

PREFACE and CONTENTS

---

This compilation of text  
is extracted from  
the research library  
of The American Mountain Men

It is intended for  
RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY  
and may not be sold

Compiled by  
Louis "Luke" Lasater H803

PREFACE and CONTENTS

---

## CONTENTS

- Ashley, William H. 1825 Rocky Mountain Papers
- Ball, John. Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832.
- Beall, Thomas J. Recollections of Wm. Craig.
- Becknell, William. Selected letters.
- Beckwourth, James P. The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth,  
written from his own dictation by T. D. Bonner
- Brackenridge, Henry Marie, Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River, in 1811.
- Bradbury, John. Travels in the Interior of America.
- Campbell, Robert. Rocky Mountain Letters.
- Catlin, George. Letters and Notes on the Manners,  
Customs, and Conditions of North American Indians.
- Clyman, James. A Short Detail of Life and Incidents  
of my trip in & through the Rocky Mountains.
- Dudgeon, Anthony. Ramsey Crooks' letter regarding Who Discovered South Pass?
- Fayel, William. A Narrative of Colonel Robert Campbell's  
Experiences in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade from 1825 to 1835.
- Ferris, Warren Angus. Life in the Rocky Mountains.
- Franchère, Gabriel. Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America.
- Hunt, Wilson Price. Account of the Journey of the Overland Party.
- Irving, Washington. Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains.
- Irving, Washington. The Adventures of Captain Bonneville.
- James, Thomas. Three Years Among the Indians and the Mexicans.
- Larocque, Francois Antoine. Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains 1805.
-

PREFACE and CONTENTS

---

Larpenteur, Charles. Forty Years a Fur Trader.

Leonard, Zenas.

Narrative of the Adventures of Zenas Leonard, fur trader and trapper, 1831-1835.

Luttig, John C. Journal of a fur-trading expedition on the Upper Missouri, 1812-1813.

Meek, Stephen Hall. The Autobiography of Stephen Hall Meek.

Menard, Pierre. Reports of Missouri Fur Co. activities at Three Forks of the Missouri, 1810.

Newell, Robert. Travels in the Territory of Missouri.

Ogden, Peter Skene. Snake Country Journals.

Pattie, James O. The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie, of Kentucky.

Potts, Daniel T. Rocky Mountain Letters.

Rogers, Harrison G. Journals of Harrison G. Rogers, member of the company of J. S. Smith.

Ross, Alexander. Journal of Snake Country Expedition, 1824.

Ross, Alexander. Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River.

Russell, Osborne. Journal of a Trapper.

Ruxton, George Frederick. Wild Life in the Rocky Mountains.

Ruxton, George Frederick. Life in the Far West.

Sage, Rufus. Rocky Mountain Life.

Spalding, Eliza. Diary, June 15 - July 6, 1836

Spalding, Henry H. Letter From The Rocky Mountains, 1836.

Smith, E. Willard. Journal while with the Fur Traders in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

Smith, Jedediah S. Journals of California Expeditions

Thomas, William H. Journal of a Voyage from St. Louis, LA. to the Mandan Village

---

PREFACE and CONTENTS

---

Townsend, John Kirk. Across the Rockies to the Columbia.

Victor, Frances Fuller. The River of the West: Joe Meek's Years in the Rocky Mountains.

Whitman, Narcissa Prentiss. 1836 Letters and Journal.

Wislizenus, F. A., A Journey to the Rocky Mountains in 1839

Work, John. Journals while in the service of Hudson's Bay Co.

Workman, W. Letter dated Feb. 13, 1826Wyeth,  
John B. Oregon, or a Short History of a Long Journey.

Wyeth, Nathaniel. The Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's  
Expeditions to the Oregon Country and Selected Letters.

Journal of E. Willard Smith while with the Fur Traders,  
Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

From: The Ashley-Smith explorations and the discovery of a central route to the Pacific, 1822-1829, with the original journals, by Harrison Clifford Dale, Cleveland, The Arthur H. Clark company, 1918.

Letter from William H. Ashley to Gen. Henry Atkinson

---

SAINT LOUIS, dec. 1, 1825.

DEAR SIR, Yours of the 23 November is at hand, and in compliance with the request therein contained, I herewith enclose you a sketch of the country over which I passed on my late tour across the Rocky mountains.

The following remarks relating to my journey have been cursorily put together, but as they afford some better information as to the practicability and means of traversing that region, at the season of the year presenting the greatest privations, they may not be uninteresting to you.

I left Fort Atkinson on the 3rd November, 1824.

On the afternoon of the fifth, I overtook my party of mountaineers (twenty-five in number), who had in charge fifty pack horses, a wagon and teams, etc. On the 6th we had advanced within miles of the villages of the Grand Pawney's, when it commenced snowing, and continued with but little intermission until the morning of the 8th. During this time my men and horses were suffering for the want of food, which, combined with the severity of the weather, presented rather a gloomy prospect. I had left Fort Atkinson under a belief that I could procure a sufficient supply of provisions at the Pawney villages to subsist my men until we could reach a point affording a sufficiency of game; but in this I was disappointed, as I learned by sending to the villages, that they were entirely deserted, the Indians having, according to their annual custom, departed some two or three weeks previous for their wintering ground. As the vicinity of those villages afforded little or no game, my only alternative was to subsist my men on horse meat, and my horses on cottonwood bark, the ground being at this time covered with snow about two feet deep. In this situation we continued for about the space of two weeks, during which time we made frequent attempts to advance and reach a point of relief, but, owing to the intense cold and violence of the winds, blowing the snow in every direction, we had only succeeded in advancing some ten or twelve miles, and on the 22nd of the same month we found ourselves encamped on the Loup fork of the river Platt within three miles of the Pawney towns. Cold and hunger had by this time killed several of my horses, and many others were much reduced from the same cause. On the day last named we crossed the country southwardly about fifteen miles to the main fork of the Platt, where we were so fortunate as to find rushes and game in abundance, whence we set out on the 24th and advanced up the Platt as expeditiously as the nature of things under such circumstances would admit. After ascending the river about one hundred miles, we reached Plumb point on the 3d December, where we found the encampment of the Grand Pawney Indians, who had reached that point (their usual crossing place) on their route to the wintering ground on the Arkansas river. At two or three of my encampments previous to arriving at Plumb point, I was visited by small parties of young warriors, who were exceedingly troublesome to my party and committed several thefts before leaving us, but on my arrival at the encampment, the chiefs and principal men expressed much friendship and manifested the same by compelling the thieves to return the articles stolen from me. From our encampment of the 24th to this place our hunters supplied us plentifully with provisions, and the islands and valleys of the Platt furnished a bountiful supply of

---

rushes and firewood, but I was here informed by the Indians that until I reached the vicinity the mountains, I should meet with but one place (the forks of the Platt) where a plentiful supply of fuel could be had, and but little food of any description for our horses. They urged me to take up winter quarters at the forks of the Platt, stating that if I attempted to advance further until spring, I would endanger the lives of my whole party.

The weather now was extremely cold, accompanied with frequent light snows. We advanced about eight miles further up the river, where we fell in with the tribe of Loup Pawneys and travelled in company with them to the forks of the Platt (their usual wintering place) where we arrived on the 12th day of December, and had so far found the Indians' information in relation to fuel and horse food to be correct. At this time my men had undergone an intense suffering from the inclemency of the weather, which also bore so severely on the horses as to cause the death of many of them.

This, together with a desire to purchase a few horses from the Loups and to prepare my party for the privations which we had reason to anticipate in travelling the next two hundred miles (described as being almost wholly destitute of wood), induced me to remain at the forks until the 23d December, the greater part of which time, we were favoured with fine weather, and, notwithstanding the uplands were still covered with from eighteen to twenty-four inches of snow, the valleys were generally bare and afforded a good range for my horses, furnishing plenty of dry grass and some small rushes, from the use of which they daily increased in strength and spirits.

The day after our arrival at the forks, the chiefs and principal men of the Loups assembled in council for the purpose of learning my wants, and to devise means to supply them. I made known them that I wished to procure twenty-five horses and a few buffalo robes, and to give my men an opportunity of providing more amply for the further prosecution of the journey, I requested that we might be furnished with meat to subsist upon while we remained with them, and promised that a liberal remuneration should be made for any services they might render me. After their deliberations were closed, they came to this conclusion: that, notwithstanding they had been overtaken by unusually severe weather before reaching their wintering ground, by which they had lost a great number of horses, they would comply with my requisition in regard to horses and other necessaries as far as their means would admit. Several speeches were made by the chiefs during the council, all expressive in the highest degree of their friendly disposition towards our government, and their conduct in every particular manifested the sincerity of their declarations.

On the 23d December, having completed the purchase of twenty-three horses and other necessary things, I made arrangements for my departure which took place on the next morning. The south fork of the river being represented as affording more wood than the north, I commenced ascending that stream. The weather was fine, the valleys literally covered with buffaloe, and everything seemed to promise a safe and speedy movement to the first grove of timber on my route, supposed to be about ten days' march. The Loup Pawneys were not at this time on very good terms with the Arapahoe and Kiawa Indians, and were anxious to cultivate a friendly understanding with them, to accomplish which, they concluded to send a deputation of five men with me to meet those tribes and propose to them terms of peace and amity. This deputation overtook me on the afternoon of the 25th.

Having now reached a point where danger might be reasonably apprehended from strolling war parties of Indians, spies were kept in advance and strict diligence observed in the duty of sentinels.

---

The morning of the 26th was cloudy and excessively cold. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon it began to snow and continued with violent winds until the night of the 27th. The next morning (28th) four of my horses were so benumbed with cold that they were unable to stand, although we succeeded in raising them on their feet. A delay to recruit them would have been attended with great danger, probably even to the destruction of the whole party. I therefore concluded to set forward without them. The snow was now so deep that had it not been for the numerous herds of buffaloe moving down the river, we could not possibly have proceeded. The paths of these animals were beat on either side of the river and afforded an easy passage to our horses. These animals were essentially beneficial to us in another respect by removing (in their search for food)

the snow in many places from the earth and leaving the grass exposed to view, which was the only nourishment our horses could obtain.

We continued to move forward without loss of time, hoping to be able to reach the wood described by the Indians before all our horses should become exhausted. on the 1st january, 1825, I was exceedingly surprised and no less gratified at the sight of a grove of timber, in appearance, distant some two or three miles on our front. It proved to be a grove of cottonwood of the sweet-bark kind suitable for horse food, situated on an island, offering among other conveniences, a good situation for defence. I concluded to remain here several days for the purpose of recruiting my horses, and made my arrangements accordingly. My Indian friends of the Pawne Loup deputation, believing this place to be nearly opposite to the Arrapahoe and other Indian camps on the Arkansas determined to proceed hence across the country. They prepared a few pounds of meat and with each a bundle of wood tied to his back for the purpose of fuel, departed the following morning on their mission. Being informed by the Pawneys that one hundred of my old enemies (the Arikara warriors) were encamped with the Arkansas Indians, and my situation independent of that circumstance, being rendered more vulnerable by the departure of the Indians, who had just left us, I was obliged to increase my guard from eight to sixteen men. This was much the most severe duty my men had to perform, but they did it with alacrity and cheerfulness as well as all other services required at their hands; indeed, such was their pride and ambition in the discharge of their duties, that their privations in the end became sources of amusement to them. We remained on this island until the cottonwood fit for horse food was nearly consumed, by which time our horses were so refreshed as to justify another move forward. We therefore made arrangements for our departure and resumed our march on the 11th january.

The weather continued extremely cold, which rendered our progress slow and very labourious. We procured daily a scanty supply of small pieces of driftwood and willow brush, which sufficed for our fuel, but we did not fall in with any cottonwood suitable for horse food until the 20th, when we reached another small island clothed with a body of that wood sufficient for two days subsistence. From this last mentioned island, we had a clear and distant view of the Rocky mountains bearing west, about sixty miles distant. Believing from the information of the Indians that it was impracticable to cross them at this time, I concluded to advance to their base with my whole party, and, after fortifying my camp, to proceed with a part of my men into the mountains, to ascertain if possible the best route to cross over, and at the same time, endeavour to employ my men advantageously until a state of things would allow me to proceed on my journey.

We advanced slowly to the point proposed, and had the good fortune to find on our way an abundance of wood for fuel as well as for horse food. on the 4th february, we approached near to

---

the base of the mountain and encamped in a thick grove of cottonwood and willows on a small branch of the river Platt. our situation here was distant six or eight miles north of a conspicuous peak of the mountains, which I imagined to be that point described by Major Long as being the highest peak and lying in latitude 40 N., longitude 29 W. On my route hither from our encampment of the 20th january, I was overtaken by three Arapahoe Indians. They stated to me that they had been informed by the Indians of the Pawney deputation (whom they had received and treated with friendship) of my journey up the Platt, and that they with 60 or 70 other warriors had started from their encampment on the Arkansas to join me, but the unusual depth of snow on the prairies had deterred all the party except themselves from proceeding further than their second day's encampment. I made them some presents, gave them advice in relation to the course of conduct they should pursue towards our citizens, and pointed out to them the advantages which a friendly understanding between them and the Pawneys would produce to both tribes. They acknowledged the correctness of my admonition and promised in future to pursue the line of conduct I had advised them to adopt. They then thanked me for the presents I had made them and departed to rejoin their tribe.

We were busily [engaged] on excursions in different directions from our camp until the 25th february. Although the last ten days had been pleasant weather partly accompanied with warm suns, the scene around us was pretty much the same as when we arrived, everything being enveloped in one mass of snow and ice, but, as my business required a violent effort to accomplish its object, notwithstanding the mountains seemed to bid defiance to my further progress, things were made ready, and on the 26th we commenced the doubtful undertaking.our passage across the first range of mountains, which was exceedingly difficult and dangerous, employed us three days, after which the country presented a different aspect. Instead of finding the mountains more rugged as I advanced towards their summit and everything in their bosom frozen and torpid, affording nothing on which an animal could possibly subsist, they assumed quite an altered character. The ascent of the hills (for they do not deserve the name of mountains) was so gradual as to cause but little fatigue in travelling over them. The valleys and south sides of the hills were but partially covered with snow, and the latter presented already in a slight degree the verdure of spring, while the former were filled with numerous herds of buffalo, deer, and antelope.

In my passage hither I discovered from the shape of the country, that the range of mountains twenty or thirty miles to the north of my route, was not so lofty or rugged and in all probability would afford a convenient passage over them. From here I pursued a W.N.W. course with such variations only as were necessary in selecting the smoothest route. The face of the country west and northwardly continued pretty much the same. Successive ranges of high hills gradually ascending as I advanced, with detached heaps of rock and earth scattered promiscuously over the hills several hundred feet higher than the common surface. On the south there appeared at the distance of fifteen or twenty miles a range of lofty mountains bearing east and west, entirely covered with snow and timbered with a thick growth of pine. We were able to procure but a scanty supply of fuel till we arrived on the 10th march at a small branch of the north fork of the Platte, where we found an abundance of wood. This stream is about one hundred feet wide, meandering northeastwardly through a beautiful and fertile valley, about ten miles in width. Its margin is partially wooded with large cottonwood of the bitter kind. The sweet cottonwood, such as affords food for horses, is nowhere to be found in the mountains; consequently our horses had to subsist

---

upon a very small allowance of grass, and this, too (with the exception of a very inconsiderable proportion) entirely dry and in appearance destitute of all nutriment. Yet my horses retained their strength and spirits in a remarkable degree, which with other circumstances, confirms me in the opinion that the vegetation of the mountains is much more nourishing than that of the plains.

On the 12th, I again set out and in the evening encamped at the foot of a high range of mountains covered with snow and bearing N.N.W. and S.S.E., which, as they appeared to present the same obstructions to my passage as far north as the eye could reach, determined me (after a day's examination) to attempt the continuation of my course W.N.W., hoping to be as successful as I had been in crossing the first range. My attempt, however, proved unsuccessful. After an unremitting and severe labour of two days, we returned to our old encampment with the loss of some of my horses, and my men excessively fatigued. We found the snow to be from three to five feet in depth and so firmly settled as to render our passage through it wholly impracticable. This mountain is timbered with a beautiful growth of white pine and from every appearance is a delightful country to travel over in the summer season. After remaining one day longer at the camp to rest my men and horses, I left it a second time and travelled northwardly along the base of the mountains. As I thus advanced, I was delighted with the variegated scenery presented by the valleys and mountains, which were enlivened by innumerable herds of buffalo antelope, and mountain sheep grazing on them, and what added no small degree of interest to the whole scene, were the many small streams issuing from the mountains, bordered with a thin growth of small willows and richly stocked with beaver. As my men could profitably employ themselves on these streams, I moved slowly along, averaging not more than five or six miles per day and sometimes remained two days at the same encampment.

On the 21st march, the appearance of the country justified another attempt to resume my former course W.N.W. The principal or highest part of the mountain having changed its direction to east and west, I ascended it in such manner as to leave its most elevated ranges to the south and travelled north west over a very rough and broken country generally covered with snow. My progress was therefore slow and attended with unusual labour until the afternoon of the 23d, when I had succeeded in crossing the range and encamped on the edge of a beautiful plain of a circular form and about ten miles in diameter. The next day (24th) we travelled west across the plain, which terminated at the principal branch of the north fork of the river Platt, on which we encamped for the night. on the two succeeding days we passed over an elevated rough country entirely destitute of wood and affording no water save what could be procured by the melting of snow. We used as a substitute for fuel an herb called wild sage. It resembles very much in appearance the garden sage but acquires a much larger growth and possesses a stock of from four to five inches in diameter. It burns well and retains fire as long as any fuel I ever used.

From the morning of the 27th to the night of the 1st april, we were employed in crossing the ridge which divides the waters of the Atlantic from those of the Pacific ocean. The first two days, the country we met with was undulating with a gradual ascent to the west Southwardly at the distance of twenty or thirty miles appeared a range of high mountains bearing east and west. Northwardly, at an equal distance, were several mountains or high hills irregularly seated over the earth, which I afterwards ascertained to surround the sources of a branch of the Platt called Sweet Water.

On the 3d, 4th and 5th days, we travelled over small ridges and valleys alternately, the latter much the most extensive and generally covered with water produced by the melting of the snow and

---

which appeared to have no outlet. This dividing ridge is almost entirely destitute of vegetation except wild sage with which the earth is so bountifully spread that it proved a considerable impediment in our progress. As my horses were greatly exhausted by the fatigue and hunger they had underwent, I advanced on the 2d april only two or three miles to a place where I had, on the preceding evening, discovered some grass. After my camp was arranged, I advanced with one of my men eight or ten miles on my route to a high hill for the purpose of taking a view of the adjacent country in the expectation of finding the appearance of water courses running westwardly. Nothing, however, was visible from which I could form an opinion with the exception of a huge craggy mountain, the eastern extremity of which, bearing from this hill due north, made nearly a right angle. The arm which extended northwardly divides (as I afterwards ascertained) the waters of the Yellow Stone and Bighorn from some of the headwaters of the Columbia, while the west arm separates the southern sources of Lewis's fork of the Columbia from what I suppose to be the headwaters of the Rio Colorado of the West. While on the mountain, I was discovered by a war party of Crow Indians, who were returning from an excursion against the southern Snake Indians. This party, unobserved by me, followed me to my camp and on the succeeding night stole seventeen of my best horses and mules. This outrage reduced me to a dreadful condition. I was obliged to burden my men with the packs of the stolen horses, and, after making the necessary arrangements, they were directed to proceed to the hill where I had been discovered the day previous by the Indians, while I, with one man, pursued the fugitives who travelled northwardly over the roughest parts of the country and with all possible expedition. In the course of the day we recovered three of the stolen horses, which were left on the way, and rejoined our party that night. on the next morning I dispatched nine men on the trail of the Indians, and with the residue of my party I proceeded in search of a suitable encampment at which to await their return. on the 6th we reached a small stream of water running north west. We deemed it about ten miles where it formed a junction with another rivulet of the same size, which headed northwardly in the range of mountains before described. This stream is clothed with a growth of small willows and furnishes the only constant running water we have met with since the 24th march and also the first wood we have seen in the same space of time. We continued at this camp until the 11th inst., on which day, the men sent in pursuit of the Indians came back without success. They had ascertained, however, from the direction of the trace and other circumstances that they belonged to the Crow nation. on the 12th we again proceeded on our journey, pursuing the meanders of the creek last mentioned in a south west direction; but the weather was so exceedingly bad, snowing a greater part of the time, that we were unable to advance more than six or eight miles per day until the 18th inst., when we left the creek and traveled west about fifteen miles to a beautiful river running south. This stream is about one hundred yards wide, of a bold current, and generally so deep that it presents but few places suitable for fording. Its margin and islands are wooded with large long leafed (or bitter) cottonwood, box-elder, willows, etc., and, judging from the quantity of wood cut on its banks, and other appearances, it once must have contained a great number of beaver, the major part of which (as I have been informed) were trapped by men in the service of the North West company some four or five years ago.

The country in this vicinity and eastwardly fifty miles is gently rolling. Some of the valleys afford a species of fine grass, but the uplands produce but little vegetation of any kind except a small growth of wild sage.

---

I have hitherto said but little in relation to the fertility of the soil on my route because that part of it lying east [of] the mountains has in two or three instances been described by gentlemen who have travelled over the country for that express purpose and further because the perfect sameness in the quality of the soil and its productions enabled me to describe them altogether and that in but few words. From this place to Plumb point on the river Platt, the proportion of arable land (which is almost entirely confined to the valleys of the mountains) is so inconsiderable that the whole country (so far as my observations extended) may be considered of no value for the purpose of agriculture. The surface generally either exhibits a bed of sand or a light coloured barren earth, which is in many places wholly destitute of the least semblance of vegetation. In relation to the subsistence of men and horses, I will remark that nothing now is actually necessary for the support of men in the wilderness than a plentiful supply of good fresh meat. It is all that our mountaineers ever require or even seem to wish. They prefer the meat of the buffaloe to that of any other animal, and the circumstance of the uninterrupted health of these people who generally eat unreasonable quantities of meat at their meals, proves it to be the most wholesome and best adapted food to the constitution of man. In the different concerns which I have had in the Indian country, where not less than one hundred men have been annually employed for the last four years and subsist altogether upon meat, I have not known at any time a single instance of bilious fever among them or any other disease prevalent in the settled parts of our country, except a few instances (and but very few) of slight fevers produced by colds or rheumatic affections, contracted while in the discharge of guard duty on cold and inclement nights. Nor have we in the whole four years lost a single man by death except those who came to their end prematurely by being either shot or drowned. In the summer and fall seasons of the year, the country will afford sufficient grass to subsist any number of horses in traversing it in either direction and even in the winter season, such is the nutritious quality of the mountain grass that, when it can be had plentifully, although perfectly dry in appearance, horses (moderately used) that partake of it, will retain in a great degree their flesh, strength, and spirits. When the round leaf or sweet-bark cottonwood can be had abundantly, horses may be wintered with but little inconvenience. They are very fond of this bark, and, judging by the effect produced from feeding it to my horses last winter, I suppose it almost, if not quite, as nutritious as timothy hay.

On my arrival at the point last described. I determined to relieve my men and horses of their heavy burdens, to accomplish which, I concluded to make four divisions of my party, send three of them by land in different directions, and, with the fourth party, descend the river myself with the principal part of my merchandise. Accordingly, some of the men commenced making a frame about the size and shape of a common mackinaw boat, while others were sent to procure buffaloe skins for a covering. On the 21 april, all things being ready for our departure, I dispatched six men northwardly to the sources of the river; seven others set out for a mountain bearing s.s.w. and N.N.E., distant about thirty miles; and six others were sent in a southern direction. After selecting one of the most intelligent and efficient of each party to act as partizans, I directed them to proceed to their respective points of destination and thence in such direction as circumstances should dictate for my interest. At the same time they were instructed to endeavor to fall in with two parties of men that were fitted out by me in the year previous, and who were then, as I supposed, beyond the range of mountains appearing westwardly. The partisans were also informed that I would descend the river to some eligible point about one hundred miles below, there de-

---

posit a part of my merchandise, and make such marks as would designate it as a place of general rendezvous for the men in my service in that country, and where they were all directed to assemble on or before the 10th july following.

After the departure of the land parties, I embarked with six men on thursday, the 21st april, on board my newly made boat and began the descent of the river. After making about fifteen miles, we passed the mouth of the creek which we had left on the morning of the 18th and to which we gave the name of Sandy. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon we encamped for the remainder of the day and night at a place distant about forty miles from where we embarked, finding from the movement of our boat in its day's progress that she was too heavily burthened, we began the construction of another, which was completed and launched on the morning of the 24th, when we again set out. As we advanced on our passage, the country gradually became more level and broken. The river bottom, which in point of soil, is but little better than the uplands, becomes narrower as we descended and has generally the appearance of being subject to inundation. Today we made 30 miles.

MONDAY, 25TH: the country today under our observation is mountainous on either side of the river for twenty miles, then it resumes its former appearance of elevated and broken heights. A beautiful bold running stream about fifty yards wide empties itself on the west side of the river bearing N.W. and S.E. Below this junction the river is one hundred and fifty yards wide, the valley narrow and thinly timbered. We encamped on an island after making about twenty-five miles. Thence we departed on the succeeding morning and progressed slowly without observing any remarkable difference in the appearance of the river or surrounding country until the 30th inst., when we arrived at the base of a lofty rugged mountain, the summit of which was covered with snow and bearing east and west. Here also a creek sixty feet wide discharges itself on the west side. This spot I selected as a place of general rendezvous, which I designated by marks in accordance with the instruction given to my men. So far, the navigation of this river is without the least obstruction. The channel in the most shallow places affords not less than four feet water. Game continues abundant, particularly buffaloe. There is no appearance of these animals wintering on this river; but they are at this time travelling from the west in great numbers.

SATURDAY, MAY 2d: we continued our voyage about half a mile below our camp, when we entered between the walls of this range of mountains, which approach at this point to the waters, edge on either side of the river and rise almost perpendicular to an immense height. The channel of the river is here contracted to the width of sixty or seventy yards, and the current (much increased in velocity) as it rolled along in angry submission to the serpentine walls that direct it, seemed constantly to threaten us with danger as we advanced. We, however, succeeded in descending about ten miles without any difficulty or material change in the aspect of things and encamped for the night. About two miles above this camp, we passed the mouth of a creek on the west side some fifteen yards wide, which discharged its water with great violence.

SUNDAY, 3RD: after progressing two miles, the navigation became difficult and dangerous, the river being remarkably crooked with more or less rapids every mile caused by rocks which had fallen from the sides of the mountain, many of which rise above the surface of the water and required our greatest exertions to avoid them. At twenty miles from our last camp, the roaring and agitated state of the water a short distance before us indicated a fall or some other obstruction of considerable magnitude. our boats were consequently rowed to shore, along which we cautiously

---

descended to the place from whence the danger was to be apprehended. It proved to be a perpendicular fall of ten or twelve feet produced by large fragments of rocks which had fallen from the mountain and settled in the river extending entirely across its channel and forming an impregnable barrier to the passage of loaded watercraft. We were therefore obliged to unload our boats of their cargoes and pass them empty over the falls by means of long cords which we had provided for such purposes. At sunset, our boats were reloaded and we descended a mile lower down and encamped.

MONDAY, 4TH: this day we made about forty miles. The navigation and mountains by which the river is bounded continues pretty much the same as yesterday. These mountains appear to be almost entirely composed of stratas of rock of various colours (mostly red) and are partially covered with a dwarfish growth of pine and cedar, which are the only species of timber to be seen.

TUESDAY, 5TH: after descending six miles, the mountains gradually recede from the water's edge, and the river expands to the width of two hundred and fifty yards, leaving the river bottoms on each side from one to three hundred Yards wide interspersed with clusters of small Willows. We remained at our encampment of this day until the morning of the 7th, when we descended ten miles lower down and encamped on a spot of ground where several thousand Indians had wintered during the past season. Their camp had been judiciously selected for defence, and the remains of their work around it accorded with the judgment exercised in the selection. Many of their lodges remained as perfect as when occupied. They were made of poles two or three inches in diameter, set up in circular form, and covered with cedar bark.

FRIDAY, THE 8TH: we proceeded down the river about two miles, where it again enters between two mountains and affording a channel even more contracted than before. As we passed along between these messy walls, which in a great degree exclude from us the rays of heaven and presented a surface as impassable as their body was impregnable, I was forcibly struck with the gloom which spread over the countenances of my men; they seemed to anticipate (and not far distant, too) a dreadful termination of our voyage, and I must confess that I partook in some degree of what I supposed to be their feelings, for things around us had truly an awful appearance. We soon came to a dangerous rapid which we passed over with a slight injury to our boats. A mile lower down, the channel became so obstructed by the intervention of large rocks over and between which the water dashed with such violence as to render our passage in safety impracticable. The cargoes of our boats were therefore a second time taken out and carried about two hundred yards, to which place, after much labor, our boats were descended by means of cords. Thence we descended fifty (50) miles to the mouth of a beautiful river emptying on each side, to which I gave the name of Mary's river. The navigation continued dangerous and difficult the whole way; the mountains equally lofty and rugged with their summits entirely covered with snow. Mary's river is one hundred yards wide, has a rapid current, and from every appearance very much confined between lofty mountains. A valley about two hundred yards wide extends one mile below the confluence of these rivers, then the mountain again on that side advances to the water's edge. Two miles lower down is a very dangerous rapid, and eight miles further the mountain withdraws from the river on the west side about a half mile. Here we found a luxurious growth of sweet-bark or round-leaf cottonwood and a number of buffaloe, and succeeded by narrow river bottoms and hills. The former, as well as several islands, are partly clothed with a luxuriant growth of round-leaf cottonwood and extend four miles down the river, where the mountains again close to the

---

water's edge and are in appearance more terrific than any we had seen during the whole voyage. They immediately produce bad rapids, which follow in quick succession for twenty miles, below which, as far as I descended, the river is without obstruction. In the course of our passage through the several ranges of mountains, we performed sixteen portages, the most of which were attended with the utmost difficulty and labor. At the termination of the rapids, the mountains on each side of the river gradually recede, leaving in their retreat a hilly space of five or six miles, through which the river meanders in a west direction about (70) seventy miles, receiving in that distance several contributions from small streams on each side, the last of which is called by the Indians Tewinty river. It empties on the north side, is about (60) sixty yards wide, several feet deep, with a bold current.

I concluded to ascend this river on my route returning, therefore deposited the cargoes of my boats in the ground near it, and continued my descent of the main river fifty miles to the point marked 5 on the topographical sketch sent you. The whole of that distance the river is bounded by lofty mountains heaped together in the greatest disorder, exhibiting a surface as barren as can be imagined. This part of the country is almost entirely without game. We saw a few mountain-sheep and some elk, but they were so wild, and the country so rugged that we found it impossible to approach them. On my way returning to Tewinty river, I met a part of the Eutau tribe of Indians, who appeared very glad to see us and treated us in the most respectful and friendly manner. These people were well dressed in skins, had some guns, but armed generally with bows and arrows and such other instruments of war as are common among the Indians of the Missouri. Their horses were better than Indian horses generally are east of the mountains and more numerous in proportion to the number of persons. I understood (by signs) from them that the river which I had descended, and which I supposed to be the Rio Colorado of the West, continued its course as far as they had any knowledge of it, southwest through a mountainous country. They also informed me that all the country known to them from south to west from Tewinty river was almost entirely destitute of game, that the Indians inhabiting that region subsist principally on roots, fish and horses. The Eutaus are part of the original Snake nation of Indians. They have no fixed place of residence but claim a district of country which (according to their representation) is about one hundred and fifty miles long by one hundred miles wide, to which their situation at that time was nearly central.

I purchased a few horses of the Eutaus, returned to Tewinty river and ascended to its extreme sources, distant from its mouth about seventy miles, in general bearing W.N.W. and S.S.E.; [it] runs through a mountainous sterile country. From the head waters of Tewinty river, I crossed a range of lofty mountains nearly E. and W., which divide the waters of the Rio Colorado from those which I have represented as the Beaunaventura. This range of mountains is in many places fertile and closely timbered with pine, cedar, quaking-asp, and a dwarfish growth of oak; a great number of beautiful streams issue from them on each side, running through fertile valleys richly clothed with grass. I proceeded down the waters of the Beaunaventura about sixty miles bordered with a growth of willow almost impenetrable. In that distance I crossed several streams from 20 to 60 yards wide running in various directions. All of them, as I am informed, unite in one in the course of 30 miles, making a river of considerable magnitude, which enters a few miles lower down a large lake, represented on your sketch as Lake Tempagono. This information was communicated to me by our hunters who (as I before told) had crossed to this region in the summer

---

of 1824 and wintered on and near the borders of this lake. They had not explored the lake sufficiently to judge correctly of its extent, but from their own observations and information collected from Indians, they supposed it to be about eighty miles long by fifty broad. They represented it as a beautiful sheet of water deep, transparent, and a little brackish, though in this latter quality the accounts differ; some insist that it is not brackish. I met several small parties of Eutaw Indians on this side of the last mentioned range of mountains, 100 miles long bearing about W.N.W. and S.S.E. [who said] that a large river flowing out of it on the west end runs in a western direction, but they know nothing of its discharge into the ocean or of the country any considerable distance west of the lake. I also conversed with some very intelligent men who I found with our hunters in the vicinity of this lake and who had been for many years in the service of the Hudson Bay Fur company. Some of them profess to be well acquainted with all the principal waters of the Columbia, with which they assured me these waters had no connection short of the ocean. It appears from this information that the river is not the Multnomah, a southern branch of the Columbia, which I first supposed it to be. The necessity of my unremitted attention to my business prevented me from gratifying a great desire to descend this river to the ocean, which I ultimately declined with the greatest reluctance. The country drained by these waters, which is about one hundred and twenty miles wide and bounded on the north, east and south by three principal and conspicuous mountains, is beautifully diversified with hills, mountains, valleys, and bold running streams and is in parts fertile. The northern part of it is well supplied with buffaloe, elk, bear, antelope, and mountain-sheep. The country east and a considerable distance north of these lakes, including the headwaters of the Rio Colorado of the West and down the same to Mary's river, is claimed by the Shoshone Indians. The men in my employ here have had but little intercourse with these people. So far they had been treated by them in the most friendly manner. They had, however, some time in the fall of 1824, attacked and killed several of our citizens who had crossed from Taus and were trading on the \_\_\_\_\_.

On the 1st day of July, all the men in my employ or with whom I had any concern in the country, together with twenty-nine, who had recently withdrawn from the Hudson Bay company, making in all 120 men, were assembled in two camps near each other about 20 miles distant from the place appointed by me as a general rendezvous, when it appeared that we had been scattered over the territory west of the mountains in small detachments from the 38th to the 44th degree of latitude, and the only injury we had sustained by Indian depredations was the stealing of 17 horses by the Crows on the night of the 2nd April, as before mentioned, and the loss of one man killed on the headwaters of the Rio Colorado, by a party of Indians unknown.

Mr. Jedediah Smith, a very intelligent and confidential young man, who had charge of a small detachment, stated that he had, in the fall of 1824, crossed from the headwaters of the Rio Colorado to Lewis fork of the Columbia and down the same about one hundred miles, thence northwardly to Clark's fork of the Columbia, where he found a trading establishment of the Hudson Bay company, where he remained for some weeks. Mr. Smith ascertained from the gentleman who had charge of that establishment, that the Hudson Bay company had then in their employment, trading with the Indians and trapping beaver on both sides of the Rocky mountains, about 80 men, 60 of whom were generally employed as trappers and confined their operations to that district called the Snake country, which Mr. Smith understood as being confined to the district claimed by the Shoshone Indians. It appeared from the account, that they had taken in the last four years within

---

that district eighty thousand beaver, equal to one hundred and sixty thousand pounds of furs. You can form some idea of the quantity of beaver that country once possessed, when I tell you that some of our hunters had taken upwards of one hundred in the last spring hunt out of streams which had been trapped, as I am informed, every season for the last four years.

It appears from Mr. Smith's account that there is no scarcity of buffalo as he penetrated the country. As Mr. Smith returned, he inclined west and fell on the waters of the Grand lake or Beaunaventura. He describes the country in that direction as admitting a free and easy passage and abounding in salt. At one place particularly hundreds of bushels might have been collected from the surface of the earth within a small space. He gave me some specimens, which equal in appearance and quality the best Liverpool salt. Mr. S. also says the buffaloe are very plenty as far as he penetrated the country over it in almost any direction.

On the 2nd day of July, I set out on my way homewards with 50 men, 25 of whom were to accompany me to a navigable point of the Big Horn river, thence to return with the horses employed in the transportation of the furs. I had forty-five packs of beaver cached a few miles east of our direct route. I took with me 20 men, passed by the place, raised the cache, and proceeded in a direction to join the other party, but, previous to joining them, I was twice attacked by Indians first by a party of Blackfeet about 60 in number. They made their appearance at the break of day, yelling in the most hideous manner and using every means in their power to alarm our horses, which they so effectually did that the horses, although closely hobbled, broke by the guard and ran off. A part of the Indians being mounted, they succeeded in getting all the horses except two, and wounded one man. An attempt was also made to take our camp, but in that they failed. The following night, I sent an express to secure horses from the party of our men who had taken a direct route. In two days thereafter, I received the desired aid and again proceeded on my way, made about ten miles, and encamped upon an eligible situation. That night, about 12 o'clock, we were again attacked by a war party of Crow Indians, which resulted in the loss of one of the Indians killed and another shot through the body, without any injury to us. The next day I joined my other party and proceeded direct to my place of embarkation just below the Big Horn mountain, where I arrived on the 7th day of August.

On my passage thither, I discovered nothing remarkable in the features of the country. It affords generally a smooth way to travel over. The only very rugged part of the route is in crossing the Big Horn mountain, which is about 30 miles wide. I had the Big Horn river explored from Wind River mountain to my place of embarkation. There is little or no difficulty in the navigation of that river from its mouth to Wind River mountain. It may be ascended that far at a tolerable stage of water with a boat drawing three feet water. The Yellowstone river is a beautiful river to navigate. It has rapids extending from above Powder river about fifty miles but I found about four feet water over the most.

---

END

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

John Ball (1794-1884) was member of Nathaniel Wyeth's 1832 expedition to the Rockies and the Pacific Northwest. Ball provides an account of: Sublette's expedition across the plains to the 1832 Pierre's Hole rendezvous, the famous battle with the Blackfeet that occurred there, the continuation of Wyeth's remaining men to Oregon, and the first settlements in Oregon.

This e-text is derived from the portion of Ball's rather lengthy autobiography that deals with his experiences in the West. It begins with the chapter where Ball meets up with Wyeth in Baltimore, and ends just before Ball sails for the Sandwich Islands, on his journey back to the East.

Ball apparently wrote this autobiography from diaries and notes. The manuscript was eventually compiled by his daughters, Kate Ball Powers, Flora Ball Hopkins, and Lucy Ball, and published as: Ball, John, Autobiography of John Ball, Grand Rapids, Mich., The Dean-Hicks company, 1925.

#### NEW PLANS

#### CHAPTER I

While in New York I sought out and found some of John Jacob Astor's Oregon men for the purpose of gaining information from them about that country. There were the Messrs. Seaton's who sailed around Cape Horn and to the Columbia River and assisted in establishing the trading post Astoria, and Ramsey Crooks, who conducted the land party for him across the continent, reaching Astoria the second year. They told me much of their experiences there. I then went to Philadelphia and Baltimore and made collections in each place for the oilcloth contracts, for my sister, and sent her back after my leaving, in all, some three thousand dollars.

#### Notables in Washington

Having the time, before the arrival from Boston of my Oregon traveling companions, I went for the first time to Washington. Put up at Brown's Hotel, standing there almost alone, on the Avenue, Washington then being comparatively but a village. General Ashley, who had long been in the fur trade from Missouri to the Mountains, was stopping at Brown's. So I took the liberty to call at his room and inform him of my intended journey and asking from him advice and information. He kindly answered many inquiries. But finally said, "Young man, it would be as difficult to tell all about it, all that may occur or be needed on such a journey, as for a carpenter to tell every blow he had got to strike on commencing to erect a house." He had sold out his fur business to William Sublette of St. Louis and others, and had been elected a member of Congress.

While thus spending a few days at Washington I took the opportunity with other things to attend the sitting of the United States Supreme Court. And then I listened to Chief Justice Marshall's celebrated decision of the Georgia and Cherokee case, with regard to the Cherokee lands. And, of course, attended the sitting of the houses of Congress, Calhoun, then Vice-President, presiding over the Senate, in which Benton, Clay, Webster and other celebrities were then members. As a presiding officer I have never seen Mr. Calhoun's equal, or a finer man to look on. And, as then constituted, it was indeed an august body and in the House were then Adams and Choate. The latter I knew well at College and there were others in both houses with whom I might without impropriety have claimed acquaintance. But no, I poked about as a stranger. And as such presumed to call on General Jackson at the White House without any introduction. He however received me kindly.

#### President Jackson

Then, as always through life, I neglected to make use of men in place and of notoriety, as I perhaps might have done to my great advantage. Had I then told the President and others of my proposed

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

journey they might have taken such interest, as to have given some aid, or more notoriety to my journey and personal advantage after its performance. But so it has always been, I have never felt much deference for men barely on account of holding office or claiming consequence. Had I studied to make use of such and shown them more regard and aid, who knows but some more notorious place might not have been mine. But there is this consolation, I have no less self respect, and may have escaped more severe troubles than have now been my lot.

Captain N. Wyeth

After spending a few days at Washington I returned to Baltimore and awaited the coming from Boston by sea of Mr. Wyeth and his party. And they in a few days arrived, numbering about twenty. Mr. Wyeth I found a man of some intelligence and great energy in his undertakings. He had been a shipper of ice from a pond, Clear pond, in Cambridge. But his men were such loafers and laborers mostly, as he had picked up in and about Boston by high representations of the pleasures of the journey and the fortune-making result of the enterprise, none of them, as time showed, at all understanding what they were going into. A Mr. Sinclair, myself and one other, I think, joined them here. While at Baltimore I stopped at Belsover's, where was one of the best tables I ever sat at. And I made the best of it, knowing when I left it, I should go into camp life. I had always liked Baltimore, so beautifully located and its fine fountains of water.

Leaves Baltimore

Having arranged matters for our journey, about the middle of March we left Baltimore on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for Frederick, sixty miles, by horse power. That sixty miles was then more than all the other railroads in the Union. It had been built at enormous labor, graded down and part of the way through the mountains to a dead level and the stringers, on which was riveted strap iron, were of cut granite rock. But they had been so moved out of place by the frost of the previous winter, that the cars moved roughly over them. From Frederick we took our journey on foot, having a wagon for our baggage. In fact commenced our camp life, sleeping at night under tents and cooking our grub at a fire by the roadside. And so for some days we trudged on. At Cumberland visited the coal mines, which to me were quite new and interesting as were many other things on our way, for I had never been before in these parts. And so we continued along on the National Cumberland road to Brownsville on the river Monongahela. There we took a steamboat for Pittsburgh, where on arrival we looked about to see its wonders; for from its history, its commanding location, at the junction of those two mountain streams to form the Ohio, and its coal and iron made it one of the most marked places in the country. In passing thus slowly the Alleghenies, I noticed with much interest the geology of the country.

Bound for St. Louis

From Pittsburgh we took passage in a steamboat bound for St. Louis. And as we descended the river I noticed its high bluffs, where at first the openings to the coal mines were high up the same, but as we sailed on, they gradually opened lower and lower, till the coal veins passed below the river. We stopped for a time at Cincinnati; which was then but a village, with few buildings hut of wood and these of no great pretensions. That spring the river had been so high as to flood much of the town, doing a good deal of damage. Among the passengers on the boat, bound to Cincinnati was the Reverend Lyman Beecher, and one pleasant day, as we were smoothly gliding down the stream, he and also Wyeth and myself were promenading the deck which had no bulwarks. We noticed that he turned many steps before he reached the stern of the boat, while we went so

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

near that our next step would have been overboard. My companion remarked, "How is it that Mr. Beecher is so much more cautious than we sinners?" Implying that Mr. Beecher doubtless claimed that all would be right with him should he be drowned, while with us we made no pretensions in that direction.

We had a pleasant sail down the river, running the rapids at Louisville, and stopping there and at a few other places, but not at Cairo, for there, all was swamp about the mouth of the Ohio. And when we entered the Mississippi we found it a muddy instead of a clear stream like the Ohio, and that we made much slower progress in stemming its current. The first sight of this mighty river strikes one as a thing almost sublime, thinking of the thousand streams so far away that make up its rushing volume. Arriving at St. Louis, I found it then but a village, mostly consisting of old French buildings along the levee and a street near the river, but few good buildings in the place. Draw a line then from there to, say Detroit and the entire white population beyond I do not think was ten, if five thousand. I saw a steamboat sail, while there to go up the Illinois River, with the United States soldiers to fight Black Hawk, who was overrunning the country about where Chicago now is.

#### ACROSS THE PLAINS

#### CHAPTER II

#### Sail up the Mississippi

Here we expected to settle about the manner of performing our further journey. We did not propose to undertake it, without guides or inducing some experienced mountaineers to join our party. And we learned that a Mr. William Sublette of St. Louis, successor with Smith & Jackson, of Gen. Ashley in the mountain fur trade business, was now fitting out in the upper part of the state for their annual trip. So thinking that we might probably join his party in the journey, we determined to go right on up the country. So took a steamboat for Lexington which is in the west part of the state and near where was then his party. So we sailed up the Mississippi in company with the boat with the United States soldiers to fight Black Hawk and parted with it at the entrance of the turbid waters of the Missouri into that river. It is a very interesting thing to observe long before you reach the junction, the clear waters of the Mississippi of the east side of the river and the turbid waters of the Missouri commingling with them, giving the riled look to the whole river.

#### The Missouri

The waters of the Missouri I have compared in color to that of your creamed coffee or kind of ash color. For the purpose of cookery and drinking if one chooses, the waters of the river are put into a cask and left to settle. But I noticed that the boatmen preferred it fresh from the river, drinking it down with apparent relish--and this though when left to settle in the bucket there would be an inch of sediment at the bottom. On drinking it raw I could perceive the grit between my teeth. It collies sweeping along for thousands of miles from the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The country to the foot of those mountains seems to the sight not to rise, still there is sufficient ascent to give a constant and rapid current to its waters, so rapid that we found our boat checked in its velocity the moment we entered the same. And we steamed on, day and night, varying our course to avoid snags and sand bars.

The country along the lower part of the river seemed well improved and occasionally a small village. And when we got a short distance above Jefferson we came to a bar that extended entirely across the river, with no place over three feet of water, and our boat drew six. And the way in such

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

cases is to run the boat's bow hard into the sand and when the water has washed it away about the same, push it in farther and in that way, in time, work through it. But some of us tiring of this slow navigation, quit the boat and journeyed on foot. And thus got to Lexington first. This gave us the opportunity to see more of the country and the ways of its inhabitants. The country seemed rich and then but thinly settled, woodland and prairie interspersed. There were but few taverns along the road, but when we called at the cabin, the most were constructed of logs, we were hospitably received and lodged and fed in their best manner and at a very reasonable rate. As to their mode of cookery I noticed one thing to me peculiar, they cooked thin bread as well as meat and vegetables at each meal. It was a corn hoe or Johnny Cake or wheat flour biscuit, and the Johnny Cake made only with salt and water. Some think such is not good but I do.

#### Joins Fur Traders

When all had arrived at Lexington, we went on to Independence, near which Mr. Sublette and his party were in camp. And on meeting him he readily consented that we might join them on this condition: that we should travel fully under his command and directions, and under the most strict military discipline; take our due part with his people in guarding camp and defense in case of attack by the Indians, which he rather expected, from a personal dislike they had to him. They charged him with leaving the year before a horse in the country packed with infected clothing, to give them the smallpox. I hardly think he could have been guilty of it. We then traversed the country and purchased horses and mules for our journey over the plains and mountains. Rigged them with saddles for riding and packing, made up those packs by sorting out the goods, for Wyeth's party had brought on much more than they could pack. But for myself I had brought but little so had nothing to throw away. But Wyeth would start with so much, that he had to drop some things by the way. Among them a small anvil and blacksmith's tools.

#### Order of March

A Mr. Campbell of St. Louis also with some men joined Mr. Sublette's party, making in all some eighty men and three hundred horses. For with the traders, each man had the care in camp and charge in marching of three horses, one to ride and two with packs. And besides they took an extra number to supply the place of any that might fail in strength or be stolen. And thus rigged and ready we started on our march from Independence, on what was then in much use, the Santa Fe road or trail, leading off in a southwest direction, crossing the west line of the state some twelve miles south of the Missouri. Our order of march was always double file, the horses led, the first attached to the rider's and the third to him. So when under way our band was more than a hundred horses long--Mr. Sublette always giving all orders and leading the band, and Mr. Campbell as lieutenant bringing up the rear and seeing that all kept their places and the loose animals did not stray away.

#### Leaves Last Settlement

Our last encampment, before crossing the west line of the state, was at a Mormon settlement. They had come and settled here the previous fall, on this extreme border of the settled world. We procured from them some milk and they otherwise treated us very kindly. They thought then that they had found a permanent home. But no, like all new religionists, they were doomed to much persecution. I remember when the Methodists were slighted. It was the 12th of May that we left this last settlement and continued our march on said Santa Fe road over a beautiful prairie country, some two or three days, then left it and turned to the northwest and in a few days more came

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

to the Kansas river, at a point I think near where is now Topeka. Here we found means to cross the river and swam our horses. For here was one white man, acting I think as a gunsmith for the Indians. He was the last white man we saw except of our own party.

#### Kansas River

We continued our march up the Kansas river along the edge of the prairie back of the timber bordering the river. For on most the larger western rivers and often on the smaller, as far as the land is moist, there is timber, but beyond grass. And in the spring or fall, the fire sweeping through this grass kills the timber on its border. But then it will, if the seasons are wet spring up again. So there was a constant warfare between the fires and the trees till these prairie fires were stopped by the settlers.

At this time I think the Indians were away, but we passed one of their villages where I noticed their mode of building. They dug holes in the dry ground some five or six feet deep and then built a roof of split plank, so made quite a warm winter house. When we had reached near the mouth of the Big Blue river, we left Kansas and traveled for days over the rolling prairies encamping at night on that stream. One day on this prairie march, with our band of packed horses, we overtook General or Captain Bonneville, who had also started out on a trading excursion, but with wagon, and with which he went all the way to the mountains, but with much difficulty. We halted for a few minutes to salute them and passed on, traveling with double the speed. The last time we encamped on the Blue, it was but a stagnant pool. And the next day's usual march, about 20 or 25 miles, brought us to the Platte about where is now Fort Kearney.

On this first part of our journey we did not depend at all on game for subsistence, but on supplies packed along on our horses. Mr. Sublette's party had also driven along cattle to slaughter on the way; as the horses never went faster than a walk, they could keep up. Then were some deer seen, but as yet no buffalo, so there was no reliance on game, or intended to be, till we should reach the buffalo. And now we continued our march over the smooth bottom of the turbid Platte river on the south side, the river riley, broad and rapid, no falls, but a sufficient descent in the country to give a rapid current--from a half to a whole mile wide and very shallow. It gives its full share of the mud of the Missouri--some timber on its islands and on its shores, bottoms broad and rich bounded by broken bluffs and all the country beyond rolling.

#### Hunting for Provisions

Our provisions were becoming nearly exhausted and we were daily expecting to see our future resource, the buffalo, but none were met with, till the day we reached the forks of the Platte, when nearly our last meal on hand had been consumed. And the same day too, we had the last shower of rain of any account. Up to this time, about the first of June, we had occasional rains, and the prairies had become green affording good feed for our animals and the wild ones too on their native range. Not far above the junction of the North and South Forks of the Platte our band forded the south branch without any serious difficulty, the depth of water not being so great as to come over the saddles or wet many of the packs. But there being some fears of a quicksand bottom, its safe accomplishment gave great satisfaction. A short ride over the bluffs brought us to the north and main branch, in all its characteristics like the main river below the junction.

#### Mode of Encampment

Now came a march of day after day up this North Platte of great sameness. The main band keeping straight on the way, when the buffalo were not met with crossing our tracks. A few of the best

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

hunters, each with two horses, one to ride and another on which to pack the meats, would leave the band and range the country back, kill and dress the animal and bring the meat to our night's encampment.

And I should have before described our mode of encamping. Mr. Sublette leading the band, always selected the ground, having reference in doing so to water, always encamping on the river or other stream, to feed for horses and the safety of the place for defense in case of an attack, which he seemed to rather expect. And if such place was reached by that time, he usually ordered "halt" by the middle of the afternoon, so as to give the horses time to feed and make full preparation for night. The horses were unpacked and men or messes arranged in a manner to leave a large hollow square, the stream forming one side. And then the horses were immediately hobbled, four feet tied together, and turned out of camp and a guard placed beyond them, to keep them from straying too far or drive them in if attacked. Then about sundown he would cry out "ketch up, ketch up" always repeating his order. Then each man would bring in the horses he had charge of, keep them still hobbled and tie them to short stakes carried with us, driven close into the ground, giving each one as much room as could be without interfering with others, so that they could feed also during the night. Then a guard, changed every three hours, sat for the night. As soon as light in the morning the order would be "turn out, turn out." And all would rise from their earthly beds, turn the horses out to bite, get a hearty breakfast, then the horses were saddled and packed and formed in line and the order given to "march." And as a reward for their expedition, the first ready took their place nearest to the commandant. In the middle of the day a stop was made, the horses unpacked to rest them, but not turned out, and a lunch taken by the men, if wished, of meat already cooked, and in half an hour pack up and march on.

#### Buffalo

We had now reached the region where there was no growing timber even along the river. And our fuel for cooking was the dry buffalo droppings. We usually in this part of our journey cooked our meat by boiling it in our camp kettles. And it was rather hard fare, for the buffalo were still lean in flesh, they getting quite reduced in flesh during the winter from their poor chance. The men felt the change from common food to this lean meat only and without even salt very severely, and rapidly grew weak and lean. The men would almost quarrel for any part of the animal that had any tallow, even the caul. But as soon as the buffalo improved in flesh and we got where there was wood to roast whole sides by, the men rapidly improved. I was a little surprised that I stood this change of life and living about as well as the mountaineers, and better than most of the new ones at it, and as to a camp life I rather enjoyed its ways. I had for bed purposes, the half of a buffalo robe, an old camlet cloak with a large cape, and a blanket. I spread the robe on the ground, wrapped the blanket about my feet and the cloak around me, throwing the cape loosely over my head to break off the moonshine, and a saddle for my pillow. And oh! I always slept most profoundly. We had tents, but it never raining and but little dew, we did not use them. I felt less discomfort from the change of life than I expected, and much enjoyed every day's march. For at every mile I met with much that to me was interesting, while Wyeth's men dwelt on the hardships and privations and cursed the day they were induced into the undertaking.

#### North Platte

At times we would not see a buffalo for a day or two, and then in countless numbers. One day we noticed them grazing on the opposite side of the river on the wide bottoms and the side bluffs

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

beyond like a herd of cattle in a pasture, up and down the country on that side as far as we could see, and continued the same during our twenty-five miles' march and no end to them ahead, probably, 10,000 seen in that one day. The greatest unevenness of the endless plain, the bottoms of the river over which we were marching, were the buffalo paths made by following one path, direct from some break in the bluff, back to the river. For they range far back for their feed, but must come to the river for their drink. We saw not a spring or crossed a stream in traveling hundreds of miles up the North Platte. But we crossed many what are called dry rivers--beds of gravel and sand--where torrents must have run at the melting of the snow in the spring. And after many days on the close-fed plain and bluffs of earth back we came to an interesting change. We saw a whole day's march ahead on the plain, what looked a big castle, or small mountain. But on nearing it, we saw that it was a big tower of sand-stone far detached like an island, from the bluffs back, which had now all become of that kind of rock, high and perpendicular, and strangely worn into many fantastic shapes. The detached mass first seen is called the Chimney Rock a striking, landmark in this prairie sea. The upper, perhaps 100 feet of naked rock and the lower 50 a spreading pedestal, well grassed over.

#### THE MOUNTAINS

#### CHAPTER III

#### Crossing the Laramie

Finally we came to a big, rapid, turbulent tributary, the Laramie from the mountains of the same name, and to a dead halt at the point where since has been Fort Laramie. For here we had to make what proved a serious undertaking, a crossing of said river. And fortunately here was plenty of timber, out of which we made rafts on which to take ourselves and our goods across, and made the horses swim the river. It was so broad, say half a mile, turbid and turbulent, they were unwilling to go in, but were drove in and then headed back until they were compelled to seek the other side, but were so swept down by the current they landed far below. And I do not know that we should have got them to head across at all had not two or three courageous men mounted some and made them swim ahead to give a lead to the rest. There was still snow in sight on the Laramie mountains, the melting of which made the high water of the river. With some difficulty we all got safely over, but some of the traders' goods were lost.

Now for two or three days' march there was a great change in the country, hilly, brooks of water, partially wooded, and better feed for horses. And we traveled back from the river. What we were crossing is a spur of the Black Hills, that extended to and far beyond the Platte toward the great bend of the main Missouri. It was a pleasant change from the monotonous plain. But we came again onto the river with its bottoms, but hills and mountains all the time in sight to the south. And after some more days' march we came to where it comes from the southwest, and our route required its crossing. And here we crossed it, but with less difficulty, in the same manner we had the Laramie. And the next day we reached the Sweet Water, a branch coming in from the northwest, and encamped at the Independence Rock, a granite boulder the size of two or three meeting houses, having got its name from some prior party having stopped here and celebrated the 4th of July on it. From it you behold a grand mountain and valley scene. And we now continued on our march up the valley of the Sweet Water, a beautiful, clear, cool stream, a great luxury as one may judge after quenching our thirst so long from the warmer, turbid waters of the Platte. It comes down a plain some few miles wide between high ridges of naked rocky mountains. And up this

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

valley we wound our way till the stream was but a rivulet that you could step across--and so high we overlooked all the mountains we had passed, and snowdrifts around, though the middle of the summer.

#### South Pass

Here we were at the celebrated South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, said by his political friends, when a candidate for President, though he was not there till ten years after, to have been discovered by General Fremont. And it was by no means then new to our fur traders. It has its name from Lewis and Clark and other early travelers always keeping on the main Missouri which led them to a crossing far north and more difficult. In two or three hours from our leaving this headwater of the Sweet Water that flows eastward to the Mississippi and to the Gulf of Mexico, we struck a small stream, a branch of the Colorado that falls into the Gulf of California. And here we were traveling over as level a prairie as I have ever seen, except bottom lands--stretching far away south and west with hundreds of buffalo feeding on the same. But stretching off to the northwest we looked out on the towering snowclad Wind River Mountains; the very crest of the Rocky Mountain range. For on the north of this, rise all the higher main branches of the Missouri; and on the west, branches of the Columbia river: and on the south, these waters of the Green and Colorado rivers.

And we continued our journey off northwest as near the foot of these mountains as the traveling was good, crossing the cool snow-formed streams of the Green river for perhaps one hundred or more miles. But our trappers now moderated their march, expecting before this to have heard from their mountain partners, who had passed the winter there or rather farther west, trapping and trading. For they knew the time they might expect Sublette out and the route he would come. And they were to send an express to meet him and inform him where they had rendezvoused to receive him. One of these days while we were laying over, a few of the party went out to hunt, and our horses were quietly feeding in the brook valley where we were, only a short distance from our camp. And these hunters, for mischief, as they came on the bluff gave an Indian whoop and fired, and the horses all came to camp for protection like scared children.

#### Indian Attack

One night in this part of our journey when we were encamped in the usual way, in messes all around, leaving quite a space within for our horses to feed, and the usual guard. But unperceived by the guard, Indians approached near camp and raised their whoop and fired guns and arrows, and so frightened the horses that they all broke loose from their fastenings and rushed by us out of camp. And all were instantly on their feet ready for fight. For myself the first consciousness I had, I found myself on my feet with my rifle in my hand. For always all were required to sleep with their rifles by their side, well loaded for action. But the Indians were not to be found. And we soon collected our horses and tied them and laid down to sleep. At least I did so, showing how a man will become, in a measure, indifferent to danger. I felt some fears before getting where there were Indians, but felt but little after. But this time we found in the morning, they so far did what they aimed at, had stolen some dozen or more of our best horses, those probably which ran farthest out.

#### Fremont's Trip

The only means I had to ascertain our altitude was the temperature of boiling water by my thermometer, and which I made in that way to be between 8,000 and 9,000 feet. But Mr. Fremont,

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

who was sent out by government, supplied with barometer and all needful instruments, made it something less. His account of that exploration is very interesting. He was an intelligent and industrious traveler, but sometimes too rash and venturesome. As in this case in crossing the Nevadas in the deep snow, and still worse when he was sent on a railroad exploration, and was caught in midwinter in the mountains and escaped into New Mexico.

No rain of any account in all this part of our journey. Sometimes a small cloud would form attended with thunder, and rain be seen falling part way to the ground, and all evaporate. Perhaps a few drops of rain or hail would reach it. Nights clear and cold, often below freezing and days, hot sun and up sometimes to 80 degrees. But on the 4th of July as we approached and arrived at the first waters of the Columbia, we had an hour or two of snow.

#### Hunger

Now we came into a rough and mountainous country, more difficult than any we had experienced. . And to add to our troubles our animals had become, from their long journey, much worn out, and the men though in like feeble condition had to walk. And food too became short, for we met but few buffalo, but some game of other kinds. And nothing came amiss. And we ate of everything that fell in our way, but the snakes, I think. Sublette had before this met with some of his mountain trappers who guided us on our way to their rendezvous. And in four days of hard working our way through ragged ravines and over steep ridges brought us out on to a fine grassy plain among the mountains, called Pierre's Hole and to the grand encampment, where they had for some time been awaiting our arrival.

#### Grand Rendezvous

Here we found not only Sublette's traders and trappers, -but a party of the American Fur Company, and hands of Nez Perce and Flat Head Indians, who had by appointment met the traders here with their furs and five or six hundred horses. Many of them they sold us to take the place of our lean ones. They would allow something for the lean ones for with them, in their slow way of journeying they would recruit. But the full price of a pony was but a blanket and a cheap knife. So we supplied ourselves with all we needed. These mountain horses are of the Arabian stock, brought to Mexico by the early Spanish settlers--light of limb and fleet. It was a grand sight to look on their immense herd out on the prairie of all colors from white to black and many spotted ones. For during the day they would send them out on to the open prairie to feed with the mounted guard with them, to run them into camp, if the Blackfeet, in whose country we were, should make a dash down the mountain side to steal them. At night they would bring them into camp where they would quietly remain among their owners tents till morning.

#### Pierre's Hole

Here in Pierre's Hole was for us a grand time of rest and recruit. The Indians had an abundance of good, dried buffalo meat which we bought of them and on which we feasted, took a bite of the fat part with the lean, eating it like bread and cheese, uncooked or slightly roasted on the coals as we chose. And I never witnessed such recuperation of men as during the two weeks we lay at our ease in this camp, feeding on the dried buffalo meat, and our drink the pure cool mountain creek, a branch of the Lewis river, on which we were encamped. And among us, a varied congregation of some two hundred white men and perhaps nearly as many Indians, there was quite a social time, and a great exchange of talk and interesting indeed, from the wide and varied experiences of the narrators. There were cultured men from city and country down to white men lower than the

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

Indian himself. Men of high-toned morals, down to such as had left their country for its good, or perhaps rather personal safety.

Some made the season s trip from the miasmatic air of the Mississippi and its city follies to recuperate their bodily and mental derangement. And it proved a grand specific. This mountain-pure air and ever-shining sun is a grand, helpful thing for both soul and body, especially when feeding on only meat and water.

And here we had the test of the honesty of the Indian. When we had purchased a horse and it had got back into the immense herd, we could never have reclaimed it, or perhaps known it if seen, but they would bring them back to us, and again and again, if needed. And if any of our property, tools or camp things seemed lost, they would bring them to us, were in all things orderly, peaceful, and kind. And the Flat Head chief used of an evening to mount his horse from which he would give his people a moral lecture. A white man who had been some years in their country and well understood their language told us what he said. And it was of a high, moral tone, telling them to be punctual in their dealings with us and orderly among themselves.

Here we were more than a thousand miles from the white settlements and had met no natives till now. And not having then ever seen much of them, I observed with much interest their ways. Their usual dress was a frock and leggings and moccasins made from dressed deer skin, and a well dressed buffalo skin with the hair on for a blanket, to ride on and sleep in. The frock of the women was longer than that of the men. Both had their dresses somewhat ornamented by a projecting edge of the leather, cut into a fringe, shells, feathers and beads, when to be had, worked into their dresses, or in their hair. The women, these mountain women were extremely diffident, would blush if looked at. And though they and their friends deemed it quite an honor to be married by a w trite man--one of these traders or trappers, who had passed years in their country--they, that is the father or nearest male relative, would never consent to any intercourse with these women, but for life. But I fear that the more virtuous and honorable Indian was sometimes betrayed into an alliance that the white man betrayed and annulled when he quit the country.

#### Sublette Returns

Mr. Sublette had here reached the end of his journey, and in a few days, but not till we left him, would commence his march back to St. Louis with his seventy horses packed with beaver, worth as he estimated, some \$50,000 in the New York market. No other fur was deemed worth packing so far, not even the otter. And the pressing question arose with us Yankees as to the manner and safe means of our future and further journey. Many of Mr. Wyeth's men had long before they got here become disheartened and disgusted, but they could not stop or return alone. But now they decided to return with Mr. Sublette's party. And all decided to go no farther, except twelve. For myself I never turned my face back for a moment and resolved to go on, if it was in the company of the Nez Pierces whose country was down near the mouth of the Lewis river. But a Mr. Frapp and Milton Sublette with a trapping party of Sublette s men were to go off trapping somewhere westward, so we resolved to go on, joined their party of some forty whites, half-breeds and Indians, and so keep on, thinking some way to bring out rightly.

#### JOURNEY CONTINUES WITH TRAPPERS

#### CHAPTER IV

Mr. Sublette had come out with arms, ammunition, traps, etc., for his business and new men to take the places of those whose term of service had expired, so there was much fixing up to sort

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

out the parties for the different purposes. And our party of trappers under Mr. Frapp one afternoon left the main camp and went out some seven or eight miles and encamped on a prairie near some timber on a little creek, as usually there is timber on the streams and mountainsides. We had a quiet night but in the morning, as we were about to commence our day's march, Indians were seen in line of march on horseback off across the prairie, say some two miles. And the trappers at once decided they must see who they were. So Frapp told Antoine, the half-breed, to take a good horse and have an Indian of the party go with him and go out and see who they were. As Antoine approached them he saw they were Blackfeet, and their chief left his party and came out in a friendly way to meet him. But his father having been killed by the Blackfeet, he was going to have his revenge. So he said to his companion, "I will appear to be friendly when we meet, but you watch your chance and shoot him." His plan was carried out. He was shot down. Antoine caught his robe, a square of blue and scarlet cloth, and turned and the Blackfeet fired after him, when they saw his treachery. He escaped and came into our camp, said they were Blackfeet, and that he had killed their chief and there was his robe in evidence. "All right" they said, "they would play friendly now but at night attack our camp." But we twelve could not appreciate the reasoning. But here we were in the company that thus decided. But as we watched to see what they would next do they seemed at first to break up and scatter, but soon we saw that a large band, the warriors, seemed coming directly towards us to make fight. So we immediately tied our horses to bushes near and put up our saddles as a kind of breastwork but before they reached us, they turned off into some timber on a stream, built a kind of fort of logs, bushes, their saddles and blankets, as a shade if we attacked them, and took their horses into the fort with them.

#### Fight with the Blackfeet

The moment that Antoine gave the information that they were Blackfeet, an express flew off back to the old camp to tell we had met the enemy, and in the time, it seemed to me, that race horses could have hardly gone over the ground, some of Sublette's men and the friendly Indians came rushing into our camp inquiring where were the Blackfeet. And on soon finding where they had fortified themselves, each white or Indian, as he felt that his gun was right, and all things ready for his part, would start off. And so they went helter skelter, each on his own hook to fight the common enemy. For the friendly Indians had their own wrongs to avenge. As they thus almost singly approached their brush and saddle fort, they could only see the defences whereas, they, the Blackfeet, could see everyone who approached them. They soon shot down some of the trappers and Flatheads, for the timber was not large enough to shelter a man. And soon wounded men were brought back to our camp.

We twelve Yankees felt that we had no men to spare to be killed or wounded that we were not called upon to go out of the way to find danger, but had they attacked our camp, we should have taken our full part, to save ourselves and horses. But we readily assisted in taking care of the wounded and in other ways aid, as far as we felt belonged to us. They kept up a firing at them at a safer distance, but did not rout them. Six trappers and as many friendly Indians were killed or mortally wounded. And as night approached it was determined to retreat. And the whites took a wounded man on a horse, others riding each side to hold him up. The Indians fixed long fills to a horse letting the ends draw on the smooth ground and fixed onto them a kind of hurdle, onto which they laid the wounded and drew them off easily over the smooth prairie. A better way than

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

ours.

When night came on we encamped in the best manner of defence we could, and the next day expecting surely an attack from them, built a high fence and strong pen for our horses in such case, and a guard on the open prairie to run them in if attacked, and then awaited the result. Their fort was finally visited and a number of dead horses found. But of course they had secreted any men they lost from scalping. We did not go back so far as the old camp.

#### Buried the Dead

The man who died in our camp we buried in the horse pen where the ground was so trodden that the enemy could not find the body to scalp it. Another badly wounded was sent to Sublette's camp on a bier suspended between two horses, one ahead of the other. And when we found that the enemy was not near, after a few days, we took up our line of march as originally intended. And after two or three days reached the main Lewis river. To cross its water, and such others as they could not ford, the trappers had packed along what they call a bull boat, green buffalo hides with the hair off, which they soak in water till limber, then stretch this hide over a temporary frame made from such saplings as could be bent into shape, and then turn their rude boat up to the sun to dry, and thus keep in shape long enough to cross two or three times, before so soaked as to be unmanageable. The men with the goods, traps etc., were crossed in these and horses swam.

And so we traveled on slowly in a pleasantly rising country back from the river, the trappers stopping to set their traps for beaver on the branches that showed signs of their residences in and on the same. Not far from this part was afterwards built what was known as Fort Hall. And we were at one time in sight of the American Falls, also of the Lewis river, and a man of our party, who had been there said at one time we were within twenty-five miles of the Salt Lake. And so we kept on southwesterly with a low ridge of mountains between us and the river. And finally came to a stream running to the south or southerly, the country apparently descending in that direction. The trappers had poor luck and said they would now quit and turn back. Sixteen free trappers, as they were called, men on their own hook, said they would go down that stream, I now know it to be the Humboldt, and go to California and get mules. None of our party had been so far in that country before and knew nothing of the country beyond in any direction. And for aught I know the free trappers are still going, Frapp and his party turned back, and we twelve turned northward to again get onto the Lewis river.

Other things I should have before said--one, the great clearness of the air of the Rocky Mountain region, from the dryness of the same, no mist or haze to prevent a distinct view of very distant objects. Objects, on our march, that seemed as though we should reach in a few hours, would perhaps take as many days, being accustomed to judge of distances through a humid atmosphere. We were soon now to pass the range of the buffalo. So while in the country where they ranged, say north of the Salt Lake, we halted a day or two to dry, in the sun and on hurdles over a slow fire, some of their meat to pack along for our future use, a wise forethought for game was scarce.

#### Birth of an Indian Baby

Mr. Frapp had an Indian wife who traveled along with him, and the Indians of the party, some of them, had their wives, these women as good horsemen as the men, always riding astride. One day we delayed our march, we knew not why, till after a time we heard an outcry for a few minutes from Frapp's wife, out to one side in some bushes. And we soon learned the cause of our laying over, was to give her the opportunity to lay in, give birth to a child in camp and not on our day's

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

march. But the very next day, she sat her newborn baby, feet down, into a deep basket that she hung to the pommel of her saddle, mounted her horse and rode on in the band as usual. And she had another child of two or three, who had his own horse. He was sat on the saddle and blankets brought around him so as to keep him erect, and his gentle pony went loose with the other pack horses, which kept along with those riding and never strayed from the common band. I mention these things to show something of the Indian ways in their own country, and that whites in their country readily from necessity and convenience, fall into like habits, and soon find but little inconvenience from the same. The Canadian Frenchman seems to adopt their life as readily as though raised in that way, and others the same after a little time.

#### Trapping for Beaver

I have been writing from recollection mostly. But on turning to the scant minutes I made at the time I find that there were the Trois Tetons and other snow mountains all the time in sight. The country we passed through zig-zag, as Milton Sublette, a brother of William, and Frapp were after the beaver, and went up and down the mountain streams hunting them, set their traps at night; and the second or more, if the game was found plenty, on the same ground. Three boys left our party soon after crossing the Lewis river to make a seasons trapping by themselves on the mountains to the left in the midst of the Blackfoot country, showing the strange, wild, fearless habits formed by these mountain trappers. The sixteen free trappers left us on the Humboldt, but Sublette and Frapp kept on westward and we parted with them on the creek that ran north and which we followed.

We were with these trappers more than a month, parting from them the 28th of August. I had during the time made many interesting observations of things around, the weather clear, and days hot and usually frost at night, ranging from say 30 to 80 degrees often. Soon after crossing the Lewis river I observed for the first strata of igneous or volcanic rock in conglomerate. And ever after met with it and saw beautiful white and variegated marble bowlders, and lime and granite rock partially melted down, but still showing the original rock. The vegetation was much diversified, timber of various kinds and extended prairies. Though but little or no rain, grass was often good and occasionally we met with fruit, which, you may well think, was very acceptable to us--a berry growing on a shrub they called a service berry, resembling what is called in New England the robin pear, and red and orange colored currants, all of an excellent quality. I brought the seeds home, but they did not grow.

#### TWELVE OF WYETH'S PARTY GO ON ALONE

##### CHAPTER V

The first day after leaving the trappers, we traveled over a rough country of all sorts of rock, burnt and unburnt, and encamped in what is now called a canyon, between high basaltic rocks. We twelve thus for the first time alone it seemed a little lonely. And though not fearful, there was something like a deep curiosity as to the future, what might happen to us in that unknown land. Our aim was to get back on to the Lewis river and follow that to its junction with the Columbia. And I now presume we were on the headwaters of the Owyhee, the east boundary of Oregon. And the next day and for days we kept on the same or near. We pursued it till so shut in that we had to leave it by a side cut and get onto an extended plain above, a plain with little soil on the basaltic rock, and streams in the clefts or canyons. One day we traveled 30 miles and found water but once, and in the dry atmosphere our thirst became extreme. On approaching the canyon we could

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

see the stream meandering along the narrow gorge 1,000 feet down, and on and on we traveled not knowing that we should survive even to reach it to quench our thirst. Finally before night we observed horse tracks and that they seemed to thicken at a certain point and lead down the precipitous bluff where it was partially broken down. So by a most difficult descent we reached the creek, dismounted and down its banks to quench our thirst. And our horses did not wait for an invitation, but followed in quick time. The bluffs were of the burnt rock, some places looking like an oven burned brick kiln, and others porous. And laying over the next day and going a short distance down the creek, we found Indians who had our future food, dried salmon. And getting out on the other side we traveled on and when we came again to the river we found it, though now quite a stream, decidedly warm, made so by hot springs gushing in from porous bluffs. Quite a stream came in of the temperature of 100 degrees.

#### Shoshone Indians

The creek finally comes out of the ravine into a better looking country, and here we met other Indians. They call themselves Shoshones and seemed very friendly and sold us their salmon for such of our goods as they seemed most to need-- awls of iron to prick their deer skins for sewing into garments, and knives, for they hardly possessed an article of our manufacture. They used a sharp bone for an awl, one flattened for a chisel, stone knives and hatchets. Ourselves and all we had seemed to them great curiosities. For their country being poor in furs it had not been visited by traders.

In some ten or twelve days after leaving the trappers, we reached the mouth of the creek where it joins the Lewis river. And here we found a large encampment of Indians, being a favorable site for fishing. The first thing on arriving the chief, in their usual hospitable manner, sent us a fine salmon for our dinner, and would have deemed it an insult to be offered pay for it. We were strangers and his guests.

#### Indian Fishing

Their manner of fishing was ingenious. The stream was shallow and they built a fence across it near its mouth and then some distance above, leaving weirs at one side, so that the fish coming down or going up would come in, but would not find their way out. They had spears with a bone point with a socket that fitted onto a shaft, and a hole through the point by which a string tied it to the handle. At sunrise at a signal from the chief they rushed in from both sides, struck the salmon through with the spear, the point came off, and held by the string to the shaft, they towed them to shore and so soon had hundreds on land.

Near, up the Lewis river, were bluffs of basaltic rock thirty feet high and resting on the sandy shore, the pentagonal columns tumbling down into the river as the earth was washed away, showing that there had been melted overflow of rock, which then cooled and crystallized into rock and in this form in blocks, one above another.

#### Beavers

As we occasionally saw the fresh marks of beaver on the streams, we set our traps and occasionally caught some, preserved and packed along their skins, knowing that they would be acceptable to the Hudson Bay people in exchange for such things as we should need from them. And at times we had nothing else to eat but their meat, which having nothing else, we relished right well. About the beaver building houses, they only do it when the land along the streams, where they are, is low. For when there are high banks they burrow up and make their nests in the earth, but always

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

have the mouths of their holes under the water, so even when the streams are frozen over they can come to the water under the ice. They subsist on the bark of small trees, but for winter's use cut with their chisel teeth, small trees into blocks and store them in the mud at the mouths of their burrows or in the same, as the squirrel does with his acorns. And the muskrat too makes his nest of grass or rushes in the swamp, raising it above the water. The beaver is an intelligent and interesting animal and so are all others, birds and all, each in his way.

#### Reckless of Danger

In this part of our journey we twelve were often very reckless of danger. For the purpose of this trapping we would separate, for a night or for more. When in full camp our horses were always picketed near us and some two or more always awake as a guard. But when two or three were away for a night's trapping, we slept with our horses' long halters tied to a bush near us or sometimes in our hand. One night when thus encamped I had my old camlet cloak stolen from my saddle and our horses' halters cut, but they, the horses, did not leave us, and we did not see by whom done. At another time we found the Indians about at night, for though generally friendly, they could not forego the attempt to steal away in a quiet manner, our horses, of which we had two to a man.

We traveled some days along or in the vicinity of the Lewis river after meeting Indians, and subsisting mostly on fresh or dried salmon bought or given us from them, and making short or long day's journeys and laying over to catch the beaver. They are a night animal.

At one night's encampment, we made the Indians understand that we were going to Walla Walla, the name of that place being the only word we had in common. All else was by signs, talk with the fingers. Inquiring the way, one of the Indians said that he had been to Walla Walla and made in the sand a map of the country. He said that such a mark meant the river and another the trail, that the road kept down the river three sleeps, always reckoning distances by day's journeys, or in two if we whipped up; that then the river went into mountains, it does pass through a canyon and for a hundred or two miles, and the road left the river and up a creek, and then we should go so many days and come to a mountain, go over that and encamp, then over another and encamp, then a plain and in two days Walla Walla.

I felt confident I understood him, though this all by signs, and it proved just as he had said, and of great help to us. But as we traveled on we met with no more Indians from whom to buy our fish, and we met with no game that we could kill. And not taking the precaution to pack along much, we soon got short of food. And we hurried on making thirty miles one day, crossing a most beautiful fertile plain surrounded by mountains, the same I think is called the Big Pound. And came to the mountains, the Indian described, the Blue Mountains. And here we were in a bad plight, our horses, some of them at least, exhausted by hard travel, and ourselves the same, having been some days on short allowance and now nothing left. So for food we killed an old horse. But hungry as we were, this did not relish well. But I will show that horse, in good condition is good food, for I afterwards tested it.

#### Wyeth Presses Ahead

Here, the next day, Wyeth took four of the men and the best horses and started off express for Walla Walla, requesting me the next day after to follow on and he would get food and send back for us. So the next day following I told the men they better pack along some of the horse meat they had dried, and some of them did so. And we ascended the mountain on the Indian trail and

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

found a quite level road along its ridge, and scattering pine and cedar timber on its sides. After many hours travel the road led down the mountain to the west into a valley where we found water and encamped. Here the men who would not pack along any of the horse, stole from those who did. As for myself, as each one looked out for himself, I had saved to this time some dried salmon, having eaten but one meal per day for many days.

#### Mount Hood

The next day we ascended another ridge and kept along the same, hour after hour. And it was a clear bright day except some cumulous, or thunder clouds as some call them, and I noticed one, on the western horizon, that seemed stationary. And after watching it an hour, I made up my mind that it was no cloud but white, snowy Mount Hood and called the attention of the men to it, and hailed it as the discovery of land--an object on which men had looked and of which they knew something of its locality. Just at night we came down to a creek and out of the mountains, and encamped, ourselves weary and our horses more so. An old pack mule turned round to me the moment I dismounted to be unpacked. Here for food we found a few blackthorn berries and rose berries.

The next day we started out onto the plain, but found so many trails we did not know which to take. But we traveled on the deepest worn, but not as proved the most direct one. Encamped at night and found some stagnant water and next day hard traveling brought us to a fine creek running west which proved to be the Walla Walla creek.

And now I proposed to the men, as we had been so long without food, to kill another horse and the best conditioned one in the lot, but they thought they could stand it another day, so we did not kill the horse. The next day we started early down the creek, for I thought that would bring us out right, and in a few hours we came to an Indian encampment, where we got some food. They had dried-bear and other meat and elderberries, and we bought and ate, for they had learned of the whites. For myself I did not eat so ravenous, but the men ate till I urged them to desist, for I feared the result. We soon after encamped, and the next day arrived at the fort, where we found Wyeth who had been there two or three days.

## OREGON

### CHAPTER VI

#### Fort Walla Walla

The said fort was a small stockade of upright timbers set in the ground some fifteen or eighteen feet high with stations or bastions at the corners for look-outs. And the company kept here for the purpose of trade a clerk and some half-dozen men. We were kindly received and here for the first time since leaving the forks of the Platte the first of June ate bread, being now the 18th of October. The fort is at the mouth of the creek on the Columbia nine miles below the mouth of the Lewis river. It was an interesting sight to look on the Columbia, after the long, long journey to see the same and to get to it.

The country about looked barren, for the fall rains, if they have them, had not commenced--little or no timber or shrubs, except the Artemisia, wild sage, which grows from one to five or six feet high, and is found everywhere on the mountain plains. It has an ash-colored leaf as bitter as the garden sage; still when nothing else can be found it is eaten by the buffalo and deer. I am informed that there is now cultivation in these parts and crops raised; but I presume it must be by means of irrigation. Here we decided to leave our faithful horses and descend the river by boat.

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

Oh! the horse is appreciated, when one for months has passed with him, his days and nights.

Down the Columbia

We procured at the fort a boat and two Canadians to take us down the river and started the day after our arrival. And in descending soon came into the high perpendicular basaltic bluffs with only river and a narrow shore on one or the other side, of grass and sand, the current of the clear water with a slight blue ocean shade sweeping swiftly on. And when we encamped at night, if we could find a place that we could ascend the bluff we found no timber, but a dry, grassy plain stretching far away to distant mountains, in the west the Cascade range and snow-clad Mount Hood. At one night's encampment the Indians, being acquainted with our boatmen, gave them a young horse to kill for our supper. And though we had received a plenty of food for our voyage at the fort, I tried the horse and found it as good meat as I had ever eaten, it being in better condition than the one killed by us at the Blue Mountains. And we voyaged on past the big falls and came to the Dalles and then stopped to see the Indians and found there had been great mortality among them. We walked by the wonderous chute or flume through which all the water rushes at its low stage, but passed the boat through it.

Saw the basaltic columns at places along the bluffs standing out prominently, or even singly, all pentagonal, blocks or sections piled one on the other, the upper side of the block dishing and the next fitted to it, and all as compact as iron. Lewis and Clark called them "high black rocks" as well they might. Finally we came to the cascade where the mighty river rushes for some miles through the break in the Cascade range of mountains, a continuation of the Nevada range of California. The mountain on the north side somewhat subsides giving a land pass way, but abrupt and thousands of feet high on the south side, down which leap from the immense height beautiful cascades. These passed we came to the tide waters of the Columbia. On the mountain is evergreen forest to the snow line, east of the mountains no timber on the plains but west, timber and prairie interspersed.

Fort Vancouver, 1832

Stopped over night at a sawmill of the company on a creek, and saw there, two strange looking men, saw at once they could be neither Caucasian, Indian or African. And so it proved, they were Kanakas, Sandwich Islanders, in the employ of the traders. And the mill was under the superintendence of one of Astor's men who had remained in the country. And the next day the 29th of October we arrived at Fort Vancouver, which is on the north side of the river, and so now in Washington territory. It was quite an extensive stockade enclosure, on a prairie, some little back from the river, with the store houses, the houses for the Governor and gentlemen, as partners and clerks were called, and quite a garden, and for the servants, the Canadian Frenchmen, little houses outside the fort. This was the main station of the Hudson Bay Company west of the mountains. And to this place came up their shipping, what they called 100 miles up the river.

Indian Burial

Though a hard looking set and unexpected, we were received very kindly and treated ever in the most hospitable way.

Some of us did not feel that we had reached the end of our journey till we had seen the Pacific. So a few days after, five of us took an Indian canoe and paddled down the river, passed the mouth of the Willamette river, found the country for miles level, prairie and timber, met a company's sloop, and often Indians singing as they paddled their canoes swiftly along.

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

Encamped one night near one of their burial places. Their way of burial here was to wrap their bodies in their clothing and mats, and place them in canoes, which they place on some conspicuous place on shore or on an island, one is called Coffin Island, then cover the boat with boards, split slabs, and load them down with stone so that the wolves or other animals could not get at the body and put the deceased's property in and about the canoe. To steal from a grave they view a great crime.

#### Fort George

After a time in descending the river the country becomes very broken and heavily timbered and after some days reach and encamp on Tongue Point, where we could look out to sea, and next day go to Fort Astoria, or as they called it, Fort George. We were there kindly received by the clerk and fur people. A fallen tree near the fort, one writer calls 45 feet in circumference and another seven fathoms, and I thought it no exaggeration.

And on going into the standing forest out towards Youngs Bay, the bay in which Lewis and Clark wintered, I saw many trees of enormous size, in girth and height. The whole forest was nearly 200 feet high, for the small trees had to grow so high to get the sun, and so dense that I should think more weight of timber on one acre than on four anywhere east that I have ever seen. And the brakes and other vegetation of annual growth were equally gigantic of their kind. Still on their little clearings about the fort, the potatoes and other things were small and the soil looked poor. We got a yawl and one of their men to sail it and crossed over to Chenook Point and returned across the broad boisterous bay to Clatsop Point on the inside and encamped. And I urged the men, or some of them at least, to accompany me around the point to the seashore, but they declined. So the tide being down, I alone footed some three miles, fairly around on the beach to where I could look out on the broad Pacific, with not an islet between me and Japan, look far down the coast and Cape Disappointment across the mouth to the northwest. Here I stood alone, as entranced, felt that now, I had gone as far as feet could carry me west, and really to the end of my proposed journey.

#### The Pacific

There to stand on the brink of the great Pacific, with the rolling waves washing its sands and seaweeds to my feet! And there I stood on the shore of the Pacific enjoying the happiest hour of all my journey, till the sun sank beneath its waters, and then by a beautiful moonlight returned on the beach to camp, feeling that I had crossed the continent. Cape Disappointment is in Lat. 46.19 N. and 123.59 W. Mount Saint Helens being due east, majestic and symmetrical in its form. This was the 9th of November and we had left Baltimore the 26th of March, seven and one-half months before. We returned slowly up the river, seeing something of the Indians, always peaceable in their ways, for these traders had the good sense and tact to keep a good understanding with them, though they had to deal with them quite in their own way, the Indian always knowing just how much he was to get for his furs in the articles he wanted. I should mention the fact that the Columbia in parts, as we passed, seemed alive and white with geese and ducks.

#### Death of One of the Twelve

When we got back to Fort Vancouver, we found that one of our fellows, and one who had stood all the hardships well, was dead and buried. He had eaten heartily of peas for his supper which gave him the colic and before morning he was dead. It was new food for him for we had lived on animal food. Mr. Wyeth as captain of the party and myself from some cause, were invited by Dr.

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

McLaughlin, the oldest partner and nominal governor, to his own table and given rooms in the fort, and the others of our men to quarters with his, out of the fort. And I soon gave him and Mr. Wyeth to understand I was there on my own hook, and that I had no further connection with the others, than that for the making of the journey. We were received at the fort as guests without talk of pay or the like, and it was acceptable, or else we should have had to hunt for subsistence.

First Teacher in Oregon, 1832-1833

But not liking thus to live gratis, I asked the doctor, as he was always called, being a physician, for some employment. He at first told me I was a guest and did not expect to set me to work. But after further urging, he said if I was willing he would like to have me teach his son and other boys about the fort. I, of course, gladly accepted the offer. So he sent the boys to my room to be instructed, all half-breed boys of course, for there was not then a white woman in Oregon. The doctor's wife was a Chippewa woman from Lake Superior, and the lightest woman, a Mrs. Douglas, a half-breed woman from Hudson Bay. Well, I found the boys docile and attentive and making good progress, for they are precocious and generally better boys than men. And the old doctor used to come in to see the school and seemed much pleased and well satisfied. And one time he said, "Ball, anyway you will have the reputation of teaching the first Academy in Oregon." And so I passed the winter. The gentlemen in the Fort were pleasant and intelligent, a circle of a dozen or more usually at the well provided table, where there was much formality. They consisted of partners, clerks, captains of vessels, and the like--men to wait on the table and probably cook, for we saw nothing or little of their women, except perhaps sometimes on Sundays out on a horse-back ride, at which they excelled.

The National boundary had not then been settled beyond the mountains, and these traders claimed that the river would be the boundary, and called the south side the American.

Hudson Bay Company

The fur trade was their business, and if an American vessel came into the river or onto the coast for trade they would at once bid up on furs to a ruinous price--ten to one above their usual tariff. And as the voyage around Cape Horn from England was so long to bring supplies, they got a bull and seven or six cows from California and in seven years had about 400 cattle. They had turned the prairies into wheat fields and had much beyond their wants, ground by ox power and made good flour. Salmon was so abundant that the men would throw it away to get some old imported salt beef, for they had not yet killed any of their own raising.

To show the climate, the wheat green all winter, for there was no snow, still spring and summer so cool that harvest did not come till last of July or August. Rained from middle of November till New Year's incessantly with the temperature day and night about 40 to 45 degrees, then rain and shine till May, frost, clear nights and vegetation nearly stationary, grass for the cattle, but cold for them out, the summer cool and dry, still the wheat first rate, the berry large and good, corn did not mature. Potatoes and vegetables seemed to do well, and were dug in winter as used.

Wyeth Returns East

In the spring Wyeth and two of his men returned home across the mountains, some way successfully. Others went into the company employ. I wrote to my friends in New Hampshire and New York and by the Hudson express that leaves Fort Vancouver on the 20th of March, goes up the North, the main branch of the Columbia, to about the latitude of 52 degrees and by men on snow shoes over the mountains in about two weeks to where they take bark canoes on the La

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

Bashe, that flows into the Arctic Ocean. Descend that a distance then make a short portage at Fort Edmonton to the Saskatchewan and down that to Lake Winnipeg, and by its outlet, the Nelson, to Hudson Bay and also up the said Lake to Lake Superior, etc., to Montreal, from which place my friends got my letters by September.

Thinking I might long stay in the country, believing after so much had been said on the subject, that others would come soon to settle though urged by Dr. McLoughlin to continue the school and stay at the fort, I determined to go to farming. And when I learned that some of the Company's men had turned farmers and gone up and settled on the Willamette river, I went there to see the country and found it very inviting. And when the doctor found that I was bent on going to farming, he kindly told me, he would lend me farming utensils, seeds for sowing and as many horses, as I chose to break in, for a team. So I took seed and implements by boat, getting help up the Willamette to the falls where the city of Oregon now is, passing the site where Portland stands, carried by the fall, boat and all. First stopped with one of the settlers, a half-breed, with two wives, his name J. B. Desportes. Yes, two wives, seven children, and cats and dogs numberless.

#### Farming

Caught from the prairie a span of horses only used to the saddle, made for them a harness and put them to work. Stuffed some deer skin sewed in due form for collars, fitted to them for harness crooked oak limbs, tied top and bottom with elk skin strings, then to these, straps of hide for tugs, which tied to the end of a stick for a whiffletree, and the center of this I tied to the drag, made from a crotch of a tree. And on this I drew out logs for a cabin, which when I had laid up and put up rafters to make the roof, I covered with bark peeled from cedar trees. And this bark covering was secured by poles across and tied with wood strings, withes, at the ends to the timbers below. And out of some split plank for no sawed boards, I made bedstead and table. And so I dwelt in a house of fir and cedar.

And with the aid of my neighbors and their teams I broke up quite a large field of rich prairie lands. Drew out fencing stuff with my own, to enclose the same, and sowed and planted my farm, a farm that butted half a mile on the river and extended back to California. My family consisted part of the time of a Mr. Sinclair, one of my mountain companions, a young wild native to catch my horses, and some of the time entirely alone. Got meal from the fort to make my bread, my meat some venison and some salmon from the falls, for being 60 feet high they could not jump them.

A rather primitive lonely life I found it and not seeing when it was likely to be less so, and having seen something of the country and experienced its climate, and the Hudson Bay people having entire control of the country, and no emigrants arriving, I began to think I might as well leave could I have the opportunity. Yes, this primitive life of the plains, mountains, and keeping house with only Indian neighbors, had lost its novelty and I wanted a change. To be sure the Willamette valley is a fine country, being a valley watered by a stream of that name, fifty miles wide and say one hundred and fifty long with a coast range on the west and towering Cascade range on the east, crowned by Mount Hood, in the bright summer days ever in sight. And I was near the river, handy for a summer bath, and out of its bank a short distance from my house was the fine cool spring from which I got my water.

#### Indian Customs

Near by was the graveyard of the Indians, and on one occasion I attended with them the burial

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

ceremony of one of their young men. They dug a grave as we would, put down some slabs at the sides and bottom, wrapped the body in his clothing and over these some mats, lowered it down to its place, put a board over and filled up with the earth. Then they built a fire on the grave and sat on the ground around and for an hour chanted a mournful dirge, all very orderly and impressive. And for a long time after his mother would come almost daily to place food in the earth at the head of the grave for his use on his journey to the other world. At the head of a man's grave they stuck a paddle and at the woman's a camas stick, a crooked pointed stick used by them to dig the camas root, with them a great article of food, the digging of which is woman's business, while paddling the canoe is that of the man.

The camas grown on the prairies is the size of an onion, a stem, say a foot high, having a blue blossom. It is as palatable and nutritious as the potato. The wapeto, another root they eat, is not so good but grows larger. It is the root of a kind of plant like the waterlily, which grows in the shallow waters of lakes and streams, and which they gather by wading in the water, often up to their arms, and break off with their toes, when it will rise to the surface. A common way of cooking these, as also sometimes meat, is to wrap in leaves and place in a hole in the ground, heated by a fire in it, then buried in same and a fire above, a very good way to cook.

#### Chenook Language

There was in use a mongrel language between the Indians and traders, called the Chenook; but unlike theirs, which was said by a man well acquainted with that and other Indian languages, to be the most copious of any. But this comprised hardly three hundred words, and probably not half of these theirs. but composed in part of words of other tribes, English and French. Things new to the Indians were called by their accustomed names. The hog had its French name, the ox the Indian name of the buffalo where the buffalo ranges in the mountains. The Indians on the Willamette, as most of the Indians, talked much by signs and sounds. One word was used for bird, for instance, then by imitating its cry, would express that it was the swan, goose or duck. One word meant growing vegetables; then by an adjective, or some motions, show whether grapes or trees were meant.

In enclosing my lands I fenced in a portion of their road or trail, and they went around, never crossing my fields. And in all things they were kind and just, as far as I observed, so I am disposed to ascribe our troubles with the Oregon Indians to injustice, or indiscretion, on the part of the whites. And this was the cause of the trouble, in most cases from the first settlement of the country.

#### Ague and Discouragement

I suffered much while residing on my farm from the ague, a disease said to be unknown to the Indians or traders, till within some four or five years. It first broke out among the Indians near the fort, and spread far into the country, except near the ocean. And with the natives it proved very fatal, sweeping off whole bands, partly probably owing to their plunging into the water when the fever came on, and other improper ways. Still they seemed wonderfully aided by the use of such medicines as they procured from the whites. As an instance, to show the fatal effect, a trader returning to the fort came to their lodges on the river, just below the mouth of the Willamette, and he found numbers dead and unburied. The only one alive was an infant child at its dead mother's breast. He carried it to the fort, and it was living when I was there. When the disease broke out, they seemed to think they must have it, and die from its effects, so gave up and died.

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

For myself, I had no superstitious fear about it, but I suffered severely, and the more so on account of my unfavorable condition to meet sickness, my living poor, and no nurse but my friend, Sinclair. And at one time I had to send him off to the fort for medicine, to be gone some three or four days, leaving me alone, and so poorly that I hardly knew whether it was day or night. But still I mustered strength, when I became very thirsty and out of water, to get out and down the bank of the river to my spring for more. And when the medicine came it helped me, and then I would be taken down again, and so kept in rather a feeble state of health.

LEAVES OREGON

CHAPTER VII

No immigrants arrived from the States, as I expected, and the Hudson Bay Company having control of the country, so I could do nothing but subsist in the way I was pursuing. And tiring of the life I was leading, I saw no object of staying longer in the country, than for an opportunity to get away by sea. For once crossing the mountains and plains, I thought enough. I had passed nearly a year there, and experienced its climate and seen its lands and waters, and become acquainted with the natives and traders. And the company being about to send a vessel to the bay of San Francisco and the Sandwich Islands, I exchanged my crop, now mostly harvested, for a passage in the same. So about the 20th of September, 1833, I quit my home on the Willamette with something of regret after all, but on the whole gladly went down the river by boat, and when I got to the falls an Indian boy of perhaps eighteen assisted us in carrying our boat by. On inquiring of him how his people were, he said, they were sick and dying, and when we came back, as he expected we would, he should be dead. Asking the chief of the band below the falls for two of his men to row us to the fort, for I was feeble and had with me only my friend, Sinclair, he answered that his men were all sick or dead, so he could not supply us. So we had wearily to paddle our own canoe.

Boards a Hudson Bay Company's Ship

After some days delay at Fort Vancouver, the ship Dryad made sail down the Columbia, with a Mr. Douglas, a botanist, a Mr. Finelson, a member of the Hudson Bay Company, myself, Sinclair, and two others of the Wyeth men. We stopped at Astoria, Fort George as they called it, and a long time in Baker's Bay, under the shelter of Cape Disappointment, which is a high promontory, the north cape at the mouth of the river, from which there is a splendid look out over the river and bays, the land and the ocean. There again I suffered severely with another attack of the ague, the chills lasting all day long.

On October 18, 1833, we sailed from Astoria, the wind having subsided, but we still found the swell in crossing the bar tremendous, and much of wind and storm as we sailed down the coast. So with the combined seasickness and ague I was not able to leave my berth for some days. But after a time both left me and I was able to look out on the sea, and occasionally the land. Still we kept at so respectful a distance that we saw little of it, and no harbor was then known between Columbia river and the bay of San Francisco.

Golden Gate

After a half month's voyage we neared the coast and on the 4th of November entered at the Golden Gate, but some fifteen years or more before it received that name.

The only buildings then seen about the bay were just at the turn, on the right, as you enter the same, called "The Presidio," which we passed and came to anchor some mile or so south, near the shore of little valleys and sand hills, all in their natural forest of bushes and trees. And here, and

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

hereabout, they say is now the city of San Francisco. Some mile or two beyond and back from the bay was a mission called Dolores, consisting of a few, small adobe buildings; and back on the opposite side of the bay were some farmers. For I recollect from them our vessel got some pumpkins and other vegetables. I met there but one resident not Spanish or Indian. This was a Mr. Forbes, a Scotchman, but who said he had resided in the United States. He seemed rather a shrewd man for as no one unless a Catholic could hold real estate, I noticed, when with them, he was a good one too. How often do we see that one's religion aids his business, a great thing with many for this world. Rather a digression.

#### Lassoing a Wild Bullock

And here our ship lay for many days. On one, I saw a Spaniard noose with his lasso a wild bullock on the shore, or rather two of them. And thus mounted on their horses, used to the business, one threw and caught him by his horns, and then wound his lasso around the high pommel of his strong, well girthed saddle, and the horse stood and held him. But they wishing to throw him down, so as to butcher him, the other man threw his so accurately that by his first move the ox stepped into the noose, which caught him by his foot. Then each turned their horses in opposite directions and starting up they laid him flat on the ground in a twinkling. And then the horses keeping their stand, one dismounted and cut his throat. All quicker done than said. The only vehicle I saw was a drag made from the crotch part of a tree. On this a man placed a barrel containing whiskey, perhaps, and to this drag he tied his lasso, mounted his horse and tied the other end to the pommel of his saddle, and so drew alone the barrel home on the drag, the lasso passing by the horse's side.

#### Dolores Mission

One day I went to the Mission on another through the woods and over the hills to the seashore, and up to the Gate where I found in the grass, dismounted, some three or four cannon, which were once probably used to guard the entrance to the bay. But the fatigue of this day's trip again brought on the ague, so I did not go much more, staying aboard the vessel.

Upper California was then, and till acquired by our war with our neighboring Republic, a Mexican territory. One day its governor came aboard the ship to dine. He had come, I suppose, all the way from Monterey, his capital, for that purpose. His name was Figueroa. There is much said of John Augustus Sutter, as an early settler in this country, but this was long before his time. The only trade to these parts seemed to be by vessels from the States with calico and the like to exchange for hides, their only product, the country being full of cattle, and vessels came in for that purpose while we were there. And not having heard from that country for nearly two years, I inquired with much interest for the news, but was much disappointed in not getting more. He knew that Jackson was still President, and that the nullification business was all settled, but there came the puzzle, what nullification was. I had never heard the term, and he could not define it any further than it was something about South Carolina.

And a whaler came in to get supplies from the Japanese Banks, as the fishing grounds were called, where they had been on a cruise. They told the time they had taken, which was very short for a well constructed sailer, whereas their ship was an old Gerard Philadelphia Square, built over forty years before, showing the constant prevalence of a westerly wind in that latitude on the Pacific and in fact the world around. And here all our Americans except myself quit our vessel and went aboard this whaler, it being of their own country, so to them attractive. I said all were Spanish ex-

---

The Autobiography of John Ball  
Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832

---

cept Mr. Forbes. No; I also met here Russians, who resided at some point up the coast, and raised wheat to supply their trading posts at Sitka and other places in Alaska.

When here I had somehow a presentiment that we should some day, by purchase or otherwise, become possessed of this splendid bay of San Francisco, and the surrounding country. Oregon I felt sure we should not relinquish to the English, and if we held that we also needed this. I thought those Hudson Bay men seemed to be very civil to their neighbors here, and that it was reciprocated by the call of the Governor, etc. All the trade that came to my notice was the purchase of some tallow from them. It was put up in hides sewed up into a kind of bag, and the melted tallow poured in, making a snug bale of goods. And if it be asked for what these traders wanted the tallow, it was mainly as a portion of the rations to their French and Indian employees, which with corn and other grain made their soup.

While we lay in the bay the weather was very pleasant, uniform, and of an agreeable temperature, being from 52 to 60 degrees. And we were a long time there, from the 4th to the 29th of November, with them probably a pleasant part of the year.

He came to the Lewiston Country in 1829--Craig Mountain Named in His Honor

(By Thomas J. Beall.)

To the Tribune--Will you please grant the space in your columns that I may inform your readers as to my early recollections of William Craig the trapper of the Rocky mountains, frontiersman and after whom Craig mountain was named. I first met Craig in the latter part of September, 1857. He was at The Dalles, Oregon, for the purpose of purchasing his winter supplies accompanied by several Nez Perce Indians, among them Chief Lawyer and Reuben. As I wanted to see the Walla Walla country, my cousin, Lloyd Brooke, of Vancouver, thought I would have an opportunity in so doing by joining Craig's party on his return trip to that country, so he gave me a letter of introduction to Craig which I tendered on my arrival at The Dalles.

Craig was the sub-Indian agent for the Nez Percés at that time and the agency was at Walla Walla. I was at The Dalles two days visiting the army officers stationed at the garrison. I was soon informed that Craig would not be able to return to the agency for several days and as I was anxious to proceed on my journey, I joined a party of Hudson Bay people who were on their way to Fort Colville and traveled with them as far as old Fort Walla Walla, now Wallula. I there severed my connection with the Hudson Bay people and proceeded to Cantonments Stevens in the Walla Walla valley, Occupied by two companies of the First Dragoons and two of the Ninth Infantry, U.S. army, under the command of Col. E. J. Steptoe. I was there nearly two months and saw a great deal of Craig nearly every day during my stay, and our intercourse with each other soon ripened into an ever lasting friendship.

In the fall of 1858 Craig was superseded by A.J. Cain as Indian agent for the Nez Perce Indians and the agency was at Cantonment Stevens, it being abandoned, and the U.S. troops were removed to the garrison built for them and now called Fort Walla Walla.

In the latter part of December, 1858, Mr. Cain received orders to move the agency on to the Nez Perce reservation, but it was not accomplished until the early spring of 1860. Craig then concluded that he would move to his old home on the Lapwal and I accompanied him also Jake Schultz. Nearly all of the old timers knew Jake, and that reminds me of a little incident that occurred in which Jake took a part. Craig had some hogs running up what is now called Mission creek. One evening Jake returned to the house and in a very excited manner accosted Craig, who was reading, and told him there was a cougar up the creek eating his hogs. Craig says: "Jake you ride back and tell that cougar I'll mess with him." The next morning the old man saddled his horse took his gun and dogs and went for Mr. Cougar, and it was not long until he returned with the hide of the cougar.

Craig was rather reticent as to his past life and not very communicative on that subject unless he was out in camp and then by the camp fire in the evening he became reminiscent and his stories and accounts of his exploits and travels in the mountains and on the plains were very interesting. There was no egotism in his recounting his exploits. He would invariably say, in speaking of his travels, "we" did so or "he" never "I."

It was in the fore part of the month of May, 1867, that Craig and a man by the name of Mike Mayer and myself took a trip to the headwaters of Potlatch creek for the purpose of hunting and prospecting. We departed from his old home at what is now called Jacques Spur on the Camas Prairie Railway and we intercepted the Clearwater river at Big Eddy, twenty-five miles above Lewiston, thence up the river to a point four miles above the present railway station at Lenore. It is not

---

necessary to give any details as to our trip from there on; suffice to say we crossed the river and traveled in a northerly direction to the head-waters of the Potlatch, remained there several days, passing the time in prospecting, hunting and fishing. It was on this trip that I learned a great deal of Craig's past life.

He was born in the Old Dominion, as he loved to call his native state (Virginia) in Green Brier county about the year 1799 or 1800. At the age of eighteen he became involved in an altercation or quarrel with one much older than he was and was forced to kill him in self-defense. Being quite young and somewhat alarmed at his act he made his "getaway" and he found himself in time in the city of St. Louis. This city at that time was the emporium for the fur traders, trappers and frontiersmen of the northwest. Craig soon joined a party of French Canadians who were on the eve of starting up the Missouri river on a trading expedition and their mode of transportation was with bateaus which made it a long tedious journey. When near Fort Benton they encountered a party of trappers, their destination being the Rocky mountains. Craig severed his connections with the Canadians, joined the trappers, and in time became a full-fledged trapper and plainsman.

The main rendezvous for the trappers, and Indians also, was at Fort Bridger on Green River, now Wyoming. It was there that Craig first met the Nez Perces who told him of the quantities of beaver and other fur animals there were in the waters of their country.

In the fall of the year 1829, William Craig, Joe Meek and Rob't Newell accompanied a party of Nez Perces from the rendezvous to their country to engage in trapping on the waters of the Clear-water and Salmon. I never knew how long they remained in their new field of operations, probably not more than two seasons.

It was here among the Nez Perces that they got their Indian wives and accompanied by them they returned to their old haunts east of the Rocky mountains.

At one time Craig in his reminiscent mood told me that in the year 1832 or 1833 a party of mountaineers were organized on Green river, now in Wyoming, for the purpose ostensibly of trapping for furs on the waters flowing from the Sierra Nevada mountains into the Pacific ocean. In fact the object was to steal horses from the Spaniards residing in California. In this party was Joe Walker, the headman; Joe Meek, Joe Gale, Bill Williams, Mark Head, Bob Mitchel, Alex Godey, Antoine Janise, William Craig and some others.

When they camped on a stream where the water would admit they usually stripped at their tepees or lodges and proceeded to the stream to take a plunge.

Now Craig tells this story: "The waters of the Humbolt river are of a milky cast, not clear, so one afternoon while camped on the said stream and being the first to strip, I started for the swimming hole and was just about to plunge in when I got a hunch that things were not as they should be and I had better investigate before taking a dive. I did so and found the water was about a foot and a half deep and the mud four, this condition being in the eddy. So I waded to where there was a current and found the water a little more than waist deep, no mud and good smooth bottom. In looking towards the camp I espied Joe Walker coming and he was jumping like a buck deer, and when he arrived at the brink he says to me: 'How is it?' 'Joe,' I replied 'it is just splendid.' With that he plunged head-first into that four and a half feet of blue mud.

Fearing trouble and not being interested in the subsequent proceedings, I made myself scarce by hiding in the brush on the opposite side and in so doing I ran into some rose brier bushes and scratched myself some, but I was so full of laughter I did not mind that. I peeped through the

---

bushes just in time to see him extricate himself from the mud. He then washed the mud off as well as he could, returned to the tepee, put on his clothes, shot his rifle off, cleaned it, then reloaded it and hollered at me and said: 'Now show yourself and I'll drop a piece of lead into you,' which I failed to do as I did not want to be encumbered with any extra weight especially at that time. I was compelled to remain in hiding nearly the whole afternoon. Before sundown I was told to come into camp and get my supper and leave, that I could not travel any further with that party.

I was very glad of the permit for it was rather monotonous out there in the brush with nothing but a blanket around me and nobody to talk to and my pipe in camp. I soon dressed myself and then it was time to chew. Our company was divided into messes and each mess was provided with a dressed buffalo hide. It was spread on the ground and the grub placed upon it. When supper was announced we sat down. I sat opposite to Walker and in looking at him I discovered some of that blue mud of the Humbolt on each side of his nose and just below his eyelids and I could not help laughing. He addressed me in an abrupt manner and said: 'What the h--l are you laughing at.' I told him that gentlemen generally washed before eating. With that the others observed the mud and they too roared with laughter in which Walker joined, but he threatened if ever I played another such trick on him he would kill me as sure as my name was Craig."

This place on the Humbolt river was ever afterward called by the mountain men. "Walker's Plunge," or "Hole." Craig says in this raid, Walker's party got away with five or six hundred head of the Spaniards horses and they drove them through what is now known as Walker's basin and Walker's pass of the Sierra Nevada mountains, which is south of the Truckee pass where the Central Pacific railway now traverses. The most of these horses were traded to the different tribes of Indians they encountered for furs, buffalo robes and such other things as they wished to barter, especially the mares and colts. I think that this was the only means by which the Indians east of the Rocky mountains acquired their ponies. They evidently came from California and New Mexico, either stolen from or traded by the Spainards. The tribes on the west side of the Rockies secured their horses from the Pacific coast by trading or raiding.

I once questioned Craig as to the bravest of the frontiersmen. He told me that actually Bill Williams was the bravest and the most fearless mountaineer of all: that the tribes from the Mexican border to the Canadian know him and feared him thinking perhaps he was some supernatural being. He never trapped in company with anyone else, always alone. His furs were the best dressed and he received more for them. He could speak the dialects of several tribes, especially the Osages and was proficient in what is termed the sign talk among the Indians, that is with the hands, hence he could go among any of the tribes and make himself understood.

Craig told me at one time that a missionary preacher came among the Osages to preach the gospel and Williams was to do the interpreting for him. It seems that Williams at one time was a minister of the gospel previous to his becoming a trapper and he asked the missionary from what part of the bible he'd select his text. He was told it would be from the book of Jonah. Than said Williams, "I will advise you not to mention that fish story for you will not get one of these Indians to believe you, but if you insist in telling about the big fish do so and I'll interpret for you." The missionary got no further in his discourse than reading the text, for one old chief arose and pointing his finger at the preacher said: "We have heard several of the white people talk and lie, we know they will lie, but, that is the biggest lie we ever heard." Then he gathered his blanket around him and proceeded to his tepee followed by the others to their respective places of abode, leaving

---

the missionary meditating on their conduct as predicted by Bill Williams. I am digressing from my subject, but the aforesaid story was told to me by Craig, hence I insert the same in writing my recollections of him.

The land on the Lapwai creek known as the Craig donation claim, was not donated by the government but by the Nez Perces. In the treaty of 1855 at Walla Walla between Governor J.J. Stevens of Washington territory on the part of the government on one side and the Nez Perces on the other, there was a stipulation in the said treaty that Craig or his heirs should have so much land (one section) on the reservation. I think this is on record in the department at Washington D.C. and Craig had the privilege of selecting it.

In 1862 I visited Craig who was then living on Mission creek, a half a mile from its junction with the Lapwai. After I had put up my horse he said to me: "See here Thomas, I am glad you came I have got some barley to deliver to Weingerber and Gamble at the brewery in Lewiston tomorrow and it will require two wagons to hold it all and I want someone to drive one of the teams." I told him I would assist him. He then proposed to load the wagons that evening so as to get an early start in the morning. He had two teams, one being mules. He asked me which I preferred. I told him either would be satisfactory. He then said: "I'll drive the mules." The next morning we had an early start and in due time arrived, delivered the barley, then put our teams up at the White Front stable. Craig went to the different stores to make his purchases, not forgetting Blue John (an appellation put on a one gallon blue keg) to have it replenished.

After dinner we went to the stable to hitch up and return home. While waiting for our teams to be harnessed he said to me: "See here, Thomas, I don't like this way of traveling." I knew what he meant so I told him I would hitch his mules to my wagon, it being the heaviest, put my horses in the lead and tie his wagon behind, then he could ride with me. This proposition was agreed on. I then hitched the mules to my wagon and drove to the different places where he had made his purchases. After collecting them I drove back to the stable hitched the other team in the lead and tied the other wagon behind mine and then started for home with Craig sitting beside me on my left. We were traveling along very nicely until we arrived at Mulkey's orchard, since called Lindsay's orchard. Mulkey had constructed an irrigating ditch, the waters of which were taken out of what is now known as Lindsay creek and the road was on the edge of this ditch for some distance. I was driving along telling some story and not paying much attention to the team when suddenly one of the fore wheels went into the ditch and Craig and I parted company - he fell on his back into that ditch. He got out of it, pulled off his coat, shook the mud off of it, then made the remark that: "if that was the way I drove a team he'd be --- if he would ride with me." I told him it was optional. He got into the trail wagon and laid down on the empty barley sacks. I drove along whistling and singing and I never thought to look behind till I was half way down Soldier canyon; then I observed that I had a wagon missing and I didn't know how far back it was to where I lost it. I tied my team to some trees dropped the tugs and went back in search of the lost one. Just at the head of the canyon I discovered the wagon silently approaching. I placed my optics on the form of my friend Craig in the arms of Morpheus I did not wish to disturb his peaceful slumbers so I picked up the tongue and started down the canyon. A short distance beyond was a rather steep piece of road and on approaching it I stopped and put on the brake, but I could not move the vehicle with the brake on and it would move too fast with it off. I took another peek at my sleeping friend and he seemed so comfortable: therefore, I did not feel inclined to wake him up, so I grasped the

---

tongue once more and proceeded on. This particular piece of road was about thirty feet long and steep, but I thought I could manage to get along. I soon discovered that the wagon wanted to go in advance and not wishing to be run over I jumped aside to let it proceed on but it did not do so, it ran off of the road and upset. I could hear Craig's muffled voice, he being covered with grain sacks, saying. "What the h--l does all this mean." It was an extremely ridiculous situation and I being in a hilarious mood I could not reply, but I approached the wagon, raised the body and let him crawl out. That being done he stood up, rubbed his eyes and took a reconnoissance of the situation, and in a solemn manner said: "Well I'll be d--m:" then exploded with laughter from which the canyon replied in echo.

In getting our wagon back on the road we were assisted by a young man passing by. We were now ready to move on and I asked Craig on which side he wished to work, off or nigh. He said he'd push. I told him I thought he had better work by my side, that we were well matched and made a good team hitched up together. He complied. We soon had our two wagons attached together and was ready to move on when Craig asked me if I did not think the incident just occurring demanded a sentiment. I told him it absolutely did. He then went to my wagon, resurrected Blue John and giving the usual salutation, "how," then passed John to my embrace and I followed suit by moistening my lips with John's tears.

In the year 1863 a portion of the territory of Washington was cut off and the territory of Idaho was created from it. A republican convention was held at Mt. Idaho to nominate a delegate to congress. Rob't Newell, a frontiersman, a companion of Craig, aspired to get the nomination, so he started for Mt. Idaho, accompanied by Craig. The first day they got as far as Durkeeville on Craig mountain.

This place was a road house established by a man named Durkee, afterwards called Masons, in fact he sold out to Harry Mason. There was quite a crowd at this place that evening whose destination was Mt. Idaho. Newell being tired, and not wishing to sit up, retired early. Some were reading, some conversing and others engaged in playing cards, in which pastime Craig participated. He soon became tired of card playing and concluded to retire. He and Newell were to sleep together, so when Craig came into the room he saw the prepared speech of Newell sticking out of his coat pocket. Craig took the speech and returned to the lower room and read to those there assembled and perhaps added some to it, for when Newell made his appearance next morning he was hailed as a good fellow, a brick and a fine old man. He was invited to have a drink and a cigar both of which he refused. They had their breakfast and by that time their team was ready to convey them on.

They had not proceeded very far when Newell says to Craig: "Bill, if I am the nominee at the convention as the delegate to congress, I'll go to congress and all h--l won't stop me." Says Craig: "See here, Bob, I'll tell you what I think." "Well what is that." "I think you'll go to h--l and all congress won't stop you." Newell made his speech but he was told in the convention that they had heard it before. In that convention Governor Wallace was the nominee.

In 1868 Craig received a paralytic stroke from which he never entirely recovered. I was contemplating on going to Moose creek and I paid him a visit before doing so and we sat up nearly the whole night talking of the pleasant hours spent together and when I bid him good bye, he said: "Thomas I'll never see you again on this earth." He invariably addressed me as Thomas.

I had been to Moose creek and on my return at Weippe I received a letter from Sam Phinney, his

---

son-in-law, informing me of his death which was in the latter part of September 1868. The Nez Perces always called him William; did not know him as Craig. He is buried at what is now known as Jacques Spur; also his wife, two sons and two daughters. He has one daughter living; her age is about seventy-five, and she lives at Theon, Umatilla county, Oregon.

Thos. J. Beall

Letters by Wm. Becknell  
regarding the early Southwestern trade.

---

From the Ritch Papers (No. 80), Huntington Library, San Marino, California

Letter To Bartolomé Baca, Govenor of New Mexico

Santa Crus Oct 29th 1824

To His Excelannce

govirnor of

New mexico

Bartolar Mr Barker

Seur I have recvd the Lisance you granted me by the onrabel preste [priest] of santa Cruse Manuel Radar and will Comply with your orders and obay them punctaly. Thar is 10 of us to gether all amearican. Those men at Tous I Have Nothing to Dew with. What thaar going to Dew I Know not. As you Requested me to Let you know of any that wars goin to trape I Cante say wheather tha ar or not. Tha Have sum trapes with them. If any Cums within my notis I shal give you notis of them as you requesid it of me. I shal be in Next June if nothing Hapins to us. Your Exlantance wishus me to send you sum medison. I sende you sum Rubarb and sum Campher. The Rubarbe you Can take at any time what will Ly on the pinte [point] of a pocket Knif in sum shuger and a spunful of Cold warter. You May Eaeght or drinke any thing Hot or Cold. The Best time to take it is of a night when you go to Bed. It is not apecke [ipecac?] a gentil purge and wil futufy the Stumak when in Bad order. The Campor you can desolve in whiskey. Put a few dropes in a dram of whiskey in the morning will Help the stumake very much. I send you A few of the gusawit Barks. Put them in to a botel of whiskey I quart in [illegible] and let them stand in the sun for one or 2 Days and then drinke them as Biter in the morning what you Like of them. The preste of santa Clarar wishes to go to the united States with me next spring if it is agreabel to your Excelances. My Friend Mr. Lagrand will translat this to your oner. I shal Cum an see you when I Cum in from the woods. The winte[r] is aprochin so near I Cante [find] time to Cum now but all orders from you Shal be apentual [punctually?] obad [obeyed] by me from your oner Seur.

Your moste obedante umbil Sarvunte.

CAPT. WM. BECKNELL

Originally Published in the Missouri Intelligencer, June 25, 1825

Capt. Becknell's Tour

Mr. Patten,

If the following narrative of my late tour in the upper province of Mexico, is sufficiently interesting to deserve a place in your columns, you are at liberty to publish it.

On the 5th of November last, I left Santa Cruz with a party of nine men, employed in my service, with a view of trapping on the Green River, several hundred miles from Santa Fe.

In the course of my route towards the point of destination, I passed through the gap in a mountain, which was so narrow as greatly to resemble a gate-way. This mountain, which had the appearance of an artificial mound, was about three or four hundred feet high, and not more than ten feet in breadth at the base. The country here is poor, and only timbered with pine and cedar. I met in this vicinity, several parties of Indians, who were poor and inoffensive. It was, however, reported that some of the Indians who spent some time with us, afterwards committed murders upon the persons of some of the engages of Mr. Prevost of St. Louis, and robbed the remainder. We suffered every misery incident to such an enterprise in the winter season, such as hunger and cold-but were exempted from robbery. The flesh of a very lean horse, which we were constrained

---

Letters by Wm. Becknell  
regarding the early Southwestern trade.

---

to break our fast with, was at this time, pronounced excellent. But when his bones were afterwards served up, as a matter of necessity, they were not as well relished, but had nearly proved fatal to the whole party. We found to our cost, that our stomachs, although tolerably commodiously disposed, were not equal to the task of digesting bones. You can readily imagine, that we were in that deplorable condition where it would be justifiable to adopt the philosophy of the ancient Romans, and give odds to die. But such is not the practice of Missourians. Although we were forty days from settlements, the snow three or four feet deep, and our small stock of horses, our principal reliance for effecting a retreat, considered sacred, so that to have eaten them would have been like dining upon our own feet, we still contrived to supply our tables, if not with the dainties of life, with food of the most substantial kind. For instance, we subsisted two days on soup made of a raw hide we had reserved for sealing our moccasins; on the following morning the remains were dished up into a hash. The young men employed by me had seen better days, and had never before been supperless to bed, nor missed a wholesome and substantial meal at the regular family hour, except one, who was with me when I opened the road to Santa Fe. When afterwards we were enabled to procure indifferent bear meat, we devoured it in that style of eagerness, which, on a review of our operations at this time, very forcibly reminds us of the table urbanity of a prairie wolf.

While at our winter camp we hunted when we could, and the remainder of the time attempted to sleep, so as to dream of the abundance of our own tables at home, and the dark rich tenants of our smoke houses.

In the vicinity of our encampment, I discovered old diggings, and the remains of furnaces. There are also in this neighborhood the remains of many small stone houses, some of which have one story beneath the surface of the earth. There is likewise an abundance of broken pottery here, well baked and neatly painted. This was probably the scite of a town where the ancient Mexican Indians resided, as the Spaniards, who seldom visit this part of the country, can give no account of it. On our way back to the settlements, we halted at the encampment of a band of Indians, who shocked our feelings not a little by the disposition they were about to make of an infirm (and no longer useful) squaw. When the principal part of the band had left their camp, two of those remaining proceeded to lay the sick woman upon her face, by the side of some of her effects. They then covered her with a funeral pile of pine wood, to which they set fire, and thus made a Hindoo sacrifice of the patient old matron.

As the depth of the snow, and the immense cold of the season rendered trapping almost impracticable, we succeeded, on a third attempt, in making good our retreat from this inhospitable wilderness, and reached a Spanish village on the fifth of April, after an absence of five months.

It was reported in the Spanish settlements, by a man who had been employed by George Armstrong, of Franklin, who accompanied me to Santa Fe, that he had been murdered by the Indians; but I have good reason to believe, and I most sincerely hope, this may be only an idle fabrication. The trade to this province has been greatly injured by the reduction of prices—white domestics are only fifty cents per yard. An export duty of three per cent. is collected on all specie brought out of the province in this direction. Although my essays have been unfortunate speculations, I am disposed to make another experiment.

I travelled from the Spanish village of Taos, to Fort Osage, on the Missouri, in thirty-four days. I had supplied myself with provisions for the journey consisting of meat, beans & peas. By the route

---

Letters by Wm. Becknell  
regarding the early Southwestern trade.

---

which I travelled on my return, I avoided the so much dreaded sand hills, where adventurers have frequently been forced to drink the blood of their mules, to allay their thirst. Mr. Bailey Harde-  
man, of this county, was to have set out on his return, accompanied by a large party, on the first of  
the present month.

I cannot better conclude than by annexing this remark, that the toils endured, and the privations  
suffered in these enterprizes, very naturally give a tone and relish to the repose and plenty found  
at the civilized fire side.

WM. BECKNELL

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

THE  
LIFE AND ADVENTURES  
OF  
JAMES P. BECKWOURTH  
Mountaineer, Scout, and Pioneer  
and  
Chief of the Crow Nation of Indians.  
With Illustrations  
Written from his own Dictation  
by T. D. Bonner  
NEW YORK:  
Harper & Brothers, Publishers,  
Franklin Square.  
1856.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year one thousand  
eight hundred and fifty-six, by  
HARPER & BROTHERS,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.

Preface

BURIED amid the sublime passes of the Sierra Nevada are old men, who, when children, strayed away from our crowded settlements, and, gradually moving farther and farther from civilization, have in time become domiciliated among the wild beasts and wilder savages — have lived scores of years whetting their intellects in the constant struggle for self-preservation; whose only pleasurable excitement was found in facing danger; whose only repose was to recuperate, preparatory to participating in new and thrilling adventures. Such men, whose simple tale would pale the imaginative creations of our most popular fictionists, sink into their obscure graves unnoticed and unknown. Indian warriors, whose bravery and self devotion find no parallels in the preserved traditions of all history, end their career on the “war-path,” sing in triumph their death-song, and become silent, leaving no impression on the intellectual world.

Among the many men who have distinguished themselves as mountaineers, traders, chiefs of great Indian nations, and as early pioneers in the settlement of our Pacific coast, is James P. Beckwourth, whose varied and startling personal adventures would have found no record but for the accident of meeting with a wanderer in the mountains of California, interested in the man, and, patiently listening to his story, proceeded, as it fell from his lips, to put it upon paper. This autobiography was thus produced, and was the result of some months' labor in the winter of 1854-55. In prosecuting the task, the author has in no instance departed from the story of the narrator, but it was taken down literally as it was from day to day related. Beckwourth kept no journal, and, of course, relied upon his memory alone; consequently dates are often wanting, which it was impossible to give with accuracy when recurring to events transpiring in the course of very many years. Beckwourth is personally known to thousands of people “living on both sides of the mountains,” and also, from his service under the United States government, has enjoyed the acquaintance of many officers of the United States Army, who have been stationed in Florida, Mexico, and California. In his long residence with the Indians he adopted their habits, and was in every respect

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

conformed to their ways: the consequence was, from his great courage and superior mental endowments, he rose rapidly in their estimation, and finally became their chief. As an Indian, therefore, he speaks of their customs, and describes their characteristics; and probably, from his autobiography, we have more interesting particulars than were ever before given of the aborigines. Beckwourth, after ten thousand adventures, finally became involved in the stream that set toward the Pacific, and, almost unconsciously, he established a home in one of the pleasant valleys that border on Feather River. Discovering a pass in the mountains that greatly facilitated emigrants in reaching California, his house became a stopping-place for the weary and dispirited among them, and no doubt the associations thus presented have done much to efface his natural disposition to wander and seek excitement among the Indian tribes.

In person he is of medium height, of strong muscular power, quick of apprehension, and, for a man of his years, very active. From his neck is suspended a perforated bullet, with a large oblong bead each side of it, secured by a thread of sinew: this amulet is just as he wore it while chief among the Crows. With the exception of this, he has now assumed the usual costume of civilized life, and, in his occasional visits to San Francisco, vies with many prominent residents in the dress and manners of the refined gentleman.

It is unnecessary to speak of the natural superiority of his mind: his autobiography every where displays it. His sagacity in determining what would please the Indians has never been surpassed; for on the most trying occasions, where hundreds of others would have fallen victims to circumstances, he escaped. His courage is of the highest order, and probably no man ever lived who has met with more personal adventure involving danger to life, though in this respect he is not an exception to all mountaineers and hunters who early engaged in the fur trade and faced the perils of an unknown wilderness.

#### CHAPTER I.

Birth-place and Childhood.—Removal to St. Louis.

I WAS born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, on the 26th of April, 1798. My father's family consisted of thirteen children, seven sons and six daughters. I was the third child, having one sister and one brother older than myself.

My father had been an officer in the Revolutionary War, and had held a major's commission. He served throughout that glorious struggle which

“Raised the dignity of man,  
And taught him to be free.”

I well recollect, when a small boy, the frequent meetings of the old patriots at my father's house, who would sit down and relate the different battles in which they had taken part during “those days that tried men's souls.” According to the custom of those days, their meetings were occasionally enlivened with some good old peach brandy; the same kind, I presume, as that with which the old Tory treated M'Donald when he delivered his splendid charger “Selim” to him for presentation to Colonel Tarleton, which circumstance was very frequently spoken of by the old soldiers. Often during these reminiscences every eye would dim, and tears course down the cheeks of the old veterans, as they thus fought their battles o'er again, and recalled their sufferings during the struggles they had passed through.

My youthful mind was vividly impressed with the stirring scenes depicted by those old soldiers; but time and subsequent hardship have obliterated most of their narratives from my memory.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

One incident I recollect, however, related by my father, when he formed one of a storming party in the attack on Stony Point made under General Wayne.

When I was but about seven or eight years of age, my father removed to St. Louis, Missouri, taking with him all his family and twenty-two negroes. He selected a section of land between the forks of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, twelve miles below St. Charles, which is to this day known as "Beckwourth's Settlement." At this early period of our history (1805-6) the whole region of country around was a "howling wilderness," inhabited only by wild beasts and merciless savages. St. Louis, at that time, was but a small town, its inhabitants consisting almost wholly of French and Spanish settlers, who were engaged in trafficking with the Indians the commodities of civilization, such as fire-water, beads, blankets, arms, ammunition, &c., for peltry.

For protection against the Indians, who were at that time very troublesome and treacherous, it became necessary for the whites to construct block-houses at convenient distances. These block-houses were built by the united exertions of the settlers, who began to gather from all quarters since the "Jefferson Purchase" had been effected from the French government. The settlers or inhabitants of four adjoining sections would unite and build a block-house in the centre of their possessions, so that in case of alarm they could all repair to it as a place of refuge from the savages.

It was necessary to keep a constant guard on the plantations, and while one portion of the men were at work, the others, with their arms, were on the alert watching the wily Indian. Those days are still fresh in my memory, and it was then that I received, young as I was, the rudiments of my knowledge of the Indian character, which has been of such inestimable value to me in my subsequent adventures among them.

There were constant alarms in the neighborhood of some of the block-houses, and hardly a day passed without the inhabitants being compelled to seek them for protection. As an illustration of our mode of life, I will relate an incident that befell me when about nine years old.

One day my father called me to him, and inquired of me whether I thought myself man enough to carry a sack of corn to the mill. The idea of riding a horse, and visiting town, possessed attractions which I could not resist, and I replied with a hearty affirmative. A sack of corn was accordingly deposited on the back of a gentle horse selected for the purpose, and "Young Jim" (as I was called) was placed upon the sack, and started for the mill two miles distant. About midway to the mill lived a neighbor having a large family of children, with whom I frequently joined in boyish sports. On my way I rode joyously up to the little fence which separated the house from the road, thinking to pass a word with my little playmates. What was my horror at discovering all the children, eight in number, from one to fourteen years of age, lying in various positions in the door-yard with their throats cut, their scalps torn off, and the warm life-blood still oozing from their gaping wounds! In the door-way lay their father, and near him their mother, in the same condition; they had all shared the same fate. I found myself soon back at my father's house, but without the sack of corn — how I managed to get it off I never discovered — and related the circumstance to my father. He immediately gave the alarm throughout the settlement, and a body of men started in pursuit of the savages who had perpetrated this fearful tragedy; my father, with ten of his own men, accompanying them. In two days the band returned, bringing with them eighteen Indian scalps; for the backwoodsman fought the savage in Indian style, and it was scalp for scalp between them.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

The day when I beheld the harrowing spectacle of my little murdered playmates is still as fresh in my memory as at the time of its occurrence, and it never will fade from my mind. It was the first scene of Indian cruelty my young eyes had ever witnessed, and I wondered how even savages could possess such relentless minds as to wish to bathe their hands in the blood of little innocents against whom they could have no cause of quarrel. But my subsequent experience has better acquainted me with the Indian character, as the reader will learn in the course of the following pages.

I also recollect a large body of Indians assembling in their war costume on the opposite side of the Mississippi River, in what is now the State of Illinois. This was at Portage de Soix, twenty-five miles above St. Louis, and about two miles from my father's house; and their intention was to cut off all the white inhabitants of the surrounding country. The alarm was given; a large party of the settlers collected, crossed the river, and after a severe engagement defeated the Indians with great loss, and frustrated their bloody purposes.

Three days after this battle, a woman came into the settlement who had been three years captive among the Indians. She had made her escape during the confusion attending their defeat, and reached her friends in safety, after they had long supposed her dead. The name of this woman I do not remember, but I have no doubt there are old settlers in that region who yet recollect the circumstance, and the general rejoicing with which her escape was celebrated.

The news that she brought was of the most alarming nature. She related how several of the Indian tribes had held a grand council, and resolved upon a general attack upon St. Louis and all the surrounding country, with the view to butcher indiscriminately all the white inhabitants, French and Spanish excepted. This intelligence produced the greatest alarm among the inhabitants, and every preparation was made to repel the attack. New block-houses were erected, old ones repaired, and every thing placed in the best posture for defense. The Indians soon after appeared in great force opposite St. Louis. Blondo, an interpreter, was dispatched across the river to them, to inform them of the preparations made for their reception. He informed them of the intelligence communicated by the woman fugitive from their camp; and represented to them that the people of St. Louis were provided with numerous "big guns mounted on wagons," which, in case of attack, could not fail to annihilate all their warriors. They credited Blondo's tale, and withdrew their forces.

At the period of which I speak, the major part of the inhabitants of St. Louis were French and Spanish. These were on friendly terms with all the Indian tribes, and wished to confine their long established traffic with the Red men to themselves. For this reason they discountenanced the settlement of Americans among them, as they considered it an invasion of their monopoly of the traffic with the Indians; and St. Louis being the grand trading depot for the regions of the West and Northwest, the profits derived from the intercourse were immense. The Indians, too, thinking themselves better dealt with by the French and Spanish, united with the latter in their hostility to the influx of the Americans.

When about ten years of age I was sent to St. Louis to attend school, where I continued until the year 1812. I was then apprenticed to a man in St. Louis named George Casner, to learn the trade of blacksmith. (This man had a partner named John L. Sutton, who is yet a resident in St. Louis.) I took to the trade with some unwillingness at first, but becoming reconciled to it, I was soon much pleased with my occupation. When I had attained my nineteenth year, my sense of impor-

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

tance had considerably expanded, and, like many others of my age, I felt my self already quite a man. Among other indiscretions, I became enamored of a young damsel, which, leading me into habits that my boss disapproved of, resulted finally in a difficulty between us.

Being frequently tempted to transgress my boss's rules by staying from home somewhat late of an evening, and finding the company I spent my time with so irresistibly attractive that I could not bring myself to obedience to orders, I gave way to my passion, and felt indifferent whether my proceedings gave satisfaction or otherwise. One morning I was assailed by my principal in language which I considered unduly harsh and insulting, and on his threatening to dismiss me his house, I was tempted to reply with some warmth, and acknowledge that his doing so would exactly square with my wishes.

Provoked at this, he seized a hammer and flung at me. I dodged the missile, and threw it back at him in return. A scuffle then ensued, in which I, being young and athletic, came off master of the ground, and, accepting his polite dismissal, walked straight to my boarding-house. But a few moments elapsed before my assailant walked in and forbade my landlady to entertain me farther on his account.

I replied that I had plenty of money, and was competent to pay my own board.

This provoked him to a second attack, in which he again came off worsted.

Hereupon resolving to leave the house, I began to prepare for my departure; but, before I had completed my preparations, a one-armed constable presented himself at the stairs, and demanded to see me. Well knowing his errand, I took a well-loaded pistol in my hand, and went to meet him, assuring him that if he ascended the steps to capture me I would shoot him dead. In my exasperated state of mind, I really believe I should have executed my threat; the constable, perceiving my resolute bearing, after parleying a while, went away. Feeling confident that he had gone for another officer, who I feared might capture me, I expedited my departure, and, taking refuge in the house, of a friend, concealed myself for three days, and then shipped on board a keel-boat, proceeding to the mines on Fever River. But I was discovered by my boss and detained, he holding himself responsible for my appearance until my father's decision was learned.

Accordingly, I went home to my father, and related the difficulty I had recently had with my master. He counseled me to return to my apprenticeship, but I declared my determination never to be reconciled again. My father then wished me to set up in business in his settlement, but I expressed disinclination, and declared a growing wish to travel. Seeing my determination, my father finally consented to my departure. He admonished me with some wholesome precepts, gave me five hundred dollars in cash, together with a good horse, saddle, and bridle, and bade me God speed upon my journey.

Bidding adieu to all my friends, I proceeded to the boat and went on board. The object for which the boat was dispatched up the Fever River was to make a treaty with the Sac Indians, to gain their consent to our working the mines, at that time in their possession. The expedition was strictly of a pacific character, and was led by Colonel R. M. Johnson. A brother of the colonel's accompanied us, and several other gentlemen went in the boat as passengers.

## CHAPTER II.

Expedition to the Mines.—Am Hunter to the Party.—First Trip to New Orleans.—Sick with Yellow Fever.—Return Home.—First Trip to the Great West.

THE expedition consisted of from six to eight boats, carrying probably about one hundred men.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

The party in our boat numbered some eight or ten men, among whom were Colonel Johnson, his son Darwin Johnson, Messrs. January, Simmes, Kennerley, and others, whose names have escaped me. I engaged in the capacity of hunter to the party.

We pushed off, and after a slow and tedious trip of about twenty days, arrived at our place of destination (Galena of the present day). We found Indians in great numbers awaiting our disembarkation, who were already acquainted with the object of our expedition. The two tribes, Sacs and Foxes, received us peaceably, but, being all armed, they presented a very formidable appearance. There was a considerable force of United States troops quartered in that region, under the command of Colonel Morgan, stationed in detachments at Prairie du Chien, Rock Island, St. Peter's, and Des Moines.

After nine days' parleying, a treaty was effected with them, and ratified by the signatures of the contracting parties. On the part of the Indians, it was signed by Black Thunder, Yellow, Bank, and Keokuk (father to the Keokuk who figured in the Black Hawk war). In the part of the United States, Colonels Morgan and Johnson attached their signatures. This negotiation concluded, the mines were then first opened for civilized enterprise.

During the settlement of the preliminaries of the treaty, there was great difficulty with the Indians, and it was necessary for each man of our party to be on his guard against any hostile attempts of the former, who were all armed to the teeth. On the distribution of presents, which followed the conclusion of the treaty, consisting of casks of whisky, guns, gunpowder, knives, blankets, &c., there was a general time of rejoicing. Pow-wows, drinking, and dancing diversified the time, and a few fights were indulged in as a sequel to the entertainment.

The Indians soon became very friendly to me, and I was indebted to them for showing me their choicest hunting-grounds. There was abundance of game, including deer, bears, wild turkey, raccoons, and numerous other wild animals. Frequently they would accompany me on my excursions (which always proved eminently successful), thus affording me an opportunity of increasing my personal knowledge of the Indian character. I have lived among Indians in the Eastern and Western States, on the Rocky Mountains, and in California; I find their habits of living, and their religious belief, substantially uniform through all the unmingled races. All believe in the same Great Spirit; all have their prophets, their medicine men, and their soothsayers, and are alike influenced by the appearance of omens; thus leading to the belief that the original tribes throughout the entire continent, from Florida to the most northern coast, have sprung from one stock, and still retain in some degree of purity the social constitution of their primitive founders.

I remained in that region for a space of eighteen months, occupying my leisure time by working in the mines. During this time I accumulated seven hundred dollars in cash, and, feeling myself to be quite a wealthy personage, I determined upon a return home.

My visit paid, I felt a disposition to roam farther, and took passage in the steam-boat Calhoun, Captain Glover, about to descend the river to New Orleans. My stay in New Orleans lasted ten days, during which time I was sick with the yellow fever, which I contracted on the way from Natchez to New Orleans. It was midsummer, and I sought to return home, heartily regretting I had ever visited this unwholesome place. As my sickness abated, I lost no time in making my way back, and remained under my father's roof until I had in some measure recruited my forces.

Being possessed with a strong desire to see the celebrated Rocky Mountains, and the great Western wilderness so much talked about, I engaged in General Ashley's Rocky Mountain Fur

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Company. The company consisted of twenty-nine men, who were employed by the Fur Company as hunters and trappers.

We started on the 11th of October with horses and pack-mules. Nothing of interest occurred until we approached the Kansas village, situate on the Kansas River, when we came to a halt and encamped.

Here it was found that the company was in need of horses, and General Ashley wished for two men to volunteer to proceed to the Republican Pawnees, distant three hundred miles, where he declared we could obtain a supply. There was in our party an old and experienced mountaineer, named Moses Harris, in whom the general reposed the strictest confidence for his knowledge of the country and his familiarity with Indian life. This Harris was reputed to be, a man of "great leg,"\* \* i.e., a great traveler; able to go a great distance in a day. and capable, from his long so-journing in the mountains, of enduring extreme privation and fatigue.

There seemed to be a great reluctance on the part of the men to undertake in such company so hazardous a journey (for it was now winter). It was also whispered in the camp that whoever gave out in an expedition with Harris received no succor from him, but was abandoned to his fate in the wilderness.

Our leader, seeing this general unwillingness, desired me to perform the journey with Harris. Being young, and feeling ambitious to distinguish myself in some important trust, I asked leave to have a word with Harris before I decided.

Harris being called, the following colloquy took place:

"Harris, I think of accompanying you on this trip." "Very well, Jim," he replied, scrutinizing me closely, "do you think you can stand it?"

"I don't know," I answered, but I am going to try. But I wish you to bear one thing in mind: if I should give out on the road, and you offer to leave me to perish, as you have the name of doing, if I have strength to raise and cock my rifle, I shall certainly bring you to a halt."

Harris looked me full in the eye while he replied, "Jim, you may precede me the entire way, and take your own jog. If I direct the path, and give you the lead, it will be your own fault if you tire out."

"That satisfies me," I replied: "we will be off in the morning."

The following morning we prepared for departure. Each man loading himself with twenty-five pounds of provisions, besides a blanket, rifle, and ammunition each, we started on our journey. After a march of about thirty miles, I in advance, my companion bringing up the rear, Harris complained of fatigue. We halted, and Harris sat down, while I built a large, cheering fire, for the atmosphere was quite cold. We made coffee, and partook of a hearty supper, lightening our packs, as we supposed, for the following day. But while I was bringing in wood to build up the fire, I saw Harris seize his rifle in great haste, and the next moment bring down a fat turkey from a tree a few rods from the camp. Immediately reloading (for old mountaineers never suffer their guns to remain empty for one moment), while I was yet rebuilding the fire, crack went his rifle again, and down came a second turkey, so large and fat that he burst in striking the ground. We were thus secure for our next morning's meal. After we had refreshed ourselves with a hearty supper, my companion proposed that we should kill each a turkey to take with us for our next day's provision. This we both succeeded in doing, and then, having dressed the four turkeys, we folded ourselves in our blankets, and enjoyed a sound night's rest.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

The following morning we breakfasted off the choicest portions of two of the turkeys, and abandoned the remainder to the wolves, who had been all night prowling round the camp for prey. We started forward as early as possible, and advanced that day about forty miles. My companion again complained of fatigue, and rested while I made a fire, procured water, and performed all the culinary work. The selected portions of last evening's turkeys, with the addition of bread and coffee, supplied us with supper and breakfast. After a travel of ten days we arrived at the Republican Pawnee villages, when what was our consternation and dismay to find the place entirely deserted! They had removed to their winter quarters. We were entirely out of provisions, having expected to find abundance at the lodges. We searched diligently for their caches (places where provisions are secured), but failed in discovering any. Our only alternative was to look for game, which, so near to an Indian settlement, we were satisfied must be scarce.

I would break my narrative for a while to afford some explanation in regard to the different bands of the Pawnee tribe; a subject which at the present day is but imperfectly understood by the general reader — the knowledge being confined to those alone who, by living among them, have learned their language, and hence become acquainted with the nature of their divisional lands.

The reader, perhaps, has remarked, that I related we were on a visit to Republican Pawnee villages. This is a band of the Pawnee tribe of Indians, which is thus divided

The Grand Pawnee Band.

Republican Pawnee Band.

Pawnee Loups or Wolf Pawnees.

Pawnee Pics or Tattooed Pawnees, and  
Black Pawnees.

The five bands constitute the entire tribe. Each band is independent and under its own chief, but for mutual defense, or in other cases of urgent necessity, they unite into one body. They occupy an immense extent of country, stretching from beyond the Platte River to south of the Arkansas, and, at the time I speak of, could raise from thirty thousand to forty thousand warriors. Like all other Indian tribes, they have dwindled away from various causes, the small-pox and war having carried them off by thousands. Some of the bands have been reduced to one half by this fatal disease (in many instances introduced designedly among them by their civilized brethren); a disease more particularly fatal to the Indians from their entire ignorance of any suitable remedy. Their invariable treatment for all ailments being a cold-water immersion, it is not surprising that they are eminently unsuccessful in their treatment of the small-pox. Horse-stealing, practiced by one band upon the other, leads to exterminating feuds and frequent engagements, wherein great numbers are mutually slain.

The following interesting episode I had from the lips of the interpreter:

Some thirty-two years ago, during Monroe's administration, a powerful Indian named Two Axe, chief counselor of the Pawnee Loup band, went to pay his "Great Father," the President, a visit. He was over six feet high and well proportioned, athletic build, and as straight as an arrow. He was delegated to Washington by his tribe to make a treaty with his Great Father.

Being introduced, his "father" made known to him, through the interpreter, the substance of his proposal. The keen-witted Indian, perceiving that the proposed treaty "talked all turkey" to the white man and "all crow" to his tribe, sat patiently during the reading of the paper. The reading finished, he arose with all his native dignity, and in that vein of true Indian eloquence in which

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

he was unsurpassed, declared that the treaty had been conceived in injustice and brought forth in duplicity; that many treaties had been signed by Indians of their "Great Father's" concoction, wherein they bartered away the graves of their fathers for a few worthless trinkets, and afterward their hearts cried at their folly; that such Indians were fools and women. He expressed his free opinion of the "Great Father," and all his white children, and concluded by declaring that he would sign no paper which would make his own breast or those of his people to sorrow. Accordingly, Two Axe broke up the council abruptly, and returned to his home without making any treaty with his "Great Father."

CHAPTER III.

Return from the deserted Pawnee Villages.—Sufferings on the Way. —Prospect of Starvation.—Fall in with the Indians most opportunely.—Safe Arrival at Ely's Trading-post at the mouth of the Kansas.

MY companion and myself took counsel together how to proceed. Our determination was to make the best of our way to the Grand Ne-mah-haw River, one of the tributaries of the Missouri. We arrived at that river after nine days' travel, being, with the exception of a little coffee and sugar, entirely without provisions. My companion was worn out, and seemed almost disheartened. I was young, and did not feel much the worse for the journey, although I experienced a vehement craving for food. Arrived at the river, I left Harris by a good fire, and, taking my rifle, went in quest of game, not caring what kind I met.

As Fortune would have it, I came across an elk, and my rifle soon sent a leaden messenger after him. We encamped near him, promising ourselves a feast. He was exceedingly poor, however, and, hungry as we were, we made a very unsavory supper off his flesh. The next morning we continued our journey down the Ne-mah-haw, traveling on for five days after I had killed the elk without tasting food. The elk had been so rank that we carried no part of him with us, trusting to find some little game, in which we were disappointed. We had thrown away our blankets to relieve ourselves of every burden that would impede our progress, which, withal, was extremely slow. On the fifth day we struck a large Indian trail, which bore evident marks of being fresh. My companion now gave entirely up, and threw himself to the ground, declaring he could go no farther. He pronounced our position to be thirty miles from the trading-post. I endeavored to arouse him to get up and proceed onward, but he could only advance a few rods at a time. I felt myself becoming weak; still, I had faith that I could reach Ely's, if I had no hinderance; if I lingered for Harris, I saw we should both inevitably perish. He positively declared he could advance not a step farther; he could scarcely put one foot before the other, and I saw he was becoming bewildered. In the dilemma I said to him, "Harris, we must both perish if we stay here. If I make the best of my way along this trail, I believe I can reach Ely's some time in the night" (for I was aware that the Indians, whose trail we were following, were proceeding thither with their peltry).

But Harris would not listen to it.

"Oh, Jim," he exclaimed, "don't leave me; don't leave me here to die! For God's sake, stay with me!" I did my best to encourage him to proceed; I assisted him to rise, and we again proceeded upon our journey.

I saw, by the progress we were making, we should never get on; so I told him, if I had to advance and leave him, to throw himself in the trail, and await my return on the following day with a good horse to carry him to the trading-post. We walked on, I a hundred yards in advance, but I

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

became convinced that if I did not use my remaining strength in getting to Ely's, we should both be lost.

Accordingly, summoning all my forces, I doubled my speed, determined to reach the post before I stopped. I had not proceeded half a mile ere I heard the report of two rifles, and, looking in the direction of the sound, I saw two Indians approaching with demonstrations of friendship.

On reaching me, one of them exclaimed, "You are dead-you no live!"

I explained to him that I had left my companion behind, and that we were both nearly starved to death. On this they spoke a few words to each other in their own language, and one started off like a race-horse, along the trail, while the other returned with me to my companion.

As we approached him I could hear him moaning, "Ho, Jim! come back! Come back! don't leave me!" We went up to him, and I informed him that we were safe; that I had met the Indians, and we should soon be relieved.

After waiting about three hours, the rattling of hoofs was heard, and, looking up, we discovered a troop of Indians approaching at tall speed. In another moment they were by our side. They brought with them a portion of light food, consisting of corn-meal made into a kind of gruel, of which they would give us but a small spoonful at short intervals. When Harris was sufficiently restored to mount a horse with the assistance of the Indians, we all started forward for the post. It appeared that the two Indians whom I had so fortunately encountered had lingered behind the main party to amuse themselves with target-shooting with their rifles. The one that started along the trail overtook the main body at a short distance, and, making our case known to them, induced them to return to our succor.

We encamped with them that night, and they continued the same regimen of small periodic doses of gruel. Several times a large Indian seized hold of an arm of each of us, and forced us into a run until our strength was utterly exhausted. Others of the party would then support us on each side, and urge us on till their own strength failed them. After this discipline, a spoonful or two of gruel would be administered to us. This exercise being repeated several times, they at length placed before us a large dish containing venison, bear-meat, and turkey, with the invitation to eat all we wanted. It is unnecessary to say that I partook of such a meal as I never remember to have eaten before or since.

Early the next day we arrived at the trading-post of Ely and Curtis, situate on the Missouri River, near the mouth of the Kansas. As I entered the house, I heard some one exclaim, "Here comes Jim Beckwourth and Black Harris," the name he went by where he was known.

Ely sprang up to welcome us. "Sure enough," said he, "it is they; but they look like corpses."

Another voice exclaimed, "Halloo, Jim! what is the matter with you? Is it yourselves, or only your ghosts? Come along and take some brandy, any way; living or dead, you must be dry."

We accepted the invitation, and took each a glass, which, in our greatly reduced state, quite overpowered us. Left to my reflections, I resolved that, if I survived my present dangers, I would return to civilized life. The extremities I had been reduced to had so moderated my resentments that, had I encountered my former boss, I should certainly have extended my hand to him with ready forgiveness.

The Indians we had so opportunely fallen in with belonged to the Kansas band of the Osage tribe, and were on the way, as we had surmised, to dispose of their goods at the trading-post. Their wares consisted principally of peltry, obtained by their sagacity in trapping, and their skill in

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

hunting the wild animals of the plains. In purchasing their skins of them, Messrs. Ely and Curtis rewarded the Indians very liberally with government stores for their humanity in succoring us when exhausted, and as an encouragement to relieve others whom they might chance to find similarly distressed.

After thoroughly recruiting at the trading-post, where I received every attention from Messrs. Ely and Curtis, I started for St. Louis. On my arrival at G. Chouteau's trading-post, I calculated the intervening distance to St. Louis, and abandoned my intention of proceeding thither, delaying my return till the spring, when the ice would break up in the Missouri. Mr. Chouteau engaged me to assist in packing peltries during the winter, at twenty-five dollars per month.

When the river was free from ice, I took passage in a St. Louis boat, and, after a quick run, arrived safe in the city early in the evening of the fifth day.

Shortly after my arrival I fell in with General Ashley, who had returned to the city for more men. The general was greatly surprised to see me, he having concluded that my fate had been the same with hundreds of others, engaged to fur companies, who had perished with cold and starvation. The general informed me that he had engaged one hundred and twenty men, who were already on their road to the mountains. He declared I was just the man he was in search of to ride after and overtake the men, and accompany them to the mountains, and added that I must start the next morning.

My feelings were somewhat similar to those of a young sailor on his return from his first voyage to sea. I had achieved one trip to the wild West, and had returned safe, and now I was desirous of spending a long interval with my father. I suffered the arguments of the old general to prevail over me, however, and I re-engaged to him, with the promise to start on the following morning. This afforded me short time to visit my friends, to whom I just paid a flying visit, and returned to the city in the morning.

After attending to the general's instructions, and receiving eight hundred dollars in gold to carry to Mr. Fitzpatrick (an agent of General Ashley then stationed in the mountains), I mounted a good horse, and put on in pursuit of the party, who were five or six days' journey in advance. I may here remark that the general had been recently married, and, feeling some reluctance to tear himself away from the delights of Hymen, he sent me on for the performance of his duties. The general followed after in about a week, and overtook the party at Franklin, on the Missouri. It was early May when I commenced my journey. Unfolding Nature presented so many charms that my previous sufferings were obliterated from my mind. The trees were clothing themselves with freshest verdure, flowers were unveiling their beauties on every side, and birds were caroling their sweetest songs from every bough. These sights and sounds struck more pleasantly upon my senses than the howl of the wolf and the scream of the panther, which assailed our ears in the forests and prairies of the wild West.

After being joined by our general, we proceeded up the Missouri to Council Bluffs, and thence struck out for the Platte country. Soon after our arrival on the Platte we had the great misfortune to lose nearly all our horses, amounting to about two hundred head, stolen from us by the Indians. We followed their trail for some time, but, deeming it useless to follow mounted Indians while we were on foot, our general gave up the pursuit. We could not ascertain what tribe the robbers belonged to, but I have since been convinced they were either the I-a-tans or the Arrapa-hos.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Our general then gave orders to return to the Missouri and purchase all the horses we needed, while he returned to St. Louis to transact some affairs of business, and possibly pay his devotions to his very estimable lady.

We succeeded in obtaining a supply of horses after retracing about two hundred miles of our journey, paying for them with drafts upon General Ashley in St. Louis. We then again returned to our camp on the Platte. This adventure occupied nearly the whole summer; and we guarded against a repetition of the misfortune by strictly watching the horses day and night. While a portion of the company were engaged in making purchase of our second supply of horses, the other portion remained on the ground to hunt and trap, and gather together a supply of provision for our consumption. They met with excellent success, and caught a great number of beavers and otters, together with a quantity of game.

General Ashley rejoined us in September, and by his orders Fitzpatrick and a Robert Campbell proceeded to the Loup fork, taking with them all the men, except eight, who remained behind with the general, to ascend the Platte in quest of the company he left there the preceding winter, from which Harris and myself had been detached on our expedition to the Pawnee camp.

After several days' travel we found the company we were seeking. They were all well, had been successful in trapping, and had made some good trades with straggling parties of Indians in the exchange of goods for peltry. They had fared rather hard a part of the time, as game, which was their sole dependence, was often difficult to obtain.

I should here mention that we found Harris in the course of our second trip, who rejoined our company, well and hearty.

Fur companies in those days had to depend upon their rifles for a supply of food. No company could possibly carry provisions sufficient to last beyond the most remote white settlements. Our food, therefore, consisted of deer, wild turkeys (which were found in great abundance), bear-meat, and, even in times of scarcity, dead horses. Occasionally a little flour, sugar, and coffee might last over to the mountains; but those who held these articles asked exorbitant prices for them, and it was but few who tasted such luxuries.

We were now in the buffalo country, but the Indians had driven them all away. Before we left the settlements, our party made free use of the bee-hives, pigs, and poultry belonging to the settlers; a marauding practice commonly indulged in by the mountaineers, who well knew that the strength of their party secured them against any retaliation on the part of the sufferers.

There were two Spaniards in our company, whom we one morning left behind us to catch some horses which had strayed away from the camp. The two men stopped at a house inhabited by a respectable white woman, and they, seeing her without protection, committed a disgraceful assault upon her person. They were pursued to the camp by a number of the settlers, who made known to us the outrage committed upon the woman. We all regarded the crime with the utmost abhorrence, and felt mortified that any of our party should be guilty of conduct so revolting. The culprits were arrested, and they at once admitted their guilt. A council was called in the presence of the settlers, and the culprits offered their choice of two punishments: either to be hung to the nearest tree, or to receive one hundred lashes each on the bare back. They chose the latter punishment, which was immediately inflicted upon them by four of our party. Having no cat-o'-nine-tails in our possession, the lashes were inflicted with hickory withes. Their backs were dreadfully lacerated, and the blood flowed in streams to the ground. The following morning the two Span-

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

iards, and two of our best horses, were missing from the camp; we did not pursue them, but, by the tracks we discovered of them, it was evident they had started for New Mexico.

CHAPTER IV.

Severe Sufferings in the Camp.—Grand Island.—Platte River.—Up the South Fork of the Platte.—The Dog, the Wolf, and the first Buffalo.

ON our arrival at the upper camp, related in the preceding chapter, we found the men, twenty-six in number, reduced to short rations, in weakly condition, and in a discouraged state of mind. They had been expecting the arrival of a large company with abundant supplies, and when we rejoined them without any provisions, they were greatly disappointed. General Ashley exerted himself to infuse fresh courage into their disconsolate breasts, well knowing himself, however, that, unless we could find game, the chances were hard against us.

We remained in camp three or four days, until we were well refreshed, and then deliberated upon our next proceeding. Knowing there must be game farther up the river, we moved forward. Our allowance was half a pint of flour a day per man, which we made into a kind of gruel; if we happened to kill a duck or a goose, it was shared as fairly as possible. I recalled to mind the incidents of our Pawnee expedition.

The third evening we made a halt for a few days. We had seen no game worth a charge of powder during our whole march, and our rations were confined to the half pint of flour per day.

We numbered thirty-four men, all told, and a duller encampment, I suppose, never was witnessed. No jokes, no fire-side stories, no fun; each man rose in the morning with the gloom of the preceding night filling his mind; we built our fires and partook of our scanty repast without saying a word.

At last our general gave orders for the best hunters to sally out and try their fortune. I seized my rifle and issued from the camp alone, feeling so reduced in strength that my mind involuntarily reverted to the extremity I had been reduced to with Harris. About three hundred yards from camp I saw two teal ducks; I leveled my rifle, and handsomely decapitated one. This was a temptation to my constancy; and appetite and conscientiousness had a long strife as to the disposal of the booty. I reflected that it would be but an inconsiderable trifle in my mess of four hungry men, while to roast and eat him myself would give me strength to hunt for more. A strong inward feeling remonstrated against such an invasion of the rights of my starving messmates; but if, by fortifying myself, I gained ability to procure something more substantial than a teal duck, my dereliction would be sufficiently atoned, and my overruling appetite, at the same time, gratified. Had I admitted my messmates to the argument, they might possibly have carried it adversely. But I received the conclusion as valid; so, roasting him without ceremony in the bushes, I devoured the duck alone, and felt greatly invigorated with the meal.

Passing up the stream, I pushed forward to fulfill my obligation. At the distance of about a mile from the camp I came across a narrow deer-trail through some rushes, and directly across the trail, with only the centre of his body visible (his two extremities being hidden by the rushes), not more than fifty yards distant, I saw a fine large buck standing. I did not wait for a nearer shot. I fired, and broke his back. I dispatched him by drawing my knife across his throat, and, having partially dressed him, hung him on a tree close by. Proceeding onward, I met a large white wolf, attracted, probably, by the scent of the deer. I shot him, and, depriving him of his meal, devoted him for a repast to the camp. Before I returned, I succeeded in killing three good-sized elk,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

which, added to the former, afforded a pretty good display of meat.

I then returned near enough to the camp to signal to them to come to my assistance. They had heard the reports of my rifle, and, knowing that I would not waste ammunition, had been expecting to see me return with game. All who were able turned out to my summons; and when they saw the booty awaiting them, their faces were irradiated with joy.

Each man shouldered his load; but there was not one capable of carrying the weight of forty pounds. The game being all brought into camp, the fame of "Jim Beckwourth" was celebrated by all tongues. Amid all this gratulation, I could not separate my thoughts from the duck which had supplied my clandestine meal in the bushes. I suffered them to appease their hunger with the proceeds of my toil before I ventured to tell my comrades of the offense I had been guilty of. All justified my conduct, declaring my conclusions obvious. As it turned out, my proceeding was right enough; but if I had failed to meet with any game, I had been guilty of an offense which would, ever after, have haunted me.

At this present time I never kill a duck on my ranche, and there are thousands of teal duck there, but I think of my feast in the bushes while my companions were famishing in the camp. Since that time I have never refused to share my last shilling, my last biscuit, or my only blanket with a friend, and I think the recollection of that "temptation in the wilderness" will ever serve as a lesson to more constancy in the future.

The day following we started forward up the river, and, after progressing some four or five miles, came in sight of plenty of deer-sign. The general ordered a halt, and directed all hunters out as before. We sallied out in different directions, our general, who was a good hunter, forming one of the number. At a short distance from the camp I discovered a large buck passing slowly between myself and the camp, at about pistol-shot distance. As I happened to be standing against a tree, he had not seen me. I fired; the ball passed through his body, and whizzed past the camp. Leaving him, I encountered a second deer within three quarters of a mile. I shot him, and hung him on a limb. Encouraged with my success, I climbed a tree to get a fairer view of the ground. Looking around from my elevated position, I perceived some large, dark-colored animal grazing on the side of a hill, some mile and a half distant. I was determined to have a shot at him, whatever he might be. I knew meat was in demand, and that fellow, well stored, was worth more than a thousand teal ducks.

I therefore approached, with the greatest precaution, to within fair rifle-shot distance, scrutinizing him very closely, and still unable to make out what he was. I could see no horns; and if he was a bear, I thought him an enormous one. I took sight at him over my faithful rifle, which had never failed me, and then set it down, to contemplate the huge animal still farther.

Finally, I resolved to let fly; taking good aim, I pulled trigger, the rifle cracked, and I then made rapid retreat toward the camp. After running about two hundred yards, and hearing nothing in movement behind me, I ventured to look round, and, to my great joy, I saw the animal had fallen. Continuing my course on to the camp, I encountered the general, who, perceiving blood on my hands, addressed me, "Have you shot any thing, Jim?"

I replied, "Yes, sir."

"What have you shot?"

"Two deer and something else," I answered.

"And what is the something else?" he inquired. "I do not know, sir."

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“What did he look like?” the general interrogated. “Had he horns?”

“I saw no horns, sir.”

“What color was the animal?”

“You can see him, general,” I replied, “by climbing yonder tree.”

The general ascended the tree accordingly, and looking through his spy-glass, which he always carried, he exclaimed, “A buffalo, by heavens!” and, coming nimbly down the tree, he gave orders for us to take a couple of horses, and go and dress the buffalo, and bring him into camp.

I suggested that two horses could not carry the load; six were therefore dispatched, and they all came back well packed with his remains.

There was great rejoicing throughout the camp at such bountiful provision, and all fears of starvation were removed, at least for the present. The two deer were also brought in, besides a fine one killed by the general, and ducks, geese, and such like were freely added by the other hunters, who had taken a wider circuit.

It appears strange that, although I had traveled hundreds of miles in the buffalo country, this one was the first I had ever seen. The conviction weighing upon my mind that it was a huge bear I was approaching had so excited me that, although within fair gun shot, I actually could not see his horns. The general and my companions had many a hearty laugh at my expense, he often expressing wonder that my keen eye could not, when close to the animal, perceive the horns, while he could see them plainly near two miles distant.

A severe storm setting in about this time, had it not been for our excellent store of provisions we should most probably have perished of starvation. There was no game to be procured, and our horses were beginning to die for want of nourishment. We remained in this camp until our provisions were all expended, and our only resource was the flesh of the horses which died of starvation and exposure to the storm. It was not such nutritious food as our fat buffalo and venison, but in our present circumstances it relished tolerably well.

Were General Ashley now living, he would recollect the hardships and delights we experienced in this expedition.

When the storm was expended we moved up the river, hoping to fall in with game. We, unfortunately, found but little on our course. When we had advanced some twenty miles we halted. Our position looked threatening. It was mid-winter, and every thing around us bore a gloomy aspect. We were without provisions, and we saw no means of obtaining any. At this crisis, six or seven Indians of the Pawnee Loup band came into our camp. Knowing them to be friendly, we were overjoyed to see them. They informed our interpreter that their village was only four miles distant, which at once accounted for the absence of game. They invited us to their lodges, where they could supply us with every thing that we needed; but on our representing to them our scarcity of horses, and the quantity of peltry we had no means of packing, they immediately started off to their village (our interpreter accompanying them in quest of horses, and speedily returned with a sufficient number. Packing our effects, we accompanied them to their village, Two Axe, of whom I have previously made mention, and a Spaniard named Antoine Behele, chief of the band, forming part of our escort.

Arrived at their village, which we found well provided with every thing we needed, the Indians gave us a hospitable reception, and spread a feast which, as they had promised, “made all our hearts glad.” Our horses, too, were well cared for, and soon assumed a more rotund appearance.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

We purchased for our future use beans, pumpkins, corn, cured meat, besides some beaver-skins, giving them in exchange a variety of manufactured goods used in the Indian trade, of which we had a great plenty. We replaced our lost horses by purchasing others in their stead; and now, every thing being ready for departure, our general intimated to Two Axe his wish to get on.

Two Axe objected. "My men are about to surround the buffalo," he said; "if you go now, you will frighten them. You must stay four days more, then you may go."

His word was law, so we staid accordingly.

Within the four days appointed they made "the surround," and killed fourteen hundred buffaloes. The tongues were counted by General Ashley himself, and thus I can guarantee the truth of the assertion.

To the reader unacquainted with the Indian mode of taking these animals, a concise description may not be uninteresting.

There were probably engaged in this hunt from one to two thousand Indians, some mounted and some on foot. They encompass a large space where the buffaloes are contained, and, closing in around them on all points, form a complete circle. Their circle at first inclosed may measure perhaps six miles in diameter, with an irregular circumference determined by the movements of the herd. When "the surround" is formed, the hunters radiate from the main body to the right and left until the ring is entire. The chief then gives the order to charge, which is communicated along the ring with the speed of lightning; every man then rushes to the centre, and the work of destruction is begun. The unhappy victims, finding themselves hemmed in on every side, run this way and that in their mad efforts to escape. Finding all chance of escape impossible, and seeing their slaughtered fellows drop dead at their feet, they bellow with affright, and in the confusion that whelms them, lose all power of resistance. The slaughter generally lasts two or three hours, and seldom many get clear of the weapons of their assailants.

The field over, the "surround" presents the appearance of one vast slaughter-house. He who has been most successful in the work of devastation is celebrated as a hero, and receives the highest honors from the "fair sex," while he who has been so unfortunate as not to kill a buffalo is jeered and ridiculed by the whole band. Flaying, dressing, and preserving the meat next engages their attention, and affords them full employment for several weeks.

The "surround" accomplished, we received permission from Two Axe to take up our line of march. Accordingly, we started along the river, and had only proceeded five miles from the village when we found that the Platte forked. Taking the south fork, we journeyed on some six miles, when we encamped. So we continued every day, making slow progress, some days not advancing more than four or five miles, until we had left the Pawnee villages three hundred miles in our rear. We found plenty of buffalo along our route until we approached the Rocky Mountains, when the buffalo, as well as all other game, became scarce, and we had to resort to the beans and corn supplied us by the Pawnees.

#### CHAPTER V.

Sufferings on the Platte.—Arrive at the Rocky Mountains.—Fall out with General Ashley.—Horses again stolen by the Crow Indians.—Sickness of our General.—Rescue of the General from a wounded Buffalo.—Remarkable Rescue of the General from the Green River "Suck." NOT finding any game for a number of days, we again felt alarmed for our safety. The snow was deep on the ground, and our poor horses could obtain no food but the boughs and bark of the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

cotton-wood trees. Still we pushed forward, seeking to advance as far as possible, in order to open a trade with the Indians, and occupy ourselves in trapping during the finish of the season. We were again put upon reduced rations, one pint of beans per day being the allowance to a mess of four men, with other articles in proportion. Here I had a serious difficulty with our general, which arose in the following manner. The general desired me to shoe his horse, which I cheerfully proceeded to do. I had finished setting three shoes, and had yet one nail to drive in the fourth, when, about to drive the last nail, the horse, which had been very restless during the whole time, withdrew his foot from me. My patience becoming exhausted, I applied the hammer several times to his belly, which is the usual punishment inflicted by blacksmiths upon unruly horses. The general, who was standing near, flew into a violent rage, and poured his curses thick and fast upon me. Feeling hurt at such language from the lips of a man whom I had treated like my own brother, I retorted, reminding him of the many obligations he owed me. I told him that his language to me was harsh and unmerited; that I had thus far served him faithfully; that I had done for him what no other man would do, periling my life for him on several occasions; that I had been successful in killing game when his men were in a state of starvation; and, warming at the recapitulation, I added, "There is one more nail to drive, general, to finish shoeing that horse, which you may drive for yourself, or let go undriven, for I will see you dead before I will lift another finger to serve you."

But little more was said on either side at that time.

The next morning the general gave orders to pack up and move on. He showed me a worn-out horse, which he ordered me to pack and drive along. I very well knew that the horse could not travel far, even without a pack.

Still, influenced by the harsh language the general had addressed to me on the previous day, I said, "General, I will pack the horse, but I wish you to understand that, whenever he gives out, there I leave him, horse and pack."

"Obey my orders, and let me have none of your insolence, sir," said the general.

I was satisfied this was imposed upon me for punishment. I, however, packed the horse with two pigs of lead and sundry small articles, and drove him along in the rear, the others having started a considerable time previous. The poor animal struggled on for about a mile, and then fell groaning under his burden. I unpacked him, assisted him to rise, and, repacking him, drove him on again in the trail that the others had left in the snow. Proceeding half a mile farther, he again fell. I went through the same ceremony as before. He advanced a few yards, and fell a third time. Feeling mad at the general for imposing such a task upon me, my hands tingling with cold through handling the snowy pack-ropes, I seized my hammer from the pack, and, striking with all my power, it penetrated the poor animal's skull.

"There," said I, "take that! I only wish you were General Ashley."

"You do, do you?" said a voice from the bushes on the side of the trail.

I well knew the voice: it was the general himself; and another volley of curses descended uninterruptedly upon my head.

I was not the man to flinch. "What I said I meant," I exclaimed, "and it makes no odds whether you heard it or not."

"You are an infernal scoundrel, and I'll shoot you;" and, suiting the action to the word, he cocked his piece and leveled it.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I cocked my rifle and presented it also, and then we stood at bay, looking each other direct in the eye.

“General,” I at length said, “you have addressed language to me which I allow no man to use, and, unless you retract that last epithet, you or I must surely die.”

He finally said, “I will acknowledge that it was language which never should be used to a man, but when I am angry I am apt to speak hastily. But,” he added, “I will make you suffer for this.”

“Not in your service, general,” I replied. “You can take your horse now, and do what you please with him. I am going to return to St. Louis.” The general almost smiled at the idea.

You will play —— going back to St. Louis,” he said, “when, in truth, you were afraid of being killed by the Indians, through being left too far behind with that old horse.”

I left general, horse, and pack, and started on to overtake the advanced party, in order to get my saddlebags before leaving them. Approaching the party, I advanced to Fitzpatrick (in whose possession they were) and addressed him: “Hold up, Fitzpatrick; give me my saddle-bags. I am going to leave you, and return to St. Louis.”

“What!” exclaimed he, “have you had more words with the general?”

“Yes,” I replied, “words that will never be forgiven — by me, at least, in this life. I am bound to return.”

Well,” said he, “wait till we encamp, a few hundred yards ahead. Your things are in the pack; when we stop you can get them.”

I accompanied them till they encamped; then, taking my goods from the pack, I was getting ready to return, when the general came up.

Seeing me about to carry my threat into execution, he addressed me: “Jim, you have ammunition belonging to me; you can not take that with you.”

Luckily, I had plenty of my own, so I delivered up all in my possession belonging to him.

“Sir,” I said, “as Fortune has favored me with plenty, I deliver up yours; but, if I had had none of my own, I would have retained a portion of yours, or died in the attempt. And it seems to me that you must have a very small soul to see a man turned adrift without any thing to protect him against hostile savages, or procure him necessary food in traversing this wide wilderness.”

He then said no more to me, but called Fitzpatrick, and requested him to dissuade me from leaving. Fitzpatrick came, and exerted all his eloquence to deter me from going, telling me of the great distance before me, the danger I ran, when alone, of being killed by Indians — representing the almost certain fact that I must perish from starvation. He reminded me that it was now March, and the snows were already melting; that Spring, with all its beauties, would soon be ushered in, and I should lose the sublime scenery of the Rocky Mountains.

But my mind was bent upon going; all my former love for the man was forfeited, and I felt I could never endure his presence again.

Fitzpatrick’s mission having failed, the general sent a French boy to intercede, toward whom I felt great attachment. He was named Baptiste La Jeunesse, and was about seventeen years of age. I had many times protected this lad from the abuse of his countrymen, and had fought several battles on his account, for which reason he naturally fled to me for protection, and had grown to regard me in the light of a father.

When this boy saw that I was in earnest about leaving, fearing that all attempts at persuasion would be useless, he hung his nether lip, and appeared perfectly disconsolate.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

The general, calling this lad to him, desired him to come to me and persuade me from the notion of leaving. He pledged his word to Baptiste that he would say no more to displease me; that he would spare no efforts to accommodate me, and offered me free use of his horses, assigning as a reason for this concession that he was unwilling for word to reach the States that he had suffered a man to perish in the wilderness through a little private difficulty in the camp.

At this moment Le Pointe presented himself, manifesting by his appearance that he had something of importance to communicate.

“General,” said he, “more than half the men are determined to leave with Beckwourth; they are now taking ammunition from the sacks and hiding it about. What is to be done?”

“I will do the best I can.” Then turning to the lad, he said, “I took Jim’s ammunition, thinking to deter him from going; had he insisted upon going, I should have furnished him with plenty. Go now,” he added, “and tell him I want him to stay, but if he insists upon going, to take whatever he wants.”

Baptiste left the group which surrounded the general, and made his way to me, with his head inclined.

“Mon frère,” said the lad, addressing me as I sat, “the général talk much good. He want you stay. I tell him you no stay; dat you en colère. I tell him if mon frère go, by gar, I go too. He say, you go talk to Jim, and get him stay. I tell you vat I tink. You stay leettle longer, and if de général talk you bad one time more, den ve go, by gar. You take von good horse, me take von good horse too; ve carry our planket, ve take some viande, and some poudre — den ve live. Ve go now — ve take noting — den ve die.”

I knew that the boy gave good advice, and, foregoing my former resolve, I concluded to remain. My decision was quickly communicated to the whole camp, and the hidden parcels of ammunition were restored to their proper places. The storm in the camp ceased, and all were ready to proceed.

I have heard scores of emigrants (when stopping with me in my “hermitage,” in Beckwourth Valley, California) relate their hair-breadth escapes from Indians, and various hardships endured in their passage across the Plains. They would dwell upon their perilous nights when standing guard; their encounters with Indians, or some daring exploit with a buffalo. These recitals were listened to with incredulous ears; for there is in human nature such a love of the marvelous, that traditionary deeds, by dint of repetition, become appropriated to the narrator, and the tales that were related as actual experience now mislead the speaker and the audience.

When I recurred to my own adventures, I would smile at the comparison of their sufferings with what myself and other men of the mountains had really endured in former times. The forts that now afford protection to the traveler were built by ourselves at the constant peril of our lives, amid Indian tribes nearly double their present numbers. Without wives and children to comfort us on our lonely way; without well-furnished wagons to resort to when hungry; no roads before us but trails temporarily made; our clothing consisting of the skins of the animals that had fallen before our unerring rifles, and often whole days on insufficient rations, or entirely without food; occasionally our whole party on guard the entire night, and our strength deserting us through unceasing watching and fatigue; these are sufferings that made theirs appear trivial, and ours surpass in magnitude my power of relation.

Without doubt, many emigrants were subjected to considerable hardship, during the early part of

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

the emigration, by the loss of cattle, and the Indians came in for their full share of blame. But it was through extreme carelessness that so many were lost; and those who have charged their losses upon the Indians have frequently found their stock, or a portion of it, harnessed to wagons either far in advance of them, or lagging carelessly in their rear. The morality of the whites I have not found to exceed very much that of the red man; for there are plenty of the former, belonging to trains on the routes, who would not hesitate to take an ox or two, if any chance offered for getting hold of them.

But to return. At the time when I had concluded to proceed with the party, we were encamped in the prairie, away from any stream (having passed the fork of the Platte), and were again in a starving condition. Except an occasional hare or rabbit, there was no sign of supplying ourselves with any kind of game.

We traveled on till we arrived at Pilot Butte, where two misfortunes befell us. A great portion of our horses were stolen by the Crow Indians, and General Ashley was taken sick, caused, beyond doubt, by exposure and insufficient fare. Our condition was growing worse and worse; and, as a measure best calculated to procure relief, we all resolved to go on a general hunt, and bring home something to supply our pressing necessities. All who were able, therefore, started in different directions, our customary mode of hunting. I traveled, as near as I could judge, about ten miles from the camp, and saw no signs of game. I reached a high point of land, and, on taking a general survey, I discovered a river which I had never seen in this region before. It was of considerable size, flowing four or five miles distant, and on its banks I observed acres of land covered with moving masses of buffalo. I hailed this as a perfect Godsend, and was overjoyed with the feeling of security infused by my opportune discovery. However, fatigued and weak; I accelerated my return to the camp, and communicated my success to my companions. Their faces brightened up at the intelligence, and all were impatient to be at them.

The general, on learning my intelligence, desired us to move forward to the river with what horses we had left, and each man to carry a pack on his back of the goods that remained after loading the cattle. He farther desired us to roll up snow to provide him with a shelter, and to return the next day to see if he survived.

The men, in their eagerness to get to the river (which is now called Green River), loaded themselves so heavily that three or four were left with nothing but their rifles to carry. Though my feelings toward the general were still unfriendly (knowing that he had expressed sentiments concerning me that were totally unmerited), I could not reconcile myself to deserting him in his present helpless condition. Accordingly, I informed him that if he thought he could endure the journey, I would make arrangements to enable him to proceed along with the company.

He appeared charmed with the magnanimity of the proposal, and declared his willingness to endure any thing in reason. His consent obtained, I prepared a light litter, and, with the assistance of two of the unladen men, placed him upon it, in the easiest position possible; then, attaching two straps to the ends of the litter-bars, we threw them over our shoulders, and, taking the bars in our hands, hoisted our burden, and proceeded with all the ease imaginable. Our rifles were carried by the third man.

The anxiety of the general to remain with us prevented his giving utterance to the least complaint, and we all arrived in good season on the banks of Green River. We were rejoiced to find that our companions who preceded us had killed a fine buffalo, and we abandoned ourselves that

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

evening to a general spirit of rejoicing. Our leader, in a few days, entirely recovered, and we were thus, by my forethought in bringing him with us, spared the labor of a return journey.

We all feasted ourselves to our hearts' content upon the delicious, coarse-grained flesh of the buffalo, of which there was an unlimited supply. There were, besides, plenty of wild geese and teal ducks on the river — the latter, however, I very seldom ventured to kill.

One day several of us were out hunting buffalo, the general, who, by the way, was a very good shot, being among the number. The snow had blown from the level prairie, and the wind had drifted it in deep masses over the margins of the small hills, through which the buffalo had made trails just wide enough to admit one at a time. These snow-trails had become quite deep — like all snow-trails in the spring of the year — thus affording us a fine opportunity for lurking in one trail, and shooting a buffalo in another. The general had wounded a bull, which, smarting with pain, made a furious plunge at his assailant, burying him in the snow with a thrust from his savage-looking head and horns. I, seeing the danger in which he was placed, sent a ball into the beast just behind the shoulder, instantly dropping him dead. The general was rescued from almost certain death, having received only a few scratches in the adventure.

After remaining in camp four or five days, the general resolved upon dividing our party into detachments of four or five men each, and sending them upon different routes, in order the better to accomplish the object of our perilous journey, which was the collecting all the beaver-skins possible while the fur was yet valuable. Accordingly, we constructed several boats of buffalo hides for the purpose of descending the river and proceeding along any of its tributaries that might lie in our way.

One of our boats being finished and launched, the general sprang into it to test its capacity. The boat was made fast by a slender string, which snapping with the sudden jerk, the boat was drawn into the current and drifted away, general and all, in the direction of the opposite shore.

It will be necessary, before I proceed farther, to give the reader a description, in as concise a manner as possible, of this "Green River Suck."

We were encamped, as we had discovered during our frequent excursions, at the head of a great fall of the Green River, where it passes through the Utah Mountains. The current, at a small distance from our camp, became exceedingly rapid, and drew toward the centre from each shore. This place we named the Suck. This fall continued for six or eight miles, making a sheer descent, in the entire distance, of upward of two hundred and fifty feet. The river was filled with rocks and ledges, and frequent sharp curves, having high mountains and perpendicular cliffs on either side. Below our camp, the river passed through a canyon, or cañon, as it is usually written, a deep river-pass through a bluff or mountain, which continued below the fall to a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles. Wherever there was an eddy or a growth of willows, there was sure to be found a beaver lodge; the cunning creatures having selected that secluded, and, as they doubtless considered, inaccessible spot, to conceal themselves from the watchful eye of the trapper.

To return to the general. His frail bark, having reached the opposite shore, encountered a ledge of rocks, and had hardly touched, when, by the action of the rolling current, it was capsized, and he thrown struggling into the water. As Providence would have it, he reached the bluff on the opposite side, and, holding on to the crevices in the high and perpendicular cliff, sung out lustily for assistance. Not a moment was to be lost. Some one must attempt to save him, for he could not hold his present position, in such cold water, long. I saw that no one cared to risk his life amid

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

such imminent peril, so, calling to a Frenchman of the name of Dorway, whom I knew to be one of the best swimmers, to come to the rescue, I threw off my leggins and plunged in, supposing he would follow. I swam under water as far as I could, to avail myself of the under current (this mode is always practiced by the Indians in crossing a rapid stream). I struck the bluff a few feet above the general. After taking breath for a moment or two, I said to him (by the way, he was no swimmer), "There is only one way I can possibly save you, and I may fail in that; but you must follow my directions in the most minute degree, or we are certainly both lost."

"Any thing you say, James, I will follow," said he. "Then," I continued, "when I float down to you, place your hands on my shoulder, and do not take hold of my neck. Then, when I give you the word, kick out with all your might, and we may possibly get across."

I then let myself down to the general, who was clinging to the rocks like a swallow. He did as I had directed, and I started, he kicking in my rear like the stern-wheel of a propeller, until I was obliged to bid him desist; for, with such a double propelling power as we produced, I could not keep my mouth out of water. We swam to within a few yards of the opposite shore, where the main suck caught us, and, my strength becoming exhausted, we began slowly to recede from the shore toward inevitable death. At this moment Fitzpatrick thrust a long pole toward us, to the end of which he attached a rope which the party on shore retained possession of. I seized the pole with a death-grip, and we were hauled out of our perilous situation; a few moment's delay, and the world had seen the last of us.

After this rescue, the general remarked to Fitzpatrick, "That Beckwourth is surely one of the most singular men I ever met. I do not know what to think of him; he never speaks to me except when absolutely unavoidable; still, he is the first and only man to encounter peril on my behalf. Three times he has now saved my life when not another man attempted to succor me. He is a problem I can not possibly solve."

Agreeably to previous arrangement, on the following morning our company proposed to disperse in different directions. While preparing to leave our comfortable camp to take our chance in the mountains, I happening to be out among the stock, the general inquired for me, and I was pointed out to him where I stood.

"He is a singular being," he exclaimed; "he knows we are about to separate, yet he does not trouble himself to come and bid me good-by. I must go to him."

Approaching me, he said, "James, we are now about to part; these toilsome enterprises in the mountains are extremely hazardous; although I hope to see you again, perhaps we may never meet more. I am under great obligations to you. You have several times rescued me from certain death, and, by your skill in hunting, you have done great service to my camp. When my mind was irritated and harassed, I was betrayed into the use of language toward you which I regretted immediately after, and still regret. I wish you to forgive me, and desire to part in friendship. So long as you continue to use the same precaution you have hitherto used, I can securely hope you will escape all accident, and look forward to meeting you again under more auspicious circumstances;" and he concluded by bidding me good-by.

I bade him good-by, and we separated.

Previous to this, and after his rescue from the "Suck," he mentioned to Fitzpatrick that I ought to have the lead of a party, and that he believed I was as capable as any one in the company for it. Fitzpatrick told him he did not believe I would accept the responsibility. The general bade him

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ask me. He came and communicated to me our general's wish, and asked me if I would take the leadership of one of our detached parties.

I declined the offer, assigning as my reason that I was too young to undertake the responsibilities of the charge; that this was my first trip to the mountains, and I had but little experience in trapping, and that there were older men better qualified for the duty.

The leadership of a party of a fur company is a very responsible post. Placed similarly to a captain of a whaling vessel, where all depends upon his success, if a captain is fortunate, and returns from a profitable voyage, of course, in the eyes of the owners, he is a first-rate officer, and stands well for the future. But if he has experienced unusual hardships, and returns more or less unsuccessful, he is disgraced in his command, and is thrust aside for a more fortunate man. It is just similar with trappers in the mountains; whatever is their fortune, good or bad, the leader is the person on whom the praise or blame falls.

#### CHAPTER VI.

We separate into six Detachments, and start out.—Trapping on Green River.—Narrow Escape from a Massacre by the Arrap-a-hos.—One Man murdered in Camp.—Retreat.—Fall in with a Detachment of our Company.—Great Joy at the Meeting.—Return of the Detachments to the Place of Rendezvous at the "Suck."

AFTER "caching" our peltry and goods by burying them in safe places, we received instructions from our general to rendezvous at the "Suck" by the first of July following. Bidding each other adieu, for we could hardly expect we should meet again, we took up our different lines of march. Our party consisted, led by one Clements, of six, among whom was the boy Baptiste, he always insisting on remaining with his brother (as he called me). Our route was up the river — a country that none of us had ever seen before — where the foot of the white man had seldom, if ever, left its print. We were very successful in finding beaver as we progressed, and we obtained plenty of game for the wants of our small party. Wherever we hauled up a trap, we usually found a beaver, besides a considerable number we killed with the rifle.

In moving up the river we came to a small stream — one of the tributaries of Green River — which we named "Horse Creek," in honor of a wild horse we found on its banks. The Creek abounded with the objects of our search, and in a very few days we succeeded in taking over one hundred beavers, the skins of which were worth ten dollars per pound in St. Louis. Sixty skins, when dried, formed a pack of one hundred pounds. After having finished our work on Horse Creek, we returned to the main river, and proceeded on, meeting with very good success, until we encountered another branch, which we subsequently named Le Brache Creek, from our comrade who was murdered by the Indians. Our success was much greater here than at any point since leaving the Suck, and we followed it up until we came to a deep cañon, in which we encamped. The next day, while the men were variously engaged about the camp, happening to be in a more elevated position than the others, I saw a party of Indians approaching within a few yards, evidently unaware of our being in their neighborhood. I immediately shouted, "Indians! Indians! to your guns, men!" and leveled my rifle at the foremost of them. They held up their hands, saying, "Bueno ! bueno !" meaning that they were good or friendly; at which my companions cried out to me, "Don't fire! don't fire! they are friendly — they speak Spanish." But we were sorry afterward we did not all shoot. Our horses had taken fright at the confusion and ran up the cañon. Baptiste and myself went in pursuit of them. When we came back with them we found sixteen Indians

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

sitting around our camp smoking, and jabbering their own tongue, which none of us understood. They passed the night and next day with us in apparent friendship. Thinking this conduct assumed, from the fact that they rather "overdid the thing," we deemed it prudent to retrace our steps to the open prairie, where, if they did intend to commence an attack upon us, we should have a fairer chance of defending ourselves. Accordingly, we packed up and left, all the Indians following us.

The next day they continued to linger about the camp. We had but slight suspicion of their motives, although, for security, we kept constant guard upon them. From this they proceeded to certain liberties (which I here strictly caution all emigrants and mountaineers against ever permitting), such as handling our guns, except the arms of the guard, piling them, and then carrying them together. At length one of the Indians shouldered all the guns, and, starting off with them, ran fifty yards from camp. Mentioning to my mates I did not like the manœuvres of these fellows, I started after the Indian and took my gun from him, Baptiste doing the same, and we brought them back to camp. Our companions chided us for doing so, saying we should anger the Indians by doubting their friendship. I said I considered my gun as safe in my own hands as in the hands of a strange savage; if they chose to give up theirs, they were at liberty to do so.

When night came on, we all lay down except poor Le Brache, who kept guard, having an Indian with him to replenish the fire. Some of the men had fallen asleep, lying near by, when we were all suddenly startled by a loud cry from Le Brache and the instant report of a gun, the contents of which passed between Baptiste and myself, who both occupied one bed, the powder burning a hole in our upper blankets. We were all up in an instant. An Indian had seized my rifle, but I instantly wrenched it from him, though, I acknowledge, I was too terrified to shoot. When we had in some measure recovered from our sudden fright, I hastened to Le Brache, and discovered that a tomahawk had been sunk in his head, and there remained. I pulled it out, and in examining the ghastly wound, buried all four fingers of my right hand in his brain. We bound up his head, but he was a corpse in a few moments.

Not an Indian was then to be seen, but we well knew they were in the bushes close by, and that, in all probability, we should every one share the fate of our murdered comrade. What to do now was the universal inquiry. With the butt of my rifle I scattered the fire, to prevent the Indians making a sure mark of us. We then proceeded to pack up with the utmost dispatch, intending to move into the open prairie, where, if they attacked us again, we could at least defend ourselves, notwithstanding our disparity of numbers, we being but five to sixteen.

On searching for Le Brache's gun, it was nowhere to be found, the Indian who had killed him having doubtless carried it off. While hastily packing our articles, I very luckily found five quivers well stocked with arrows, the bows attached, together with two Indian guns. These well supplied our missing rifle, for I had practiced so much with bow and arrow that I was considered a good shot.

When in readiness to leave, our leader inquired in which direction the river lay; his agitation had been so great that his memory had failed him. I directed the way, and desired every man to put the animals upon their utmost speed until we were safely out of the willows, which order was complied with. While thus running the gauntlet, the balls and arrows whizzed around us as fast as our hidden enemies could send them. Not a man was scratched, however, though two of our horses were wounded, my horse having received an arrow in the neck, and another being wound-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ed near the hip, both slightly. Pursuing our course, we arrived soon in the open ground, where we considered ourselves comparatively safe.

Arriving at a small rise in the prairie, I suggested to our leader that this would be a good place to make a stand, for if the Indians followed us we had the advantage in position.

“No,” said he, “we will proceed on to New Mexico.”

I was astonished at his answer, well knowing — though but slightly skilled in geography — that New Mexico must be many hundred miles farther south. However, I was not captain, and we proceeded. Keeping the return track, we found ourselves, in the afternoon of the following day, about sixty miles from the scene of murder.

The assault had been made, as we afterward learned, by three young Indians, who were ambitious to distinguish themselves in the minds of their tribe by the massacre of an American party.

We were still descending the banks of the Green River, which is the main branch of the Colorado, when, about the time mentioned above, I discovered horses in the skirt of the woods on the opposite side. My companions pronounced them buffalo, but I was confident they were horses, because I could distinguish white ones among them. Proceeding still farther, I discovered men with the horses, my comrades still confident I was in error; speedily, however, they all became satisfied of my correctness, and we formed the conclusion that we had come across a party of Indians. We saw by their manœuvres that they had discovered us, for they were then collecting all their property together.

We held a short council, which resulted in a determination to retreat toward the mountains. I, for one, was tired of retreating, and refused to go farther. Baptiste joining me in my resolve. We took up a strong position for defense, being a place of difficult approach; and having our guns, and ammunition, and abundance of arrows for defense, considering our numbers, we felt ourselves rather a strong garrison. The other three left as to our determination to fall together, and took to the prairie; but, changing mind, they returned, and rejoined us in our position, deeming our means of defense better in one body than when divided. We all, therefore, determined to sell our lives as dearly as possible should the enemy attack us, feeling sure that we could kill five times our number before we were overpowered, and that we should, in all probability, beat them off.

By this time the supposed enemy had advanced toward us, and one of them hailed us in English as follows

“Who are you?”

“We are trappers.”

“What company do you belong to?” “General Ashley’s.”

“Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!” they all shouted, and we, in turn, exhausted our breath in replying.

“Is that you, Jim Beckwourth?” said a voice from the party.

“Yes. Is that you, Castenga?” I replied.

He answered in the affirmative, and there arose another hurrah.

We inquired where their camp was. They informed us it was two miles below, at the ford. Baptiste and myself mounted our horses, descended the bank, plunged into the river, and were soon exchanging salutations with another of the general’s old detachments. They also had taken us for Indians, and had gathered in their horses while we took up our position for defense.

The night was spent in general rejoicing, in relating our adventures, and recounting our various successes and reverses. There is as much heartfelt joy experienced in falling in with a party of

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

fellow-trappers in the mountains as is felt at sea when, after a long voyage, a friendly vessel just from port is spoken and boarded. In both cases a thousand questions are asked; all have wives, sweethearts, or friends to inquire after, and then the general news from the States is taken up and discussed.

The party we had fallen in with consisted of sixteen men. They had been two years out; had left Fort Yellow Stone only a short time previously, and were provided with every necessary for a long excursion. They had not seen the general, and did not know he was in the mountains. They had lost some of their men, who had fallen victims to the Indians, but in trapping had been generally successful. Our little party also had done extremely well, and we felt great satisfaction in displaying to them seven or eight packets of sixty skins each. We related to them the murder of Le Brache, and every trapper boiled with indignation at the recital. All wanted instantly to start in pursuit, and revenge upon the Indians the perpetration of their treachery; but there was no probability of overtaking them, and they suffered their anger to cool down.

The second day after our meeting, I proposed that the most experienced mountaineers of their party should return with Baptiste and myself to perform the burial rites of our friend. I proposed three men, with ourselves, as sufficient for the sixteen Indians, in case we should fall in with them, and they would certainly be enough for the errand if we met no one. My former comrades were too tired to return.

We started, and arrived at our unfortunate camp, but the body of our late friend was not to be found, though we discovered some of his long black hair clotted with blood.

On raising the traps which we had set before our precipitate departure, we found a beaver in every one except four, which contained each a leg, the beavers having amputated them with their teeth. We then returned to our companions, and moved on to Willow Creek, where we were handy to the caches of our rendezvous at the "Suck." It was now about June 1st, 1822.

Here we spent our time very pleasantly, occupying ourselves with hunting, fishing, target-shooting, footracing, gymnastic, and sundry other exercises. The other detachments now came in, bringing with them quantities of peltry, all having met with very great success.

#### CHAPTER VII.

Arrival of General Ashley and Party.—His Relation of their Sufferings after leaving the Rendezvous.—Their Excursion to Salt Lake.—Fall in with a Fur Company before unknown to the Mountaineers.—His final Fortune, and return to St. Louis.

SITTING in camp one beautiful summer morning — for the month of June is always lovely in northern latitudes — an Indian lass stepped up to me, and wished me to kill a deer or an antelope, and bring her the brains, wherewith to dress a deer-skin, offering me, in compensation, a handsome pair of moccasins. Thinking to save two dollars by a few minutes' exertion, I took my rifle and alone left camp. After traveling two miles, I obtained sight of a fine antelope, which had also seen me, and kept himself at a respectful distance. In following him up to get a fair shot, I at length found myself about ten miles from camp, with small prospect of getting either brains or moccasins.

While among the wild sage, still trying to approach the antelope, I observed a horse and rider coming in my direction. Feeling satisfied that the rider was an Indian, I at once made up my mind to run no farther after the antelope, but to shoot him, and take his brains to the squaw, as she would know no difference. I therefore concealed myself in the sage until he should come

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

within range of my rifle. Becoming impatient, at length, at his tardy approach, I raised my head to take a look, when, to my utter astonishment, I saw General Ashley in the act of mounting his horse at a few paces' distance. He had stopped to adjust something belonging to his saddle, and to this trifling circumstance he was indebted for his life. On seeing who it was, I became so excited at the narrow escape he had made, that my rifle fell from my hand. If I had shot him, it being well known in camp that I was not entirely reconciled to him, I should, most undoubtedly, have been charged with his murder. I told the general of the narrow escape he had just made. He was surprised at my mistaking him for an Indian, and inquired if I did not know that they never traveled singly.

I then inquired after his health, and the success he had met with, and then related to him our own losses and success generally. He inquired where the camp was. I told him it was close at hand. In conducting the general thither, he pronounced my "close at hand" rather distant.

Arrived at camp, the general related their adventures in descending the Green River over the rapids, through the Suck and cañon, in the following narrative:

"We had a very dangerous passage down the river, and suffered more than I ever wish to see men suffer again. You are aware that we took but little provision with us, not expecting that the cañon extended so far. In passing over the rapids, where we lost two boats and three guns, we made use of ropes in letting down our boats over the most dangerous places. Our provisions soon gave out. We found plenty of beaver in the cañon for some miles, and, expecting to find them in as great plenty all the way, we saved none of their carcasses, which constituted our food. As we proceeded, however, they became more and more scarce, until there were none to be seen, and we were entirely out of provisions. To retrace the river was impossible, and to ascend the perpendicular cliffs, which hemmed us in on either side, was equally impossible. Our only alternative was to go ahead. "After passing six days without tasting food, the men were weak and disheartened. I listened to all their murmurings and heart-rending complaints. They often spoke of home and friends, declaring they would never see them more. Some spoke of wives and children whom they dearly loved, and who must shortly become widows and orphans. They had toiled, they said, through every difficulty; had risked their lives among wild beasts and hostile Indians in the wilderness, all which they were willing to undergo; but who could bear up against actual starvation?

"I encouraged them all in my power, telling them that I bore an equal part in their sufferings; that I, too, was toiling for those I loved, and whom I yet hoped to see again; that we should all endeavor to keep up our courage, and not add to our misfortunes by giving way to despondency.

"Another night was passed amid the barren rocks. The next morning, the fearful proposition was made by some of the party for the company to cast lots, to see which should be sacrificed to afford food for the others, without which they must inevitably perish. My feelings at such a proposition can not be described. I begged of them to wait one day more, and make all the way they could meanwhile. By doing so, I said, we must come to a break in the cañon, where we could escape. They consented, and, moving down the river as fast as the current would carry us, to our inexpressible joy, we found a break, and a camp of trappers therein.

"All now rejoiced that they had not carried their fearful proposition into effect. We had fallen into good hands, and slowly recruited ourselves with the party, which was under the charge of one Provo, a man with whom I was well acquainted. By his advice, we left the river and proceeded in a northwesterly direction. Provo was well provided with provisions and horses, and he

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

supplied us with both. We remained with his party until we arrived at the Great Salt Lake. Here I fell in with a large company of trappers, composed of Canadians and Iroquois Indians, under the command of Peter Ogden, in the service of the Northwest Fur Company. With this party I made a very good bargain, as you will see when they arrive at our camp, having purchased all their peltry on very reasonable terms.”

The general concluded his narrative, and was congratulated by all present on his safe arrival. We were all rejoiced to hear that, during an absence of six or seven weeks, he had not lost a man. We then proceeded to uncache our goods, which we had buried at the “Suck,” and prepared to move up the river to a point where the Canadians and Indians had engaged to meet him with their peltry. The general appointed me captain of a party to meet the Canadians, and escort them to the rendezvous which he had proposed to them, while he and some few others remained to bring up the goods, consisting of flour, sugar, coffee, blankets, tobacco, whisky, and all other articles necessary for that region.

There were at this time assembled at our camp about two hundred men, besides many women and children — for many of the Frenchmen were accompanied with a squaw. I took with me eighty men, with their women, children, and effects, leaving for the general a strong guard of one hundred and twenty men, to escort the goods up the river.

Two days after we had started, being about a mile from the river, we stopped to dress a buffalo. While resting, a party of four hundred Indians passed at full speed between us and the river, driving a large number of horses. We mounted with all haste and started after them, but not in time to recapture the whole of the horses, which they had just stolen, or, rather, forced from the general in the presence of his men.

We fired on the Indians, and, after a smart skirmish, in which I received an arrow in the left arm, we recaptured twenty-seven of the animals, the Indians running off the remainder, amounting to seventy or eighty head; a severe loss, for we needed them to carry our peltry. We found three dead Indians on the field, whom we scalped, leaving them for the wolves to feed on. I ordered a camp to be formed wherein to leave the women and children, with a guard, and then, mustering all the horses, we took the return track to the camp, fearing that the party had been surprised and perhaps all massacred. On the road we met a party which the general had dispatched to us, he having similar apprehensions in regard to us. They informed us that the Indians had broken in upon them in broad daylight, unawares, and stampeded one hundred head of horses; that two of their men were wounded, of whom Sublet (since well known to the Western people) was one. It seems he was with the horses at the time the Indians rushed in upon them; he fired at one, but missed him; then clubbing his piece, he struck the Indian, nearly knocking him off his horse. The Indian rallied again and fired at Sublet, wounding him slightly. Both the wounded men were doing well. Arrived at the camp, we related our exploit to the general. He was overjoyed to hear that we had recaptured so many horses without the loss of a single man. This was my first engagement with Indians in the capacity of officer; and never did Generals Scott or Taylor feel more exultation at their most signal triumph than did I in this trifling affair, where a score or so of horses were captured at the expense of myself and two of my men receiving slight wounds.

We all moved on together, feeling ourselves a match for a thousand Indians, should they dare to assail us. On arriving at the rendezvous, we found the main body of the Salt Lake party already there with the whole of their effects. The general would open none of his goods, except tobacco,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

until all had arrived, as he wished to make an equal distribution; for goods were then very scarce in the mountains, and hard to obtain.

When all had come in, he opened his goods, and there was a general jubilee among all at the rendezvous. We constituted quite a little town, numbering at least eight hundred souls, of whom one half were women and children. There were some among us who had not seen any groceries, such as coffee, sugar, &c., for several months. The whisky went off as freely as water, even at the exorbitant price he sold it for. All kinds of sports were indulged in with a heartiness that would astonish more civilized societies. The general transacted a very profitable trade with our Salt Lake friends. He purchased all their beaver, of which they had collected a large quantity, so that, with his purchases and those of our own collection, he had now one hundred and ninety-one packs, all in excellent order, and worth \$1000 per pack in St. Louis.

There lay the general's fortune in one immense pile, collected at the expense of severe toil, privation, suffering, peril, and, in some cases, loss of life. It was supposed the general was indebted in the mountains and elsewhere to the amount of \$75,000. The skins he had purchased of the Northwest Company and free trappers had cost him comparatively little; if he should meet with no misfortune on his way to St. Louis, he would receive enough to pay all his debts, and have an ample fortune besides.

In about a week the general was ready to start for home. The packs were all arranged; our Salt Lake friends offered him the loan of all the horses he wanted, and engaged to escort him to the head of Wind River, one of the branches of the Yellow Stone. The number selected to return with the general was twenty men, including my humble self; thirty men were to accompany us as a guard, and to return the horses we had borrowed.

The night previous to our departure, I and my boy Baptiste were sleeping among the packs, as were also some of the other men, when the sentinel came to me to tell me that he had seen something which he believed to be Indians. I arose, and satisfied myself that he was correct. I sent a man to acquaint the general, at the same time waking the boy and two men near me. We noiselessly raised ourselves, took as good aim as possible, and, at a signal from me, all four fired. We saw two men run. By this time the whole camp was aroused; the general asked me what I had fired at. I told him I believed an Indian.

"Very good," said he; "whenever you see an Indian about the camp at night, you do right to shoot him."

Our whole force was on guard from that time till the morning, when we discovered two dead Indians lying where we had directed our aim in the night. We knew they had been killed by our guns, for the other two men fired with shot-guns loaded with buck-shot. One had been killed with a ball through the arm and body; the other was shot through the head. We at first supposed that the two Indians belonged to the Black Feet, but we subsequently found they were Crows. One of them wore a fine pair of buckskin leg-gins, which I took from him and put on myself. We started with an escort of fifty men, following the Wind River down to the Yellow Stone, where we built our boats to descend the river. On the sixth day after leaving camp, while we were packing our effects for an early start, the alarm of "Indians!" was given, and, on looking out, we saw an immense body of them, well mounted, charging directly down upon our camp. Every man seized his rifle, and prepared for the living tornado. The general gave orders for no man to fire until he did. By this time the Indians were within half pistol shot. Greenwood (one of our party)

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

pronounced them Crows, and called out several times not to shoot. We kept our eyes upon our general; he pulled trigger, but his gun missed fire, and our camp was immediately filled with their warriors. Most fortunate was it for us that the general's gun did miss fire, for they numbered over a thousand warriors, and not a man of us would have escaped to see the Yellow Stone.

Greenwood, who knew the Crows, acted as interpreter between our general and the Indian chief, whose name was Ap-sar-o-ka Bet-set-sa, Sparrow - Hawk Chief.

After making numerous inquiries about our success in hunting, the chief inquired through the interpreter where we were from.

"From Green River," was the reply. "You killed two Black Feet there?" "Yes."

"Where are their scalps? My people wish to dance."

"Don't show them!" cried Greenwood to us. Turning to the Indian: "We did not take their scalps."

"Ugh! that is strange."

During this colloquy I had buried my scalp in the sand, and concealed my leggins, knowing they had belonged to a Crow. The chief gave orders to his warriors to move on, many of them keeping with us on our road to their camp, which was but a short distance off.

Soon after reaching there, an Indian woman issued from a lodge and approached the chief. She was covered with blood, and, crying in the most piteous tones, addressed the chief: "These are the men that killed my son on Green River, and will you not avenge his death?"

She was almost naked, and, according to their custom when a near relative is slain, had inflicted wounds all over her body in token of her deep mourning.

The chief, turning to the general, then said,

"The two men that were killed in your camp were not Black Feet, but my own warriors; they were good horse-thieves, and brave men. One of them was a son of this woman, and she is crying for his loss. Give her something to make her cease her cries, for it angers me to see her grief."

The general cheerfully made her a present of what things he had at hand, to the value of about fifty dollars.

"Now," said the chief to the woman, "go to your lodge and cease your crying." She went away seemingly satisfied.

During the day two other Indians came to the encampment, and, displaying each a wound, said, "See here what you white people have done to us; you shot us; white people shoot good in the dark."

These were the two whom we had seen run away after our night-discharge on the Green River. They had been wounded by the other two men's shot-guns, but their wounds were not serious. They said that their intention had been to steal our horses, but our eyes were too sharp for them. The general distributed some farther presents among these two men. Happening to look among their numerous horses, we recognized some that had been stolen from us at the time the general was sick, previous to our discovery of the Green River.

The general said to the chief, "I believe I see some of my horses among yours."

"Yes, we stole them from you."

"What did you steal my horses for?"

"I was tired with walking. I had been to fight the Black Feet, and, coming back, would have called at your camp; you would have given me tobacco, but that would not carry me. When we stole them they were very poor; they are now fat. We have plenty of horses; you can take all that

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

belong to you.”

The chief then gave orders for them to deliver up all the horses taken from our camp. They brought in eighty-eight — all in excellent condition — and delivered them up to the general, who was overjoyed at their recovery, for he had never expected to see his horses again.

On our issuing from their camp, many of the Indians bore us company for two days, until we came to a pass in the mountains called Bad Pass, where we encamped. Several of the party being out with their guns searching for game, a man by the name of Baptiste — not the boy — having a portion of a buffalo on his horse, came across a small stream flowing near the trail, when he halted to get a drink. While stooping to drink, a grizzly bear sprang upon him, and lacerated him in a shocking manner. Passing that way, I came across his dismounted horse, and, following his tracks down to the river, discovered the poor fellow with his head completely flayed, and several dangerous wounds in various parts of his body. I quickly gave the alarm, and procured assistance to carry him to the camp. Soon after reaching the camp we heard a great rush of horses, and, looking in the direction of the noise, perceived a party of our half-breeds charging directly toward our camp, and driving before them an other bear of enormous size. All the camp scattered and took to trees. I was standing by the wounded man at the time, and became so terrified that I hardly knew whether I was standing on the ground or was in a tree. I kept my eye on the bear, not supposing that he would enter our camp; but he held his course directly for me. I withdrew to look for a tree, but for some reason did not climb. Every man was calling to me, “To a tree, Jim! to a tree!” but by this time the bear was in camp, and the horsemen at his heels. On his seeing the wounded man lying there all covered with blood, he made a partial halt. I profited by the incident, and put a ball directly into his heart, killing his bearship instantly. The general fired at the same moment, his ball also taking good effect.

The next day we went through Bad Pass, carrying our wounded companion on a litter, who, notwithstanding his dreadful wounds, recovered. On arriving at the “Big Horn,” as it is called there, we set about preparing boats, which, after five days, were ready for launching. There were fur-trappers with us, who, having made a boat for themselves, went on in advance, intending to trap along down until we should overtake them. They accordingly started. When we went down we found their boat and traps, which had been broken, but no remains of the trappers. By the appearance of the ground, it was evident that the Indians had surprised and murdered them, and afterward removed their bodies. Nothing else of consequence occurred during our run down the Big Horn and Yellow Stone to the junction of the latter with the Missouri, thus running a distance of eight hundred miles in our boats.

In effecting a landing at the junction of these two rivers we unfortunately sunk one of our boats, on board of which were thirty packs of beaver-skins, and away they went, floating down the current as rapidly as though they had been live beavers. All was noise and confusion in a minute, the general, in a perfect ferment, shouting to us to save packs. All the swimmers plunged in after them, and every pack was saved. The noise we made attracted a strong body of U. S. troops down to the river, who were encamped near the place, and officers, privates, and musicians lined the shore. They were under the command of General Atkinson, then negotiating a treaty with the Indians of that region on behalf of the government. General Atkinson and our general happened to be old acquaintances, and when we had made every thing snug and secure, we all went into camp, and freely indulged in festivities. Hurrah for the Mountains!” rung through the camp again

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

and again.

The next morning we carried all our effects from the boats to the encampment, and our hunters went out in search of game. Not a day passed but we brought in great quantities of buffalo, venison, mountain-sheep, etc. Of the latter, we caught some very young ones alive, one of which I presented to Lieutenant (now General) Harney, which circumstance, I have no doubt, he still bears in mind.

After a stay of about a week, General Atkinson furnished us a boat of sufficient size to carry all our effects, and, breaking up the encampment, afforded us the pleasure of the company of all the troops under his command — we, gentlemen mountaineers, traveling as passengers. At our camping places we very willingly supplied the party with game.

At one of our encampments an amusing accident occurred. We were out hunting buffalo, and had succeeded in wounding a bull, who, furious with his wound, made, with the speed of lightning, directly for the camp, leaving a cloud of dust in his track. The troops, perceiving his approach, scattered in all directions as though an avalanche was bursting upon them. On went the buffalo, overturning tents, baggage, and guns — leaping every impediment that arrested his course; then, turning, he plunged into the river and gained the opposite prairie, leaving more than a hundred soldiers seared half to death at his visitation. They certainly discharged their pieces at him, but, for all the injury they inflicted, he will probably live to a good old age.

Previous to our arrival at Fort Clarke we met with another serious misadventure. The boat containing all our general's effects, running on a snag, immediately sunk. Again all our packs were afloat, and General Atkinson, witnessing the accident, ordered every man overboard to save the peltry, himself setting the example. In an instant, mountaineers, United States officers and soldiers plunged in to the rescue. Fortunately it was shoal water, not more than waist high, and all was speedily saved.

General Atkinson related a difficulty he had had with the Crow nation in the course of a treaty with them at Fort Clarke, on his way up the river. The Crows, in a battle with the Black Feet, had taken a half-breed woman and child, whom they had captured on the Columbia River some time previously. General Atkinson ordered them to liberate the captives, which they refused to do, saying that they had taken them from their enemies, the Black Feet, and that they clearly belonged to them. The general persisted in his demand, and the Indians refused to comply, even offering to fight about the matter. The general declined fighting that day, but desired them to come on the morrow and he would be prepared.

The next day the Indian force presented themselves for the onset, they bringing a host of warriors. One of the chiefs visited the military camp for a "talk." He had an interview with Major O'Fallen, who ordered him to give up the captives or prepare to fight. The chief boastfully replied, through Rose, the interpreter, that the major's party was not a match for the Crows; that he would whip his whole army. On this, the major, who was a passionate man, drew his pistol and snapped it at the chief's breast. It missed fire, and he then struck the Indian a violent blow on the head with the weapon, inflicting a severe gash. The chief made no resistance, but remained sullen. When this occurrence reached the ears of the Indian warriors, they became perfectly infuriated, and prepared for an instant attack. General Atkinson pacified them through Rose, who was one of the best interpreters ever known in the whole Indian country. During the hubbub, the Indians spiked the general's guns with wooden spikes, and stuffed them with grass.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Their principal chief, "Long Hair," then visited the camp, and addressed the general:

"White Chief, the Crows have never yet shed the blood of the white people; they have always treated them like brothers. You have now shed the first blood; my people are angry, and we must fight."

The general replied, "Chief, I was told by my friend, the great Red-haired Chief, that the Crows were a good people; that they were our friends. We did not come to fight the Crows; we came as their friends."

"The Red-haired Chief!" exclaimed Long Hair, in astonishment ; "are you his people?"

"Yes," replied the general.

"The Red-haired Chief is a great chief, and when he hears that you have shed the blood of a Crow, he will be angry, and punish you for it. Go home," he added, "and tell the Red-haired Chief that you have shed the blood of a Crow, and, though our people were angry, we did not kill his people. Tell him that you saw Long Hair, the Crow chief, to whom he gave the red plume many winters ago."

Long Hair and Rose then went out and harangued the warriors, who immediately withdrew, and soon the woman and child were brought into camp. The general made them a present of a great number of guns, and ammunition in abundance, at which they were highly delighted.

The reader who has perused "Lewis and Clarke's Travels" will please to understand that the "Red-haired Chief" spoken of above was none other than Mr. Clarke, whom the Crows almost worshiped while he was among them, and who yet hold his name in the highest veneration. He was considered by them to be a great "medicine man," and they supposed him lord over the whole white race.

The loss of the boat being supplied, and all to rights again, we continued our course down the Missouri, still in company with the troops, until we reached Fort Look-out, where we encamped for the night. There was a trading-post at this fort, belonging to the American Fur Company, in charge of Major Pitcher. The major made General Ashley present of a large grizzly bear for a plaything, and a pretty plaything we found him before we were done with him. He was made fast with a chain to the cargo-box on deck, and seemed to think himself captain; at any rate, he was more imperious in his orders than a commodore on a foreign station. He would suffer no one on deck, and seemed literally to apply the poet's words to himself,

"I am monarch of all I survey,

My right there is none to dispute."

We continued our course down the river, encamping on shore every night. We had a jovial time of it, telling stories, cracking jokes, and frequently making free with Uncle Sam's "O be joyful," of which there was great plenty for the supply of rations to the troops. The soldiers listened with astonishment to the wild adventures of the mountaineers, and would, in turn, engage our attention with recitals of their own experience.

At length we arrived at Council Bluffs, where we remained three days, feeling ourselves almost at home. We of course had a good time at the Bluffs, and the three days passed in continual festivities.

Providing ourselves with a good boat, we bade adieu to the troops, who stayed behind at the Bluffs, and continued our descent of the river. The current of the Missouri is swift, but to our impatient minds a locomotive would have seemed too tardy in removing us from the scenes of

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

hardship and privation we had just gone through to the homes of our friends, our sweethearts, our wives and little ones.

Those who reside in maritime places, and have witnessed the hardy tars step ashore in their native land, can form an adequate idea of the happy return of the mountaineers from their wanderings on the Plains to St. Louis, which is their great sea-port; or, if a pun is admissible, I may perhaps say see-port; for there we see our old friends, there we see our fun and merriment, and there we sometimes "see sights."

Arrived at St. Charles, twenty miles above St. Louis, the general dispatched a courier to his friends, Messrs. Warndorf and Tracy, to inform them of his great success, and that he would be in with his cargo the next day about noon.

When we came in sight of the city we were saluted by a piece of artillery, which continued its discharges until we landed at the market-place. There were not less than a thousand persons present, who hailed our landing with shouts which deafened our ears. Those who had parents, brothers and sisters, wives or sweethearts, met them at the landing; and such a rushing, crowding, pulling, hauling, weeping, and laughing I had never before witnessed. Every one had learned our approach by the courier.

My father, who had moved to St. Louis, was in the crowd, and was overjoyed to see me. He had lost a part of his property by being surety for other men, and I could see that age had left its traces upon him during the little time that I had been absent.

Our cargo was soon landed and stored, the men receiving information that they would be paid off that afternoon at the store of Messrs. Warndorf and Tracy. We accordingly repaired thither in a body to receive our pay. The full amount was counted out in silver to each man, except three, namely, La Roche, Pellow, and myself. To us the general gave twenty-five dollars each, telling us he would see us there again. I immediately thought of my difficulty with him in the mountains, and concluded that the remainder of my pay was to be withheld on that account. We took our twenty-five dollars each, and went away, asking no farther questions, though we took no trouble to conceal our thoughts. Before we left the counting-room, the general told us to repair to any hotel we chose, and have whatever we liked to call for until the next morning, and he would pay the bill.

Accordingly, we all repaired to Le Barras's hotel, and had a glorious time of it. The house was thronged with our friends besides, who all felt themselves included in the general's hospitality. General Ashley called on us the next morning, and, perceiving that we had "run all night," told us to keep on another day at his expense, adding that, if we wished to indulge in a ride, he would pay for carriages. We profited by his hint, and did not fail to take into our party a good share of lasses and mountaineers.

The next morning the general again visited us, and, seeing we were pretty sober, paid the bill (not a trifling matter), and desired us to call on him at the store at ten o'clock. We went as appointed, not knowing yet how he would treat us. When we were assembled, he paid us our wages in full, made us a present of three hundred dollars each, and desired us to purchase a first-rate suit of clothes each at his expense.

"I give you this extra," he said, "for your faithful services to me in the mountains; for your watchfulness over my property and interest while there; for your kindness in caring for me while sick and helpless, carrying me when unable to walk, and not leaving me to perish in the camp alone."

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I forgot to mention the disembarkation of Grizzly at the proper time, but will do so here. After the peltry was all landed and stored, the bear still occupied his station. Hundreds were yet gazing at him, many of whom had never seen one of the kind before. The general said to me, "James, how, under the sun, are we to get that animal off the boat?" I, having a few glasses of "artificial courage" to back me, felt exceedingly valorous, and thought myself able to throw a mill-stone across the Mississippi. Accordingly, I volunteered to bring him ashore. I procured a light stick, walked straight up to the bear, and, speaking very sharp to him (as he had to us all the way down the river), deliberately unfastened his chain. He looked me in the eyes for a moment, and, giving a low whine, drooped his head. I led him off the boat along a staging prepared for the purpose, the crowd instantly falling back to a respectful distance. Landing him without accident, the general wished me to lead him to the residence of Major Biddle, distant a quarter of a mile from the landing. Courageous as ever, I led him on, though some of the time he would lead his leader, Bruin often looking round at the crowd that was following up at a prudent distance behind. I arrived safe at the residence, and made Grizzly fast to an apple-tree that stood there. I had scarcely got to the length of his chain, when he made a furious spring at me; the chain, very fortunately, was a strong one, and held him fast.

I then called at the major's house, and, delivering our general's compliments to him, informed him he had sent a pet for his acceptance. He inquired what kind of a pet, and, taking him to the tree where I had made fast the bear, I showed the huge beast to him. The major almost quaked with fear. While we stood looking at him, a small pig happened to pass near the bear, when Grizzly dealt him such a blow with his paw that he left him not a whole bone in his body, and piggy fell dead out of the bear's reach.

The major then invited me in, and, setting out some of his best, I drank his health according to the custom of those days, and left to rejoin my companions.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Unexpected Return to the Rocky Mountains.—Camp removed.—Final Success in finding our party in the Mountains.—Joyful Meeting.—Horses stolen by the Pun-nak Indians.—A Battle, and six Indians killed.—We recapture our Horses.

I HAD been in St. Louis only one week, when Gen. Ashley came to me, and desired me to return to the mountains immediately, to carry dispatches to Mr. W. L. Sublet, captain of the trappers, and offering me the magnificent sum of one thousand dollars for the trip. I consented to go; La Roche and Pellow were to accompany me. A journey to the mountains was then called two thousand miles, through a country considered dangerous even for an army. I left St. Louis this time with extreme reluctance. It is a severe trial to leave one's friends; but the grief of separating from father and all other relatives sank into insignificance when contrasted with the misery of separating from one in particular—one in whom all my affections were reposed, and upon whom all my hopes of the future were concentrated. The contemplation of the anguish I was about to inflict by the announcement filled my heart with sorrow. One week more, and the happy event that would make one of two loving hearts would have been consummated.

The general's business was urgent, and admitted of no delay; after I had engaged, not a day, scarcely an hour was to be lost. The thousand dollars I was to receive looked large in my eyes; and that, added to what I already possessed, would the better prepare me for a matrimonial voyage. I comforted myself with the reflection that my services were confined to the mere delivering of the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

dispatches; that service performed, I was free to return immediately.

I bid my aged father farewell — it was the last time I saw him. To my other friends I said cheerfully *au revoir*, expecting to return to them shortly.

But my greatest conflict was to come. I had encountered perils, privation, and faced death itself; I had fought savages and the wild beasts of the mountains; but to approach this tender heart, that had been affianced to my own for years, unmanned me. That heart that was then so light, so buoyant with hope, so full of confidence in the future, that I must plunge in utter darkness by the intelligence that in a few short hours I must leave her! Could I have communicated it to her by fighting a score of Indians, how much my pain would have been mitigated! But time was urgent, and the sacred obligation to the lady must be performed.

I called on my sweetheart; she looked more lovely than ever. She remarked my troubled looks.

“James,” she said, “you look saddened; what is the matter? Are you unwell?”

“No, Eliza, I am well; but —”

“But what, James? What has happened? Speak!”

Knowing that I had no time for delay, I felt it my duty to break the news to her at once.

“My dear girl,” I said, “I have loved you long and ardently. I have waited to see if the affection which you shared with me in childhood would stand the proof of maturer years. We are now both matured in years, and are capable of judging our own hearts. Through all my sufferings and dangers, my devotion to you has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength. We have decided on the day for our indissoluble union. But, Eliza, I am yet young; my means of supporting you as I could wish are inadequate. I have just received a very tempting offer from General Ashley.”

“What to do, James?”

“He offers me one thousand dollars to carry dispatches to the mountains, which admits of my immediate return.”

“And are you going?”

“That is what I have come to inform you, Eliza. Understand my motive — it is solely to obtain the means to enable us to start the fairer in life.”

“I care not for money, James,” she said, bursting into a flood of tears.

My heart sought relief from its overcharged feeling in the same way. I left her amid her sobs, promising to make a speedy return, and that we would part no more till death should separate us. The general had furnished us with two good saddle-horses each, and one stout mule to carry our bedding. We mounted, and, leaving St. Louis, were soon some miles on our journey. We proceeded up the Missouri River, left the last white settlement, and issued out into the wilderness. We proceeded with the utmost caution; always halting before dark, we built a fire and ate our supper; then moving on farther to a secure camping-place, we lit no fire, to avoid attracting the Indians to us. On arriving at the forks of the Platte, we held a council, and resolved to follow up the north branch to its source, thence cross over to Green River, thus striking it much higher up than we had ever been on that stream before. We proceeded accordingly— crossed Green River, and held our course to the head of Salt River. Here we found a party belonging to the general’s company. Winter was now beginning to set in, and it was time for the whole company to go into winter quarters. As nearly as I can recollect, this was the end of October, 1823.

A place of rendezvous had been previously agreed upon, and as it was certain that the various

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

parties would soon assemble, I concluded to proceed to the rendezvous, and wait the arrival of Sublet, for the delivery of my dispatches, rather than undertake a search for him in the mountain wilderness. I and my companions, therefore, continued with the party until we reached the rendezvous. The parties, one after the other, came slowly in, and Sublet's was the last to arrive. It was now too late for me to return, and I had no alternative but to wait until spring.

Our present rendezvous was in Cache Valley, but Sublet gave orders for all to remove to Salt Lake, which was but a few miles distant, and then go into winter quarters. We accordingly moved to the mouth of "Weaver's Fork," and established ourselves there. When all were collected together for the winter, our community numbered from six to seven hundred souls (from two to three hundred consisting of women and children), all strong and healthy as bears, and all having experienced very good success.

Shortly after we had become well settled down, we had the misfortune to lose about eighty horses, stolen one dark, stormy night by the Pun-naks, a tribe inhabiting the head-waters of the Columbia River. On missing them the next day, we formed a party of about forty men, and followed their trail on foot—the ground was covered with snow at the time. I volunteered with the rest, although fortunately my horses were not among the missing. After a pursuit of five days we arrived at one of their villages, where we saw our own horses among a number of others. We then divided our forces, Fitzpatrick taking command of one party, and a James Bridger of the other. The plan resolved upon was as follows: Fitzpatrick was to charge the Indians, and cover Bridger's party, while they stampeded all the horses they could get away with. I formed one of Captain Bridger's party, this being the first affair of the kind I had ever witnessed. Every thing being in readiness, we rushed in upon the horses, and stampeded from two to three hundred, Fitzpatrick at the same time engaging the Indians, who numbered from three to four hundred. The Indians recovered a great number of the horses from us, but we succeeded in getting off with the number of our own missing, and forty head besides. In the engagement, six of the enemy were killed and scalped, while not one of our party received a scratch. The horses we had captured were very fine ones, and our return to the camp was greeted with the liveliest demonstrations.

We found, on our return from the above marauding expedition, an encampment of Snake Indians, to the number of six hundred lodges, comprising about two thousand five hundred warriors. They had entirely surrounded us with their encampments, adding very materially to our present population. They were perfectly friendly, and we apprehended no danger from their proximity. It appears this was their usual resort for spending the winter; and, after pitching their lodges, which are composed of skins, they proceeded to build a large "medicine lodge."

The word medicine (or, as they call it, Barchk-Parchk) signifies a prophet or dreamer, and is synonymous with the word prophet as employed in the Old Testament. The Indian form of government is a theocracy, and the medicine man is the high-priest. His dreams or prophecies are sacred; if his predictions are not verified in the result, the fault is with themselves; they had disregarded some of his instructions. When by accident his dreams are exactly verified, their confidence in their prophet exceeds all belief. The "medicine lodge" is the tabernacle of the wilderness, the habitation of the Great Spirit, the sacred ark of their faith.

Our long residence with the Snake tribe afforded us an excellent opportunity of acquainting ourselves with the domestic character of the Indians. They often invited us into their medicine lodge to witness their religious ceremonies and listen to their prophesying. The name of the old proph-

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

et was O-mo-qua, which in English means woman's dress. One evening he delivered a prophecy for us.

"I can see," said he, "white people on Big Shell (Platte River); I see them boring a hole in a red bucket; I see them drawing out medicine water (whisky); I see them fighting each other; but Fate (Sublet) has gone down on the other side of the river: he does not see them. He has gone to the white lodges. Where are you going?"

"We are going," answered Fitzpatrick, "to trap on Bear Head and the other small streams in the country of the Black Feet."

"No," said the prophet, "you will go to Sheep Mountain; there you will find the snow so deep that you can not pass. You will then go down Port Neif

to Snake River. If you are fortunate you will discover the Black Feet before they see you, and you will beat them. If they discover you first, they will rub you all out — kill you all. Bad Hand (Fitzpatrick), I tell you there is blood in your path this grass. If you beat the Black Feet, you will retrace your steps and go to Bear River, whose water you will follow until you come to Sage River. There you will meet two white men who will give you news."

To return to my narrative: Mr. Sublet, having left the camp in company with my old companion, Mr. Harris, before we returned, had left a letter of instructions for Fitzpatrick, desiring him to remove our camp as early in the spring as possible back to Cache Valley, and to repair to Weaver's Lake, where he would rejoin him. Sublet and Harris had parted for St. Louis, which they reached in safety after a journey in mid-winter.

We spent the winter very comfortably, and at the opening of spring we all moved — whites and Indians — back to Cache Valley. Soon after we arrived we commenced digging caches to secure seventy-five packs of beaver-skins in the possession of our party. While digging a cache in the bank, the earth caved in, killing two of our party, who were Canadians. The Indians claimed the privilege of burying them, which ceremony they performed by hoisting them up in trees. This has ever been the method of disposing of the dead with most, if not all, of the Rocky Mountain tribes. The body is securely wrapped in blankets and robes fastened with thongs, in which are inclosed the war implements, pipes, and tobacco of the deceased. If he had been a warrior, his war-horse is killed and buried, together with his saddle and other implements, at the foot of the same tree.

One more accident occurred, which at first occasioned us considerable alarm, before we quitted Cache Valley on our excursion. One of our men was out hunting, and coming across an antelope, as he supposed, fired at the animal's head, and killed it. On going to cut the animal's throat, to his surprise he found he had killed one of the Snake Indians, who had put on this disguise to decoy the antelopes near him. This was an accident that we deeply lamented, as the Snakes were very friendly toward us. Before the Indians discovered the accident, we held a council, and resolved to make a precipitate retreat, as we felt very distrustful of the consequences. While we were preparing to start, the chief came among us, and was greatly surprised at our sudden departure, especially as we had given him no previous notice. We excused ourselves by saying we were going to engage in hunting and trapping. He then asked what ailed us, saying we all looked terrified, and wished to know what had happened. Fitzpatrick at length told him what had taken place, and how it came to pass.

"Oh," said the chief, "if that is what you are alarmed at, take off your packs and stay. The Indian

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

was a fool to use a decoy when he knew the antelope came into the sage every day, and that the white men shoot all they see.”

He then made a speech to his warriors, telling them what had happened, and ordered some of his men to bring in the dead Indian. Then turning to us, he said, “You and the Snakes are brothers; we are all friends; we can not at all times guard against accident. You lost two of your warriors in the bank, the Snakes have just lost one. Give me some red cloth to wrap up the body. We will bury the fallen brave.”

We gave the chief a scarlet blanket, as he had desired, and all was well again.

CHAPTER IX.

The Company removes from Cache Valley on a Hunting and Trapping Excursion.—Discovery of a Band of Black Feet.—A Battle ensues with them.—Description of the Battle.—Return to Rendezvous.—Fulfillment of the Medicine Chief’s Prophecy.

THE peltry and other things not required in our expedition being all safely cached, our whole party — numbering two hundred and fifty, besides women and children — left Cache Valley for the country of the Black Feet, expecting to make a profitable hunt. I had engaged to the Fur Company for the spring hunt for the sum of five hundred dollars, with the privilege of taking for servant the widow of one of the men who had been killed in the bank. She was of light complexion, smart, trim and active, and never tired in her efforts to please me, she seeming to think that she belonged to me for the remainder of her life. I had never had a servant before, and I found her of great service to me in keeping my clothes in repair, making my bed, and taking care of my weapons.

We kept on till we came to Sheep-horn Mountain, but, finding it impassable for the snow, we changed our course, and proceeded down the Port Neif until we arrived at its junction with the Snake River, one of the main branches of the Columbia. No trappers having preceded us on the Port Neif, we met with excellent success all the way to the junction, a course which occupied us three weeks. An advanced party arriving at the junction before the main body came up, immediately upon landing discovered Indians coming down the Snake River. They were not perceived by the Indians, who were as yet at a considerable distance. Our whole force was soon prepared to meet them. Leaving one hundred men in camp, the remaining one hundred and fifty marched up the river, keeping in the timber; our policy being to retain our foes in the open prairie, while we kept the protection of the woods. At last they perceived us; but, seeing that we had the advantage of them, they made signs of great friendship.

Not wishing to be the aggressors, we contented ourselves with observing the enemy, and retired toward our camp, without any hostile demonstration on either side. Seeing signal-smokes arising on every side, we knew an attack on our little band was meditated by their thousands of mounted warriors. We therefore determined on a retreat as the safest course. There being many Indians about our camp, it required a strict watch to be maintained, every man having his gun constantly in hand, and the priming well looked to. We were able to converse with them, as many of our men could speak their language; but they still pretended to entertain toward us feelings of the “most distinguished consideration.” We encamped that night, keeping a strong guard, and saw all around us, as far as the eye could extend, numerous signal-fires.

At daylight one of our men shouted, “Stop the Indians! stop the Indians! My rope is cut!” On looking, we found that three of our best horses had been stolen, notwithstanding our unceas-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ing vigilance. The cry then passed around, "The ropes are cut! Shoot them down! shoot them down!" Rifles began to crack, and six of the Indians fell, five of whom were instantly scalped (for the scalps are taken off with greater ease while the bodies are warm); and the remaining Indian, having crawled into the river after receiving his wound, his scalp was lost. One of their chiefs was among the slain. He was shot in our camp before he had time to make his retreat with the others, who all ran as soon as our camp was alarmed.

Not a moment was then to be lost. We knew that their signal-fires would cover the whole prairie with savages, for we were in the very heart of their country. Packing up, in a few minutes we were on the retreat, which we pressed all day. We encamped the same night, as the Indians did not see fit to follow us.

Soon after this occurrence a party of fur-trappers, consisting of twelve men, under the charge of one Logan, left our company to try their fortune, but were never heard of afterward. Every exertion was subsequently made to obtain some clew to the cause of their disappearance, but nothing was ever learned of them. Beyond doubt, they fell victims to the treachery of the Black Feet.

Our party continued trapping up the Port Neif until we came to Sheep Mountain, which we passed without difficulty, the snow having by this time disappeared. We proceeded on to Bear River, and continued trapping upon that stream and its tributaries until we reached Sage River, where, very unexpectedly, and to our utter surprise, we met "two white men," Black Harris and my old friend Portuleuse.

This verification of the prediction of the old chief was, to say the least, a remarkable coincidence, and one not easily accounted for.

Our two friends informed us that they were from St. Louis, and had left General Ashley and Sublet but a short distance in the rear. We took up our traps and moved immediately to Weaver Lake, and formed a rendezvous to wait the arrival of the general and Sublet. While resting there, a party of sixteen Flat Heads came to our camp, and informed us that there were thirty white men, with women and children, encamped on a creek twelve or fifteen miles distant. They stated that the party had twenty-six guns, but that their ammunition was expended. Having some splendid horses, in the very best condition, I proposed to go and take them some ammunition, in the event of their having need for it on their way to our camp. Provo, Jarvey, and myself mounted three of our fleetest steeds, and found the party in camp. As we had expected, we found they were Campbell's party, among whom were many of our personal friends. They had met with very good fortune in their cruise, and had lost none of their men. We encamped with them that night, and escorted them to the rendezvous the next day.

On our way to the rendezvous we heard singing in our rear, and, looking in the direction of the noise, we discovered a party of five hundred mounted Indians coming directly toward us. "Flat Heads! Flat Heads!" was shouted; and, believing them to be such, I and my two friends wheeled to go and meet them. Approaching within a short distance, to our horror and surprise we discovered they were Black Feet — a tribe who prize white scalps very highly. Wishing to take us all together, probably, they ordered us back — an order we obeyed with alacrity, and we speedily gave the alarm. Placing the women and children in advance, and directing them to make all speed to a patch of willows six miles in front, and there to secure them selves, we formed to hold the Indians in check. The women made good time, considering the jaded state of their animals, for they were all accustomed to horseback-riding.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

By this time the Indians had commenced charging upon us, not so furiously as was their wont, but they doubtless considered their prey sure, and, farther, did not care to come into too close proximity to our rifles. Situated as we were, it was impossible for them to surround us, for we had a lake on one side and a mountain on the other. They knew, however, that we must emerge into the open country, where their chance of attack would be improved. When they approached too near, we used our rifles, and always with effect; our women the mean while urging on their animals with all the solicitude of mothers, who knew that capture was certain death to their offspring.

The firing continued between both parties during the whole time of our retreat to the willows; in fact, it was a running fight through the whole six miles. On the way we lost one man, who was quite old. He might have saved himself by riding to the front, and I repeatedly urged him to do so, telling him that he could not assist us; but he refused even to spur on his horse when the Indians made their charges. I tarried with him, urging him on, until I found it would be certain death to delay longer. My horse had scarcely made three leaps in advance when I heard him cry, "Oh God, I am wounded!" Wheeling my horse, I called on my companions to save him. I returned to him, and found an arrow trembling in his back. I jerked it out, and gave his horse several blows to quicken his pace; but the poor old man reeled and fell from his steed, and the Indians were upon him in a moment to tear off his scalp. This delay nearly cost two more lives, for myself and Jarvey were surrounded with the Black Feet, and their triumphant yells told us they felt certain of their prey. Our only chance of escape was to leap a slough fifteen feet from bank to bank, which we vaulted over at full speed. One Indian followed us, but he was shot in the back directly upon reaching the bank, and back he rolled into the ditch. We passed on around the slough in order to join our companions, but in doing so were compelled to charge directly through a solid rank of Indians. We passed with the rapidity of pigeons, escaping without any damage to ourselves or horses, although a shower of arrows and bullets whistled all around us. As we progressed, their charges became more frequent and daring; our ammunition now grew very short, and we never used a charge without we were sure of its paying for itself.

At length we gained the willows. If our ammunition had been plenty, we would have fought them here as long as they might have wished. When all was gone, what were we to do with an enemy more than ten times our number, who never grants or receives quarter?

Eroquey proposed one bold charge for the sake of the women and children. "Let us put our trust in God," he exclaimed, "and if we are to die, let us fall in protecting the defenseless. They will honor our memory for the bravery they witnessed."

Sixteen of us accordingly mounted our horses, leaving the remainder to hold out to the last. Eroquey led the charge. In our fierce onset we broke through two ranks of mounted Indians, killing and overturning every thing in our way. Unfortunately, my beautiful horse was killed in his tracks, leaving me alone amid a throng of Indians. I was wounded with an arrow in the head, the scar of which, with many other wounds received since, I shall carry to my grave. My boy Baptiste, seeing my danger, called upon his comrades to assist him to save his brother. They charged a second time, and the Indians who surrounded me were driven back. At that moment Baptiste rode up to me; I sprang on the saddle behind him, and retreated in safety to the willows. The foe still pressed us sorely, but their shots produced little effect except to cut off the twigs of the bushes which formed our hiding-place; as for charging in upon us, they showed some disinclination.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

To hold out much longer was impossible. Immediate assistance must be had, and it could come from no other place than our camp. To risk a message there seemed to subject the messenger to inevitable death; yet the risk must be encountered by some one. "Who'll go? who'll go?" was asked on all sides. I was wounded, but not severely; and, at a time so pressing, I hardly knew that I was wounded at all. I said, "Give me a swift horse, and I will try to force my way. Do not think I am anxious to leave you in your perilous position."

"You will run the greatest risk," said they. "But if you go, take the best horse."

Campbell then said that two had better go, for there might be a chance of one living to reach the camp. Calhoun volunteered to accompany me, if he had his choice of horses, to which no one raised any objection. Disrobing ourselves, then, to the Indian costume, and tying a handkerchief round our heads, we mounted horses as fleet as the wind, and bade the little band adieu. "God bless you!" shouted the men; the women cried, "The Great Spirit preserve you, my friends." Again we dashed through the ranks of the foe before they had time to comprehend our movement. The balls and arrows flew around us like hail, but we escaped uninjured. Some of the Indians darted in pursuit of us, but, seeing they could not overtake us, returned to their ranks. Our noble steeds seemed to fully understand the importance of the mission they were going on. When about five miles from the camp we saw a party of our men approaching us at a slow gallop. We halted instantly, and, taking our saddle-blankets, signaled to them first for haste, and then that there was a fight. Perceiving this, one man wheeled and returned to the camp, while the others quickened their pace, and were with us in a moment, although they were a mile distant when we made the signal. There were only sixteen, but on they rushed, eager for the fray, and still more eager to save our friends from a horrible massacre. They all turned out from the camp, and soon the road was lined with men, all hurrying along at the utmost speed of the animals they bestrode. My companion and I returned with the first party, and, breaking once more through the enemy's line, rode back into the willows, amid the cheers of our companions and the loud acclamations of the women and children, who now breathed more freely again. The Indians were surprised at seeing a re-enforcement, and their astonishment was increased when they saw a whole line of men coming to our assistance. They instantly gave up the battle and commenced a retreat. We followed them about two miles, until we came to the body of Bolliere — the old man that had been slain; we then returned, bringing his mangled remains with us.

On our side we lost four men killed and seven wounded. Not a woman or child was injured. From the enemy we took seventeen scalps, most of them near the willows; those that we killed on the road we could not stop for. We were satisfied they had more than a hundred slain; but as they always carry off their dead, we could not ascertain the exact number. We also lost two packs of beavers, a few packs of meat, together with some valuable horses.

After attending to our wounded, we all proceeded to camp, where the scalp-dance was performed by all the Half-breeds and women, many of the mountaineers taking part in the dance. The battle lasted five hours, and never in my whole life had I run such danger of losing my life and scalp. I now began to deem myself Indian-proof, and to think I never should be killed by them.

The reader will wonder how a contest could last that length of time when there were but thirty to oppose five hundred men, and we not meet with a greater loss. It is accounted for by the Indian mode of warfare. The Indian is a poor marksman with a gun, more especially on horseback, and, to kill with their arrows, they must be near their mark. They often shoot their arrows when their

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

horse is in full speed, and, unless they are very near their object, they seldom take effect. When they hunt the buffalo, their horses are trained to keep by the side of their destined victim until the arrow is discharged; then springing directly away, he escapes the charge of the infuriated animal, which becomes dangerous as soon as wounded. Unlike the Indians, we seldom discharged our guns unless sure of our man, for we had no ammunition to waste.

Our victory was considered, under the circumstances, a glorious one, and all who participated in the battle our companions lauded to the skies. The women, too, hailed us as the "bravest of the brave," knowing that we had preserved them from a captivity to which death were preferable. Two days after the battle we were again rejoined by our friends, the Snakes, to the number of four thousand. They all took part in our scalp-dance, and such a scene of rejoicing as we held has seldom been witnessed in the mountains. They deeply lamented that they had not come in season to take part in the battle, so that not one of the Black Feet could have escaped. Their wishes for battle, however, were soon after gratified.

The absent parties began to arrive, one after the other, at the rendezvous. Shortly after, General Ashley and Mr. Sublet came in, accompanied with three hundred pack mules, well laden with goods and all things necessary for the mountaineers and the Indian trade. It may well be supposed that the arrival of such a vast amount of luxuries from the East did not pass off without a general celebration. Mirth, songs, dancing, shouting, trading, running, jumping, singing, racing, target-shooting, yarns, frolic, with all sorts of extravagances that white men or Indians could invent, were freely indulged in. The unpacking of the medicine water contributed not a little to the heightening of our festivities.

We had been informed by Harris, previous to the arrival of the general, that General Ashley had sold out his interest in the mountains to Mr. Sublet, embracing all his properties and possessions there. He now intended to return to St. Louis, to enjoy the fortune he had amassed by so much toil and suffering, and in which he had so largely shared in person.

#### CHAPTER X.

Great Battle with the Black Feet.—Departure of General Ashley.—His Farewell Speech to the Mountaineers.—Removal of our Rendezvous.—Peace between the Flat Heads and Black Feet.—Trading-post at their Village.—I become Son-in-law to the Black Foot Chief.—Trouble in the Family.—Wife punished for Disobedience. —Troubled Waters finally stilled.

Two days after the arrival of the general, the tocsin again sounded through our whole camp, "The Black Feet! the Black Feet!" On they came, making the very earth tremble with the tramp of their fiery war horses. In their advance they surprised three men and two women belonging to the Snakes, who were out some distance from camp, gathering roots. The whole five were instantly overtaken, killed, and scalped. As soon as the alarm was given, the old prophet came to our camp, and, addressing Mr. Sublet, said,

"Cut Face, three of my warriors and two women have just been killed by the Black Feet. You say that your warriors can fight — that they are great braves. Now let me see them fight, that I may know your words are true."

Sublet replied, "You shall see them fight, and then you will know that they are all braves — that I have no cowards among my men, and that we are all ready to die for our Snake friends."

"Now, men," added he, turning to us, "I want every brave man to go and fight these Black Feet, and whip them, so that the Snakes may see that we can fight, and let us do our best before them

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

as a warning to them. Remember, I want none to join in this battle who are not brave. Let all cowards remain in camp.”

Every man was impatient to take part; but, seeing that his camp would be deserted and his goods exposed, he detained quite a number, as well to guard the goods as to keep the general company, he not wishing to take part in the battle.

There were over three hundred trappers mounted in a few moments, who, with Captain Sublet at their tread, charged instantly on the enemy. The Snake warriors were also on hand, thirsting to take vengeance on the Black Feet for the five scalps of their friends. After retreating before us about five miles, they formed in a place of great security, in a deep hollow on the border of the lake. At our arrival, the battle recommenced in good earnest. We and our allies fought them for about six hours, they certainly displaying great intrepidity, for they would repeatedly issue from their stronghold and make a bold sortie against us. When intrenched in their position, they had a great advantage over us, as it was difficult for a man to approach them without being shot, and to charge on them as they were situated would have occasioned us great loss of life. One Indian issuing from their position was shot through the back bone, thus depriving his legs of all power of motion. Seeing him fall, Sublet said to me, “Jim, let us go and haul him away, and get his scalp before the Indians draw him in.”

We went, and, seizing each a leg, started toward our lines with him: the wounded Indian grasping the grass with both hands, we had to haul with all our strength. An Indian, suddenly springing over their breast-work, struck me a heavy blow in the back with his gun, causing me to loose hold of my leg and run. Both I and my companion were unarmed; and I, not knowing how many blows were to follow, deemed discretion on this particular occasion the better part of valor. Sublet made a strong demonstration against my assailant with his fists, at the same time calling me back and cursing me for running. I returned, and, together, we dragged the Indian to one of our men, also wounded, for him to dispatch. But the poor fellow had not strength sufficient to perforate the Indian’s skin with his knife, and we were obliged to perform the job ourselves.

After six hours’ fighting, during which time a number of the enemy were slain, we began to want nourishment. Sublet requested our allies “to rub out” all their foes while we went and procured refreshment; but on our leaving, they followed us, and we all arrived in camp together. On our return to the field of battle we found the Black Feet were gone, having departed precipitately, as they had left a number of their dead, a thing unusual with the Indians. The fruits of our victory were one hundred and seventy-three scalps, with numerous quivers of arrows, war-clubs, battle-axes, and lances. We also killed a number of their horses, which doubtless was the reason of their leaving so many of their dead on the field of battle. The trappers had seven or eight men wounded, but none killed. Our allies lost eleven killed in battle, besides the five slain before; but none of those killed in battle were scalped.

Had this battle been fought in the open plain, but few of our foes could have escaped; and even as it was, had we continued to fight, not a dozen could have got away. But, considering that we were fighting for our allies, we did not exert ourselves.

As usual on all such occasions, our victory was celebrated in camp, and the exercises lasted several days, conformably to Indian custom.

General Ashley, having disposed of all his goods and completed his final arrangements, departed for St. Louis, taking with him nearly two hundred packs of beaver. Previous to his departure, he

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

summoned all the men into his presence, and addressed them, as nearly as I can recollect, in the following words:

“Mountaineers and friends! When I first came to the mountains, I came a poor man. You, by your indefatigable exertions, toils, and privations, have procured me an independent fortune. With ordinary prudence in the management of what I have accumulated, I shall never want for any thing. For this, my friends, I feel myself under great obligations to you. Many of you have served with me personally, and I shall always be proud to testify to the fidelity with which you have stood by me through all danger, and the friendly and brotherly feeling which you have ever, one and all, evinced toward me. For these faithful and devoted services I wish you to accept my thanks; the gratitude that I express to you springs from my heart, and will ever retain a lively hold on my feelings.

“My friends! I am now about to leave you, to take up my abode in St. Louis. Whenever any of you return thither, your first duty must be to call at my house, to talk over the scenes of peril we have encountered, and partake of the best cheer my table can afford you.

“I now wash my hands of the toils of the Rocky Mountains. Farewell, mountaineers and friends! May God bless you all!”

We were all sorry to part with the general. He was a man of untiring energy and perseverance, cheerfully enduring every toil and privation with his men. When they were short of food, he likewise hungered; he bore full share in their sufferings, and divided his last morsel with them. There was always something encouraging in his manner; no difficulty dejected him; kind and generous in his disposition, he was loved equally by all. If, which was seldom, he had any disagreement with them, if he discovered himself in fault, he would freely acknowledge his error, and ask forgiveness.

Before he left he had a word of advice for me. “James,” he commenced, “since I have been here I have heard much of your exploits. I like brave men, but I fear you are reckless in your bravery. Caution is always commendable, and especially is it necessary in encounters with Indians. I wish you to be careful of yourself, and pay attention to your health, for, with the powerful constitution you possess, you have many valuable years before you. It is my hearty desire to have you do well, and live to a good old age; correct your fault of encountering risks for the mere ostentatious display of your courage. Whenever you return home, come and see me, James; you will be a thousand times welcome; and, should you ever be in need of assistance, call on me first. Good-by.” He left the camp amid deafening cheers from the whole crowd. I did not see him again until the year 1836.

At the general’s departure, we broke up our camp and marched on to the country of the Flat Heads, on the Snake River. On our arrival at the new rendezvous, we were rejoiced to learn that peace existed between the two nations — the Flat Heads and Black Feet, and that they were in friendly intercourse together. This was very favorable for our purpose; for it is with Indian tribes as with civilized nations, when at war, various branches of business are impoverished, and it becomes inconvenient for those engaged in them to make more than trifling purchases, just for the supply of their immediate wants. Hostilities are still more destructive to Indian commerce than to that of civilized nations, for the reason, that the time and resources — of the whole community are engaged in their prosecution. The “sinews of war” with the Indian mean, literally, himself and his horse.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

We spent the summer months at our leisure, trading with the Indians, hunting, sporting, and preparing for the fall harvest of beaver. We made acquaintance with several of the Black Feet, who came to the post to trade. One of their chiefs invited Mr. Sublet to establish a branch post in their country, telling him that they had many people and horses, and plenty of beaver, and if his goods were to be obtained they would trade considerably; his being so far off prevented his people coming to Mr. Sublet's camp.

The Indian appearing sincere, and there being a prospect of opening a profitable trade, Sublet proposed to establish a post among the Black Feet if any of the men were willing to risk their scalps in attending it. I offered to go, although I was well aware the tribe knew that I had contributed to the destruction of a number of their braves; but, to the Indian, the greater the brave, the higher their respect for him, even though an enemy. So, taking my boy Baptiste and one man with me, we packed up and started for Beaver River, which is a branch of the Missouri, and in the heart of the Black Foot country.

On our arrival, the Indians manifested great appearance of friendship, and were highly pleased at having a trading-post so conveniently at hand, I soon rose to be a great man among them, and the chief offered me his daughter for a wife. Considering this an alliance that would guarantee my life as well as enlarge my trade, I accepted his offer, and, without any superfluous ceremony, became son-in-law to As-as-to, the head chief of the Black Feet. As-as-to, interpreted, means heavy shield. To me the alliance was more offensive than defensive, but thrift was my object more than hymeneal enjoyments. Trade prospered greatly. I purchased beaver and horses at my own price. Many times I bought a fine beaver-skin for a butcher-knife or a plug of tobacco.

After a residence among them of a few days, I had slight difficulty in my family affairs. A party of Indians came into camp one day, bringing with them three white men's scalps. The sight of them made my blood boil with rage; but there was no help for it, so I determined to wait with patience my day of revenge. In accordance with their custom, a scalp-dance was held, at which there was much additional rejoicing.

My wife came to me with the information that her people were rejoicing, and that she wished to join them in the dance.

I replied, "No; these scalps belonged to my people; my heart is crying for their death; you must not rejoice when my heart cries; you must not dance when I mourn."

She then went out, as I supposed, satisfied. My two white friends, having a great curiosity to witness the performance, were looking out upon the scene. I reproved them for wishing to witness the savage rejoicings over the fall of white men who had probably belonged to our own company. One of them answered, "Well, your wife is the best dancer of the whole party; she out-dances them all."

This was a sting which pierced my very heart. Taking my battle-axe, and forcing myself into the ring, I watched my opportunity, and struck my disobedient wife a heavy blow in the head with the side of my battle-axe, which dropped her as if a ball had pierced her heart.

I dragged her through the crowd, and left her; I then went back to my tent.

This act was performed in such a bold manner, under the very noses of hundreds of them, that they were thunderstruck, and for a moment remained motionless with surprise. When I entered the tent, I said to my companions, "There, now, you had better prepare to hold on to your own scalps, since you take so much interest in a celebration over those of your murdered brethren."

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Their countenances turned ashy pale, expecting instant death.

By this time the whole Indian camp was in a blaze. "Kill him! kill him! burn him! burn him!" was shouted throughout the camp in their own language, which I plainly understood. I was collected, for I knew they could kill me but once.

Soon I heard the voice of my father-in-law crying, in a tone which sounded above all, "Stop! hold! hold! warriors! listen to your chief."

All was hushed in an instant, and he continued "Warriors! I am the loser of a daughter, and her brothers have lost a sister; you have lost nothing. She was the wife of the trader; I gave her to him. When your wives disobey your commands, you kill them; that is your right. That thing disobeyed her husband; he told her not to dance; she disobeyed him; she had no ears; he killed her, and he did right. He did as you all would have done, and you shall neither kill nor harm him for it. I promised the white chief that, if he would send a trader to my people, I would protect him and return him unharmed; this I must do, and he shall not be hurt here. Warriors! wait till you meet him in battle, or, perhaps, in his own camp, then kill him; but here his life is sacred. What if we kill them all, and take what they have? It will last but a few suns; we shall then want more. Whom do we get sach-o-path (powder) from? We get it from the whites; and when we have expended what we have, we must do without, or go to them for more. When we have no powder, can we fight our enemies with plenty? If we kill these three men, whom I have given the word of a chief to protect, the white chief will send us no more, but his braves will revenge the death of their brothers. No, no; you shall not harm them here. They have eaten of our meat, and drunk of our water; they have also smoked with us. When they have sold their goods, let them return in peace."

At this time there were a great many Flat Heads at the Black Foot camp, as they were at peace with each other. After the speech of my father-in-law, a great brave of the Flat Heads, called Bad Hand, replied, "Hey! you are yourself again; you talk well; you talk like As-as-to again. We are now at peace; if you had killed these men, we should have made war on you again; we should have raised the battle-axe, never to have buried it. These whites are ours, and the Flat Heads would have revenged their deaths if they had been killed in your camp."

The chief then made a loud and long harangue, after which all became quiet. As-as-to next came to my camp and said, "My son, you have done right; that woman I gave you had no sense; her ears were stopped up; she would not hearken to you, and you had a right to kill her. But I have another daughter, who is younger than she was. She is more beautiful; she has good sense and good ears. You may have her in the place of the bad one; she will hearken to all you say to her." "Well," thought I, "this is getting married again before I have even had time to mourn."

But I replied, "Very well, my father, I will accept of your kind offer," well knowing, at the same time, that to refuse him would be to offend, as he would suppose that I disdained his generosity. My second wife was brought to me. I found her, as her father had represented, far more intelligent and far prettier than her other sister, and I was really proud of the change. I now possessed one that many a warrior had performed deeds of bloody valor to obtain; for it is a high honor to get the daughter of a great chief to wife, and many a bold warrior has sacrificed his life in seeking to attain such a prize.

During the night, while I and my wife were quietly reposing, some person crawled into our couch, sobbing most bitterly. Angry at the intrusion, I asked who was there.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“Me,” answered a voice, which, although well-nigh stifled with bitter sobs, I recognized as that of my other wife, whom every one had supposed dead. After lying outside the lodge senseless for some hours, she had recovered and groped her way to my bed.

“Go away,” I said, “you have no business here; I have a new wife now, one who has sense.”

“I will not go away,” she replied; “my ears are open now. I was a fool not to hearken to my husband’s words when his heart was crying, but now I have good sense, and will always hearken to your words.”

It did really seem as if her heart was broken, and she kept her position until morning. I thought myself now well supplied with wives, having two more than I cared to have; but I deemed it hardly worth while to complain, as I should soon leave the camp, wives and all.

It is a universal adage, “When you are among Romans, do as the Romans do.” I conformed to the customs of a people really pagan, but who regarded them selves both enlightened and powerful. I was risking my life for gold, that I might return one day with plenty, to share with her I tenderly loved. My body was among the Indians, but my mind was far away from them and their bloody deeds. Experience has revealed to me that civilized man can accustom himself to any mode of life when pelf is the governing principle — that power which dominates through all the ramifications of social life, and gives expression to the universal instinct of self-interest. By living with the savages, and becoming familiar with their deeds of injustice and cruelty — witnessing friends and companions struck down without a moment’s warning — if a man has feeling, in a short time it becomes callous toward the relentless savage, who can mock the dying struggles of the white man, and indulge his inhuman joy as he sees his warm life-blood saturate the earth, on which, a few moments since, his victim stood erect in seeming security. Many a companion have I seen fall in the wild prairie or the mountain forest, dying with some dear name upon his lips, his body left as food for the wild beasts, or his bones to whiten in the trackless wilderness.

It will be said, “He might have staid at home, and not have hazarded his life amid such dangers.” So it might be said of the hardy mariner, whose compass guides him through all parts of the pathless ocean. The same motive impels them both on their perilous career — self-interest, which, while it gratifies their individual desires, at the same time enriches and advances society, by adding its acquisitions to the mart of commerce.

We left the Black Foot country after a stay of twenty days, having purchased thirty-nine packs of beaver and several splendid horses at a sum trifling in real value, but what they considered as far exceeding the worth of their exchanges. The chief lent us an escort of two hundred and fifty mounted warriors, in addition to which nearly one hundred Flat Heads returned with us to our camp, whom we met the second day on our road (they having become alarmed for our safety, and being on the way to revenge our deaths, in the event of the Black Feet having proved treacherous). On our arrival we were greeted with the liveliest expressions of joy. Presents were made to our escort, and Mr. Sublet sent my father-in-law a valuable gift for his kindness to me, and as the assurance of his most distinguished consideration. I also sent some dress-patterns to my wives, in addition to the presents I had previously made them. The Black Feet, apparently well satisfied, returned to their homes.

#### CHAPTER XI.

Removal of our Rendezvous.—Battle with our Friends, the Black Feet. —A Race for dear Life.—Great Victory over the Grovan Band of Black Feet.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

AFTER we had rested we departed for Snake River, making the Black Foot buttes on our way, in order to pass through the buffalo region. I received a severe lecture from Mr. Sublet for my rashness while at the trading post. The second day of our march, one of our men, while fishing, detected a party of Black Feet in the act of stealing our horses in the open day. But for the man, they would have succeeded in making off with a great number. The alarm was given, and we mounted and gave immediate chase. The Indians were forty-four in number, and on foot; therefore they became an easy prey. We ran them into a thicket of dry bush, which we surrounded, and then fired in several places. It was quite dry, and, there being a good breeze at the time, it burned like chaff. This driving the Indians out, as fast as they made their appearance we shot them with our rifles. Every one of them was killed; those who escaped our bullets were consumed in the fire; and as they were all more or less roasted, we took no scalps. None of our party were hurt, except one, who was wounded by one of our men.

On the third day we found buffalo, and killed great numbers of them by a "surround." At this place we lost six horses, three of them belonging to myself, two to a Swiss, and one to Baptiste. Not relishing the idea of losing them (for they were splendid animals), and seeing no signs of Indians, I and the Swiss started along the back track in pursuit, with the understanding that we would rejoin our company at the Buttes. We followed them to the last place of rendezvous; their tracks were fresh and plain, but we could gain no sight of our horses. We then gave up the chase, and encamped in a thicket. In the morning we started to return, and had not proceeded far, when, hearing a noise in our rear, I looked round, and saw between two and three hundred Indians within a few hundred yards of us. They soon discovered us, and, from their not making immediate pursuit, I inferred that they mistook us for two of their own party. However, they soon gave chase. They being also on foot, I said to my companion, "Now we have as good a chance of escaping as they have of overtaking us."

The Swiss (named Alexander) said, "It is of no use for me to try to get away: I can not run; save yourself, and never mind me."

"No," I replied, "I will not leave you; run as fast as you can until you reach the creek; there you can secrete yourself, for they will pursue me."

He followed my advice, and saved himself. I crossed the stream, and when I again appeared in sight of the Indians I was on the summit of a small hill two miles in advance. Giving a general yell, they came in pursuit of me. On I ran, not daring to indulge the hope that they would give up the chase, for some of the Indians are great runners, and would rather die than incur the ridicule of their brethren. On, on we tore; I to save my scalp, and my pursuers to win it. At length I reached the Buttes, where I had expected to find the camp, but, to my inconceivable horror and dismay, my comrades were not there. They had found no water on their route, and had proceeded to the river, forty-five miles distant.

My feelings at this disappointment transcended expression. A thousand ideas peopled my feverish brain at once. Home, friends, and my loved one presented themselves with one lightning-flash. The Indians were close at my heels; their bullets were whizzing past me; their yells sounded painfully in my ears; and I could almost feel the knife making a circuit round my skull. On I bounded, however, following the road which our whole company had made. I was scorching with thirst, having tasted neither sup nor bit since we commenced the race. Still on I went with the speed of an antelope. I kept safely in advance of the range of their bullets, when suddenly the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

glorious sight of the camp-smoke caught my eye. My companions perceived me at a mile from the camp, as well as my pursuers; and, mounting their horses to meet me, soon turned the tables on my pursuers. It was now the Indians' turn to be chased. They must have suffered as badly with thirst as I did, and our men cut them off from the river. Night had begun to close in, under the protection of which the Indians escaped; our men returned with only five scalps. According to the closest calculation, I ran that day ninety-five miles. \* \* Concerning this great race for life, it may appear impossible to some for a human being to accomplish such a feat. Those who survive of Sublet's company, and who know the distances from point to point of my celebrated race, will please to correct me publicly if I am in error in the distance. I have known instances of Indian runners accomplishing more than one hundred and ten miles in one day. NARRATOR.

My heels thus deprived the rascally Indians of their anticipated pleasure of dancing over my scalp. My limbs were so much swollen the next morning, that for two or three days ensuing it was with great difficulty I got about. My whole system was also in great pain. In a few days, however, I was as well as ever, and ready to repay the Indians for their trouble.

The third day after my escape, my companion Aleck found his way into camp. He entered the lodge with dejection on his features.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "I thank God for my escape, but the Indians have killed poor Jim. I saw his bones a few miles back. I will give any thing I have if a party will go with me and bury him. The wolves have almost picked his bones, but it must be he. Poor, poor Jim ! gone at last!"

"Ha!" said some one present, "is Jim killed, then ? Poor fellow ! Well, Aleck, let us go back and give him a Christian burial."

He had seen a body nearly devoured on the way, most likely that of the wounded Indian who had chased me in his retreat from our camp.

I came limping into the crowd at this moment, and addressed him before he had perceived me: "Halloo, Aleck, are you safe?"

He looked at me for a moment in astonishment, and then embraced me so tight that I thought he would suffocate me. He burst into a flood of tears, which for a time prevented his articulation. He looked at me again and again, as if in doubt of my identity.

At length he said, "Oh, Jim, you are safe! And how did you escape? I made sure that you were killed, and that the body I saw on the road was yours. Pshaw! I stopped and shed tears on a confounded dead Indian's carcass!"

Aleck stated that the enemy had passed within ten feet without perceiving him; that his gun was cocked and well primed, so that if he had been discovered there would have been at least one red skin less to chase me. He had seen no Indians on his way to camp.

I was satisfied that some (if not all) of my pursuers knew me, for they were Black Feet, or they would not have taken such extraordinary pains to run me down. If they had succeeded in their endeavor, they would, in subsequent years, have saved their tribe many scalps.

From this encampment we moved on to Lewis's Fork, on the Columbia River, where we made a final halt to prepare for the fall trapping season. Some small parties, getting tired of inaction, would occasionally sally out to the small mountain streams, all of which contained plenty of beaver, and would frequently come in with several skins.

I prepared my traps one day, thinking to go out alone, and see what my luck might be. I mounted my horse, and, on approaching a small stream, dismounted to take a careful survey, to see if there

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

were any signs of beaver. Carefully ascending the bank of the stream, I peered over, and saw, not a beaver, but an Indian. He had his robe spread on the grass, and was engaged in freeing himself from vermin, with which all Indians abound. He had not seen nor heard me; his face was toward me, but inclined, and he was intently pursuing his occupation.

“Here,” thought I, “are a gun, a bow, a quiver full of arrows, a good robe, and a scalp.”

I fired my rifle; the Indian fell over without uttering a sound. I not only took his scalp, but his head. I tied two locks of his long hair together, hung his head on the horn of my saddle, and, taking the spoils of the enemy, hurried back to camp.

The next morning our camp was invested by two thousand five hundred warriors of the Black Foot tribe. We had now something on our hands which demanded attention. We were encamped in the bend of a river — in the “horse-shoe.” Our lodges were pitched at the entrance, or narrowest part of the shoe, while our animals were driven back into the bend. The lodges, four deep, extended nearly across the land, forming a kind of barricade in front; not a very safe one for the inmates, since, being covered with buffalo hides, they were penetrable to bullet and arrow.

The Indians made a furious charge. We immediately placed the women and children in the rear, sending them down the bend, where they were safe unless we were defeated. We suffered the Indians for a long time to act on the offensive, being content with defending ourselves and the camp. I advised Captain Sublet to let them weary themselves with charging, by which time we would mount and charge them with greater prospect of victory; whereas, should we tire ourselves while they were fresh, we should be overwhelmed by their numbers, and, if not defeated, inevitably lose a great many men.

All the mountaineers approved of my advice, and our plans were taken accordingly. They drove us from our first position twice, so that our lodges were between the contending ranks, but they never broke our lines. When they approached us very near we resorted to our arrows, which all our half-breeds used as skillfully as the Indians. Finally, perceiving they began to tire, I went and ordered the women to saddle the horses in haste. A horse was soon ready for each man, four hundred in number. Taking one hundred and thirty men, I passed out through the timber, keeping near the river until we could all emerge and form a line to charge them, unobserved, in the rear. While executing this diversion, the main body was to charge them in front. While defiling through the timber we came suddenly upon ten Indians who were resting from the fight, and were sitting on the ground unconcernedly smoking their pipes. We killed nine of them, the tenth one making good his retreat.

Our manœuvre succeeded admirably. The Indians were unconscious of our approach in their rear until they began to fall from their horses. Then charging on their main body simultaneously with Captain Sublet’s charge in front, their whole force was thrown into irretrievable confusion, and they fled without farther resistance. We did not pursue them, feeling very well satisfied to have got rid of them as we had. They left one hundred and sixty-seven dead on the field. Our loss was also very severe; sixteen killed, mostly half breeds, and fifty or sixty wounded. In this action I received a wound in my left side, although I did not perceive it until the battle was over.

As usual, there was a scalp-dance after the victory, in which I really feared that the fair sex would dance themselves to death. They had a crying spell after ward for the dead. After all, it was a victory rather dearly purchased.

A few days after our battle, one of our old trappers, named Le Blueux, who had spent twen-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ty years in the mountains, came to me, and telling me he knew of a small stream full of beaver which ran into Lewis's Fork, about thirty miles from camp, wished me to accompany him there. We being free trappers at that time, the chance of obtaining a pack or two of beaver was rather a powerful incentive. Gain being my object, I readily acceded to his proposal. We put out from camp during the night, and traveled up Lewis's Fork, leisurely discussing our prospects and confidently enumerating our unhatched chickens, when suddenly a large party of Indians came in sight in our rear.

The banks of the river we were traveling along were precipitous and rocky, and skirted with a thick bush. We entered the bush without a moment's hesitation, for the Indians advanced on us as soon as they had caught sight of us. Le Blueux had a small bell attached to his horse's neck, which he took off, and, creeping to a large bush, fastened it with the end of his lariat, and returned holding the other end in his hand. This stratagem caused the Indians to expend a great amount of powder and shot in their effort to kill the bell; for, of course, they supposed the bell indicated the position of ourselves. When they approached near enough to be seen through the bushes, we fired one gun at a time, always keeping the other loaded. When we fired the bell would ring, as if the horse was started by the close proximity of the gun, but the smoke would not rise in the right place. They continued to shoot at random into the bushes without injuring us or our faithful animals, who were close by us, but entirely concealed from the sight of the Indians. My companion filled his pipe and commenced smoking with as much sang froid as if he had been in camp.

"This is the last smoke I expect to have between here and camp," said he.

"What are we to do?" I inquired, not feeling our position very secure in a brush fort manned with a company of two, and beleaguered by scores of Black Foot warriors.

In an instant, before I had time to think, crack went his rifle, and down came an Indian, who, more bold than the rest, had approached too near to our garrison. "Now," said Le Blueux, "bind your leggins and moccasins around your head."

I did so, while he obeyed the same order. "Now follow me."

Wondering what bold project he was about to execute, I quietly obeyed him. He went noiselessly to the edge of the bluff, looked narrowly up and down the river, and then commenced to slide down the almost perpendicular bank, I closely following him. We safely reached the river, into which we dropped our selves. We swam close under the bank for more than a mile, until they discovered us.

"Now," said my comrade, "strike across the stream in double quick time."

We soon reached the opposite bank, and found ourselves a good mile and a half ahead of the Indians. They commenced plunging into the river in pursuit, but they were too late. We ran across the open ground until we reached a mountain, where we could safely look back and laugh at our pursuers. We had lost our horses and guns, while they had sacrificed six or eight of their warriors, besides missing the two scalps they made so certain of getting hold of.

I had thought myself a pretty good match for the Indians, but I at once resigned all claims to merit. Le Blueux, in addition to all the acquired wiles of the Red Man, possessed his own superior art and cunning. He could be surrounded with no difficulties for which his inexhaustible brain could not devise some secure mode of escape.

We arrived safe at camp before the first guard was relieved. The following morning we received a

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

severe reprimand from Captain Sublet for exposing ourselves on so hazardous an adventure. As soon as the wounded were sufficiently recovered to be able to travel, we moved down the river to the junction of Salt River with Guy's Fork, about a mile from Snake River. The next day the captain resolved to pass up to Guy's Fork to a convenient camping-ground, where we were to spend the interval until it was time to separate into small parties, and commence trapping in good earnest for the season.

One day, while moving leisurely along, two men and myself proposed to the captain to proceed ahead of the main party to ascertain the best road, to reconnoitre the various streams — in short, to make it a trip of discovery. We were to encamp one night, and rejoin the main body the next morning. The captain consented, but gave us strict caution to take good care of ourselves.

Nothing of importance occurred that day; but the next morning, about sunrise, we were all thunderstruck at being roused from our sleep by the discharge of guns close at hand. Two of us rose in an instant, and gave the war-hoop as a challenge for them to come on. Poor Cotton, the third of our party, was killed at the first fire. When they saw us arise, rifle in hand, they drew back; whereas, had they rushed on with their battle-axes, they could have killed us in an instant. One of our horses was also killed, which, with the body of our dead comrade, we used for a breast-work, throwing up, at the same time, all the dirt we could to protect ourselves as far as we were able. The Indians, five hundred in number, showered their balls at us, but, being careful to keep at a safe distance, they did us no damage for some time. At length my companion received a shot through the heel, while carelessly throwing up his feet in crawling to get a sight at the Indians without exposing his body. I received some slight scratches, but no injury that occasioned me any real inconvenience.

Providence at last came to our relief. Our camp was moving along slowly, shooting buffalo occasionally, when some of the women, hearing our guns, ran to the captain, exclaiming, "There is a fight. Hark! hear the guns!"

He, concluding that there was more distant fighting than is common in killing buffalo, dispatched sixty men in all possible haste in the direction of the reports. We saw them as they appeared in sight on the brow of a hill not far distant, and sent up a shout of triumph. The Indians also caught sight of them, and immediately retreated, leaving seventeen warriors dead in front of our little fort, whom we relieved of their scalps.

We returned to camp after burying our companion, whose body was literally riddled with bullets. The next day we made a very successful surround of buffalo, killing great numbers of them. In the evening, several of our friends, the Snakes, came to us and told us their village was only five miles farther up, wishing us to move up near them to open a trade. After curing our meat, we moved on and encamped near the friendly Snakes. We learned that there were one hundred and eighty-five lodges of Pun-naks encamped only two miles distant, a discarded band of the Snakes, very bad Indians, and very great thieves. Captain Sublet informed the Snakes that if the Pun-naks should steal any of his horses or any thing belonging to his camp, he would rub them all out, and he wished the friendly Snakes to tell them so.

Two of our men and one of the Snakes having strolled down to the Pun-nak lodges one evening, they were set upon, and the Snake was killed, and the two of our camp came home wounded.

The morning volunteers were called to punish the Pun-naks for their outrage. Two hundred and fifteen immediately presented themselves at the call, and our captain appointed Bridger leader of

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

the troop.

We started to inflict vengeance, but when we arrived at the site of the village, behold! there was no village there. They had packed up and left immediately after the perpetration of the outrage, they fearing, no doubt, that ample vengeance would be taken upon them.

We followed their trail forty-five miles, and came up with them on Green River. Seeing our approach, they all made across to a small island in the river.

“What shall we do now, Jim?” inquired our leader. “I will cross to the other side with one half the men,” I suggested, “and get abreast of the island. Their retreat will be thus cut off, and we can exterminate them in their trap.”

“Go,” said he; “I will take them if they attempt to make this shore.”

I was soon in position, and the enfilading commenced, and was continued until there was not one left of either sex or any age. We carried back four hundred and eighty-eight scalps, and, as we then supposed, annihilated the Pun-nak band. On our return, however, we found six or eight of their squaws, who had been left behind in the flight, whom we carried back and gave to the Snakes.

On informing the Snakes of what had taken place, they expressed great delight. “Right!” they said “Pun-naks very bad Indians;” and they joined in the scalp-dance.

We afterward learned that the Pun-naks, when they fled from our vengeance, had previously sent their old men, and a great proportion of their women and children, to the mountains, at which we were greatly pleased, as it spared the effusion of much unnecessary blood. They had a great “medicine chief” slain with the others on the island; his medicine was not good this time, at least. We proceeded thence to a small creek, called Black Foot Creek, in the heart of the Black Foot country.

It was always our custom, before turning out our horses in the morning, to send out spies to reconnoitre around, and see if any Indians were lurking about to steal them. When preparing to move one morning from the last-named creek, we sent out two men; but they had not proceeded twenty yards from our corral before a dozen shots were fired at them by a party of Black Feet, bringing them from their horses severely wounded. In a moment the whole camp was in motion. The savages made a bold and desperate attempt to rush upon the wounded men and get their scalps, but we were on the ground in time to prevent them, and drove them back, killing four of their number.

The next day we were overtaken by the Snakes, who, hearing of our skirmish, expressed great regret that they were not present to have followed them and given them battle again. We seldom followed the Indians after having defeated them, unless they had stolen our horses. It was our policy always to act on the defensive, even to tribes that were known enemies. When the Snakes were ready, we all moved on together for the head of Green River. The Indians numbered six or seven thousand, including women and children; our number was nearly eight hundred altogether, forming quite a formidable little army, or, more properly, a moving city. The number of horses belonging to the whole camp was immense.

We had no farther difficulty in reaching Green River, where we remained six days. During this short stay our numberless horses exhausted the grass in our vicinity, and it was imperative to change position.

It was now early in September, and it was time to break up our general encampment, and spread

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

in all directions, as the hunting and trapping season was upon us. Before we formed our dispersing parties, a number of the Crows came to our camp, and were rejoiced to see us again. The Snakes and Crows were extremely amicable.

The Crows were questioning the Snakes about some scalps hanging on our lodge-poles. They gave them the particulars of our encounter with the Black Feet, how valiantly we had fought them, and how we had defeated them. The Crows were highly gratified to see so many scalps taken from their old and inveterate foes. They wished to see the braves who had fought so nobly. I was pointed out as the one who had taken the greatest number of scalps; they told them they had seen me fight, and that I was a very great brave. Upon this I became the object of the Crows' admiration; they were very anxious to talk to me and to cultivate my acquaintance; but I could speak very little of their language.

One of our men (named Greenwood), whose wife was a Crow, could speak their language fluently; he and his wife were generally resorted to by the Crows to afford full details of our recent victory. Greenwood, becoming tired of so much questioning, invented a fiction, which greatly amused me for its ingenuity. He informed them that White-handled Knife (as the Snakes called me) was a Crow.

They all started in astonishment at this information, and asked how that could be.

Said Greenwood in reply, "You know that so many winters ago the Cheyennes defeated the Crows, killing many hundreds of their warriors, and carrying off a great many of their women and children."

"Yes, we know it," they all exclaimed.

"Well, he was a little boy at that time, and the whites bought him of the Cheyennes, with whom he has staid ever since. He has become a great brave among them, and all your enemies fear him." On hearing this astonishing revelation, they said that I must be given to them. Placing implicit faith in every word that they had heard, they hastened to their village to disseminate the joyful news that they had found one of their own people who had been taken by the Shi-ans when a bar-car-ta (child), who had been sold to the whites, and who had now become a great white chief, with his lodge-pole full of the scalps of the Black Feet, who had fallen beneath his gun and battle axe. This excited a great commotion throughout their whole village. All the old women who remembered the defeat, when the Crows lost two thousand warriors and a host of women and children, with the ensuing captivity, were wondering if the great brave was not their own child; thereupon ensued the greatest anxiety to see me and claim me as a son.

I did not say a word impugning the authenticity of Greenwood's romance. I was greatly edified at the inordinate gullibility of the red man, and when they had gone to spread their tale of wonderment, we had a hearty laugh at their expense.

Our party now broke up; detachments were formed and leaders chosen. We issued from the camp, and started in all directions, receiving instructions to return within a certain day. There were a great many fur trappers with us, who hunted for their own profit, and disposed of their peltry to the mountain traders. The trappers were accompanied by a certain number of hired men, selected according to their individual preferences, the strength of their party being regulated by the danger of the country they were going to. If a party was going to the Black Foot country, it needed to be numerous and well armed. If going among the Crows or Snakes, where no danger was apprehended, there would go few or many, just as was agreed upon among themselves. But

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

each party was in strict obedience to the will of its captain or leader: his word was supreme law. My party started for the Crow country, at which I was well content; for, being a supposed Crow myself, I expected to fare well among them. It seemed a relief, also, to be in a place where we could rest from our unsleeping vigilance, and to feel, when we rose in the morning, there was some probability of our living till night.

CHAPTER XII.

Departure from the Rendezvous.—Trouble in Camp.—Leave the Party and Traps.—Arrival at the Crow Village.—Great Stir among the Crows.—Joyful Meeting with my Crow Parents, Brothers, and Sisters.—Three Years without seeing a White Man.

I NOW parted with very many of my friends for the last time. Most of the members of that large company now sleep in death, their waking ears no longer to be filled with the death-telling yell of the savage. The manly hearts that shrunk from no danger have ceased to beat; their bones whiten in the gloomy fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, or moulder on the ever-flowering prairies of the far West. A cloven skull is all that remains of my once gallant friends to tell the bloody death that they died, and invoke vengeance on the merciless hand that struck them down in their ruddy youth.

Here I parted from the boy Baptiste, who had been my faithful companion so long. I never saw him again.

The party that I started with consisted of thirty-one men, most of them skillful trappers (Captain Bridger was in our party), and commanded by Robert Campbell. We started for Powder River, a fork of the Yellow Stone, and, arriving there without accident, were soon busied in our occupation.

A circumstance occurred in our encampment on this stream, trivial in itself (for trivial events sometimes determine the course of a man's life), but which led to unexpected results. I had set my six traps overnight, and on going to them the following morning I found four beavers, but one of my traps was missing. I sought it in every direction, but without success, and on my return to camp mentioned the mystery. Captain Bridger (as skillful a hunter as ever lived in the mountains) offered to renew the search with me, expressing confidence that the trap could be found. We searched diligently along the river and the bank for a considerable distance, but the trap was among the missing. The float-pole also was gone — a pole ten or twelve feet long and four inches thick. We at length gave it up as lost.

The next morning the whole party moved farther up the river. To shorten our route, Bridger and myself crossed the stream at the spot where I had set my missing trap. It was a buffalo-crossing, and there was a good trail worn in the banks, so that we could easily cross with our horses. After passing and traveling on some two miles, I discovered what I supposed to be a badger, and we both made a rush for him. On closer inspection, however, it proved to be my beaver, with trap, chain, and float-pole. It was apparent that some buffalo, in crossing the river, had become entangled in the chain, and, as we conceived, had carried the trap on his shoulder, with the beaver pendent on one side and the pole on the other. We inferred that he had in some way got his head under the chain, between the trap and the pole, and, in his endeavors to extricate himself, had pushed his head through. The hump on his back would prevent it passing over his body, and away he would speed with his burden, probably urged forward by the four sharp teeth of the beaver, which would doubtless object to his sudden equestrian (or rather bovine) journey. We killed the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

beaver and took his skin, feeling much satisfaction at the solution of the mystery. When we arrived at camp we asked our companions to guess how and where we had found the trap. They all gave various guesses, but, failing to hit the truth, gave up the attempt.

“Well, gentlemen,” said I, “it was stolen.”

“Stolen!” exclaimed a dozen voices at once.

“Yes, it was stolen by a buffalo.”

“Oh, come, now,” said one of the party, “what is the use of coming here and telling such a lie?”

I saw in a moment that he was angry and in earnest, and I replied, “If you deny that a buffalo stole my trap, you tell the lie.”

He rose and struck me a blow with his fist. It was my turn now, and the first pass I made brought my antagonist to the ground. On rising, he sprang for his gun; I assumed mine as quickly. The bystanders rushed between us, and, seizing our weapons, compelled us to discontinue our strife, which would have infallibly resulted in the death of one. My opponent mounted his horse and left the camp. I never saw him afterward. I could have taken his expression in jest, for we were very free in our sallies upon one another; but in this particular instance I saw his intention was to insult me, and I allowed my passion to overcome my reflection. My companions counseled me to leave camp for a few days until the ill feeling should have subsided.

The same evening Captain Bridger and myself started out with our traps, intending to be gone three or four days. We followed up a small stream until it forked, when Bridger proposed that I should take one fork and he the other, and the one who had set his traps first should cross the hill which separated the two streams and rejoin the other. Thus we parted, expecting to meet again in a few hours. I continued my course up the stream in pursuit of beaver villages until I found myself among an innumerable drove of horses, and I could plainly see they were not wild ones. The horses were guarded by several of their Indian owners, or horse-guards, as they term them, who had discovered me long before I saw them. I could hear their signals to each other, and in a few moments I was surrounded by them, and escape was impossible. I resigned myself to my fate: if they were enemies, I knew they could kill me but once, and to attempt to defend myself would entail inevitable death. I took the chances between death and mercy; I surrendered my gun, traps, and what else I had, and was marched to camp under a strong escort of horse-guards. I felt very sure that my guards were Crows, therefore I did not feel greatly alarmed at my situation. On arriving at their village, I was ushered into the chief’s lodge, where there were several old men and women, whom I conceived to be members of the family. My capture was known throughout the village in five minutes, and hundreds gathered around the lodge to get a sight of the prisoner. In the crowd were some who had talked to Greenwood a few weeks before. They at once exclaimed, “That is the lost Crow, the great brave who has killed so many of our enemies. He is our brother.” This threw the whole village into commotion; old and young were impatient to obtain a sight of the “great brave.” Orders were immediately given to summon all the old women taken by the Shians at the time of their captivity so many winters past, who had suffered the loss of a son at that time. The lodge was cleared for the examining committee, and the old women, breathless with excitement, their eyes wild and protruding, and their nostrils dilated, arrived in squads, until the lodge was filled to overflowing. I believe never was mortal gazed at with such intense and sustained interest as I was on that occasion. Arms and legs were critically scrutinized. My face next passed the ordeal; then my neck, back, breast, and all parts of my body, even down to my feet,

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

which did not escape the examination of these anxious matrons, in their endeavors to discover some mark or peculiarity whereby to recognize their brave son.

At length one old woman, after having scanned my visage with the utmost intentness, came forward and said, "If this is my son, he has a mole over one of his eyes."

My eyelids were immediately pulled down to the utmost stretch of their elasticity, when, sure enough, she discovered a mole just over my left eye!

"Then, and oh then!" such shouts of joy as were uttered by that honest-hearted woman were seldom before heard, while all in the crowd took part in her rejoicing. It was uncultivated joy, but not the less heartfelt and intense. It was a joy which a mother can only experience when she recovers a son whom she had supposed dead in his earliest days. She has mourned him silently through weary nights and busy days for the long space of twenty years; suddenly he presents himself before her in robust manhood, and graced with the highest name an Indian can appreciate. It is but nature, either in the savage breast or civilized, that hails such a return with overwhelming joy, and feels the mother's undying affection awakened beyond all control.

All the other claimants resigning their pretensions, I was fairly carried along by the excited crowd to the lodge of the "Big Bowl," who was my father. The news of my having proved to be the son of Mrs. Big Bowl flew through the village with the speed of lightning, and, on my arrival at the paternal lodge, I found it filled with all degrees of my newly-discovered relatives, who welcomed me nearly to death. They seized me in their arms and hugged me, and my face positively burned with the enraptured kisses of my numerous fair sisters, with a long host of cousins, aunts, and other more remote kindred. All these welcoming ladies as firmly believed in my identity with the lost one as they believed in the existence of the Great Spirit.

My father knew me to be his son; told all the Crows that the dead was alive again, and the lost one was found. He knew it was fact; Greenwood had said so, and the words of Greenwood were true; his tongue was not crooked — he would not lie. He also had told him that his son was a great brave among the white men; that his arm was strong; that the Black Feet quailed before his rifle and battle-axe; that his lodge was full of their scalps which his knife had taken; that they must rally around me to support and protect me; and that his long-lost son would be a strong breastwork to their nation, and he would teach them how to defeat their enemies.

They all promised that they would do as his words had indicated.

My unmarried sisters were four in number, very pretty, intelligent young women. They, as soon as the departure of the crowd would admit, took off my old leggins, and moccasins, and other garments, and supplied their place with new ones, most beautifully ornamented according to their very last fashion. My sisters were very ingenious in such work, and they wellnigh quarreled among themselves for the privilege of dressing me. When my toilet was finished to their satisfaction, I could compare in elegance with the most popular warrior of the tribe when in full costume. They also prepared me a bed, not so high as Haman's gallows certainly, but just as high as the lodge would admit. This was also a token of their esteem and sisterly affection.

While conversing to the extent of my ability with my father in the evening, and affording him full information respecting the white people, their great cities, their numbers, their power, their opulence, he suddenly demanded of me if I wanted a wife; thinking, no doubt, that, if he got me married, I should lose all discontent, and forego any wish of returning to the whites. I assented, of course.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“Very well,” said he, you shall have a pretty wife and a good one.”

Away he strode to the lodge of one of the greatest braves, and asked one of his daughters of him to bestow upon his son, who the chief must have heard was also a great brave. The consent of the parent was readily given. The name of my prospective father-in-law was Black-lodge. He had three very pretty daughters, whose names were Still-water, Blackfish, and Three-roads.

Even the untutored daughters of the wild woods need a little time to prepare for such an important event, but long and tedious courtships are unknown among them.

The ensuing day the three daughters were brought to my father’s lodge by their father, and I was requested to take my choice. “Still-water” was the eldest, and I liked her name; if it was emblematic of her disposition, she was the woman I should prefer. “Stillwater,” accordingly, was my choice. They were all superbly attired in garments which must have cost them months of labor, which garments the young women ever keep in readiness against such an interesting occasion as the present.

The acceptance of my wife was the completion of the ceremony, and I was again a married man, as sacredly in their eyes as if the Holy Christian Church had fastened the irrevocable knot upon us.

Among the Indians, the daughter receives no patrimony on her wedding-day, and her mother and father never pass a word with the son-in-law after — a custom religiously observed among them, though for what reason I never learned. The other relatives are under no such restraint.

My brothers made me a present of twenty as fine horses as any in the nation — all trained war-horses. I was also presented with all the arms and instruments requisite for an Indian campaign.

My wife’s deportment coincided with her name; she would have reflected honor upon many a civilized household. She was affectionate, obedient, gentle, cheerful, and, apparently, quite happy. No domestic thunder-storms, no curtain-lectures ever disturbed the serenity of our connubial lodge. I speedily formed acquaintance with all my immediate neighbors, and the Morning Star (which was the name conferred upon me on my recognition as the lost son) was soon a companion to all the young warriors in the village. No power on earth could have shaken their faith in my positive identity with the lost son. Nature seemed to prompt the old woman to recognize me as her missing child, and all my new relatives placed implicit faith in the genuineness of her discovery. Greenwood had spoken it, “and his tongue was not crooked.” What could I do under the circumstances? Even if I should deny my Crow origin, they would not believe me. How could I dash with an unwelcome and incredible explanation all the joy that had been manifested on my return — the cordial welcome, the rapturous embraces of those who hailed me as a son and a brother, the exuberant joy of the whole nation for the return of a long-lost Crow, who, stolen when a child, had returned in the strength of maturity, graced with the name of a great brave, and the generous strife I had occasioned in their endeavors to accord me the warmest welcome? I could not find it in my heart to undeceive these unsuspecting people and tear myself away from their untutored caresses.

Thus I commenced my Indian life with the Crows. I said to myself, “I can trap in their streams unmolested, and derive more profit under their protection than if among my own men, exposed incessantly to assassination and alarm.” I therefore resolved to abide with them, to guard my secret, to do my best in their company, and in assisting them to subdue their enemies.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

There was but one recollection troubled me, and that was my lonely one in St. Louis. My thoughts were constantly filled with her. I knew my affection was reciprocated, and that her fond heart beat alone for me; that my promise was undoubtedly confided in, and that prayers were daily offered for my safety, thus distant in the mountains, exposed to every peril. Repeatedly I would appoint a day for my return, but some unexpected event would occur and thrust my resolution aside. Still I hoped, for I had accumulated the means of wealth sufficient to render us comfortable through life; a fortunate return was all I awaited to consummate my ardent anticipation of happiness, and render me the most blessed of mortals.

Before proceeding farther with my Indian life, I will conduct the reader back to our camp the evening succeeding to my disappearance from Bridger. He was on the hill, crossing over to me as agreed upon, when he saw me in the hands of the Indians, being conducted to their village, which was also in sight. Seeing clearly that he could oppose no resistance to my captors, he made all speed to the camp, and communicated the painful news of my death. He had seen me in the charge of a whole host of Shi-ans, who were conducting me to camp, there to sacrifice me in the most improved manner their savage propensities could suggest, and then abandon themselves to a general rejoicing over the fall of a white man. With the few men he had in camp it was hopeless to attempt a rescue; for, judging by the size of the village, there must be a community of several thousand Indians. All were plunged in gloom. All pronounced my funeral eulogy; all my daring encounters were spoken of to my praise. My fortunate escapes, my repeated victories were applauded in memory of me; the loss of their best hunter, of their kind and ever-obliging friend, was deeply deplored by all.

“Alas! had it not been for that lamentable quarrel,” they exclaimed, “ he would still have been among us. Poor Jim! peace to his ashes!”

Bridger lamented that he had advised me to leave the camp, and again that he had separated from me at the Forks. “If we had kept together,” he murmured, “his fate might have been prevented, for doubtless one of us would have seen the Indians in time to have escaped.”

Thus, as I was afterward informed by some of the party, was my memory celebrated in that forlorn camp. Farther, having conceived a deep disgust at that vicinity, they moved their camp to the head waters of the Yellow Stone, leaving scores of beaver unmolested in the streams.

The faithful fellows little thought that, while they were lamenting my untimely fall, I was being hugged and kissed to death by a whole lodge full of near and dear Crow relatives, and that I was being welcomed with a public reception fully equal in intensity, though not in extravagance, to that accorded to the victor of Waterloo on his triumphal entry into Paris.

Bridger had never supposed that the Indians whom he saw leading me away were Crows, he being ignorant that he was so near their territory. His impression was that these were Cheyennes, hence I was given up for dead and reported so to others. My death was communicated to the rendezvous when the fall hunt was over, and there was a general time of mourning in mountain style. I say “mountain style” in contradistinction to the manner of civilized circles, because, with them, when the death of a comrade is deplored, his good deeds alone are celebrated; his evil ones are interred with his bones. Modern politics have introduced the custom of perpetuating all that is derogatory to a man’s fair fame, and burying in deep oblivion all that was honorable and praiseworthy. Hence I say, Give me the mountaineer, despite all the opprobrium that is cast upon his name, for in him you have a man of chivalrous feeling, ready to divide his last morsel with his

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

distressed fellow — ay, and to yield the last drop of his blood to defend the life of his friend.  
CHAPTER VIII.

War between the Crow Nation and other Indian Tribes.—My first Victory as a Crow Indian.—A Melancholy and Sentimental Indian.—Indian Masonry.—Return to Camp.—Great Rejoicing among my innumerable Relatives.—The Little Wife.

AFTER fêting for about ten days among my new neighbors, I joined a small war-party of about forty men, embodied for the ostensible purpose of capturing horses, but actually to kill their enemies. After advancing for three days, we fell in with a party of eleven of the Blood Indians, a band of the Black Foot tribe, immemorial enemies of the Crows. Our chief ordered a charge upon them. I advanced directly upon their line, and had struck down my man before the others came up. The others, after making a furious advance, that threatened annihilation to our few foes, curveted aside in Indian fashion, thus losing the effect of a first onset. I corrected this unwarlike custom. On this occasion, seeing me engaged hand to hand with the enemy's whole force, they immediately came to my assistance, and the opposing party were quickly dispatched. I despoiled my victim of his gun, lance, war-club, bow, and quiver of arrows. Now I was the, greatest man in the party, for I had killed the first warrior. We then painted our faces black (their mode of announcing victory), and rode back to the village, bearing eleven scalps. We entered the village singing and shouting, the crowds blocking up our way so that it was with difficulty we could get along. My wife met me at some distance from our lodge, and to her I gave my greatest trophy, the gun. My pretty sisters next presenting themselves for some share of my spoils, I gave them what remained, and they returned to their lodge singing and dancing all the way. Their delight was unbounded in their new-found relative, who had drawn the first blood. My companions told how I had charged direct upon the enemy, how I struck down the first Indian at a blow, what strength there was in my arm, and a great deal more in my commendation. Again I was lionized and fêted. Relatives I had not seen before now advanced and made my acquaintance. I was feasted by all the sachems and great braves of the village until their kindness nearly fatigued me to death, and I was glad to retire to my lodge to seek a season of quietude.

It was a custom rigidly observed by the Crows, when a son had drawn the first blood of the enemy, for the father to distribute all his property among the village, always largely recollecting his own kin in the proposed distribution. I saw that my achievement had ruined my poor old father. He seemed contented, however, to sacrifice his worldly goods to the prowess of his illustrious son. It was the Crows' religion, and he was thoroughly orthodox. Another traditional memento was to paint a chief's coat with an image of the sun, and hang that, together with a scarlet blanket, in the top of a tree, as an offering to the Great Spirit, to propitiate him to continue his favorable regards.

Several small bands of the village had a grand dance after the victory, each band by itself. I watched them for some time, to see which band or clique contained the most active men. Having singled one, I broke into the ring, and joined the performance with great heartiness. Then their shouts arose, "The great brave, the Antelope, has joined our band!" and their dancing increased in vehemence, and their singing became more hilarious. By the act of joining their clique I became incorporated with their number.

For the next three weeks I staid at home, spending much of my time in trapping round the village. I was accompanied in these excursions by a fine and intelligent Indian, who was without

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

a relative. He was very successful in trapping. One day we went to our traps as usual; he found eight fine beavers, but I had caught none. After flaying them, he offered me four of the skins. I looked at him in surprise, telling him they were caught in his traps—that they were his. Take them,” said he; “you are my friend: your traps have been unlucky to-day.” Previous to this, our success had been about equal.

Then he wished me to sit down and have a talk with him. I sat down by him, and he began. “My friend,” said he, “I am alone in the world all my kindred are gone to the land of the Great Spirit. I now want one good friend — a confidential bosom friend — who will be my brother. I am a warrior — a brave — and so are you. You have been far away to the villages of the white man; your eyes have seen much; you have now returned to your people. Will you be my friend and brother? be as one man with me as long as you live?”

I readily acceded to all his desires.

“It is well,” said he, and “we must exchange traps.” I agreed to it.

“Now we must exchange guns.” It was done.

So we went on until we had exchanged all our personal effects, including horse, clothing, and war implements.

“Now,” said he, “we are one while we live. What I know, you shall know; there must be no secret between us.”

We then proceeded to my father’s lodge, and acquainted him with the alliance we had entered into. He was much pleased at the occurrence, and ever after received my allied brother as his son; but the assumed relationship debarred his ever entering the family as son-in-law, since the mutual adoption attached him as by ties of consanguinity.

Shortly after, another war party was levied for an excursion after the enemy, or their horses, as occasion might offer. The party consisted of eighty or ninety warriors. My adopted brother inquired of me if I was going with the party. I told him I was, and asked the same question of him.

“No,” he said; “we are brothers; we must never both leave our village at once. When I go, you must stay; and when you go, I must stay; one of us must be here to see to the interests of the other. Should we both be killed, then who would mourn faithfully for the other?”

I was, as yet, but a private in the Crow army, no commission having been conferred upon me for what little service I had seen. We started in the night, as is their custom, leaving the village one or two at a time. My brother came to me in the evening, and expressed a wish to speak to me before I left, and pointed to a place where he wished me to meet him alone as we passed out of the village. I went as appointed, and found him there.

He first asked me if I had done any thing in the village.

I did not clearly see the import of his question, and I innocently answered “No.”

“Why, have you not been to war?” Yes.”

“Did the warriors not impart to you the war-path secret?”

“No.”

“Ah! well, they will tell it you to-morrow. Go on, my brother.”

We all assembled together and marched on. In the forenoon we killed a fine fat buffalo, and rested to take breakfast. The intestines were taken out, and a portion of them cleansed and roasted. A long one was then brought into our mess, which numbered ten warriors, who formed a circle, every man taking hold of the intestine with his thumb and finger. In this position, very solemn-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ly regarded by all in the circle, certain questions were propounded to each in relation to certain conduct in the village, which is of a nature unfit to be entered into here. They are religiously committed to a full and categorical answer to each inquiry, no matter whom their confession may implicate. Every illicit action they have committed since they last went to war is here exposed, together with the name of the faithless accomplice, even to the very date of the occurrence. All this is divulged to the medicine men on the return of the party, and it is by them noted down in a manner that it is never erased while the guilty confessor lives. Every new warrior, at his initiation, is conjured by the most sacred oaths never to divulge the war-path secret to any woman, on pain of instant death. He swears by his gun, his pipe, knife, earth, and sun, which are the most sacred oaths to the Indian, and are ever strictly observed.

We marched on until we came to the Missouri River, and I was greatly edified at the novel manner in which we crossed the stream. A sufficient number of robes were brought to the river bank, and a puckering-string run around the entire edge of one, drawing it together until it assumed a globulated form. Five or six guns, with other articles necessary to be kept dry, were put into it, together with a stone for ballast. An Indian would then attach one end of a string to the hide tub, and, taking the other end in his teeth, swim across with the novel bark in tow. When unfreighted on the opposite shore, every thing would be as dry as when embarked. Thus all our freight was conveyed across in a very short time, and we recommenced our march.

We had not proceeded far when our spies returned, and reported that they had discovered a village of the As-ne-boines on Milk River, about forty miles distant. We started for the village, intending to relieve them of a few of their horses, of which we thought they had more than their share. We reached there, and succeeded in driving off nearly three hundred head; but, in re-crossing the Missouri, we lost about one third of them by drowning, in consequence of our crossing over a sand-bar, in which, though covered with water, the animals became involved and perished. We reached home in safety with the remainder without being pursued; indeed, on our whole route we did not see an Indian.

Although we brought no scalps, there was great rejoicing at our success. I received, in the distribution, seventeen horses, which I gave to my friends, taking care to give my father a liberal share, in the place of those he had previously parted with on my account.

I had a month's interval at home. Visiting at my father's lodge one day, he asked me why I did not head a party myself, and go on some expedition as leader. By so doing, he informed me, I stood a better chance of gaining promotion. "Your medicine is good," said he, "and the medicine of both will bring you great success."

I replied that I had been domiciliated there so short a time that I did not wish to be too precipitate in pushing myself forward, and that I preferred to fight a while longer as a brave, rather than risk the responsibility of being leader.

He replied, "Here is your brother-in-law, take him; also your brothers will go with you. If they all get killed, so be it; I will cheerfully submit to old age without them, and die alone."

I reflected that, in order to advance by promotion, I must risk every thing; so I consented to follow his advice.

"Black Panther," my brother-in-law, was anxious to follow me, and there were seven young striplings, from ten to eighteen years old, that my father called his sons, though, in fact, half of them were what I called nephews. I put myself forward as the leader, the party comprising only

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

two men and the above-mentioned seven boys.

We departed from the village, and pressed on to the head-waters of the Arkansas, coming directly to the Arrap-a-ho and I-a-tan villages. At night we drove off one hundred and eighteen fine horses, with which we moved on in all possible haste toward home. We were then about three hundred miles from our village, and two hundred from the Crow country. In passing through the Park\* \* Formerly one of the greatest places for beaver in North America, and well known to the mountaineers. we discovered three Indians coming toward us, driving a small drove of horses. We concealed ourselves from their view by dropping back over the brow of a small hill directly in their route, until they had approached within ten steps of us. We raised the war-hoop, and rushed out on them, killing two of the three; the third was at a greater distance, driving the cattle, and when he saw the fate of his companions he mounted one of the fleetest, and was soon beyond pursuit. My company had achieved a great victory, the spoils of which were fourteen horses, in addition to those already in our possession, two scalps, one gun, two battle-axes, one lance, bow, quiver, etc. This trivial affair exalted my young brothers in their own esteem higher than the greatest veteran their village contained. During their return home they were anticipating with untiring tongues the ovation that awaited them.

We fell in with no more enemies on our way to the village. The horses we had captured from the three Indians had been stolen by them from the Crows, and as a recovery of lost horses is a greater achievement in Indians' eyes than the original acquisition, our merit was in proportion. We entered singing, with our faces blackened, bearing two scalps and other trophies, and driving one hundred and thirty-two fine horses before us. The whole village resounded with the shouts with which our brethren and kindred welcomed us. I was hailed bravest of the brave, and my promotion appeared certain.

My father and all his family rose greatly in popular favor. The Antelope's distinguished skill and bravery were reflected in lucent rays upon their names. "Great is the Antelope," was chanted on all sides, "the lost son of Big Bowl; their medicine is good and prosperous."

There is one trait in Indian character which civilized society would derive much profit by imitating. Envy is a quality unknown to the savages. When a warrior has performed any deed of daring, his merit is freely accorded by all his associate braves; his deeds are extolled in every public and private reunion, and his name is an incentive to generous emulation. I never witnessed any envious attempt to derogate from the merit of a brave's achievement. No damning with faint praise; none

"Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike;"

no faltering innuendoes that the man has not accomplished so much, after all. The same way with the women. When a woman's husband has distinguished himself, her neighbors, one and all, take a pride in rejoicing with her over her happiness. If a woman displays more ingenuity than common in ornamenting her husband's war-dress, or in adding any fancy work to her own habiliments, she at once becomes the pattern of the neighborhood. You see no flaws picked in her character because of her rising to note; no aspersions cast upon her birth or present standing. Such and such is her merit, and it is deserving of our praise; the fact perceived, it receives full acknowledgment. This leads to the natural conclusion that civilization, in introducing the ostentation of display which is too frequently affected without sufficient ground to stand upon, warps the mind from the charity that is natural to it, and leads to all the petty strifes, and scandalous

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

tales, and heartburnings that imbitter the lives of so many in civilized life.

I now engaged in trapping until the latter part of December. I celebrated Christmas by myself, as the Indians knew nothing about the birth of our Savior, and it was hard to make them understand the nature of the event. At this time a trading-party started from our village for the Grovan and Mandan country, where there was a trading-post established, for the purpose of buying our winter supply of ammunition, and tobacco, and other necessary articles. I sent thirty beaver-skins, with directions what to purchase with their value, and had marked my initials on all of the skins. These letters were a mystery to the trader. He inquired of the Crows who had marked the skins with those letters. They told him it was a Crow, one of their braves, who had lived with the whites. Kipp, the trader, then sent an invitation to me to visit him at his fort.

While our party was away, our village was attacked by a combined party of the Siouxs and Reke-rahs, numbering two thousand five hundred. So sudden was the attack that they inflicted considerable mischief upon us before we had a chance to collect our forces. But when we at length charged on them, it was decisive. We penetrated their ranks, throwing them into the direst confusion, and they withdrew, leaving two hundred and fifty-three dead on the field. Our loss was thirty-one killed, and one hundred and sixty wounded. They had supposed that nearly all the warriors had left the village, when but a small party had gone, and they met with such a reception as they little expected. I had three horses killed under me, and my faithful battle-axe was red with the blood of the enemy to the end of the haft; fourteen of the Siouxs had fallen beneath it.

Although we had taken such a number of scalps, there was no dancing or rejoicing. All were busied in attending the wounded, or mourning their relatives slain. Their mourning consists in cutting and hacking themselves on every part of the body, and keeping up a dismal moaning or howling for hours together. Many cut off their fingers in order to mourn through life, or, at least, to wear the semblance of mourning; hence the reason of so many Western Indians having lost one or more of their fingers, and of the scars which disfigure their bodies.

The Crows fasten the remains of their dead in trees until their flesh is decayed; their skeletons are then taken down and inhumed in eaves. Sometimes, but not frequently, they kill the favorite horse of the deceased, and bury him at the foot of the tree; but that custom is not followed so strictly with them as with most other tribes.

I was pacifically engaged in trapping during the ensuing winter, and the season being open and pleasant, I met with great success. Could I have disposed of my peltry in St. Louis, I should have been as rich as I coveted.

In the month of March (1826), a small war-party of twenty men left our village on an excursion, and not one of them ever came back, their pack-dogs (used for carrying extra moccasins when a party goes to war) alone returning to intimate their fate. Another party was quickly dispatched, of whom I was appointed leader, and we soon came upon the remains of the massacred party, which yet bore the marks of the weapons that had laid them low. There were also many fresh Indian tracks about the place, which led us to the inference that there were enemies near. We made immediate search for them, and had only marched about six miles when we came upon a village of nine lodges, which we instantly assaulted, killing every man but two. These were on a hill near by, and as they made off we did not follow them. My personal trophies in this encounter were one scalp and the equipments of its wearer; one young girl of about fourteen years, and a little boy. We killed forty-eight of the enemy, and took six women prisoners, together with a large drove

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

of horses, and a valuable stock of beaver, otter, and other skins, with which we returned to the village. There was great rejoicing again (not one of our party was scratched), and the beaver-skins, to the number of one hundred and sixty-three, were bestowed upon me for my skill in command. Before we made the assault we felt convinced that this was the party who had killed our missing friends, and our convictions were substantiated subsequently by recognizing several weapons in their possession which had formerly belonged to our braves; indeed, some of our women prisoners acknowledged that our departed brethren had killed many of their people.

The Crows treat the women whom they take prisoners much better than other tribes do. They do not impose upon them a harder lot than their own women endure, and they allow them to marry into the tribe, after which they are in equal fellowship with them. On finding themselves captives, they generally mourn a day, or two, but their grief quickly subsides, and they seem to care no farther for their violent removal from their own people.

At this time the Crows were incessantly at war with all the tribes within their reach, with the exception of the Snakes and the Flat Heads; and they did not escape frequent ruptures with them, brought about by the Indians' universal obtuseness as to all law relating to the right of property in horses.

The Crows could raise an army of sixteen thousand warriors, and, although there were tribes much more numerous, there were none could match them in an open fight. The Camanches and Apaches have tilted lances with them repeatedly, and invariably to their discomfiture. If the Crows ever suffered defeat, it was when overwhelmed by numbers. One principal cause of their marked superiority was their plentiful supply of guns and ammunition, which the whites always more readily exchanged to them on account of their well-proved fidelity to the white man. When other tribes were constrained to leave their fire-arms in their lodges for want of ammunition, the Crows would have plenty, and could use their arms with great effect against an enemy which had only bow and arrows to shoot with. Farther, they were the most expert horsemen of any Indian tribe, notwithstanding the great name bestowed upon the Camanches and Apaches — those two great terrors of Northern Mexico. I have seen them all, and consider myself in a position to judge, although some, perhaps, will say that I am prejudiced in favor of the Crows, seeing that I am one myself.

Previous to my going among the Crows, the smallpox had been ravaging their camp, carrying them away in thousands, until, as I was informed by themselves, their number was reduced by that fatal Indian scourge to little better than one half. None of their medicine would arrest its course.

After our last-mentioned victory, the Crows met with numerous reverses, which were attended with severe loss of life. In their small war-parties going out on marauding expeditions I had never much confidence, although, individually, they were good warriors; therefore I never took part with them until six or eight of their parties would come back severely handled, and many of their braves slain. Thus their reverses accumulated until the whole village was one scene of mourning, numbers of them being self-mangled in the most shocking manner, and the blood trickling from their heads down to the ground. Some had lost a father, some a brother, some a sweetheart; in short, their appearance was too fearful to look upon, and their cries were too painful to hear. When the last party came in, defeated with serious loss, I had just returned with a party from the pursuit of horse-thieves. We had brought in four scalps, and were performing the scalp-dance in

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

honor of the event. On hearing the disastrous news of the return of the defeated party, we arrested the dance, and I retired into my lodge. Soon, however, a crowd of women came and lifted it directly from over me, leaving me in the open air. They then threw before me immense quantities of all kinds of goods, leggins, moccasins, and other things, until I was nearly covered with their miscellaneous offerings.

I called out, "Enough! I am aroused. I will go with your warriors and revenge the death of your friends." They were all satisfied, and stood still. The news then circulated through the village that the Antelope was aroused, and himself going against the Cheyennes to revenge the death of their braves.

I had as yet met with no reverses since my translation. My medicine had always been good and true. I had never come home without scalps or spoils, and they began to associate my name with victory. The next day five hundred warriors rallied round me, among whom were some who had suffered recent defeat, and their minds were burning for revenge. I sent forward fifty spies, and moved cautiously on with the main body. My reputation was committed to my present success, and I took more than ordinary pains to vindicate the cause they had intrusted to my care. Every man was well armed and mounted, and I had full confidence in our ability to give a good account of double our number.

My command were very curious to learn my tactics. On one occasion, when they were completely harassing me with endless inquiries respecting my plan of attack, I told them, if they would bring me a silver-gray fox, unhurt, my medicine would be complete, and that we were sure of a great victory. In a moment they left me, and shortly returned with a live fox, which they had caught in a surround. I ordered them to choke it to death, and then flay it: it was done, and the beautiful skin was handed to me. I wrapped it round my medicine bow, and made a brief speech, informing them that the cunning of the fox had descended upon my head, and that my wiles would infallibly circumvent the enemy. Like another Alexander, I thus inspired confidence in the breasts of my soldiers, and the spirit I was infusing in others partly communicated itself to my own breast. Some of the spies now returned and informed me that they had discovered a village of Cheyennes containing thirty-seven lodges.

"Well," said I, after learning where it was, "now return and watch them strictly; if anything happens, acquaint me with it promptly."

Away they went, but soon returned again to report that the enemy had moved down the creek (which was then called Antelope Creek, a small tributary of the Missouri), had passed through the cañon, and were encamped at its mouth. I ordered them to send in all the spies except ten, and to direct those ten to keep a sharp look-out. I then determined to follow them down the cañon and attack them at the mouth, thus cutting off their retreat into the cañon; but again I was informed that the enemy had moved farther down, and had encamped in the edge of the timber, with the evident intention of remaining there.

I approached their village with great caution, moving a few miles a day, until I occupied a position on a hill near it, where I had an almost bird's-eye view of the village underneath. I then sent all my extra horses, together with the boys and women, to the rear; I divided the warriors into three parties, reserving the smallest division of fifty men to myself. I placed the two chief divisions in juxtaposition, out of view of the enemy, and, with my small party, intended to descend upon the horses, thinking to draw them after me; my two concealed divisions would then inclose

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

them as in a lane, and we, returning, would place them under a triple fire. I addressed them briefly, begging them to show the enemy they were Crows, and brave ones too, and that, if they would strictly obey my directions, we could retrieve all our recent reverses.

The two corps d'armée being in position, I was advancing with my small division, when we came suddenly upon two of the enemy, whom we instantly killed and scalped. We rode on, being in full sight of the enemy, but they made no offer to come out of their camp. We tried every means to provoke them to advance; we shook our two scalps at them, yet reeking with blood, and tantalized them all we could; but they would not move. To have charged them as they were situated would have entailed upon us severe loss. We had taken two scalps without loss of blood, more glorious in an Indian's estimation than to take one hundred if a single life was sacrificed. We had braved our foes; we had stamped them as cowards, which is almost equal to death; so, contenting myself with what was done, I concluded to draw off my forces and return home. We were received at the village with deafening applause. Every face was washed of its mourning-paint; gloom gave way to rejoicing; and the scalp-dance was performed with enthusiasm and hilarity. I was illustrated with the distinguished name of Big Bowl (Bat-te-sarsh), and hailed as a deliverer by all the women in the village.

A little girl, who had often asked me to marry her, came to me one day, and with every importunity insisted on my accepting her as my wife. I said, "You are a very pretty girl, but you are but a child; when you are older I will talk to you about it."

But she was not to be put off. "You are a great brave," she said, "and braves have a right to paint the faces of their wives when they have killed the enemies of the Crows. I am a little girl now, I know; but if I am your wife, you will paint my face when you return from the war, and I shall be proud that I am the wife of a great brave, and can rejoice with the other women whose faces are painted by their brave husbands. You will also give me fine things, fine clothes, and scarlet cloth; and I can make you pretty leggins and moccasins, and take care of your war-horses and war implements."

The little innocent used such powerful appeals that, notwithstanding I had already seven wives and a lodge for each, I told her she might be my wife. I took her to the lodge of one of my married sisters, told her that the little girl was my wife, and that she would make her a good wood-carrier, and that she must dress her up finely as became the spouse of a brave. My sister was much pleased, and cheerfully carried out all my requests. As I shall have occasion to speak of this little girl again, in connection with the medicine lodge, I shall say comparatively little of her at this time.

I spent the summer very agreeably, being engaged most of the time in hunting buffalo and trapping beaver. I had now accumulated three full packs, worth in market three thousand dollars. One day I took a fancy to hunt mountain sheep, and for company took my little wife with me. She was particularly intelligent, and I found by her conversation that she surpassed my other wives in sense. She was full of talk, and asked all manner of questions concerning my travels among the great lodges and villages of the white man; if the white squaws were as pretty as herself; and an endless variety of questions. I felt greatly pleased with her piquant curiosity, and imparted much information to her. Fixing her deep black eyes full upon mine, she at length said, "I intend, some time in my life, to go into the medicine lodge." I looked at her with astonishment. The dedication of a female to the service of the Great Spirit is a dangerous attempt. Like

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

all forms of imposture, it requires a peculiar talent and fitness in the candidate who seeks to gain admission into the sacred lodge. The war-path secret is associated with the ministration, with many other fearful ceremonies. The woman who succeeds in her ambitious project is an honored participant in the sacred service of the Deity through life; but where one succeeds numbers fail, and the failure entails instant death. Three years subsequent to this conversation, I shall have to relate how my little wife, in the breathless silence of ten thousand warriors, passed the fiery ordeal in safety, and went triumphantly into the lodge of the Great Spirit.

I had good success in hunting, killing a great number of sheep, and carried their skins with me to the village. On arriving, I called at the lodge of my allied brother, who insisted on my entering and taking a meal. I accepted his offer, while my little wife ran home to communicate my great success in hunting. Our meal consisted of strips of dried buffalo tongue, which, as the Indians did not half cook it, was a dish I never partook of. What was served me on this occasion, however, was well done, and I ate a hearty meal. Supper completed, I was praising the viands, and chanced to inquire what dish I had been eating. The woman replied that it was tongue, and expressed by her looks that I must have known what it was. My friend, knowing that I had departed from my rule, inferred that I had infringed my medicine, and he started up in horror, shouting, "Tongue! tongue! you have ruined his medicine! should our hero be slain in battle, you are a lost woman." The poor woman was half dead with fear, her features expressing the utmost horror.

I issued from the lodge, bellowing in imitation of the buffalo, protruding my tongue, and pawing up the ground like a bear in fury. This was in order to remove the spell that had settled over me, and recover the strength of my medicine. I recovered at length, and proceeded toward my lodge, commiserated by a large crowd, who all deplored the taking of the food as a lamentable accident. That same evening the village was notified by the crier that on the following day there would be a surround, and all were summoned to attend. I accompanied the party, and the surround was made, several hundred buffaloes being inclosed. On charging among them to dispatch them, we discovered seven Black Foot Indians, who, finding retreat cut off from them, had hastily provided themselves with a sand fort. I struck one of the victims with a willow I had in my hand, and retired thereupon, declaring I had wounded the first enemy. This, I believe I have before mentioned, is a greater honor than to slay any number in battle. I had retired to a short distance, and was standing looking at the fight, when a bullet, discharged from the fort, struck the dagger in my belt, and laid me breathless on the ground. Recovering immediately, I arose, and found myself bleeding at the mouth. Imagining the ball had penetrated some vital place, I gave myself up for dead. I was carried to the village by scores of warriors, who, with me, supposed my wound to be mortal, and were already deploring their warrior's fall. The medicine men surrounded me, and searched for my wound; but, behold! there was only a small discoloration to be seen; the skin was not perforated. The ball was afterward found where I fell, flattened as if struck with a hammer. It was then declared that would recover. The enemy's bullets flattened in contact with my person — my medicine was infallible — I was impenetrable to wound! I did not afford them any light on the matter.

As soon as the poor woman who had entertained me at supper heard that I was wounded, she left for another village, and was not seen again for six months. Supposing herself to have been instrumental in destroying my medicine, and knowing that, if I died, her life would pay the forfeit of her carelessness, she did not dare to return. She chanced to see me unharmed at the village where

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

she had taken refuge, and then she knew her life was redeemed.

While the doctor and medicine men were going through their spells and incantations previous to uncovering my wound, my relatives, in their solicitude for my life, offered profuse rewards if they would save me. Some offered twenty horses, some fifty, some more, in proportion as their wealth or liberality prompted. The doctors ransomed my life, and they received over five hundred horses for their achievement.

One day a slight dispute arose between one of the braves and myself about some trivial matter, and as both of us were equally obstinate in maintaining our views, we both became angry. My disputant remarked with great superciliousness, "Ugh! you pretend to be a brave, but you are no brave."

We drew our battle-axes at the same instant, and rushed at each other, but before either had an opportunity to strike, the pipe was thrust between us, compelling us to desist, to disobey which is instant death. This is the duty of certain Indians, who occupy the position of policemen in a city. They then said to my antagonist, "You said that 'Big Bowl' was no brave. You lied; we all know that he is brave; our enemies can testify to it, and you dare not deny it any more. Hereafter, if you wish to show which is the greatest brave, wait until you meet the enemy, then we can decide; but never again attempt to take each other's lives."

This interference procured peace. It was not long, however, before we both had a good opportunity to determine the question of our valor. A small party of thirty warriors was embodied, myself and my antagonist being of the number. After a short march we fell in with a war-party of eighteen Cheyennes, who, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, accepted battle, well knowing that escape was impossible. I pointed out one of the enemy (who I could see by his dress and the peculiarity of his hair was a chief). "You see him?" I said. "Well, we can decide which is the best man now. You charge directly against him by my side."

This he readily assented to, but still I could detect in his countenance an expression which I deciphered, "I would rather not." I saw the Indian we were about to attack open the pan of his gun, and give it a slight tap with his hand to render its discharge certain. He presented his piece, and took the most deliberate aim as we advanced side by side to the attack. The death of one of us seemed inevitable, and I did not like the feeling of suspense. A few spurtings of our chargers, and we were upon him. I seized the muzzle of his gun at the very instant that it exploded, and cut him down with the battle-axe in my right hand. My left cheek was filled with the powder from the discharge, the stains of which remain to this day. My rival did not even strike at the Indian I had killed.

He then said to me, "You are truly a great warrior and a great brave; I was wrong in saying what I did. We are now good friends."

Our few enemies were quickly exterminated, the loss on our side being four wounded, including my powder-wound. My fame was still farther celebrated, for I had again struck down the first man, who was a great chief, and had actually charged up to the muzzle of his gun, what few Indians have the stamina to do. On our return with the spoils of victory we were warmly congratulated by the tribe, and I was still farther ennobled by the additional name of Bull's Robe, conferred on me by my father.

It was now the fall of the year. I had been a Crow for many moons. It was time to repair to the trading post to obtain what articles we needed. I determined to accompany the party, and at least

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

attend to the sale of my own effects. What peltry I had was worth three thousand dollars in St. Louis, and I was solicitous to obtain something like an equivalent in exchange for it.

We proceeded to Fort Clarke, on the Missouri. I waited until the Indians had nearly completed their exchanges, speaking nothing but Crow language, dressed like a Crow, my hair as long as a Crow's, and myself as black as a crow. No one at the post doubted my being a Crow. Toward the conclusion of the business, one of my tribe inquired in his own language for "be-has-i-pe-hish-a." The clerk could not understand his want, and there was none of the article in sight for the Indian to point out. He at length called Kipp to see if he could divine the Indian's meaning.

I then said in English, "Gentlemen, that Indian wants scarlet cloth."

If a bomb-shell had exploded in the fort they could not have been more astonished.

"Ah," said one of them, "you speak English! Where did you learn it?"

"With the white man."

"How long were you with the whites?" More than twenty years."

"Where did you live with them?"

"In St. Louis."

"In St. Louis! in St. Louis! You have lived twenty years in St. Louis!"

Then they scanned me closely from head to foot, and Kipp said, "If you have lived twenty years in St. Louis, I'll swear you are no Crow."

"No, I am not."

"Then what may be your name?"

"My name in English is James Beckwourth."

"Good heavens! why I have heard your name mentioned a thousand times. You were supposed dead, and were so reported by Captain Sublet."

"I am not dead, as you see; I still move and breathe."

"This explains the mystery," he added, turning to the clerk, "of those beaver-skins being marked 'J. B.' Well, well! if you are not a strange mortal!"

All this conversation was unintelligible to my Crow brethren, who were evidently proud to see a Crow talk, so fluently to the white man.

"Now," I said, "I have seen you transact your business without interposing with a word. You have cleared two or three thousand per cent of your exchanges. I do not grudge it you. Were I in your place I should do the same. But I want a little more liberal treatment. I have toiled hard for what I have obtained, and I want the worth of my earnings."

I set my own price upon my property, and, to the great astonishment of my Indian brethren, I returned with as large a bale of goods as theirs would all together amount to. But, as I have said, an Indian is in no wise envious, and, instead of considering themselves unfairly used, they rejoiced at the white man's profusion to me, and supposed the overplus he had given me was an indemnity for the captivity they had held me in.

On our return I made various presents to all my wives, some of whom I did not see for months together, and to many other relatives. I had still a good stock to trade upon, and could exchange with my brethren at any rate I offered. They placed implicit confidence in my integrity, and a beaver-skin exchanged with me for one plug of tobacco contented them better than to have exchanged it for two with the white man.

I had the fairest opportunity for the acquisition of an immense fortune that ever was placed in

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

man's way. By saying one word to the tribe I could have kept the white trader forever out of their territory, and thus have gained the monopoly of the trade of the entire nation for any term of years. That I am not now in possession of a fortune equal to that of an Astor or a Girard is solely the fault of my own indolence, and I do not to this moment see how I came to neglect the golden opportunity.

While returning from the trading-post, we fell in with a party of about two hundred and fifty Cheyenne warriors, to oppose whom we numbered but two hundred warriors, besides being encumbered with a still greater number of women. As good fortune would have it, they attacked us in the daytime, while we were moving; whereas, had they but waited till we were encamped, and our horses turned out, I do not see how we could have escaped defeat. In traveling, every warrior led his war-horse by his side, with lance and shield attached to the saddle.

The enemy was first seen by one of our scouts at some little distance from the main body. On seeing they were discovered, they gave chase to him, and continued on until they came upon our whole party. Every man transferred himself to his war-horse, and was instantly ready to receive them. They advanced upon our line, were received without wavering, and finally driven back. It was now our turn to attack. We charged furiously with our whole force, completely sweeping every thing from before us, and killing or disabling at least fifty of the enemy. They rallied and returned, but the reception they met with soon put them to rout, and they fled precipitately into the timber, where we did not care to follow them.

Our loss was severe: nine warriors killed and thirteen wounded, including myself, who had received an arrow in the head — not so serious, however, as to prevent me doing duty. We also lost one pack-horse, laden with goods, but no scalps. We took eleven scalps upon the field, and the Cheyennes afterward confessed to the loss of fifty-six warriors. When we lost a horse in the action, the women would immediately supply its place with a fresh one. We were nearly two hundred miles from home, and we carried our dead all the way thither.

On arriving at home, I found my father greatly irritated. He had lost two hundred and fifty head of horses from his own herd, stolen by the Black Feet, who had raised a general contribution from the whole village. His voice was still for war, and he insisted on giving immediate chase. I dissuaded him from his intention, representing to him his advanced years, and promising to go myself and obtain satisfaction for his losses. He reluctantly consented to this arrangement; but, four or five days after my departure on the errand, his medicine became so strong that he started off with a party, taking an opposite direction to the one I had gone on. My party consisted of two hundred and twenty good warriors, and my course lay for the head-waters of the Arkansas, in the Arrap-a-ho country.

We fell in with no enemies on our way until we arrived at a village which contained upward of one hundred lodges. We formed our plans for assaulting the place the next day, when we discovered four white men, whom we surrounded. The poor fellows thought their last day was come, and I was amused to overhear their conversation.

“They will surely kill us all,” said one.

In what manner will they kill us?” asked another.

“They may burn us,” suggested a third.

Then they communed among themselves, little thinking there was one overhearing them who sympathized with every apprehension they expressed.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

They summed up their consultation by one saying, "If they attempt to kill us, let us use our knives to the best advantage, and sell our lives as dearly as possible."

"Gentlemen," said I, "I will spare you that trouble."

"Great God!" they exclaimed, "Mr. Beckwourth, is that you?"

"Yes," I replied, "that is my name. You are perfectly safe, but you must not leave our camp till tomorrow."

"For what reason?" they inquired.

"Because there is a village close by which we mean to assault at daybreak, and we do not wish our design to be known."

"Oh," said they, "we should not communicate your designs, and we did not even know of the village."

They then poured out before me a whole sea of misfortunes. They had been trapping — had met with very good success; the Indians had stolen their horses; in attempting to cross the river by means of a badly-constructed raft, the raft had fallen to pieces, and they had lost every thing — peltry, guns, and ammunition. They were now making their way to New Mexico, with nothing to eat and no gun to kill game with. They were among Indians, and were two or three hundred miles from the nearest settlements of New Mexico. I entertained them well while they staid, and, after our assault in the morning, I gave them two guns and twenty rounds of ammunition, and counseled them to take advantage of the surprise of the Indians to make good their escape. One of the four afterward informed me that they reached the settlements in safety, having killed a buffalo and a deer on the way.

We made the assault as appointed. We were mounted on horses we had taken from the village during the night, as Indians go on horse-stealing expeditions on foot. I divided my force into two bodies, giving my principal scout the command of one. I gave orders to run off their horses without risking a battle, if no opposition were offered; but, if they showed fight, to kill whatever came in their way. The Arrap-a-hos are very poor warriors, but on this occasion they defended themselves with commendable zeal and bravery. We were, however, compelled to kill fourteen of them, for our own security, before we could get their horses well started. On our side we had four wounded; and if they had not delayed to scalp the fallen Indians, that might have been avoided. We succeeded in driving away over sixteen hundred horses, all well conditioned, with which we arrived safely at home. My father also returned about the same time with near three thousand head, all superior animals. The Bull's Robe family had certainly done wonders, and we were entertained to the greatest feast I had ever seen. The whole village was illuminated with numerous feux de joie, and such dancing was never known before.

I received another addition to my list of titles in commemoration of this event, Is-ko-chu-e-chu-re, the Enemy of Horses.

A feud now broke out, which had been long brewing, between two different parties in our village, one of which worshiped foxes, and the other worshiped dogs. The warriors of the latter party were called Dog Soldiers, of which I was the leader; the other party was led by Red Eyes. The quarrel originated about the prowess of the respective parties, and was fostered by Red Eyes, on the part of the rival company, and by Yellow Belly (in Indian A-re-she-res), a man in my company. This A-re-she-res was as brave an Indian as ever trod the plain, but he was also a very bad Indian — that is, he was disagreeable in his manners, and very insulting in his conversation.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Red Eyes was equally brave, but of a different disposition. His was a reserved pride; the braggadocio of A-re-she-res offended him. This rivalry developed into an open rupture, and the pipemen were obliged to interfere to prevent open hostilities. At length it was proposed, in order to cement a final peace between the two warriors, that each should select from his own party a certain number of men, and go and wage common war against some enemy — the question of bravery to be decided by the number of scalps brought in on each side.

Red Eyes accordingly chose from his party eighteen of the best men, himself making the nineteenth — men who would suffer death rather than show their backs to the enemy. A-re-she-res, with his accustomed fanfaronade, said, "I can beat that party with less men; I will only take sixteen men, and bring in more scalps than they."

He came to me and said, "Enemy of Horses, I want you to go with me and die with me. It is of no use for you to stay with this people; they are not brave any longer. Come with me, and we will enter the spirit land together, where the inhabitants are all brave. There is better hunting ground in the country of the Great Spirit. Come!"

I replied I would rather not go on such an errand. I have women to live for, and defend against the enemies of the Crows; that when I fought I wished to destroy the enemy and preserve my own life. "That," said I, "is bravery and prudence combined."

"Ah !" answered he, "you a leader of the Dog Soldiers, and refuse to go! There are prettier women in the land of the Great Spirit than any of your squaws, and game in much greater abundance. I care nothing about my life: I am ready to go to the land of the Great Spirit. You must go with me; perhaps your medicine will save not only yourself, but all of us. If so, it will be so much the better."

I, not wishing to be thought cowardly, especially by A-re-she-res, at length consented to accompany him, on the condition that he would stifle all harsh feeling against our brethren, and, let our expedition result as it would, accept the decision in good faith, and never refer to the past.

"It is well," he said; let it be as your words speak."

The two parties started on different routes to the Cheyenne country. I regarded it as a foolhardy enterprise, but if it resulted in the establishment of peace, I was contented to take part in it, at whatever personal sacrifice. We used every precaution against a surprise, and A-re-she-res willingly adapted his movements to my counsel; for, though he was as brave as a lion, and fought with the utmost desperation, he was very inconsiderate of consequences, and had no power of calculating present combinations to come at a desired result.

After traveling about twenty days, we arrived at a considerable elevation, from whence we could see, at some distance on the prairie, about thirty of the enemy engaged in killing buffalo. We could also see their village at a distance of three miles.

"There is an opportunity," said A-re-she-res; now let us charge these Indians in the open prairie."

"No, no," I replied; "there are too many of them; the Cheyennes are brave warriors; if you wish to carry home their scalps, we must get into their path and waylay them; by that means we shall kill many of them, and run less risk of our own lives. We shall gain more honor by preserving the lives of our warriors, and taking back the scalps of the enemy, than by sacrificing our lives in a rash and inconsiderate charge."

"Your words are true," said he, "and we will do as you say."

"Then," added I, "turn your robes the hair side out, and follow me."

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

We wound our way down the trail through which they must necessarily pass to reach their village, and kept on until we reached a place where there were three gullies worn by the passage of the water. Through the centre gully the trail passed, thus leaving a formidable position on each side, in which an ambuscade had ample concealment. I divided my party, giving the command of one division to A-re-she-res. We took our stations in the ditches on each side the trail, though not exactly opposite to each other. I directed the opposite party not to fire a gun until they should hear ours, and then each man to take the enemy in the order of precedence. The unsuspecting Cheyennes, as soon as they had finished butchering and dressing the buffalo, began to approach us in parties of from three to eight or ten, their horses loaded with meat, which they were bearing to the village. When there were about a dozen abreast of my party, I made a signal to fire, and nine Cheyennes fell before our balls, and eight before those of A-re-she-res's party. Some few of the enemy who had passed on, hearing the guns; returned to see what the matter was, and three of them became victims to our bullets. We all rushed from our hiding-places then, and some fell to scalping the prostrate foe, and some to cutting the lashings of the meat in order to secure the horses, the remainder keeping the surviving enemy at bay. Having taken twenty scalps, we sprang upon the horses we had freed from their packs, and retreated precipitately, for the enemy was coming in sight in great numbers.

We made direct for the timber, and, leaving our horses, took refuge in a rocky place in the mountain, where we considered ourselves protected for a while from their attacks. To storm us in front they had to advance right in the face of our bullets, and to reach us in the rear they had to take a circuitous route of several miles round the base of the mountain. The enemy evinced the utmost bravery, as they made repeated assaults right up to the fortification that sheltered us. Their bullets showered around us without injury, but we could bring down one man at every discharge. To scalp them, however, was out of the question.

During the combat a great Cheyenne brave, named Leg-in-the-water, charged directly into our midst, and aimed a deadly thrust with his lance at one of our braves. The warrior assailed instantly shivered the weapon with his battle-axe, and inflicted a ghastly wound in his assailant's shoulder with a second blow. He managed to escape, leaving his horse dead in our midst.

By this time we were encompassed with the enemy, which induced the belief in our minds that retreat would be the safest course. None of our party was wounded except A-re-she-res, who had his arm broken with a bullet between the shoulder and elbow. He made light of the wound, only regretting that he could no longer discharge his gun; but he wielded his battle-axe with his left hand as well as ever.

When night came on we evacuated our fortress, unperceived by our enemies. They, deeming our escape impossible, were quietly resting, intending to assault us with their whole force in the morning, and take our scalps at all hazards. Moving with the stealth of a cat, we proceeded along the summit of a rocky cliff until we came to a cleft or ravine, through which we descended from the bluff to the bottom, which was covered with a heavy growth of timber. We then hastened home, arriving there on the twenty-eighth day from the time we left.

They had given us over for lost; but when they saw us returning with twenty scalps, and only one of our party hurt, their grief gave way to admiration, and we were hailed with shouts of applause. Our rival party, under Red Eyes, had returned five or six days previously, bringing with them seventeen scalps, obtained at the loss of one man. Our party was declared the victor, since we had

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

taken the greater number of scalps, with the weaker party, and without loss of life, thus excelling our rivals in three several points. Red Eyes cheerfully acknowledged himself beaten, good feeling was restored, and the subject of each other's bravery was never after discussed.

We had still another advantage, inasmuch as we could dance, a celebration they were deprived of, as they had lost a warrior; they, however, joined our party, and wanted nothing in heartiness to render our dance sufficiently boisterous to suffice for the purpose of both.

All the dancing is performed in the open air, with the solid ground for a floor. It consists of jumping up and down, intermixed with violent gestures and stamping; they keep time with a drum or tambourine, composed of antelope-skin stretched over a hoop, the whole party singing during the performance.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Great Loss of Horses in the Mountains.—Destructive Battle with the Black Feet.—Storming of their Natural Fort.—Trouble with the Cheyennes.

WE went along without noteworthy occurrence until the following March, when we moved from the western to the eastern side of what was at that time called Tongue River Mountain, one of the peaks of the Rocky Mountain chain. The buffaloes had receded from the environs of our old camping-ground, and had been attracted to the region whither we removed in consequence of the grass being in a more forward state.

Our community numbered ten thousand souls — men, women, and children — together with an immense number of horses. In crossing the mountain, we found the snow to be of so great depth, being farther increased with a three days' recent storm, that the mountain was impassable. In this severe journey, which occupied three days, we had twelve hundred horses perish in the snow. Previously, the Black Feet had stolen eight hundred head, and we were in no condition to follow them, as we were all engaged in packing up for removal. We reached the prairie, on the eastern side of the mountain, after a toilsome journey, and found good camping-ground on Box Elder Creek. The morning following our arrival we started on a surround, in parties of fifty and upward, as our whole population was without meat. I rode a pack-horse, and three of my wives were with me, each leading a saddle-horse. I had not proceeded far before I heard a noise that sounded very much like a war-hoop. I stopped my horse to listen. Those near me said it was a signal from one of the parties, who had discovered buffalo, and we proceeded on our journey. Soon, however, I heard the yell again, and I became satisfied there was something more than buffalo astir. I rode to a small eminence close by, and descried a party of our hunters at a distance making signals for others to succor them. I turned back to my wives, and dispatched two of them to the village for my war instruments, and then galloped on to ascertain the cause of the alarm. Not more than fifty of our warriors were then before me.

I then learned that they had before them a party of one hundred and sixty Black Foot warriors, who had thrown themselves into an apparently impregnable fortress. It was a stronghold manifestly thrown up in some of Nature's grand convulsions, it would seem, for the very purpose to which it was now applied. It was a huge mass of granite, forming a natural wall in front of a graduated height, varying from twenty-five feet to six feet, the lowest part; it was solid, and nearly perpendicular all round.

There was in our camp a young Kentuckian named Robert Mildrum, naturally a brave fellow, though he seldom went out in the war parties; but when the village was assaulted, he always

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

fought like a tiger. He was a good trapper and a skillful blacksmith, and had been out in the employ of the American Fur Company. I met him while we were surveying the enemy's stronghold. I said to him, "Mildrum, if the adage is true, there is policy in war. These Indians make no question of our bravery; had we not better resign to them the brunt of this encounter, and not expose our lives in a cause that we have no concern in? How do you intend to act?"

As for me, "said Mildrum, "I must be in the fray. If we are to see any fun, I want my share of the entertainment."

"Well," said I, "I shall endeavor to keep by you."

The Indians had by this time assembled to the number of from five to seven hundred, and were watching the fort indecisively, awaiting instructions from the chief. Many had succeeded in running and sheltering under the wall, while several had been shot in making the attempt. I ran to the wall to reconnoitre it, and soon saw there were two ways in which it could be taken; one was by bombardment, and the other was by storm. Bombardment was out of the question, as our heaviest calibre was a rifle-bore. I waited to see what steps would be taken.

Long Hair, the head chief of the nation, said, "Warriors, listen! Our marrow-bones are broken; the enemy has chosen a strong fort; we can not drive them from it without sacrificing too many men. Warriors, retreat !"

I replied, "No; hold! Warriors, listen ! If these old men can not fight, let them retire with the women and children. We can kill every one of these Black Feet: then let us do it. If we attempt to run from here, we shall be shot in the back, and lose more warriors than to fight and kill them all. If we get killed, our friends who love us here will mourn our loss, while those in the spirit land will sing and rejoice to welcome us there, if we ascend to them dying like braves. The Great Spirit has sent these enemies here for us to slay; if we do not slay them, he will be angry with us, and will never suffer us to conquer our enemies again. He will drive off all our buffaloes, and will wither the grass on the prairies. No, warriors! we will fight as long as one of them survives. Come, follow me, and I will show you how the braves of the great white chief fight their enemies!"

"Enemy of Horses," exclaimed hundreds of the brave and impatient warriors who were crowded round me, "lead us, and we will follow you to the spirit land."

Accepting the charge, I stationed a large body of those who were never known to flinch on one side of the position, which I, with my followers, intended to scale. I thus thought to engage the attention of the enemy until we made good our entrance, when I felt no longer doubtful of success. I then told them as I threw up my shield the third time, and shouted "Hoo-ki-hi," they were to scale the wall as fast as possible, and beat down whatever resistance might be offered them.

I had divested myself of all my weapons except my battle-axe and scalping-knife, the latter being attached to my wrist with a string. I then made the signal, and when I raised the shout "Hoo-ki-hi," the party opposite began to hoist one another up. When I sprang for the summit of the wall, I found that my women were holding my belt; I cut it loose with my knife, and left it in their hands. I was the first on the wall, but was immediately followed by some scores of warriors. The enemy's whole attention, when we entered the arena, was directed to the opposite party, and we had time to cut numbers down before they were aware of our entrance. The carnage for some minutes was fearful, and the Black Feet fought with desperation, knowing their inevitable doom if taken. The clash of battle-axes, and the yells of the opposing combatants were truly appalling. Many leaped the wall only to meet their certain doom below, where hundreds of battle-axes and

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

lances were ready to drink their blood as soon as they touched ground. The interior surface of this huge rock was concave, and the blood all ran to the centre, where it formed a pool, which emitted a sickening smell as the warm vapor ascended to our nostrils. It was also a work of great difficulty to keep one's feet, as the mingled gore and brains were scattered every where round this fatal place. The blood of the Crow and the Black Foot mingled together in this common pool, for many of our warriors fell in this terrible strife.

All was silent within a few minutes after we had gained an entrance. Victims who were making away with their bowels ripped open were instantly felled with the battle-axe and stilled in death. The wounded were cared for by their friends, and the dead removed from sight. Upward of forty Crows were killed, and double the number wounded. There were engaged on the side of the Crows about twenty white men, and only one was wounded, though nearly all scaled the wall with the Indians. Mildrum was seriously injured by leaping from the heights after an Indian, but he soon recovered.

Our spoils were one hundred and sixty scalps, and an immense quantity of guns and ammunition, a large amount of dried meats, with arrows, lances, knives, in great abundance.

Here an incident happened with my little wife and mother worth mentioning. They were seated outside, and under the wall, when Owl Bear, one of the chiefs, happening to pass, asked the girl if she was not the wife of the Enemy of Horses. She answered that she was.

"I thought so," he said, "because you are such a pretty little squaw; but you have no husband now; he was shot through the head in the fort, and instantly killed; and here you are playing with sticks!"

The poor thing, together with her mother, screamed out at the intelligence, and, seizing a battle-axe, each cut off a finger. The girl then stabbed her forehead with a knife, and was instantly dripping with blood. The chief came laughing to me, and said, "That little wife of yours loves you better than any of your other wives."

"How do you know?" I inquired.

"Because I told them all you were dead, and she was the only one that cut off a finger;" and he laughed aloud as he passed on.

Soon, however, she climbed the wall, and forced her way into the fort, and came directly to me. She presented a sickening spectacle, and was covered entirely with blood. Seeing me, she burst into tears, and as soon as she could articulate, said, "Why, you are not dead, after all! Owl Bear told me you were killed, and I came to seek your body."

"Who are you mourning for?" I asked; "is your brother or father scalped?"

"No; I mourned because I thought you were killed; Owl Bear told me you were."

"You must not believe all you hear," I said; "some Indians have crooked tongues. But come and spread your robe, and carry this gun and spoils of my first victim to the village, and there wash your face and bind up your finger."

She did as I directed her, and departed.

As soon as we had collected all the trophies bequeathed us by our fallen foes, and gathered all our own dead, we moved back to the new camp. On our way, I exerted myself to the utmost to console the afflicted mourners. I told them that their friends were happy in the spirit land, where there were no enemies to fight, where all was everlasting contentment, and where they were happy in endless amusement. I said that in a few days I would avenge the fall of our warriors, and

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

depart for that peaceful land myself.

I could plainly see that this last promise afforded them more satisfaction than all my other consoling remarks; but I disliked to see their horrid fashion of mourning, and my promise of future victory speedily washed their faces of their present grief; for a promise from me was confided in by all the tribe. There was, of course, no dancing, for we had lost too many warriors; but in the evening there was great visiting throughout the village, to talk over the events of the day, and hear the statements of those who had taken part in the battle. Long Hair came to the lodge of my father to congratulate me on my great feat in scaling the wall, and to talk of the victory of his people achieved through my valor. All who were present related the deeds they had performed. As each narrated his exploits, all listened with profound attention. While this was going on, my little wife, who sat near by, crawled behind me, and, whispering in my ear, inquired if I had obtained any coos. These coos she inquired after are the same as counts in a game of billiards: the death of one warrior counts as one; of two warriors counts as two; every battle-axe or gun taken counts one to the victor's merit. I said I had not, at which she looked aghast. But when the question was put to me by the chief shortly after, I answered "Eleven." On this she administered eleven taps on my back with her finger, and again whispered, "Ah! I thought your tongue was crooked when you told me you had no coos." All the coos are registered in the great medicine lodge in favor of the brave who wins them.

I trust that the reader does not suppose that I waded through these scenes of carnage and desolation without some serious reflections on the matter. Disgusted at the repeated acts of cruelty I witnessed, I often resolved to leave these wild children of the forest and return to civilized life; but before I could act upon my decision, another scene of strife would occur, and the Enemy of Horses was always the first sought for by the tribe. I had been uniformly successful so far; and how I had escaped, while scores of warriors had been stricken down at my side, was more than I could understand. I was well aware that many of my friends knew of the life I was leading, and I almost feared to think of the opinions they must form of my character. But, in justification, it may be urged that the Crows had never shed the blood of the white man during my stay in their camp, and I did not intend they ever should, if I could raise a voice to prevent it. They were constantly at war with tribes who coveted the scalps of the white man, but the Crows were uniformly faithful in their obligations to my race, and would rather serve than injure their white brethren without any consideration of profit.

In addition to this, Self-interest would whisper her counsel. I knew I could acquire the riches of Cræsus if I could but dispose of the valuable stock of peltry I had the means of accumulating. I required but an object in view to turn the attention of the Indians to the thousands of traps that were laid by to rust. I would occasionally use arguments to turn them from their unprofitable life, and engage them in peaceful industry. But I found the Indian would be Indian still, in spite of my efforts to improve him.

They would answer, "Our enemies steal our horses; we must fight and get them back again, or steal in turn. Without horses we can make no surrounds, nor could we, to protect our lives, fight our foes when they attack our villages."

Of course these arguments were unanswerable. So long as they were surrounded with enemies, they must be prepared to defend themselves. The large majority of Indian troubles arise from their unrestrained appropriation of each other's horses. It is their only branch of wealth; like the

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

miser with his gold, their greed for horses can not be satisfied. All their other wants are merely attended to from day to day; their need supplied, they look no farther; but their appetite for horses is insatiable: they are ever demanding more.

Mildrum and myself had a long conversation on the subject while he was smarting with the injury he received in leaping from the fort. He would say, "Beckwourth, I am pretty well used to this Indian life; there is a great deal in it that charms me. But when I think of my old Kentucky home — of father, mother, and other friends whom I tenderly love, and with whom I could be so happy, I wonder at the vagabond spirit that holds me here among these savages, fighting their battles, and risking my life and scalp, which I fairly suppose exceeds in value ten thousand of these bloodthirsty heathen. How, in the name of all that is sacred, can we reconcile ourselves to it? Why don't we leave them?"

The medicine men held a council, and resolved to remove the village; the Great Spirit was displeased with the spot, and had therefore suffered all our warriors to be killed. We accordingly pulled up stakes and moved a short distance farther.

While we were busy moving, my little squaw angered me, and I drove her away. She not daring to disobey me, I saw no more of her until she supposed my anger was appeased. She then came to the lodge while I was conversing with my brothers, and, putting her childish head into the door, said humbly, "I know you are angry with me, but I want you to come and stay at our lodge tonight; we are outside the village, and my father and mother are afraid."

"Yes," said my brother, "she has no ears now; she is but a child; she will have ears when she grows older; you had better go and protect the old people."

I told her to run home, and I would soon follow.

I went to the lodge accordingly. In the night I heard the snorting of horses, which were tied near the lodge door. I crept softly out and looked carefully around. I then crawled, without the least noise, out of the lodge, and caught sight of an Indian, who I knew was there for no good purpose. He was using the utmost precaution; he had a sharp-pointed stick, with which he raised the leaves that lay in his way, so that his feet might not crush them, and thus alarm the inmates of the lodge. Every step brought him nearer to the animals, who, with necks curved and ears erect, gave an occasional snort at the approach of the Indian. This would bring him to a halt. Then again he would bring his stick into action, and prepare a place for another step, not mistrusting that he was approaching the threshold of death. The ropes were tied close to the lodge door, and to untie them he must approach within six feet of where I lay on the ground. I let him advance as near as I thought safe, when, with one bound, I grappled him, and gave the war-hoop. He was the hardest to hold that ever I had my arms around, but I had both his arms pinned in my embrace round his lithe and nimble body, and he could not release one so as to draw his knife. Instantly we were surrounded with fifty armed warriors; and when I saw a sufficient breastwork round about, I released my hold and stepped back. He was riddled with bullets in an instant, and fell without a cry. His scalp sufficed to wash off the mourning-paint from every face in the village, and all was turned into mirth, although this general change in feeling did not restore the dismembered fingers or heal their voluntary wounds. Greater than ever was the Enemy of Horses, and I received a still more ennobling appellation, Shas-ka-o-hush-a, the Bobtail Horse. The village exhausted itself in showing its admiration of my exploit; and my single scalp was greeted with as much honor as if I had slaughtered a hundred of the enemy.

---

CHAPTER XV.

Short Account of Pine Leaf, the Crow Heroine. —Twenty Days' Battle with the Cheyennes. —Return of the Village to the west Side of the Mountains. —Letter from M'Kenzie —Visit to his Trading-post at the Mouth of the Yellow Stone.

IN connection with my Indian experience, I conceive it to be my duty to devote a few lines to one of the bravest women that ever lived, namely, Pine Leaf — in Indian, Bar-chee-am-pe. For an Indian, she possessed great intellectual powers. She was endowed with extraordinary muscular strength, with the activity of the cat and the speed of the antelope. Her features were pleasing, and her form symmetrical. She had lost a brother in the attack on our village before mentioned — a great brave, and her twin brother. He was a fine specimen of the race of red men, and bade fair to rise to distinction; but he was struck down in his strength, and Pine Leaf was left to avenge his death. She was at that time twelve years of age, and she solemnly vowed that she would never marry until she had killed a hundred of the enemy with her own hand. Whenever a war-party started, Pine Leaf was the first to volunteer to accompany them. Her presence among them caused much amusement to the old veterans; but if she lacked physical strength, she always rode the fleetest horses, and none of the warriors could outstrip her. All admired her for her ambition, and as she advanced in years, many of the braves grew anxious for the speedy accomplishment of her vow. She had chosen my party to serve in, and when I engaged in the fiercest struggles, no one was more promptly at my side than file young heroine. She seemed incapable of fear; and when she arrived at womanhood, could fire a gun without flinching, and use the Indian weapons with as great dexterity as the most accomplished warrior.

I began to feel more than a common attachment toward her. Her intelligence charmed me, and her modest and becoming demeanor singled her out from her sex. One day, while riding leisurely along, I asked her to marry me provided we both returned safe. She flashed her dark eye upon mine, "You have too many already," she said. "Do you suppose I would break my vow to the Great Spirit? He sees and knows all things; he would be angry with me, and would not suffer me to live to avenge my brother's death."

I told her that my medicine said that I must marry her, and then I could never be vanquished or killed in battle. She laughed and said, "Well, I will marry you."

"When we return?"

"No; but when the pine-leaves turn yellow."

I reflected that it would soon be autumn, and regarded her promise as valid. A few days afterward it occurred to my mind that pine-leaves do not turn yellow, and I saw I had been practiced upon. When I again spoke to her on the subject, I said, "Pine Leaf, you promised to marry me when the pine-leaves should turn yellow: it has occurred to me that they never grow yellow."

She returned no answer except a hearty laugh.

"Am I to understand that you never intend to marry me?" I inquired.

"Yes, I will marry you," she said, with a coquettish smile.

"But when?"

"When you shall find a red-headed Indian."

I saw I advanced nothing by importuning her, and I let the matter rest. However, to help her on with her vow, I never killed an Indian if she was by to perform it for me, thinking that when her number were immolated there might be better chance of pressing my suit.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

We frequently shifted our camping-ground, in order to keep up with the buffalo and furnish our horses with sufficient grass, for we had such an immense number that the prairie round our lodges in a few days had the appearance of a closely-mown meadow. Finally, we removed to the western side of the mountain again, and encamped on Little Horn River, one of the sources of the Yellow Stone. Shortly after our encampment, we found there was a village of Cheyennes about twelve miles distant, and an incessant warfare was maintained between the two villages for twenty days. Sometimes they would take three or four Crow scalps; in return, our party would retaliate by taking as many of theirs. Thus they went on, with varying fortune, during the whole twenty days.

I had never been engaged in these skirmishes; but one evening, I, with three others, among whom was Yellow Belly, resolved to go on an adventure. Accordingly, we started for the Cheyenne, arriving there the next morning, and unhesitatingly entered their village while the inmates were quietly reposing. After passing through one quarter of their village, we saw an Indian approaching, who, on perceiving us, wheeled his horse to escape. I shot an arrow into his back, but, before he fell, I rode up, cut him down with my battle-axe, and rode on. One of our party, not wishing to lose his scalp, dismounted to take it. In doing so he lost his horse, which followed us, leaving his rider on foot close to the enemy's village, whence the aroused warriors were issuing like hornets. Perceiving his danger, I rode back, and took him up behind me. We had to run for it; but we made good our escape, driving home before us seven horses captured from the enemy. This was considered a great achievement by our Crow brethren, and they again washed their faces. The enemy now charged on our village, killing six Crows, among whom was a brother-in-law of mine. His relatives appealed to me to avenge them. Supposing that the enemy would renew the attack the next day, I selected one hundred and thirty warriors, all well mounted, to waylay them. We posted ourselves midway between the belligerent villages, but the Cheyennes had passed within a few hundred yards before we were in ambush. Being there, the idea occurred to me to await their return. On their repulse from the village we would spring up and cut off their retreat, and, I made no doubt, succeed in killing a great number of their warriors.

It fell out as I had expected. The Crows drove them back with a loss to the enemy of four; and when they neared us, their horses were badly jaded, and our friends hotly in pursuit. We sprung up, cutting off their retreat, and they, sorely pressed in their rear, seeing our party in front cutting down right and left, became panic-struck, and fled in all directions.

We took sixteen scalps, with the horses and equipments of the fallen warriors, and returned home in triumph. This made twenty scalps taken in one day, which was considered by the Crows a glorious victory, and the scalp-dance was performed with unusual vivacity. In this battle the heroine was by my side, and fought with her accustomed audacity. I counted five coos, and she three, for three enemies killed with her lance. The Cheyennes, disconcerted with their misadventure, moved their village away from the Crow territory.

We also took up our line of march, and moved on to Clarke's Fork, a branch of the Yellow Stone, where we found abundance of buffalo and good grass. While encamped here I received a letter from Mr. M'Kenzie, written at Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, where he desired me to see him. It was delivered to me by Mr. Winters, who, in company with one man, had found his way unharmed. M'Kenzie wished me to see him immediately on business of importance, as he wished, through my influence, to establish a trade with the Crows.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

On communicating my intention of performing the journey, all expostulated at my going. I gave them my positive word that I would return in eighteen suns if not killed on the way. It was a long and hazardous journey to undertake, having to traverse a distance of seven hundred and sixty miles, exposed to numerous bands of hostile Indians. I succeeded in reaching the fort in safety, where I found M'Kenzie with a great stock of miscellaneous goods. I arrived late in the afternoon, dispatched my business with him hastily, and started on my return in the morning. I took ten pack-horses laden with goods to trade with the Indians, in addition to which several boats were freighted and sent to me up the Yellow Stone. Two men accompanied me to the Crow country. We had no trouble on our way until we arrived within a few miles of our village (as I supposed it), when, as we were marching on, I remarked something unfamiliar in the appearance of the place. I ordered the two men to turn their animals up a little valley close by, while I took a nearer look at the village. A closer inspection confirmed my mistake; I saw the lodges were painted a different color from our own. I followed the packhorses, and found a trail which led to the Crow village, and concealed from the observation of the village we had approached. Soon after entering the trail, I discovered the fresh tracks of five Indians, going the direction that we were. I halted the pack-horses, and rode on to get a sight of them. At a short distance I perceived the five men, and, unobserved by them, I rode on and entered a low place until I approached within a few rods of them. I took a short survey of them, and concluded that they must be enemies belonging to the village we had just left. They were on foot, and I conceived myself a match for the whole five. I leveled my rifle, and was taking aim, when my horse moved his head and disconcerted any sight. I tried again, with precisely the same result. I then dismounted, and advanced two or three steps nearer my object. As I was about to fire, having the rein on my arm, the horse made another motion, thus spoiling my aim for the third time. At that moment one of them made a yawning expression in the Crow language, and I was so terrified at his narrow escape that the rifle dropped from my hand. I called to them, telling them the danger they had escaped.

"Why," said they, "you would not have attacked five of us?"

"Yes," I said, "and would have killed every one of you, had you been enemies."

They then informed me that they had lost two men that day near the village of the Black Feet, who were now, beyond doubt, dancing over their scalps. I did not wait to hear more, but directed them to return to my horses and assist the men in getting on to the Crow village as soon as possible. I rode forward to make my arrival known.

My return was welcomed with the liveliest demonstrations of joy by the whole tribe. But I delayed no time in ceremonial. I called a council forthwith, and informed them that the Black Feet were encamped ten miles distant, that two of our warriors had that day fallen by their hands, and that we must go and avenge their death. The chief assented; but, as a preliminary, directed me and another to count their lodges that night. I undertook the dangerous task, although extremely fatigued with my long journey. We succeeded in the object of our expedition, and found their lodges outnumbered ours by one. There are, as a general thing, from four to six warriors to a lodge; the Black Foot village comprised two hundred and thirty-three lodges; hence we could form a pretty accurate estimate of the number of warriors we had to contend with.

Their village was closely watched by our spies; every movement made by the enemy was promptly reported to our chief. During the night they appeared to sleep soundly, probably fatigued with a late dance. But in the morning they were astir betimes, and having packed up, started forward in

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

our direction, apparently unaware of our presence. On they came — men, women, and children — utterly unconscious of the terrible shock that awaited them. Our warriors were never better prepared for a conflict, and never more certain of victory. We were drawn up on a high table prairie, our whole force concealed from view at no greater distance than half pistol-shot.

Their chief led the van, and with him were several young squaws, who were laughing and dancing around him, evidently to his great amusement. They were near enough to launch the thunders of war upon them, and our chief gave orders to charge. The order was instantly carried into effect. The chief who, a moment before, was so joyous, surrounded by his tawny young squaws, was the first to fall beneath my battle-axe, and his attendants scattered like chaff before the wind. We were upon the warriors so unexpectedly that they had hardly time to draw their weapons before they were overthrown and put to flight. They were encumbered with women, children, and baggage. Our attention was directed solely to the men; the women were unharmed, except those who were overturned by our horses.

During the engagement, a powerful Black Foot aimed a blow at me with his battle-axe, which Pine Leaf deprived of its effect by piercing his body through with her lance. In a few moments the fighting was over, and after pursuing the flying enemy through the timber, we returned to collect the spoils of victory. We took one hundred and seventy scalps, over one hundred and fifty women and children, besides abundance of weapons, baggage, and horses. The Crows had twenty-nine wounded.

This was a severe blow to the Black Feet; such a slaughter is of rare occurrence in Indian warfare. Notwithstanding this sad defeat, they rallied their broken band, and attacked us again in the afternoon; but it amounted to nothing, and they fled in gloomy confusion beyond the Crow territory.

Pine Leaf never signalized herself more than on this occasion. She counted six coos, having killed four of the enemy with her own hand. She had but few superiors in wielding the battle-axe. My horse was killed by the blow which was aimed at my head by the Indian whom the heroine killed. I wore a superb head-dress, ornamented with eagles' feathers and weasels' tails — the labor of many days. Early in the action, three of these tails were severed by a bullet which grazed my head. "These Black Feet shoot close," said the heroine, as she saw the ornaments fall; "but never fear; the Great Spirit will not let them harm us."

I took a very pretty young woman prisoner, but was obliged to give her up to one of the braves, who had my promise before the battle that if I took one I would give her to him, and if he took one he should give her to me. When a warrior (of the Crow tribe) takes a woman prisoner, she is considered his sister, and he can never marry her. If she marries, her husband is brother-in-law to her captor. Our prisoners soon forgot their captivity; they even seemed pleased with the change, for they joined with great alacrity in our scalp-dance over the scalps of their own people.

All Indian women are considered by the stronger sex as menials: they are thoroughly reconciled to their degradation, and the superiority of their "lords and masters" is their chiefest subject of boast. They are patient, plodding, and unambitious, although there are instances in savage life of a woman manifesting superior talent, and making her influence felt upon the community.

During my visit at Fort Union I engaged to build a fort for M'Kenzie to store his goods in safety at the mouth of the Big Horn River, one of the branches of the Yellow Stone. Accordingly, I repaired to the place to select a good site and commence operations. On arriving at the spot, I

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

found the boats close by, but as there was no secure quay at the junction of the streams, I selected a site about a mile below. There were fifty men, who had arrived with the boats, hired to assist me in erecting the fort. The stipulated dimensions were one hundred and twenty yards for each front, the building to be a solid square, with a block-house at opposite corners. The fort was erected of hewn logs planted perpendicularly in the ground; the walls were eighteen feet high. As soon as the pickets were up, we built our houses inside, in order to be prepared for the approach of winter. When I had been engaged about six weeks upon its construction, four hundred lodges of Crows moved into our immediate vicinity, thus affording us plenty of company, and a sufficient force to protect us against the attacks of hostile tribes.

When we had completed our building we unloaded the boats, and commenced trading with the Indians. During the first year the company was very unsuccessful, sinking over seventeen thousand dollars in the undertaking. This, however, was principally attributable to the outlay upon the fort (the wages of the fifty men engaged in constructing it ran for twelve months), and to the number of presents which it is customary, on such occasions, to distribute among the Indians. After the Crows had removed to the fort, they were repeatedly annoyed with attacks from different hostile tribes. I was engaged in two small encounters during the winter, in both of which we were completely victorious. The Crows were fully occupied in protecting their own horses, or levying contributions upon their neighbors.

During the winter we accumulated a large amount of peltry, which in the spring I sent down to Fort Union in five Mackinaw boats, built by ourselves for the purpose. I sent a sufficient number of men to take good care of the boats, and to return up stream with a fresh supply of goods. I then left the fort in charge of Winters, leaving him thirty men for a guard. I also had provided an ample stock of dried meat, so that they might avoid the risk of hunting for provisions.

Early in May we commenced our march in search of summer quarters. We traveled by easy stages, and on a circuitous route, so that when we finally arrived at Rosebud Creek, a branch of the Yellow Stone, we found ourselves but twenty miles distant from the fort.

After we had remained about a week at our encampment, our village was invested by a large war-party of Black Feet. It happened very fortunately we were building a medicine lodge at the time, and our whole force was at home, which circumstance most probably preserved us from a disastrous defeat. Our enemies numbered about four thousand warriors, to oppose whom we had two thousand eight hundred practiced warriors, besides the old men, who always acted as village guards. At daybreak the enemy advanced upon our village with great impetuosity. Our war-horses being tied to our lodge doors, the first alarm found our defenders ready mounted to meet the assailants. We did not allow them to enter the village, but advanced on to the plain to meet them. The contest was severe for several minutes, and the clash of battle-axes and the fierce yells of the opposing forces made the whole prairie tremble. The two parties charged alternately, according to the Indian mode of warfare; but the Crows gained ground at every attack, for they fought with every thing at stake. The fight lasted for several hours. Early in the action we discovered a manœuvre of the enemy which would probably have resulted seriously for us had we not perceived it in time. About half their force was detached to attack us in the rear, and take possession of the village. I formed from fifteen to eighteen hundred warriors into a body, and rode down to meet their detachment as it wound around the foot of a small hill. They were in quick march to gain their position, and approached in seeming security. My warriors being formed

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

upon the brow of a hill under which the enemy was passing, I gave the order for a rush down the hill upon them. The attack was made with such irresistible force that every thing in our way was overthrown, and warriors and horses were knocked into promiscuous piles. We happened to burst upon their centre, thus severing them in two, and the confusion they became involved in was so irremediable that their only hope was to get back to their main body with as little delay as possible.

In the attack, a lance thrown by a Black Foot perforated my leggin, just grazing the calf of my leg, and entered the body of my horse, killing him on the spot. My ever-present friend, Pine Leaf, instantly withdrew it, releasing me from a very precarious situation, as I was pinned close to the horse, and his dying struggles rendered such proximity extremely unsafe. I sprang upon the horse of a young warrior who was wounded, and called to some of our women to convey the wounded man to a place of safety; the heroine then joined me, and we dashed into the conflict. Her horse was immediately after killed, and I discovered her in a hand-to-hand encounter with a dismounted Black Foot, her lance in one hand and her battle-axe in the other. Three or four springs of my steed brought me upon her antagonist, and, striking him with the breast of my horse when at full speed, I knocked him to the earth senseless, and before he could recover, she pinned him to the ground with her lance and scalped him. When I had overturned the warrior, Pine Leaf called to me, "Ride on; I have him safe now."

I rode on accordingly, but she was soon mounted again and at my side. The surviving Black Feet speedily dispersed, and they all retreated together, leaving the Crows master of the field. They left behind ninety-one killed, besides carrying off many dead with their wounded. We lost thirty-one killed, and a large number wounded. I had five horses killed under me, but received no wound. Our enemies, in their retreat, drove off sixteen hundred horses, among which were eighty of my own, but we had plenty left, and we considered these only lent to them. We had no dance, and the relatives of the slain went through their usual mourning.

A few days after this battle a messenger arrived from the fort with a request for me to return as quickly as possible, as the Black Feet were continually harassing the men, and they were in fear of a general attack. Accordingly, I returned in the latter part of June, and found affairs in a very serious condition. The Indians had grown very bold, and it was hazardous to venture outside the fort. One morning seven men were sent about one mile away to cut house-logs, it being supposed there were no Indians in the vicinity. Some time in the fore-noon I heard the report of a rifle close to our gate. I ran out, and just caught sight of the retreating Indians as they entered the bushes. They had shot and scalped one of our men as he was chopping only a few paces from the gate. The danger that the other men might be placed in then occurred to me, and, ordering the men to follow me, I mounted my horse and hastened to their rescue. I was followed by about one half the men, the remainder preferring the protection of the wooden walls. I soon discovered our men; they were surrounded by forty Indians, the chief of whom appeared to be addressing the sun, and was gesticulating with his battle-axe. On his raising his arm, I sent a ball through his body, and then shouted to the men to run to me. They started, but one of them was shot down before they reached me. The survivors were so terrified that they did not dare to stop when they reached me, but continued their course unslackened until they gained the fort. My followers, seeing their alarm, became fugitives in turn, and I was left alone within gunshot of the remaining thirty-nine Indians. Uttering deafening yells, they made a rush for me; my horse became fright-

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ened, and I could scarcely mount him. However, by running by his side a few paces, I managed to leap on his back, and retreated at full speed, while their bullets and arrows flew around me like hail. When I approached the fort, a voice near me cried, "Oh, Jim! don't leave me here to be killed."

I wheeled round, and, with my double-barreled gun in my hand, made a charge toward the whole approaching party, who, seeing my resolute bearing, turned and scampered off. I rode up to the person who had called me, and found him an old man, who was unable to run, and had been abandoned by his valorous companions to the mercy of the savages. I assisted him on to my horse, and was about to spring on behind him, when the horse sprang forward, leaving the old man's gun behind, and carried him safely to the fort. By this time the Indians had returned upon me. I ran wherever a shelter offered itself; and, when closely pressed, would face round and menace them with my guns. Within a few hundred yards of the fort I came to a small covering which had been used as a shelter by the horse-guards, and I sprang into it, with the Indians at my heels. After expending the contents of my guns, I plied them with arrows to their hearts' content, until they gave up the fray and retired. This took place in fair view of the fort, when not one of its doughty inmates dare come to my assistance, and who even refused to resign their fire-arms to the women, who were anxious to come to my rescue.

When at length I succeeded in reaching the fort, I favored the men with my unreserved opinion of them. I had been the means of saving their lives even after the chief of the savages had returned thanks to the sun for their scalps, which he had already deemed secure. I really believe that with Pine Leaf and three other squaws I could have stormed and taken the fort from their possession.

These men were not mountaineers; they were nearly all Canadians, and had been hired in the East; they were unused to savage warfare, and only two of them had seen an Indian battle. If they had come out like men, we might have killed one half the Indians, and I should have been spared a great deal of hard feeling. They acknowledged, however, that I had flogged the Indians alone, and that six of them were indebted to me for their lives.

In July, after the arrival of the boats, the Crows again returned to the fort. They came to make purchases with what small means they possessed, as they had disposed of all their peltry on their previous visit. They, however, brought in a great quantity of roots, cherries, berries, etc., which they traded for articles of necessity; they also sold sixty horses, which we sent to M'Kenzie at the lower fort (Clarke).

It greatly charms the Indians to see new goods when they have the means to buy there is no end to their purchases. When the lances, battle-axes, and guns are spread before their eyes, glittering with their burnished steel, notwithstanding they may have a dozen serviceable weapons at home, they must infallibly purchase a new one. If one purchases, all must follow; hence there is no limit to their demand but the very important one imposed by the extent of their exchangeable commodities.

The newly-arrived boats were manned with Canadians, all strangers in the country, nearly all having been imported for boating, as they were willing to submit to the hardships of such a life for a smaller remuneration than men hired in the States. On their arrival, their brethren related a thousand tales about the Indians, and what feats I had performed against them single-handed. They listened to the marvelous tales, and gazed at me in wondering admiration.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

When Canadians are fairly broken in, and have become familiar with Indian character, they make the best of Indian fighters, especially when put to it in defense of their own lives. They become superior trappers too, being constituted, like their native ponies, with a capacity to endure the extremest hardships and privations, and to endure starvation for an incredibly long period.

CHAPTER XVI.

Departure from Fort Cass. —Capture of Squaws. —Battle with the Black Feet; with the Cheyennes. —Great Success of the Crows in stealing Horses. —A successful Fall for Beaver. —Return to the Fort with Peltry.

AFTER having arranged every thing in the fort (which I have forgotten to mention we named after Mr. Cass), and given all needful instructions to Winters, who was in charge, I again left. My intention was to induce the Crows to devote their undivided attention to trapping, not alone for their own benefit, but for the interest of the company in whose service I was engaged. I well knew that if I was with them they would capture five beavers to one if left to themselves. I had obtained great influence in the medicine lodge, and could often exert it to prevent a war-party from making a useless excursion against their enemies. I would tell them in their council that my medicine told me not to go to war; that it was to their interest to employ their warriors in trapping all the beavers possible, so that they might have the means of purchasing ammunition and weapons for themselves, as well as beads, scarlet cloth, and blankets for the women; that by-and-by we should be attacked by the enemy, and be unprovided with the means of defense; that they would then kill all our warriors, and make captives of our women and children, as the Cheyennes had captured my mother when I was an infant, many winters gone; that they should save all their warriors against a time of need, and only engage in war when the safety of their village was at stake.

These representations would frequently dissuade them from their belligerent purpose, and beaver-skins would be brought into the village by the pack; but they would soon tire of their pacific occupation, and their enemies' horses would offer them temptations which they could not resist. Nearly all the Crows having left the fort before I did, only a few warriors remained to bear me company. I engaged to meet them at the mouth of the Little Horn within a given number of nights, and I knew I should be expected. We arrived in safety at the place appointed, and within the time I had specified.

Soon after our arrival, it was proposed to send out a war-party, not so much to fight as to reconnoitre; to see where horses could with least difficulty be procured, and gain a general intelligence of how matters stood. We set out, and had traveled slowly along for nearly two weeks, when our scouts returned to apprise us that there was a large crowd of women approaching toward us. We were then in a forest of plum-trees, bearing large red plums, which were fully ripe, and were very delicious. Feeling satisfied that the women were coming to gather fruit, we secreted ourselves, intending, at a given signal, to surround them while they were busily employed. Accordingly, we waited until they all set themselves about their task, they keeping up an incessant jabber among themselves like so many blackbirds or bob-o-links, and having no suspicion that the Crows would so soon come in for their share. At a sound from the whistle, they were entirely surrounded, and their merry chatter was hushed in an instant. We marched them to an open piece of ground, made them form a line, and proceeded to make selection. The aged, the ill-favored, and the matrons we withdrew from the body, telling them to return to the village, and depart without

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

clamor. They went away in sullenness, with their eyes flashing fire. The remainder, to the number of fifty-nine, very attractive looking young women, we carried along with us; and as we were but three miles distant from their village, and could plainly see the smoke of their lodges, we deemed it prudent to lose no time in making our way home. There were three warriors in the company of the women when first descried, but they were not inclosed in our surround, and we could find no traces of them in any direction.

On our return toward home the captives were, as usual, gloomy for an hour or two; but they very quickly brightened, and amused us with their smiles and conversation during the whole of the journey. In four days we reached the village, and were received with "thunders of applause." Four of the prisoners were adjudged my prizes, who, according to Indian customs, became my sisters. For my services in this expedition I was honored with the name of Boah-hish-a (Red Fish). Our prisoners were kindly received, and treated with becoming attention. I carried my four sisters to my lodge, and distributed them among my relatives. They were all married to Crow braves, and added materially to the strength of my band of relatives; for it is esteemed a great honor to marry the sister of a great brave, which appellation I had long borne.

Pine Leaf had captured two prisoners, and offered me one of them to wife. I answered, "You once told me I had already wives enough. I will not add to their number until I marry the heroine of the Crow nation."

"Ah, you have found the red-handed Indian, then," she said, laughing mockingly.

She always received my advances with this unsatisfactory nonchalance, that it was with some unpleasantness of feeling I approached the subject. But the more I saw of her lofty bearing, and witnessed the heroic deeds that she performed, the more ardent became my attachment to her. When she was by my side in battle, it seemed as if I had increased strength and courage; when she was away, which happened rarely, I felt a vacancy which no other warrior could supply. There was none bolder than herself, and she knew it; there were others of greater strength, but her deficiency in muscular power was more than indemnified by her cat-like agility, and she would kill her man while others were preparing to attack.

There was one thing that irritated the noble girl's curiosity, and that was the war-path secret. Having killed many in battle, having followed where any dared to lead, "Why am I debarred from that important communication?" she would ask. "Why am I sent off with the women and children, when that secret is told the warriors of but one battle?"

I would tell her that the misfortune of her sex rendered it impossible that she could ever have the secret unveiled to her; that, should she break her trust, she would surely pay the forfeit with her life. She would become angry at such representations, and her black eyes would glow like fire. Soon after this capture, a band of Black Feet made reprisals by breaking our enclosure and taking seven hundred horses. I immediately collected a small party and went in pursuit. We speedily overtook them, and recovered all the horses except sixty, bearing the enemy, who precipitately fled, leaving two of their party dead. On our return we were received with the usual demonstrations of joy, and the horse-dance was performed by the village, together with the scalp-dance, which lasted nearly all night.

About this time my allied friend raised a war-party, and went in quest of the enemy; the heroine, ever active and prepared, accompanying him. I staid behind. They returned in a few days, bringing eight scalps of the Coutnees — one of the bands of the Black Feet. They had lost two of their

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

warriors, much to the annoyance of the heroine, as she was prevented from dancing, although she had counted two coos. She then declared that she would go to war no more, except in my company; but she had to break her word, and the next time she engaged in fight she received a severe wound. She wished me to raise a force immediately, and go and kill an enemy, so that she could wash her face. I declined, however, on the ground that I was soon to go to the fort, and that I would engage in no hostile encounters until my return.

When a war party loses one of its members, the survivors are compelled to wear their mourning-paint, until that same party, or an individual member of it, has wiped out the blot by killing one of the enemy without incurring loss of life. Thus it not unfrequently happens, when no opportunity of avenging a loss occurs, that the mourners wear paint for months, regularly renewing it as it wears off.

Small parties were continually going out and returning with varying success. The grand total of horses stolen by the Crows from all other tribes during that year amounted to near six thousand head. During the same period, however, they lost a great number stolen from them.

I visited the fort again in October, with three hundred lodges of the Indians, the remainder following us in a few days. A great number of the Indians had been busy with their traps for about two months, and we took into the fort a great quantity of peltry, which procured for the Indians every thing they needed, besides finery for the women.

When I arrived, I was informed that the head-hunter of the fort had been killed during my absence.

“Now,” said Pine Leaf, “you will go to war for one of your people, and I will go with you, so that I can wash my face.”

The fort had been subject to alarms during the whole time of my absence, but had only lost the man here referred to.

As soon as the Indians had finished their trading, I directed them to move to the Yellow Stone, as far up as “Pompey’s Tower,” telling them that I would join them in four nights. Then, as soon as I could get ready, I loaded twelve pack-horses with goods for retail, and, taking two Canadians with me, I went on and joined the village at the appointed place.

This much performed, I then attended to the frequent solicitations of the heroine, by leading a party, and going in pursuit of the Black Feet to chastise them, as I told the Crows, for killing the white hunter. We were absent eleven days, and returned with only four scalps and seventy-four horses. I received an arrow in my head; and there were three other warriors wounded, but none killed. The heroine then washed her face of the mourning paint, which she had been grieving about so long.

At this time I was third counselor of the nation, having been fifth and fourth previously. In the Crow nation there are six counselors, and by them the nation is ruled. There are also two head chiefs, who sit with the counsel whenever it is in session. The office of first counselor is the highest in the nation, next to the head chiefs, whose authority is equal. If in any of these divisions, when a matter is brought to the vote, the suffrages are equal, one of the old pipe-men is summoned before the council, and the subject under discussion is stated to him, with the substance of the arguments advanced on both sides; after hearing this he gives his casting vote, and the question is finally settled.

When war is declared on any tribe, it is done by the council. If any party goes out without the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

authority of the council, they are all severely whipped; and their whipping is no light matter, as I can personally testify. It makes no difference how high the offender ranks, or how great his popularity with the nation — there is no favor shown; the man who disobeys orders is bound to be lashed, and if he resists or resents the punishment, he suffers death.

We raised a war-party of three hundred men to act against the Cheyennes, having one of the head chiefs as leader. We moved on foot toward their country, which was about two hundred and fifty miles from our village. In this expedition I acted in the capacity of head spy, and was of necessity continually in advance of the main party. Being near the enemy, according to our calculations, I was some distance ahead, with four other spies, when we discovered five of the Cheyenne warriors in the act of dressing a buffalo, which they had just killed. We crept slyly up within gunshot of them, and each singled out his man and fired. Four fell at the discharge; the other mounted his horse and fled. I mounted one of the other horses, and pursued him within sight of his village, when I wheeled and returned to the camp, well knowing that we should be pursued immediately after the fugitive communicated his news. I found the camp readily, and acquainted the chief with what had happened, although it is against orders for spies to commence any attack. I told him that we were compelled to fight them to save our own lives, as the enemy had discovered us. "That is all right," he said, "but they will be soon after us, and we must retreat as fast as we can."

We returned on our steps without losing a moment, and traveled all night. It was very cold, with considerable snow on the ground. In the morning we built a fire, and as soon as we had warmed ourselves we moved on. One man, who was lame, lingered by the fire after we had left, and he rejoined us in great alarm, telling us that the Cheyennes were on our trail in great force, and were but a short distance behind us. We then put our boys and horses into a deep gully close by, and also stepped in ourselves, as soon as we had discharged one volley at our pursuers, who were then within short gunshot distance. They numbered from fifteen hundred to two thousand warriors, all mounted, while we were but a very few warriors, and had not more than a dozen horses in all. We were in a strong position, however, one which they dared not to storm, even with their whole force. Frequently a few more daring cavaliers would advance to the edge of the bank, and hurl their lances into our midst; but they rarely escaped our bullets. We had killed and wounded a great number in this manner, which taught our foe to be more cautious in his approaches; when our chief, losing heart, declared there was no hope for us, and that we infallibly should be all "rubbed out."

He addressed his son, a lad about sixteen years of age, in the following strain: "My son, we shall be all killed here. The Cheyennes are very brave, and they have a cloud of warriors before us. It must never be said that my son was killed by them, therefore I must kill you myself before I die. Die, my son, first!"

In an instant his son was a corpse, prostrate at the feet of his savage father. This, thought I, is the first time I ever saw a person killed to save his life. The actions of the old chief were wild throughout the whole proceeding. After killing his son, he rushed upon the top of the bank, and addressed himself to the enemy, an exposed mark to their arrows, as follows:

"Ho, Cheyennes! here I am! come and kill me! I am the great chief of the Crows. Come and kill me first, and then you can easily kill my warriors. Many of your braves have fallen by my hand; their scalps darken my lodge. Come! come and kill me!"

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I was astonished at such rashness, and still more astonished at the enemy, who, on seeing him a fair mark for their bullets, even withdrew to a greater distance, and appeared to be perfectly paralyzed. After a while, our head chief descended, and took a long smoke at his pipe. The enemy retired without troubling us farther. In the night we decamped, and made all possible haste to our village, where we arrived in safety without any molestation from the enemy. The chief attributed our escape to the interposition of the Great Spirit, whom the sacrifice of his son had propitiated in our behalf.

We killed fourteen of the enemy while in our intrenchment, making eighteen, and wounded a great number. We had eight killed, including the chief's son, and ten or eleven slightly wounded. When we arrived at home there was great mourning, and we all assumed paint on our faces as usual. But we wore it only a short time before we took ample revenge. Pine Leaf did not accompany us on this expedition.

CHAPTER XVII.

Victory over the Cheyennes. — Treachery of the Snake Indians. — Loss of six Crow Warriors. — Victory over the Snakes and Utahs. — A Mountaineer killed. — Trouble in the Wigwam. — I am disgraced. — Great Sacrifice of my Father's Property. — Three Whippings for violating Crow Morals. — Great Battle with the Re-ka-ras.

FOUR days after our return, our chief, still smarting at the sacrifice he had made for the salvation of his people, burned for revenge. He selected a body of over two hundred warriors, and started forthwith in search of the enemy.

The night following his departure, I also raised two hundred men, and started in a contrary direction. We proceeded on until we came to Laramie Forks, where Fort Laramie has since been built, and were in sight of a Cheyenne village. While we were surveying the village, eleven of their men, laden with meat, came up and encamped within a few hundred yards of where we were. We immediately threw ourselves flat upon the ground, resolved to wait until the coming of night, in order to make secure work of our attack on them, and prevent any of their number escaping to alarm the village. At a late hour we silently approached their camp when they were all sound asleep; a dozen guns were discharged at them in a moment, and we rushed in with our battle-axes to complete the work. We took their scalps, and were soon on the retreat, bearing away all the meat we needed, besides nineteen horses, and the slain warriors' equipments. We returned to the village, and washed off the mourning-paint, making the whole village ring with our dancing and rejoicing. The additional name of Ar-ra-e-dish (the Bloody Arm) was conferred upon me.

The old chief came in three days subsequently, bringing fourteen scalps and equipments, without having lost a single man.

Many of my readers will doubtless wonder how a man who had been reared in civilized life could ever participate in such scenes of carnage and rapine. I have already related that I was brought up where similar outrages were committed upon the defenseless inhabitants of the new settlements. Impressed with the recollection of these early scenes, I hardly ever struck down an Indian but my mind reverted to the mangled bodies of my childish play-fellows, which I discovered on my way to the mill, barbarously murdered by the savages. In after years I have experienced the natural ferocity of the savage, who thirsts for the blood of the white man for no other purpose than to gratify the vindictive spirit that animates him. I have seen the paths of the trappers dyed with

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

their blood, drawn from their hearts by the ambushed savage, who never knew mercy, but remorsefully butchered all who came in his way. Such is Indian nature. When I fought with the Crow nation, I fought in their behalf against the most relentless enemies of the white man. If I chose to become an Indian while living among them, it concerned no person but myself; and by doing so, I saved more life and property for the white man than a whole regiment of United States regulars could have done in the same time.

Before I close this narrative, I shall take the liberty to express my opinions, and afford those having control of the War Department some counsel about the cheapest, most expeditious, and most certain method of quelling their Indian troubles, on which the newspapers are harping so much. I know that with five hundred men of my selection I could exterminate any Indian tribe in North America in a very few months. But so long as our government continues to enlist the offscouring of European cities into our army, and intrusts the command to inexperienced officers fresh from West Point, just so long will they afford food for the Indians in and about the Rocky Mountains. Encumbered as our army is with baggage-wagons and artillery, an Indian chief can move his whole community farther in one day than our soldiers can follow them in three.

When our victorious celebration was over, I started on a small trading expedition to the Snake Indians. I had received an invitation from their chief to trade among them, and I selected eight warriors to accompany me. On arriving at their village, I found that the Utahs had joined them, and a great number of them were thronging the village. Knowing that the Utahs and Crows were deadly enemies, I sedulously watched their movements, and very speedily felt distrust for the safety of myself and party, as the whole camp savored strongly of treachery. I mustered my little party around me, and found them without guns. On inquiring the cause, they informed me they had traded them away for horses. I suppose my looks expressed my disapprobation. Mistaking me, they said there was yet one fine horse left, which I could have at the price of my gun. I had finished my traffic, and had disposed of every thing except my gun, when the Snakes came to me and offered to trade for that. I said, "No; I never sell my gun, except when at home and among my own people." The Snakes then told us to go, that things were bad in their camp. We sprang upon our horses, and struck out at full speed; but we soon discovered a large party of Indians were in close pursuit. We then found they had not sold us their fastest horses, as they gained on some of my party, and shot and scalped them without our ability to defend them. I succeeded in reaching the mountain with two of my men, having lost six noble young warriors in my flight. I knew there would be terrible mourning and loss of fingers, until I could teach the Snakes a lesson which would serve them to remember for a long time.

After devoting a short space to bewailing my misfortune, I requested a council to be called, and never did I enlarge with such wrathful vehemence as I then fulminated against the Snakes, holding them up to the abhorrence of the fathers for their treachery in decoying our unsuspecting warriors into their camp, and then letting loose a pack of murderous savages at our heels, after we had, through their complicity, parted with our only means of defense. I demanded five hundred warriors to go and wipe out the stain, and inflict summary chastisement on the village for their duplicity.

My argument was listened to with the profoundest attention, and all I proposed was readily acceded to. "Let the Red Arm have all that he asks," was the unanimous voice of the assembly. My warriors rallied around me almost at a moment's notice, and we mounted our horses and

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ped in the direction of the Snake country, on Green River. On the eighth day our scouts came in and reported that they had found a large number of the Snakes, scattered in small parties, who were engaged in killing buffalo. We held on until we came in sight of them. I distributed my warriors as the occasion suggested, ordering them to attack the various small camps, while I, with my party, should attack their main body. They were overthrown and dispersed by my brave warriors, with severe loss. We took over one hundred scalps, and a great quantity of guns and other warlike implements. We had sixteen men wounded, including myself (I received two slight wounds from arrows), but none of them dangerously. This blow brought the Snakes to their senses, and they immediately sent a deputation to our village to sue for peace.

A circumstance happened on the evening preceding our attack which caused me the deepest regret. While the spies were reconnoitering, they perceived two Indians, as they supposed, leave the enemy's camp, and proceed down the cañon. This circumstance they reported to me. I ordered them to return, and kill them if they could find them. They went in pursuit of the two stragglers, and when they came in sight of them they had their robes over their heads, and were kneeling down over a fire. They fired, and one of the two fell mortally wounded; the other sprang out of his robe, when, to their surprise, they saw he was a white man. They, however, took him prisoner, and brought him to my camp. I was absent at their return; but on the following morning I remarked a very dejected look on their countenances, and I asked them what was the matter.

"We have done very bad," said one; "we have reddened our hands with the blood of the white man."

"Well, how did it occur?" I inquired.

"Ask that white man, and he will tell you all."

I walked up to the unhappy prisoner, whose looks betrayed the keenest anguish, and addressed him in English.

"How are you, my friend?"

He started as if electrified, and looked me closely in the face.

"What brought you here?" I continued.

"I was brought here by these Indians, who killed my companion while we were building a fire to warm ourselves. I suppose I am brought here to be killed also?"

"No, my friend," I said, "you are safe. The Crows never kill white men."

"Are these Crows?" "Yes."

"Well, well! Then you must be Mr. Beckwourth?"

"Yes, that is my name. And now, without the least fear of danger, relate the occurrence fairly: if my warriors have killed a white man intentionally, they shall be punished."

He then related how he and his companion went into the cañon, and how they made a fire to render themselves comfortable away from the Indian camp; how that their robes were over their heads, entirely concealing their faces from view, and that he felt fully confident that my warriors, in firing upon them, had mistaken them for Indians.

"Well," I said, "since the mistake is so apparent, you will greatly serve me to make the same statement to your companions when you return to your camp; for the Crows are entirely innocent of any design to shed the blood of the white man, and it would be deplorable for any misunderstanding to arise in consequence of this lamentable occurrence."

"I shall make a fair statement of the fact," he said, "and should be very sorry to be the means of

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

any trouble.”

He then informed me that he and his late companion were trappers; that his party were in winter-quarters, and encamped with the main body of the Snakes; and that they had come out with this party after meat. I then gave him my reasons for attacking the Snakes, and begged him to commend me to all the old mountaineers.

“There is not a day passes,” he said, “but some one mentions you, to wonder where you are, and what you are now doing. I can tell them all that I have seen you, and conversed with you.”

I then told him he was at liberty to go at any time; that he could take all the horses belonging to him, and all else that he needed. We assisted him with the body of his unhappy friend upon the back of a horse, and, bidding me adieu, he departed.

The Snakes dispatched a deputation of forty warriors and a medicine chief to the Crows to negotiate peace. They attached all the blame of the late rupture to the Utahs, whom, they said, they could not control, and that the death of our six young warriors was entirely against their wish.

This we knew was false, for there were ten Snakes to one Utah in the camp at the time of the outrage. They also pleaded that they had tried for a long time to induce the Utahs to return home, knowing that they were enemies to the Crows. We at length adjusted the conditions of peace, smoked the calumet, and, after an exchange of presents, they returned to their home. About this time a brave, named Big Rain, was elected chief of the village for the term of six moons. His duties were to superintend all the village removals, to select sites for camps, order surrounds; in short, he was a kind of mayor, and alone subject to the head chief. Big Rain possessed the most beautiful squaw in the whole village; she was the admiration of every young brave, and all were plotting (myself among the rest) to win her away from her proud lord. I had spoken to her on several occasions, and, whenever opportunity offered, would tender her my most ceremonious obeisance; but she never favored me with any return. Not only was she beautiful, but she was very intelligent, and as proud as Lucifer; and the gorgeous dyes of the peacock were not more variegated or more showy than her attire. Since the elevation of her husband, I fancied that she assumed rather haughtier airs; and I determined to steal her from her lord, be the consequences what they might.

I went one evening to her brother's lodge, and acquainted him that there was a woman in our village that I loved, and that I must have her at all hazards.

“Well, warrior,” said he, “if it is any of my relatives, I will assist you all in my power. You are a great brave, and have gained many victories for us, and it is but right that your desires should be gratified.”

“Thank you,” said I; “but I will try alone first, and if I do not succeed, then I shall be very glad of your assistance.”

As an acknowledgment for the prompt tender of his services, I presented him with a quantity of tobacco. “Now,” added I, “I want you to call in all your neighbors to-night, and let them smoke as long as they please. After they are assembled, bar the door of your lodge, and amuse them as long as you can with the rehearsal of your adventures. In the mean time, I will be engaged.”

I then went to my bosom friend and brother, and made part to him of what I had in hand, which revelation greatly amused him. I requested him to act as sentry over the lodge where they were all smoking — Big Rain with the rest, for I had seen him enter — and remain there until he was satisfied they had filled their pipes for the last time, and then to call out to me, but to mislead

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

them in the place where he was addressing me. This he promised to perform, and we both started on our errands.

I went to Big Rain's lodge, dressed and painted in the extreme of the fashion, and saw the lady reclining, half asleep, upon her couch, and several of her female relatives asleep about the room. Nothing daunted, I strode to the couch of Mrs. Big Rain, and laid my hand gently on her brow. She started up, saying, "Who is here?" "Hush!" I replied; "it is I."

"What do you want here?"

"I have come to see you, because I love you."

"Don't you know that I am the chief's wife?"

"Yes, I know it; but he does not love you as I do. He never goes to war, but stays idly in the village. I am a great brave, and always go to war. I can paint your face, and bring you fine horses; but so long as you are the wife of Big Rain, he will never paint your face with new coos."

"My husband will kill you."

"Well, then the Crows will talk of you for many winters, and say that the great brave, 'The Bloody Arm,' died for a pretty woman."

"Your father," she said, "will lose all his horses, and all his other property, and will become poor in his old age. I respect your father, and all your relatives, and my heart would cry to see them poor."

"If my father loses his horses, I can steal more from our enemies. He would be proud to lose his horses if his son could get a wife as handsome as you are. You can go to war with me, and carry my shield. With you by my side, I could kill a great many enemies, and bring home many scalps. Then we could often dance, and our hearts would be made merry and glad."

"Go now," she pleaded; "for if my husband should return, and find you here, he would be very angry, and I fear he would kill you. Go! go! for your own sake, and for mine, and for the love you have for the Crows, go!"

"No," said I, "I will not go until you give me a pledge that you will be mine when an opportunity offers for me to take you away."

She hesitated for a moment, and then slipped a ring off her finger and placed it on mine. All I now had to do was to watch for a favorable chance to take her away with me on some of my excursions. Just as I was about to leave, my friend called me as though I had been three miles away. I went out and joined him. "What luck?" inquired he.

"Good," said I.

"Prove it to me, I will believe," said my friend. I held out my finger to him, displaying the ring.

"Enough," said he; "but I could not otherwise have believed it."

The following day, with six warriors in full costume, I visited Big Rain at his lodge.

"Ah!" said he, you are going on a war-excursion, my friend?"

"No," I answered. "We came to see which way you are going to move, how many days you will travel, and how far each day; so that we may find good places to encamp, and know where to find the village in case we should encounter the enemy."

"You are very kind," said he; "then you intend to be my spy. I have many brothers and other relatives among the braves, but not one has ever made me that offer."

"No," thought I, "they don't care as much about your wife as I do."

"Go," said he, "and the Great Spirit will protect you."

I then left, accompanied by my six warriors. The second day out, in the afternoon, as we were

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

traveling slowly along, I discovered, at about a mile distance, a party of twenty-seven Black Foot warriors, just emerging from the Bad Pass. We immediately retraced our steps toward home, and traveled all night, until we arrived within three miles of the village. When within sight, we telegraphed with the aid of a small looking-glass, which the Crow scouts usually carry, and every motion of which is understood in the village. I made a signal that I had discovered the enemy, and a second that they were approaching. In a moment I could discover a great stir in the village. When we arrived, I reported to his honor, Big Rain, how many we had seen, what tribe they were, where they had passed the previous night, and where they could then be found. The chief then ordered his madam to bring us some water, an order she complied with, smiling coquettishly at me the while.

I then retired to my lodge to change my dress, as portions of it were stained with our travel through the mountains. While I was in my lodge, madam came over with a splendid war-horse, which her husband had sent me, on which to return and fight the Black Feet I had just discovered. She said, "My husband has sent this war-horse to the Bloody Arm, and requests him to lead the Crows to the enemy."

I was soon on the road, with enough mounted warriors to eat the whole party of the enemy; for they were only a short distance from our village, and, desirous of excitement, every one wished to go. Judging where the enemy would encamp that night, we traveled on until we arrived near the anticipated encampment.

Previous to starting, my little wife, who, by being the wife of a great brave, was as good as any woman, wished to bear me company and carry my shield. But I refused her, alleging that the danger was too great, and promising to paint her face when I returned. One of my sisters then volunteered, and I accepted her offer, taking her with me to carry my shield and lead my war-horse. As soon as it was light enough in the morning, I sent out small parties in all directions to look for their trail, that we might track them to their den. In ten or fifteen minutes after the parties left, we heard the report of a gun, and the war-hoop raised. The Crows assembled in the direction of the report, all drawing toward a centre. When I arrived, I saw that the Black Feet had chosen a strong position, and that we had another fort to storm. It was built partly by nature, but human industry had improved the stronghold. It was low water, and there was a pile of drift on a naked sand-bar, and trees had been felled from the bank upon the drift-pile, forming quite a shelter. Over this position the enemy was placed, protected with a breast-work formed of timber taken from the drift. When I reached the ground, I saw two of our reckless braves talking carelessly under the enemy in this in closed space, as if they had been in a secure lodge. I regarded them for a moment, and, thinking to display as much bravery as they had, I dismounted and ran to the place, although several shots were fired at me from the fort, none of which took effect.

"What are you here for?" inquired one of them of me.

"In the first place," I said, "tell me what you are here for."

"Why we are old warriors, and you are not."

"If I am not an old warrior," I answered, "I will be one."

I then regarded the rough flooring over head, which separated us from our foes, and perceived an aperture hardly large enough to admit my fist. I stood under it a moment, and as the warriors were moving about, one of them stepped over the aperture and remained there. I thrust my lance up with my whole force, and drew it back reeking with blood.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“There, old warriors,” said I to my two companions, who has drawn the first blood now? Who struck them first? Old warriors, or a young brave? How do you like the look of my lance? Do you see it?”

“Yes, yes, we see it. You have done well, young brave!”

“Well,” said I, “you can stay here out of danger; but I am going out to my warriors, and then to storm the fort.”

I ran back with the same success that I had entered it, brandishing my dripping lance, and ordered a charge, which was obeyed as soon as given. In five minutes there was not a Black Foot left within alive. They made scarcely any defense, so sudden and overwhelming was the shock. We had one warrior killed by the first discharge of the enemy, and six wounded. We then returned home, and, notwithstanding our slain warrior, we celebrated a dance, and devoted the next day to mourning our loss. In robing his remains for the spirit land, we dressed him in the most costly manner, using trinkets, seam-embroidered cloth, and the most costly articles, to show the inhabitants of the spirit land that he was a great brave, and much respected on earth. Over all was wrapped the best of scarlet blankets, and his arms were enfolded therein.

Oh shroud him in his hunting-shirt,

And lay him in the glen,

Away, away from jealous foes,

Away from sight of men

With bow and painted arrow,

That never failed its aim,

When by his fleet and favorite steed

The bounding bison came.

Go, kill the warrior's favorite horse,

His crouching, lonely hound;

To shield so brave a warrior

In the happy hunting-ground.

While the villagers were crying and putting on a coat of mourning-paint for the departed warrior, I was busied in my domestic affairs. I sent my sister to madam with a large quantity of service-berries, which had been finely dried the preceding summer, together with some sweet potatoes, telling her to request madam to send me her extra moccasins, in order to lash them together with my own on my pack-dog, and to appoint a place to meet me that evening. My sister was astonished, and said, “Is it possible that you intend to take Ba-chua-hish-a (Red Cherry) with you? Why, we shall all become poor! We shall not have a horse to ride! But I don't care; she is a pretty woman, and will make a good robe-dresser.”

Away she hied, and soon returned with my lady's moccasins. Ah, ah! thought I, I am all right now! I expected that the course of true love would not run very smooth with me in the end, but would, on the contrary, carry me over breakers which would most probably break my neck; but I fortified myself with the old adage, “Faint heart never won fair lady,” and I determined to hazard all consequences.

The appointed time had arrived, and, on going to the place of assignation, I found my lady true to her word — in fact, she was there first. We joined the party, thirty-four in number, and traveled all night in the direction of the Black Foot country. On the sixth day, at nightfall, we arrived at

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

the Mussel Shell River, a little below the mouth of the Judith, and in sight of a village of the enemy. I looked out a good place for a reserve camp, and then, selecting eighteen of the most expert horse-thieves, we started for the village. We succeeded in capturing one hundred and seventeen horses without being discovered, and arrived safe with them at the camp. We all started immediately back for the village. The warriors took but two horses each, giving the rest to me and my new wife. Meanwhile, Big Rain made discovery of the loss of his wife, and was greatly disturbed in mind. My father, knowing the aggressor, commenced giving away to his near relatives all his choicest stock and other valuable property, until the storm should blow over.

When we rode in, the people came out to meet us, rejoicing at our success. Big Rain was out likewise; he took no part in the rejoicing, however, but ordered his wife and me to be surrounded. I was seized by Big Rain, together with half a dozen of his sisters, all armed with scourges, and they administered a most unmerciful whipping. I lay down to it, and received it with true Indian fortitude, though I certainly did think they would beat me to death. If I had resisted, they would have been justified in killing me; also, if they had drawn one drop of blood from me, I should have been justified in taking their lives. They laid it on so unmercifully, that I became angry, and hoped they would draw blood. After the flagellation was performed, the next penalty was, to strip my father and myself of all our horses and other effects (our war-implements excepted). My father was stripped of five hundred horses. I lost about eighty.

"Pretty dear for a very pretty woman," thought I. However, I soon had my horses made up to me by presents from my friends.

We performed the horse-dance that night, though I danced without owning one. During the amusement I conveyed word to the wife of Big Rain that I should go out again the next night, and should expect her company, appointing her to meet me at the same place as before. She returned a favorable answer. My little wife hauled me over the coals for stealing a married woman, when there were enough maidens in the village that I could select. I told her that I wished to have the Handsomest woman in the village for my lodge.

The appointed hour arrived, and Big Rain's wife was faithful to her promise. We started off with only seventeen warriors. We were gone four days, and returned with three scalps. We met a war-party of nine warriors, six of whom outstripped us and escaped. On my return I was again seized, and received another such a flogging as the first, laid on with equal good-will.

After my dressing, I retired to my lodge, when a woman approached me bearing some burden in her arms. She addressed me: "Here is something will gladden your heart; he will make as great a brave as his father: his name is Black Panther. Here, look at your child."

Sure enough, my little wife had presented me with a son, who is at this present time (1855) first counselor of the Crow nation.

Two nights afterward, I started on a third expedition with a party of sixty-three warriors, my new wife accompanying me for the third time. We took a southerly course toward the country of the Black Feet, and captured near two hundred head of horses, with which we returned home by way of the fort. On arriving at the fort, I found that my services were required, and that they were about to dispatch a courier after me on business of great importance. I told the commander that I must go home with my party, but that I would return to the fort with the least possible delay. Accordingly we started on. On the road we fell in with a small party of trappers, who were under the conduct of an old schoolmate of mine, David Adams. They seemed greatly dejected,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

and I inquired of them the cause. Adams then related that he had been robbed of every thing he possessed by some of his men confederated with a number of my Indians, and that they had sent him off in the forlorn condition in which I now saw him. I asked him to describe the appearance of the Indians who took part in robbing him.

One of the party," said he, "was not an Indian, but a mulatto."

"There was no mulatto when I left," I answered, "and you must be mistaken."

"No," he replied, "I am not. You will find him there on your return."

"Well," said I, "get up and return to the village with me; I will sift this matter to the bottom."

He declined to accompany me. "They told me, if I returned," he urged, "that they would kill us all; and I dare not go back."

"Come with me," I said. "If there is any killing to be done, I will have a hand in it."

He at length consented to return with me. On gaining the village, I rode up to my father's lodge, and said, "How is this? You allow white men to be robbed in the village, directly under your eyes! Do you wish to call down the vengeance of the great white chief upon the Crows? Do you wish them to be made poor and miserable, like the other tribes? Have I not often told you of the immense number of white warriors; that they were like the sand of the prairie — as the leaves of the forest?"

"Hold, my son! I had nothing to do in the matter. My heart was sorrowful when I heard of the crime. It was High Lance who committed it."

"Then I will go and kill him, or be killed myself," said I; and away I sped to the lodge of High Lance.

"Go with him — go with him!" exclaimed my father to all my brothers and relatives around. "He is mad; go and protect him."

I advanced to High Lance, who was standing at his lodge, who, on seeing me approach, stepped in and shut his door. I dismounted, and tore his door down in an instant, and demanded of him what he had been doing. I remarked that his lodge was extremely well supplied with goods.

"High Lance," said I, in an authoritative tone, "restore to these men their horses without one moment's delay."

"I have taken no horses," said he, sullenly. "Send for them in an instant," said I.

By, this time my Dog Soldiers, the bravest men in the nation, were surrounding me.

"What does our chief want?" demanded they.

I told them that I wanted all the goods taken out of the lodge of High Lance, for that he had assisted to steal them from a white man, who was my friend. Instantly the lodge was hoisted, and torn into a thousand pieces, and High Lance, the mulatto, and eleven white men, were exposed to plain view.

I then accosted the mulatto: "What are you doing here, you black velvet-headed scoundrel? You come here in my absence to put the devil into the heads of the Indians, who are bad enough already? I will have your scalp torn off, you consummate villain!"

The poor fellow was frightened almost to death, and trembled in every joint. He replied, "The Crows gave me liberty to stay here and trap in their country, and —"

"Not another word," interrupted I; "though I will hang you, at any rate."

Then, turning to the eleven renegade white men, I said, "I give you just five minutes to leave the village; if you are longer in going, I will order my warriors to scalp every one of you. You assume

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

to be white men, and yet think no more of yourselves than to enter an Indian village and set such an example to the savages; whereas, if they were to treat you in such a manner, you would think death too light a punishment. You rob your own race, and forbid their return to the village under pain of death, allying yourselves with the worst Indian in the tribe. After stripping your victim, you forcibly deprive him of his few trusty followers, and bid him go through these trackless wilds, filled with murderous savages, who, had they come across him, would have murdered him before he reached the fort.”

I rated them thus soundly, but not one offered to lift his hand. The stolen horses were very quickly forthcoming, and the purloined property was readily produced. I restored it to my friend before them.

“Now,” I said, addressing the gang, “you can return to the fort with Mr. Adams; but if I hear that you offer to molest him in any way, your scalps shall pay for it.”

Then, turning to the mulatto, I said, “You have instigated all this mischief, and I should only be doing my duty to put my threat into execution, and hang you as I promised. However, you can go to the fort with these men. I shall be there about as soon as you will, and I will attend to your case then. I’ll see if I can not teach you better than to come among the Crows again.”

Mr. Adams belonged to Captain Bonneville’s company, and was leader of a party of about twenty men; he had come into the Crow country for the purpose of trading and trapping. The mulatto had arrived previously, and had brought a Canadian with him: the mulatto could speak the Crow language tolerably well. He had become acquainted with High Lance, who was a bad Indian, and had relations as bad as himself; and through this clique he had obtained permission to stay and trap in the country. On the arrival of Mr. Adams, the mulatto made himself very familiar with his men, representing to them that they were fools to travel for hire, when they could stay among the Crows with him and do so much better. By these arguments he induced eleven of Mr. Adams’s party to desert him, when, with the participation of High Lance and other bad Indians, they stripped him of all his goods. Mr. Adams expressed his warmest thanks to me for my interference. I told him I had only done my duty, as I always had done in like cases, and should continue to do as long as I remained with the Crows.

This business settled, I received a third sound thrashing from my new wife’s husband and relatives for again making free with his wife.

After the lapse of three days I left for the fort, again taking my friend’s lady. Her husband, finding that I was incorrigible, grew furious, and declared he only wished to have me in his power once more. My Dog Soldiers said to him, “You have whipped him three times, and you shall whip him no more, neither shall you do him any farther harm. Red Cherry loves him, and she does not love you; she will always go with him. You might as well try to turn Big Horn back to its mountain sources as to attempt to separate them, unless you kill them. You would not be so cowardly as to spill the blood of the pretty Red Cherry because she loves our chief. If you should fight him, he will kill you; and if you should assassinate him, we would avenge his death. No, no! Big Rain must not hurt our chief. But we will buy your claim to the Red Cherry, and give her to Red Arm for his own. You, a great chief, should despise to want a woman who loves another warrior better than you!”

Big Rain drooped his head on finding the Dog Soldiers were against him, and gave way to deep reverie. He loved the Red Cherry as children love the delicious fruit bearing the same name.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

After weighing the matter well, he reluctantly acceded to the offer, and consented to resign all interest and title in Mrs. Big Rain for the consideration of one war-horse, ten guns, ten chiefs' coats, scarlet cloth, ten pairs of new leggins, and the same number of moccasins.

The stipulation was forthwith produced by my faithful Dog Soldiers, and I had the exclusive right to the Red Cherry, without the fear of a drubbing every time I returned.

Such acts are as common among the Rocky Mountain tribes as they have been among the whites in California since the discovery of gold there, though in the latter place, the penalty is frequently more severe than among the wild tribes of the mountains and prairies.

My new wife was the perfection of symmetry. Few of the Caucasian race could boast of handsomer features, and nothing but the rich olive color of the skin betrayed her Indian origin. Big Rain always regarded me with an evil eye after the transaction, and several times attempted to induce the lady to return to him. Many warriors, whose wives had played truant, had cut off their noses to deprive them of their attractions. I told Red Cherry that if ever she should return to Big Rain, he would surely serve her so. She never manifested any disposition to leave me; and my engagement to the American Fur Company enabled me to dress my wives better than any other woman in the whole nation.

It was now early spring, and I started for the fort. Before I left, I told the Crows what time I wished them to follow me with their peltry.

On my arrival, I was informed that a Mr. Johnson Gardner had bought quite a large lot of goods, which he had taken to his camp, eighteen miles down the river. The morning after my arrival, three men were dispatched from the fort to acquaint him that I had come. I had two hundred warriors with me; and on the night of our arrival we formed a camp and turned out the horses, not apprehending any danger. Early in the morning one of my followers went out to fetch up the horses, when he found them all missing, and the trail visible on which they had been taken away. The alarm was instantly given, and I ran to the top of the hill to take a general survey. I saw two objects on the ice, which appeared to me to be men; and this excited my apprehensions that they were two of the men dispatched from the fort, as they lay in the direction which they had taken. I collected my warriors instantly for the pursuit, placing all our women and children in the fort. I ordered some of the white men down on the ice to bring in the supposed bodies. Alas! my suspicions proved too true! All three men had been butchered, and when we rode up their bodies were scarcely cold. The eyes of the warriors flashed fire, and, without delaying a moment, on we swept in pursuit of revenge. We traveled about thirty miles (each man leading his war-horse), and our saddle-horses were beginning to tire, and we saw nothing of the enemy. Darkness would close over us, we feared, before we could overtake them. We then mounted our war-horses, which were as swift as the wind, and, leaving the saddle-horses behind, on we went faster than ever. Darkness was already upon us, when we came in sight of a large fire in the distance.

"Now, boys, we have them !" cried I.

We rode on until we neared the camp of the enemy, as we supposed, and then I examined their position previous to the onset. Just as I was about to give the order to charge, I heard a voice from the camp saying, "Throw them in! D—n them, throw them in!"

I then saluted the camp, shouting at the top of my voice, "Halloo the camp! Don't shoot, boys; we are Crows! I am Jim Beckwourth !"

I then rode up with my whole party, and found that they had taken two prisoners from the very

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

party we were in pursuit of, and under the following circumstances: The pursued party rode up to the camp, and several of them dismounted, among whom was Antoine Garro (a Canadian half-breed), well known in St. Louis. Garro could speak tolerably good English.

He accosted Gardner with "How d'do? You have got a good fire."

"Who are you," inquired Gardner, "that you speak English?"

"My name is Garro."

"What Indians are those with you?"

"Oh, they are good Indians; they will not hurt you."

Gardner discovered that too many were dismounting and crowding round his camp; and he perceived that many of them rode in the direction of his horses, and he became alarmed, as he well might be at his situation.

"Garro," said he, again, "tell me, what Indians are these?"

"They are Re-ka-ras," said he; "they have borrowed your horses, but they will bring them back again." He said this as he saw Gardner look in the direction of his horses.

"Re-ka-ras!" repeated Gardner. "To your guns, men; seize them!"

Old Garro stepped away with an accelerated pace, and two only of the Indians were arrested.

Garro stood off at a safe distance, and demanded the two Indians.

"You can not have them until you bring me my horses," said Gardner.

"Then we will have the tops of your heads," threatened the old rascal.

"Yes, you would have the tops of our heads; but come and take them, if you can."

They rode off, taking every horse that Gardner possessed; and if he had not been on the alert, they would have taken a few scalps as well.

These were the two prisoners that were in question when we rode up. They had bound them with trap-chains, and were in the act of throwing them into a tremendous log fire that was burning in the camp. They opened the logs on the top of the fire, and, swinging the two victims into the flames, rolled back the burning logs. There was a terrible struggle for a moment; then all was still. A blue flame towered high above the pile, and quickly subsided. My Indians begged the privilege of scalping them before they were burned; but Gardner told them he wished to burn them up clean. "You are going after their companions," he said, "and you can get plenty more scalps."

"Yes," they replied, "we will get plenty, and bring your horses back besides."

I really felt proud of my warriors in seeing them animated with so true a spirit. We breathed our horses for a few minutes, for they were in a perfect foam, and then started after them again in hot pursuit.

By next morning, we came within two gunshots' distance of the enemy without being perceived, as a roll in the prairie hid us from their view. We rested for a few moments, to refresh our horses and prepare them for the charge. We heard a continual firing, as if kept up by the enemy, and then a terrific explosion, which made the earth tremble; yells of the savages succeeded to this, and I then learned that there had been a battle between the Indians and traders, and that the whole stock of the traders' powder had exploded.

Now, thought I, is the time to charge; and I gave the word to my impatient warriors. We were among them like a thunder-bolt, even before they had time to mount their horses; for they had not yet recovered from the fright of the explosion. We cut down one hundred and seventy-two of them before they had time to fire twenty shots. The whole force of the enemy amounted to

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

four hundred men, and those who remained unhurt scattered in all directions. We did not pursue them, as our horses were so badly jaded.

Pine Leaf, who charged gallantly by my side, was wounded with a bullet, which broke her left arm just below the elbow. Placing her wounded arm in her bosom, she grew more desperate than ever, and three of the enemy met their death from the point of her lance after she received her wound. Becoming faint from loss of blood, she was constrained to retire.\* \* The heroine's arm was set in good style by Dr. Walton, at Gardner's camp, and in a few weeks it was sound again. The Indians have no bone-setters; when their bones get broken, they tie them up as well as possible, and trust in Providence for the result. We had twelve others wounded.

We recovered all our own horses, and recaptured those belonging to Gardner, besides a great number in the possession of the enemy. For spoils we gathered near two hundred scalps, and a vast amount of firearms and other equipments. After this signal victory we returned to Gardner's camp, reaching there the same evening.

Before leaving, however, we took three blackened and disfigured bodies, the remains of the trappers who had so heroically defended themselves, and who, to all appearance, had blown themselves up rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. This supposition was warranted by the appearance of the ground. Evidently the savages had set fire to the grass all round, thinking to burn them out; but it had not reached them. I surmised that the Indians had charged on them in a body, and, when near to the trappers, had been scattered with the ignition of three kegs of powder in the possession of the trappers, for some of the carcasses of the Indians were badly scorched. Our reception at the camp of Gardner was enthusiastic. "Beckwourth and his brave warriors forever!" rent the air in acclamations. They joined us, and went on to the fort with us. When we came in sight of the place we formed all in line, and displayed our scalps on the ends of sticks, and discharged our guns, and sung at the top of our voices. This brought every person out of the fort to look at us. We then opened our column, and I requested Gardner to drive all the horses with full speed to the fort. Just before he reached there we spurred our horses on to the front, and encircled the fort several times, still displaying our scalps, and singing the scalp-dance burden louder and louder, while all the occupants of the post joined in. There were hilarious times round the fort that night.

We had sent word to the village to summon the Crows to the trading-post, to help us mourn for the three white men who had recently been killed on the ice, and who were yet unburied. I omitted to mention in proper place that Glass's body was found near the fort — probably on his retreat after he had discovered the Indians. The whole village, accordingly, started to join us, while I and my party went out to meet them and acquaint them with our success. In consideration of my distinguished services, I was elevated to second counselor of the nation.

We met them about a day's ride from the fort, and had a great celebration over the communication of our victory. We returned together and buried the three men, amid the most terrible scenes that I had ever witnessed. The crying was truly appalling. The three men were well known, and highly esteemed by the Crows. When their bodies were lowered to their last resting-place, numberless fingers were voluntarily chopped off and thrown into the graves; hair and trinkets of every description were also contributed, and the graves were finally filled up.

I then set the men to work in building boats, to carry our peltry down to Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, whither I intended going as soon as the river was free from ice.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

When completed, I put on board seven hundred packs of buffalo robes — ten robes in each pack — and forty-five packs of beaver. I forwarded orders for such goods as were wanted, and also word for another clerk in the place of poor Rose, who had lost his life in the service of the company.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Departure from the Fort with the Crows.—I am elected First Counselor of the Nation.—Death of the head Chief —I am appointed Successor.—Last Moments of the Chief.

THE Indians having made all their requisite purchases, moved on to the Little Horn River, six or eight days' travel from the fort. We encamped here for the purpose of planting tobacco, which is done by the prophets and medicine men; after which a great feast is provided, and a general time of dancing and rejoicing follows.

The tobacco-plant grows spontaneously in the Snake country, but it is cultivated by the Crows and several other tribes. It is a tolerably good substitute for the cultivated species, for the purpose of smoking, but it is unfit to chew. The plant very closely resembles garden sage, and forms into heads similar to the domestic flax.

At this camp the First Counselor made a speech to the warriors, and spoke in substance as follows "Warriors! Red Bird has served you faithfully many winters. He is now old. He can be young no more. His body has been made weak by the numerous wounds he has received in fighting the enemies of the Crows. He now wishes for repose, and not to be disturbed in his slumbers by being called into the council at all hours of the night, when his body, once so powerful, now requires rest. He is desirous of joining the medicine men, that he will not be compelled to go to war; but he will always be ready to defend his own village, the women and the helpless, and to give up his life for them. Red Bird's medicine in the warpath has grown weak; let the younger warriors, who are brave and active, have an opportunity to try their medicine. We have plenty who deserve to be promoted, who are as brave as the she-bear, and as swift as the antelope. Warriors, I now give up my position as first counselor. I have done."

Long Hair replied as follows:

"Red Bird, we feel that our hearts are sorry that you have seen fit to cease to be our first counselor. You have served our people long and faithfully. Your counsel has been good: under your wise direction we have prospered. We would rather that you had still directed us; but you say it is your desire to have repose. Be it so. We know that your body is weak. We know that you have received numerous wounds from the weapons of our enemies. We know that you never turned your back upon the foe. Now we need a sixth counselor, and must select one from the braves here present. Will you name him for us?"

"No," said the old man; "I have never had any enemies among my braves, and I do not wish to make them now. I should not know which to choose, were I to attempt it. They are all brave."

It was at length resolved that one of the medicine men should be blindfolded, and go among the most distinguished braves, and whoever he first placed his hand upon should take his seat as sixth counselor. The distinguished braves then gathered promiscuously together; a close bandage was placed over the eyes of the medicine man, and away he went among the crowd. The five counselors being among the braves, he placed his hand on one of them, and cried out, "Here is your sixth counselor."

"You are wrong," said Long Hair; "he is counselor already."

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

He then went through the crowd, and laid his hand upon another brave, crying out as before. Long Bow was therefore declared to be the choice of the people for sixth counselor of the nation. When the seat of the first counselor falls vacant, the others are elevated one degree, thus leaving the lowest station vacant.

The village now crossed the Big Horn on their way to Sun River Creek, a small tributary of the Yellow Stone. At Big Horn I took forty warriors, and started in quest of Black Feet and horses. After traveling two days, I was overtaken by the head chief, A-ra-poo-ash, with one hundred and seventy-five warriors. He was evidently chagrined about something. Not wishing him to go to war, as I expected nothing less than that he would rush in and throw away his life, I told him that I should avoid the war-path, that my medicine told me my war-path was bad, and I intended to return to the village. I started forthwith, and he followed me. On coming in sight of the village, we halted and encamped for the night.

I stole away in the night with seventy-five warriors, and made for the enemy's country, hoping that the old chief would return to the village. But he took my trail the next morning, and overtook me with his remaining followers.

He advanced to me, and said, "Bloody Arm, you are a great warrior; you do not wish me to go to war, but I will. I shall never return to the village. I am going to die. The Crows are fools. I have given them good counsel, and they would not listen to my words. I have fought for them during many years. I have shed much blood for them. I have tried to make them a great people, but they have closed their ears. I am going to the big village of the Great Spirit. If you do not wish to go in the path with me, you can go in another path; I will find the enemy alone, and die."

When he had finished speaking, he dismounted. Then, placing the edge of his shield on some buffalo chips, he said, "Warriors, you see my shield. If it rises, I shall die before I return to the village; if not, I shall return." He then addressed the sun for some minutes, after which he took his lance and made several motions with it. Then, giving a bound, the shield was raised as high as his head, and not a warrior saw him touch it. Then every one present believed his words, namely, that he would never return alive to the village. I knew that the shield must have some elevating agency, but it was concealed: my attention was so riveted upon the chief, that I did not discover the power that produced the seeming miracle.

The scouts now ran in to report that there were fourteen Black Feet but a short distance off, who were approaching us on foot. All was then bustle of preparation for a moment, and the trick of the shield was forgotten. Away we sped to find the enemy. We speedily found them, and they, perceiving escape was impossible, prepared to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

The old chief was the first to charge impetuously upon the scanty foe; as his steed plunged through them, he cut down one with his battle-axe; then, wheeling and again passing their line, he clove a second. Again turning to pass the enemy's line a third time, he had already raised his arm to strike, when an arrow entered his body just below the hip, and passed clean through, showing itself near the shoulder.

Every warrior paused in astonishment at seeing their chief thus furiously engaged; but when he fell a demon seemed suddenly to possess them, and the few surviving Black Feet were hewed to pieces in a moment. Every warrior gathered round the dying chief; his life-blood was fast draining from his mortal stroke.

"Warriors," he said, "I came here to die. My wish will soon be gratified. A-ra-poo-ash will lead

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

you no more to war. My home will soon be in the Spirit Land. My people were fools, and would not listen to my counsel. Bloody Arm, come to me. You must now take the place of A-ra-poo-ash. You are brave and wise. You fight the enemy, and vanquish them without losing our own warriors. Your medicine is powerful. Warriors, listen to your dying chief! You, Bloody Arm, are the only brave who can keep the nation together. The Crows disobeyed my orders, and I did not like to punish them for it. I loved my people too well; I was too kind to them for their own good. I was too indulgent. They all fear you, and will obey your words. If they obey you, they will increase and become a powerful people, as I have wished them to be; but if they disobey you, they will not be a nation two winters more. Their enemies are numerous and powerful, and they will rub out all the Crows unless they hearken to what you say. My eyes grow dim. Red Arm, are you listening? I can not see."

"I am listening to all you say," I replied.

"It is well. Then take this shield and this medal; they both belong to you. The medal was brought from our great white father many winters ago by the red-headed chief. When you die, it belongs to him who succeeds you. Listen. Tell Nam-i-ne-dishee, the wife that I have always loved, that if our child, yet unborn, shall be a son, to tell him who his father was. Red Arm, listen."

"I hear you," I said.

"Let my body be buried under this spot. Suffer no warrior to make a track on this war-ground for one season. Then come and seek my bones, and I will have something good for you.

"I can hear the voice of the Great Spirit. It sounds like the moaning of the mighty wind through the dark, gloomy forest. He calls for A-ra-poo-ash to come to the spirit land. I must go. Remember!"

The word "remember" expired on his lips as his soul winged its flight to the spirit land. Every warrior (except Yellow Belly, who was a brother of the old chief) immediately set up the most dismal cryings that I have ever heard in my life. I dispatched a herald to the village to inform them of the head chief's death, and then burying him according to his directions we slowly proceeded homeward. My very soul sickened at the contemplation of the scenes that would be enacted at my arrival. When we drew in sight of the village, we found every lodge laid prostrate. We entered amid shrieks, cries, and yells. Blood was streaming from every conceivable part of the bodies of all who were old enough to comprehend their loss. Hundreds of fingers were dismembered; hair, torn from the head, lay in profusion about the paths; wails and moans in every direction assailed the ear, where unrestrained joy had a few hours before prevailed. This fearful mourning lasted until evening of the next day.

The morning following I ordered the removal of the village in the direction of the Rose Bud. We there built a council-lodge, and all the prophets and medicine men in the village were assembled in it on its completion. The national records were read over, and, after a lengthy ceremony performed by the great men, it was unanimously declared that they had elected me First Counselor, and that, conjointly with Long Hair, I was head chief of the nation. Which pronunciamiento was recorded.

It then devolved upon me to deliver my inaugural address. As nearly as I can recollect, I spoke as follows "Brothers and warriors! The great A-ra-poo-ash is no more. He has met his fathers and kindred who preceded him to the Spirit Land. He has told all concerning you that yet survive on earth. He has related your deeds of bravery, which makes the spirits rejoice; he has also told

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

of your disobedience to your chief, which has made them cry and become dark. The Great Spirit becomes angry at you when he sees his heroes mourn. But, although you displeased A-ra-poo-ash by disobedience, and made his heart to mourn, he intercedes for you there, that, if you now obey the chiefs you have chosen to lead you, your war-paths may constantly be prosperous; your buffalo and beaver shall always abound, and you may become a great and powerful people.

“I am now your great chief. If you obey what I say to you, I can make you all you wish to be. By my long stay with the whites, I possess advantages which the chiefs of no other tribe possess. I can get twice as much for our robes and beavers as you ever got before. I came back to you. I can talk to our white brethren, and they understand all my words. They know that if they cheat my people I shall find it out.

“My medicine tells me that we must not make war on our enemies, unless they first kill our people or steal our horses: we must then attack them with many warriors, so that we may run no danger of being rubbed out. I shall never consent for our nation to have more than two villages at one time. Let those two villages keep their warriors, their wives, and their children together, and not subdivide, when they are sure to be attacked by the enemies. When our village is united, no enemy will ever dare to attack it.

My brother, Long Hair, is a very great brave, a wise chief. He will guide one village, and it will be my duty to guide the council and direct the other. I want all my warriors to lay aside the battle-axe and lance for a season, and turn their attention to hunting and trapping. Our streams are full of beaver, as also are our prairies with buffalo. Our squaws excel all others in dressing robes, for which the whites pay us a great price. Then let us get all the robes they can dress, and not keep them in idleness as mere playthings. If we keep them at work, they will be healthy, and strong, and brave, when they become warriors. They can also buy every thing they require, both for themselves and their children, while the beavers of the warriors will also supply our wants.

“Warriors! How can we do all this, if we scatter over the country in numerous little villages, subject to continual attacks from our enemies, who will cut us off, a few at a time, until we are all rubbed out? No; obey me, and keep yourselves undivided; and if enemies attack us, we can kill ten of them when they kill one Crow: thus my medicine says. But if you disobey me, and will not hearken to my words, then I shall surely leave you, and return to my white friends, not enduring to see the nation become weak, and flying before their enemies, and our women and children carried into captivity. Obey and assist me, then, and I will do my best in your behalf. Warriors, I have done.”

This oration was received with undisguised approval, and I received the name of Good War Road. A herald having been dispatched to our other village to acquaint them with the death of our head chief, and request them to assemble at the Rose Bud, in order to meet our village and devote themselves to a general time of mourning, there met, in conformity with this summons, over ten thousand Crows at the place indicated. Such a scene of disorderly, vociferous mourning no imagination can conceive, nor any pen portray. Long Hair cut off a large roll of his hair, a thing he was never known to do before. The cutting and hacking of human flesh exceeded all my previous experience; fingers were dismembered as readily as twigs, and blood was poured out like water. Many of the warriors would cut two gashes nearly the entire length of their arm; then, separating the skin from the flesh at one end, would grasp it in their other hand, and rip it asunder to the shoulder. Others would carve various devices upon their breasts and shoulders, and raise the skin

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

in the same manner, to make the scars show to advantage after the wound was healed. Some of their mutilations were ghastly, and my heart sickened to look at them; but they would not appear to receive any pain from them.

It was frequently asked of me why I did not mourn. I told them that my medicine forbade me to mourn in their manner, but that I mourned in my heart, and in painting my face. I would frequently represent to them the folly of maiming themselves, and appearing before the eyes of the Great Spirit so greatly disfigured; but I lost my labor. By torturing themselves their pagan minds supposed they were rendering acceptable sacrifices to the Great Spirit, and performing penance for offenses against his will. It was religion; and to interfere with their received opinions would have subjected me to the imputation of infidel, and perhaps have entailed upon me expulsion from my high office.

The mourning over, I selected seventy young warriors, and started out in search of feats of arms (according to their custom), to prove my fortune in my new office. I crossed the Missouri into the As-ne-boine country, where we fell in with fifteen Indians and four old women. We killed them all, and returned home with their scalps. There was but slight rejoicing on my return, on account of our recent affliction.

I should have mentioned that at the assembly of our two villages a grand council was held, wherein certain principles of action were deliberated and adjusted. On the death of a chief all his plans die with him, and it devolves upon his successor to come to an understanding with his confederate head chief. In this deliberation it is determined upon what rules the villages shall move, which direction each shall take, and what shall be the relations existing between them. There is generally a harmony preserved between the chiefs, and much method is shown in the preliminary adjustment of details. Long Hair and myself were the best of friends, and my allied brother was the elect to the office of Sixth Counselor, so that there was a promising indication of unanimity in our administration.

The villages then separated, with an understanding that they should again assemble at the fort in one moon. The attention of the nation was turned to trapping and killing buffalo, and the stock of accumulated peltry that fall was prodigious.

When I started on my excursion to the As-ne-boines, Pine Leaf begged to accompany me. Her arm was far from sound, and I refused to take her. However, soon after I had left, one of my leaders invaded the Cheyenne country, and, regardless of my wishes, she accompanied the expedition. She was brought home, as all supposed, mortally wounded. A ball had penetrated her left breast, just escaping the heart; it had passed through her body, coming out at the shoulder-blade, and tearing away a portion of it in its exit. On seeing her in this pitiable condition, I resigned all hope of her recovery. "So much," said I, "for disregarding my counsel. I would not allow you to go with me, in consideration of your wound; but you took advantage of my absence, and now you are done for."

"Well," she replied, "I am sorry that I did not listen to my chief; but I gained two coos."

The party accompanying her lost four warriors, wounded in rescuing her, and saving her scalp. She eventually recovered, but it was a long while before she could again go to war. The Cheyennes were defeated in the end, with the loss of three scalps, which were brought into camp.

The two villages met at the time appointed at the fort, and disposed of all their peltry. A Mr. Tulleck was sent up as clerk, and to him I intrusted full charge of the fort, promising him the

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

protection of the Crows for the winter, as I intended that one of our villages should take up their winter quarters in his vicinity. I was at this time salaried by the American Fur Company at three thousand dollars per annum, to reside with the Crows and procure their trade for the company. Our whole nation then crossed the Yellow Stone, and moved on to Mussel Shell River, whence we purposed to go and gather the remains of our late head chief, as the time he had specified for their removal had arrived. The Indians count four seasons in the year; namely, green grass, yellow grass, leaf falling, and snow falling. Our party destined to collect the bones consisted of seven or eight hundred persons of both sexes. On arriving at the grave, we discovered a new Indian trail passing directly over the spot, and we started in immediate pursuit. After a march of six miles, we came upon a Black Foot village of twenty-seven lodges, who were returning from the trading-post, having made extensive purchases. At sight of them, every warrior's breast kindled with revenge, they remembering the fall of their chief. We charged furiously upon them, killing and taking prisoners about one hundred and fifty of their party. While the warriors were engaged in the attack, our women attacked the Black Foot women, and killed many of them and their children before we could interfere to stop it. We captured quite a number of young women and little boys, with an abundance of horses, weapons, ammunition, scarlet cloth, beads, and sundries. We did not receive a scratch, as we attacked them with such overwhelming numbers that they offered trifling resistance, their chief endeavor being to save themselves by flight.

We took up the body of our chief and returned with it to the camp. Then there was another ceremony of cutting and maiming, and a body of two hundred lodges was sent to deposit the remains in the burial-ground of the chief's ancestors. While this party were away on their mission, those who remained with us busied themselves in collecting the various sorts of fruit with which the country abounded.

I now received my last name — for I was on the pinnacle of my fame, and they could ennoble me no farther — Nan-kup-bah-pah (Medicine Calf).

After tarrying about three weeks, we returned to the fort, where we again spent a short time, and then proceeded to the Big Horn, where we had engaged to meet Bear's Tooth, who had the conduct of the burial party.

While we were resting at the fort, a small party of twenty-three warriors, led by Little Gray Bull, stole from our camp at night, unknown to the chiefs, and when at a safe distance sent us word that they were going to the Cheyenne country in pursuit of spoils. They were the élite of our party, the braves des braves. Not one of that devoted band ever returned. What fate befell them remains to be shown.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

Departure from the Fort.—Arrival of Fitzpatrick and Party at the Crow Village.—Hair-breadth Escape from a Massacre.—Rescue and Restoration of Property to the Owners.—Departure of the Party.—My Return to the Fort.—Escape from Black Feet.—Defeat of the Crows.

WHILE staying at our camp on the Big Horn, a messenger arrived with the intelligence that Thomas Fitzpatrick was back upon the mountain, and that he wished me to visit him without loss of time. My affairs were in such a position that I could not possibly leave, but I sent my father and two of my best warriors to escort him into the village. The next morning they returned with Fitzpatrick and party, to the number of thirty-five men, and over two hundred horses. They encamped a short distance out. I visited the camp, and was received with a cordial welcome. I

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

was introduced to a Captain Stuart, an English officer, who had figured conspicuously, as I was informed, under the Iron Duke, and was now traveling the Far West in pursuit of adventure; also to a Dr. Harrison, a son of the hero of Tippecanoe, and to a Mr. Brotherton, with several other gentlemen, who were all taking a pleasure excursion.

While sitting in their quarters, I observed some of the Crows looking very wistfully at the horses belonging to our new friends. Knowing that the most incorruptible of Indians have a moral weakness for horses, I ordered some of my faithful Dog Soldiers to watch them. I then invited the gentlemen to the village, which invitation they readily accepted. The visitors left at an early hour, but Fitzpatrick remained to talk matters over until quite late in the evening. I offered him a bed in my lodge, but he preferred sleeping in his own quarters.

Shortly after his arrival, Fitzpatrick incidentally mentioned that the Cheyennes had killed an entire party of Crows (but he omitted all mention of the part his men had taken in the massacre), and that one of his men had been wounded in the affair. He had also a horse that had belonged to one of the fallen heroes, purchased by him of the Cheyennes. Had he acquainted me with this circumstance when he first saw me, the very unpleasant sequel that I am about to relate would have been avoided.

One of the Crow braves was son to a member of the party massacred, and he recognized his late father's horse. This discovery had occasioned the scrutiny which I had remarked early in the evening, but the cause of which I was in utter ignorance. On the retiring of Fitzpatrick I lay down for the night. I had not fallen asleep, when the murdered brave's son entered my lodge, and addressed me: "Medicine Calf, what must we do with these white men?"

"What must you do with them?" repeated I, not apprehending his meaning.

"Yes, I say so."

"Why, take them into your lodges and feast them, and give them beds to sleep on, if they wish it."

"No, no, that is not what I mean," he said; "you know these are the white men who killed my father. They have his horse here with them, and a wounded man — wounded in their fight with the Crows."

He then left me to go, as I supposed, to his lodge, and I thought no more of the matter. I soon fell asleep, and woke no more till morning. On awaking, I heard a great rush or trampling of horses, and, springing out of bed, I inquired of a squaw what was the matter in the village.

"Why, don't you know the whites are all dead?" she made reply.

"The whites are all dead!" repeated I, thunderstruck.

I ran out and ordered my war-horse to be got ready in a moment. I next ran to the lodge where Winters slept, and found it filled with Crows. I asked what all this uproar meant.

"I don't know," said he; "I have wished to go to your lodge to see you, but they would not let me leave. They have been clamoring about Thomas—Thomas—Thomas, all night."

At this moment Fitzpatrick rode up, with an Indian behind him.

"Fitz," said I, "what in the name of God does all this mean? Where are your men?"

"They are all dead, I expect, by this time," said he, blankly; "and I presume you have sent for me to murder me at your own discretion."

"When did you leave them? Were they alive when you left them?"

"They were going down the river, and a thousand Indians in hot pursuit after them," he said.

"Go over to my father's lodge," I said to him, "and stay till I return."

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I then mounted my war-horse, being well armed, and addressed my father: "I am mad," I said; "I am going to die."

He gave the war-hoop so loud that my ears fairly tingled, as a signal for my relatives to follow me. They gathered round. "Go," said he, "and die with the Medicine Calf."

On I dashed, in mad career, for six or seven miles along the bank of the river, until I came in sight of the men. I seemed to have traveled the space in the same number of minutes, for the horse flew with lightning speed upon his errand. He dropped dead beneath me; in his prodigious exertions he had burst a blood-vessel.

I ran forward on foot, shouting to Fitzpatrick's men, "Run to me! Run to me quickly!"

They heard me, and hesitated at my summons. At length one started, and the others followed, running at their utmost speed toward me. A hill rose on each side the river, closing together and arching over the stream, at a short distance in advance of the party when I arrested their steps. In this pass the Crows had taken their position, intending to massacre the party as they attempted to force their passage.

As they reached me, I serried them around me, the Crows charging from the hills upon us at the same time. I now saw my band of relatives and friends approaching us from the village. As the exasperated Indians came surging on toward us, I advanced toward them, and ordered them to desist.

They arrested their course: "What do you want?" they asked; "do you wish those whites to live?" "After you have killed me," I said, "you can march over my dead body and kill them, but not before."

They then wheeled, and fell in with my party of relatives, who were fast arriving and encircling the whites. I then requested each man to mount horse behind my relatives, and return with us to the village. All did so except Stuart. I requested him also to mount. No," said he, "I will get on behind no d—d rascal; and any man that will live with such wretches is a d—d rascal."

"I thank you for your compliment," I returned; "but I have no time to attend to it here."

"Captain Stuart," said Charles A. Wharfield, afterward colonel in the United States army, "that's very unbecoming language to use at such a time."

"Come, come, boys," interposed Dr. Harrison, "let us not be bandying words here. We will return with them, whether for better or for worse."

After I had mounted the party, I borrowed a horse of one of my warriors, and led them back to the village. For temporary safety, I deposited the party in my father's lodge.

Fitzpatrick inquired of me, "Jim, what in the name of God are you going to do with us?"

"I don't know yet," I said; "but I will do the best possible for you."

I then called the Dog Soldiers to me, and commanded them, together with the Little Wolves, to surround the village, and not suffer a single person to go out. They all repaired to their stations. I next took fifty faithful men, and made a thorough search throughout the village, beginning at the extreme row of lodges. By this means I recovered all the goods, once in the possession of Fitzpatrick, in good condition, except his scarlet and blue cloths, which had been torn up for blankets and wearing apparel, but still not much injured for the Indian trade. I also recovered all his horses, with the exception of five, which had been taken to Bear's Tooth's camp. I had the goods well secured, and a strong guard of my relatives placed over them.

The reader may perhaps inquire what restrained the infuriated Crows from molesting the rescued

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

party on their way to the village. Simply this: when an Indian has another one mounted behind him, the supposition is that he has taken him prisoner, and is conducting him to head-quarters. While thus placed, the Indian having him in charge is responsible with his life for his security; if he fails to protect him, himself and all his kindred are disgraced; an outrage upon the prisoner is construed into pusillanimity on the part of the custodian. Prisoners are also safe while in custody in the village; their inviolability is then transferred to the responsibility of the chief. This is Indian morals.

I was informed subsequently that the Englishman, as soon as he approached me, cocked his gun, intending to shoot me. It was well for him, as well as his party, that he altered his mind; for, if he had harmed me, there would not have been a piece of him left the size of a five-penny bit. I was doing all that lay in my power to save the lives of the party from a parcel of ferocious and exasperated savages; his life depended by the slightest thread over the yawning abyss of death; the slightest misadventure would have proved fatal. At that moment he insulted me in the grossest manner. The language that he addressed to me extorted a look of contempt from me, but I had not time for anger. I was suspected of complicity with the Indians, or, rather, of having instigated the fiendish plot. No man of common sense could entertain such a suspicion, when he sees the part I took in the affair. Had I conspired the tragedy, I had but to rest in my bed until the deed was consummated. Every man would have been killed, and no one but the conspirators have known their fate. To be sure, I was in the service of the American Fur Company, and Fitzpatrick was trading upon his own account; but that could afford no motive to conspire his death. I had not the faintest objection to his selling every thing he had to the Crows. But they had nothing to buy with; they had disposed of all their exchangeable commodities but a short time since at the fort. Further, I was personally acquainted with Fitzpatrick, with whom I never had an ill word; and some of his party stood high in my regard. Dr. Harrison, if only for his noble father's sake, I would have defended at the risk of my own life. They were all bound to me with the ties of hospitality, and I have yet to hear of any action committed by me that would warrant the assumption of such deep perfidy. I have been informed that Captain Stuart offered one thousand dollars to a certain individual to take my life. I can hardly think the charge is true, for the individual thus said to be bribed has had many opportunities of earning his reward, and still I am alive.

After the goods were secured and the horses brought up, it was discovered that Captain Stuart's horse, a fine iron-gray, was missing. It was traced to the possession of High Bull, a very bad Indian, and I was informed that he had declared he would kill the first man that should come after him. Stuart valued his horse highly, as well he might, for he was a noble animal; he was, therefore, very anxious to obtain him. Fitzpatrick had acquainted Stuart that I was the only person in the nation that could procure the horse's restitution.

Accordingly, he visited me, and said, "Mr. Beckwourth" (he mistered me that time), "can you get my horse for me?"

I replied, "Captain Stuart, I am a poor man in the service of the American Fur Company, to sell their goods and receive the peltry of these Indians. The Indian who has your horse is my best customer; he has a great many relatives, and a host of friends, whose trade I shall surely lose if I attempt to take the horse from him. Should the agent hear of it, I should be discharged at once, and, of course, lose my salary."

"Well," said he, "if the company discharge you for that, I pledge you my word that I will give you

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

six thousand dollars a year for ten years.”

“Captain Stuart is a man of his word, and able to perform all he promises,” said Fitzpatrick.

“Well,” replied I, “I will see what I can do.”

I then dispatched an Indian boy to High Bull with the message that I wanted the gray horse he had in his possession. The boy delivered his message, and the Indian retorted with a “Ugh!” which startled the boy almost out of his skin, and he came bounding back again, saying the Indian was mad.

In a short time High Bull came riding his horse, and said, “Medicine Calf, did you send for this horse?”

“I did.”

“Well, here he is.”

“Take him back,” I said, “and keep him safe until I send for him.”

Stuart was wonder-stricken at this proceeding, as our discourse was unintelligible to him.

“If I could get my hand on that horse’s neck,” he said, “the whole village should not get him away from me.”

I was annoyed at this braggadocio, and was glad the Indians did not understand him.

Fitzpatrick requested Captain Stuart to remain quiet, saying, “Beckwourth has passed his word to you that you shall have your horse. He will be forthcoming when you want him.”

The next morning they prepared to leave the village. The horses were all packed, and every thing in readiness.

“Am I to have my horse?” said Captain Stuart. “He will be here in a moment, sir,” said I.

High Bull then rode the horse up to the party and dismounted, giving me the reins.

“Now, sir, you can mount your horse,” said I, delivering him into his owner’s possession.

He mounted, and the party started. I took one hundred and fifty of my choice Dog Soldiers, and escorted them a distance of fifteen miles. Before leaving them, I cautioned Fitzpatrick to keep on his journey for three days without stopping to encamp. I told him that the Indians were exasperated, and the two villages were together, and it was not in my power to keep them from following them. I was apprehensive they would dog them a considerable distance, but that a three days’ journey would place them in safety.

Instead of following my advice, he encamped the following afternoon. Within an hour after his delay, almost all his horses were taken by the Indians, not leaving him enough to pack his goods. I afterward learned that Stuart saved his gray horse. I saw the Crows had made free with my friends’ horses, for I saw several of them about the village subsequently. However, I was satisfied I had done my duty; I could not have done more to my own father or brother. Still my life was sought after, and my character basely assailed.

The fate of the Crow warriors I will mention episodically here, as I gathered it from Fitzpatrick, and afterward from the Cheyennes.

The party had encamped between two villages, having the Cheyennes on one side and the Siouxs on the other. They were in utter ignorance of their dangerous proximity. Being quickly discovered by one of the enemy, he returned and alarmed his village, and dispatched a messenger to the neighboring village; and in a few moments our small band was surrounded by a force of fifty times their number. Their position was a strong one, being chosen in a deep hollow or gully. They received the assault with unflinching intrepidity, and fought until they were all exterminated ex-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

cept their chief — they killing thirty-four of their foes. The chief seemed to wear a charmed life; neither lead nor arrows could harm him. He advanced from his position and tantalized his foes. He invited them to come and kill him, saying that the scalps of his enemies made his lodge dark, and that he had ridden their horses till he was tired of riding. They were filled with admiration of his daring. They told him he was too great a brave to be killed; that he might go, and they would not hurt him.

“No,” said he, pointing to his dead companions; “you have killed all my warriors; they have gone to the land of the Great Spirit; now kill me, so that I may go with them. I am the Little Gray Bull; come and kill me. I ask not to live. My heart disdains your offers of mercy. My brothers and friends will avenge my death.”

He would frequently advance toward his swarming enemies; as he approached, they retired. He then returned toward his dead companions, and again defied them to come and kill him. He was eventually, shot down, probably by a bullet fired by one of Fitzpatrick’s men, who, being encamped with the Cheyennes, had joined them for the sport of shooting Indians. There were two small boys in the party of Crows, who went as moccasin-carriers. They were taken prisoners, and placed behind two warriors to be conveyed to the village. While on the way thither, each drew his knife and plunged it into the body of his custodian, each killing his man. The little fellows were cut to pieces in an instant, which was their own choice, rather than to be captive to the enemy.

When I returned from escorting Fitzpatrick, I informed the Crows of the fate of their party; but I withheld all mention of the participation of the whites. There upon ensued another dreadful time of mourning.

When I parted from Fitzpatrick and party, they all appeared very grateful for their deliverance, and, if they had not lost their horses when they encamped, I presume they never would have entertained other but friendly feelings toward me.

Shortly after this occurrence we held a grand council relative to certain national affairs. I then again proceeded, taking Winters and four warriors with me. When we had approached within a mile of the fort, I happening to be considerably in advance of the party, in ascending a small hill, when near the summit, I peered carefully over, and discovered a party of Black Feet, not more than three hundred yards distant, sitting by the roadside, smoking their pipes. I drew back my head, for I saw one Indian coming directly upon me, and motioned my men to a ravine close by. Then, dismounting, I crept back to the brow of the hill, and lay down flat until the Indian’s head came within sight. I sprang instantly to my feet, and shot him dead. In less than a minute I had his scalp; ran back and mounted my horse; then, riding to the summit of the hill, I displayed the scalp to the Indians, who were advancing at their topmost speed. As soon as they saw me they turned and fled, thinking, no doubt, that I had a strong force lying in wait. I rode on and overtook my party, and we reached the fort without molestation or pursuit. About two hours after, the Indians presented themselves before the fort, and challenged us to come out and fight. We hoisted the scalp I had just taken in answer to the invitation. I consider we may thank my acquired habit of caution for our escape, for, had the Indian surprised us instead of my surprising him, it is more than probable that every one of us would have been killed.

We were detained at the fort for the space of eight days, on account of the numbers of the Black Feet prowling about. They finally left, and as soon as we were satisfied that the way was clear, we loaded ten pack-horses with goods, and Winters and myself taking two men each — returned

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

to the Crow village. The villages had separated during our absence; Long Hair and his village having taken one direction, and mine having taken another. Winters took Long Hair's trail, with the goods; I followed my village through the Bad Pass, and overtook it at Black Panther Creek. I then went on to Wind River, trapping and hunting very successfully all the way, the journey occupying about a month. We went into winter quarters under Wind River Mountain, at the mouth of Po-po-on-che (Long Grass Creek). Here, after gathering a sufficient quantity of buffalo and elk horns, we supplied ourselves with a large outfit of fine new bows. The horns are thrown into hot springs which abound in that region, where they are kept until they are perfectly malleable; they are then taken out and straightened, and cut into strips of suitable width. It takes two buffalo horns to make a bow of sufficient length. They are pieced in the centre, and riveted; then they are bound strongly at the splice with sinew. Bows made of this material are equaled by none other except those made from the horn of the mountain sheep.

While we were encamped here, numerous small parties of Crows went to war without leave, and in almost every instance were defeated; on some excursions they were entirely destroyed. One party, consisting of thirty-nine warriors, led by the Constant Bird, a great war-chief, went to the Black Foot country, and every one of them was killed. They had killed and scalped one of the enemy, whom they met alone, and again journeyed on, when they came suddenly upon a whole village of Black Feet, and were themselves instantly discovered. To save themselves they resorted to an ingenious device, which certainly offered fair to save them. On being discovered, instead of retreating, they kept on and entered the enemy's village, pretending they came with authority to conclude a peace. The Indians, putting faith in their mission, concluded peace accordingly. While thus engaged proposing terms and smoking cozily, one of the Black Foot squaws stole a sack belonging to them. After the departure of the Crows, the sack was examined, and among its contents was found the identical scalp they had taken a short time previously. Raising the war-hoop, the Black Feet assembled in great numbers, and, making immediate pursuit after the Crows, they overtook them, and massacred every one. This intelligence was brought by express from Fort Maria, the Black Foot trading-post, to Fort Cass, the Crow trading-post. On receipt of this intelligence, there was another general scene of mourning and vowing vengeance. I used all the arguments that I could frame to prevent these mischievous guerilla expeditions, but they would steal off in the night in spite of my entreaties or my denunciations, and I did not like to resort to punishments.

Several of the high functionaries inquired of me to what cause I attributed such repeated disasters. I answered as follows: "Warriors! the causes are clear enough. My medicine tells me the causes. Firstly, you robbed my white friends, stealing their horses away, and even attempting to take their lives when they were under my protection, and when you knew it grieved my heart to have wrong done to them. A second cause: you are continually acting contrary to the wishes of A-ra-poo-ash, who went to the Spirit Land on account of your disobedience. I have also expressed the same wishes to you, telling you to apply yourselves to collecting skins, in order to have the wherewith to purchase the things that you need. These, my orders, are openly disobeyed, and the Great Spirit is very angry with the nation for their thieving, and disregard of the orders of their head chief."

They then inquired what they should do to appease the wrath of the Great Spirit. I answered again "Warriors! to appease the just anger of the Great Spirit, you must discontinue your

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

war-parties, and remain peaceably at home for one moon. You can then prepare a great sacrifice, and do penance for that time, and let the Great Spirit see that you really repent the evil you have committed. By so acting, you may recover the favor which the Great Spirit has evidently withdrawn from you; by continuing in your obstinate ways, you will assuredly be rubbed out as a nation.”

The sacrifices that they offer on such occasions are curious. One sacrifice is made by shaving the manes and tails of some of their best war-horses, and painting on their bodies a rude delineation of the sun. They then turn them out, but never drive them away; and if they follow the other horses, it is a sure sign that the Great Spirit is following them also.

I had become so sickened with their constant mourning, which was kept up through the whole village day and night, that I determined to take a small party and see if I could not change the face of affairs. Accordingly, I raised fifty warriors, and started for the Cheyenne village, near the site of the present Fort Laramie. The first night we encamped on the Sweet Water River. The morning ensuing was clear and cold, and we started across a plain twenty miles wide, with neither trees nor bushes in the whole distance. Across this plain was a mountain, which I wished to reach that night, in order to provide ourselves with fire-wood and have a warm camp. When we had traversed this desert about midway, a storm came on, which is called by the mountaineers a Pooder-ee. These storms have proved fatal to great numbers of trappers and Indians in and about the Rocky Mountains. They are composed of a violent descent of snow, hail, and rain, attended with high and piercing wind, and frequently last three or four days. The storm prevented our seeing the object for which we were directing our course. We all became saturated with the driving rain and hail, and our clothing and robes were frozen stiff; still we kept moving, as we knew it would be certain death to pause on our weary course. The winds swept with irresistible violence across the desert prairie, and we could see no shelter to protect us from the freezing blast. Eventually we came to a large hole or gully, from eighteen to twenty feet deep, which had been made by the action of water. Into this place we all huddled, and were greatly protected from the wind. Being exhausted with our exertions, we wrapped ourselves as well as we could in our frozen robes, and lay down. How long we lay there I could form no idea. When I attempted to stir, it required the exercise of all my strength to free myself from the mass of snow that had fallen upon me while asleep. I saw that if we tarried there it would be inevitable death to us all, and it was still storming furiously. I aroused my second in command, named “A Heap of Dogs,” and told him that we must arouse ourselves and bestir our warriors, or we should all perish.

“No,” said he; “it is too painful; let us stay here and all die together.”

I told him that I should go at all risks, and made a spring thereupon, he laying himself down again. I had not proceeded much more than three hundred yards when I came upon a gulch, or dry creek, in which was a drift pile composed of a large accumulation of dry wood. I made an opening and crawled in; then striking fire, I got it well burning, and returned to my perishing warriors to relate my discovery. They arose and shook off the loose snow from their robes, and essayed to proceed. But many of them were so weak and stiffened that they could but crawl along. After getting thawed and comfortably warmed before a blazing fire, I found there were two of our party missing. I returned with two or three others to search for them, and we had to dig away the snow to arrive at them; but the vital spark had fled — they were stiff in death. We staid by our fire, which increased in body and warmth, for two days, by which time the storm having sub-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

sided, we returned home. The relatives of the lost warriors made a great mourning for them, while the friends of those who returned with me showered presents and blessings upon me for having been instrumental in saving their kinsmen's lives.

It was a time of intense cold. Our whole party were more or less frostbitten; my face and ears were severely frozen, and were sore for a long time. The wild buffalo approached so near to our fire that we could shoot them without stirring from our seats. As an excuse for my ill success, I informed the Crows that the wrath of the Great Spirit was not yet appeased.

Soon after this catastrophe, I informed my people that I wished to wander solitary for a space, to mourn for my two warriors who had perished in the snow. My real intention was to get to the fort, and thus have a respite from the unceasing crying and howling that was kept up throughout the village. On making my intention known, two white men, named Mildrum and Cross, who were staying in our village, desired to accompany me. We started accordingly, taking one squaw with us as servant. On our second day out, we were surprised by a party of two hundred and fifty Black Feet. We took shelter in a thicket of willows, resolved to make a brave stand, and sell our lives for all they were worth. The squaw showed herself a valuable auxiliary by taking good care of our horses, six in number, and building us a little fort of sand, behind which we stood in great security, watching our enemies as they ever and anon made their appearance. We were thus invested for thirty-six hours, the Indians hovering about, and losing one of their number at every discharge, without daring to rush in upon us, which had they ventured upon would have proved our inevitable destruction. We were situated so close to the river that we could be supplied with water at all times by the squaw without incurring danger.

The second night, our besiegers, having wearied of their exertions, gave us comparative repose. Availing ourselves of the lull, we muffled our horses' feet with our capotes, cut to pieces for the purpose, and, stealing gently down the slope of the bank, we forded the shallow stream, and made the best of our way home. We went whooping and galloping at full speed into the village, displaying nineteen scalps on various parts of our horses. Our victorious return created the most thrilling sensation throughout the village. Every face was washed, the scalp-dance was performed (the first time for two months), and the hilarity was universally indulged in. The Great Spirit's wrath was appeased, the tide had turned in favor of the Crows, and a continuation of victory was predicted from this brilliant achievement.

CHAPTER XX.

Excursion to the Fort.—Arrival of Long Hair's Village.—Building of a new Medicine Lodge.—Triumphant Entrance of my little Wife into the Lodge.—Attack on the Crow Village by the Siouxs.—Meeting of the two Crow Villages.—Visit of the Grovans.—Visit to the Grovans and Fort Clarke.

A PARTY of nine trappers happening to call at the village on their way to the fort, among whom was my old friend Harris, I proposed to accompany them. We started, and reached the fort without accident, except sustaining another siege from the Black Feet. After our departure, the whole village followed to purchase their spring supply of necessaries at the fort. They brought an immense stock of peltry, with which they purchased every thing that they stood in need of.

About a week after our arrival, the other Crow village, under Long Hair, encamped without the fort, all of them deep in mourning. The same ill luck had attended them in their excursions as we had suffered, and eighty warriors had fallen without one gleam of success. I availed myself

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

of this opportunity to impress upon the minds of Long Hair and his followers that the cause of their misfortune was owing to the conduct of the Crows toward Fitzpatrick and his party, which representation they all firmly believed.

When the two villages had finished their trading, we all moved back to the Big Horn, where we constructed a new medicine lodge for the medicine men, prophets, and dreamers to prophesy and hold their deliberations in. These lodges are erected every year — the first moon in May; the whole tribe is assembled at the festival, and the ceremonies are continued for seven days. Before the poles are raised, the medicine men select from the assembled multitude a warrior whom they deem qualified to assume the functions of a medicine chief. The man they select is compelled to serve; no excuse that he can frame is accepted as valid. He is then taken to a lodge-pole and lashed to one end; an eagle's wing is placed in each hand, and a whistle (similar to a boatswain's) placed between his lips. Thus equipped, he is hoisted a distance of forty feet, until the pole assumes its perpendicularity and is adjusted in its proper place. Raising the first pole is analogous to laying the first stone. The first one being hoisted, abundance of others are raised into their places, until the whole space is inclosed. They are then covered with green buffalo hides, descending to within six feet of the ground, the inclosure being left open at the top. About one hundred and twenty hides are generally required for the purpose, and a space is thus obtained capable of holding from seven to eight hundred persons.

I was the subject selected on this occasion; and when I was raised upon the pole in the manner I have just described, the officials declared that I was raised solely by the elevating power of my wings, whence they inferred that my medicine was very powerful.

When the lodge is completed, the medicine men and other functionaries assemble the most distinguished braves within the building for a rehearsal of their achievements and an enumeration of their coos. Each brave then gives an account of his exploits thus: "I killed one or more Cheyennes (as the case may be) on such a day, in such a place, and took such and such spoils. You know it, Crows." The medicine chief then exhibits his marks, pronounces the warrior's statement correct, and confirms it by his record. This ratification each warrior passes through, and there is seldom any discrepancy between his statement and the record. Sham battles are then fought in illustration of the manner in which the different trophies were acquired, the rehearsal reminding the civilized spectator of a theatrical representation, only that in this case the performance is more in earnest.

This examination gone through with, the lodge is then prepared for the medicine men, prophets, and dreamers to go through the ceremony of initiating a virtuous woman. The members of the conclave endure a total abstinence from food and water for seven days previous to the ceremony, unless any one faints from exhaustion, in which case some slight nourishment is afforded him.

The warriors are then drawn up in two lines, "inward face," a few feet apart, and the female candidate for "holy orders" presents herself at the lodge door. She harangues them when she first presents herself, and then marches between the extended lines of the dusky warriors. Here is the fearful ordeal. If she has ever been guilty of any illicit action, her declaration of innocence is refuted by a dozen voices, a thousand bullets riddle her body in a moment, and her flesh is hacked into morsels.

This is the fearful war-path secret. It will be remembered that my little wife had resolved to dedicate herself to this service; when only a child she had determined upon entering the medicine

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

lodge. On this occasion she was candidate for admission. She came to me to be dressed for the ceremony; she was robed in her best attire, and I painted her as the custom prescribes.

The warriors are in line, and the Sanhedrim in readiness. The herald announces that Nom-nedit-chee (The One that Strikes Three), wife of the head chief, Medicine Calf, offers herself for election. Intense excitement prevails through the assembly as her name is pronounced, and it is re-echoed through the lines of the warriors. She presented herself at the door of the lodge, and calmly met the concentrated gaze of thousands. A breathless silence prevailed.

She commenced her address. "Can it be said that there are no virtuous women among the Crows? Can it be true that our medicine men can not make medicine, nor our prophets prophesy, nor our dreamers dream, because so few of you are virtuous? Oh women! it is shameful to you to be so faithless. Our nation is disgraced because of your conduct, and the Crows will soon cease to be a people. The Great Spirit is angry with you, and has brought disgrace upon our warriors on account of your evil practices. Our prairies will become wastes like yourselves, producing no good thing; and our buffalo will bellow at you, and leave the hunting-grounds of the Crows, and go to the country of a more virtuous people."

Then addressing the warriors, she continued:

"Warriors! I have this day volunteered to carry the sand, the wood, and the elk-chips into the lodge. You are brave warriors, and I hope your tongues are not crooked. I have seen our women attempt to do it, and they have been cut to pieces. I am now about to try it myself. Before I start for the materials at the other end of your extended lines, if there be a warrior, or any other man under the sun, who knows any thing wrong in me, or injurious to my virtue, let him speak. I, too, am ready to go to the spirit land, for there is one there who knows me innocent of the bad deeds which disgrace the women of our country."

She then passed with a firm step between the lines of the warriors to the sand. Taking the bowl, she dipped a small quantity, and returned with it to the lodge, and then made two other trips for the wood and elk-chips. Returning for the third time, she received the vociferations of the assembled multitude. The functionaries came forth to meet her, and passed their bands over her head, shoulders, and arms, extolling her to the skies, and proclaiming there was one virtuous woman in the Crow nation. She was then presented with my medicine shield by the great medicine chief, to preserve and carry for me, no one but myself having authority to take it from her.

I trembled while she was passing this perilous ordeal, and its triumphant termination filled me with delight. She was a girl of superior endowments, and, if they had been fostered by a Christian education, I know no woman who would surpass her in worth, elegance, or attainments. Had she ever failed in her conduct, it would have been thundered in her ears when she stooped to gather the sand, and a cry would have arisen that she was polluting the medicine of the nation. If the candidate is killed during the inauguration ceremonies, nothing more is done in the same medicine lodge: it is immediately torn down, and the tribe moves to some other place, where it builds another lodge, and the same observances are again gone through with.

In the mean while, women are engaged cooking and preparing a sumptuous feast of every thing in season. All kinds of meats and dried berries, variously cooked, are spread before the partakers, which includes all who can obtain seats, except the medicine men, prophets, and dreamers. Their fast continues for seven days, during which time their inspiration is continually moving them.

There are plenty of warriors in attendance to convey messages and execute orders, like depu-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ty sheriffs in a justice's court; and as fast as an ordinance is dreamed out, prophesied upon, and medicined, the instructions are delivered to the messengers, and away they start, one party in this direction, and one party in another, to communicate the instructions and execute orders.

While we were yet at the lodge, a deputation of about a dozen Grovan warriors came to solicit our assistance against the Cheyennes and Siouxs, who had made a combined attack upon them, killing about four hundred of their warriors. In reply to the application, we told them that we had lost many warriors during the past winter, and that we must avenge our own men first; but that we would go and see them in the course of the summer, and hold a conference with them on the subject.

There are two bands of the Grovans: the Grovans of the Missouri, which the Crows sprung from, and whose language they speak, and the Grovans of the prairie, who form a band of the Black Feet. The Grovans of the Missouri were then a weak tribe or band, having, by their incessant wars with the surrounding tribes, been reduced to a very insignificant number of warriors. When the Crows separated from them, the nation was deemed too numerous. This separation was effected, according to their reckoning, above a century since. Those Grovans and the Crows have always been on very friendly terms, and even to this day consider themselves descendants of the same family. They do not move about, like many wandering tribes, but remain stationary and cultivate the ground. Their lodges are built of poles, filled in with earth; they are spacious, and are kept comparatively neat.

I would here remark that the name "Crow" is not the correct appellation of the tribe. They have never yet acknowledged the name, and never call themselves Crows. The name was conferred upon them many years ago by the interpreters, either through their ignorance of the language, or for the purpose of ridiculing them. The name which they acknowledge themselves by, and they recognize no other, is in their language Ap-sah-ro-kee, which signifies the Sparrowhawk people. The villages separated at this time. Long Hair went up the Yellow Stone, to Clarke's Fort, in order to kill buffalo and gather fruit when ripe, while I went with my village on a circuit, and finally rested on the banks of Powder River, a branch of the Yellow Stone. While busy killing buffalo, we were suddenly attacked by the Cheyennes to the number of two thousand warriors. I had been advised by my scouts of their contemplated attack, and was consequently prepared to receive them. They were seriously disappointed in charging upon our empty lodges; and, while they were in confusion, we thundered upon them from our concealment, driving them before us in all directions for upward of two miles. Our victory was complete. We took sixty-three scalps, besides horses and weapons in abundance. We had eighty warriors wounded, principally with lances and arrows, but every one recovered. The heroine did good service, having thoroughly recovered from her terrible wound. She had two horses killed under her, but escaped unhurt herself, using her lance as adroitly as ever.

The village moved on, directly after the battle, in the direction of our friends the Grovans; but, before we arrived, we rubbed out a party of eleven Cheyennes, who had been to the Grovan village on a war excursion, and we carried their scalps and presented them to the Grovans. When we arrived in sight of their villages — five in number — and halted with our whole force on a small hill which overlooked their towns, on perceiving us they were filled with alarm, believing us to be the Cheyennes, returned with a force sufficient to exterminate them. But they discovered us to be Crow friends, and their joy was now proportionate to their former despondency. We passed

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

through their villages two abreast, and all were out upon the tops of their lodges to welcome us as we rode through. The acclamations resounded on every side. They looked upon us as their deliverers and friends, who had come to protect the weak against the strong, that their wrongs might be avenged, and their faces be washed once more. From their villages we rode on to Fort Clarke through the Mandan villages, defiling before the fort in double columns. Every man in the fort was on the battlements, gazing at our long lines of mounted warriors. While defiling past, we were correctly counted by Mr. Kipp. Several alighted and visited the fort, and Mr. Kipp inquired for the Crow who spoke English. No one understood him until he came across a Mandan who spoke the Crow language fluently. They inquired of him for me. I replied he was somewhere about. I was dressed in full costume, and painted as black as a Crow, and neither the Mandan nor Kipp recognized me. The Mandan informed Kipp that I was present.

“Yes,” said I, “Beckwourth is present.”

“Well, well!” exclaimed Kipp, in astonishment; “is that you, Beckwourth?”

I replied that it was, indisputably.

“Then why did you not declare yourself when I was inquiring for you? I certainly should never have distinguished you from any other Indian.”

At this moment my wife entered, carrying my boy in her arms. A great interest was taken in him by all the inmates of the fort, greatly to the delight of his proud mother, and by the time the child had passed through all their hands he had received presents enough to load a pack-mule.

We staid with our friends ten days, part of which time was occupied in arranging a combined plan of defense against the Black Feet. When we departed, Long Hair presented us with an ample stock of corn and pumpkins. We passed the Yellow Stone, and traveled on by easy marches to the Mussel Shell River, killing and dressing buffalo during our whole journey. Here we encamped to await the arrival of Long Hair. Our spies kept us advised of the movements of the enemy, and intelligence was brought us that he was manifestly concentrating his forces at the Three Forks of the Missouri for a grand attack. I knew that we were also vigilantly watched by the enemy’s spies, and I determined to make no movement that would warrant the suspicion that their movements were known to us. Long Hair shortly joined us with his whole force, and I felt perfectly at ease now, notwithstanding the most strategical movements of our enemy.

After various demonstrations on either side, we feigned a division of our forces, and marched one half of them to a spot which concealed them from the tableland, thus leading the enemy to the belief that we were still ignorant of his intentions and his numbers.

At daybreak the following morning we heard the noise of their innumerable horse-hoofs, and shortly after they burst upon our tenantless lodges like a thunder-cloud. I suffered about one third of their warriors to become entangled in the village, and I then gave the order to charge.

The shock was irresistible; their advancing division was attacked on all sides, and the appearance of my concealed warriors sent a panic through the tribe. They fled precipitately without venturing to look round to see if they were pursued. It was a complete rout, and purchased at but slight cost to ourselves. We gathered over four hundred scalps, and took fifty women prisoners; we captured five hundred horses, one hundred guns, and weapons, blankets, and camp equipage beyond enumeration. Our loss was four killed and three hundred wounded, some of whom afterward died of their wounds.

Our wounded warriors attended to, and our spoils gathered, we moved on without delay to our

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

tobacco plantation, as it was now time to gather our crop. We journeyed by way of the fort, and on our road fell in with a party of fifteen Black Foot warriors, who were driving a large drove of horses they had stolen from the Snakes. We entrapped the enemy into a ditch and killed the whole party, and their recent acquisition came in very serviceably, as our stock of horses was greatly diminished. We found our crop excellent, and, as our numerous hands made light work, our harvest was soon gathered.

We then passed on at our leisure, killing more or less buffalo daily, until we arrived at Tongue River, about the new moon of Leaf Fall. On our way we lost nearly three hundred head of horses, which were stolen by the Black Feet. We did not trouble ourselves to pursue them, as we felt confident they were but lent them, and that they would shortly be returned with good interest. At Tongue River we confederated with our friends, the Grovans, in an attack upon the Cheyenne village; from thence we returned to the Yellow Stone, when I detached a party of one hundred and sixty warriors on an excursion to the Black Foot village, and they returned bringing six hundred fine horses with them. We then passed on to Fort Cass, where we witnessed much dejection and gloom, occasioned by a serious reverse which they had experienced since our last visit.

CHAPTER XXI.

Attacks of the Black Feet on the Fort.—Six White Men killed.—Abandonment of Fort Cass.—Fort constructed at the Mouth of the “Rose Bud”.—Removal of the Village.—Peace concluded with the As-ne-boines.—Hair-breadth Escape.—Death of Mr. Hunter, of Kentucky.

WHILE we were indulging in a display of our captured horses while encamped outside the fort, the Spotted Antelope, one of my relatives, came to me, and intimated that I had better visit the fort, as they had lost six men by the Black Feet. He was in mourning-paint for the victims, because the whites were his friends. I dismounted, and passed through the encampment on my way to the gate. As usual, I found my father’s lodge, in which my little wife resided, pitched nearest to the fort, with the other lodges of my various relatives grouped in a row, their contiguity to my parent’s lodge being graduated by their propinquity of kin. I found Pine Leaf seated by my wife, amusing herself with the Black Panther (whose civilized patronymic was Little Jim), while almost all the other women were dancing. I delayed a moment to inquire why these two women were not dancing with the others. Pine Leaf, with solemn air and quivering lip, said, “Your heart is crying, and I never dance when your heart cries.”

“Neither do I,” said the little woman.

This was a greater concession than the heroine had ever made to me before. She had told me that she would marry me, and she had frequently informed my sisters and my little wife of a similar intention; but this promise was always modified with a proviso — a contumacious “if,” which could never be avoided. “I will marry the Medicine Calf,” she would say, “if I marry any man.” A great many moons had waxed and waned since she first spoke of the pine leaves turning yellow, but they had not yet lost their verdure, and I had failed to discover a red-handed Indian.

In conversation with Mr. Tulleck, the commandant of the fort, I learned that they had been incessantly harassed by the Black Feet ever since our last visit, who had invested them on all sides, rendering it extremely dangerous for any of the inmates to venture outside the gate. He further informed me that he had had six men massacred and fifty-four horses stolen. He had sent for me, he said, to come and select a new site, where they would be liable to less molestation, and be less in fear of their lives.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I consulted with our chiefs and braves upon the selection of a more secure location for a new fort, and it was unanimously agreed upon that the mouth of the Rose Bud, thirty miles lower down the river, offered the best situation, as the country was fair and open all round, and afforded the hostile Indians no good places of concealment. There was also a fine grazing country there, and plenty of buffalo, so that a village of the Crows could winter under the fort, and afford them the protection of their presence.

As soon as the Crows had completed their purchases, I started them up the Big Horn on their way back, with the promise that I would rejoin them in a few days. I then took a boat filled with goods, and twenty men, and dropped down the river until we came across a beautiful location for the new fort. We then returned, and removed the effects of the present fort to the new site, and then immediately set about constructing a new post. We measured off one hundred and eighty yards square, which we inclosed as quickly as possible with hewn timber eighteen feet high, and of sufficient thickness to resist a rifle ball: all the houses required for the accommodation of the inmates were commodiously constructed inside.

Having finished the construction of the fort, I gave full instructions for the management of its affairs, and then departed for the village, where my presence was required to incite the Indians to devote themselves to trapping and hunting buffalo, for which service I was paid by the American Fur Company.

As I was about starting, a deputation of fifty As-ne-boines came to the post, leaving a letter from Mr. M'Kenzie at the lower fort addressed to me, requesting me to constrain the As-ne-boines into a treaty of peace with the Crows, in order that their incessant wars might be brought to a close, and the interests of the company less interfered with. Had they arrived earlier, while the village was present at the old fort, I would have immediately called a council of the nation, and had the business settled. I seriously regretted their inopportune arrival, as it not only delayed the conclusion of the proposed peace, which was in every way desirable, but it would have saved me a very hazardous and anxious journey with the whole deputation of hostile Indians on our way to the village, where I had but one companion as a guarantee for my security. I was aware that the Indians remembered many a horse-borrowing adventure wherein I had taken an active part, and I had had too much experience of Indian character not to appreciate to the full the imminent danger I incurred in trusting myself with this band of savages in our intended journey across the wilderness.

Mr. Kean, a native of Massachusetts, was my companion on this excursion. We started on foot, in company with the party of As-ne-boines. Every thing went well until our fourth day out. We were traveling leisurely along, the Indians in close conversation among themselves, of which I understood but little — not enough to make out the subject of their consultation, though I mistrusted I formed the matter of their discourse. One of the chiefs and his son were a few rods in advance, in close conversation. The party at length halted, and sat down on the grass to smoke. My companion, unsuspecting of evil, started on to kill buffalo while the party rested. The chief and his son, who were in advance, returned, and passed one on each side of me. I instantly heard a gun-click, which I felt certain was the sound of cocking it. I turned my head, and saw the chief's son with his piece leveled ready to shoot. I sprang to my feet, and grasped the barrel of his gun just as he discharged it, the load passing into the air. I drew my battle-axe, and raised it to strike the treacherous rascal down; but a chief arrested my arm, saying, as nearly as I could understand

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

him, "Hold! Don't strike him: he is a fool!"

A general melee then ensued among the party; high words were bandied, and there seemed an equal division among them on the propriety of taking my life. By this time I had withdrawn a few yards, and stood facing them, with my rifle ready cocked. On hearing the report, my companion ran back, and, seeing how matters stood, exclaimed, "There is a fort just ahead, let us run and get into it; we can then fight the whole parcel of the treacherous devils."

We started for it, but the Indians were ahead of us; they arrived there first, and took possession of it, and again had a long confab, while we remained at their mercy outside. The party opposed to killing me appeared greatly to predominate, and we were not again molested, though neither I nor Mr. Kean slept one moment during the ensuing night. In the morning we started on our way, but we kept strict watch on their movements. The following afternoon I discovered two Indians on the hill-side, and, although they were at a great distance, I conceived them to be Crows, most likely spies from the village, which proved to be the case. No one had seen them but myself, and I imparted my discovery to my friend. I then told the head chief, who well understood the Crow language, that we were near the Crow village, and that if any of them should visit our camp during the night, he must be sure to call me before he suffered any of his people to speak to them, or they would be all inevitably massacred. He accordingly issued orders to that purport to all his men, and erected his lodge in front of the party, so as to be the first inquired of by the Crows. I and my partner then lay down, and soon were sound asleep.

About midnight the chief shook me, and informed me the Crows were coming. A host of warriors swarmed around our encampment, and, pointing their guns at the camp, said, "What people are you? Bud-da-ap-sa-ro-kee" (we are Sparrowhawks).

"Go back," I replied; "I have other people with me, who are come to make peace."

On hearing my voice, which they readily recognized, they retired.

The next morning we moved on and met the village, who were approaching toward us. The Asne-boines, on seeing such a host, began to tremble. Our soldiers came driving along, my brave Dog Soldiers ineffectually striving to keep them back; for, as they restrained them in one place, they broke through in another, until the warriors rode almost upon the toes of their guests. A council was shortly called to listen to the arguments of the envoyé extraordinaire from the Asne-boine nation. Several of the council applied to me for my sentiments on the subject, but I deferred it to the collective wisdom of the nation.

When I had at first arrived, like many another foolish man, I mentioned to my wife the narrow escape of my life I had just made, and she, like many another foolish woman, unable to contain herself, related the information to Pine Leaf, who was her bosom friend. While the council were busy deliberating, and some explanatory statements had been listened to regarding a matter which I supposed would have afforded no food for discussion, the heroine entered the assembly. "Warriors!" she said, you are assembled here, I believe, to deliberate on peace or war with the Asne-boines. In coming to our village with the Medicine Calf, they attempted to take his life, and came very near accomplishing their end. Will you conclude peace with a people who possess such base hearts? I do not believe you will."

Such an instantaneous change of countenance in an assembly was never before seen. Pine Leaf, the nation's favorite, had spoken, and, as usual, had spoken to the purpose. Though a woman, her influence was every where strongly felt, even in council. She had a gift of speech which the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

bravest warriors might well envy; she was ever listened to with admiration, and in truth, though young, her judgment on all important matters was generally guided by sound sense.

Every eye in the assembly flashed fire at the intelligence of this contemplated treachery, and was directed first upon me and then upon the As-ne-boines. I immediately arose and said,

“Warriors! I conducted these people to our village because they said they were anxious to make peace with us. While on the road, one young As-ne-boine, whom they declared to be a fool, attempted to shoot me, but the others interfered to prevent him, and were sorry for what he had done. This was no deliberate treachery; it was the folly of the young man, and the party showed their friendly intention by their prompt interference. Do not allow this to make any difficulty in the way of a peace with the As-ne-boines.”

My obligation to the Fur Company made it my duty to smooth the matter over, for at this moment the slightest whisper from me would have sufficed to hack the whole deputation to pieces in a moment.

The council held a short consultation together, and the first councilor arose and thus addressed himself to the chief of the As-ne-boines:

“As-ne-boines! you behold that chief (pointing to me)? Our women and all our warriors carry him here (holding out his left hand, and indicating the palm with a finger of his right hand); he is our chief; he is our great chief; he and his brother (Long Hair), who sits by him, are the two great chiefs of our nation. It is he who has made us great and powerful; it is he who has rendered us the terror of other nations; it is he who, by living with his white friends for many winters, and knowing them all, has brought us guns and ammunition, and taught our young men how to use them. It is he who has built us a fort, where we can at all times go and buy every thing we require. He loves the white man, and has made all the whites to love us. We fight for the whites, and kill their enemies, because they are the friends of our chief. If you had killed him, our nation would have mourned in blood.

“Listen, As-ne-boines ! If you had killed our chief, our whole nation would have made war on you, and we would have put out your last fire, and have killed the last man of your nation. We would have taken possession of your hunting-grounds; our women would have become warriors against you; we would have hunted you as we hunt the wild beasts. Now go! we will not harm you. Go! We will sleep to-night; but we will not make peace until we sleep, and our hearts have considered upon it. Come to us again when your hearts are clean: they are foul now; and when you come, you must have your tongues straight. You are poor; you have no horses. We have plenty, and will give you horses. I have done. Go!”

They made no reply, but went straightway out of the lodge. A horse was furnished to each man; those who were without guns received one, and several articles were presented to them by our women. “Go! go! go!” was dinned in their ears from all present; and, accordingly, they went.

They proceeded immediately to the trading-post, where they gave a stirring narrative of what they had seen. They told them they had seen many chiefs, but never one approaching to the great Crow chief; that all his people loved him; that when he entered the village, all the children ran up to him, and shook him by the hand; and that they had never seen a chief so much respected by his warriors and all his people. They told how, when I arrived, I was presented with the best war-horse they had ever seen; that he had two panther-skins on his saddle, and a collar about his neck trimmed with bears’ claws, and a bridle surpassing all they had ever heard of. They said that they

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

would all have been killed on their approach to the village, as the Crows came to the camp during the night; but that the great chief only spoke one word, and the tribe was stilled, and departed in a moment. Not a word did they mention about their attempt on my life. They merely said that the Crows would not make peace with them, but had wished to treat again with them at some future time. I suspect they must have told marvelous tales when they reached home, for we were not troubled with them any more for a long time.

The Crows have something of the Gallic temperament: they must have excitement, no matter whence derived, although the excitement of war suits them by far the best. They were again clamorous for war, they did not care against whom, and I alone must lead them, as my presence was a guarantee of success. Many of my friends opposed my going. My father's medicine told him that I should meet with a great disaster. My wife pleaded with me to remain. Even the heroine, who never before showed reluctance to engage in war, had forebodings of disaster, and earnestly entreated me to stay. But I had previously given my word to my warriors, and had selected one hundred and fifty-four of my best followers to engage in an expedition. I must confess that if I had obeyed my own feelings, or, rather, if I had attended to my own misgivings, I should certainly have staid at home. What motive prompted me to go? and what gain could possibly accrue to mixing with savages in their intestine broils with other savages?

However, we started. Little White Bear, as brave a warrior as ever drew bow-string, was my second in command, and Pine Leaf was one of the number. We started for the Black Foot territory, traveling by way of the fort, where we staid three days. They had already finished their pickets, and the work was progressing finely. There were fifty men employed upon it.

Mr. Tulleck inquired where I was going. I told him that my warriors wanted employment, and, to gratify them, I was going to the Black Foot country in quest of scalps or horses. He said, "For God's sake, do not go, Jim! I have a presentiment that a great calamity awaits you—that I shall never see you again. For your own safety, turn back to the village, or rest here."

Many of my friends, who were working at the fort, expressed the same sentiments; all mentioned a foreboding that, if I should venture into the Black Foot country with my little force, I should infallibly be cut to pieces. I thought such despondency only natural, since they had been so badly harassed with the enemy that their fears magnified the danger. Still it was singular that both civilized and savage should give way to such forebodings.

The morning for our departure came; my warriors were impatient to get on. Some had galloped on ahead, and were prancing and curveting, awaiting my departure. I prepared my going with a heavy heart, which ill fortified me against the representations of my friends. I started, Mr. Tulleck and several of my friends accompanying me a few rods. I bade them good-by: my friend Tulleck's eyes filled with tears. I was seized with momentary hesitation: what did all this portend? I looked round for my moccasin-bearer; he had gone on: this determined me; I dashed off to my warriors, resolved to listen to no such idle fears.

There was a young gentleman with me named Hunter, a Kentuckian, who, having a great curiosity to witness an Indian battle, insisted on joining in the expedition. The first night that we were encamped, being influenced by what I had heard all around me, and fearing some disaster might happen to him among us, I begged of him to go back to the fort and await our return there. He refused to listen to me. We then offered him as many of our best horses as he might wish to select after our return, as an inducement for him to be hired to go back. But all in vain. "I have

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

started with you," he said, "and I will go; if I am to lose my life, there is no help for it."

My warriors did not wish him to go, as they feared a white man might bring us bad luck. Some expressed a fear that he might be killed with us, and that I should then cry. He was a free trapper in the country, and much respected at the fort.

We continued our course until we arrived at Little Box Elder Creek. Here our spies discovered a Black Foot village, which, from a cursory examination, we concluded consisted of but few lodges. At midnight we abstracted a large drove of about seven hundred horses, and started directly upon our return. We did not drive so fast as is customary on such occasions, for we thought that the few Black Feet that the village contained could be easily disposed of, should they venture to molest us.

About ten the next morning, our spies, being about six hundred yards in advance of us, signaled to us to hasten, as they had discovered some men. We accelerated our speed, thinking there might be a chance of adding a few scalps to our present booty. Having advanced a few hundred yards, we discovered more Black Feet than we had bargained for, and I became aware that a terrible battle must ensue. The whole scene appeared alive with them, outnumbering us ten to one. There was not a moment to lose. I directed all the boys to drive on the horses with the utmost speed possible, and to await us two days at the fort; if we should not arrive during that time, to go home and report to the village that we were all slain. I also requested Mr. Hunter to select the best horse in the herd, and go with the boys. But he refused, saying, if there was any fighting in the wind, he wanted to have his hand in it. I then endeavored to persuade the heroine to go, but was answered with an emphatic "No!"

The boys started with the horses, but only succeeded in reaching the fort with about two hundred. We had a very poor chance for defending ourselves against such an overwhelming force as was then before us in an open field-fight. There was no fort, nor breast-work, nor rocks, nor bushes to protect us, but we were exposed to the storm of bullets and arrows that they poured upon us without ceasing. At last we discovered a large hole in front of a hill, and we all leaped into it for shelter. The enemy, confident of an easy victory, displayed great bravery for Black Feet. They charged up to the very brink of our intrenchment, discharging their volleys at us in lines, which, considering the advantage of their position, produced comparatively little effect. One of my warriors repeatedly ran out of the intrenchment alone, and drove all before him. Exasperated at my cursed misadventure, and absolutely sickening at the scene of mourning we should occasion at the village, I grew desperate, and lost all consideration of safety. I sprang from the gully, and rushed singly among a crowd of besiegers; wherever I advanced the enemy drew back. It was truly astonishing to see three or four hundred recede, and many of them fairly run, as often as two or three of us showed ourselves at the top of the bank, when they might have burned us to death with the powder from the muzzles of their guns. They seemed to be panic-struck or bewildered. The warrior who had charged so often among them had his thigh broken; he then sat down and tantalized them. He told them who he was, how many of their warriors' scalps he had taken, and at what times; how many of their squaws and horses he had captured; and then desired them to come and finish him, and take his scalp, for it had long been forfeit to them. He reminded me of the words of the poet, which I had read when at home:

"Remember the wood where in ambush we lay,  
And the scalps which we bore from your nation away;

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Remember the arrows I shot from my bow,

And remember your chiefs by my hatchet laid low.”

He was soon killed, being pierced with numerous arrows and bullets.

An old brave in the pit exclaimed, “Let us not stay in this hole to be shot like dogs; let us go out and break through the ranks of the Black Feet. They can not kill us all; some will get away. I will go foremost; I can break through their ranks alone.”

Some hundreds of the enemy had climbed the hill, as they could not half of them get to the side of the pit, and thence they showered volleys of stones upon us, which annoyed us more than their bullets. At length, Little White Bear desired the old brave to lead, and we would follow and break through their line. I requested Hunter to keep as near the front as possible when we made the charge, as he would incur less danger of being cut down. He took his place accordingly. Out we rushed from the pit, the old warrior leading the way, and hewing down right and left, until the enemy finally opened their column and suffered us to pass through. We left twenty-four of our party behind, either killed in the pit, or cut down in forcing their column. I was near the rear, and, after passing a short distance from their line, I came upon poor Hunter, who had his back broken by a ball, and was in a dying condition. I asked him if he was badly hurt; he answered, “Yes, I am dying; go on and save yourself: you can do me no good.”

When the Little Bear came up to him, he sat down by his side and refused to leave him. He said, “I will die with my white friend, and go with him to the spirit land.”

I looked and saw him fall over upon the body of poor Hunter; he was also killed.

Pine Leaf had cut her way through in advance of me, and was dodging first one way and then the other, as she awaited for me to cut up.

“Why do you wait to be killed?” she inquired. “If you wish to die, let us return together; I will die with you.”

We continued our retreat for a few miles, but the enemy no longer molested us; he had not followed us more than two hundred yards. We had left all our robes behind us in the pit, that we might not be burdened with them in our charge. The weather was extremely cold, and we halted to build a large fire, which we rested by all night, warming one side at a time.

The old brave who led the assault lost a son in the strife; he continued to sing all the way until he became hoarse, and he could sing no more. He prayed to the Great Spirit to give him an opportunity to avenge his loss, which prayer was accorded several times over during the ensuing winter. The heroine lost one joint off the little finger of her right hand, amputated with a bullet; the little finger of her other hand she had cut off at the death of her twin-brother. Fortunately, I had saved my capote, and I gave it to her to wear, as she was suffering severely with the cold. We also killed several buffaloes on our way to the fort, and made wrappers of the raw hides for many of the men; still a number were badly frozen in their bodies and limbs.

This was my Russian campaign. I lost more men, and suffered more from the cold on this expedition, than in any other in which I had command either before or since.

The boys reached the fort with the horses before we did. They had more than enough to mount us all on our way home. There was great joy at the fort at our return in such numbers, as they had supposed it impossible for one of us to escape.

When I left the lamented Hunter upon the field, he said, “Jim, when you pass this way, I ask you to take my bones to the fort, and have them buried. Write home to my friends, and inform them

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

of my fate. Goodby! Now go and save yourself.”

“It shall be done,” I said; and the following spring it was done as I had promised.

We rested at the fort four or five days to recruit ourselves. While staying there, a party of thirty warriors from Long Hair’s village came to see how they were progressing with the fort. There were some in my party who belonged to that village, and they returned with them. They also informed us where our village was, as it had been removed during our absence. Having provided ourselves with robes in the place of those we had left behind, we started onward with dejected feelings, and in deep mourning.

On our arrival we found the village likewise in mourning. They had lost four warriors by the Black Feet while resisting an attempt to steal our horses. When informed of our disaster, there was a general renewal of their lamentations; more fingers were lopped, and heads again scarified. The Medicine Calf had been defeated, and for some hidden cause the Great Spirit was again wroth with the Crows.

CHAPTER XXII.

Meteoric Shower.—Its Effect upon the Indians.—Their Sacrifice to the Great Spirit.—Continued Hostilities with the Black Feet.—A Black Foot burned in the Crow Village.—Visit to the Fort.

IN case any captious “elders of the congregation” had been inclined to throw the blame of my recent disaster upon my shoulders, I was provided with a sufficient portent to screen me from consequences. After quitting the fort on our way to Little Box Elder (as before related), and while exhausting all my powers of persuasion to induce Mr. Hunter to return, we observed a remarkable meteoric shower, which filled us all (more particularly my followers) with wonder and admiration. This was at our first encampment after leaving the fort in the latter end of October, 1832. Although my warriors were ready to face death in any form, this singular phenomenon appalled them. It was the wrath of the Great Spirit showered visibly upon them, and they looked to me, in quality of medicine chief, to interpret the wonder. I was as much struck with the prodigious occurrence, and was equally at a loss with my untutored followers to account for the spectacle. Evidently I must augur some result therefrom, and my dejected spirits did not prompt me to deduce a very encouraging one. I thought of all the impostures that are practiced upon the credulous, and my imagination suggested some brilliant figures to my mind. I thought of declaring to them that the Great Spirit was pleased with our expedition, and was lighting us on our way with spirit lamps; or that these meteors were the spirits of our departed braves, coming to assist us in our forthcoming fight. But I was not sanguine enough to indulge in any attractive oratory. I merely informed them I had not time to consult my medicine, but that on our return to the village I would interpret the miracle to them in full.

On our arrival, I found the people’s minds still agitated with the prodigy. All were speaking of it in wonder and amazement, and my opinion was demanded respecting the consequences it portended. Admonished by my defeat, I had no trouble in reading the stars. I informed them that our people had evidently offended the Great Spirit; that it was because of his wrath I had suffered defeat in my excursion, and returned with the loss of twenty-three warriors. I thence inferred that a sacrifice must be made to appease the wrath of the Great Spirit, and recommended that a solemn assembly be convened, and a national oblation offered up.

I was fully confident that by thus countenancing such pagan superstitions I was doing very

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

wrong, but, like many a more prominent statesman in civilized governments, I had found that I must go with the current, and I recommended a measure, not because it was of a nature to benefit the country, but simply because it was popular with the mass.

The camp in which we then were was a mourning-camp, in which medicine would have no effect. Therefore we moved to Sulphur River, ten miles distant, in order to offer up our sacrifice. All the leading men and braves assembled, and I was consulted as to the kind of offering proper to make for the purpose of averting the wrath that was consuming us. I ordered them to bring the great medicine kettle, which was of brass, and capable of holding ten gallons, and was purchased at a cost of twenty fine robes, and to polish it as bright as the sun's face. This done, I ordered them to throw in all their most costly and most highly-prized trinkets, and whatsoever they cherished the most dearly. It was soon filled with their choicest treasures. Keepsakes, fancy work on which months of incessant and patient toil had been expended, trinkets, jewels, rings so highly prized by them that the costliest gems of emperors seemed poor by their side — all these were thrown into the kettle, along with a bountiful contribution of fingers, until it would hold no more. I then had weights attached to it, and had it carried to an air-hole in the ice where the river was very deep, and there it was sunk with becoming ceremony. Three young maidens, habited like May queens, carried the burden.

This great sacrifice completed, the minds of the people were relieved, and the result of the next war-party was anxiously looked forward to to see if our oblation was accepted. Their crying, however, continued unabated, so much to the derangement of my nervous system that I was fain to retire from the village and seek some less dolorous companionship. My bosom friend and myself therefore started off unnoticed, and traveled on without stopping until we came to a hill some seven or eight miles distant. He was pre-eminently a great brave, at all times self-possessed and unobtrusive. I always considered him as endowed with the most solid sense, and possessing the clearest views of any Indian in the nation. His spirits were generally somewhat dejected, but that I attributed to the loss of all his relatives. When I wished to enjoy a little converse or sober meditation, he always was my chosen companion, as there were qualities in his character which interested me and assimilated with my own. He never craved popularity, never envied the elevation of others, but seemed rather to rejoice at another person's success. He would listen to me for an entire day when I spoke of my residence with the whites, and told of their great battles, where thousands were slain on both sides; when I described their ships carrying immense guns capable of sweeping hundreds of men away at a discharge; and when I depicted to him their forts, to which our forts for size or strength were but as ant-hills. I then would tell him of the great Atlantic Ocean, and the millions of white men living beyond it; of countries where there was no summer, and others where there was no winter, and a thousand other marvels, of which I never spoke to other warriors, as their minds were too limited to comprehend me.

After listening to me with the deepest attention until I would grow tired of talking, he would seem to be perfectly amazed, and would be lost in a deep reverie for some time, as though endeavoring to raise his ideas to a level with the vast matters he had been listening to. Occasionally he would tell me of the traditions handed down from generation to generation in the Indian race, in which he was "elegantly learned." He told me of the mighty tribes of men who had once inhabited this vast continent, but were now exterminated by internecine wars; that their fathers had told them of a great flood, which had covered all the land, except the highest peaks of the

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

mountains, where some of the inhabitants and the buffaloes resorted, and saved themselves from destruction.

We were on a hill, as before mentioned, some seven or eight miles from the village, engaged in one of these long cosmographical discussions, when my companion, chancing to turn his head, descried some object at a great distance. Pointing it out to me with his finger, "There is a people," he exclaimed. I looked in the direction indicated, and saw a small party of Black Feet approaching.

"Sit still," said I, "and let us see where they encamp; we will have every one of them to-night."

We watched them until they halted at a couple of small Indian forts, with which the country abounds, and we saw they were soon joined by four or five others who came from another direction, and who were evidently scouts. From the direction which they came, I saw they had not discovered our village.

"Now," said I, "let us return; we will have that party. We will collect a few trusty warriors, and not mention our discovery to a living soul, not even telling our warriors the errand we are upon until we get within sight of the camp-fires of the enemy. Then we will return with their scalps, and put an end to this howling that deafens my ears."

We started on our way to the village. I desired him to select from his friends, and I would assemble my own.

"No," said he, "my friends are fools. I don't want them. But you collect your warriors, and I will be one of them."

Accordingly, I went to my father, and desired him to send for about seventy-five of my brothers and relatives, and tell them the Medicine Calf wished to see them; but I charged him not to tell them they were going away from the village. As they mustered one at a time, I acquainted them that I wanted them to leave the village singly and with the utmost secrecy, to meet me with their guns and battle-axes at a certain hour and in such a place, and in the mean time to answer no word to whatever question might be asked them.

At the appointed hour I repaired to the post, and found them all in readiness. I then marched them to the place of attack. When we arrived within sight of our foes we found them all very merry; they were singing the Wolf Song, or Song of the Spies, they having no suspicion that they were so near to the Crow village. We went cautiously up to the forts, which were but a few yards apart; and while they were yet singing we pointed our guns, and, at a signal given by me, all fired. The whole party were slain; their notes were cut short in death. Taking their scalps (nineteen in number) and guns, we reached our village by daylight, and entered it singing, dancing, and shouting.

The village was aroused, and men, women, and children came running from all directions to learn the cause of the disturbance. We displayed our nineteen scalps, and I took to myself full credit for the force of my medicine in divining where to find the foe, and cognizance was taken of the fact in the medicine lodge. We had five days' dancing to do full justice to this brilliant achievement, and I had become so tired of their continual mourning that their savage yells of delight seemed quite a luxury.

One night a party of Black Feet came to borrow some of our horses, and happened to be caught in the fact. The alarm was given, the marauders fired upon, and one of them had his leg broken by a ball. He was found the next morning, unable to get away; but he sat up and defended himself

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

until he had shot his last arrow. He was then brought into the village, and it was decided to burn him. A large fire was built, which was surrounded by hundreds, and when the fire was well burnt up the poor fellow was thrown in. This was the first act of the kind I had ever known the Crows to commit; but there was no preventing it. It is an appalling sight to behold a human being, or even an inferior animal, perish in the flames; I trust my eyes may never witness such another scene. To see the writhing agony of the suffering wretch when cast into the darting flames, and hear his piercing shrieks as the blaze gradually envelops his whole body, until the life is scorched out of the victim, and he falls prostrate among the logs, soon to become a charred mass of cinders undistinguishable from the element that consumed it — it is indeed a sight only fit for savages to look at.

I learned this one truth while I was with the Indians, namely, that a white man can easily become an Indian, but that an Indian could never become a white man. Some of the very worst savages I ever saw in the Rocky Mountains were white men, and I could mention their names and expose some of their deeds, but they have most probably gone to their final account before this.

Our village now moved on toward the fort to purchase our spring supplies. Both villages could only raise forty packs of beaver and nineteen hundred packs of robes; but for their continual wars, they could as easily have had ten packs for one. But it is impossible to confine an Indian to a steady pursuit — not even fighting; after awhile he will even tire of that. It is impossible to control his wayward impulses; application to profitable industry is foreign to his nature. He is a vagrant, and he must wander; he has no associations to attach him to one spot; he has no engendered habits of thrift or productiveness to give him a constant aim or concentration of purpose. Both villages at length assembled at the new fort, and our spring trading was briskly entered into. We rested for over a week, and I then proposed moving, as the time was approaching for our building a new medicine lodge. The night preceding our proposed departure, thieves were discovered among our horses; the alarm was given, and a party went in pursuit. They returned with six Sioux scalps, and two of our own men wounded. The remainder of the rascals succeeded in getting away with sixteen of our animals, we not considering them worth following after. We then postponed our departure four days, and devoted ourselves to noise and festivity. The welkin rung with our shouts, and the fort shook with the thunder of our earthquake step.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

Removal to our Tobacco-ground.—Expedition to the Arrap-a-hos for Horses.—Discovered, and the Party scattered.—Wanderings for fourteen Months.—Return at last amid tremendous Rejoicing.

WE left the fort, and proceeded toward our tobacco-ground. We planted the seed, and spent a short time in festivity. It was deemed inexpedient to build a medicine lodge this season, as all the business could be transacted in a temporary one.

Our stock of horses being greatly diminished, we deemed this a fitting time to try and replenish it, and various small parties sallied out for that purpose. I left with only seventeen warriors for the country of the Arrap-a-hos, situated on the head-waters of the Arkansas. On arriving at their village we found a great number of horses, upon which we made a descent; but we were discovered before we could lay our hands on any, and had to scatter in all directions in our effort to escape. One of our party had his leg broken with a rifle ball, but he did not fall into the enemy's hands, as he crawled away and secreted himself. Two months subsequently he found his way home, with

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

his leg nearly healed. He stated that, after receiving his wound, he plunged into the river, which flowed close by, and swam to an island, there concealing himself in a thick brush. The enemy moved away the next day, and he swam back to their camping-ground, where he found an abundance of meat, which he carried over to his quarters; upon this he fared sumptuously until he was strong enough to walk; then he made his way home.

I saw the village move the next morning, and, gathering four of my scattered companions, I followed the enemy at a respectful distance until they encamped for the next night. We then made another descent upon their fold, and succeeded in obtaining each man a horse. We saw no more of the remains of our party until we returned to our village upward of a year subsequently.

We came to the resolution to quit the Arrap-a-hos, and pay the Snakes a visit. On reaching them we found horses in abundance, and could have levied upon them for any number; but, being at peace with the tribe, we contented ourselves with exchanging our jaded and foot-sore animals for five fresh ones from their drove. Here we dropped an arrow, and they recognized it for a Crow arrow readily; we also put on new moccasins, and left our old ones behind us. When the Snakes fell in with the Crows some time after, they charged them with stealing their horses, which charge the Crows strenuously denied. The Snakes persisted, and, to confirm their accusation, produced the arrow and the abandoned moccasins. This satisfied the Crows that it must be some of the Arrap-a-ho expedition, and hopes of our safety were revived.

From the Snakes we passed on to the Flat Head territory, where we found thousands of horses, but felt ourselves under the same moral restrictions as with the Snakes. Accordingly, we merely exchanged again, and again left five pairs of moccasins. Subsequently they made the same charge against the Crows, and accused them of infringing the treaty. The Crows again pleaded innocence, and again the moccasins convicted them of their guilt. They, however, resorted to diplomatic finesse, and an appeal to arms was averted. Again their hopes were rekindled of seeing us once more.

We then took a notion to pay the Coutnees a flying visit, where we made another exchange. We could have taken all the horses we wanted, but, to get home with them, we must have taken a wide circuit, or have passed through the territory of two hostile nations. We next moved to the As-ne-boine River, which empties into Hudson's Bay. Here we borrowed one hundred and fifty head of fine horses from the Blood Indians, and started on our way home. We arrived, without accident, at the Mussel Shell River, within one day's ride of our own people, where we encamped, intending to reach home the next day; but that night the Crows swept away every horse we had, not even leaving us one for our own use. We must have slept very soundly during the night; indeed, we were all greatly fatigued, for we did not hear a single movement. In getting our horses, they glorified themselves over having made a glorious haul from the Black Feet.

Not liking to be foiled in our resolution to return home with a respectable accompaniment of horses, we retraced our steps to the As-ne-boine River, intending to start another drove. On our return we found our friends had left, and had crossed to the other side of the mountain. We followed on, but delayed so long on the western slope, that the heavy snow-storms now falling cut off all possibility of returning home before spring; therefore we built a comfortable lodge in what was called Sweet Mountain, in a cañon, where we could kill a buffalo every day, the skins of which, covered entirely over our lodge, made a very agreeable abode for the winter. We also killed several large wolves, and dressed their skins in the nicest manner. We likewise took three

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Black Foot scalps. The Indians whose horses we had been in pursuit of, after having roamed about considerably, had gone into winter quarters only twelve or fifteen miles distant; their smoke was visible from our lodge. On the return of spring we visited our neighbors' camp, and selected one hundred and twenty head of such horses as we thought would stand the journey. We then returned over the mountain, and reached as far as the Judith in safety, which was within three days' ride of the village. We were greatly fatigued, and halted to encamp for the night and rest our jaded horses. Again the Crows stripped us of every horse, leaving us on foot once more. Resolved not to be beat, we determined to try our luck a third time before we returned to our village. I told my four companions that my medicine promised me success, and that when we did eventually get home we should be able to see what amount of affection was felt toward us by our people, by ascertaining how much crying had been done for us.

I had no doubt we had been mourned as dead, for we had been absent above a year. During this time, we subsequently learned, there had been great mourning for us, and many had cut off their hair. My father, however, still persisted that I was alive, and would some day return, and he would allow none of his family to cut off their fingers for me. At the time the Flat Heads went in with their complaint, they were about to elect another chief to fill my place; but when they saw the five pairs of moccasins produced, they knew they must have had Crow wearers, and their hopes were revived of again seeing us, and the election ceremony was postponed. My father would have no steps taken toward filling my vacant place before the erection of the next medicine lodge. He said he did not know where his Calf had rambled, and it was his firm belief that in the course of time he would ramble home again.

When we reached the As-ne-boine for the third time, we found that our friends who had accommodated us with the two previous droves of horses had gone over the mountain, and passed down that river to Fort Row, one of the Hudson's Bay trading-posts. By the appearance of their trail we judged that they had been joined by other villages, probably from the Coutnees and Pa-gans, all on their way to the trading-post for the purchase of their spring supply of goods. We followed their trail for several days, which grew fresher and fresher, until one afternoon we came suddenly upon a horse. We were at that time in thick timber, with a dense growth of underbrush, and thousands of wild pea-vines about.

On seeing the horse we halted suddenly. On looking farther around, we discovered horses of all colors and stripes, ring-streaked and speckled. Shortly the sound of voices reached our ears. In an instant we stooped down and crept under the almost impenetrable vines, nor did we venture to move from our hiding-place until night. We could distinctly hear the chatter of men, women, and children around us, and some of the squaws came most dangerously near when gathering fire-wood for their camp-fires. We could occasionally peep out, and we saw in those glimpses that they had beautiful horses, and, besides, that they were in good traveling condition. We then felt no doubt that the Coutnees were in company, since they always prided themselves in spotted horses, as Jacob of old took pride in spotted cattle. In that encampment it so little entered into their heads to anticipate molestation that they had placed no horse-guards to keep watch.

The noise of the horses in tearing through the pea-vines assisted us materially in our nocturnal enterprise. We selected two hundred and eighty of their largest, strongest, and handsomest cattle, with which we lost no time in making direct for Crow-land; nor did we venture to give rest to their hoofs until a journey, continued through three days and nights, placed what we considered

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

a safe distance between us. We then ventured to encamp for the night, to afford to the poor tired-out animals an opportunity to rest for a while, but starting off at early dawn to preclude all possibility of recapture.

On the fifth day we discovered an Indian a short distance from our trail, who was coming in an oblique direction toward us. He stopped on the hill-side at some little distance off, and motioned for us to approach him. Supposing him to be a Crow, I desired my companions to drive on, while I went to see what he wanted. When I had approached within a few yards of him, he put on an air of surprise, and placed his hand to his shoulder with the intention of drawing his bow. I sprang upon him instantly and cut him down, and despoiled him of his scalp and quiver. When about to leave to overtake my companions, I perceived the distant smoke of a Black Foot village situated immediately in the direction that we were journeying, and it was beyond doubt that the Indian I had just killed was a spy belonging to that village. He must have mistaken us for some of his own tribe, and only discovered his mistake when I approached near enough for him to distinguish my features.

My companions returning to me, we altered our course, and passed over a mountain covered with deep snow, so hard, however, that we passed it without losing a horse. This was one of the spurs of the Rocky Mountains, and covered with perpetual snows.

After sixteen days of almost incessant travel day and night, we came in sight of our village just as the sun was sinking behind the distant mountains. We approached within a mile of the village, and encamped under a small hill, as yet unperceived by our people, for the hill in the shelter of which we lay was between ourselves and the village. It was now the latter end of June (I think), in the year 1834.

After resting a while, I thought to get some tobacco, to indulge in a smoke before making our grand entreé, at the same time requesting my companions to keep a sharp look-out, and see that the Crows did not steal our horses again. Finally, three of us entered incog., and smoked with several of the old men, not one of whom recognized us or once thought of us. We passed all through the village, looking leisurely about us; the streets were full of people, yet not one bestowed a thought on us. When it became somewhat late, and the inhabitants had principally retired, I dismissed my two companions to the camp, telling them I would get some tobacco, and rejoin them in a short time. I then entered the lodge of one of my wives, who was asleep in bed. I shook her by the arm, and aroused her.

Waking, she inquired, "Who is this in the lodge?" I answered, "It is your husband."

"I never had but one husband," she replied, "and he is dead."

"No," said I, "I am he."

"You are not dead, then, as we have believed?"

"No," I said; "I have been wandering a long while, and have only just returned."

"We all mourned you," she continued, "many moons ago, and we all mourn you now every day.

We believed that the enemy had killed you."

"No," I said, "I escaped. I have now brought home a large drove of beautiful spotted horses, and if you will do as I wish you, you shall have your choice of the whole drove, and you will become a medicine woman also."

"I will do what you wish me," she replied. "Well, I want you, when you get up in the morning, to request the village to refrain from crying for one sun. Tell them that you dreamed that I came

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

home riding a large and spotted horse, having the other four men with me; that we had nearly three hundred of the most beautiful horses you ever saw, and that we rode with large wolf-skins spread on our horses' backs, mine being as white as the drifted snow."

She agreed to do all as I had bidden her; I then left her lodge; but, before quitting the village, I called in at my father's lodge. All was still around, and, entering on tip-toe, I reached down the medicine shield, which no one but his wife or eldest son is privileged to handle, and, opening it, I took out all his medicine tobacco, carrying it back to the camp with me, and then replaced the shield upon its peg. I then returned to our camp, and enjoyed a good smoke with my companions, our spirits waxing elate at the surprise we had in store.

Early the next morning, the woman, true to her word, narrated her dream to the astonished inhabitants, with whatever additions her own fancy suggested. My father and mother listened attentively to her revelation; and, before she had got through with her narrative, she had quite a numerous auditory. We were watching the occurrence from the brow of the hill; and, knowing she would have to rehearse her vision several times before it was generally known throughout the village, we did not hurry to show ourselves.

My father and mother, having heard her through, turned and entered their lodge. Suddenly the medicine shield caught my mother's eye—it had evidently been moved. My father took it down and opened it — the tobacco was gone. This opened the —old gentleman's" eyes. "It is well," he said; "my son lives!" and he believed the substance of the dream as fervently as the prophetess who uttered it. The bystanders, seeing his medicine so strong, and he beginning to sing and dance, they all joined in, until the noise of their revelry reached us on our distant eminence.

Now was our time. We mounted our caparisoned steeds, and, forming ourselves in procession, we commenced our grand entreé, singing and shouting at the top of our voices. Our tones are heard, and the villagers gaze around in surprise. "Hark!" they exclaimed; "look yonder! there are five men mounted on large spotted steeds. Who are they?"

All was hushed as the grave in the village, each striving to catch the sound of our distant strains. The five horsemen disappeared as if by magic, and reappeared driving a large drove of horses before them of all colors. The horsemen again pause on the summit.

"Hark! listen! they sing again! Who can they be?"

Not a soul yet stirred from the village. We drove our horses down toward them, and left them there, while we took a circuit around, displaying our scalps, but still keeping over gunshot distance. The old men came out to us, carrying drums; each of us took one, and then we bounded away to the rear of our horses. We raised a well-known song, and all listened to the tones of the returning Medicine Calf. At length our wives and relatives broke away from the throng, and darted over the plain to meet us. They fairly flew over the intervening space to welcome us in their arms. A tall sister of mine outstripped the rest, and arrived first, and immediately after my little wife was also by my side. After a warm greeting exchanged with these, the warriors came up, and saluted us with a shout that would have aroused Napoleon's Old Guard from their graves. We were lifted from our horses, and almost denuded of our clothing, and carried by the impetuous throng into the village. My father had painted his face into an exact resemblance of Satan, in token of his joy at my happy return. I was kissed and caressed by my mother, sisters, and wives until I fairly gasped for breath.

Any person who has never beheld a real downright rejoicing among savages can form but a faint

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

conception of their unrestrained manifestations; words can convey no adequate idea of it. Being untutored and natural, and not restricted by any considerations of grace or propriety, they abandon themselves to their emotions, and no gesture is too exaggerated, no demonstration too violent for them to resort to.

My friend, with many others, had given me up for dead, and had adopted another in my place; so that there were now three of us who all knew one another's secrets. Pine Leaf was overjoyed at my return.

She had become confident of my death, and was only waiting to ascertain the nation that had killed me in order to revenge my loss, or be sacrificed to my manes. Couriers were immediately dispatched to the other village to acquaint them with our return, and to invite them to participate in the celebrations of the event. Long Hair returned for answer, "Tell my brother I will fly to see him." They lost six warriors on their way to our village, through carelessly straggling in detached parties, consequently they came to us in mourning for their loss.

The two droves of horses which the Crows had released us of were all religiously returned. Those that the captors had given away were promptly delivered up, so that we were now in possession of a very numerous drove. I distributed my share among my relatives, friends, wives, and wives' relatives, until I had only just enough for my own use. I gave my father an elegant steed, the largest in the whole drove. To the heroine I gave a spotted four-year-old, a perfect beauty, one that I had intended for her as we were driving them home. He proved to be a superior warhorse, and there were but few among the thousands that we possessed that could distance him with her upon his back. She was very proud of him, and would suffer no one but herself to ride him.

It took me a long time to rehearse all our adventures while away. I was required to do it very minutely and circumstantially — even to describe all our camping-grounds, and relate every minute occurrence that transpired during our long pilgrimage.

We had certainly incurred exceeding risk in the route we had traveled; in recurring to it I marveled at our escape. Any five men might start upon such an adventure, and not one party in ten would ever return. I reflected, however, that I was a little more sagacious than the Indians, and that I had my physical faculties as well developed as theirs. I could see fully as quick as they could, and ride as fast, if they undertook to chase me in the mountains.

I now found that I had thousands of friends, whether attracted by my fancy horses or not, and that I was the idol of my proud parents. The mother of Black Panther always lived with my father, and if both survive, I presume she does to this day. I gave him the child when it was quite young, to adopt as his son, in obedience to his reiterated solicitations.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

Excursion to the Fort.—Great Battle with the Cheyennes on the Way. —Rejoicing on my Arrival at the Fort. —Horses stolen by the Cheyennes. —Pursuit and Battle with the Thieves. —Battle with the Black Feet. —Return to our Village.

WHEN the rejoicings were over, a council was called to deliberate on the future operations of the nation, wherein the resolution was taken to keep united until Leaf Fall. About the latter end of August I started for the fort, taking with me three hundred and fifty warriors, with as many women and children, among whom was my little wife. While on our way thither, we encamped one night on Fallen Creek, and lost upward of fifty horses, stolen by the Cheyennes. We pursued them with our whole force, and, soon overtaking them, a fight ensued between numbers about

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

equal. I had charged in advance of the line, and, as I was always dressed in full costume when on these excursions, I offered an excellent mark to any one skilled in shooting. I was proceeding at an easy canter, when my horse was shot through the head, the ball entering near the ear, and he fell, his last spring hurling me head foremost against a huge rock, which I struck with such force that I saw another dense meteoric shower, and the blood gushed from my mouth, nose, and ears. When I recovered my senses I found both parties over me, each struggling to obtain me. The Crows prevailed eventually, and my scalp was saved. My warriors were fully convinced of my death, as I lay so long motionless; but they were determined to preserve my scalp. The enemy, seeing our women and children approach, mistook them for a re-enforcement of Crow warriors, and they gave up the contest and fled precipitately, leaving us masters of the field, with all the horses they had just stolen from us, besides a great number of their own, which they had not time to drive off. We only obtained three scalps from the enemy, losing none ourselves, though we had several warriors wounded.

We then resumed our journey to the fort, reaching there without farther trouble. When we arrived within sight and hearing, we, as usual, struck up a song. All the women from the fort ran out, exclaiming, "Here comes a war-party of the Crows; they are singing! Look at their scalps: they come from the country of the Cheyennes; they have conquered our enemies. See, they are all painted!"

I had long been supposed dead at the fort. It was conjectured that Big Bowl (my father) had the conduct of the party, and there was no inquiry made for me. We entered amid a thousand How d'ye do's, and my wife and "Little Jim" were comfortably provided with the best quarters in the fort. I was standing among the busy throng, who had already fallen to admire the new goods, still feeling the effects of my severe shake, when I saw one of the female inmates eye me very inquiringly. She inquired of my wife who that Indian was. She answered, "He is my husband."

"What! are you married again?" the woman exclaimed, in astonishment.

"No, not again," she replied, in her very modest manner; "did you not know that the Medicine Calf was alive and had returned?"

"Then that surely is the Medicine Calf," the woman exclaimed, "now standing in the fort!" and ran to Mr. Tulleck to acquaint him with the news.

"Where is he? where is the Medicine Calf?", Mr. Tulleck called aloud, and looking among the throng without perceiving me.

I addressed him in English, calling him by name. I thought at first that he would fall to the ground; it was some seconds before he could speak, his astonishment was so overwhelming. At last he found tongue, and broke out in all kinds of expressions of joy and welcome. The men, too, attached to the fort, on hearing of my arrival, came running in with their utmost speed to welcome one whom they had all long since supposed dead. So heartfelt a welcome I could not have expected. Little Jim had been taken from his mother's hand before it was known that I was present. He was a general pet at the fort, and it usually took one good horse to carry all the presents bestowed upon mother and child. He was then near three years old, running every where, and was already looked upon by the Crows as their future chief.

We tarried at the fort a few days, engaged in hunting buffalo for its men and our own family. Our consumption was several carcasses a day. During my long absence the Crows had neglected their traps, and they had not dressed more than half the usual number of robes, which caused a

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

sensible falling off in the trade of the fort, and diminished very materially the profits derived by the company from Fort Cass. No reduction, however, was made in my salary on account of my absence, which I considered very liberal conduct on the part of the company.

My warriors, becoming uneasy at their inactive life, desired to be led against the Black Feet. To gratify them, I selected one hundred and six warriors, and sent the others back to the village with the women and children, except my wife, whom I requested to stay at the fort to await my return. We marched into the enemy's country, and in the daytime came suddenly upon one of their villages. There were lodges enough to contain three hundred warriors, but they were probably gone upon an expedition, for there were but few present to receive us. We unhesitatingly assaulted it, although we had but little fighting to do. We took upward of twenty scalps, and eighteen women and children prisoners. We captured two hundred and sixty horses, besides weapons, clothing, and other spoils. Here I succeeded in having a good joke at the heroine's expense, with which I plagued her for a long time. She was swifter on foot than any warrior, and we were on foot during this excursion. On seeing us advance, a young Indian, about sixteen, took to his heels, running like a deer. The heroine made after him with her antelope speed, certain to catch him. The Indian did his best, frequently turning his head, like a negro with an alligator at his heels. Seeing that his pursuer must overtake him, and not relishing the idea of having her lance transfix his body — for she was preparing to hurl it — he suddenly stopped and faced about, at the same time throwing his bow down and holding up both hands to beg for his life. She did what no other warrior in our party would have done — her woman's heart took pity on the poor fellow's pitiable condition — she spared his life, and marched him back captive.

He being her prisoner, no one had authority over his life but herself. He was a fine-looking young man, but when he was brought among the Crow warriors he trembled in every joint, expecting nothing less than to be killed.

I thought this too good an opportunity for a joke not to make use of it.

"I see," said I, addressing myself to Pine Leaf, "you have refused all our braves that you might win a husband from the enemy."

All the warriors shouted at the sally; but the poor girl was sorely perplexed, and knew not what to do or say. We rallied her so much on her conquest that she finally became quite spunky, and I did not know whether she would run her prize through with her lance or not. One day I told her I had talked with her prisoner about his capture. "Well," said she, "and what has he to say about it?"

"Why," I answered, "he says he could have killed you as well as not, but that you promised to marry him if he would spare your life."

She was fully practiced upon, and she flushed with anger. "He lies!" she exclaimed. "You know I can not speak to these Black Feet, or I would make him tell a different tale. I have often told you, as well as other warriors, that I do not wish to marry; my tongue was straight when I said so. I have told you often, and I have told your sisters and your wives, that, if ever I did marry, I would have you, and none other. So why do you trifle with my feelings?"

What she said was a genuine ebullition of feeling; for, although an Indian girl, her heart was as proud, as sensitive, and as delicate as ever beat in the breast of civilized woman. To soothe her ruffled temper, I told her I would intrust a secret to her. I had undertaken my prolonged journeying, when all supposed me dead, and she along with the rest, solely to search through the Rocky

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Mountains for a "red-headed Indian." I had been unsuccessful in my search, and had returned with spotted horses.

She laughed immoderately at my invention.

We now returned to the fort with our trophies, where we had a joyous time. My warriors gave a horse to each man at the fort, about fifty in number, and every woman staying there also received one. I selected the best one I had, and made Little Jim present it to Mr. Tulleck, with which delicate attention he was greatly delighted. My boy could now speak quite plain. The men at the fort had taught him to swear quite fluently both in French, and English, much more to their satisfaction than to mine. But I trusted he would soon forget his schooling, as the Crows never drink whisky, nor use profane language.

We left the fort, and reached our village without accident. On our arrival we found the people in mourning for the loss of two warriors, killed in the village by an attack of the Cheyennes; and, notwithstanding my recent success, we had to take part in the crying, in obedience to their forms. The Cheyennes, in their late attack, used very good generalship; but the result was not so good as their design would seem to promise. They started with a force of three thousand warriors, and, dividing their army, five hundred marched directly over the Tongue River Mountain, where they were safe from molestation, while their main body passed round in another direction, placing themselves in ambush in a place agreed upon, so as to fall upon the Crows should they pursue their flying division. But the Crows were too wary for them, and their bright design failed.

The division of five hundred made a descent upon the horses, killing the two Crows that were among them, and unable to escape in time. It was in open day, and our stock was so immense that they actually did succeed in driving off about twelve hundred, of which our family owned about eighty. Many of our choice mares, with their foals, and a great number of our war-horses, seemed to have intelligence of the business in hand, and ran with full speed to the village, where the enemy did not care to follow them. Hundreds of our warriors were ready for the conflict, and were impatiently awaiting the order to attack; but their chiefs strictly forbade their advance, and even charged my faithful Dog Soldiers with the duty of enforcing their orders. There were in the village over four thousand warriors, a force sufficient to repel any attack; but the old heads seemed to suspect something at the bottom of their foes' audacity, and thus escaped the trap that was prepared for them. The horses we cared but little about, as it was easy to replace them at any time, without risking the lives of so many brave warriors.

On my return, all this was related to me by the council. They inquired my opinion of the policy they had acted upon, and I assented to the wisdom of all they had done. I further recommended that no war-party should leave the village for at least two weeks, but that all should devote themselves to trapping beaver, as a means better calculated to please the Great Spirit, and after that it was likely he would reward our excursions with more constant success.

My advice was approved of, and my medicine was pronounced powerful. Every trap in the village was accordingly brought to light, and a general preparation made for an active season of trapping: peltry-parties scattered for every stream containing beaver. My old friend and myself, with each a wife, composed one party; we took twelve traps, and in ten days collected fifty-five beaver-skins. All who went out had excellent success, as the streams had been but little disturbed for several months. Our two weeks' combined industry produced quite a number of packs.

It was now about the 1st of October. I had promised, after our two weeks' trapping, to lead a par-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ty in a foray upon the Cheyennes. I selected over four hundred warriors, and started in pursuit of something — whether horses or scalps was a matter of indifference. After an easy travel of twenty days, our spies keeping a vigilant look-out on the way, a large village was reported some few miles in advance. Knowing whom we had to deal with, I used my utmost caution, for we were beyond the reach of re-enforcement if I should fall into any difficulties. We ascended a hill which overlooked their village. We saw their cheerful-looking fires, and would have liked to warm ourselves by similar ones; but, although firewood was abundant, it seemed barely advisable to indulge in such a luxury. By the size of the village, it was evident we had a powerful enemy before us, and that he was brave we had learned by previous experience. After surveying it as well as we could by the gleam of the stars, I determined to go down into their village, and obtain a closer observation. I took three braves with me, and, turning our robes the hair side out, we descended the hill and entered the village.

We found they had recently built a new medicine lodge, and the national council was in session that night. We walked up to the lodge, where there were a number of Cheyennes smoking and conversing, but we could not understand a word they said. I passed my hand inside to reach for a pipe. One was handed to me; and after all four of us had taken a few whiffs, I handed it back to my accommodating lender. We then strolled leisurely through their town, and returned to our own camp somewhat late in the evening.

About midnight we visited their herd, and started out quite a large drove, which we found at daylight consisted of eight hundred head; with these we moved with all possible speed toward home, taking the directest route possible. We drove at full speed, wherever practicable, until the next day at noon; we then turned short round the point of a mountain, and awaited the arrival of our pursuers. Our animals were well rested when the enemy came up, and we had just transferred ourselves to the backs of some that we had borrowed from them. As soon as they had rounded the point — about two hundred and fifty in number — we issued out to attack them; and, although they were somewhat surprised to behold so large a force, they quickly formed and awaited the onset. We were soon upon them, killing several, and having a few of our own wounded. We withdrew to form another charge; but, before we were ready to fall on them again, they divided their line, and one half made a daring attempt to surround our horses, but we defeated their aim. They then retreated toward their village, they finding it necessary to re-enforce their numbers before they could either recover their animals or fight our party with any show of success. I afterward learned, when a trader in the Cheyenne nation for Sublet, that their main body, consisting of two thousand warriors, had started with them, but turned back when within four miles of our temporary resting-place. The smaller division traveled back as fast as possible in the endeavor to reach them, and bring them back to the attack. After proceeding two or three hours in their trail, they suddenly came in sight of them as they were resting to dress some buffalo. By means of couriers and signals, they soon had the whole army on the march again; but by this time we were “over the hills and far away,” having resumed our retreat immediately our pursuers left us. Those who are driving horses in a chase such as this have a great advantage over their pursuers, since the pursuer must necessarily ride one horse all the time, but those that are driving can change as often as they please, taking a fresh horse every half hour even, if occasion requires. In case there is great urgency with a drove, a number of warriors are sent in advance to lead them, while others are whooping and yelling behind. Under this pressure, the animals generally get over

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

the ground at a pretty good rate.

On our arrival at home with thirteen scalps, over eight hundred horses, and none of our party killed, it may be judged that we made much noise and shouting.

The trip we had just accomplished was a severe one, especially for the wounded, and none but Indians could have lived through such torment; but they all finally recovered. They begged to be left upon the road, urging that they must inevitably die, and it was a folly to impede our flight and jeopardize our lives; but I was determined, if possible, to get them in alive; for, had I lost but one, the village would again have gone into mourning, and that I was desirous to avoid.

CHAPTER XXV.

Visit of the whole Crow Nation to the Fort.—Seven Days' Trading and Rejoicing. —Separation of the Villages. —Expedition to the Camanches. —Narrow Escape from their Village. —Battle with the Black Feet. —The Whites assist us with their Cannon. —Captured by the Black Feet. —Recaptured by the Crows. —Final Victory.

HAVING now quite a respectable amount of peltry on hand, both of our villages started for the fort to purchase winter supplies. We carried upward of forty packs of beaver, and two thousand four hundred packs of robes, with which we were enabled to make quite an extensive trading. We loitered seven days in the vicinity of the fort; then the villages separated, for the purpose of driving the buffalo back to the Yellow Stone, where they would keep in good condition all winter. This required a considerable force of men, as those animals abounded by the thousand at that time where they are now comparatively scarce, and it is a conclusion forced upon my mind that within half a century the race of buffaloes will be extinguished on this continent. Then farewell to the Red Man! for he must also become extinct, unless he applies himself to the cultivation of the soil, which is beyond the bound of probability. The incessant demand for robes has slain thousands of those noble beasts of the prairie, until the Indians themselves begin to grow uneasy at the manifest diminution, and, as a means of conservation, each nation has adopted the policy of confining to itself the right of hunting on its own ground. They consider that the buffalo belongs to them as their exclusive property; that he was sent to them by the Great Spirit for their subsistence; and when he fails them, what shall they resort to? Doubtless, when that time arrives, much of the land which they now roam over will be under the white man's cultivation, which will extend inland from both oceans. Where then shall the Indian betake himself? There are no more Mississippis to drive him beyond. Unquestionably he will be taken in a surround, as he now surrounds the buffalo; and as he can not assimilate with civilization, the Red Man's doom is apparent. It is a question of time, and no very long time either; but the result, as I view it, is a matter of certainty.

The territory claimed by the Crows would make a larger state than Illinois. Portions of it form the choicest land in the world, capable of producing any thing that will grow in the Western and Middle States. Innumerable streams, now the homes of the skillful beaver, and clear as the springs of the Rocky Mountains, irrigate the plains, and would afford power for any amount of machinery. Mineral springs of every degree of temperature abound in the land. The country also produces an inconceivable amount of wild fruit of every variety, namely, currants, of every kind; raspberries, black and red; strawberries, blackberries, cherries; plums, of delicious flavor and in great abundance; grapes, and numberless other varieties proper to the latitude and fertile nature of the soil.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I am fully convinced that this territory contains vast mineral wealth; but, as I was unacquainted with the properties of minerals during my residence with the Crows, I did not pay much attention to the investigation of the subject. One thing, however, I am convinced of, that no part of the United States contains richer deposits of anthracite coal than the territory I am speaking of, and my conviction is thus founded. I one night surrounded a small mountain with a large force of warriors, thinking I had observed the fires of the enemy, and that I should catch them in a trap. But, to my great surprise, it proved to be a mountain of coal on fire, which had, I suppose, spontaneously ignited. I immediately drew off my forces, as I was fearful of an explosion. I could readily point out the place again.

It would be extremely hazardous to attempt any scientific explorations without first gaining the consent of the Crows. They have been uniformly friendly with the whites; still, they would be jealous of any engineering operations, as they would be ignorant of their nature. The Crows are a very reserved people, and it would be difficult to negotiate a treaty with them for the cession of any portion of their land. They have always refused to send a deputation to Washington, although repeatedly invited. Indeed, when I was their chief, I always opposed the proposition, as I foresaw very clearly what effect such a visit would produce upon their minds. The Crows, as a nation, had never credited any of the representations of the great wealth, and power, and numbers of their white brethren. In the event of a deputation being sent to Washington, the perceptions of the savages would be dazzled with the display and glitter around them. They would return home dejected and humiliated; they would confound the ears of their people with the rehearsal of the predominance and magnificence of the whites; feeling their own comparative insignificance, they would lose that pride in themselves that now sustains them, and, so far from being the terror of their enemies, they would grow despondent and lethargic; they would addict themselves to the vices of the weaker nations, and in a short time their land would be engulfed in the insatiable government vortex, and, like hundreds of other once powerful tribes, they would be quickly exterminated by the battle-axes of their enemies. These are the considerations that influenced me while I administered their affairs.

From the fort I started on foot with two hundred and sixty trusty warriors for the Camanche territory. We had reached their ground, and were traveling leisurely along upon a high, open prairie, when our spies suddenly telegraphed to us to lie flat down — an order which we promptly obeyed. We soon learned that there was a number of Indians, some distance beyond, engaged in running buffalo and antelope as far as we could see. There appeared to be an outlet to the prairie, through which we could see them emerging and disappearing like bees passing in and out of a hive. We found at night that it was a wide cañon, in which their village was encamped, extending over three miles, and must have contained several thousand warriors. They had just driven a host of horses into it, to have them ready, most probably, for the next day's chase. There were still thousands of horses scattered in every direction over the prairie, but I preferred to take those already collected. The Camanches, being seldom troubled by the incursions of their neighbors (as most of the tribes hold them in dread), take no precaution for the safety of their animals, for which reason they fell an easy prey to us.

At the usual time of night we paid a visit to their immense herd, and started an innumerable drove; we found it larger than we could successfully drive, and were therefore obliged to leave several hundreds of them on the prairie. We then placed a sufficient number of horse-guides ahead,

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

and, whipping up our rear, we soon had an immense drove under full speed for our own country, making the very earth tremble beneath their hoofs. We continued this pace for three days and nights, closely followed by our enemies, who, having discovered their loss the next morning, started after us in pursuit. They kept in sight of us each day, but we had the advantage of them, as we could change horses and they could not, unless they happened to pick up a few stragglers on the road.

On the third day I happened to be leading, and just as I rose to look over the summit of a hill on the Arkansas, I discovered a large village of the Cheyennes not far in advance, and lying directly in our course. In an instant we turned to the left, and continued on through a hollow with all our drove, the Camanches not more than two or three miles in our rear.

On our pursuers arriving at the spot where we had diverged to the left, they held their course right on, and, pouncing upon the astonished Cheyennes, conceived they were the party they were in pursuit of. We could distinctly hear the report of the guns of the contending parties, but did not slacken our pace, as our desire to get home in safety outweighed all curiosity to see the issue of the conflict. We afterward learned that the Cheyennes inflicted a severe beating upon their deluded assailants, and chased them back, with the loss of many of their warriors, to their own country. This was fine fun for us, and Fortune aided us more than our own skill, for we were saved any farther trouble of defending our conquest, and eventually reached home without the loss of a single life.

Our pursuers being disposed of, we allowed ourselves a little more ease. On the fifth day of our retreat we crossed the Arkansas, and, arriving on the bank of the Powder River (a branch of the south fork of the Platte), we afforded ourselves a rest. We drove all our horses into a cañon, and fortified the entrance, so that, in case of molestation, we could have repulsed five times our number. There was excellent pasture, affording our wearied and famishing horses the means of satisfying their hunger, and refreshing themselves with rest. We also needed repose, for we had eaten nothing on the way except what we happened to have with us, in the same manner as our horses would crop an occasional mouthful of grass while pursuing their flight.

After refreshing ourselves we resumed our journey, and, striking the Laramie River, we passed on through the Park, and then crossed the Sweet Water River into our own territory, where we were safe. We fell in with Long Hair's village before we entered our own, with whom we had a good time. Before parting we gave them five hundred horses. From thence we went down to the fort in quest of our own village, but learned they were about twenty miles out, encamped on the Rose Bud. The inmates of the fort thought it must have rained horses, for such a prodigious drove they never saw driven in before. We made them a present of a Camanche horse all round, and, having staid one night with them, the next morning we journeyed on to our village.

We found them all dancing and rejoicing over the success of the other war-parties, who had reached home before us, and our arrival increased their joy to such an extreme that there was no limit to their extravagant manifestations.

We had not parted from the fort more than two or three hours when Big Bowl called there, also in quest of the village, bringing two thousand seven hundred horses, which he had taken from the Coutnees.

Tulleck informed him that his son had but just left for the village with a large drove.

"Yes," said the old, man, "but I can laugh at him this time."

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“No, no,” replied Tulleck, “he has beat you; he has twice as many as you.”

“Ugh!” exclaimed the old brave; “his medicine is always powerful.”

We must have started with five thousand horses, for many gave out on the way and were left behind, besides a number that must have straggled off, for the Cheyennes afterward informed me that they picked up a considerable number which had undoubtedly belonged to our drove.

My father, after presenting them with a horse all round at the fort, whipped his drove up, saying that he would yet overtake the Medicine Calf before he reached the village.

He arrived just before sunset, when the joy was at its height.

We had horses enough now to eat us out of house and home, about eight thousand head having been brought in during the last ten days.

When the rejoicing was through, I divided my village, sending two hundred lodges round to start the buffalo toward the mountain, while I took one hundred and seventy lodges, and made a circuit in the direction of the fort, encamping in the bottom close by. I had with me eight or nine hundred warriors, besides my division of the women and children.

While staying in the vicinity of the fort we were usually very careless, never apprehending any attack, but on the third day of our encampment here we were suddenly assailed by nearly fifteen hundred Black Foot warriors, who were probably aware that we had divided our village, and had followed us as the smallest party. Myself and several other warriors were in the fort when the attack was made, but we soon hastened to join our warriors. The contest became severe. The Black Feet fought better than I had ever seen them fight before. The Crows, being outnumbered by their enemies, were sorely pressed, and every man had to exert himself to the utmost to withstand the assault. The men at the fort, seeing our situation, brought out to our aid a small cannon on a cart. The enemy, seeing them bring it up, charged on it and carried it, the Frenchmen who had it in charge running back to the fort with all possible speed. The Crows, seeing what had happened, made a furious charge on the captors of the cannon, and succeeded in retaking it, though not without the loss of several killed and wounded in the conflict. The gun was loaded with musket-balls, and, when finally discharged, did no damage to the enemy.

I was in another quarter, encouraging my warriors to protect our lodges, and we at length succeeded in beating them off, although they drove away over twelve hundred head of our horses with them, without any possibility of our wresting them from them, at least at that time. We lost thirteen warriors killed, twelve of whom were scalped, and about thirty wounded. It is a wonder we did not suffer a loss three times more severe. But the Black Feet are not steady warriors; they become too much excited in action, and lose many opportunities of inflicting mischief. If bluster would defeat a foe, their battles would be a succession of victories. Had we in the least mistrusted an attack, by being in readiness we could have repulsed them without the least effort. But they caught us totally unprepared; there was not a man at his post until they were about to fall upon us. The enemy lost forty-eight scalps in the encounter, besides a number of dead and wounded they carried away with them without our being able to lay hands upon them. They had also over one hundred horses shot under them.

We suffered a severe loss in the death of the veteran brave Red Child, the hero of a hundred fights, who was killed and scalped at his lodge door. His wife, who was by, struck the Indian who scalped him with a club, but she did not strike him hard enough to disable him. The loss of the old brave was severely felt by the whole nation. The crying and mourning which ensued pained

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

me more than the loss of our horses. After spending the night in mourning, we moved on to the other division, to carry the wofultidings of our reverse. When we rejoined them there was a general time of crying. I took a great share of the blame to myself, as it was upon my proposition that the village had been divided and the disaster sustained. I suggested it with a view to facilitate business, never dreaming of an attack by such an overwhelming force. When the excitement had subsided, I determined to wash their faces or perish in the attempt. I ordered every one that could work to engage in the erection of a fort in the timber, sufficiently large to hold all our lodges, laying out the work myself, and seeing it well under way. I directed them, when they had finished the construction, to move their lodges into it, and remain there till my return, for, thus protected, they could beat off ten times their number.

I then took nearly seven hundred of our best warriors, and started for the Black Feet, resolved upon revenge, and careless how many I fell in with.

A small party had recently come in with two scalps, which they had obtained near the head of Lewis's Fork, Columbia River. They reported a large village of eight hundred lodges, from which numerous war-parties had departed, as they had crossed their trails in coming home. They knew the direct road to the village, how it was situated, and all about it, which was of great service to me. I therefore took them with me, and employed them as scouts. Every warrior was well provided for hard service; each man had a riding-horse, and led his war-horse by his side.

On the seventh day we came in view of their village, but we deferred our attack till the next day. The enemy had chosen a very good position; they were encamped on a large bend of the river, at that time shallow and fordable every where. I detached fifty of my warriors for a feint, while I stole round with the main body to the high ground, taking care to keep out of sight of the enemy. Having gained my position, I signaled to the light division to feign an attack, while my men were so excited I could hardly restrain them from rushing out and defeating my purpose. My plan succeeded admirably. The Black Feet, having suffered themselves to be decoyed from their position by the flight of the fifty warriors, I sounded a charge, and my men rushed upon the unprotected village like a thunderbolt. We swept every thing before us; the women took to the bush like partridges; the warriors fled in every direction. They were so paralyzed at our unexpected descent that no defense was attempted. I threw myself among the thickest group I could see, and positively hacked down seventeen who pretended to be warriors without receiving a scratch, although my shield was pretty well cut with arrows. If my warriors had all come to their work according to the example that even the heroine set them, not one of the Black Feet who ventured to show fight would have escaped. The heroine killed three warriors with her lance, and took two fine little boys prisoners. We found but about a thousand warriors to oppose us, while there were lodges enough to contain three times the number. We only took sixty-eight scalps after all our trouble — a thing I could not account for. We took thirty women and children prisoners, and drove home near two thousand head of horses, among which were many of our own.

As I had never seen the Black Feet fight so well as at the fort, I expected an equal display of valor on this occasion, but they offered nothing worthy the name of defense. I learned from my prisoners that my old father-in-law was in that village, whose daughter I had nearly killed for dancing over the scalps of the white men. We had only one warrior wounded, who was shot through the thigh; but it was not broken, and, like all Indian wounds, it soon got well. We reached home in less than four days; and, after our arrival, singing and dancing were kept up for a week.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

In taking prisoners from an enemy we gain much useful information, as there are always more or less of their tribe domiciliated with us, to whom the captives impart confidence; these relate all that they hear to the chiefs, thus affording much serviceable information that could not otherwise be obtained. The women seem to care but little for their captivity, more particularly the young women, who have neither husbands nor children to attach them to their own tribe. They like Crow husbands, because they keep them painted most of the time with the emblems of triumph, and do not whip them like their Black Foot husbands. Certain it is that, when once captured by us, none of them ever wished to return to their own nation. In our numerous campaigns that winter we also took an unusual number of boys, all of whom make excellent Crow warriors, so that our numbers considerably increased from our prisoners alone. Some of the best warriors in the Crow nation had been boys taken from the surrounding tribes. They had been brought up with us, had played with our children, and fought their miniature sham-battles together, had grown into men, become warriors, braves, and so on to the council, until they were far enough advanced to become expert horse-thieves.

That winter was an exceedingly fortunate one for the Crow nation; success crowned almost every expedition. Long Hair's warriors achieved some great triumphs over the Black Feet, and in one battle took nearly a hundred scalps.

When Long Hair heard of our misfortune at the fort, he sent a messenger to our village to offer some of his warriors to assist us in retrieving our reverse. But before the arrival of the messenger we had been and returned, and were all in the height of rejoicing. He hastened back to his village to impart the glad tidings, in order that they might rejoice with us.

We then engaged in trapping beaver and hunting buffalo for the next three weeks, during which time we suffered no molestation from any of our enemies.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

Deputation from the As-ne-boines.—Characteristic Speech of Yellow Belly.—Visit to the Fort.—Visit to Fort Union.—Rescue of Five White Men from Starvation.—Arrival at Fort Cass.—Departure for the Village.—Visit of the Snakes to the Crows.

WE received another deputation from the As-ne-boines to sue for a renewal of peace. We had lost a warrior and two women, who had been massacred when away from the village, and on discovery of the bodies we followed the trail of the perpetrators in the direction of the Black Foot country. We eventually discovered that many petty outrages, which we had charged upon the Black Feet, were in reality committed by the treacherous As-ne-boines. On their return from their thievish inroads they were in the habit of proceeding very near to a Black Foot village, with which they were at peace, and then, turning obliquely, would cross the Missouri into their own country. Becoming acquainted with this oft-repeated ruse, we determined to chastise them. I accordingly crossed the Missouri with a force of eight hundred and fifty men, and invaded their territory with the determination to inflict upon them such a chastisement as should recall them to a sense of decency. We encountered a small village, only numbering forty lodges, on their way to Fort Union, and within a few hundred yards of the fort. Seeing our approach, they intrenched themselves in a hollow, rendering our assault a work of danger. But we stormed their position, and killed twenty-six warriors (all of whom we scalped); the remainder we could not get at, as we found their position impregnable.

Admonished by this chastisement, they sent another deputation to us to treat for the re-estab-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ishment of peace. But their propositions were unfavorably received, and Yellow Belly favored them with his sentiments in the following rather unpalatable and characteristic strain: "No," said he, in answer to their representations, "we make peace with you no more. You are dogs — you are women-slayers — you are unworthy of the confidence or notice of our people. You lie when you come and say that you want peace. You have crooked and forked tongues: they are subtle like the tongue of the serpent. Your hearts are corrupt: they are offensive in our nostrils. We made peace with you before because we pitied you; we looked upon you with contempt, as not even worthy to be killed by the Sparrowhawks. We did not wish for your scalps: they disgrace our others; we never mix them even with those of the Black Feet. When we are compelled to take them from you on account of your treachery, we give them to our pack-dogs, and even they howl at them. Before, we gave you horses to carry you home, and guns to kill your buffalo; we gave you meat and drink; you ate, and drank, and smoked with us. After all this, you considered yourselves great braves in scalping two of our women. Our women would rub out your nation and put out all your fires if we should let them loose at you. Come and steal our horses when you think best, and get caught at it if you want to feel the weight of our tomahawks. Go! we will not make peace with you; go!"

After this very cordial reception, we had no more intercourse with the As-ne-boines for some time.

Shortly after the departure of this delegation, we set out for the fort to trade away our peltry, which amounted to a considerable number of packs. On arriving there, I found a letter from a Mr. Halsey, who then had charge of Fort Union, the head-quarters of the American Fur Company. The letter was couched in rather strong terms, and was evidently written when he was under the influence of temper. The company had their trading-posts among every tribe with which the Crows were at war, and for many months past there had been a great falling off in trade. The Indians had brought in but little peltry, and the universal complaint among all was that it took all their time to defend themselves against the Crows. The Crows had killed scores of their warriors; the Crows had stolen all their horses; the Crows had captured their women and children; the Crows had kept them mourning and crying; their trappers dare not go out to trap for fear of the Crows; their hunters dare not, and could not, kill buffalo for fear of the Crows; in short, by this letter it appeared that the poor Crows were the constant terror of all the surrounding tribes. He concluded his epistle, "For —'s sake, do keep your d—d Indians at home, so that the other tribes may have a chance to work a little, and the company may drive a more profitable business." I knew perfectly well that these incessant wars were very prejudicial to the company's interest, but it was impossible for me to remedy the evil. Other tribes were continually attacking the Crows, killing their braves, and stealing their horses, and, of course, they were bound to make reprisals. In justice to the Crows I must say, that other tribes were generally the aggressors, until the policy was forced upon me of endeavoring to "conquer a peace." I thought, if I could make the Crow nation a terror to all their neighbors, that their antagonists would be reduced to petition for peace, and then turn their battle-axes into beaver-traps; and their lances into hunting-knives. Our villages, having made their purchases, left the fort, but staid in the vicinity, engaged in trapping and making robes. The letter I had just received from Halsey requested my attendance on him that spring. I left my people, and went down the river to Fort Union. On arriving, I found a large body of the As-ne-boines encamped near the fort. Their chiefs immediately came to me,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

wishing me to conclude peace with them as representative of the Crow nation. They attempted to palliate their late misdeeds by throwing the blame on a few As-ne-boine desperadoes, who had acted without the authority or the cognizance of the national council, and that they had been severely punished by the tribe for their excesses.

In answer, I told them that I had no authority to conclude peace; that, even if I had, they would not observe a peace longer than one moon; that I thought the Crows would throw difficulties in the way of entertaining their propositions, but that they could apply to the council again, and learn how they were inclined. Mr. Halsey and all the sub-traders present interceded with me to exert myself in establishing a peace between the two nations, which request I promised to comply with. The chiefs inquired whether we would take their lives in the event of their visiting us on such a mission. I assured them that the Crows would hold their lives sacred; that they were not dogs, as many nations were, but that they were a great and magnanimous nation, whose power was predominant, and who killed no enemies but in battle.

I remained at the fort about three weeks, and, as most of the sub-traders, clerks, and interpreters were in, we had a glorious time. It was at least three or four years since I had last visited there; for, though I fought a battle outside its walls lately, I did not see fit at that time to make them a call. The boats being ready to return, I started with them, but their progress was so slow and wearisome on their way up to the Yellow Stone that I leaped ashore, intending to make my way over dry land. I have always rejoiced that I was prompted to take that step, for I became instrumental thereby in performing a merciful deed among so many that might be termed unmerciful.

I had not traveled more than three miles when I came across a white man, named Fuller, in a famishing condition. I had a companion with me, whom I started off to the boats to bid them prepare something suitable to recover the poor fellow, and to order them to touch on shore when they came to where he lay. Fuller was quite delirious. I had discovered him just in the nick of time, as he could not have survived many hours longer. My companion was not long in performing his errand, and, when the boat touched for him, we carried him on board, and gave him tea and warm restoratives. He shortly revived, and then gave me to understand, in a very incoherent manner, that he had four companions in a similar condition near to where I had found him.

At this intelligence we went on shore again to succor them also. We had a long hunt before we succeeded in finding them, and when we at last discovered them, we found them picking and eating rosebuds, or, rather, the pods containing seed of last year's growth. When they saw us approaching they attempted to run, supposing us to be Indians; but, their strength failing them, they sought to conceal themselves in the bushes. We made known our errand to them, and invited them on board the boat. Our opportune offer of service seemed so providential, that the fortitude of the poor famishing fellows could not sustain them, and they all gave way to a plentiful flood of tears. We conveyed them on board the boat, and furnished them with food adapted to their emaciated condition.

When in some measure restored, they informed us that they had been trapping in the mountains, their party originally consisting of eleven men; that they were on their road to Fort Cass, with their pack-horses and four packs of beaver, when they were set upon by the Black Feet, who killed six of their party, and despoiled them of every article they had, and it was by a miracle that they escaped from their hands. When they had supposed themselves near the fort, they saw a great number of Indians, whom they took for Black Feet; to avoid them, they took a wide circuit

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

through the prairie. The Indians whom they mistook for Black Feet were a party of Crows, and if they had gone up to them and made their case known, the Crows would have escorted them to the fort, and probably have pursued the Black Feet, and have retaken their property. On returning from their circuit, they struck the river a great distance below the fort, and were still traveling down the river in search of it. They had nothing to eat, and nothing to kill game with to relieve their wants. They went on with the boats, while I and my companion resumed our "over-land route."

We reached the fort several days in advance of the boats. I only rested one night there, and then proceeded directly on to my Indian home. Shortly after my arrival there, the villages moved on up the river, proceeding leisurely, and killing buffalo and dressing robes on the way. We finally reached the mountain streams, and, as it was now near September, the beaver were getting to be in fine condition for trapping.

We had at this time a visit from eight hundred lodges of the Snakes, who came for the purpose of trading, as they had no trading-post of their own. They remained with us several weeks, and we had a very agreeable time together. This furnished me with an opportunity of enlarging to the Crows upon the superior delights of peace. We could visit the lodges of our Snake friends, and they could visit ours without cutting each other's throats. Our women could chatter together, our children gambol and have their sham-battles together, while the old veterans could talk over their achievements, and smile at the mimic war-hoops of their children. They could also trade together, and derive mutual benefit from the fair exchange of commodities. I contrasted this with the incessant butcheries that distinguished their intercourse with some tribes, and asked them which relation was the more desirable.

The Crows had many things to trade away which they had no need for, or, if they had needed them, they could replace them with a fresh supply from the fort. The nation was desirous that their guests should see the trading-post, where all their goods were stored beyond the reach of their enemies, and whence they drew their supplies as often as they had need of them; for the simple Crows supposed that the posts, with their contents, were the property of the nation, and that the whites who were in charge there were their own agents. To gratify their natural pride, I led a party to the fort, among whom were two hundred of our Snake visitors. On entering the fort, and looking over the store-house, they were struck dumb with astonishment; they could not comprehend the vastness of the wealth that was displayed before them. They had never before seen a depôt of goods, and this exceeded all they had any previous experience of. The rows of guns highly polished, the battle-axes, lance-blades, scarlet cloth, beads, and many curiosities they had never seen before, filled them with admiration; they could not gaze sufficiently at these indications of our wealth.

They inquired of the Crows whether our nation made all those articles there. They told them that they did not; that they were made at our great fort below, in comparison with which this was but a small lodge; that all our supplies were manufactured there, and brought up the river in great boats by our white friends.

They then inquired by what means they had gained the alliance of the whites; that, instead of killing them and banishing them from their hunting-ground, as they did to many nations, they should give themselves the great trouble to serve them with their boats, and bring them such immense supplies.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

The Crows informed them that their great chief, the Medicine Calf, had been instrumental in accomplishing all this. By his long residence with the whites, after his sale to them by the Cheyennes when he had become a great brave, he had gained surprising influence with the great white chief, who loved the Medicine Calf, and had taught him to make forts, and had suffered him to come back to his people in order to teach them to become great, and overcome all their enemies. The Snakes were wonder-stricken at such marvels. The unassailable fort (which a single bomb-shell would have blown to atoms), filled with an inexhaustible store of rich goods; our great fort down the river, in comparison with which this was but a small lodge, and where all these marvelous products of our ingenuity were manufactured; our mysterious connection with the whites, which procured us the advantage of their unremunerated services, and shielded us with the irresistible succor of the great white chief — all this overpowered their imagination. The wealth and power of the Crow nation exceeded all conception, and to oppose them in war was to incur unavoidable destruction.

After the Snakes had traded off their stock of peltry, obtaining large supplies in exchange, we returned to the village. They had wonderful narratives of the big fort and wealth of the Crow nation to spin to their fellow-villagers. In fact, they were so impressed with the idea of our superiority that two hundred lodges of the Snakes joined our nation, and never separated from them. They had a chief of their own, but conformed to our laws and regulations, proving themselves faithful fellow-citizens, and emulating our best warriors in battle. This coalition increased our force to the number of five hundred warriors — more than we had lost in battle for four years preceding. They intermarried with our women, and in a few years were so completely transformed that they had quite forgotten their Snake origin. On our return, the remainder of our friends left us.

During our absence the Black Feet had invaded our dominion, and made off with upward of three thousand of our horses, very greatly to our detriment. The Snakes were anxious to pursue them, or, at least, to assist their hosts in recapturing their stolen property, but Long Hair declined their proffered service. He said, "No, I am too old to run after them, and the warriors must have some one to direct them. Should any accident befall my people, the medicine chief would be grieved. We must wait his return from the fort; if he then deems it proper to punish them, he will not be long without the means."

Our villages still remained together, and we moved on to the head-waters of the Yellow Stone. We had several war-parties out, and some endeavoring to retrieve our equine losses, while those who remained in the village applied themselves to trapping and hunting. The Snake women were very skillful in dressing robes — far superior to our own, as they had been more engaged in it. My warriors were again burning with the desire for war and Horse-raids, although our prairies were alive with animals. Inaction seemed to consume them. In spite of my prohibition, they would steal away in parties during the night. When convicted, I would inflict severe floggings upon them by my Dog Soldiers (who did not spare the lash); but it was to little purpose. In fact, they took it as honorable distinction to receive a lashing, inasmuch as it indicated their overruling ardor for war; and the culprit who received a flogging this morning for disobedience of orders, was sure to be off at night again. An old warrior despises the sight of a trap; hunting buffalo, even, does not afford him excitement enough. Nothing but war or a Horse-raid is a business worth their attending to, and the chief who seeks to control this predilection too far loses popularity.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Accordingly, I gave way to the general desire of my warriors. I selected one hundred and sixty trusty braves, intending "to lay alongside" my old friends the Black Feet, and wipe out one or two old scores I had marked against them. I invaded their territory with my little force, and marched on, admonishing my spies to extreme vigilance. We came in sight of a village, and secreted ourselves till the proper hour of night. On our march we discovered a single Indian. Some of the party called him to them, and clubbed him down and scalped him. He had mistaken us for his own people.

At midnight we visited their herd, and drove out six hundred and forty head. A number of their best cattle were tied at the doors of their lodges and in their corrals. I arrived home safe with my booty, and, as I had taken one scalp, we had a great dance. All our other parties were very successful, excepting one. That was one that had gone on an expedition against the Arrap-a-hos. Pine Leaf was in the number. They had taken about a thousand horses, and, having reached a distance that they supposed safe, they slackened their pace, and were proceeding carelessly along. Suddenly their pursuers came in sight — a strong posse comitatus — and retook all their animals except those that bore the fugitives, and killed three of their comrades. The heroine came back in mourning, looking like the last of her race.

One of our victorious parties brought back fifty boys and girls whom they had captured while gathering fruit. Since the loss of our three thousand horses to the Black Feet we had captured six thousand, two thousand five hundred of which had been recovered from the Black Feet.

We now moved on to the Yellow Stone, and crossed it, the villages still keeping together. We then journeyed on slowly in the direction of the fort, trapping and hunting all the way. We kept a vigilant eye upon our prisoners, for fear they might attempt an escape to their own tribes, and thus bring upon us a foe when we had no time to attend to him.

This was a very productive fall for peltry, and we sent in great quantities to the fort in advance of our arrival. I remained at the trading-post nearly the whole of the winter. In the early spring the Crows sent for me to rejoin them. I went, accordingly, and found that their long-continued good fortune had suffered a reverse. They had grown careless in their expeditions, and had lost some of their warriors. They wished my aid to revenge their deaths and wash their faces.

I required them to defer their retaliation until their robes were dressed and sent to the fort. They took hold of the business in good earnest, and every robe was soon ready for market.

It was now time to plant our tobacco, and we all moved in the direction of our planting-ground. The seed was put in, and the attending ceremonial gone through with. Our pacific business thus completed, the warriors began to prepare for war. Our horses had been but little used during the winter, and they were all fat and in high condition.

I took three hundred and sixty warriors and went against the Cheyennes. We discovered a moving village of sixty lodges, charged on it, and bore away nine scalps, with considerable booty, without losing one drop of blood. Pine Leaf was in my party, and being so unfortunate as not to count one coo, she was greatly out of humor, and blamed me for depriving her of the opportunity of killing an enemy. The truth is, we had no time to favor her, as I was desirous to secure our booty and get off without endangering the loss of a man.

Her young Black Foot prisoner had become quite a warrior; he went to war constantly, and bid fair to equal his captor in valor. He was already a match for an ordinary Sioux warrior, and took great pride in his sister Pine Leaf.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

All our war-parties returned without loss, and the nation resumed its customary good spirits. I then returned to the fort, where I rested all the summer.

My thoughts had for a long time past reverted to home. Year after year had rolled away, and now that I had attained middle life, they seemed to pass me with accelerated pace, and the question would intrude upon my mind, What had I done? When I abandoned myself seriously to reflection, it seemed as if I had slumbered away the last twelve years. Others had accomplished the same toils as myself, and were now enjoying the fruits of their labor, and living in luxury and ease. But what had been my career? and what advance had I made toward this desirable consummation? I had just visited the Indian territory to gratify a youthful thirst for adventure; I had narrowly escaped starvation in a service in which I had no interest; I had traversed the fastnesses of the far Rocky Mountains in summer heats and winter frosts; I had encountered savage beasts and wild men, until my deliverance was a prevailing miracle. By the mere badinage of a fellow-trapper I had been adopted among the savages, and had conformed my superior habits to their ruthless and untutored ways; I had accompanied them in their mutual slaughters, and dyed my hand crimson with the blood of victims who had never injured me; I had distinguished myself in my barbarian seclusion, and had risen to supreme command in the nation I had devoted myself to. And what had I to show for so much wasted energy, and such a catalogue of ruthless deeds? I had been the means of saving many a fellow-creature's life. Did they still owe me gratitude? Possibly some few did, while others had forgotten my name. In good truth, when I sought the results of my prolonged labors, I found I had simply wasted my time. I had bestowed years upon others, and only moments upon myself.

However, I still lived, and there was yet time to take more heed unto my ways. I resolved to go home and see my friends, and deliver myself from this present vagabond life. The attachments I had formed during my savage chieftainship still retained some hold upon my affections, and it was barely possible I might return to them, and end my days among my trusty braves. There at least was fidelity, and, when my soul should depart for the spirit land, their rude faith would prompt them to paint my bones, and treasure them until I should visit them from my ever-flowing hunting ground, and demand them at their hands.

Such sober thoughts as these occupied my mind during my summer residence at the fort. I had brought with me all the peltry we had accumulated, in order to be in season for the boats, which were soon to start for the lower fort. I had directed the village to follow along with whatever peltry they might collect before the departure of the boats.

In obedience to this instruction, about two hundred and fifty warriors came down, bringing their commodities with them; but the boats had gone, and I still was waiting at the fort.

One day a party of my men were out to hunt buffalo for our own use, when they accidentally scared up eleven Black Feet, who were lurking about on the look-out for horses. They chased them into our old camping-ground, and the fugitives had taken refuge in our old temporary fort. I was sitting at the fort the while, busily conversing with persons present; I heard the report of their guns, and supposed, if the affair proved serious, I should be promptly sent for. Bad Hand, one of my leaders, finally said, "They are fighting out yonder, and I don't suppose they can do any thing without we are with them. Let us go."

We each threw on a chief's coat, and went down to see how matters stood. I found the Black Feet fortified in their position, and our men ineffectually firing upon them. I ordered an immediate as-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

sault, placing myself at their head. We advanced a few paces at a rapid rate, when I fell senseless, with the blood gushing from my mouth in a stream. All supposed me mortally wounded, and I was carried into the fort to breathe my last.

The boats had left, and Tulleck happened to be starting after them just as I was carried in. Seeing my wounded condition, and every one pronouncing me in a dying state, he reported me as being dead at the lower fort, whence the news traveled to my friends in St. Louis that I had been killed in a fight with the Indians.

In an hour or two it was discovered that there was still life in me, and that I was reviving. I was examined: there was no bullet-wound on my body, and again it was proved that my broad-bladed hunting-knife (though not the same one) had averted the blow. It had been struck with an ounce of lead impelled with the full force of gunpowder. I speedily recovered, but continued sore for a long time.

Every Black Foot was killed by my men, who scaled their defense and leaped upon them in such numbers that they almost smothered them. Only four of my warriors were wounded. Intelligence of my injury was sent to the village, which was three weeks in reaching them. One thousand warriors instantly set out for the fort, all my wives accompanying them; but I had recovered before their arrival.

Our party had scarcely encamped outside the fort, when the Black Feet, who were always haunting us, stole about eight hundred head of horses. On discovering the theft, a large party started on their trail up the river. The depredators would have to cross the river to get home, and there was no crossing for horses nearer than fifteen miles, after which they had to go on to the Mussel Shell, a distance of twenty miles farther, and only ten from the fort. I knew that this would be the route of the fugitives, because it was their regular beat. I had had no thought of going until it suddenly occurred to me that the party in pursuit would most likely fail to overtake the thieves, while I had so admirable an opportunity to catch them on the Mussel Shell. I took a party, therefore, forded the river near the fort, and went on straight to the Mussel Shell, where I posted my men. Our unsuspecting victims came up, singing in great merriment, and driving our horses before them, all of which were jaded. I suffered them to approach close upon us, and then gave the word to charge. Never was a party taken more by surprise; they were too dumbfounded to offer resistance, and all we had to do was to chop them down. We had their twenty-four scalps in little more than the same number of seconds.

When the other party came up and found the work done, they thought we had been rained down there. They knew they had left us at the fort, and we had not passed them on the way, and where did we come from?

Pine Leaf was with the party, and she was ready to blow me off my horse. It was unfair to take the job out of their hands, after they had almost run their horses off their legs in the chase. I expressed my regret at the fortunate turn affairs had taken, and promised never to offend in the same manner again; but it was a long while before I could banter her into good humor.

I remained at the fort all the summer (as before stated), intending to go down the river on my way to St. Louis with the last boats in the fall. While idling there, I found the five men whom I had rescued from starvation in a penniless condition, and unable to go to work again. It seemed the company had issued orders to their agents to furnish no more outfits to free trappers on their personal credit, as the risk was too great, from their extreme liability to be killed by the Indians.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

To engage to work for the company at the price they were paying hands was only perpetuating their poverty; for they were running the same risk of their lives as if trapping for themselves, and their remuneration was but as one to ten. They were down-hearted, and knew not what to do. Considering their sad condition, I determined to befriend them, and risk the chances. I therefore offered to give them an excellent outfit, and direct them to the best beaver-ground in the Crow nation, where they would be protected from all harm by my Crow warriors as my friends, my interest to be one half of the proceeds.

This offer was cheerfully accepted by the five men, and they were highly elated at the prospect. I then acquainted the Crows that those men were my friends; that they were the remains of a party of eleven, of whom six had been killed by the Black Feet, who had despoiled them of every thing they had, and that I had found these in the prairie almost famished to death. I had engaged them to stay in the nation and trap for me, and I wished my faithful Crow braves to protect them in their pursuit, and suffer none to offer them molestation. This they all readily promised to do, and were even pleased with the trust; for it was a belief with the Crows that the beavers in their streams were too numerous ever to be diminished. My bosom friend offered to remain with them, to show them the best streams, and render them all the assistance in his power. He was a most valuable auxiliary, as his skill in trapping I never saw excelled. They went to work, and met with extraordinary success; my share of their labors of less than three months amounted to five thousand dollars.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Departure for St. Louis.—Visit Fort Union.—Fort Clarke.—Descend to the A-rick-a-ra Country.—Am taken Prisoner.—Extraordinary Means of Release.—Reach St. Louis.—Scarcely recognized by my Sisters.—Changes.—Estrangement of Friends.—Sigh for my Indian Home.

THE Sparrowhawk nation was all assembled at the fort, to take leave of the Medicine Calf for several moons. The boats had arrived filled with a fresh stock of goods, and the nation made purchases to the amount of many thousands of dollars. The boats being now ready to return again, I made a short address to my people before I bade them adieu.

“Sparrowhawks!” I said, “I am going to leave you for a few moons, to visit my friends among the white men. I shall return to you by Green Grass, when the boats come back from the country of the whites. While I am away, I desire you to remember the counsel I have often given you. I wish you to send out no war-parties, because you want for nothing, and your nation is feared by all the neighboring tribes. Keep a good look-out over your horses, so as to afford the enemy no opportunity of stealing them. It is through carelessness in the horse-guards that one half the horses are lost, and it is the loss of horses that leads to half the battles that you fight. It is better not to have your horses stolen in the first place, than to steal more in the place of those you have lost.

“I also commend Mr. Tulleck to your care, as well as all the inmates of the fort. Visit them often, and see that they are not besieged or starved out by their enemies. Do not let the Black Feet or any other bad Indians harm them. Behave yourselves as becomes my faithful Crows. Adieu!”

They all promised obedience to my instructions, and I was soon on board. The boats were cast loose, and we were borne rapidly down stream by the swift current of the Yellow Stone.

We called at Fort Union, and I staid there three days. Here I had a fine canoe built, and two oarsmen furnished me to carry me to St. Louis. I was bearer of a large package of letters; and when my little craft was finished, I stepped on board and launched out upon the swift-rolling current of

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

the Missouri. After the brilliant opportunities I had had of realizing a princely fortune, my only wealth consisted of an order upon the company for seven thousand eight hundred dollars. Arriving at Fort Clarke, we made another short stay. The A-rick-a-ras, whose country was some hundred and fifty miles farther down, had just stolen nearly all the horses belonging to the fort. Bellemaire, the interpreter of the fort, proposed to me to go after them, and see if we could recover some of the horses. I consented, and we went down to their village in my canoe, and on our arrival there found them all dancing. Antoine Garro, with two relatives, were in the number. On seeing our approach, one shouted, "Here come white men!" and Garro and his brother instantly sprang toward us and pushed us into a lodge, where we were apparently prisoners. A council was summoned to decide upon our fate, and I had but slight hopes of ever seeing St. Louis. A young Indian came at that moment, and mentioned in a whisper to Peter that there was a large boat approaching. He made a long harangue before the others, in which he earnestly and energetically declaimed against taking the lives of white men. He concluded his oration by saying, "You have now my opinion, and remember, if you decide upon taking these white men's lives, I stay with you no longer." He then left the council and went down to the boat, where he advised the occupants to cross to the other side of the river, as the Indians were at that moment deliberating upon the fate of Bellemaire and three others. Garro's father happened to be on board, who was a great man among the Indians, and, on learning what business was in hand, he provided himself with a club, and entered the village with his son Peter. He then set about the council, and administered to all the members such a hearty thrashing, laying about him as if fighting wild bulls, that I thought he must surely slay some of them.

"There!" exclaimed the old man, after having belabored them till he was out of breath, "I'll teach you to deliberate on the lives of white men, dogs as ye are!"

The Indians offered no resistance, and said not a word. We remained all night with old Garro's company, and returned to the fort in the morning. Bellemaire recovered his own horses, but could obtain none belonging to the fort. We called at all the forts that lay in our way, to collect what dispatches they had to send, making but brief stay, however, as I was impatient to be getting on. At Fort Canaille I obtained a passenger, a son of Mr. Pappen, who was going to St. Louis, and I received reiterated charges to be very careful of him.

Soon after our departure from the fort there came on a cold rain-storm, which lasted several hours; the storm raged fiercely, and we had to make fast to a snag in the middle of the river to save ourselves from driving ashore. I had my Indian fire-striker, and, amid all the wind and rain, I repeatedly lit my pipe. My young passenger was astonished at the performance. "If you can strike a fire," he exclaimed, "in such a storm as this, I do not fear perishing."

When the storm had somewhat abated, we landed to encamp. I shot two fat wild turkeys, which were quite a rarity to me, after having lived so many years on buffalo-meat, there being no turkeys in the Crow country. On arriving at Jefferson City I felt quite sick, and showed symptoms of fever; but I was anxious to reach home without laying up. A steamboat coming down the river, I went on board, canoe and all, and was soon landed on the dock of St. Louis.

It was fourteen years since I had last seen the city, and what a difference was observable in those few years! But I was too sick to take much notice of things, and hastened to my sister's house, accompanied by the carpenter of the boat.

He rapped; the door was opened by my younger sister; I was supporting myself against the wall.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Greetings passed between them, for my companion was acquainted with my family; and he then informed her that he was the bearer of sad news — her brother James was dead.

My sister Louise began to cry, and informed him they had learned the news some weeks since. Then turning to me, he said, “Come in, Jim, and see your sister cry for you.”

I advanced, and addressed her in my old familiar manner, “How do you do, Lou?”

I must have been a curious looking object for an affectionate sister to recognize. All my clothing consisted of dressed antelope, deer, and the skins of mountain sheep, highly ornamented by my Indian wives. My long hair, as black as the raven’s wing, descended to my hips, and I presented more the appearance of a Crow than that of a civilized being.

She gazed at me for a moment with a searching look, and then exclaiming, “My God, it is my brother!” she flew into my arms, and was for some time unable to speak.

At length she said, “We received a letter informing us of your death, and that Mr. Tulleck had seen you borne into Fort Cass dead.”

My elder sister, Matilda, was up stairs, entertaining a few female friends, and Lou bounded up stairs to acquaint her that her brother James wished to speak to her.

Thinking her to be jesting, she said, “Are you not ashamed of yourself to jest on such a subject?” and she shed tears at thus having me recalled to remembrance.

Louise asseverated her earnestness, and Matilda reproved her for her wantonness, but would not budge to go and see for herself. At length a Mrs. Le Fevre said,

“Matilda, I believe she is in earnest, and if you do not go and see, I will.”

She had been a child with me, and we used to repeat our catechism together; now she was married, and the mother of several children.

She came tripping down stairs into my sister’s apartment, making a ceremonious courtesy as she entered. My sister introduced her to me, asking me if I did not recollect my commère (for we were baptized together). I had forgotten her, but the mention of this circumstance recalled her to my mind, and there was another embracing.

Her faith being thus confirmed, my sister Matilda was called down, and my reception from her was even more cordial than from the preceding friends. She was a woman of great warmth of feeling, and her heart was full to overflowing with the emotions my name had called up. She was the eldest of the family, and since our mother’s death she had been at once mother and sister to us all. Although I was the vagrant of the family, I still lived in her sisterly heart, and the supposition that my earthly career was closed had only hallowed my memory in her affections.

This was my second reception by my relatives after I had been supposed dead. One by my savage friends, who, in welcoming me as their long-lost child, exhibited all the genuine emotions of untutored nature; and this second by my civilized friends, who, if less energetic in their demonstrations of attachment, showed equal heartfelt joy, equal sincerity, and far superior decorum.

The following morning I visited the company’s office and delivered my letters. I became too weak to walk home, and Mr. Chouteau very obligingly drove me back in his carriage. I was compelled to take to my bed, where I was confined for several days, under good medical attendance, and most assiduously attended by my relatives.

Their answers to my many inquiries confounded me entirely.

“Where is my father?”

He went back to Virginia, and died there many years ago.”

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“Where are my brothers?”

They are scattered about the country.” “Where is such and such a friend?”

“In his grave.” Where is Eliza?”

“She was married a month ago, after receiving intelligence of your certain death.”

I ceased my querying, and averted my eyes from my sister’s gaze.

And this, I mused, is my return home after years of bright anticipations of welcome! This is my secure and sunshiny haven, after so long and dangerous a voyage! My father dead, my brothers dispersed, my friends in their graves, and my loved one married! She did well — I have no right to complain — she is lost to me forever! If a man’s home exists in the heart of his friends, with the death and alienation of those friends his cherished home fades away, and he is again a wanderer upon the earth.

I do not know whether it was disappointment at so much death, mutation, and estrangement, or whether I bore the disease immediately in my own heart, but I was disappointed in my return home; the anticipations I had formed were not realized — a feeling of cynicism passed over me. I thought of my Indian home, and of the unsophisticated hearts I had left behind me. Their lives were savage, and their perpetual animosities repulsive, but with this dark background there was much vivid coloring in relief. If the Indian was unrelenting, and murdered with his lance, his battle-axe, and his knife, his white brother was equally unfeeling, and had ways of torturing his victim, if less violent, not the less certain. The savage is artless, and when you win his admiration there is no envious reservation to prompt him to do injustice to your name. You live among them honored; and on your death, your bones are stored religiously in their great cave along with others of preceding generations, to be each year visited, and painted, and reflected on by a host of devoted companions. There is not the elegance there, the luxury, the refined breeding, but there is rude plenty, prairies studded with horses, and room to wander with out any man to call your steps in question. My child was there, and his mother, whom I loved; a return there was in no way unnatural. I had acquired their habits, and was in some manner useful to them. I had no tie to hold me here, and I already almost determined upon returning to my Indian home.

Such thoughts as these, as I lay on my sick-bed, passed continuously through my mind. A few of my early friends, as they heard of my return, came one after the other to visit me; but they were all changed. The flight of time had wrought furrows upon their smooth brows, and the shadow of the wings of Time was resting upon the few fair cheeks I had known in my younger days.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

Disagreeable Rencounters in St. Louis.—Messenger arrives from Fort Cass.—Imminent Peril of the Whites from the Infuriated Crows.—The Cause.—Immediate Return.—Incidents of my Arrival.—Pine Leaf substituted for Eliza.—Last Battle with the Black Feet.—Final Adieu to the Crows.

IT now comes in the order of relation to describe two or three unpleasant rencounters I had with various parties in St. Louis, growing out of the misunderstanding (already related) between the Crows and Mr. Fitzpatrick’s party. I had already heard reports in the mountains detrimental to my character for my supposed action in the matter, but I had never paid much attention to them. Friends had cautioned me that there were large sums of money offered for my life, and that several men had even undertaken to earn the rewards. I could not credit such friendly intimations; still I thought, on the principle that there is never smoke but there is fire, that it would be as well

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

to keep myself a little on my guard.

I had recovered from my sickness, and I spent much of my time about town. My friends repeatedly inquired of me if I had seen Fitzpatrick. Wondering how so much interest could attach to my meeting with that man, I asked one day what reason there was for making the inquiry. My friend answered, "I don't wish you to adduce me as authority; but there are strong threats of taking your life for an alleged robbery of Fitzpatrick by the Crow nation, in which you were deeply concerned."

I saw now what to prepare for, although I still inclined to doubt that any man, possessed of ordinary perceptions, could charge me with an offense of which I was so manifestly innocent. True, I had met Fitzpatrick several times, and, instead of his former cordial salutation, it was with difficulty he addressed a civil word to me.

Shortly after this conversation with my friend I went to the St. Louis Theatre. Between the pieces I had stepped to the saloon to obtain some refreshments, and I saw Fitzpatrick enter, with four other not very respectable citizens. They advanced directly toward me. Fitzpatrick then pointed me out to them, saying, "There's the Crow."

"Then," said the others, "we are Black Feet, and let us have his scalp."

They immediately drew their knives and rushed on me.

I then thought of my friend's salutary counsel to be on my guard, but I had no weapon about me. With the agility of a cat I sprung over the counter, and commenced passing tumblers faster than they had been in the habit of receiving them. I had felled one or two of my assailants, and I saw I was in for a serious disturbance.

A friend (and he is still living in St. Louis, wealthy and influential) stepped behind the bar, and, slapping me on the shoulder, said, "Look out, Beckwourth, you will hurt some of your friends."

I replied that my friends did not appear to be very numerous just then.

"You have friends present," he added; and, passing an enormous bowie-knife into my hand, stepped out again.

Now I was all right, and felt myself a match for the five ruffians. My practice with the battle-axe, in a case where the quickness of thought required a corresponding rapidity of action, then came into play.

I made a sortie from my position on to the open floor, and challenged the five bullies to come on; at the same time (which, in my excited state, was natural enough) calling them by the hardest names.

My mind was fully made up to kill them if they had only come at me; my arm was nervous; and my friends, who knew me at that time, can tell whether I was quick-motivated or not. I had been in situations where I had to ply my battle-axe with rapidity and precision to redeem my own skull. I was still in full possession of my belligerent powers, and I had the feeling of justice to sustain me.

I stood at bay, with my huge bowie-knife drawn, momentarily hesitating whether to give the Crow war-hoop or not, when Sheriff Buzby laid hands on me, and requested me to be quiet. Although boiling with rage, I respected the officer's presence, and the assassins marched off to the body of the theatre. I followed them to the door, and defied them to descend to the street with me; but the sheriff becoming angry, and threatening me with the calaboose, I straightway left the theatre.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I stood upon the steps, and a friend coming up, I borrowed a well-loaded pistol of him, and moved slowly away, thinking that five men would surely never allow themselves to be cowed by one man. Shortly after, I perceived the whole party approaching, and, stepping back on the side-walk in front of a high wall, I waited their coming up. On they came, swaggering along, assuming the appearance of intoxication, and talking with drunken incoherency.

When they had approached near enough to suit me, I ordered them to halt, and cross over to the other side of the street.

“Who are you?” inquired one of them.

“I am he whom you are after, Jim Beckwourth; and if you advance one step farther, I will blow the tops of your heads off.”

“You are drunk, ar’n’t you?” said one of the party. “No, I am not drunk,” I replied; “I never drink any thing to make a dog of me like yourselves.”

I stood during this short colloquy in the middle of the side-walk, with my pistol ready cocked in one hand and my huge bowie-knife in the other; one step forward would have been fatal to any one of them.

“Oh, he’s drunk,” said one; “let’s cross over to the other side.” And all five actually did pass over, which, if any of them is still living and has any regard for truth, he must admit to this day.

I then proceeded home. My sister had been informed of the rencounter, and on my return home I found her frightened almost to death; for Forsyth (one of the party) had long been the terror of St. Louis, having badly maimed many men, and the information that he was after me led her to the conclusion that I would surely be killed.

A few days after I met two of the party (Forsyth and Kinney), when Forsyth accosted me, “Your name is Beckwourth, I believe?”

I answered, “That is my name.”

“I understand that you have been circulating the report that I attempted to assassinate you?”

“I have told that you and your gang have been endeavoring to murder me,” I replied, “and I repeat it here.”

“I will teach you to repeat such tales about me,” he said, fiercely, and drew his knife, which he called his Arkansas tooth-pick, from his pocket.

The knife I had provided myself with against any emergency was too large to carry about me conveniently, so I carried it at my back, having the handle within reach of my finger and thumb. Seeing his motion, I whipped it out in a second.

“Now,” said I, “you miserable ruffian, draw your knife and come on! I will not leave a piece of you big enough to choke a dog.”

“Come,” interposed Kinney, “let us not make blackguards of ourselves; let us be going.” And they actually did pass on without drawing a weapon.

I was much pleased that this happened in a public part of the city, and in open day; for the bully, whom it was believed the law could not humble, was visibly cowed, and in the presence of a large concourse of men. I had no more trouble from the party afterward.

In connection with this affair, it is but justice to myself to mention that, when Captain Sublet, Fitzpatrick, and myself happened to meet in the office of Mr. Chouteau, Captain Sublet interrogated Fitzpatrick upon the cause of his hostility toward me, and represented to him at length the open absurdity of his trumping up a charge of robbery of his party in the mountains against me.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Being thus pressed, Fitzpatrick used the following words: "I never believed the truth of the charge myself; but when I am in the company of sundry persons, they try to persuade me into the belief of it, in order to raise trouble. I repeat, it is not my belief at this present moment, and I will not be persuaded into believing it again." Then turning to me, he said, "Beckwourth, I have done you a great injustice by ever harboring such a thought. I acknowledge it freely, and I ask your forgiveness for the same. Let us be as we formerly were, friends, and think no more about it." Friends we therefore mutually pledged ourselves, and friends we have since remained up to this day. While in town I called on General Ashley, but he happened to be away from home. I was about leaving the house, when a melodious voice invited me in to await the general's return. "My husband will soon be back," the lady said, "and will be, doubtless, pleased to see you."

I turned, and really thought I was looking on an angel's face. She moved toward me with such grace, and uttered such dulcet and harmonious sounds, that I was riveted to the spot. It was the first time I had seen the lady of General Ashley.

I accepted her invitation, and was shown into a neat little parlor, the lady taking a seat at the window to act as my entertainer until the return of the general.

"If I mistake not," she said "you are a mountaineer?"

I put on all the airs possible, and replied, "Yes, madam, I was with General Ashley when he first went to the mountains."

Her grace and affability so charmed me that I could not fix my ideas upon all the remarks she addressed to me. I was conscious I was not showing myself off to advantage, and she kept me saying "Yes, madam" and "No, madam," without any correct understanding of the appropriateness, until she espied the general approaching.

"Here comes the general," the lady said; "I knew he would not be long away."

Shortly the general entered the lodge, and fixed his eye upon me in an instant, at the same time whipping his pantaloons playfully with his riding-whip.

Rising from a better chair than the whole Crow nation possessed, I said, without ceremony,

"How do you do, general?"

"Gracious heavens! is this you, Beckwourth?" and he seized my hand with the grip of a vice, and nearly shook off my scalp, while his lady laughed heartily at the rough salutation of two old mountaineers.

"My dear," said the general, "let me introduce you to Mr. Beckwourth, of whom you have heard me so often make mention. This is the man that saved my life on three different occasions in the Rocky Mountains; had it not been for our visitor, you would not have been Mrs. Ashley at this moment. But you look sickly, James; what is the matter?"

I replied, "I had been confined to my bed since my arrival in St. Louis."

We had a long conversation about the mountains and my residence with the Crow nation. I was very hospitably entertained by my former commander and his amiable lady, and when I left, the promise was extorted from me to make repeated calls upon them so long as I remained in the city.

About the latter end of March a courier arrived from Fort Cass, bringing tidings of a most alarming character. He had come alone through all that vast extent of Indian territory without being molested. It seemed as though a special providence had shielded him.

He found me in the theatre, and gave me a hasty rehearsal of the business. It seems that a par-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ty of trappers, who had heard of my departure for St. Louis, having fallen in with a number of Crows, had practiced upon them in regard to me.

“Your great chief is gone to the white nation,” said the trapper spokesman.

“Yes, he has gone to see his friend, the great white chief.”

“And you will never see him again.”

“Yes, he will come back in the season of green grass.”

“No, the great white chief has killed him.”

“Killed him!”

“Yes.”

“What had he done that he should kill him?”

He was angry because he left the whites and came to live with the Indians — because he fought for them.”

It is the greatest wonder in the world that every one of the trapper party did not lose their scalps on the spot. If the Indians had had any prominent leader among them, they infallibly would have been all killed, and have paid the penalty of their mischievous lying. Unfortunately for the Crows, they believe all the words of a white man, thinking that his tongue is always straight. These trappers, by their idle invention, had jeopardized the lives of all the white men in the mountains.

The Indians said no more, but dashed off to the village, and carried the news of my death.

“How do you know that he is dead?” they inquired.

“Because the whites told us so, and their tongues are not forked. The great white chief was angry because he staid with our people, and he killed him.”

A council was immediately held to decide upon measures of vengeance. It was determined to proceed to the fort and kill every white man there, and divide all the goods, guns, and ammunition among themselves; then to send out parties in every direction, and make a general massacre of every white man. Innumerable fingers were cut off, and hair without measure, in mourning for me; a costly sacrifice was then made to the Great Spirit, and the nation next set about carrying out their plans of vengeance.

The village moved toward the fort. Many were opposed to being too hasty, but all agreed that their decisions should be acted upon. The night before the village reached the fort, four women ran on in advance of the village to acquaint Mr. Tulleck of the sanguinary intention of the Crows. Every precaution was taken to withstand them — every gun was loaded. The village arrived, and, contrary to all precedent, the gates of the fort were closed.

The savages were infuriated. The whites had heard of the death of the Medicine Calf, and had closed the gates to prevent the anticipated vengeance. The inmates of the fort were in imminent peril; horror was visible on their countenances. They might hold their position for a while, but an investment by from ten to fifteen thousand savages must reduce it eventually. Tulleck was seated on the fort in great perplexity. Many of the veteran Crow warriors were pacing to and fro outside the inclosure. Yellow Belly was provisional head chief during my absence. Tulleck called him to him.

He rode up and inquired, “What is the matter? Why are your gates shut against us?”

“I had a dream last night,” replied Tulleck, and my medicine told me I had to fight my own people to-day.” “Yes, your bird told you truth; he did not lie. Your chief has killed the Medicine Calf, and we are going to kill you all.”

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“But the Medicine Calf is not dead; he will certainly come back again.”

“Yes, he is dead. The whites told us so, and they never lie. You need not try to escape by saying he is not dead, for we will not believe your words. You can not escape us; you can neither dig into the ground, nor fly into the air; if you attempt to run, I will put five thousand warriors upon your trail, and follow you to the white chief: even there you shall not escape us. We have loved the whites, but we now hate them, and we are all angry. You have but little meat in the fort, and I know it; when that is gone, you die.”

My son, “little Jim,” was standing near the fort, and Mr. Tulleck called him to him. The child’s answer was, “Away! you smell bloody!”

Mr. Tulleck, however, induced him to approach, and said, “Black Panther, I have always loved your father, and you, and all the warriors. Have I ever told you a lie?”

“No.”

“They have told you that your father is dead, but they have lied; he lives, and will come back to you. The white chief has not killed him. My words are true. Do you believe your friend, and the friend of your father?”

“Yes. I love my father; he is a great chief. When he is here, I feel happy — I feel strong; but if he is dead, I shall never feel happy any more. My mother has cried four suns for him, and tells me I shall see him no more, which makes me cry.”

“Your father shall come back, my son, if you will listen to what I now say to you.”

“I will listen.”

“Go, then, and ask Yellow Belly to grant me time to send for your father to the country of the white men, and if he be not here by the time the cherries shall have turned red, I will then lay down my head, and you may cut it off, and the warriors may kill us all, for we will not fight against them. Go and tell the chief that he must grant what I have told you for your sake, and if he does not listen to you, you will never see your father any more. Go!”

The child accordingly went to Yellow Belly, and begged him to grant one request. The chief, supposing that he was about to request permission to kill a particular man at the fort, said, “Certainly, my son; any request you make shall be granted. Speak! what is it?”

The child then informed Yellow Belly what the Crane had said — that he would have his father back by the time the cherries turned red, or that he would suffer his head to be cut off, and deliver up his whites to the Crows, and would not fight.

“It shall be so, my son,” Yellow Belly assented; “go and tell the Crane to send for your father, for not a warrior shall follow the trail of the white runner, or even look upon it. If he does as he says, the whites shall all live; if he fails, they shall all die. Now go and harangue the people, and tell all the warriors that the Crane is going to send for your father, and the warrior who follows the runner’s trail shall die. Yellow Belly has said it.”

He mounted a horse, and did as the chief had directed.

Joseph Pappen volunteered to deliver the message to me: it was encountering a fearful hazard. His inducement was a bonus of one thousand dollars.

The morning following the receipt of this intelligence I saw Mr. Chouteau, who was in receipt of a letter from Mr. Tulleck by the same messenger. He was in great uneasiness of mind. There was over one hundred thousand dollars’ worth of goods in the fort, and he urged me to start without delay. The distance from St. Louis was estimated at two thousand seven hundred and fifty miles,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

and the safety of the men rendered the greatest expedition necessary. Any sum I might ask would be willingly paid me.

“Go!” said he; “engage as many men as you wish; purchase all the horses you require: we will pay the bills.” He also furnished me with instructions to all the agents on the way to provide me with whatever I inquired for. The price I demanded for my services was five thousand dollars, which was, without scruple, allowed me. I hired two men to accompany me (Pappen being one), to whom I gave fifteen hundred and one thousand dollars respectively.

Our horses being procured, and every necessary supplied us, away we started upon our journey, which occupied us fifty-three days, as the traveling was bad. Our last resting-place was Fort Clarke. Thence we struck directly across through a hostile Indian country, arriving in safety within hailing distance of the fort before the cherries were ripe, although they were very near it. I rested on a gentle rise of ground to contemplate the mass of people I saw before me. There they lay, in their absorbing devotedness to their absent chief; day and night, for long months, they had staid by that wooden inclosure, watching for my return, or to take fearful vengeance upon their prey. They had loved the whites, but those whites had now killed their chief because he had returned to his own people to fight for his kindred and nation — the chief who had loved them much, and made them rich and strong. They were now feared by their enemies, and respected by all; their prairies were covered with thousands of horses, and their lodges were full of the wealth derived from the whites. For this the white chief had killed him, and a war of extermination was denounced against them. The fort and its inmates were within their grasp; if the Crane would redeem his pledge and produce their missing chief, all were well; but if the appointed time passed by, and he were not forthcoming, it was fearful to contemplate the vengeance they would inflict. When I thought of those contemptible wretches, who, merely to wanton with the faith that the artless savages reposed in them, could fabricate a lie, and arouse all this impending danger, I felt that a death at the stake would not transcend their deserts.

I put my horse into speed, and rode in among the Indians. I made the usual salutation on arriving before them, and, riding through their ranks sullenly,

I repeated two or three times, “I am angry!” Every eye was turned on me, but not a warrior stirred; the women seized their children and ran into lodges. The Medicine Calf had arrived, but he was angry.

I advanced to the strong and well-secured gate of the fort, and struck it a heavy blow with my battle-axe. “Halloo, boys!” I shouted; “open your gate, and admit a friend.”

“Jim Beckwourth! By heavens, Jim Beckwourth!” was repeated from tongue to tongue. The gates flew open upon their massive hinges, and, as I rode through, I said, “Leave the gates open, boys; there is no longer danger.”

I exchanged but a few words with Mr. Tulleck, as I had a difficult business before me. The people I had to mollify were subject to strange caprices, and I had not resolved what policy to adopt toward them.

I went and sat down sullenly, hanging my head so low that my chin rested upon my breast: this was a token of my great displeasure. The braves came round me slowly. My wives all formed themselves in a circular line, and marched round me, each one pausing as she passed to place her hand on the back of my neck.

The brave old Yellow Belly was the first one to speak, and what he said was to the purpose.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“What is the matter with our chief?” he inquired; “who has angered the Medicine Calf?”

“Did I not tell you,” I said, “that I left you in charge of the Crane and these other whites during my absence? And what do I behold on my return?”

“Yes, I told you I would take care of the Crane and these other whites while you were gone, and I have done so. My warriors have killed buffalo for them to eat, and our women have brought them wood and water for their use, and they are all alive. Look! Yonder is the Crane; and his white people are all with him — are they dead?”

“No; but you intended to kill them.”

“Yes; but listen: if you had not returned before the cherries turned red, we should have killed them all, and every other white man besides that we could have found in the Am-ma-ha-bas (Rocky Mountains). Now hear what I have to say:

“Suppose I am now going to war, or I am going to die. I come to you and say, ‘My friend, I am going to die yonder; I want you to be a kind friend to my children, and protect them after I depart for the land of the Great Spirit.’ I go out and die. My wives come to you with their fingers cut off, their hair gone, and the warm blood pouring from their bodies. They are crying mournfully, and your heart pities them. Among the children is a son in whom you behold the image of your friend who is no more. The mother of that child you know to be good and virtuous. You have seen her triumphant entry into the medicine lodge, where you have beheld so many cut to pieces in attempting the same. You say, Here is the virtuous wife of my friend; she is beloved and respected by the whole nation. She asks you to revenge her loss — the loss that has deprived her of her husband and the child of its father. In such a case, what would you do?’ Speak!”

“I should certainly take my warriors,” I replied, “and go and avenge your loss.”

“That is just what I was going to do for your relatives, friends, and nation. Now punish me if I have done wrong.”

I had nothing to say in answer, and my head again fell — the spell was not yet broken. The Crow Belt, an old and crafty brave, whispered to a young warrior, who rose in silence, and immediately left the fort.

Mrs. Tulleck shortly presented herself, and commenced tantalizing the Crows.

“What are your warriors waiting for, who have been thirsting so many suns to kill the whites? You have been brave for a long while; where is all your bravery now? The gates are set wide open, and only three have joined the few whites whom you thirsted to kill; why don’t you begin? What are you afraid of?”

She continued in this aggravating strain, the warriors hearing it all, although they did not appear to notice her. The woman’s voice was agreeably relieved by tones uttered outside the gate, which at that moment fell upon my ear, and which I readily recognized as the voice of Pine Leaf. She was haranguing her warriors in an animated manner, and delivering what, in civilized life, would be called her valedictory address.

“Warriors!” she said, “I am now about to make a great sacrifice for my people. For many winters I have been on the war-path with you; I shall tread that path no more; you have now to fight the enemy without me. When I laid down my needle and my beads, and took up the battle-axe and the lance, my arm was weak; but few winters had passed over my head. My brother had been killed by the enemy, and was gone to the hunting-ground of the Great Spirit. I saw him in my dreams. He would beckon for his sister to come to him. It was my heart’s desire to go to him,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

but I wished first to become a warrior, that I might avenge his death upon his foes before I went away.

“I said I would kill one hundred foes before I married any living man. I have more than kept my word, as our great chief and medicine men can tell you. As my arm increased in strength, the enemy learned to fear me. I have accomplished the task I set before me; henceforward I leave the war-paths of my people; I have fought my last battle, and hurled my last lance; I am a warrior no more.

“To-day the Medicine Calf has returned. He has returned angry at the follies of his people, and they fear that he will again leave them. They believe that he loves me, and that my devotion to him will attach him to the nation. I therefore bestow myself upon him; perhaps he will be contented with me, and will leave us no more. Warriors, farewell!”

She then entered the fort, and said, “Sparrowhawks, one who has followed you for many winters is about to leave your war-path forever. When have you seen Bar-chee-am-pe shrink from the charge? You have seen her lance red with the blood of the enemy more than ten times ten. You know what her vow was, and you know she has kept her word. Many of you have tried to make her break her word, which you knew she had passed to the Great Spirit when she lost her brother. But you found that, though a woman, she had the heart of a warrior.

“Do not turn your heads, but listen. You have seen that a woman can keep her word. During the many winters that I have followed you faithfully in the war-path, you have refused to let me into the war-path secret, although you tell it to striplings on their second excursion. It was unfair that I could not know it; that I must be sent away with the women and children, when the secret was made known to those one battle braves. If you had seen fit to tell it to me, it would have been secret until my death. But let it go; I care no farther for it.

“I am about to sacrifice what I have always chosen to preserve — my liberty. The back of my steed has been my lodge and my home. On his back, armed with my lance and battle-axe, I knew no fear. The medicine chief, when fighting by my side, has displayed a noble courage and a lofty spirit, and he won from my heart, what no other warrior has ever won, the promise to marry him when my vow was fulfilled. He has done much for our people; he has fought their enemies, and spilled his blood for them. When I shall become his wife, I shall be fond and faithful to him. My heart feels pure before the Great Spirit and the sun. When I shall be no more on the war-path, obey the voice of the Medicine Calf, and you will grow stronger and stronger; we shall continue a great and a happy people, and he will leave us no more. I have done.”

She then approached me, every eye being intently fixed upon her. She placed her hand under my chin, and lifted my head forcibly up. “Look at me,” she said; “I know that your heart is crying for the follies of the people. But let it cry no more. I know you have ridden day and night to keep us from evil. You have made us strong, and your desire is to preserve us strong. Now stay at home with us; you will not be obliged to go to war more than twice in twelve moons. And now, my friend, I am yours after you have so long been seeking me. I believe you love me, for you have often told me you did, and I believe you have not a forked tongue. Our lodge shall be a happy one; and when you depart to the happy hunting-ground, I will be already there to welcome you. This day I become your wife — Bar-chee-am-pe is a warrior no more.”

This relieved me of my melancholy. I shook the braves by the hand all round, and narrated much of my recent adventures to them. When I came to my danger in the A-rick-a-ra country, they

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

were almost boiling with wrath, and asked my permission to go and exterminate them. Pine Leaf left the fort with my sisters to go and dress for the short marriage ceremony. She had so long worn the war costume that female apparel seemed hardly to become her; she returned so transformed in appearance that the beholder could scarcely recognize her for the same person. When I visited her lodge in the evening I found her dressed like a queen, with a lodge full of her own and my relatives to witness the nuptials. She was naturally a pensive, deep-thinking girl; her mind seemed absorbed in some other object than worldly matters. It might be that her continual remembrance of her brother's early fall had tinged her mind with melancholy, or it might be constitutional to her; but for an Indian girl she had more of that winning grace, more of those feminine blandishments — in short, she approached nearer to our ideal of a woman than her savage birth and breed would seem to render possible.

This was my last marriage in the Crow nation. Pine Leaf, the pride and admiration of her people, was no longer the dauntless and victorious warrior, the avenger of the fall of her brother. She retired from the field of her glory, and became the affectionate wife of the Medicine Calf.

The difficulty being now entirely removed, we quitted our encampment, and went on a hunting excursion. We were away but a few days, and then returned to the fort. One morning it was discovered a large drove of horses was missing. A party was dispatched along the trail, which conducted them precisely the same route they took before. I raised a party, and again struck across the Mussel Shell, and, finding I was before the fugitives, I secreted my warriors as before. We had waited but a few moments, when I saw the enemy emerge from the pines, not more than a mile distant. Pine Leaf and my little wife were with me. My new bride, as she saw the enemy approach, lost all recollection of her new character; her eye assumed its former martial fire, and, had she had her former war equipments, beyond all doubt she would have joined in the dash upon the foe.

The pursued, which was a party of Black Feet, were hard pressed by their pursuers in the rear, but very shortly they were harder pushed in the van. When within proper distance, I gave the word Hoo-ki-hi (charge), and every Black Foot instantly perished. So sudden was our attack, they had not time to fire a gun. I struck down one man, and, looking round for another to ride at, I found they were all dead. The pursuers did not arrive in time to participate in the fight. We took thirty-eight scalps, and recovered one thousand horses, with which we returned to the fort. This was my last battle in the Crow nation; the scalp I relieved the Black Foot of was the last I ever took for them. Before my sudden recall from St. Louis I had entered into negotiations which I now felt I would like to complete. I had informed the Crows, after my marriage with Pine Leaf, that I must return to the country of the whites, as they had called me away before I had had time to finish my business. When the boats were ready to go down stream I stepped on board, and proceeded as far as Fort Union. Previous to departing, I informed the Crows that I should be back in four seasons, as I at that time supposed I should. I told them to credit no reports of my death, for they were all false; the whites would never kill me. Pine Leaf inquired if I would certainly come back. I assured her that, if life was preserved to me, I would. I had been married but five weeks when I left, and I have never seen her since.

I was disappointed in my expectation of entering into a satisfactory engagement to the agent of the company, so I kept on to St. Louis. In good truth, I was tired of savage life under any aspect. I knew that, if I remained with them, it would be war and carnage to the end of the chapter, and

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

my mind sickened at the repetition of such scenes. Savage life admits of no repose to the man who desires to retain the character of a great brave; there is no retiring upon your laurels. I could have become a pipe-man, but I did not like to descend to that; and, farther, I could not reconcile myself to a life of inactivity. Pine Leaf and my little wife would have excited their powers of pleasing to procure me happiness; but I felt I was not doing justice to myself to relapse irretrievably into barbarism.

It certainly grieved me to leave a people who reposed so much trust in me, and with whom I had been associated so long; and, indeed, could I have made an engagement with the American Fur Company, as I had hoped to do, I should have redeemed my promise to the Crows, and possibly have finished my days with them. But, being mistaken in my calculations, I was led on to scenes wilder and still more various, yet dignified with the name of greater utility, because associated with the interests of civilization.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Return to St. Louis.—Interview with General Gaines.—The Muleteers' Company.—Departure for Florida.—Wreck of the "Maid of New York."—Arrival at Fort Brooke.—Tampa Bay.—Bearer of Dispatches to General Jessup.—Battle of O-ke-cho-be.—Anecdotes and Incidents.

I HAD speedy passage to St. Louis, and arrived there after an absence of five months. I mentioned that I had left some business unsettled at the time of my sudden leave. This was none other than an affair matrimonial; but on my return I had some misunderstanding with my fair dulcinea, and the courtship dropped through.

At this time the Florida war was unfinished. General Gaines was in St. Louis for the purpose of raising a company of men familiar with Indian habits. Mr. Sublet had spoken to him about me, and had recommended me as being particularly well acquainted with Indian life. The general sent a request that I would call upon him at his quarters. I went accordingly, and was introduced by Sublet.

The general inquired of me how I would like to go to Florida to fight the Indians. I replied that I had seen so much of Indian warfare during the last sixteen years that I was about tired of it, and did not want to engage in it again, at least for the present. He remarked that there was a good opportunity there for renown. He wished, he said, to raise a company which would go down as muleteers; that their duties would be light, and so on through the stereotyped benefits peculiar to a soldier's life.

Sublet recommended me to engage. Florida, he said, was a delightful country, and I should find a wide difference between the cold region of the Rocky Mountains and the genial and salubrious South.

The general then inquired if I could not raise a company of mountain-boys to go with me. I replied that I thought I could, or that, at any rate, I would make the effort.

The trapping business was unusually dull at that time, and there were plenty of unoccupied men in the city ready to engage in any enterprise. I went among my acquaintance, and soon collected a company of sixty-four men. I went and reported my success to the general. He wished to see the men. I brought them all forward, and had their names enrolled. I was appointed captain of the company, with three lieutenants elected from the men.

On the ninth day of my stay in St. Louis, we went on board a steamer going down stream, and were quickly, on our way to the Seminole country. We had a delightful journey to New Orleans,

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

where we were detained five days in waiting for a vessel to transport us to the fields of "renown." While waiting in New Orleans I fell in with several old acquaintances, who gave me an elegant parting dinner. I then sported the commission of captain in the service of Uncle Sam. Our vessel, the Maid of New York, Captain Carr, being at length ready for sea, my soldiers, with their horses, were taken on board, and we set sail for Tampa Bay. I now, for the first time in my life, saw salt water, and the sickness it produced in me led me to curse General Gaines, and the trappings of war to boot. Our vessel stranded on a reef, and there she remained snug enough, all efforts to dislodge her proving fruitless. There was one small island in sight to leeward; in every other direction there was nothing visible but the heaving ocean. Wreckers, who seemed to rise from the sea-foam, flocked instantly around us, and were received by our captain with a ready volley of nautical compliment. The vessel had settled deeply into a bed of sand and rock; the water was rapidly gaining in her hold, and my commission, together with my gallant companions in arms, seemed, at that moment, to have a slim chance of ever serving our respected uncle in the "fields of renown." I ascended the rigging to take a survey of the country. Many a time an elevated prospect had delivered me from difficulties, if dissimilar, yet not less imminent, than those that now menaced me. Still I felt that, could those ratlines I was now ascending be transformed into the back of my Indian war-steed, this ocean be replaced with a prairie, and that distant speck which they called an island be transmuted into a buffalo, I would give my chance of a major-generalship in purchase of the change; for the sensations of hunger I began to feel were uncomfortably acute, and I saw no immediate prospect of alleviating the pain. Suddenly I saw a long line of black smoke, which I thought must be from a prairie fire. I reported my discovery to the captain, and he hoisted our colors at half-mast, to signal for assistance. A small steamer came in sight, and made toward us, and finally ranged up under our stern. She took off all my men except myself and twelve others. I wrote to the commandant at Tampa Bay to inform him of our situation, and asking him for immediate assistance. After twelve days' stay on the reef, two small brigs came out to us, and received on board ourselves, with our horses and forage, conveying us to Tampa Bay, where they cast anchor. Major Bryant sent for me to his quarters, and I forthwith presented myself before him.

This officer gave me a very cordial welcome, congratulating the service on having an experienced mountaineer, and saying several other very complimentary things. At length he said, "Captain Beckwourth, I wish to open a communication between this port and the head-quarters of Colonel Jessup, distant about one hundred miles. I have received no dispatches from there, although nine couriers have been dispatched by Colonel Taylor."

I replied, "Sir, I have no knowledge of the country; I know nothing of its roads or trails, the situation of its posts, nor do I so much as know the position of Colonel Jessup's command. To attempt to convey dispatches while so little prepared to keep out of harm's way, I very much fear, would be to again disappoint the service in the delivery of its messages, and to afford the Seminoles an additional scalp to those they have already taken."

He pooh-poohed my objections. "A man," said Major Bryant, "who has fought the Indians in the Rocky Mountains the number of years that you have, will find no difficulty here in Florida."

"Well," I assented, "furnish me with the bearings of the country, and direct me to the colonel's camp, and I will do my best to reach there."

Accordingly, the major furnished me with all the necessary instructions, and I started alone on

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

my errand.

It was my acquired habit never to travel along any beaten path or open trail, but rather to give such road a wide berth, and take the chances of the open country. I observed my invariable custom on this occasion, merely keeping in view the bearings of the position I was steering for. I started from Major Bryant's post about sunrise, and reached the colonel's head-quarters at nightfall the following day. I passed through the camp without seeing it; but the sound of a bugle falling on my ear, I tacked about, and finally alighted upon it.

As I rode up I was hailed by a sentinel,

"Who come dere?"

"An express."

"Vat you vant in dish camp?"

"I wish to see Colonel Jessup. Call the officer of the guard."

"Vat for you come from dat way vere ish de Schimynoles?"

"Call your officer of the guard," said I, impatiently. The officer of the guard at length appeared.

"What are you here again for?" he inquired of me. "I wish to see the commanding officer," I replied. "Yes, you are always wishing to see the commanding officer," he said; "but he will not be troubled with you much longer; he will soon commence hanging you all."

"I demand to be shown to the commanding officer, sir," I reiterated.

"Who are you, then?"

"I am a bearer of dispatches."

"Give them to me."

"I was not instructed to give them to you. I shall not do it, sir."

"I believe you came from the Seminoles; you came from that direction."

"You believe wrong, sir. Will you show me to Colonel Jessup, or will you not?"

This very cautious officer of the guard then went to the marquee of the colonel, and addressed him: "Here is another of those Seminoles, sir, who says he has dispatches for you. What shall I do with him?"

The colonel came out, and eyed me scrutinizingly. "Have you brought dispatches for me?" he inquired. "I have, sir."

"From where?"

"From Tampa Bay, sir."

"He came from the Seminoles, colonel," interposed the officer of the guard.

"You are mistaken again, sir," I said, giving him the look of a Crow in the midst of a battle; for I was not yet hireling enough not to feel aggravated at being called by implication a liar.

"Let me see your dispatches," said the colonel.

I handed him the documents; he took them, and passed into his tent.

This did not suit me. I resolved to return instantly. I had not been treated with common civility; no inquiries had been made about my appetite; I was not even invited to alight from my horse. I had neither eaten nor slept since I left Tampa Bay. I was on the point of turning my horse's head, secretly resolving that these were the last dispatches I would bear in that direction, when the colonel called,

"Captain Beckwourth, alight! alight, sir, and come into my quarters. Orderly, have Captain Beckwourth's horse taken immediate care of. You must be hungry, captain."

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“What I need most now is sleep,” I said; “let me have a little repose, and then I shall feel refreshed, and will not refuse to sit down to a meal.”

The colonel bowed assent, and, raising a canvas door, pointed out to me a place for repose, at the same time promising me I should not be disturbed. When I awoke, I presented myself, and was regaled with a good substantial supper. This recruited me, and I was again fit for service.

The colonel made many inquiries of my past service. Major Bryant had made very favorable mention of me in his dispatches, which seemed to have inspired quite an interest in the colonel’s mind. He asked me if I was a native of Florida, where I had spent my early days, and my reason for entering the army. I answered all his questions as briefly as possible, mentioning that I had been tempted among the Seminoles by the promise held out by General Gaines of my gaining “renown.” The colonel thought my company of mountaineers a valuable acquisition to the service, and he made no doubt we should achieve great credit in ferreting out the hiding-places of the Indians.

He soon had his papers ready; they were delivered to me, and I departed. On the way I stopped at a fort, the name of which I forget, and took a fresh horse. I finally arrived at the Bay without seeing an Indian.

I staid with my company for two or three weeks at Fort Brooke, during which time we were engaged in breaking-in mules. We were then placed under the command of Colonel Taylor, afterward General, and President of the United States, whose force was composed of United States troops and volunteers, some of the latter being from Missouri. The colonel advanced southward with sixteen hundred men, erecting, as we advanced, a fort at the interval of every twenty-five miles.

On the morning of Christmas-day (1837) our camp was beleaguered by a large force of Indians, and Colonel Taylor ordered an advance upon them. The spot was thickly grown with trees, and numbers of our assailants were concealed among the branches; as our line advanced, therefore, many were singled out by the enemy, and we lost fearfully in killed and wounded. The yelling was the most deafening I ever heard, for there were many negroes among the enemy, and their yells drowned those of the Red Men. I soon found we had a different enemy from the Black Feet to fight, and different ground to fight on. The country lost several valuable lives through this slight brush with the Indians. The gallant Colonel Gentry, of the Missouri volunteers, was shot through the head; Colonel Thompson, and several other officers, were also among the slain. The enemy had made an excellent choice of ground, and could see our troops while remaining concealed themselves.

I placed myself behind a tree, and Captain Morgan, of the Missouri Spies, was similarly sheltered close by. We were surrounded with Indians, and one was watching, on the opposite side of the tree that protected me, for a chance to get my scalp. A Missourian picked off a fine fat negro who had ensconced himself in a live oak tree. As he fell to the ground it shook beneath him: the fruit was ripe, but unfit for food.

Seeing the men dropping around, Major Price ordered a retreat. The order was instantly countermanded by Colonel Davenport, who, by so doing, saved many lives.

Colonel Foster had taken a very exposed position on the bough of a tree, where he was visible to all. He ordered his men to lie low and load their muskets; he waited till he saw a favorable opportunity, and then shouted, “Fire, boys, and pour it into the red and black rascals!”

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

A charge with bayonets was finally ordered, and the Indians, not relishing the look of the sharp steel, retreated; however, not before they had seized a sergeant-major and a private from our line, and scalped them alive.

This was the battle of O-ke-cho-be, which lasted four hours. We lost over a hundred in killed and wounded; the enemy left nine Indians and a negro dead upon the field. Sam Jones, the half-breed, was only eight miles distant, with a force of a thousand warriors; most providentially he had been dissuaded by the negroes from advancing, who assured him that the whites would not fight on Christmas-day.

It was reported that Colonel Taylor was uncontrollably angry during the battle, and that his aids and other officers had to hold him by main force to prevent him from rushing among the enemy, and meeting certain death. I do not know what truth there was in this, for I saw nothing of it, nor, indeed, did I see the colonel during the whole of the four hours' fighting.

On the conclusion of the action Colonel Taylor wished to send dispatches to Tampa Bay. He requested Captain Lomax to take his company and go with them. The captain refused, for the reason that he and his men would infallibly be massacred. The colonel remarked then, "Since you are all afraid, I will go myself." He sent for me, and demanded if I could raise a sufficient number of brave men among my mountaineers to carry dispatches to the Bay.

I answered, certainly, if I could have his favorite horse, which was the fleetest one in the whole army, and such excellent bottom that he was as fresh after a journey as before. I considered that, if I had to run the gauntlet through a host of Seminoles and infuriated negroes, the best horse was none too good, and was, indeed, my only means of salvation.

When ready to start, I applied for the dispatches.

"Where are your men?" asked the colonel.

"My men are in their quarters, colonel," I said. "I am going to carry those dispatches by myself."

"They must go through," he remarked, "and I want them to go well guarded."

"I am not going to fight, colonel," I replied, "I am going to run; and one man will make less noise than twenty. If I am not killed the dispatches shall arrive safe; my life is certainly worth as much to me as the charge I am intrusted with, and for personal safety I prefer going alone."

In our progress out the troops had cut their way through several hummocks, and had thrown the bushes up on both sides. I had to pass through some of these lanes. It was night when I started, and as I was riding through one of these excavations at a good pace, I heard a sudden noise in the brush. I saw myself in a trap, and my hair bristled up with affright. I was greatly relieved, however, by the speedy discovery that it was only a deer I had scared, and which was scampering away at its utmost speed. I continued on, resting a short time at each fort, until I arrived in sight of Fort Brooke. As soon as I arrived within hailing distance, I shouted "Victory! victory!" which brought out officers and men, impatient to hear the news. I could not see that O-ke-cho-be was much of a victory: indeed, I shrewdly suspected that the enemy had the advantage; but it was called a victory by the soldiers, and they were the best qualified to decide.

On my return, I found Colonel Taylor, soon after the battle, had retrograded to Fort Bassinger. We lay at that fort a long while; spies were vigilantly on the look-out, but nothing very encouraging was reported. I and my company of mountaineers did not encamp with the other troops, but took up our quarters at a considerable distance from the main guard. We were quite tired of inactivity, and wanted to go somewhere or do something. Being quartered by ourselves, we were not

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

subjected to the restrictions and military regulations of the camp; we had our own jollifications, and indulged in some little comforts which the camp did not enjoy. We always would have a large fire when there was need for it, for it destroyed the millions of musquitoes and other vermin that annoyed us; and, as some of our company were always about, the Indians never molested us.

There was a large hummock about four miles distant from the fort which the Indians infested in great numbers, but, as they could not be dislodged without great loss, our colonel was constrained to content himself with closely watching them. One day I proposed to my men to take a stroll, and they fell with great alacrity into the proposition. We passed down to the interdicted hummock, where we shot two deer, and found quite an assortment of stock. We drove them all to the camp before us, to the great admiration of the officers and men present. We had captured quite a drove of hogs, several head of cattle, and a good sprinkling of Seminole ponies. We saw no Indians at the hummock, though certainly we did not search very diligently for them.

During our stay at the fort, the communication between that post and Charlotte's Harbor was closed, and one messenger had been killed. The quartermaster inquired of me if I would undertake the trip. I told him I would; and set one hundred dollars as the price of the undertaking, which he thought quite reasonable. I started with the dispatches, and proceeded at an easy gallop, my eye glancing in every direction, as had been my wont for many years. In casting a look about two gun-shots ahead, I felt sure that I saw some feathers showing themselves just above the palmettos, and exactly in the direction that I was bending my steps. I rode a short distance farther, and my suspicion was confirmed. I immediately stopped my horse and dismounted, as though for the purpose of adjusting my saddle, but in reality to watch my supposed foes. In a minute or two several heads appeared, looking in my direction, and withdrew again in an instant. Immediately the heads declined behind the grass, I sprang upon my horse, and reined him out of the road, taking a wide circuit round them, which I knew would carry me out of danger. I then looked after them, and tantalized them with my gestures in every manner possible, motioning them to come and see me; but they seemed to be aware that their legs were not long enough to reach me, so they digested their disappointment, and troubled me no farther. I arrived safe at the Harbor that same day, delivered my dispatches, and was back at the fort the following night.

We now experienced a heavy rain, which deluged the entire country, and prevented any farther operations against the Indians. The colonel ordered a retreat to Tampa Bay, and, as there was no danger of molestation on the way, many of the officers obtained liberty to gallop on in advance of the army. Colonel Bryant rode a very valuable black charger, acknowledged to be the best horse in camp. After traveling on a while, the colonel said, "I have a notion to ride on and get in to-day, as my presence is required; you can get in to-morrow at your leisure." A number said, "If you can get in to-day, we can, and finally the whole party proposed starting off together.

We at length came to a swampy place in the road, which spread over five miles, and in many places took our horses off their feet. This place forded, there was then a narrow stream, and after that it was all dry land. Having passed the swamp and the stream, and got fairly on to dry land again, I took the saddle off my mule, which example all followed, and, with the assistance of a brother officer, wrung the saddle-blanket as dry as possible, and then spread it out fairly in the sun to dry. In the mean while, the horses helped themselves to a good feed of grass, and we all partook of a hearty lunch likewise.

Thus refreshed, we saddled up and proceeded again. After a few miles travel we discovered the

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

rear of Bryant's party, who were toiling slowly along, and goring their animals' flanks in the vain endeavor to urge them into speed. We passed them with a hearty cheer. We journeyed on until within three miles of the fort, where there was a short bend in the road, and a foot-trail across, which saved about a hundred yards. "Now, gentlemen," said I, "let us raise a gallop, and pass every body on the road." The work was at once accomplished, some of my men deriding those left behind on account of their miserable progress. We then all struck into a gallop, and soon reached the fort, and several of our company found time to get quite intoxicated before the quarter-master arrived. He, however, soon recovered his equanimity of temper, and begged a solution of the mystery how we could come in with our animals fresh, while his and his companions' horses were jaded to death. He was referred by all to the captain of the mountaineers.

I said, "A horse, colonel, is only flesh and blood, and his system requires greater care than that of almost any other animal. We beat your powerful steed with inferior animals by affording them a short rest, with a mouthful or two of grass on the road, and by wringing our blankets after we had passed the water."

Now we had another long interval of inactivity, and I began to grow tired of Florida, with its inaccessible hummocks. It seemed to me to be a country dear even at the price of the powder that would be required to blow the Indians out of it, and certainly a poor field to work in for renown. My company and I, its commander, had nothing to do except to carry an occasional dispatch, and I wanted excitement of some kind — I was indifferent of what nature, even if it was no better than borrowing horses of the Black Feet. The Seminoles had no horses worth stealing, or I should certainly have exercised my talents for the benefit of the United States.

The last dispatches that I carried in Florida I bore from Fort Dade to Fort Brooke. In accomplishing this, I traveled with my customary caution, avoiding the trail as much as possible. In a part where I anticipated no danger, I took the trail, and fell asleep on my horse, for I had ridden four days and nights without rest, except what I had snatched upon horseback. Suddenly my horse sprang aside, instantly awaking me. I found I had been sleeping too long, for I had passed the turning-point, and was now near a hummock. To return would cost me several miles travel. My horse's ears informed me there was something in motion near by. I pondered my position, and ultimately resolved to take the chances and go ahead. The road through the hummock was just wide enough to admit the army wagons to pass. I bid my horse go, and he sprung forward with tremendous bounds. He had not reached through this dark and dangerous pass when I saw the flash of several guns, and the balls whizzed harmlessly past me. I discharged my pistols at the lair of my foes, and traveled on in safety to the fort.

I grew tired of this, and informed Colonel Bryant that I wished to resign my task. "Why?" said he; "every body who undertakes it gets killed, while you never see any Indians. What are we to do?"

When in camp, I had frequently seen men come running in half dead with alarm, saying that they had seen Indians, or had been fired upon by Indians. I remarked that they were always ridiculed by the officers; even the privates disbelieved them. Seeing this, I determined to say nothing about my adventure; for, if they had received my assertion with incredulity, it might have led to an unpleasant scene in the wigwam.

I was determined to return to the "home of the free and the land of the brave," for I felt that the mountains and the prairies of the Great West, although less attended with renown, at least would

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

afford me more of the substantial comforts of life, and suit my peculiar taste better than the service of Uncle Sam in Florida.

The commander of the fort, after reading the dispatch, indorsed on it, "Beckwourth fired on by a party of Indians when near this post." He then returned it to me, and I rode on to Fort Brooke. Colonel Bryant, having read the dispatch, said, "Ah, Beckwourth, you have been fired on, I see! why did you not tell us so on your arrival?"

I informed him of my reasons, as before stated.

He smiled. "Your word would have been believed by us all," he said; "it is these stupid foreigners that we discredit, who do not know an Indian from a stump; they have deceived us too often for us to put further faith in them."

A Seminole came into the fort a few days subsequent to this, to give himself up, his arm being broken. When questioned about it, he said that a white man had broken it in such a hummock, on such a night. I then knew that my pistols, which I fired at random, had done the mischief. Alligator, the Seminole Chief, shortly after came in, and informed Colonel Taylor that he and his tribe had concluded to remove to their new home, and requested the colonel to send down wagons to transport their women and children.

"I have fought you a long time," said the Red Man, "but I can not beat you. If I kill ten of your warriors, you send a hundred to replace them; I am now ready to go, and save the rest of my people."

"Yes," the colonel answered, "your talk is good. You can now go to your new home, and be happy. There is a man (pointing to me) who is a great chief of a great nation; you will, for aught I know, be neighbor to his people; he and his people will teach you to hunt the buffalo, and I hope you will be good friends."

While I was with the army a tragedy occurred, which I have never seen in any public print, and I deem it of sufficient interest to make mention of it here. A young private, of very respectable connexions, had been tried for some offense, and sentenced to receive a flogging, which was carried unmercifully into effect. After he had recovered, the surgeon bade him go and report himself fit for duty.

"I will go," said he, "but it will be my last duty."

Accordingly, he fixed his bayonet and repaired to the officers' quarters, where he found the captain and first lieutenant of his company. He advanced upon them, and saying, "You have disgraced me with an inhuman flogging — die!" he shot the captain dead, and plunged his bayonet through the body of the lieutenant, also killing him on the spot.

He straightway gave himself up, was tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be shot. The execution of the sentence was withheld by Colonel Taylor, who had forwarded the particulars of the trial to the department at Washington, and was waiting the result of official investigation. The case was found worthy of executive interference; a pardon was signed by the President and sent on, and the young man was liberated from confinement.

Such inhuman treatment as this poor young soldier received at the hands of his officers has resulted, I have no shadow of doubt, in the death of many an officer on the battle-field.

I remember, at the battle of O-ke-cho-be, a young lieutenant riding up to Colonel Foster, and saying, "Colonel, I have been shot at twice, and not by the enemy either."

"It was by no friend, I will swear," said the colonel; "you can leave the field, and learn to treat your

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

men well in future.”

This I witnessed myself; but whether the young “buckskin” profited by the sharp cut of the colonel I am unable to say.

There was a Tennessean in camp, a great foot-racer, who was incessantly boasting about his wonderful pedestrian powers. He had a valuable horse, which he offered to stake against any person in the camp for a race of sixty yards. As he was considered a “great leg” by all, no one ventured to take up his offer.

I offered myself as a competitor, but all sought to dissuade me. “Don’t run against him,” said they; “that fellow will outrun Lucifer himself. He has beat every man who has run against him in Florida.”

However, I staked a hundred dollars against his horse, and entered the lists. We started together; but, as I did not see my antagonist either ahead of me or by my side, I looked around, and saw him coming-up. I went out a good distance ahead of him, and did not exert myself either.

The enemy having submitted to the government, there was nothing more for us to do, and I asked for a furlough to return to St. Louis. I and my company were enlisted for a year; ten months of this time had been served, and I obtained a furlough for the remaining two months. We embarked for New Orleans, Colonel Gates and his regiment taking passage in the same ship. Arriving at my place of destination in safety, I staid but one night in the “Crescent City,” and then took the steamer to St. Louis, where we had a good time while steaming up, and I was very well satisfied to jump ashore once again at my old home. My company all returned but two, one of whom died in New Orleans, the other was killed by the Seminoles after I left.

#### CHAPTER XXX.

Departure for the Mountains.—Severe Sickness on the Way.—Arrival at Bent’s Fort.—Arrival at Sublet’s Fort.—Interview with the Cheyennes.—Difficulty with a Sioux Warrior.—His Death.—Successful Trade opened with various Tribes.—Incidents.

I STAID but five days in St. Louis, which time I devoted to a hasty visit among my friends. I entered into service with Messrs. Sublet and Vasques to return to the mountains and trade with any tribes I might find on the head-waters of the Platte and Arkansas rivers. This country embraces the hunting-grounds of the Cheyennes, the Arrap-a-hos, the Sioux, and the I-a-tans.

All preliminaries being arranged, which are of no interest to the reader, I bade my friends once more adieu; and, stepping on board a steam-boat bound up the Missouri, we were soon breasting its broad and turbid current. We spent the Fourth on board, amid much noise, revelry, and drunken patriotism. We were landed in safety at Independence, where we received our wagons, cattle, etc., with which to convey the immense stock of goods I had brought through the Indian country. We were very successful in escaping accident in our progress over the plains, until we reached the ridge which passes between the Arkansas and Platte rivers. While ascending this ridge, accompanied with Mr. Vasques, I was sun-struck. We were at that time twenty miles from water; I was burning with thirst, the heat was intolerable, and hostile Indians were before us. After incredible suffering we reached the river bank, and crossed the stream to an island, where I lay me down to die. All our medicines were in the wagons, and two days’ journey in our rear. My fatigue and suffering had thrown me into a fever; I became delirious, and grew rapidly worse. I requested my companion to return to the wagons and procure me some medicine; but he refused to leave me, lest I might die in his absence.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I said to him, "If you stay by me I shall certainly die, for you can not relieve me; but if you go, and nature holds out till you return, there is some chance of my gaining relief. Go," I added, "and hasten your return."

He left me at my entreaties, but filled all our vessels with water before he started. I speedily fell asleep, and I know not how long I remained unconscious. When I at length awoke, I drank an inordinate quantity, which caused me to perspire copiously; this relieved me, and my recovery commenced from that moment, although I still suffered from a severe headache. The third day of my friend's absence I could walk about a little, and the fourth day, at noon, I kept a good lookout in the direction I expected succor. Suddenly I saw a head appear, and another, and then another, until four showed themselves. They are Indians, I said to myself; but if there are only four, I stand a passable chance with them, so let them come on. I saw they had discovered me, so I arose and showed myself. With joyous shouts they flew toward me. It was my companion, with three others, who had come either to bury me or to assist me to the wagons. Their joy on beholding me so miraculously restored was unbounded, while my delight at seeing them was almost as great. We remained on the island that night, and the following morning started for the wagons, which we found in two days.

In going for assistance, my friend had a narrow escape. He came suddenly upon a party of Pawnees, and one made a rush for his horse. He discharged his rifle hastily, and missed his mark. He then had to trust to his horse's heels; but, as he was jaded, he did not make very good speed. The Indians were on foot, and gave close chase, but, when they saw his rifle reloaded, they fell back to a wider distance, and plied him with arrows until he was out of reach.

I was placed in a wagon, and attended on as far as our circumstances would admit, until I recovered my accustomed health. We staid one night at Burt's Fort, on the Arkansas, and then moved on to our destination on the South Fork of the Platte. Here we erected suitable buildings within the fort for our proposed trading, and, among others, a barn, which we proceeded to fill with hay for the coming winter.

While staying at the fort, a man inquired of Sublet his reason for bringing up such a rascally fellow as I, to prompt the Indians into rising and massacring all the whites.

"Murray," said Sublet — for that was the man's name — "it is unsafe for you to express such sentiments in relation to Beckwourth; should they reach his ears, he would surely make you rue it. I have heard these foul aspersions upon his character before, and I am in a position to know that they are all unfounded. Had I the least suspicion of his integrity, I should be the last man to take him in my employ."

This conversation was reported to me at some distance from the fort, where Murray was perfectly safe. But these foul reports annoyed me exceedingly. They were like stabs in the dark, for no one ever accused me to my face of such misdeeds.

After having placed things to rights, we were dining together within the fort, when Mr. Sublet rose and said,

"Traders and clerks, you have come here to the mountains to work for me, and I expect every man to do his best. If I am prospered, I will do well by all of you. I desire a regular system established in my business out here, that my interests may be placed upon a secure footing. I am now going to deliver the key of my entire stock of goods to one man among you, in whom I have implicit confidence, and whose long experience and intimate acquaintance with the Indian char-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

acter pre-eminently entitle him to the trust. This man will have full command of the fort, and full charge of its affairs. I wish you to receive him as a representative of myself, and, whatever orders you receive from him, obey them cheerfully and to the very letter.”

All present promised ready acquiescence to the wishes of our chief.

He then delivered the key to me, saying, “Beckwourth, I place this trust in your keeping, believing you to be as morally worthy of the confidence I repose in you, as you are practically qualified to advance my interests. I abandon my affairs to your keeping. Do your best, and I shall be satisfied.”

I was so entirely unprepared for this distinguished mark of confidence, that for a moment I was unable to reply. After a momentary irresolution, I said, “Mr. Sublet, you have other men present who are better able to discharge this trust. I thank you for the flattering reference, but I beg to be excused from assuming the responsibility.”

“I engaged you,” he answered, “to serve me in this capacity, and I wish you to accept the charge.”

“In that case,” I said, “I will do my best to promote your interest.”

Shortly after, he called me apart, and said, “Beckwourth, I am deeply in debt. I have been losing for a long time. If you can replace me in one year, you shall be substantially rewarded, and I shall feel sincerely grateful for your service.”

“How much do you owe?” I inquired.

“Over seventeen thousand dollars.”

“Well,” said I, “if the men co-operate with me, and carry out my instructions, I feel confident of working you straight.”

I forthwith set about establishing sub-posts in various places, with the Siouxs, Arrap-a-hos, I-a-tans, and Cheyennes, and selected the best men at hand to attend them. I placed one at the mouth of Crow Creek, which I called my post, but left a man in charge of it, as I was at present fully occupied in traveling from one post to another.”

We had not, as yet, found any customers; but, as we were in the Cheyenne country, I knew some of that nation could not be very far off. I sent three different messengers in search of them to invite them to trade, but they all returned without having discovered the whereabouts of the Indians. Tired of these failures, I took a man with me, and started in the direction of the Laramie mountain. While ascending the mount, I cast my eyes in the direction of a valley, and discovered buffalo running in small groups, which was sufficient evidence that they had been chased recently by Indians. We went no farther, but encamped there, and at nightfall we saw fires. The next morning a dense smoke hung like a cloud over the village of the Cheyennes; we ate a hasty meal, and started to pay them a visit.

As we approached the village we saw William Bent, an interpreter, entering before us. He visited the chief’s lodge; we followed him in, and seated ourselves near him. He looked aghast, and addressed me: “My God! Beckwourth, how dare you come among the Cheyennes? Don’t you know that they will kill you if they discover you?”

I replied that I thought not.

He had come on the same errand as ourselves, namely, to induce a portion of the village to remove to the Platte, as buffalo were abundant in that region. After a conversation was held between Bent and a chief, the latter inquired of Bent who we were. He informed him that we were Left Hand’s (Sublet’s) men.

“What do they want here?” he asked.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“They come for the same purpose that I have,” Bent answered, “to have you move on to the Platte.”

Bent then inquired of me what account I wished to give of myself, as he would interpret for me; but, preferring to interpret for myself, I asked if there was a Crow among them that I could speak to. At the word “Crow” they all started, and every eye was riveted upon me.

One stepped forward, and said, “I am a Crow.”

“You a Crow?”

“Yes.”

“How long have you been away from them?”

“Twenty winters.”

Bent was in the greatest perplexity. “You are not surely going to tell them who you are, Jim? If you do, you’ll cost your friends nothing for your funeral.”

This apprehension on the part of Bent proved to me that, although he had lived long among the Indians, he had still much to learn of their real character. I therefore requested him to quiet his fears and bide the result.

Turning to the Crow, I then said, “Tell the Cheyennes that I have fought them many winters, that I have killed so many of their people that I am buried with their scalps; I have taken a host of their women and children prisoners; I have ridden their horses until their backs were sore; I have eaten their fat buffalo until I was full; I have eaten their cherries, and the other fruits of their land, until I could eat no more. I have killed a great Crow chief, and am obliged to run away, or be killed by them. I have come to the Cheyennes, who are the bravest people in the mountains, as I do not wish to be killed by any of the inferior tribes. I have come here to be killed by the Cheyennes, cut up, and thrown out for their dogs to eat, so that they may say that they have killed a great Crow chief.”

He interpreted this unreserved declaration faithfully to the chief, and I observed Bent ready to fall from his seat at what he deemed my foolhardy audacity.

“You are certainly bereft of your senses,” he remarked; “the Indians will make sausage-meat of you.”

Old Bark, the patriarch of the Cheyennes, rose and said: “Warrior, we have seen you before; we know you; we knew you when you came in; now we know you well. We know you are a great brave. You say you have killed many of our warriors; we know you do not lie. We like a great brave, and we will not kill you; you shall live.”

I answered, “If you will not kill me, I will live with you; if you become poor, like some of the other tribes; and you need warriors to help you against your enemies, my arm is strong, and perhaps I will assist you to overcome them; but I will not at this time give you my word that I will do so. If you do not kill me, I am going to trade with you for many moons. I will trade with you fairly; I will not cheat you, as some of the traders have cheated you. I have a great many goods over on the Platte, such as you want, more than would fill many of your lodges. They are new, and look well. But, mind you, you must trade fairly with me. I have heard that you sometimes treat your traders badly; that you take away their goods, and whip them, and make them run out of your country to save their lives. Your people must never serve me in that manner; they must pay me for all they get; and if any one strikes me, I shall kill him, and thereby show you that I am brave. If any one should strike me, and I should not kill him, you would call me a woman, and say I was no brave.”

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

They then asked me, through the Crow interpreter, if I was in such and such a battle between their nation and the Crows, all of which questions I answered truthfully.

“Do you remember that in such a battle we lost such a brave?” describing him.

“Yes.”

“Who killed him?”

“I did.” Or, if I did not kill him, I would tell them the name of the Crow who did.

“Did he fight well?”

“Yes, he fought well.”

“He died like a brave man, then!” they would ejaculate.

“Were you in such a battle?” asked another.

“Yes.”

“Did you see such a warrior fall?”

“Yes.”

“Did he fight strong like a brave?”

“No, he did not fight well.”

“Ugh! he was no brave; he deserved to be killed.”

In battle every warrior has his personal device painted on his shield, chosen according to his fancy. My “armorial bearing” was a crescent, with a green bird between the horns, and a star on each side the field. I described my novel device, and there was a great movement among them, for most of them distinctly recollected that shield, and I saw myself rising in their estimation. Their brave hearts rejoiced to have a true warrior before them, for they esteemed me as brave as themselves.

One of their great chiefs, named the Bob-tailed Horse, arose, and asked me if I remembered the battle on Pole Creek. I replied that I did.

“You killed me there,” he said, “but I did not die;” and he pointed out two scars upon his chest, just below the lower rib, where the balls from my gun entered, and which must have killed any body but an Indian.

“Where did I hit you?” he asked.

“Ugh!” said I; “you missed me.”

Old Bark then said, “Warrior, you killed me once too: look here;” and he withdrew the hair from his right temple, and I saw that his cheek had been badly torn, and his ear was entirely missing.

“But,” he added, “I did not die. You fought bravely that day.”

Had I gone among the Pawnees, the Siouxs, or many other tribes, and held this talk, I should have been hewn to pieces in a moment; but the Cheyennes were great braves themselves, and admired the quality in others, the Crows being their only equals.

While I sat talking thus, one of my men entered the village bearing two ten-gallon kegs of whisky. He requested me to take one and sell it out, while he went to the other end of the village, where the Siouxs were encamped, to sell the other. I had hitherto always opposed the sale of liquor to the Indians, and, during my chieftainship of the Crows, not one drop had ever been brought into the village; but now I was restrained by no such moral obligation. I was a mere trader, hazarding my life among the savages to make money for my employers. The sale of liquor is one of the most profitable branches of a trader’s business, and, since the appetite for the vile potion had already been created, my personal influence in the matter was very slight. I was no

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

lawgiver; I was no longer in a position to prohibit the introduction of the white man's fire-water; if I had refused to sell it to the Indians, plenty more traders would have furnished it to them; and my conscientious scruples would benefit the Indians none, and would deprive my embarrassed employer of a very considerable source of profit.

Running these things hurriedly over in my own mind, I took the proffered keg, and dealt it all out within two hours. Certainly the rate of profit was high enough; if a man wants a good price for the sale of his soul to his satanic majesty, let him engage in the liquor business among the nations of the Rocky Mountains. Our liquor was a choice article. One pint of alcohol, costing, I suppose, six cents, was manufactured into five times the quantity of whisky, and this was retailed to our insatiate customers at the rate of one pint for each buffalo robe. If the robe was an extra fine one, I might possibly open my heart, and give two pints. But I felt no particular inducement to liberality in my dealings, for I thought the greatest kindness I could show my customers was to withhold the commodity entirely.

Before I had got through with my keg I had a row with an Indian, which cost him his life on the spot. While I was busy in attending the tap, a tall Sioux warrior came into my establishment, already the worse for liquor, which he had obtained elsewhere. He made some formidable strides round and near me, and then inquired for the Crow. I was pointed out to him, and, pot valiant, he swaggered up to me.

"You are a Crow?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"You are a great Crow brave?"

"Yes."

"You have killed a host of Siouxs?"

"No; I have killed a host of Cheyennes, but I have only killed fourteen Siouxs with my own hand."

"Look at me," said he, with drunken gasconade; "my arm is strong; I am the greatest brave in the Sioux nation. Now come out, and I will kill you."

"No," I said, "I did not come here to be killed or to kill; I came here to trade. I could kill you as easily as I could kill a squaw, but you know that you have a host of warriors here, while I am alone. They would kill me after I had killed you. But if I should come in sight of your village with twenty of my Crow warriors, you would all run and leave your lodges, women, and children. Go away; I want nothing to do with you. Your tongue is strong, but you are no brave."

I had told the Cheyennes but a few moments previously that I had been among all the nations in the country, and that it had ever been my invariable rule, when struck by a Red Man, to kill him. I was determined to prove the truth of my declaration in this instance. I had my battle-axe hanging from my wrist, and I was ready at a moment's warning. The Sioux continued his abuse of me in his own tongue, which I paid no attention to, for I supposed that, like his white brethren, he might utter a great deal of provocation in his cups, and straightway repent it when he became sober.

Finally, he became so importunate that I saw it was time to take an active part. I said, "You want to kill me, eh?" I would fight with you, only I know I should be killed by the Siouxs afterward, and I should have you for my waiter in the spirit land. I would rather kill a good brave, if I kill any."

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

This was a very opprobrious speech, for it is their faith that when an Indian is slain who has previously slain a foe, the first-killed warrior becomes waiter in the spirit land to the one who had laid him low. In deed, it was more than he could endure. He jerked off the cloth that was fastened round his hips, and struck me in the face with it. I grasped my battle-axe, but the blow I aimed was arrested by a lodge pole, which impended over his head, and saved him from immediate death. The lodge pole was nearly severed with the blow. I raised my arm again, but it was restrained by the Cheyennes, who had been sitting round with their heads declined during the Sioux's previous abuse.

The Sioux chief, Bull Bear, was standing near, and was acquainted with the whole particulars of the difficulty. He advanced, and chopped his warrior down, and hacked him to pieces after he fell. "Ugh!" grunted he, as coolly as possible, "you ought to have been killed long ago, you bad Indian!" This demonstration on my part had a good effect. The Indians examined the cut inflicted by the edge of my axe on the lodge pole, and declared mine a strong arm. They saw I was in earnest, and would do what I had threatened, and, except in one single instance, I had no farther trouble. Influenced by my persuasions, two hundred lodges of the Cheyennes started for the Platte, Bent and myself accompanying them. On our way thither we met one of my wagons, loaded with goods, on its way to the North Fork of the Platte. There was a forty-gallon cask of whisky among its contents, and, as the Indians insisted on having it opened, I brought it out of the wagon, and broached it. Bent begged me not to touch it, but to wait till we reached the fort. I was there for the purpose of making money, and when a chance offered, it was my duty to make the most of it. On that, he left me, and went to the fort. I commenced dealing it out, and, before it was half gone, I had realized sixteen horses and over two hundred robes.

While I was busy in my traffic, the Indians brought in four trappers whom they had chanced to pick up. The poor fellows appeared half frightened to death, not knowing what their fate would be. I addressed them in English. "How are you, boys? Where are you bound?"

"These Indians must decide that," they replied. "Are they good Indians?"

"Yes," I replied. "They will not harm you." They informed me that they were returning from the mountains with twelve packs of beaver, and, while encamped one night, the Crows had stolen their horses. They had cached their peltry, and now wanted to buy more horses to carry it to some fort.

I made a bargain with them for their beaver, and, taking some horses, went with them myself to their late encampment, for I could not trust them alone for fear they would take their skins to some other post. We disinterred the peltry, and with it reached the fort without accident. The trappers staid with us two or three weeks, and then, purchasing their outfit and horses, they again started for the mountains.

We had a prosperous fall and winter trade, and accumulated more peltry than our wagons could transport, and we had to build boats to convey it to St. Louis. At the settlement of accounts, it was found that we had cleared sufficient to pay Mr. Sublet's debts, and enough over to buy a handsome stock of goods for the next season's trade.

I spent the summer at the fort, while Sublet and Fitzpatrick went on with the peltry to St. Louis. I had but little to do, as the Indians had removed to their summer retreats, and I spent my time very agreeably with the few men remaining behind, in hunting buffalo for our own use. About the last of August our goods arrived, and we set ourselves to work again at business. I put up at

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

the North Fork of the Platte, and had a busy fall and winter trade, making many very profitable bargains for the company. The Cheyennes thought me the best trader that ever visited them, and would not allow any other company to traffic with their villages. This sorely vexed my rival traders, and once or twice I had my life attempted in consequence. When others came to ask permission to open a trading-post, the Cheyennes would say, "No; we do all our trading with the Crow. He will not cheat us. His whisky is strong."

When I found I had obtained the confidence of the nation, I told the Cheyennes that if they allowed other traders to come in I should leave them, and they would be cheated by those who sold poor whisky, that would not make them merry half so soon as mine. This may be considered selfish; but I knew that our company was keenly competed with by three or four rival companies, and that the same representations that I used to keep the trade in my hands were freely urged by others to attract it from me. There was also a farther inducement for the Cheyennes to do their business with me, which was founded upon their respect for me as a great brave, who had killed a number of their countrymen. Whether there was diplomatic finesse enough in their minds to reflect that, while I was harmlessly engaged with them, I could not be fighting in the bands of their enemies, and adding to my present number of scalps, I can not pretend to say.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Invitation to visit the Outlaws.—Interview with "the Elk that Calls."—Profitable Trade with the Outlaws.—Return to the Post.—Great Alarm among the Traders.—Five Horses killed at the Fort.—Flight from the Siouxs.—Safe arrival at the Fort.—Trade with the Arrapa-hos.—Attacked by a Cheyenne Warrior.—Peace restored.

WHILE in the midst of my occupations, a messenger was dispatched to me by the chief of a Cheyenne village, at that time encamped about twenty miles distant, with an invitation to visit them and trade there. This village was composed of outlaws from all the surrounding tribes, who were expelled from their various communities for sundry infractions of their rude criminal code; they had acquired a hard name for their cruelties and excesses, and many white traders were known to have been killed among them. The chief's name was Mo-he-nes-to (the Elk that Calls), and he was a terror to all white people in that region. The village numbered three hundred lodges, and could bring from twelve to fifteen hundred warriors into the field — the best fighters of the nation. We called it the City of Refuge.

The messenger arrived at my post, and inquired for the Crow.

"I am the Crow," I answered.

"The great chief, Mo-he-nes-to, wants the Crow to come to his lodge."

"What does he want with me?"

"He wants to trade much."

"What does he want to trade?"

"He wants much whisky, much beads, much scarlet, much kettles," and he enumerated a list of articles.

"Have your people any robes by them?"

"Wugh! they have so much robes that they can not move with them."

"Any horses?"

"Great many-good Crow horses."

"Well," said I, "I will go straightway, and you must show me the way."

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“Who will go to the village of the Elk that Calls?” I asked; “I want two men.”

Peterson and another volunteered to accompany me; but by this time the matter in hand had reached Sublet’s ears, and he came forward and said,

“You are not going to the village of the Outlaws, Beckwourth?”

“Yes,” I replied, “I am.”

“Don’t you know that they kill whites there?”

“Yes, I know that they have killed them.”

“Well, I object to your going.”

“Captain Sublet,” I said, “I have promised the Indian that I will go, and go I must. There has been no trader there for a long time, and they are a rich prize.”

He saw that I was resolved, and, having given me the control of affairs, he withdrew his objection and said no more.

I accordingly prepared for the journey. Ordering the horses, I packed up my goods, together with twenty gallons of whisky, and issued forth on the way to uncertain destruction, and bearing with me the means of destruction certain.

The Indian conducted me to the chief’s lodge. I dismounted, my two men following my example. The chief came to us, and passed the usual compliments. He desired me to take off my packs, at which request I immediately remounted my horse.

“What is the matter?” inquired the chief.

“When I send for my friends to come and see me,” I said, “I never ask them to unpack their horses or to guard them, but I have it done for them.”

“You are right, my friend,” said he; “it shall be done. Get off your horse, and come into my lodge.”

I dismounted again, and was about to follow him. My men, who did not understand our conversation, arrested my path to inquire what was in the wind. I bade them keep quiet, as all was amicable, and then entered the lodge. We held a long conversation together, during which the chief made many inquiries of a similar nature to those addressed me at the first village. In recounting our achievements, I found that I had stolen his horses, and that he had made reprisals upon the Crows, so that we were about even in the horse trade.

At length he wished me to broach the whisky. “No,” said I, “my friend, I will not open the whisky until you send for your women to come with their robes, and they have bought what goods they want first. They work hard, and dress all your robes; they deserve to trade first. They wish to buy many fine things to wear, so that your warriors may love them. When they have traded all they wish, then I will open my whisky, and the men can get drunk. But if the men get drunk first, your women will be afraid of them, and they will take all the robes, and the women will get nothing.”

“Your words are true, my friend,” said the chief; “our women shall trade before the men get drunk; they dress all our robes: it shall be according to your words.”

Accordingly, he sent for all the women who had robes and wished to sell, to come and trade with the Crow. They were not long in obeying the summons. Forward they came, some with one robe and some with two. Two was the most that any of them had, as the men had reserved the most to purchase whisky. The trading was expeditiously effected; we did not have to take down and open all our goods, and then sell a skein of thread, and be informed by our customer that she would look elsewhere first, and perhaps call again, which is the practice of many young ladies, especially where there is an attractive shopman. We could hardly hand out things fast enough.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

We served all the women to their entire satisfaction, and closed out our stock of dry-goods. We then proceeded to the whisky. Before opening the kegs, I laid down my rules to the chief. I told him that his people might spree as long as they chose, but that they must not obstruct my business, or interfere with me. As the liquor was served out to them, they must carry it out of the lodge, and not stay to be in my way and give me trouble. This was readily assented to, and the sales began.

Whisky will have the same effect every where, and if a man will traffic in the "cursed stuff," he must submit to his share of the mischief he creates. My understanding with the chief was productive of no effect. He came into the lodge, saying, "I have killed an Indian;" I looked, and saw that his battle-axe was dripping with blood. Yells and tumult increased outside; the chief was again making his way toward the lodge, protected by a host of friends, while behind him, and striving to get at him, was an infuriated throng, fighting and yelling like devils. My store in an instant was filled to overflowing with opposing parties, composed of outlaws from a dozen tribes. I sprang to secure my gun; and my companions, mistaking my movement, supposed I had started to run, and they broke out at the back of the lodge, and did not stop until they reached our post on the Platte.

Battle-axes and knives fairly rung through the lodge during the continuance of the fight; but it was over in a few minutes, and they withdrew to the place outside, and renewed it to greater advantage. At the restoration of peace, some ghastly wounds were shown to me, but, singular to say, none of the belligerents were killed.

Mo-he-nes-to, after a short interval, returned, without having received a single scratch, and said all was quiet again, and they wanted more whisky. The women wished to get some also, he informed me. I knew that, if the women were going to join in, I must have another supply, and I told the chief I had not enough left to get the women drunk.

"Send for more, then," said he. "Our women are buried up and smothered with robes, and will buy very much."

I soon found a volunteer to run to the post to carry an order to Sublet to send me twenty gallons more of whisky.

My assistants, after making their hasty exit from the back of the chief's lodge, reported at the post the state of affairs at the village of the Outlaws at the time they left. Guns were being fired, they said, and, beyond all doubt, Beckwourth was killed. No one dared to go and ascertain the result. Sublet was in great trouble. "I did my utmost to prevent his going," he consoled himself by saying, "but he went in opposition to all orders and advice; so, if he is killed, the responsibility does not rest upon me."

By-and-by my messenger arrived with the order for more whisky. Sublet took the letter and read it. "Ho!" said he, "Jim is not dead yet. He has sent for more fire-water. Who will take it to him?" Four men volunteered for the errand, and arrived with it next day. The Indians took their horses away from them, and they became alarmed; but when they shortly after saw me up to my neck in buffalo robes, their fear subsided. These two kegs went off as actively as the preceding, and the robes fairly poured in. The whole village moved on toward the post, singing, dancing, and drinking, and, when I had approached within five miles, I had to send for two kegs more.

In short, the sixty gallons of fire-water realized to the company over eleven hundred robes and eighteen horses, worth in St. Louis six thousand dollars.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

This trading whisky for Indian property is one of the most infernal practices ever entered into by man. Let the reader sit down and figure up the profits on a forty-gallon cask of alcohol, and he will be thunderstruck, or rather whisky struck. When disposed of, four gallons of water are added to each gallon of alcohol. In two hundred gallons there are sixteen hundred pints, for each one of which the trader gets a buffalo robe worth five dollars! The Indian women toil many long weeks to dress these sixteen hundred robes. The white trader gets them all for worse than nothing, for the poor Indian mother hides herself and her children in the forests until the effect of the poison passes away from the husbands, fathers, and brothers, who love them when they have no whisky, and abuse and kill them when they have. Six thousand dollars for sixty gallons of alcohol! Is it a wonder that, with such profits in prospect, men get rich who are engaged in the fur trade? or is it a miracle that the poor buffalo are becoming gradually exterminated, being killed with so little remorse that their very hides, among the Indians themselves, are known by the appellation of a pint of whisky?

The chief made me a gratuity of forty robes. On two subsequent visits I paid him on his invitation, he made me further presents, until he had presented me with one hundred and eighty-five robes without receiving any equivalent. The extent of his "royal munificence" seriously alarmed Sublet. It was just this same profuse spirit, he said, that had bred disputes with other traders, often resulting in their losing their lives. It is as well a savage custom as civilized, to expect a commensurate return for any favors bestowed, and an Indian is so punctilious in the observance of this etiquette, that he will part with his last horse and his last blanket rather than receive a favor without requital.

Mo-he-nes-to, without intending it, was rather troublesome on this point. When he became sober after these drunken carousals, he would begin to reflect seriously on things. He would find his robes all gone; his women's labor — for it would take months of toil in dressing and ornamenting these robes — thrown unprofitably away; his people had nothing to show for their late pile of wealth, and their wants would remain unsupplied. They would have no guns or ammunition to fight the Crows, who were always well supplied, and their whole year's earnings were squandered. These reflections would naturally make him discontented and irritable, and he would betake himself to the post for reparation.

"White man," he would say, "I have given you my robes, which my warriors have spent months in hunting, and which my women have slaved a whole year in dressing; and what do you give me in return? I have nothing. You give me fire-water, which makes me and my people mad; and it is gone, and we have nothing to hunt more buffalo with, and to fight our enemies."

The generality of traders will endeavor to make it apparent to him that there was a fair exchange of commodities effected, and that he had the worth of his wares, and they can do no more for him.

This angered him, and in his disappointment and vexation he would raise the war-hoop, his warriors would rush to him, he would harangue them for a moment, an assault would be made upon the trading-post, the goods would be seized, and, in many instances, the trader would be massacred and scalped.

I saw the necessary relation between all these events, and knew that simple justice in exchanges would avoid all such catastrophes. I therefore told Sublet to feel no uneasiness, as I could arrange matters so as to afford general satisfaction.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“Well,” said he, “go your own way to destruction.”

A day or two after this, Sublet came to inform me that Mo-he-nes-to was on his way to the fort. I looked out, and saw the chief and his wife both approaching on horseback. As he entered, I received him with great ceremony, taking him by the hand, and bidding him welcome to the fort. I had his horses well attended to, a sumptuous supper for himself and wife served up, and, while the meal was preparing, entertained him with liquors fit to make any toper’s mouth water. After supper he got gloriously fuddled, and went to bed, ignorant of what was passing in the world around him.

In the morning I inquired of him how he felt. “Wugh ! Much bad! head ache strong!”

I then gave him another whisky punch, well-flavored with spices; he and his lady drank deeply, and then partook of a hearty breakfast. He then felt well again. I next led him into the store, where we had a large assortment of every Indian novelty. I knew he had children, as well as how many; so I selected a five-striped Hudson’s Bay blanket for himself, another for his wife, and one for each of his children, besides an extra scarlet blanket for his eldest son, a young warrior. To his wife I also gave a two-gallon brass kettle, and beads enough to last her for a year or two. In fact, I selected more or less of every description of article that I thought would be useful to them, or that I thought an Indian eye could covet. These presents I ceremoniously laid upon the counter, until I had two or three large piles of quite attractive-looking goods.

The chief and his wife had watched me laying all these goods before them. I then asked them if they saw any thing more any where in the store that they thought they would like.

Mo-he-nes-to opened his eyes wide with surprise. “What!” he exclaimed, “are all those things for us?” “Yes,” I said, “they are for you, your wife, and your children — something for you all. When I have a friend, I like to be liberal in my gifts to him. I never rob the Red Men; I never take all their robes and give them nothing but whisky. I give them something good for themselves, their wives, and their children. My heart is big; I know what the Red Men want, and what their families want.”

“My friend, your heart is too big; you give me much more than I ever had before; you will be very poor.”

“No,” I said; “I have many things here, all mine. I am rich, and when I find a good friend, I make him rich like me.”

I then bade him look the store carefully through, to see if there was any thing more that he would like. He looked, but saw nothing more that he needed. I then made the same request of his wife, whose satisfaction beamed all over her face, but she too was fully supplied.

I then stepped into another room, and returned with a fine new gun, with a hundred rounds of ammunition, and a new, highly-finished, silver-mounted battle-axe. This was the comble de bienfaits. I thought he would not recover from the shock. He took the battle-axe in his hand, and examined it minutely, his face distorted with a broad grin all the while.

“Hugh!” said he; “you give me too much. I gave you no robes, but you have proved that you are my friend.”

When they were ready to start, there was an extra horse for him, and a fine mare for his wife, ready waiting at the door.

“There, my friend,” said I, “is a good horse for you; he is swift to run the buffalo. Here is a fine mare for you,” I said to his wife. “Indian women love to raise handsome colts. I give her to you,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

and you must not let the Crows steal her from you.”

She displayed every tooth in her head in token of her satisfaction, and she mounted to return home. The chief said as he left, “I am going on a war-party, and then to kill buffalo. I will come back again in a few moons. I will then come and see you, and I will kill you — I will crush you to death with robes.” And away they went, never better satisfied in their lives.

Now is it to be supposed that the company lost any thing by this liberality? That chief, whose hands were stained with the blood of so many traders, would have defended my life till the last gasp. While I was in his country, no other trader could have bartered a plug of tobacco with him or his people. The company still derived great profits from his trade. Besides the immense returns derived from my transactions with the village, I cleared over five hundred dollars from my exchanges with the chief alone, after the full value of my munificent presents had been deducted. One day the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers were to have a dance and count their coos. I called all the Crows who were in the band, and asked them if the regulations would admit of my joining in the dance.

“Certainly,” said they; “nothing will please them more; they will then believe that you have joined them.”

Accordingly, I painted myself, and put on a uniform, including a chief’s coat, new from the shelves, and painted my white leggins with stripes, denoting a great number of coos; when ready, I walked toward them as great a man as any. On seeing me approach, there was a general inquiry, “Who is that? Where did he come from?” When the ceremonies commenced, I joined in, and danced as hard as any of them. The drum at length sounded, to announce the time to begin to count.

I stepped forward first, and began. “Cheyennes, do you remember that you had a warrior killed at such a place, wearing such and such marks of distinction?”

“Yes, we know it.”

“I killed him; he was a great brave.”

There was a tap on the drum, and one coo was counted. I proceeded until I had counted my five coos, which is the limited number between the dances.

Next in turn the Bob-tailed Horse counted his five on the Crows, and to his various allusions I assented with the customary “I remember.”

This betrayed who I was, and they were delighted to see one of the Dog Soldiers of the Crows join their band. The Bob-tailed Horse made me a valuable present, and I returned to the fort with six splendid warhorses and thirty fine robes, presented to me at that dance, as my initiation gifts, or bounty-money, I suppose, for joining their army. I was then a Dog Soldier in the picked troop of the Cheyennes, compelled to defend the village against every enemy until I died, like Macbeth, with harness on my back.

The Crows had been informed by sundry persons in the employ of the American Fur Company that I had joined their inveterate enemies. They were satisfied with my proceeding. “The Medicine Calf is a cunning chief,” they said; “he best knows how to act. He has joined the Cheyennes to learn all about their numbers, the routes of their villages, and so forth. When he has learned all that he wants, he will return to us, and then we can fight the Cheyennes to greater advantage.”

I was now in my second winter with Sublet in the Cheyenne and Sioux country. He had succeeded far beyond his expectation, and he still continued to make money by thousands. We had

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

curtailed the number of sub-posts, and thereby materially reduced his expenses; indeed, they were now less than half what they were the preceding winter.

Leaving Sublet's, I went down to the South Platte, distant one hundred and fifty miles, and indulged in a short rest, until I heard that the Cheyennes of the Arkansas — those that I first visited — were about to make their spring trade, and I went over to meet them, and bring them to our fort. I found them; all appeared to be glad to see me, and they returned with me. In crossing the divide, or ridge between the two rivers, our spies in advance discovered a party of Pawnees, and a charge was immediately made upon them. We only killed three of the enemy. I counted a coo by capturing a rifle. The victim who abandoned it had been already killed.

While we engaged the enemy the village went into camp, and I proposed to my fellow-warriors to return to the village after the manner of the Crows, which was agreed to. There were several in the party, so we could easily raise a good Crow song, and the Cheyenne warriors could join in. We struck up merrily, and advanced toward the village. As soon as the women heard our voices, they ran out to see who were coming. There were several captive Crows among the Cheyennes, who, I supposed, had lived among them ever since I had been sold to the whites. These recognized our stave, and exclaimed, "Those are Crows coming; we know their song." This brought out the whole village, who stood waiting our arrival, in surprise and wonderment. As we drew near, however, they distinguished me in the party, and the mystery was solved. "The Crow is with the Cheyennes."

We performed all kinds of antics; made a circuit round the village, going through evolutions and performances which the Cheyennes had never before seen, but with which they were so highly pleased, that they adopted the dance into the celebrations of their nation. That night the scalp-dance was performed, which I took part in, as great a man as any. I sung the Crow song, to the especial admiration of the fair sex.

The next morning we resumed our journey to the fort, which we reached after three days' travel. The village had brought a great number of robes, together with some beaver, and a great trade was opened with them. At this time I had a difficulty with a Cheyenne, the only one I ever had with any of the tribe. I was eating dinner one day, when a great brave came in and demanded whisky. I repaired to the store with him to supply his want, when I found he had no robe to pay for it, and was, besides, intoxicated. I refused to give him the whisky, telling him he must first go and bring a robe. This probably aggravated him, and he made a sudden cut at me with his sword, which I very fortunately dodged, and before he could raise his weapon again I had him between my feet on the ground. I had left my battle-axe on my seat at the table, and I called out for some one to bring it to me, but no one came with it. I at length released him, and he went hooping away, to obtain his gun to shoot the Crow. I seized my own, and waited for him at the door, while all the inmates of the fort begged of me not to shoot him. After some little delay, he appeared, gun in hand; but three Cheyenne warriors interfered to stop him, and he returned into his lodge.

The day following he sent for Sublet and myself to go and dine with him, and we went accordingly. Sublet was apprehensive of mischief from my visit, and endeavored to dissuade me from going; but I foresaw no danger, and knew, farther, that it would be a cause of offense to the Indian to neglect his invitation. When we entered his lodge he was glad to see us, and bade me be seated on a pile of robes. I sat down as desired, and our host, after holding a short conversation with Sublet, turned to me and spoke as follows:

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

“O-tun-nee” (Crow), “I was a fool yesterday. You spared my life. I do not want you to be angry with me, because I am not angry with you. I was drunk; I had drunk too much of your whisky, and it made my heart black. I did not know what I was doing.”

“Very well,” said I; “I am not angry with you. When you attempted to kill me I was angry, and if my battle-axe had been in my hand, I should have killed you. You are alive, and I am glad of it.”

“Take those robes,” he rejoined, “and hereafter you shall be my brother, and I will be your brother. Those robes will make your heart right, and we will quarrel no more.”

I took the robes with me, ten in number, and found my heart perfectly mollified.

Messrs. Sublet and Vasques, having realized immense profits during their three years of partnership, disposed of all their interest and effects in the Rocky Mountain fur business, and returned to St. Louis. This threw me entirely out of business, when Messrs. Bent and Saverine wished to engage me in their employ. After some little negotiation with them, I concluded a bargain, and entered into their service in the latter part of the summer of 1840. We immediately proceeded to establish sub-posts in various directions, and I repaired to Laramie Fork.

As soon as it was known among the Indians that the Crow was trading at Bent’s post, they came flocking in with their robes. Old Smoke, the head chief of another band of Outlaws, known as Smoke’s Band, but claimed by no particular nation or tribe, visited me, with his village, and commenced a great spree. I gave them a grand entertainment, which seemed to tickle their tastes highly. They kept up their carousal until they had parted with two thousand robes, and had no more remaining. They then demanded whisky, and I refused it. “No trust,” the motto we see inscribed on every low drinking-saloon in St. Louis, is equally our system in dealing with the Indians.

They became infuriated at my refusal, and clamored and threatened if I persisted. I knew it was no use to give way, so I adhered to my resolution. Thereupon they commenced firing upon the store, and showered the bullets through every assailable point. The windows were shot entirely out, and the assailants swore vengeance against the Crow. According to their talk, I had my choice either to die or give them whisky to drink. I had but one man with me in the store. There had been several Canadians in the fort, but on the first alarm they ran to their houses, which were built around the fort, within the pickets, to obtain their guns; but on the Indians informing them that they would not hurt them, that it was only the Crow that they were after, the Canadians staid within doors, and abandoned me to my fate.

I and my companion sat with our rifles ready cocked, well prepared to defend the entrance to the fort. We had plenty of guns at hand ready loaded, and there must a few have fallen before they passed the gate. At dusk I closed the door, but we lay upon our arms all night. The Indians kept up a great tumult and pother, but attempted nothing.

Messrs. Bent and Saverine arrived in the morning, and wanted to be informed of the cause of the disturbance. I acquainted them, and they approved my conduct. They were astonished at my immense pile of robes, and applauded my fortitude.

When the Outlaws became sobered, they expressed contrition for what they had done, and charged their excesses upon John Barleycorn, which plea I admitted. At the same time, it appeared quite inconsistent that I, who was that celebrated gentleman’s high-priest, should be set upon and almost murdered by his devotees.

Nothing noteworthy occurred until the following January, when the Indians, being again on the

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

spree, once more attempted my life. I fled to a post in the Arrap-a-ho country, in charge of Mr. Alex. Wharfield, now a colonel in the army; he resigned the post to me, and took my place at Bent's post. I had but little trouble with the Indians here. Cut Nose, an old brave, who, it seems, had been in the habit of obtaining his drams of Wharfield gratis, expected to be supplied by me on the same terms. I resisted this invasion, and seriously ruffled the feathers of the old chief thereby. He left at my refusal, and did not return again that day. During the ensuing night the Pawnees came, and stole both his horses and mine. The old man raised a party, went in pursuit, recaptured all the horses, took two scalps, and returned in high spirits.

He visited the store, and informed me what he had done.

"Well," said I, "that is because I gave you no whisky yesterday. If I had given you whisky, you would have drunk too much, and been sick this morning in consequence. Then you would not have been able to pursue the Pawnees, and you would have lost your horses."

However, I gave him some whisky then in honor of his achievement. This, as I had expected, pleased the old fellow, and he restored me my horses, and charged me nothing for their recapture. As soon as the spring trade was over, I abandoned that post and returned to the Arkansas. Saverine desired me to go and see if I could open a trade with a village of Arrap-a-hos which he had heard was en-camped at forty miles distance. I accordingly started in their direction, accompanied by two men. We journeyed on until we had arrived within a short distance of the village, when we discovered on our road a band of three or four hundred traveling Indians. I saw they were Camanches, and I bade the two men to run for their lives, as I knew the Camanches would kill them. I directed them to the Arrap-a-ho village, and bade them shout their loudest when they came in sight of it. They left me, and ascended a slight eminence a little distance in advance, and then, shouting to the extent of their lungs, they put their horses down at the best speed. I rode up after them, and telegraphed with my blanket to the village to have them come quickly. They obeyed my motions, and fell in with the Camanches on their way to me. The two tribes proved to be friends, and my companions were safe. On arriving at the village I found abundance of robes, and opened a very successful trade with the people. This finished, I returned to the fort, and assisted the other employés in loading the wagons for their trip to St. Louis.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

First Trip to New Mexico.—Return to the Indians with Goods.—Success in Trade.—Enter into Business in St. Fernandez.—Get Married.—Return to the Indians.—The fortunate Speculation.—Proceed to California with Goods.

I HAD now accumulated a considerable sum of money, and thought I might as well put it to some use for my own profit, as risk my life in the service of others, while they derived the lion's share from my industry. It was now about three years since I had left St. Louis on my present excursion, and I began to weary of the monotony of my life. I was within five days' journey of New Mexico, and I determined upon going to take a look at the northern portion of this unbounded territory.

I had but one man with me, named Charles Towne, when I started upon my new exploration. On our road thither we passed near to a Utah village, and two or three of their warriors presented themselves before us to hold a parley, while the chief sat down on a log close by. They said, as we reined in our horses for a moment, "You make our paths bad by coming into our country; you will go back and tell the Cheyennes and Arrap-a-hos where we are; they will then come and kill us,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

and steal our horses. Come here! our chief wants to see you.”

This was spoken in tolerably good Spanish.

“Come on,” said I, addressing my companion; “let us not be annoyed by these trifling Indians;” and I urged my horse against the Indian spokesman, knocking him into the dirt. He arose, exclaiming, “Wugh! Shawnee!” We then rode on without further molestation, they evidently mistaking me for a Shawnee. They had robbed several white men, and, after beating them savagely, had liberated them. I had no manner of fear of them, for I knew them to be great cowards; with one hundred and fifty good Crow warriors I would have chased a thousand of them.

We passed on into St. Fernandez, and found quite a number of American traders there, established in business, and supplying both mountaineers and Indians with goods. Here I encountered an old acquaintance, named Lee, with whom I entered into partnership. We purchased one hundred gallons of alcohol, and a stock of fancy articles, to return to the Indian country, and trade for robes and other peltry. We visited the Cheyennes on the South Fork of the Platte. We passed Bent’s fort on our way thither. He hailed us, and inquired where we were going. I informed him that we were on our way to the Cheyenne village. He begged me not to go, as I valued my safety. It was only the day previous, he said, that he had traded with them, and bought eighteen horses from their village. They came the next morning and took them forcibly back, and threatened him with their guns if he said a word against their proceedings. I replied to him that I anticipated no danger, and left him to pass on to their village.

The Indians were delighted at my arrival. I had heard that the hooping-cough was very prevalent among the children, and, as we happened to have several bushels of corn, and beans, and a large quantity of dried pumpkins, we could not have come at a more opportune moment. I told the Indians, in answer to their welcome, that I had come back to see there be cause I had heard their children were all sick. I called attention to my stock of vegetable esculents, as being best adapted for food for their children, and the best calculated to restore them to health. “Besides,” I added, “I have brought a little whisky along, to put good life into your hearts.”

They were then in their sobered feelings, which will return to them after their carousals, and which present so dangerous a time to the trader. Their horses were all away, their robes were gone, and they had nothing to show in return for them. Their children were sick and dying, their wives mourning and half distracted, and they could obtain nothing at the fort to alleviate their sufferings. I could understand the whole corollary of incidents. Like their intemperate white brethren, who will occasionally review matters after a prolonged spree, and who will see the effects of their dissipation in their desolate homes, their heart-broken wives, and their ragged and starving children, what are their feelings at such a contemplation? Unquestionably hostility against the cause of this destitution, whether they recognize it in themselves, the willing instruments, or the liquor that infatuated them, or the dealer that supplied it to them. The Indians seem to have one circle of reasoning, and invariably vent their spleen upon the trader. It was this reactionary feeling that had led the Indians to recover, by force of arms, the horses they had parted with previously. I knew better how to manage them.

I deposited my goods at Old Bark’s lodge, who felt highly honored with the trust. The villagers collected round, and a dispute arose among them whether the whisky should be broached or not. Porcupine Bear objected, and Bob-tailed Horse, his brother-in-law, strongly advocated my opening the kegs. This led to a warm altercation between the two warriors, until the disputed question

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

was to be decided by the arbitrament of battle. They both left the lodge to prepare for the combat, and returned in a few minutes fully armed and equipped.

Porcupine Bear argued his cause in the following strain: "Cheyennes, look at me, and listen well to my words. I am now about to fight my brother; I shall fight him, and shall kill him if I can. In doing this, I do not fight my brother, but I fight the greatest enemy of my people.

"Once we were a great and powerful nation: our hearts were proud, and our arms were strong. But a few winters ago all other tribes feared us; now the Pawnees dare to cross our hunting-grounds, and kill our buffalo. Once we could beat the Crows, and, unaided, destroyed their villages; now we call other villages to our assistance, and we can not defend ourselves from the assaults of the enemy. How is this, Cheyennes? The Crows drink no whisky. The earnings of their hunters and toils of their women are bartered to the white man for weapons and ammunition. This keeps them powerful and dreaded by their enemies. We kill buffalo by the thousand; our women's hands are sore with dressing the robes; and what do we part with them to the white trader for? We pay them for the white man's fire-water, which turns our brains upside down, which makes our hearts black, and renders our arms weak. It takes away our warriors' skill, and makes them shoot wrong in battle. Our enemies, who drink no whisky, when they shoot, always kill their foe. We have no ammunition to encounter our foes, and we have become as dogs, which have nothing but their teeth.

"Our prairies were once covered with horses as the trees are covered with leaves. Where are they now? Ask the Crows, who drink no whisky. When we are all drunk, they come and take them from before our eyes: our legs are helpless, and we can not follow them. We are only fearful to our women, who take up their children and conceal themselves among the rocks and in the forest, for we are wolves in our lodges; we growl at them like bears when they are famishing. Our children are now sick, and our women are weak with watching. Let us not scare them away from our lodges, with their sick children in their arms. The Great Spirit will be offended at it. I had rather go to the great and happy hunting-ground now than live and see the downfall of my nation. Our fires begin to burn dim, and will soon go out entirely. My people are becoming like the Pawnees: they buy the whisky of the trader, and, because he is weak and not able to fight them, they go and steal from his lodge.

"I say, let us buy of the Crow what is useful and good, but his whisky we will not touch; let him take that away with him. I have spoken all I have to say, and if my brother wishes to kill me for it, I am ready to die. I will go and sit with my fathers in the spirit land, where I shall soon point down to the last expiring fire of the Cheyennes, and when they inquire the cause of this decline of their people, I will tell them with a straight tongue that it was the fire-water of the trader that put it out."

Old Bark then advanced between the two belligerents and thus spoke: Cheyennes, I am your great chief; you know me. My word this day shall be obeyed. The Crow has come among us again, and has brought us good things that we need; he has also brought us a little whisky. He is poor, while we are yet strong, and we will buy all he has brought with him. This day we will drink; it will make us merry, and feel good to one another. We will all drink this once, but we will not act like fools; we will not quarrel and fight, and frighten our women and children. Now, warriors, give me your weapons."

This fiat admitted no appeal; it was law and gospel to his people; disobedience to his command

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

subjected the offender to immediate death at the hands of the Dog Soldiers. The warriors delivered up their battle-axes, and the old chief handed them tome. "Crow," said he, "take these weapons that I have taken from my two children. Keep them until we have drunk up your whisky, and let no one have them till I bid you. Now, Crow, we are ready."

Slim Face and Gray Head, two Dog Soldiers, then harangued the village, and desired all who wished to trade to come and bring their robes and horses to Old Bark's lodge, and to remember that they were trading with the honest Crow, and not with white men, and that what they paid him was his.

They answered the summons in flocks, the women first, according to my established rule. My corn, beans, and pumpkins "exhaled like the dew," and I received in exchange their beautiful fancy robes. The women served, the men next came in for whisky. I sold on credit to some. When one wanted thus to deal, he would tell me what kind of a horse or mule he had: I would appeal to Old Bark for confirmation of the statement; if he verified it, I served the liquor. They all got drunk, Porcupine Bear, the temperance orator, with the rest; but there was not a single fight; all passed off harmoniously.

I received over four hundred splendid robes, besides moccasins and fancy articles. When I was ready to leave, thirty-eight horses and mules, a number corresponding to what I had marked, were brought forward. I packed up my peltry, and sent my partner on in advance with every thing except the horse I rode, telling him I would overtake him shortly.

I had reserved a five-gallon keg of whisky unknown to all, and when about to start I produced it and presented it to the crowd. They were charmed, and insisted on making me a return. They brought me over forty of their finest robes, such as the young squaws finish with immense labor to present to their lovers. Old Bark gave me a good mule to pack them, and another chief gave me a second. I then took my leave, promising to return by Leaf Fall.

When I passed Bent at his post he was perfectly confounded. He had seen one train pass belonging to me, and now I was conducting another, when, at the same time, he had supposed that there was not a robe in the village.

"Beckwourth," said he, "how you manage Indians as you do beats my understanding."

I told him that it was easily accounted for; that the Indians knew that the whites cheated them, and knew that they could believe what I said. Besides that, they naturally felt superior confidence in me on account of my supposed affinity of race. I had lived so much among them that I could enter into their feelings, and be in every respect one of themselves: this was an inducement which no acknowledged white trader could ever hope to hold out.

I rode on, and overtook my partner in advance. He had had an adventure. A party of Cheyennes, led by a chief named Three Crows, had met him, and rifled him of a three-gallon keg of whisky, which we had reserved for our own use on our way to St. Fernández. The chief stopped him, and said, "I smell whisky, and we must have some."

My partner told him that he had none.

"Wugh! my nose don't lie, but your tongue does. I smell it strong, and, if you do not hand it out, we shall unpack all your horses and find it."

"Well," said the man, "I have a little, but it belongs to the Crow, and he wants it himself."

Give it me," said the chief, "and tell him that Three Crows took it."

There was no alternative, and he gave him the keg. They carried it along until they came to a

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

creek, where they sat down and had a jollification. I passed them while they were in the midst of it, but did not see them, although they saw me. When I met the chief some time subsequently, and charged him with the larceny, he gave me ten robes and a good horse to compound the felony.

We shot several buffalo on our way, enough to load all our horses with meat and tallow. We exchanged our effects in Santa Fé for goods, and carried them to St. Fernández, a distance of sixty miles. Here we established a store as our head-quarters for the Indian trade, where I resided some time, living very fast and happily, according to the manner of the inhabitants. Among other doings, I got married to Senorita Louise Sandeville.

In the fall I returned to the Indian country, taking my wife with me. We reached the Arkansas about the first of October, 1842, where I erected a trading-post, and opened a successful business. In a very short time I was joined by from fifteen to twenty free trappers, with their families. We all united our labors, and constructed an adobe fort sixty yards square. By the following spring we had grown into quite a little settlement, and we gave it the name of Pueblo. Many of the company devoted themselves to agriculture, and raised very good crops the first season, such as wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, and abundance of almost all kinds of vegetables.

When the spring trade was over, I sent all my peltry to Independence, and bought with the proceeds three thousand dollars worth of articles, suitable for the trade in New Mexico. But, on the arrival of the goods, the whole country was in a ferment on account of Colonel Cook's expedition from Texas, which resulted so disastrously for the parties concerned. This affected the minds of the New Mexicans unfavorably for my interest, inasmuch as their former preference for United States novelties was now turned into strong repugnance for every thing American. I therefore could obtain no sale for my goods, and determined to return to my Indian friends. I bought a load of whisky to trade for horses to pack my goods to California, where I intended removing. I succeeded in my adventure, and obtained forty horses and mules, upon which I packed my merchandise, and quickly found myself on the way to the "golden state."

I started with fifteen men, three of whom were Mexicans. When I reached the Utah country, I found that the Indians were waging exterminating war upon the Mexicans, but I did not learn it in time to save the lives of my three unhappy followers, who, lagging too far in the rear, were set upon by the Indians and slain. In passing through their country I did considerable trading, exchanging my merchandise for elk, deer, and antelope skins, very beautifully dressed.

I arrived in Pueblo de Angeles (California) in January, 1844. There I indulged my new passion for trade, and did a very profitable business for several months. At the breaking out of the revolution in 1845, I took an active part against the mother country, of which I will furnish some details in my next chapter.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Californian Revolution.—Rifle Corps.—Position of the two Armies.—Colonel Sutter.—Cannonade.—Flight of Sutter.—His Return.—Trial and subsequent Release.

THE Upper Californians, on account of their great distance from the Mexican government, had long enjoyed the forms of an independent principality, although recognizing themselves as a portion of the Mexican Republic. They had for years past had the election of their own officers, their governor inclusive, and enjoyed comparative immunity from taxes and other political vexations. Under this abandonment, the inhabitants lived prosperous and contented; their hills and

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

prairies were literally swarming with cattle; immense numbers of these were slaughtered annually for their hides and tallow; and, as they had no "Armies of Liberation" to support, and no costly government to maintain in extravagance, they passed their lives in a state of contentment, every man sitting under his own vine and his own fig-tree.

Two years prior to my arrival all this had been changed. President Santa Anna had appointed one of his creatures, Torrejon, governor, with absolute and tyrannical power; he arrived with an army of bandits to subject the defenseless inhabitants to every wrong that a debasing tyranny so readily indulges in. Heavy taxes were imposed for the support of the home government, and troops were quartered to the great annoyance and cost of the honest people. The lives of the inhabitants were continually in danger from the excesses of the worthless vagabonds who had been forced upon them; their property was rifled before their eyes, their daughters were ravished in their presence, or carried forcibly to the filthy barracks. The people's patience became at length exhausted, and they determined to die rather than submit to such inflictions. But they were ignorant how to shake off the yoke: they were unaccustomed to war, and knew nothing about political organizations. However, Providence finally raised up a man for the purpose, General José Castro, who had filled the office of commander under the former system, but who had been forced to retire into privacy at the inauguration of the reign of terror. He stepped boldly forth, and declared to the people his readiness to lead them to the warfare that should deliver their country from the scourge that afflicted them, he called upon them to second his exertions, and never desert his banner until California were purified of her present pollution. His patriotic appeal was responded to by all ranks. Hundreds flocked to his standard; the young and the old left their ranches and their cattle-grounds, and rallied round their well-trying chief.

There was at that time quite a number of Americans in the country, and, according to their interests and predilections, they ranged themselves upon opposing sides. Our present worthy and much-respected citizen, General Sutter, was at that time, if I mistake not, a colonel in the forces of the central government, and at the outbreak of the revolution he drew his sword for Santa Anna, and entered into active service against the rebels in Pueblo de Angeles.

There was an American, long resident in the country, named J. Roland, who sought my co-operation in the popular cause. He said that every American who could use a rifle was a host against the invaders, and besought me to arm in defense, and to influence my men likewise to espouse the cause. I replied to his solicitations by promising him my active co-operation, and also that I would represent his arguments to the men living with me. Accordingly, I informed my people that I intended to shoulder my rifle in the defense of life and property, and they were unanimous in their resolution to accompany me. Hence there were thirteen riflemen instead of one. We shortly after received an accession of sixty more good frontiersmen, and mustered ourselves for service. The company elected me captain, but I declined the office. Mr. Bell finally assumed the command, with the promise of my unflinching support in extremities. Our company steadily increased in number until we had one hundred and sixty men, including native Californians, who joined us with rifles.

General Castro's first movement was against Pueblo. He entered the place at the head of his forces, and took the fort, arsenal, with all the government arms, ammunition, and stores, with the slight loss of one officer wounded. This enabled the rebels to arm themselves, and he was shortly at the head of a small but well-appointed army. The general highly extolled the rifle battalion, and

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

he looked upon it as a powerful support.

Castro then took a detachment of rebel troops, and proceeded northward to reconnoitre the enemy's position, our main body also moving in the direction of the enemy as far as Monterey, where were the governor's head-quarters. On first hearing the intelligence of the outbreak, the governor had put his forces in motion, and issued orders to shoot the rebels wherever met, and destroy their property of whatever kind. General Castro, having proceeded as far as Santa Barbara, a distance of ninety-six miles, and having obtained full information concerning the movements of the governor, returned and joined the main body. During his expedition he captured five Americans in the Mexican service. He disarmed them, telling them that he had no disposition to injure Americans, and that he would return their arms as soon as he had expelled the enemies of the people.

Our forces were concentrated in a large open prairie, the enemy being stationed at no great distance, likewise on the prairie. I ascended, one morning, the summit of a mountain, which would afford me a fair view of the enemy's camp, just to discover their numbers and strength of position. On my road I encountered two Americans, who were serving in the capacity of spies to the enemy. I accosted them, and expressed surprise to see them in the service of such an old rascal as Torrejon, and recommended them to join the popular cause; but they seemed to have an eye to the promised booty of the rebels, and my arguments could not influence them. I dispatched one of them with a letter to Gant, an American who held the commission of captain in the governor's army, offering him, as we did not wish to fight against our American brethren, to withdraw all the Americans from the rebel ranks, if he would do the same on the side of the governor, and leave the Mexicans and Californians, who were most interested in the issue, to measure their strength. Some Germans who were with us also made the same proposal to Colonel Sutter. Our messenger conveyed the dispatches, and delivered the German's letter to Colonel Sutter, who read both that and our letter to Captain Gant. He returned for answer that, unless the Americans withdrew from the insurgent army immediately, he would shoot us every one by ten o'clock the next morning. This embittered us the more against the barbarity of the opposing power, and we resolved to make their leaders, not excepting Setter, feel the effects of our rifles as soon as they placed themselves within range.

On the following morning a weak and ineffective cannonade commenced on both sides. We lay low, awaiting the enemy's charge. As their riflemen had not shown themselves, and we were desirous to obtain a sight of them, myself, with seven or eight others, advanced cautiously in search of them. On our way we discovered a small cannon which the enemy had loaded and was about to discharge upon our ranks. Had there been a gunner among them, it must have done us great injury. We advanced within a few yards of the piece, and had raised ourselves up to shoot the artillerymen, when one of our party arrested our aim by suddenly exclaiming, "Don't shoot! don't shoot!" He then pointed out the enemy's riflemen carefully emerging from a hollow, with the intention of stealing upon our flank and saluting us with a volley of lead.

I laid down my rifle, and hailed them to halt. I recognized a number of mountaineers among them, with some of whom I had intimate acquaintance, and I urged them to adopt the cause of the people, for the side they had now espoused was one no American should be seen to defend. They heard me through, and all, or nearly all the Americans were persuaded by my arguments, and returned with me to join our battalion. This assured us of victory. The cannonade was per-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

fectly harmless: some of the balls passed three hundred feet over our heads; others plowed up the prairie as near to their ranks as ours. All the damage we received was one wagon shivered to pieces, and a horse killed under Colonel Price, which animal had been captured by us at Pueblo, and was now serving in the rebel forces with the same rank he had held under government. The desertion of the riflemen seriously affected the enemy's prospects of victory. Ten o'clock had passed, and Colonel Sutter had not put his threat into execution. The enemy finally retired from the field, and marched in the direction of Pueblo. I took a party, and ascended a mountain to watch the progress of the retiring foe; we staid out some hours, with the view to learn where they encamped. While thus employed, a courier, sent from our commander, brought us orders to return immediately. We instantly obeyed, and found the army gone, with only one man remaining to direct our steps. On coming up with our forces, we found that our colonel had made a movement which cut off all retreat from the enemy, and which must bring him to an engagement, or an unconditional surrender. In the morning, I again took a party with me, and mounted an eminence to reconnoitre the enemy's position. We approached to within five hundred yards of their camp, where we shot a bullock, which we quietly proceeded to dress. While we were thus engaged, I perceived an officer approaching from the enemy's camp to ascertain who we were. I took my rifle, and dodged among the bushes, eager to get a shot at him; but, before I could do so, one of my men prematurely fired, and missed his mark. The officer had dismounted in order to get a nearer view of us, and this admonitory shot warned him back into camp. Myself and another advanced to within fifty rods of it, and boldly seized the officer's horse, and they did not fire a shot at us. We saw their camp was hemmed in on all sides. Our artillery was placed in battery, matches lighted, and men in position — all was ready for action. The enemy, perceiving their desperate condition, sent a flag of truce for a negotiation. Articles of capitulation were eventually drawn up and signed, to the effect that the governor and his forces should immediately lay down their arms, and leave for Acapulco as soon as their embarkation could be accomplished. Accordingly, they laid down their arms, and marched under escort to the Embaradara, distant twenty miles from Pueblo. The governor was not permitted to return to Monterey, but his lady was sent for to the Embaradara, where she rejoined her husband, and they quit the country together. Colonel Sutter, on the day of embarkation, left his detachment of naked Indians with the army, and proceeded, as we supposed, to his fort on the Sacramento; but he returned the next day, and gave himself up to us. His force of Indians were very well drilled, but would have been far better employed in raising cabbages on his farm than in facing rebel riflemen on the battle-field. A trial was held upon the colonel, which resulted in his full acquittal, with the restoration of all his property fallen into our hands, such as cannon and other military effects, by the surrender of the government forces. The Americans, in jest probably, seemed very desirous to have the prisoner shot, which produced great alarm in his mind, and recalled to his recollection his recent threat to shoot all the Americans in our army.

Our countrymen were almost carried on the shoulders of the Californians, in gratitude for their participation in the revolution; for, although the victory had been a bloodless one, they attributed their easily-won success to the dread inspired by the name of their American confederates. After seeing the departure of the government troops, the rebel army returned to Pueblo, where they elected Colonel Pico governor; Colonel, now General Castro, commander of the forces; and filled other less important offices. Fandangoes, which were continued for a week, celebrated our

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

success; and these festivities over, the insurgents returned to their various homes and occupations. Some few weeks after, a small proportion of the inhabitants sought to displace our newly-elected chiet magistrate, and appoint some other in his place. I was sent for during the night to guard the governor's palace with my corps of rifles, and we succeeded in capturing the leading conspirators, who were tried and sent to Acapulco in irons. I had a quarrel with the alcalde shortly after this service, and he put me in irons for cursing him. As soon as the governor heard of my misfortune, he had me immediately discharged from confinement.

I now resumed my business, and dispatched my partner, Mr. Waters, after a fresh supply of goods; but, before he had time to return, fresh political commotions supervened. There still seemed to exist in the minds of the majority a strong hankering for the domination of Mexico, notwithstanding they had so recently sided with the Revolutionists in shaking off the yoke of the national government. Among other causes of excitement, too, the American adventurers resident there had raised the "Bear Flag," and proclaimed their intention of establishing an independent government of their own. This caused us to be closely watched by the authorities, and matters seemed to be growing too warm to be pleasant.

In the midst of this gathering ferment, news reached us from Mazatlan of the declaration of war between the United States and Mexico, and I deemed it was fully time to leave. Colonel Fremont was at that juncture approaching from Oregon with a force, if combined with the Americans resident there, sufficient to conquer the whole country, and I would have liked exceedingly to join his forces, but to have proceeded toward him would have subjected me to mistrust, and consequent capture and imprisonment. If I looked south the same difficulties menaced me, and the west conducted me to the Pacific Ocean.

I had but little time to deliberate. My people was at war with the country I was living in; I had become security to the authorities for the good behavior of several of my fellow-countrymen, and I was under recognizances for my own conduct. The least misadventure would compromise me, and I was impatient to get away. My only retreat was eastward; so, considering all things fair in time of war, I, together with five trusty Americans, collected eighteen hundred stray horses we found roaming on the Californian ranchos, and started with our utmost speed from Pueblo de Angeles. This was a fair capture, and our morals justified it, for it was war-time. We knew we should be pursued, and we lost no time in making our way toward home. We kept our herd jogging for five days and nights, only resting once a day to eat, and afford the animals time to crop a mouthful of grass. We killed a fat colt occasionally, which supplied us with meat, and very delicious meat too — rather costly, but the cheapest and handiest we could obtain. After five days' chase our pursuers relaxed their speed, and we ourselves drove more leisurely. We again found the advantage that I have often spoken of before of having a drove of horses before us, for, as the animals we bestrode gave out, we could shift to a fresh one, while our pursuers were confined to one steed.

When we arrived at my fort on the Arkansas, we had over one thousand head of horses, all in good condition. There was a general rejoicing among the little community at my safe arrival, the Indians also coming in to bid me welcome. I found my wife married again, having been deceived by a false communication. Her present husband had brought her a missive, purporting to be of my inditing, wherein I expressed indifference toward her person, disinclination to return home, and tendering her a discharge from all connubial obligation. She accepted the document

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

as authentic, and solaced her abandonment by espousing her husband's messenger. My return acquainted her with the truth of the matter. She manifested extreme regret at having suffered herself to be imposed upon so readily, and, as a remedy for the evil, offered herself back again; but I declined, preferring to enjoy once more the sweets of single blessedness.

I left the fort on a visit to San Fernández. I found business very dull there on account of the war, and great apprehensions were felt by my friends in regard to the result. Perceiving that was no very desirable place to remove to, I returned to my community. General Kearney was just then on his march to Santa Fé. I took a drove of my horses, and proceeded down the Arkansas to meet him on his route; for it was probable there might be an opportunity of effecting some advantageous exchanges. The general came up, and found me in waiting with my stock; we had been acquainted for several years, and he gave me a very cordial reception.

"Beckwourth," said the general, you have a splendid lot of horses, really; they must have cost you a great sum of money."

"No, general," I replied, "but they cost me a great many miles of hard riding."

"How so?" he inquired.

"Why, I was in California at the time the war broke out, and, not having men enough at my command to take part in the fighting, I thought I could assist my country a little by starting off a small drove of the enemy's horses, in order to prevent their being used against us."

"Ah, Beckwourth, you are truly a wonderful man to possess so much forethought," and he laughed heartily. "However," added he, "trade them off as quickly as possible, for I want you to accompany me. You like war, and I have good use for you now."

I informed him that I was ready for service; and, accordingly, I sent all my remaining horses back to my plantation, and went on with the general to Santa Fé, which place submitted without firing a shot. The general sent me immediately back to Fort Leavenworth with dispatches. This was my service during the war. The occupation was a tolerably good one, and I never failed in getting my dispatches through. I enjoyed facilities superior to almost any other man, as I was known to almost all the Indians through whose country I passed.

My partner and I had purchased a hotel in Santa Fé, and we transacted a very profitable business there. My associate attended to the business of the hotel, while I carried dispatches, and Santa Fé was generally my starting-place. Many messengers lost their lives on the route, as at times there were dispatches to be sent, and I would not be at head-quarters to carry them. The distance from Santa Fé to Fort Leavenworth is nine hundred and thirteen miles. I have frequently made the trip in from twenty to twenty-five days; my shortest trip I accomplished in eighteen. I well knew that my life was at stake every trip that I made, but I liked the employment; there was continual excitement in it, indeed sometimes more than I actually cared about, more particularly when I fell in with the Pawnees. The service furnished an escort of fifteen or twenty-five men, but I always declined the company of troops, as I considered myself safer without them. If I had taken troops with me, it would have led to incessant fights with the Indians; and if they had seen me with white soldiers, they would have been very apt to kill me the first opportunity. Another thing: I did not think the United States regular troops good for any thing against the Indians, for I knew that the Camanches would stand and fight them almost man for man.

I chanced to fall in with Kit Carson one day, as I was about to start from New Mexico to Fort Leavenworth, and he proposed going with me, as he wished to learn my route. I was very much

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

pleased with his proposal, as I thought that with Kit and his men I should go through strong handed. I told him that I should rest at Taos one day to get my horses shod, and that he could easily come up with me there, or on the road thither. I left with two men, and staid at Taos as appointed, but he failed to rejoin us. I rode on as far as my ranch; still he did not appear. I built a large fire before proceeding into the Indian country, thinking to attract him by the smoke, and thus bring him on to our trail, but I saw no more of him, and it was supposed he was lost until he eventually turned up in the City of Washington. We both had a narrow escape from Indians on that trip. I had, contrary to my usual practice, encamped one night in the prairie, and was to start in the morning, when we heard buffalo running close to our camp. On looking out, I saw a great number chased by the Pawnees, although the Indians were not yet in sight. We made all possible haste to the timber, threw our horses on their sides, gagged them and fastened them to the ground, and then secreted ourselves in the willows. The Indians flocked round, busied in their pursuit, and some of the buffaloes they dressed within gunshot of our secret camp. I thought that day the longest I had lived through, and I expect the poor animals thought so too, for they lay in one position the whole time, without food or water, and without being permitted to whisper a complaint. At night we made good our escape, and arrived at the fort without further difficulty. When I was ready to return to Santa Fé, I could find no one willing to accompany me. The weather was intensely cold, and no inducement that I could offer was sufficient to tempt men to leave their comfortable fires, and encounter the perils of the Indians and Jack Frost in the prairies. Many men had been frozen to death on the route, and a general shudder ran through the company when I proposed the journey to them. I could have been furnished with soldiers in plenty, but I was unwilling to take them, as it imposed so much trouble on the road to stay to bury every man that perished with the hardships of the journey. Important dispatches had arrived from Washington which must go through, and I looked fruitlessly round for a man hardy enough to go with me. At length a boy — a Kentuckian — volunteered. He had followed the army to the fort, and had lived about the barracks until he had become well accustomed to the privations of a camp life. He was an intelligent lad, but, unfortunately, had a malformation of one of his feet, which seriously impeded his walking. However, I liked his “pluck” in proposing, and eventually consented to take him. I went with him to the sutler’s store, and procured him the warmest clothing I could, and then bade him repair to my boarding-house, and stay there until I was ready to start.

When I was prepared for departure, I furnished him with a good horse, and, taking an extra one between us, we started on the long journey. I gave him particular directions that if he should become very cold he was to acquaint me, and I would stay and build a fire to warm him by wherever there was any wood; but the proposition he declined.

Three days after we reached the Arkansas, and encamped. Isaac was busied in preparing supper, while I walked to an eminence close by in order to survey the country. I perceived an immense number of Indians approaching directly toward us, and at not more than three or four hundred yards distance. I shouted to Isaac to catch the horses quickly and tether them, and I hastened back to the camp. He inquired what the matter was, and I told him there were a thousand Indians coming after us.

The approaching individuals belonged to the Camanche tribe, and numbered over a thousand warriors. They were in full speed. They dashed through the Arkansas with such precipitation that

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

I thought they would throw all the water out of the channel and hurl it on to the bank. I ran in front of the advance, and challenged them to stop. They halted for a moment, and asked me who I was. I told them the Crow. Thereupon they grabbed me up like a chicken, and carried me into our little camp. They had nine white men's scalps, which, to appearance, were hardly yet cold, and they said they must kill my white boy, and his scalp would just make ten. I told them the boy was my nephew, and that they must not kill him — that great braves never killed boys. They then conversed among themselves a minute or two, and finally said, "He, being your nephew, may live. Tell him to make us some good black soup."

I foresaw that my coffee and sugar must suffer, for by black soup they meant coffee. I directed Isaac to set about making it, but to secrete a little for our selves, if he could do so unperceived. The Camanches have a great fondness for coffee, and I never fell in with them without having to part with all I had, and I sometimes imagined they preferred my coffee and sugar to my scalp. The same day, just before dusk, while jogging steadily along, the boy discovered a small party of Pawnees. I hastily dismounted, and tied the heads of our three horses together, to prevent them running, and directed the boy to see that they did not move. I then took his gun and my own, and went away from the horses. As I was leaving, the boy inquired if he should fire too. I told him no, not unless I was killed, and then to defend himself as he best could. I took a secure position and fired. An Indian fell. I fired again, and killed a second. They cracked away at me, but did no harm. I reloaded, and fired again, until I had leveled five of them, they retreating at every discharge. When the fifth warrior fell, the whole party fell back to cry. I knew that, after they had cried for a few minutes, they would make a rush for revenge. Therefore I shouted to the boy to cut the animals loose, and mount in haste. He did so; I sprung on my horse instantly, and we flew away, leaving the mourners to their lamentations. At every foe I shot the boy would ejaculate, "Whoop! you fetched him; he's got his gruel," and other sayings, thereby displaying more bravery than many men would have shown under similar circumstances. Ever afterward he considered that we were a match for any number of Pawnees; and as for the Camanches, I could beat them off with "black soup."

We traveled on for several miles, and then encamped. In the morning I started along a ravine for our horses, which had strayed away. I returned toward the camp, where I found that they had taken themselves up another small ravine, and that I had passed them. While thus pursuing the stray animals, the boy came to acquaint me that he had seen a great number of Indians. I led the horses to the camp, and then mounted a little rise of ground, from whence I descried a large village. I did not know what tribe they belonged to, though I knew they were not Pawnees, for that tribe never visited this country except on war excursions. I took the boy, and walked with him up to the village, but their faces were all strange to me; nor did I like their appearance and movements. On perceiving one at a little distance wrapped in his robe, I thought he might possibly be a chief, and I approached him. He addressed me in Crow, "Ah! my friend, what brought you here?"

I replied that, as I was passing through, I had thought it well to call on him.

"I am glad to see you," said he; "enter my lodge; my warriors are bad to-day."

The Indians were Apaches, and the chief was named Black Shield, an old and intimate acquaintance.

He insisted on my spending the night in the village, which I consented to. He was perfectly rabid toward the whites, and stated his intention to manure the prairie with their bodies the forth-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

coming season he would not leave one in the country. I applauded his intention, telling him the whites were unable to fight. Seeing that I was on his side — that is, if my words made me so — he continued, “I have plenty of warriors, and plenty of guns and balls, but I am a little short of powder. When will you return?”

I informed him as nearly as I could calculate, but I added that my return was uncertain.

“Will you bring me some powder?” he inquired. “I will,” I said; “but I shall return by way of the Eagle’s Nest Hill.”

“That is the very place I am going to from here,” he rejoined; and, if I am not there myself, some of my warriors will be, and they can take it of you.”

This afforded me no put-off, and I accordingly promised to furnish him with the powder. If the reader will indulge me in a witticism, I beg to assure him that I carried the powder to the old chief in a horn! In the morning he furnished me with meat enough to subsist us for a week, together with new moccasins, and sundry other articles. We then bade him adieu, and proceeded on our journey, arriving at Santa Fé without any farther noteworthy adventure.

On reaching my destination, I informed some of my friends of my promise to the Black Shield, and where they could find him to deliver the powder, to enable him to carry out his commendable resolution. A party started to meet him at the appointed spot; but in delivering the powder they managed to explode it, and he and his warriors only received the bullets, of which they already had plenty.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

Affairs at Santa Fé.—Insurrection at Taos.—Discovery of the Plot.—Battle at the Cañon.—Battles at Lambida, at Pueblo, and at Taos. —A Mexican Woman redeemed from the Indians.—Return to Santa Fé.

ON my arrival at Santa Fé I found affairs in a very disturbed state. Colonel Doniphan had just gained the battle of Brasito, and was carrying all before him in that section of the country. He had forwarded orders to Santa Fé for a field battery, in order to make a demonstration against Chihuahua. Major Clarke was intrusted with the duty of conveying the artillery to the colonel. Scarcely had he departed when we received intelligence of an insurrection in Taos. The information was first communicated by an Indian from a village between Santa Fé and Taos, who reported to General Price that the Mexicans had massacred all the white inhabitants of that place, and that a similar massacre was contemplated in Santa Fé, of which report full information could be obtained by the arrest of a Mexican who was then conveying a letter from the priest in Taos to the priest in Santa Fé. A watch was immediately set upon the priest’s house, and a Mexican was seen to enter. The guard approached the door to arrest the man as he issued, but he, being apprised of the action of the authorities, left the house by another door, and escaped.

At night there came a violent rapping at my gate, and on going to open it I perceived my friend, Charles Towne, who, on being admitted, clasped me round the neck, and gave vent to uncontrolled emotion. Perceiving that something alarming had occurred, I invited him into the house, spread refreshments before him, and allowed him time to recover himself. He then informed me that he had escaped almost by a miracle from Taos, where all the American residents had been killed. He was a resident, there, having married a girl of New Mexico, and his wife’s father had apprised him that he had better effect his escape, if possible, for if he was caught he would be inevitably massacred. His father-in-law provided him with a good horse, and he retreated into the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

woods, where, after considerable risk and anxiety, he providentially eluded the assassins. On receiving this alarming information, I lost no time in repairing to the head-quarters of General Price, accompanied by my informant, who related the above particulars. General Price immediately adopted the most effective measures. He assembled his officers, and instructed them to set a close watch upon the house of every Mexican in the city, and to suffer no person to pass in or out; he also ordered that every American should hold himself in readiness for service during the night. Before morning several of the most influential Mexican citizens were placed under arrest. In searching them, important conspiracies were brought to light. Correspondence, implicating the most considerable residents, was read, and a plot was detected of subjecting Santa Fé to the same St. Bartholomew massacre as had just been visited upon Taos. The city was placed under martial law, and every American that could shoulder a musket was called into immediate service. All the ox-drivers, mule-drivers, merchants, clerks, and commissariat-men were formed into rank and file, and placed in a condition for holding the city. Then, placing himself at the head of his army, four hundred strong, General Price marched toward Taos. On arriving at Canjarra, a small town about twenty miles from Santa Fé, we found the enemy, numbering two thousand Mexicans and Indians, were prepared to give us battle. The enemy's lines were first perceived by our advanced guard, which instantly fell back upon the main body. Our line was formed, and an advance made upon the enemy, the mountaineer company, under Captain Saverine, being placed in charge of the baggage. As soon as battle was begun, however, we left the baggage and ammunition wagons to take care of themselves, and made a descent upon the foe. He fled precipitately before the charge of our lines, and we encamped upon the field of battle. The next day we advanced to Lamboda, where the enemy made another stand, and again fled on our approach. We marched on until we arrived at Taos, and the barbarities we witnessed there exceeded in brutality all my previous experience with the Indians. Bodies of our murdered fellow-countrymen were lying about the streets, mutilated and disfigured in every possible way, and the hogs and dogs were making a repast upon the remains. Among the dead we recognized that of Governor Bent, who had been recently appointed by General Kearney. One poor victim we saw, who had been stripped naked, scalped alive, and his eyes punched out: he was groping his way through the streets, beseeching some one to shoot him out of his misery, while his inhuman Mexican tormentors were deriving the greatest amusement from the exhibition. Such scenes of unexampled barbarity filled our soldiers' breasts with abhorrence: they became tiger-like in their craving for revenge. Our general directed the desecrated remains to be gathered together, and a guard to be placed over them, while he marched on with his army in pursuit of the barbarians. Late in the afternoon we arrived at Pueblo, where we found the enemy well posted, having an adobe fort in their front. No attack was attempted that evening, and strict orders were issued for no man to venture out of camp.

In the evening I was visited by a man, who informed me that he had a brother at Rio Mondo, twelve miles distant, whom, if he was not already killed, he wished to save from massacre. I determined to rescue him, if possible, and, having induced seven other good and trusty mountaineers to aid me in the attempt, we left the camp unperceived, and proceeded to the place indicated. On our arrival we found two or three hundred Mexicans, all well armed; we rode boldly past them, and they dispersed, many of them going to their homes. We reached the door of the Mexican general Montaja, who styled himself the "Santa Anna of the North," and captured him. We then

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

liberated the prisoner we were in quest of, and returned to Taos with our captive general. At Taos we found our forces, which had retired upon that place from Pueblo, after having made an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the enemy. We informed our general of our important capture, and he affected great displeasure at our disobedience of orders, although it was easy to see that, in his eyes, the end had justified the means. The following morning a gallows was erected, and Montaja was swung in the wind. The correspondence that had been seized in Santa Fé had implicated him in some of the blackest plots, and we thought that this summary disposal of his generalship would relieve us from all further danger from his machinations.

Having procured artillery to bombard the enemy's position, our commander returned to Pueblo. We cannonaded in good earnest, but the pieces were too small to be of much service; but we cut a breach with our axes half way through the six-foot wall, and then finished the work with our cannon. While engaged in this novel way of getting at the enemy, a shell was thrown from a mortar at the fort; but our artillerymen, not being very skillful in their practice, threw the shell outside the fort, and it fell among us. A young lieutenant seized it in his hands, and cast it through the breach; it had not more than struck before it exploded, doing considerable damage in the fort. We then stormed the breach, which was only big enough to admit one man at a time, and carried the place without difficulty.

The company of mountaineers had fallen back midway between the fort and mountain, in order to pick off any Mexican who should dare to show himself. We killed fifty-four of the defenders as they were endeavoring to escape, upon the person of one of whom, an officer, we found one hundred and sixty doubloons. Some of the enemy fired upon us from a position at one corner of the fort, through loop-holes; and while looking about for a covert to get a secure shot at them, we discovered a few of the enemy hidden away in the brush. One of them, an Indian, ran toward us, exclaiming, "Bueno! bueno! me like Americanos." One of our party said, "If you like the Americans, take this sword, and return to the brush, and kill all the men you find there."

He took the proffered sword, and was busy in the brush for a few minutes, and then returned with his sword-blade dripping with gore, saying, "I have killed them."

"Then you ought to die for killing your own people," said the American, and he shot the Indian dead.

The battle lasted through the whole day, and a close watch was set at night to prevent the escape of those yet occupying the fort. The assault was renewed the following morning, and continued during that day also. Toward night several white flags were raised by the enemy, but were immediately shot down by the Americans, who had determined to show no quarter. On the third morning all the women issued from the fort, each bearing a white flag, and kneeled before the general to supplicate for the lives of their surviving friends. The general was prevailed upon, and gave orders to cease firing. The enemy lost severely through their disgraceful cowardice. Our company lost but one man through the whole engagement. Nine of the most prominent conspirators were hanged at Taos, and seven or eight more at Santa Fé. It was about this time that the report reached us of the butchery of Mr. Waldo, with eight or ten other Americans, at the Moro.

After the insurrection was suppressed I started again for Fort Leavenworth. On my way back from the fort I again fell in with Black Shield and his Apaches. I said to him, "You told me false. You said that you would meet me at the Eagle's Nest, but when I went there you were not to be found. I had to throw the powder away that I brought for you, and run for my life; for the whites

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

discovered my errand, and were close at my heels.”

“I know it, my friend,” said the Black Shield. “We saw your kegs there, but the whites had taken all the powder out. I am sorry they came upon you so suddenly, for we had to run as well as you.” The second day after we left the Apaches we discovered an object in the distance which I at first took for a stump, but still thought it singular that there should be a stump where there were no trees near. As we approached the object moved, and we at length discovered it to be a man of the name of Elliott Lee, who had been wounded by the Apaches three or four days previously, and had not tasted food since. He had belonged to a party of seventeen or eighteen mountaineers, on their way to Santa Fé. They had stopped to rest on the bank of a creek, and were suddenly set upon by the Indians. Several of the party were killed, among whom was my friend Charles Towne, and all the rest were more or less severely wounded. Some few had succeeded in getting away, notwithstanding their wounds; but Mr. Lee had been shot in the thigh, and was unable to crawl along. When we picked him up he was delirious, and his wound was greatly swollen and inflamed. We gave him food, and carried him along with us, until we fortunately came up with his wagons. We then gave him into the keeping of his friends, and proceeded on our way.

On my arrival home I disposed of all my property in Santa Fé, and started to buy horses of the Indians to dispose of to the discharged troops. I had arrived within a short distance of my ranch, when I met a man who advised me to conceal myself. Two rewards had been offered for my apprehension: one of a thousand dollars by Colonel Price, and another of five hundred dollars by Mr. Kissack, Quarter-master. I was accused of confederating with rebels and Indians, and assisting them in stealing horses from the whites, and leading the hostile bands in their warfare upon the American troops.

I listened to his information, and was astonished at the invention. “That is news indeed,” I said. “But they shall not have the profit all to themselves; I will immediately go and deliver myself up, and obtain the rewards.”

“I advise you, as a friend, not to go,” rejoined my interlocutor, “for they will assuredly hang you directly they lay hands upon you.”

“Well, hang or not hang,” I answered, “I am resolved to go, for I have not been a month absent from Santa Fé, and I can give account of every day and night I have since spent.”

At the time I met with my informant, I had an order from Captain Morris, of the United States Army, in my pocket, authorizing me to pick up all the government horses that I might find in my rambles, and bring them in; but up to the time that I was informed of the charges against me, I had found but one horse, the property of Captain Saverine, and it I had restored to the owner. Accordingly, I returned without delay to Taos, where I saw Colonel Willock, who was lieutenant under Colonel Price. Him I acquainted with my determination to proceed to Santa Fé, to deliver myself up for the rewards that were offered for my apprehension, but he urgently requested me not to go. He was about to start with an expedition against the Apaches, and wished to engage me as spy, interpreter, and guide. He promised to forward an exculpatory letter to Santa Fé that should set me all right with the authorities. The letter was sent, but not delivered, as the messenger was shot on the way.

I concluded to accompany the colonel, and aid him to the extent of my ability in the object of his expedition. We started with a small battalion of volunteers for the Apaches. The first day in camp, the common soldier's fare was spread for dinner, which at that time I felt but little appetite for. I

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

informed the colonel that I would go out and kill an antelope.

“Why,” said he, “there is not an antelope within ten miles around; the soldiers have scoured the whole country without seeing one.”

I told him I felt sure I could find one, and took up my rifle and was about to start.

“Hold on!” cried the colonel; I will go with you, and will further engage to pack on my back all you kill.” We started, and kept on the road for about half a mile, when I discovered the tracks of three antelopes which had just crossed our path, and gone in the direction of a hill close by. The colonel did not see the tracks, and I did not point them out to him. We passed on a few rods farther, when I suddenly stopped, threw my head back, and began to sniff like a dog scenting his prey.

“What the dickens are you sniffing so for?” asked the colonel.

“I am sure that I smell an antelope,” said I.

“You smell antelope!” and the colonel’s nostrils began to dilate; “I can smell nothing.”

“Well, colonel,” I said, “there are antelopes close by, I know, for my smellers never yet deceived me; and now,” added I, “if you will start carefully up that hollow, I will go up on the other side, and I am confident that one of us will kill one.”

I knew that if the animals were in the hollow they would start at the approach of the colonel, and most probably in my direction, and thus afford me an opportunity of getting a shot at one. I proceeded cautiously along, until, raising my head over a knoll, I saw the three antelopes which had crossed us. Two had already lain down, and the third was preparing to do so, when I sent a leaden messenger which brought him down involuntarily.

The colonel shouted to inquire what I had shot at. “Antelope,” I answered; and he came running at his best speed. There was the very beast, beyond all dispute, to the utter astonishment of the colonel, who regarded for some moments first the game and then the hunter

“And you smelled them!” he pondered; “well, I must confess, your olfactory nerves beat those of any man I ever yet fell in with. Smell antelope! Humph! I will send my boy to carry him in.”

“But that was not the bargain, colonel,” I said; “you engaged to pack in on your back all I should kill. There is your burden; the distance is but short.”

But the colonel declined his engagement. We finally hung the antelope on a tree, and the colonel, on our return to camp, dispatched his servant to fetch it in. He never could get over my smelling antelope, and we have had many a hearty laugh at it since.

The following morning, at daylight, I took five or six men with me, and proceeded on my duty as spy, while the colonel moved on with the troops, we returning to camp every evening at dusk. We frequently saw signs of Indians, but we could make no discovery of the Indians themselves. We continued our chase for nearly a month; our coffee and sugar had given out, and our provisions were getting low; the soldiers could kill no game, and there was a general disposition, especially among the officers, to return.

In leaving the camp, as usual, one morning, I directed the colonel to a camping-ground, and started on my search. Late in the afternoon, I discovered what I supposed to be a large party of Indians moving in our direction. I ran with all possible speed to communicate the information; but, in ascending a small point of land which was in my way, I found a strange encampment of United States troops lying before me. I knew it was not Colonel Willock’s command, for these had tents, wagons, and other appointments, which we were unprovided with. When I was first

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

perceived, some of the men pointed me out to their companions; "There's Beckwourth! there's Jim Beckwourth!" I heard whispered around. I found it was a detachment commanded by Colonel Edmondson, who had just returned from Santa Fé with a re-enforcement, having been defeated in an engagement with the Apaches some time previously. When the colonel saw me, he inquired of me my errand.

"I have come after horses," I replied, en plaisantant; "but I see you have none."

"Beckwourth," said a Captain Donohue, "I have been defending your character for a long time, and I now want you to clear up matters for yourself."

I found I was not in very good savor among the parties present, owing to a mistake in my identity made by one of the soldiers during their late engagement with the Indians. It was supposed I had entered their camp, hurled my lance through a soldier, and challenged another out to fight, telling him he was paid for fighting, and it was his duty to engage me. This suspicion, added to flying reports of evil doings, which derived their origin in the Crow village from my adventure with Fitzpatrick, had associated me in the soldiers' minds with all the horse-raids and white massacres they heard rumors of, and I was regarded by them all as a desperate, lawless character, who deserved hanging to the first tree wherever met.

At this moment two men came running toward the camp at full speed, shouting, "To arms! to arms!" as though the whole Apache nation were behind them.

"Where is your party?" asked Colonel Edmondson of me.

"Coming yonder, sir," I replied, pointing in the direction of the two approaching heralds; for I supposed it was Colonel Willock's command they had seen, and whom, in their fright, they had mistaken for Indians.

Immediately there was a bustle of preparation to receive the coming foe: muskets were snatched up, and the men fell into line; but in a few moments the real character of the approaching company was ascertained, and the colonel advanced to greet them. At the junction of the two parties, both engaged on the same errand, matters were discussed by the two colonels, and it was resolved to abandon the expedition, for it was manifest that the Indians were too much on the alert to be taken. I was dispatched to Santa Fé with a letter to Colonel Price from Colonels Edmondson and Willock, while they resolved to march back with their detachments, Colonel Edmondson to Santa Fé, and Colonel Willock to Taos.

The morning following I again set out for Fort Leavenworth, having for companion M'Intosh, who, by the way, was a Cherokee, and known as such to the Indians whom we fell in with on the road. We reached the fort without any accident, and delivered our dispatches safe. On our return we overtook Bullard and Company's trains of wagons, which were on their way to Santa Fé with supplies for the army. Bullard and his partner proposed to leave their charge and go-in with us, if I thought we would be able to keep up with them. I answered that we would try and keep their company as far as possible, but that they would be at liberty to proceed at any time that they considered we retarded them. They went with us as far as the Moro, two days' ride from Santa Fé, where we were compelled to leave them, as they were tired out, and had already detained us two full days.

My next engagement in the service of Uncle Sam was a trip to Chihuahua to convey dispatches; but, previous to starting, Captain Morris wished to engage me as guide in an expedition against the Utah Indians; so, preferring the latter service, I transferred my trust to my brave and faithful

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

friend, M'Intosh, and accompanied Captain Morris. The expedition consisted of ninety men: the object was a treaty of peace with the Utahs. We succeeded in finding the Indians; but, as they supposed our only object was to fight, it was some time before we could get up to them. We at length surprised them in a gap in the mountain, when we succeeded in taking a number of prisoners, among whom were some chiefs. We explained our object; they, then frankly informed us where their village was; we all repaired to it, and concluded terms of peace. Our approach greatly alarmed the village at first, for they knew that, in conjunction with the Apaches, they had been guilty of many depredations, although it had been their policy to throw all the blame of the mischief upon their allies. Our mission performed, we returned to Taos.

I remained some weeks inactive. Taos was convulsed with continual alarms from reports that Cortez was approaching against us with a great force. The troops were all away at Santa Fé; though, had he visited us, we could have improvised a warm reception. We had a small piece of cannon, with plenty of grape and canister, with which we could have swept the streets. We tried its effect one day, just to satisfy the curiosity of the Mexicans: we put in a heavy charge of grape-shot, and discharged it down the street. The tawny Mexicans were wonder-stricken: they thought an army would stand but a poor chance before such a volcanic belching of iron missiles.

Poultry in the vicinity of Taos became exceeding scarce: it was a rare matter to hear a cock crow. When we did by chance hear the pleasing sound, we would listen for the repetition of it, in order to learn from which direction it proceeded. We would then visit the tell-tale's quarters after dark, as we could obtain our poultry cheaper at night than in the day-time. Orders had been issued to take nothing from the enemy without paying for it, which orders were evidently based upon the assumption that we had money to pay with. Those without money did not feel themselves bound by the injunction. The authorities that issue similar commands in future would do well to insert some clause binding on the moneyless, otherwise these orders are all moonshine.

From Taos I proceeded to Santa Fé. I again started, for the last time, to Fort Leavenworth; M'Intosh, having safely returned from Chihuahua, again accompanying me. When we arrived at the Wagon Mound we heard shots fired, and immediately after met a train of mule-teams approaching at their quickest pace. The drivers advised us to return, as they had been attacked by the Apaches, and if we proceeded we could not escape being killed. I thought that my companion and I knew the Indians better than the mule-drivers did, and we bade them good-by and started on. We intended to avoid the Indians by making a circuit away from where we expected they would be, but in so doing we came directly upon the village. We staid all night with them, were well treated, and resumed our journey in the morning. We met a party of Americans who had been attacked by the Camanches, and lost one horse, but we saw no more Indians until we reached the fort.

Many times wonder has been expressed how I could always travel the road in safety while other men were attacked and killed. The only way in which I could account for the marvel was that I knew how to act the "wolf," while the others did not. Of all the dispatches I ever carried, I never lost one; while numbers who have undertaken to bear them lost, not alone the dispatches, but their lives; for, whenever they fell in with the Indians, they were sure to be killed. The Indians knew perfectly well what my business was. They knew that I was conveying orders backward and forward from the great white chief to his war chiefs in New Mexico. They would frequently ask me what the orders were which I had with me. Sometimes I would tell them that the great chief

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

at Washington was going to send on a great host of warriors to rub them all out. They would laugh heartily at the supposition, for they conceived that all the American forces combined would hardly be a circumstance before them. I promised to apprise them when the white warriors were to advance against them, which promise they confidently relied upon. I had to say something to keep on good terms with them, and answer their inquiries to satisfy them, and then proceed with my business. The war between the great white chief and the great Mexican chief interested the Indians but little, though their conviction was that the Mexican chief would be victorious. Their sympathy was with the latter, from motives of self-interest. They were now able to go at any time and drive home all the horses, cattle, and sheep that they wanted, together with Mexican children enough to take care of them. If the white chief conquered, they supposed he would carry all the horses, cattle, and sheep home with him, and thus leave none for them.

The Camanches and Apaches have a great number of Mexicans, of both sexes, among them, who seldom manifest much desire to return home. The women say that the Indians treat them better than they are treated at home. I never met but one exception to this rule, and that was a young Mexican woman captive among the Camanches. She told me that her father was wealthy, and would give me five thousand dollars if I could procure her restoration. I bought her of the chief, and conveyed her to my fort, whence I sent information to her father to acquaint him where he could find his daughter. In a few days her father and her husband came to her. She refused to have any thing to say to her husband, for she said he was a coward. When the Indians attacked the village, he mounted his horse and fled, leaving her to their mercy. Her father proffered me the promised sum, but I only accepted one thousand dollars, which returned me a very good profit on the cost of the goods I had given to the Indians for her ransom. The woman returned home with her father, her valorous husband following them. Shortly after this I returned to Santa Fé.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Departure for California.—Meeting with the Apaches.—Hostile Threats.—Trouble with the Utahs.—Most terrible Tragedy.—Society in California.—Adventures with Grizzly Bears.

THE last dispatches I bore from Fort Leavenworth were addressed to California, and I had undertaken to carry them through. At Santa Fé I rested a week, and then, taking an escort of fifteen men, I started on my errand. On our arrival at the village of Abbeger, we found a large party of Apaches, who were in the midst of a drunken carousal. We encamped inside the corral, that being as safe a place as we could select. Little Joe, an Apache Chief, inquired of me what I was going to do with these whites.

“I am going to take them to California,” I told him. “No,” said he, “you shall never take them nearer to California than they are now.”

“Well, I shall try,” said I.

He held some farther conversation with me of a denunciatory character, and then left me to return to the liquor-shop.

Foreseeing what was likely to result if more liquor was obtained, I visited every place in town where it was kept, and informed every seller that, if another drop was sold to the Indians, I would hang the man that did it without a minute’s delay; and I would have been as good as my word, for they were all Mexicans, and I had felt no great liking for them since the awful tragedy at Taos. “But the priest—” began one or two, in expostulation.

But I cut them short. “I’ll hang your priest just as soon as any of you,” I said, “if he dares to inter-

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ferre in the matter.”

I suppose they intended to urge that their priest had authorized them to sell liquors to the Indians. My interdict stopped them, for there was no more sold while I was there.

The next day I saw Little Joe in one of the low saloons; the stimulus of the liquor had left him, and he had what toppers call the horrors. He begged me to let him have one dram more, but I refused.

“Whisky,” I said, “puts all kinds of nonsense into your head; you get drunk, and then you are ripe for any mischief.”

When he had become perfectly sober, he came to me, and again asked if it were true that I intended taking those whites to California with me.

I told him that it was perfectly true.

“Well,” said Joe, “if you attempt it we will kill your whole party, and you with them. You will never listen to us: your ears are stopped. We all love you, but we have told you many times that we hate the whites, and do not want you to lead them through our hunting-grounds, and show them our paths; but you will not listen to us. And now, if you undertake to pass through that cañon, we will, without fail, kill you all.”

“Well,” I replied, I shall certainly go, so you had better get your warriors ready.”

We packed our animals, and I directed my men to travel slowly while I went through the cañon. If I wished them to advance, I would climb up and show myself to them as a signal for them to rush through, and reach me as soon as possible. I then went on all alone, as I knew that, if I encountered Indians in the cañon, they would not kill me by myself. I passed through without meeting any, and I signaled to the men to come on; they soon joined me, and we issued upon the open prairie. Here we discovered three hundred Apaches, each man leading his war-horse. We numbered eighteen, two of whom were Mexicans. They did not offer to attack us, however, and we continued our route unmolested, although they kept on our trail for twenty miles. A little before dark we rested to take supper, starting again immediately after the meal was finished. We saw no more of the Apaches.

The following afternoon a Utah came to us. I asked him where his village was. He did not know, he said, as he had been away some time. I was going out to shoot game at the time, and I took the Indian with me, lending him a gun belonging to one of my men. I had killed two or three wild turkeys, when my Indian, discovering deer some distance off, went in pursuit. I returned to the camp, but the fellow had not arrived. When we started in the morning he had not shown himself. The second day after the disappearance of the Indian with my gun, I was some distance in advance of the party, when, on ascending a hill, I saw a large party of Utahs ahead. They were looking down, and examining the trail very closely, to see if we had passed. This convinced me that the Indian fugitive had lied to me; that he knew well where his village was, and had, no doubt, been sent out from it as a spy. We held on our way till we came up with them, and, it being then about noon, we halted to take a long rest. The Indians soon came flocking round us, but I gave strict orders to the men to keep a good look-out, and upon no account to let them touch the fire-arms. They swarmed round the camp, entering it one at a time, and I determined to make the first troublesome advance an excuse for getting rid of them.

We packed up, and moved on through the whole mass of Indians, but they did not venture an attack, although it had been their intention to do so if they could have got any advantage over

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

us through our negligence. They were embittered against the whites at that time, on account of a severe whipping that had been recently inflicted upon two of their warriors by Chouteau, who had just passed through them, for a theft from his camp. To receive a whipping, especially at the hands of a white man, is looked upon by them as a lasting infamy, and they would prefer death to the disgrace. The next morning they overtook us again, and the Indian returned me my gun. I mollified them with a few trifling presents, and they finally left us on apparently good terms. The next hostile country that lay upon our road was that of the Navajo tribe. They followed us through their whole strip of territory, shouting after us, and making insulting gestures; but they took the precaution to keep out of gun-shot range, and I did not think it worth my while to chastise them.

The next tribe on our route was the Pi-u-ches, which is also the last before you reach Pueblo in California. The first Pi-u-ches that we came across were an Indian and his squaw engaged in digging roots. On seeing us approach, the Indian took to his heels, leaving the squaw to take care of herself. I rode up to her and asked where her village was. She pointed in the direction of it, but I could not see it. The next one that I saw stooped and concealed himself in the grass immediately he found himself observed; but I rode up to him, and made him show himself, not wishing to have him think that he could escape our notice so easily. He accompanied me for a short distance, until another of the tribe shouted to him from a hill, and he then left me.

We encamped that night upon the prairie. At dusk we observed the smoke of camp-fires in every direction, and shortly we were visited by hundreds of Indians, who entirely hemmed us in; but, on their finding that we were not Mexicans, they did not offer to molest us. They were hostile on account of the continual abductions of their squaws and children, whom the Mexicans employ as domestic slaves, and treat with the utmost cruelty.

We reached our destination in safety, and I delivered my dispatches. I was now inactive for some time again, and occupied my leisure in rambling about the environs of Monterey. I then engaged in the service of the commissariat at Monterey, to carry dispatches from thence to Captain Deny's ranch, where I was met by another carrier. On my road lay the mission of St. Miguel, owned by a Mr. Reed, an Englishman; and, as his family was a very interesting one, I generally made his home my resting-place. On one of my visits, arriving about dusk, I entered the house as usual, but was surprised to see no one stirring. I walked about a little to attract attention, and no one coming to me, I stepped into the kitchen to look for some of the inmates. On the floor I saw some one lying down, asleep, as I supposed. I attempted to arouse him with my foot, but he did not stir. This seemed strange, and my apprehensions became excited; for the Indians were very numerous about, and I was afraid some mischief had been done. I returned to my horse for my pistols, then, lighting a candle, I commenced a search. In going along a passage, I stumbled over the body of a woman; I entered a room, and found another, a murdered Indian woman, who had been a domestic. I was about to enter another room, but I was arrested by some sudden thought which urged me to search no farther. It was an opportune admonition, for that very room contained the murderers of the family, who had heard my steps, and were sitting at that moment with their pistols pointed to the door, ready to shoot the first person that entered. This they confessed subsequently. Thinking to obtain farther assistance, I mounted my horse and rode to the nearest ranch, a distance of twenty-four miles, where I procured fifteen Mexicans and Indians, and returned with them the same night to the scene of the tragedy. On again entering the house, we found eleven

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

bodies all thrown together in one pile for the purpose of consuming them; for, on searching further, we found the murderers had set fire to the dwelling, but, according to that Providence which exposes such wicked deeds, the fire had died out.

Fastening up the house, we returned immediately back to the ranch from which I had started with my party, making seventy-two miles I rode that night. As soon as I could obtain some rest, I started, in company with the alcalde, for St. Louis Obispo, where, it was believed, we could get assistance in capturing the murderers. Forty men in detached parties, moving in different directions, went in pursuit. It was my fortune to find the trail, and with my party of six men I managed to head off the suspected murderers so as to come up with them in the road from directly the opposite direction from Reed's house. When I came opposite, one of the men sang out, "Good-day, señors." I replied, but kept on riding in a lope.

The bandits, thrown entirely off their guard, insisted upon entering into conversation; so I had a fair opportunity of marking them all, and discovering among them a horse belonging to the unfortunate Reed. I then rode to Santa Barbara, a distance of forty miles, and, with a party of twenty men, started boldly in pursuit. After much hard travel, we finally came upon the gang, encamped for the night. Without a moment's hesitation, we charged on them, and gave a volley of rifles, which killed one, and wounded all the others, save an American named Dempsey. The villains fought like tigers, but were finally mastered and made prisoners.

Dempsey turned state's evidence. He stated that, on the night of the murder, his party stopped at Reed's; that Reed told them that he had just returned from the mines, whereupon it was determined to kill the whole family and take his gold, which turned out to be the pitiful sum of one thousand dollars. After the confession of Dempsey, we shot the murderers, along with the "state's evidence," and thus ended the lives of two Americans, two Englishmen, and ten Irishmen, they having committed the most diabolical deed that ever disgraced the annals of frontier life.

I continued in this service of carrying dispatches some four months, varying my route with an occasional trip to San Francisco. At this time society in California was in the worst condition to be found, probably, in any part of the world, to call it civilized. The report of the discovery of gold had attracted thither lawless and desperate characters from all parts of the earth, and the government constituted for their control was a weaker element than the offenders it had to deal with. The rankest excesses were familiar occurrences, and men were butchered under the very eyes of the officers of justice, and no action was taken in the matter. What honest men there were became alarmed, and frequently would abandon the richest placers for the mere security of their lives, and leave a whole community of rowdies to prey upon each other. Disorder attained its limit, and some reactionary means would naturally be engendered as a corrective to the existing evils. The establishment of "Vigilance Committees" among the better order of citizens operated as a thunderbolt upon the conniving civil officers and the rank perpetrators of crime. Scores of villains were snatched from the hands of these mock officers, and summarily strung up to the limb of the nearest tree. Horse and cattle thieves had their necks disjoined so frequently that it soon became safe for a man to leave his horse standing in the street for a few moments, while he stepped into a house to call upon his friend, and that widely-practiced business was quickly done away with. Such sudden justice overtook murderers, robbers, and other criminals, that honest people began to breathe more freely, and acquired a sense of security while engaged in their ordinary pursuits. The materiel for crime still existed, and is yet present in California to an alarming extent; but

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

order may be considered as confirmed in the supremacy, though inevitably many social evils still exist, which time alone will remedy.

In the month of April, 1849, the steamship California touched at Monterey, she being the first steam-vessel that had visited there from the States. I, with a party of fifteen others, stepped on board, and proceeded as far as Stockton, where we separated into various parties. I left with one man to go to Sonora, where we erected the first tent, and commenced a business in partnership. I had carried a small lot of clothing along with me, which I disposed of to the miners at what now seems to me fabulous prices. Finding the business thus profitable, I sent my partner back to Stockton for a farther supply, and he brought several mules laden with goods. This lot was disposed of as readily as the first, and at prices equally remunerative. This induced us to continue the business, he performing the journeys backward and forward, and I remaining behind to dispose of the goods and attend to other affairs. Sonora was rapidly growing into a large village, and our tent was replaced with a roomy house. I had a corps of Indians in my employ to take charge of the horses left in my care by miners and other persons, sometimes to the number of two hundred at once. I also employed Indians to work in the mines, I furnishing them with board and implements to work with, and they paying me with one half of their earnings. Their general yield was from five to six ounces a day each man, a moiety of which they faithfully rendered to me. Among my earliest visitors was a party of eighteen United States dragoons, who came to me to be fitted out with citizen's clothing, as they had brought to a sudden period their service to their country. It was an impossible thing at that time to retain troops in California, for the produce of the mines held out a temptation to desert that none seemed able to resist, as more gold could be dug sometimes in one day than would pay a private for a year's service in the army; even officers of considerable rank not unfrequently threw aside epaulette and sash, and shouldered the pick to repair to the diggings.

While at Sonora I learned that Colonel Fremont was at Mariposa, and I made a journey over there for the purpose of seeing him. I was disappointed in my expectation, and started to return home again. While proceeding quietly along, having left the main road and taken up a hollow, I perceived two men approaching me from the opposite direction, running at the top of their speed, and a crowd of Indians after them in pursuit. When they came up, they shouted to me to turn and fly for my life, or the Indians would certainly massacre me. I bade them stop, and quiet their fears. Seeing my self-possession, notwithstanding the near approach of the Indians, they at length halted, and approached close to me for protection against their pursuers. I then commanded the Indians to stand, telling them that they were my men. They said they were not aware of that, or they should not have chased them. The Indians I was acquainted with; they had been frequently to my house to invite me to their village. They wished to purchase goods of me, and had promised me a mule-load of gold dust if I would only supply them with what they were in need of. I accompanied them to their village, but my two rescued companions were not admitted into their lodges. They then renewed their promise of the mule-load of gold dust if I would bring out the goods they wanted. I never went to them, although it was remiss in me, for they had a great quantity of gold dust. I left after a brief visit, and rejoined the two men. They could not sufficiently express their gratitude to me for their deliverance, as they considered my opportune appearance alone saved their lives.

Becoming tired of my business in Sonora, for inactivity fatigued me to death, I disposed of my

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

interest in it for six thousand dollars, and went on to Sacramento City with the money in my pocket. From this place I traveled on to Murderer's Bar, which lies on the middle fork of the American River; here I found my old friend Chapineau house-keeping, and staid with him until the rainy season set in. Thence I proceeded to Greenwood Valley to establish my winter quarters, but I was seized with an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, and I had a nice time of it that winter. Before I was able to get about, I was called on by the inhabitants to go several miles to shoot a grizzly bear, and as I was unable to walk the distance, several of them volunteered to carry me. The bear was in the habit of walking past a row of cabins every morning on his return to his den, he having issued forth the preceding night to procure his evening meal. They had fired several shots at Bruin as he passed, but he had never deigned to pay any attention to the molestation. I mounted a horse, and rode some distance along his customary path, until I came to a tree which offered a fair shelter to await his approach. I placed my back against it as a support while I awaited his coming, the neighbors drawing off to a safe distance to witness the sport. By-and-by Grizzly came in sight, walking along as independently as an alderman elect. I allowed him to approach till he was within twenty paces, when I called out to him; he stopped suddenly, and looked around to ascertain whence the sound proceeded. As he arrested himself, I fired, and the ball entered his heart. He advanced ten or fifteen paces before he fell; the observers shouted to me to run, they forgetting in their excitement that I had not strength to move. The bear never stirred from where he fell, and he expired without a groan. When dressed, he weighed over fourteen hundred pounds. The grizzly bear is a formidable animal, and has acted a prominent part among the settlers of California. They are seldom known to attack a man unless wounded; in that case, if a tree is by, the hunter had better commence climbing. They are very plenty from the Sierra Nevada to the coast range of mountains. I have, in the course of my sojourn in the country, killed a great many of them, and met with some singular adventures.

On one occasion, while I was with the Crow Indians, there was a man of the name of Coe who was trapping in one of the neighboring streams, and I became alarmed for his safety, as Black Foot parties were skulking about in all directions, and were sure to kill him if they should find his camp. I found Coe, and told him my fears. He instantly gathered up his traps, and, mounting his horse, started toward me. When within fair gun-shot, an old bear sprang from a thicket, and landed upon the flanks of his horse, applying his teeth to the roots of the poor animal's tail, and holding him as if in a vice. Coe leaned over his horse's neck, and cried out, "Shoot, Jim! shoot quick!"

I could not help laughing to have saved my life, as he turned from side to side, though his situation was a critical one. I soon got in a favorable position, and put a ball in the animal's head, just behind the ear, when he liberated the horse and his rider, falling on his back apparently stone dead.

There is a story, remembered by the mountaineers, of a person named Keyere. He was a man who never exceeded one hundred pounds in weight, but was clear grit, what little there was of him. He went out one day alone, and his horse came back in the evening without his rider, and we thought that the Indians had made sure of poor Keyere's scalp. The next morning a small party of us started on the horse's trail, and found Keyere lying beside a large dead grizzly bear. Keyere was horribly mutilated and insensible, but still alive, and must have soon died if no one had come to his rescue.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

We took him to camp, and nursed him with all possible care. When he recovered sufficiently to tell his tale, his story was received with shouts of laughter, and was rehearsed as a wonderful joke from camp to camp. Keyere stated that, when he saw the grizzly, he got from his horse to shoot him, but unfortunately only wounded the animal. The bear (so Keyere says) caught hold of him, and commenced a regular rough-and-tumble fight; finally Keyere got a good lick at the bear's head, knocked him down with his fist, and then attempted to run away. The bear, however, was too quick, when Keyere, becoming desperate, seized the beast by the tongue, drew his knife, and stabbed the creature to the heart!

Improbable as is the tale, it was a singular fact, that, when Keyere was found, his knife was up to the maker's name in the bear's side, and the body showed the effects of other severe stabs; but whether a man weighing ninety pounds could knock down the best of boxers, weighing twelve hundred, the reader can decide; but Keyere ever told the same tale, and became known far and near as the man that whipped the grizzly in a stand-up fight. Probably no man ever recovered who received so many wounds as did Keyere in this unequal combat.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Discovery of Beckwourth's Pass.—No pecuniary Reward for public Services. —Transformation. — A new Character. — Emigrants at Home and at their Journey's End.—Description of the Happy Valley.—Interesting Reminiscence.

THE next spring I engaged in mining and prospecting in various parts of the gold region. I advanced as far as the American Valley, having one man in my company, and proceeded north into the Pitt River country, where we had a slight difficulty with the Indians. We had come upon a party who manifested the utmost friendship toward us; but I, knowing how far friendly appearances could be trusted to, cautioned my partner on no account to relinquish his gun, if the Indians should attempt to take it. They crowded round us, pretending to have the greatest interest in the pack that we carried, until they made a sudden spring, and seized our guns, and attempted to wrest them from our grasp. I jerked from them, and retreated a few steps; then, cocking my gun, I bade them, if they wished to fight, to come on. This produced a change in their feelings, and they were very friendly again, begging caps and ammunition of us, which, of course, we refused. We then walked backward for about one hundred and fifty yards, still keeping our pieces ready should they attempt further hostilities; but they did not deem it prudent to molest us again.

While on this excursion I discovered what is now known as "Beckwourth's Pass" in the Sierra Nevada. From some of the elevations over which we passed I remarked a place far away to the southward that seemed lower than any other. I made no mention of it to my companion, but thought that at some future time I would examine into it farther. I continued on to Shasta with my fellow-traveler, and returned after a fruitless journey of eighteen days.

After a short stay in the American Valley, I again started out with a prospecting party of twelve men. We killed a bullock before starting and dried the meat, in order to have provisions to last us during the trip. We proceeded in an easterly direction, and all busied themselves in searching for gold; but my errand was of a different character: I had come to discover what I suspected to be a pass.

It was the latter end of April when we entered upon an extensive valley at the northwest extremity of the Sierra range. The valley was already robed in freshest verdure, contrasting most delightfully with the huge snow-clad masses of rock we had just left. Flowers of every variety and

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

hue spread their variegated charms before us; magpies were chattering, and gorgeously-plumaged birds were caroling in the delights of unmolested solitude. Swarms of wild geese and ducks were swimming on the surface of the cool crystal stream, which was the central fork of the Rio de las Plumas, or sailed the air in clouds over our heads. Deer and antelope filled the plains, and their boldness was conclusive that the hunter's rifle was to them unknown. Nowhere visible were any traces of the white man's approach, and it is probable that our steps were the first that ever marked the spot. We struck across this beautiful valley to the waters of the Yuba, from thence to the waters of the Truchy, which latter flowed in an easterly direction, telling us we were on the eastern slope of the mountain range. This, I at once saw, would afford the best wagon-road into the American Valley approaching from the eastward, and I imparted my views to three of my companions in whose judgment I placed the most confidence. They thought highly of the discovery, and even proposed to associate with me in opening the road. We also found gold, but not in sufficient quantity to warrant our working it; and, furthermore, the ground was too wet to admit of our prospecting to any advantage.

On my return to the American Valley, I made known my discovery to a Mr. Turner, proprietor of the American Ranch, who entered enthusiastically into my views; it was a thing, he said, he had never dreamed of before. If I could but carry out my plan, and divert travel into that road, he thought I should be a made man for life. Thereupon he drew up a subscription-list, setting forth the merits of the project, and showing how the road could be made practicable to Bidwell's Bar, and thence to Marysville, which latter place would derive peculiar advantages from the discovery. He headed the subscription with two hundred dollars.

When I reached Bidwell's Bar and unfolded my project, the town was seized with a perfect mania for the opening of the route. The subscriptions toward the fund required for its accomplishment amounted to five hundred dollars. I then proceeded to Marysville, a place which would unquestionably derive greater benefit from the newly-discovered route than any other place on the way, since this must be the entrepôt or principal starting-place for emigrants. I communicated with several of the most influential residents on the subject in hand. They also spoke very encouragingly of my undertaking, and referred me, before all others, to the mayor of the city. Accordingly, I waited upon that gentleman (a Mr. Miles, and brought the matter under his notice, representing it as being a legitimate matter for his interference, and offering substantial advantages to the commercial prosperity of the city. The mayor entered warmly into my views, and pronounced it as his opinion that the profits resulting from the speculation could not be less than from six to ten thousand dollars; and as the benefits accruing to the city would be incalculable, he would insure my expenses while engaged upon it.

I mentioned that I should prefer some guarantee before entering upon my labors, to secure me against loss of what money I might lay out.

"Leave that to me," said the mayor; "I will attend to the whole affair. I feel confident that a subject of so great importance to our interests will engage the earliest attention."

I thereupon left the whole proceeding in his hands, and, immediately setting men to work upon the road, went out to the Truchy to turn emigration into my newly-discovered route. While thus busily engaged I was seized with erysipelas, and abandoned all hopes of recovery; I was over one hundred miles away from medical assistance, and my only shelter was a brush tent. I made my will, and resigned myself to death. Life still lingered in me, however, and a train of wagons came

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

up, and encamped near to where I lay. I was reduced to a very low condition, but I saw the drivers, and acquainted them with the object which had brought me out there. They offered to attempt the new road if I thought myself sufficiently strong to guide them through it. The women, God bless them! came to my assistance, and through their kind attentions and excellent nursing I rapidly recovered from my lingering sickness, until I was soon able to mount my horse, and lead the first train, consisting of seventeen wagons, through "Beckwourth's Pass." We reached the American Valley without the least accident, and the emigrants expressed entire satisfaction with the route. I returned with the train through to Marysville, and on the intelligence being communicated of the practicability of my road, there was quite a public rejoicing. A northern route had been discovered, and the city had received an impetus that would advance her beyond all her sisters on the Pacific shore. I felt proud of my achievement, and was foolish enough to promise myself a substantial recognition of my labors.

I was destined to disappointment, for that same night Marysville was laid in ashes. The mayor of the ruined town congratulated me upon bringing a train through. He expressed great delight at my good fortune, but regretted that their recent calamity had placed it entirely beyond his power to obtain for me any substantial reward. With the exception of some two hundred dollars subscribed by some liberal-minded citizens of Marysville, I have received no indemnification for the money and labor I have expended upon my discovery. The city had been greatly benefited by it, as all must acknowledge, for the emigrants that now flock to Marysville would otherwise have gone to Sacramento. Sixteen hundred dollars I expended upon the road is forever gone, but those who derive advantage from this outlay and loss of time devote no thought to the discoverer; nor do I see clearly how I am to help myself, for every one knows I can not roll a mountain into the pass and shut it up. But there is one thing certain: although I recognize no superior in love of country, and feel in all its force the obligation imposed upon me to advance her interests, still, when I go out hunting in the mountains a road for every body to pass through, and expending my time and capital upon an object from which I shall derive no benefit, it will be because I have nothing better to do.

In the spring of 1852 I established myself in Beckwourth Valley, and finally found myself transformed into a hotel-keeper and chief of a trading-post. My house is considered the emigrant's landing-place, as it is the first ranch he arrives at in the golden state, and is the only house between this point and Salt Lake. Here is a valley two hundred and forty miles in circumference, containing some of the choicest land in the world. Its yield of hay is incalculable; the red and white clovers spring up spontaneously, and the grass that covers its smooth surface is of the most nutritious nature. When the weary, toil-worn emigrant reaches this valley, he feels himself secure; he can lay himself down and taste refreshing repose, undisturbed by the fear of Indians. His cattle can graze around him in pasture up to their eyes, without running any danger of being driven off by the Arabs of the forest, and springs flow before them as pure as any that refreshes this verdant earth.

When I stand at my door, and watch the weary, way-worn travelers approach, their wagons holding together by a miracle, their stock in the last stage of emaciation, and themselves a perfect exaggeration of caricature, I frequently amuse myself with imagining the contrast they must offer to the tout ensemble and general appearance they presented to their admiring friends when they first set out upon their journey.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

We will take a fancy sketch of them as they start from their homes. We will fancy their strong and well-stored wagon, bran-new for the occasion, and so firmly put together that, to look at it, one would suppose it fit to circumrotate the globe as many times as there are spokes in the wheels; then their fat and frightened steers, so high-spirited and fractious that it takes the father and his two or three sons to get each under the yoke; next, the ambitious emigrant and his proud family, with their highly-raised expectations of the future that is before them: the father, so confident and important, who deems the Eastern States unworthy of his abilities, and can alone find a sufficiently ample field in the growing republic on the Pacific side; the mother, who is unwilling to leave her pleasant gossiping friends and early associations, is still half tempted to believe that the crop of gold that waits their gathering may indemnify her for her labors; so they pull up stakes, and leave town in good style, expecting to return with whole cart-loads of gold dust, and dazzle their neighbors' eyes with their excellent good fortune.

The girls, dear creatures! put on their very best, as all their admiring beaux assemble to see them start, and to give them the last kiss they will receive east of the Nevada Mountains; for their idea is that they will be snatched up and married the moment they step over the threshold into California by some fine young gentleman who is a solid pile of gold, and they joyously start away, in anticipation of the event, their hats decked with ribbons, their persons in long-flowing riding-dresses, their delicate fingers glittering with rings, and their charming little ankles incased in their fashionable and neatly-laced gaiters.

At the close of day, perhaps amid a pelting rain, these same parties heave wearily into sight: they have achieved the passage of the Plains, and their pleasant Eastern homes, with their agreeable, sociable neighbors, are now at a distance it is painful to contemplate. The brave show they made at starting, as the whole town hurraed them off, is sadly faded away. Their wagon appears like a relic of the Revolution after doing hard service for the commissariat: its cover burned into holes, and torn to tatters; its strong axles replaced with rough pieces of trees hewn by the wayside; the tires bound on with ropes; the iron linchpins gone, and chips of hickory substituted, and rags wound round the hubs to hold them together, which they keep continually wetted to prevent falling to pieces. The oxen are held up by the tail to keep them upon their legs, and the ravens and magpies evidently feel themselves ill treated in being driven off from what they deem their lawful rights.

The old folks are peevish and quarrelsome; the young men are so headstrong, and the small children so full of wants, and precisely at a time when every thing has given out, and they have nothing to pacify them with. But the poor girls have suffered the most. Their glossy, luxuriant locks, that won so much admiration, are now frizzled and discolored by the sun; their elegant riding-habit is replaced with an improvised Bloomer, and their neat little feet are exposed in sad disarray; their fingers are white no longer, and in place of rings we see sundry bits of rag wound round, to keep the dirt from entering their sore cuts. The young men of gold, who looked so attractive in the distance, are now too often found to be worthless and of no intrinsic value; their time employed in haunting gaming-tables or dram-shops, and their habits corrupted by unthrift and dissipation.

I do not wish to speak disparagingly of my adopted state, and by no means to intimate the slightest disrespect to the many worthy citizens who have crossed the Plains. I appeal to the many who have witnessed the picture for the accuracy of my portraiture. So much good material constant-

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

ly infused into society ought to improve the character of the compound, but the demoralizing effects of transplantation greatly neutralize the benefits.

Take a family from their peaceful and happy homes in a community where good morals are observed, and the tone of society exercises a salutary influence over the thoughts of both old and young, and put them in such a place as this, where all is chaotic, and the principles that regulate the social intercourse of men are not yet recognized as law, and their dignity of thought and prestige of position is bereft from them. They have to struggle among a greedy, unscrupulous populace for the means of living; their homes have yet acquired no comfort, and they feel isolated and abandoned; and it is even worse upon the children; all corrective influence is removed from them, and the examples that surround them are often of the most vicious and worst possible description. All wholesome objects of ambition being removed, and money alone substituted as the reward of their greed, they grow up unlike their fathers; and it is only those in whom there is a solid substratum of correct feeling that mature into good citizens and proper men.

The girls, too, little darlings, suffer severely. They have left their worthy sweethearts behind, and can not get back to them; and those who now offer themselves here are not fit to bestow a thought upon. Every thing is strange to them. They miss their little social reunions, their quilting-parties, their winter quadrilles, the gossip of the village, their delightful summer haunts, and their dear paternal fireside. They have no pursuits except of the grosser kinds, and all their refinements are roughed over by the prevailing struggle after gold.

Much stock is lost in crossing the Plains, through their drinking the alkali water which flows from the Sierra Nevada, becoming impregnated with the poisonous mineral either in its source or in its passage among the rocks. There are also poisonous herbs springing up in the region of the mineral water, which the poor, famishing animals devour without stint. Those who survive until they reach the Valley are generally too far gone for recovery, and die while resting to recruit their strength. Their infected flesh furnishes food to thousands of wolves, which infest this place in the winter, and its effect upon them is singular. It depilates their warm coats of fur, and renders their pelts as bare as the palm of a man's hand. My faithful dogs have killed numbers of them at different times, divested entirely of hair except on the extremity of the nose, ears, and tail. They present a truly comical and extraordinary appearance.

This general loss of cattle deprives many of the poor emigrants of the means of hauling their lightened wagons, which, by the time they reach my ranch, seldom contain any thing more than their family clothing and bedding. Frequently I have observed wagons pass my house with one starveling yoke of cattle to drag them, and the family straggling on foot behind. Numbers have put up at my ranch without a morsel of food, and without a dollar in the world to procure any. They never were refused what they asked for at my house; and, during the short space that I have spent in the Valley, I have furnished provisions and other necessaries to the numerous sufferers who have applied for them to a very serious amount. Some have since paid me, but the bills of many remain unsettled. Still, although a prudent business man would condemn the proceeding, I can not find it in my heart to refuse relief to such necessities, and, if my pocket suffers a little, I have my recompense in a feeling of internal satisfaction.

My pleasant valley is thirty-five miles at its greatest breadth. It is irrigated by two streams, with their various small tributaries. These form a junction about ten miles from my house up the valley, which, as you remount it, becomes the central fork of the Feather River. All these streams abound

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

with trout, some of them weighing seven or eight pounds. In the main one there are also plenty of otter. Antelopes and deer are to be found the entire year, unless the winter is unusually severe, when they cross the mountains to the eastern slope. Grizzly bears come and disappear again, without asking leave of any man. There are wolves of every species, together with foxes, hares, rabbits, and other animals. Of the feathered tribe, we have wild geese, ducks, sage-hens, grouse, and a large variety of smaller birds. Service-berries and cherries are the only kinds of fruit that grow from nature's cultivation.

The growth of timber about the valley is principally pitch-pine, although there is a considerable intermixture of cedar. I have never yet sown any grain, but I have cultivated a small kitchen-garden, and raised cabbages, turnips, and radishes of great size. I have never known the snow to fall to a greater depth than three feet, and when the storms are over it dissolves very rapidly, notwithstanding the elevation is many thousand feet above the level of the Pacific. The snow clings to the mountain peaks that overlook the valley to the eastward the year round, and as it is continually melting and feeding the streams, it keeps the water icy cold all the summer through. About a mile and a half distant from my house there is a large sulphur spring, and on the eastern slope, in the desert, there are copious hot springs, supplying the traveler with boiling water for his coffee without the cost of fuel.

The Truchy rises on the summit of the Sierra Nevada, opposite the head-waters of the Yuba, and runs in an easterly direction until it loses itself in Pyramid Lake, about fifty miles east of this valley. This lake is a great natural curiosity, as it receives not alone the waters of the Truchy, but numerous other streams, and has no visible outlet; its surcharge of water probably filtering into the earth, like St. Mary's River, and some others I have met with. There is no place in the whole state that offers so many attractions for a few weeks' or months' retirement; for its charms of scenery, with sylvan and piscatorial sports, present unusual attractions. During the winter season my nearest neighbors are sixteen miles away; in the summer they are within four miles of my house, so that social broils do not much disturb me.

There is a pleasant historical incident associated with St. Mary's River, which, as it can be familiar to but few of my readers, I will relate here. The St. Mary's River is known to most persons as the River Humboldt, since that is the name that has been since conferred upon it, in honor of the distinguished European traveler. I prefer the former name, as being more poetical, though less assuming. An Indian woman, the wife of a Canadian named Chapineau, who acted as interpreter and guide to Lewis and Clarke during their explorations of the Rocky Mountains, was suddenly seized with the pains of labor, and gave birth to a son on the banks of this mysterious river. The Redheaded Chief (Clarke) adopted the child thus rudely issued into the world, and on his return to St. Louis took the infant with him, and baptized it John Baptist Clarke Chapineau. After a careful culture of his mind, the boy was sent to Europe to complete his education. But the Indian was ineffaceable in him. The Indian lodge and his native mountain fastnesses possessed greater charms than the luxuries of civilized life. He returned to the desert and passed his days with his tribe. Mary, the mother of the child, was a Crow, very pleasing and intelligent, and may have been, for aught I know, connected with some of my many relatives in that tribe. It was in honor of this event, and to perpetuate her memory, that the river received its original name, St. Mary's, and, as such, is still known to the mountaineers.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

Mistakes regarding the Character of the Indian.—Extent of the Western Tribes.—Their Character.—How a War against them should be conducted.—Reflections.—Closing Address to the Indian Heroine.

As an American citizen, a friend of my race, and a sincere lover of my country, and also as one well acquainted with the Indian character, I feel that I can not properly conclude the record of my eventful life without saying something for the Red Man. It should be remembered, when judging of their acts, that they consider the country they inhabit as the gift of the "Great Spirit," and they resent in their hearts the invasion of the immigrant just as much as any civilized people would, if another nation, without permission, should cross their territory. It must also be understood, that the Indians believe the buffalo to be theirs by inheritance, not as game, but in the light of ownership, given to them by Providence for their support and comfort, and that, when an immigrant shoots a buffalo, the Indian looks upon it exactly as the destruction by a stranger of so much private property.

With these ideas clearly in the mind of the reader, it can be understood why the Indian, in destroying a cow belonging to white people, or stealing a horse, considers himself as merely retaliating for injuries received, repaying himself, in fact, for what he has lost. For this act on the part of the Red Man, the United States troops are often turned indiscriminately upon his race; the innocent generally suffer, and those who have raised the storm can not understand of what crime they can be guilty.

But if the government is determined to make war upon the Western tribes, let it be done intelligently, and so effectually that mercy will temper justice. To attempt to chastise Indians with United States troops is simply ridiculous; the expense of such campaigns is only surpassed by their inefficiency. The Indians live on horseback, and they can steal and drive off the government horses faster than it can bring them together. The Indians having no stationary villages, they can travel faster, even with the incumbrance of their lodges, women, and children, subsisting themselves on buffalo slain on the way, than any force, however richly appointed, the country could send against them. An army must tire out in such a chase before summer is gone, while the Indians will constantly harass it with their sharpshooters, and, should several powerful tribes unite — not an unusual occurrence — many thousand men would make no impression.

It should also be recollected by our officers sent to fight in the Rocky Mountains, that the Indians have a mode of telegraphing by the aid of robes and mirrors, and thus, by having their spies stationed at convenient distances, they convey intelligence of the movements of their enemies at great distances and in a very few minutes, thus informing villages whether it would be best to retreat or not. Some tribes telegraph by fires at night, and by smoke in the daytime. An officer might hear of a band of warriors encamped at a certain place; he immediately makes a forced march, and when his troops arrive at their destination, those same warriors may be many miles in his rear, encamped on his trail.

A village of three hundred lodges of Crows or Cheyennes could, within thirty minutes after receiving an order to move, have all their lodges struck, the poles attached to the horses, and their men, women, and children going at full speed, and could thus outstrip the best dragoons sent in their pursuit.

I have seen enough of Indian treaties and annuities to satisfy me that their effects for good are worse than fruitless. The idea formed by the Indians is that the annuities are sent to them by the

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

great white chief because he is afraid of them, and wishes to purchase their friendship. There are some of the tribes — a very few — who would keep a treaty sacred; but the majority would not be bound by one, for they can not understand their nature. When caught at a disadvantage, and reduced to enter into a compact, they would agree to any proposals that were offered; but when the controlling power is withdrawn, and they can repeat their depredations with apparent impunity, no moral obligation would restrain them, and the treaty that was negotiated at so much cost to the country proves a mere delusion.

The officer having charge of an expedition against the Indians should rightly understand which band of a tribe he is commissioned to punish. The Siouxs, for instance, which, a few years ago, could raise thirty thousand warriors, are divided into many bands, which, at times, are hundreds of miles apart. One band of that tribe may commit a depredation on the emigrant road, and the other bands not even have heard of it they do not hold themselves amenable for the misdeeds of another body totally distinct from them in social relations, and to inflict chastisement upon them in such a case would be a manifest injustice. But in a case of extreme danger all these bands coalesce.

Other tribes have the same divisions into distinct bands, and many are hence led into the belief that each band is a tribe. The Siouxs range over a territory upward of a thousand miles in extent from north to south, and their country embraces some of the most beautiful spots in the world, as well for natural scenery as for extreme productiveness of soil. The Crows have but one band proper, although they are generally divided into two villages, as being a more convenient arrangement to afford pasture for their immense herds of horses, and also to hunt the buffalo. But these two villages are seldom more than three hundred miles apart, generally much nearer; they come together at least once a year, and have frequent accidental coalitions in the course of their wanderings. They speak the Grovan language, from which nation they are an offshoot.

The Pawnees are probably the most degraded, in point of morals, of all the Western tribes; they are held in such contempt by the other tribes that none will make treaties with them. They are a populous nation, and are inveterate against the whites, killing them wherever met. A treaty concluded with that nation at night would be violated the next morning. Those who engage in warfare with the Western Indians will remember that they take no prisoners except women and children. It has generally been believed that the Siouxs never kill white men, but this is a mistake; they have always killed them. I have seen white men's scalps in their hands, and many still fresh hanging in the smoke of their lodges.

The Western Indians have no hummocks or everglades to fight among, but they have their boundless prairies to weary an army in, and the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains to retreat to. Should a majority of those powerful nations coalesce in defense against one common enemy, it would be the worst Indian war — the most costly in blood and treasure that the national government has ever entered into. The coalition tribes could bring two hundred and fifty thousand warriors against any hostile force, and I know I am greatly within the limits of truth in assigning that number to them.

If it is the policy of government to utterly exterminate the Indian race, the most expeditious manner of effecting this ought to be the one adopted. The introduction of whisky among the Red Men, under the connivance of government agents, leads to the demoralization and consequent extermination, by more powerful races, of thousands of Indians annually. Still, this infernal agent

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

is not effectual; the Indians diminish in numbers, but with comparative slowness. The most direct and speedy mode of clearing the land of them would be by the simple means of starvation — by depriving them of their hereditary sustenance, the buffalo. To effect this, send an army of hunters among them, to root out and destroy, in every possible manner, the animal in question. They can shoot them, poison them, dig pit-falls for them, and resort to numberless other contrivances to efface the devoted animal, which serves, it would seem, by the wealth of his carcass, to preserve the Indian, and thus impede the expanding development of civilization.

To fight the Indians *vi et armis*, the government could employ no such effectual means as to take into its service five hundred mountaineers for the space of one year, and any one tribe of Indians that they should fall foul of could never survive the contest. Such men, employed for that purpose, would have no encumbrance from superfluous baggage to impede them in a pursuit or a retreat over their illimitable plains. The mode of life of a mountaineer just fits him for an Indian fighter, and if he has to submit to privation, and put up with an empty commissariat, he has the means of support always at hand. He is so much an Indian from habit that he can fight them in their own way: if they steal his horses, he can steal theirs in return; if they snatch a hasty repose in the open air, it is all he asks for himself, and his health and spirits are fortified with such regimen. It is only by men possessing the qualities of the white hunter, combined with Indian habits, that the Indians can be effectually and economically conquered.

I have now presented a plain, unvarnished statement of the most noteworthy occurrences of my life, and, in so doing, I have necessarily led the reader through a variety of savage scenes at which his heart must sicken. The narrative, however, is not without its use. The restless youthful mind, that wearies with the monotony of peaceful every-day existence, and aspires after a career of wild adventure and thrilling romance, will find, by my experience, that such a life is by no means one of comfort, and that the excitement which it affords is very dearly purchased by the opportunities lost of gaining far more profitable wisdom. Where one man would be spared, as I have been, to pass through the perils of fasting, the encounters with the savage, and the fury of the wild beasts, and still preserve his life, and attain an age of near threescore, it is not too much to say that five hundred would perish, with not a single loved one near to catch his last whispered accent, would die in the wilderness, either in solitude, or with the fiendish savage shrieking in revolting triumph in his ear.

I now close the chapter of my eventful life. I feel that time is pressing; and the reminiscences of the past, stripped of all that was unpleasant, come crowding upon me. My heart turns naturally to my adopted people. I think of my son, who is the chief; I think of his mother, who went unharmed through the medicine lodge; I think of Bar-chee-am-pe, the brave heroine. I see her, tearful, watching my departure from the banks of the Yellow Stone. Her nation expects my return, that I may be buried with my supposed fathers, but none looks so eagerly for the great warrior as

PINE LEAF, THE INDIAN HEROINE.

I've seen her in her youthful years;  
Her heart was light and free,  
Her black eyes never dimm'd with tears,  
So happy then was she.

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

When warriors from the fight return'd,  
And halted for display,  
The trophies that the victors won  
She was first to bring away.  
I've seen her kiss her brother's cheek  
When he was called to go  
The lurking enemy to seek,  
Or chase the buffalo.  
She loved him with a sister's love  
He was the only son;  
And "Pine Leaf" prized him far above  
The warriors' hearts she'd won.  
I've seen her in her mourning hours  
That brother had been slain  
Her head, that oft was decked with flowers,  
Now shed its crimson rain;  
Her bleeding head and bleeding hand  
Her crimson, clotted hair  
Her brother's in the spirit land,  
And hence her keen despair.  
I've heard her make a solemn vow  
"A warrior I will be  
Until a hundred foes shall bow,  
And yield their scalps to me;  
I will revenge my brother's death —  
I swear it on my life,  
Or never, while I draw a breath,  
Will I become a wife."  
I've seen her on her foaming steed,  
With battle-axe in hand,  
Pursuing at her utmost speed  
The Black Foot and Shi-an.  
I've seen her wield her polished lance  
A hundred times and more,  
When charging fierce in the advance  
Amid the battle's roar.  
I've seen her with her scalping-knife  
Spring on the fallen foe,  
And, ere he was yet void of life,  
Make sure to count her coo.  
I've seen her, at full speed again,  
Oft draw her trusty bow,  
Across her arrow take good aim,

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

And lay a warrior low.  
I've heard her say, "I'll take my shield,  
My battle-axe, and bow,  
And follow you, through glen or field,  
Where'er you dare to go;  
I'll rush amid the blood and strife  
Where any warrior leads:"  
Pine Leaf would choose to lose her life  
Amid such daring deeds.  
I've heard her say, "The spirit land  
Is where my thoughts incline,  
Where I can grasp my brother's hand,  
Extended now for mine.  
There's nothing now in this wide world  
No ties that bid me stay;  
But, a broken-hearted Indian girl,  
I weep both night and day.  
" He tells me in my midnight dreams  
I must revenge his fall,  
Then come where flowers and cooling streams  
Surround their spirits, all.  
He tells me that the hunting-ground,  
So far away on high,  
Is filled with warriors all around  
Who nobly here did die.  
"He says that all is joy and mirth  
Where the Great Spirit lives,  
And joy that's never known on earth  
He constantly receives.  
No brother to revenge his wrongs —  
The war-path is my road  
A few more days I'll sing his songs,  
Then hie to his abode."  
I've heard her say, "I'll be your bride;  
You've waited long, I know;  
A hundred foes by me have died,  
By my own hand laid low.  
'Tis for my nation's good I wed;  
For I would still be free  
Until I slumber with the dead;  
But I will marry thee."  
And when I left the heroine,  
A tear stood in her eye

---

The Life And Adventures  
Of James P. Beckwourth

---

As last I held her hand in mine,  
And whispered a good-by.  
“Oh, will you soon return again?”  
The heroine did say;  
“Yes, when the green grass decks the plain,”  
I said, and came away.  
THE END.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

CHAPTER 1

MR. MANUEL LISA, of whom I have spoken in the "Views," was chosen by the company, to take the management of its affairs on the Missouri, and endeavor to retrieve them if possible. The profits expected, owing to a variety of unforeseen misfortunes, had not been realized; indeed, it appeared to be a prevailing opinion, that the situation of the company was desperate. Besides the loss by fire, at the Sioux establishment, and the hostility of the Blackfoot Indians, the remnant of the company's men, under Mr. Henry, had crossed the Rocky mountains, and it was not known what had become of them. To ascertain this, was therefore another object of the expedition, and if possible, to carry them assistance. Mr. Lisa, also, privately entertained the hope of being able to make peace with the Blackfoot Indians, and to be permitted to remain quietly in the country, which offered the greatest advantages to the company.

A person better qualified for this arduous undertaking, could not have been chosen. Mr. Lisa is not surpassed by any one, in the requisite experience in Indian trade and manners, and has few equals in perseverance and indefatigable industry. Ardent, bold and enterprising, when any undertaking is begun, no dangers, or sufferings are sufficient to overcome his mind. I believe there are few men so completely master of that secret of doing much in a short space of time, which arises, from turning every moment to advantage, as will appear in the course of the Journal. This panegyric is due to Mr. Lisa, and it would be unjust in me to withhold it, after the many marks of attention I received from him. Unfortunately, however, from what cause, I know not, the majority of the members of the company have not the confidence in Mr. Lisa, which he so highly merits; but on this occasion; he was intrusted with the sole direction of their affairs, in some degree, from necessity, as the most proper person to conduct an expedition, which appeared little short of desperate. The funds of the company were at so low an ebb, that it was with some difficulty a barge of twenty tons could be fitted out, with merchandise to the amount of a few thousand dollars, and to procure twenty hands and a patron. The members were unwilling to stake their private credit, where prospects were so little flattering. This was also the last year appointed for the continuance of the association, and there was no certainty of its being renewed.

With respect to myself, I must own to the reader, that I had no other motive for undertaking a tour of several thousand miles, through regions but seldom marked, even by the wandering footsteps of the savage, than the mere gratification of what he will term an idle curiosity: and I must confess that I might have employed my time more beneficially to myself, and more usefully to the community. Would that I were able to make some amends, by describing the many interesting objects which I witnessed, in such a manner as to enable the reader to participate in the agreeable parts of my peregrinations.

We set off from the village of St. Charles, on Tuesday the 2d of April, 1811, with delightful weather. The flood of March, which immediately succeeds the breaking up of the ice, had begun to subside, yet the water was still high. Our barge was the best to ever ascended this river, and manned with twenty stout oars-men. As Mr. Lisa had been a sea captain, he took much pains in rigging his boat with a good mast, and main and top sail; these being great helps in the navigation of this river. Our equipage, chiefly composed of young men, though several have already made a voyage to the upper Missouri, of which they are exceedingly proud, and on that account claim a kind of precedence over the rest of the crew. We are in all, twenty-five men, well armed, and completely prepared for defense. There is, besides, a swivel on the bow of the boat, which, in case of attack,

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

would make a formidable appearance; we have also two brass blunderbusses in the cabin, one over my birth, and the other over that of Mr. Lisa. These precautions were absolutely necessary from the hostility of Sioux bands, who, of late had committed several murders and robberies on the whites, and manifested such a disposition that it was believed impossible for us to pass through their country. The greater part of the merchandise, which consisted of shrouding, blankets, lead, tobacco, knives, guns, beads, &c. was concealed in a false cabin, ingeniously contrived for the purpose; in this way presenting as little as possible to tempt the savages. But we hoped, that as this was not the season for the coming on the river of the wandering tribes 2, the fall being the usual time, we might pass unnoticed. Mr. Wilson P. Hunt had set off with a large party, about twenty-three days before us, on his way to the Columbia; we anxiously hoped to overtake him before he entered the territory of the Sioux Nation; for this purpose it was resolved to strain every nerve, as upon it, in a great measure depended the safety of our voyage.

Having proceeded a few miles above St. Charles, we put to shore, some of our men still remaining at the village. It is exceedingly difficult to make a start on these voyages, from the reluctance of the men to terminate the frolic with their friends, which usually precedes their departure. They set in to drinking and carousing, and it is impossible to collect them on board. Sometimes they make their carousels at the expense of the Bourgeois 3; they are credited by the tavern keeper, who knows that their employer will be compelled to pay, to prevent the delay of the voyage. Many vexations are practiced in these cases. It was found impossible to proceed any further this evening; the men in high glee from the liquor they had drank before starting; they were therefore permitted to take their swig.

We had on board a Frenchman named Charbonet 4, with his wife, an Indian woman of the Snake Nation, both of whom had accompanied Lewis and Clark to the Pacific, and were of great service. The woman, a good creature, of a mild and gentle disposition greatly attached to the whites, whose manners and dress she tries to imitate, but she had become sickly, and longed to revisit her native country; her husband, also who had spent many years amongst the Indians, was become weary of a civilized life. So true, it is, that the attachment to the savage state of nature, (with which appellation is has commonly been dignified,) is much stronger than to that of civilization, with all its comforts, its refinements and its security.

Wednesday April 3d. About two o'clock in the afternoon, having at length succeeded in getting all hands on board, we proceeded on our voyage. Found an excessive current, augmented by the state of the waters. Having come about six miles, encamped. In the course of this evening, had as much reason to admire the dexterity of our Canadians and Creoles, as I had before to condemn their frivolity. I believe an American could not be brought to support with patience the fatiguing labors, and submission, which these men endure. At this season, when the water is exceedingly cold, they leap in without a moment's hesitation. Their food consists of lied corn homony for breakfast, a slice of fat pork and a biscuit for dinner, and a pot of mush for supper, with a pound of tallow in it. Yet this is better than the common fair; but we were about to make an extraordinary voyage, the additional expense was not regarded.

Thursday 4th. Last night we were completely drenched by rain; the whole party, the bank itself, in a bad condition this morning. Weather somewhat cloudy -- clearing up. -- A Short distance from out encampment, the hills approach the river N.E. side 5; they are not high, but rocky, and so not continue more than a mile, when the alluvium again commences. -- About 8 a fine breeze S.E. --

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

sailed until 12 -- passed several plantations S.W. side 6. The bottoms very extensive on the lower part of this river, the banks high, far above the reach of inundation. Timber, principally cotton wood; a few of the trees intermixed with it, are beginning to vegetate. The red-bud, the tree which blooms earliest in our woods, and so much admired by those who descend the Ohio early in the spring, appears in a few places. Passed an island where the river widens considerably; the current rapid, obliged to abandon oars and poles, and take the towing line. Above the island the high land again approaches the river; there is a brownish colored rock, with a few dwarf cedars growing on the top of the clefts. In going too near shore, we had the misfortune to have our top mast broken by the projecting limb of a tree. Encamped some distance. This evening serene and beautiful; the sand-bars begin to appear; several deer seen. I observed on the sand-bars, a kind of scaffolds, ten or fifteen feet in height, which I was informed were erected by the neighboring settlers for the purpose of shooting the deer by moon light, which usually come of the thickets at this time, to avoid the misquotes and to sport on the smooth beach; the hunter ascends the scaffold, and remains until the deer approaches. Came this day about twenty miles; navigation comparatively easy.

Friday 5th. Wind S.E. this morning, enabling us to set off under sail -- continued until ten, when it forsook us. Passed several plantations 6, and two islands. The bluffs disappear on the N.E. side, and are seen on the S.W. for the first time since our leaving St. Charles. They rise about two hundred feet, and are faced with rock, in masses separated by soil and vegetation. These are called the Tavern Rocks 7, from the circumstance of a cave in one of them affording a stopping place for voyagers ascending, or returning to their homes after a long absence. The Indians seem to have had some veneration for the spot, as it is tolerably well scratched over with their rude attempts at representing birds and beasts. From this place, through a long reach, or straight part of the river, we have a distant view of the terminating bluffs N.E. side. A violent storm of rain, wind and thunder, compelled us to put to shore, having passed a very dangerous and difficult place. The number of trees which had lately fallen into the river, and the danger to be apprehended from others, which seemed to have but a slender hold, rendered our situation disagreeable. Towards evening, a canoe with six or seven men passed on the other side, but we were unable to distinguish them. At this place I measured a cotton-wood tree, which was thirty-six feet in circumference; they grow larger on the lower parts of this river, than perhaps any where else in America. The bluffs, in the course of this day appeared higher, but not so abrupt or rocky.

Saturday 6th. Having passed a small willow island, we got beyond the hills on the S.W. side. At 11 o'clock, the wind became so high, that we were compelled to stop, as it blew directly down the river. This is near Boon's settlement -- About sixty miles from St. Charles 8. A number of plantations at the edge of the bottom 9. The wind having abated in the evening, we proceeded a few miles further, and encamped.

Sunday 7th. Water rising. Crossed to the S.W. side, and encountered a very swift current at the head of the willow island. The difficulty of this navigation is not easily described. Made Point Labadie 10, so called from a French trader, who formerly wintered there. Forty years ago this was thought a distant point on the Missouri, at present there are tolerable plantations every where through the bottom. The carcasses of several drowned buffaloes passed by us; it is said that an unusual number of them has been drowned this year. -- Some have been seen floating on the river at St. Louis. A gentleman lately described, declares that he counted forty on the head of an island.

---

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

Immediately below Point Labadie, the river contracts its breadth, and is confined to a channel of three or four hundred yards wide. Passed between an island and the main shore; a very narrow channel, but the current and distance less. A channel of this sort is often taken in preference, and it is one of the means of facilitating the ascending of this uncommonly rapid river; but there is sometimes danger of the upper end being closed with logs and billets of wood matted together, as it turned out in the present instance; fortunately after the labor of an hour we were able to remove the obstacles, else we should have been compelled to return. Opposite the head of the island there is a tolerable log house, and some land cleared; the tenant, a new comer, with a wife and six children, had nothing to give or sell. Here the banks fall in very much; the river more than a mile wide. A great impediment in opening lands on this river, is the dilapidation of the banks, which immediately ensue when the trees are cut away, from the rapid current upon the light soil of a texture extremely loose. It will be found absolutely necessary to leave the trees to stand on the borders of the river. The river exceedingly crooked in the course of this day. A number of plantations on both sides. Having made about fourteen miles, we put to shore, after passing a very difficult embarras 11. This word needs some explanation. Independent of the current of that vast volume of water rolling with great impetuosity, the navigation is obstructed by various other impediments. At the distance of every mile or two, and frequently at less distant intervals, there are embarras, or rafts, formed by the collection of trees closely matted. and extending from twenty to thirty yards. The current vexed by these interruptions, rushes round them with great violence and force. We may now judge what a boat encounters in grappling round these rafts. When the oars and grappling books were found insufficient, the towing line was usually resorted to with success. There is not only difficulty here, but considerable danger, in case the boat should swing round. In bends where the banks fall in, as in the Mississippi, trees lie for some distance out in the river. In doubling points, in passing sawyers, difficulties are encountered. The water is generally too deep to admit of poling; it would be absolutely impossible to stem the current further out than a few yards; the boat usually passes about this distance from the bank. Where the bank has not been washed steep, which is most usually the case, and the ground newly formed, the young trees, of the willow, cotton-wood &c. which overhang the stream, afford much assistance in pulling the boat along with the hands.

Monday 8th. The water fell last night as much as it had risen. About ten came in sight of a little village N.E. side called Charette 12. There are about thirty families here, who hunt, and raise a little corn. A very long island lies in the bend in which this village is situated. Above this island, passed under a gentle breeze, some very handsome bluffs, S.W. side to the isle aux Boeufs 13; they are about one hundred feet high, and excepting in a few places where rocks appear, covered with oak and other timber. At this place, the river makes a considerable bend. Instead of taking the main channel, we entered a smaller one between the island and the shore, which will shorten the distance; the current not so strong. The channel is about fifty yards wide, and very handsome, having clean even banks, and resembling a small river. -- It is about four miles in length.

Through all these islands, and on the Missouri bottoms, there are great quantities of rushes, commonly called scrub grass. (This is the case for several hundred miles up the Missouri) They grow from four to five feet high, and so close, as to render it very disagreeable, as well as difficult, to pass through the woods. The cattle feed upon the winter, answering the same purpose as cane on the Mississippi.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

At the upper end of the isle aux Boeufs, we were compelled, about five o'clock in the evening, to put to shore, on account of a violent storm, which continued until after dark. In the badly constructed cabin of our boat, we were wet to the skin; the men were better off in their tents, made by a blanket stretched over twigs.

We have been accompanied for these two days past by a man 14 and two lads, ascending in a canoe. This evening they encamped close by us, placing the canoe under shelter of our boat. Unsheltered, except by the trees on the bank, and a ragged quilt drawn over a couple of forks, they abode "the pelting of the pitiless storm," with apparent indifference. These people are well dressed in handsome home made of cotton cloth. The man seemed to possess no small share of pride and self importance, which, as I afterwards discovered, arose from his being a captain of militia. He borrowed a kettle from us, and gave it to one of his boys. When we were about to sit down to supper, he retired, but returned when it was over; when asked, why he had not staid to do us the honor of supping with us; "I thank you gentlemen," said he, licking his lips with satisfaction, "I have just been eating an excellent supper." -- He had scarcely spoken, when the patron (The Patron is the fresh-water sailing-master) 15 came to inform Mr. Lisa, the boys were begging him for a biscuit 16, as they had eating nothing for two days! our visitant was somewhat disconcerted, but passed it off with, "Poh! I'm sure they can't be suffering!"

He resides on the Gasconade; was the second family which settled in that quarter, about three years ago. He has present about 250 men on his muster-roll. We were entertained by him with a long story of his having pursued some Pottawatomise, who had committed robberies on the settlements some time last summer; he made a narrow escape, the Indians having attacked his party in the night time, and killed four of his men after desperate resistance. The captain had on board a barrel of whiskey to set up tavern 17 with, a bag of cotton for his wife to spin, and a couple of kittens, for the purpose of augmenting his family; these kept up such doleful serenades, during the night, that I was scarcely able to close my eyes.

CHAPTER II

Tuesday 9th. Set off this morning with a light breeze, which continued to augment until ten, when from a change in the course of the river, it was unfavorable for two or three miles. Passed a number of plantations on both sides, and isle a la loutre 18, which is about twelve miles long, and two wide, near the N.E. side; it has a compact settlement. In the course of the day we lost sight of our captain of the Gasconade, who was not able to keep up with us in his canoe.

Passed at four o'clock, the Gasconade, a considerable river, S.W. side, which rises with the Maramek, and has been ascended upwards of one hundred miles, in canoes; but its channel is rocky and rough. It is ninety miles from the mouth of the Missouri. The lands on its borders are broken and hilly, and badly wooded. Before reaching the Gasconade, we passed a long range of bluffs, or rather hills, well covered with wood, but terminating at the entrance of the river in rocky precipices; this range appears again on the other side of the Gasconade. -- There is a very long reach here, of fifteen or twenty miles; the Gasconade hills, on the S.W. side, are washed by the Missouri the whole of this distance. This day was sufficient to prove the efficacy of our sails, in navigating this river; we passed with ease, places much worse than any we had encountered since leaving St. Charles. Encamped six miles above 19 the Gasconade; heavy rains last night.

Wednesday 10th. Cloudy -- crossed to the bluffs, N.E. side, which are high and rocky. Passed Montburn's tavern and river 20; another stopping place for voyagers. Passed an embarras, N.E.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

side, the most difficult since we started. There are wide bottoms above these bluffs, on both sides of the river. The wind against us throughout the whole of this day. The verdure is observed to be rapidly increasing; the smaller trees and shrubs are already in gay green. From the color of the water on the S.W. side, it appears that the Osage river is paying the annual tribute.

Thursday 11th. A fine morning. Current so strong S.W. side, from the waters of the Osage, that we were compelled to cross to an island. Hills on the N.E. side, not high of rocky; continued on this side to ascend throughout the day, though with difficulty, on account of numerous embarras, and falling in of the banks. This is a fine country; the lands extremely rich, and covered with a great variety of trees. Stopping a few moments at the cabin of a Frenchman, who is beginning to open a plantation. In company with the interpreter, I proceeded by land, across a point, about two miles to the village of cote sans dessein 21, where we arrived nearly three hours before the barge. We inquired with eagerness after the party of Mr. Hunt 22, we were informed that he had passed this place twenty-one days ago. Thus far, it appears that we have gained but two days upon him.

Friday 12th. Weather fine. -- a gentle breeze on the river from the S.E. Remained here until eleven, engaged in repairing our cabin. Mr. Lisa here employed a famous hunter, named Castor, a Kansas Indian, who had been brought up from infancy amongst the whites.

Cote sans dessein, is a beautiful place, situated on the N.E. side of the river, and in sight of the Osage. It will in time become a considerable village. The beauty and fertility of the surrounding country cannot be surpassed. It is here that we met with the first appearance of prairie, on the Missouri, but it is handsomely mixed with woodland. The wooded country on the N.E. extends at least thirty miles, as far up as this place, and not less than fifteen on the other side. The name is given to this place, from the circumstance of a single detached hill filed with limestone, standing on the bank of the river, about six hundred yards long, and very narrow. -- The village has been established about three years; there are thirteen French families, and two or three of Indians. They have handsome fields in the prairie, but their time is spent in hunting. From their eager inquiries after merchandise, I perceived we were already remote from the settlements.

We continued under way, with a light breeze, but scarcely sufficient to waft the barge of itself, without the aid of oars.-- Handsome wooded upland, S.W. side, gently sloping to the river, and not recall. For many reasons, I would prefer these situations to the bottom, where the soil is richer. Passed the Great Osage river, one hundred and thirty-three miles from the mouth of the Missouri, and navigable about six hundred miles. There is much fine land immediately on its borders, but the prairies stretch out on either side, and to the westward are almost boundless. The Osage villages are situated about two hundred miles up.

Passed a long island, called l'isle à cedar, Cedar Island 23. A number of islands on the Missouri bear this name, from the growth of cedar upon them, in this particular, differing from the islands of the Mississippi. In this island the best part of the wood had been cut down, and rafted to St. Louis, to supply the settlement with this wood, of which there is a great consumption.

Throughout the course of this day, we found the navigation less arduous and painful; owing principally to the falling of the waters, and to our having passed one of those rivers which add to the current of the Missouri. The sand bars, begin to present a pleasing appearance; several miles in length, clean and smooth. Instead of ascending along either side, we pursued the middle of the river, along the sand bars. Encamped N.E. side, just above the Cedar island. The bars and the sides of the river are everywhere marked with deer tracks.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

Saturday 13th. A fine morning -- somewhat cool -- set off with a favorable breeze. Passed hills on the S.W. side -- saw five or six deer sporting on a sand bar. Passed the Manitoo rocks, S.W. side, a la Bonne Femme creek 24. The country hereabout, is delightful; the upland sloping gently to the river, timbered with oak, hickory, ash, &c. The lands on this stream are said not to be surpassed by any in the territory.

After having had a favorable wind the greater part of the day, encamped at the Roche Percee, perforated rock; a high craggy cliff on the N.E. side. This is the narrowest part of the river I have yet seen; it is scarcely two hundred yards wide. -- Made in the course of this day about twenty-eight miles, for which we were indebted to the favorable wind. Some of us considered this good fortune, a reward for the charity which was manifested by us yesterday, in spending an hour to relieve a poor ox, which was swamped near the bank. The poor creature had remained here ten or twelve days, and the sand into which he had sunk, was become hard and solid. The wolves had paid him friendly visits from time to time, to inquire after his health, while buzzards, crows, and eagles, tendered their salutations from the boughs of the neighboring trees.

Sunday 14th. Violent wind all night -- hoisted sail before daylight, in order to take advantage of the wind. Passed the Manitou on the N.E. side, and high rocks. A delightful country. Wind slackened about ten. At twelve, came in sight of the hills of the Mine river, resembling those of the Gasconade. At three, the wind again rose -- passed the Mine river, S.W. side. This river is not navigable more than ten or twelve miles. Valuable saltworks are established here. The whole of this day we found rich and extensive bottoms, N.E. side, and beautiful sloping upland, S.W. on this side of the river some beautiful situations for farms and plantations. The hills rise with a most delightful ascent from the waters edge, to the height of forty or fifty feet; the woods open and handsome. The lands on the Mine river, reputed excellent. The bottoms on the N.E. side the Missouri, uncommonly fine. There is a flourishing settlement here. As this is Sunday, the good people were dressed out in their best clothes, and came in groups to the bank to gaze upon us, as we passed under sail. We put to shore, at the farm of Braxton Cooper 25, a worthy man, who has the management of the saltworks. The settlement is but one year old, but is already considerable, and increasing rapidly; it consists of seventy-five families, the greater part living on the bank of the river, in the space of four or five miles. There are, generally, persons in good circumstances, most of them have slaves. Mr. Cooper informed me that the upland, back, is the most beautiful ever beheld. He thinks that from the mouth of the Missouri to this place, the country for at least forty miles from the river, may bear the character of rich woodland; the prairies forming but trifling proportions. This place is two hundred miles up. We inquired for the party of which we were in chase -- they had passed by nineteen days before us.

Monday 15th, Rain last night, but without lightning -- from this it is prognosticated that the wind will continue favorable to day. Set off with a fair wind, but the course of the river became unfavorable. At half past seven, again fair -- continued under sail until twelve. Passed handsome upland S.W. side, and the two Chareton rivers N.E. Had to oppose in the course of the day some very difficult places -- the river extremely crooked. While the men were towing, they chased a she bear into a hollow tree; we set about chopping the tree, while several stood with guns presented to the hole at which she had entered, about twenty feet up. In a short time she put out her head and shoulders, but on receiving a volley, instantly withdrew. The chopping was renewed; madam Cuff again appeared, and was saluted as before, but without producing the same effect,

---

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

as she leisurely crawled down the tree, and attempted to make off, amidst the shouts of fifteen or twenty barbarians, who were bent on the destruction of a mother and her little family. She was killed with a stroke of an axe, having been previously severely wounded. In the hollow sycamore, there were found three cubs. At five, hoisted sail, and continued until seven, having this day made twenty-eight miles. Towards evening, passed beautiful undulating hills, gently sloping to the river. What charming situations for seats and farms.

Tuesday 16th. Set off without wind -- the river rising. At eleven, the wind so much against us that we were obliged to lie by. At three we continued our voyage, and as it was resolved to tow, I set out with my rifle, expecting to meet the boat at the head of a long bend. This is the first expedition I have made into the country. I passed through the bottom with great difficulty, on account of the rushes, which grow as high as a mans head, and are matted with vines and briars. The beauty of the upland in some degree recompensed. Clean and open woods, growth, oak, hickory, &c.; the grass beginning to appear green. Saw several deer, and abundance of turkeys. We are now in a country which abounds with game. I came late in the evening to the boat, I having been supposed lost in the woods. Our hunter had been more successful than I, having killed a she bear with four cubs. The river very crooked in the course of this day. -- Passed some places of thin woods -- not quite prairie, on the bank of the river.

Wednesday 17th. Breakfast under sail. Passed the Grand river, N.E. side. It is two hundred yards wide at its mouth; a very long river, navigable six or eight hundred miles, and takes its waters with the river Des Moines. The traders who were in the habit of visiting the Mahas, six hundred miles above this on the Missouri, were formerly compelled to ascend this river in order to avoid the Kansas Indians, who were then the robbers of the Missouri. There is a portage of not more than a couple of days, from the Grand river to the Mahas.

At the confluence on the lower side, there is a beautiful situation. The bottom is a handsome prairie, which is seen extending for the first time on the Missouri, to the water's edge, and about a mile in width; the upland then rises with a gentle ascent, with here and there a few clumps of trees. Immediately at the point of junction, there are about fifty area of well timbered land. Here is a delightful situation for a village 26; the distance about two hundred and forty miles from the mouth of the Missouri. There is some beautiful country lying on the Grand river, but deficient in wood. In fact, this river may almost be considered the boundary of the wooded upland on that side of the river.

Here the wind failed us. The Missouri very wide; a large bar in the middle. The beautiful green hills on the Little Osage in sight. But for the single defect of the dilapidating banks of the Missouri, the country boarding on it, thus far, would not be surpassed by any in the world. Spring has already cast her green mantle over the land; and the scenery every where assumes a more enlivened appearance. After an arduous navigation, came this day about twenty miles.

Thursday 18th. Heavy rain last night, accompanied by unusual thunder and lightning. Set off at six, weather apparently clearing up. About ten, compelled by heavy rain to put to shore until three, when we again shoved off, came a few miles and encamped, N.E. side.

Friday 19th. Continued our voyage at daylight, and came through a long channel, between an island and the shore. The wind S.E. but the course of the river such as to disable us from profiting by it. A drizzling rain, and the weather disagreeable. Wind favorable for an hour. Passed handsome upland and prairie S.W. side. There was formerly a village of the Little Osages here, but from

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

the frequent attacks of the Ayuwas, they were compelled to go higher up the river. The situation is fine. At a distance, the deep green herbage on this open ground had much the appearance of a wheat field.

Encamped late, after having got through a channel with considerable difficulty. The slowness with which we have advanced for several days past, forms a contrast with those which preceded. Water rising.

Saturday 20th. A cold disagreeable morning. The men drenched by the heavy rain of last night. Hoisted sail about six, but the wind served us but a short distance. -- Weather clearing up -- put to shore for an hour to dry our effects. Handsome hills on the S.W. side. Got underway at three, along the N.E. side. One of the finest tracts of land I have ever seen -- a great proportion of the timber is walnut, poplar, and cotton wood of enormous size. Entered a channel, at the upper end of which, fired upon a flock of several pelicans, standing on a shoal. These birds abound very much on the Missouri, but are shy. -- We daily kill wild fowl, ducks, geese, brandt, &c. -- which ascend the river at this season of the year, to breed. Their eggs are found at every moment, on the sand bars.

Sunday 21st. A delightful morning, though somewhat cool. Got under way early -- passed through the channel, and crossed over to the S.W. side. Had some difficultembarras, but no great current. After breakfast, took my gun, and struck into the woods. On ascending the hills about two hundred feet in height, I had a fine view up and down the river. On the other side (N.E.) there is an extensive prairie bottom, apparently four or five miles wide; and a level plain of vast extent stretching out on either hand, of rich alluvium soil, from appearance of the luxuriant herbage. There is a singular contrast of the sward which has remained unburnt, and the extensive tracts of deep green of the grass of this spring 27. Beyond the plain, the prairie rises into upland, of abrupt elevation, and in a thousand fantastic forms, but without a shrub, and apparently covered with but a thin coat of vegetation.

On this side (S.W.) I found the soil of the upland of an excellent quality -- and notwithstanding the ravages committed by fire, the woods, principally, hickory, oak, walnut, ash, &c. -- were tolerably close.

Returned to the boat about four in the evening. We spent an hour and a half this evening, in grappling around some rocks of free stone, the distance of a few hundred yards. The swiftness of the current on the other side rendered it impossible to attempt it there, encamped some distance above and encampment of Mr. Hunt, which appeared not more than ten or twelve days old.

Monday 22d. Continued until eleven, with cordelle, or towing line -- the banks being favorable. The hills, or bluffs, are here, about one hundred feet high, and rise abruptly from the river. Wind from the S.S.W. becoming too strong, were compelled to lie by until three. Crossed to the N.E. side, and endeavored to ascend between the shore and an island, but found a sand bar running across, at the upper end, so that we were obliged to back, and camp nearly opposite the place of starting 28.

Tuesday 23d. Very high wind this morning. Doubled the island which had been the scene of so much vexation. Endeavored to proceed on the outside, but met with so many difficulties, that we were compelled to cross to the S.W. side. Towed to Ibar's channel and Island 29 -- then re-crossed to the N.E. side, and found ourselves about two miles above our last night's encampment. Remained here until three, when the wind somewhat abated its violence. Having arrived opposite

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

the Wizzard's island, 30 (L'isle du Sorcier) crossed over and encamped. The superstitious boatmen believe that a wizzard inhabits this island; they declare that a man has been frequently seen on the sand beach, at the point, but that he suddenly disappears, on the approach of anyone. These few days have been in a manner lost, from contrary winds, and bad weather. Heavy rain this evening -- Musketoos begin to be troublesome, for the first time during our voyage.

Wednesday 24th. Attempted a ripple this morning, and were driven back five times -- we had once got within half the boat's length of being through; the oars and poles were insufficient; ten of our men leaped into the water with the cordelle, while the rest of us exerted ourselves with the pole; and thus by perseverance became conquerors. This ripple, like all others of the Missouri, is formed by high sand bars, over which the water is precipitated, with considerable noise. This bar has been formed within two or three years. The bend formerly almost impassable from the swiftness of the current, is now tolerable. There is seldom any great current on both sides; the falling in of the banks indicates the current to be there. Wherever the river has a wider channel than ordinary, there is usually a sand bar in the middle. This extraordinary river sometimes pursues a straight course for ten or fifteen miles, then suddenly turns to every point of the compass. In other places, the whole volume of its waters is compressed into a channel of three hundred yards; again suddenly opening to the width of one, or even two miles, with islands and sand bars scattered though the space.

Passed a canoe with four men, who had wintered up the Kansas (river), about five hundred miles; they had beaver, and other furs. They could give no information respecting Hunt's party; -- we conclude he must have passed that river before they came out of it.

From the violence of the wind, made but a few miles. While Castor was out, he saw a white turkey, but was not so fortunate as to kill it. I am told that they have sometimes been seen of this color; but I suspect it is:

*Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno.*

Thursday 25th. Contrary winds, but not such as to prevent us from continuing our voyage tolerably well. About eleven, came in sight of Fort Osage, situate on a bluff, three miles off 31, on a commanding eminence. We stopped at the clearing of Mr. Audrain, who is about opening a farm below the fort. A number of Indians of the Osage Nation of all ages, and sexes, were scattered along the bank, attracted by curiosity -- some with old buffaloe robes thrown over their shoulders, others dressed out in the gayest manner. They gathered round us in crowds, and manifested an idle curiosity, very different from the Indians who live east of the Mississippi, one of whose characteristics, is a studied indifference, as to everything strange which transpires around them. On landing at the fort, on a very rocky shore, a soldier under arms, who waited for us at the water's side, escorted Mr. Lisa and myself to the fort, where we were politely received by the commanding officer.

While Mr. Lisa was transacting some business, accompanied by Mr. Sibley 32, the factor, and an interpreter, I went to deliver a pipe to Sans Oreille, (a warrior, and head man of this tribe) sent to him by General Clark 33. He received us, seated on a mat, and after smoking in the usual manner, requested the interpreter to inform me 'that he was the friend of the Americans and that he was flattered with this proof of Gen. Clark's good will towards him.' He was surround by a number of young warriors, who appeared to look upon him with great respect. This man, though not a chief, is evidently intriguing to be the head of his tribe, and has great influence with them; the chief,

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

Young White Hairs 34, having but little to entitle him to respect from his own character, being extremely young, and of a gentle disposition. Sans Oreille, as is usual with the ambitious amongst these people, is the poorest man in the Nation; to set the heart upon goods and chattels, being reckoned indicative of a mean and narrow soul; he gives away everything he can obtain, in order to procure popularity. Such is ambition! Little know they of this state of society, who believe that it is free from jealousies, envy, detraction, or guilty ambition. No demagogue -- no Cataline, ever used greater art and finesse, or displayed more policy than this cunning savage. The arts of seducing the multitude are nearly the same everywhere, and the passion for the power and distinction, seems inherent in human nature. He is a tall fine looking man, possesses very superior abilities, and esteemed the best warrior of the village.

The fort is handsomely situated about one hundred feet above the level of the river, which makes an elbow 35 at this place, giving an extensive view up and down the river. Its form is triangular; this fort is small, not calculated for more than a company of men 36. A group of buildings is formed by the factory, suttler's house, &c. The lodges of the Little Osage, are sixty in number, and within gun shot of the fort; but they are about to remove their village to a prairie, three miles off. Their lodges are a circular form, not more than ten or fifteen feet in diameter, constructed by placing of course rushes, over forks and poles.

All three of the Osage bands, together with some Kansas, were lately camped here for the purpose of trading, to the number of fifteen hundred warriors. The officer informed me, that about ten days ago, serious apprehensions had been entertained from them. A war party, of about two hundred, having scalped a few women and children, of the Ayuwas, their enemies, had returned to slated with this exploit, that they insulted the people of the fort. One of these warriors defied a centinel on his post; the centinel was commanded to fire over his head, this produced no effect, he was seized by a file of men. This he at first treated with indifference, declaring, that if he was confined, he would get some of the whitemen's bread; his tune was changed, however, by a liberal application of the cat o'nine tails to his back. Great commotions amongst the Indians were excited; they rushed forward with their arms; but the soldiers no sooner paraded and made ready a few pieces of cannon, than they thought proper to retreat. They maintained a threatening attitude for some days, and to give vent to their spite, killed a pair of the fine oxen, belonging to Mr. Audrain 37. The officer sent for the chiefs, and told them, that unless two others were given for the oxen, he would instantly fire upon their village. This spirited deportment had the desired effect, and after some consoling, the pipe was smoked, all matters adjusted.

Mr. Sibley informed me, that he was just setting out on a tour towards the Arkansas, to visit the salines 38, on that river, and also to the Kansas and Platte, to see the Pani Nation 39.

These Indians are not to be compared to the nations east of the Mississippi; although at war with most of their neighbors, they are a cowardly race. One good trait, however, deserves to be mentioned; they have rarely, if ever, been known to spill the blood of a white man:--When a white hunter is found on their lands, they take away his furs and his arms, he is then beaten with ram-rods, and driven off.

Thus far we have gained about one hundred miles upon the party of Hunt -- we are in good spirits, and will renew the pursuit with augmented vigor.

This place is something better than three hundred miles up the Missouri, in lat. 38 deg. 40'.

CHAPTER III

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

Friday, 26th April. Heavy rains last night, our situation extremely uncomfortable. This morning we were awakened about daylight, by the most hideous howlings I ever heard. -- They proceeded from the Osages, among whom this is a custom. On inquiry, I found that they were unable to give any satisfactory reason for it; I could only learn that it was partly religious, and if it be true, as is supposed by many, that they offer their worship only to the Evil Spirit, the orison was certainly not unworthy of him. I was told, also, that it arises from another cause; when any one, on awaking in the morning, happens to think of a departed friend, even of some valued dog or horse, which has been lost, he instantly begins this doleful cry, and all the others hark in, as soon as it is heard. About eleven o'clock, clearing up, but wind strong from the S.W. we set off with it, blowing directly in our faces. -- About twelve we put to shore and remained for more than two hours. Crossed to the N.E. side, and continued our voyage. -- Towards evening the weather moderated. Passed a small encampment of hunters. The Missouri is now what the Ohio was once, the paradise of hunters. Made nine miles to day. The water is at a good stage for ascending; the navigation becomes more agreeable. Weather somewhat cool.

We have now passed the last settlement of whites, and probably will not re-visit them for several months. This reflection caused us all to think seriously of our situation. I almost repented of having undertaken this voyage, without an object in view, of importance. Our men were kept from thinking too deeply, by the cheering songs, which were encouraged by Mr. Lisa, and the splashing of the oars, which kept time with them. So far removed, I seemed to look back, as from an eminence; thus abstracted, I faced that I contemplated my country with more accuracy than I could while protected in its bosom I heaved a sigh, when I reflected that I might never see it, or my friends again; that my bones might be deposited on some dreary spot, far from my home, and the haunts of civilized man; but this last, suggested a consolation, there is no spot however distant, where I may be buried, but will in time, be surrounded by the habitations of Americans, the place will be marked, and approached with respect, as containing the remains of one of the first who ventured into these distant and solitary regions 40 !

Saturday 27th. We are once more to be somewhat favored. This is a delightful morning, though cool. Set off at daylight, and at six, had a light breeze from the east. Passed Vincent's Island 41, above which the river is extremely narrow, and hills S.W. side. About eleven, met a party of traders in tow canoes lashed together, which form a kind of raft, heavily laden with furs, and skins. They came from the Sioux, who, they say, are peaceably disposed. They met Hunt's party, five days ago, at the Little Nimeha 42; it proceeds slowly, and had two days of contrary winds. -- The traders think we shall be able to overtake them at the river Platte. -- Hunt informed them that they would meet us below the Grand river. Wind fell shortly after leaving this party. The good news we have heard, animates our men very much.

Towards evening, passed Benito's Island 43, and sand bar, S.W. side, so called, from a trader of that name having been robbed by the Ayuwas of his peltry, and he, with his men, forced to carry enormous burdens of it on their backs to the river Des Moines. Instances of such insults were formerly very usual; several spots have been shown to me where like acts have been committed, and even accompanied with murder. Having come within two leagues of the Kansas river, we encamped. Large sand bars begin everywhere to appear 44.

Sunday 28th. A cool morning, and somewhat foggy on the river -- A light breeze from the east, but not sufficient to enable us to carry sails. Passed high land N.E. side, with some rocks on the

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

shore; we are delighted with the gentle hills, or rather elevated upland of the Missouri. On a large sand bar, saw nearly thirty deer. They are very numerous in this part of the river.

Passed the Kansas, a very large river which enters on the S.W. side. It heads between the Platte and the Arkansas. -- The country on its borders, is entirely open. The river can be ascended with little difficulty, more than twelve hundred miles. The Kansas nation of Indians reside upon it.

In the evening we passed the little river Platte, navigable with canoes fifty of sixty miles, and said to abound with beaver. We are encamped near a mile above it, having made about fifteen miles.

In the course of this day, we find the river, in most places, extremely narrow, and the sand bars very extensive.

Monday 29th Somewhat cloudy this morning -- A light breeze from the S.E. At seven, breakfasted under sail. At nine, reached a beautiful island, called Diamond island 45, fifteen miles, above the Kansas. From this, there is a long reach of six or eight miles. The weather is fine -- the breeze still continuing.

At three o'clock we had made twenty-four miles. The wind, from the change of the course of the river, could not serve us. We lost two hours in passing of the most difficult places I have ever seen on the river; after which, we had a fair wind again, until night.

Passed in the course of this day, some beautiful country on both sides; the upland chiefly S.W. and a greater proportion of prairie than we have yet seen. The river generally narrow, and the sand bars of great extent.

Having made about thirty miles, we encamped a short distance below Buffaloe Island 46, opposite a range of hills, and at the upper end of a long view. During the whole of the day, we saw astonishing quantities of game on the shore; particularly deer and turkeys. The buffaloe or elk are not yet seen.

Tuesday 30th. Last night there was much thunder and lightning, but little rain. At day light embarked with a favorable wind, which continued until seven, when, from the course of the river, the wind failed us for an hour. The river extremely crooked. Mr. Lisa and myself went on shore, and each killed a deer. There were great numbers of them sporting on the sand bars. There are great quantities of snipes<sup>47</sup>, of a beautiful plumage, being a curious mixture of dove color, and white. I saw one of a different kind, which was scarlet underneath the wings <sup>48</sup>.

At two o'clock we hoisted sail at the beginning of a long reach, to the great joy of the whole company. High prairies S.W. side -- continued under sail through another long reach, and had a view of the old Kansas village, at the upper end of it. It is a high prairie; smooth waving hills, perfectly green, with a few clumps of trees in the hollows. But for the scarcity of timber this would be a delightful situation for a town. At this place, the bend of the river rendered the wind unfavorable. -- Continued under oars about 3 miles further, having in the course of this day made thirty three miles.

Wednesday 1st. of May. Very high wind all last night. Embarked this morning about daylight, and continued under sail until six o'clock. Upland N.E. side, thinly timbered. It may be remarked, that the hills of the Missouri are not so high as those of the Ohio, seldom rocky, and rise more pleasantly from the waters edge. Continued under sail until eleven, when we were brought off by a considerable bend in the river. Passed St. Michael's prairie 49, a handsome plain in front, with variegated hills in the back ground, and but little wood. At two o'clock we came to a very great bend in the river, but did not get through until evening. The river from being narrow, changes to

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

an unusual width, and very shallow. We were detained about an hour, having so unlucky as to run aground.

Saw but one or two deer to day, as we approached the open country their numbers will be found to diminish, there being no thickets to shelter them. They are to lessen perceptibly from Nowawa river, upwards.

In the evening, the weather, which has been for some days cloudy, cleared up, and the wind abated entirely; the Missouri and its scenery appeared in their natural state. The wind also became calm, and harmonized with nature. The river is falling fast, approaching to a low stage of water -- came to day twenty-seven miles.

Thursday 2d. Embarked at daylight, the river unruffled by a breeze; the birds, as if rejoicing that the strife of the elements had ceased, tuned their sweetest notes.

At seven o'clock, breakfast opposite some bluffs N.E. side. A very large mass appeared at no distant period, to have slipped into the river, leaving a clay precipice fifty or sixty feet high. A little above, there are rocks of freestone 50 at the edge of the water. Below this place, there is an extensive prairie, partly river bottom, and partly upland, with a considerable rivulet passing through it. What a delightful situation for a farm, or even a town 51! Description of such a country as this, can give no idea of its peculiar character. The hills, or bluffs, begin to appear, thinly wooded with dwarf trees, principally oak or ash.

In the evening arrived at Nodawa channel, on the N. E. side, and about five miles in length.

Friday 3d. A beautiful morning; set off at daylight as usual, and passed the wintering ground of Crooks and McClelland, some distance above Nodawa.

High hills on the S. W. side, with some bold places, and fine land on the N.E. side. In the afternoon passed Wolf river 54, fourteen miles from Nodawa. Shortly after this, a breeze from N.E. enabled us, from the course of the river, to sail four or five miles. Passed a large prairie S.W. side, and encamped at the commencement of another. In these places there is not even a shrub to the water's edge, the bottom of considerable width, the grass very luxuriant.

Saturday 4th. Heavy rain last night, and drizzling this morning. Passed an extensive lowland prairie, above our encampment. At half past eight, passed an encampment of Hunt. In the evening passed the Nimeba and Tarkio creeks<sup>55</sup>, and encamped a short distance above.

I overheard this evening, with considerable chagrin, while warming myself at the fire, some bitter complaints on the part of the men; they declared that it was impossible for them to stand it long, that they had never so severe a voyage. This discontent was of course excited by some Thersites<sup>56</sup> of the party. -- Great exertions have certainly been made and no moments lost; in advancing our voyage, but much of the time we were carried along by the wind, when there was no need for any labor on the part of the men. The weather is now fine, and their labor diversified, when there is no wind, by pole, the oars, or cordelle, which is little more than a promenade along the sand bars. I represented these things to them as well as I could, and endeavored to quiet their minds<sup>57</sup>.

Sunday 5th. Passed an encampment of Hunt this morning. The sun shone out, but the air was cool. -- wind from N.E. but not so hard as to form any great obstacle. In the evening hailed two men descending in a bark canoe; they had been of Hunts party, and had left him on the 2d of May, two days above the Platte, at Boyer's river<sup>58</sup>. They had fair wind it seems all the way up. Thus, it seems we have gained upon them as much as we expected.

The weather very fine throughout the day, encamped in the evening at the upper end of a hand-

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

some prairie, opposite a large sand bar.

Monday 6th. About ten this morning, passed a river called Nis-na-botona 59, after which there are some long reaches very favorable for sailing. At four o'clock arrived at the little Nameha 60; the course of the river here is for a considerable distance nearly N.E. -- Wind being N.W. were enabled to hoist sail, but having proceeded about a mile, a squall suddenly sprung up from the N. we were compelled with all dispatch to take in the sail, and gain the shore S.W. side. Here a dreadful storm raged during the remainder of the evening, and the greater part of the night.

Our encampment is at the edge of a large prairie, but with a fringe of wood along the bank of the river. The greater part of the country, particularly on the S.W. side, is now entirely open. The grass is at this time about six inches high 61.

Tuesday 7th. Continued our voyage at daylight, the weather fine, though somewhat cool. Wind still continues N.W. -- Passed an island and sand bar, and towed along a prairie S. side for nearly a mile. This prairie is a narrow, bounded by hills somewhat broken and stony.

At ten o'clock arrived at L'isle à beau soleil 62; the wind here became so high that we proceeded with great difficulty. In the evening, arriving at the head of the island, were compelled to put to shore. Mr. Lisa seized this opportunity of replanting his mast, by a young oak which he found in the wood along the shore. All hands were set to work on it, in order that it might be ready the next day. This was rendered necessary on account of the old one having given way.

I took this opportunity of making an excursion into the country. Ascended the hills of bluffs, which, through steep, are not much more than two hundred feet above the river, and command prospects of great extent. I could see the meandering course of the river, between the two ranges of hills, or more properly of high land, for thirty or forty miles. Some of these hills are cut into precipices forty or fifty feet high, without any appearance of stone. It is a light yellow colored earth, with a considerable mixture of sand. There is an immense extent of prairie on both sides of the river. The hills are not always abrupt, but in many places rise gently, and are extremely beautiful. The river hereabout is very crooked; in following the hills, along which there is an Indian path, I could go to a point up the river, which will probably be our place of encampment to morrow night.

On my return to the boat, killed some pigeons and wild ducks, and saw a flock of turkeys. 63

Wednesday 8th. Last night having finished our mast, we had it put up this morning before day, and set off on our voyage. Weather cool, but no wind, and the sun apparently regaining his empire.

Passed through a country in the course of the day, chiefly open, with very little wood. The river very wide; In one places it appeared to me nearly two miles. Encamped at the falling in banks, or grand eboulment. Wind has entirely abated.

Thursday 9th. Set off at daylight -- continued a short distance under sail with a light breeze.

Several of the men are sick; one has a pleurisy, and others slight fevers and coughs, from frequent exposure in the water.

There appears to be no hills or bluffs on the north east side, the whole distance to the Platte.

Encamped some distance above a hill, called Loeil effroi, from an Indian chief who was scaffolded here some years ago.

Friday 10th. A dreadful storm raged during the whole of last night. Set off this morning under sail, in expectation of reaching the Platte before twelve, but in the course of an hour it failed us,

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

and changed to N.W. At ten, it became so violent that we were compelled to put to shore, where we remained until towards evening, and again attempting to proceed, but finding the wind too strong, again landed and encamped, having passed the mouth of the Platte. At the mouth of this river there is so great a number of bars and small islands, that its entrance is scarcely perceptible. The river enters by a number of channels or mouths; the color of its water is the same with that of the Missouri. The country hereabouts is entirely open, excepting in some spots along the river, where there are groves of cotton wood, and on the hills a few scattered dwarf oaks.

Saturday 11th. The wind continues to high to proceed. This morning we advanced about three miles, and encamp until near noon -- very cold.

Set off with my gun to take a walk into the country. Traversed the prairie which had been burnt, and reached the high land about three miles distant; the high land rises gradually to the height of about two hundred feet, the company then becomes waving. The other side of the Missouri appears extremely bare. I wandered toward the Platte, or rather to the point of the upland between this river and the Missouri, which commands a very extensive prospect. I discovered a great extent of open country, gently rising grounds, with a soil everywhere extremely rich. The Platte is full of islands and sand bars, and appears as wide as the Missouri. On my return, I saw several Indian mounds.

On reaching camp I found that the wind had abated, and that the river was rising fast.

The river Platte is regarded by the navigators of the Missouri as a point of much importance, as the equinoctial line amongst mariners. All those who had not passed it before, were required to be shaved, unless they could compromise the matter by a treat. Much merriment was indulged on the occasion. From this we enter what is called the Upper Missouri; Indeed the change is perceptible and great.

CHAPTER IV

Sunday 12th. Weather pleasant -- the river rising rapidly; the drift wood descends in great quantities, and the current seems to argument every moment. This may possibly be the annual flood. We were enabled to ascend the greater part of this morning with the towing line.

In the afternoon, some distance above the old Otto Village 64 S.W. side, I went on shore, and wandered several miles through scrubby hills, and saw several elk and deer, without being able to approach them. Towards evening I entered a charming prairie, and of the richest soil. Followed a rivulet until it formed a lake in the river bottom, its banks for six or eight feet a rich black earth 65. In pursuing the upland I might have fallen upon the Missouri six miles above, in the distance of a mile, the river forming here a considerable bend. The prairies or meadows to the water's edge, enabled us to continue the greater part of this day with the line.

Monday 13th. Water falling -- continued with the towing line. At ten, a fine breeze springing up, hosted sail. Passed the river à Boyer 66, and the houses of M'Clelland, who wintered here 67. Some woody country hereabouts; but that on the upland is very inferior, chiefly scrubby oak. A short distance above this place we encountered a very difficult and rapid current, but being luckily a little aided by the sail, we passed tolerably well -- We have now reached the highest point to which settlements will probably extend on the western side for many years.

In the evening passed high clean meadows, called the Council Bluffs, from the circumstance of Lewis and Clark having held a council with the Otto and Missouri Indians, when ascending this river. It is a beautiful place -- Encamped four miles above this place on a large sand bar. In the

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

course of this day found the river crooked and narrow; it appeared in one place almost closed up by drift wood and sawyers.

Tuesday 14th. Set off with a slight breeze -- compelled by heavy rain to put to shore for some hours, after which, continued under a fine wind that lasted throughout the day; but from the winding course of the river, we were not much benefited by it.

In some of the bends of the river, the timber, principally cotton wood, is heavy, but the prairies and upland are entirely bare of trees. The prairies compose more than two-thirds of the margin of the stream -- the soil extremely rich; for the three first feet, generally a light mound, another stratum is a deep black, almost approaching the color of coal, but not hard or stiff; the lower stratum is marle. I have no doubt that these natural meadows would yield surprisingly -- Encamped at the beginning of a great bend of the river 68, twelve miles round, and not more than three hundred paces across.

Wednesday 15th. Although the wind is favorable, it was of no use to us, from the sudden turns of the river. At twelve hoisted sail, and passed the Soldiers' river, a small stream. After doubling some points we came into a reach of some extent; wind here became very violent, and blew almost a tempest; with our sail reduced to half its size we easily encountered the strongest current. The storm became at length so serious that it was deemed imprudent to continue under way. The air was darkened by clouds of sand, and we found ourselves at the upper end of the reach, in the midst of sawyers and planters 69, our situation dangerous in the extreme. We fortunately escaped safely to the shore, where we remarked until evening, the wind abating we proceeded a few miles further.

Thursday 16th. A tremendous storm of thunder and lightning last night -- being fortunately in a good harbor we suffered but little. Were not able to get under weigh this morning until late. A fine serene morning, strangely contrasted with the turbulence of last night. Came in sight of the hills S.W. every one bitterly regretting that the wind of yesterday could not serve us here, where there is a view of twelve miles up the river. There appears to reign an unusual calm, the sky cloudless, the river as smooth as a mirror. Words cannot convey what I feel, and it is only the lover of nature who could understand me.

The points are tolerably wooded -- At the upper end of the long reach we saw an encampment of Hunt, where there were appearances of his having remained one or two days. The hoards of buffaloe which they have killed were strewed about. If it be their encampment at the time we were at the river Platte, it is not more than six days since they were here. The reaches before described are now rarely seen -- the woods more free from undergrowth. Encamped before sunset on a sand bar below la coupe à L'Oiselle. 70

Friday 17th. A charming morning-- slight indication of wind from the S.E. Passed la coupe à L'Oiselle. This name originated, in the circumstance of a trader having made a narrow escape, being in the river at the very moment that this cutoff was forming. It was a bend of fifteen miles round, and perhaps not more than a few hundred yards across, the neck, which was suddenly cut through by the river, became the main channel. This was effected in a few hours.

While remaining a short time at a sand bar in the river, a curious phenomenon occurred; the sand began to dissolve, and every instant diminish like melting of snow, it was thought prudent to embark immediately. This I am informed is not infrequent. Bars are sometimes formed during the continuance of a single flood, but being principally of loose sand, without any thing to unite, as

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

soon as the waters begin to rise again, is entirely carried off. 71

At ten passed a similar cut-off called la coupe à Jacque. At twelve continued under sail, made several long reaches -- passed the Yellow banks, and encamped within a few miles of the Black-bird hill. 72 Through out this day the river border is chiefly wood.

Saturday 18th. A fine breeze S.W.-- At seven arrived at the Black-bird hill. As this is one of the curiosities of the Missouri, a description may be amusing. It rises on the common range to the height of four or five hundred feet. The Missouri at its base, begins a strange winding course, several times returning upon its steps, and at length coming within nine hundred yards of where it is first approached; so that in a course of thirty miles the Black-bird hill is still near us. It takes its name from a celebrated chief of the Mahas, who caused himself to be interred on the top; a mound has been erected on the pinnacle, with a branch stuck in it, a flag was formerly attached to it.-- He was buried, sitting erect on horse back; the reason why he chose this spot, was to enable him to see the traders as they ascended. This chief was as famous in his lifetime amongst all the nations in this part of the world, as Tamerlane of Bajeet were in the planes of Asia; a superstitious awe is still paid to this grave. Yet, the secret of his greatness was nothing more nor less than a quantity of arsenic, which he procured from some trader. He denounced death against any one who displeased him, or opposed his wishes; it is therefore not surprising, that he, who held at his disposal the lives of others, should possess unlimited power, and excite universal terror. The proud savage, wherever this terrible being appeared, rendered the homage of a slave. The gods and heroes of antiquity, were, perhaps, little better. We may learn this lesson, that ignorant and savage man, can only be ruled through means of fear. 73

At four o'clock, boat through the last bend, and hoisted sail, with a fine wind -- sailed along some hills, S.W. side, and encamped amongst some cotton wood, in a low bottom.

Sunday 19th. Continued our voyage this morning at daylight, with sanguine expectations of overtaking the party of Hunt, at the Maha village. Passed the bluffs; some of them very curious, faced with sand rock, of variegated and fantastic hues; at the first glance, it resembles the decorations of a theater. Continued with little interruption, under sail, and arrived about twelve at some trading houses, near which, the Maha village is situated, about two miles from the river. We saw a few Indians on the bank, and several traders with them, men who were on the point of setting off with their peltries. Hunt set out from this on the 15th, under sail.

Remaining here as short a time as possible, we continued our voyage, having sent our interpreter and an Indian by land, to the Poncas, to request Hunt to wait for us. The wind continued until towards evening, when it gradually sled away. Encamped near Floyds bluff, and river, fourteen miles above the Mahas. Sergeant Floyd, one of the party of Lewis and Clark, was buried here; the place is marked by a cross 74.

The appearance of the river is much changed -- it continues a handsome width, with a diminished current. The banks low, and the trees much smaller in size; we now rarely see a large tree. The bluffs and upland on the N.E. side, are not high, and without any appearance of trees and shrubs. Monday 20th. Passed at daylight, the Great Sioux river, which takes its rise in the plains, between the Missouri, and the waters of lake Winiec 75; it is five or six hundred miles in length. I ascended the bluffs, high clay banks of sixty, or an hundred feet. The current is here very strong. Hailed a trader, descending in a large canoe, made of skins of the buffaloe 76, upwards of twenty feet in length, who wintered at the river à Jaque. He met Hunt eight leagues below that river, proceeding

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

with a fair wind, and is by this time, at the Qui Courre. -- These skin canoes are stretched over the red willow, and require to be frequently exposed to the sun, and dried, as they would otherwise become too heavy, from the quantity of water absorbed. We are now nearly half way to the place of our destination.

Perceive a sudden rise of the water. Sand bars are nearly all covered, and banks, in places, overflowed.

Tuesday 21st. This morning fine, though somewhat cool. Wind increasing from the N.E. Current rapid, but for the eddies in the bends, it would be almost impossible to ascend.-- There are but few embarras, or collections of trees, &c. The sand bars are fringed with a thick growth of willows, immediately behind which, there are young cotton wood trees, forming a handsome natural avenue, twenty or thirty feet wide. The banks are very low, and must be inundated every season.

Passed in the evening, a rapid, of frightful appearance, the water foaming and rolling in waves, as if agitated by violent wind in the middle of the river, while on either side it was calm. We were compelled to pass along the sand bar, and through the willows. It was with difficulty that we could obtain dry land this evening, the water, in most places, flows into the woods.-- In the night, the water had risen so much, that the men were compelled to abandon their encampment, and sleep on board.-- Very little prairie in the course of this day, but the timber of a small size.

Wednesday 22d. A delightful day-- the water has risen to its utmost height, and presents a vast expanse-- the current uniformly rapid, in some places rolling with the most furious and terrific violence. One of these places, below Vermilion creek, was sufficient to appall the stoutest heart; the river forms an elbow at the termination of some bluffs, the water, compressed between them and the sand bar, dashes against the opposite rocks. The middle of the river appeared several feet higher than the sides. The distance to cross, before we could reach the opposite eddy, was no more than twice the length of the boat, but we were not able completely to effect it, being swept down the rapidly of flight, but fell into the current of the opposite side, before it had gained its full force, and were able, with great difficulty, to gain the eddy.

The high waters enable us to cut off points, which is no small saving of the distance. The water begins to fall, though great quantities of drift wood descending, and thirty or forty drowned buffaloes pass every day.

I observe a much greater variety of trees and shrubs, than below, and some altogether new to me. There is a shrub which the French call *graisse de boeuf*, bearing a red berry, of a pungent taste; its leaves, though smaller and delicate, bear a resemblance to those of a pear tree. In the hollows, clumps of trees are usually found, but what surprises me, they are very low, through some of the oaks and ash are eighteen or twenty inches in diameter, they look like orchard trees, and have much greater resemblance to regular than wild woods.

Thursday 23d. Water falling rapidly.-- a fine breeze S.E. sailed until eleven -- passed the Hot, or Burning Bluffs, on the S.W. side Here I observed enormous masses of pumice, and other matter, which appeared to have undergone the action of heat, of a very high degree. I saw what was the fragment of a hill, the greater part at present composed of pumice. From not being able to discover other volcanic appearances, I concluded these appearances to have produced by the burning of coal 77.

About noon, espied a number of persons on a sand bar, which we at first supposed to be Indians, but on a nearer approach, recognized to be whites, amongst them, a Mons. Benit, factor of the

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

Missouri Company 78, at the Mandan village. These men were descending in a small boat, with some peltries. He tells us that the Indians are ill disposed to the whites every where on the Missouri. Mr. Henry 79 is in a distressed situation over the Rocky mountains. The Crow Indians are supposed to be inimical -- and the Sioux have broken out into open hostilities, and have killed several whites. Mr. Benit and crew were fired upon last night, by what they supposed to be Sioux, and returned it. They did not see the boats of Hunt.

Proceeded on our voyage at three o'clock, not a little disheartened at this intelligence. Mr. Benit and one other of the company returned with us. Passed some beautiful upland N.E. side, but without wood, an immense level plain stretches out, I am informed, for about an hundred miles 80. We observed a Sioux lodge or tent, of a conical shape, made of skins -- it appears to be the custom of these people, to leave their dead in lodges of this kind, until it be convenient for them to gather up their remains.

Friday 24th. Set off early -- weather warm. The water is falling very fast-- there is still a very strong current. Passed bluffs of a chalky appearance, perhaps limestone. A piece of ice floated by us this morning, probably from the breaking up of some of the northern rivers, which have contributed to the present rise. In putting off from a bluff on the S.W. side, to cross over, my attention was called to an object which attracted the notice of the company. A large buffaloe bull made his appearance on the top of the bluff, standing at the edge of the precipice, and looking down upon us. It was the first we had seen. Long and matted wool hung over his head, and covered his large shoulders, while his body was smooth, as also the tail, except a tuft at the end. It was a striking and terrific object; he eyed us with the ferocity of the lion, seemed at length to "sniff the tainted gale," threw his head into the air, wheeled round, and trotted off.

Had a fine breeze towards evening -- which enabled us to make five or six miles more than we expected.

Saturday 25th. This morning ran a ground, and were detained several hours. Passed the river à Jaque; the principal rendezvous of the traders with the Yankton Sioux. It is a large handsome stream, tolerably well suited for a small settlement.

It is becoming very warm. Went out on a delightful prairie, the grass short, of a deep blue, intermixed with a great variety of beautiful flowers. I am forbidden to wonder far, on account of the Indians, who it is thought may be near. We discovered this morning, a great deal of smoke up the river -- we supposed this to be a notification of the Indian spies, of our approach. We are now in the open country -- no woods are to be seen, except some slender cotton wood trees in the points, and some clumps in the hollows of the upland. The beauty of the scenery, this evening exceeds any thing I ever beheld.-- The sky as clear as in a Chinese painting, the country delightful. Convert the most beautiful parts of England or France, into one meadow, leaving a trifling proportion of wood, and some idea may be formed of this. But there appears to be a painful void -- something wanting -- it can be nothing else than a population of animated beings. It were vain to describe the melancholy silence which reigns over these vast plains. Yet they seem to give a spring to the intellectual faculties. One never feels his understanding so vigorous, or thinks so clearly. Were it safe, with what delight would I roam over these lovely meads!

The water has fallen, and the current is much lessened.

Sunday 26th. At daylight, discovered a canoe descending with two men, who prove to be sent by us, to Hunt. They bring information that he has agreed to wait for us at the Poncas village 81,

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

where he intends to remain some days.

Saw some buffaloe to day, and with Mr. Lisa, went several miles in pursuit of them, but without success.

Passed a beautiful island l'isle à bon homme, upon which there is the remains of an ancient fortification 82. In the evening our hunter killed a buffaloe, upon which we all feasted.

Monday 27th. Had to oppose a contrary wind, until eleven. At one, arrived at the Poncas village, where we remained until five. On our approach, we found the whole village crowded on the bank, and several had waded up to the waist in the water.-- The greater part of the men were naked; the women and children filthy and disgusting. According to custom, had a talk with the chiefs, to whom we made some trifling presents. Hunt had not waited for us, according to promise. Saw two men, who had probably deserted from him, they informed us that as soon as he heard of our approach, which was quite unexpected, he had determined to exert himself to the utmost, to get out of our reach. The fact is, there does not exist the greatest confidence between the two commanders. Ours seems to think, that it is the intention of Hunt, to pass the Sioux, who may wish to detain him, by telling them that their trader is coming on with goods for them. While on the other hand, Hunt may believe that Lisa intends to pass him, and tell the same story. It is therefore determined to push our voyage, if possible, still more than before.

Encamped above the Qui Courre river 83-- A most beautiful country, but very little wood. The country is much more hilly.

Tuesday 28th. Weather smoky, and extremely warm. High land on both sides of the river, with some dwarf trees in the hollows, principally cedar. At ten, a fine breeze springing up, we continued under sail the rest of the day, and the greater part on the night, determining to strain every nerve, in order to overtake Hunt. There is scarcely any bottoms from the Qui Courre.

Wednesday 29th. After lying a few hours, at one o'clock, again continued under sail -- but the moon disappearing, and it becoming dark, it was thought advisable to lie by until daylight. The hills hereabouts, high and broken, and little or no river bottom on either side. At two o'clock, arrived at a beautiful island, called Little Cedar island 84, on which grows fine cedar, the trees uncommonly large. This is a delightful spot, the soil of the island is rich, and it may contain about three thousand acres -- the middle of the island is a beautiful prairie -- the adjacent country is bleak and barren. At the point of the island, discovered an encampment of Hunt, and on examination, we discovered, to the great joy of the company, that the fire was not yet extinguished; it is therefore but a few days since they were here. Continued under sail until 11 at night, having in little better than twenty-four hours, made seventy five miles.

Thursday 30th. This morning, favored with a continuance of the fair wind. The country is exceedingly rough and broken -- the greater part without the least vegetation. The hills have a very singular appearance. Near the top they look black, and seem to have been burnt. About noon, saw some tracks, which we supposed to be of yesterday.

In the evening, passed a very fine river, called White river 85, about three hundred yards at the mouth. There is some bottom land, and wood points; the hills covered with grass. -- Heard several gun shots, which we supposed to have been from the party of Hunt. This evening the wind abated.

Friday 31st. This morning, contrary wind, and some rain. Proceeded with the cordelle. In the course of the day, saw a large flock of antelopes -- they appear to be numerous in this part of the country. Observed in the sand, a number of Indian tracks, and a place, where it appeared that the

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

boats of Mr. Hunt had stopped with the Indians some time. One of our men discovered a curious place, contrived by the Indians, for taking fish, it was something like a large fish basket -- we found two fine catfish in it.

When about to put into the river, to cross, to a point, we discovered three buffaloe, swimming towards us, and contrary to the precautions we had agreed to observe, in making no noise, least we should be discovered by the Indians, who were probably in the neighborhood, a firing was commenced upon the poor animals, which continued half an hour. The report of the guns, as might have been foreseen, brought an Indian to the top of the hill, but we were too far in the river, to return to him, or to be heard.

Towards evening, the boat having received some injury, was compelled to stop -- went in pursuit of a buffaloe calf -- on my return found the party somewhat uneasy on account of the length of my stay, having been drawn by the eagerness of pursuit to a considerable distance.

Saturday, June 1st. 1811. At daylight heard a number of guns fired on the hills below us on the other side of the river. We now concluded that all our precaution and labor had been vain. That we should be robbed or killed, or at least compelled to return. They soon arrived opposite to us, with an American flag, and fired one or two guns. There was but one thing to be done, which was to cross over to them at once, and meet the worst, every man preparing himself for defence. Each rower had his gun by his side -- Mr. Lisa and myself, besides our knives and rifles, had each one a pair of pistols in our belts. On reaching the shore we discovered twelve or thirteen Indians on a log. Mr. Lisa and I, leaped on shore and shook hands with them.-- We supposed that the principal body was concealed behind in the woods, so as to be at hand if necessary. Having no interpreter at this critical juncture, we were fearful of not being understood; however, with the aid of signs, a language with which Mr. Lisa was well acquainted, he was enabled to communicate tolerably well. He told them that he was their trader, but that he had been very unfortunate, all the peltires which he had collected amongst them having been burnt, and his young men, who had passed 2 years before to go to the head of the Missouri, were attacked and distressed by the Indians of those parts, who are bad people. That he was now poor, and much to be pitied; that he was going to bring back his young men, having resolved to confine himself to the lower country. He so concluded, by telling them that he intended to return in three months to establish a trading house at the Cedar island, and requested the chief to send word of it to all the Sioux bands. This story, together with a handsome present, produced the desired effect, though not without some reluctance. We remained here as short a time as possible, and re-crossed the river. The chief is a fine looking Indian, the others were very young men, nearly naked, with long bands of hair hanging down their foreheads; they are the best looking people I have seen. It is two days since Hunt passed here. We did not cease to use every exertion, considering it still possible that we might be stopped.

About twelve reached the great bend 86, twenty-one miles around, and only one and an half across. Two men were sent to notify the boats of our near approach. In the evening a strong wind from the N.E. which would hardly have been favorable in any other part of the river, enabled us to hoist sail, and what is singular, continued changing to suit the running of the river. We by this means made fifteen miles -- some part of the time it blew with violence, accompanied by rain.

Sunday 2d. Set out with my gun early this morning, on the S.W. side of the river -- walked about four miles along the river hills and with much satisfaction perceived at a distance the boats of Mr.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

Hunt. I returned immediately to give the joyful intelligence to our people. On coming opposite the place where I had seen the boats, we discovered a great number of Indians, who beckoned to us to cross; but supposing them to be Sioux, we determined to continue on until we should overtake the party before us. We suffered them to shout, to gallop their horses, and to wave their robes unnoticed. Some distance above, our men came to us, they had been with Hunt, the Indians we had just past, were a party of three hundred Arikaras, who, on hearing of our approach, had come for the purpose of enabling us to ascend. It appears also, that we have passed all the Sioux bands, who had been seen by Hunt, but probably finding his party too strong, they had resolved to stop and plunder ours, that we must have past them in the night or under sail, as they did not expect to hear from us so soon.

At eleven o'clock we overtook Hunt's party, to the great satisfaction of our little company. It was with real pleasure I took my friend Bradbury 87 by the hand; I have reason to believe our meeting was much more cordial than that of the two commanders. Continued under sail in company the rest of the day, forming a handsome little fleet of five sail. Encamped in the evening opposite the larger Cedar island 88, twelve hundred miles from the mouth of the Missouri.

CHAPTER V

Monday June 3d, 1811. A strong wind from the N.E. this morning, compelled us, after proceeding a few miles, to encamp for the remainder of the day. Took my gun, and set off to make an excursion. The country is altogether open, excepting some groves of cotton wood in the bottom. The upland rises into considerable hills, about one-third covered with a very short grass, intermixed with a great variety of plants and flowers, the rest consists of clay, bare of almost every kind of vegetation. On the tops of the higher hills, at some distance from the river, there are masses of granite, of several tons weight, and great quantities of pebbles. In the course of my ramble, I happened on a village of barking squirrels, or prairie dogs, they have been called. My approach was announced by an incessant barking, or rather chirping, similar to that of a common squirrel, though much louder. The village was situated on the slope of a hill, and appeared to be at least two miles in length; the holes were seldom at a great distance from each other than twenty or thirty paces. Near each hole, there was a small elevation of earth, of six or eight inches, behind which, the animal posted himself, and never abandoned it, or ceased his demonstrations of alarm, "insignificantly fierce", until I approached within a few paces. As I proceeded through the village, they disappeared, one after another, before me. There was never more than one at each hole. I had heard that the magpie, the Missouri rattle snake, and the horn frog, were observed to frequent these places; but I did not see any of them, except the magpie. The rattle snake of the prairies, is about the same length with the common rattle snake, but more slender, and the color white and black.

Mr. Bradbury has met with great success in his pursuit.-- He has found nearly an hundred undescribed plants. Within a few days he has found a great number, which he calls Mexican. The country thus far, has offered nothing remarkable as to minerals. There is in company, a gentleman of the name of Nuttall 89, engaged in the same pursuits, to which he appears singularly devoted; it seems to absorb every thought, so as to be troublesome to the company, which has sometimes to wait for him; it appears to have done away every regard of personal safety.-- To the ignorant Canadian boatmen, who are unable to appreciate the science, it affords a subject of merriment; le fou, the fool, is the name by which he is commonly known. No sooner does the boat touch the

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

shore, than he leaps out, and when his attention is arrested by a plant of flower, every thing else is forgotten. The inquiry is sometimes made, *ou est le fou?* where is the fool? *il est après ramasser des racines*, he is gathering roots. He is a young man of genius, and very considerable acquirements, but unfortunately too much devoted to his favorite study. A sarcastic anecdote of this gentleman was related to me, by Mr. Miller 90, who commanded one of the boats, and shows to what astonishing degree the pursuit of natural history had taken possession of his mind, to the exclusion of every thing else. The day after passing the Sioux tribes, they met, as I have before mentioned, three hundred Arikara Indians, these were so delighted to see them, that a number rushed into the river, to swim or wade to the boats; the party supposing them to be inimical, was on the point of firing; while every one was in momentary expectation that this would take place; Nuttall, who appeared to have been examining them very attentively, turned to Miller, "sir," said he, "don't you think these Indians much fatter, and more robust than those of yesterday."

In the course of the evening, had an opportunity of seeing the manner in which the antelope is hunted in these open plains, where there is no possibility of approaching by insidious means. A handkerchief is placed on the end of a ramrod, and waved in the air, the hunter lying flat on the ground. If any of the animals be in sight, they run instantly to the place, and perform a circuit around, approaching often within twenty or thirty yards, which gives an opportunity of firing on them.

The party of Mr. Hunt consists of about eighty men, chiefly Canadians; the rest are American hunters.

Tuesday 4th. Set off at seven -- wind contrary, though not as strong as yesterday. After doubling a point, we found that from the course of the river the wind would be favorable, and accordingly sailed for eight or ten miles. We saw at the mouth of a small creek, a herd of buffaloe, of several hundred. The appearance of the country has varied but little for several days past. Bleak and dreary -- the bottoms narrow; in some places none at all, and clay bluffs.

Wednesday 5th. This morning, after proceeding a short distance, we were compelled, by rain, to put to shore, where we remained until the afternoon, and finding no appearance of the weather clearing up, crossed to the S.W. side, where Mr. Hunt was encamped.

I took a walk with Mr. Bradbury -- in the course of which, I saw a number of antelopes, buffaloe, and villages of prairie dogs. At some distance from the river, there is not the least appearance of a tree or shrub. The country appears to rise gradually. There was something picturesque in the appearance of herd of buffaloe, slowly winding round the sides of the distant hills, disappearing in some hollow, and again emerging to view. The whole extent of the plain is covered with ordure, as in a pasture ground. Wide and beaten roads are every where to be seen.

On my return, I found that a disagreeable misunderstanding had taken place between the two chiefs of the parties. The interpreter of Mr. Hunt, had been in the employment of the company, and was indebted to it. Mr. Lisa had several times mentioned to him the impropriety of his conduct, and perhaps had made him some offers, in order to draw him from his present service. This was certainly imprudent, and placed him in the power of a worthless fellow, who, without doubt retailed the conversation to his master, with some additions. This evening, while in Hunt's camp, to which he had gone on some business, he was grossly insulted by the interpreter, who struck him several times, and seized a pair of pistols belonging to Hunt; -- that gentleman did not seem to interest himself much in the affair, being acquitted by feelings of resentment, at the attempt to

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

inveigle his man. On my return to our camp, I found Mr. Lisa furious with rage, buckling on his knife, and preparing to return; finding that I could not dissuade, I resolved to accompany him. It was with the greatest difficulty I succeeded in preventing the most serious consequences. I had several times to stand between him and the interpreter, who has a pistol in each hand. I am sorry to say, that there was but little disposition on the part of Mr. Hunt, to prevent the mischief that might have arisen. I must, in justice to him, declare however, that it was through him that Mr. M'Clelland 91 was induced not to put his threat in execution having pledged his honor to that effect. (A mortal enmity existed on the part of Mr. M'Clelland, towards Lisa, in consequence of some conduct of the latter, in the trade -- and he had declared, that he ever fell in with Lisa, in the Indian country, he would shoot him. Those who knew M'Clelland, would not be surprised that such a threat should be put in execution.) I finally succeeded in bringing Lisa off to his boat. When it is recollected that this was at the distance of thirteen hundred miles from all civil authority, or power, it will be seen that there was but little to restrain the effects of animosity. Having obtained in some measure, the confidence of Mr. Hunt, and the gentleman who were with him, and Mr. Bradbury, that of Mr. Lisa, we mutually agreed to use all the arts of mediation in our power, and if possible, prevent any thing serious.

Thursday 6th. Weather clearing up. The water rising very fast -- supposed the annual flood. This morning passed the ruins of an Indian village 92, there were great piles of buffaloe bones, and quantities of earthen ware. The village appears to have been scattered round a kind of citadel, or fortification, enclosing four or five acres, and of an oval form. The earth is thrown up about four feet, there are a few cedar palisades remaining. Probably, in cases of siege, the whole village was crowded into this space.

Friday 7th. Continued under way as usual. All kind of intercourse between the leaders has ceased. In the evening, passed several old villages, said to be of the Arikara nation. The bottoms, or points, become wider, and the bluffs of a less disgusting appearance; there are but a few clay hills, the country being generally covered with grass.

Saturday 8th. Contrary wind to day -- though delightful weather. This morning, passed a large and handsome river, called the Chienne 93, S.W. side. It appears as large at the mouth as the Cumberland or Tennessee. Saw at this place, the ruins of an old village, and fortification 94. The country hereabouts is fine, and better wooded than any I have seen for the last three hundred miles. A tolerable settlement might be supported here. Game is very abundant -- elk, deer, and buffaloe, without number.

Encamped a few miles above the Chienne river, in a beautiful bottom. No art can surpass the beauty of this spot; trees of different kinds, shrubs, plants, flowers, meadow, and upland, charmingly disposed. What coolness and freshness breathes around! The river is bordered with cotton wood, and a few elms, there is then an open space of 30 or 40 paces, after which begins a delightful shrubbery of small ash trees, the grasse de boeuf 95, the gooseberry, currant, &c... forming a most delightful avenue. We all remark, that the singing of the birds is much sweeter than in the forests of the states 96. This is fancifully accounted for by Mr. Bradbury, from the effects of society; from the scantiness of the woods, they are compelled to crowd on the same tree, and in the same grove, and in this way impart improvement to each other. Assuming it as a fact, that birds of Europe sing better than those of America, he asks, can it be owing to any other reason than this? The Musketoos have been exceedingly troublesome for several days past. They disappear in the

---

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

evenings, which are cool, or with the slightest wind.

Sunday 9th Got under way this morning, with fine weather. Discovered great numbers of buffaloe; on the N.W. side, and extensive level meadow. Numbers began to swim across the river, as the party of Hunt, who were before us, got opposite; they waited, and killed as many as they wished; a number which were started from an island, swam towards us, and we killed several also.

Mr. Bradbury and I went out on the N.W. side, where the buffaloe had been first seen, and walked several miles. A very beautiful and extensive meadow, at least a mile wide, but without a tree or a shrub -- the upland equally bare. Passed a Sioux encampment of last fall -- from appearances there must have been three or four hundred here. Amongst other things, our curiosity was attracted, by a circular space, about twenty feet in diameter, enclosed with poles in the middle, painted red, and at some distance, a buffaloe head placed upon a little mound of earth. We are told, this is a place where an incantation of the buffaloe plenty, had been performed.-- Amongst other ceremonies, the pipe is presented to the head.

At four o'clock hoisted sail with a favorable wind. Passed a surprising number of buffaloe in the course of this day, some herds on the sides of the hills, not less than a thousand. Towards evening we saw a great number crowded on the sand beach at the foot of an island, proceeding with caution, we approached under sail within twenty or thirty yards, and selecting the fattest, we fired upon him at once; and notwithstanding that he had received several wounds, he endeavored to make off.-- We pursued him into the island, the animal had now become ferocious from his wounds, and it was dangerous to approach him. It was not until he had received the contents of ten or twelve guns, that he was brought to the ground. The island is beautiful. It is completely surrounded by cotton wood and cedar trees, but the space within is a beautiful clear meadow. On the edges of the woods in the inside, there are great quantities of currant and gooseberry bushes; these islands are much alike in this respect. They are more beautiful than any I have seen.

Monday 10th. During the whole of this day had a fine wind which enabled us to make thirty-five miles. Encamped opposite a handsome stream, called Ser-war-cerna, N.W. 97

The country wears a handsome aspect; the hills gently swelling and some delightful prairie on the river. There is but little wood. In the course of the day we saw great numbers of buffaloe, in herds of several hundred each.

Tuesday 11th. Continued our voyage with a slight wind. The country much the same as that of yesterday. Encamped some distance below the island on which the Arikara village was situated some years ago -- they have removed some miles further up. This evening I went to the camp of Mr. Hunt to make arrangements as to the manner of arriving at the village, and of receiving two chiefs. This is the first time our chiefs have had any intercourse directly or indirectly since the quarrel.-- Mr. Lisa appeared to be suspected, they supposed his intention to be, to take advantage of his influence with the Arikara nation, and do their party some injury in revenge. I pledged myself that this should not be the case.

Wednesday 12th. Heavy rains accompanied by thunder and lightning last night.

At nine o'clock two of the chiefs with the interpreter employed by the company, came on board our boat. They are both fine looking men, much above the common size, and with much fairer complexions than any Indians I have seen. At ten we put to shore opposite the village, in order to dry our baggage, which was completely wet. The leaders of the party of Hunt were still suspicious that Lisa intended to betray them.-- McClelland declared that he would shoot him the moment he

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

discovered any thing like it. In the mean time, the chief spoke across the river, which is here about a half mile wide, we understood that he was giving orders to prepare the council lodge. The village appeared to occupy about three quarters of a mile along the river bank, on a level plain, the country behind it rising into hills of considerable height. There are little or no woods any where to be seen. The lodges are of a conical shape, and look like heaps of earth. A great number of horses are seen feeding in the plains around, and on the sides of the hills. I espied a number of squaws, in canoes, descending the river and landing at the village. The interpreter informed me, that they were returning home with wood. These canoes are made from a single buffaloe hide, stretched over osiers and are of a circular form 98. There was one woman in each canoe, who kneeled down, and instead of paddling sideways, places the paddle before; the load is fastened to the canoe. The water being a little rough these canoes sometimes almost disappeared between the waves, which produced a curious effect; the squaws with the help of a little fancy, might be supposed, mermaids sporting on the billows; the canoe rising and sinking with them, while the women were visible from the waist upwards.

About two o'clock fourteen of us crossed over, and accompanied the chief to his lodge. Mats were laid around for us to sit on, while he placed himself on a kind of stool or bench. The pipe was handed around, and smoked; after which, the herald, (every chief or great man, has one of them ascended the top of the lodge and seated himself near an open place, and began to bawl out like one of our town criers; the chief every now and then addressing something to him through the aperture before mentioned. We soon discovered the object of this, by the arrival of the other chiefs, who seemed to drop in, one after the other, as their names were called.

When all were seated, the pipe was handed to the chief, who began as is usual on solemn occasions, by blowing a wiff upwards as it were to the sky, then to the earth, and after to the east and west, after which the pipe was sent round. A mark of respect in handling the pipe to another, is to hold it until the person has taken several whiffs. After this ceremony, Mr. Lisa addressed a speech to the chiefs, in which, after common place which would be expected, he observed, that the strangers in company with him were going a long journey to the great Salt lake to the west, and ought to be treated well, that any injury done to them, he should consider as done to himself; that in this respect they were as one people. A number of speeches were as usual made on the occasion. The chief on the proposal of trading, required time to give an answer -- with this the council concluded. The boats were ordered over, and encamped a little distance below the village. A guard of Indian warriors was placed to keep off the populace and prevent pilfering.

CHAPTER VI

Thursday, June 13th, 1811. This morning, found ourselves completely drenched by heavy rains, which continued the whole night. The chief has not given his answer as to the conditions of the trade. It is for him, usually to fix the price, on a consultation with his subordinate chiefs, to this, the whole village must conform.-- The Indian women and girls, were occupied all this morning, in carrying earth in baskets, to replace that which the rains had washed off their lodges. Rambled through the village, which I found excessively filthy, the "villainous smells," which every where assailed me, compelled me at length, to seek refuge in the open plain. The lovers of Indian manners, and mode of living, should contemplate them at a distance. The rains had rendered their village little better than a hog pen; the police appeared to me, in some particulars, extremely negligent. Some of the ancient cities of the old world, were probably like this village, inattentive to that

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

cleanliness so necessary to health, where a great mass of beings are collected in one place; and we need not be surprised at the frequency of desolating plagues and pestilence. The village is swarming with dogs and children. I rank these together, for they are inseparable companions. Wherever I went, the children ran away, screaming, and frightened at my outré and savage appearance.

Let us not flatter ourselves with the belief, that the effect of our civilization and refinement, is to render us agreeable and lovely to the eyes of those whom we exclusively denominate savages! The dogs, of which every family has thirty or forty, pretended to make a show of fierceness, but on the least threat, ran off.-- They are of different sizes and colors. A number are fattened on purpose to eat, others are used to draw their baggage.-- It is nothing more than the domesticated wolf. In wandering through the prairies, I have often mistaken wolves for Indian dogs. The larger kind has long curly hair and resembles the shepherd dog. There is the same diversity amongst the wolves of this country. They may be more properly said to howl than bark.

The lodges are constructed in the following manner: Four large forks of about fifteen feet in height, are placed in the ground, usually about twenty feet from each other, with hewn logs, or beams across; from these beams, other pieces of wood are placed slanting; smaller pieces are placed above, leaving an aperture at the top, to admit the light, and to give vent to the smoke. These upright pieces are interwoven with osiers, after which, the whole is covered with earth, through not sodded. An opening is left at one side, for a door, which is secured by a kind of projection of ten or twelve feet, enclosed on all sides, and forming a narrow entrance, which might be easily defended. A buffaloe robe suspended at the entrance, answers as a door. The fire is made in a hole in the ground, directly under the aperture at the top. Their beds elevated a few feet, are placed around the lodge, and enclosed with curtains of dressed elk skins. At the upper end of the lodge, there is a kind of trophy erected; two buffaloe heads, fantastically painted on a little elevation; over them are placed, a variety of consecrated things, such as shields, skins of a rare or valuable kind, and quivers of arrows. The lodges seem placed at random, without any regularity or design, and are so much alike, that it was for some time before I could learn to return to the same one. The village is surrounded by a palisade of cedar poles, but in a very bad state. Around the village, there are little plats enclosed by stakes, entwined with osiers, in which they cultivate maize, tobacco, and beans; but their principal field is at the distance of a mile from the village, to which, such of the females whose duty it is to attend to their culture, go and return morning and evening. Around the village they have buffaloe robes stuck up on high poles. I saw one so arranged as to bear a resemblance to the human figure, the hip bone of the buffaloe represented the head, the sockets of the thigh bones looked like eyes.

Friday 14th. It rained again last night, which prevented the trade from commencing until sometime in the day. Mr. Lisa sent a quantity of goods to the lodge of the principal chief before mentioned, called Le Gauchée, and Hunt to the one who accompanied him to meet us, La Gros, the principal war chief. The price of a horse was commonly ten dollars worth of goods first cost. Hunt had resolved to purchase horses at this price and proceed by land to the Columbia, being assured by some hunters, who met him before his arrival here, that this would be his best route.

Mr. Bradbury and I, took a walk into the upper village, which is separated from the lower by a stream about twenty yards wide.-- Entered several lodges, the people of which received us with kindness, placed mats and skins for us to sit on, and after smoking the pipe, offered us something to eat; this consisted of fresh buffaloe meat served in a wooden dish.-- They had a variety

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

of earthen vessels, in which they prepared their food, or kept water. After the meat, they offered us homony made of corn dried in the milk, mixed with beans, which was prepared with buffaloe marrow, and tasted extremely well; also pounded and made into gruel. The prairie turnip, is a root very common in the prairies, with something of the taste of the turnip but more dry; this they eat dried and pounded, made into gruel. Their most common food is hominy and dried buffaloe meat. In one of the lodges which we visited, we found the doctor, who was preparing some medicine for a sick lad.-- He was cooling with a spoon a decoction of some roots, which had a strong taste and smell, not unlike jalap 99. He showed us a variety of samples which he used. The most of them were common plants with some medicinal properties, but rather harmless than otherwise. The boy had a slight pleurisy. The chief remedy for their diseases, which they contrive to be owing to a disorder of the bowels, is rubbing the belly and sides of the patient, sometimes with such violence, as to cause fainting. When they become dangerous, they resort to charms and incantations, such as singing, dancing, blowing on the sick, &c. They are very successful in the treatment of wounds. When the wound becomes very obstinate, they commonly burn it, after which it heals more easily.

Saturday 15th. Fine weather-- Took a walk with Mr. Bradbury through the country, which is entirely open, and somewhat hilly. Large masses of granite were usually found on the highest knobs. We saw a great variety of plants, and some new ones-- One or two of the valleys are beautiful, and a few dwarf plum trees scattered along a rivulet.

On our return in the evening, an alarm prevailed in the village, which appeared to be all in commotion. We were informed that the Sioux, their enemies, were near. This was probably all preconcerted. I was shown, at the distance of about two miles horsemen on the top of a hill, at full gallop, passing and repassing each other; this I understand is the signal given by the scouts, some of whom are constantly on the alert, of the approach of an enemy. To give intelligence of the appearance of a herd of buffaloe, instead of crossing each other, they gallop backward and forward abreast. Presently the warriors issued from the village with great noise and tumult, some on foot, others on horse back, and pursued the direction in which the signals were made, down the river, and past an encampment. They observed no regular march, but ran helter skelter, like persons on one of our towns to extinguish a fire -- and keeping up a continued hallooing to encourage each other. Some of them were dressed in their most splendid manner. The tops of the lodges were crowded with women and children, and with the old men who could give no assistance, but by their lungs, which were kept busily employed; yet there were several who sallied forth, almost half bent with the weight of years. I counted upwards of five hundred in all. They soon after returned; whether they had chased away the enemy, or the alarm had turned out false, I never learned.

Sunday 16th. In the course of the day several parties arrived from different directions. According to custom they were met by warriors and conducted to be the council lodge, where they gave an account of what had occurred, which was afterwards announced to the village by heralds. These contribute to enliven the village; though independent, they continually present a busy and animated scene. Great numbers of men are engaged in the different games of address and agility, others judging, or looking on, and many employed in a variety of other ways. There are a great number of women constantly at work in dressing buffaloe robes, which are placed on frames before the lodges. One of the parties which arrived to day came from the Snake 100, where they had stolen horses. This arrested their employments for a moment, the immediate friends and relations

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

of each as returned, spent the evening in rejoicing, while several females who had lost a relation, retired to the hills behind the village, where they continued to cry the whole afternoon.

In the evening they usually collect on the tops of the lodges, where they sit and converse; every now and then the attention of all was attracted by some old men who rose up and declaimed aloud, so as to be heard over the whole village. There was something in this like a quaker meeting. Adair labors to prove the Indian tribes to be descended from the Jews 101, I might here adduce this as an argument in favor of these people being a colony of quakers.

Monday 17th. This day arrived a deputation from the Chienne nation, to announce that these people were on their march to this village, and would be here in fifteen days. I sometimes amused myself with the idea of forming a gazette of the daily occurrences. We here see an independent nation, with all the interests and anxieties of the largest; how little would its history differ from that, of one of the Grecian states! A war, a treaty, deputations sent and received, warlike excursions, national mourning or rejoicing, and a thousand other particulars, which constitutes the chronicle of the most celebrated people.

In the evening, about sundown, the women cease from their labors, and collect into little knots, and amuse themselves with a game something like jack-stones; five pebbles are tossed up in a small basket, with which they endeavor to catch them again as they fall.

Tuesday 18th. Confidence had been somewhat restored between the leaders of the two parties since the council in the village. Mr. Hunt having resolved to start from this village, a bargain was made with Mr. Lisa, for the sale of Hunt's boats and some merchandise; in consequence of which, we crossed the river, in order to make the exchange, after which we returned and encamped. We are to set off to-morrow to the Mandan villages 102.

Before I bid adieu to Arikara, I must note some general matters relating to their character and manners.

The men are large and well proportioned, complexion somewhat fairer than Indians commonly are. Generally go naked; the dress they sometimes put on, seems more for ornament than any advantage it is to them; this consists of a sort of cassock or shirt, made of the dressed skin of the antelope, and ornamented with porcupine quills, died a variety of colors; a pair of leggings, which are ornamented in the same way. A buffaloe hide dressed with the hair on, is then thrown over the right shoulder, the quiver being hung on the other, if he be armed with a bow (A warrior is seldom seen without his arms, even in the village. -- His bow, spear, or gun, is considered part of his dress, and to appear in public without them, is in some measure disgraceful.) 103.-- They generally permit their hair to grow long; I have, in one or two instances, seen it reach to their heels; they sometimes increase it by artificial means; commonly with horse hair. It is divided into a number of locks, matted at intervals, with a braid of white earth, a substance resembling putty. Some times it is rolled up in a ball, and fixed on the top of the head. They always have a quantity of feathers about them, those of the black eagle are most esteemed 104. They have a kind of crown made of feathers 105, such as we see represented in the usual paintings of Indians, which is very beautiful. The swan is in most estimation for this purpose. Some ornament the neck with necklace made of the claws of the white bear 106. To their heels they sometimes fasten fox tails, and on their leggings suspend deers hoofs, so as to make a rattling noise as they walk. On seeing a warrior dressed out in all this finery, walking with his wife, who was comparatively plain in her dress of ornaments, I could not but think this was following the order of nature, as in the pea-

---

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

cock, the stag, and almost all animals, the male is lavishly decorated while the female is plain and unadorned, I intend this as a hint to some of our petit maitres. The dress of the female consists of a long robe made of the dressed skins of the elk, the antelope, or the agolia, and ornamented with blue beads, and strips of ermine, or in this place, of some white skin. The robe is girded round the waist with a broad zone, highly ornamented with porcupine quills, and beads. They are no better off than were the Greeks and Romans, in what we deem at present to essential, but like them, they bathe themselves regularly, twice a day. The women are much fairer than the men; some might be considered handsome anywhere -- they are much more numerous than the men, the consequence of the wars in which the nation is constantly engaged. Polygamy is general, they have often four or five wives. Their courtship and marriage resemble that of most Indian nations; if the parties are mutually agreeable to each other, there is a consultation of the family, if this be also favorable, the father of the girl, or whosoever gives her in marriage, makes a return for the present he had previously received from the lover -- the match is than concluded.

They display considerable ingenuity of taste in their works of art; this observation applies to all the American nations, from the Mexicans to the most savage. Their arms, household utensils, and their dresses, are admirably made. I saw a gun which had been completely stocked by an Indian. A curious instance of native ingenuity which came under my notice, ought not to be omitted. I was told one day, of an old Indian who was making a blanket; I immediately went to see him. To my surprise, I found an old man, perfectly blind, seated on a stool before a kind of frame, over which were drawn coarse threads, or rather twists of buffaloe wool, mixed with wolf's hair; he had already made about a quarter of a yard of a very coarse rough cloth.-- He told me that it was the first the had attempted, and that it was in consequence of a dream, in which he thought he had made a blanket like those of the white people. Here are the rudiments of weaving. They make beautiful jugs or baskets with osier, so close as to hold water.

I observed some very old men amongst them -- the country is so exceedingly healthy, that they arrive to a very great age.-- About twenty years ago, the small pox destroyed a great number of them. One day, in passing through the village, I saw something brought out of a lodge in a buffaloe robe, and exposed to the sun; on approaching, I discovered it to be a human being, but so shrivelled up, that is had nearly lost the human physiognomy; almost the only sign of life discernible, was a continual sucking its hands. On inquiring of the chief he told me, that he had seen it so ever since he was a boy. He appeared to be at least forty-five. It is almost impossible to ascertain the age of an Indian when he is above sixty; I made inquiries of several, who appeared to me little short of an hundred, but could form no satisfactory conjecture. Blindness is very common, arising probably from the glare of the snow, during a great part of the year. I observed the goitre, or swelled neck, in a few instances.

Their government is oligarchical, but great respect is paid to popular opinion 107. It is utterly impossible to be a great man amongst them, without being a distinguished warrior, though respect is paid to birth, but this must be accompanied by other merit, to procure much influence. They are divided into different bands or classes; that of the pheasant, which is composed of the oldest men; that of the bear, the buffaloe, the elk, the dog &c.. Each of these has its leader, who generally takes the name of the class, exclusively. Initiation into these classes, on arriving to the proper age, and after having given proofs of being worthy of it, is attended with great ceremony. The band of dogs, is considered the most brave and effective in war, being composed of young

---

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

men under thirty. War parties are usually proposed by some individual warrior, and according to the confidence placed in him, his followers are numerous or otherwise. In these excursions they wander to a great distance, seldom venturing to return home without a scalp, or stolen horses.-- Frequently when unsuccessful, they "cast their robes," as they express it, and vow to kill the first person they meet, provided he not be of their nation. In crossing the river, they use canoes made of the buffaloe hide, or a few pieces of wood fastened together. They usually have some token, as a stake, which is so as to convey some idea of their numbers, the direction which they have taken, &c. To avoid surprise, they always encamp at the edge of a wood; and when the party is small, they construct a kind of fortress, with wonderful expedition, of billets of wood, apparently piled up in a careless manner, but so arranged as to be very strong, and are able to withstand an assault from a much superior force. They are excellent horsemen -- they will shoot an arrow at full speed, and again pick it up from the ground without stopping; sometimes they will lean entirely upon one leg, throwing their bodies to that side, so as to present nothing but the leg and thigh, on the other.-- In pursuit of the buffaloe, they will gallop down steep hills, broken almost into precipices. Some of their horses are very fine, and run swiftly, but are soon worn out, from the difficulty of procuring food for them in winter, the smaller branches of the cotton wood tree being almost the only fodder which they give them. Their hunting is regulated by the warriors chosen for the occasion, who urge on such as are tardy, and repress often with blows, those who would rush on too soon. When a herd of buffaloe is discovered, they approach in proper order, within a half a mile, they separate and dispose themselves, so as, in some measures, to surround them, when at the word, they rush upon them at full speed, and continue as long as their horses can stand it; a hunter usually shoots two arrows into a buffaloe, and then goes in pursuit of another; if he kills more than more than two in the hunt, he is considered having acquitted himself well, The tongue is the prize of the person who has slain the animal; and he that has the greater, is considered the best hunter of the day. Their weapons consist of guns, war clubs, spears, bows, and lances. They have two kinds of arrows, one for the purpose of the chase, and the other for war; the latter differs in this particular, that the barb or point is fastened so slightly, that when it enters the body, it remains in, and cannot be drawn out with the wood; therefore, when it is not in a vital part, the arrow is pushed entirely through. They do not poison them. Their bows are generally very small; an elk's horn, or two ribs of a buffaloe, often constitute the materials of which they are made. Those of wood are willow, the back covered with sinews. Their daily sports, in which, when the weather is favorable, they are engaged from morning till night, are principally of two kinds. A level piece of ground appropriated for the purpose, and beaten by frequent use, is the place where they are carried on. The first is played by two persons, each armed with a long pole; one of them rolls a hoop, which after having reached about two-thirds of the distance, is followed at half speed, and as they perceive it about to fall, they cast their poles under it; the pole on which the hoop falls, so as to be nearest to certain corresponding marks on the hoop and pole, gains for that time. This game excites great interest, and produces gentle, but animated exercise. The other differs from it in this, that instead of poles, they have short pieces of wood, with barbs at one end, and a cross piece at the other, held in the middle with one hand; but instead of the hoop before mentioned, they throw a small ring, and endeavor to put the point of the barb through it. This is a much more violent exercise than the other.

With respect to their religion, it is extremely difficult, particularly from the slight acquaintance

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

I had with them, to form any just idea. They have some notion of a Supreme Being, whom they call "The Master of Life," but they offer him no rational worship, and have but indistinct ideas of a future state. Their devotion manifests itself in a thousand curious tricks, of slight of hand, which they call magic, and which the vulgar amongst them believe to be something supernatural. They are very superstitious. Besides their public resident lodge, in which they have a great collection of magic, or sacred things, every one has his private magic in his lodge about his person 108. Anything curious, is immediately made amulet, or a talisman; and is considered as devoted or consecrated, so as to deprive them of the power of disposing of it. The principal war chief lately took advantage of this, ingeniously enough. He obtained a very fine horse, which he was desirous of keeping, but fearing that some one might ask him as a gift, and to refuse would be considered as evincing a narrowness of mind unbecoming a great man, who ought not to set his heart upon a matter of so little importance, he announced that he had given him to his magic.-- Some parts of their religious exercises are the most barbarous that can be imagined. I observed a great number whose bodies were scarred and cut in the most shocking manner; I was informed that this was done in their devotion; that to show their zeal, they sometimes suspend themselves by the arms or legs, or the sides, by hooks. I was shown a boy, who had drawn two buffaloe heads by cords drawn through the fleshy part of his sides, nearly a quarter of a mile 109. I might enumerate a variety of other particulars, in which this strange self punishment is carried to the greatest lengths. They have frequent holy days, when the greater part of the village appears to desist from labor, and dress out unusually fine. On these occasions, each one suspends his private magic on a high pole before his door; the painted shields, quivers of a variety of colors, scarlet cloth, and highly ornamented buffaloe robes, which compose those trophies, produce a very lively effect. I several times observed articles of some value, suspended in the woods. I was told they often leave their property in this manner, without being under any apprehension that any of the same tribe will touch it, provided that there be the least sign to show that it is not lost. A kind of superstition similar to that of the Druids 110, which protected their offerings hung up in the woods. Since the affair of Lieut. Prior 111, who commanded the party dispatched by the United States, to take home the Mandan chief, these people have been friendly to the whites. They speak of the occurrence with regret, and declare that it was done by bad people whom they could not restrain 112.

To give an account of the vices of these people would be to enumerate some of the more gross, prevalent amongst us.-- The savage state, like the rude uncultivated waste, is contemplated to most advantage at a distance. They have their rich and their poor, their envious, their proud, overbearing, their mean and groveling, and the reverse of these. In some respects they appear extremely dissolute and corrupt -- whether the result of refinement, or vice, or the simplicity of nature, I am not able to say. It is part of their hospitality, to offer the guest, their wife, sister, or maid servant, according to the estimation in which the guest is held, and to refuse, is considered as treating the host with contempt. It appeared to me while we remained at the village, that their females had become mere articles of traffic; I have seen fathers bring their daughters, brothers their sisters, and husbands their wives, to be disposed of for a short time, to the highest bidder. I was unable to account for this strange difference from all other people I had ever read of, unless from the inordinate passion which seized them for our merchandise. Chastity appeared to be unknown as a virtue. Yet this may not have been universal; a more minute acquaintance with these people,

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

might have enabled to explain this strange phenomenon. From the remnant of a singular custom which prevails amongst them, one might suppose that this had not always been the case. On a certain occasion, a great number of young girls were collected before the medicine lodge or temple, prizes were exhibited, and a cedar bough was stuck on the lodge; the old men who reside in the temple, proclaimed, that whoever was yet a virgin, should come forward and touch the bough, and take the pier; that is was in vain to think of deceiving, the manitou would reveal every thing; the young men were moreover required to declare against any one who should attempt it, all they knew. A young metiff, daughter of the interpreter, a beautiful girl of sixteen, came forward, but before she could ascend to touch the bough, a young fellow stepped out and bade her remember a certain place! She withdrew, confused and abashed. There was a pause for a considerable time; I began to tremble for the maiden of Arikara, when a girl of seventeen, one of the most beautiful in the village, walked forward and asked, "where is the Arikara who can boast of having received favors from me?" then touched the bough, and carried off the prize. I feel a pleasure in adding, for the honor of the ladies of Arikara, that others followed, though I did not take the trouble of noting the number.

Seeing the chief one day in a thoughtful mood, I asked him what was the matter-- "I was wondering" said he "whether you white people have any women amongst you." I assured him in the affirmative. "Then" said he, "why is it that your people are so fond of our women, one might suppose they had never seen any before?" 113

CHAPTER VII

Wednesday 19th. It was resolved this morning by Mr. Lisa to leave one of his men to continue the trade with the Arikaras, and continue his voyage. As part of the price of the goods bought from Mr. Hunt, was to be paid in horses, a party was sent by land to the Mandan fort, for the purpose of bringing them. Mr. Bradbury being desirous of seeing the interior of the country, accompanied them.

Set off from the village about eleven o'clock, the wind favorable, but the weather rainy and disagreeable. Having made about fifteen miles, we encamped. The musketoes are more troublesome than I have known them. I am informed that this is not the case every year.

Thursday 20th. Weather more pleasant, but the wind for a part of the afternoon contrary. The river is rising rapidly, it is at present at a very high stage. Having made five points, encamped.

Friday 21st. Set off under sail, with a fine breeze, which continued the whole of the day. Made upwards of forty miles. The country improves -- handsome green hills, and fine bottoms.

Saturday 22d. A continuance of favorable wind, but the river crooked. At ten, landed to kill some buffaloe -- they are numerous on the sides of the hills.

Sunday 23d. Bad weather -- contrary wind, and violent storms. In the evening it cleared up; the wind continuing so as to prevent us from proceeding, we landed and went in pursuit of some buffaloe. The whole surface of the country appeared covered with them. I continued the chase four or five miles from the river, in the middle of a very romantic country.

Monday 24th. Proceeded this morning with delightful weather, the sky clear, and of a most enchanting blue. Continued the greater part of the day, with the cordelle, along the prairie. The country on either side, of a very pleasant appearance, and a number of wooded points.

Tuesday 25th. Sailed this morning with a slight breeze.-- At ten, passed an old Mandan village; and at some distance above, saw a great number of Mandan Indians on their march along the

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

Prairie. They sometimes go on hunting parties by whole villages, which is the case at present; they are about five hundred in number, some on horseback, some on foot, their tents and baggage drawn by dogs. On these great hunting parties, the women are employed in preserving the hides, drying the meat, and making a provision to keep. Very little of the buffaloe is lost, for after taking the marrow, they pound the bones, boil them, and preserve the oil. This evening the Mandan chief, She-he-ke, who was in the United States, came to us with his wife. Hearing of our approach, he had set off for the purpose. Encamped on a prairie of very rich soil. The country is very fine on both sides of the river. There are some high hills.

Wednesday 26th. In the course of the day, passed by the Mandan villages, with a favorable wind, and arrived late at night, at the fort of the company, 1640 miles from the mouth of the Missouri. We remained here until the sixth of July. Mr. Bradbury had already arrived. He describes the country at the distance of eight or ten miles from the river, as very handsome; a continued succession of meadows, with some wood along the water courses; on approaching the river, it becomes more broken and hilly.

We made several excursions to the villages below, and to the interior of the country, but as they afford but little new, I shall not give any detail of them. In the neighborhood of the fort there are a number of clay hills, washed into the most curious shapes, by the frequent rains, generally of a whitish color, though intermixed with strata of various hues. Some of them resemble clouds, being circular, and detached; at first glance they look like buildings. On some of them there is a beautiful creeping vine, or evergreen, which Mr. Bradbury informs me, is described by Michaux 114, as growing on the lakes. There are great quantities of petrified wood scattered about; I traced a whole tree; the stump was more than three feet high, and at least four in diameter. This is a very extraordinary fact, in a country where the trees are everywhere small. 115

On the fourth day of July, we had something like a celebration of the day; the two principal chiefs happened to be with us.-- The borgne is one of the most extraordinary men I ever knew. The description of Abelino 116 might give some idea of this man. He sways with unlimited control, all these villages, and is sometimes a cruel and abominable tyrant. In stature he is a giant, and his one eye seems to flash with fire. I saw him on one or two occasions, treat She-he-ke with great contempt -- Mr. Lisa citing something which She-he-ke expressed, "what" says the other, "does that bag of lies pretend to have any authority here?" She-he-ke is a fat man, not much distinguished as a warrior, and extremely talkative, a fault much despised amongst the Indians.

On a visit to the village, I saw a great number of small scaffolds scattered over the prairie, on which human bodies were exposed. The scaffolds are supported with four forks, and sufficiently large to receive one or two bodies. They are covered with blankets, cloth of different colors, and a variety of offerings. In this they are different from the Arikaras, who bury their dead as we do. On the sixth of July, we set off from the fort, to return to the Arikara village, where we arrived two days after, without any remarkable occurrence. On our arrival, we found Mr. Hunt waiting the arrival of the Chiennes, to complete his supply of horses. We continued here about ten days, Mr. Manuel Lisa having concluded to send two of his boats, with peltries, Mr. Bradbury who was desirous of returning, gladly embraced the opportunity. The boats 117 were accordingly put under my command, with six men in each.

Two mornings before our departure, a great commotion was heard in the village, before daylight. We rose to discover the cause, and found that the war party, of which about three hundred men,

---

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

were within a short distance of the village, on their return, after a battle with the Sioux the evening before, in which two or three were killed, and as many wounded. All the relations of those engaged, came out of the village to meet them. I accompanied them about a mile and an half. They advanced in a kind of procession, which moved slowly, with some regularity; each band separate, and sung its song. Some carried the scalps on poles, others the sacred standards, which consisted of a large bow and a spear, both beautifully ornamented. The scene which took place, would be worthy the pen of a Fenelon 118; the meeting of those connected by the most tender relations, was truly affecting. The whole would baffle description; I was touched with the tenderness of a woman, who ran to meet her son, a youth badly wounded, but who exerted himself to keep on his horse, and from his countenance, one would have supposed nothing had been the matter. The young man died almost as soon as he arrived at the temple, for it is the custom to carry those who have been wounded on these occasions to this place, to be taken care of at the public expence. As they approached the village, the old men who could hardly walk, whose voices were extremely shrill, came out singing their songs also, and rubbing the warriors with their hands. The following day we spent in festivity by the village in general, and in grief by those who had lost their relations.

Towards the last of July, with glad hearts, we set off, to return once more to civilized life, after more than four months absence from it. My orders were to go day and night if possible, and not stop for any Indians. The water was extremely high, and with the assistance of six oars, we were able to make little short of twelve miles an hour. The first day we passed the Chienne river, and went some time after night, but considering this something dangerous, I landed and continued until daylight. The next morning we reached the Great Bend, a vast number of buffaloe were seen on all sides, and the most tremendous bellowing from the bulls, as this was about the time of their mixing with the herds of cows, for they generally stay in separate herds. The country this far is beautiful, the points sufficiently wooded, and the bottoms fine. The wind becoming high, we were compelled to lie by the whole of the afternoon, in the Great Bend. On the north west side, it is bounded the whole of the way by buffaloe nearly bare, affording but a scanty vegetation of sand cherries, gooseberries, and dwarf plum trees. The next day we passed White river, where the black bluffs begin -- a barren and miserable country nearly as hundred miles; there are scarcely any bottoms, and the bluffs in most places without even grass. In some places the hills rise to the height of mountains; it frequently afforded me amusement to see the herds of buffaloe ascending these hills by a winding path. In the evening we were compelled to land in a little recess of the bluffs, there being appearances of an approaching storm; we were not disappointed. The continued and vivid flashes of lightening, and peals of thunder, shaking the solid earth, were succeeded by a tremendous storm. The winds blew with such violence, as to threaten our boats; for an hour, we were obliged to protect the sides with wet blankets, to prevent them from filling, while it rained on us incessantly the whole night. The next day we passed the Poncas village. The Indians were absent in the plains. The islands are generally fine thus far, and excepting the tract between the White river, and the Qui Courre 119, there are many delightful spots, though the bottoms are mostly prairie, and the upland with little or no wood.

In the evening, near a point above isle a Bon Homme 120, our attention was awakened by a tremendous noise. On landing, we discovered the woods literally swarming with buffaloe, a heard of males had come amongst a number of females. The noise which they made is truly undescribable.

---

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE MISSOURI RIVER, IN 1811

Henry Marie Brackenridge Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum. Pittsburgh. 1814.

---

On the hills in every direction, they appeared by thousands. Late in the evening we saw an immense herd running along the sides of the hills in full speed; their appearance had something in it, which, without incurring ridicule, I might call sublime -- their footsteps resembled the roaring of distant thunder.

The next day we passed the Maha village, and had a most extraordinary run of forty-five leagues, from sun to sun. From the Qui Corre, to the Mahas, the bottoms are wider and better wooded than above, but the upland much of the same. We found them almost everywhere overflowed; we were obliged to encamp on some driftwood -- the musketoes tormented us the whole night.

The following day we passed the Blackbird Hill, and the river Platte. The navigation in this part is much more dangerous than above, from the number of trees fixed in the bottom. The bottoms are much wider than above, and better wooded; in some places for twenty miles and upwards, we were out of sight of the high lands; but the low grounds were everywhere overflowed. The water rushed into the woods with great velocity, and in bends it poured over the gorge into the river again; a sheet of water sometimes for a mile, flowed over the bank.

In something better than two days afterwards, we arrived at Fort Clark, having come a thousand miles in eight or nine days, without meeting a living soul. Here we were treated politely by the officers. Mr. Sibley, the factor, had returned but a few days before, from a journey to the interior, and showed us specimens of salt, which he had procured at the salines 121, on the Arkansas.

We arrived at St. Louis early in August, having made fourteen hundred and forty miles in little better than fourteen days 122.

---

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811;

Including

A Description of Upper Louisiana,  
together with

The States of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee  
with the

Illinois and Western Territories,

and containing

Remarks and Observations

useful to

Persons Emigrating to those Countries.

Second Edition

BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON,

Corresponding Member of the Liverpool Philosophical Society, and Honorary Member of the  
Literary and Philosophical Societies, New York, United States of America

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES,

1819.

PREFACE

WHEN I undertook to travel in Louisiana, it was intended that I should make New Orleans my principal place of residence, and also the place of deposit for the result of my researches. This intention I made known to Mr. Jefferson, during my stay at Monticello, when he immediately pointed out the want of judgment in forming that arrangement, as the whole of the country round New Orleans is alluvial soil, and therefore ill suited to such productions as were the objects of my pursuit. In consequence of his representations, I changed my intentions, and proceeded to St. Louis, one thousand four hundred miles above Orleans by the course of the Mississippi, where I employed myself, during the winter of 1810, in making such preparations as I deemed necessary for the preservation of what might be collected during the ensuing summer. In my subsequent journey up the Missouri, although every facility was afforded me that the nature of the expedition would allow, yet the necessity of conforming to the rules laid down to secure the safety of the party during the voyage, added to the known or supposed proximity of the hostile Indians, during a considerable part of our route, caused me to lose a great many opportunities, which, had my exertions been free, I should not have done. Besides these impediments, I lost the opportunity of collecting a great number of new plants on my return, through the breach of faith towards me by Mr. Lisa, who agreed that his boats should land me at different places; which promise he neither did, nor intended to, perform. For these reasons, I am persuaded that much yet remains to be done in that interesting country. When the whole of my collection was embarked on the Missouri, at the Aricara nation, it was extensive; but being then two thousand nine hundred miles from New Orleans, the losses by the way, and during my subsequent sickness at St. Louis, greatly diminished it. Immediately after my return to the United States, and before I could make any arrangement, either for my return to England, or for the publication of the plants I collected, the war broke out with this country:- I waited for its termination, and made some arrangements which caused a necessity for my stay some time longer.

I have made the above statement, because I think, that whoever undertakes a mission of the

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

nature which I did, where the duty is to be performed in a wilderness, ought to give an account how he performed it, even in his own defence; as it often happens that men are found, who, from interested or malignant motives, will vilify his character. I had intended that this should have been accompanied by a description of the objects collected, that had not been before discovered; but on my return to England, I found that my design was frustrated, by my collection having been submitted to the inspection of a person of the name of Pursh, who has published the most interesting of my plants in an appendix to the *Flora Americae Septentrionalis*.

As my chief object has been to convey information and to write the truth, I have not been particular in the choice of words; if, therefore, the style meets with criticism, I shall neither be surprised nor disappointed. A catalogue of some of the more rare plants in the neighbourhood of St. Louis, and on the Missouri, is added, together with their habitats. To many it will be of no value; but as it may be of some use to naturalists who may visit those parts hereafter, I have thought proper to insert it. In what relates to the country west of the Alleghanies, I have been brief, because a more dilated account would have swelled the work much beyond the limits I had prescribed to myself. A second visit to those parts, in which my movements shall be less circumscribed, may enable me to give a more finished picture. In what has been said on those countries, I disclaim any design to encourage emigration; and may be credited in the assertion, because I can have no possible interest in promoting it. I have told the truth, and I can see no reason why it should have been suppressed.

Liverpool, August 1, 1817

SECOND EDITION

SHORTLY after the publication of the first Edition of this Work, Mr. Bradbury returned to America, and is now residing at St. Louis. The rapid sale of the first Edition, and its favourable reception by the Public, have induced the publication of a second, to which a Map of the United States has been added, carefully collated from the one published by Mr. Mellish.

Mr. Bywater's ingenious speculations on animalculae, which were published in the first Edition, in a letter addressed by him to Mr. Bradbury, are omitted in the second, at the request of the author, who, on reconsidering the subject, wishes to make some alterations, that he does not feel himself at liberty to publish in Mr. Bradbury's Work, without previously consulting him.

Liverpool, 1819.

ON the 31st December, 1809, I arrived at St. Louis, in Upper Louisiana; intending to make that town or neighbourhood my principal place of residence, whilst employed in exploring the interior of Upper Louisiana and the Illinois Territory, for the purpose of discovering and collecting subjects in natural history, either new or valuable. During the ensuing spring and summer, I made frequent excursions alone into the wilderness, but not farther than eighty or a hundred miles into the interior. In the autumn of 1810, I dispatched for Orleans, in seven packages, the result of my researches; but had the mortification, soon after, to hear that the boat containing my collection had been driven ashore and damaged, on an island near St. Genevieve, sixty miles below St. Louis. As soon as I received this information I went thither, but learned that the boat had been repaired, and had proceeded on her voyage. On my return to St. Louis, I was informed that a party of men had arrived from Canada, with an Intention to ascend the Missouri, on their way to the Pacific Ocean, by the same route that Lewis and Clarke had followed, by descending the Columbia River. I soon became acquainted with the principals of this party, in whom the manners and accom-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

plishments of gentlemen were united with the hardihood and capability of suffering, necessary to the backwoodsmen. As they were apprised of the nature and object of my mission, Mr. Wilson P. Hunt, the leader of the party, in a very friendly and pressing manner invited me to accompany them up the River Missouri, as far as might be agreeable to my views. I had intended to remove from St. Louis to Ozark, (or more properly Aux-arcs) on the Arkansas, and to spend the remaining summer on that river; but considering this opportunity for exploring the Missouri too valuable to be lost, I gladly accepted the invitation, to which an acquaintance with Messrs. Ramsey Crooks and Donald M'Kenzie, also principals of the party, was no small inducement. As it would not be practicable to ascend the Missouri until the breaking up of the ice in spring, Mr. Hunt concluded, that to avoid the expense of supporting his party at St. Louis, it would be better to station them during the winter on some part of the Missouri, at a considerable distance above its mouth, as, at any point on that river above the settlements, five or six hunters can easily provide for forty or fifty men. The party therefore quitted St. Louis, and proceeded to the mouth of the Naduet, which falls into the Missouri 450 miles from the Mississippi. In the beginning of March Mr. Hunt returned to St. Louis in a boat with ten oars, and on the morning of the 12th, having completed his arrangements, he again embarked for the Missouri. As the post was expected to arrive the morning following, I put my trunks on board the boat, and determined to wait until that time, and meet the party at St. Charles. I must here observe, that the post to St. Louis is dispatched from Louisville, in Kentucky, a distance of more than 300 miles, through a wilderness, and from various causes is often retarded for several weeks, as had been the case at that period. In the evening I was informed by a gentleman in St. Louis, that a writ for debt had been taken out against Dorion, (whom Mr. Hunt had engaged as interpreter) by a person whose object was to defeat the intentions of the voyage. Knowing that the detention of Dorion would be of serious consequence to the party, I left St. Louis at two O'clock the following morning, in company with a young Englishman of the name of Nuttall, determined to meet the boat previous to its arrival at St. Charles, which I effected; and Dorion was sent into the woods, his squaw accompanying him. We arrived at St. Charles about noon, and soon after Mr. Samuel Bridge, a gentleman from Manchester, then living at St. Louis, arrived also, with letters for me from Europe, the post having come in as was expected. We slept on board the boat, and in the morning of the 14th took our departure from St. Charles, the Canadians measuring the strokes of their oars by songs, which were generally responsive betwixt the oarsmen at the bow and those at the stem: sometimes the steersman sung, and was chorused by the men. (1) We soon met with Dorion, but without his squaw, Whom it was intended should accompany us. They had quarrelled, and he had beaten her, in consequence of which she ran away from him into the woods, with a child in her arms, and a large bundle on her back. A Canadian of the name of St. Paul was sent in search of her. The day was very rainy, and we proceeded only nine miles, to Bon Homme Island, where we encamped, and St. Paul arrived, but without the squaw. I observed in the broken banks of this island, a number of tuberous roots, which the Canadians call pommes de terre. They are eaten by them, and also by the Indians, and have much of the consistence and taste of the Jerusalem artichoke: they are the roots of *glycine apios*.

15th.- About two hours before day, we were hailed from the shore by Dorion's squaw, who had been rambling all night in search of us. She was informed, that we would cross over to her at daybreak, which we did, and took her on board. I walked the greater part of this day on the north

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

side of the river, which is partly bounded by rocks of secondary lime-stone; at the foot of which I observed crystals of quartz and calcareous spar, or carbonate of lime. We encamped opposite the remains of the village of St. Andrew, which is now abandoned.

16th.- We this day passed the Tavern Rocks, so called from a large cave therein, level with the surface of the river. These rocks are nearly three hundred feet high, and are of the same nature as those we passed yesterday, but more abundantly filled with organ remains, consisting of anomiae and entrochii. On the islands which we passed there is abundance of equisetum hyemale, called rushes by the settlers, by whom this plant is held in high estimation, on account of its affording winter food for their cattle. On the first settlement of Kentucky, the borders of the river were found to be thickly set with cane, (*arundinaria macrosperma* of Michaux) and it was one of the strongest inducements with the first settlers to fix on a spot if cane was abundant. On the Missouri, the rushes are equally valuable, affording to the first settler winter food for his cattle for several years, after which they perish, being destroyed if fed on during the winter. We this night arrived at Point L'Abaddie, where we encamped.

17th.- Early this morning I walked along the river, and was much struck with the vast size to which the cotton wood tree<sup>(2)</sup> grows. Many of those which I observed this day exceed seven feet in diameter, and continue with a thickness very little diminished, to the height of 80 or 90 feet, where the limbs commence. After breakfast, we crossed to the north side of the river, and in the afternoon landed at a French village, name Charette. In the woods surrounding this place I observed a striking instance of the indolence of the inhabitants. The rushes in the neighbourhood had been already destroyed by the cattle, and from the neglect of the owners to provide winter food for their horses, they had been reduced to the necessity of gnawing the bark off the trees, some hundreds of which were stripped as far as these animals could reach. The cotton wood, elm, mulberry, and nettle trees (*celtis crassifolia*) suffered the most. On leaving Charette, Mr. Hunt pointed out to me an old man standing on the bank, who, he informed me, was Daniel Boone, the discoverer of Kentucky. As I had a letter of introduction to him, from his nephew Colonel Grant, I went ashore to speak to him, and requested that the boat might go on, as I intended to walk until evening. I remained for some time in conversation with him. He informed me, that he was eighty-four years of age; that he had spent a considerable portion of his time alone in the back woods, and had lately returned from his spring hunt, with nearly sixty beaver skins. On proceeding through the woods, I came to the river Charette, which falls into the Missouri about a mile above the village, and was now much swelled by the late rains. As the boat had disappeared behind an island, and was at too great a distance to be hailed, I got across by swimming, having tied my clothes together, and inclosed them in my deer skin hunting coat, which I pushed before me. I overtook the boat in about three hours, and we encamped at the mouth of a creek called Boeuf, near the house of one Sullens. I enquired of Sullens for John Colter, one of Lewis and Clarke's party, whom General Clark had mentioned to me as being able to point out the place on the Missouri where the petrified skeleton of a fish, above forty feet long, had been found. Sullens informed me that Colter lived about a mile from us, and sent his son to inform him of our arrival; but we did not see him that evening.

18th.- At day-break Sullens came to our camp, and informed us that Colter<sup>(3)</sup> would be with us in a few minutes. Shortly after he arrived, and accompanied us for some miles, but could not give me the information I wished for. He seemed to have a great inclination to accompany the expe-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

dition; but having been lately married, he reluctantly took leave of us. I walked this day along the bluffs, which were beautifully adorned with anemone hepatica. We encamped near the lower end of Lutre (Otter) Island.

The 19th commenced and continued rainy.- When we had passed the lower settlements, we began to see the river and its borders in a state of nature. The rushes, equisetum hyemale, were so thick and tall, that it was both painful and difficult to walk along, even at a very slow pace.

20th.- The river on the south side, during this day's travel, is mostly bounded by bluffs, or rocks, of whitish limestone: their appearance is very picturesque; the tops are crowned with cedar, and the ledges and chinks are adorned with mespilus Canadensis, now in flower. We encamped this night seven miles above the mouth of Gasconade River.

21st.- The rain, which had been almost incessant since our departure from St. Charles, had now ceased.

I went ashore, after breakfast, intending to walk along the bluffs, and was followed by Mr. Nuttall. We observed that the boat immediately passed over to the other side of the river, on account of its being more easy to ascend. As this sometimes happened several times in a day, we felt no concern about it, but proceeded on our researches. In the forenoon we came to a creek or river, much swelled by the late rains: I was now surprised to find that Mr. Nuttall could not swim. As we had no tomahawk, nor any means of constructing a raft, and were certain that the boat was before us, we looked for no alternative but to cross the creek by fording it. We therefore continued to ascend, and in about half an hour arrived at a place where a tree had fallen in on the opposite side of the river, which reached about half way across it. I stripped, and attempted to wade it, but found it impracticable. I then offered to take Nuttall on my back, and swim over with him; but he declined, and we continued our route. About a league further up, we found a raft of drift-wood, which had been stopped by a large tree that had fallen into the river; this we crossed and with some difficulty overtook the boat. We arrived at a French village, called Cote sans Dessein, about two miles below the mouth of Osage River. After we had formed our camp, the interpreter went into the village, where he had some acquaintance. On his return, he informed us that there was a war party of Indians in the neighbourhood, consisting of the Ayauwais, Potowatomies, Sioux, and Saukee nations, amounting to nearly three hundred warriors.

He had learned, that this party were going against the Osages; but having discovered that there was an Osage boy in the village, they were waiting to catch and scalp him. He also informed us, that we might expect to fall in with other war parties crossing the Missouri higher up. This was unpleasant news to us, as it is always desirable that white men should avoid meeting with Indian war parties: for if they are going to war, they are generally associated in larger parties than can subsist by hunting, from which they refrain, to prevent being discovered by their enemies, wherefore they are almost certain to levy contributions of provisions or ammunition on all they meet. When they return from war, the danger is still greater; for, if successful, they often commit wanton ravages; and if unsuccessful, the shame of returning to their nation without having performed any achievement, often induces them to attack those whom they would, in other circumstances, have peaceably passed. As we were sixteen men, well armed, we were determined to resist any act of aggression, in case of a rencontre with them.

22nd, 23rd, and 24th.- Almost incessant rain. Our bread was now becoming very mouldy, not having been properly baked. Mr. Hunt anxiously waited for a fine day to dry it, together with the

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

rest of the baggage.

25th.- Met a boat with sixteen oars coming from Fort Osage to St. Louis, for supplies: news had arrived at the fort, that the Great Osages had lately killed an American at their village.

26th.- It rained nearly the whole of this day: the flats near the river still continue to be so thickly covered with rushes, that it is almost impossible to travel over them.

27th.- The north bank of the river now assumes a most interesting appearance: it consists of a range of rocks, nearly perpendicular, from 150 to 300 feet high; they are composed of a very white limestone, and their summits are covered to the edge with cedar. The length of this range is about six miles, and at the upper end they assume a semi-circular form. These are called the Manitou Rocks, a name given to them by the Indians, who often apply this term Manitou to uncommon or singular productions of nature, which they highly venerate. On or near these Manitous, they chiefly deposit their offerings to the Great Spirit or Father of Life. This has caused some to believe that these Manitous are the objects that they worship; but this opinion is erroneous. The Indians believe that the Great Spirit either inhabits, or frequently visits, these manifestations of his power; and that offerings deposited there, will sooner attract his notice, and gain his auspices, than in any other place. These offerings are propitiatory, either for success in war or in hunting, and consist of various articles, of which the feathers of the war eagle (*falco melanoetos*) are in the greatest estimation. On these rocks several rude figures have been drawn by the Indians with red paint: they are chiefly in imitation of buffalo, deer, &c. One of these, according with their idea of the Great Spirit, is not unlike our common representation of the devil. We encamped this night a little above the mouth of the Bonne Femme, a small river on the north side, where the tract of land called Boone's Lick settlement commences, supposed to be the best land in Western America for so great an area: it extends about 150 miles up the Missouri, and is near fifty miles in breadth.

28th.- I left the boats early, intending to walk to the Lick settlements, which are the last on the river, excepting those occupied by one or two families near Fort Osage. After travelling eight or ten miles, I was surprised in the woods by a severe thunder storm. Not knowing whether I could reach the settlements before night, I returned to meet the boat, and found our two hunters, who had sheltered themselves in a hollow tree: they had killed a buck, on a part of which we dined, and carried the remainder to the boat, and soon after we arrived at the first house, belonging to a planter named Hibband. This evening we had a most tremendous thunder storm; and about nine o'clock, a tree, not more than fifty yards from our camp, was shivered by lightning. Mr. Hunt, Mr. Nuttall, and myself, who were sitting in the tent, sensibly felt the action of the electric fluid.

29th.- As Mr. Hunt had some business with one of the settlers, we walked to his house, where we heard that war had already commenced between the Osages and the confederate nations, and that the former had killed seven of the Ayauways. This determined us to continue our practice of sleeping on our arms, as we had done since the 21st. We slept this night about a league above the settlements.

30th.- We were now beyond all the settlements, except those at Fort Osage, and Mr. Hunt resolved to send the hunters out more frequently, as game might now be expected in abundance. I accompanied them, and we killed a buck and a doe. I found the country, three or four miles from the river, very broken or stony. The almost incessant rains had now raised the Missouri to within a few feet of its annual flood, which rendered the navigation very difficult.

31st.-The morning was rainy, and was succeeded by a strong north wind, which caused a sudden

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

change in the temperature of the weather: the 30th had been warm, but this night the water, in a tin cup of a pint measure, that had been left full in the boat, was found to be nearly all solid ice on the morning of the first of April.

April 1st.- After breakfast I went ashore with the two hunters, Harrington and Mears, but soon separated from them in order to visit the bluffs. In the evening I descended into the valley, and on my way to find the boat, observed a skunk(4), (*Viverra mephitis*) and being desirous of procuring the skin, fired at it, but with shot only, having that day taken out my fowling-piece instead of my rifle. It appeared that I had either missed entirely, or only slightly wounded it, as it turned round instantly, and ran towards me. Being well aware of the consequence if overtaken, I fled, but was so closely pursued, that I was under the necessity of re-loading whilst in the act of running. At the next discharge I killed it; but as it had ejected its offensive liquor upon its tail, I could not touch it, but cut a slender vine, of which I made a noose, and dragged my prize to the boat. I found that the Canadians considered it as a delicacy, and were desirous of procuring it to eat: this enabled me to obtain the skin without having to perform the disgusting operation of taking it off myself. Soon after my arrival, Harrington came in, and brought the intelligence that they had killed a large bear about four miles off. He had left Mears engaged in skinning it, and came to request that one or two men might be sent to assist in fetching it in. As it was near night, Mr. Hunt determined to stop, and two of the Canadians were sent along with Harrington; I also accompanied them. Although our course lay through a very thick wood, Harrington led us with great precision towards the place, and when he supposed himself near it, he stopped, and we gave a shout. In a few seconds afterwards we heard the discharge of a rifle, and also a shout from Mears, who was within two hundred yards of us. On joining him we were surprised to find that he had two bears. He informed us, that after the departure of Harrington he re-loaded his rifle, and laid it beside him whilst he was skinning and cutting up the bear: he had nearly completed this operation, when he heard a rustling, as if an animal was coming towards him. To defend himself, he seized his piece, and at the moment we shouted, a bear appeared in view. Not seeing Mears, he laid his fore paws on the trunk of a fallen tree, and turned his head to look back. Mears could not have wished for a better opportunity; he shot him through the head. The bears were very large, and as the night had set in before the latter was skinned and cut up, it was too late to send to the boat for assistance: I therefore offered to carry a part, provided they would allot to me the skins, as they were the only clean part of the spoil. This proposition was agreed to, and we set out. Before we had proceeded far, it became quite dark, which caused us to take a wrong direction, that led to a swamp. In addition to our difficulties, the underwood consisted chiefly of the prickly ash, (*zanthoxylon clava Hercules*) by which our faces and hands were continually scratched: there was also an abundance of small prickly vines entwined among the bushes, of a species of smilax. These were easily avoided during day-light, but they were now almost every instant throwing some of us down. Whilst we were deliberating whether it would not be advisable to stop, make a fire, and remain there during the night, we heard the report of a gun, which we thought proceeded from the boat: we therefore steered our course in the direction of the sound. Shortly afterwards we perceived before us a light glimmering through the trees, and in less than half an hour we had a full view of it. Mr. Hunt, from our long delay, had become apprehensive of what had really happened, viz. that we had lost our way, and having observed near the camp a very large cotton-wood tree, which was dead, and evidently hollow, he caused a hole to be cut into the cavity near the root, and a quantity

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

of dry weeds being put in, it was set on fire. The trunk was at least seventy or eighty feet in length before the broken limbs commenced; several of these projected eight or ten feet, and were also hollow. The flames, impelled by so long a column of rarefied air, issued from the top, and from the ends of the limbs, with a surprising force, and with a noise equal to that of a blast furnace. Although smarting with pain, weary, wet, and hungry, not having eaten any thing since morning, I sat down to enjoy the scene, and have seldom witnessed one more magnificent. On relating to the hunters this evening that I had been pursued by a skunk, they laughed heartily, and said it was no uncommon thing, having been often in the same predicament themselves.

2nd.- We this day passed the scite of a village on the north-east side of the river, once belonging to the Missouri tribe. Four miles above it are the remains of Fort Orleans, formerly belonging to the French; it is 240 miles from the mouth of the Missouri." We passed the mouth of La Grande Riviere, near which I first observed the appearance of prairie(5) on the alluvion of the river. Our hunters went out, but soon returned without attempting to kill any thing, having heard some shots fired, which they discovered proceeded from Indians in pursuit of elk. The navigation had been very difficult for some days, on account of the frequent occurrence of, what is termed by the boatmen, embarras. They are formed by large trees falling into the river, where it has undermined the banks. Some of these trees remain still attached by their roots to the firm ground, and the drift-wood being collected by the branches, a dam of the length of the tree is formed, round the point of which the water runs with such velocity, that in many instances it is impossible to stem it. On account of these obstacles, we were frequently under the necessity of crossing the river. This day the carcasses of several drowned buffaloes passed us.

3rd.-I walked the greatest part of the day, but found it troublesome, being much annoyed by the prickly ash. In the evening we had another severe thunder storm.

4th.-The navigation became less difficult, as the river had fallen four feet.

5th.-Went out with the hunters, who shot nothing but a goose, (*anas Canadensis*) that was sitting on a tree beside its nest, in which was the female. Observed for the first time that the rocks bordering the river were sandstone. In these I found nodules of iron ore imbedded.

6th.-Walked all day, and in the afternoon -met the hunters, who had found a bee tree,(6) and were returning to the boat for a bucket , and a hatchet to cut it down. I accompanied them to the tree. It contained a great number of combs, and about three gallons of honey. The honey bees have been introduced into this continent from Europe, but at what time I have not been able to ascertain. Even if it be admitted that they were brought over soon after the first settlement took place, their increase since appears astonishing, as bees are found in all parts of the United States; and since they have entered upon the fine countries of the Illinois and Upper Louisiana, their progress westward has been surprisingly rapid. It is generally known in Upper Louisiana, that bees had not been found westward of the Mississippi prior to the year 1797.(7)They are now found as high up the Missouri as the Maha nation, having moved westward to the distance of 600 miles in fourteen years. Their extraordinary progress in these parts is probably owing to a portion of the country being prairie, and yielding therefore a succession of flowers during the whole summer, which is not the case in forests. Bees have spread over this continent in a degree, and with a celerity so nearly corresponding with that of the Anglo-Americans, that it has given rise to a belief, both amongst the Indians and the Whites, that bees are their precursors, and that to whatever part they go the white people will follow. I am of opinion that they are right, as I think it as impossible to

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

stop the progress of the one as of the other. We encamped this night at the bottom of an island. 7th.- This morning I went upon the island, accompanied by one of the Frenchmen named Guardepee, to look for game. We were wholly unsuccessful in our pursuit, although the island is of considerable extent. On arriving at the upper end of it, we perceived a small island, of about two acres, covered with grass only, and separated from the large one by a narrow channel, the mouth of which was covered with drift timber. We passed over, and walked through the grass, and having given up all hopes of game, we were proceeding to the river to wait for the boat, when my companion, who was before me, suddenly stopped, fired, and jumped aside, crying out, "Voila, O diable, tirez," at the same time pointing towards the grass a few steps before him. I looked, and saw a bear not five yards from us. I immediately fired, and we retired to a short distance to reload, but on our return found the animal expiring. It was a female, with three small cubs in her bed, about two yards from where she was killed. She had heard us approach, and was advancing to defend them. I took one of the cubs in my arms. It seemed sensible of its misfortune, and cried at intervals. It was evident that whenever it uttered a cry, the convulsions of the dying mother increased, and I really felt regret that we had so suddenly cut the ties of so powerful an affection.(8) Whilst we breakfasted the bear was cut up, and, with the young ones, taken on board. We encamped this night about twelve miles below Fort Osage.

8th.- About ten o'clock we came in sight of the fort, about six miles distant. We had not been long in sight before we saw the flag was hoisted, and at noon we arrived, when we were saluted with a volley as we passed on to the landing place, where we met Mr. Crooks, who had come down from the wintering station at the mouth of the river Naduet to meet us. There were also collected at the landing place about 200 Indians, men, women, and children, of the Petit Osage nation, whose village was then about 300 yards from the fort. We passed through them to pay our respects to Lieutenant Brownson, who then commanded in the absence of Captain Clemson. He received us very politely, and insisted that we should eat at his table during our stay. I had with me an introductory letter to Dr. Murray, physician to the garrison, whom I found disposed to give me every information relative to the customs and manners of the Osage nation, and from him also I received a vocabulary of a considerable number of words in that language.(9) He walked with me down to the boats, where we found several squaws assembled, as Dr. Murray assured me, for the same purpose as females of a certain class in the maritime towns of Europe crowd round vessels lately arrived from a long voyage, and it must be admitted with the same success. Towards evening an old chief came down, and harangued the Indians assembled about the boats, for the purpose of inviting the warriors of the late expedition to a feast prepared for them in the village. I was told it was intended that the dance of the scalp should be performed, on the occasion of the war party having brought in seven scalps from the Ayauwais, a village belonging to whom they had destroyed, and killed two old men and five women and children. All the rest had fled at their approach; but as rain came on the dance was not performed. At evening Dr. Murray proposed that we should walk into the village, which I found to consist of about one hundred lodges of an oblong form, the frame of timber, and the covering mats, made of the leaves of flag, or typha palustris. On our return through the town, we called at the lodge belonging to a chief named Waubuschon, with whom Dr. Murray was particularly acquainted. The floor was covered with mats, on which they sat; but as I was a stranger, I was offered a cushion. A wooden bowl was now handed round, containing square pieces of cake, in taste resembling gingerbread. On inquiry I

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

found it was made of the pulp of the persimon, (*diospyros Virginiana*) mixed with pounded corn. This bread they called staninca. Shortly afterwards some young squaws came in, with whom the doctor (who understood the Osage language) began to joke, and in a few minutes they seemed to have overcome all bashfulness, or even modesty. Some of their expressions, as interpreted to me, were of the most obscene nature. The squaw of our host laughed heartily, and did all in her power to promote this kind of conversation. I expressed my surprise to Dr. Murray, but was informed by him that similar conduct would have been pursued at any other lodge in the village. We left the lodge of Waubuschon, and went to that of the chief. On the roof the seven scalps were placed, tied to sticks ornamented with racoons' tails. We were shewn to the upper end of the lodge, and sat down on the ground. I learned that the chief was not present; that he was a boy of six years of age, his name Young White Hair, and that the tribe was now governed by a regent. Immediately a warrior came in, and made a speech, frequently pointing to the scalps on the roof, as they were visible through the hole by which the smoke escaped. I understood that he had distinguished himself in the late expedition against the Ayauways. After shaking hands with all round, we left the lodge, and in our return to the boat we met the squaw belonging to our interpreter, who being of the Ayauway nation, appeared to be much afraid of the Osages during our passage up the river, and it was thought with reason, as on our first interview with the commandant, it had been debated whether or not it would be prudent to send a file of men to conduct her from the boat to the fort during our stay. On inquiry we found that she had been invited up to the village by some of the Osages, and of course, according to Indian custom, would be as safe with them as in the fort. I inquired of Dr. Murray concerning a practice which I had heard prevailed among the Osages, of rising before day to lament their dead. He informed me that such was really the custom, and that the loss of a horse or a dog was as powerful a stimulus to their lamentations as that of a relative or friend; and he assured me, that if I should be awake before day the following morning, I might certainly hear them. Accordingly on the 9th I heard before day that the howling had commenced; and the better to escape observation, I wrapped a blanket round me, tied a black handkerchief on my head, and fastened on my belt, in which I stuck my tomahawk, and then walked into the village. The doors of the lodges were closed, but in the greater part of them the women were crying and howling in a tone that seemed to indicate excessive grief. On the outside of the village I heard the men, who, Dr. Murray had informed me, always go out of the lodges to lament. I soon came within twenty paces of one, and could see him distinctly, as it was moonlight: he also saw me, and ceased, upon which I withdrew. I was more successful with another, whom I approached nearer unobserved. He rested his back against the stump of a tree, and continued for about twenty seconds to cry out in a loud and high tone of voice, when he suddenly lowered to a low muttering, mixed with sobs: in a few seconds he again raised to the former pitch.(10) We breakfasted with the commandant, and afterwards walked out to view some improvements he had made in the fort. In our walk we observed what, on the first view, appeared to be two squaws carrying a tub of water, suspended on a pole. Mr. Crooks desired me to notice them, which I did, and remarked that one of them had more the appearance of a man than of a woman. He assured me that it was a man, and that there were several others in the village, who, like the one we saw, were condemned for life to associate with the squaws, to wear the same dress, and do the same drudgery. I now learned, that when the Osages go to war, they keep a watchful eye over the young men who are then making their first essay in arms, and such as appear to possess the necessary qualifications

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

are admitted to the rank of warriors, or, according to their own idiom, brave men. But if any exhibit evident proofs of cowardice, on the return of the party they are compelled to assume the dress and character of women, and their doom is fixed for life, as no opportunity is afterwards afforded them to retrieve their character.(11) The men do not associate with them, nor are they suffered to marry, or have any intercourse with the women: they maybe treated with the greatest indignity by any warrior, as they are not suffered to resent it. I found, on inquiry, that the late war party had not been conducted by any of the principal chiefs, a circumstance which often happens, as any of the noted warriors may lead a party, provided he can obtain adherents, and he finds no difficulty in procuring the sanction of the chiefs; but in this case he must travel without mock-asons, or even leggings. He goes the foremost of the party, makes the fire at night, and stands to keep watch whilst the party lie down to sleep, nor can he lie down unless a warrior rises and takes his place. This indulgence he must not require, but may accept, if voluntarily offered. In pursuing the object of the expedition, his commands are absolute, and he is obeyed without a murmur. The Osages are so tall and robust as almost to warrant the application of the term gigantic: few of them appear to be under six feet, and many are above it. Their shoulders and visages are broad, which tend to strengthen the idea of their being giants. On our return from viewing the improvements in the fort, I was introduced to Mr. Sibly, the Indian agent there, who is the son of Dr. Sibly of Natchitoches.” He informed me that he purposed shortly to attend the Petits Osages in their annual journey for salt, and invited me to accompany him, offering as an inducement, to procure two horses from the Indians for my own use. Learning that the place where the salt is procured is that which has occasioned the report of a salt mountain existing in Upper Louisiana, I was very much inclined to accept his invitation; but finding Mr. Hunt unwilling to release me from my promise to attend him, I declined it. I accompanied Mr. Sibly and Dr. Murray in the evening, to see the dance of the scalp. The ceremony consisted in carrying the scalps elevated on sticks through the village, followed by the warriors who had composed the war party, dressed in all their ornaments, and painted as for war.

On the 10th we again embarked on the river, although it rained very hard. Our number was now augmented to twenty-six by the addition of Mr. Crooks and his party. We had not proceeded more than two miles, when our interpreter, Dorion, beat his squaw severely; and on Mr. Hunt inquiring the cause, he told him that she had taken a fancy to remain at the Osages in preference to proceeding with us, and because he had opposed it, she had continued sulky ever since. We were obliged to encamp early this day, as the rain became excessive.

11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th.-We had a fair wind, and employed our sail, wherefore I could not go ashore without danger of being left behind. During these days the bread was examined, and being found wholly unfit for use, it was thrown overboard.

15th.-We passed the scite of a village which formerly belonged to the Kansas Indians- I had an opportunity of going ashore, and found the soil to have the appearance of the greatest fertility. On the sides of the hills I noticed abundance of the hop plant (*humulus lupulus*.)

16th.- We began to notice more particularly the great number of drowned buffaloes that were floating on the river; vast numbers of them were also thrown ashore, and upon the rafts, on the points of the islands. The carcasses had attracted an immense number of turkey buzzards, (*vultur aura*) and as the preceding night had been rainy, multitudes of them were sitting on the trees, with their backs towards the sun, and their wings spread out to dry, a common practice with these

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

birds after rain.

17th.- Arrived at the wintering houses, near the Naduet River, and joined the rest of the party.

18th.- I proceeded to examine the neighbouring country, and soon discovered that pigeons (*columba migratoria*) were in the woods. I returned, and exchanged my rifle for a fowling-piece, and in a few hours shot two hundred and seventy-one, when I desisted. I had an opportunity this day of observing the manner in which they feed: it affords a most singular spectacle, and is also an example of the rigid discipline maintained by gregarious animals. This species of pigeon associates in prodigious flocks: one of these flocks, when on the ground, will cover an area of several acres in extent, and the birds are so close to each other that the ground can scarcely be seen. This phalanx moves through the woods with considerable celerity, picking up, as it passes along, every thing that will serve for food. It is evident that the foremost ranks must be the most successful, and nothing will remain for the hindermost. But that all may have an equal chance, the instant that any rank becomes the last, it rises, and flying over the whole flock, alights exactly ahead of the foremost. They succeed each other with so much rapidity, that there is a continued stream of them in the air; and a side view of them exhibits the appearance of the segment of a large circle, moving through the woods. I observed that they cease to look for food a considerable time before they become the last rank, but strictly adhere to their regulations, and never rise until there is none behind them.

19th.- On the bluffs (12) under which the wintering house was placed, there is a considerable number of flat stones. On examining one, I found beneath it several snakes, in a half torpid state, arising probably from the cold state of the weather, and I found on further examination, that the number of snakes under these stones was astonishing. I selected this day eleven species, and killed a great number.

20th.- It was this day arranged, by the desire of Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, that I should travel in his boat, and preparations were made for our departure the succeeding morning. I was employed in continuing my researches, and had a narrow escape from a rattlesnake; it darted at me from the top of a small rock, at the base of which I was gathering plants. The noise of its rattle just gave me sufficient notice to withdraw my head.

21st.- We again embarked in four boats. Our party amounted to nearly sixty persons: forty were Canadian boatmen, such as are employed by the North West Company, and are termed in Canada Engages or Voyageurs. Our boats were all furnished with masts and sails, and as the wind blew pretty strong from the south-east, we availed ourselves of it during the greater part of the day.

22d, 23d, 24th.- The wind continuing favourable, we sailed almost the whole of these three days, and made considerable progress.

25th.- Went ashore with the hunters, and collected a new species of rattle-snake, and a bird of the genus *recurvirostra*. The hunters killed two elks, but they were so lean that we left them for the vultures: at all times their flesh is much inferior to that of deer.

26th.- The wind had changed to the north-west, and blew so strong, that we were obliged to stop during the whole day. When I found this measure determined on, I resolved to avail myself of the opportunity to quit the valley of the Missouri, and examine the surrounding country. After travelling about three miles, I ascended the bluffs, and found that the face of the country, soil, &c. were entirely changed. As far as the eye could reach, not a single tree or shrub was visible. The whole of the stratum immediately below the vegetable mould, is a vast bed of exceedingly hard yellow clay.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

In the valleys, the land floods, during the rainy season, have worn channels so deep, and with the sides so precipitous, that a traveller is often under the necessity of proceeding a mile or two along one of these ravines before he can cross it. In the bottoms of several I observed evident indications of coal.

27th.- The night had been very cold, and before we had been long on the river, the sides of the boats and the oars were covered with ice, although we were not farther north than 40 deg. After breakfast, I went out with the hunters, and found my hopes of a change in the vegetation realized. The bluffs forming the bounds of the river are no longer in part rocks, but a continued chain of rounded knobs of stiff clay: under these is a fine bed of bituminous coal, rendered visible wherever the river has washed away the base. This day I collected several new species of plants.

28th.- We breakfasted on one of the islands formed by La Platte Riviere, the largest river that falls into the Missouri. It empties itself into three channels, except in the time of its annual flood, when the intervening land is overflowed; it is then about a mile in breadth. We noticed this day the skeleton or frame of a skin canoe, in which the river had been crossed by Indians: we saw also other indications of war parties having been recently in the neighbourhood, and observed in the night the reflection of immense fires, occasioned by burning the prairies. At this late season, the fires are not made by the hunters to facilitate their hunting, but by war parties; and more particularly when returning unsuccessful, or after a defeat, to prevent their enemies from tracing their steps. As the ash discontinues to grow on the Missouri above this place, it was thought expedient to lay in a stock of oars and poles; and for that purpose, we stopped in the forenoon, about a league above the mouth of Papillon Creek, and I availed myself of this opportunity to visit the bluffs four or five miles distant from us, on the north-east side. On approaching them I found an extensive lake running along their base, across which I waded, the water in no part reaching higher than my breast. This lake had evidently been in former times the course of the river: its surface was much covered with aquatic plants, amongst which were *nelumbium luteum* and *hydropeltis purpurea*: on the broad leaves of the former a great number of water snakes were basking, which on my approach darted into the water. On gaining the summit of the bluffs, I was amply repaid by the grandeur of the scene that suddenly opened to my view, and also by the acquisition of a number of new plants. On looking into the valley of the Missouri from an elevation of about two hundred and fifty feet, the view was magnificent: the bluffs can be seen for more than thirty miles, stretching to the north-eastward in a right line, their summits varied by an infinity of undulations. The flat valley of the river, about six or seven miles in breadth, is partly prairie, but interspersed with clumps of the finest trees, through the intervals of which could be seen the majestic but muddy Missouri. The scene towards the interior of the country was extremely singular: it presents to the view a countless number of little green hills, apparently sixty or eighty feet in perpendicular height, and so steep, that it was with much difficulty I could ascend them; some were so acutely pointed, that two people would have found it difficult to stand on the top at the same time. I wandered among these mountains in miniature until late in the afternoon, when I recrossed the lake, and arrived at the boats soon after sun-set.

29th.- Being informed that the oars and poles would not be finished before noon, Mr. M'Kenzie obliged me by sending his boat to carry me across the river. I found the bluffs to be of a nature similar to those on the north-east side. I met the boats in the afternoon, and we encamped about fourteen miles below the wintering house belonging to Mr. Crooks, who proposed to me that we

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

should walk to it the following morning, along the bluffs; as the distance was much less by that route than by the course of the river .

30th.- I set out with Mr. Crooks at sunrise, for the wintering house, and travelled nearly a mile on a low piece of ground, covered with long grass: at its termination we ascended a small elevation, and entered on a plain of about eight miles in length, and from two and a half to three miles in breadth. As the old grass had been burned in the autumn, it was now covered with the most beautiful verdure, intermixed with flowers. It was also adorned with clumps of trees, sufficient for ornament, but too few to intercept the sight: in the intervals we counted nine flocks of elk and deer feeding, some of which we attempted to approach near enough to fire at, but without success. On arriving at the termination of the plain, our route lay along a series of the most rugged clay bluffs: some of them were in part washed away by the river, and exhibited perpendicular faces at least a hundred feet in height. At noon we arrived at the wintering house, and dined on dried buffaloe. In the evening the boats came up.

May 1st.- This day was employed in embarking some articles necessary for the voyage, together with Indian goods, and in the evening Mr. Crooks informed me that he intended to set out the next morning on foot, for the Ottoes, a nation of Indians on the Platte River, who owed him some beaver- From the Ottoes he purposed travelling to the Maha nation, about two hundred miles above us on the Missouri, where he should again meet the boats. I immediately offered to accompany him; he seemed much pleased, and we proceeded to cast bullets, and make other arrangements necessary for our journey.

2d.- At day-break we were preparing to depart, as also were the rest of the party, when an occurrence took place that delayed us until sunrise, and created a considerable degree of confusion. Amongst our hunters were two brothers of the name of Harrington, one of whom, Samuel Harrington, had been hunting on the Missouri for two years, and had joined the party in autumn: the other, William Harrington, had engaged at St. Louis, in the following March, and accompanied us from thence. The latter now avowed that he had engaged at the command of his mother, for the purpose of bringing back his brother, and they both declared their intention of abandoning the party immediately. As it had already been intimated to us at the Osage nation, that the Nodowessie, or Sioux Indians, intended to oppose our progress up the river, and as no great dependence was placed on our Canadians in case of an attack, the loss of two good riflemen was a matter of regret to us all. Mr. Hunt, although a gentleman of the mildest disposition, was extremely exasperated; and when it was found that all arguments and entreaties were unavailing, they were left, as it was then imagined, without a single bullet or a load of powder, four hundred miles at least from any white man's house, and six hundred and fifty from the mouth of the river. As soon as the final issue of this affair was known, Mr. Crooks and myself set out for the Otto village, attended by, two of the Canadians, one named Guardépée, the other La Liberté. Our equipments were, a blanket, a rifle, eighty bullets, a full powder horn a knife, and tomahawk, for each. Besides these, I had a large inflexible portfolio, containing several quires of paper, for the purpose of laying down specimens of plants; we had also a small camp-kettle, and a little jerked buffaloe meat. In half an hour we left the valley of the Missouri, and entered on the vast plain. We took our course S. S. E. which we held for some hours, and travelled at a great rate, hoping to reach the Platte that night, although estimated at forty-five miles from the place of our departure. A little before noon we saw four large animals at a great distance, which we supposed to be elk, but on crossing their footsteps

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

some time afterwards, we found to our great satisfaction that they were buffaloe. In the afternoon we crossed two branches of Papillon Creek, and an hour before gun-set arrived at the Come du Cerf River, a deep clear stream, about eighty yards in breadth: it falls into the Platte about twenty miles below. As our Canadians could not swim, it was necessary to construct a raft, and we concluded to remain here for the night.

This arrangement was very agreeable to me, as I was much exhausted, which Mr. Crooks considered was, in a great measure, owing to my having drank water too copiously during the day. Although we had not eaten any thing from the time of our departure, I was unable to eat at supper, and lay down immediately.

3d.- We arose at day break. I found myself completely refreshed. Our raft being ready at sun-rise, we crossed the river, and in two hours arrived at the Platte, exactly opposite the Otto village. The river is here About eight hundred yards in breadth, but appears to be shallow, as its name indicates. The southern bank is wholly divested of timber, and as the village is situated on a declivity near the river, we could see the lodges very distinctly, but there was no appearance of Indians. We discharged our rifles, but the signal was not answered from the village: in about five minutes we heard the report of a gun down the river, and immediately proceeded towards the place. At the distance of half a mile, we arrived opposite to an island, on the point of which a white man was standing, who informed us that we could cross over to him by wading: we did not stop to take off our clothes, but went over immediately, the water reaching to our arm-pits. This man proved to be an American, of the name of Rogers, and was employed as an interpreter by a Frenchman from St. Louis, who was also on the island with a few goods. They informed us that they had been concealed for some days on the island, having discovered a war party hovering round, belonging, as they supposed, to the Loup, or Wolf nation, who had come in order to surprise the Ottoes. They had nothing to give us as food, excepting some beaver flesh, which Rogers obtained by trapping on Come du Cerf, or Elk Horn River; as it was stale, and tasted fishy, I did not much relish it, but there was no alternative but to eat it or starve. We remained all day concealed on the island, and on the morning of the 4th, before daylight, Rogers set out to look at his traps, on Elk Horn River, distant to the eastward not more than five miles. I accompanied him, and on crossing the channel of the Platte, found that in the same place where the day before it reached to our arm-pits, it did not now reach to our waists, although the river had not fallen. Such changes in the bottom of this river, Rogers told me were very frequent, as it is composed of a moving gravel, in which our feet sank to a considerable depth. We arrived at the Elk Horn River about sun-rise, but found no beaver in the traps. After our return to the island, I expressed a wish to visit the Otto village, which was in sight; and Rogers, who had a canoe concealed in the willows that surrounded the island, landed me on the other side of the river. I found the village to consist of about fifty-four lodges, of a circular form, and about forty feet in diameter, with a projecting part at the entrance, of ten or twelve feet in length, in the form of a porch. At almost every lodge, the door or entrance was closed after the manner which is customary with Indians when they go on hunting parties, and take their squaws and children with them. It consists in putting a few sticks across, in a particular manner, which they so exactly note and remember, as to be able to discover the least change in their position. Although anxious to examine the internal structure of the lodges, I did not violate the injunction conveyed by this slight obstruction, and after searching some time, found a few that were left entirely open. On entering one, I found the length of the porch to be an inclined

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

plane to the level of the floor, about two and a half or three feet below the surface of the ground: round the area of the lodge are placed from fifteen to eighteen posts, forked at the top, and about seven feet high from the floor. In the centre, a circular space of about eight feet in diameter is dug to the depth of two feet; four strong posts are placed in the form of a square, about twelve feet asunder, and at equal distances from this space: these posts are about twenty feet high, and cross pieces are laid on the tops. The rafters are laid from the forked tops of the outside posts over these cross pieces, and reach nearly to the centre, where a small hole is left for the smoke to escape: across the rafters small pieces of timber are laid; over these, sticks and a covering of sods, and lastly earth. The fire is made in the middle of the central space, round the edges of which they sit, and the beds are fixed betwixt the outer posts. The door is placed at the immediate entrance into the lodge: it is made of a buffalo skin, stretched in a frame of wood, and is suspended from the top. On entering, it swings forward, and when let go, it falls to its former position. On my return to the island, Mr. Crooks informed me that he had resolved to send Rogers to find the Ottoes, who were hunting about twenty miles from us, in order to collect his debts, or to procure horses for us, to facilitate our journey to the Maha nation.

5th.-In the morning early, Rogers set out on his expedition, and returned on the 6th, without having obtained any beaver or horses, excepting one horse belonging to Mr. Crooks. This night I procured from Rogers what information I could relative to the Otto nation, and was informed that the Missouris are incorporated with them; that they are their descendants, and speak the same language. They call themselves Wad-doké-tah-tah, and can muster one hundred and thirty or one hundred and forty warriors. They are now at war with the Loups or Wolf Indians, the Osages, and the Sioux. He said they furnish a considerable quantity of bear, deer, and beaver skins, and are very well disposed towards their traders, who may safely credit them. They do not claim the property of the land on which they live, nor any other tract. A very considerable part of the surrounding country formerly belonged to the Missouris, who were once the most powerful nation on the Missouri river, but have been reduced by war and the small pox to be dependent on the Ottoes, by whom they are treated as inferiors. Rogers had with him a squaw of the Maha nation, with her child, whom he wished to send with us to her father. To this Mr. Crooks consented, and early on the morning of the 7th we set out, putting the squaw and her child on the horse. Having crossed over from the island, we steered a due north course, and came to the Elk Horn River, after travelling about ten miles. Mr. Crooks immediately stripped, to examine if the river was fordable, and found that, excepting about twenty yards in the middle, we might wade it. I offered to carry the child, but the squaw refused, and after stripping herself, she gave me her clothes, put the child on her neck, and swam over, the little creature sticking to her hair. After assisting our Canadians across, we continued along the bank, in expectation of arriving at the creek, distant about five miles, which comes in a direction from the north. We observed, that as our distance from the island increased, the reluctance of the squaw to proceed also increased, and soon after we had crossed the river, she began to cry, and declared she would go no farther. Mr. Crooks, who understood the language, remonstrated with her; but finding it in vain, he ordered Guardépée to take her back, and we encamped to wait his return.

8th.- About two o'clock in the morning Guardépée returned with the horse, and at day-light we set out. In about an hour we came to the creek, and continued along its banks, and found ourselves in a short time on a most beautiful prairie, along which the creek flowed, without having a

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

single tree on its border, or even a shrub, excepting a few widely scattered plum bushes. We shot this day two prairie hens, (*tetrao umbellus*) on which we supped, having dined on some jerked buffalo, brought by Rogers from the Ottoes. We slept on the border of the creek, but not so comfortably as usual, as the dew was so copious, that before morning our blankets were wet through. 9th.- We continued to pursue our course along the creek, but with great trouble, as our mockasons, being of untanned skins, became so soft as to render it difficult to keep them on our feet. We shot a prairie hen, and prepared to breakfast, having first relieved the horse from the baggage, and turned him out to graze. Whilst we were collecting some dry stalks of plants to boil our kettle, a herd of elk, nineteen in number, appeared marching towards the creek, and Guardépée immediately ran to put himself in such a position that he might fire at them, when the horse took fright, broke his tie, and galloped off. Guardépée fired, but only wounded one so slightly that it ran off with the rest, and escaped. The horse took the direct route back towards the Ottoes, and was followed by Mr. Crooks and Guardépée; but in vain: they gave up the chase, finding it impossible to recover him. After we had breakfasted, we threw the saddle and every thing belonging to the horse into the creek; each man took his share of the baggage, and we again set out, and travelled without stopping until evening, when we arrived at the head of the creek, and came to what is called a dividing ridge (13). We passed over it, and came to the head of a creek, running in a N. E. direction. This we supposed to be Blackbird Creek, which falls into the Missouri, near the monument of a famous chief of the Mahas, named Blackbird. At the distance of about two miles, we saw a small clump of trees on the border of the creek, and resolved to remain there during the night, hoping to find fuel to boil a small portion of jerked buffalo, being all we had left. Whilst the supper was preparing, I walked back to an eminence, to collect some interesting plants, having noticed them in passing. I had not been long employed in that way, when I saw a distant flash of lightning in the south, and soon after others in quick succession. As these and other appearances indicated the approach of a violent storm, I hastened back to recommend precautions for the security of our arms and ammunition. Having boiled our meat, which amounted to a few morsels each, we secured our powder horns and some tow in our camp kettle, which we inverted, and discharged our rifles. Excepting the sound of distant thunder, which was continual, an awful silence prevailed, and the cloud which had already spread over one half of the visible horizon, was fast shutting out the little remains of daylight. As the trees afforded us no fuel, and in a few minutes would become no shelter, but might endanger our safety, I recommended that we should go to the open prairie, which we did, and lay down in our blankets: I put my plants under me. For several hours the thunder, lightning, and rain were incessant, and such rain as I have seldom witnessed. In half an hour after the storm commenced, we had nothing more to fear from it, excepting the cold occasioned by the torrents that fell on us. At the approach of morning the rain ceased: we saw a few stars, and with joy noticed the first appearances of day. We arose, and wrung the water out of our blankets, and finding ourselves very much benumbed, we walked about to restore the circulation: when it was sufficiently light, we put our rifles in order, which was attended with considerable difficulty, as our hands were almost without sensation. Having arranged our arms, we set out, but were extremely uncomfortable, as our clothes, being made of dressed skins, stuck so close to our bodies as to make our march very unpleasant. We proceeded at a brisk pace to warm ourselves, and in about two hours came to a small ridge, which we ascended, and when near the top, Guardépée preceded us, to examine if any game was in sight. He gave the signal for us to

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

remain quiet and soon afterwards fired at two buffalo cows, with their calves. One of the cows he wounded, and they ran off with so much speed, that the calves could not keep up with them. Perceiving this, I immediately pursued the calves, one of which I killed. The rest of the party followed the cows for a short distance, but finding the inutility of it, they soon returned: and notwithstanding my remonstrances, Guardépée killed the other calf. As we had eaten but little the day before, we were very glad of this supply, and taking what we thought proper, proceeded on our journey. We soon began to perceive that the face of the country was changing in its appearance. From the Elk Horn River, our course had hitherto been over a most beautiful prairie, with scarcely a tree or shrub, but covered with grass and flowers: we now began to observe a more broken country to the eastward, and some scattered bushes in the valleys. From an eminence, we soon after perceived a hill, that had a heap of stones on the summit: Mr. Crooks assured me that this was the monument of Blackbird(14), the famous Maha chief, and that it was one of the bluffs of the Missouri: we judged it was about fifteen miles N. E. of us. Satisfied that we were now near the boats, and having arrived at some small timber, where we could procure fuel, we dined on our veal; and although without bread or salt it was to us a luxury, as we had long been unaccustomed to those articles. We halted about three hours before sunset, at about five miles from the monument of Blackbird, to which place Mr. Crooks despatched Guardépée to look for a letter, as Mr. Hunt had promised to leave one there on passing the place. At night he returned, but without a letter, and we concluded that the boats had not yet arrived.

11 th.- We set off early, and soon fell in with the trace from the Maha village to the monument : along this we travelled, and about ten o'clock arrived at the town, where we met one of the Canadians belonging to the boats. He informed us that they arrived the day before, and were stationed about four miles from the village. As we were in want of food, we did not stop, but proceeded to the boats, where we found a considerable number of Indians assembled to trade. They gave jerked buffalo meat, tallow, corn, and marrow; and in return they received tobacco in carottes, vermilion, blue beads, &c. There, also, we found Mr. James Aird, an old and respectable trader, with whom I had become acquainted at St. Louis. He informed me that he should go to the United States in a few days; I therefore availed myself of this opportunity to forward letters, and was employed in writing until the 12th at noon. Immediately after, I set out on an excursion to the bluffs, and in my way passed through the village, where the great number of children playing about the lodges, entirely naked, drew my attention. I soon attracted their notice also, and they began to collect around me. Some of the boldest ventured to touch my hand, after which they ran back a few paces, but soon again resumed their courage. When about fifty or sixty had assembled, I came to where three young squaws were repairing one of the stages erected for the purpose of exposing the buffalo skins to dry, whilst they are in preparation. The squaws, seeing the children run after me, spoke to them in a commanding tone, when they instantly stopped, and not one followed me afterwards. I doubt much if such a crowd of children, in any European city, would have obeyed with such promptness, had such a phenomenon appeared among them, as they must have considered me. On arriving at the summit of the bluffs, I had a fine view of the town below. It had a singular appearance. The frame work of the lodges consists of ten or twelve long poles, placed in the periphery of a circle of about sixteen feet in diameter, and are inclined towards each other, so as to cross at a little more than half their length from the bottom; and the tops diverging with the same angle, exhibit the appearance of one cone inverted on the apex of another. The lower cone

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

is covered with dressed buffalo skins, sewed together, and fancifully painted; some with an undulating red or yellow band, of ten or twelve inches in breadth, surrounding the lodge at half its height; in others, rude figures of horses, buffaloe or deer were painted; others again with attempts at the human face, in a circle, as the moon is sometimes painted; these were not less than four feet in diameter. I judged there were not fewer than eighty lodges. I did not remain long on the summit of the bluffs, as I perceived, from the heaps of earth, some of these recent, that it was the burial ground, and I knew the veneration they have for the graves of their ancestors. I proceeded along the bluffs, and was very successful in my researches, but had not been long employed, when I saw an old Indian galloping towards me. He came up and shook hands with me, and pointing to the plants I had collected, said, "Bon pour manger?" to which I replied, "Ne pas bon." He then said, "Bon pour medicine?" I replied "Oui." He again shook hands and rode away, leaving me somewhat surprised at being addressed in French by an Indian. On my return through the village, I was stopped by a group of squaws, who invited me very kindly into their lodges, calling me wakendaga, or as it is pronounced, wa-ken-da-ga (physician.) I declined accepting their invitation, showing them that the sun was near setting, and that it would be night before I could reach the boats. They then invited me to stay all night: this also I declined, but suffered them to examine my plants, for all of which I found they had names. On my way to the boats, I met a number of Indians returning to the village, all of whom shook hands with me. Two of them informed me that they had seen me at St. Louis, and at the same time gave me satisfactory proofs of it(15). I did not reach the boats until it was dark.

13th.- In the forenoon of this day, Mr. Hunt was waited upon by two chiefs, who were contending for the sanction of the government of the United States, to determine their claim to kingly power. Mr. Hunt declined interfering, not being vested with the powers to act. The names of these two chiefs were the Big Elk and the White Cow, the former of whom ultimately succeeded, and has since signalized himself by a fine specimen of Indian eloquence, at the funeral of a Sioux chief, in the Missouri territory(16). The Mahas seem very friendly to the whites, and cultivate corn, beans, melons, squashes, and a small species of tobacco (*nicotiana rustica*.) In 1802 they were visited by the small-pox, which made dreadful havoc, and destroyed at least two thirds of the whole nation. At present they muster nearly two hundred warriors, and from the great number of children, I judge that they are again increasing. In stature they are much inferior to the Osages, although I noticed several whom I thought would reach to six feet. Their hunting ground is from their village to L'Eau qui Court, and along that river.

14th.- This day three Sioux Indians arrived, of the Yanktoon Alma tribe, who reported that several nations of the Sioux were assembling higher up the river, with an intention to oppose our progress. This news was concealed as much as possible from the voyageurs, and we prepared for our departure on the following morning.

15th.- We embarked early, and passed Floyd's Bluffs, so named from a person of the name of Floyd (one of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke's party) having been buried there. In the course of this day, I was informed by Mr. M'Kenzie, that in the night of the 7th instant, during our journey to the Ottoes, eleven Sioux Indians, who had given or devoted their clothes to the medicine(17), ran into the camp with their tomahawks in their hands, and were instantly surrounded and taken prisoners. The leader, finding the party on their guard, and much stronger probably than he expected, immediately cried out to his followers in their language, " My children, do not hurt the

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

white people." As the party were fully apprized of the murderous intentions of these miscreants, the general voice was for putting them to death; but Mr. Hunt would not consent to it, and ordered that they should be conveyed over the river in one of the boats, at the same time informing them, that if they were again caught by the party, every man should be sacrificed. From a coincidence of time and circumstances, it appeared almost certain that it was this party that had crossed the Missouri, near the mouth of the river Platte, in the canoe of which we saw the skeleton on the 28th of April; and that it was also this party that was discovered by Rogers hovering about the Otto village, as the Sioux are at war with the Ottoes: it therefore appeared that Mr. Crooks and myself had run a greater risk than we were sensible of at the time.

16th, 17th, and 18th.- We had a fair wind, and made considerable progress up the river; few opportunities were therefore afforded for walking. I regretted this circumstance, as the bluffs had a very interesting appearance. During a short excursion, I was enabled to ascertain that the lower part of the bluffs was impregnated with sulphur, mixed with sulphate of iron and selenite crystals.

19th.- About nine o'clock we observed three buffalo cows and a calf swimming across the river. Two of them and the calf were killed; but we found them to be so poor that we only preserved the calf.

20th.- We were stopped all day by a strong head wind. I availed myself of this circumstance, and was very successful in my researches. We found that the river was rising rapidly; it rose during this day more than three feet: we therefore concluded that this was the commencement of the annual flood of the Missouri, occasioned by the melting of the snow on the Rocky Mountains.

21st.- The river continued to rise, and the current to increase in rapidity: the navigation was therefore rendered very difficult. I walked the greatest part of the day, chiefly on the bluffs, and found the summits for the most part covered with gravel, containing tumblers of feldspar, granite, and some porphyry.

22d.- In the morning our hunters killed three buffaloe and two elks on an island; and as we were now arriving at the country of our enemies, the Sioux, it was determined that they should in a great measure confine themselves to the islands, in their search for game. We dined at the commencement of a beautiful prairie; afterwards I went to the bluffs, and proceeded along them till near evening. On regaining the bank of the river, I walked down to meet the boats, but did not find them until a considerable time after it was dark, as they had stopped early in the afternoon, having met with a canoe, in which were two hunters of the names of Jones and Carson, who had been two years near the head of the Missouri. These men agreed to join the party, and were considered as a valuable acquisition; any accession of strength being now desirable. This day, for the first time, I was much annoyed by the abundance of the prickly pear. Against the thorns of this plant I found that mockasons are but a slight defence. I observed two species, cactus opuntia and mamillaris.

23d.- When on the bluffs yesterday, I observed in the river an extensive bend, and determined to travel across the neck. I therefore did not embark with the boats, but filled my shot pouch with parched corn, and set out, but not without being reminded by Mr. Hunt that we were now in an enemy's country. In about two hours I had entirely passed the range of hills forming the boundary of the Missouri; and as I had before experienced, I found the soil and face of the country to improve very much as we proceed from the river. The hills here are only gentle swellings, and, together with the intervening valleys, were covered with the most beautiful verdure. At a small

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

distance from my route I noticed a space, of several acres in extent, of a more vivid green than the surrounding prairie, and on my nearer approach it had the appearance of a rabbit burrow. From the previous descriptions given by the hunters, I immediately conceived it to be, what it proved, a colony of the prairie dog(18). The little animals had taken the alarm before I reached their settlement, and were sitting singly on the small hillocks of earth at the mouth of their holes. They were very clamorous uttering a cry which had some resemblance to a shrill barking. I fired at several, but at the instant of the flash, they darted with surprising quickness into their holes, before the shot could reach them. I soon found the impossibility of procuring one with shot only, as unless they are instantaneously killed, they are certain to get into their holes, from the edges of which they never wander if a man is in sight. I continued to travel through this charming country till near the middle of the afternoon, when I again came to the bluffs of the Missouri, where, amongst a number of new plants, I found a fine species of ribes, or currant. As it was now time to look for the boats, I went to the river and proceeded down the bank, in the expectation of meeting them. I had probably travelled about two miles, when suddenly I felt a hand laid upon my shoulder, and turning round, saw a naked Indian with his bow bent, and the arrow pointed towards me. As I had no expectation of meeting any Indians excepting the Sioux, and as with them the idea of danger was associated, I took my gun from my shoulder, and by a kind of spontaneous movement put my hand towards the lock, when I perceived that the Indian drew his bow still farther. I now found myself completely in his power; but recollecting that if an enemy, he would have shot me before I saw him, I held out my hand, which he took, and afterwards laid his hand on my breast, and in the Osage language said "Moi-he ton-ga de-ah," literally in English, "Big Knife you ?"(19) which I luckily understood and answered, "Hoya," (Yes) and laying my hand on his breast, said, "Nodo-wessie de-ah," (Sioux you.) He replied, "Honkoska ponca we ah.." (No, Poncar me.) He then pointed up the river, and I saw two other Indians running towards us, and not more than fifty yards distant. They soon came up, and all the three laid hold of me, pointing over the bluffs, and making signs that I should go with them. I resisted and pushed off their hands. As the river had overflowed where we stood, I pointed to a sand-hill a small distance from us, to which we went and sat down. I amused them with my pocket compass for some time, when they again seized me, and I still resisted, and took out a small microscope. This amused them for some time longer, when on a sudden one of them leaped up and gave the war whoop. I laid hold of my gun, with an intention to defend myself, but was instantly relieved from apprehension by his pointing down the river, and I perceived the mast of one of the boats appear over the willows. The Indians seemed very much inclined to run away, but I invited them to accompany me to the boats, and shewed them by signs that I would give them something to drink, which they complied with, but soon after disappeared. We travelled very late this evening, and encamped above the mouth of a small creek. It appeared that the three Indians went to inform their nation, as in the morning a number of them came to our camp and also a white man, with a letter to Mr. Hunt from Mr. Lisa, one of the Missouri Fur Company, for whom he was agent. Mr. Lisa had arrived at the Mahas some days after we left, and had dispatched this man by land. It appeared he had been apprised of the hostile intentions of the Sioux, and the purport of the letter was to prevail on Mr. Hunt to wait for him, that they might, for mutual safety, travel together on that part of the river which those blood thirsty savages frequent. It was judged expedient to trade with the Indians for some jerked buffalo meat, and more than 1000 lbs. was obtained for as much tobacco as cost two dollars.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

About noon we set out, and at the distance of a league passed the mouth of the river called L'Eau qui Court, or Rapid River.

25th.- It was discovered early this morning, that two men who had engaged at the Mahas, and had received equipments to a considerable value, had deserted in the night. As it was known that one of them could not swim, and we had passed a large creek about a league below, our party went in pursuit of them, but without success.

26th.- Whilst at breakfast on a beautiful part of the river, we observed two canoes descending on the opposite side. In one, by the help of our glasses, we ascertained there were two white men, and in the other only one. A gun was discharged, when they discovered us, and crossed over. We found them to be three men belonging to Kentucky, whose names were Robinson, Hauberk, and Reesoner. They had been several years hunting on and beyond the Rocky Mountains, until they imagined they were tired of the hunting life; and having families and good plantations in Kentucky, were returning to them; but on seeing us, families, plantations, and all vanished; they agreed to join us, and turned their canoes adrift. We were glad of this addition to our number, as the Poncars had confirmed all that we had heard respecting the hostile disposition of the Nodowessies, or Sioux, towards us, with the additional information, that five nations or tribes had already assembled, with a determination to cut us off. Robinson was sixty-six years of age, and was one of the first settlers in Kentucky. He had been in several engagements with the Indians there, who really made it to the first settlers, what its name imports, "The Bloody Ground." In one of these engagements he was scalped, and has since been obliged to wear a handkerchief on his head to protect the part. The wind being fair, we this day made considerable progress, and had many fine views of the bluffs, along which, from the L'Eau qui Court, we observed excellent roads made by the buffaloes. These roads I had frequent opportunities of examining, and am of opinion that no engineer could have laid them out more judiciously.

27th.- The weather continues fine, as it has been for the last fortnight, and is delightful. For some days past it has been very warm, and the carcasses of drowned buffaloes on the islands and shores of the river become extremely offensive. We had a fine breeze from the S. E. and made all the sail the extreme cowardice of our Canadians would permit, in order to reach Little Cedar Island(20), as it was intended that we should stop there to procure new masts, some of our old ones being defective. Late in the evening we accomplished our purpose to the joy of our voyageurs, who frequently in the course of the day, when the boats heeled, cried out in agony, "O mon Dieu! abattez le goile." As we had now in our party five men who had traversed the Rocky Mountains in various directions, the best possible route in which to cross them became a subject of anxious enquiry. They all agreed that the route followed by Lewis and Clarke was very far from being the best, and that to the southward, where the head waters of the Platte and Roche Jaune rivers rise, they had discovered a route much less difficult. This information induced Mr. Hunt to change his plan, which had originally been to ascend the Missouri to the Roche Jaune river, one thousand eight hundred and eighty miles from the mouth, and at that place to commence his journey by land. It was now concluded that it would be more adviseable to abandon the Missouri at the Aricara Town, four hundred and fifty miles lower down the river.

28th.- We arose at day-break, and the men soon found trees suitable for masts. Whilst they were preparing them, I employed myself in examining this delightful spot. The island is about three quarters of a mile in length, and five hundred yards in width. The middle part is covered with

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

the finest cedar, round which there is a border from sixty to eighty yards in width, in which were innumerable clumps of rose and currant bushes, mixed with grape vines, all in flower, and extremely fragrant. The currant is a new and elegant species, and is described by Pursh(21) as *ribes aureum*. Betwixt the clumps and amongst the cedars, the buffaloes, elks, and antelopes had made paths, which were covered with grass and flowers. I have never seen a place, however embellished by art, equal to this in beauty. In a few hours the masts were completed, and we proceeded on our voyage with a fine breeze in our favour. Since our departure from L'Eau qui Court I noticed that the bluffs had gradually continued to change in appearance. The quantity of alluvion on the border of the river decreased as we proceeded, and has now entirely vanished. The bluffs continue in a regular declivity from their summits to the edge of the river, and the narrowness of the valley indicates a country formed of such hard materials as to oppose considerable resistance to the abrasion of the river. On these bluffs, and at about half the distance from the summit to the river, I began to notice a number of places of a deep brown colour, apparently divested of vegetation. They occurred on both sides of the river, with an exact correspondence in altitude and breadth, and exhibited the appearance of two interrupted lines running as far as the bluffs could be seen. As we were now in an enemy's country, it was with reluctance Mr. Hunt suffered me to land a little before dinner, when I proceeded to examine one of these spots. I found it almost entirely covered with iron ore, of that species called by Kirwan compact iron stone; in Waller Syst. 2, p. 144, *haematitis solidus*. Its specific gravity is 3.482. The oxidation of the ore had so changed the earth, that it resembled Spanish brown, and nothing grew on it but a few scattered shrubs of a species of *artemisia*, apparently a non-descript. I hastened to the boats, in which we kept our sails up the rest of the day, the bodies of ore becoming longer and more frequent as we proceeded. We travelled eighteen miles, and encamped one hour after sunset.

29th.- Some arrangements being necessary, the boats did not set out so early as usual, and daylight opened to our view one of the most interesting prospects I had ever seen. We had encamped at the commencement of a stretch of the river, about fifteen miles in length, as we judged, and nearly in a right line. The bluffs on both sides formed, as before, a gentle slope to the river, and not a single tree was visible. The body of iron ore had now become continuous on both sides of the river, and exhibited the appearance of two dark brown stripes, about one hundred yards in breadth, and fifteen miles long. The exact conformity of the two lines, and the contrast of colour produced by the vivid green which bounded them, formed a *coup d'oeil* which I have never seen paralleled. I lamented much that the wind was fair, but availed myself of the short delay, and hastened up the bluff to the vein of ore, where, although the soil was so strongly impregnated with iron as to resemble rust, I observed a number of large white flowers on the ground, belonging to a new species of *aenothera*, having neither stem nor scape, the flower sitting immediately on the root. On a signal being given from the boats, I was obliged to return, and had no further opportunity to examine this enormous body of ore, without doubt sufficient to supply the whole of North America with iron for thousands of years: and if we combine in the same view the abundance of coal on the Missouri, it warrants a presumption that in some future age it will become an object of vast national importance.

30th.- We set out this morning with a favourable wind, which continued during the whole of the day; and the course of the river being less crooked than usual, we made thirty miles, and slept on an island.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

31st.- Before breakfast this morning we discovered two Indians on a bluff on the north-east side of the river: we stopped opposite to them to breakfast, during which they frequently harangued us in a loud tone of voice. After we had breakfasted, Mr. Hunt crossed the river to speak to them, and took with him Dorion, the interpreter. We noticed, that when he landed, one of the Indians went away, but immediately after re-appeared on horseback, and went at full speed over the bluffs. Mr. Hunt informed us on his return, that these Indians belonged to the Sioux nations; that three tribes were encamped about a league from us, and had two hundred and eighty lodges. They were the Yangtons Ahnah, the Tetons Bois Brule, and the Tetons Min-na-kine-azzo. The Indian informed Mr. Hunt that they had been waiting for us eleven days, with a decided intention of opposing our progress, as they would suffer no one to trade with the Ricaras, Mandans, and Minateres, being at war with those nations. It is usual to reckon two warriors to each lodge; we therefore found that we had to oppose near six hundred savages, with the character of whom we were well acquainted;(22) and it had also been stated by the Indian that they were in daily expectation of being joined by two other tribes, Tetons Okandandas and Tetons Sahone. We proceeded up the river, and passed along an island, which for about half an hour intercepted our view of the northeast side of the river. On reaching the upper point we had a view of the bluffs, and saw the Indians pouring down in great numbers, some on horseback, and others on foot. They soon took possession of a point a little above us, and ranged themselves along the bank of the river. By the help of our glasses, we could perceive that they were all armed and painted for war. Their arms consisted chiefly of bows and arrows, but a few had short carbines: they were also provided with round shields. We had an ample sufficiency of arms for the whole party, which now consisted of sixty men; and besides our small arms, we had a swivel and two howitzers. Any attempt to avoid the Indians would have been abortive, as a boat, in ascending the Missouri, can only effect it by going along the edges of the river, it being wholly impossible to stem the middle current; and as the banks are in many places high and perpendicular, we must inevitably be frequently in their power, as they might several times in the course of a day shower a volley of arrows upon us, and retire unseen. Our alternative, therefore, was, as we supposed, either to fight them or return. The former was immediately decided on, and we landed nearly opposite to the main body. Our first care was to put all the arms in complete order: afterwards the swivel and the howitzers were loaded with powder only, and fired to impress them with an idea that we were well prepared. They were then heavily loaded, and with as many bullets as it was supposed they would bear, after which we crossed the river. When we arrived within about one hundred yards of them, the boats were stationed, and all seized their arms. The Indians now seemed to be in confusion, and when we rose up to fire, they spread their buffaloe robes before them, and moved them from side to side. Our interpreter called out, and desired us not to fire, as the action indicated, on their part, a wish to avoid an engagement, and to come to a parley. We accordingly desisted, and saw about fourteen of the chiefs separate themselves from the crowd who were on the summit of the bank, and descend to the edge of the river, where they sat down on the sand, forming themselves into a portion of a circle, in the centre of which we could see preparations making to kindle a fire, evidently with a design to smoke the calumet with us, and signs were made, inviting us to land. Mr. Hunt requested that Messrs. Crooks, M'Kenzie, Miller, and M'Clellan would attend him in his boat, and I accompanied Mr. M'Kenzie. The object was to consider whether it was advisable to put so much confidence in so ferocious and faithless a set, as to accept the invitation. It did not

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

require much deliberation, as we found ourselves under the necessity of either fighting or treating with them; it was therefore determined to hazard the experiment of going ashore. The party who remained in the boats were ordered to continue in readiness to fire on the Indians instantly, in case of treachery, and Messrs. Hunt, M'Kenzie, Crooks, Miller, and M'Clellan, with the interpreter and myself, went ashore. We found the chiefs sitting where they had first placed themselves, as motionless as statues; and without any hesitation or delay, we sat down on the sand in such a manner as to complete the circle. When we were all seated, the pipe was brought by an Indian, who seemed to act as priest on this occasion: he stepped within the circle, and lighted the pipe. The head was made of a red stone, known by mineralogists under the term of killas, and is often found to accompany copper ore: it is procured on the river St. Peter's, one of the principal branches of the Mississippi. The stem of the pipe was at least six feet in length, and highly decorated with tufts of horse hair, dyed red. After the pipe was lighted, he held it up towards the sun, and afterwards pointed it towards the sky in different directions.

He then handed it to the great chief, who smoked a few whiffs, and taking the head of the pipe in his hand, commenced by applying the other end to the lips of Mr. Hunt, and afterwards did the same to every one in the circle. When this ceremony was ended, Mr. Hunt rose, and made a speech in French, which was translated as he proceeded into the Sioux language, by Dorion. The purport of the speech was to state, that the object of our voyage up the Missouri was not to trade; that several of our brothers had gone to the great salt lake in the west, whom we had not seen for eleven moons; that we had come from the great salt lake in the east, on our way to see our brothers, for whom we had been crying ever since they left us; and our lives were now become so miserable for the want of our brothers, that we would rather die than not go to them, and would kill every man that should oppose our passage: that we had heard of their design to prevent our passage up the river, but we did not wish to believe it, as we were determined to persist, and were, as they might see, well prepared to effect our purpose; but as a proof of our pacific intentions, we had brought them a present of tobacco and corn. About fifteen carottes of tobacco, and as many bags of corn, were now brought from the boat, and laid in a heap near the great chief, who then rose and began a speech, which was repeated in French by Dorion. He commenced by stating that they were at war with the Ricaras, Mandans, and Gros Ventres or Minaterees, and that it would be an injury to them if these nations were furnished with arms and ammunition; but as they found we were only going to our brothers, they would not attempt to stop us: that he also had brothers at a considerable distance northward, whom he had not seen for a great many moons, and for whom he also had been crying. He professed himself satisfied with our present, and advised us to encamp on the other side of the river, for fear his young men should be troublesome. When the speech was ended, we all rose, shook hands, and returned to the boats. During the conference, I had an opportunity of noticing these Indians, a great number of whom were assembled on the bank above us, and observed that they are in stature considerably below the Osages, Mahas, and Poncars, and much less robust. They are also more deficient in clothing and ornaments, a considerable number being entirely naked, but all armed. Several of our party were acquainted with these tribes, and represent them much as described by Lewis. Although the squaws are very ill treated by all Indians, it is said they are treated much worse by the Sioux than any other tribe, whence it follows that mothers frequently destroy their female children, alleging as a reason, that it is better they should die than continue a life so miserable as that to which they

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

are doomed. Amongst the Sioux women, it is also said, suicide is not unfrequent, and the mode which they adopt to put an end to their existence, is, by hanging themselves. They are of opinion that suicide is displeasing to the Father of Life, and believe it will be punished in the land of spirits by their ghosts being doomed for ever to drag the tree on which they hung themselves: for this reason they always suspend themselves to as small a tree as can possibly sustain their weight. In the course of the afternoon we met a chief who belonged to a party of Teton Okandandas, which consisted, he said, of thirty lodges. He requested to have a passage in the boats for the remainder of the day. It was granted to him, and he remained with us during the night.

June 1.- This morning the old chief was conveyed over the river, and landed on the opposite side, as he said he expected to meet his people, but we did not see him again. In the afternoon we entered upon the Great Bend, or, as the French call it, the Grand Detour, and encamped about five miles above the lower entrance. This bend is said to be twenty-one miles in circuit by the course of the river, and only nineteen hundred yards across the neck.

2d.- In the morning early we discovered two Indians standing on the bluffs, who upon discovering us, spread their buffalo robes to denote that they were amicably inclined towards us. We crossed over the river, and when we approached them, they extended their arms in a horizontal position. This action, I was informed, was an appeal to our clemency. When we landed they showed evident symptoms of alarm. This was soon accounted for by Messrs. Crooks, M'Clellan, and Miller, who informed us that they knew these fellows, and that they were chiefs of the Sahonies and Okanandans, who the year preceding had behaved extremely ill, by plundering and otherwise maltreating them, in such a manner as to render it necessary for their safety to escape down the river in the night, and abandon the trade with the upper Indians for that year, which had been a great loss to them. They seemed very apprehensive that Mr. Crooks would now resent their conduct; but after we had smoked with them they became more tranquil. During the smoking, Mr. Hunt asked them why they killed white men, as he heard that they had killed three during the last summer? They replied, because the white men kill us: that man (pointing to Carson) killed one of our brothers last summer. This was true. Carson, who was at that time among the Ricaras, fired across the Missouri at a war party of Sioux, and it was by a very extraordinary chance he killed one of them, as the river is full half a mile in breadth, and in retaliation the Sioux killed three white men. I observed that, as before, in smoking the pipe they did not make use of tobacco, but the bark of *cornus sanguinea*, or red dog wood, mixed with the leaves of *rhus glabrum*, or smooth sumach. This mixture they call kinnikineck. After we had smoked, they spoke of the poverty of their tribes, and concluded by saying they expected a present. A few carottes of tobacco and bags of corn were laid at their feet, with which they appeared satisfied. As these were the last of the Sioux tribes we expected to meet, I now determined to walk all day, and was much pleased that the restraint imposed on me by the proximity of these vagabonds was removed. I therefore proceeded up the bluffs nearly abreast of the boats. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards two other Indians rode hastily past me, and overtook the boats. I observed that they had a short conference with Mr. Hunt, when they turned their horses about, and again rode past me, seemingly in a rage. Mr. Hunt called to me, and requested that I would come on board instantly, when he informed me that these fellows were also chiefs, and had seen our presents, with which they were much dissatisfied, and in consequence had followed the boats to extort more. In reply to their insolent demands, Mr. Hunt informed them that "he had given all he

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

intended to give, and would give no more," adding, "that he was much displeas'd by their importunity, and if they or any of their nation again followed us with similar demands, he would consider them as enemies, and treat them as such." As we were not exactly acquainted with the strength of these two tribes, and expected that, in consequence of the disappointment in their rapacious demands, they would attack us, it was arranged that the large boat should ascend on the N. E. side of the river, and the three small boats on the S. W. as the bluffs on either side of the river can be seen much better from the opposite side; and it was agreed that the signal on seeing Indians should be two shots fired in quick succession. As we had not much apprehension of being attacked on the S. W. side, I went ashore after dinner, and continued along the river nearly on a line with the boats, and about four o'clock heard the signal given of Indians being seen. I instantly ran towards the boats, and arrived as they were preparing to quit the shore to aid Mr. Hunt and his party in the large boat, who were then apparently in the most imminent danger. They had passed betwixt a large sand bar and the shore, and it was evident to us that at that juncture they found the water too shallow at the upper end, and were under the necessity of turning back. The sand bar prevented the possibility of putting out into the river, and we saw with horror that at least a hundred Indians had arrived on the bank at the lower end of the bar: we could also perceive that they were a war party, as they were painted with black and white stripes, and all had shields.(23) We had every reason to conclude that these were the Teton Okandandas and the Teton Sahonies, and our anxiety for the safety of Mr. Hunt and the party in the large boat was indescribable when we saw large bodies of Indians every moment arrive at the point near which he must unavoidably pass, before we could possibly give him any assistance: but our anxiety was changed to surprise on seeing the boat pass within a short distance of them unmolested; soon after which the Indians ran along the bank to the upper end of the sand bar, threw down their arms, their shields, and their buffalo robes, and plunged into the river in crowds to meet us; and before we could reach the sand bar, they were round our boats, holding up their hands in such numbers, that it became tiresome to shake hands with so many. We now found that this was a war party, consisting of Aricaras, Mandans, and Minetarees, or Gros Ventres, who were coming against the Sioux, and having discovered us, had determined for the present to abandon the enterprise, expecting that on our arrival at the Arrears Town they should obtain a supply of fire arms and ammunition, which would give them a superiority over their enemies. During the ceremony of shaking hands we were joined by the large boat, and it was agreed that we should encamp at the first convenient place. We soon found one that was suitable, and the Indians fixed their camp about one hundred yards from ours. I now ascertained that the party consisted of nearly three hundred warriors. As we had plenty of provisions, a supply was given to the Indians, who prepared their supper, after which the chiefs and principal warriors came to our tents. In Mr. M'Kenzie's tent there were seven of them, none of whom appeared to me to be lower than five feet ten inches, and some were more than six feet. Most of them had very good countenances, differing from the heavy face of the Osage, and the keen visage of the Sioux. One of them who had an aquiline nose, had a scarified line running along each arm, which met on his stomach. This our interpreter informed us was done to show his grief for the death of his father. Whilst I was endeavouring to converse with him, an Indian boy came into the tent, and handed water round to the chiefs in a gourd shell tied to the end of a stick. He spoke to the boy, who went out, but soon returned with a new pair of ornamented mockasons, and handed them to the warrior, who it then

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

appeared had observed that mine were dirty and much worn, as he took them off my feet, and put on the new pair, which he tied himself. Observing that he had a short carbine and powder flask, I begged to look at the latter, and finding it only contained a very small quantity of powder, I immediately filled it from my own flask. He was greatly pleased with the acquisition of so much powder, and informed me that he was a Ricara, and should meet me at their town, where we should be brothers. We were interrupted by one of the chiefs crying "How," which signifies among the Indians, "Come on, " or "let us begin." This occasioned silence, and he began to strike on one hand with a war club which he held in the other. It had a globular head, on one side of which was fixed the blade of a knife, five or six inches in length. The head was hollow, and contained small bits of metal, which made a jingling noise as he struck it in quick time. The singing now commenced, and continued at intervals until past midnight. The song is very rude, and it does not appear that they combine the expression of ideas and music, the whole of their singing consisting in the repetition of the word ha six or seven times in one tone, after which they rise or fall a third, fourth, or fifth, and the same in quick time. I observed that their voices were in perfect unison, and although, according to our ideas of music, there was neither harmony nor melody, yet the effect was pleasing, as there was evidently system, all the changes of tone being as exactly conformable in point of time, as if only one voice had been heard. Whenever their performance ceased, the termination was extremely abrupt, by pronouncing the word how in a quick and elevated tone . On the morning of the 3d, the chiefs declared to Mr. Hunt their intention of immediately returning to their nation, where they expected to arrive in three days, although they had been sixteen days in coming out. They also demanded some arms and ammunition. This demand, being conformable to the custom of war parties, had been foreseen, but was not complied with, Mr. Hunt informing them, that when we arrived at their nation, we should furnish abundance. After we had left them, the chief overtook us on horseback, and said that his people were not satisfied to go home without some proof of their having seen the white men. Mr. Hunt could not now resist, and gave him a cask of powder, a bag of balls, and three dozen of knives, with which he was much pleased. Whilst the articles were delivering to him, an Indian came running up, and informed us that there was a boat in sight, coming up the river. We immediately concluded that it was the boat belonging to Manuel Lisa, and after proceeding five or six miles, we waited for it. I was much pleased on the boat's joining us, to find that Mr. Henry Brackenridge was along with Mr. Lisa; I became acquainted with him at St. Louis, and found him a very amiable and interesting young man. Mr. Lisa had made the greatest possible exertions to overtake us, being well apprised of the hostile disposition of the Sioux. He had met a boat, which, it appeared, had passed us in the night, and the people informed him that they had been fired upon by the Indians. As the conjunct party now consisted of ninety men, and we were approaching the nations that were at war with the Sioux, our fears almost subsided; for myself, I was much gratified on finding the restraints removed which had so long circumscribed my motions. In the early part of this day the wind was fair, but after we had proceeded some miles, it changed to north-east, and blew so strong, that we could not stem the torrent, which was increased by the rising of the river. I went to the bluffs, which in this part are of considerable elevation, but rise in a gentle slope from the river: near the summit is a stratum of deep brown-coloured earth, from two to three hundred feet in breadth, on the declivity of the hill. This earth appears mostly to consist of decomposed iron ore, and is evidently a continuation of that seen near Little Cedar Island, although distant from it near

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

a hundred miles in a right line. I observed, that uniformly the flat tops of the hills were almost covered with masses of stone, chiefly breccia. There was something so singularly constant in this appearance, that I was tempted to attend to a particular examination, and became convinced that these groupes of stone were the passive cause of the hills. If the group was of an oblong form, the hill was a ridge; if it was nearly circular, the hill was a cone. It would be difficult to describe the sensations occasioned by a view at once of these hills and the valley of the Missouri. The mind is irresistibly impressed with the belief that the whole surface of the surrounding country was once at least on a level with the tops of these hills; and that all below has been carried away by the erosion of water, from which it has been protected in the parts where these stones were collected.

(24) I remarked this day, that the wolves were more numerous and more daring than in any former part of our voyage. Within the last week we frequently saw a few every day, but now, some of them were almost constantly in sight, and so fearless, as frequently to stand at no great distance to gaze. For the present, they were protected by their worthlessness, their skins being out of season. It appears that in a natural state, the wolf is a diurnal animal; but in the neighbourhood of condensed and stationary population its habits change, and it becomes nocturnal.(25) On my route this day I saw numerous colonies of the prairie dog; and from the frequency of the occurrence, I noticed that my approach to their burrows was announced by the screams of a species of curlew. I shot one, and ascertained it to be a variety of scolopax arquata; and perceived, after I noticed the fact, that the alarm was invariably given. On my return to the boats, I found that some of the leaders of our party were extremely apprehensive of treachery on the part of Mr. Lisa, who being now no longer in fear of the Sioux, they suspected had an intention of quitting us shortly, and of doing us an injury with the Aricaras. Independent of this feeling, it had required all the address of Mr. Hunt to prevent Mr. M'Clellan or Mr. Crooks from calling him to account for instigating the Sioux to treat them ill the preceding year. Besides, it was believed by all, that although apparently friendly, he was anxiously desirous that the expedition should fail. Lisa had twenty oars, and made much greater expedition than we could; it was evident, therefore, that he had it in his power to leave us, and it was determined to watch his conduct narrowly.

4th.- The boats did not make much way, and I walked chiefly on and beyond the bluffs, which I found of the same description as those observed yesterday, and on still farther examination, became more confirmed in my opinion regarding the origin of the hills. On the summit of one I found some fragments of bones in a petrified state, apparently belonging to the buffalo. I had for some time past noticed on the declivities circular spaces of about six or seven feet in diameter, wholly divested of every kind of vegetation, and covered with small gravel. The frequent occurrence of these this day attracted my more particular attention, and I found that they were caused by a large species of black ant, hundreds of which were running in every direction within the area with astonishing activity. On finding a large beetle, I put it in the centre of one of these areas, when it was instantly seized by those nearest to it. For a short time the ants were dragged along with ease; but by some unknown and surprising faculty the intelligence was immediately spread throughout the whole space: the ants ran from every direction towards the centre, and in a few seconds the poor beetle became completely covered, and escape was impossible.

5th.- We had not proceeded more than four miles before a very heavy rain commenced, and we were compelled to stop and fix up the tents. I went as usual to the bluffs, and on my return to secure some interesting specimens of plants, found that Lisa had encamped about one hun-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

dred yards above us. After I had dried my clothes, I again visited the bluffs in company with Mr. Brackenridge. We discovered on the bank of a small creek the remains of an Indian encampment, which had apparently been occupied by a considerable number, and for some time, as there was a great quantity of bones spread on the ground, and the marks where the wigwams stood were numerous. We agreed that the situation was judiciously chosen to prevent surprise. On ascending the hills, and looking over the summit, we observed near us a small herd of buffaloes, consisting of two cows and three bulls. We immediately drew back, and taking advantage of a ravine, approached within thirty or forty yards, and fired. We wounded one of the cows, which Mr. Brackenridge pursued. Several other herds of buffaloes were in view, and some antelopes or cabri. I found the hills all capped with stones, and was still more confirmed in my opinion respecting their formation by observing some large detached blocks, each lying on a small pyramid of clay. After Mr. Brackenridge joined me, we saw a large hare, *lepus variabilis*, the first I had noticed, and also a number of wolves in several directions, and returning through an extensive colony of prairie dogs, we regained the boats. Immediately on my return to our camp, a circumstance happened that for some time threatened to produce tragical consequences. We learned that, during our absence, Mr. Lisa had invited Dorion, our interpreter, to his boat, where he had given him some whiskey, and took that opportunity of avowing his intention to take him away from Mr. Hunt, in consequence of a debt due by Dorion to the Missouri Fur Company, for whom Lisa was agent. Dorion had often spoken to us of this debt, and in terms of great indignation at the manner in which it had been incurred, alleging, that he had been charged the most exorbitant prices for articles had at Fort Mandan, and in particular ten dollars per quart for whiskey. Some harsh words having passed betwixt him and Lisa, he returned to our camp. On the instant of my arrival, Mr. Lisa came to borrow a cordeau, or towing-line, from Mr. Hunt, and being perceived by Dorion, he instantly sprang out of his tent, and struck him. Lisa flew into the most violent rage, crying out, "O mon Dieu! ou est mon couteau!" and ran precipitately to his boat. As it was expected he would return armed, Dorion got a pair of pistols, and took his ground, the party ranging themselves in order to witness the event. Soon after Mr. Lisa appeared without pistols; but it was observed that he had his knife in his girdle. As Dorion had disclosed what had passed in Lisa's boat, Messrs. Crooks and M'Clellan were each very eager to take up the quarrel, but were restrained by Mr. Hunt, until an expression from Lisa, conveying an imputation upon himself, made him equally desirous of fighting. He told Lisa that the matter should be settled by themselves, and desired him to fetch his pistols. I followed Lisa to his boat, accompanied by Mr. Brackenridge, and we with difficulty prevented a meeting, which, in the present temper of the parties, would certainly have been a bloody one.

The river had risen considerably during the night, and we were now convinced that the floods we had before encountered, and which were of short duration, were only partial, and caused by the rising of the tributary streams that have their sources in the lower regions. The periodical flood is occasioned by the melting of the snows on the Rocky Mountains, and the plains at their feet. The boats ascended with difficulty, which gave opportunities for walking the whole of the day. In the early part, we passed the remains of an old Aricara village. The scite was indicated by an embankment, on which there had been pallisadoes, as the remains were still visible. Within the area, the vestiges of the lodges were very apparent, and great quantities of bones and fragments of earthenware were scattered in every part. The wolves are still numerous, and are mostly of a light grey

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

colour, with a few black hairs intermixed on the hind part of the back: they are seen singly, and although not timid, show no disposition to attack. Happening to come on one this day suddenly and unperceived, I shot him. He was large, and appeared to be old, as his teeth were much worn. The country beyond the bluffs continues still very fine, but cut up in many places by deep ravines, occasioned by torrents during heavy rains. The sides of these ravines uniformly exhibited an under stratum of hard yellow clay, of an indeterminate depth.

7th.- Went out early on the S. W. side, with some of the hunters, and on reaching the summit of the bluffs, observed, in a westwardly direction, a range of high hills, apparently at the distance of thirty or forty miles. These, I was informed by the hunters, bounded the Chien or Chayenne River. Two buffaloes were killed, and one cabri, or antelope. The hunter who killed the last assured me that he had allured it by putting a handkerchief at the end of his ramrod, and lying down, continued to wave it, whilst he remained concealed. The animal, it seems, after a long contest betwixt curiosity and fear, approached near enough to become a sacrifice to the former.

8th.- Since the affair of the 5th, our party have had no intercourse with that of Mr. Lisa, as he kept at a distance from us, and mostly on the opposite side of the river. This deprived me of the society of my friend Brackenridge. I regretted this circumstance, and purposed to join him this morning, but was prevented by our stopping on an island to breakfast, where our hunters killed two buffaloe and two elks. Of the former we had for some days past seen a great number of herds, consisting of from fifty to a hundred in each. On expressing my surprise at seeing so many, the hunters assured me, that so far from its being extraordinary, they had been in the expectation of seeing them in much greater numbers. Some of the hunters, who had been six or eight years about the head of the Missouri, said they had seen them during their annual migrations from north to south in autumn, and to the northward in spring; and agreed in stating, that at these times they assemble in vast herds, and march in regular order. Some asserted that they had been able to distinguish where the herds were even when beyond the bounds of the visible horizon, by the vapour which arose from their bodies. Others stated that they had seen herds extending many miles in length. It appeared also to be a well known fact among them, that in these periodical migrations, they are much less fearful of the hunter. I must observe of the hunters, that any accounts which I heard from them, and afterwards had an opportunity to prove, I found to be correct;(26) and when the great extent of this plain, and its fertility in grass are considered, we cannot but admit that the number of animals it is capable of containing must be immense. In the forenoon we passed the mouth of Chayenne River, where it is four hundred yards in width. It is described by the hunters as being a very fine river, and navigable for several hundred miles. We encamped this night in a beautiful grove, ornamented with a number of rose and currant bushes, entwined with grape vines, now in bloom.

9th.- Mr. M'Clellan, with two of our men, and three belonging to Lisa, were despatched to the Aricaras, to apprise them of our coming, and to see how far it was practicable to procure horses for the journey by land. Soon after we set out, we saw a great number of buffaloe on both sides of the river, over which several herds were swimming. Notwithstanding all the efforts made by these poor animals, the rapidity of the current brought numbers of them within a few yards of our boats, and three were killed. We might have obtained a great many more, but for once we did not kill because it was in our power to do so; but several were killed from Lisa's boat. In the evening Mr. Lisa encamped a little above us, and we were informed by his party, that about sun-set they

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

had seen six Indians.

10th. - A fine breeze sprang up early in the day, and we proceeded rapidly. About noon Mr. M'Clellan and his party appeared on the bank of the river, having found that they could not reach the Aricara nation before the boats. About the middle of the afternoon, we met a canoe with three Indians. They had come from the Aricaras, where intelligence of our approach had been brought by the war party that met us on the 1st. They had made a great parade of the presents, which they received from us, and of the exploit which they had achieved in discovering the white men coming. They reported that the Mandans, who were of the party, had urged an attack on Mr. Hunt's boat, when it was in the situation already described, which they (the Aricaras) had prevented. They also stated, that the Minetarees, or Gros Ventres Indians, had killed two white men on the river above the Missouri Fur Company's fort. We encamped three miles above the mouth of the river Cer-wer-cer-na, after travelling thirty-five miles.

11th.- We hoped this day to arrive at the Aricaras, but did not derive so much benefit from the wind as we expected; and after passing the river Ma-ra-pa, encamped about six miles below the town, near an island on which they were formerly settled.

12th.- During this night we had a severe thunder storm, accompanied by torrents of rain, so that our beds were completely wet. We set out early, and about half way to the town, met a canoe with two chiefs, and an interpreter, who is a Frenchman, and has lived with this tribe more than twenty years. He married a squaw, and has several children. The chiefs were good looking men: one of them is called the head chief, or king, and is named by the French Le Gauche, being left-handed; the other is the war chief, and called the Big Man. The interpreter informed us that the chiefs had come to a resolution to oppose our farther progress up the river, unless a boat was left to trade with them. Mr. Hunt explained to the chiefs the object of his voyage, and that he would willingly trade for horses. About ten o'clock we landed on the north side, opposite the town, or rather towns, as there are two distinct bands, and their villages are about eighty yards apart. Our first care was to spread out the beds and baggage to dry. Whilst the men were occupied in this business, the chief informed us, from the other side of the river, that he would be ready to meet us in council when we should chuse to come over. As the river is here at least eight or nine hundred yards in breadth, it may appear surprising that he could make himself understood at so great a distance; but to those who have heard the Indian languages spoken, and who are acquainted with the Indians, it will appear very credible. In all the Indian languages which I have heard, every syllable of the compound words is accented; as, for instance, the primitive name of this nation, Star-rahe they pronounce Str-r-h. In addition to this construction of their languages, the Indians have remarkably loud voices. The leaders of our two parties had not yet spoken to each other since the affair of the 5th; nor had any communication, except through the medium of Mr. Brackenridge or myself. It was evident that Lisa was still suspected; and M'Clellan, in particular, carefully watched his motions, determined to shoot him if he attempted to cross the river before us, to attend the council of the Indians, contrary to what had been previously agreed upon with Mr. Brackenridge on his behalf. Soon after noon Mr. Hunt manned the large boat, and with Messrs. M'Kenzie and M'Clellan, went over the river; Lisa also attended in his barge. Mr. Brackenridge and myself were of the party. On landing, amongst a crowd of Indians, we were conducted to the council lodge by some chiefs who met us; where we sat down on buff aloe skins prepared for us, and spread on the ground. I noticed that this lodge was constructed in a manner similar to those already described,

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

belonging to the Ottoes. An old Indian lighted the pipe, and handed it to the chief; after which he squatted himself on his hams, near the entrance of the lodge. Although there were nearly twenty present, I learned from Dorion, (near whom I had placed myself) that several of the chiefs were not yet assembled. After we had smoked for a short time, Le Gauche, the chief, spoke to the old Indian at the door, who went out of the lodge: he soon after appeared on the top, and was visible to us through the hole left for the smoke. What the chief dictated to him from within, he bawled out aloud, with the lungs of a stentor. I understood that his object was to summon the chiefs to council, and it was promptly obeyed, as in ten minutes all were assembled. I learned that although we had smoked, the council pipe had not yet been lighted: this was now done by the same old Indian, who it seems was both priest and herald. Le Gauche made the customary appeal to the Great Spirit, by puffing the smoke in different directions towards heaven and earth; after which the pipe was applied to the lips of each assembled, the chief still holding it. He then opened the council by a short speech: in the first place he spoke of their poverty, but said that they were very glad to see us, and would be still more glad to trade with us. Lisa replied, and expressed his intention to trade, if they did not rate their buffaloe and beaver too highly. He then mentioned Mr. Hunt and his party as his friends, and said he should join them in resenting and repelling any injury or insult. Mr. Hunt declared that the object of his journey was not to trade, but to see our brothers, at the great salt lake in the west; for that undertaking he should now want horses, as he purposed to go thence by land, and that he had plenty of goods to exchange, if they would spare the horses. Mr. Lisa and Mr. Hunt accompanied their speeches by suitable presents of tobacco. Le Gauche spoke, and expressed the satisfaction of his people at our coming, and their attachment to the white men. In respect to the trade with Mr. Lisa, he wished for more time to fix the price of dried buffaloe skins, (usually called buffaloe robes) being an article they had most of: his present idea of the price was thirty loads-of powder and ball for each robe. Respecting Mr. Hunt's proposition, he was certain they could not spare the number of horses that he understood he wanted; and that he did not think they ought to sell any horses. Les Yeux Gris, another chief, replied to the latter part of his speech, by stating that they might easily spare Mr. Hunt a considerable number of horses, as they could readily replace them by stealing or by smoking.(27) These arguments governed the opinions of the chiefs, and it was determined to open a trade for horses, when they were satisfied with the price Mr. Hunt purposed to give. The council now broke up, and Messrs. Hunt, M'Kenzie, M'Clellan, Dorion, and myself were conducted to the lodge of one of their chiefs, where there was a feast of sweet corn, prepared by boiling, and mixing it with buffaloe grease. Accustomed as I now was to the privation of bread and salt, I thought it very palatable. Sweet corn is corn gathered before it is ripe, and dried in the sun: it is called by the Americans green corn, or corn in the milk. I quitted the feast, in order to examine the town, which I found to be fortified all round with a ditch, and with pickets or pallsadoes, of about nine feet high. The lodges are placed without any regard to regularity, which renders it difficult to count them, but there appears to be from a hundred and fifty to a hundred and sixty of them. They are constructed in the same manner as those of the Ottoes, with the additional convenience of a railing on the eaves: behind this railing they sit at their ease and smoke. There is scarcely any declivity in the scite of the town; and as little regard is paid to cleanliness, it is very dirty in wet weather. I spent the remainder of the day in examining the bluffs, to ascertain what new plants might be collected in the neighbourhood; having now, for the first time in the course of our voyage, an opportunity to preserve living specimens. During

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

this time the rest of the boats crossed over the river, and a camp was formed about two hundred yards below the town. Lisa's party was nearer to it than our's.

13th.- The morning being rainy, no business was done in the village until the afternoon, when Mr. Hunt exhibited the kind and quantity of goods he purposed to give for each horse. These were placed in the lodge of Le Gauche, for general inspection, and proved to be satisfactory. This day I employed myself in forming a place for the reception of living specimens, a little distance below our camp, and near the river, for the convenience of water.

14th.- I understood that Lisa and the chiefs had agreed that the price of a buffalo robe should be twenty balls, and twenty loads of powder. He removed a part of his goods to the lodge of Le Gauche, and, Mr. Hunt began to trade at the lodge of the Big Man. The trade for horses soon commenced: the species of goods most in demand were carbines, powder, ball, tomahawks, knives, &c. as another expedition against the Sioux was meditated. During this traffic, I walked with Mr. Brackenridge to the upper village, which is separated from the lower one by a small stream. In our walk through the town, I was accosted by the Medicine Man, or doctor, who was standing at the entrance of a lodge into which we went. It appeared that one of his patients, a boy, was within, for whom he was preparing some medicine. He made me understand that he had seen me collecting plants, and that he knew me to be a Medicine Man. He frequently shook hands with us, and took down his medicine bag, made of deer skin, to show me its contents. As I supposed this bag contained the whole materia medica of the nation, I examined it with some attention. There was a considerable quantity of the down of reedmace, (*typha palustris*) which I understood was used in cases of burns or scalds: there was also a quantity of a species of artemisia, common on the prairies, and known to the hunters by the name of hyssop; but the ingredient which was in the greatest abundance, was a species of wall-flower: in character it agrees with *cheiranthus erysimoides*: besides these, I found two new species of astragalus, and some roots of *rudbeckia purpurea*. After examining the contents of the bag, I assured the doctor it was all very good, and we again shook hands with him, and went into several other lodges, where we were very hospitably received. Although they sit on the ground round the fire, buffalo robes were always spread for us, and the pipe was invariably brought out, whilst the squaw prepared something for us to eat: this consisted of dried buffalo meat, mixed with pounded corn, warmed on the fire in an earthen vessel of their own manufacture. Some offered us sweet corn, mixed with beans (*phaseolus*.) The squaws were particularly attentive to us, and took every opportunity to examine such parts of our dress as were manufactured, and not of skins. After our return, I went to the trading house, and found that the trade for horses went on very briskly. The instant a horse was bought, his tail was cropped, to render him more easily distinguished from those belonging to the Indians, which are in all respects as nature formed them. On my return to our camp, I found the warrior there with whom I had become acquainted on the 1st instant. He insisted so much on my going to his lodge, that I went with him; where he spread a very finely painted buffalo robe for me to sit on, and shewed me by signs that it was now mine. In return I gave him a pair of silver bracelets, with ornaments for the ears and hair, having brought a considerable quantity of those articles from St. Louis. With these he was so much pleased, that he requested me to sleep at his lodge during our stay, and informed me that his sister should be my bedfellow. This offer I declined, alleging as an excuse, that I had voluntarily engaged to assist in keeping guard round our camp. I found, on my return, that the principals of our party were engaged in a very serious consultation on our present situation. All

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

our fresh provisions were exhausted, and of the dried buffaloe bought from the Poncars, not more remained than was thought necessary to reserve for the journey by land: of Indian corn we had left only a few bags, which it was thought expedient to parch, grind, and mix with sugar, in order to apply it to the same object. It had been this day ascertained that the Aricaras could not spare us any provisions, as the excessive rains had penetrated into their caches,(28) and spoiled the whole of their reserved stock, so that they expected to be in want themselves before the harvest would come in. In addition to our difficulties, a rumour had been spread this afternoon, and it was believed, that the Sioux had followed us, and were now in the neighbourhood, to the amount of four or five hundred. Whether this was true or not, the consequences were the same to us, as our hunters could not, with any degree of prudence, be suffered to go out; nor indeed were they willing. In this dilemma, no means could be thought of for the removal of our difficulties, but to purchase from the Indians some of their spare dogs, particularly those employed in dragging their sledges, and this measure was resolved on. It may here be remarked, that horses and dogs are the only animals which the Indians domesticate: of the latter they have two varieties: one of these they employ in hunting; the other appears to be of a stupid and lazy nature, always remaining about the village, and employed as above mentioned.

15th.-In conformity with the measure determined upon last evening, a number of dogs were purchased this morning, brought to the camp, and shot for breakfast. I went out to collect, accompanied by Mr. Brackenridge, and proceeded farther into the interior than I had before done. I was rewarded by finding several new species of plants, and by an additional confirmation of the geological formations, as the hills situated at a distance from the river have uniformly flat summits, covered with fragments of rock, mixed with smaller stones and gravel. On our return, when about three miles from the camp, we saw Indians pouring out from the village, some on horseback, others on foot, and all at full speed. They went in a direction to our right, towards some hills, five or six miles distant down the river. A young Indian, soon after, in passing us at some distance, changed his course, and came up to me. He spoke with great earnestness, frequently pointing to the hills, on the tops of which I observed some horsemen apparently meeting each other, and after passing, turn back, and continue galloping. I at length comprehended that enemies were near, and that seeing me only armed with a pistol, he wished me to hasten to the camp. When we came nearer the town, I observed that the tops of the lodges were crowded with women, children, and old men, all looking earnestly towards the hills, and considerable numbers were still running past our camp. I now enquired the cause of the tumult, and found that a signal had been given, indicating the appearance of a war party of the Sioux. The noise and confusion were such as I have not often witnessed: the war whoop was heard in every direction, and even the old men in the village were busily employed in animating the warriors. Some aged Nestors tottered along with the crowd, raising their shrill voices to encourage the young and vigorous to exert themselves in repelling the foe. If any enemy really appeared, they had immediately fled on being discovered; a thing not at all unlikely, as it is conformable to their customs, and in this instance the more probable, as the Sioux would naturally expect that our party would join their adversaries. At all events, the party soon returned in as much disorder as they went out. I observed, that amongst the warriors of this and the other nations, several had foxes' tails attached to the heels of their mock-asons, and I am informed by Captain Winter, who resided some time at Michillimakinac, that the same custom prevails among the tribes in Upper Canada, and that this honour is only permitted

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

to such warriors as have killed an enemy on his own ground.

16th.-I went into the village, and found that the chiefs were assembled to hear from the warriors an account of what had passed the preceding day. As they were not in the habit of printing newspapers, the news was carried through the village by heralds, who attend at the door of the council-lodge, and from time to time go through the village to give information. On my return to the camp, I found that Mr. Hunt and Mr. Lisa were negotiating respecting the boats belonging to our party, which were no longer of any use to us. Mr. Hunt was willing to exchange them with Mr. Lisa for horses, who had a considerable number of them at the Fort belonging to the Missouri Fur Company, about two hundred miles higher up the river. Mr. Hunt, some days previous to this, presented to me the smallest boat, which was a barge built at Michillimakinac; and three American hunters, whom we found at the Aricara nation, agreed to assist me in navigating it down the river, when I should be disposed to return. The three other boats, and some Indian goods, were finally exchanged with Mr. Lisa. In consequence of this arrangement, I found that a party were to be dispatched in a few days to the Fort for the horses, and I resolved to accompany them, if permitted. After an excursion to collect plants, I walked into the village in the evening, and found that a party had arrived, who had been on an expedition to steal horses, in which they were successful. This event, and the return of the war party, caused an unusual bustle: the tops of the lodges were crowded with men, women, and children. Several of the old men harangued them in a loud voice. The subject I understood to be an exhortation to behave well towards the white people, and stating the advantages they derived by an intercourse with them. Notwithstanding all this tumult, some of the women continued their employment in dressing buffaloe skins, which are stretched on frames, and placed on stages, erected both for this purpose, and to dry or jerk the flesh of animals cut into thin slices.

17th.-It was arranged that Mr. Crooks should go to the Company's Fort for the horses; and as more than thirty had been bought from the Aricaras, the men who were to accompany him began to select from amongst them such as they thought the best able to perform the journey. Notwithstanding I had resolved to accompany them, I neglected taking the same precaution, which occasioned me afterwards much vexation. I had already expressed my wish to undertake the journey, and although Mr. Hunt had not absolutely refused to permit me, yet he tried by arguments to dissuade me from it, in representing the danger which the party ran of being cut off by the Sioux, the fatigue of riding on an Indian saddle, &c. I therefore did not for the present press the subject, and spoke of it only to Mr. Crooks, who, knowing my determination, was much pleased with it. After devoting the greatest part of the day to the increasing of my collection, I went into the village, and found that some Indians had arrived from the Chayenne nation, where they had been sent to inform the Aricaras of their intention to visit them in fifteen days. One of these Indians was covered with a buffalo robe, curiously ornamented with figures worked with split quills, stained red and yellow, intermixed with much taste, and the border of the robe entirely hung round with the hoofs of young fawns, which at every movement made a noise much resembling that of the rattlesnake when that animal is irritated. I understood that this robe had been purchased from the Arapahoes, or Big Bead Indians, a remote tribe, who frequent the Rocky Mountains. I wished much to purchase the robe, and offered him such articles in exchange as I thought most likely to induce him to part with it; but he refused. The day following it was purchased by Mr. M'Clellan, who gave it to me for silver ornaments and other articles, which amounted to about ten dollars.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

As these Indians could not speak the Aricara language, they had need of an interpreter, whose place was supplied by one of the Aricaras that could speak their language. They were tall and well proportioned men, but of a darker complexion than the Aricaras. This nation has no fixed place of residence, but resort chiefly about the Black Hills, near the head of Chayenne River, having been driven by the Sioux from their former place of residence, near the Red River of Lake Winnipeg. Their number is now inconsiderable, as they scarcely muster one hundred warriors. On my return to the camp, I found it crowded with Indians and squaws, as it had been for the two preceding evenings. Travellers who have been acquainted with savages, have remarked that they are either very liberal of their women to strangers, or extremely jealous. In this species of liberality no nation can exceed the Aricaras, who flocked down every evening with their wives, sisters, and daughters, anxious to meet with a market for them. The Canadians were very good customers, and Mr. Hunt was kept in full employ during the evening, in delivering out to them blue beads and vermilion, the articles in use for this kind of traffic. This evening I judged that there were not fewer than eighty squaws, and I observed several instances wherein the squaw was consulted by her husband as to the quantum sufficit of price; a mark of consideration which, from some knowledge of Indians, and the estimation in which their women are held, I had not expected.

18th.- Went early to the bluffs to the south-westward of the town, on one of which I observed fourteen buffalo skulls placed in a row. The cavities of the eyes and the nostrils were filled with a species of artemisia common on the prairies, which appears to be a nondescript. On my return, I told our interpreter to inquire into the reason of this, and learned that it was an honour conferred by the Indians on the buffaloes which they had killed, in order to appease their spirits, and prevent them from apprising the living buffaloes of the danger they run in approaching the neighbourhood. After my return, I walked into the village with Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, who wore a green surtout. This attracted very much the attention of the squaws, and from the surprise they shewed, I believe it is a colour with which they were unacquainted. They were so anxious to obtain a part of it, that several offered him favours as an equivalent for a piece which they marked out. This occasioned much mirth betwixt us, and on my part a pretended alarm lest his coat should become a spencer. We amused ourselves sometime by watching a party who were engaged in play. A place was neatly formed, resembling a skittle alley, about nine feet in breadth and ninety feet long: a ring of wood, about five inches in diameter, was trundled along from one end, and when it had run some distance, two Indians, who stood ready, threw after it, in a sliding manner, each a piece of wood, about three feet long and four inches in breadth, made smooth on one edge, and kept from turning by a cross piece passing through it, and bent backwards so as to resemble a cross bow. The standers by kept an account of the game, and he whose piece, in a given number of throws, more frequently came nearest the ring after it had fallen, won the game.

19th.- We breakfasted early, having killed the dogs the night before, and ten horses were brought into the camp for the party appointed to go to the Fort, beyond the Mandans, to escort the horses agreed for with Mr. Lisa, and I now declared to Mr. Hunt that, unless he absolutely refused me the privilege, I was determined to accompany them. With his accustomed kindness he consented, and a man was dispatched to catch a horse for me on the prairie. As the party had cast their bullets, and made every other preparation the preceding night, we were all ready, when the man returned with a very bad horse. He was small, and apparently weak; but being unwilling to delay the party, I fixed my saddle, and we set out, having previously agreed with one of the men to take care of my

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

plants in my absence. We had for our guide a person of the name of Jones, who was acquainted with the whole of the country betwixt the Mandans and Aricaras; and after passing the villages, kept as much as possible in the ravines and valleys, to avoid being seen by the Sioux Indians, who we had reason to think were still lurking about the country; as we knew that if they discovered us, they would, almost to a certainty, cut us off. There being no provisions to spare in the camp, except a little dog's flesh, we took nothing with us to eat, nor made the least attempt to look for game, as our safety perhaps depended on the celerity and silence of our march. We continued at a smart trot until near eight o'clock in the evening, having only stopped once to give the horses an opportunity to feed. Our course lay nearly north, and we kept the river in sight the whole of the day, being sometimes very near it, and at other times five or six miles distant. We encamped on the border of a creek, not more than a mile from the Missouri, on the open prairie. We found this place so much infested with mosquitoes, that scarcely any of us slept. In the latter part of the day I discovered the insufficiency of my horse, as it was with difficulty I could keep up with the rest. The reflections on my situation, combined with the pain occasioned by mosquitoes, kept me from closing my eyes; in addition to this, I had already painfully experienced the effects of an Indian saddle, which I shall describe. It consists of six pieces of wood: two of these are strong forked sticks, one of which is formed to fix on the shoulders of the horse; the other is adapted to the lower part of the back: they are connected by four flat pieces, each about four inches in breadth: two of these are so placed as to lie on each side of the backbone of the horse, which rises above them; the two others are fastened to the extremities of the forked sticks, and the whole is firmly tied by thongs. Two strong slips of buffalo hide are doubled over each of the upper connecting pieces, for the purpose of holding the stirrup, which is formed of a stick about two feet long, and cut half way through in two places, so as to divide it into three equal parts: at these places it is bent, and when the two ends are strongly tied, it forms an equilateral triangle. The conjunct end of the foremost forked stick rises to the height of eight or ten inches above the back of the horse, and serves to fasten on it the coiled end of the long slip of dried skin intended to serve as a bridle: this slip is also made use of to fasten the horse at night, to allow him sufficient space wherein to graze, and is mostly fifty or sixty feet long. Under the saddle is laid a square piece of buffalo skin, dressed with the hair upon it, and doubled four-fold, and on the saddle the rider fixes his blanket.

20th. - We were on horseback on the first appearance of day, and immediately abandoned the river, passed over the bluffs, and struck into the interior of the country. Besides my rifle and other equipments, similar to those of the rest of the party, I had a portfolio for securing specimens of plants. I had contrived already to collect some interesting specimens, by frequently alighting to pluck them, and put them into my hat. For these opportunities, and to ease my horse, I ran many miles alongside of him. Notwithstanding this, about noon he seemed inclined to give up, and I proposed to Mr. Crooks that I should turn back: this he would by no means agree to, but prevailed on the lightest man in company to exchange horses with me for the rest of the day. Soon after noon, we observed some deer grazing at a distance; we therefore halted in a small valley, suffered the horses to graze, and dispatched one of the men to look after the deer, who soon returned, having killed one. As we had not eaten any thing from the morning of the preceding day, this news was very acceptable, and some were sent to fetch the meat, whilst others gathered dry buffaloe dung to boil our kettle. This opportunity afforded me the pleasure of adding to my little collection, besides securing in my portfolio what I had before gathered. It is perhaps needless to

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

observe that the men were not slow in bringing the meat, nor that we were equally expeditious in our cooking. We were so confident of finding game, that we did not take any part of the remains of our feast, but proceeded, in the hope of being able to reach Cannon-ball River(29), intending to encamp on its banks. In the course of the afternoon we perceived innumerable herds of buffalo; and had we wished to hunt, we might have killed great numbers; but we avoided them as much as possible, for fear of disturbing them, as it might have been the means of enabling some lurking war party to discover us. It is well known to the hunters and the Indians, that a herd of buffalo, when frightened, will often run ten, fifteen, or even twenty miles before they stop. About five o'clock we perceived before us the valley of Cannon-ball River, bounded on each side by a range of small hills, visible as far as the eye can reach; and as they appear to diminish regularly, in the proportion of their distance, they produce a singular and pleasing effect. In the evening, as we considered the danger from the Sioux much decreased, we ventured to kill a buffalo: each man cut what he thought proper, and the remainder was left for the wolves, who doubtless picked the bones before the morning. On descending into the valley of the river, some deer were observed, feeding near the bank, whilst others were lying down near them. Some of our men stole cautiously round a grove, and shot two of the poor animals, although we had no great occasion for them. The Cannon-ball River was muddy at this time; but whether it is constantly so or not, I could not learn. It is here about one hundred and sixty yards wide, but so shallow that we crossed it without swimming, but not without wetting some of the blankets on our saddles. We encamped on a very fine prairie, near the river, affording grass in abundance, nearly a yard high, in which we stationed our horses. The alluvion of the river is about a mile in breadth from bluff to bluff, and is very beautiful, being prairie, interspersed with groves of trees, and ornamented with beautiful plants, now in flower. Amongst others which I did not observe before, I found a species of flax, resembling that which is cultivated: I think it is the species known as *linum perenne*. I rambled until it was quite dark, and found my way to the camp by observing the fire.

21st.- We arose before day. Each man cooked his own breakfast, cutting what suited him from the venison, and fixing it on a stick set in the ground, which inclined over the fire. At break of day we were on horseback, and soon after ascended the bluffs, and proceeded on our route. I noticed a sensible change in the face of the country after we had left the river. We now found some of the more elevated places covered with small stones, and divested of herbage, and throughout the soil was of less depth, and the grass shorter and more scanty. About ten o'clock we again found the country to assume the same fertile appearance as on the preceding day, and saw herds of buffalo in every direction: before mid-day two were killed, but very little was taken, except the marrow-bones: each man who chose to take one, hung it to his saddle. In the course of this forenoon we observed three rattlesnakes, of an entirely new and undescribed species: one of them I killed, and carried in my shot-pouch, and during the time we stopped to feed our horses, I secured the skin. We passed very close to several herds of buffalo during the afternoon, near which we always observed a number of wolves lurking. I perceived that those herds which had wolves in their vicinity, were almost wholly females with their calves; but noticed also, that there were a few bulls with them, and that these were always stationed on the outside of the herd, inclosing the cows with their calves within. We came suddenly on one of these herds, containing, as we judged, from six to eight hundred buffaloes: they immediately galloped off. One of our party rode after them, and overtook a calf which could not keep pace with the rest: he instantly dismounted, caught it

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

by the hind leg, and plunged his knife into its body. We took what we wanted, and rode on. This afternoon I noticed a singularly formed hill on our right, in the direction of the Missouri, apparently about ten miles from us. It is of an oblong shape, nearly perpendicular at the ends, and level at the top, so as to resemble a regular building; near the centre there rises a pic, very steep, which seems to be elevated at least one hundred feet above the hill on which it stands. We rode this day almost without intermission, and late in the evening arrived at Riviere de Coeur, or Heart River, and encamped on its banks, or, more properly, lay down in our blankets. I found that my horse did not get worse, although he showed a great disposition to lag behind; a certain proof of his being very much tired, as the Indian horses, when on a journey, have an aversion to be separated from their companions.

22nd.- Although the distance from this place to the Missouri Fur Company's Fort was estimated at about sixty miles, we determined if possible to reach it this day, and were, as usual, on horseback at day-break, having previously breakfasted on veal. I observed the preceding days a sufficient number of buffaloes to induce me to credit the hunters in their reports of the vast numbers they had seen; but this day afforded me ample confirmation. Scarcely had we ascended the bluffs of Heart River, when we discerned herds in every direction; and had we been disposed to devote the day to hunting, we might have killed a great number, as the country north of Heart River is not so uniform in its surface as that we had passed. It consists of ridges, of small elevation, separated by narrow valleys. This renders it much more favourable for hunting, and although we did not materially deviate from our course, five were killed before noon. Mr. Crooks joined me in remonstrating against this waste; but it is impossible to restrain the hunters, as they scarcely ever lose an opportunity of killing, if it offers, even although not in want of food. About two o'clock we arrived on the summit of a ridge more elevated than any we had yet passed. From thence we saw before us a beautiful plain, as we judged, about four miles across, in the direction of our course, and of similar dimension from east to west. It was bounded on all sides by long ridges, similar to that which we had ascended. The scene exhibited in this valley was sufficiently interesting to excite even in our Canadians a wish to stop a few minutes and contemplate it. The whole of the plain was perfectly level, and, like the rest of the country, without a single shrub. It was covered with the finest verdure, and in every part herds of buffalo were feeding. I counted seventeen herds; but the aggregate number of the animals it was difficult even to guess at: some thought upwards of ten thousand. We descended into the plain, and each having two marrow bones hung to his saddle, we resolved to dine wherever we could first find water. In descending into the plain, we came upon a small herd feeding in a valley. One buffalo was shot by our party before we could possibly restrain them. At about half the distance across the plain we reached a small pond, where we halted, and having collected a sufficient quantity of dry buffalo's dung, we made a fire, in which we disposed our bones, and although the water was stagnant, we made free use of it. During our stay here a very large herd of buffalo continued to feed within a quarter of a mile of us. Some of them I observed gazing at us; but as they were to the windward, they had not the power of discovering what we were by the sense of smelling. I found, on inquiry from some of our party who were well acquainted with the habits of these animals, that they seem to rely chiefly on that sense for their safety. Around this herd we counted fifteen wolves, several of which stood for some minutes looking at us, without exhibiting any signs of fear: and as we did not think them worth shooting, we left them unmolested. On gaining the summit of the ridge forming the north-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

ern boundary of the plain, we noticed a chain of hills on our right hand, at the distance of about six miles. Jones, our guide, assured us they were the bluffs of the Missouri, and although we might not arrive at the Fort that night, yet he was certain of our being able to go to the Mandan village. About four o'clock we fell into a trace that Jones said was one of the roads which the Mandans usually followed when they went out to hunt. We resolved to keep along it, as we found it led towards the bluffs, at which we arrived in about an hour, and passed through a narrow valley, bounded on each side by some small rocks of secondary limestone. On turning an angle in the valley, we came suddenly in view of the Missouri, at no great distance from us. The sight of the river caused much joy in our party; but no one had so much occasion as myself to be pleased with it, as it was with the greatest difficulty I could keep up with the party, my horse being so tired, that Dorion and others of the party occasionally rode after me, to beat him forward. The trace turned up a long and very fine plain, betwixt the bluffs and the river. The plain continued to increase in breadth as we advanced, and had on it a sufficiency of clumps of cotton woods, so interspersed as to prevent our seeing its upper termination. We had not been on this plain more than half an hour, when we suddenly saw an Indian on horseback, galloping down the bluffs at full speed, and in a few minutes he was out of sight, having proceeded nearly in the same direction we were pursuing. We considered this as a certain proof that we were not far from the Mandan town, and shortly after, on turning round the point of a large grove, we came in full view of it. We could perceive that the Indian had already given notice of our approach, as the tops of the lodges were crowded with people; and as we advanced, we saw crowds coming from the town to meet us. From the time the first of the Indians met us till we arrived in the town, we were continually employed in shaking hands, as every one was eager to perform that ceremony with the whole party, and several made us understand that they had seen us before, having been of the war party which we had met at the Great Bend. They conducted us to the lodge of She-he-kè, the chief, where we alighted. He met us at the door, and after shaking hands with us, said, to my great surprise in English, "Come in house." I was again surprised, on entering the lodge, to see a fine dunghill cock. On inquiry I found that She-he-kè had brought it with him from the United States, at the time he accompanied Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, where also he learnt his English." It appeared that immediately on the centinel announcing our approach, the squaw had set on the pot. The victuals being ready before we had done smoking, and Mr. Crooks expressing a determination to proceed to the Missouri Fur Company's Fort this evening, we soon finished our meal, which consisted of jerked flesh of buffaloe and pounded corn. The sun was setting when we mounted, and several of our horses appeared much jaded, but mine in particular. I therefore proposed to remain at the Mandans; but the party, and in particular Mr. Crooks, wished me to go on. With some reluctance I consented, and we pushed on our horses, in order to reach Knife River before it was quite dark, which by much exertion we effected, and arrived opposite to the third village of the Minetaree, or Gros Ventres Indians, as the night was closing in. On hallooing, some Indians came down to the bank on the other side of the river, and immediately ran back to the village. In a few minutes we saw them returning along with six squaws, each of whom had a skin canoe on her back, and a paddle in her hand. Whilst we unsaddled our horses they crossed the river in their canoes, and the Indians swam over, and all shook hands with us. The squaws put our saddles in their canoes, -where we also placed ourselves, and left the Indians to drive our horses over the river, which they managed with much address, by placing themselves in such a

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

way as to keep them in a compact body. This river is not rapid, but it has the appearance of being deep, and is about eighty yards wide at this place. After saddling our horses, and giving the squaws three balls and three loads of powder for each man, being the price of ferriage, we passed through the village, having seven miles still to travel in order to reach the Fort. We could not now make our horses exceed a walk. On the hill above the town I imperfectly distinguished something that had the appearance of cavalry, which Jones told me were the stages whereon the Indians deposit the bodies of their dead. About eleven o'clock we reached the Fort, after having travelled this day more than eighteen hours, with very little intermission. We were received in a very friendly manner by Mr. Reuben Lewis, brother to Captain Lewis, who travelled to the Pacific Ocean: the mosquitoes were much less friendly, and were in such numbers, and so troublesome, that notwithstanding our excessive fatigue, it was next to impossible to sleep.

23rd.-We went early to look at the horses. The greater part were lying down, and appeared to have scarcely moved from the place where they had been left the preceding night, seeming to prefer rest to food. In consequence of their jaded state, Mr. Crooks resolved to remain at the Fort four or five days, that they might recruit themselves. On our return to breakfast, we found that the Fort was but ill supplied with provisions, having little of any thing but jerked meat; but as that, or any other accommodation the place afforded, was accompanied by kindness and the most polite attention from Mr. Lewis, we were much pleased with our reception. The bluffs here have a very romantic appearance, and I was preparing to examine them after breakfast, when some squaws came in belonging to the uppermost village of the Minetarees, with a quantity of roots to sell. Being informed that they were dug on the prairie, my curiosity was excited, and on tasting found them very palatable, even in a raw state. They were of the shape of an egg: some of them were nearly as large as those of a goose; others were smaller. Mr. Lewis obligingly caused a few to be boiled. Their taste most resembled that of a parsnip, but I thought them much better. I found no vestige of the plant attached to them, and anxious to ascertain the species, I succeeded in obtaining information from the squaws of the route by which they came to the Fort, and immediately set out on the search. After much pains I found one of the places where they had dug the plants, and to my surprise discovered, from the tops broken off, that the plant was one I was well acquainted with, having found it even in the vicinity of St. Louis, where I had first discovered it, and determined it to be a new species of psoralea, which is now known as psoralea esculenta. On enquiry I was informed that this root is of the greatest importance, not only to the Indians, but to the hunters, who, in case of the failure of other food, from the want of success in hunting, can always support life by resorting to it; and even when not impelled by want, it cannot but be extremely grateful to those who otherwise must exist on animal food alone, without bread or salt; at least I then thought it so. I found the country about the Fort, and especially the bluffs, extremely interesting. It chiefly consists of argillaceous schistus, and a very tenacious and indurated yellow clay, exhibiting in many places the appearance of coal. The land floods from the country behind the bluffs had cut through them, and left large bodies of clay standing up, with the sides perpendicular, and resembling in appearance towers, or large square buildings, which it was impossible to ascend. The incumbent soil appears to be of excellent quality, and was at this time covered with fine grass and a number of beautiful plants. The roots and specimens of these I collected with the greatest assiduity, not having yet determined to remain any longer than until our party returned. I soon found the number to increase so much, as I lengthened my excursions, that I resolved to re-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

main at the Fort until Mr. Lisa came up with his boat, and obtain a passage with him down to the Aricaras, and this resolution I announced to Mr. Crooks. The Missouri had overflowed its banks some time before our arrival, and on receding had left numberless pools in the alluvion. In these the mosquitoes had been generated in numbers inconceivably great. In walking it was necessary to have one hand constantly employed to keep them out of the eyes; and although a person killed hundreds, thousands were ready to take their place. At evening the horses collected in a body round the Fort, waiting until fires were made, to produce smoke, in which they might stand for protection. This was regularly done, and a quantity of green weeds thrown on each fire to increase the smoke. These fires caused much quarrelling and fighting, each horse contending for the centre of the smoke, and the place nearest the fire. In the afternoon we were visited by She-he-kè, the Mandan chief, who came dressed in a suit of clothes brought with him from the United States. He informed us that he had a great wish to go my regret that he had no potatoes. "Oh!" said he, "that does not signify; we can soon have them; there is plenty just over the way." I did not think the man was serious; but on mentioning the circumstance to Mr. Lewis, he told me that there really were potatoes at an English Fort on the river St. Peter's, distant only from two to three hundred miles.

24th.- This morning I was informed by Jussum that the squaw dance would be performed in the afternoon, and he promised to have horses ready for us by mid-day. I packed up a few beads for presents, and spent the fore part of the day in my usual way, but took a more extended range into the interior from the river, as the air was calm, having discovered that the mosquitoes remain almost entirely in the valley of the river, where during calm weather it was nearly impossible to collect. On the top of a hill, about four miles from the Fort, I had a fine view of a beautiful valley, caused by a rivulet, being a branch of Knife River, the declivities of which abound in a new species of *oleagnus*, intermixed with a singular procumbent species of cedar (*juniperus*.) The branches are entirely prostrate on the ground, and never rise above the height of a few inches. The beautiful silvery hue of the first, contrasted with the dark green of the latter, had a most pleasing effect; and to render the scene more interesting, the small alluvion of the rivulet was so plentifully covered with a species of lily, (*lilium catesbaei*) as to make it resemble a scarlet stripe as far as the eye could trace it. I returned to the Fort much gratified, and prepared to accompany Jussum to the dance. On our approach some fields of Indian corn lay betwixt us and the village, which I wished to avoid, and proposed that we should change our route, as the corn was now nearly a yard high.<sup>(30)</sup> This proposal was absolutely refused by Jussum, and we rode on through the corn till we came to where some squaws were at work, who called out to us to make us change our route, but were soon silenced by Jussum. I suspected that he committed this aggression to show his authority or importance. On our arrival at the village we went into several of the lodges, which were constructed exactly in the same form as those of the Aricaras. We smoked at every lodge, and I found by the bustle among the women that they were preparing for the dance, as some of them were putting on their husbands' clothes, for which purpose they did not retire into a corner, nor seem in the least discomposed by our presence. In about half an hour the dance began, which was performed in a circle, the dancers moving round, with tomahawks in their hands. At intervals they turned their faces all at once towards the middle of the circle, and brandished their weapons. After some time one of them stepped into the centre of the ring, and made an harangue, frequently brandishing her weapon, whilst the rest moved round her. I found that the nature of all the

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

speeches was the same, which was to boast of the actions of their husbands. One which made Jussum smile I requested he would interpret. He briefly informed me, that she had said her husband had travelled south-west to a country inhabited by white people, which journey took him twenty days to perform: that he went to steal horses, and when he came to the white people's houses, he found one where the men were gone out, and in which he killed two women, and stole from them a number of horses. She corrected herself, by denying that they were women whom her husband had killed, and the reasons she assigned to prove they were not, was what caused Jussum to smile. The dance did not last more than an hour, and I was informed by Jussum that it would be followed by a feast of dog's flesh, of which it was expected I should partake. I excused myself by saying I wished to collect some plants, and set out alone. In my way to the Fort I passed through a small wood, where I discovered a stage constructed betwixt four trees, standing very near each other, and to which the stage was attached, about ten feet from the ground. On this stage was laid the body of an Indian, wrapt in a buffalo robe. As the stage was very narrow, I could see all that was upon it without much trouble. It was the body of a man, and beside it there lay a bow and quiver with arrows, a tomahawk, and a scalping knife. There were a great number of stages erected about a quarter of a mile from the village, on which the dead bodies were deposited, which, for fear of giving offence, I avoided; as I found, that although it is the custom of these people thus to expose the dead bodies of their ancestors, yet they have in a very high degree that veneration for their remains which is a characteristic of the American Indians. I arrived at the Fort about sunset. Soon afterwards we heard the report of a swivel down the river, which caused us all to run out, and soon saw the boat belonging to Mr. Lisa turning a point about two miles below us. We returned the salute, but he did not arrive that night, as the side on which we were, to within half a mile of the Fort, consisted of high perpendicular bluffs, and his men were too much exhausted to reach us by the river.

25th.- This morning I had the pleasure of again meeting Mr. Brackenridge, and of finding that it was the intention of Mr. Lisa to stay at least a fortnight at the Fort. I was very glad to have so good an opportunity of examining this interesting country. I received by the hands of Mr. Brackenridge some small articles for trade, which I had delivered to him at the Aricaras. This enabled me to reward the gardener for his civility in offering me a place in the garden where I could deposit my living plants, and of this I availed myself during my stay.

27th.- The business relative to the horses having been arranged betwixt Mr. Lisa and Mr. Crooks, he set out early this morning on his return to the Aricara nation; and as he was not without his fears that the Gros Ventres Indians, headed by Le Borgne, or One Eyed, would attempt to rob him of his horses, he determined to proceed with as much celerity as we had travelled to the Fort, and kept his departure as secret as possible. I was much pleased to see this chief at the Fort in a few hours afterwards, being satisfied that Mr. Crooks was now out of his reach. As it may give some idea of the tyrannic sway with which the chiefs sometimes govern these children of nature, I shall relate an instance of cruelty and oppression practised by this villain. He had a wish to possess the wife of a young warrior of his tribe, who was esteemed beautiful. She resisted his offers, and avoided him. He took the opportunity of the absence of her husband, and carried her off forcibly. The husband was informed on his return of the transaction, and went to the lodge of Le Borgne to claim his wife. The monster killed him. The young man had no father: his mother only was living, and he was her only son. The shock deprived her of reason, and she reviles the wretch whenever

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

er she meets him, and often seeks him to procure the opportunity of doing so. Even amongst those we term savages, the horror which the deed has occasioned is so great, and the pity which the situation of the poor maniac has excited so prevailing, that he dares not kill her. How much then ought Christians to detest a similar deed. He has a most savage and ferocious aspect, and is of large stature. He is chief of one of the villages of the Minetarees, or, as the French call them, Gros Ventres, and assumes a dominion over both, although there are several other chiefs. It is stated by Mr. Lewis that the two villages or bands can raise six hundred warriors, but the number at this time is probably much less. The object of this wretch in visiting the Fort was to make professions of friendship, and to obtain a present. Mr. Lisa knew very well the value of his professions, but, notwithstanding, he gave him some, with which he appeared satisfied. Having selected some silver ornaments which I purposed, presenting to She-he-kè, Mr. Brackenridge agreed to accompany me to the Mandan village. We obtained horses from Mr. Lewis for the journey, and about ten o'clock set off. We crossed Knife River at the lower of the Minetaree villages, and paid the accustomed price to the squaw who ferried us over; which was, for each of us, three balls and three charges of powder. Before we left the village, we were invited into the lodge belonging to the White Wolf, one of the chiefs of this village, with whom we smoked. I was surprised to observe that his squaw and one of his children had brown hair, although their skins did not appear to be lighter coloured than the rest of the tribe. As the woman appeared to be above forty years of age, it is almost certain that no intercourse had taken place betwixt these people and the whites at the time she was born. I should have been less surprised at the circumstance had they been one of those tribes who change their places of residence; but they have not even a tradition of having resided in any other place than where the present village stands. The White Wolf appeared to be much pleased with our visit, and by signs invited us to call at his lodge whenever we came that way. He shook hands very cordially with us at parting. In our way to the Mandans we passed through the small village belonging to the Ahwahhaways, consisting of not more than eighteen or twenty lodges. This nation can scarcely muster fifty warriors, and yet they carry on an offensive war against the Snake and Flathead Indians. On our arrival at the Mandans, She-he-kè, as before, came to the door of his lodge, and said, "come in house." We had scarcely entered when he looked earnestly at us, and said, "whiskey." In this we could not gratify him, as we had not thought of bringing any. I presented the silver ornaments to him, with which he seemed much pleased, and after smoking we were feasted with a dish consisting of jerked buffalo meat, corn, and beans boiled together. I mentioned to him my wish to purchase some mockasons, and he sent out into the village to inform the squaws, who flocked into the lodge in such numbers, and with so plentiful a supply, that I could not buy a tenth part of them. I furnished myself with a dozen pair at a cheap rate, for which I gave a little vermilion, or rather red lead, and a few strings of blue beads. During our stay, She-he-kè pointed to a little boy in the lodge, whom we had not before noticed, and gave us to understand that his father was one of the party that accompanied Mr. Lewis, and also indicated the individual. On our return we crossed Knife River at the upper village of the Minetarees. The old squaw who brought the canoe to the opposite side of the river, to fetch us over, was accompanied by three young squaws, apparently about fourteen or fifteen years of age, who came over in the canoe, and were followed by an Indian, who swam over to take care of our horses. When our saddles were taken off, and put into the canoe, Mr. Brackenridge and myself stepped in, and were followed by the old squaw, when the three young ones instantly stripped,

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

threw their clothes into the canoe, and jumped into the river. We had scarcely embarked before they began to practice on us a number of mischievous tricks. The slow progress which the canoe made enabled them to swim round us frequently, sometimes splashing us, then seizing hold of the old squaw's paddle, who tried in vain to strike them with it; at other times they would pull the canoe in such a manner as to change the direction of its course; at length they all seized hold of the hind part, and hung to it. The old squaw called out to the Indian that was following our horses, who immediately swam down to our assistance, and soon relieved us from our frolicksome tormentors, by plunging them successively over head, and holding them for a considerable time under water. After some time they all made their escape from him, by diving and swimming in different directions. On landing, by way of retaliation, we seized their clothes, which caused much laughing betwixt the squaw and the Indian. We had many invitations to stay and smoke; but as it was near sunset, and we had seven miles to ride, they excused us.

29th and 30th.- I continued adding to my stock, and the latter day observed a vein of fine coal, about eighteen inches thick, in the perpendicular bluff below the Fort. On shewing specimens of it to some of the hunters in the Fort, they assured me that higher up the river it was a very common substance, and that there were places in which it was on fire. As pumice is often found floating down the Missouri, I made frequent inquiries of the hunters if any volcano existed on the river or its branches, but could not procure from them any information that would warrant such a conclusion. It is probable, therefore, that this pumice stone proceeds from these burning coal beds.

1st July.- I extended my researches up the river, along the foot of the bluffs; and when at the distance of three or four miles from the Fort, and in the act of digging up some roots, I was surprised by an Indian, who was within a few yards of me before I perceived him. He had a short gun on his shoulder, and came close to me. He shewed me by signs that he knew very well I was collecting those roots and plants for medicine, and laying hold of my shirt, made the motion usual when traffic or exchange is proposed. It consists in crossing the two fore fingers one over the other alternately. On his pointing to a little distance from us, I perceived a squaw coming up, followed by two dogs, each of which drew a sledge, containing some mockasons and other small articles. The signs which he afterwards made were of a nature not to be misunderstood, and implied a wish to make a certain exchange for my shirt, wherein the squaw would have been the temporary object of barter. To this proposition I did not accede, but replied, in the Osage language, honkoska (no) which he seemed to understand, and immediately took hold of my belt, which was of scarlet worsted, worked with blue and white beads, and repeated his proposition, but with the same success. After looking at me fiercely for a few moments, he took his gun from his shoulder, and said in French, *sacre crapaud*, which was also repeated by the squaw. As I had foreseen that he would be offended at my refusal, I took care, on the first movement which he made with his gun, to be beforehand with him, by placing my hand on the lock of mine, which I held presented to him. In this situation we gradually withdrew from each other, until he disappeared with his squaw and the dogs.

2nd.-Mr. Brackenridge and I made an excursion into the interior from the river, and found nothing interesting but what has already been noticed, excepting some bodies of argillaceous schist, parts of which had a columnar appearance. They were lying in a horizontal position, and resembled in some degree the bodies of trees.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

4th.- This day being the anniversary of the independence of the United States, Mr. Lisa invited us to dine on board of his boat, which was accepted by Messrs. Brackenridge, Lewis, Nuttall, and myself; and as Le Borgne and the Black Shoe, the two Minetaree chiefs, called at the Fort before dinner, they were invited also. They ate with moderation, and behaved with much propriety, seeming studiously to imitate the manners of white people. After dinner Mr. Lisa gave to each of them a glass of whiskey, which they drank without any hesitation; but on having swallowed it, they laid their hands on their stomachs, and exhibited such distortion of features, as to render it impossible to forbear laughing. As Jussum was present, I asked him the meaning of some words which they spoke to each other, who informed me that they called the whiskey fire water. Mr. Lisa having announced to us his intention to depart on the 6th for the Aricaras, I employed myself during the 5th in packing up carefully my collection, and on the morning of the 6th we set out. Our progress down the river was very rapid, as it was still in a high state. We did not land until evening, after making in the course of the day more than one hundred miles. In the evening and during the night the mosquitoes were exceedingly troublesome, which rendered it almost impossible to sleep.

7th.- We passed Cannon-ball River about ten o'clock, and stopped a short time at its mouth, where I noticed and procured some additional specimens. In the evening I had the pleasure of meeting my former companions, and was rejoiced to find that Mr. Crooks arrived safely with the horses, and that Mr. Hunt had now obtained nearly eighty in all. Soon after my arrival, Mr. Hunt informed me of his intention to depart from the Aricaras shortly. I therefore purposed returning down the river; and as the Canadians would not be permitted to take their trunks, or, as they termed them, their caissettes, by land, I purchased from them seventeen, in which I intended to arrange my living specimens, having now collected several thousands. It had been a custom with us to keep a guard round our camp during the night, since our arrival at the Aricaras. Four of the party were stationed for this purpose until midnight, and were then relieved by four others, who remained on guard until morning. On the morning of the 10th, at day-break, some Indians came to our camp from the village, among whom was my friend the young warrior. As I happened to be on guard, he came to me, and by signs invited me to go and breakfast with him. Whilst we were sitting together, he suddenly jumped up, and pointed to the bluffs, at the distance of three or four miles down the river. On looking, I observed a numerous crowd of Indians. He gave me to understand that it was a war party on their return, and immediately ran to the village. In a few minutes the tops of the lodges were crowded with Indians, who appeared much agitated. Soon after an Indian galloped past our camp, who I understood was a chief. In a few minutes afterwards parties began to come out of the village, on their way to meet the warriors, or rather to join them, as it is the custom for a war party to wait at a distance from the village, when a victory has been gained, that their friends may join in the parade of a triumphal entry; and on such occasions all their finery and decorations are displayed: some time also is requisite to enable the warriors at home and their friends to paint themselves, so as to appear with proper eclat. During the time that elapsed before the arrival of the procession, I walked into the village, where a universal stillness prevailed. No business seemed to be going on, excepting the preparing of something for the warriors to eat on their return. The squaws were thus employed in all the lodges into which I entered(31), and I noticed that not one of the poor creatures seemed in the least solicitous about her own person; as they are too insignificant to be thought an appendage to a triumph. It was near

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

the middle of the day before the procession came in sight, when I went to meet it, in order that my view might be prolonged. A number of the old men and squaws were also moving down from the town to meet it. At the head of the procession were four standard bearers, followed by a band of warriors on foot; after which came a party on horseback: to these succeeded two of the principal chiefs, betwixt whom was a young warrior, who I understood had been severely wounded. Then came two other standard bearers, who were succeeded by another band of foot and horse; this order was observed until the four bands of which the party consisted had passed. They were about three hundred in number: each man carried a shield; a few were armed with guns, some with bows,(32) and others with war clubs. They were painted in a manner that seemed as if they had studied to make themselves hideous. Many of them had the mark which indicates that they had drunk the blood of an enemy. This mark is made by rubbing the hand all over with vermilion, and by laying it on the mouth, it leaves a complete impression on the face, which is designed to resemble and indicate a bloody hand. With every band some scalps were carried, elevated on long sticks; but it was easy to perceive, on a close examination, that the scalps had been divided, to increase the apparent number. The enemy that were killed we suppose did not exceed in number seven or eight, and they had themselves lost two, so that this engagement had not been a very bloody one. As the body approached the town, the squaws and old men met them, and, excepting the lamentations of those whose relatives had been killed or wounded, the expressions of joy became general, but without disturbing in the least the order of the procession. I walked into the village, which assumed a busy air. On the entrance of the party, the warriors were conducted to the different lodges, that they might refresh themselves; and the old men went among them, shaking hands with some, and seemingly bestowing praises on others, who had conducted themselves well in the battle. As the time fixed on for the departure of Mr. Hunt and his party by land was now approaching, I quitted this scene of festivity, in order to resume my employment, and returned to the camp, where I found the party busily employed in preparing for their departure, by parching and grinding corn, mixing it with sugar, and putting it in bags. I now learned that the three men who had promised to accompany me down the river had changed their minds, and on account of the now determined and inveterate hostility of the Sioux, they could not be prevailed on to venture, although I made them liberal offers. Two of them had determined to join the expedition: the other, Amos Richardson, was very anxious to descend the river, four years having elapsed since he had seen the house of a white man; but we two would not have been sufficient to navigate the boat. Notwithstanding this I commenced filling the caissettes with plants, and placed them in my boat, and in the evening again walked up to the village, where I met Mr. Brackenridge, who had amused himself during the afternoon by attending to the proceedings consequent on the return of the war party. I was also met by my friend the young warrior, who invited me into his lodge, and repeated his request that I would be his guest during my stay. I gave him a few yards of printed calico and some gunpowder. In return he pressed me to accept a bow and a quiver-full of arrows. Whilst we were smoking, his sister prepared some buffalo meat with hominy, of which we ate, and after shaking hands with him, I joined Mr. Brackenridge. In the village all kind of labour among the women was suspended: the old men were going from lodge to lodge, probably enquiring the particulars of the engagement, and bestowing praises on those who had behaved well. The tops and entrances of the lodges were adorned with the shields and arms of the warriors, and all seemed joy and festivity, with the exception of those squaws who were mourning

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

the loss of the killed. It may not be amiss to observe that these people had more reason to rejoice for this victory, than many European nations have had for those of infinitely more importance in appearance. For although it had not been attended with so much bloodshed as some battles in Europe have, yet it had for the present driven away an enemy, who for two or three weeks had been hovering round, and threatened us all with starvation. This enemy is the oldest and the most implacable they have, and has already succeeded so far in effecting their extermination, that they are reduced from composing ten large tribes to their present number. These miscreants have been constantly their oppressors, and rob and murder them sometimes with impunity. The present number which the two villages contain is estimated at two thousand, and the warriors at five hundred, but I think it overrated. They are derived from the Parties, and are stout and well built. The men go mostly naked in summer, and when disposed to make use of a covering, it consists of only a part of a buffalo skin thrown over the shoulders, with a hole for the right arm to pass through. This can be thrown off in an instant. They scarcely ever appear without arms beyond the limits of the town. As the nature of the country renders it necessary that they should pursue their game on horseback, frequent practice renders them not only good horsemen, but also teaches them to handle their bows and strike an object with precision with their arrows, when at full speed They chiefly subsist on the buffalo, and when a herd is discovered, a considerable number of the hunters dispose themselves in a manner so as to approach as near as possible unperceived by them. This must always be done with due regard to the direction of the wind, on account of the exquisite degree in which this animal possesses the sense of smelling. The instant they are perceived by the herd, they dash in amongst them, each singling out one. The horse is taught to understand and obey the wishes of his rider, although conveyed to him by the slightest movement. When he has overtaken a buffalo, he does not offer to pass it, but continues at an even pace until the arrow is discharged, when the rider singles out another immediately, if he thinks the first arrow has effected his purpose. If the horse has sufficient strength and wind to enable his rider to kill three buffaloes, he is held in great estimation. None of these would be sold by the Aricaras to Mr. Hunt. After the horses are out of breath, they pursue the wounded animals at leisure, as they separate from the herd on being wounded, and are soon left behind from weakness, occasioned by loss of blood. To produce a more copious discharge, the heads of the arrows designed to be used in hunting are much broader than those intended for war. The heads of both are flat, and of the form of an isosceles triangle; the length of the two equal sides is three times that of the base. (33) In neither does the shaft of the arrow fill up the wound which the head has made; but the shaft of the hunting arrow is fluted, to promote a still greater discharge of blood. On these occasions they often kill many more than they can possibly dispose of, and it has already been observed that hunting parties are frequently followed by wolves, which profit by this wanton destruction.

The Aricaras do not provide for their horses any better than the other nations of the Missouri. They cut down the cotton wood, (*populus angulosa*) and the horses feed on the bark and smaller branches. I have seen instances exhibiting proofs that these poor animals have eaten branches two inches in diameter. The women, as is the custom with Indians, do all the drudgery, and are excellent cultivators. I have not seen, even in the United States, any crop of Indian corn in finer order, or better managed, than the corn about these villages. They also cultivate squashes, beans, and the small species of tobacco (*nicotiana rustica*.) The only implement of husbandry used by them

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

is the hoe. Of these implements they were so destitute before our arrival, that I saw several of the squaws hoeing their corn with the blade bone of a buffalo, ingeniously fixed in a stick for that purpose.

I am not acquainted with any customs peculiar to this nation, except that of having a sacred lodge in the centre of the largest village. This is called the Medicine Lodge, and in one particular corresponds with the sanctuary of the Jews, as no blood is on any account whatsoever to be spilled within it, not even that of an enemy; nor is any one, having taken refuge there, to be forced from it. This lodge is also the general place of deposit for such things as they devote to the Father of life: but it does not seem absolutely necessary that every thing devoted shall be deposited here; for one of the chiefs, availing himself of this regulation, devoted his horse, or, in their mode of expressing it, "gave it to his medicine," after which he could not, according to their rules, give him away. This exempted him, in respect to that particular object, from the tax which custom lays on the chiefs of this nation and most of the other nations. This will be explained by stating that generosity, or rather an indifference for self, forms here a necessary qualification in a chief. The desire to acquire and possess more than others, is thought a passion too ignoble for a brave man: it often happens, therefore, that a chief is the poorest man in the community.

In respect to their general policy as regards property, they seem to have correct ideas amongst themselves of the *meum* and *tuum*; and when the generally thievish character of those we call savages is considered, the Indians of the Missouri are superlatively honest towards strangers. I never heard of a single instance of a white man being robbed, or having any thing stolen from him in an Indian village. It is true, that when they find white men trapping for beaver on the grounds which they claim, they often take from them the furs they have collected, and beat them severely with their wiping sticks; but so far is this from being surprising, that it is a wonder they do not kill them, or take away their rifles.

The chief part of their riches consists in horses, many of which are obtained from the nations southwest of them, as the Chayennes, Poncars, Panies, &c. who make predatory excursions into Mexico, and steal horses from the Spaniards. A considerable number of those bought from the Aricaras were branded, and were doubtless brought from Mexico, as the Indians do not practice branding.

There is nothing relating to the Indians so difficult to understand as their religion. They believe in a Supreme Being, in a future state, and in supernatural agency. Of the Great Spirit they do not pretend to give any account, but believe him to be the author and giver of all good. They believe in bad spirits, but seem to consider them rather as little wicked beings, who can only gratify their malignity by driving away the game, preventing the efficacy of medicine, or such petty mischief. The belief in a future state seems to be general, as it extends even to the Nodowessies or Sioux, who are the furthest removed from civilization, and who do not even cultivate the soil. It is known, that frequently when an Indian has shot down his enemy, and is preparing to scalp him, with the tomahawk uplifted to give the fatal stroke, he will address him in words to this effect: "My name is Cashegra. I am a famous warrior, and am now going to kill you. When you arrive at the land of spirits, you will see the ghost of my father; tell him it was Cashegra that sent you there." He then gives the blow.

In respect to laws, I could never find that any code is established, or that any crime against society becomes a subject of inquiry amongst the chiefs, excepting cowardice or murder. The last is,

---

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

for the most part, punished with death, and the nearest of kin is deputed by the council to act the part of executioner. In some tribes, I am told, this crime may be commuted. It scarcely requires to be observed, that chastity in females is not a virtue, nor that a deviation from it is considered a crime, when sanctioned by the consent of their husbands, fathers, or brothers: but in some tribes, as the Potowatomies, Saukies, Foxes, &c. the breach of it, without the consent of the husband, is punished severely, as he may bite off the nose of his squaw if she is found guilty.

No people on earth discharge the duties of hospitality with more cordial good-will than the Indians. On entering a lodge I was always met by the master, who first shook hands with me, and immediately looked for his pipe: before he had time to light it, a bear-skin, or that of a buffalo, was spread for me to sit on, although they sat on the bare ground. When the pipe was lighted, he smoked a few whiffs, and then handed it to me; after which it went round to all the men in the lodge. Whilst this was going on, the squaw prepared something to eat, which, when ready, was placed before me on the ground. The squaw, in some instances, examined my dress, and in particular my mockasons: if any repair was wanting, she brought a small leather bag, in which she kept her awls and split sinew, and put it to rights. After conversing as well as we could by signs, if it was near night, I was made to understand that a bed was at my service; and in general this offer was accompanied by that of a bedfellow.

The two men, Jones and Carson, whom we met descending the Missouri on the 22nd of May, had remained with the Aricaras during the winter, and on our return, Carson was desirous of rewarding the Indian with whom he had boarded during that period. For that purpose he obtained some articles from Mr. Hunt, and offered them to the savage, who refused to accept them, and as a reason for it, observed, that "Carson was poorer than himself."

I breakfasted with Mr. Lisa the day following, and found that he intended to send two of the boats purchased from Mr. Hunt to St. Louis, with skins and furs, and that Mr. Brackenridge purposed to descend with them. I knew also that in a week our party would take their departure for the Pacific Ocean. Messrs. Hunt, Crooks, and M'Kenzie invited me to go to the Pacific, and in the first instance I was inclined to accept the invitation; but finding that they could not assure me of a passage from thence to the United States by sea, or even to China, and considering also that I must sacrifice my present collection by adopting that measure, and that in passing over the Rocky Mountains, I should probably be unable to preserve or carry my specimens, I declined. There was now something of uncertainty whether Mr. Lisa would return to St. Louis in autumn, or remain during the winter.

On duly weighing all these circumstances, I resolved to return in the boats which were intended to be dispatched down the river, although it did not exactly suit my views, as I had noticed a great number of species of plants on the river, that, from the early state of the season, could not then be collected advantageously. These I had reserved for my descent; but as no man would accompany me but Richardson, I applied to Mr. Lisa, informing him of my wish to descend in his boats; and on consideration of being permitted to land at certain places which I pointed out, I offered to give him my boat as a compensation. To this he readily agreed, and I commenced preparing for my departure.

It had been a matter of surprise to me on my return from Fort Mandan, to find plenty of fresh buffalo meat in our camp, although the fear of the Sioux had not yet subsided. On enquiry, I found that Mr. Hunt had hit upon an expedient which proved successful. This was to dispatch a

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

boat up the river in the night to some miles distant, which afforded an opportunity to the hunters to procure food. This boat returned with a plentiful supply, and secured the party from starving, as a considerable portion of the Indian dogs were already consumed. I was not less surprised on learning that at least two-thirds of our Canadians had experienced unpleasant consequences from their intercourse with the squaws, notwithstanding which the traffic before mentioned continued. I had been informed by Jones and Carson of the existence of this evil, but found it was of the mildest description, and that here, where the natives do not use spirituous liquors nor salt, it is not feared. I found some of the Canadians digging up roots, with which I understood they made a decoction, and used it as a drink. They mostly preferred the roots of *rudbeckia purpurea*, and sometimes they used those of *houstonia longifolia*.

This morning a circumstance came to our knowledge which gave serious alarm to Mr. Hunt and the leaders of the party. During the night a cask of gunpowder belonging to me had been stolen from amongst the baggage, and from the security of our situation, and the precautions we had taken, it was impossible the Indians could have stolen it. Our camp was situated immediately on the bank of the river; the tents, together with the men sleeping in their blankets, surrounded the baggage, and four men were constantly on guard during the night, walking round the camp in sight of each other. I had been on guard in the fore part of the night, and Mr. Crooks on the latter watch. No collusion could therefore be suspected; these and other circumstances concurred in producing a belief that some of the party intended to desert, and on examination I found that one of my trunks had been opened, and a pistol, some flints, my belt, and a few shirts, taken out. In confirmation of our opinions, John Day, one of the hunters, informed Mr. Hunt of his having overheard some of the Canadians murmuring at the fatigues they had already undergone, and expressing an opinion that they should all be murdered in the journey they were going to undertake. As the safety of the party depended, in a great measure, on its strength, a diminution in the number, if considerable, might therefore defeat the enterprize; a search was made in all the neighbourhood of the camp, and even in the bank of the river, but without effect. As my boat might facilitate a desertion, I caused it to be removed to Mr. Lisa's camp, who moored it in safety with his own boats; and I employed myself, for the remainder of the day, in filling some boxes.

On account of my constant attention to plants, and being regularly employed in collecting, I was considered as the physician of the party by all the nations we saw; and generally the medicine men amongst them sought my acquaintance. This day, the doctor, whom Mr. Brackenridge and I saw in the upper village, and who showed me his medicine bag, came to examine my plants. I found he understood a few French words, such as *bon*, *mal*, &c. I presented him with some small ornaments of silver, with which he appeared to be very much pleased, and requested me to go to his lodge and smoke with him. When I entered, he spread a fine new buffalo robe for me to sit on, and showed me that it was a present, which he wished me to accept. I smoked with him, and regretted much that we could only converse by signs, and he seemed also to feel the same regret. He showed me a quantity of a plant lately gathered, and by signs informed me that it cured the choleric. It was a new species of *amorpha*. I returned to the camp, accompanied by the doctor, who very politely carried the buffalo robe for me.

On the 17th I took leave of my worthy friends, Messrs. Hunt, Crooks, and M'Kenzie, whose kindness and attention to me had been such as to render the parting painful; and I am happy in having this opportunity of testifying my gratitude and respect for them: throughout the whole voyage,

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

every indulgence was given me, that was consistent with their duty, and the general safety. Mr. Lisa had loaded two boats with skins and furs, in each of which were six men. Mr. Brackenridge, Amos Richardson, and myself were passengers. On passing our camp, Mr. Hunt caused the men to draw up in a line, and give three cheers, which we returned; and we soon lost sight of them, as we moved at the rate of about nine miles per hour. I now found, to my great surprise, that Mr. Lisa had instructed Mr. Brackenridge not, on any account, to stop in the day, but if possible, to go night and day. As this measure would deprive me of all hopes of adding to my collection any of the plants lower down the river, and was directly contrary to our agreement, I was greatly mortified and chagrined; and although I found that Mr. Brackenridge felt sensibly for my disappointment, yet I could not expect that he would act contrary to the directions given by Lisa: I had in consequence the mortification during the day, of passing a number of plants that may probably remain unknown for ages.

Our descent was very rapid, and the day remarkably fine; we had an opportunity, therefore, of considering the river more in its tout ensemble than in our ascent, and the changes of scenery came upon us with a succession so quick, as to keep the eye and the mind continually employed. We soon came in sight of the bluffs which border the Chayenne River, stretching as far as the eye could reach, and visible only through the low intervals in those bordering the Missouri. Before night we passed the Chayenne, and during a few moments had a view of its stream, for two or three miles above its junction with the Missouri. It is one of the largest rivers that falls into it, being at least four hundred yards wide at its mouth, and navigable to a great distance. The banks appear to be more steep than those of the Missouri, and are clothed with trees to the water's edge. On both sides of the river we saw numberless herds of buffaloes, grazing in tranquillity, some of them not a quarter of a mile from us when we passed them. We continued under way until late in the evening, and encamped on an island; a measure we determined to pursue when practicable, as we knew that to fall into the hands of the Sioux would be certain death.

18th.- We set out early, and continued under way during the whole of the day without interruption, and encamped on Great Cedar Island, where a French trader, named L'Oiselle, formerly had a post or trading house. This island is about two miles in length, and chiefly covered with very fine cedar, and some rose and currant bushes, considerably overrun with vines, on which some of the grapes were already changing colour.

19th.- In the early part of the day we arrived at the upper part of the Great Bend, and continued to see innumerable herds of buffaloes on both sides of the river. I now found that although our patron, or steersman, who conducted the first boat, and directed our motions, was determined to obey strictly the orders of Lisa as regarded expedition, yet from his timidity I had some hope of opportunities to collect.

Before we entirely passed the Great Bend a breeze arose, which ruffled the surface of the river: He put ashore, not daring to proceed, and we lay to during the remainder of the day, having descended about two hundred and eighty miles in two days and a half. I determined not to lose this opportunity to add a few species to my collection, and was accompanied in my excursion by Mr. Brackenridge, who employed himself in keeping a good look out for fear of a surprise by the Sioux, a precaution necessary to my safety, as the nature of my employment kept me for the most part in a stooping posture. The track of land which is inclosed in the Bend probably contains about forty square miles, nearly level, and the soil excellent. It was at this time covered with fine

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

grass and scattered groves of trees, betwixt which many herds of buffaloes were quietly grazing: we did not wish to disturb them, for fear of thereby enabling the Sioux to discover us.

20th.- About nine o'clock we discovered some buffaloes grazing near the edge of the river, about half a mile below us, and in such a position that we might apparently approach very near them without being discovered. We landed a little above them, and approached within about sixty yards, when four of the party fired. It appeared that two were wounded, one of which fled towards the river, into which it plunged, and was immediately pursued by one of the boats, whilst the party ashore followed the other, among whom I ran, but I was much less intent on obtaining the buffalo, than on procuring some plants which I knew were to be had on the bluffs, and actually succeeded. In about half an hour the party gave up the pursuit, being unsuccessful, and returned discouraged to the place where they had left me. But as I had not gone over the bluffs, and had observed what had passed in the river, I gave them the pleasing intelligence that the boat had overtaken the other buffalo, and that the men were now employed in dragging the carcase ashore. We soon joined them, and in a few minutes the animal was skinned and cut up. It was by much the fattest we had seen, and the tallow it contained was very considerable.(34)

We soon passed White River, which is inferior both in magnitude and beauty to the Chayenne, if we may judge from its mouth, where it is not more than three hundred yards wide. Soon after we passed the river, we saw a buffalo running over the bluff towards the Missouri, which put us on our guard, as we considered it a certain indication of Indians being near. Immediately below the river the vast vein of iron ore commences which has been before mentioned. I again noticed its exact conformity on both sides of the river, in point of elevation and thickness of the vein.

As the evening approached we noticed a succession of flashes of lightning, just appearing over the bluffs, on the opposite side of the river. This did not for some time excite much attention, as it was by no means an uncommon occurrence; but we soon began to apprehend impending danger, as we perceived that the storm advanced with great rapidity, accompanied with appearances truly terrific. The cloud was of a pitchy blackness, and so dense as to resemble a solid body, out of which, at short intervals, the lightning poured in a continued stream for one or two seconds. It was too late to cross the river, and, unfortunately for us, the side on which we were was entirely bounded by rocks. We looked most anxiously for some little harbour, or jutting point, behind which we might shelter ourselves; but not one appeared, and darkness came on with a rapidity I never before witnessed. It was not long that any choice was left us. We plainly heard the storm coming. We stopped and fastened our boats to some shrubs, (*amorpha fruticosa*) which grew in abundance out of the clefts of these rocks, and prepared to save ourselves and our little barks if possible. At each end of the boats there was a small deck: under these we stowed our provisions, &c.: next to the decks were piled the packs of skins, secured by ropes, and in the middle a space of about twelve feet long was left for the oarsmen. Fortunately for us, we had some broad boards in each boat, designed as a defence against arrows, in case of an attack by the Sioux. These boards we placed on the gunwale of the boats, and crammed our blankets into such parts as the lightning enabled us at intervals to see did not fit closely. Before we had time to lash our boards the gale commenced, and in a few minutes the swell was tremendous. For nearly an hour it required the utmost exertion of our strength to hold the boards to their places, and before the storm abated we were nearly exhausted, as also were those who were occupied in baling. As the river is in this place nearly a mile in breadth, and being on the lee shore, the waves were of considerable mag-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

nitide, and frequently broke over the boats. Had our fastenings given way, we must inevitably have perished. When the wind abated the rain increased, and continued for the greater part of the night, during which my friend Brackenridge and myself lay on the deck, rolled up in our wet blankets, congratulating ourselves on our escape. For myself I felt but little: two years, in a great measure spent in the wilds, had inured me to hardships and inclemencies; but I felt much for my friend Brackenridge. Poor young man, his youth, and the delicacy of his frame, ill suited him for such hardships, which, nevertheless, he supported cheerfully.

In the morning the sun rose unobscured, which was to us extremely welcome, as its heat soon rendered us comparatively comfortable. We passed the river L'Eau qui Court, and shortly afterwards the place where we met the Poncar Indians, and as the wind began to blow fresh, we stopped five or six miles lower down, nearly at the place where I met the three Indians on the 24th of May. This enabled me to procure roots of the new species of currant, although with much pain and difficulty, having four miles at least to wade through water and mud, as the river had recently overflowed its banks. On my return to the boats, as the wind had in some degree abated, we proceeded, and had not gone more than five or six miles before we were surprised by a dull hollow sound, the cause of which we could not possibly imagine. It seemed to be one or two miles below us; but as our descent was very rapid, it increased every moment in loudness, and before we had proceeded far, our ears were able to catch some distinct tones, like the bellowing of buffaloes. When opposite to the place from whence it proceeded, we landed, ascended the bank, and entered a small skirting of trees and shrubs, that separated the river from an extensive plain. On gaining a view of it, such a scene opened to us as will fall to the lot of few travellers to witness. This plain was literally covered with buffaloes as far as we could see, and we soon discovered that it consisted in part of females. The males were fighting in every direction, with a fury which I have never seen paralleled, each having singled out his antagonist. We judged that the number must have amounted to some thousands, and that there were many hundreds of these battles going on at the same time, some not eighty yards from us. It will be recollected that at this season the females would naturally admit the society of the males. From attentively observing some of the combats nearest to us, I am persuaded that our domestic bull would almost invariably be worsted in a contest with this animal, as he is inferior to him both in strength and ferocity. A shot was fired amongst them, which they did not seem to notice. Mr. Brackenridge joined me in preventing a volley being fired, as it would have been useless, and therefore wanton; for if we had killed one of these animals, I am certain the weight of his carcase in gold would not have bribed us to fetch him. I shall only observe farther, that the noise occasioned by the trampling and bellowing was far beyond description. In the evening, before we encamped, another immense herd made its appearance, running along the bluffs at full speed, and although at least a mile from us, we could distinctly hear the sound of their feet, which resembled distant thunder.

The morning of the next day was very fine. We saw some buffaloes swimming, at which the men fired, contrary to our wishes, as we did not intend to stop for them. The stream was very rapid. We passed the Sulphur bluffs, and stopped a short time at Floyd's grave: shortly afterwards we arrived at the trading house opposite the Maha village, but saw no one, nor did we wish it, as Mr. Lisa had not called on the Big Elk when he ascended, who might probably be offended at his neglect. We encamped on some drift wood from necessity, not being able to get ashore. The navigation of the river had now become much more difficult, and we had in the two succeeding

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

days some very narrow escapes. The river was considerably higher than at any former period, and from the Mahas to the River Platte, is more crooked than in any other part. At every sudden turn the momentum of the boats had a continual tendency to throw them ashore on the outer bank, which it required all the skill of the steersman, and strength of the oarsmen, to prevent. In two instances we were very near being carried into the woods, in places where the river overflowed its banks. We arrived at Fort Osage, now Fort Clark, on the 27th in the afternoon, and were very politely received by Major Brownson. I had the pleasure to find that Mr. Sibley had returned a few days before from his tour to the Arkansas, to examine the vast body of salt in the neighbourhood of that river. He very politely furnished us with extracts from his journal, which are as follows: "After giving a number of medals to the Panie chiefs, and having various counsels with them, I left their villages on the 4th of June, and proceeded to the little Osage Camp, on the Arkansas, about seventy-five miles south, and sixteen east from the Panies, where I safely arrived on the 11th. I remained several days with the Osages, who had abundance of provisions, they having killed two hundred buffaloes within a few days. Where they had their camp, the Arkansas was about two hundred yards wide, the water shallow, rapid, and of a red colour. On the 16th, the Indians raised their camp, and proceeded towards the hilly country, on the other side of the Arkansas. I continued with them about fifty miles west and thirty miles east, when we fell in with some men of the Chanier's Band, who informed us that their camp was at no great distance, and the camp of the Big Osage still nearer. In consequence, I determined to pass through both on my way to the Grand Salines. On the 21st I rode south forty miles, east thirty, to the Big Osage camp; nearly all the warriors were at war, or abroad hunting. I was remarkably well treated by young White Hair and family; I however remained but one night with them. On the 22d I rode twenty miles south, fifteen east, to the Chanier's camp, where we arrived about one o'clock. We were well treated by the head men; and indeed, this is one of the tribes most attached to the Americans. The chief's name is Clermont. From hence it is forty miles to the Grand Salines, which we reached early on the morning of the 24th. I hasten to give you a description of this celebrated curiosity. "The Grand Saline is situated about two hundred and eighty miles south-west of Fort Osage, between two forks of a small branch of the Arkansas, one of which washes its southern extremity; and the other, the principal one, runs nearly parallel, within a mile of its opposite side. It is a hard level plain, of reddish coloured sand, and of an irregular or mixed figure. Its greatest length is from north-west to south-east, and its circumference full thirty miles. From the appearance of drift-wood that is scattered over, it would seem that the whole plain is at times inundated by the overflowing of the streams that pass near it. This plain is entirely covered in hot dry weather, from two to six inches deep, with a crust of beautiful clean white salt, of a quality rather superior to the imported blown salt: it bears a striking resemblance to a field of brilliant snow after a rain, with a light crust on its top. On a bright sunny morning, the appearance of this natural curiosity is highly picturesque: it possesses the quality of looming, or magnifying objects, and this in a very striking degree, making the small billets of wood appear as formidable as trees. Numbers of buffaloes were on the plain. The Saline is environed by a stripe of marshy prairie, with a few scattered trees, mostly of cotton wood; behind these is a range of sand hills, some of which are perfectly naked, others thinly clothed with verdure and dwarf plum bushes, not more than thirty inches in height, from which we procured abundance of the most delicious plums I ever tasted. The distance to a navigable branch of the Arkansas is about eighty miles, the country tolerably level, and the wa-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

tercourses easily passed. About sixty miles south-west of this, I came to the Saline, the whole of this distance lying over a country remarkably rugged and broken, affording the most romantic and picturesque views imaginable. It is a tract of about seventy-five miles square, in which nature has displayed a great variety of the most strange and whimsical vagaries. It is an assemblage of beautiful meadows, verdant ridges, and rude, mis-shapen piles of red clay, thrown together in the utmost apparent confusion, yet affording the most pleasant harmonies, and presenting us in every direction an endless variety of curious and interesting objects. After winding along for a few miles on the high ridges, you suddenly descend an almost perpendicular declivity of rocks and clay, into a series of level, fertile meadows, watered by some beautiful rivulets, and here and there adorned with shrubby cotton wood trees, elms, and cedars. These meadows are divided by chains formed of red clay and huge masses of gypsum, with here and there a pyramid of gravel: one might imagine himself surrounded by the ruins of some ancient city, and that the plain had sunk, by some convulsion of nature, more than one hundred feet below its former level; for some of the huge columns of red clay rise to the height of two hundred feet perpendicular, capped with rocks of gypsum, which the hand of time is ever crumbling off, and strewing in beautiful transparent flakes along the declivities of the hills, glittering, like so many mirrors, in the sun."

Mr. Sibly also showed me a letter from his father, Dr. Sibly, of Natchitoches, informing him of a mass of native iron having been brought down the Red River, which weighed about two thousand five hundred pounds. In the fort we saw the young bears which we left there in passing up the river; they had grown surprisingly, and were quite tame, except whilst feeding, when all bears are more fierce than at other times.

28th.- After breakfasting at the fort, we set off, and encamped near where Fort Orleans formerly was situated.

29th.- About noon we came in sight of a white man's house, at Boon's Lick, when our boatmen immediately set up a shout. Soon after, some men appeared at the edge of a field of Indian corn, close to the river: they invited us ashore, and we willingly complied. In passing through the corn, I was much struck with its luxuriance: I judged it to be not less than fourteen feet high, and the ears were far above my head. It was Sunday, and when we arrived at the house, we found three women there, all dressed in clean white gowns, and being in other respects very neat, they formed a pleasing contrast to the squaws whom we had of late been in the habit of seeing. They soon spread the table for us, and produced bread, milk, and preserved fruits, which I thought the most delicious that I ever tasted. We arrived at St. Louis in safety, where I had the pleasure of shaking hands with my worthy friend, Mr. Abraham Gallatin, at whose house I slept. Early the next day, I called at the post-office, and found letters from England, informing me of the welfare of my family. This pleasing intelligence was damped by a letter from my son, who informed me that those who had agreed to furnish me with the means of prosecuting my tour, and to whom I had sent my former collection, had determined to withhold any farther supply. Early in the forenoon, my worthy and respected friend, Mr. S. Bridge, from Manchester, came to St. Louis, and invited me to take up my residence for the present with him. He informed me that during my absence he had bought a considerable quantity of land, on which he had built a house. He sent his waggon for my plants, and allotted me a piece of ground, which, with much labour, I prepared in a few days, got it surrounded by a fence, and transplanted the whole of my collection. I found the situation of Mr. Bridge's house extremely pleasant, and his plantation of the first quality of land. Within

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

a hundred and fifty yards of his house was a small vein of coal, from twelve to eighteen inches in thickness, and rising to the surface. For this land he had paid one dollar, sixty-five cents per arpent(35) , or French acre.

In about ten days after my arrival I was attacked by a bilious fever, which confined me to my bed. Its violence left me little hope of recovery. In about a month it became intermittent, and continued until the beginning of December.

During my illness a circumstance occurred, an account of which will tend to show the almost unconquerable attachment to the hunting life in those accustomed to it. It will be remembered that a man named Richardson accompanied us down the Missouri, and that it has been related of him that he had been several years in the wilderness. He had there suffered more than common hardships, having been often ill treated by the Indians, and once severely wounded by an arrow. This man, during our descent, seemed to look forward with great anxiety to the time when we should arrive in the settlements, and often declared his intention never again to adopt the hunting life. When I had been sick about three weeks, he came to see me, and after some conversation, reminded me of my having mentioned a design to ascend the Arkansas River, and requested that I would admit him as my companion, if I persisted in my intention. I spoke of my doubts whether I should ever recover, and expressed my surprise at so sudden a change in his intentions. He replied, "I find so much deceit and selfishness amongst white men, that I am already tired of them. The arrow head which is not yet extracted, pains me when I chop wood, whiskey I can't drink, and bread and salt I don't care about: I will go again amongst the Indians."

Towards the latter end of November, I received a remittance from those who had previously determined to withhold it, together with a letter from the person(36) who managed the Botanic Garden at Liverpool, informing me that he had received my former collection, out of which he had secured in pots more than one thousand plants, and that the seeds were already vegetating in vast numbers. As I had now so far recovered as to be able to ride to St. Louis, I visited my friend Mr. Gallatin, and remained with him some days, during which period I often saw a young gentleman from Philadelphia, Mr. H W. Drinker, who had frequently called to see me in my sickness, and whose talents and amiable manners had created in me a strong attachment to him. In a tour through the country west of the Alleghanies, he visited St. Louis, and pleased with the beauty of the place, had resided there for some months. Finding that I was determined to descend the Mississippi to New Orleans, he invited me to take my passage with him, as he purposed taking a boat down to that place, loaded with lead, of which he had a sufficient quantity. This was a very favourable opportunity, and I made every exertion my weak state would admit of, to be in readiness. A short time afterwards Mr. Drinker ascertained that some debts due to him, and contracted to be paid in lead, could not be collected until the ensuing spring: he therefore found himself necessitated to remain at St. Louis until that period. But aware of the impossibility of my detaining what yet remained of my collection till that season, he offered to buy a boat, load it with lead, and commit it to my care, with liberty to sell the lead at Orleans, or store it for his account. This kind and generous offer I gladly accepted, and in a few days a boat was procured, and her cargo put on board, amounting to about thirty thousand pounds weight of lead. Her crew consisted of five French Creoles, four of whom were oarsmen, and the fifth, who steered the boat, is called the patron.

On the evening of the 4th of December we were in perfect readiness, when I took leave of my

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

friends at St. Louis, several of whom, from their polite attention to me, I have reason to hold in lasting remembrance; and in addition to those I have already mentioned, I ought not to omit Mr. Josh. Charless, editor of the Missouri Gazette, whose disposition and manners gain him the esteem of all who know him: mine he will always retain. I find that I omitted stating, that in November Mr. Lisa arrived at St. Louis, and delivered me a letter from Mr. Hunt, who informed me, that after my departure from the Aricaras, whilst the men were still assembled to watch our boats descend, he addressed them on the subject of my cask of powder, which was stolen, and with such effect, that one of the Canadians came privately to his tent the night following, and informed him where it was buried in the bank of the river. Mr. Hunt caused a search to be made the day after, and found it. As Mr. Lisa was in want of powder, he bought it, and paid me for it on his return. On the 5th of December I set off from St. Louis on the voyage to New Orleans, a distance of about one thousand three hundred and fifty miles. I was accompanied by Mr. John Bridge, whom I admitted as a passenger at the request of his brother. He purposed sailing from Orleans to the eastern states. We arrived at St. Genevieve in the evening, and slept at the mouth of Gabarie, a small creek near the village, where boats trading to that place usually stop. Having some business to transact at St. Genevieve, I was detained till the afternoon of the following day. During my stay here, I became acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Longprie, a native of St. Domingo. He had a boat, in part loaded with lead, intended for Orleans. It was much wished by both of us that we should descend in company, as in case of an accident happening to one, assistance might be rendered by the other; but as he could not be ready in less than two days, I set out, intending to travel leisurely, that he might overtake me. It may be necessary to remark in this place, that the navigation of the Mississippi is attended with considerable danger, and in particular to boats loaded with lead. These, by reason of the small space occupied by the cargo, in case of striking against a planter or a sawyer, sink instantly. That these terms may be understood, it must be observed that the alluvion of the Mississippi is almost in every part covered with timber close to the edge of the river, and that in some part or other encroachments are continually made, and in particular during the time of the floods, when it often happens that tracts of some acres in extent are carried away in a few days. As in most instances a large body of earth is attached to the roots of the trees, it sinks those parts to the bottom of the river, whilst the upper parts, more buoyant, rise to the surface in an inclined posture, generally with the heads of the trees pointing down the river. Some of these trees are fixed and immovable, and are therefore termed planters. Others, although they do not remove from where they are placed, are constantly in motion: the whole tree is sometimes entirely submerged by the pressure of the stream, and carried to a greater depth by its momentum than the stream can maintain. On rising, its momentum in the other direction, causes many of its huge limbs to be lifted above the surface of the river. The period of this oscillatory motion is sometimes of several minutes duration. These are the sawyers, which are much more dangerous than the planters, as no care or caution can sufficiently guard against them. The steersman this instant sees all the surface of the river smooth and tranquil, and the next he is struck with horror at seeing just before him the sawyer raising his terrific arms, and so near that neither strength nor skill can save him from destruction. This is not figurative: many boats have been lost in this way, and more particularly those descending. From these and other risks, it is common for those carrying lead, to have a canoe with them, in which they may save themselves in case of any accident happening to the boat.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

Until the 14th, no occurrence happened worth noticing, excepting that we saw on the bank of the river four Indians, who beckoned to us to stop: we accordingly landed near them, and found they were Choctaws, who wanted to sell some venison and turkies. As they were acquainted with the use of money, I bought from them three turkies and two hind quarters of venison for three quarters of a dollar, being the sum they asked.

In the evening of the 14th, we arrived at New Madrid, and having occasion for some necessaries, I bought them in the morning. I was much disappointed in this place, as I found only a few straggling houses, situated round a plain of from two to three hundred acres in extent. There are only two stores, which are very indifferently furnished. We set off about nine o'clock, and passed the Upper Chickasaw Bluffs; these bluffs are of soft sand-stone rock, of a yellow colour, but some parts being highly charged with oxyd of iron, the whole has a clouded appearance, and is considered as a curiosity by the boatmen. At the lower end of the bluffs we saw a smoke, and on a nearer approach, observed five or six Indians, and on the opposite side of the river, but lower down, we heard a dog howling. When the Indians perceived us, they held up some venison, to show us that they wished to dispose of it. Being desirous of adding to our stock of fresh meat, I hastily got into the canoe, and took with me one of the men, named La France, who spoke the Chickasaw language, as I supposed the Indians to be of that nation. We very imprudently went without arms an omission that gave me some uneasiness before we reached them; especially as the boat, by my direction, proceeded leisurely on.

We found that the Indians had plenty of deer's flesh, and some turkies. I began to bargain for them, when the people in the boat fired a shot, and the dog on the other side of the river instantly ceased howling. The Indians immediately flew to their arms, speaking all together, with much earnestness. La France appeared much terrified, and told me that they said our people in the boat had shot their dog. I desired him to tell them that we did not believe that our people had done so, but if they had, I would pay them any price for him. They seemed too much infuriated to hearken to him, and surrounded us with their weapons in their hands. They were very clamorous amongst themselves, and, as I was afterwards told by La France, could not agree whether they should immediately put us to death, or keep us prisoners until we could procure goods from the boat to pay for the dog, on which it appeared they set high value. Most fortunately for us, the dog, at this instant began to bark opposite to us, having run a considerable distance up the river after the shot was fired.

The tomahawks were immediately laid aside, and I bargained for half a deer, for which I gave them a quarter dollar and some gunpowder. I was not very exact in measuring the last, being rather anxious to get away, and could perceive that La France had no desire to stay any longer. On reaching our canoe we seized our paddles, and being told by La France that we were not yet out of danger, we made every exertion to get out of their reach. When we conceived ourselves safe, we relaxed, and he told me that even when we were leaving them, they were deliberating whether they should detain us or not; some of them having remarked that the dog might be wounded. We had been so long delayed by this adventure, that it was more than an hour before we overtook the boat. I blamed the boatmen much for firing, and charged them with having fired at the dog: this, however, appeared not to have been the case, as they fired at a loon, (*mergus merganser*.) In the course of this day, we passed no fewer than thirteen arks, or Kentucky boats, going with produce to Orleans; all these we left a considerable distance behind, as they only float with

---

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

the stream, and we made considerable head-way with our oars. In the evening we came in view of the dangerous part of the river, called by the Americans the Devil's Channel, and by the French *Chenal du Diable*. It appears to be caused by a bank that crosses the river in this place, which renders it shallow. On this bank, a great number of trees have lodged; and, on account of the shallowness of the river, a considerable portion of the branches are raised above the surface; through these the water rushes with such impetuosity as to be heard at the distance of some miles. As it would require every effort of skill and exertion to pass through this channel in safety, and as the sun had set, I resolved to wait until the morning, and caused the boat to be moored to a small island, about five hundred yards above the entrance into the channel. After supper we went to sleep as usual; and in the night, about ten o'clock, I was awakened by a most tremendous noise, accompanied by so violent an agitation of the boat that it appeared in danger of upsetting. Before I could quit the bed, or rather the skin, upon which I lay, the four men who slept in the other cabin rushed in, and cried out in the greatest terror, "O mon Dieu! Monsieur Bradbury, qu'est ce qu'il y a?" I passed them with some difficulty, and ran to the door of the cabin, where I could distinctly see the river agitated as if by a storm; and although the noise was inconceivably loud and terrific, I could distinctly hear the crash of falling trees, and the screaming of the wild fowl on the river, but found that the boat was still safe at her moorings. I was followed by the men and the patron, who, in accents of terror, were still enquiring what it was: I tried to calm them by saying, "Restez vous tranquil, c'est un tremblement de terre," which term they did not seem to understand. By the time we could get to our fire, which was on a large flag, in the stern of the boat, the shock had ceased; but immediately the perpendicular banks, both above and below us, began to fall into the river in such vast masses, as nearly to sink our boat by the swell they occasioned; and our patron, who seemed more terrified even than the men, began to cry out, "O mon Dieu! nous perirons!" I wished to consult with him as to what we could do to preserve ourselves and the boat, but could get no answer except "O mon Dieu! nous perirons!" and "Allons à terre! Allons à terre!" As I found Mr. Bridge the only one who seemed to retain any presence of mind, we consulted together, and agreed to send two of the men with a candle up the bank, in order to examine if it had separated from the island, a circumstance that we suspected, from hearing the snapping of the limbs of some drift trees, which were deposited between the margin of the river and the summit of the bank. The men, on arriving at the edge of the river, cried out, "Venez à terre! Venez à terre!" and told us there was a fire, and desired Mr. Bridge and the patron to follow them; and as it now occurred to me that the preservation of the boat in a great measure depended on the depth of the river, I tried with a sounding pole, and to my great joy, found it did not exceed eight or ten feet. Immediately after the shock we observed the time, and found it was near two o'clock. At about nearly half-past two, I resolved to go ashore myself, but whilst I was securing some papers and money, by taking them out of my trunks, another shock came on, terrible indeed, but not equal to the first. Morin, our patron, called out from the island, "Monsieur Bradbury! sauvez vous, sauvez vous!" I went ashore, and found the chasm really frightful, being not less than four feet in width, and the bank had sunk at least two feet. I took the candle to examine its length, and concluded that it could not be less than eighty yards; and at each end, the banks had fallen into the river. I now saw clearly that our lives had been saved by our boat being moored to a sloping bank. Before we completed our fire, we had two more shocks, and others occurred during the whole night, at intervals of from six to ten minutes, but they were slight in comparison with the first and second.

---

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

At four o'clock I took a candle, and again examined the bank, and perceived to my great satisfaction that no material alteration had taken place; I also found the boat safe, and secured my pocket compass. I had already noticed that the sound which was heard at the time of every shock, always preceded it at least a second, and that it uniformly came from the same point, and went off in an opposite direction. I now found that the shock came from a little northward of east, and proceeded to the westward. At day-light we had counted twenty-seven shocks during our stay on the island, but still found the chasm so that it might be passed. The river was covered with foam and drift timber, and had risen considerably, but our boat was safe. Whilst we were waiting till the light became sufficient for us to embark, two canoes floated down the river, in one of which we saw some Indian corn and some clothes. We considered this as a melancholy proof that some of the boats we passed the preceding day had perished. Our conjectures were afterwards confirmed, as we learned that three had been overwhelmed, and that all on board had perished. When the daylight appeared to be sufficient for us, I gave orders to embark, and we all went on board. Two men at breakfast, and a third as we were preparing to re-embark. In the last, Mr. Bridge, who was standing within the declivity of the bank, narrowly escaped being thrown into the river, as the sand continued to give way under his feet. Observing that the men were still very much under the influence of terror, I desired Morin to give to each of them a glass of spirits, and reminding them that their safety depended on their exertions, we pushed out into the river. The danger we had now to encounter was of a nature which they understood: the nearer we approached it, the more confidence they appeared to gain; and indeed, all their strength, and all the skill of Morin, was necessary; for there being no direct channel through the trees, we were several times under the necessity of changing our course in the space of a few seconds, and that so instantaneously, as not to leave a moment for deliberation. Immediately after we had cleared all danger, the men dropped their oars, crossed themselves, then gave a shout, which was followed by mutual congratulations on their safety.

We continued on the river till eleven o'clock, when there was another violent shock, which seemed to affect us as sensibly as if we had been on land. The trees on both sides of the river were most violently agitated, and the banks in several places fell in, within our view, carrying with them innumerable trees, the crash of which falling into the river, mixed with the terrible sound attending the shock, and the screaming of the geese and other wild fowl, produced an idea that all nature was in a state of dissolution. During the shock, the river had been much agitated, and the men became anxious to go ashore: my opinion was, that we were much safer on the river; but finding that they laid down their oars, and that they seemed determined to quit the boat for the present, we looked out for a part of the river where we might moor in security, and having found one, we stopped during the remainder of the day.

At three o'clock, another canoe passed us adrift on the river. We did not experience any more shocks until the morning of the 17th, when two occurred; one about five and the other about seven o'clock. We continued our voyage, and about twelve this day, had a severe shock, of very long duration. About four o'clock we came in sight of a log-house, a little above the Lower Chickasaw bluffs. More than twenty people came out as soon as they discovered us, and when within hearing, earnestly entreated us to come ashore. I found them almost distracted with fear, and that they were composed of several families, who had collected to pray together. On entering the house, I saw a bible lying open on the table. They informed me that the greatest part of the inhabitants

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

in the neighbourhood had fled to the hills, on the opposite side of the river, for safety; and that during the shock, about sun-rise on the 16th, a chasm had opened on the sand bar opposite the bluffs below, and on closing again, had thrown the water to the height of a tall tree. They also affirmed that the earth opened in several places back from the river. One of the men, who appeared to be considered as possessing more knowledge than the rest, entered into an explanation of the cause, and attributed it to the comet that had appeared a few months before, which he described as having two horns, over one of which the earth had rolled, and was now lodged betwixt them: that the shocks were occasioned by the attempts made by the earth to surmount the other horn. If this should be accomplished, all would be well, if otherwise, inevitable destruction to the world would follow. Finding him confident in his hypothesis, and myself unable to refute it, I did not dispute the point, and we went on about a mile further. Only one shock occurred this night, at half past seven o'clock. On the morning of the 18th, we had two shocks, one betwixt three and four o'clock, and the other at six. At noon, there was a violent one of very long duration, which threw a great number of trees into the river within our view, and in the evening, two slight shocks more, one at six, the other at nine o'clock.

19th.- We arrived at the mouth of the river St. Francis, and had only one shock, which happened at eleven at night.

20th.- Detained by fog, and experienced only two shocks, one at five, the other at seven in the evening.

21st.- Awakened by a shock at half past four o'clock: this was the last, it was not very violent, but it lasted for nearly a minute.

On the 24th in the evening, we saw a smoke, and knowing that there were no habitations on this part of the river, we made towards it, and found it to be the camp of a few Choctaw Indians, from whom I purchased a swan, for five balls and five loads of powder.

25th.- Monsieur Longpre overtook us, and we encamped together in the evening. He was about two hundred miles from us on the night of the 15th, by the course of the river, where the earthquakes had also been very terrible. It appeared from his account, that at New Madrid the shock had been extremely violent: the greatest part of the houses had been rendered uninhabitable, although, being constructed of timber, and framed together, they were better calculated to withstand the shocks than buildings of brick or stone. The greatest part of the plain on which the town was situated was become a lake, and the houses were deserted.

The remainder of our voyage to Natchez was very pleasant, with the exception of two very narrow escapes from planters in the river. Without any occurrence that would excite much interest, we arrived at the port of Natchez on the afternoon of the 5th of January, and went to the city, which is situated about three quarters of a mile from the river, on the level behind the bluffs. The port consists of thirty or forty houses, and some stores: for the size of it, there is not, perhaps, in the world a more dissipated place. Almost all the Kentucky men stop here on the way to Orleans, and as they now consider all the dangers and difficulties of their voyage as past, they feel the same inclination to dissipation as sailors who have been long out of port, and generally remain here a day or two to indulge it. I spent a pleasant evening in the city, in company with Dr. Brown, whom I found to be a very agreeable and intelligent man.

In the morning of the 6th instant I went on board the steam boat from Pittsburg; she had passed us at the mouth of the Arkansas, three hundred and forty-one miles above Natchez; she was a

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

very handsome vessel, of four hundred and ten tons burden, and was impelled by a very powerful steam engine, made at Pittsburg, whence she had come in less than twenty days, although nineteen hundred miles distant. About eighty miles above New Orleans, the sugar plantations commenced, some of which I visited, accompanied by Mr. Longpre, who assured me that he had not seen the cane in higher perfection in any part of the West Indies. Many fields yet remained, from which the cane had not been got in: they were now covered with snow, an occurrence, as I was informed, very uncommon. From this part to New Orleans, groves of orange trees of great extent are seen on both sides of the river, and at this season, loaded with ripe fruit.

On the 13th we arrived at New Orleans, where I consigned the lead to the agent of Mr. Drinker, again met with my friend Brackenridge, and on the 20th set sail for New York.

Notes

1. A few verses of one of their most favourite songs is annexed; and to show its frivolity to those unacquainted with the language, an imitation in English is added.

I

Derriere chéz nous, il y a un etang,

Ye, ye ment.

Trois canards s'en vont baignans,

Tous du lông de la rivière,

Legérement ma bergère,

Legérement, ye ment.

II

Trois canards s'en vont baignans,

Ye, ye ment.

Le fils du roi s'en va chassant,

Tous du lông de la rivière,

Legérement ma bergère,

Legérement, ye ment.

III

Le fils du roi s'èzi va chassant,

Ye, ye ment.

Avec son grand fusil d'argent,

Tous du lông de la rivière,

Legérement ma bergère,

Legérement, ye ment.

— — —

I

Behind our house there is a pond,

Fal lal de ra.

There came three ducks to swim thereon:

All along the river clear,

Lightly my shepherdess dear,

Lightly, fal de ra.

II,

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

There came three ducks to swim thereon,  
Fal lal de ra.

The prince to chase them he did run  
All along the river clear,  
Lightly my shepherdess dear,  
Lightly, fal de ra.

III

The prince to chase them he did run,  
Fal lal de ra.,  
And he had his great silver gun  
All along the river clear,  
Lightly my shepherdess dear,  
Lightly, fal de ra.

- &c. &c.-- BRADBURY.

2. *Populus angulosa* of Michaux, called by the French Liard.- BRADBURY.

3. This man came to St. Louis in May, 1810, in a small canoe, from the head waters of the Missouri, a distance of three thousand miles, which he traversed in thirty days. I saw him on his arrival, and received from him an account of his adventures after he had separated from Lewis and Clarke's party: one of these, from its singularity, I shall relate. On the arrival of the party on the head waters of the Missouri, Colter, observing an appearance of abundance of beaver being there, he got permission to remain and hunt for some time, which he did in company with a man of the name of Dixon, who had traversed the immense tract of country from St. Louis to the head waters of the Missouri alone. Soon after he separated from Dixon, and trapped in company with a hunter named Potts; and aware of the hostility of the Blackfeet Indians, one of whom had been killed by Lewis, they set their traps at night, and took them up early in the morning, remaining concealed during the day. They were examining their traps early one morning, in a creek about six miles from that branch of the Missouri called Jefferson's Fork, and were ascending in a canoe, when they suddenly heard a great noise, resembling the trampling of animals; but they could not ascertain the fact, as the high perpendicular banks on each side of the river impeded their view. Colter immediately pronounced it to be occasioned by Indians, and advised an instant retreat; but was accused of cowardice by Potts, who insisted that the noise was caused by buffaloes, and they proceeded on. In a few minutes afterwards their doubts were removed, by a party of Indians making their appearance on both sides of the creek, to the amount of five or six hundred, who beckoned them to come ashore. As retreat was now impossible, Colter turned the head of the canoe to the shore; and at the moment of its touching, an Indian seized the rifle belonging to Potts; but Colter, who is a remarkably strong man, immediately retook it, and handed it to Potts, who remained in the canoe, and on receiving it pushed off into the river. He had scarcely quitted the shore when an arrow was shot at him, and he cried out, "Colter, I am wounded." Colter remonstrated with him on the folly of attempting to escape, and urged him to come ashore. Instead of complying, he instantly levelled his rifle at an Indian, and shot him dead on the spot. This conduct, situated as he was, may appear to have been an act of madness; but it was doubtless the effect of sudden, but sound reasoning; for if taken alive, he must have expected to be tortured to death, according to their custom. He was instantly pierced with arrows so numerous, that, to use the language of

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

Colter, "he was made a riddle of." They now seized Colter, stripped him entirely naked, and began to consult on the manner in which he should be put to death. They were first inclined to set him up as a mark to shoot at; but the chief interfered, and seizing him by the shoulder, asked him if he could run fast? Colter, who had been some time amongst the Kee-kat-sa, or Crow Indians, had in a considerable degree acquired the Blackfoot language, and was also well acquainted with Indian customs. He knew that he had now to run for his life, with the dreadful odds of five or six hundred against him, and those armed Indians; therefore cunningly replied that he was a very bad runner, although he was considered by the hunters as remarkably swift. The chief now commanded the party to remain stationary, and led Colter out on the prairie three or four hundred yards, and released him, bidding him to save himself if he could. At that instant the horrid war whoop sounded in the ears of poor Colter, who, urged with the hope of preserving life, ran with a speed at which he was himself surprised. He proceeded towards the Jefferson Fork, having to traverse a plain six miles in breadth, abounding with the prickly pear, on which he was every instant treading with his naked feet. He ran nearly half way across the plain before he ventured to look over his shoulder, when he perceived that the Indians were very much scattered, and that he had gained ground to a considerable distance from the main body; but one Indian, who carried a spear, was much before all the rest, and not more than a hundred yards from him. A faint gleam of hope now cheered the heart of Colter: he derived confidence from the belief that escape was within the bounds of possibility; but that confidence was nearly being fatal to him, for he exerted himself to such a degree, that the blood gushed from his nostrils, and soon almost covered the fore part of his body. He had now arrived within a mile of the river, when he distinctly heard the appalling sound of footsteps behind him, and every instant expected to feel the spear of his pursuer. Again he turned his head, and saw the savage not twenty yards from him. Determined if possible to avoid the expected blow, he suddenly stopped, turned round, and spread out his arms. The Indian, surprised by the suddenness of the action, and perhaps at the bloody appearance of Colter, also attempted to stop; but exhausted with running, he fell whilst endeavouring to throw his spear, which stuck in the ground, and broke in his hand. Colter instantly snatched up the pointed part, with which he pinned him to the earth, and then continued his flight. The foremost of the Indians, on arriving at the place, stopped till others came up to join them, when they set up a hideous yell. Every moment of this time was improved by Colter, who, although fainting and exhausted, succeeded in gaining the skirting of the cotton wood trees, on the borders of the fork, through which he ran, and plunged into the river. Fortunately for him, a little below this place there was an island, against the upper point of which a raft of drift timber had lodged. He dived under the raft, and after several efforts, got his head above water amongst the trunks of trees, covered over with smaller wood to the depth of several feet. Scarcely had he secured himself, when the Indians arrived on the river, screeching and yelling, as Colter expressed it, "like so many devils." They were frequently on the raft during the day, and were seen through the chinks by Colter, who was congratulating himself on his escape, until the idea arose that they might set the raft on fire. In horrible suspense he remained until night, when hearing no more of the Indians, he dived from under the raft, and swam silently down the river to a considerable distance, when he landed, and travelled all night. Although happy in having escaped from the Indians, his situation was still dreadful: he was completely naked, under a burning sun; the soles of his feet were entirely filled with the thorns of the prickly pear; he was hungry, and had no means of killing game, although he

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

saw abundance around him, and was at least seven days journey from Lisa's Fort, on the Bighorn branch of the Roche Jaune River. These were circumstances under which almost any man but an American hunter would have despaired. He arrived at the fort in seven days, having subsisted on a root much esteemed by the Indians of the Missouri, now known by naturalists as *psoralea esculenta*.- BRADBURY.

4. This animal in its defence discharges a few drops of a liquid so foetid that the stench can scarcely be endured by any animal. Clothes on which the smallest particle has fallen, must be buried in the earth for at least a month before they can be worn. This liquor is highly inflammable, and is secreted in a gland beneath the tail, from which it is thrown with a force that will carry it to the distance of three or four yards. Only a very few of the American dogs can be induced to attack it, and those are so powerfully affected by the horrid stench, that they continue to howl for a considerable time afterwards, and instinctively relieve themselves by scratching holes in the earth, into which they put their nose.- BRADBURY.

5. Prairie is the term given to such tracts of land as are divested of timber. In travelling west from the Alleghanies they occur more frequently, and are of greater extent as we approach the Mississippi. When we proceed to the distance of two or three hundred miles west of that river, the whole country is of this description, which continues to the Rocky Mountains westward, and from the head waters of the Mississippi to near the Gulf of Mexico; an extent of territory which probably equals in area the whole empire of China.- BRADBURY.

6. The term given in America to a hollow tree, containing a swarm of bees.- BRADBURY.

7. At that time the natural history of the bee was not very well known at St. Louis. They relate there, that a French lady of that place having received a present of honey from Kaskaskias, was much delighted with it, and being told it was produced by a kind of fly, she sent a negro with a small box to Kaskaskias (60 miles) to get a pair of the flies, in order that she might obtain the breed.- BRADBURY.

8. The great attachment which the she bear has for her young is well known to the American hunter. No danger can induce her to abandon them. Even when they are sufficiently grown to be able to climb a tree, her anxiety for their safety is but little diminished. At that time, if hunted and attacked by dogs, her first care is to make her young climb to a place of safety. If they show any reluctance, she beats them, and having succeeded, turns fearlessly on her pursuers. Perhaps in animal economy maternal affection is almost always commensurate with the helplessness of the young. -BRADBURY.

9. See Appendix, No. I.- BRADBURY.

10. I have been informed, that when the Osages were in the habit of robbing the white settlers, it was customary with them, after they had entered the house, and before they proceeded to plunder, to blacken their faces, and cry. The reason they gave for this was, that they were sorry for the people whom they were going to rob.- BRADBURY.

11. It is customary amongst the Missouri Indians to register every exploit in war, by making a notch for each on the handle of their tomahawks, and they are estimated as being rich or poor in proportion to the number of notches. At their war dances, any warrior who chuses may recount his exploits. This is done by pointing to each notch, and describing the particular act that entitled him to it. The Nodowessies, or Sioux, fix up a post near the war fire, to represent the enemy of each warrior in succession whilst he is recounting his deeds. During his harangue, he strikes the

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

post when in the act of describing how he struck his enemy, and, like Alexander, “fights his battles o’er again.” Mr. Crooks informed me, that the day before our arrival at the fort, he saw an Osage beating and kicking another, who suffered it patiently. Mr. Crooks asked him why he did not defend himself? “Oh!” said he, shewing the handle of his tomahawk, “I am too poor; he is richer than I am.” - BRADBURY.

12. As the term bluff may not be understood, an explanation will render the application more intelligible. The alluvion of the great rivers west of the Alleghannies is considerably lower than the surrounding country, and is of a breadth nearly in the ratio of the magnitude of the river; that of the Missouri is from two to six or eight miles in breadth, and is for the most part from a hundred and fifty to three hundred feet below the general level of the country. The ascent from this valley into the country is precipitous, and is called “the Bluff;” it may consist of rock or clay. Betwixt these bluffs the river runs in a very crooked channel, and is perpetually changing its bed, as the only permanent bounds are the bluffs. It may here be remarked, that a view of the vast channel bounded by these bluffs, connected with the idea that all which it contained has been carried away by the river, would induce us to believe that this globe has existed longer than some people imagine.- BRADBURY.

13. A term given to any elevation that separates the head waters of one creek from those of another- BRADBURY.

14. This chief, called by the French, Oiseau Noir, ruled over the Mahas with a sway the most despotic. He had managed in such a manner as to inspire them with the belief that he was possessed of supernatural powers: in council no chief durst oppose him - in war it was death to disobey. It is related of him at St. Louis, that a trader from that town arrived at the Mahas with an assortment of Indian goods: he applied to Blackbird for liberty to trade, who ordered that he should first bring an his goods into his lodge, which order was obeyed. Blackbird commanded that all the packages should be opened in his presence, and from them he selected what goods he thought proper, amounting to nearly the fourth part of the whole: he caused them to be placed in a part of the lodge distinct from the rest, and addressed the trader to this effect: - “Now, my son, the goods which I have chosen are mine, and those in your possession are your own. Don’t cry, my son; my people shall trade with you for your goods at your own price.” He then spoke to his herald, who ascended to the top of the lodge, and commanded, in the name of the chief, that the Mahas should bring all their beaver, bear, otter, muskrat, and other skins to his lodge, and not on any account to dispute the terms of exchange with the trader, who declared, on his return to St. Louis, that it was the most profitable voyage he had ever made. Mr. Tellier, a gentleman of respectability, who resided near St. Louis, and who had been formerly Indian agent there, informed me that Blackbird obtained this influence over his nation by the means of arsenic, a quantity of that article having been sold to him by a trader, who instructed him in the use of it. If afterwards any of his nation dared to oppose him in his arbitrary measures, he prophesied their death within a certain period, and took good care that his predictions should be verified. He died about the time that Louisiana was added to the United States; having previously made choice of a cave for his sepulchre, on the top of a hill near the Missouri, about eighteen miles below the Maha village. By his order his body was placed on the back of his favourite horse, which was driven into the cave, the mouth of which was then closed up with stones. A large heap was afterwards raised on the summit of the hill.- BRADBURY.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

15. The Indians are remarkable for strength of memory in this particular. They will remember a man whom they have only transiently seen, for a great number of years, and perhaps never during their lives forget him. I had no recollection of these Indians, but they pointed down the river to St. Louis: afterwards they took up the corner of the buffalo robe, held it before their faces, and turned it over as a man does a newspaper in reading it. This action will be explained by relating that I frequented the printing-office of Mr. Joseph Charless, when at St. Louis, to read the papers from the United States, when it often happened that the Indians at that place on business came into the office and sat down. Mr. Charless, out of pleasantry, would hand to each a newspaper, which, out of respect for the custom of the whites, they examined with as much attention as if they could read it, turning it over at the same time that they saw me turn that with which I was engaged.- BRADBURY.

16. See Appendix, No. II.- BRADBURY.

17. When a party on a war excursion are entirely foiled in their object, a dread of the scoffs which may be expected from their tribe, renders them furious; and it often happens in such cases, that they throw away their clothes, or devote them to the Great Spirit, with an intention to do some desperate act. Any white man, or any party of whites, whom they meet and can overcome, is almost certain to be sacrificed in this case.- BRADBURY.

18. A species of sciurus or squirrel, not described in the Syst. Natura. - BRADBURY.

19. The Americans are called "the Big Knives" by the Indians of the Missouri- BRADBURY.

20. One thousand and seventy-five miles from the mouth of the Missouri. - BRADBURY.

21. This man has been suffered to examine the collection of specimens which I sent to Liverpool, and to describe almost the whole, thereby depriving me both of the credit and profit of what was justly due to me.- BRADBURY.

22. In the statistical account of the Missouri, by Lewis, read before Congress in February, 1806, the character of these Indians is thus described: - "These are the vilest miscreants of the savage race, and must ever remain the pirates of the Missouri, until such measures are pursued by our government as will make them feel a dependence on its will for their supply of merchandize. Unless these people are reduced to order by coercive measures, I am ready to pronounce that the citizens of the United States can never enjoy, but partially, the advantages which the Missouri presents. Relying on a regular supply of merchandize through the channel of the river St. Peter's, they view with contempt the merchants of the Missouri, whom they never fail to plunder when in their power. Persuasion or advice with them is viewed as supplication, and only tends to inspire them with contempt for those who offer either. The tameness with which the traders of the Missouri have heretofore submitted to their rapacity, has tended not a little to inspire them. with a poor opinion of the white persons who visit them through that channel. A prevalent idea, and one which they make the rule of their conduct, is, that the more harshly they behave towards the traders, the greater the quantity of merchandize they will bring them, and that they will obtain the articles they wish on better terms. They have endeavoured to inspire the Aricaras with similar sentiments, but happily without effect." - BRADBURY.

23. It may be observed here, that all the Indians who inhabit the prairie use shields in war; but to those who inhabit a woody region they are wholly unknown: as in action, excepting in close fight, each man conceals himself behind a tree. The shields made use of are circular, and are nearly thirty inches in diameter. They are covered with three or four folds of buffalo skin, dried hard in the

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

sun, and are proof against arrows, but not against a bullet.- BRADBURY.

24. An enquiry into the length of time which it has required to produce this effect, might be a matter of great interest to the Chinese philosophers. BRADBURY.

25. During the autumn, whilst the Indians are employed in killing game for their winter's stock, the wolves associate in flocks, and follow them at a distance to feed on the refuse of the carcasses; and will often sit within view, waiting until the Indians have taken what they chuse, and abandoned the rest.- BRADBURY.

26. During our voyage, I often associated with the hunters, to collect information from their united testimony, concerning the nature and habits of animals, with which no men are so well acquainted. This knowledge is absolutely necessary to them, that they may be able to circumvent or surprise those which are the objects of chase, and to avoid such as are dangerous; and likewise to prevent being surprised by them. They can imitate the cry or note of any animal found in the American Wilds, so exactly, as to deceive the animals themselves. I shall here state a few of what I certainly believe to be facts; some I know to be so, and of others I have seen strong presumptive proofs. The opinion of the hunters, respecting the sagacity of the beaver, goes much beyond the statements of any author whom I have read. They state that an old beaver, who has escaped from a trap, can scarcely ever afterwards be caught, as travelling in situations where traps are usually placed, he carries a stick in his mouth, with which he probes the sides of the river, that the stick may be caught in the trap, and thus saves himself.

They say also of this animal, that the young are educated by the old ones. It is well known that in constructing their dams, the first step the beaver takes, is to cut down a tree that shall fall across the stream intended to be dammed up. The hunters in the early part of our voyage informed me, that they had often found trees near the edge of a creek, in part cut through and abandoned; and always observed that those trees would not have fallen across the creek, and that by comparing the marks left by the teeth on those trees, with others, they found them much smaller; and therefore not only concluded that they were made by young beavers, but that the old ones, perceiving their error, had caused them to desist. They promised to show me proofs of this, and during our voyage I saw several, and in no instance would the trees, thus abandoned, have fallen across the creek.

I have myself witnessed an instance of a doe, when pursued, although not many seconds out of sight, so effectually hide her fawn, that we could not find it although assisted by a dog. I mentioned this fact to the hunters, who assured me that no dog, nor perhaps any beast of prey, can follow a fawn by the scent, and showed me in a full grown deer, a gland and a tuft of red hair, situated a little above the hind part of the fore foot, which had a very strong smell of musk. This tuft they call the scent, and believe that the route of the animal is betrayed by the effluvia proceeding from it. This tuft is mercifully withheld until the animal has acquired strength. What a benevolent arrangement! -BRADBURY.

27. It was not difficult to comprehend that horses might be obtained by stealing, but how they could be procured by smoking I did not then understand. On the first opportunity, I enquired from Mr. Crooks, who is remarkably well acquainted with Indian customs: from him I learned, that it is a practice with tribes in amity to apply to each other in cases of necessity. When one tribe is deficient in any article of which the other has abundance, they send a deputation, who smoke with them, and inform them of their wants. It would be a breach of Indian courtesy to send them

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

away without the expected supply.- BRADBURY.

28. The nations on the Missouri, always liable to be surprised and plundered by the Teton villains, annually conceal a quantity of corn, beans, &c. after harvest, in holes in the ground, which are artfully covered up. These hoards are called by the French caches, from the verb cacher, to hide. BRADBURY.

29. Cannon-ball River derives its name from the singularly round form of the stones which are found in its bed. These are of all sizes, from one to twelve inches in diameter, or sometimes more: they are of a brownish sand-stone, and before they were rounded by attrition, must have been formed in cubes.- BRADBURY.

30. This is about the full height to which the maize grows in the Upper Missouri, and when this circumstance is connected with the quickness with which it grows and is matured, it is a wonderful instance of the power given to some plants to accommodate themselves to climate. The latitude of this place is about forty-seven degrees geographically, but geologically many degrees colder, arising from its elevation, which must be admitted to be very considerable, when we consider that it is at a distance of more than three thousand miles from the ocean by the course of a rapid river. This plant is certainly the same species of *zea* that is cultivated within the tropics, where it usually requires four months to ripen, and rises to the height of twelve feet. Here ten weeks is sufficient, with a much less degree of heat. Whether or not this property is more peculiar to plants useful to men, and given for wise and benevolent purposes, I will not attempt to determine. -BRADBURY.

31. I noticed over their fires much larger vessels of earthenware than any I had before seen, and was permitted to examine them. They were sufficiently hardened by the fire to cause them to emit a sonorous tone on being struck, and in all I observed impressions on the outside, seemingly made by wicker work. This led me to enquire of them by signs how they were made? when a squaw brought a basket, and took some clay, which she began to spread very evenly within it, shewing me at the same time that they were made in that way. From the shape of these vessels, they must be under the necessity of burning the basket to disengage them, as they are wider at the bottom than at the top. I must here remark, that at the Great Salt Lick, or Saline, about twenty miles from the mouth of the Wabash, vast quantities of Indian earthenware are found, on which I have observed impressions exactly similar to those here mentioned. From the situation of these heaps of fragments, and their proximity to the salt works, I am decidedly of opinion that the Indians practised the art of evaporating the brine, to make salt, before the discovery of America. - BRADBURY.

32. The bows are short, but strong. Those which are esteemed the best, are made of the horns of the animal called by the French *gros corne*. This animal inhabits the Rocky Mountains, and is gregarious. All who have seen it, represent its agility in leaping from rock to rock as one of the most surprising things they ever beheld. The Americans call it the mountain sheep; but the probability is that it belongs to the genus *antelope*. The horns are exceedingly large for the size of the animal. The bows are made of three pieces, very neatly joined together by a long splice, and wound round with sinew in a very exact manner. The next in value, and but little inferior, are made of a yellow wood, from a tree which grows on Red River, and perhaps on the Arkansas. This wood is called *bois jaune*, or *bois d'arc*. I do not think the tree has yet been described, unless it has been found lately in Mexico. I have seen two trees of this species in the garden of Pierre Chouteau, in St. Lou-

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

is, and found that it belongs to the class dioecia; but both of the trees being females, I could not determine the genus. The fruit is as large as an apple, and is rough on the outside. It bleeds an acrid milky juice when wounded, and is called by the hunters the Osage orange. The price of a bow made from this wood at the Aricaras is a horse and a blanket. Many of the war clubs are made of the same kind of wood, and have the blade of a knife, or some sharp instrument, fastened at the end, and projecting from four to six inches, forming a right angle with the club.- BRADBURY.

33. Before the Indians had any intercourse with the whites, they made the heads of their arrows of flint or horn stone. They now purchase them from the traders, who cut them from rolled iron or from hoops.- BRADBURY.

34. I am informed by the hunters, that in autumn the quantity of tallow or fat in the buffalo is very great. It of course diminishes when food becomes scarce. As the same thing obtains in a number of animals, by climate and habit ordained to procure abundance of food in summer, and to suffer great privation in winter, this collection of fat seems to be a kind of reservoir, containing the means of existence, which is drained by absorbent vessels, and returned into the system when necessary- BRADBURY.

35. The arpent is to the statute acre nearly in the proportion of eighty-three to one hundred.- BRADBURY.

36. This man's name is Shepherd.- BRADBURY.

Letter 1

Lewis' Fork, July 18th, 1832.

(A tributary of Columbia river, foot of the Three Teton Mountains.)

DEAR BROTHER,

- A year has nearly elapsed since we parted, and the Fates,- my wayward disposition, - or both combined, have placed us at a distance of some thousand miles from each other. You, in the enjoyment of peace and security; while I, with a small band of hardy trappers, am in the midst of our old enemies the Black Feet Indians - who if they had a chance would take pleasure in "dancing my scalp." Be that as it may, yours is an enviable lot, when compared with mine. You can retire to rest, without apprehensions of midnight alarms; and can walk forth during the day without fear of an assassin : - whilst I am compelled to recline on the "green sward," with the Heavens for a canopy; my arms by my side - and a strong guard keeping watch over our lives and property. Such are our different situations, and such must they remain for at least another year, when I fervently hope to be enabled to quit forever, a pursuit which has little besides danger and privation connected with it.

---

Leaving the boundary line of Missouri, our company, consisting in all of about 60 men, proceeded up the Blue river, which empties into the Kansas; and from thence up the Platte river. Our trip was more prosperous than usual, having taken every precaution which past experience had taught us to provide for every emergency.

We had two steers and fifteen sheep, besides the usual supplies of bacon, meal, flour, &c. to meet our wants, until we reached the Buffalo. In former letters, I told you that this noble, and (to the hunter and Indian) most useful animal, has been gradually retiring from the haunts of civilized men; and is not met with, at any great distance east of the Black hills. To those, who are not amply

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

provided with supplies, the dreary journey from the boundary line to the Buffalo range, must be attended with great danger and privation.

On 11th June we came in view of the Black hills, and since then have never been out of the sight of snow. Our clothing requires to be as warm as yours in the coldest winter. During the last three weeks we have had frost every night, and have frequently encamped by snow banks; yet such a complaint as a cold is unknown among our men!

---

19th July. - I was yesterday interrupted in describing our route, by the cry of "Black Feet!" - Instantly I threw down my pen, and hastily preparing for a conflict with those savages, I proceeded in the direction pointed out by the express, in company with my friend S. - In Indian warfare, we do not marshall our forces; nor approach the scene of conflict in any regular order. Each person goes "on his own hook," if I may be allowed the expression; and in this way our party, with the exception of a few left in charge of the camp, proceeded down the ravine at full gallop. Mr. S. and I, without being aware of the cause or nature of the approaching contest, felt convinced we were about entering on a perilous engagement, in which one, or both of us might fall. We therefore briefly directed each other as to the disposition of our property, or in other words, made our wills, appointing each other sole executor. So far as I have known, (and I have known too many instances,) the utmost respect is paid to the disposal of property in this manner, amongst the hunters; - and I question whether the dying wishes of your fellow citizens, - guarded as they are, by salutary laws, - are better, or more correctly fulfilled, than amongst our mountain traders.

On reaching the party that gave the alarm, we found them debating on the propriety of attacking the enemy, who were strongly fortified in a willow swamp about a mile distant. The information derived from our friends, was given in a few sentences; for at such times "our words are few and full of meaning." No one waits to answer questions, and he who has not a quick ear and ready comprehension, must go to the battle without news. We learned that a small party leaving our encampment on the day previous, had suddenly encountered a band of Black Feet warriors - and, that coming to a halt, a parley ensued; our friends sending two half bred Indians to meet the chief of the Black Feet, who rode out in advance. A few signs (for their languages were unknown to each other) soon satisfied the parties of the irreconcilable enmity existing; an enmity that originated on the part of the Black Feet, with the first visit of Lewis and Clarke to this region and continues, unabated to the present day. This interview took place in sight of both whites and Indians. On a signal given, the latter immediately retired to the swamp where they constructed a fortification of logs, hanging their lodge skins around - by way of masked battery - to conceal their position more effectually. Their number was estimated at 250 warriors.

Our force consisted of from 40 to 50 whites - a few half breeds - and two small bands of friendly Indians, from the Pierced Nose and Flat Head tribes. Mr. S. - (brave as a lion) addressed a few words to the whites, telling them that the enemy was near, and that if at the commencement of the season we did not show a bold front, our prospects in the mountains would be blasted. He concluded his brief but energetic address, by remarking "and now boys, here are the Black Feet who have killed so many of your companions; - who have probably been prowling around us for several days, waiting a favorable chance of attacking us, when they believed us unprepared; - and who are at this moment daring the palefaces to the onset. Some of us may fall; but we die in a good cause; for whose life or property will be secure if the foe be encouraged by refusing their

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

challenge?" Addressing my old friends the Flat Heads, I told them our determination to assail their enemies, in their strong hold, and that we knew we should have their assistance. Then raising the war whoop, Mr. S. and myself, with about twenty others, dashed off at full speed towards the willows. Drum, fife and trumpet, are as nothing when compared with the effect of the war whoop. The yell, the action, and their effect, perhaps, in banishing reflection for the time being, prepare us better for entering into battle than all the "pomp and circumstance" of the best martial music. On reaching the willows we fastened our horses in a thicket, a short distance above where the Black Feet were fortified. Our little party was then formed in two divisions; one under Mr. M.; S. approached along the creek; while Mr. S. his brother A. four other Americans and myself, kept towards where we knew the Indians were waiting for us. We were soon within a few steps of their rude but formidable breastwork - and here "the boldest held his breath for a time." We approached according to the usage in Indian warfare, on our hands and knees; and while in this attitude Mr. S. and myself a little in advance, - a shot from behind the breastwork mortally wounded a brave fellow named St. Clair, who was within two feet of me. Poor fellow! he had a brother in our company, to whom he was greatly attached, and feeling death approach rapidly, he called to us. "I am shot! - oh God - take me to my brother." These were his last words - and we gave immediate directions that they should be obeyed. A few steps further and another of our men, named Phelps, was wounded in the thigh. One of the men was directed to carry him off, and we were thus left within 10 or 15 steps of the fort with only a party of four effective men, opposed to hundreds!

Perhaps you will call it madness to continue an attack under such circumstances; but you must remember that on entering the thicket we expected our example would be followed by more of our men and by the friendly Indians. Even should our course deserve the name of rashness, a retreat would be attended with greater danger than maintaining our ground; for by crawling cautiously along we more effectually avoided the bullets which were now "hailing" around us, than by exposing our backs to an Indian's aim. We continued to keep up a steady fire, never rising higher than our knee to take aim, and never losing a shot by firing without an object. While thus engaged on one occasion, with my left heel touching the right knee, and taking deliberate aim at a rascal who was peeping out between the lodge skins, a bullet whistled by so near my leg, as to induce the belief that I was wounded. I soon found it was a false alarm, and am since then grateful that my legs are not larger; -for it requires a centre shot to hit there. In the mean time another brave fellow, quickly, received a bullet in his head - gave one spring from where he stood, leaning against Mr. S. and me and fell down a corpse! Either the same ball, or one fired at the same time, struck Mr. S. on the left arm, fracturing the bone, and passing out under the shoulder blade. He remarked that he was wounded, and continued the attack for a short time, but the loss of blood, and thirst which succeeded, obliged him to call on me for assistance.

By this time the Pierced Nose and Flat Head Indians began to join us, and the fire on the Fort became more formidable and deadly. I assisted Mr. S. from the scene to the creek, where I probed the wound, and dressed it as well as the means within reach admitted of. We then made a litter and carried him back to the encampment, where I am happy to say he seems to be recovering. To return, however, to the field of battle; our men, and the friendly Indians continued the assault from the time we left (late in the afternoon) until dark, without being able to enter the fortress. The Black Feet defended their position (which was well chosen) with obstinate bravery. During

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

the night our men drew off, and took such stations around the spot as to detect the enemy in case of an attempt to escape. Notwithstanding all their precautions, the Black Feet effected a retreat, so quietly that it was not discovered until this morning. I have just returned from the battle field; - the sight was distressing; - two of our brave men were killed - two more are I fear mortally - and four seriously wounded. Of the friendly Indians I saw the bodies of five braves who -  
“Could lightly wheel the bright claymore, And send the whistling arrow far:”  
- dressed and painted for burial; and then laid in one grave. Two or three others I am told have died since morning.

The loss of the enemy I am unable to ascertain. You are aware that it is their custom to carry off the slain, when in their power. We found on examination that we had killed of their horses, which were within the enclosure and conjectured from their trail that there was an equal number in killed and wounded amongst their warriors.

In giving these details of an encounter with savages, while the incidents are yet fresh on my memory. I fear I shall only add to your antipathy of the mode of life that necessity and choice have caused me to adopt. To confess the truth I am sick of it. In the course of a few days I hope to begin my return trip to St. Louis - from whence I may give some further details of “Mountain perils.”  
Yours, &c. &c.

Letter II

Green River, Rocky Mountains, July 10, 1833.

DEAR BROTHER.

- I am now on my route from the head of Columbia river, to the mouth of the Yellow Stone, where it empties into the Missouri. You can have no idea of the anxiety and toil of such a march. With “returns” of some value, our party are traversing a country frequented by bands of Indians, whose friendship can only be depended on, when our vigilance and strength sets hostility at defiance. From our point of destination, we will send our beaver, &c. by water to St. Louis, - and I will probably build a fort, and establish a trading station in the vicinity.

Yesterday I met a party of the Shoshonee or Snake Indians, with their principal chief “The Iron Wristband.” We had a smoke and talk, as is usual on such occasions; in the course of which I discovered that my new friend wished to employ me in the capacity of ambassador extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, on a mission to the Crow Indians; through whose country I intend to pass. Much as I have been accustomed to the tact and shrewdness of Indian chiefs, I have seldom seen stronger proofs of political cunning, than on this occasion.

The Iron Wristband had lately succeeded his father “Petticoat,” as chief of the nation. It seems that a misunderstanding had arisen between the Snakes and Crows, - not so serious as to lead to immediate open hostilities, - yet sufficient to render it doubtful whether they could meet as friends. To ascertain the views of the Crows; and if hostile, to deliver a suitable defiance, were to be the objects of my mission.

After some preliminary conversation, the chief made me a speech, in which were condensed his final instructions. I took notes of it at the time, and herewith give you the substance. The sententious brevity and emphatic point, would have put some of your long winded orators to the blush; - and few of them could convey their meaning with more accuracy.

“Write a letter,” said he “to the Crows. Let it be in two parts. Tell them my people wish to know

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

their intentions. We are anxious to go to war with the Black Feet Indians (common enemies to the Crows and Snakes). We do not wish to fight with our former friends and allies - the Crows; - nor to divide our strength by keeping some war parties at home to protect our squaws. No - we wish to be friends with the Crows; we wish to join them, against the Black Feet ; - we wish to smoke, trade and intermarry with their people. If they will agree to this, we will be happy; - we will love them as neighbours - as friends - as allies.

“Should the Crow Indians reject these offers of peace, then the Snakes hurl defiance at them. Let them come. There are many heroes among us, who have never known fear. We will meet them with as much ferocity as enemies as we could have cordially greeted them as friends. We are not afraid. We will call on our friends the Shians, Aripahoes, Utaws and Navahoes, before the snow comes, and will grind them to death!

“Let this be your letter. Divide it into two parts. If the offer of peace be accepted, then destroy the other. If not, then give them our defiance, and tell them to come on.”

“Eight years ago, when we first saw the long knife (Gen. A\_\_y) there had been war between us and the Crows. We had killed many of them. They were as children in our hands. Your friend, the Long Knife, offered to make peace. He gave us large presents. We consented; and since then, the tomahawk has been buried. Our wish is still for peace. Let their answer be frank and candid. Peace or war, is the same to us; only let them say which they prefer.”

I listened with much attention, and no small share of admiration to this brief harangue. Were you familiar with the position of the parties, you would see in every sentence, evidence of deep policy, and consummate political skill. The Snakes were deeply apprehensive of the effects if a war with the Crows; for they could not wage war with that nation, and the Black Feet: yet an Indian well knows the danger of admitting weakness; or asking as a boon, what he knows can only be held by his rifle. On parting, I promised the chief to write and deliver the letter “in two parts” according to his wishes; - and hope to succeed in establishing peace between those nations.

Yours, &c. &c.

### Letter III

Fort William, Nov. 16th, 1833.

(the mouth of the Yellow Stone river.)

DEAR BROTHER,

- My time has been so much occupied during the last five weeks, preparing our winter quarters, that I have been obliged to omit my usual monthly letter. You have never built a fort? Then pray Heaven you never may; for of all the trouble and annoyance I have ever experienced, that gives the most. A few days more will enable me to complete the outside of our accommodations, with the exception of an ice house and provision store. We can finish the interior at our leisure. Our fort is 130 by 150 feet - strongly built, with only one well guarded entrance - and inclosing all our houses, stores, &c.

The trade has scarcely commenced; but we, and our rivals, are electioneering hard for it; - a business that would puzzle one of your most noisy politicians. Intrigue, bribery and corruption are the order of the day. The Indians feel their importance and maintain it.

Amongst those who lately visited me, was a part of the tribe of Creek [Cree?] Indians, accompanied by their chief Sonnant (anglice “Rattle.”) He is a man above the common size, and of very

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

remarkable appearance. When you look at an Indian, you generally try to discover his character from his eye; but the optics of this chief defied scrutiny. They were so embedded between high cheek bones, a hawk nose that exceeds belief, and large shaggy eye brows; that no man, even in your prying and starring city, could tell their colour, without such a look as an Indian brooks not; while my new friend Sonnant could peer into your very soul, without appearing to be looking at you.

His forehead was prominent, - and such were the general developments of his cranium, that without being much of a phrenologist you would at once attribute to him, resolution, to sustain his purposes; implacable hatred and deadly revenge on those who crossed him. His head surmounted by a huge mass of hair, tied in a knot before, not unlike the mode adopted by some belles among the "white folks," (bless them) but with this difference - the hair was all his own. - His full chest and brawny arms, were tattooed with blue stripes, very regularly laid on; and indeed handsome, after your eye became familiar with it; although at first sight, you would condemn the taste that could admire such horrible and disgusting ornaments. The easy, dignified and elastic step of this chief, proved that he was "born to command." His apparel was simple, but comfortable. A Buffalo robe enveloped him from head to knee. Leggins of Antelope skin ensconced his legs; and plain moccasins protected his feet.

Sonnant - or "the Rattle," as I shall call him, has seven brothers, all of whom are chiefs of subordinate rank in the nation. To their influence, no less than his own savage bravery, is he indebted for the great and powerful ascendancy he maintains among his people. He has several wives, the youngest of whom, scarcely fifteen years of age, was amongst the party who visited me, and evidently proud of her lord and master. He seems to be fully sensible of his important standing; but he has one fault which materially lessened his claims on my respect: - namely, a most sacrilegious contempt for the rules laid down by the temperance society; not one of which will he observe; shame on him! - In other words he is a beastly drunkard.

Such as he was, however, he came to see me; and we had a talk on politics - or trade; which with us are synonymous terms. When we advised peace between nations, it is with a view to our benefit, in traffic: - when we advise war (a thing by the way, we have never done) our motives would be equally selfish. I could make some handsome compliments to myself, on recommending sobriety, when I had no spirits to sell; and very strongly deprecating the use of the "fire water" by our friends the "red skins." The advice was certainly good, be the motive as it may. Indeed such is the world, with all its attempts to dissemble. Self interest predominates; and the only difference in its exercise, in savage and civilized life, is that in the former we acknowledge; in the latter you conceal your motives.

Our smoke and talk, ended like all of a similar character, by me giving him some tobacco, ammunition, and vermilion, in return for many fair promises. He then begged me for something to drink, which he said should be strong, as he was accustomed drinking like his "white fathers." I ordered a pint of wine for himself and suite (enough, of the description we have, to make you and I tipsy) when lo! the old sinner swallowed the whole at a single draught! It was amusing to see his companions looking at him imploringly during the act, and very significantly smelling the empty cup. "The Rattle" soon began to make a noise, and became very troublesome from his loquacity. I paced the apartment with some degree of impatience; and to his solicitations for more drink, gave a flat denial; at the same time leaving the house. - The old fellow (for he has seen nearly

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

sixty snows) in great good humour, paced through the room with his hands on his sides (Buffaloe robes have no pockets) observing that he too was a chief and a "medicine man;" and that he would walk as his father (meaning me) had done. The old rascal had seen enough moons to be my grandfather. His conduct and remarks were irresistibly comic. Our clerks and men, were so highly amused that another bumper was allowed his majesty, who departed greatly pleased with his interview; vowing everlasting friendship; which being interpreted; means, as long as I had wine and goods to give, and he had robes and beaver to trade.

Letter IV

Fort William, Dec. 8th, 1833.

(the Mouth of the Yellow Stone River, about 2000 miles above St. Louis.)

DEAR BROTHER

- You have often asked me for a description of the Indians that I have been amongst, and particularly my impressions at the first interview. I confess until now, I was not sufficiently aware of the difference between first impressions, and those formed after we become familiar. You were right - first impressions are the only impressions that can be satisfactory to one who wishes to have a correct idea of Indian character.

After our arrival here, thirty lodges of the Assenaboine Indians came in to the American Fur Company's Fort to trade dressed Buffalo skins, and after finishing their trade they came to our encampment, and stopped a night with us. Their arrival being on the Sabbath, I had the better opportunity of observing the difference between these and the Indians I had formerly been amongst, which resulted to the disadvantage of my new friends as you will perceive.

We discovered them at about a mile distance, issuing out of a little ravine where they had stopped to paint themselves before appearing amongst "The Long Knives," as they term the Americans. They were in number about sixty; all men capable of wielding the merciless tomahawk, or sending the shaft of death; and woe to the retreating foe they pursued - the deer is but little swifter, and a hound not more durable than these sinewy sons of the north, who esteem a horse fit only to pack the fruits of the chase. I might say their appearance was grand - 'twas certainly imposing. Imagine to yourself, sixty able warriors walking abreast, some with spears fantastically ornamented with scarlet cloth, and the feathers of the war eagle, others carrying the war club, not less beautiful, (horrid should I say?) and all armed with guns, or bows and arrows. When they advanced so near as to be heard by us, they commenced a song expressive of their satisfaction at their arrival at the white man's camp - in their songs they generally make the words suit the occasion, which one chants, and all the others join in chorus. When they got within two hundred yards of us they made a halt, and their song ceased; the chief then advanced six paces in front of the rear rank, and at mid distance immediately behind him stopped three or four braves, who ranked next in authority. This halt was a signal for me to approach - I accordingly took my interpreter along, and went up to them; I gave my hand to the chap, which he grasped firmly, and ejaculated how! (I may here observe an Indian has no goodmorrow how dy'e, or any of our nonsensical greetings, but if you try you will find his how! relieves the heart of that pleading sensation we feel on meeting a friend, better than our salutation). He was a fine noble looking fellow, as large as Mr. Sublette, and possessed of the easy manners common to an Indian chief, who ranks himself second to none

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

that walks the earth. I invited them to proceed, and set the example - the march was resumed, every gun was discharged in the air, and the song recommenced, which ended only when we stopped to form a circle to smoke; here the same respect to rank was observed as in the march - the plebeians seated themselves in the outer ring - the braves in an inner one, and the chief still nearer the centre. I entered and took my seat vis a vis his greatness, my interpreter setting to my left. A glance at the motley group was amusing; their dress was plain - it was yet summer, and they had a Buffalo skin (without the hair) to protect them from the sun, as they wore no shirts - their leggins generally like their mockasons, were plain - excepting a few who had rings painted around the leggins, one leg red, the other black - recording some feats they had performed. Long fringes hanging on each side, and a few ornamented with hair, was what constituted their simple dress. They were all painted; some had the face all red except the tip of the nose, others painted with vermilion leaving little spots on the forehead and cheek, which were painted lead color, a few had their eyes painted white and all the other part red; and others again were painted as black as a negro. These last having been to war, and killed some of the enemy were privileged to paint themselves, as an honorary mark of distinction between them, and those who had not sought glory in the paths of danger (the privilege extends to their wives and daughters, who are more strict in its observance). Every one paints according to his taste, as you may any day see pretty girls dressed in Philadelphia, (pardon the comparison) each consulting his complexion. After we had lighted a few pipes of tobacco mixed with kinekinuk, and had each taken a few ambrossial whiffs in dead silence, I commenced and made them a speech, the substance of which was, that we came here to build a fort and trade with them - the sole object we had in view was benefitting them (I had almost said ourselves): yes, that we came here, our sole object to better their condition - that we had a large quantity of merchandise in our boat, and hoped we would find them disposed to trade with us, and reciprocate our good feelings. I then presented them with 300 charges ammunition, 60 plugs tobacco, a doz. knives, and other kick-shaws, which I had brought forward, as my discourse ended in order to produce effect. - I told them this was a small present as earnest of our future conduct, and which I wished them to accept as such.

My plan succeeded, the chief sent forth a murmur of applause, which was responded by his followers - he then said they were poor! He was grateful for the present, and for the words I had spoken, which should not enter our ear and pass out at the other - No! they would carry my words under their left arm (next the heart) and when they found the balance of their nation they would glad their hearts by a recital what I had said. - He then wound up by promises of lasting amity. The present was laid at the feet of the chief, and as yet untouched. He now commenced, assisted by his commissary, to distribute amongst his followers according to their station, but retained nothing for himself; and in this manner a chief gains popularity and influence, and if he distinguishes himself in war, and uses sufficient liberality amongst his adherents, there is no degree of eminence in the nation to which he may not aspire. Each having received his portion they all arose, and went to their several lodges which by this time had arrived.

After their lords, at a respective distance, came the women in Indian file, between each family a space of a few rods. The principal squaw took the lead, and was followed by her joint partners in the affections of the husband, the dogs followed dragging along all the effects of the day. They fasten together at one end two poles eight foot long - this end is tied on a little saddle fastened on the dogs shoulders, and a strap passing under the neck to haul by - immediately behind the dog,

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

is a hoop worked like a sifter, and fastened to the poles to keep them firm and apart, on this is put 50, 60 or 80 lbs. baggage, which these poor animals haul a day's march. What would you say to see a child 2 or 3 years old fastened on one of these drags, enjoying his ride seemingly as much as one of our little urchins of the same age would a ride in a gig or carriage? The howling of the poor dogs, and scolding of the women produced such a disagreeable noise, that I was glad to see the place selected for the encampment, and the squaws set about their several duties of unloading the dogs, pitching the lodges, collecting wood and carrying water; and finally (all being arranged) sitting down on the sweet scented floors of their wigwam, raised and provided in the short space of half an hour. The dress of the women was well adapted to their situation. Short frocks of antelope skin, reaching just below the knee, (as most suitable for walking) worked with porcupine quills. Leggings of the same material, ornamented with beads, and an envelope of a Buffalo skin, or blanket to wrap in by day or sleep in by night, was all that these ladies require.

The men (and women too) are careless of their hair - it is wore long and matted - very ugly. An Assenaboine village, though in my eyes wanting the greatest ornament, fine houses, is more beautiful than you can imagine, and I am certain it would make a handsome view through a magnifying glass at the museum, than the arrival of the Pilgrims at Mecca. Some of their lodges have painted on them the likeness of bears, wolves, dogs, or horses, and some have men with the blood issuing from the wounds, as when the owner of the lodge dealt the death blow - occasionally a man was represented "trimmed off at the shoulders," which looks awkward, as I have witnessed a moment after the operation. You would avoid that lodge, I dare say, that contained the man of blood, but nine times in ten he is the most generous and hospitable you meet.

The lodges when erected looked really fine, and at once reminded me of days by-gone, where I have seen on a handsome meadow, bordering one of our enchanting mountain streams, a village of two thousand lodges (more gracefully proportioned than your finest houses) sprung up as it were by magic, and one to two thousand horses feeding luxuriantly, where but an hour before, the deer startled by the tainted gale, announcing the approach of the enemy man, had fled from the pasture it had long occupied apparently secure from the stealthy steps of the prowling hunter.

Letter V

Rocky Mountains, July 12, 1836.

Dear Brother.

- Feeling a disposition to write, and having met with no incident worth notice, for some days past, I have concluded to give you some details connected with the Sioux Indians, - a nation, perhaps the most numerous, and occupying the most extensive range of country, of any tribe in North America. They have no permanent villages, like their neighbours, the Pawnees, Rees, Mandans and Gros-vants; nor do they, like them, cultivate the soil, but depend for subsistence solely on game, moving about with their leathern lodges from place to place, as their wants or wishes may prompt them.

Their immense numbers rendering unity of purpose and action almost impossible, they are subdivided into tribes, having independent chiefs, occupying distinct portions of territory, and known by different names: Thus we have the Sioux of St. Peters, on the Mississippi; the Sioux of Missouri; the Yanhtoneys, and the Assinnaboines. The two latter tribes are sometimes at war with

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

each other, but it is generally of short duration. At present they are firm and friendly allies; waging war with their neighbours, the Mandans and Gros-vants.

The Assinnaboines, who occupy the northern portion of Sioux territory, call themselves E-ao-ka or Nar-ko-ta. When the white man first visited this country, they were called by their neighbours, the Cree Indians, Assin-poinee, (or the Stone Roasters,) which for sake of easier pronounciation, we have slightly changed. They are the poorest of the Sioux bands, having no horses - an important item of Indian wealth.

Nearly all their baggage is transported by dogs, and I have known 60, 80 or even 100 lb. to be hauled by these poor animals, a days march, with no great apparent fatigue. The Assinnaboines, are not, however insensible to the value of horses; for it is no uncommon occurrence to see one of them offer a horse, in the fall season, for half a gallon of whiskey, which he will buy in the following spring, at the rate of thirty Buffalo robes; and all this difference in consequence of the difficulty of wintering horses in their cold and inhospitable climate. Their principal trading points, are with the British on North Red River, and at the American fur company's post at the mouth of Yellow Stone. The former is visited in the summer, where they dispose of light peltries; and the latter in the fall and winter, where their robes, and other articles of a heavy description, find a better market.

I was forcibly struck with the remarkable similarity which some of their traditions respecting creation, bear to divine revelation. One of their prophets gave me a long history of the formation of things "animate and inanimate," the substance of which I now record for your amusement - and I may as well premise, that as yet, these people have never had either missionary or other instructor amongst them.

The Assinnaboines believe that at a very remote period, the Great Spirit, formed the earth out of a confused mass. He then made a Fox out of clay, which he sent forth to see if the world was large enough. The Fox returned from the survey and reported it too small. By a sudden convulsion, the Great Spirit then made it larger; and again the Fox went forth, but did not return to report the dimensions; from which it was known that the earth was sufficiently capacious. Trees were then made, and when they grew large enough, a man and a woman were made of the timber. Every other living thing was made of clay - male and female of its kind - and all were sent forth, with a command to multiply. It seems the work of creation was done, on the borders of a lake, and amongst the most absurd portion of the creed, is a belief that a fish swam to the shore, - offered itself as a sacrifice - and told the newly created pair, to boil and eat it all, except the scales and bones, which they were directed to bury in the earth. From this sprang up powder, balls, fuzees, knives and other implements of warfare.

In the course of time men had become very numerous. Amongst them were two brothers - great chiefs - who were formed for skill and bravery. One of them was slain by an enormous animal, (for which they have no name) and the other, to revenge his brother's death, afterwards attacked and killed it. This animal was a great favourite with the Great Spirit, and in order to shew his disapprobation of the act, he determined to drown all mankind. The surviving brother heard this, and built himself a large raft, on which he placed a male and female of every animal. The rain poured down, and the earth was covered, over the top of the highest mountain; but the raft floated in security. The chief at length becoming tired of sailing, determined to make land for himself - for he was "strong medicine," and knew every thing. All he wanted was a little earth, or mud.

TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AMERICA, IN THE YEARS 1809, 1810, AND 1811  
BY JOHN BRADBURY, F.L.S. LONDON

---

A Beaver went out, but soon returned, reporting (as sailor's say) "no bottom." Another was next sent, with no better success. Last of all, a musk rat was employed, and after some time returned with a mouth full of mud. From this our earth, as we have it, was formed - which accounts for it being no better than it is.

Yours, &c.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 1

As the following pages have been hastily compiled, at the urgent request of a number of my friends, from a series of Letters and notes written by myself during several years' residence and travel amongst a number of the wildest and most remote tribes of the North American Indians, I have thought it best to make this page the beginning of my book; dispensing with preface, and even with dedication, other than that which I hereby make of it, with all my heart, to those who will take the pains to read it.

If it be necessary to render any apology for beginning thus unceremoniously my readers will understand that I, had no space in these, my first volumes, to throw away; nor much time at my disposal, which I could, in justice, use for introducing myself and my works to the world.

Having commenced thus abruptly then, I will venture to take upon myself the sin of calling this one of the series of Letters of which I have spoken; although I am writing it several years later, and placing it at the beg-inning of my book; by which means I will be enabled briefly to introduce myself to my readers (who, as yet, know little or nothing of me), and also the subjects of the following epistles, with such explanations of the customs described in them, as will serve for a key or glossary to the same, and prepare the reader's mind for the information they contain.

Amidst the multiplicity of books which are, in this enlightened age, flooding the world, I feel it my duty, as early as possible, to beg pardon for making a book at all; and in the next (if my readers should become so much interested in my narrations, as to censure me for the brevity of the work) to take some considerable credit for not having trespassed too long upon their time and patience. Leaving my readers, therefore, to fine! out what is in the book, without promising them anything, I proceed to say -- of myself, that I was born in Wyoming, in North America, some thirty or forty years since, of parents who entered that beautiful and famed valley soon after the close of the revolutionary war, and the disastrous event of the "Indian massacre."

The early part of my life was whiled away, apparently, somewhat in vain, with books reluctantly held in one hand, and a rifle or fishing-pole firmly and affectionately grasped in the other.

At the urgent request of my father, who was a practicing lawyer, I was prevailed upon to abandon these favorite themes, and also my occasional dablings with the brush, which had secured already a corner in my affections; and I commenced reading the law for a profession, under the direction of Reeve and Gould, of Connecticut. I attended the lectures of these learned judges for two years -- was admitted to the bar -- and practiced the law, as a sort of Nimrodical lawyer, in my native land, for the term of two or three years; when I very deliberately sold my law library and all (save my ride and fishing-tackle), and converting their proceeds into brushes and paint pots; I commenced the art of painting in Philadelphia, without teacher or adviser.

I there closely applied my hand to the labors of the art for several years; during which time my mind was continually reaching for some branch or enterprise of the art, on which to devote a whole life-time of enthusiasm; when a delegation of some ten or fifteen noble and dignified-look-

ing Indians, from the wilds of the "Far West," suddenly arrived in the city, arrayed and equipped in all their classic beauty, -- with shield and helmet, -- with tunic and manteau, tinted and tasselled off, exactly for the painter's palette!

In silent and stoic dignity, these lords of the forest strutted about the city for a few days, wrapped in their pictured robes, with their brews plumed with quills of the war-eagle, attracting the gaze and admiration of all who beheld them. After this, they took their leave for Washington City, and I was left to reflect and regret, which I did long and deeply, until I came to the following deductions and conclusions.

Black and blue cloth and civilization are destined, not only to veil, but to obliterate the grace and beauty of Nature. Man, in the simplicity and loftiness of his nature, unrestrained and unfettered by the disguises of art, is surely the most beautiful model for the painter, -- and the country from which he hails is unquestionably the best study or school of the arts in the world: such I am sure, from the models I have seen, is the wilderness of North America. And the history and customs of such a people, preserved by pictorial illustrations, are themes worthy the life-time of one man, and nothing short of the loss of my life, shall prevent me from visiting their country, and of becoming their historian.

There was something inexpressibly delightful in the above resolve, which was to bring me amidst such living models for my brush; and at the same time, to place in my hands again, for my living and protection, the objects of my heart above-named; which had long been laid by to rust and decay in the city, without the remotest prospect of again contributing to my amusement.

I had fully resolved -- I opened my views to my friends and relations, but got not one advocate or abettor. I tried fairly and faithfully, but it was in vain to reason with those whose anxieties were ready to fabricate every difficulty and danger that could be imagined, without being able to understand or appreciate the extent or importance of my designs, and I broke from them all, -- from my wife and my aged parents, -- myself my only adviser and protector.

With these views firmly fixed--armed, equipped, and supplied, I started out in the year 1832, and penetrated the vast and pathless wilds which are familiarly denominated the great "Far West" of the North American Continent, with a light heart, inspired with an enthusiastic hope and reliance that I could meet and overcome all the hazards and privations of a life devoted to the production of a literal and graphic delineation of the living manners, customs, and character of an interesting race of people, who are rapidly passing away from the face of the earth--lending a hand to a dying nation, who have no historians or biographers of their own to portray with fidelity their native looks and history; thus snatching from a hasty oblivion what could be saved for the benefit of posterity, and perpetuating it, as a fair and just monument, to the memory of a truly lofty and noble race.

I have spent about eight years already in the pursuit above-named, having been for the most of that time immersed in the Indian country, mingling with red men, and identifying myself with them as much as possible, in their games and amusements; in order the better to familiarize myself with their superstitions and mysteries, which are the keys to Indian life and character.

It was during the several years of my life just mentioned, and whilst I was in familiar participation with them in their sports and amusements, that I penned the following series of epistles; describing only such glowing or curious scenes and events as passed under my immediate observation; leaving their early history, and many of their traditions, language, &c. for a subsequent and much

more elaborate work, for which I have procured the materials, and which I may eventually publish.

I set out on my arduous and perilous undertaking with the determination of reaching, ultimately, every tribe of Indians on the Continent of North America, and of bringing home faithful portraits of their principal personages, both men and women, from each tribe; views of their villages, games, &c. and full notes on their character and history. I designed, also, to procure their costumes, and a complete collection of their manufactures and weapons, and to perpetuate them in a Gallery unique, for the use and instruction of future ages.

I claim whatever merit there may have been in the originality of such a design, as I was undoubtedly the first artist who ever set out upon such a work, designing to carry his canvass to the Rocky Mountains; and a considerable part of the following Letters were written and published in the New York Papers, as early as the years 1832 and 1833; long before the Tours of Washington Irving, and several others, whose interesting narratives are before the world.

I have, as yet, by no means visited all the tribes; but I have progressed a very great way with the enterprise, and with far greater and more complete success than I expected.

I have visited forty-eight different tribes, the greater part of which I found speaking different languages, and containing in all 400,000 souls. I have brought home safe, and in good order, 310 portraits in oil, all painted in their native dress, and in their own wigwams; and also 200 other paintings in oil, containing views of their villages -- their wigwams -- their games -- religious ceremonies -- their dances -- their ball plays -- their buffalo hunting, and other amusements (containing in all, over 3000 full-length figures); and the landscapes of the country they live in, as well as a very extensive and curious collection of their costumes, and all their other manufactures, from the size of a wigwam down to the size of a quill or a rattle.

A considerable part of the above-named paintings, and Indian manufactures, will be found amongst the very numerous illustrations in the following pages; having been, in every instance, faithfully copied and reduced by my own hand, for the engraver, from my original paintings; and the reader of this book who will take the pains to step in to "CATLIN'S NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN GALLERY", Will find nearly every scene and custom which is described in this work, as well as many others, carefully and correctly delineated, and displayed upon the walls, and every weapon (and every "Sachem" and every "Sagamore" who has wielded them) according to the tenor of the tales herein recited.

So much of myself and of my works, which is all that I wish to say at present.

Of the Indians, I have much more to say, and to the following delineations of them, and their character and customs, I shall make no further apology for requesting the attention of my readers.

The Indians (as I shall call them), the savages or red men of the forests and prairies of North America, are at this time a subject of great interest and some importance to the civilized world; rendered more particularly so in this age, from their relative position to, and their rapid declension from, the civilized nations of the earth. A numerous nation of human beings, whose origin is beyond the reach of human investigation -- whose early history is lost -- whose term of national existence is nearly expired--three-fourths of. whose country has fallen into the possession of civilized man within the short space of 250 years -- twelve millions of whose bodies have fattened the soil in the mean time; who have fallen victims to whiskey, the small-pox and the bayonet; leaving at this time but a meager proportion to live a shore time longer, in the certain apprehension of

soon sharing a similar fate.

The writer who would undertake to embody the whole history of such a people, with all their misfortunes and calamities, must needs have much more space than I have allotted to this epitome; and he must needs begin also (as I am doing) with those who are living, or he would be very apt to dwell upon the preamble of his work, until the present living remnants of the race should have passed away; and their existence and customs, like those of ages gone by, become subjects of doubt and incredulity to the world for whom his book was preparing. Such an historian also, to do them justice, must needs correct many theories and opinions which have, either ignorantly or maliciously, gone forth to the world in indelible characters; and gather and arrange a vast deal which has been but imperfectly recorded, or placed to the credit of a people who have not had the means of recording it themselves; but have entrusted it, from necessity, to the honesty and punctuality of their enemies.

In such an history should be embodied, also, a correct account of their treatment, and the causes which have led to their rapid destruction; and a plain and systematical prophecy as to the time and manner of their final extinction, based upon the causes and the ratio of their former and present declension.

So Herculean a task may fall to my lot at a future period, or it may not: but I send forth these volumes at this time, fresh and full of their living deeds and customs, as a familiar and unstudied introduction (at least) to them and their native character; which I confidently hope will repay the readers who read for information and historical facts, as well as those who read but for amusement.

The world know generally, that the Indians of North America are copper coloured; that their eyes and their hair are black, &c.; that they are mostly uncivilized, and consequently un-Christianized; that they are nevertheless human beings, with features, thoughts, reason, and sympathies like our own; but few yet know how they live, how they dress, how they worship, what are their actions, their customs: their religion, their amusements, &c. as they practice them in the uncivilized regions of their uninvited country, which it is the main object of this work, clearly and distinctly to set forth.

It would be impossible at the same time, in a book of these dimensions, to explain all the manners and customs of these people; but as far as they are narrated, they have been described by my pen, upon the spot, as I have seen them transacted; and if some few of my narrations should seem a little too highly coloured I trust the world will be ready to extend to me that pardon which it is customary to Yield to all artists whose main faults exist in the vividness of their colouring, rather than in the drawing of their pictures; but there is nothing else in them, I think, that I should ask pardon for, even though some of them should stagger credulity, and incur for me the censure of those critics, who sometimes, unthinkingly or unmercifully, sit at home at their desks, enjoying the luxury of wine and a good cigar, over the simple narration of the honest and weather-worn traveler (who shortens his half-starved life in catering for the world), to condemn him and his work to oblivion, and his wife and his little children to poverty and starvation; merely because he describes scenes which they have not beheld, and which, consequently, they are unable to believe. The Indians of North America, as I have before said, are copper-coloured, with long black hair, black eyes, tall, straight, and elastic forms -- are less than two millions in number -- were originally the undisputed owners of the soil, and got their title to their lands from the Great Spirit

who created them on it, -- were once a happy and flourishing people, enjoying all the comforts and luxuries of life which they knew of, and consequently cared for: -- were sixteen millions in numbers, and sent that number of daily prayers to the Almighty, and thanks for his goodness and protection. Their country was entered by white men, but a few hundred years since; and thirty millions of these are now scuffling for the goods and luxuries of life, over the bones and ashes of twelve millions of red men; six millions of whom have fallen victims to the small-pox, and the remainder to the sword, the bayonet, and whiskey; all of which means of their death and destruction have been introduced and visited upon them by acquisitive white men; and by white men, also, whose forefathers were welcomed and embraced in the land where the poor Indian met and fed them with ears of green corn and with pemican." Of the two millions remaining alive at this time, about 1,400,000, are already the miserable living victims and dupes of white man's cupidity degraded, discouraged and lost in the bewildering maze that is produced by little use of whiskey and its concomitant vices; and the remaining number are yet unroused and unenticed from their wild haunts or their primitive modes, by the dread or love of white man and his allurements. It has been with these, mostly, that I have spent my time, and of these, chiefly, and their customs, that the following Letters treat. Their habits (and their's alone) as we can see them transacted, are native, and such as I have wished to fix and preserve for future ages.

Of the dead, and of those who are dying, of those who have suffered death, and of those who are now trodden and kicked through it, I may speak more fully in some deductions at the close of this book; or at some future time, when I may find more leisure, and may be able to speak of these scenes without giving offence to the world, or to any body in it.

Such a portrait then as I have set forth in the following pages (taken by myself from the free and vivid realities of life, instead of the vague and uncertain imagery of recollection, or from the haggard deformities and distortions of disease and death), I offer to the world for their amusement, as well as for their information; and I trust they will pardon me, if it should be thought that I have over-estimated the Indian character, or at other times descended too much into the details and minutiae of Indian mysteries and absurdities.

The reader, then, to understand me rightly, and draw from these Letters the information which they are intended to give, must follow me a vast way from the civilized world; he must needs wend his way from the city of New York, over the Allegheny, and far beyond the mighty Missouri, and even to the base and summit of the Rocky Mountains, some two or three thousand miles from the Atlantic coast. He should forget many theories he has read in the books of Indian barbarities, of wanton butcheries and murders; and divest himself, as far as possible of the deadly prejudices which he has carried from his childhood, against this most unfortunate and most abused part of the race of his fellow man.

He should consider, that if he has seen the savages of North America without making such a tour, he has fixed his eyes upon and drawn his conclusions (in all probability) only from those who inhabit the Frontier; whose habits have been changed -- whose pride has been cut down -- whose country has been ransacked--whose wives and daughters have been shamefully abused--whose lands have been wrested from them -- whose limbs have become enervated and naked by the excessive use of whiskey -- whose friends and relations have been prematurely thrown into their graves -- whose native pride and dignity have at last given way to the unnatural vices which civilized cupidity has engrafted upon them, to be silently nurtured and magnified by a burning sense

of injury and injustice, and ready for that cruel vengeance which often falls from the hand that is palsied by refined abuses, and yet unrestrained by the glorious influences of refined and moral cultivation. That if he has laid up what he considers well-founded knowledge of these people, from books which he has read, and from newspapers only, he should pause at least, and withhold his sentence before he passes it upon the character of a people, who are dying at the hands of their enemies, without the means of recording their own annals -- struggling in their nakedness with their simple weapons, against guns and gunpowder -- against whiskey and steel, and disease, and mailed warriors who are continually trampling them to the earth, and at last exultingly promulgating from the very soil which they have wrested from the poor savage, the history of his cruelties and barbarities, whilst his bones are quietly resting under the very furrows which their ploughs are turning.

So great and unfortunate are the disparities between savage and civil, in numbers-in weapons and defenses -- in enterprise, in craft, and in education, that the former is almost universally the sufferer either in peace or in war; and not less so after his pipe and his tomahawk have retired to the grave with him, and his character is left to be entered upon the pages of history, and that justice done to his memory which from necessity, he has intrusted to his enemy.

Amongst the numerous historians, however, of these strange people, they have had some friends who have done them justice; yet as a part of all systems of Justice whenever it is meted to the poor Indian, it comes invariably too late, or is administered at an ineffectual distance; and that too when his enemies are continually about him, and effectually applying the means of his destruction.

Some writers, I have been grieved to see, have written down the character of the North American Indian, as dark, relentless, cruel and murderous in the last degree; with scarce a quality to stamp their existence of a higher order than that of the brutes: -- whilst others have given them a high rank, as I feel myself authorized to do, as honorable and highly-intellectual beings; and others, both friends and foes to the red men, have spoken of them as an "anomaly in nature"!

In this place I have no time or inclination to reply to so unaccountable an assertion as this; contenting myself with the belief, that the term would be far more correctly applied to that part of the human family who have strayed farthest from nature, than it could be to those who are simply moving in, and filling the sphere for which they were designed by the Great Spirit who made them,

From what I have seen of these people I feel authorized to say, that there is nothing very strange or unaccountable in their character; but that it is a simple one, and easy to be learned and understood, if the right means be taken to familiarize ourselves with it. Although it has its dark spots, yet there is much in it to be applauded, and much to recommend it to the admiration of the enlightened world. And I trust that the reader, who looks through these volumes with care, will be disposed to join me in the conclusion that the North American Indian in his native state, is an honest, hospitable, faithful, brave, warlike, cruel, revengeful, relentless, -- yet honorable, contemplative and religious being.

If such be the case, I am sure there is enough in it to recommend it to the fair perusal of the world, and charity enough ill all civilized countries, in this enlightened are to extend a helping hand to a dying race; provided that prejudice and fear can be removed, which have heretofore constantly held the civilized portions in dread of the savage -- and away from that similar and

friendly embrace, in which alone his true native character can be justly appreciated.

I am fully convinced, from a long familiarity with these people, that the Indian's misfortune has consisted chiefly in our ignorance of their true native character and disposition, which has always held us at a distrustful distance from them; inducing us to look upon them in no other light than that of a hostile foe, and worthy only of that system of continued warfare and abuse that has been for ever waged against them.

There is no difficulty in approaching the Indian and getting acquainted with him in his wild and unsophisticated state, and finding him an honest and honorable man; with feelings to meet feelings, if the above prejudice and dread can be laid aside, and any one will take the pains, as I have done, to go and see him in the simplicity of his native state, smoking his pipe under his own humble roof, with his wife and children around him, and his faithful dogs and horses hanging about his hospitable tenement. So the world may see him and smoke his friendly pipe, which will be invariably extended to them; and share, with a hearty welcome, the best that his wigwam affords for the appetite, which is always set out to a stranger the next moment after he enters.

But so the mass of the world, most assuredly, will not see these people; for they are too far off, and approachable to those only whose avarice or cupidity alone lead them to those remote regions, and whose shame prevents them from publishing to the world the virtues which they have thrown down and trampled under foot.

The very use of the word savage, as it is applied in its general sense, I am inclined to believe is an abuse of the word, and the people to whom it is applied. The word, in its true definition, means no more than wild, or wild man; and a wild man may have been endowed by His Maker with all the humane and noble traits that inhabit the heart of a tame man. Our Ignorance and dread or fear of these people, therefore, have given a new definition to the adjective; and nearly the whole civilized world apply the word savage, as expressive of the most ferocious, cruel, and murderous character that can be described.

The grizzly bear is called savage, because he is blood-thirsty, ravenous and cruel; and so is the tiger, and they, like the poor red man, have been feared and dreaded (from the distance at which ignorance and prejudice have kept us from them, or from resented abuses which we have practiced when we have come in close contact with them), until Van Amburgh shewed the world, that even these ferocious and unreasoning animals wanted only the friendship and close embrace of their master, to respect and to love him.

As evidence of the hospitality of these ignorant and benighted people, and also of their honesty and honor, there will be found recorded many striking instances in the following pages. And also, as an offset to these, many evidences of the dark and cruel, as well as ignorant and disgusting excesses of passions, unrestrained by the salutary influences of laws and Christianity.

I have roamed about from time to time during seven or eight years, visiting and associating with, some three or four hundred thousand of these People, under an almost infinite variety of circumstances; and from the very many and decided voluntary acts of their hospitality and kindness, I feel bound to pronounce them, by nature, a kind and hospitable people. I have been welcomed generally in their country, and treated to the best that they could give me, without any charges made for my board; they have often escorted me through their enemies' country at some hazard to their own lives, and aided me in passing mountains and rivers with my awkward baggage; and under all of these circumstances of exposure, no Indian ever betrayed me, struck me a blow, or

stole from me a shilling's worth of my property that I am aware of.

This is saying a great deal, (and proving it too, if the reader will believe me) in favour of the virtues of these people; when it is borne in mind, as it should be, that there is no law in their land to punish a man for theft -- that locks and keys are not known in their country -- that the commandments have never been divulged amongst them; nor can any human retribution fail upon the head of a thief, save the disgrace which attaches as a stigma to his character, in the eyes of his people about him.

And thus in these little communities, strange as it may seem, in the absence of all systems of jurisprudence, I have often beheld peace and happiness, and quiet, reigning supreme, for which even kings and emperors might envy them. I have seen rights and virtue protected, and wrongs redressed; and I have seen conjugal, filial and paternal affection in the simplicity and contentedness of nature. I have unavoidably, formed warm and enduring attachments to some of these men which I do not wish to forget -- who have brought me near to their hearts, and in our final separation have embraced me in their arms, and commended me and my affairs to the keeping of the Great Spirit.

For the above reasons, the reader will be disposed to forgive me for dwelling so long and so strong on the justness of the claims of these people; and for my occasional expressions of sadness, when my heart bleeds for the fate that awaits the remainder of their unlucky race; which is long to be outlived by the rocks, by the beasts, and even birds and reptiles of the country they live in; -- set upon by their fellow-man, whose cupidity, it is feared, will fix no bounds to the Indian's earthly calamity, short of the grave.

I cannot help but repeat, before I close this Letter, that the tribes of the red men of North America, as a nation of human beings, are on their wane; that (to use their own very beautiful figure) "they are fast traveling to the shades of their fathers, towards the setting sun"; and that the traveler who would see these people in their native simplicity and beauty, must needs be hastily on his way to the prairies and Rocky Mountains, or he will see them only as they are now sees on the frontiers, as a basket of dead game, -- harassed, chased, bleeding and dead; with their plumage and colours despoiled; to be gazed amongst in vain for some system or moral, or for some scale by which to estimate their true native character, other than that which has too often recorded them but a dark and unintelligible mass of cruelty and barbarity.

Without further comments I close this Letter, introducing my readers at once to the heart of the Indian country, only asking their forgiveness for having made it so long, and their patience whilst traveling through the following pages (as I journeyed through those remote realms) in search of information and rational amusement; in tracing out the true character of that "strange anomaly" of man in the simple elements of his nature, undissolved or compounded into the mysteries of enlightened and fashionable life.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER No. 2.

MOUTH OF YELLOWSTONE, UPPER MISSOURI, 1838.

I arrived at this place yesterday on the steamer "Yellow Stone," after a voyage of nearly three months from St. Louis, a distance of two thousand miles, the greater part of which has never before been navigated by steam ; and the almost insurmountable difficulties which continually oppose the voyageur on this turbid stream, have been by degrees overcome by the indefatigable zeal of Mr. Chouteau, a gentleman of great perseverance, and part proprietor of the boat. To the politeness of this gentleman I am indebted for my passage from St. Louis to this place, and I had also the pleasure of his company, with that of Major Sanford, the government agent for the Missouri Indians.

The American Fur Company have erected here, for their protection against the savages, a very substantial Fort, 300 feet square, with bastions armed with ordnance; and our approach to it under the continued roar of cannon for half an hour, and the shrill yells of the half-affrighted savages who lined the shores, presented a scene of the most thrilling and picturesque appearance. A voyage so full of incident, and furnishing so many novel scenes of the picturesque and romantic, as we have passed the numerous villages of the "astonished natives", saluting them with the puffing of steam and the thunder of artillery, would afford subject for many epistles; and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of occasionally giving you some little sketches of scenes that I have witnessed, and am witnessing; and of the singular feelings that are excited in the breast of the stranger traveling through this interesting country. Interesting (as I have said) and luxurious, for this is truly the land of Epicures; we are invited by the savages to feasts of dog's meat, as the most honorable food that can be presented to a stranger, and glutted with the more delicious food of beaver tails, and buffaloe tongues. You will, no doubt, be somewhat surprised on the receipt of a Letter from me, so far strayed into the Western World; and still more startled, when I tell you that I am here in the full enthusiasm and practice of my art. That enthusiasm alone has brought me into this remote region, 3500 miles from my native soil; the last 2000 of which have furnished me with almost unlimited models, both in landscape and the human figure, exactly suited to my feelings. I am now in the full possession and enjoyments of Ghose conditions, on which alone I was induced to Pursue the art as a Profession; and in anticipation of which alone, my admiration for the art could ever have been kindled into a pure flame. I mean the free use of nature's undisguised models, with the privilege of selecting for myself. If I am here losing the benefit of the fleeting fashions of the day, and neglecting that elegant polish, which the world say an artist should draw from a continual intercourse with the polite world; yet have I this consolation, that in this country, I am entirely divested of those dangerous steps and allurements which beset an artist in fashionable life; and have little to steal my thoughts away from the contemplation of the beautiful models that are about me. If, also, I have not here the benefit of that feeling of emulation, which is the life and spur to the arts, where artists are associates together; yet am I surrounded by living models

---

of such elegance and beauty, that I feel an unceasing excitement of a much higher order -- the certainty that I am drawing knowledge from the true source. My enthusiastic admiration of man in the honest and elegant simplicity of nature, has always fed the warmest feelings of my bosom, and shut half the avenues to my heart against the specious refinements of the accomplished world. This feeling, together with the desire to study my art, independently of the embarrassments which the ridiculous fashions of civilized society have thrown in its way, has led me to the wilderness for a while, as the true school of the arts.

I have for a long time been of opinion, that the wilderness of our country afforded models equal to those from which the Grecian sculptors transferred to the marble such inimitable grace and beauty; and I am now more confirmed in this opinion, since I have immersed myself in the midst of thousands and tens of thousands of these knights of the forest; whose whole lives are lives of chivalry, and whose daily feats, with their naked limbs, might vie with those of the Grecian youths in the beautiful rivalry of the Olympian games.

No man's imagination, with all the aids of description that can be given to it, can ever picture the beauty and wildness of scenes that may be daily witnessed in this romantic country; of hundreds of these graceful youths, without a care to wrinkle, or a fear to disturb the full expression of pleasure and enjoyment that beams upon their faces -- their long black hair mingling with their horses' tails, floating in the wind, while they are flying over the carpeted prairie, and dealing death with their spears and arrows, to a band of infuriated buffaloes; or their splendid procession in a war-parade, arrayed in all their gorgeous colours and trappings, moving with most exquisite grace and manly beauty, added to that bold defiance which man carries on his front, who acknowledges no superior on earth, and who is amenable to no laws except the laws of God and honour.

In addition to the knowledge of human nature and of my art, which I hope to acquire by this toilsome and expensive undertaking, I have another in view, which, if it should not be of equal service to me, will be of no less interest and value to posterity. I have, for many years past, contemplated the noble races of red men who are now spread over these trackless forests and boundless prairies, melting away at the approach of civilization. Their rights invaded, their morals corrupted, their lands wrested from them, their customs changed, and therefore lost to the world; and they at last sunk into the earth, and the ploughshare turning the sod over their graves, and I have flown to their rescue--not of their lives or of their race (for they are "doomed" and must perish), but to the rescue of their looks and their modes, at which the acquisitive world may hurl their poison and every besom of destruction, and trample them down and crush them to death; yet, phoenix-like, they may rise from the "stain on a painter's palette," and live again upon canvass, and stand forth for centuries yet to come, the living monuments of a noble race. For this purpose, I have designed to visit every tribe of Indians on the Continent, if my life should be spared; for the purpose of procuring portraits of distinguished Indians, of both sexes in each tribe, painted in their native costume; accompanied with pictures of their villages, domestic habits, games, mysteries, religious ceremonies, &c. with anecdotes, traditions, and history of their respective nations. If I should live to accomplish my design, the result of my labours will doubtless be interesting to future ages; who will have little else left from which to judge of the original inhabitants of this simple race of beings, who require but a few years more of the march of civilization and death, to deprive them of all their native customs and character. I have been kindly supplied by the, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Secretary of War, with letters to the commander of every

---

military post, and every Indian agent on the Western Frontier, with instructions to render me all the facilities in their power, which will be of great service to me in so arduous an undertaking. The opportunity afforded me by familiarity with so many tribes of human beings in the simplicity of nature, devoid of the deformities of art; of drawing fair conclusions in the interesting sciences of physiognomy and phrenology; of..... and customs, rites, ceremonies, &c.; and the opportunity of examining the geology and mineralogy of this western, and yet unexplored country, will enable me occasionally to entertain you with much new and interesting information, which I shall take equal pleasure in communicating by an occasional Letter in my clumsy way.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 3.

MOUTH OF YELLOW STONE, UPPER, MISSOURI.

Since the date of my former Letter, I have been so much engaged in the amusements of the country, and the use of my brush, that I have scarcely been able to drop you a line until the present moment.

Before I let you into the amusements and customs of this delightful country however, (and which, as yet, are secrets to most of the world), I must hastily travel with you over the tedious journey of 2000 miles, from St. Louis to this place; over which distance one is obliged to pass, before I can reach this wild and lovely spot.

The Missouri is, perhaps, different in appearance and character from all other rivers in the world; there is a terror in its manner which is sensibly felt, the moment we enter its muddy waters from the Mississippi. From the mouth of the Yellow Stone river, which is the place from whence I am now writing, to its junction with the Mississippi, a distance of 2000 miles, the Missouri, with its boiling, turbid waters, sweeps off, is one unceasing current; and in the whole distance there is scarcely an eddy or resting-place for a canoe. Owing to the continual falling in of its rich alluvial banks, its water is always turbid and opaque; having, at all seasons of the year, the colour of a cup of chocolate or coffee, with sugar and cream stirred into it. To give a better definition of its density and opacity, I have tried a number of simple experiments with it at this place, and at other points below, at the results of which I was exceedingly surprised. By placing a piece of silver (and afterwards a piece of shell, which is a much whiter substance) in a tumbler of its water, and looking through the side of the glass, I ascertained that those substances could not be seen through the eighth part of an inch; this, however, is in the spring of the year, when the freshet is upon the river, rendering the water, undoubtedly, much more turbid than it would be at other seasons; though it is always muddy and yellow, and from its boiling and wild character and uncommon colour, a stranger would think, even in its lowest state, that there was a freshet upon it.

For the distance of 1000 miles above St. Louis, the shores of this river (and, in many places, the whole bed of the stream) are filled with snags and raft, formed of trees of the largest size, which have been undermined by the falling banks and cast into the stream; their roots becoming fastened in the bottom of the river, with their tops floating on the surface of the water, and pointing down the stream, forming the most frightful and discouraging prospect for the adventurous voyageur. Almost every island and sand-bar is covered with huge piles of these floating trees, and when the river is flooded, its surface is almost literally covered with floating raft and drift wood which bid positive defiance to keel-boats and steamers, on their way up the river.

With what propriety this "Hell of waters" might be denominated the river "Styx", I will not undertake to decide; but nothing could be more appropriate or innocent than to call it the river of Sticks.

The scene is not, however, all so dreary; there is a redeeming beauty in the green and carpeted

---

shores, which hem In this huge and terrible deformity of waters. There is much of the way though, were the mighty forests of stately cotton wood stand, and frown in horrid dark and coolness over the filthy abyss below; into which they are ready to plunge headlong, when the mud and soil in which they were germed and reared have been washed out from underneath them, and with the rolling current ale mixed, anti oil their way to the ocean.

The greater part of the shores of this liver, however, are without timber, where the eye is delightfully relieved by wandering over the beautiful prairies; most of the way gracefully sloping down to the water's edge, carpeted with the deepest green, and, in distance, softening into velvet of the richest hues, entirely beyond the reach of the artist's pencil. Such is the character of the upper part of the river especially; and as one advances towards its source, and through its upper half, it becomes more pleasing to the eye, for snags and raft are no longer to be seen; yet the current holds its stiff and onward turbid character.

It has been, heretofore, very erroneously represented to the world, that the scenery on the river was monotonous, and wanting in picturesque beauty. This intelligence is surely incorrect, and that because it has been brought perhaps, by men who ale not the best judges in the world, of nature's beautiful works; and if they were, they always pass them by, in pain or desperate distress, in toil and trembling fear for the safety or their furs and peltries, or fur their lives, which are at the mercy of the yelling savages who, inhabit this delightful county.

One thousand miles or more of the upper part of the river, was, to my eye, like fairy-land; and during our transit through that part of our voyage, I was most of the time riveted to the deck of the boat, indulging my eyes in the boundless and tireless pleasure of roaming over the thousand hills, and bluffs, and dales, and ravines; where the astonished herds of buffaloes, of elks, and antelopes, and sneaking wolves, and mountain-goats, were to be seen bounding up and down and over the green fields; each one and each tribe, band, and gang, taking their own way, and using their own means to the greatest advantage possible, to leave the sight and sound of the puffing of our boat; which was, for the first time, saluting the green and wild shores of the Missouri with the din of mighty steam.

From St. Louis to the falls of the Missouri, a distance of 2600 miles, is one continued prairie; with the exception of a few of the bottoms formed along the bank of the river, and the streams which are falling into it, which are often covered with the most luxuriant growth of forest timber.

The summit level of the great prairies stretching off to the west and the east from the river, to an almost boundless extent, is from two to three hundred feet above the level of the river; which has formed a bed or valley for its course, varying in width from two to twenty miles. This channel or valley has been evidently produced by the force of the current, which has gradually excavated, in its floods and gorges, this immense space, and sent its debris into the ocean. By the continual overflowing of the river, its deposits have been lodged and left with a horizontal surface, spreading the deepest and richest alluvion over the surface of its meadows on either side; through which the river winds its serpentine course, alternately running from one bluff to the other, which present themselves to its shores in all the most Picturesque and beautiful shapes and colours imaginable--some with their green sides gracefully slope down in the most lovely groups to the water's edge; Whilst others, divested of their verdure, present themselves in Immense masses of clay of different colours, which arrest the eye of the traveler, with the most curious views is the world.

These strange and picturesque appearances have been produced by the rains and frosts, which are

continually changing the dimensions, and varying the thousand shapes of these denuded hills, by washing down their sides and carrying them into the river.

Amongst these groups maybe seen tens and hundreds of thousands of different forms and figures, of the sublime and the picturesque; in many places for miles together, as the boat glides along, there is one continued appearance, before and behind us, of some ancient and boundless city in ruins -- ramparts, terraces, domes, towers, citadels and castles may be seen -- cupolas, and magnificent porticoes, and here and there a solitary column and crumbling pedestal, and even spires of clay which stand alone -- and glistening in distance, as the sun's rays are refracted back by the thousand crystals of gypsum which are imbedded in the clay of which they are formed. Over and through these groups of domes and battlements (as one is compelled to imagine them), the sun sends his long and gilding rays, at morn or in the evening; giving life and light, by aid of shadows cast, to the different glowing colours of these clay-built ruins; shedding a glory over the solitude of this wild and pictured country, which no one can realize unless he travels here and looks upon it.

It is amidst these wild and quiet haunts that the mountain-sheep, and the fleet-bounding antelope sport and live in herds, secure from their enemies, to whom the sides and slopes of these bluffs (around which they fearlessly bound) are nearly inaccessible.

The grizzly bear also has chosen these places for his abode; he sullenly sneaks through the gulphs and chasms, and ravines, and frowns away the lurking Indian; whilst the mountain-sheep and antelope are bounding over and around the hill tops, safe and free from harm of man and beast. Such is a hasty sketch of the river scenes and scenery for 2000 miles, over which we tugged, and puffed, and blowed, and toiled for three months, before we reached this place. Since we arrived here, the steamer has returned and left me here to explore the country and visit the tribes in this vicinity, and then descend the river from this place to St. Louis; which Tour, if I live through it, will furnish material for many a story and curious incident, which I may give you in detail in future epistles, and when I have more leisure than I have at the present moment. I will then undertake to tell how we astonished the natives, in many an instance, which I can in this Letter but just hint at and say adieu. If anything did ever literally and completely "astonish (and astound) the natives", it was the appearance of our steamer, puffing and blowing, and paddling and rushing by their villages which were on the banks of the liver.

These poor and ignorant people for the distance of 2000 miles, had never before seen or heard of a steam-boat, and in some places they seemed at a loss to know what to do, or how to act; they could not, as the Dutch did at Newburgh, on the Hudson River, take it to be a "floating saw-mill" -- and they had no name for it -- so it was, like every thing else (with them), which is mysterious and unaccountable, called medicine (mystery). We had on board one twelve-pound cannon and three or four eight-pound swivels, which we were taking up to arm the Fur Company's Fort at the mouth of Yellow Stone; and at the approach to every village they were all discharged several times in rapid succession, which threw the inhabitants into utter confusion and amazement -- some of them laid their faces to the ground, and cried to the Great Spirit -- some shot their horses and dogs, and sacrificed them to appease the Great Spirit, whom they conceived was offended -- some deserted their villages and ran to the tops of the bluffs some miles distant; and others, in some places, as the boat landed in front of their villages, came with great caution, and peeped over the bank of the river to see the fate of their chiefs, whose duty it was (from the nature of their of-

face) to approach us, whether friends or foes, and to go on board. Sometimes, in this plight, they were instantly thrown 'neck and heels' over each other's heads and shoulders -- men, women and children, and dogs-sage, sachem, old and young -- all in a mass, at the frightful discharge of the steam from the escape-pipe, which the captain of the boat let loose upon them for his own fun and amusement.

There were many curious conjectures amongst their wise men, with regard to the nature and powers of the steam-boat. Amongst the Mandans, some called it the "big thunder canoe"; for when in distance below the village, they saw the lightning flash from its sides, and heard the thunder come from it; others called it the "big medicine canoe with eyes"; it was medicine (mystery) because they could not understand it; and it must have eyes, for said they, "it sees its own way, and takes the deep water in the middle of the channel." They had no idea of the boat being steered by the man at the wheel, and well they might have been astonished at its taking the deepest water. I may (if I do not forget it) hereafter give you an account of some other curious incidents of this kind, which we met with in this voyage; for we met many, and some of them were really laughable.

The Fort in which I am residing was built by Mr. McKenzie, who now occupies it. It is the largest and best-built establishment of the kind on the river, being the great or principal head-quarters and depot of the Fur Company's business in this region. A vast stock of goods is kept on hand at this place; and at certain times of the year the numerous out-posts concentrate here with the returns of their season's trade, and refit out with a fresh supply of goods to trade with the Indians. The site for the Fort is well selected, being a beautiful prairie on the bank near the junction of the Missouri with the Yellow Stone rivers; and its inmates and its stores well protected from Indian assaults.

Mr. McKenzie is a kind-hearted and high-minded Scotchman; and seems to have charge of all the Fur Companies' business in this region, and from this to the Rocky Mountains. He lives in good and comfortable style, inside of the Fort, which contains some eight or ten log-houses and stores, and has generally forty or fifty men, and one hundred and fifty horses about him.

He has, with the same spirit of liberality and politeness with which Mons. Pierre Chouteau treated me on my passage up the river, pronounced me welcome at his table, which groans under the luxuries of the country; with buffaloe meat and tongues, with beavers' tails and marrow-fat; but sans coffee, sans bread and butter. Good cheer and good living we get at it however, and good wine also; for a bottle of Madeira and one of excellent Port are set in a pail of ice every day, and exhausted at dinner.

At the hospitable board of this gentleman I found also another, who forms a happy companion for mine host; and whose intellectual and polished society has added not a little to my pleasure and amusement since I arrived here.

The gentleman of whom I am speaking is an Englishman, by the name of Hamilton, of the most pleasing and entertaining conversation, whose mind seems to be a complete store-house of ancient and modern literature and art; and whose free and familiar acquaintance with the manners and men of his country gives him the stamp of a gentleman, who has had the curiosity to bring the embellishments of the enlightened world, to contrast with the rude and the wild of these remote regions.

We three bons vivants form the group about the dinner-table, of which I have before spoken, and crack our jokes and fun over the bottles of Port and Madeira, which I have named; and a con-

siderable part of which, this gentleman has brought with great and precious care from his own country.

This post is the general rendezvous of a great number of Indian tribes in these regions, who are continually concentrating here for the purpose of trade; sometimes calling, the whole tribe together, in a mass. There are now here, and encamped about the Fort, a great many, and I am continually at work with my brush; we have around us at this time the Knisteneaux, Crows, Assinneboins and Blackfeet, and in a few days are to have large accessions.

The finest specimens of Indians on the Continent are in these regions; and before I leave these parts, I shall make excursions into their respective countries, to their own native fire-sides; and there study their looks and peculiar customs; enabling me to drop you now and then an interesting Letter. The tribes which I shall be enabled to see and study by my visit to this region, are the Ojibbeways, the Assinneboins, Knisteneaux, Blackfeet, Crows, Shiennes, Grosventres, Mandans, and others; of whom and their customs, their history, traditions, costumes, &C., I shall in due season, you further and minute accounts.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 4.

MOUTH OF THE YELLOWSTONE.

The several tribes of Indians inhabiting the regions of the Upper Missouri, and of whom I spoke in my last Letter, are undoubtedly the finest looking, best equipped, and most beautifully costumed of any on the Continent. They live in a country well-stocked with buffaloes and wild horses, which furnish them an excellent and easy living; their atmosphere is pure, which produces good health and long life; and they are the most independent and the happiest races of Indians I have met with: they are all entirely in a state of primitive wildness, and consequently are picturesque and handsome, almost beyond description. Nothing in the world, of its kind, can possibly surpass in beauty and grace, some of their games and amusements -- their gambols and parades, of which I shall speak and paint hereafter.

As far as my travels have yet led me into the Indian country, I have more than realized my former predictions that those Indians who could be found most entirely in a state of nature, with the least knowledge of civilized society, would be found to be the most cleanly in their persons, elegant in their dress and manners, and enjoying life to the greatest perfection. Of such tribes, perhaps the Crows and Blackfeet stand first; and no one would be able to appreciate the richness and elegance (and even taste of), with which some of these people dress, without seeing them in their own country. I will do all I can, however, to make their looks as well as customs known to the world; I will paint with my brush and scribble with my pen, and bring their plumes and plumage, dresses, weapons, &c., and every thing but the Indian himself, to prove to the world the assertions which I have made above.

Every one of these red sons of the forest (or rather of the prairie) is a knight and lord -- his squaws are his slaves; the only things which he deems worthy of his exertions are to mount his snorting steed, with his bow and quiver slung, his shield upon his arm, and his long lance glistening in the war-parade; or, divested of all his plumes and trappings, armed with a simple bow and quiver, to plunge his steed amongst the flying herds of buffaloes, and with his sinewy bow, which he seldom bends in vain, to drive deep to life's fountain the whizzing arrow.

The buffalo herds, which graze in almost countless numbers on these beautiful prairies, afford them an abundance of meat; and so much is it preferred to all other, that the deer, the elk, and the antelope sport upon the prairies in herds in the greatest security; as the Indians seldom kill them, unless they want their shins for a dress. Tilt: buffalo (or more correctly speaking bison) is a noble animal, that roams over the vast prairies, from the borders of Mexico on the south, to Pludson's Bay on the north. Their size is somewhat above that of our common beef, and their flesh of a delicious flavor, resembling and equaling that of fit beef. Their flesh which is easily procured, furnishes the savages of these vast regions the means of a wholesome and good subsistence, and they live: almost exclusively upon it -- converting the skins, horns, hoofs and bones, to the construction of dresses, shields, bows, &c. The buffalo bull is one of the most formidable and frightful looking an-

---

imals in the world when elicited to resistance; his long shaggy mane hangs in great profusion over His neck and shoulders, and often extends quite down to the ground. The cow is less in stature, and less ferocious; though not much less wild and frightful in her appearance.

The mode in which these Indians kill this noble animal is spirited and thrilling in the extreme; and I must in a future epistle, give you a minute account of it. I have almost daily accompanied parties of Indians to see the fun, and have often shared in it myself; but much oftener ran my horse by their sides, to see how the hunt was done--to study the modes and expressions of these splendid scenes, which I am enthusiastically putting on the canvas.

They are all (or nearly so) killed with arrows and the lance, while at full speed; and the reader may easily imagine, that these scenes after the most spirited and picturesque views of the sporting kind that can possibly be seen.

At present, I will give a little sketch of a hit of fun I joined in yesterday, with Mr. McKenzie and a number of his men without the company or aid of Indians.

I mentioned the other day, that McKinzie's table from day to day groans under the weight of buffalo tongues and beavers' tails, and other luxuries of this western land. He has within his Fort a spacious ice-house, where he preserves his meat fresh for any length of time required; and sometimes, when his larder runs low, he starts out, rallying some five or six of his best hunters (not to hunt, but to "go for meat"). He leads the party, mounted on his favorite buffalo horse (i.e. the horse amongst his whole group which is best trained to run the buffalo), trailing a light and short gun in his hand, such an one as he can most easily reload whilst his horse is at full speed.

Such was the condition of the ice-house yesterday morning which caused to cast their eyes with a wishful look over the prairies such was the plight in which our host took the lead, and I, and then Mons. Chardon, and Batiste Defonde and Tullock (who is a trader amongst the Crows, and is here at this time, with a large party of that tribe), and there were several others whose names I do not know.

As we were mounted and ready to start, McKenzie called up some four or five of his men, and told them to follow immediately on our trail, with as many one-horse carts, which they were to harness up, to bring home the meat; "ferry them across the river in the scow," said he, "and following our trail through the bottom, you will find us on the plain yonder, between the Yellow Stone and the Missouri rivers, with meat enough to load you home. My watch on Gender bluff has just told us by his signals, that there are cattle a plenty on that spot, and we are going there as fast as possible." We all crossed the river, and galloped away a couple of miles or so, when we mounted the bluff; and to be sure, as was said, there was in full view of us a fine herd of some four or five hundred buffaloes, perfectly at rest, and in their own estimation (probably) perfectly secure. Some were grazing, and others were lying down and sleeping; we advanced within a mile or so of them in full view, and came to a halt. Mons. Chardon "tossed the feather" (a custom always observed, to try the course of the wind), and, he commenced: "stripping" as it is termed (i.e. every man strips himself and his horse of every extraneous and unnecessary appendage of dress, &c. that might be an incumbrance in running): hats are laid off, and coats -- and bullet pouches; sleeves are rolled up, a handkerchief tied tightly around the head, and another around the waist -- cartridges are prepared and placed in the waistcoat pocket, or a half dozen bullets "thrown into the mouth," &c., &c., all of which takes up some ten or fifteen minutes, and is not, in appearance or in effect, unlike a council of war. Our leader lays the whole plan of the chase, and preliminaries all fixed, guns

charged and ramrods in our hands, we mount and start for the onset. The horses are all trained for this business, and seem to enter into it with as much enthusiasm, and with as restless a spirit as the riders themselves. While "stripping" and mounting, they exhibit the most restless impatience; and when "approaching" -- (which is, all of us abreast, upon a slow walk, and in a straight line towards the herd, until they discover us and run!, they all seem to have caught entirely the spirit of the chase, and the laziest nag amongst them prances with an elasticity in His step -- champing] his bit -- his ears erect -- his eyes strained out of his head, and fixed upon the game before him, whilst he trembles under the saddle of his rider. In this way we carefully and silently marched, until within' some forty or fifty rolls; when the herd discovering us, wheeled and laid their course in a mass. At this instant we started! (and all must start, for no one could check the fury of those steeds at that moment of excitement,) and away all sailed, and over the prairie flew in a cloud of dust which was raised by their trampling hoofs. McKinzie was foremost in tire throng, and soon dashed off amidst the dust and was out of sight -- he was after the fattest and the fastest. I had discovered a huge bull whose shoulders towered above the whole band, and I picked my way through the crowd to cut alongside of him. I went not for "meat", but for a trophy; I wanted his head and horns. I dashed along through the thundering mass, as they swept away over the plain, scarcely able to tell whether I was on a buffalo's back or my horse -- hit, and hooked, and jostled about, till at length I found myself alongside of my game, when I gave him a shot, as I passed him. I saw guns flash in several directions about me, but I heard them not. Amidst the trampling throng, Mons. Chardon had wounded a stately bull, and at this moment was passing him again with his piece leveled for another shot; they were both at full speed and I also, within the reach of the muzzle of my gun, when the bull instantly turned and receiving the horse upon his horns, and the ground received poor Chardon, who made a frog's leap of some twenty feet or more over the bull's back, and almost under my horse's heels. I wheeled my horse as soon as possible and rode back, where lay poor Chardon, gasping to start his breath again; and within a few paces of him his huge victim, with his heels high in the air, and the horse lying across him. I dismounted instantly, but Chardon was raising himself on his hands, with his eyes and mouth full of dirt, and feeling for his gun, which lay about thirty feet in advance of him. "Heaven spare you ! are you hurt, Chardon ?" " hi--llic--- hic ---h ic ---hic---h i c----- n o, -----hic-----no---no, I believe not. Oh-no! This is not much, Mons. Cataline -- this is nothing new -- but this is a d---d hard pied of ground here -- hic -- oh! Hic!" At this the poor fellow fainted, but in a few moments arose, picked up his gun, took his horse by the bit; which then opened its eyes, and with a hic and a UGH! -- UGH! Sprang upon its feet -- shook off the dirt -- and here we were, all upon our legs again, save the bull, whose life had been more sad than that of either.

I turned my eyes in the direction where the herd had gone, and our companions in pursuit, and nothing could be seen of them, nor indication, except the cloud of dust which they left behind them. At a little distance on the right, however, I beheld lily huge victim endeavouring to make as much head-way as he possibly could, from this dangerous ground, upon three legs. I galloped off to him, and at my approach he wheeled around -- and bristled up for battle; he seemed to know perfectly well that he could not escape from me, and resolved to meet his enemy and death as bravely as possible.

I found that my shot had entered him a little too far forward, breaking one of his shoulders, and lodging in his breast, and from his very great weight it was impossible for him to make much

---

advance upon me. As I rode up within a few paces of him, he would ristle up with fury enough in his looks alone, almost to annihilate me; and making one lunge at me, would fall upon his neck and nose, so that I found the sagacity of my horse alone enough to keep me out of reach of danger: and I threw from my pocket my sketch-book, laid my gun across my lap, and commenced taking his likeness. He stood stiffened up, and swelling with awful vengeance, which was sublime for a picture, but which he could not vent upon me. I rode around him and sketched him in numerous attitudes, sometimes he would lie down, and I would then sketch him; then throw my cap at him, and rousing him on his legs, rally a new expression, and sketch him again.

In this way I added to my sketch-book some invaluable sketches of this grim-visaged monster, who knew not that he was standing for his likeness.

No man on earth can imagine what is the look and expression of such a subject before him as this was. I defy the world to produce another animal than call look so frightful as a huge buffalo bull, when wounded as Ire was, turned around for battle, and swelling with rage; -- his eyes bloodshot, and his long shaggy mane hanging to the ground, -- his mouth open, and his horrid rage hissing in streams of smoke and blood from his mouth and through his nostrils, as Ire is bending forward to spring upon his assailant.

After I had had the requisite time and opportunity for using my pencil, McKinzie and his companions came walking their exhausted horses back from the chase, and in our rear came four or five carts to carry home the meat. The party met from all quarters around me and my buffalo bull, whom I then shot in the head and finished. And being seated together for a few minutes, each one took a smoke of the pipe, and recited his exploits, and his "coups" or deaths; when all parties had a hearty laugh at me, as a novice, for having aimed at an old bull, whose flesh was not suitable for food, and the carts were escorted on the trail, to bring away the meat. I rode back with Mr. McKenzie, who pointed out five cows which he had killed, and all of them selected as the fattest and slickest of the herd. This astonishing feat was; performed within the distance of one mile -- all were killed at full speed, and every one shot through the heart. In the short space of time required for a horse under "full whip", to run the distance of one mile, he had discharged his gun five, and loaded it four times -- selected his animals, and killed at every shot! There were six or eight others killed at the same time, which altogether furnished, as will be seen, abundance of freight for the carts; which returned, as well as several packhorses, loaded with the choicest parts which were cut from the animals, and the remainder of the carcasses left a prey for the wolves. Such is the mode by which white men live in this country -- such the way in which they get their food, and such is one of their delightful amusements -- at the hazard of every bone in one's body, to feel the fine and thrilling exhilaration of the chase for a moment, and then as often to upbraid and blame himself for his folly and imprudence.

From this scene we commenced leisurely wending our way back; and dismounting at the place where we had stripped, each man dressed himself again, or slung his extra articles of dress, &c. across his saddle, astride of which Ire sat; and we rode back to the Fort, reciting as we rode, and for twenty-four hours afterwards, deeds of chivalry and chase, and hair's-breadth escapes which each and either had fought and run on former occasions. McKinzie with all the true character and dignity of a leader, was silent on these subjects; but smiled, while those in his train were reciting for him the astonishing and almost incredible deeds of his sinewed arms, which they had witnessed in similar scenes; from which I learned (as well as from my own observations), that he was

reputed (and actually was) the most distinguished of ail the white men who have flourished in these regions, in the pursuit and death of the buffalo.

On our return to the Fort, a bottle or two of wine were set forth upon the table, and around them a half dozen parched throats were soon moistened, and good cheer ensued. Batiste Defonde, Chardon, &c., retired to their quarters, enlarging smoothly upon the events of our morning's work; which they were reciting to their wives and sweethearts; when about this time the Fort was thrown open, and the procession of carts and paclihorses laden with buffalo meat made its entrke; gladdening the hearts of a hundred women and children, and tickling the noses of as many hungry dogs and puppies, who were stealing in and smelling at the tail of the procession. The door of the ice-house was thrown open, the meat was discharged into it, and I being fatigued, went to sleep.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 5.

Letter 5

MOUTH OF THE YELLOW STONE, UPPER MISSOURI.

In my former epistle, I told you there were encamped about the Fort a host of wild, incongruous spirits -- chiefs and sachems-warriors, braves, and women and children of different tribes -- or Crows and Blackfeet -- Ojibbeways -- Assinneboins -- and Crees or Knisteneaux. Amongst and in the midst of them am I, with my paint pots and canvass, snugly ensconced in one of the bastions of the Fort, which I occupy as a painting-room. My easel stands before, and the cool breech of a twelve-pounder makes me a comfortable seat, whilst her muzzle is looking out at one of the port-holes. The operations of my brush are mysteries of the highest order to these red sons of the prairie, and my room the earliest and latest place of concentration of these wild and jealous spirits, who all meet here to be amused and pay me signal honours; but gaze upon each other, sending their sidelong looks of deep-rooted hatred and revenge around the group. However, whilst in the Fort, their weapons are placed within the arsenal, and naught but looks and thoughts can be breathed here; but death and grim destruction will visit back those looks upon each other, when these wild spirits again are loose and free to breathe and act upon the plains.

I have this day been painting a portrait of the head chief of the Blackfoot nation; he is a good-looking and dignified Indian, about fifty years of age, and superbly dressed; whilst Sitting for his picture he has been surrounded by his own braves and warriors, anti also gazed at by his enemies, the Crows and the Knisteneaux, Assinneboins and Ojibbeways; a number of distinguished personages of each of which tribes, have laid all day around the sides of my room; reciting to each other the battles they have fought, and pointing to the scalp-locks, want as proofs of their victories, and attached to the seams of their shirts and leggings. This is a curious scene to witness, when one sits in the midst of such inflammable, and combnstible materials, brought together, unarmed, for the first time in their lives; peaceably and calmly recounting over the deeds of their lives, and smoking their pipes upon it, when a few weeks or days will bring them on the plains ajiain, where the war-cry will be raised, and their deadly bows will again be drawn on each other. The name of this dignitary, of whom I have just spoken, is Stumick-o-such (the buffalo's back fat), i. e. the "hump" or "fleece", the most delicious part of the buffalo's flesh. I have also painted, of the Blackfeet, Pe-toh-pee-kiss (the eagle ribs), and Mix-ke-mote-skin-na (The Iron Horn), and Wun-nes-tou (the white buffalo), and Teha-aes-sa-ko-mah-pee (The Bear's Child), and In-ne-ocose (The Buffalo's Child), and half-a-dozen others, and all in rich and costly dresses.

There is no tribe, perhaps, on the Continent, who dress more comfortably, and more gaudily, than the Blackfeet, unless it be the tribe of Crows. There is no great-difference, however, in the costliness or elegance of their costume; nor in the materials of which they are formed; though there is a distinctive mode in each tribe, of stitching or ornamenting with the porcupine quills, wlllich constitute one of the principal ornaments to all their fine dresses; and which can be easily recognized,

by any one a little familiar with their modes, as belonging to such or such a tribe. The dress, for instance of the chief whom I have just mentioned, and whose portrait I have just painted, consists of a shirt or tunic, made of two deer skins finely dressed, and so placed together with the necks of the skins downwards, and the skins of the hind legs stitched together, the seams running down on each arm, from the neck to the knuckles of the hand; this seam is covered with a band of two inches in width, of very beautiful embroidery of porcupine quills, and suspended from the under edge of this, from the shoulders to the hands, is a fringe of the locks of black hair, which he has taken from the heads of victims slain by his own hand in battle. The leggings are made also of the same material; and down the outer side of the leg, from the hip to the feet, extends also a similar band or belt of the same width; and wrought and fringed with scalp locks. These locks of hair are ornaments from scalps and worn as trophies.

The wife (or squaw) of this dignitary Eeh-nis-kin (the crystal stone), I have also placed upon my canvass; her countenance is rather pleasing, which is an uncommon thing amongst the Blackfeet -- her dress is made of skins, and being the youngest of a bevy of six or eight, and the last one taken under his guardianship, was smiled upon with great satisfaction, whilst he exempted her from the drudgeries of the camp; and keeping her continually in the halo of his own person, watched and guarded her as the apple of his eye. The grandson also of this sachem, a boy of six years of age, and too young as yet to have acquired a name, has stood forth like a tried warrior; and I have painted him at full length, with his bow and quiver slung, and his robe made of a racoon skin. The history of this child is somewhat curious and interesting; his father is dead, and in case of the death of the chief, of whom I have spoken, he becomes hereditary chief of the tribe. This boy has been twice stolen away by the Crows by ingenious stratagems and twice re-captured by the Blackfeet, at considerable sacrifice of life, and at present is lodged with Mr. McKenzie, for safe keeping and protection, until he shall arrive at the proper age to take the office to which he is to succeed, and able to protect himself.

The scalp of which I spoke above, is procured by cutting out a piece of the skin of the head, the size of the palm of the hand or less, containing the very centre or crown of the head, the place where the hair radiates from a point, and exactly over what the phrenologists call self-esteem. This patch then is kept and dried with great care, as proof positive of the death of an enemy, and evidence of a man's claims as a warrior: and after having been formally "danced", as the saying is, (i.e. after it has been stuck up upon a pole or held up by an "old woman", and the warriors have danced around it for two or three weeks at intervals,) it is fastened to the handle of a lance, or the end of a war-club, or divided into a great many small locks and used to fringe and ornament the victor's dress. When these dresses are seen bearing such trophies, it is of course a difficult matter to purchase them of the Indian, for they often hold them above all price. I shall hereafter take occasion to speak of the scalp-dance; describing it in all its parts, and giving a long Letter, at the same time on scalps and scalping, an interesting and general custom amongst all the North American Indians.

In the chief's dress, which I am describing, there are his moccasins, made also of buckskin, and ornamented in a corresponding manner. And over all, his robe, made of the skin of a young buffalo bull, with the hair remaining on; and on the inner or flesh side, beautifully garnished with Porcupine quills, and the battles of his life very ingeniously, though rudely, portrayed in pictorial representations. In his hand he holds a very beautiful pipe, the stem of which is four or five feet

long, and two inches wide, curiously wound with braids of the porcupine quills of various colours; and the bowl of the pipe ingeniously carved by himself from a piece of red steatite of an interesting character, and which they all tell me is procured somewhere between this place and the Falls of St. Anthony, on the head waters of the Mississippi.

This curious stone has many peculiar qualities, and has, undoubtedly, but one origin in this country, and perhaps in the world. It is found hut in the hands of the savage, and every tribe, and nearly every individual in the tribe has his pipe made of it. I consider this stone a subject of great interest, and curiosity to the world; and I shall most assuredly make it a point, durin Indian rambles, to visit the place from whence it is brought. I have already got a number of most remarkable traditions and stories relating to the "sacred quarry"; of pilgrimages performed there to procure the stone, and of curious transactions that have taken place on that ground. It seems, from all I can learn, that all the tribes in these regions, and also of the Mississippi and tlie Lakes, have been in the habit of going to that place, and meeting their enemies there, whom they are obliged to treat as friends, under an injunction of the Great Spirit.

So then is this sachem (the buffalo's back fat) dressed; and in a very similar manner, and almost the same, is each of the others above named; and all armed with bow and quiver, lance and shield. These north western tribes are all armed with the bow and lance, and protected with the shield or arrow fender, which is carried outside of the left arm, exactly as the Roman and Grecian shield was carried, and for the same purpose.

There is an appearance purely classic in the plight and equipment of these warriors and "knights of the lance". They are almost literally always on their horses' backs, and they wield these weapons with desperate effect upon the open plains; where they kill their game while at full speed, and contend in like manner in battles with their enemy. There is one prevailing custon in these respects, amongst all the tribes who inhabit the great plains or prairier of these western regions. These plains afford them an abundance of wild ane fleet horses, which are easily procured: and on their backs at full speed, they can come alongside of any animal, which they easily destroy.

The bow with which they are armed is small, and apparently an insignificant weapon, though one of great and almost incredible power in the handt of its owner, whose sinews have been from childhood habituated to its usi and service. The length of these bows is generally about three feet, ane sometimes not more than two and a half. They have, ne doubt, studied to get the recjquisite power in the smallest compass possible as it is more easily and handily used on horseback than one of greater length. The greater number of these bows are made of ash, or of "bois d'arc" (as the French call it), and lined on the back with layers of buffalo or deer? Sinews, which are inseparably attached to them, and give them great elasticity. There are very many also (amongst the Blackfeet and the Crows) which are made of bone, and others of the horn of the mountain-sheep. Those made of bone are decidedly the most valuable, and cannot in this country be procured of a good cjnality short of the price of one or two horses. About these there is a mystery yet to be solved, and I advance my opinion against all theories that I llave heard in the coluntry where they are used and made. I have procured several very fine specimens, and when purchasing them have inquired of the Indians, what bone they were made of? nod in every instance, the answer was, "That's medicine", meaning tllat it was a mystery to them, or that they did not wish to be questioned about them. The bone of which they are made is certainly not the bone of any animal now ranging on the prairies, or in the mountains between this place and the Pacific Ocean; for some of

---

these bows are three feet in length, of; one solid piece of horn, and that as close-grained -- as hard -- as white, and as highly polished as any ivory; it was elks' horn (as some have supposed), which is of a dark colour and porous: or it come from the buffalo. It is my opinion, therefore, that the Indians on the Pacific coast procure the bone from the jaw of the sperm whale, which is stranded on that coast, and bringing the bone into the mountains, trade it to the Blackfeet and Crows, will manufacture it into these bows without knowing any more than we do, from what source it has been found.

One of these little bows in the hands of an Indian, on a feet and welltrained horse, with a quiver of arrows slung on his back, is a most effective and powerful weapon in the open plains. No one can easily credit the force with which these missiles are thrown, and the sanguinary effects produced by their wounds, until he has rode by the side of a party of Indians in chase of a herd of buffaloes, and witnessed the apparent ease and grace with which their supple arms have drawn the bow, and seen these huge animals tumbling down and gushing out their hearts' blood from their mouths and nostrils.

Their bows are often made of bone and sinews, and their arrows headed with flints or with bones, of their own construction, or with steel, as they are now chiefly furnished by the Fur Traders quite to the Rocky mountains. The quiver, which is uniformly carried on the back, and made of the panther or otter skins is a magazine of these deadly weapons, and generally contains two varieties. The one to be drawn upon an enemy, generally poisoned, and with long flukes or barbs, which are designed to hang the blade in the wound after the shaft is withdrawn, in which they are but slightly glued; -- the other to be used for their game, with the blade firmly fastened to the shaft, and the flukes inverted; that it may easily be drawn from the wound, and used on a future occasion.

Such is the training of men and horses in this country, that this work of death and slaughter is simple and easy. The horse is trained to approach the animals on the tight side, enabling its rider to throw his arrows to the left; it runs and approaches without the use of the halter, which is hanging loose upon its neck bringing the rider within three or four paces of the animal, when the arrow is thrown with great ease and certainty to the heart; and instances sometimes occur, where the arrow passes entirely through the animal's body.

An Indian, therefore, mounted on a fleet and well-trained horse, with his bow in his hand, and his quiver slung on his back, containing an hundred arrows, of which he can throw fifteen or twenty in a minute, is a formidable and dangerous enemy. Many of them also ride with a lance of twelve or fourteen feet in length, with blades of polished steel; and all of them (as a protection for their vital parts), with a shield or arrow fender made of the skin of the buffalo's neck, which has been smoked, and hardened with glue extracted from the hoofs. These shields are arrow-proof, and will glance off a rifle shot with perfect effect by being turned obliquely, which they do with great skill. This shield or arrow-fender is, in my opinion, made of similar materials, and used in the same way, and for the same purpose, as was the clypeus or small shield in the Roman and Grecian cavalry. They were made in those days as a means of defence on horseback only -- made small and light, of bull's hides; sometimes single, sometimes double and tripled. Such was Hector's shield, and of most of the Homeric heroes of the Greek and Trojan wars. In those days also were darts or javelins and lances; the same were also used by the Ancient Britons; and such exactly are now in use amongst the Arabs and the North American Indians.

---

In this way then, are all of these wild red knights of the prairie, armed and equipped -- and while nothing can possibly be more picturesque and thrilling than a troop or war-party of these fellows, galloping over these green and endless prairies; there can be no set of mounted men of numbers, so effective and so invincible in this country as they would be, could they be inspired with confidence of their own powers and their own superiority; yet this never can be done; -- for the Indian, as far as the name of white man has travelled, and long before he has to try his strength with him, is trembling with fright and fear of his approach; he hears of white man's arts and artifice -- his tricks and cunning, and his hundred instruments of death and destruction, he dreads his approach, shrinks from him with fear and trembling his heart sickens, and his pride and courage wither, at the thoughts of contending with an enemy, whom he thinks may war and destroy with weapons of medicine or mystery.

Of the Blackfeet, whom I mentioned in the beginning of this letter, and whose portraits are now standing in my room, there is another of whom I must say a few words; Pe-toh-pee-kiss, (the eagle ribs). This man is one of the extraordinary men of the Blackfoot tribe; though not a chief, he stands here in the Fort, and deliberately boasts of eight scalps, which he says he has taken from the heads of trappers and traders with his own hand. His dress is really superb, almost literally covered with scalp-locks, of savage and civil.

I have painted him at full length, with a head-dress made entirely of ermine skins and horns of the buffalo. This custom of wearing horns beautifully polished and surmounting the head-dress, is a very curious one, being worn only by the bravest of the brave; by the most extraordinary men in the nation. Of their importance and meaning, I shall say more in a future epistle. When he stood for his picture, he also held a lance and two "medicine-bags" in his hand; of lances I have spoken, -but "medicinebags" and "medicine" will be the text for my next Letter.

Besides the chiefs and warriors above-named, I have also transferred to my canvass the "looks and very resemblance" of an aged chief, who combines with his high office, the envied title of mystery or medicine-man, ie. doctor -- magician -- prophet -- soothsayer -- or high priest, all combined in one person, who necessarily is looked upon as "Sir Oracle" of the nation. The name of this distinguished functionary is Wun-nes-tou, (the white buffalo); and on his left arm he presents his mystery drum or tambour, in which are concealed the hidden and sacred mysteries of his healing art.

And there is also In-ne-o-cose, the iron-horn, at full length, a splendid dress, with his "medicine-bag" in his hand; and Ah-kay-eepix-en, the woman who strikes many, in a beautiful dress of the mountain-goats' skin, and her robe of the young buffalo's hide.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 6.

MOUTH OF YELLOW STONE, UPPER MISSOURI.

Now for medicines or mysteries -- for doctors, high-priests, for hocus pocus, witchcraft, and animal magnetism!

In the last Letter I spoke of Pe-toh-pee-kiss (the eagle ribs), a Blackfoot brave, whose portrait I had just painted at full length, in a splendid dress. I mentioned also, that he held two medicine-bags in his hand; as they are represented in the picture; both of them made of the skins of otters, and curiously ornamented with ermine, and other strange things.

I must needs stop here -- my painting and every thing else, until I can explain the word "medicine", and "medicine-bag;" and also some medicine operations, which I have seen transacted at this place within a few days past. "Medicine" is a great word in this country; and it is very necessary that one should know the meaning of it, whilst he is scanning and estimating the Indian character, which is made up, in a great degree, of mysteries and superstitions.

The word medicine, in its common acceptation here, means mystery, and nothing else; and in that sense I shall use it very frequently in my Notes on Indian Manners and Customs.

The Fur Traders in this country, are nearly all French; and in their language, a doctor or physician, is called "Medicine". The Indian country is full of doctors; and as they are all magicians, and skilled, of profess to be skilled, in many mysteries, the word "medecin" has become habitually applied to every thing mysterious or unaccountable; and the English and Americans, who are also trading and passing through this country, have easily and familiarly adopted the same word, with a slight alteration, conveying the same meaning; and to be a little more explicit, they have denominated these personages "medicine-men", which means something more than merely a doctor or physician. These physicians, however, are all medicine-men, as they are all supposed to deal more or less in mysteries and charms, which are aids and handmaids in their practice. Yet it was necessary to give the word or phrase a still more comprehensive meaning as there were many personages amongst them, and also amongst the white men who visit the country, who could deal in mysteries, though not skilled in the application of drugs and medicines; and they all range now, under the comprehensive and accommodating phrase of "medicine-men". For instance, I am a "medicine-man of the highest order amongst these superstitious people, on account of the art which I practice; which is a strange and unaccountable thing to them, and of course, called the greatest of "medicine". My gun and pistols, which have percussion-locks, are great medicine; and no Indian can be prevailed on to fire them off, for they say they have nothing to do with white man's medicine.

The Indians do not use the word medicine, however; but in each tribe they have a word of their own construction, synonymous with mystery or mystery-man .

The "medicine-bag" then, is a mystery-bag; and its meaning and importance necessary to be understood, as it may be said to be the key to Indian life and Indian character. These bags are

constructed of the skins of animals, of birds, or of reptiles, and ornamented and preserved in a thousand different ways, as suits the taste or freak of the person who constructs them. These skins are generally attached to some Part of the clothing of the Indian, or carried in his hand--they are oftentimes decorated in such a manner as to be exceedingly ornamental to his person, and always are stuffed with grass, or moss, or something of the kind; and generally without drugs or medicines within them, as they are religiously closed and sealed, and, seldom, if ever, to be opened. I find that every Indian in his primitive state, carries his medicine-bag in some form or other, to which he pays the greatest homage, and to which he looks for safety and protection through life--and in fact, it might almost be called a species of idolatry; for it would seem in some instances, as if he actually worshipped it. Feasts are often made, and dogs and horses sacrificed, to a man's medicine; and days and even weeks, of fasting and penance of various kinds are often suffered, to appease his medicine, which he imagines he has in some way offended.

This curious custom has principally been done away with along the frontier, where white men laugh at the Indian for the observance of so ridiculous and useless a form: but in this country it is in full force, and every man in the tribe carries this, his supernatural charm or guardian, to which he looks for the preservation of his life, in battle or in other danger; at which times it would be considered ominous of bad luck and an ill fate to be without it.

The manner in which this curious and important article is instituted is this: a boy, at the age of fourteen or fifteen years, is said to be making or (forming his "medicine", when he wanders away from his father's lodge, and absents himself -- if for the space of two or three, and sometimes even four or five, days; lying on the ground in some remote or secluded spot, crying to the Great Spirit, and fasting the whole time, a period of peril and abstinence, when he falls asleep, the first animal, bird, or reptile, of which he dreams (or pretends to have dreamed, perhaps), he considers the Great Spirit has designated for his mysterious protector through life. He then returns home to his father's lodge, and relates his success; and after allaying his thirst, and satisfying his appetite, he searches for with weapons or traps, until he can procure the animal or bird, the skin of which he reserves entire, and ornaments it according to his own fancy, and carries it with him through life, for "good luck" (as he calls it); as his strength in battle -- and in death his guardian spirit, that is buried with him, and which is to conduct him safe to the beautiful hunting grounds, which he contemplates in the world to come.

The value of the medicine-bag to the Indian is beyond all price; for to sell it, or give it away, would subject him to such signal disgrace in his tribe, that he could never rise above it; and again, his superstition would stand in the way of any such disposition of it, for he considers it the gift of the Great Spirit. An Indian carries his medicine-bag into battle, and trusts to it for his protection; and if he loses it thus, when fighting ever so bravely for his country, he suffers a disgrace scarcely less than that which occurs in case he sells or gives it away; his enemy carries it off and displays it to his own people as a trophy; whilst the loser is cut short of the respect that is due to other young men of his tribe, and forever subjected to the degrading epithet of "a man without medicine", or "he who has lost his medicine", until he can replace it again; which can only be done, by rushing into battle and plundering one from an enemy whom he slays with his own hand, this done, his medicine is restored, and he is reinstated again in the estimation of his tribe; and even higher than before, for this is called the best of medicine, or "medicine honourable".

It is a singular fact, that a man can institute his mystery or medicine, but once in his life; and

equally singular that he can reinstate himself by the adoption of the medicine of his enemy; both of which reful-tonns are strong and violent inducements for him to tight bravely in battle: the first, that he may protect and preserve his medicine; and the second, in case he has been so unlucky as to lose it, that he may restore it, and his reputation also, while he is desperately contending for the protection of his community.

During my travels thus far, I have been unable to buy a medicine-bag of an Indian, although I have offered them extravagant prices for them; and even on the frontier, where they have been induced to abandon the practice, though a white man may induce an Indian to relinquish his medicine, yet cannot bring it of him, the Indian, in such case will bury it, to please a white man, and save it from his sncrileious touch; or he will linger around the site and at regular times his visit to it -- may pay it his devotions, as long as he lives.

These curious appendages to the persons or wardrobe of an individual, are sometilues made of the skin of an otter, a beaver, a musk-rat, a weazel, a racoon, a polecat sabbie, a frog, a toad, a bat, a mouse, a mole, a hawk, an eagle, a magpie, or a sparrow: -- sometimes of the skin of an animal so large as a wolf; and at others, of the skins of the lesser animals, so small that they are hidden under the dress, and very difficult to be found, even if searched for.

Such then is the medicine-bag -- such its meaning and importance; and when its owner dies, it is placed in his grave and decays with his body.

In the case of the portrait of which I spoke in the beginning of this Letter, there are seen two medicine-bags in the hand of Pe-toh-pee-kiss; the one was of his own instituting, and the other was taken from his enemy, whom he had slain in battle; both of these he has a right to display and boast of on such an occasion. This is but the beginning or incipient stage of "medicines", however, in this strange and superstitious country; and if you have patience, I will carry you a few degrees further into the mysteries of conjuration, before I close this Letter. Sit still then and read, until I relate a scene of a tragic, and yet of the most grotesque character, which took place in this Fort a few days since, and to all of which I was an eye-witness. The scene I will relatk as it transpired precisely; and call it the story of the "doctor", or the "Blackfoot medicine-man."

Not many weeks since, a party of Knisteneaux came here from the north, for the purpose of making their summer's trade with the Fur Company; and, whilst here, a party of Blackfeet, their natural enemies (the same who are here now), came from the west, also to trade. These two belligerent tribes encamped on different sides of the Fort, and had spent some weeks here in the Fort and about it, in apparently good feeling and fellowship; unable in fact to act otherwise, for, according to a regulation of the Fort, their arms and weapons were all locked up by McKenzie in his "arsenal", for die purpose of preserving die peace amongst these fighting-cocks.

The Knisteneaux had completed their trade, and loitered about the premises, until all, both Indians and white men, were getting tired of their company, wishing them quietly off. When they were ready to start, with their goods packed upon their backs, their arms were given them, and they started; bidding everybody, both friends and foes, a hearty farewell. They went out of the Fort, and though the party gradually moved off, one of them undiscoveretl, loitered about the Fort, until he got an opportunity to poke the muzzle of his Sun through between the picluets; when he fired it at one of the chiefs of the Blackfeet, who stood within a few paces, talking with Mr. McKenzie, and shot him with two musket bullets through the centre of his body! The Blackfoot fell, and rolled about upon the ground in the ngonies of death. The Blackfeet who were in the

Fort seized their weapons and ran in a mass out of the Fort, in pursuit of the Knisteneaux, who were rapidly retreating to the bluffs. The Frenchmen in the Fort, also, at so flagrant and cowardly an insult, seized their guns and ran out, joining the Blackfeet in the pursuit. I, at that moment, ran to my painting-room in one of the bastions overlooking the plain, where I had a fair view of the affair; many shots were exchanged back and forward, and a skirmish ensued which lasted half an hour; the parties, however, were so far apart that little effect was produced; the Knisteneaux were driven off over the bluffs, having lost one man and had several others wounded. The Blackfeet and Frenchmen returned into the Fort, and then, I saw what I never before saw in my life -- I saw a "medicine-man" performing his mysteries over a dying man. The man who had been shot was: still living, though two bullets had passed through the centre of his body, about two inches apart from each other; he was lying on the ground in the agonies of death, and no one could indulge the slightest hope of his recovery; yet the medicine-man must needs be called (for such a personage they had in their party), and hocus pocus applied to the dying man, as the dernier resort, when all drugs and all specifics were useless, and after all possibility of recovery was extinct!

I have mentioned that all tribes have their physicians, who are also medicine (or mystery) men. These professional gentlemen are worthies of the highest order in all tribes. They are regularly called and paid as physicians, to prescribe for the sick; and many of them acquire great skill in the medicinal world, and gain much celebrity in their nation. Their first prescriptions are roots and herbs, of which they have a great variety of species; and when these have all failed, their last resort is to "medicine" or mystery; and for this purpose, each one of them has a strange and unaccountable dress, conjured up and constructed during a life-time of practice, in the wildest fancy imaginable, in which he arrays himself, and makes his last visit to his dying patient, -- dancing over him, shaking his frightful rattles, and singing songs of incantation, in hopes to cure him by a charm. There are some instances, of course, where the exhausted patient unaccountably recovers, under the application of these absurd forms; and in such cases, this ingenious son of Indian Esculapius will be seen for several days after, on the top of a wigwam, with his right arm extended and waving over the gaping multitude, to whom he is vaunting forth, without modesty, the surprising skill he has acquired in his art, and the undoubted efficacy of his medicine or mystery. But if, on the contrary, the patient dies, he soon changes his dress, and joins in doleful lamentations with the mourners; and easily, with his craft, and the ignorance and superstition of his people, protects his reputation and maintains his influence over them; by assuring them, that it was the will of the Great Spirit that his patient should die, and when sent for, his feeble efforts must cease.

Such was the case, and such the extraordinary means resorted to in the instance I am now relating. Several hundred spectators, including Indians and traders, were assembled around the dying man, when it was announced that the "medicine-man" was coming; we were required to "form a ring", leaving a space of some thirty or forty feet in diameter around the dying man, in which the doctor could perform his wonderful operations; and a space was also opened to allow him free room to pass through the crowd without touching any one. This being done, in a few moments his arrival was announced by the death-like "hush-----sh---" through the crowd; and nothing was to be heard, save the light and casual tinkling of the rattles upon his dress, which was scarcely perceptible to the ear, as he cautiously and slowly moved through the avenue left for him; which at length brought him into the ring, in view of the pitiable object over whom his mysteries were to be performed.

Readers! you may have seen or read of the witch of Elder -- or you may imagine all the ghosts, and spirits, and furies, that ever ranked amongst the "rank and file" of demonology; and yet you must see my painting of this strange scene before you can form a just conception of real frightful ugliness and Indian conjuration -- yes, and even more: you must see the magic dress of this Indian "Le big bug" (which I have this day procured in all its parts), placed upon the back of some person who can imitate the strides, and swells, the grunts, and spring the rattles of an Indian magician.

His entrise and his garb were somewhat thus :-he approached the ring with his body in a crouching position, with a slow and tilting step-his body and head were entirely covered with the skin of a yellow bear, the head of which (his own head being inside of it) served as a mask; the huge claws of which also, were dangling on his wrists and ankles; in one hand he shook a frightful rattle, and in the other brandished his medicine-spear or magic wand; to the rattling din and discord of all of which, he added the wild and startling jumps and yelps of the Indian, and tire horrid and appalling grunts, and snarls, and growls of the grizzly bear, in ejaculatory and guttural incantations to the Good and Bad Spirits, in behalf of his patient; who was rolling and groaning in the agonies of death, whilst he was dancing around him, jumping over him, and pawing him about, and rolling him ill every direction.

In this wise, this strange operation proceeded for half an hour, to the surprise of a numerous and death-like silent audience, until the man died; and the medicine-man danced off to his quarters, and packed up, and tied and secured from the sight of the world, his mystery dress and equipments.

This dress, in all its parts, is one of the greatest curiosities in the whole collection of Indian manufactures which I have yet obtained in the Indian country. It is the strangest medley and mixture, perhaps of the mysteries of the animal and vegetable kingdoms that ever was seen. Besides the skin of the yellow bear (which being almost an anomaly in that country, is out of the regular order of nature, and, of course, great medicine, and converted to a medicine use), there are attached to it the skins of many animals, which are also anomalies or deformities, which render them, in their estimation, medicine; and there are also the skins of snakes, and hogs, and bats, weasels and tails of bird, -- hoofs of deer, goats, and antelopes; and, in fact, the odds and ends," and fag ends, and tails, and tips of almost everything that swims, flies, or runs, in this part of the wide world.

Such is a medicine-man or a physician. And such is one of his wild and ridiculous manures, which I have just witnessed in this strange country.

These men, as T before remarked, are valued as dignitaries in the tribe, and the greatest respect is paid to them by the whole community; not only for their skill in their "materia medicine"; but more especially for their tact in magic and mysteries, in which they all deal to a very great extent. I shall have much more to say of these characters and their doings in future epistles, and barely observe in the present place, that no tribe is without them -- that in all tribes their doctors are conjurers -- are magicians -- are sooth-sayers, and I had like to have said, high-priests, inasmuch as they superintend and conduct all their religious ceremonies -- they are looked upon by all as oracles of the nation. In all councils of war and peace, they have a seat with the chiefs -- are regularly consulted before any public step is taken, and the greatest deference and respect is paid to their opinions.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER No. 7.

MOUTh OF YELLOW STONE, UPPER MISSOURI.

The Letter which I gave you yesterday, on the subject of “medicines” and ‘L medicine-men,” has somewhat broken the “thread of my discourse;” and left my painting-room (in the bastion), and all the Indians in it, and portraits, and buffalo hunts, and landscapes of these beautiful regions, to be taken up and discussed; which I will now endeavour to do, beginning just where I left (or digressed) off.

I was seated on the cool breech of a twelve-pounder, and had my easel before me, and Crows and Blackfeet, and Assinneboins, whom I was tracing. And so I have been doing to-day, and shall be for several days thereafter.

My painting-room has become so great a lounge, and I so great a “medicineman”, that all other amusements are left, and all other topics of conversation and gossip are postponed for future consideration. The chiefs have had to plant “dog soldiers” (as they are called) at my door, with spears in hand to protect me from the throng, who otherwise would press upon me; and none but the worthies are allowed to come into my medicine apartments, and none to be painted, except such as are decided by the chiefs to be worthy of so high an honour.

The Crows and Blackfeet who are here together, are enemies of the most deadly kind while out on the plains; but here they sit and smoke quietly together, yet with a studied and dignified reserve. The Blackfeet are, perhaps, one of the most (if not entirely the most) numerous and warlike tribes on the Continent. They occupy the whole of the country about the sources of the Missouri, from this place to the Rocky Mountains; and their numbers, from the best computations, are something like forty or fifty thousand -- they are (like all other tribes whose numbers are sufficiently large to give them boldness) warlike and ferocious, i. e. they upon the canvass. ral days to come ranging through every part of the Rocky Mountains, and carrying war and moulistering their enemies, who are, of course, every tribe who inhabit the country about them.

The Crows who live on the head waters of Yellow Stone. and extend from this neighbourhood also to the base of the Rocky Mountains, are similar in the above respects to the Blackfeet; roaming about a great part of the year -- and seeking their enemies wherever they can find them.

They are a much smaller tribe than the Blackfeet, with whom they are always at war, and from whose great numbers they suffer prodigiously in battle; and probably will be in a few years entirely destroyed by them.

The Crows have not, perhaps, more than 7000 in their nation, and probably not more than eight hundred warriors or fighting men. Amongst the more powerful tribes, like the Sioux and Blackfeet, who have been enabled to Preserve their warriors, it is a fair calculation to count one in five as warriors; but among the Crows and Minatarees, and Puncachs, and several other small but warlike tribes, this proportion cannot exist; as in some of these I have found two or three women to a man in the nation; in consequence of the continual losses sustained amongst their men in war,

and also whilst pursuing the buffaloes on the plains for food, where their lives are exceedingly exposed.

The Blackfeet and the Crows, like the Sioux and Assinneboins, have nearly the same mode of constructing their wigwam or lodge; in which tribes it is made of buffaloe skins sewed together, after being dressed, and made into the form of a tent; supported within by some twenty or thirty pine poles of twenty-five feet in height, with an apex or aperture at the top, through which the smoke escapes and the light is admitted. These lodges, or tents, are taken down in a few minutes by the squaws, when they wish to change their location, and easily transported to any part of the country where they wish to encamp; and they generally move some six or eight times in the course of the summer; following the immense herds of buffaloes, as they range over these vast plains, from east to west, and north to south.

They hunt the Buffalo for objects for which they do this are two-fold -- to procure and dress their skins, which are brought in, in the fall and winter, and sold to the Fur Company, for white man's luxury; and also for the purpose of killing and drying buffalo meat, which they bring in from their hunts, packed on their horses' backs, in great quantities; making pemican, and preserving the marrow-fat for their winter quarters; which are generally taken up in some heavy-timbered bottom, on the banks of some stream, deep imbedded within the surrounding bluffs, which break off the winds, and make their long and tedious winter tolerable and supportable. They then sometimes erect their skin lodges amongst the timber, and dwell in them during the winter months; but more frequently cut logs and make a miserable and rude sort of log cabin, in which they can live much warmer and better protected from the assaults of their enemies, in case they are attacked; in which case a log cabin is a tolerable fort against Indian weapons.

The Crows, of all the tribes in this region, or on the Continent, make the most beautiful lodge. As I have before mentioned, they construct them as the Sioux do, and make them of the same material; yet they often times dress the skins of which they are composed almost as white as linen, and beautifully garnish them with porcupine quills, and paint and ornament them in such a variety of ways, as renders them exceedingly picturesque and agreeable to the eye. I have procured a very beautiful one of this description, highly-ornamented, and fringed with scalp-locks, and sufficiently large for forty men to dine under. The poles which support it are about thirty in number, of pine, and are cut in the Rocky Mountains, having been some hundred years, perhaps, in one. Their tent, when erected, is about twenty-five feet high, and has a very pleasing effect; with the area or Good Spirit painted on one side, and the Evil Spirit on the other. If I can ever succeed in transporting it to New York and other eastern cities, it will be looked upon as a beautiful and exceedingly interesting specimen.

The manner in which an encampment of Indians strike their tents and transport them is curious, and to the traveller in this country a very novel and unexpected sight, when he first beholds it. Whilst ascending the river to this place, I saw an encampment of Sioux, consisting of six hundred of these lodges, struck, and all things packed and on the move in a very few minutes. The chief sends his runners or criets (for each, all chiefs keep in their employment) through the village, a few hours before they are to start; announcing his determination to move, and the hour fixed upon, and the necessary preparations are in the meantime making; and at the time announced, the lodge of the chief is seen sapping in the wind, a part of the poles having been taken out: from under it; this is the signal, and in one minute, six hundred of them (on a level and beautiful prairie)

rie), which before had been strained tight and fixed, were seen waving and happing in the wind, and in one minute more all were flat upon the ground. Their horses and dogs, of which they had a great number, had all been secured upon the spot, in readiness; and each one was speedily loaded with the burthen allotted to it, and ready to fall into the grand procession.

This strange cavalcade, preparation is made in the following manner: the poles of a lodge are divided into two bunches, and the little ends of each bunch fastened upon the shoulder or with end of a horse, leaving the big ends to drag behind on the ground on either side. Just behind the horse, a brace or pole is tied across, which keeps the poles in their respective place; and then upon that and the poles behind the horse, is placed the lodge or tent, which is rolled up, and also numerous other articles of household and domestic furniture, and on the top of all, two, three, and even (sometimes) four women and children. Each one of the horses has a conductor, who sometimes walks before and leads it, with a tremendous pack upon her own back; and at often she rides astride on its back, with a child, perhaps, at her breast, and another astride of the horse's back behind her, clinging to her waist with one arm, while it affectionately embraces a sneaking dog-pup in the other.

In this way five or six hundred wigwams, with all their furniture, may be seen drawn out for miles, creeping over the grass-covered plains of this country; and three times that number of men, on good horses, strolling along in front or on the flank; and, in some tribes, in the rear of this heterogeneous caravan, at least five times that number of dogs, which within this the skins to be smoked are placed, and in this condition the tent will stand a day or so, enclosing the heated smoke: and by some chemical process or other, which I do not understand, the skins thus acquire a quality which enables them, after being ever so many times wet, to dry soft and pleasant as they were before, which secret I have never yet seen practiced in my own country; and for the lack of which, all of our dressed skins when once wet, are, I think, chiefly spoiled.

An Indian's dress of deer skins, which is wet a hundred times upon his back, dries soft; and his lodge also, which stands in the rains, and even through the severity of winter, is taken down as soft and as clean as when it was first put up.

A Crow is known wherever he is met by his beautiful white dress, and his tall and elegant figure; the greater part of the men being six feet high. The Blackfeet on the other hand, are more of the Herculean make -- about middling stature, with broad shoulders, and great expansion of chest; and the skins of which their dresses are made, are chiefly dressed black, or of a dark brown colour; from which circumstance, in all probability, they having black leggings or moccasins, have got the name of Blackfeet.

The Crows are very handsome and gentlemanly Indians in their personal appearance: and have been always reputed, since the first acquaintance made with them, very civil and friendly.

These people to be sure, have in some instances plundered and robbed trappers and travellers in their country; and for that I have sometimes heard them called rascals, slid thieves, and rogues of the first order, &c.; yet they do not consider themselves such; for thieving in their estimation is a high crime, and considered the most disgraceful act that a man can possibly do. They call this certulping, where they sometimes run off a Trader's horse and make their boast of it; considering it a kind of retaliation or summary justice, which they think it right and honourable that they should administer. And why not for the unlicensed trespass committed through their country from one end to the other, by mercenary white men, who are destroying the game, and catching all the

beaver and other rich and valuable furs out of their country, without paying them an equivalent, or, in fact, anything at all, for it; and this too, when they have been warned time and again of the danger they would be in, if they longer persisted in the practice. Reader, I look upon the Indian as the most honest and honourable race of people that I ever lived amongst in my life; and in their native state, I pledge you my honour they are the last of all the human family to pilfer or to steal, if you trust to their honour; and for this never-ending and boundless system of theft and plunder, and debauchery, that is practiced off upon these rightful owners of the soil, by acquisitive white men, I consider the infliction, or retaliation, by driving off and appropriating a few horses, but a lenient punishment, which those persons at least should expect; and which, in fact, none but a very honourable and high-minded people could inflict, instead of a much severer one; which they could easily practice upon the few white men in their country, without rendering themselves amenable to any law.

Mr. McKinzie has repeatedly told me, within the four last weeks, while in conversation relative to the Crows, that they were friendly and honourable in their dealing with the whites, and that he considered them the finest Indians of his acquaintance.

I recollect whilst in St. Louis, and other places at the East, to have heard it often said, that the Crows were a rascally and thieving set of vagabonds, big highway robbers, &c. &c.; and I have been told since, that this information has become current in the world, from the fact that they made some depredations upon the camp of Messrs. Crooks and Hunt of the American Fur Company; and drove off a number of their horses, when they were passing through the Crow country, on their way to Astoria. This was no doubt true; and equally true, would these very Indians tell us, was the fact, that they had a good and sufficient reason for it.

These gentlemen, with their party, were crossing the Crow country with a large stock of goods, of guns, and ammunition, of knives, and spears, arrowheads, &c. and stopped for some time and encamped in the midst of the Crow country (and I think wintered there), when the Crows assembled in large numbers about them, and treated them in a kind and friendly manner; and at the same time proposed to trade with them for guns and ammunition, &c. (according to these gentlemen's own account, of which they were in great want, and for which they brought a great many horses, and offered them repeatedly in trade; which they refused to take, persisting in their determination of carrying their goods to their destined place, across the mountains; thereby disappointing these Indians, by denying them the arms and weapons which were in their possession, whilst they were living upon them, and exhausting the game and food of their country. No doubt, these gentlemen told the Crows, that these goods were going to Astoria, of which place they knew nothing; and of course, it was enough for them that they were going to take them farther west; which they would at once suppose was to the Blackfeet, their principal enemy, having eight or ten warriors to one of the Crows; where they supposed the white men could get a greater price for their weapons, and arm their enemies in such a way as would enable them to turn upon the Crows, and cut them to pieces without mercy. Under these circumstances, the Crows rode off, and to show their indignation, drove off some of the Company's horses, for which they have ever since been denominated a band of thieves and highway robbers. It is a custom, and a part of the system of jurisprudence amongst all savages, to revenge upon the person or persons who give the offence, if they can; and if not, to let that punishment fall upon the head of the first white man who comes in their way, provided the offender was a white man. And I would not be surprised,

therefore, if I get robbed of my horse; and you too, readers, if you go into that country, for that very (supposed) offence.

Messrs. Sublette and Campbell, two gentlemen of the highest respectability, who have traded with the Crows for several years, and they tell me they are one of the most honourable, honest, and high-minded races of people on earth; and with Mr. Tulloch, also, a man of the strictest veracity, who is now here with a party of them; and, he says, they never steal, -- have a high sense of honour, and being fearless and proud, are quick to punish or retaliate.

So much for the character of the Crows for the present, a subject which I shall assuredly take up again, when I shall have seen more of them myself.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 8.

MOUTH OF THE YELLOWSTONE, UPPER MISSOURI.

SINCE my last Letter, nothing of great moment has transpired at thi place; but I have been continually employed in painting my portraits an making notes on the character and customs of the wild folks who are about me. I have just been painting a number of the Crows, fine looking an noble gentlemen. They are really a handsome and well-formed set of me as can be seen in any part of the world. There is a sort of ease and grac added to their dignity of manners, which gives them the air of gentlemen ; once. I observed the other day, that most of them were over six teet high and very many of these have cultivated their natural hair to such an almo incredible length, that it sweeps the ground as they walk; there are frequel instances of this kind amongst them, and in some cases, a foot or more it will drag on the grass as they walk, giving exceeding grace and beauty their movements. They usually oil their Lair with a profusion of bear grease every morning, which is no doubt one cause of the unusual length which their hair extends; though it cannot be the sole cause of it, for tl other tribes throughout this country use the bear's grease in equal profusic without producing the same result. The Mandans, however, and the Sioux of whom I shall speak in future epistles, have cultivated a very great growth of the hair, as many of them are seen whose hair reaches near to the ground.

This extraordinary length of hair amongst the Crows is confined to the men alone; for the women, though all of them with glossy and beautif hair, and a great profusion of it, are unable to cultivate it to so great length; or else they are not allowed to compete with their lords in a fashion so Ornamental (and on which the men so highly pride themselves), and a obliged in many easer, to cut it short off.

The fashion of long hair amongst the men, prevails throughout all the Western and North West-ern tribes, after passing the Sacs and Foxes; ar the Pawnees of the Platte, who, with two or three other tribes only, a in the habit of shaving nearly the whole head.

The present chief of the Crows, who is called "Long-hair", and he received his name as well as his office from the circumstance of having the longest hair of any man in the nation, I have not yet seen: but I hope I may. Here I leave this part of the country. This extraordinary man known to several gentlemen with whom I am acquainted, and particular to Messrs. Sublette and Campbell, of whom I have before spoken, who told me they had lived in his hospitable lodge for months together; and assured me that they had measured his hair by a correct means, and found it to be ten feet and seven inches in length; closely inspecting every part of it at the same time, and satisfying themselver that it war the natural growth.

On ordinary occasions it is wound with a broad leather strap, from his head to its extreme end, and then folded up into a budget or block, of some ten or twelve inches in length, and of some pounds weight; which when he walks is carried under his arm, or placed in his bosom, within the folds of His robe; but on any great parade or similar occasion, his pride is to unfold it, oil it with

bear's grease and let it drag behind him, some three or four feet of it spread out upon the grass, end black and shining like a raven's wing.

It is a common custom amongst most of these upper tribes, to splice or add on several lengths of hair, by fastening them with glue; probably for the purpose of imitating the Crows, upon whom alone Nature has bestowed this conspicuous and signal ornament.

Amongst the Crows of distinction now at this place, I have painted the portraits of several, who exhibit some striking peculiarities. Amongst whom is Chah-ee-chopes, the fourwolves; a fine looking fellow, six feet in stature, and whose natural hair sweeps the grass as he walks; he is beautifully clad, and carries himself with the most graceful and manly men -- he is in mourning for a brother; and according to their custom, has cut off a number of locks of his long hair, which is as much as a man can well spare of so valued an ornament, which he has been for the greater part of his life cultivating; whilst a woman who mourns for a husband or child, is obliged to crop her hair short to her head, and so remained till it grows out again; ceasing gradually to mourn as her hair approaches to its former length.

Duhlr-pits-a-bo-shee, the red bear, a distinguished warrior; and Oo-je-en-a-he-ha, the woman who lives in the bear's den. I have also painted Pa-ris-ka-roo-pa (two crows) the younger, one of the most extraordinary men in the Crow nation; not only for his looks, from the form of his head, which seems to be distortion itself -- and curtailed of all its fair proportions; but from his extraordinary sagacity so a counsellor and orator, even at an early stage of his life.

There is something very uncommon in this outline, and sets forth the striking peculiarity of the Crow tribe, though rather in an exaggerated form. The semilunar outline of the Crow head, with an exceedingly low and retreating forehead, is certainly a very peculiar and striking characteristic; and though not so strongly marked in most of the tribe as in the present instance, is sufficient for their detection whenever they are met; and will be subject for further comment in another place. The Crow women (and Blackfeet also) are not handsome, and I shall at present say but little of them. They are, like all other Indian women, the slaves of their husbands: being obliged to perform all the domestic work and drudgeries of the tribe, and not allowed to join in their religious rites or ceremonies, nor in the dance or other amusements.

The women in all these upper and western tribes are decently dressed and many of them with great beauty and taste; their dresses are all of deer or goat skins, extending from their chins quite down to the feet; the dresses are in many instances trimmed with ermine, and ornamented with porcupine quills and beads with exceeding ingenuity.

The Crow and Blackfeet women, like all others I ever saw in any Indian tribe, divide the hair on the forehead, and paint the separation or crease with vermilion or red earth. For what purpose this little, but universal, custom is observed, I never have been able to learn.

The men amongst the Blackfeet tribe, have a fashion equally simple, and probably of as little meaning, which seems strictly to be adhered to by every man in the tribe; they separate the hair in two places on the forehead; leaving a lock between the two, of an inch or two in width, which is completely straightened down on to the bridge of the nose, and there cut square off. It is more than probable that this is done for the purpose of distinction that they may thereby be free from the epithet of effeminacy, which might otherwise attach to them.

These two tribes, whom I have spoken of connectedly, speak two distinct and entirely dissimilar languages; and the language of each is different and radically so, from that of all other tribes about

them. As these people are always at war, and have been, time out of mind, they do not intermarry or hold converse with each other, by which any knowledge each other's language could be acquired. It would be the work of man's life-time to collect the languages of all the different tribes which I am visiting; and I shall, from necessity, leave this subject chiefly to others, who have the time to devote to them, to explain them to the world I have, however, procured a brief vocabulary of their words and sentences in these tribes; and shall continue to do so amongst the tribes I all visit, which will answer as a specimen or sample in each; and which, in a sequel to these Letters (if they should ever be published), will probably be arranged.

The Blackfeet are, perhaps, the most powerful tribe of Indians on this Continent; and being sensible of their strength, have stubbornly resisted traders in their country, who have been gradually forming an acquaintance with them, and endeavouring to establish a permanent and profitable system of trade. Their country abounds in beaver and buffalo, and most of the fur-bearing animals of North America; and the American Fur Company with an unconquerable spirit of trade and enterprise, has pushed its establishments into their country; and the numerous parties of trappers tracing up their streams and rivers, rapidly destroying the beavers which Indian languages of North America can all be traced to two or three roots. The language of the Dohcotas is entirely and radically distinct from that of the Mandans, and theirs equally so from the Blackfoot and the Crows. And from the lips of Mr. Brazeau, a gentleman of education and strict observation, who has lived several years with the Blackfeet and Shiennes, and who speaks the language of tribes on either side of them, assures me that these languages are radically distinct and dissimilar, as I have above stated; and also, that although he has been several years amongst those tribes, he has not been able to trace the slightest resemblance between the Cree, Dohcotas, and Blackfoot, and Shienne, and Crow, and Mandan tongues; and from a great deal of corroborating information, which I have got from other persons acquainted with these tribes, I am fully convinced of the correctness of his statements.

Besides the Blackfeet and Crows, whom I told you were assembled at this place, are also the Knisteneaux (or Crees, as they are commonly called), a very pretty and pleasing tribe of Indians, of about 3000 in number, living on the north of this, and also the Assinneboins and Ojibbeways; both of which tribes also inhabit the country to the north and north-east of the mouth of Yellow Stone.

The Knisteneaux are of small stature, but well-built for strength and activity combined; are a people of wonderful prowess for their numbers, and have waged an unceasing warfare with the Blackfeet, who are their neighbours and enemies on the west. From their disparity in numbers, they are rapidly thinning the ranks of their warriors, who bravely sacrifice their lives in contentions with their powerful neighbours. This tribe occupy the country from the mouth of the Yellow Stone, in a north-western direction, far into the British territory, and trade principally at the British N. W. Company's forts.

The Assinneboins of seven thousand, and the Ojibbeways of six thousand, occupy a vast extent of country, in a north-eastern direction from this; extending also into the British possessions as high north as Lake Winnepeg; and trading principally with the British Company. These three tribes are in a state of nature, living as neighbours, and are also on terms of friendship with each other. This friendship, however, is probably but a temporary arrangement, brought about by the Traders amongst them; and which, like most Indian peace establishments, will be of short duration.

The Ojibbeways are, undoubtedly, a part of the tribe of Chippeways, with whom we are more familiarly acquainted, and who inhabit the south-west shore of Lake Superior. Their language is the same, though they are separated several hundred miles from any of them, and seem to have on knowledge of them, or traditions of the manner in which, or of the time when, they became severed from each other.

The Assinneboins are a part of the Dohcotas, or Sioux, undoubtedly; for their personal appearance as well as their language is very similar.

At what time, or in what manner, these two parts of a nation got strayed away from each other is a mystery; yet such cases have often occurred, of which I shall say more in future. Large parties who are, straying off in pursuit of game, or in the occupation of war, are oftentimes intercepted by their enemy; and being prevented from returning, are run off to a distant region, where they take up their residence and establish themselves as a nation.

There is a very curious custom amongst the Assinneboins, from which they have taken their name; a name given them by their neighbours, from a singular mode they have of boiling their meat, which is done in the following manner -- when they kill meat, a hole is dug in the ground about the size of a common pot, and a piece of the raw hide of the animal, as taken from the back, is put over the hole, and then pressed down with the hands close around the sides, and filled with water. The meat to be boiled is then put in this hole or pot of water; and in a fire, which is built near by, several large stones are heated to a red heat, which are successively dipped and held in the water until the meat is boiled; from which singular and peculiar custom, the Ojibbeways have given them the appellation of Assinneboins or stone boilers.

This custom is a very awkward and tedious one, and used only as an ingenious means of boiling their meat, by a tribe who was too rude and ignorant to construct a kettle or pot.

The Traders have recently supplied these people with pots; and even long before that, the Mandans had instructed them in the secret of manufacturing very good and serviceable earthen pots; which together have entirely done away the custom, excepting at Public festivals; where they seem, like all others of the human family, to take pleasure in cherishing and perpetuating their ancient customs.

Of these three tribes, I have also lined my painting-room with a number of very interesting portraits of the distinguished and brave men; and also representations of their games and ceremonies, which will be found in my INDIAN GALLERY, if I live, and they can be preserved until I get home.

The Assinneboine, or stone boilers, are a fine and noble looking race of Indians; bearing, both in their looks and customs, a striking resemblance to the Dohcotas or Sioux, from whom they have undoubtedly sprung. The men are tall, and graceful in their movements; and wear their pictured robes of the buffalo hide with great skill and pleasing effect. They are good hunters, and tolerably supplied with horses; and living in a country abounding with buffaloes, are well supplied with the necessaries of Indian life, and may be said to live well. Their games and amusements are many, of which the most valued one is the ball-play; and in addition to which, they have the game of the moccasin, horse-racing, and dancing; some one of which, they seem to be almost continually practicing, and of all of which I shall hereafter give the reader (as well as of many others of their amusements) a minute account.

Their dances, which were frequent and varied, were generally exactly the same as those of the

Sioux, of which I have given a faithful account in my Notes on the Sioux, and which the reader will I meet with. There was one of these scenes, however, that I witnessed the other day, which appeared to me to be peculiar to this tribe, and exceedingly picturesque in its effect; which was described to me as the pipe-dance, and was as follows -- On a hard-trodden pavement in front of their village, which place is used for all their public meetings, and many of their amusements, the young men, who were to compose the dance, had gathered themselves around a small fire, and each one seated on a buffalo-robe spread upon the ground. In the centre and by the fire, was seated a dignitary, who seemed to be a chief (perhaps a doctor or medicine-man), with a long pipe in his hand, which he lighted at the fire and smoked incessantly, grunting forth at the same time, in half-strangled gutturals, a sort of song, which I did not get translated to my satisfaction, and which might have been susceptible of none. While this was going on, another grim-visaged fellow in another part of the group, commenced beating on a drum or tambourine, accompanied by his voice; when one of the young men seated, sprang instantly on his feet, and commenced singing in time with the taps of the drum, and leaping about on one foot and the other in the most violent manner imaginable, In this way he went several times around the circle, bowing and brandishing his fists in the faces of each one who was seated, until at length he grasped one of them by the hands, and jerked him forcibly up upon his feet; who joined in the dance for a moment leaving the one who had pulled him up, to continue his step and his song in the centre of the ring; whilst he danced around in a similar manner, jerking up another, and then joining his companion in the centre; leaving the third and the fourth, and so on to drag into the ring, each one his man, until all were upon their feet; and at last joined in the most frightful gesticulations and yells that seemed almost to make the earth quake under our feet. This strange manoeuvre, which I did but partially understand, lasted for halfer three-quarters of an hour; to the great amusement of the gaping multitude who were assembled around, and broke up with the most piercing yells and barks like those of so many affrighted dogs.

The Assinneboins, somewhat like the Crows, cultivate their hair to a very great length, in many instances reaching down nearly to the ground; but in most instances of this kind, I find the great length is produced by splicing or adding on several lengths, which are fastened very ingeniously by means of glue, and the joints obscured by a sort of paste of red earth and glue, with which the hair is at intervals of every two or three inches tilled, and divided into locks and slabs of an inch or so in breadth, and falling straight down over the back to the heels have painted the portrait of a very distinguished young man, and son of the chief, his dress is a very handsome one, and in every respect answers well to the descriptions I have given above. The name of thir man is Wi-jun-jon (the pigeon's egg head), and by the ride of him & his wife, Chin-cha-pee (the fire bug that creeps), a fine looking squaw, in a handsome dress of the mountainsheep skin, holding in her band 8 stick curiously carved, with which every woman in this country is supplied; for the purpose of digging up the "Pomme Blanche", or prairie turnip, which is found in great quantities in these northern prairies, and furnishes the Indians with an abundant and nourishing food. The women collect these turnips by striking the end of the stick into the ground, and prying them out; after which they are dried and preserved in their wigwams for use during the season.

I have just had the satisfaction of seeing this travelled-gentleman (Wi-jun-jon) meet his tribe, his wife and his little children; after an absence of a year or more, on his journey of 6000 miles to Washington City, and back again (in company with Major Sanford, the Indian agent); where, he

has been spending the winter amongst the fashionables in the polished circles of civilized society. And I can assure you, readers, that his entrance amongst his own people, in the dress and with the airs of a civilized beau, was one of no ordinary occurrence; and produced no common sensation amongst the red-visaged Assinneboins, or in the minds of those who were travellers, and but spectators to the scene.

On his way home from St. Louis to this place, a distance of 2000 miles, I travelled with this gentleman, on the steamer Yellow-Stone; and saw him step ashore (on a beautiful prairie, where several thousands of his people were encamped), with a complete suit in military a colonel's uniform of blue, presented to him by the President of the United States, with a beaver hat and feather, with epaulettes of gold -- with sash and belt, and broad sword; with high-heeled boots -- with a keg of whiskey under his arm, and a blue umbrella in his hand. In this plight and metamorphose, he took his position on the bank, amongst his friends. His wife and other relations; not one of whom exhibited, for an half-hour or more, the least symptoms of recognition, although they knew well who was before them. He also gazed upon them -- upon his wife and parents, and little children, who were about, as if they were foreign to him, and he had not a feeling or thought to interchange with them. Thus the mutual gazings upon and from this would-be-stranger, lasted for full half an hour; when a gradual, but cold and exceedingly formal recognition began to take place, and an acquaintance ensued, which ultimately and smoothly resolved itself, without the least apparent emotion, into its former state; and the mutual kindred intercourse seemed to dow on exactly where it had been broken off, as if it had been but for a moment, and nothing had transpired in the interim to check or change its character or expression.

Such is one of the stoic instances of a custom which belongs to all the North American Indians, forming one of the most striking features in their character; valued, cherished and practiced, like many others of their strange notions for reasons which are difficult to be learned or understood; and which probably will never be justly appreciated by others than themselves.

This man, at this time, is creating a wonderful sensation amongst his tribe, who are daily and nightly gathered in gaping and listless crowds around him, whilst he is descanting upon what he has seen in the fashionable world; and which to them is unintelligible and beyond their comprehension; for which I find they are already setting him down as a liar and impostor.

What may be the final results of his travels and initiation into the fashionable world, and to what disasters his incredible narrations may yet subject the poor fellow in this strange land, time only will develop.

He is now in disgrace, and spurned by the leading men of the tribe, and rather to be pitied than envied, for the advantages which one might have supposed would have flown from his fashionable tour. More of this curious occurrence and of this extraordinary man, I will surely give in some future epistles.

The women of this tribe are often comely, and sometimes pretty; the dresses of the women and children, which are usually made of the skins of the mountain-goat, and ornamented with porcupine's quills and rows of elk's teeth.

The Knisteneaux (or Crees, as they are more familiarly called in this country) are a very numerous tribe, extending from this place as high north as the shorer of Lake Winnipeg; and even much further in a north-westerly direction, towards, and even through, a great part of the pocky Mountains.

I have before said of these, that they were about 3000 in numbers -- be that, I meant but a small part of this extensive tribe, who are in the habit of visiting the American Fur Company's Establishment, at this place, to do their trading; and who themselves, scarcely know anything of the great extent of country over which this numerous and scattered family range. Their customs may properly be said to be primitive, as no inroads of civilized habits have been as yet successfully made amongst them. Like the other tribes in these regions, they dress in skins, and gain their food, and conduct their wars in a very similar manner. They are a very daring and most adventurous tribe; roaming vast distances over the prairies and carrying war into their enemy's country. With the numerous tribe of Blackfeet, they are always waging an uncompromising warfare; and though fewer in numbers and less in stature, they have shewn themselves equal in sinew, and not less successful in mortal combats.

Amongst the foremost and most renowned of their warriors, is Bro-cas-sit?, the broken arm, in a handsome dress; and by the side of him, his wife, a simple and comely looking woman. In a sketch, will be seen the full length portrait of a young woman with a child on her back, shewing fairly the fashion of cutting and ornamenting the dresses of the females in this tribe; which, without further comment, is all I shall say at this time, of the valorous tribe of Crees or Kniteneaur. The Ojibbeways I have briefly mentioned in a former place, and of them should say more; which will be done at a proper time, after I shall have visited other branches of this great and scattered family.

The chief of that part of the Ojibbeway tribe who inhabit these northern regions, and whose name is Sha-co-pay (the Sir), is a man of huge size; with dignity of manner, and pride and vanity, just about in proportion to his bulk. He sat for his portrait in a most beautiful dress, fringed with scalp locks in profusion; which he had snatched, in his early life from his enemies' heads, and now wears as proud trophies and proofs of what his arm has accomplished in battles with his enemies. His shirt of buckskin is beautifully embroidered and painted in curious hieroglyphics, the history of his battles and charts of his life. This, and also each and every article of his varied dress, had been manufactured by his wives, of which he had several; and one, though not the most agreeable. I have much to see of these people yet, and much consequently to write; so for the present I close my book.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 9.

MOUTH OF THE YELLOWSTONE, UPPER MISSOURI.

SINCE the dates of my other Letters from this place, I have been taking some wild rambles about this beautiful country of green fields; jolted and tossed about, on horseback and on foot, where pen, ink, and paper never thought of going; and of course the most that I saw and have learned, and would tell to the world, is yet to be written. It is not probable, however, that I shall again date a letter at this place, as I commence, in a few days, my voyage down the river in a canoe; but yet I may give you many a retrospective glance at this fairy land and its amusements.

A traveler on his tour through such a country as this, has no time to write, and scarcely time enough to moralize. It is as much as he can well do to "look out for his scalp," and "for something to eat." Impressions, however, of the most vivid kind, are rapidly and indelibly made by the fleeting incidents of savage life; and for the mind that can ruminate upon them with pleasure, there are abundant materials clinging to it for its endless entertainment in driving the quill when he gets back. The mind susceptible of such impressions catches volumes of incidents which are easy to write -- it is but to unfold a web which the fascinations of this shorn country and its allurements have spun over the soul -- it is but to Paint the splendid panorama of a world entirely different from anything seen or painted before; with its thousands of miles, and tens of thousands of grassy hills and dales, where nought but silence reigns, and where the soul of a contemplative mould is seemingly lifted up to its Creator. What man in the world, I would ask, ever ascended to the pinnacle of one of Missouri's green-carpeted bluffs, a thousand miles severed from his own familiar land, anti giddily gazed over the interminable and boundless ocean of grass-covered hills anti valleys which lie beneath him, where the gloom of silence is complete -- where not even the voice of the sparrow or cricket ill heard -- without feeling a sweet melancholy come over him, which seemed to drown his sense of everything beneath and on a level with him?

It is but to paint a vast country of green fields, where the men are all red -- where meat is the staff of life -- where no laws, but those of honour, are known -- where the oak and the pine give way to the cotton-wood and peccan -- where the buffaloes range, the elk, mountain-sheep, and the fleet-bounding antelope -- where the magpie and chattering parroquettes supply the place of the red-breast and the blue-bird -- where wolves are white and bears grizzly -- where pheasants are hens of the prairie, and frogs have horns! Where the rivers are yellow, and white men are turned savages in looks. Through the whole of this strange land the dogs are all wolves -- women all slaves-men all lords. The sun and rats alone (of all the list of old acquaintance, could be recognized in this country of strange metamorphose. The former shed everywhere his familiar rays; and Monsr. Ratapon was hailed as an old acquaintance, which it gave me pleasure to meet; though he had grown a little more savage in his look.

In traversing the immense regions of the classic West, the mind of a philanthropist is filled to the brim with feelings of admiration; but to reach this country, one is obliged to descend from

the light and glow of civilized atmosphere, through the different grades of civilization, which gradually sink to the most deplorable condition along the extreme frontier; thence through the most pitiable misery and wretchedness of savage degradation; where the genius of natural liberty and independence have been blasted and destroyed by the contaminating vices and dissipations introduced by the immoral part of civilized society. Through this dark and sunken vale of wretchedness one hurries, as through a pestilence, until he gradually rises again into the proud and chivalrous pale of savage society, in its state of original nature, beyond the reach of civilized contamination; here he finds much to fix his enthusiasm upon, and much to admire. Even here, the predominant passions of the savage breast, of ferocity and cruelty, are often found; yet restrained, and frequently subdued, by the noblest traits of honor and magnanimity, -- a race of men who live and enjoy life and its luxuries, and practice its virtues, very far beyond the usual estimation of the world, who are apt to judge the savage and his virtues from the poor, degraded, and humbled specimens which alone can be seen along our frontiers. From the first settlements of our Atlantic coast to the present day, the bane of this blasting frontier has regularly crowded upon them, from the northern to the southern extremities of our country I and, like the fire in a prairie, which destroys everything where it passes, It has blasted and sunk them, and all but their names, into oblivion, wherever it has travelled. It is to this tainted class alone that the epithet of "poor, naked, and drunken savage", can be, with propriety, applied; for all those numerous tribes which I have visited, and are yet uncorrupted by the vices of civilized acquaintance, are well clad, in many instances cleanly, and in the full enjoyment of life and its luxuries. It is for the character and preservation of these noble fellows that I am an enthusiast; and it is for these uncontaminated people that I would be willing to devote the energies of my life. It is a sad and melancholy truth to contemplate, that all the numerous tribes who inhabited our vast Atlantic States have not "fled to the West:" -- that they are not to be found here -- that they have been blasted by the fire which has passed over them -- have sunk into their graves, and everything but their names travelled into oblivion.

The distinctive character of all these Western Indians, as well as their traditions relative to their ancient locations, prove beyond a doubt, that they have been for a very long time located on the soil which they now possess; and in most respects, distinct and unlike those nations who formerly inhabited the Atlantic coast, and who (according to the erroneous opinion of a great part of the world), have fled to the West.

It is for these inoffensive and unoffending people, yet unvisited by the vices of civilized society, that I would proclaim to the world, that it is time, for the honor of our country -- for the honor of every citizen of the republic -- and for the sake of humanity, that our government should raise her strong arm to save the remainder of them from the pestilence which is rapidly advancing upon them. We have gotten from them territory enough, and the country which they now inhabit is most of it too barren of timber for the use of civilized man; it affords them, however, the means and luxuries of savage life; and it is to be hoped that our government will not acquiesce in the continued wilful destruction of these happy people.

My heart has sometimes almost bled with pity for them, while amongst them, and witnessing their innocent amusements, as I have contemplated the inevitable bane that was rapidly advancing upon them; without that check from the protecting arm of government, and which alone could shield them from destruction.

What degree of happiness these sons of Nature may attain to in the world, in their own way; or in what proportion they may relish the pleasures of life, compared to the sum of happiness belonging to civilized society, has long been a subject of much doubt, and one which I cannot undertake to decide at this time. I would say thus much, however, that if the thirst for knowledge has entailed everlasting miseries on mankind from the beginning of the world; if refined and intellectual pains increase in proportion to our intellectual pleasures, I do not see that we gain much advantage over them on that score; and judging from the full-toned enjoyment which beams from their happy faces, I should give it as my opinion, that their lives were much more happy than ours; that is, if the word happiness is properly applied to the enjoyments of those who have not experienced the light of the Christian religion. I have long looked with the eye of a critic, into the jovial faces of these sons of the forest, unfurrowed with cares -- where the agonizing feeling of poverty had never stamped distress upon the brow. I have watched the bold, intrepid step-the proud, yet dignified deportment of Nature's man, in fearless freedom, with a soul unalloyed by mercenary lusts, too great to yield to laws or power except from God. As these independent fellows are all joint-tenants of the soil, they are all rich, and none of the steepings of comparative poverty can strangle their just claims to renown. Wile (I would ask) can look without admiring, into a society where peace and harmony prevail -- where virtue is cherished -- where rights are protected, and wrongs are redressed -- with no laws, but the laws of honor, which are the supreme laws of their land. Trust the boasted virtues of civilized society for awhile, with all its intellectual refinements, to such a tribunal, and then write down the degradation of the "lawless savage", and our transcendent virtues.

As these people have no laws, the sovereign right of summary redress lies in the breast of the party (or friends of the party) aggrieved; and infinitely more dreaded is the certainty of cruel revenge from the licensed hands of an offended savage, than the slow and uncertain vengeance of the law. If you think me enthusiast, be it so; for I deny it not. It has ever been the predominant passion of my soul to seek Nature's wildest haunts, and give my hand to Nature's men. Legends of these, and visits to those, filled the earliest page of my juvenile impressions.

The tablet has stood, and I am an enthusiast for God's works as He left them.

The sad tale of my native "valley", has been beautifully sung; and from the flight of "Gertrude's" soul, my young imagination closely traced the savage to his deep retreats, and gazed upon him in dreadful horror, until pity pleaded, and admiration worked a charm.

A journey of 4000 miles from the Atlantic shore, regularly receding from the center of civilized society to the extreme wilderness of Nature's original work, and back again, opens a book for many an interesting tale to be sketched; and the mind which lives, but to relish the works of Nature, reaps a reward on such a tour of a much higher order than can arise from the selfish expectations of pecuniary emolument. Notwithstanding all that has been written and said, there is scarcely any subject on which the knowing people of the East, are yet less informed and instructed than on the character and amusements of the West: by this I mean the "Far West;" -- the country whose fascinations spread a charm over the mind almost dangerous to civilized pursuits. Few people even know the true definition of the term "West;" and where is its location? -- phantom-like it flies before us as we travel, and on our way is continually gilded, before us, as we approach the setting sun.

In the commencement of my Tour, several of my travelling companions from the city of New

York, found themselves at a frightful distance to the West, when we arrived at Niagara Falls; and hastened back to amuse their friends with tales and scenes of the West. At Buffalo a steam-boat was landing with 400 passengers, and twelve days out -- "Where from?" "From the West". In the rich state of Ohio, hundreds were selling their farms and going to the West. In the beautiful city of Cincinnati, people said to me, "Our town has passed the days of its most rapid growth, it is not far enough West." -- In St. Louis, 1400 miles west of New York, my landlady assured me that I would be pleased with her boarders, for they were nearly all merchants from the "West." I there asked,--" Whence come those steam boats, laden with pork, honey, hides, &c.?"

From the West.

Whence those ponderous bars of silver, which those men have been for hours shouldering and putting on board that boat?

They come from Santa Fee, from the West.

Where goes this steam-boat so richly laden with dry goods, steam-engines?

She goes to Jefferson city.

Jefferson city? -- Where is that?

Far to the West.

And where goes that boat laden down to her gunnels, the Yellow Stone ?

She goes still farther to the West " Then," said I, "I'll go to the West."

I went on the Yellow Stone --

Two thousand miles on her, and we were at the mouth of the Yellow Stone river -- at the West.

What! invoices, bills of strange looking, long-haired gentlemen, who have just arrived, and are

And those relating the adventures of their long- and tedious journey. Who are they?

Oh ! they are some of our merchants just arrived from the West.

And that keel-boat, that Mackinaw-boat, and that formidable all of which are richly laden with goods.

These, Sir, are outfits starting for die West.

Going to the West, ha?" Then," said I, "I'll try it again. I will try and see if I can go to the West."

What, a Fort here, too?

Oui, Monsieur -- oui, Monsieur (as a dauntless, and semi-barbarian-looking, jolly fellow, dashed forth in advance of his party on his wild horse to meet me.)

What distance are you west of Yellow Stone here, my good fellow? Comment ?

What distance? -- (stop) -- quel distance?

Pardon, Monsieur, je ne sais pas, Monsieur.

Ne parlez vous ]'Anglais?

Non, Monsr. I speaks de French and de Americaine; mais je ne parle pas l'Anglais.

"Well then, my good fellow, I will speak English, and you may speak Americaine."

Pardon, pardon, Monsieur.

Well, then we will both speak Americaine.

Val, sare, je suis bien content, pour for I see dat you speaks putb coot Americaine.

What may I call our name?

Baptiste, Monsieur

What Indians are those so splendidly dressed, and with such fine horses, encamped on the plain yonder?

Ils sont Corbeaux.

Crows, ha?

Yes, sare, Monsieur.

We are then in the Crow country?

Non, Monsieur, not putty exact; we are in de coontrae of de dam Pieds noire.

Blackfeet, ha?

Oui.

What blue mountain is that which we see in the distance yonder?

Ha, quel Montaigne? cela est la Montaigne du (pardon).

Du Rochers, I suppose?

Oui, Monsieur, de Rock Montaigne.

You live here, I suppose?

Non, Monsieur, I comes fair from de West.

What, from the West ! Where under the heavens is that?

Wat, diable! de West? well you shall see, Monsieur, he is putty fair off, suppose. Monsieur Pierre Chouteau can give you de histoire de ma vie--, il bien salt que je prends les castors, very fair in de West.

You carry goods, I suppose, to trade with the Snake Indians beyond the mountains, and trap beaver also?

Oui, Monsieur.

Do you see anything of the "Flat-heads" in your country?

Non, Monsieur, ils demeurent very, very fair to de West.

Well, Ba'tiste, I'll lay my course back again for the present, and at some future period, endeavor to go to the "West." But you say you trade with the Indians and trap beavers; you are in the employment of the American Fur Company, I suppose?

Non, Monsieur, not quite exact; mais, suppose, I am "free Tappare," free, Monsr. free Free trapper, what's that? I don't understand you, Ba'tiste.

Well, Monsr. suppose he is easy pour understand -- you shall know all. In de first place, I am enlist for tree year in de Fur Comp in St. Louis-for bounte -- pour bounte, eighty dollare (understand, ha?) den I am go for wages, et I ave come de Missouri up, et I am trap castors putty much for six years, you see, until I am learn very much; and den you see, Monsr. McKenzie is give me tree horse -- one pour ride, et two pour pack (mais he is not buy, him not give, he is lend), and he is lend twelve trap; and I ave make start into de Rocky Montaigne, et I am live all Qlone on de leet rivares pour prendre les castors. Sometime six months -- sometime five month, and I come back to Yel Stone, et Monsr. M'Kenzie is give me coot price pour all.

So Mr. McKenzie fits you out, and takes your beaver of you at a certin price ?

Oui, Monsr. oni.

What price does he pay you for your beaver, Ba'tiste

Ha! Suppose one dollare pour one beavare.

A dollar per skin, ah ?

Oui.

Well, you must live a lonesome and hazardous sort of life; can you make anything by it?

Oh! oui, Monsr. putty coot, mais if it is not pour for de dam rascalitk Riccaree, et de dam Pieds

noirs, de Blackfoot Ingin, I am make very much monnair, mais (sacrk), I am rob--rob--rob too much!

What, do the Blackfeet rob you of your furs?

Oui, Monsr. rob, suppose, five time! I am been free trappare seven year, et I am rob five time -- I am someting left not at all -- he is take all; he is take all de horse -- he is take my gun -- he is take all my clothes -- he is takee de castors-et I am come back with foot. So in de Fort, some cloths is cost putty much monnair, et some whiskey is give sixteen dollares pour gall; so you see I am owe de Fur Comp 600 dollare, by Car!

Well, Ba'tiste, this then is what you call being a free trapper is it?

Oni, Monsr. "free trappare," free!

You seem to be going down towards the Yellow Stone, and probably have been out on a trapping excursion.

Oui, Monsr. c'est vrai.

Have you been robbed this time, Ba'tiste?

Oui, Monsr. by de dam Pieds noirs -- I am loose much; I am loose all -- very all ----- eh bien -- pour le dernier -- c'est le dernier fois, Monsr. I am go to Yellow Stone -- I am go le Missouri down, I am go to St. Louis.

Well, Ba'tiste, I am to figure about in this part of the world a few weeks longer, and then I shall descend the Missouri from the mouth of Yellow Stone, to St. Louis; and I should like exceedingly to employ just such a man as you are as a voyageur with me -- I will give you good wages, and pay all your expenses; what say you?

Avec tout mon cour, Monsr. remercie, remercie.

It's a bargain then, Ba'tiste; I will see you at the mouth of Yellow Stone.

Oui, Monsr. in de Yel Stone, bon soir, bon soir, Monsr.

But stop, Ba'tiste, you told me those were Crows encamped yonder.

Oui, Monsieur, oui, des Corbeaux.

And I suppose you are their interpreter?

Non, Monsieur.

But you speak the Crow language?

Ouis, Monsieur.

Well then, turn about; I am going to pay them a visit, and you call render me a service. -- Bien, Monsieur, allons.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 10.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

Soon after the writing of my last Letter, which was dated at the Mouth of Yellow Stone, I embarked on the river for this place, where I landed safely; and have resided for a couple of weeks, a guest in this almost subterraneous city -- the strangest place in the world; where one sees in the most rapid succession, scenes which force him to mirth -- to pity and compassion -- to admiration -- disgust; to fear and astonishment. But before I proceed to reveal them, I must give you a brief sketch of my voyage down the river from the Mouth of the Yellow Stone river to this place, a distance of 200 miles; and which my little note-book says, was performed somewhat in the following manner:

When I had completed my rambles and my sketches in those regions, and Ba'tiste and Bogard had taken their last spree, and fought their last battles, and forgotten them in the final and affectionate embrace and farewell (all of which are habitual with these game-fellows, when settling up their long-standing accounts with their fellow-trappers of the mountain streams); and after Mr. McKenzie had procured for me a snug little craft, that was to waft us down the mighty torrent; we launched off one fine morning, taking our leave of the Fort, and the friends within it; and also, for ever, of the beautiful green fields, and hills, and dales, and prairie bluffs, that encompass the enchanting shores of the Yellow Stone.

Our canoe, which was made of green timber, was heavy and awkward; but our course being with the current, promised us a fair and successful voyage. Ammunition was laid in abundance--a good stock of dried buffalo tongues-a dozen or two of beavers' tails-and a good supply of pemican. Bogard and Ba'tiste occupied the middle and bow, with their paddles in their hands; and I took my seat in the stern of the boat, at the steering oar. Our larder was as I have said; and added to that, some few pounds of fresh buffalo meat.

Besides which, and ourselves, our little craft carried several packs of Indian dresses and other articles, which I had purchased of the Indians; and also my canvass and easel, and our culinary articles, which were few and simple; consisting of three tin cups, a coffee-pot -- one plate -- a frying-pan -- and a tin kettle.

Thus fitted out and embarked, we swept off at a rapid rate under the shouts of the savages, and the cheers of our friends, who lined the banks as we gradually lost sight of them, and turned our eyes towards St. Louis, which was 2000 miles below us, with nought intervening, save the widespread and wild regions, inhabited by the roaming savage.

At the end of our first day's journey, we found ourselves handily encamping with several thousand Assinneboins, who had pitched their tents upon the bank of the river, and received us with every mark of esteem and friendship.

In the midst of this group, was my friend Wi-jun-jon (the pigeon's egg head), still lecturing on the

manners and customs of the "pale faces." Continuing to relate without any appearance of exhaustion, the marvelous scenes which he had witnessed amongst the white people, on his tour to Washington City.

Many were the gazers who seemed to be the whole time crowding around him, to hear his recitals; and the plight which he was in rendered his appearance quite ridiculous. His beautiful military dress, of which I before spoke, had been so shockingly tattered and metamorphosed, that his appearance was truly laughable.

His keg of whiskey had dealt out to his friends all its charms -- his frock-coat, which his wife had thought was of no earthly use below the waist, had been cut off at that place, and the nether half of it supplied her with a beautiful pair of leggings; and His silver-laced hat-band had been converted into a splendid pair of garters for the same. His umbrella the poor fellow still affectionately held on to, and kept spread at all times. As I before said, his theme seemed to be exhaustless, and he, in the estimation of his tribe, to be an unexampled liar.

Of the village of Assiniboins we took leave on the following morning, and rapidly made our way down the river. The rate of the current being four or five miles per hour, through one continued series of picturesque grass-covered bluffs and knells, which everywhere had the appearance of an old and highly-cultivated country, with houses and fences removed.

There is, much of the way, on one side or the other, a bold and abrupt precipice of three or four hundred feet in elevation, presenting itself in an exceedingly rough and picturesque form, to the shore of the river; sloping down from the summit level of the prairies above, which sweep off from the brink of the precipice, almost, level, to an unknown distance.

It is along the rugged and wild fronts of these cliffs, whose sides are generally formed of hard clay, that the mountain-sheep dwell, and are often discovered in great numbers. Their habits are much like those of the goat; and in every respect they are like that animal, except in the horns, which resemble those of the ram; sometimes making two entire circles in their coil; and at the roots, each horn is, in some instances, from five to six inches in breadth.

On the second day of our voyage we discovered a number of these animals skipping along the sides of the precipice, always keeping about quite distant between the top and bottom of the ledge; leaping and vaulting in the most extraordinary manner from point to point, and seeming to cling actually, to the sides of the wall, where neither man nor beast could possibly follow them.

We landed our canoe, and endeavored to shoot one of these sagacious animals; and after he had led us a long and fruitless chase, amongst the cliffs, we thought we had fairly entrapped him in such a way as to be sure bring him, at last, within the command of our rifles; when he suddenly bounded from his narrow foot-hold in the ledge, and tumbled down a distance of more than a hundred feet, amongst the fragments of rocks and lay, where I thought we must certainly find his carcass without further trouble; when, to my great surprise, I saw him bounding off, and he was almost instantly out of my sight.

Bogard, who was an old hunter, and well acquainted with these creatures, shouldered his rifle, and said to me -- "the game is up; and you now see the use of those big horns: when they fall by accident, or find it necessary to quit their foot-hold in the crevice, they fall upon their head at a great distance unharmed, even though it should be on the solid rock."

Being on shore, and our canoe landed secure, we whiled away the greater part of this day amongst the wild and ragged cliffs, into which we had entered; and a part of our labours were vainly spent

in the pursuit of a war-eagle. This noble bird is the one which the Indians in these regions, value so highly for their tail feathers, which are used as the most valued, plumes for decorating the heads and dresses of their warriors. It is a beautiful bird, and, the Indians tell me, conquers all other varieties of eagles in the country; from which circumstance, the Indians respect the bird, and hold it in the highest esteem, and value its quills. I am unable so say to what variety it belongs; but I am sure it is not to be seen in any of our museums; nor is it to be found in America (I think), until one gets near to the base of the Rocky Mountains. This bird has often been called the calumet eagle and war-eagle; the last of which appellations I have already accounted for; and the other has arisen from the fact, that the Indians almost invariably ornament their calumets or pipes of peace with its quills.

Our day's loitering brought us through many a mild scene; occasionally cross the tracks of the grizzly bear, and, in sight merely of a band of buffaloes; "which got the wind of us," and were out of the way, leaving us to return to our canoe at night, with a mere speck of good luck. Just before we reached the river, I heard the crack of a rifle, and in a few moments Bogard came in sight, and threw down from his shoulders a fine antelope; which added to our larder, and we were ready to proceed. We embarked and travelled until nightfall, when we encamped on a beautiful little prairie at the base of a series of grass-covered bluffs; and the next morning cooked our breakfast and ate it, and rowed on until late in the afternoon; when we stopped at the base of some huge clay bluffs, forming one of the most curious and romantic scenes imaginable. At this spot the river expands itself into the appearance somewhat of a beautiful lake; and in the midst of it, and on and about its sand-bars, floated and stood, hundreds and thousands of white swans and pelicans. Though the scene in front of our encampment at this place was placid and beautiful; with its flowing water -- its wild fowl -- and its almost endless variety of gracefully sloping hills and green prairies in the distance; yet it was not less wild and picturesque in our rear, where the rugged and various coloured bluffs were grouped in all the wildest fancies and rudeness of Nature's accidental varieties.

The whole country behind us seemed to have been dug and thrown up into huge piles, as if some giant mason had been there mixing his mortar and paints, and throwing together his rude models for some sublime structure of a colossal city; -- with its walls -- its domes -- its ramparts -- its huge porticos and galleries -- its castles -- its fosses and ditches; and in the midst of his progress, he had abandoned his works to the destroying hand of lime, which had already done much to tumble them down, and deface their noble structure; by jostling them together, with all their vivid colours, into an unsystematic and unintelligible mass of sublime ruins.

To this group of clay bluffs, which line the river for many miles in distance, the voyageurs have very appropriately given the name of "the Brickkilns;" owing to their red appearance, which may be discovered in a clear day at the distance of many leagues.

By the action of water, or other power, the country seems to have been graded away; leaving occasionally a solitary mound or bluff, rising in a conical form to the height of two or three hundred feet, generally pointed or rounded at the top, and in some places grouped together in great numbers; some of which having a tabular surface on their top, and covered with a green turf. This fact (as all of those which are horizontal on their tops, and corresponding exactly with the summit level of the wide-spreading prairies in distance) clearly shows, that their present isolated and rounded forms have been produced by the action of waters: which have carried away the inter-

vening earth, and left them in the picturesque shapes in which they are now seen.

A similar formation (or deformation) may be seen in hundreds of places on the shores of the Missouri river, and the actual progress of the operation by which it is produced; leaving yet for the singularity of this place, the peculiar feature, that nowhere else (to my knowledge) occurs; that the superstratum, forming the tops of these mounds (where they remain high enough to support anything of the original surface) is composed, for the depth of fifteen feet, of red pumice; terminating at its bottom, in a layer of several feet of sedimentary deposits, which is formed into endless conglomerates of basaltic crystals.

This strange feature in the country arrests the eye of a traveller suddenly, and as instantly brings him to the conclusion, that he stands in the midst of the ruins of an extinguished volcano.

As will be seen in the drawings, a near view, and, distant view), the sides of these conical bluffs (which are composed of strata of different coloured clays), are continually washing down by the effect of the rains and melting of the frost; and the superincumbent masses of pumice and basalt are crumbling off, and falling down to their masses; and from thence, in vast quantities, by the force of the gorges of water which are often cutting their channels between them--carried into the river, which is close by; and wafted for thousands of miles, floating as light as a cork upon its surface, and lodging in every pile of drift-wood

from this place to the ocean.

The upper part of this layer of pumice is of a brilliant red; and when the sun is shining upon it, is as bright and vivid as vermilion. It is porous and open, and its specific gravity but trifling. These curious bluffs must be seen as they are in nature; or else in a painting, where their colours are faithfully given, or they lose their picturesque beauty, which consists in the variety of their vivid tints. The strata of clay are alternating from red to yellow -- white -- brown and dark blue; and so curiously arranged, as to form the most pleasing and singular effects.

During the day that I loitered about this strange scene, I left my men stretched upon the grass, by the canoe; and taking my rifle and sketch-book in my hand, I wandered and clambered through the rugged defies between the bluffs; passing over and under the immense blocks of the pumice, that had fallen to their bases; determined, if possible, to find the crater, or source, from whence these strange phenomena had sprung; but after clambering and squeezing about for some time, I unfortunately came upon the enormous tracks of a grizzly bear, which, apparently, was travelling in the same direction (probably for a very different purpose) but a few moments before me; and my ardour for exploring was instantly so cooled down, that I hastily retraced my steps, and was satisfied with making my drawings, and collecting specimens of the lava and other minerals in its vicinity.

After strolling about during the day, and contemplating the beauty of the scenes that were around me, while I sat upon the pinnacles of these pumice-capped mounds; most of which time, Bogard and Ba'tiste laid enjoying the pleasure of a "mountaineer's nap" -- we met together -- took our coffee and dried buffalo tongues -- spread our buffalo robes upon the grass, and enjoyed during the night the luxury of sleep, that belongs so peculiarly to the tired voyageur in these realms of pure air and dead silence.

In the morning, and before sunrise, as usual, Bogard (who was a Yankee and a "wide-awake-fellow," just retiring from a ten years' siege of hunting and trapping in the Rocky Mountains,) thrust his head out from under the robe, nibbling his eyes open, and exclaiming as he grasped for

his gun, "By darn, look at old Cale! will you!" Ba'tiste, who was more fond of his dreams, snored away, muttering something that I could not understand when Bogard seized him with a grip, that instantly shook off his iron slumbers. I at the same time, and all eyes were turned at once upon Caleb (as the grizzly bear is familiarly called by the trappers in the Rocky Mountains -- or more often "Cale," for brevity's sake), who was sitting up in the dignity and fury of her sex, within a few rods, and gazing upon u, with her two little cubs at her side! Here was a "fix", and a subject for the painter; but I had no time to sketch it -- I turned my eyes to the canoe which had been fastened at the shore a few paces from us; and saw that everything had been pawed out of it, and all eatables had been without ceremony devoured. My packages of dresses and Indian curiosities had been drawn out upon the bank, and deliberately opened and inspected. Every thing had been scraped and pawed out, to the bottom of the boat; and even the rawhide thong, with which it was tied to a stake, had been chewed, and no doubt swallowed, as there was no trace of it remaining. Nor was this peep into the secrets of our luggage enough for her insatiable curiosity -- we saw by the prints of her huge paws, that were left in the ground, that she had been perambulating our humble mattresses, smelling at our toes and our noses, without choosing to molest us; verifying a trite saying of the country, "That man lying down is medicine to the grizzly bear"; though it is a well-known fact, that man and beast, upon their feet, are sure to be attacked when they cross the path of this grizzly and grim monster, which is the terror of all this country; often growing to the enormous size of eight hundred or one thousand pounds.

Well -- whilst we sat in the dilemma which I have just described, each one was hastily preparing his weapons for defense, when I proposed the mode of attack; by which means I was in hopes to destroy her -- capture her young ones, and bring her skin home as a trophy. My plans, however, entirely failed, though we were well armed; for Bogard and Ba'tiste both remonstrated with a vehemence that was irresistible; saying that the standing rule in the mountains was "never to fight Caleb, except in self-defense." I was almost induced, however, to attack her alone, with my rifle in hand, and a pair of heavy pistols; with a tomahawk and scalping-knife in my belt; when Ba'tiste suddenly thrust his arm over my shoulder and pointing in another direction, exclaimed in an emphatic tone, "Voila ! voila un corps de reserve -- Monsr. Cataline -- voila sa mari! allons -- allons! descendons la riviere toute de suite! toute de suite! Nonsr." To which Boeard added. "these darned animals are too much for us, and we had better be off;" at which my courage cooled, and we packed up and re-embarked as fast as possible; giving each one of them the contents of our rifles as we drifted off in the current; which brought the she-monster, in all her rage and fury, to the spot where we, a few moments before, had passed our most prudent resolve.

During the rest of this day, we passed on rapidly, gazing upon and admiring the beautiful shores, which were continually changing, from the high and ragged cliffs, to the graceful and green slopes of the prairie bluffs; and then to the wide expanded meadows, with their long waving grass, enameled with myriads of wild flowers.

The scene was one of enchantment the whole way; our chief conversation was about grizzly bears and hair's-breadth escapes; of the histories of which my companions had volumes in store. -- Our breakfast was a late one--cooked and eaten about five in the afternoon; at which time our demolished larder was luckily replenished by the unerring rifle of Bogard, which brought down a fine antelope, as it was innocently gazing at us, from the bank of the river. We landed our boat, and took in our prize; but there being no wood for our fire, we shoved off, and soon ran upon the

head of an island, that was covered with immense quantities of raft and drift wood, where we easily kindled a huge fire and ate our delicious meal from a clean peeled log, astride of which we comfortably sat, making it answer admirably the double purpose of chairs and a table. After our meal was finished, we plied the paddles, and proceeded several miles further on our course; leaving our fire burning, and dragging our canoe upon the shore, in the dark, in a wild and unknown spot; and silently spreading our robes for our slumbers, which it is not generally considered prudent to do by the side of our fires, which might lead a war-party upon us, who often are prowling about and seeking an advantage over their enemy.

The scenery of this day's travel, as I have before said, was exceedingly beautiful; and our canoe was often run to the shore, upon which we stepped to admire the endless variety of wild flowers," wasting their sweetness on the desert air," and the abundance of delicious fruits that were about us. Whilst wandering through the high grass, the wild sun-flowers and voluptuous lilies were constantly taunting us by striking our faces; whilst here and there, in every direction, there were little copses and clusters of plum trees and gooseberries, and wild currants, loaded down with their fruit; and amongst these, to sweeten the atmosphere and add a charm to the effect, the wild rose bushes seemed planted in beds and in hedges, and everywhere were decked out in all the glory of their delicate tints, and shedding sweet aroma to every breath of the air that passed over them. In addition to these, we had the luxury of service-berries, without stint; and the buffalo bushes, which are peculiar to these northern regions, lined the banks of the river and defiles in the bluffs, sometimes for miles together; forming almost impassable hedges, so loaded with the weight of their fruit, that their boughs were everywhere gracefully bending down and resting on the ground.

This last shrub (sheppfrdia), which may be said to be the most beautiful ornament that decks out the wild prairies, forms a striking contrast to the rest of the foliage, from the blue appearance of its leaves, by which it can be distinguished for miles in distance. The fruit which it produces in such incredible profusion, hanging in clusters to every limb and to every twig, is about the size of ordinary currants, and not unlike them in colour and even in Aavour; being exceedingly acid, and almost unpalatable, until they are bitten by the frost of autumn, when they are sweetened, and their flavour delicious; having, to the taste, much the character of grapes, and I am inclined to think, would produce excellent wine.

The shrub which bears them resembles some varieties of the thorn, though (as I have said) differs entirely in the colour of its leaves. It generally grows to the height of six or seven feet, and often to ten or twelve; and in groves or hedges, in some places, for miles in extent. While: gathering the fruit, and contemplating it as capable of producing good wine, I asked my men this question, "Suppose we three had ascended the river to this point in the spring of the year, and in a timbered bottom had pitched our little encampment; and one of you two had been a boat-builder, and the other a cooper -- the one to have got out your staves and constructed the wine casks, and the other to have built a mackinaw-boat, capable of carrying fifty or a hundred casks; and I had been a good hunter, capable of supplying the little encampment with meat; and we should have started off about this time, to float down the current, stopping our boat wherever we saw the finest groves of the buffalo bush, collecting the berries and expressing the juice, and putting it into our casks for fermentation while on the water for two thousand miles; how many bushels of these berries could you two gather in a day, provided Watched the boat and cooled your meals? And how

many barrels of good wine do you think we could offer for sale in St. Louis when we should arrive there?"

This idea startled my two men exceedingly, and Baptiste gabbled so fast in French, that I could not translate; and I am almost willing to believe, that but for the want of the requisite tools for the enterprize, I should have lost the company of Bogard and Baptiste; or that I should have been under the necessity of submitting to one of the unpleasant alternatives which are often regulated by the majority, in this strange and singular wilderness.

I at length, however, got their opinions on the subject; when they mutually agreed that they could gather thirty bushels of this fruit per day; and I gave it then, and I offer it now, as my own also, that their estimate was not out of the way, and judged so from the experiments which we made in the following manner:-We several times took a large mackinaw blanket which I had in the canoe, and spreading it on the ground under the bushes, where they were the most abundantly loaded with fruit; and by striking the stalk of the tree with a club, we received the whole contents of its branches in an instant on the blanket, which was taken up by the corners, and not unfrequently would produce us, from one blow, the eighth part of a bushel of this fruit; when the boughs relieved of their burden, instantly hew up to their native position.

Or this beautiful native, which I think would form one of the loveliest ornamental shrubs for a gentleman's park or pleasure grounds, I procured a number of the roots; but which, from the many accidents and incidents that our unlucky bark was subjected to on our rough passage, I lost them (and almost the recollection of them) as well as many other curiosities I had collected on our way down the river.

On the morning of the next day, and not long after we had stopped and taken our breakfast, and while our canoe was swiftly gliding along under the shore of a beautiful prairie, I saw in the grass, on the bank above me, what I supposed to be the back of a fine elk, busy at his grazing. I let our craft float silently by for a little distance, when I communicated the intelligence to my men, and slyly ran in to the shore. I pricked the priming of my firelock, and taking a bullet or two in my mouth, stepped ashore, and trailing my rifle in my hand, went back under the bank, carefully crawling up in a little ravine, quite sure of my game; when, to my utter surprise and violent alarm, I found the elk to be no more nor less than an Indian pony, getting his breakfast! And a little beyond him, a number of others grazing; and nearer to me, on the left, a war-party reclining around a little fire; and yet nearer, and within twenty paces of the muzzle of my gun, the naked shoulders of a brawny Indian, who seemed busily engaged in cleaning his gun. From this critical dilemma, the reader can easily imagine that I vanished with all the suddenness and secrecy that was possible, bending my course towards my canoe. Bogard and Baptiste correctly construing the expression of my face, and the agitation of my hurried retreat, prematurely unmoored from the shore; and the force of the current carrying them around a huge pile of drift wood, threw me back for some distance upon my own resources; though they finally got in, near the shore, and I into the boat, with the steering oar in my hand; when we plied our sinews with effect and in silence, till we were wafted far from the ground which we deemed critical and dangerous to our lives; for we had been daily in dread of meeting a war-party of the revengeful Riccarees, which we had been told was on the river, in search of the Mandans. From and after this exciting occurrence, the entries in my journal for the rest of the voyage to the village of the Mandans, wore as follows :

Saturday, fifth day of our voyage from the mouth of Yellow Stone, at eleven o'clock. -- landed our

canoe in the Grand Detour (or Big Bend) as it is called, at the base of a stately clay mound, and ascended, all hands, to the summit level, to take a glance at the picturesque and magnificent works of Nature that were about us. Spent the remainder of the day in Painting a view of this grand scene; for which purpose Baptiste and Bogard carried my easel and canvass to the top of a huge mound, where they left me at my work; and I painted my picture, whilst they amused themselves with their rides, decoying a flock of antelopes, of which they killed several, and abundantly added to the stock of our provisions.

Scarcely anything in nature can be found, I am sure, more exceedingly picturesque than the view from this place; exhibiting the wonderful manner in which the gorges of the river have cut out its deep channel through these walls of clay on either side, of two or three hundred feet in elevation; and the imposing features of the high table-lands in distance, standing as a perpetual anomaly in the country, and producing the indisputable, though astounding evidence of the fact, that there has been at some ancient period, a super surface to this country, corresponding with the elevation of these tabular hills, whose surface, for half a mile or more, on their tops, is perfectly level; being covered with a green turf, and yet one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet elevated above what mag now be properly termed the summit level of all this section of country; as will be seen stretching off at their base, without furnishing other instances in hundreds of miles, of anything rising one foot above its surface, excepting the solitary group which is shewn in the painting. The fact, that there was once the summit level of this great valley, is a stubborn one, however difficult it may be to reconcile it with reasonable causes and results; and the mind of feeble man is at once almost Paralyzed in endeavoring to comprehend the process by which the adjacent country, from this to the base of the Rocky Mountains, as well as in other directions, could have been swept away; and equally so, for knowledge of the place where its mighty deposits have been carried.

I recollect to have seen on my way up the river, at the distance of six or eight hundred miles below, a place called "the Square Hills," and another denominated "the Bijou Hills;" which are the only features on the river, seeming to correspond with this strange remain, and which, on my way down, I shall carefully examine; and not fail to add their testimonies (if I am not mistaken in their character) to further speculations on this interesting feature of the geology of the great valley of the Missouri. Whilst my men were yet engaged in their sporting excursions, I left my easel and travelled to the base and summit of these tabular hills; which, to my great surprise, I found to be several miles from the river, and a severe journey to accomplish getting back to our encampment at nightfall. I found by their sides that they were evidently of an alluvial deposits, composed of a great variety of horizontal layers of clays of different colours -- of granitic sand and pebbles (many of which furnished me beautiful specimens of agate, jasper and carnelians), and here and there large fragments of pumice and cinders, which gave, as instances above-mentioned, evidences of volcanic remains. The mode by which Bogard and Baptiste had been entrapping the timid and sagacious antelopes was one which is frequently and successfully practiced in this country; and on this day had afforded them fine sport.

The antelope of this country, I believe to be different from all other known varieties, and forms one of the most pleasing, living ornaments to this western world. They are seen in some places in great numbers sporting and playing about the hills and dales; and often, in flocks of fifty or a hundred, will follow the boat of the descending voyageur, or the travelling caravan, for hours

together; keeping off at a safe distance, on the right or left, galloping up and down the hills, snuffing their noses and stamping their feet; as if they were endeavoring to remind the traveller of the wicked trespass he was making on their own hallowed ground.

This little animal seems to be endowed, like many other gentle and sweet breathing creatures, with an undue share of curiosity, which often leads them to destruction; and the hunter who wishes to entrap them, saves himself the trouble of travelling after them. When he has been discovered, he has only to elevate above the tops of the grass, his red or yellow handkerchief on the end of his gun-rod, which he sticks in the ground, and to which they are sure to advance, though with great coyness and caution; whilst he lies close, at a little distance, with his rifle in hand; when it is quite an easy matter to make sure of two or three at a shot, which he gets in range of his eye, to be pierced with one bullet.

On Sunday, departed from our encampment in the Grand Detour; and having passed for many miles, through a series of winding and ever-varying bluffs and fancied ruins, like such as have already been described, our attention was more than usually excited by the stupendous scene, called by the voyageurs "the Grand Dome", which was lying in full view before us.

Our canoe was here hauled ashore, and a day whiled away again, amongst these clay built ruins. We clambered to their summits and enjoyed the distant view of the Missouri for many miles below, wending its way through the countless groups of clay and grass-covered hills; and we wandered back on the plains, in a toilsome and unsuccessful pursuit of a herd of buffaloes, which we discovered at some distance. Though we were disappointed in the results of the chase; yet we were in a measure repaid in amusements, which we found in paying a visit to an extensive village of prairie dogs, and of which I should render some account

I have subjoined a sketch of one of these sub-terra communities; though it was taken in a former excursion, when my party was on horseback, and near the mouth of the Yellow Stone River; yet it answers for this place as well as any other, for their habits are one and the same wherever they are found; their houses or burrows are all alike, and as their location is uniformly on a level and desolate prairie, without timber, there is little room for variety or dissimilarity.

The prairie dog of the American Prairies is undoubtedly a variety of the marmot; and probably not unlike those which inhabit the vast Steppes of Asia. It bears no resemblance to any variety of dogs, except in the sound of its voice, when excited by the approach of danger, which is something like that of a very small dog, and still much more resembling the barking of a grey squirrel. The size of these curious little animals is not far from that of a very large rat, and they are not unlike in their appearance. As I have said, their burrows, are uniformly built in a lonely desert; and away, both from the proximity of timber and water. Each individual, or each family, dig their hole in the prairie to the depth of eight or ten feet, throwing up the dirt from each excavation, in a little pile, in the form of a cone, which forms the only elevation for them to ascend; where they sit, to bark and chatter when an enemy is approaching their village. These villages are sometimes of several miles in extent containing (I would almost say) myriads of their excavations and little dirt hillocks, and to the ears of their visitors, the din of their barkings is too confused and too peculiar to be described.

In the present instance, we made many endeavors to shoot them, but finding our efforts to be entirely in vain. As we were approaching them at a distance, each one seemed to be perched up, on his hind feet, on his appropriate domicil, with a significant jerk of his tail at every bark, pos-

itively disputing our right of approach. I made several attempts to get near enough to “draw a bead” upon one of them; and just before I was ready to fire (and as if they knew the utmost limits of their safety), they sprang down into their holes, and instantly turning their bodies, shewed their ears and the ends of their noses, as they were peeping out at me; which position they would hold, until the shortness of the distance subjected their scalps to danger again, from the aim of a ride; when they instantly disappeared from our sight and all was silence thereafter, about their premises, as I passed them over; until I had so far advanced by them, that their ears were again discovered, and at length themselves, at full length, perched on the tops of their little hillocks and threatening as before; thus gradually sinking and rising like a wave before and behind me.

The holes leading down to their burrows, are four or five inches in diameter, and run down nearly perpendicular; where they undoubtedly communicate into something like a subterraneous city (as I have formerly learned from fruitless endeavors to dig them out), undermined and vaulted; by which means, they can travel for a great distance under the ground, without danger from pursuit.

Their food is simply the grass in the immediate vicinity of their burrows, which is cut close to the ground by their flat, shovel teeth; and, as they sometimes live twenty miles from any water, it is to be supposed that they get moisture enough from the dew on the grass, on which they feed chiefly at night; or that (as is generally supposed) they sink wells from their under-ground habitations, by which they descend low enough to get their supply. In the winter, they are for several months invisible; existing, undoubtedly, in a torpid state, as they certainly lay by no food for that season -- nor can they procure any. These curious little animals belong to almost every latitude in the vast plains of prairie in North America; and their villages, which I have sometimes encountered in my travels, have compelled my party to ride several miles out of our way to get by them; for their burrows are generally within a few feet of each other, and dangerous to the feet and the limbs of our horses.

The sketch of the bluffs denominated “the Grand Dome”, of which I spoke but a few moments since, is a faithful delineation of the lines and character of that wonderful scene; and the reader has here a just and striking illustration of the ruin-like appearances, as I have formerly described, that are so often met with on the banks of this mighty river.

This is, perhaps, one of the most grand and beautiful scenes of the kind to be met with in this country, owing to the perfect appearance of its several huge domes, turrets, and towers, which were everywhere as precise and as perfect in their forms as they are represented in the illustration. These stupendous works are produced by the continual washing down of the sides of these clay-formed hills; and although, in many instances, their sides, by exposure, have become so hardened, that their change is very slow; yet they are mostly subjected to continual phases, more or less, until ultimately their decomposition ceases, and their sides becoming seeded and covered with a green turf, which protects and holds them (and will hold them) unalterable: with carpets of green, and enamelled with flowers, to be gazed upon with admiration, by the hardy voyageur and the tourist, for ages and centuries to come.

On Monday, the seventh day from the mouth of the Yellow Stone River, we floated away from this noble scene; looking back again and again upon it, wondering at its curious and endless changes, as the swift current of the river, hurried us by, and gradually out of sight of it. We took a sore of melancholy leave of it -- but at every bend and turn in the stream, we were introduced to others --

and others -- and yet others, almost as strange and curious. At the base of one of these, although we had passed it, we with difficulty landed our canoe, and I ascended to its top, with some hours' labour; having to cut a foot-hold in the clay with my hatchet for each step, a great part of the way up its sides. So curious was this solitary bluff, standing alone as it did, to the height of 250 feet, with its sides washed down into hundreds of variegated forms -- with large blocks of indurated clay, remaining upon pedestals and columns as it were, and with such a variety of tints; that I looked upon it as a beautiful picture, and devoted an hour or two with my brush, in transferring it to my canvass.

In the after part of this day we passed another extraordinary scene, which is denominated "the Three Domes", forming an exceedingly pleasing group, though requiring no further description for the reader, who is now sufficiently acquainted with these scenes to understand them.

On this day, just before night, we landed our little boat in front of the Mandan village; and amongst the hundreds and thousands who flocked towards the river to meet and to greet us, was Mr. Kipp, the agent of the American Fur Company, who has charge of their Establishment at this place. He kindly ordered my canoe to be taken care of, and my things to be carried to his quarters, which was at once done; and I am at this time rearing the benefits of his genuine politeness, and gathering the pleasures of his amusing and interesting society.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 11

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

I SAID that I was here in the midst of a strange people, which is literally true; and I find myself surrounded by subjects and scenes worthy the pens of Irving or Cooper--of the Pencils of Raphael or Hogarth; rich in legends and romances, which would require no aid of the imagination for a book or a picture.

The Mandans (or See-pohs-kah-nu-mah-kah-kee, "people of the pheasants," as they call themselves), are perhaps one of the most ancient tribes of Indians in our country. Their origin, like that of all the other tribes is from necessity, involved in mystery and obscurity. Their traditions and peculiarities I shall casually recite in this or future epistles; which when understood, will at once, I think, denominate them a peculiar and distinct race. They take great pride in relating their traditions, with regard to their origin; contending that they were the first people created on earth. Their existence in these regions has not been from a very ancient period; and, from what I could learn of their traditions, they have, at a former period, been a very numerous and powerful nation; but by the continual wars which have existed between them and their neighbours, they have been reduced to their Present numbers.

This tribe is at present located on the west bank of the Missouri, about 1800 miles above St. Louis, and 200 below the Mouth of Yellow Stone river. They have two villages only, which are about two miles distant from each other; and number in all (as near as I can learn), about 2000 souls. Their present villages are beautifully located, and judiciously also, for defense against the assaults of their enemies. The site of the lower (or principal) town, in particular, is one of the most beautiful and pleasing that can be seen in the world, and even more beautiful than imagination could ever create. In the very midst of an extensive valley (embraced within a thousand graceful swells and parapets or mounds of interminable green, changing to blue, as they vanish in distance) is built the city, or principal town of the Mandans. On an extensive plain (which is covered with a green turf, as well as the hills and dales, as far as the eye can possibly range, without tree or bush to be seen) are to be seen rising from the ground, and towards the heavens, domes--(not "of gold" but) of dirt -- and the thousand spears (not "spires") and scalp-poles, &c, &c., of the semi-subterraneous village of the hospitable acid gentlemanly Mandans. These people formerly (and within the recollection of many of their oldest men) lived fifteen or twenty miles farther down the river, in ten contiguous villages; the marks or ruins of which are yet plainly to be seen. At that period, it is evident, as well from the number of lodges which their villages contained, as from their traditions, that their numbers were much greater than at the present day.

There are other, and very interesting, traditions and historical facts relative to a still prior location and condition of these people, of which I shall speak more fully on a future occasion. From these, when they are promulged, I think there may be a pretty fair deduction drawn, that they formerly occupied the lower part of the Missouri, and even the Ohio and Muskingum, and have gradually

made their way up the Missouri to where they now are.

There are many remains on the river below this place (and, in fact, to be seen nearly as low down as St. Louis), which shew clearly the peculiar construction of Mandan lodges, and consequently carry a strong proof of the above position. While descending the river, however, which I shall commence in a few weeks, in a canoe, this will be a subject of interest; and I shall give it close examination.

The ground on which the Mandan village is at present built, was admirably selected for defense; being on a bank forty or fifty feet above the greater part of this bank is nearly perpendicular, and of solid rock. The river, suddenly changing its course to a right-angle, protects two sides of the village, which is built upon this promontory or angle; they have therefore but one side to protect, which is effectually done by a strong piquet, and a ditch inside of it, of three or four feet in depth. The piquet is composed of timbers of a foot or more in diameter and eighteen feet high, set firmly in the ground at sufficient distances front each other to admit of guns and other missiles to be fired between them. The ditch (unlike that of civilized modes of fortification) is inside of the piquet, in which their warriors screen their bodies from the view and weapons of their enemies, whilst they are reloading and discharging their weapons through the piquets.

The Mandans are undoubtedly secure in their villages, from the attacks of any Indian nation, and have nothing to fear, except when they meet their enemy on the prairie. Their village has a most novel appearance to the eye of a stranger; their lodges are closely grouped together leaving but just room enough for walking and riding between them; and appear from without to be built entirely of dirt; but one is surprised when he enters them, to see the neatness, comfort, and spacious dimensions of these earth-covered dwellings. They all have a circular form, and are from forty to sixty feet in diameter. Their foundations are prepared by digging some two feet in the ground, and forming the door of earth, by leveling the requisite size for the lodge. These floors or foundations are all perfectly circular, and varying in size in proportion to the number of inmates, or of the quality or standing of the families which are to occupy them. The superstructure is then produced, by arranging, inside of this circular excavation, firmly fixed in tire ground and resting against the bank, a barrier or wall of timbers, some eight or nine inches in diameter, of equal height (about six feet) placed on end, and resting against each other, supported by a formidable embankment of earth raised against them outside; then, resting upon tire tops of these timbers or piles, are others of equal size and equal in numbers, of twenty or twentyfive feet in length, resting firmly against each other, and sending their upper or smaller ends towards the centre and top of the lodge; rising at an angle of forty-five degrees to the apex or sky-light, which is about three or four feet in diameter, answering as a chimney and a sky-light at the same time. The roof of the lodge being thus formed, is supported by beams passing around the inner part of the lodge about the middle of these poles or timbers, and themselves upheld by four or five large posts passing down to the floor of the lodge. On the top of, and over the poles forming the roof, is placed a complete mat of willow-boughs, of half a foot or more in thickness, which protects the timbers from the dampness of the earth, with which the lodge is covered from bottom to top, to the depth of two or three feet; and then with a hard or tough clay, which is impervious to water, and which with long use becomes quite hard, and a lounging place for the whole family in pleasant weather -- for sage -- for wooing lovers -- for dogs and all; an airing place -- a look-out -- a place for gossip and mirth -- a seat for the solitary gaze and meditations of the stern warrior, who sits and contemplates the

peaceful mirth and happiness that is breathed beneath him, fruits of his hard-fought battles, on fields of desperate combat with bristling Red Men.

The floors of these dwellings are of earth, but so hardened by use, and swept so clean, and tracked by bare and moccassined feet, that they have almost a polish, and would scarcely soil the whitest linen. In the centre, and immediately under the sky-light is the fire-place -- a hole of four or five feet in diameter, of a circular form, sunk a foot or more below the surface, and curbed around with stone. Over the fireplace, and suspended from the apex of diverging props or poles, is generally seen the pot or kettle, filled with buffalo meat; and around it are the family, reclining in all the most picturesque attitudes and groups, resting on their buffalo-ropes and beautiful mats of rushes. These cabins are so spacious, that they hold from twenty to forty persons -- a family and all their connexions. They all sleep on bedsteads similar in form to ours, but generally not quite so high; made of round poles rudely lashed together with thongs. A buffalo skin, fresh stripped from the animal, is stretched across the bottom poles, and about two feet from the floor; which, when it dries, becomes much contracted, and forms a perfect sacking-bottom. The fur side of this skin is placed uppermost, on which they lie with great comfort, with a buffalo-robe for a pillow, and others drawn over them instead of blankets. These beds, as far as I have seen them (and I have visited almost every lodge in the village), are uniformly screened with a covering of buffalo or elk skins, oftentimes beautifully dressed and placed over the upright poles or frame, like a suit of curtains; leaving a hole in front, sufficiently spacious for the occupant to pass in and out, to and from his or her bed. Some of these coverings or curtains are exceedingly beautiful, being out tastefully into fringe, and handsomely ornamented with porcupine's quills and picture writings or hieroglyphics.

From the great number of inmates in these lodges, they are necessarily very spacious, and the number of beds considerable. It is no uncommon thing to see these lodges fifty feet in diameter inside (which is an immense loom), with a row of these curtained beds extending quite around their sides, being some ten or twelve of them, placed four or five feet apart, and the space between them occupied by a large post, fixed quite firm in the ground, and six or seven feet high, with large wooden pegs or bolts in it, on which are hung and grouped, with a wild and startling taste, the arms and armour of the respective proprietor; consisting of his whitened shield, embossed and emblazoned with the figure of his protecting medicine (or mystery), his bow and quiver, his war-club or battle-axe, his dart or javelin -- his tobacco pouch and pipe -- his medicine-bag -- and his eagle -- ermine or raven headdress; and over all, and on the top of the post (as if placed by some conjuror or Indian magician, to guard and protect the spell of wildness that reigns in this strange place), stands forth and in full relief the head and horns of a buffalo, which is, by a village regulation, owned and possessed by every man in the nation, and hung at the head of his bed, which he uses as a mask when called upon by the chiefs, to join in the buffalo-dance, of which I shall say more in a future epistle.

This arrangement of beds, of arms, &c., combining the most vivid display and arrangement of colours, of furs, of trinkets -- of barbed and glistening points and steel -- of mysteries and hocus pocus, together with the: sombre and smoked colour of the roof and sides of the lodge; and the wild, and rude and red -- the graceful (though uncivil) conversational, garrulous, story telling and happy, though ignorant and untutored groups, that are smoking their pipes -- wooing their sweet-hearts, and embracing their little ones about their peaceful and endeared fire-sides; together with

their pots and kettles, spoons, and other culinary articles of their own manufacture, around them; present altogether, one of the most picturesque scenes to the eye of a stranger, that can be possibly seen; and far more wild and vivid than could be imagined.

Reader, I said these people were garrulous, story-telling and happy; this is true, and literally so; and it belongs to me to establish the fact, and correct the error which seems to have gone forth to tire world on this subject. As I have before observed, there is no subject that I know of, within the scope and reach of human wisdom, on which the civilized world in this enlightened ape are more incorrectly informed, than upon that of the true manners and customs, and moral condition, rights and abuses, of the North American Indians; and that, as I have also before remarked, chiefly on account of the difficulty of our cultivating a fair and honourable acquaintance with them, and doing them the justice, and ourselves the credit, of a fair anti impartial investigation of their true character. The present age of refinement and research has brought every thing else that I know of (and a vast deal more than the most enthusiastic mind ever dreamed of) within the scope and fair estimation of refined intellect and of science; while the wild and timid savage, with his interesting customs and modes has vanished, or his character has become changed, at the approach of the enlightened and intellectual world; who follow him like a phantom for awhile, and in ignorance of his true character at last turn back to the common business and social transactions of life. Owing to the above difficulties, which have stood in the way, the world have fallen into many egregious errors with regard to the true modes and meaning of the savage, which I am striving to set forth and correct in the course of these epistles. Rnd amongst them all, there is none more common, nor more entirely erroneous, nor more easily refuted, than the current one, that "the Indian is a sour, morose, reserved and taciturn man." I have heard this opinion advanced a thousand times and I believed it; but such certainly, is not uniformly nor generally the case.

I have observed in all my travels amongst the Indian tribes, and more particularly amongst these unassuming people, that they are a far more talkative and conversational race than can easily be seen in the civilized world. This assertion, like many others I shall occasionally make, will somewhat startle the folks at the East, yet it is true. No one call look into the wigwams of these people, or into any little momentary group of them, without being at once struck with the conviction that small-talk, gossip, garrulity, and story-telling, are the leading passions with them, who have little else to do in the world, but to while away their lives in the innocent and endless amusement ut' the exercise of those talents with which Nature has liberally endowed them, for their mirth and enjoyment.

One has but to walk or ride about this little town and its environs for a few hours in a pleasant day, and overlook the numerous games and gambols, where their notes and yelps of exultation are unceasingly vibrating in the atmosphere; or peep into their wigwams (and watch the glistening hill that's beaming from the noses, cheeks, and chins, of the crouching, crosslegged, and prostrate groups around the fire; where the pipe is passed, and jokes and anecdote, and laughter are excessive) to become convinced that it is natural to laugh and be merry. Indeed it would be strange if a race of people like these, who have little else to do or relish in life, should be curtailed ii, thnt source of pleasure and amusement; and it rvould be also strange, if a life-time of indulgence and practice in eo innocent and productive a mode of amusement, free from the cares and anxieties of business or professions, should not advance them in their modes, and enable them to draw far greater pleasure from such sources, than we in the civilized and business world can possibly feel.

If the uncultivated condition of their minds curtails the number of their enjoyments; yet they are free from, and independent of, a thousand cares and jealousies, which arise from mercenary motives in the civilized world; and are yet far a-head of us (in my opinion) in the real and uninterrupted enjoyment of their simple natural faculties.

They live in a country and in communities, where it is not customary to look forward into the future with concern, for they live without incurring the expenses of life, which are absolutely necessary and unavoidable in the enlightened world; and of course their inclinations and faculties are solely directed to the enjoyment of the present day, without the sober reflections on the past or apprehensions of the future.

With minds thus unexpanded and uninfluenced by the thousand passions and ambitions of civilized life, it is easy and natural to concentrate their thoughts and their conversation upon the little and triing occurrences of their lives. They are fond of fun and good cheer, and can laugh easily and heartily at a slightjoke, of which their peculiar modes of life furnish them an inexhaustible fund, and enable them to cheer their little circle about the wigwam fire-side with endless laughter and garrulity.

It may be thought, that I am taking a great deal of pains to establish this fact, and I am dwelling longer upon it than I otherwise should, inasmuch as I am opposing an error that seems to have become current through the world; and which, if it be once corrected, removes a material difficulty which has always stood in the way of a fair and just estimation of the Indian character. For the purpose of placing the Indian in a proper light before the world, as I hope to do In many respects, it is of importance to me -- it is but justice to the savage-and justice to my readers also, that such points should be cleared up as I proceed; and for the world who enquire for correct and just information, they must take my words for the truth, or else come to this country and look for themselves, into these grotesque circles of never-ending laughter and fun, instead of going to Washington City to gaze on the poor embarrassed Indian who is called there by his "Great Father," to contend with the sophistry of the learned and acquisitive world, in bartering away his lands with the graves and the hunting grounds of his ancestors. There is not the proper place to study the Indian character; yet it is the place where the sycophant and the scribbler go to gaze and frown upon him -- to learn his character, and write his history! and because he does not speak, and quaffs the delicious beverage which he receives from white men's hands, "he's a speechless brute and a drunkard." An Indian is a beggar in Washington City, and a white man is almost equally so in the Mandan village. An Oidian in Washington is mute, is dumb and embarrassed; and so is a white man (and for the very same reasons) in this place -- he has nobody to talk to.

A wild Indian, to reach the civilized world, must needs travel some thousands of miles in vehicles of conveyance, to which he is unaccustomed -- through latitudes and longitudes which are new to him -- living on food that he is unused to -- stared and gazed at by the thousands and tens of thousands whom he cannot talk to -- his heart grieving and his body sickening at the exhibition of white men's wealth and luxuries, which are enjoyed on the land, and over the bones of his ancestors. And at the end of his journey he stands (like a caged animal) to be scanned -- to be criticised -- to be pitied -- and heralded to the world as a mute -- as a brute, and a beggar.

A white man, to reach this village, must travel by steam-boat -- by canoes -- on horseback and on foot; swim rivers -- wade quagmires -- fight mosquitoes -- patch his moccasins, and patch them again and again, and his breeches; live on meat alone -- sleep on the ground

the whole way, and think and dream of his friends he has left behind; and when he gets here, half-starved, and half-naked, and more than half sick, he finds himself a beggar for a place to sleep, and for something to eat ; a mute amongst thousands who flock about him, to look and to criticise, and to laugh at him for his jaded appearance, and to speak of him as they do of all white men (without distinction) as liars. These people are in the habit of seeing no white men in their country but Traders, and know of no other deeming us all alike, and receiving us all under the presumption that we come to trade or barter; applying to us all, indiscriminately, the epithet of “liars” or Traders.

The reader will therefore see, that we mutually suffer in each other’s estimation from the unfortunate ignorance, which distance has chained us in; and (as I can vouch, and the Indian also, wile has visited the civilized world) that the historian who would record justly and correctly the character and customs of a people, must go and live among them.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 12.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

In my last, I gave some account of the village, and the customs, and appearances of this strange people, -- and I will now proceed to give further details on that subject.

I have this morning, perched myself upon the top of one of the earth covered lodges, which I have before described, and having the whole village beneath and about me, with its sachems -- its warriors -- its dogs -- and its horses in motion -- its medicines (or mysteries) and scalp-poles waving over my head -- its piquets -- its green fields and prairies, and river in full view, with the din and bustle of the thrilling panorama that is about me. I shall be able, I hope, to give some sketches more to the life than I could have done from any effort of recollection.

I said that the lodges or wig-wams were covered with earth -- were of forty or sixty feet in diameter, and so closely grouped that there was but just room enough to walk and ride between them, that they had a door by which to enter them, and a hole in the top for the admission of light, and for the smoke to escape, -- that the inmates were at times grouped upon their tops in conversations and other amusements, ect.; and yet you know not exactly how they look, nor what is the precise appearance of the strange world that is about me. There is really a newness and rudeness in every thing that is to be seen. There are several hundred houses or dwellings about me, and they are purely unique--they are all covered with dirt--the people are all red, and yet distinct from all other red folks I have seen. The horses are wild--every dog is a wolf--the whole moving mass are strangers to me: the living, in everything, carry an air of intractable wildness about them and the dead are not buried, but dried upon scaffolds.

The groups of lodges around me present a very curious and pleasing appearance, resembling in shape (more nearly than anything else I can compare them to) so many potash-kettles inverted. On the tops of these are to be seen groups standing and reclining, whose wild and picturesque appearance it would be difficult to describe. Stern warriors, like statues, standing in dignified groups, wrapped in their painted robes, with their heads decked and plumed with Quills of the war-eagle; extending their long arms to the east or the west, the scenes of their battles, which they are recounting over to each other. In another direction, the wooing lover, softening the heart of his fair Taih-nah-tai-a with the notes of his simple late. On other lodges, and beyond these, groups are engaged in games of the "moccasin", or the "platter". Some are to be seen manufacturing robes and dresses, and others, fatigued with amusements or occupations, have stretched their limbs to enjoy the luxury of sleep, whilst basking in the sun. With all this wild and varied medley of living beings are mixed their dogs, which seem to be so near an Indian's heart, as almost to constitute a material link of his existence.

In the center of the village is an open space, or public area, of 150 feet in diameter, and circular in form, which is used for all public games and festivals, shews and exhibitions; and also for their "annual religious ceremonies," which are soon to take place, and of which I shall hereafter give

some account. The lodges around this open space front in, with their doors towards the center; and in the middle of this circle stands an object of great religious veneration, as I am told, on account of the importance it has in the conduction of those annual religious rites.

This object is in form of a large hogshead, some eight or ten feet high, made of planks and hoops, containing within it some of their choicest medicines or mysteries, and religiously preserved unhacked or scratched, as a symbol of the "Big Canoe", as they call it.

One of the lodges fronting on this circular area, and facing this strange object of their superstition, is called the "Medicine Lodge", or council house. It is in this sacred building that these wonderful ceremonies, in commemoration of the hood, take place. I am told by the Traders that the cruelties of these scenes are frightful and abhorrent in the extreme; and that this huge wigwam, which is now closed, has been built exclusively for this grand celebration. I am every day reminded of the near approach of the season for this strange affair, and as I have not yet seen any thing of it, I cannot describe it; I know it only from the relations of the Traders who have witnessed parts of it; and their descriptions are of so extraordinary a character, that I would not be willing to describe until I can see for myself, -- which will, in all probability, be in a few days.

In ranging the eye over the village from where I am writing, there is presented to the view the strangest mixture and medley of unintelligible trash (independent of the living beings that are in motion), that can possibly be imagined. On the roofs of the lodges, besides the groups of living, are buffaloes' skulls, skin canoes, pots and pottery; sleds and sledges -- and suspended on poles, erected some twenty feet above the doors of their wigwams, are displayed in a peasant day, the scalps of warriors, preserved as trophies; and thus proudly exposed as evidence of their warlike deeds. In other parts are raised on poles the warriors' pure and whitened shields and quivers, with medicine-bags attached; and here and there a sacrifice of red cloth, or other costly stuff, offered up to the Great Spirit, over the door of some benignant chief, in humble gratitude for the blessings which he is enjoying. Such is a part of this strange medley that is before and around me; and amidst them and the blue streams of smoke that are rising from the tops of these hundred "coal-pits," can be seen in distance, the green and boundless, treeless, bushless prairie; and on it, and contiguous to the piquet which encloses the village, a hundred scaffolds, on which their "dead live", as they term it.

These people never bury the dead, but place the bodies on slight scaffolds just above the reach of human hands, and out of the way of wolves and dogs; and they are there left to moulder and decay. This cemetery, or place of deposits for the dead, is just back of the village, on a level prairie; and with all its appearances, history, forms, ceremonies, &c. is one of the strangest and most interesting objects to be described in the vicinity of this peculiar race.

Whenever a person dies in the Mandan village, and the customary honours and condolence are paid to his remains, and the body dressed in its best attire, painted, oiled, feasted, and supplied with bow and quiver, shield, pipe and tobacco -- knife, flint and steel, and provisions enough to last him a few days on the journey which he is to perform; a fresh buffalo's skin, just taken from the animal's back, is wrapped around the body, and tightly bound and wound with thongs of raw hide from head to foot. Then other robes are soaked in water, till they are quite soft and elastic, which are also bandaged around the body in the same manner, and tied fast with thongs, which are wound with great care and exactness, so as to exclude the action of the air from all parts of the body.

There is then a separate scaffold erected for it, constructed of four upright posts, a little higher than human hands can reach; and on the tops of these are small poles passing around from one post to the others; across which a number of willow-rods just strong enough to support the body, which is laid upon them on its back, with its feet carefully presented towards the rising sun.

There are a great number of these bodies resting exactly in a similar way; excepting in some instances where a chief, or medicine-man, may be seen with a few yards of scarlet or blue cloth spread over his remains, as a mark of public respect and esteem. Some hundreds of these bodies may be seen reposing in this manner in this curious place, which the Indians call, “the village of the dead;” and the traveller, who visits this country to study and learn, will not only be struck with the novel appearance of the scene; but if he will give attention to the respect and devotions that are paid to this sacred place, he will draw many a moral deduction that will last him through life: he will learn, at least, that filial, conjugal, and paternal affection are not necessarily the results of civilization; but that the Great Spirit has given them to man in his native state; and that the spices and improvements of the enlightened world have never refined upon them.

There is not a day in the year in which one may not see in this Place evidences of this fact, that will wring tears from his eyes, and kindle in his bosom a spark of respect and sympathy for the poor Indian, if he never felt it before. Fathers, mothers, wives, and children, may be seen lying under these scaffolds, prostrated upon the ground, with their faces in the dirt, howling forth incessantly the most piteous and heart-broken cries and lamentations for the misfortunes of their kindred; tearing their hair--cutting their flesh with their knives, and doing other penance to appease the spirits of the dead, whose misfortunes they attribute to some sin or omission of their own, for which they sometimes indict the most excruciating selftorture.

When the scaffolds on which the bodies rest, decay and fall to the ground, the nearest relations having buried the rest of the bones, take the skulls, which are perfectly bleached and purified, and place them in circles of an hundred or more on the prairie--placed at equal distances apart (some eight or nine inches from each other), with the faces all looking to the center; where they are religiously protected and preserved in their precise positions from year to year, as objects of religious and affectionate veneration.

There are several of these “Golgothas” or circles of twenty or thirty feet in diameter, and in the center of each ring or circle is a little mound of three feet high, on which uniformly rest two buffalo skulls (a male and female); and in the center of the little mound is erected a “medicine pole”, about twenty feet high, supporting many curious articles of mystery and superstition, which they suppose have the power of guarding and protecting this sacred arrangement. Here then, to this strange place do these people again resort, to evince their further affections for the dead- not in groans and lamentations however, for several years have cured the anguish; but fond affections and endearments are here renewed, and conversations are here held and cherished with the dead. Each one of these skulls is placed upon a bunch of wild sage, which has been pulled and placed under it. The wife knows (by some mark or resemblance) the skull of her husband or her child, which lies in this group; and there seldom passes a day that she does not visit it, with a dish of the best cooked food that her wigwam affords, which she sets before the skull at night, and returns for the dish in the morning. As soon as it is discovered that the sage on which the skull rests is beginning to decay, the woman cuts a fresh bunch, and places the skull carefully upon it, removing that which was under it.

Independent of the above-named duties, which draw the women to this spot, they visit it from inclination, and linger upon it to hold converse and company with the dead. There is scarcely an hour in a pleasant day, but more or less of these women may be seen sitting or laying by the skull of their child or husband -- talking to it in the most pleasant and endearing language that they call use (as they were wont to do in former days) and seemingly getting an answer back. It is not unfrequently the case, that the woman brings her needle-work with her, spending the greater part of the day, sitting by the side of the skull of her child, chatting incessantly with it, while she is embroidering or garnishing a pair of moccasins; and perhaps, overcome with fatigue, falls asleep, with her arms encircled around it, forgetting herself for hours; after which she gathers up her things and returns to the village.

There is something exceedingly interesting and impressive in these scenes, which are so strikingly dissimilar, and yet within a few rods of each other; the one is the place where they pour forth the frantic anguish of their souls-and afterwards pay their visits to the other, to jest and gossip with the dead.

The great variety of shapes and characters exhibited in these groups of crania, render them a very interesting study for the chronologist and phrenologist; but I apprehend that it would be a matter of great difficulty (if not of impossibility) to procure them at this time, for the use and benefit of the scientific world.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 13.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

In several of my former Letters I have given sketches of the village, and some few of the customs of these peculiar people; and I have many more yet in store; some of which will induce the readers to laugh, and others almost dispose them to weep. But at present, I drop them, and introduce a few of the wild and gentlemanly Mandans themselves; and first, Ha-natah-nu-mauh, the wolf chief. This man is head-chief of the nation, and familiarly known by the name of "Chef de Loup", as the French Traders call him; a haughty, austere, and overbearing man, respected and feared by his people rather than loved. The tenure by which this man holds his office, is that by which the head-chiefs of most of the tribes claim, that of inheritance. It is a general, though not an infallible rule amongst the numerous tribes of North American Indians, that the office of chief belongs to the eldest son of a chief; provided he shews himself, by his conduct, to be equally worthy of it as any other in the nation; making it hereditary on a very proper condition -- in default of which requisites, or others which may happen, the office is elective.

The dress of this chief was one of great extravagance, and some beauty; manufactured of skins, and a great number of quills of the raven, forming his stylish head-dress.

The next and second chief of the tribe, is Mah-to-toh-pa (the four bears). This extraordinary man, though second in office is undoubtedly the first and most popular man in the nation. Free, generous, elegant and gentlemanly in his deportment -- handsome, brave and valiant; wearing a robe on his back, with the history of his battles emblazoned on it; which would fill a book of themselves, if properly translated. This, readers, is the most extraordinary man, perhaps, who lives at this day, in the atmosphere of Nature's noblemen; and I shall certainly tell you more of him anon. After him, there are Mah-tahp-ta-ha, he who rushes through the middle; Seehk-hee-da, the mouse-coloured feather; Sanja-ka-ko-kah (the deceiving wolf); Mah-to-he-ha (the old bear), and others, distinguished as chiefs and warriors -- and there are belies also; such as Mi-neek-e-sunk-te-ca, the mink; and the little grayhaired Sha-ko-kn, mint; and fifty others, who are famous for their conquests, not with the bow or the javelin, but with their small black eyes, which shoot out from under their unfledged brows, and pierce the oldest, fiercest chieftain to the heart.

The Mandans are certainly a very interesting and pleasing people in their personal appearance and manners; differing in many respects, both in looks and customs, from all other tribes which I have seen. They are not a warlike people; for they seldom, if ever, carry war into their enemies' country; but when invaded, shew their valeur and courage to be equal to that of any people on earth. Being a small tribe, and unable to contend on the wide prairies with the Sioux and other roaming tribes, while they are ten times more numerous; they have very judiciously located themselves in a permanent village, which is strongly fortified, and ensures their preservation. By this means they have advanced further in the arts of manufacture; have supplied their lodges more abundantly with the comforts, and even luxuries of life, than any Indian nation I know of. The consequence

---

of this is, that this tribe have taken many steps ahead of other tribes in manners and retinements (if I may be allowed to apply the word refinement to Indian life); and are therefore familiarly (and correctly) denominated, by the Traders and others, who have been amongst them, "the polite and friendly Mandans".

There is certainly great justice in the remark; and so forcibly have I been struck with the peculiar ease and elegance of these people, together with the diversity of complexions, the various colours of their hair and eyes; the singularity of their language, and their peculiar and unaccountable customs, that I am fully convinced that they have sprung from some other origin than that of the other North American tribes, or that they are an amalgam of natives with some civilized race.

Here arises a question of very great interest and importance for discussion; and, after further familiarity with their character, customs, and traditions, if I forget it not, I will eventually give it further consideration. Suffice it then, for the present, that their personal appearance alone, independent of their modes and customs, pronounces them at once, as more or less, than savage.

A stranger in the Mandan village is first struck with the different shades of complexion, and various colours of hair which he sees in a crowd about him; and is at once almost disposed to exclaim that "these are not indians".

There are a great many of these people whose complexions appear as light as half breeds; and amongst the women particularly, there are many whose skins are almost white, with the most pleasing symmetry and proportion of features; with hazel, with grey, and with blue eyes, -- with mildness and sweetness of expression, and excessive modesty of demeanour, which render them exceedingly pleasing and beautiful.

Why this diversity of complexion I cannot tell, nor call they themselves account for it. Their traditions, so far as I have yet learned them, afford us no information of their having had any knowledge of white men before the visit of Lewis and Clarke, made to their village thirty-three years ago. Since that time there have been but very few visits from white men to this place, and surely not enough to have changed the complexions and the customs of a nation. And I recollect perfectly well that Governor Clarke told me, before I started for this place, that I would find the Mandans a strange people and half white.

The diversity in the colour of hair is also equally as great as that in the complexion; for in a numerous group of these people (and more particularly amongst the females, who never take pains to change its natural colour, as the men often do), there may be seen every shade and colour of hair that can be seen in our own country, with the exception of red or auburn, which is not to be found.

And there is yet one more strange can probably be seen nowhere else accounted for, other than it is a freak or order of Nature, for which she has not seen fit to assign a reason. There are very many, of both sexes, and of every age, from infancy to manhood and old age, with hair of a bright silvery grey; and in some instances almost perfectly white.

This singular and eccentric appearance is much oftener seen among the women than it is with the men; for many of the latter who have it, seem ashamed of it, and artfully conceal it, by filling their hair with glue and black and red earth. The women, on the other hand, seem proud of it, and display it often in an almost incredible profusion, which spreads over their shoulders and falls as low as the knee. I have ascertained, on a careful enquiry, that about one in ten or twelve of the whole tribe are what the French call "cheveux gris", or greyhairs; and that this strange and un-account-

able phenomenon is not the result of disease or habit; but that it is unquestionably a hereditary character which runs in families, and indicates no inequality in disposition or intellect. And by passing this hair through my hands, as I often have, I have found it uniformly to be as coarse and harsh as a horse's mane; differing materially from the hair of other colours, which amongst the Mandans, is generally as fine and as soft as silk.

The reader will at once see, by the above facts, that there is enough upon the faces and heads of these people to stamp them peculiar, -- when he meets them in the heart of this almost boundless wilderness, Presenting such diversities of colour in the complexion and hair; when he knows from what he has seen, and what he has read, that all other primitive tribes known in America, are dark copper-coloured, with jet black hair.

From these few facts alone, the reader will see that I am amongst a strange and interesting people, and know how to pardon me, if I lead him through a maze of novelty and mysteries to the knowledge of a strange, yet kind and hospitable, people, whose fate, like that of all their race is sealed; -- and unaccountable peculiarity, which on earth; nor on any rational grounds whose doom is fixed, to live just long enough to be imperfectly known, and then to fall before the fell to disease or sword of civilizing devastation.

The stature of the Mandans is rather below the ordinary size of man, with beautiful of form and proportion, and wonderful suppleness and elasticity; they are pleasingly erect and graceful, both in their walk and their attitudes; and the hair of the men, which generally spreads over their backs, falling down to the hams, and sometimes to the ground, is divided into Plaits or slabs of two inches in width, and filled with a profusion of glue and red earth or vermillion, at intervals of an inch or two, which becoming very hard, remains in and unchanged from year to year.

This mode of dressing the hair is curious, and gives to the Mandans the most singular appearance. The hair of the men is uniformly all laid over from the forehead backwards; carefully kept above and resting on the ear, and thence falling down over the back, in these flattened bunches, and painted red, extending oftentimes quite on to the calf of the leg, and some times in such profusion as almost to conceal the whole figure from the person walking behind them. In the portrait of San-ja-ka-ko-kall (the deceiving wolf), where he is represented at full length, with several others of His family around him in a group, there will be seen a fair illustration of these and other customs of these people.

The hair of the women is also worn as long as they can possibly cultivate it, oiled very often, which preserves on it a beautiful gloss and shows its natural colour. They often braid it in two large plaits, one falling down just back of the ear, on each side of the head; and on any occasion which requires them to "put on their best looks", they pass their fingers through it, drawing it out of braid, and spreading it over their shoulders. The Mandan women observe strictly the same custom, which I observed amongst the Crows and Blackfeet (and, in fact, all other tribes I have seen, without a single exception), of parting the hair on the forehead, and always keeping the crease or separation filled with vermilion or other red paint. This is one of the very few little (and apparently trivial) customs which I have found amongst the Indians, without being able to assign any cause for it, other than that "they are Indians", and that this is an Indian fashion.

In mourning, like the Crows and most other tribes, the women are obliged to crop their hair all off; and the usual term of that condolence is until the hair has grown again to its former length. When a man mourns for the death of a near relation the case is quite different; his long, valued

tresses, are of much greater importance and only a lock or two can be spared. Just enough to tell of his grief to his friends, without destorying his most valued ornament, is doing just reverence and respect to the dead.

To repeat what I have said before, the Mandans are a pleasing and friendly race of people, of whom it is proverbial amongst the Traders and all who ever have known them, that their treatment of white men in their country has been friendly and kind ever since their first acquaintance with them -- they have ever met and received them, on the prairie or in their villages, with hospitality and honour.

They are handsome, straight and elegant in their forms -- not tall, but quick and graceful; easy and polite in their manners, neat in their persons and beautifully clad. When I say "neat in person and beautifully clad", however, I do not intend my readers to understand that such is the case with them all, for among them and most other tribes, as with the enlightened world, there are different grades of society -- those who care but little for their personal appearance, and those who take great pains to please themselves and their friends. Amongst this class of personages, such as chiefs anti braves, or warriors of distinction, and their families, and dandies or exquisites (a class of beings of whom I shall take due time to speak in a future Letter), the strictest regard to decency, and cleanliness and elegance of dress is observed; and there are few people, perhaps, who take more pains to keep their persons neat and cleanly than they do.

At the distance of half a mile or so above the village, is the customary place where the women and girls resort every morning in the summer months, to bathe in the river. To this spot they repair by hundreds, every morning at sunrise, where, on a beautiful beach, they can be seen running and glistening in the sun, whilst they are playing their innocent gambols and leaping into the stream. They all learn to swim well, and the poorest swimmer amongst them will dash fearlessly into the boiling, and eddying current of the Missouri, and cross it with perfect ease. At the distance of a quarter of a mile back from the river, extends a terrace or elevated prairie, running north from the village, and forming a kind of semicircle around this bathingplace; and on this terrace, which is some twenty or thirty feet higher than the meadow between it and the river, are stationed every morning several sentinels, with their bows and arrows in hand, to guard and protect this sacred ground from the approach of boys or men from any directions.

At a little distance below the village, also, is the place where the men and boys go to bathe and learn to swim. After this morning ablution, they return to their village, wipe their limbs dry, and use a profusion of bear's grease through their hair and over their bodies.

The art of swimming is known to all the American Indians; and perhaps no people on earth have taken more pains to learn it, nor any who turn it to better account. There certainly are no people whose avocations of life more often call for the use of their limbs in this way; as many of the tribes spend their lives on the shores of our vast lakes and rivers, paddling about liorn their childhood in their fragile bark canoes, which are liable to continual accidents, which often throw the Indian upon His natural resources for the preservation of his life.

There are many times also, when out upon their long marches in the prosecution of their almost continued warfare, when it becomes necessary to plunge into and swim across the wildest streams and rivers, at times when they have no canoes or craft in which to cross them. I have as yet seen no triie where this art is neglected. It is learned at a very early age by both sexes, and enables the strong and hardy muscles of the squnws to take their child upon the back, and successfully to pass

any river that lies in their way.

The mode of swimming amongst the Mandans, as well as amongst most of the other tribes, is quite different from that practiced in those parts of the civilized world, which I have had the pleasure yet to visit. The Indian, instead of parting his hands simultaneously under the chin, and making the stroke outward, in a horizontal direction, causing thereby a serious strain upon the chest, throws his body alternately upon the left and the right side, raising one arm entirely above the water and reaching as far forward as he can, to dip it, whilst his whole weight and force are spent upon the one that is passing under him, and like a paddle propelling him along; whilst this arm is making a half circle, and is being raised out of the water behind him, the opposite arm is describing a similar arch in the air over his head, to be dipped in the water as far as he can reach before him, with the hand turned under, forming a sort of bucket, to act most effectively as it passes in its torn underneath him.

By this bold and powerful mode of swimming, which may want the grace that many would wish to see, I am quite sure, from the experience I have had, that much of the fatigue and strain upon the breast and spine are avoided, and that a man will preserve his strength and his breath much longer in this alternate and rolling motion, than he can in the usual mode of swimming, in the polished world.

In addition to the modes of bathing which I have above described, the Mandans have another, which is a much greater luxury, and often resorted to by the sick, but far more often by tire well and sound, as a matter of luxury only, or perhaps for the purpose of hardening their limbs and preparing them for the thousand exposures and vicissitudes of life to which they are continually liable. I allude to their vapour baths, or sudatories, of which each village has several, and which seem to be a kind of public property-accessible to all, and resorted to by all, male and female, old and young, sick and well.

In every Mandan lodge is to be seen a crib or basket, much in the shape of a bathing-tub, curiously woven with willow boughs, and sufficiently large to receive any person of the family in a reclining or recumbent posture; which, when any one is to take a bath, is carried by the squaw to the sudatory for the purpose, and brought back to the wigwam again after it has been used.

These sudatories are always near the village, above or below it, on the bank of the river. They are generally built of skins (in form of a Crow or Sioux lodge which I have before described), covered with buffalo skins sewed tight together, with a kind of furnace in the centre; or in other words, in the centre of the lodge are two walls of stone about six feet long and two and a half apart, and about three feet high; across and over this space, between the two walls, are laid a number of round sticks, on which the bathing crib is placed. Contiguous to the lodge, and outside of it, is a little furnace something similar, in the side of the bank, where the woman kindles a hot fire, and heats to a red heat a number of large stones, which are kept at these places for this particular purpose; and having them all in readiness, she goes home or sends word to inform her husband or other one who is waiting, that all is ready; when he makes his appearance entirely naked, though with a large buffalorobe wrapped around him. He then enters the lodge and places himself in the crib or basket, either on his back or in a sitting posture (the latter of which is generally preferred), with his back towards the door of the lodge; when the squaw brings in a large stone red hot, between two sticks (lashed together somewhat in the form of a pair of tongs) and, placing it under him, throws cold water upon it, which raises a profusion of vapour about him. He is at once

enveloped in a cloud of steam, and a woman or child will sit at a little distance and continue to dash water upon the stone, whilst the matron of the lodge is out, and preparing to make her appearance with another heated stone: or he will sit and dip from a wooden bowl, with a ladle made of the mountain-sheep's horn, and throw upon the heated stones, with his own hands, the water which he is drawing through his lungs and pores, in the next moment, in the most delectable and exhilarating vapours, as it distils through the mat of wild sage and other medicinal and aromatic herbs, which he has strewed over the bottom of his basket, and on which he reclines.

During all this time the lodge is shut perfectly tight, and he quaffs this delicious and renovating draught to his lungs with deep drawn sighs, and with extended nostrils, until he is drenched in the most profuse degree of perspiration that can be produced; when he makes a kind of strangled signal, at which the lodge is opened, and he darts forth with the speed of a frightened deer, and plunges headlong into the river, from which he instantly escapes again, wraps his robe around him and "leans" as fast as possible for home. Here his limbs are wiped dry, and wrapped close anti tight within the fur of the buffalo robes, in whid he takes his nap, with his f'et to the fire; then oils his limbs and hair with bear's grease, dresses and plumes himself for a visit -- a feast -- a parade, or a council; or slicks down his long hair, and rubs his oiled limbs to a polish, with a Piece of soft buckskin, prepared to join in games of ball or Tchung-kee.

Such is the sudatory or the vapour bath of the Mandans, and, as I before observed, it is resorted to both as an every-day luxury by those who have the time and energy or industry to indulge in it; and also used by the sick as a remedy for nearly all the diseases which are known amongst them. Fevers are very rare, and in fact almost unknown amongst these people: but in the few cases of fever which have been known, this treatment has been applied, and without the fatal consequences which we would naturally predict. The greater part of their diseases are inflammatory rhenmatisms, and other chronic diseases; and for these, this mode of treatment, with their modes oflife, does admirably well. This custom is similar amongst nearly all of these Missouri Indians, and amongst the Pawnees, Omahas, and Punchas and other tribes, while have suffered with the small-pox (the dread destroyer of the Indian race), this mode was practiced by the poor creatures, who fled by hundreds to the river's edge, and by hundreds died before they could escape from the waves, into which they had plunged in the heat and rage of a burning fever. Such will yet be the scourge, and such the misery ofthese poor unthinking people, and each tribe to the Rocky Mountains, as it has been with every tribe between here and the Atlantic Ocean. White man's whiskey -- tomehawks -- scalping knives -- guns, powder and ball -- small-pox -- debauchery -- extermination.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER No. 14.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

The Mandans in many instances dress very neatly, and some of them splendidly. As they are in their native state, their dresses are all of their own manufacture; and of course, altogether made of skins of different animals belonging to those regions. There is, certainly, a reigning and striking similarity of costume amongst most of the North Western tribes; and I cannot say that the dress of Mandans is decidedly distinct from that of the Crows or the Blackfeet, the Assiniboins or the Sioux; yet there are modes of stitching or embroidering, in every tribe, which may at once enable the traveller, who is familiar with their modes, to detect or distinguish the dress of any tribe. These differences consist generally in the fashions of constructing the head-dress, or of garnishing their dresses with the porcupine quills, which they use in great profusion.

Amongst so many different and distinct nations, always at war with each other, and knowing nothing at all of each other's languages; and amongst whom, fashions in dress seldom if ever change; it may seem somewhat strange that we should find these people so nearly following, or imitating each other, in the forms and modes of their dress and ornaments. This must however, be admitted, and I think may be accounted for in a manner, without raising the least argument in favour of the theory of their having all sprung from one stock or one family; for in their continual warfare, when chiefs or warriors fall, their clothes and weapons usually fall into the possession of the victors, who wear them; and the rest of the tribe would naturally more or less often copy from or imitate them; and so also in their repeated councils or treaties of peace, such articles of dress and other manufactures are customarily exchanged, which are equally adopted by the other tribe; and consequently, eventually lead to the similarity which we find amongst the modes of dress, &c. of the different tribes.

The tunic or shirt of the Mandan men is very similar in shape to that of the Blackfeet -- made of two skins of deer or mountain-sheep, strung with scalp-locks, beads, and ermine. The leggings, like those of the other tribes, of whom I have spoken, are made of deer skins, and shaped to fit the leg, embroidered with porcupine quills, and fringed with scalps from their enemies heads. Their moccasins are made of buckskin, and neatly ornamented with porcupine quills--over their shoulders (or in other words, over one shoulder and passing under the other), they very gracefully wear a robe from the young buffalo's back, oftentimes cut down to about half its original size, to make it handy and easy for use. Many of these are also fringed on one side with scalp-locks; and the flesh side of the skin curiously ornamented with pictured representations of the creditable events and battles of their lives.

Their head-dresses are of various sorts, and many of them exceedingly picturesque and handsome; generally made of war-eagles' or ravens quills and ermine. These are the most costly part of an Indian's dress in all this country, owing to the difficulty of procuring the quills and the fur. The war-eagle being the "rara avis", and the ermine the rarest animal that is found in the country. The

tail of a war-eagle in this village, provided it is a perfect one, containing some six or eight quills, which are denominated first-rate plumes, and suitable to arrange in a head-dress, will purchase a tolerable good horse (horses, however, are much cheaper here than they are in most other countries). I have had abundant opportunities of learning the great value which these people sometimes attach to such articles of dress and ornament, as I have been purchasing a great many, which I intend to exhibit in my Gallery of Indian Paintings, that the world may examine them for themselves, and thereby be enabled to judge of the fidelity of my works, and the ingenuity of Indian manufactures.

In these purchases I have often been surprised at the prices demanded by them; and perhaps I could not recite a better instance of the kind, than one which occurred here a few days since: -- One of the chiefs, whom I had painted at full length, in a beautiful costume, with head-dress of war eagles' quills and ermine, extending quite down to his feet; and whom I was soliciting for the purchase of his dress complete, was willing to sell to me all but the head-dress; saying, that "he could not part with that, as he would never be able to get quills and ermine of so good a quality to make another like it." I agreed with him, however, for the rest of the dress, and importuned him, from day to day, for the head-dress, until he at length replied, that, if I must have it, he must have two horses for it; bargain was instantly struck -- the horses were procured of Traders at twenty-five dollars each, and the head-dress secured for my Collection.

There is occasionally, a chief or a warrior of so extraordinary renown, that he is allowed to wear horns on his head-dress, which give to his aspect a strange and majestic effect. These we made of about a third part of the horn of a buffalo bull; the horn having been split from end to end, and a third part of it taken and shaved thin and light, and highly polished. These are attached to the top of the head-dress on each side, in the same place that they rise and stand on the head of a buffalo; rising out of a mat of ermine skins and tails, which hang over the top of the head-dress, somewhat in the form that the large and profuse locks of hair hang and fall over the head of a buffalo bull. The same custom I have found observed amongst the Sioux, -- the Crows -- the Blackfeet and Assinneboins, and it is one of so striking a character as needs a few more words of observation. There is a peculiar meaning or importance (in their estimation) to this and many other curious and unaccountable appearances in the habits of Indians, upon which the world generally look as things that are absurd and ridiculous, merely because they are beyond the world's comprehension, or because we do not stop to enquire or learn their uses or meaning..

I find that the principal cause why we underrate and despise the savage, is generally because we do not understand him; and the reason why we are ignorant of him and his modes, is that we do not stop to investigate--the world have been too much in the habit of looking upon him as altogether inferior-as a beast, a brute; and unworthy of more than a passing notice. If they stop long enough to form an acquaintance, it is but to take advantage of his ignorance and credulities -- to rob him of the wealth and resources of his country;-to make him drunk with whiskey, and visit him with abuses which in his ignorance he never thought of. By this method his first visitors entirely overlook and never understand the meaning of his thousand interesting and characteristic customs; and at the same time, by changing his native modes and habits of life, blot them out from the view of the enquiring world for ever.

It is from the observance of a thousand little and apparently trivial modes and tricks of Indian life, that the Indian character must be learned; and, in fact, it is just the same with us if the subject

were reversed: excepting that the system of civilized life would furnish ten apparently useless and ridiculous trifles to one which is found in Indian life; and at least twenty to one which are purely nonsensical and unmeaning.

The civilized world look upon a group of Indians, in their classic dress, with their few and simple oddities, all of which have their moral or meaning, and laugh at them excessively, because they are not like ourselves -- we ask, " why do the silly creatures wear such great bunches of quills on their heads? -- Such loads and streaks of paint upon their bodies -- and bear's grease? abominable!" and a thousand other equally silly questions, without ever stopping to think that Nature taught them to do so--and that they all have some definite importance or meaning which an Indian could explain to us at once, if he were asked and felt disposed to do so -- that each quill in his head stood, in the eyes of his whole tribe, as the symbol of an enemy who had fallen by his hand--that every streak of red paint covered a wound which he had got in honorable combat -- and that the bear's grease with which he carefully anoints his body every morning, from head to foot, cleanses and purifies the body, and protects his skin from the bite of mosquitoes, and at the same time preserves him from colds and coughs which are usually taken through the pores of the skin.

At the same time, an Indian looks among the civilized world, no doubt, with equal. If not much greater, astonishment, at our apparently, as well as really, ridiculous customs and fashions; but he laughs not, nor ridicules, nor questions, -- for his natural good sense and good manners forbid him,-until he is reclining about the fire-side of his wigwam companions, when he vents forth his just criticisms upon the learned world, who are a rich and just theme for Indian criticism and Indian gossip.

An Indian will not ask a white man the reason why he does not oil his skin with bears' grease, or why he does not paint his body--or why he wears a hat on his head, or why he has buttons on the back part of his coat, where they never can be used -- or why he wears whiskers, and a shirt collar up to his eyes -- or why he sleeps with his head towards the fire instead of his feet -- why he walks with his toes out instead of turning them in -- or why it is that hundreds of white folks will flock and crowd round a table to see an Indian eat -- but he will go home to his wigwam fire-side, and "make the welkin ring" with jokes and fun upon the ignorance and folly of the knowing world. A wild Indian thrown into the civilized atmosphere will see a man occasionally moving in society, wearing a cocked hat; and another with a laced coat and gold or silver epaulettes upon his shoulders, without knowing or enquiring the meaning of them, or the objects for which they are worn. Just so a white man travels amongst a wild and untaught tribe of Indians, and sees occasionally one of them parading about their village, with a head-dress of eagles' quills and ermine, and elevated above it a pair of beautifully polished buffalo horns; and just as ignorant is he also, of their meaning or importance; and more so, for the first will admit the presumption that epaulettes and cocked hats amongst the civilized world, are made for some important purpose,-but the latter will presume that horns on an Indian's head are nothing more nor less (nor can they be in their estimation), than Indian nonsense and stupidity.

This brings us to the "corned crest" again, and if the poor Indian scans epaulettes and cocked hats, without enquiring their meaning, and explaining them to his tribe, it is no reason why I should have associated with the noble dignitaries of these western regions, with horns and ermine on their heads, and then to have introduced the subject without giving some further clue to their importance and meaning. For me, this negligence would be doubly unpardonable, as I travel, not

to trade but to herald the Indian and his dying customs to posterity.

This custom then, which I have before observed belongs to all the northwestern tribes, is one no doubt of very ancient origin, having a purely classic meaning. No one wears the head-dress surmounted with horns except the dignitaries who are very high in authority, and whose exceeding valor, worth, and power is admitted by all the nation.

He may wear them, however, who is not a chief; but a brave, or warrior of such remarkable character, that he is esteemed universally in the tribe, as a man whose "voice is as loud in council" as that of a chief of the first grade, and consequently his power as great.

This head-dress with horns is used only on certain occasions, and they are very seldom. When foreign chiefs, Indian agents, or other important personages visit a tribe; or at war parades, at the celebration of a victory, at public festivals, &c. they are worn; but on no other occasions-unless, sometimes, when a chief sees fit to lead a war-party to battle, he decorates his head with this symbol of power, to stimulate his men; and throws himself into the foremost of the battle, inviting his enemy to concentrate their shafts upon him.

The horns on these head-dresses are but loosely attached at the bottom, so that they easily fall back or forward, according as the head is inclined forward or backward; and by an ingenious motion of the head, which is so slight as to be almost imperceptible -- they are made to balance to and fro, and sometimes, one backward and the other forward like a horse's ears. giving a vast deal of expression and force of character, to the appearance of the chief who is wearing them.

This, reader, is a remarkable instance (like hundreds of others), for its striking similarity to Jewish customs, to the kerns ;or keren, in Hebrew), the horns worn by the Abyssinian chiefs and Hebrews, as a symbol of power and command; worn at great parades and celebrations of victories.

"The. false prophet Zedekiah, made him horns of iron" (I Kings xxii. II). " Lift not your horns on high; speak not with a stiff neck".

This last citation seem?; so exactly to convey to my mind the mode of raising and changing the position of the horns by a motion of the head, as I have above described, that I am irresistibly led to believe that this custom is now practiced amongst these tribes very nearly as it was amongst the Jews; and that it has been, like marry other customs of which I shall speak more in future epistles, handed down and preserved with very little innovation or change from that ancient people. The reader will see this custom exemplified in the portrait of Mah-totoh-pa. This man, although the second chief, was the only man in the nation who was allowed to wear the horns; and all, I found, looked upon him as the leader, who had the power to lead all the warriors in time of war; and that, in consequence of the extraordinary battles which Ire had fought.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 15.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

A WEEK Or more has elapsed since the date of my last Letter, and nothing as yet of the great and curious event -- or the Mandan religious ceremony. There is evidently much preparation making for it, however; and from what I can learn, no one in the nation, save the medicine-men, have any knowledge of the exact day on which it is to commence. I am informed by the chiefs, that it takes place as soon as the willow-tree is in full leaf; for, say they, "the twig which the bird brought in was a willow bough, and had full-grown leaves on it." So it seems that this celebration has some relation to the Flood.

This great occasion is close at hand, and will, undoubtedly, commence in a few days; in the meantime I will give a few notes and memorandums, which I have made since my last.

I have been continually at work with my brush, with fine and picturesque subjects before me; and from the strange, whimsical, and superstitious notions which they have of an art so novel and unaccountable to them, I have been initiated into many of their mysteries -- have witnessed many very curious incidents, and preserved several anecdotes, some of which I must relate.

Perhaps nothing ever more completely astonished these people than the operations of my brush.

The art of portrait-painting was a subject entirely new to them, and of course, unthought of; and my appearance here has commenced a new era in the arcana of medicine or mystery. Soon after arriving here, I commenced and finished the portraits of the two principal chiefs. This was done without having awakened the curiosity of the villagers, as they had heard nothing of what was going on, and even the chiefs themselves seemed to be ignorant of my designs, until the pictures were completed. No one else was admitted into my lodge during the operation; and when finished was exceedingly amusing to see them mutually recognizing each other's likeness, and assuring each other of the striking resemblance which they bore to the originals. Both of these pressed their hand over their mouths awhile in dead silence (a custom amongst most tribes, when anything surprises them very much); looking attentively upon the portraits and myself, and upon the palette and colors with which these unaccountable effects had been produced.

They then walked up, to me in the most gentle manner, taking me In turn by the hand, with a firm grip: with head and eyes inclined downwards, and in a tone a little above a whisper--pronounced the words "te-hope-nee Wash-ee!" and walked off.

Readers, at that moment I was christened with a new and a great name--one by which I am now familiarly hailed, and talked of in this village; and no doubt will be, as long as traditions last in this strange community.

That, moment conferred an honour on me, which you as yet do not understand. I took the degree (not of Doctor of Laws, nor Bachelor of Arts) of Master of Arts -- of mysteries -- of magic, and of hocus pocus. I was recognized in that short sentence as a "great medicine white man"; and since that time, have been regularly installed medicine or mystery, which is the most honorable degree

---

that could be conferred upon me here; and I now hold a place amongst the most eminent and envied personages, the doctors and conjurati of this titled community. Te-ho-pe-nee Wash-ee (or medicine white man) is the name I now go by, and it will prove to me, no doubt, of more value than gold, for I have been called upon and feasted by the doctors, who are all mystery-men; and it has been an easy and successful passport already to many strange and mysterious places; and has put me in possession of a vast deal of curious and interesting information, which I am sure I never should have otherwise learned. I am daily growing in the estimation of the medicine-men and the chiefs; and by assuming all the gravity and circumspection due from so high a dignitary (and even considerably more); and endeavoring to perform now and then some art or trick that is unfathomable, I am in hopes of supporting my standing, until the great annual ceremony commences; on which occasion, I may possibly be allowed a seat in the medicine-lodge by the doctors, who are the sole conductors of this great source and fountain of all priestcraft and conjuration in this country.

After I had finished the portraits of the two chiefs, and they had returned to their wigwams, and deliberately seated themselves by their respective fire-sides, and silently smoked a pipe or two (according to an universal custom), they gradually began to tell what had taken place; and at length crowds of gaping listeners, with mouths wide open, thronged their lodges; and a throng of women and girls were about my house, and through every crack and crevice I could see their glistening eyes, which were piercing my hut in a hundred places, from a natural and restless propensity, a curiosity to see what was going on within. An four or more passed in this way, and the soft and silken throng continually increased, until some hundreds of them were clung, and piled about my wigwam like a swarm of bees hanging on the front and sides of their hive.

During this time, not a man made his appearance about the premises -- after awhile, however, they could be seen, folded in their robes, gradually siding up towards the lodge, with a silly look upon their faces, which confessed at once that curiosity was leading them reluctantly, where their pride checked and forbade them to go. The rush soon after became general, and the chiefs and medicine-men took Possession of my room, placing soldiers (braves with spears in their hands) at the door, admitting no one, but such as were allowed by the chiefs, to come in.

Monsr. Kipp (the agent of the Fur Company, who has lived here eight years, and to whom, for his politeness and hospitality, I am much indebted), at this time took a seat with the chiefs, and, speaking their language fluently, he explained to them my views and the objects for which I was painting these portraits; and also expounded to them the manner in which they were made, -- at which they seemed all to be very much pleased. The necessity at this time of exposing the Portraits to the view of the crowds who were assembled around the house, became imperative, and they were held up together over the door, so that the whole village had a chance to see and recognize their chiefs. The effect upon so mixed a multitude, who as yet had heard no way of accounting for them, was novel and really laughable. The likenesses were instantly recognized, and many of the gaping multitude commenced yelping; some were stamping off in the jarring dance--others were singing, and others again were crying -- hundreds covered their mouths with their hands and were mute; others, indignant, drove their spears frightfully into the ground, and some threw a reddened arrow at the sun, and went home to their wigwams.

The pictures seen, -- the next curiosity was to see the man who made them, and I was called forth. Readers! if you have any imagination, save me the trouble of painting this scene.

I stepped forth, and was instantly hemmed in the throng. Women were gaping and gazing -- and warriors anti braves were offering me their hands, -- whilst little boys and girls, by dozens, were struggling through the crowd to touch me with the ends of their fingers; and whilst I was engaged, from the waist upwards, in fending off the throng and shaking hands, my legs were assailed (not unlike the nibbling of little fish, when I have been standing in deep water) by children, who were creeping between the legs of the bystanders for the curiosity or honor of touching me with the end of their finger. The eager curiosity and expression of astonishment with which they gazed upon me, plainly shewed that they looked upon me as some strange and unaccountable being. They pronounced me the greatest medicine-man in the world ; for they said I had made living beings,--they said they could see their chiefs alive, in two places -- those that I had made were a little alive -- they could see their eyes move -- could see them smile and laugh, and that if they could laugh they could certainly speak, if they should try, and they must therefore have some life in them.

The squaws generally agreed, that they had discovered life enough in them to render my medicine too great for the Mandans; saying that such an operation could not be performed without taking away from the original something of his existence, which I put in the picture, and they could see it move, could see it stir.

This curtailing of the natural existence, for the purpose of instilling life into the secondary one, they decided to be an useless and destructive operation, and one which was calculated to do great mischief in their happy community I and they commenced a mournful and doleful chant against me, crying and weeping bitterly through the village, proclaiming me a most "dangerous man"; one who could make living persons by looking at them; and at the same time, could, as a matter of course, destroy life in the same way, if I chose. That my medicine was dangerous to their lives, and that I must leave the village immediately. That bad luck would happen to those whom I painted -- that I was to take a part of the existence of those whom I painted, and carry it home with me amongst the white people, and that when they died they would never sleep quiet in their graves." In this way the women and some old quack medicine-men together, had succeeded in raising an opposition against me; and the reasons they assigned were so plausible and so exactly suited for their superstitious feelings, that they completely succeeded in exciting fears and a general panic in the minds of a number of chiefs who had agreed to sit for their portraits, and my operations were, of course, for several days completely at a stand. A grave council was held on the subject from day to day, and there seemed great difficulty in deciding what was to be done with me and the dangerous art which I was practicing; and which had far exceeded their original expectations. I finally got admittance to their sacred conclave, and assured them that I was but a man like themselves, -- that my art had no medicine or mystery about it, but could be learned by any of them if they would practice it as long as I had -- that my intentions towards them were of the most friendly kind, and that in the country where I lived, brave men never allowed their squaws to frighten them with their foolish whims and stories. They all immediately arose, shook me by the hand, and dressed themselves for their pictures. After this, there was no further difficulty about sitting; all were ready to be painted,--the squaws were silent, and my painting-room a continual resort for the chiefs, and braves, and medicine men; where they waited with impatience for the completion of each one's picture, -- that they could decide as to the likeness as it came from under the brush; that they could laugh, and yell, and sing a new song, and smoke a fresh pipe to the health and

success of him who had just been safely delivered from the hands and the mystic operation of the "white medicine".

In each of these operations, as they successfully took place, I observed that a pipe or two were well filled, and as soon as I commenced painting, the chiefs and braves, who sat around the sides of the lodge, commenced smoking for the success of the picture (and probably as much or more so for the safe deliverance of the sitter from harm while under the operation); and so they continued to pass the pipe around until the portrait was completed.

In this way I progressed with my portraits, stopping occasionally very suddenly as if something was wrong, and taking a tremendous puff or two at the pipe, and streaming the smoke through my nostrils, exhibiting in my looks and actions an evident relief; enabling me to Proceed with more facility and success, - by flattering and complimenting each one on his good looks after I had got it done, and taking them according to rank, or standing, making it a matter of honor with them, which pleased them exceedingly, and gave me and my' art the stamp of respectability at once.

I was then taken by the arm by the chiefs, and led to their lodges, where feasts were prepared for me in elegant style, i.e. in the bat manner which this country affords; and being led by the arm, and welcomed to them by gentlemen of high and exalted feelings, rendered them in my estimation truly elegant.

I was waited upon, in due form and ceremony by the medicine-men, who received me upon the old adage, "Similis simili gaudet." I was invited to a feast, and they presented me a she-shee-quoi, or a doctor's rattle, and also a magical wand, or a doctor's staff, strung with claws of the grizzly bear, with hoofs of the antelope -- with ermine -- with wild sage and hats, wings -- and perfumed withal with the choice and savory odor of the pole-cat -- a dog was sacrificed and hung by the legs over my wigwam, and I was therefore and thereby initiated into (and countenanced in the practice of) the arcana of medicine or mystery, and considered a Fellow of the Extraordinary Society of Conjurati.

Since this signal success and good fortune in my operations, things have gone on very pleasantly, and I have had a great deal of amusement. Some altercation has taken place, however, amongst the chiefs and braves, with regard to standing or rank, of which they are exceedingly jealous; and they must sit (if at all) in regular order, according to that rank; the trouble is all settled at last, however, and I have had no want of subjects, though a great many have become again alarmed, and are unwilling to sit, for fear, as some say, that they will die prematurely if painted; and as others say, that if they are painted, the picture will live after they are dead, and they cannot sleep quiet in their graves.

I have had several most remarkable occurrences in my painting-room, of this kind, which have made me some everlasting enemies here; though the minds and feelings of the chiefs and medicine-men have not been affected by them. There has been three or four instances where proud and aspiring young men have been in my lodge, and after gazing at the portraits of the head chief across the room (which sits looking them in the eyes), have raised their hands before their faces and walked around to the side of the lodge, on the right or left, from whence to take a long and fair side-look at the chief, instead of staring him full in the face (which is a most unpardonable offence in all Indian tribes); and after having got in that position, and cast their eyes again upon the portrait which was yet looking them full in the face, have thrown their robes over their heads

and bolted out of the wigwam, filled equally with astonishment and indignation; averring, as they always will in a sullen mood, that they "saw the eyes move", that as they walked around the room "the eyes of the portrait followed them". With these unfortunate gentlemen, repeated efforts have been made by the Traders, and also by the chiefs and doctors, who understand the illusion, to convince them of their error, by explaining the mystery; but they will not hear to any explanation whatever; saying, that "what they see with their eyes is always evidence enough for them;" that they always "believe their own eyes sooner than a hundred tongues, "and all efforts to get them a second time to my room, or into my company in any place, have proved entirely unsuccessful. I had trouble brewing also the other day from another source; one of the "medicines" commenced howling and haranguing around my domicil, amongst the throng that was outside, proclaiming that all who were inside and being painted were fools and would soon die; and very materially affecting thereby my popularity. I however sent for him and called him in the next morning, when I was alone, having only the interpreter with me; telling him that I had had my eye upon him for several days, and had been so well pleased with his looks, that I had taken great pains to find out his history, which had been explained by all as one of a most extraordinary kind, and his character and standing in his tribe as worthy of my particular notice; and that I had several days since resolved that as soon as I had practiced my hand long enough upon the others, to get the stiffness out of it (after paddling my canoe so far as I had) and make it to work easily and successfully, I would begin on his portrait, which I was then prepared to commence on that day, and that; I felt as if I could do him justice. We shook me by the hand, giving me the "Doctor's grip", and beckoned me to sit down, which I did, and we smoked a pipe together. After this was over, he told me, that" he had no inimical feelings towards me, although he had been telling the chiefs that they were all fools, and all would die who had their Portraits painted -- that although he had set the old women and children all crying, and even made some of the young warriors tremble, yet he had no unfriendly feelings towards me, nor any fear or dread of my art." I know you are a good man (said he), I know you will do no harm to any one, your medicine is great and you are a great medicine-man. I would like to see myself very well -- and so would all of the chiefs ; but they have all been many days in this medicine-house, and they all know me well, and they have not asked me to come in and be made alive with paints -- my friend, I am glad that my people have told you who I am -- my heart is glad -- I will go to my wigwam and eat, and in a little while I will come, and you may go to work" -- another pipe was lit and. smoked, and he got up and went off. I prepared my canvass and palette, and whistled away the time until twelve o'clock, before he made his appearance; having used the whole of the fore-part of the day at his toilette, arranging his dress and ornamenting his body for his picture.

At that hour then, bedaubed and streaked with paints of various colors, with bear's grease and charcoal, with medicine-pipes in his hands and foxes tails attached to his heels, entered Mah-to-he-hah (the old bear), with a train of his own profession, who seated themselves around him; and also a number of boys, whom it was requested should remain with him, and whom I supposed it possible might have been pupils, whom he was instructing in the mysteries of materia medica and hoco poca. He took his position in the middle of the room, waving his eagle calumets in each hand, and singing his medicine-song which he sings over his dying patient, looking me full in the face until I completed his picture. Which I painted at full length. His vanity has been completely gratified in the operation; he lies for hours together, day after day, in my room, in front of his

picture, gazing intensely upon it; lights my pipe for me while I am painting -- shakes hands with me a dozen times on each day, and talks of me, and enlarges upon my medicine virtues and my talents, wherever he goes: so that this new difficulty is now removed, and instead of preaching against me, he is one of my strongest and most enthusiastic friends and aids in the country. There is yet to be described another sort of personage, that is often seen stalking about in all Indian communities, a kind of nondescript, with whom I have been somewhat annoyed, and still more amused, since I came to this village, of whom (or of which) I shall give some account in my next epistle.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 16.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

Besides chiefs, and braves and doctors, of whom I have heretofore spoken, there is yet another character -of whom I must say a few words before I proceed to other topics. The person I allude to, is the one mentioned at the close of my last Letter, and familiarly known and countenanced in every tribe as an Indian beau or dandy. Such personages may be seen on every pleasant day, strutting and parading around the village in the most beautiful and unsoiled dresses, without the honorable trophies however of scalp locks and claws of the grizzly bear, attached to their costume, for with such things they deal not. They are not peculiarly anxious to hazard their lives in equal and honorable combat with the one, or disposed to cross the path of the other; but generally remain about the village, to take care of the women, and attire themselves in the skins of such animals as they can easily kill, without seeking the rugged cliffs for the war-eagle, or visiting the haunts of the grizzly bear. They plume themselves with swan's-down and quills of ducks, with braids and plaits of sweet-scented grass and other harmless and unmeaning ornaments, which have no other merit than they themselves have, that of looking pretty and ornamental.

These clean and elegant gentlemen, who are very few in each tribe, are held in very little estimation by the chiefs and braves; inasmuch as it is known by all, that they have a most horrible aversion to arms, and are denominated " faint hearts" or "old women" by the whole tribe, and are therefore but little respected. They seem, however, to be tolerably well contented with the appellation, together with the celebrity they have acquired amongst the women and children for the beauty and elegance of their personal appearance; and most of them seem to take and enjoy their share of the world's pleasures, although they are looked upon as drones in society.

These gay and tinselled bucks may be seen in a pleasant day in all their plumes, astride of their pied or dappled ponies, with a fan in the right hand, made of a turkey's tail -- with whip and a fly-brush attached to the wrist of the same hand, and underneath them a white and beautiful and soft pleasure saddle, ornamented with porcupine quills and ermine, parading through and lounging about the village for an hour or so, when they will cautiously bend their course to the suburbs of the town, where they will sit or recline upon their horses for an hour or two, overlooking the beautiful games where the braves and the young aspirants are contending in manly and athletic amusements;-when they are fatigued with this severe effort, they wend their way hack again, lift off their fine white saddle of doe's-skin, which is wadded with buffalo's hair, turn out their pony -- take a little refreshment, smoke a pipe, fan themselves to sleep, and doze away the rest of the day. Whilst I have been painting, from day to day, there have been two or three of these fops continually strutting and taking their attitudes in front of my door; decked out in all their finery, without receiving other benefit or other information, than such as they could discover through the cracks and seams of my cabin. The chiefs, I observed, passed them by without notice, and of course, without inviting them in; and they seemed to figure about my door from day to day in their best

---

dresses and best attitudes, as if in hopes that I would select them as models, for my canvass. It was natural that I should do so, for their costume and personal appearance was entirely more beautiful than anything else to be seen in the village. My plans were laid, and one day when I had got through with all of the head men, who were willing to sit to be painted, and there were two or three of the chiefs lounging in my room, I stepped to the door and tapped one of these fellows on the shoulder, who took the hint, and stepped in, well-pleased and delighted with the signal and honorable notice I had at length taken of him and his beautiful dress. Readers, you cannot imagine what was the expression of gratitude which beamed forth in this poor fellow's face, and how high his heart beat with joy and pride at the idea of my selecting him to be immortal, alongside of the chiefs and worthies whose portraits he saw arranged around the room; and by which honor he, undoubtedly, considered himself well paid for two or three weeks of regular painting, and pleasing, and dressing, and standing alternately on one leg and the other at the door of my premises.

Well, I placed him before me, and a canvass on my easel, and "chalked him out" at full length. He was truly a beautiful subject for the brush, and I was tilled with enthusiasm -- his dress from head to foot was of the skins of the mountain-goat, and dressed so neatly, that they were almost as soft and; as white as Canton crape -- around the bottom and the sides it was trimmed with ermine, and porcupine quills of beautiful dyes garnished it in a hundred parts; -- his hair which was long, and spread over his back and shoulders, extending nearly to the ground, was all combed back and parted on his forehead like that of a woman. He was a tall and fine figure, with ease and grace in his movements, that were well worthy of a man of better caste. In his left hand he held a beautiful pipe -- and in his right hand he plied his fan, and on his wrist was still attached his whip of elk's horn, and his fly-brush, made of the buffalo's tail. There was nought about him of the terrible, and nought to shock the finest, chastest intellect.

I had thus far progressed, with high-wrought feelings of pleasure, when the two or three chiefs, who had been seated around the lodge, and whose portraits I had before painted, arose suddenly, and wrapping themselves tightly in their robes, crossed my room with a quick and heavy step, and took an informal leave of my cabin. I was apprehensive of their displeasure, though I continued my work; and in a few moments the interpreter came furiously into my room, addressing me thus: -- "My God, Sir! this never will do; you have given great offence to the chiefs -- they have made complaint of your conduct to me -- they tell me this is a worthless fellow -- a man of no account in the nation, and if you paint his picture, you must instantly destroy theirs; you have no alternative, my dear Sir -- and the Quicker this chap is out of your lodge the better."

The same matter was explained to my sitter by the interpreter, when he picked up his robe, wrapped himself in it, plied his fan nimbly about his face, and walked out of the lodge in silence, but with quite a consequential smile, taking his old position in front of the door for awhile, after which he drew himself quietly off without further exhibition. So highly do Mandan braves and worthies value the honor of being painted; and so little do they value a man, however lavishly Nature may have bestowed her master touches upon him, who has not the pride and noble bearing of a warrior.

I spoke in a former Letter of Mah-to-toh-pa (the four bears), the second chief of the nation, and the most popular man of the Mandans -- a high-minded and gallant warrior, as well as a polite and polished gentleman. Since I painted his portrait, as I before described, I have received at his

hands many marked and signal attentions; some of which I must name to you, as the very relation of them will put you in possession of many little forms and modes of Indian life, that otherwise might not have been noted.

About a week since, this noble fellow stepped into my painting-room about twelve o'clock in the day, in full and splendid dress, and passing his arm through mine, pointed the way, and led me in the most gentlemanly manner, through the village and into his own lodge, where a feast was prepared in a careful manner and waiting our arrival. The lodge in which he dwelt was a room of immense size, some forty or fifty feet in diameter, in a circular form, and about twenty feet high -- with a sunken curb of stone in the center, of five or six feet in diameter and one foot deep, which contained the fire over which the pot was boiling. I was led near the edge of this curb, and seated on a very handsome robe, most ingeniously garnished and painted with hieroglyphics; and he seated himself gracefully on another one at a little distance from me; with the feast prepared in several dishes, resting on a beautiful rush mat, which was placed between us.

The simple feast which was spread before us consisted of three dishes only, two of which were served in wooden bowls, and the third in an earthen vessel of their own manufacture, somewhat in shape of a bread-tray in our own country. This last contained a quantity of pem-I-can and marrow fat; and one of the former held a fine brace of buffalo ribs, delightfully roasted; and the other was filled with a kind of paste or pudding, made of the flour of the "pomme hlanche", as the French call it, a delicious turnip of the prairie, finely flavored with the buffalo berries, which are collected in great quantities in this country, and used with divers dishes in cooking, as we in civilized countries use dried currants, which they very much resemble.

A handsome pipe and a tobacco-pouch made of the otter skin, filled with k'nick-k'neck (Indian tobacco), laid by the side of the feast; and when we were seated, mine host took up his pipe, and deliberately filled it; and instead of lighting it by the fire, which he could easily have done, he drew from his pouch his flint and steel, and raised a spark with which he kindled it. He drew a few strong whiffs through it, and presented the stem of it to my mouth, through which I drew a whiff or two while he held the stem in his hands. This done, he laid down the pipe, and drawing his knife from his belt, cut off a very small piece of the meat from the ribs, and pronouncing the words "Ho-pe-ne-chee wa-pa-shee" (meaning a medicine sacrifice), threw it into the fire.

He then (by signals) requested me to eat, and I commenced, after drawing out from my belt my knife (which it is supposed that every man in this country carries about him, for at an Indian feast a knife is never offered to a guest). Reader, be not astonished that I sat and ate my dinner alone, for such is the custom of this strange land. In all tribes in these western regions it is an invariable rule that a chief never eats with his guests invited to a feast; but while they eat, he sits by, at their service, and ready to wait upon them; deliberately charging and lighting the pipe which is to be passed around after the Feast is over. Such was the case in the present instance, and while I was eating, Mah-to-toh-pa sat cross-legged before me, cleaning his pipe and preparing it for a cheerful smoke when I had finished my meal. For this ceremony I observed he was making unusual preparation, and I observed as I ate, that after he had taken enough of the k'nick-k'neck or bark of the red willow, from his pouch, he rolled out of it also a piece of the "castor," which it is customary amongst these folks to carry in their tobacco-sack to give it a flavor; and, shaving off a small quantity of it, mixed it with the bark, with which he charged his pipe. This done, he drew also from his sack a small parcel containing a fine powder, which was made of dried buffalo dung, a little of

which he spread over the top, (according also to custom,) which was like tinder, having no other effect than that of lighting the pipe with ease and satisfaction. My appetite satiated, I straightened up, and with a whiff the pipe was lit, and we enjoyed together for a quarter of an hour the most delightful exchange of good feelings, amid clouds of smoke and pantomimic signs and gesticulations.

The dish of pemican and marrow-fat, of which I spoke, was thus -- the first, an article of food used throughout this country, as familiarly as we use bread in the civilized world. It is made of buffalo meat dried very hard, and afterwards pounded in a large wooden mortar until it is made nearly as fine as sawdust, then packed in this dry state in bladders or sacks of skin. and is easily carried to any part of the world in good order. "Marrow-fat" is collected by the Indians from the buffalo bones which they break to pieces, yielding a prodigious quantity of marrow, which is boiled out and put into buffalo bladders which have been distended; and after it cools, becomes quite hard like tallow, and has the appearance, and very nearly the flavor, of the richest yellow butter. At a feast, chunks of this marrow fat are cut off and placed in a tray or bowl, with the pemican, and eaten together; which we civilized folks in these regions consider a very good substitute for (and indeed we generally so denominate it) "bread and butter." In this dish laid a spoon made of the buffalo's horn, which was black as jet, and beautifully polished; in one of the others there was another of still more ingenious and beautiful workmanship, made of the horn of the mountain-sheep, or "Gros corn", as the French trappers call them; it was large enough to hold of itself two or three pints, and was almost entirely transparent.

I spoke also of the earthen dishes or bowls in which these viands were served out; they are a familiar part of the culinary furniture of every Mandan lodge, and are manufactured by the women of this tribe in great quantities, and modeled into a thousand forms and tastes. They are made by the hands of the women, from a tough black clay, and baked in kilns which are made for the purpose, and are nearly equal in hardness to our own manufacture of pottery; though they have not yet got the art of glazing, which would be to them most valuable secret. They make them so strong and serviceable, however, that they hang them over the fire as we do our iron pots, and boil their meat in them with perfect success. I have seen some few specimens of such manufacture, which have been dug up in Indian mounds and tombs in the southern and middle states, placed in our Eastern Museums and looked upon as a great wonder, when here this novelty is at once done away with, and the whole mystery; where women can be seen handling and using them by hundreds, and they can be seen every day in the summer also, moulding them into many fanciful forms, and passing them through the kiln where they are hardened.

Whilst sitting at this feast the wigwam was as silent as death, although we were not alone in it. This chief, like most others, had a plurality of wives, and all of them (some six or seven) were seated around the sides of the lodge, upon robes or mats placed upon the ground, and not allowed to speak, though they were it readiness to obey his orders or commands, which were uniformly given by signs-manual, and executed in the neatest and most silent manner.

When I arose to return, the pipe through which we had smoked was presented to me; and the robe on which I had sat, he gracefully raised by the corners and tendered it to me, explaining by signs that the paintings which were on it were, the representations of the battles of his life, where he had fought and killed with his own hand fourteen of his enemies; that he had been two weeks engaged in painting it for me, and that he had invited me here on this occasion to present it to me.

The robe, readers, which I shall describe in a future epistle, I took upon my shoulder, and he took me by the arm and led me back to my painting-room.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 17.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

I mentioned in the foregoing epistle, that the chiefs of the Mandans frequently have a plurality of wives. Such is the custom amongst all or these North Western tribes, and a few general remarks on this subject will apply to them all, and save the trouble of repeating them.

Polygamy is countenanced amongst all of the North American Indians, so far as I have visited them; and it is no uncommon thing to find a chief with six, eight, or ten, and some with twelve or fourteen wives in his lodge. Such is an ancient custom, and in their estimation is right as well as necessary. Women in a savage state, I believe, are always held in a rank inferior to that of the men, in relation to whom in many respects they stand rather in the light of menials and slaves than otherwise; and as they are the "hewers of wood and drawers of water," it becomes a matter of necessity for a chief (who must be liberal, keep open doors, and entertain, for the support of his popularity) to have in his wigwam a sufficient number of such handmaids or menials to perform the numerous duties and drudgeries of so large and expensive an establishment.

There are two other reasons for this custom which operate with equal, if not with greater force than the one above assigned. In the first place, these people, though far behind the civilized world in acquisitiveness, have still more or less passion for the accumulation of wealth, or, in other words, for the luxuries of life; and a chief, excited by a desire of this kind, together with a wish to be able to furnish his lodge with something more than ordinary for the entertainment of his own people, as well as strangers who all upon his hospitality, sees fit to marry a number of wives, who are kept at hard labor during most of the year; and the avails of that labour enable him to procure those luxuries, and give to his lodge the appearance of respectability which is not ordinarily seen. Amongst those tribes who trade with the Fur Companies, this system is carried out to a great extent, and the women are kept for the greater part of the year, dressing buffalo robes and other skins for the market; and the brave or chief, who has the greatest number of wives, is considered the most affluent and envied man in the tribe; for his table is most bountifully supplied, and his lodge the most abundantly furnished with the luxuries of civilized manufacture, who has at the year's end the greatest number of robes to vend to the Fur Company.

The manual labour amongst savages is all done by the women; and as there are no daily laborers or persons who will "hire out" to labour for another, it becomes necessary for him who requires more than the labour or services of one, to add to the number by legalizing and compromising by the ceremony of marriage, his stock of laborers; who can thus, and thus alone, be easily enslaved, and the results of their labour turned to good account.

There is yet the other inducement, which probably is more effective than either; the natural inclination which belongs to man, who stands high in the estimation of his people and wields the scepter of power -- surrounded by temptations which he considers it would be unnatural to resist, where no law or regulation of society stands in the way of his enjoyment. Such a custom amongst

savage nations can easily be excused too, and we are bound to excuse it, when we behold man in a state of nature, as he was made, following a natural inclination, which is sanctioned by ancient custom and by their religion, without a law or regulation of their society to discountenance it; and when, at the same time, such an accumulation of a man's household, instead of quadrupling his expenses (as would be the case in the civilized world), actually becomes his wealth, as the results of their labour abundantly secure to him all the necessaries and luxuries of life.

There are other and very rational grounds on which the propriety of such a custom may be urged, one of which is as follows: -- as all nations of Indians in their natural condition are unceasingly at war with the tribes that are about them, for the adjustment of ancient and never-ending feuds, as well as from a love of glory, to which in Indian life the battle-field is almost the only road, their warriors are killed off to that extent, that in many instances two and sometimes three women to a man are found in a tribe. in such instances I have found that the custom of polygamy has kindly helped the community to an evident relief from a cruel and prodigious calamity.

The instances of which I have above spoken, are generally confined to the chiefs and medicine-men; though there is no regulation prohibiting a poor or obscure individual from marrying several wives, other than the personal difficulties which lie between him and the hand which he wishes in vain to get, for want of sufficient celebrity in society, or from a still more frequent objection, that of his inability (from want of worldly goods) to deal in the customary way with the fathers of the girls whom he would appropriate to his own household.

There are very few instances indeed, to be seen in these regions, where a poor or ordinary citizen has more than one wife; but amongst chiefs and braves of great reputation, and doctors, it is common to see some six or eight living under one roof, and all apparently quiet and contented; seemingly harmonizing, and enjoying the modes of life and treatment that falls to their lot.

Wives in this country are mostly treated for with the father, as in all instances they are regularly bought and sold. In many cases the bargain is made with the father alone, without ever consulting the inclinations of the girl, and seems to be conducted on his part as a mercenary contract entirely, where he stands out for the highest price he can possibly command for her. There are other instances to be sure, where the parties approach each other, and from the expression of a mutual fondness, make their own arrangements, and pass their own mutual vows, which are quite as sacred and inviolable as similar assurances when made in the civilized world. Yet even in such cases, the marriage is never consummated without the necessary form of making presents to the father of the girl.

It becomes a matter of policy and almost of absolute necessity, for the white men who are Traders in these regions to connect themselves in this way, to one or more of the most influential families in the tribe, which in a measure identifies their interest with that of the nation, and enables them, with the influence of their new family connexions, to carry on successfully their business transactions with them. The young women of the best families only can aspire to such an elevation; and the most of them are exceedingly ambitious for such a connexion, inasmuch as they are certain of a delightful exemption from the slavish duties that devolve upon them when married under other circumstances; and expect to be, as they generally are, allowed to lead a life of ease and idleness, covered with mantles of blue and scarlet cloth--with beads and trinkets, and ribbons, in which they flounce and flirt about, the envied and tinselled belles of every tribe.

These connexions, however, can scarcely be called marriages, for I believe they are generally en-

tered into without the form or solemnizing ceremony of a marriage, and on the part of the father of the girls, conducted purely as a mercenary or business transaction; in which they are very expert, and practice a deal of shrewdness in exacting an adequate price from a purchaser whom they consider possessed of so large and so rich a stock of the world's goods; and who they deem abundantly able to pay liberally for so delightful a commodity.

Almost every Trader and every clerk who commences in the business of this country, speedily enters into such an arrangement, which is done with as little ceremony as he would bargain for a horse, and just as unceremoniously do they annul and abolish this connexion when they wish to leave the country, or change their positions from one tribe to another; at which time the woman is left, a fair and proper candidate for matrimony or speculation, when another applicant comes along, and her father equally desirous for another horse or gun, &c. which he can easily command at her second espousal. From the enslaved and degraded condition in which the women are held in the Indian country, the world would naturally think that theirs must be a community formed of incongruous and unharmonizing materials; and consequently destitute of the fine, reciprocal feelings and attachments which flow from the domestic relations in the civilized world; yet it would be untrue, and doing injustice to the Indians, to say that they were in the least behind us in conjugal, in filial, and in paternal affection. There is no trait in the human character which is more universal than the attachments which flow from these relations, and there is no part of the human species who have a stronger affection and a higher regard for them than the North American Indians.

There is no subject in the Indian character of more importance to be rightly understood than this, and none either that has furnished me more numerous instances and more striking proofs, of which I shall make use on a future occasion, when I shall say a vast deal more of marriage -- of divorce -- of polygamy -- and of Indian domestic relations. For the present I am scribbling about the looks and usages of the Indians who are about me and under my eye; and I must not digress too much into general remarks, lest I lose sight of those who are near me, and the first to be heralded.

Such, then, are the Mandans -- their women are beautiful and modest, -and amongst the respectable families, virtue is as highly cherished and as inapproachable, as in any society whatever; yet at the same time a chief may marry a dozen wives if he pleases, and so may a white man; and if either wishes to marry the most beautiful and modest girl in the tribe, she is valued only equal, perhaps, to two horses, a gun with powder and ball for a year, five or six pounds of beads, a couple of gallons-of whiskey, and a handful of awls.

The girls of this tribe, like those of most of these north-western tribes, marry at the age of twelve or fourteen, and some at the age of eleven years; and their beauty, from this fact, as: well as from the slavish life they lead, soon after marriage vanishes. Their occupations are almost continual, and they seem to go industriously at them, as if from choice or inclination, without a murmur. The principal occupations of the women in this village, consist in procuring wood and water, in cooking, dressing robes and other skins, in drying meat and wild fruit, and raising corn (maize). The Mandans are somewhat of agriculturists, as they raise a great deal of corn and some pumpkins and squashes. This is all done by the women, who make their hoes of the shoulder-blade of the buffalo or the elk, and dig the ground over instead of ploughing it., which is consequently done with a vast deal of labour. They raise a very small sort of corn, the ears of which are not

longer than a man's thumb. This variety is well adapted to their climate, as it ripens sooner than other varieties, which would not mature in so cold a latitude. The green corn season is one of great festivity with them, and one of much importance. The greater part of their crop is eaten during these festivals, and the remainder is gathered and dried on the cob, before it has ripened, and packed away in "caches" (as the French call them), holes dug in the ground, some six or seven feet deep, the insides of which are somewhat in the form of a jug, and tightly closed at the top. The corn, and even dried meat and pemican, are placed in these caches, being packed tight around the sides, with prairie grass, and effectually preserved through the severest winters.

Corn and dried meat are generally laid in the fall, in sufficient quantities to support them through the winter. These are the principal articles of food during that long and inclement season; and in addition to them, they oftentimes have in store great quantities of dried squashes and dried "pommes blanches", a kind of turnip which grows in great abundance in these regions, and of which I have before spoken. These are dried in great quantities, and pounded into a sort of meal, and cooled with the dried meat and corn. Great quantities also of wild fruit of different kinds are dried and laid away in store for the winter season, such as buffalo berries, service berries, strawberries, and wild plume.

The buffalo meat, however, is the great staple and "staff of life" in this country, and seldom (if ever) fails to afford them an abundant and wholesome means of subsistence. There are, from a fair computation, something like 250,000 Indians in these western regions, who live almost exclusively on the flesh of these animals, through every part of the year. During the summer and fall months they use the meat fresh, and cook it in a great variety of ways, by roasting, broiling, boiling, stewing, smoking, &c.; and by boiling the ribs and joints with the marrow in them, make a delicious soup, which is universally used, and in vast quantities. The Mandans, I find, have no regular or stated times for their meals, but generally eat about twice in the twenty-four hours. The pot is always boiling over the fire, and any one who is hungry (either of the household or from any other part of the village) has a right to order it taken off, and to fall to eating as he pleases. Such is an unvarying custom amongst the North American Indians, and I very much doubt, whether the civilized world have in their institutions any system which can properly be called more humane and charitable. Every man, woman, or child in Indian communities is allowed to enter any one's lodge, and even that of the chief of the nation, and eat when they are hungry, provided misfortune or necessity has driven them to it. Even so can the poorest and most worthless drone of the nation; if he is too lazy to hunt or to supply himself, he can walk into any lodge and everyone will share with him as long as there is anything to eat. He, however, who thus begs when he is able to hunt, pays dear for his meat, for he is stigmatized with the disgraceful epithet of a poltroon and a beggar.

The Mandans, like all other tribes, sit at their meals cross-legged, or rather with their ancles crossed in front of them, and both feet drawn close under their bodies; or, which is very often the case also, take their meals in a reclining posture, with the legs thrown out, and the body resting on one elbow and fore-arm, which are under them. The dishes from which they eat are invariably on the ground or door of the lodge, and the group resting on buffalo robes or mats of various structure and manufacture.

The position in which the women sit at their meals and on other occasions is different from that of the men, and one which they take and rise from again, with great ease and much grace, by

merely bending the knees both together, inclining the body back and the head and shoulders quite forward, they squat entirely down to the ground, inclining both feet either to the right or the left. In this position they always rest while eating, and it is both modest and graceful, for they seem, with apparent ease, to assume the position and rise out of it, without using their hands in any way to assist them.

These women, however, although graceful and civil, and ever so beautiful or ever so hungry, are not allowed to sit in the same group with the men while at their meals. So far as I have yet travelled in the Indian country, I never have seen an Indian woman eating with her husband. Men form the first group at the banquet, and women, and children and dogs all come together at the next, and these gormandize and glut themselves to an enormous extent, though the men very seldom do.

It is time that an error on this subject, which has gone generally abroad in the world, was corrected. It is everywhere asserted, and almost universally believed, that the Indians are "enormous eaters;" but comparatively speaking, I assure my readers that this is an error. I venture to say that there are no persons on earth who practice greater prudence and self-denial, than the men do (amongst the wild Indians), who are constantly in war and in the chase, or in their athletic sports and exercises; for all of which they are excited by the highest ideas of pride and honour, and every kind of excess is studiously avoided; and for a very great part of their lives, the most painful abstinence is enforced upon themselves, for the purpose of preparing their bodies and their limbs for these extravagant exertions. Many a man who has been a few weeks along the frontier, amongst the drunken, naked and beggared part of the Indian race, and run home and written a book on Indians, has, no doubt, often seen them eat to beastly excess; and he has seen them also guzzle whiskey (and perhaps sold it to them) till he has seen them glutted and besotted, without will or energy to move; and many and thousands of such things can always be seen, where white people have made beggars of them, and they have nothing to do but lie under a fence and beg a whole week to get meat and whiskey enough for one feast and one carouse; but amongst the wild Indians in this country there are no beggars -- no drunkards -- and every man, from a beautiful natural precept, studies to keep his body and mind in such a healthy shape and condition as will at all times enable him to use His weapons in self-defense, or struggle for the prize in their manly games.

As I before observed, these men generally eat but twice a day, and many times not more than once, and those meals are light and simple compared with the meals that are swallowed in the civilized world; and by the very people also, who sit at the festive board three times a day, making a jest of the Indian for his eating, when they actually guzzle more liquids, besides their eating, than would fill the stomach of an Indian.

There are, however, many seasons and occasions in the year with all Indians, when they fast for several days in succession; and others where they can get nothing to eat; and at such times (their habits are such) they may be seen to commence with an enormous meal, and because they do so, it is an insufficient reason why we should for ever remain under so egregious an error with regard to a single custom of these people.

I have seen so many of these, and lived with them, and travelled with them, and oftentimes felt as if I should starve to death on an equal allowance, that I am fully convinced I am correct in saying that the North American Indians, taking them in the aggregate, even where they have an

abundance to subsist on, eat less than any civilized population of equal numbers, that I have ever travelled amongst.

Their mode of curing and preserving the buffalo meat is somewhat curious, and in fact it is almost incredible also; for it is all cured or dried in the sun, without the aid of salt or smoke!

The method of doing this is the same amongst all the tribes, from this to the Mexican Provinces, and is as follows:-- The choicest parts of the flesh from the buffalo are cut out by the squaws, and carried home on their backs or on horses, and there cut "across the grain," in such a manner as will take alternately the layers of lean and fat; and having prepared it all in this way, in strips about half an inch in thickness, it is hung up by hundreds and thousands of pounds on poles resting on crotches, out of the reach of dogs or wolves, and exposed to the rays of the sun for several days, when it becomes so effectually dried, that it can be carried to any part of the world without damage. This seems almost an unaccountable thing, and the more so, as it is done in the hottest months of the year, and also in all the different latitudes of an Indian country.

So singular a fact as this can only be accounted for, I consider, on the ground of the extraordinary rarity and purity of the air which we meet with in these vast tracts of country which are now properly denominated "the great buffalo plains," a series of exceedingly elevated plateaus of steppes or prairies, lying at and near the base of the Rocky Mountains.

It is a fact then, which I presume will be new to most of the world, that meat can be cured in the sun without the aid of smoke or salt; and it is a fact equally true and equally surprising also, that none of these tribes use salt in any way, although their country abounds in salt springs; and in many places, in the frequent walks of the Indian, the prairie may be seen, for miles together, covered with an incrustation of salt as white as the drifted snow.

I have, in travelling with Indians, encamped by such places, where they have cooked and eaten their meat, when I have been unable to prevail on them to use salt in any quantity whatever. The Indians cook their meat more than the civilized people do, and I have long since learned, from necessity, that meat thus cooked can easily be eaten and relished too, without salt or other condiment.

The fact above asserted applies exclusively to those tribes of Indians which I have found in their primitive state, living entirely on meat; but everywhere along our Frontier, where the game of the country has long since been chiefly destroyed, and these people have become semi-civilized, raising and eating, as we do, a variety of vegetable food, they use (and no doubt require), a great deal of salt; and in many instances use it even to destructive excess.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER No. 18.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

The Mandans, like all other tribes, lead lives of idleness and leisure; and of course, devote a great deal of time to their sports and amusements, of which they have a great variety. Of these, dancing is one of the principal, and may be seen in a variety of forms: such as the buffalo dance, the boasting dance, the begging dance, the scalp dance, and a dozen other kinds of dances, all of which have their peculiar characters and meanings or objects.

These exercises are exceedingly grotesque in their appearance, and to the eye of a traveller who knows not their meaning or importance, they are an uncouth and frightful display of starts, and jumps, and yelps, and jarring gutturals, which are sometimes truly terrifying. But when one gives them a little attention, and has been lucky enough to be initiated into their mysterious meaning they become a subject of the most intense and exciting interest. Every dance has its peculiar step, and every step has its meaning; every dance also has its peculiar song, and that is so intricate and mysterious oftentimes, that not one in ten of the young men who are dancing and singing it, know the meaning of the song which they are chanting over. None but the medicine-men are allowed to understand them; and even they are generally only initiated into these secret arcana, on the payment of a liberal stipend for their tuition, which requires much application and study. There is evidently a set song and sentiment for every dance, for the songs are perfectly measured, and sung in exact time with the beat of the drum; and always with an uniform and invariable set of sounds and expressions, which clearly indicate certain sentiments, which are expressed by the voice, though sometimes not given in any known language whatever.

They have other dances and songs which are not so mystified, but which are sung and understood by every person in the tribe, being sung in their own language, with much poetry in them, and perfectly metered, but without rhyme. On these subjects I shall take another occasion to say more; and will for the present turn your attention to the style and modes in which some of these curious transactions are conducted.

My ears have been almost continually ringing since I came here, with the din of yelping and beating of the drums; but I have for several days past been peculiarly engrossed, and my senses almost confounded with the stamping, and grunting, and bellowing of the buffalo dance, which closed a few days since at sunrise (thank Heaven), and which I must needs describe to you.

Buffaloes, it is known, are a sort of roaming creatures, congregating occasionally in huge masses, and strolling away about the country from east to west, or from north to south, or just where their whims or strange fancies may lead them; and the Mandans are sometimes, by this means, most unceremoniously left without any thing to eat; and being a small tribe, and unwilling to risk their lives by going far from home in the face of their more powerful enemies, are oftentimes left almost in a state of starvation. In any emergency of this kind, every man musters and brings out of his lodge his mask (the skin of a buffalo's head with the horns on), which he is obliged to keep in

---

readiness for this occasion; and then commences the buffalo dance, of which I have above spoken, which is held for the purpose of making "buffalo come" (as they term it), of inducing the buffalo herds to change the direction of their wanderings, and bend their course towards the Mandan village, and graze about on the beautiful hills and bluffs in its vicinity, where the Mandans can shoot them down and cook them as they want them for food.

For the most part of the year, the young warriors and hunters, by riding out a mile or two from the village, can kill meat in abundance; and sometimes large herds of these animals may be seen grazing in full view of the village. There are other seasons also when the young men have ranged about the country as far as they are willing to risk their lives, on account of their enemies, without finding meat. This sad intelligence is brought back to the chiefs and doctors, who sit in solemn council, and consult on the most expedient measures to be taken, until they are sure to decide upon the old and only expedient which "never has failed".

The chief issues his order to his runners or criers, who proclaim it through the village -- and in a few minutes the dance begins. The place where this strange operation is carried on is in the public area in the center of the village, and in front of the great medicine or mystery lodge. About ten or fifteen Mandans at a time join in the dance, each one with the skin of the buffalo's head (or mask) with the horns on, placed over his head, and in His hand his favorite bow or lance, with which he is used to slay the buffalo.

I mentioned that this dance always had the desired effect, that it never fails, nor can it, for it cannot be stopped (but is going incessantly day and night) until "buffalo come." Drums are beating and rattles are shaken, and songs and yells incessantly are shouted, and lookers-on stand ready with masks on their heads, and weapons in hand, to take the place of each one as he becomes fatigued, and jumps out of the ring.

During this time of general excitement, spies or "lookers" are kept on the hills in the neighborhood of the village, who, when they discover buffaloes in sight, give the appropriate signal, by "throwing their robe", which is instantly seen in the village, and understood by the whole tribe. At this joyful intelligence there is a shout of thanks to the Great Spirit, and more especially to the mystery-man, and the dancers, who have been the immediate cause of their success! There is then a brisk preparation for the chase -- a grand hunt takes place. The choicest pieces of the victims are sacrificed to the Great Spirit, and then a surfeit and a carouse.

These dances have sometimes been continued in this village two and three weeks without stopping an instant, until the joyful moment when buffaloes made their appearance. So they never fail; and they think they have been the means of bringing them in.

Every man in the Mandan village (as I have before said) is obliged by a village regulation, to keep the mask of the buffalo, hanging on a post at the head of his bed, which he can use on his head whenever he is called upon by the chiefs, to dance for the coming of buffaloes. The mask is put over the head, and generally has a strip of the skin hanging to it, of the whole length of the animal, with the tail attached to it, which, passing down over the back of the dancer, is dragging on the ground. When one becomes fatigued of the exercise, he signifies it by bending quite forward, and sinking his body towards the ground; when another draws a bow upon him and hits him with a blunt arrow, and he falls like a buffalo is seized by the bye-standers, who drag him out of the ring by the heels, brandishing their knives about him and having gone through the motions of skinning and cutting him up, they let him off, and his place is at once supplied by another, who

dances into the ring with his mask on; and by this taking of places, the scene is easily kept up night and day, until the desired effect has been produced, that of "making buffalo come."

The day before yesterday however, readers, which, though it commenced in joy and thanksgiving to the Great Spirit for the signal success which had attended their several days of dancing and supplication, ended in a calamity which threw the village of the Mandans into mourning and repentant tears, and that at a time of scarcity and great distress. The signal was given into the village on that morning from the top of a distant bluff, that a band of buffaloes were in sight, though at a considerable distance off, and every heart beat with joy, and every eye watered and glistened with gladness.

The dance had lasted some three or four days, and now, instead of the doleful tap of the drum and the begging chants of the dancers, the stamping of horses was heard as they were led and galloped through the village -- young men were throwing off their robes and their shirts, -- were seen snatching a handful of arrows from their quivers, and stringing their sinewy bows, glancing their eyes and their smiles at their sweethearts, and mounting their ponies.

A few minutes there had been of bustle and boasting, whilst bows were twanging and spears were polishing by running their blades into the ground -- every face and every eye was filled with joy and gladness -- horses were pawing and snuffing in fury for the outset, when Louison Frenie, an interpreter of the Fur Company, galloped through the village with his rifle in his hand and his powder-horn at his side; his head and waist were bandaged with handkerchiefs, and his shirt sleeves rolled up to his shoulders -- the hunter's yell issued from his lips and was repeated through the village; he hew to the bluffs, and behind him and over the graceful swells of the prairie, galloped the emulous youths, whose hearts were beating high and quick for the onset.

In the village, where hunger had reigned, and starvation was almost ready to look them in the face, all was instantly turned to joy and gladness. The chiefs and doctors who had been for some days dealing out minimum rations to the community from the public crib, now spread before their subjects the contents of their own private caches, and the last of every thing that could be mustered, that they might eat a thanksgiving to the Great Spirit for his goodness in sending them a supply of buffalo meat. A general carouse of banqueting ensued, which occupied the greater part of the day; and their hidden stores which might have fed an emergency for several weeks, were pretty nearly used up on the occasion -- bones were half picked, and dishes half emptied and then handed to the dogs. I was not forgotten neither, in the general surfeit; several large and generous wooden bowls of pemican and other palatable food were pent to my painting-room, and I received them in this time of scarcity with great pleasure.

After this general indulgence was over, and the dogs had licked the dishes, their usual games and amusements ensued-and hilarity and mirth, and joy took possession of, and reigned in, every nook and corner of the village; and in the midst of this, screams and shrieks were heard ! and echoed everywhere. Women and children scrambled to the tops of their wigwams, with their eyes and their hands stretched in agonizing earnestness to the prairie, whilst blackened warriors ran furiously through every winding maze of the village, and issuing their jarring gutturals of vengeance, as they snatched their deadly weapons from their lodges, and struck the reddened post as they furiously passed it by! Two of their hunters were bending their course down the aides of the bluff towards the village, and another broke suddenly out of a deep ravine, and yet another was seen dashing over and down the green hills, and all were goading on their horses at full speed!

and then came another, and another, and all entered the village amid shouts and groans of the villagers who crowded around them; the story was told in their looks, for one was bleeding, and the blood that flowed from his naked breast had crimsoned his milk white steed as it had dripped over him; another grasped in his left hand a scalp that was reeking in blood--and in the other his whip -- another grasped nothing, save the reins in one hand and the mane of the horse in the other, having thrown his bow and his arrows away, and trusted to the fleetness of his horse for his safety; yet the story was audibly told, and the fatal tragedy recited in irregular and almost suffocating ejaculations -- the names of the dead were in turns pronounced and screams and shrieks burst forth at their recital -- murmurs and groans ran through the village, and this happy little community were in a moment smitten with sorrow and distraction.

Their proud band of hunters who had started full of glee and mirth in the morning, had been surrounded by their enemy, the Sioux, and eight of them killed. The Sioux, who had probably reconnoitered their village during the night, and ascertained that they were dancing for buffaloes, laid a stratagem to entrap them in the following manner: -- Some six or eight of them appeared the next morning (on a distant bluff, in sight of their sentinel) under the skins of buffaloes, imitating the movements of those animals whilst prating; and being discovered by the sentinel, the intelligence was telegraphed to the village, which brought out their hunters as I have described. The masked buffaloes were seen grazing on the top of a high bluff, and when the hunters had approached within half a mile or so of them, they suddenly disappeared over the hill. Louison Frenie, who was leading the little band of hunters, became at that moment suspicious of so strange a movement, and came to a halt "Look!" (said a Mandan, pointing to a little ravine to the right, and at the foot of the hill: from which suddenly broke some forty or fifty furious Sioux, on fleet horses and under full whip, who were rushing upon them); they wheeled, and in front of them came another band more furious from the other side of the hill! they started for home (poor fellows), and strained every nerve; but the Sioux were too fleet for them; and every now and then, the whizzing arrow and the lance were heard to rip the flesh of their naked backs, and a grunt and a groan, as they tumbled from their horses. Several miles were run in this desperate race; and Frenie got home, and several of the Mandans, though eight of them were killed and scalped by the way.

So ended that day and the hunt; but many a day and sad, will last the grief of those whose hearts were broken on that unlucky occasion.

This day, though, my readers, has been one of a more joyful kind, for the Great Spirit, who was indignant at so flagrant an injustice, has sent the Mandans an abundance of buffaloes; and all hearts have joined in a general thanksgiving to Him For his goodness and justice.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER No. 19.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI

In my last Letter I gave an account of the buffalo dance, and in future epistles may give some descriptions of a dozen other kinds of dance, which these people have in common with other tribes; but in the present Letter I shall make an endeavor to confine my observations to several other customs and forms, which are very curious and peculiar to the Mandans.

Of these, one of the most pleasing is the sham-fight and sham scalp-dance of the Mandan boys, which is a part of their regular exercise, and constitutes a material branch of their education.

During the pleasant mornings of the summer, the little boys between the age of seven and fifteen are called out, to the number of several hundred, and being divided into two companies, each of which is headed by some experienced warrior, who leads them on, in the character of a teacher; they are led out into the prairie at sunrise, where this curious discipline is regularly taught them. Their bodies are naked, and each one has a little bow in his left hand and a number of arrows made of large spears of grass, which are harmless in their effects. Each one has also a little belt or girdle around his waist, in which he carries a knife made of a piece of wood and equally harmless -- on the tops of their heads are slightly attached small tufts of grass, which answer as scalps, and in this plight, they follow the dictates of their experienced leaders, who lead them through the judicious evolutions of Indian warfare -- of feints -- of retreats -- of attacks -- and at last to a general fight. Many manoeuvres are gone through, and eventually they are brought up face to face, within fifteen or twenty feet of each other, with their leaders at their head stimulating them on. Their bows are bent upon each other and their missiles flying, whilst they are dodging and fending them off.

If any one is struck with an arrow on any vital part of his body, he is obliged to fall, and His adversary rushes up to him, places his foot upon him, and snatching from his belt his wooden knife, grasps hold of his victim's scalp-lock of grass, and making a feint at it with his wooden knife, twitches it off and puts it into his belt, and enters again into the ranks and front of battle.

This mode of training generally lasts an hour or more in the morning, and is performed on an empty stomach, affording them a rigid and wholesome exercise, whilst they are, instructed in the important science of war. Some five or six miles of ground are run over during these evolutions, giving suppleness to their limbs and strength to their muscles, which last and benefit them through life.

After this exciting exhibition is ended, they all return to their village, where the chiefs and braves pay profound attention to their vaunting, and applaud them for their artifice and valor.

Those who have taken scalps then step forward, brandishing them and making their boast as they enter into the scalp-dance (in which they are also instructed by their leaders or teachers), jumping and yelling -- brandishing their scalps, and reciting their sanguinary deeds, to the great astonishment of their tender aged sweethearts, who are gazing with wonder upon them.

---

The games and amusements of these people are in most respects like those of the other tribes, consisting of ball plays -- game of the moccasin, of the platter--feats of archery -- horse-racing, &c.; and they have yet another, which may be said to be their favorite amusement, and unknown to the other tribes about them. The game of Tchung-kee, a beautiful athletic exercise, which they seem to be almost unceasingly practicing whilst the weather is fair, and they have nothing else of moment to demand their attention. This game is decidedly their favorite amusement, and is played near to the village on a pavement of clay, which has been used for that purpose until it has become as smooth and hard as a Boor. For this game two champions form their respective parties, by choosing alternately the most famous players, until their requisite numbers are made up. Their bettings are then made, and their stakes are held by some of the chiefs or others present. The play commences with two (one from each party), who start off upon a trot, abreast of each other, and one of them rolls in advance of them, on the pavement, a little ring of two or three inches in diameter, cut out of a stone; and each one follows it up with his "tchung-kee" (a stick of six feet in length, with little bits of leather projecting from its sides of an inch or more in length), which he throws before him as he runs, sliding it along upon the ground after the ring, endeavoring to place it in such a position when it stops, that the ring may fall upon it, and receive one of the little projections of leather through it, which counts for game, one, or two, or four, according to the position of the leather on which the ring is lodged. The last winner always has the rolling of the ring, and both start and throw the tchung-kee together; if either fails to receive the ring or to lie in a certain position, it is a forfeiture of the amount of the number he was nearest to, and he loses his throw; when another steps into his place. This game is a very difficult one to describe, so as to give an exact idea of it, unless one can see it played -- it is a game of great beauty and fine bodily exercise, and these people become excessively fascinated with it; often gambling away every thing they possess, and even sometimes, when everything else was gone, have been known to stake their liberty upon the issue of these games, offering themselves as slaves to their opponents in case they get beaten.

Feasting and fasting are important customs observed by the Mandans, as well as by most other tribes, at stated times and for particular purposes. These observances are strictly religious and rigidly observed. There are many of these forms practiced amongst the Mandans, some of which are exceedingly interesting, and important also, in forming a correct estimate of the Indian character; and I shall at a future period take particular pains to lay them before my readers.

Sacrificing is also a religious custom with these people, and is performed in many different modes, and on numerous occasions. Of this custom I shall also speak more fully hereafter, merely noticing at present, some few of the hundred modes in which these offerings are made to the Good and Evil Spirits. Human sacrifices have never been made by the Mandans, nor by any of the north western tribes (so far as I can learn), excepting the Pawnees of the Platte; who have, undoubtedly, observed such an inhuman practice in former times, though they have relinquished it of late. The Mandans sacrifice their fingers to the Great Spirit, and of their worldly goods, the best and the most costly; if a horse or a dog, it must be the favorite one; if it is an arrow from their quiver, they will select the most perfect one as the most effective gift; if it is meat, it is the choicest piece cut from the buffalo or other animal; if it is anything from the stores of the Traders, it is the most costly--it is blue or scarlet cloth, which costs them in this country an enormous price, and is chiefly used for the purpose of hanging over their wigwams to decay, or to cover the scaffolds

where rest the bones of their departed relations.

Of these kinds of sacrifices there are three of an interesting nature, erected over the great medicine-lodge in the center of the village—they consist of ten or fifteen yards of blue and black cloth each, purchased from the Fur Company at fifteen or twenty dollars per yard, which are folded up so as to resemble human figures, with quills in their heads and masks on their faces. These singular-looking figures, like “scare crows”, are erected on poles about thirty feet high, over the door of the mystery-lodge, and there are left to decay. There hangs now by the side of them another, which was added to the number a few days since, of the skin of a white buffalo, which will remain there until it decays and falls to pieces.

This beautiful and costly skin, when its history is known, will furnish a striking proof of the importance which they attach to these propitiatory offerings. But a few weeks since, a party of Mandans returned from the mouth of the Yellow Stone, two hundred miles above, with information that a party of Blackfeet were visiting that place on business with the American Fur Company; and that they had with them a white buffalo robe for sale. This was looked upon as a subject of great importance by the chiefs, and one worthy of public consideration. A white buffalo robe is a great curiosity, even in the country of buffaloes, and will always command an almost incredible price, from its extreme scarcity; and then, from its being the most costly article of traffic in these regions, it is usually converted into a sacrifice, being offered to the Great Spirit, as the most acceptable gift that can be procured. Amongst the vast herds of buffaloes which graze on these boundless prairies, there is not one in an hundred thousand, perhaps, that is white; and when such an one is obtained, it is considered great medicine or mystery.

On the receipt of the intelligence above-mentioned, the chiefs convened in council, and deliberated on the expediency of procuring the white robe from the Blackfeet; and also of appropriating the requisite means, and devising the proper mode of procedure for effecting the purchase. At the close of their deliberations, eight men were fitted out on eight of their best horses, who took from the Fur Company’s store, on the credit of the chiefs, goods exceeding even the value of their eight horses; and they started for the Mouth of the Yellow Stone, where they arrived in due time, and made the purchase, by leaving the eight horses and all the goods which they carried; returning on foot to their own village, bringing home with them the white robe, which was looked upon by all eyes of the villagers as a thing that was vastly curious, and containing (as they express it) something of the Great Spirit. This wonderful anomaly laid several days in the chief’s lodge, until public curiosity was gratified; and then it was taken by the doctors or high-priests, and with a great deal of form and mystery consecrated, and raised on the top of a long pole over the medicine-lodge; where it now stands in a group with the others, and will stand as an offering to the Great Spirit, until it decays and falls to the ground.

This Letter, as I promised in its commencement, being devoted to some of the customs peculiar to the Mandans, and all of which will be new to the world, I shall close, after recording in it an account of a laughable farce, which was enacted in this village when I was on my journey up the river, and had stopped on the way to spend a day or two in the Mandan village.

Readers, did you ever hear of “Rain Makers”? If not, sit still, and read on; but laugh not -- keep cool and sober, or else you may laugh in the beginning, and cry at the end of my story. Well, I introduce to you a new character -- not a doctor or a high-priest, yet a medicine-man, and one of the highest and most respectable order, a “Rain Maker” Such dignitaries live in the Mandan

nation, aye, and “rain stoppers” too; and even those also amongst their conjurati, who, like Joshua of old, have even essayed to stop the sun in his course; but from the inefficiency of their medicine or mystery, have long since descended into insignificance.

Well, the story begins thus: -- The Mandans, as I have said in a former Letter, raise a great deal of corn ; and sometimes a most disastrous drought will be visited on the land, destructive to their promised harvest. Such was the case when I arrived at the Mandan village on the steam-boat, Yellow-Stone. Rain had not fallen for many a day, and the dear little girls and the ugly old squaws, altogether (all of whom had fields of corn), were groaning and crying to their lords, and imploring them to intercede for rain, that their little respective patches, which were now turning pale and yellow, might not be withered, and they be deprived of the pleasure of their customary annual festivity, and the joyful occasion of the “roasting ears,” and the “green corn dance”.

The chiefs and doctors sympathized with the complaints of the women, and recommended patience. Great deliberation, they said, was necessary in these cases; and though they resolved on making the attempt to produce rain for the benefit of the corn; yet they very wisely resolved that to begin too soon might ensure their entire defeat in the endeavor; and that the longer they put it off, the more certain they would feel of ultimate success. So, after a few days of further delay, when the importunities of the women had become clamorous, and even mournful, and almost insupportable, the •medicine-men assembled in the council-house, with all their mystery apparatus about them -- with an abundance of wild sage, and other aromatic herbs, with a fire prepared to burn them, that their savory odors might be sent forth to the Great Spirit. The lodge was closed to all the villagers, except some ten or fifteen young men, who were willing to hazard the dreadful alternative of making it rain, or suffer the everlasting disgrace of having made a fruitless essay.

They, only, were allowed as witnesses to the hocus pocus and conjuration devised by the doctors inside of the medicine-lodge; and they were called up by lot, each one in his turn, to spend a day upon the top of the lodge, to test the potency of his medicine; or, in other words, to see how far his voice might be heard and obeyed amongst the clouds of the heavens I whilst the doctors were burning incense in the wigwam below, and with their songs and prayers to the Great Spirit for success, were sending forth grateful fumes and odors to Him” who lives in the sun and commands the thunders of Heaven. “Wah-kee (the shield) was the first who ascended the wigwam at sunrise; and he stood all day, and looked foolish, as he was counting over and over his string of mystery-beads -- the whole village were assembled around him, and praying for his success. Not a cloud appeared -- the day was calm and hot; and at the setting of the sun, he descended from the lodge and went home -- “his medicine was not good”, nor can he ever be a medicine-man.

Om-pah (the elk) was the next; he ascended the lodge at sunrise the next morning. His body was entirely naked, being covered with yellow clay. On his left arm he carried a beautiful shield, and a long lance in his right; and on his head the skin of a raven, the bird that soars amidst the clouds, and above the lightning’s glare -- he flourished his shield and brandished his lance, and raised his voice, but in vain; for at sunset the ground was dry and the sky was clear; the squaws were crying, and their corn was withering at its roots.

War-rah-pa (the beaver) was the next; he also spent his breath in vain upon tire empty air, and came down at night -- and Wak-a-dah-ha-hee (the white buffalo’s hair) took the stand the next morning. He is a small, but beautifully proportioned young man. He was dressed in a tunic and leggings of the skins of the mountain-sheep, splendidly garnished with quills of the porcupine,

and fringed with locks of hair taken by his own hand from the heads of his enemies. On his arm he carried his shield, made of the buffalo's hide -- its boss wore the head of the war-eagle -- and its front was ornamented with "red chains of lightning". In his left hand he clenched his sinewy bow and one single arrow. The villagers were all gathered about him; when he threw up a feather to decide on the course of the wind, and he commenced thus: -- "My friends! people of the pheasants! you see me here a sacrifice -- I shall this day relieve you from great distress, and bring joy amongst you; or I shall descend from this lodge when the sun goes down, and live amongst the dogs and old women all my days. My friends! You saw which way the feather; flew, and I hold my shield this day in the direction where the wind comes -- the lightning on my shield will draw a great cloud, and this arrow, which is selected from my quiver, and which is feathered with the quill of the white swan, will make a hole in it. My friends! this hole in the lodge at my feet, shows me the medicine-men, who are seated in the lodge below me and crying to the Great Spirit; and through it comes and passes into my nose delightful odors, which you see rising in the smoke to the Great Spirit above, who rides in the clouds and commands the winds ! Three days they have sat here, my friends, and nothing has been done to relieve your distress. On the first day was Wahkee (the shield), he could do nothing: he counted his beads and came down -- his medicine was not good -- his name was bad, and it kept off the rain. The next was Om-pah (die elk); on his head the raven was seen, who flies above the storm, and he failed. War-rah-pa (the beaver) was the next, my friends; the beaver lives under the water, and he never wants it to rain. My friends! I see you are in great distress, and nothing has yet been done; this shield belonged to my father the White Buffalo; and the lightning you see on it is red; it was taken from a black cloud, and that cloud will come over us to-day. I am the white buffalo's hair -- and I am the son of my father." In this manner flourished and manoeuvred Wak-a-dah-ha-hee (the white buffalo's hair), alternately addressing the audience and the heavens--and holding converse with the winds and the "je-bi" (spirits) that are floating about in them -- stamping his foot over the heads of the magi, who were involved in mysteries beneath him, and invoking the spirits of darkness and light to send rain, to gladden the hearts of the Mandans.

It happened on this memorable day about noon, that the steam-boat Yellow Stone, on her first trip up the Missouri River, approached and landed at the Mandan Village, as I have described in a former epistle. I was lucky enough to be a passenger on this boat, and helped to fire a salute of twenty guns of twelve pounds caliber, when we first came in sight of the village, some three or four miles below. These guns introduced a new sound into this strange country, which the Mandans at first supposed to be thunder; and the young man upon the lodge, who turned it to good account, was gathering fame in rounds of applause, which were repeated and echoed through the whole village; all eyes were centered upon him -- chiefs envied him -- mothers' hearts were beating high whilst they were decorating and leading up their fair daughters to offer him in marriage, on his signal success. The medicine-men had left the lodge, and came out to bestow upon him the envied title of "medicine-man", or "doctor," which he had so deservedly won -- wreaths were prepared to decorate his brows, and eagle's plumes and calumets were in readiness for him; his friends were all rejoiced--his enemies wore on their faces a silent gloom and hatred; and his old sweethearts, who had formerly cast him off, gazed intensely upon him, as they glowed with the burning fever of repentance.

During all this excitement, Wak-a-dah-ha-hee kept his position, assuming the most command-

ing and threatening attitudes; brandishing his shield in the direction of the thunder, although there was not a cloud to be seen, until he (poor fellow), being elevated above the rest of the village, espied, to his inexpressible amazement, the steam-boat ploughing its way up the windings of the river below; puffing her steam from her pipes, and sending forth the thunder from a twelve-pounder on her deck!

The White Buffalo's Hair stood motionless and turned pale, he looked awhile, and turned to the chief and to the multitude, and addressed them with a trembling lip -- "My friends, we will get no rain I -- there are, you see, no clouds; but my medicine is great -- I have brought a thunder boat ! look and see it! The thunder you hear is out of her mouth, and the lightning which you see is on the waters!"

At this intelligence, the whole village flew to the tops of their wigwams, or to the bank of the river, from whence the steamer was in full view, and ploughing along, to their utter dismay and confusion.

In this promiscuous throng of chiefs, doctors, women, children and dogs, was mingled Wak-adah-ha-hee (the white buffalo's hair), having descended from his high place to mingle with the frightened throng.

Dismayed at the approach of so strange and unaccountable an object, the Mandans stood their ground but a few moments; when, by an order of the chiefs, all hands were ensconced within the piquets of their village, and all the warriors armed for desperate defense. A few moments brought the boat in front of the village, and ail was still and quiet as death; not a Mandan was to be seen upon the banks. The steamer was moored, and three or four of the chiefs soon alter, walked boldly down the bank and on to her deck, with a spear in one hand and the calumet or pipe of peace in the other. The moment they stepped on board they met (to their great surprise and joy) their old friend, Major Sanford, their agent, which circumstance put an instant end to all their fears. The villagers were soon apprized of the fact, and the whole race of the beautiful and friendly Mandans was paraded on the bank of the river, in front of the steamer.

The "rain maker", whose apprehensions of a public calamity brought upon the nation by his extraordinary medicine, had, for the better security of his person from apprehended vengeance, secreted himself in some secure place, and was the last to come forward, and the last to be convinced that this visitation was a friendly one from the white people; and that his medicine had not in the least been instrumental in bringing it about. This information, though received by him with much caution and suspicion, at length gave him great relief, and quieted his mind as to his danger. Yet still in his breast there was a rankling thorn, though he escaped the dreaded vengeance which he had a few moments before apprehended as at hand; as he had the mortification and disgrace of having failed in his mysterious operations. He set up, however (during the day, in his conversation about the strange arrival), his medicines, as the cause of its approach; asserting everywhere and to everybody, that he knew of its coming, and that he had by his magic brought the occurrence about. This plea, however, did. not get him much audience; and in fact, everything else was pretty much swallowed up in the guttural talk, and bustle, and gossip about the mysteries of the "thunder-boat", and so passed the day, until just at the approach of evening, when the "White Buffalo's Hair" (more watchful of such matters on this occasion than most others) observed that a black cloud had been jutting up in the horizon, and was almost directly over the village ! In an instant his shield was on his arm, and his bow in his hand, and he again upon the lodge! Stiffened and

---

braced to the last sinew, he stood, with his face and his shield presented to the cloud, and his bow drawn. He drew the eyes of the whole village upon him as he vaunted forth his super-human powers, and at the same time commanding the cloud to come nearer, that he might draw down its contents upon the heads and the corn-fields of the Mandans! In this wise he stood, waving his shield over his head, stamping his foot and frowning as he drew his bow and threatened the heavens, commanding it to rain -- his bow was bent, and the arrow drawn to its head, was sent to the cloud, and he exclaimed, (I My friends, it is done ! Wak-a-dahIra-hee's arrow has entered that black cloud, and the Mandans will be wet with the water of the skies!" His predictions were truer--in a few moments the cloud was over the village, and the rain fell in torrents. He stood for some time wielding his weapons and presenting His shield to the sky, while he boasted of his power and the efficacy of his medicine, to those who had been about him, but were now driven to the shelter of their wigwams. He, at length, finished his vaunts and his threats, and descended from his high place (in which he had been perfectly drenched), prepared to receive the honours and the homage that were due to one so potent in his mysteries; and to receive the style and title of "medicine-man". This is one of a hundred different modes in which a man in Indian countries acquires the honorable appellation.

This man had "made it rain," and of course was to receive more than usual honours, as he had done much more than ordinary men could do. All eyes were upon him, and all were ready to admit that he was skilled in the magic art; and must be so nearly allied to the Great or Evil Spirit, that he must needs be a man of great and powerful influence in the nation, and well entitled to the style of doctor or medicine-man.

Headers, there are two facts relative to these strange transactions, which are infallibly true, and should needs be made known. The first is, that when the Mandans undertake to make it rain, they never fail to succeed, for their ceremonies never stop until rain begins to fall. The second is equally true, and is this: that he who has once "made it rain", never attempts it again; his medicine is undoubted -- and on future occasions of the kind, he stands aloof, who has once done it in presence of the whole village, giving an opportunity to other young men who are ambitious to signalize themselves in the same way.

During the memorable night of which I have just spoken, the steam-boat remained by the side of the Mandan village, and the rain that had commenced falling continued to pour down its torrents until midnight; black thunder roared, and livid lightning flashed until the heavens appeared to be lit up with one unceasing and appalling glare. In this frightful moment of consternation, a flash of lightning buried itself in one of the earth-covered lodges of the Mandans, and killed a beautiful girl. Here was food and fuel fresh for their superstitions; and a night of vast tumult and excitement ensued. The dreams of the new-made medicine-man were troubled, and he had dreadful apprehensions for the coming day -- for he knew that he was subject to the irrevocable decree of the chiefs and doctors, who canvass every strange and unaccountable event, with close and superstitious scrutiny, and Let their vengeance fall without mercy upon its immediate cause.

He looked upon his well-earned fame as likely to be withheld from him; and also considered that his life might perhaps be demanded as the forfeit for this girl's death, which would certainly be charged upon him. He looked upon himself as culpable, and supposed the accident to have been occasioned by his criminal desertion of his post, when the steam-boat was approaching the village. Morning came, and he soon learned from some of his friends, the opinions of the wise

men; and also the nature of the tribunal that was preparing for him; he sent to the prairie for his three horses, which were brought in, and he mounted the medicine-lodge, around which, in a few moments the villagers were all assembled. "My friends! (said he) I see you all around me, and I am before you; my medicine, you see, is great -- it is so great -- I am young, and I was too fast -- I knew not when to stop. The wigwam of Mah-sish is laid low, and many are the eyes that weep for Ko-ka (the antelope) Wak-a-dah-ha-hee gives three horses to gladden the hearts of those who weep for Ko-ka: his medicine was great -- his arrow pierced the black cloud, and the lightning came, and the thunder-boat also ! who says the medicine of Wak-a-dah-ha-hee is not strong?" At the end of this sentence an unanimous shout of approbation ran through the crowd, and the "Hair of the White Buffalo" descended amongst them, where he was greeted by shakes of the hand: and amongst whom he now lives and thrives under the familiar and honorable appellation of the "Big DOUBLE MEDICINE".

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 20.

MANDAN VILLAGE. UPPER MISSOURI.

This day has been one of unusual mirth and amusement amongst the Mandans, and whether on account of some annual celebration or not, I am as yet unable to say, though I think such is the case; for these people have many days which, like this, are devoted to festivities and amusements. Their lives, however, are lives of idleness and ease, and almost all their days and hours are spent in innocent amusements. Amongst a people who have no office hours to attend to -- no professions to study, and of whom but very little time is required in the chase, to supply their families with food, it would be strange if they did not practice many games and amusements, and also become exceedingly expert in them.

I have this day been a spectator of games and plays until I am fatigued with looking on; and also by lending a hand, which I have done; but with so little success as only to attract general observation, and as generally to excite the criticisms and laughter of the squaws and little children.

I have seen a fair exhibition of their archery this day, in a favorite amusement which they call the "game of the arrow", Where the young men who are the most distinguished in this exercise, assemble on the prairie at a little distance from the village, and having paid, each one, his "entrance-fee", such as a shield, a robe, a pipe, or other article, step forward in turn, shooting their arrows into the air, endeavoring to see who can get the greatest number flying in the air at one time, thrown from the same bow. For this, the number of eight or ten arrows are clenched in the left hand with the bow, and the first one which is thrown is elevated to such a degree as will enable it to remain the longest time possible in the air, and while it is flying, the others are discharged as rapidly as possible; and he who succeeds in getting the greatest number up at once, is "best", and takes the goods staked.

In looking on at this amusement, the spectator is surprised; not at the great distance to which the arrows are actually sent; but at the quickness of fixing them on the string, and discharging them in succession: which is no doubt, the result of great practice, and enables the most expert of them to get as many as eight arrows up before the first one reaches the ground.

For the successful use of the bow, as it is used through all this region of country on horseback, and that invariably at full speed, the great object of practice is to enable the bowman to draw the bow with suddenness and instant effect; and also to repeat the shots in the most rapid manner. As their game is killed from their horses' backs while at the swiftest rate -- and their enemies fought in the same way; and as the horse is the swiftest animal of the prairie, and always able to bring his rider alongside, within a few paces of his victim ; it will easily be seen that the Indian has little use in throwing his arrow more than a few paces; when he leans quite low on his horse's side, and drives it with astonishing force, capable of producing instant death to the buffalo, or any other animal in the country. The bows which are generally in use in these regions I have described in a former Letter, and the effects produced by them at the distance of a few paces is almost beyond relief,

---

considering their length, which is not often over three,-and sometimes not exceeding two and a half feet. It can easily be seen, from what has been said, that the Indian has little use or object in throwing the arrow to any great distance. And as it is very seldOIPP that they can be seen shooting at a target, I doubt very much whether their skill in such practice would compare with that attained to in many parts of the civilized world; but with the same weapon, and dashing Forward at fullest speed on the wild horse, without the use of the rein, when the shot is required to be made with the most instantaneous effect, I scarcely think it possible that any people can be found more skilled, and capable of producing more deadly effects with the bow.

The horses which the Indians ride in this country are invariably the wild horses, which are found in great numbers on the prairies; and have, unquestionably, strayed from the Mexican borders, into which they were introduced by the Spanish invaders of that country; and now range and subsist themselves, in winter and summer, over the vast plains of prairie that stretch from the Mexican frontiers to Lake Winnipeg on the North, a distance of 3000 miles. These horses are all of small stature, of the pony order; but a very hardy and tough animal, being able to perform for the Indians a continual and essential service. They are taken with the laso, which is a long halter or thong, made of raw-hide, of some fifteen or twenty yards in length, and which the Indians throw with great dexterity; with a noose at one end of it, which drops over the head of the animal they wish to catch, whilst running at full speed -- when the Indian dismounts from his own horse, and holding to the end of the laso, choaks the animal down, and afterwards tames and converts him to his own use.

Scarcely a man in these regions is to be found, who is not the owner of one or more of these horses; and in many instances of eight, ten, or esen twenty, which he values as his own personal property.

The Indians are hard and cruel masters; and, added to their cruelties the sin that is familiar in the Christian world, of sporting with the liml and the lives of these noble animals. Horse-racing here, as in all mon enlightened communities, is one of the most exciting amusements, and or of the most extravagant modes of gambling.

I have been this day a spectator to scenes of this kind, which have bee enacted in abundance, on a course which they have, just back of the village; and although I never had the least taste for this cruel amusemer in my own country, yet, I must say, I have been not a little amused an pleased with the thrilling effect which these exciting scenes have produce amongst so wild and picturesque a group.

I have made a sketch of the ground and the group, as near as I could; shewing the manner of “starting” and coming out, “which vary a little from the customs of the Knowing world; but in other respecte I believe, a horse-race is the same all the world over.

Besides these, many have been the amusements of this day, to whicl I have been an eye-witness; and since writing the above, I have learnec the cause of this unusual expression of hilarity and mirth; which was no more nor less than the safe return of a small war-party, who had been al long out without any tidings having been received of them -- that they hac long since been looked upon as sacrificed to the fates of war and lost. This party was made up of the most distinguished and desperate youn! men of the tribe, who had sallied out against the Riccarees, and taken the most solemn oath amongst themselves never to return without achieving; victory. They had wandered long and faithfully about the country, following the trails of their enemy; when they were

attacked by a numerou party, and lost several of their men and all their horses. In this condition to evade the scrutiny of their enemy, who were closely investing the natura route to their village; they took a circuitous range of the country, to enable them to return with their lives, to their vil-  
lage.

In this plight, it seems, I had dropped my little canoe alongside of them while descending from the Mouth of Yellow Stone to this place, not man weeks since; where they had bivouacked or halted, to smoke and consul on the best and safest mode of procedure. At the time of meeting them not knowing anything of their language, they were unable to communicate their condition to me, and more probably were afraid to do so even if they could have done it, from apprehension that we might have given some account of them to their enemies. I rested my canoe an hour or so with them during which time they treated us with an indifferent reserve, yet respectfully : and we passed on our way, without further information of them or their plan! than the sketch that I there made, and which I shall preservt and value as one of the most pleasing groups I ever have had the pleasun to see. Seated on their buffalo robes, which were spread upon the grass with their respective weapons laying about them, and lighting their pipes at a little fire which was kindled in the centre -- the chief or leader of the party, with his arms stacked behind him, and his long head-dress of war-eagles' quills and ermine falling down over his back, whilst he sat in a contemplative and almost desponding mood, was surely one of the most striking and beautiful illustrations of a natural hero that I ever looked upon.

These gallant fellows got safely home to their village, and the numerous expressions of joy for their return, which I have this day witnessed, have so much fatigued me that I write brief, and close my Letter here.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 20.

MANDAN VILLAGE. UPPER MISSOURI.

This day has been one of unusual mirth and amusement amongst the Mandans, and whether on account of some annual celebration or not, I am as yet unable to say, though I think such is the case; for these people have many days which, like this, are devoted to festivities and amusements. Their lives, however, are lives of idleness and ease, and almost all their days and hours are spent in innocent amusements. Amongst a people who have no office hours to attend to -- no professions to study, and of whom but very little time is required in the chase, to supply their families with food, it would be strange if they did not practice many games and amusements, and also become exceedingly expert in them.

I have this day been a spectator of games and plays until I am fatigued with looking on; and also by lending a hand, which I have done; but with so little success as only to attract general observation, and as generally to excite the criticisms and laughter of the squaws and little children.

I have seen a fair exhibition of their archery this day, in a favorite amusement which they call the "game of the arrow", Where the young men who are the most distinguished in this exercise, assemble on the prairie at a little distance from the village, and having paid, each one, his "entrance-fee", such as a shield, a robe, a pipe, or other article, step forward in turn, shooting their arrows into the air, endeavoring to see who can get the greatest number flying in the air at one time, thrown from the same bow. For this, the number of eight or ten arrows are clenched in the left hand with the bow, and the first one which is thrown is elevated to such a degree as will enable it to remain the longest time possible in the air, and while it is flying, the others are discharged as rapidly as possible; and he who succeeds in getting the greatest number up at once, is "best", and takes the goods staked.

In looking on at this amusement, the spectator is surprised; not at the great distance to which the arrows are actually sent; but at the quickness of fixing them on the string, and discharging them in succession: which is no doubt, the result of great practice, and enables the most expert of them to get as many as eight arrows up before the first one reaches the ground.

For the successful use of the bow, as it is used through all this region of country on horseback, and that invariably at full speed, the great object of practice is to enable the bowman to draw the bow with suddenness and instant effect; and also to repeat the shots in the most rapid manner. As their game is killed from their horses' backs while at the swiftest rate -- and their enemies fought in the same way; and as the horse is the swiftest animal of the prairie, and always able to bring his rider alongside, within a few paces of his victim ; it will easily be seen that the Indian has little use in throwing his arrow more than a few paces; when he leans quite low on his horse's side, and drives it with astonishing force, capable of producing instant death to the buffalo, or any other animal in the country. The bows which are generally in use in these regions I have described in a former Letter, and the effects produced by them at the distance of a few paces is almost beyond relief,

---

considering their length, which is not often over three,-and sometimes not exceeding two and a half feet. It can easily be seen, from what has been said, that the Indian has little use or object in throwing the arrow to any great distance. And as it is very seldOIP that they can be seen shooting at a target, I doubt very much whether their skill in such practice would compare with that attained to in many parts of the civilized world; but with the same weapon, and dashing Forward at fullest speed on the wild horse, without the use of the rein, when the shot is required to be made with the most instantaneous effect, I scarcely think it possible that any people can be found more skilled, and capable of producing more deadly effects with the bow.

The horses which the Indians ride in this country are invariably the wild horses, which are found in great numbers on the prairies; and have, unquestionably, strayed from the Mexican borders, into which they were introduced by the Spanish invaders of that country; and now range and subsist themselves, in winter and summer, over the vast plains of prairie that stretch from the Mexican frontiers to Lake Winnipeg on the North, a distance of 3000 miles. These horses are all of small stature, of the pony order; but a very hardy and tough animal, being able to perform for the Indians a continual and essential service. They are taken with the laso, which is a long halter or thong, made of raw-hide, of some fifteen or twenty yards in length, and which the Indians throw with great dexterity; with a noose at one end of it, which drops over the head of the animal they wish to catch, whilst running at full speed -- when the Indian dismounts from his own horse, and holding to the end of the laso, choaks the animal down, and afterwards tames and converts him to his own use.

Scarcely a man in these regions is to be found, who is not the owner of one or more of these horses; and in many instances of eight, ten, or esen twenty, which he values as his own personal property.

The Indians are hard and cruel masters; and, added to their cruelties the sin that is familiar in the Christian world, of sporting with the liml and the lives of these noble animals. Horse-racing here, as in all mon enlightened communities, is one of the most exciting amusements, and or of the most extravagant modes of gambling.

I have been this day a spectator to scenes of this kind, which have bee enacted in abundance, on a course which they have, just back of the village; and although I never had the least taste for this cruel amusemer in my own country, yet, I must say, I have been not a little amused an pleased with the thrilling effect which these exciting scenes have produce amongst so wild and picturesque a group.

I have made a sketch of the ground and the group, as near as I could; shewing the manner of “starting” and coming out, “which vary a little from the customs of the Knowing world; but in other respecte I believe, a horse-race is the same all the world over.

Besides these, many have been the amusements of this day, to whicl I have been an eye-witness; and since writing the above, I have learnec the cause of this unusual expression of hilarity and mirth; which was no more nor less than the safe return of a small war-party, who had been al long out without any tidings having been received of them -- that they hac long since been looked upon as sacrificed to the fates of war and lost. This party was made up of the most distinguished and desperate youn! men of the tribe, who had sallied out against the Riccarees, and taken the most solemn oath amongst themselves never to return without achieving; victory. They had wandered long and faithfully about the country, following the trails of their enemy; when they were

attacked by a numerou party, and lost several of their men and all their horses. In this condition to evade the scrutiny of their enemy, who were closely investing the natura route to their village; they took a circuitous range of the country, to enable them to return with their lives, to their vil- lage.

In this plight, it seems, I had dropped my little canoe alongside of them while descending from the Mouth of Yellow Stone to this place, not man weeks since; where they had bivouacked or halted, to smoke and consul on the best and safest mode of procedure. At the time of meeting them not knowing anything of their language, they were unable to communicate their condition to me, and more probably were afraid to do so even if they could have done it, from apprehension that we might have given some account of them to their enemies. I rested my canoe an hour or so with them during which time they treated us with an indifferent reserve, yet respectfully : and we passed on our way, without further information of them or their plan! than the sketch that I there made, and which I shall preservt and value as one of the most pleasing groups I ever have had the pleasun to see. Seated on their buffalo robes, which were spread upon the grass with their respective weapons laying about them, and lighting their pipes at a little fire which was kindled in the centre -- the chief or leader of the party, with his arms stacked behind him, and his long head- dress of war-eagles' quills and ermine falling down over his back, whilst he sat in a contemplative and almost desponding mood, was surely one of the most striking and beautiful illustrations of a natural hero that I ever looked upon.

These gallant fellows got safely home to their village, and the numerous expressions of joy for their return, which I have this day witnessed, have so much fatigued me that I write brief, and close my Letter here.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 22

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

OH! "horrible visu -- et mirabile dictu!" "Thank God, it is over, that I have seen it, and am able to tell it to the world.

The annual religious ceremony, of four days, of which I have so often spoken, and which I have so long been wishing to see, has at last been enacted in this village; and I have, fortunately, been able to see and to understand it in most of its bearings, which was more than I had reason to expect; for no white man, in all probability, has ever been before admitted to the medicine-lodge during these most remarkable and appalling scenes. Well and truly has it been said, that the Mandans are a strange and peculiar people; and most correctly had I been informed, that this was an important and interesting scene, by those who had, on former occasions, witnessed such parts of it as are transacted out of doors, and in front of the medicine-lodge.

Since the date of my last Letter, I was lucky enough to have painted the medicine-man, who was high-priest on this grand occasion, or conductor of the ceremonies, who had me regularly installed doctor or "medicine;" and who, on the morning when these grand refinements in mysteries commenced, took me by the arm, and led me into the medicine-lodge, where the Fur Trader, Mr. Kipp, and his two clerks accompanied me in close attendance for four days; all of us going to our own quarters at sun-down, and returning again at sun-rise the next morning.

I took my sketch-book with me, and have made many and faithful drawings of what we saw, and full notes of everything as translated to me by the interpreter; and since the close of that horrid and frightful scene, which was a week ago or more, I have been closely ensconced in an earth-covered wigwam, with a fine sky-light over my head, with my palette and brushes, endeavouring faithfully to put the whole of what we saw upon canvass, which my companions all agree to be critically correct, and of the fidelity of which they have attached their certificates to the backs of the paintings. I have made four paintings of these strange scenes, containing several hundred figures, representing the transactions of each day; and if I live to get them home, they will be found to be exceedingly curious and interesting.

I shudder at the relation, or even at the thought of these barbarous and cruel scenes, and am almost ready to shrink from the task of reciting them after I have so long promised some account of them. I entered the medicine-house of these scenes, as I would have entered a church, and expected to see something extraordinary and strange, but yet in the form of worship or devotion; but alas! little did I expect to see the interior of their holy temple turned into a slaughter-house, and its floor strewn with the blood of its fanatic devotees. Little did I think that I was entering a house of God, where His blinded worshippers were to pollute its sacred interior with their blood, and propitiatory suffering and tortures-surpassing, if possible, the cruelty of the rack or the inquisition; but such the scene has been, and as such I will endeavour to describe it.

The "Mandan religious ceremony" then, as I believe it is very justly denominated, is an annual

---

transaction, held in their medicine-lodge once a year, as a great religious anniversary, and for several distinct objects, as I shall in a few minutes describe; during and after which, they look with implicit reliance for the justification and approval of the Great Spirit.

All of the Indian tribes, as I have before observed, are religious -- are worshipful -- and many of them go to almost incredible lengths (as will be seen in the present instance, and many others I may recite) in worshipping the Great Spirit; denying and humbling themselves before Him for the same purpose, and in the same hope as we do, perhaps in a more rational and acceptable way. The tribes, so far as I have visited them, all distinctly believe in the existence of a Great (or Good) Spirit, an Evil (or Bad) Spirit, and also in a future existence and future accountability, according to their virtues and vices in this world. So far the North American Indians would seem to be one family, and such an unbroken theory amongst them; yet with regard to the manner and form, and time and place of that accountability -- to the constructions of virtues and vices, and the modes of appeasing and propitiating the Good and Evil Spirits, they are found with all the changes and variety which fortuitous circumstances, and fictions, and fables have wrought upon them.

If from their superstitions and their ignorance, there are oftentimes obscurities and mysteries thrown over and around their system, yet these affect not the theory itself, which is everywhere essentially the same -- and which, if it be not correct, has this much to command the admiration of the enlightened world, that they worship with great sincerity, and all according to one creed. The Mandans believe in the existence of a Great (or Good) Spirit, and also of an Evil Spirit, who they say existed long before the Good Spirit, and is far superior in power. They all believe also in a future state of existence, and a future administration of rewards and punishments, and (so do all other tribes that I have yet visited) they believe those punishments are not eternal, but commensurate with their sine.

These people living in a climate where they suffer from cold in the severity of their winters, have very naturally reversed our ideas of Heaven and Hell. The latter they describe to be a country very far to the north, of barren and hideous aspect, and covered with eternal snows and ice. The torments of this freezing place they describe as most excruciating; whilst Heaven they suppose to be in a warmer and delightful latitude, where nothing is felt but the keenest enjoyment, and where the country abounds in buffaloes and other luxuries of life. The Great or Good Spirit they believe dwells in the former place for the purpose of there meeting those who have offended him; increasing the agony of their sufferings, by being himself present, administering the penalties. The Bad or Evil Spirit they at the same time suppose to reside in Paradise, still tempting the happy; and those who have gone to the regions of punishment they believe to be tortured for a time proportioned to the amount of their transgressions, and that they are then to be transferred to the land of the happy, where they are again liable to the temptations of the Evil Spirit, and answerable again at a future period for their new offences. Such is the religious creed of the Mandans, and for the purpose of appeasing the Good and Evil Spirits, and to secure their entrance into those "fields Elysian", or beautiful hunting grounds, do the young men subject themselves to the horrid and sickening cruelties to be described in the following pages.

There are other three distinct objects (yet to be named) for which these religious ceremonies are held, which are as follow:

First, they are held annually as a celebration of the event of the subsiding of the Flood, which they call Mee-nee-ro-Ka-ha-sha, (sinking down or settling of the waters.)

Second[y, for the purpose of dancing what they call, Bel-lohck-na-pic (the bull-dance); to the strict observance of which they attribute the coming of buffaloes to supply them with food during the season; and Thirdly and lastly, for the purpose of conducting all the young men of the tribe, as they annually arrive to the age of manhood, through an ordeal of privation and torture, which, while it is supposed to harden their muscles and prepare them for extreme endurance, enables the chiefs who are spectators to the scene, to decide upon their comparative bodily strength and ability to endure the extreme privations and sufferings that often fall to the lots of Indian warriors; and that they may decide who is the most hardy and best able to lead a war-party in case of extreme exigency.

This part of the ceremony, as I have just witnessed it, is truly shocking to behold, and will almost stagger the belief of the world when they read of it. The scene is too terrible and too revolting to be seen or to be told. Were it not an essential part of a whole, which will be new to the civilized world, and therefore worth their knowing.

The bull-dance, and many other parts of these ceremonies are exceedingly grotesque and amusing, and that part of them which has a relation to the Deluge is harmless and full of interest.

In the centre of the Mandan village is an open, circular area of 150 feet diameter, kept always clear, as a public ground, for the display of all their public feasts, parades, &c. and around it are their wigwams placed as near to each other as they can well stand, their doors facing the centre of this public area.

In the middle of this ground, which is trodden like a hard pavement, is a curb (somewhat like a large hogshead standing on its end) made of planks (and bound with hoops); some eight or nine feet high, which they religiously preserve and protect from year to year, free from mark or scratch, and which they call the "big canoe" -- it is undoubtedly a symbolic representation of a part of their traditional history of the Flood; which it is very evident, from this and numerous other features of this grand ceremony, they have in some way or other received, and are here endeavouring to perpetuate by vividly impressing it on the minds of the whole nation. This object of superstition, from its position, as the very centre of the village is the rallying point of the whole nation. To it their devotions are paid on various occasions of feasts and religious exercises during the year; and in this extraordinary scene it was often the nucleus of their mysteries and cruelties, as I shall shortly describe them, and becomes an object worth bearing in mind, and worthy of being understood.

This exciting and appalling scene, then, which is familiarly (and no doubt correctly) called the "Mandan religious ceremony", commences, not on a particular day of the year, (for these people keep no record of days or weeks), but at a particular season, which is designated by the full expansion of the willow leaves under the bank of the river; for according to their tradition," the twig that the bird brought home was a willow bough, and had fullgrown leaves on it," and the bird to which they allude, is themourning or turtle-dove, which they took great pains to point out to me, as it is often to be seen feeding on the sides of their earth-covered lodges, and which, being, as they call it, a medicine-bird, is not to be destroyed or harmed by any one, and even their dogs are instructed not to do it injury.

On the morning on which this strange transaction commenced, I was sitting at breakfast in the house of the Trader, Mr. Kipp, when at son-rise, we were suddenly startled by the shrieking and screaming of the women, and barking and howling of dogs, as if an enemy were actually storming

their village.

“Now we have it !” (exclaimed my host, as he sprang from the table,) the grand ceremony has commenced -- drop your knife and fork, Monsr. and get your sketch-book as soon as possible, that you may lose nothing, for the very moment of commencing is as curious as anything else of this strange affair.” I seized my sketch-book, and all hands of us were in an instant in front of the medicine-lodge, ready to see and to hear all that was to take place. Groups of women and children were gathered on the tops of their earth-covered wigwams, and all were screaming, and dogs were howling, and all eyes directed to the prairies in the West, where was beheld at a mile distant, a solitary individual descending a prairie bluff, and making his way in a direct line towards the village! The whole community joined in the general expression of great alarm, as if they were in danger of instant destruction; bows were strung and thumbed to test their elasticity -- their horses were caught upon the prairie and run into the village -- warriors were blackening their faces, and dogs were muzzled, and every preparation made, as if for instant combat.

During this deafening din and confusion within the piquets of the village of the Mandans, the figure discovered on the prairie continued to approach with a dignified step and in a right line towards the village; all eyes were upon him, and he at length made his appearance (without opposition) within the piquets, and proceeded towards the centre of the village, where all the chiefs and braves stood ready to receive him, which they did in a cordial manner, by shaking hands with him, recognizing him as an old acquaintance, and pronouncing his name Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (the first or only man). The body of this strange personage, which was chiefly naked, was painted with white clay, so as to resemble at a little distance, a white man; he wore a robe of four white wolf skins falling back over his shoulders; on his head he had a splendid head-dress made of two ravens' skins, and in his left hand he cautiously carried a large pipe, which he seemed to watch and guard as something of great importance. After passing the chiefs and braves as described, he approached the medicine or mystery lodge, which he had the means of opening, and which had been religiously closed during the year except for the performance of these religious rites.

Having opened and entered it, he called in four men whom he appointed to clean it out, and put it in readiness for the ceremonies, by sweeping it and strewing a profusion of green willow-boughs over its floor, and with them decorating its sides. Wild sage also, and many other aromatic herbs they gathered from the prairies, and scattered over its floor; and over these were arranged a curious group of buffalo and human skulls, and other articles, which were to be used during this strange and unaccountable transaction.

During the whole of this day, and while these preparations were making in the medicine-lodge, Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (the first or only man! travelled through the village, stopping in front of every man's lodge, and crying until the owner of the lodge came out, and asked who he was, and what was the matter? To which he replied by relating the sad catastrophe which had happened on the earth's surface by the overflowing of the waters, saying that “he was the only person saved from the universal calamity: that he landed his big canoe on a high mountain in the west, where he now resides; that he had come to open the medicine-lodge, which must needs receive a present of some edged-tool from the owner of every wigwam, that it may be sacrificed to the water; for he says, “if this is not done, there will be another flood, and no one will be saved, as it was with such tools that the big canoe was made.”

Having visited every lodge or wigwam in the village, during the day, and having received such a

present at each, as a hatchet, a knife, &c. (which is undoubtedly always prepared and ready for the occasion), he returned at evening and deposited them in the medicine-lodge, where they remained until the afternoon of the last day of the ceremony, when, as the final or closing scene, they were thrown into the river in a deep place, from a bank thirty feet high, and in presence of the whole village; from whence they can never be recovered, and where they were, undoubtedly, sacrificed to the Spirit of the Water.

During the first night of this strange character in the village, no one could tell where he slept; and every person, both old and young, and dogs, and all living things were kept within doors, and dead silence reigned every where. On the next morning at sunrise, however, he made his appearance again, and entered the medicine-lodge; and at his heels (in "Indian file", i.e. single file, one following in another's tracks) all the young men who were candidates for the self-tortures which were to be inflicted, and for the honours that were to be bestowed by the chiefs on those who could manfully endure them. There were on this occasion about fifty young men who entered the lists, and as they went into the sacred lodge, each one's body was chiefly naked, and covered with clay of different colours; some were red, others were yellow, and some were covered with white clay, giving them the appearance of white men. Each one of them carried in his right hand his medicine-bag -- on his left arm, his shield of the bull's hide -- in his left hand, his bow and arrows, with his quiver slung on his back.

When all had entered the lodge, they placed themselves in reclining postures around its sides, and each one had suspended over his head his respective weapons and medicine, presenting altogether, one of the most wild and picturesque scenes imaginable.

Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (the first or only man) was in the midst of them, and having lit and smoked his medicine-pipe for their success; and having addressed them in a short speech, stimulating and encouraging them to trust to the Great Spirit for His protection during the severe ordeal they were about to pass through; he called into the lodge an old medicine or mystery-man, whose body was painted yellow, and whom he appointed master of ceremonies during this occasion, whom they denominated in their language O-Ree-pah Ka-se-kah (Keeper or Conductor Of The Ceremonies). He was appointed, and the authority passed by the presentation of the medicine-pipe, on which they consider hangs all the power of holding and conducting all these rites. After this delegated authority had thus passed over to the medicineman; Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah shook hands with him, and bade him good bye, saying "that he was going back to the mountains in the west, from whence he should assuredly return in just a year from that time, to open the lodge again." He then went out of the lodge, and passing through the village, took formal leave of the chiefs in the same manner, and soon disappeared over the bluffs from whence he came. No more was seen of this surprising character during the occasion: but I shall have something yet to say of him and his strange office before I get through the Letter.

To return to the lodge, -- the medicine or mystery-man just appointed, and who had received his injunctions from Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah, was left sole conductor and keeper; and according to those injunctions, it was his duty to lie by a small fire in the centre of the lodge, with his medicine-pipe in his hand, crying to the Great Spirit incessantly, watching the young men, and preventing entirely their escape from the lodge, and all communication whatever with people outside, for the space of four days and nights, during which time they were not allowed to eat, to drink, or to sleep, preparatory to the excruciating self-tortures which they were to endure on the

fourth day.

I mentioned that I had made four paintings of these strange scenes, and the first one exhibits the interior of the medicine-lodge at this moment; with the young men all reclining around its sides, and the conductor or mystery-man lying by the fire, crying to the Great Spirit. It was just at this juncture that I was ushered into this sacred temple of their worship, with my companions, which was, undoubtedly, the first time that their devotions had ever been trespassed upon by the presence of pale faces; and in this instance had been brought about in the following strange and unexpected manner.

I had most luckily for myself painted a full-length portrait of this great magician or high-priest, but a day previous to the commencement of the ceremonies (in which I had represented him in the performance of some of His mysteries), with which he had been so exceedingly pleased as well as astonished (as "he could see its eyes move"), that I must needs be, in his opinion, deeply skilled in magic and mysteries, and well-entitled to a respectable rank in the craft, to which I had been at once elevated by the unanimous voice of the doctors, and regularly initiated, and styled Te-hopee-nee-wash-ee-waska-pooslia, the white medicine (or Spirit) painter.

With this very honourable degree which had just been conferred upon me, I was standing in front of the medicine-lodge early in the morning, with my companions by my side, endeavouring to get a peep, if possible, into its sacred interior; when this master of ceremonies, guarding and conducting its secrets, as I before described, came out of the door and taking me with a firm professional affection by the arm, led me into this sanctum sanctorum, which was strictly guarded from, even a peep of a gaze from the vulgar, by a vestibule of eight or ten feet in length, guarded with a double screen or door, and two or three dark and frowning centinels with spears or war-clubs in their hands. I gave the wink to my companions as I was passing in, and the potency of my medicine was such as to gain them a quiet admission, and all of us were comfortably placed on elevated seats, which our conductor soon prepared for us.

We were then in full view of everything that transpired in the lodge, having before us the scene exactly, which is represented in the first of the four pictures. To this seat we returned every morning at sunrise, and remained until sun-down for four days, the whole time which these strange scenes occupied.

In addition to the preparations and arrangements of the interior of this sanctuary, as above described, there was a curious, though a very strict arrangement of buffalo and human skulls placed on the floor of the lodge, and between them (which were-divided into two parcels), and in front of the reclining group of young candidates, was a small and very delicate scaffold, elevated about five feet from the ground, made of four posts or crotches, not larger than a gun-rod, and placed some four or five feet apart, supporting four equally delicate rods, resting in the crotches; thus forming the frame of the scaffold, which was completed by a number of still smaller and more delicate sticks, transversely resting upon them. On the centre of this little frame rested some small object, which I could not exactly understand from the distance of twenty or thirty feet which intervened between it and my eye. I started several times from my seat to approach it, but all eyes were instantly upon me, and every mouth in the assembly sent forth a hush! Which brought me back to my seat again; and I at length quieted my stilled curiosity as well as I could, upon learning the fact, that 90 sacred was that object, and so important its secrets or mysteries, that not I alone, but even the young men, who were passing the ordeal, and all the village, save the conductor of

the mysteries, were stopped from approaching it, or knowing what it was.

This little mystery-thing, whatever it was, had the appearance from where I sat, of a small tortoise or frog lying on its back, with its head and legs quite extended, and wound and tasselled off with exceedingly delicate red and blue, and yellow ribbons or tassels, and other bright coloured ornaments; and seemed, from the devotions paid to it, to be the very nucleus of their mysteries -- the sanctissimus sanctorum, from which seemed to emanate all the sanctity of their proceedings, and to which, all seemed to be paying the highest devotional respect.

This strange, yet important essence of their mysteries, I made every enquiry about; but got no further information of, than what I could learn by my eyes, at the distance at which I saw it, and from the silent respect which I saw paid to it. I tried with the doctors, and all of the fraternrly answered me, that that was "great medicine", assuring me that it "could not be told". So I quieted my curiosity as well. as I could, by the full conviction that I had a degree or two yet to take before I could fathom all the arcana of Indian superstitions; and that this little, seemingly wonderful, relic of antiquity, symbol of some grand event, or "secret too valuable to be told", might have been at last nothing but a silly bunch of strings and toys, to which they pay some great peculiar regard; giving thereby to some favourite Spirit or essence an ideal existence, and which, when called upon to describe, they refuse to do so, calling it "Great Medicine", for the very reason that there is nothing in it to reveal or describe.

Immediately under the little frame or scaffold described, and on the floor of the lodge was placed a knife, and by the side of it a bundle of splints or skewers, which were kept in readiness for the infliction of the cruelties directly to be explained. There were seen also, in this stage of the affair, a number of cords of rawhide hanging down from the top of the lodge, and passing through its roof, with which the young men were to be suspended by the splints passed through their flesh, and drawn up by men placed on the top of the lodge for the purpose, as will be described in a few moments.

There were also four articles of great veneration and importance lying on the floor of the lodge, which were sacks, containing in each some three or four gallons of water. These also were objects of superstitious regard, and made with great labour and much ingenuity; each one. of them being constructed of the skin of the buffalo's neck, and most elaborately sewed together in the form of a large tortoise lying on its back, with a bunch of eagle's quills appended to it as a tail; and each of them having a stick, shaped like a drum-stick, lying on them, with which, in a subsequent stage of these ceremonies, as will be seen, they are beaten upon by several of their mystery-men, as a part of the music for their strange dances and mysteries. By the side of these sacks which they call Eeh-teeh-Ra, are two other articles of equal importance, which they call Eeh-na-dee (rattles), in the form of a gourd-shell made also of dried skins, and used at the same time as the others, in the music (or rather noise and din) for then dances, &c.

These four sacks of water have the appearance of very great antiquity; and by enquiring of my very ingenious friend and patron, the medicilze-mun, after the ceremonies were over, he very gravely told me, that "those four tortoises contained the waters from the four quarters of the world -- that these waters had been contained therein ever since the settling down on the waters!" I did not think it best to advance any argument against so ridiculous a theory, and therefore could not even enquire or learn, at what period they had been instituted, or how often, or on what occasions, the water in them had been changed or replenished.

I made several propositions, through my friend Mr. Kipp, the trader and interpreter, to purchase one of these strange things by offering them a very liberal price; to which I received in answer that these, and all the very numerous articles used in these ceremonies, being a society property were medicine, and could not be sold for any consideration; so I abandoned all thoughts of obtaining anything, except what I have done by the medicine operation of my pencil, which was applied to everything, and even upon that they looked with decided distrust and apprehension, as a sort of theft of sacrilege.

Such then was the group, and such the appearance of the interior of the medicine-lodge during the three first, and part of the fourth day also, of the Mandan religious ceremonies. The medicine-man with a group about him, of young aspirants who were under his sole control, as was every article and implement to be used, and the sanctity of this solitary and gloomy looking place, which could not be trespassed upon by any man's presence without his most sovereign permission. During the three first days of this solemn conclave, there were many very curious forms and amusements enacted in the open area in the middle of the village, and in front of the medicine-lodge, by other members of the community, one of which formed a material part or link of these strange ceremonials. This very curious and exceedingly grotesque part of their performance, which they denominated *Bel-Eohck nah-pick* (the bull-dance) of which I have before spoken, as one of the avowed objects for which they held this annual feast; and to the strictest observance of which they attribute the coming of buffaloes to supply them with food during the season -- is repeated four times during the first day, eight times on the second day, twelve times on the third day, and sixteen times on the fourth day; and always around the curb, or "big canoe", of which I have before spoken.

This subject I have selected for my second picture, and the principal actors in it were eight men, with the entire skins of buffaloes thrown over their backs, with the horns and hoofs and tails remaining on; their bodies in a horizontal position, enabling them to imitate the actions of the buffalo, whilst they were looking out of its eyes as through a mask.

The bodies of these men were chiefly naked and all painted in the most extraordinary manner, with the nicest adherence to exact similarity; their limbs, bodies and faces, being in every part covered, either with black, red, or white paint. Each one of these strange characters had also a lock of buffalo's hair tied around his ankles--in his right hand a rattle, and a slender white rod or staff, six feet long, in the other; and carried on his back, a bunch of green willow boughs about the usual size of a bundle of straw. Where eight men, being divided into four pairs, took their positions on the four different sides of the curb or big canoe, representing thereby the four cardinal points; and between each group of them, with the back turned to the big canoe, was another figure, engaged in the same dance, keeping step with them, with a similar staff or wand in one hand and a rattle in the other, and (being four in number) answering again to the four cardinal points. The bodies of these four young men were chiefly naked, with no other dress upon them than a beautiful belt (or quartz-quaw), around the waist, made of eagles quills and ermine, and very splendid head-dresses made of the same materials. Two of these figures were painted entirely black with powdered charcoal and grease, whom they called the "firmament or night", and the numerous white spots which were dotted all over their bodies, they called "stars". The other two were painted from head to foot as red as vermilion could make them; these they said represented the day, and the white streaks which were painted up and down over their bodies, were "ghosts which the

morning rays were chasing away.”

These twelve are the only persons actually engaged in this strange dance, which is each time repeated in the same form, without the slightest variation. There are, however, a great number of characters engaged in giving the whole effect and wildness to this strange and laughable scene, each one acting well his part, and whose offices, strange and inexplicable as they are, I will endeavour to point out and explain as well as I can, from what I saw, elucidated by their own descriptions. This most remarkable scene, then, which is witnessed more or less often on each day, takes place in presence of the whole nation, who are generally gathered around, on the tops of the wigwams or otherwise, as spectators, whilst the young men are reclining and fasting in the lodge as above described. On the first day, this “bull-dance” is given once to each of the cardinal points, and the medicine-man smokes his pipe in those directions. On the second day, twice to each; three times to each on the third day, and four times to each on the fourth. As a signal for the dancers and other characters (as well as the public) to assemble, the old man, master of ceremonies, with the medicine-pipe in hand, dances out of the lodge, singing (or rather crying) forth a most pitiful lament, until he approaches the big canoe, against which he leans, with the pipe in his hand, and continues to cry. At this instant, four very aged and patriarchal looking men, whose bodies are painted red, and who have been guarding the four sides of the lodge, enter it and bring out the four sacks of water, which they place near the big canoe, where they seat themselves by the side of them and commence thumping on them with the mallets or drumsticks which have been lying on them; and another brandishes and shakes the eeh-na-dees or rattles, and all unite to them their voices, raised to the highest pitch possible, as the music for the bull-dance, which is then commenced and continued for fifteen minutes or more in perfect time, and without cessation or intermission. When the music and dancing stop, which are always perfectly simultaneous, the whole nation raise the huzza, and a deafening shout of approbation; the master of ceremonies dances back to the medicine-lodge, and the old men return to their former place; the sacks of water, until all rest as before, until by the same method, they are again called into a similar action. The supernumeraries or other characters who play their parts in this grand spectacle, are numerous and well worth description. By the side of the big Canoe are seen two men with the skins of grizzly bears thrown over them, using the skins as a mask, over their heads. These ravenous animals are continually growling and threatening to devour everything before them and interfering with the forms of their religious ceremony. To appease them, the women are continually bringing and placing before them dishes of meat, which are as often snatched up and carried to the prairie, by two men whose bodies are painted black and their heads white, whom they call bald eagles, who are darting by them and grasping their food from before them as they pass. These are again chased upon the plains by a hundred or more small boys, who are naked, with their bodies painted yellow and their heads white, whom they call Cabris or antelopes; who at length get the food away from them and devour it; thereby inculcating (perhaps) the beautiful moral, that by the dispensations of Providence, his bountiful gifts will fall at last to the hands of the innocent. During the intervals between these dances, all these characters, except those from the medicine-lodge, retire to a wigwam close by, which they use on the occasion also as a sacred place, being occupied exclusively by them while they are at rest, and also for the purpose of painting and ornamenting their bodies for the occasion.

During each and every one of these dances, the old men who beat upon the sacks and sing, are

earnestly chanting forth their supplications to the Great Spirit, for the continuation of his influence in sending them buffaloes to supply them with food during the year; they are administering courage and fortitude to the young men in the lodge, by telling them, that "the Great Spirit" has opened his ears in their behalf -- that the very atmosphere all about them is peace -- that their women and children can hold the mouth of the grizzly bear -- that they have invoked from day to day O-ke-hee-de (the Evil Spirit) -- that they are still challenging him to come, and yet he has not dared to make his appearance."

But alas! in the last of these dances, on the fourth day, in the midst of all their mirth and joy, and about noon, and in the height of all these exultations, an instant scream burst forth from the tops of the lodges!--meu, women, dogs and all, seemed actually to howl and shudder with alarm, as they fixed their glaring eye-balls upon the prairie bluff, about a mile in the west, down the side of which a man was seen descending at full speed towards the village! This strange character darted about in a zig-zag course in all directions on the prairie, like a boy in pursuit of a butterfly, until he approached the piquets of the village, when it was discovered that his body was entirely naked, and painted as black as a negro, with Pounded charcoal and bear's grease; his body was therefore everywhere of a shining black, except occasionally white rings of an inch or more in diameter, which were marked here and there all over him; and frightful indentures of white around his mouth, resembling canine teeth. Added to his hideous appearance, he gave the most frightful shrieks and screams as he dashed through the village and entered the terrified group, which was composed (in that quarter) chiefly of females, who had assembled to witness the amusements which were transpiring around the "big canoe".

This unearthly looking creature carried in his two hands a wand or staff of eight or nine feet in length, with a red ball at the end of it, which he continually slid on the ground a-head of him as he ran. All eyes in the village, save those of the persons engaged in the dance, were centred upon him, and he made a desperate rush towards the women, who screamed for protection as they were endeavouring to retreat; and falling in groups upon each other as they were struggling to get out of his reach. In this moment of general terror and alarm there was an instant check! and all for a few moments were as silent as death.

The old master of ceremonies, who had run from his position at the big canoe, had met this monster of fiends, and having thrust the medicine-pipe before him, held him still and immovable under its charm! This check gave the females an opportunity to get out of his reach, and when they were free from their danger, though all hearts beat yet with the instant excitement, their alarm soon cooled down into the most exorbitant laughter and shouts of applause at his sudden defeat, and the awkward and ridiculous posture in which he was stopped and held. The old man was braced stiff by his side, with his eye-balls glaring him in the face, whilst the medicine-pipe held in its mystic chains his Satanic Majesty, annulling all the powers of his magical wand, and also depriving him of the powers of locomotion! Surely no two human beings ever presented a more striking group than these two individuals did for a few moments, with their eye-balls set in direct mutual hatred upon each other; both struggling for the supremacy, relying on the potency of their medicine or mystery. The one held in check, with his body painted black, representing (or rather assuming to be) his sable majesty, O-kee-hee-de (the Evil Spirit); frowning everlasting vengeance on the other, who sternly gazed him back with a look of exultation and contempt, as he held him in check and disarmed under the charm of his sacred mystery-pipe.

When the superior powers of the medicine-pipe (on which hang all these annual mysteries) had been thus fully tested and acknowledged, and the women had had requisite time to withdraw from the reach of this fiendish monster, the pipe was very gradually withdrawn from before him, and he seemed delighted to recover the use of his limbs again, and power of changing his position from the exceedingly unpleasant and really ridiculous one he appeared in, and was compelled to maintain, a few moments before; rendered more superlatively ridiculous and laughable, from the further information, which I am constrained to give, of the plight in which this demon of terror and vulgarity made his entree into the midst of the Mandan village, and to the centre and nucleus of their first and greatest religious ceremony.

Then, to proceed: I said that this strange personage's body was naked--was painted jet black with charcoal and bear's grease, with a wand in his hands of eight feet in length with a red ball at the end of it, which he was nibbling about on the ground in front of him as he ran.

In this plight, in which I have not dared fully to represent him in the picture, he pursued the groups of females, spreading dismay and alarm wherever he went, and consequently producing the awkward and exceedingly laughable predicament in which he was placed by the sudden check from the medicine-pipe, as I have above stated, when all eyes were intently fixed upon him, and all joined in rounds of applause for the success of the magic spell that was placed upon him; all voices were raised in shouts of satisfaction at his defeat, and all eyes gazed upon him; of chiefs and of warriors--matrons and even of their tender-aged and timid daughters, whose education had taught them to receive the moral of these scenes without the shock of impropriety, that would have startled a more fastidious and consequently sensual-thinking people.

After repeated attempts thus made, and thus defeated in several parts of the crowd, this blackened monster was retreating over the ground where the buffalo-dance was going on. and having (apparently, par accident) swaggered against one of the men placed under the skin of a buffalo and engaged in the "bull dance," he started back, and placing himself in the attitude of a buffalo,-- "hi ung ee a wahkstia, chee a nahk s tammee ung s towa; se ung ee aht gwaht ee o nunghths tcha ho a, tummee ozt no ah, ughstono ah hi en en ah nahxt gwi aht gahtch gun ne. Gwee en on doatclrt chee en arc gunne how how en ahzst fchtl!"

After this he paid his visits to three others of the eight, in succession, receiving as before the deafening shouts of approbation which pealed from every mouth in the multitude, who were all praying to the Great Spirit to send them buffaloes to supply them with food during the season, and who attribute the coming of buffaloes for this purpose entirely to the strict and critical observance of this ridiculous and disgusting part of the ceremonies.

During the half hour or so that he had been jostled about amongst man and beasts, to the great amusement and satisfaction of the lookers-on, he seemed to have become exceedingly exhausted, and anxiously looking out for some feasible mode of escape.

In this awkward predicament he became the laughing-stock and butt for the women, who being no longer afraid of him, were gathering in groups around, to tease and tantalize him; and in the midst of this dilemma, which soon became a very sad one -- one of the women, who stole up behind him with both hands full of yellow dirt -- dashed it into his Face and eyes, and all over him, and his body being covered with grease, took instantly a different hue. He seemed heart-broken at this signal disgrace, and commenced crying most vehemently, when, an instant, another caught his wand from his hand, and broke it across her knee. It was snatched for by others, who broke

it still into bits, and then threw them at him. His power was now gone -- his bodily strength was exhausted, and he made a bolt for the prairie -- he dashed through the crowd, and made his way through the piquets on the back part of the village, where were placed for the purpose, an hundred or more women and girls, who escorted him as he ran on the prairie for half a mile or more, beating him with sticks, and stones, and dirt, and kicks, and cuffs, until he was at length seen escaping from their clutches, and making the best of his retreat over the prairie bluffs, from whence he first appeared.

At the moment of this signal victory, and when all eyes lost sight of him as he disappeared over the bluffs, the whole village united their voices in shouts of satisfaction. The bull-dance then stopped, and preparations were instantly made for the commencement of the cruelties which were to take place within the lodge, leaving us to draw, from what had just transpired, the following beautiful moral:--

That in the midst of their religious ceremonies, the Evil Spirit (O-kee-hee-de) made his entree for the purpose of doing mischief, and of disturbing their worship -- that he was held in check, and defeated by the superior influence and virtue of the medicine-pipe, and at last, driven in disgrace out of the village, by the very part of the community whom he came to abase.

At the close of this exciting scene, preparations were made, as above stated, by the return of the master of ceremonies and musicians to the medicine-lodge, where also were admitted at the same time a number of men, who were to be instruments of the cruelties to be indicted; and also the chief and doctors of the tribe, who were to look on, and bear witness to, and decide upon, the comparative degree of fortitude, with which the young men sustain themselves in this most extreme and excruciating ordeal. The chiefs having seated themselves on one side. of the lodge, dressed out in their robes and splendid head-dresses -- the band of music seated and arranged themselves in another part; and the old master of ceremonies having placed himself in front of a small fire in the centre of the lodge, with his "big pipe" in his hands, and having commenced smoking to the Great Spirit, with all possible vehemence for the success of these aspirants, presented the subject for the third picture, which they call "polk-hong", the cutting scene. Around the sides of the lodge are seen, still reclining, as I have before mentioned, a part of the group, whilst others of them have passed the ordeal of self-tortures, and have been removed out of the lodge; and others still are seen in the very act of submitting to them, which were inflicted in the following manner: -- After having removed the sanctissimus sanctorum, or little scaffold, of which I before spoke, and having removed also the buffalo anti human skulls from the floor, and attached them to the posts of the lodge; and two men having taken their positions near the middle of the lodge, for the purpose of inflicting the tortures -- the one with the scalping-knife, and the other with the bunch of splints (which I have before mentioned) in his hand; one at a time of the young fellows, already emaciated with fasting, and thirsting, and waking, for nearly four days and nights, advanced from the side of the lodge, and placed himself on his hands and feet, or otherwise, as best suited for the performance of the operation, where he submitted to the cruelties in the following manner: -- An inch or more of the flesh on each shoulder, or each breast was taken up between the thumb and finger by the man who held the knife in his right hand; and the knife, which had been ground sharp on both edges, and then hacked and notched with the blade of another, to make it produce as much pain as possible, was forced through the flesh below the fingers, and being withdrawn, was followed with a splint or skewer, from the other, who held a bunch of such in

---

his left hand, and was ready to force them through the wound. There were then two cords lowered down from the top of the lodge (by men who were placed on the lodge outside, for the purpose), which were fastened to these splints or skewers, and they instantly began to haul him up; he was thus raised until his body was suspended from the ground where he rested, until the knife and a splint were passed through the flesh or integuments in a similar manner on each arm below the shoulder (over the brachialis eztemus), below the elbow (over the *extensor carpi radialis*), on the thighs (over the *vastus externus*), and below the knees (over the *peroneus*).

In some instances they remained in a reclining position on the ground until this painful operation was finished, which was performed, in all instances, exactly on the same parts of the body and limbs; and which, in its progress, occupied some five or six minutes.

Each one was then instantly raised with the cords, until the weight of his body was suspended by them, and then, while the blood was streaming down their limbs, the bystanders hung upon the splints each man's appropriate shield, bow and quiver, &c.; and in many instances, the skull of a buffalo with the horns on it, was attached to each lower arm and each lower leg, for the purpose, probably, of preventing by their great weight, the struggling, which might otherwise have taken place to their disadvantage whilst they were hung up.

When these things were all adjusted, each one was raised higher by the cords, until these weights all swung clear from the ground, leaving his feet, in most cases, some six or eight feet above the ground. In this plight they at once became appalling and frightful to look at -- the flesh, to support the weight of their bodies, with the additional weights which were attached to them, was raised six or eight inches by the skewers; and their heads sunk forward on the breasts, or thrown backwards, in a much more frightful condition, according to the way in which they were hung up. The unflinching fortitude, with which every one of them bore this part of the torture surpassed credulity; each one as the knife was passed through his flesh sustained an unchangeable countenance; and several of them, seeing me making sketches, beckoned me to look at their faces, which I watched through all this horrid operation, without being able to detect anything but the pleasantest smiles as they looked me in the eye, while I could hear the knife rip through the flesh, and feel enough of it myself, to start involuntary and uncontrollable tears over my cheeks.

When raised to the condition above described, and completely suspended by the cords, the sanguinary hands, through which he had just passed, turned back to perform a similar operation on another who was ready, and each one in his turn passed into the charge of others, who instantly introduced them to a new and improved stage of their refinements in cruelty.

Surrounded by imps and demons as they appear, a dozen or more, who seem to be concerting and devising means for his exquisite agony, gather around him, when one of the number advances towards him in a sneering manner, and commences turning him around with a pole which he braces in his hand for the purpose. This is done in a gentle manner at first; but gradually increased, when the brave fellow, whose proud spirit could control its agony no longer, burst out in the most lamentable and heart-rending cries that the human voice is capable of producing, crying forth a prayer to the Great Spirit to support and protect him in this dreadful trial; and continually repeating his confidence in his protection. In this condition he is continued to be turned, faster and faster -- and there is no hope of escape from it, nor chance for the slightest relief, until by fainting, his voice falters, and his struggling ceases, and he hangs, apparently, a still and lifeless corpse! When he is, by turning, gradually brought to this condition, which is generally done with-

in ten or fifteen minutes, there is a close scrutiny passed upon him among his tormentors, who are checking and holding each other back as long as the least struggling or tremor can be discovered, lest he should be removed before he is (as they term it) "entirely dead".

When brought to this alarming and most frightful condition, and the turning has gradually ceased, as his voice and his strength have given oath, leaving him to hang entirely still, and apparently lifeless; when his tongue is distended from his mouth, and his medicine-bag, which he has affectionately and superstitiously clung to with his left hand, has dropped to tire ground; the signal is given to the men on top of the lodge, by gently striking the cord with the pole below, when they very gradually and carefully lower him to the ground.

In this helpless condition he lies, like a loathsome corpse to look at, though in the keeping (as they call it) of the Great Spirit, whom he trusts will protect him, and enable him to get up and walk away. As soon as Ire is lowered to the ground thus, one of the bystanders advances, and pulls out the two splints or pins from the breasts and shoulders, thereby disengaging him from the cords by which he has been hung up; but leaving all the others with their weights, &c. hanging to His flesh.

In this condition he lies for six or eight minutes, until he gets strength to rise and move himself, for no one is allowed to assist or offer him aid, as he is here enjoying the most valued privilege which a Mandan can boast of, that of "trusting hid life to the keeping of the Great Spirit", in this time of extreme peril.

As soon as he is seen to get strength enough to rise on his hands and feet, and drag his body around the lodge, he crawls with the weights still hanging to his body, to another part of the lodge, where there is another Indian sitting with a hatchet in his hand, and a dried buffalo skull before him; and here, in the most earnest and humble manner, by holding up the little finger of his left hand to the Great Spirit, he expresses to Him, in a speech of a few words, his willingness to give it as a sacrifice; when he lays it on the dried buffalo skull, where the other chops it off near the hand, with a blow of the hatchet!

Nearly all of the young men whom I saw passing this horrid ordeal, gave in the above manner, the little finger of the left hand; and I saw also several, who immediately afterwards (and apparently with very little concern or emotion), with a similar speech, extended in the same way, the fore finger of the same hand, and that too was struck off; leaving on the left hand only the two middle fingers and the thumb; all which they deem absolutely essential for holding the bow, the only weapon for the left hand.

One would think that this mutilation had thus been carried quite far enough; but I have since examirred several of the head chiefs and dignitaries of the tribe, who have also given, in this manner, the little finger of the right hand, which is considered by them to be a much greater sacrifice than both of the others; and I have found also a number of their most famous men, who furnish me incontestible proof, by five or six correspond ding scars on each arm, and each breast, and each leg, that they had so many times in their lives submitted to this almost incredible operation, which seems to be optional with them; and the oftener they volunteer to go through it, the more famous they become in the estimation of their tribe.

No bandages are applied to the fingers which have been amputated, nor any arteries taken up; nor is any attention whatever, paid to them or the other wounds; but they are left (as they say) "for the Great Spirit to cure, who will surely take good care of them." It is a remarkable fact (which

I learned from a close inspection of their wounds from day to day) that the bleeding is but very slight and soon ceases, probably from the fact of their extreme exhaustion and debility, caused by want of sustenance and sleep, which checks the natural circulation, and admirably at the same time prepares them to meet the severity of these tortures without the same degree of sensibility and pain, which, under other circumstances, might result in humiliation and death.

During the whole of the time of this cruel Part of these most extraordinary inflictions, the chiefs and dignitaries of the tribe are looking on, to decide who are the hardiest and "stoutest hearted" -- who can hang the longest by his flesh before he faints, and who will be soonest up, after he has been down; that they may know whom to appoint to lead a war party, or place at the most honorable and desperate post. The four old men are incessantly beating upon the sacks of water and singing the whole time, with their voices strained to the highest key, vaunting forth, for the encouragement of the young men, the power and efficacy of the medicinepipe, which has disarmed the monster O-kee-hee-de (or Evil Spirit), and driven him from the village, and will be sure to Protect them and watch over them through their present severe trial.

As soon as six or eight had passed the ordeal as above described, they were led out of the lodge, with their weights hanging to their flesh, and dragging on the ground, to undergo another, and a still more appalling mode of suffering in the center of the village, and in presence of the whole nation, in the manner as follows:

The signal for the commencement of this part of the cruelties was given by the old master of ceremonies, who again ran out as in the buffalo dance, and leaning against the big canoe, with his medicine-pipe in his hand, began to cry. This was done several times in the afternoon, as often as there were six or eight who had passed the ordeal just described within the lodge, who were then taken out in the open area, in the presence of the whole village, with the buffalo skulls and other weights attached. to their flesh, and dragging on the ground! There were then in readiness and prepared for the purpose, about twenty young men, selected of equal height and equal age; with their bodies chiefly naked, with beautiful (and similar) head-dresses of war-eagles' quills, on their heads, and a wreath made of willow boughs held in the hands between them, connecting them in a chain or circle in which they ran around the big canoe, with all possible speed, raising their voices in screams and yelps to the highest pitch that was possible, and keeping the curb or big canoe in the center, as their nucleus.

Then were led forward the young men who were further to suffer, and being placed at equal distances apart, and outside of the ring just described, each one was taken in charge of two athletic young men, fresh and strong, who stepped up to him, one on each side, and by wrapping a broad leather strap around his wrists, without tying it, grasped it firm underneath the handle, and stood prepared for what they call Eh-ke-nah-ka-nah-pick (the last race). This, the spectator looking on would suppose was most correctly named, for he would think it was the last race they could possibly run in this world.

In this condition they stand, pale and ghastly, front abstinence and loss of blood, until all are prepared, and the word is given, when all start and run around, outside of the other ring; and each poor fellow, with His weights dragging on the ground, and his furious conductors by his side, who hurry him forward by the wrists, struggles in the desperate emulation to run longer without "dying" (as they call it) than his comrades, who are fainting around him and sinking down, like himself, where their bodies are dragged with all possible speed, and often with their faces in the

dirt. In the commencement of this dance or race they all start at a moderate pace, and their speed being gradually increased, the pain becomes so excruciating that their languid and exhausted frames give out, and they are dragged by their wrists until they are disengaged from the weights that were attached to their flesh, and this must be done by such violent force as to tear the flesh out with the splint, which (as they say) can never be pulled out endwise, without greatly offending the Great Spirit and defeating the object for which they have thus far suffered. The splints or skewers which are put through the breast and the shoulders, take up a part of the pectoral or trapezius muscle, which is necessary for the support of the great weight of their bodies, and which, as I have before mentioned, are withdrawn as soon as he is lowered down-but all the others, on the legs and arms, seem to be very ingeniously passed through the flesh and integuments without taking up the muscle, and even these, to be broken out, require so strong and so violent a force that most of the poor fellows fainted under the operation, and when they were freed from the last of the buffalo skulls and other weights, (which was often done by some of the bystanders throwing the weight of their bodies on to them as they were dragging on the ground) they were in every instance dropped by the persons who dragged them, and their bodies were left, appearing like nothing but a mangled and a loathsome corpse! At this strange and frightful juncture, the two men who had dragged them, fled through the crowd and away upon the prairie, as if they were guilty of some enormous crime, and were fleeing from summary vengeance.

Each poor fellow, having thus patiently and manfully endured the privations and tortures devised for him, and (in this last struggle with the most appalling effort) torn himself loose from them and his tormentors, he lies the second time, in the "keeping (as he terms it) of the Great Spirit," to whom he issues his repeated prayers, and entrusts his life: and in whom he reposes the most implicit confidence for his preservation and recovery. As an evidence of this, and of the high value which these youths set upon this privilege, there is no person, not a relation or a chief of the tribe, who is allowed, or who would dare, to step forward to offer an aiding hand, even to save his life; for not only the rigid customs of the nation, and the pride of the individual who has entrusted his life to the keeping of the Great Spirit, would sternly reject such a tender; but their superstition, which is the strongest of all arguments in an Indian community, would alone, hold all the tribe in fear and dread of interfering, when they consider they have so good a reason to believe that the Great Spirit has undertaken the special care and protection of his devoted worshipers.

In this "last race", which was the struggle that finally closed their sufferings, each one was dragged until he fainted, and was thus left, looking more like the dead than the living: and thus each one laid, until, by the aid of the Great Spirit, he was in a few minutes seen gradually rising, and at last reeling and staggering, like a drunken man, through the crowd (which made way for him) to his wigwam, where his friends and relatives stood ready to take him into hand and restore him.

In this frightful scene, as in the buffalo-dance, the whole nation was assembled as spectators, and all raised the most piercing and violent yells and screams they could possibly produce to drown the cries of the suffering ones, that no heart could even be touched with sympathy for them. I have mentioned before, that six or eight of the young men were brought from the medicine-lodge at a time, and when they were thus Passed through this shocking ordeal, the medicine-men and the chiefs returned to the interior, where as many more were soon prepared, and underwent a similar treatment; and after that another batch, and another, and so on, until the whole number, some forty-five or fifty had run in this sickening circle, and, by leaving their weights, had opened

the flesh for honorable scars. I said all, but there was one poor fellow though (and I shudder to tell it), who was dragged around and around the circle, with, the skull of an elk hanging to the flesh on one of his legs, several had jumped upon it, but to no effect, for the splint was under the sinew, which could not be broken. The dragging became every instant more and more furious, and the apprehensions for the poor fellow's life, apparent by the piteous howl which was set up for him by the multitude around; and at last the medicine-man ran, with his medicine-pipe in his hand, and held them in check, when the body was dropped, and left upon the ground, with the skull yet hanging to it. The boy, who was an extremely interesting and fine-looking youth, soon recovered his senses and his strength, looking deliberately at his torn and bleeding limbs; and also with the most pleasant smile of defiance, upon the misfortune which had now fallen to his peculiar lot, crawled through the crowd (instead of walking, which they are never again at liberty to do until the flesh is torn out, and the article left) to the prairie, and over which, for the distance of half a mile, to a sequestered spot, without any attendant, where he laid three days and three nights, yet longer, without food, and praying to the Great Spirit, until suppuration took place In the mound, and by the decaying of the flesh the weight was dropped, and the splint also, which he dare not extricate in another way. At the end of this, he crawled back to the village on His hands and knees, being too much emaciated to walk, and begged for something to eat, which was at once given him, and he was soon restored to health.

These extreme and difficult cases often occur, and I learn that in such instances the youth has it at his option to get rid of the weight that is thus left upon him, in such way as he may choose, and some of those modes are far more extraordinary than the one which I have just named. Several of the Traders, who have been for a number of years in the habit of seeing this part of the ceremony, have told me that two years since, when they were looking on, there was one whose flesh on the arms was so strong that the weights could not be left, and he dragged them with his body to the river by the side of the village, where he set a stake fast in the ground on the top of the bank, and fastening cords to it, he let himself half down a perpendicular wall of rock, of twenty-five or thirty feet, where the weight of hip body was suspended by the two cords attached to the flesh of his arms. In this awful condition he hung for several days, equal distant from the top of the rock and the deep water below, into which he at last dropped and saved himself by swimming ashore!

I need record no more of these shocking and disgusting instances, of which I have already given enough to convince the world of the correctness of the established fact of the Indian's superior stoicism and power of endurance, although some recent writers have, from motives of envy, from ignorance, or something else, taken great pains to cut the poor Indian short in everything, and in this, even as if it were a virtue.

I am ready to accord to them in this particular, the palm; the credit of outdoing anything and everybody, and of enduring more than civilized man ever aspired to or ever thought of. My heart has sickened also with disgust for so abominable and ignorant a custom, and still I stand ready with all my heart, to excuse and forgive them for adhering so strictly to an ancient celebration, founded in superstitions and mysteries, of which they know not the origin, and constituting a material part and feature in the code and forms of their religion.

Reader, I will return with you a moment to the medicine-lodge, which is just to be closed, and then we will indulge in some general reflections upon what has passed, and in what, and for what purposes this strange batch of mysteries has been instituted and perpetuated.

After these young men, who had for the last four days occupied the medicine-lodge, had been operated on, in the manner above described, and taken out of it, the old medicine-man, master of ceremonies, returned, (still crying to the Great Spirit) sole tenant of that sacred place, and brought out the “edged tools”, which I before said had been collected at the door of every man’s wigwam, to be given as a sacrifice to the water, and leaving the lodge securely fastened, he approached the bank of the river, when all the medicine-men attended him, and all the nation were spectators; and in their presence he threw them from a high bank into very deep water, from which they cannot be recovered, and where they are, correctly speaking, made a sacrifice to the water. This part of the affair took place just exactly at sun-down, and closed the scene, being the end or finale of the Mandan religious ceremony.

The reader will forgive me for here inseting the Certificates which I have just received from Mr. Kipp, of the city of New York, and two others, who were with me; which I ask for the satisfaction of the world, who read the above account.

“We hereby certify, that we witnessed, in company with Mr. Catlin, in the Mandan Village, the ceremonies represented in the four paintings, and described in his Motes, to which this Certificate refers; and that he has therein faithfully represented those scenes as we saw them transacted, without any addition or exaggeration.

J. Kipp, Agent Amer. Fur Company.

L. CRAWFORD, Clerk. "Mandan Village", July 20, 1833. ABRAHAM BOGARD

---

J. Kipp, Agent Amer. Fur Company.

L. CRAWFORD, Clerk. "Mandan Village", July 20, 1833. ABRAHAM BOGARD.))

The strange country that I am in -- its excitements -- its accidents and wild incidents which startle me at almost every moment, prevent me from any very elaborate disquisition upon the above remarkable events at present; and even had I all the time and leisure of a country gentleman, and all the additional information which I am daily procuring, and daily expect to procure hereafter in explanation of these unaccountable mysteries, yet do I fear that there would be that inexplicable difficulty that hangs over most of the customs and traditions of these simple people, who have no history to save facts and systems from falling into the most absurd and disjointed fable and ignorant fiction.

What few plausible inferences I have as yet been able to draw from the above strange and peculiar transactions I will set forth, but with some diffidence, hoping and trusting that by further intimacy and familiarity with these people I may yet arrive at more satisfactory and important results.

That these people should have a tradition of the Flood is by no means surprising; as I have learned from every tribe I have visited, that they all have some high mountain in their vicinity, where they insist upon it the big canoe landed; but that these people should hold an annual celebration of the event, and the season of that decided by such circumstances as the full leaf of the willow, and the medicine-lodge opened by such a man as Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (who appears to be a white man), and making his appearance "from the high-mountains in the West"; and some other circumstances, is surely a very remarkable thing, and requires some extraordinary attention.

This Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (first or only man) is undoubtedly some mystery or medicine-man of the tribe, who has gone out on the prairie on the evening previous, and having dressed and painted himself for the occasion, comes into the village in the morning, endeavoring to keep up the semblance of reality; for their tradition says, that at a very ancient period such a man did actually come from the West -- that his body was of the white colour, as this man's body is represented -- that he wore a robe of four white wolf skins -- his head-dress was made of two raven's skins -- and in his left hand was a huge pipe. He said, "he was at one time the only man -- he told them of the destruction of every thing on the earth's surface by water -- that he stopped in His big canoe on a high mountain in the West, where he landed and was saved."

"That the Mandans, and all other people were bound to make yearly sacrifices of some edged-tools to the water, for of such things the big canoe was made. That he instructed the Mandans how to build their medicine lodge, and taught them also the forms of these annual ceremonies; and told them that as long as they made these sacrifices, and performed their rites to the full letter, they might be assured of the fact, that they would be the favorite people of the Almighty, and would always have enough to eat and drink; and that so soon as they should depart in one tittle from these forms, they might be assured, that their race would decrease, and finally run out; and that they might date their nation's calamity to that omission or neglect."

These people have, no doubt, been long living under the dread of such an injunction, and in the fear of departing from it; and while they are living in total ignorance of its origin, tire world must remain equally ignorant of much of its meaning, as they needs must be of all Indian customs resting on ancient traditions, which soon run into fables, having lost all their system, by which they might have been construed.

J. Kipp, Agent Amer. Fur Company.

L. CRAWFORD, Clerk. "Mandan Village", July 20, 1833. ABRAHAM BOGARD

---

This strange and unaccountable custom, is undoubtedly peculiar to the Mandans; although, amongst the Minatarees, and some others of the neighboring- tribes, they have seasons of abstinence and self-torture, somewhat similar, but bearing no other resemblance to this than a mere feeble effort or form of imitation.

It would seem from their tradition of the willow branch, and the dove, that these people must have had some proximity to some part of the civilized world; or that missionaries or others have been formerly among them, inculcating the Christian religion and the Mosaic account of the Flood; which is, in this and some other respects, decidedly different from the theory which most natural people have distinctly established of that event.

There are other strong, and almost decisive proofs in my opinion, in support of the assertion, which are to be drawn from the diversity of colour in their hair and complexions, as I have before described, as well as from their tradition just related, of the "first or only man," whose body was white, and who came from the West, telling them of the destruction of the earth by water, and instructing them in tire forms of these mysteries: and, in addition to the above, I will add the two following very curious stories, which I had from several of their old and dignified chiefs, and which are, no doubt, standing and credited traditions of the tribe.

The Mandans (people of the pheasants) were the first people created in tire world, and they originally lived inside of the earth; they raised many vines, and one of them had grown up through a hole in the earth, over head, and one of their young men climbed up it until he came out on the top of the ground, on the bank of the river, where the Mandan village stands. He looked around, and admired the beautiful country and prairies about him -- saw many buffaloes -- killed one with his bow and arrows, and found that its meat was good to eat. He returned, and related what he had seen; when a number of others went up the vine with him, and witnessed the same things. Amongst those who went up, were two very pretty young women, who were favorites of the chiefs, because they were virgins ; and amongst those who were trying to get up, was a very large and fat woman, who was ordered by the chiefs not to go up, but whose curiosity led her to try it as soon as she got a secret opportunity, when there was no one present. When she got part of the way up, the vine broke under the great weight of her body, and let her down. She was very much hurt by the fall, but did not die. The Mandans were very sorry about this; and she was disgraced for being the cause of a very great calamity, which she had brought upon them, and which could never be averted; for no more could ever ascend, nor could those descend who had got up; but they built the Mandan village, where it formerly stood, a great ways below on die river; and the remainder of the people live under ground to this day." The above tradition is told with great gravity by their chiefs and doctors or mystery-men; and the latter profess to hear their friends talk through the earth at certain times and places, and even consult them for their opinions and advice on many important occasions-

The next tradition runs thus :-

"At a very ancient period, O-kee-hee-de (the Evil Spirit, the black fellow mentioned in the religious ceremonies) came to the Mandan village with Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (the first or only man) from the West, and sat down by a woman who had but one eye, and was hoeing corn. Her daughter, who was very pretty came up to her, and the Evil Spirit desired her to go and bring some water; but wished that before she started, she would come to him and eat some buffalo meat. He told her to take a piece out of his side, which she did and ate it, which proved to be buf-

J. Kipp, Agent Amer. Fur Company.

L. CRAWFORD, Clerk. "Mandan Village", July 20, 1833. ABRAHAM BOGARD

---

falo-fat. She then went for the water, which she brought, and met them in the village where they had walked, and they both drank of it -- nothing more was done.

"The friends of the girl soon after endeavored to disgrace her, by telling her that she was enciente, which site did not deny. Site declared her innocence at the same time, and boldly defied any man in the village to come forward and accuse her. This raised a great excitement in the village, and as no one could stand forth to accuse her, she was looked upon as great medicine. She soon after went off secretly to the upper Mandan village, where the child was born.

"Great search was made for her before she was found ; as it was decided that the child would also be great medicine or mystery, and of great importance to the existence and welfare of the tribe. They were induced to this belief from the very strange manner of its conception and birth, and were soon confirmed in it from the wonderful things which it did at an early age. They say, that amongst other miracles which he performed, when the Mandans were like to starve, he gave them four buffalo bulls, which filled the whole village -- leaving as much meat as there was before they had eaten; saying that these four bulls would supply them for ever. Nu-mobli-mucka-nah (the first or only man) was bent on the destruction of the child, and after making many fruitless searches for it, found it hidden in a dark place, and put it to death by throwing it into the river.

"When O-kee-hee-de (the Evil Spirit) heard of the death of this child, he sought for Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah with intent to kill him. He traced him a long distance, and at length found him at Heart River, about seventy miles below the village, with the big medicine-pipe in his hand, the charm or mystery of which protects him from all of his enemies. They soon agreed, however, to become friends, smoked the big pipe together, and returned to the Mandan village. The Evil Spirit was satisfied; and Numohli-muck-a-na told the Mandans never to pass Heart River to live, for it was the center of the world, and to live beyond it would be destruction to them; and he named it Nat-com-pa-sa-hah (heart or center of the world)."

Such are a few of the principal traditions of these people, which I have thought proper to give in this place, and I have given them in their own way, with all the imperfections and absurd inconsistencies which should be expected to characterize the history of ail ignorant and superstitious people who live in a state of simple and untaught nature, with no other means of perpetuating historical events, than by oral traditions.

I advance these vague stories then, as I have done, and shall do in other instances, not in support of any theory, but merely as I have heard them related by the Indians; and preserved them, as I have everything else that I could meet in the Indian habits and character, for the information of the world, who may get more time to theorize than I have at present; and who may consider better than I can, how far such traditions should be taken as evidence of the facts, that these people have for a long period preserved anti perpetuated an imperfect knowledge of the Deluge -- of the appearance and death of a Savior -- and of the transgressions of mother Eve.

I am not yet able to learn from these people whether they have any distinct theory of the creation; as they seem to date nothing further back than their own existence as a people; saying (as I have before mentioned), that they where the first people created; involving the glaring absurdities that they were the only people on earth before the Flood, and the only one saved was a white man; or that they were created inside of the earth, as their tradition says; and that they did not make their appearance on its outer surface until after the Deluge. When an Indian story is told, it is like all other gifts, "to be taken for what it is worth", and for any seeming inconsistency in their traditions

---

J. Kipp, Agent Amer. Fur Company.

L. CRAWFORD, Clerk. "Mandan Village", July 20, 1833. ABRAHAM BOGARD

---

there is no remedy; for as far as I have tried to reconcile them by reasoning with, or questioning them, I have been entirely defeated; and more than that, have generally incurred their distrust and ill-will. One of the Mandan doctors told me very gravely a few days since, that the earth was a large tortoise, that it carried the dirt on its back -- that a tribe of people, who are now dead, and whose faces were white, used to dig down very deep in this ground to catch badgers; and that one day they stuck a knife through the tortoise-shell, and it sunk down so that the water ran over its back, and drowned all but one man. And on the next day while I was painting his portrait, he told me there were four tortoises, -- one in the North -- one in the East -- one in the South, and one in the West : that each one of these rained ten days, and the water covered over the earth.

These ignorant and conflicting accounts, and both from the same man, give as good a demonstration, perhaps, of what I have above mentioned, as to the inefficiency of Indian traditions as anything I could at present mention. They might, perhaps, have been in this instance however the creeds of different sects, or of different priests amongst them, who often advance diametrically opposite theories and traditions relative to history and mythology.

And however ignorant and ridiculous they may seem, they are yet worthy of a little further consideration, as relating to a number of curious circumstances connected with the unaccountable religious ceremonies which I have just described.

The Mandan chiefs and doctors, in all their feasts, where the pipe is lit and about to be passed around, deliberately propitiate the good-will and favour of the Great Spirit, by extending the stem of the pipe upwards before they smoke it themselves; and also as deliberately and as strictly offering the stem to the four cardinal points in succession, and then drawing a whiff through it, passing it around amongst the group.

The annual religious ceremony invariably lasts four days, and the other following circumstances attending these strange forms, and seeming to have some allusion to the four cardinal points, or the "four tortoises", seem to me to be worthy of further notice. Four men are selected by Numohkmuck-a-nah (as I have before said), to cleanse out and prepare the medicine lodge for the occasion -- one he calls from the north part of the village -- one from the east -- one from the south, and one from the west. The four sacks of water, in form of large tortoises, resting on the floor of the lodge and before described, would seem to be typical of the same thing; and also the four buffalo, and the four human skulls resting on the floor of the same lodge -- the four couples of dancers in the "bull-dance", as before described; and also the four intervening dancers in the same dance, and also described.

The bull-dance in front of the medicine-lodge, repeated on the four days, is danced four times on the first day, eight times on the second, twelve times on the third, and sixteen times on the fourth; (adding four dances on each of the four days,) which added together make forty, the exact number of days that it rained upon the earth, according to the Mosaic account, to produce the Deluge. There are four sacrifices of black and blue cloths erected over the door of the medicine-lodge -- the visits of Oh-kee-hee-de (or Evil Spirit) were paid to four of the buffaloes in the buffalo-dance, as above described; and in every instance, the young men who underwent the tortures before explained, had four splints or skewers run through the flesh on their legs -- four through the arms and four through the body.

Such is a brief account of these strange scenes which I have just been witnessing, and such my brief history of the Mandans. I might write much more on them, giving yet a volume on their

---

J. Kipp, Agent Amer. Fur Company.

L. CRAWFORD, Clerk. "Mandan Village", July 20, 1833. ABRAHAM BOGARD

---

stories and traditions; but it would be a volume of fables, and scarce worth recording. A nation of Indians I, their primitive condition, where there are no historians, have but temporary historical existence, for the reasons above advanced, and their history, what can be certainly learned of it, may be written in a very small compass.

I have dwelt longer on the history and customs of these people than I have or shall on any other tribe, in all probability, and that from the fact that I have found them a very peculiar people, as will have been seen by my notes.

From these very numerous and striking peculiarities in their personal appearance--their customs -- traditions and language, I have been led conclusively to believe that they are a people of decidedly a different origin from that of any other tribe in these regions.

From these reasons, as well as from the fact that they are a small and feeble tribe, against whom the powerful tribe of Sioux are waging a deadly war with the prospect of their extermination; and who with their limited numbers, are not likely to hold out long in their struggle for existence, I have taken more pains to portray their whole character, than my limited means will allow me to bestow upon other tribes.

From the ignorant anti barbarous and disgusting customs just recited, the world would naturally infer, that these people must be the most cruel and inhuman beings in the world -- yet, such is not the case, and it becomes duty to say it; a better, more honest, hospitable and kind people, as a community, are not to be found in the world. No set of men that ever I associated with have better hearts than the Mandans, and none are quicker to embrace and welcome a white man than they are -- none will press him closer to his bosom, that the pulsation of his heart may be felt, than a Mandan; and no man in any country will keep his word and guard his honour more closely.

The shocking and disgusting custom that I have just described, sickens the heart and even the stomach of a traveller in the country, and he weeps for their ignorance--he pities them with all his heart for their blindness, and laments that the light of civilization, of agriculture and religion cannot be extended to them, and that their hearts which are good enough, could not be turned to embrace something more rational and conducive to their true happiness.

Many would doubtless ask, whether such a barbarous custom could be eradicated from these people? And whether their thoughts and tastes, being turned to agriculture and religion, could be made to abandon the dark and random channel in which they are drudging, and made to flow in the light and life of civilization?

To this query I answer yes. Although this is a custom of long standing, being a part of their religion; and probably valued as one of their dearest rights; and notwithstanding the difficulty of making inroads upon the religion of a people in whose country there is no severance of opinions, and consequently no division into different sects, with different creeds to shake their faith; I still believe, and I know, that by a judicious and persevering effort, this abominable custom, and others, might be extinguished, and the beautiful green fields about the Mandan village might be turned into productive gardens, and the waving green bluffs that are spread in the surrounding distance, might be spotted with lowing kine, instead of the sneaking wolves and the hobbled war-horses that are now stalking without them.

All ignorant and superstitious people, it is a well-known fact, are the most fixed and stubborn in their religious opinions, and perhaps the most difficult to divert from their established belief, from the very fact that they are the most difficult to reason with. Here is an ignorant race of

J. Kipp, Agent Amer. Fur Company.

L. CRAWFORD, Clerk. "Mandan Village", July 20, 1833. ABRAHAM BOGARD

---

human beings, who have from time immemorial been in the habit of worshiping in their own way, and of enjoying their religious opinions without ever having heard any one to question their correctness; and in those opinions they are quiet and satisfied, and it requires a patient, gradual, and untiring effort to convince such a people that they are wrong, and to work the desired change in their belief, and consequently in their actions.

It is decidedly my opinion, however, that such a thing can be done, and I do not believe there is a race of wild people on earth where the experiment could be more successfully made than amongst the kind and hospitable Mandans, nor any place where the Missionary labours of pious and industrious men would be more sure to succeed, or more certain to be rewarded in the world to come.

I deem such a trial of patience and perseverance with these people of great importance, and well worth the experiment. One which I shall hope soon to see accomplished, and which, if properly conducted, I am sure will result in success. Severed as they are from the contaminating and counteracting vices which oppose and thwart most of the best efforts of the Missionaries along the frontier, and free from the almost fatal prejudices which they have there to contend with: they present a better field for the labours of such benevolent teachers than they have yet worked in, and a far better chance than they have yet had of proving to the world that the poor Indian is not a brute -- that he is a human and humane being, that he is capable of improvement -- and that his mind is a beautiful blank on which anything can be written if the proper means be taken.

The Mandans being but a small tribe, of two thousand only, and living all in two villages, in sight of each other, and occupying these permanently, without roaming about like other neighboring tribes, offer undoubtedly, the best opportunity for such an experiment of any tribe in the country. The land about their villages is of the best quality for ploughing and grazing, and the water just such as would be -desired. Their villages are fortified with piquets or stockades, which protect them from the assaults of their enemies at home; and the introduction of agriculture (which would supply them with the necessaries and luxuries of life, without the necessity if continually exposing their lives to their more numerous enemies on the plains, when they are seeking in the chase the means of their subsistence) would save them from the continual wastes of life, to which in their wars and the chase they are continually exposed, and which are calculated soon to result in their extinction.

I deem it not folly nor idle to say that these people can be saved, nor officious to suggest to some of the very many excellent and pious men, who are almost throwing away the best energies of their lives along the debased frontier, that if they would introduce the ploughshare and their prayers amongst these people, who are so far separated from the taints and contaminating vices of the frontier, they would soon see their most ardent desires; accomplished and be able to solve to the world the perplexing enigma, by presenting a nation of savages, civilized and Christianized (and consequently saved), in the heart of the American wilderness.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 23.

MINATAREE VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

Soon after witnessing the curious scenes described in the former Letters, I changed my position to the place from whence I am now writing -- to the village of the Minatarees, which is also located on the west bank of the Missouri river, and only eight miles above the Mandans. On my way down the river in my canoe, I passed this village without attending to their earnest and, clamorous invitations for me to come ashore, and it will -- thus be seen that I am retrograding a little, to see all that is to be seen in this singular country.

I have been here some weeks, and am able already to say of these people as follows: --

The Minatarees (people of the willows) are a small tribe of about 1500 souls, residing in three villages of earth-covered lodges, on the banks of Knife river; a small stream, so called, meandering through a beautiful and extensive prairie, and uniting its waters with the Missouri.

This small community is undoubtedly a part of the tribe of Crows, of whom I have already spoken, living at the base of the Rocky Mountains, who have at some remote period, either in their war or hunting excursions, been run off by their enemy, and their retreat having been prevented, have thrown themselves upon the hospitality of the Mandans, to whom they have looked for protection, and under whose wing they are now living in a sort of confederacy, ready to intermarry and also to join, as they often have done, in the common defense of their country.

In language and personal appearance, as well as in many of their customs, they are types of the Crows; yet having adopted and so long lived under its influence, the system of the Mandans, they are much like them in many respects, and continually assimilating to the modes of their patrons and protectors. Amongst their vague and various traditions they have evidently some disjointed authority for the manner in which they came here; but no account of the time. They say, that they came poor -- without wigwams or homes -- were nearly all women, as their warriors had been killed off in their flight; that the Mandans would not take them into their village, nor let their come nearer than where they are now living, and there assisted them to build their villages. From these circumstances their wigwams have been constructed exactly in the same manner as those of the Mandans, which I have already described, and entirely distinct from any custom to be seen in the Crow tribe.

Notwithstanding the long familiarity in which they have lived with the Mandans, and the complete adoption of most of their customs, yet it is almost an unaccountable fact, that there is scarcely a man in the tribe who can speak half a dozen words of the Mandan language; although on the other hand, the Mandans are most of them able to converse in the Minataree tongue; leaving us to conclude, either that the Minatarees are a very inert and stupid people, or that the Mandan language (which is most probably the case) being different from any other language in the country, is an exceedingly difficult one to learn.

The principal village of the Minatarees which is built upon the bank of the Knife river, contains

---

forty or fifty earth-covered wigwams, from forty to fifty feet in diameter, and being elevated, overlooks the other the other two, which are on lower ground and almost lost amidst their numerous corn fields and other profuse vegetation which cover the earth with their luxuriant growth.

The scenery along the banks of this little riser, from village to village is quite peculiar and curious; rendered extremely so by the continual wild and garrulous groups of men, women, and children, who are wending their way along its winding shores, or dashing and plunging through its blue waves, enjoying the luxury of swimming, of which both; sexes seem to be passionately fond. Others are paddling about in their tub-like canoes, made of the skins of buffaloes; and every now and then, are to be seen their sudatories, or vapour-baths, where steam is raised by throwing water on to heated stones; and the patient jumps from his sweating-house and leaps into the river in the highest state of perspiration, as I have more fully described whilst speaking of the bathing of the Mandans.

The chief sachem of this tribe is a very ancient and patriarchal looking man, by the name of Eeh-tohk-pah-shee-pee-shah (the black moccasin), and counts, undoubtedly, more than an hundred snows. I have been for some days an inmate of his hospitable lodge, where he sits tottering with age, and silently reigns sole monarch of his little community around him, who are continually dropping in to cheer his sinking energies, and render him their homage. His voice and his sight are nearly gone; but the gestures of his hands are yet energetic and youthful, and freely speak the language of his kind heart.

I have been treated in the kindest manner by this old chief; and have painted his portrait as he was seated on the floor of his wigwam, smoking his pipe, whilst he was recounting over to me some of the extraordinary feats of his life, with a beautiful Crow robe wrapped around him, and his hair wound up in a conical form upon his head, and fastened with a small wooden pin, to keep it in its place.

The man has many distinct recollections of Lewis and Clarke, who were the first explorers of this country, and who crossed the Rocky Mountains thirty years ago. It will be seen by reference to their very interesting history of their tour, that they were treated with great kindness by this man; and that they in consequence constituted him chief of the tribe, with the consent of his people; and he has remained their chief ever since. He enquired very earnestly for "Red Hair" and "Long Knife" (as he had ever since termed Lewis and Clarke), from the fact, that one had red hair (an unexampled thing in his country), and the other wore a broad sword which gained for him the appellation of "Long Knife".

I have told him that "Long Knife" has been many years dead; and that "Red Hair" is yet living in St. Louis, and no doubt, would be glad to hear of him; at which he seemed much pleased, and has signified to me that he will make me bearer of some peculiar dispatches to him. The name by which these people are generally called (Grosventres) is one given them by the French Traders, and has probably been applied to them with some degree of propriety or fitness, as contradistinguished from the Mandans amongst whom these Traders were living; and who are a small race of Indians, being generally at or below the average stature of man; whilst the Minatarees are generally tall and heavily built. There is no tribe in the western wilds, perhaps, who are better entitled to the style of warlike, than the Minatarees; for they, unlike the Mandans, are continually carrying war into their enemies' country; oftentimes drawing the poor Mandans into unnecessary broils, and suffering so much themselves in their desperate warexcursions, that I find the proportion of

women to the number of men as two or three to one, through the tribe.

The son of Black Moccasin, whose name is Ee-a-chin-che-a (the red thunder), and who is reputed one of the most desperate warriors of his tribe, I have also painted at full length, in his war-dress, with his bow in his hand, his quiver slung, and his shield upon his arm. In this plight, sans head-dress, sans robe, and sans everything that might be an useless incumbrance -- with the body chiefly naked, and profusely bedaubed with red and black paint, so as to form an almost Perfect disguise, the Indian warriors invariably sally forth to war; save the chief, who always plumes himself, and leads on his little band, tendering himself to his enemies a conspicuous mark, with all his ornaments and trophies upon him; that his enemies, if they get him, may get a prize worth the fighting for.

Besides chiefs and warriors to be admired in this little tribe, there are many beautiful and voluptuous looking women, who are continually crowding in throngs, and gazing upon a stranger; and possibly shedding more bewitching smiles from a sort of necessity, growing out of the great disparity in numbers between them and the rougher sex, to which I have before alluded.

From the very numerous groups of these that have from day to day constantly pressed upon me, overlooking the operations of my brush; I have been unable to get more than one who would consent to have her portrait painted, owing to some fear or dread of harm that might eventually ensue in consequence; or from a natural coyness or timidity, which is surpassing all description amongst these wild tribes, when in presence of strangers.

The one whom I have painted is a descendant from the old chief; and though not the most beautiful, is yet a fair sample of them, and dressed in a beautiful costume of the mountain-sheep skin, handsomely garnished with porcupine quills and beads. This girl was almost compelled to stand for her picture by her relatives who urged her on, whilst: she modestly declined, offering as her excuse that "she was not pretty enough, and that her picture would be laughed at." This was either ignorance or excessive art on her part; for she was certainly more than comely, and the beauty of her name, Seet-se-be-a (the midday sun) is quite enough to make up for a deficiency, if there were any, in the beauty of her face.

I mentioned that I found these people raising abundance of corn or maize; and I have happened to visit them in the season of their festivities, which annually take place when the ears of corn are of the proper size for eating. The green corn is considered a great luxury by all those tribes who cultivate it; and is ready for eating as soon as the ear is of full size, and the kernels are expanded to their full growth, but are yet soft and pulpy. In this green state of the corn, it is boiled and dealt out in great profusion to the whole tribe, who feast and surfeit upon it whilst it lasts; rendering thanks to the Great Spirit for the return of this joyful season, which they do by making sacrifices, by dancing, and singing songs or thanksgiving. This joyful occasion is one valued alike, and conducted in a similar manner, by most of the tribes who raise the corn, however remote they may be from each other. It lasts but for a week or ten days; being limited to the longest term that the corn remains in this tender and palatable state; during which time all hunting, and all war-excursions, and all other avocations, are positively dispensed with; and all join in the most excessive indulgence of gluttony and conviviality that can possibly be conceived. The fields of corn are generally pretty well stripped during this excess; and the poor improvident Indian thanks the Great Spirit for the indulgence he has had, and is satisfied to ripen merely the few ears that are necessary for his next year's planting, without reproaching himself for his wanton lavishness, which has laid

waste his fine fields, and robbed him of the golden harvest, which might have gladdened his heart, with those of his wife and little children, through the cold and dreariness of winter.

The most remarkable feature of these joyous occasions is the "green corn-dance", which is always given as preparatory to the feast, and by most of the tribes in the following manner :---

At the usual season, and the time when from outward appearance of the stalks and ears of the corn, it is supposed to be nearly ready for use, several of the old women who are the owners of fields or patches of corn (for such are the proprietors and cultivators of all crops in Indian countries, the men never turning their hands to such degrading occupations) are delegated by the medicine-men to look at the corn fields every morning at sun-rise, and bring into the council-house, where the kettle is ready, several ears of corn, the husks of which the women are not allowed to break open or even to peep through. The women then are from day to day discharged and the doctors left to decide, until from repeated examinations they come to the decision that it will do; when they dispatch runners or criers, announcing to every part of the village or tribe that the Great Spirit has been kind to them, and they must all meet on the next day to return thanks for his goodness. That all must empty their stomachs, and prepare for the feast that is approaching.

On the day appointed by the doctors, the villagers are all assembled, and in the midst of the group a kettle is hung over a fire and filled with the green corn, which is well boiled, to be given to the Great Spirit, as a sacrifice necessary to be made before any one can indulge the cravings of his appetite. Whilst this first kettle full is boiling, four medicine-men, with a stalk of the corn in one hand and a rattle (she-she-quoi) in the other, with their bodies painted with white clay, dance around the kettle, chanting a song of thanksgiving to the Great Spirit to whom the offering is to be made. At the same time a number of warriors are dancing around in a more extended circle, with stalks of the corn in their hands, and joining also in the song of thanksgiving, whilst the villagers are all assembled and looking on. During this scene there is an arrangement of wooden bowls laid upon the ground, in which the feast is to be dealt out, each one having in it a spoon made of the buffalo or mountain-sheep's horn.

In this wise the dance continues until the doctors decide that the corn is sufficiently boiled; it then stops for a few moments, and again assumes a different form and a different song, whilst the doctors are placing the ears on a little scaffold of sticks, which they erect immediately over the fire where it is entirely consumed, as they join again in the dance around it.

The fire is then removed, and with it the ashes, which together are buried in the ground, and new fire is originated on the same spot where the old one was, by friction, which is done by a desperate and painful exertion by three men seated on the ground, facing each other and violently drilling the end of a stick into a hard block of wood by rolling it between the hands, each one catching it in turn from the others without allowing the motion to stop until smoke, and at last a spark of fire is seen and caught in a piece of spunk, when there is great rejoicing in the crowd. With this a fire is kindled, and the kettle full of corn again boiled for the feast, at which the chiefs, doctors, and warriors are seated; and after this an unlimited licence is given to the whole tribe, who surfeit upon it and indulge in all their favorite amusements and excesses, until the fields of corn are exhausted, or its ears have become too hard for their comfortable mastication.

Such are the general features of the green corn festivity and dance amongst most of the tribes; and amongst some there are many additional forms and ceremonies gone through, preparatory to the

indulgence in the feast.

Some of the southern tribes concoct a most bitter and nauseating draught, which they call asceola (the black drink), which they drink to excess for several days previous to the feast; ejecting everything from their stomachs and intestines, enabling them after this excessive and painful purgation, to commence with the green corn upon an empty and keen stomach.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 24.

MINATAREE VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI,

EPISTLES from such a strange place as this, where I have no desk to write from, or mail to send them by, are hastily scribbled off in my notebook, as I can steal a little time from the gaze of the wild group that is continually about me; and instead of sending them, Keeping them to bring with me when I make my retreat from the country.

The only place where I can satisfactorily make these entries is in the shade of some sequestered tree, to which I occasionally resort, or more often from my bed (from which I am now writing), enclosed by a sort of curtains made of the skins of elks or buffaloes, completely encompassing me, where I am reclining on a sacking-bottom, made of the buffalo's hide; making my entries and notes of the incidents of the past day, amidst the roar and unintelligible din of savage conviviality that is going on under the same roof, and under my own eye, whenever I feel disposed to apply it to a small aperture which brings at once the whole interior and all its inmates within my view.

There are at this time some distinguished guests, besides myself, in the lodge of the Black Moccasin; two chiefs or leaders of a party of Crows, who arrived here a few days since, on a visit to their ancient friends and relatives. The consequence has been, that feasting and carousing have been the "order of the day" here for some time; and I have luckily been a welcome participator in their entertainments. A distinguished chief of the Minatarees, with several others in company, has been for some months past on a visit to the Crows and returned, attended by some remarkably fine looking fellows, all mounted on fine horses. I have said something of these fine specimens of the human race heretofore; and as I have been fastening more of them to the canvass within the few days past, I must use this occasion to add what follows :

I think I have said that no part of the human race could present a more picturesque and thrilling appearance on horseback than a party of Crows rigged out in all their plumes and trappings--galloping about and yelping, in what they call a war-parade, I. e. in a sort of tournament or sham-fight, passing rapidly through the evolutions of battle, and vaunting forth the wonderful character of their military exploits. This is an amusement, of which they are excessively fond; and great preparations are invariably made for these occasional shows.

No tribe of Indians on the Continent are better able to produce a pleasing and thrilling effect in these scenes, nor any more vain, and consequently better prepared to draw pleasure and satisfaction from them, than the Crows. They may be justly said to be the most beautifully clad of all the Indians in these regions, and bringing from the base of the Rocky Mountains a fine and spirited breed of the wild horses, have been able to create a great sensation amongst the Minatarees, who have been paying them all attention and all honours for some days past.

From amongst these showy fellows who have been entertaining us and pleasing themselves with their extraordinary feats of horsemanship, I have selected one of the most conspicuous, and transferred him and his horse, with arms and trappings, as faithfully as I could to the canvass, for the

information of the world, who will learn vastly more from lines and colours than they could from oral or written delineations.

I have painted him as he sat for me, balanced on his leaping wild horse with his shield and quiver slung on his back, and his long lance decorated with the eagle's quills, trailed in his right hand. His shirt and his leggings, and moccasins, were of the mountain-goat skins, beautifully dressed; and their seams everywhere fringed with a profusion of scalp-locks taken from the heads of his enemies slain in battle. His long hair, which reached almost to the ground whilst he was standing on his feet, was now lifted in the air, and floating in black waves over the hips of his leaping charger. On his head, and over his shining black locks, he wore a magnificent crest or head-dress, made of the quills of the war-eagle and ermine skins; and on his horse's head also was another of equal beauty and precisely the same in pattern and material. Added to these ornaments there were yet many others which contributed to his picturesque appearance, and amongst them a beautiful netting of various colours, that completely covered and almost obscured the horse's head and neck, and extended over its back and its hips, terminating in a most extravagant and magnificent crupper, embossed and fringed with rows of beautiful shells and porcupine quills of various colours.

With all these picturesque ornaments and trappings upon and about him, with a noble figure, and the bold stamp of a wild gentleman on his face, added to the rage and spirit of his wild horse, in time with whose leaps he issued his startling (though smothered) yelps, as he gracefully leaned to and fro, leaving his plumes and his plumage, his long locks and his fringes, to float in the wind, he galloped about; and felt exceeding pleasure in displaying the extraordinary skill which a lifetime of practice and experiment had furnished him in the beautiful art of riding and managing his horse, as well as in displaying to advantage his weapons and ornaments of dress, by giving them the grace of motion, as they were brandished in the air and floating in the wind.

I have also secured the portraits of Ee-he-a-duck-chee-a (he who ties his hair before, and Pa-ris-ka-roo-pa (the two Crows); fine and fair specimens of this tribe, in both of which are exhibited the extraordinary instances of the natural hair reaching to the ground, peculiarities belonging almost exclusively to this tribe, and of which I have in a former Letter given some account. In presenting such instances as these, I offer them, (and the reader will take them of course) as extraordinary and rare occurrences amongst the tribe, who generally fall short of these in this peculiarity, and also in elegance of dress and ornament; although many others from their numbers might be selected of equal extravagance. The Crows are generally handsome, and comfortably clad: every man in the nation oils his hair with a profusion of bear's grease, and promotes its growth to the utmost of his agility; and the greater part of them cultivate it down on to the calf of the leg, whilst a few are able to make it sweep the ground.

In a former Letter I gave some account of the form of the head peculiar to this tribe, which may well be recorded as a national characteristic, and worthy further attention, which I shall give it on a future occasion. This striking peculiarity is quite conspicuous in the two portraits of which I have just spoken, exhibiting fairly, as they are both in profile, the semi-lunar outline of the face of which I have before spoken, and which strongly characterizes them as distinct from any relationship or resemblance to, the Blackfeet, Shiennies, Knisteneaux, Mandans, or other tribes now existing in these regions. The peculiar character of which I am speaking, like all other national characteristics, is of course met by many exceptions in the tribe, though the greater part of the

men are thus strongly marked with a bold and prominent anti-angular nose, with a clear and rounded arch, and a low and receding forehead; the frontal bone oftentimes appearing to have been compressed by some effort of art, in a certain degree approaching to the horrid distortion thus produced amongst the Flatheads beyond the Rocky Mountains. I learned however from repeated inquiries, that no such custom is practiced amongst them, but their heads, such as they are, are the results of a natural growth, and therefore may well be offered as the basis of a national or tribal character.

I recollect to have seen in several publications on the antiquities of Mexico, many rude drawings made by the ancient Mexicans, of which the singular profiles of these people forcibly remind me, almost bringing me to the conclusion that these people may be the descendants of the race who have bequeathed those curious and inexplicable remains to the world, and whose scattered remnants, from dire and unknown necessities of those dark and veiled ages that have gone by have been jostled and thrown along through the hideous and almost impenetrable labyrinths of the Rocky Mountains to the place of their destination where they now live. I am stopped, however, from advancing such as a theory, and much prefer to leave it to other hands, who may more easily get over difficulties which I should be afraid to encounter in the very outset, from the very important questions raised in my mind, as to the correctness of those rude and ignorant outlines, in truly establishing the looks and character of a people. Amongst a people so ignorant and so little advanced in the arts as the ancient Mexicans were, from whose tracings those very numerous drawings are copied, I think it would be assuming a great deal too much for satisfactory argument, to claim that such records were to set up to the world the looks and character of a people who have sunk into oblivion, when the heads of horses and other animals, drawn by the same hands, are so rude and so much out of drawing as scarcely to be distinguished, one from the other. I feel as if such rude outlines should be received with great caution and distrust, in establishing the character of a people; and for a fair illustration of the objection I am raising, I would refer the reader to a number of fac simile drawings which I have copied from some of the paintings of the Mandans, where most of the figures have the forehead and nose answering exactly to these Mexican outlines, and strikingly resembling the living Crows, also, when they have certainly borrowed nothing from either, nor have they any living outlines like them in their own tribe to have copied from,

Since writing the above I have passed through many vicissitudes, and witnessed many curious scenes worthy of relating, some of which I will scribble now, and leave the rest for a more leisure occasion. I have witnessed many of the valued games and amusements of this tribe, and made sketches of them; and also have painted a number of portraits of distinguished warriors and braves which will be found in my collection.

I have just been exceedingly amused with a formal and grave meeting which was called around me, formed by a number of young men, and even chiefs and doctors of the tribe, who, having heard that I was great medicine, and a great chief, took it upon themselves to suppose that I might (or perhaps must) be, a man of influence amongst the "pale faces," and capable of rendering them some relief in a case of very great grievance, under which they represented that they were suffering. Several most profound speeches were made to me, setting forth these grievances, somewhat in the following manner. They represented, that about five or six years ago, an unknown, small animal--not far differing in size from a ground squirrel, but with a long, round tail, shewed

himself slyly about one of the chief's wigwams, peeping out from under the pots and kettles, and other such things; which they looked upon as great medicine -- and no one dared to kill it; but hundreds came to watch and look at it. On one of these occasions, one of the spectators saw this strange animal catching and devouring a small "deer mouse", of which little and very destructive animals their lodges contained many. It was then at once determined that this had been an act of the Great Spirit, as a means of putting a stop to the spoliations committed by these little sappers, who were cutting their clothing, and other manufactures to pieces in a lamentable manner. Councils had been called and solemn decrees issued for the countenance and protection of this welcome visitor and its progeny, which were soon ascertained to be rapidly increasing, and calculated soon to rid them of these thousands of little depredators. It was soon, however, learned from one of the Fur Traders, that this distinguished object of their superstition (which my man Ba'tiste familiarly calls "Monsr. Ratapon") had, a short time before, landed himself from one of their keel boats, which had ascended the Missouri river for the distance of 1800 miles; and had taken up its residence, without introduction or invitation, in one of their earth-covered wigwams.

This information, for a while, curtailed the extraordinary respect they had for some time been paying to it; but its continual war upon these little mice, which it was using for its food, in the absence of all other nutriment, continued to command their respect, in spite of the manner in which it had been introduced; being unwilling to believe that it had come from that source, even, without the agency in some way of the Great Spirit.

Having been thus introduced and nurtured, and their numbers having been so wonderfully increased in the few last years, that every wigwam was infested with them -- that their caches, where they bury their corn and other provisions, were robbed and sacked; and the very pavements under their wigwams were so vaulted and sapped, that they were actually falling to the ground; they were now looked upon as a most disastrous nuisance, and a public calamity, to which it was the object of this meeting to call my attention, evidently in hopes that I might be able to designate some successful mode of relieving them from this real misfortune. I got rid of them at last, by assuring them of my deep regret for their situation, which was, to be sure, a very unpleasant one; and told them, that there was really a great deal of medicine in the thing, and that I should therefore be quite unwilling to have anything to do with it. Ba'tiste and Bogard, who are yet my daily and almost hourly companions, took to themselves a great deal of fun and amusement at the end of this interview, by suggesting many remedies for the evil, and enjoying many hearty laughs; after which, Ba'tiste, Bogard and I, took our hats; and I took my sketch-book in hand, and we started on a visit to the upper town of the Minatarees, which is half a mile or more distant, and on the other bank of the Knife River, which we crossed in the following manner. The old chief, having learned that we were to cross the river, gave direction to one of the women of his numerous household, who took upon her head a skin-canoe (more familiarly called in this country, a bull-boat), made in the form of a large tub, of a buffalo's skin, stretched on a frame of willow boughs, which she carried to the water's edge; and placing it in the water, made signs for us three to get into it. When we were in, and seated flat on its bottom, with scarce room in any way to adjust our legs and our feet (as we sat necessarily facing each other), she stepped before the boat, and pulling it along, waded towards the deeper water, with her back towards us, carefully with the other hand attending to her dress, which seemed to be but a light slip, and floating upon the surface until the water was above her waist, when it was instantly turned off, over her head, and thrown ashore;

and she boldly plunged forward, swimming and drawing the boat with one hand, which she did with apparent ease. In this manner we were conveyed to the middle of the stream, where we were soon surrounded by a dozen or more beautiful girls, from twelve to fifteen and eighteen years of age, who were at that time bathing on the opposite shore.

They all swam in a bold and graceful manner, and as confidently as so many otters or beavers; and gathering around us, with their long black hair floating about on the water, whilst their faces were glowing with jokes and fun, which they were cracking about us, and which we could not, understand.

In the midst of this delightful little aquatic group, we three sat in our little skin-bound tub (like the "three wise men of Gotham, who went to sea in a bowl," &c.), floating along down the current, losing sight, and all thoughts, of the shore, which was equal-distant from us on either side; whilst we were amusing ourselves with the playfulness of these dear little creatures who were floating about under the clear blue water, catching their hands on to the sides of our boat; occasionally raising one-half of their bodies out of the water, and sinking again, like so many mermaids.

In the midst of this bewildering and tantalizing entertainment, in which poor Ba'tiste and Bogard, as well as myself, were all taking infinite pleasure, and which we supposed was all intended for our especial amusement; we found ourselves suddenly in the delightful dilemma of floating down the current in the middle of the river; and of being turned round and round to the excessive amusement of the villagers, who were laughing at us from the shore, as well as these little tyros, whose delicate hands were besetting our tub on all sides; and for an escape from whom, or for fending off, we had neither an oar, or anything else, that we could wield in self-defense, or for self-preservation. In this awkward predicament, our feelings of excessive admiration were immediately changed, to those of exceeding vexation, as we now learned that they had peremptorily: discharged from her occupation our fair conductress, who had undertaken to ferry us safely across the river; and had also very ingeniously laid their plans, of which we had been ignorant until the present moment, to extort from us in this way, some little evidences of our liberality, which, in fact, it was impossible to refuse them, after so liberal and bewitching an exhibition on their part, as well as from the imperative obligation which the awkwardness of our situation had laid us under. I had some awls in my pockets, which I presented to them, and also a few strings of beautiful beads, which I placed over their delicate necks as they raised them out of the water by the side of our boat; after which they all joined in conducting our craft to the shore, by swimming by the sides of, and behind it, pushing it along in the direction where they designed to land it, until the water became so shallow, that their feet were upon the bottom, when they waded along with great coyness, dragging us towards the shore, as long as their bodies, in a crouching position, could possibly be half concealed under the water, when they gave our boat the last push for the shore, and raising a loud and exulting laugh, plunged back again into the river; leaving us the only alternative of sitting still where we were, or of stepping out into the water at half leg deep, and of wading to the shore, which we at once did, and soon escaped from the view of our little tormentors, and the numerous lookers-on, on our way to the upper village, which I have before mentioned.

Here I was very politely treated by the Yellow Moccasin, quite an old man, and who seemed to be chief of this band or family, constituting their little community of thirty or forty lodges, averaging, perhaps, twenty persons to each. I was feasted in this man's lodge -- and afterwards invited

to accompany him and several others to a beautiful prairie, a mile or so above the village, where the young men and young women of this town, and man!: from the village below, had assembled for their amusements; the chief of which seemed to be that of racing their horses. In the midst of these scenes, after I had been for some time a looker-on, and had felt some considerable degree of sympathy for a fine-looking young fellow, whose horse had been twice beaten on the course, and whose losses had been considerable; for which, his sister, a very modest and pretty girl, was most piteously howling and crying. I selected and brought forward an ordinary-looking pony, that was evidently too fat and too sleek to run against his fine-limbed little horse that had disappointed his high hopes; and I began to comment extravagantly upon its muscle, &c., when I discovered him evidently cheering up with the hope of getting me and my pony on to the turf with him; for which he soon made me a proposition; and I, having lauded the limbs of my little nag too much to “back out”, agreed to run a short race with him of half a mile, for three yards of scarlet cloth, a knife, and half a dozen strings of beads, which I was willing to stake against a handsome pair of leggings, which he was wearing at the time. The greatest imaginable excitement was now raised amongst the crowd by this arrangement; to see a white man preparing to run with an Indian jockey, and that with a scrub of a pony, in whose powers of running no Indian had the least confidence. Yet, there was no one in the crowd, who dared to take up the several other little bets I was willing to tender (merely for their amusement, and for their final exultation); owing, undoubtedly, to the bold and confident manner in which I had ventured on the merits of this little horse, which the tribe had all overlooked; and needs must have some medicine about it.

So far was this panic carried, that even my champion was ready to withdraw; but his friends encouraged him at length, and we galloped our horses off to the other end of the course, where we were to start; and where we were accompanied by a number of horsemen, who were to witness the “set off”. Some considerable delay here took place, from a condition, which was then named to me, and which I had not observed before, that in all the races of this day, every rider was to run entirely denuded, and ride a naked horse! Here I was completely balked, and having no one by me to interpret a word, I was quite at a loss to decide what was best to do. I found however, that remonstrance was of little avail; and as I had volunteered in this thing to gratify and flatter them, I thought it best not positively to displease them in this; so I laid off my clothes, and straddled the naked back of my round and glossy little pony, by the side of my competitor, who was also mounted and stripped to the skin, and panting with a restless anxiety for the start.

Reader I did you ever imagine that in the middle of a man’s life there could be a thought or a feeling so new to him, as to throw him instantly back to infancy; with a new world and a new genius before him—started afresh, to navigate and breathe the elements of naked and untasted liberty, which clothe him in their cool and silken robes that float about him; and wafting their life-inspiring folds to his inmost lungs? If you never have been inspired with such a feeling, and have been in the habit of believing that you have thought of, and imagined a little of every thing, try for a moment, to disrobe your mind and your body, and help me through feelings to which I cannot give utterance. Imagine yourselves as I was, with my trembling little horse underneath me, and the cool atmosphere that was floating about, and ready, more closely and familiarly to embrace me, as it did, at the next moment, when we “were off”, and struggling for the goal and the prize. Though my little Pegasus seemed to dart through the clouds, and I to be wafted on the wings of Mercury, yet my red adversary was leaving me too far behind for further competition; and I

wheeled to the left, making a circuit on the prairie, and came in at the starting point, much to the satisfaction and exultation of the jockeys; but greatly to the murmuring disappointment of the women and children, who had assembled in a dense throng to witness the “coming out” of the “white medicine-man”. I clothed myself instantly, and came back, acknowledging my defeat, and the superior skill of my competitor, as well as the wonderful muscle of his little charger, which pleased him much; and his sisters’ lamentations were soon turned to joy, by the receipt of a beautiful scarlet robe, and a profusion of vari-coloured beads, which were speedily paraded on her copper-coloured neck.

After I had seen enough of these amusements, I succeeded with some difficulty, in pulling Ba’tiste and Bogard from amongst the groups of women and girls, where they seemed to be successfully ingratiating themselves; and we trudged back to the little village of earth-covered lodges, which were hemmed in, and almost obscured from the eye, by the fields of corn and luxuriant growth of wild sun-flowers, and other vegetable productions of the soil, whose spontaneous growth had reared their heads in such profusion, as to appear all but like a dense and formidable forest.

We loitered about this little village awhile, looking into most of its lodges, and tracing its winding avenues, after which we recrossed the river and wended our way back again to head-quarters, from whence we started in the morning, and where I am now writing. This day’s ramble shewed to us all the inhabitants of this little tribe, except a portion of their warriors who are out on a war excursion against the Riccarees; and I have been exceedingly pleased with their general behavior and looks, as well as with their numerous games and amusements, in many of which I have given them great pleasure by taking a part.

The Minatarees, as I have before said, are a bold, daring, and warlike tribe; quite different in these respects from their neighbors the Mandans, carrying war continually in their enemies’ country, thereby exposing their lives and diminishing; the number of their warriors to that degree that I find two or three women to a man, through the tribe. They are bold and fearless in the chase also, and in their eager pursuits of the bison, or buffaloes, their feats are such as to excite the astonishment and admiration of all who behold them. Of these scenes I have witnessed many since I came into this country, and amongst them all, nothing have I seen to compare with one to which I was an eye-witness a few mornings since, and well worthy of being described.

The Minatarees, as well as the Mandans, had suffered for some months past for want of meat, and had indulged in the most alarming fears, that the herds of buffaloes were emigrating so far off from them, that there was great danger of their actual starvation, when it was suddenly announced through the village one morning at an early hour, that a herd of buffaloes were in sight, when an hundred or more young men mounted their horses with weapons in baud and steered their course to the prairies. The chief informed me that one of his horses was in readiness for me at the door of his wigwam, and that I had better go and see the curious affair. I accepted his polite offer, and mounting the steed, galloped off with the hunters to the prairies, where we soon descried at a distance, a fine herd of buffaloes grazing, when a halt and a council were ordered, and the mode of attack was agreed upon. I had armed myself with my pencil and my sketch-book only, and consequently took my position generally in the rear, where I could see and appreciate every manoeuvre.

The plan of attack, which in this country is familiarly called a “surround”, was explicitly agreed upon, and the hunters who were all mounted on their “buffalo horses” and armed with bows and

arrows or long lances, divided into two columns, taking opposite directions, and drew themselves gradually around the herd at a mile or more distance from them; thus forming a circle of horsemen at equal distances apart, who gradually closed in upon them with a moderate pace, at a signal given.

The unsuspecting herd at length "got the wind" of the approaching enemy and fled in a mass in the greatest confusion. To the point where they were aiming to cross the line, the horsemen were seen at full speed, gathering and forming in a column, brandishing their weapons and yelling in the most frightful manner, by which means they turned the black and rushing mass which moved off in an opposite direction where they were again met and foiled in a similar manner, and wheeled back in utter confusion; by which time the horsemen had closed in from all directions, forming a continuous line around them, whilst the poor affrighted animals were eddying about in a crowded and confused mass, hooking and climbing upon each other; when the work of death commenced. I had rode up in the rear and occupied an elevated position at a few rods distance, from which I could (like the general of a battle field) survey from my horse's back, the nature and the progress of the grand melee; but (unlike him) without the power of issuing a command or in any way directing its issue.

In this grand turmoil, a Cloud of dust was soon raised, which in parts obscured the throng where the hunters were galloping their horses around and driving the whizzing arrows or their long lances to the hearts of these noble animals; which in many instances, becoming infuriated with deadly wounds in their sides, erected their shaggy manes over their blood-shot eyes and furiously plunged forwards at the sides of their assailants' horses, sometimes goring them to death at a lunge, and putting their dismounted riders to flight for their lives; sometimes their dense crowd was opened, and the blinded horsemen, too intent on their prey amidst the cloud of dust, were hemmed and wedged in amidst the crowding beasts, over whose backs they were obliged to leap for security, leaving their horses to the fate that might await them in the results of this wild and desperate war. Many were the bulls that turned upon their assailants and met them with desperate resistance; and many were the warriors who were dismounted, and saved themselves by the superior muscles of their legs; some who were closely pursued by the bulls, wheeled suddenly around and snatching the part of a buffalo robe from around their waists, threw it over the horns and the eyes of the infuriated beast, and darting by its side drove the arrow or the lance to its heart. Others suddenly dashed off upon the prairies by the side of the affrighted animals which had escaped from the throng, and closely escorting them for a few rods, brought down their hearts blood in streams, and their huge carcasses upon the green and enameled turf.

In this way this grand hunt soon resolved itself into a desperate battle: and in the space of fifteen minutes, resulted in the total destruction of the whole herd, which in all their strength and fury were doomed, like every beast and living thing else, to fall before the destroying hands of mighty man.

I had sat in trembling silence upon my horse, and witnessed this extraordinary scene, which allowed not one of these animals to escape out of my sight. Many plunged off upon the prairie for a distance, but were overtaken and killed; and although I could not distinctly estimate the number that were slain, yet I am sure that some hundreds of these noble animals fell in this grand melee. The scene after the battle was over was novel and curious in the extreme; the hunters were moving about amongst the dead and dying animals, leading their horses by their halters, and claiming

their victims by their private marks upon their arrows, which they were drawing from the wounds in the animals' sides.

Amongst the poor affrighted creatures that had occasionally dashed through the ranks of their enemy, and sought safety in flight upon the prairie (and in some instances, had undoubtedly gained it), I saw them stand awhile, looking back, when they turned, and, as if bent on their own destruction, retraced their steps, and mingled themselves and their deaths with those of the dying throng. Others had fled to a distance on the prairies, and for want of company, of friends or of foes, had stood and gazed on till the battle-scene was over; seemingly taking pains to stay, and hold their lives in readiness for their destroyers, until the general destruction was over, when they fell easy victims to their weapons -- making the slaughter complete.

After this scene, and after arrows had been claimed and recovered, a general council was held, when all hands were seated on the ground, and a few pipes smoked; after which, all mounted their horses and rode back to the village.

A deputation of several of the warriors was sent to the chief, who explained to him what had been their success; and the same intelligence was soon communicated by little squads to every family in the village; and preparations were at once made for securing the meat. For this purpose, some hundreds of women and children, to whose lots fall all the drudgeries of Indian life, started out upon the trail, which led them to the battle-field, where they spent the day in skinning the animals, and cutting up the meat, which was mostly brought into the villages on their backs, as they tugged and sweated under their enormous and cruel loads.

I rode out to see this curious scene; and I regret exceedingly that I kept no memorandum of it in my sketch-book. Amidst the throng of women and children, that had been assembled, and all of whom seemed busily at work, were many superannuated and disabled nags, which they had brought out to assist in carrying in the meat; and at least, one thousand semi-loup dogs, and whelps, whose keen appetites and sagacity had brought them out, to claim their shares of this abundant and sumptuous supply.

I staid and inspected this curious group for an hour or more, during which time, I was almost continually amused by the clamorous contentions that arose, and generally ended, in desperate combats; both amongst the dogs and women, who seemed alike tenacious of their local and recently acquired rights; and disposed to settle their claims by "tooth and nail" -- by manual and brute force.

When I had seen enough of this I rode to the top of a beautiful prairie bluff, a mile or two from the scene, where I was exceedingly amused by overlooking the route that laid between this and the village, which was over the undulating green fields for several miles, that laid beneath me; over which there seemed a continual string of women, dogs and horses, for the rest of the day, passing and repassing as they were busily bearing home their heavy burthens to their village, and in their miniature appearance, which the distance gave them, not unlike to a busy community of ants as they are sometimes seen, sacking and transporting the treasures of a cupboard, or the sweets of a sugar bowl.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER-- No. 26.

MOUTH OF TETON RIVER, UPPER MISSOURI.

Since writing the above Letter I have descended the Missouri, a distance of six or seven hundred miles, in my little bark, with Ba'tiste and Bogard, my old "compagnons du voyage", and have much to say of what we three did and what we saw on our way, which will be given anon.

I am now in the heart of the country belonging to the numerous tribe of Sioux or Dahcotas, and have Indian faces and Indian customs in abundance around me. This tribe is one of the most numerous in North America, and also one of the most vigorous and warlike tribes to be found, numbering some forty or fifty thousand, and able undoubtedly to muster, if the tribe could be moved simultaneously, at least eight or ten thousand warriors, well mounted and well armed. This tribe take vast numbers of the wild horses on the plains towards the Rocky Mountains, and many of them have been supplied with guns; but the greater part of them hunt with their bows and arrows and long lances, killing their game from their horses' backs while at full speed.

The name Sioux (pronounced see-oo) by which they are familiarly called, is one that has been given to them by the French traders, the meaning of which I never have learned; their own name being, in their language, Dah-co-ta. The personal appearance of these people is very fine and prepossessing, their persons tall and straight, and their movements elastic and graceful. Their stature is considerably above that of the Mandans and Riccarees, or Blackfeet; but about equal to that of the Crows, Assinneboins and Minatarees, furnishing at least one half of their warriors of six feet or more in height.

I am here living with, and enjoying the hospitality of a gentleman by the name of Laidlaw, a Scotchman, who is attached to the American Fur Company, and who, in company with Mr. McKenzie (of whom I have before spoken) and Lamont, has the whole agency of the Fur Company's transactions in the regions of the Upper Missouri and the Rocky Mountains.

This gentleman has a finely-built Fort here, of two or three hundred feet square, enclosing eight or ten of their Factories, houses and stores, in the midst of which he occupies spacious and comfortable apartments, which are well supplied with the comforts and luxuries of life and neatly and respectably conducted by a fine looking, modest, and dignified Sioux woman, the kind and affectionate mother of his little flock of pretty and interesting children.

This Fort is undoubtedly one of the most important and productive of the American Fur Company's posts, being in the center of the great Sioux country, drawing from all quarters an immense and almost incredible number of buffalo robes, which are carried to the New York and other Eastern markets, and sold at a great profit. This post is thirteen hundred miles above St. Louis, on the west bank of the Missouri, on a beautiful plain near the mouth of the Teton river which empties into the Missouri from the West, and the Fort has received the name of Fort Pierre, in compliment to Monsr. Pierre Chouteau, who is one of the partners in the Fur Company, residing in St. Louis; and to whose politeness I am indebted, as I have before mentioned, for my passage in the

---

Company's steamer, on her first voyage to the Yellow Stone; and whose urbane and gentlemanly society, I have before said, I had during my passage.

The country about this Fort is almost entirely prairie, producing along the banks of the river and streams only, slight skirtings of timber. No site could have been selected more pleasing or more advantageous than this; the Fort is in the center of one of the Missouri's most beautiful plains, and hemmed in by a series of gracefully undulating, grass-covered hills, on all sides; rising like a series of terraces, to the summit level of the prairies, some three or four hundred feet in elevation, which then stretches off in an apparently boundless ocean of gracefully swelling waves and fields of green. On my way up the river I made a painting of this lovely spot, taken from the summit of the bluffs, a mile or two distant, shewing an encampment of Sioux, of six hundred tents or skin lodges, around the Fort, where they had concentrated to make their spring trade; exchanging their furs and peltries for articles and luxuries of civilized manufactures.

The great family of Sioux who occupy so vast a tract of country, extending from the banks of the Mississippi river to the base of the Rocky Mountains, are everywhere a migratory or roaming tribe, divided into forty-two bands or families, each having a chief who all acknowledge a superior or head chief, to whom they all are held subordinate. This subordination, however, I should rather record as their former and native regulation, of which there exists no doubt, than an existing one, since the numerous innovations made amongst these people by the Fur Traders, as well as by the proximity of civilization along a great deal of their frontier, which soon upset and change many native regulations, and particularly those relating to their government and religion. There is one principal and familiar division of this tribe into what are called the Mississippi and Missouri Sioux. Those bordering on the banks of the Mississippi, concentrating at Prairie du Chien and Fort Snelling, for the purposes of trade, &c., are called the Mississippi Sioux. These are somewhat advanced towards civilization, and familiar with white people, with whom they have held intercourse for many years, and are consequently excessive whiskey drinkers, though constituting but a meager proportion, and at the same time, but a very unfair and imperfect sample of the great mass of this tribe who inhabit the shores of the Missouri, and fearlessly roam on the vast plains intervening between it and the Rocky Mountains, and are still living entirely in their primitive condition.

There is no tribe on the Continent, perhaps, of finer looking men than the Sioux; and few tribes who are better and more comfortably clad, and supplied with the necessaries of life. There are no parts of the great plains of America which are more abundantly stocked with buffaloes and wild horses, nor any people more bold in destroying the one for food, and appropriating the other to their use. There has gone abroad, from the many histories which have been written of these people, an opinion which is too current in the world, that the Indian is necessarily a poor, drunken, murderous wretch; which account is certainly unjust as regards the savage, and doing less than justice to the world for whom such histories have been prepared. I have travelled several years already amongst these people and I have not had my scalp taken, nor a blow struck me; nor had occasion to raise my hand against an Indian; nor has my property been stolen, as yet to my knowledge, to the value of a shilling; and that in a country where no man is punishable by law for the come of stealing: still some of them steal, and murder too; and if white men did not do the same, and that in defiance of the laws of God and man, I might take satisfaction in stigmatizing the Indian character as thievish and murderous. That the Indians in their native state are "drunk-

en", is false; for they are the only temperance people, lite rally speaking, that ever I saw in my travels, or ever expect to see. If the civilized world are startled at this, it is the fact that they must battle with not with me; for these people manufacture no spirituous liquor themselves and know nothing of it until it is brought into their country and tendered them by Christians. That these people are "naked" is equally untrue, an as easily disproved; for I am sure that with the paintings I have mad amongst the Mandans and Crows, and other tribes; and with their beautiful costumes which I have procured and shall bring home, I shall be able to establish the fact that many of these people dress, not only with clothe comfortable for any latitude, but that they also dress with some consider able taste and elegance. Nor am I quite sure that they are entitled to The name of "poor", who live in a boundless country of green fields, with good horses to ride; where they are all joint tenants of the soil, together; whet the Great Spirit has supplied them with an abundance of food to eat -- what they are all indulging in the pleasures and amusements of a lifetime of idle ness and ease, with no business hours to attend to, or professions to learn where they ]rave no notes in bank or other debts to pay-no taxes, no tithes, no rents, nor beggars to touch and tax the sympathy of their son at every step they go. Such might be poverty in the Christian world, but is sure to be a blessing where the pride and insolence of comparative wealth are unknown.

I mentioned that this is the nucleus or place of concentration of the numerous tribe of the Sioux, who often congregate here in great masses to make their trades with the American Fur Company; and that on my way up the river, some months since, I found here encamped, six hundred families of Sioux, living in tents covered with buffalo hides. Amongst these there were twenty or more of the different bands, each one with their chief at their head, over whom was a superior chief and leader, a middle-aged man, of middling stature, with a noble countenance, and a figure almost equaling the Apollo, and I painted his portrait. The name of this chief is Ha-won-je-tah (The One Horn) of the Mee-ne-cow-e-gee band, who has risen rapidly to the highest honours in the tribe, from his own extraordinary merits, even at so early an age. He told me that he took the name of "One Horn" (or shell) from a simple small shell that was hanging on his neck, which descended to him from his father, and which, he said, he valued more than anything he possessed; affording a striking instance of the living affection which these people often cherish for the dead, inasmuch as he chose to carry this name through life in preference to many others and more honourable ones he had a right to have taken, from different battles and exploits of his extraordinary life. He treated me with great kindness and attention, considering himself highly complimented by the signal and unprecedented: honour I had conferred upon him by painting his portrait, and that before I had invited any other. His costume was a very handsome one, and will have a place in my INDIAN GALLERY by the side of his picture. It is made of elk skins beautifully dressed, and fringed with a profusion of porcupine quills and scalp-locks; and his hair, which is very long and profuse, divided into two parts, and lifted up and crossed, over the top of his head, with a simple tie, giving it somewhat the appearance of a Turkish turban.

This extraordinary man, before he was raised to the dignity of chief, was the renowned of his tribe for his athletic achievements. In the chase he was foremost; he could run down a buffalo, which he often had done, on his own legs, and drive his arrow to the heart. He was the fleetest in the tribe; and is the races he had run, he had always taken the prize.

It was proverbial in his tribe, that Ha-wan-je-tah's bow never was drawn in vain, and his wigwam was abundantly furnished with scalps that he had taken from his enemies' heads in battle.

Having descended the river thus far, then, and having hauled out my canoe, and taken up my quarters for awhile with mine hospitable host, Mr. Laidlaw, as I have before said; and having introduced my readers to the! country and the people, and more particularly to the chief dignitary of the Sioux; and having promised in the beginning of this letter also, that I should give them some amusing and curious information that we picked up, and incidents that we met with, on our voyage from the Mandans to this place; I have again to beg that they will pardon me for withholding from them yet awhile longer, the incidents of that curious and most important part of my Tour, the absence of which, at this time, seems to make a "hole in the ballad", though I promise my readers they are written, and will appear in the book in a proper and appropriate place.

Taking it for granted then, that I will be indulged in this freak, I am taking the liberty of presuming on my readers' patience in proposing another, which is to offer them here an extract from my Notes, which were made on my journey of 1300 miles from St. Louis to this place, where I stopped, as I have said, amongst several thousands of Sioux; where I remained for some time, and painted my numerous portraits of their chiefs, &c.; one of whom was the head and leader of the Sioux, whom I have already introduced. On the long and tedious route that lies between St. Louis and this place, I passed the Sacs and Ioways -- the Konzas -- the Omahaws, and the Ottoes (making notes on them all, which are reserved for another place), and landed at the Puncahs, a small tribe residing in one village, on the west bank of the river, 300 miles below this, and 1000 from St. Louis.

The Puncahs are all contained in seventy-five or eighty lodges, made of buffalo skins, in the form of tents; the frames for which are poles of fifteen or twenty feet in length, with the butt ends standing on the ground, and the small ends meeting at the top, forming a cone, which sheds off the rain and wind with perfect success. This small remnant of a tribe are not more than four or five hundred in numbers; and I should think, at least, two-thirds of those are women. This disparity in numbers having been produced by the continual losses which their men suffer, who are penetrating the buffalo country for meat, for which they are now obliged to travel a great way (as the buffaloes have recently left their country), exposing their lives to their more numerous enemies about them.

The chief of this tribe, whose name is Shoo-de-ga-cha (Smoke), I painted at full length, and his wife also, a young and very pretty woman, whose name is Hee-la'h-dee (The Pure Fountain); her neck and arms were curiously tattooed, which is a very frequent mode of ornamenting the body amongst this and some other tribes, which is done by pricking into the skin, gunpowder and vermilion.

The chief, who was wrapped in a buffalo robe, n a noble specimen of native dignity and philosophy. I conversed much with him; and from his dignified manners, as well as from the soundness of his reasoning, I became fully convinced that he deserved to be the sachem of a more numerous and prosperous tribe. He related to me with great coolness and frankness, the poverty and distress of his nation; and with the method of a philosopher, predicted the certain and rapid extinction of his tribe, which he had not the poor, noble chief; who was equal to, and worthy of a He sat upon the deck of the steamer, overlooking the little power to avert a greater empire! He sat upon the deck of the steamer, overlooking the little cluster of his wigwams mingled amongst the trees; and, like Caius Marius, weeping over the ruins of Carthage, shed tears as he was descanting on the poverty of his ill-fated little community, which he told me, "had once been powerful and happy;

that the buffaloes which the Great Spirit had given them for food, and which formerly spread all over their green prairies, had all been killed or driven out by the approach of white men, who wanted their skins; that their country was now entirely destitute of game, and even of roots for their food, as it was one continued prairie; and that his young men penetrating the countries of their enemies for buffaloes, which they were obliged to do, were cut to pieces and destroyed in great numbers. That his people had foolishly become fond of fire-water (whiskey), and had given away everything in their country for it -- that it had destroyed many of his warriors, and soon would destroy the rest -- that his tribe was too small, and his warriors too few to go to war with the tribes around them; that they were met and killed by the Sioux on the North, by the Pawnees on the West; and by the Osages and Konzas on the South; and still more alarmed from the constant advance of the pale faces -- their enemies from the East, with whiskey and small-pox, which already had destroyed four-fifths of his tribe, and soon would impoverish, and at last destroy the remainder of them."

In this way did this shrewd philosopher lament over the unlucky destiny of his tribe; and I pitied him with all my heart. I have no doubt of the correctness of his representations; and I believe there is no tribe on the frontier more in want, nor any more deserving of the sympathy and charity of the government and Christian societies of the civilized world.

The son of this chief, a youth of eighteen years, and whose portrait I painted, distinguished himself in a singular manner the day before our steamer reached their village, by taking to him four wives in one day! This extraordinary and unprecedented freak of his, was just the thing to make him the greatest sort of medicine in the eyes of his people; and probably he may date much of his success and greatness through life, to this bold and original step, which suddenly raised him into notice and importance.

The old chief Shoo-de-ga-cha, of whom I have spoken above, considering his son to have arrived to the age of maturity, fitted him out for house-keeping, by giving him a handsome wigwam to live in, and nine horses, with many other valuable presents; when the boy, whose name is Hongskay-de (the great chief), soon laid his plans for the proud and pleasant epoch in his life, and consummated them in the following ingenious and amusing manner.

Wishing to connect himself with, and consequently to secure the countenance of some of the most influential men in the tribe, he had held an interview with one of the most distinguished; and easily (being the son of a chief), made an arrangement for the hand of his daughter, which he was to receive on a certain day, and at a certain hour, for which he was to give two horses, a gun, and several pounds of tobacco. This was enjoined on the father as a profound secret, and as a condition of the espousal. In like manner he soon made similar arrangements with three other leading men of the tribe, each of whom had a young and beautiful daughter, of marriageable age. To each of the fathers he had promised two horses, and other presents similar to those stipulated for in the first instance, and all under the same injunctions of secrecy, until the hour approached, when he had announced to the whole tribe that he was to be married. At the time appointed, they all assembled, and all were in ignorance of the fair hand that was to be placed in his on this occasion. He had got some of his young friends who were prepared to assist him, to lead up the eight horses. He took two of them by the halters, and the other presents agreed upon in his other hand, and advancing to the first of the parents, whose daughter was standing by the side of him, saying to him, "you promised me the hand of your daughter on this day, for which I was to give you two

horses." The father assented with a "ugh!" receiving the presents, and giving his child; when some confusion ensued from the simultaneous remonstrances, which were suddenly made by the other three parents, who had brought their daughters forward, and were shocked at this sudden disappointment, as well as by the mutual declarations they were making, of similar contracts that each one had entered into with him! As soon as they could be pacified, and silence was restored, he exultingly replied, "You have all acknowledged in public your promises with me, which I shall expect you to fulfil. I am here to perform all the engagements which I have made, and I expect you all to do the same." No more was said. He led up the two horses for each, and delivered the other presents; leading off to his wigwam his four brides -- taking two in each hand, and commenced at once upon his new mode of life; reserving only one of his horses for his own daily use.

I visited the wigwam of this young installed medicine-man several times, and saw his four modest little wives seated around the fire, where all seemed to harmonize very well; and for aught I could discover, were entering very happily on the duties and pleasures of married life. I selected one of them for her portrait, and painted it, Mong-shong-shaw (The Bending Willow), in a very pretty dress of deer skins, and covered with a Young buffalo's robe, which was handsomely ornamented, and worn with much grace and pleasing effect.

Mr. Chouteau of the Fur Company, and Major Sanford, the agent for the Upper Missouri Indians, were with me at this time; and both of these gentlemen, highly pleased with go ingenious and innocent a freak, felt disposed to be liberal, and sent them many presents from the steamer.

The ages of these young brides were probably all between twelve and fifteen years, the season of life in which most of the girls in this wild country contract marriage.

It is a surprising fact, that women mature in these regions at that early age, and there have been some instances where marriage has taken place, even at eleven; and the juvenile mother has been blest with her first offspring at the age of twelve!

These facts are calculated to create surprise and almost incredulity in the mind of the reader, but there are circumstances for his consideration yet to be known, which will in a manner account for these extraordinary facts.

There is not a doubt but there is a more early approach to maturity amongst the females of this country than in civilized communities, owing either to a natural and constitutional difference, or to the exposed and active life they lead. Yet there is another and more general cause of early marriage (and consequently apparent maturity), which arises out of the modes and forms of the country, where most of the marriages are contracted with the parents, hurried on by the impatience of the applicant, and prematurely accepted and consummated on the part of the parents, who are often impatient to be in receipt of the presents they are to receive as the price of their daughters.

There is also the facility of dissolving the marriage contract in this country, which does away with one of the most serious difficulties which lie in the way in the civilized world, and calculated greatly to retard its consummation, which is not an equal objection in Indian communities. Education and accomplishments, again, in the fashionable world, and also a time and a season to flourish and show them off, necessarily engross that part of a young lady's life, when the poor Indian girl, who finds herself weaned from the familiar embrace of her parents, with her mind and her body maturing, and her thoughts and her passions straying away in the world for some theme or some pleasure to cling to, easily follows their juvenile and ardent dictates, prematurely entering on that system of life, consisting in reciprocal dependence and protection.

---

In the instance above described, the young man was in no way censured by his people, but most loudly applauded; for in this country polygamy is allowed; and in this tribe, where there are two or three times the number of women that there are of men, such an arrangement answers a good purpose, whereby so many of the females are provided for and taken care of; and particularly so, and to the great satisfaction of the tribe, as well as of the parties and families concerned, when so many fall to the lot of a chief, or the son of a chief, into whose wigwam it is considered an honour to be adopted, and where they are the most sure of protection.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 27.

MOUTH OF TETON RIVER, UPPER MISSOURI.

WHEN we were about to start on our way up the river from the village of the Puncahs, we found that they were packing up all their goods and preparing to start for the prairies, farther to the West, in pursuit of buffaloes, to dry meat for their winter's supplies. They took down their wigwams of skins to carry with them, and all were hat to the ground and everything packing up ready for the start. My attention was directed by Major Sanford, the Indian Agent, to one of the most miserable and helpless looking objects that I ever had seen in my life, a very aged and emaciated man of the tribe, who he told me was be exposed.

The tribe were going where hunger and dire necessity compelled them to go, and this pitiable object, who had once been a chief, and a man of distinction in his tribe, who was now too old to travel, being reduced to mere skin and bones, was to be left to starve, or meet with such death as might fall to his lot, and his bones to be picked by the wolves ! I lingered around this Poor old forsaken patriarch for hours before we started, to indulge the tears of sympathy which were flowing for the sake of this goer benighted and decrepit old man, whose worn-out limbs were no longer able to support him; their kind and faithful offices having long since been performed, and his body and his mind doomed to linger into the withering agony of decay, and gradual solitary death. I wept, and it was a pleasure to weep, for the painful looks, and the dreary prospects of this old veteran, whose eyes were dimmed, whose venerable locks were whitened by an hundred years, whose limbs were almost naked, and trembling as he sat by a small fire which his Friends had left him, with a few sticks of wood within his reach and a buffalo's skin stretched upon some crotches over his head. Such was to be his only dwelling, and such the chances for his life, with only a few half-picked bones that were laid within his reach, and a dish of water, without weapons or means of any kind to replenish them, or strength to move his body from its fatal locality. In this sad plight I mournfully contemplated this miserable remnant of existence, who had unluckily outlived the fates and accidents of wars to die alone, at death's leisure. His friends and his children had all left him, and were preparing in a little time to be on the march. He had told them to leave him, "he was old", he said, "and too feeble to march." "My children", said he. "our nation is poor, and it s necessary that you should all go to the country where you can get meat, -- my eyes are dimmed and my strength is no more; my days are nearly all numbered, and I am a burthen to my children -- I cannot go, and I wish to die. Keep your hearts stout, and think not of me; I am no longer good for anything." In this way they had finished the ceremony of exposing him, and taken their final leave of him. I advanced to the old man, and was undoubtedly the last human being who held converse with him. I sat by the side of him, and though he could not distinctly see me, he shook me heartily by the hand and smiled, evidently aware that I was a white man, and that I sympathized with his inevitable misfortune. I shook hands again with him, and left him, steering my course towards the steamer which was a mile or more from me, and ready to resume her voyage

---

up the Missouri.

This cruel custom of exposing their aged people, belongs, I think, to all the tribes who roam about the prairies, making severe marches, when such decrepit persons are totally unable to go, unable to ride or to walk, -- when they have no means of carrying them. It often becomes absolutely necessary in such cases -- that they should be left; and they uniformly insist upon it, saying as this old man did, that they are old and of no further use -- that they left their fathers in the same manner -- that they wish to die, and their children must not mourn for them.

From the Puncah village, our steamer made regular progress from day to day towards the mouth of the Teton, from where I am now writing; passing the whole way a country of green fields, that come sloping down to the river on either side, forming the loveliest scenes in the world.

From day to day we advanced, opening our eyes to something new and more beautiful every hour that we progressed, until at last our boat was aground; and a day's work of sounding told us at last, that there was no possibility of advancing further, until here should be a rise in the river, to enable the boat to get over the bar. After laying in the middle of the river about a week, in this unpromising dilemma, Mr. Chouteau started off twenty men on foot, to cross the plains for a distance of 200 miles to Laidlaw's Fort, at the mouth of Teton river. To this expedition, I immediately attached myself; and having heard that a numerous party of Sioux were there encamped, and waiting to see the steamer, I packed on the backs, and in the hands of several of the men, such articles for painting, as I might want; canvass, paints, and brushes, with my sketch-book slung on my back, and my rifle in my hand, and I started off with them.

We took leave of our friends on the boat, and mounting the green bluffs, steered our course from day to day over a level prairie, without a tree or a bush in sight, to relieve the painful monotony, filling our canteens at the occasional little streams that we passed, kindling our fires with dried buffalo dung, which we collected on the prairie, and stretching our tired limbs on the level turf whenever we were overtaken by night.

We were six or seven days in performing this march; and it gave me a good opportunity of testing the muscles of my legs, with a number of half-breeds and Frenchmen, whose lives are mostly spent in this way, leading a novice, a cruel, and almost killing journey. Every rod of our way was over a continuous prairie, with a verdant green turf of wild grass of six or eight inches in height; and most of the way enameled with wild flowers, and filled with a profusion of strawberries.

For two or three of the first days, the scenery was monotonous, and became exceedingly painful from the fact, that we were (to use a phrase of the country) "out of sight of land", I. e. out of sight of anything rising above the horizon, which was a perfect straight line around us, like that of the blue and boundless ocean. The pedestrian over such a discouraging sea of green, without a landmark before or behind him; without a beacon to lead him on, or define his progress, feels weak and overcome when night falls; and he stretches his exhausted limbs, apparently on the same spot where he has slept the night before, with the same prospect before and behind him; the same grass, and the same wild flowers beneath and about him; the same canopy over his head, and the same cheerless sea of green to start upon in the morning. It is difficult to describe the simple beauty and serenity of these scenes of solitude, or the feelings of feeble man, whose limbs are toiling to carry him through them -- without a hill or tree to mark his progress, and convince him that he is not, like a squirrel in his cage, after all his toil, standing still. One commences on peregrinations like these, with a light heart, and a nimble foot, and spirits as buoyant as the very

air that floats along by the side of him; but his spirit soon tires, and he lags on the way that is rendered more tedious and intolerable by the tantalizing mirage that opens before him beautiful lakes, and lawns, and copses; or by the looming of the prairie ahead of him, that seems to rise in a parapet, and decked with its varied flowers, phantom-like, flies and moves along before him. I got on for a couple of days in tolerable condition, and with some considerable applause; but my half-bred. companions took the lead at length, and left me with several other novices far behind, which gave me additional pangs; and I at length felt like giving up the journey, and throwing myself upon the ground in hopeless despair. I was not alone in my misery, however, but was cheered and encouraged by looking back and beholding several of our party half a mile or more in the rear of me, jogging along, and suffering more agony in their new experiment than I was suffering myself. Their loitering and my murmurs, at length, brought our leaders to a halt, and we held a sort of council, in which I explained that the pain in my feet was so intolerable, that I felt as if I could go no further; when one of our half-breed leaders stepped up to me, and addressing me in French, told me that I must "turn my toes in" as the Indians do, and that I could then go on very well. We halted a half-hour, and took a little refreshment, whilst the little Frenchman was teaching his lesson to the rest of my fellow novices, when we took up our march again; and I soon found upon trial, that by turning my toes in, my feet went more easily through the grass; and by turning the weight of my body more equally on the toes (enabling each one to support its proportionable part of the load, instead of throwing it all on to the joints of the big toes, which is done when the toes are turned out); I soon got relief, and made my onward progress very well. I rigidly adhered to this mode, and found no difficulty on the third and fourth days, of taking the lead of the whole party, which I constantly led until our journey was completed.

On this journey we saw immense herds of buffaloes; and although we had no horses to run them, we successfully approached them on foot, and supplied ourselves abundantly with fresh meat. After travelling for several days, we, came in sight of a high range of blue hills in distance on our left, which rose to the height of several hundred feet above the level of the prairies. These hills were a conspicuous landmark at last, and some relief to us. I was told by our guide, that they were called the Bijou Hills, from a Fur Trader of that name, who had had his trading-house at the foot of them on the banks of the Missouri river, where he was at last destroyed by the Sioux Indians. Not many miles back of this range of hills, we came in contact with an immense saline, or "salt meadow", as they are termed in this country, which turned us out of our path, and compelled us to travel several miles out of our way, to get by it; we came suddenly upon a great depression of the prairie, which extended for several miles, and as we stood upon its green banks, which were gracefully sloping down, we could overlook some hundreds of acres of the prairie which were covered with an incrustation of salt, that appeared the same as if the ground was everywhere covered with snow.

These scenes, I am told are frequently to be met with in these regions, and certainly present the most singular and startling effect, by the sudden and unexpected contrast between their snow-white appearance, and the green fields that hem them in on all sides. Through each of these meadows there is a meandering small stream which arises from salt springs, throwing out in the spring of the year great quantities of water, which flood over these meadows to the depth of three or four feet; and during the heat of summer, being exposed to the rays of the sun, entirely evaporates, leaving the incrustation of muriate on the surface, to the depth of one or two inches. These

places are the constant resort of buffaloes, which congregate in thousands about them, to lick up the salt; and on approaching the banks of this place we stood amazed at the almost incredible numbers of these animals, which were in sight on the opposite banks, at the distance of a mile or two from us, where they were lying in countless numbers, on the level prairie above, and stretching down by hundreds, to lick at the salt, forming in distance, large masses of black, most pleasingly to contrast with the snow white, and the vivid green, which I have before mentioned.

After several days toil in the manner above-mentioned, all the way over soft and green fields, and amused with many pleasing incidents and accidents of the chase, we arrived, pretty well jaded, at Fort Pierre, mouth of Teton River, from whence I am now writing; where for the first time I was introduced to Mr. MCKENZIE (of whom I have before spoken), to Mr. Laidlaw, mine host, and Mr. Halsey, a chief clerk in the establishment; and after, to the head chief and dignitaries of the great Sioux nation, who were here encamped about the Fort, in six or seven hundred skin lodges, and waiting for the arrival of tire steamer, which they had heard, was on its way up the river, and which they had great curiosity to see.

After resting a few clays, and recovering from the fatigues of my journey, having taken a fair survey of the Sioux village, and explained my views to the Indians, as well as to the gentlemen whom I have above named; I commenced my operations with the brush, and first of all painted the portrait of the head-chief of the Sioux (the one horn), whom I have before spoken of. This truly noble fellow sat for his portrait, and it was finished before any one of the tribe knew anything of it; several of the chiefs and doctors were allowed to see it, and at last it was tallied of through the village; and of course, the greater part of their numbers were at once gathered around me. Nothing short of hanging it out of doors on the side of my wigwam, would in any way answer them; and here I had the peculiar satisfaction of beholding, through a small hole I had made in my wigwam, the high admiration and respect they all felt for their chief, as well as the very great estimation in which they held me as a painter and a magician, conferring upon me at once the very distinguished appellation of Ee-cha-zoo-kah-ga-wa-kon (The Medicine Painter).

After the exhibition of this chief's picture; there was much excitement in the village about it; the doctors generally took a decided and noisy stand against the operations of my brush; haranguing the populace, and predicting bad luck, and premature death, to all who submitted to so strange and unaccountable an operation! My business for some days was entirely at a stand for want of sitters; for the doctors were opposing me with all their force; and the women and children were crying, with their hands over their mouths, making the most pitiful and doleful laments, which I never can explain to my readers; but for some just account of which, I must refer them to my friends McKinzie and Halsey, who overlooked with infinite amusement, these curious scenes and are able, no doubt, to give them with truth and effect to the world.

In this sad and perplexing dilemma, this noble chief stepped forward, and addressing himself to the chiefs and the doctors, to the braves and to the women and children, he told them to be quiet, and to treat me with friendship; that I had been travelling a great way to see them, and smoke with them; that I was great medicine, to be sure; that I was a great chief, and that I was the friend of Mr. Laidlaw and Mr. McKenzie, who had prevailed upon him to sit for his picture, and fully assured him that there was no harm in it. His speech had the desired effect, and I was shaken hands with by hundreds of their worthies, many of whom were soon dressed and ornamented. prepared to sit for their portraits.

The first who then stepped forward for his portrait was Ee-ah-sa-pa (The Black Rock) chief of the Nee-caw-wee-gee band, a tall and fine looking man, of six feet or more in stature; in a splendid dress, with his lance in his hand; with his pictured robe thrown gracefully over his shoulders, and his head-dress made of war-eagles' quills and ermine skins, falling in a beautiful crest over his back, quite down to his feet, and surmounted on the top with a pair of horns denoting him (as I have explained in former instances) head leader or war-chief of his band.

This man has been a constant and faithful friend of Mr. McKenzie and others of the Fur Traders, who held him in high estimation, both as an honourable and valiant man, and an estimable companion.

The next who sat to me was Tehan-dee, Tobacco, a desperate warrior, and represented to me by the traders, as one of the most respectable and famous chiefs of the tribe. After him sat Toh-ki-ee-to, (The Stone With Horns), Chief of the Yank-ton band, and reputed the principal and most eloquent orator of the nation. The neck, and breast, and shoulders of this man, were curiously tattooed, by pricking in gunpowder and vermilion, which in this extraordinary instance, was put on in such elaborate profusion as to appear at a little distance like a beautifully embroidered dress. In his hand he held a handsome pipe, the stem of which was several feet long, and all the way wound with ornamented braids of the porcupine quills. Around his body was wrapped a valued robe, made of the skin of the grizzly bear, and on his neck several strings of wampum, an ornament seldom seen amongst the Indians in the Far West and the North. I was much amused with the excessive vanity and egotism of this notorious man, who, whilst sitting for his picture, took occasion to have the interpreter constantly explaining to me the wonderful effects which his oratory had at different times produced on the minds of the chiefs and people of his tribe.

He told me, that it was a very easy thing for him to set all the women of the tribe to crying; and that all the chief listened profoundly to his voice before they went to war; and at last, summed up by saying, that he was "the greatest orator in the Sioux nation", by which he undoubtedly meant the greatest in the world.

Besides these distingues of this great and powerful tribe, I painted in regular succession, according to their rank and standing, Wan-ee-ton, chief of the Susseton band; Tah-zee-kah-da-cha (The Torn Belly), a brave of the Yancton band; Ka-pes-ka-day (The Shell), a brave of the O-gla-la band; Wuk-mi-ser (Corn), a warrior of the Nee-cow-ee-gee band; Cha-tee-wah-nee-chee (No Heart), chief of the Wah-nee-watch-to-nee-nah band; Mah-to-ra-rish-nee-eeh-ee-rah (The Grizzly Bear That Runs Without Regard), a brave of the Onc-pa-pa band; Mah-to-chee-ga (The Little Bear), a distinguished brave; Shon-ka (The Dog), chief of the Ca-za-zhee-ta (bad arrow points) band; Tah-teck-a-da-hair (The Steep Wind), a brave of the same band; Hah-ha-ra-pah (The Elk's Head), chief of the Ee-ta-sip-shov band; Mah-to-eeen-nah-pa (The White Bear That Goes Out), chief of the Blackfoot Sioux band; Shon-ga-ton-ga-chesh-en-day (The Horse Dung), chief of a band, a great conjuror and magician.

The portraits of all the above dignitaries can be always seen, as large as life, in my very numerous Collection, provided I get them safe home; and also the portraits of two very pretty Sioux women. Wi-looh-tah-eeh-tehah-ta-mah-nee (The Red Thing That Touches In Marching), and, Tehon-su-mons-ka (The Sand Bar). The first of these women, is the daughter of the famous chief called Black Rock, of whom I have spoken, and whose portrait has been given. She is an unmarried girl, and much esteemed by the whole tribe, for her modesty, as well as beauty. She was beautifully

---

dressed in skins, ornamented profusely with brass buttons and beads. Her hair was plaited, her ears supported a great profusion of curious beads -- and over her other dress she wore a handsomely garnished buffalo robe.

So highly was the Black Rock esteemed (as I have before mentioned), and his beautiful daughter admired and respected by the Traders, that Mr. MCKENZIE employed me to make him copies of their two portraits, which he has hung up in Mr. Laidlaw's trading-house, as valued ornaments and keepsakes.

The second of these women was very richly dressed, the upper part of her garment being almost literally covered with brass buttons; and her hair, which was inimitably beautiful and soft, and glossy as silk; fell over her shoulders in great profusion, and in beautiful waves, produced by the condition in which it is generally kept in braids, giving to it, when combed out, a waving form, adding much to its native appearance, which is invariably straight and graceless.

This woman is at present the wife of a white man by the name of Chardon, a Frenchman, who has been many years in the employment of the American Fur Company, in the character of a Trader and Interpreter; and who by his bold and daring nature, has not only carried dread and consternation amongst the Indian tribes wherever he has gone; but has commanded much respect, and rendered essential service to the Company in the prosecution of their dangerous and critical dealings with the Indian tribes. I have said something of this extraordinary man heretofore, and shall take future occasion to say more of him. For the present, suffice it to say, that although from his continual intercourse with the different tribes for twenty-five or thirty years, where he had always been put forward in the front of danger--sent as a sacrifice, or forlorn hope; still his cut and hacked limbs have withstood all the blows that have been aimed at them; and his unfaltering courage leads him to "beard the lion in his den", whilst his liberal heart, as it always has, deals out to his friends (and even to strangers, if friends are not by) all the dear earnings which are continually bought with severest toil, and at the hazard of his life.

I acknowledge myself a debtor to this good hearted fellow for much kindness and attention to me whilst in the Indian country, and also for a superb dress and robe, which had been manufactured and worn by his wife, and which he insisted on adding to my Indian GALLERY since her death, where it will long remain to be examined.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER No. 28.

MOUTH OF TETON RIVER, UPPER MISSOURI.

WHILST Painting the portraits of the chiefs and braves of the Sioux, as described in my last epistle, my painting-room was the continual rendezvous of the worthies of the tribe; and I, the “lion of the day”, and my art, the summum and ne plus ultra of mysteries, which engaged the whole conversation of chiefs and sachems, as well as of women and children. I mentioned that I have been obliged to paint them according to rank, as they looked upon the operation as a very great honour, which I, as “a great chief and medicine-man”, was conferring on all who sat to me. Fortunately it was for me, however, that the honour was not a sufficient inducement for all to overcome their fears, which often stood in the way of their consenting to be painted; for if all had been willing to undergo the operation, I should have progressed but a very little way in the “rank and file” of their worthies; and should have had to leave many discontented, and (as they would think) neglected. About one in five or eight was willing to be painted, and the rest thought they would be much more sure of “sleeping quiet in their graves” after they were dead, if their pictures were not made. By this lucky difficulty I got great relief, and easily got through with those who were willing, and at the same time decided by the chiefs to be worthy, of so signal an honour.

After I had done with the chiefs and braves, and proposed to paint a few of the women, I at once got myself into a serious perplexity, being heartily laughed at by the whole tribe, both by men and by women, for my exceeding and (to them) unaccountable condescension in seriously proposing to paint a woman; conferring on her the same honour that I had done the chiefs and braves. Those whom I had honoured, were laughed at by hundreds of the jealous, who had been decided unworthy the distinction, and were now amusing themselves with the very enviable honour which the great white medicine-man had conferred, especially on term, and was now to confer equally upon the squaws!

The first reply that I received from those whom I had painted, was, that if I was to paint women and children, the sooner I destroyed their pictures, the better; for I had represented to them that I wanted their pictures to exhibit to white chiefs, to shew who were the most distinguished and worthy of the Sioux; and their women had never taken scalps, nor did anything better than make fires and dress skins. I was quite awkward in this dilemma, in explaining to them that I wanted the portraits of the women to hang tinder those of their husbands, merely to shew how their women looked, and how they dressed, without saying any more of them. After some considerable delay of my operations, and much deliberation on the subject, through the village, I succeeded in getting a number of women’s portraits, of which the two above introduced are a couple.

The vanity of these men, after they had agreed to be painted was beyond all description, and far surpassing that which is oftentimes immodest enough in civilized society, where the sitter generally leaves the picture when it is done to speak for, and to take care of, itself; while an Indian often lays down, from morning till night, in front of his portrait, admiring his own beautiful face, and

---

faithfully guarding it from day to day, to save it from accident or harm.

This watching or guarding their portraits, I have observed during all of my travels amongst them as a very curious thing; and in many instances, where my colours were not dry, and subjected to so many accidents, from the crowds who were gathering about them, I have found this Peculiar guardianship of essential service to me -- relieving my mind oftentimes from a great deal of anxiety.

I was for a long time at a loss for the true cause of this singular a peculiarity, but at last learned that it was owing to their superstitious notion, that there may be life to a certain extent in the picture; and that if harm or violence be done to it, it may in some mysterious way, affect their health or do them other injury.

After I had been several weeks busily at work with my brush in this village, and pretty well used to the modes of life in these regions -- and also familiarly acquainted with all the officers and clerks of the Establishment, it was announced one day, that the steamer which we had left, was coming in the river below, where all eyes were anxiously turned, and all ears were listening; when, at length, we discovered the puffing of her steam; and, at last, heard the thundering of her cannon, which were firing from her deck.

The excitement and dismay caused amongst 6000 of these wild people, when the steamer came up in front of their village, was amusing in the extreme. The steamer was moored at the shore, however; and when Mr. Chouteau and Major Sanford, their old friend and agent, walked ashore, it seemed to restore their confidence and courage; and the whole village gathered in front of the boat, without showing much further amazement, or even curiosity about it.

The steamer rested a week or two at this Place before she started on her voyage for the head-waters of the Missouri; during which time, there was much hilarity and mirth indulged in amongst the Indians, as well as with the hands employed in the service of the Fur Company. The appearance of a steamer in this wild country was deemed a wonderful occurrence, and the time of her presence here, looked upon, and used as a holiday. Some sharp encounters amongst the trappers, who come in here from the mountains, loaded with Packs of furs, with sinews hardened by long exposure, and seemingly impatient for a bight, which is soon given them by some bullying fist-cuff-fellow, who steps forward and settles the matter in a ring, which is made and strictly preserved for fair play, until hard raps, and bloody noses, and blind eyes "settle the hash", and satisfy his trapper ship to lay in bed a week or two, and then graduate a sober and a civil man.

Amongst the Indians we have had numerous sights and amusements to entertain and some to shock us. Shows of dances-ball-plays-horse racing -- foot racing, and wrestling in abundance. Feasting -- fasting, and prayers we have also had; and penance and tortures, and almost every thing short of self-immolation.

Some few days after the steamer had arrived, it was announced that a grand feast was to be given to the great white chiefs, who were visitors amongst them; and preparations were made accordingly for it. The two chiefs, Ha-wan-je-tah and Te-han-dee, of whom I have before spoken, brought their two tents together, forming the two into a semi-circle, enclosing a space sufficiently large to accommodate 150 men; and sat down with that number of the principal chiefs and warriors of the Sioux nation; with Mr. Chouteau, Major Sanford, the Indian agent, Mr. MCKENZIE, and myself, whom they had invited in due time, and placed on elevated seats in the center of the crescent; while the rest of the company all sat upon the ground, and mostly cross-legged, prepara-

tory to the feast being dealt out.

In the center of the semi-circle was erected a flag-staff, on which was waving a white flag, and to which also was tied the calumet, both expressive of their friendly feelings towards us. Near the foot of the flag-staff were placed in a row on the ground, six or eight kettles, with iron covers on them, shutting them tight, in which were prepared the viands for our voluptuous feast. Near the kettles, and on the ground also, bottom side upwards, were a number of wooden bowls, in which the meat was to be served out. And in front, two or three men, wile were there placed as waiters, to light the pipes for smoking, and also to deal out the food.

In these positions things stood, and all sat, with thousands climbing and crowding around, for a peep at the grand pageant; when at length, Ha-wan-je-tah (The One Horn), head chief of the nation, rose in front of the Indian agent, in a very handsome costume, and addressed him thus: "My father, I am glad to see you here to-day -- my heart is always glad to see my father when he comes -- our Great Father, who sends him here is very rich, and we are poor. Our friend Mr. McKinzie, who is here, we are also glad to see; we know him well, and we shall be sorry when he is gone our friend who is on your right-hand we all know is very rich; and we have heard that he owns the great medicine-canoe; he is a good man, and a friend to the red men. Our friend the White Medicine, who sits with you, we did not know -- he came amongst us a stranger, and he has made me very well -- all the women know it, and think it very good; he has done many curious things, and we have all been pleased with him -- he has made us much amusement -- and we know he is great medicine.

"My father, I hope you will have pity on us, we are very poor-we offer you to-day, not the best that we have got; for we have a plenty of good buffalo hump and marrow -- but we give you our hearts in this feast -- we have killed our faithful dogs to feed you -- and the Great Spirit will seal our friendship. I have no more to say."

After these words he took off his beautiful war-eagle head-dress -- his shirt and leggings -- his necklace of grizzly bears claws and his moccasins; and tying them together, laid them gracefully down at the feet of the agent as a present; and laying a handsome pipe on top of them, he walked around into an adjoining lodge, where he got a buffalo robe to cover his shoulders, and returned to the feast, taking his seat which he had before occupied.

Major Sanford then rose and made a short speech in reply, thanking him for the valuable present which he had made him, and for the very polite and impressive manner in which it had been done; and sent to the steamer for a quantity of tobacco and other presents, which were given to him in return. After this, and after several others of the chiefs had addressed him in a similar manner; and, like the first, disrobed themselves, and thrown their beautiful costumes at his feet, one of the three men in front deliberately lit a handsome pipe, and brought it to Ha-wan-je-tah to smoke. He took it, and after presenting the stem to the North-to the South -- to the East, and the West -- and then to the Sun that was over his head, and pronounced the words "How--how--how!" drew a whiff or two of smoke through it, and holding the bowl of it in one hand, and its stem in the other, he then held it to each of our mouths, as we successively smoked it; after which it was passed around through the whole group, who ail smoked through it, or as far as its contents lasted, when another of the three waiters was ready with a second, and at length a third one, in the same way, which lasted through the hands of the whole number of guests. This smoking was conducted with the strictest adherence to exact and established form, and the feast the whole way,

to the most positive silence. After the pipe is charged, and is being lit, until the time that the chief has drawn the smoke through it, it is considered an evil omen for any one to speak; and if any one break silence in that time, even in a whisper, the pipe is instantly dropped by the chief, and their superstition is such, that they would not dare to use it on this occasion; but another one is called for and used in its stead. If there is no accident of the kind during the smoking, the waiters then proceed to distribute the meat, which is soon devoured in the feast.

In this case the lids were raised from the kettles, which were all filled with dogs' meat alone. It being well-cooked, and made into a sort of a stew, sent forth a very savory and pleasing smell, promising to be an acceptable and palatable food. Each of us civilized guests had a large wooden bowl placed before us, with a huge quantity of dogs' flesh floating in a profusion of soup, or rich gravy, with a large spoon resting in the dish, made of the buffalo's horn. In this most difficult and painful dilemma we sat; all of us knowing the solemnity and good feeling in which it was given, and the absolute necessity of falling to, and devouring a little of it. We all tasted it a few times, and resigned our dishes, which were quite willingly taken, and passed around with others, to every part of the group, who all ate heartily of the delicious viands, which were soon dipped out of the kettles, and entirely devoured; after which each one arose as he felt disposed, and walked off without uttering a word. In this way the feast ended, and all retired silently, and gradually, until the ground was left vacant to the charge of the waiters or officers, who seemed to have charge of it during the whole occasion.

This feast was unquestionably given to us, as the most undoubted evidence they could give us of their friendship; and we, who knew the spirit and feeling in which it was given, could not but treat it respectfully, and receive it as a very high and marked compliment.

Since I witnessed it on this occasion, I have been honoured with numerous entertainments of the kind amongst the other tribes, which I have visited towards the sources of the Missouri, and all conducted in the same solemn and impressive manner; from which I feel authorized to pronounce the cornfeast a truly religious ceremony, wherein the poor Indian sees fit to sacrifice his faithful companion to bear testimony to the sacredness of his vows of friendship, and invite his friend to partake of its flesh, to remind him forcibly of the reality of the sacrifice, and the solemnity of his professions.

The dog, amongst all Indian tribes, is more esteemed and more valued than amongst any part of the civilized world; the Indian who has more time to devote to his company, and whose untutored mind more nearly assimilates to that of his faithful servant, keeps him closer company, and draws him nearer to his heart; they hunt together, and are equal sharers in the chase—their bed is one; and on the rocks, and on their coats of arms they carve his image as the symbol of fidelity. Yet, with all of these he will end his affection with this faithful follower, and with tears in his eyes, offer him as a sacrifice to seal the pledge he has made to man; because a feast of venison, or of buffalo meat, is what is due to every one who enters an Indian's wigwam and of course, conveys but a passive or neutral evidence, that generally goes for nothing.

I have sat at many of these feasts, and never could but appreciate the moral and solemnity of them. I have seen the master take from the bowl the head of his victim, and descant on its former affection and fidelity with tears in his eyes. And I have seen guests at the same time by the aide of me, jesting and sneering at the poor Indian's folly and stupidity; and I have said in my heart, that they never deserved a name so good or so honourable as that of the poor animal whose bones

they were picking.

At the feast which I have been above describing, each of us tasted a little of the meat, and passed the dishes on to the Indians, who soon demolished everything they contained. We all agreed that the meat was well cooked, and seemed to be a well-flavored and palatable food; and no doubt, could have been eaten with a good relish, if we had been hungry, and ignorant of the nature of the food we were eating.

The flesh of these dogs, though apparently relished by the Indians, is, undoubtedly, inferior to the venison and buffalo's meat, of which feasts are constantly made where friends are invited, as they are in civilized society, to a pleasant and convivial party; from which fact alone, it would seem clear, that they have some extraordinary motive, at all events, for feasting on the flesh of that useful and faithful animal; even when, as in the instance I have been describing, their village is well supplied with fresh and dried meat of the buffalo. The dog-feast is given, I believe, by all tribes in North America; and by them all, I think, this faithful animal, as well as the horse, is sacrificed in several different ways, to appease offended Spirits or Deities, whom it is considered necessary that they should conciliate in this way; and when done, is invariably done by giving the best in the herd or the kennel.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER. No. 29.

MOUTH OF TETON RIVER, UPPER MISSOURI.

ANOTHER curious and disgusting scene I witnessed in the after part of the day on which we were honoured with the dog feast. In this I took no part, but was sufficiently near to it, when standing some rods off, and witnessing the cruel operation. I was called upon by one of the clerks in the Establishment to ride up a mile or so, near the banks of the Teton River, in a little plain at the base of the bluffs, where were grouped some fifteen or twenty lodges of the Ting-ta-to-ah band, to see a man (as they said) "looking at the sun"! We found him naked, except his breech-cloth, with splints or skewers run through the flesh on both breasts, leaning back and hanging with the weight of his body to the top of a pole which was fastened to the ground, and to the upper end of which he was fastened by a cord which was tied to the splints. In this position he was leaning back, with nearly the whole weight of his body hanging to the pole, the top of which was bent forward, allowing his body to sink about half-way to the ground. His feet were still upon the ground, supporting a small part of his weight; and he held in his left hand his favorite bow, and in his right, with a desperate grip, his medicine-bag. In this condition, with the blood trickling down over his body, which was covered with white and yellow clay, and amidst a great crowd who were looking on, sympathizing with and encouraging him, he was hanging and "looking at the sun", without paying the least attention to any one about him. In the group that was reclining around him, were several mystery-men beating their drums and shaking their rattles, and singing as loud as they could yell, to encourage him and strengthen his heart to stand and look at the sun, from its rising in the morning 'till its setting at night; at which time, if his heart and his strength have not failed him, he is "cut down", receives the liberal donation of presents (which have been thrown into a pile before him during the day), and also the name and the style of a doctor, or medicine-man, which lasts him, and ensures him respect, through life.

This most extraordinary and cruel custom I never heard of amongst any other tribe, and never saw an instance of it before or after the one I have just named. It is a sort of worship, or penance, of great cruelty; disgusting and painful to behold, with only one palliating circumstance about it, which is, that it is a voluntary torture and of very rare occurrence. The poor and ignorant, misguided and superstitious man who undertakes it, puts his everlasting reputation at stake upon the issue; for when he takes his stand, he expects to face the sun and gradually turn his body in listless silence, till he sees it go down at night; and if he faints and falls, of which there is imminent danger, he loses his reputation as a brave or mystery-man, and suffers a signal disgrace in the estimation of the tribe, like all men who have the presumption to set themselves up for braves or mystery-men, and fail justly to sustain the character.

The Sioux seem to have many modes of worshipping the Great or Good Spirit, and also of conciliating the Evil Spirit: they have numerous fasts and feasts, and many modes of sacrificing, but yet they seem to pay less strict attention to them than the Mandans do, which may perhaps be owing

---

in a great measure to the wandering and predatory modes of life which they pursue, rendering it difficult to adhere so rigidly to the strict form and letter of their customs.

There had been, a few days before I arrived at this place, a great medicine operation held on the prairie, a mile or so back of the Fort, and which, of course, I was not lucky enough to see. The poles were still standing, and the whole transaction was described to me by my friend Mr. Halsey, one of the clerks in the Establishment. From the account given of it, it seems to bear some slight resemblance to that of the Mandan religious ceremony, but no nearer to it than a feeble effort by so ignorant and superstitious a people, to copy a custom which they most probably have had no opportunity to see themselves, but have endeavored to imitate from hearsay. They had an awning of immense size erected on the prairie which is yet standing, made of willow bushes supported by posts, with Poles and willow boughs laid over; under the center of which there was a pole set firmly in the ground, from which many of the young men had suspended their bodies by splints run through the flesh in different parts, the numerous scars of which were yet seen bleeding afresh from day to day, amongst the crowds that were about me.

During my stay amongst the Sioux, as I was considered by them to be great medicine, Received many pipes and other little things from them as presents, given to me in token of respect for me, and as assurances of their friendship; and I, being desirous to collect and bring from their country every variety of their manufactures, of their costumes, their weapons, their pipes, and their mystery-things, purchased a great many others, for which, as I was "medicine" and a "great white chief"! I was necessarily obliged to pay very liberal prices.

Of the various costumes (of this, as well as of other tribes), that I have collected, there will be seen fair and faithful representations in the numerous portraits; and of their war-clubs, pipes, &c. I have set forth in the following illustrations, a few of the most interesting of the very great numbers of those things which I have collected in this and other tribes which I have visited.

The luxury of smoking is known to all the North American Indians, in their primitive state, and that before they have any knowledge of tobacco; which is only introduced amongst them by civilized adventurers, who teach them the use and luxury of whiskey at the same time.

In their native state they are excessive smokers, and many of them (I would almost venture the assertion), would seem to be smoking one-half of their lives. There may be two good reasons for this, the first of which is, that the idle and leisure life that the Indian leads, (who has no trade or business to follow -- no office hours to attend to, or profession to learn), induces him to look for occupation and amusement in so innocent a luxury, which again further tempts him to its excessive use, from its feeble and harmless effects on the system. There are many weeds and leaves, and barks of trees, which are narcotics, and of spontaneous growth in their countries, which the Indians dry and pulverize, and carry in pouches and smoke to great excess -- and which in several of the languages, when thus prepared, is called k'nick K'neck.

As smoking is a luxury so highly valued by the Indians, they have bestowed much pains, and not a little ingenuity, to the construction of their pipes. Of these I have procured a collection of several hundreds, and have given facsimile outlines of a number of the most curious. The bowls of these are generally made of the red steatite, or "pipe-stone" (as it is more familiarly called in this country), and many of them designed and carved with much taste and skill, with figures and groups in alto relievo, standing or reclining upon them.

The red stone of which these pipe bowls are made, is, in my estimation, a great curiosity; inas-

much as I am sore it is a variety of steatite (if it be steatite), differing from that of any known European locality, and also from any locality known in America, other than the one from which all these pipes come; and which are all traceable I have found to one source; and that source as yet unvisited except by the red man who describes it, everywhere, as a place of vast importance to the Indians -- as given to them by the Great Spirit, for their pipes, and strictly forbidden to be used for anything else.

The source from whence all these pipes come, is, undoubtedly, somewhere between this place and the Mississippi River; and as the Indians all speak of it as a great medicine-place, I shall certainly lay my course to it, ere long, and be able to give the world some account of it and its mysteries.

The Indians shape out the bowls of these pipes from the solid stone, which is not quite as hard as marble, with nothing but a knife. The stone which is of a cherry red, admits of a beautiful polish, and the Indian makes the hole in the bowl of the pipe, by drilling into it a hard stick, shaped to the desired size, with a quantity of sharp sand and water kept constantly in the hole, subjecting him therefore to a very great labour and the necessity of much patience.

The shafts or stems of these pipes, are from two to four feet long, sometimes round, but most generally fat; of an inch or two in breadth, and wound half their length or more with braids of porcupines' quills; and often ornamented with the beaks and tufts from the wood-pecker's head, with ermine skins and long red hair, dyed from white horse hair or the white buffalo's tail.

The stems of these pipes will be found to be carved in many ingenious forms, and in all cases they are perforated through the center, quite staggering the wits, of the enlightened world to guess how the holes have been bored through them; until it is simply and briefly explained, that the stems are uniformly made of the stalk of the young ash, which generally grows straight, and has a small pith through the center, which is easily burned out with a hot wire or a piece of hard wood, by a much slower process.

In another drawing of articles, the pipes marked b are ordinary pipes, made and used for the luxury only of smoking; and for this purpose, every Indian designs and constructs his own pipe. The calumet, or Pipe of peace, ornamented with the war-eagle's quills, is a sacred pipe, and never allowed to be used on any other occasion than that of peace-making; when the chief brings it into treaty, and unfolding the many bandages which are carefully kept around it -- has it ready to be mutually smoked by the chiefs, after the terms of the treaty are agreed upon, as the means of solemnizing or signing, by an illiterate people, who cannot draw up an instrument, and sign their names to it, as it is done in the civilized world.

The mode of solemnizing is by passing the sacred stem to each chief, who draws one breath of smoke only through it, thereby passing the most inviolable pledge that they can possibly give, for the keeping of the peace. This sacred pipe is then carefully folded up, and stowed away in the chief's lodge, until a similar occasion calls it out to be used in a similar manner. There is no custom more uniformly in constant use amongst the poor Indians than that of smoking, nor any other more highly valued. His pipe is his constant companion through life -- his messenger of peace; he pledges his friends through its stem and its bowl -- and when its care-drowning fumes cease to flow, it takes a place with him in his solitary grave, with his tomahawk and war-club, companions to his long fancied, "mild and beautiful hunting-grounds."

The weapons of these people, like their pipes, are numerous, and mostly manufactured by themselves. In a former place. I have described a part of these, such as the bows and arrows, lances,

&c., and they have yet many others, specimens of which I have collected from every tribe; and a number of which I have grouped together; consisting of knives, war-clubs, and tomahawks. I have here introduced the most general and established forms that are in use amongst the different tribes, which are all strictly copied from amongst the great variety of these articles to be found in my Collection.

The scalping-knives and tomahawks epee are of civilized manufacture, made expressly for Indian use, and carried into the Indian country by thousands and tens of thousands, and sold at an enormous price. The scabbards of the knives and handles for the tomahawks, the Indians construct themselves, according to their own taste, and oftentimes ornament them very handsomely. In his rude and unapproached condition, the Indian is a stranger to such weapons as these--he works not in the metals; and his untutored mind has not been ingenious enough to design or execute anything so savage or destructive as these civilized refinements on Indian barbarity. In his native simplicity he shapes out his rude hatchet from a piece of stone, as in letter f, heads his arrows and spears with flints; and his knife is a sharpened bone, or the edge of a broken silex. The war-club c is also another civilized refinement, with a blade of steel, of eight or ten inches in length, and set in a club, studded around and ornamented with some hundreds of brass nails.

Their primitive clubs d are curiously carved in wood, and fashioned out with some considerable picturesque form and grace; are admirably fitted to the hand, and calculated to deal a deadly blow with the spike of iron or bone which is imbedded in the ball or bulb at the end.

Two of the tomahawks that I have named, marked e, are what are denominated "pipe-tomahawks," as the heads of them are formed into bowls like a pipe, in which their tobacco is put, and they smoke through the handle. These are the most valued of an Indian's weapons, inasmuch as they are a matter of luxury, and useful for cutting his fire-wood, &c. in time of peace; and deadly weapons in time of war, which they use in the hand, or throw with unerring and deadly aim.

The scalping-knife b in a beautiful scabbard, which is carried under the belt, is the form of knife most generally used in all parts of the Indian country, where knives have been introduced. It is a common and cheap butcher knife with one edge, manufactured at Sheffield, in England, perhaps, for sixpence; and sold to the poor Indian in these wild regions for a horse. If I should live to get home, and should ever cross the Atlantic with my Collection, a curious enigma would be solved for the English people, who may enquire for a scalping-knife, when they find that every one in my Collection (and hear also, that nearly every one that is to be seen in the Indian country, to the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean) bears on its blade the impress of G.R., which they will doubtless understand.

The huge two-edged knife, with its scabbard of a part of the skin of a grizzly bear's head, letter a, is one belonging to the famous chief of the Mandans, of whom I have before said much. The manufacture of this knife is undoubtedly American; and its shape differs altogether from those which are in general use.

The above weapons, as well as the bow and lance, of which I have before spoken, are all carried and used on horseback with great effect. The Indians in this country of green fields, all ride for their enemies, and also for their game, which is almost invariably killed whilst their horses are at full speed. They are all cruel masters for their horses; and in war or the chase goad them on with a heavy and cruel whip, the handle of which is generally made of a large prong of the elk's horn or of wood, mid the lashes of rawhide are very heavy; being braided, or twisted, or cut into wide

straps. These are invariably attached to the wrist of the right arm by a tough thong, that they can be taken up and used at any moment, and dropped the next, without being lost.

During the time that I was engaged in painting my portraits, I was occasionally inducing the young men to give me their dances, a great variety of which they gave me by being slightly paid; which I was glad to do, in order to enable me to study their character and expression thoroughly, which I am sure I have done; and I shall take pleasure in shewing them to the world when I get back. The dancing is generally done by the young men, and considered undignified for the chiefs or doctors to join in. Yet so great was my medicine, that chiefs and medicine-men turned out and agreed to compliment me with a dance. I looked on with great satisfaction; having been assured by the Interpreters and Traders, that this was the highest honour they had ever known them to pay to any stranger amongst them.

In this dance, which I have called "the dance of the chiefs," for want of a more significant title, was given by fifteen or twenty chiefs and doctors; many of whom were very old and venerable men. All of them came out in their head-dresses of war-eagle quills, with a spear or staff in the left hand, and a rattle in the right. It was given in the midst of the Sioux village, in front of the head chiefs lodge; and beside the medicine-man who beat on the drum, and sang for the dance, there were four young women standing in a row, and chanting a sort of chorus for the dancers; forming one of the very few instances that I ever have met, where the women are allowed to take any part in the dancing, or other game or amusement, with the men.

This dance was a very spirited thing, and pleased me much, as well as all the village, who were assembled around to witness what most of them never before had seen, their aged and venerable chiefs united in giving a dance.

As I have introduced the scalping-knife above, it may be well for me to give some further account in this place of the custom and the mode of taking the scalp; a custom practiced by all the North American Indians, which is done when an enemy is killed in battle, by grasping the left hand into the hair on the crown of the head, and passing the knife around it through the skin, tearing off a piece of the skin with the hair, as large as the palm of the hand, or larger, which is dried, and often curiously ornamented and preserved, and highly valued as a trophy. The scalping is an operation not calculated of itself to take life, as it only removes the skin, without injuring the bone of the head; and necessarily, to be a genuine scalp, must contain and show the crown or center of the head; that part of the skin which lies directly over what the phrenologists call "self-esteem," where the hair divides and radiates from the center; of which they all profess to be strict judges, and able to decide whether an effort has been made to produce two or more scalps from one head. Besides taking the scalp, the victor generally, if he has time to do it without endangering his own scalp, cuts off and brings home the rest of the hair, which his wife will divide into a great many small locks, and with them fringe off the seams of his shirt and his leggings, as will have been seen in many of the illustrations; which also are worn as trophies and ornaments to the dress, and then are familiarly called "scalp-locks." Of these there are many dresses in my Collection, which exhibit a continuous row from the top of each shoulder, down the arms to the wrists, and down the seams of the leggings, from the hips to the feet, rendering them a very costly article to buy from the Indian, while is not sure that his success in his military exploits will ever enable him to replace them. The scalp, then, is a patch of the skin taken from the head of an enemy killed in battle, and preserved and highly appreciated as the record of a death produced by the hand of the individual

---

who possesses it; and may oftentimes during his life, be of great service to a man living in a community where there is no historian to enrol the names of the fellows to record the heroic deeds of the brave, who have gained their laurels in mortal combat with their enemies; where it is as lawful and as glorious to slay an enemy in battle, as it is in Christian communities; and where the poor Indian is bound to keep the record himself, or be liable to lose it and the honour, for no one in the tribe will keep it for him. As the scalp is taken then as the evidence of a death, it will easily be seen, that the Indian has no business or inclination to take it from the head of the living; which I venture to say is never done in North America, unless it be, as it sometimes has happened, where a man falls in the heat of battle, stunned with the blow of a weapon or a gunshot, and the Indians, rushing over his body, snatches off his scalp, supposing him dead, who afterwards rises from the field of battle, and easily recovers from this superficial wound of the knife, wearing a bald spot on his head during the remainder of his life, of which we have frequent occurrences on our Western frontiers. The scalp must be from the head of an enemy also, or it subjects its Possessor to disgrace and infamy who carries it. There may be many instances where an Indian is justified in the estimation of his tribe in taking the life of one of his own people; and their laws are such, as oftentimes make it his imperative duty; and yet no circumstances, however aggravating, will justify him or release him from the disgrace of taking the scalp.

There is no custom practiced by the Indians, for which; they are more universally condemned, than that of taking the scalp; and, at the same time, I think there is some excuse for them, inasmuch as it is a general custom of the country, and founded, like many other apparently absurd and ridiculous customs of these people, in one of the necessities of Indian life, which necessities we are free from in the civilized world, and which customs, of course, we need not and do not practice. From an ancient custom, "time out of mind," the warriors of these tribes have been in the habit of going to war, expecting to take the scalps of their enemies whom they may slay in battle, and all eyes of the tribe are upon them, making it their duty to do it; so from custom it is every man's right, and his duty also, to continue and keep up a regulation of his society, which it is not in his power as an individual, to abolish or correct, if he saw fit to do it.

One of the principal denunciations against the custom of taking the scalp, is on account of its alleged cruelty, which it certainly has not; as the cruelty would be in the Killing, and not in the act of cutting the skin from a man's head after he is dead. To say the most of it, it is a disgusting custom, and I wish I could be quite sure that the civilized and Christian world (who kill hundreds, to where the poor Indians kill one), do not often treat their enemies dead, in equally as indecent and disgusting a manner, as the Indian does by taking the scalp.

If the reader thinks that I am taking too much pains to defend the Indians for this, and others of their seemingly abominable customs, he will bear it in mind, that I have lived with these people, until I have learned the necessities of Indian life in which these customs are founded; and also, that I have met with so many acts of kindness and hospitality at the hands of the poor Indian, that I feel bound, when I can do it, to render what excuse I can for a people, who are dying with broken hearts, and never can speak in the civilized world in their own defense.

And even yet, reader, if your education, and your reading of Indian cruelties and Indian barbarities -- of scalps, and scalping-knives, and scalping, should have ossified a corner of your heart against these unfortunate people, and would shut out their advocate, I will annoy you no longer on this subject, but withdraw, and leave you to cherish the very beautiful, humane and parental

moral that was carried out by the United States and British Governments during the last, and the revolutionary wars, when they mutually employed thousands of their "Red children," to aid and to bleed, in fighting their battles, and paid them, according to contract, so many pounds, shillings and pence or so many dollars and cents for every "scalp" of a "red" or a blue coat" they could bring in!

In a drawing, there will be seen the principal modes in which the scalps are prepared, and several of the uses to which they are put. The most usual way of preparing and dressing the scalp is that of stretching it on a little hoop at the end of a stick two or three feet long, for the purpose of "dancing it," as they term it; which will be described in the scalp-dance, in a few moments. There are many again, which are small, and not "dressed;" sometimes not larger than a crown piece, and hung to different parts of the dress. In public shows and parades, they are often suspended from the bridle bits or halter when they are paraded and carried as trophies. Sometimes they are cut out, as it were into a string, the hair forming a beautiful fringe to line the handle of a war-club. Sometimes they are hung at the end of a club, and at other times, by the order of the chief, are hung out, over the wigwams, suspended from a pole, which is called the "scalp-pole". This is often done by the chief of a village, in a pleasant day, by his erecting over his wig-warn a pole with all the scalps that he had taken, arranged upon it; at the sight of which all the chiefs and warriors of the tribe, who had taken scalps, "follow suit"; enabling every member of the community to stroll about the village on that day and "count scalps", learning thereby the standing of every warrior, which is decided in a great degree by the number of scalps they have taken in battles with their enemies. In yet another sketch shows the usual manner of taking the scalp, and (letter h), exhibits the head of a man who had been scalped and recovered from the wound.

So much for scalps and scalping, of which I shall yet say more, unless I should unluckily lose one before I get out of the country.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 30.

MOUTH OF TETON RIVER, UPPER MISSOURI.

In the last letter I gave an account of many of the weapons and other manufactures of these wild folks; and as this has been a day of packing and casing a great many of these things, which I have obtained of the Indians, to add to my *Musee Indienne*, I will name a feat more, which I have just been handling over; some description of which may be necessary for the reader in endeavoring: to appreciate some of their strange customs and amusements, which I am soon to unfold. - In a drawing, will be seen the quiver made of the fawn's skin, and the Sioux shield made of the skin of the buffalo's neck, hardened with the glue extracted from the hoofs and joints of the same animal. The process of "smoking tire shield" is a very curious, as well as an important one, in their estimation. For this purpose a young man about to construct him a shield; digs a hole of two feet in depth, in the ground, and as large in diameter as he designs to make his shield. In this he builds a fire, and over it, a few inches higher than the ground, he stretches the raw hide horizontally over the fire, with little pegs driven through holes made near the edges of the skin. This skin is at first, twice as large as the size of the required shield; but having got his particular and best friends (who are invited on the occasion,) into a ring, to dance and sing around it, and solicit the Great Spirit to instil into it the power to protect him harmless against his enemies, he spreads over it the glue, which is rubbed and dried in, as the skin is heated; and a second busily drives other and other pegs, inside of those in the ground, as they are gradually giving way and being pulled up by the contraction of the skin. By this curious process, which is most dexterously done, the skin is kept tight whilst it contracts to one-half of its size, taking up the glue and increasing in thickness until it is rendered as thick and hard as required (and his friends have pleaded long enough to make it snow, and almost ball proof), when the dance ceases, and the fire is put out. When it is cooled and cut into the shape that he desires, it is often painted with his medicine or totem upon it, the figure of an eagle, an owl, a buffalo or other animal, as the case may be, which he trusts will guard and protect him from harm. It is then fringed with eagles' quills, or other ornaments he may have chosen, and slung with a broad leather strap that crosses his breast. These shields are carried by all the warriors in these regions, for their protection in battles, which are almost variably fought from their horses' backs.

Of pipes, and the custom of smoking, I have already spoken; and I then said, that the Indians use several substitutes for tobacco, which they call *K'nick K'neck*. For the carrying of this delicious weed or bark, and preserving its flavour, the women construct very curious pouches of otter, or beaver, or other skins (letters c, c, c.), which are ingeniously ornamented with porcupine quills and beads, and generally carried hanging across the left arm, containing a quantity of the precious narcotic, with flint and steel, and spunk, for lighting the pipe.

The musical instruments used amongst these people are few, and exceedingly rude and imperfect, consisting chiefly of rattles, drums, whistles, and lutes, all of which are used in the different tribes.

---

I made sketches today of the rattles (or She-she-quois) most generally used, made of rawhide, which becomes very hard when dry, and charged with Pebbles or something of the kind, which produce a shrill noise to mark the time in their dances and songs. Their drums (letters e, e,) are made in a very rude manner, oftentimes with a mere piece of rawhide stretched over a hoop, very much in the shape of a tambourine ; and at other times are made in the form of a keg, with a head of rawhide at each end; on these they beat with a drum-stick, which oftentimes itself is a rattle, the bulb or head of it being made of rawhide and filled with pebbles. In other instances the stick has, at its end, a little hoop wound and covered with buckskin, to soften the sound; with which they beat on the drum with great violence, as the chief and heel-inspiring sound for all their dances, and also as an accompaniment for their numerous and never-ending songs of amusement, of thanksgiving, and medicine or metal. The mystery whistle, (letter f,) is another instrument of their invention, and very ingeniously made, the sound being produced on a principle entirely different from that of any wind instrument known in civilized inventions; and the notes produced on it, by the sleight or trick of an Indian boy, in so simple and successful a manner, as to baffle entirely all civilized ingenuity, even when it is seen to be played. An Indian boy would stand and blow his notes on this repeatedly, for hundreds of white men who might be lookers-on, not one of whom could make the least noise on it, even by practicing with it for hours. When I first saw this curious exhibition, I was charmed with the peculiar sweetness of its harmonic sounds, and completely perplexed, (as hundreds of white men have no doubt been before me, to the great amusement and satisfaction of the women and children,) as to the mode in which the sound was produced, even though it was repeatedly played immediately before my eyes, and handed to me for my vain and amusing endeavors. The sounds of this little simple toy are liquid and sweet beyond description; and, though here only given in harmonics, I am inclined to think, might, by some ingenious musician or musical instrument-maker, be modulated and converted into something very pleasing.

The War-whistle is a well known and valued little instrument, of six or nine inches in length, invariably made of the bone of the deer or turkey's leg, and generally ornamented. with porcupine quills of different colors which are wound around it. A chief or leader carries this to battle with him, suspended generally from his neck, and worn under his dress. This little instrument has but two notes, which are produced by blowing in the ends of it. The note produced in one end, being much more shrill than the other, gives the signal for battle, whilst the other sounds a retreat; a thing that is distinctly heard and understood by every man, even in the heat and noise of battle, where all are barking and yelling as loud as possible, and of course unable to hear the commands of their leader.

There is yet another wind instrument which I have added to my Collection, and from its appearance would seem to have been borrowed, in part, from the civilized world. This is what is often on the frontier called a "deer-skin flute," a Winnebago courting flute, "tsal-eet-quash-to"; it is perforated with holes for the fingers, sometimes for six, at others for four, and in some instances for three only, having only so many notes with their octaves. These notes are very irregularly graduated, showing clearly that they have very little-taste or ear for melody. These instruments are blow in the end, and the sound produced much on the principle of a whistle. In the vicinity of the Upper Mississippi, I often and familiarly heard this instrument, called the Winnebago courting flute; and was credibly informed by traders and others in those regions, that the young men of

that tribe meet with signal success, oftentimes, in wooing their sweethearts with its simple notes, which they blow for hours together, and from day to day, from the bank of some stream -- some favorite rock or log on which they are seated, near to the wigwam which contains the object of their tender passion; until her soul is touched, and she responds by some welcome signal, that she is ready to repay the young Orpheus for his pains, with the gift of her hand and her heart. How true these representations may have been made, I cannot say, but there certainly must have been some ground for the present cognomen by which it is known in that country.

From these rude and exceedingly defective instruments, it will at once be seen, that music has made but little progress with these people; and the same fact will be still more clearly proved, to those who have an opportunity to hear their vocal exhibitions, which are daily and almost hourly serenading the ears of the traveller through their country.

Dancing is one of the principal and most frequent amusements of all the tribes of Indians in America; and, in all of these, both vocal and instrumental music are introduced. These dances consist in about four different steps, which constitute all the different varieties: but the figures and forms of these scenes are very numerous, and produced by the most violent jumps and contortions, accompanied with the song and beats of the drum, which are given in exact time with their motions. It has been said by some travellers, that the Indian has neither harmony or melody in his music, but I am unwilling to subscribe to such an assertion; although I grant, that for the most part of their vocal exercises, there is a total absence of what the musical world would call melody; their songs being made up chiefly of a sort of violent chant of harsh and jarring gutturals, of yelps and barks, and screams, which are given out in perfect time, not only with "method (but with harmony) in their madness." There are times too, as every traveller of the Indian country will attest, if he will recall them to his recollection, when the Indian lays down by his tire-side with his drum in his hand, which he lightly and almost imperceptibly touches over, as he accompanies it with his stifled voice of dulcet sounds that might come from the most tender and delicate female. These quiet and tender songs are very different from those which are sung at their dances, in full chorus and violent gesticulation; and many of them seem to be quite rich in plaintive expression and melody, though barren of change and variety.

Dancing, I have before said, is one of the principal and most valued amusements of the Indians, and much more frequently practiced by them than by any civilized society; inasmuch as it enters into their forms of worship, and is often their mode of appealing to the Great Spirit -- of paying their usual devotions to their medicine -- and of honouring and entertaining strangers of distinction in their country.

Instead of the "giddy maze" of the quadrille or the country dance, enlivened by the cheering smiles and graces of silken beauty, the Indian performs his rounds with jumps, and starts, and yells, much to the satisfaction of his own exclusive self, and infinite amusement of the gentler sex, who are always lookers on, but seldom allowed so great a pleasure, or so signal an honour, as that of joining with their lords in this or any other entertainment. Whilst staying with these people on my way up the river, I was repeatedly honoured with the dance, and I as often hired them to give them, or went to overlook where they were performing them at their own pleasure, in pursuance of their peculiar customs, or for their own amusement, that I might study and correctly herald them to future ages. I saw so many of their different varieties of dances amongst the Sioux, that I should almost be disposed to denominate them the "dancing Indians". It would actually seem

as if they had dances for every thing. And in so large a village, there was scarcely an hour in any day or night, but what the beat of the drum could somewhere be heard. These dances are almost as various and different in their character as they are numerous -- some of them so exceedingly grotesque and laughable, as to keep the bystanders in an irresistible roar of laughter -- others are calculated to excite his pity, and forcibly appeal to his sympathies, whilst others disgust, and yet others terrify and alarm him with their frightful threats and contortions.

All the world have heard of the "bear-dance", though I doubt whether more than a very small proportion have ever seen it.

The Sioux, like all the others of these western tribes, are fond of bear's meat, and must have good stores of the "bear's-grease" laid in, to oil their long and glossy locks, as well as the surface of their bodies. And they all like the fine pleasure of a bear hunt, and also a participation in the bear dance, which is given several days in succession, previous to their starting out, and in which they all join in a song to the Bear Spirit; which they think holds somewhere an invisible existence, and must be consulted and conciliated before they can enter upon their excursion with any prospect of success. For this grotesque and amusing scene, one of the chief medicine-men, placed over his body the entire skin of a bear, with a war-eagle's quill on his head, taking the lead in the dance, and looking through the skin which formed a masque that hung over his face. Many others in the dance wore masques on their faces, made of the skin from; the bear's head; and all, with the motions of their hands, closely imitated the movements of that animal; some representing its motion in running, and others the peculiar attitude and hanging of the paws, when it is sitting up on its hind feet, and looking out for the approach of an enemy. This grotesque and amusing masquerade oftentimes is continued at intervals, for several days previous to the starting of a party on the bear hunt, who would scarcely count upon a tolerable prospect of success, without a strict adherence to this most important and indispensable form.

Dancing is done here too, as it is oftentimes done in the enlightened world, to get favours -- to buy the world's goods; and in both countries danced with about equal merit, except that the Indian has surpassed us in honesty by christening it in his own country, the "beggar's dance". This spirited dance was given, not by a set of beggars though, literally speaking, but by the first and most independent young men in the tribe beautifully dressed, (i.e. not dressed at all, except with their breech clouts or kelts, made of eagles' and ravens' quills,) with their lances, and pipes, and rattles in their hands, and a medicine-man beating the drum, and joining in the song at the highest key of his voice. In this dance every one sings as loud as he can halloo; uniting his voice with the others, in an appeal to the Great Spirit, to open the hearts of the bystanders to give to the poor, and not to themselves; assuring them that the Great Spirit will be kind to those who are kind to the helpless and poor.

Of scalps, and of the modes and objects of scalping, I have before spoken; and I therein stated, "that most of the scalps were stretched on little hoops for the purpose of being used in the scalp-dance, of which I shall say more at a future time."

The Scalp dance is a celebration of a victory; and amongst this tribe, as I learned whilst residing with them, danced in the night, by the light of their torches, and just before retiring to bed. When a war party returns from a war excursion, bringing home with them the scalps of their enemies, they generally "dance them" for fifteen nights succession ranting forth the meet extravagant boasts of their wonderful prowess in war, whilst they brandish their war weapons in their

hands. A number of young women are selected to aid (though they do not actually join in the lance), by stepping into the centre of the ring, and holding up the scalps that have been recently taken, whilst the warriors dance (or rather jump), around in a circle, brandishing their weapons, and barking and yelping in the most frightful manner, all jumping on both feet at a time, with a simultaneous stamp, and blow, and thrust of their weapons; with which it would seem as if they were actually cutting and carving each other to pieces. During these frantic leaps, and yelps, and thrusts, every man distorts his face to the utmost of his muscles, darting about his glaring eye-balls and snapping his teeth, as if he were in the heat (and actually breathing through his inflated nostrils the very hissing death) of battle. No description that can be written, could ever convey more than a feeble outline of the frightful effects of these scenes enacted in the dead and darkness of night, under the glaring light of their blazing flambeaux; nor could all the years allotted to mortal man, in the least obliterate or deface the vivid impress that one scene of this kind would leave upon his memory.

The precise object for which the scalp is taken, is one which is definitely understood, and has already been explained; but the motive (or motives), for which this strict ceremony is so scrupulously held by all the American tribes, over the scalp of an enemy, is a subject, as yet not satisfactorily settled in my mind. There is no doubt, but one great object in these exhibitions is public exultation; yet there are several conclusive evidences, that there are other and essential motives for thus formally and strictly displaying the scalp. Amongst some of the tribes, it is the custom to bury the scalps after they have gone through this series of public exhibitions; which may in a measure have been held for the purpose of giving them notoriety, and of awarding public credit to the persons who obtained them, and now, from a custom of the tribe, are obliged to part with them. The great respect which seems to be paid to them whilst they use them, as well as the pitying and mournful song which they howl to the manes of their unfortunate victims; as well as the precise care and solemnity with which they afterwards bury the scalps, sufficiently convince me that they have a superstitious dread of the spirits of their slain enemies, and many conciliatory offices to perform, to ensure their own peace; one of which is the ceremony above described.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 31.

MOUTH OF TETON RIVER, UPPER MISSOURI.

In former Letters I have given: some account of the Bisons, or (as they are more denominated in this country) buffaloes, which inhabit these regions in numerous herds; and of which I must say yet a little more familiar.

These noble animals of the ox species, and which have been so well described in our books on natural History, are a subject of curious interest and great importance in this vast wilderness; rendered peculiarly so at this time, like the history of the poor savage; and from the same consideration, ; that they are rapidly wasting away at the approach of civilized man -- and like him and his character, in a very few years, to live only in books or on canvass.

The word buffalo is undoubtedly most incorrectly applied to these animals, and I can scarcely tell why they have been so called; for they bear just about as much resemblance to the Eastern buffalo, as they do to a zebra or to a common ox. How nearly they may approach to the bison of Europe, which I never have had an opportunity to see, and which, I am inclined to think, is now nearly extinct, I am unable to say ; yet if I were to judge from the numerous engravings I have seen of those animals, and descriptions I have read of them, I should be inclined to think, there was yet a wide difference between the bison of the American prairies, and those in the North of Europe and Asia. The American bison, or (as I shall here after call it) buffalo, is the largest of the ruminating animals that is now living in America; and seems to have been spread over the plains of this vast country, by the Great Spirit, for the use and subsistence of the red men, who live almost exclusively on their flesh, and clothe themselves with their skins. The reader, by referring back to in the beginning of this Work, will see faithful traces of the male and female of this huge animal, in their proud and free state of nature, grazing on the plains of the country to which they appropriately belong. Their colour is a dark brown, but changing very much as the season varies from warm to cold; their hair or fur, from its great length in the winter and spring, and exposure to the weather, turning quite light, and almost to a jet black, when the winter coat is shed off, and a new growth is shooting out.

The buffalo bull often grows to the enormous weight of 2000 pounds, and shakes a long and shaggy black mane, that falls in great profusion and confusion, over his head and shoulders; and oftentimes falling down quite to the ground. The horns are short, but very large, and have but one turn, i.e. they are a simple arch, without the least approach to a spiral form, like those of the common ox, or of the goat species.

The female is much smaller than the male, and always distinguishable by the peculiar shape of the horns, which are much smaller and more crooked, turning their points more in towards the centre of the forehead.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the buffalo, is the peculiar formation and expression of the eye, the ball of which is very large and white, and the iris jet black. The lids of the eye

---

seem always to be strained quite open, and the ball rolling forward and down; so that a considerable part of the iris is hidden behind the lower lid, while the pure white of the eyeball glares out over it in an arch, in the shape of a moon at the end of its first quarter.

These animals are, truly speaking, gregarious, but not migratory -- they graze in immense and almost incredible numbers at times, and roam about and over vast tracts of country, from East to West, and from West to East, as often as from North to South; which has often been supposed they naturally and habitually did to accommodate themselves to the temperature of the climate in the different latitudes. The limits within which they are found in America, are from the 30th to the 55th degrees of North latitude; and their extent from East to West, which is from the border of our extreme Western frontier limits, to the Western verge of the Rocky Mountains, is defined by quite different causes, than those which the degrees of temperature have prescribed to them on the North and the South. Within these 25 degrees of latitude, the buffaloes seem to flourish, and get their living without the necessity of evading the rigor of the climate, for which Nature seems most wisely to have prepared them by the greater or less profusion of Fur, with which she has clothed them.

It is very evident that, as high North as Lake Winnipeg, seven or eight hundred miles North of this, the buffalo subsists itself through the severest winters; getting its food chiefly by browsing amongst the timber, and by pawing through the snow, for a bite at the grass, which in those regions is frozen up very suddenly in the beginning of the winter, with all its juices in it, and consequently furnishes very nutritious and efficient food; and often, if not generally, supporting the animal in better flesh during these difficult seasons of their lives, than they are found to be in, in the 30th degree of latitude, upon the borders of Mexico, where the severity of winter is not known, but during a long and tedious autumn, the herbage, under the influence of a burning sun, is gradually dried away to a mere husk, and its nutriment gone, leaving these poor creatures, even in the dead of winter, to bask in the warmth of a genial sun, without the benefit of a green or juicy thing to bite at.

The place from which I am now writing, may be said to be the very heart or nucleus of the buffalo country, about equal distant between the two extremes; and of course, the most congenial temperature for them to flourish in. The finest animals that graze on the prairies are to be found in this latitude; and I am sure I never could send from a better source, some further account of the death and destruction that is dealt among these noble animals, and hurrying on their final extinction.

The Sioux are a bold and desperate set of horsemen, and great hunters; and in the heart of their country is one of the most extensive assortments of goods, of whiskey, and other saleable commodities, as well as a party of the most indefatigable men, who are constantly calling for every robe that can be stripped from these animals' backs.

These are the causes which lead so directly to their rapid destruction; and which open to the view of the traveller so freshly, so vividly, and so familiarly, the scenes of archery -- of lancing, and of death-dealing, that belong peculiarly to this wild and shorn country.

The almost countless herds of these animals that are sometimes met with on these prairies, have been often spoken of by other writers, and may yet be seen by any traveller who will take the pains to visit these regions. The "running season," which is in August and September, is the time when they congregate into such masses in some places, as literally to blacken the prairies for miles

together. It is no uncommon thing at this season, at these gatherings, to see several thousands in a mass, eddying and wheeling about under a cloud of dust, which is raised by the bulls as they are pawing in the dirt, or engaged in desperate combats, as they constantly are, plunging and butting at each other in the most furious manner. In these scenes, the males are continually following the females, and the whole mass are in constant motion; and all bellowing (or "roaring") in deep and hollow sounds; which, mingled altogether, appear, at the distance of a mile or two, like the sound of distant thunder.

During the season whilst they are congregated together in these dense and confused masses, the remainder of the country around for many miles, becomes entirely vacated; and the traveller may spend many a toilsome day, and many a hungry night, without being cheered by the sight of one; where, if he retraces his steps a few weeks after, he will find them dispersed, and grazing quietly in little families and flocks, and equally stocking the whole country. Of these quiet little herds, a fair representation will be seen, Where some are grazing, others at play, or lying down, and others indulging in their "wallows". A bull in his wallow" is a frequent saying in this country; and has a very significant meaning with those who have ever seen a buffalo bull performing ablution, or rather eodeavouring to cool his heated sides, by tumbling about in a mud puddle.

In the heat of summer, these huge animals, which, no doubt, suffer very much with the great profusion of their long and shaggy heir or fur, often graze on the low grounds in the prairies, where there is little stagnant water lying amongst the grass, and the around underneath being saturated with it, is soft, into which the enormous bull, lowered down upon one knee, will plunge his horns, and at last his head, driving up the earth, and soon making an excavation in the ground, into which the water filters from amongst the grass, forming for him in a few moments, a cool and comfortable bath, into which he plunges like a hog in his mire.

In this delectable laver, he throws himself flat upon his side, and forcing himself violently around, with his horns and his huge hump on his shoulders presented to the sides, he ploughs up the ground by his rotary motion, sinking himself deeper and deeper in the ground, continually enlarging his pool, in which he at length becomes nearly immersed; and the water and mud about him mixed into a complete mortar, which changes his colour, and drips in streams from every part of him as he rises up upon his feet, a hideous monster of mud and ugliness, too frightful and too eccentric to be described!

It is generally the leader of the herd that takes upon him to make this excavation; and if not (but another one opens the ground), the leader (who is conqueror) marches forward, and driving the other from it plunges himself into it; and having cooled his sides, and changed his colour to a walking mass of mud and mortar; he stands in the pool until inclination induces him to step out, and give place to the next in command, who stands ready; and another, and another, who advance forward in their turns, to enjoy the luxury of the wallow; until the whole band (sometimes an hundred or more) will pass through it in turn; each one throwing his body around in a similar manner; and each one adding a little to the dimensions of the pool, while he carries away in his hair an equal share of the clay, which dries to a grey or whitish colour, and gradually falls off. By this operation, which is done, perhaps, in the space of half an hour, a circular excavation of fifteen or twenty feet in diameter, and two feet in depth, is completed, and left for the water to run into, which soon fills it to the level of the ground.

To these sinks, the waters lying on the surface of the prairies, are continually draining, and in

them lodging their vegetable deposits; which, after a lapse of years, fill them up to the surface with a rich soil, which throws up all unusual growth of grass and herbage; forming conspicuous circles which arrest the eye of the traveller, and are calculated to excite his surprise for ages to come. Many travellers who have penetrated not quite far enough into the Western country to see the habits of these animals, and the manner in which these mysterious circles are made; but who have seen the prairies strewed with their bleached bones, and have beheld these strange circles, often occur in groups, and of different sizes--have come home with beautiful and ingenious theories (which must needs be made), for the origin of these, singular and unaccountable appearances, which, for want of a rational theory, have generally been attributed to fairy feet, and gained the appellation of "fairly circles."

Many travellers, again, have supposed that these rings were produced by the dances of the Indians, which are oftentimes (and in fact most generally) performed in a circle; yet a moment's consideration disproves such a probability, inasmuch as the Indians always select the ground for their dancing near the sites of their villages, and that always on a dry and hard foundation; when these "fairy circles" are uniformly found to be on low and wet ground.

As my visit to these parts of the "Great Far West" has brought me into the heart of the buffalo country, where I have had abundant opportunities of seeing this noble animal in all its phases -- its habits of life, and every mode of its death; I shall take the liberty of being yet a little more particular, and of rendering some further accounts of scenes which I have witnessed in following out my sporting propensities in these singular regions.

The chief hunting amusement of the Indians in these parts consists in the chase of the buffalo, which is almost invariably done on horseback, with bow and lance. In this exercise, which is highly prized by them, as one of their most valued amusements, as well as for the principal mode of procuring meat for their subsistence, they become exceedingly expert; and are able to slay these huge animals with apparent ease.

The Indians in these parts are all mounted on small, but serviceable horses, which are caught by them on the prairies, where they are often running wild in numerous bands. The Indian, then, mounted on his little wild horse, which has been through some years of training, dashes off at full speed amongst the herds of buffaloes, elks, or even antelopes, and deals his deadly arrows to their hearts from his horse's back. The horse is the fleetest animal of the prairie, and easily brings his rider alongside of his game, which falls a certain prey to his deadly shafts, at the distance of a few paces.

In the chase of the buffalo, or other animal, the Indian generally "strips" himself and his horse, by throwing off his shield and quiver, and every part of his dress, which might be an encumbrance to him in running; grasping his bow in his left hand, with five or six arrows drawn from his quiver, and ready for instant use. In his right hand (or attached to the wrist) is a heavy whip, which he uses without mercy, and forces his horse alongside of his game at the swiftest speed.

These horses are so trained, that the Indian has little use for the rein, which hangs on the neck, whilst the horse approaches the animal on the right side, giving his rider the chance to throw his arrow to the left; which he does at the instant when the horse is passing -- bringing him opposite to the heart, which receives the deadly weapon "to the feather." When pursuing a large herd, the Indian generally rides close in the rear, until he selects the animal he wishes to kill, which he separates from the throng as soon as he can, by dashing his horse between it and the herd, and forcing

it off by itself; where he can approach it without the danger of being trampled to death, to which he is often liable by too closely escorting the multitude.

In another drawing, I have fairly represented the mode of approaching, at the instant the arrow is to be thrown; and the striking disparity between the size of a huge bull of 2000 pounds weight, and the Indian horse, which, it will be borne in mind, is but a pony.

No bridle whatever is used in this country by the Indians, as they have no knowledge of a bit. A short halter, however, which answers in place of a bridle, is in general use; of which they usually form a noose around the under jaw of the horse, by which they get great power over the animal; and which they use generally to stop rather than guide the horse. This halter is called by the French Traders in the country, l'arret, the stop, and has great power in arresting the speed of a horse; though it is extremely dangerous to use too freely as a guide, interfering too much with the freedom of his limbs, for the certainty of his feet and security of his rider.

When the Indian then has directed the course of his steed to the animal which he has selected, the training of the horse is such, that it knows the object of its rider's selection, and exerts every muscle to give it close company; while the halter lies loose and untouched upon its neck, and the rider leans quite forward, and off from the side of his horse, with his bow drawn, and ready for the deadly shot, which is given at the instant he is opposite to the animal's body. The horse being instinctively afraid of the animal (though he generally brings his rider within the reach of the end of his bow), keeps his eye strained upon the furious enemy he is so closely encountering; and the moment he has approached to the nearest distance required, and has passed the animal, whether the shot is given or not, he gradually sheers off, to prevent coming on to the horns of the infuriated beast, which often are instantly turned, and presented for the fatal reception of its too familiar attendant. These frightful collisions often take place, notwithstanding the sagacity of the horse, and the caution of its rider; for in these extraordinary (and inexpressible) exhilarations of chase, which seem to drown the prudence alike, of instinct and reason, both horse and rider often seem rushing on to destruction, as if it were: mere pastime and amusement.

I have always counted myself a prudent man, yet I have often waked (as it were) out of the delirium of the chase (into which I had fallen, as into an agitated sleep, and through which I had passed as through a delightful dream), where to have died would have been but to have remained, riding on, without a struggle or a pang.

In some of these, too, I have arisen from the prairie, covered with dirt and blood, having severed company with gun and horse, the one lying some twenty or thirty feet from me with a broken stalk, and the other coolly browsing on the grass at half a mile distance, without man, and without other beast remaining in sight.

For the novice in these scenes there is much danger of his limbs and his life, and he finds it a hard and a desperate struggle that brings him in at the death of these huge monsters, except where it has been produced by hands that have acquired more sleight and tact than his own.

With the Indian, who has made this the every day sport and amusement of his life, there is less difficulty and less danger; he rides without ("losing his breath," and his unagitated hand deals certainty in its deadly blows.

In another painting, I have represented a party of Indians in chase of a herd, some of whom are pursuing with lance and others with bows and arrows. The group in the foreground shews the attitude at the instant after the arrow has been thrown and driven to the heart; the Indian at full

speed, and the lasso dragging behind his horse's heels. The lasso is a long thong of rawhide, of ten or fifteen yards in length, made of several braids or twists, and used chiefly to catch the wild horse, which is done by throwing over their necks a noose which is made at the end of the lasso, with which they are "choked down." In running the buffaloes, or in time of war, the lasso drags on the ground at the horse's feet, and sometimes several rods behind, so that if a man is dismounted, which is often the case, by the tripping or stumbling of the horse, he has the power of grasping to the lasso, and by stubbornly holding on to it, of stopping and securing his horse, on whose back he is instantly replaced, and continuing on in the chase.

In the dead of the winters, which are very long and severely cold in this country, where horses cannot be brought into the chase with any avail, the Indian runs upon the surface of the snow by the aid of his snow shoes, which buoy him up, while the great weight of the buffaloes, sinks them down to the middle of their sides, and completely stopping their progress, ensures them certain and easy victims to the bow or lance of their pursuers. The snow in these regions often lies during the winter, to the depth of three and four feet, being blown away from the tops and sides of the hills in many places, which are left bare for the buffaloes to graze upon, whilst it is drifted in the hollows and ravines to a very great depth, and rendered almost entirely impassable to these huge animals, which, when closely pursued by their enemies, endeavor to plunge through it, but are soon wedged in and almost unable to move, where they fall an easy prey to the Indian, who runs up lightly upon his snow shoes and drives his lance to their hearts. The skins are then stripped off, to be sold to the Fur Traders, and the carcasses left to be devoured by the wolves. This is the season in which the greatest number of these animals are destroyed for their robes they are most easily killed at this time, and their hair or fur being longer and more abundant, gives greater value to the robe.

The Indians generally kill and dry meat enough in the fall, when it is fat and juicy, to last them through the winter; so that they have little other object for this unlimited slaughter, amid the drifts of snow, than that of procuring their robes for traffic with their Traders. The snow shoes are made in a great many forms, of two and three feet in length, and one foot or more in width, of a hoop or hoops bent around for the frame, with a netting or web woven across with strings of rawhide, on which the feet rest, and to which they are fastened with straps somewhat like a skate. With these the Indian will glide over the snow with astonishing quickness, without sinking down, or scarcely leaving his track where he has gone.

The poor buffaloes have their enemy man, besetting and besieging them at all times of the year, and in all the modes that man in his superior wisdom has been able to devise for their destruction. They struggle in vain to evade his deadly shafts, when he dashes amongst them over the plains on his wild horse--they plunge into the snow-drifts where they yield themselves an easy prey to their destroyers, and they also stand unwittingly and behold him, unsuspected under the skin of a white wolf, insinuating himself and his fatal weapons into close company, when they are peaceably grazing on the level prairies, and shot down before they are aware of their danger. There are several varieties of the wolf species in this country, the most formidable and most numerous of which are white, often sneaking about in gangs or families of fifty or sixty in numbers, appearing in distance, on the green prairies like nothing but a flock of sheep. Many of these animals grow to a very great size, being I should think, quite a match for the largest Newfoundland dog. At present, whilst the buffaloes are so abundant, and these ferocious animals are glutted

---

with the buffalo's flesh, they are harmless, and everywhere sneak away from man's presence; which I scarcely think will be the case after the buffaloes are all gone, and they are left, as they must be, with scarcely anything to eat. They always are seen following about in the vicinity of herds of buffaloes and stand ready to pick the bones of those that the hunters leave on the ground, or to overtake and devour those that are wounded, which fall an easy prey to them. While the herd of buffaloes are together, they seem to have little dread of the wolf, and allow them to come in close company with them. The Indian then has taken advantage of this fact, and often places himself under the skin of this animal, and crawls for half a mile or more on his hands and knees, until he approaches within a few rods of the unsuspecting group, and easily shoots down the fattest of the throng.

The buffalo is a very timid animal, and shuns the vicinity of man with the keenest sagacity; yet, when overtaken, and harassed or wounded, turns upon its assailants with the utmost fury, who have only to seek safety in flight. In their desperate resistance the finest horses are often destroyed; but the Indian, with his superior sagacity and dexterity, generally finds some effective mode of escape.

During the season of the year whilst the calves are young, the male seems to stroll about by the side of the dam, as if for the purpose of protecting the young, at which time it is exceedingly hazardous to attack them, as they are sure to turn upon their pursuers, who have often to fly to each others assistance. The buffalo calf, during the first six months is red, and has so much the appearance of a red calf in cultivated fields, that it could easily be mingled and mistaken amongst them. In the fall, when it changes its hair it takes a brown coat for the winter, which it always retains. In pursuing a large herd of buffaloes at the season when their calves are but a few weeks old, I have often been exceedingly amused with the curious manœuvres of these shy little things. Amidst the thundering confusion of a throng of several hundreds or several thousands of these animals, there will be many of the calves that lose sight of their dams; and being left behind by the throng, and the swift Passing hunters, they endeavor to secrete themselves, when they are exceedingly put to it on a level prairie, where nought can be seen but the short grass of six or eight inches in height, save an occasional bunch of wild sage, a few inches higher, to which the poor affrighted things will run, and dropping on their knees, will push their noses under it, and into the grass, where they will stand for hours, with their eyes shut, imagining themselves securely hid, whilst they are standing up quit straight upon their hind feet and can easily be seen at several miles distance. It is a familiar amusement for us accustomed to these scenes, to retreat back over the ground where we have just escorted the herd, and approach these little trembling things, which stubbornly maintain their positions, with their noses pushed under the grass, and their eyes strained upon us, as we dismount from our horses and are passing around them. From this fixed position they are sure not to move, until hands are laid upon them, and then for the shins of a novice, we can extend our sympathy; or if he can preserve the skin on his bones from the furious buttings of its head, we know how to congratulate him on his signal success and good luck. In these desperate struggles, for a moment, the little thing is conquered, and makes no further resistance. And I have often, in concurrence with a known custom of the country, held my hands over the eyes of the calf, and breathed a few strong breaths into its nostrils; after which I have, with my hunting companions, rode several miles into our encampment, with the little prisoner busily following the heels of my horse the whole way, as closely and as affectionately as its instinct would

attach it to the company of its dam!

This is one of the most extraordinary things that I have met with in the habits of this wild country, and although I had often heard of it, and felt unable exactly to believe it, I am now willing to bear testimony to the fact, from the numerous instances which I have witnessed since I came into the country. During the time that I resided at this post, in the spring of the year, on my way up the river, I assisted (in numerous hunts of the buffalo, with the Fur Company's men), in bringing in, in the above manner, several of these little prisoners, which sometimes followed for five or six miles close to our horses' heels, and even into the Fur Company's Fort, and into the stable where our horses were led. In this way, before (left for the headwaters of the Missouri, I think we had collected about a dozen, which Mr. Laidlaw was successfully raising with the aid of a good milch cow, and which were to be committed to the care of Mr. Chouteau to be transported by the return of the steamer, to his extensive plantation in the vicinity of St. Louis. •

It is truly a melancholy contemplation for the traveller in this country, to anticipate the period which is not far distant, when the last of these noble animals, at the hands of white and red men, will fall victims to their cruel and improvident rapacity; leaving these beautiful green fields, a vast and idle waste, unstocked and unpeopled for ages to come, until the bones of the one and the traditions of the other will have vanished, and left scarce an intelligible trace behind.

That the reader should not think me visionary in these contemplations, or romancing in making such assertions, I will hand him the following item of the extravagancies which are practiced in these regions, and rapidly leading to the results which I have just named.

When I first arrived at this place, on my way up the river, which was in the month of May, in 1832, and had taken up my lodgings in the Fur Company's Fort, Mr. Laidlaw, of whom I have before spoken, and also his chief clerk, Mr. Halsey, and many of their men, as well as the chiefs of the Sioux, told me, that only a few days before I arrived, (when an immense herd of buffaloes had showed themselves on the opposite side of the river, almost blackening the plains for a great distance,) a party of five or six hundred Sioux Indians on horseback, forded the river about mid-day, and spending a few hours amongst them, recrossed the river at sun-down and came into the Fort with fourteen hundred fresh buffalo tongues, which were thrown down in a mass, and for which they required but a few gallons of whiskey, which was soon demolished, indulging them in a little, and harmless carouse.

This profligate waste of the lives of these noble and useful animals, when, from all that I could learn not a skin or a pound of the meat (except the tongues), was brought in, fully supports me in the seemingly extravagant predictions that I have made as to their extinction, which I am certain is near at hand. In the above extravagant instance, at a season when their skins were without fur and not worth taking off, and their camp was so well stocked with fresh and dried meat, that they had no occasion for using the flesh, there is a fair exhibition of the improvident character of the savage, and also of his recklessness in catering for his appetite, so long as the present inducements are held out to him in his country, for its gratification.

In this singular country, where the poor Indians have no laws or regulations of society, making it a vice or an impropriety to drink to excess, they think it no harm to indulge in the delicious beverage, as long as they are able to buy whiskey to drink. They look to white men as wiser than themselves, and able to set them examples -- they see none of these in their country but sellers of whiskey, who are constantly tendering it to them, and most of them setting the example by

using it themselves; and they easily acquire a taste, that to be catered for, where whiskey is sold at sixteen dollars per gallon, soon impoverishes them, and must soon strip the skin from the last buffalo's back that lives in their country, to "be dressed by their squaws" and vended to the Traders for a pint of diluted alcohol.

From the above remarks it will be seen, that not- only the red men, but red men and white, have aimed destruction at the race of these animals ; and with them, beasts have turned hunters of buffaloes in this country, slaying them, however, in less numbers, and for far more laudable purpose than that of selling their skins. The white wolves, of which I have spoken in a former epistle, follow the herds of buffaloes as I have said, from one season to another, glutting themselves on the carcasses of those that fall by the deadly shafts of their enemies, or linger with disease or old age to be dispatched by these sneaking cormorants, who are ready at all times kindly to relieve them from the pangs of a lingering death.

Whilst the herd is together, the wolves never attack them, as they instantly gather for combined resistance, which they effectually make. But when the herds are travelling; it often happens that an aged or wounded one, lingers at a distance behind, and when fairly out of sight of the herd, is set upon by these voracious hunters, which often gather to the number of fifty or more, and are sure at last to torture him to death, and use him up at a meal. The buffalo, however, is a huge and furious animal, and when his retreat is cut off, makes desperate and deadly resistance, contending to the last moment for the right of life -- and oftentimes deals death by wholesale, to his canine assailants, which he is tossing into the air or stamping to death under his feet.

During my travels in these regions, I have several times come across such a gang of these animals surrounding an old or a wounded bull, where it would seem, from appearances, that they had been for several days in attendance, and at intervals desperately engaged in the effort to take his life. But a short time since, as one of my hunting companions and myself were returning to our encampment with our horses loaded with meat, we discovered at a distance, a huge bull, encircled with a gang of white wolves; we rode up as near as we could without driving them away, and being within pistol shot, we had a remarkably good view, where I sat for a few moments and made a sketch in my note-book; after which, we rode up and gave the signal for them to disperse, which they instantly did, withdrawing themselves to the distance of fifty or sixty rods, when we found, to our great surprise, that the animal had made desperate resistance, until his eyes were entirely eaten out of his head -- the grizzle of his nose was mostly gone-his tongue was half eaten off, and the skin and flesh of iris legs torn almost literally into strings. In this tattered and torn condition, the poor old veteran stood bracing up in the midst of his devourers, who had ceased hostilities for a few minutes, to enjoy a sort of parley, recovering strength and preparing to resume the attack in a few moments again. In this group, some were reclining, to gain breath, whilst others were sneaking about and licking their chaps in anxiety for a renewal of the attack; and others, less lucky, had been crushed to death by the feet or the horns of the bull. I rode nearer to the pitiable object as he stood bleeding and trembling before me, and said to him, "Now is your time, old fellow, and you had better be off." Though blind and nearly destroyed, there seemed evidently to be a recognition of a friend in me, as he straightened up, and, trembling with excitement, dashed off at full speed upon the prairie, in a straight line. We turned our horses and resumed our march, and when we had advanced a mile or more, we looked back, and on our left, where we saw again the ill-fated animal surrounded by his tormentors, to whose insatiable voracity he unquestionably soon fell a

victim.

Thus much I wrote of the buffaloes, and of the accidents that befall them, as well as of the fate that awaits them; and before I closed my book, I strolled out one day to the shade of a plum-tree, where I laid in the grass on a favorite bluff, and wrote thus:--

“ It is generally supposed, and familiarly said, that a man ‘foils’ into a reverie; but I seated myself in the shade a few minutes since, resolved to force myself into one; and for this purpose I laid open a small pocket-map of North America, and excluding my thoughts from every other object in the world, I soon succeeded in producing the desired illusion. This little chart, over which I bent, was seen in all its parts, as nothing but the green and vivid reality. I was lifted up upon an imaginary pair of wings, which easily raised and held me floating in the open air, from whence I could behold beneath me the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans--the great cities of the East, and the mighty rivers. I could see the blue chain of the great lakes at the North--the Rocky Mountains, and beneath them and near their base, the vast, and almost boundless plains of grass, which were speckled with the bands of grazing buffaloes!

“The world turned gently around, and I examined its surface; continent alter continent passed under my eye, and yet amidst them all, I saw not the vast and vivid green, that is spread like a carpet over the Western wilds all my own country. I saw not elsewhere in the world, the myriad herds of buffaloes -- my eyes scanned in vain, for they were not. And when I turned again to the wilds of my native land, I beheld them all in motion! Far the distance of several hundreds of miles from North to South, they were wheeling about in vast columns and herds -- some were scattered, and ran with furious wildness -- some lay dead, and others were pawing the earth for a hiding-place -- some were sinking down and dying, gushing out their life’s blood in deep-drawn sighs -- and others were contending in furious battle for the life they possessed, and the ground that they stood upon. They had long since assembled from the thickets, and secret haunts of the deep forest, into the midst of the treeless and bushless plains, as the Place for their safety. I could see in an hundred places, amid the wheeling bands, and on their skirts and flanks, the leaping wild horse darting among them. I saw not the arrows, nor heard the twang of the sinewy bows that sent them; but I saw their victims fall I -- on other steeds that rushed along their sides, I saw the glistening lances, which seemed to lay across them ; their blades were blazing in the sun, till dipped in blood, and then I lost them ! In other parts (and there were many), the vivid dash of fire-arms was seen--their victims fell too, and over their dead bodies hung suspended in air, little clouds of whitened smoke, from under which the flying horsemen had darted forward to mingle again with, and deal death to, the trampling throng.

“So strange were men mixed (both red and white) with the countless herds that wheeled and eddyed about, that all below seemed one vast extended field of battle--whole armies, in some places, seemed to blacken the earth’s surface; -- in other parts, regiments, battalions, wings, platoons, rank and file, and “Indian-file” -- all were in motion; and death and destruction seemed to be the watch-word amongst them. In their turmoil, they sent up great clouds of dust, and with them came the mingled din of groans and trampling hoofs, that seemed like the rumbling of a dreadful cataract, or the roaring of distant thunder. Alternate pity and admiration harrowed up in my bosom anti my brain, many a hidden thought; and amongst them a few of the beautiful notes that were once sung, and exactly in point: (*Quadrupedante pufrena sonitn quatit ungula campum.*) Even such was the din amidst the quadrupeds of these vast plans. And from the craggy cliffs of

the Rocky Mountains also were seen descending into the valley, the myriad Tartars, who had not horses to ride, but before their well drawn bows the fattest of the herds were falling. Hundreds and thousands were strewed upon the plains--they were flayed, and their reddened carcasses left; and about them bands of wolves, and dogs, and buzzards were seen devouring them. Contiguous, and in sight, were the distant and feeble smokes of wigwams and villages, where the skins were dragged, and dressed for white man's luxury! where they were all sold for whiskey and the poor Indians laid drunk, and were crying. I cast my eyes into the towns and cities of the East, and there I beheld buffalo robes hanging at almost every door for traffic; and I saw also the curling smokes of a thousand Stills -- and I said, 'Oh insatiable man, is thy avarice such! wouldst thou tear the skin from the back of the last animal of this noble race, and rob thy fellow-man of his meat, and for it give him poison!'

Many are the rudenesses and wilds in Nature's works, which are destined to Fall before the deadly axe and desolating hands of cultivating man; and so amongst her ranks of living, of beast and human, we often find noble stamps, or beautiful colours, to which our admiration clings; and even in the overwhelming march of civilized improvements and refinements do we love to cherish their existence, and lend our efforts to preserve them in their primitive rudeness. Such of Nature's works are always worthy of our preservation and protection; and the further we become separated (and the face of the country) from that pristine wildness and beauty, the more pleasure does the mind of enlightened man feel in recurring to those scenes, when he can have them preserved for his eyes and his mind to dwell upon.

Of such "rudenesses and wilds," Nature has no where presented more beautiful and lovely scenes, than those of the vast prairies of the West; and of man and beast, no nobler specimens than those who inhabit them -- the Indian and the buffalo -- joint and original tenants of the soil, and fugitives together from the approach of civilized man; they have fled to the great plains of the West, and there, under an equal doom, they have taken up their last abode, where their race will expire, and their bones will bleach together.

It may be that power is right, and voracity a virtue; and that these people, and these noble animals, are righteously doomed to an issue that will not be averted. It can be easily proved -- we have a civilized science that can easily do it, or anything else that may be required to cover the iniquities of civilized man in catering for his unholy appetites. It can be proved that the weak and ignorant have no rights--that there can be no virtue in darkness--that God's gifts have no meaning or merit until they are appropriated by civilized man -- by him brought into the light, and converted to his use and luxury. We have a mode of reasoning (I forget what it is called) by which all this can be proved, and even more. The word and the system are entirely of civilized origin; and latitude is admirably given to them in proportion to the increase of civilized wants, which often require a judge to overrule the laws of nature. I say that we can prove such things; but an Indian cannot. It is a mode of reasoning unknown to him in his nature's simplicity but admirably adapted to subserve the interests of the enlightened world; who are always their own judges, when dealing with the savage: and who, in the present refined age, have many appetites that can only be law, indulged by proving God's laws defective.

It is not enough in this polished and extravagant age, that we get from the Indian his lands, and the very clothes from his back, but the food from their mouths must be stopped, to add a new and useless article to the fashionable world's luxuries. The ranks must be thinned, and the race

exterminated, of this noble animal, and the Indians of the great plains left without the means of supporting life, that white men may figure a few years longer, enveloped in buffalo robes--that they may spread them, for their pleasure and elegance, over the backs of their sleighs, and trail them ostentatiously amidst the busy throng, as things of beauty and elegance that had been made for them!

Reader! listen to the following calculations; and forget them not. The buffaloes (the quadrupeds from whose backs your beautiful robes were taken, and whose myriads were once spread over the whole country, from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean) have recently fled before the appalling appearance of civilized man, and taken up their abode and pasturage amid the almost boundless prairies of the West. An instinctive dread of their deadly foes, who made an easy prey of them whilst grazing in the forest, has led them to seek the midst of the vast and treeless plains of grass, as the spot where they would be least exposed to the assaults of their enemies; and it is exclusively in those desolate fields of silence (yet of beauty) that they are to be found -- and over these vast steppes, or prairies, have they fled, like the Indian, towards the "setting sun"; until their bands have been crowded together, and their limits confined to a narrow strip of country on this side of the Rocky Mountains.

This strip of country, which extends from the province of Mexico to lake Winnepeg on the North, is almost one entire plain of grass. which is, and ever must be, useless to cultivating man. It is here, and here chiefly, that the buffaloes dwell; and with, and hovering about them, live and flourish the tribes of Indians, whom God made for the enjoyment of that fair land and its luxuries. It is a melancholy contemplation for one who has travelled as I have, through these realms, and seen this noble animal in all its pride and glory, to contemplate it so rapidly wasting from the world, drawing the irresistible conclusion too, which one must do, that its species is soon to be extinguished, and with it the peace and happiness (if not the actual existence) of the tribes of Indians who are joint tenants with them, in the occupancy of these vast and idle plains.

And what a splendid contemplation too, when one (who has travelled these realms, and can duly appreciate them) imagines them as they might in future be seen, (by some great protecting policy of government) preserved in their pristine beauty and wildness, in a magnificent park, where the world could see for ages to come, the native Indian in his classic attire, galloping his wild horse, with sinewy bow, and shield and lance, amid the fleeting herds of elks and buffaloes. That a beautiful and thrilling specimen for America to preserve and hold up to the view of her refined citizens and the world, in future ages! A nation's Park, containing man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty!

I would ask no other monument to my memory, nor any other enrolment of my name amongst the famous dead, than the reputation of having been the founder of such an institution.

Such scenes might easily have been preserved, and still could be cherished on the great plains of the West, without delirium to the country or its borders; for the tracts of country on which the buffaloes have assembled, are uniformly sterile, and of no available use to cultivating man.

It is on these plains, which are stocked with buffaloes, that the finest specimens of the Indian race are to be seen. It is here, that the savage is decorated in the richest costume. It is here, and here only, that his wants are all satisfied, and even the luxuries of life are afforded him in abundance.

And here also is he the proud and honourable man (before he has had teachers or laws), above the imported wants, which beget meanness and vice; stimulated by ideas of honour and virtue, in

which the God of Nature has certainly not curtailed him.

There are, by a fair calculation, more than 300,000 Indians, who are now subsisted on the flesh of the buffaloes, and by those animals supplied with ail the loxuries of life which they desire, as they know of none others. The great variety of uses to which they convert the body and other parts of that animal, are almost incredible to the person who has not actually dwelt amongst these people, and closely studied their modes and customs. Every part of their flesh is converted into food, in one shape or another, and on it they entirely subsist. The robes of the animals are worn by the Indians instead of blankets -- their skins when tanned, are used as coverings for their lodges, and for their beds; undressed, they are used for constructing canoes -- for saddles, for bridles -- for harnesses, laces, and thongs. The horns are shaped into ladles and spoons -- the brains are used for dressing the skins--their bones are used for saddle trees -- for war clubs, and scrapers for graining-- the robes -- and others are broken up for the marrow-fat which is contained in them. Their sinews are used for struts and backs to their bows -- for thread to string their beads and sew their dresses. The feet of the animals are boiled, with their hoofs, for the glue they contain, for fastening their arrow points, and many other uses. The hair from the head and shoulders, which is long, is twisted and braided into halters, and the tail is used for a fly brush. In this way do these people convert and use the various parts of this useful animal, and with all these luxuries of life about them, and their numerous games, they are happy (God bless them) in the ignorance of the disastrous fate that awaits them.

Yet this interesting community, with its sports, its wildnesses, its languages, and all its manners and customs, could be perpetuated, and also the buffaloes, whose numbers would increase and supply them with food for ages and centuries to come, if a system of non-intercourse could be established and preserved. But such is not to be the case -- the buffalo's doom is sealed, and with their extinction must assuredly sink into real despair and starvation, the inhabitants of these vast plains, which afford for the Indians, no other possible means of subsistence; and they must at last fall a prey to wolves and buzzards, who will have no other bones to pick.

It seems hard and cruel, (does it not?) that we civilized people with all the luxuries and comforts of the world about us, should be drawing from the backs of these useful animals the skins for our luxury, leaving their carcasses to be devoured by the wolves -- that we should draw from that country, some 150 or 200,000 of their robes annually the greater part of which are taken from animals that are killed expressly for the robe, at a season when the meat is not cured and preserved, and for each of which skins the Indian has received but a pint of whiskey!

Such is the fact, and that number or near it, are annually destroyed, in addition to the number that is necessarily killed for the subsistence of 300,000 Indians, who live entirely upon them. It may be said, perhaps, that the Fur Trade of these great western realms, which is now limited chiefly to the purchase of buffalo robes, is of great and national importance, and should and must be encouraged. To such a suggestion I would reply, by merely enquiring, (independently of the poor Indians' disasters,) how much more advantageously would such a capital be employed, both for the weal of the country and for the owners, if it were invested in machines for the manufacture of woollen robes, of equal and superior value and beauty; thereby encouraging the growers of wool, and the industrious manufacturer, rather than cultivating a taste for the use of buffalo skins; which is just to be acquired, and then, from necessity, to be dispensed with, when a few years shall have destroyed the last of the animals producing them.

It may be answered, perhaps, that the necessaries of life are given in exchange for these robes; but what, I would ask, are the necessities in Indian life, where they have buffaloes in abundance to live on? The Indian's necessities are entirely artificial -- are all created; and when the buffaloes shall have disappeared in his country, which will be within eight or ten years, I would ask, who is to supply him with the necessaries of life then? and I would ask, further, (and leave the question to be answered ten years hence), when the skin shall have been stripped from the back of the last animal, who is to resist the ravages of 300,000 starving savages; and in their trains, 1,500,000 wolves, whom direst necessity will have driven from their desolate and gameless plains, to seek for the means of subsistence along our exposed Frontier? God has everywhere supplied man in a state of Nature, with the necessaries of life, and before we destroy the game of his country, or teach him new desires, he has no wants that are not satisfied.

Amongst the tribes who have been impoverished and repeatedly removed, the necessaries of life are extended with a better grace from the hands of civilized man; 90,000 of such have already been removed, and they draw from Government some 5 or 600,000 dollars annually in cash; which money passes immediately into the hands of white men, and for it the necessaries of life may be abundantly furnished. But who, I would ask, are to furnish the Indians who have been instructed in this unnatural mode -- living upon such necessaries, and even luxuries of life, extended to them by the hands of white men, when those annuities are at an end, and the skin is stripped from the last of the animals which God gave them for their subsistence?

Reader, I will stop here, lest you might forget to answer these important queries -- these are questions which I know will puzzle the world -- and, perhaps it is not right that I should ask them. \* \*

\* \* \* \*

Thus much I wrote and painted at this place, whilst on my way up the river: after which I embarked on the steamer for the Yellow Stone, and the sources of the Missouri, through which interesting regions I have made a successful Tour; and have returned, as will have been seen by the foregoing narrations, in my canoe, to this place, from whence I am to descend the river still further in a few days. If I ever get time, I may give further Notes on this place, and of people and their doings, which I met with here; but at present, I throw my note-book, and canvass, and brushes into my canoe, which will be launched to-morrow morning, and on its way towards St. Louis, with myself at the steering-oar, as usual: and with Ba'tiste and Bogard to paddle, of whom, I beg the readers' pardon for having said nothing of late, though they have been my constant companions. Our way is now over the foaming and muddy waters of the Missouri, and amid snags and drift logs (for there is a sweeping freshet on her waters), and many a day will pass before other Letters will come from me; and possibly, the reader may have to look to my biographer for the rest. Adieu.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER No. 32

FORT LEAVENWORTH, LOWER MISSOURI.

The readers, I presume, will have felt some anxiety for me and the fate of my little craft, after the close of my last Letter; and I have the very great satisfaction of announcing to them that we escaped snags and sawers, and every other danger, and arrived here safe from the Upper Missouri, where my last letters were dated. We, (that is, Ba'tiste, Bogard and I,) are comfortably quartered for awhile, in the barracks of this hospitable Cantonment, which is now the extreme Western military post on the frontier, and under the command of Colonel Davenport, a gentleman of great urbanity of manners, with a Roman head and a Grecian heart, restrained and tempered by the charms of an American lady, who has elegantly pioneered the graces of civilized refinements into these uncivilized regions.

This Cantonment, which is beautifully situated on the west bank of the Missouri River, and six hundred miles above its mouth, was constructed some years since by General Leavenworth, from whom it has taken its name. Its location is very beautiful, and so is the country around it. It is the con-centration point of a number of hostile tribes in the vicinity, and has its influence in restraining their warlike propensities.

There is generally a regiment of men stationed here, for the purpose of holding the Indians in check, and of preserving the peace amongst the hostile tribes. I shall visit several tribes in this vicinity, and most assuredly give you some further account of them, as fast as I get it.

Since the date of my last epistles, I succeeded in descending the river to this place, in my little canoe, with my two men at the oars, and myself at the helm, steering its course the whole way amongst snags and sand-bars.

Before I give further account of this downward voyage, however, I must recur back for a few moments, to the Teton River, from whence I started, and from whence my last epistles were written, to record a few more incidents which I then overlooked in my note-book. Whilst painting my portraits amongst the Sioux, as I have described, I got the portrait of a noble Shienne chief, by the name of Nee-hee-o-ee-woo-tis, the wolf on the hill. The chief of a party of that tribe, on a friendly visit to the Sioux, and the portrait also of a woman, Tis-see-woo-na-tis (she who bathes her knees. The Shiennes are a small tribe of about 3000 in numbers, living neighbors to the Sioux, on the west of them, and between the Black Hills and the Rocky Mountains. There is no finer race of men than these in North America, and none superior in stature, excepting the Osages; scarcely a man in the tribe, full grown, who is less than six feet in height. The Shiennes are undoubtedly the richest in horses of any tribe on the Continent, living in a country as they do, where the greatest herds of wild horses are grazing on the prairies, which they catch in great numbers and vend to the Sioux, Mandans and other tribes, as well as to the Fur Traders.

These people are the most desperate set of horsemen, and warriors also, having carried on almost unceasing wars with the Pawnees and Blackfeet, "time out of mind." The chief represented in the

---

picture was clothed in a handsome dress of deer skins, very neatly garnished with broad bands of porcupine quill-work down the sleeves of his shirt and his leggings, and all the way fringed with scalp-locks. His hair was very profuse, and flowing over his shoulders; and in his hand he held a beautiful Sioux pipe, which had just been presented to him by Mr. McKenzie, the Trader. This was one of the finest looking and most dignified men that I have met in the Indian country; and from the account given of him by the Traders a man of honour and strictest integrity. The woman was comely, and beautifully dressed; her dress of the mountain-sheep skins, tastefully ornamented with quills and beads, and her hair plaited in large braids, that hung down on her breast.

After I had painted these and many more, whom I have not time at present to name, I painted the portrait of a celebrated warrior of the Sioux, by the name of Mah-to-chee-ga (the little bear), who was unfortunately slain in a few moments after the picture was done, by one of his own tribe; and which was very near costing me my life for having painted a side view of his face, leaving one-half of it out of the picture, which had been the cause of the affray; and supposed by the whole tribe to have been intentionally left out by me, as "good for nothing." This was the last picture that I painted amongst the Sioux, and the last, undoubtedly, that I ever shall paint in that place. So tremendous and so alarming was the excitement about it, that my brushes were instantly put away, and I embarked the next day on the steamer for the sources of the Missouri, and was glad to get under weigh.

The man who slew this noble warrior was a troublesome fellow of the same tribe, by the name of Shon-ka (the dog). A "hue and cry" has been on his track for several months; and my life having been repeatedly threatened during my absence up the river, I shall defer telling the whole of this most extraordinary affair, until I see that my own scalp is safe, and I am successfully out of the country. A few weeks or months will decide how many are to fall victims to the vengeance of the relatives of this murdered brave; and if I outlive the affair, I shall certainly give some further account of it.

My voyage from the mouth of the Teton River to this place has been the most rugged, yet the most delightful, of my whole Tour. Our canoe was generally landed at night on the point of some projecting barren sand-bar, where we straightened our limbs on our buffalo robes, secure from the annoyance of mosquitos, and out of the walks of Indians and grizzly bears. In addition to the opportunity which this descending Tour has afforded me, of visiting all the tribes of Indians on the river, and leisurely filling my portfolio with the beautiful scenery which its shores present--the sportsman's fever was roused and satisfied; the swan, ducks, geese, and pelicans--the deer, antelope, elk, and buffaloes, were "stretched" by our rifles; and some times -- "pull boys! pull! a war party! For your lives pull! Or we are gone!"

I often landed my skiff, and mounted the green-carpeted bluffs. Whose soft grassy tops, invited me to recline, where I was at once lost in contemplation. Soul melting scenery that was about me! A place where the mind could think volumes; but the tongue must be silent that would speak, and the hand palsied that would write. A place where a Divine would confess that he never had fancied Paradise -- where the painter's palette would lose its beautiful tints -- the blood-stirring notes of eloquence would die in their utterance -- and even the soft tones of sweet music would scarcely preserve a spark to light the soul again that had passed this sweet delirium. I mean the prairie, whose enameled plains that lie beneath me, in distance soften into sweetness, like an essence; whose thousand velvet covered hills, (surely never formed by chance, but grouped in one

of Nature's sportive moods) -- tossing and leaping down with steep or graceful declivities to the river's edge, as if to grace its pictured shores, and make it "a thing to look upon." I mean the prairie at sun-set; when the green hill-tops are turned into gold -- and their long shadows of melancholy are thrown over the valleys -- when all the breathing of day are hushed, and nought but the soft notes of the retiring dove can be heard ; or the still softer and more plaintive notes of the wolf, who sneaks through these scenes of enchantment, and mournfully how--l---s, as if lonesome, and lost in the too beautiful quiet and stillness about him. I mean this prairie; where Heaven sheds its purest light, and lends its richest tints -- this round-topped bluff, here the foot treads soft, and light -- whose steep sides, and lofty head, rear me to the skies, overlooking yonder pictured vale of beauty -- this solitary cedar-post, which tells a tale of grief -- grief that was keenly felt, and tenderly, but long since softened in the march of time and lost. Oh, sad and tearstarting contemplation I: sole tenant of this stately mound, how solitary thy habitation! here Heaven wrested from thee thy ambition, and made thee sleeping monarch of this land of silence.

Stranger! oh, how the mystic web of sympathy links my soul to thee and thy afflictions! I knew thee not, but it was enough; thy tale was told, and I a solitary wanderer through thy land, have stopped to drop familiar tears upon thy grave. Pardon this gush from a stranger's eyes, for they are all that thou canst have in this strange land, where friends and dear relations are not allowed to pluck a flower, and drop a tear to freshen recollections of endearments past.

Stranger! Adieu. With streaming eyes I leave thee again, and thy fairy land, to peaceful solitude. My pencil has faithfully traced thy beautiful habitation; and long shall live in the world, and familiar, the name of "Floyd's Grave".

Readers, pardon this digression. I have seated myself down, not on a prairie, but at my table, by a warm and cheering fire, with my journal before me to cull from it a few pages, for your entertainment; and if there are spots of loveliness and beauty, over which I have passed, and whose images are occasionally beckoning me into digressions, you must forgive me.

Such is the spot I have just named, and some others, on to which I am instantly transferred when I cast my eyes back upon the enameled and beautiful shores of the Upper Missouri; and I am constrained to step aside and give ear to their breathing, when their soft images, and cherished associations, so earnestly prompt me. "Floyd's Grave" is a name given to one of the most lovely and imposing mounds or bluffs on the Missouri River, about twelve hundred miles above St. Louis, from the melancholy fate of Sergeant Floyd, who was of Lewis and Clark's expedition, in 1806; who died on the way, and whose body was taken to this beautiful hill, and buried in its top, where now stands a cedar post, bearing the initials of his name.

I landed my canoe in front of this grass-covered mound, and all hands being fatigued, we encamped a couple of days at its base. I several times ascended it and sat upon his grave, overgrown with grass and the most delicate wild flowers, where I sat and contemplated the solitude and stillness of this tenanted mound; and beheld from its top, the windings infinite of the Missouri, and its thousand hills and domes of green, vanishing into blue in distance, when nought but the soft-breathing winds were heard, to break the stillness and quietude of the scene. Where not the chirping of bird or sound of cricket, nor soaring eagle's scream, were interposed between God and man; nor aught to check man's whole surrender of his soul to his Creator. I could not hunt upon this ground, but I roamed from hill-top to hill-top, and culled wild flowers, and looked into the valley below me, both up the river and down, and contemplated the thousand hills and dales

that are now carpeted with green, streaked as they will be, with the plough, and yellow with the harvest sheaf; spotted with lowing kine-with houses and fences, and groups of hamlets and villas -- and these lovely hill-tops ringing with the giddy din and maze, or secret earnest whispers of lovesick swains -- of pristine simplicity and virtue -- wholesome and well earned contentment and abundance -- and again, of wealth and refinements -- of idleness and luxury -- of vice and its deformities -- of fire and sword, and the vengeance of offended Heaven, wreaked in retributive destruction and peace, and quiet, and loveliness, and silence, dwelling again, over and through these scenes, and blending them into futurity!

Many such scenes there are, and thousands, on the Missouri shores. My canoe has been stopped, and I have clambered up their grassy and flower decked sides; and sighed all alone, as I have carefully traced and fastened them in colours on my canvass.

This voyage in my little canoe, amid the thousand islands and grass covered bluffs that stud the shores of this mighty river, afforded me infinite pleasure, mingled with Pains and privations which I never shall wish to forget. Gliding along from day to day, and tiring our eyes on the varying landscapes that were continually opening to our view, my merry voyageurs were continually chanting their cheerful boat songs, and I' every now and then," taking up their unerring rifles to bring down the stately elks or antelopes, which were often gazing at us from the shores of the river.

But a few miles from "Floyd's Bluff" we landed our canoe, and spent a day in the vicinity of the "Black Bird's Grave". This is a celebrated point on the Missouri, and a sort of telegraphic place, which all the travellers in these realms, both white and red, are in the habit of visiting: the one to pay respect to the bones of one of their distinguished leaders; and the others, to indulge their eyes on the lovely landscape that spreads out to an almost illimitable extent in every direction about it. This elevated bluff, which may be distinguished for several leagues in distance, has received the name of the "Black Bird's Grave", from the fact, that a famous chief of the O-ma-haws, by the name of the Black Bird, was buried on its top, at his own peculiar request; over whose grave a cedar post was erected by his tribe some thirty years ago, which is still standing. The O-ma-haw village was about sixty miles above this place; and this very noted chief, who had been on a visit to Washington City, in company with the Indian agent, died of the small-pox, near this spot, on his return home. And, whilst dying, enjoined on his warriors who were about him, this singular request, which was literally complied with. He requested them to take his body down the river to this his favourite haunt, and on the pinnacle of this towering bluff; to bury him on the back of his favourite war-horse, which was to be buried alive, under him, from whence he could see, as he said, "the Frenchmen passing up and down the river in their boats." He owned, amongst many horses, a noble white steed that was led to the top of the grass-covered hill; and, with great pomp and ceremony, in presence of the whole nation, and several of the Fur Traders and the Indian agent, he was placed astride of his horse's back, with his bow in his hand, and his shield and quiver slung-with his pipe and his medicine-bag -- with his supply of dried meat, and his tobacco-pouch replenished to last him through his journey to the "beautiful hunting grounds of the shades of his fathers" -- with his flint and steel, and his tinder, to light his pipes by the way. The scalps that he had taken from his enemies' heads, could be trophies for nobody else, and were hung to the bridle of his horse -- he was in full dress and fully equipped; and on his head waved, to the last moment, his beautiful head-dress of the war-eagle's plumes. In this plight, and the last

---

funeral honours having been performed by the medicine-men, every warrior of his band painted the palm and fingers of his right hand with vermilion; which was stamped, and perfectly impressed on the milk-white sides of his devoted horse.

This all done, turfs were brought and placed around the feet and legs of the horse, and gradually laid up to its sides; and at last, over the back and head of the unsuspecting animal, and last of all, over the head and even the eagle plumes of its valiant rider, where altogether have smouldered and remained undisturbed to the present day.

This mound which is covered with a green turf, and spotted with wild flowers, with its cedar post in its centre, can easily be seen at the distance of fifteen miles, by the voyageur, and forms for him a familiar and useful land-mark.

Whilst visiting this mound in company with Major Sanford, on our way up the river, I discovered in a hole made in the mound, by a "ground hog" or other animal, the skull of the horse; and by a little pains, also came at the skull of the chief, which I carried to the river side, and secreted till my return in my canoe, when I took it in, and brought with me to this place, where I now have it, with others which I have collected on my route.

There have been some very surprising tales told of this man, which will lender him famous in history, whether they be truth or matters of fiction. Of the many, one of the most current is, that he gained his celebrity and authority by the most diabolical series of murders in his own tribe; by administering arsenic (with which he had been supplied by the Fur Traders) to such of his enemies as he wished to pet rid of -- and even to others in his tribe whom he was willing to sacrifice, merely to establish his superhuman powers, and the most servile dread of the tribe, from the certainty with which his victims fell around him, precisely at the times he saw fit to predict their death! It has been said that he administered this potent drug, and to them unknown medicine, to many of his friends as well as to foes; and by such an inhuman and unparalleled depravity, succeeded in exercising the most despotic and absolute authority in his tribe, until the time of his death!

This story may be true, and it may not. I cannot contradict it; and I am sure the world will forgive me, if I say, I cannot believe it. If it be true, two things are also true; the one, not much to the credit of the Indian character; and the other, to the everlasting infamy of the Fur Traders. If it be true, it furnishes an instance of Indian depravity that I never have elsewhere heard of in my travels; and carries the most conclusive proof of the incredible enormity of white men's dealings in this country; who, for some sinister purpose must have introduced the Poisonous drug into die country, and taught the poor chief how to use it; whilst they were silent accessories to the murders he was committing. This story is said to have been told by the Fur Traders; and although I have not always the highest confidence in their justice to the Indian, yet, I cannot for the honour of my own species believe them to be so depraved and so wicked, nor so weak, as to reveal such iniquities of this chief, if they were true, which must directly implicate themselves as accessories to his most wilful and unprovoked murders.

Such he has been heralded, however, to future ages, as a murderer -- like hundreds and thousands of others, as "horse thieves" -- as "drunkards" -- as "rogues of the first order", &c. &c. -- by the historian who catches but a glaring story, (and perhaps fabrication) of their lives, and has no time nor disposition to enquire into and record their long and brilliant list of virtues, which must be lost in the shade of infamy, for want of an historian.

I have learned much of this noble chieftain, and at a proper time shall recount the modes of his

civil and military life -- how he exposed his life, and shed his blood in rescuing the victims to horrid torture, and abolished that savage custom in his tribe -- how he led on and headed his brave warriors, against the Sacs and Foxes; and saved the butchery of his women and children -- how he received the Indian agent, and entertained him in his hospitable wigwam, in his village -- and how he conducted and acquitted himself on his embassy to the civilized world.

So much I will take pains to say, of a man whom I never saw, because other historians have taken equal pains just to mention his name, and a solitary (and doubtful) act of his life, as they have said of hundreds of others, for the purpose of consigning him to infamy.

How much more kind would it have been for the historian, who never saw him, to have enumerated with this, other characteristic actions of his life (for the verdict of the world); or to have allowed, in charity, his bones and his name to have slept in silence, instead of calling them up from the grave, to thrust a dagger through them, and throw them back again.

Book-making now-a-days, is done for money-making; and he who takes the Indian for his theme, and cannot go and see him, finds a poverty in his matter that naturally begets error, by grasping at every little tale that is brought or fabricated by their enemies. Such books are standards, because they are made for white man's reading only; and herald the character of a people who never can disprove them. They answer the purpose for which they are written; and the poor Indian who has no redress, stands stigmatized and branded, as a murderous wretch and beast.

If the system of book-making and newspaper printing were in operation in the Indian country awhile, to herald the iniquities and horrible barbarities of white men in these Western regions, which now are sure to be overlooked; I venture to say, that chapters would soon be printed, which would sicken the reader to his heart, and set up the Indian, a fair and tolerable man.

There is no more beautiful prairie country in the world, than that which is to be seen in this vicinity. In looking back from this bluff, towards the West, there is, to an almost boundless extent, one of the most beautiful scenes imaginable. The surface of the country is gracefully and slightly undulating, like the swells of the retiring ocean after-a heavy storm. And everywhere covered with a beautiful green turf, and with occasional patches and clusters of trees. The soil in this region is also rich, and capable of making one of the most beautiful and productive countries in the world. Ba'tiste and Bogard used their rifles to some effect during the day that we loitered here, and gathered great quantities of delicious grapes. From this lovely spot we embarked the next morning, and glided through constantly changing scenes of beauty, until we landed our canoe at the base of a beautiful series of grass-covered bluffs, which, like thousands and thousands of others on the banks of this river, are designated by no name, that I know of; and I therefore introduce them as fair specimens of the grassy bluffs of the Missouri.

My canoe was landed at noon, at the base of these picturesque hills--and there rested till the next morning. As soon as we were ashore, I scrambled to their summits, and beheld; I took my easel, and canvass and brushes, to the top of the bluff, and painted the two views from the same spot; the one looking up, and the other down the river. The reader, by imagining these hills to be five or six hundred feet high, and every foot of them, as far as they can be discovered in distance, covered with a vivid green turf, whilst the sun is gilding one side, and throwing a cool shadow on the other, will be enabled to form something like an adequate idea of the shores of the Missouri. From this enchanting spot there was nothing to arrest the eye from ranging over its waters for the distance of twenty or thirty miles, where it quietly glides between its barriers, formed of thousands

of green and gracefully sloping hills, with its rich and alluvial meadows, and woodlands -- and its hundred islands, covered with stately cotton-wood.

In these two views, the reader has a fair account of the general character of the Upper Missouri, which I have already described, he will at once see the process by which this wonderful formation has been produced. In that plate will be seen the manner in which the rains are wearing down the clay-bluffs, cutting gullies or sluices behind them, and leaving them at last to stand out in relief, these rounded and graceful forms, until in time they get seeded over, and nourish a growth of green grass on their sides, which forms a turf, and protects their surface, preserving them for centuries, in the forms that are here seen. The tops of the highest of these bluffs rise nearly up to the summit level of the prairies, which is found as soon as one travels a mile or so from the river, amongst these picturesque groups, and comes out at their top; from whence the country goes off to the East and the West, with an almost perfectly level surface.

These two views were taken about thirty miles above the village of the Puncas, and five miles above "the Tower", the name given by the travellers through the country, to a high and remarkable clay bluff, rising to the height of some hundreds of feet from the water, and having in distance, the castellated appearance of a fortification.

My canoe was not unmoored from the shores of this lovely spot for two days, except for the purpose of crossing the river; which I several times did, to ascend and examine the hills on the opposite side. I had Ba'tiste and Bogard with me on the tops of these green carpeted bluffs, and tried in vain to make them see the beauty of scenes that were about us. They dropped asleep, and I strolled and contemplated alone; clambering "up one hill" and sliding or running "down another," with no other living being in sight, save now and then a bristling wolf, which, from my approach, was reluctantly retreating from his shady lair -- or sneaking behind me and smelling on my track.

Whilst strolling about on the western bank of the river at this place, I found the ancient site of an Indian village, which, from the character of the marks, I am sure was once the residence of the Mandans. I said in a former Letter, when speaking of the Mandans, that within the recollection of some of their oldest men, they lived some sixty or eighty miles down the river from the place of their present residence; and that they then lived in nine villages. On my way down, I became fully convinced of the fact; having landed my canoe, and examined the ground where the foundation of every wigwam can yet be distinctly seen. At that time, they must have been much more numerous than at present, from the many marks they have left, as well as from their own representations.

The Mandans have a peculiar way of building their wigwams, by digging down a couple of feet in the earth; and there fixing the ends of the poles which form the walls of their houses. There are other marks, such as their caches-and also their mode of depositing their dead on scaffolds -- and of preserving the skulls in circles on the prairies; which peculiar customs I have before described, and most of which are distinctly to be recognized in each of these places, as well as in several similar remains which I have met with on the banks of the river, between here and the Mandans: which fully convince me, that they have formerly occupied the lower parts of the Missouri, and have gradually made their way quite through the heart of the great Sioux country; and having been well fortified in all their locations, as in their present one, by a regular stockade and ditch; they have been able successfully to resist the continual assaults of the Sioux, that numerous tribe, who have been, and still are, endeavoring to effect their entire destruction. I have examined, at

---

least fifteen or twenty of their ancient locations on the banks of this river, and can easily discover the regular differences in the ages of these antiquities; and around them all I have found numerous bits of their broken pottery, corresponding with that which they are now manufacturing in great abundance; and which is certainly made by no other tribe in these regions. These evidences, and others which I shall not take the time to mention in this place, go a great way in my mind towards strengthening the possibility of their having moved from the Ohio river, and of their being a remnant of the followers of Madoc. I have much further to trace them yet, however, and shall certainly have more to say on so interesting a subject in future.

Almost every mile I have advanced on the banks of this river, I have met evidences and marks of Indians in some form or other; and they have generally been those of the Sioux, who occupy and own the greater part of this immense region of country. In the latter part of my voyage, however, and of which I have been speaking in the former part of this Letter, I met the ancient sites of the O-ma-ha and Ot-to towns, which are easily detected when they are met. The usual mode of the Omahas, of depositing their dead in the crotches and on the branches of trees, enveloped in skins, and never without a wooden dish hanging by the head of the corpse; probably for the purpose of enabling it to dip up water to quench its thirst on the long and tedious journey, which they generally expect to enter on after death. These corpses are so frequent along the banks of the river, that in some places a dozen or more of them may be seen at one view.

The customs of the Sioux, which are found in endless numbers on the river; and in fact, through every part of this country. The wigwams of these people are only moveable tents, and leave but a temporary mark to be discovered. Their burials, however, are peculiar and lasting remains, which can be long detected. They often deposit their dead on trees, and on scaffolds; but more generally bury in the tops of bluffs, or near their villages; when they often split out staves and drive in the ground around the grave, to protect it from the trespass of dogs or wild animals.

The character of Mandan remains, that are met with in numerous places on the river. Their mode of resting their dead upon scaffolds is not so peculiar to them as positively to distinguish them from Sioux, who sometimes bury in the same way; but the excavations for their earth-covered wigwams, which I have said are two feet deep in the ground, with the ends of the decayed timbers remaining in them, are peculiar and conclusive evidence of their being of Mandan construction; and the custom of leaving the skulls bleached upon the ground in circles, instead of burying them as the other tribes do, forms also a strong evidence of the fact that they are Mandan remains.

In most of these sites of their ancient towns, however, I have been unable to find about their burial places, these characteristic deposits of the skulls; from which I conclude, that whenever they deliberately moved to a different region, they buried the skulls out of respect to the dead. I found, just back of one of these sites of their ancient towns, however, and at least 500 miles below where they now live, the same arrangement of skulls. They had laid so long, however, exposed to the weather, that they were reduced almost to a powder, except the teeth, which mostly seemed polished and sound as ever. It seems that no human hands had dared to meddle with the dead; and that even their enemies had respected them; for every one, and there were at least two hundred in one circle, had mouldered to chalk, in its exact relative position, as they had been placed in a circle. In this case, I am of opinion that the village was besieged by the Sioux, and entirely destroyed; or that the Mandans were driven off without the power to stop and bury the bones of their dead. Belie Vue, on the West bank of the River, about nine miles above the mouth of the Platte, and is

the agency of Major Dougherty, one of the oldest and most effective agents on our frontiers. This spot is, as I said, lovely in itself; but doubly so to the eye of the weather-beaten voyageur from the sources of the Missouri, who steers his canoe in, to the shore, as I did, and soon finds himself a welcome guest at the comfortable board of the Major, with a table again to eat from--and that (not "groaning", but) standing under the comfortable weight of meat and vegetable luxuries, products of the labour of cultivating man. It was a pleasure to see again, in this great wilderness, a civilized habitation; and still more pleasant to find it surrounded with corn-fields, and potatoes, with numerous fruit-trees, bending under the weight of their fruit -- with pigs and poultry, and kine; and what was best of all, to see the kind and benevolent face, that never looked anything but welcome to the half-starved guests, who throw themselves upon him from the North, from the South, the East, or the West.

At this place I was in the country of the Pawnees, a numerous tribe, whose villages are on the Platte river, and of whom I shall say more an on. Major Dougherty has been for many years the agent for this hostile tribe; and by his familiar knowledge of the Indian character, and his strict honesty and integrity, he has been able to effect a friendly intercourse with them, and also to attract the applause and highest confidence of the world, as well as of the authorities who sent him there.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 33.

FORT LEAVENWORTH, LOWER MISSOURI.

I MENTIONED in a former epistle, that this is the extreme outpost on the Western Frontier, and built, like several others, in the heart of the Indian country. There is no finer tract of lands in North America, or, perhaps, in the world, than that vast space of prairie country, which lies in the vicinity of this post, embracing it on all sides. This garrison, like many others on the frontiers, is avowedly placed here for the purpose of protecting our frontier inhabitants from the incursions of Indians; and also for the purpose of preserving the peace amongst the different hostile tribes, who seem continually to wage, and glory in, their deadly wars. How far these feeble garrisons, which are generally but half manned, have been, or will be, able to intimidate and control the warlike ardour of these restless and revengeful spirits; or how far they will be able in desperate necessity, to protect the lives and property of the honest pioneer, is yet to be tested,

They have doubtless been designed with the best views, to effect the most humane objects, though I very much doubt the benefits that are anticipated to flow from them, unless a more efficient number of men are stationed in them than I have generally found; enough to promise protection to the Indian, and them to ensure it; instead of promising, and leaving them to seek it in their own way at last, and when they are least prepared to do it.

When I speak of this post as being on the Lower Missouri, I do not wish to convey the idea that I am down near the sea-coast, at the mouth of the river, or near it; I only mean that I am on the lower part of the Missouri, yet 600 miles above its junction with the Mississippi, and near 2000 from the Gulf of Mexico, into which the Mississippi discharges its waters.

In this delightful Cantonment there are generally stationed six or seven companies of infantry, and ten or fifteen officers; several of whom have their wives and daughters with them, forming a very pleasant little community, who are almost continually together in social enjoyment of the peculiar amusements and pleasures of this wild country. Of these pastimes they have many, such as riding on horseback or in carriages over the beautiful green fields of the prairies, picking strawberries and wild plums -- deer chasing -- grouse shooting -- horse-racing, and other amusements of the garrison, in which they are almost constantly engaged; enjoying life to a very high degree. In these delightful amusements, and with these pleasing companions, I have been for a while participating with great satisfaction; I have joined several times in the deer-hunts, and more frequently in grouse shooting, which constitutes the principal amusement of this place.

This delicious bird, which is found in great abundance in nearly all the North American prairies, and most generally called the Prairie Hen, is, from what I can learn, very much like the English grouse, or heath hen, both in size, in colour, and in habits. They make their appearance in these parts in the months of August and September, from the higher latitudes, where they go in the early part of the summer, to raise their broods. This is the season for the best sport amongst them; and the whole garrison, in fact are almost subsisted on them at this time, owing to the facility with

---

which they are killed.

I was lucky enough the other day, with one of the officers of the garrison, to gain the enviable distinction of having brought in together seventy- five of these fine birds, which we killed in one afternoon; and although I am quite ashamed to confess the manner in which we killed the greater part of them, I am not so professed a sportsman as to induce me to conceal the fact. We had a fine pointer, and had legitimately followed the sportsman's style for a part of the afternoon; but seeing the prairies on fire several miles ahead of us, and the wind driving the fire gradually towards us, we found these poor birds driven before its long line, which seemed to extend From horizon to horizon, and they were flying in swarms or flocks that would at times almost fill the air. They generally flew half a mile or so, and lit down again in the grass, where they would sit until the fire was close upon them, and then they would rise again. We observed by watching their motions, that they lit in great numbers in every solitary tree; and we placed our selves near each of these trees in turn, and shot them down as they settled in them; sometimes killing five or six at a shot, by getting a range upon them.

In this way we retreated for miles before the flames, in the midst of the flocks, and keeping company with them where they were carried along in advance of the fire, in accumulating numbers; many of which had been driven along for many miles. We murdered the poor birds in this way, until we had as many as we could well carry, and laid our course back to the Fort, where we got much credit for our great shooting; and where we were mutually pledged to keep the secret.

The prairies burning form some of the most beautiful scenes that are to be witnessed in this country, and also some of the most sublime. Every acre of these vast prairies (being covered for hundreds and hundreds of miles, with a crop of grass, which dies and dries in the fall) burns over during the fall or early in the spring, leaving the ground of a black and doleful colour.

There are many modes by which the fire is communicated to them, both by white men and by Indians -- par accident; and yet many more where it is voluntarily done for the purpose of getting a fresh crop of grass, for the grazing or their horses, and also for easier travelling during the next summer, when there will be no old grass to lie upon the prairies, entangling the feet of man and horse, as they are passing over them.

Over the elevated lands and prairie bluffs, where the grass is thin and short, the fire slowly creeps with a feeble flame, which one can easily step over; where the wild animals often rest in their lairs until the flames almost burn their noses, when they will reluctantly rise, and leap over it, and trot off amongst the cinders, where the fire has past and left the ground as black as jet. These scenes at night become indescribably beautiful, when their flames are seen at many miles distance, creeping over the sides and tops of the bluffs, appearing to be sparkling and brilliant chains of liquid fire (the hills being lost to the view), hanging suspended in graceful festoons from the skies.

But there is yet another character of burning prairies, that requires another Letter, and a different pen to describe -- the war, or hell of fires! Where the grass is seven or eight feet high, as is often the case for many miles together, on the Missouri bottoms; and the flames are driven forward by the hurricanes, which often sweep over the vast prairies of this denuded country. There are many of these meadows on the Missouri, the Platte, and the Arkansas, of many miles in breadth, which are perfectly level, with a waving grass, so high, that we are obliged to stand erect in our stirrups, in order to look over its waving tops, as we are riding through it. The fire in these, before such a wind, travels at an immense and frightful rate, and often destroys, on their fleetest horses, parties

of Indians, who are so unlucky as to be overtaken by it; not that it travels as fast as a horse at full speed, but that the high grass is filled with wild pea-vines and other impediments, which render it necessary for the rider to guide his horse in the zig-zag paths of the deers and buffaloes, retarding his progress, until he is overtaken by the dense column of smoke that is swept before the fire -- alarming the horse, which stops and stands terrified and immutable, till the burning grass which is wafted in the wind, falls about him, kindling up in a moment a thousand new fires, which are instantly wrapped in the swelling flood of smoke that is moving on like a black thunder-cloud, rolling on the earth, with its lightning's glare, and its thunder rumbling as it goes.

\* \* \* \* When Ba'tiste, and Bogard, and I, and Patrick Raymond (who like Bogard had been a free trapper in the Rocky Mountains), and Pah-me-o-ne-qua (The Red Thunder), our guide back from a neighboring village, were jogging along on the summit of an elevated bluff, overlooking an immense valley of high grass, through which we were about to lay our course.---

"Well, then, you say you have seen the prairies on fire?" Yes. "You have seen the fire on the mountains, and beheld it feebly creeping over the grassy hills of the North, where the toad and the timid snail were pacing from its approach -- all this you have seen, and who has not? But who has seen the vivid lightnings, and heard the roaring thunder of the rolling conflagration which sweeps over the deep-clad prairies of the West? Who has dashed, on his wild horse, through an ocean of grass, with the raging tempest at his back, rolling over the land its swelling waves of liquid fire?" What! "Aye, even so. Ask the red savage of the wilds what is awful and sublime -- Ask him where the Great Spirit has mixed up all the elements of death, and if he does not blow them over the land in a storm of fire? Ask him what foe he has met, that regarded not his frightening yells, or his sinewy bow? Ask these lords of the land, who vauntingly challenge the thunder and lightning of Heaven--whether there is not one foe that travels over their land, too swift for their feet, and too mighty for their strength--at whose approach their stout hearts sicken, and their strong-armed courage withers to nothing? Ask him again (if he is sullen, and his eyes set in their sockets) --' Hush!--sh!--sh!--sh!--sh!--(he will tell you, with a soul too proud to confess -- his head sunk on his breast, and his hand over his mouth)--that's medicine!"

I said to my comrades, as we were about to descend from the towering bluffs into the prairie -- "We will take that buffalo trail, where the travelling herds have slashed down the high grass, and making for that blue point, rising, as you can just discern, above this ocean of grass; a good day's work will bring us over this vast meadow before sunset." We entered the trail, and slowly progressed on our way, being obliged to follow the winding paths of the buffaloes, for the grass was higher than the backs of our horses. Soon after we entered, my Indian guide dismounted slowly from his horse, and lying prostrate on the ground, with his face in the dirt, he cried, and was talking to the Spirits of the brave -- "For," said he, "over this beautiful plain dwells the Spirit of fire! He rides in yonder cloud -- his face blackens with rage at the sound of the trampling hoofs -- the fire-bow is in his hand -- he draws it across the path of the Indian, and quicker than lightning, a thousand flames rise to destroy him; such is the talk of my fathers, and the ground is whitened with their bones. It was here", said he, "that the brave son of Wah-chee-ton, and the strong-armed warriors of his band, just twelve moons since, licked the fire from the blazing wand of that great magician. Their pointed spears were drawn upon the backs of the treacherous Sioux, whose swift-dying horses led them, in vain, to the midst of this valley of death. A circular cloud sprang up from the prairie around them! it was raised, and their doom was fixed by the Spirit of fire! It was

on this vast plain of pre-grass that waves over our heads, that the swift foot of Mah-to-ga was laid. It is here, also, that the fleet-bounding wild horse mingles his bones with the red man; and the eagle's wing is melted as he darts over its surface. Friends! It is the season of fire; and I fear, from the smell of the wind, that the Spirit is awake!"

Pah-me-o-ne-qua said no more, but mounted his wild horse, and waving his hand, his red shoulders were seen rapidly vanishing as he glided through the thick mazes of waving grass. We were on his trail, and busily traced him until the midday-sun had brought us to the ground, with our refreshments spread before us. He partook of them not, but stood like a statue, while his black eyes, in sullen silence, swept the horizon round; and their, with a deep-drawn sigh, he gracefully sunk to the earth, and laid with his face to the ground. Our buffalo tongues and pemican, and marrow-fat, were spread before us; and we were in the full enjoyment of these dainties of the Western world, when, quicker than the frightened elk, our Indian friend sprang upon his feet! His eyes skimmed again slowly over the prairies' surface, and he laid himself as before on the ground. "Bed Thunder seems sullen to-day." Said Bogard -- "He startles at every rush of the wind, and scowls at the whole world that is about him."

"There's a rare chap for you -- a fellow who would shake his fist at Heaven, when he is at home; and here, in a grass-patch, must make his pre-medicine for a circumstance that he could easily leave at a shake of his horse's heels."

"Not sae sure o' that, my hooney, though we'll not be making too lightly of the matter, nor either be frightened at the mon's strange octions. But, Bogard, I'll tell ye in aord (and thot's enough), there's something more than odds in all this 'medicine.' If this mon's a fool, he was born out of his own country, that's all -- and if the divil iver gits him, he must take him cowl, for he is too swift and too wide-awake to be taken alive -- you understond that, I suppose? But, to come to the plain matter -- supposin that the Fire Spirit (and I go for somewhat of witchcraft), I say supposin that this Fire Spirit should jist impty his pipe on tother side of this prairie, and strike up a bit of a blaze in this high grass, and send it packing across this direction, before sich a death of a wind as this is! By the bull barley, I'll bet you'd be after' making medicine,' and taking a bit of it, too, to get rid of the racket."

"Yes, but you see, Patrick----"

"Neever mind thot (not wishin to distarb you); and suppose the blowin wind was coming fast ahead, jist blowin about our ears a warld of smoke and chokin us to dith, and we were dancin about a Varginny reel among these little paths, where the divil would we be by the time we got to that bluff, for it's now fool of a distance? Givin you time to spake, I would say a word more (askin your pardon), I know by the expression of your face, mon, you neever have seen the world on fire yet, and therefore you know nothin at all of a hurry burly of this kind -- did ye? -- Did ye iver see (and I jist want to know), did ye iver see the fire in high grass, runnin with a strong wind, about five mile and the half, and thin hear it strike into a slash of dry cane brake!! I would jist ax you that? By thunder you niver have -- for your eyes would jist stick out of your head at the thought of it! Did ye iver look way into the backside of Mr. Maelzel's Moscow, and see the flashin flames a runnin up; and then hear the poppin of the militia: fire jist afterwards? Then you have jist a touch of it! ye're jist beginnin--ye may talk about fires -- but this is sich a baste of a fire! Ask Jack Sanford, he's a chop that can tall you all about it. Not wishin to distarb you, I would say a word more--and that is this -- If I were advisin, I would say that we are gettin too far into this imbustible

meadow; for the grass is dry, and the wind is too strong to make a light matter of, at this season of the year; an now I'll jist tell ye how McKenzie and I were sarved in this very plane about two Years ago; and he's a worldly chop, and niver aslape, my word for that ----- hollo, what's that!"

Red Thunder was on his feet! -- his long arm was stretched over the grass, and his blazing eye-balls starting from their sockets! "White man (said he), see ye that small cloud lifting itself from the prairie? He rises! The hoofs of our horses have waked him! The Fire Spirit is awake -- this wind is from his nostrils, and his face is this way!" No more -- but his swift horse darted under him, and he gracefully slid over the waving grass as it was bent by the wind. Our viands were left, and we were swift on his trail. The extraordinary leaps of his wild horse, occasionally raised his red shoulders to view, and he sank again in the waving billows of grass. The tremulous wind was hurrying by us fast, and on it was borne the agitated wing of the soaring eagle. His neck was stretched for the towering bluff, and the thrilling screams of his voice told the secret that was behind him. Our horses were swift, and we struggled hard, yet hope was feeble, for the bluff was yet blue, and nature nearly exhausted! The sunshine was dying, and a cool shadow advancing over the plain. Not daring to look back, we strained every nerve. The roar of a distant cataract seemed gradually advancing on us -- the winds increased, the howling tempest was maddening behind us -- and the swift-winged beetle and heath hens, instinctively drew their straight lines over our heads. The fleet-bounding antelope Passed us also; and the still swifter long-legged hare, who leaves but a shadow as he dies! There was no time for thought -- but I recollect the heavens were overcast -- the distant thunder was heard -- the lightning's glare was reddening the scene -- and the smell that came on the winds struck terror to my soul! The piercing yell of my savage guide at this moment came back upon the winds -- his robe was seen waving in the air, and his foaming horse leaping up the towering bluff.

Our breath and our sinews, in this last struggle for life, were just enough to bring us to its summit. We had risen from a sea of fire! "Great God I (I exclaimed) how sublime to gaze into that valley, where the elements of nature are so strangely convulsed!" Ask not the poet or painter how it looked, for they can tell you not; but ask the naked savage, and watch the electric twinge of his manly nerves and muscles, as he pronounces the lengthened "hush----sh-----" his hand on his mouth, and his glaring eye-balls looking you to the very soul!

I beheld beneath me an immense cloud of black smoke, which extended from one extremity of this vast plain to the other, and seemed majestically to roll over its surface in a bed of liquid fire; and above this mighty desolation, as it rolled along, the whitened smoke, pale with terror, was streaming and rising up in magnificent cliffs to heaven!

I stood secure, but tremblingly, and heard the maddening wind, which hurled this monster o'er the land -- I heard the roaring thunder, and saw its thousand lightnings dash; and then I saw behind, the black and smoking desolation of this storm of fire!

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 35.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

My little bark has been soaked in the water agin, and Ba'tiste and Bogard have paddled, and I have steered and dodged our little craft amongst the snags and sawyers, until at last we landed the humble little thing amongst the huge steamers and floating palaces at the wharf of this bustling and growing city.

And first of all, I must relate the fate of my little boat, which had borne us safe over two thousand miles of the Missouri's turbid and boiling current, with no fault, excepting two or three instances, when the waves became too saucy, she, like the best of boats of her size, went to the bottom, and left us soused, to paddle our way to the shore, and drag out our things and dry them in the sun. When we landed at the wharf, my luggage was all taken out, and removed to my hotel; and when I returned a few hours afterwards, to look for my little boat, to which I had contracted a peculiar attachment (although I had left it in special charge of a person at work on the wharf); some mystery or medicine operation had relieved me from any further anxiety or trouble about it -- it had gone and never returned, although it had safely passed the countries of mysteries, and had often laid weeks and months at the villages of red men, with no laws to guard it; and where it had also often been taken out of the water by mystery-men, and carried up the bank, and turned against my wigwam; and by them again safely carried to the river's edge. and put afloat upon the water, when I was ready to take a seat in it.

St. Louis, which is 1400 miles west of New York, is a flourishing town, of 15,000 inhabitants, and destined to be the great emporium of the West--the greatest inland town in America. Its location is on the Western bank of the Mississippi river, twenty miles below the mouth of the Missouri, and 1400 above the entrance of the Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico.

This is the great depot of all the Fur Trading Companies to the Upper Missouri and Rocky Mountains, and their starting-place; and also for the Santa Fe, and other Trading Companies, who reach the Mexican borders overland, to trade for silver bullion, from the extensive mines of that rich country.

I have also made it my starting-point, and place of deposit, to which I send from different quarters, my packages of paintings and Indian articles, minerals, fossils, &c., as I collect them in various regions, here to be stored till my return; and where on my last return, if I ever make it, I shall hustle them altogether, and remove them to the East.

To this place I had transmitted by steamer and other conveyance, about twenty boxes and packages at different times, as my note-book shewed; and I have, on looking them up and enumerating them, been lucky enough to recover and recognize about fifteen of the twenty, which is a pretty fair proportion for this wild and desperate country, and the very conscientious hands they often are doomed to pass through.

Ba'tiste and Bogard (poor fellows) I found, after remaining here a few days, had been about as

---

unceremoniously snatched off, as my little canoe; and Bogard, in particular, as he had made show of a few hundred dollars, which he had saved of his hard earnings in the Rocky Mountains.

He came down with a liberal heart, which he had learned in an Indian life of ten years, with a strong taste, which he had acquired, for whiskey, in a country where it, was sold for twenty dollars per gallon; and with an independent feeling, which illy harmonized with rules and regulations of a country of laws; and the consequence soon was, that by the "Hawk and Buzzard system", and Rocky Mountain liberality, and Rocky Mountain prodigality, the poor fellow was soon "jugged up;" where he could deliberately dream of beavers, and the free and cooling breezes of the mountain air, without the pleasure of setting his trap for the one, or even indulging the hope of ever again having the pleasure of breathing the other.

I had imbibed rather less of these delightful passions in the Indian country, and consequently indulged less in them when I came back; and of course, was rather more fortunate than poor Bogard, whose feelings I soothed as far as it laid in my power, and prepared to "lay my course" to the South, with colours and canvass in readiness for another campaign.

In my sojourn in St. Louis, amongst many other kind and congenial friends whom I met, I have had daily interviews with the venerable Governor Clark, whose whitened locks are still shaken in roars of laughter, and good jests among the numerous citizens, who all love him, and continually rally around him in his hospitable mansion.

Governor Clark, with Captain Lewis, were the first explorers across the Rocky Mountains, and down the Colombia to the Pacific Ocean thirty-two years ago; whose tour has been published in a very interesting work, which has long been before the world. My works and my design have been warmly approved and applauded by this excellent patriarch of the Western World; and kindly recommended by him in such ways as have been of great service to me. Governor Clark is now Superintendent of Indian Affairs for all the Western and North Western regions; and surely, their interests could never have been intrusted to better or abler hands.

So long have I been recruiting, and enjoying the society of friends in this town, that the navigation of the river has suddenly closed, being entirely frozen over; and the earth's surface covered with eighteen inches of drifting snow, which has driven me to the only means, and I start in a day or two, with a tough little pony and a packhorse, to trudge through the snow drifts from this to New Madrid, and perhaps further; a distance of three or four hundred miles to the South ••• where I must venture to meet a warmer climate -- the river open, and steamers running, to waft me to the Gulf of Mexico. Of the fate or success that waits me, or of the incidents of that travel, as they have not transpired, I can as yet say nothing; and I close my book for further time and future entries.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 37.

FORT GIBSON, ARKANSAS TERRITORY .

Since the date of my last Letter at Pensacola, in Florida, I travelled to New Orleans, and from thence up the Mississippi several hundred miles, to the mouth of the Arkansas; and up the Arkansas, 700 miles to this place. We wended our way up, between the pictured shores of this beautiful river, on the steamer "Arkansas," until within 200 miles of this post; when we got aground, and the water falling fast, left the steamer nearly on dry ground. Hunting and fishing, and whist, and sleeping, and eating, were our principal amusements to deceive away the time, whilst we were waiting for the water to rise. Lieutenant Seaton, of the army, was one of my companions in misery, whilst we lay two weeks or more without prospect of further progress -- the poor fellow on his way to his post to join his regiment, had left his trunk, unfortunately, with all his clothes in it; and by hunting and fishing in shirts that I loaned him, or from other causes, we became yoked in amusements, in catering for our table-in getting fish and wild fowl; and, after that, as the "last kick" for amusement and pastime, with another good companion by the name of Chadwick, we clambered up and over the rugged mountains' sides, from day to day, turning stones to catch centipedes and tarantulas, of which poisonous reptiles we caged a number; and on the boat amused ourselves by betting on their battles, which were immediately fought, and life almost instantly taken, when they came together.

In this, and fifty other ways, we whiled away the heavy time : but yet, at last we reached our destined goal, and here we are at present fixed. Fort Gibson is the extreme south-western outpost on the United States frontier; beautifully situated on the banks of the river, in the midst of an extensive and lovely prairie ; and is at Present occupied by the with regiment of United States infantry, heretofore under the command of General Arbuckle, one of the oldest officers on the frontier, and the original builder of the post.

Being soon to leave this little civilized world for a campaign in the Indian country, I take this opportunity to bequeath a few words before the moment of departure. Having sometime since obtained permission from the Secretary of War to accompany the regiment of the United States dragoons in their summer campaign, I reported myself at this Place two months ago, where I have been waiting ever since for their organization. -- After the many difficulties which they have had to encounter, they have at length all assembled--the grassy plains are resounding with the trampling hoofs of the prancing warhorse -- and already the hills are echoing back the notes of the spirit-stirring trumpets, which are sounding for the onset. The natives are again "to be astonished", and I shall probably again be a witness to the scene. But whether the approach of eight hundred mounted dragoons amongst the Camanchees and Pawnees, will afford me a better subject for a picture of a gaping and astounded multitude, than did the first approach of our steamboat amongst the Mandans, &c., is a question yet to be solved. I. am strongly inclined to think that the scene will not be less wild and spirited, and I ardently wish it; for I have become so much

---

Indian of late, that my pencil has lost all appetite for subjects that savour of tameness. I should delight in seeing these red knights of the lance astonished, for it is then that they shew their brightest hues -- and I care not how badly we frighten them, provided we hurt them not, nor frighten them out of sketching distance. You will agree with me, that I am going farther to get-sitters, than any of my fellow-artists ever did; but I take an indescribable pleasure in roaming through Nature's trackless wilds, and selecting my models, where I am free and unshackled by the killing restraints of society; where a painter must modestly sit and breathe away in agony the edge and soul of his inspiration, waiting for the sluggish calls of the civil. Though the toil, the privations, and expense of travelling to these remote parts of the world to get subjects for my pencil, place almost insurmountable, and sometimes painful obstacles before me, yet I am encouraged by the continual conviction that I am practicing in the true School of the Arts; and that, though I should get as poor as Lazarus, I should deem myself rich in models and studies for the future occupation of my life. Of this much I am certain -- that amongst these sons of the forest, where are continually repeated the feats and gambols equal to the Grecian Games, I have learned more of the essential parts of my art in the three last years, than I could have learned in New York in a life-time.

The landscape scenes of these wild and beautiful regions, are, of themselves, a rich reward for the traveller who can place them in his portfolio: and being myself the only one accompanying the dragoons `for scientific purposes, there will be an additional pleasure to be derived from those pursuits. The regiment of eight hundred men, with whom I am to travel, will be an effective force, and a perfect protection against any attacks that will ever be made by Indians. It is composed principally of young men of respectable families, who would act, on all occasions, from feelings of pride and honour, in addition to those of the common soldier.

The day before yesterday the regiment of dragoons and the 7th regiment of infantry, stationed here, were reviewed by General Leavenworth, who has lately arrived at this post, superseding Colonel Arbuckle in the command.

Both regiments were drawn up in battle array, in fatigue dress, and passing through a number of the manoeuvres of battle, of charge and repulse, &c., presenting a novel and thrilling scene in the prairie, to the thousands of Indians and others who had assembled to witness the display. The proud and manly deportment of these young men remind one forcibly of a regiment of Independent Volunteers, and the horses have a most beautiful appearance from the arrangement of colours. - Each company of horses has been selected of one colour entire. There is: a company of bays, a company of blacks, -one of whites, one of sorrels, one of greys, one of cream colour, &c. &c., which render the companies distinct, and the effect exceedingly pleasing. This regiment goes out under the command of Colonel Dodge, and from his well tested qualifications, and, from the beautiful equipment of the command, there can be little doubt but that they will do credit to themselves and an honour to their country I so far as honours can be gained and laurels can be plucked from their wild stems in a savage country. The object of this summer's campaign seems to be to cultivate an acquaintance with the Pawnees and Camanches. These are two extensive tribes of roaming Indians. who, from their extreme ignorance of us, have not yet recognized the United States in treaty; and have struck frequent blows on -- our frontiers and plundered our traders who are traversing their country. For this I cannot so much blame them, for the Spaniards are gradually advancing upon them on one side, and the Americans on the other, and fast destroying the furs and game of their country, which God gave them as their only wealth and means of subsistence.

---

This movement of the dragoons seems to be one of the most humane in its views, and I heartily hope that it may prove so in the event, as well for our own sates as for that of the Indian. I can see no reason why we should march upon them with an invading army carrying with it the spirit of chastisement. The object of Government undoubtedly is to effect a friendly meeting with them, that they may see and respect us, and to establish something like a system of mutual rights with them. To penetrate their country with the other view, that of chastising them, even with five times the number that are now going, would be entirely futile, and perhaps disastrous in the extreme. It is a pretty thing (and perhaps an easy one, in the estimation of the world) for an army of mounted men to be gaily prancing over the boundless green fields of the West, and it is so for a little distance -- but it would be well that the world should be apprised of some of the actual difficulties that oppose themselves to the success of such a campaign, that they may not censure too severely, in case this command should fail to accomplish the objects for which they were organized.

In the first place, from the great difficulty of organizing and equipping, these troops are starting too late in the season for their summer's campaign, by two months. The journey which they have to perform is a very long one, and although the first part of it will be picturesque and pleasing, the after part of it will be tiresome and fatiguing in the extreme. As they advance to the West, the grass (and consequently the game) will be gradually diminishing, and water in many parts of the county not to be found.

As the troops will be obliged to subsist themselves a great part of the way, it will be extremely difficult to do it under such circumstances, and at the same time hold themselves in readiness, with half-famished horses and men nearly exhausted, to contend with a numerous enemy who are at home, on the ground on which they were born, with horses fresh and ready for action. It is not probable, however, that the Indians will venture to take advantage of such circumstances; but I am inclined to think, that the expedition will be more likely to fail from another source : it is my opinion that the appearance of so large a military force in their country, will alarm the Indians to that degree, that they will fly with their families to their hiding-places amongst those barren deserts, which they themselves can reach only by great fatigue and extreme privation, and to which our half-exhausted troops cannot possibly follow them. From these haunts their warriors would advance and annoy the regiment as much as they could, by striking at their hunting parties and cutting off their supplies. To attempt to pursue them, if they cannot be called to a council, would be as useless as to follow the wind; for our troops in such a case, are in a country where they are obliged to subsist themselves, and the Indians being on fresh horses, with a supply of provisions, would easily drive all the buffaloes ahead of them; and endeavor, as far as possible, to decoy our troops into the barren parts of the country, where they could not find the means of subsistence. The plan designed to be pursued, and the only one that can succeed, is to send runners to the different bands, explaining the friendly intentions of our Government, and to invite them to a meeting. For this purpose several Camanchee and Pawnee prisoners have been purchased from the Osages, who may be of great service in bringing about a friendly interview.

I ardently hope that this Plan may succeed, for I am anticipating great fatigue and privation in the endeavor to see these wild tribes together; that I may be enabled to lay before the world a just estimate of their manners and customs.

I hope that my suggestions may not be truly prophetic; but I am constrained to say, that I doubt very much whether we shall see anything more of them than their tails, and the sites of their de-

served villages.

Several companies have already started from this place; and the remaining ones will be on their march in a day or two. General Leavenworth will accompany them 200 miles, to the mouth of False Washita, and I shall be attached to his staff. Incidents which may occur, I shall record.

Adieu.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER-No. 38.

FORT GIBSON, ARKANSAS.

NEARLY two months have elapsed since I arrived at this post, on my way up the river from the Mississippi, to join the regiment of dragoons on their campaign into the country of the Camanchees and Pawnee Picts; during which time, I have been industriously at work with my brush and my pen, recording the looks and the deeds of the Osages, who inhabit the country on the North and the West of this.

The Osage, or (as they call themselves) Wa-saw-see, are a tribe of about 5200 in numbers, inhabiting and hunting over the head-waters of the Arkansas, and Neosho or Grand Rivers. Their present residence is about 700 miles West of the Mississippi river; in three villages, constituted of wigwams, built of barks and flags or reeds. One of these villages is within forty miles of this Fort; another within sixty, and the third about eighty miles. Their chief place of trade is with the sutlers at this post; and there are constantly more or less of them encamped about the garrison.

The Osages may justly be said to be the tallest race of men in North America, either of red or white skins; there being very few indeed of the men, at their full growth, who are less than six feet in stature, and very many of them six and a half, and others seven feet. They are at the same time well-proportioned in their limbs, and good looking; being rather narrow in the shoulders, and, like most all very tall people, a little inclined to stoop; not throwing the chest out, and the head and shoulders back, quite as much as the Crows and Mandans, and other tribes amongst which I have been familiar. Their movement is graceful and quick; and in war and the chase, I think they are equal to any of the tribes about them.

This tribe, though living, as they long have, near the borders of the civilized community, have studiously rejected everything of civilized customs: and are uniformly dressed in skins of their own dressing -- strictly maintaining their primitive looks and manners, without the slightest appearance of innovations, excepting in the blankets, which have been recently admitted to their use instead of the buffalo robes, which are now getting scarce amongst them.

The Osages are One Of the tribes who shave the head, as I have before described when speaking of the Pawnees and Konzas, and they decorate and paint it with great care, and some considerable taste. There is a peculiarity in the heads of these people which is very striking to the eye of a traveller; and which I find is produced by artificial means in infancy. Their children, like those of all the other tribes, are carried on a board, and slung upon the mother's back. The infants are lashed to the boards, with their backs upon them, apparently in a very uncomfortable condition; and with the Osages, the head of the child bound down so tight to the board, as to force in the occipital bone, and create an unnatural deficiency on the back part, and consequently more than a natural elevation of the top of the head. This custom, they told me they practiced, because "it pressed out a bold and manly appearance in front." This I think, from observation, to be rather imaginary than real; as I cannot see that they exhibit any extraordinary development in the front; though

---

they evidently shew a striking deficiency on the back part, and also an unnatural elevation on the top of the head, which is, no doubt, produced by this custom. The difference between this mode and the one practiced by the Flat-head Indians beyond the Rocky Mountains, consists in this, that the Flat-heads press the head between two boards; the one pressing the frontal bone down, whilst the other is pressing the occipital up, producing the most frightful deformity; whilst the Osages merely press the occipital in, and that, but to a moderate degree, occasioning but a slight, and in many cases, almost immaterial, departure from the symmetry of nature.

These people, like all those tribes who shave the head, cut and slit their ears very much, and suspend from them great quantities of wampum and tinsel ornaments. Their necks are generally ornamented also with a profusion of wampum and beads; and as they live in a warm climate where there is not so much necessity for warm clothing, as amongst the more Northern tribes, of whom I have been heretofore speaking; their shoulders, arms, and chests are generally naked, and painted in a great variety of picturesque ways, with silver bands on the wrists, and oftentimes a profusion of rings on the fingers.

The head-chief of the Osages at this time, is a young man by the name of Clermont, the son of a very distinguished chief of that name, who recently died; leaving his son his successor, with the consent of the tribe. I painted the portrait of this chief at full length, in a beautiful dress, his leg-gings fringed with scalp-locks, and in his hand his favorite and valued war-club.

By his side I have painted also at full length, his wife and child. She was richly dressed in costly cloths of civilized manufacture, which is almost a solitary instance amongst the Osages, who so studiously reject every luxury and every custom of civilized people; and amongst those, the use of whiskey, which is on all sides tendered to them -- but almost uniformity rejected! This is an unusual and unaccountable thing, unless the influence which the missionaries and teachers have exercised over them, has induced them to abandon the pernicious and destructive habit of drinking to excess. From what I can learn, the Osages were once fond of whiskey; and, like all other tribes who have had the opportunity, were in the habit of using it to excess. Several very good and exemplary men have been for years past exerting their greatest efforts, with those of their families, amongst these people; having established schools and agricultural experiments amongst them. And I am fully of the opinion, that this decided anomaly in the Indian country, has resulted from the devoted exertions of these pious and good men.

Amongst the chiefs of the Osages, and probably the next in authority and respect in the tribe, is Tehong-tas-sab-bee, (the black dog), whom I painted also at full length, with his pipe in one hand, and his tomahawk in the other; his head shaved, and ornamented with a beautiful crest of deers' hair, and his body wrapped in a huge mackinaw blanket.

This dignitary, who is blind in the left eye, is one of the most conspicuous characters in all this country, rendered so by his huge size (standing in height and in girth, above all of his tribe), as well as by his extraordinary life. The Black Dog is familiarly known to all the officers of the army, as well as to Traders and all other white men, who have traversed these regions, and I believe, admired and respected by most of them.

His height, I think, is seven feet; and his limbs full and rather fat, making his bulk formidable, and weighing, perhaps, some 250 or 300 pounds. This man is chief of one of the three bands of the Osages, divided as they are into three families; occupying, as I before said, three villages, "Black Dog's Village", and "White denominated", Clermont's Village, "White Hair's Village". The White

Hair is another distinguished leader of the Osages; and some have awarded to him the title of Head Chief; but in the jealous feelings of rivalry which have long agitated this tribe, and some times, even endangered its peace, I believe it has been generally agreed that his claims are third in the tribe; though he justly claims the title of a chief, and a very gallant and excellent man. The portrait of this man, I regret to say, I did not get.

Amongst the many brave and distinguished warriors of the tribe, one of the most noted and respected is Tal-lee, Painted at full length, with his lance in his hand--his shield on his arm, and his bow and quiver slung upon his back.

In this portrait, there is a fair specimen of the Osage figure and dress, as well as of the facial outline, and shape and character of the head, and mode of dressing and ornamenting it with the helmet-crest, and the eagle's

If I had the time at present, I would unfold to the reader some of the pleasing and extraordinary incidents of this gallant fellow's military life; and also the anecdotes that have grown out of the familiar life I have led with this handsome and high-minded gentleman of the mild woods and prairies. Of the Black Dog I should say more also; and most assuredly will not fail to do justice to these extraordinary men, when I have leisure to write off all my notes, and turn biographer. At present, I shake hands with these two noblemen, and bid them good-bye; promising them, that if I never get time to say more of their virtues -- I shall say nothing again them.

In three paintings I have represented three braves, Ko-ha-tunk-a (The Big Crow); Nah-com-e-shee (the man of the bed), and Mun-ne-puskee (he who is not afraid). These portraits set forth fairly the modes of dress and ornaments of the young men of the tribe, from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. The only dress they wear in warm weather is the breech-cloth, leggings, and moccasins of dressed skins, and garters worn immediately below the knee, ornamented profusely with heads and wampum.

These three distinguished and ambitious young men, were of the best families in the Osage nation; and as they explained to me, having formed a peculiar attachment to each other -- they desired me to paint them all on one canvass, in which wish I indulged them.

Besides the above personages, I also painted the portraits of Wa-hobeck-ee (---), a brave, and said to be the handsomest man in the Osage nation; Moi-een-e-shee (The Constant Walker); Wa-mash-ee-sheek (He Who Takes Away); Wa-chesh-uk (war); Mink-chesk (-----); Wash-im-pe-shee (The Mad Man), a distinguished warrior; Shin-ga-wos-sa (The Handsome Bird); Cah-he-ga-shin-ga (The Little Chief), and Teha-to-ga (The Mad Buffalo); all of which will hang in my INDIAN MUSEUM for the inspection of the curious. The last mentioned of these was tried and convicted of the murder of two white men during Adams's administration, and was afterwards pardoned, and still lives, though in disgrace in his tribe, as one whose life had been forfeited, "but (as they say) not worth taking."

The Osages have been formerly, and until quite recently, a powerful and warlike tribe: carrying their arms fearlessly through all of these realms; and ready to cope with foes of any kind that they were liable to meet. At present, the case is quite different; they have been repeatedly moved and jostled along, from the head waters of the White river, and even from the shores of the Mississippi, to where they now are; and reduced by every war and every move. The small-pox has taken its share of them at two or three different times; and the Konzas, as they are now called, having been a part of the Osages, and receded from them, impaired their strength; and have at last helped to

lessen the number of their warriors: so that their decline has been very rapid, bringing them to the mere handful that now exists of them; though still Preserving their valor as warriors, which they are continually showing off as bravely and as professionally as they can, with the Pawnees and the Camanchees, with whom they are waging incessant war; although they are the principal sufferers in those scenes which they fearlessly persist in, as if they were actually bent on their self-destruction very great efforts have been, and are being made amongst these people to civilize and Christianize them; and still I believe with but little success. Agriculture they have caught but little of; and of religion and civilization still less. One good result has, however, been produced by these faithful labourers, which is the conversion of these People to temperance; which I consider the first important step rewards the Other results, and which of itself is an achievement that redounds much to the credit and humanity of those, whose lives have been devoted to its accomplishment.

Here I must leave the Osages for the present, but not the reader,,whose company I still hope to have awhile longer, to bear how I get along amongst in a few days, in the wild and untried scenes, that I am to start upon company with the first regiment of dragoons, in the first grand civilized foray, into the country of the wild and warlike Camanchees.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 39.

MOUTH OF FALSE WASHITA, RED RIVER.

UNDER the protection of the United States dragoons, I arrived at this place three days since, on my way again in search of the "Far West". How far I may this time follow the flying phantom, is uncertain. I am already again in the land of the buffaloes and the fleet-bounding antelopes; and I anticipate, with many other beating hearts, rare sport and amusement amongst the wild herds ere long.

We shall start from hence in a few days, and other epistles I may occasionally drop you from terra incognita, for such is the great expanse of country which we expect to range over; and names we are to give, and country to explore, as far as we proceed. We are, at this place, on the banks of the Red River, having Texas under our eye on the opposite bank. Our encampment is on the point of land between the Red and False Washita rivers, at their junction; and the country about us is a panorama too beautiful to be painted with a pen: it is, like most of the country in these regions, composed of prairie and timber, alternating in the most delightful shapes and proportions that the eye of a connoisseur could desire. The verdure is everywhere of the deepest green, and the plains about us are literally speckled with buffalo. We are distant from Fort Gibson about 200 miles, which distance we accomplished in ten days.

A great part of the way, the country is prairie, gracefully undulating-well watered, and continually beautified by copses and patches of timber. On our way my attention was rivetted to the tops of some of the prairie bluffs, whose summits I approached with inexpressible delight. I rode to the top of one of these noble mounds, in company with my friends Lieut. Wheelock and Joseph Chadwick, where we agreed that our horses instinctively looked and admired. They thought not of the rich herbage that was under their feet, but, with deep-drawn sighs, their necks were loftily curved, and their eyes widely stretched over the landscape that was beneath us. From this elevated spot, the horizon was bounded all around us by mountain streaks of blue, softening into azure as they vanished, and the pictured vales that intermediate lay, were deepening into green as the eye was beneath us, and winding through the waving peculiar effect, the "bold dragoons", marching in beautiful order forming a train of a mile in length. Baggage waggons and Indians (engage's) helped to lengthen the procession. From the point where we stood, the line was seen in miniature; and the undulating hills over which it was bending its way, gave it the appearance of a huge black snake gracefully gliding over a rich carpet of green.

This picturesque country of 200 miles, over which we have passed, belongs to the Creeks and Choctaws, and affords one of the richest and most desirable countries in the world for agricultural pursuits.

Scarcely a day has passed, in which we have not crossed oak ridges, of several miles in breadth, with a sandy soil and scattering timber; where the ground was almost literally covered with vines, producing the greatest profusion of delicious grapes, of five-eighths of an inch in diameter, and

---

hanging in such endless clusters, as justly to entitle this singular and solitary wilderness to the style of a vineyard (and ready for the vintage), for many miles together.

The next hour we would be trailing through broad and verdant valleys of green prairies, into which we had descended; and oftentimes find our progress completely arrested by hundreds of acres of small plum-trees, of four or six feet in height; so closely woven and interlocked together, as entirely to dispute our progress, and sending us several miles around; when every bush that was in sight was so loaded with the weight of its delicious wild fruit, that they were in many instances literally without leaves on their branches, and bent quite to the ground. Amongst these, and in patches, were intervening beds of wild roses, wild currants, and gooseberries. And underneath and about them, and occasionally interlocked with them, huge masses of the prickly pears, and beautiful and tempting wild flowers that sweetened the atmosphere above; whilst an occasional huge yellow rattlesnake, or a copper-head, could be seen gliding over, or basking across their vari-coloured tendrils and leaves.

On the eighth day of our march we met, for the first time, a herd of buffaloes; and being in advance of the command, in company with General Leavenworth, Colonel Dodge, and several other officers; we all had an opportunity of testing the mettle of our horses and our own tact at the wild and spirited death. The inspiration of chase took at once, and alike, with the old and the young; a beautiful plain lay before us, and we all gave spur for the onset. General Leavenworth and Colonel Dodge, with their pistols, gallantly and handsomely labored a fat cow, and were in together at the death. I was not quite so fortunate in my selection, for the one which I saw fit to gallant over the plain alone, of the same sex, younger and coy, led me a hard chase, and for a long time, disputed my near approach; when, at length, the full speed of my horse forced us to close company, and she desperately assaulted his shoulders with her horns. My gun was aimed, but missing its fire, the muzzle entangled in her mane, and was instantly broke in two in my hands, and fell over my shoulder. My pistols were then brought to bear upon her; and though severely wounded, she succeeded in reaching the thicket, and left me without "a deed of chivalry to boast." -- Since that day, the Indian hunters in our charge have supplied us abundantly with buffalo meat; and report says, that the country ahead of us will afford us continual sport, and an abundant supply.

We are halting here for a few days to recruit horses and men, after which the line of march will be resumed; and if the Pawnees are as near to us as we have strong reason to believe, from their recent trails and fires, it is probable that within a few days we shall "thrash" them or "get thrashed"; unless through their sagacity and fear, they elude our search by flying before us to their hiding-places.

The prevailing policy amongst the officers seems to be, that of flogging them first, and then establishing a treaty of peace. If this plan were morally right, I do not think it practicable; for, as enemies, I do not believe they will stand to meet us; but, as friends, I think we may bring them to a talk, if the proper means are adopted. We are here encamped on the ground on which Judge Martin and servant were butchered, and his son kidnaped by the Pawnees or Camanchees, but a few weeks since; and the moment they discover us in a large body, they will presume that we are relentlessly seeking for revenge, and they will probably be very shy of our approach. We are over the Washita -- the "Rubicon is passed". We are invaders of a sacred soil. We are carrying war in our front, -- and "we shall soon see, what we shall see."

The cruel fate of Judge Martin and family has been published in the papers; and it belongs to the

regiment of dragoons to demand the surrender of the murderers, and get for the information of the world, some authentic account of the mode in which this horrid outrage was committed.

Judge Martin was a very respectable and independent man, living on the lower part of the Red River, and in the habit of taking his children and a couple of black men-servants with him, and a tent to live in, every summer, into these wild regions; where he pitched it upon the prairie, and spent several months in killing buffaloes and other wild game, for his own private amusement. The news came to Fort Gibson but a few weeks before we started, that he had been set upon by a party of Indians and destroyed. A detachment of troops was speedily sent to the spot, where they found his body horridly mangled, and also of one of his negroes; and it is supposed that his son, a fine boy of nine years of age, has been taken home to their villages by them. Where they still retain him, and where it is our hope to recover him.

Great praise is due to General Leavenworth for his early and unremitted efforts to facilitate the movements of the regiment of dragoons, by opening roads from Gibson and Towson to this place. We found encamped two companies of infantry from Fort Towson, who will follow in the rear of the dragoons as far as necessary, transporting with wagons, stores and supplies, and ready, at the same time, to co-operate with the dragoons in case of necessity. General Leavenworth will advance with us from this post, below far he may proceed is uncertain. We know not exactly the route which we shall take, for circumstances alone must decide that point. We shall probably reach Cantonment Leavenworth in the fall; and one thing is certain (in the opinion of one who has already seen something of Indian life and country), we shall meet with many severe privations and reach that place a jaded set of fellows, and as ragged as Jack Falstaff's famous band.

You are no doubt inquiring, who are these Pawnees, Camanchees, and Arapahoes, and why not tell us all about, them? Their history, numbers and limits are still in obscurity; nothing definite is yet known of them, but I hope I shall soon be able, to give the world a clue to them.

IF my life and health are preserved, I anticipate many a pleasing scene for my pencil, as well as incidents worth; of reciting to the world, which I shall occasionally do, as opportunity may occur.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 40.

MOUTH OF FALSE WASHITA.

Since I wrote my last Letter from this place, I have been detained here with the rest of the cavalcade from the extraordinary sickness which afflicting the regiment, and actually threatening to arrest its progress.

It was, as I wrote the other day, the expectation of the commanding officer that we should have been by this time recruited and recovered from sickness, and ready to start again on our march; but since I wrote nearly one half of the command, and included amongst them, several officers, with General Leavenworth, have been thrown upon their backs, with the prevailing epidemic, a slow and distressing bilious fever. The horses of the regiment are also sick, about an equal proportion, and seemingly suffering with the same disease. They are daily dying, and men are calling sick, and General Leavenworth has ordered Col. Dodge to select all the men, and all the horses that are able to proceed, and be off to-morrow at nine o'clock upon the march towards the Camanchees, in hopes thereby to preserve the health of the men, and make the most rapid advance toward the extreme point of destination.

General Leavenworth has reserved Col. Kearney to take command of the remaining troops and the little encampment; and promises Colonel Dodge that he will himself be well enough in a few days to proceed with a party on his trail and overtake him at the Cross Timbers.

I should here remark, that when we started from Fort Gibson, the regiment of dragoons, instead of the eight hundred which it was supposed it would contain, had only organized to the amount of 400 men, which was the number that started from that place; and being at this time- half disabled, furnishes but 200 effective men to penetrate the wild and untried regions of the hostile Camanchees. All has been bustle and confusion this day, packing up and preparing for the start to-morrow morning. My canvass and painting apparatus are prepared and ready for the pack-horse, which carries the goods and chattels of my esteemed companion Joseph Chadwick and myself, and we shall be the two only guests of the procession, and consequently the only two who will be at liberty to gallop about where we please, despite military rules and regulations, chasing the wild herds, or seeking our own amusements in any such modes as we choose. Mr. Chadwick: is a young man from St. Louis, with whom I have been long acquainted, and for whom I have the highest esteem. He has so far stood by me as a faithful friend, and I rely implicitly on his society during this campaign for much good company and amusement. Though I have an order from the Secretary at War to the commanding officer, to protect and supply me, I shall ask but for their Protection ; as I have, with my friend Joe, laid in our own supplies for the campaign, not putting the Government to any expense on my account, in pursuit of my own private objects.

I am writing this under General Leavenworth's tent, where he has personally invited me to take up my quarters during our encampment here, and he promises to send it by his express, which starts to-morrow with a mail from this to Fort Towson on the frontier, some hundreds of miles below

this. At the time I am writing, the General lies pallid and emaciated before me, on his couch, with a dragoon fanning him, whilst he breathes forty or fifty breaths a minute, and writhes under a burning fever, although he is yet unwilling even to admit that he is sick.

In my last Letter I gave a brief account of a buffalo chase, where General Leavenworth and Col. Dodge took parts, and met with pleasing success. The next day, while on the march, and a mile or in advance of the regiment, and two days before we reached this place, General Leavenworth, Col. Dodge, Lieut. Wheelock and myself were jogging along, and all in turn complaining of the lameness of our bones, from the chase on the former day, when the General, who had long ago had his surfeit of pleasure of this kind on the Upper Missouri, remonstrated against further indulgence, in the following manner: "Well, Colonel, this running for buffaloes is bad business for us -- we are getting too old, and should leave such amusements to the young men; I have had enough of this fun in my life, and I am determined not to hazard my limbs or weary my horse any more with it -- it is the height of folly for us, but will do well enough for boys." Col. Dodge assented at once to his resolves, and approved them; whilst I, who had tried it in every form! and I had thought, (to my heart's content), on the Upper Missouri, joined my assent to the folly of our destroying our horses, which had a long journey to perform, and agreed that I would join no more in the buffalo chase, however near and inviting they might come to me.

In the midst of this conversation, and these mutual declarations (or rather just at the end of them), as we were jogging along in "Indian file", and General Leavenworth taking the lead, and just rising to the top of a little hill over which it seems he had had an instant peep, he dropped himself suddenly upon the side of his horse and wheeled back! and rapidly informed us with an agitated whisper, and an exceeding game contraction of the eye, that a snug little band of buffaloes were quietly grazing just over the knell in a beautiful meadow for running, and that if I would take to the left! and Lieut. Wheelock to the right! and let him and the Colonel dash right into the midst of them; we could play the devil with them!! One half of this at least was said after he had got upon his feet and taken off his portmanteau and valise, in which we had all followed suit, and were mounting for the start! And I am almost sure nothing else was said, and if it had been I should not have heard it, for I was too far off! and too rapidly dashed over the waving grass! and too eagerly gazing and plying the whip, to hear or to see, anything but the trampling hoofs! and the blackened throng I and the darting steeds! and the flashing of guns! until I had crossed the beautiful lawn! and the limb of a tree, as my horse was darting into the timber, had crossed my horse's back, and had scraped me into the grass, from which I soon raised my head! and all was silent! and all out of sight! Save the dragoon regiment, which I could see in distance creeping along on the top of a high hill. I found my legs under me in a few moments, and put them in their accustomed positions, none of which would for some time, answer the usual purpose; but I at last got them to work, and brought ("Charley") out of the bushes, where he had "brought up" in the top of a fallen tree, without damage.

No buffalo was harmed in this furious assault, nor horse nor rider. Col. Dodge and Lieut. Wheelock had joined the regiment, and General Leavenworth joined me, with too much game expression yet in his eye to allow him more time than to say, "I'll have that calf before I quit!" And away he sailed, "up hill and down dale," in pursuit of a fine calf that had been hidden on the ground during the chase, and was now making its way over the prairies in pursuit of the herd. I rode to the top of a little hill to witness the success of the General's second effort, and after he had come

close upon the little affrighted animal, it dodged about in such a manner as evidently to baffle his skill, and perplex his horse, which at last fell in a hole, and both were instantly out of my sight. I ran my horse with all possible speed to the spot, and found him on his hands and knees, endeavouring to get up. I dismounted and raised him on to his feet, when I asked him if he was hurt, to which he replied "No, but I might have been," when he instantly fainted, and I laid him on the grass. I had left my canteen with my portmanteau, and had nothing to administer to him, nor was there water near us. I took my lancet from my pocket and was tying his arm to open a vein, when he recovered, and objected to the operation, assuring me that he was not in the least injured. I caught his horse and soon got him mounted again, when we rode on together, and after two or three hours were enabled to join the regiment.

From that hour to the present, I think I have seen a decided change in the General's face; he has looked pale and feeble, and been continually troubled with a violent cough. I have rode by the side of him from day to day, and he several times told me that he was fearful he was badly hurt. He looks very feeble now, and I very much fear the result of the fever that has set in upon him. We take up the line of march at bugle-call in the morning, and it may be a long time before I can send a Letter again, as there are no post-offices nor mail carriers in the country where we are now going. It will take a great deal to stop me from writing, however, and as I am now to enter upon one of the most interesting parts of the Indian country, inasmuch as it is one of the wildest and most hostile, I shall surely scribble an occasional Letter, if I have to carry them in my own pocket, and bring them in with me on my return.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 41.

GREAT CAMANCHEE VILLAGE.

WE are again at rest, and I am with subjects rude and almost infinite around me, for my pen and my brush. The little band of dragoons are encamped by a fine spring of cool water, within half a mile of the principal town of the Camanches, and in the midst of a bustling and wild scene, I assure you; and before I proceed to give an account of things and scenes that are about me, I must return for a few moments to the place where I left the Reader, at the encampment at False Washita, and rapidly travel with him over the country that lies between that place and the Camanchee Village, where I am now writing.

On the morning after my last Letter was written, the sound and efficient part of the regiment was in motion at nine o'clock. And with them, my friend "Joe" and I, with our provisions laid in, and all snugly arranged on our packhorse, which we alternately led or drove between us.

Our course was about due West, on the divide between the Washita and Red Rivers, with our faces looking towards the Rocky Mountains. The country over which we passed from day to day, was inimitably beautiful; being the whole way one continuous prairie of green fields, with occasional clusters of timber and shrubbery, just enough for the uses of cultivating-man, and for the pleasure of his eyes to dwell upon. The regiment was rather more than half on the move, consisting of 250 men, instead of 200 as I predicted in my Letter from that place. All seemed gay and buoyant at the fresh start, which all trusted was to liberate us from the fatal miasma which we conceived was hovering about the mouth of the False Washita. We advanced on happily, and met with no trouble until the second night of our encampment, in the midst of which we were thrown into (as printers would say,) in an instant of the most appalling alarm and confusion. We were encamped on a beautiful prairie, where we were every hour apprehensive of the lurking enemy. And in the dead of night, when all seemed to be sound asleep and quiet, the instant sound and flash of a gun within a few paces of us! and then the most horrid and frightful groans that instantly followed it, brought us all upon our hands and knees in an instant, and our affrighted horses (which were breaking their lassos,) in full speed and fury over our heads, with the frightful and mingled din of snorting, and cries of "Indians! Indians! Pawnees!" &c., which rang from every part of our little encampment! In a few moments the excitement was chiefly over, and silence restored; when we could hear the trampling hoofs of the horses, which were making off in all directions, (not unlike a drove of swine that once ran into the sea, when they were possessed of devils); and leaving hut now and then an individual quadruped hanging at its stake within our little camp. The mode of our encampment was, uniformly in four lines, forming a square of fifteen or twenty rods in diameter. Upon these lines our saddles and packs were all laid, at the distance of five feet from each other; and each man, after grazing his horse, had it fastened with a rope or lasso, to a stake driven in the ground at a little distance from his feet; thus enclosing the horses all within the square, for the convenience of securing them in case of attack or alarm. In this way we laid encamped, when

---

we were awakened by the alarm that I have just mentioned; and our horses affrighted, dashed out of the camp, and over the heads of their masters in the desperate "Stampedo".

After an instant preparation for battle, and a little recovery from the fright, which was soon effected by waiting a few moments in vain, for the enemy to come on;-a general explanation took place, which brought all to our legs again, and convinced us that there was no decided obstacle, as yet, to our reaching the Camanchee towns; and after that, "sweet home", and the arms of our wives and dear little children, provided we could ever overtake and recover our horses, which had swept off in fifty directions, and with impetus enough to ensure us employment for a day or two to come. At the proper moment for it to be made, there was a general enquiry for the cause of this Teal misfortune, when it was ascertained to have originated in the following manner. A "raw recruit", who was standing as one of the sentinels on that night, saw, as he says "he supposed", an Indian creeping out of a bunch of bushes a few paces in front of him, upon whom he leveled his rifle; and as the poor creature did not "advance and give the countersign" at his call, nor any answer at all, he "let off!" And popped a bullet through the heart of a poor dragoon horse, which had strayed away on the night before, and had faithfully followed our trail all the day, and was now, with a beastly misgiving, coming up, and slowly poking through a little thicket of bushes into camp, to join its comrades, in servitude again! The sudden shock of a gun, and the most appalling groans of this poor dying animal, in the dead of night, and so close upon the heels of sweet sleep, created a long vibration of nerves, and a day of great perplexity and toil which followed, as we had to retrace our steps twenty miles or more, in pursuit of affrighted horses; of which some fifteen or twenty took up wild and free life upon the prairies, to which they were abandoned, as they could not be found. After a detention of two days in consequence of this disaster, we took up the line of march again, and pursued our course with vigour and success, over a continuation of green fields, enamelled with wild flowers, and pleasingly relieved with patches and groves of timber.

On the fourth day of our march, we discovered many fresh signs of buffaloes; and at last, immense herds of them grazing on the distant hills. Indian trails were daily growing fresh, and their smokes were seen in various directions ahead of us. And on the same day at noon, we discovered a large party at several miles distance, sitting on their horses and looking at us. From the glistering of the blades of their lances, which were blazing as they turned them in the sun, it was at first thought that they were Mexican cavalry, who might have been apprized of our approach into their country, and had advanced to contest the point with us. On drawing a little nearer, however, and scanning them closer with our spy-glasses, they were soon ascertained to be a war-party of Camanchees, on the look out for their enemies.

The regiment was called to a halt, and the requisite preparations made and orders issued, we advanced in a direct line towards them until we had approached to within two or three miles of them, when they suddenly disappeared over the hill, and soon after shewed themselves on another mound farther off and in a different direction. The course of the regiment was then changed, and another advance towards them was commenced, and as before, they disappeared and shewed themselves in another direction. After several such efforts which proved ineffectual, Col. Dodge ordered the command to halt, while he rode forward with a few of his staff, and an ensign carrying a white flag. I joined this advance, and the Indians stood their ground until we had come within half a mile of them, and could distinctly observe all their numbers and movements. We then came to a halt, and the white flag was sent a little in advance, and waved as a signal for them

to approach; at which one of their party galloped out in advance of the war-party, on a milk white horse, carrying a piece of white buffalo akin on the point of his long lance in reply to our flag. This moment was the commencement of one of the most thrilling and beautiful scenes I ever witnessed. All eyes, both from his own party and ours, were fixed upon the manoeuvres of this gallant little fellow, and he well knew it.

The distance between the two parties was perhaps half a mile, and that a beautiful and gently sloping prairie; over which he was for the space of a quarter of an hour, reining and spurring his maddened horse, and gradually approaching us by tacking to the right and the left, like a vessel beating against the wind. He at length came prancing and leaping along till he met the flag of the regiment, when he leaned his spear for a moment against it, looking the bearer full in the face, when he wheeled his horse, and dashed up to Col. Dodge, with his extended hand, which was instantly grasped and shaken. We all had him by the hand in a moment, and the rest of the party seeing him received in this friendly manner, instead of being sacrificed, as they undoubtedly expected, started under "full whip" in a direct line towards us, and in a moment gathered, like a black cloud, around us! The regiment then moved up in regular order, and a general shake of the hand ensued, which was accomplished by each warrior riding along the ranks, and shaking the hand of every one as he passed. This necessary form took up considerable time, and during the whole operation, my eyes were fixed upon the gallant and wonderful appearance of the little fellow who bore us the white flag on the point of his lance. He rode a fine and spirited wild horse, which was as white as the drifted snow, with an exuberant mane, and its long and bushy tail sweeping the ground. In his hand he tightly drew the reins upon a heavy Spanish bit, and at every jump, plunged into the animal's sides, till they were in a gore of blood, a huge pair of spurs, plundered, no doubt, from the Spaniards in their border wars, which are continually waged on the Mexican frontiers. The eyes of this noble little steed seemed to be squeezed out of its head; and its fright, and its agitation had brought out upon its skin a perspiration that was fretted into a white foam and lather. The warrior's quiver was slung on the warrior's back, and his bow grasped in his left hand, ready for instant use, if called for. His shield was on his arm, and across his thigh, in a beautiful cover of buckskin, his gun was slung--and in his right hand his lance of fourteen feet in length.

Thus armed and equipped was this dashing cavalier; and nearly in the same manner, all the rest of the party; and very many of them leading an extra horse, which we soon learned was the favourite war-horse; and from which circumstances altogether, we soon understood that they were a war-party in search of their enemy.

After a shake of the hand, we dismounted, and the pipe was lit, and passed around. And then a "talk" was held, in which we were aided by a Spaniard we luckily had with us, who could converse with one of the Camanches, who spoke some Spanish.

Colonel Dodge explained to them the friendly motives with which we were penetrating their country--that we were sent by the President to reach their villages -- to see the chiefs of the Camanches and Pawnee Picts -- to shake hands with them, and to smoke the pipe of peace, and to establish an acquaintance, and consequently a system of trade that would be beneficial to both. They listened attentively, and perfectly appreciated; and taking Colonel Dodge at his word, relying with confidence in what he told them; they informed us that their great town was within a few days' march, and pointing in the direction -- offered to abandon their war-excursion, and turn

about and escort us to it, which they did in perfect good faith. We were on the march in the afternoon of that day, and from day to day they busily led us on, over hill and dale, encamping by the side of us at night, and resuming the march in the morning.

During this march, over one of the most lovely and picturesque countries in the world, we had enough continually to amuse and excite us. The whole country seemed at times to be alive with buffaloes, and bands of wild horses.

We had with us about thirty Osage and Cherokee, Seneca and Delaware Indians, employed as guides and hunters for the regiment; and with the war-party of ninety or a hundred Camanches, we formed a most picturesque appearance while passing over the green fields, and consequently, sad havoc amongst the herds of buffaloes, which we were almost hourly passing. We were now out of the influence and reach of bread stuffs, and subsisted ourselves on buffaloes' meat altogether; and the Indians of the different tribes, emulous to shew their skill in the chase, and prove the mettle of their horses, took infinite pleasure in dashing into every herd, that we approached; by which means, the regiment was abundantly supplied from day to day with fresh meat.

In one of those spirited scenes when the regiment were on the march, and the Indians with their bows and arrows were closely plying a band of these affrighted animals, they made a bolt through the line of the dragoons, and a complete breach, through which the whole herd passed, upsetting horses and riders in the most amusing manner, and receiving such shots as came from those guns and pistols that were aimed, and not fired off into the empty air.

The buffaloes are very blind animals, and owing, probably in a great measure, to the profuse locks that hang over their eyes; they run chiefly by the nose, and follow in the tracks of each other, seemingly heedless of what is about them; and of course, easily disposed to rush in a mass, and the whole tribe or gang to pass in the tracks of those that have first led the way.

The tract of country over which we passed, between the False Washita and this place, is stocked, not only with buffaloes, but with numerous bands of wild horses, many of which we saw every day. There is no other animal on the prairies so wild and so sagacious as the horse; and none other so difficult to come up with. So remarkably keen is their eye, that they will generally run "at the sight", when they are a mile distant; being, no doubt, able to distinguish the character of the enemy that is approaching when at that distance; and when in motion, will seldom stop short of three or four miles. I made many attempts to approach them by stealth, when they were grazing and playing their gambols, without ever having been more than once able to succeed. In this instance, I left my horse, and with my friend Chadwick, skulked through a ravine for a couple of miles; until we were at length brought within gun-shot of a fine herd of them, when I used my pencil for some time, while we were under cover of a little hedge of bushes which effectually screened us from their view. In the herd we saw all the colours, nearly, that can be seen in a kennel of English hounds. Some were milk white, some jet black -- others were sorrel, and bay, and cream colour -- many were of an iron grey; and others were pied, containing a variety of colours on the same animal. Their manes were very profuse, and hanging in the wildest confusion over their necks and faces -- and their long tails swept the ground.

After we had satisfied our curiosity in looking at these proud and playful animals, we agreed that we would try the experiment of "creasing" one, as it is termed in this country; which is done by shooting them through the gristle on the top of the neck, which stuns them so that they fall, and are secured with the hobbies on the feet; after which they rise again without fatal injury. This is

a practice often resorted to by expert hunters, with good rifles, who are not able to take them in any other way. My friend Joe and I were armed on this occasion, each with a light fowling-piece, which have not quite the preciseness in throwing a bullet that a rifle has; and having both leveled our pieces at the withers of a noble, fine-looking iron prey, we pulled trigger, and the poor creature fell, and the rest of the herd were out of sight in a moment. We advanced speedily to him, and had the most inexpressible mortification of finding, that we never had thought of hobbles or halters, to secure him -- and in a few moments more, had the still greater mortification, and even anguish, to find that one of our shots had broken the poor creature's neck, and that he was quite dead.

The laments of poor Chadwick for the wicked folly of destroying this noble animal, were such as I never shall forget; and so guilty did we feel that we agreed that when we joined the regiment, we should boast of all the rest of our hunting feats, but never make mention of this.

The usual mode of taking the wild horses, is, by throwing the laso, whilst pursuing them at full speed, and dropping a noose over their necks, by which their speed is soon checked, and they are "choked down." The laso is a thong of rawhide, some ten or fifteen yards in length, twisted or braided, with a noose fixed at the end of it; which, when the coil of the laso is thrown out, drops with great certainty over the neck of the animal, which is soon conquered.

The Indian, when he starts for a wild horse, mounts one of the fleetest he can get, and coiling his laso on his arm, starts off under the "full whip", till he can enter the band, when he soon gets it over the neck of one of the number; when he instantly dismounts, leaving his own horse, and runs as fast as he can, letting the laso pass out gradually and carefully through his hands, until the horse falls for want of breath, and lies helpless on the ground; at which time the Indian advances slowly towards the horse's head, keeping his laso tight upon its neck, until he fastens a pair of hobbles on the animal's two forefeet, and also loosens the laso (giving the horse chance to breathe), and gives it a noose around the under jaw, by which he gets great power over the affrighted animal, which is rearing and plunging when it gets breath; and by which, as he advances, hand over hand, towards the horse's nose, he is able to hold it down and prevent it from throwing itself over on its back, at the hazard of its limbs. By this means he gradually advances, until he is able to place his hand on the animal's nose, and over its eyes; and at length to breathe in its nostrils, when it soon becomes docile and conquered; so that he has little else to do than to remove the hobbles from its feet, and lead or ride it into camp.

This "breaking down" or taming, however, is not without the most desperate trial on the part of the horse, which rears and plunges in every possible way to effect its escape, until its power is exhausted, and it becomes covered with foam; and at last yields to the power of man, and becomes his willing slave for the rest of its life. By this very rigid treatment, the poor animal seems to be so completely conquered, that it makes no further struggle for its freedom; but submits quietly ever after, and is led or rode away with very little difficulty. Great care is taken, however, in this and in subsequent treatment, not to subdue the spirit of the animal, which is carefully preserved and kept up, although they use them with great severity; being, generally speaking, cruel masters.

The wild horse of these regions is a small, but very powerful animal; with an exceedingly prominent eye, sharp nose, high nostril, small feet and delicate leg; and undoubtedly, have sprung from a stock introduced by the Spaniards, at the time of the invasion of Mexico; which having strayed off upon the prairies, have run wild, and stocked the plains from this to Lake Winnipeg, two or

three thousand miles to the North.

This useful animal has been of great service to the Indians living on these vast plains, enabling them to take their game more easily, to carry their burthens, &c.; and no doubt, render them better and handier service than if they were of a larger and heavier breed. Vast numbers of them are also killed for food by the Indians. They subsist themselves both in winter and summer by biting at the grass, which they can always get in sufficient quantities for their food.

Whilst on our march we met with many droves of these beautiful animals, and several times had the opportunity of seeing the Indians pursue them, and take them with the laso. The first successful instance of the kind was effected by one of our guides and hunters, by the name of Beatte, a Frenchman, whose parents had lived nearly their whole lives in the Osage village; and who, himself had been reared from infancy amongst them; and in a continual life. Of Indian modes and amusements, had acquired all the skill and tact of his Indian teachers, and probably a little more; for he is reputed, without exception, the best hunter in these Western regions.

This instance took Place one day whilst the regiment was at its usual halt of an hour, in the middle of the day.

When the bugle sounded for a halt, and all were dismounted, Beatte and several others of the hunters asked permission of Col. Dodge to pursue a drove of horses which were then in sight, at a distance of a mile or more from us. The permission was given, and they started off, and by following a ravine, approached near to the unsuspecting animals, when they broke upon them and pursued them for several miles in full view of the regiment. Several of us had good glasses, with which we could plainly see every movement and every manoeuvre. After a race of two or three miles, Beatte was seen with his wild horse down, and the band and the other hunters rapidly leaving him.

Seeing him in this condition, I galloped off to him as rapidly as possible, and had the satisfaction of seeing the whole operation of "breaking down", and bringing in the wild animal; and in another drawing, I have given a fair representation of the mode by which it was done. When he had conquered the horse in this way, his brother, who was one of the unsuccessful ones in the chase, came, riding back, and leading up the horse, of Beatte which he had left behind, and after staying with us a few minutes, assisted Beatte in leading his conquered wild horse towards the regiment, where it was satisfactorily examined and commented upon, as it was trembling and covered with white foam, until the bugle sounded the signal for marching, when all mounted; and with the rest, Beatte, astride of his wild horse, which had a buffalo skin girted on its back, and a halter, with a cruel noose around the under jaw. In this manner the command resumed its march, and Beatte astride of his wild horse, on which he rode quietly and without difficulty, until night; the whole thing, the capture, and breaking, all having been accomplished within the space of one hour, our usual and daily halt at midday.

Several others of these animals were caught in a similar manner during our march, by others of our hunters, affording us satisfactory instances of this most extraordinary and almost unaccountable feat.

The horses that were caught were by no means very valuable specimens, being rather of an ordinary quality; and I saw to my perfect satisfaction, that the finest of these droves can never be obtained in this way, as they take the lead at once, when they are pursued, and in a few moments will be seen half a mile or more ahead of the bulk of the drove, which they are leading off. There is

not a doubt but there are many very fine and valuable horses amongst these herds; but it is impossible for the Indian or other hunter to take them, unless it be done by "creasing" them, as I have before described; which is often done, but always destroys the spirit and character of the animal. After many hard and tedious days of travel, we were at last told by our Camanchee guides that we were near their village; and having led us to the top of a gently rising elevation on the prairie, they pointed to their village at several miles distance, in the midst of one of the most enchanting valleys that human eyes ever looked upon. The general course of the valley is from N. W. to S. E., of several miles in width, with a magnificent range of mountains rising in distance beyond; it being, without doubt, a huge "spur" of the Rocky Mountains, composed entirely of a reddish granite or gneis, corresponding with the other links of this stupendous chain. In the midst of this lovely valley, we could just discern amongst the scattering shrubbery that lined the banks of the water-courses, the tops of the Camanchee wigwams, and the smoke curling above them. The valley, for a mile distant about the village, seemed speckled with horses and mules that were grazing in it. The chiefs of the war-party requested the regiment to halt, until they could ride in, and inform their people who were coming. We then dismounted for an hour or so; when we could see them busily running and catching their horses; and at length, several hundreds of their braves and warriors came out at full speed to welcome us, and forming in a line in front of us, as we were again mounted, presented a formidable and pleasing appearance. As they wheeled their horses, they very rapidly formed in a line, and "dressed" like well-disciplined cavalry. The regiment was drawn up in three columns, with a line formed in front, by Colonel Dodge and his staff, in which rank my friend Chadwick and I were also paraded; when we had a fine view of the whole manoeuvre, which was picturesque and thrilling in the extreme.

In the centre of our advance was stationed a white flag, and the Indians answered to it with one which they sent forward and planted by the side of it.

The two lines were thus drawn up, face to face, within twenty or thirty yards of each other, as inveterate foes that never had met; and, to the everlasting credit of the Camanchees, whom the world had always looked upon as murderous and hostile, they had all come out in this manner, with their heads uncovered, and without a weapon of any kind, to meet a war-party bristling with arms, and trespassing to the middle of their country. They had every reason to look upon us as their natural enemy, as they have been in the habit of estimating all pale faces; and yet, instead of arms or defenses, or even of frowns, they galloped out and looked us in our faces, without an expression of fear or dismay, and evidently with expressions of joy and impatient pleasure, to shake us by the hand, on the bare assertion of Colonel Dodge, which had been made to the chiefs, that "we came to see them on a friendly visit."

After we had sat and gazed at each other in this way for some half an hour or so, the head chief of the band came galloping up to Colonel Dodge, and having shaken him by the hand, he passed on to the other officers in turn, and then rode alongside of the different columns, shaking hands with every dragoon in the regiment; he was followed in this by his principal chiefs and braves, which altogether took up nearly an hour longer, when the Indians retreated slowly towards their village, escorting us to the banks of a fine clear stream, and a good spring of fresh water, half a mile from their village, which they designated as a suitable place for our encampment, and we were soon bivouacked at the place from which I am now scribbling.

No sooner were we encamped here (or, in other words, as soon as our things were thrown upon

the ground,) Major Mason, Lieutenant Wheelock, Captain Brown, Captain Duncan, my friend Chadwick and myself, galloped off to the village, and through it in the greatest impatience to the prairies, where there were at least three thousand horses and mules grazing; all of us eager and impatient to see and to appropriate the splendid Arabian horses, which we had so often heard were owned by the Camanchee warriors. We galloped around busily, and glanced our eyes rapidly over them; and all soon returned to the camp, quite "crest fallen" and satisfied, that, although there were some tolerable nags amongst this medley group of all colours and all shapes, the beautiful Arabian we had so often heard of at the East, as belonging to the Camanchees, must either be a great ways further South than this, or else it must be a horse of the imagination.

The Camanchee horses are generally small, all of them being of the wild breed, and a very tough and serviceable animal; and from what I can learn here of the chiefs, there are yet, farther South, and nearer the Mexican borders, some of the noblest animals in use of the chiefs, yet I do not know that we have any more reason to rely upon this information, than that which had made our horse-jockeys that we have with us, to run almost crazy for the possession of those we were to find at this place. Amongst the immense herds we found grazing here, one-third perhaps are mules, which are much more valuable than the horses.

Of the horses, the officers and men have purchased a number of the best, by giving a very inferior blanket and butcher's knife, costing in all about four dollars! These horses in our cities at the East, independent of the name, putting them upon their merits alone, would be worth from eighty to one hundred dollars each, and not more.

A vast many of such could be bought on such terms, and are hourly brought into camp for sale. If we had goods to trade for them, and means of getting them home, a great profit could be made, which can easily be learned from the following transaction that took place yesterday. A fine looking Indian was hanging about my tent very closely for several days, and continually scanning an old and half-worn cotton umbrella, which I carried over me to keep off the sun, as I was suffering with fever and ague, and at last proposed to purchase it of me, with a very neat limbed and pretty pied horse which he was riding. He proposed at first, that I should give him a knife and the umbrella, but as I was not disposed for the trade (the umbrella being so useful an article to me, that I did not know how to Part with it, not knowing whether there was another in the regiment); he came a second time, and offered me the horse for the umbrella alone, which offer I still rejected; and he went back to the village, and soon returned with another hone of a much better duality, supposing that I had not valued the former one equal to the umbrella.

With this he endeavoured to push the trade, and after I had with great difficulty made him understand that I was sick, and could not part with it, he turned and rode back towards the village, and in a short time returned again with one of the largest and finest mules I ever saw, proposing that, which I also rejected; when he disappeared again.

In a few moments my friend Captain Duncan, in whose hospitable tent I was quartered, came in, and the circumstance being related to him, started up some warm jockey feelings, which he was thoroughly possessed of, when he instantly sprang upon his feet, and exclaimed, "d-----mn the fellow! Where is he gone? Here, Gosset! Get my old umbrella out of the pack, I rolled it up with my wiper and the flying-pan-get it as quick as lightning!" With it in his hand, the worthy Captain soon overtook the young man, and escorted him into the village, and returned in a short time-not with the mule, but with the second horse that had been offered to me.

Though they appeared to be near the river, I found it half a day's journey to travel to and from them; they being several miles from the river. On ascending them I found them to be two or three hundred feet high, and rising on their sides at an angle of 45 degrees; and on their tops, in some places, for half a mile in length, perfectly level, with a green turf, and corresponding exactly with the tabular hills spoken of above the Mandans. I therein said, that I should visit these hills on my way down the river; and I am fully convinced, from close examination, that they are a part of the same original superstratum, which therein described, though seven or eight hundred miles separated from them. They agree exactly in character, and also in the materials of which they are composed; and I believe, that some unaccountable gorge where waters has swept away the intervening earth, leaving these solitary and isolated, though incontrovertible evidences, that the summit level of all this great valley has at one time been where the level surface of these hills now is, two or three hundred feet above what is now generally denominated the summit level.

The mouth of the Platte, is a beautiful scene, and no doubt will be the site of a large and flourishing town, soon after Indian titles shall have been extinguished to the lands in these regions, which will be done within a very few years. The Platte is a long and powerful stream, pouring in from the Rocky Mountains and joining with the Missouri at this place.

In this voyage, as in all others that I have performed, I kept my journal, but I have not room, it will be seen, to insert more than an occasional extract from it for my present purpose. In this voyage, Ba'tiste and Bogard were my constant companions; and we ah had our rides, and used them often. We often went ashore amongst the herds of buffaloes, and were obliged to do so for our daily food. We lived the whole way on buffaloes' flesh and venison -- we had no bread; but laid in a good stock of coffee and sugar. These, however, from an unforeseen accident availed us but little; as on the second or third day of our voyage, after we had taken our coffee on the shore, and Ba'tiste and Bogard had gone in pursuit of a herd of buffaloes, I took it in my head to have an extra very fine dish of coffee to myself, as the fire was fine. For this purpose, I added more coffee-grounds to the pot, and placed it on the fire, which I sat watching, when I saw a fine buffalo cow wending her way leisurely over the hills, but a little distance from me, for whom I started at once, with my ride trailed in my hand; and after creeping, and running, and heading, and all that, for half an hour, without getting a shot at her; I came back to the encampment, where I found my two men with meat enough, but in the most uncontrollable rage, for my coffee had all boiled out, and the coffee-pot was melted to Pieces!

This was truly a deplorable accident, and one that could in no effectual way be remedied. We afterwards botched up a mess or two of it in our frying-pan, but to little purpose, and then abandoned it to Bogard alone, who thank fully received the dry coffee-grounds and sugar, at his meals, which he soon entirely demolished.

We met immense numbers of buffaloes in the early part of our voyage and used to land our canoe almost every hour in the day; and oftentimes all together approach the unsuspecting herds, through some deep and hidden ravine within a few rods of them, and at the word, "pull trigger" each of us bring down our victim.

In one instance, near the mouth of White River, we met the most immense herd crossing the Missouri River -- and from an imprudence got our boat into imminent danger amongst them, from which we were highly delighted to make our escape. It was in the midst of the "running season", and we had heard the "roaring" (as it is called) of the herd, when we were several miles

from them. When we came in sight, we were actually terrified at the immense numbers that were streaming down the green hills on one side of the river, and galloping up and over the bluffs on the other. The river was filled, and in parts blackened, with their heads and horns, as they were swimming about, following up their objects, and making desperate battle whilst they were swimming.

I deemed it imprudent for our canoe to be dodging amongst them, and ran it ashore for a few hours, where we laid, waiting for the opportunity of seeing the river clear; but we waited in vain. Their numbers, however, got somewhat diminished at last, and we pushed off, and successfully made our way amongst them. From the immense numbers that had passed the river at that place, they had torn down the prairie bank of fifteen feet in height, so as to form a sort of road or landing-place, where they all in succession clambered up. Many in their turmoil had been wafted below this landing, and unable to regain it against the swiftness of the current, had fastened themselves along in crowds, hugging close to the high bank under which they were standing. As we were drifting by these, and supposing ourselves out of danger, I drew up my rifle and shot one of them in the head, which tumbled into the water, and brought with him a hundred others, which plunged in, and in a moment were swimming about our canoe, and placing it in great danger. No attack was made upon us, and in the confusion the poor beasts knew not, perhaps, the enemy that was amongst them; but we were liable to be sunk by them, as they were furiously looking and climbing on to each other. I rose in my canoe, and by my gestures and hallooing, kept them from coming in contact with us, until we were out of their reach.

This was one of the instances that I formerly spoke of, where thousands and tens of thousands of these animals congregate in the running season, and move about from East and West, or wherever accident or circumstances may lead them. In this grand crusade, no one can know the numbers that may have made the ford within a few days; nor in their blinded fury in such scenes, would feeble man be much respected.

During the remainder of that day we paddled onward, and passed many of their carcasses floating on the current, or lodged on the heads of islands and sand-bars. And, in the vicinity of, and not far below the grand turmoil, we passed several that were mired in the quicksand near the shores; some were standing fast and half immersed; whilst others were nearly out of sight, and gasping for the last breath; others were standing with all legs fast, and one half of their bodies above the water, and their heads sunk under it, where they had evidently remained several days; and flocks of ravens and crows were covering their backs, and picking the flesh from their dead bodies. So much of the Upper Missouri and its modes, at present; though I have much more in store for some future occasion.

Fort Leavenworth, which is on the Lower Missouri, being below the mouth of the Platte, is the nucleus of another neighborhood of Indians, amongst whom I am to commence my labours, and of whom I shall soon be enabled to give some account. So, for the present, Adieu.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 42.

GREAT CAMANCHEE VILLAGE.

The Village of the Camanches by the side of which we are encamped, is composed of six or eight hundred skin-covered lodges, made of poles and buffalo skins, in the manner precisely as those of the Sioux and other Missouri tribes, of which I have heretofore given some account. This village with its thousands of wild inmates, with horses and dogs, and wild sports and domestic occupations, presents a most curious scene; and the manners and looks of the people, a rich subject for the brush and the pen.

In the view I have made of it, but a small Portion of the village is shewn; which is as well as to shew the whole of it, inasmuch as the wigwams, as well as the customs, are the same in every part of it. In the foreground is seen the wigwam of the chief; and in various parts, crotches and poles, on which the women are? Drying meat, and "graining" buffalo robes. These people, living in a country where buffaloes are abundant, make their wigwams more easily of their skins, than of anything else; and with them find greater facilities of moving about, as circumstances often require; when they drag them upon the poles attached to their horses, and erect them again with little trouble in their new residence.

We white men, strolling about amongst their wigwams, are looked upon with as much curiosity as if we had come from the moon; and evidently create a sort of chill in the blood of children and dogs, when we make our appearance. I was pleased to-day with the simplicity of a group which came out in front of the chiefs lodge to scrutinize my faithful friend Chadwick and I, as we were strolling about the avenues and labyrinths of their village; upon which I took out my book and sketched as quick as lightning, whilst "Joe" riveted their attention by some ingenious trick or other, over my shoulders, which I did not see, having no time to turn my head. These were the juvenile parts of the chiefs family, and all who at this moment were at home; the venerable old man, and his three or four wives, making a visit, like hundreds of others, to the encampment.

In speaking just above, of the mode of moving their wigwams, and changing their encampments, I should have said a little more, and should also have given to the reader, a sketch of one of these extraordinary scenes, which I have had the good luck to witness; where several thousands were on the march, and furnishing one of those laughable scenes which daily happen, where so many dogs, and so many squaws, are travelling in such a confused mass; with so many conflicting interests, and so many local and individual rights to be pertinaciously claimed and protected.

Each horse drags his load, and each dog, (i. e. each dog that will do it and there are many that will not), also dragging his wallet on a couple of poles; and each squaw with her load, and all together (notwithstanding their burthens) cherishing their pugnacious feelings, which often bring them into general conflict, commencing usually amongst the dogs, and sure to result in fisticuffs of the women; whilst the men, riding leisurely on the right or the left, take infinite pleasure in overlooking these desperate conflicts, at which they are sure to have a laugh, and in which, as sure never to

---

lend a hand.

The Camanchees, like the Northern tribes, have many games, and in Pleasant weather seem to be continually practicing more or less of them, on the prairies, back of, and contiguous to, their village.

In their ball-plays, and some other games, they are far behind the Sioux and others of the Northern tribes; but, in racing horses and riding, they are not equalled by any other Indians on the Continent. Racing horses, it would seem, is a constant and almost incessant exercise, and their principal mode of gambling; and perhaps, a more finished set of jockeys are not to be found. The exercise of these people, in a country where horses are so abundant, and the country so fine for riding, is chiefly done on horseback; and it "stands to reason", that such a people, who have been practicing from their childhood, should become exceedingly expert in this wholesome and beautiful exercise. Amongst their feats of riding, there is one that has astonished me more than anything of the kind I have ever seen, or expect to see, in my life -- a stratagem of war, learned and practiced by every young man in the tribe; by which he is able to drop his body upon the side of his horse at the instant he is passing, effectually screened from his enemies' weapons as he lays in a horizontal position behind the body of his horse, with his heel hanging over the horses' back; by which he has the power of throwing himself up again, and changing to the other side of the horse if necessary. In this wonderful condition, he will hang whilst his horse is at fullest speed, carrying with him his bow and his shield, and also his long lance of fourteen feet in length, all or either of which he will wield upon his enemy as he passes; rising and throwing his arrows over the horse's back, or with equal ease and equal success under the horse's neck. This astonishing feat which the young men have bees repeatedly playing off to our surprise as well as amusement, whilst they have been galloping about in front of our tents, completely puzzled the whole of us; and appeared to be the result of magic, rather than of skill acquired by practice. I had several times great curiosity to approach them, to ascertain by what means their bodies could be suspended in this manner, where nothing could be seen but the heel hanging over the horse's back. In these endeavors I was continually frustrated, until one day I coaxed a young fellow up within a little distance of me, by offering him a few plugs of tobacco, and he in a moment solved the difficulty, so far as to render it apparently more feasible than before; yet leaving it one of the most extraordinary results of practice and persevering endeavors. I found on examination, that a shorthair halter was passed around under the neck of the horse, and both ends tightly braided into the mane, on the withers, leaving a loop to hang under the neck, and against the breast, which, being caught up in the hand, makes a sling into which the elbow falls, taking the weight of the body on the middle of the upper arm. Into this loop the rider drops suddenly and fearlessly, leaving his heel to hang over the back of the horse, to steady him, and also to restore him when he wishes to regain his upright position on the horse's back.

Besides this wonderful art, these people have several other feats of horsemanship, which they are continually showing off; which are pleasing and extraordinary, and of which they seem very proud. A people who spend so very great a part of their lives, actually on their horses backs, must needs become exceedingly expert in every thing that pertains to riding-to war, or to the chase; and I am ready, without hesitation, to pronounce the Camanchees the most extraordinary horsemen that I have seen yet in all my travels, and I doubt very much whether any people in the world can surpass them.

The Camanchees are in stature, rather low, and in person, often approaching to corpulency. In their movements, they are heavy and ungraceful; and on their feet, one of the most unattractive and slovenly-looking races of Indians that I have ever seen; but the moment they mount their horses, they seem at once metamorphosed, and surprise the spectator with the ease and elegance of their movements. A Camanchee on his feet is out of his element, and comparatively almost as awkward as a monkey on the ground, without a limb or a branch to cling to; but the moment he lays his hand upon his hone, his face, even becomes handsome, and he gracefully flies away like a different being.

Our encampment is surrounded by continual swarms of old and young--of middle aged -- of male and female -- of dogs, and every moving thing that constitutes their community; and our tents are lined with the chiefs and other worthies of the tribe. So it will be seen there is no difficulty of getting subjects enough for my brush, as well as for my pen, whilst residing in this place.

The head chief of this village, who is represented to us here, as the head of the nation, is a mild and pleasant looking gentleman, without anything striking or peculiar in his looks; dressed in a very humble manner, with very few ornaments upon him, and his hair carelessly falling about his face, and over his shoulders. The name of this chief is Ee-shahko-nee (The Bow and Quiver). The only ornaments to be seen about him were a couple of beautiful shells worn in his ears, and a boar's tusk attached to his neck, and worn on his breast.

For several days after we arrived at this place, there was a huge mass of flesh, Ta-wah-que-nah (The Mountain of Rocks), who was put forward as head chief of the tribe; and all honours were being paid to him by the regiment of dragoons, until the above-mentioned chief arrived from the country, where it seems he was leading a war-party; and had been sent for, no doubt, on the occasion. When he arrived, this huge monster, who is the largest and fattest Indian I ever saw, stepped quite into the background, giving way to this admitted chief, who seemed to have the confidence and respect of the whole tribe.

This enormous man, whose flesh would undoubtedly weigh three hundred pounds or more, took the most wonderful strides in the exercise of his temporary authority; which, in all probability, he was lawfully exercising in the absence of his superior, as second chief of the tribe.

A perfect personation of Jack Falstaff, in size and in figure, with an African face, and a beard on his chin of two or three inches in length. His name, he tells me, he got from having conducted a large party of Camanchees through a secret and subterraneous passage, entirely through the mountain of granite rocks, which lies back of their village; thereby saving their lives from their more powerful enemy, who had "cornered them up" in such a way, that there was no other possible mode for their escape. The mountain under which he conducted them, is called Ta-wah-que-nah (The Mountain of Rocks), and from this he has received his name, which would certainly have been far more appropriate if it had been a mountain of flesh.

Corpulency is a thing exceedingly rare to be found in any of the tribes, amongst the men, owing, probably, to the exposed and active sort of lives they lead; and that in the absence of all the spices of life, many of which have their effect in producing this disgusting, as well as unhandy and awkward extravagance in civilized society.

Ish-a-ro-yeh (He Who Carries A Wolf); and Is-sa-wah-tam-ah (The Wolf Tied With Hair); are also chiefs of some standing in the tribe, and evidently men of great influence, as they were put forward by the head chiefs, for their likenesses to be painted in turn, after their own. The first of

the two seemed to be the leader of the war-party which we met, and of which I have spoken; and in escorting us to their village, this man took the lead and piloted us the whole way, in consequence of which Colonel Dodge presented him a very fine gun.

His-oo-san-ches (The Spaniard), a gallant little fellow, is represented to us as one of the leading warriors of the tribe; and no doubt is one of the most extraordinary men at present living in these regions.

He is half Spanish, and being a half-breed, for whom they generally have the most contemptuous feelings, he has been all his life thrown into the front of battle and danger; at which posts he has signalized himself, and commanded the highest admiration and respect of the tribe, for his daring and adventurous career. This is the man of whom I have before spoken, who dashed out so boldly from the war-party, and came to us with the white rag raised on the point of his lance, and of whom I have made a sketch in. I have here represented him as he stood for me, with his shield on his arm, with his quiver slung, and his lance of fourteen feet in length in his right hand. This extraordinary little man, whose figure was light, seemed to be all bone and muscle, and exhibited immense power, by the curve of the bones in his legs and his arms. We had many exhibitions of his extraordinary strength, as well as agility; and of his gentlemanly politeness and friendship, we had as frequent evidences. As an instance of this, I will recite an occurrence which took place but a few days since, when we were moving our encampment to a more desirable ground on another side of their village. We had a deep and powerful stream to ford, when we had several men who were sick, and obliged to be carried on litters. My friend "Joe" and I came up in the rear of the regiment, where the litters of the sick were passing, and we found this little fellow up to his chin in the muddy water, wading and carrying one end of each litter on his head, as they were in turn, passed over. After they had all passed, this gallant little fellow beckoned to me to dismount, and take a seat on his shoulders, which I declined; preferring to stick to my horse's back, which I did, as he took it by the bridle and conducted it through the shallowest ford. When I was across, I took from my belt a handsome knife and presented it to him, which seemed to please him very much. Besides the above-named chiefs and warriors, I painted the portrait of Kots-o-ko-ro-ko (The Hair of The Bull's Neck); and Hah-nee (The Beaver); the first, a chief, and the second, a warrior of terrible aspect, and also of considerable distinction. These and many other paintings, as well as manufactures from this tribe, may be always seen in my Museum, if I have the good luck to get them safe home from this wild and remote region.

From what I have already seen of the Camanchees, I am fully convinced that they are a numerous and very powerful tribe, and quite equal in numbers and prowess, to the accounts generally given of them.

It is entirely impossible at present to make a correct estimate of their numbers; but taking their own account of villages they point to in such numbers, South of the banks of the Red River, as well as those that lie farther West, and undoubtedly North of its banks, they must be a very numerous tribe; and I think I am able to say, from estimates that these chiefs have made me, that they number some 30 or 40,000 -- being able to shew some 6 or 7000 warriors, well-mounted and well-armed. This estimate I offer not as conclusive, for so little is as yet known of these people, that no estimate can be implicitly relied upon other than that, which, in general terms, pronounces them to be a very numerous and warlike tribe.

We shall learn much more of them before we get out of their country; and I trust that it will yet be

in my power to give something like a fair census of them before we have done with them. They speak much of their allies and friends, the Pawnee Picts, living to the West some three or four days' march, whom we are going to visit in a few days, and afterwards return to this village, and then "bend our course" homeward, or, in other words, back to Fort Gibson. Besides the Pawnee Picts, there are the Kiowas and Wicos; small tribes that live in the same vicinity, and also in the same alliance, whom we shall probably see on our march. Every preparation is now making to be off in a few days -- and I shall omit further remarks on the Camanchees, until we return, when I shall probably have much more to relate of them and their customs. So many of the men and officers are getting sick, that the little command will be very much crippled, from the necessity we shall be under, of leaving about thirty sick, and about an equal number of well to take care of and protect them: for which purpose, we are constructing a fort, with a sort of breastwork of timbers and bushes, which will be ready in a day or two; and the sound part of the command prepared to start with several Camanchee leaders, who have agreed to pilot the way.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 43.

GREAT CAMANCHEE VILLAGE.

The above Letter it will be seen, was written some time ago, and when all hands (save those who were too sick) were on the start for the Pawnee arrived; and as the dragoons have made their visit there and returned in a village. Amongst those exceptions was I, before the hour of starting had most jaded condition, and I have again got well enough to write, I will render some account of the excursion, which is from the pen and the pencil of my friend Joe, who went with them and took my sketch and note-books in his pocket.

“We were four days travelling over a beautiful country, most of the way prairie, and generally along near the base of a stupendous range of mountains of reddish granite, in many places piled up to an immense height without tree or shrubbery on them; looking as if they had actually dropped from the clouds in such a confused mass, and all lay where they had fallen.

Such we found the mountains enclosing the Pawnee village, on the bank of Red River, about ninety miles from the Camanchee town. The dragoon regiment was drawn up within half a mile or so of this village, and encamped in a square, where we remained three days. We found here a very numerous village, containing some five or six hundred wigwams, all made of long prairie grass, thatched over poles which are fastened in the ground and bent in at the top; giving to them, in distance, the appearance of straw beehives, as in, which is an accurate view of it, shewing the Red River in front, and the “mountains of rocks” behind it.

“To our very great surprise, we have found these people cultivating quite extensive fields of corn (maize), pumpkins, melons, beans and squashes; so, with these aids, and an abundant supply of buffalo meat, they may be said to be living very well.

“The next day after our arrival here, Colonel Dodge opened a council with the chiefs, in the chief’s lodge, where he had the most of his officers around him. He first explained to them the friendly views with which he came to see them; and of the wish of our Government to establish a lasting peace with them, which they seemed at once to appreciate and highly to estimate.

“The head chief of the tribe is a very old man, and he several times replied to Colonel Dodge in a very eloquent manner; assuring him of the friendly feelings of his chiefs and warriors towards the pale faces, in the direction from whence we came.

“After Colonel Dodge had explained in general terms, the objects of our visit, he told them that he should expect from them some account of the foul murder of Judge Martin and his family on the False Washita, which had been perpetrated but a few weeks before, and which the Camanchees had told us was done by the Pawnee Picts. The Colonel told them, also, that he learned from the Camanchees, that they had the little boy, the son of the murdered gentleman, in their possession; and that he should expect them to deliver him up, as an indispensable condition of the friendly arrangement that was now making. They positively denied the fact, and all knowledge of it; firmly

assuring us that they knew nothing of the murder, or of the boy. The demand was repeatedly made, and as often denied; until at length a negro-man was discovered, who was living with the Pawnees, who spoke good English; and coming into the council-house, gave information that such a boy had recently been brought into their village, and was now a prisoner amongst them. This excited great surprise and indignation in the council, and Colonel Dodge then informed the chiefs that the council would rest here; and certainly nothing further of a peaceable nature would transpire until the boy was brought in. In this alarming dilemma, all remained in gloomy silence for awhile; when Colonel Dodge further informed the chiefs, that as an evidence of his friendly intentions towards them, he had, on starting, purchased at a very great price, from their enemies the Osages, two Pawnee (and one Kiowa) girls; which had been held by them for some years as prisoners, and which he had brought the whole way home, and had here ready to be delivered to their friends and relations; but whom he certainly would never show, until the little boy was produced. He also made another demand, which was for the restoration of an United States ranger, by the name of Abbe, who had been captured by them during the summer before. They acknowledged the seizure of this man, and all solemnly declared that he had been taken by a party of the Camanches, over whom they had no control, and carried beyond the Red River into the Mexican provinces, where he was put to death. They held a long consultation about the boy, and seeing their plans defeated by the evidence of the negro; and also being convinced of the friendly disposition of the Colonel, by bringing home their prisoners from the Osages, they sent out and had the boy brought in, from the middle of a corn-field, where he had been secreted. He is a smart and very intelligent boy of nine years of age, and when he came in, he was entirely naked, as they keep their own boys of that age. There was a great excitement in the council when the little fellow was brought in; and as he Passed amongst them, he looked around and exclaimed with some surprise, "What! Are there white men here?" To which Colonel Dodge replied, and asked his name; and he promptly answered. "My name is Matthew Wright Martin."

He was then received into Colonel Dodge's arms; and an order was immediately given for the Pawnee and Kiowa girls to be brought forward; they were in a few minutes brought into the council-house, when they were at once recognized by their friends and relatives, who embraced them with the most extravagant expressions of joy and satisfaction. The heart of the venerable old chief was melted at this evidence of white man's friendship, and he rose upon his feet, and taking Colonel Dodge in his arms, and placing his left cheek against the left cheek of the Colonel, held him for some minutes without saying a word, whilst tears were flowing from his eyes. He then embraced each officer in turn, in the same silent and affectionate manner -- which form took half an hour or more, before it was completed.

"From this moment the council, which before had been a very grave and uncertain one, took a pleasing and friendly turn. And this excellent old man ordered the women to supply the dragoons with something to eat, as they were hungry.

(The little encampment, which heretofore was in a woeful condition, having eaten up their last rations twelve hours before, were now gladdened by the approach of a number of women, who brought their "back loads" of dried buffalo meat and green corn, and threw it down amongst there. This seemed almost like a providential deliverance, for the country between here and the Camanches, was entirely destitute of game, and our last Provisions were consumed.

"The council thus Proceeded successfully and pleasantly for several days, whilst the warriors of

the Kiowas and Wicos, two adjoining and friendly tribes living further to the West, were arriving; and also a great many from other bands of the Camanchees, who had heard of our arrival; until two thousand or more of these wild and fearless-looking fellows were assembled, and all, from their horses' backs, with weapons in hand, were looking into our pitiful little encampment, of two hundred men, all in a state of dependence and almost literal starvation; and at the same time nearly one half the number too sick to have made a successful resistance if we were to have been attacked."

The command returned to this village after an absence of fifteen days, in a fatigued and destitute condition, with scarcely anything to eat, or chance of getting anything here; in consequence of which, Colonel Dodge almost instantly ordered preparations to be made for a move to the head of the Canadian river, a distance of an hundred or more miles, where the Indians represented to us there would be found immense herds of buffaloes; a place where we could get enough to eat, and by lying by awhile, could restore the sick, who are now occupying a great number of litters. Some days have elapsed, however, and we are not quite ready for the start yet. And during that time, continual parties of the Pawnee Picts and Kioways have come up; and also Camanchees, from other-villages, to get a look at us, and many of them are volunteering to go in with us to the frontier.

The world who know me, will see that I can scarcely be idle under such circumstances as these, where so many subjects for my brush and my pen are gathering about me.

The Pawnee Picts, Kioways, and Wicos are the subjects that I am most closely scanning at this moment, and I have materials enough around me.

The Pawnee Picts are undoubtedly a numerous and powerful tribe, occupying, with the Kioways and Wicos, the whole country on the head waters of the Red River, and quite into and through the southern part of the Rocky Mountains. The old chief told me by signs, enumerating with his hands and fingers, that they had altogether three thousand warriors; which if true, estimating according to the usual rule, one warrior to four, would make the whole number about twelve thousand; and, allowing a fair per-centage for boasting or bragging, of which they are generally a little guilty in such cases, there would be at a fair calculation from eight to ten thousand. These then, in an established alliance with the great tribe of Camanchees, hunting and feasting together, and ready to join in common defence of their country become a very formidable enemy when attacked on their own ground.

The name of the Pawnee Picts, we find to be in their own language, Tow-ee-ahge, the meaning of which I have not yet learned. I have ascertained also, that these people are in no way related to the Pawnees of the Platte, who reside a thousand miles or more North of them, and know them only as enemies. There is no family or tribal resemblance; nor any in their language or customs. The Pawnees of the Platte shave the head, and the Pawnee Picts abominate the custom; allowing their hair to grow like the Camanchees and other tribes.

The old chief of the Pawnee Picts, of whom I have before spoken, and whose name is We-ta-ra-sha-ro, is undoubtedly a very excellent and kind-hearted old man, of ninety or more years of age, and has consented to accompany us, with a large party of his people, to Fort Gibson; where Colonel Dodge has promised to return him liberal presents from the Government, for the friendship he has evinced on the present occasion.

The second chief of this tribe, Sky-se-ro-ka, we found to be a remarkably clever man, and much

approved and valued in his tribe.

The Pawnee Picts, as well as the Camanchees, are generally a very clumsy and ordinary looking set of men, when on their feet; but being fine horsemen, are equally improved in appearance as soon as they mount upon their horses' backs.

Amongst the women of this tribe, there were many that were exceedingly pretty in feature and in form; and also in expression, though their skins are very dark. The dress of the men in this tribe, as amongst the Camanchees, consists generally in leggings of dressed skins, and moccasins; with a flap or breech clout, made also of dressed skins or furs, and often very beautifully ornamented with shells, &c. Above the waist they seldom wear any drapery, owing to the warmth of the climate, which will rarely justify it; and their heads are generally uncovered with a head-dress, like the Northern tribes who live in a colder climate, and actually require them for comfort.

The women of the Camanchees and Pawnee Picts, are always decently and comfortably clad, being covered generally with a gown or slip, that reaches from the thin quite down to the ankles, made of deer or elk skins; often garnished very prettily, and ornamented with long fringes of elk's teeth, which are fastened on them in rows, and more highly valued than any other ornament they can put upon them.

I have given the portraits of two Pawnee girls, Kah-kee-tsee (The Thighs), and She-de-a (Wild Sage), the two Pawnee women who had been held as prisoners by the Osages, and purchased by the Indian Commissioner, the Reverend Mr. Schemmerhom, and brought home to their own people, and delivered up in the Pawnee town, in the manner that I have just described.

The Kioways are a much finer looking race of men, than either the Camanchees or Pawnees -- are tall and erect, with an easy and graceful gait -- with long hair, cultivated oftentimes so as to reach nearly to the ground.

They have generally the fine and Roman outline of head, that is so frequently found at the North, and decidedly distinct from that of the Camanchees and Pawnee Picts. These men speak a language distinct from both of the others; and in fact, the Camanchees and Pawnee Picts -- and Kioways, and Wicos, are all so distinctly different in their languages, as to appear in that respect as total strangers to each other.

The head chief of the Kioways, whose name is The-toot-sah we found to be a very gentlemanly and high minded man, who treated the dragoons and officers with great kindness while in his country. His long hair, which was put up in several large clubs, and ornamented with a great many silver broaches, extended quite down to his knees. This distinguished and, as well as several others of his tribe, have agreed to join us on the march to Fort Gibson; so I shall have much of their company yet, and probably much more to say of them at a future period. Bon-son-gee (the new fire) is another chief of this tribe, and called a very good man; the principal ornaments which he carried on his person were a boar's tusk and his war-whistle, which were hanging on his breast. Quay-ham-kay (The Stone Shell), is another fair specimen of the warriors of this tribe; and, if I mistake not, somewhat allied to the mysteries and arcana of the healing art, from the close company he keeps with my friend Dr. Findley, who is surgeon to the regiment, and by whom I have been employed to make a copy of my portrait of this distinguished personage.

Wun-pan-to-mee (The White Weasel), a girl; and Tunk-aht-oh-ye (The Thunderer), a boy; who are brother and sister, are two Kioways who were purchased from the Osages, to be taken to their tribe by the dragoons. The girl was taken the whole distance with us, on horseback, to the Pawnee

village, and there delivered to her friends, as I have before mentioned; and the fine little boy was killed at the Fur Trader's house on the banks of the Verdigris, near Fort Gibson, the day after I painted his portrait, and only a few days before he was to have started with us on the march. He was a beautiful boy of nine or ten years of age, and was killed by a ram, which struck him in the abdomen, and knocking him against a fence, killed him instantly.

Kots-a-to-ah (The Smoked Shield), is another of the extraordinary men of this tribe, near seven feet in stature, and distinguished, not only as one of the greatest warriors, but the swiftest on foot, in the nation. This man, it is said, runs down a buffalo on foot, and slays it with his knife or his lance, as he runs by its side!

I made a portrait of Ush-ee-kitz (He Who Fights With A Feather), head chief of the Wi-co tribe, a very polite and polished Indian, in his manners, and remarkable for his mode of embracing the officers and others in council.

In the different talks and councils that we have had with these people, this man has been a conspicuous speaker; and always, at the end of his speeches, has been in the habit of stepping forward and embracing friends and foes, all that were about him, taking each one in turn, closely and affectionately in his arms, with his left cheek against theirs, and thus holding them tightly for several minutes.

All the above chiefs and braves, and many others, forming a very picturesque cavalcade, will move off with us in a day or two, on our way back to Fort Gibson, where it is to be hoped we may arrive more happy than we are in our present jaded and sickly condition.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 44.

CAMP CANADIAN, TEXAS.

Six days of severe travelling have brought us from the Camanchee village to the North bank of the Canadian, where we are snugly encamped on a beautiful plain, and in the midst of countless numbers of buffaloes; and halting a few days to recruit our horses and men, and dry meat to last us the remainder of our journey.

The plains around this, for many miles, seem actually speckled in distance, and in every direction, with herds of grazing buffaloes; and for several days, the officers and men have been indulged in a general licence to gratify their sporting propensities; and a scene of bustle and cruel slaughter it has been, to be sure ! From morning till night, the camp has been daily almost deserted; the men have dispersed in little squads in all directions, and are dealing death to these poor creatures to a most cruel and wanton extent, merely for the pleasure of destroying, generally without stopping to cut out the meat. During yesterday and this day, several hundreds have undoubtedly been killed, and not so much as the flesh of half a dozen used. Such immense swarms of them are spread over this tract of country ; and so divided and terrified have they become, finding their enemies in all directions where they run, that the poor beasts seem completely bewildered -- running here and there, and as often as otherwise, come singly advancing to the horsemen, as if to join them for their company, and are easily shot down. In the turmoil and confusion, when their assailants have, been pushing them forward, they have galloped through our encampment, jumping over our fires, upsetting pots and kettles, driving horses from their fastenings, and throwing the whole encampment into the greatest instant consternation and alarm. The hunting fever will be satiated in a few days amongst the young men, who are well enough to take parts in the chase; and the bilious fever, it is to be hoped, will be abated in a short time, amongst those who are invalid, and meat enough will be dried to last us to Fort Gibson, when we shall be on the march again, and wending our way towards that garrison.

Many are now sick and unable to ride, and are carried on litters between two horses. Nearly every tent belonging to the officers has been converted to hospitals for the sick; and sighs and groaning are heard in all directions. From the Camanchee village to this place, the country has been entirely prairie; and most of the way high and dry ground, without water, for which we sometimes suffered very much. From day to day we have dragged a long exposed to the hot and burning rays of the sun, without a cloud to relieve its intensity, or a bush to shade us, or anything to cast a shadow, except the bodies of our horses. The grass for a great part of the way, was very much dried up, scarcely affording a bite for our horses; and sometimes for the distance of many miles, the only water we could find, was in stagnant pools, lying on the highest ground, in which the buffaloes have been lying and wallowing like hogs in a mud-puddle. We frequently came to these dirty layers, from which we drove the herds of wallowing buffaloes, and into which our poor and almost dying horses, irresistibly ran and plunged their noses, sucking up the dirty and poisonous

---

draught, until, in some instances, they fell dead in their tracks--the men also (and oftentimes amongst the number, the writer of these lines) sprang from their horses, and laded up and drank to almost fatal excess, the disgusting and tepid draught, and with it filled their canteens, which were slung to their sides, and from which they were sucking the bilious contents during the day. In our march we found many deep ravines, in the bottoms of which there were the marks of wild and powerful streams; but in this season of drought they were all dried up, except an occasional one, where we found them dashing along in the coolest and dearest manner, and on trial, to our great agony, so salt that even our horses could not drink from them; so we had occasionally the tantalizing pleasure of hearing the roar of, and looking into, the dearest and most sparkling streams; and after that the dire necessity of drinking from stagnant pools which lay from month to month exposed to the rays of the sun, till their waters become so poisonous and heavy, from the loss of their vital principle, that they are neither diminished by absorption, or taken into the atmosphere by evaporation.

This poisonous and indigestible water, with the intense rays of the sun in the hottest part of the summer, is the cause of the unexampled sickness of the horses and men. Both appear to be suffering and dying with the same disease, a slow and distressing bilious fever, which seems to terminate in a most frightful and fatal affection of the liver.

In these several cruel days' march, I have suffered severely, having had all the time (and having yet) a distracting fever on me. My real friend, Joe, has constantly rode by my side, dismounting and filling my canteen for me, and picking up minerals or fossils, which my jaundiced eyes were able to discover as we were passing over them; or doing other kind offers for me, when I was too weak to mount my horse without aid. During this march over these dry and parched plains, we picked up many curious things of the fossil and mineral kind, and besides them a number of the horned frogs. In our portmanteaux we had a number of tin boxes in which we had carried Seidlitz powders, in which we caged a number of them safely, in hopes to carry them home alive. Several remarkable specimens my friend Joe has secured of these, with the horns of half and three-fourths of an inch in length, and very sharp at the points.

These curious subjects have 80 often fallen under my eye while on the Upper Missouri, that with me, they have lost their novelty in a great degree; but they have amused and astonished my friend Chadwick so much, that he declares he will take every one he can pick up, and make a sensation with them when ne gets home. In this way Joe's fancy for horned frogs has grown into a sort of frog-mania, and his eyes are strained all day, and gazing amongst the grass and pebbles as he rides along, for his precious little prizes, which he occasionally picks up and consigns to his pockets. On one of these hard day's march, and just at night, whilst we were looking out for water, and a suitable place to encamp, Joe and I galloped off a mile or two to the right of the regiment, to a Point of timber, to look for water, where we found a small and sunken stagnant pool; and as our horses plunged their feet into it to drink, we saw to our great surprise, a number of frogs hopping across its surface, as our horses started them from the shore! Several of them stopped in the middle of the pool, sitting quite "high and dry" on the surface of the water; and when we approached them nearer, or jostled them, they made a leap into the air, and coming down head foremost went under the water and secreted themselves at the bottom. Here was a subject for Joe, in his own line! frogs with horns, and frogs with webbed feet, that could hop about, and sit upon, the surface of the water! We rode around the pool and drove a number of them into it, and fearing that it

would be useless to try to get one of them that evening; we rode back to the encampment, exulting very much in the curious discovery we had made for the naturalists; and by relating to some of the officers what we had seen, got excessively laughed at for our wonderful discovery! Nevertheless, Joe and I could not disbelieve what we had seen so distinctly "with our own eyes"; and we took to ourselves, or in other words, I acquiesced in Joe's taking to himself, as it was so peculiarly in his line) the most unequivocal satisfaction in the curious and undoubted discovery of this new variety; and we made our arrangements to ride back to the spot before "bugle call" in the morning; and by a thorough effort, to obtain a specimen or two of the web-footed frogs for Joe's pocket, to be by him introduced to the consideration of the knowing ones in the East. Well, our horses were saddled at an early hour, and Joe and I were soon on the spot -- and he with a handkerchief at the end of a little pole, with which he had made a sort of scoop-net, soon dipped one up as it was hopping along on the surface of the water, and making unsuccessful efforts to dive through its surface. On examining its feet, we found, to our very great surprise.

I laughed a great deal at poor Joe's most cruel expense, and we amused ourselves a few minutes about this filthy and curious pool, and rode back to the encampment. We found by taking the water up in the hollow of the hand, and dipping the finger in it, and drawing it over the side, thus conducting a little of it out; it was so slimy that the whole would run over the side of the hand in a moment!

We were joked and teased a great deal about our web-footed frogs; and after this, poor Joe has had repeatedly to take out and exhibit his little pets in his pockets, to convince our travelling companions that frogs sometimes actually have horns.

Since writing the above, an express has arrived from the encampment, which we left at the mouth of False Washita, with the melancholy tidings of the death of General Leavenworth, Lieutenant McClure, and ten or fifteen of the men left at that place! This has cast a gloom over our little encampment here, and seems to be received as a fatal foreboding by those who are sick with the same disease; and many of them, poor fellows, with scarce a hope left now for their recovery. It seems that the General had moved on our trail a few days after we left the Washita, to the "Cross Timbers", a distance of fifty or sixty miles, where his disease at last terminated his existence; and I am inclined to think, as I before mentioned, in consequence of the injury he sustained in a fall from his horse when running a buffalo calf. My reason for believing this, is, that I rode and ate with him every day after the hour of his fall; and from that moment I was quite sure that I saw a different expression in his face, from that which he naturally more; and when riding by the side of him two or three days after his fall, I observed to him, "General, you have a very bad cough" -- "Yes," he replied, "I have killed myself in running that devilish calf; and it was a very lucky thing, Catlin, that you painted the portrait of me before we started, for it is all that my dear wife will ever see of me."

We shall be on the move again in a few days; and I plainly see that I shall be upon a litter, unless my horrid fever leaves me, which is daily taking away my strength, and almost, at times, my senses. Adieu!

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER -- No. 45.

FORT GIBSON, ARKANSAS.

The last Letter was written from my tent, and out upon the wild prairies, when I was shaken and terrified by a burning fever, with home and my dear wife and little one, two thousand miles ahead of me, whom I was despairing of ever embracing again. I am now scarcely better off, except that I am in comfortable quarters, with kind attendance, and friends about me. I am yet sick and very feeble, having been for several weeks upon my back since I was brought in from the prairies. I am slowly recovering, and for the first time since I wrote from the Canadian, able to use my pen or my brush.

We drew off from that slaughtering ground a few days after my last Letter was written, with a great number sick, carried upon litters -- with horses giving out and dying by the way, which much impeded our progress over the long and tedious route that laid between us and Fort Gibson. Fifteen days, however, of constant toil and fatigue brought us here, but in a most crippled condition. Many of the sick were left by the way with attendants to take care of them, others were buried from their litters on which they breathed their last while travelling, and many others were brought in, to this place, merely to die and get the privilege of a decent burial.

Since the very day of our start into that country, the men have been constantly falling sick, and on their return, of those who are alive, there are not well ones enough to take care of the sick. Many are yet left out upon the prairies, and of those that have been brought in, and quartered in the hospital, with the soldiers of the infantry regiment stationed here, four or five are buried daily; and as an equal number from the 9th regiment are falling by the same disease, I have the mournful sound of "Roslin Castle" with muffled drums, passing six or eight times a-day under my window, to the burying-ground; which is but a little distance in front of my room, where I can lay in my bed and see every poor fellow lowered down into his silent and peaceful habitation. During the day before yesterday, no less than eight solemn processions visited that insatiable ground, and amongst them was carried the corpse of my intimate and much-loved friend Lieutenant West, who was aid-de-camp to General Leavenworth, on this disastrous campaign, and who has left in this place, a worthy and distracted widow, with her little ones to mourn for his untimely end. On the same day was buried also the Prussian Botanist, a most excellent and scientific gentleman, who had obtained an order from the Secretary at War to accompany the expedition for scientific purposes. He had at St. Louis, purchased a very comfortable Dearborn waggon, and a snug span of little horses to convey himself and his servant with his collection of plants, over the prairies. In this he travelled in company with the regiment from St. Louis to Fort Gibson, some five or six hundred miles, and from that to the False Washita, and the Cross Timbers and back again. In this Tour he had made an immense, and no doubt, very valuable collection of plants, and at this Place had been for some weeks indefatigably engaged in changing and drying them, and at last, fell a victim to the disease of the country, which seemed to have made an easy conquest of him, from

---

the very feeble and enervated state he was evidently in, that of pulmonary consumption. This fine, gentlemanly and urbane, excellent man, to whom I became very much attached, was lodged in a room adjoining to mine, where he died, as he had lived, peaceably and smiling, and that when nobody knew that his life was in immediate danger. The surgeon who was attending me, (Dr. Wright,) was sitting on my bed-side in his morning call at my room, when a negro boy, who alone had been left in the room with him, came into my apartment and said Mr. Beyrich was dying -- we instantly stepped into his room and found him, not in the agonies of death, but quietly breathing his last, without a word or a struggle, as he had laid himself upon his bed with his clothes and his boots on. In this way perished this worthy man, who had no one here of kindred friends to drop tears for him; and on the day previous to his misfortune, died also, and much in the same way, his devoted and faithful servant, a young man, a native of Germany. Their bodies were buried by the side of each other, and a general feeling of deep grief was manifested by the officers and citizens of the post, in the respect that was paid to their remains in the appropriate and decent committal of them to the grave.

After leaving the head waters of the Canadian, my illness continually increased, and losing strength every day, I soon got so reduced that I was necessarily lifted on to and off from, my horse; and at last, so that I could not ride at all. I was then put into a baggage-waggon which was going sack empty, except with several soldiers sick, and in this condition rode eight days, most of the time in a delirious state, lying on the hard planks of the waggon, and made still harder by the jarring and jolting, until the skin from my elbows and knees was literally worn through, and I almost "worn out", when we at length reached this post, and I was taken to a bed, in comfortable quarters, where I have had the skillful attendance of my friend and old schoolmate Dr. Wright, under whose hands, thank God, I have been restored, and all; now daily recovering my flesh and usual strength.

The experiment has thus been made, of sending an army of men from the North, into this Southern and warm climate, in the hottest months of the year, of July and August; and from this sad experiment I am sure a secret will be learned that will be of value on future occasions.

Of the 450 fine fellows who started from this place four months since, about one-third have already died, and I believe many more there are whose fates are sealed, and will yet fall victims to the deadly diseases contracted in that fatal country. About this post it seems to be almost equally unhealthy, and generally so during this season, all over this region, which is probably owing to an unusual drought which has been visited on the country, and unknown heretofore to the oldest inhabitants.

Since we carne in from the prairies, and the sickness has a little abated, we have had a bustling time with the Indians at this place. Colonel Dodge sent runners to the chiefs of all the contiguous tribes of Indians, with an invitation to meet the Pawnees, &c. in council, at this place. Seven or eight tribes flocked to us, in great numbers on the first day of the month, when the council commenced; it continued for several days, and gave these semi-civilized sons of the forest a fair opportunity of shaking the hands of their wild and untamed red brethren of the West -- of embracing them in their arms, with expressions of friendship, and of smoking the calumet together, as the solemn pledge of lasting peace and friendship.

Colonel Dodge, Major Armstrong (the Indian agent), and General Stokes (the Indian commissioner), presided at this council, and I cannot name a scene more interesting and entertaining

than it was; where, for several days in succession, free vent was given to the feelings of men civilized, half-civilized, and wild; where the three stages of man were fearlessly asserting their rights, their happiness, and friendship For each other. The vain orations of the half polished (and half-breed) Cherokees and Choctaws, with all their finery and art, found their match in the brief and jarring gutturals of the wild and naked man.

After the council had adjourned, and the fumes of the peace-making calumet had vanished away, and Colonel Dodge had made them additional presents, they soon made preparations for their departure, and on the next day started, with an escort of dragoons, for their own country. This movement is much to be regretted; for it would have been exceedingly gratifying to the people of the East to have seen so wild a group, and it would have been of great service to them to have visited Washington -- a journey, though, which they could not be prevailed upon to make.

We brought with us to this place, three of the principal chiefs of the Pawnees, fifteen Kioways, one Camanchee, and one Wico chief. The group was undoubtedly one of the most interesting that ever visited our frontier; and, I have taken the utmost pains in painting the portraits of all of them, as well as seven of the Camanchee chiefs, who came part of the way with us, and turned back. These portraits, together with other paintings which I have made, descriptive of their manners and customs -- views of their villages-landscapes of the country, &c., will soon be laid before the amateurs of the East, and, I trust, will be found to be very interesting.

Although the achievement has been a handsome one, of bringing these unknown people to an acquaintance, and a general peace; and at first sight would appear to be of great benefit to them -- yet I have my strong doubts, whether it will better their condition, unless with the exercised aid of the strong arm of Government, they can be protected in the rights which by nature, they are entitled to.

There is already in this place a company of eighty men fitted out, who are to start tomorrow, to overtake these Indians a few miles from this place, and accompany them home, with a large stock of goods, with traps for catching beavers, &c., calculating to build a trading-house amongst them, where they will amass, at once, an immense fortune, being the first traders and trappers that have ever been in that part of the country.

I have travelled too much among Indian tribes, and seen too much, not to know the evil consequences of such a system. Goods are sold at such exorbitant prices, that the Indian gets a mere shadow for his peltries, &c. The Indians see no white people but traders and sellers of whiskey; and of course, judge us all by them--they consequently hold us, and always mill, in contempt; as inferior to themselves, as they have reason to do -- and they neither fear nor respect us. When, on the contrary, if the Government would promptly prohibit such establishments, and invite these Indians to our frontier posts, they would bring in their furs, their robes, horses, mules, &c., to this place, where there is a good market for them all -- where they would get the full value of their property -- where there were several stores of goods --where there is an honourable competition, and where they would get four or five times as much for their articles of trade, as they would get from a trader in the village, out of the reach of competition, and out of sight of the civilized world. At the same time, as they would be continually coming where they would see good and polished society, they would be gradually adopting our modes of living--introducing to their country our vegetables, our domestic animals, poultry, &c., and at length, our arts and manufactures; they would see and estimate our military strength, and advantages, and would be led to fear and re-

spect us. In short, it would undoubtedly be the quickest and surest way to a general acquaintance -- to friendship and peace, and at last to civilization. If there is a law in existence for such protection of the Indian tribes, which may have been waived in the case of those nations with which we have long traded, it is a great pity that it should not be rigidly enforced in this new and important acquaintance, which we have just made with thirty or forty thousand strangers to the civilized world; yet (as we have learned from their unaffected hospitality when in their villages), with hearts of human mould, susceptible of all the noble feelings belonging to civilized man.

This acquaintance has cost the United States a vast sum of money, as well as the lives of several valuable and esteemed officers, and more than 100 of the dragoons; and for the honour of the American name, I think we ought, in forming an acquaintance with these numerous tribes, to adopt and enforce some different system from that which has been generally practiced on and beyond our frontiers heretofore.

What the regiment of dragoons has suffered from sickness since they started on their summer's campaign is unexampled in this country, and almost incredible. When we started from this place, ten or fifteen were sent back the first day, too sick to proceed; and so afterwards our numbers were daily diminished, and at the distance of 200 miles from this place we could muster, out of the whole regiment, but 250 men who were able to proceed, with which little band, and that again reduced some sixty or seventy by sickness, we pushed on, and accomplished-all that was done. The beautiful and pictured scenes which we passed over had an alluring charm on their surface, but (as it would seem) a lurking poison within, that spread a gloom about our encampment whenever we pitched it.

We sometimes rode day after day, without a tree to shade us from the burning rays of a tropical sun, or a breath of wind to regale us or cheer our hearts -- and with mouths continually parched with thirst, we dipped our drink from stagnant pools that were heated by the sun, and kept in fermentation by the wallowing herds of buffaloes that resort to them. In this way we dragged on, sometimes passing picturesque and broken country, with fine springs and streams, affording us the luxury of a refreshing shade and a cool draught of water.

Thus was dragged through and completed this most disastrous campaign; and to Colonel Dodge and Colonel Kearny, who so indefatigably led and encouraged their men through it, too much praise cannot be awarded.

During my illness while I have been at this post, my friend Joe has been almost constantly by my bedside; evincing (as he did when we were creeping over the vast prairies) the most sincere and intense anxiety for my recovery; whilst he has administered, like a brother, every aid and every comfort that lay in his power to bring. Such tried friendship as this, I shall ever recollect; and it will long hence and often, lead my mind back to retrace, at least, the first part of our campaign, which was full pleasant; and many of its incidents have formed pleasing impressions on my memory, which I would preserve to the end of my life.

When we started, we were fresh and ardent for the incidents that were before us -- our little pack-horse carried our bedding and culinary articles; amongst which we had a coffee-pot and a frying-pan -- coffee in good store, and sugar -- and wherever we spread our bear-skin, and kindled our fire in the grass, we were sure to take by ourselves, a delightful repast, and a refreshing sleep. During the march, as we were subject to no military subordination, we galloped about wherever we were disposed, popping away at whatever we chose to spend ammunition upon -- and running

our noses into every wild nook and crevice, as we saw fit. In this way we travelled happily, until our coffee was gone, and our bread; and even then we were happy upon meat alone, until at last each one in his turn, like every other moving thing about us, both man and beast, were vomiting and fainting, under the poisonous influence of some latent enemy, that was floating in the air, and threatening our destruction. Then came the "tug of war", and instead of catering for our amusements, every one seemed desperately studying the means that were to support him on his feet, and bring him safe home again to the bosoms of his friends. In our start, our feelings were buoyant and light, and we had the luxuries of life--the green prairies, spotted with wild flowers, and the clear blue sky, were an earthly paradise to us, until fatigue and disease, and at last despair, made them tiresome and painful to our jaundiced eyes.

On our way, and while we were in good heart, my friend Joe and I had picked up many minerals and fossils of an interesting nature, which we put in our portmanteaux and carried for weeks, with much pains, and some pain also, until the time when our ardour cooled and our spirits lagged, and then we discharged and threw them away; and sometimes we came across specimens again, still more wonderful, which we put in their place, and lugged along till we were tired of them, and their weight, and we discharged them as before; so that from our eager desire to procure, we lugged many pounds weight of stones, shells, &c. nearly the whole way, and were glad that their mother Earth should receive them again at our hands, which was done long before we got back. One of the most curious places we met in all our route, was a mountain ridge of fossil shells, from which a great number of the above-mentioned specimens were taken. During our second day's march from the mouth of the False Washita, we were astonished to find ourselves travelling over a bed of clam and oyster shells, which were all in a complete state of petrification. This ridge, which seemed to run from N. E. to S.W. was several hundred feet high, and varying from a quarter to half a mile in breadth, seemed to be composed of nothing but a concretion of shells, which, on the surface, exposed to the weather for the depth of eight or ten inches, were entirely separated from the cementing material which had held them together, and were lying on the surface, sometimes for acres together, without a particle of soil or grass upon them; with the colour, shapes and appearance exactly, of the natural shells, lying loosely together, into which our horses' feet were sinking at every step, above their fetterlocks. These I consider the most extraordinary petrifications I ever beheld. In any way they could be seen, individually or in the mass together, they seemed to be nothing but the pure shells themselves, both in colour and in shape. In many instances we picked them up entire, never having been opened; and taking our knives out, and splitting them open as we would an oyster, the fish was seen petrified in perfect form, and by dipping it into water, it shewed all the colours and freshness of an oyster just opened and laid on a plate to be eaten. Joe and I had carefully tied up many of these, with which we felt quite sure we could deceive our oyster-eating friends when we got back to the East; yet, like many other things we collected, they shared the fate that I have mentioned, without our bringing home one of them, though we brought many of them several hundreds of miles, and at last threw them away. This remarkable ridge is in some parts covered with grass, but generally with mere scattering bunches, for miles together, partially covering this compact mass of shells, forming (in my opinion) one of the greatest geological curiosities now to be seen in this country, as it lies evidently some thousands of feet above the level of the ocean, and seven or eight hundred miles from the nearest point on the sea-coast.

In another section of the country, lying between Fort Gibson and the Washita, we passed over a ridge for several miles, running parallel to this, where much of the way there was no earth or grass under foot, but our horses were travelling on a solid rock, which had on its surface a reddish or oxidized appearance; and on getting from my horse and striking it with my hatchet, I found, it to contain sixty or eighty per cent of solid iron, which produced a ringing noise, and a rebounding of the hatchet, as if it were struck upon an anvil.

In other parts, and farther West, between the Camanchee village and the Canadian, we passed over a similar surface for many miles denuded, with the exception of here and there little bunches of grass and wild sage, a level and exposed surface of solid gypsum, of a dark grey colour; and through it, occasionally, as far as the eye could discover, to the East and the West, streaks of three and five inches wide of snowy gypsum, which was literally as white as the drifted snow.

Of saltpetre and salt, there are also endless supplies; so it will be seen that the mineral resources of this wilderness country are inexhaustible and rich, and that the idle savage who never converts them to his use, must soon yield them to the occupation of enlightened and cultivating man.

In the vicinity of this post there are an immense number of Indians, most of whom have been removed to their present locations by the Government, from their Eastern original positions, within a few years past; and previous to my starting with the dragoons, I had two months at my leisure in this section of the country, which I used in travelling about with my canvass and note-book, and visiting all of them in their villages. I have made many paintings amongst them, and have a curious note-book to open at a future day, for which the reader may be prepared. The tribes whom I thus visited, and of whom my note-book will yet speak, are the Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, Seminoles, Chickasaws, Quapaws, Senecas, Delawares, and several others, whose customs are interesting, and whose history, from their proximity to, and dealings with the civilized community, is one of great interest, and some importance, to the enlightened world, Adieu.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 46.

ALTON, ILLINOIS.

A few days after the date of the above Letter, I took leave of Fort Gibson, and made a transit across the prairies to this place, a distance of 550 miles, which I have performed entirely alone, and had the satisfaction of joining my wife, whom I have found in good health, in a family of my esteemed friends, with whom she has been residing during my last year of absence.

While at Fort Gibson, on my return from the Camanchees, I was quartered for a month or two in a room with my fellow-companion in misery, Captain Wharton, of the dragoons, who had come in-from the prairies in a condition very similar to mine, and laid in a bed in the opposite corner of the room; where we laid for several weeks, like two grim ghosts, rolling our glaring and staring eyeballs upon each other, when we were totally unable to hold converse, other than that which was exchanged through the expressive language of our hollow, and bilious, sunken eyes.

The Captain had been sent with a company of dragoons to escort the Santa Fee Traders through the country of the Camanchees and Pawnees, and had returned from a rapid and bold foray into the country, with many of his men sick, and himself attacked with the epidemic of the country.

The Captain is a gentleman of high and noble bearing, of one of the most respected families in Philadelphia, with a fine and chivalrous feeling; but with scarce physical stamina sufficient to bear him up under the rough vicissitudes of his wild and arduous sort of life in this country.

As soon as our respective surgeons had clarified our flesh and our bones with calomel, had brought our pulses to beat calmly, our tongues to ply gently, and our stomachs to digest moderately; we began to feel pleasure exquisitely in our convalescence, and draw amusement from mutual relations of scenes and adventures we had witnessed on our several marches. The Captain convalescing faster than I did, soon got so as to eat (but not to digest) enormous meals, which visited back upon him the renewed horrors of his disease; and I, who had got ahead of him in strength, but not in prudence, was thrown back in my turn, by similar indulgence; and so we were mutually and repeatedly, until he at length got so as to feel strength enough to ride, and resolution enough to swear that he would take leave of that deadly spot, and seek restoration and health in a cooler and more congenial latitude. So he had his horse brought up one morning, whilst he was so weak that he could scarcely mount upon its back, and with his servant, a small negro boy, packed on another, he steered off upon the prairies towards Fort Leavenworth, 500 miles to the North, where his company had long since marched.

I remained a week or two longer, envying the Captain the good luck to escape from that dangerous ground; and after I had gained strength sufficient to warrant it, I made preparations to take informal leave, and wend my way also over the prairies to the Missouri, a distance of 500 miles, and most of the way a solitary wilderness. For this purpose I had my horse "Charley" brought up from his pasture, where he had been in good keeping during my illness, and got so fat as to form almost an objectionable contrast to his master, with whom he was to embark on a long and

tedious journey again, over the vast and almost boundless prairies.

I had, like the Captain, grown into such a dread of that place, from the scenes of death that were and had been visited upon it, that I resolved to be off as soon as I had strength to get on to my horse, and balance myself upon his back. For this purpose I packed up my canvass and brushes, and other luggage, and sent them down the river to the Mississippi, to be forwarded by steamer, to meet me at St. Louis. So, one fine morning, Charley was brought up and saddled, and a bear-skin and a buffalo robe being spread upon his saddle, and a coffee-pot and tin cup tied to it also -- with a few pounds of hard biscuit in my portmanteau -- with my fowling piece in my hand, and my pistols in my belt -- with my sketch-book slung on my back, and a small pocket compass in my pocket; I took leave of Fort Gibson, even against the advice of my surgeon and all the officers of the garrison, who gathered around me to bid me farewell. No argument could contend with the fixed resolve in my own mind, that if I could get out upon the prairies, and moving continually to the Northward, I should daily gain strength, and save myself, possibly, from the jaws of that voracious burial-ground that laid in front of my room; where I had for months laid and imagined myself going with other poor fellows, whose mournful dirges were played under my window from day to day. No one can imagine what was the dread I felt for that place; nor the pleasure, which was extatic, when Charley was trembling under me, and I turned him around on the top of a prairie bluff at a mile distance, to take the last look upon it, and thank God, as I did audibly, that I was not to be buried within its enclosure. I said to myself, that "to die on the prairie, and be devoured by wolves; or to fall in combat and be scalped by an Indian, would be far more acceptable than the lingering death that would consign me to the jaws of that insatiable grave", for which, in the fever and weakness of my mind, I had contracted so destructive a terror.

So, alone, without other living being with me than my affectionate horse Charley, I turned my face to the North, and commenced on my long journey, with confidence full and strong, that I should gain strength daily; and no one can ever know the pleasure of that moment, which placed me alone, upon the boundless sea of waving grass, over which my proud horse was prancing, and I with my life in my own hands, commenced to steer my course to the banks of the Missouri. For the convalescent, rising and escaping from the gloom and horrors of a sick bed, astride of his strong and trembling horse, carrying him fast and safely over green fields spotted and tinted with waving wild flowers; and through the fresh and cool breezes that are rushing about him, as he daily shortens the distance that lies between him and his wife and little ones, there is an exquisite pleasure yet to be learned, by those who never have felt it.

Day by day I thus pranced and galloped along, the whole way through waving grass and green fields, occasionally dismounting and lying in the grass an hour or so, until the grim shaking and chattering of an ague chill had passed off; and through the nights, slept on my bear-skin spread upon the grass, with my saddle for my pillow, and my buffalo robe drawn over me for my covering. My horse Charley was picketed near me at the end of his lasso, which gave him room for his grazing; and thus we snored and nodded away the nights, and never were denied the doleful serenades of the gangs of sneaking wolves that were nightly perambulating our little encampment, and stationed at a safe distance from us at sun-rise in the morning -- gazing at us, and impatient to pick up the crumbs and bones that were left, when we moved away from our feeble fire that had faintly flickered through the night, and in the absence of timber, had been made of dried buffalo dung.

This "Charley" was a noble animal of the Camanchee wild breed, of a clay bank colour; and from our long and tried acquaintance, we had become very much attached to each other, and acquired a wonderful facility both of mutual accommodation, and of construing each other's views and intentions. In fact, we had been so long tried together, that there would have seemed to the spectator almost an unity of interest; and at all events, an unity of feelings on the subject of attachment, as well as on that of mutual dependence and protection.

I purchased this very showy and well-known animal of Colonel Burbank, of the ninth regiment, and rode it the whole distance to the Camanchee villages and back again; and at the time when most of the horses of the regiment were drooping and giving out by the way -- Charley flourished and came in good flesh and good spirits.

On this journey, while he and I were twenty-five days alone, we had much time, and the best of circumstances, under which to learn what we had as yet overlooked in each other's characters, as well as to draw great pleasure and real benefit from what we already had learned of each other, in our former travels.

I generally halted on the bank of some little stream, at half an hour's sun, where feed was good for Charley, and where I could get wood to kindle my fire, and water for my coffee. The first thing was to undress "Charley" and drive down his picket, to which he was fastened, to graze over a circle that he could inscribe at the end of his lasso. In this wise he busily fed himself until nightfall; and after my coffee was made and drank, I uniformly moped him up, with his picket by my head, so that I could lay my hand upon his lasso in an instant, in case of any alarm that was liable to drive him from me. On one of these evenings when he was grazing as usual, he slipped the lasso over his head, and deliberately took his supper at his pleasure, wherever he chose to prefer it, as he was strolling around. When night approached, I took the lasso in hand and endeavored to catch him, but I soon saw that he was determined to enjoy a little freedom; and he continually evaded me until dark, when I abandoned the pursuit, making up my mind that I should inevitably lose him, and be obliged to perform the rest of my journey on foot. He had led me a chase of half a mile or more, when I left him busily grazing, and returned to my little solitary bivouac, and laid myself on my bear skin, and went to sleep.

In the middle of the night I waked, whilst I was lying on my back, and on half opening my eyes, I was instantly shocked to the soul, by the huge figure (as I thought) of an Indian, standing over me, and in the very instant of taking my scalp! The chill of horror that paralyzed me for the first moment, held me still till I saw there was no need of my moving -- that my faithful horse "Charley" had "played shy" till he had "filled his belly," and had then moved up, from feelings of pure affection, or from instinctive fear, or possibly, from a due share of both, and taken his position with his forefeet at the edge of my bed, with his head hanging directly over me, while he was standing fast asleep!

My nerves, which had been most violently shocked, were soon quieted, and I fell asleep, and so continued until sunrise in the morning, when I waked, and beheld my faithful servant at some considerable distance, busily at work picking up his breakfast amongst the cane-brake, along the bank of the creek. I went as busily to work, preparing my own, which was eaten, and after it, I had another half-hour of fruitless endeavors to catch Charley, whilst he seemed mindful of success on the evening before, and continually tantalized me by turning around and around, and keeping out of my reach. I recollected the conclusive evidence of his attachment and dependence, which

he had voluntarily given in the night, and I thought I would try them in another way. So I packed up my things and slung the saddle on my back, trailing my gun in my hand, and started on my route. After I had advanced a quarter of a mile, I looked back, and saw him standing with his head and tail very high, looking alternately at me and at the spot where I had been encamped, and left a little fire burning. In this condition he stood and surveyed the prairies around for a while, as I continued on. He, at length, walked with a hurried step to the spot, and seeing everything gone, began to neigh very violently, and at last started off at fullest speed, and overtook me, passing within a few paces of me, and wheeling about at a few rods distance in front of me, trembling like an aspen leaf.

I called him by his familiar name, and walked up to him with the bridle in my hand, which I put over his head, as he held it down for me, and the saddle on his back, as he actually stooped to receive it. I was soon arranged, and on his back, when he started off upon his course as if he was well contented and pleased, like his rider, with the manoeuvre which had brought us together again, and afforded us mutual relief from our awkward positions. Though this alarming freak of "Charley's" passed off and terminated so satisfactorily; yet I thought such rather dangerous ones to play, and I took good care after that night, to keep him under my strict authority; resolving to avoid further tricks and experiments till we got to the land of cultivated fields and steady habits. On the night of this memorable day, Charley and I stopped in one of the most lovely little valleys I ever saw, and even far more beautiful than could have been imagined by mortal man. An enchanting little lawn of five or six acres, on the banks of a cool and rippling stream, that was alive with fish; and every now and then, a fine brood of young ducks, just old enough for delicious food, and too unsophisticated to avoid an easy and simple death. This little lawn was surrounded by bunches and copses of the most luxuriant and picturesque foliage, consisting of the lofty bois d'arcs and elms, spreading out their huge branches, as if offering protection to the rounded groups of cherry and plum-trees that supported festoons of grapevines, with their purple clusters that hung in the most tempting manner over the green carpet that was everywhere decked out with wild flowers, of all tints and of various sizes, from the modest wild sun-flowers, with their thousand tall and drooping heads, to the lilies that stood, and the violets that crept beneath them. By the side of this cool stream, Charley was fastened, and near him my bear-skin was spread in the grass, and by it my little fire, to which I soon brought a fine string of perch from the brook; from which, and a broiled duck, and a delicious cup of coffee, I made my dinner and supper, which were usually united in one meal, at half an hour's sun. After this I strolled about this sweet little paradise, which I found was chosen, not only by myself, but by the wild deer, which were repeatedly rising from their quiet lairs, and bounding out, and over the graceful swells of the prairies which hemmed in, and framed this little Picture of sweetest tints and most masterly touches. The Indians also, I found, had loved it once, and left it; for here and there were their solitary and deserted graves, which told, though briefly, of former chants and sports; and perhaps, of wars and deaths, that have once rung and echoed through this little silent vale.

On my return to my encampment, I laid down upon my back, and looked awhile into the blue heavens that were over me, with their pure and milk white clouds that were passing -- with the sun just setting in the West, and the silver moon rising in the East, and renewed the impressions of my own insignificance, as I contemplated the incomprehensible mechanism of that wonderful clock, whose time is infallible, and whose motion is eternity! I trembled, at last, at the dangerous

expanse of my thoughts, and turned them again, and my eyes, upon the little and more comprehensible things that were about me. One of the first was a newspaper, which I had brought from the Garrison, the National Intelligencer, of Washington, which I had read for years, but never with quite the zest and relish that I now conversed over its familiar columns, in this clean and sweet valley of dead silence!

And while reading, I thought of (and laughed), what I had almost forgotten, the sensation I produced amongst the Minatarees while on the Upper Missouri, a few years since, by taking from amongst my painting apparatus an old number of the New York Commercial Advertiser, edited by my kind and tried friend Colonel Stone. The Minatarees thought that I was mad, when they saw me for hours together, with my eyes fixed upon its pages. They had different and various conjectures about it; the most current of which was, that I was looking at it to cure my sore eyes, and they called it the "medicine cloth for sore eyes!" I at length put an end to this and several equally ignorant conjectures, by reading passages in it, which were interpreted to them, and the objects of the paper fully explained; after which, it was looked upon as much greater mystery than before; and several liberal offers were made me for it, which I was obliged to refuse, having already received a beautifully garnished robe for it, from the hands of a young son of Esculapius, who told me that if he could employ a good interpreter to explain everything in it, he could travel about amongst the Minatarees and Mandans, and Sioux, and exhibit it after I was gone; getting rich with presents, and adding greatly to the list of his medicines, as it would make him a great Medicine-Man. I left with the poor fellow his painted robe, and the newspaper; and just before I departed, I saw him unfolding it to show to some of his friends, when he took from around it, some eight or ten folds of birch bark and deer skins; all of which were carefully enclosed in a sack made of the skin of a pole cat, and undoubtedly destined to become, and to be called, his mystery or medicine-bag.

The distance from Fort Gibson to the Missouri, where I struck the river, is about five hundred miles, and most of the way a beautiful prairie, in a wild and uncultivated state without roads and without bridges, over a great part of which I steered my course with my Docket-compass, fording and swimming the streams in the best manner I could; shooting prairie hens, and occasionally catching fish, which I cooked for my meals, and slept upon the ground at night. On my way I visited "Riqua's Village" of Osages, and lodged during the night in the hospitable cabin of my old friend Beatte, of whom I have often spoken heretofore, as one of the guides and hunters for the dragoons on their campaign in the Camanchee country. This was the most extraordinary hunter, I think, that I ever have met in all my travels. To "hunt", was a phrase almost foreign to him, however, for when he went out with his rifle, it was "for meat", or "for cattle"; and he never came in without it. He never told how many animals he had seen -- how many he had wounded, &c. -- but his horse was always loaded with meat, which was thrown down in camp without comment or words spoken. Riqua was an early pioneer of Christianity in this country, who has devoted many years of his life, with his interesting family, in endeavouring to civilize and Christianize these people, by the force of pious and industrious examples, which he has successfully set them; and, I think, in the most judicious way, by establishing a little village, at some miles distance from the villages of the Osages; where he has invited a considerable number of families who have taken their residence by the side of him; where they are following his virtuous examples in their dealings and modes of life, and in agricultural pursuits which he is teaching them, and showing them that they

may raise the comforts and luxuries of life out of the ground, instead of seeking for them in the precarious manner in which they naturally look for them, in the uncertainty of the chase.

It was a source of much regret to me, that I did not see this pious man, as he was on a Tour to the East, when I was in his little village.

Beatte lived in this village with his aged parents, to whom he introduced me; and with whom, altogether, I spent a very pleasant evening in conversation. They are both French, and have spent the greater part of their lives with the Osages, and seem to be familiar with their whole history. This Beatte was the hunter and guide for a party of rangers (the summer before our campaign), with whom Washington Irving made his excursion to the borders of the Pawnee country; and of whose extraordinary character and powers. Mr. Irving has drawn a very just and glowing account, excepting one error which I think he has inadvertently fallen into, that of calling him a "half-breed." Beatte had complained of this to me often while out on the prairies; and when I entered his hospitable cabin, he said he was glad to see me, and almost instantly continued, "Now you shall see, Monsieur Catline, I am not 'half breed', here I shall introduce you to my father and my mother, who you see are two very nice and good old French people."

From this cabin where I fared well and slept soundly, I started in the morning, after taking with them a good cup of coffee, and went smoothly on over the prairies on my course.

About the middle of my journey, I struck a road leading into a small civilized settlement, called the "Kickapoo prairie", to which I "bent my course"; and riding up to a log cabin which was kept as a sort of an hotel or tavern, I met at the door, the black boy belonging to my friend Captain Wharton, who I have said took his leave of Fort Gibson a few weeks before me; I asked the boy where his master was, to which he replied, "My good masse, Massa Wharton, in dese house, jist dead of de libber compliment!"

I dismounted and went in, and to my deepest sorrow and anguish, I found him, as the boy said, nearly dead, without power to raise his head or his voice -- his eyes were rolled upon me, and as he recognized me he took me by the hand, which he firmly gripped, whilst both shed tears in profusion. By placing my ear to his lips, his whispers could he heard, and he was able in an imperfect manner to make his views and his wishes known. His disease seemed to be a repeated attack of his former malady, and a severe affection of the liver, which was to be (as his physician said) the proximate cause of his death. I conversed with his physician who seemed to be a young and inexperienced man, who told me that he certainly could not live more than ten days. I staid two days with him, and having no means with me of rendering him pecuniary or other aid amongst strangers, I left him in kind hands, and started on my course again. My health improved daily, from the time of my setting out at Fort Gibson; and I was now moving along cheerfully, and in hopes soon to reach the end of my toilsome journey. I had yet vast prairies to Pass over, and occasional latent difficulties, which were not apparent on their smooth and deceiving surfaces. Deep sunken streams, like, ditches, occasionally presented themselves suddenly to my view, when I was within a few steps of plunging into them from their perpendicular sides, which were overhung with long wild. grass, and almost obscured from the sight. The bearings of my compass told me that I must cross them, and the only alternative was to plunge into them, and get out as well as I could. They were often muddy, and I could not tell whether they were three or ten feet deep, until my horse was in them; and sometimes he went down head foremost, and I with him, to scramble out on the opposite shore in the best condition we could. In one of these canals, which I had

followed for several miles in the vain hope of finding a shoal, or an accustomed ford, I plunged, with Charley, where it was about six or eight yards wide (and God knows how deep, for we did not go to the bottom), and swam him to the opposite bank, on to which I clung; and which, being perpendicular and of clay, and three or four feet higher than the water, was as insurmountable difficulty to Charley; and I led the, poor fellow at least a mile, as I walked on the top of the bank, with the bridle in my hand, holding his head above the water as he was swimming; and I at times almost inextricably entangled in the long grass that was often higher than my head, and hanging over the brink, filled and woven together, with ivy and wild pea-vines. I at length (and just before I was ready to drop the rein of faithful Charley, in hopeless despair), came to an old buffalo ford, where the banks were graded down, and the poor exhausted animal, at last got out, and was ready and willing to take me and my luggage (after I had dried them in the sun) on the journey again. The Osage river which is a powerful stream, I struck at a place which seemed to stagger my courage very much. There had been heavy rains but a few days before, and this furious stream was rolling along its wild and turbid waters, with a freshet upon it, that spread its waters, in many places over its banks, as was the case at the place where I encountered it. There seemed to be but little choice in places with this stream, which, with its banks full, was sixty or eighty yards in width, with a current that was sweeping along at a rapid rate. I stripped everything from Charley, and tied him with his lasso, until I travelled the shores up and down for some distance, and collected drift wood enough for a small raft, which I constructed, to carry my clothes and saddle, and other things, safe over. This being completed, and my clothes taken off, and they with other things, laid upon the raft, I took Charley to the bank and drove him in and across, where he soon reached the opposite shore, and went to feeding on the bank. Next was to come the "great white medicine"; and with him, saddle, bridle, saddle-bags, sketch-book, gun and pistols, coffee and coffee-pot, powder, and his clothes, all of which were placed upon the raft, and the raft pushed into the stream, and the "medicine man" swimming behind it, and pushing it along before him, until it reached the opposite Bore, at least half a mile below! From this, his things were carried to the top of the bank, and in a little time, Charley was caught and dressed, and straddled, and on the way again.

These are a few of the incidents of that journey of 500 miles, which I performed entirely alone, and which at last brought me out at Boonville on the Western bank of the Missouri. While I was crossing the river at that place, I met General Arbuckle, with two surgeons, who were to start the next day from Boonville for Fort Gibson, travelling over the route that I had just passed. I instantly informed them of the condition of poor Wharton, and the two surgeons were started off that afternoon at fullest speed, with orders to reach him in the shortest time possible, and do everything to save his life. I assisted in purchasing for him, several little things that he had named to me, such as jellies-acids-apples, &c. &c.; and saw them start; and (God knows), I shall impatiently hope to hear of their timely assistance, and of his recovery.

From Boonville, which is a very pretty little town, building up with the finest style of brick houses, I crossed the river to New Franklin, where I laid by several days, on account of stormy weather; and from thence proceeded with success to the end of my journey, where I now am, under the roof of kind and hospitable friends, with my dear wife, who has patiently waited one year to receive me back, a wreck, as I now am; and who is to start in a few days with me to the coast of Florida, 1400 miles South of: this, to spend the winter in patching up my health, and fitting me for

future campaigns.

On this Tour (from which I shall return in the spring, if my health will admit of it), I shall visit the Seminoles in Florida,--the Euchees--the Creeks in Alabama and Georgia, and the Choctaws and Cherokees, who are yet remaining on their lands, on the East side of the Mississippi.

We take steamer for New Orleans to-morrow, so, till after another campaign, Adieu.

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER--No. 49

ST. LOUIS.

IN one of my last Letters from Fort Gibson, written some months since, I promised to open my note-book on a future occasion, to give some further account of tribes and remnants of tribes located in that vicinity amongst whom I had been spending some time with my pen and my pencil; and having since that time extended my rambles over much of that ground again, and also through the regions of the East and South East, from whence the most of those tribes have emigrated; I consider this a proper time to say something more of them, and their customs and condition, before I go farther.

The most of these, as I have said, are tribes or parts of tribes which the Government has recently, by means of Treaty stipulations, removed to that wild and distant country, on to lands which have been given to them in exchange for their valuable possessions within the States, tell or twelve hundred miles to the East.

Of a number of such reduced and removed tribes, who have been located West of the Missouri, and North of St. Louis, I have already spoken in a former Letter, and shall yet make brief mention of another, which has been conducted to the same region--and then direct the attention of the reader to those which are settled in the neighborhood of Fort Gibson, who are the Cherokees-Creeks-Choctaws-Chickasaws-Se and Euchees.

The people above alluded to are the  
SHA-WA-NO'S.

The history of this once powerful tribe is so closely and necessarily connected with that of the United States, and the revolutionary war, that it is generally pretty well understood. This tribe formerly inhabited great parts of the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, (and for the last sixty years,) a part of the states of Ohio and Indiana, to which they had removed; and now, a considerable portion of them, a tract of country several hundred miles West of the Mississippi, which has been conveyed to them by Government in exchange for their lands in Ohio, from which it is expected the remainder of the tribe will soon move. It has been said that this tribe came formerly from Florida, but I do not believe it. The mere fact, that there is found in East Florida a river by the name of Su wa-nee, which bears some resemblance to Sha-wa-no, seems, as far as I can learn, to be the principal evidence that has been adduced for the fact. They have evidently been known, and that within the scope of our authenticated history, on the Atlantic coast--on the Delaware and Chesapeake bays. And after that, have fought their way against every sort of trespass and abuse--against the bayonet and disease, through the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, to their present location near the Kon-zas River, at least 1500 miles from their native country.

This tribe and the Delawares, of whom I have spoken, were neighbours on the Atlantic coast, and alternately allies and enemies, have retrograded and retreated together--have fought their enemies

---

united, and fought each other, until their remnants that have outlived their nation's calamities, have now settled as neighbours together in the Western wilds; where, it is probable, the sweeping hand of death will soon relieve them from further necessity of warring or moving; and the Government, from the necessity or policy of proposing to them a yet more distant home. In their long and disastrous pilgrimage, both of these tribes laid claim to, and alternately occupied the beautiful and renowned valley of Wy-o-ming; and after strewing the Susquehana's lovely banks with their bones, and their tumuli, they both yielded at last to the dire necessity, which follows all civilized intercourse with natives, and fled to the Alleghany, and at last to the banks of the Ohio; where necessity soon came again, and again, and again, until the great "Guardian" of all "red children" placed them where they now are.

There are of this tribe remaining about 1200; some few of whom are agriculturists, and industrious and temperate, and religious people; but the greater proportion of them are miserably poor and dependent, having scarcely the ambition to labour or to hunt, and a passion for whiskey-drinking, that sinks them into the most abject poverty, as they will give the last thing they possess for a drink of it. There is not a tribe on the Continent whose history is more interesting than that of the Shawanos, nor any one that has produced more extraordinary men.

The great Tecumseh, whose name and history I can but barely allude to at this time, was the chief of this tribe, and perhaps the most extraordinary Indian of his age.

The present chief of the tribe Lay-law-she-kaw (he who goes up the river), is a very aged, but extraordinary man, with a fine and intelligent head, and his ears slit and stretched down to his shoulders, a custom highly valued in this tribe; which is done by severing the rim of the ear with a knife, and stretching it down by wearing heavy weights attached to it at times, to elongate it as much as possible, making a large orifice, through which, on parades, &c. they often pass a bunch of arrows or quills, and wear them as ornaments.

In this instance (which was not an unusual one), the rims of the ears were so extended down, that they touched the shoulders, making a ring through which the whole hand could easily be passed. The daughter of this old chief, Ka-te-qua (the female eagle), was an agreeable looking girl, of fifteen years of age, and much thought of by the tribe. Pah-te-coo-saw (the straight man), a warrior of this tribe, has distinguished himself by his exploits; and when he sat for his picture, had painted his face in a very curious manner with black and red paint.

Ten-sgua-ta-way (the open door), called the "Shawnee Prophet", is perhaps one of the most remarkable men, who has flourished on these frontiers for some time past. This man is brother of the famous Tecumseh, and quite equal in his medicines or mysteries, to what his brother was in arms; he was blind in his left eye, and in his right hand he was holding his "medicine fire", and his "sacred string of beans" in the other. With these mysteries he made his way through most of the North Western tribes, enlisting warriors wherever he went, to assist Tecumseh in effecting his great scheme, of forming a confederacy of all the Indians on the frontier, to drive back the whites and defend the Indians' rights; which he told them could never in any other way be protected. His plan was certainly a correct one, if not a very great one; and his brother, the Prophet, exercised his astonishing influence in raising men for him to fight his battles, and carry out his plans. For this purpose, he started upon an embassy to the various tribes on the Upper Missouri, nearly all of which he visited with astonishing success; exhibiting his mystery fire, and using his sacred string of beans, which every young man who was willing to go to war, was to touch; thereby taking the

---

solemn oath to start when called upon, and not to turn back.

In this most surprising manner, this ingenious man entered the villages of most of his inveterate enemies, and of others who never had heard of the name of his tribe; and manoeuvred in so successful a way, as to make his medicines a safe passport for him to all of their villages; and also the means of enlisting in the different tribes, some eight or ten thousand warriors, who had solemnly sworn to return with him on his way back; and to assist in the wars that Tecumseh was to wage against the whites on the frontier. I found, on my visit to the Sioux -- to the Puncas, to the Riccarees and the Mandans, that he had been there, and even to the Blackfeet; and everywhere told them of the potency of his mysteries, and assured them, that if they allowed the fire to go out ill their wigwams, it would prove fatal to them in every case. He carried with him into every wigwam that he visited, the image of a dead person of the size of life; which was made ingeniously of some light material. and always kept concealed under bandages of thin white muslin cloths and not to be opened; of this he made great mystery, and got his recruits to swear by touching a sacred string of white beans, which he had attached to its neck or some other way secreted about it. In this way, by his extraordinary cunning, he had carried terror into the country as far as he went; and had actually enlisted some eight or ten thousand men, who were sworn to follow him home; and in a few days would have been on their way with him, had not a couple of his political enemies in his own tribe, followed on his track, even to those remote tribes, and defeated his plans, by pronouncing him an impostor; and all of his forms and plans an imposition upon them, which they would be fools to listen to. In this manner. this great recruiting officer was defeated in his plans, for raising an army of men to fight his brother's battles; and to save his life, he discharged his medicines as suddenly as possible, and secretly travelled his way home, over those vast regions, to his own tribe, where the death of Tecumseh, and the opposition of enemies, killed all his splendid prospects, and doomed him to live the rest of his days in silence, and a sort of disgrace; like all men in Indian communities who pretend to great medicine, in any way, and fail; as they all think such failure an evidence of the displeasure of the Great Spirit, who always judges right. This, no doubt, has been a very shrewd and influential man, but circumstances have destroyed him, as they have many other great men before him; and he now lives respected, but silent and melancholy in his tribe. I conversed with him a great deal about his brother Tecumseh, of whom he spoke frankly, and seemingly with great pleasure; but of himself and his own great schemes, he would say nothing. He told me that Tecumseh's plans were to embody all the Indian tribes in a grand confederacy, from the province of Mexico, to the Great Lakes, to unite their forces in an army that would be able to meet and drive back the white people, who were continually advancing on the Indian tribes, and forcing them from their lands towards the Rocky Mountains -- that Tecumseh was a great general, and that nothing but his premature death defeated his grand plan. The Shawanos, like most of the other remnants of tribes, in whose countries the game has been destroyed, and by the use of whiskey, have been reduced to poverty and absolute want, have become, to a certain degree, agriculturists; raising corn and beans, potatoes, hogs, horses, &c; so as to be enabled, if they could possess anywhere on earth, a country which they could have a certainty of holding in perpetuity, as their own, to plant and raise their own crops, and necessaries of life from the ground.

The Government have effected with these people, as with most of the other dispersed tribes, an arrangement by which they are to remove West of the Mississippi, to lands assigned them; on

which they are solemnly promised a home for ever; the uncertain definition of which important word, time and circumstances alone will determine.

Besides the personages whom I have above-mentioned, I painted the portraits of several others of note in the tribe; and amongst them Lay-loo-ahpe-ni-shee-liaw (the grass-bush and blossom), whom I introduce in this place, rather from the very handy and poetical name, than from any great personal distinction known to have been acquired by him.

THE CHER-O-KEES.

Living in the vicinity of, and about Fort Gibson, on the Arkansas, and 700 miles west of the Mississippi river, are a third part or more of the once very numerous and powerful tribe who inhabited and still inhabit, a considerable part of the state of Georgia, and under a Treaty made with the United States Government, have been removed to those regions, where they are settled on a fine tract of country; and having advanced somewhat in the arts and agriculture before they started, are now found to be mostly living well, cultivating their fields of corn and other crops, which they raise with great success.

Under a serious difficulty existing between these people (whom their former solemn Treaties with the United States Government, were acknowledged a free and independent nation, with powers to make and enforce their own laws), and the state of Georgia, which could not admit such a Government within her sovereignty, it was thought most expedient by the Government of the United States, to propose to them, for the fourth or fifth time, to enter into Treaty stipulations again to move; and by so doing to settle the difficult question with the state of Georgia, and at the same time, to place them in peaceable possession of a large tract of fine country, where they would for ever be free from the continual trespasses and abuses which it was supposed they would be subjected to, if they were to remain in the state of Georgia, under the present difficulties and the high excited feelings which were then existing in the minds of many people along their borders.

John Ross, a civilized and highly educated and accomplished gentleman, who is the head-chief of the tribe, and several of his leading subordinate chiefs, have sternly and steadily rejected the proposition of such a Treaty; and are yet, with a great majority of the nation remaining on their own ground in the state of Georgia, although some six or 7000 of the tribe have several years since removed to the Arkansas, under the guidance and control of an aged and dignified chief by the name of Jol-lee.

This man, like most of the chiefs, as well as a very great proportion of the Cherokee population, has a mixture of white and red blood in his veins, of which, in this instance, the first seems decidedly to predominate. Another chief, and second to this, amongst this portion of the Cherokees, by the name of The-ke-neh-kee (the black coat), I have also painted and placed in my Collection, as well as a very interesting specimen of the Cherokee women.

I have travelled pretty generally through the several different locations of this interesting tribe, both in the Western and Eastern divisions, and have found them, as well as the Choctaws and Creeks, their neighbours, very far advanced in the arts; affording to the world the most satisfactory evidences that are to be found in America, of the fact, that the Indian was not made to shun and evade good example, and necessarily to live and die a brute, as many speculating men would needs record them and treat them, until they are robbed and trampled into the dust; that no living evidences might give the lie to their theories, or draw the cloak from their cruel and horrible iniquities.

As I have repeatedly said to my readers, in the course of my former epistles, that the greater part of my time would be devoted to the condition and customs of the tribes that might be found in their primitive state, they will feel disposed to Pardon me for barely introducing the Cherokees, and several others of these very interesting tribes, and leaving them and their customs and histories (which are of themselves enough for volumes), to the reader, who is, perhaps, nearly as familiar as I am myself, with the Full and fair accounts of these people, who have had their historians and biographers.

The history of the Cherokees and other numerous remnants of tribes, who are the exhabitants of the finest and most valued portions of the United States, is a subject of great interest and importance, and has already been woven into the most valued histories of the country, as well as forming material parts of the archives of the Government, which is my excuse for barely introducing the reader to them, and beckoning him off again to the native and untrodden wilds, to teach him something new and unrecorded. Yet I leave the subject, as I left the people (to whom I became attached, for their kindness and friendship), with a heavy heart, wishing them success and the blessing of the Great Spirit, who alone can avert the door, that would almost seem to be fixed for their unfortunate race.

The Cherokees amount in all to about 22,000, 16,000 of whom are yet living in Georgia, under the Government of their chief, John Ross, whose name I have before mentioned; with this excellent man, who has been for many years devotedly opposed to the Treaty stipulations for moving from their country, I have been familiarly acquainted; and, notwithstanding the bitter invective and animadversions that have been by his political enemies heaped upon him, I feel authorized, and bound, to testify to the unassuming and gentlemanly urbanity of his manners, as well as to the rigid temperance of his habits, and the purity of his language, in which I never knew him to transgress for a moment, in public or private interviews.

At this time, the most strenuous endeavours are making on the part of the Government and the state of Georgia, for the completion of an arrangement for the removal of the whole of this tribe, as well as of the Choctaws and Seminoles; and I have not a doubt of their final success, which seems, from all former experience, to attend every project of the kind made by the Government to their red children.\*

It is not for me to decide, nor in this place to reason, as to the justice or injustice of the treatment of these people at the hands of the Government or individuals; or of the wisdom of the policy which is to Place them in a new, though vast and fertile country, 1000 miles from the land of their birth, in the doubtful dilemma whether to break the natural turf with their rusting ploughshares, or string their bows, and dash over the boundless prairies, beckoned on by the alluring dictates of their nature, seeking laurels amongst the ranks of their new enemies, and subsistence amongst the herds of buffaloes.

Besides the Cherokees in Georgia, and those that I have spoken of in the neighbourhood of Fort Gibson, there is another band or family of the same tribe, of several hundreds, living on the banks of the Canadian river, an hundred or more miles South West of Fort Gibson, under the Government of a distinguished chief by the name of Tuch-ee (familiarly called by the white people, "Dutch"). This is one of the most extraordinary men that lives on the frontiers at the present day, both for his remarkable history, and for his fine and manly figure, and character of face.

This man was in the employment of the Government as a guide and hunter for the regiment of

dragoons, on their expedition to the Camanchees, where T had him for a constant companion for several months, and opportunities in abundance, for studying his true character, and of witnessing his wonderful exploits in the different varieties of the chase. The history of this man's life has been very curious and surprising; and I sincerely hope that some one, with more leisure and more talent than myself, will take it up, and do it justice. I promise that the life of this man furnishes the best materials for a popular tale, that are now to be procured on the Western frontier.

He is familiarly known, and much of his life, to all the officers who have been stationed at Fort Gibson, or at any of the posts in that region of country.

Some twenty years or more since, becoming fatigued and incensed with civilized encroachments, that were continually making on the borders of the Cherokee country in Georgia, where he then resided, and probably, foreseeing the disastrous results they were to lead to, he beat up for volunteers to emigrate to the West, where he had designed to go, and colonize in a wild country beyond the reach and contamination of civilized innovations; and succeeded in getting several hundred men, women, and children, whom he led over the banks of the Mississippi, and settled upon the head waters of White River, where they lived until the appearance of white faces, which began to peep through the forests at them, when they made another move of 600 miles to the banks of the Canadian, where they now reside; and where, by the system of desperate warfare, which he has carried on against the Osages and the Camanchees, he has successfully cleared away from a large tract of fine country, all the enemies that could contend for it, and now holds it, with his little band of myrmidons, as their own undisputed soil, where they are living comfortably by raising from the soil fine crops of corn and potatoes, and other necessaries of life; whilst they indulge whenever they please, in the pleasures of the chase amongst the herds of buffaloes, or in the natural propensity for ornamenting their dresses and their war-clubs with the scalp-locks of their enemies.

THE CREEKS (or MUS-KO-GEES).

Of 20,000 in numbers, have, until quite recently, occupied an immense tract of country in the states of Mississippi and Alabama; but by a similar arrangement (and for a similar purpose) with the Government, have exchanged their possessions there for a country, adjoining to the Cherokees, on the South side of the Arkansas, to which they have already all removed, and on which, like the Cherokees, they are laying out fine farms, and building good houses, in which they live; in many instances, surrounded by immense fields of corn and wheat. There is scarcely a finer country on earth than that now owned by the Creeks; and in North America, certainly no Indian tribe more advanced in the arts and agriculture than they are. It is no uncommon thing to see a Creek with twenty or thirty slaves at work on his plantation, having brought them from a slave-holding country, from which, in their long journey, and exposure to white man's ingenuity, I venture to say, that most of them got rid of one-half of them, whilst on their long and disastrous crusade. The Creeks, as well as the Cherokees and Choctaws, have good schools and churches established amongst them, conducted by excellent and pious men, from whose example they are drawing great and lasting benefits.

I have given the portraits of two distinguished men, and I believe, both chiefs. The first by the name of Stee-cha-co-me-co (the great king), familiarly called "Ben Perryman" and the other, Holte-mal-te-tez-te-nehk-ee (---), Failed "Sam Perryman". These two men are brothers, and are fair specimens of the tribe, who are mostly clad in calicoes, and other cloths of civilized manufacture;

---

tasselled and hinged off by themselves in the most fantastic way, and sometimes with much true and picturesque taste. They use a vast many beads, and other trinkets, to hang upon their necks, and ornament their moccasins and beautiful belts.

#### THE CHOCTAWS.

Of fifteen thousand, are another tribe, removed from the Northern parts of Alabama, and Mississippi, within the few years past, and now occupying a large and rich tract of country, South of the Arkansas and the Canadian rivers; adjoining to the country of the Creeks and the Cherokees, equally civilized, and living much in the same manner.

In this tribe I painted the portrait of their famous and excellent chief, Mo-sho-la-tub-bee (he who puts out and kills), who has since died of the small-pox. In the same plate will also be seen, the portrait of a distinguished and very gentlemanly man, who has been well-educated, and who gave me much curious and valuable information, of the history and traditions of his tribe. The name of this man, is Ha-tchoo-tuck-nee (the snapping turtle), familiarly called by the whites "Peter Pinchlin".

These people seem, even in their troubles, to be happy ; and have, like all the other remnants of tribes, preserved with great tenacity their different games, which it would seem they are everlastingly practicing for want of other occupations or amusements in life. Whilst I was staying at the Choctaw agency in the midst of their nation, it seemed to be a sort of season of amusements, a kind of holiday r when the whole tribe almost, were assembled around the establishment, and from day to day we were entertained with some games or feats that were exceedingly amusing: horse-racing, dancing, wrestling, foot-racing, and ball-playing, were amongst the most exciting; and of all the catalogue, the most beautiful, was decidedly that of ball-playing. This wonderful game, which is the favorite-one amongst all the tribes, and with these Southern tribes played exactly the same, can never be appreciated by those who are not happy enough to see it.

It is no uncommon occurrence for six or eight hundred or a thousand of these young men, to engage in a game of ball, with five or six times that number of spectators, of men, women and children, surrounding the ground, and looking on. And I pronounce such a scene, with its hundreds of Nature's most beautiful models, denuded, and painted of various colours, running and leaping into the air, in all the most extravagant and varied forms, in the desperate struggles for the ball, a school for the painter or sculptor, equal to any of those which ever inspired the hand of the artist in the Olympian games or the Roman forum.

I have made it an uniform rule, whilst in the Indian country, to attend every ball-play I could hear of, if I could do it by riding a distance of twenty or thirty miles; and my usual custom has been on such occasions, to straddle the: back of my horse, and look on to the best advantage. In this way I have sat, and oftentimes reclined, and almost dropped from my horse's back, with irresistible laughter at the succession of droll tricks, and kicks and scuffles which ensue, in the almost superhuman straggles for the ball. These plays generally commence at nine o'clock, or near ii, in the morning; and I have more than once balanced myself on my pony, from that time till near sundown, without more than one minute of intermission at a time, before the game has been decided. It is impossible for pen and ink alone, or brushes, or even with their combined efforts, to give more than a caricature of such a scene; but such as I have been able to do, I have put upon the canvass, and in the slight outlines which I have here taken from those paintings, (for the colouring to which the reader must look to my pen), I will convey as correct an account as I can, and

leave the reader to imagine the rest; or look to other books for what I may have omitted.

While at the Choctaw agency it was announced, that there was to be a great play on a certain day, within a few miles, on which occasion I attended, and made the three sketches which are hereto annexed ; and also the following entry in my note-book, which I literally copy out.

On Monday afternoon at three, o'clock, I rode out with Lieutenants S. and M., to a very pretty prairie, about six miles distant, to the ball-play-ground of the Choctaws, where we found several thousand Indians encamped. There were two points of timber about half a mile apart, in which the two parties for the play, with their respective families and friends, were encamped; and lying between them, the prairie on which the game was to be played. My companions and myself, although we had been apprised, that to see the whole of a ball-play, we must remain on the ground all the night previous, had brought nothing to sleep upon, resolving to keep our eyes open, and see what transpired through the night. During the afternoon, we loitered about amongst the different tents and shantees of the two encampments, and afterwards, at sundown, witnessed the ceremony of measuring out the ground, and erecting the "byes" of goals which were to guide the play. Each party had their goal made with two upright posts, about 25 feet high and six feet apart, set firm in the ground, with a pole across at the top. These goals were about forty or fifty rods apart; and at a Point just half way between, was another small stake, driven down, where the ball was to be thrown up at the firing of a gun, to be struggled for by the players. All this preparation was made by some old men, who were, it seems, selected to be the judges of the play, who drew a line from one bye to the other to which directly came from the woods, on both sides, a great concourse of women and old men, boys and girls, and dogs and horses, where bets were to be made on the play. The betting was all done across this line, and seemed to be chiefly left to the women, who seemed to have martialled out a little of everything that their houses and their fields possessed. Goods and chattels -- knives -- dresses -- blankets -- pots and kettles -- dogs and horses, and guns; and all were placed in the possession of stake-holders, who sat by them, and watched them on the ground all night, preparatory to the play.

The sticks with which this tribe play, are bent into an oblong hoop at the end, with a sort of slight web of small thongs tied across, to prevent the ball from passing through. The players hold one of these in each hand, and by leaping into the air, they catch the ball between the two nettings and throw it, without being allowed to strike it, or catch it in their hands.

The mode in which these sticks are constructed and used, will be seen in the portrait of Tullock-chish-Ro (He Who Drinks The Juice Of The Stone), the most distinguished ball-player of the Choctaw nation, represented in his ball-play dress, with his hall-sticks in his hands. In every ball play of these people, it is a rule of the play, that no man shall wear moccasins on his feet, or any other dress than his breech-cloth around his waist, with a beautiful bead belt, and a "tail", made of white horsehair or quills, and a "mane" on the neck, of horsehair dyed of various colours.

This game had been arranged and "made up", three or four months before the parties met to play it, and in the following manner. The two champions who led the two parties, and had the alternate choosing of the players through the whole tribe, sent runners, with the ball-sticks most fantastically ornamented with ribbons and red paint, to be touched by each one of the chosen players; who thereby agreed to be on the spot at the appointed time and ready for the play. The ground having been all prepared and preliminaries of the game all settled, and the bettings all made, and goods all "staked", night came on without the appearance of any players on the ground.

---

But soon after dark, a procession of lighted flambeaux was seen coming from each encampment, to the ground where the players assembled around their respective byes; and at the beat of the drums and chants of the women, each party of players commenced the "ball-play dance". Each party danced for a quarter of an hour around their respective byes, in their ball-play dress; rattling their ball-sticks together in the most a violent manner, and all singing as loud as they could raise their voices; whilst the women of each party, who had their goods at stake, formed into two rows on the line between the two parties of players, and danced also, in an uniform step, and all their voices joined in chants to the Great Spirit; in which they were soliciting his favour in deciding the game to their advantage; and also encouraging the players to exert every power they possessed, in the struggle that was to ensue. In the mean time, four old medicine-man, who were to have the starting of the ball, and who were to be judges of the play, were seated at the point where the ball was to be started; and busily smoking to the Great Spirit for their success in judging rightly, and impartially, between the parties in so important an affair.

This dance was one of the most picturesque scenes imaginable, and was repeated at intervals of every half hour during the night, and exactly in the same manner; so that the players were certainly awake all the night, and arranged in their appropriate dress, prepared for the play which was to commence at nine o'clock the next morning. In the morning, at the hour, the two parties and all their friends, were drawn out and over the ground; when at length the game commenced, by the judges throwing up the ball at the firing of a gun; when an instant struggle ensued between the players, who were some six or seven hundred in numbers, and were mutually endeavouring to catch the ball in their sticks, and throw it home and between their respective stakes; which, whenever successfully done, counts one for game. In this game every player was dressed alike, that is, divested of all dress except the girdle and the tail, which I have before described; and in these desperate struggler for the ball, when it is up, where hundreds are running together and leaping, actually over each other's heads, and darting between their adversaries' legs, tripping and throwing, and foiling each one in every possible manner, and every voice raised to the highest key, in shrill yelps and barks. There are rapid successions of feats, and of incidents, that astonish and amuse far beyond the conception of any one who has not had the singular good luck to witness them. In these struggles, every mode I used that can be devised, to oppose the progress of the foremost, who is like: to get the ball; and these obstructions often meet desperate individual resistance, which terminates in a violent scuffle, and sometimes in fisticuffs; when their stricks are dropped, and the parties are unmolested, whilst they are set tling it between themselves; unless it be by a general stampede, to whici they are subject who are down, if the ball happens to pass in their direction. Every weapon, by a rule of all ball-plays, is laid by in their respective en campments, and no man allowed to go for one; so that the sudden broil that take place on the ground, are presumed to be as suddenly settled with out any probability of much personal injury; and no one is allowed to inter fere in any way with the contentious individuals.

There are times, when the ball gets to the ground, and such a confused mass rushing together around it, and knocking their sticks te gether, without the possibility of any one getting or seeing it, for the dust that they raise, that the spectator loses his strength, and everything else but his senses; when the condensed mass of ball-sticks, and shins, and bloody noses, is carried around the different parts of the ground, for a quarter (an hour at a time), without any one of the mass being able to see the ball and which they are often thus scuffling for, several minutes after it has

bee thrown off, and, layed over another part of the ground.

For each time that the ball was passed between the stakes of either part: one was counted for their game, and a halt of about one minute; when was again started by the judges of the play, and a similar struggle ensued and so on until the successful party arrived to 100, which was the limit (the game), and accomplished at an hour's sun, when they took the stakes and then, by a previous agreement, produced a number of jugs of whiskey: which gave all a wholesome drink, and sent them all off merry and in good humour, but not drunk.

After this exciting day, the concourse was assembled in the vicinity I the agency house, where we had a great variety of dauces and other amusements; the most of which I have described on former occasion One, however, was new to me, and I must say a few words of it: this with the Eagle Dance, a very pretty scene, which is got up by their your men, in honour of that bird, for which they seem to have a religior regard. This picturesque dance was given by twelve or sixteen men, whet ludiPn were chiefly naked and painted white, with white clay, and each one holding in his hand the tailof the eagle, while his head was also decorated with an eagle's quill. Spears were stuck in the ground, around which the dance was performed by four men at a time, who had simultaneously, at the beat of the drum, jumped up from the ground where they had all sat in rows of four, one row immediately behind the other, and ready to take the place of the first four when they left the ground fatigued, which they did by hopping or jumping around behind the rest, and taking their seats, ready to come up again in their turn, after each of the other sets had been through the same forms.

In this dance, thesteps or rather jumps, were different from anything I had ever witnessed before, as the dancers were squat down, with their bodies almost to the ground, in a severe and most difficult posture, as will have been seen in the drawing.

I have already, in a former Letter, while speaking of the ancient custom of Aattening the head, given a curious tradition of this interesting tribe, accounting for their having come from the West, and I here insert another or two, which I had, as well as the former one, from the lips of Peter Pinchlin, a very intelligent and influential man in the tribe.

The Deluge. "Our people have always had a tradition of the Deluge, which happened in this way: "There was total darkness for a great time over the whole of the earth; the Choctaw doctors or mystery-men looked out for daylight for a long time, until at last they despaired of ever seeing it, and the whole nation were very unhappy. At last a light was discovered in the horth, and there was great rejoicing, until it was found to be great mountains of water rolling on, which destroyed them all, except a few families who had expected it and built a great raft, on which they were saved."

Future State. "Our people all believe that the spirit lives in a future state -- that it has a great distance to travel after death towards the West -- that it has to cross a dreadful deep and rapid stream, which is hemmed in on both sides by high and rugged hills -- over this stream, from hill to hill, there lies a long and slippery pine-log, with the bark peeled off, over which the dead have to pass to the delightful hunting-grounds. On the other side of the stream there are six persons of the good hunting-grounds, with rocks in their hands, which they throw at them allwhen they are on the middle of the log. The good walk on safely, to the good hunting-grounds, where there is one continual day -- where the trees are always green -- where the sky has no clouds -- where there are continual fine and cooling breezes -- where there is one continual scene of feasting,

dancing and rejoicing -- where there is no pain or trouble, and people never grow old, but for ever live young and enjoy the youthful pleasures.

“The wicked see the stones coming, and try to dodge, by which they fall from the log, and go down thousands of feet to the water, which is dashing over the rocks, and is stinking with dead fish, and animals, where they are carried around and brought continually hack to the same place in whirlpools -- where the trees are all dead, and the waters are full of toads and lizards, and snakes -- where the dead are always hungry, and have nothing to eat -- are always sick, and never die -- where the sun never shines, and where the wicked are continually climbing up by thousands on the sides of a high rock from which they can overlook the beautiful country of the good hunting-grounds, the place of the happy, hut never can reach it.”

Origin of the Craw-fish band. “Our people have amongst them a band which is called, the Craw-fish band. They formerly, but at a very remote period, lived under ground, and used to come up out of the mud -- they were a species of craw-fish; and they went on their hands and feet, and lived in a large cave deep under ground, where there was no light for several miles. They spoke no language at all, nor could they understand any. The entrance to their cave was through the mud -- and they used to run down through that, and into their cave; and thus, the Choctaws were for a long time unable to molest them. The Choctaws used to lay and wait for them to come out into the sun, where they would try to talk to them, and cultivate an acquaintance.

“One day, a parcel of them were run upon so suddenly by the Choctaws, that they had no time to go through the mud into their cave, but were driven into it by another entrance, which they had through the rocks. The Choctaws then tried a long time to smoke them out, and at last succeeded-they treated them kindly-taught them the Choctaw language-taught them to walk on two legs -- made them cut off their toe nails, and pluck the hair from their bodies, after which they adopted them into their nation--and the remainder of them are living under ground to this day.”

LETTERS AND NOTES ON THE  
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

by George Catlin

(First published in London in 1844)

---

LETTER-NO. 55.

RED PIPE STONE Quarry, COTEAU DES PRAIRIES.

Well, to proceed with the Story of the Dog, which I promised; (after which I shall record the tale of Wi-jun-jon, (the pigeon's egg head), which was also told by me during the last night, before we retired to rest.

"I think I said that my little canoe had brought-us down the Missouri, about eight hundred miles below the mouth of Yellow Stone, when we landed at Laidlaw's Trading-house, which is twelve hundred miles above civilization and the city of St. Louis. If I did not say it: it is no matter, for it was even so; and 'Ba'tiste and Bogard who had paddled, and I who had steered,' threw our little bark out upon the bank, and taking our paddles in our bands, and our 'plunder' upon our backs, crossed the plain to the American Fur Company's Fort, in charge of Mr, Laidlaw, who gave us a hearty welcome; and placed us in an instant at his table, which happened at that moment to be stationed in the middle of the floor, distributing to its surrounding guests the simple blessings which belong to that fair and silent land of buffalo tongues and beavers' tails! A bottle of good Madeira wine sprung (a l' instant) upon the corner of the table, before us, and swore, point blank, to the welcome that was expressed in every feature of our host. After the usual salutations, the news, and a glass of wine, Mr. Laidlaw began thus:

"Well, my friend, you have got along well, so far; and I am glad to see you. You have seen a great many fine Indians since you left here, and have, no doubt, procured many interesting and valuable portraits; but there has been a deal of trouble about the ' pictures,' in this neighborhood, since you went away. Of course, you have heard nothing of it at the Yellow Stone ; but amongst us, I assure you, there has not a day passed since you left, without some fuss or excitement about the portraits. The 'Dog' is not yet dead, though he has been shot at several times, and had his left arm broken. The 'Little Bear's' friends have overtaken the brother of the Dog, that fine fellow whom you painted, and killed him! They are now sensible that they have sacrificed one of the best men in the nation, for one of the greatest rascals; and they are more desperately bent on revenge than ever. They have made frequent enquiries for you, knowing that you had gone up the river; alleging that you had been the cause of these deaths, and that if the Dog could not be found, they should look to you for a settlement of that unfortunate affair!

"That unlucky business, taken altogether, has been the greatest piece of medicine (mystery), and created the greatest excitement amongst the Sioux, of anything that has happened since I came into the country. My dear Sir, you must not continue your voyage down the river, in your unprotected condition. A large party of the Little Bear's' band, are now encamped on the river below, and for you to stop there (which you might be obliged to do), would be to endanger your life."

\* \* \* Reader, sit still, and let me change ends with my story, (which is done in one moment,) and then, from a relation of the circumstances which elicited the friendly advice and caution of Mr. Laidlaw just mentioned, you will be better enabled to understand the nature of the bloody affair

which I am undertaking to relate.

“About four months previous to the moment I am now speaking of, I had passed up the Missouri river by this place, on the steam-boat “Yellowstone”, on which I ascended the Missouri to the mouth of Yellow Stone river. While going up, this boat, having on board the United States Indian agent: Major Sanford -- Messrs. Pierre, Chouteau, McKenzie of the American Fur Company, and myself, as passengers, stopped at this trading-post, and remained several weeks; where were assembled six hundred families of Sioux Indians, their tents being pitched in close order on an extensive prairie on the bank of the river.

“This trading-post, in charge of Mr. Laidlaw, is the concentrating place, and principal trading depot, for this Powerful tribe, who number, when all taken together, something like forty or fifty thousand. On this occasion, five or six thousand had assembled to see the steam-boat and meet the Indian agent, which, and whom they knew were to arrive about this time. During the few weeks that we remained there, I was busily engaged painting my portraits, for here were assembled the principal chiefs and medicine-men of the nation. To these people, the operations of my brush were entirely new and unaccountable, and excited amongst them the greatest curiosity imaginable. Every thing else (even the steam-boat) was abandoned for the pleasure of crowding into my painting-room, and witnessing the result of each fellow’s success, as he came out from under the operation of my brush.

“They had been at first much afraid of the consequences that might flow from so strange and unaccountable an operation; but having been made to understand my views, they began to look upon it as a great honour, and afforded me the opportunities that I desired; exhibiting the utmost degree of vanity for their appearance, both as to features and dress. The consequence was, that my room was filled with the chiefs who sat around, arranged according to the rank or grade which they held in the estimation of their tribe; and in this order it became necessary for me to paint them, to the exclusion of those who never signalized themselves, and were without any distinguishing character in society.

“The first man on the list, was Ha-wan-ghee-ta (one horn), head chief of the nation, of whom I have heretofore spoken; and after him the subordinate chiefs, or chiefs of bands, according to the estimation in which they were held by the chief and the tribe. My models were thus placed before me whether ugly or beautiful, all the same, and I saw at once there was to be trouble somewhere, as I could not paint them all. The medicine-men or high priests, who are esteemed by many the oracles of the nation, and the most important men in it -- becoming jealous, commenced their harangues, outside of the lodge, telling them that they were all fools -- that those who were painted would soon die in consequence; and that these pictures, which had life to a considerable degree in them, would live in the hands of white men after they were dead, and make them sleepless and endless trouble.

“Those whom I had painted, though evidently somewhat alarmed, were unwilling to acknowledge it, and those whom I had not painted, unwilling to be outdone in courage, allowed me the privilege; braving and defying the danger that they were evidently more or less in dread of. Feuds began to arise too, among some of the chiefs of the different bands, who (not unlike some instances amongst the chiefs and warriors of our own country), had looked upon their rival chiefs with unsleeping jealousy, until it had grown into disrespect and enmity. An instance of this kind presented itself at this critical juncture, in this assembly of inflammable spirits, which changed

in a moment, its features, from the free and jocular garrulity of an Indian levee, to the frightful yells and agitated treads and starts of an Indian battle! I had in progress at this time a Portrait of Mah-to-tchee-ga (little bear); of the Onc-pa-pa band, a noble fine fellow, who was sitting before me as I was painting. I was Painting almost a profile view of his face, throwing a part of it into shadow, and had it nearly finished, when an Indian by the name of Shon-Ka (the dog), chief of the Caz-a-zshee-ta band; an ill-natured and surly man -- despised by the chiefs of every other band, entered the wigwam in a sullen mood, and seated himself on the floor in front of my sitter, where he could have a full view of the picture in its operation. After sitting a while with his arms folded, and his lips stuffy arched with contempt; he sneeringly spoke thus:

“Mah-to-tchee-ga is but half a man.”

Dead silence ensued for a moment, and nought was in motion save the eyes of the chiefs, who were seated around the room, and darting their glances about upon each other in listless anxiety to hear the sequel that was to follow! During this interval, the eyes of Mah-to-tchee-ga had not moved -- his lips became slightly curved, and he pleasantly asked, in low and steady accent, ‘Who says that?’ ‘Shon-Ka says it,’ was the reply; ‘and Skon-Ka can prove it.’ At this the eyes of Mah-to-tchee-ga, which had not yet moved, began steadily to turn, and slow, as if upon pivots, and when they were rolled out of their sockets till they had fixed upon the object of their contempt; his dark and jutting brows were shoving down in trembling contention, with the blazing rays that were actually burning with contempt, the object that was before them. ‘Why does Shon-ka say it?’

“Ask We-chash-a-wa-kon (the painter), he can tell you; he knows you are but half a man-he has painted but one half of your face, and knows the other half is good for nothing!”

“Let the painter say it, and I will believe it; but when the Dog says it let him prove it.”

“Shon-ka said it, and Shon-ka can prove it; if Mah-to-tchee-ga be a man, and waste to be honoured by the white men, let him not be ashamed; but let him do as Shon-ka has done, give the white man a horse, and then let him see the whole of your face without being ashamed.”

“When Mah-to-tchee-ga kills a white man and steals his horses, he may be ashamed to look at a white man until he brings him a horse! When Mah-to-tchee-ga waylays and murders an honorable and a brave Sioux, because he is a coward and not brave enough to meet him in fair combat, then he may be ashamed to look at a white man till he has given him a horse! Mah-to-tchee-ga can look at any one; and he is now looking at an old woman and a coward!”

“This repartee, which had lasted for a few minutes, to the amusement and excitement of the chiefs, being ended thus -- The Dog rose suddenly from the ground, and wrapping himself in his robe, left the wigwam, considerably agitated, having the laugh of all the chiefs upon him.”

“The Little Bear had followed him with his piercing eyes until he left the door, and then pleasantly and unmoved, resumed his position, where he sat a few minutes longer, until the portrait was completed. He then rose, and in the most graceful and gentlemanly manner, presented to me a very beautiful shirt of buckskin, richly garnished with quills of the porcupine, hinged with scalp-locks (honorable memorials) from his enemies’ heads, and painted, with all his battles emblazoned on it. He then left my wigwam, and a few steps brought him to the door of his own, where the Dog intercepted him, and asked, What meant Mah-to-tchee-ga by tile last words that he spoke to Shon-ka. “Mah-to-tchee-ga said it, and Shon-ka is not a fool -- that is enough.” At this The Dog walked violently to his own lodge: and the Little Bear retreated into his, both knowing from looks and gestures what was about to be the consequence of their altercation.

“The Little Bear instantly charged his gun, and then (as their custom is) threw himself upon his face, in humble supplication to the Great Spirit for his aid and protection. His wife, in the meantime, seeing him agitated, and fearing some evil consequences, without knowing anything of the preliminaries, secretly withdrew the bullet from his gun, and told him not of it.

“The Dog’s voice, at this moment, was heard, and recognized at the door of Mah-to-tchee-ga’s lodge -- If Mah-to-tchee-ga be a whole man, let him come out and prove it; it is Shon-Ka that calls him!”

“His wife screamed; but it was too late. The gun was in his hand, and he sprang out of the door -- both drew and simultaneously fired! The Dog fled uninjured; but the Little Bear lay weltering in his blood (strange to say) with all that side of his face entirely shot away, which had been left out of the picture: end, according to the prediction of the Dog, “good for nothing”; carrying away one half of the jaws, and the flesh from the nostrils and corner of the mouth, to the ear, including one eye, and leaving the jugular vein entirely exposed. Here was a ‘coup’; and any one accustomed to the thrilling excitement that such scenes produce in an Indian village, call form some idea of the frightful agitation amidst several thousand Indians, who were divided into jealous bands or clans, under ambitious and rival chiefs ! In one minute, a thousand guns and bows were seized! A thousand thrilling yells were raised: and many were the fierce and darting warriors who sallied round the Dog for his protection -- he fled amidst a shower of bullets and arrows; but his braves were about him! The blood of the Onc-pa-pas was roused, and the indignant braves of that gallant band rushed forth from all quarters, and, swift upon their heels, were hot for vengeance! On the plain, and in full view of us, for some time, the whizzing arrows flew, and so did bullets, until the Dog and his brave followers were lost in distance on the prairie! In this rencontre, the Dog had his left arm broken; but succeeded, at length, in making his escape.

“On the next day after this affair took place, the Little Bear died of his wound, and was buried amidst the most pitiful and heart-rending cries of his distracted wife, whose grief was inconsolable at the thought of having been herself the immediate and innocent cause of his death, by depriving him of his supposed protection.

“This marvelous and fatal transaction was soon talked through the village, and the eyes of all this superstitious multitude were fixed upon me as the cause of the calamity--my paintings and brushes were instantly packed, and all hands, both Traders and Travellers, assumed at once a posture of defense.

“I evaded, no doubt, in a great measure, the concentration of their immediate censure upon me, by expressions of great condolence, and by distributing liberal presents to the wife and relations of the deceased; and by uniting also with Mr. Laidlaw and the other gentlemen, in giving him honourable burial, where we placed over his grave a handsome Sioux lodge, and hung a white flag to wave over it.

“On this occasion, many were the tears that were shed for the brave and honourable Mah-to-tchee-ga, and all the warriors of his band swore sleepless vengeance on the Dog, until his life should answer for the loss of their chief and leader.

“On the day that he was buried, I started for the mouth of Yellow Stone, and while I was gone, the spirit of vengeance had pervaded nearly all the Sioux country in search of the Dog, who had evaded pursuit. His brother, however, a noble and honourable fellow, esteemed by all who knew him, fell in their way in an unlucky hour, when their thirst for vengeance was irresistible, and they slew

him. Repentance deep, and grief were the result of so rash an act, when they beheld a brave and worthy man fall for so worthless a character; and as they became exasperated, the spirit of revenge grew more desperate than ever, and they swore they never would lay down their arms or embrace their wives and children until full and complete, should light upon the head that deserved it. This brings us again to the first part of my story, and in this state were things in that part of the country, when I was descending the river, four months afterwards, and landed my canoe as I before stated, at Laidlaw's trading-house.

"The excitement had been kept up all summer amongst these people, and their superstitions bloated to the full brim, from circumstances so well calculated to feed and increase them. Many of them looked to me at once as the author of all these disasters, considering I knew that one half of the man's face was good for nothing, or that I would not have left it out of the picture, and that I must therefore have foreknown the evils that were to flow from the omission; they consequently resolved that I was a dangerous man, and should suffer for my temerity in case the Dog could not be found. Councils had been held, and in all the solemnity of Indian medicine and mystery, I had been doomed to die! At one of these, a young warrior of the One-Papa band, arose and said. "The blood of two chiefs has just sunk into the ground, and an hundred bows are bent which are ready to shed more! On whom shall we bend them? I am a friend to the white men, but here is one whose medicine is too great -- he is a great medicine-man! his medicine is too great! he was the death of Mah-to-tchee-ga! He made only one side of his face! He would not make the other -- the side that he made was alive; the other was dead, and Shonka shot it off! How is this? Who is to die?"

"After him, Tah-zee-kee-da-cha (Torn Belly), of the Yankton band, arose and said -- "Father, this medicine-man has done much harm! You told our chiefs and warriors, that they must be painted -- you said he was a good man, and we believed you -- you thought so, my father, but you see what he has done! -- He looks at our chiefs and our women and then makes them alive!! In this way he has taken our chiefs away, and he can trouble their spirits when they are dead! -- they will be unhappy. If he can make them alive by looking at them, he can do us much harm! -- you tell us that they are not alive -- we see their eyes move! -- their eyes follow us wherever we go, that is enough! I have no more to say!" After him, rose a young man of the Onc-pa-pa band. "Father! You know that I am the brother of Mah-to-tchee-ga! -- you know that I loved him -- both sides of his face were good, and the medicine-man knew it also! Why was half of his face left out? He never was ashamed, but always looked white man in the face! Why was that side of his face shot off? Your friend is not our friend, and has forfeited his life -- we want you to tell us where he is -- we want to see him!"

"Then rose Toh-ki-e-to (a medicine-man) of the Yankton band, and principal orator of the nation.) "My friend, these are young men that speak -- I am not afraid! your white medicine-man painted my picture, and it was good -- I am glad of it -- I am very glad to see that I shall live after vengeance. This brings I am dead! -- I am old and not afraid! -- some of our young men are foolish. I know that this man put many of our buffaloes in his book I for I was with him, and we have had no buffaloes since to eat, it is true -- but I am not afraid!! his medicine is great and I wish him well--we are friends!"

It In this wise was the subject discussed by these superstitious people during my absence, and such were the reasons given by my Friend Mr. Laidlaw, for his friendly advice; wherein he cau-

tioned me against exposing my life in their hands, advising me to take some other route than that which I was pursuing down the river where I would find encamped at the mouth of Cabri river, eighty miles below, several hundred Indians belonging to the Little Bear's band, and I might possibly fall a victim to their unsatiated revenge. I resumed my downward voyage in a few days, however, with my little canoe, which 'Ba'tiste and Bogard paddled and I steered,' and passed their encampment in peace, by taking the opposite shore. The usual friendly invitation however, was given (which is customary on that river), by skipping several rifle bullets across the river, a rod or two ahead of us. To those invitations we paid no attention, and (not suspecting who we were), they allowed us to pursue our course in peace and security. Thus rested the affair of the Dog and its consequences, until I conversed with Major Bean, the agent for these people, who arrived in St. Louis some weeks after I did, bringing later intelligence from them, assuring me that 'the Dog had at length been overtaken and Killed, near the Black-hills, and that the affair might now for ever be considered as settled.'

Thus happened, and thus terminated the affair of "the Doe"; wherein have fallen three distinguished warriors; and wherein might have fallen one "great medicine-man!" and all in consequence of the operations of my brush. The portraits of the three first named will long hang in my Gallery for the world to gaze upon; and the head of the latter (whose hair yet remains on it), may probably be seen (for a time yet) occasionally stalking about in the midst of this Collection of Nature's dignitaries.

The circumstances above detailed, are as correctly given as I could furnish them! and they have doubtless given birth to one of the most wonderful traditions, which will be told and sung amongst the Sioux Indians from age to age; furnishing one of the rarest instances, perhaps, on record, of the extent to which these people may be carried by the force of their superstitions.

STORY OF WI-JUN-JON (The PIGEON'S EGG HEAD);

I recited it as I first told it to poor Ba'tiste, on a former occasion, which was as follows:--

"Well, Ba'tiste, I promised last night, as you were going to sleep, that I would tell you a story this morning -- did I not? "Oui, Monsieur, oui -- de 'Pigeon's Head.'

"No, Ba'tiste, the 'Pigeon's Egg Head.'

"Well den, Monsieur Cataline, de ' Pigeon Egg's Head.

"No, Ba'tiste, you have it wrong yet. The Pigeon's Egg Head.

"Sacre -- well, 'Pee--jonse--ec--head.'

"Right, Ba'tiste. Now you shall hear the 'Story of the pigeon's Egg Head.

"The Indian name of this man (being its literal translation into the Assinneboin language) was Wi-jun-jon.

"Wat! comment! by Gar (pardon); not Wi-jun-jon, le frere de medouce Wee-ne-on-ka, his du chef Assinneboin? But excusez; go on, s'il vous plait.'

"Wi-jun-jon (the Pigeon's Egg Head) was a brave and a warrior of the Assinneboins -- young -- proud -- handsome -- valiant, and graceful. He had fought many a battle, and won many a laurel. The numerous scalps from his enemies' heads adorned his dress, and his claims were fair and just for the highest honours that his country could bestow upon him: for his father was chief of the nation.

"Le meme! de same -- mon frere-mon am I! Bien, I am compose; go on, Monsieur.

---

“Well, this young Assinneboin, the ‘Pigeon’s Egg- Head,’ was selected by Major Sanford, the Indian Agent, to represent his tribe in a delegation which visited Washington city under his charge in the winter of 1832. With this gentleman, the Assinneboin, together with representatives from several others of those North Western tribes, descended the Missouri river, several thousand miles, on their way to Washington.

“While descending the river in a Mackinaw boat, from the mouth of Yellow Stone, Wi-jun-jon and another of his tribe who was with him, at the first approach to the civilized settlements, commenced a register of the white men’s houses (or cabins), by cutting a notch for each on the side of a pipestem, in order to be able to shew when they got home, how many white men’s houses they saw on their journey. At first the cabins were scarce; but continually as they advanced down the river, more and more rapidly increased in numbers; and they soon found their pipe-stem filled with marks, and they determined to put the rest of them on the handle of a war-club, which they soon got marked all over likewise; and at length, while the boat was moored at the shore for the purpose of cooking the dinner of the party, Wi-jun-jon and his companion stepped into the bushes, and cut a long stick, from which they peeled the bark; and when the boat was again underweight, they sat down, and with much labour, copied the notches on to it from the pipe-stem and club; and also kept adding a notch for every house they passed. This stick was soon filled; and in a day or two several others; when, at last, they seemed much at a loss to know what to do with their troublesome records, until they came in sight of St. Louis, which is a town of 15,000 inhabitants; upon which, after consulting a little, they pitched their sticks overboard into the river!

“I was in St. Louis at the time of their arrival, and painted their portraits while they rested in that place. Wi-jun-jon was the first, who reluctantly yielded to the solicitations of the Indian agent and myself, and appeared as sullen as death in my painting-room -- with eyes fixed like those of a statue, upon me, though his pride had plumed and tinted him in all the freshness and brilliancy of an Indian’s toilet. In his nature’s uncovering pride he stood a perfect model; but superstition had hung a lingering curve upon his lip, and pride had stiffened it into contempt. He had been urged into a measure, against which his fears had pleaded; yet he stood unmoved and unflinching amid the struggles of mysteries that were hovering about him, foreboding ills of every kind, and misfortunes that were to happen to him in consequence of this operation.

“He was dressed in his native costume, which was classic and exceedingly beautiful; his leggings and shirt were of the mountain goat skin, richly garnished with quills of the porcupine, and fringed with locks of scalps, taken from his enemies’ heads. Over these floated his long hair in plaits, that fell nearly to the ground; his head was decked with the war-eagle’s plumes -- his robe was of the skin of the young buffalo bull, richly garnished and emblazoned with the battles of his life; his quiver and bow were slung, and his shield, of the skin of the bull’s neck.

“I painted him in this beautiful dress, and so also the others who were with him; and after I had done, Major Sanford went on to Washington with them, where they spent the winter.

“Wi-jun-jon was the foremost on all occasions--the first to enter the levee -- the first to shake the President’s hand, and make his speech to him--the last to extend the hand to them, but the first to catch the smiles and admiration of the gentler sex. He travelled the giddy maze, and beheld amid the buzzing din of civil life, their tricks of art, their handiworks, and their finery; he visited their principal cities--he saw their forts, their ships, their great guns, steamboats, balloons, &c. &c.; and in the spring returned to St. Louis, where I joined him and his companions on their way back to

---

their own country.

“Through the politeness of Mr. Chouteau, of the American Fur Company, I was admitted (the only passenger except Major Sanford and his Indians) to a passage in their steamboat, on her first trip to the Yellow Stone; and when I had embarked, and the boat was about to depart, Wi-jun-jon made his appearance on deck, in a full suit of regimentals! He had in Washington exchanged his beautifully garnished and classic costume, for a full dress ‘en militaire’. It was, perhaps, presented to him by the President. It was broadcloth, of the finest blue, trimmed with lace of gold; on his shoulders were mounted two immense epaulettes; his neck was strangled with a shining black stock, and his feet were pinioned in a pair of waterproof boots, with high heels, which made him ‘step like a yoked hog.

“Ha-ha-hagh (pardon, Monsieur Calaline, for I am almost laugh) -- well, he was a fine gentleman, ha?”

“On his head was a high-crowned beaver hat, with a broad silver lace band, surmounted by a huge red feather, some two feet high; his coat collar stiff with lace, came higher up than his ears, and over it flowed, down towards his haunches -- his long Indian locks, stuck up in rolls and plaits, with red paint.

“Ha-ha-hagh-agh-ah.

“Hold your tongue, Ba’tiste.

“Well, go on--go on.’

“A large silver medal was suspended from his neck by a blue ribbon -- and across his right shoulder passed a wide belt, supporting by his side a broad sword.

“Diable!”

“On his hands he had drawn a pair of white kid gloves, and in them held, a blue umbrella in one, and a large fan in the other. In this fashion was poor Wi-jun-jon metamorphosed, on his return from Washington; and, in this plight was he strutting and whistling Yankee Doodle, about the deck of the steamer that was wending its way up the mighty Missouri, and taking him to his native land again; where he was soon to light his pipe, and cheer the wigwam fire-side, with tales of novelty and wonder.

“Well, Ba’tiste, I travelled with this new-fangled gentleman until he reached his home, two thousand miles above St. Louis, and I could never look upon him for a moment without excessive laughter, at the ridiculous figure he cut -- the strides, the angles, the stiffness of this travelling beau! Oh Ba’tiste, if you could have seen him, you would have split your sides with laughter; he was -- ‘puss in boots’, precisely!

“By gar, he is good compare! Ha-ha, Monsieur: (pardon) I am laugh: I am see him wen he is arrive in Yellow Stone; you know I was dere. I am laugh much wen he is got off de boat, and all de Assinneboins was dere to look. Oh diable! I am laugh almost to die, I am split I -- suppose he was pretty stiff, ha? ‘cob on spindle,’ ha? Oh, by gar, he is coot pour laugh--pour rire?”

“After Wi-jun-jon had got home, and passed the usual salutations among his friends, he commenced the simple narration of scenes he had passed through, and of things he had beheld among the whites; which appeared to them so much like fiction, that it was impossible to believe them, and they set him down as an impostor. ‘He has been, (they said,) among the whites, who are great liars, and all he has learned is to come home and tell lies.’ He sank rapidly into disgrace in his tribe; his high claims to Political eminence all vanished; he was reputed worthless -- the

greatest liar of his nation; the chiefs shunned him and passed him by as one of the tribe who was lost; yet the ears of the gossiping portion of the tribe were open, and the campfire circle and the wigwam fireside, gave silent audience to the whispered narratives of the 'travelled Indian.'

"The next day after he had arrived among his friends, the superfluous part of his coat, (which was a laced frock), was converted into a pair of leggings for his wife; and his hat-band of silver lace furnished her a magnificent pair of garters. The remainder of the coat, curtailed of its original length, was seen buttoned upon the shoulders of his brother, over and above a pair of leggings of buckskin; and Wi-jun-jon was parading about among his gaping friends, with a bow and quiver slung over his shoulders, which, sans coat, exhibited a fine linen shirt with studs and sleeve buttons. His broadsword kept its place, but about noon, his boots gave way to a pair of garnished moccasins; and in such plight he gossiped away the day among his friends, while his heart spoke so freely and so effectually from the bung-hole of a little keg of whiskey, which he had brought the whole way, (as one of the choicest presents made him at Washington), that his tongue became silent.

"One of his little fair enamoras, or 'catch crumbs', such as live in the halo of all great men, fixed her eyes and her affections upon his beautiful silk braces, and the next day, while the keg was yet dealing out its kindnesses, he was seen paying visits to the lodges of his old acquaintance, swaggering about, with his keg under his arm, whistling Yankee Doodle, and Washington's Grand March; his white shirt, or that part of it that had been flapping in the wind, had been shockingly tithed -- his pantaloons of blue, laced with gold, were razed into a pair of comfortable leggings -- his bow and quiver were slung, and his broad-sword which trailed on the ground, had sought the centre of gravity and taken a position between his legs, and dragging behind him, served as a rudder to steer him over the earth's troubled surface.

"Ha-hah-hah -----ah-----o-----oo-- k, eh bien.

"Two days' revel of this kind, had drawn from his keg all its charms; and in the mellowness of his heart, all his finery had vanished, and all of its appendages, except his umbrella, to which his heart's strongest affections still clung, and with it, and under it, in rude dress of buckskin, he was afterwards to be seen, in all sorts of weather, acting the fop and the beau as well as he could, with his limited means. In this plight, and in this dress, with his umbrella always in his hand, (as the only remaining evidence of his quondam greatness), he began in his sober moments, to entertain and instruct his people, by honest and simple narratives of things and scenes he had beheld during his tour to the East; but which (unfortunately for him), were to them too marvellous and improbable to be believed. He told the gaping multitude, that were constantly gathering about him, of the distance he had travelled--of the astonishing number of houses he had seen--of the towns and cities, with all their wealth and splendour -- of travelling on steamboats, in stages, and on railroads. He described our forts, and seventy-four gun ships, which he had visited -- their big guns -- our great bridges--our great council-house at Washington, and its doings--the curious and wonderful machines in the patent office, (which he pronounced the greatest medicine place he had seen); he described the great war parade, which he saw in the city of New York -- the ascent of the balloon from Castle Garden -- the numbers of the white people, the beauty of the white squaws; their red cheeks, and many thousands of other things, all of which were so much beyond their comprehension, that they 'could not be true' and 'he must be the very greatest liar in the whole world.'"

---

“But he was beginning to acquire a reputation of a different kind. He was denominated a medicine-man, and one too of the most extraordinary character; for they deemed him far above the ordinary sort of human beings, whose mind could invent and conjure up for their amusement, such an ingenious fabrication of novelty and wonder. He steadily and unostentatiously persisted, however, in this way of entertaining his friends and his people, though he knew his standing was affected by it. He had an exhaustless theme to descant upon through the remainder of his life; and he seemed satisfied to lecture all his life, for the pleasure which it gave him. “So great was his medicine, however, that they began, chiefs and all, to look upon him as a most extraordinary being, and the customary honours and forms began to be applied to him, and the respect shewn him, that belongs to all men in the Indian country, who are distinguished for their medicine or mysteries. In short, when all became familiar with the astonishing representations that he made, and with the wonderful alacrity with which ‘he created them,’ he was denominated the very greatest of medicine; and not only that, but the ‘lying medicine.’ That he should be the greatest of medicine, and that for lying, merely, rendered him a prodigy in mysteries that commanded not only respect, but at length, (when he was more maturely heard and listened to) admiration, awe, and at last dread and terror; which altogether must needs conspire to rid the world of a monster, whose more than human talents must be cut down, to less than human measurement.”

‘Wat! Monsieur Cataline, dey av not try to kill him?’

“Yes, Ba’tiste, in this way the poor fellow had lived, and been for three years past continually relating the scenes he had beheld, in his tour to the Far East; until his medicine became so alarmingly great, that they were unwilling he should live; they were disposed to kill him for a wizard. One of the young men of the tribe took the duty upon himself, and after much perplexity, hit upon the following plan, to-witt -- he had fully resolved, in conjunction with others who were in the conspiracy, that the medicine of Wi-jun-jon was too great for the ordinary mode, and that he was so great a liar that a rifle bullet would not kill him; while the young man was in this distressing dilemma, which lasted for some weeks, he had a dream one night, which solved all difficulties; and in consequence of which, he loitered about the store in the Fort, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, until he could procure, by stealth, (according to the injunction of his dream,) the handle of an iron pot, which he supposed to possess the requisite virtue, and taking it into the woods, he there spent a whole day in straightening and filing it, to fit it into the barrel of his gun; after which, he made his appearance again in the Fort, with his gun under his robe, charged with the pot handle, and getting behind poor Wi-jun-jon, whilst he was talking with the Trader, placed the muzzle behind his head and blew out his brains!

“Sacre vengeance! oh, mon Dieu! let me cry -- I shall cry always, for evare Oh he is not true, I hope? no, Monsieur, no!”

“Yes, Ba’tiste, it is a fact: thus ended the days and the greatness, and all the pride and hopes of WI-JUN-JON, the ‘Pigeon’s Egg Head,’ -- a warrior and a brave of the valiant Assiniboins, who travelled eight thousand miles to see the President, and all the great cities of the civilized world; and who, for telling the truth, and nothing but the truth, was, after he got home, disgraced and killed for a wizard.

“Oh, Monsieur Cataline -- I am distress -- I am sick -- I was hope he is not true -- oh I am mortify. Wi-jun-jon was coot Ingin -- he was my bruddare --- eh bien -- eh bien.

“Now, my friend Ba’tiste, I see you are distressed, and I regret exceedingly that it must be so; he

was your friend and relative, and I myself feel sad at the poor fellow's unhappy and luckless fate; for he was a handsome, an honest, and a noble Indian."

"C'est vrais. Monsieur, c'est vrai."

"This man's death, Ba'tiste, has been a loss to himself, to his friends, and to the world; but you and I may profit by it, nevertheless, if we bear it in mind ----

"Oui! yes, Monsr. mais, suppose, 'tis bad wind dat blows nary way, ha?"

"Yes, Ba'tiste, we may profit by his misfortune, if we choose. We may call it 'a caution;' for instance, when I come to write Your book, as you have proposed, the fate of this poor fellow, who was relating no more than what he actually saw, will caution you against the imprudence of telling all that you actually know, and narrating all that you have seen, lest like him you sink into disgrace for telling the truth. You know, Ba'tiste, that there are many things to be seen in the kind of life that you and I have been living for some years past, which it would be more prudent for us to suppress than to tell."

"Oui, Monsieur. Well, suppose, perhaps I am discourage about de book. Ma is, we shall see, ha?"

Thus ended the last night's gossip, and in the cool of this morning, we bid adieu to the quiet and stillness of this wild place, of which I have resolved to give a little further account before we take leave of it.

From the Fall of St. Anthony, my delightful companion (Mr. Wood, whom I have before mentioned) and myself, with our Indian guide, whose name was O-kup-pee, tracing the beautiful shores of the St. Peters river, about eighty miles; crossing it at a place called "Traverse des Sioux", and recrossing it at another point about thirty miles above the mouth of "Terre Bleue", from whence we steered in a direction a little North of West for the "Coteau des Prairies", leaving the St. Peters river, and crossing one of the most beautiful prairie countries in the world, for the distance of one hundred and twenty or thirty miles, which brought us to the base of the Coteau, where we were joined by our kind and esteemed companion Monsieur La Fromboise, as I have before related. This tract of country as well as that along the St. Peters river, is mostly covered with the richest soil, and furnishes an abundance of good water, which flows from a thousand living springs. For many miles we had the Coteau in view in the distance before us, which looked like a blue cloud settling down in the horizon; and we were scarcely sensible of the fact, when we had arrived at its base, from the graceful and almost imperceptible swells with which it commences its elevation above the country around it. Over these swells or terraces, gently rising one above the other, we travelled for the distance of forty or fifty miles, when we at length reached the summit; and from the base of this mound, to its top, a distance of forty or fifty miles, there was not a tree or bush to be seen in any direction, and the ground everywhere was covered with a green turf of grass, about five or six inches high; and we were assured by our Indian guide, that it descended to the West, towards the Missouri, with a similar inclination, and for an equal distance, divested of every thing save the grass that grows, and the animals that walk upon it.

On the very top of this mound or ridge, we found the far-famed quarry or fountain of the Red Pipe, which is truly an anomaly in nature.

The principal and most striking feature of this place, is a perpendicular wall of close-grained, compact quartz, of twenty-five and thirty feet in elevation, running nearly North and South with its face to the West, exhibiting a front of nearly two miles in length, when it disappears at both ends by running under the prairie, which he comes there a little more elevated, and probably cov-

ers it for many miles, both to the North and the South. The depression of the brow of the ridge at this Place has been caused by the wash of a little stream, produced by several springs on the top, a little back from the wall; which has gradually carried away the super-incumbent earth, and having bared the wall for the distance of two miles, is now left to glide for some distance over a perfectly level surface of quartz rock; and then to leap from the top of the wall into a deep basin below, and from thence seek its course to the Missouri, forming the extreme source of a noted and powerful tributary, called the "Big Sioux".

This beautiful wall is horizontal, and stratified in several distinct layers of light grey, and rose or flesh-coloured quartz; and for most of the way, both on the front of the wall, and for acres of its horizontal surface, highly polished or glazed, as if by ignition. At the base of this wall there is a level prairie, of half a mile in width, running parallel to it; in any and all parts of which, the Indians procure the red stone for their pipes, by digging through the soil and several slaty layers of the red stone, to the depth of four or five feet.\*\*\*\*[SEE NOTE] From the very numerous marks of ancient and modern diggings or excavations, it would appear that this place has been for many centuries resorted to for the red stone; and from the great number of graves and remains of ancient fortifications in its vicinity, it would seem, as well as from their actual traditions, that the Indian tribes have long held this place in high superstitious estimation; and also that it has been the resort of different tribes, who have made their regular pilgrimages here to renew their pipes. The red pipe stone, I consider, will take its place amongst minerals, as an interesting subject of itself; and the "Coteau des Prairies" will become hereafter an important theme for geologists; not only from the fact that this is the only known locality of that mineral, but from other phenomena relating to it. The single fact of such a table of quartz, in horizontal strata, resting on this elevated plateau, is of itself (in my opinion) a very interesting subject for investigation; and one which calls upon the scientific world for a correct theory with regard to the time when, and the manner in which, this formation was produced. That it is of a secondary character, and of a sedimentary deposit, seems evident; and that it has withstood the force of the diluvial current, while the great valley of the Missouri, from this very wall of rocks to the Rocky Mountains, has been excavated, and its debris carried to the ocean, there is also not a shadow of doubt; which opinion I confidently advance on the authority of the following remarkable facts:

At the base of the wall, and within a few rods of it, and on the very ground where the Indians dig for the red stone, rests a group of five stupendous boulders of gneiss, leaning against each other; the smallest of which is twelve or fifteen feet, and the largest twenty-five feet in diameter, altogether weighing, unquestionably, several hundred tons. These blocks are composed chiefly of felspar and mica, of an exceedingly coarse grain (the felspar often occurring in crystals of an inch in diameter). The surface of these boulders is in every part covered with a grey moss, which gives them an extremely ancient and venerable appearance, and their sides and angles are rounded by attrition, to the shape and character of most other erratic stones, which are found throughout the country. It is under these blocks that the two holes, or ovens are seen, in which, according to the Indian superstition,

<<<<<NOTE>>>>>

[[[\*\*\*\* From the very many excavations recently and anciently made, I could discover that these layers varied very much, in their thickness in different parts; and that in some places they were overlaid with four or five feet of rock, similar to, and in fact a part of, the lower stratum of the

wall. the two old women, the guardian spirits of the place, reside; of whom I have before spoken.]]]]

<<<<<END OF NOTE>>>>>

That these five immense blocks, of precisely the same character, and differing materially from all other specimens of boulders which I have seen in the great vallies of the Mississippi and Missouri, should have been hurled some hundreds of miles from their native bed, and lodged in so singular a group on this elevated ridge, is truly matter of surprise for the scientific world, as well as for the poor Indian, whose superstitious veneration of them is such, that not a spear of grass is broken or bent by his feet, within three or four rods of them, where he stops, and in humble supplication, by throwing plugs of tobacco to them, solicits permission to dig and carry away the red stone for his pipes. The surface of these boulders are in every part entire and unscratched by anything; wearing the moss everywhere unbroken, except where I applied the hammer, to obtain some small specimens, which I shall bring away with me.

The fact alone, that these blocks differ in character from all other specimens which I have seen in my travels, amongst the thousands of boulders which are strewed over the great valley of the Missouri and Mississippi, from the Yellow Stone almost to the Gulf of Mexico, raises in my mind an unanswerable question, as regards the location of their native bed, and the means by which they have reached their isolated position; like five brothers, leaning against and supporting each other, without the existence of another boulder within many miles of them. There are thousands and tens of thousands of boulders scattered over the prairies, at the base of the COTEAU on either side; and so throughout the valley of the St. Peters and Mississippi, which are also subjects of very great interest and importance to science, inasmuch as they present to the world, a vast variety of characters; and each one, though strayed away from its original position, bears incontestible proof of the character of its native bed. The tract of country lying between the St. Peters river and the Coteau, over which we passed, presents innumerable specimens of this kind; and near the base of the COTEAU they are strewed over the prairie in countless numbers, presenting almost an incredible variety of rich, and beautiful colours; and undoubtedly traceable, (if they can be traced), to separate and distinct beds.

Amongst these beautiful groups, it was sometimes a very easy matter to sit on my horse and count within my sight, some twenty or thirty different varieties, of quartz and granite, in rounded boulders, of every hue and colour, from snow white to intense red, and yellow, and blue, and almost to a jet black; each one well characterized and evidently from a distinct quarry. With the beautiful hues and almost endless characters of these blocks, I became completely surprised and charmed; and I resolved to procure specimens of every variety, which I did with success, by dismounting from my horse, and breaking small bits from them with my hammer; until I had something like an hundred different varieties, containing all the tints and colours of a painter's palette. These, I at length threw away, as I had on several former occasions, other minerals and fossils, which I had collected and lugged along from day to day, and sometimes from week to week.

Whether these varieties of quartz and granite can all be traced to their native beds, or whether they all have origins at this time exposed above the earth's surface, are equally matters of much doubt in my mind. I believe that the geologist may take the different varieties, which he may gather at the base of the Coteau in one hour, and travel the Continent of North America all over without being enabled to put them all in place; coming at last to the unavoidable conclusion,

that numerous chains or beds of primitive rocks have reared their heads on this Continent, the summits of which have been swept away by the force of diluvial currents, and their fragments jostled together and strewed about, like foreigners in a strange? land, over the great vallies of the Mississippi and Missouri, where they will ever remain, and be gazed upon by the traveller, as the only remaining evidence of their native beds, which have again submerged or been covered with diluvial deposits.

There seems not to be, either on the Coteau or in the great vallies on either side, so far as I have travelled, any slaty or other formation exposed above the surface on which grooves or scratches can be seen, to establish the direction of the diluvial currents in those regions; yet I think the fact is pretty clearly established by the general shapes of the vallies, and the courses of the mountain ridges which wall them in on their sides.

The Coteau des Prairies is the dividing ridge between the St. Peters and Missouri rivers; its southern termination or slope is about in the latitude of the Fall of St. Anthony, and it stands equi-distant between the two rivers; its general course bearing two or three degrees West of North for the distance of two or three hundred miles, when it gradually slopes again to the North, throwing out from its base the bend-waters and tributaries of the St. Peters, on the East. The Red River, and other streams, which empty into Hudson's Bay, on the North; La Riviere Jaque and several other tributaries to the Missouri, on the West; and the Red Cedar, the Iowa and the Des Moines, on the South.

This wonderful feature, which is several hundred miles in length, and varying from fifty to a hundred in width, is, perhaps, the noblest mound of its kind in the world; it gradually and gracefully rises on each side, by swell after swell, without tree, or bush or rock (save what are to be seen in the vicinity of the Pipe Stone Quarry), and everywhere covered with green grass, affording the traveller, from its highest elevations, the most unbounded and sublime views of -- nothing at all -- save the blue and boundless ocean of prairies that lie beneath and all around him, vanishing into azure in the distance without a speck or spot to break their softness.

The direction of this ridge, I consider, pretty clearly establishes the course of the diluvial cut-rent in this region, and the erratic stones which are distributed along its base, I attribute to an origin several hundred miles North West from the Coteau. I have not myself traced the Coteau to its highest points, nor to its Northern extremity; but it has been a subject, on which I have closely questioned a number of traders, who have traversed every mile of it with their carts, and from thence to Lake Winnipeg on the North, who uniformly tell me, that there is no range of primitive rocks to be crossed in travelling the whole distance, which is one connected and continuous prairie.

The top and sides of the COTEAU are everywhere strewed over the surface with granitic sand and pebbles, which, together with the fact of the five boulders resting at the Pipe Stone Quarry, shew clearly that every part of the ridge has been subject to the action of these currents, which could not have run counter to it, without having disfigured or deranged its beautiful symmetry.

The glazed or polished surface of the quartz rocks at the Pipe Stone Quarry, I consider a very interesting subject, and one which will excite hereafter a variety of theories, as to the manner in which it has been produced, and the causes which have led to such singular results. The quartz is of a close grain, and exceedingly hard, eliciting the most brilliant spark from steel; and in most places, where exposed to the sun and the air, has a high polish on its surface, entirely beyond any

results which could have been produced by diluvial action, being perfectly glazed as if by ignition. I was not sufficiently particular in my examinations to ascertain whether any parts of the surface of these rocks under the ground, and not exposed to the action of the air, were thus affected, which would afford an important argument in forming a correct theory with regard to it; and it may also be a fact of similar importance, that this polish does not extend over the whole wall or area; but is distributed over it in parts and sections, often disappearing suddenly, and reappearing again, even where the character and exposure of the rock is the same and unbroken. In general, the parts and points most projecting and exposed, bear the highest polish, which would naturally be the case whether it was produced by ignition, or by the action of the air and sun. It would seem almost an impossibility, that the air passing these projections for a series of centuries, could have produced so high a polish on so hard a substance; and it seems equally unaccountable, that this effect could have been produced in the other way, in the total absence of all igneous matter.

I have broken off specimens and brought them home, which certainly bear as high a polish and luster on the surface, as a piece of melted glass; and then as these rocks have undoubtedly been formed where they now lie, it must be admitted, that this strange effect on their surface has been produced either by the action of the air and sun, or by igneous influence; and if by the latter course, there is no other conclusion we can come to, than that these results are volcanic; that this wall has once formed the side of a crater, and that the Pipe Stone, laying in horizontal strata, is formed of the lava which has issued from it. I am strongly inclined to believe, however, that the former supposition is the correct one; and that the Pipe Stone, which differs from all known specimens of lava, is a new variety of steatite, and will be found to be a subject of great interest and one worthy of a careful analysis.

With such notes and such memorandums on this shorn land, whose quiet and silence are only broken by the winds and the thunders of Heaven, I close my note-book, and we this morning saddle our horses; and after wending our way to the "Thunders' Nest" and the "Stone-man Medicine," we shall descend into the valley of the St. Peters, and from that to the regions of civilization; from whence, if I can get there, you will hear of me again. Adieu.

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

Nappa April 17, 1871

“According to promis I will now attempt to give you a short detail of life and incidents of my trip in & through the Rocky Mountains in the years 1824-25, 26, 27, 28 and a portion of 1829

“Haveing been imployed in Public Surveys in the state of Illinois through the winter of 1823 and the early part of 24 I came to St Louis about the first of February to ricieve pay for past services and rimaining there Some days I heard a report that general William H Ashly was engaging men for a Trip to the mouth of the Yellow Stone river I made enquiry as to what was the object but found [pg2] no person who seemed to possess the desired information finding whare Ashleys dwelling was I called on him the same evening Several Gentlemen being present he invited me to call again on a certain evening which I did he then gave a lenthly account of game found in that Region Deer, elk, Bear and Buffalo but to crown all immense Quantities of Beaver whose skins ware verry valuable selling from \$5 to 8\$ per pound at that time in St Louis and the men he wished to engage ware to huters trappers and traders for furs and peltrees my curiosity now being satisfied St Louis being a fine place for Spending money I did not leave immediately not having spent all my funds I loitered about without (without) employment

“Haveing fomed a Slight acquaintance with Mr Ashley we occasionally passed each other on the streets at length one day Meeting him he told me he had been looking for me a few days back and enquiredd as to my employment I informed him that I was entirely unemployed he said he wished then that I would assist him ingeaging men t for his Rocky mountain epedition and he wished me to call at his housse in the evening [pg3] which I accordingly did getting instrutions as to whare I would most probably find men willing to engage which found in grog Shops and other sinks of degredation he rented a house & furnished it with provisions Bread from to Bakers -- pork plenty, which the men had to cook for themselves

“On the 8th of March 1824 all things ready we shoved off from the shore fired a swivel which was answered by a Shout from the shore which we returned with a will and porceed up stream under sail

“A discription of our crew I cannt give but Fallstafs Battallion was genteel in comparison I think we had about (70) seventy all told Two Keel Boats with crews of French some St Louis gumboes as they were called

“We proceeded slowly up the Missouri River under sail wen winds ware favourable and towline when not Towing or what was then calld cordell is a slow and tedious method of assending swift waters It is done by the men walking on the shore and hawling the Boat by a long cord Nothing of importance came under view for some months except loosing men who left us from time to time & engaging a few new men of a much better appearance than those we lost The Missourie is a monotonous crooked stream with large cottonwood forest trees on one side and small young groth on the other with a bare Sand Barr intervening I will state one circumstance only which will show something of the character of Missourie Boats men

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

[pg4]”The winds are occasionally very strong and when head winds prevail we were forced to lay by this circumstance happened once before we left the Settlements the men went out gunning and that night came in with plenty of game Eggs Fowls Turkeys and what not Having a fire on shore they dressed cooked and eat until midnight being care full to burn all the fragments the wind still Blowing in the morning several Neighbours came in hunting for poultry liberty was given to search the boats but they found nothing and left the wind abateing somewhat the cord was got out and pulling around a bend the wind became a fair sailing breeze and were ordered unfurled when out dropped pigs and poultry in abundance

“A man was ordered to Jump in the skiff and pick up the pigs and poultry

“Arriving at Council Bluffs we made several exchanges (8) eight or Ten of our men enlisting and 2 or 3 of the Soldier whose was nearly expired engaging with us The officers being very liberal furnished us with a Quantity of vegetables here we leave the last appearance of civilization and fully Indian country game becoming more plenty we furnished ourselves with meat daily

“But I pass on to the arickaree villages where we met with our defeat on arriving in sight of the villages the barr in front was lined with squaws packing up water thinking to have to stand a siege

[pg5]”For a better understanding it is necessary that I state that the Missouri fur company have established a small trading house some (60) or (80) miles below the arickaree villages the winter previous to our ascent and the arickarees having taken some Sioux squaws prisoners previously one of these Squaws got away from them and made for this trading post and they pursuing come near overtaking her in sight of the post the men in the house ran out and fired on the Pursuing arickarees killing (2) others so that Rees considered war was fully declared between them and the whites But Genl. Ashley thought he could make them understand that his was not responsible for Injuries done by the Missouri fur company But the Rees could not make the distinction they however agreed to receive pay for their loss but the general would make them a present but would not pay the Missouri fur companies damages

“After one days talk they agreed to open trade on the sand bar in front of the village but the only article of Trade they wanted was ammunition For fear of a difficulty, the boats were kept at anchor in the stream, and the skiffs were used for communications Between the boats and the shore. we obtained twenty horses in three days trading, but in doing this we gave them a fine supply of Powder and ball which on fourth day we found out to Sorrow

“In the night of the third day Several of our men without permission went and remained in the village amongst them our Interpreter Mr Rose about midnight he came running into camp & informed us that one of our men was killed in the village and war was declared in earnest We had no Military organization discipline or Subordination Several advised to cross over the river at once but thought best to wait until day light But Genl. Ashley our employer Thought best to wait till morning and go into the village and demand the body of our comrade and his Murderer Ashley

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

being the most interested his advice prevailed We laid on our arms expecting an attack as their was a continual Hubbub in the village

“At length morning appeared every thing still undecided finally one shot was fired into our camp the distance being however to great for certain aim Shortly firing became Quite general we seeing nothing to fire at Here let me give a Short discription of an Indian City or village as it is usually cald Picture to your self (50) or (100) large potatoe holes as they are usuly caled in the west (10) to (15) feet in diameter and 8 to 10 feet high in the center covered on the outside with small willow brush then a (a) layer of coarse grass a coat of earth over all a hole in one side for a door and another in the top to let out the smoke a small fire in the center all Told The continual wars between them and Sioux had caused them to picket in their place You will easely prceive that we had little else to do than to Stand on a bear sand barr and be shot at, at long range Their being seven or Eigh hundred guns in village and we having the day previously furnished them with abundance of Powder and Ball many calls for the boats to come ashore and take us on board but no prayers or threats had the the Boats men being completely Parylized Several men being wounded a skiff was brought ashore all rushed for the Skiff and came near sinking it but it went the boat full of men and water the shot still coming thicker and the aim better we making a brest work of our horses (most) they nerly all being killed the skiffs having taken sevarl loads on Board the boats at length the shot coming thicker and faster one of the skids (was turned) was let go the men clambering on Boad let the skiff float off in their great eaganess to conceal themselves from the rapid fire of the enemy I seeing no hopes of Skiffs or boats comeing ashore left my hiding place behind a dead hors, ran up stream a short distance to get the advantage of the current and coricieving myself to be a tolerable strong swimer stuck the muzzle of my rifle in belt the lock ove my head with all my clothes on but not having made sufficien calculation for the strong current was carried passed the boat within a few feet of the same one Mr Thomas Eddie but the shot coming thick he did not venture from behin the cargo Box and so could not reach me with a setting pole which held in his hands Kowing now or at thinking that I had the river to swim my first aim was to rid myself of all my encumbraces and my Rifle was the greatest in my attempt to draw it over my head it sliped down the lock ketching in my belt comeing to the surface to breathe I found it hindred worse that it did at first making one more effort I turned the lock side ways and it sliped through which gave me some relief but still finding myself to much encumbred I next unbucled my belt and let go my Pistols still continueing to disengage my self I next let go my Ball Pouch and finally one Sleeve of my Hunting shirt which was buckskin and held an immense weight of water when rising to the surface I heard the voice of encoragemnt saying hold on Clyman I will soon relieve you This Reed Gibson who had swam in and caught the skiff the men had let go afloat and was but a few rods from me I was so much exausted that he had to haul me into the skiff wh I lay for a moment to cacth breath when I arose to take the only remaing ore when Gibson caled oh, god I am shot and fell forward in the skiff I encouraged him and Perhaps not fatally give a few pulls more and we will be out of reach he raised and gave sevreral more strokes with the oar using it as a paddle when coplained of feeling faint when he fell forward again and I took his plac in the stern and shoved it across to the East shore whare we landed I hauled the skiff up on the shore and told Gibson to remain in the Skiff and I would go upon the high land whare I could see if any danger beset us thair.

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

After getting up on the river bank and looking around I Discovered sevral Indian in the water swimming over of whom ware nearly across the stream I spoke to Gibson telling him of the circumstance he nearly said (said) save yourself Clyman and pay no attention to me as I am a dead man and they can get nothing of me but my Scalp My first Idea was to get in the skiff and meet them in the water and brain them with the oar But on second look I com-concluded there ware to many of them and they ware too near the shore then I looked for some place to hide But there being onley a scant row of brush along the shore I concluded to take to the open Pararie and run for life by this time Gibson had scrambled up the bank and stood by my side and said run Clyman but if you escape write to my friends in Virginia and tell them what has become of me I for the open Prarie and Gibson for the brush to hide At first I started a little distance down the river but fearing that I might be heading in some bend I steered directly for the open Prarie and looking Back I ssaw three Inians mount the bank being intirely divested of garments excepting a belt around the waist containing a Knife and Tomahawk and Bows and arrows in their They made but little halt and started after me One to the right the other to the left while the third took direct after me I took direct for the rising ground I think about three - miles of there being no chanc for dodging the ground being smooth and level but haveing the start of some 20 or 30 rods we had appearantle an even race for about one hour when I began to have the palpitation of the heart and I found my man was gaining on me I had now arived at a moderately roling ground and for the first time turned a hill out of sight I turned to the right and found a hole wased in the earth some 3 feet long 1 1/2 feet wide and Pehaps 2 feet deep with weeds and grass perhaps one foot high surrounding it into this hole I droped and persuer immediatle hove in sight and passed me about fifty yards distant both my right an left hand persuers haveing fallen cosiderably in the rear and particularly the one on my right here fortune favoured me for my direct persuer soon passed over some uneven ground got out of sight when I arose and taking to the right struck into a low ground which covered me and following it soon came into a moderately steep ravine in all this time I gained breath and I did not see my persuers until I gained the top of the ridge over a Quarter of a mile from my friend when I gained this elevation I turned around the three standing near together I made them a low bow with both my hand and thanked god for my present Safety and diliveranc

“But I did not remain long here wishing to put the gratest possible distance between me and the Arrickarees I still continued Southward over a smoothe roling ground But what ware my reflection being at least Three Hundred miles from any assistanc unarmed and uprovided with any sort of means of precureing a subsistance not even a pocket Knife I began to feel after passing So many dangers that my propects ware still verry slim, mounting some high land I saw ahed of me the river and Quite a grove of timber and being verry thirsty I made for the water intending to take a good rest in the timber I took one drink of water and setting down on a drift log a few minuits I chanced to look the and here came the boats floating down the stream the watcing along the shores saw me about as soon as I saw them the boat was laid in and I got aboard

“I spoke of my friend Gibson whe I was informed he was on board I immediately wen to the cabin where he lay but he did not recognize me being in the agonies of Death the shot having passed through his bowels I could not refrain from weeping over him who lost his lifee but saved mine

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

he did not live but an hour or so and we buried him that evening the onley one of (12) that ware killed at the arrickarees Eleven being left on the sand bar and their Scalps taken for the squaws to sing and dance over.

“Before meeting with this defeat I think few men had Stronger Ideas of their bravery and disregard of fear than I had but standing on a bear and open sand barr to be shot at from behind a picketed Indian village was more than I had contacted for and some what cooled my courage before leaving the grave of my friend Gibson that before I had an oppertunity of writing to his friends I forgot his post office and so never have written We fell down a few miles and lay by several day to wait and if any more men had escaped the buthery when on the third or fourth day Jack Larisson came to us naked as when he was born and the skin peeling off of him from the effects of the sun he was wounded a ball passing through the fleshy part of one thigh and ldg- ing in the other the ball was easily exticated and in a few (a few) days he was hobbling around Larrisson had lain between two dead horses untill the boats left and he saw no other chance of escape but to swim the river then divesting himself of all his clothing he took the water the Indians came running and firing at his head but escaped without further injury the wound Before mentioned he had recieved in the early part of the battle if it can be called Battle supposing no more men had survived the slaughte we again dropped down the river

“And landed under the side of an Isle and two men ware sent up to the mouth of the yellowstone and one boat containing the wounded and discouraged was sent down to Council bluffs with orders to continue to St Louis This being the fore part of June here we lay for Six weeks or two months living on scant and frquentle no rations allthrough game was plenty on the main Shore perhaps it was my fault in greate measure for several of us being allowed to go on Shore we ware luckey enough to get Several Elk each one packing meat to his utmost capacity there came on a brisk shower of rain Just before we reached the main shore and a brisk wind arising the men on the (men on the) boat would not bring the skiff and take us on board the bank being bear and no timber neare we ware suffering with wet and cold I went off to the nearest timber made a fire dried and warmed myself laid down and went to sleep in the morning looking around I saw a fine Buck in easy gun shot and I succeeded in Killing him then I was in town plenty of wood plenty of water and plenty of nice fat venison nothing to do but cook and eat here I remained untill next morning then taking a good back load to the landing whare I met several men who had Just landed for the purpose of hunting for me after this I was scarcely ever allowed to go ashore for I might never return

“In proecess of time news came that Col. Livenworth with Seven or eight hundred Sioux Indians ware on the rout to Punnish the Arrickarees and (18) or (20) men came down from the Yellow Stone who had gone up the year prevous these men came in Canoes (came in canoes) and passed the Arrickarees in the night we ware now landed on the main Shore and allowed more liberty than hertofore (at) Col. Levenworth about (150) men the remnant of the (6) Regiment came and Shortly after Major Pilcher with the Sioux Indians (Indians) amounting to 5 or 600 warriors and (18) or 20 engagies of the Missourie furr Company and a grand feast was held and speches made by whites and Indians

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

“After 2 days talk a feast and an Indian dance we proceeded up stream Some time toward the last of August we came near the arrickaree villages again a halt was made arms examined amunition distributed and badges given to our friends the Sioux which consisted of a strip of white muslin bound around the head to distinguish friends from foes

“The third day in the afternoon being 2 or three miles from the villages the Sioux made a breake being generally mounted they out went us although we ware put to the double Quick and when we arived the plain was covered with Indians which looked more like a swarm bees than a battle field they going in all possible directions the Rees having mounted and met the Sioux a half mile from their pickets But as soon as we came in sight the Rees retreated into their village the boats came up and landed a short half mile below the village but little efort was mad that afternoon except to surround the Rees and keep them from leaveing the Sioux coming around one side and the whites around the other Quite a number of dead Indians streued over the plain I must here notice the Bravery of one Sioux a Ree ventured out some distance from the pickets and held some tantalizeing conversation with the Sioux, one Siox on a fast horse approached him slowly Still bantering each other to approach nearer at length the Sioux Put whip to his horse taking directly for the Ree and run him right up to the then firing at full speed wheeled to retreat the Rees inside of the pickets firing some 40 or 50 of them covered him completely in smoke but Sioux and his horse came out safe and the Rees horse went in through the gate without a rider the Rees friends came out and carried in the man Several Rees lay dead and one in long shot (shot) of the pickets the old Sioux chief Brought one of his wives up with a war club who struck the corps a number of blow with club he tantalizeing the Rees all the time for their cowardice in comeing out to defend thair dead comrad and allowing his Squaws to strike their braves in gunshot of their village a common habit of the Indians in war is the first man that comes to the body of a dead enemy is to take his Scalp the second will take off his right hand the third his left the fourth his right foot the fifth his Left foot and hang thes trophies around their necks to shew how near they ware to the death of their enemy on the field of Battle and in this case a member of our Sioux shewed Trophies one more circumstance and I am done one large middle aged Sioux blonged to the grizzle Bear medicine came on hand feet to the body of a dead Ree in the attitude of a grzzly Bear snorting and mimican the bear in all his most vicious attitudes and with his teeth tore out mouth fulls of flesh from the breast of the dead body of the Ree

“But I will not tire you with details of the savage habits of Indians to their enimies but I will merely state that it is easy to make a savage of a civilised man but impossible to make a civilised man of a savage in one Generation

“The third day in the afternoon one of the Ree chiefs came out alone offering terms of peace a Schedule was drawn up to be confirmed on the morrow in a half hour after this was undestood our Sioux packed up and ware out of sight also the most of the Missourie companies men

“The night was Quiet but the two previous we had a lively picture of pandimonium the waing of squaws and children the Screams and yelling of men the firing of guns the awful howling

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

of dogs the neighing and braying of hosses and mules with the hooting of owls of which thy a number all intermingled with the stench of dead men and horses made the place the most (most) disagreeable that immaginnation could fix Short of the bottomless pit In the morning however our Quiet night was easily accounted for the Rees having dserted thair village early in the night previous a few men with an Interpeter ware sent forward to hunt them up and bring them back they returned about noon not being able to overtake them one circumstanc I must not omit to mention Captain Riley since General Riley who gave California her constituon was present and in command of company of Company A..6th Regiment and requested pemition to lead a forlorn hope into the villag but was denied that honour he then became allmost furious and swore that he demande the prviledge stating that they had been laying at garison at Council Bluffs for 8 or 10 years doeing nothing but eating pumpkins and now a small chance for promotion occured and it was denied him and might not occur again for the next 10 yeares (again)

“We Remained one night more in our stinking disageeable camp when we loosed cable and dropped down stream 4 men of our mountanier corps was left behind and in an hour after we left a great smoke arose and the acursd village was known to be on fire three Squaw 2 verry old and feebe and one sick and unabe to move ware found to have been left as not worth caring for these ware removed into a lodge which was preserved Col. Levenworth had given special orders that the village be left unmolested & ordered the boats landed and role called to ascertain who if any ware missing the sargent called over the roles rapidly and reported all present then it must be Souix

“We having to hunt for our living we soon fell behind the Col. and his corps dropping down to a place called fort Keawa a trading establishment blonging to Missouriie furr Company

“Here a small company of I think (13) men ware furnished a few horses onley enough to pack their baggage they going back to the mouth of the yellow Stone on their way up they ware actacted in the night by a small party of Rees killing two of thier men and they killing one Ree amongst this party was a Mr Hugh Glass who could not be rstrand and kept under Subordination he went off of the line of march one afternoon and met with a large grissly Bear which he shot at and wounded the bear as is usual attached Glass he attemptd to climb a tree but the bear caught him and hauled to the ground tearing and lacerating his body in feareful rate by this time several men ware in close gun shot but could not shoot for fear of hitting Glass at length the beare appeaed to be satisfied and turned to leave when 2 or 3 men fired the bear turned immediately on glass and give him a second mutilation on turning again several more men shot him when for the third time he pounced on Glass and fell dead over his body this I have from information not being present here I leave Glass for the presen we having bought a few horses and borrowed a few more left about the last of September and proceded westward over a dry roling highland a Elleven in number I must now mention honorable exceptions to the character of the men engaged at St Louis being now thined down to onley nine of those who left in March and first Jededdiah Smith who was our Captain Thomas Fitzpatrick William L. Sublett and Thomas Eddie all of which will figure more or less in the future in evening we camped on White clay Creek a small stream running thick with a white sediment and resembling cream in appearance

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

but of a sweetish pugenst taste our guide warned us from using this water too freely as caused excessive costiveness which we soon found out

“We proceeded up this stream one day not in sight since we left the Missouri part of the next day same when our guide informed us to take what water we could as we would not reach water until about noon the next day our means of taking water being very small we trailed on until dark and camped on a ridge where the cactus was so thick that we could scarcely find room to spread our Blankets Starting early about 11 o'clock we arrived at our expected water But behold it was entirely dry not even dam mud to be found but here we found a few Shrubby oaks to protect us from the scorching sun We rested perhaps half an hour 15 miles to the water yet and being all on foot and a pack horse to lead can we if we hold out reach it before dark we urged and hauled our stubborn horses along as fast as possible our guide getting a long way ahead and finely out of sight my pack horse being more tractable than most others I soon got ahead of my companions and we got strung out a mile in (length) the country some what rolling and one steering off to the right or left in search of water we were not only long but wide and it appeared like we might never all collect together again I followed as near as possible the last appearance of our guide but deviating slightly to the right struck on a hole water about an hour before sunset I fired my gun immediately and then ran into the pool arm deep my horse following me

“Coming out I fired my gun again one man and horse made their appearance the horse outran the man plunging into the water first each man as he came fired his gun and Shouted as soon as he could moisten his mouth and throat sufficiently to make a noise about dark we all got collected except two who had given out and were left buried in the sand all but their heads Capt Smith Being the last who was able to walk and he took some water and rode about 2 miles back bringing up the exhausted men which he had buried in the sand and this two days of thirst and Starvation was made to cross a large bend of the white clay River in the morning we found it yet 4 or 5 miles to the river where our guide waiting for us I have been thus particular in describing the means and troubles of traveling in a barren and unknown region here our River is a beautiful clear stream running over a gravelly bottom with some timber along its course having from its bed of mud and ashes for the sediment spoken of is nearer its mouth Continued up the valley of this stream to Sioux encampment of the Bois Brulie tribe where we remained several days trading for Horses and finally obtained 27 or 28 which gave us 2 horses to each man and two or three spare animals so far the country is dry not fit for cultivation (There may) However there may be and probably is better soil and better grazing higher up amongst the hills as it certainly grew better (was) the farther we proceeded up the stream and there was an increase of Shrubbery and soil Likewise here our guide left us to return with the Horses we had borrowed of the Missouri Fur Company.

“We packed up and crossed the White Clay river and proceeded north westerly over a dry rolling Country for several days meeting with a Buffalo now and then which furnished us with provision for at least one meal each day our luck was to fall in with the Ojibwa tribe of Sioux where traded a few more horses and swapped some of our more ordinary

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

“Country nearly the same short grass and plenty of cactus untill we crossed the Chienne River a few miles below where it leaves the Black Hill range of Mountains here some aluvial lands look like they might bear cultivation we did not keep near enough to the hills for a rout to travel on and again fell into a tract of county where no vegetation of any kind existed being worn into knobs and gullies and extremely uneven a loose grayish coloured soil verry soluble in water running thick as it could move of a pale whitish coular and remarkably adhesive there on a misty rain while we were in this pile of ashes and it loded down our horses feet (feet) in great lumps it looked a little remarkable that not a foot of level land could be found the narrow revines going in all manner of directions and the cobble mound of a regular taper from top to bottom all of them of the percise same angle and the tops share the whole of this region is moveing to the Misourie River as fast as rain and thawing of Snow can carry it by enclining a little to the west in a few hours we got on to smoothe ground and soon cleared ourselves of mud at length we arived at the foot of the black Hills which rises in verry slight elevation about the common plain we entered a pleasant undulating pine Region cool and refreshing so different from the hot dusty planes we have been so long passing over and here we found hazlenuts and ripe plumbs a luxury not expected We had one two day travel over undulating Pine with here and there an open glade of rich soill and fine grass but assinding the Ridges unill we arived near the summet our rout became brushy mainly Scruby pine and Juniper the last covered in purple berries comencing our desent the ravines became steep and rugged an rockey the waters flowing westward we suposed we ware on the waters of Powder river one evening late gowing dwn a small stream we came into a Kenyon and pushed ouselves down so far that (that) our horses had no room to turn while looking for a way out it became dark by unpacking and leading our animals down over Slipery rocks three of us got down to a nce open glade where we killed a Buffaloe and fared Sumpiously that night while the rest of the Company remained in the Kenyon without room to lie down we now found it would not do to follow down any stream in these moutains as we ware shure to meet with rocky inaccessible places So with great exertion we again assended to the top of a ridge and ware Quite lucky in gitting a main devide which led us a considerable distance before had to desend again but this portion of the mountain fumished our horses with no food and they began to be verry poor and weak so we left 3 men and five horses behind to recruit while the rest of us proceded on there being some sighn of Beaver in the vicinity and hoping to soon find more where we Might all Stop for a time The Crow Indians being our place of destination a half Breed by the name of Rose who spoke the crow tongue was dispatched ahead to find the Crows and try to induce some of them to come to our assistance we to travel directly west as near as circumstances would permit supposing we ware on the waters of Powder River we ought to be within the bounds of the Crow country continueing five days travel since leaveing our given out horses and likewise Since Rose left us late in the afternoon while passing through a Brushy bottom a large Grssely came down the vally we being in single file men on foot leding pack horses he struck us about the center then turning ran paralel to our line Capt. Smith being in the advanc he ran to the open ground and as he immerged from the thicket he and the bear met face to face Grissly did not hesitate a moment but sprung on the capt taking him by the head first pitcing sprawling on the earth he gave him a grab by the middle fortunately cathing by the ball pouch and Butcher Kife which he broke but breaking several of his ribs and cutting his head badly none of us having any sugical Knowledge what

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

was to be done one Said come take hold and he wuld say why not you so it went around I asked Capt what was best he said one or 2 for water and if you have a needle and thread git it out and sew up my wounds around my head which was bleeding freely I got a pair of scissors and cut off his hair and then began my first Job of dessing wounds upon examination I the bear had taken nearly all his head in his capcious mouth close to his left eye on one side and clos to his right ear on the other and laid the skull bare to near the crown of the head leaving a white streak whare his teeth passed one of his ears was torn from his head out to the outer rim after stitching all the other wounds in the best way I was capabl and according to the captains directions the ear being the last I told him I could do nothing for his Eare 0 you must try to stich up some way or other said he then I put in my needle stiching it through and through and over and over laying the lacerated parts together as nice as I could with my hands water was found in about ame mille when we all moved down and encamped the captain being able to mount his horse and ride to camp whare we pitched a tent the onley one we had and made him as comfortable as circumtances would permit this gave us a lisson on the charcter of the grissly Baare which we did not forget I now a found time to ride around and explore the immediate surroundings of our camp and ascertained that we ware still on the waters of shiann river which heads almost in the eastern part of the Black hill range taking a western course for a long distance into an uneven vally whare a large portion of (of) the waters are sunk or absorbd then turning short to the east it enters the Black hill rang though a narrow Kenyon in appeareantly the highest and most abrupt part of the mountain enclosed in immense cliffs of the most pure and Beautifull black smooth and shining and perhaps five hunded to one thousand feet high how this slate extends I cannot tell We passe through this slate Quarry about 2 miles and one of the men observed here or at some such place Mosses must have obtained the plates or tables on which the declogue was inscirobed some miles farther west I visited place of a different character containing Quite a grove of Petrifid timber standing laying and inclining at various angles one stub in Peticular wa so high that I could barely lay my hand on the top sitting in the saddle the body and main branches scatered on the ground dismouted and picked up several fragments which ware so hard so to bring fire fom steel A mountaneer named Harris being St Louis some yers after undertook to describe some of the strange things seen in the mountains spoke of this petrified grove in a restaurant whare a caterer for one of the dailys was preset and the next morning his exagerated statement came out saying a petrified forest was lately dicovered whare the trees branches leaves and all were perfect and the small birds sitting on them with their mouths open singing at the time of their transformation to stone This is a fine country for game Buffaloe Elk Bare deer antelope &c likewise it produces some Hazel nuts Plumbs white thorn Berries wild currant large and of fine flavour and abundance of nutricious grass and some land that would bear cultivation after remaining here ten days or 2 weeks the capt. Began to ride out a few miles and as winter was rapidly approaching we began to make easy travel west ward and Struck the trail of Shian Indians the next day we came to their village traded and swaped a few horses with them and continued our march across a Ridge mountains not steep & rocky (in general) but smooth and grassy in general with numerous springs and brook of pure water and well stocked with game dsending this ridge we came to the waters of Powder River Running West and north country mountainous and some what rocky

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

“Rose with 15 or 16 Crow Indians came to our camp as soon as we raised a fire in the evening they had been watching for two days passed to assure themselves that no Shians were with us they and the Shians being at war they the Crows brought us several spare Horses which relieved our Broke down animals and gave us a chance to ride but they caused us to travel to fast for our poor horses and so Capt Smith gave them what they could pack sending Rose with them and we followed at our own gait stoping and Traping for beaver occasionly Crossing several steep and high ridges which in any other country would be called mountains Crossed Shell river Quite a stream running into the bighorn as I believe the mountains here do not appear to have any rigular direction but run in all directions are tolerable high but not generall precipitous Before laving this perticular Region I think it the Best Supplied with game of any we passe through in all our Travels and therefore do not wonder that the Indian would not give it up and if it is not too cold there some soil that will bear cultivation we ware there through the month of November the nights war frosty but the days ware generally warm and pleasant on Tongue river we struck the trail of the (of the) Crow Indians Passed over another ridge of mountains we came on to Wind River which is merely another name for the Big horn above the Big horn Mountain the most of this Region is barren and worthless if my recollection is right from the heads of the Shian untill we came on to Wind river we ware Bountiffully supplied with game but here we found none at all two causes may be assigned for this first the country not being well supplied naturely an Second the Crows haveing passed recntly through they had killed and drove off all the game in our reach our meals being few and far between our only hope being to push a head and overtake the Crow village The weather being cold and blustry and I thought the River was well named slight Snows and Strong north winds prevailed continually our horses and urselves became completely exhausted before we reached the main Encampment Still passing up Wind river untill we came immediatly north of Freemont peak on the Wind River Mountain, whare we halted for the winter. The vally is here narrow and uneven but tolerable well set in grass and Buffalo plenty at the time of our arival several grand hunts taking place which being the first I had witnessed I will attempt to give some description the whole grown male population turning out Early in the morning and taking rank along on each side of a narrow vally those on fleetest horses taking a circuit and getting behind a large herd Bufflo drove them pell mell down the vally those Stationed on the sides falling in as they passed they run down the Buffaloe so that old and slow could catch them and even men on foot Killed them with Bow and Arrow the Squaws old men and children following and Buchering and secureing meat and skins as fast as possible the night after this grand hunt not more than half the people came in to camp they remaining out to watch the wolves fom the meat untill they could get it packed in dying now commenced on a grand scale and wood was in demand

“In a few days we moved a short distance to whare wood was more plenty and had another gran hunt after which individuals ware allowed to hunt at their pleasure all though this vally is in heart of the rocky Mountain range Snow did not fall deep and every Clear day it thawed whare the sun struck fairly In the second grand chase I did not go out on horseback as in the first but took it on foot with the foot men the day being too cold for pleasant riding we proceeded to the lower part of the vally whare the stream that passes through the vally enters a narrow Kenyon it being 6 or 7 miles from whare the race commenced and standing on a cliff nealy ove the

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

buffaloe we had rare Sport shooting them on enquiry as to how many were slaughtered that day every one said a thousand or upwards thi I did not dispute thinking it fell near the fact myself and about 20 Indians who stood on the rocks of Kenyon Killed Seventy by my own count It is remarkable the amount of cold these Crows can withstand I have frequently seen them dozens of them runing bufaloe on horseback for hours together all their bodies naked down to the belt around their waists and dismount with but a slight trimble and many of them take a bath every morning even whn the hoar frost was flying thick in the air and it was necessary to cut holes in the ice to get at the water

“They put their children to all kinds of hardships and the femals in particular pack the littl girls and dogs when on march the whole employment of the males being hunting and war and at the time we were there at least one third of the warriors were out in war parties in different directions they being in a state of warfare with all the neighbouring tribes in February we made an effort to cross the mountains north of the wind River nge but found the snow too deep and had to return and take a Southern course east of the wind river range which is here the main Rocky mountains and the main dividing ridge between the Atlantic and Pacific

“In traveling up the Popo Azia a tributary of Wind River we came to an oil springe neare the main Stream whose surface was completely covered over with oil resembling Brittish oil and not far from the same place were stacks Petrolium of considerable bulk Buffaloe being scarce our supply of food was Quite scanty Mr Sublett and my self mounted our horses one morning and put in quest of game we rode on utill near sundown when we came in sight of three male bufalo in a verry open and exposed place our horses being too poor to run we made an effort to aproach them by crawling over the ice and snow but our game saw us and was about to brake when we arose and fired luckeyly we broke ones Shoulder had we had our horses at hand so as to mount and follow we would soon had meat but our horses were narely a mile Distant so Sublett went back for our horses and I loaded my rifle and followed the wounded buffalo there being an uneven riadge about a mile distant in the direction the game went and (and) my hope was to head him there and git another shot I ran with all my speed and fortunately when I oame out of cover was in easy gun shot when all breathless nearly pointing my in the direction of the game to my surprise I gave him a dead Shot bfore I could reload he fell dead in a steep gutter where I could not commence butcering untill Sublett came up to assist me night came on before we got our meat buched we gatherd some dry sage and struck a light by which we got of a small Quantity of meat Shortly after the sun left us the North wind arose and grew stronger and stronger and a cold frosty snow commenced falling before finished our suppers there being no wood and sage being small and scarce and scattering what little fire we had in all directions we spread down our scanty bed and covered ourselves as close as possbele from the wind and snow which found its way through ever crevice

“Although the wind blew and the fine frosty snow crept in and around us this was not the worst for the cold hard frozen earth on which we lay was still more disagreeabi so that sleep was out of the Question by turning every method for rest day light at last apeared when we consulted what we had best do under the circumstances and it was agre that I should arise and gather some

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

sage brush which was small and scarce and would remain under the Buffalo robe and keep his hands warm if possible to strike fire. But all our calculations failed for as soon our hands became exposed to the air they became so numb that we could not hold the flint and steel. We then resorted to our guns with no better success for the wind was so strong and for the want of some fine material to catch the fire in. We or my comrade rapped himself in his robe and laid down after a great struggle I made out to saddle my horse and was about to leave the inhospitable. Not wishing to leave my friend I asked him if he could ride if I saddled his horse but he thought not and was unwilling to try. I then made several unsuccessful efforts to obtain fire. Just as I was about to mount and leave I ran my hand in the ashes to see if any warmth remained. To my joy found a small coal of fire alive not larger than a grain of corn. Throwing it in to hand full of material I had gathered it started a blaze in a minute and in one minute more I had a fine fire. My friend got out and crawled up to my side. Drawing our robe around our backs we tried to warm ourselves but the wind being so strong the smoke and fire came into our faces by the back current. I saddled the other horse packed up the meat while Sublet gathered sagebrush to keep up a fire which was no little job for carried away almost as fast as he put it on. At length we mounted and left. I put my friend ahead and followed urging his horse along. We had about four miles to timber I found I would be liable to freeze on horseback so I got off and walked it being a north inclination the snow was about one foot deep. I saw my friend was too numb to walk so I took the lead for the last half mile and struck a grove of timber where there was an old Indian but one side of which was still standing. I got fire almost immediately then ran back and whopped up my friend's horse. Assisted him to dismount and get to the fire. He seemed to have no life to move as usual he laid down nearly asleep while I went broiling meat on a stick. After awhile I roused him up and gave him his breakfast when he (he) came to and was as active as usual.

“I have been thus particular in describing one night near the summit of the Rocky mountains although a number similar may and often do occur

“We now moved over a low ridge and struck on Sweet Water since ascertained to be a tributary of the Platte river. It was cold and clear the evening that we encamped on Sweet water many of the south sides of the hills were bare of snow. Buffalo scarce and rations limited. Some time in the night the wind arose to a hurricane direct from the north and we had to keep awake and hold on to our blankets and robes to keep them from flying away. In the morning we gathered a large pile of dry pine logs and fixed up our blankets against the wind but the back current brought the smoke and ashes into our faces. In fifteen or twenty minutes after taking down our screen our fire blew entirely away and left the wood but no fire. We then cleared away the snow under the lee of a clump of willows fixed ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Laid to sleep the wind still blowing all day and night without abatement. The next morning several of us wrapped ourselves in our robes and (and) attempted to take some exercise following down the stream. It became confined in a narrow canyon. Under the points of some rocks we would be partly secure from the cold blast. Toward evening my companion Mr Branch saw a mountain sheep on the rocks almost perpendicular over us and fired at him. Had the good luck to hit him when he came tumbling down to our feet. We soon prepared him and packed him to camp where efforts were made to broil small pieces but soon gave it up the wind still keeping up such

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

a continual blast as to prevent even a starving mountaneer from satisfying his hunger we all took to our blankets again it being the only way to keep from perishing the blast being so strong and cold Late in the night however the lull came on and being awake I arose and found it Quite comfortable I struck up a fire and commenced cooking and eating by broiling thin slices of meat after a short time my comrades began to arise and we talked cooked eat the remainder of the night in the morning we started out in various directions some to look for game and some to look for more comfortable Quarters our present camp being close to the East foot of the Wind River mountain and on a low divide directly south of the Wind river valley having a full sweep for the North Wind Caused us such uncomfotabe time Two parties proceeded one in Quest of game the other for a camping ground I went down the sweet water some four or five miles to where the Kenyon opened out into Quite a valley and found plenty of dry aspin wood in a small grove at the Lower end of the Kenyon and likewise plenty of Mountain Sheep on the cliffs which bounded the stream one of which I had the luck to kill and which I Buied in a snowdrift the next morning we packed up and moved down to the Aspin grove where we remained some two or three weeks Subsisting on Mountain sheep on our way to our new camp we ware overtaken by one of the heaviest falls of snow that I ever witnessed with but verry slight wind the snow came down in one perfect sheet but fortunately it did not las but a short time and we made our camp in good season as I before said we did not leave this camp until the Mountain Sheep began to get scarce and wild and before leaving we here made a cash of Powder Lead and several other articles supposed to be not needed in our Springs hunt and it was here likewise understood that should circumstances at any time seperate us we would meet at this place and at (and) all event we would all met here again or at some navigable point on the stream below at or by the first June according to our recording on leaving sweet water we struck in a South westerly direction this being some of the last days of February I think in 1825 our stock of dried meat being verry scant we soon run out entirely -no game to be found It appears this winter was extremely dry and cold one fourth of the gound on those ridges south of Sweetwater being entirely bare from the effect of strong west winds which carried the snow over to the East and south sides of the ridges about sixth morning out Mr Sublette and myself ware in the advance looking out for game a few antelope had been see the evening previous a slight snow falling we came on the fresh track of a buffalo and supposing he could not be far off we started full speed after him in running about a mile we came in sight of him laying down the animal being thick a hevvy it difficult to hit a vital part when he is laying down we consulted as to the surest way disabling him and came to the concusion that I fire at the rump and if posible breake his coupling while Sublett would fire at his Shouldei and disable him in forward parts so we greed Sublett counting one two three while we both drew aim and both pull trigger at the word fire when both of our rifles went of simutanu and both effected what we desired the animal strugling to rise but could not Sublett beat me in reloading and approached and shot him in the head Just as the company came in sight on a hight of land when they all raised a Shout of Delight at sight many not having tasted food for four days & none of us from two to three now you may suppose we had a happy time in butchering

“Our company coming up we butchered our meat in short order many of the men eating large slices raw we packed up our meat & traveled on until in the afternoon in hopes of finding water but did not, succeed but finding large clumps of sage brush we camped all eaving & part of the

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

night continuing on we found we had crossed the main ridge of the Rocky mountain in the month of January 15 days without water or only such as we got from melting snow our horses eating snow and living fairly when beaver ground was found although we struck Sandy about noon some of the men went immediatly to cutting the ice with thier Tomahauks called out frose to the bottom I walked down they had got down the length of thier arms and was about to give it up I pulled out one of my pistols and fired in to the hole up came the water plentiful for man & horse there being a small growth of willows along the stream we had wood & water plenty but our supply of meat had given out passed down the stream on day in the eavning a buffalo was killed and we were all happy for the present this stream and one other we passd and on the 20th of February we reached Green river where I had the luck to kill two wild geese here Capt Smith with seven men left us he going farther south we left to trap on the branches of the stream as soon as the ice gave way in a few day wild geese became plenty on thawy & Springy places the ice giving way we found beaver plenty and we commenced trapping We found a small family of diggers or Shoshone Indians on our trapping ground whom we feed with the overplus of Beaver the snow disaparing our diggar friends moved off without our knowledge of when or where and when they had gone our horses runing loose on night they all disapared and we were unable to find them or in what direction they had gone we continued trapping on foot with fair success for about six weeks when the 10th of June was drawing close and we had promised all who were alive to meet at our cash on Sweet Water accordingly we cashed traps & furs hung our saddle & horse equipments on trees & set out for Sweet water the same day about noon on turning the point of a ridge we met face to face with five & six indians mounted on some of our horses preparing to take possession of as many horses each on taking hold of a lariat and ordering our friens to dismount but after a short consultation we decided to go with them to thier camp about one mile up a steep mountain where we found six lodges 18 men with a large supply of squaws & children & our old acquaintences that we had fed with the fat of Beaver while the earth was thickly covered with snow we made our camp on rising ground in easy gunshot of thier village all our horses wer given up but one and we concluded this one was hid in the mountain so we caught one of the men tied him fast told them we intended to kill him if our horse was not given back which soon brought him we gave them a few presents and left for our old camp dug up our cashe cut down our saddles and again started for Sweet water this brought us to the 15th of June no sight of Smith or his party remaining here a few days Fitzpatrick & myself mounted & fowling down stream some 15 miles we concluded the stream was unnagable it beeing generally broad & Shallow and all our baggae would have to be packed to some navigable point below where I would be found waiting my comrades who would not be more than three or four days in the rear I moved slowly down stream three days to the mouth where it enters the North Platt Sweetwater is generafly bare of all kind of timber but here near the mouth grew a small thick clump of willoes in this I cut a lodging place and geathered some driftwood for a fire which I was just preparing to strike fire I heard human voices on the stream below carfully watching I saw a number of Indians advance up along the opisite side of the stream being here about 4 rods wide they come up & all stoped on the other side there being a lot of dry wood they soon raised 4 or 5 fires turned loose or tithered all their horses thier being 22 Indians and 30 horses I did not feel myself perfectly safe with so large number a war party in my rear vacinity recoclecting that for 1/2 mile back the country was bare & sandy the moon a few days before

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

the full I could be trased as easily as if it had been snow so I walked backward across the sandy reagon out to a narrow rocky ridge & following along the same to where the creek broke through it I crossed over to the east side and climbing a high point of rocks I had a fair vew of my disagreeable neighbors at about 40 rods distance some of them lay down and slept while some others kept up the fire about midnight they all arose collected up thier horses too of the horses crossed over the creek two Indians on horse back folowed after when a shout was raised & eight or ten mounted went to assist hunting the fugitives after an hours ride backward & farword they gave up & all started of north I crawled down from my perch & caught a few moments of cool feverish sleep. next day I surveyed the canyon through which the river passes fearfully swift without any perpendicular fall while on one of the high Cliffs I discovered about 20 Ind approach the stream right where I had left a bout halfhour before all on foot they soon mad a small raft of driftwood on which they piled their war equipments & clothes swam the stream and went South I returned to my observatory on Sweetwater I remained in this vacinity eleven days heard nothing of my party began to get lonsome examened my store of amuniton found I had plenty of Powder but only eleven bullets reconitering all the curcumstances in my mind I thought if I spent a week in trying to find my old companions & should not be lucky enough to meet with them I would not have balls enough to take me to civilisation & not knowing whither I was on platt or the Arkansas on the 12th day in the afternoon I left my look out at the mouth of Sweetwater and proceeded down stream knowing that civilation could be reached Eastward the days were quite warm & I had to keep near the water nothing occured for several day worth mentioning at length I found a bull boat lying drifted up on a sand bar and the marks of a large Indian ranch on the main shore I knew by the boat some white men had here for the Indians never made such boats this gave me a fient hope of meeting some white men in this Indian world but continuing down stream several days I saw several persons running Buffalow on the hills on the other side of the river but to far to tell who they were Great herds of Buffalo were drivin across the river right around me I shot one and dried some meat remained here two days in hopes of meeting some human beeing even a friendly Indian would be a relief to my solitude but no person appearing I moved off down stream some two or three days after I came into a grove of large old cottonwoods where a number of village Martins were nesting

“I laied down in the shade and enjoyed their twittering for some hours it reminded me of home & civilisation I saw a number of wild horses on the and I thought I would like to ride there is what hunters call “creasing”; this is done by shooting the animal through the neck close above the main bone this stuns them for a minute or more The next buffalo I killed I made a halter, I was forced to keep near the watter for there were no springs or streams on the plain. A fine black stallion came down to drink and beeing in close gun shot I fired as soon as he had gained the main bank he fell & I ran up & haltered him but he never moved for his neck was broken so I missed my wild ride still continuing my jurny at length I came to a large recent lodge trail crossing the stream I thought it would be plesent to communicate with humans even though it were Indians so I plunged into the stream and crossed over the water was only breast deep any where the villiag was about two miles out in the hills on my approach to them I did not attract thier attention untill within a few rods of thier lodges when a lot of men & boys came running up to me yelling most hidously when one man ran up & snatched my butcher knife and waved it across

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

my breast I thought this a bravado so bared my breast for the fated streike & this perhaps saved my life for he immediatly commensed taking such things as suited him others taking my blankets then all my balls firesteel & flint another untied my powder into a rag when one or two cam rapedly up on horseback then they all left one of the mounted me talking very loud & rapidly then he ordered me to mount behind him which I was glad to do he took me to his lodge and gave me to understand that I must not roam around any for some of them were bad and would kill me I remained in his lodge all night and after the morning meal he had three horses brought he & his son each mounted one and told me to mount the other he rode forward his son in the rear we rode basck over the river & about two miles on the trail where I dismounted and went on a foot again they sitting on their horses watched me untill I had passed over half mile when they returned, my hair had not been cut since I left St Louis I lost my hat at the defeat of the Arickrees and had been bareheaded ever since my hair was quite long my friend had beged for my hair the morning before we left his lodge I had granted his request so he barbered me with a dull butcher knife before leaving me he made me understand he loved me that he had saved my lief and wanted the hair for a memento of me as soon as my friends were fairly out of sight I left the trail fearing some unfriendly Indian the grass was thick and tall which made it hard to brake through so I frequently took ridges which led me from my course the second day in the afternoon I came to a pool of water under an oak tree drank sat down under the shade a short time ate a few grains of parched corn (which my friends had given me) when I heard a growling of some animals near by I advanced a few steps and saw two Badgers fighting I aimed at one but my gun mised fire they started off I geathered some bones (horse brobly) ran after & killed both I struck fire with my gunlock skined & roasted them made a bundle of grass & willow bark. it rained all the later part of the night but I started early in the morning the wet grass beeing more pleasant to travel than the dry it continu showery for several days the mosquitos be uncommonly bad I could not sleep and it got so damp I could not obtain fire and I had to swim several rivers at last I struck a trail that seamed to lead in the right direction which I determind to follow to its extream end on the second day in the afternoon I got so sleepy & nervous that it was with difficulty I kept the trail a number of times I tumbled down asleep but a quick nervous gerk would bring me to my feet again in one of these fits I started up on the trail traveled some 40 rods when I hapened to notise I was going back the way I had come turning right around I went on for some time with my head down when raising my eyes with great surprise I saw the stars & stripe waving over Fort Leavenworth I swoned emmediatly how long I lay unconcious I do not know I was so overpowered with joy The stars & stripes came so unexpected that I was completely overcome being on decending ground I sat contemplating the scene I made several attemps to raise but as often fell back for the want of strength to stand after some minnites I began to breathe easier but certainly no man ever enjoyed the sight of our flag better than I did I walked on down to the fort there beeing no guard on duty I by axident came to the door of Cap Rileys quarters where a waiter brought out the Cap who conducted me to Generl Leavenworth who assigned me a company & gave me a writen introduction to the settelers where I got credit for a change of clothing some shoes & a soldiers cap I remained here receiving rashions as a soldier for ten days when to my surprise Mr Fitzpatrick Mr Stone & Mr Brench arived in a more pitible state if possible than myself. Fitzpatrick went back to the cashe after leaving me they opened the cashe found the powder somewhat damp spread

---

Narrative, by James Clyman

---

it out to dry got all ready to pack up when Smith and party arived the day being quite warm the snow melted on the mountains and raised the water & they came to the conclusion to build a boat there & Fitzpatrick Stone & Branch to get the furs down the best way the could Cap Smith to take charge of all the hunting & traping and to remain in the country the season so acordingly they made a skin boat & Cap coming down on horsback to bring me back again (but I was off surveying the canyon) he saw here I had cut my lodge in the willows where the Indians had been w Jusion the Indians had killed me so and not finding me came to the conclusion the Indians had killed me so made that report the three men hauld the boat down stream untill it was nearly worn out and the water still falling so cashed the furs on Indipendence rock and ran down into the Canyon thier boat filled & they lost two of thier guns & all of thier balls they broke the Brass mounting of the gun with rocks bent it into balls with which they killed a few buffalo, the Skin boat I saw on the sand bar was made by four men who crossed over from the mouth of the Bighorn thier winter camp and landing on the shore walked up into the valliage which proved to be Arickaree two of them escaped but the other two were killed this afterward proved to be the same people I saw runing buffalo by axident I escaped from them the camp I waided the river to meet were Pownees and here too I bearly saved my scalp but lost my hair”

Mourn not dear friends to anguish deriven  
Thy children now unite in Heaven  
Mourn not for them who early blest  
Have found in Heaven eternal rest

WHO DISCOVERED THE SOUTH PASS?  
RAMSEY CROOKS

---

WHO DISCOVERED THE SOUTH PASS?

The Detroit Advertiser having asserted that Col. Fremont was the discoverer of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, a correspondent of the Detroit Free Press denies the truth of statement and the editor of that journal publishes the following letter from Ramsay Crooks, Esq., of New York:—  
New York, June 28, 1856.

My Dear Sir:— Just as I was about closing my letter to you of yesterday's date, I received the Detroit Free Press of the 21st inst., containing a laudation of Col. John C. Fremont taken from the Detroit Advertiser of the previous day and which (if it had been true) is not, in my humble opinion, a very important item in making up the essentials of such a man as should become President of this glorious confederacy.

I, however, presume it is intended to exhibit him as endowed with uncommon intrepidity and daring in exploring so wide a region, surrounded by savages and grizzly bears, thereby proving great firmness of character, so very desirable, but unfortunately so very rare in the head of a great nation.

But even if the Colonel had discovered the 'South Pass' it does not show any more fitness for the exalted station he covets than the numerous beaver hunters and traders who passed and repassed through that noted place full twenty years before Col. Fremont had attained a legal right to vote, and were fully his equals in enterprise, energy, and indomitable perseverance, with this somewhat important difference, that he was backed by the United States treasury, while other explorers had to rely on their own resources.

The perils of the 'South Pass,' therefore, confer on the Colonel no greater claim to distinction than the trapper is entitled to, and his party must be pressed very hard when they had to drag in a circumstance so very unimportant as who discovered the 'South Pass.'

Although the Free Press conclusively proves that the Colonel could not be the discoverer of the 'South Pass,' the details are not accurate and in order that history (if it ever gets there) may be correctly vindicated, I will tell you how it was.

Mr. David Stuart sailed from this port in 1810 for the Columbia River on board the ship 'Tonquin' with a number of Mr. Astor's associates in the 'Pacific Fur Company,' and after the breaking up of the company in 1814, he returned through the Northwest Company's territories to Montreal, far to the north of the 'South Pass,' which he never saw.

In 1811, the overland party of Mr. Astor's expedition, under the command of Mr. Wilson P. Hunt, of Trenton, New Jersey, although numbering sixty well armed men, found the Indians so very troublesome in the country of the Yellowstone River, that the party of seven persons who left Astoria toward the end of June, 1812, considering it dangerous to pass again by the route of 1811, turned toward the southeast as soon as they had crossed the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, and, after several days' journey, came through the celebrated 'South Pass' in the month of November, 1812.

Pursuing from thence an easterly course, they fell upon the River Platte of the Missouri, where they passed the winter and reached St. Louis in April, 1813.

The seven persons forming the party were Robert McClelland of Hagerstown, who, with the celebrated Captain Wells, was captain of spies under General Wayne in his famous Indian campaign, Joseph Miller of Baltimore, for several years an officer of the U. S. army, Robert Stuart, a citizen of Detroit, Benjamin Jones, of Missouri, who acted as huntsman of the party, Francois LeClaire, a

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

WHO DISCOVERED THE SOUTH PASS?  
RAMSEY CROOKS

---

halfbreed, and Andre Valee, a Canadian voyageur, and Ramsay Crooks, who is the only survivor of this small band of adventurers.

—I am very sincerely yours,

RAMSEY CROOKS.

Anthony Dudgeon, Esq., Detroit, Mich.

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE ROCKY  
MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

PREFATORY

The following narrative by the late Col. Robert Campbell, contains a sketch of his life and remarkable experiences while engaged in the Rocky Mountain Fur trade, during a period of ten years - from 1825 to 1835.

It was dictated to me in the year 1870, while I was accompanying him and Hon. Felix R. Brunot, President of the Board of Indian Commissioners as their Secretary, on a mission to Fort Laramie, to treat with Red Cloud. The notes were taken by installments after various intervals on our trip, while the narrator was in the reminiscent mood, and each recital was suspended as soon as he found it tiresome.

Mr. Brunot who was made acquainted with my purpose, expressed his approbation, because no connected account of that portion of Col. Campbell's life, had ever been given to the public.

In fact, this is the only record ever authorized or made of Col. Campbell's experiences.

With a modesty characteristic of him, he avoided notoriety, and although the names of Sublette and Campbell, in the "Adventures of Capt. Bonneville," are given honorable mention in the glowing style of Washington Irving; yet Mr. Campbell, instead of feeling flattered and indisposed to criticism, told me that the account there given on the Blackfeet fight at Pierres Hole, in which he participated was erroneous, and mixed up with incidents that transpired in other encounters.

He said further that he designed to have that account corrected.

I have frequently been solicited by the late Albert Todd and others to write out the notes which I made under the circumstances above related, for the use of the Missouri Historical Society, but partly through a fault of procrastination and partly because of the pressure of other duties, I failed to comply with these requests.

This M.S. is now prepared expressly for and at the instance of Mr. Hugh Campbell and his brothers - the sons of my deceased and venerated friend.

In reading over my notes after the lapse of so many years, I find some breaks or lapses in the narrative, where evidently I had placed a dependence on memory to fill up the omissions.

I now regret they were not fuller, because the strength of my memory was inadequate to tide over the long and unexpected delay in writing out the story.

I have taken pains to transcribe the notes exactly as dictated, without any attempt to color or expand the plain, unpretentious narration.

I cannot close these prefatory observations without adding a few remarks on my own account concerning the subject of this sketch.

The privations perils endured by Col. Campbell in that portion of his life which is treated of here, doubtless laid the foundation of a prosperous business career and his name became widely known throughout the Far West as a merchant banker, having dealings with the Traders throughout the vast region from Santa Fe to the mouth of the Yellowstone.

With these people his credit stood high and unimpeached, as the following incident told me by Gen. Raynolds, of the U.S. Engineer Corps, who conducted an exploring expedition across the Bad Lands on the Upper Missouri, by order of the government in 1857, will illustrate.

Before starting out from Fort Pierre, the General said, he needed money and supplies for the outfit. He applied to the Traders there for means, but they refused credit to the United States,

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

and would only accept drafts on Robert Campbell of St. Louis, whom they knew and would trust sooner than the Government.

There was something grand in such a distinction as this, no matter what the circumstances. One thing more; on one occasion Col. Campbell stated to us the circumstances which induced him to go to the Mountains in 1825. He came to St. Louis he said, when a young man, seeking employment.

He was an invalid, pale and subject to hemorrhages of the lungs.

He saw old Doctor Farrar, who advised him, saying: "Young man your symptoms are consumptive, and I advise you to go to the Rocky Mountains. I have before sent two or three young men there in your condition, and they came back restored to health and as hearty as bucks."

This latter statement I furnished, I believe, at the time of Col. Campbell's death for the obituary notice in the Missouri Republican.

St. Louis, July 1886

William Fayel.

In 1825 I started from St. Louis, joining Gen. Ashley in an expedition to the Rocky Mountains. Gen. Ashley had just returned from a successful trade in the mountains.

Henry and Ashley in 1822 went up to the mouth of the Yellowstone, where they had a fort.

In 1823, Ashley had a fight with the Arickerees at the old Arickeree village on the Missouri river. He lost twenty men.

He sent news of the fight to Council Bluffs, and Col. Leavenworth went up with troops and destroyed the Arickeree village.

At that time there was the Missouri Fur Company, composed of Pilcher, Fontenelle and other partners. They failed about that time.

Another company, Pratte, Chouteau and Co., of St. Louis was formed. When Ashley was defeated all these men volunteered their assistance. The Sioux joined them, they being at war at the time with the Arickerees. Subsequently Astor joined Pratte, Chouteau & Co., and their concern was merged into the American Fur Company.

As before intimated, an expedition was in the fall of 1825 - fitted out, under the firm of Ashley & Smith, to go out and trade west of the Rocky Mountains.

Jedediah Smith was Ashley's partner. He was a very efficient man.

Smith led the expedition, which I joined and Gen. Ashley remained in St. Louis during the ensuing winter.

We left St. Louis on the first of November. It was wrong to start at that season, because we had the winter to encounter.

The animals - mostly mules - were purchased for the expedition in old Franklin Howard County, then a great point of trade to New Mexico.

The mules were all shipped to St. Louis, and all our party mounted.

Our camp was then at Cote Brillante, a beautiful grassy hill, six miles from the City, west of the Prairie House.

We first took our animals to our camp, then located just west of Seventh Street, and east of the Catholic College, on the present Washington Avenue.

The men were assembled there, but we made our final start from Cote Brillants.

The expedition consisted of sixty men, all provided with pack animals.

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

We traveled on the South side of the Missouri River. The first Indians we saw were the Kaws, in Jackson County.

That year Jackson County was purchased from the Kaws and Osages.

The Indians came down to St. Louis and made the treaty with Governor Clark, that same year.

The Indians all bought umbrellas and walked in Indian file, bare headed with the umbrellas spread over them, making a ludicrous appearance. The first thing they had done on reaching town was to buy up all the red umbrellas.

They were large, fine looking Indians.

We found little settlements all along our route, but they became more sparse in the upper counties until we got to Jackson County, the Indian title to which had been extinguished, as stated that year.

At the mouth of the Kaw, just above the site of Kansas City, Ely and Curtis were located as traders. We bought beef off them. We crossed the Kaw and on the first day of January reached Fort Riley. We wintered all along the Republican Fork, and suffered very much for want of provisions. One third of our mules died that winter, and we sent back for more mules to St. Louis.

The Republican Pawnees had a mud village on the Republican Fork, on the South side fifty miles north of Grand Island.

Some of our men knew where the Indians had formerly cached their corn and they dug it up.

When the Pawnees returned to their village, they having gone out on the Buffalo hunt, we paid them for so much of the corn as we had taken. The Republican Pawnees, three years after we were there, joined on the Platte with the Grand Pawnees, who were then on the Loupe Fork.

The chief of the Republican Pawnees was Ish-Ka-ta-pa. Mr. Smith and myself staid in his lodge.

We had no interpreters. We lived on the corn taken from the caches, and killed some buffalo bulls on the Smoky Hill Fork while going out.

That was the only meat we had except that we got occasionally a wild turkey.

The Kaw village was then at the junction of the Blue and Kaw rivers.

We followed up the Republican Fork from the Pawnee village to the Platte.

We suffered great privations until joined by General Ashley from St. Louis.

He overtook us at Grand Island on the Platte about the first of April with supplies. He then sent off Smith and Harris to the Trappers in the Mountains, to arrange in advance for a rendezvous, which was about twenty miles north of Salt Lake in Utah, called Cache or Willow Valley. At O'Fallon's Bluff, the expedition was joined by Bill Fallon, after whom the Bluffs were named. His name was Fallon; not O'Fallon. He had wintered there.

His father was a wagon maker in St. Louis. He was a strong, athletic man, as spry as a cat, and a great horseman.

His weight was 200 pounds. He could mount a horse on the run and pick up a sixpence from the ground while on the gallop.

Hiram Scott was also of our party, he having left St. Louis with us.

He wintered with us on the Kaw and Republican but afterward left us at Willow Valley, and in the spring of 1827 while descending the Platte in a canoe, was taken sick and left behind by his associates and was devoured by wolves.

His bones were found the next year by Sublette and Jackson. Scotts Bluff was named after him.

Col. A. G. Boone, also was with the party, starting with us from St. Louis.\*

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

\*Note - Col. Boone was a grand-son of the famous Daniel Boone. In 1870. Col. Campbell met him at Denver, he having come there from Fort Sill, where he had been Indian Agent.

They recalled reminiscences of their trip to the mountains in 1825. Near the foot of the range where Denver now stands, they made dried meat for the mountain trip.

On returning over the mountains Boone's horse froze to death and he had to carry his gun to Lexington, Mo.

He died three years ago - W.F.

Gen. Ashley brought with him twenty-five men from St. Louis. We continued our march, meeting with few adventures. Everybody walked except Ashley. A good many of the men - about 25 or 30 - had deserted. They were sick of the trip, having suffered like the rest, almost to the verge of starvation.

At Hames Fork, near Fort Bridger, the Trappers came out to meet us. There were about, from 60 to 75 of them. We were also joined by fifteen lodges of Iroquois, who had left the Hudson Bay Company, and joined Ashley at Cache or Willow Valley. They had met Ashley the year before, where they had made a satisfactory traffic of their peltries with them.

They brought in plenty of Beavers, that being the only fur that would pay the cost of transportation.

Beaver's fur cost in the mountains \$3 per pound.

They brought in the States \$5 and upwards and in St. Louis \$5.25 to \$6 per pound, and from \$6 to \$7 in New York.

The trading companies from the states would start from the Western boundary of Missouri, about the first of April when the grass was good. All mounted on pack animals, each man riding one and leading two. It took usually from 60 to 70 days to get through to the place of destination in the Fur Country.

Ashley & Smiths' Company was the only one from the States there. The Hudson Bay Company, under the treaty of 1818, operated in the Columbia Territory, which was left open to both countries for ten years and again in 1828 extended ten years longer. After a negotiation of many years the joint occupancy finally terminated in compliance with our alternative for "Fifty-four-forty or Fight!"

We remained in Cache valley only a couple of weeks, long enough to complete the traffic with the trappers.

After we left Cache valley, Jackson and Sublette met us on Bear river. Ashley then sold out his interest in the fur trade, to Smith, his partner, and to Jackson and Sublette, the new firm being known as Smith, Jackson & Sublette.

We now had buffalo meat in great plenty.

In fact we found the buffalo in great numbers at the head of Grand Island, after Ashley joined us. It was their grand crossing place in their annual migratory tramps from the Arkansa to the Forks of the Missouri.

They have been there until within four or five years.

While engaged in preparations for trapping the beaver, I will mention some peculiar traits of that sagacious animal. The beaver has a little bag under the tail, or more properly an oil sac near the anus.

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

The trapper takes this castoreum from this sac, and uses it as bait, it having served the beaver, by providing the where-with to oil himself.

While constructing their dams, some are seen bringing sticks and bushes for the purpose, while others dive to the bottom of the stream and bring up mud to plaster the sticks and bushes of the structure.

They are seen near these dams and at their "lodges" on the banks of the stream, where they ooze out this castoreum, which is understood to be a signal to other beavers. The trappers set their traps at these places. This castoreum, some of the old hunters use in this way. They take a piece of willow, strip off the bark and wash it, so as to leave no scent, as the beaver's sense of smell is exquisite, and then put castoreum on it.

The willow is attached to the trap and floats over it, when the beaver attracted to the smell approaches and is caught. The animal flounders about until drowned, but if he gets on the bank, with the trap, he has been known to bite off his feet to regain his liberty.

The trappers generally set out from camp with eight traps each. When they moved camp they cached what provisions were not necessary for the hunt, as dependence was made on game.

Arriving at good hunting ground a stop was made of some two or three days in a place, or even for one day.

They then set their traps for three or four miles up and down the stream. These trappers consisted mostly of men hired in St. Louis for eighteen months. Then there were what were called free hunters, who lived entirely on what they killed. We seldom had any bread.

When the supplies were brought up in the Summer, about two pounds of bread each, for one-hundred men were brought in for the feast, made once a year, - and only then did they have bread.

Flour cost one dollar for a pint cupful

The trappers would made a feast of batter fried in melted buffalo tallow - a sort of fritter and call their friends around to partake.

Each man brought his pan and his knife, and very little liquor would be sold out - except to the old trappers. The single men among the trappers would mess half a dozen together. The air was pure and perfectly healthy. Every man, on-going to the cities would come back after spending his earnings. It was a bold, dashing life.

From this part of the country they could not carry buffalo skins away, owing to the cost of land transportation.

After the formation of the Company, the partners, Smith, Sublette and Jackson divided up the country between them.

Smith took a party of fifteen or twenty men, and started to go below Salt Lake, where he suffered from want of water.

Eventually they got down on the Colorado river and fell in with a band of the Mohaves.

In crossing the river, part of the men got over, leaving ten on the other side, when the Mohaves, to the number of thirty began to maneuver about in a hostile manner, Smith and the balance of the men with him attacked and killed four out of the thirty. Isaac Gallraith, a powerful man, died from his wounds, subsequently, on the Arkansas, about fifty miles from Bent's fort.

They then went to California. Smith and Turner came back poor and joined us the next Summer, at Sweet Water Lake, which empties into Bear Lake, where the rendezvous of Smith, Jackson and

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

Sublette was then established.

When Smith left for Colorado, Jackson and Sublette with myself ascended the Snake river and tributaries near the Three Tetons and hunted along to the forks of the Missouri, following the Gallatin, and trapped along across the head waters of the Columbia.

We then came back and wintered in Cache valley, and got our goods which we had cached the season before. On our trip we were abundantly supplied with buffalo, elk, deer and bear all the time.

While we were out and encamped at the forks of Snake river, the Blackfeet came in the day time and took the two fastest horses, belonging to our Iroquois, and cleared themselves.

They got the start and we could not follow.

They knew all about horses, as they were noted for their horsemanship.

The Blackfeet were always at war with us because we were trading with Indians that they were at war with. They were at war with the Snakes, the Crows, the Flatheads and the neighboring tribes. They had fierce contests, and great care was taken to avoid them when on their marauding expeditions.

They would cut off bears feet, and use them as moccasins to steal up and capture horses.

They came up one night, but our Iroquois understood the signs. We had our animals picketed and guarded at night and always had three reliefs in the night. Every man had to mount guard, except the leader of the expedition. It depended on the strength of the party, how many would be on guard. Twenty or thirty men were considered equal to any emergency. It was the habit, to have out two-thirds trapping, the other taking care of camp, no matter how large the party would be.

We came back, as I said, to cache valley and wintered there. On the first of January Sublette with one man, names Mose Harris, started for St. Louis after supplies. As soon as the river broke up we started on a hunt to the waters of seeds-ke-deeagie (Prairie Hen river) so called by the Crows (agie, river) now called Green river. The name is very euphoneous, as pronounced by the Indians. It was called Verde, (Green) by the Mexicans.

It was always thus known to the trappers, and excited their utter disgust, when changed to Verdancy, from Green the American appellation.

An incident occurred in the fall before returning to Cache valley, that created some excitement in the party. We came across the tracks of a bear, and while following it, Jim Bridger, who was in advance, saw a smoke on the head waters of the Missouri.

We, Sublette, Bridger and myself determined to see what it was. As we habitually had to be on the alert when hostile Indians were suspected in our vicinity, we dashed along, until we came to a place where the Indians had camped a month before, leaving some burned logs, from which the smoke still issued. The exploit became known for a long time in camp as "the battle of the burned logs."

When Sublette started to St. Louis for supplies, Jackson and myself returned and rendezvoused at the head of Sweet Water Lake, where Sublette brought up the supplies in the Spring of 1827.

The supplies were furnished by Ashley.

Mr. Bruffee (of Washington County, Mo.) and Hiram Scott, who was the leader of men and knew all about managing men - took the leadership of the party, Bruffee attending to the financial part. Then, Smith started down with another party to California with some 12 or 14 men.

The expedition turned out unsuccessful.

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

Smith and his party marched through to California, and thence along the coast as far as Umpqua river, collecting furs and loading their pack animals. They found it impracticable to cross the river. Smith took one of his men and proceeded up the river to find a fording place. While absent, his party in camp were attacked by Indians, and all but one of the twelve massacred. The Indians took all the mules, furs and baggage, and everything the company had. The man who escaped fell in with Smith and he with his two companions travelled through a savage and inhospitable country, 300 miles to Fort Vancouver where they met with members of the Hudson Bay Company.

Out of sympathy the company sent a party to the scene of the massacre.

They buried the victims and recovered most of the property from the savage robbers.

In addition to this kind treatment Gov. Simpson proposed to take Smith and all his furs to London, where he could obtain high prices for them. But Smith replied that he had already been under too much obligation to the company and declined the generous offer.

He sold his furs to the company and leaving Vancouver he traversed the country, rejoining his partners, Sublette and Jackson in 1829.

In 1830 they all quit the country having made \$100,000 a large sum for those days.

In 1831, Smith was killed by the Comanches on the Arkansas, while going out to New Mexico. He has a brother, a farmer, now living near De Soto, Mo.

Going back in my statement to the Summer of 1827, Jackson and Sublette that fall came down to St. Louis to get their supplies for the next year.

I then took charge of the Iroquois, and others of the party and went out trapping in the Flathead Country, on the head waters of Missouri and Columbia, and on the Deer Lodge and Bitter Root Rivers. We trapped all through there.

An incident occurred that caused us trouble.

Towards the close of the Fall Season, the Nez Perces joined the Flat Heads to hunt buffalo on the Hellgate river.

The Deer Lodge and the Little Blackfoot forms the Hellgate, and the latter river and the Bitter Root form the Flathead.

The Bitter Root is so named after a bitter root which the Indians eat. They make a feast on it, known as bitter root, which is agreeable to the taste. It is a white root with three or four prongs; very pleasant to the palate after one has become accustomed to eating it. It fills the place of the Bread fruit and would be a good substitute.

Another root called commace, is baked like a "pone" of bread and they slice it off.

It is a bulbous root like the onion; is sweet and pleasant to the taste, and the Indians make feasts of it likewise.

We came through the Shoshone Cave, or Big Hole of the Missouri, on Wisdom River - a valley fifty miles long, very broad and beautiful, situated on the top of the divide between the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

The buffalo were very abundant and were seen in countless numbers.

The Indians would not allow any to be killed, as they wanted to make a "surround."

One of my men caught a beaver.

We had nothing to eat. My French cook roasted the beaver. I ate a small piece to quiet my appetite, as I had had nothing to eat for a day or two. Just after I ate, I felt pains, as did all the others who ate it.

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

The beavers were poisoned from eating the wild parsnip. Hence the name of the river, Malade. Every one who ate these beavers were poisoned. The result of the "Surround" was that the Indians came in with any quantity of buffalo meat but none of us would enjoy it. We had pains in the neck, head and other disagreeable sensations in the stomach and bowels.

The old trappers knew what was the matter and attributed our sickness to eating poisoned beaver. We had plenty of buffalo afterwards.

When the hunt was over we started to winter in Cache valley, there being good feed for the animals. The buffalo ranged into the valley just above.

Salt Lake was too far away for us to go for buffalo, although a good place to winter.

When, on our way in, we came on a camp of Blackfeet, at the head of the Jefferson, we camped there.

Some of our men went to the village and found they had fortifications built up to protect them.

The Blackfeet came into our camp and we were suspicious of trouble.

We started off early in the morning to go on the Snake river, and the Indians followed us. At a little creek I brought our men under shelter of a bank.

The Indians attacked us, and our men fired upon them. Old Pierre, the chief of our Iroquois was killed. He had advanced too far.

One of the most notable incidents was, that we had a Flathead Indian and a squaw accompanying us. He started to fight the Indians. His squaw followed and cheered him on. The poor fellow was shot through the head, but we brought him into camp. He lived four or five days after he was shot. The eventful valley in which Pierre met his fate, has perpetuated his name as "Pierre's Hole."

We remained there several days.

We found a portion of old Pierre's remains - a portion of his feet - in the Blackfeet village - after they left.

Whilst we remained there, two Indians, who had been out stealing, were coming down in an opposite direction. The Iroquois shot them, and they were the first Indians that I saw scalped. The Iroquois put their feet on the dead body, fastened their fingers in the hair, and running the knife around the skull, yanked the scalp off in an instant. It was a horrid sight.

Our Iroquois and the party with me concluded to go no further and returned to the Flathead camp, where they remained during the winter.

I with one Frenchman and a Flathead Indian, came on to Cache valley, reached there safely and after remaining a few days I went out on my mule to hunt.

Whilst I was gone, a party of Crows that had been visiting the Snakes at Salt Lake took four of our horses; the Indian and Frenchman whom I had left in charge concealing themselves. (Two years afterwards I saw the horses in the Crow village.)

When I returned to the camp it was deserted.

After a while my Flathead Indian, discovered me. He met me and said he thought I and the Frenchman were killed, he having separated from the latter. The next morning I went off to reconnoiter these same Indians, between Willow valley and Salt Lake, and saw the Indians camped there. My Flathead said if I would give him a knife, he would go down in the night and steal a horse to replace the one he had lost. He offered to steal one for me also. I objected, and dissuaded him from making the attempt.

We remained in the Mountains three days, to keep out of their way. We then came back into the

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

valley and found our trapper party. They found the Frenchman that they supposed had been killed.

His name was James Fourness and he lived at Kansas City until he was over one hundred years old.

After these parties came in, I took a party and went over to Sweet Water Lake where we had made a cache the previous summer.

A terrible snow storm came on which lasted several days. We had to go to the Soda Springs on Bear river, a long distance out of the way. The result was, all our animals died from starvation. The snow was four feet deep on a level.

It was one of the most severe winters ever known. I cached my goods there and went back to our camp in Willow or Cache valley. I then disposed of my goods there to the trappers and started back on snow shoes, with four dogs and a train which I got from our hunters.

On the second day, all gave out except the halfbreeds. We travelled on to the mouth of Portneuf where Fort Hall was subsequently built. There I found Mr. Samuel Tullock with a party of trappers and a brother of Sublette was with him - also Mr. Peter Skein Ogden, with a portion of the Hudson Bay Company's trappers, all encamped together, snow bound. They could go no further. Tullock, when the Winter broke up, in the Spring, was attacked by Blackfeet up the Portneuf River. The attack occurred in the morning, and they were robbed of all their horses, and had four men killed, Sublette's brother among them. He was known as Pinckney Sublette. The year before, while awaiting at the head of this lake for the party to arrive from St. Louis, the Blackfeet attacked the Snakes, and the Snake warriors with William Sublette went out to assist them when Tullock was wounded on the wrist, and his hand withered from the effects of the wound.

In the fight on the Portneuf river, a good many of the Blackfeet were killed and the rest driven off. A prominent Snake chief, a young man was killed, besides several others on our side. The Snakes killed two fine horses to bury with the chief.

I wanted the horses badly. Sublette behaved bravely.

I staid in camp, in charge of everything.

The families of those killed disposed of all the bodies. One of them placed a buffalo robe on Sublette's tent and said to him, "You are a great warrior. I seen it. My "bonick," (Sublette) behaved cooly".

I then prepared to leave to join my party, who were with the Flatheads, on Flathead river.

We packed our bedding on the dog train.

I had two half breeds, Mountain Indians, with me. We carried no tent for ourselves.

At night we shovelled off the snow with our snowshoes, for the dogs tent.

We killed buffalo to live on. We fed our dogs at night so that their food could digest, while they were at rest. We passed through Shoshone Cove, and crossed the Bitterroot river. All the country to the West was free from snow.

This was due to its being much lower in elevation. We went down the Mountain to the plain. We hung up our snow-shoes on a tree, and made little sacks for saddlebags, where there was no snow. We crossed the Hellsgate to Wild-Horse Mountain, and found our party who had left us the season before, feeding on the flesh of wild horses. It was very good food.

There were no buffalo in that part of the country. The flesh of the young colt is delicious. They had wild onions for a condiment. I had been forty-four days on snow-shoes and my ankles became

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

lame when I took them off. We then hunted and trapped along and came to Sweet Water Lake again, which is about twenty miles long.

The powder brought up in the Summer of 1827, was of an inferior quality.

It was so bad, that it became a saying, that the men would snap the gun and lay it down on the ground, before it went off. The Indians knew this.

We were at the foot of the Lake and going up towards the head. In the morning we were attacked by the Blackfeet just as we were starting from camp. Four of the trappers who had been up at the head of the Lake came down and had joined me the night before. They managed to get some good powder.

My cook, who had the tents packed on the horses was found killed early in the morning.

I led the party and got to a Willow Spring and prepared for defence. We fought for four hours. We knew of four Blackfeet being killed by our fire.

Presuming on our poor powder they charged on us and were shot down. We didn't get their scalps. We then found that our ammunition was getting short. We were cut off.

The Indians flanked us and got in ahead of us. We held a council of wars.

We knew that the encampment at the head of the Lake - 18 miles distant - had ammunition, that we sorely needed.

The question was, how to get out, and get a communication with the camp. I proposed that I would go through to the encampment with two horses. A little Spaniard volunteered to go with me and we started. We dashed right in the face of the enemy! As is it not their mode to stand a charge, they separated.

We dashed on, and as they saw this they gave way and fled before our onset.

They knew that we would soon reach reinforcements, and in turn surround them.

We went on a gallop; I and the little Spaniard. We were going at such speed, that my horse fell with me. The whole of one side of my face was skinned.

Reaching the encampment, I started back immediately with reinforcements and a supply of ammunition, and rejoined the balance of our party. The Indians had disappeared as soon as they saw we went out for help.

We lost half a dozen horses in the fight, but got off safely, except with the loss of one man killed and two or three wounded.

The Blackfeet were regarded among all the trappers in the countries of their enemies, - as dangerous, and as a consequence, mutual distrust and frequent bloody encounters ensued.

The events just recited occurred in the Summer of 1828. I intended returning to St. Louis that year and quit the country; but, instead of doing so, I was prevailed on to go over into the country of the Crows, as a partner with Bridger and others, now all dead.

Our party for this expedition consisted of twelve men. We commenced trapping on Powder river, and our operations extended on the Tongue, Big Horn, and all the streams that are now in Red Cloud's country. That fall Jackson and Sublette returned from St. Louis. They struck Laramie at Horse Creek, Sublette went into the Crow country, where two years before, two Crows had been killed, and no trader had ventured there since. I went into that country trapping as before stated. I then went up to the Cache river at Po-po agie where it joins the Wind river, and made a cache there to put in my beaver.

A war party of Crows that had been down to the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, were returning and

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

found my cache. They took 150 skins.

I was then with Long Hair, principal chief of the Crows. They had brought in some scalps and were having great rejoicings. They held a great dance, in which the braves boasted of their exploits. Among other things they boasted of having found my cache. The old Chief then came into my lodge and said to me "Have you been catching beaver?" "Yes!" I answered.

"What you do with it?" asked the chief.

"Put it in the ground," said I.

"Where is it?" he enquired.

I drew a plan of the ground, where my beaver had been cached.

The old chief then said, "You talk straight about it!"

He said for four years they had had no Whites trading among them and a War party found this place where the beaver was cached. "They opened it," said the chief, "and brought some along." They tell me they brought 150 skins. Now don't let your heart be sad. You are in my lodge and all these skins will be given back to you.

I'll neither eat, drink or sleep till you get all your skins. Now count them as they come in!

He then mounted his horse and harangued the village, saying to his people that he had been a long time without traders, and they must not keep one skin back.

Then the old squaws and old men would come and pitch the beaver skins into my lodge, until nearly all were returned.

The son-in-law of the chief, said to me, "Tell the old chief the skins were all in, and if any are missing, I'll give you the balance." I then told the old chief, the skins were all in, and the next day I invited two or three men into my lodge to satisfy him from their inspection, that the skins were all right; the old chief becoming satisfied, then broke his fast.

In the next spring we started out in two parties; to hunt in the same country.

One party had all their horses stolen by the Blackfeet. There were five in my party, with Fitzpatrick, who now found us.

We stood guard every night. At the end of the hunt we struck for the Red Buttes, in order to meet Sublette coming up. Not meeting him, I went to Sweet Water and over to Wind river, where we had our rendezvous, and waited there till he came up.

There, an unpleasant incident occurred.

A great bully of a Frenchman, named Bray, when Sublette came up, gave out liquor.

He had been out with Samuel Tullock, got dissatisfied and became quarrelsome, under the influence of drink. He abused Tullock and said he had but one hand, but could knock him down. He asked Sublette if his pistol was loaded. He kept on with his abuse, when Tullock struck him a blow with his fist. The Frenchman fell over and never breathed. It was justifiable though.

Mr. Tullock did not intend killing the man.

The Frenchmen in camp took Bray's part, but drinking liquor in camp was all stopped.

We buried the man there. The difficulty produced a terrible damper in camp.

I took charge of the party that season and brought it down to St. Louis, arriving there in the fall of that year. I had spent four years in the Mountains.

In the Spring of 1831 I was at Lexington, Mo., and met Fitzpatrick coming in on his way from the Indian Country. He had with him an Indian boy, named Friday, whom he found on the Plains.

The boy did not know what nation he belonged to. He belonged to the Arapahoes, as subsequent-

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

ly ascertained. Friday became a well known Character on the Plains.

I paid a visit to my relatives in Ireland in the Spring of 1832. Returning that Spring to St. Louis, I again started for the Indian Country, taking out with me a small outfit of goods, blankets, clothes, and only five men and fifteen horses. Ten of the horses were loaded with merchandise. I accompanied Mr. William Sublette, who led a party of fifty men.

Sublette was taking out goods to furnish the firm of Milton, Sublette, Fitzpatrick and Bridger in exchange for beaver.

Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth was also with us.

He lived at Fresh Pond, near Boston, where they harvested fresh ice, and, died there two years ago.

On our trip up we crossed the Laramie river, which was then in flood, just below the fort, on a raft.

Capt. Wyeth's party lost a good many of their things by the upsetting of the raft.

We swam our mules across. Mr. Wyeth had an idea of going to the Columbia River and establishing a profitable business in catching salmon in connection with the fur trade, and had invested capital and goods in the enterprise.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, who also joined us, had started out ahead to the Sweet Water, to get the Traders together, and meet us at Pierre's Hole, on the Headwaters of the Columbia, under the Three Tetons.

On his way out, a village of the Gros Ventres of the Upper Missouri, who had been making a visit to the Arapahoes of two or three years duration, were returning and discovering Fitzpatrick pursued him to the Mountains, on Green river and took his horses. He, after concealing himself for two or three days managed to escape.

As we came along, the same Indians came to our camp at night stole two or three animals and killed one of our mules.

This was some days after, as we, did not then know what had befallen Fitzpatrick.

Well, nothing further happened to us until we reached the point of rendezvous.

There we met the hunters and trappers, and a party of Flathead Indians, who had got in from the hunt, also the party commanded by Mr. Drippe connected with Choteau & Co. The latter were supplied with merchandise taken out to the firm by Mr. Sublette.

We had nearly got through with the exchange of our wares and merchandise with the trappers and Indians, when the camp was disturbed by an Indian alarm. A trapping party had started out preparatory to the fall hunt, and had fallen in with the Blackfeet that had followed our trail, which had become obliterated by the rains and the length of time that had elapsed since we came in.

A halfbreed, Antoine Godin, and a Flathead Indian, discovering they were Blackfeet who were always at war, rode up in advance. They were met by a chief who was unarmed, bearing the pipe of peace.

But Godin, aware of Indian perfidy and suspecting treachery, ordered his Flathead companion to fire on the Blackfoot, as his hand was extended in pretended friendship, and he fell to the ground. A messenger came back to the main camp and told us they were fighting Blackfeet.

On receiving this information, we started out from camp, leaving a sufficient number of men to guard it. The Indians got into a thicket of willows, at a Beaver dam, forming a masked battery.

They put their horses in there and hung up their lodges to prevent our seeing them.

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

William Sublette and myself rode out together. We mutually agreed that whoever survived, the survivor should wind up our affairs.

When we came to the fortified place, firing commenced by the Indians and we were satisfied there was a large force of them. They had placed themselves in a position for defence.

We then arranged a place for the wounded to be brought.

A few of us crawled up between the willows. Sublette, myself and Sinclair, (St. Clair) there were two brothers of them. We crawled along on our hands and knees. Sublette was ahead, I second and Sinclair next to me. The Indians saw us and fired upon us, when within ten or fifteen paces of them and killed Sinclair. He was shot through the body. He was a quarter Cherokee. The Indians were concealed behind a breastwork of logs, and were well fortified against small arms.

We kept firing upon them. Sublette and myself had a pair of flint-lock pistols. In the lodge which was screened by buffalo skins, one of the Indians peered through a hole. Sublette fired and plugged him right in the eye.

I was within two steps of Sublette. Just at that time, and he told me, "Watch that place there is a chance for a shot at them." As he said this, three Indians, who were posted in another corner of the fortress fired and shot Sublette in the shoulder, and at the same time a man named Quigley was shot in the right side of the head. Neither shot proved fatal.

A portion of the bone in Sublette's arm was splintered by the shot, and I may anticipate by adding that some months afterwards, pieces of the bone were taken out by old Dr. Farrar at St. Louis.

When Sublette told me he was shot, I was watching to get a shot at them in the place he had just designated to me.

As he grew faint from the loss of blood, I bore him out of the thicket, and though disabled, he said, "Bring my gun along, we may get a shot at them yet." We fought on till nearly night. We left the Nez Perces to keep a watch on the enemy. Sublette was conveyed on a litter to our camp, six miles distant from the battle ground. In the battle one of our Nez Perce Chiefs, was shot in the breast. He told us before, that he could not be killed by a bullet.

He was hit on the breast bone by a spent ball which dropped to the ground.

It was big medicine that produced the charm, a big thing with the Indians. The chief of the Ban-nocks had the same belief; that he was invulnerable and could not be killed by a bullet. The Black-foot fled from their stronghold during the night.

There were three of our party killed in the fight, and the Blackfeet reported seventeen killed on their side. We found twenty-five dead horses, killed in the Blackfeet camp, and among the horses killed were two taken from Fitzpatrick.

In consequence of Sublette's wound we remained in camp for two weeks.

While there, Fitzpatrick joined us in a famished condition. He lost his powder horn, and had nothing to eat for many days.

I then sold out my merchandise to Fallon and Vanderburg, at this rendezvous. Then Sublette, being wounded, I took charge of the party, and made preparations to leave for St. Louis.

At that time the price of beaver rated at \$3 per pound, and brought about \$5 in St. Louis. There were eighty mules and we had 150 pounds on each mule.

When we hadn't the means of weighing, - 60 beavers were rated at 100 pounds.

When we trapped the first time in the country, they would average more. It would not take 60 beavers to make a hundred pounds, as the old beavers, before they were trapped out, weighed

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

more than young beavers.

The merchandise in demand consisted of blankets, beads, knives, kettles, clothes, etc.

Our party with mules and pack animals, formed a long cavalcade, as we started out.

A man who was shot in the battle, died soon after we started, from mortification.

He got off his horse and died in five minutes.

We then came to St. Louis. On the trip going out we had passed Captain Bonneville and his party on the Blue, and as we were coming back we passed him on the Green river and gave him an account of our fight with the Blackfeet.

Washington Irving passed us in Jackson County, Mo. We did not know him, nor he, us.

That winter, after my return to St. Louis, Sublette and myself formed a company partnership.

It was the same company that I went out to in 1833, furnishing supplies when we had our rendezvous on Green river.

We then determined to open trade on the Upper Missouri, near Fort Pierre, for buffalo, with the Sioux Indians. We accordingly established trading posts in the country of the Mandans and Gros Ventres, and at the Mandan village, on Knife river.

The Mandans lived in dirt lodges, dome shaped and in some respects, were in advance of other tribes.

Sublette went up in two keel boats, cordelling and sailing up the river. At the same time I went out to the Green River rendezvous.

While we were at Green River, I met Bonneville, Dripps and then there was our company, making three companies. We were located a mile apart for the purpose of not having our animals mingle. One night a mad wolf came into our three camps and bit ten or twelve men. He rushed into my camp and bit two of the animals.

One of them went mad, and three or four weeks afterwards died. It was a bull I had taken up from Lexington, Lafayette county, Mo., from the blue bunch grass pastures of that county.

The heifer that was bitten by the wolf at the same time, had a calf, and to anticipate my story, I will add here, that she died at the mouth of the Yellowstone, eight or nine months afterwards.

I had driven these cattle from Missouri to the Green river and then drove them down the Big Horn Mountains, where I constructed Bull boats, with which to descend the Big Horn to the mouth of the Yellowstone. In gliding down the stream, one of the boats came under a fallen tree, and upset, I under it. I got safely out and lost my gun, but the floating skins were picked up by the other boat.

When I reached the mouth of the Yellowstone I found Mr. Sublette there, who had left one of our boats at the mouth of the Sioux, near Fort Pierre, where we had a trading post and also a trading post at the Mandan village. He came up with the other boat to the mouth of the Yellowstone. There was a days difference in our time. We erected a stockade fort, with blockhouses on the angles, the dimensions being 130 by 150 feet.

Choteau and company had a fort above the mouth of the Yellowstone. Our fort was three miles, by land, six by water, distant from it.

Mr. McKenzie had charge of Fort Union of the Choteau or American Fur Company.

This fort was 300 feet square, with bastions armed with cannons. I was left in charge of my fort with thirty men and remained there that season. The Assiniboins were principally assembled there that Winter.

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

In October, Sublette came down to St. Louis and made arrangements for a division of the country, between Chouteau & Co., and Sublette & Campbell. Before this, an attempt had been made to make a division of the Territory, between the existing rival Fur Companies.

At the period referred to, the concerns of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were managed by two resident partners Fitzpatrick and Bridger, and those of the American Fur Company by Vanderburg and Dripps. The competition between these two rival companies was prosecuted with unusual zeal, and resulted in disastrous effects. Fitzpatrick knew the evils of competition on the same hunting grounds and had proposed that the two companies divide the country between them, so as to hunt in different directions, but the proposition was rejected. By the division of Territory agreed upon between Sublette & Campbell and the American Fur Company, the boundaries were as follows. We commenced on the Arkansas, at a point South of the Platte, on the 24th degree from Washington; thence up to the Forks of the Platte, then to the dividing line of the waters emptying into the Missouri; thence we continued on that line to the Rocky Mountains, and thence on to the three forks of the Missouri, covering all west and south of that line. To Choteau Company was assigned all the Territory North and East of that line.

In the Spring, Sublette sent up a messenger to me, with the boundary treaty, and the conditions of sale, of our merchandise at the fort, to the American Fur Company as we now had to confine our trade in another direction.

I then turned over the goods to the American Fur Companies, and I sent a party of trappers across the country from the Yellowstone, with our furs, to our new fort. Meantime Mr. Sublette had sent up Mr. Potter to Laramie, where he established Fort Williams, so named after William Sublette, and now called Fort Laramie.

There I sent our furs. Having closed up our business at the mouth of the Yellowstone, I then came down to St. Louis.

During the Winter of 1834-35, the two Fur trapping companies - Fontenelle & Dripps and that of Fitzpatrick, Milton Sublette and Bridger, formed a partnership, and we (Sublette & Campbell) sold out to them.

I then went up from St. Louis in the Spring of 1835 to transfer over to the new company, the goods and animals that we had at Fort Laramie.

Having completed that business, I built a boat at this post and started down the North Platte, with buffalo robes, while a party by land, with mules, carried the beaver skins. The boat had a fine stage of water till I reached Scotts Bluffs.

There the quicksands rendered navigation impossible. The quicksand bars were all scattered about and the water was shallow. I constructed, then, at Scotts Bluffs, two Bull boats, putting in each three bull skins, sewed together like a crate.

I then procured some plum bushes, that made the ribs. We loaded the buffalo robes on these two boats, and brought the Mackinaw boat along. I went on in advance of the boats to Ash Hollow. The skins got somewhat wetted. The South fork of the Platte was full of water when the boats entered, and we came down finely.

Just below the forks of the Platte there was an Arickaree village. We were on the North side. The Indians were hostile. I took a dozen men and went on a little Island, where I prepared for defense. The Indians came across, but not with their guns.

I held a talk with them by signs, gave them some tobacco, and told them to go back, that my

A NARRATIVE OF COLONEL ROBERT CAMPBELL'S EXPERIENCES IN THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE FROM 1825 TO 1835

---

mules would be frightened.

I traveled on the North shore, as fast as our mules would carry us. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and we camped without building fires. We took different trails, and went on till we reached the Pawnee Loupes village on the Loupes Fork of the Platte. There I learned that Gen. Dodge was going up with a regiment of Rangers - a U.S. regiment, merged into the first U.S. dragoons. He was going up the Platte, fifteen miles off. This news gave us confidence.

I crossed the Missouri at Omaha, and came down to St. Joe, then a trading post.

There I heard the first news that the boats were safe. In the fall of 1835 I arrived at St. Louis. In the fall of 1836 Sublette commenced business in St. Louis.

In 1851, I was again out in the Indian country and attended the grand council which lasted eighteen days, with the Sioux, Crows, Blackfeet and Cheyennes, at the mouth of Horse Creek on the North Platte.

I went out with Colonel David D. Mitchell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, and Maj. Thomas Fitzpatrick.

The Secretary of the Council was Col. A.B. Chambers of the "Republican", and the Assistant Secretary, B. Grantz Brown.

Father DeSmet, who had just returned from the Yellowstone, accompanied me from Fort Laramie to the place where the council was held. The treaty then made is known as the treaty of 1852.

published in French as:

- Franchère, Gabriel, 1786-1863. *Relation d'un voyage à la côte du Nord-ouest de l'Amérique Septentrionale, dans les années 1810, 11, 12, 13, et 14.* Par G. Franchère, fils. Montréal : Impr. de C.B. Pasteur, 1820.

It was first published in English as:

- Franchère, Gabriel. *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814.* Translated by: J. V. Huntington. New York: Redfield, 1854.

This translation was reprinted in several editions:

- Thwaites, Reuben Gold. ed. *Early Western Travels.* Vol.6. Cleveland, OH: The Authur H. Clark Company, 1904.
- Quaife, Milo Milton. ed. *Lakeside Classics Series,* Chicago: R. R. Donnelly, 1954.
- Franchere, Hoyt. ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

An independent edition, based on the original manuscript, was published as:

- *Journal of a voyage on the north west coast of North America during the years 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814.* Transcribed and translated by Wessie Tipping Lamb. Edited with an introd. and notes by W. Kaye Lamb. Toronto : Champlain Society, 1969.

The original manuscript is now held by the Toronto Public Library.

This digital edition is based on the 1854 Huntington translation.

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

LIFE IN THE

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

A Diary of Wanderings on the sources of

the Rivers Missouri, Columbia, and Colorado

from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

then in the employ of the

American Fur Company

CHAPTER I

Westward! Ho! It is the sixteenth of the second month A. D. 1830. and I have joined a trapping, trading, hunting expedition to the Rocky Mountains. Why, I scarcely know, for the motives that induced me to this step were of a mixed complexion, - something like the pepper and salt population of this city of St. Louis. Curiosity, a love of wild adventure, and perhaps also a hope of profit, - for times are hard, and my best coat has a sort of sheepish hang-dog hesitation to encounter fashionable folk - combined to make me look upon the project with an eye of favour. The party consists of some thirty men, mostly Canadians; but a few there are, like myself, from various parts of the Union. Each has some plausible excuse for joining, and the aggregate of disinterestedness would delight the most ghostly saint in the Roman calendar. Engage for money! no, not they; health, and the strong desire of seeing strange lands, of beholding nature in the savage grandeur of her primeval state, - these are the only arguments that could have persuaded such independent and high-minded young fellows to adventure with the American Fur Company in a trip to the mountain wilds of the great west. But they are active, vigorous, resolute, daring, and such are the kind of men the service requires. The Company have no reason to be dissatisfied, nor have they. Everything promises well. No doubt there will be two fortunes apiece for us. Westward! Ho!

All was at last ready, we mounted our mules and horses, and filed away from the Company's warehouse, in fine spirits, and under a fine sky. The day was delightful, and all felt its cheerful influence. We were leaving for many months, - even years - if not forever, the lands and life of civilization, refinement, learning order and law, plunging afar into the savageness of a nomadic, yet not pastoral state of being, and doomed to encounter hunger, thirst, fatigue, exposure, peril,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

and perhaps sickness, torture, and death. But none of these things were thought of. The light jest was uttered, the merry laugh responded. Hope pictured a bright future for every one, and dangers, hardships, accidents, and disappointments, found no harbour in our anticipations.

The first day's march conducted us through a fertile and cultivated tract of country, to the Missouri river, opposite St. Charles. We crossed the stream in a flat boat, and passing through the village, halted for the night at a farmhouse a few miles beyond. Corn and corn-stalks were purchased for our horses, and corn bread and bacon for ourselves. We did not greatly relish a kind of diet so primitive, neither did we the idea that it was furnished us merely because it was the cheapest that could be obtained. Having ascertained, however, that nothing better was to be had, we magnanimously concluded to accept that instead of the alternative - nothing - and I, at least, made out a hearty supper.

It is not necessary to mention every trifling accident that occurred during our journey through the state of Missouri. Our numbers prevented us from enjoying the comforts of a house to lodge in, and when we could not find room in barns or other outbuildings, we slept on the bosom of mother earth, beneath our own good blankets, and the starry coverlet of heaven. No unpleasant effects resulted from this exposure, and though all unused to a mode of life so purely aboriginal, I even enjoyed it. Sleep more refreshing, and dreams more sweet were never vouchsafed to me than those which waited upon my grassy couch beneath the sky canopy of night. In fair weather nothing could be finer, but a cold driving storm made all the difference in the world. In such an event we arose, took up our beds, and walked - to the nearest door, which we ordered instantly to unfold and yield admittance, on pain of our displeasure. The conscious door trembled at the summons, but never hesitated to obey the mandate, and thereupon we entered and spread ourselves and blankets on the floor, if wet - to dry, if dry - to snore.

On the twenty-first we entered the Eighteen-mile prairie, east of Franklin, beneath a bright sky, and a balmy air. A few miles and the weather changed sadly. A terrible storm set in, which we were obliged to face and brave, for shelter was out of the question. The snow and hail melted and froze again on our hair, eye-brows, and neck-cloths, and we suffered much during almost the whole day from its driving violence. At evening we re-entered the woodlands, and the storm ceased to annoy us. Two days after this, we reached and passed through the village of Franklin, which a pitiless monster was in the act of swallowing up. The river is every year encroaching on the bank that forms the site of the town, and several buildings have already made an aquatic excursion. Others seem preparing to follow. Near the village we met with innumerable flocks of parquets - the first I had seen in a wild state - whose beautiful plumage of green and gold flashed above us like an atmosphere of gems.

We crossed the Missouri at Arrow-rock ferry on the twenty-fifth, and shortly after overtook a party of fifteen Canadians, who had preceded us a few days from St. Louis, and who were henceforth to be our companions to the end of the journey. The country had already begun to assume a more uncultivated and dreary aspect; plantations were much less frequent, - we were approaching the limits of civilization. We now moved from farm-house to farm-house, remaining at each so

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

long as we could obtain sustenance for ourselves and horses, in order that the condition of the latter might be improved, and to give time for the vegetation, to which their diet would soon have to be restricted, to increase sufficient for the purpose. In the meantime our leisure hours were occupied and amused by the surprising relations of a few of the Canadians who had formerly been to the mountains, and who did not scruple to impose on the credulity of the “mangeris de lard,” as they term those who are unacquainted with the wild hap-hazard sort of life peculiar to the remote and desolate regions to which our journey tends. Each of these veterans seemed to have had a “most enormous experience” in mountain adventure, and certainly if their own stories could have been taken for it, they were singly more than a match for any given number of bears or Blackfeet. Some of their narrations were romantic enough, with a possibility of their being true, but the greatest number savoured too much of Munchausenism to gain a moment’s belief. I soon found that a current of rude but good natured humour ran through their veins, and that, though quite disposed to quiz, they were by no means disposed to quarrel with us. We easily came to a good understanding together. They told as extravagant yarns as they pleased, and we believed as little as we liked. Both had reason to be pleased with this arrangement, and many an hour I sat and listened to extempore adventures, improvised for the occasion, compared to which those of Colter and Glass, (both of which I had read years before,) were dull and spiritless. One told of coursing an antelope a week without intermission or food, over a spur of the Wind Mountains, and another of riding a grizzly bear, full tilt, through a village of Blackfeet Indians! There was no end to their absurdities.

## CHAPTER II

Messrs. Dripps and Robidoux, who were to be our conductors to the Council Bluffs, overtook us on the fifth, bringing with them an addition to our strength of fifty more - mules! As these our new leaders (not the mules) were noted for anything but a want of energy, we were soon again in motion, and recrossing the Missouri near Mount Vernon, continued our course to a plantation not far from Liberty, the last village on our route, where we remained for two weeks, waiting the arrival of wagons from St Louis, with merchandize for the Indian trade, which from this point has to be conveyed to the mountains on pack horses.

The only incident by which the monotony of our stay was at all relieved, was a stab which one of our men received in a drunken frolic, from a stranger whom he had without doubt insulted. This affair produced at first some little excitement, and even threatened serious consequences. It was soon ascertained, however, that the injury was but slight, and, as the individual wounded was known to be a reckless, impudent quarrelsome fellow, who had beyond question provoked the broil in which he got his hurt, he found but little sympathy, and was forced to put up with the loss of blood and temper his insolence and ill-conduct had brought upon him. This lesson was not entirely lost to him, for it had the effect of amending his manners very materially, and so proved to be rather a providence than a punishment.

The long-expected train of wagons arrived on the nineteenth, and there was speedily a general

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

bustle in the camp, though never a lady near. We all set to work unloading the bales, cording and preparing them for packing, and making other necessary arrangements for prosecuting our journey. Our party now amounted to forty-five persons, and we had above a hundred beasts of burden. The men were supplied with arms, ammunition, pans, kettles, etc., and divided into six messes, each of which received its proportionate share of provisions, with an intimation that they must be carefully husbanded, as nothing more could be obtained until we reached the Council Bluffs, the intervening country being an unpeopled waste or wilderness. Pleasant intelligence this for the stomach, and some went supperless to bed - no, blanket - for fear they would otherwise have no breakfast on some subsequent morning. At last, all was in readiness, and early the following day we were on the march. Passing the boundary of those two great states, Missouri and Misery, and leaving the forest bordering the river, we emerged into an almost limitless prairie, embroidered with woodland stripes and dots, fringing and skirting the streams and rivulets by which it was not inelegantly intersected and adorned. The day was bright and fair, and this early part of our travel might have been pleasant, but for the unceasing annoyance of our mules, who seized every opportunity, and indeed when occasion was wanting, took the responsibility of making one, to give us trouble and vexation. Some were content to display the stupidity for which their sires are so proverbial, but the greater part amused themselves with the most provoking tricks of legerdemain, such as dexterously and by some cabalistic movement, tossing their packs, (which were lashed on,) into a mud-hole, or turning them by a practised juggle from their backs to between their legs, which, having accomplished, they scampered off in high glee, or stopped and commenced kicking, floundering, pawing, and bellowing, as if they were any thing but delighted with the result of their merry humours. Job himself would have yielded to the luxury of reviling, had his patience been tried by the management of a drove of packed mules, and it may be esteemed fortunate for his reputation that Senior Nicholas had not the wit to propose such an experiment upon his even-toned temper. As the Devil is ordinarily by no means wanting in shrewdness, the omission might perhaps be set down to his credit on the score of charity, but for his abominable taste in matters of diabolical vertûe, as shown by his penchant for sanguinary signatures to all compacts and bonds for bad behavior made with or exacted by him, in the course of his "regular dealings" with mankind, and hence it must be considered a clear case of ignorance or oversight, that this test, compared to which there is toleration for boils even, was not applied. A wicked wag at my elbow, inquires with an affectation of much interest, if Satan, having in the case of the good man Job, failed so signally to keep his word, was not liable to an action on the case for a breach of promise. I of course decline answering, and refer him to those more skilled in legal casuistry for a reply. Of all bores in the world, your quizzing, carping, text-torturing sceptic is the worst - next to mule driving; and those confounded mules would bore a two inch auger hole through the meekness of Moses himself, were he their master. Such kicks, caperings, perverseness and obstinacy! the task of St. Dunstan was a play-spell to this teasing, tormenting tax upon one's time and patience. The man in the song, who "Had a donkey wot wouldn't go," and yet didn't "wallop him," was a miracle of forbearance and - but such people live only in song!

Well, in spite of the obstinacy of our mules, night came at last, and we halted on the margin of a pretty rippling stream, turned our horses loose to crop the yellow beard on the prairie face of earth, and kindled camp fires for our evening meal. O what a luxury it is to have a whole night's

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

rest before you, after a long day of toil, vexation, and weariness! Supper over and I indulging in reflections of a very indiscriminate kind, reposing on my elbow by the warmth of a genial blaze, when a blessless wight elbowed my repose by stumbling over me and adding an unexpected and quite too general ablution from his freshly filled kettle of water. Peace societies were not then thought of, and as I half suspected the rascal to have done it accidentally by design, as an Irishman might say, I started up in order to give him, - as one good turn deserves another, - a box on the ear for his carelessness. But fear collapsed the coward's limbs, he slipped down to his knees, and my blow, just grazing the stubble of his short crop, cut the empty air and whirled me sprawling over him. There was an attitude for a philosopher! I sprang to my feet now as thoroughly enraged as I had been before drenched, but my opponent had utterly vanished, and I saw and heard nothing save the echo of a chuckle that seemed to dance on the still quivering leaves of a bush he must have brushed in his flight. However, I had my revenge for a few hours later I thrashed him soundly - in a dream!

In the morning we collected our horses and pack animals, and after breakfast continued on our journey across the prairie which we found to be lacquered with numerous trails or paths beaten by herds of buffaloes, that formerly grazed these plains, vestiges of which were still every where to be seen. One of these trails bearing to the westward we followed until it terminated in an impenetrable thicket, when our bewildered guide struck off to the northward, on a hunt, as some one facetiously remarked, after the Great Bear, which he had the good fortune to find, though not, as may be supposed, until some time after dusk. We halted for the night in a beautiful grove near a fine spring, and had the inexpressible pleasure of ascertaining that it was a capital watering place, a fact that was fully proved by the torrents that poured down like another deluge, the whole night, and prevented us from getting a single moment's sleep. Some of our people took, from this cold water movement, such a decided distaste for the pure element that they could not bear to drink a single drop, for a long time after, that is when anything better, as rum or whiskey, could be had. For my own part the surfeit did not produce nausea, and I still loved the sparkling liquid, but I must confess in more moderate abundance and from any spring rather than a spring shower.

## CHAPTER III

We left ourself, at the close of the last chapter, in a most comfortless condition, that is to say, wet as a drowned rat, but very much consoled by the reflection that not a man in camp had a dry thread on his back. How gratifying it always is, to a person in distress, to know that his neighbours are at least as badly off as he is! There was no trouble in rousing the party that morning, for every man was up, not exactly bright to be sure, but quite early; and the number of big blazing fires, with human figures crouching and crowding round them, shifting sides and changing positions constantly, gave one no unapt conception of a certain place more than an ell in measurement, with its attendant imps and demons. Forty five persons doing duty *ex necessitate rei*, in the capacity of clothes-horses, had in it something indescribably ludicrous, yet, strange to say, there was not a smile on a single lip, and we all spread ourselves to dry with, the utmost imaginable gravity, specific and facial. After breakfast we gathered up our traps, literal as well as hyperbolic,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

and proceeded on our journey.

For several days, we met with no adventure worth relating, and though our curiosity was constantly on the stretch, to find out how it was possible for our mules to play us so many tricks as they continually did, it still remains a mystery, as much so as any other species of animal magnetism, in vogue with beings of that order. We saw herds of deer daily, now and then a herd of elk, and of deer and buffalo more bones than we cared to pick. We met also with a great variety of wild fowl, which are common to the lakes and prairies of Illinois, and to whoever can catch them besides. Innumerable small streams crossed our course, or rather we crossed them, the beds of many of which, though any thing but down, were as soft as could be desired, and much more so than suited our convenience, for they often suited us with a covering infinitely more adhesive than agreeable. Some of them we bridged over, and so passed without taking toll of their richness, but others were destitute of trees or shrubs, and because they were naked we were obliged to denude ourselves, wade over and carry both our clothes and luggage, for our horses and mules could with difficulty flounder through when eased of their loading. Of the latter it may be here observed, that however firm the bed and consequently practicable the passage of a stream might be, they invariably insisted upon not attempting to cross until relieved of their burden, and the strongest argument scarcely sufficed to overcome this repugnance to such a proceeding. "It is quite astonishing," said a weather beaten wag one day with great simplicity, "how little confidence them animals has in themselves." Singular, but our impressions were quite the contrary, and we had often occasion to remark that their organs of self-esteem and firmness must be most surprisingly developed - pro-di-gous! as Dominie Sampson would say.

On the twenty-eighth we narrowly escaped losing our horses and baggage through the carelessness of one of our men, who kindled a fire and left it notwithstanding he had been repeatedly warned of the danger of so doing. During his absence the dry grass caught the blaze, and a fresh gust in a moment fanned it to a conflagration which wrapt the whole encampment in a sheet of flame. We rushed at once to rescue the baggage, but several bales of powder and other articles were already lost to view in the devouring element that rolled and billowed over the plain. We had barely time, the flames spread with such rapidity, to seize each a bale and fly for refuge to a small sand bar, beneath a high bluff. Here we stood and gazed with agony at the curling and darting flames as they swept over the prairie, threatening destruction to our horses, in which event our situation would have been indeed deplorable. Fortunately however the wind suddenly changed, and blew with equal violence in the opposite direction, driving the mass or sheet of flames away to the eastward, and leaving us and our poor beasts free from danger.

The bales were all cased with thick cowhide and passed the fiery ordeal without injury; even our powder, though the envelopes were scorched and blackened by the blaze, escaped explosion, and we had truly reason to be thankful for our great deliverance. Two of our horses were less fortunate than their companions, for they were overtaken by the flames and completely singed, presenting an extremely ludicrous but pitiable appearance. Is it not singular that these animals, not usually wanting in sagacity or courage, should when threatened by fire so quietly submit to their fate without making a single effort to escape? A few saddles, blankets, and other articles, among

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

which was all the extra clothing and only coat, of him whose inexcusable carelessness had thus exposed us, were lost by the fire. And this was fortunately the extent of the damage.

Resuming our journey we reached the Missouri on the thirty-first and crossed in a keel boat to Belle Vue, the trading house of Messrs. Fontenelle & Dripps, situate eight miles above the mouth of the Platte. We were here supplied with tents, which we pitched - not as the paddy did with grease - near the Papillon creek, about a mile below the fort. Our horses having become extremely weak and thin from scanty fare and hard usage, were now turned out to graze in fields of gigantic rushes which flourish in great abundance in the woodland bottoms bordering the river. As for ourselves having a long holiday before us, we employed our time in various ways, as hunting, fishing, and story telling, and making necessary preparations for continuing our route when our horses should have become sufficiently recruited to warrant them in a serviceable condition.

I shall not stop to mention all the silly things we did on the first of April, when people make such egregious fools of themselves in trying to befool others. "Oh! Ferris!" calls out one in over acted alarm, "there's a great copperhead just behind you!" "Yes, I see the rascal's face right between your two ears." Suddenly another cries in a simulated agony of terror, "Indians! Indians!" "Where? where?" eagerly asks some unsuspecting innocent in real fear. "April fool!" returns the wag with a chuckle, and then one tries very hard not to seem sheepish, but to look a whole folio of dignified philosophical indifference, in both of which he utterly fails as a matter of course, while the other builds a couple of triumphal arches with his eye brows, and hieroglyphs his face over with tokens of self gratulation at his successful foray, - fooled each to the top of his bent. In puerilities like these passed the day, as all-fools day usually passes, in country, camp, or court the world over. Vive la bagatelle! - hurra for nothing!

The four weeks of our stay at this point were undiversified by any occurrences worth relating, and we soon became heartily weary of the dull monotony of its daily routine, and as anxious to resume the line of march, as we had been before to hail a pause in its progression. The days dragged on heavily and slowly until the last of April came, when after packing up with the alacrity of pleasure, we packed off in high spirits and ascending a hill in rear of the trading house, bade a long but reluctant adieu to the scene of a wasted month, glad to find our feet again in the stirrups, and our faces once more, westward ho! We soon lost sight of Belle Vue, though belle vue was ever in sight, in whatsoever direction our eyes were turned. But the same cause that rendered the prospect beautiful, namely, several recent showers, had also made the roads almost impassable. Our mules were become more mercurial than ever and played off their old pranks with a skill greatly heightened by experience, much to the annoyance and vexation of the poor Jobs, who were compelled to manage, and yet - incredible hardship! - not permitted to kill them. Here or there might be seen at almost any moment, some poor devil smeared or bespattered with mire and water until he scarcely knew himself only by report, holding on to a restive mule with one hand, and with the other endeavouring to fish out of the mud a discharged cargo, left without leave by the gallows jade whose business it was to bear the burden. These knights of the cross (the poor mule drivers) as their crosses and losses of luck and temper occasioned them to be called, were cross from morning till night and yet I doubt if they were not naturally the best natured

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

fellows in the world; but mule driving is the d\_\_\_l and there is no more to be said about it, except that I pitied them until it came my turn to share their fate, and then I pitied the tiger for his tameness. We slept that night at a fine spring ten miles north of Belle Vue, and, oh strange inconstancy of man's mood! wished ourselves back by the quiet margin of the peaceful Papillon, whose rushy border we had rushed away from but a few hours before.

“Green grow the rushes O!

Green grow “

Good night!

## CHAPTER IV

And this is May-day, the festival of girlhood and happy youth, in many a town of many a land, where joyous hearts exulting hail its beautiful dawn, and the hours are winged and rosy with the exciting and rapturous scenes of a floral coronation. Ah, how sweetly rise in my memory the visions of fetes like these! I can almost fancy that I see one now - that again a laughing gay spirited boy I mingle in the mimic pageant, and assist at the pleasing ceremonial. There stands the rural throne, with its velvet dias, its mossy seat, and its canopy of flower-woven evergreens; there too, is the fairy-like Queen, a tall, graceful girl, the flaxen locks of whose infancy have been curled into golden ringlets, that cluster round her beautiful face, and fall in fleecy masses on her ivory shoulders, by the warm suns of some thirteen summers; and there, too, is a gallant gathering about her of maids of honour, pages, pursuivants, and - pshaw! what a fool I am to dream of scenes and seasons like those, in this far wilderness, and with these companions! Imagination! and thou, too, Memory! be silent, and weave no more the bright texture of romance!

Resuming our march, we followed a zig-zag trail through hills, and bluffs, covered with dwarf trees, and thick underbrush, for six miles, and descending into a pleasant vale, came upon the Trading-house of Mr. Cabina, eight miles below the Council Bluffs. Here we received supplies of ammunition and a “Code of Laws,” with penalties annexed, for the preservation of harmony and safety, in our passage through the immense plains - that still intervene between us and the end of our journey - which are roamed and infested by hordes of savages, among whom theft and robbery are accounted any thing but crime, and whose scruples on the score of murder are scarcely a sufficient shield against the knife or the tomahawk. Strength and courage alone, command their respect - they have no sympathy for trust, no pity for weakness. By the strong hand they live, and by the strong hand only are they awed. Our traveling code of “pains and penalties” was signed by Mr. Fontenelle, a veteran leader in the mountain service, who now assumed the direction of affairs and in all things showed himself to be an experienced, able, and efficient commander.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

After a brief interval of rest, refreshment, and preparation, the word was given to march, and, leaving Mr. Cabina, his trading house, and the Missouri, we struck off across the prairie until evening, when we pitched our camp on the Papillon, twenty miles above its mouth. Next day we reached a branch of the Loup Fork, called the Elk-horn River - a clear, deep, rapid stream, fifty paces in width - and constructed a boat-frame of willow, which we covered with dressed buffalo-skins, sewn together for the purpose. After some trouble in adjusting and securing the parts, our boat was finished, and launched, but unfortunately the skins proved to have been spoiled and soon came to pieces. We had but one resource left, and that to ford the river, which was effected at a point where the greatest depth did not exceed four feet. Stripping ourselves, and wading back and forth we transported our baggage on our backs, piece-meal, whilst our horses were forced to swim over at another place. The water was quite chill, and as if to make the toil of crossing doubly unpleasant, we were showered with a storm of sleet, which belaboured our naked shoulders most unmercifully. However, we got every thing at last safely over, and as evening overtook us here, passed the night on the margin of the river. We started as usual, early on the following day, but proceeded only a few miles, when we were compelled to halt at a place called "The Hole," in consequence of a severe storm of sleet, accompanied by a fierce northern gale, which continued with unabated fury till the morning of the fifth. We began to grow familiar with hardships, as may well be imagined, from the toil, danger, and exposure, of scenes like these, but such weather was still - awful unpleasant!

The country now presented a boundless gently-rolling prairie, in one complete mantle of green, laced with occasional dark stripes of woodland, that border and outline the mazy courses of rivulets, which flow from every dell and hollow. Wild onions abound on the margin of all these streams, as the lovers of that valuable and very fragrant esculent may be pleased to learn; but I botanized no further. On the fifth we continued our march, with the bright sun of a beautiful day smiling upon and encouraging our journey.

Up to this period, we encamped without order, helter-skelter, just as it happened, allowing our horses to run loose night and day; but now, when we halted for the night, our camp assumed a somewhat martial appearance. The order of its arrangement was this, - a space of fifty yards square was marked out, one side of which was always along the brink of some stream. Four of our tents occupied the corners, and of the remaining four, one was placed in the middle of each side. The intervening spaces between the tents were barricaded by a breast-work formed of our baggage and horse furniture. The space within the square, was dotted with the iron heads of nearly two hundred hard wood pins, each one foot in length, and one and three-fourths inches in diameter, drove into the ground, to which our horses and mules were fastened. Each man was provided with a wooden mallet to drive the pins with, and when, just before sunset, all were put into requisition, such a din as they created, would be a caution to Paganini. Immediately after sundown, the words "catch up," resounded through camp, all hands flew to the horses, and all was noise and bustle for some minutes. Forty odd of us 'cordelling' our stubborn mules, - who the more you want them to go, the more they won't - into camp, with oaths and curses, not only loud, but deep - it was wicked, but, poor fellows they couldn't help it! - might have been seen, if one could for laughter have kept his eyes open, upon any such occasion. A few moments and all was

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

quiet again, horses and mules securely fastened to their respective pickets, and the men at their tents, seated around kettles of boiled pork and corn, with pans, spoons, and grinders in motion. Keen hunger made us relish the repast, which else the very dogs had refused, - however all contented themselves as well as they might with such fare, looking forward with a sort of dreamy delight to the time when rich heaps of fat buffalo meat, should grace and garnish our encampments.

After supper we reclined on our elbows about the fire, produced our pipes and tuned them to a smoke, recounted tales, puffed ourselves, and old times, and quizzed, joked and jested with one another until eight o'clock, when our humour was interrupted by the cry "turn out the first guard, " whereupon six of our companions, jumped up, seized their guns and blankets, and presently commenced strutting around camp, rifle in hand, while the rest retired not only to sleep, but also to be awakened, in the midst perhaps, of a pleasing dream, by a rough shake of the shoulder, and those most detestable words, "get up, sir, it is your watch, " - and capital time those watches keep too, except that they are apt to run a little too fast. Two hours, two mortal long hours, wrapped in your blanket may you sit on the prairie without fire, but with your rifle across your knees, and watch the stars, the moon, the clouds, or the waving grass, not forgetting to answer the watch-word repeated every half hour, by six poor wretches like yourself, "all's well." Rain or shine, wet to the skin or not, half starved with cold or hunger, no matter what, still you hear and echo those most applicable words, with perhaps, as once in a woeful storm of sleet, the rhyming jingling comment of some uneasy sleeper, - " 'Tis false as h\_\_l," the truth of which in your heart you are forced to admit. At the expiration of two hours another takes your place, and you may crawl to rest, to be brought again to your feet at day light by the cry "léve, léve," (get up). Three or four of the morning guard are ordered at dawn to scour the neighbouring hills on horseback, when if they discover nothing unusual, the horses are turned out to graze, under the charge of the "horse day guard," and the rest of the party cluster round their camp-fires to smoke or watch the bubbling kettle, till the morning meal. After breakfast all are busily employed in folding up their tents, pulling down the breast-works, and arranging the luggage so as to require as little time as possible for "loading up." When the sun is something over an hour high, the order "catch up," is again heard, and all hasten to catch and tow their animals into camp. Patience and forbearance, if you are blessed with those amiable qualities, will now be tested to the uttermost, supposing you to be honoured with the charge of two or more of those mongrel brutes with shrill voices and long ears. Few exist but will strive to do you an injury by some infernal cantrap or other. One bites your leg while you fasten the saddle girth, another kicks you while you arrange the croupper, a third stands quietly until his lading is nearly completed, and then suddenly starts and flounces until he throws every thing off, a fourth at the same interesting point stamps upon your foot, breaks away, and scampers off into the prairie, strewing the way with his burden, a fifth refuses to be loaded at all, and a sixth to stand still, be led or driven. In short there is no end to their tricks and caperings. But I spare the recital. Any one of the party having completed his arrangements for departure assists his messmates, and in half an hour or so, all are ready for marching orders, when our leaders take the front, and proceed at a fast walk, while we fall into line and follow, leading our pack horses, and carrying our guns before us across the saddle. At noon we halt for a couple of hours, after which we journey on until the sun appears but an hour and a half or such a matter above the horizon, when we stop for the night, turn out our horses, after "hobbling" them,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

by tying the fore legs together to prevent them running away in case of an alarm, and arrange and fortify our encampment, as above related.

## CHAPTER V

We saw on the seventeenth several prong-horned antelopes; a timid, fleet, and beautiful animal, peculiar I believe to the region of the Rocky Mountains. Much I had heard and read of the swiftness and graceful motion of the antelope, but had no conception of the exquisite ease of its airy, floating perfection of movement, until I saw these glide away with the light and sylphic step of the down-footed zephyr, that scarcely touches the lawn over which it trips so sweetly and so swift. I can now understand, what I never could realize before, the poetry of motion. We reached on the following day a wide shallow stream called the Loup Fork, which rises near the Black hills, and flows eastward about five hundred miles, parallel with the Platte, into which it empties forty or fifty miles above the Missouri. We found no little difficulty in fording it, in consequence of the quick sands of which its bed is composed, giving way so readily beneath the pressure of our feet. At noon, however, all were safely across, and for the rest of the day we skirted along its southern margin. The following afternoon we passed a Pawnee village situated on the opposite bank of the river, and sent, as customary, a present of tobacco, powder, balls etc., to these tribute-taking lords of forest, field and flood, the heart of whose wild dominion we are now traversing. In the evening the principal chief a fine looking, hardy, and certainly hearty old codger, and two of his people, came with our messenger to pay us a visit and acknowledge our courtesy, when the pipe of peace was smoked with all becoming gravity, and he was so well pleased with his reception and our hospitality that he passed the night with us. The same evening one of our men by the name of Perkins, was severely burned by the accidental explosion of his powder horn. On the next day we reached and crossed the Platte river, which is here nearly a mile wide, but so shallow as to be fordable. It is full of low sleepy islands, and bounded on either side by rich bottom lands, often a mile two in breadth, but little higher than the stream itself, and apparently quite as level. The bed of this river is also formed of quicksands which are always shifting, and give its waters that muddy consistence so remarkable in the Missouri. Beyond the bottoms a rolling sandy prairie stretches its lazy level, but scantily covered with a coarse short grass, and even now and then in barren spots as nude as an antique statue destitute of the seemliness of a fig leaf. Occasional groves of aspen and cotton-wood deck the islands and bottoms of the Platte, and these are the only varieties of timber to be found.

Scarcely had we got under way on the morning of the eleventh, when we discovered several mounted Indians approaching at full speed, who soon gave us to understand that a large party of their people were close at hand coming to trade with us. Mr. Fontenelle not doubting but that they came for the express purpose of plundering us, immediately ordered a halt, and made preparations to give them a reception more warm than welcome. We picketed and hobbled our horses, examined our guns, and were directed to be ready for the worst. Hardly were these hasty preliminaries arranged, when the Indians, a large body of well mounted fine ferocious looking fellows, dashed in sight at the top of their speed. We formed a line in front of our baggage, all

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

wide awake for a nice cosy little game of ball, and quietly waited their approach. Our suspense was not of long duration for they whirled up in a breath to speaking distance and were ordered to stand, which they did in mid career, throwing their horses back upon their haunches, and halting about two hundred yards in advance of us, when their chief commenced a loud harrangue in the choicest guttural that could be conceived, much to our edification and delight. They appeared to be about one hundred and fifty strong, (only thrice our number), all admirably mounted, and all armed with bows and arrows, and spears, and a few with guns. They wore buffalo robes about their middle, but from the waist upwards were all magnificently naked. A few had on leggins of dressed skins, but generally save their robes and moccasins, they were just as nature made them, except in the matter of grease and paint. After some introductory chatterings, they informed us that they were on a hunting expedition for buffalo, that they intended us no harm, but on the contrary wished to trade with us in amity. They were then permitted to come up, and exchange a few skins, moccasins, etc. for knives, vermilion, and tobacco, pilfering the while every thing they could lay their hands upon without being discovered. The reciprocity of this kind of commerce being as the Paddy said, all on one side, we soon got tired of it, and unceremoniously packed up and off, and left them gazing after us in no small astonishment.

On the fourteenth, hurrah, boys! we saw a buffalo; a solitary, stately old chap, who did not wait an invitation to dinner, but toddled off with his tail in the air. We saw on the sixteenth a small herd of ten or twelve, and had the luck to kill one of them. It was a patriarchal fellow, poor and tough, but what of that? we had a roast presently, and champed the gristle with a zest. Hunger is said to be a capital sauce, and if so our meal was well seasoned, for we had been living for some days on boiled corn alone, and had the grace to thank heaven for meat of any quality. Our hunters killed also several antelopes, but they were equally poor, and on the whole we rather preferred the balance of the buffalo for supper. People soon learn to be dainty, when they have a choice of viands. Next day, oh, there they were, thousands and thousands of them! Far as the eye could reach the prairie was literally covered, and not only covered but crowded with them. In very sooth it was a gallant show; a vast expanse of moving, plunging, rolling, rushing life - a literal sea of dark forms, with still pools, sweeping currents, and heaving billows, and all the grades of movement from calm repose to wild agitation. The air was filled with dust and bellowings, the prairie was alive with animation, - I never realized before the majesty and power of the mighty tides of life that heave and surge in all great gatherings of human or brute creation. The scene had here a wild sublimity of aspect, that charmed the eye with a spell of power, while the natural sympathy of life with life made the pulse bound and almost madden with excitement. Jove but it was glorious! and the next day too, the dense masses pressed on in such vast numbers, that we were compelled to halt, and let them pass to avoid being overrun by them in a literal sense. On the following day also, the number seemed if possible more countless than before, surpassing even the prairie-blackening accounts of those who had been here before us, and whose strange tales it had been our wont to believe the natural extravagance of a mere travellers' turn for romancing, but they must have been true, for such a scene as this our language wants words to describe, much less to exaggerate. On, on, still on, the black masses come and thicken - an ebless deluge of life is moving and swelling around us!

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

## CHAPTER VI

Since leaving the Loup Fork we have seen very little timber, and latterly none at all. We have, however, hitherto found plenty of drift-wood along the banks of the river, but to-day, the nineteenth, there is not a stick of any description to be seen, and as the only resource, we are compelled to use as a substitute for fuel, the dried excrement of buffalo, of which, fortunately, the prairie furnishes an abundant supply. I do not, by any means, take it upon myself to defend the position, but certainly some of the veterans of the party affirm that our cooking exhibits a decided improvement, which they attribute to this cause, and to no other. That our steaks are particularly savoury I can bear witness.

At our noon encampment on the twenty-first, we discovered several objects on the brow of a neighboring bluff, which at first we took to be antelopes, but were soon undeceived, for they speedily transformed and multiplied themselves into several hundreds of Indians, who came rushing like a torrent down upon us. All was now excitement and confusion. We hastily collected our cattle, drove them into camp, and fastened them, built a breastwork of our baggage, primed our guns afresh, and prepared to stand upon our defence. The Indians by this time came up, made signs of friendship, and gave us to understand that they were Sioux. They formed a semicircle in front of our position, and displayed four American flags. Many of them had on long scarlet coats, trimmed with gold and silver lace, leggins and mocasins richly, though fantastically ornamented, and gay caps of feathers. Some wore painted buffalo robes, and all presented a lively, dashing appearance. They were, without exception, all finely mounted; and all armed - some with swords, shields, and lances, others with bows and arrows, and a few with guns.

After some consultation among themselves, they informed us, with much gravity, that it was customary for whites passing through their country to propitiate their friendship by a small present, which was immediately acceded to, and a liberal gift of ammunition, knives, trinkets, and paints bestowed. Several of their chiefs passed through our camp while this was doing, and we observed that some of them wore large silver medals. During the whole time the interview lasted, the rain came down in torrents, and the air was besides extremely cold. Wet to the skin, and chilled to the very marrow, we were compelled to stand to our posts, with limbs shivering, and teeth chattering, while the Indians warmed themselves at fires made of the buffalo dung we had collected. I never in my life had a stronger desire to pull trigger on a red skin than now, but they gave us no sufficient provocation to authorise hostilities; and to our great relief, after getting from us all they could beg, and stealing all they could slyly lay their hands on, they took their departure, and returned to their own camp.

The following day was raw, wet, and cold, and the "prairie chips" having now become so saturated with water that they could not be coaxed to burn, we had no alternative but to freeze or move camp. Preferring the latter, we resumed our weary march, and fortunately, after six miles travel, found a welcome plenty of drift-wood, when we again halted to enjoy the luxury of a good fire in a rain storm in the open prairie. Blessings on thy head, O Prometheus! that we have even the one

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

comfort of a cheerful blaze.

We saw a wild horse next day, on the opposite side of the river, and made an effort to catch him, but did not succeed. An Indian, ordinarily well mounted, would have caught him with a noose almost in no time; but luckily for him, we were not Indians. One singular fact, often remarked, but never, that I know of, chronicled, is this, that a horse carrying a rider will easily overtake one not mounted, though naturally much the fleetest. I cannot account for this, but it is nevertheless true, and can be proved by an abundance of testimony.

We traversed on the twenty-fourth, a narrow tract of country, covered with light sand, and destitute of every kind of vegetation, save a species of strong grass, covered with knot-like protuberances, which were armed with sharp thorns that pierce the foot through the best of moccasins. These grass-knots are called "Sand-burrs," and were a source of great inconvenience to several poor fellows who, as a punishment for having slept on guard, were compelled to trudge along on foot behind the cavalcade.

On the twenty-fifth we saw a herd of wild horses, which however, did not wait a very near approach, but dashed off, and were soon lost in the distance. We had a visit in the afternoon from three Sioux, who came into camp, and reported that a large collection of Arrapahoes and Gros Ventres lay in wait for us at the Black Hills, determined to give battle to all parties of whites who should attempt to pass them. It was little uneasiness this intelligence gave to the men of our party; we were growing wolfish after some kind of excitement, and would have fought a whole raft of them in our then present humour, for the recreation of a play spell. It may well be questioned, however, if our leaders, who had the responsibility of a double charge, were quite so indifferent to the matter. But n'importe.

We reached on the following day the "Nose Mountain," or as it is more commonly called, the "Chimney," a singular mound, which has the form of an inverted funnel, is half a mile in circumference at the base, and rises to the height of three hundred feet. It is situated on the southern margin of the North Fork of the Platte, in the vicinity of several high bluffs, to which it was evidently once attached; is on all sides inaccessible, and appears at the distance of fifty miles shooting up from the prairie in solitary grandeur, like the limbless trunk of a gigantic tree. It is five hundred miles west from the Council Bluffs.

We encamped on the twenty-seventh opposite to "Scott's Bluffs," so called in respect to the memory of a young man who was left here alone to die a few years previous. He was a clerk in a company returning from the mountains, the leader of which found it necessary to leave him behind at a place some distance above this point, in consequence of a severe illness which rendered him unable to ride. He was consequently placed in a bullhide boat, in charge of two men, who had orders to convey him by water down to these bluffs, where the leader of the party promised to await their coming. After a weary and hazardous voyage, they reached the appointed rendezvous, and found to their surprise and bitter disappointment, that the company had continued on down the river without stopping for them to overtake and join it.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Left thus in the heart of a wild wilderness, hundreds of miles from any point where assistance or succour could be obtained, and surrounded by predatory bands of savages thirsting for blood and plunder, could any condition be deemed more hopeless or deplorable? They had, moreover, in descending the river, met with some accident, either the loss of their arms or powder, by the upsetting of their boat, which deprived them of the means of procuring subsistence or defending their lives in case of discovery and attack. This unhappy circumstance, added to the fact that the river was filled with innumerable shoals and sand-bars, by which its navigation was rendered almost impracticable, determined them to forsake their charge and boat together, and push on night and day until they should overtake the company, which they did on the second or third day afterward.

The reason given by the leader of the company for not fulfilling his promise, was that his men were starving, no game could be found, and he was compelled to proceed in quest of buffalo. Poor Scott! We will not attempt to picture what his thoughts must have been after this cruel abandonment, nor harrow up the feelings of the reader, by a recital of what agonies he must have suffered before death put an end to his misery.

The bones of a human being were found the spring following, on the opposite side of the river, which were supposed to be the remains of Scott. It was conjectured that in the energy of a dying despair, he had found strength to carry him across the stream, and then had staggered about the prairie, till God in pity took him to himself.

Such are among the sad chances to which the life of the Rocky Mountain adventurer is exposed.

## CHAPTER VII

At about noon on the twenty-eighth we discovered a village of Indians, on the south side of the river five miles above, and sent three men forward to watch their movements whilst we made the necessary preparations for defence. In a short time our spies returned, closely following by about fifty of the Indians, who dashed up in a cloud, and gave us to understand that they were "Chayennes." They repeated the story told by the Sioux, respecting the Arrappahoes Gros Ventres, and remaining about us till night when all but one disappeared.

In the course of the evening it was whispered about that the Indian in camp was an Arrappahoe, (with whom we were at war,) and one of the men became so excited on the subject that he requested permission to shoot him, but was of course refused.

During the night this individual, with two others, made an attempt to desert, but was detained by the guard. To such a pitch of desperation were his feelings wrought up that on the following morning he left us to return alone to St. Louis, notwithstanding, as he acknowledged, fear alone had impelled him to attempt desertion. It was a singular case, the very excess of cowardice having

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

determined him to an undertaking from which the boldest would have shrunk appalled.

We afterwards heard that he succeeded in reaching St. Louis alive, but that he suffered the extreme of misery both from starvation and maltreatment of the Indians, some of whom seized him near the Council Bluffs, stripped him entirely naked, scourged him most unmercifully, and then let him go. In this situation he found his way to the garrison near the Platte, more dead than alive. Here he was kindly received, supplied with food and clothing, and nursed up until his health was quite recruited, when he returned to St. Louis, and reported that the company had been attacked and defeated by the Indians, himself alone escaping.

On the day he left us we reached a fine grove of cotton wood trees of which we made a horse pen - this is always done in the Indian country when timber can be obtained, as a necessary protection for our cattle, in case of attack. Save a few isolated trees, this is the only timber we have seen for fifteen days.

We discovered on the thirtieth, a solitary Indian lodge, pitched in a grove of aspen trees, which, as it was the first I had seen, was an object of some curiosity. The manner of its construction was this: - thirteen straight pine poles were placed equidistant from each other in the circumference of a circle, ten or twelve feet in diameter, and made to meet in a point eleven feet from the ground, where four, crossing a foot from the end, are tied together, to support the rest. The conical frame thus formed is covered with dressed buffalo skins, cut and sewed together in a proper shape, which much resembles the shape of a coat. A pole fastened at top and bottom to this covering serves to raise it by, the top of which is allowed to rest against the others. Then the loose sides are drawn around the frame and fastened together with strings or wooden pins, to the height of seven feet, except that an oval aperture three feet high is left for an entrance. Above the closed parts, are two projecting wings or corners with pockets on the outside for the reception of two poles, calculated to piece them in various positions, in order to avoid the smoke, which but for some such contrivance, would greatly incommode the inmates, particularly if the wind should happen to come from an unfavourable quarter. The bottom of the covering is then secured to the ground on the outside with wooden pins, and the lodge is thus complete. If it be well pitched the covering sets smoothly to the poles and is tight as a drum head. A skin fixed to hang loosely over the aperture serves the purpose of a door, and this concludes the description of any lodge hereafter mentioned, though some are larger and others less in proportion.

As we approached the lodge the first object that presented itself was the lifeless body of a male child about four years old. It was lying on the ground a few paces from the lodge, and was horribly maimed and disfigured, evidently by repeated blows with a club, it bore also the mark of a deep wide stab in the left side. Within the lodge on a raised platform lay the scalpless bodies of two grown Indians, with their instruments of war and the chase beside them - it being the Indian custom to bury with the dead such articles as they believe will be required on a journey to the land of Spirits. Both the bodies were hacked and mangled in a manner truly savage and revolting. They were Chayennes, and had been killed in a battle with the Crows, five days previous. The child was a prisoner taken from the Crows the preceding winter, and was thus barbarously

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

murdered by way of retaliation. Achilles sacrificing at the tomb of Patroclus - is both a precedent and a parallel. Poetry has almost hallowed the cruelty of the Greek, but the inhumanity of the savage is still fearfully conspicuous; yet which was the worst, the refined Hellenian or the barbarous Chayenne? We crossed the Platte in bull-hide canoes, on the second of June, and encamped a short distance above the mouth of Laramie's Fork, at the foot of the Black Hills, six hundred miles west of the Council Bluffs. Laramie's Fork rises in the Black Hills, between the northern and southern forks of the Platte, and falls into the former after a northeast course of six hundred miles. The rich bottoms bordering this stream are decked with dense groves of slender aspen, and occasional tall and stately cotton woods.

Since passing the Sioux country we have seen herds of buffalo almost daily, but never in such countless numbers as then astonished our sight. Our hunters kill more or less of them every day, and they form the staple article of food; but they are still poor and tough, and would hardly be considered eatable could any thing else be procured, which is not the case.

The Black Hills are a chain of mountains less remarkable for height than for scenery, which is of the most romantic order. They extend up the Platte one hundred miles, and are noted as a place of refuge and concealment for marauding Indians, - they form consequently a dangerous pass for hunting and trading parties. They are partially covered with pine and cedar shrubbery, which gives them when viewed from a distance, a dark forbidding appearance, and hence their name. On a nearer approach, however, they present a less repulsive aspect, and finally exhibit a pleasing variety of shapes, and colours, slopes and dells, bluffs and ravines, which together form occasional landscapes of singular picturesqueness and beauty. Some of these hills are composed of a deep crimson-coloured sand stone, others of a bright yellow, grey, white or brown rocky formation, and all partially covered with soil. Some are as bald of vegetation as the naked prairie, and one, rearing its barren peak far above the rest, is still crowned with a diadem of snow. Entering the region of this range of hills, the Platte was seen to the right of our trail, winding its devious way, at times through fine timbered bottoms, again between dark walls of cut rock, and occasionally through beautiful unwooded valleys occupied by herds of buffalo quietly grazing and all unconscious of the approach of death in the form and guise of old Sonsosay, our veteran hunter, who might have been seen crawling like a snake through the long grass, until a sudden burst of thunder starting herds and echoes from their repose, showed that he had them within reach of his unerring rifle, where horns and hoofs were alike unavailing.

## CHAPTER VIII

On the eighth, we saw for the first time, a grizzly bear, a large fierce formidable animal, the most sagacious, most powerful, and most to be feared of all the North American quadrupeds. We shall have occasion elsewhere to note instances of the prowess, cunning and courage of this remarkable animal, and shall relate, in their proper connexion, some of the many anecdotes concerning it, which are current among the Indians and trappers of the Rocky Mountains, the stock of which is constantly increasing, as adventure goes on, and brute and human meet in mutual strife. The one

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

we saw, was at a distance, and looked nearly as large as a buffalo, for which they are often mistaken, even by experienced hunters.

We re-crossed the Platte again, on the eleventh, at the Red Hills, - these are two high cherry-red points of rock, separated by the river, which here turns away to the southward. On the following day we left the Platte and the Black Hills together, and pursued our never-varying course, westward, through a sandy plain, covered with wild sage, and at evening encamped near a fine spring. Next day's march brought us to Sweet-Water River, which rises in the southeastern extremity of the Wind Mountains, and flows eastward one hundred and fifty miles, falling into the Platte, a few miles above the Red Hills. This river owes its name to the accidental drowning in it of a mule loaded with sugar, some years since. We halted at evening under the lee of an immense rock half imbedded in the earth, which is nearly a mile in circumference, and from one to two hundred feet in height. It bears the name of Rock Independence, from the circumstance of a party having several years ago passed a fourth of July, with appropriate festivities, under its ample shade. Except a chain of rocks, some of which closely resemble hay-stacks, running parallel with Sweet Water, the face of the country is a barren, sandy, rolling prairie, destitute of trees and bushes, and every species of vegetation, save occasional patches of coarse grass and wild sage, and scattering clusters of dwarf willows, on the margin of the river.

On the fourteenth, we passed a small lake, highly impregnated with glauber salts, the efflorescence of which, covers the margin of the lake to the depth of several inches, and appears at a distance like snow. We made a cache on the nineteenth, of some goods, intended for future trading with Crow Indians, who rove at some seasons, on the tract of country we are now passing. Cache, derived from the French verb cacher, to conceal, is applied in this region to an excavation for the reception of goods or furs, commonly made in the following manner. A proper place being selected, which is usually near the border of some stream, where the bank is high enough to be in no danger of inundation, a round hole two feet in diameter is carried down to a depth of three feet, when it is gradually enlarged, and deepened until it becomes sufficiently capacious to contain whatever is destined to be stored in it. The bottom is then covered with sticks to prevent the bales from touching the ground, as otherwise they would soon contract moisture, become mouldy, and rot. The same precautions are observed to preserve them intact from the walls of the cave. When all is snugly deposited and stowed in, valueless skins are spread over the top, for the same excellent purpose, and the mouth is then closed up with earth and stones, beat down as hard as possible, to hinder it from settling or sinking in. The surplus earth taken out, is carefully gathered up and thrown into the stream, and the cache finally completed, by replacing stones and tufts of grass, so as to present the same uniform appearance, as the surrounding surface. If the cache is made in a hard clay bluff, and the goods perfectly dry when put in, they will keep years without damage. At this period we were in view of the Wind Mountains, which were seen stretching away to the northward, their bleak summits mantled over with a heavy covering of snow.

On the twentieth, we reached a fountain source of the Sweet Water, near a high, square, table-like mound, called the Pilot Butte; and the next day ascended an irregular plain, in which streams have their rise, that flow into both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, halting at night on the Sandy,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

a small river that takes its name from the barren country through which it runs. It has its source in the south-eastern point of the Wind Mountains, where also the Sweet Water, Platte, and Wind River of the Bighorn, take their rise, and empties into Green River after a south west course of sixty miles. From the dividing plain or ridge, we saw vast chains of snow-crowned mountains, stretching far away to the west and northward, and revealing but too plainly the toil and hazard that await our future progress. The southern point of the Wind Mountains, rose bluffly to the northeast, distant fifteen miles, and, strangely contrasting their snowy summits with the dark forests of pines that line and encircle their base, were seen stretching away to the northwestward the looming shapes of this range or spur of the far-reaching Andes, until their dark forms and dazzling crests were lost in the distance, blending in the haze and mingling with the clouds. After a weary march, on the twenty-first, we reached Green River, a fine, clear, deep and rapid stream, one hundred and fifty yards wide, which takes its rise in the Wind Mountains, with the sources of Lewis River and the Yellow Stone, and flows south-east, south, and finally south-west, four hundred miles, to its junction with Grand River, when it becomes the Rio Colorado of the West, one of the most magnificent streams in the world, and descending the mountains, rolls its sublime volume away, many hundreds of miles through Upper and Lower California, until at last it reaches and empties into the gulf of that name. From the southern point of the Wind Mountains, one or two snowy peaks rise, dimly visible, far to the southward: - within the intervening space, a broken, sandy plain, perfectly practicable for loaded wagons, which may cross it without the least obstruction, - separates the northern waters of the Platte, from those of the Colorado.

We crossed Green River on the twenty-sixth in bull-hide canoes, and halted for the night on its western margin, where we were nearly victimized by moschetoes, which during the five days of our vicinity to this stream, kept sucking at the vital currents in our veins in spite of every precaution that could be taken. Leaving Green River the next day, we encamped after a hard journey of twenty-five miles, on one of its branches, called Ham's Fork. From this point, several persons were despatched in different directions in quest of a party of hunters and trappers, called Free Men, from the circumstances of their not being connected with either of the rival Fur Companies, but holding themselves at liberty to trade with one or all. They rove through this savage and desolate region free as the mountain air, leading a venturesome and dangerous life, governed by no laws save their own wild impulses, and bounding their desires and wishes to what their own good rifles and traps may serve them to procure. Strange, that people can find so strong and fascinating a charm in this rude nomadic, and hazardous mode of life, as to estrange themselves from home, country, friends, and all the comforts, elegances, and privileges of civilization; but so it is, the toil, the danger, the loneliness, the deprivation of this condition of being, fraught with all its disadvantages, and replete with peril, is, they think, more than compensated by the lawless freedom, and the stirring excitement, incident to their situation and pursuits. The very danger has its attraction, and the courage and cunning, and skill, and watchfulness made necessary by the difficulties they have to overcome, the privations they are forced to contend with, and the perils against which they must guard, become at once their pride and boast. A strange, wild, terrible, romantic, hard, and exciting life they lead, with alternate plenty and starvation, activity and repose, safety and alarm, and all the other adjuncts that belong to so vagrant a condition, in a harsh, barren, untamed, and fearful region of desert, plain, and mountain. Yet so attached to it do they become,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

that few ever leave it, and they deem themselves, nay are, with all these bars against them, far happier than the in-dwellers of towns and cities, with all the gay and giddy whirl of fashion's mad delusions in their train.

Continuing our journey, we passed up Ham's Fork thirty miles, and then made a halt until all our people returned, who reported that no traces of the Free Men could be found. We then resumed our march, and on the seventh of July, ascended a steep snow-clad pine-covered mountain, when we came in view of a beautiful valley, watered by a shining serpentine river, and grazed by tranquil herds of buffalo. At evening we halted on the margin of Bear River, after a very fatiguing and toilsome march of thirty miles. This river is from fifty to eighty yards in breadth, clear and deep, with a gentle current, and is bordered by fertile though woodless bottoms. It rises in the Eut Mountains, and flows northward above one hundred miles, when it turns to the westward, and after a further course of seventy-five miles, discharges itself into the Big Lake.

We killed here a great many buffalo, which were all in good condition, and feasted, as may be supposed, luxuriously upon the delicate tongues, rich humps, fat roasts, and savoury steaks of this noble and excellent species of game. Heretofore we had found the meat of the poor buffalo the worst diet imaginable, and in fact grew meagre and gaunt in the midst of plenty and profusion. But in proportion as they became fat, we grew strong and hearty, and now not one of us but is ready to insist that no other kind of meat can compare with that of the female bison, in good condition. With it we require no seasoning; we boil, roast, or fry it, as we please, and live upon it solely, without bread or vegetables of any kind, and what seems most singular, we never tire of or disrelish it, which would be the case with almost any other meat, after living upon it exclusively for a few days. Perhaps the reason why the flesh of buffalo is so superior to the beef of the United States, may be found in the fact, that during the severities of winter, they become reduced to mere skeletons, and thrive with the grass in spring, mending up constantly as the season advances, until in summer, their bones are thickly enveloped with an entire new coat of flesh and fat.

While we remained in the neighbourhood of Green River, we were again exceedingly annoyed by moschetoes. They appeared in clouds both in the morning and evening, but disappeared in the heat of the day, and with the sun at night. Parties were here a second time sent out in various directions, in search of the Free Men, but they all returned again unsuccessful. Some of them saw an encampment of a party of Indians, who had passed two days before, about Sixty miles above on this stream. They were supposed to be about one hundred and fifty strong, and were evidently on some expedition that required great secrecy and caution. They encamped in a very small circle, and removed every thing from camp, that would lead to a discovery of their nation. When they departed, they went into the hills, and were so cautious, that our spies found it not only impossible to follow the trail, but even to designate the course they had taken. The trails and encampments of a party of hunters who had passed very early in the spring, were also seen. Nothing else unusual was observed.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

## CHAPTER IX

On the sixteenth, I departed with Mr. Dripps and three others for Cache Valley. We passed up the river a few miles, crossed, and followed a rivulet westward to its source in the mountain, which we then ascended to its summit. The crest of the mountain was ornamented with a few scattering cedars, here and there a small grove of aspen, and occasional patches of wild sage. From this elevation bleak snow-clad pyramidal peaks of granite were beheld in all directions jutting into the clouds. Stern, solemn, majestic, rose on every side these giant forms, overlooking and guarding the army of lesser hills and mountains that lay encamped below, and pointing proudly up their snow-sheeted crests, on which the stars at evening light the sentinel fires of ages.

From the precipitous western side of the height on which we stood, one of the most agreeable prospects imaginable, saluted and blessed our vision. It was the Little Lake, which from the foot of the mountain beneath us, stretches away to the northward washing the base of the cordillera that invests it. It is fifteen miles long and about eight in breadth and like Nemi,

“Navelled in the hills,”

for it is entirely surrounded by lofty mountains, of which those on the western side are crowned with eternal snow. It gathers its waters from hundreds of rivulets that come dancing and flashing down the mountains, and streams that issue not unfrequently from subterranean fountains beneath them. At the head of the lake opposite, and below us, lay a delightful valley of several miles extent, spotted with groves of aspen and cotton wood, and beds of willows of ample extent.

When first seen the lake appeared smooth and polished like a vast field of glass, and took its colour from the sky which was a clear unclouded blue. It was dotted over by hundreds of pelicans white in their plumage as the fresh-fallen snow. While we yet paused, gazing rapturously upon the charmed prospect, and feasting our eyes upon its unhidden beauties, we were overtaken by a tremendous gale of wind accompanied with rain, which dissipated in a moment a lovely cottage Fancy had half constructed upon the quiet margin of the sleeping lake. Beautiful to behold is a fair young female in the soft slumber of health and innocence, but far more beautiful when startled to consciousness from her gentle rest, and bright colours chase one another across her cheeks and bosom. So with the lake, which far from losing a single attraction when roused by the wind from its repose, became even more enchanting than before; for the milk-white billows rolling like clouds over its deep blue surface seemed to add a bewitching something to the scene that did not appear to be wanting until the attention of the observer was directed to it, when it became too essential to be spared.

Admonished by the storm, we dismounted from our horses, and led them in a narrow winding path, down the steep mountain side, and reaching the valley below, halted for the night at a pleasant spring near the margin of the lake. The next day we crossed a low mountain, south of the lake, to Cache Valley Creek, which we followed into a narrow defile, nearly impassable to

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

equestrians. On either side, rose the mountains, in some places almost, and at others quite perpendicularly, to the regions of the clouds. The sun could be seen only for a short time, and that in the middle of the day. We were often compelled while struggling over the defile, to cross the stream and force our way through almost impenetrable thickets, and at times, to follow a narrow trail along the borders of precipices, where a single mis-step would inevitably have sent horse and rider to the shades of death. We saw a number of grizzly bears prowling around the rocks, and mountain sheep standing on the very verges of projecting cliffs as far above us as they could be discerned by the eye. Such was the wild and broken route which for two entire days we were obliged to pursue. We killed a grizzly bear on the evening of the eighteenth, and emerging from the mountain-pass early on the following day, came to Cache Valley, one of the most extensive and beautiful vales of the Rocky Mountain range.

This valley, called also by some, the Willow Valley, is situated about thirty miles due west of the Little Lake, from which the passage is so nearly impracticable, that it requires two days to perform the distance - at least by the route we came. It lies parallel with the Little Lake, extending nearly north and south; is sixty miles long, and fifteen to twenty broad, and is shut in on every side by lofty mountains. Numerous willow-skirted streams, that intersect and diversify it, unite and flow into Bear River, which crosses the valley, and after cutting its way through a low bald mountain, falls into the Big Lake, distant twenty miles to the west.

Cache Valley is abundantly fertile, producing every where most excellent grass, and has ever for that reason, been a favorite resort for both men and animals, especially in the winter. Indeed, many of the best hunters assert that the weather is much milder here than elsewhere, which is an additional inducement for visiting it during that inclement season. It received its name from a melancholy incident that occurred in it a few years ago. The circumstances are briefly these: -

A man in the employ of Smith, Sublette and Jackson, was engaged with a detached party, in constructing one of those subterranean vaults for the reception of furs, already described. The cache was nearly completed, when a large quantity of earth fell in upon the poor fellow, and completely buried him alive. His companions believed him to have been instantly killed, knew him to be well buried, and the cache destroyed, and therefore left him

Unknelled, uncoffined, ne'er to rise,

Till Gabriel's trumpet shakes the skies,

and accomplished their object elsewhere. It was a heartless, cruel procedure, but serves to show how lightly human life is held in these distant wilds.

In this country, the nights are cold at any season, and the climate perhaps more healthy than that of any other part of the globe. The atmosphere is delightful, and so pure and clear, that a person

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of good sight has been known to distinguish an Indian from a white man, at a distance of more than a mile, and herds of buffalo may be recognized by the aid of a good glass, at even fifteen to eighteen miles.

Passing down the valley, we met a number of grizzly bears, one of which of a large size, we mistook for a buffalo bull, and were only convinced of our error when the huge creature erected himself on his haunches, to survey us as we passed. These animals are of every shade of colour, from black to white, and were seen singly in the prairies, busied in digging roots, which constitute their chief subsistence until fruits ripen in the fall.

The object of our visit to Cache Valley, was to find the Free Men, but our search for them proved fruitless. We were unable to discover any recent traces either of whites or Indians, and retracing our steps, halted at the lake beneath the shade of an aged cotton wood, in the branches of which a bald eagle sat quietly on her nest, apparently indifferent to our presence, nor did she leave it during our stay. While here, we killed one of the many pelicans which were disporting on the lake, and found that it measured eight and a half feet between the tips of its extended wings.

After our return to camp, six others of the party were sent northward, on the same errand, but they were equally unsuccessful. They were absent eleven days, and saw in their route abundance of fine salt, and likewise a number of curious springs, of which a description will be given on some future page.

On the tenth day of August, a village of Shoshonees or Snake Indians, entered the valley of Bear River, fifteen or twenty miles above us, and encamped on the margin of the stream. Some of them paid us a speedy visit, and testified their friendship for us by giving us each a hearty hug. Two days after the arrival, we moved up the valley, and encamped half a mile below them. Their village consisted of about one hundred and fifty lodges, and probably contained above four hundred fighting men. The lodges were placed quite close to each other, and taken together, had much the appearance of a military camp. I strolled through it with a friend, to gratify my curiosity, as to their domestic manners. We were obliged to carry clubs, to beat off the numerous dogs, that were constantly annoying us by barking, and trying to bite our legs. Crowds of dirty naked children followed us from lodge to lodge, at each of which were seen more or less filthy but industrious women, employed in dressing skins, cutting meat into thin strips for drying, gathering fuel, cooking, or otherwise engaged in domestic labour. At every lodge, was a rack or frame, constructed of poles tied together, forming a platform, covered over with half-dried meat, which was curing over a slow fire. The women were all at work, but not so the men. Half of them were asleep in the lodges, and the rest either gaming, keeping guard over their horses, or leisurely strutting about camp. They are extremely jealous of their women, though I could not help thinking, with but slight occasion, when I surveyed the wrinkled, smoke-dried unprepossessing features of the latter, and the dirt and filth by which they are surrounded. Cupid must have a queer taste, if he can find marks for his arrows among the she snakes of this serpent tribe. We spoke to several of them, but they either feigned not to hear, or retired at once. After gratifying our curiosity, which did not require long, we purchased a few buffalo robes, and skins of other kinds, for trifles of little value

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

to us, yet by them prized highly, and returned sadder though wiser to our own encampment.

Most of the Rocky Mountain Indians are given to priggish, as we have already had a taste of proof. The Snakes are by no means deficient in this accomplishment, and at almost every visit they made to us many little articles acquired a trick of vanishing with the most marvelous dexterity. However we left them on the sixteenth, and returned to Ham's Fork, by way of a small stream, called Muddy, from the turbid appearance of its waters. This little stream rises against Ham's Fork, and flows south of west thirty miles, emptying into Bear River, nearly opposite to the spring which marks the pass to the head of Little Lake. It is noted as being the best route from Ham's Fork to Bear River, there being no steep ascents or descents in the whole distance.

On Ham's Fork we cached our goods, and separated into three parties, headed respectively by Messrs. Fontenelle, Dripps, and Robidoux, who had each his portion of hunting ground specified, in order to avoid interference with the rest. Mr. Fontenelle was to hunt to the southward on the western tributaries of Green River; Mr. Dripps to the northeast on the sources of the same stream, and Mr. Robidoux northward on the head waters of Lewis River.

We separated on the twenty-third, and departed in quest of adventures and beaver, - my unlucky stars having induced me to join Mr. Fontenelle's party, which met with the least of either. We rambled about in the Eut mountains, on the sources of Black's Fork, and Henrie's Fork, explored them to their outlets, and returned to the caches after a month's absence, having starved one half of the time. After leaving Ham's Fork, we saw no buffalo until our return, and killed no game of any kind, except one elk, two or three goats, and a few beaver. We were nicely frightened by a party of Crow Indians, who crawled up to our encampment one dark night, and fired a volley over our heads. We sprang to our feet, but before we could return the compliment, they came into camp shouting Ap-sah-ro-ke, - Ap-sah-ro-ke, (Crows,) and laughing heartily at the confusion their novel manner of introducing themselves had occasioned us. From them we ascertained that the Free Men who had caused us so much unavailing search, were on the Yellow Stone River. Two of our men were sent with the Crows, to raise the cache on Sweet Water, proceed with them to their village, and trade until further orders. Previous to their departure, the Crows gave us a few practical lessons in the art of pilfering, of which they are the most adroit and skilful professors in all this region, if not the world. No legislative body on earth ever made an appropriation with half the tact, facility, and success, that characterize these untaught sons of the forest.

## CHAPTER X

On the twentieth of September, five of us left the party to 'hunt' several small streams in the vicinity of Bear River. We proceeded to the mouth of the Muddy, and followed Bear River down fifteen miles to the mouth of Smith's Fork, where we saw recent traces of brother trappers and Indians. The same evening I was thrown from my horse, by which my gun was broken so as to render it entirely useless. The feelings of a trapper may better be imagined than described, after losing his only means of subsistence and defence, in hourly danger of his life and thrown entire-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

ly upon the charity of his comrades, from whom should he get accidentally separated, he must either perish miserably, or suffer privations and agonies compared to which death were mercy, before he could find the company.

From Smith's Fork we passed down to Talma's Fork, - so named in honour of the great French tragedian, - eight miles below. The plains of this stream as also those of Bear River, were covered with buffalo, one of which we killed, and after packing the meat travelled up the fork fifteen miles into the mountains, where it divides into three branches of nearly equal size. On the middle one of these branches two miles above the fork, we found a large quantity of beautiful white salt, formed by the total evaporation of a pond, on the rocks forming the bed of which it was encrusted. From this point we passed up to the head of the western fork, and thence crossed to a small stream called Beaver Creek, from the uncommon labours of those industrious animals, which are here observed, forming a succession of dams for several miles. We first tasted the waters of the Columbia river which has its source in this little stream, on the first of October, after which we continued our hunt down the creek to its mouth, twenty miles from its fountain head, and all the way confined between high mountains. The narrow bottoms along it were occasionally covered with bushes bearing a delicious fruit called service berries, by the American hunters, and pears (Des Poires) by the Canadians: a species of black hawthorn berries, wild currents, goose berries, black cherries, and buffalo berries were also at intervals abundant.

At the mouth of Beaver Creek the mountains retire apart leaving a beautiful valley fifteen miles long, and six to eight broad, watered by several small streams which unite and form "Salt River," so called from the quantities of salt, in a chrysalized form, found upon most of its branches. At the northern or lower end of the valley we observed a white chalk-like appearance, which one of our party, (who had been here with others in quest of the Free men) recognized to be certain singular springs. His account of them excited my curiosity and that of one of my companions, so much that we determined upon paying them a visit. With this intention we set out early one fine morning and reached our place of destination about noon, after an agreeable ride of three or four hours.

We found the springs situated in the middle of a small shallow stream, in the open level prairie. Rising from the middle of the brook, were seen seven or eight semi globular mounds self-formed by continual deposits of a calcarious nature, which time had hardened to the consistency of rock. Some of them were thirty or forty feet in circumference at the base, and seven or eight feet high. Each of them had one or more small apertures (similar in appearance to the mouth of a jug) out of which the water boils continually, and these generally, though not invariably, at the top of the mound. The water that boils over, deposits continually a greenish, slimy, foeted cement, externally about the orifices, by constant accretions of which, the mounds are formed. The water in these springs was so hot, that we could not bear our fingers in it a moment, and a dense suffocating sulphurous vapour is constantly rising from them. In the bases of the mounds, there were also occasional cavities from which vapour or boiling water was continually emitted. Some of the mounds have long since exploded, and been left dry by the water. They were hollow, and filled with shelving cavities not unlike honey-comb. These singular springs are known to the Rocky

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Mountain hunters by the name of the Boiling Kettles, and are justly regarded as great curiosities. After spending a couple of hours very agreeably in examining these remarkable fountains, we returned to camp, well satisfied for the fatigue of thirty miles' travel, by the opportunity we had enjoyed of perusing one of the most interesting pages of the great book of nature. A fair day and a beautiful prospect, enhanced the pleasure and reward of our excursion.

Leaving the valley, we returned slowly back to Talma's Fork, trapping many small streams by the way, near some of which we saw considerable deposits of pure salt. We had a severe storm of rain, on the twenty-third, which finally changed to snow. Except occasional light showers, this was the only interruption to fair weather that we had experienced since we left the caches. On the twenty-seventh, we were greatly alarmed by one of the party (Milman) returning at full speed from a visit to his traps, and yelling in tones of trepidation and terror, that fear had rendered less human than the screams of the panther. We sprung to our arms, rushed our horses into camp, and awaited his approach with feelings wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement between suspense and apprehension. As he approached nearer, however, his voice becoming less unearthly, at length relaxed into something like human speech; and guessing at his meaning, rather by the probability of the case, than by any actual sounds he uttered, we made out the words "Indians! Indians!" The lapse of a few moments brought him up, exclaiming, "Boys, I am wounded!" We saw at once that a well-directed ball had been intercepted by his gun, which thus evidently saved his life. The ball had been cut into several pieces by the sharp angle of the barrel, one of which, glancing off, had lodged in the fleshy part of his thigh. The same bullet, previous to striking his gun, had passed through the neck of his mule, and grazed the pommel of his saddle. He was also struck in the shoulder, by an arrow, but both wounds were slight.

After recovering his wonted control over the faculties of speech, he gave us the following particulars of the affair, which was ever afterwards facetiously termed "Milman's Defeat." Whilst jogging along, three or four miles from camp, and calculating the probable sum total of dollars he should accumulate from the sales of furs he purposed taking from his traps that morning, his dog suddenly commenced barking at some invisible object which he supposed to be a squirrel, badger, or some other small animal, that had taken refuge in its burrow. Satisfied of his own sagacity in arriving at this conclusion, he advanced thoughtlessly, until he reached the top of a gently - ascending knoll, whence, to his utter astonishment and dismay, he discovered the heads of seven or eight Indians, peeping ferociously up from a patch of sage, not thirty steps beyond him, and at the same instant three guns were fired at him, by way of introduction. This sort of welcome by no means according with his notions of politeness, he wheeled about with the intention of making his stay in the vicinity of persons whose conduct was so decidedly suspicious, as brief as possible. His mule seemed however far less disposed to slight the proffered acquaintance, and positively refused to stir a single peg. In the meantime, the Indians starting up, showered their compliments in the shape of arrows upon him with such hearty good will, that he was forced to dismount, intending to return their kindness with an impromptu ball from his rifle; but ere he could effect this, the Indians, divining his purpose, and overcome by so touching a proof of friendship, bowed, scraped, and retired precipitately, in all likelihood to conceal their modest blushes at his condescension. Just then, too, madam Long Ears, probably resenting their unceremonious departure,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

betrayed symptoms of such decided displeasure, that Milman was induced perforce, to remount, after he had withdrawn an arrow from his shoulder, but before he had accomplished his purpose of presenting the red-skins with the contents of his gun, free gratis, in exchange for their salute; and he was borne away from the field of his achievements with a gallantry of speed that would not have discredited the flight of Santa Anna from the battle-plain of San Jacinto, but which Long Ears had never displayed, unless fear lent the wish of wings to her activity. Milman did not, he said, discover that he had been struck by a ball, until he saw the blood, which was just before he reached camp.

Shortly after the return of Milman, two Indians, to our surprise, came coolly marching up to camp, who proved, on their approach, to be Snakes, a young savage and his squaw. They had left their village at the mouth of Smith's Fork, for the purpose of hunting big-horns, (Rocky Mountain sheep,) in a mountain near by, from which he discovered us. We questioned him until we were perfectly satisfied that he was an innocent, harmless fellow, and in no way associated with the party which had fired upon Milman, though we strongly suspected them to be Snakes. He soon took his leave, and shortly disappeared in the forest of pines, which encircle the bases of all lofty mountains in this region. We departed also, not doubting but that the Indians who attacked Milman, would hang about, seeking other opportunities to do us injury.

Passing up the east fork of the three, into which Talma's Fork is subdivided, we crossed it and ascended a high mountain eastward, on the summit of which we halted at midnight, and, having tied our beasts to cedars, of which there were a few scattered here and there, threw ourselves down to sleep, almost exhausted with fatigue, and still haunted by fears of murdering savages, who might have dogged our footsteps, and be even now only waiting the approach of dawn to startle us with their fiendish yells and arrows, and take our - scalps. At day break we resumed our weary march, forced our way, though with great difficulty through a chaos of snow banks, rocks and fallen pines, to the east side of the mountain, and at last descended to the source of Ham's Fork, on which we passed the night. The next day we reached an open valley of considerable extent, decked with groves of aspen, and beds of willows, and grazed by a numerous herd of buffalo. Midway of this valley, on the western side, is a high point of rock, projecting into the prairie and overlooking the country to a great distance. Imagine our surprise when we beheld a solitary human being seated on the very pinnacle of this rock, and apparently unconscious of our approach, though we were advancing directly in front of him, - and he so elevated that every object however trifling, within the limit of human vision seemed to court his notice; and what made it still more singular, there was evidently no person in or near the valley except ourselves. We halted before him, at a short distance, astonished to see one solitary hero, who seemed to hide himself from he knew not what - friends or foes; but firm as the giant rock on which he sat as on a throne, seemed calmly to await our approach, then to hurl the thunder of his vengeance upon us, or fall gloriously like another Warwick, disdainful to ask what he can no longer defend. With mingled feelings of respect and awe we approached this lord of the valley, gazed admiringly up at the fixed stolidity of his countenance, and lo! he was dead.

I afterwards learned that this Indian was taken in the act of adultery with the wife of another, and

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

put to death by the injured husband. He was a Shoshone, and was placed in this conspicuous position by the chief of the tribe, as a warning to all similar offenders.

On the thirty first we reached the caches where we found Robidoux with a small party of men. Fontenelle and Dripps, together with the Free Men, and a detachment of a new company, styled the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, were all in Cache Valley, where they intended to establish their winter quarters. Robidoux remained here twelve days, awaiting promised assistance from Fontenelle, to aid him in transporting the goods to Cache Valley. At the end of that time, impatient of their slow coming, and admonished by the more rapid approach of starvation which was already grinning at us most horribly, he resolved to re-cache a part of the goods, and start with the balance.

We set off in the midst of a severe snow-storm, accompanied with chilling winds, which blew directly in our faces, and, having braved with the best temper we could, a whole day of such exposure, encamped at evening on the margin of Muddy Creek. We were met next day at noon, by the expected party. They continued on to raise the cache we had left, whilst we journeyed down to the mouth of the Muddy, there to await their return. In the meantime, hunters were dispatched in pursuit of game, who brought back with them, at the expiration of two days, the flesh of several fine bulls.

The report of Milman's defeat, was received in Cache Valley, from a party of Snakes some time before we arrived, with the additional information, that the young Indian who paid us a visit on that memorable morning, was killed on the evening of the same day, and his wife taken prisoner, though she escaped the night following.

On the third day after we reached Bear River, the party dispatched for that purpose, returned with the contents of the cache, and on the fifth we arrived in sight of the camp, exchanged salutes, and hastened to grasp the honest hands of our hardy old comrades, glad to meet and mingle with them again after a long absence, and listen to their adventures, or recount our own.

## CHAPTER XI

We remained about ten days in the northern point of Cache Valley, in a small cove frequently called Ogden's Hole, in compliment to a gentleman of that name of the Hudson Bay Company, who paid it a visit some years since. Meanwhile, the men amused themselves in various ways, - drinking, horse racing, gambling, etc. and at the same time, Mr. J. H. Stevens, an intelligent and highly esteemed young man, gave me the following account of his adventures with Robidoux, which was confirmed by others of the party.

"After leaving you," said he, "we trapped Ham's Fork to its source, crossed over to Smith's Fork, and there fell in with a party of Iroquois, who informed us that Smith, Sublette and Jackson, three partners who had been engaged in the business of this country for some years past, had sold out

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

to a new firm, styled the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. This arrangement was made on Wind River, a source of the Big Horn, in July of last year. From that place parties were sent out in various directions, amongst which was one led by Fraeb and Jarvis, consisting of twenty two hired men, and ten free Iroquois, with their wives and children - which departed to hunt on the waters of the Columbia. The Iroquois, however, became dissatisfied with some of the measures adopted by the leaders of the party, and separated from them to hunt the tributaries of Bear River, where we found them. Robidoux engaged three of them, and the others promised to meet us in Cache Valley, after the hunting season. One of those hired, was immediately despatched in pursuit of Dripps, who joined us at the Boiling Kettles, on Salt River, from whence we proceeded to its mouth, and there fell in with Fraeb and Jarvis. Arrangements were now made for both companies to hunt together, and we travelled thence sixty miles to the mouth of Lewis River, and down Snake river eighty or ninety miles to Porteneuf. Here we cached our furs, and thence continued down Snake River to the falls, forty or fifty miles below the mouth of Porteneuf. These falls are a succession of cascades by which the river falls forty or fifty feet in a few rods. "At the Falls we separated into two parties, one of which was to hunt the Cassia, and other streams in the vicinity, whilst the other, consisting of twenty two men, myself included, was sent to the Maladi. Our party left Snake River, and travelled north of west, through a barren desert, destitute of every species of vegetation, except a few scattering cedars, and speckled with huge round masses of black basaltic rock. At noon, we entered on a tract of country entirely covered with a stratum of black rock, which had evidently been in a fluid state, and had spread over the earth's surface to the extent of forty or fifty miles. It was doubtless lava, which had been vomited forth from some volcano, the fires of which are now extinct.

"We proceeded on over this substance, hoping to cross the whole extent without difficulty, but soon met with innumerable chasms, where it had cracked and yawned asunder at the time of cooling, to the depth often of fifty feet, over which we were compelled to leap our horses. In many places the rock had cooled into little wave-like irregularities, and was also covered with large blisters, like inverted kettles, which were easily detached by a slight blow. One of these was used as a frying pan, for some time afterwards, and found to answer the purpose quite well. In the outset of our march over this bed of lava, we got along without much trouble, but were finally brought to a full stop by a large chasm too wide to leap, and forced to return back to the plain. At this time we began to feel an almost insupportable thirst. The day was an excessively sultry one, and the lava heated to that degree that we were almost suffocated by the burning atmosphere, that steamed up from it. We had, moreover, lived for some time past, upon dried buffalo meat, which is alone sufficient to engender the most maddening desire for water, when deprived of that article.

"One or two individuals, anticipating the total absence of any stream or spring on the route, had providently supplied themselves with beaver skins of water, previous to our departure in the morning, but this small supply was soon totally exhausted. At dark we found ourselves involved in a labyrinth of rocks, from which we sought, without success to extricate ourselves, and were finally obliged to halt and await the rising of the moon. Meantime we joyfully hailed the appearance of a shower, but greatly to our chagrin, it merely sprinkled slightly, and passed over. However it was not entirely lost, for we spread out our blankets and eagerly imbibed the dampness that

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

accumulated, but the few drops thus obtained, provoked rather than satisfied the wild thirst that was raging within us.

“At the expiration of a couple of hours, the moon rose, and we proceeded cautiously in the direction of a blue mountain, where we conjectured that the river Maladi took its rise. Through the rest of the night we toiled on, and at length we saw the sun climbing the east. But the benefit of his light was a mere feather in the scale, compared with the double anguish occasioned by the added heat. Some of the party had recourse to the last expedient to mitigate their excessive thirst, and others ate powder, chewed bullets, etc. but all to no purpose. At eight o'clock, we reached a narrow neck of the rock or lava, which we succeeded in crossing. Some of our companions explored the interior of frightful chasms in search of water, but returned unsuccessful. Subordination now entirely ceased. Every one rushed forward without respect to our leaders, towards a rising plain which separated us from the blue mountain which had been our guiding beacon since the night. On reaching the summit of the plain, the whole valley about the mountain presented a sea of rock, intersected by impassable chasms and caverns.

“Orders were now given for every one to shift for himself, and exercise his best judgement in the endeavour to save his life. One of the men immediately turned his horse from north west, which had been thus far our course, to the north east, and declared that if any thought proper to follow him, they would be rewarded by the taste of water before night. We all followed him, rather because the route seemed less difficult, than from any well-grounded hope of realizing his promise.

“Our suffering became more and more intense, and our poor animals, oppressed with heat and toil, and parching with thirst, now began to give out, and were left by the way side. Several of our poor fellows were thus deprived of their horses, and though almost speechless and scarcely able to stand, were compelled to totter along on foot. Many of our packed mules, unable to proceed any further, sank down and were left with their parched tongues protruding from their mouths. Some of the men too, dropped down totally exhausted, and were left, beseeching their companions to hasten on, and return to them with water, if they should be so fortunate as to succeed in reaching it.

“At length, when all were nearly despairing, and almost overcome, one of our companions who had outstripped us to the top of a hill, fired off his gun. The effect was electrical. All knew that he had found water, and even our poor beasts understood the signal, for they pricked up their drooping ears, snuffed the air, and moved off at a more rapid pace. Two or three minutes of intense anxiety elapsed, we reached the top of the hill, and then beheld what gave us infinitely more delight than would the discovery of the north west passage, or the richest mine of gold that ever excited, the cupidity of man.

“There lay at the distance of about four miles, the loveliest prospect imagination could present to the dazzled senses - a lovely river sweeping along through graceful curves. The beautiful sight lent vigour to our withered limbs, and we pressed on, oh! how eagerly. At sunset we reached the margin of the stream, and man and beast, regardless of depth, plunged, and drank, and laved, and

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

drank again. What was nectar to such a draught! The pure cool reviving stream, a new river of life, - we drank, laughed, wept, embraced, shouted, - and drank, shouted, embraced, wept, and laughed again. Fits of vomiting were brought on by the excessive quantities we swallowed, but they soon passed off, and an hour or so saw us restored to our usual spirits.

“We spent that night and the following morning in the charitable office of conveying water to our enfeebled companions, who lingered behind, and the poor beasts that had been also left by the way, and succeeded in getting them all to camp, except the person and animals of Charbineau,\* one of our men, who could nowhere be found, and was supposed to have wandered from the trail and perished.

\*This was the infant who, together with his mother, was saved from a sudden flood near the Falls of the Missouri, by Capt. Lewis, - vide Lewis and Clark's Expedition. [W. A. F.]

## CHAPTER XII

“Next morning,” continued Stevens, “several successive reports of firearms were heard apparently at the distance and direction of a mile or so below camp. Supposing the shots to have been fired by Charbineaux, one of our men was despatched in quest of him, but he shortly after returned, accompanied by several trappers who belonged to a party of forty, led by a Mr. Work, a clerk of the Hudson Bay Company. These men were mostly half breeds, having squaws and children. They live by hunting furred animals, the skins of which they dress and exchange for necessaries at the trading posts of that company, on the Columbia and its tributaries.

“Two days before we met them, five of their hunters were fired upon by a party of Indians, who lay concealed in a thicket of willows near the trail. One of them was killed on the spot, and a second disabled by a shot in the knee. An Indian at the same moment sprang from the thicket and caught the wounded man in his arms, who, well knowing that torture would be the consequence of captivity, besought his flying comrades to pause and shoot either the Indian or himself. Heeding his piteous cry, one of the retreating hunters, more bold, or more humane than the other two, wheeled and fired, but missed his aim, and hastily resumed his flight. The exasperated savage, at this, let go his hold, pursued, overtook, and killed the unlucky marksman, while the wounded man crept into a thicket and effectually concealed himself till night, when he made his escape. The bodies of the two dead men were found the next day; both had been stripped and scalped. Beside one of them lay a gun, broken off at the breech, and charged with two balls without powder. They were buried as decently as circumstances would permit, and the place of interment carefully concealed to prevent their last repose being rudely disturbed by the Indians, who frequently, with a fiendish malice, tear open the graves of their victims, and leave their bones to bleach upon the soil.

“The river on which we were now encamped, and the fortunate and timely discovery of which had saved us from the last extremity of thirst, is called ‘La Riviere Maladi,’ (Sick River,) and owes its

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

name to the fact that the beaver found upon it, if eaten by the unwary hunter, causes him to have a singular fit, the symptoms of which are, stiffness of the neck, pains in the bones, and nervous contortions of the face. A party of half-starved trappers found their way to this stream a few years since, and observing plenty of beaver 'signs,' immediately set their traps, in order to procure provisions. At dawn the next day, several fine large fat beavers were taken, and skinned, dressed and cooked, with the least possible delay. The hungry trappers fed ravenously upon the smoking viands, and soon left scarce a single bone unpicked. Two or three hours elapsed, when several of the party were seized with a violent cramp in the muscles of the neck; severe shooting pains darted through the frame, and the features became hideously convulsed. Their companions were greatly alarmed at their condition, and imagined them to be in imminent danger. However, at the expiration of an hour, they were quite recovered, but others had meantime been attacked in the same way. These also recovered, and by the following morning all had passed the ordeal, save one, who having escaped so much longer than the rest, fancied himself entirely out of danger, and indiscreetly boasted of his better constitution, laughing at what he called the effeminacy of his companions.

"During the very height of his merriment, which by the way, was any thing but agreeable to his comrades, he was observed to turn pale, his head turned slowly towards his left shoulder, and became fixed, his mouth was stretched round almost to his ear on the same side, and twitched violently, as if in the vain endeavor to extricate itself from so unnatural a position, and his body was drawn into the most pitiable and yet ludicrous deformity. His appearance, in short, presented such an admirable and striking portraiture of the 'beautiful boy,' that his companions could not help indulging in hearty peals of laughter at his expense, and retorted his taunts with the most provoking and malicious coolness. When he recovered he was heard to mutter something about 'whipping,' but probably thought better of it afterwards, as he never attempted to put his threat into execution. Indeed, he subsequently acknowledged that he had been justly treated, and was never, from that time forth, heard to speak of his 'constitution.'

"Notwithstanding that we were well aware of these facts, we could not resist the temptation of a fine fat beaver, which we cooked and eat. But we were all sick in consequence, so much so, in short, that I do not believe a single one of us will ever be induced to try the same experiment again, no matter how urgently pressed by starvation."

There is a small stream flowing into the Big Lake, the beaver taken from which, produce the same effect. It is the universal belief among hunters, that the beaver in these two streams feed upon some root or plant peculiar to the locality, which gives their flesh the strange quality of causing such indisposition. This is the only mode in which I ever heard the phenomena attempted to be explained, and it is most probably correct.

"We trapped the Maladi to its source, then crossed to the head of Gordiaz River, and trapped it down to the plains of Snake River, from whence we returned to Cache Valley by the way of Porteneuf, where we found Dripps and Fontenelle, together with our lost companion Charbineaux. He states that he lost our trail, but reached the river Maladi after dark, where he discovered a village

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of Indians. Fearing that they were unfriendly, he resolved to retrace his steps, and find the main company. In pursuance of this plan, he filled a beaver skin with water, and set off on his lonely way. After eleven day's wandering, during which he suffered a good deal from hunger, he attained his object, and reached the company at Porteneuf. The village he saw was the lodges of the Hudson Bay Company, and had he passed a short distance below, he would have found our camp. But his unlucky star was in the ascendant, and it cost him eleven day's toil, danger, and privation to find friends."

Such was the narrative Mr. Stevens gave me of the adventures of Robideaux's party.

## CHAPTER XIII

From Ogden's Hole, we passed by short marches down Cache Valley forty miles to Bear river, where we remained at the same encampment a whole month. During this time it stormed more or less every day, and the snow accumulated to such a depth that four of our hunters, were compelled to remain away from camp for thirty four days, the impossibility of travelling having prevented their return from an expedition after game. In all December the snow lay upwards of three feet deep, throughout Cache Valley; in other parts of the country the depth was still greater. In the latter part of this month, we separated from Fraeb and Jarvis, and crossed over to the Big Lake, a distance of thirty miles which we accomplished in four days. The "Big Lake" is so called in contra-distinction to the Little Lake, which lies due East from it fifty miles, and which has been described in a former chapter. It is sometimes also called "Salt Lake," from the saline quality of its waters. An attempt has been recently made to change the name of this lake to Lake Bonnyville, from no other reason that I can learn, but to gratify the silly conceit of a Captain Bonnyville, whose adventures in this region at the head of a party, form the ground work of "Irving's Rocky Mountains." There is no more justice or propriety in calling the lake after that gentleman, than after any other one of the many persons who in the course of their fur hunting expeditions have passed in its vicinity. He neither discovered, or explored it, nor has he done any thing else to entitle him to the honour of giving it his name, and the foolish vanity that has been his only inducement for seeking to change the appellation by which it has been known for fifty years, to his own patronymic, can reflect no credit upon him, or the talented author who has lent himself to the service of an ambition so childish and contemptible.

The dimensions of the Big Lake have not been accurately determined, but it may be safely set down as not less than one hundred miles in length, by seventy or eighty broad. It was circumnavigated a few years since by four men in a small boat, who were absent on the expedition forty days, and on their return reported that for several days they found no fresh water on its western shore, and nearly perished from the want of that necessary article. They ascertained that it had no visible outlet, and stated as their opinion that it was two hundred miles long and one hundred broad, but this was doubtless a gross exaggeration. I ascended a high mountain between Bear River and Webber's Fork, in order to obtain an extensive view of it, but found it so intersected by lofty promontories and mountains, not only jutting into it from every side, but often rising out

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of its midst, that only thirty or forty square miles of its surface could be seen. Its waters are so strongly impregnated with salt that many doubt if it would hold more in solution; I do not however think it by any means saturated, though it has certainly a very briny taste, and seems much more buoyant than the ocean. In the vicinity of the Big Lake we saw dwarf oak and maple trees, as well on the neighboring hills as on the border of streams. This was the first time since leaving the Council Bluffs that we have seen timber of that description.

About the first of February we ascertained that a number of Caches we had made previous to our leaving Cache Valley, had been robbed by a party of Snakes, who without doubt discovered us in the act of making them. However the "Horn Chief," a distinguished chief and warrior of the Shoshonee tribe, made them return every thing he could find among them into the Caches again, though a multitude of small articles to the value of about two hundred dollars were irrecoverably lost. I had almost forgotten to record a debt of gratitude to this high souled and amiable chief for an act of chivalry that has scarce a parallel in the annals of any age or nation, in respect either of lofty courage, or disinterested friendship. The Horn Chief is noted for his attachment to the whites, numbers of whom owe to him not only the protection of their property, but the safety even of their lives. He is the principle chief of the Snakes, and forms a striking contrast to his people, being as remarkable for his uprightness and candour as they are noted for treachery and dishonesty.

While we remained near the Snake village on Bear River, the preceding autumn, they formed a plot to massacre us solely for the purpose of possessing themselves of our arms and baggage. Relying on their professions of friendship, and unsuspecting of ill faith, we took no precautions against surprise, but allowed them to rove freely through camp, and handle our arms, and in short gave them every advantage that could be desired. The temptation was too much for their easy virtue. Such an opportunity of enriching themselves, though at the cost of the blackest ingratitude, they could not consent to let slip, and therefore held a council on the subject at which it was resolved to enter our camp under the mask of friendship, seize our arms, and butcher us all on the spot.

In these preliminary proceedings the Horn Chief took no part, he having preserved the strictest silence throughout the whole debate. But when the foul scheme was fully resolved upon and every arrangement made for carrying it into effect, he arose and made a short speech in which he charged them with ingratitude, cowardice, and the basest breach of faith, and after heaping upon them the most stinging sarcasms and reproaches, concluded by telling them he did not think they were manly enough to attempt putting their infamous design into execution, but to remember if they did, that he would be there to aid and die with those they purposed to destroy.

Early the following morning the Snakes assembled at our camp with their weapons concealed beneath their robes; but this excited no suspicion for we had been accustomed to see them go armed at all times and upon every occasion. None of their women or children however appeared, and this was so unusual that some of my companions remarked it at the time; still the wily devils masked their intention so completely by an appearance of frank familiarity and trusting confi-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

dence, that the idea even of an attack never occurred to us.

At length when they had collected to more than thrice our number, the Horn Chief suddenly appeared in the centre of our camp, mounted on a noble horse and fully equipped for war. He was of middle stature, of severe and dignified mien, and wore a visage deeply marked by the wrinkles of age and thought, which with his long gray hairs showed him to have been the sport of precarious fortune for at least the venerable term of sixty winters. His head was surmounted by a curious cap or crown, made of the stuffed skin of an antelope's head, with the ears and horns still attached, which gave him a bold, commanding, and somewhat ferocious appearance.

Immediately upon his arrival he commenced a loud and threatening harrangue to his people, the tenor of which we could not comprehend, but which we inferred from his looks, tone of voice and gestures, boded them no good, and this opinion was strengthened by their sneaking off one after another until he was left quite alone. He followed immediately after, himself, leaving us to conjecture his meaning. However he afterwards met with the Iroquois, and informed them of the whole matter, and the same time showing the tip of his little finger, significantly remarked that we escaped "that big."

It appears they were assembling to execute their diabolical plot, and about to commence the work of blood when the Horn Chief so opportunely arrived. He instantly addressed them, reminded them of his resolution, dared them to fire a gun, called them cowards, women, and in short so bullied and shamed them that they sneaked away without attempting to do us any injury. It was not for months afterwards that all this came to our knowledge and we learned how providential had been our deliverance, and how greatly we were under obligation to the friendship, courage, and presence of mind of this noble son of the forest, whose lofty heroism in our defence may proudly rival the best achievements of the days of chivalry.

Some days after the robbery of the Caches, seventeen horses were stolen from a detachment of our party which had been sent to Cache Valley for provisions. They were about sixty in number, and supposed to be Blackfeet. They departed in the direction of Porteneuf. This misfortune prevented our obtaining supplies of meat, and we were consequently reduced to the necessity of living on whatever came to hand. Famished wolves, ravens, magpies, and even raw hide made tender by two days boiling, were greedily devoured. We lived or rather starved in this manner ten or twelve days, daily expecting the arrival of our hunters with meat, but they came not, and we were compelled to return to Cache Valley where we halted on the first of March on Cache Valley Creek. We saw in our route several boiling springs, the most remarkable of which bursts out from beneath a huge fragment of rock, and forms a reservoir of several rods in circumference, the bottom of which was covered with a reddish slimy matter. The waters of these springs was as hot as in those on Salt River. They are situated near the trail that leads from the head of Cache Valley to the Big Lake.

We found the snow in Cache Valley reduced to the depth of eighteen inches, but covered with a crust so thick and firm that it cuts our horse legs, making them bleed profusely, and the trail of

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

our poor beasts was sprinkled with blood at every step, wherever we went.

During the month of March, we proceeded slowly to Bear River, starving at least one half the time. Our horses were in the most miserable condition, and we reduced to mere skeletons. Our gums became so sore from eating tough bull meat, that we were forced to swallow it without chewing; and to complete our misery, many of us were nearly deprived of sight from inflammation of the eyes, brought on by the reflection of the sunbeams on the snow.

Early in April wild geese began to make their appearance, - a happy omen to the mountain hunter. The ice soon disappeared from the river, and the days became generally warm and pleasant, though the nights were still extremely cold. About this time three Flathead Indians came to us from the Hudson Bay trappers, who had passed the winter at the mouth of Porteneuf, and reported that the plains of Snake River were already free from snow. This information decided our leaders to go there and recruit our horses preparatory to the spring hunt, which would commence as soon as the small streams were disencumbered of their icy fetters; and we set about the necessary arrangements for departure.

## CHAPTER XIV

On the fourth of April, having cached our furs, and made other necessary arrangements for our journey, we set off, and proceeding but slowly, though with great fatigue, owing to the great depth and hardness of the snow, which though encrusted stiffly, would by no means bear the weight of our horses, - accompanied but a few miles, when we halted for the night at a spring source, in the northern extremity of Cache Valley. The following day we crossed a prairie hill, and encamped at evening at the fountain source of the south fork of Porteneuf, having seen on our route great numbers of buffalo, and many with young calves. We found the snow next day increased to the depth of from three to five feet, and floundered along through it for a few miles, though with the greatest toil and difficulty. Buffalo were quite as numerous on this day as the preceding, and we caught thirty or forty of their calves alive in the snow. Quite as many more were observed either killed or maimed by the frightened herds in their fugitive course. We rested that night on the south side of a hill, which the wind had partly denuded of snow, leaving here and there spots quite divested of it; but found neither grass nor water, both of which were greatly needed, and but scant supply of sage (wormwood) which we were obliged from the absence of every other, to use as a substitute for fuel. Water we obtained both for ourselves and horses, by melting snow in our kettles, - a tedious and vexatious process. The exertion of another day sufficed us to reach a point where fuel was more abundant, and of somewhat better quality, - a few scattered clusters of large willows furnishing us the necessary firewood to our comfort. We killed a number of buffalo, but upon any one of them the least particle of fat could not be found, and our fare was therefore none of the best, as may well be imagined.

On the morning of the eighth, several men were sent out with directions to drive, if possible, a herd of bulls down the river. Could this have been effected, we should have had a tolerable road

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

for our feeble horses to follow, but no such good fortune was the reward of our endeavours, for the buffalo refused absolutely to move, and were all, to the number of fifty and upwards, killed on the spot. Disappointed of this hope, we had no alternative but to resume our weary march as before, which we did at sunrise, on the following day. At first, we got along with tolerable ease, but as the forenoon advanced, the warmth of the sun so melted and softened the crust of the snow, that our horses plunged in at every step, and speedily became quite exhausted from the excessive fatigue of constantly breaking through, and forcing their way under such disadvantage. There was no alternative but for us to carry them, since they could neither carry us nor themselves even, and we therefore procured poles, and transported them two miles through the snow to a hill side, which was accomplished only at the cost of incredible labour, hardship and misery. In addition to this, we had our baggage, which lay scattered along the whole distance, from one encampment to the other, to collect and bring in on our shoulders, a work of immense toil, as at almost every step the crust gave way and engulfed us up to our armpits in the damp snow. However, we had the pleasure of seeing everything safe at camp in the evening, except three or four of our poorest horses, which being unable to extricate from the snow, we were obliged to abandon to their fate.

All hands were employed on the tenth, in making a road. We marched on foot one after another in Indian file, ploughing our way through the snow to the forks of Porteneuf, a distance of six miles, and back again, thus beating a path for our horses, the labour of which almost overcame our strength. When we returned, many of us were near dropping down from fatigue, so violent had been our exertion. At three o'clock next morning, rousing our weary limbs and eyelids from their needful rest and slumber, we pursued our journey, and succeeded in reaching a narrow prairie at the forks, which was found nearly free from snow. Here we remained over the following day, to refresh our half-dead horses, and rest our nearly exhausted selves. In the mean time we were visited by two hunters of the Hudson Bay Company, who gave us the grateful information that our troubles were nearly at an end, as the snow entirely disappeared after a few miles below. Six miles marching on the thirteenth, brought us out of the narrow defile we had hitherto with so much labour threaded, and into a broad and almost boundless prairie, which far as the eye could reach, was bare, dry, and even dusty. The sensation produced by this sudden transition from one vast and deep expanse of snow which had continually surrounded us for more than five months, to an open and unincumbered valley of one hundred miles in diameter, over which the sun shed its unclouded warmth, and where the greenness of starting verdure gladdened the eye was one of most exquisite and almost rapturous pleasure. Our toils were past, our hardships were over, our labours were at an end, and even our animals seemed inspired with fresh life and vigour, for they moved off at a gallop, of their own accord, evidently delighted to find their feet once more on terra firma. Since our departure from Cache Valley to this point, where Porteneuf leaves the mountains, we have made a distance of sixty miles, which to accomplish, has cost us nine day's toil.

We moved leisurely down Porteneuf on the following day, a distance of four miles, and came upon the camp of Mr. Work with the Hudson Bay trappers, (who it will be remembered, were met by Robidoux's party in the fall), with whom we pitched our quarters. From these people we procured some excellent dried meat, which, having been cured and prepared in the fall, when the buffalo were in good condition, was really most welcome; and of which we partook heartily,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

believing, half-famished as we were, that more delicious food never feasted the appetite of man. In consequence of a storm of sleet that lasted for two days we were forced to remain here until the morning of the seventeenth, when the sun re-appeared, and we departed, though owing to a quarrel Mr. Works had with one of his men, which resulted in the fellow joining our party, not until we had narrowly escaped flogging the "Nor'westers" as the Hudson Bay people are sometimes called, since the junction with that company of one called the Northwest Fur company, of recent date. One of Mr. Work's people, foolishly imagining that Mr. Fontenelle had seduced or at least encouraged the man to desert, presented his gun at the breast of our leader, but was withheld from firing by the interference of a more sensible comrade. Astonished and angered at the recklessness and audacity of the action, we sprang from our horses, cocked our rifles, and prepared to give them battle, should they presume to offer any further show of hostility. Matters, however, soon assumed a more serious aspect, and we left them to pursue our journey. Immediately after our departure they signified their good will in firing a salute, by the way of bravado, to which, however, we did not think worth while our while to pay any attention. A collision that might have been bloody and fatal, was thus happily, though narrowly, avoided, for in the excitement and passion of the moment, a single shot, fired even by accident, would have been the signal for a deadly encounter. Our progress was necessarily slow from the extreme debility and weakness of our horses, and after marching a few hours, we halted for the night on the margin of a pleasant spring, beneath a grove of cedars, three or four miles west of Porteneuf. Continuing our route, we reached Snake River, and followed it slowly up to the forks where we opened our spring hunt.

From the mouth of Porteneuf, Snake River flows westward to the falls between forty and fifty miles below, when it gradually turns northward and finally after receiving the waters of several large tributaries, which rise to the westward of the Big Lake, unites itself with Salmon River. It will be recognized on maps of the country as the south fork of Lewis River, but is known among Rocky Mountain hunters by no other name than Snake River, or which is the same thing, "Sho-sho-ne-pah," its ancient appellation, in the language of that Indian tribe. Near the mouth of Porteneuf, it is a broad, magnificent stream, two hundred yards wide, clear, deep, and rapid, bordered by groves of towering cotton wood and aspen trees, and clustering thickets of large willows, matted and bound together by numerous vines and briars. On either side, a vast plain extends its level from thirty to fifty miles in breadth, bounded by ranges of lofty mountains, which in some places are barely visible, owing to their great distance. On the east side of the river, the plain is barren, sandy, and level, and produces only prickly pear, sage, and occasional scanty tufts of dry grass; on the west side the plain is much more extensive than on the opposite, stretching often away to fifty and even sixty miles from the river; it is irregular and sandy, covered with rocks, and like the other, barren of vegetation, except prickly pear and sage - the northern part is a perfect desert of loose, white, sand, dreary, herbless, and arid. It presents everywhere proofs of some mighty convulsion, that sinking mountains to valleys, and elevating valleys to mountains, has changed the aspect of nature, and left the Rocky Mountains in the picturesqueness and grandeur of their present savage and sullen sublimity. Scattered over this immense plain, there are innumerable mounds or masses of rock cracked in the form of a cross at top, (quere, by cooling or the heat of the sun?) the most remarkable of which are three of mountain altitude, situated midway between the mouth of Porteneuf and the mountains northward. Near the largest of these gigantic

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

masses there is a district of some extent covered with huge blocks of black rock, varying in size from a finger stone to a house, which at a distance bear a close resemblance to a village of sombre dwellings.

There are several small rivers flowing from the mountains on this side towards Snake River, not one of which ever reaches it; they are all absorbed by the sand, the strata of which it is evident from this circumstance, must be deep. On the east side, however, there is Porteneuf, and a small river called the Blackfoot, which rises with the sources of Salt River and flows sixty miles westward, to its junction with Snake River, fifteen miles above the mouth of Porteneuf. The Blackfoot is fifty paces in breadth, and is bordered by dense thickets of willow - near the mouth there is a large solitary mound or hill, called the "Blackfoot Butte." Between the Blackfoot and Porteneuf, there is a rich and continuous bottom of excellent grass, where deer are always numerous.

## CHAPTER XV

From the mouth of the Blackfoot, Snake River turns gradually away to the northeast. At the distance of twenty miles, its garniture of grass-covered bottoms and groves of trees entirely disappear, giving place to a more harsh and sterile border, where instead of a rich soil and luxuriant vegetation we find only rocks and sand, with an occasional dwarf cedar, scattering prickly pears, and a gigantic growth of that which flourishes where nothing else can, the everlasting wormwood, or as it is always here called "sage." Twenty miles further up and we come to the junction of "Gray's Creek," a small stream scantily fringed with unneighborly clusters of willows, which rises in "Gray's Hole," between Blackfoot and Salt River, and thence flows north thirty miles and twenty west to its union with Snake River. Fifteen miles above the mouth of Gray's Creek are the "Forks of Snake River," otherwise the junction of "Lewis River" with "Henry's Fork." The first named flows from a cut in the mountain to the southeast, the latter rises with the sources of Madison River in a range of fir covered hills called the "Piny Woods," and runs a southwest course of seventy miles or so to its junction with Lewis River. The country through which it passes after emerging from the Piny Woods is a barren sandy waste, and it is rendered totally unnavigable even for canoes by a succession of falls and rapids. It derives its name from the enterprising Major Henry, who visited the Rocky Mountains shortly after the return of Messrs Lewis and Clark, and built a trading house near its mouth, the remains of which are still visible, bringing sadly to mind the miserable fate of the party left in charge of it, who were overpowered by the Indians and all massacred. It is the "Mad River," mentioned in Chapter V of Coxe's Narrative of adventures on the Columbia River. Lewis River rises with the sources of the Yellow Stone Lake, and flows southward to Jackson's Hole, when it expands to a lake of thirty or forty miles extent, called the "Teton Lake" from a remarkable mountain overlooking it, which bears the name of the "Trois Tetons." From Jackson's Hole it makes a gradual and graceful sweep to the northwest, until it issues forth from the mountains twenty miles above its mouth, where on the north side a perpendicular wall of rock juts into the plain to a considerable distance, while on the south side its margin is lined by

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

a grove of dwarf cedars that stretches away from the pass or cut several miles. After leaving the mountains it becomes divided into a great number of channels separated from each other by numerous islands, some of which are miles in extent, but others of comparatively small dimensions. Many of these streams or channels are not again united but pursue their several courses till they meet and mingle with the waters of Henry's Fork. There is a high rocky mound in the angle between the two streams, and another on the north side of Henry's Fork, which present the appearance of having been once united. Both these mounds are large and lofty and may be easily seen from the plain at a distance of from thirty to forty miles. There are likewise two or three similar but smaller mounds on an island in Lewis River, their summits just appearing above the forest of cottonwood trees by which they are entirely surrounded and nearly concealed. Noble groves of aspen and cottonwood, and dense thickets of willow border all these streams and channels, and form almost impenetrable barriers around the verdant prairies covered with fine grass and delicate rushes which lie embowered within their islands. Deer and elk in great numbers resort to these fair fields of greenness in the season of growth, and during the inclemencies of winter seek shelter in the thickets by which they are environed, where rushes of gigantic size, exceeding in stature the height of man, are found in wild profusion. Flowing into Henry's Fork there is, a short distance above Lewis River, a small stream called Pierres Fork. It rises in Pierre's Hole, and has a westerly course of sixty miles to its mouth. Twenty miles above the forks of Snake River, Henry's Fork is subdivided into two streams of nearly equal magnitude, one of which before leaving the mountains bounds over a lofty precipice, thus forming a most magnificent cascade. Lewis River is about two hundred miles long, and receives in its course several streams which I shall hereafter have occasion to notice.

During our journey to the forks of Snake River, we saw and killed numbers of Buffalo, and saw also hundreds of their carcasses floating down the river, or lodged with drift wood upon the shoals. These animals were probably drowned by breaking through when endeavoring to cross the river on the ice. At Gray's Creek we came in view of the "Trois Tetons," (three breasts) which are three inaccessible finger-shaped peaks of a lofty mountain overlooking the country to a vast distance. They were about seventy miles to the northeast, when observed from that point. Their appearing is quite singular, and they form a noted land mark in that region. During our march we had several hard showers of rain, and occasionally a storm of sleet, but the weather was generally mild and pleasant.

From the Forks of Snake River we continued up to the forks of Henry's Fork, trapping as we went and taking from forty to seventy beaver a day. Some of them were large and fat, and when well boiled proved to be excellent eating. Our cuisine was not of the best perhaps, but we made up in plenty what we lacked in variety, and on the whole fared very tolerably. As we ascended Henry's Fork, trees and grass again disappeared, and the waters of both branches were frequently compressed to narrow channels by bold bluff ledges of black rock, through which they darted with wild rapidity, and thundering sound.

A small party of hunters was sent to the "Burnt Hole," on the Madison River, in quest of beaver, but returned back without success. The Burnt Hole is a district on the north side of the Piny

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

woods, which was observed to be wrapped in flames a few years since. The conflagration that occasioned this name must have been of great extent, and large forests of half consumed pines still evidence the ravages at that time of the destructive element. The Piny Woods are seen stretching darkly along like a belt of twilight from south of east to northwest, distant from us about thirty miles.

From Henry's Fork we passed westward to the head of "Kammas Creek," (so called from a small root, very nutritious, and much prized as food by Indians and others, which abounds here,) a small stream that rises with the sources of the Madison, flows southeast forty or fifty miles, and discharges itself into a pond six miles northwest from the mouth of Gray's Creek. This pond has no outlet, its surplus waters pass off by evaporation, or are absorbed by the sand. During our stay on this stream, several Indians were seen lurking about, and evidently watching an opportunity to steal our horses, or commit some other depredation upon our party.

On the twenty-eighth of May, two of our men, Daniel Y. Richards, and Henry Duhern by name, went out as usual to set their traps, but never returned. We ascertained subsequently, that they were butchered by a war party of Blackfeet Indians. Four of our men, crossing over to the southeastern sources of the Jefferson, discovered a number of mounted Indians, and fled back to camp in alarm. At the same time, a party of Flathead Indians came to us from a village four days' march to the northwestward. They informed us that they had a skirmish a few days previous with a party of Blackfeet, two of whom they killed. Several of the Flathead warriors were immediately dispatched to their village with a present to the chief, and a request that he and his people would come and trade with us. During their absence, we moved westward to a small stream called "Poison Weed Creek," from a deleterious plant found in its vicinity. The waters of this creek also, are drunk up by the thirsty sands. Large herds of buffalo were driven over to us before the Flatheads, many of which we killed, and about one out of a dozen of which was found fat enough to be palatable. Several of the young Flatheads in the mean time joined us in advance of the village. The day previous to their coming, one of their tribe was killed by the Blackfeet, who also caught a Flathead squaw some distance from the village, whom they treated with great barbarity - they ravished her, cut off her hair, and in this condition sent her home.

Two or three days after their arrival, the whole village, consisting of fifty lodges of Flatheads, Nezperces, and Pend'orielles, came in sight, but unlike all other Indians we have hitherto seen, they advanced to meet us in a slow and orderly manner singing their songs of peace. When they had approached within fifty paces, they discharged their guns in the air, reloaded, and fired them off again in like manner. The salute of course, was returned by our party. The Indians now dismounted, left their arms and horses, and silently advanced in the following order: first came the principle chief, bearing a common English flag, then four subordinate chiefs, then a long line of warriors, then young men and boys who had not yet distinguished themselves in battle, and lastly the women and children, who closed the procession. When the Chief had come up, he grasped the hand of our Partizan, (leader,) raised it as high as his head, and held it in that position while he muttered a prayer of two minutes duration. In the same manner he paid his respects to each of our party, with a prayer of a minute's length. His example was followed by the rest, in the order

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of rank. The whole ceremony occupied about two hours, at the end of which time each of us had shaken hands with them all. Pipes were then produced, and they seated themselves in a circle on the ground, to hold a council with our leaders respecting trade.

The Flatheads probably derive their name from an ancient practice of shaping or deforming the head during infancy, by compressing it between boards placed on the forehead and back part, though not one living proof of the existence at any time of that practice can now be found among them. They call themselves in their beautiful tongue, "Salish," and speak a language remarkable for its sweetness and simplicity. They are noted for humanity, courage, prudence, candour, forbearance, integrity, trustfulness, piety, and honesty. They are the only tribe in the Rocky Mountains that can with truth boast of the fact that they have never killed or robbed a white man, nor stolen a single horse, how great soever the necessity and the temptation. I have, since the time mentioned here, been often employed in trading and travelling with them, and have never known one to steal so much as an awl-blade. Every other tribe in the Rocky Mountains hold theft rather in the light of a virtue than a fault, and many even pride themselves on their dexterity and address in the art of appropriation, like the Greeks deeming it no dishonour to steal, but a disgrace to be detected.

## CHAPTER XVI

The Flatheads have received some notions of religion either from pious traders or from transient ministers who have visited the Columbia. Their ancient superstitions have given place to the more enlightened views of the christian faith, and they seem to have become deeply and profitably impressed with the great truths of the gospel. They appear to be very devout and orderly, and never eat, drink, or sleep, without giving thanks to God. The doctrines they have received are no doubt essential to their happiness and safety in a future state of existence, but they oppose, and almost fatally, their security and increase in this world. They have been taught never to fight except in self defence, or as they express it, "never to go out to hunt their own graves," but to remain at home and defend manfully their wives and children when attacked. This policy is the worst that could be adopted, and is indeed an error of fatal magnitude, for the consequence is that a numerous, well armed, watchful, and merciless enemy, with whom they have been at war from time immemorial, emboldened by their forbearance, and puffed up with pride by their own immunity, seek every occasion to harass and destroy them, - steal their horses, butcher their best hunters, and cut them off in detail. Fearing to offend the Deity, they dare not go out to revenge their murdered friends and kinsmen, and thus inspire their blood-thirsty foes with a salutary dread of retributive justice; and hence they are incessantly exposed to the shafts of their vindictive enemies, outlying parties of whom are almost constantly on the watch to surprise and massacre stragglers, unrestrained by the fear of pursuit and vengeance. Under the influence of such an untoward state of things, they are rapidly wasting away, in spite of courage, patriotism, and many virtues that have no parallel in the Rocky Mountains. Though they defend themselves with a bravery, skill, and devotion that has absolutely no comparison, proving on every occasion their great superiority in dauntlessness and address, no advantages of daring and prowess can over-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

come the evil effects of their defensive policy, and the probability is that in a few years more the noblest race of uncivilized men, will become utterly extinct.

Many anecdotes of Messrs. Lewis and Clark, who were the first white men they ever saw, are related by the Flatheads, and some of the old men in the village now with us, were present at their first interview. An intelligent Flathead, known to the hunters by the name of "Faro," related to me many curious incidents in their history, and among others an account of this first interview with the whites, which, though obtained two years later in point of time, may not be uninteresting in this connexion. I give it nearly in his own language.

"A great many snows past," said he, "when I was a child, our people were in continual fear of the Blackfeet, who were already in possession of fire arms of which we knew nothing, save by their murderous effects. During our excursions for buffalo, we were frequently attacked by them, and many of our bravest warriors fell victims to the thunder and lightning they wielded, which we conjectured had been given them by the Great Spirit to punish us for our sins. In our numerous conflicts, they never came in reach of our arrows, but remained at such a distance that they could deal death to us without endangering themselves. Sometimes indeed their young warriors closed in with us, and were as often vanquished; but they never failed to repay us fourfold from a safe distance. For several moons we saw our best warriors almost daily falling around us, without our being able to avenge their deaths. Goaded by thirst for revenge, we often rushed forth upon our enemies, but they receded like the rainbow in proportion as we advanced, and ever remained at the same distance, whence they destroyed us by their deadly bolts, while we were utterly powerless to oppose them. At length, 'Big Foot,' the great chief of our tribe, assembled his warriors in council, and made a speech to them, in which he set forth the necessity our leaving our country. 'My heart tells me,' said he, 'that the Great Spirit has forsaken us; he has furnished our enemies with his thunder to destroy us, yet something whispers to me, that we may fly to the mountains and avoid a fate, which, if we remain here is inevitable. The lips of our women are white with dread, there are no smiles on the lips of our children. Our joyous sports are no more, glad tales are gone from the evening fires of our lodges. I see no face but is sad, silent, and thoughtful; nothing meets my ears but wild lamentations for departed heroes. Arise, let us fly to the mountains, let us seek their deepest recesses where unknown to our destroyers, we may hunt the deer and the bighorn, and bring gladness back to the hearts of our wives and our children!'

"The sun arose on the following morning to shine upon a deserted camp, for the little band of Flatheads were already leaving the beautiful plains of the Jefferson. During one whole moon we pursued our course southwestward, through devious paths and unexplored defiles, until at last, heartsore and weary, we reached the margin of salmon river. Here we pitched our camp, and whilst the women were employed in gathering fruits and berries, our hunters explored the surrounding mountains, which they found stored with abundance of game, as the stooping trees and bushes that grew around our lodges, told us on our return; we likewise made the joyful discovery that the river was alive with salmon, great numbers of which were taken and preserved against future necessity. The Great Spirit seemed again to look kindly upon us. We were no longer disturbed by our enemies, and joy and gladness came back to our bosoms. Smiles like little birds

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

came and lit upon the lips of our children, their merry laughter was a constant song, like the song of birds. The eyes of our maidens were again like the twinkling stars, and their voices soft as the voice of a vanishing echo. There was plenty in every lodge, there was content in every heart. Our former pastimes were renewed, our former fears were forgotten. Pleasant tales again wooed the twilight, and the moon was the only watch that we kept upon our slumbers. Our hunters went out in safety, there was no blood upon the path. They came back loaded with game, there was no one to frighten away the deer. Peace hovered around our council fires, we smoked the calumet in peace.

“After several moons, however, this state of tranquil happiness was interrupted by the unexpected arrival of two strangers. They were unlike any people we had hitherto seen, fairer than ourselves, and clothed with skins unknown to us. They seemed to be descended from the regions of the great “Edle-a-ma-hum.” They gave us things like solid water, which were sometimes brilliant as the sun, and which sometimes showed us our own faces. Nothing could equal our wonder and delight. We thought them the children of the Great Spirit. But we were destined to be again overwhelmed with fear, for we soon discovered that they were in possession of the identical thunder and lightning that had proved in the hands of our foes so fatal to our happiness. We also understood that they had come by the way of Beaver-head River, and that a party of beings like themselves were but a day’s march behind them.

“Many of our people were now exceedingly terrified, making no doubt but that they were leagued with our enemies the Blackfeet, and coming jointly to destroy us. This opinion was strengthened by a request they made for us to go and meet their friends. At first this was denied, but a speech from our beloved chief, who convinced us that it was best to conciliate if possible the favor of a people so terribly armed, and who might protect us, especially since our retreat was discovered, induced most of our warriors to follow him and accompany the strangers to their camp. As they disappeared over a hill in the neighborhood of our village, the women set up a doleful yell, which was equivalent to bidding them farewell forever, and which did any thing but elevate their drooping spirits.

“After such dismal forebodings imagine how agreeably they were disappointed, when, upon arriving at the strangers encampment, they found, instead of an overwhelming force of their enemies, a few strangers like the two already with them, who treated them with great kindness, and gave them many things that had not existed before even in their dreams or imaginations. Our eagle-eyed chief discovered from the carelessness of the strangers with regard to their things, that they were unacquainted with theft, which induced him to caution his followers against pilfering any article whatever. His instructions were strictly obeyed, mutual confidence was thus established. The strangers accompanied him back to the village, and there was peace and joy in the lodges of our people. They remained with us several days, and the Flatheads have been ever since the friends of the white men.”

CHAPTER XVII

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Gambling seems not to be disallowed by the religion of the Flatheads, or rather perhaps is not included among the number of deadly offences, for they remain incurably addicted to the vice, and often play during the whole night. Instances of individuals losing everything they possess are by no means infrequent. Their favourite game is called "Hand," by the hunters, and is played by four persons or more. - Bettors, provided with small sticks, beat time to a song in which they all join. The players and bettors seat themselves opposite to their antagonists, and the game is opened by two players, one of each side, who are provided each with two small bones, one called the true, and the other false. These bones they shift from hand to hand, for a few moments with great dexterity, and then hold their closed hands, stretched apart, for their respective opponents to guess in which the true bone is concealed. This they signify by pointing with the finger. Should one of them chance to guess aright and the other wrong, the first is entitled to both true bones, and to one point in the game. Points are marked by twenty small sharp sticks, which are stuck into the ground and paid back and forth until one side wins them all, which concludes the game. The lucky player, who has obtained both the true bones, immediately gives one to a comrade, and all the players on his side join in a song, while the bones are concealing. Should the guesser on the opposite side miss both the true bones, he pays two points, and tries again; should he miss only one, he pays one point. When he guesses them both, he commences singing and hiding the bones, and so the game continues until one, or other of the parties wins. They have likewise a game called by the French name of "Roulette." This game is played by two persons with a small iron ring, two or three inches in diameter, having beads of various colours fastened to the inside. The ring is rolled over a piece of smooth ground by one of the players; both follow it and endeavour to pitch arrows so that the ring may fall upon them. The beads are of different values, and such only count as may happen to be directly over the arrow. The points, of the game are counted by small sticks, and the winning of a stated number determines it. Throwing arrows at a target with the thumb and finger, is a common game with the boys; shooting at a mark is also much practiced.

The women are as much addicted to gaming as the men. They play at Hand, and have also a game which is never played by the other sex. Four bones eight inches in length, which are marked on one side with figures common to two of them, are thrown forward on a buffalo robe, spread down for the purpose. If the white sides of all the four fall uppermost, they count four, and throw again; if two figured ones of the same kind, and two white ones are up, they count two, but if one odd one should be turned, they count nothing, and the adverse party takes the bones with the same privilege. This game is won by the party which gets an expressed number of points first.

Horse racing is a favourite amusement, with the Flatheads. In short races they pay no attention to the start, but decide in favour of the horse that comes out foremost. Sometimes in long races they have no particular distance assigned, but the leading horse is privileged to go where he pleases, and the other is obliged to follow until he can pass and take the lead. These races generally terminate in favour of bottom rather than speed. Occasionally they have club races, when they enter such horses, and as many of them as they please, run to some certain point and back, when the foremost horse is entitled to all the bets. These games and races are not peculiar to the Flatheads,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

but are common to all the tribes we have met with in the country.

We remained on Poison-weed creek with the Flatheads until the 19th of June, when Messrs. Fontenelle and Dripps, with thirty men departed for St. Louis. They were accompanied by twenty Flatheads to Cache Valley, where they expected to meet the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, under a mutual agreement to return together to St. Louis. The remainder of our party, with the Iroquois amounting to twenty-five persons, set out at the same time for Salmon River, in company with the Flatheads. A Snake Indian came into our camp on the 22d, and informed us that he was one of two hunters, who escaped from a general massacre of the inmates of six lodges on Salmon river three days previous. Himself and companion returning from a hunting expedition, instead of the friends and relatives they expected to meet them and welcome them home from the fatigues of the chase, found only scalps and desolate lodges. Old and young, weak and strong, homely and fair, had met a common doom; not one was left alive of all they had so lately parted from in health and happiness. It was a sad tale, yet no uncommon one in this region of barbarism and inhumanity.

The next day four of the Flatheads who went with Fontenelle, returned and reported that he had a slight skirmish on Snake river with a party of Blackfeet, of whom they killed one, and took five horses, his own party sustaining no loss or injury.

On the 28th day of June we ascended a creek that flows from Day's defile, and unites with another from the north called Cotas Creek, both falling into a pond situated at the eastern extremity of a point of the mountain jutting down in the plain on the south side of Day's Creek. Day's defile receives its name from John Day, a noted hunter, who died and was buried here a few years since. We journeyed slowly, being engaged in procuring and drying meat for our subsistence during the fall hunt, which it is intended to make in a rugged country on the sources of Salmon river, where white men had never penetrated, but where beaver was said to be abundant. A Snake Indian, engaged for a guide, states that buffalo are no where to be found in that wild district, and hence the necessity of securing a good supply of provisions to be taken with us.

From the outlet of Day's Creek, we proceeded up forty miles to its source, and thence continued over a narrow pass between two mountains which we found so free from all obstructions that even wagons might cross with ease, and which conducted us to a large valley watered by a small stream called Little Salmon River, which flows through it in a western course. The source of this stream, though only ten or twelve feet wide, was yet so deep as to be unfordable, except at occasional points. Some of our men, ignorant of its depth, attempted to ford it, but only escaped drowning, by clinging to the branches which were interlaced and bound together by wild vines, forming a complete canopy over the stream. Their horses were carried some distance down by the impetuosity of the current before we could reach and rescue them.

We passed through a defile, on the first of July bearing southward, which was dotted occasionally, with banks of snow, which were however rapidly disappearing. This defile brought us to a small valley watered by Gordiaz river, which, rising with the sources of the Malade, against those of

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Salmon river, flows eighty to one hundred miles eastward, gradually decreasing in breadth and depth, until it finally disappears in the plains of Snake river twenty-five miles north of the mouth of the Blackfoot. We found this valley covered with Buffalo, many of which we killed; we remained here until the 5th to dry the meat.

We now separated from the Flatheads, (except a few lodges, who remained with us,) and crossed a mountain to the westward, when we reached a torrent bounding over the rocks in that direction, which we followed for several miles, until it falls into a large one from the southwestward. This we ascended to its source, a small lake, one or two miles in extent, of great depth and perfectly transparent, situated in a hollow corner or cavity on the summit of a mountain. From hence we travelled westward over a harsh rugged pine covered country, destitute of valleys, but abounding with deep ravines, and dark gulfs. The sides of the mountains were often so abrupt that our horses were continually falling down, and frequently fell fifty or sixty feet before they could recover their footing. In some places the fallen pines were so numerous, and withal so interlocked with each other, that we were forced to cut a passage through.

The northern declivities of all these mountains were covered with snow banks, or chaotick masses of snow and rock intermingled, which had fallen from the summits. All the streams that wind through the deep cavities or gulfs between these mountains, are roaring and tumbling torrents, which flow eastward, and fall into Salmon river. Over these mountains, gulfs, ravines and torrents, and a thousand other obstacles we pursued our difficult and toilsome way, often at the imminent hazard of our lives, and compelled often to retrace our weary steps; sometimes journeying above the clouds, and again through passages so deep and dark, that no straggling sunbeam ever pierced their gloom. Thus alternated our course over mountain heights, and through tartarian depths.

## CHAPTER XVIII

After a tedious and toilsome march, we at length encamped on the 13th in a prairie, forming the central portion of a large valley half grown up with lofty pines, which is watered by one of the largest and most westerly of the sources of Salmon river. Here we found a party of "Root Diggers," or Snake Indians without horses. They subsist upon the flesh of elk, deer, and bighorns, and upon salmon which ascend to the fountain sources of this river, and are here taken in great numbers. These they first split and dry, and then pulverize for winter's provision. They often, when unable to procure fish or game, collect large quantities of roots for food, whence their name. We found them extremely anxious to exchange salmon for buffalo meat, of which they are very fond, and which they never procure in this country, unless by purchase of their friends who occasionally come from the plains to trade with them. We have not seen a vestige of buffalo since leaving the valley of Gordiez river.

From observing that many of these Indians were clad with robes and moccasins made of dressed beaver skins, we were induced to believe that the information we had previously received in re-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

gard to the abundance of those animals in this vicinity was true. Our enterprising hunters forthwith engaged one of these Indians to serve as a guide, and set out on a trapping expedition, not doubting but that they should return in a few days with horse loads of fur. Meanwhile such of us as remained to take care of camp, were employed in taking salmon, which was easily effected by driving them up or down the river, over shoals and rapids where we killed them with clubs and stones, and frequently even caught them with our hands.

Our horses were daily so much annoyed by flies, that they were forced to assemble in crowds for their mutual defence, and were seen switching and brushing one another continually with their tails in the most affectionate and friendly manner. Hence I infer that among animals, of an inferior order to man at least - the strongest bands of friendship are forged more by interest than inclination. Our poor beasts from having nothing else to rub against, in the open prairie, were compelled to rub against each other to get rid of their tormenters, and thus necessity forced them to mutual kind offices, and established among them a community of friendly feelings and acts of generosity. Are the ties of social and political union among men often of a more refined and liberal character than that which bound together these poor, fretted animals in an intercourse of mutual amelioration?

At the expiration of ten days our hunters returned with ill success impressed most audibly upon their downcast visages. They reported that their guide conducted them about fifty miles further west and showed them a small group of beaver lodges, from which they caught some thirty of those animals. This accomplished they desired the Indian to proceed. He then led them to the summit of a lofty mountain, overlooking a vast plain watered by several streams, whose borders were garnished with groves of aspen and cottonwood trees, and pointing down with his finger inquired, "Do you see those rivers?" "Yes," returned the trappers, "but are there any beaver there?" "No," answered the Indian, with animation, "but there is abundance of elk." In the first heat of their indignation they could scarcely refrain from killing the poor Indian, who beheld with astonishment their anger at the receipt of information, which in his simplicity he had supposed must give them great delight. A moment's reflection, however, satisfied them that their guide meant well, though he had deceived them sorely. The truth was that the Indian imagining they hunted merely for food, had prepared them what he thought would be a most agreeable surprise, in leading them to where instead of the humble beaver they would find the lordly elk. There was nothing left for them to do but to return to camp, which they did with all expedition, leaving the wandering guide gazing alternately at the inviting prospect spread before him, and at the retreating cavalcade of retiring trappers and vainly striving to read the riddle of their disappointment and departure.

Having thus satisfied ourselves that our visit to this now interesting country was a complete failure, we determined to retrace our steps with the utmost possible despatch to the plains, and make our hunt elsewhere. Accordingly on the 24th we commenced our return travel, (I had almost spelt it with an ai, instead of an e, more, however, for the sake of the truth than a bad pun;) and for some time wandered about in almost every direction, to avoid the numerous obstacles that impeded nearly every step of the way, though our general course was towards the rising sun.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

During our journey, I witnessed the process of cooking "Kamas," a small root about the size of a crab apple, which abounds in many parts of this country, in the rich bottoms that border most of the streams and rivers. The mode of preparing this root, is almost identical with that by which the south sea Islanders cook their cannibal and swinish food, and the west Indians their plantain. The squaws, by whom all the avocations of domestic labour are performed, excavate round holes in the earth two feet deep, and three in diameter, which are then filled with dry wood and stones in alternate layers, and the fuel fired beneath. When the wood consumes the heated stones fall to the bottom, and are then covered with a layer of grass, upon which two or three bushels of kamas roots, according to the capacity of the whole, are placed, and covered with a layer of grass, and the whole coated over with earth, upon which a large fire is kept burning for fifteen hours. Time is then allowed for the kamas to cool, when the hole is opened, and if perfectly done, the roots which were before white, are now of a deep black colour, not disagreeable to the taste, and having something the flavour of liquorice. Thus prepared, the kamas is both edible and nutritious, and forms no inconsiderable item of food with many of the Rocky Mountain tribes.

We found ourselves in the beginning of August, much to our satisfaction again in a level country, and far from the sombre folds of the mountain-wrapping pine in the dense forests of which the brightest day is but a starless twilight, and the fairest evening but a thick and blackened night. We rested from our mountain toils - toils in a double sense - in a beautiful valley twelve miles long, and from four to five broad, intersected by several willow and aspen bordered streams, tributary to Salmon River, which flows through the valley in a northeast direction. The river is here one hundred yards wide, clear, shallow, and arrowy swift. We had a shower of rain on the fourth, the first that has fallen since the middle of June.

On the eleventh, we fell in with the Flatheads, from whom we had parted a month before. Nothing worthy of record had chanced among them since our separation. In the afternoon, two horsemen were observed on a neighbouring bluff, but concealed themselves or fled ere they could be reached by a party of Flathead warriors, who were speedily mounted and in pursuit.

After this period we returned by way of the valley, of the Gordiez river, and little Salmon river to Day's Defile. During our route we saw traces of footmen, and one evening, heard the reports of firearms from a neighboring mountain, but saw no strange Indians, and met with no disaster of consequence. We killed several grizzly bears and a variety of other game. From the head of Day's creek, we crossed a mountain eastward to "Cota's Defile", so named from a man who was shot while performing a sentinel's duty, one dark night, by an Indian. On the 19th we had a snow storm of several hours duration. In the valleys the snow melted as fast as it fell, but the surrounding mountains were whitened with it for two days.

Cota's Defile brought us to the head waters of the east fork of the Salmon river, in an extensive valley, thirty miles long and ten to twelve in breadth. The principal stream is forty paces wide, bordered with willows, and birch and aspen, and flows northwestward fifty miles to Salmon river. From the summit of Cota's defile we saw a dense cloud of smoke rising from the plains forty or

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

fifty miles to the southeastward, which we supposed to have been raised by the Flatheads, who accompanied Fontenelle to Cache Valley, and who were now in quest of the village to which they belong. The Indians with us answered the signal by firing a quantity of fallen pines on the summit of a high mountain.

It may seem to the reader a trifling matter to note the track of footmen, the report of firearms, the appearance of strange horsemen, and the curling vapour of a far off fire, but these are far from trivial incidents in a region of country where the most important events are indicated by such signs only. Every man carries here emphatically his life in his hand, and it is only by the most watchful precaution, grounded upon and guided by the observation of every unnatural appearance however slight, that he can hope to preserve it. The footmark may indicate the vicinity of a war party hovering to destroy; the report of firearms may betray the dangerous neighbourhood of a numerous, well armed, and wily enemy; strange horsemen may be but the outriding scouts of a predatory band at hand and in force to attack; the rising smoke may indeed curl up from the camp of friends or an accidental fire, but it more probably signals the gathering forces of an enemy recruiting their scattered bands for the work of plunder and massacre. Thus every strange appearance becomes an important indication which the ripest wisdom and experience are needful to interpret; and the most studious care and profound sagacity are requisite to make the most advantage from. It is only in this manner that the hunter's life is rendered even comparatively secure, and it is thus that the most trivial occurrence assumes a character of the gravest moment, freighted as it may be with the most alarming and perilous consequences.

## CHAPTER XIX

On the 25th of August we again separated from the Flatheads, except a few lodges which accompanied us wherever we went, and entering a narrow cut in the mountain on the east side of the valley, followed the stream that flows through it to its source, and thence crossing a prairie hill descended into Horse Prairie fifteen miles north of the East Fork valley. Horse Prairie is a pleasant rolling plain fifty or sixty miles in circumference and surrounded by lofty mountains. In the middle of the valley there is a conical rocky mound rising from the plain on the north side of the stream, and directly fronting a high rocky bluff on the opposite side. These elevations, separated by a few hundred feet, at a distance convey the idea of a formidable gateway. The borders of the creeks and rivulets in this valley are scantily adorned with clusters of small willows. The largest of these creeks flows through the valley to the northeastward, and is the most southwesterly source of the Jefferson. The Sho- sho-ne Cove, where Capt. Lewis in advance of the canoes and with one attendant, discovered the first Rocky Mountain Indian whose confidence he endeavored to win by friendly signs and the offering of trinkets, but who, timid as a hare, fled in the mountains westward and crossed the Salmon River, is in this valley.

A trapper of our party by the name of Perkins was fired upon on the 27th from a thicket near which he happened to be passing, but fortunately escaped uninjured, though the ball passed through the left breast of his coat. His horse, alarmed by the sudden report of the gun, sprang

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

forward throwing off by the action his fusil which he was carrying carelessly across his saddle, seeing this an Indian sprang forth instantly from the thicket and pounced upon it, but before he could bring it to bear upon the trapper the latter by dint of whip and spur and a fleet steed had contrived to get beyond his reach. A party of hunters returned with Perkins to the scene of his discomfiture, but the Indians had already taken their departure, and that with such precipitation that several trifling articles were overlooked in their haste and left behind them.

We left Horse Prairie on the last day of the month, and crossing the mountain northwestward, descended into the Big Hole. This is an extensive valley of sixty miles length, and fifteen to twenty broad, bounded on every side by lofty, irregular and picturesque ranges of mountains, the bases of which are girded with dense forests of fir which in some places encroach upon the prairie domain. Above the pine region, the mountains present immense pointed masses of naked rock, hiding their giant heads among the clouds where the eye vainly strives to follow; and often even piercing through the misty realm, where storm spirits hold their frolic revels, so that their gray peaks are often seen flashing and basking in the sun while the thickening vapours below are sending down torrents of rain, and it may be belting their hoary forms with lightning lines of fire, and beating their stolid breasts with blows and bolts of thunder, or darkening the atmosphere with heavy falls of snow and hail. The caverns or gulfs - they are not vales - between these worlds of rock are heaped with the snows of ages.

This valley is watered by innumerable willow-fringed streams that unite and form Wisdom River, which flows a little east of north, and, after leaving the valley, eastward, to its junction with the Jefferson distant eighty miles.

On the first of September I discovered the burrow of a species of beautiful small spotted fox, and wishing to obtain one of their skins, sent an Indian boy to camp for a brand of fire designing, if possible, to drive them out by the aid of smoke. The careless boy scattered a few sparks in the prairie, which, the dry grass almost instantly igniting, was soon wrapped in a mantle of flame. A light breeze from the south carried it with rapidity down the valley, sweeping everything before it, and filling the air with black clouds of smoke. Our absent trappers returned at full speed, expecting to find camp attacked or at least the horses stolen, but were agreeably disappointed on learning the real nature of the accident. It however occasioned us no inconsiderable degree of uneasiness as we were now on the borders of the Blackfoot country, and had frequently seen traces of small parties, who it was reasonably inferred might be collected by the smoke, which is their accustomed rallying signal, in sufficient force to attack us. Our party consisted of thirty armed men, a mere handful when compared to the prairie-reddening parties of Blackfeet which are often seen here. Clouds of smoke were observed on the following day curling up from the summit of a mountain jutting into the east side of the valley, probably raised by the Blackfeet to gather their scattered bands, though the truth was never more clearly ascertained.

We were detained on the tenth, by a storm of snow which covered the earth to the depth of several inches, but disappeared on the following night. During our stay at this encampment we found the petrified trunk of a large cedar half imbedded in the earth. Next day we left the Big Hole by

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

its northern extremity and crossed a mountain to the Deer Horse Plains. This is a valley somewhat larger than the Big Hole, and like that surrounded by mountains, generally however low, barren and naked, except to the south and east where lofty and snowclad peaks appear. All the streams by which it is intersected are decorated with groves and thickets of aspen, birch and willow, and occasional clusters of currant and gooseberry bushes. The bottoms are rich and verdant, and are resorted to by great numbers of deer and elk. The several streams unite and form "La Riviere des pierres a fleches," (Arrow Stone River,) thus named from a kind of semi-transparent stone found near it, formerly much used by the Indians for making points of arrows. This river is one of the sources of Clark's River, and flows through the valley to the northeastward. The valley owes its singular but appropriate name to a natural curiosity situated near the river a few miles from the eastern side. The curiosity referred to is a semi-spherical mound some fifty paces in circumference and fifteen feet high, rather flattened at top, and covered with turf and a sickly growth of yellow grass. There are several cavities in the highest part of the mound, the largest measuring a foot in diameter, in all of which water is seen boiling a few inches below the surface. The earth is heated but not to such a degree as to prevent vegetation, except about immediate edges of the cavities. This mound, like those on Snake River, has been evidently self-formed by continual deposits of calcareous cement, hardened to the consistence of rock. How the soil came upon its summit is matter of inquiry, perhaps by the encroachments and decay of the creeping vegetation of years. The ground about its base is low and marshy, and several transparent pools of tepid water near by, are famous resorts for bathing by the Indians. These waters are slightly impregnated with salt, which quality renders the place attractive to deer, and it is seldom without visitors of this description. Animals as well as men have their favourite (not to say fashionable,) watering places, and this is one of them. Clouds of vapour are continually emanating from the mound, which at a distance on a clear cold morning might readily be mistaken for smoke, - the mound itself has much the resemblance of an Indian Cabin, and hence which the name by the valley is designated. The water within the mound is so hot one cannot bear a finger in it for a moment. The presence of sulphur is shown by the unmistakable, and any thing but fragrant smell of the vapour.

On entering the Deer House Plains we were alarmed by the cry of Indians from the advance guard of the party, but almost as quickly freed from apprehension by the arrival of a Pen-d'orielle, who gave us to understand, that one hundred lodges of his tribe lay encamped eight miles below. - Early next day they removed their quarters and took up a position in the immediate vicinity of our own, when we ascertained that they were on their way from the Flathead Trading House of the Hudson Bay Company to buffalo, and were living upon a mixed diet of roots and expectations, the latter in much the larger proportion - plainly they were nearly starving. It is a well ascertained fact, that buffalo confine their range to the eastern side of an imaginary line commencing at the south on the west side of the Arkansas, in about Latitude 38 north and Longitude 28 west from Washington, and running thence around the headwaters of the Arkansas, crossing the sources of the Rio Grande, Blue River (its principal branch) and Salt River, then turning from north to west in a nearly direct course - crossing Green River above the mouth of Ashley's Fork, - to the Big Lake at the mouth of Bear River, thence crossing Salt River a short distance below the junction of Porte Neuf, and through the sources of Salmon River to a point in Latitude 44E40' north, and Longitude 33E20' west or nearly, thence around the sources of Clark's River on the

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

east, and thence in a north west direction west of the Missouri, and its principal sources to Lat. 49 north and Longitude 34E20' west, where it passes the limit of my observation and inquiries to the northward. East of this line they range back and forth across the great plains of the Mississippi and Missouri, retiring towards the mountains in the winter, and in spring spreading themselves over the vast prairies, and almost blackening the waste by their countless numbers, from the Pawnee hunting ground, to the far off ranges of the Rocky Mountains.

As the line described almost skirts the Deer House Plains buffalo are seldom found west of this valley, and rarely even here, which was now the case. Indeed we have seen none since leaving the east fork of the Salmon River, though Horse Prairie is a famous resort for them, and they sometimes penetrate to the Big Hole.

We were annoyed almost beyond endurance by the hundreds of famishing dogs belonging to the Indians. They devoured every leathern article that lay within reach, even to the bull-hide thongs, with which we fastened our horses. We were compelled to keep guard by turns or risk the entire loss of our baggage, their depredations were so bold and incessant. I performed my watch at the salient angle of our tent, armed with an axe, which I hurled among them without respect to "mongrel, puppy, whelp or hound," and not infrequently sent some of them back yelping a serenade of pain to their sleeping masters. Once, however, on returning with the axe which I had thrown unusually far, I discovered a scury cur, coolly trotting off with my saddle bags, which the rascal had stolen from within the protection of the tent. It is needless to say that I pursued and recovered them, but ere I could return to my post, I perceived three large fellows marching leisurely homeward, with a bale of dried meat, weighing not less than forty pounds. Grounding an inference hereupon that in spite of the axe and my utmost efforts they would prove victorious, I thought it advisable to let my manhood take care of itself, and call up my dreaming companions. No sooner said than done, when we called a council of war, and deeming discretion with such an enemy the better part of valour, we suspended all our baggage in a tree that overhung the tent, and went to rest without apprehension of the consequences. In the morning we found every thing safe as we had left it, while our less careful neighbours were seen busily collecting the scattered relics of the night's devastation. One of them lost above forty dollars' worth of furs, and another, a jolly old Frenchman, drew his pipe from his teeth to swear with more emphasis that the scoundrelly dogs had devoured his axe.

## CHAPTER XX

We departed southeastward for the Jefferson River on the morning of the fifteenth, accompanied by all the Indians; and picturesque enough was the order and appearance of our march. Fancy to yourself, reader, three thousand horses of every variety of size and colour, with trappings almost as varied as their appearance, either packed or ridden by a thousand souls from squalling infancy to decrepid age, their persons fantastically ornamented with scarlet coats, blankets of all colours, buffalo robes painted with hideous little figures, resembling grasshoppers quite as much as men for which they were intended, and sheep-skin dresses garnished with porcupine quills, beads,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

hawk bells, and human hair. Imagine this motley collection of human figures, crowned with long black locks gently waving in the wind, their faces painted with vermilion, and yellow ochre. Listen to the rattle of numberless lodgepoles trained by packhorses, to the various noises of children screaming, women scolding, and dogs howling. Observe occasional frightened horses running away and scattering their lading over the prairie. See here and there groups of Indian boys dashing about at full speed, sporting over the plain, or quietly listening to traditionary tales of battles and surprises, recounted by their elder companions. Yonder see a hundred horsemen pursuing a herd of antelopes, which sport and wind before them conscious of superior fleetness,- there as many others racing towards a distant mound, wild with emulation and excitement, and in every direction crowds of hungry dogs chasing and worrying timid rabbits, and other small animals. Imagine these scenes, with all their bustle, vociferation and confusion, lighted by the flashes of hundreds of gleaming gun-barrels, upon which the rays of a fervent sun are playing, a beautiful level prairie, with dark blue snow-capped mountains in the distance for the locale, and you will have a faint idea of the character and aspect of our march, as we followed old Guignon (French for bad-luck) the Flathead or rather the Pen-d'oreille chief slowly over the plains, on the sources of Clark's River. Exhibitions of this description are so common to the country that they scarcely elicit a passing remark, except from some comparative stranger.

Next day we separated into two parties, one of which entered a cut in the mountains southward, while the other (of which was I,) continued on southeastward, and on the 17th crossed a mountain to a small stream tributary to the Jefferson. In the evening a Pen-d'oreille from the other division, joined us and reported that he had seen traces of a party of footmen, apparently following our trail. We ourselves saw during our march, the recent encampment of a band of horsemen, and other indications of the vicinity of probable foes. Pursuing our route, on the following day we reached and descended into the valley of the Jefferson twenty-five miles below the forks. This valley extended below us fifteen or twenty miles to the northward, where the river bending to the East, enters a narrow passage in the mountain between walls of cut rock. The plains are from two to five miles in breadth, and are covered with prickly pear, - immediately bordering the river are broad fertile bottoms, studded with cottonwood trees. The River is about one hundred yards wide, is clear, and has a gentle current,- its course is northward till it leaves the valley. We found the plains alive with buffalo, of which we killed great numbers, and our camp was consequently once more graced with piles of meat, which gave it something the appearance of a well stored market place. From starvation to such abundance the change was great, and the effect was speedily apparent. Indians, children, and dogs lay sprawling about, scarcely able to move, so gorged were they with the rich repast, the first full meal which they had, perhaps, enjoyed for weeks. The squaws alone were busy, and they having all the labour of domestic duty to perform, are seldom idle. Some were seen seated before their lodges with buffalo skins spread out before them, to receive the fat flakes of meat they sliced for drying. Others were engaged in procuring fuel, preparing scaffolds, and making other preparations for curing and preserving the fortunate supply of provisions thus obtained. Even the children were unusually quiet and peaceable, and all would have been exempt from care or uneasiness, had not the unslumbering cautiousness of the veteran braves discovered traces of lurking enemies.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

On the morning of the 19th several of our men returned from their traps, bearing the dead body of Frasier, one of our best hunters, who went out the day previous to set his trap, and by his not returning at night, excited some alarm for his safety. His body was found in the Jefferson, about five miles below camp, near a trap, which it is supposed he was in the act of setting when fired upon. He was shot in the thigh and through the neck, and twice stabbed in the breast. His body was stripped, and left in the water, but unscalped. - In the afternoon we dug his grave with an axe and frying pan, the only implements we had that could be employed to advantage in this melancholy task, and prepared for the sad ceremony of committing to the earth the remains of a comrade, who but yestermorn was among us in high health, gay, cheerful, thoughtless, and dreaming of nothing but pleasure and content in the midst of relations and friends. Having no coffin, nor the means to make one, we covered his body in a piece of new scarlet cloth, around which a blanket and several buffalo robes were then wrapped and lashed firmly. The body thus enveloped was carefully laid in the open grave, and a wooden cross in token of his catholic faith placed upon his breast. Then there was a pause. The friends and comrades of the departed trapper gathered around to shed the silent tear of pity and affection over a companion so untimely cut off; and the breeze as if in sympathy with their sorrow, sighed through the leaves and branches of an aged cottonwood, which spread its hoary and umbrageous arms above his last resting place, as though to protect it from intrusion; while in contrast with this solemnity merry warblers skipped lightly from limb to limb, tuning their little pipes to lively strains, unmindful of the touching and impressive scene beneath. At length the simple rite was finished, the grave closed, and with saddened countenances and heavy hearts the little herd of mourners retired to their respective lodges, where more than one of our ordinarily daring and thoughtless hunters, thus admonished of the uncertainty of life, held serious self-communion, and perhaps resolved to make better preparations for an event that might come at almost any moment, after which there can be no repentance. But it may be doubted if these resolutions were long remembered. They soon recovered their light heartedness, and were as indifferent, reckless, and mercurial as ever. - Frasier was an Iroquois from St. Regis, in Upper Canada. He left that country seventeen years before, having with many others engaged in the service of the Norwest Company, and came to the Rocky Mountains. Subsequently he joined the American hunters, married a squaw by whom he had several children, purchased horses and traps, and finally as one of the Freemen led an independent and roving life. He could read and write in his own language, was upright and fair in all his dealings, and very generally esteemed and respected by his companions.

It commenced raining in the afternoon of the following day, and continued without intermission during the night. Taking advantage of the storm and darkness, a party of Blackfeet boldly entered our lines, and cut loose several horses from the very centre of the camp. An alarm having been given the Flathead chief arose and harranged his followers, calling upon them to get up and prepare to oppose their enemies, not doubting but that an attack would be made at day break. When he had concluded, a Blackfoot chief, who last summer deserted from his people and joined the Flatheads, in a loud voice and in his native tongue, invited all who were lurking about camp, to come in and help themselves to whatever horses they had a mind to, asserting that as the whites and Flatheads were all asleep, there could be no hazard in the undertaking. Scarcely had he done speaking, when the Blackfeet, to testify their gratitude and appreciation of this disin-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

terested advice fired a volley upon him. Fortunately, however, no one was injured by the firing, though several lodges were perforated by their balls. In the morning we were early on the alert, but the Blackfeet had all departed, taking with them seven or eight of our best horses. As there was no help for it, we had to put up with the loss, and the next day having finished drying meat, we struck our tents, and departed southward up the Jefferson.

Previous to our reaching this river we had exacted a promise from the Indians to accompany us to the three forks of the Missouri, but since the death of Frasier they refused to fulfill their engagement, asserting that we shall certainly fall in with a village of Blackfeet, who will dispute with us every inch of ground, and thus render the expedition to no purpose, for trappers would forget their employment when death was grinning at them from every tree and cluster of willows. Our route was therefore necessarily somewhat changed, and on the 23rd we reached the Philanthropy, and halted two or three miles from its mouth. This is a deep muddy stream thirty paces in breadth, flowing for the last twelve or fifteen miles of its course through an open valley, and finally discharging itself into the Jefferson, which it enters from the northeast, a short distance from Wisdom River, a branch proceeding from the Big Hole. All these streams are bordered by fine grass bottoms, and groves of trees and willows. Six miles above the forks, on the west side of the Jefferson, there is a bluff or point of a high plain jutting into the valley to the brink of the river, which bears some resemblance to a beaver's head, and goes by that name. Hence the plains of the Jefferson are sometimes called the Valley of Beaver Head. These plains are everywhere covered with prickly pear, which constitutes one of the greatest evils - Indians aside - that we have to encounter in this country where moccasins are universally worn. The thorns of the prickly pear are sharp as needles, and penetrate our feet through the best of moccasins; they are extremely painful and often difficult to extract. In the evening we were joined by a Nezperce Indian who brought intelligence that the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were encamped in the Big Hole.

## CHAPTER XXI

On the 24th we moved up the Philanthropy a few miles, and killed numbers of buffalo, which were numerous in all directions. In the afternoon a party of strange mounted Indians came into the plain in pursuit of a herd of buffalo, but discovering our camp fled precipitately to the mountains. We were joined in the evening by twenty-five lodges of Nezperces. For several days nothing of interest occurred. On the 27th we followed the course of the river through a narrow defile of a mile in length, and descended into an open valley which we found covered with buffalo. The old chief immediately encamped and desired that no person should leave camp for that day, but remain and rest the horses, as by so doing they would be able to hunt the buffalo the next morning to much better advantage. His directions were complied with, as it was necessary to lay in a supply of meat for future use, and with fresh horses much greater execution could be done than if they were fatigued. The doomed bisons were therefore allowed a few hours respite.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

An Indian about noon brought us a note from Jervais, a partner in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, stating that he was left with three men to trade with the Nezperces; that his partners had gone northwest to hunt the sources of Clark's River, and that Fitzpatrick, one of the partners in that Company, had been killed on his way to St. Louis with one companion the spring previous. Fraeb, who was with Jervais the fall before, left Cache valley in August for St. Louis in order to bring out an equipment next spring. The object of the note was to inform our Freemen where little conveniences could be procured in exchange for furs. In the course of the afternoon a party of horsemen boldly entered the valley, but quickly perceiving the danger fled for their lives. The Flatheads were speedily mounted and in pursuit, but with the exception of one who was overtaken and killed, they gained the mountains in safety. During the night a fire was kindled on the neighbouring mountain, and we heard the reports of several guns in that direction, but the Indians did not approach our camp.

On the 28th we passed the body of an Indian killed the day before, and the squaws agreeable to an ancient custom, gave it repeated blows as they went by. It was totally naked, scalped, and pinned to the ground by an arrow through the heart. Beside it lay a half worn garment, in which we recognized the pantaloons worn by Richards when he was killed in the spring. It was hence conjectured that this Blackfoot had a hand in the murder. If so the bloody deed was in part avenged, for his bones were left to moulder here, as were those of poor Richards near Kamas prairie. A party of our trappers, to day, a few miles from camp, discovered an Indian on the summit of a mound who beckoned them to come to him, and disappeared behind the hill. They wisely declined a more intimate acquaintance, and returned to camp without further investigation. It was probably a decoy to an ambush.

After laying in a sufficient store of dried buffalo meat, we passed southward, over ranges of prairie hills to a small stream that flows into the Jefferson below the Rattle Snake cliffs. There the Indians left us on the third of October, and we, continuing our journey, passed down the stream to its mouth, and thence up the Jefferson through the Rattle Snake Cliffs to the forks where Lewis and Clark left their canoes. One of these streams rises with the sources of the Madison and Kamas Creek, and flows northwestward to its junction with the other, which has its rise in Horse Prairie. Ascending the latter two miles above its mouth, we entered Horse Prairie at a narrow gap between two high points of plains. Here we found the Flatheads from whom we separated on the east fork of Salmon River, with the trader Jervais and several "engages," (hired men.)

On the 8th two of our men accompanied by three or four Indians departed for the Trois Tetons, to meet Mr. Dripps who was expected this fall from the Council Bluffs, with an equipment of men, horses, and merchandise. The same day two Indians came to us from the band which left us on the third. They stated that a large party of mounted Blackfeet came near them on the sixth, but departed without firing a gun, probably awed by their numbers. We left Horse Prairie on the eleventh, and crossed the mountains westward to the east fork of Salmon River, following the same trail that guided Lewis and Clark there so many years before Us. Here we fell in with another village of Nezperces, whom we had not before seen. Accompanied by these Indians we continued down Salmon River to the forks, about twenty miles, and thence six or eight miles to an abrupt

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

bend westward where the river, leaving the valley enters a dark passage through rugged mountains, impassable for horsemen. The valley of the Salmon River is separated from the Big Hole, to which we crossed, by a mountain capped with a succession of bleak points of naked granite, the stern majesty of which makes an impression upon the beholder such as few scenes of earthly grandeur can equal.

On the 29th the Rocky Mountain Fur Company returned, having finished their hunt on the waters of the Missouri without molestation from the Indians. Shortly after leaving Cache valley, however, they were attacked on the Blackfoot by a large party of the enemy. The attack was made at day break, immediately after the horses were turned loose, which was unusually early. It was still so dark that neither party could see the sights on their guns, and hence they overshot each other, doing little mischief on either side. As soon as the firing commenced, the horses broke into camp and were refastened to their pickets. The Indians, finding that they should get nothing by fighting, resolved to try what could be effected by begging. A party then marched coolly up to camp and announced themselves Creas. "They said," says my informant, "that they mistook us for Snakes and professed to be very sorry that they had commenced firing before ascertaining who we really were. Not a few of us raised our guns to punish their unparalleled impudence, but were restrained by our leaders, who believed or affected to believe their improbable story. We ascertained from them that the party was composed of one hundred Blackfeet and thirty-three Creas, and that several of them were slightly wounded in the fray. Our leaders made them a present, and suffered them to depart in peace much against the wishes of some of our exasperated men. Two of our trappers, who were absent from camp at the time of the attack never returned, and were doubtless killed by them. This occurred on the 15th of August."

On the 19th of the same month, four men (D. Carson, H. Phelps, Thos. Quigley and J. M. Hunter) left camp in Gray's Hole, and proceeded down Gray's Creek, in quest of beaver, about fifteen miles; during the time occupied in going this distance, they had set all their traps, and found the day too far spent, to look for a safe encampment, which is a rare thing here at best; however they halted near the brink of the river, where the margin was partially decked with here and there a lone cluster of willows, or birch, with some few intervening rose briars. The bottom or level margin of the river, extended but a few paces from the water's edge, and was there terminated by abrupt rocky hills, of considerable height, overlooking the bottoms, as well as the surrounding country, to a great distance. "We lay as much concealed as possible, in such an open place," says one of these men, whose account was corroborated by all the others; "and passed the night without disturbance; but just at day break, our ears were saluted with the shrill noise of the warrior's whistle, quickly answered by the re-echoing yells of a multitude of Indians, who were rushing upon us. We sprang from our beds, and in a twinkling one of our guns was discharged in their faces, which somewhat dampened their ardour, and they fell back a few paces; at the same time we sprang into the best position, the place afforded; the Indians re-appeared the next instant, and poured showers of lead and arrows around us. We saw no means of avoiding death, but resolved to sell our lives as dearly as possible. We mutually encouraged each other, and resolved if practicable, to fire but one gun at a time and wait until it was reloaded before firing again, unless the Indians should rush upon us, in which case we were to single out each one his man and send them

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

before us to eternity. In short, each time they approached, the foremost was made to bite the dust, and the others fled precipitately; they were recalled, however, by the animated voice of a chieftain, who induced them to charge, time after time, upon us, but each time they advanced, the dying groans of a companion so completely unmanned them, that they fell back, again and again. At length, finding that they could not dislodge us, they fired upon and killed our restless horses, who were fastened a few paces from us, save one, which broke loose, and fell into their hands alive. In the mean time, others commenced throwing stones which fell thick around us, but fortunately did us no injury. After some time they departed, and ascended a high rocky hill some distance from us, where one of them stepped out before the rest, waved his robe five times in the air and dropped it to the ground, he then took it and disappeared with the others behind the hill. We immediately collected our blankets, saddles, &c. together with some articles the Indians had left, and concealed them as well as we could, intending to return for them, and set out for camp, which we reached without accident the same evening.”

Early the next morning, a strong party set out with these men, to aid them in collecting their traps and baggage, but the Indians had already carried off every thing. They examined the battle ground and found several places where the ground was soaked with blood, and wads of buffalo wool were strewed about clogged with blood, with which they had stopped their wounds; trains of blood likewise marked the route of the fugitives, to twenty four stone pens where they had slept, which were mostly covered with proofs of the number of dead or wounded, that had lain in them. The persons, who visited the place, say that they cannot conceive how four men could be placed so as to escape death, where they were situated. The ground was literally ploughed up by balls, and all acknowledge that it was one of the most extraordinary escapes, ever heard of. The Indians were the same who attacked camp on the 15th. There were one hundred and thirty-three of them. The battle lasted from day break until ten o'clock, and these men fired about thirty shots, most of which were supposed to have taken effect.

## CHAPTER XXII

A day or two after the arrival of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, our men who were despatched about a month since to meet Dripps, returned, and reported that he had not reached the place appointed, but that Fraeb, who started for St. Louis last summer, fell in with Fitzpatrick, on the Platte, at the head of thirty men with pack horses. Fraeb immediately headed the expedition, which he was now conducting to this place, whilst Fitzpatrick returned to St. Louis, to bring out an equipment in the spring.

This last enterprising gentleman, departed in the month of February last, though necessarily exposed to every privation and hardship, to cross the whole extent of that immense plain, from the Rocky Mountains to the state of Missouri; which must needs be performed on foot, and a great part of the way on snow shoes, at that dreary season of the year. So hardy was this enterprise esteemed, that it was a matter of considerable speculation, among the brave Mountaineers, whether he would reach his place of destination, or not! He had promised, in case he should reach that

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

place in safety; to bring an equipment to his partners in Cache Valley by or before the first of July. They awaited his arrival a month after the time had expired, and the opinion became universal, that he had been killed, or perished on the way. He reached the settlements, after a series of sufferings, and ascertained that his patrons Smith, Sublette, and Jackson, had left the state of Missouri two days before with a large assortment of goods for Santa Fe.

Notwithstanding the fatigue our traveller had already undergone, he immediately procured a horse, and again entered the uninhabited prairies in pursuit of his friends, whom he overtook after several days hard riding. They persuaded him to go on with them to New Mexico, promising to give him an equipment at Toas, which would not be more than twenty days march from Cache Valley, whither he could arrive in time to meet his companions in the month of July.

Several days after his arrival among them, the party was charged upon by several hundred Comanche Indians; however, they were so terrified at the discharge of a six pounder, that they fled in alarm and adjourned the attack sine die. Shortly after this, one of the leaders of the party, Mr. Jerediah Smith, (a gentleman, whose life for several years in the Rocky Mountains, was a constant series of bold adventures, defeats, narrow escapes, and attendant miseries,) was killed during a lone excursion in search of water, for want of which, the party suffered two days, a thirst rising nearly to madness. A young man, employed by the company as clerk, whose name I did not learn, was likewise killed about the same time.

A few days after the last event, a large party of "Gross Ventry of the Prairie," encamped around them, but betrayed no evil intentions. The Chief said that he had buried all his resentment towards the whites, and should never annoy them any more. Probably the appearance of one hundred men, well armed, in a camp well fortified by the waggons and baggage added to the ever primed big gun continually pointed towards them, produced this salutary, though perhaps temporary effect.

The party reached Toas, on the Rio del Norte; and Fitzpatrick having received his equipment, departed for the mountains; but being unacquainted with the route, and having no guide, he missed his way, and fell on to the Platte, where he met with Fraeb as before mentioned. Fraeb met also on that river with a party of fifty men, led by a Capt. Ghant. They were all on foot, and led about their own number of pack horses, and were destined for the mountains.

Two days after our express returned, three others of our men who were confident that Dripps would come on this fall, set off to meet him. Fraeb arrived one or two days after their departure, and camp presented a confused scene of rioting, and debauchery for several days, after which however, the kegs of alcohol were again bunged, and all became tranquil.

The men provided themselves with lodges, and made preparation for passing the winter as comfortable as possible. We purchased all the dried meat the Indians could spare, together with robes, and "appishimous" (square pieces of robes, used under our saddles in travelling, or under our beds in camp,) in addition to our former stock of bedding. Our arrangements completed, we

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

had nothing to do, but to make the time pass as easily as possible. We assembled at each others lodges, and spent the evening merrily, by listening to good humoured stories, and feasting on the best the country afforded, with the frequent addition of a large kettle of coffee, and cakes.

On the 6th of November, one of the three men who departed sometime since, to meet Dripps; returned, and reported that himself and comrades had been east of Snake River, but, that during their journey, they had seen several war parties of foot Indians who pursued them until they finally resolved to return, fearing that they would discover their encampment some night, and steal their horses, if not their lives. On the evening of the third day of their journey homeward they encamped in a dense thicket of willows, on the east fork of Salmon River, where they imagined themselves quite secure; but the following morning, a rustling of leaves and brushes, betrayed the approach of something unusual. They immediately sprang from their beds, and by this movement, discovered their place of concealment to the wary Indians, who now commenced firing upon them. One of them Baptiste Menard, was soon severely wounded in his thigh, and his groans served to increase the ardour of the enemy, who now pressed forward with resolution; but the first who presented himself was sent to the other world, by a well directed shot, which at once put an end to the action. The Indians lost all their courage with their friend, and immediately departed, taking the horses with them. After they were gone, our men conveyed their wounded comrade a mile or two, to a place of more security, and remained until dark, when my informant departed to get assistance from camp. He had not proceeded far, however, when the Indians discovered him, and gave chase, but he escaped in a thicket of willows; and thence continued his progress, without interruption, until he reached camp, which he did the next evening; having walked fifty miles since he left his companions. The morning after his return, a party of volunteers set out for the wounded man and his companions and returned with them on the third day afterwards. This man Menard, was shot in the hip and the bones so fractured that he remained a cripple for life.

About this time, a large party of Flatheads, and others, departed for buffalo, promising to return in the coming moon. Two or three days after, one of them returned with the news, that they had recovered some stolen horses from a party of Blackfeet, and taken two of their scalps. On the 21st of December, two men from Mr. Work's party, (Hudson Bay Company) arrived and stated that Mr. Work was encamped two day's journey above, on the east fork. They had been to Beaver Head, and were continually harrassed by the Blackfeet, who killed two of them, and severely wounded a third. They killed, however, several of the enemy, and captured a number of horses. They saw the body of a man in the Jefferson River, below Beaver Head, which our hunters believed to be the body of Frazier, whom we had buried there.

On the 23rd we separated from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and passed southward up Salmon River, to the western extremity of little Salmon River valley, forty miles above the entrance of the east fork.

The river was all the way confined by lofty mountains on either side, and numerous points jutting into it, rendered the journey extremely toilsome, for our jaded horses. However, our difficulties

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

ended when we entered the valley, though we continued twenty miles up it, and encamped with a few lodges of Flatheads, on the 3d of January 1832. In this valley we killed upwards of an hundred head of buffalo, which were numerous for sometime after we arrived. Heretofore the weather has been warm, and pleasant during the day time, but the nights extremely cold. The rivers have been frozen for a month past, but the valleys are still free from snow.

I departed with three others on the 25th, to procure some trifling articles from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. We returned down Salmon River, and reached a village of Nezperce Indians, late in the evening of the second day, with whom we remained one night. The hospitable Indian I chanced to stay with, treated me with great kindness, and contrary to my expectation refused any remuneration whatever. From him I learned that the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were encamped twenty miles above, on the east fork, together with forty or fifty lodges of Flatheads, and Nezperce's. We continued our journey the next morning, and reached them late in the afternoon. They were encamped opposite to a pass to Horse Prairie, well known to the Blackfeet, who had lately stolen twenty horses, and fled by that route to the Missouri.

The second evening after we arrived, soon after dark, a party of Blackfeet approached camp, and several of them boldly entered, at different points, cutting loose our horses in their way. One of them mounted a beautiful horse, and slowly rode through both encampments. During his progress he was challenged by the guard, but gave the usual Flat Head answer and passed on; soon after his departure, the owner of the horse discovered that he was missing, and imagining that he had broken loose, departed with a companion in quest of him. They proceeded silently about fifty yards from camp, and met a Blackfoot who came running up to them, thinking they were some of his comrades; but quickly discovered his mistake and fled. They brought him to the ground, however, by a well-directed shot, and about twenty others immediately sprang up from the sage, and fled into the woods bordering the river. The Flat Heads raised the scalp of the dead Indian, by cutting around the edge of the hair and pulling off the entire skin of the head from the ears up. The taking, or raising of a scalp is done in this way, by all the mountain tribes. We ascertained next morning that the Blackfeet had taken seven or eight horses. The Indian killed, as stated above, was a tall, bold-featured, handsome fellow, unusually white, and about twenty-two years of age.

Two days after this affair, an express arrived from Mr. Work's party, who were at this time with a large band of Pen-d'oreilles, at Beaver Head; they had lost several horses, which were stolen by the Blackfeet, and had hemmed up a body of those Indians, so that neither party could injure the other; but could yet talk freely on both sides. The Blackfeet stated that the white chief, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone River, (McKensie of the A.M.F. Co.) had built a trading house at the mouth of the Maria; and had already supplied the Blackfeet, with one hundred and sixty guns and plenty of ammunition; and they were now, only awaiting the arrival of a large band of Blood Indians from the north, to commence a general war of extermination of all the whites, Flat Heads and others in this part of the country. The day after the express arrived, I departed with my companions, and reached our own quarters without accident about the third or fourth of February.

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

## CHAPTER XXIII

The fine valley in which our camp was situated, is thirty miles long, and twelve broad; it is intersected by willowed streams, and large bottoms, covered with rich pasturage, hence it is a favourite resort for both deer and buffalo. The only trees are a few orchard-like groves in the head of the valley, and pines of every variety, on the abrupt sides of the surrounding mountains. The principal stream flows northwestward into Salmon River, which runs northward through the lower extremity of the valley. On the 9th of February, we passed up to the head of the valley and left the Indians, who had hitherto accompanied us behind. Previous to this time, we had scarcely seen a particle of snow in this valley; but we were now detained, by a snow storm of four days continuance, which left the lowlands covered to the depth of one foot. However on the 15th we passed through Day's defile, where we found the snow two feet deep, and covered with an icy crust that cut our horses' legs so that they bled profusely. We proceeded slowly, and employed our best horses successively to break the road, until we reached a small patch of willow on Day's Creek in view of the plains of Snake River. The day was intensely cold, and many of us frost bitten, notwithstanding we had taken the precaution to envelope ourselves with blankets, and buffalo robes. At this evening's encampment, we found nothing but small willows for fuel, and even a scarcity of them. At midnight we were brought to our feet by the cry of Indians, and sprang out to our horses, twenty-five of which were missing. We saw several pairs of snow shoes, and as many packed dogs, but the Indians had vanished with our horses, and the night was so extremely cold, that no person could be induced to follow them, though we had every reason to believe that they could be soon overtaken. Many of our companions intended to set out in pursuit at day break, but the drifting snow so completely erased all trace of the robbers, that no one could designate the course they had taken.

After this period, we continued slowly down the extremity of Day's Creek, whence we were in full view of the Trois Tetons; the three buttes of Snake River, and the mountains east of the river. The three buttes of Snake River, are three gigantic, solitary, or isolated mounds, rising from the plains, midway from Snake River, near the mouth of Porteneuf, to the mountains northward. They are fifteen or twenty miles asunder, and the most westerly richly deserve the name of mountain. It is covered with pines, abounds with big horns, and is crowned with snow almost the year around.

From the extremity of Day's Creek, we continued southward in the direction of the middle butte, fifteen miles to Gordiez River, which was quite dry when we reached it. There were several cotton wood trees scattered along the margin, but none of those long grass bottoms, common to other streams are to be found here: in lieu of them a sandy uneven plain appears, covered with black rocks, and wormwood, extending as far as the eye can reach, and likewise covered with pools of water from the melting snow, which is rapidly disappearing. We saw near the margin of the river, the trail of an Indian village that had passed two or three days since to the westward. Fifteen of our party immediately set out in pursuit of them, hoping to hear something of our stolen horses. The following day we passed under the south side of the middle butte, and encamped in a large grove of cedars, two miles from Gordiez River. The next day we continued about the same dis-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

tance, and halted in the sage on the open plains. We saw large herds of buffalo during our march, and killed several, which to our surprise, were as fat as they generally are in the summer season. In the evening, two hundred Indians passed our camp, on their way to the village, which was situated on the lower butte. They were Ponacks, as they are called by the hunters, or Po-nah-ke as they call themselves. They were generally mounted on poor jaded horses, and were illy clad with shirts and leggins, of dirty torn or patched skins, moccasins made of buffalo skins, and old buffalo robes, half divested of hair, loosely thrown over the shoulders, and fastened by a string around the middle. They were generally ugly, and made a wretched appearance, illy comparing with their bold, handsome and well clad neighbours, the Flatheads. They gave us to understand, that a party of whites were now in Cache valley. On further enquiry, we were satisfied that it could be none other than Dripps, who we supposed had got thus far, on his way to Salmon River last fall, but was prevented from continuing his journey, by the bad condition of his horses, and almost total want of grass on the route.

The next day we reached Snake River, opposite to the mouth of Blackfoot. The same evening the party of fifteen who left us on Gordiez River, returned, having gained no information of their horses. They went to the village of Ponacks at the western butte, and represent them to be miserable, in the superlative sense of the word.

On the 4th of March we crossed the river on the ice, and encamped near the mouth of Blackfoot. The plains are now entirely free from snow, though they are not dry. On the 5th John Gray and David Montgomery, departed for cache valley, to ascertain if Dripps was there, or not. A day or two afterwards, the Ponacks came and encamped a short distance below us. On the 10th we left our thriving neighbourhood, and halted at a spring east of Porteneuf: - the same evening two of our hunters brought in Gray, (one of two men who left us on the 5th) whom they found lying half dead in the cedars, near Porteneuf. He gave us the following account of his unfortunate trip to Cache Valley.

“We proceeded,” said he, “by way of the south fork of Porteneuf to Cache Valley, without accident, and sought throughout the northern extremity, for traces of the whites, but were unable to find the least evidence of their having been there at any time during the winter. Hence we concluded, that the story told to us by the Ponacks, was a falsehood invented solely to draw from us a present, which is usually given to Indians on the receipt of good news. This conviction added to numberless traces of foot Indians, that appeared wherever we went, induced us to return back to camp with the least possible delay. In the afternoon of the 8th we discovered a small herd of buffalo, and succeeded in killing one of them, after firing several ineffectual shots. Our appetites had been quickened by two days starvation, which urged the adoption of bold and prompt measures. We quickly secured the tongue, with other choice pieces, and proceeded in quest of fuel, at a rapid pace. During our progress, we saw what greatly resembled an Indian, laying upon the ground, with his buffalo robe thrown over him. We hesitated a moment, but concluded it to be the carcase of a buffalo, and continued on. At length, we reached a small lake, which is the source of the south fork of Porteneuf. It had been frozen over in the early part of the winter, and was since covered with water to the depth of one foot, which was encrusted with a sheet of ice, though not

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

strong enough to bear one. Near the margin, were several clusters of large willows, which were now surrounded by ice and water; they supplied us with fuel, which we conveyed to the bank, beyond the reach of the water, and kindled a fire, by which we roasted and devoured our meat, with tiger-like voracity, until our hunger was allayed.

“By this time the sun was disappearing behind the western hills, and being fully aware of the danger of remaining in such an open place all night, I remarked to Montgomery that we had better saddle our horses, and proceed down the creek, until after dark, and pass the night in some of the groves of cedars which were scattered along the entrance of ravines, in our route. He objected to this measure, and added that wiser men than ourselves had encamped in worse places. Finding that remonstrance would be useless, I immediately cut away some of the briars in the centre of a bed of wild rose bushes, and spread down our blankets. At dark we lay down, and my companion slept soundly. For my own part, I was alarmed in the early part of the night by some unusual noise, which might have been occasioned by the trampling of our horses; but which, together with a train of thoughts foreboding evil, effectually prevented me from closing my eyes to sleep at all.

“I arose early in the morning, but it was yet light, and commenced kindling a fire, in the course of which, having occasion for my powder horn, I called to Montgomery to hand it to me. He immediately arose and stepped out, but sprang back to his bed the next instant exclaiming Indians! Indians! At one bound I was with him, and the Indians commenced firing upon us. The rose bushes which surrounded us, only served to conceal us from view but offered no resistance to their balls, one of which grazed my neck. I immediately exclaimed “Montgomery I am wounded.” The next instant he arose with his gun to his face, in a sitting posture, but ere he had time to shoot, his gun dropped from his hands, streams of blood gushed from his mouth and nose, he fell backwards uttering a groan, and expired. I sprang up, and presented my gun to the advancing Indians, determined to kill one of them, but they threw themselves down in the grass. I then wheeled and fled through the breaking ice of the lake, and exerted my utmost strength, to gain the opposite bank. Some of the Indians were instantly in close pursuit, whilst others deliberately fired from the bank. One of their balls grazed my thigh and another cut out a lock of my hair, and stunned me so much that I could with difficulty keep my feet; however, I succeeded in reaching the bank, but had the mortification to see the foremost of my pursuers step ashore as soon as I did. At this moment, a thought crossed my mind, to surrender all I had and they would spare my life; but the recollection of the cruelties they have ever practiced upon prisoners, always terminating in death, awoke me to reason, and I redoubled my efforts to gain a ravine, which led into the mountain. As I reached the entrance, the loud, harsh voice of the chief, calling back my pursuers, fell upon my ears like strains of the sweetest music; but I continued running until overcome by exertion, I fell down quite exhausted. After resting a few moments, I ascended the mountains and dragged myself through the snow until dark, in the direction of Snake River, at which time, I descended to the margin of Porteneuf, and followed its course.

“My mocasins became worn out and left my naked feet to be cut and lacerated by the ice and stones, and at the same time, I was drenched by a shower, which chilled me through. I endeavored to kindle a fire, and make use of the powder in my gun for the purpose, but was unsuccess-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

ful. There being no alternative, I was compelled to crawl along or freeze. My feet, now became extremely painful, and I found they were frozen. Being no longer able to support myself upon them, I sought a stick with which I hobbled along some distance, but at length found myself in a field of prickly pears, that pierced me to the very soul. Here, for the first time, I wished for death and upbraided myself for running from the Indians. I stopped and plucked the thorns from my bloody feet, proceeded and the next moment was again upon them. At length, I crawled into the willows, bordering the river, and to my great joy found a quantity of bull rushes. Fortunately, I happened to have a pen knife, with which I cut as many as I could grasp in my arms twice, and bound into three separate bundles; these I fastened together with willows, launched it without difficulty, and embarked upon it, allowing it to be carried along by the force of the current.

“In the afternoon of the following day, I reached the nearest point from Porteneuf to camp, and abandoned my floating bed. With a stick in one hand and my gun in the other, I set out; but the torture from my feet was such, that I fell down, unable to proceed farther. In this situation, whilst revolving in my own mind the chances for getting to camp, a distance of twelve miles, I was discovered by the two hunters whose presence gave me a thrilling sensation of joyful deliverance, indescribable. One of them immediately dismounted, and placed me upon his horse, which he slowly led to camp.”

When Gray reached his own lodge, his mangled frozen feet were examined; they were swollen to twice their natural size, and were quite black; however, at the expiration of two months, he was quite well, and the circumstances of his so narrow escape almost forgotten. He left his powder horn, shot-pouch, belt, and knife at the field of death, which will account for his want of success, when endeavoring to kindle a fire; and for being compelled to construct his raft with a pen knife, which is a rare instrument in this country, because it is useless, save in such a peculiar case.

## CHAPTER XXIV

After Gray's return, we moved camp over to Porteneuf. This stream rises between Blackfoot, and the Sheep Rock of Bear River, and flows fifty or sixty miles westward, to its junction with Snake River. On the south side, a point of mountains juts down nearly to Snake River; but on the north side, the mountains disappear. Fifteen miles above its mouth, the river enters the plains, through a narrow opening in the mountains, somewhat resembling a huge gate way, hence it is called Porteneuf, (New gate.) The banks of this stream are garnished with impenetrable thickets of willow, briars, and vines, matted together; bluff ledges of rock, where the country has evidently sunk, and here and there near the fork, remains of boiling springs. After this period, we continued to the source of the south fork of Porteneuf, and on the evening of the eighteenth, reached the spot where Montgomery was killed; the blood appeared quite fresh on the grass, where he had lain, but nothing could be found of his remains, save a few small bones. In justice to the memory of a careless, good-natured, brave, but unfortunate comrade, we resolved to call the pass, from Cache Valley to Porteneuf, “Montgomery's Pass.”

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

On the twentieth we reached Bear River in Cache Valley, having seen during our journey, traces of foot Indians. Some of our hunters saw twenty Indians some distance from camp in the valley. On the twenty-third, several hunters arrived from a company of fifty, who had passed the winter in the southern extremity of this valley, and were now encamped a few miles east of us. This party was fitted out at Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone; and was led by a Mr. Vanderburgh. Four of their men were killed in Cache Valley, during the winter, and as many others left them in the fall, but never returned. They were well-supplied with meat during the winter, and never had occasion to go down to the lower end of the valley; hence the reason why Gray and Montgomery did not fall in with them. From them we ascertained that a certain district where we intended to make our hunt, had already been trapped by a party from Toas, last fall. This information induced us to join Vanderburgh, and proceed with him forty miles northward, up Bear River, to the Sheep rock. This river was confined all the way, by cedar-covered or prairie-hills, and ledges of black rock.

The "Sheep Rock," is the high, rocky, abrupt termination of a mountain, south of the river, which flows around it, through a deep canal of cut rock, from the southeast. At the Sheep Rock is a beautiful cove or horse-shoe-like valley, two or three miles in diameter, bounded on the north and west by irregular hills, covered with fragments of black rock, and scattering cedars. From south to northeast, it is surrounded by lofty mountains, through which the river meanders, before it reaches the valley. There are groves of cedars in and about the cove, which likewise betrays an unusual volcanic appearance. The plain is covered, in many places, with a substance resembling ashes; the rocks have a black, blistered appearance, as if burnt; and there are the remains of many boiling springs similar to those on Salt River, which have long since exploded. Some of them present little knolls of a beautiful yellow, tasteless substance, several paces in extent; others present the hollow mounds of cement, that were formed by deposits from the waters, which have long since disappeared. There is a spring in the middle of the valley, the waters of which taste precisely like soda water, if drank after the effervescence has ceased. Some of these boiling springs were situated on the highest mounds, and others in the valley. We saw the skeletons of five persons bleaching in the grove of cedars, near the valley, supposed to be Indians. The country here is yet covered with water from the snows, which have just disappeared.

From the Sheep Rock, we followed the zig-zag course of the river seventy-five miles, and again entered a beautiful valley, fifteen miles long from north to south, and five or six broad; at the southern extremity, the outlet for the Little Lake enters, and falls into Bear River. The margins of both rivers are here decorated with dense groves of cottonwood and aspen trees, and thick underbrush, and the valley is a great resort for both animals and wildfowl, particularly geese, who always deposit their eggs in the old nests made by hawks and ravens, in the trees; great numbers of eggs are collected by passing trappers, in the spring. We reached this valley on the tenth of April; at this time our trappers branched out in various directions in quest of beaver.

On the thirteenth we continued twelve miles eastward, over prairie hills to Talma's Fork, a small stream that interlocks with the sources of Salt River, and flows southward into Bear River. It receives its name from an Iroquois who discovered it. Bear River has again meandered into a valley,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

at the mouth of Talma's Fork; thus far it varies from fifty to one hundred yards wide, is rapid and seldom fordable; its naked borders present nothing but an occasional lone cluster of willows, save in Cache Valley, and at the outlet of the Little Lake, where groves of trees beautify its margin.

On the fourteenth we passed eight miles southeastward, to Smith's Fork; this is a large well wooded creek, that rises with the sources of Ham's Fork and Salt River, and flows southeastward into Bear River. It commands a narrow valley until near its junction with the latter, where two high points of mountain, jutting towards it on either side, leave a narrow passage for the water. This stream is noted for the great numbers of beaver taken from it, and receives its name from the late Jerediah Smith, of the firm of Smith, Sublette and Jackson.

On the fifteenth we forded Bear River, at a place unusually shallow, passed twelve miles southeastward and re-encamped on its margin. From the south of Smith's Fork, the mountains, which have hemmed up the river more or less, since our departure from Cache Valley, expand, leaving an open plain five or six miles wide, bounded on the east by a high mountain, and on the west by a low one, which is abrupt on the western side, and overhangs the Little Lake. Through this plain, the river forms a gentle curve from east to south; the valley on the east side is apparently as level as the surface of still water; but on the western side, has a very gentle ascent, until it reaches the abrupt base of the mountain. The river is from fifty to eighty yards wide; is deep, and has a gentle current; its borders are in many places naked of bushes; but generally here and there, a solitary cluster of willows afford a resting place for the ravens, or a shelter for the wolves. The plains were graced with hundreds of antelopes, either gamboling about, or quietly feeding in groups, with ever watchful sentinels to apprise them of danger.

On the sixteenth we passed a few miles above the mouth of Muddy, and killed several buffalo from a large herd, which were the first we have seen since we left the valley, at the outlet of the Little Lake. We likewise saw great numbers of geese and ducks, which have just made their appearance in the river. On the twenty fourth we recrossed Bear River, and encamped on its eastern margin; during the afternoon a well known Flathead Indian, named Paseal, who accompanied Fontenelle and Dripps to St. Louis last summer, returned with the agreeable intelligence that Dripps, at the head of forty-eight men, was encamped at the entrance of Muddy. We moved down on the following day, and encamped with him: we now ascertained that he left the council Bluffs about the first of October, but owing to want of grass, and the jaded state of his horses, was compelled to stop, and pass the winter at the foot of the Black Hills. In the mean time he despatched three men and an Indian to us on Salmon River, who ought to have reached that place previous to our departure, but they have not been heard of since. Two or three of the following days were devoted, by many of the men to inebriation; a chilling storm of sleet, attended their out of door revels.

On the twenty-ninth I set out with three others, to raise a small cache of furs we had made on Rush Creek in Cache Valley. We proceeded by way of the Little Lake forty-five miles to the head of Cache Valley, and thence thirty-five, by night, to Rush Creek. This is a small stream (that flows into Bear River, on the south side,) bordered by dense thickets, and at this time was not fordable.

---

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

I followed the brink several hundred yards, in hopes of finding a shoal, where we could cross without wetting our fur; at the same time one of my comrades who was mounted, entered the brush a short distance above me, for the same object. Soon after, hearing a noise like that of some large animal splashing in the water, I ran to the spot, certain that my comrade had attempted to cross, where the river was deep and his horse endangered. Imagine then my agony and surprise when a formidable grizzly bear came rushing, like a wounded buffalo towards me. I instinctively cocked my gun, and intended to discharge it into his open mouth, when he should rear himself to clasp me; but to my great joy he passed a few feet from me, and disappeared in the neighbouring thickets.

We returned the following night to the head of Cache Valley, and were saluted by the barking of several dogs during our route; however the night was dark, and we rode briskly until we were beyond the reach of either dogs or Indians. We suffered from exposure to a snow storm, of two or three days continuance, but at length reached camp at the mouth of Smith's Fork, after a march of five days and two nights.

## CHAPTER XXV

On the eighth of May, we continued northwestward, down Bear River, and reached the Horse-shoe Cove on the twelfth. A mile or two above the Sheep Rock, and a few yards from the river, is a bed of chalk white substance, called "the white clay," which possesses the cleansing property of soap, and is used by the hunters as well as the natives, instead of that commodity. It is found in various parts of the country, and is sometimes called 'white earth.' On the following day we passed northeastward, through cedar hills, which opened into a plain, decked with groves of cedar, and bluff ledges of rock, where the country, or at least portions of it, have evidently sunk. In the course of our route, we frequently marched several miles over a level plain, and suddenly came to an abrupt precipice, twenty or thirty feet high, where we sought vainly to find a place sufficiently oblique to admit of descending without danger. When safe below, we continued our progress in like manner, over a level country some distance, until another precipice obstructed our progress. High lone mounds, rising out of level bottoms, are not uncommon. We encamped fifteen miles northeast of the Sheep Rock, on one of the sources of Blackfoot.

Near our encampment were found an American riding saddle, and a rifle that was stripped of the lock and mountings. These articles were recognized to have been the property of Alexander, one of four men, who left Vanderburgh near the Big Lake last fall. Heretofore it had been believed that they were killed by some of the Blackfeet, who were lurking about Cache Valley last fall and winter. That opinion was mournfully confirmed by the circumstance of finding these articles, eighty miles indeed from that place, but directly in the route of the Blackfeet to their own country. We likewise saw ten Indian forts in a grove of cedars, that had been but recently evacuated.

On the fourteenth we continued in the same direction, about the same distance, and halted at the brink of another source of Blackfoot. Previous to this time for several days, we have had raw

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

disagreeable weather, but it is now quite pleasant. Buffalo and antelopes, have been continually in sight since we left Smith's Fork. Next day we passed northwestward, through a plain intersected by numbers of small streams, flowing through deep canals of cut rock, which unite and form Gray's Creek, which is likewise confined between barriers of cut rock. This valley, or rather district, is called Gray's Hole, after John Gray, a half breed Iroquois, who discovered it some years since. This person is the same who was with Montgomery when he was killed.

In a narrow bottom beneath the walls of Gray's Creek, we found a party of trappers, headed by Bridger, one of the partners in the R. M. F. Company. Their encampment was decked with hundreds of beaver skins, now drying in the sun. These valuable skins are always stretched in willow hoops, varying from eighteen inches, to three feet in diameter, according to the size of the skins, and have a reddish appearance on the flesh side, which is exposed to the sun. Our camps are always dotted with these red circles, in the trapping season, when the weather is fair. There were several hundred skins folded and tied up in packs, laying about their encampment, which bore good evidence to the industry of the trappers. They found a rifle, as well as ourselves, which was likewise robbed of the lock and mountings. It belonged to one of two men, who disappeared a day or two previous to the battle, in August last. Both of these rifles were unusually heavy, and were doubtless left by the Indians for that reason.

On the nineteenth I departed from camp, accompanied by two Indians, to seek the Flatheads, and induce them to come to the forks of Snake River, where our leaders wished to meet them, for the purpose of trading. We passed ten miles over rocky hills, to the plains of Snake River; thence fifteen, to the mouth of Gray's Creek, and forced our horses to swim over Snake River, which we crossed on a raft ourselves. We halted a short time on the western margin, to bait our horses, and again proceeded northwestward. Six miles from the river, we passed a small lake, which is the termination of Cammas Creek, and has no outlet. We continued our course four miles beyond the lake, and halted in the sage after dark without water. We started at daybreak on the twentieth, and directed our course towards Cotas defile. During our march, we saw great numbers of buffalo running in various directions, which convinced us that they had been alarmed by Indians. This startled us in no small degree for we did not doubt but that they were Blackfeet, and should they discover us in the open plains, escape with our jaded horses would be impracticable. However, after suffering a fever, occasioned by thirst and excitement, and marching thirty-five miles over the heated plains, we reached Cotas Creek, and gladly threw ourselves down to sip the refreshing waters that flow from fields of snow in view. Our minds, however, were not yet free from apprehension, for just before we reached the river, three horsemen appeared coming towards us at full speed; two of whom came near enough to satisfy themselves that we were certainly men, and then turned and fled up the river. We immediately cooked and eat several choice pieces of a buffalo we were fortunate enough to kill in the morning, and remained until dark watching by turns the appearance of Indians, but saw nothing save here and there a veteran bull, quietly feeding around us; or large herds of buffalo in the distance. At dark we saddled our horses, and departed cautiously up the river, carefully avoiding to ride near the margin. Soon after our departure, our horses turned towards the river, and neighed, a certain sign that they saw or smelled horses; we continued, however, without annoyance, about ten miles, and halted to pass the night on the steep

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

side of a hill.

The next morning at daybreak, we were on the march, and passed through a narrow space between two bluff ledges of rock, into a large plain, where Cotas Creek, and the east fork of Salmon River, both take their rise. We continued twenty miles down the plain, when we discovered a large party of horsemen meeting us at full speed. We hastily ascended an eminence, unsheathed our guns, and with no little anxiety awaited their approach. As they came near, we hailed them in Flathead, and they immediately discharged their guns in the air, which relieved our minds at once from apprehension. We followed their example, and descended to them. They were Flatheads, and Nezperces, and had just started for buffalo; but after hearing our mission, they furnished us with fresh horses, and returned with us at half speed, about six miles, to the village. Here we found the men Dripps sent in quest of our party from the Black Hills last winter. They reached the village last spring, a few days after we left Salmon River.

The Indians had had a battle with the Blackfeet three days before I arrived. They lost twelve men killed, and several others severely, if not mortally, wounded; besides upwards of a thousand head of horses, which were taken by the Blackfeet. The latter left sixteen of their comrades dead on the field. The action lasted two days, and was so obstinate at the commencement, that six or eight of the Flathead tents were cut up by their enemies, and several of the latter killed in camp. There were about a thousand of the enemy, who came for the purpose of annihilating the Flatheads, root and branch. Previous to the commencement of the fray, they told the Flatheads that McKensie had supplied them with guns by the hundred, and ammunition proportionate, and they now came with the intention of fighting, until "they should get their stomachs full." After the battle, when as usual in such cases they were crying for the loss of their friends; the Flatheads demanded sarcastically, if they had "got their stomachs full," to which they made no reply, but immediately departed for their own country. Sixteen of their scalps were triumphantly displayed by the Flatheads, who courageously defended their own slain, and prevented the Blackfeet from taking a single scalp. Several of the Flathead horsemen were killed in the spring, previous to the battle, amongst whom was the brother of Pascal, one of the Indians who accompanied me.

On the twenty-second we departed, and bore southeastward up the plain. The wounded Indians were carried on a kind of litter simply constructed, by fastening the ends of two long poles to opposite sides of a pack horse, and tying cross bars six feet assunder, to prevent the long poles from approaching to, or receding from each other. A buffalo robe is then fastened loosely to the four poles, and the wounded person placed upon it. These litters, of which there were eight or ten, were followed by numbers of young men, ever ready to administer to the wants of the sufferers. Among the latter, was a young man who was shot through the knee; - his leg was swelled to an enormous size, yet he would not allow himself to betray the least symptoms of pain, and exultingly gloried in his misfortune.

We reached the narrows at the head of the plain, and the source of Cotas Creek on the twenty-third. Considerable anxiety was now manifested by the Indians. They were without either provisions or ammunition, and were consequently only prevented from pushing forward, to where

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

both could be obtained, by the inability of their wounded companions, to endure the torture occasioned by long marches.

On the twenty-fourth we passed down Cotas defile, and fell in with a party of Flatheads, who left the village previous to the battle. They were well supplied with both dry and fresh meat, and at the same time were surrounded by buffalo, numbers of which were killed by our party. These Indians were probably the same discovered by us, and believed to be Blackfeet, on our way up four days since. After this period we moved slowly down Cotas Creek as far as the mountains jut down into the plain, on either side, and killed numbers of buffalo, which were numerous in all directions. In the meantime three of the wounded Indians died, and were decently buried. They were enveloped in skins lashed around them, previous to interment, and their graves after being filled with earth, were surmounted by little comical heaps of stones, which is the only mark by which the resting place of these heroes may hereafter be designated.

## CHAPTER XXVI

On the 2d of June, a party of hunters arrived from our own camp, which was situated a few miles above the forks of the Snake river. The following morning I departed in company with one of the hunters, for camp; we passed twenty miles North of East, through a sandy plain decked with great numbers of Rocky mounds, which were all cross cracked, at the top, leaving cavities in some cases, large enough to shelter both men and horses, from the balls or arrows of Indians. The largest are one hundred feet high, and overlook the country far, in every direction. They appear a secure asylum to small parties of men, who, if once within them, may bid defiance to hundreds of Indians. A mountain of white sand, thirty miles in extent, is situated six or eight miles north of the forks of the Snake River. I have crossed several points of it, with difficulty, owing to the depth my horse sank into the sand. In most places it is entirely destitute of all herbage, and at a distance resembles a snow clad mountain. We reached camp in the afternoon, and ascertained that nothing worthy of recollection, had occurred since I left it. The trappers were all in camp, having ceased to trap, and the Springs hunt was considered over.

The next day the Indians reached us, and were requested to accompany us to Pierre's Hole, where we expected to meet Fontenelle, with supplies from St. Louis. They agreed to accompany us, if we would remain with them a day or two, to rest their jaded horses. In the meantime the brave Indian who was shot through the knee, died, and was buried on the margin of Henrie's fork.

After this period we continued slowly up Henrie's fork, and halted two or three days on the East fork, to dry meat, knowing that we should remain one or two days at rendezvous, and that buffalo would soon be driven far from us. We killed hundreds daily during our stay on Henrie's fork; and continued thirty miles South Eastward over prairie hills, decked with groves of Aspen trees, to the Northern extremity of Pierre's Hole. This pleasant retreat is twenty miles long, and two wide, extending from South-east to North-west; and is surrounded by lofty mountains, save on the west side, where prairie hills appear. It is watered by numbers of small streams, which unite and form

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Pierre's fork, a fine stream thirty or forty paces in width, which cuts its way out of the valley, in a deep canal of bluff rocks. On the east side of the valley, three majestic peaks of naked rock, rise far above the rest, and are well known to mountain rovers by the name of "The Trois Tetons." The mountains are very abrupt, as far as the pines extend, and the huge pyramids above are absolutely inaccessible. This valley is noted for the large extent of excellent pasturage, along the borders of its waters; and has been selected as a pleasant place for a general rendezvous, by the R. M. F. C., Vanderburgh and ourselves: it receives its name from an Iroquois chieftain, who first discovered it; and was killed in 1827, on the source of the Jefferson River. On reaching this valley, we found the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. already here, awaiting the arrival of Mr. Fitzpatrick, with supplies from Saint Louis. Mr. Vanderburgh expected a Mr. Provenu, with an equipment from fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone; and we as anxiously looked forward for Mr. Fontenelle, who was expected from the Council Bluffs.

Some days after we entered Pierre's Hole, a party of trappers returned, having made their hunt to the Southward. They saw Captain Ghant, at the head of fifty or sixty men, on Green river; he had procured horses from the Spaniards of New Mexico, and had made his hunt on the sources of the Arkansas, and tributaries of Green river, without molestation by the Indians. Two men were despatched by the R. M. F. Co. about this time, to meet the Saint Louis companies, and six of our men followed a few days afterwards for the same object.

On the 29th of June, the two men despatched by the R. M. F. Co. returned in a miserable plight; they had proceeded as far as Laramie's fork, at the foot of the Black hills, and were robbed by a party of Crow Indians, of their horses; after which they retraced their steps to camp, and suffered extremely for want of provisions, or from cold, rain, and fatigue. Throughout the month of June, scarcely a day passed without either rain, hail, or snow, and during the last three days of the month, a snow storm continued without intermission, the whole time, night and day; but disappeared from the earth a few hours after the sun reappeared.

On the third of July, one of our men who was sent in quest of the St. Louis companies returned, and reported that William Sublett, at the head of one hundred men, was now on his way here. This numerous company was composed of fifty hired men; a party of twenty-two men, detached from Ghant's company; a party of thirteen men from the Rio del Norte, and a Mr. Wythe with ten or twelve followers, who was on some secret expedition to the mouth of the Oregon, or Columbia River. We learned that Mr. Fitzpatrick left the company at the Red Hills, with two horses, and set out to reach us, in advance of Sublett; but had not since been heard of. Two or three nights before our express reached them, their camp was fired upon by a party of unknown Indians, but no one injured. Several horses were stolen, however; from Sublett, our express could learn nothing of Fontenelle; and determined to proceed on until they should meet him, but the day after their departure from Sublett's Camp, they were charged upon by a party of mounted Indians, who compelled them to return.

On the 8th Sublett arrived, and halted in the middle of the hole, with the R. M. F. Co., for whom he brought one hundred mules, laden with merchandise. The same evening Mr. Thos. Fitzpatrick,

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

to our great joy, came into camp, though in a most pitiable condition. It appears that this traveler, on his way to Pierre's Hole, came suddenly upon a large Village of Indians, who mounted their horses and immediately gave chase; however, he had fortunately taken the precaution to furnish himself with two horses, previous to his departure from camp, one of which had the reputation of being fleet. This last he led by the halter, ever saddled, and bridled, as a resource in case he should be compelled to seek safety by flight. So soon as he found himself discovered and pursued, he sprang upon his favorite horse, and fled, directing his course towards the mountains, which were about three miles distant. When he reached the mountains, the Indians were so far behind, that he hoped to elude them by concealment, and immediately placed his horse in a thicket, and sought a crevice in the rocks, where he concealed himself. In a few moments the blood hounds came up, and soon discovered his horse; from his place of concealment he saw them searching every nook and crevice, for him, and the search was not discontinued, until the next step would have placed him before the eyes of a blood thirsty set of wretches, whose clemency in the first instance, is yet to be recorded. Fortunately for him, the search was abandoned, and the Indians returned to camp, at the same time he chose a point, whence he could discover any passing object, in the plain beneath him; and determined to remain, until the company should pass, and join them at that time. At the expiration of three days, he discovered six men, passing in the valley, and immediately descended the mountain to join them, but ere he could effect this, a party of Indians appeared from another quarter, and gave chase to the six men, who wheeled and fled; in the meantime, he fled back to his place of refuge. At length he became confident, that the company had passed him without his knowledge, and set out for Pierre's Hole in the night; his moccasins became worn out, and he was forced to make others of his hat, he likewise lost his powder in swimming a river, and suffered from the combined effects of hunger, cold, and fatigue, until he was reduced to a mere skeleton, and could scarcely be recognized when he finally reached camp. He informs us, that the Indians were doubtless a band of Grosvents of the prairie, who passed from the Missouri to the head of the Arkansas three years ago, and were now on their return to their own country. They are the same Indians who encamped with Smith, Sublett and Jackson, on the Arkansas last summer, and there buried their hatchets and animosity together. But it appears from their proceedings this far, that they have raised both since.

## CHAPTER XXVII

On the 17th a party of trappers, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, having received supplies for the fall hunt, left the company, and passed ten miles up the valley, intending to cross on to Lewis River, near the mouth of Salt River. The following morning they discovered a party of strange Indians near the margin of the stream, some distance above them, and several of the men immediately departed to ascertain who they were. As they approached, the chief advanced to meet them, armed with nothing but the calumet of peace; but he was recognized to be a Grosventre and in a twinkling was sent to eternity. At the same time the Indians, who perhaps numbered fifty men, besides women and children, entered a grove of cottonwood trees, and without loss of time proceeded to make a breastwork, or pen of trees impenetrable to balls. In the mean time an express was despatched to inform us, and in a few minutes the plains were covered with whites,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

and friendly Indians, rushing to the field of battle. On their arrival, however, the enemy had completed an impenetrable fort, fifty feet square, within which they had fastened their horses. A general fire was immediately opened upon the fort, and was warmly kept up on both sides until dark. In the mean time a plan was formed by the whites to burn them up in their fort, and quantities of dry wood and brush were collected for that purpose; but the Indians on our side objected to this project, on the ground that all the plunder would be lost, which they thought to appropriate to their own use. At length night came on, and the whites, who were provoked at the Indians, for not consenting to annihilate the enemy at once, departed for their respective camps; the Indians soon followed, and left such of the enemy as survived, at liberty to depart and recount their misfortunes to their friends. We lost in this engagement, two men killed, one mortally wounded, and many others either severely or slightly. The Indians on our side, lost five killed, and many wounded, some supposed to be mortally. The following morning, a large party of both whites and Indians returned to the fort. In it were the dead bodies of three Grosventre Indians, a child, twenty-four horses, and several dogs. Our Indians followed the route of the fugitives several miles, and found their baggage, which they had concealed in divers places, as well as the bodies of five more Indians, and two young women, who were yet unhurt, though their heartless captures sent them to the shades, in pursuit of their relations without remorse. Amongst the dead horses were those lost by Mr. Fitzpatrick some days since; but those stolen from Sublett about the same time, were not among the number; hence we supposed that a larger party of Indians were yet behind.

After this period we enjoyed fine weather, and nothing occurred worthy of remembrance, until the 27th. This evening five of seven men who departed for St. Louis, three days since, returned, and informed us that they were attacked yesterday, by a party of Indians in Jackson's Hole, and that two of their number, Moore and Foy, killed. The survivors saved themselves by flight, but one of them was wounded in his thigh.

On the 30th William Sublett departed on his return to St. Louis. He had been detained here much longer than he intended, owing to a wound he had received on the 18th. During the first day's march, Stevens, the person who was wounded in his thigh, several days since, died, and was interred in the southeastern extremity of Pierre's Hole. On the first of August we had a hail storm of one hour's duration. Until this period we had anxiously awaited the appearance of Provenu and Fontenelle; but they came not, and we became apprehensive that they had lost their horses on the way, and were thus prevented from reaching us, according to promise however, Dripps and Vanderburgh resolved to move over to Green River, and learn if possible something definite. We set out on the 2d and reached the head of Pierre's Hole on the 3d. On the 4th we crossed the mountain, and descended into a large prairie valley, called Jackson's Big Hole. It lies due east of the Trois Tetons, and is watered by Lewis River, which leaves the valley through a deep cut in the mountains, impassable for pack horses; hence trappers have to cross the mountains to Pierre's Hole, in order to avoid greater obstacles, which present themselves at any other pass. The waters of this river, in the head of the Hole, expand into a lake of considerable magnitude, which I believe is identical with one attached to the Big Horn River, on the maps of the United States, for I have never heard of any lake on the sources of that river, although our trappers have explored every spring source of it. This lake is called the Teton Lake, from the mountain that overlooks it.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

The river flows through the valley in a southwest direction, and near the lower end of the hole, a large branch from the southeast falls into it. Those streams are bordered by aspen and cottonwood trees, and groves of cedars, in some parts of the valley. The Hole is surrounded by lofty mountains, and receives its name from one of the firm of Smith, Sublett and Jackson.

We crossed Lewis River at a well known ford, where its waters are separated by several Islands, and are expanded to the distance of several hundred yards; but are fordable at this season for pack horses, if led carefully over, following the bars or shallow places. In the evening we halted on a spring, four miles east of Lewis River, after marching twenty-two miles. On the 5th we passed six or eight miles southeast, and halted on the margin of the stream, flowing from that direction. During our march, some of the hunters saw the bones of two men, supposed to be those killed from a party of seven, in the latter part of July. On the sixth we entered a dark defile, and followed a zig-zag trail along the almost perpendicular side of the mountain, scarcely leaving space in many places for the feet of our horses; we all dismounted, and led our animals over the most dangerous places, but notwithstanding this precaution, three of them lost their footing, and were precipitated sixty or seventy feet into the river below; two were but slightly injured, having fortunately fallen upon their loads, which preserved them from death; but the other was instantly killed. At length we came out into an open valley after a march of fifteen miles, and halted in its eastern extremity. This small valley is called Jackson's Little Hole, in contradistinction to its neighbor, which we left yesterday. It was covered with herds of buffalo, numbers of which fell before our rifles, and supplied us with fresh meat, an article we had not possessed since we came into Pierre's Hole. We saw several encampments of a large village of Indians, who had been in the valley five or six days since. They were doubtless Grosventres of the prairie, and were prevented from passing by way of Pierre's Hole, most likely, by the reception met with by a small party, who reached that Hole in advance of the main village.

On the 7th we ascended a high abrupt hill, covered with dense groves of aspen trees, and came in view of a vast plain, gently descending eastward to Green River, which flows through it south-eastward. The plain was literally covered with buffalo, numbers of which we killed, and halted at a spring on the summit of the hill. On the 8th we descended the plain to a stream flowing into Green River, and halted on its margin; during the day we discovered a party of horsemen several miles to the northward, who were supposed by some, to be our long expected company, and by others were believed to be the Grosventres, who we all knew could not be far in advance of us.

To our great joy, however, they proved to be the former, headed by our old friend Fontenelle, who had passed from St. Louis to the mouth of the Yellowstone River in a steamboat, and thence with pack horses to this place. He had about fifty men, and three times that number of horses, and was aided by Mr. Provean in conducting the expedition. He fell in with the Grosventres two days since, on Green River and although they numbered five or six hundred warriors, want of ammunition prevented them from making an attack upon him; they denied having any knowledge of whites in this part of the country, notwithstanding we had given them sufficient cause to remember us, at least for a few days. He likewise saw a company of one hundred and twenty men, with twenty covered wagons, and numbers of pack horses, led by one Captain Bonyville from New

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

York, who was at this time constructing a fort on Green River, a few miles below us.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

On the 12th all arrangements, for the journey being completed, Mr. Fontenelle departed with thirty men, and the furs we had collected during the past year, for Fort Union at the Yellow Stone; at the same time Messrs. Vanderburgh and Dripps, who were now jointly acting for the American Fur Co., departed at the head of about ten men, intending to hunt on the source of the Missouri. We reached a spring, on the summit of the hill, east of Jackson's Little Hole, in the evening; and halted for the night. On the 14th we passed through the Narrows, between Jackson's Holes; and avoided some of the difficulties we met with on our previous passage, by crossing the river, several times. In the evening we halted for the night near the remains of two men, who were killed in July last. These we collected, and deposited in a small stream, that discharged itself into a fork of Lewis river; that flows from Jackson's Little Hole.

On the 16th we reached the head of Pierre's Hole, and found the bones of several Indians, who were supposed to have been killed during the battle in July last; and were transported here by their relations, though several miles from the battle field. Three days after we reached Henri's Fork amid clouds of dust which rose from our horses' feet, and filled our eyes. The plains were covered with buffalo, in all directions, far as we could discern them.

On the 20th I departed with two others, with orders to seek the Flatheads, and induce them to meet the company in Horse prairie, if possible, in eight days from this time. Our leaders intended to cache their goods at that place, and wished to meet the Indians, for the purpose of trading with them. Our company continued onward a north course, whilst we passed north of the sand mountain, and bore a trifle south of west, in the direction of Cota's defile. We reached Kamas creek at sunset, after a march of forty-five miles, during which we suffered extremely, owing to want of water, on the route; but allayed our parching thirst when we arrived; ate a hearty supper of dry meat, hobbled our fatigued horses, and slept in a thicket until sunrise. Next day proceeded on thirty-five miles, to Cota's creek, and halted until dark. During our march we saw traces of horsemen, who had passed by recently. At dusk we passed two miles up the defile, and halted in the logs, near the margin of the creek. On the 22nd we mounted our horses, at day break, and passed the narrows into a rolling plain, where we found several encampments made by the Flat heads twenty days since. At noon, we halted to bait our horses, and demolished a few pounds of dried meat, ourselves. At the expiration of two hours, we again departed; and proceeded down the plain, until near midnight, halting at length near the margin of a small stream. During the night our slumbers were disturbed by the bellowing of a herd of bulls, near us; and by the howling of a multitude of wolves, prowling about the buffalo. We were approached, by a formidable grizzly bear, who slowly walked off, however, after we had made some bustle about our beds. We made during the day and night, about fifty miles.

On the 23d we arose in the morning, and found ourselves in the valley of the east fork of Salmon

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

river. There were large herds of buffalo slowly moving up the valley, which led us to believe, that the Indians were not far below us. One of their encampments appeared to have been evacuated, but five or six days since; and was at this time a rendezvous for wolves, ravens, and magpies. We likewise saw numbers of salmon, forcing their way up the small streams, in this valley - many had so worn out their fins, that they could with difficulty avoid us when we endeavored to catch them, in our hands. With clubs and stones, we killed several of them, with which we regaled ourselves at noon, and my companions, amused themselves, whilst our horses were feeding, by adding to the numberless carcasses scattered along the shore, that had been taken and thrown away by the Indians. We passed through this valley, and halted some time after dark at the mouth of a stream from the south, after travelling forty miles.

On the 24th we passed between two high rocky points jutting into the river, and came out into an open plain two miles wide. Near the entrance, is a bed of stone, which is frequently used as a substitute for soap. It is but little harder than chalk, of the same color, and when manufactured into pipes, and burnt, becomes a fine glossy jet color, and equally hard as stoneware. In this plain we discovered an encampment that appeared to have been made so recently, that we were confident of finding the Indians before night; however, we followed the trail to the forks of Salmon River, passing several other encampments, which were now occupied by bears, wolves, ravens and magpies, which were preying upon the yet undevoured particles of dried meat, and fragments of skins scattered around them. At dark we halted near one of these encampments in the forks of Salmon River, after riding about forty miles. In the night we were serenaded by the growling of bears and wolves, quarelling for the half-picked bones about them.

## CHAPTER XXIX

On the 25th we continued down Salmon River to a high abrupt plain, jutting down on the east side, which leaves a narrow trail along the brink of the river for several hundred yards, over-hung by a frowning precipice some hundred feet high. Through this we passed, and came into a small prairie, decked with huge fragments of rocks, trees, and willows. On the neighboring hills, we discovered a colt that had been left by the Indians, and likewise an encampment on the margin of the river that had evidently been left yesterday; we followed the trail over ranges of prairie hills, and finally found an encampment that had been left this morning, the Indians having crossed the mountains in the direction of Bitter-root River.

Having already exceeded the time allotted us by our leaders, and being aware that they would not wait more than a day beyond the time for us; I was forced to abandon the pursuit, or risk not seeing the company, until the expiration of the fall hunt which would subject me to complaint, as well as danger; and every hour's ride being two from the place of rendezvous, I turned my horse up a small stream, and followed it eight miles into the mountains that separate the valley of Salmon River from the Big Hole. During this jaunt, we killed a grey wolf which was fat, and made us a tolerable supper; we likewise wounded a grizzly bear, but in his rage, he broke down bushes and saplings with such ease, that we concluded that it would be imprudent to meddle with him any

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

more. We made about twenty-eight miles today, including deviations.

On the 26th we started at sunrise, and reached the head of a ravine, in the opposite side of the mountains, at sunset; after a toilsome and continual march of five or six miles, including necessary deviations from our general course. The distance attained will be proof enough of the existence of obstacles in this day's march, which was one of the most fatiguing I ever attempted. The sides of the mountains were very steep, and were covered with green or fallen pines, of which the latter were so interlocked with each other, and so numerous, that we were continually forced to leap our horses over them, and were frequently compelled to retrace our steps and seek some other passage. Here, an avalanche of huge rocks, trees, and snows had been precipitated from the summit of the mountains, and the sharp fragments left in the route, if slightly disturbed, would immediately resume their headlong course downward, and presented a barrier not only impassable for horses, but even for men. From this we turned, and sought to wedge our way through the pines in another direction, but suddenly came to the brink of some frightful ravine several hundred feet deep, but so narrow that a mountain goat would over-leap it without hesitation. Here we again turned, and followed the sharp edge of a very narrow ridge, between two dark profound caverns, which yawned in immeasurable depth and obscurity, almost beneath our feet on either side. Continuing our progress, we at length reached a small cove at the head of a ravine above the regions of pine, which was covered with banks of snow, and was nearly surrounded by a naked wall of rock, which forms the base of the huge pyramids that constitute in general the summits of the Rocky Mountains.

With great difficulty we succeeded in gaining the top of the wall between two peaks, and halted beside a vast bank of snow, from which little rills were trickling down either side of the mountains, that fall, both into the sources of the Missouri and Columbia. From this height we surveyed with pleasure, the apparently level prairies and bottoms bordering Salmon River on the one side, and the more extensive and fertile valley of Wisdom River on the other. After refreshing ourselves by a cool draught from a rivulet, which formed a reservoir a few feet from its source, we commenced our descent, which was by far more rapid and dangerous than our ascent, though infinitely less difficult. At dark we reached a cove in the upper region of pines, and gladly threw ourselves down to sleep, overcome by fatigue, having walked and led our horses the whole time, since we set out in the morning.

On the 27th we followed the ravine to a small stream, which flowed several miles with uncontrollable fury, but at length reached a point where the barriers on either side of the ravine expanded, leaving room for a beautiful little lake, two or three miles in circuit, of perfect transparency, which was surrounded by gigantic pines. From this point we continued six or seven miles and reached the open prairie of the Big Hole. During our march we killed a fine black-tailed deer, and saw the trail and an encampment of the R. M. F. company, who had passed through this valley eight or ten days since; in the afternoon we continued fifteen miles up the Hole, killed a white-tailed fawn, and halted for the night in a point of pines.

On the 28th we ascertained that the company had not passed, and chose a situation whence we

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

could discover, any passing object in the southern extremity of this valley. Here we constructed a pen of dry poles, and covered it with branches of the balsam fir, to shelter us from storms, as well as the missiles of Indians, in case of attack, being determined to await the arrival of the company, at this place. We ate to day the small portion we had saved of the buck, and nearly finished the fawn. In the afternoon, it commenced snowing, and continued all night; the following day it snowed without intermission until we lay down to sleep. On the morning of the 30th we arose, and found the prairies covered with snow to the depth of one foot; though the storm had abated, however, the plains are so warm, that it must rapidly disappear.

On the 31st we saddled our horses, and passed two miles across the valley in quest of food, having had nothing to eat, save part of a famished wolf since yesterday morning. The snow disappeared from the plains at noon, and discovered to us traces of buffalo, which we followed into the hills on the east side of the Hole. We found the herd grazing in a narrow bottom; they were so unusually wild, however that we succeeded only in stopping a bull by one of our balls, whilst the other disappeared instantaneously. In the mean time we approached, and opened fire upon the wounded one, but night overtook us and we were obliged to leave him on his legs, after firing at him ten or twelve times. We retired supperless to a neighboring thicket, and passed the night.

September first, early in the morning we departed, hungry as bears, in the direction of the bull we wounded and left last evening. As we approached, the presence of thirty or forty wolves, proved to us, that some of our balls had been well directed; yet we could not find meat enough for breakfast, that was not torn or mangled by them. However our appetites were so well sharpened, that we were not long in cooking some half picked bones, which were quickly fastened to our saddle cords, preparatory to going in quest of firewood. In the mean time the wolves, and the multitudes of ravens, remained a few yards off, politely waiting for us to serve ourselves; hinting, however, by an occasional growl, or scream, for us to be as expeditious as possible. As soon as we departed, they simultaneously sprang or flew to the carcase, with such intimacy, that ravens were seen picking at a bone, in the mouth of a wolf.

Immediately after our departure, three men entered the valley from the eastward, and charged furiously toward us, but as they came from a point we expected the company, we rightly conjectured that they were hunters, in advance of camp. In a few moments they came up, and before we had made our usual brief inquiries, the company appeared, and we passed with them, twelve miles, northward down the valley. Nothing had occurred in camp since our departure worth noticing.

## CHAPTER XXX

In the two following days we travelled fifty miles, and reached the northern extremity of the Big Hole, in the same part of this valley. We saw two or three bears, antelopes and deer, and great numbers of young ducks, yet unable to fly, in the streams.

On the fourth we passed into the Deer-house plains, and saw the trail, and several encampments,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co.; but no game, save one antelope.

On the fifth, we passed twenty five mile, west of north, down this valley. In the mean time, our hunters killed three grizzly bears, several goats, deer, and two buffaloes; the latter, however, is seldom found in this country; though it abounds in black and white tailed deer, elk, sheep, antelopes, and sometimes moose, and White mountain goats have been killed here.

On the sixth, we left this valley, and bore northward over a low mountain, to a small stream that flows into the Arrow-stone river; the country below us, is a succession of isolated hills, partially covered with pines, and fragments of rock, or extremely small bottoms, intersected by prairie hills. On the seventh, we traversed a low mountain, to a small stream, flowing northwestward, through an irregular plain. During the day we espied a party of horsemen, at the distance of two miles, who immediately ascended an eminence, discharged their guns in the air, and reflected the rays of the sun upon us with a mirror. Some of our party went to them, and ascertained that they were Snakes, who had been on an expedition against the Blackfeet. They had succeeded in capturing a woman, with a young child, whom they put to death; and decamped with twenty horses, which they stole the same day. On the eighth, we continued down the stream fifteen miles, to a large valley, surrounded by mountains; of which those on the north were exceedingly lofty; here we again intersected the trail of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co., and judging from the fresh appearance of their traces, that they were but a short distance before us, we immediately followed, determined to overtake them, and by this means share a part of the game, which is usually found in advance of a company, but never behind. We followed the principal stream, that flows into this valley, called Blackfoot, which flows into the Arrow-stone river, at a place called Hell-gates up into the mountains, about five miles, and halted in a small bottom, for the night.

On the ninth, we continued the pursuit twenty miles farther into the mountains. During our march we saw an encampment, that was left this morning, in which fires were yet burning.

On the fourteenth we crossed the mountains, to the waters of the Missouri, a short distance above the mouth of Dearborn's river; and encamped on a small stream, with the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. From the summit of the mountain, the country presented a vast plain, dotted by table and pointed clay bluffs; which were extremely regular and picturesque, resembling fortresses, or castles, surmounted by towers and domes, which at a distance, appeared so magnificent and perfect, that one could hardly persuade himself, that they were the productions of nature; so strongly did they resemble the works of art. - Those, who have had the pleasure of seeing the elegant and correct representation of scenery on the Missouri, in that splendid collection of paintings, CATLIN'S PICTURE GALLERY, consisting of Indian portraits, views of their Villages, Buffalo Hunts, Religious Ceremonies, Western Landscapes, etc., can form a tolerable idea, of the imposing and romantic prospects, that abound in this section of the country. This extensive plain was bounded by the horizon to the north and eastward, but rugged mountains presented themselves in every other direction. The Missouri winds its way through it to the northward, towards the mighty falls, described by Lewis and Clark, in all their terrific grandeur. We found the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. like ourselves, in a starving condition. They reported that a party of Indian trappers, supposed

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

to be Black Feet, had preceded them a few days, and consequently the country was almost destitute of game; some times they had succeeded in killing a grizzly bear, or black tailed deer, which divided amongst eighty men, was but a mouthful for each; though generally they had retired to bed supperless. This had been precisely the case with ourselves, since we left the Deer-house Plains. We likewise learned, that a young man named Miller, who belonged to this Company, and who was wounded at Pierre's Hole, during the battle in July last, died a month afterward, and was interred in Cotas defile.

On the 11th, hunters were despatched in quest of provisions, and returned in the evening successful; having killed a bull, together with several deer, and antelopes. In the mean time, the trappers went in search of beaver, but generally returned with their traps, of course unsuccessful. On the 12th both companies raised camp, and proceeded together southeastward, over rugged hills, to a small stream flowing eastward, towards the Missouri. During our march, we killed several black tailed deer, which were numerous in the pines, with which the hills were covered. We continued our course next day, over the same description of country, following a road composed of several parallel trails, a few feet asunder, which was evidently much used by the Black Feet, as no other Indians pass here with lodges.

Near the trail on the summit of a hill, we saw a quantity of broken bows and arrows, together with remnants of Indian garments, which induced some of our comrades to believe that a party of Indians had been defeated here a year or two since; notwithstanding, bones, which are usually found on battle fields, were not seen. Others, however, inferred that these articles had been sacrificed to the malignant Deity, after some unfortunate expedition, in which they had sustained irreparable losses.

In the evening of this day we reached a small branch, which unites with others, and is then called Vermillion river from a bed of red earth found near it, which is used by the Indians for painting their faces and clothing. Here we remained the following day, to rest our horses; whilst some of the trappers explored several small streams, in search of beaver.

On the 15th we again continued our course, over a low spur of the mountain, to a small stream that led into a fine prairie valley, eight miles wide, and fifteen in length from north-west to south-east. The Missouri is separated from it by a range of pine covered hills. Its course is marked by a chain of lofty mountains, which extend parallel with it, on the east side, and were distant about fifteen miles from us. Several of our hunters brought in today the flesh of several deer and big horns, both of which are numerous on the hills.

On the 16th, the R. M. F. Co., together with Mr. Dripps, at the head of fifty of our men, directed their course towards the three forks of the Missouri, south-east-ward. During our progress we met a severe storm of sleet, which we were compelled to face, until we reached a suitable place to encamp.

On the 17th we arose, and found the country mantled with snow, which was still rapidly falling;

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

however, we descended the mountain, and crossed a high hill, into the deer house plains, after a long march of twenty-five miles. The storm abated at noon, but the ground was covered with snow to the depth of several inches.

On the 18th we continued twenty miles up the valley, and saw numbers of rabbits, which were pursued in various directions by our dogs, as well as a herd of elk; yet our hunters were unable to kill anything, though the carcass of a wolf would have been acceptable at this time; having killed nothing, save one or two deer, since we separated from Dripps. The following day we reached the mountain, at the head of this valley; but saw no game save a herd of antelopes, whose vigilant sentinels baffled the efforts of our hunters to approach them; and thus we starved in view of plenty.

## CHAPTER XXXI

On the 20th we crossed the mountain, and encamped on the Jefferson, about thirty miles below Beaver Head. Here, our hunters were partially compensated for their bad-luck previous to this time; for they brought into camp the flesh of one bull, several elk, deer, and antelopes, upon which we feasted fully.

The next day being Friday, some of our catholic comrades conscientiously kept lent, having eaten so much the day before, as to be utterly unable to violate this custom of the church, had they even felt so disposed; they are however, by and by, not often so forcibly reminded of the propriety of compliance with religious observances, though the expediency of those rites is often illustrated in a similar manner.

In the afternoon, accompanied by a friend, I visited the grave of Frasier, the Irroquois, who was killed and buried here last fall, being desirous to ascertain what was generally believed already, namely, that his body had been stolen from the grave, robbed of its covering, and thrown into the Jefferson by the Black foot Indians. This opinion originated from the circumstance of finding the body of a man in the river last fall, and was now fully confirmed by the grave being open.

After this time, we continued southward up to the Philanthropy, and killed elk, deer and antelopes; and caught some beaver, on the route. Fifteen miles below Beaver Head, is a quarry of green stone, that is semi-transparent, and easily cut with a knife. It is highly prized by the Indians, for manufacturing into pipes. It is situated in a bluff, on the west side of the river; overlooking the plain. In the vicinity of the Philanthropy, we saw several fine herds of buffalo, and our hunters reported that the plains were covered with them near Beaver Head.

On the 24th several Black Foot-Indians were seen lurking about the thickets that skirt the river, evidently watching an opportunity to kill some of our trappers, who being aware of their design, always go out in parties of several together, for mutual safety.

After this period we continued southeastward, following the course of the Philanthropy, and

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

trapping it in our route, about twenty miles to the head of this plain, where the river flows from a narrow defile, one or two miles in length. Continuing our course through the narrows, we re-entered the valley - where the Indians with us killed a Black foot last fall - and again reached the mountain, whence the river flows, after a march of fifteen miles.

On the first of October, we left the plain and followed a zig zag course of the river fifteen miles, into the mountains; halting in the evening in a narrow bottom, scarcely large enough to contain ourselves and horses; however, beaver signs were numerous, and we remained two nights, being amply compensated for the inconvenience of our situation, by the numbers of beaver we caught during our stay.

On the 30th we left the river, and ascended the mountain eastward, with inexpressible fatigue, owing to the obstructions that lay in our route, added to the perpendicularity of the ascent; though we succeeded in reaching the summit, without accident, and encamped beside a fountain on the south side, at the base of an enormous peak, that rises majestically far above the rest, is crowned with eternal snow, and overlooks the plains of both the Jefferson and Madison rivers.

On the 4th we arose early in the morning, and found the country covered with snow, to the depth of fifteen inches. Last evening the weather was pleasant, and bade fair to continue so. We halted late, and were nearly overcome by fatigue; hence we neglected our usual precaution, constructing cabins; which otherwise would have deprived us of the laugh we enjoyed, at the expense of our comrades, who successively popped out their heads as they arose, half supported, from the snow, by which they were completely buried, and which tumbling in, reoccupied their beds, the moment they left them. The day was extremely cold, and the snow continued falling so fast, that we were forced to remain; however, we prepared shelters for the coming night, and kindled large fires in the pines, by which we dried our bedding, and passed the day. On the 5th the storm had abated, though the atmosphere was still cloudy and cool; however, we descended the mountain, following a spring source until it increased to a large creek, having a rapid and noisy current. In the evening it recommenced snowing, and continued all night and the following day, without intermission.

On the 7th we raised camp, though the snow was still falling very fast, and the company crossed a low spur of the mountain, in a northeast direction, fifteen miles to a parallel stream. In the mountain I, with several others, in quest of buffalo continued our course eastward ten miles, to the junction of this stream, with the Madison river. This branch of the Missouri is here eighty yards wide, quite shallow, and its bed is composed of smooth round rocks, of a black color. It commands a narrow valley, terminated on either side by abrupt and lofty mountains, through which it flows to the northward. Its borders were decked with a few black willows, of an inferior growth, which appeared to be out of place in their present situation. There are however several small streams flowing into it, whose borders are covered with aspen and pine trees, or thickets of common willows. After we separated from the company this morning, the storm increased so much that we could discover nothing, and with difficulty kept our course; but the cutting winds became less tedious, as we approached the river, and finally abated; in the meantime we discov-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

ered a herd of buffalo, lying in a ravine sheltered from the storm, one of which we killed and went to camp. On the 8th the storm continued with fury all the day, yet regardless of its severity, we raised camp and passed over to the mouth of the creek, that we left yesterday; when we sheltered ourselves in a grove of dead aspen trees, which supplied us with an abundance of fuel. The snow is now more than a foot deep, in the bottoms bordering the river.

On the 6th our long absent friend, the sun, reappeared with such lustre, that one, without the gift of prophecy might have foretold, the rapid annihilation of the snow, which followed; leaving the country partially inundated with water. During the day, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company arrived from the three forks of the Missouri and encamped near us; they separated from Mr. Dripps at the forks, who continued up the Jefferson; whilst they trapped the Gallatin, and crossed to the Madison, a few miles below us. They had caught but few beaver, and were several times alarmed by parties of Indians, who were lurking about them, but as yet no person had been injured.

On the 20th the weather was disagreeable, and the prairie wet and muddy, which prevented either company from moving, though both were anxious to proceed. It was passed however, in the various amusements, incident to such a suspension of active operations; in which card playing was the principal; and, as if to illustrate the various subjects of conversation, and give emphatic form to particular photographs, the stentorian voices of the hardy hunters, were occasionally heard, practicing that fashionable folly and crime, profane swearing.

## CHAPTER XXXII

On the 11th the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. raised camp, and departed southward up the river, to accomplish their design of trapping its sources, before proceeding to winter quarters. Though desirous to imitate their example, and be moving, we were yet compelled to remain quiet, and pass this day, as we had the preceding one, in inactivity; as some of our absent trappers had not yet returned.

Oct. 12th. - This morning we raised camp, passed about fifteen miles down the river, and encamped on its margin. It here passes through a narrow valley, flanked on either side by a bold bank fifty or sixty feet in height; from the top of the bluff, however, a gently irregular plain is seen, extending fifteen or twenty miles, in a northeast direction, nearly ten miles in width and bounded on either side by lofty snow covered mountains; through which its channel, a deep canal with perpendicular rocky walls of considerable height, winds its devious way - Near our encampment we discovered a herd of buffalo, and killed five of them. On the succeeding day we travelled over the plains to the mountains, which we likewise crossed at a very low pass, and halted on a small fork, that flows through a range of barren hills, and discharges its waters into the Philanthropy. Our course was north of west, and we made about eighteen miles.

On the 14th we descended from the hills, and encamped near this run, eight miles below the narrows, on a small plain, surrounded by the most imposing and romantic scenery. During our

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

march we had an alarm of Indians from some of our hunters; and myself and others went to ascertain the truth. We proceeded, however, but a short distance when we found the remains of a cow, just butchered, and evidently abandoned in haste, which satisfied us that the butchers had fled for safety or assistance. We returned and reported the discovery to our partizan. In the mean time a rumor was current that a party would go and ascertain more of the matter, after we should encamp. Not doubting that it originated with our leader, previous to unsaddling, I went to him, and inquired if he thought it necessary for some of us to go. "No," said he, "for this reason; if there are many of them, and they are enemies, we shall see them soon enough; but on the contrary if they are but few, they are already far beyond our reach, in the neighboring mountains." I left him without making any reply, and turned out my horse; but observed him soon after in the act of re-saddling his own, which excited my curiosity to ascertain his intentions. I therefore approached him, and was informed that he had again considered the matter, and thought it best for some few of us to go, and gain, if possible, more positive information; as the trappers could not be persuaded to hunt when danger was apparent.

Accordingly we equipped ourselves, and sallied out of camp one after another, where we collected to the number of seven, a short distance from it. We proceeded up the river about three miles, and found a fire yet burning, near a cow evidently killed but a short time previous, and also perceived traces of Indians following a buffalo trail up along the margin of the river. The neighboring hills were covered with vast herds of these animals that appeared to be quite unalarmed, and from these favorable appearances, we were confident there were not more than seven or eight Indians in the party. We continued on about three miles further, directing our course towards the only dense grove of timber on this part of the river, where we were certain of finding them unless they had fled to the mountains. About fifty yards from the river, we crossed a deep gully through which a part of its current flows, during the spring tides, and were carefully scrutinizing the grove, on which every eye was fixed in eager curiosity, watching each wavering twig and rustling bough, to catch a glimpse of some skulking savage. Suddenly the lightning and thunder of at least twenty fusils burst upon our astonished senses from the gully, and awoke us to a startling consciousness of imminent danger, magnified beyond conception, by the almost magical appearance of more than one hundred warriors, erect in uncompromising enmity - both before and on either side of us, at the terrifying distance (since measured) of thirty steps. Imagination cannot paint the horrid sublimity of the scene. A thousand brilliances reflected from their guns as they were quickly thrown into various positions, either to load or fire, succeeded the first volley, which was followed by a rapid succession of shots, and the leaden messengers of death, whistled in our ears as they passed in unwelcome proximity. At that instant I saw three of our comrades flying, like arrows, from the place of murder. The horse of our partizan was shot dead under him, but with unexampled firmness, he stepped calmly from the lifeless animal, presented his gun at the advancing foe, and exclaimed "boys don't run;" at the same moment the wounded horse of a Frenchman threw his rider, and broke away towards camp. The yells of these infernal fiends filled the air, and death appeared inevitable, when I was aroused to energy by observing about twenty Indians advancing, to close the already narrow passage, between the two lines of warriors. Dashing my spurs rowel deep into the flank of my noble steed, at a single bound he cleared the ditch, but before he reached the ground, I was struck in the left shoulder by a ball, which nearly threw

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

me off; by a desperate effort, however, I regained my upright position, and fled. A friend (Mr. R. C. Nelson) crossed the gully with me, but a moment after he was called to return. Without considering the utter impossibility of rendering assistance to our devoted partisan, he wheeled, but at the same instant his horse was severely wounded by two balls through the neck, which compelled him to fly; he yet kept his eye for some moments on our friend, who seeing himself surrounded, without the possibility of escape, levelled his gun and shot down the foremost of his foes. The Indians immediately fired a volley upon him - he fell - they uttered a loud and shrill yell of exultation, and the noble spirit of a good and a brave man had passed away forever.

Thus fell Wm. Henry Vanderburgh, a gentleman born in Indiana, educated at West Point in the Military Academy, and, at the time he perished, under thirty years of age. Bold, daring and fearless, yet cautious, deliberate and prudent; uniting the apparent opposite qualities, of courage and coolness, a soldier and a scholar, he died universally beloved and regretted by all who knew him.

The Frenchman, who was thrown from his horse, was also killed; his name was Pilou.

I had not gone above two hundred paces from the ravine, before I heard Nelson calling for me to stop. I did so until he came up exclaiming "our friend is killed! - our friend is killed! let us go and die with him." Believing that I would shortly have to undergo the dying part of the affair, without farther assistance from the Indians than I had already received, I felt little like returning, and we continued our rapid flight. The blood ran freely from my mouth and nose, and down my body and limbs; I became so faint that I reeled on my horse like a person intoxicated, and with extreme difficulty prevented myself from falling. I gave my gun to one of my comrades, the three who first fled having now joined us, and succeeded in getting to camp, where I was taken down, and soon agreeably disappointed with the cheering intelligence that my wound was not dangerous, and I would shortly be a well man. It was probed with a gun stick, by a friend who had some knowledge of practical surgery, and dressed with a salve of his own preparation, by which it healed so rapidly, that after the expiration of a month I felt no inconvenience from it.

We found our comrades in camp greatly alarmed, and so confident that they would be attacked in it, that some of them, more terrified than the rest, openly expressed a determination to flee for safety. They were however, convinced by some of the more daring and sensible, of the propriety and necessity of remaining together, to secure, by a manly defence, the property in camp as well as their own lives; that by a cowardly separation they would not only lose all their effects, and expose themselves to greater insecurity, but would ever after bear the stigma of having basely and cowardly deserted their companions in the hour of peril, when a united and manly effort was alone necessary to insure safety. The timid convinced by these cogent arguments, and all somewhat reassured, it was determined to remain together, and for greater security moved a short distance at sunset, into a point of timber, where we could defend ourselves against thrice our number. Next morning we arose, having passed a very unpleasant night, unrefreshed and haggard, but satisfied that we should escape an attack; and a proposition was made that a party should go and inter the remains of our lamented friends. But few persons could be found willing to risk the chance of finding the bodies, without falling into the same snare; consequently the de-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

sign was abandoned. However, we determined to go on to the caches, (which had been made in Horse-prairie during my absence, in quest of the Flat Heads, the preceding August.) Accordingly we packed up, and passed from the south side of the river to a point of mountain between this stream and the Jefferson, when we came in view of a large smoke at Beaver Head, towards which we had directed our course.

Aware now of the vicinity of an Indian village, to that place, and having had sufficient reason for believing them enemies, consternation again seized us, and we turned our course toward a grove of cotton wood trees, on the last named river; which we reached and halted at, after a march of fifteen miles. All hands immediately set to work, and soon constructed a strong pen of trees, large enough to contain ourselves and horses, and shelter us from the balls of our foes; which made us feel quite safe and fearless. We however kept a good look out from the trees, and guarded our horses close about camp, ready to drive them into the pen at a moment's warning, in case of the appearance of Indians. But the day passed away without incident, and the night also; yet we determined to remain in our present quarters, till we should be able to ascertain the extent of our danger, and the best means of avoiding it. To accomplish this object, some of our boldest comrades furnished themselves with our fleetest horses, and rode off in the direction of the village. - They had been but a short time absent, when they returned with the welcome intelligence, that the village was composed of about one hundred and fifty lodges of Flat Heads, Pen-d'oreilles, and others, which at once quieted all our fears, and camp again assumed its wonted bustle.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

Soon careless groups were idly loitering on the ground in various positions; others trying to excel one another in shooting; some engaged in mending their clothes or moccasins; here one fondling a favorite horse, there another, galloping, in wild delight, over the prairie; a large band of horses quietly feeding about camp; large kettles supported over fires by "trois-pied" (three feet) and graced to overflowing with the best of meat; saddles and baggage scattered about; and to finish the description, fifty uncovered guns leaning against the fort or pen ready for use, at any moment. Such was the aspect of our camp, which was now settled; and a stranger uninformed of the late disastrous occurrences, would not have discovered that anything had happened, to mar our usual tranquility.

Next morning a party went to seek and inter the remains of our murdered friends. In the mean time, we raised camp and moved to the Indian village. I was unable to use my left arm, which I carried in a sling, yet I walked about, and felt no inconvenience from it, except when riding fast, or when my horse stumbled in travelling. There was with the Indians, a "trader" from the Hudson Bay Company, and several "Engages," from whom we learned that Dripps had passed up to the caches a few days previous. In the evening our party returned, and reported that they could find no trace of the body of Mr. Vanderburgh, but had found and buried the Frenchman - Pilou. Having ascertained that these Indians would pass that place in a few days, we promised to give them a present, if they would seek, and inter the remains of the unfortunate Vanderburgh. - We

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

departed southward on the 18th, passed up the plain about twelve miles, and halted in a very fertile bottom on the Jefferson. Continuing our course on the succeeding day, we passed up this river about the same distance, through the Rattle Snake cliffs, and encamped on a very narrow level, at its margin. Above these cliffs the river is confined on either side, by high bald or rocky hills, through which it meanders leaving little or no ground on its borders; some few elk and antelopes are found here, and buffalo in abundance.

Leaving this place on the 20th we crossed several forks of this stream, one of which is nearly as large as the river itself, and rises in the mountains on the east side of the Big Hole. It commands a fine little valley at its head, called by some the "Little Hole" and is separated from Horse Prairie by a bald hill. Having made about the same distance as on the preceding day, we came into the valley, at the forks, where Lewis and Clark left their canoes. Our caches were situated near this place, and we found Mr. Dripps here, awaiting our arrival. We learned from him, that nothing uncommon or serious had occurred, save the loss of a few horses, which were stolen, and camp fired upon, by a party of Blackfeet Indians, during the night of the fifth; but no person was injured, though several trappers were still out hunting. - Here we remained until the 24th, when Mr. Dripps and company set out for Snake river, where he intended to pass the winter. I also departed with two men, and a small equipment for the purpose of trading with the above named Indians. We passed about fifteen miles through Horse Prairie to the "Gates," where I found a party of them, who had left Dripps two days since. These "Gates" are a high rocky conical elevation attached to a plain jutting into the bottom on one side of the river precisely opposite to the bluff rocky termination of a plain of considerable height, on the other side, but three or four hundred yards asunder; which gives to them the appearance of formidable gates, and they were thus named by Lewis and Clark.

We remained several days with the Indians, who were actively employed in hunting, to supply themselves with meat for food, and skins for clothing, against the approach of winter. A day or two after my arrival, a small party of men belonging to Capt. Bonyville's Company, and some few lodges of Flatheads, encamped with us. This party had been out in quest of buffalo meat for the company, the remainder of which, were employed in constructing a fort, on Salmon River. One or two nights previous to their joining us, their camp was boldly entered by several Blackfeet, who were discovered by a squaw; she immediately entered her husband's lodge, and informed him of their presence. Like a true brave, he sprang forth from his lodge, gun in hand, but was shot down at its entrance. All hands immediately flew to arms, but the ever cautious enemy had already disappeared in a neighboring thicket. Nothing deserving of record had happened to this company since we saw them in August on Green River.

Three days afterwards a party of twenty five trappers headed by Capt. Walker, belonging likewise to Bonnyville's expedition, arrived, and informed us that they had a skirmish with a party of Blackfeet some days since, in the Little Hole, but lost nothing except a few horses, and several rounds of powder and ball. About the same period, an express arrived from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, stating that soon after separating from us, they fell in with a party of trappers, on the sources of the Madison, who had left Dripps on the Missouri below the three forks. They

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

were fired upon by a party of Blackfeet, and lost one man killed, and another severely wounded; a third left them about the same time, to look for a trail, and had not been heard from since; these things occurred near the three forks before named. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company crossed from the Madison, to the head of Pierre's fork of the Jefferson, where they encountered a party of about seventy Pagans, (Blackfeet). Two of their chiefs ventured up to camp unarmed, and were permitted to go in. They expressed a wish to bury all animosity, and establish peace and amity with the whites. - They promised to meet and trade with them on Snake river the coming winter; and sent word to the Flatheads, that they should pay them a visit in the spring, and if possible exterminate their race. They stated likewise that all the Pagan chiefs had resolved in council to kill and rob the whites no more. And at the same time they cautioned them to be on their guard against a party of more than one hundred Blood Indians, who were two days in advance of them, and might possibly "show fight." The Indians departed on the morning following, apparently much pleased with the whites, and particularly with some trifling presents they received.

Agreeable to the intelligence received from the Pagans, the Company fell in with the Blood Indians, and had a skirmish with them. The whites commenced the firing, and the Indians immediately displayed a white signal on a pole, and the firing ceased. Two of the chiefs then went into camp, and said they were sorry the whites had fired on them, as they wished to be friendly. McKenzie at Fort Union, had told them to exhibit a white flag, and the whites would permit them to come unmolested into their camps, and trade with them. They corroborated the statement of the Pagans, and said that they were now going against the Snakes. They also left the whites much pleased with the presents which they received.

The R.M.F. Company arrived soon after the express, and remained with us one day; after which we all departed, and travelled over the mountains to the east fork of Salmon River, about twenty miles; and from thence about the same distance to the forks, and finally, three miles farther to Bonnyville's fortification, situated on the west bank of the river, in a grove of Cottonwood trees. This miserable establishment, consisted entirely of several log cabins, low, badly constructed, and admirably situated for besiegers only, who would be sheltered on every side, by timber, brush etc.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

I was undeceived, at sight, respecting this "fort" which I had been informed, was to be a permanent post for trading with the Indians; but its exposed situation, and total want of pickets, proved that it was only intended for a temporary shelter for the company, during the winter.

On the seventh of November, several Indians came to us from the village we left at Beaver Head and reported, that they had halted on the spot where Vanderburgh was killed and that they succeeded in finding his bones, which the Blackfeet had thrown into the river; and had interred them, on the margin of that stream, near where he fell. After having been satisfied that their

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

statement was correct; I made them the promised present.

In the afternoon a detachment of the R.M.F. Company, which had been to the south westward on the snake river, and its tributaries returned and informed us, that they had been down near the Walla Walla trading house of the Hudson Bay Co., I but had made a "bad hunt" owing to the scarcity of Beaver in that quarter. They saw a village of Snakes and Ponacks, amounting to about two hundred lodges on Gordiez River; which was attacked a few days before by a large party of about one hundred and fifty Blackfeet; but it seemed they were greatly deceived in the number of their foes, for no sooner had the Snakes and Ponacks sallied out in battle order, than their enemies fled into a thicket of willows. The Snakes, however, fired the prairie which rapidly spread and soon gained the willows; they, being mostly dry, quickly disappeared in the devouring element, and the Blackfeet were compelled to reappear in the open prairie, but they were so terrified that they simultaneously fled, directing their course over a barren prairie, towards the nearest point of the mountains, distant some three miles. The Snakes, mounted on their horses, followed and continued charging and firing on them, until they reached the timber on the mountain, and could no longer proceed on horse back. The Snakes then returned back to their village, scalping their fallen enemies on the way, to the number of forty men, and five women. They were not however without loss, nine of their warriors being stretched in death on the plain, and among the number, the famous Horned Chief, remarkable for his lasting friendship to the Whites. This was the individual, it will be remembered, who alone prevented a diabolical plot to murder us on Bear river, in 1831.

Possessed of a superstitious idea, that the moon was his guardian deity, this extraordinary Indian imagined that she instructed him in dreams during his sleep; and he taught his followers to believe that he never acted but in obedience to her directions, and that he could not be killed by metal. He was the owner of an uncommonly fleet bay horse, with which at one race, he has killed two deer, and but for the lack of arrows would have dispatched a third, from the same herd. He thought his favorite deity had informed him that he would invariably be successful in war, when mounted on his favorite steed, and obedient to the divine inspiration, he always rushed headlong upon his enemies without fear of death, and rendered himself so terrible to them by his prowess, that his presence alone was often sufficient to put them to flight.

At one time, meeting a small party of Blackfeet Indians traveling on foot in the open prairie, regardless of danger, and alone, he rushed upon them, with his only weapon, a spear, and killed no less than six of their number. This great warrior, scorning to take the usual trophy of victory, returned to camp and told his young men, that if they wanted hair, with which to garnish their leggins; they would find some at a given place in the prairie. Several young warriors set out instantly, and soon returned, bearing six scalps to their astonished tribe.

This intrepid hero was shot through the heart with a ball, which immediately deprived him of life. The Snakes universally believe the ball to have been made of horn, as he had induced them to think, that he could not be killed by any metal.

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Some time afterwards the R. M. Fur Co., took their departure up Salmon river, intending to pass the winter in Little Salmon river valley. A detachment of forty men, under Capt. Walker, were in the mean time making preparations for their removal to Snake river, where they were to pass that inclement season. I determined to go with this party to the mouth of Blackfoot, and thence to the forks of Snake river, where Dripps intended to await the coming spring.

After some delays, we set off on our journey, and passed about forty-five miles up the narrow and irregular valley, through which the Salmon river, confined to small and uneven bottoms by the mountains, runs. The Indian trail which we followed, crossed several steep high points, almost impassable to our now feeble horses. Our course from Bonnyville's Fort, gently turned from south to south west. At the termination of this distance, we again found ourselves in the open level country, near the lower extremity of little Salmon River valley. At this point we overtook the R. M. F. Company, and passed with them slowly up to the head of this valley, a distance of thirty miles, and there again departed from them. This company resolved to pass the winter here. We passed through Day's defile, and slowly down to the termination of Day's Creek, about fifty miles. We saw several encampments of the Ponacks, who had recently passed here, in the direction of Porteneuf; at this place, Mr. Fitzpatrick of the R. M. F. Co. joined us, with one man; intending to go with us to Dripps, with whom he had some business to transact. Departing thence, we directed our course towards the lower or south-western Butte, and halted on Gordiez River, after a march of twelve miles. We saw during the day several herds of buffalo, but killed none until after we had encamped, when one of our hunters succeeded in approaching a herd of bulls, and shot a very fine one.

Next day we continued our course, and halted at a small spring in a ravine on the N. E. side of the Butte, which is the only water found at this mountain; and even it is lost in the sand before reaching the prairie. After leaving the spring, we passed east of south, twenty-five miles without finding any water; and halted at a spring, five miles west of Snake river; and seven or eight above the mouth of Porteneuf. From this place, we crossed Snake River, and encamped in the rich luxurious bottom, on the East side of this stream, December 11th. Hunters were immediately dispatched in quest of game; they returned successful, and reported, that they had heard guns firing, seen buffalo running, and discovered a large smoke on the river, about twenty miles above. Several Ponacks came to camp the next day, reported that their village was on the Porteneuf, and that they had no knowledge of any whites on the river, except a party of Norwest trappers they had seen very far down it. Shortly after an express arrived, bringing information, that four men belonging to a detachment from Bonnyville's Company, which separated from him on Green River, were killed about a month previous, near the sheep Rock; and that the remainder of the party were in winter quarters in Cache valley.

## CHAPTER XXXV

On the 17th I set out in company with Mr. Fitzpatrick and four others, in search of Mr. Dripps. Travelling a distance of 70 miles up the river, to the forks, we fell in with some of his hunters,

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

who escorted us to their camp, on one of the numerous islands in Lewis' river. We remained here two days, which was agreeably passed, every lodge being graced with racks which were well filled with the best of meat. All were supplied with good quarters, and appeared to want for nothing this dreary country could afford, that would contribute to their comfort or amusement. We left this place on the 22d, on our return; Mr. Fitzpatrick to join his party on Salmon River, and I, for the men and baggage we had left at the mouth of the Blackfoot. We arrived at the quarters of Capt. Walker on the 24th, and passed the next day with this gentleman very pleasantly, receiving the best treatment his - in this country necessarily limited - means would afford. During the last two days, the snow hitherto rare, had fallen to the depth of seven or eight inches. With the design to purchase a few skins of the Ponacks, who were encamped at this time on a small stream near Blackfoot River, I visited their village on the 20th, and found these miserable wretches to the number of eighty or one hundred families, half naked, and without lodges, except in one or two instances. They had formed, however, little huts of sage roots, which were yet so open and ill calculated to shield them from the extreme cold, that I could not conceive how they were able to endure such severe exposure. Warmly clad as I was, I could hardly think it possible to pass one night in such a miserable shelter without freezing, unless supplied with the means of keeping a good fire, during the whole time. They kept small ones, burning in the centre of their cabins, and groups of half starved, and almost wholly frozen women and children, were squatting in a circular form round them, ever struggling, with a feeling and energetic devotion, still nearer to approximate the element they so fervently worshipped. In almost every family might be seen several dogs crowding between the children, to share with them a portion of the animal and artificial heat, diffused equally to all who formed the surrounding ring, which is generally involved or lost from view, in the dense clouds of smoke, which custom or habit had rendered less disagreeable to them, than would be imagined.

Having succeeded in procuring a few skins - their poverty forbade my getting many - left them on my return, reflecting on their intolerable indolence, and abject condition, and its natural consequence; feeling pity for their sufferings, and yet forced to blame their entire want of industry, which might in a great measure alleviate their hardships; for a few hours employment would suffice to form a cabin of grass and branches, infinitely more comfortable than their present abodes.

Three days after, I set out with several others to rejoin Mr. Dripps, whose camp we reached on the third day; nothing worthy of record having occurred on the march. We learned here, that during our absence a man who was lost on the Missouri, last fall, had returned to the company, having rambled about the mountains alone, for more than a month.

The first of January, 1833, or New Years day, was spent in feasting, drinking, and dancing, agreeable to the Canadian custom. In amusements such as riding, shooting, wrestling, etc. when the weather was fair, and in the diversion of card playing when the state of affairs without would not permit athletic exercises, the month of January passed away, during which, we had changed our camp three times, in order to obtain better grass for our faithful animals. The weather was generally fine, but little snow had fallen, and we usually found plenty of game near our camp - therefore time passed away not only comfortably but pleasantly. On the seventh of February, three of our

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

trappers went up the river about twenty miles in search of beaver, when they discovered five comical Indian forts, and supposing them tenantless, they approached them without apprehension intending to pass the coming night, in one of them; when they had arrived within a few paces of them; seven or eight Indians rushed out and fired upon them. One of their horses was shot down beneath his rider, who sprang up behind one of his comrades, and they fled unharmed back to camp, which they reached the same evening. We had on the twentieth an alarm from some of our hunters, stating the appearance of a large party of horsemen, on the opposite side of the river. Some of us concluded they were the same party of Indians, who had promised the R. M. F. Co. to come and trade with them on this stream during the present winter. A party sallied out to obtain information, and soon ascertained that a large herd of elk had caused the alarm. - These animals, when frightened or startled, throw up their heads, which their long necks enable them to do quite high, and have at a distance, much of the appearance of a band of horsemen - I mention this circumstance, because when they are advancing, or retiring, at a distance of three or four miles, the most sagacious Indians are often deceived by them; and cases when horsemen are mistaken for elk are by no means uncommon. The month of February, thus far, has been very pleasant; the days are mild and serene, and seldom miss the genial radiance of the sun - the nights, however, are by no means so comfortable, and the river is frozen to a depth of two feet. The snow has in many places quite disappeared, and the returning warblers have already announced the approach of gentle spring; whom we soon expected to see, arrayed in a joyous garb of leaves and flowers. Our hunters as usual leave camp about daylight, and generally return in time for breakfast, laden with supplies of meat of various kinds, so plentiful is game in this region. Several visitors from both the R. M. F. Co., and Walker's camp, arrived about this time, and from them we learned, that five men left the former company about the first of December, on Gordie's River in quest of meat, but were never afterward heard of; and the trail of a party of Indians going in the direction they had taken, was discovered a day or two subsequent. The possibility of their having voluntarily abandoned the company, and gone to the Spanish settlements or elsewhere, is at once refuted by the fact, that they left property behind them to the amount of several hundred dollars. They were without doubt killed by the Indians; their names were Quigley, Smith, Smith, the other two not recollected.

We remained quietly awaiting the disappearance of snow and ice, which was realized about the twenty-fourth of March. Geese and swans are now performing their migratory returns, and are continually seen flying over us; ducks are also observed in abundance. Our numerous company was now divided into two parties, one of them headed by a Spaniard named Alvaris, amounting to about forty men, departed up Henry's Fork, intending to hunt on the Yellow Stone River; and finally join us on Green River, at the expiration of the spring hunt. Mr. Dripps with the remainder, including myself, marched a short distance up Lewis River, and halted, the weather being yet so cold and wet, as to render travelling extremely uncomfortable.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

From this time forward until the 19th of April, the weather continued raw and windy, with fre-

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

quent storms of snow; yet many of our trappers were successfully employed in taking beaver. Four of them returned quite unexpectedly from an expedition to Gray's Hole this evening, considerably alarmed. They came suddenly, it appears, upon several forts in a grove of aspen trees, in that place, which were still tenanted, as ascending volumes of smoke proved to their surprise, and they immediately fled, pursued by a large body of Indians, who followed with such speed that it was for some time doubtful which party would arrive first at a narrow gorge, where the only chance of saving their lives presented itself. The certainty of death if they were overtaken, or their retreat through the pass cut off, urged them on with an energy and rapidity unknown to less pressing dangers. Even their horses seemed to comprehend the peril, and seconding with generous efforts the wishes of their riders, bore them safely on, till they reached the defile, passing through which into the open plain beyond, relieved them from further pursuit. The earth was at this time covered with snow, and from their being obliged to take a route very circuitous to the pass, owing to rocks, precipices, and other obstacles, which horsemen could not safely venture over, but which the light armed, strong limbed, and swift footed Indians easily threaded, in an almost direct course to the place, which if first reached by them, cut off the only hope of escape to the poor trappers, their danger was indeed imminent, and scarcely had they passed through the defile, before the yells of the disappointed savages, arriving at the place, proclaimed how determined had been their pursuit, and how timely their flight.

Five horsemen were seen on the 19th, on the margin of Snake river, down which they turned and fled, on finding themselves discovered. Who they were could not be ascertained, but they were supposed to be Blackfeet. - Two days afterwards, we discovered a large smoke apparently near the forks, probably proceeding from the fires of Alvaris, from whose camp four men returned on the 22nd, and reported they were still on Henry's Fork, having been prevented from advancing further by the snow, then two feet deep on Cammas prairie; and were waiting its disappearance. Next day they returned back to their own quarters.

We removed on the 24th to Gray's creek, about eight miles, and encamped in the vicinity of a herd of buffalo; several of which were killed by our hunters. In the evening a small party of trappers came in from Salt River, where they were to have remained during the hunt; they were driven to the necessity of returning, by the presence of hostile Indians. Our hunters on the succeeding day, killed a number of fine fat bulls, and as usual, we fared well.

To the reader, it may seem trifling to record the simple fact of our having heard guns fired in the cedars on Lewis river, and likewise in the direction of Gray's Hole; but to the hunter of the Rocky Mountains such an occurrence is an event of importance, and should by no means be unheeded. Surrounded by tribes of savages, whose ethicks counsel theft and murder on every occasion, and authorize treachery and cruelty without discrimination, nothing but the most watchful care, and sagacious prudence can render him even comparatively safe, in the midst of so many dangers as are constantly thrown around him, by a wicked and wily foe. True the report of fire arms may indicate the vicinity of friends, but they may much more likely herald the approach of enemies; and the most common prudence will show the importance of a careful attention to these and other alarms. The most important event in the march of a week, may be the report of a strange fusil, so

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

uncertain are the circumstances it may produce, and so probable the vicinity of danger.

On the 26th we proceeded to Gray's Hole, twelve miles, where we remained until the 3d of May following. Scattered about the hills near our camp, I saw a great number of porous rocks, each having a cavity much like an oven, with invariably a single orifice; which in one of the largest was so small as scarcely to admit a wolf, yet the area within was sufficiently large to have contained several men. These rocks consist of a very coarse sand stone, extremely hard and nearly round, the cavities within were also generally circular, and what was very singular, though rocks of this species were numerous and of various sizes, yet each one had a similar cavern. Different species of rocks are found here in abundance, such as granite, limestone, etc., but none of these were of the form, or had the peculiarity which characterized the sand stone formation. Could the waves of the ocean, which was evidently once here, have washed these fragments of stone into such regular form, and by continued attrition have worn out those remarkable cavities? - their similitude refuses the probability of the suggestion. - Could their nuclei have been of perishable material, and in the lapse of ages, by decomposition have left those singular cavities? - the uniformity of their appearance, and the fact that each rock of the kind had one and but one aperture, will not allow the conclusion. Were they formed by the industry and ingenuity of man? - if so, to what purpose was an amount of labor expended at once so vast and so difficult? It must remain an enigma for the present. The investigations of philosophers may hereafter elucidate their origin and uses, now a mystery.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII

We changed our encampment several times further south, and finally proceeded eastward about fifteen miles and halted on a small stream, which passes here through a beautiful valley, skirted as usual by lofty hills, covered with evergreen pine. A young man by the name of Benjamin Hardister, who came out last summer with Bonnyville, but had left him and taken refuge in our camp in the winter, died on the evening of the 8th, of some complaint, the germ of which he had no doubt brought with him from the United States. With the assistance of a man behind him on the same horse, he rode eight miles during the day previous to his decease. We buried him as decently as circumstances would permit the next day, "and left him alone in his glory." On the 10th, we crossed the mountain with difficulty, in consequence of the narrow and irregular condition of the paths formed by buffalo, passing sometimes along the uneven bottom of the ravines, sometimes up the broken and steep declivity of their sides, winding often among fragments of rock, and occasionally through the almost impassible pine forests, that cover the middle region of the Rocky Mountains; and after a very tiresome march of twenty miles, found ourselves on Salt river, in a fine valley about fifteen miles long, by four broad, and surrounded by high mountains, whose bases are covered by dense forests of pine and aspen. The river runs through it in nearly a north direction, and several small creeks with willow and aspen timbered margins, flow into it from the mountain. The valley is level, having but little sage, is covered with short grass, like all other timberless plains, and is entirely free from those little holes, burrowed by badgers, often found in other valleys, which are highly dangerous to equestrians, and frequently cause serious accidents

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

to those, Indians and others, who kill deer or buffalo by running them on horseback. Instances of valuable horses crippled by stepping in these holes while running, are of frequent occurrence in plains where these holes are numerous. We found several bands of buffalo here, and had the good fortune to kill ten or twelve. - On the 14th several of us went up this river in quest of salt.

From the head of this valley, twelve miles from camp, we proceeded three miles through a range of hills, and came to the valley of the Boiling Kettles, already described; passing up a small branch that empties into Salt river on the same side, and a short distance above the Boiling Kettles, to its head, we found several low wet places where salt was found by elutriation in considerable quantities; in one, particularly, a layer of cubic and pyramidal crystals seven inches in thickness, found above a black, stinking, miry substance several rods in extent, furnished us with abundance. The salt found in the country is, however, more commonly attached to stones, in the bottoms of dried up pools, like ice, and requires a hard blow, in most cases, to separate them. Breaking from the strata as much salt as we could conveniently carry, we collected the fragments and put them into bags, which we lashed behind our saddles, and sallied out into the prairie on our return to camp. We visited several springs situated on the side of a bald hill, about half a mile from the Kettles. Extending several yards around these springs, the rocky cement, as well as the earth, is hollow, and the noise of our footsteps, increasing as we advanced, at length redoubled to that degree that some of my comrades refused to approach the several holes and caves found near the Kettles, which are much smaller than those in the plain, being in no instance more than two feet high. Like them, however, the water continually boils over from a small aperture from the top, ever depositing a slimy greenish matter which soon hardens into rock. There are likewise many cavities at the basis of the Kettles, several inches in diameter, from which the boiling water constantly exudes. The surplus water proceeding both from the Kettles and cavities above mentioned, flows down a plain several feet, till it empties into a deep pool three or four rods in diameter; and the outlet of this one becomes the inlet of another, two or three paces distant, of about the same magnitude. The water in both pools is of a bright yellow color, and vapors, disagreeably odorate, are continually emanating from it. Large quantities of sulphur have been deposited on the plain through which it passes, having a beautiful yellow appearance, which can be seen from every part of the valley; though at a distance it seems white. We remained about the springs some time, and set out for camp, where we arrived shortly after dark.

We passed down the river about four miles on the 15th, and encamped on its border. Snow had fallen during the past night to the depth of several inches, but disappeared about noon to-day. On the 10th, a party of us went up to the Boiling Kettles, to procure buffalo meat; we found the valley quite covered with them, but killed a few bulls only; however, the cows are poor and in most cases inferior to the bulls at this season of the year. We saw several bears, but they are not now eatable, except in case of absolute necessity. On our way back we halted for the night, shortly after dark, in the narrows, near a mound, having precisely the shape and appearance of a vastly large haystack.

The ranges of mountains which nearly surround the valley of the springs, as they follow the course of the river down on each side, become greatly approximated to each other, and confining

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

that stream to very small borders and compressed breadth, constitutes what is here termed the narrows; and again expanding or receding from each other, form Salt river valley.

At day-break, the next morning, we set out for camp, passed from the narrows into the plain, and down it several miles, when we discovered eight or ten objects at a distance having the appearance of elk or horsemen; proceeding on our course until we met them, they proved to be a party of trappers from Bonnyville's Company. They informed us that their camp was in the hills on a small stream a mile or so from the river; that they left Walker on Bear river, and came from the head of Black-foot to that of the stream they are now on. On the following day they moved down and encamped with us.

On the 19th we raised camp, and passed through this valley northward, and halted on Lewis river, a few hundred yards above the junction of Salt river with it, after a march of eight miles. This river is confined, a short distance above us, by formidable walls or bluff mountains, forming in some places very high and perpendicular banks, impassable for even those sure footed animals, mules; hence travellers are compelled to cross the mountains into Pierre's Hole, and then again to cross them to Jackson's Hole; when if it were feasible to pass up the river direct, two thirds of the distance we are forced to go, and the fatigue of crossing two mountains, might be avoided.

A narrow valley extended a short distance below our camp, through which the river runs in a north-west direction. The weather was, at this time, cloudy, with some rain, and the shelter of the little cabins, constructed with our blankets was found quite agreeable. About four miles below our camp, we forded the river, on the succeeding day, and proceeding about six miles further down, we halted at the mouth of a small creek, in the neighborhood of which we found wild onions in abundance, and also a species of lettuce in great plenty - weather continuing wet and disagreeable, time passed along rather heavily.

We passed six miles down on the 21st, to a fine valley about ten miles long, in which the river gradually turned to the westward, and at the head of which we rested for the night. Continuing our journey next morning, we went down to the other extremity of the valley, and again halted, having travelled in a direction nearly west, with weather still hazy and uncomfortable.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

On the twenty-third, we ascended the point of a hill which juts in to the river at the lower end of the valley, and then passing over an irregular plain, northwest, a short distance, we reached a small stream, which we followed up into the mountains nine miles, and encamped. Our road, in many places, was almost impassable, in consequence of the thick dense growth of aspen, through which we were obliged to force our way, to the no small detriment of our clothing, and in great danger of losing our eyes, or being at least severely bruised by the numerous branches, which were continually flying back from a strained position, caused by the pack horses forcing themselves through; and which frequently coming against us with no gentle force, in their efforts to

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

regain their natural position, seemed determined to give us a practical lesson on the elasticity of that species of timber. By no means grateful for the instruction thus forcibly imparted, we were heartily rejoiced when the task was ended, and ourselves at liberty to retire and seek repose; fully impressed with the conviction that though to spare the rod, in many instances might spoil the child; yet its too free application on an occasion like the present, would hurt our feelings extremely, without being productive of any beneficial result.

The sun on the morning of the twenty-fourth arose clear and pleasant, and with the prospect of a fair day before us, we again started on our pilgrimage. We ascended a fork and crossed the mountains, when we arrived at the head of a stream flowing into Pierre's Holes; which we followed down into the plain, four miles; there leaving it, we passed over to the stream which marks the pass to Jackson's Hole, about two miles, and halted, very much fatigued, about one mile above the battle ground of last summer.

Next day, with one companion, I returned to Lewis river, in search of several horses which we lost while crossing the mountains the day previous. Again we passed over it, and searched every bottom on the several small forks in the mountain without success, when we went down to Lewis river, and finally found them quietly feeding in a ravine, to which they had strayed near the prairie. We succeeded in catching them and set off on our return at a round pace, which brought us to camp, some time in the evening. On the succeeding morning, in company with a friend or two, I visited the battle ground which was situate in a grove of aspen trees, several hundred yards in extent. The pen or fort was probably about fifty feet square, was composed of green and dry aspen timber, and though hastily, yet firmly constructed. It had sunk down in some places, however, from decay, below the height of two feet perpendicular. The besieged had excavated holes or cavities in the earth, within the pen, sufficiently capacious for two or three persons to remain in, quite below the surface of the ground. These holes extended entirely round the pen; and we ascertained that the Indians had fired, in most cases, from small holes at the surface of the ground, beneath the pen or breast work, which circumstance (happily for them) was not observed in the smoke and confusion of the battle, or they would have been annihilated in a few moments. The attack was principally made on the north side, where at every tree, sticks were still seen piled up against the roots, from which the besiegers fought; who had likewise raised a heap of brush and logs, a few paces from the pen or fort, to nearly or quite the same height; and had the Indian allies not objected, in the hope of capturing their arms, ammunition and other equipments, it would have soon been so greatly increased and advanced toward the pen, as to have insured its destruction, if fired, with all its contents and defenders. Parties were also stationed behind trees, and clusters of willows on the other sides of the fort, which was thus entirely surrounded. The trees both within and outside of the pen, were covered with the marks of balls, or of the axes successfully employed by our comrades, to exhume and save them; lead being very valuable in these remote regions, where it is so extremely necessary, both to the purposes of defence and subsistence. Bones, of both men and animals, lay scattered about, in and around the pen, bearing evident indications of having contributed their fleshy covering, to the sustenance of wolves and ravens; who undoubtedly gratified their gastronomical propensities, after a protracted fast, for some days subsequent to the conflict.

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Mr. Fitzpatrick received information from the Blackfeet, whom he encountered last fall, that the Gros-Vent's after separating from Fontenelle on Green river, last August, passed over to the head of the Yellow Stone, and were there discovered and attacked by the Crows, who captured their horses, took many women and children prisoners, and killed a great portion of the men. Some few, however, of these unfortunate wretches escaped, and after enduring great hardships, reached their friends the Blackfeet, in a state of starvation, nakedness and suffering seldom met with, even among those prowling robbers who are frequently out from the villages for months together, in search of opportunities to steal horses from either whites or Indians, and hence are often necessarily exposed to cold, hunger, privation and danger, almost beyond the limits of human endurance.

On our return to camp, we learned that one of our men had been severely wounded by a grizzly bear, during an excursion for buffalo, in our absence. It appeared that himself and several others discovered one of these formidable animals, near a grove of willows on the margin of a small stream. They approached and mortally wounded him; but he succeeded in crawling into the brush. Our unlucky comrade, unwilling to let the animal escape, advanced to the bushes, and was at the same instant attacked by the enraged bear, who sprang upon and threw him. His companions were so paralyzed with the fear that he would be torn to pieces, that they could render him no assistance, with the exception of one, a well known one eyed Spaniard by the name of Manuel, a famous hunter, who, quick as thought, threw his gun to his eye, and fired; fortunately the ball was well directed, and the huge beast fell lifeless beside the prostrate man, who escaped with life, but was so severely bitten in the hand, arm and thigh, as to be unfit for duty for several weeks.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

We passed slowly over to Jackson's Hole, a distance of twenty miles, and halted, on the 31st, on a small "slough," west of Lewis river. This word is used in the mountains to designate that portion of a river separated from the main channel or current, by the intervention of an island. We passed some immense banks of snow on the mountain, but succeeded in getting over without accident; though not without difficulty; and after the fatiguing march of the day, were well drenched in the evening, by a shower of rain, which the reader may justly conclude, did not, in any degree contribute to our comfort or complacency.

Though very little pleased with the aspect of the weather on the morning of June 1st, when we arose but little refreshed, and found the rain still falling at intervals, yet we raised camp, passed up the valley about fifteen miles, and halted on the east side of the river; our course having been nearly north-east. We found a large herd of buffalo in the valley, and killed several; also a large bear, which paid with his life the temerity of awaiting our approach.

Next day we left the river, and travelled eastward about four miles, to a stream some forty paces in breadth flowing into it, called "Gros Vent's Fork," from that tribe having passed here some

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

years since on their way to the Anipahoes, with whom they are on terms of intimacy and often exchange friendly visits . This stream is quite shallow, having its bed formed of large round black rocks, over which the current dashes with noisy rapidity. Its borders are quite naked in some places, though generally a few scattering trees appear, overhanging the water. During the afternoon it rained considerably, and we found a pretty close approximation to our camp fires by no means detrimental to comfort.

On the 4th we went up this stream into the mountain eight miles, and halted at the mouth of a small fork. Our way, (it could hardly be called a road, though we were all on horseback,) was tolerable, if we except a dry red bluff, projecting into the run at high water, over which, at such times, passers are compelled to follow a narrow trail, scarcely wide enough to secure footing at the very brink of a frightful precipice, whose base is washed by the river, for several rods; but when the river is low, this may be passed below without danger. At the foot of the bluff, are the bones of many buffaloes and elk, that have been precipitated over it and killed.

June 5th we ascended the left fork five or six miles, and halted in a very small valley on the right fork of three into which the stream is subdivided. The "Trois Tetons" bear due west, consequently our course from Jackson's Hole has been directly east. This section of the country is graced with irregular clay bluffs of various colors, as red, yellow, white, etc., which give it a pleasant and variegated appearance.

We crossed over a low "divide" to a small stream on the 6th, which we followed to Green river, about ten miles distant from our last encampment, at which place we found several trappers who had been absent upwards of a month. They had caught some beaver, and met with no accident to interrupt their occupation.

With a single companion, I departed on the morning of the 7th, to ascertain if any of our long absent friends, who left us at "Pierre's Hole," with John Gray nearly a year since, had arrived at "Horse creek," the appointed place of rendezvous. Passing down the plains of Green river, twenty miles, we discovered several squaws scattered over the prairie engaged in digging roots, who informed us that a party of whites and Snakes, were now at Bonnyville's fort, a few miles below. We continued on our way down, and found at the place indicated by our informants, Capt. Walker with some of his men, also John Gray, and a small party headed by Fallen and Vanderburgh, who received an outfit from Wm. H. Vanderburgh, in Pierre's Hole last year. These different parties had made good hunts, without being molested by unfriendly Indians. One of the partisans, Fallen, went to Taos last winter for supplies, and on his return lost two Spaniards, "Engages," who were frozen to death on their horses. He also suffered greatly from cold and fatigue. One of Capt. Walker's men had been attacked by a brown bear, but escaped with a broken arm. Some fifty or sixty lodges of Snakes lay encamped about the fort, and were daily exchanging their skins and robes, for munitions, knives, ornaments, etc., with the whites, who kept a quantity of goods opened for the purpose of trading in one of the block houses, constituting a part of the fort. This establishment was doubtless intended for a permanent trading post, by its projector, who has, however, since changed his mind, and quite abandoned it. - From the circumstance of a great deal

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of labor having been expended in its construction, and the works shortly after their completion deserted, it is frequently called "Fort Nonsense." It is situated in a fine open plain, on a rising spot of ground, about three hundred yards from Green river on the west side, commanding a view of the plains for several miles up and down that stream. On the opposite side of the fort about two miles distant, there is a fine willowed creek, called "Horse creek," flowing parallel with Green river, and emptying into it about five miles below the fortification. The river from the fort, in one direction, is terminated by a bold hill rising to the height of several hundred feet on the opposite side of the creek, and extending in a line parallel with it. - Again on the east side of the river, an abrupt bank appears rising from the water's edge, and extending several miles above and below, till the hills, jutting in on the opposite side of the river; finally conceal it from the sight. The fort presents a square enclosure, surrounded by posts or pickets firmly set in the ground, of a foot or more in diameter, planted close to each other, and about fifteen feet in length. At two of the corners, diagonally opposite to each other, block houses of unhewn logs are so constructed and situated, as to defend the square outside of the pickets, and hinder the approach of an enemy from any quarter. The prairie in the vicinity of the fort is covered with fine grass, and the whole together seems well calculated for the security both of men and horses.

## CHAPTER XL

On the 8th, I returned to camp, which had moved down and was now in a fertile bottom fifteen miles below the fort. Here we remained tranquilly, nothing worthy of record occurring until the evening of the 11th, when four of our trappers, who had been absent from camp some time, returned in a state of perfect nudity and most unparalleled misery. Their bodies were broiled by the heat of the sun to that degree, that the pain produced by coming in contact with our clothes was almost insupportable.

It seems that, four days previous, they prepared a raft for the purpose of crossing Lewis river; having before ascertained that it was not fordable, and when every arrangement was completed, they drove in their horses, which swam over safely, and landed on the shore opposite. Stripping themselves for greater security, they pushed off into the stream. The velocity of the current, however, capsized their raft, on which their guns, traps, saddles, blankets, beavers and clothes were fastened, and carried the whole under an immense quantity of floating drift wood, beyond the possibility of recovery; and they only saved their lives by swimming, which they with difficulty accomplished, and faint, weary, and despairing, landed on the other side, reduced by this unfortunate accident to a condition the most miserable and hopeless. - A few moments reflection, while taking a little rest, convinced them that their only chance of saving their lives, lay in endeavoring to find and reach our camp, naked and entirely destitute of arms, provisions, and other necessaries as they then were. With scarcely a ray of hope to cheer them on their dreary task, they mounted their bare backed horses, and started in quest of us. The burning heat of the sun parched their skins, and they had nothing to shield them from his powerful rays; the freezing air of the night chilled and benumbed their unprotected bodies, and they had no covering to keep off the cold; the chill storms of rain and hail pelted mercilessly on them, and they could not escape

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

the torture; the friction produced by riding without a saddle or any thing for a substitute chafed off the skin, and even flesh, and without any means of remedying the misfortune, or alleviating the pain, for they were prevented from walking by the stones and sharp thorns of the prickly pair, which lacerated their feet. They were compelled, though the agony occasioned by it was intense, to continue their equestrian march, till amidst this accumulation of ills, they reached our camp; where by kind treatment, and emollient applications, their spirits were restored and their sufferings relieved. Add to the complication of woes above enumerated, the gnawing pangs of hunger which the reader will infer, that they must have experienced in no slight degree, from the fact that they did not taste a morsel of food during those four ages of agony, and we have an aggregate of suffering hardly equalled in the history of human woe.

After the return of our comrades, as above related, nothing of note occurred for some time; during which we enjoyed the luxury of pleasant weather, and a fine air.

On the 25th, I departed, with some others, to meet the St. Louis Company, who were daily expected. We passed along the plain at the base of the wind mountains, a very extensive and lofty range, crossing several small creeks, which at some distance below us unite and form New Fork. While on our march we killed an antelope, and also a brown bear, which last we discovered on the open prairie, several miles from any timber, and immediately gave chase to him; but as soon as we approached to within a few paces, he wheeled and pursued those who were nearest to him; the superior fleetness of our horses, however, soon put us beyond his reach, and he again bounded off in another direction, we in turn again becoming the pursuers. We fired several shots at him, some of which, though well directed, only served to increase his fury. For a considerable length of time we were alternately pursuing or pursued, till finally after many shots had been fired at him, a ball penetrated the scull between his eyes, and simultaneously put a period to our sport, and his existence.

“At the close of the day” we retired to rest, in the open prairie, as usual, with a blanket for a bed, a saddle for a pillow, a robe for a covering, and the clear blue star-studded sky for a canopy. I slept, and gentle visions mingled with my slumbers; home, mother, sisters, brothers, passed before me in the pleasing panorama of a dream; again I seemed to tread the lovely streets of my native village, which had become a populous city. I sought and found the well remembered haunts of my childhood, and pressed in imagination, the friendly hands of the companions of my youth. The scene was too delightful to be real, and from the sweet delusions of fancy, I awoke to the unwelcome conviction of absence from home, and the certainty of comparative solitude, in the Rocky Mountains. We arose, and pursued our journey, “ere morn unbarred the gates of light,” and soon after sunrise discovered the plains covered with buffalo, but so unusually wild that the report of a single gun set them all at once in motion.

Few persons, even in these romantic regions, have ever witnessed so interesting a scene as was presented to our view from an eminence or high mound, on which we were fortunately situated, overlooking the plains to a great distance. Immense herds of bison were seen in every direction galloping over the prairie, like vast squadrons of cavalry performing their accustomed evolutions.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Platoons in one part filing off, and in another returning to the main bodies; scattering bands moving in various courses, enveloped in clouds of dust, now lost, and now reappearing to view, in their rapid movements; detachments passing and repassing, from one point to another, at full speed; and now and then a solitary patriarch of the mountain herds, halting for a moment behind the dashing cohorts, to ascertain, if possible, the cause and extent of the danger and alarm; but soon again with instinctive impulse, hurrying to join his less fearless files; and all rushing on, till forms and numbers disappear in the dust and distance, and nothing remains visible of the long black lines but dark clouds slowly sweeping over the distant plains, which soon dissolve, and leave no trace of the tranquil thousands of buffalo, so lately grazing in peaceful quiet on the wide plains beneath our wondering, wondering vision.

When these scenes of living interest had faded into absolute obscurity, we descended from the "Butte," and continued on our way as far as the Sandy, where we halted a short time for breakfast, which having despatched, we again set off, and soon after discovered the traces of two horsemen, going in the direction of our camp. - From the circumstance of our not having before seen them, which we must have done had they been on the plains; we concluded that when we stopped for breakfast they were on the same stream a short distance above us, and had started again shortly after we halted; also that they were sent express in advance of the St. Louis Company, to announce its arrival. We, however, continued on, passed over the high barren plain which separates the waters of the Platte from those of Green river, and having descended to Sweet Water, finally halted on its margin.

## CHAPTER XLI

On the 20th of July a young man by the name of Newell and myself, departed at the head of an equipment destined for the Flathead trade. Our little party consisted of six "engages" with pack horses, and five armed Indians, amounting in all to thirteen armed men. It was late before we separated from the company, yet, notwithstanding, we marched fifteen miles, killed a fine bull, and halted on the margin of a small spring, in the highlands, near Jackson's Little Hole. We passed through the hole on the succeeding day, and encamped in the narrows below. We fortified our little encampment with a breastwork of logs, or in other words, we enclosed it in a timber pen.

Leaving this, we passed the narrows, a corner of Jackson's Big Hole, crossed Lewis river, ascended the mountains, and on the 30th came into a region where the weather was fair, the sky cloudless above us, and the sun shining pleasantly, quite reverse to the appearance a short distance below. Gazing down, in the direction of Jackson's Hole, from our elevated position one of the most beautiful scenes imaginable, was presented to our view. It seemed quite filled with large bright clouds, resembling immense banks of snow, piled on each other in massy numbers, of the purest white; wreathing their ample folds in various forms and devious convolutions, and mingling in

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

one vast embrace their shadowy substance. - Sublime creations! emblems apt of the first glittering imaginings of human life! like them redolent of happiness, and smiling in the fancied tranquil security of repose; like them, liable to contamination by intercourse with baser things, and like them, dissipated by the blasts of adversity, which sooner or later are sure to arrest and annihilate them. Alike evanescent are the dreamy anticipations of youth, and the aerial collections of vapor. Such the reflections suggested by this lovely scene, which, though often on the mountains, I have never before seen below me. Clouds of this pure snow-white appearance, are, however, by no means uncommon; but those usually observed beneath us, when on the mountains, have a dark and lowering aspect.

Turning with reluctance to things of a more terrestrial nature we pursued our way down to Pierre's Hole, where we fortunately discovered and killed a solitary bull; being the only animal of the kind we had seen since leaving Jackson's little hole.

We passed in our route a well known hot spring, which bursts out from the prairie, on the east side of a valley, near a small willow skirted creek, and flows several hundred yards into Wisdom river. It boils up, at its head, in a quantity sufficient to form a stream of several paces in breadth, and is so hot at its source, that one cannot bear a finger in it for a moment; it gradually becomes cooler as it recedes from the fount and at its lower extremity is cold. The Indians have made a succession of little dams, from the upper end to the river; and one finds baths of every temperature, from boiling hot, to that of the river, which is too cold for bathing, at any season. Our Indians were almost constantly in one or other of these baths during our stay near the springs.

It may be proper to remark here, that we have been drenched with rain, more or less, every day since we left rendezvous. The mornings are generally cloudless and the rocks, mountains, and valleys, are gilded by the dazzling brightness of the sun; but the scene changes as the day advances, dense black clouds cover the face of nature, and heavy rains, though usually of short duration, follow; however, it generally clears up, and becomes warm again, before the sun disappears behind the neighboring mountains. Lightning and thunder are frequent during these storms, and the latter is sometimes distinctly heard, when the sky appears perfectly cloudless.

As we arose on the morning of the 11th of August, we discovered a smoke rising above the pines in the mountains, where we were compelled to pass; however, we packed our horses and started, but saw neither smoke nor other traces of Indians after we had commenced the ascent, we halted at noon on a small prairie, on the summit of the mountain, two hours, and then descended the steep north side, to the head of Bitter Root river. - We saw traces of several horsemen who had recently passed down the river, which is but a small creek here in the mountains, and has a very narrow bottom; we halted late at an old Indian encampment.

Next morning a Flat-head came to our camp, one of several now on the stream a short distance below us, who had separated from a village of Nezperces on Salmon river a few days since, and were now like ourselves in quest of their tribe. Under his guidance we passed down the river into a little valley, then over a high mountain point, and finally descended into a small prairie bottom,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

where we found the comrades of our guide. We halted a short time to bait our horses, and departed accompanied by the Indians. At dark we halted on a small fork near the river, which has greatly increased in magnitude, and here skirts an open plain, several miles in extent on the east side, but a narrow irregular one, covered with dense pine timber, forming the base of the mountain, on the other.

On the 13th, we continued down this river, till evening and halted on it. The Indians with us, announced our arrival in this country by firing the prairies. The flames ran over the neighboring hills with great violence, sweeping all before them, above the surface of the ground except the rocks, and filling the air with clouds of smoke.

On the 14th we met several Flat-heads who, having been informed of our coming by an express despatched two days since, came to guide us to their village, which was situated half a day's journey below. We continued down through an open prairie, and halted late, on the margin of a finely timbered fork, on the west side, a short distance from the river.

On the 15th we passed about seven miles down to an open plain, some twelve miles in length and six in breadth, at the forks, formed by the junction of the Arrow Stone, which flows from the deer-house plains, and the stream we have followed for the last four days; these rivers are both clear, deep, rapid, and not fordable at high water. Bitter Root river is about fifty yards wide, and Arrow Stone something more. The former is but partially bordered by timber some distance above the forks, and the other quite bare; however, in the vicinity of the forks, both branches and the river below, are well decorated by large scattering pines and thick under brush, particularly on the west side. We found the village consisting of only fifteen lodges, situated on the margin of the Bitter Root, about one mile above the forks. As we approached they sallied out from their lodges and shook hands with us, as usual, made short prayers for us during this ceremony, and then passed away as if fearful of troubling us, whilst unpacking and arranging our baggage and lodgings. At length after we had finished pitching our lodge, and disposing properly our luggage, a multitude of women and girls came to us, bearing baskets of fruit and provisions, which they poured upon a blanket and disappeared to their respective habitations. We had suffered much with hunger for several days past, and seated around the blanket, gladly availed ourselves of present abundance to

“Satisfy as well we might,

The keen demands of appetite.”

The lovely little hillock, composed of Whortle, Service, Hawthorn, and White berries, rapidly disappeared before the united efforts of eight hearty and hitherto half starved lads; and leaving in it an “awful gap,” we arose, either satisfied, or ashamed to be seen devouring so voraciously the gifts of our generous friends; and prepare to receive the Chief and his retinue, who came as customary to smoke a pipe with us, and enquire our business. We seated ourselves in a ring on the grass, with our guests, and a pipe was immediately produced, and presented to a little hardy old veteran,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

the Chief. He placed it in his mouth, when his attendant applied to it a coal, and the Chief taking two or three whiffs, passed it to the person on his right, who in turn took a few puffs, and returned it to the Chief; he again inhaled through it a few inspirations, and passed to the one on his left, and it continued then regularly round, until it was extinguished. One of the company prepared with tobacco and weed, cut and mixed in proper proportions, and a stick for cleaning the ashes out of the pipe, replenished it, and the same ceremony was repeated. In the mean time we informed them as well as we could, having no interpreter, of our objects in coming among them. They listened without speaking until we had done, when the old chief in the name of his people, tendered us his thanks for coming so far from our chief, through a dangerous country, to bring them munitions and tobacco, articles of which they were much in want; and promised to exert his influence with his young men, to encourage them to hunt and trade with us; supply us with fruit and provisions, and aid us otherwise as much as lay in his power.

He informed us that thirty of his people were massacred last spring, at one time, by a large party of Black-feet, on the east fork of Salmon river. The little devoted band had started expressly to retake horses from, or fight the Black-feet, who were, it appears, approaching in considerable numbers, at the same time, determined to fulfil a threat they had made last fall, that they would exterminate the Flat-heads, root and branch. The two parties met on the summit of the pass from that fork to Horse prairie, and a most desperate conflict ensued, which resulted in the total defeat of the Flatheads, who fought to the last, and perished to a man. The only individual of the party who escaped was separated from the rest in the early part of the action, and fled to tell the disastrous tale. There were among the slain several of the bravest warriors of the nation, who were well known to the hunters as hardy, bold, and heroic in war; sage and experienced in council, and hospitably courteous, even to inconvenience and self-privation, in their humble dwellings. The venerable chief dwelt on the virtues of each of these braves, and related many interesting anecdotes of daring feats and rare presence of mind, exhibited by some of them, in the most trying and hopeless situations. He betrayed the presence of hereditary superstition, in but a single instance: that of a warrior, who had been often wounded in battle by balls, not one of which had ever entered his body, (all having fortunately been nearly spent.) The old veteran declared it the firm belief of himself and friends, that he could not have been killed with a bullet, but must have been caught and then butchered by his enemies. It is believed that the Black-feet sustained great loss in this engagement; at least they abandoned the design of attacking the village, and returned to their own country.

The chief also informed us that he was now awaiting the arrival of the Pen-d'orielles from the Flat-head post, who were expected in twenty days, and should then proceed to hunt buffalo. These animals are never found west of the Big Hole, or the Deer house plains; consequently the Indians, during their stay here, subsist on dried meat, which they transport in bales of forty pounds or more, upon horses, from the buffalo range, or the haunts of deer and big horn, which are found on the neighboring mountains. They bring in daily horse loads of berries, and several kinds of roots, the most abundant and most prized of which, is small, white, extremely bitter of taste, and called by the Indians "Spathem;" it is found in great plenty in the plain of, and gives name to, Bitter Root river. It is prepared for food by boiling until it becomes like jelly; and is very disagree-

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

able to the palate of one who has never before eaten it. During our stay here, we were employed in trading our goods for the only articles we wanted, namely, beaver and provisions; the best articles in our equipment for this purpose, was cut glass beads, with which the dress of the females are decorated.

## CHAPTER XLII

On the 30th of October we passed under the north east side of the sand mountains which rears its gigantic form in the centre of a vast plain, nearly one hundred miles in diameter, of the most sterile description; where, in gloomy desolation, it seems to mock the vegetating efforts of nature. With the sand hills that constitute its base, the mountain covers an area of some thirty miles in circumference, and is composed of fine white sand, extremely light, into which our horses sank above the knees, in passing over it. When the winds blow upon it, agitating the sand at the surface, it has a beautiful, undulating, wave-like appearance. The particles are so very small, and have so little apparent specific gravity, that large quantities are often removed by the gentle whirlwinds that sometimes occur, and scattered over the neighboring prairie.

On the main body of the mountain there are a few occasional dwarf shrubs, but the hills are absolutely destitute of herbage. No shells, nor any other marine organic remains, nor indeed any foreign substances, are found on the hills or mountains, among the pure crystals that constitute this singular structure, which, in solitary grandeur appears, when viewed from a distance, like a huge mountain of snow, at any season of the year. Though we have traversed many barren prairies, and crossed over many sterile tracts of territory, we have never before seen any sand of similar character or appearance, which therefore remains unique, and this singular protuberance of earth, an isolated enigma; for conjecture ever must be silent in respect to its origin. It stands alone, in a vast region of elevations, not one of which affords a parallel, or at all resembles it. Is it a proof that the ocean, once slumbering here, deposited this formation, and covered this country, the most elevated portion of North America, situated, as it is, at the sources of the Mississippi, Columbia, and Colorado? If so, the whole region affords no other instance, and even this lacks the strongest evidence of a former subaqueous condition, since there are no productions, or even relics, of an aquatic animal nature attending it. The whole vast plain in which it "towers alone," is covered with the evidences of volcanic action; can it then, in one of those tremendous efforts of nature, which scattered these fragments of rock over so great an extent, have been upheaved from the bed of the earth, and left as a monument of some mighty convulsion? The subject affords ample scope for curious speculation.

Having travelled about twenty-five miles since we set out in the morning, we halted on Henry's fork, about twenty miles above the Forks. Our horses were very much fatigued, and one of them entirely exhausted, was left in the way, being totally unable to proceed, though relieved from the weight of his lading. We discovered the traces, both of a horse and a mule, that had passed quite recently up and down the margin of this river. - The distance from Pierre's fork, when we left the village, to Henry's fork is about seventy miles.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

October 31st we remained in camp to rest our weary horses. My companion Newell, however, with one more, departed to ascertain if Dripps had arrived at the Forks. During the day a fire broke out in camp, and filled the air with smoke, but caused no damage.

On the 1st of November, we raised camp, and crossed Henry's fork, but had not left the ford before Newell reappeared with information that a party of trappers, detached from Dripp's company, were now awaiting his arrival at the forks. We continued down the stream about eighteen miles, and encamped with them. Three of them, during a recent excursion for beaver on the sources of Henry's Fork, met with an adventure, which may not be deemed uninteresting, and will also exhibit the danger and hardships to which the trappers are constantly exposed, in this savage region. It is thus described by one of them, William Peterson, of St. Louis.

"On the 23d of September, having returned from my traps unusually early, I set about preparing some meat for breakfast; in the mean time one of my comrades, Chevalia, alarmed or surprised at the continuing absence of Piero, our companion, who had started to go a short distance below, to examine some traps and had not returned; went off to seek him, but in a few moments came running back, out of breath, exclaiming 'Indians! Indians! Indians!' I had barely time to inquire if they were near, when they appeared rushing toward us. We sprang into the willows, where we had taken the precaution to place our baggage when we came here, and I employed myself in arranging it, with alacrity, so as to shelter us from the shower of balls we expected momentarily. Chevalia amused them for some time by talking to them in the Sioux language, which they pretended to understand; happily I discovered at this critical instant, that they were actually taking advantage of the conference, to surround us, and thus cut off our retreat to the mountains; the sudden conviction of this truth, and the fatal consequences to us if they succeeded in effecting their object, induced us to spring at once into the creek, and follow the shallow current about two hundred yards, concealed from our enemies by the few small willows on its margin; when we were compelled to leave it, owing to the total want of obscurity, offered by its woodless borders; and cross a narrow neck of prairie, to a grove of aspen trees on the mountain side. Fortunately for us, the Indians had mistaken the course of our flight, and were some distance below, when we entered the open plain; but they quickly discovered us, and gave chase, as we penetrated the forest; finding that the timber continued we pushed forward, and at length crept into a dense thicket, hoping to elude them thus, but we were again discovered by the barking of a little dog with us, and forced to seek another place to hide in; we finally halted in a dark shadowed thicket, and choaked the dog to silence; while the Indians were yelling like so many deals, and hunting from one grove to another in every direction. We, however, remained quiet and undiscovered, until the sun was setting, when, all the noise having subsided, we ventured out to ascertain if possible, the fate of Piero, who imprudently left us in the morning, without his gun, which was now in my possession.

We returned to our camp, and found every thing removed, from which we concluded that the Indians had departed, and were encouraged to look for the body of Piero, not doubting that he was killed. On our way down to the "dams," (beaver) where we knew his traps had been placed,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

we passed through a small prairie surrounded by willows; before leaving it, two Indians intently gazing on the ground, were observed, evidently following our tracks. I immediately placed one of my guns between my knees, and shot the foremost of them with the other, dead on the spot. My companion fled, and the surviving Indian slowly brought his gun to his eye, as if to insure my fate; but in a twinkling, the empty gun dropped from my hand, and the other was at my eye. The amazed red skin sprang into a thicket and escaped. - At this moment a volley of diabolical yells burst upon my ears from the adjacent willows. I seized my empty gun and ran for life, expecting to experience something more fatal, though scarcely more appalling than the horrid sounds that saluted me at every step. Unharmed, however, I reached our former place of concealment, to the no small gratification of my companion, whom I believe, had hardly deigned to bestow on the Indians a single glance, from the moment I fired until he found himself safely and snugly in our favorite quarters. During my flight I saw many of them, both in the little plain where I shot one, and in pursuit of me, but I could form no correct idea of their sum total.

After dark all became quiet, and we sallied forth from our hiding place, passed over the plain four miles to a neighboring stream, and remained there until morning, when we returned to the scene of our misfortune, with a slight hope that Piero had escaped the knives of the savages, and might be awaiting our reappearance. But as we approached camp they were again seen, and we fled to the mountain unperceived by them, giving up all expectation of ever beholding our comrade. The Indians were encamped a short distance below, on the margin of the stream, and we were in constant danger of being discovered and butchered by them. At length, however, we set out for snake river, and reached it after two day's march, without accident; but being unprovided with horses, and meeting no game, we were four days without food. Good fortune on the fifth, put a fat cow in our possession, and we remained to recruit ourselves until the following day, when we set out for the Buttes at the forks of snake river, to find, if possible, a party who were trapping that stream in canoes. After an anxious search we could perceive no traces of them, and concluded to return back to the cow we killed the day previous, and wait for the arrival of the company at the forks, as patiently as possible.

During our progress we discovered, with surprise, the tracks of a white man, a close examination of which, showed that his feet were widely different from each other. It occurred to me at once, that Piero had a deformed foot which I recollected to resemble the print of the unnatural one here. The hope of finding the old man yet alive, burst forth anew, and impelled us forward with fresh vigor in the direction indicated by his footsteps, which we followed a distance of two miles, that seemed but a step, filled as we were with the pleasing anticipation of shortly relieving his miseries. With a joyful swelling of the heart, that it is absolutely impossible to express, and that can only be imagined by such as have felt the thrilling ecstasy inspired by circumstances similar, I perceived my old friend and companion, on the margin of the river, at the distance of about half a mile, and fired off my gun, the usual token of delightful recognition, to attract his attention; he turned toward us - extended his arms in a transport of glad surprise - and overpowered by exhaustion and the excitement of feelings it were impossible to control, sank fainting on the ground. We ran to him - raised him up - chafed his temples; he recovered - clasped us to his heart - tears flowed profusely down his aged cheeks, and utterance entirely failed him. Never had

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

I before, never can I hope again, to experience such another moment of melting tenderness and joy. I could, I think, face death with heart and courage unappalled, not a drop would moisten my eye, and not a fiber tremble, but the scene I have vainly attempted to describe quite unmanned me, and our tears were mingled together. We supported him with us to our camp, tended him with affectionate care; for if there is in this world any circumstance, that can soften the heart, and awaken our affections to each other, it is a companionship in misfortune; but we could not deny him the gratification of eating until he had so much overcharged his stomach, as to make himself quite sick, from which he did not entirely recover in seven or eight days; during which time we killed seven buffalo, and fortunately fell in with a party of trappers, with whom we have since remained."

## CHAPTER XLIII

From Piero, whose real name is Jacques Fournoise, the former appellation having been given him by the Canadians, most of whom have nicknames, I received an account of his sufferings, which will, I hope, be a sufficient caution, to strangers particularly, who may hereafter visit the Rocky Mountains, never to leave, without their arms, their encampment or companions.

It appears that, on the morning before alluded to, he started for his traps with two beavers, both very large, on his way back to camp; and observed as he was about leaving the willows, a number of buffalo robes scattered about on the prairie. The startling Ruth flashed on his mind, like an electric shock; he regretted deeply his imprudence in venturing from camp without his gun, which left him now without the means of defence, or subsistence, and dared not attempt to reach it, where, in all probability, his comrades already were shipped, scalped, and covered with wounds - dead. He heard the sanguinary yells of the savages re-echoed back from the neighboring hills and mountains, and was induced, by his own peril, to seek concealment, which he finally effected in a dense cluster of willows. He heard the footsteps of his foes passing and repassing frequently during the day, but in the evening all was silent and he left his shelter to revisit camp. Arriving there, comrades, horses, baggage, all had disappeared, and he remained alone, unarmed, a wanderer in the barren plains of Henry's Fork, with misery, starvation, death, and such a death pictured to his imagination in their most gloomy colors. With such a vivid prospect of despair, he carried his beaver some distance up the stream, split the meat for drying, and remained in cheerless solitude during the night.

On the following morning early, he revisited his traps and found in them two beaver, with which and two of his traps, he returned; by the aid of the latter he hoped so to increase his store of provisions, as to render more remote the danger of perishing with hunger, and enable him, if possible, to await the arrival of the company at the Forks, where they were expected to be by the first of November. The reason that he did not meet with the Indians upon the night and morning that he visited the place of encampment was because he did not, in the first instance, leave his place of concealment until it was quite dark, and in the second, he went and returned before they were stirring.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

He moved into the mountains several miles, when he dried his meat, and then sallied forth again into the plain, crossed Henry's fork, and proceeded with the intention of hunting beaver on a small branch. At length he found a dam, and leaving his meat, traps, etc., went across to examine it, but reached the opposite side just in time to discover himself to two parties of the copper-faced rascals, who were situated both above and below him, and who sprang up in chase as soon as they saw him. His fate for a moment seemed inevitable, but the energy of despair lent vigor to his aged frame, and activity to his feeble limbs, and with an agility that would have done credit to his youth, he ran across the bottom, several acres in extent, only covered with here and there a few scattering willows, in the hope of finding a dense thicket; when he reached the border of the plain, and heard the footsteps of the Indians fast approaching, death appeared inevitable. The child of luxury would unquestionably have sunk under the weight of opposing circumstances, and making no further effort to prolong a life equally dear, have fallen an easy victim to savage atrocity; but the hard buffetings of a mountain life had familiarized the old veteran to danger, and impressed it on his mind as a duty, never to yield to adversity, while a shadow of hope remained; and to scan, even in the most critical moment, the chances of success: his experience was even here not un-availing; he sprang into a cluster of willows, and crouched with deliberate caution, at the very moment the Indians passed him, pulling and tearing the branches asunder in every direction. Some of them at the same time, commenced making forts or lodges but a few feet from the spot where he was concealed; and at every moment he expected part of the branches that surrounded him, would be cut away for that object, and thereby expose him. It was still morning, and he studied to calm his agitation, and meet a doom he had reason to think unavoidable, with manly fortitude.

In the meantime the search continued with such unabated ardor, that he believed every bunch of bushes on the whole bottom, underwent an examination, except in the single instance that afforded him protection. Towards noon some of them commenced playing roulette, close under him, against the willows; others seated themselves around, and in one instance he felt the body of an Indian touching his own. His heart beat so violently that he fancied they must hear it, and would soon send him to eternity. Shortly one of them sprang up, seized a tin vessel, struck it thrice on the bottom, and started towards him. He now thought the Indian had discovered him while sitting by the bushes; but wished to make it appear to his comrades, as if magically effected, by virtue of the kettle. At this trying moment, his soul rose superior to his condition, and he had the presence of mind to consider that they might torture him if taken alive, and the firmness to prefer present death to prospective hours of agony; he grasped his knife, and determined to spring upon the first who approached him.

“Poor powerless man, and canst thou harbor then

A hope but death - a passion but despair.”

The Indian, however, passed him, examined several other clusters near, but shortly returned and again seated himself near his former position, and commenced crying, in the manner of those people, at the death of a friend. The day passed slowly away, the hours to him were attenuated to

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

many times their usual length, and he almost imagined night would never approach.

“In those suspended pangs he lay,

Oh! many, many hours of day!

How heavily it rolled away.”

And slowly night advanced; but it came at last, and the bloodhounds retired to slumber. A spark of hope rekindled in his bosom a new energy. He carefully removed the branches to make his escape from that tedium of terror, but as he was about to step forth from the thicket, the Chief hurried out of the fort, and harangued his people for some time; at length he reentered his lodge, and in a short time all became quiet. Our hero seized the opportunity, cut the willows until he was able to extricate himself without noise, and then carefully crawled out into the prairie; his legs had been cramped up all day and now refused to perform their usual office. With extreme difficulty he succeeded in dragging himself on his hands and knees some distance and after rubbing his limbs considerable time, to restore and accelerate the circulation of the vital fluids, he was enabled to resume an erect position, and walk off as fast as his years would permit.

During this painful midnight march, a large grizzly bear reared up on his hinder legs but few feet distant. - At any other time he says he should have been alarmed to meet so dangerous an enemy, but his feelings had been so lacerated by constant peril, that no new danger could appall him. With more of forbearance or pity, than his human foes had exhibited, the bear turned and retired, without adding brutal molestation to man-created misery; and Piero quietly pursued his way to the forks of Snake River, where he wandered about for some time in search of roots and buds to support his existence.

“Poor child of danger, nursling of the storm!

Sad are the woes that wreck thine aged form.”

Fearing at last that the company would not come to Snake River, he resolved to retrace his steps, and endeavor to find some of his traps. During the chill frosty nights, having no bedding, he cut up and covered himself with grass, his only means of shelter.

Finally, on his way back he was discovered, as we have before related, having eaten nothing for six days, save a very few roots and buds. His companions, judging from his emaciated condition when found, think that a few more days would have sufficed to close his earthly career. So wretched and hopeless was he, that when he heard the joy inspiring report of a rifle, and turned and saw friends, comrades, approaching him, the revulsion of feeling from despair to the fulness of hope, was too much for feeble nature to sustain, and with a single gesture of gratitude, and one wild loud throb of exultation, he fainted. With the same sensation, described by that master spirit, Byron, he must have thought, when he came to, and found himself in the arms of his com-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

panions -

“Awake! - where am I? Do I see

A human face look kind on me?”

Yes, his sorrows were past, his woes forgotten, and for once he gave himself up to the luxury of gratitude and joy. The soul of the mountaineer was subdued, the warm tears coursed each other down his aged cheek; his limbs trembled with the vibration of ecstasy, he could not stand, and they all sat and wept and laughed together.

## CHAPTER XLIV

There were at the Forks three other small parties, who had been compelled to leave their traps and fly for safety, from the Indians. However they have since returned and collected them all, save forty, that probably fell into the hands of the savages. On the 2d of November Mr. Dripps arrived with the company, having been quite fortunate during the fall, and caught many beaver, losing neither men nor horses. He had seen no Indians, with the exception of a party of Snakes, and had received information from some source, not recollected, that a detachment of Bonnyville's company were attacked by the Crows on the head of the Yellow Stone river, and lost several horses, laden with merchandize, having also two men badly wounded. Likewise that Mr. Cerre, a gentleman of that party, had departed down the Big-horn in bull-hide boats, with the peltries thus far collected by them, destined for St. Louis. We heard, in addition, that the Crows had discovered a cache belonging to the same company, and robbed it; however, they must have been seen while constructing it, or it could not have been properly closed; for a well made cache is in no more danger of being discovered in these plains, than is any substance surrounded by the fibrous effects of organic nature. We were also told that Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick at the head of a detachment of the R. M. F. Co., had their horses nearly all stolen by the Crows; which, however, they afterwards recovered; and report adds, that two of his men were killed. Capt. Walker was seen on Snake River, some distance below. His men had lost some traps taken by the Rootdiggers, and had killed one of them in return. The Crows have openly declared war against all hunting parties found trespassing on their territory. A party of trappers, detached from the R.M.F. Co., are also on Snake river; one of them, named Small, was killed by the accidental discharge of a gun some time since.

Trading houses have been established at the mouth of the Maria, and also at the mouth of the Big-horn by the American Fur Company; who likewise intend to erect one at the three forks of the Missouri, for trading with the Blood Indians. From the Indian signs we saw at the deer house, when with the Flat Heads, I concluded that this fort was already constructed - judging by the bits of blankets, cloth, etc., and other emblems of commerce observed there. From Mr. Fontenelle, and some others, no intelligence has been received since they left rendezvous.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

On the second day after the arrival of Mr. Dripps, we selected a good encampment, affording wood, water, and grass in abundance, situated on Pierre's Fork, near the mouth, and removed to it. In a few days Mr. Pillet prepared to set off on his return to the Flat Heads; and having received some encouragement, I concluded to go with him: accordingly we started on the 12th; our little party was composed of some seven or eight white men and five or six Indians. Not a few of our friends, deeming our journey, in such small numbers, extremely perilous, expressed an opinion that we would be massacred by the numerous parties of Blackfeet, who ever haunt the country, through which we would have to pass, at this season of the year. However we were not dismayed, and marched over the hills, mountains, and plains with all possible dispatch, i.e., as fast as our fatigued and feeble animals were able to proceed, and reached the Flat Heads on the evening of the 27th, at Bitter Root river Forks. We followed the same route Newell and myself had pursued the previous summer, and which is indeed the nearest and best. With the single exception of cold winds, we were favored with pleasant good weather during our journey. But the nights were exceedingly cold, and our blankets and robes absolutely necessary. We found buffalo numerous the whole distance from Dripp's camp to the Big Hole, and we therefore lived well.

On the north side of the mountain we crossed, there was already one foot of snow, but the plains were yet entirely free. We saw several encampments made by the Flat Heads, since I left them; in one of these we saw a living colt with one thigh broken by a ball. At the mouth of the defile, (from the Big Hole to the Bitter Root,) we found several hundred lodge poles, left by them before attempting to pass over the mountains. One of them, painted red and black, was planted erect in the ground, and was probably intended to be emblematic of defiance to the Blackfeet. We caught on the mountain a fine horse, that had been lost by the Indians, and took him on with us.

On the east side of Bitter Root river, there is a singular curiosity, that I had not before observed, because it is situated under some rocky bluffs, almost impassable to horsemen, the proper road being on the west side of the river: it is the horn of an animal, called by hunters, the "Big-horn," but denominated by naturalists "Rocky Mountain Sheep;" of a very large size, of which two-thirds of its length from the upper end, is entombed in the body of a pine tree, so perfectly solid and firmly, that a heavy blow of an axe did not start it from its place. - The tree is unusually large and flourishing, and the horn in it some seven feet above the ground. It appears to be very ancient, and is gradually decomposing on the outside, which has assumed a reddish cast. The date of its existence has been lost in the lapse of ages, and even tradition is silent as to the origin of its remarkable situation. The oldest of Indians can give no other account of it, than that it was there precisely as at present, before their father's great grandfathers were born. They seldom pass it without leaving some trifling offering, as beads, shells, or other ornaments - tokens of their superstitious veneration for it. As high as they can reach, the bark of the tree is decorated with their trifles.

We met with a few Indians before reaching the Forks, who were hunting deer a short distance below the Sheep horn; and some of them accompanied us to the village, when we found Mr. Ermatinger and most of the Flat heads. His men, with the Pen-d'orilles, had departed towards the Flat-head post, and he had remained behind, for the purpose of seeing us, having been informed

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of our approach, by an express despatched by Pillet, a day in advance of us. From him we learned that a young man had been killed near the Big Hole, since we left the villages, by the Blackfeet, and that the Indians had lost several little bands of horses; most of the young warriors being now in pursuit of the robbers.

On the 29th we again set out, in company with that gentleman, and passed northward through this valley and a narrow defile that led us out into a very small plain on the mountain, or rather in it, called Little Cammas Prairie, having made about fifteen miles. Mr. Ermatinger and myself departed on the succeeding morning, to overtake his men with the Pen-d'orilles. We descended the mountain into a fine valley called Cammas Prairie, watered by a beautiful, well timbered stream flowing northward; passed through it, and thence along a narrow defile where the river is confined on both sides by hills rising, though not perpendicularly, from the water's edge many hundred feet, and at length overtook the company who were in the act of encamping when we came up, having rode not less than twenty miles. The same evening Pillet arrived, and halted with us, and about the same hour an express came in from horse plains, with information to Mr. E. that some of his trappers had arrived there. Shortly after dark two Indians reached us from the Flat-head village, bearing a scalp, and informed us that the party who went in pursuit of the horse thieves, had returned with twenty-six of the stolen horses, and two trophies from the heads of their enemies.

## CHAPTER XLV

December first, we proceeded again on our journey, and found ourselves after a march of twelve miles, on the margin of a large clear river, ornamented with scattered pines on its borders, called the Flatt-head river.

On the 2d we succeeded, after considerable difficulty, in fording it, still deep and rapid, even at its lowest stage, and left it, passing through a large prairie, and finally halted at the entrance of a mountain pass, having marched about fifteen miles.

On the succeeding day we continued our toilsome progress over a low pine covered mountain, from the summit of which we descended into a large river valley, called Horse plains, watered by the Flatt-head river, which here joins with the Bitterroot. On the margin of the former, we found a party of young half-breeds, who had returned from their fall hunt, and brought in their furs for delivery to Mr. Ermatinger. These men are supplied with goods on this, the west side of the mountains, by the traders here, much cheaper than the Americans can afford them on our side; and consequently they are better clad, though, for want of buffalo, they do not fare as well as our hunters. There was likewise quite a village of Indians collected here, who never go for buffalo, nor do they in many cases possess horses to go with, even if they felt inclined to do so. Most of the families, have light canoes, with which they glide about on the river, and gather roots and berries, in their proper season; but in the winter they separate into small parties, and not unfrequently, into single families, who then seek the mountains, and pass that inclement season there, with little

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

knowledge of or communication with each other. - They assemble here, at certain seasons to exchange with the traders their skins for such articles as they may chance to want, or be rich enough to buy.

There was a cabin once erected in this valley, for the purpose of trade, but it was shortly afterwards consumed by fire. These Indians were anxious to trade for dried buffalo meat, and I think in many instances succeeded in exchanging some of their fish and roots, for more substantial viands. I had the pleasure of tasting some vegetables that had been conveyed here in two large open boats or barges, with goods from an establishment seven or eight days' journey below, called "Colville," at the Kettle falls.

When we arrived in this valley the danger was declared over, and our horses permitted to run loose night and day; however, a few nights after, thirty of them were stolen. Mr. Ermatinger lost eight or ten, and the others were the property of the Indians. Mine, as good fortune would have it, were not among the number missing.

On the 13th of December Mr. Ermatinger, having completed his arrangements, and stowed his furs into the barges, which were manned by his men, who were, I perceived, quite "at home" in them, set out with his companion, Pillet, for Colville. In the mean time a general breaking up of camp took place. In a few moments the lodges disappeared, and the bosom of the river was studded with bark canoes conveying whole families and their baggage down the stream with surprising velocity. I was greatly deceived in their canoes, for the squaws would lift them from the water on to the bank, and again set them into it, with such ease that I imagined they must be quite insufficient to the transportation of any heavy burden. Some of them, however, appeared loaded until there was no longer room for any thing more, and still floated securely. They were managed by the squaws, who, with paddles, direct their course with great steadiness, astonishing rapidity, and apparent ease and dexterity. Parties on horseback, at the same time set off in various directions, and finally I departed, with the family of a trader, to pass the winter in the Cotenas mountains. We travelled this day over a low spur, or point of mountain, east of Horse Plains, and halted in the pines on the margin of a small stream, that flows into the plains.

After a day or two, we passed into a small, though open valley, watered by a stream flowing westward, called Thompson's river, in honor of a gentleman formerly in the Hudson's Bay Co.'s service. We had several days fine weather, when Heaven seemed to be literally "smiling over us," and much enjoyed it.

At length, on the 20th, two "Canadian Voyagers" came to us from the Flatt-head post, where they had been in quest of some articles of commerce. They remained with us a part of the day, and set out for their place of destination. Two Pen-d'orielles Indians came and engaged to hunt for us; but one of them left us several days after, promising to return again soon.

In the mean time Mr. Montour and myself, set about constructing a log cabin, rather because we had nothing else to do, than from any necessity, as his lodge was uncommonly large, and quite

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

comfortable. Christmas was passed agreeably with the family of mine host, and we were rather more sumptuously entertained than on ordinary occasions. Our "bill of fare" consisted of buffalo tongues, dry buffalo meat, fresh venison, wheat flour cakes, buffalo marrow, (for butter,) sugar, coffee, and rum, with which we drank a variety of appropriate toasts, suited to the occasion, and our enlarged and elevated sentiments, respecting universal benevolence and prosperity, while our hearts were warmed, our prejudices banished, and our affections refined, by the enlivening contents of the flowing bowl. Our bosoms glowed with the kindling emotions, peculiar to the occasion. - Remote from our kind, and the thralling, contracted opinions which communication with a cheating world are apt to engender, when our stomachs were filled with substantial viands and our souls with contentment, we were at peace with all mankind and with ourselves, and had both time and opportunity to expatiate largely on honesty, charity, and philanthropy; which we did till our goblets (tin cups) were drained of their inspiring contents, and night summoned us to repose. Do not imagine, reader, that as we slept off the effects of our conviviality, we also slumbered away these enlarged and liberal views of ethics, honor, and integrity. No! With a praise worthy propriety, they continued to increase and multiply, until the next favorable opportunity offered for taking advantage of the ignorance and necessity of the Indians, in honorable barter; when, having occasion for them, they could no where be found, but had vanished, and like "the baseless fabric of a vision, left not a wreck behind." Sublime and intellectual as were these enlightened principles of morality, how vastly to be deplored is the fact that they are not more generally and permanently entertained. Alas! for poor human nature! Truth is too abstract and difficult to be comprehended - Justice too holy and intricate to practice - Honor too lofty and profound to be governed by - and all too obsolete and unfashionable to direct - in the vulgar concerns of trade. The most upright principles, the most equitable regulations, the most honorable expedients, all, all retire from their formidable enemy - selfishness; and intrigue is but another name for frailty, when opposed to the potential influence of interest. Such, at least, I have found the world though there are doubtless many, and I have met with some most honorable exceptions.

"Auro pulsa fides, auro venalia jura."

## CHAPTER XLVI

On the last of December, our remaining Indian hunters left us, promising to come back again in a few days, however, they never returned, - and the day passed as usual.

So ends the year 1833, but let it pass in silence to oblivion, with the thousands that have gone before, and must hereafter follow it. Its hopes, its fears, its expectations, can no longer excite or agitate; its perils, and privations, are already half forgotten; and even the severe disappointments it produced, have entirely lost the ability to disturb. Well! with all its imperfections on its head, let it descend to the dark void of by-gone eternity, and we, older if not wiser, will again look forward with eager curiosity, to the events which yet slumber in the bosom of another; with wishes that

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

will probably prove to be vain, with hopes that may be destined to experience disappointment, and with expectations that are doubtless doomed to be blasted; but which are all, notwithstanding their frailty and uncertainty, cherished with fondness, perhaps with folly.

The new year was ushered in with feasting and merriment, on dried buffalo meat, and venison, cakes and coffee; which might appear to people constantly accustomed to better fare, rather meagre variety for a dinner, not to say a feast. But to us who have constantly in mind the absolute impossibility of procuring better, and the no less positive certainty, that we are often compelled to be satisfied with worse, - the repast was both agreeable and excellent; for think not, that we enjoy, daily, the same luscious luxuries of cake and coffee, that announces the advent of 1834; by no means. Our common meals consist of a piece of boiled venison, with a single addition of a piece of fat from the shoulder of the buffalo; except on Sundays, when we have in addition a kind of French dumpling, made of minced meat, rolled into little balls enveloped with dough, and fried in the marrow of buffalo; which is both rich and pleasant to the taste.

Our house was now advanced to putting on the roof, for which we had cut a sufficient number of poles, intending, when properly placed, to cover them with grass, and finally with a coat of earth, sufficient to exclude rain or melting snow, in the spring.

On the 13th of January snow commenced falling on the hitherto uncovered earth, and continued without intermission for five days and nights; when the storm suddenly abated; and we enjoyed fair sunny weather, every day, during the remainder of the month.

In the mean time we had finished and moved into our house, which was rendered extremely warm and comfortable, by having the seams filled with clay, a chimney composed of sticks and mud, windows covered with thin transparent, undressed skins, which admitted sufficient light, and yet excluded the rain and snow; and a floor constructed of hewn slabs. After the building was completed, and the whole family snugly housed in it, the son of Mr. Montour, a young man of about nineteen, and myself employed ourselves in hunting deer on snow shoes; but in consequence of our not having rifles, our sport was quite limited.

We each possessed a fusil brought to this country expressly for the Indian trade, a light kind of gun which is used only by the hunters on our side of the mountains for running buffalo. However, my companion appeared quite expert with his weapon, and made several very good shots with it.

During these rambles we sometimes saw an animal resembling an otter, in size, shape and color, called a pekan or fisher; but for want of a dog to tree them, did not shoot any. We killed several martins, and saw the traces of a large animal of the cat kind, supposed to be a lynx.

At length, my companion and myself, having become tired of hunting, concluded to go to the Flatt-head house, where we knew several families of Indians were wintering, and engage one or two, to come and hunt for us. - We started on the last day of January, passed down Thompson's

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

river about ten miles, and encamped on its margin, in good time to clear away the snow several places in extent, prepare for a bed the branches of the balsam-fir, which we cut from the trees that abound here; and last, though not least, to kindle a fire and heap on the wood in plenty, which we did, and made, what would be called at home, a rousing one. In the evening we dried our moccasins, ate some dried meat, and finally threw ourselves down to sleep, covered by our two blankets; and as the night was pleasant we rested well, warm and comfortable.

Quite refreshed, we rose early next morning, and continued our journey. We went down the river several miles farther, killed a deer and encamped near it, in consequence of a severe storm of rain which commenced in the forenoon and continued all day. We however went out, killed another deer, and trailed it along the snow, with a great deal of difficulty and fatigue, to camp. After reaching it, we constructed a shelter of fir branches, aware that it would not exclude the rain, but in hopes that it would change to snowing. Placing again, a quantity of branches on the ground, we lay down upon them "to sleep, perchance to dream," both of which paid us visits, but neither of them remained long.

Next morning, February 2d, we rose, as the "Velchman" said to his "Vife," "vell vet," being literally drenched to the skin. The rain was still falling very fast but the air was warm, and the snow rapidly diminishing. We had some trouble to kindle a fire, every thing being wet. However, with some splinters of pine full of pitch we finally succeeded, and had soon a good fire. By it we dried our clothes, and then set out in quest of game, although it was still raining. I passed down the river some distance, and fired several shots without effect, but my gun soon became so wet that I could no longer get it off, though I had several opportunities, and was obliged to return to camp. My companion had the same ill luck, and was already there. We each saw the bones of several deer that had been caught and devoured by wolves. The wind was blowing from the south, and the rain still falling, when we again lay down for the night; not as people do in some parts of the world, dry, warm, with plenty of bedding, and a shelter from the storm; but wet to the skin, exposed to the pelting rain on a February night, in a latitude of about fifty degrees north; our only covering a couple of blankets, that would scarcely, if immersed in a fountain of water, have robbed it of a drop, and our bed the bosom of our dear mother earth, only overspread with a few wet branches, where we lay, and a fine coat of melting snow where we did not. The little cool rivulets, trickling down every part of us, and gliding along the skin on our backs, prevented sleep from injuring our delicate faculties, and kept us fully awake to the very romantic situation in which we were placed. However, the air was not very cold, and we rose rather early, if I remember right, for this fact was not recorded in the diary I kept while in the mountains, kindled a fire, and partially dried our clothing. We cooked a shoulder of venison and ate it for breakfast, and then, considerably refreshed, set out again in quest of game. I succeeded in killing a young buck, but my gun soon became wet and useless and I set out for camp, dragging the body of my deer along on the snow. On the way my companion joined me, and having been unsuccessful, assisted me with it to camp. In the evening, we came to the conclusion to abandon, for the present, our design of going to the Flatt-head house, because the snow had become so soft that it was almost impossible to get along with snow shoes; and quite so without them.

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

We resolved to go back, and get horses to convey our present supply of provisions to the house. After dark we again lay down on a bed that could not be mistaken for one of down, and in a plight that will not, I presume, excite envy in any one, being precisely similar to our condition on the preceding evening, as it yet rained steadily, though slowly. Do not flatter yourself, reader, that we slept any, though we had been without for the last forty-eight hours; that was a luxury only contemplated in our extremely interesting situation; our enjoyments were entirely intellectual, and we could not abandon the pleasures of reflection even for a season, to waste our precious time in sleep.

The night, though lengthened to a degree that we would not have conceived possible, at last approached to a close.

We kindled a fire, prepared a scaffold to secure our meat from the wolves, placed a handkerchief as a flag above it, to frighten away the ravens and magpies, which are always numerous in this country, slung our blankets, and started for the house. The snow was now reduced to the depth of a foot, but very soft and saturated with water, so that we sank through almost to the ground at every step, even with our rackets on. However, we reached the house after dark, wet through, and nearly exhausted by fatigue; changed our apparel, and having ate a hearty supper, retired to enjoy a good nights rest in our beds. Oh! the luxury of such repose! after having been exposed to a storm of rain, for three whole weary days, and two sleepless nights. None can appreciate it, who have not experienced similar hardships.

It rained all night, but abated at the dawn of day, when

“Up rose the sun: the mists were curl’d

Back, from the solitary world.”

and the mellow rays of the sun again illumined nature with their cheerful splendor.

## CHAPTER XLVII

On the morning of the sixth we mounted two of our horses, and set out for our late encampment, where we had enjoyed so many hours of nocturnal contemplation. - The day was one of the finest imaginable, clear and warm, and every object tinted with the rich lustre of the radiant sun. Late in the afternoon we reached our venison, which remained as we had left it, untouched by beasts or birds. During our progress we had seen several deer, but could not get a shot at them. We kindled a fire and prepared a shoulder of venison for supper; but had no water, and being some distance from the river, could not get any without descending a steep rocky bluff, at the imminent hazard of our lives. We tasked our ingenuity to devise an expedient, and succeeded. Taking the digestive ventricle of a deer, which had previously been cleaned for food, we filled it with snow, and then putting in heated stones, continued the operation until we were at length the lawful

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

proprietors of a whole gallon of water; which auspicious event, was duly celebrated by proper rejoicings.

Having finished these important arrangements, eaten supper, and participated in the refreshing beverage so ingeniously procured; we laid down on the precise spot where we had spent three previous nights, and enjoyed an undisturbed repose.

On the day following we returned to the house, with another deer which we had the good fortune to kill by the way. The weather continued pleasant for some time forward, and on the tenth, two Indian boys came to us from a lake, two or three day's walk to the eastward; where the half-breeds we saw in the Horse Plains, were passing the winter. A child of one of them was burnt to death accidentally, by its clothes, which were of cotton, taking fire. In that quarter there had been as much snow, as in our vicinity. Next day the boys continued on, in quest of some relations at the Flatt-head house. - We told them to send up here one or two Indians to hunt for us, and they should be well rewarded.

We waited until the 17th for the arrival of some, but none came, and I finally resolved to go down and engage one or two myself. Taking my gun, blankets, a pair of extra moccasins, flint and steel, a hatchet, and my snow shoes, I passed down the river about twelve miles, where I found a comfortable bush cabin, and halted for the night.

In the morning the weather was pleasant, and I started down the serpentine course of the stream, hemmed in, on either side, by an indefinite number of high rocky bluffs, or points, with sides almost perpendicular, jutting into the river; on which, I was frequently compelled to climb, at the hazard of my neck. Had I followed a guide, no doubt much fatigue, danger and distance, would have been avoided, but ignorant as I was of the proper route, I was compelled to follow the tortuous course of the river; often to retrace my steps, and seek a more practicable passage, from some abrupt precipice, or perpendicular descent; till at length, quite overcome by fatigue, I sought refuge from the storm - which recommenced, soon after I started in the morning - in a cavern, which extended far beneath an immense rock, and afforded a comfortable shelter. When I halted here it was quite dark, and I was wet and benumbed with cold; however, I gathered a quantity of fuel, and succeeded, after considerable difficulty, owing to the wet condition of every thing I procured, in making a fire, the cheerful blaze of which, illuminated the interior of the cave, and enabled me to discover an excellent spring, a few paces in the interior, precluding thus the necessity of climbing down the steep bank of the river, fifteen or twenty feet to the water's edge, and exposing myself to the risk of falling in, of which there would be great danger. During the day, I had no opportunity to kill any game, nor did I see any signs of deer.

Fasting, and unrefreshed, I set out early on the morning of the 19th, scarcely able to see, in consequence of the snow, which was falling with almost blinding rapidity. I had, however, made but a short distance, when I discovered the traces of two Indians; and proceeding but a little way further, found two squaws in the act of butchering a deer. By signs, they informed me that I would find several Indians a short distance below. - I continued on, till I found about fifteen men

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

and boys, warming themselves by a fire of large dimensions. - They were from the Flatt-head house three days since, and came here to hunt; they directed me to follow a small trail, which they pointed out in the snow, and that I would find a house. I traced along the path about half a mile, and came to a large bush cabin.

In the evening the Indians all returned, having had pretty good success in their hunt; and we slept in a circle not more than ten feet in diameter, with a fire in the centre; though there were seventeen souls in all, not estimating in this number two dogs, as their having souls is yet a matter of dispute with metaphysicians. They, however, considered themselves as of us, by insisting on places in the circle; which, notwithstanding sundry kicks, cuffs, and other dogmatical demonstrations of hostility, they retained during the whole night.

In the morning following we started for the house, passed out into the plain, at the mouth of Thompson's river, several miles in extent, and occasionally intersected by woodland. Our party was divided in this place; two of them I despatched to the house of Mr. Montour; and, with the exception of two others who accompanied me, the remainder departed down the river. Under the direction of my guides, I passed across the plain several miles, to the Flatt-head house, situated on the river bearing the same name. This establishment formerly consisted of seven hewn log buildings; but all are now going to decay, except the one inhabited by the Indians who accompanied me. They supply themselves with firewood, at the expense of the other buildings. They are entrusted with the secret of a cache, made in one of those decayed houses, containing the goods which yet remain of Mr. Ermatinger's stock last fall. He would be there shortly, they informed me, on his way to the plains. During my stay at the fort, the Indians went out daily to hunt, and seldom returned unsuccessful.

On the 24th, an Indian by the name of Pillet (so called after the Trader) came and invited me to go and sup at his camp, which he assured me, was not far distant; I gave a ready consent, as he would be greatly obliged by my compliance, and I would not wound the feelings of a Pen-d'orielle by a refusal, if it could conveniently be avoided. We passed down the river some distance, crossed it on the ice, and continued over hills and hollows, through a grove of pines, about four miles, to his lodge; which was situated on the margin of a small stream in the mountain, and was constructed of weeds. Though it appeared better calculated to exclude the warm rays of the sun, than to keep out the cold; a cheerful fire within counterbalanced the evil; and I was seated opposite to a good natured squaw, and two or three children. My considerate host set before me a vessel, filled with the choicest morsels of deer and lynx, both fat and tender, of which I partook freely. The flesh of the latter is far superior to the meat of the deer; and is the best I ever tasted, except that of the female bison. After finishing my repast, I ascertained that he had passed the winter thus far here, with his family, quite remote from any of his people; that he had killed, during his stay here, forty-six deer, two lynxes, two pekans, three martins, one beaver, one otter, and several muskrats. He appeared quite intelligent and devout, prayed for his family before eating; and so pleased me, by his courteous yet dignified conduct, and amiable disposition, that I concluded to remain at his lodge, until the arrival of the trader. Time passed agreeably here, and I made considerable progress in acquiring the Flathead language; in which my kind entertainer seemed delighted to

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

instruct me.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

On the first of April, Pillet departed for the Cotena trading house, in company with the three men from that place; and on the same day, a half-breed arrived, with information, that his friends would be here in a day or two from the Flatt-head lake.

On the eleventh an Indian reached us in advance of a party coming on from Bitter-root river; he said that three Flatt heads had been killed in that quarter, by the Black feet. The Indian, Pillet; whom the reader will recollect as my kind entertainer a few days since, came here on the twelfth, to receive a present I had promised him in return for his hospitality. He informed me with sorrow, that "Tloght" had been severely wounded in a contest with a lynx, and that he was much afraid he could never recover. I felt really grieved for him, knowing the value of the friend he was likely to lose; but lest the reader should feel an emotion of regret that he might afterwards think misplaced, I hasten to inform him that Tloght, the poor wounded Tloght, was of the canine species. Yes, reader! he was, though one of the noblest of his kind, only - a dog - a large powerful black hound, exceedingly swift, and well trained to hunting. He has often caught and killed deer of the largest kind, unaided; he was also fond of hunting lynx, and animals, very strong and fierce; and indeed, I have been more than once indebted to the courage and agility of Tloght, for a most delicious meal of the flesh of this animal. On one occasion, when Pillet was hunting with his faithful dog; the latter treed a lynx - which the Indian killed, - and there found in the snow beneath the tree, no less than three fine deer, which the lynx had killed, and buried there; all of which, through the sagacity of his dog, became a prize to the hunter. The name - Tloght - which was borne by this fine animal, signifies Fleetest; and is but a literal expression of his speed. Pillet, was a poor Pen-d'orielle, whose sole reliance for the support of his family and himself, was on his dog, and his own exertions. He had no horses, his other dog was quite inferior, and Tloght was the most valuable of his possessions. It will not then be wondered, that the story of this misfortune to the gallant Tloght, should have been the first intelligence communicated to me by the simple savage; or that he should dwell with a melancholy eloquence, on his virtues, and abilities, and deplore his calamity. I sympathised with him, and made him a present of an axe and a kettle, for which he expressed his thanks in terms of warmest gratitude; and we parted, mutually pleased with the interview. I never saw him again.

On the thirteenth I left Flatt head post in a barge loaded with about a ton of merchandise, for the Horse plain, and manned by four stout Canadians; who propelled it with poles where the water was shallow, but when its depth would not admit of this mode of locomotion, recourse was had to paddles. We halted at sundown, opposite to a rock called "Le Gros Rocker". By noon on the following day, we reached House Prairie and encamped with a few lodges of Indians, who were awaiting the arrival of Mr. Ermatinger. In the afternoon, a Canadian reached us from Bitter Root river; he informed me that my fellow trader of last summer, was now with the Flatt heads. Mr. Ermatinger came up in the evening by land, with a quantity of goods upon pack horses. From

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

this period until the twenty-third; Mr. Montour and myself, having purchased an equipment from the Hudson Bay Company; were employed in arranging bales, purchasing provisions, and making preparations for our departure to the Flatt-heads. We crossed over a point of the mountain, - around which the river winds, making a large curve in its course; - to the opposite side of the bend, following the same route, on which we had passed in December last; which we reached on the evening of the twenty-third. Leaving the Flatt-heads, we ascended a small branch, called Wild Horse Creek, to Cammas prairie; crossed over the mountain, and halted on the Arrowstone river, on the twenty-ninth. During our journey, we saw wild horses galloping in bands over the plains, almost daily; several of which, were caught by our Indians and domesticated, with but little trouble. They pursued them, on very fleet horses until sufficiently near to "leash" them; when thus captured, they exert all their remaining force in fruitless endeavors to escape; and finally become gentle from exhaustion. In this situation they are bridled, mounted, and then, whipped to action. Other horses are usually rode before, that they may be induced to follow. If then they move forward gently, they are caressed by the rider; but on the contrary, most cruelly beaten if they refuse to proceed, or act otherwise unruly; a few day's practice seldom fails to render them quite docile and obedient. The process of catching wild horses, by throwing a noose over the head, is here called "leashing," and all Indians in the mountains, as well as those who rove in the plains east of them, are quite expert at it; although in this respect, far behind the inhabitants of New Mexico, who not only catch wild horses, cattle, buffalo, and bears; but even leash them by the feet, when at full speed, so as to render them quite incapable of moving. However, two experienced "leashers" are requisite to the complete capture of a large bull bison, or a full grown grizzly bear, and in both cases the feat is attended with considerable danger.

On our arrival at the Arrow stone river, we found it too high for fording, and immediately commenced making rafts. In the meantime, the squaws sewed up all torn places or holes in their lodges, then conveyed them, and their baggage, to the brink of the stream. The lodges were next spread on the ground and folded once in the middle, the baggage of several families were then placed on one, taking care to put the heaviest articles at the bottom; the lodge was then firmly drawn from every side together at the top, and there strongly fastened by a thong, or rope, so that the whole appeared like a large ball four or five feet in diameter. About half way up the side two long cords or "leashes" (such as they use in catching horses,) were attached, and the ball then launched into the water, which buoyed it up like an egg-shell; several squaws and children then embarked upon it, and secured themselves from falling, by clinging to the cord which held it at the top. After all these arrangements were completed, two naked mounted Indians, seized the long cords between their teeth, and pushed out into the river; making their horses swim and carry them and tow one of their families and baggage at the same time. When I observed them start, I was fearful that the ball would upset and endanger the lives of the women and children; but was agreeably disappointed seeing them turning and returning, as the cords slackened or strained on it, horizontally; until it reached the opposite shore in safety. The river appeared in a few moments literally covered with these balls, all in the same manner constructed; all surmounted by women and children, and each towed over by two Indians on horseback. In short, they all crossed without accident, and transported our baggage over at our request, we having found our rafts quite insufficient. Ermatinger and myself, however, with several of his men, passed over on a raft; but

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

the velocity of the current carried us down a considerable distance with fury, and it was for some time doubtful, where we should be able to effect a landing, but we finally passed so near a point of willows, which overhung the river, that we succeeded in arresting our rapid course by clinging to them, and got to shore, a mile below the landing place of the Indians, at which we all encamped.

## CHAPTER XLIX

On the thirtieth, Mr. Ermatinger and myself, having learned that a party of Flatt-heads were encamped on Bitter-root river some distance above the mouth, set off in a gallop to see them. We arrived about noon, and had hardly gone through the tedious ceremony of shaking hands with them, before a large party arrived from Buffalo, with my old comrade Newell and several "engages" in company. From him, I ascertained that Dripps had received last fall an express from Fontenelle; stating that two of his men had been killed during the fall hunt, supposed by the Blackfeet, that Dripps had passed the winter at the forks, where I left him last November, found buffalo as numerous as during the preceding winter, and had met with no accidents. Late in the afternoon our party arrived, and we all concluded to remain here some time to recruit our horses.

In the evening of the third of May, while a party of the Indians were amusing themselves at a war dance, one of them, a spectator, carelessly resting his chin on the muzzle of his gun, was instantly killed by the unexpected discharge of its contents into his brain. The gun was probably, accidentally exploded by the foot or knee of some person passing in the crowd. On the day following, the corpse was carefully dressed with a clean shirt, and blanket, then enveloped from head to foot, like an Egyptian Mummy, with robes and skins, well lashed around him, and finally committed to the silent keeping of the grave.

At length, our horses having become in good travelling condition, Mr. Montour and myself determined to set out in search of Americans, with whom we had resolved to trade; and started accordingly, on the tenth. Our party was composed of Mr. Montour, his son, two "engages," two Nez-perces, four Pend'orielles, one Cotena, one boy, four women and two or three small children. From the number of dialect in our camp, I am convinced, that a stranger would have been greatly puzzled to determine, which of the five languages continually spoken there, was predominant. However, we understood each other sufficiently well, to prevent mistakes; and the Indians comprehended one another, though they cannot be induced to convey their ideas in any tongue except their own. This custom would in a great measure prevent a proper understanding in many instances, were it not for their numerous signs, which constitute a kind of universal communication, not to say language, at once understood by all the various Indians in the mountains. These signs are made with their hands or fingers, in different positions, with rapidity; and are so extremely simple, that a person entirely unacquainted with them, will readily conceive a great portion of what may be expressed by them.

We passed, nearly southward, up the river some distance to a high point of mountain - projecting in the plain quite to the river's margin. We passed the Sheep Horn, which appears to have been

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

garnished lately, with arrows, feathers, beads, pieces of scarlet, etc. in addition to the ornaments observed there in the fall. These little offerings, the superstitious natives ignorantly imagine will conciliate or gratify, the Deity, whom they suppose to have placed the horn in that singular position, that it may remain an eternal monument of his kind care for them, by continually reminding them, that it is their constant duty to remember and adore him. A confession or acknowledgement of their faith is made manifest, by the contribution of some little trinket or other trifling present. We crossed over the point, and descended into a fine little valley, inhabited by an extensive village of prairie dogs, where we finally halted on the second day about sunset. On the twelfth we crossed the mountain without difficulty, and encamped in the edge of the Big Hole. We saw several forts, made by the Black-feet since we passed here last fall. Next morning the last of our provisions, amounting to but a small piece for each person, was eaten for breakfast. We hoped, however, to kill something soon, and followed the Indian trail across this hole to Wisdom river, on which we halted for a short time, to bait our horses. It commenced raining soon after we started, and continued all day. Notwithstanding the storm however, we set out again, and proceeded to the warm springy where we encamped. The Indians expressed a desire to return back to the village. We were all cold, hungry and wet, and were but scantily supplied with sage roots and small willows for fuel. Not a few faces were chattering like rattle-boxes, and the prospect seemed fair for an uncomfortable night. A dram of Demarara rum, and a pint of hot coffee to each individual, was made to answer for fire and supper, and a night's meditation in a cold wet blanket for lodging, though they were considered by some as rather poor apologies for these common comforts. There was no choice, however; and during the night the drowsy phantom, continually flitting about like an "ignis fatuus," though often near, invariably eluded our grasp, as we essayed to catch it, and having spent the whole night in such fruitless endeavors, we arose, and collected our horses, who had broken loose from their pickets during the night, and rambled down the plain several miles. Having breakfasted, as we last night supposed, we set out, notwithstanding the storm, which still continued with violence; leaving the Big Hole behind us, we bore eastward over high bold hills into the Little Hole, which we followed, gradually turning to the southward, until near night, when we halted at its southern extremity. Our Indians killed during the march a cow that was poor and unpalatable; but were however, more fortunate in the evening, when they brought in the meat of a bull in much better condition. On the morning of the fifteenth we set out in fine spirits, to which a good night's rest, a full stomach, and a fair pleasant morning had severally contributed; and passed over a rising plain south-eastward, through Horse prairie, and halted for the night on a small stream, that flows into the eastern extremity of this plain. We saw during the day large herds of buffalo, killed several in fine eating order, and fared "pretty well considering," as a brother yankee would say, after a good meal. On the succeeding day we passed a high conical mound or spur, which it is, of the mountain, that is visible from any part of Horse prairie, and halted in the evening on the head of a creek, in an open valley, called by the Indians "Sin ko lats sin la," or "Hanged Man's Prairie," from the circumstance of one having been punished in that mode here by his fellows, for some crime several years since. We made that day twenty-five miles, our course south-east.

CHAPTER L

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

On the seventeenth, we ascended a bold hill, and came in view of the plains of Snake river, and the "Trois Titons", which bore nearly East; we descended the rough irregular plain, and halted at evening on the waters of the Columbia. The face of the country here is extremely broken, and intersected by small streams, that are separated from each other by high bluff rocky hills. We saw immense herds of buffalo in the plains below, which were covered in every direction by them, as far as the eye could distinguish. We were cautioned by our Indians during the march, to prevent our horses feeding by the way, in consequence of a poisonous herb, resembling a parsnip, which abounds there, and causes death shortly after being eaten.

On the eighteenth, we travelled South-Eastward down to the great plains, and halted on Poison Weed Creek. We observed columns of sand moving in various directions; raised by whirlwinds, though the day was fair and the air still, without a breeze or even zephyr. These singular columns, when passing over the plain with great rapidity, would often suddenly stop, as if to gather more force and a denser cloud of dust, for some moments, revolving round with accelerated velocity; then again progressing slowly, move off in quite a different direction from that in which they run, before halting; with faster flight they would wing their way along, until again they would pause at some sand hill, to increase their speed or condense their substance, and again pass away with volume and vigor apparently renewed; until they would finally dissolve and disappear. The most extensive and remarkable of these whirling pillars, were seen to rise on the hills, at the base of the Sand Mountain, and large quantities of the beautiful fine white sand of which they are composed, were scattered over the plain by these aerial phenomena.

I had heard in the summer of 1833, while at rendezvous, that remarkable boiling springs had been discovered, on the sources of the Madison, by a party of trappers in their spring hunt; of which the accounts they gave, were so very astonishing, that I determined to examine them myself, before recording their descriptions, though I had the united testimony of more than twenty men on the subject, who all declared they saw them, and that they really were, as extensive and remarkable as they had been described. Having now an opportunity of paying them a visit, and as another or a better might not soon occur, I parted with the company after supper, and, taking with me two Pen-d'orielles, set out at a round pace, the night being clear and comfortable. We proceeded over the plain about twenty miles, and halted until daylight on a fine spring, flowing into Cammas Creek. Refreshed by a few hours sleep, we started again after a hasty breakfast, and entered a very extensive forest called the Piny Woods, which we passed through, and reached the vicinity of the springs about dark, having seen several small lakes or ponds, on the sources of the Madison; and rode about forty miles; which was a hard day's ride, taking into consideration the rough irregularity of the country through which we had travelled.

We regaled ourselves with a cup of coffee, and immediately after supper lay down to rest, sleepy, and much fatigued. The continual roaring of the springs, however, for some time prevented my going to sleep, and excited an impatient curiosity to examine them; which I was obliged to defer the gratification of, until morning; and filled my slumbers with visions of water spouts, cataracts, fountains, jets d'eau of immense dimensions, etc. etc.

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

When I arose in the morning, clouds of vapor seemed like a dense fog to overhang the springs, from which frequent reports or explosions of different loudness, constantly assailed our ears. I immediately proceeded to inspect them, and might have exclaimed with the Queen of Sheba, when their full reality of dimensions and novelty burst upon my view, "The half was not told me."

From the surface of a rocky plain or table, burst forth columns of water, of various dimensions, projected high in the air, accompanied by loud explosions, and sulphurous vapors, which were highly disagreeable to the smell. The rock from which these springs burst forth, was calcareous, and probably extends some distance from them, beneath the soil. The largest of these wonderful fountains, projects a column of boiling water several feet in diameter, to the height of more than one hundred and fifty feet - in my opinion; but the party of Alvarez, who discovered it, persist in declaring that it could not be less than four times that distance in height - accompanied with a tremendous noise. These explosions and discharges occur at intervals of about two hours. After having witnessed three of them, I ventured near enough to put my hand into the water of its basin, but withdrew it instantly, for the heat of the water in this immense cauldron, was altogether too great for comfort, and the agitation of the water, the disagreeable effluvia continually exuding, and the hollow unearthly rumbling under the rock on which I stood, so ill accorded with my notions of personal safety, that I retracted back precipitately to a respectful distance. The Indians who were with me, were quite appalled, and could not by any means be induced to approach them. They seemed astonished at my presumption in advancing up to the large one, and when I safely returned, congratulated me on my "narrow escape." - They believed them to be supernatural, and supposed them to be the production of the Evil Spirit. One of them remarked that hell, of which he had heard from the whites, must be in that vicinity. The diameter of the basin into which the water of the largest jet principally falls, and from the centre of which, through a hole in the rock of about nine or ten feet in diameter, the water spouts up as above related, may be about thirty feet. - There are many other smaller fountains, that did not throw their waters up so high, but occurred at shorter intervals. In some instances, the volumes were projected obliquely upwards, and fell into the neighboring fountains or on the rock or prairie. But their ascent was generally perpendicular, falling in and about their own basins or apertures. These wonderful productions of nature, are situated near the centre of a small valley, surrounded by pine covered hills, through which a small fork of the Madison flows. Highly gratified with my visit to these formidable and magnificent fountains, jets, or springs, whichever the reader may please to call them, I set out after dinner to rejoin my companions. Again we crossed the Piny Woods, and encamped on the plains at Henry's fork.

## CHAPTER LI

Resuming our journey early on the morning of the twenty-first, we crossed Henry's Fork, and continued on till we arrived in the vicinity of Pierre's Hole; where the country assumes a rolling

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

appearance, and is dotted with an occasional grove of aspen trees. Entering this valley, we passed over to Pierre's fork, near which we discovered the trail of our company, and following it about three miles, at our rapid pace, overtook them as they were on the very point of encamping. Mutual congratulations over, I retired much fatigued to rest. From Mr. Montour, I learned that the hunters had killed several bulls, a bald eagle and a goose. They were greatly annoyed by suffocating clouds of dust, which arose from their horses' feet, filled their lungs and eyes, and the air around them, for some distance.

On the twenty-second, we remained to dry meat, which was prepared and packed, ready for transportation, by evening. Next morning we pursued our journey, passed South-Eastward to Pierre's Hole, and halted in the mountain, on a trail leading over it. We killed, during our march, five buffalos and an antelope. One of our Indians found in Pierre's Hole, a pair of boots, and some articles of clothing, that had evidently been there a long time, on the prairie; probably lost by some white man during last year. On the twenty-fourth we ascended the mountain, crossed an immense snow bank with extreme difficulty, descended the plain, passed through Lewis's rim, though so high that our horses were obliged to swim, and halted on a small stream several miles east of the river. Leaving the river on the twenty-fifth, we passed along this valley to the South-East point or extremity, when we reached a fork of this stream, and travelled up its narrow bottom, flanked on either side, at the distance of less than half a mile, by lofty mountains; climbing occasional hills or bluffs, which project in some instances quite to the river's margin; and halted at the commencement of the narrows, formed by the mountains closing upon the stream, until barely sufficient space remains for its compressed channel. We here found an encampment, made by a large party of whites, some ten days since, on their way from Salt river to Green river; I supposed it to have been made by Dripps, who wintered on Snake river.

On the twenty-fifth we passed, with our usual hazards and difficulty, though fortunately without accident, through the tortuous windings, abrupt elevations, and precipitous descents, of the Narrows, out of which we were glad to emerge; and entering Jackson's Little Hole, encamped on a small branch of this fork, at the East side of the valley. Antelopes and buffalos were found here; and an encampment made by the company whose traces we observed the day previous. On the twenty-seventh we ascended the steep, rough, aspen covered hill, forming the east boundary of this hole, and passing down on the opposite side, came into the plains of Green river. We now directed our course towards "Bonnyville's Folly," or "Fort Nonsense," as it was more frequently called; but had proceeded a few miles only, when we discovered two Indians so near us that they could not hope to escape though they betrayed considerable anxiety at our approach. When we reached them, however, their fears were quelled, we learned that they belonged to the party of Dripps, who were encamped on a small stream in the Wind mountain, east of Green river. On hearing this information, we turned our course to that stream, which we crossed without accident; and halted after sundown in the willows, on the border of a small branch; after a hard march of thirty miles, at least. Early the next morning we set out, found the trail of Dripp's party, followed it ten miles to a small stream, and then found an encampment, which had been that morning evacuated. We continued to pursue the trail, over a rough, rocky, hilly country, and finally descended to the margin of a fine little lake, about ten miles long and one broad; down which,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

the trail passed to the western side, and finally conducted us to Dripps' encampment, in a narrow bottom, bounded on one side by a high, rocky, bold hill; and by the lake on the other; our course here, from Green river, was nearly East.

From Mr. Dripps we learned, that Fontenelle and others were in the Eutaw country, to the Southward, trapping still. This lake, fed by springs, constitutes the source of the Western branch, of the New Fork. The trappers informed me that there were several other small lakes in this side of the mountain, on the sources of the other branches of this fork. We remained here for several days, awaiting the return of some small parties of trappers. On the thirty-first, we made a short march to the outlet of this lake, for better grass, and killed on our way several buffalos. On the succeeding day, June the first, we collected all our horses together at camp, and blooded them indiscriminately, to make them thrive, and render them more healthy. This operation is performed every spring, and is considered quite necessary. Indeed horses who are bled, invariably fatted faster, and become strong, hardy, and active, much sooner than those who are not. June, the second, a party of trappers returned, who had been out since last fall; several of them saw Fontenelle this spring, in the neighborhood of Bear river. He had lost one man, killed, by the name of CHEVALIA. We moved several times, short distances parallel with Green river, and finally went to it. In the mean time, an express was despatched to Fontenelle, and several small parties of trappers, returned from various sections of the country, and related their adventures and escapes. The weather had been pleasant, we seldom failed to kill plenty of buffalos when we made an effort to do so, and we therefore fared and frolicked, when we chose, agreeably.

## CHAPTER LII

Several men bitten by a rabid wolf - Arrival in camp of two Eutaw squaws from the Snakes - Wild currants, goosberries, etc. - Mexican Indians

About this time we learned that two persons, who were bitten by a wolf, at last rendezvous, had died or disappeared suddenly. The circumstances during the hurry and bustle of business at rendezvous were by mistake not recorded in my journal, though they produced great excitement at that time. They were as follows: whilst we were all asleep, one night, an animal, supposed to be a dog, passed through camp, bit several persons as they lay, and then disappeared. On the following morning considerable anxiety was manifested by those who were bitten, under the apprehension that the animal might have been afflicted with the hydrophobia, and several of them took their guns and went about camp, shooting all suspicious looking dogs; but were unable to determine that any one was positively mad. During the day information came from the R. M. F. Co., who were encamped a short distance below us on the same side of the river, that several men were likewise bitten in their camp during the night, and that a wolf supposed to be rabid, had been killed in the morning. The excitement which this affair originated, however, gradually subsided, and nothing more was heard of mad-dogs or wolves. In the fall subsequent, one the persons who had been bitten, a young Indian brought from the council Bluffs by Mr. Fontenelle, after having given indications of the hydrophobia, disappeared one night from camp and was heard of no

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

more. The general impression being, that he wandered off while under its influence, and perished. Another individual died of that horrible malady, after having several violent spasms, while on his way from the mountains to St. Louis, in company with two others. Whether there have been any more instances of the kind, I am not informed.

On the twenty-fourth, two women arrived at our camp, in a starving condition. One of them had an infant at her breast, and was the wife of Cou-mar-ra-nap, a famous Eutaw chieftain; the other was a young, unmarried girl, of the same nation. They were taken prisoners by a party of Snakes, during the early part of the summer, and were conducted to the village, where they were condemned to die; but were saved by the timely interference of Capt. Walker, who humanely purchased their lives, and sent them to overtake us, as the surest means of getting to their own country in safety. They had followed our camp twenty days, living upon roots and berries, and had avoided the trails and most frequented places, for fear of again falling into the hands of their enemies. The Snakes declared war against the Eutaws last fall, for killing several of their tribe, who were caught in the act of stealing their horses. A few days after capturing the women, they stole the horses of a party of hunters, from the Rio del Norte, on a stream called the Euruta, and returned to their village with the booty.

On the twenty-ninth we passed southward over a rolling country, covered with cedars; and halted at a small stream, that discharges itself into Green river. The borders of this creek were covered with bushes, laden with fruit, which was now ripe. There were black, white, yellow and red currants, large as cherries; though to the taste, quite inferior to the common garden currants, being less sweet, and more acid; plump goosberries of a large size, likewise tempted the eye, but were equally sour. The bushes that bear them, frequently attain the height of eight or ten feet, in the rich mellow soil along the rivers; and at this season, are bent to the ground by the loads of fruit, with which they are encumbered. There was also a species of small tree, not unlike the hawthorn, armed with thorns, and covered with blue or lead colored leaves, which was completely enveloped with berries, either red or yellow, about the size of allspice or pepper grains. This fruit is extremely sour, and is commonly called "buffalo berries." They are prized by the Indians for abundance, surpassing by far, all other productions of this kind, and quantities of them are collected by the squaws for food. It may be remarked, in relation to goosberries, that we have frequently found them in other parts of the mountains of a delicious flavor, as well as of a very large size.

On the third of September, being within the territory of Mexico, three of the wild natives of this region, ventured into our camp. They were stark naked, and betrayed almost a total want of intellect, which was perhaps the result of extreme wretchedness and misery, to which they are continually exposed, from infancy until death. They spoke a tongue perfectly unintelligible to us, and evidently not well comprehended by each other; neither could they understand any of those expressive signs, and gestures, by which other Indians convey their ideas, with perfect success. Severe hunger, however, instinctively taught them to make us understand, that they wanted

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

something to eat, which indeed was all they could communicate. We gave them the carcasses of two beavers, together with the head and feet of a dog, which they warmed, a few moments, over the fire, and devoured with wolfish avidity. A Nezperce with our party, regarded them attentively, until they had finished their repast, when he arose, and with evident marks of astonishment, in his countenance, exclaimed "why my horse has got more sense, than those Indians!" It may be well to remark in this place, that the different nations in the Rocky Mountains are, for the most part, confined to certain districts, called by them, their own country; within which they rove, and become familiar with every trifling object; but are almost entirely ignorant of the country, or people, beyond their limits. The Indian who made the remark above, was born on one of the sources of the Columbia, but was not aware of the existence of this nation, until we brought him among them.

On the fourth, four of these Indians, who call themselves "Sann-pitch," came into camp, bringing to my surprise, several deer skins. I say, to my surprise, because from the hasty opinion I had formed yesterday, I imagined deer, to be the more intelligent animal of the two, and should have expected them with skins of the Sann-pitch, marching up to trade, almost as soon. However, in justice to the superiority of the latter, skins they brought, and made us understand, by simply pointing to the skins, and then toward our horses, that they wanted one of them. We quickly informed them, that our horses could not be disposed off for deer skins. They manifested a great deal of disappointment, and finally offered them for provisions, but were equally unsuccessful. These are by far, the most miserable human beings we have ever seen. The barrenness of their country, and scarcity of game, compel them to live by separate families, either in the mountains, or in the plains. In the latter, they usually select the most barren places to encamp, where there is apparently nothing but sand, and wormwood or sage. Here, the women and children are employed in gathering grasshoppers, crickets, ants, and various other species of insects, which are carefully preserved for food, together with roots, and grass seed. From the mountains, they bring the nuts which are found in the cores of the pine, acorns from the dwarf oaks, as well as the different kinds of berries, and the inner bark of the pine, which has a sweet acid taste, not unlike lemon syrup. In the mean time, the men are actively employed in hunting small animals, such as prairie dogs, squirrels, field mice, and larger animals, or birds, which fortune some times, places within the reach of their arrows. They likewise take fish, with simple instruments of their own invention, which will be hereafter described.

The Sann-pitch are generally quite naked, though in some instances a small piece of skin, is fastened before them. The women all wear a piece of skin, reaching from the middle, to the knees, and instances are not uncommon, where they possess a complete leathern shirt, but no other article of dress. They are extremely shy, and approach us with evident fear and caution. If in the plains, they conceal themselves from our approach, by crawling into the sage, or into gullies; but if discovered in the open prairie, where flight would be useless, they throw themselves flat upon the ground, in hopes of being mistaken for a rock, or other unusual appearance; which practice generally succeeds, if they were not discovered before putting it into effect.

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

## CHAPTER LIII

A bed of salt - Indian arrows - Brutal conduct of a hunter towards an aged Indian - Chanion of White River.

On the eight, I set out with others to procure salt, at a place discovered by our hunters yesterday. We passed three miles down the river, and found the salt in a slough on the west side of it. It was found on the surface of a black stinking mire, fifty or sixty paces in circuit; the upper strata was fine, and white as snow, to the depth of two inches; beneath which, was a layer of beautiful chrysalis, to the depth of five or six inches, that rested on the surface of the mire. We slowly sank into the latter to our knees, whilst scooping up the salt, and then changed places, for we could scarcely extricate ourselves at that depth; and concluded that if we should remain long enough in the same spot, we would at length disappear entirely. This opinion was corroborated by thrusting down a stick four feet in length, without meeting any resistance, more than at the surface. I gathered about a half bushel in a few minutes, and returned with my companions, who were equally fortunate, to camp.

\*\*\*\*\*

I observed during our stay on the Sarah, that the Indians had two kinds of arrows in their quivers, one of which was made of a single hard stick, feathered and pointed with transparent flint, artfully broken to a proper shape, and firmly fastened to the end of the arrow with sinews and glue. The others were made of a hollow weed, having six or eight inches of hard wood nicely inserted, and firmly glued into it; to the end of which the stone point is fastened, and is poisoned with venom from the fangs of a rattle snake. Hence the slightest wound from them is certain death. These arrows may be known at sight, by the natural joints of the cane; and the artificial one, where the wood part is inserted. They are not solely used in battle, as some have asserted; but are equally advantageous in hunting, for the slightest wound causes the animal to droop, and a few moments places it within the power of the hunter. The flesh of animals thus poisoned, is harmless in the stomach.

On the nineteenth, we continued northward, over a gently ascending plain, and encamped on a small stream, that flows into the Eutaw lake. During our march we encountered a feeble old Indian, whose age and infirmities, if they could not have insured him respect, ought at least to have shielded him from harm. Innocent and inoffensive, this miserable old man - destitute of the means of offense, and engaged in the harmless occupation of gathering roots, his only apparent means of subsistence, which he deposited in a willow basket on his back - was overtaken by one of our heartless comrades, who, having had a valuable horse stolen on the seventeenth, in a most unfeeling manner, inflicted a severe blow upon his head, with his gun. For once the fortitude of the Indian yielding to the frailty of nature, he gave utterance to a scream of agony, which was distinctly heard by all of us, though far in advance of them. I galloped back as soon as possible, and saw him covered with blood, while a few paces distant stood the hunter in the act of loading his gun, with the avowed intention of taking his life. I easily persuaded him, however, to leave the In-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

dian without further molestation, and he accordingly proceeded with me to the company, heartily ashamed of his brutal conduct. Similar instances I am happy to say, are of rare occurrence.

On the twenty-ninth, we entered a narrow passage between two formidable walls of cut rocks, called by the hunters the Chanion of White river; which rose, perhaps, from one to two hundred feet in perpendicular height, and sixty or eighty yards asunder. This narrow space is chiefly occupied by the river, winding from one side to the other, as if enraged, at being thus confined. The walls are seldom accessible, and are surmounted in some places, by singular peaks of weather-worn sand stone resembling, when beheld at a distance, domes, turrets, steeples and towers, so strikingly that a single glance is sufficient to excite in the mind of the spectator, the idea of a flourishing village, and the vicinity of a civilized country. But, alas! a nearer and more careful view, dispels the pleasing illusion, changes those spires to solitary desolation, and turns the lovely creations of imagination, to naked cliffs and sandy deserts, far, far from the inspiring presence of home, and the affectionate relations of social life.

## CHAPTER LIV

Arrival to camp of twenty families of Eutaws - An Indian Chief - Several horses stolen from the camp, and attendant circumstances - Shaving materials, etc. found - Murder of a squaw by her husband.

On the first of November, we were joined by twenty families of Eutaw Indians, who were returning from Buffalo, having loaded their horses with dried meat. They had several stolen, whilst they were engaged in preparing their meat, for transportation, which induced them to retreat expeditiously, fearing an attack from their enemies, the Snakes. This was effected with so much rapidity, that they packed their horses unskillfully, and nearly ruined them; for, in consequence of such neglect, many of them had their backs completely skinned.

A party of Indians also came in from the southward on the fourth, and we immediately opened a brisk trade with them for furs, deer skins, etc. The principal chief is a hardy warrior, about forty years of age; evidently superior both in a mental and physical point of view, to any of his followers. His hair, which is of uncommon length, he wears coiled up in a knot on his forehead, secured by a thong; but differs from his tribe in no other particular, either of dress or ornament. The expression of his countenance is mild and thoughtful, and rather pleasing than otherwise. His keen wandering eye bespeaks intelligence, and his demeanor is dignified and impressive. He is reputed the bravest man of his nation; and has won, on the sanguinary field more trophies, than any of his warriors. He is known to the hunters by the name La Toque, which he has received from our French comrades, probably because his hair, has some resemblance to a cap. His followers do not steal, but are continually loitering about our encampment, curiously examining every thing they see, and never fail to ask for every thing they examine; hence they are even more intolerable, than some of their less honest neighbors.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

On the tenth, we were alarmed early in the morning by the cry of "robbers," and immediately sallied out to collect our horses, - twenty of which belonging to the Indians were missing. We always fastened ours in camp at night, whilst the Indians frequently permitted theirs to run loose, and were consequently the sufferers. Unfortunately, one of our men had discovered maces of Indians, some distance below our encampment last night; but neglected to inform the chief, and thereby put him on his guard. The consequence of this neglect on our part, was a universal belief among the Indians that the robbers were Snakes, with whom they knew we were friendly, and that we had seen and given them the requisite information, to the accomplishment of their design. No arguments of ours could prevail against this opinion, which was based upon a circumstance that occurred last fall in the camp of Fallen and Vanderburgh. They were encamped at that time on a river thirty miles north of us, and had been accompanied by a family of Eutaw Indians, during their hunt, who intended to remain with them until spring. But on reaching that river they were joined by a party of Snakes, who watching a favorable opportunity, decoyed a young man of the Eutaw family from camp, and slew him. The whites whose interest taught them to remain friendly with both nations, refused to tend their aid to avenge the deed; and the exasperated father, with his wife, and children, left them the same night; but was pursued and overtaken by the Snakes, who massacred them all. The particulars of this murder the Eutaws heard from ourselves, but blaming the whites at large for the fault of a few, in permitting so flagrant an outrage on the rights of hospitality, to pass unpunished, they could view us in no other light, than as accomplices. Hence they doubted not, that we had formed an alliance with their enemies, to effect their destruction. Fully persuaded of this, the chief instructed the women to saddle their horses, and be ready to fly into the mountains, should his fears be confirmed; whilst himself and many of his boldest followers, set out in pursuit of the robbers. Several of our men, who wished to prove their suspicions groundless, accompanied them; but returned in the evening with some of the Indians, having continued the chase to Bear river, thirty miles to the northward; where the course taken by the robbers proved them to be Arrappahoes, with whom we were at war as well as the Eutaws. This fact immediately restored confidence between us, and our men having no other object in view, returned to camp; but twenty of the Indians still followed on.

On the seventeenth, some of the Indians returned from hunting with a razor, shaving box, two shirts, and a blanket, which they found near a small stream. They had lain exposed to the weather for months. But of their being found here, there were no marks on either of these articles, by which the mystery could be unravelled.

On the evening of the twenty-seventh, one of the Indians shot down his wife in a paroxysm of passion, for some trifling misdemeanor, and having thus satiated his demoniac rage, fled. The squaws immediately joined in a heart rending lamentation, and the men rushed out of their lodges, to avenge the deed. For some minutes the camp presented a scene of clamor and confusion, that bade fair to end still more seriously. The lodge of the murderer disappeared in a moment, his property was quickly destroyed by the enraged friends of the deceased, and his horses would have shared the same fate, had they been in the care of one less resolute than the chief, who stood beside them gun in hand, and forbade their approach on the peril of their lives. No one dared to oppose the haughty chieftain, who had set them all at defiance, and the outcry soon subsided,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

though had the wretch who perpetrated the deed, fallen into their hands, I am confident he would have been torn to pieces in a moment.

## CHAPTER LV

Conmarrowap, a noted Chief of the Py-Euts.

On the twenty-third, Conmarrowap, a celebrated Chief, with his wife, and ten warriors, came into camp. This noted personage is a Eutaw by birth, but forsook his own people and joined the Py-Euts, after he became a man, and by his prowess and bravery, acquired such an ascendancy over the tribe of his adoption, as to become their principal chief. He has rendered himself as an object of terror to them, by an atrocious custom of taking their lives, for the most trivial offenses.. He is the subject of conversation every where among the Eutaws, by whom he is universally detested; all agreeing, that he deserves death, but none can be found daring enough to attempt its accomplishment.

He is the only Indian in the country, who ever dared to chastise a white man, in his own camp; and had not the partisans of the hunter interfered, his soul at that time would have taken its flight to eternity; for the high spirited trapper could not brook from the haughty Chieftain, an insult, that would have awakened a spirit of vengeance in the breast of the meanest Indian, and immediately leveled his rifle at the heart of his intended victim, who, perhaps for the first time in his life, betrayed emotions of fear. However, the comrades of the justly exasperated hunter, dashed his gun aside, and prevented the execution of a deed which would certainly have been avenged by the Indians; though the poor trapper shed tears of regret for the loss of an opportunity of appeasing his wounded honor, and at the same time punishing a savage tyrant. This evil genius once fell in with a party of trappers, some of whom are now present, and bored his finger in their ears, to make them more readily comprehend him; but I doubt whether this treatment rendered their understandings more susceptible to Eut -gibberage afterward. I heard one of these Indians seriously ask a hunter, with whom he was conversing, to allow him to spit in his ear, assuring him that if he would permit it, he must inevitably understand the Eut language thence forward; but he seemed more inclined to laugh at the folly of the proposition than to submit to the mode of instruction.

Conmarrowap's wife and her companion, after leaving us last Summer, fell in with the relations of the latter, who unhesitatingly killed and devoured the horse, we had given to the former. Leaving the inhospitable relations of her companion, she proceeded on, and reached her husband some days after. He had been sick during several weeks, and for some time was considered past recovery; but survived, and as soon as sufficient strength returned, set out to visit those who had robbed his wife. An altercation ensued, which resulted in the death of the man who was at the head of the family that had injured him though not until he had received a slight wound from an arrow himself. He lost all his horses last summer, when his wife was taken prisoner, yet he now had ten of the finest we have ever seen among the Indians. He says they were presented to him, by the passing traders from Toas to California; but it is much more probable that he took them by

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

force, as he has already done to our knowledge in many instances. All the hunting parties from Toas look upon him as a terrible fellow, and submit to his insults, which they dare not resent; although I have seen one or two individuals, who have sworn to take his life, the first opportunity that occurs, when they may not endanger themselves. During our stay on this river, one of the log huts was occupied by those trappers from Toas, who joined us last fall. They brought with them from the Sources of the Eurata, the flesh of several fine deer, which was piled upon some branches, in a corner of the room. Conmarrowap's wife entered the house one day and asked for some meat; but as the men did not immediately attend to her request, she departed without any; in a few moments Conmarrowap himself hastily entered, and without speaking, applied his herculian strength to tossing the meat to and fro, until he found the best deer in the lot, which he shouldered and with it disappeared; whilst those men sat in mute astonishment, nor dared to cast a glance of dissatisfaction towards him; though he was armed with nothing but a frown, from which they shrunk back with awe, having before felt the consequences of his displeasure. There is nothing uncommon in the appearance of this Indian, save a stern and determined look; he is now slender, of a middle stature, and has a dark, keen and restless eye; but before his sickness, was quite corpulent, a rare circumstance among Indians. There is less in his dress and manners, to distinguish him from his fellows, on ordinary occasions. He appears to be about forty years of age.

## CHAPTER LVI

## A Winter Encampment

The season having become far advanced, we pitched quarters in a large grove of aspen trees, at the brink of an excellent spring that supplied us with the purest water, and resolved to pass the winter here. Our hunters made daily excursions in the mountains, by which we were half surrounded, and always returned with the flesh of several black tail deer; an animal almost as numerous as the pines and cedars among which they were found. They frequently killed seven or eight individually, in the course of a day; and consequently our encampment, or at least the trees within it, were soon decorated with several thousand pounds of venison. We passed the time by visiting, feasting, and chatting with each other, or by hunting occasionally, for exercise and amusement. Our camp presented eight leathern lodges, and two constructed of poles covered with cane grass, which grows in dense patches to the height of eight or ten feet, along the river. They were all completely sheltered from the wind by the surrounding trees. Within, the bottoms were covered with reeds, upon which our blankets and robes were spread, leaving a small place in the centre for the fire. Our baggage was placed around at the bottom of the lodge, on the inside, to exclude the cold from beneath it, and each one of the inmates had his own particular place assigned him. One who has never lived in a lodge, would scarcely think it possible for seven or eight persons to pass a long winter agreeably, in a circular room, ten feet in diameter, having a considerable portion of it occupied by the fire in the centre; but could they see us seated around the fire, cross legged like Turks, upon our beds, each one employed in cleaning guns, repairing moccasins, smoking, and lolling at ease on our elbows, without interfering with each other, they would exclaim, In-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

deed they are as comfortable as they could wish to be! which is the case in reality. I moved from a lodge into a comfortable log house, but again returned to the lodge, which I found much more pleasant than the other. These convenient and portable dwellings, are partially transparent, and when closed at the wings above, which answer the double purpose of windows and chimneys, still admit sufficient light, to read the smallest print without inconvenience. At night a good fire of dry aspen wood, which burns clear without smoke, affording a brilliant light, obviates the necessity of using candles. Our little village numbers twenty-two men, nine women and twenty children; and a different language is spoken in every lodge, the women being of different nations, and the children invariably learn their mothers tongue before any other. There were ten distinct dialects spoken in our camp, each of which was the native idiom of one or more of us, though French was the language predominant among the men, and Flathead among the women; yet there were both males and females, who understood neither. One would imagine that where such a multiplicity of tongues are spoken, a confusion, little short of that of Babel, would naturally ensue. However, it is not the case. Men who find it difficult to convey their ideas to each other, through ignorance of their opposing dialect, readily make themselves understood by avoiding difficult or abstract expressions, and accompanying their simple speech with explanatory gestures.

## CHAPTER LVII

An attempt to pass through a frightful chasm - Battle offered to a grizzly bear - Profound cogitations of a grey wolf

On the thirtieth of March, we entered the chanion of a deep creek, and attempted to pass through one of the most frightful chasms, perhaps, in existence. On either side of the narrow space at the bottom, which was thirty paces in width, huge perpendicular walls arose, to the apparent height of a thousand feet, and were surmounted by large pines, which appeared but as twigs from the abyss beneath. We had not penetrated far beyond the entrance to this murky cave, whose gloomy vaults have probably never been explored by mortal footsteps; and whose recesses are veiled in a shroud of everlasting night, when we found it impossible to proceed further with our horses, in consequence of innumerable obstacles by which the passage was obstructed. Dismounting, I forced my way some distance over banks of snow, that entirely bridged the stream - huge fragments of immense rocks, which had been precipitated from the summit of the walls, and crumbled to pieces on the stony pavement below - lofty pines that had been torn up by descending avalanches, which accumulate on the steep side of the mountain, until even the gigantic trees can no longer sustain the superincumbent pressure of the mighty mass, that gliding down resistlessly sweeps all before it, over the eternal cliffs, and thundering thence with accelerated fury, mingles in one chaotic heap of shapeless ruins below. - Deterred from advancing further by the sublime terror of the surrounding scene, and the absolute impossibility of accomplishing my design, I stood for a few moments in mute astonishment and wonder - profusely showered by the ever-dropping spray from elevated regions of perpetual snow - beside a stream, whose foaming current has for ages dashed impetuously along its rock-bound channel - gazing in awe upon the dangers that had already stripped of branches a few lonely monarchs of the soil, that towered in solitary grandeur

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

here and there, and seemed to mourn the dismal desolation scattered around and still threatened destruction. Turning my eyes aloft, the view was menacing indeed. Overhanging trees and rocks, and banks of snow, were poising on the verge of this dire descent, and on the very point of tumbling off: perhaps Imagination or dismay made them appear to tremble, but so they did. Shivering with dread, I turned from a place, so pregnant with dangers, and hastening forward, heard, as I returned, the deafening sound of timber, stones and snow, hurled down the giddy heights from crag to crag, into the gulph below. Rejoining my companions who had heard appalled those tremendous concussions, we gladly abandoned a spot so dreary, and proceeding to the plain halted on a portion of the prairie, that was covered with dry sticks; having been the camping ground of a party of Indians, a year or two since.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the 14th April, having placed a rag at the extremity of a stick, planted in the ground near camp, to prevent the wolves from rifling it, we all set out to combat a grizzly bear that had buried the carcass of an animal, some distance up, near the margin of the river, and had put Blackface to flight last evening whilst heedlessly approaching his prey. We reached the spot after riding four miles, and opening a little mound of fresh earth, discovered and disinterred the entire carcass of a large elk, recently killed. We remained some time awaiting the appearance of the bear, but our numbers probably deterred him from leaving the thicket in which we supposed he was concealed, being but a few paces from his charge, and from which his traces led to and fro. However, we returned disappointed to camp, where every thing remained as we had left it, though a large grey wolf sat upon his haunches a short distance off, having evidently (as an Indian would express it) two hearts, for and against, helping himself to some of the fresh elk meat that lay exposed to view with perhaps for him the same attractions, that a roast pig would have had for one of us. His cogitations on the propriety or expediency of charging up to the luscious store, and committing larceny, in open defiance of the fearful banner waving over it, being interrupted by our approach, his thoughts immediately turned into a new channel, and he came at once to the sage conclusion, with wonderful alacrity and sagacity, that -

“He who coolly runs away,

May live to steal another day,”

and proceeded to put the decision into practice, without unnecessary delay.

## CHAPTER LVIII

A party of hostile Indians out-generalled, etc.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

\* \* \* \* \*

About two hours before sunset, we observed a large party of Indians running about a mile in advance of us, evidently seeking a situation favorable to entrap us, by an ambush. They were scarcely perceptible, owing to the vapors rising from the damp plain; and as they had taken a position near which we must inevitably have passed, it was a lucky chance, or providence, that saved our lives by enabling us to anticipate their design. We halted apparently as if we had not discovered them, at a large cluster of willows, on a small stream flowing into Bear river: we turned out our horses to feed, made a rousing fire, cooked and eat a hearty supper, and scattered our baggage carelessly about, to give our camp an unconcerned appearance, though every eye was bent on some point, ravine, or hill, watching the appearance of the enemy. - As soon as it became dark, we caught our horses, packed up, and moved off, with as little noise as possible. We discovered the Indians at the distance of a mile, east of us in a deep ravine, around a small fire, busily dodging about, evidently making preparations to steal our horses and attack us. We smiled to think of their disappointment, when they should find themselves outwitted, and that their expected prey had slipped through their fingers; and congratulated ourselves on the complete success of our stratagem. We laughed in our sleeves as we passed them, and chuckled with glee, as soon as we were out of danger, at the blank countenances they would exhibit at daylight, when they would find that we were really gone. The night was dark, and we pursued our way some time after midnight, guided by the polar star, from which, and a few other dim ones, what light there was, came twinkling down. We halted a short time, but daylight found us again moving, on the morning subsequent, on the highest part of the plain between Bear and Snake rivers; from which we discovered a large smoke near the latter stream, and supposing it to proceed from the camp of Vanderburgh, we continued on until we found ourselves in a Snake village. These Indians do not often kill whites in their own camps, though they have done so, in instances where they thought they would never be exposed. A man was at this time in one of our parties, who was wounded by and escaped from them. - As they are esteemed the most treacherous, cunning and vindictive Indians in the mountains, we did not feel ourselves safe with them, and continued our progress, satisfied that the party we saw last night belonged to this village. After enquiring where Vanderburgh's camp was situated, they denied having any knowledge of whites on this stream, but persisted in asserting that a company was yet on Bear river. We contradicted their statement, and pointed to the ground where the trail of Vanderburgh's party passed along near their village. They affected surprise, and declared that they had not before perceived it; though the lying, cunning rascals always examine every part they visit, and observe the most minute appearances, wherever they go. We followed the trail to Snake river, a few miles eastward, over several ranges of hills, but the country where he had promised to remain was covered with buffalos, and we concluded that he had gone to Green river; still we continued to follow the trace, passed through the timbered bottom, and reached the margin of the river at the ford, where we halted to await the arrival of one of our men, who had been allowed to go below, and ascertain if the company had left this river.

Shortly after we halted, about twenty Indians came rushing towards us, and yelling like so many devils. We seized our guns and sprang behind the trunk of a large fallen cottonwood tree; not

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

doubting that the villains would attempt our lives. However the principal warrior, who was the ugliest looking man among them, dismounted, and made signs to us to come and smoke. We did so, and he enquired who were the two Indians with us; we made him understand that they were Delawares, because the Shawnees had fought and killed a party of several Snakes last summer, which they well knew; and to have acknowledged them Shawnees would have exposed them and ourselves to instant death; for they would have been butchered on the spot, and we were sworn to protect each other. We made them a small present, and they departed peaceably.

Shortly after they had left us, a hunter arrived from camp, which was situated only four or five miles below on the opposite side of the river, and we immediately packed up and forded the stream without accident, tho' the water was so deep as to come quite over the backs of our smallest horses; and went to camp, which we found situated in a fine timbered bottom, on the margin of the river. Nothing remarkable had occurred during my absence, and the trappers had all returned, except Williams and his companions.

## CHAPTER LIX

Number of Hunters in the Mountains, etc. - Decrease of game - Blighting effects of ardent spirits upon the Indians.

There are about three hundred men, who compose the roving, hunting parties in these regions, excluding those, who remain principally at the several forts or trading posts, on the east and west sides of the mountains. One half or more of this number, are employed as "camp keepers," who perform all duties required in camp, such as cooking, dressing beaver, making leather thongs, packing, unpacking, and guarding horses, etc., and remaining constantly in camp, are ever ready to defend it from the attacks of Indians.

These men are usually hired by the company, and more or less of them accompany every party of trappers, in their excursions, or "hunts," for beaver. The trappers on the contrary, are most of the time absent from camp in quest of game, or castor.

They are divided into two classes; those engaged to the companies, to hunt for stipulated salaries; and those called "Freemen," who have horses and traps of their own, who rove at pleasure, where they please, and dispose of their furs to whom they please. They are never unhappy when they have plenty to eat. They collect skins to exchange for necessaries with the traders; their wants are few, and seldom extend beyond the possession of a few horses, traps, and a rifle, and some other little "fixens;" the attainment of these simple desires, generally constituting the height of a hunter's ambition. There are however a few individuals, who yearly lay by a small sum, from the profits of their profession, for the purpose of purchasing land, and securing to themselves a home hereafter, in some of the western states, at which they may peacefully repose in their declining years. But these instances of prudent forethought are extremely rare; and the purchase of grog and tobacco, and the practice of gaming, more frequently disperse their surplus funds, with a facility far greater

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

than that in which they were obtained.

Many of these mountaineers have taken squaws for their wives, by whom they have children. These females are usually dressed in broad cloths, either green, scarlet, or blue. Their frocks are commonly of the latter color entirely, or a combination of the other two; the waist and sleeves being composed of one, and the skirt of the other; and these dresses appear very becoming. On their heads they wear nothing but handkerchiefs, and their feet are enveloped in moccasins.

The clothing of the hunters themselves, is generally made of prepared skins, though most of them wear blanket "capotes," (overcoats,) and calico shirts. Some of them however, make coats of their buffalo robes, which are very warm and comfortable in cold weather, but become rigid and useless, if they are exposed to rains, or otherwise get wet. Moccasins are worn universally by all the whites and Indians. One half of these men are Canadians, and Half-breeds, who speak French, and some both French and English; the remainder are principally Americans, from every part of the United States. There are, however, a few foreigners, from various portions of Europe; and some Mexican Spaniards, from the Rio Del Norte; but these latter are darker, and more ill-favored than any of the mountain Indians. They are declared, by the hunters, to be an amalgamation of Indian and Negro blood, an opinion that would be pronounced by any one, unacquainted with their claim to Spanish European origin in part.

Some few of the old mountaineers annually leave the country, and their places are occupied by the less experienced "new comers," consequently the number of whites in the mountains, remains about the same.

Beaver and other kinds of game become every year more rare; and both the hunters and Indians will ultimately be compelled to herd cattle, or cultivate the earth for a livelihood; or in default of these starve. Indeed the latter deserve the ruin that threatens their offspring, for their inexcusable conduct, in sacrificing the millions of buffalo which they kill in sport, or for their skins only. The robes they obtain in the latter case, are most frequently exchanged for WHISKEY, with the traders at their establishments on the Missouri, Arkansas, and Platte rivers. - The curse of liquor has not yet visited the Indians in the mountains; but has found its way to almost all those who inhabit the plains; whose faculties are benumbed, whose energies are paralyzed, and who are rapidly sinking into insignificance and oblivion, by the living death, which their unhappy predilection for "strong water," has entailed upon them. They were gay and light hearted, but they are now moody and melancholy; they were candid and confiding, they are now jealous and sullen; they were athletic and active, they are now impotent and inert; they were just though implacable, they are now malignant and vindictive; they were honorable and dignified, they are now mean and abased; integrity and fidelity were their characteristics, now they are both dishonest and unfaithful; they were brave and courteous, they now are cowardly and abusive. They are melting away before the curse of the white man's friendship, and will soon only be known as, "The nations" that have been.

It is a prevailing opinion among the most observing and intelligent hunters, that ten years from this period, a herd of buffalo will be a rare sight, even in the vast plain between the Rocky Moun-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

tains, and the Mississippi. Though yet numerous, they have greatly decreased within the last few years. The fact is alarming and has not escaped the notice of some shrewd Indians, who however believe the evil to be unavoidable.

## CHAPTER LX

Return home - Conclusion.

On the ninth of October we reached Belle Vue, a few miles above the mouth of the Platte river, on our return home. Here we remained eight days, in consequence of heavy rains; and in the meantime the company, consisting of about eighty men, dissolved; and each person sought such a conveyance as best suited him, to the state of Missouri. Some shipped on the Mackinaw trading boats from the upper Missouri; some made or purchased canoes, in which they embarked down the river; and others set out on foot to the completion of their journey. A small party, including myself, proceeded on horseback; leaving Belle Vue on the seventeenth. We had a cold, wet journey over a rich rolling prairie country, intersected by small streams bordered with timber, to cantonment Leavensworth, at which we arrived on the twenty-eighth. We remained here, to rest our horses and repose ourselves, two days; and on the thirty-first, after witnessing a review of the United States Dragoons here, commanded by Col. Dodge, we continued our journey. Our route lay over the same open undulating country, variagated with timbered streams; on which we observed, that as we advanced, the wooded bottoms through which they flow, increased in breadth and luxuriance.

On the twelfth of November we reached Boonville, in the state of Missouri, having been in daily view of those splendid spectacles, burning prairies, since we left the Pawnee lousps. At this place I disposed of my horse, and took passage on a steamboat to St. Louis, which I reached on the fifteenth, after an absence of nearly six years.

Those who have done me the honor to peruse my journal have obtained a fair idea of the character of this eventful period of my life, and of the character of the lives of trappers in the Rocky Mountains in general. Roaming over those dark regions of solitude, constantly exposed to danger from wild animals and ravages; frequently obliged to endure the most severe and protracted privation and fatigue; separated by many hundred weary miles from the abodes of civilization and refinement; conscious that even the fond filaments of love and consanguinity, which wind in delicate fibres around the heart, were becoming attenuated by distance, time, and novelty; feeling that my habits and manners were gradually giving way to the innovation of savage and unsocial custom, and my very speech and person were yielding slowly, but not less surely, before the uncouth barbarisms of language, and the exposures and severity of an ever-changing climate - it will not seem strange that I sometimes repined at my long absence from the scenes of my nativity, and reviewed with regret the inducements that forced me from friends and home. But these, however, were not always my feelings; - resolute, cheerful, contented, I usually was. And when the weather was warm and pleasant; the demands of nature satisfied, a reliance on the good qualities of my

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

arms and ammunition, not misplaced; the confidence of bestriding and governing a truly noble steed, in the spirit of stirring excitement of the chase, gloriously bounding over the plains, in the panoply of speed and power, before which the swiftest and mightiest denizens of the forest and prairie must yield themselves victims; then - then I was really, rationally happy. Many times have I experienced the sensations, generated by either condition; but these scenes have now passed away, their delights and perils no longer thrill nor alarm, and I bid them farewell forever.

## CHAPTER LXI

The Rocky Mountain Indians are generally of the middle stature, straight, well proportioned, have fine limbs, black hair flowing loosely over their shoulders, in some instances so long as to reach the ground when they stand erect, and lively keen black eyes. Their features are seldom ugly, often agreeable, and in smiling they exhibit beautiful, white even, set teeth; except those who subsist principally upon fish. Their clothing consists of a long shirt, reaching down to the knees, open on each side from the armpits to the bottom; a pair of legging a breech-cloth and moccasins, over all of which a light buffalo robe or blanket is thrown, resting on the shoulders. - The shirt and leggins are usually made of the skins of Rocky Mountain sheep, dressed for that purpose with peculiar care; and are ornamented with small blue and white beads, colored porcupine quills, and leather fringe over the seams, or instead of the latter, human hair dyed of various hues, which is obtained from the scalps of their enemies. They paint their faces with vermilion, white earth, ochre, powder, etc., and fasten beads, shells, buttons, and other trinkets, with feathers in their hair.

The garments of the women, are a long gown, also made of the smooth even skin of the Big-horns, decorated about the neck and shoulders with all the beads they can procure, short leggins, moccasins, and a light robe thrown loosely, yet gracefully, over their shoulders. Their dresses are sometimes loaded with some eight or ten pounds of large cut glass beads of various colors; their leggins and the tops of their moccasins are also ornamented with porcupine quills, or small beads. Like the men they are very fond of decorations, vermilion, trinkets, shells, etc., but they attach them to their dresses, instead of their hair; and like them besmear their faces with the former.

Nothing can divert an Indian from his purpose, when in pursuit of game; but on his return to camp he sinks in comparative indolence. They are brave, and display both intelligence and deep artifice, in their stratagems to surprise and conquer their enemies; but mercy, the hero's noblest attribute, is to them unknown, at least unregarded. Sedate and taciturn, with folded arms, they slowly pace back and forth before their lodges, to all appearance, wrapt in intense thought; approach a warrior thus intellectually engaged, and inquire the subject of his meditations, he will answer with undiminished gravity, "nothing." In their lodges and domestic circles, they are loquacious as the whites, with the difference of good-breeding, that the person speaking is never interrupted; and in turn each speaks, and is listened to with profound attention. Their conversa-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

tions most frequently are on themes of war, and each individual chaunts his own exploits. Universally superstitious, they put good or ill constructions on their dreams, and account for all the phenomena of nature, by attributing all effects, to the kind or unfavorable temper of the Deity. With a commendable devotion they believe unhesitatingly all the Great-Spirit thinks proper to communicate to them, through their "Medicine men," (i.e. priests,) who, taking advantage of their religious credulity, impose upon them the most ridiculous stories of divine truth.

These medicine men also forewarn them of coming events, and profess to cure them of their diseases, by wearing the skin, assuming the characters, imitating the voices, and mimicking the actions of bears, and other animals; accompanying their demoniac capers by discordant yells, and deafening sounds, extracted from a kind of drum by violent thumpings, alone sufficient, one would imagine, to frighten away both the demon of distemper, and the spirit of the afflicted together. But their endeavors are probably well meant; and they may, from the habit of relating their powers, perhaps have induced themselves to believe they really possess the qualifications, that they arrogate to themselves, and which are so readily conceded them, by their less gifted comrades, - at least they may claim the merit of performing, without any fees, all the various ceremonies of their profession; their only reward being the esteem of their companions, and a more extended influence. Their diseases are however few, and when slightly ill, they usually resort to their sweat houses; which are constructed of willows, pointed and stuck in the ground, with their tops bent over and interlocked, so as to form a hemisphere of about six feet in diameter, on which skins, blankets, or robes, are spread to prevent the escape of the steam. In the centre of this hut a small hole is excavated in the earth, over which dry sticks and stones are placed in alternate layers, and fired beneath; when the wood consumes, the heated stones fall to the bottom, and the invalid, accompanied by others who do so for amusement, divested of all clothing, enter the cabin with a basin of water, which they commence pouring slowly on the stones, and soon fill it with dense scalding vapor; when it becomes no longer supportable they cease pouring, but recommence when it subsides. By this means they produce a copious perspiration from their bodies, which continues until they leave the hut, in which they sometimes remain half an hour. - When they crawl out, their bodies appear half boiled, and they immediately jump into the nearest stream, remaining immersed in the water until they become chilled in as great a degree as they were before heated. Indeed I have often seen them bathe in the winter season, through a hole cut in the ice, after issuing from a sweat house. - This practice, though it may bring present relief, must be attended in the end, with highly deleterious consequences; and indeed I have often observed that young Indians, who were in the habit of taking this hot and cold bath weekly, have foreheads wrinkled, and many other indications of premature old age. Its effects are more apparent of course, in those of mature years. Bathing is one of their favorite amusements, and when near a suitable place, if the weather be fair, some of them may at any time be seen in the water. The employments of the men are war, hunting, fishing, guarding their horses, shooting at a target, horse racing, etc.

CHAPTER LXII

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

The women of most tribes in the Rocky Mountains, though sometimes pretty when young, soon become decrepid and ugly, in consequence of the great hardships they are compelled to endure throughout their whole lives. They are esteemed rather as beasts of burden than companions for their tyrannical husbands; and are seldom valued as high as a favorite horse, for which they have been exchanged. They perform all the camp labors, such as drying meat, dressing skins, collecting fuel, bringing water, cooking, making clothing and moccasins, packing and driving horses from one encampment to another; and frequently accompany their husbands in the chase, to butcher and bring in the game they may happen to kill. Notwithstanding the constant drudgery to which they are subjected, they appear cheerful, sing during the performance of their duties, in rather a wild mournful air, and seem contented to wear through life, patient as an ox, submitting to all the hardships their capricious lords impose upon them without a complaint, which, however, instead of exciting sympathy or pity, would only exact blows and abuse from them.

Infants, when they first appear on life's eventful stage, are immediately immersed in a snow-bank, in a state of perfect nudity, a few moments, for the purpose of familiarizing them to the endurance of cold; if in the summer, they are instantly plunged into water, perhaps to render them as nearly as nature will permit, amphibious: if it be a female child, it is regarded by the father with contempt, and valued little more than a puppy; on the contrary, if a male, it is caressed and fostered by him, and the utmost pains taken to instil into its mind, as soon as it becomes able to comprehend, a love of glory, spirit of chivalry, and a contempt of privation, and hardship, and suffering, to which he must necessarily be exposed in leading the life of a hunter and a warrior. He is taught by example, the precepts early inculcated, and daily practised by his father, but is on no occasion punished, or deprived of any gratification. His youth is passed in hunting small animals and birds, in gymnastic exercises, such as are calculated to render him robust, active, and fearless, and in riding on horseback, with various equestrian feats, an accomplishment essential to his future character and destiny. When he becomes old enough to enter the lists of battle, he assembles, with other youthful aspirants for glory, chaunts the inspiring war song, and proudly dances in the midst of his companions, vowing vengeance against the enemies of his race; and shouting to the charge, enacts what his enthusiastic imagination prescribes his duty on the field of honor, and yells of rage and anger fill the air, as bursting from his lips in fiery wrath. The spectators applaud, and hardy veterans, kindling into zeal, join in the dance, proclaim aloud their achievements, exhibit their trophies, brandish their weapons, and with vehement eloquence encourage the high-souled youth to follow their footsteps, smite his enemies with vindictive fury, and return triumphant to his tribe and kindred, by whom he will be welcomed with shouts of rapture and applause, and win the favor of Heaven. His bosom glows with exultation, and burns with ardor to emulate the glowing deeds of his ancestors; to win for himself an honor and a name wholly, peculiarly his own, and in addition, secure to himself a happy enhance to the land of spirits, all of which he believes are to be won on the field of battle. Thus in his fervor, happiness, renown, immortality, are believed to be the reward of valor, and an impression is formed that will last with his life; he resolves to be a brave, and becomes - nay is - a warrior.

War dances are usually held in the evening, round a large fire, made for the purpose; and though the performers are entirely divested of clothing, they are attended by women and children; accus-

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

tomed, however, from infancy to exhibitions of this kind, they are unconscious of there being any impropriety or indecency in them. A large circle being formed by the bystanders around the fire, the ceremony commences with a general song, in which they all join in perfect harmony, beginning in the highest strain their voices are capable of, and gradually falling note after note, until the sound dies imperceptibly away; then suddenly resuming a high shrill tone, and again falling gradually as before, the song being accompanied by a regular thumping on a discordant kind of drum. In the mean time the naked youths and warriors jump into the ring, and dance with vigor, keeping time with the drum, yelling at intervals like demons, shaking aloft their gory gleanings of a field of carnage, (scalps, etc.) flourishing their weapons in their rapid evolutions, throwing their bodies into unnatural, sometimes ludicrous attitudes, and chaunting aloud their deeds of desperate daring. These dances are invariably celebrated on the return of a successful war party, and at such other times as their inclinations may direct.

When a young man wishes to marry, he selects a young woman, and makes application to her parents, who, if they think he can support a wife, will probably demand a horse, which if he promises to bestow, concludes the contract, and he is invited to come and sleep with her, at her father's lodge, without perhaps having ever had any conversation or acquaintance with her. In such cases, the wishes, however, of the young woman are always ascertained by her mother, but if averse to the proposed bride-groom, not always followed. Sometimes he sends a present of one or more horses to the favored damsel's parents, and if they are accepted, he sends a horse to her lodge the first time they move camp, which she sides; from that moment she is considered his wife, and at night encamps with him.

Polygamy, though allowed, is by no means common among them, but in accordance with the customs of their forefathers, they put away their wives and take others at pleasure. I have known an Indian to have fourteen wives, all living; but this is a solitary instance, and similar ones occur very rarely. In most cases, the husband and wife pass their lives agreeably, and sometimes happily together, and when separations take place, they proceed most commonly from the infidelity of the latter not the inconstancy of the former. The females thus banished from the lodges of their husbands, return to their parents, by whom they are received and supported until another opportunity occurs to marry.

It is the custom in some nations, on the death of a friend, to cut off a joint of a finger; and in others, to clip off their hair and continue mourning until it grows out again to its usual length; others, again, black their faces with a composition that only wears off with the skin, and cease to mourn when it disappears. But all nations give utterance to their grief in a piercing, wild, monotonous lamentation, commencing at a high key and gradually falling to the lowest notes, in continued repetition, that sounds extremely melancholy, and fills the hearer with solemnity.

They all inter their dead in the earth, with the exception of infants, who are sometimes encased in skins and deposited in trees; but are generally buried like adults in the ground.

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

## CHAPTER LXIII

Of their vague and crude notions of the past and of futurity, each tribe in the Rocky Mountains has its own favorite traditions, most of them too ridiculous either to hear or repeat. Some believe that a beautiful woman descended from the clouds, at an era when Indians were but few, and even those extremely poor; that she supplied the country, before destitute, with game, and promised that brave men and warriors, who perished on the field of battle, should go to a pleasant country after death, where there is very little snow, good horses, and plenty of game, not very wild; she then disappeared. Another tradition speaks of a wonderful beaver that suddenly appeared in a certain river, of immense size and great sagacity, gifted with intelligence and speech, which bestowed great bounties on the people, promised them happiness in a fine country after death, where game was abundant and hunting easy; when he also vanished. A third informs us that a prairie wolf visited the sources of the Columbia, ages ago, and finding the people poor and miserable, caused the mountains to be stocked with deer, sheep, goats, elk, moose, etc., and the plains with antelopes, and the rivers with salmon; so that the people, who had before lived wretchedly upon roots and berries, were overjoyed, and loved the wolf; which afterwards married a cow, and had innumerable difficulties with a rival bull, which he finally succeeded in destroying, and lived long afterward happy and undisturbed; but at length, he promised the people happiness in a fine hunting country after death, where brave men would be loved, and have much less trouble in their excursions for game than cowards, who would always be miserable and distressed. With these words he left them, and was seen no more. These, and many other equally absurd traditions, are the grave ideas of the mountain savages on this subject. All agree, however, in the belief of a future state of existence, more happy to the brave, than the present; and in a great spirit, by whose bounty they will be permitted to inhabit that delightful region.

Such of the Indians as possess horses enough to convey themselves, their families, and their baggage, with ease, are esteemed wealthy; their animals are guarded with peculiar care, during the day in bands of twenty or more together, by boys; and in the night, they are tied to stakes, driven in the ground for that purpose, near their lodges, for greater security against robbers. Those who are not so fortunate or wealthy as to possess the number of horses requisite, are obliged to walk or put enormous loads upon such as they may chance to own. In one instance, in the year 1832, I saw a mare loaded with, first - two large bales containing meat, skins, etc., on opposite sides of the animal, attached securely to the saddle by strong cords; secondly - a lodge, with the necessary poles dragging on each side of her; thirdly - a kettle, axe, and sundry other articles of domestic economy; fourthly - a colt too young to bear the fatigue of travelling was lashed on one side; and finally - this enormous load was surmounted by a woman with a young child; making in all, sufficient to have fully loaded three horses, in the ordinary manner. Though this rather exceeds any thing of the kind I ever before saw, yet large loads, in like manner surmounted by women, children, colts and puppies, are often observed in their moving jaunts.

Some of the poorer classes, who do not possess horses, and are consequently unable to follow the buffalo in the prairies, ascend the mountains where deer and sheep are numerous, and pass their lives in single families - are never visited by the horsemen of the plains, but sometimes descend to

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

them, and exchange the skins of those animals for robes, and other articles of use and ornament.

Their weapons are bows, arrows, and war-clubs, and are of their own manufacture. Their bows never exceed two and a half feet in length, and are made usually of the rib bones of the buffalo, two of which, in the construction of this weapon, are neatly jointed, glued together, and wound with thongs about the joint; it is gradually tapered from the middle toward each end, is polished, and rendered more elastic by sinews glued on the back, from end to end, over which rattle snake skins are sometimes cemented for ornament. The string is always composed of sinews, twisted together into a cord. Bows are made sometimes of elk horn, and sometimes of wood, but are always strengthened by adding sinews to the back, and not, as an eminent western writer has observed, "by adding buffalo bones to the tough wood."

Their arrows (except the poisoned ones of the Sann pitches) are made of wood, slender, never above two feet in length, and are pointed with sharp transparent flints, neatly broken to a dagger-blade shape, from half to three-fourths of an inch in length, which never exceed the latter. These points are ingeniously inserted in a slit in the end of the arrow, are fastened by sinews wrapped around it, and are rendered less liable to damage by being covered with a coat of glue. They have three or four distinct feathers, six or seven inches in length, placed opposite to each other, remaining parallel, but turning gently on the arrow, in order to give it a spiral motion, which prevents its wavering, and enables it to cleave the air with less resistance.

They manufacture spears and hooks, also of bone, for fishing, but they are not to be compared to the same instruments made of metal by the whites. But they have been supplied by the traders with light guns, spears, and iron arrow points, which have in measure superseded their own weapons; still, however, bows and arrows are most frequently employed in killing buffalo.

## CHAPTER LXIV

The Indians rise at day light invariably, when all go down to the stream they may happen to be encamped on, wash their hands and face, and comb their long hair with their fingers, the nails of which are allowed to grow long.

The men are all expert horsemen, ride without saddles generally, always when they pursue game. Their saddles are made of wood, sometimes of elk horn and wood, covered with raw hide, which renders them very durable and strong; their stirrups are also composed of wood. - Instead of a bridle and bit, they make use of a long cord, (used for catching wild horses) tied to the under jaw of the animal; these cords, or more properly leashes, are made of narrow strips of raw hide, divested of the hair, and rendered soft and pliant by greasing and repeated rubbing; or of the long hair from the scalp of the bison, twisted into a firm and neat rope. The saddles of the women have both before and behind, a high pommel, reaching as high as their waists, for the greater convenience of carrying children. Some of them carry two children and drive their pack horses. They drop their little ones on the ground, dismount and arrange their packs, when necessary, remount,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

ride along side of them, and draw them up again by the hand, and continue their march. Their children of three or four years of age, are lashed firmly on the top of their packs, and are often endangered by the horses running away with them, though I never saw one seriously injured in consequence. Yet, if the loads turn under the horses' belly, as they sometimes do, the situation of the poor child is truly frightful.

Gaming is common with all the mountain Indians. Some of them, however, are more passionately addicted to it than others. The games mentioned in my journal, and described as having been observed among the Flat-heads, are those practised by all the various tribes, without exception.

Indian sagacity has ever been a riddle to the greatest portion of the public; who have been inclined, in some degree, to consider their great skill in tracing an enemy, or detecting the vicinity of danger, as depending on a finer construction and adaptation of some of the organs of sense, and to believe that no white man could ever attain a degree of skill by any means equal to the tact so often exhibited by the aborigines of this country. But I am convinced it is entirely owing to a careful attention to, and observation of, various minute peculiarities, which would escape the notice of any one not instructed how to prosecute his examination, though ever so attentive; and in proof of this, there are in the mountains many hunters who have become so practiced in this species of discernment, as to be acknowledged by the Indians as equal to themselves; though these Indians, in this respect, are inferior to none.

Several tribes of mountain Indians, it will be observed, have names that would be supposed descriptive of some national peculiarity. Among these are the Black-feet, Flat-heads, Bored-noses, Ear-bobs, Big-belly's, etc., and yet it is a fact, that of these, the first have the whitest feet; there is not among the next a deformed head; and if the practice of compressing the skull so as to make it grow in a peculiar shape ever did exist among them, it must have been many years since, for there is not one living proof to be found of any such custom. There is not among the Nez-perces an individual having any part of the nose perforated; nor do any of the Pen-d'orulles wear ornaments in their ears; and finally, the Gros-vents are as slim as any other Indians, and corpulency among them as rare.

The funerals of the mountain Indians are similar to those described by various authors of other nations. The dead body is dressed in the neatest manner, enveloped in skins, and deposited in the earth, with the weapons, ornaments, trinkets, etc., which belonged to the deceased when living; and it is customary among some tribes, to sacrifice his favorite horse on the grave of a warrior, after the manner of the Tartars.

## CHAPTER LXV

THE CROW INDIANS call themselves "Ap-sa-ro-ke," and are tall, active, intelligent, brave, haughty and hospitable. They acknowledge no equals, and pride themselves on their superiority over other nations. They boast of greater ability in making their wishes understood by signs, to

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

those who do not comprehend their language. - In their lodges, they consider themselves bound to protect strangers, and feast them with the best they can procure. They are well armed with guns and ammunitions, which they have purchased from the whites, or taken from their enemies; and are supplied with horses, which they steal from other nations, with whom they are constantly at war.

Their women are, without exception, unfaithful, and offer themselves to strangers unhesitatingly for a few beads or other trifles. Jealousy is hardly known among them, though the property of one proved to have had illicit connexion with another's wife, by "crowic law," is immediately transferred to the injured husband.

War parties, on foot, are frequently sent out, at all seasons of the year, for scalps and property; and every man in the village is compelled, in turn, to join these predatory excursions. They are slow to project, cautious to proceed, certain to surprise, firm to execute; and are ever victorious when they commence an affray. Extremely superstitious, with certain charms about their persons, such as the skins of birds, small animals, or other trifles, in the efficacy of which they place great reliance, they charge fearlessly upon their enemies, under the entire conviction that these their medicines ward off every danger, and completely shield them from harm.

They are good hunters and accomplished horsemen; they ride at full speed, throw their bodies entirely on one side of their animals, shoot from the same side under their horses' necks, and pick up their arrows from the ground without abating their rapidity.

They are fond, nay, proud of ornaments for their persons, particularly scarlet cloth, feathers, and vermilion, with which they attire themselves with great care for the field of battle; but they are fonder, prouder still, of a high reputation for bravery and prowess.

Among the trophies of victory, a scalp is prominent, and belongs, not to him who shot down the enemy, but to him who first rushed upon him and struck him on the head. The very pinnacle of human glory with them, is to have taken twenty scalps from their enemies, and to achieve this high honor is the constant ambition of every noble-minded brave.

They express their gradations of rank by affixing ornaments to their hair, among which the tail feathers of the golden or calumet eagle, indicate the loftiest. None but the most heroic warriors are entitled to the envied privilege of wearing this valuable plumage, (a single feather of which is more prized than a fine horse) and the person in whose hair even a single quill is conspicuous, is entitled to, and receives, the most profound respect and deference; but when a plurality of these badges are displayed by some fortunate brave, he is regarded with veneration, almost with awe.

They are entitled to precedence in the science of theft, of which they are masters; being almost certain to obtain from a stranger any article they discover about him, that they may chance to desire. When detected in pilfering, they appear extremely foolish and ashamed, because it is superlatively dishonorable - not to steal - but to have failed in an attempt, the complete achievement of

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

which would have added renown to their characters for dexterity and address.

They are now the declared enemies to trappers, several of whom they have killed; yet there is an establishment on the Big-horn river belonging to the American Fur Company, at which they trade peaceably. During the summer of 1835, they caught two of our trappers, at the point of the Wind Mountain, detained them several days, robbed them, and then allowed them to return to us. It must be regarded, however, as a freak of kindness, not as a settled principle of mercy. They rove in two villages, containing six or seven hundred souls in each. These villages seldom leave the Yellow Stone and its tributaries, but war parties infest the countries of the Eutaws, Snakes, Arrapahoes, Blackfeet, Sioux, and Chayennes, with all of whom they are at war. They have a tradition that their forefathers fought a great battle with the Snakes, in which many hundred of the latter were killed; that the battle lasted three days, during which time the Chief of the Crows caused the sun to stand still.

Several years since, one of the Crow villages, issuing from a narrow defile into a large prairie valley, through which they designed to pass, discovered a village of Blackfeet encamped on the opposite side. A council was immediately held, in which it was resolved to place a few lodges in a conspicuous situation, purposely to be observed, and conceal the greater part, together with all their war horses, in a low place where they could not be seen. This was done, and their inferior horses were permitted to stray down the plain, offering an inducement to their foes to come and take them. At the same time, the Blackfeet discovered, as they supposed, a few lodges of the Crows, and thinking themselves undiscovered, made instant preparations for combat. These young warriors were sent in a body to surround the Crows in the night, and directed to commence the attack at daybreak, at which time the old braves were to join them on horseback, and assist in exterminating the enemy. In obedience to their instructions, the young men set out that evening, but the night being dark, they mistook their way, and were prevented from reaching the field of glory at all. - Early in the morning, the old veterans, believing that the business would be half finished before they could reach the scene of action, set off at full speed, which they continued unbroken until they reached the fatal spot. The Crows allowed them to approach to the very doors of their lodges, when the war-whoop resounded in their ears, and in a moment every hill was red with mounted warriors, bearing down upon them. They saw the snare into which they had fallen, when too late, and fled; but alas! their horses, already fatigued, were unable to run. The Crows pursued them on fresh horses, overtook and killed them as they fled, until the survivors gained the mountains. - Seventy scalps were displayed on that day by the victors, who also obtained considerable booty. So much for out-manoeuvering and discomfiting their enemies.

The following anecdote exhibits their character in a different light. During a long continued storm in the winter of 1830, the Sioux Indians carried off nearly one hundred and fifty head of horses from them, and a party of eighty Crows immediately departed in pursuit. They travelled several days in the direction that they supposed the Sioux had taken; but the protracted storm prevented them from discovering the traces of their enemies, and all but twenty-three returned home. The small party still in pursuit, consisted of men who scorned to return without even a glimpse of their enemies, and continued on, far beyond the distance that horses could have

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

travelled at that season of the year, in the same length of time. Finally concluding that they had quite mistaken the course of their enemies, they resolved to retrace their steps towards their own firesides; but some days after, unfortunately, they passed, during a tedious snow storm, very near a Sioux village, and were discovered by them. A large party were soon in pursuit, and the Crows, unconscious of danger, advanced at their usual pace until night, and encamped as customary. During the night, they were entirely surrounded by the Sioux, who awaited for the next day to make an attack upon them. In the morning they made the necessary preparations for departure; breakfasted, packed their dogs, and started; but the Sioux, till this moment unobserved, rushed towards them, and drove them into a hole, which had been the bed of a spring torrent, crossed by a fallen tree. To this they suspended their robes for concealment. In the mean time, a Sioux chief, who could speak the Crow language, stepped in front of the rest, and in a loud voice addressed them, saying that he was very sorry to keep them in suspense, but that his party were nearly frozen, having passed a sleepless night in the snow without fire; that they were consequently compelled to kindle a fire and warm themselves before they could proceed; "but," continued he, "as soon as we thaw ourselves, you will cease to exist, unless you are what your name indicates, and fly away; or like the prairie dog, you can burrow in the ground." - Accordingly, they warmed themselves, attacked the devoted little band, and killed them all, with the loss of but two men killed, and several slightly wounded. Three of the Crows fought manfully, but the others, benumbed as they were by the cold, could make but little resistance. Their bodies were cut in pieces, and transported to the village on dogs, the same day.

## CHAPTER LXVI

THE SNAKE INDIANS are termed in their own dialect, Sho-sho-ne. They are brave, robust, active and shrewd, but suspicious, treacherous, jealous and malicious. Like the Crows, war-parties frequently go out to plunder, and some times kill and rob the trappers if they think it will not be discovered. They are utterly faithless even to each other.

There is one evil genius among them, called the "Bad Gocha," (*mauvais gauche* - bad left-handed one) who fell in with a party of trappers, led by a well-known mountaineer, Mr. E. Proveau, on a stream flowing into the Big Lake that now bears his name, several years since. He invited the whites to smoke the calumet of peace with him, but insisted that it was contrary to his medicine to have any metallic near while smoking. Proveau, knowing the superstitious whims of the Indians, did not hesitate to set aside his arms, and allow his men to follow his example; they then formed a circle by sitting indiscriminately in a ring, and commenced the ceremony; during which, at a preconcerted signal, the Indians fell upon them, and commenced the work of slaughter with their knives, which they had concealed under their robes and blankets. Proveau, a very athletic man, with difficulty extricated himself from them, and with three or four others, alike fortunate, succeeded in making his escape; the remainder of the party of fifteen were all massacred. - Notwithstanding this infernal act, its savage author has been several times in the camp of the whites; but his face not being recognized, he has thus far escaped the death his treacherous murder so richly merits. As the whites are determined, however, to revenge their murdered comrades, the

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

first opportunity, there is little doubt that his forfeit life will, sooner or later, pay the penalty of his crimes to injured justice! During the life of that white man's friend, the Horned Chief, Gocha was seldom if ever seen with the Snake village, but was heard of frequently, with a small band of followers, prowling about the Big Lake.

The principal chief of the Snakes is called the "Iron Wristband," a deceitful fellow, who pretends to be a great friend of the whites, and promises to punish his followers for killing them or stealing their horses. The "Little Chief," a brave young warrior, is the most noble and honorable character among them.

Notwithstanding the bad qualities of these Indians, their country is rich in game, and the whites have thought proper to overlook many serious offenses, rather than expose small trapping parties to the vindictive attacks that would characterize an open war.

It is hardly necessary to say, that though not so completely adept in the art of stealing as the Crows, they are nevertheless tolerably expert. I saw one of them steal a knife without stooping from his upright position, or in the least changing countenance. He was barefooted, and contrived to get the handle of the instrument between his toes, and then draw his foot up under his robe, where a hand was ready to receive the booty.

There is one Snake who has distinguished himself in battle, called "Cut Nose," from a wound he received in the facial extremity, from the Blackfeet, who has joined the whites, lives with and dresses like them. He is an excellent hunter, and has frequently rendered them important services.

The females are generally chaste, the men extremely jealous. I have heard of but one instance of adultery among them, which was punished by the enraged husband by the death of the female and her seducer, the latter of whom was murdered, and then placed upright on a high cliff, in a valley on Horn's fork, as a warning to all, and a fearful monument of an injured husband's revenge.

Of the Snakes on the plains, there are probably about four hundred lodges, six hundred warriors, and eighteen hundred souls. They range in the plains of Green river as far as the Eut mountains; Southward from the source to the outlet of Bear river, of the Big Lake; thence to the mouth of Porto-muf, on Snake river of the Columbia; and they sometimes ascend the Snake river of the Soos-so-dee, or Green river, and visit the Arrappahoes, on the sources of the Platte and Arkansas.

They are at war with the Eutaws, Crows, and Blackfeet, but rob and steal from all their neighbors, and any body else whenever an opportunity occurs. It may be said of them that stealing is their master passion; and indeed they are so incorrigibly addicted to the practice, that they have been known in some instances to steal, in the most adroit manner imaginable, even their own horses, mistaking them, of course, for the property of others.

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

## CHAPTER LXVII

THE EUTAWS are neither ugly nor prepossessing. They are brave, but extremely suspicious; are candid, never treacherous, and are not inhospitable, though they rarely feast a stranger who visits them, like the Crows, Arrappahoes, or Blackfeet, but in general ask for something to eat themselves of their guests. Unlike the Crows or Snakes, they never steal; but they are most accomplished beggars. With unblushing assurance, one of them one day asked me for my coat, and was of course refused. "Then give me your blanket" - denied; "your pistols, then," - no; and was going to ask for every article he saw about me, but ascertaining by a very abrupt reply, that I was not inclined to listen to him, and still less to give him any thing, he turned to one of his companions and observed, "that man's heart is very small."

The reader no doubt remembers the ingenious impudence of La Fogue in directing his children to weep, and then telling us they were crying for something to eat, with a pathetic gravity, to obtain a little food, when there were in his lodge at the time several bales of dried buffalo meat, and we had nothing else, he well knew. It is not, however, so much for the property itself that they beg with incorrigible pertinacity on every occasion, as they do invariably; but for the honor of having obtained it in that mode; for to be adroit and successful in the art is considered a demonstration incontestible of uncommon talent.

They are very jealous, though their women give them little cause for being so. They are as well clad, but are not so well supplied with lodges as some other Indians, because there are no buffalo in their country, and they are obliged in winter season to construct cabins of cedar branches, which are by no means so comfortable.

They are, by far, the most expert horsemen in the mountains, and course down their steep sides in pursuit of deer and elk at full speed, over places where a white man would dismount and lead his horse.

They are less addicted to gambling than most other Indians; probably, because they subsist principally upon small game, more difficult to obtain, and hence have less leisure for other pursuits. In places where deer are numerous, they excavate holes in the earth, in which they conceal themselves, and shoot them as they pass in the night.

They frequently visit Taos on the Del Norte, and California; consequently many speak, and nearly all understand, the Spanish language.

There are of the Eutaws, in all, about two thousand five hundred souls.

THE ARRAPPAHOES are a tribe of Indians who rove in one or two villages, as their inclinations may indicate, on the sources of the Platte and Arkansas rivers. They were for several years deadly enemies to the whites, but Capt. Ghant, whose firmness and liberality they have reason to remem-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

ber long, has established a trading house among them on the Arkansas, four day's march from Taos, and has succeeded in gaining their confidence and inculcating among them, an opinion of the whites, that will perhaps secure their lasting friendship.

They set before their guests the best provisions they can procure, and feel bound to protect them even at the risk of their own lives. They consider hospitality a virtue second only to valor.

Polygamy is common among them, every man having as many wives as he pleases.

The flesh of dogs is esteemed with them a dainty, and by some of the neighboring nations they are detested for no other reason, than because they eat them.

They are brave, candid, and honest, for though good warriors, they neither rob nor steal. Some of Mr. Vanderburgh's men wintered with them in 1834 and '35, and speak highly of their integrity and generosity. They lost nothing by theft during their stay, but were kindly treated, and the chief told them on separating in the spring, to display a white flag on a pole near their encampment, and they would never be molested by the Arrappahoes. As their country abounds with buffalo, they have fine lodges and live comparatively easy and comfortable. - Their number is in all about two thousand souls, and they are friendly with the Snakes, Black-feet, Gros-vents, and Comanches; but at war with the Eutaws, Crows, and Sioux.

## CHAPTER LXVIII

## THE GRIZZLY BEAR

This animal, well known to be the most formidable and dangerous in North America, is found in the Rocky Mountains of every shade and color, from black to white, but most frequently of a dark grizzly hue, and is so large that those of a brown color are often mistaken by hunters who are accustomed to see them almost daily, for buffalo.

For instance - returning from the waters of the Columbia to those of the Colorado, in the spring of 1834, with four white men and several Indians, on our way over Horse Prairie, I discovered and passed within one hundred yards of a very large female, accompanied by two cubs, but was prevented from firing upon her from the fear of arousing some lurking foe in this dangerous part of the country, and permitted her to pass without molestation. At our encampment in the evening, the men, who usually discuss the occurrences of the day over their suppers, surprised me by inquiring if I had ever before seen a female bison with two calves. I replied that I had not yet met with an instance of the kind. "What?" exclaimed all of them, "did you not see a cow followed by two calves, who passed us this afternoon at \_\_\_\_\_?" describing the place - when I immediately discovered that they had mistaken the bear for a buffalo, and found them still incredulous when I asserted the fact.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

A trapper, with whom I am acquainted, discovered, as he supposed, several years since, a herd of buffalo near Bear river, and being without provisions, resolved to approach them. Accordingly he followed the winding of a deep gully, which at length brought him among them, but imagine his disappointment and terror, when in lieu of buffalo, he found himself surrounded by thirty grizzly bears, whose aspects were any thing but amiable. Perceiving, however, that he was yet undiscovered, he retraced his steps, and fortunately escaped a horrible death, which in all probability he would have suffered had they observed him.

I have often mistaken them for buffalo, and discovered my error only when they erected themselves to ascertain what passed near them, which they always do when they hear, see, or smell any thing unusual.

They are numerous throughout the mountains, particularly when fruit is most abundant, which serves them for food in the fall; roots being their chief subsistence in the spring. Through-out the long inclement winter season, like the black bear, but unlike the white, they penetrate and lay dormant in caverns.

Most animals, from their superior speed, can escape them; hence, though extremely fond of flesh, they kill very few; yet they often rob wolves of their prey, and devour it at leisure; and sometimes, but seldom, catch a deer or elk that happens to pass near without discovering them.

When wounded they are terrible and most dangerous foes; and unlike all other animals, are so extremely sagacious and vindictive, that though their enemy is concealed from their view, they will rush to the spot whence the smoke of his gun arises in search of him, and if he has not already secured his safety, he will hardly have an opportunity.

Many of the trappers bear the most incontestible proofs of having been roughly handled by them, of which the most shocking instance, together with attendant circumstances, is told of a well known trapper by the name of Hugh Glass, which is so extraordinary, that I shall give a brief sketch of it here. The same incidents have already been related, I believe, in the Southern Literary Messenger.

Glass was an engaged trapper in the service of Major Henry, who was the leader of a party of beaver hunters several years in the mountains. In the year 1822 or '23, during an excursion to the sources of the Yellow Stone, Glass was employed in hunting for the subsistence of the company. One day, being as usual in advance of his friends, in quest of game, he reached a thicket on the margin of a stream, which he penetrated, intending to cross the river, as it intersected his course. But no sooner had he gained the center of the almost impenetrable underbrush, than a female bear, accompanied by her two cubs, fell upon him, cast him to the ground, and deliberately commenced devouring him. But the company happening to arrive at this critical moment, immediately destroyed the grizzly monsters, and rescued him from present death, though he had received several dangerous wounds, his whole body being bruised and mangled, and he lay weltering in his own blood, in the most excruciating agony. To procure surgical aid, or to remove the unfortunate

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

sufferer, were equally impossible; neither could the commander think of frustrating the object of his enterprise by remaining idle, with a large party of men, engaged at high salaries. Under these circumstances, by offering a large reward, he induced two men to remain with, and administer to the wants of poor Glass, until he should die, as no one thought his recovery possible, and proceeded on with his party to accomplish the purpose of the expedition. These men remained with Glass five days, but as he did not die perhaps as they anticipated he soon must, when the company left them, they cruelly abandoned him, taking his rifle, shot-pouch, etc., with them, believing that he would soon linger out a miserable existence. Leaving him without the means of making a fire, or procuring food, the heartless wretches followed the trail of the company, reached their companions, and circulated the report that Glass had died, and that they had buried him. No one doubted the truth of their statement until some months afterward, when to the astonishment of all, Glass appeared in health and vigor before them; but fortunately for one of the villains, he had already descended the Missouri and enlisted in the service of the United States. The other, though present when Glass arrived, being a youth, received a severe reprimand only from the justly exasperated hunter, for his unpardonable crime.

After Glass was deserted, he contrived to crawl, with inexpressible anguish, a few paces to a spring, the waters of which quenched his feverish thirst, and a few overhanging bushes loaded with buffalo berries and cherries, supplied him with food for ten days. Acquiring by degrees a little strength, he set out for Fort Kiawa, a trading establishment on the Missouri, three hundred miles distant, a journey that would have appalled a healthy and hardy hunter, destitute as he was of arms and ammunition. By crawling and hobbling along short distances, resting, and resuming his march, and sustaining life with berries and the flesh of a calf, which he captured from a pack of wolves and devoured raw during his progress, he finally reached the fort and recovered his health. After innumerable other difficulties and adventures, Glass finally fell a victim to the bloody-thirsty savages on the Missouri.

There is also a story current among the hunters of two men, whose names I have forgotten, who being one day some distance from the camp, discovered a large bear, busily engaged in tearing up the ground in search of roots. One of them, who was reputed an excellent marksman, desired his companion to ascend a tree, and after selecting one as a refuge for himself in case he should only wound and enrage the bear, deliberately elevated his piece and fired. In an instant the huge and vindictive beast rushed like a tiger toward him, seized him in the act of ascending the tree, a branch of which had caught his coat, and prevented him from accomplishing his purpose, and tore him in pieces. Having thus consummated his vengeance, the bear sank down beside his victim and expired. The other person, terrified at the bloody scene enacted beneath him, descended and ran to camp, informed his comrades of the melancholy circumstance, and returned to the spot with them. They interred the remains of the ill-fated hunter, and on examining the bear, found that he was shot directly through the heart. Hunters usually shoot them through the head, when, if the ball is well directed, they always expire instantly; yet they dare not molest them unless they have the means of escaping, either on their horses or by ascending trees. I have often heard trappers say that they would willingly, were it possible, make an agreement with them not to molest each other. I knew a bear to charge through an encampment of hunters who had fired

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

upon him, knock down two of them in his progress, bite each of them slightly, and continue his flight, with no other demonstrations of anger at the warm reception he met with.

John Gray, a herculean trapper, has fought several duels with them, in which he has thus far been victorious, though generally at the expense of a gun, which he usually manages to break in the conflict. A Shawnee Indian in the Rocky Mountains, has acquired much fame by attacking and destroying numbers of them, with an old rusty sword, which he flourishes about their ears with no little dexterity and effect.

When they are attacked in a thicket, they charge out into the prairie after their pursuers, and return back, and continue to do so when any of their assailants come near them. Hunting and chasing them on horseback is a favorite amusement of both whites and Indians, and is attended with no great danger, for a good horse will easily avoid and outstrip them; but daring hunters, by charging too close upon them, have had their horses caught and frightfully lacerated before they could extricate them, which is only effected by leaving portions of their bodies in the claws and teeth of the bear.

W.A.F.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ARTICLES

NUMBER 1 - Western Literary Messenger, July 20, 1842.

## CHANION OF THE COLORADO

Extract from an unpublished work, entitled

"LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS."

The Colorado a short distance below the junction of Green and Grand rivers, enters the great chanion, which is a canal in many places more than a thousand feet deep, and bounded on either side by perpendicular walls of rock, that bid defiance to horsemen, who would descend to the river; in fact, they are seldom accessible to footmen. From the summit of the walls, a succession of rocky cedar-covered hills, and sandy plains, appear losing themselves in the distance. This chanion confines the river between two and three hundred miles; and even to those, who have seen and for years been familiar with the mightiest productions of nature, presents a scene from which they recoil with terror. Reader have you ever stood on the brink of the precipice, midway between the falls of Niagara and the Whirlpool, and looked down with terror upon the rushing waters beneath you? if so, fancy yourself there at this moment; but suppose the walls to be six hundred feet higher, and in the same proportion, more distant from each other. Let the foaming torrent beneath you vanish, and imagine a beautiful meadow, perfectly level, extending from wall to wall; through this let a calm, unruffled, yet muddy streamlet wind its way; let its borders

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

be decked with a few small shrubs, and dwarf trees. Gaze upon the frowning hills, and burning sands, with which you are to suppose yourself, half surrounded; and you will certainly attempt to descend to the lovely scene beneath, and perhaps may resolve to step over the brook, and recline yourself in the shade of a cluster of willows; alas,! if you succeed, how sadly will you be disappointed. The little brook will gradually enlarge itself as you descend, until it becomes a mighty river, three hundred yards wide; the bushes will increase in size, and stature, until they become giant cotton woods; the narrow strip of meadow land between the walls, will expand into broad fields of verdure; and you will see, kind reader, in imagination, what many a half-starved trapper, has seen in reality, on the Colorado. These walls approach each other so closely, in some places, that the bottoms disappear; and the river being compressed to one fourth of its ordinary width, dashes through with inconceivable fury, like the Niagara, at the point I have chosen, and which renders its navigation impracticable. Its tributaries are likewise confined by walls, from their junctions some distance; which compels caravans, to travel the plains, far from the main river, and depend much upon chance, and rains, for water.

NUMBER 2 - Western Literary Messenger, August 17, 1842.

## CURIOUS INDIAN LETTER

Extract from an unpublished work, entitled

“LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.”

Traversing the Deer-house Plains with a party of traders, and in company with a band of Flatt-head Indians, on our way to the Buffalo range, we observed one afternoon what might be called an Indian letter, and interesting from its rare novelty, and the ingenuity with which it was devised. As the mountain tribes are not less ignorant of the art of writing than other Indians, it would be difficult to conceive how it was possible for them to effect an interchange of ideas to any considerable extent without a personal interview and by other than oral communication. In this instance, however, though the information conveyed, embodied quite a number of distinct facts, with allusions to past events and present intentions, and combined with warnings, threats and boastings, it required no Solomon to read the characters, and no Daniel to interpret their meaning. This singular document with its date, signature and superscription, excited our astonishment not less from the novelty of its appearance and the skill with which it was prepared, than from the number of ideas it imparted and the unequivocal character of the information it expressed. No learned clerk with all the appliances of letter writing at command, could have couched in more intelligible phrase or told in less doubtful terms, the knowledge intended to be made known, though addressing the Royal Society itself, than had these uncultured savages communicating with another and equally unlettered tribe. But how, methinks I hear you inquire, with a smile of incredulity, could this have been effected? It was in this wise:

In the first place, a small extent of ground was smoothed and a map of the junction of three rivers

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

drawn. Near them were then placed several little mounds, and a small square enclosure made of pointed twigs, planted close together, in the centre of which a stick considerably longer than the others was fixed upright in the ground, having a bit of rag fastened to it at top. A great many little conical heaps of earth were arranged round the enclosure, and red earth scattered profusely among them. At the entrance to the enclosure were the figures of two persons standing, one of whom had on a hat and was represented in the act of smoking. Behind him lay a small bunch of horse-hair rolled up and placed on a piece of tobacco. At the feet of the other were four little wooden pipes, and by his side a bit of dressed skin containing a few grains of powder. Near these persons were two sticks stuck in the ground so as to cross each other at right angles, a small stick was also planted in the ground at the foot of each of the two figures making an angle with the earth of forty-five degrees, and pointing towards the other.

There were also a magnitude of little figures of men clustered around them. Eight or ten paces off were thirty little sticks painted red, lying on the ground. Bits of scarlet blankets and cloth were scattered about, and finally, seven small figures representing horsemen facing the north, were arranged at a little distance.

Such was the novel communication referred to, which would probably have puzzled all the academicians of Europe to decipher, but which the Flatt-heads were at no loss to understand, and which even we found little difficulty in comprehending. It was evidently a letter to the Flatt-heads, and had been arranged with great care for their inspection. The date, as we easily ascertained from indications not at all questionable, but impossible to describe in words, was of the day previous. The interpretation of this curious epistle may be rendered thus:

The situation, direction, etc. of the three rivers, and the mounds near them, made it at once certain that they were intended to represent the three forks of the Missouri. The little square enclosure or pen, presented a fort in miniature, the central stick and rag indicating its flag-staff and banner. The little conical mounds gave us at first sight a lively idea of an Indian village with its numerous lodges, and the red earth scattered among them, made it equally evident that the Indians composing the village were of the Blood tribe. The two figures of men, one wearing a hat, represent the Indian Chief and the white trader. The pipes are emblematic of peace and intimacy. The tobacco, horse-hair (for horses,) powder, and skin, show that such articles have been exchanged between them. This is confirmed by the two sticks forming a cross, which represents a sign understood by all the mountain tribes, made by placing the two fore fingers in such a position, and meaning "to trade." The two other sticks pointing from the feet of each to the breast of the other, indicates a sign made by pointing with the fore-finger from the breast obliquely upwards, which is the Indian mode of declaring that it is "the truth." The multitude of little figures show evidently a large number of Indians in attendance; and the numerous bits of cloth, blankets, etc. are offered as incontestible proof of the abundant supplies they have at hand. The thirty small red sticks lying some paces off, represent as many Flatt-heads who were killed last spring, and the seven horsemen are the persons who have prepared this epistle, and who, proceeding northward, have now gone to their own country.

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

The communication was clearly intended to terrify the Flatheads, and warn them against hunting on the waters of the Missouri, and had it been expressed in words would have read somewhat as follows:

“Flatt-heads, take notice, that peace, amity and commerce have at length been established in good faith, between the whites and our tribe; that for our benefit they have erected a fort at the three forks of the Missouri, supplied with every thing necessary for trade that our comfort and safety require; that we have assembled in great numbers at the fort, where a brisk trade has been opened, and that we shall henceforth remain on the head waters of the Missouri. You will please observe that we scalped thirty of you last spring, and that we intend to serve the rest of you in the same manner. If, therefore, you consult your own interests and safety, you will not venture on our hunting grounds, but keep out of our vicinity. You may depend upon the truth of what we now tell you. Done by a party of seven Blood horsemen, now on our way home to the Forks.”

The Chief of the Flatt-heads, a Brave, in the fullest, noblest sense of the word, after having deliberately examined this strange epistle, and satisfied himself of its signification, drawing his fine form up to its full manly height, and shrugging his shoulders with the air of one scorning their threats and hurling back defiance, while his eye flashed with the fire of inveterate hate and unconquerable courage, pronounced in the emphatic language of his tribe, and in a tone of voice, expressing far more than the simple words, or indeed any other form of phraseology could convey, a brief “ES WHAU!” (maybe!) and, turning upon his heel, gave his attention to the trivial affairs of encampment, as if nothing had occurred.

NUMBER 3 - Dallas Herald, January 11, 1873.

## INTERESTING INDIANS - THE FLAT HEADS

The Flat Head Indians are, by far, the most interesting tribe of Indians in the Rocky Mountains. They number but fifty or sixty lodges; are nomadic in their habits, and range on the head of “Clark’s Fork” of the Columbia. They have been from time immemorial, at war with the powerful tribe of the Black Feet, who probably outnumber them twenty fold. Being constitutionally brave, and frequently engaged in battle with their more numerous opponents, they are rapidly diminishing in numbers and will soon be compelled to abandon their wandering habits and settle down near some of the Forts, on the lower Columbia, where they can receive protection, and raise corn, beans, and stock for a livelihood. They derive their name “Galish”, or Flat Head from an ancient custom of compressing the heads of their infants between boards so as to cause them to assume a different or unnatural shape, but this crush custom has long since been abandoned, and no living example can be found amongst them. These were the interesting and inoffensive Indians, Capt. Lewis found in Horse Prairie, on the head of the Jefferson, and enticed to his camp by a display of brads, looking glasses and other gew gaws that caught the admiration of these untutored children of the mountains. I have frequently heard “Old Guigneo,” the Flat Head Chief, relate minutely, the circumstances that occurred in this, their first interview with the white man, and found that

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

his relation was almost word for word the same as recorded by Capt. Lewis; the only difference being this, an old Shoshony or Snake squaw who was with Capt. Lewis, observing how much he seemed to be interested in these simple and amiable people, claimed them as Shoshoneys, her own people and the greatest rascals to be found in the whole mountain range. The Flat Heads boast that they have never killed a white man, or stolen a horse from any one of them. They are honest and religious. In the two years that I was trading with them, I never had so much as an awl blade stolen. Their religious exercises consist of singing and dancing, in which they all assemble and engage on every sabbath in the open air. Their customs are almost identical with those of the ancient Jews, with the single exception of burnt offerings or sacrifices, in which blood is displayed; they do make offerings to the great Saint, but these are always articles of beauty or use, as tobacco, blankets, beads and other ornaments. These are always deposited in places where they believe the Great Spirit temporarily resides, or visits. To one who has been familiar with their manners and customs, it would seem that in ancient times, they had had a Jewish Jesuit among them, who had instructed them in all the ancient doctrines of the Pentateuch. When any article, however trifling, is lost and found by any one, it is immediately handed to the Chief, who invariably restores it to the right owner. Their females are chaste and modest, and many of them would be considered as pretty anywhere. They are fond of dress, painting, and a display of brilliant colors, which makes the individual Indian when in full dress a very fantastic creature. Their appearance, however, when assembled on a gala day or on that of some annual festival, especially when on a march, is quite animating. I will attempt imperfectly to describe such a scene. We had broke up camp in Horse Prairie, on a lonely day precisely on the spot where Capt. Lewis had formerly met these Indians, and were marching eastward over the wide and beautiful plain in quest of water, grass and convenience to the game. Old Guineo limped along at the head of the procession, his old wounds preventing him from mounting a horse. He was wrapped in a plain buffalo robe, and nowhere displayed any ornament. Behind him was led a proud war charger, which by the by, he never mounted, bearing his lance, shield, quiver, and tomahawk, and all the paraphernalia of war used in his days of vigor and prime of manhood. This horse was highly ornamented, covered with fringe and tassels of various brilliant colors, but the most prized ornament was several tailfeathers of the American Eagle, highly ornamented with porcupine quills of all colors and fastened securely to the tail of the noble animal. These indicated the number of the gallant deeds his splendid animal had enabled him to perform. His lance, too, had many of these feathers dangling at the outer ends like the small flags attached to lances by our chivalrous ancestors. These were also a record of the deeds of high emprise effected with the aid of this implement. Behind followed many gallant steeds decorated in a similar manner, and bearing the arms of their respective owners. Following these was a scattering crowd of packed horses, bearing their lodges, goods and children. These were driven by squaws, mounted on saddles having the front and rear two feet high. They all rode astride, and their saddles were as abundantly decorated with fringe, tassels, bells, etc. as the war chargers of their gallant husbands. On our left, a cavalcade of fantastic horsemen canter along, their long black hair rising and falling gracefully with the motion of their bodies. Beyond them a score of youths are trying the speed of their horses, and moving with the speed of the Arabs of the desert; beyond these still, are single horsemen at all distances in view; these are acting as spies to get a distant view of any approaching enemy, and to observe the situation, kind and numbers of game. On our right are seen half a dozen horsemen in hot pursuit

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

of a wounded antelope, who runs nearly as fast on three legs as the following steeds do on four. Beyond them is a scattering herd of Buffalo running in all directions with twenty or thirty Indians after them. There, down goes one, then another, and still another, in a few minutes twenty are dead on the field; yonder is an Indian driving his Buffalo towards our line of march, he approaches nearly to Old Guineo, and down goes his Buffalo; this is done to get the assistance of his squaw to help butcher it. Yonder is another driving his Buffalo in the direction we are traveling; this is done to kill him as near camp as possible. Far beyond our line of march, is a single Indian waiving his Buffalo robe to and fro, and still beyond him are several Indians riding at half speed, a short distance back and forth, at right angles to our course; all this is to apprise us that they have discovered strangers. A strong party of Indians instantly depart at full speed to the point of observation always ready for peace or war; in a few moments a party of horsemen are seen far to the Northward galloping towards the distant mountains, but they are so far off that no attempt is made to follow them. We reach a clear and wooded stream where grass is high and plentiful; here a tripod is planted and Old Guineo's arms are suspended from it; other tripods are similarly set up and ornamented. The pack horses are quickly unloaded; in an hour the lodges are pitched and the goods transferred therein; in the meantime the braves are assembled here and there in circles, the calumet goes freely around, while in the midst of each of these assemblages, some old veteran in animated declaration is rehearsing the glorious deeds of their ancestors, and inspiring the listening youths to these illustrious examples.

These mountain Indians have an unusual language of signs by which any Indian of any tribe can make himself clearly understood by any other Indian of any other tribe, although neither of them may understand a word of their different languages or tongues. These signs are made by graceful movements of the fingers, hands and arms, and are natural and expressive. These signs embrace animate and inanimate things; thought hope, light, darkness, truth, each has its sign, which is well understood as well as all other things, animate or otherwise, that is known to them. These signs are employed to give form and emphasis in their discourses, and a chieftain who is fond of displaying his oratorical powers reminds one of Ulysses or his older confederate in their animate discourses to the ancient Grecians. But these native declaimers introduce hundreds of gestures unknown to such men as Clay, Webster and Adams, that render their discourses much more effective than they would otherwise be, and fully make up for the paucity of their language, when compared with the fullness of ours in which ideas are more numerous but not more clearly expressive than these native effusion.

W.A.F.

NUMBER 4 - Dallas Herald, January 27, 1873.

## PERSONAL ADVENTURE

Leaving the rendezvous on Green River, our company was divided into several parties to make a spring hunt; each party choosing its own particular hunting ground. Our party, headed by

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Fontenelle and consisting of twenty-two men, determined to try our luck in Gray's Hole, a broken valley adjoining Pierre's Hole on the south, and separated by hills of no great elevation from the plains of Snake River. This valley was remarkable from the circumstance, that every stream, however small, was confined to canyons of cut rock, varying from twenty to thirty feet high, and as it was only here and there, that ravines could be found where a horseman could ascend and descend these cliffs, and there were many hiding places for Indians, it was always regarded as a very unsafe locality to trap in, for a trapper once hemmed in between the walls, had little or no chance to escape. Beaver houses was numerous; no Indians made their appearance, and our hunt was quite successful.

In the middle of May, when our hunt was about half over, Fontenelle came to me one day and proposed that I should take one or two men and hunt up the Flat Head Indians. Our hunt, said he, is quite a success, but could we induce the Flat Heads to meet us at the coming rendezvous, we should be able to get from them a considerable increase to our present store of furs, however, he continued, the Gros Ventre's of the Prairie, who have, for the last three years, been associated with the Arrappahoes, on the head waters of the Arkansas River, and south fork of the Platte, are now returning to their old friends and old haunts; the Peagans on the head waters of the Missouri, and we are here directly in the route, it is more than probable that a collision between us will take place, and for this reason it will not do to weaken our small force by sending off a party sufficient for self defense. You must, therefore, endeavor to accomplish this purpose by night traveling and extreme caution. On the following morning, having chosen an Irroquois and a Flat Head to accompany me, and finding them willing to attempt the enterprise, we made our little necessary arrangements, and set out, after bidding adieu to our comrades who did us the honor to declare that we should be seen no more alive! Directing our course across the hills, we soon came in view of the great plains of Snake River, and at the distance of sixty or seventy miles, in the distant mountains across the plain could be seen 'Cotas defile,' to which we directed our march and which would lead us over to Salmon River. The plain of Snake River was covered with wild sage, the only vegetable to be seen, except the cactus plant which was abundant of every variety. At noon, we reached the great river, and having forced our horses to swim over, we made a raft of loose drift wood upon which we placed our clothing and arms, and half pushing half swimming we reached the opposite shore. Here finding some short curly grass that is very nutritious we halted a couple of hours to let our horses graze; ate some of a small stock of dried Buffalo meat, and again proceeded. We now entered the region of the natural fort that I have described in a former article, the wild sage and cactus were still the only vegetation. The country was arid and waterless, and frequently covered with huge black basaltic boulders similar to that, that constitutes the natural forts. The famous Buttes could be seen far to the southward and the Tetons that we had left behind us seem to increase in height as we receded from them. After a hard day's ride, we halted at dusk, made no fire, ate some of our dried meat and slept in one of the natural forts. After hobbling out our horses, we suffered some for water, which we had not seen since we left the river. Our repose was undisturbed. The next morning at day-light, we again set out proceeding as rapidly as the nature of the country would admit, in the direction of the defile. Towards evening, we began to see great numbers of Buffalo along the base of the yet distant mountains; these animals were in great commotion, running in all directions, evidently pursued by a large body of

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Indians; we however continued our course. Late in the evening we discovered three mounted men approaching us from the defile; they came within half a mile, and two of them halted, the other approached within two hundred yards, and examined us for several minutes with great attention, then galloped off rejoining his companions. They all disappeared in the defile we were about to enter, turning our course obliquely so as to strike the small stream that flows from the defile at the nearest point. We soon reached it, and concealing ourselves in the willows that were sufficiently plentiful along its margin, we made a fire and cooked and ate some of the flesh of a Buffalo we had killed during our day's march. As soon as it was dark we took the precaution to cover one of our horses that was a white color, with dark blankets to elude observation and started up the defile. We had every reason to believe that a large body of Indians were encamped in the defile, and consequently avoided going near the stream, but held our course as near the base of the adjacent mountain as the nature of the ground would admit, yet notwithstanding our precautions we had proceeded but three or four miles before all the dogs of a large village of Indians set out after us, filling the air with their yells. We rode for several miles at a break neck gallop and outstripped the dogs, after which resuming our ordinary gait, we continued our course until after midnight; turned loose our horses and slept on the spot. With the morning star we arose, sought our horses and resumed our journey. As soon as it was light enough to see, we found the ground covered with the traces of horsemen, but these diminished as we proceeded, and when we reached the narrows where the pass for several hundred yards is confined between walls of cut rock forty or fifty feet apart the numerous traces ceased to appear, and we began to congratulate ourselves that we should at least escape the Indians we had left behind us. The pass opened into a large rolling plain which we entered and continued down for some distance. We now again began to find numerous traces of horsemen and footmen increasing in frequency as we proceeded. In a little time we found ourselves in the edge of a battle field; dead Indians killed and scalped, began to make their appearance and increased in numbers as we advanced; we counted sixteen in a few hundred yards. They were not Flat Heads or we should have recognized some of them, they appeared to have been killed only a few hours. Here it was certain that a bloody battle had been fought within a few hours past. It was also evident enough that we had passed one party of the belligerents during the preceding night, and that the other party was necessarily ahead of us, but who are they? Are they hostile or friendly? If the Flat Heads and Black Feet have had a fight, which is more than probable, which of the parties did we pass in the night, and who are we about to meet? These questions were agitated but not solved, we concluded that the chances of our meeting friends or foes were about equal, but we resolved to be extremely vigilant and the moment we should uncover Indians to seek instant concealment until that night, when we would approach them and ascertain who they were. These pleasant resolutions were all suddenly knocked in the head, for we had scarcely made them before a party of over a hundred Indians filed out of a ravine at the distance of three or four hundred yards, and at once came in full view of us. We saw at once that with our jaded horses escape was impossible, and immediately ascended a hill resolved to sell our lives as dearly as possible. The Iroquois and myself dismounted from our horses and quietly awaited the result. The Indian appeared sullen and by his tenacious grasp of his gun, and his look of firm resolve, I know that he intended to kill an advancing foe which was all he could hope to do before being killed himself. I presume my own feelings were similar to his; I had confidence in myself and gun, and believe I could accomplish as much as the Indian.

---

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

The Flat Head pursued a different course. He rode at half speed back and forth on top of the mound, and in a loud but monotonous tone sung his death song, in which he recounted his deeds of heroism, the scalps he had taken and his utter readiness and contempt for death; he invited the advancing Indians to come and take his worthless life, but assured them that one of their number should accompany him to the bright hunting grounds. I confess that the example of this gallant Indian inspired me with similar feelings and I could plainly see that it had the same effect upon my Irroquois friend. All at once my Flat Head friend stopped his song and gazed intently at the advancing Indians for a moment and then dashed headlong, like a madman, down to them, crying 'Galish!' 'Galish!' All was instantly explained; the Indians were the very ones we were seeking. They had just started on a Buffalo hunt but on meeting us immediately returned to camp. Our jaded horses were turned loose and we were mounted on their war chargers and went in a sweeping gallop six or seven miles to their camp.

As soon as we arrived and had been sufficiently feasted, Guigneo assembled his warriors in council to learn the nature of my embassy. I was instructed to offer them a liberal present of ammunition, blankets, and tobacco if they would meet us at the rendezvous in Pierre's Hole. My arrival proved to be auspicious; the day before they had had a severe fight with the Blackfeet Indians, that lasted all day, and when the parties withdrew from the field of battle, the Flatheads had not a single load of powder and ball left for half of their number, and had the Blackfeet known this, the Flatheads would in all probability have been exterminated. The council at once determined to comply with our wishes, but old Guigneo said he would be compelled to make short and easy marches on account of the forty-odd wounded Indians in his village. Many of his braves had been killed, and some of the severely wounded were dying daily. On the following morning we set out, returning by the same route we had already followed. The wounded Indians were conveyed on litters consisting of two lodge poles fastened on either side of a packhorse with skins stretched on cross bars so as to form a bed for each of the sufferers. These lodge poles were very elastic and passed over rough ground like the springs of a carriage, yet it was a terrible journey to the poor invalids, though perhaps no worse than the carts and ambulances in which our own wounded are usually conveyed. We were three days in reaching the point where we had passed the Indian encampment in the night. The Indians had decamped, and we ascertained that they occupied about three times as much space as the Flatheads, and judged from this that they were about three times as numerous. When we entered the plains at the mouth of the defile, the hostile party could be seen encamped about three miles north of us on a small stream, but they made no demonstration. They had evidently had fight enough and were doubtless as much or more encumbered with wounded Indians than ourselves. We saw many fresh graves about their encampment and believed that their loss had exceeded that of the Flatheads. At the mouth of the defile, all the skins and available vessels were filled with water to supply the wounded whilst crossing the great arid plain. It required three days to reach the river, but some of the young Indians went in advance and brought back water from the river, keeping a sufficient supply on hand for the wounded.

On reaching the river, a stranger not acquainted with the resources of these Indians, would have wondered how so large a force was to be transported across a wide and swiftly flowing river without boats or rafts. He would soon, however, have been undeceived. All the goods and chattels be-

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

longing to a lodge were placed in it, it was then rolled up in the shape of a ball, puckered and tied at the top, a cord was fastened to each and they were launched into the river, the squaws and children mounted on these balls, and they were towed across the river by an Indian swimming over with the rope in his mouth. In twenty minutes the river was covered with these novel vessels, and in half an hour all were safely landed half a mile below on the opposite shore. Four of these balls with a platform of lodge poles would convey six or eight wounded Indians, and in one and a half hours from the time of our reaching the river, the tents were all stretched ready for the occupants on the opposite shore. Myself and a few youngsters fastened some drift logs together upon which we placed our clothing and arms and crossed as we had done a few days before. Finding the grass tolerably good, old Guiguel resolved to rest his wounded here for several days. On the following morning I set out accompanied by a half dozen young Indians for Pierre's Hole. Here we found Fontonelle and some other parties of other trappers who had already reached the place of rendezvous. Other parties reached camp daily, and a week later, and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company reached the valley and encamped about a mile from us the same time the two St. Louis companies headed by Dripps and Gubbitt reached the valley. Old Guiguel also made in with his forces and we now altogether numbered one thousand men able to bear arms. The Gros Venues of the prairie, as we anticipated, were passing northward in companies of one hundred lodges or more. One of these lodges fell in with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company but finding the white men abundantly able to defend themselves, they adopted the peaceful policy and opened a trade for fur and skins that was advantageous to both parties. A few days later the same Indians killed seven of our young men who had started for Saint Louis. This took place in Jackson Hole. Still later a party of these Indians numbering about a hundred and fifty warriors with their women and children, entered Pierre's Hole and had proceeded nearly to the middle of the valley before they discovered the extent of their danger. They however then acted with judgment and discretion.

They immediately sought shelter in a dense grove of aspen trees of which they hurriedly built a very substantial pen large enough to contain themselves and their horses; they also dug a trench around the pen on the inside sufficiently capacious to contain the whole party below the surface of the earth. This enabled them to shoot from the bottom of the pen and gave them a great advantage over their assailants. However, in one hour a thousand guns were constantly discharging at every hole in the pen. The party within it made a gallant resistance, and for a while returned bullet for bullet, but late in the evening resistance had almost ceased, and all parties returned to their several encampments. In the morning we visited the pen which was literally full of dead Indians, squaws, children and horses. It is not probable that any escaped. Two young and rather interesting girls, fourteen or fifteen years of age who were out hunting berries when the fight commenced, concealed themselves, and were found and captured the next morning. The Indians kindly offered to save their lives and treat them kindly, but they said that their friends and relations were all killed and they wished only for death. They were importunate, and earnestly begged for death on their knees until an old warrior finding that he could do nothing with them, released them from the bond of life with his tomahawk. Had any of the white men been present their lives would have been saved unless they had committed suicide, which from their despair was highly probable. The next morning we had sixteen Indians and six white men laid out for interment in our camp. Other parties suffered to the same extent. Many were wounded - some

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

mortally. Subbett was shot in the breast and arm, Dripps had a bullet through his hat that took a lock of hair with it. The Indians, however, being most numerous, suffered the most, and Old Gurgueo had quite a company of wounded men to add to those already in this condition. Old Gurgueo was a great favorite with all white men, and received generous presents from all the various companies. In fact he left six weeks afterwards with ammunition and tobacco enough to last his braves for several years. He was also furnished with everything that could be found in any of our camps to alleviate the sufferings of his wounded followers. The old fellow was generous and grateful, and prayed earnestly to the Great Spirit to protect us in all our pursuits.

W.A.F.

NUMBER 5 - Dallas Herald, December 14, 1872.

## ANIMATING SCENE, AND A FORMIDABLE NIGHT COMPANION

In the early part of the fall we descended Bitter Root River, to the head of navigation. Here the Hudson Bay Company had a trading post which however, was abandoned in the winter. Here on a fine day we enjoyed quite an animating scene. A long line of Mackanaw boats loaded with furs and peltries, were proceeding down the river, the whole surface of which was covered with those light and fragile vessels, birch bark canoes, which of all known craft are, the most easily upset. One is astonished to see with what dexterity and address these topling things are managed by the squaws. We have seen an old squaw pack her canoe on her back two miles across the portage, set it in the water, pile up a wagon load of goods upon it, throw three or four children on top and getting into it, balance the whole by the motions of her body and paddle away with almost the speed of a fish. One is surprised that fear or no accidents occur. After the fleet of canoes had disappeared on their way down the river, a long line of horsemen also proceeded down the river by land intending to winter at Fort Colville, leaving behind a small part of the company assembled here in the morning. Others broke away in small parties, who sought shelter and game in nooks and ravines of adjacent mountains, there to spend a long and dreary winter. I accompanied a half dozen families thirty or forty miles up a small stream to a very small but pretty valley, where we hoped to find game abundant. During the early part of the winter, having a pretty good supply of provisions, and a young half breed Indian managed to keep a pretty good supply of venison on hand. The winter, however, was very severe; snow fell to the depth of five feet over the little surface of the valley and it was impossible to get about, except on snow shoes. Provisions began to grow scarce, and our hunting necessarily became an every day's business, I began to get about as tired of this as I had previously got of fishing. To chase, on snow shoes, half or three fourths of a day over spurs of mountains, kill a deer and pack it on your back to camp two or three miles, might do as an occasional amusement, but when necessity makes it an every day business it becomes rather tiresome. Convinced that we should not be able to supply all the camps, I volunteered to go down the stream where we knew a small party of Indians were stationed and hire one or two hunters to go up and hunt for the party left behind. With my gun, blanket, tomahawk and knife, together with a small scrip of dried venison I set out on snow shoes. My course lay down

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

the narrow valley of the stream, now crossing Rocky Point, now through skirts of pine timber, and frequently over difficult ravines. During the day I saw many deer, but was not yet so lost to humanity as to kill them through mere wantonness. I suffered during the day for water, although I was almost constantly beside a stream; fifteen or eighteen inches of ice must be penetrated before I could hope to get water. Once I attempted to reach the water with my tomahawk but soon found that after penetrating the ice the water was still beyond my reach and I gave it up in despair. I had freely been eating dry snow all day, but snow is but a sorry substitute for water. In the evening I began to look about for some place where I could spend the night. Luckily, I found a cave sufficiently large at the enhance to admit me in a stooping posture. As soon as I entered it, I found it sufficiently capacious being two or three feet wide, as high, and lost in darkness in the interior. I now struck fire, and having supplied myself with a large quantity of pine knots which were sufficiently abundant, I then made myself a comfortable bed of branches of the balsam fir; got thoroughly warmed up, ate my supper of dried venison, and should really have felt quite comfortable had it not been for my inordinate thirst. Directly I heard, or fancied that I heard, water rippling in the interior of the cave. Making a torch, and taking my gun along, I proceeded to explore the cave, and soon found, to my great joy, one of the most delightful fountains I had ever seen in my life; the water was exquisite, neither too hot or too cold, and beyond the reach of congelation. I drank until I was satisfied, having gone a little beyond the strict rules of temperance. As I sat near the spring, torch in hand, I either saw or imagined I saw a ball of fire in the interior of the cave beyond; perhaps, it was mere fancy. I saw but one and only one imperfect glance at that: Perhaps it was only the reflection of my torch on a drop of water. In any event I cared not as I knew no animal would venture to attack me with my means of keeping up a good fire. Returning to my fire I lay down, but that ball of fire recurring to my mind I took the precaution to place the muzzle of my gun in that direction, placed a knot or two on the fire and fell into a doze; whenever my fire burnt low the intense cold would awake me, some knots were placed upon the fire, and the dozing repeated. The cold was so intense, that the sap vessels of the pine trees were continually bursting with the reports as loud as fire arms. Towards day, finding that I had a much larger quantity of fuel than I should require, I built up a large fire and fell into a deeper slumber than I had yet enjoyed. I was awakened from this by a tremendous clatter and soon found that an enormous Grizzly Bear, who had probably watched me all night from the interior of the cave, most likely in trepidation, finding it impossible to resist his fears and danger had bolted for the mouth of the cave, determined to make his exit in spite of fire. The entrance to the cave was much too small to admit the passage of his body without great exertion. Being convinced that he could not return until I should have ample time to put my gun to his ear and blow his brains out, I could not resist the inclination to stick a fire brand to his long hair. In an instant he was enveloped in flames. The next moment I saw him flouncing and wallowing in the snow having the appearance of a swung rat. He arose, shook himself, and eyed me as if he had half a notion to attack me and my fire; however, if such were his intentions, he soon changed his mind and galloped off in the direction of a ledge of rocks, no doubt promising himself never again to attempt to pass a night in that infernal cavern. I saw him no more, and never had the opportunity to inquire if he caught cold on this occasion. After eating some of my small store of venison, I went with a lighted torch, to my glorious spring not knowing how many more bears might be stored away in the dark recesses of the cave. I drank freely of the water I had discovered and left it with regret. I now departed from

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

the cave and proceeded on my journey. At the end of three or four miles I began to see tracks of snow shoes, and the same evening reached an encampment of about fifteen Indians. I found all the trees in the neighborhood of the camp full of the carcasses of deer that had been dressed but frozen hard as ice. I remained with them all night. The next morning I hired two Indians to go up and hunt for the party I had left alone. I went on down the stream, and passed the residue of the winter with an Indian friend, Payette, who had a small family and a well supplied wigwam. I amused myself by excursions on snow shoes, sometimes killed deer for amusement. Payette killed several Linxes during the winter; these were always fat and I found the flesh excellent.

NUMBER 6 - Dallas Herald, December 14, 1872.

## THE FIRST SALMON - SALMON FISHING

After a peaceful Buffalo hunt on the plains of Snake River, old Ginquro the Hot Head Chief proposed to lead us over to Salmon River, in order to give us a little recreation in the way of fishing. The first waters of the Salmon River that we reached, was a very small stream issuing from a pond or miniature lake, four or five feet deep and sixty or eighty yards in extent, having a fine pebbly bottom; the water was so clear and pure, that a pin could be seen at its greatest depth. In this pond was one single Salmon of unusual size; we inferred that this fish had selected that place to deposit its spawn to the exclusion of all other fish which it had probably driven away. After encamping, all hands, Indians and white men, surrounded the pond all elated with the idea of capturing the first salmon. Happening to have some knowledge of the habits of this fish I stepped down to the lower edge of the pond and placed myself on the shoal opposite to the deepest part in water a little over shoe mouth deep, and stood gun in hand, watching the appearance of the fish; presently, I saw it swimming down slowly close to the bottom, evidently uneasy at the presence of so many persons. As soon as it reached a depth of one foot, I aimed at his head and fired; a great splash of water followed, enveloping me and my gun. Before I could clear the water out of my eyes my comrades had the fish out on dry land, with a bullet hole through his head; he was a noble fish of the very largest size and in the finest condition. The next day we reached the shoals of Salmon River, and I lost all the glory I had acquired the day before in killing the first Salmon, for I found boys ten years old that would kill with sticks and stones three fish to my one, notwithstanding I had the advantage of a double barrel gun. The women and children were all engaged in this sport with sticks, stones, arrows, guns and lances; of the various instruments the lance seemed to be the most efficient. One old Indian with a lance would pin a fish to the ground, whilst three or four little boys followed him with forked sticks. Whenever he caught a fish, one of the boys who was always ready to place his hook in the gills of the fish and start for shore, the lance was then relieved, and the same thing repeated. Old Guineo notwithstanding his age and infirmities, was on the shoals tomahawk in hand, and killed several fish. I here saw a trait in the Indian character that was very pleasing. Some of the young and active Indians observing how anxious Guineo was to enjoy the sport, and how difficult it was for him, to get about with alacrity, over the smooth and slippery rocks managed with great address to draw several fish within reach of his tomahawk and he seldom failed to give the death blow to such as came within his reach. So many fish were

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

killed that we made use of only those in high condition. The squaws split and smoke-dried large quantities. We were compelled every few days to move camp to other shoals, in consequence of the offensive epheria of stinking fish, and in truth we became as tired of fish and fishing as we had before been anxious to engage in the amusement. Some of us fancied that our camps had a fishy smell for months afterwards.

W.A.F.

NUMBER 7 - Dallas Herald, November 30, 1872

## PERSONAL ADVENTURE

While quite a youth the writer was frequently employed in raising and conveying the contents of caches (goods and furs) to the summer rendezvous or to Winter quarters. Care, caution and uniform success, elicited the praise of his employers, and induced them to give him frequent employment in expeditions of this kind. The amount of force sent was always determined by the leader of the company, but the partizans of these squads always had the privalege of selecting his own assistants. On one occasion he was ordered to take five men and ten pack horses and raise a 'cache' of furs about three hundred miles distant. The course lay directly through the country occupied by a powerful tribe of Indians, the Aarrappahoes who were at the time hostile. The value of the pack horses and fur was about fifteen thousand dollars. Having chosen two Delawares, a Shawnee, and two Canadian Frenchmen, all men who had seen death in all its forms and could look it steadily in the face if necessary, yet men of great caution and vigilance who had all shown great presence of mind on trying occasions, the preliminaries being settled, we set out, generally halting at twelve o'clock and remaining until two in order to give our horses ample time to graze. At such times someone of the party was always stationed out on some eminence where he could watch the movements of game or the approach of Indians. At two hours before sun set we again halted and remained until dark, then saddled up our horses and proceeded ten or twelve miles after night, turning loose or hobbling our horses, we slept on the spot where we halted. This course prevented any stragglng Indians who might have seen us during the day from following us to our encampments. It also gave us a great advantage of war parties, as we would necessarily see their fires when in the vicinity of our course and determine the extent of our night marches so as to avoid them, altogether. In this manner we proceeded on to the "caches," raised them and returned as far as Salt River, about half way to the main encampment. Three or four days previously, we had crossed the great lodge trail of the Appahoes, going south east into the defiles of the great chain of mountains that were nearly parallel to our course about a half a day's march to the eastward and in which are seen Long's and Pike's peaks and many other conspicuous land marks. The Arrapahoes had hunted out the country leaving little or no game behind them together with small probability of our meeting any considerable party of Indians. After passing the great trail we saw no further sign of Indians and began immediately to greatly relax our vigilance. Salt River some fifty miles west unites with Snake River forming Grand River which last unites with Green River, forming the Colorado of the West which by and by is a muddy stream like the Missouri,

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

the Columbia River being on the contrary as clear as the Ohio. We were encamped on Salt River, Snake River was about thirty miles from our encampment a distance too great for a day's march with pack horses. However, about midway between the two rivers a span of the great mountain chain projected down into the plain, reaching quite to the trail generally followed and near its termination was a famous spring having clusters of willows sufficient for fire wood along its margin. This was a noted place for encamping both by white men and Indians. In the morning it rained heavily for half an hour, cleared off and the sun came out giving promise of a beautiful day; we leasurly packed up our horses intending to proceed as far as the spring and halt there during the following night. So soon as we crossed Salt River we found Buffalo and Antelopes in great numbers that had certainly not recently been disturbed. The strong mist arising after the shower from the hot arid plain rendered distant objects very indistinct and the great refraction caused distant Buffalo to appear as tall as pine trees. We proceeded slowly and killed several fat and fine buffalo; the choice meat was fastened to our pack horses and we proceeded on our march. All at once we discovered eighty or ninety red objects we supposed to be Antelopes far as the eye could reach ahead of us. They were running from us in the direction of the spring. We immediately halted and examined them with great care. I soon ascertained that they did not retain their places as a herd of Deer or Antelopes generally do, but the hindmost would pass up the line another dropping in his place and we soon noticed that they were continually passing each other; more than this, we could see no reason why a herd of antelopes should be running from us at so great distance. The conclusion arrived at, was that they were Indians, and we instantly comprehended their designs. They were so far off that they believed themselves undiscovered. They were running to meet the point of mountain undiscovered; once there, they would be secure from discovery or observation. They knew, from our course, that we were aiming to reach the spring. From this place of concealment they could watch our every movement. After night, when we had gone to rest, they would surround our encampment, secure our horses, and crawl up around our camp, and fire upon us according to their custom at daybreak. All this we instantly comprehended. The question now with us was how should we manage to save our pack horses and furs. After some time spent in consultation, we adopted a course that we believed we could make successful, by good management. We knew too well that if we attempted to save ourselves by changing our course, the Indians would know at once that they were discovered and give chase; that in the course of two or three hours they would certainly overtake us and we should necessarily be compelled to abandon our pack horses to save ourselves. Our course was to proceed on to the spring and encamp as if we were wholly unconscious of the proximity of an enemy; to appear as carelessly as possible; to build fires, cook our supper, keep our riding horses close about camp, so as to throw our saddles upon them and make our escape in case the Indians should attempt to make a raid upon us by daylight; but above all, to place a hawk eyed Indian behind a rock on a neighboring eminence to watch the point of mountain, distant about three hundred yards, with unremitting vigilance. All this was duly accomplished, we reached the spring whilst the sun was yet above the horizon; our packs were thrown off with the greatest apparent carelessness, yet everything was so placed that it could instantly be found and used; our pack horses were permitted to stray some distance from camp yet our riding horses were herded close at hand. We built large fires, cooked and ate as heartily as we should have done had we known ourselves perfectly free of danger, and as soon as it became sufficiently dark to prevent observation from the point of mountain, we

## LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

hurriedly but securely, packed up our horses and having built our fires and placed some saddle blankets on sticks about the fires, to give them the appearance of men sitting around them. We set out giving the point of mountain a wide berth. As we passed, however, we could plainly see the Indians in a ravine by a small fire stark naked in the act of painting themselves preliminary to their contemplated attack upon us. The next morning at sunrise we were thirty miles away and had so completely out-witted the Indians that they made no attempt to follow us. In due time we reached camp without loss and received undeserved praise for our conduct; whereas we should have been censured for exposing ourselves unnecessarily, for we should with our accustomed vigilance have performed this part of our journey by night with perfect security.

W.A.F.

NUMBER 8 - Dallas Herald, January 4, 1873

## INTERESTING INDIANS - THE NABAHOES

There are really no Indians in the Rocky Mountains who deserve honorable mention, but two tribes, the Nabahoes and Flat Heads; all others are rascally, beggarly, thieves and rogues generally. The Nabahoes are found in the gulches and canons of the Gila, west of Santa Fe. They are generally at war with the Mexicans, and in most instances, have proved themselves the better soldier of the two. This may in some degree, be imputed to the great national defenses in the country where they reside, consisting of inaccessible canons and precipices to which they can retire when necessary, or from which, by secret pass and outlets, they can at any time issue and attack an enemy when, perhaps, they are wholly unexpected and by these means surprise a force that may greatly exceed their own. The Mexicans have become exceedingly chary in following these Indians to their places of concealment, and in consequence, the Indians, if too weak to make a successful resistance, retired to their hiding places until their enemies depart. These Indians have sheep and cattle; they are not migratory or nomadic, but remain permanently fixed in coves and small valleys surrounded by walls of cut rock or mountains scarcely accessible. They have attained to a high degree of perfection in the art of manufacturing blankets, similar to those made in Mexico, but we are assured that they greatly surpass the Mexicans; both in execution and design. We have seen a Nabaho blanket that was worth five hundred dollars. The texture, was fine and closely woven; colors were very brilliant and the design extremely beautiful. One who has made himself familiar with the history of design as practiced by the silk weavers of Lyons, would be surprised to learn that a tribe of Indians in the Rocky Mountains, had attained to quite as high a degree of perfection in the art, as these French weavers. And why not? Have they not the whole field of nature before them to copy, and where else can we find a higher degree of beauty and perfection than is presented by the vegetable and floral world? I am told that it required two or three years to complete one of the finest blankets. I presume that these Indians if let alone would become harmless and inoffensive. They possess within themselves all that a pastoral people require, and having no knowledge of luxuries have no use for them.

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

W.A.F.

VERSE

by Warren A. Ferris

The following lines were composed on a dreary Winter day during a surveying excursion remote from habitation or other indications of civilized life whilst the author lay in camp alone and lame where great danger existed.

LAMENT

Very forlorn and weary here

Alone I rest my frame

Far far from friends and Kindred dear

I lie a cripple lame

A streamlet flows beside my lair

Sheltered by lofty cane

Sought to arrest the chilling air

And turn the wintry rain

A thousand warblers cheer the wood

With ever changing lay

But still my mind in irksome mood

Is cheerful as this day

Which line the forests aspect drear

Imparts the unwelcome truth

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

That Autumn hastening year by year

Succeeds the way of youth

My Comrades gone and I alone

With anxious care opprest

I hear the forrests hollow moan

And start ah! fear exprest

But better reason checks the fault

A fault I blush to own

Tho' sterner spirits often halt

By sudden terror thrown

From reasons cheek when danger's near

As pallid cheeks declare

Yet this to him is short lived fear

Who seeks a warriors fare

With thoughts like these I sink to rest

Morpheus drowns my care

My soul with fleeting visions blest

I dream of fortune rare

MOUNTAIN SCENERY

Where dark blue mountains towering rise

Whose craggy summits cleave the skies

LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS - from February, 1830, to November, 1835

By W. A. FERRIS

---

Whose sides are decked with giant pines  
With branch and encircling vines  
There thund'ring torrents bounding far  
From rock to rock dissolve in air  
Or larger streams with lion rage  
Burst through the barriers that encage  
And sweeping onward to the plain  
Deposit ruins and again  
Proceed: but mask what force subdued  
Their whirlwind terror now not rude  
No longer they with fury hurl  
Rocks from their beds in Eddies whirl  
Tall pines, nor yet with deafening roar  
Assail the echoing mountains hoar  
But milder than the summer breeze  
Flow gently winding through the trees  
Or smoothly flow and softly glide  
Through woodless plains and valleys wide

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO NORTHWEST COAST OF AMERICA  
BY GABRIEL FRANCHERE

---

NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO NORTHWEST COAST OF AMERICA IN THE YEARS 1811,  
1812, 1813, AND 1814 OF THE FIRST AMERICAN SETTLEMENT ON THE PACIFIC  
BY GABRIEL FRANCHERE

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY J. V. HUNTINGTON

REDFIELD

110 AND 112 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK

1854.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854, BY J. S. REDFIELD, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Southern District of New York.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN 1846, when the boundary question (that of the Oregon Territory in particular) was at its height, the Hon. THOMAS H. BENTON delivered in the United States Senate a decisive speech, of which the following is an extract:—

“Now for the proof of all I have said. I happen to have in my possession the book of all others, which gives the fullest and most authentic details on all the points I have mentioned — a book written at a time, and under circumstances, when the author (himself a British subject and familiar on the Columbia) had no more idea that the British would lay claim to that river, than Mr. Harmon, the American writer whom I quoted, ever thought of our claiming New Caledonia. It is the work of Mr. FRANCHERE, a gentleman of Montreal, with whom I have the pleasure to be personally acquainted, and one of those employed by Mr. ASTOR in founding his colony. He was at the founding of ASTORIA, at its sale to the Northwest Company, saw the place seized as a British conquest, and continued there after its seizure. He wrote in French: his work has not been done into English, though it well deserves it; and I read from the French text. He gives a brief and true account of the discovery of the Columbia.”

I felt justly proud of this notice of my unpretending work, especially that the latter should have contributed, as it did, to the amicable settlement of the then pending difficulties. I have flattered myself ever since, that it belonged to the historical literature of the great country, which by adoption has become mine.

The re-perusal of “Astoria” by WASHINGTON IRVING (1836) inspired me with an additional motive for giving my book in an English dress. Without disparagement to Mr. IRVING's literary fame, I may venture to say that I found in his work inaccuracies, misstatements (unintentional of course), and a want of chronological order, which struck forcibly one so familiar with the events themselves. I thought I could show — or rather that my simple narration, of itself, plainly discovered — that some of the young men embarked in that expedition (which founded our Pacific empire), did not merit the ridicule and contempt which Captain THORN attempted to throw upon them, and which perhaps, through the genius of Mr. IRVING, might otherwise remain as a lasting stigma on their characters.

But the consideration which, before all others, prompts me to offer this narrative to the American reading public, is my desire to place before them, therein, a simple and connected account (which at this time ought to be interesting), of the early settlement of the Oregon Territory by one of our adopted citizens, the enterprising merchant JOHN JACOB ASTOR. The importance of a vast ter-

NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO NORTHWEST COAST OF AMERICA  
BY GABRIEL FRANCHERE

---

ritory, which at no distant day may add two more bright stars to our national banner, is a guarantee that my humble effort will be appreciated.

Note by the Editor

It has been the editor's wish to let Mr. Franchere speak for himself. To preserve in the translation the Defoe-like simplicity of the original narrative of the young French Canadian, has been his chief care. Having read many narratives of travel and adventure in our northwestern wilderness, he may be permitted to say that he has met with none that gives a more vivid and picturesque description of it, or in which the personal adventures of the narrator, and the varying fortunes of a great enterprise, mingle more happily, and one may say, more dramatically, with the itinerary. The clerkly minuteness of the details is not without its charm either, and their fidelity speaks for itself. Take it altogether, it must be regarded as a fragment of our colonial history saved from oblivion; it fills up a vacuity which Mr. IRVING's classic work does not quite supply; it is, in fact, the only account by an eye-witness and a participator in the enterprise, of the first attempt to form a settlement on the Pacific under the stars and stripes.

The editor has thought it would be interesting to add Mr. Franchere's Preface to the original French edition, which will be found on the next page.

BALTIMORE,

February 6, 1854.

PREFACE TO THE FRENCH EDITION

WHEN I was writing my journal on the vessel which carried me to the northwest coast of North America, or in the wild regions of this continent, I was far from thinking that it would be placed one day before the public eye. I had no other end in writing, but to procure to my family and my friends a more exact and more connected detail of what I had seen or learned in the course of my travels, than it would have been possible for me to give them in a viva voce narration. Since my return to my native city, my manuscript has passed into various hands and has been read by different persons: several of my friends immediately advised me to print it; but it is only quite lately that I have allowed myself to be persuaded, that without being a learned naturalist, a skilful geographer, or a profound moralist, a traveller may yet interest by the faithful and succinct account of the situations in which he has found himself, the adventures which have happened to him, and the incidents of which he has been a witness; that if a simple ingenuous narrative, stripped of the merit of science and the graces of diction, must needs be less enjoyed by the man of letters or by the savant, it would have, in compensation, the advantage of being at the level of a greater number of readers; in fine, that the desire of affording an entertainment to his countrymen, according to his capacity, and without any mixture of the author's vanity or of pecuniary interest, would be a well-founded title to their indulgence. Whether I have done well or ill in yielding to these suggestions, which I am bound to regard as those of friendship, or of good-will, it belongs to the impartial and disinterested reader to decide.

MONTREAL,

1819.

Voyage of Mr. Hunt and his companions from St Louis to the mouth of the Columbia by a new route across the Rocky Mountains

By July 18, 1811, Misters McKenzie, Crooks, Miller, McClellan, Reed, and Hunt, in company with fifty-six men, a woman, and two children had traveled up the Missouri River from St. Louis to the village of the Aricaras. We left there with eighty-two horses packing commodities, munitions, food, and animal traps. Everyone walked except the company partners and the woman, a squaw. We took a southwesterly route and came to the banks of the Ramparre, a little river that flows into the Missouri below the Aricaras' village.

Without doubt the name Ramparre comes from the French hunters, for it means "provided with many forts." On the same day we camped near a small stream a short distance from its confluence with the Grand River. This we forded on July 21, and on the 24th we pitched camp on the banks of one of its tributaries. We had covered sixty-seven miles, keeping our course a little more to the west in the prairies, where the grass was knee-high and where the horses could graze contentedly. The countryside was bare except for a few cottonwood trees growing along the rivers.

Several members of the company were ill, and we rested here until August 5. During this interval I visited the camp of some Cheyenne Indians. I bought thirty-six horses there at a price better than that which I paid the Aricaras. Their camp was in the middle of a prairie near a small stream. These Indians burn buffalo chips to keep themselves warm. Their teepees are made of buffalo skins carefully sewn together and supported by poles joined at the top. They often hold as many as fifty people. The Cheyennes are honest and clean. They hunt buffalo, and they raise horses that each year they trade to the Aricaras for corn, kidney beans, pumpkins, and some merchandise. They had a dozen beaver skins, but they did not seem to know how to trap these animals.

We rearranged our packs so that no horse would be loaded too heavily and resumed our journey on August 6. We now had enough horses so that two men could ride alternately. I assigned six to hunters and sent them to look for buffalo. We crossed several hillocks, or isolated knolls, that were composed of red earth as hard as brick. Other signs indicated that this area had been burned over, for at the base of several knolls we saw cinders and pumice stones. This rugged terrain had very little grass.

It appeared that at one time some straggling trees had grown on these plains. We found the rotted remains of a few of them. Stumps still stood and we could see from the remnants that they were pine and oak. On the 6th we camped along a tributary of the Grand River and on the 7th near a pond in the prairie. Buffalo chips served for our fuel. We killed several buffalo; in fact, they were everywhere around us, for they were breeding. They made a frightful noise that sounded like distant thunder. The males tore up the earth with their hooves and horns.

We covered forty-two miles on the 6th and 7th. But after that we slowed our pace so that our hunters, who were behind us, could rejoin the main party. The countryside became mountainous and water scarce. The slopes were covered with crags of white sandstone, ranging from southeast

to northwest. We saw some big horn [sheep] there, and we built fires on the summits to guide our hunters. At first we used buffalo chips, but after that we could use pine wood. (40 miles southwest)

On August 11 we crossed a range of mountains like those of preceding days. The trail was tiring because of its precipitousness and the great number of rocks. On the 12th we forded two tributaries of the Grand River that flowed from the southwest, one of them appearing to be the main branch. We saw many petrifications that several of our companions collected to use as whetstones. (27 miles)

Since we supposed that our hunters were still to our right, on the 13th we traveled more to the west, crossing a tributary of the Little Missouri that was three hundred feet wide, its current swift, muddy, and swirling with eddies. To the west the mountains appeared to bar our passage. Three of our hunters returned at sunset. (12 miles)

On the 14th, we made camp beside a tributary of the Little Missouri. The evening was very cold. To the north we found pine-covered mountains that we crossed on the 15th. The terrain was extremely rugged. It became even worse on the 17th, and we could find no passage through these mountains. We killed a big horn whose meat is good, not unlike mutton. Usually we found these animals on mountains where no other animals could go. Several ran and leaped on the very edges of precipices. We also saw some black-tailed deer, larger than the red deer and with very big ears. Their flesh is not so tasty as that of the red deer. The tips of their tails are black, and they are to be found only in mountainous country. (45 miles southwest)

On the 18th we found it necessary to leave the mountains and turn back toward the broken countryside. There we met our hunters who had killed eight buffalo. When we had pitched camp to the left of the pine-covered mountains, Mr. McKenzie and I scaled the nearby slopes. Our view extended in all directions. In the west we saw far off some mountains that appeared white in several spots, and we assumed that this was the snow-covered Big Horn [Range]. Below the peaks herds of buffalo ran over the plains. (10 miles)

On the 19th, we camped in the midst of some hills near a pond of clear water. All around grew reeds, gooseberries, and prickly gooseberries with yellow and red fruit. Clusters of cherry trees showed signs of the habitual paths of the black bear, so that the slightest wind that stirred the bushes gave us some feelings of trepidation. However, we had to this point seen only three of the animals. (21 miles southwest)

We stopped on the 20th beside a branch of the Little Missouri, thought to be the largest tributary. The weather was cold and disagreeable. It froze during the night and the ice was as thick as a dollar. The countryside was high and irregular. This is the spot that separates the waters that flow east into the Missouri and west into the Yellowstone. (34 miles west)

On the 22nd we ran into what we thought to be the usual route of the Absaroka [usually called

---

the Crow] Indians coming from the Mandan villages. The little river beside which we camped and which flowed north was doubtless a tributary of the Powder River. On the 23rd we found another branch; but before we got there we passed through some mountains and some dry gullies. The great heat, the treacherous trail, and the lack of water caused much suffering. Several people were at the point of losing their courage. Mr. McKenzie's dog died from exhaustion. While trudging through these barren, arid mountains we could no longer kill buffalo, for they usually keep near water. However, on the 25th we found a few in this area. The hunters stalked them and killed five. The day before, some of the company had eaten a wolf, which they found quite good. We made camp near a third tributary of the Powder River. (58 miles southwest)

We left the river on the 30th, and camped near Mt. Big Horn [probably Cloud Peak] that had been ahead of us for so long. The day before, our hunters had seen signs of Indians. For several days we had been on the lookout for them, but they discovered us first. On the evening of the 30th, two Crow Indians came to our camp and the next morning many more appeared. They were all on horseback. Not even the children were on foot. These Indians are such excellent horsemen that they ride up and down the mountains and craggy heights as if they were galloping in a riding school. We followed their to their settlement that was beside a clear brook on the slope of a mountain.

The chief came to meet us. He received us amicably, led us to his tent, and pointed to a spot convenient for our camp. I gave him presents of tobacco, knives, and some trifles to distribute among his people. To him personally I gave a piece of scarlet cloth, some powder, bullets, and other items.

We spent the first day of September buying some robes and pelts and trading our tired, maimed horses for fresh ones. A few of our company bought some, thereby augmenting the number of our horses to about 121, most of which were well-trained and able to cross the mountains.

On the 2nd we resumed our journey along the foot of the mountains and stopped near a small river that is said to be a tributary of the Powder River. We tried for half a day on the 3rd to get away from the precipices and the bare mountain heights; but we were forced to retrace our steps and return to the banks of a small stream. We killed several very large elk. (21 miles)

We had in our company a hunter by the name of Rose, a very unpleasant, insolent man. We had been warned that he planned to desert us when we came across the Crow Indians, to persuade as many of our men as he could to abandon us, and to steal our horses. For that reason we kept close watch at night. Moreover, we were afraid that if, despite our vigilance, he succeeded in carrying out his traitorous design, he would greatly damage our expedition. Thus, with the thought in mind that his plan might be more extensive than we suspected, we resolved to frustrate it. On September 2 we had received a visit from some Crow Indians of a tribe different from the one which we had just left and which was camped on the mountainside. At that point I suggested to Rose that he remain with [the] Crow Indians; and I offered him half a year's wages, a horse, three beaver traps, and some other commodities. He accepted my conditions; and he immediately

abandoned his fellow conspirators who, without a leader, remained with our expedition.

So Rose joined the first Crow Indians whom we encountered. Their chief realized that we had followed a wrong course and on the 4th sent Rose to tell us and to put us on the right trail that crossed the mountains and that was both shorter and better. We soon met Crows who were taking the same route as we, a meeting that gave me an opportunity to admire the horsemanship of these Indians. It was truly unbelievable. There, among others, was a child tied to a two-year-old colt. He held the reins in one hand and frequently used his whip. I asked about his age and was told that he had seen two winters. He did not yet talk!

We camped at the source of the small river that we had reached the day before, resting there on the 5th. We wished to await the return of our hunters who appeared that evening. They had killed two buffalo and a gray bear. We were in the middle of the Big Horn mountains, so called because of the river by that name. The river runs along the mountain base, flowing northeast to southwest. The Big Horns are an advanced part of the Rockies. They are covered with pines, with many shrubs, and with plants that were actually in bloom. (16 miles)

On the 6th we met eight Indians and three families, some of them Flatheads and some Snakes. As we continued on our way westward across the mountains and crags, we saw some beautiful country: an abundance of springs, verdant grasslands, forests of pine, and innumerable plants in bloom. Nevertheless, it froze continually. We camped near a brook that flowed north and emptied into the Big Horn River. The ground was covered with gooseberries of two species, the best that I have ever eaten. One of our men brought me some strawberries that he had just picked. We had killed an elk and several black-tailed deer. Buffalo were quite numerous, too, so that the mountainside looked like one continuous barnyard. Farther on, however, we found only an occasional animal. We could see clearly a third, snow-covered mountain; we had avoided the first and now turned southward. (20 miles)

By the 7th we went down onto the plains, where we traveled until the 9th. We thus reached the banks of the Big Horn, here called the Wind River because the wind blows so continually that the snow never remains on the ground. We camped twice along this stream. On the morning of the 8th we paid the Indians the price of a horse that they offered us and set out for the village of the Arapaho Indians, a tribe of the Panis who live along the Platte River. One of our men left a gun at the camp, but the Indians had run off with it before he could return. That evening we were on the banks of a small river into which flows a brook that has a great quantity of beaver. At the spot where we camped, the Big Horn flows swiftly, is quite clear, and is about three hundred feet wide. We could see below us the canyon through which it escaped the mountain meadows. It is a very narrow gorge flanked on both sides by precipices. (45 miles west)

On the 10th we went along the banks of the Wind River, going upstream through a beautiful plain. Some trees grow along its banks but there are no beaver. Its torrents have covered the banks with gravel. We saw two bears that we could not get near, but we caught some fish that were much like herring. On the 11th we forded a rather large tributary of the Wind River that flows out of

the mountains rising from the south. On the plain we often used sagebrush for our fires. It grows here to a great height. I rode through a thicket of it that was as tall as I on horseback and extremely full. Two species of gooseberries are quite common. We saw many flights of robins and other small birds. By the 12th we found mountains to the north and to the south of us. They seemed to join in the west. We crossed the Wind River and found the trail hilly. (38 miles)

From the 13th to the 15th, we crossed and recrossed the Wind River as well as two of its tributaries, the larger of which flowed from the northwest. The land produces a great amount of wild flax which is much like ours in height, in the texture of its stem, and in its husk, though the husk is smaller and lighter in color. The mountains closed in and the countryside became very rugged, the footing tortuous among the high peaks. On the 15th we left the river and, trekking southwest, followed an Indian trail into the mountains. One of our hunters who had been on the banks the Columbia pointed out three immense and snow-covered peaks which, he said, bordered a tributary of the river [the Snake]. (50 miles southwest)

On the 16th we frequently encountered snow. There were large beds of it on the summit and slopes of the mountains visible to the north. We halted beside the Spanish River [Green River], a large stream on whose banks, according to some Indians, the Spanish live. It flows west and, it may be supposed, empties into the Gulf of California. We were surrounded by mountains in which we found beautiful green meadows where many herds of buffalo graze - a fact the more interesting to us because we had not seen a single one of these animals for several days. I found three different species of gooseberries: the common type with red berries, low bushes, and very spiny stems; a second with excellent yellow berries and non-spiny stems; and a third with dark red berries that taste much like our winter grapes. It is nearly as large and has very spiny stems. I also saw three kinds of currants; one has red berries, large and savory, with bushes eight or nine feet high; another with yellow berries about the size of ordinary currants, and with bushes about four or five feet high; and a third with bright red berries that are almost as sweet as strawberries but are rather insipid. Their bushes are small. (20 miles)

On the 17th we continued to follow the river to the opposite end of the mountains. Beaver and otter seemed to be everywhere. In fact, for some distance down the mountainside the area appears to be very favorable for trapping beaver. Ducks and geese are also plentiful. (15 miles southwest)

On the 18th we left the river and, as we trekked to the northwest, we went up a small stream that flows from the mountains. We stopped there to dry enough buffalo meat to last until we reached the banks of the Columbia and other rivers where we hoped to catch fish. While hunting, some of our men met Indians who seemed to be extremely frightened at the appearance of our men and who immediately took flight. I went after them with Mr. McKenzie, Mr. McClellan, and two others. We had gone about eight miles before we found them some distance away, pursuing a buffalo. When they saw us they again ran away and again we followed them. Finally we overtook two young men whose horses were not so fast as those of their comrades. At first they seemed to be greatly disturbed, but we soon put them at ease. They led us to their camp. They belonged, we found, to a tribe of Snake Indians that had come to this district to dry meat. They had a great

amount of it, all very fat. They live in skin tents and own many horses. Several among them had never before seen white men and they were very happy about our visit. They fed us and in all made us thoroughly welcome. They had no pelts other than buffalo and a dozen beaver, which we bought; and we urged them to kill more of the beaver. We told them that we would return to their camp to trade with them and they seemed pleased. We bought from them nearly two thousand pounds of dried buffalo meat which, with the more than four thousand that our men had prepared, loaded all our horses but six. (8 miles)

Afterward, when we had climbed a small mountain, we came to a good trail leading to a tributary of the Columbia where it flows into the fourth range. Several tributaries of the Columbia flow from this same range. We had snow on both sides and ahead of us on all the peaks. (15 miles west)

The little brook that we followed is fed by several others and becomes a small river. On the 25th and 26th we had to ford it often, but its current is so swift that no one could cross it without help. Our trail was quite tortuous, winding through small mountains and along the edge of precipices that surrounded us. One of our pack horses fell into the river from a height of nearly two hundred feet but was not hurt. (20 miles)

We left these mountains on the 27th and camped at the confluence of a small river and another stream that we had seen recently. Americans call it the Mad River because of its swiftness. On its banks and somewhat above this confluence rise the three peaks that we had seen on the 15th. We ought, before, to have continued to follow the Wind River and crossed one of these mountains because we would have reached its source. But our lack of provisions had forced us to head for the banks of the Spanish River. (12 miles west)

Since it was at this point from which we hoped to continue our journey by water, we began on the 28th to look for trees suitable for building canoes. With another man I climbed about twelve miles on the other side of the river and saw many signs of beaver; I also saw gray bear tracks and a herd of elk. That evening when I returned to camp I learned that no one had been any more successful than I in finding suitable wood. The trees, a variety of poplar, were too frail; their leaves are like those of the willow. There were also some spruce, but they were so full of knots that we had no hope that our axes could get through them. The other trees that we had seen were cherries, small pines, sorbs [service trees], and some cedars.

Thus, on the 29th we moved our camp farther downriver because the trees there better suited our purpose, even though, as it seemed to me, we would have to make a canoe out of two pieces. On the 30th we set to work and we felled many trees that were not useful. However, since I feared that the river would not be navigable below the point where it flowed into the mountains, Mr. Reed and two other men went ahead to explore it for the distance of four days of travel downstream.

On October 1, it rained in the valley and snowed in the mountains. Several of our men left to catch beaver. At evening two Snake Indians who had followed us since we left the Crows came

to our camp. They made us fear that we should not be able to travel on the river. On the 2nd Mr. Reed returned. At the end of two days he had been obliged to leave his horses which were of no help to him in climbing the mountains and crags. After an hour's effort to get through on foot along the river banks he had been forced to abandon his attempt. To try to get across the peaks would have been an endless labor. The river became very narrow, its twisting course obstructed by many rapids. It became necessary then to look farther downstream for wood for our canoes and the hope of navigating. So far as Mr. Reed could see, the river continued to flow through the heart of the mountains. Among other things he had found signs of beaver and had seen two bears, one black and one gray.

Rain and sleet fell all day on the 3rd. Everything was readied to cross the mountain that we believed was our last. The storm ended on the 4th, but all the slopes around us were covered with snow. We forded the Mad River with the water up to the bellies of our horses, and camped at the foot of the mountain. On the 5th we climbed it, following an easy and much-traveled trail. Snow whitened the summit and the northern slopes of the heights. The Snakes served as our guides, though two of our hunters had the year before come through this area. (18 miles)

On the 6th we camped near a little brook that washes the northwest borders of a beautiful plain. The next day we stopped by a river that flows to the northwest, crossing it on the 7th. It joins several other streams and becomes quite large. After merging with another stream of equal size, it runs west. We saw many herds of antelopes. Wild cherries are common, about the size of ordinary red cherries, but they were not yet ripe. About twelve miles northwest of our camp there is a hot spring. I went to it with Mr. McKenzie and, though it was not boiling, steam constantly spouted from it.

The 8th was cold all day. The wind from the west blew with a fury, and a little snow fell. We reached the fort of Mr. Andrew Henry. It has several small buildings that lie constructed in order to spend the past winter there. All stand along a tributary of the Columbia about 300 to 450 feet wide. We hoped to navigate it and we found some trees suitable for canoes. By the 9th we had already begun to build eight of them, all from cottonwood. The cottonwood, the aspen, and some small willows are the only trees that thrive in this area.

Mr. Miller left us on the 10th, with four hunters and four horses, to trap beaver. They took the two Snakes with them and traveled down along the mountainside, hoping to find a tribe of Indians from whom they could get information useful to their hunting. Every evening we caught some beaver and some small salmon trout. On the 14th a Snake Indian came to our camp half dead from hunger and clothed in rags.

On the 17th we were all ready to embark. We had cached our saddles in a spot that we showed the two young Snakes. They promised to take care not only of the saddles but also of our seventy-seven horses until one of us returned. The poor devil whom we had seen on the 14th came back with his son, who was even more ragged than he. We fed them. Then they gathered up the paws and entrails of the beavers we had killed and said goodbye to us. The people of this area must suffer

terribly from a lack of game. Buffalo come here in some seasons; their tracks are numerous. There are also some elk and some extremely wild antelope. During our stay in this district the wind blew constantly from the west, often quite violently. I observed that it is the prevailing wind in these mountains where it causes considerable damage, uprooting large trees over a vast area and blowing their branches for great distances.

With the cargoes loaded into our canoes, we left this place on the 19th. The force of the current hurried us along at a rapid pace, and we were not long in passing the little river that I mentioned on the 7th. Beyond its confluence with the Mad River it becomes large enough to make navigation possible for canoes of all sizes. Its water is a light green. Since it had no name, I gave it one: the Canoe River [Teton River]. Its banks are lined with small cottonwoods. Several markings made me think that within the last few days some gray bears had been here in the thickets. Beaver, ducks, and geese are very common. It was cold and it snowed all day. (30 miles south)

As we went on downstream the river became more beautiful and much larger; a space of from 1,200 to 1,800 feet separated its two banks. We made 40 miles on the 20th, but throughout the last twenty the river bed was broken by rapids, and we found two other rapids farther downstream. In going through these, two of our canoes were swamped and we had to stop at once. I sent my canoe and one other to the rescue. We saved the men, but we lost a good deal of merchandise and many supplies, as well as one of the canoes. We continued to find the mountains on our left, ranging parallel to the river. It was cold. We could still see Pilot Knob [Grand Teton] that we had seen on September 15. (40 miles southeast)

When on the 21st we had passed two rapids, we came to a portage of a mile and a quarter. We carried the supplies by land and towed the canoes. For nearly a half mile the river narrows between two sheer mountain walls to not more than sixty feet, in a few places to even less. (6 miles)

We passed over the rapids with the canoes tied to a rope, but we did not delay re-embarking on the 21st. Thereafter we came to a series of rapids, two of which forced us to portage. One of the small canoes swamped and capsized and we lost more supplies. (6 miles)

On the 23rd we lightened the loads in our canoes in order to pass through some very rough waters. After that we found several rapids which were not dangerous but in which the current was very swift. Beaver, geese, and ducks are common here. We found no other trees but the cottonwoods and willows, and on the plains some wild pears. The prairies were marked by buffalo tracks, but these were quite old. From time to time we saw flights of magpies and robins. The mountains fan out in different directions here. (75 miles south)

Toward the end of the day the river current slowed. From either side, the [larger] Canoe River is joined by a small stream. A tribe of Snakes and one Shoshone fled when we appeared. In their camp we found some tiny fish that were not more than an inch long; we found, in addition, some roots and seeds that they were drying for winter, some pots of woven grass and twigs for water, and a well-made fish net of flax or nettle. We left some small commodities and two knives in the

camp. Somewhat farther downstream we met three of these Indians on a slight raft of reeds and we stopped them. Except for a fragment of a rabbitskin robe thrown over their shoulders, they were completely naked. Their bows and arrows are artistically wrought. The bow is of pine or cedar, or of bone reinforced by animal sinews. The arrow is of reed or well-worked wood, tipped with a green stone. We made camp near a waterfall about thirty feet high. (70 miles)

On the 25th we crossed to the south bank and traveled on land so that we could avoid the waterfall and some small rapids below it. Six miles downstream a rock obstructs the river channel from one bank to the other; but because the south bank is less high, we could lower the canoes by rope. Several of them swamped while we were passing through a series of rapids and again we lost some of our merchandise. The river is winding, the countryside rugged and rocky. The mountains reach down to the very edge of the water on the south bank. (12 miles)

On the 26th the rapids were again numerous but not precarious. In some places the water was calm. We left the mountains and took a northwesterly route. When we landed to visit a camp of Indians, the poor creatures fled at our approach. By making signs of friendship, I persuaded one of them to return. He was on horseback and seemed better equipped than those whom I had seen earlier. He had some trout and some dried meat that he traded for a few knives, but his fear of us was so great that I could not get him to show me, by sign language, the route that I should take. His only concern was that I not take away his fish and meat and that I commend him to the care of the Great Spirit. (70 miles)

The skies were cloudy and it rained on the afternoon of the 27th. We had come to only two rapids in the morning. The river is nearly a half mile wide here, and beaver are plentiful. (40 miles southwest)

Our journey was less fortunate on the 28th; for after passing through several rapids, we came to the entrance of a narrow gorge. Mr. Crook's canoe capsized, one of his companions drowned, and we lost a great deal of merchandise. (18 miles)

On the 29th I went with three men to see if we could take our canoes through the north side of the gorge. For thirty-five miles I went along the banks of the river, which continues to carve a passage northwest through the mountains. Its bed is no more than sixty to ninety feet wide, it is full of rapids, and its course is broken by falls ten to forty feet high. Except at two spots where I went down to get water, the banks are precipitous everywhere. We had only some fruit from a rose tree for supper; then we slept beside our fire. On the 29th we returned to camp, tired out and famished. Those whom I had sent south had found a place where they believed that we could get through with our canoes by making a portage of about six miles.

Our situation became critical. We had enough food for about five days. On the 31st Mr. Reed and three others went downstream to try to get some horses and provisions from the Indians and to learn if, below the spot that I had reached, it was possible to navigate the river. Sixteen men, with four of our best canoes, went to attempt the passage. Then, because our lack of food prevented

any delay of our journeys we put to one side those things that were most needful to us and began to dig holes in which to cache the remainder. Rain fell so heavily that we could not finish our digging.

On November 1 we changed our plans. In trying to descend the rapids with a rope, our sixteen men lost one of the canoes and its load of merchandise; the other canoes were caught among the rocks. We saw no way to continue our journey by water and prepared to go in different directions in search of Indians. The rain still hindered our work and we could not finish it until the 2nd, when we put our baggage and merchandise into six caches. Mr. McKenzie, along with four men, set out northward toward the plains, hoping to find the Columbia. Mr. McClellan and three other men went downstream on the Canoe River. Mr. Crooks and three men went upstream toward the river source. I remained with thirty-one men, a woman, and two children. We set a net in the river but caught only one fish. I ordered our four canoes loaded and we paddled upstream. While going around a point, in the midst of some rapids we lost a canoe but we saved the cargo. Our hunters who had caught up with us on the 4th had killed eight beaver. That was scanty relief. Mr. Crooks returned. He had found the distance by land greater than he expected and concluded that he could not reach Fort Henry and get back this winter. Thus he abandoned the scheme. I stopped at my camp of October 27.

I spent the 5th making all necessary arrangements for procuring food for several days, until we had news from Mr. Reed. We caught four beaver, drying the tails and the innards. I had the dried meat inspected and aired. On the 6th, despite our efforts, we found only one fish in the net. Two of Mr. Reed's men returned. After they had explored for two days they realized that the river did not improve farther downstream. Consequently we agreed with Mr. Crooks that the best course was to divide our company into two parties, each to proceed on its own. For that reason I cached still other things, and all the essentials I put into packs of about twenty pounds each.

On the 7th I returned to our camp of October 28. We had wasted nine days in futile explorations. We had caught eight beaver; but we had eaten the dried meat, for its quality is superior to beaver meat.

I cached still more goods on the 8th, distributing to each member of our party all that remained of our food. Every person had five and a quarter pounds of meat. We had, besides, forty pounds of corn, twenty of fat, and nearly five pounds of bouillon tablets. That had to keep more than twenty people alive.

On the 9th I set out on the north bank of the river with nineteen men, a woman, and two children. Mr. Crooks, with nineteen others, traveled on the south bank. It rained in the afternoon. We camped under some rocks on the river's edge and had great difficulty getting water.

All day on the 10th we went on, unable to [reach any water to] drink, except the little we found in the hollows of rocks. Finally we came to a spot where we could reach the river. Everywhere else its banks are sheer walls two to three hundred feet high. Its bed is broken by rapids; but in the space

between these rapids the water is quiet. Today we could have navigated it for thirty miles. Some willows grow along its banks. (32 miles northwest)

On the 11th we found at the water's edge a trail worn by horses. I chose to follow it rather than again to clamber over rocks. Before long we met two Shoshone Indians who showed me a knife that they had got from some of our companions. One of them led us along a path that took us away from the river; we crossed a prairie and came to the village of his people. The women fled in such haste that they did not have time to take their children who could not walk, but simply covered them with straw.

The poor little creatures were terrified when I lifted the straw to look at them. Even the men trembled, as though I were some ferocious animal. Nevertheless, they gave us a small amount of dried fish that we found most edible, and they sold us a dog. One of these Indians accompanied us and we soon found the river again. It was lined by their tents. We camped nearby and before long about fifty men came to see us. They were very honest and very obliging. As on the day before, the river course was broken by rapids. (26 miles northwest)

On the 12th I visited some tepees where I found a great quantity of salmon. These structures are of straw and are, in form, like stacks of wheat. They are warm and snug. In front of the doorways we saw large piles of sagebrush used for fires. I bought two dogs and we ate one for breakfast.

These Indians have good buffalo-skin robes which they told me they had got in trade for their salmon. After we left them, we went on for some time along the river and forded a little brook. We saw mountains to the north. (16 miles northwest)

On the 13th we camped at a spot where a small stream flows out of the mountains. (25 miles north, northwest)

On the 14th we came across an Indian camp with three tepees. All around these structures we saw an immense number of salmon heads and skins with pieces of meat still attached, but the best part of the meat had been cached. None of these Indians ran away when we appeared. The women were poorly clothed, the children even more shabbily, though each one had a robe of buffalo skin, or of rabbit, badger, fox, wolf, or possibly some skins of ducks sewn together. All these animals, with the exception of rabbits, are rarely found on these plains. We had not seen a buffalo for a long time. (22 miles northwest)

We bought two dogs and some salmon on the 15th. Before us was a snow-covered mountain that the river seemed to penetrate. The river banks were littered with dead salmon that sent up a frightful stench. The river course, so far as I could see, had no rapids. We met some horses whose owners took great care to keep them out of our way. The Indians told us that some of our people had passed through this area. (28 miles northwest)

Early on the 16th the river reappeared, but now it was narrow, filled with rapids, and bordered by

---

sheer rocks. As we approached the mountains, we had only some parched corn and the remnants of our meat to keep ourselves alive. Fortunately, on the 17th I traded an old kettle for a horse, though the Indians showed no interest in anything else that we were carrying. I also got two dogs. The countryside was bare of woods and even the sagebrush had disappeared. We camped beside the river. (35 miles northwest)

We put our baggage on the horse. We had only a quart of grain and a small piece of fat for each person. On the 18th we continued our trail to the northwest, along the river banks. (30 miles)

On the 19th, following the advice of some Indians whom we met, we changed our course and crossed a prairie where we found no water at all. Everything seemed to suggest that we would be luckier on the next day. But what discouragement for people whose only food was dried fish! By good fortune we bought a horse. (25 miles northeast)

On the 20th the rain that had begun to fall the night before gave us a little water. This relief came in good time, for several Canadians had begun to drink their urine. (33 miles north)

The rain continued all night. On the 21st at daybreak we saw ahead of us a river that flowed to the west, its banks lined with cottonwood and willow trees. Some Indians who had pitched camp there had many horses and were far better clothed than those whom we had seen recently. They told us that farther upstream beaver were plentiful, though in the vicinity of our camp there were very few. When we arrived at the Indian village I lost my horse; an Indian told me that we had stolen it from him. However, as it was necessary to get food for our company, I bought some fish and two dogs [saying nothing further about the horse]. (12 miles)

It rained constantly and we could not make much headway on the trail. On the 22nd we met some Indians. As I gathered from the few words that I could understand, the distance from this spot to the Columbia was very considerable; but the Indians told me nothing about the route that I should take. We got some fish, seven dogs, and two horses. We continued our way westward along the river (35 miles) and on the 24th forded it a little above our Canoe River which flowed northward. The mountains ahead were all covered with snow. (18 miles northwest) On the 25th, despite the rigors of the season, our exhaustion, and our weakness we forded another river, waist high, that flowed from the east. (27 miles)

The foothills began to appear on the 26th, spreading along the snowy mountains. We crossed another little stream that flows from the east, like the others. It brought us, on the 27th, to a pass so narrow that it scarcely left enough space for us to get through. We were often forced to take the baggage from the backs of our horses and wade through the water. On the previous evening we had caught a beaver that furnished us with a meager breakfast and we made a supper of some bouillon tablets. I ordered a horse killed and my people thought the meat very good. I could eat it only with regret because I had become attached to the poor animal. (33 miles northwest)

On the 28th we arrived early at a Shoshone village. The Indians had just killed two colts for food.

---

Except for the seeds of a plant that looks like flax and that they pulverize, the horsemeat was their only food. I bought a sack of the former, as well as some pieces of horsemeat which was fat and tender. I dreaded to remain several days in these narrows and I camped near the Indians in the hope of trading some goods for a horse. But no matter what I offered, I could make no bargain. When the women saw that I was insistent, they raised cries of fright, as though I wanted to rob them. The men told me about some whites who had followed the same trail as the one we were taking and about some others who had passed on the opposite side of the river. This news relieved me greatly regarding Mr. Crooks and his companions, especially when I learned that he still had his dogs; for I could believe that he had not suffered too much from hunger. The Indians added that I would sleep three more nights in the mountains and that after six nights on the trail I would arrive at the Great Falls of the Columbia. Nevertheless, I had little confidence in this talk because it seemed to me that they were only impatient to see us leave. (10 miles north)

On the 29th the bad footing forced us to unload our horses and occasionally to leave the river banks. We climbed mountains so high that I could hardly believe our horses would get over them. On the 30th the mountains further narrowed the river channel. The heights were covered with pines and snow. We could advance only with the greatest difficulty because of the sharp rocks, and the precipices plunge to the very banks of the river that here flows northeast and then north northwest. We killed a black-tailed deer which gave us an excellent meal. (28 miles)

On December 1 it rained in the valley and snowed in the mountains. As I climbed them to look for a passageway, I found the snow knee deep. I saw many black cherries that were delicious probably because the frost had cut their tartness. Snow fell so heavily on the mountain slopes we had to cross that visibility was no more than a half mile. We were compelled to rest in camp on the 2nd. The evening before we had caught a beaver, but as we had nothing more to eat I killed another horse.

Rain and snow fell all day on the 3rd, and we traveled only nine miles. We unloaded our horses so that we could keep to our trail along the river, and we carried the baggage in our arms, trudging to the northeast. On the 4th, we had to leave the river course and again climb the mountains whose ranges extended all around us and were covered with snow. Pines and other evergreens grew on the slopes of a few of them. The snow came above our knees and it was extremely cold. We were nearly exhausted by the harshness of the weather when we had the good luck of reaching a patch of pine trees at sunset. We comforted ourselves by a good fire. Although we had struggled ahead all day we were, because of the twisting course of the river, only four miles from our camp of the day before.

The snowstorm that commenced on the 5th reduced visibility to about three hundred feet, but we succeeded in reaching the river by sliding down the mountainside. The roar of the water guided us. One horse fell several hundred feet with his load but was not hurt. The weather was much less severe in the valley than on the mountain slopes, for it rained there and the snow was only ankle deep. I slaughtered another horse. (6 miles)

We were just setting out on the 6th when to my astonishment and distress I saw Mr. Crooks and his people on the other side of the river. I returned to camp at once and built a canoe with the hide of the horse I had killed the night before. Then I launched some food in it, sending it across the river to our starving companions. Mr. Crooks and one of his men came across to us. Poor man! He was almost completely exhausted by fatigue and hunger. He told me that he had already traveled for three days downstream, that the mountains there were even higher and narrowed to not more than sixty to a hundred feet between sheer walls. It was impossible for men in their condition to get through. For six days they had had only the meat of their dogs for food. Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Reed had passed and Mr. Crooks had talked with them only a few days earlier. They told him that Mr. McClellan had left the river and crossed the mountains, hoping to find the Flathead Indians. In the place where we met, the river flowed almost exactly east. Mr. Crooks said that it continued to run in that direction.

I spent the night reflecting on our situation. I had to answer for the needs of more than twenty famished people and, moreover, to do all that I could for Mr. Crooks and his men. Despite all the discouraging reports that he had given me about the countryside below, I should have gone my way through the mountains if, as I had already learned, the depth of the snow had not made such a journey impracticable. To my great regret it was thus necessary to backtrack with the hope of finding some Indians on one of the three small rivers beyond these mountains. I counted on buying from them a large enough number of horses to feed us until we reached the Columbia, a move I flattered myself in thinking we could effect this winter. I nevertheless believed that Mr. Crooks and several of his men would not be able to follow us. What a prospect! We had to plan on having nothing to eat for several days; for on this side of the Indian village that we had left on November 29, we had found nothing but cherries, and perhaps there would be no more of them in the same places. The horsehide canoe had been lost. We made a raft so that Mr. Crooks and his companions could cross to the other side of the river with some meat, but the attempt was unsuccessful. On the 7th we were reduced to a very slow pace because Mr. Crooks was so weak that he could follow along only with great difficulty. Most of my men went on ahead. On the 8th we made another raft; but, after repeated attempts, Mr. Crooks and his men could not make the crossing because of the swift current. I had of course to wait for them, and my men complained. They said that we would all die from starvation and urged me by all means to go on. To add to my distress, Mr. Crooks was very ill during the night. I realized that this unfortunate situation could delay for two days my reaching the Indian village. I therefore left three men with Mr. Crooks and set out on the 9th with two others to rejoin my group. I had three beaver skins and I left two; my men and I made a supper of the third. The weather was extremely cold.

Early on the 10th I overtook my people. We had only one horse left and that belonged to Dorion, one of our Canadians. We suggested slaughtering it, but Dorion would not consent to the idea. We finally agreed that it would be better to let the animal live until we knew whether or not the Indian village was still in the same place. I approved this plan quite willingly because the poor horse was only skin and bones. We had not gone far on the trail before we found some tepees of the Shoshones who had come down from the mountains after our departure. I approached them cautiously so as to keep them from hiding their horses. They had twenty and sold us five, one of

which I had slaughtered at once, and I sent a man to Mr. Crooks with some of the meat. Several of my men had not eaten since the 7th, the day on which they had left me.

Then on the 11th a new misfortune struck us. One of Mr. Crook's men drowned while crossing the river in a canoe that capsized with a load of goods. I ordered another horse killed; and I left two animals with Mr. Crooks along with some of the meat of a third, hoping that with this help he could reach the Indians upstream. On the 13th we came to the village that we had seen during our descent from the mountain heights. The Indians traded a horse for an old pewter kettle and some glass beads, but they refused a gun.

On the 16th we at last left the mountains and camped on the banks of a river that we had forded on the 26th of the previous month. Thus for twenty days we had worn ourselves out futilely trying to find a passage along the lower part of this river. On the previous day rain and snow had fallen. Ice floated on the river and the weather was extremely cold. Luckily for us, in this district we found a dozen tepees of the Shoshones who had come since we had camped there. They told me that it would [not?] have been possible for us to find a passage by following the river. This news heightened my anxiety about Mr. McKenzie and his company. On the 17th I went up the little stream and camped near a Shoshone village. From these Indians I bought a horse and a dog, and on the 18th I got another horse, some dried fish, a few roots, and some pounded dried cherries. I spent most of the day getting information about our route and about the time it would take to reach the village of Sciatogas. These Indians gave us different advice; but they did agree in saying that the trail was good, that it would take us seventeen to twenty-one nights to reach our destination, and that in the mountains we would be in snow up to our waists. I offered a gun, some pistols, a horse, etc., to whoever would serve me as a guide. They all replied that we would freeze to death and pleaded with me to remain with them during the winter.

I tried again on the 19th to find a guide. I went to every tepee along the river banks, but without success. I could not get along without one, for that meant running the risk that we would all die. But to remain in this place would be still worse, after having come so far and at such great cost. I ended by telling the Indians that they spoke with forked tongues, that they were lying to me. I accused them of being women; in short, I challenged them with whatever expressions would goad them most. At last, one of them found courage enough to volunteer to be our guide as far as the village of the Sciatogas. According to the report of our Shoshones, these Indians live on the west side of the mountains and own many horses.

Thus, we once more resumed our journey. On the 21st two other Indians joined our guide who led us at once to our Canoe River. We did not find any reed canoes there for the crossing; so we killed two horses and made a canoe with the hide of one of them. In this we got across the river. On the other side I found thirteen of Mr. Crook's men who told me that since we had left they had not seen either Mr. Crooks or the two men who were with him. When we had all effected a crossing by the 23rd, my people took heart. All of Mr. Crook's men were extremely weak and exhausted, four of them even more than the others. They handed over to me a horse and some goods. When three of them expressed the wish to remain with the Snakes, I gave them a canoe and some

supplies. They crossed the river on the following day, and I hoped that they would not be long in finding Mr. Crooks and his party.

My group was now made up of thirty-two white men, a woman eight months pregnant, her two children, and three Indians. We had only five puny horses to feed us during our trip over the mountains. On the 24th I [at last] turned away from the Canoe River, remembrance of which will always cause us some moments of unhappiness. We traveled west, crossing hills by a trail that was sometimes level enough, more often irregular, but always good. A little snow fell and a little rain. On the 28th we crossed a brook that flowed northward. Mountains crowded us on each side; to the left was one that we had to climb. It extended from north to south, was heavily wooded, and was covered with snow. On the 29th we had a good trail through a level valley and we forded the river twice. ( 106 miles west)

On the 30th, after we had left the river at a spot where it thrusts into the mountains to the north, we came to another beautiful valley several miles wide and very long. A pretty stream meanders there and the beaver seem to be plentiful. Happily we found six Shoshone tepees and many horses. These Indians sold us four horses, as well as three dogs and some roots. They told me that we still had three nights to sleep before we came to the Sciatoga village and they showed me a pass in the mountains through which we had to travel. They added that not much snow was there, but they had so often given me erroneous reports that I did not take this news seriously. On every side of us snow blanketed the mountains. The pregnant woman gave birth to her child early the next morning. Her husband [Dorion] remained with her in the camp for a day, then rejoined us on the 31st. His wife rode horseback with her newly born child in her arms. Another child, two years old and wrapped in a blanket, was fastened by her side. One would have thought, from her behavior, that nothing had happened to her. (21 miles west)

My people asked me not to travel on the 1st of January without first celebrating the new year. I agreed to the idea willingly because most of them were very tired from having daily no more than a meager meal of horse meat and from carrying packs on their shoulders while crossing the mountains.

From the 2nd to the 7th of January we crossed the valley, following a small stream for several miles into the mountains and climbing many pine-covered hills. On the peaks we waded through snow half way up our legs, at times plunging into it to our waists. We lacked water. On the 4th we were at a point as high as the mountains that surrounded us, some wooded, but all covered with snow. The weather was overcast and cold. On the 6th we saw the sun for the first time since climbing into these mountains, and the snow decreased. To the west we could see what appeared to be a plain. On the 7th we came to a small stream that led us to an extremely narrow pass through mountains of immense height. Everywhere we found horse trails used by the Indians in hunting deer which must be plentiful here, for we saw many herds of black-tail. The snow disappeared entirely. The Dorion baby died. By nightfall several of our men had not arrived at camp. (68 miles west)

The little stream joins another much larger one, and near their confluence on the 8th we found a village of Sciatogas and Tushepahs made up of thirty-four tepees. They had at least two thousand horses. Their tepees are made of matting. They are clothed in good robes of buffalo or deerskin; they have deerskin shirts and leggings and in every respect their clothing is as good as any of the best-provided Indian peoples. In their homes they have kettles and copper pots, as well as other things that suggest some intercourse with the inhabitants along the seacoast. They have some axes, too, and a skillfully wrought stone hammer that they use to pound roots, cherries, and other fruits, as well as fish. Pointed pieces of elkhorn serve in lieu of wedges to split wood. Women have willow-twig hats very neatly made and decorated. Their water containers are also made of willow, and in these they cook their meat by putting red-hot stones from the fire into them. However, copper kettles are preferred, three or four of them usually hanging in their tepees. (15 miles west)

These Indians pleased me greatly when they told me that some white men had reached the Columbia, a two-day trek from this spot. It appears that grass grows here all winter long, for the mountain slopes are green.

All my men rejoined me except the Canadian CarriŠre. Someone had seen him on the previous afternoon sitting on horseback behind a Snake Indian. They were in front of a lodge that we had passed a few miles from our camp of the night before.

I cannot thank Providence enough for our having reached this point, for we were excessively tired and weak. We had only two horses left, both no more than skin and bones. That night we dined on some rather poor deer meat and some roots.

We remained six days in this place. I bought eight horses and two colts. We ate two of the horses and I gave two to our guides in payment for their services. Some of my men also bought horses. Several men were ill, some from overeating, others apparently from eating roots. Still others were lame. On our last day here, each one made moccasins for himself and prepared to continue the journey. I dispatched two men to look for CarriŠre but they did not find him. This unfortunate fellow had probably followed an Indian hunting trail and become lost. The Snakes had moved their lodges elsewhere, and my men could get no information about him. The Sciatogas also moved their tepees a day's journey downstream.

We got under way again on the 15th and reached the village of the Sciatogas on the banks of the Umatilla River. These Indians told us about a river upstream that they called the Walla Walla. According to Clark's map, I supposed it to be the little river that he places at a confluence with the Columbia, near some beds of shellfish. From what I learned, the Canoe River is Lewis's Kemounoum. (15 miles northwest)

These Indians had some venison, but they wanted to sell it at such a high price that I could not afford it. They hunt deer by chasing them on horseback and surrounding them. They use the bow and arrow with remarkable skill, and are superb horsemen.

It rained so heavily during our stay on the banks of the Umatilla that the water rose with amazing speed. We were compelled to break camp in a hurry. Three of our horses tied to stakes in the lowlands were drowned. The Indians also had to move to higher ground. I bought four horses from them. I wanted quite a number because the Indians told me that I could get a canoe in exchange for a horse. They added that in about six nights I would be at the Great Falls of the Columbia. On the 19th we continued downstream along the Umatilla. Beaver must be abundant here, for many places were filled by their dams. Several of my people traveled on horseback, as I did. On the opposite side of the river we saw the lodges of the Akaitehis Indians who live on the Columbia. One of them swam to our camp and gave us some very satisfying details about the white men who had preceded us going downriver. (15 miles northwest)

I bought still another horse from the Sciatoegas who again had moved their camp below us, and I said good-bye to them. They are the cleanest Indians that I know of and, like all the others, they are very proud. They eat neither dogs nor horses, and they will not allow anyone to bring the meat of these animals into their tents. I pleased them no end when I told them that I would return to their village with merchandise to trade for beaver. They already had some pelts and they told a very confusing tale about some white men who came to trade and who gave them tobacco and smoked with them. One of the white men, they said, had a house on the Columbia. My Canadians thought that the white man in question must be an agent of the Northwest Company. (12 miles west)

At last, on the 21st, we reached the banks of the Columbia, for such a long long time our cherished goal. We had come 1,751 miles and had lived through unbelievable hardship and privation. I expressed with difficulty our joy at the sight of this river. It was three quarters of a mile wide here; its banks were bare of trees, were filled with pebbles and in some places with steep rocks.

The area was inhabited by the Akaitchis Indians, a wretchedly poor tribe that have neither moccasins nor leggings. Their clothing consists of only a robe of buffalo, deer, rabbit, fox, or even duck skin. To this meager equipment, they sometimes add wolf-skin sleeves. Their huts are well constructed of matting with roofs like the roofs of houses. These structures are very light and warm. Holes scooped out of the ground and lined with mats are living quarters for the women, who are usually naked. Some have a fragment of robe to cover their shoulders, but all of them wear around their waists a leather belt that passes between their thighs and indicates that they aim to be modest.

These Indians are better stocked with food than the Snakes, for it seems that dried salmon is plentiful in their homes. They gave us many fresh salmon trout that they had caught at the mouth of the Umatilla River. This is excellent fish. Their canoes are made of pine trunks split in half, and consequently they are not raised at either bow or stern. Since they have no special tool, they use fire to hollow out their trees.

We crossed the river because the Akaitchis told us that the trail passed along the right, or north, bank. We left on the 23rd after purchasing some fresh fish and nine dogs. The route along the riv-

er was very good. We camped that night close to a village of Indians who had about 50 canoes. I bought nine dogs that were quite fat and made a delicious dinner. Their meat seemed most savory to us, both wholesome and strengthening; on the other hand, horsemeat, however well prepared, is not nourishing, no matter how much of it one eats. The weather was beautiful and very mild, much like the beautiful days of the month of October. (12 miles)

From the 24th to the 28th we followed the river which flows almost directly west. Its banks are generally bare. Frequently we came upon Indian lodges and the Indians sold us dogs, but they put such a high price on elk or deer meat that I could not afford it. Moreover, they caused us much trouble by stealing the ropes by which our horses were tethered. The animals ran away and we lost a great deal of time rounding them up. Sometimes the Indians stole the horses and hid them. The natives here ate acorns and told me that a short distance from the river we could find many white oaks. (57 miles west)

On the 28th the countryside again became quite mountainous. The Indians seemed to be less wretched. They told me of some white men who had built a large house at the mouth of the river, surrounding it with stakes, etc. They themselves had not gone to the river mouth, but they insisted that the white men were concerned and were waiting for a large number of their friends. They watched constantly from the banks of the Columbia, these Indians said, and when their friends arrived, those at the river's mouth would dry their tears and sing and dance.

On the 29th the mountains and rocks along the riverside became more numerous. The Indians whom we saw had many horses, and we began to set up a watch at night. (15 miles)

We camped on the 30th opposite the mouth of the Deschutes, called Tou-et-ka by the Indians. They came in great numbers to dance in honor of our arrival, but their multitude worried me. I pretended to be ill and asked that I be left alone. In a short time they complied with my wishes. (14 miles)

On the 31st we passed Celilo Falls that we had viewed in the distance the day before. I could not see the largest of them which was on the south bank. The river course is dammed by rocks over which the water rushes violently through several channels.

A village called Ouaioumpoum is situated on the north river bank at that spot where the Falls begin. The Indians give a special name to each village that has more than one lodge in it, and they love to talk about their villages to strangers.

At an early hour we reached the village of Wishram. It is at the entrance to a long gorge through which the river has carved a channel of from 200 to 240 feet wide and several miles long. This is the great fishing ground of the Columbia. It looks like one of the seaport villages on the east coast of the United States. On both sides of the river we saw large platforms made of carefully woven stakes. On these the Indians dry their fish. The ground around them is covered with bones and heads of fish. In the spring when the river waters are high, the salmon arrive in schools so large

that the Indians can catch them in purse nets attached to the ends of poles. To accomplish this they stand on the edges of those rocks that extend farthest in to the river.

The Indians in this area are the most intelligent that I have met so far. One of them who knew a few English words told me that Mr. David Stuart had gone to one of the northern tributaries of the Columbia to spend the winter; he had, in fact, seen Stuart's trading post. And he recounted for me the disaster that overtook Mr. McKay and the ship Tonquin.

Today we saw some little white oaks. The countryside became more rugged and the mountains higher. Not far below the Falls, on the south bank, we saw a snow-covered peak that I had first seen on the 20th of this month and that I guessed was Vancouver's Mt. Hood. (12 miles)

February 1. A great number of Indians gathered this evening near our camp. Since they found no opportunity to steal our horses or baggage, they planned a unique stratagem in order to get something. They told us that about forty Indians were coming from downriver to attack us and take our horses. We paid little attention to their narrative and later some chiefs of their village arrived, armed with knives, spears, etc., telling us the same story, and saying that they wanted to stay with us. I received them most coldly, though we smoked a pipe together. Then I assembled everybody in our camp and placed watches at several spots. This procedure produced the effect that I had hoped for. The Indians soon left and brought to me a man who they said, was chief of the village that had planned to attack us. They gave him credit for having dispersed the crowd. I smoked with them again, and a little before daylight they returned to their homes. These rascals thought that by frightening us I would give them two or three horses to assure the safety of the rest. As one of our horses had got loose on the evening before and was not to be found in the morning, I sold him for two packs of pounded and dried salmon I each weighing seventy pounds. We camped that night on the hills in the midst of bushes, pines, and oaks. (10 miles)

I could find only one canoe, that I could get in exchange for a horse. The Indians have large numbers of them, strongly made of pine and raised at both bow and stern, some of them capable of carrying three thousand pounds. Despite my injunctions that we keep close watch, the Indians stole an axe. Encouraged by their success, several of them followed us on the 2nd. They snatched two guns from us and, although our horses were in our camp, made off with one of them at eleven o'clock at night. On the 3rd I embarked in a canoe and sent my horses ahead.

I met my people at a village at the mouth of the Klickitat River that enters the Columbia from the north bank. I bought three canoes, each costing one a horse; but while I traded, the Indians stole a tomahawk and our last axe. They also made off with Dorion's horse that grazed near his tent. The Canadian had unwisely raised his tent some distance from our camp. (9 miles)

On the 4th the violence of the wind compelled me to remain, in spite of myself, in this den of thieves. I bought still another canoe for a horse; and on the next day when I reached another village, I traded our last three horses for two canoes. It seemed to me that the trail by land ended at this village. Hills became snow-covered mountains on which we saw pines. They bordered the

river on both sides. Cottonwoods, oaks, and ash trees grew on the waterside, oaks on the nearby hills.

The rain increased greatly and the wind held me for several days opposite an Indian village. A Clatsop Indian came to see us and spoke to me about the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia - as well as about the tragic loss of Mr. McKay. He was the third man to relate to me this grievous story. He knew a few English words and asked me for news about Mr. Lewis and Mr. Clark and some of their companions. However, he had learned of the death of Mr. Lewis. (26 miles)

The wind subsided on the 10th and we got under way early. When we arrived at the beginning of some large rapids (15 miles), I examined the portage on the north bank. The trail was only good for something over a mile. We therefore landed all our canoes at ten o'clock and within an hour we were below the rapids which are very large. In dashing against the rocks, the water produces some unusually high waves. No boat could ride through them, at least in the present condition of the river which narrows formidably between hills and rocks. From this point on downriver, oaks and ash become more common. We saw quantities of hazelnut trees, too. At these rapids we found a second salmon fishery, a village on the north bank, and three lodges on the opposite side. The Indians here have a penchant for blue glass beads. Numerous rivulets that plunge down from the mountains above add to the beauty of the countryside. (16 miles)

On the 11th rapids covering space of miles forced us again to land our canoes. Finally about eight miles from the great rapids we encountered the last of them. Below this the river spreads to its usual width, which is about three-quarters of a mile wide. The hills diminish in size and retreat from the river banks. The intervening space is covered with pine, oak, ash, cottonwood, maple, hazel, and willow trees. (12 miles)

On the 13th I passed the confluence of the Sandy River, which rushes from the south bank of the Columbia through two mouths, thereby forming a great sandbar. Twenty miles farther downstream the Columbia is joined by another river [the Willamette] that is nearly 1,800 feet wide. A large island [Sauvie Island] stands before its mouth and several small islands below it. The Columbia at this point is about a mile and a quarter wide. On both sides we found vast rush-covered areas, some small prairies, and often some ponds. Seals were numerous here. We could see more distinctly than before the mountain that I mentioned earlier and that I have no doubt is Vancouver's Mt. Hood. For two days the wind blew with great force. Rain, hail, and snow fell. (52 miles)

On the 14th the mountains once more drew close. We camped at the mouth of a small river on the north bank [the Cowlitz]. Indians spoke to us about the establishment of our compatriots, adding that we had one more night before arriving. (36 miles)

On the 15th we passed several large islands. The terrain on the north bank was covered with oak and ash trees but all were inundated. I stopped by some Indian huts where I found four of our Fort Astoria men who were trading sturgeon and fishing for some excellent little fish that are

about six inches long. The Indians call them othlecan [candlefish] and catch many of them in the spring. We made camp on two low islands near the south bank. (27 miles)

During our trip on the river we had frequently come to the lodges of Indians who sold us dogs, dried salmon, beaver pelts, wapattoo roots - which are the ouapasippin of Mississippi - finally some Othlecan.

On the 16th we departed early. It had rained during the night and the fog was so thick that we could see only the lowlands and some small islands. All were inundated. The fog dissipated in the afternoon at high tide. I realized that we were paddling through a large bay and soon afterward I saw Fort Astoria on the south bank. (30 miles)

I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. McKenzie and Mr. McClellan once again. They had arrived a month earlier after suffering unbelievable hardships. In my diary I had noted February 16. At the fort it was counted the 15th. It was a great delight for travelers overcome with weariness to rest comfortably, surrounded by friends, after such a long journey in the midst of savage people of whom it is always wise to be wary.

We had covered 2,073 miles since leaving the village of the Aricaras.

Mr. Seton's Adventures—Survivors of the Expedition in 1854 —Author's Protest against some Expressions in Mr. Irving's "Astoria"—Note by Huntington

#### INTRODUCTION

SINCE the independence of the United States of America, the merchants of that industrious and enterprising nation have carried on an extremely advantageous commerce on the northwest coast of this continent. In the course of their voyages they have made a great number of discoveries which they have not thought proper to make public; no doubt to avoid competition in a lucrative business.

In 1792, Captain Gray, commanding the ship *Columbia* of Boston, discovered in latitude 46° 19' north, the entrance of a great bay on the Pacific coast. He sailed into it, and having perceived that it was the outlet or estuary of a large river, by the fresh water which he found at a little distance from the entrance, he continued his course upwards some eighteen miles, and dropped anchor on the left bank, at the opening of a deep bay. There he made a map or rough sketch of what he had seen of this river (accompanied by a written description of the soundings, bearings, &c.); and having finished his traffic with the natives (the object of his voyage to these parts), he put out to sea, and soon after fell in with Captain Vancouver, who was cruising by order of the British government, to seek new discoveries. Mr. Gray acquainted him with the one he had just made, and even gave him a copy of the chart he had drawn up. Vancouver, who had just driven off a colony of Spaniards established on the coast, under the command of Señor Quadra (England and Spain being then at war), despatched his first-lieutenant Broughton, who ascended the river in boats some one hundred and twenty or one hundred and fifty miles, took possession of the country in the name of his Britannic majesty, giving the river the name of the *Columbia*, and to the bay where the American captain stopped, that of Gray's bay. Since that period the country had been seldom visited (till 1811), and chiefly by American ships.

Sir Alexander M'Kenzie, in his second overland voyage, tried to reach the western ocean by the *Columbia* river, and thought he had succeeded when he came out six degrees farther north, at the bottom of Puget's sound, by another river.

In 1805, the American government sent Captains Lewis and Clark, with about thirty men, including some Kentucky hunters, on an overland journey to the mouth of the *Columbia*. They ascended the *Missouri*, crossed the mountains at the source of that river, and following the course of the *Columbia*, reached the shores of the Pacific, where they were forced to winter. The report which they made of their expedition to the United States government created a lively sensation.

Mr. John Jacob Astor, a New York merchant, who conducted almost alone the trade in furs south of the great lakes *Huron* and *Superior*, and who had acquired by that commerce a prodigious fortune, thought to augment it by forming on the banks of the *Columbia* an establishment of which the principal or supply factory should be at the mouth of that river. He communicated his views to the agents of the Northwest Company; he was even desirous of forming the proposed establishment in concert with them; but after some negotiations, the inland or wintering partners of that association of fur-traders having rejected the plan, Mr. Astor determined to make the attempt alone. He needed for the success of his enterprise, men long versed in the Indian trade, and he soon found them. Mr. Alexander M'Kay (the same who had accompanied Sir Alexander M'Kenzie in his travels overland), a bold and enterprising man, left the Northwest Company to join him; and soon after, Messrs. Duncan M'Dougal and Donald M'Kenzie (also in the service of

---

the company), and Messrs. David Stuart and Robert Stuart, all of Canada, did the same. At length, in the winter of 1810, a Mr. Wilson Price Hunt of St. Louis, on the Mississippi, having also joined them, they determined that the expedition should be set on foot in the following spring.

It was in the course of that winter that one of my friends made me acquainted in confidence with the plan of these gentlemen, under the injunction of strictest secrecy. The desire of seeing strange countries, joined to that of acquiring a fortune, determined me to solicit employment of the new association; on the 20th of May I had an interview with Mr. A. M'Kay, with whom the preliminaries were arranged; and on the 24th of the same month I signed an agreement as an apprenticed clerk for the term of five years.

When the associates had engaged a sufficient number of Canadian boatmen, they equipped a bark canoe under charge of Messrs. Hunt and M'Kenzie, with a Mr. Perrault as clerk, and a crew of fourteen men. These gentlemen were to proceed to Mackinaw, and thence to St. Louis, hiring on the way as many men as they could to man the canoes, in which, from the last-mentioned port, they were to ascend the Missouri to its source, and there diverging from the route followed by Lewis and Clark, reach the mouth of the Columbia to form a junction with another party, who were to go round by way of Cape Horn. In the course of my narrative I shall have occasion to speak of the success of both these expeditions.

#### NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE NORTHWEST COAST OF AMERICA

##### CHAPTER I

Departure from Montreal — Arrival in New York — Description of that City — Names of the Persons engaged in the Expedition.

WE remained in Montreal the rest of the spring and a part of the summer. At last, having completed our arrangements for the journey, we received orders to proceed, and on the 26th of July, accompanied by my father and brothers and a few friends, I repaired to the place of embarkation, where was prepared a birch bark canoe, manned by nine Canadians, having Mr. A. M'Kay as commander, and a Mr. A. Fisher as passenger. The sentiments which I experienced at that moment would be as difficult for me to describe as they were painful to support; for the first time in my life I quitted the place of my birth, and was separated from beloved parents and intimate friends, having for my whole consolation the faint hope of seeing them again. We embarked at about five, P. M., and arrived at La Prairie de la Madeleine (on the opposite side of the St. Lawrence), toward eight o'clock. We slept at this village, and the next morning, very early, having secured the canoe on a wagon, we got in motion again, and reached St. John's on the river Richelieu, a little before noon. Here we relaunched our canoe (after having well calked the seams), crossed or rather traversed the length of Lake Champlain, and arrived at Whitehall on the 30th. There we were overtaken by Mr. Ovid de Montigny, and a Mr. P. D. Jeremie, who were to be of the expedition.

Having again placed our canoe on a wagon, we pursued our journey, and arrived on the 1st of August at Lansingburg, a little village situated on the bank of the river Hudson. Here we got our canoe once more afloat, passed by Troy, and by Albany, everywhere hospitably received, our Canadian boatmen, having their hats decorated with parti-colored ribands and feathers, being taken by the Americans for so many wild Indians, and arrived at New York on the 3d, at eleven o'clock in the evening.

We had landed at the north end of the city, and the next day, being Sunday, we re-embarked, and

were obliged to make a course round the city, in order to arrive at our lodgings on Long Island. We sang as we rowed; which, joined to the unusual sight of a birch bark canoe impelled by nine stout Canadians, dark as Indians, and as gayly adorned, attracted a crowd upon the wharves to gaze at us as we glided along. We found on Long Island (in the village of Brooklyn) those young gentlemen engaged in the service of the new company, who had left Canada in advance of our party.

The vessel in which we were to sail not being ready, I should have found myself quite isolated and a stranger in the great city of New York, but for a letter of introduction to Mr. G—, given me on my setting out, by Madame his sister. I had formed the acquaintance of this gentleman during a stay which he had made at Montreal in 1801; but as I was then very young, he would probably have had some difficulty in recognising me without his sister's letter. He introduced me to several of his friends, and I passed in an agreeable manner the five weeks which elapsed between my arrival in New York and the departure of the ship.

I shall not undertake to describe New York; I will only say, that the elegance of the buildings, public and private, the cleanliness of the streets, the shade of the poplars which border them, the public walks, the markets always abundantly provided with all sorts of commodities, the activity of its commerce, then in a flourishing condition, the vast number of ships of all nations which crowded the quays; all, in a word, conspired to make me feel the difference between this great maritime city and my native town, of whose steeples I had never lost sight before, and which was by no means at that time what it is now.

New York was not then, and indeed is not at this time a fortified town; still there were several batteries and military works, the most considerable of which were seen on the Narrows, or channel which forms the principal mouth of the Hudson. The isles called Governor's Island, and Bedloe or Gibbet Island, were also well fortified. On the first, situated to the west of the city and about a mile from it, there were barracks sufficiently capacious for several thousand soldiers, and a Moro, or castle, with three tiers of guns, all bomb-proof. These works have been strengthened during the last war.

The market-places are eight in number; the most considerable is called Fly-Market.

The Park, the Battery, and Vauxhall Garden, are the principal promenades. There were, in 1810, thirty-two churches, two of which were devoted to the catholic worship; and the population was estimated at ninety thousand souls, of whom ten thousand were French. It is thought that this population has since been augmented (1819) by some thirty thousand souls.

During my sojourn at New York, I lodged in Brooklyn, on Long Island. This island is separated from the city by a sound, or narrow arm of the sea. There is here a pretty village, not far from which is a basin, where some gunboats were hauled up, and a few war vessels were on the stocks. Some barracks had been constructed here, and a guard was maintained.

Before leaving New York, it is well to observe that during our stay in that city, Mr. M'Kay thought it the part of prudence to have an interview with the minister plenipotentiary of his Britannic majesty, Mr. Jackson, to inform him of the object of our voyage, and get his views in regard to the line of conduct we ought to follow in case of war breaking out between the two powers; intimating to him that we were all British subjects, and were about to trade under the American flag.

After some moments of reflection Mr. Jackson told him, "that we were going on a very hazardous enterprise; that he saw our object was purely commercial, and that all he could promise us, was,

that in case of a war we should be respected as British subjects and traders.”

This reply appeared satisfactory, and Mr. M'Kay thought we had nothing to apprehend on that side.

The vessel in which we were to sail was called the *Tonquin*, of about 300 tons burden, commanded by Captain Thorn (a first-lieutenant of the American navy, on furlough for this purpose), with a crew of twenty-one men. The number of passengers was thirty-three. Here follow the names of both.

PASSENGERS

- Partners
- o Messrs. Alexander M'Kay
- o “ Duncan M'Dougall
- o “ David Stuart
- o “ Robert Stuart

all of Canada.

- Clerks
- o James Lewis of New York.
- o Russel Farnham of Massachusetts.
- o William W. Matthews of New York.
- o Alexander Ross
- o Donald M'Gillis
- o Ovide de Montigny
- o Francis B. Pillot
- o Donald M'Lennan
- o William Wallace
- o Thomas M'Kay
- o Gabriel Franchere

all from Canada

- Boatmen, Etc.
- o Oliver Roy Lapensée
- o Ignace Lapensée
- o Basile Lapensée
- o Joseph Lapierre
- o Jacques Lafantaisie
- o Benjamin Roussel
- o Michel Laframboise
- o Giles Leclerc
- o Joseph Nadeau
- o J. B'te. Belleau
- o Antoine Belleau
- o Louis Bruslé
- o P. D. Jeremie

all of Canada.

- o Johann Koaster, ship-carpenter, a Russian.

- o George Bell, cooper, New York.
- o Job Aitken, rigger and calker, from Scotland.
- o Augustus Roussil, blacksmith, Canada.
- o Guillaume Perreault, a boy.

These last were all mechanics, &c., destined for the establishment.

#### CREW

- Jonathan Thorn, captain, New York State.
- Ebenezer D. Fox, 1st mate, of Boston.
- John M. Mumford, 2d mate, of Massachusetts.
- James Thorn, brother of the captain, New York.
- John Anderson, boatswain, foreigner.
- Egbert Vanderhuff, tailor, New York.
- John Weeks, carpenter, ”
- Stephen Weeks, armorer, New York.
- Sailmakers
- o John Coles, New York,
- o John Martin, a Frenchman,
- Sailors
- o John White, New York.
- o Adam Fisher, ”
- o Peter Verbel, ”
- o Edward Aymes, ”
- o Robert Hill, Albany, New York.
- o John Adams,
- o ” Joseph Johnson, Englishman.
- o Charles Roberts, New York.
- o A colored man as cook,
- o A mulatto steward,
- o And three or four others whose names I have forgotten.

#### CHAPTER II

Departure from New York — Reflections of the Author — Navigation, falling in with other Ships, and various Incidents, till the Vessel comes in Sight of the Falkland Isles.

ALL being ready for our departure, we went on board ship, and weighed anchor on the 6th of September, in the morning. The wind soon fell off, and the first day was spent in drifting down to Staten island, where we came to anchor for the night. The next day we weighed anchor again; but there came on another dead calm, and we were forced to cast anchor near the lighthouse at Sandy Hook. On the 8th we weighed anchor for the third time, and by the help of a fresh breeze from the southwest, we succeeded in passing the bar; the pilot quitted us at about eleven o'clock, and soon after we lost sight of the coast.

One must have experienced it one's self, to be able to conceive the melancholy which takes possession of the soul of a man of sensibility, at the instant that he leaves his country and the civilized world, to go to inhabit with strangers in wild and unknown lands. I should in vain endeavor to give my readers an idea, even faintly correct, of the painful sinking of heart that I suddenly felt,

and of the sad glance which I involuntarily cast toward a future so much the more frightful to me, as it offered nothing but what was perfectly confused and uncertain. A new scene of life was unfolded before me, but how monotonous, and ill suited to diminish the dejection with which my mind was overwhelmed! For the first time in my life, I found myself under way upon the main sea, with nothing to fix my regards and arrest my attention but the frail machine which bore me between the abyss of waters and the immensity of the skies. I remained for a long time with my eyes fixed in the direction of that land which I no longer saw, and almost despaired of ever seeing again; I made serious reflections on the nature and consequences of the enterprise in which I had so rashly embarked; and I confess that if at that moment the offer had been made to release me from my engagement, I should have accepted the proposal with all my heart. It is true that the hopeless confusion and incumberment of the vessel's deck, the great number of strangers among whom I found myself, the brutal style which the captain and his subalterns used toward our young Canadians; all, in a word, conspired to make me augur a vexatious and disagreeable voyage. The sequel will show that I did not deceive myself in that.

We perceived very soon in the S. W., which was our weather side, a vessel that bore directly toward us; she made a signal that was understood by our captain; we hove to, and stood on her bow. It turned out to be the American frigate Constitution. We sent our boat on board of her, and sailed in company till toward five o'clock, when, our papers having been sent back to us, we separated.

The wind having increased, the motion of the vessel made us sea-sick, those of us, I mean, who were for the first time at sea. The weather was fine, however; the vessel, which at first sailing was lumbered in such a manner that we could hardly get in or out of our berths, and scarcely work ship, by little and little got into order, so that we soon found ourselves more at ease.

On the 14th we commenced to take flying fish. The 24th, we saw a great quantity of dolphins. We prepared lines and took two of the latter, which we cooked. The flesh of this fish appeared to me excellent.

After leaving New York, till the 4th of October, we headed southeast. On that day we struck the trade winds, and bore S. S. E.; being, according to our observations, in latitude  $17^{\circ} 43' 43''$  and longitude  $22^{\circ} 39'$ .

On the 5th, in the morning, we came in sight of the Cape Verd islands, bearing W. N. W., and distant about eight or nine miles, having the coast of Africa to the E. S. E. We should have been very glad to touch at these islands to take in water; but as our vessel was an American bottom, and had on board a number of British subjects, our captain did not think fit to expose himself to meet the English ships-of-war cruising on these coasts, who certainly would not have failed to make a strict search, and to take from us the best part of our crew; which would infallibly have proved disastrous to the object for which we had shipped them.

Speaking of water, I may mention that the rule was to serve it out in rations of a quart a day; but that we were now reduced to a pint and a half. For the rest, our fare consisted of fourteen ounces of hard bread, a pound and a quarter of salt beef or one of pork, per day, and half a pint of souchong tea, with sugar, per man. The pork and beef were served alternately: rice and beans, each once a week; corn-meal pudding with molasses, ditto; on Sundays the steerage passengers were allowed a bottle of Teneriffe wine. All except the four partners, Mr. Lewis, acting as captain's clerk, and Mr. T. M'Kay, were in the steerage; the cabin containing but six berths, besides the cap-

tain's and first-mate's state-rooms.

As long as we were near the coast of Africa, we had light and variable winds, and extremely hot weather; on the 8th, we had a dead calm, and saw several sharks round the vessel; we took one which we ate. I found the taste to resemble sturgeon. We experienced on that day an excessive heat, the mercury being at 94° of Fahrenheit. From the 8th to the with we had on board a canary bird, which we treated with the greatest care and kindness, but which nevertheless quitted us, probably for a certain death.

The nearer we approached to the equator the more we perceived the heat to increase: on the 16th, in latitude 6°, longitude 22° west from Greenwich, the mercury stood at 108°. We discovered on that day a sail bearing down upon us. The next morning she reappeared, and approached within gun-shot. She was a large brig, carrying about twenty guns: we sailed in company all day by a good breeze, all sail spread; but toward evening she dropped astern and altered her course to the S. S. E.

On the 18th, at daybreak, the watch alarmed us by announcing that the same brig which had followed us the day before, was under our lee, a cable's length off, and seemed desirous of knowing who we were, without showing her own colors. Our captain appeared to be in some alarm; and admitting that she was a better sailer than we, he called all the passengers and crew on deck, the drum beat to quarters, and we feigned to make preparations for combat.

It is well to observe that our vessel mounted ten pieces of cannon, and was pierced for twenty; the forward portholes were adorned with sham guns. Whether it was our formidable appearance or no, at about ten A. M. the stranger again changed her course, and we soon lost sight of her entirely.

Nothing further remarkable occurred to us till the 22d, when we passed the line in longitude 25° 9'. According to an ancient custom the crew baptized those of their number who had never before crossed the equator; it was a holyday for them on board. About two o'clock in the afternoon we perceived a sail in the S. S. W. We were not a little alarmed, believing that it was the same brig which we had seen some days before; for it was lying to, as if awaiting our approach. We soon drew near, and to our great joy discovered that she was a Portuguese; we hailed her, and learned that she came from some part of South America, and was bound to Pernambuco, on the coasts of Brazil. Very soon after we began to see what navigators call the Clouds of Magellan: they are three little white spots that one perceives in the sky almost as soon as one passes the equator: they were situated in the S. S. W.

The 1st November, we began to see great numbers of aquatic birds. Toward three o'clock P. M., we discovered a sail on our larboard, but did not approach sufficiently near to speak her. The 3d, we saw two more sails, making to the S. E. We passed the tropic of capricorn on the 4th, with a fine breeze, and in longitude 33° 27'. We lost the trade-winds, and as we advanced south the weather became cold and rainy. The 11th, we had a calm, although the swell was heavy. We saw several turtles, and the captain having sent out the small boat, we captured two of them. During the night of the 11th and 12th, the wind changed to the N. E., and raised a terrible tempest, in which the gale, the rain, the lightning, and thunder, seemed to have sworn our destruction; the sea appeared all a-fire, while our little vessel was the sport of winds and waves. We kept the hatches dosed, which did not prevent us from passing very uncomfortable nights while the storm lasted; for the great heats that we had experienced between the tropics, had so opened the seams of the deck that

every time the waves passed over, the water rushed down in quantities upon our hammocks. The 14th, the wind shifted to the S. S. W., which compelled us to beat to windward. During the night we were struck by a tremendous sea; the helm was seized beyond control, and the man at the wheel was thrown from one side of the ship to the other, breaking two of his ribs, which confined him to his berth for a week.

In latitude  $35^{\circ} 19'$ , longitude  $40^{\circ}$ , the sea appeared to be covered with marine plants, and the change that we observed in the color of the water, as well as the immense number of gulls and other aquatic birds that we saw, proved to us that we were not far from the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. The wind continued to blow furiously till the 21st, when it subsided a little, and the weather cleared up. On the 25th, being in the 46th degree, and 30 minutes of latitude, we saw a penguin. We began to feel sensibly the want of water: since passing the tropic of Capricorn the daily allowance had been always diminishing, till we were reduced to three gills a day, a slender modicum considering that we had only salt provisions. We had indeed a still, which we used to render the sea-water drinkable; but we distilled merely what sufficed for the daily use of the kitchen, as to do more would have required a great quantity of wood or coal. As we were not more than one hundred and fifty leagues from the Falkland isles, we determined to put in there and endeavor to replenish our casks, and the captain caused the anchors to be got ready.

We had contrary winds from the 27th of November to the 3d December. On the evening of that day, we heard one of the officers, who was at the mast head, cry "Land! Land!" Nevertheless, the night coming on, and the barren rocks which we had before us being little elevated above the ocean, we hove to.

### CHAPTER III

Arrival at the Falkland Isles — Landing — Perilous Situation of the Author and some of his Companions — Portrait of Captain Thorn — Cape Horn — Navigation to the Sandwich Islands.

ON the 4th (Dec.) in the morning, I was not the last to mount on deck, to feast my eyes with the sight of land; for it is only those who have been three or four months at sea, who know how to appreciate the pleasure which one then feels even at sight of such barren and bristling rocks as form the Falkland Isles. We drew near these rocks very soon, and entered between two of the islands, where we anchored on good ground. The first mate being sent ashore to look for water, several of our gentlemen accompanied him. They returned in the evening with the disappointing intelligence that they had not been able to find fresh water. They brought us, to compensate for this, a number of wild geese and two seals.

The weather appearing to threaten, we weighed anchor and put out to sea. The night was tempestuous, and in the morning of the 5th we had lost sight of the first islands. The wind blowing off land, it was necessary to beat up all that day; in the evening we found ourselves sufficiently near the shore, and hove to for the night. The 6th brought us a clear sky, and with a fresh breeze we succeeded in gaining a good anchorage, which we took to be Port Egmont, and where we found good water.

On the 7th, we sent ashore the water casks, as well as the cooper to superintend filling them, and the blacksmiths who were occupied in some repairs required by the ship.

For our part, having erected a tent near the springs, we passed the time while they were taking in water, in coursing over the isles: we had a boat for our accommodation, and killed every day a great many wild geese and ducks. These birds differ in plumage from those which are seen in

Canada. We also killed a great many seals. These animals ordinarily keep upon the rocks. We also saw several foxes of the species called Virginia fox: they were shy and yet fierce, barking like dogs and then flying precipitately. Penguins are also numerous on the Falkland Isles. These birds have a fine plumage, and resemble the loon: but they do not fly, having only little stumps of wings which they use to help themselves in waddling along. The rocks were covered with them. It being their sitting season we found them on their nests, from which they would not stir. They are not wild or timid: far from flying at our approach, they attack us with their bill, which is very sharp, and with their short wings. The flesh of the penguin is black and leathery, with a strong fishy taste, and one must be very hungry to make up one's mind to eat it. We got a great quantity of eggs by dislodging them from their nests.

As the French and English had both attempted to form establishments on these rocks, we endeavored to find some vestige of them; the tracks which we met everywhere made us hope to find goats also: but all our researches were vain: all that we discovered was an old fishing cabin, constructed of whalebone, and some seal-skin moccasins; for these rocks offer not a single tree to the view, and are frequented solely by the vessels which pursue the whale fishery in the southern seas. We found, however, two head-boards with inscriptions in English, marking the spot where two men had been interred: as the letters were nearly obliterated, we carved new ones on fresh pieces of board procured from the ship. This pious attention to two dead men nearly proved fatal to a greater number of the living; for all the casks having been filled and sent on board, the captain gave orders to re-embark, and without troubling himself to inquire if this order had been executed or not, caused the anchor to be weighed on the morning of the 11th, while I and some of my companions were engaged in erecting the inscriptions of which I have spoken, others were cutting grass for the hogs, and Messrs. M'Dougall and D. Stuart had gone to the south side of the isle to look for game.

The roaring of the sea against the rock-bound shore prevented them from hearing the gun, and they did not rejoin us till the vessel was already at sea. We then lost no time, but pushed off, being eight in number, with our little boat, only twenty feet keel. We rowed with all our might, but gained nothing upon the vessel. We were losing sight of the islands at last, and our case seemed desperate. While we paused, and were debating what course to pursue, as we had no compass, we observed the ship tacking and standing toward us. In fine after rowing for three hours and a half, in an excited state of feeling not easily described, we succeeded in regaining the vessel, and were taken on board at about three o'clock P. M.

Having related this trait of malice on the part of our captain, I shall be permitted to make some remarks on his character. Jonathan Thorn was brought up in the naval service of his country, and had distinguished himself in a battle fought between the Americans and the Turks at Tripoli, some years before: he held the rank of first lieutenant. He was a strict disciplinarian, of a quick and passionate temper, accustomed to exact obedience, considering nothing but duty, and giving himself no trouble about the murmurs of his crew, taking counsel of nobody, and following Mr. Astor's instructions to the letter. Such was the man who had been selected to command our ship. His haughty manners, his rough and overbearing disposition, had lost him the affection of most of the crew and of all the passengers: he knew it, and in consequence sought every opportunity to mortify us. It is true that the passengers had some reason to reproach themselves; they were not free from blame; but he had been the aggressor; and nothing could excuse the act of cruelty and

---

barbarity of which he was guilty, in intending to leave us upon those barren rocks of the Falkland isles, where we must inevitably have perished. This lot was reserved for us, but for the bold interference of Mr. R. Stuart, whose uncle was of our party, and who, seeing that the captain, far from waiting for us, coolly continued his course, threatened to blow his brains out unless he hove to and took us on board.

We pursued our course, bearing S. S. W., and on the 14th, in latitude  $54^{\circ} 1'$  longitude  $64^{\circ} 13'$ , we found bottom at sixty-five fathoms, and saw a sail to the south. On the 15th, in the morning, we discovered before us the high mountains of Terra del Fuego, which we continued to see till evening: the weather then thickened, and we lost sight of them. We encountered a furious storm which drove us to the 56th degree and  $18'$  of latitude. On the 18th, we were only fifteen leagues from Cape Horn. A dead calm followed, but the current carried us within sight of the cape, five or six leagues distant. This cape, which forms the southern extremity of the American continent, has always been an object of terror to the navigators who have to pass from one sea to the other; several of whom to avoid doubling it, have exposed themselves to the long and dangerous passage of the straits of Magellan, especially when about entering the Pacific ocean. When we saw ourselves under the stupendous rocks of the cape, we felt no other desire but to get away from them as soon as possible, so little agreeable were those rocks to the view, even in the case of people who had been some months at sea! And by the help of a land breeze we succeeded in gaining an offing. While becalmed here, we measured the velocity of the current setting east, which we found to be about three miles an hour.

The wind soon changed again to the S. S. W., and blew a gale. We had to beat. We passed in sight of the islands of Diego Ramirez, and saw a large schooner under their lee. The distance that we had run from New York, was about 9,165 miles. We had frightful weather till the 24th, when we found ourselves in  $58^{\circ} 16'$  of south latitude. Although it was the height of summer in that hemisphere, and the days as long as they are at Quebec on the 21st of June (we could read on deck at midnight without artificial light), the cold was nevertheless very great and the air very humid: the mercury for several days was but fourteen degrees above freezing point, by Fahrenheit's thermometer. If such is the temperature in these latitudes at the end of December, corresponding to our June, what must it be in the shortest days of the year, and where can the Patagonians then take refuge, and the inhabitants of the islands so improperly named the Land of Fire!

The wind, which till the 24th had been contrary, hauled round to the south, and we ran westward. The next day being Christmas, we had the satisfaction to learn by our noon-day observation that we had weathered the cape, and were, consequently, now in the Pacific ocean. Up to that date we had but one man attacked with scurvy, a malady to which those who make long voyages are subject, and which is occasioned by the constant use of salt provisions, by the humidity of the vessel, and the inaction.

From the 25th of December till the 1st of January, we were favored with a fair wind and ran eighteen degrees to the north in that short space of time. Though cold yet, the weather was nevertheless very agreeable. On the 17th, in latitude  $10^{\circ}$  S., and longitude  $110^{\circ} 50'$  W., we took several bonitas, an excellent fish. We passed the equator on the 23d, in  $128^{\circ} 14'$  of west longitude. A great many porpoises came round the vessel. On the 25th arose a tempest which lasted till the 28th. The wind then shifted to the E. S. E. and carried us two hundred and twenty-four miles on our course in twenty-four hours. Then we had several days of contrary winds; on the 8th of February

---

it hauled to the S. E., and on the 11th we saw the peak of a mountain covered with snow, which the first mate, who was familiar with these seas, told me was the summit of Mona-Roah , a high mountain on the island of Ohehy, one of those which the circumnavigator Cook named the Sandwich Isles, and where he met his death in 1779. We headed to the land all day, and although we made eight or nine knots an hour, it was not till evening that we were near enough to distinguish the huts of the islanders: which is sufficient to prove the prodigious elevation of Mona Roah above the level of the sea.

#### CHAPTER IV

Accident — View of the Coast — Attempted Visit of the Natives — Their Industry — Bay of Karaka-koua — Landing on the Island — John Young, Governor of Owahee.

WE were ranging along the coast with the aid of a fine breeze, when the boy Perrault, who had mounted the forerigging to enjoy the scenery, lost his hold, and being to windward where the shrouds were taut, rebounded from them like a ball some twenty feet from the ship's side into the ocean. We perceived his fall and threw over to him chairs, barrels, benches, hen-coops, in a word everything we could lay hands on; then the captain gave the orders to heave to; in the twinkling of an eye the lashings of one of the quarterboats were cut apart, the boat lowered and manned: by this time the boy was considerably a-stern. He would have been lost undoubtedly but for a wide pair of canvass overalls full of tar and grease, which operated like a life-preserver. His head, however, was under when he was picked up, and he was brought on board lifeless, about a quarter of an hour after he fell into the sea. We succeeded, notwithstanding, in a short time, in bringing him to, and in a few hours he was able to run upon the deck.

The coast of the island, viewed from the sea, offers the most picturesque coup d'œil, and the loveliest prospect; from the beach to the mountains the land rises amphitheatrically, all along which is a border of lower country covered with cocoa-trees and bananas, through the thick foliage whereof you perceive the huts of the islanders; the valleys which divide the hills that lie beyond appear well cultivated, and the mountains themselves, though extremely high, are covered with wood to their summits, except those few peaks which glitter with perpetual snow.

As we ran along the coast, some canoes left the beach and came alongside, with vegetables and cocoa-nuts; but as we wished to profit by the breeze to gain the anchorage, we did not think fit to stop. We coasted along during a part of the night; but a calm came on which lasted till the morrow. As we were opposite the bay of Karaka-koua, the natives came out again, in greater numbers, bringing us cabbages, yams, taro , bananas, bread-fruit, water-melons, poultry, &c., for which we traded in the way of exchange. Toward evening, by the aid of a sea breeze that rose as day declined, we got inside the harbor where we anchored on a coral bottom in fourteen fathoms water. The next day the islanders visited the vessel in great numbers all day long, bringing, as on the day before, fruits, vegetables, and some pigs, in exchange for which we gave them glass beads, iron rings, needles, cotton cloth, &c.

Some of our gentlemen went ashore and were astonished to find a native occupied in building a small sloop of about thirty tons: the tools of which he made use consisted of a half worn-out axe, an adze, about two-inch blade, made out of a paring chisel, a saw, and an iron rod which he heated red hot and made it serve the purpose of an auger. It required no little patience and dexterity to achieve anything with such instruments: he was apparently not deficient in these qualities, for his work was tolerably well advanced. Our people took him on board with them, and we supplied

him with suitable tools, for which he appeared extremely grateful.

On the 14th, in the morning, while the ship's carpenter was engaged in replacing one of the cat-heads, two composition sheaves fell into the sea; as we had no others on board, the captain proposed to the islanders, who are excellent swimmers, to dive for them, promising a reward; and immediately two offered themselves. They plunged several times, and each time brought up shells as a proof that they had been to the bottom. We had the curiosity to hold our watches while they dove, and were astonished to find that they remained four minutes under the water. That exertion appeared to me, however, to fatigue them a great deal, to such a degree that the blood streamed from their nostrils and ears. At last one of them brought up the sheaves and received the promised recompense, which consisted of four yards of cotton.

Karaka-koua bay where we lay, may be three quarters of a mile deep, and a mile and a half wide at the entrance: the latter is formed by two low points of rock which appear to have run down from the mountains in the form of lava, after a volcanic eruption. On each point is situated a village of moderate size; that is to say, a small group of the low huts of the islanders. The bottom of the bay terminates in a bold escarpment of rock, some four hundred feet high, on the top of which is seen a solitary cocoa-tree.

On the evening of the 14th, I went ashore with some other passengers, and we landed at the group of cabins on the western point, of those which I have described. The inhabitants entertained us with a dance executed by nineteen young women and one man, all singing together, and in pretty good time. An old man showed us the spot where Captain Cook was killed, on the 14th of February, 1779, with the cocoa-nut trees pierced by the balls from the boats which the unfortunate navigator commanded. This old man, whether it were feigned or real sensibility, seemed extremely affected and even shed tears, in showing us these objects. As for me, I could not help finding it a little singular to be thus, by mere chance, upon this spot, on the 14th of February, 1811; that is to say, thirty-two years after, on the anniversary of the catastrophe which has rendered it for ever celebrated. I drew no sinister augury from the coincidence, however, and returned to the ship with my companions as gay as I left it. When I say with my companions, I ought to except the boatswain, John Anderson, who, having had several altercations with the captain on the passage, now deserted the ship, preferring to live with the natives rather than obey any longer so uncourteous a superior. A sailor also deserted; but the islanders brought him back, at the request of the captain. They offered to bring back Anderson, but the captain preferred leaving him behind.

We found no good water near Karaka-koua bay: what the natives brought us in gourds was brackish. We were also in great want of fresh meat, but could not obtain it: the king of these islands having expressly forbidden his subjects to supply any to the vessels which touched there. One of the chiefs sent a canoe to Tohehigh bay, to get from the governor of the island, who resided there, permission to sell us some pigs. The messengers returned the next day, and brought us a letter, in which the governor ordered us to proceed without delay to the isle of Wahoo, where the king lives; assuring us that we should there find good water and everything else we needed.

We got under way on the 16th, and with a light wind coasted the island as far as Tohehigh bay. The wind then dropping away entirely, the captain, accompanied by Messrs. M'Kay and M'Dougall, went ashore, to pay a visit to the governor aforesaid. He was not a native, but a Scotchman named John Young, who came hither some years after the death of Captain Cook. This man had married a native woman, and had so gained the friendship and confidence of the king, as to be

raised to the rank of chief and after the conquest of Wahoo by King Tamehameha, was made governor of Owhyhee (Hawaii) the most considerable of the Sandwich Islands, both by its extent and population. His excellency explained to our gentlemen the reason why the king had interdicted the trade in hogs to the inhabitants of all the islands: this reason being that his majesty wished to reserve to himself the monopoly of that branch of commerce, for the augmentation of his royal revenue by its exclusive profits. The governor also informed them that no rain had fallen on the south part of Hawaii for three years; which explained why we found so little fresh water: he added that the north part of the island was more fertile than the south, where we were: but that there was no good anchorage: that part of the coast being defended by sunken rocks which form heavy breakers. In fine, the governor dismissed our gentlemen with a present of four fine fat hogs; and we, in return, sent him some tea, coffee, and chocolate, and a keg of Madeira wine.

The night was nearly a perfect calm, and on the 17th we found ourselves abreast of Mona-Woror-ayea a snowcapped mountain, like Mona-Roah, but which appeared to me less lofty than the latter. A number of islanders came to visit us as before, with some objects of curiosity, and some small fresh fish. The wind rising on the 18th, we soon passed the western extremity of Hawaii, and sailed by Mowhee and Tahooraha, two more islands of this group, and said to be, like the rest, thickly inhabited. The first presents a highly picturesque aspect, being composed of hills rising in the shape of a sugar loaf and completely covered with cocoa-nut and bread-fruit trees.

At last, on the 21st, we approached Wahoo, and came to anchor opposite the bay of Ohetity, outside the bar, at a distance of some two miles from the land.

#### CHAPTER V

Bay of Ohetity — Tamehameha, King of the Islands — His Visit to the Ship — His Capital — His Naval Force — His Authority — Productions of the Country — Manners and Customs — Reflections.

THERE is no good anchorage in the bay of Ohetity, inside the bar or coral reef: the holding-ground is bad: so that, in case of a storm, the safety of the ship would have been endangered. Moreover, with a contrary wind, it would have been difficult to get out of the inner harbor; for which reasons, our captain preferred to remain in the road. For the rest, the country surrounding the bay is even more lovely in aspect than that of Karaka-koua; the mountains rise to a less elevation in the back-ground, and the soil has an appearance of greater fertility.

Tamehameha, whom all the Sandwich Isles obeyed when we were there in 1811, was neither the son nor the relative of Tierroboo, who reigned in Owhyhee (Hawaii) in 1779, when Captain Cook and some of his people were massacred. He was, at that date, but a chief of moderate power; but, being skilful, intriguing, and full of ambition, he succeeded in gaining a numerous party, and finally possessed himself of the sovereignty. As soon as he saw himself master of Owhyhee, his native island, he meditated the conquest of the leeward islands, and in a few years he accomplished it. He even passed into Atouay, the most remote of all, and vanquished the ruler of it, but contented himself with imposing on him an annual tribute. He had fixed his residence at Wahoo, because of all the Sandwich Isles it was the most fertile, the most picturesque — in a word, the most worthy of the residence of the sovereign.

As soon as we arrived, we were visited by a canoe manned by three white men, Davis and Wadsworth, Americans, and Manini, a Spaniard. The last offered to be our interpreter during our stay; which was agreed to. Tamehameha presently sent to us his prime-minister, Kramoku, to whom

the Americans have given the name of Pitt, on account of his skill in the affairs of government. Our captain, accompanied by some of our gentlemen, went ashore immediately, to be presented to Tamehameha. About four o'clock, P. M., we saw them returning, accompanied by a double pirogue conveying the king and his suite. We ran up our colors, and received his majesty with a salute of four guns.

Tamehameha was above the middle height, well made, robust and inclined to corpulency, and had a majestic carriage. He appeared to me from fifty to sixty years old. He was clothed in the European style, and wore a sword. He walked a long time on the deck, asking explanations in regard to those things which he had not seen on other vessels, and which were found on ours. A thing which appeared to surprise him, was to see that we could render the water of the sea fresh, by means of the still attached to our caboose; he could not imagine how that could be done. We invited him into the cabin, and, having regaled him with some glasses of wine, began to talk of business matters: we offered him merchandise in exchange for hogs, but were not able to conclude the bargain that day. His majesty re-embarked in his double pirogue, at about six o'clock in the evening. It was manned by twenty-four men. A great chest, containing firearms, was lashed over the centre of the two canoes forming the pirogue; and it was there that Tamehameha sat, with his prime-minister at his side.

In the morning, on the 22d, we sent our water-casks ashore and filled them with excellent water. At about noon his sable majesty paid us another visit, accompanied by his three wives and his favorite minister. These females were of an extraordinary corpulence, and of unmeasured size. They were dressed in the fashion of the country, having nothing but a piece of tapa, or bark-cloth, about two yards long, passed round the hips and falling to the knees. We resumed the negotiations of the day before, and were more successful. I remarked that when the bargain was concluded, he insisted with great pertinacity that part of the payment should be in Spanish dollars. We asked the reason, and he made answer that he wished to buy a frigate of his brother, King George, meaning the king of England. The bargain concluded, we prayed his majesty and his suite to dine with us; they consented, and toward evening retired, apparently well satisfied with their visit and our reception of them.

In the meantime, the natives surrounded the ship in great numbers, with hundreds of canoes, offering us their goods, in the shape of eatables and the rude manufactures of the island, in exchange for merchandise; but, as they had also brought intoxicating liquors in gourds, some of the crew got drunk; the captain was, consequently, obliged to suspend the trade, and forbade any one to traffic with the islanders, except through the first-mate, who was intrusted with that business. I landed on the 22d, with Messrs. Pillet and M'Gillis: we passed the night ashore, spending that day and the next morning in rambling over the environs of the bay, followed by a crowd of men, women, and children.

Ohetity, where Tamehameha resides, and which, consequently, may be regarded as the capital of his kingdom, is — or at least was at that time — a moderate-sized city, or rather a large village. Besides the private houses, of which there were perhaps two hundred, constructed of poles planted in the ground and covered over with matting, there were the royal palace, which was not magnificent by any means: a public store, of two stories, one of stone and the other of wood; two morais, or idol temples, and a wharf. At the latter we found an old vessel, the *Lady Bird*, which some American navigators had given in exchange for a schooner; it was the only large vessel

which King Tamehameha possessed; and, besides, was worth nothing. As for schooners he had forty of them, of from twenty to thirty tons burthen: these vessels served to transport the tributes in kind paid by his vassals in the other islands. Before the Europeans arrived among these savages, the latter had no means of communication between one isle and another, but their canoes, and as some of the islands are not in sight of each other, these voyages must have been dangerous. Near the palace I found an Indian from Bombay, occupied in making a twelve inch cable, for the use of the ship which I have described.

Tamehameha kept constantly round his house a guard of twenty-four men. These soldiers wore, by way of uniform, a long blue coat with yellow; and each was armed with a musket. In front of the house, on an open square, were placed fourteen four-pounders, mounted on their carriages. The king was absolute, and judged in person the differences between his subjects. We had an opportunity of witnessing a proof of it, the day after our landing. A Portuguese having had a quarrel with a native, who was intoxicated, struck him: immediately the friends of the latter, who had been the aggressor after all, gathered in a crowd to beat down the poor foreigner with stones; he fled as fast as he could to the house of the king, followed by a mob of enraged natives, who nevertheless stopped at some distance from the guards, while the Portuguese, all breathless, crouched in a corner. We were on the esplanade in front of the palace royal, and curiosity to see the trial led us into the presence of his majesty, who having caused the quarrel to be explained to him, and heard the witnesses on both sides, condemned the native to work four days in the garden of the Portuguese and to give him a hog. A young Frenchman from Bordeaux, preceptor of the king's sons, whom he taught to read, and who understood the language, acted as interpreter to the Portuguese, and explained to us the sentence. I can not say whether our presence influenced the decision, or whether, under other circumstances, the Portuguese would have been less favorably treated. We were given to understand that Tamehameha was pleased to see whites establish themselves in his dominions, but that he esteemed only people with some useful trade, and despised idlers, and especially drunkards. We saw at Wahoo about thirty of these white inhabitants, for the most part, people of no character, and who had remained on the islands either from indolence, or from drunkenness and licentiousness. Some had taken wives in the country, in which case the king gave them a portion of land to cultivate for themselves. But two of the worst sort had found means to procure a small still, wherewith they manufactured rum and supplied it to the natives. The first navigators found only four sorts of quadrupeds on the Sandwich islands: — dogs, swine, lizards, and rats. Since then sheep have been carried there, goats, horned cattle, and even horses, and these animals have multiplied.

The chief vegetable productions of these isles are the sugar cane, the bread-fruit tree, the banana, the watermelon, the musk-melon, the taro, the ava, the pandanus, the mulberry, &c. The bread-fruit tree is about the size of a large apple-tree; the fruit resembles an apple and is about twelve or fourteen inches in circumference; the rind is thick and rough like a melon: when cut transversely it is found to be full of sacs, like the inside of an orange; the pulp has the consistence of water-melon, and is cooked before it is eaten. We saw orchards of bread-fruit trees and bananas, and fields of sugar-cane, back of Ohetity.

The taro grows in low situations, and demands a great deal of care. It is not unlike a white turnip, and as it constitutes the principal food of the natives, it is not to be wondered at that they bestow so much attention on its culture. Wherever a spring of pure water is found issuing out of

the side of a hill, the gardener marks out on the declivity the size of the field he intends to plant. The ground is levelled and surrounded with a mud or stone wall, not exceeding eighteen inches in height, and having a flood gate above and below. Into this enclosure the water of the spring is conducted, or is suffered to escape from it, according to the dryness of the season. When the root has acquired a sufficient size it is pulled up for immediate use. This esculent is very bad to eat raw, but boiled it is better than the yam. Cut in slices, dried, pounded and reduced to a farina, it forms with bread-fruit the principal food of the natives. Sometimes they boil it to the consistence of porridge, which they put into gourds and allow to ferment; it will then keep a long time. They also use to mix with it, fish, which they commonly eat raw with the addition of a little salt, obtained by evaporation.

The ava is a plant more injurious than useful to the inhabitants of these isles; since they only make use of it to obtain a dangerous and intoxicating drink, which they also call ava. The mode of preparing this beverage is as follows: they chew the root, and spit out the result into a basin; the juice thus expressed is exposed to the sun to undergo fermentation; after which they decant it into a gourd; it is then fit for use, and they drink it on occasions to intoxication. The too frequent use of this disgusting liquor causes loss of sight, and a sort of leprosy, which can only be cured by abstaining from it, and by bathing frequently in the water of the sea. This leprosy turns their skin white: we saw several of the lepers, who were also blind, or nearly so. The natives are also fond of smoking: the tobacco grows in the islands, but I believe it has been introduced from abroad. The bark of the mulberry furnishes the cloth worn by both sexes; of the leaves of the pandanus they make mats. They have also a kind of wax-nut, about the size of a dried plum of which they make candles by running a stick through several of them. Lighted at one end, they burn like a wax taper, and are the only light they use in their huts at night.

The men are generally well made and tall: they wear for their entire clothing what they call a maro ; it is a piece of figured or white tapa, two yards long and a foot wide, which they pass round the loins and between the legs, tying the ends in a knot over the left hip. At first sight I thought they were painted red, but soon perceived that it was the natural color of their skin. The women wear a petticoat of the same stuff as the maro , but wider and longer, without, however, reaching below the knees. They have sufficiently regular features, and but for the color, may pass, generally speaking, for handsome women. Some to heighten their charms, dye their black hair (cut short for the purpose) with quick lime, forming round the head a strip of pure white, which disfigures them monstrously. Others among the young wear a more becoming garland of flowers. For other traits, they are very lascivious, and far from observing a modest reserve, especially toward strangers. In regard to articles of mere ornament, I was told that they were not the same in all the island. I did not see them, either, clothed in their war dresses, or habits of ceremony. But I had an opportunity to see them paint or print their tapa , or bark cloth, an occupation in which they employ a great deal of care and patience. The pigments they use are derived from vegetable juices, prepared with the oil of the cocoa-nut. Their pencils are little reeds or canes of bamboo, at the extremity of which they carve out divers sorts of flowers. First they tinge the cloth they mean to print, yellow, green, or some other color which forms the ground: then they draw upon it perfectly straight lines, without any other guide but the eye; lastly they dip the ends of the bamboo sticks in paint of a different tint from the ground, and apply them between the dark or bright bars thus formed. This cloth resembles a good deal our calicoes and printed cottons; the oils with which it is im-

---

pregnated renders it impervious to water. It is said that the natives of Atoway excel all the other islanders in the art of painting the tapa.

The Sandwich-islanders live in villages of one or two hundred houses arranged without symmetry, or rather grouped together in complete defiance of it. These houses are constructed (as I have before said) of posts driven in the ground, covered with long dry grass, and walled with matting; the thatched roof gives them a sort of resemblance to our Canadian barns or granges. The length of each house varies according to the number of the family which occupies it: they are not smoky like the wigwams of our Indians, the fireplace being always outside in the open air, where all the cooking is performed. Hence their dwellings are very clean and neat inside.

Their pirogues or canoes are extremely light and neat: those which are single have an outrigger, consisting of two curved pieces of timber lashed across the bows, and touching the water at the distance of five or six feet from the side; another piece, turned up at each extremity, is tied to the end and drags in the water, on which it acts like a skating iron on the ice, and by its weight keeps the canoe in equilibrium: without that contrivance they would infallibly upset. Their paddles are long, with a very broad blade. All these canoes carry a lateen, or sprit-sail, which is made of a mat of grass or leaves, extremely well woven.

I did not remain long enough with these people to acquire very extensive and exact notions of their religion: I know that they recognise a Supreme Being, whom they call Etoway, and a number of inferior divinities. Each village has one or more morais. These morais are enclosures which served for cemeteries; in the middle is a temple, where the priests alone have a right to enter: they contain several idols of wood, rudely sculptured. At the feet of these images are deposited, and left to putrify, the offerings of the people, consisting of dogs, pigs, fowls, vegetables, &c. The respect of these savages for their priests extends almost to adoration; they regard their persons as sacred, and feel the greatest scruple in touching the objects, or going near the places, which they have declared taboo or forbidden. The taboo has often been useful to European navigators, by freeing them from the importunities of the crowd.

In our rambles we met groups playing at different games. That of draughts appeared the most common. The checkerboard is very simple, the squares being marked on the ground with a sharp stick: the men are merely shells or pebbles. The game was different from that played in civilized countries, so that we could not understand it.

Although nature has done almost everything for the inhabitants of the Sandwich islands — though they enjoy a perpetual spring, a clear sky, a salubrious climate, and scarcely any labor is required to produce the necessaries of life — they can not be regarded as generally happy: the artisans and producers, whom they call Tootoos, are nearly in the same situation as the Helots among the Lacedemonians, condemned to labor almost incessantly for their lord or Eris, without hope of bettering their condition, and even restricted in the choice of their daily food. How has it happened that among a people yet barbarous, where knowledge is nearly equally distributed, the class which is beyond comparison the most numerous has voluntarily submitted to such a humiliating and oppressive yoke? The Tartars, though infinitely less numerous than the Chinese, have subjected them, because the former were warlike and the latter were not. The same thing has happened, no doubt, at remote periods, in Poland, and other regions of Europe and Asia. If moral causes are joined to physical ones, the superiority of one caste and the inferiority of the other will be still more marked; it is known that the natives of Hispaniola, when they saw the Spaniards ar-

---

rive on their coast, in vessels of an astonishing size to their apprehensions, and heard them imitate the thunder with their cannon, took them for beings of a superior nature to their own. Supposing that this island had been extremely remote from every other country, and that the Spaniards, after conquering it, had held no further communication with any civilized land, at the end of a century or two the language and the manners would have assimilated, but there would have been two castes, one of lords, enjoying all the advantages, the other of serfs, charged with all the burdens. This theory seems to have been realized anciently in Hindostan; but if we must credit the tradition of the Sandwich-islanders, their country was originally peopled by a man and woman, who came to Owyhee in a canoe. Unless, then, they mean that this man and woman came with their slaves, and that the Eris are descended from the first, and the Tootoos from the last, they ought to attribute to each other the same origin, and consequently regard each other as equals, and even as brothers, according to the manner of thinking that prevails among savages. The cause of the slavery of women among most barbarous tribes, is more easily explained: the men have subjected them by the right of the strongest, if ignorance and superstition have not caused them to be previously regarded as beings of an inferior nature, made to be servants and not companions.

#### CHAPTER VI

Departure from Wahoo — Storm — Arrival at the Mouth of the Columbia — Reckless Order of the Captain — Difficulty of the Entrance — Perilous Situation of the Ship — Unhappy Fate of a part of the Crew and People of the Expedition.

HAVING taken on board a hundred head of live hogs, some goats, two sheep, a quantity of poultry, two boatloads of sugar-cane, to feed the hogs, as many more of yams, taro, and other vegetables, and all our water-casks being snugly stowed, we weighed anchor on the 28th of February, sixteen days after our arrival at Karaka-koua.

We left another man (Edward Aymes) at Wahoo. He belonged to a boat's crew which was sent ashore for a load of sugar-canes. By the time the boat was loaded by the natives the ebb of the tide had left her aground, and Aymes asked leave of the coxswain to take a stroll, engaging to be back for the flood. Leave was granted him, but during his absence, the tide having come in sufficiently to float the boat, James Thorn, the coxswain, did not wait for the young sailor, who was thus left behind. The captain immediately missed the man, and, on being informed that he had strolled away from the boat on leave, flew into a violent passion. Aymes soon made his appearance alongside, having hired some natives to take him on board; on perceiving him, the captain ordered him to stay in the long-boat, then lashed to the side with its load of sugar-cane. The captain then himself got into the boat, and, taking one of the canes, beat the poor fellow most unmercifully with it; after which, not satisfied with this act of brutality, he seized his victim and threw him overboard! Aymes, however, being an excellent swimmer, made for the nearest native canoe, of which there were, as usual, a great number around the ship. The islanders, more humane than our captain, took in the poor fellow, who, in spite of his entreaties to be received on board, could only succeed in getting his clothes, which were thrown into the canoe. At parting, he told Captain Thorn that he knew enough of the laws of his country, to obtain redress, should they ever meet in the territory of the American Union.

While we were getting under sail, Mr. M'Kay pointed out to the captain that there was one water-cask empty, and proposed sending it ashore to be filled, as the great number of live animals we had on board required a large quantity of fresh water. The captain, who feared that some of

the men would desert if he sent them ashore, made an observation to that effect in answer to Mr. M'Kay, who then proposed sending me on a canoe which lay alongside, to fill the cask in question: this was agreed to by the captain, and I took the cask accordingly to the nearest spring. Having filled it, not without some difficulty, the islanders seeking to detain me, and I perceiving that they had given me some gourds full of salt water, I was forced also to demand a double pirogue (for the canoe which had brought the empty cask, was found inadequate to carry a full one), the ship being already under full sail and gaining an offing. As the natives would not lend a hand to procure what I wanted, I thought it necessary to have recourse to the king, and in fact did so. For seeing the vessel so far at sea, with what I knew of the captain's disposition, I began to fear that he had formed the plan of leaving me on the island. My fears, nevertheless were ill-founded; the vessel made a tack toward the shore, to my great joy; and a double pirogue was furnished me, through the good offices of our young friend the French school-master, to return on board with my cask.

Our deck was now as much encumbered as when we left New York; for we had been obliged to place our live animals at the gangways, and to board over their pens, on which it was necessary to pass, to work ship. Our own numbers were also augmented; for we had taken a dozen islanders for the service of our intended commercial establishment. Their term of engagement was three years, during which we were to feed and clothe them, and at its expiration they were to receive a hundred dollars in merchandise. The captain had shipped another dozen as hands on the coasting voyage. These people, who make very good sailors, were eager to be taken into employment, and we might easily have carried off a much greater number.

We had contrary winds till the 2d of March, when, having doubled the western extremity of the island, we made nothing, and lost sight of these smiling and temperate countries, to enter very soon a colder region and less worthy of being inhabited. The winds were variable, and nothing extraordinary happened to us till the 16th, when, being arrived at the latitude of 35° 11' north, and in 138° 16' of west longitude, the wind shifted all of a sudden to the S. S. W., and blew with such violence, that we were forced to strike top-gallant masts and top-sails, and run before the gale with a double reef in our foresail. The rolling of the vessel was greater than in all the gales we had experienced previously. Nevertheless, as we made great headway, and were approaching the continent, the captain, by way of precaution, lay to for two nights successively. At last, on the 22d, in the morning, we saw the land. Although we had not been able to take any observations for several days, nevertheless, by the appearance of the coast, we perceived that we were near the mouth of the river Columbia, and were not more than three miles from land. The breakers formed by the bar at the entrance of that river, and which we could distinguish from the ship, left us no room to doubt that we had arrived at last at the end of our voyage.

The wind was blowing in heavy squalls, and the sea ran very high: in spite of that, the captain caused a boat to be lowered, and Mr. Fox (first mate), Basile Lapensee, Ignace Lapensee, Jos. Nadeau, and John Martin, got into her, taking some provisions and firearms, with orders to sound the channel and report themselves on board as soon as possible. The boat was not even supplied with a good sail, or a mast, but one of the partners gave Mr. Fox a pair of bed sheets to serve for the former. Messrs. M'Kay and M'Dougall could not help remonstrating with the captain on the imprudence of sending the boat ashore in such weather; but they could not move his obstinacy. The boat's crew, pulled away from the ship; alas! we were never to see her again; and we already

had a foreboding of her fate. The next day the wind seemed to moderate, and we approached very near the coast. The entrance of the river, which we plainly distinguished with the naked eye, appeared but a confused and agitated sea: the waves, impelled by a wind from the offing, broke upon the bar, and left no perceptible passage. We got no sign of the boat; and toward evening, for our own safety, we hauled off to sea, with all countenances extremely sad, not excepting the captain's, who appeared to me as much afflicted as the rest, and who had reason to be so. During the night, the wind fell, the clouds dispersed, and the sky became serene. On the morning of the 24th, we found that the current had carried us near the coast again, and we dropped anchor in fourteen fathoms water, north of Cape Disappointment. The coup d'œil is not so smiling by a great deal at this anchorage, as at the Sandwich islands, the coast offering little to the eye but a continuous range of high mountains covered with snow.

Although it was calm, the sea continued to break over the reef with violence, between Cape Disappointment and Point Adams. We sent Mr. Mumford (the second mate) to sound a passage; but having found the breakers too heavy, he returned on board about mid-day. Messrs. M'Kay and D. Stuart offered their services to go ashore, to search for the boat's crew who left on the 22d; but they could not find a place to land. They saw Indians, who made signs to them to pull round the cape, but they deemed it more prudent to return to the vessel. Soon after their return, a gentle breeze sprang up from the westward, we raised anchor, and approached the entrance of the river. Mr. Aikin was then despatched in the pinnace, accompanied by John Coles (sailmaker), Stephen Weeks (armorers), and two Sandwich-islanders; and we followed under easy sail. Another boat had been sent out before this one, but the captain judging that she bore too far south, made her a signal to return. Mr. Aikin not finding less than four fathoms, we followed him and advanced between the breakers, with a favorable wind, so that we passed the boat on our starboard, within pistol-shot. We made signs to her to return on board, but she could not accomplish it; the ebb tide carried her with such rapidity that in a few minutes we had lost sight of her amidst the tremendous breakers that surrounded us. It was near nightfall, the wind began to give way, and the water was so low with the ebb, that we struck six or seven times with violence: the breakers broke over the ship and threatened to submerge her. At last we passed from two and three quarters fathoms of water to seven, where we were obliged to drop anchor, the wind having entirely failed us. We were far, however, from being out of danger, and the darkness came to add to the horror of our situation: our vessel, though at anchor, threatened to be carried away every moment by the tide; the best bower was let go, and it kept two men at the wheel to hold her head in the right direction. However, Providence came to our succor: the flood succeeded to the ebb, and the wind rising out of the offing, we weighed both anchors, in spite of the obscurity of the night, and succeeded in gaining a little bay or cove, formed at the entrance of the river by Cape Disappointment, and called Baker's Bay, where we found a good anchorage. It was about midnight, and all retired to take a little rest: the crew, above all, had great need of it. We were fortunate to be in a place of safety, for the wind rose higher and higher during the rest of the night, and on the morning of the 25th allowed us to see that this ocean is not always pacific.

Some natives visited us this day, bringing with them beaver-skins; but the inquietude caused in our minds by the loss of two boats' crews, for whom we wished to make search, did not permit us to think of traffic. We tried to make the savages comprehend, by signs, that we had sent a boat ashore three days previous, and that we had no news of her; but they seemed not to understand

us. The captain, accompanied by some of our gentlemen, landed, and they set themselves to search for our missing people, in the woods, and along the shore N. W. of the cape. After a few hours we saw the captain return with Weeks, one of the crew of the last boat sent out. He was stark naked, and after being clothed, and receiving some nourishment, gave us an account of his almost miraculous escape from the waves on the preceding night, in nearly the following terms:—"After you had passed our boat," said he, "the breakers caused by the meeting of the wind roll and ebb-tide, became a great deal heavier than when we entered the river with the flood. The boat, for want of a rudder, became very hard to manage, and we let her drift at the mercy of the tide, till, after having escaped several surges, one struck us midship and capsized us. I lost sight of Mr. Aiken and John Coles: but the two islanders were close by me; I saw them stripping off their clothes, and I followed their example; and seeing the pinnace within my reach, keel upward, I seized it; the two natives came to my assistance; we righted her, and by sudden jerks threw out so much of the water that she would hold a man: one of the natives jumped in, and, bailing with his two hands, succeeded in a short time in emptying her. The other native found the oars, and about dark we were all three embarked. The tide having now carried us outside the breakers, I endeavored to persuade my companions in misfortune to row, but they were so benumbed with cold that they absolutely refused. I well knew that without clothing, and exposed to the rigor of the air, I must keep in constant exercise. Seeing besides that the night was advancing, and having no resource but the little strength left me, I set to work sculling, and pushed off the bar, but so as not to be carried out too far to sea. About midnight, one of my companions died: the other threw himself upon the body of his comrade, and I could not persuade him to abandon it. Daylight appeared at last; and, being near the shore, I headed in for it, and arrived, thank God, safe and sound, through the breakers, on a sandy beach. I helped the islander, who yet gave some signs of life, to get out of the boat, and we both took to the woods; but, seeing that he was not able to follow me, I left him to his bad fortune, and, pursuing a beaten path that I perceived, I found myself, to my great astonishment, in the course of a few hours, near the vessel."

The gentlemen who went ashore with the captain divided themselves into three parties, to search for the native whom Weeks had left at the entrance of the forest; but, after scouring the woods and the point of the cape all day, they came on board in the evening without having found him.

#### CHAPTER VII

Regrets of the Author at the Loss of his Companions — Obsequies of a Sandwich Islander — First steps in the Formation of the intended Establishment — New Alarm — Encampment.

THE narrative of Weeks informed us of the death of three of our companions, and we could not doubt that the five others had met a similar fate. This loss of eight of our number, in two days, before we had set foot on shore, was a bad augury, and was sensibly felt by all of us. In the course of so long a passage, the habit of seeing each other every day, the participation of the same cares and dangers, and confinement to the same narrow limits, had formed between all the passengers a connection that could not be broken, above all in a manner so sad and so unlooked for, without making us feel a void like that which is experienced in a well-regulated and loving family, when it is suddenly deprived by death, of the presence of one of its cherished members. We had left New York, for the most part strangers to one another; but arrived at the river Columbia we were all friends, and regarded each other almost as brothers. We regretted especially the two brothers Lapensée and Joseph Nadeau: these young men had been in an especial manner recommended

---

by their respectable parents in Canada to the care of Mr. M'Kay; and had acquired by their good conduct the esteem of the captain, of the crew, and of all the passengers. The brothers Lapensée were courageous and willing, never flinching in the hour of danger, and had become as good seamen as any on board. Messrs. Fox and Aikin were both highly regarded by all; the loss of Mr. Fox, above all, who was endeared to every one by his gentlemanly behavior and affability, would have been severely regretted at any time, but it was doubly so in the present conjuncture: this gentleman, who had already made a voyage to the Northwest, could have rendered important services to the captain and to the company. The preceding days had been days of apprehension and of uneasiness; this was one of sorrow and mourning.

The following day, the same gentlemen who had volunteered their services to seek for the missing islander, resumed their labors, and very soon after they left us, we perceived a great fire kindled at the verge of the woods, over against the ship. I was sent in a boat and arrived at the fire. It was our gentlemen who had kindled it, to restore animation to the poor islander, whom they had at last found under the rocks, half dead with cold and fatigue, his legs swollen and his feet bleeding. We clothed him, and brought him on board, where, by our care, we succeeded in restoring him to life. Toward evening, a number of the Sandwich-islanders, provided with the necessary utensils, and offerings consisting of biscuit, lard, and tobacco, went ashore, to pay the last duties to their compatriot, who died in Mr. Aikin's boat, on the night of the 24th. Mr. Pillet and I went with them, and witnessed the obsequies, which took place in the manner following. Arrived at the spot where the body had been hung upon a tree to preserve it from the wolves, the natives dug a grave in the sand; then taking down the body, and stretching it alongside the pit, they placed the biscuit under one of the arms, a piece of pork beneath the other, and the tobacco beneath the chin and the genital parts. Thus provided for the journey to the other world, the body was deposited in the grave and covered with sand and stones. All the countrymen of the dead man then knelt on either side of the grave, in a double row, with their faces to the east, except one of them who officiated as priest; the latter went to the margin of the sea, and having filled his hat with water, sprinkled the two rows of islanders, and recited a sort of prayer, to which the others responded, nearly as we do in the litanies. That prayer ended, they rose and returned to the vessel, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. As every one of them appeared to me familiar with the part he performed, it is more than probable that they observed, as far as circumstances permitted, the ceremonies practised in their country on like occasions. We all returned on board about sundown.

The next day, the 27th, desirous of clearing the gangways of the live stock, we sent some men on shore to construct a pen, and soon after landed about fifty hogs, committing them to the care of one of the hands. On the 30th, the long boat was manned, armed and provisioned, and the captain, with Messrs. M'Kay and D. Stuart, and some of the clerks, embarked on it, to ascend the river and choose an eligible spot for our trading establishment. Messrs. Ross and Pillet left at the same time, to run down south, and try to obtain intelligence of Mr. Fox and his crew. In the meantime, having reached some of the goods most at hand, we commenced, with the natives who came every day to the vessel, a trade for beaver-skins, and sea-otter stones.

Messrs. Ross and Pillet returned on board on the 1st of April, without having learned anything respecting Mr. Fox and his party. They did not even perceive along the beach any vestiges of the boat. The natives who occupy Point Adams, and who are called Clatsops, received our young gentlemen very amicably and hospitably. The captain and his companions also returned on the

4th, without having decided on a position for the establishment, finding none which appeared to them eligible. It was consequently resolved to explore the south bank, and Messrs. M'Dougal and D. Stuart departed on that expedition the next day, promising to return by the 7th.

The 7th came, and these gentlemen did not return. It rained almost all day. The day after, some natives came on board, and reported that Messrs. M'Dougal and Stuart had capsized the evening before in crossing the bay. This news at first alarmed us; and, if it had been verified, would have given the finishing blow to our discouragement. Still, as the weather was excessively bad, and we did not repose entire faith in the story of the natives — whom, moreover, we might not have perfectly understood — we remained in suspense till the 10th. On the morning of that day, we were preparing to send some of the people in search of our two gentlemen, when we perceived two large canoes, full of Indians, coming toward the vessel: they were of the Chinook village, which was situated at the foot of a bluff on the north side of the river, and were bringing back Messrs. M'Dougal and Stuart. We made known to these gentlemen the report we had heard on the 8th from the natives, and they informed us that it had been in fact well founded; that on the 7th, desirous of reaching the ship agreeably to their promise, they had quitted Chinook point, in spite of the remonstrances of the chief, Comcomly, who sought to detain them by pointing out the danger to which they would expose themselves in crossing the bay in such a heavy sea as it was; that they had scarcely made more than a mile and a half before a huge wave broke over their boat and capsized it; that the Indians, aware of the danger to which they were exposed, had followed them, and that, but for their assistance, Mr. M'Dougal, who could not swim, would inevitably have been drowned; that, after the Chinooks had kindled a large fire and dried their clothes, they had been conducted by them back to their village, where the principal chief had received them with all imaginable hospitality, regaling them with every delicacy his wigwam afforded; that, in fine, if they had got back safe and sound to the vessel, it was to the timely succor and humane cares of the Indians whom we saw before us that they owed it. We liberally rewarded these generous children of the forest, and they returned home well satisfied.

This last survey was also fruitless, as Messrs. M'Dougal and Stuart did not find an advantageous site to build upon. But, as the captain wished to take advantage of the fine season to pursue his traffic with the natives along the N. W. coast, it was resolved to establish ourselves on Point George, situated on the south bank, about fourteen or fifteen miles from our present anchorage. Accordingly, we embarked on the 12th, in the long-boat, to the number of twelve, furnished with tools, and with provisions for a week. We landed at the bottom of a small bay, where we formed a sort of encampment. The spring, usually so tardy in this latitude, was already far advanced; the foliage was budding, and the earth was clothing itself with verdure; the weather was superb, and all nature smiled. We imagined ourselves in the garden of Eden; the wild forests seemed to us delightful groves, and the leaves transformed to brilliant flowers. No doubt, the pleasure of finding ourselves at the end of our voyage, and liberated from the ship, made things appear to us a great deal more beautiful than they really were. Be that as it may, we set ourselves to work with enthusiasm, and cleared, in a few days, a point of land of its under-brush, and of the huge trunks of pine-trees that covered it, which we rolled, half-burnt, down the bank. The vessel came to moor near our encampment, and the trade went on. The natives visited us constantly and in great numbers; some to trade, others to gratify their curiosity, or to purloin some little articles if they found an opportunity. We landed the frame timbers which we had brought, ready cut for the purpose,

---

in the vessel; and by the end of April, with the aid of the ship-carpenters, John Weeks and Johann Koaster, we had laid the keel of a coasting-schooner of about thirty tons.

#### CHAPTER VIII

Voyage up the River — Description of the Country — Meeting with strange Indians.

THE Indians having informed us that above certain rapids, there was an establishment of white men, we doubted not that it was a trading post of the Northwest Company; and to make sure of it, we procured a large canoe and a guide, and set out, on the 2d of May, Messrs. M'Kay, R. Stuart, Montigny, and I, with a sufficient number of hands. We first passed a lofty headland, that seemed at a distance to be detached from the main, and to which we gave the name of Tongue Point. Here the river gains a width of some nine or ten miles, and keeps it for about twelve miles up. The left bank, which we were coasting, being concealed by little low islands, we encamped for the night on one of them, at the village of Wakhaykum, to which our guide belonged.

We continued our journey on the 3d: the river narrows considerably, at about thirty miles from its mouth, and is obstructed with islands, which are thickly covered with the willow, poplar, alder, and ash. These islands are, without exception, uninhabited and uninhabitable, being nothing but swamps, and entirely overflowed in the months of June and July; as we understood from Coalpo, our guide, who appeared to be an intelligent man. In proportion as we advanced, we saw the high mountains capped with snow, which form the chief and majestic feature, though a stern one, of the banks of the Columbia for some distance from its mouth, recede, and give place to a country of moderate elevation, and rising amphitheatrically from the margin of the stream. The river narrows to a mile or thereabouts; the forest is less dense, and patches of green prairie are seen. We passed a large village on the south bank, called Kreluit, above which is a fine forest of oaks; and encamped for the night, on a low point, at the foot of an isolated rock, about one hundred and fifty feet high. This rock appeared to me remarkable on account of its situation, reposing in the midst of a low and swampy ground, as if it had been dropped from the clouds, and seeming to have no connection with the neighboring mountains. On a cornice or shelving projection about thirty feet from its base, the natives of the adjacent villages deposit their dead, in canoes; and it is the same rock to which, for this reason, Lieutenant Broughton gave the name of Mount Coffin. On the 4th, in the morning, we arrived at a large village of the same name as that which we had passed the evening before, Kreluit, and we landed to obtain information respecting a considerable stream, which here discharges into the Columbia, and respecting its resources for the hunter and trader in furs. It comes from the north, and is called Cowlitzk by the natives. Mr. M'Kay embarked with Mr. de Montigny and two Indians, in a small canoe, to examine the course of this river, a certain distance up. On entering the stream, they saw a great number of birds, which they took at first for turkeys, so much they resembled them, but which were only a kind of carrion eagles, vulgarly called turkey-buzzards. We were not a little astonished to see Mr. de Montigny return on foot and alone; he soon informed us of the reason: having ascended the Cowlitzk about a mile and a half, on rounding a bend of the stream, they suddenly came in view of about twenty canoes, full of Indians, who had made a rush upon them with the most frightful yells; the two natives and the guide who conducted their little canoe, retreated with the utmost precipitancy, but seeing that they would be overtaken, they stopped short, and begged Mr. M'Kay to fire upon the approaching savages, which he, being well acquainted with the Indian character from the time he accompanied Sir Alexander M'Kenzie, and having met with similar occurrences before, would by

---

no means do; but displayed a friendly sign to the astonished natives, and invited them to land for an amicable talk; to which they immediately assented. Mr. M'Kay had sent Mr. de Montigny to procure some tobacco and a pipe, in order to strike a peace with these barbarians. The latter then returned to Mr. M'Kay, with the necessary articles, and in the evening the party came back to our camp, which we had fixed between the villages. We were then informed that the Indians whom Mr. M'Kay had met, were at war with the Kreluits. It was impossible, consequently, to close our eyes all night; the natives passing and repassing continually from one village to the other, making fearful cries, and coming every minute to solicit us to discharge our firearms; all to frighten their enemies, and let them see that they were on their guard.

On the 5th, in the morning, we paid a visit to the hostile camp; and those savages, who had never seen white men, regarded us with curiosity and astonishment, lifting the legs of our trousers and opening our shirts, to see if the skin of our bodies resembled that of our faces and hands. We remained some time with them, to make proposals of peace; and having ascertained that this warlike demonstration originated in a trifling offence on the part of the Kreluits, we found them well disposed to arrange matters in an amicable fashion. After having given them, therefore, some looking-glasses, beads, knives, tobacco, and other trifles, we quitted them and pursued our way. Having passed a deserted village, and then several islands, we came in sight of a noble mountain on the north, about twenty miles distant, all covered with snow, contrasting remarkably with the dark foliage of the forests at its base, and probably the same which was seen by Broughton, and named by him Mount St. Helen's. We pulled against a strong current all this day, and at evening our guide made us enter a little river, on the bank of which we found a good camping place, under a grove of oaks, and in the midst of odoriferous wild flowers, where we passed a night more tranquil than that which had preceded it.

On the morning of the 6th we ascended this small stream, and soon arrived at a large village called Thlakalamah, the chief whereof, who was a young and handsome man, was called Keaseno, and was a relative of our guide. The situation of this village is the most charming that can be, being built on the little river that we had ascended, and indeed at its navigable head, being here but a torrent with numerous cascades leaping from rock to rock in their descent to the deep, limpid water, which then flows through a beautiful prairie, enamelled with odorous flowers of all colors, and studded with superb groves of oak. The freshness and beauty of this spot, which Nature seemed to have taken pleasure in adorning and enriching with her most precious gifts, contrasted, in a striking manner, with the indigence and uncleanness of its inhabitants; and I regretted that it had not fallen to the lot of civilized men. I was wrong no doubt: it is just that those should be most favored by their common mother, who are least disposed to pervert her gifts, or to give the preference to advantages which are factitious, and often very frivolous. We quitted with regret this charming spot, and soon came to another large village, which our guide informed us was called Kathlapootle, and was situated at the confluence of a small stream, that seemed to flow down from the mountain covered with snow, which we had seen the day before: this river is called Cowilkt. We coasted a pretty island, well timbered, and high enough above the level of the Columbia to escape inundation in the freshets, and arrived at two villages called Maltnabah. We then passed the confluence of the river Wallamat, or Willamet, above which the tide ceases to be felt in the Columbia. Our guide informed us that ascending this river about a day's journey, there was a considerable fall, beyond which the country abounded in deer, elk, bear, beaver, and otter. But

---

here, at the spot where we were, the oaks and poplar which line both banks of the river, the green and flowery prairies discerned through the trees, and the mountains discovered in the distance, offer to the eye of the observer who loves the beauties of simple nature, a prospect the most lovely and enchanting. We encamped for the night on the edge of one of these fine prairies.

On the 7th we passed several low islands, and soon discovered Mount Hood, a high mountain, capped with snow, so named by Lieutenant Broughton; and Mount Washington, another snowy summit, so called by Lewis and Clarke. The prospect which the former had before his eyes at this place, appeared to him so charming, that landing upon a point, to take possession of the country in the name of King George, he named it Pointe Belle Vue. At two o'clock we passed Point Vancouver, the highest reached by Broughton. The width of the river diminishes considerably above this point, and we began very soon to encounter shoals of sand and gravel; a sure indication that we were nearing the rapids. We encamped that evening under a ledge of rocks, descending almost to the water's edge.

The next day, the 8th, we did not proceed far before we encountered a very rapid current. Soon after, we saw a hut of Indians engaged in fishing, where we stopped to breakfast. We found here an old blind man, who gave us a cordial reception. Our guide said that he was a white man, and that his name was Soto. We learned from the mouth of the old man himself, that he was the son of a Spaniard who had been wrecked at the mouth of the river; that a part of the crew on this occasion got safe ashore, but were all massacred by the Clatsops, with the exception of four, who were spared and who married native women; that these four Spaniards, of whom his father was one, disgusted with the savage life, attempted to reach a settlement of their own nation toward the south, but had never been heard of since; and that when his father, with his companions, left the country, he himself was yet quite young. These good people having regaled us with fresh salmon, we left them, and arrived very soon at a rapid, opposite an island, named Strawberry Island by Captains Lewis and Clarke, in 1806. We left our men at a large village, to take care of the canoe and baggage; and following our guide, after walking about two hours, in a beaten path, we came to the foot of the fall, where we amused ourselves for some time with shooting the seals, which were here in abundance, and in watching the Indians taking salmon below the cataract, in their scoop-nets, from stages erected for that purpose over the eddies. A chief, a young man of fine person and a good mien, came to us, followed by some twenty others, and invited us to his wigwam: we accompanied him, had roasted salmon for supper, and some mats were spread for our night's repose.

The next morning, having ascertained that there was no trading post near the Falls, and Coalpo absolutely refusing to proceed further, alleging that the natives of the villages beyond were his enemies, and would not fail to kill him if they had him in their power, we decided to return to the encampment. Having, therefore, distributed some presents to our host (I mean the young chief with whom we had supped and lodged) and to some of his followers, and procured a supply of fresh salmon for the return voyage, we re-embarked and reached the camp on the 14th, without accidents or incidents worth relating.

#### CHAPTER IX

Departure of the Tonquin — Indian Messengers — Project of an Expedition to the Interior — Arrival of Mr. Daniel Thompson — Departure of the Expedition — Designs upon us by the Natives — Rumors of the Destruction of the Tonquin — Scarcity of Provisions — Narrative of a strange

---

Indian — Duplicity and Cunning of Comcomly.

HAVING built a warehouse (62 feet by 20) to put under cover the articles we were to receive from the ship, we were busily occupied, from the 16th to the 30th, in stowing away the goods and other effects intended for the establishment.

The ship, which had been detained by circumstances, much longer than had been anticipated, left her anchorage at last, on the 1st of June, and dropped down to Baker's bay, there to wait for a favorable wind to get out of the river. As she was to coast along the north, and enter all the harbors, in order to procure as many furs as possible, and to touch at the Columbia river before she finally left these seas for the United States, it was unanimously resolved among the partners, that Mr. M'Kay should join the cruise, as well to aid the captain, as to obtain correct information in regard to the commerce with the natives on that coast. Mr. M'Kay selected Messrs. J. Lewis and O. de Montigny to accompany him; but the latter having represented that the sea made him sick, was excused; and Mr. M'Kay shipped in his place a young man named Louis Bruslé, to serve him in the capacity of domestic, being one of the young Canadian sailors. I had the good fortune not to be chosen for this disastrous voyage, thanks to my having made myself useful at the establishment. Mr. Mumford (the second mate) owed the same happiness to the incompatibility of his disposition with that of the captain; he had permission to remain, and engaged with the company in place of Mr. Aikin as coaster, and in command of the schooner.

On the 5th of June, the ship got out to sea, with a good wind. We continued in the meantime to labor without intermission at the completion of the storehouse, and in the erection of a dwelling for ourselves, and a powder magazine. These buildings were constructed of hewn logs, and, in the absence of boards, tightly covered and roofed with cedar bark. The natives, of both sexes, visited us more frequently, and formed a pretty considerable camp near the establishment.

On the 15th, some natives from up the river, brought us two strange Indians, a man and a woman. They were not attired like the savages on the river Columbia, but wore long robes of dressed deer-skin, with leggings and moccasins in the fashion of the tribes to the east of the Rocky Mountains. We put questions to them in various Indian dialects; but they did not understand us. They showed us a letter addressed to "Mr. John Stuart, Fort Estekatadene, New Caledonia." Mr. Pillet then addressing them in the Knisteneaux language, they answered, although they appeared not to understand it perfectly. Notwithstanding, we learned from them that they had been sent by a Mr. Finnan M'Donald, a clerk in the service of the Northwest Company, and who had a post on a river which they called Spokane; that having lost their way, they had followed the course of the Tacousah-Tesseh (the Indian name of the Columbia), that when they arrived at the Falls, the natives made them understand that there were white men at the mouth of the river; and not doubting that the person to whom the letter was addressed would be found there, they had come to deliver it.

We kept these messengers for some days, and having drawn from them important information respecting the country in the interior, west of the Mountains, we decided to send an expedition thither, under the command of Mr. David Stuart; and the 15th July was fixed for its departure. All was in fact ready on the appointed day, and we were about to load the canoes, when toward midday, we saw a large canoe, with a flag displayed at her stem, rounding the point which we called Tongue Point. We knew not who it could be; for we did not so soon expect our own party, who (as the reader will remember) were to cross the continent, by the route which Captains Lewis

and Clarke had followed, in 1805, and to winter for that purpose somewhere on the Missouri. We were soon relieved of our uncertainty by the arrival of the canoe, which touched shore at a little wharf that we had built to facilitate the landing of goods from the vessel. The flag she bore was the British, and her crew was composed of eight Canadian boatmen or voyageurs. A well-dressed man, who appeared to be the commander, was the first to leap ashore, and addressing us without ceremony, said that his name was David Thompson, and that he was one of the partners of the Northwest Company. We invited him to our quarters, which were at one end of the warehouse, the dwelling-house not being yet completed. After the usual civilities had been extended to our visitor, Mr. Thompson said that he had crossed the continent during the preceding season; but that the desertion of a portion of his men had compelled him to winter at the base of the Rocky mountains, at the head waters of the Columbia. In the spring he had built a canoe, the materials for which he had brought with him across the mountains, and had come down the river to our establishment. He added that the wintering partners had resolved to abandon all their trading posts west of the mountains, not to enter into competition with us, provided our company would engage not to encroach upon their commerce on the east side: and to support what he said, produced a letter to that effect, addressed by the wintering partners to the chief of their house in Canada, the Hon. William M'Gillivray.

Mr. Thompson kept a regular journal, and travelled, I thought, more like a geographer than a fur-trader. He was provided with a sextant, chronometer and barometer, and during a week's sojourn which he made at our place, had an opportunity to make several astronomical observations. He recognised the two Indians who had brought the letter addressed to Mr. J. Stuart, and told us that they were two women, one of whom had dressed herself as a man, to travel with more security. The description which he gave us of the interior of the country was not calculated to give us a very favorable idea of it, and did not perfectly accord with that of our two Indian guests. We persevered, however, in the resolution we had taken, of sending an expedition thither; and, on the 23d Mr. D. Stuart set out, accompanied by Messrs. Pillet, Ross, M'Clellan and de Montigny, with four Canadian voyageurs, and the two Indian women, and in company with Mr. Thompson and his crew. The wind being favorable, the little flotilla hoisted sail, and was soon out of our sight. The natives, who till then had surrounded us in great numbers, began to withdraw, and very soon we saw no more of them. At first we attributed their absence to the want of furs to trade with; but we soon learned that they acted in that manner from another motive. One of the secondary chiefs who had formed a friendship for Mr. R. Stuart, informed him, that seeing us reduced in number by the expedition lately sent off, they had formed the design of surprising us, to take our lives and plunder the post. We hastened, therefore, to put ourselves in the best possible state of defence. The dwelling house was raised, parallel to the warehouse; we cut a great quantity of pickets in the forest, and formed a square, with palisades in front and rear, of about 90 feet by 120; the warehouse, built on the edge of a ravine, formed one flank, the dwelling house and shops the other; with a little bastion at each angle north and south, on which were mounted four small cannon. The whole was finished in six days, and had a sufficiently formidable aspect to deter the Indians from attacking us; and for greater surety, we organized a guard for day and night. Toward the end of the month, a large assemblage of Indians from the neighborhood of the straits Juan de Fuca, and Gray's Harbor, formed a great camp on Baker's Bay, for the ostensible object of fishing for sturgeon. It was bruited among these Indians that the Tonquin had been destroyed

---

on the coast, and Mr. M'Kay (or the chief trader, as they called him) and all the crew, massacred by the natives. We did not give credence to this rumor. Some days after, other Indians from Gray's Harbor, called Tchikeylis, confirmed what the first had narrated, and even gave us, as far as we could judge by the little we knew of their language, a very circumstantial detail of the affair, so that without wholly convincing us, it did not fail to make a painful impression on our minds, and keep us in an excited state of feeling as to the truth of the report. The Indians of the Bay looked fiercer and more warlike than those of our neighborhood; so we redoubled our vigilance, and performed a regular daily drill to accustom ourselves to the use of arms.

To the necessity of securing ourselves against an attack on the part of the natives, was joined that of obtaining a stock of provisions for the winter: those which we had received from the vessel were very quickly exhausted, and from the commencement of the month of July we were forced to depend upon fish. Not having brought hunters with us, we had to rely for venison, on the precarious hunt of one of the natives who had not abandoned us when the rest of his countrymen retired. This man brought us from time to time, a Very lean and very dry doe-elk, for which we had to pay, notwithstanding, very dear. The ordinary price of a stag was a blanket, a knife, some tobacco, powder and ball, besides supplying our hunter with a musket. This dry meat, and smoke-dried fish, constituted our daily food, and that in very insufficient quantity for hardworking men. We had no bread, and vegetables, of course, were quite out of the question. In a word our fare was not sumptuous. Those who accommodated themselves best to our mode of living were the Sandwich-islanders: salmon and elk were to them exquisite viands.

On the 11th of August a number of Chinooks visited us, bringing a strange Indian, who had, they said, something interesting to communicate. This savage told us, in fact, that he had been engaged with ten more of his countrymen, by a Captain Ayres, to hunt seals on the islands in Sir Francis Drake's Bay, where these animals are very numerous, with a promise of being taken home and paid for their services; the captain had left them on the islands, to go southwardly and purchase provisions, he said, of the Spaniards of Monterey in California; but he had never returned: and they, believing that he had been wrecked, had embarked in a skiff which he had left them, and had reached the main land, from which they were not far distant; but their skiff was shattered to pieces in the surf, and they had saved themselves by swimming. Believing that they were not far from the river Columbia, they had followed the shore, living, on the way, upon shellfish and frogs; at last they arrived among strange Indians, who, far from receiving them kindly, had killed eight of them and made the rest prisoners; but the Klemooks, a neighboring tribe to the Clatsops, hearing that they were captives, had ransomed them.

These facts must have occurred in March or April, 1811. The Indian who gave us an account of them, appeared to have a great deal of intelligence and knew some words of the English language. He added that he had been at the Russian trading post at Chitka, that he had visited the coast of California, the Sandwich islands, and even China.

About this time, old Comcomly sent to Astoria for Mr. Stuart and me, to come and cure him of a swelled throat, which, he said, afflicted him sorely. As it was late in the day, we postponed till to-morrow going to cure the chief of the Chinooks; and it was well we did; for, the same evening, the wife of the Indian who had accompanied us in our voyage to the Falls, sent us word that Comcomly was perfectly well, the pretended tonsillitis being only a pretext to get us in his power. This timely advice kept us at home.

---

CHAPTER X

Occupations at Astoria — Return of a Portion of the Men of the Expedition to the Interior — New Expedition — Excursion in Search of three Deserters.

ON the 26th of September our house was finished, and we took possession of it. The mason work had at first caused us some difficulty; but at last, not being able to make lime for want of limestones, we employed blue clay as a substitute for mortar. This dwelling-house was sufficiently spacious to hold all our company, and we had distributed it in the most convenient manner that we could. It comprised a sitting, a dining room, some lodging or sleeping rooms, and an apartment for the men and artificers, all under the same roof. We also completed a shop for the blacksmith, who till that time had worked in the open air.

The schooner, the construction of which had necessarily languished for want of an adequate force at the ship-yard, was finally launched on the 2d of October, and named the *Dolly*, with the formalities usual on such occasions. I was on that day at Young's Bay, where I saw the ruins of the quarters erected by Captains Lewis and Clarke, in 1805–06: they were but piles of rough, unhewn logs, overgrown with parasite creepers.

On the evening of the 5th, Messrs. Pillet and M'Lellan arrived, from the party of Mr. David Stuart, in a canoe manned by two of his men. They brought, as passengers, Mr. Régis Bruguier, whom I had known in Canada as a respectable country merchant, and an Iroquois family. Mr. Bruguier had been a trader among the Indians on the Saskatchewan river, where he had lost his outfit: he had since turned trapper, and had come into this region to hunt beaver, being provided with traps and other needful implements. The report which these gentlemen gave of the interior was highly satisfactory: they had found the climate salubrious, and had been well received by the natives. The latter possessed a great number of horses, and Mr. Stuart had purchased several of these animals at a low price. Ascending the river they had come to a pretty stream, which the natives called Okenakan. Mr. Stuart had resolved to establish his post on the bank of this river, and having erected a log-house, he thought best to send back the above named persons, retaining with him, for the winter, only Messrs. Ross and de Montigny, and two men.

Meanwhile, the season being come when the Indians quit the seashore and the banks of the Columbia, to retire into the woods and establish their winter quarters along the small streams and rivers, we began to find ourselves short of provisions, having received no supplies from them for some time. It was therefore determined that Mr. R. Stuart should set out in the schooner with Mr. Mumford, for the threefold purpose, of obtaining all the provisions they could, cutting oaken staves for the use of the cooper, and trading with the Indians up the river. They left with this design on the 12th. At the end of five days Mr. Mumford returned in a canoe of Indians. This man having wished to assume the command, and to order (in the style of Captain Thorn) the person who had engaged him to obey, had been sent back in consequence to Astoria.

On the 10th of November we discovered that three of our people had absconded, viz., P. D. Jeremie, and the two Belleaux. They had leave to go out shooting for two days, and carried off with them firearms and ammunition, and a handsome light Indian canoe. As soon as their flight was known, having procured a large canoe of the Chinooks, we embarked, Mr. Matthews and I, with five natives, to pursue them, with orders to proceed as far as the Falls, if necessary. On the 11th, having ascended the river to a place called Oak Point, we overtook the schooner lying at anchor, while Mr. Stuart was taking in a load of staves and hoop-poles. Mr. Farnham joined our party, as

---

well as one of the hands, and thus reinforced, we pursued our way, journeying day and night, and stopping at every Indian village, to make inquiries and offer a reward for the apprehension of our runaways. Having reached the Falls without finding any trace of them, and our provisions giving out, we retraced our steps, and arrived on the 16th at Oak Point, which we found Mr. Stuart ready to quit.

Meanwhile, the natives of the vicinity informed us that they had seen the marks of shoes imprinted on the sand, at the confluence of a small stream in the neighborhood. We got three small canoes, carrying two persons each, and having ascertained that the information was correct, after searching the environs during a part of the 17th, we ascended the small stream as far as some high lands which are seen from Oak Point, and which lie about eight or nine miles south of it. The space between these high lands and the ridge crowned with oaks on the bank of the Columbia, is a low and swampy land, cut up by an infinity of little channels. Toward evening we returned on our path, to regain the schooner; but instead of taking the circuitous way of the river, by which we had come, we made for Oak Point by the most direct route, through these channels; but night coming on, we lost ourselves. Our situation became the most disagreeable that can be imagined. Being unable to find a place where we could land, on account of the morass, we were obliged to continue rowing, or rather turning round, in this species of labyrinth, constantly kneeling in our little canoes, which any unlucky movement would infallibly have caused to upset. It rained in torrents and was dark as pitch. At last, after having wandered about during a considerable part of the night, we succeeded in gaining the edge of the mainland. Leaving there our canoes, because we could not drag them (as we attempted) through the forest, we crossed the woods in the darkness, tearing ourselves with the brush, and reached the schooner, at about two in the morning, benumbed with cold and exhausted with fatigue.

The 18th was spent in getting in the remainder of the lading of the little vessel, and on the morning of the 19th we raised anchor, and dropped down abreast of the Kreluit village, where some of the Indians offering to aid us in the search after our deserters, Mr. Stuart put Mr. Farnham and me on shore to make another attempt. We passed that day in drying our clothes, and the next day embarked in a canoe, with one Kreluit man and a squaw, and ascended the river before described as entering the Columbia at this place. We soon met a canoe of natives, who informed us that our runaways had been made prisoners by the chief of a tribe which dwells upon the banks of the Willamet river, and which they called Cathlanaminim. We kept on and encamped on a beach of sand opposite Deer island. There we passed a night almost as disagreeable as that of the 17th–18th. We had lighted a fire, and contrived a shelter of mats; but there came on presently a violent gust of wind, accompanied with a heavy rain: our fire was put out, our mats were carried away, and we could neither rekindle the one nor find the others: so that we had to remain all night exposed to the fury of the storm. As soon as it was day we re-embarked, and set ourselves to paddling with all our might to warm ourselves. In the evening we arrived near the village where our deserters were, and saw one of them on the skirts of it. We proceeded to the hut of the chief, where we found all three, more inclined to follow us than to remain as slaves among these barbarians. We passed the night in the chief's lodge, not without some fear and some precaution; this chief having the reputation of being a wicked man, and capable of violating the rights of parties. He was a man of high stature and a good mien, and proud in proportion, as we discovered by the chilling and haughty manner in which he received us. Farnham and I agreed to keep watch alter-

nately, but this arrangement was superfluous, as neither of us could sleep a wink for the infernal thumping and singing made by the medicine men all night long, by a dying native. I had an opportunity of seeing the sick man make his last will and testament: having caused to be brought to him whatever he had that was most precious, his bracelets of copper, his bead necklace, his bow and arrows and quiver, his nets, his lines, his spear, his pipe, &c., he distributed the whole to his most intimate friends, with a promise on their part, to restore them, if he recovered.

On the 22d, after a great deal of talk, and infinite quibbling on the part of the chief, we agreed with him for the ransom of our men. I had visited every lodge in the village and found but few of the young men, the greater part having gone on a fishing excursion; knowing, therefore, that the chief could not be supported by his warriors, I was resolved not to be imposed upon, and as I knew where the firearms of the fugitives had been deposited, I would have them at all hazards; but we were obliged to give him all our blankets, amounting to eight, a brass kettle, a hatchet, a small pistol, much out of order, a powder-horn, and some rounds of ammunition: with these articles placed in a pile before him, we demanded the men's clothing, the three fowling-pieces, and their canoe, which he had caused to be hidden in the woods. Nothing but our firmness compelled him to accept the articles offered in exchange; but at last, with great reluctance, he closed the bargain, and suffered us to depart in the evening with the prisoners and the property.

We all five (including the three deserters) embarked in the large canoe, leaving our Kreluit and his wife to follow in the other, and proceeded as far as the Cowlitzk, where we camped. The next day, we pursued our journey homeward, only stopping at the Kreluit village to get some provisions, and soon entered the group of islands which crowd the river above Gray's bay. On one of these we stopped to amuse ourselves with shooting some ducks, and meanwhile a smart breeze springing up, we split open a double-rush mat (which had served as a bag), to make a sail, and having cut a forked sapling for a mast, shipped a few boulders to stay the foot of it, and spread our canvass to the wind. We soon arrived in sight of Gray's bay, at a distance of fourteen or fifteen miles from our establishment. We had, notwithstanding, a long passage across, the river forming in this place, as I have before observed, a sort of lake, by the recession of its shores on either hand: but the wind was fair. We undertook, then, to cross, and quitted the island, to enter the broad, lake-like expanse, just as the sun was going down, hoping to reach Astoria in a couple of hours.

We were not long before we repented of our temerity: for in a short time the sky became overcast, the wind increased till it blew with violence, and meeting with the tide, caused the waves to rise prodigiously, which broke over our wretched canoe, and filled it with water. We lightened it as much as we could, by throwing overboard the little baggage we had left, and I set the men to baling with our remaining brass kettle. At last, after having been, for three hours, the sport of the raging billows, and threatened every instant with being swallowed up, we had the unexpected happiness of landing in a cove on the north shore of the river. Our first care was to thank the Almighty for having delivered us from so imminent a danger. Then, when we had secured the canoe, and groped our way to the forest, where we made, with branches of trees, a shelter against the wind — still continuing to blow with violence, and kindled a great fire to warm us and dry our clothes. That did not prevent us from shivering the rest of the night, even in congratulating ourselves on the happiness of setting our foot on shore at the moment when we began quite to despair of saving ourselves at all.

The morning of the 24th brought with it a clear sky, but no abatement in the violence of the wind,

till toward evening, when we again embarked, and arrived with our deserters at the establishment, where they never expected to see us again. Some Indians who had followed us in a canoe, up to the moment when we undertook the passage across the evening before, had followed the southern shore, and making the portage of the isthmus of Tongue Point, had happily arrived at Astoria. These natives, not doubting that we were lost, so reported us to Mr. M'Dougal; accordingly that gentleman was equally overjoyed and astonished at beholding us safely landed, which procured, not only for us, but for the culprits, our companions, a cordial and hearty reception.

#### CHAPTER XI

Departure of Mr. R. Stuart for the Interior — Occupations at Astoria — Arrival of Messrs. Donald M'Kenzie and Robert M'Lellan — Account of their Journey — Arrival of Mr. Wilson P. Hunt.

THE natives having given us to understand that beaver was very abundant in the country watered by the Willamet Mr. R. Stuart procured a guide, and set out, on the 5th of December, accompanied by Messrs. Pillet and M'Gillis and a few of the men, to ascend that river and ascertain whether or no it would be advisable to establish a trading-post on its banks. Mr. R. Bruguier accompanied them to follow his pursuits as a trapper.

The season at which we expected the return of the Tonquin was now past, and we began to regard as too probable the report of the Indians of Gray's Harbor. We still flattered ourselves, notwithstanding, with the hope that perhaps that vessel had sailed for the East Indies, without touching at Astoria; but this was at most a conjecture.

The 25th, Christmas-day, passed very agreeably: we treated the men, on that day, with the best the establishment afforded. Although that was no great affair, they seemed well satisfied; for they had been restricted, during the last few months, to a very meagre diet, living, as one may say, on sun-dried fish. On the 27th, the schooner having returned from her second voyage up the river, we dismantled her, and laid her up for the winter at the entrance of a small creek.

The weather, which had been raining, almost without interruption, from the beginning of October, cleared up on the evening of the 31st; and the 1st January, 1812, brought us a clear and serene sky. We proclaimed the new year with a discharge of artillery. A small allowance of spirits was served to the men, and the day passed in gayety, every one amusing himself as well as he could.

The festival over, our people resumed their ordinary occupations: while some cut timber for building, and others made charcoal for the blacksmith, the carpenter constructed a barge, and the cooper made barrels for the use of the posts we proposed to establish in the interior. On the 18th, in the evening, two canoes full of white men arrived at the establishment. Mr. M'Dougal, the resident agent, being confined to his room by sickness, the duty of receiving the strangers devolved on me. My astonishment was not slight, when one of the party called me by name, as he extended his hand, and I recognised Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, the same who had quitted Montreal, with Mr. W. P. Hunt, in the month of July, 1810. He was accompanied by a Mr. Robert M'Lellan, a partner, Mr. John Reed, a clerk, and eight voyageurs, or boatmen. After having reposed themselves a little from their fatigues, these gentlemen recounted to us the history of their journey, of which the following is the substance.

Messrs. Hunt and M'Kenzie, quitting Canada, proceeded by way of Mackinac and St. Louis, and ascended the Missouri, in the autumn of 1810, to a place on that river called Nadoway, where they wintered. Here they were joined by Mr. R. M'Lellan, by a Mr. Crooks, and a Mr. Müller, traders with the Indians of the South, and all having business relations with Mr. Astor.

In the spring of 1811, having procured two large keelboats, they ascended the Missouri to the country of the Arikaras, or Rice Indians, where they disposed of their boats and a great part of their luggage, to a Spanish trader, by name Manuel Lisa. Having purchased of him, and among the Indians, 130 horses, they resumed their route, in the beginning of August, to the number of some sixty-five persons, to proceed across the mountains to the river Columbia. Wishing to avoid the Blackfeet Indians, a war-like and ferocious tribe, who put to death all the strangers that fall into their hands, they directed their course southwardly, until they arrived at the 40th degree of latitude. Thence they turned to the northwest, and arrived, by-and-by, at an old fort, or trading post, on the banks of a little river flowing west. This post, which was then deserted, had been established, as they afterward learned, by a trader named Henry. Our people, not doubting that this stream would conduct them to the Columbia, and finding it navigable, constructed some canoes to descend it. Having left some hunters (or trappers) near the old fort, with Mr. Miller, who, dissatisfied with the expedition, was resolved to return to the United States, the party embarked; but very soon finding the river obstructed with rapids and water-falls, after having upset some of the canoes, lost one man by drowning, and also a part of their baggage, perceiving that the stream was impracticable, they resolved to abandon their canoes and proceed on foot. The enterprise was one of great difficulty, considering the small stock of provisions they had left. Nevertheless, as there was no time to lose in deliberation, after depositing in *acache* the superfluous part of their baggage, they divided themselves into four companies, under the command of Messrs. M'Kenzie, Hunt, M'Lellan and Crooks, and proceeded to follow the course of the stream, which they named Mad river, on account of the insurmountable difficulties it presented. Messrs. M'Kenzie and M'Lellan took the right bank, and Messrs. Hunt and Crook the left. They counted on arriving very quickly at the Columbia; but they followed this Mad river for twenty days, finding nothing at all to eat, and suffering horribly from thirst. The rocks between which the river flows being so steep and abrupt as to prevent their descending to quench their thirst (so that even their dogs died of it), they suffered the torments of Tantalus, with this difference, that he had the water which he could not reach above his head, while our travellers had it beneath their feet. Several, not to die of this raging thirst, drank their own urine: all, to appease the cravings of hunger, ate beaver skins roasted in the evening at the camp-fire. They even were at last constrained to eat their moccasins. Those on the left, or southeast bank, suffered, however, less than the others, because they occasionally fell in with Indians, utterly wild indeed, and who fled at their approach, carrying off their horses. According to all appearances these savages had never seen white men. Our travellers, when they arrived in sight of the camp of one of these wandering hordes, approached it with as much precaution, and with the same stratagem that they would have used with a troop of wild beasts. Having thus surprised them, they would fire upon the horses, some of which would fall; but they took care to leave some trinkets on the spot, to indemnify the owners for what they had taken from them by violence. This resource prevented the party from perishing of hunger. Mr. M'Kenzie having overtaken Mr. M'Lellan, their two companies pursued the journey together. Very soon after this junction, they had an opportunity of approaching sufficiently near to Mr. Hunt, who, as I have remarked; was on the other bank, to speak to him, and inform him of their distressed state. Mr. Hunt caused a canoe to be made of a horse-hide; it was not, as one may suppose, very large; but they succeeded, nevertheless, by that means, in conveying a little horse-flesh to the people on the north bank. It was attempted, even, to pass them across, one by

one (for the skiff would not hold any more); several had actually crossed to the south side, when, unhappily, owing to the impetuosity of the current, the canoe capsized, a man was drowned, and the two parties lost all hope of being able to unite. They continued their route, therefore, each on their own side of the river. In a short time those upon the north bank came to a more considerable stream, which they followed down. They also met, very opportunely, some Indians, who sold them a number of horses. They also encountered, in these parts, a young American, who was deranged, but who sometimes recovered his reason. This young man told them, in one of his lucid intervals, that he was from Connecticut, and was named Archibald Pelton; that he had come up the Missouri with Mr. Henry; that all the people at the post established by that trader were massacred by the Blackfeet; that he alone had escaped, and had been wandering for three years since, with the Snake Indians. Our people took this young man with them. Arriving at the confluence with the Columbia, of the river whose banks they were following, they perceived that it was the same which had been called Lewis river, by the American captain of that name, in 1805. Here, then, they exchanged their remaining horses for canoes, and so arrived at the establishment, safe and sound, it is true, but in a pitiable condition to see; their clothes being nothing but fluttering rags.

The narrative of these gentlemen interested us very much. They added, that since their separation from Messrs. Hunt and Crooks, they had neither seen nor heard aught of them, and believed it impossible that they should arrive at the establishment before spring. They were mistaken, however, for Mr. Hunt arrived on the 15th February, with thirty men, one woman, and two children, having left Mr. Crooks, with five men, among the Snakes. They might have reached Astoria almost as soon as Mr. M'Kenzie, but they had passed from eight to ten days in the midst of a plain, among some friendly Indians, as well to recruit their strength, as to make search for two of the party, who had been lost in the woods. Not finding them, they had resumed their journey, and struck the banks of the Columbia a little lower down than the mouth of Lewis river, where Mr. M'Kenzie had come out.

The arrival of so great a number of persons would have embarrassed us, had it taken place a month sooner. Happily, at this time, the natives were bringing in fresh fish in abundance. Until the 30th of March, we were occupied in preparing triplicates of letters and other necessary papers, in order to send Mr. Astor the news of our arrival, and of the reunion of the two expeditions. The letters were intrusted to Mr. John Reed, who quitted Astoria for St. Louis, in company with Mr. M'Lellan—another discontented partner, who wished to disconnect himself with the association,—and Mr. R. Stuart, who was conveying two canoe-loads of goods for his uncle's post on the Okenakan. Messrs. Farnham and M'Gillis set out at the same time, with a guide, and were instructed to proceed to the cache, where the overland travellers had hidden their goods, near old Fort Henry, on the Mad river. I profited by this opportunity to write to my family in Canada. Two days after, Messrs. M'Kenzie and Matthews set out, with five or six men, as hunters, to make an excursion up the Willamet river.

#### CHAPTER XII

Arrival of the Ship Beaver—Unexpected Return of Messrs. D. Stuart, R. Stuart, M'Lellan, &c.—Cause of that Return—Ship discharging—New Expeditions—Hostile Attitude of the Natives—Departure of the Beaver—Journeys of the Author—His Occupations at the Establishment.

FROM the departure of the last outfit under Mr. M'Kenzie, nothing remarkable took place at

---

Astoria, till the 9th of May. On that day we descried, to our great surprise and great joy, a sail in the offing, opposite the mouth of the river. Forthwith, Mr. M'Dougal was despatched in a boat to the cape, to make the signals. On the morning of the 10th, the weather being fine and the sea smooth, the boat pushed out and arrived safely alongside. Soon after, the wind springing up, the vessel made sail and entered the river, where she dropped anchor, in Baker's Bay, at about 2 P. M. Toward evening the boat returned to the Fort, with the following passengers: Messrs. John Clarke of Canada (a wintering partner), Alfred Seton, George Ehnainger, a nephew of Mr. Astor (clerks), and two men. We learned from these gentlemen that the vessel was the *Beaver*, Captain Cornelius Sowles, and was consigned to us; that she left New York on the 10th of October, and had touched, in the passage, at Massa Fuego and the Sandwich Isles. Mr. Clarke handed me letters from my father and from several of my friends: I thus learned that death had deprived me of a beloved sister.

On the morning of the 11th, we were strangely surprised by the return of Messrs. D. Stuart, R. Stuart, R. M'Lelland, Crooks, Reed, and Farnham. This return, as sudden as unlooked for, was owing to an unfortunate adventure which befell the party, in ascending the river. When they reached the Falls, where the portage is very long, some natives came with their horses, to offer their aid in transporting the goods. Mr. R. Stuart, not distrusting them, confided to their care some bales of merchandise, which they packed on their horses: but, in making the transit, they darted up a narrow path among the rocks, and fled at full gallop toward the prairie, without its being possible to overtake them. Mr. Stuart had several shots fired over their heads, to frighten them, but it had no other effect than to increase their speed. Meanwhile our own people continued the transportation of the rest of the goods, and of the canoes; but as there was a great number of natives about, whom the success and impunity of those thieves had emboldened, Mr. Stuart thought it prudent to keep watch over the goods at the upper end of the portage, while Messrs. M'Lellan and Reed made the rearguard. The last named gentleman, who carried, strapped to his shoulders, a tin box containing the letters and despatches for New York with which he was charged, happened to be at some distance from the former, and the Indians thought it a favorable opportunity to attack him and carry off his box, the brightness of which no doubt had tempted their cupidity. They threw themselves upon him so suddenly that he had no time to place himself on the defensive. After a short resistance, he received a blow on the head from a war club, which felled him to the ground, and the Indians seized upon their booty. Mr. M'Lellan perceiving what was done, fired his carabine at one of the robbers and made him bite the dust; the rest took to flight, but carried off the box notwithstanding. Mr. M'Lellan immediately ran up to Mr. Reed; but finding the latter motionless and bathed in blood, he hastened to rejoin Mr. Stuart, urging him to get away from these robbers and murderers. But Mr. Stuart, being a self-possessed and fearless man, would not proceed without ascertaining if Mr. Reed were really dead, or if he were, without carrying off his body; and notwithstanding the remonstrances of Mr. M'Lellan, taking his way back to the spot where the latter had left his companion, had not gone two hundred paces, when he met him coming toward them, holding his bleeding head with both hands.

The object of Mr. Reed's journey being defeated by the loss of his papers, he repaired, with the other gentlemen, to Mr. David Stuart's trading post, at Okenakan, whence they had all set out, in the beginning of May, to return to Astoria. Coming down the river, they fell in with Mr. R. Crooks, and a man named John Day. It was observed in the preceding chapter that Mr. Crooks

---

remained with five men among some Indians who were there termed friendly : but this gentleman and his companion were the only members of that party who ever reached the establishment: and they too arrived in a most pitiable condition, the savages having stripped them of everything, leaving them but some bits of deerskin to cover their nakedness.

On the 12th, the schooner, which had been sent down the river to the Beaver's anchorage, returned with a cargo (being the stores intended for Astoria), and the following passengers: to wit, Messrs. B. Clapp, J. C. Halsey, C. A. Nichols, and R. Cox, clerks; five Canadians, seven Americans (all mechanics), and a dozen Sandwich-islanders for the service of the establishment. The captain of the Beaver sounded the channel diligently for several days; but finding it scarcely deep enough for so large a vessel, he was unwilling to bring her up to Astoria. It was necessary, in consequence, to use the schooner as a lighter in discharging the ship, and this tedious operation occupied us during the balance of this month and a part of June.

Captain Sowles and Mr. Clarke confirmed the report of the destruction of the Tonquin; they had learned it at Owhyhee, by means of a letter which a certain Captain Ebbetts, in the employ of Mr. Astor, had left there. It was nevertheless resolved that Mr. Hunt should embark upon the "Beaver," to carry out the plan of an exact commercial survey of the coast, which Mr. M'Kay had been sent to accomplish, and in particular to visit for that purpose the Russian establishments at Chitka sound.

The necessary papers having been prepared anew, and being now ready to expedite, were confided to Mr. R. Stuart, who was to cross the continent in company with Messrs. Crooks and R. M'Lellan, partners dissatisfied with the enterprise, and who had made up their minds to return to the United States. Mr. Clark, accompanied by Messrs. Pillet, Donald M'Lellan, Farnham and Cox, was fitted out at the same time, with a considerable assortment of merchandise, to form a new establishment on the Spokane or Clarke's river. Mr. M'Kenzie, with Mr. Seton, was destined for the borders of Lewis river: while Mr. David Stuart, reinforced by Messrs. Matthews and M'Gillis, was to explore the region lying north of his post at Okenakan. All these outfits being ready, with the canoes, boatmen, and hunters, the flotilla quitted Astoria on the 30th of June, in the afternoon, having on board sixty-two persons. The sequel will show the result of the several expeditions. During the whole month of July, the natives (seeing us weakened no doubt by these outfits), manifested their hostile intentions so openly that we were obliged to be constantly on our guard. We constructed covered ways inside our palisades, and raised our bastions or towers another story. The alarm became so serious toward the latter end of the month that we doubled our sentries day and night, and never allowed more than two or three Indians at a time within our gates.

The Beaver was ready to depart on her coasting voyage at the end of June, and on the 1st of July Mr. Hunt went on board: but westerly winds prevailing all that month, it was not till the 4th of August that she was able to get out of the river; being due again by the end of October to leave her surplus goods and take in our furs for market.

The months of August and September were employed in finishing a house forty-five feet by thirty, shingled and perfectly tight, as a hospital for the sick, and lodging house for the mechanics. Experience having taught us that from the beginning of October to the end of January, provisions were brought in by the natives in very small quantity, it was thought expedient that I should proceed in the schooner, accompanied by Mr. Clapp, on a trading voyage up the river to secure a cargo of dried fish. We left Astoria on the 1st of October, with a small assortment of merchandise.

---

The trip was highly successful: we found the game very abundant, killed a great quantity of swans, ducks, foxes, &c., and returned to Astoria on the 20th, with a part of our venison, wild fowl, and bear meat, besides seven hundred and fifty smoked salmon, a quantity of the Wapto root (so called by the natives), which is found a good substitute for potatoes. and four hundred and fifty skins of beaver and other animals of the furry tribe.

The encouragement derived from this excursion induced us to try a second, and I set off this time alone, that is, with a crew of five men only, and an Indian boy, son of the old chief Comcomly.

This second voyage proved anything but agreeable. We experienced continual rains, and the game was much less abundant, while the natives had mostly left the river for their wintering grounds.

I succeeded, nevertheless, in exchanging my goods for furs and dried fish, and a small supply of dried venison: and returned, on the 15th of November, to Astoria, where the want of fresh provisions began to be severely felt, so that several of the men were attacked with scurvy.

Messrs. Halsey and Wallace having been sent on the 23d, with fourteen men, to establish a trading post on the Willamet, and Mr. M'Dougal being confined to his room by sickness, Mr. Clapp and I were left with the entire charge of the post at Astoria, and were each other's only resource for society. Happily Mr. Clapp was a man of amiable character, of a gay, lively humor, and agreeable conversation. In the intervals of our daily duties, we amused ourselves with music and reading; having some instruments and a choice library. Otherwise we should have passed our time in a state of insufferable ennui, at this rainy season, in the midst of the deep mud which surrounded us, and which interdicted the pleasure of a promenade outside the buildings.

#### CHAPTER XIII

Uneasiness respecting the "Beaver" — News of the Declaration of War between Great Britain and the United States — Consequences of that Intelligence — Different Occurrences — Arrival of two Canoes of the Northwest Company — Preparations for abandoning the Country — Postponement of Departure — Arrangement with Mr. J. G. M'Tavish.

THE months of October, November, and December passed away without any news of the "Beaver," and we began to fear that there had happened to her, as to the Tonquin, some disastrous accident. It will be seen, in the following chapter, why this vessel did not return to Astoria in the autumn of 1812.

On the 15th of January, Mr. M'Kenzie arrived from the interior, having abandoned his trading establishment, after securing his stock of goods in a cache. Before his departure he had paid a visit to Mr. Clark on the Spokan, and while there had learned the news, which he came to announce to us, that hostilities had actually commenced between Great Britain and the United States. The news had been brought by some gentlemen of the Northwest Company, who handed to them a copy of the Proclamation of the President to that effect.

When we learned this news, all of us at Astoria who were British subjects and Canadians, wished ourselves in Canada; but we could not entertain even the thought of transporting ourselves thither, at least immediately: we were separated from our country by an immense space, and the difficulties of the journey at this season were insuperable: besides, Mr. Astor's interests had to be consulted first. We held, therefore, a sort of council of war, to which the clerks of the factory were invited pro formâ, as they had no voice in the deliberations. Having maturely weighed our situation; after having seriously considered that being almost to a man British subjects, we were trading, notwithstanding, under the American flag: and foreseeing the improbability or rather, to cut

the matter short, the impossibility that Mr. Astor could send us further supplies or reinforcements while the war lasted, as most of the ports of the United States would inevitably be blockaded by the British; we concluded to abandon the establishment in the ensuing spring, or at latest, in the beginning of the summer. We did not communicate these resolutions to the men, lest they should in consequence abandon their labor: but we discontinued, from that moment, our trade with the natives, except for provisions; as well because we had no longer a large stock of goods on hand, as for the reason that we had already more furs than we could carry away overland.

So long as we expected the return of the vessel, we had served out to the people a regular supply of bread: we found ourselves in consequence, very short of provisions, on the arrival of Mr. M'Kenzie and his men. This augmentation in the number of mouths to be fed compelled us to reduce the ration of each man to four ounces of flour and half a pound of dried fish per diem : and even to send a portion of the hands to pass the rest of the winter with Messrs. Wallace and Halsey on the Willamet, where game was plenty.

Meanwhile, the sturgeon having begun to enter the river, I left, on the 13th of February, to fish for them; and on the 15th sent the first boat-load to the establishment; which proved a very timely succor to the men, who for several days had broken off work from want of sufficient food. I formed a camp near Oak Point, whence I continued to despatch canoe after canoe of fine fresh fish to Astoria, and Mr. M'Dougal sent to me thither all the men who were sick of scurvy, for the re-establishment of their health.

On the 20th of March, Messrs. Reed and Seton, who had led a party of our men to the post on the Willamet, to subsist them, returned to Astoria, with a supply of dried venison. These gentlemen spoke to us in glowing terms of the country of the Willamet as charming, and abounding in beaver, elk, and deer; and informed us that Messrs. Wallace and Halsey had constructed a dwelling and trading house, on a great prairie, about one hundred and fifty miles from the confluence of that river with the Columbia. Mr. M'Kenzie and his party quitted us again on the 31st, to make known the resolutions recently adopted at Astoria, to the gentlemen who were wintering in the interior.

On the 11th of April two birch-bark canoes, bearing the British flag, arrived at the factory. They were commanded by Messrs. J. G. M'Tavish and Joseph Laroque, and manned by nineteen Canadian voyageurs. They landed on a point of land under the guns of the fort, and formed their camp. We invited these gentlemen to our quarters and learned from them the object of their visit. They had come to await the arrival of the ship Isaac Todd , despatched from Canada by the Northwest Company, in October, 1811, with furs, and from England in March, 1812, with a cargo of suitable merchandise for the Indian trade. They had orders to wait at the mouth of the Columbia till the month of July, and then to return, if the vessel did not make her appearance by that time. They also informed us that the natives near Lewis river had shown them fowling-pieces, gun-flints, lead, and powder; and that they had communicated this news to Mr. M'Kenzie, presuming that the Indians had discovered and plundered his cache ; which turned out afterward to be the case. The month of May was occupied in preparations for our departure from the Columbia. On the 25th, Messrs. Wallace and Halsey returned from their winter quarters with seventeen packs of furs, and thirty-two bales of dried venison. The last article was received with a great deal of pleasure, as it would infallibly be needed for the journey we were about to undertake. Messrs. Clarke, D. Stuart, and M'Kenzie also arrived, in the beginning of June, with one hundred and forty packs

---

of furs, the fruit of two years' trade at the post on the Okenakan, and one year on the Spokan. The wintering partners (that is to say, Messrs. Clarke and David Stuart) dissenting from the proposal to abandon the country as soon as we intended, the thing being (as they observed) impracticable, from the want of provisions for the journey and horses to transport the goods, the project was deferred, as to its execution, till the following April. So these gentlemen, having taken a new lot of merchandise, set out again for their trading posts on the 7th of July. But Mr. M'Kenzie, whose goods had been pillaged by the natives (it will be remembered), remained at Astoria, and was occupied with the care of collecting as great a quantity as possible of dried salmon from the Indians. He made seven or eight voyages up the river for that purpose, while we at the Fort were busy in baling the beaver-skins and other furs, in suitable packs for horses to carry. Mr. Reed, in the meantime, was sent on to the mountain-passes where Mr. Miller had been left with the trappers, to winter there, and to procure as many horses as he could from the natives for our use in the contemplated journey. He was furnished for this expedition with three Canadians, and a half-breed hunter named Daion, the latter accompanied by his wife and two children. This man came from the lower Missouri with Mr. Hunt in 1811–12.

Our object being to provide ourselves, before quitting the country, with the food and horses necessary for the journey; in order to avoid all opposition on the part of the Northwest Company, we entered into an arrangement with Mr. M'Tavish. This gentleman having represented to us that he was destitute of the necessary goods to procure wherewith to subsist his party on their way homeward, we supplied him from our warehouse, payment to be made us in the ensuing spring, either in furs or in bills of exchange on their house in Canada.

#### CHAPTER XIV

Arrival of the Ship "Albatross"—Reasons for the Non-Appearance of the Beaver at Astoria — Fruitless Attempt of Captain Smith on a Former Occasion — Astonishment and Regret of Mr. Hunt at the Resolution of the Partners — His Departure — Narrative of the Destruction of the Tonquin — Causes of that Disaster — Reflections.

ON the 4th of August, contrary to all expectation, we saw a sail at the mouth of the river. One of our gentlemen immediately got into the barge, to ascertain her nationality and object: but before he had fairly crossed the river, we saw her pass the bar and direct her course toward Astoria, as if she were commanded by a captain to whom the intricacies of the channel were familiar. I had stayed at the Fort with Mr. Clapp and four men. As soon as we had recognised the American flag, not doubting any longer that it was a ship destined for the factory, we saluted her with three guns. She came to anchor over against the Fort, but on the opposite side of the river, and returned our salute. In a short time after, we saw, or rather we heard, the oars of a boat (for it was already night) that came toward us. We expected her approach with impatience, to know who the stranger was, and what news she brought us. Soon we were relieved from our uncertainty by the appearance of Mr. Hunt, who informed us that the ship was called the Albatross and was commanded by Captain Smith.

It will be remembered that Mr. Hunt had sailed from Astoria on board the "Beaver," on the 4th of August of the preceding year, and should have returned with that vessel, in the month of October of the same year. We testified to him our surprise that he had not returned at the time appointed, and expressed the fears which we had entertained in regard to his fate, as well as that of the Beaver itself: and in reply he explained to us the reasons why neither he nor Captain Sowles had been

able to fulfil the promise which they had made us.

After having got clear of the river Columbia, they had scudded to the north, and had repaired to the Russian post of Chitka, where they had exchanged a part of their goods for furs. They had made with the governor of that establishment, Barnoff by name, arrangements to supply him regularly with all the goods of which he had need, and to send him every year a vessel for that purpose, as well as for the transportation of his surplus furs to the East Indies. They had then advanced still further to the north, to the coast of Kamskatka ; and being there informed that some Kodiak hunters had been left on some adjacent isles, called the islands of St. Peter and St. Paul, and that these hunters had not been visited for three years, they determined to go thither, and having reached those isles, they opened a brisk trade, and secured no less than eighty thousand skins of the South-sea seal. These operations had consumed a great deal of time; the season was already far advanced; ice was forming around them, and it was not without having incurred considerable dangers that they succeeded in making their way out of those latitudes. Having extricated themselves from the frozen seas of the north, but in a shattered condition, they deemed it more prudent to run for the Sandwich isles, where they arrived after enduring a succession of severe gales. Here Mr. Hunt disembarked, with the men who had accompanied him, and who did not form a part of the ship's crew; and the vessel, after undergoing the necessary repairs, set sail for Canton.

Mr. Hunt had then passed nearly six months at the Sandwich islands, expecting the annual ship from New York, and never imagining that war had been declared. But at last, weary of waiting so long to no purpose, he had bought a small schooner of one of the chiefs of the isle of Wahoo, and was engaged in getting her ready to sail for the mouth of the Columbia, when four sails hove in sight, and presently came to anchor in Ohetity bay. He immediately went on board of one of them, and learned that they came from the Indies, whence they had sailed precipitately, to avoid the English cruisers. He also learned from the captain of the vessel he boarded, that the Beaver had arrived in Canton some days before the news of the declaration of war. This Captain Smith, moreover, had on board some cases of nankeens and other goods shipped by Mr. Astor's agent at Canton for us. Mr. Hunt then chartered the Albatross to take him with his people and the goods to the Columbia. That gentleman had not been idle during the time that he sojourned at Wahoo: he brought us 35 barrels of salt pork or beef, nine tierces of rice, a great quantity of dried Taro , and a good supply of salt.

As I knew the channel of the river, I went on board the Albatross, and piloted her to the old anchorage of the Tonquin, under the guns of the Fort, in order to facilitate the landing of the goods. Captain Smith informed us that in 1810, a year before the founding of our establishment, he had entered the river in the same vessel, and ascended it in boats as far as Oak Point; and that he had attempted to form an establishment there; but the spot which he chose for building, and on which he had even commenced fencing for a garden, being overflowed in the summer freshet, he had been forced to abandon his project and re-embark. We had seen, in fact, at Oak Point, some traces of this projected establishment. The bold manner in which this captain had entered the river was now accounted for.

Captain Smith had chartered his vessel to a Frenchman named Demestre , who was then a passenger on board of her, to go and take a cargo of sandal wood at the Marquesas , where that gentleman had left some men to collect it, the year before. He could not, therefore, comply with the

request we made him, to remain during the summer with us, in order to transport our goods and people, as soon as they could be got together, to the Sandwich islands.

Mr. Hunt was surprised beyond measure, when we informed him of the resolution we had taken of abandoning the country: he blamed us severely for having acted with so much precipitation, pointing out that the success of the late coasting voyage, and the arrangements we had made with the Russians, promised a most advantageous trade, which it was a thousand pities to sacrifice, and lose the fruits of the hardships he had endured and the dangers he had braved, at one fell swoop, by this rash measure. Nevertheless, seeing the partners were determined to abide by their first resolution, and not being able, by himself alone, to fulfil his engagements to Governor Barnoff, he consented to embark once more, in order to seek a vessel to transport our heavy goods, and such of us as wished to return by sea. He sailed, in fact, on the Albatross, at the end of the month. My friend Clapp embarked with him: they were, in the first instance, to run down the coast of California, in the hope of meeting there some of the American vessels which frequently visit that coast to obtain provisions from the Spaniards.

Some days after the departure of Mr. Hunt, the old one-eyed chief Comcomly came to tell us that an Indian of Gray's Harbor, who had sailed on the Tonquin in 1811, and who was the only soul that had escaped the massacre of the crew of that unfortunate vessel, had returned to his tribe.

As the distance from the River Columbia to Gray's Harbor was not great, we sent for this native. At first he made considerable difficulty about following our people, but was finally persuaded. He arrived at Astoria, and related to us the circumstances of that sad catastrophe, nearly as follows: "After I had embarked on the Tonquin," said he, "that vessel sailed for Nootka. Having arrived opposite a large village called Newity, we dropped anchor. The natives having invited Mr. M'Kay to land, he did so, and was received in the most cordial manner: they even kept him several days at their village, and made him lie, every night, on a couch of sea-otter skins. Meanwhile the captain was engaged in trading with such of the natives as resorted to his ship: but having had a difficulty with one of the principal chiefs in regard to the price of certain goods, he ended by putting the latter out of the ship, and in the act of so repelling him, struck him on the face with the roll of furs which he had brought to trade. This act was regarded by that chief and his followers as the most grievous insult, and they resolved to take vengeance for it. To arrive more surely at their purpose, they dissembled their resentment, and came, as usual, on board the ship. One day, very early in the morning, a large pirogue, containing about a score of natives, came alongside: every man had in his hand a packet of furs, and held it over his head as a sign that they came to trade. The watch let them come on deck. A little after, arrived a second pirogue, carrying about as many men as the other. The sailors believed that these also came to exchange their furs, and allowed them to mount the ship's side like the first. Very soon, the pirogues thus succeeding one another, the crew saw themselves surrounded by a multitude of savages, who came upon the deck from all sides. Becoming alarmed at the appearance of things, they went to apprise the captain and Mr. M'Kay, who hastened to the poop. I was with them," said the narrator, "and fearing, from the great multitude of Indians whom I saw already on the deck, and from the movements of those on shore, who were hurrying to embark in their canoes, to approach the vessel, and from the women being left in charge of the canoes of those who had arrived, that some evil design was on foot, I communicated my suspicions to Mr. M'Kay, who himself spoke to the captain. The latter affected an air of security, and said that with the firearms on board, there was no reason to fear even a greater

---

number of Indians. Meanwhile these gentlemen had come on deck unarmed, without even their sidearms. The trade, nevertheless, did not advance; the Indians offered less than was asked, and pressing with their furs close to the captain, Mr. M'Kay, and Mr. Lewis, repeated the word Makoke! Makoke! 'Trade! Trade!' I urged the gentlemen to put to sea, and the captain, at last, seeing the number of Indians increase every moment, allowed himself to be persuaded: he ordered a part of the crew to raise the anchor, and the rest to go aloft and unfurl the sails. At the same time he warned the natives to withdraw, as the ship was going to sea. A fresh breeze was then springing up, and in a few moments more their prey would have escaped them; but immediately on receiving this notice, by a preconcerted signal, the Indians, with a terrific yell, drew forth the knives and war-bludgeons they had concealed in their bundles of furs, and rushed upon the crew of the ship. Mr. Lewis was struck, and fell over a bale of blankets. Mr. M'Kay, however, was the first victim whom they sacrificed to their fury. Two savages, whom, from the crown of the poop, where I was seated, I had seen follow this gentleman step by step, now cast themselves upon him, and having given him a blow on the head with a potumagan (a kind of sabre which is described a little below), felled him to the deck, then took him up and flung him into the sea, where the women left in charge of the canoes, quickly finished him with their paddles. Another set flung themselves upon the captain, who defended himself for a long time with his pocket-knife, but, overpowered by numbers, perished also under the blows of these murderers. I next saw (and that was the last occurrence of which I was witness before quitting the ship) the sailors who were aloft slip down by the rigging, and get below through the steerage hatchway. They were five, I think, in number, and one of them, in descending, received a knifestab in the back. I then jumped overboard, to escape a similar fate to that of the captain and Mr. M'Kay: the women in the canoes, to whom I surrendered myself as a slave, took me in, and bade me hide myself under some mats which were in the pirogues; which I did. Soon after, I heard the discharge of firearms, immediately upon which the Indians fled from the vessel, and pulled for the shore as fast as possible, nor did they venture to go alongside the ship again the whole of that day. The next day, having seen four men lower a boat, and pull away from the ship, they sent some pirogues in chase: but whether those men were overtaken and murdered, or gained the open sea and perished there, I never could learn. Nothing more was seen stirring on board the Tonquin; the natives pulled cautiously around her, and some of the more daring went on board; at last, the savages, finding themselves absolute masters of the ship, rushed on board in a crowd to pillage her. But very soon, when there were about four or five hundred either huddled together on deck, or clinging to the sides, all eager for plunder, the ship blew up with a horrible noise. I was on the shore," said the Indian, "when the explosion took place, saw the great volume of smoke burst forth in the spot where the ship had been, and high in the air above, arms, legs, heads and bodies, flying in every direction. The tribe acknowledged a loss of over two hundred of their people on that occasion. As for me I remained their prisoner, and have been their slave for two years. It is but now that I have been ransomed by my friends. I have told you the truth, and hope you will acquit me of having in any way participated in that bloody affair."

Our Indian having finished his discourse, we made him presents proportioned to the melancholy satisfaction he had given us in communicating the true history of the sad fate of our former companions, and to the trouble he had taken in coming to us; so that he returned apparently well satisfied with our liberality.

---

According to the narrative of this Indian, Captain Thorn, by his abrupt manner and passionate temper, was the primary cause of his own death and that of all on board his vessel. What appears certain at least, is, that he was guilty of unpardonable negligence and imprudence, in not causing the boarding netting to be rigged, as is the custom of all the navigators who frequent this coast, and in suffering (contrary to his instructions) too great a number of Indians to come on board at once.

Captain Smith, of the Albatross, who had seen the wreck of the Tonquin, in mentioning to us its sad fate, attributed the cause of the disaster to the rash conduct of a Captain Ayres, of Boston. That navigator had taken off, as I have mentioned already, ten or a dozen natives of Newitty, as hunters, with a promise of bringing them back to their country, which promise he inhumanly broke by leaving them on some desert islands in Sir Francis Drake's Bay. The countrymen of these unfortunates, indignant at the conduct of the American captain, had sworn to avenge themselves on the first white men who appeared among them. Chance willed it that our vessel was the first to enter that bay, and the natives but too well executed on our people their project of vengeance. Whatever may have been the first and principal cause of this misfortune (for doubtless it is necessary to suppose more than one), seventeen white men and twelve Sandwich-Islanders, were massacred: not one escaped from the butchery, to bring us the news of it, but the Indian of Gray's Harbor. The massacre of our people was avenged, it is true, by the destruction of ten times the number of their murderers; but this circumstance, which could perhaps gladden the heart of a savage, was a feeble consolation (if it was any) for civilized men. The death of Mr. Alexander M'Kay was an irreparable loss to the Company, which would probably have been dissolved by the remaining partners, but for the arrival of the energetic Mr. Hunt. Interesting as was the recital of the Indian of Gray's Harbor throughout, when he came to the unhappy end of that estimable man, marks of regret were visibly painted on the countenances of all who listened.

At the beginning of September, Mr. M'Kenzie set off, with Messrs. Wallace and Seton, to carry a supply of goods to the gentlemen wintering in the interior, as well as to inform them of the arrangements concluded with Mr. Hunt, and to enjoin them to send down all their furs, and all the Sandwich-Islanders, that the former might be shipped for America, and the latter sent back to their country.

#### NOTE BY HUNTINGTON

It will never be known how or by whom the Tonquin was blown up. Some pretend to say that it was the work of James Lewis, but that is impossible, for it appears from the narrative of the Indian that he was one of the first persons murdered. It will be recollected that five men got between decks from aloft, during the affray, and four only were seen to quit the ship afterward in the boat. The presumption was that the missing man must have done it, and in further conversation with the Gray's Harbor Indian, he inclined to that opinion, and even affirmed that the individual was the ship's armorer, Weeks. It might also have been accidental. There was a large quantity of powder in the run immediately under the cabin, and it is not impossible that while the Indians were intent on plunder, in opening some of the kegs they may have set fire to the contents. Or again, the men, before quitting the ship, may have lighted a slow train, which is the most likely supposition of all.

#### CHAPTER XV

Arrival of a Number of Canoes of the Northwest Company Sale of the Establishment at Astoria to

---

that Company — Canadian News — Arrival of the British Sloop-of-War “Raccoon” — Accident on Board that Vessel — The Captain takes Formal Possession of Astoria — Surprise and Discontent of the Officers and Crew — Departure of the “Raccoon.”

A FEW days after Mr. M'Kenzie left us, we were greatly surprised by the appearance of two canoes bearing the British flag, with a third between them, carrying the flag of the United States, all rounding Tongue Point. It was no other than Mr. M'Kenzie himself, returning with Messrs. J. G. M'Tavish and Angus Bethune, of the Northwest Company. He had met these gentlemen near the first rapids, and had determined to return with them to the establishment, in consequence of information which they gave him. Those gentlemen were in light canoes (i. e., without any lading), and formed the vanguard to a flotilla of eight, loaded with furs, under the conduct of Messrs. John Stuart and M'Millan.

Mr. M'Tavish came to our quarters at the factory, and showed Mr. M'Dougal a letter which had been addressed to the latter by Mr. Angus Shaw, his uncle, and one of the partners of the Northwest Company. Mr. Shaw informed his nephew that the ship Isaac Todd had sailed from London, with letters of marque, in the month of March, in company with the frigate Phoebe, having orders from the government to seize our establishment, which had been represented to the lords of the admiralty as an important colony founded by the American government. The eight canoes left behind, came up meanwhile, and uniting themselves to the others, they formed a camp of about seventy-five men, at the bottom of a little bay or cove, near our factory. As they were destitute of provisions, we supplied them; but Messrs. M'Dougal and M'Kenzie affecting to dread a surprise from this British force under our guns, we kept strictly on our guard; for we were inferior in point of numbers, although our position was exceedingly advantageous.

As the season advanced, and their ship did not arrive, our new neighbors found themselves in a very disagreeable situation, without food, or merchandise wherewith to procure it from the natives; viewed by the latter with a distrustful and hostile eye, as being our enemies and therefore exposed to attack and plunder on their part with impunity; supplied with good hunters, indeed, but wanting ammunition to render their skill available. Weary, at length, of applying to us incessantly for food (which we furnished them with a sparing hand), unable either to retrace their steps through the wilderness or to remain in their present position, they came to the conclusion of proposing to buy of us the whole establishment.

Placed, as we were, in the situation of expecting, day by day, the arrival of an English ship-of-war to seize upon all we possessed, we listened to their propositions. Several meetings and discussions took place; the negotiations were protracted by the hope of one party that the long-expected armed force would arrive, to render the purchase unnecessary, and were urged forward by the other in order to conclude the affair before that occurrence should intervene; at length the price of the goods and furs in the factory was agreed upon, and the bargain was signed by both parties on the 23d of October. The gentlemen of the Northwest Company took possession of Astoria, agreeing to pay the servants of the Pacific Fur Company (the name which had been chosen by Mr. Astor), the arrears of their wages, to be deducted from the price of the goods which we delivered, to supply them with provisions, and give a free passage to those who wished to return to Canada over land. The American colors were hauled down from the factory, and the British run up, to the no small chagrin and mortification of those who were American citizens.

It was thus, that after having passed the seas, and suffered all sorts of fatigues and privations, I lost

in a moment all my hopes of fortune. I could not help remarking that we had no right to expect such treatment on the part of the British government, after the assurances we had received from Mr. Jackson, his majesty's chargé d'affaires previously to our departure from New York. But as I have just intimated, the agents of the Northwest Company had exaggerated the importance of the factory in the eyes of the British ministry; for if the latter had known what it really was — a mere trading-post — and that nothing but the rivalry of the fur-traders of the Northwest Company was interested in its destruction, they would never have taken umbrage at it, or at least would never have sent a maritime expedition to destroy it. The sequel will show that I was not mistaken in this opinion.

The greater part of the servants of the Pacific Fur Company entered the service of the Company of the Northwest: the rest preferred to return to their country, and I was of the number of these last, Nevertheless, Mr. M'Tavish, after many ineffectual attempts to persuade me to remain with them, having intimated that the establishment could not dispense with my services, as I was the only person who could assist them in their trade, especially for provisions, of which they would soon be in the greatest need, I agreed with them (without however relinquishing my previous engagement with Mr. Astor's agents) for five months, that is to say, till the departure of the expedition which was to ascend the Columbia in the spring, and reach Canada by way of the Rocky Mountains and the rivers of the interior. Messrs. John Stuart and M'Kenzie set off about the end of this month, for the interior, in order that the latter might make over to the former the posts established on the Spokan and Okenakan.

On the 15th of November, Messrs. Alexander Stuart and Alexander Henry, both partners of the N. W. Company, arrived at the factory, in a couple of bark canoes manned by sixteen voyageurs. They had set out from Fort William, on Lake Superior, in the month of July. They brought us Canadian papers, by which we learned that the British arms so far had been in the ascendant. They confirmed also the news that an English frigate was coming to take possession of our quondam establishment; they were even surprised not to see the Isaac Todd lying in the road.

On the morning of the 30th, we saw a large vessel standing in under Cape Disappointment (which proved in this instance to deserve its name); and soon after that vessel came to anchor in Baker's bay. Not knowing whether it was a friendly or a hostile sail, we thought it prudent to send on board Mr. M'Dougal in a canoe, manned by such of the men as had been previously in the service of the Pacific Fur Company, with injunctions to declare themselves Americans, if the vessel was American, and Englishmen in the contrary case. While this party was on its way, Mr. M'Tavish caused all the furs which were marked with the initials of the N. W. Company to be placed on board the two barges at the Fort, and sent them up the river above Tongue Point, where they were to wait for a concerted signal, that was to inform them whether the new-comers were friends or foes. Toward midnight, Mr. Halsey, who had accompanied Mr. M'Dougal to the vessel, returned to the Fort, and announced to us that she was the British sloop-of-war *Raccoon*, of 26 guns, commanded by Captain Black, with a complement of 120 men, fore and aft. Mr. John M'Donald, a partner of the N. W. Company, was a passenger on the *Raccoon*, with five voyageurs, destined for the Company's service. He had left England in the frigate *Phoebe*, which had sailed in company with the Isaac Todd as far as Rio Janeiro; but there falling in with the British squadron, the admiral changed the destination of the frigate, despatching the sloops-of-war *Raccoon* and *Cherub* to convoy the Isaac Todd, and sent the *Phoebe* to search for the American commodore Porter, who

---

was then on the Pacific, capturing all the British whalers and other trading vessels he met with. These four vessels then sailed in company as far as Cape Horn, where they parted, after agreeing on the island of Juan Fernandez as a rendezvous. The three ships-of-war met, in fact, at that island; but after having a long time waited in vain for the Isaac Todd, Commodore Hillier (Hillyer?) who commanded this little squadron, hearing of the injury inflicted by Commodore Porter, on the British commerce, and especially on the whalers who frequent these seas, resolved to go in quest of him in order to give him combat; and retaining the Cherub to assist him, detailed the Raccoon to go and destroy the American establishment on the River Columbia, being assured by Mr. M'Donald that a single sloop-of-war would be sufficient for that service.

Mr. M'Donald had consequently embarked, with his people, on board the Raccoon. This gentleman informed us that they had experienced frightful weather in doubling the Cape, and that he entertained serious apprehensions for the safety of the Isaac Todd, but that if she was safe, we might expect her to arrive in the river in two or three weeks. The signal gun agreed upon, having been fired, for the return of the barges, Mr. M'Tavish came back to the Fort with the furs, and was overjoyed to learn the arrival of Mr. M'Donald.

On the 1st of December the Raccoon's gig came up to the fort, bringing Mr. M'Donald (surnamed Bras Croche, or crooked arm), and the first lieutenant, Mr. Sheriff. Both these gentlemen were convalescent from the effects of an accident which had happened to them in the passage between Juan Fernandez and the mouth of the Columbia. The captain wishing to clean the guns, ordered them to be scaled, that is, fired off: during this exercise one of the guns hung fire; the sparks fell into a cartridge tub, and setting fire to the combustibles, communicated also to some priming horns suspended above; an explosion followed, which reached some twenty persons; eight were killed on the spot, the rest were severely burnt; Messrs. M'Donald and Sheriff had suffered a great deal; it was with difficulty that their clothes had been removed; and when the lieutenant came ashore, he had not recovered the use of his hands. Among the killed was an American named Flatt, who was in the service of the Northwest Company and whose loss these gentlemen appeared exceedingly to regret.

As there were goods destined for the Company on board the Raccoon, the schooner Dolly was sent to Baker's bay to bring them up: but the weather was so bad, and the wind so violent, that she did not return till the 12th, bringing up, together with the goods, Captain Black, a lieutenant of marines, four soldiers and as many sailors. We entertained our guests as splendidly as it lay in our power to do. After dinner, the captain caused firearms to be given to the servants of the Company, and we all marched under arms to the square or platform, where a flag-staff had been erected. There the captain took a British Union Jack, which he had brought on shore for the occasion, and caused it to be run up to the top of the staff; then, taking a bottle of Madeira wine, he broke it on the flag-staff, declaring in a loud voice, that he took possession of the establishment and of the country in the name of his Britannic Majesty; and changed the name of Astoria to Fort George. Some few Indian chiefs had been got together to witness this ceremony, and I explained to them in their own language what it signified. Three rounds of artillery and musketry were fired, and the health of the king was drunk by the parties interested, according to the usage on like occasions. The sloop being detained by contrary winds, the captain caused an exact survey to be made of the entrance of the river, as well as of the navigable channel between Baker's bay and Fort George. The officers visited the fort, turn about, and seemed to me in general very much dissatisfied with their

fool's errand, as they called it: they had expected to find a number of American vessels loaded with rich furs, and had calculated in advance their share in the booty of Astoria. They had not met a vessel, and their astonishment was at its height when they saw that our establishment had been transferred to the Northwest Company, and was under the British flag. It will suffice to quote a single expression of Captain Black's, in order to show how much they were deceived in their expectations. The captain landed after dark; when we showed him the next morning the palisades and log bastions of the factory, he inquired if there was not another fort; on being assured that there was no other, he cried out, with an air of the greatest astonishment:— "What! is this the fort which was represented to me as so formidable! Good God! I could batter it down in two hours with a four-pounder!"

There were on board the Raccoon two young men from Canada, who had been impressed at Quebec, when that vessel was there some years before her voyage to the Columbia: one of them was named Parent, a blacksmith, and was of Quebec: the other was from Upper Canada, and was named M'Donald. These young persons signified to us that they would be glad to remain at Fort George: and as there was among our men some who would gladly have shipped, we proposed to the captain an exchange, but he would not consent to it. John Little, a boat-builder from New York, who had been on the sick list a long time, was sent on board and placed under the care of the sloop's surgeon, Mr. O'Brien; the captain engaging to land him at the Sandwich Islands. P. D. Jeremie also shipped himself as under clerk. The vessel hoisted sail, and got out of the river, on the 31st of December.

From the account given in this chapter the reader will see with what facility the establishment of the Pacific Fur Company could have escaped capture by the British force. It was only necessary to get rid of the land party of the Northwest Company — who were completely in our power — then remove our effects up the river upon some small stream, and await the result. The sloop-of-war arrived, it is true; but as, in the case I suppose, she would have found nothing, she would have left, after setting fire to our deserted houses. None of their boats would have dared follow us, even if the Indians had betrayed to them our lurking-place. Those at the head of affairs had their own fortunes to seek, and thought it more for their interest, doubtless, to act as they did, but that will not clear them in the eyes of the world, and the charge of treason to Mr. Astor's interests will always be attached to their characters.

#### CHAPTER XVI

Expeditions to the Interior — Return of Messrs. John Stuart and D. M'Kenzie — Theft committed by the Natives — War Party against the Thieves.

ON the 3d of January, 1814, two canoes laden with merchandise for the interior, were despatched under the command of Mr. Alexander Stuart and Mr. James Keith, with fifteen men under them. Two of the latter were charged with letters for the posts (of the Northwest Company) east of the mountains, containing instructions to the persons in superintendence there, to have in readiness canoes and the requisite provisions for a large party intending to go east the ensuing spring. I took this opportunity of advising my friends in Canada of my intention to return home that season. It was the third attempt I had made to send news of my existence to my relatives and friends: the first two had miscarried and this was doomed to meet the same fate.

Messrs. J. Stuart and M'Kenzie, who (as was seen in a previous chapter) had been sent to notify the gentlemen in the interior of what had taken place in Astoria, and to transfer the wintering

posts to the Northwest Company, returned to Fort George on the morning of the 6th. They stated that they had left Messrs. Clarke and D. Stuart behind, with the loaded canoes, and also that the party had been attacked by the natives above the falls.

As they were descending the river toward evening, between the first and second portages, they had espied a large number of Indians congregated at no great distance in the prairie; which gave them some uneasiness. In fact, some time after they had encamped, and when all the people ( *tout le monde* ) were asleep, except Mr. Stuart, who was on guard, these savages had stealthily approached the camp, and discharged some arrows, one of which had penetrated the coverlet of one of the men, who was lying near the baggage, and had pierced the cartilage of his ear; the pain made him utter a sharp cry, which alarmed the whole camp and threw it into an uproar. The natives perceiving it, fled to the woods, howling and yelling like so many demons. In the morning our people picked up eight arrows round the camp: they could yet hear the savages yell and whoop in the woods: but, notwithstanding, the party reached the lower end of the portage unmolested.

The audacity which these barbarians had displayed in attacking a party of from forty to forty-five persons, made us suppose that they would, much more probably, attack the party of Mr. Stuart, which was composed of but seventeen men. Consequently, I received orders to get ready forthwith a canoe and firearms, in order to proceed to their relief. The whole was ready in the short space of two hours, and I embarked immediately with a guide and eight men. Our instructions were to use all possible diligence to overtake Messrs. Stewart and Keith, and to convey them to the upper end of the last portage; or to return with the goods, if we met too much resistance on the part of the natives. We travelled, then, all that day, and all the night of the 6th, and on the 7th, till evening. Finding ourselves then at a little distance from the rapids, I came to a halt, to put the firearms in order, and let the men take some repose. About midnight I caused them to re-embark, and ordered the men to sing as they rowed, that the party whom we wished to overtake might hear us as we passed, if perchance they were encamped on some one of the islands of which the river is full in this part. In fact, we had hardly proceeded five or six miles, when we were hailed by some one apparently in the middle of the stream. We stopped rowing, and answered, and were soon joined by our people of the expedition, who were all descending the river in a canoe. They informed us that they had been attacked the evening before, and that Mr. Stuart had been wounded. We turned about, and all proceeded in company toward the fort. In the morning, when we stopped to breakfast, Mr. Keith gave me the particulars of the affair of the day preceding.

Having arrived at the foot of the rapids, they commenced the portage on the south bank of the river, which is obstructed with boulders, over which it was necessary to pass the effects. After they had hauled over the two canoes, and a part of the goods, the natives approached in great numbers, trying to carry off something unobserved. Mr. Stuart was at the upper end of the portage (the portage being about six hundred yards in length), and Mr. Keith accompanied the loaded men. An Indian seized a bag containing articles of little value, and fled: Mr. Stuart, who saw the act, pursued the thief, and after some resistance on the latter's part, succeeded in making him relinquish his booty. Immediately he saw a number of Indians armed with bows and arrows, approaching him: one of them bent his bow and took aim; Mr. Stuart, on his part, levelled his gun at the Indian, warning the latter not to shoot, and at the same instant received an arrow, which pierced his left shoulder. He then drew the trigger; but as it had rained all day, the gun missed

fire, and before he could re-prime, another arrow, better aimed than the first, struck him in the left side and penetrated between two of his ribs, in the region of the heart, and would have proved fatal, no doubt, but for a stone-pipe he had fortunately in his side-pocket, and which was broken by the arrow; at the same moment his gun was discharged, and the Indian fell dead. Several others then rushed forward to avenge the death of their compatriot; but two of the men came up with their loads and their gun (for these portages were made arms in hand), and seeing what was going forward, one of them threw his pack on the ground, fired on one of the Indians and brought him down. He got up again, however, and picked up his weapons, but the other man ran upon him, wrested from him his warclub, and despatched him by repeated blows on the head with it. The other savages, seeing the bulk of our people approaching the scene of combat, retired and crossed the river. In the meantime, Mr. Stuart extracted the arrows from his body, by the aid of one of the men: the blood flowed in abundance from the wounds, and he saw that it would be impossible for him to pursue his journey; he therefore gave orders for the canoes and goods to be carried back to the lower end of the portage. Presently they saw a great number of pirogues full of warriors coming from the opposite side of the river. Our people then considered that they could do nothing better than to get away as fast as possible; they contrived to transport over one canoe, on which they all embarked, abandoning the other and the goods, to the natives. While the barbarians were plundering these effects, more precious in their estimation than the apples of gold in the garden of the Hesperides, our party retired and got out of sight. The retreat was, notwithstanding, so precipitate, that they left behind an Indian from the Lake of the Two Mountains, who was in the service of the Company as a hunter. This Indian had persisted in concealing himself behind the rocks, meaning, he said, to kill some of those thieves, and did not return in time for the embarkation. Mr. Keith regretted this brave man's obstinacy, fearing, with good reason, that he would be discovered and murdered by the natives. We rowed all that day and night, and reached the factory on the 9th, at sunrise. Our first care, after having announced the misfortune of our people, was to dress the wounds of Mr. Stuart, which had been merely bound with a wretched piece of cotton cloth.

The goods which had been abandoned, were of consequence to the Company, inasmuch as they could not be replaced. It was dangerous, besides, to leave the natives in possession of some fifty guns and a considerable quantity of ammunition, which they might use against us. The partners, therefore, decided to fit out an expedition immediately to chastise the robbers, or at least to endeavor to recover the goods. I went, by their order, to find the principal chiefs of the neighboring tribes, to explain to them what had taken place, and invite them to join us, to which they willingly consented. Then, having got ready six canoes, we re-embarked on the 10th, to the number of sixty-two men, all armed from head to foot, and provided with a small brass field-piece.

We soon reached the lower end of the first rapid: but the essential thing was wanting to our little force; it was without provisions; our first care then was to try to procure these. Having arrived opposite a village, we perceived on the bank about thirty armed savages, who seemed to await us firmly. As it was not our policy to seem bent on hostilities, we landed on the opposite bank, and I crossed the river with five or six men, to enter into parley with them, and try to obtain provisions. I immediately became aware that the village was abandoned, the women and children having fled to the woods, taking with them all the articles of food. The young men, however, offered us dogs, of which we purchased a score. Then we passed to a second village, where they were already

---

informed of our coming. Here we bought forty-five dogs and a horse. With this stock we formed an encampment on an island called Strawberry island.

Seeing ourselves now provided with food for several days, we informed the natives touching the motives which had brought us, and announced to them that we were determined to put them all to death and burn their villages, if they did not bring back in two days the effects stolen on the 7th. A party was detached to the rapids, where the attack on Mr. Stuart had taken place. We found the villages all deserted. Crossing to the north bank, we found a few natives, of whom we made inquiries respecting the Nipissingue Indian, who had been left behind, but they assured us that they had seen nothing of him.

Not having succeeded in recovering, above the rapids, any part of the lost goods, the inhabitants all protesting that it was not they, but the villages below, which had perpetrated the robbery, we descended the river again and re-encamped on Strawberry island. As the intention of the partners was to intimidate the natives, without (if possible) shedding blood, we made a display of our numbers, and from time to time fired off our little field-piece, to let them see that we could reach them from one side of the river to the other. The Indian Coalpo and his wife, who had accompanied us, advised us to make prisoner one of the chiefs. We succeeded in this design, without incurring any danger. Having invited one of the natives to come and smoke with us, he came accordingly: a little after, came another; at last, one of the chiefs, and he one of the most considered among them, also came. Being notified secretly of his character by Coalpo, who was concealed in the tent, we seized him forthwith, tied him to a stake, and placed a guard over him with a naked sword, as if ready to cut his head off on the least attempt being made by his people for his liberation. The other Indians were then suffered to depart with the news for his tribe, that unless the goods were brought to us in twenty-four hours, their chief would be put to death. Our stratagem succeeded: soon after we heard wailing and lamentation in the village, and they presently brought us part of the guns, some brass kettles, and a variety of smaller articles, protesting that this was all their share of the plunder. Keeping our chief as a hostage, we passed to the other village, and succeeded in recovering the rest of the guns, and about a third of the other goods.

Although they had been the aggressors, yet as they had had two men killed and we had not lost any on our side, we thought it our duty to conform to the usage of the country, and abandon to them the remainder of the stolen effects, to cover, according to their expression, the bodies of their two slain compatriots. Besides, we began to find ourselves short of provisions, and it would not have been easy to get at our enemies to punish them, if they had taken refuge in the woods, according to their custom when they feel themselves the weaker party. So we released our prisoner, and gave him a flag, telling him that when he presented it unfurled, we should regard it as a sign of peace and friendship: but if, when we were passing the portage, any one of the natives should have the misfortune to come near the baggage, we would kill him on the spot. We re-embarked on the 19th, and on the 22d reached the fort, where we made a report of our martial expedition. We found Mr. Stuart very ill of his wounds, especially of the one in the side, which was so much swelled that he had every reason to think the arrow had been poisoned.

If we did not do the savages as much harm as we might have done, it was not from timidity but from humanity, and in order not to shed human blood uselessly. For after all, what good would it have done us to have slaughtered some of these barbarians, whose crime was not the effect of depravity and wickedness, but of an ardent and irresistible desire to ameliorate their condition? It

must be allowed also that the interest, well-understood, of the partners of the Northwest Company, was opposed to too strongly marked acts of hostility on their part: it behooved them exceedingly not to make irreconcilable enemies of the populations neighboring on the portages of the Columbia, which they would so often be obliged to pass and repass in future. It is also probable that the other natives on the banks, as well as of the river as of the sea, would not have seen with indifference, their countrymen too signally or too rigorously punished by strangers; and that they would have made common cause with the former to resist the latter, and perhaps even to drive them from the country.

I must not omit to state that all the firearms surrendered by the Indians on this occasion, were found loaded with ball, and primed, with a little piece of cotton laid over the priming to keep the powder dry. This shows how soon they would acquire the use of guns, and how careful traders should be in intercourse with strange Indians, not to teach them their use.

#### CHAPTER XVII

Description of Tongue Point — A Trip to the Willamet — Arrival of W. Hunt in the Brig Pedlar — Narrative of the Loss of the Ship Lark — Preparations for crossing the Continent.

THE new proprietors of our establishment, being dissatisfied with the site we had chosen, came to the determination to change it; after surveying both sides of the river, they found no better place than the head-land which we had named Tongue point. This point, or to speak more accurately, perhaps, this cape, extends about a quarter of a mile into the river, being connected with the mainland by a low, narrow neck, over which the Indians, in stormy weather, haul their canoes in passing up and down the river; and terminating in an almost perpendicular rock, of about 250 or 300 feet elevation. This bold summit was covered with a dense forest of pine trees; the ascent from the lower neck was gradual and easy; it abounded in springs of the finest water; on either side it had a cove to shelter the boats necessary for a trading establishment. This peninsula had truly the appearance of a huge tongue. Astoria had been built nearer the ocean, but the advantages offered by Tongue point more than compensated for its greater distance. Its soil, in the rainy season, could be drained with little or no trouble; it was a better position to guard against attacks on the part of the natives, and less exposed to that of civilized enemies by sea or land in time of war. All the hands who had returned from the interior, added to those who were already at the Fort, consumed, in an incredibly short space of time the small stock of provisions which had been conveyed by the Pacific Fur Company to the Company of the Northwest. It became a matter of necessity, therefore, to seek some spot where a part, at least, could be sent to subsist. With these views I left the fort on the 7th February with a number of men, belonging to the old concern, and who had refused to enter the service of the new one, to proceed to the establishment on the Willamet river, under the charge of Mr. Alexander Henry, who had with him a number of first-rate hunters. Leaving the Columbia to ascend the Willamet, I found the banks on either side of that stream well wooded, but low and swampy, until I reached the first falls; having passed which, by making a portage, I commenced ascending a dear but moderately deep channel, against a swift current. The banks on either side were bordered with forest-trees, but behind that narrow belt, diversified with prairie, the landscape was magnificent; the hills were of moderate elevation, and rising in an amphitheatre. Deer and elk are found here in great abundance; and the post in charge of Mr. Henry had been established with a view of keeping constantly there a number of hunters to prepare dried venison for the use of the factory. On our arrival at the Columbia, considering the

---

latitude, we had expected severe winter weather, such as is experienced in the same latitudes east; but we were soon undeceived; the mildness of the climate never permitted us to transport fresh provisions from the Willamet to Astoria. We had not a particle of salt; and the attempts we made to smoke or dry the venison proved abortive.

Having left the men under my charge with Mr. Henry, I took leave of that gentleman, and returned. At Oak point I found Messrs. Keith and Pillet encamped, to pass there the season of sturgeon-fishing. They informed me that I was to stay with them.

Accordingly I remained at Oak point the rest of the winter, occupied in trading with the Indians spread all along the river for some 30 or 40 miles above, in order to supply the factory with provisions. I used to take a boat with four or five men, visit every fishing station, trade for as much fish as would load the boat, and send her down to the fort. The surplus fish traded in the interval between the departure and return of the boat, was cut up, salted and barrelled for future use. The salt had been recently obtained from a quarter to be presently mentioned.

About the middle of March Messrs. Keith and Pillet both left me and returned to the fort. Being now alone, I began seriously to reflect on my position, and it was in this interval that I positively decided to return to Canada. I made inquiries of the men sent up with the boats for fish, concerning the preparations for departure, but whether they had been enjoined secrecy, or were unwilling to communicate, I could learn nothing of what was doing below.

At last I heard that on the 28th February a sail had appeared at the mouth of the river. The gentlemen of the N. W. Company at first flattered themselves that it was the vessel they had so long expected. They were soon undeceived by a letter from Mr. Hunt, which was brought to the fort by the Indians of Baker's bay. That gentleman had purchased at the Marquesas islands a brig called The Pedlar : it was on that vessel that he arrived, having for pilot Captain Northrop, formerly commander of the ship Lark. The latter vessel had been outfitted by Mr. Astor, and despatched from New York, in spite of the blockading squadron, with supplies for the ci-devant Pacific Fur Company; but unhappily she had been assailed by a furious tempest and capsized in lat. 16° N., and three or four hundred miles from the Sandwich Islands. The mate, who was sick, was drowned in the cabin, and four of the crew perished at the same time. The captain had the masts and rigging cut away, which caused the vessel to right again, though full of water. One of the hands dived down to the sail-maker's locker, and got out a small sail, which they attached to the bowsprit. He dived a second time, and brought up a box containing a dozen bottles of wine. For thirteen days they had no other sustenance but the flesh of a small shark, which they had the good fortune to take, and which they ate raw, and for drink, a gill of the wine each man per diem. At last the trade winds carried them upon the island of Tahouraka , where the vessel went to pieces on the reef. The islanders saved the crew, and seized all the goods which floated on the water. Mr. Hunt was then at Wahoo , and learned through some islanders from Morotoi , that some Americans had been wrecked on the isle of Tahouraka. He went immediately to take them off, and gave the pilot-age of his own vessel to Captain Northrop.

It may be imagined what was the surprise of Mr. Hunt when he saw Astoria under the British flag, and passed into stranger hands. But the misfortune was beyond remedy, and he was obliged to content himself with taking on board all the Americans who were at the establishment, and who had not entered the service of the Company of the Northwest. Messrs. Halsey, Seton, and Farnham were among those who embarked. I shall have occasion to inform the reader of the part each

of them played, and how they reached their homes.

When I heard that Mr. Hunt was in the river, and knowing that the overland expedition was to set out early in April, I raised camp at Oak point, and reached the fort on the 2d of that month. But the brig Pedlar had that very day got outside the river, after several fruitless attempts, in one of which she narrowly missed being lost on the bar.

I would gladly have gone in her, had I but arrived a day sooner. I found, however, all things prepared for the departure of the canoes, which was to take place on the 4th. I got ready the few articles I possessed, and in spite of the very advantageous offers of the gentlemen of the N. W. Company, and their reiterated persuasions, aided by the crafty M'Dougal, to induce me to remain, at least one year more, I persisted in my resolution to leave the country. The journey I was about to undertake was a long one: it would be accompanied with great fatigues and many privations, and even by some dangers; but I was used to privations and fatigues; I had braved dangers of more than one sort; and even had it been otherwise, the ardent desire of revisiting my country, my relatives, and my friends, the hope of finding myself, in a few months, in their midst, would have made me overlook every other consideration.

I am about, then, to quit the banks of the river Columbia, and conduct the reader through the mountain passes, over the plains, the forests, and the lakes of our continent: but I ought first to give him at least an idea of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, as well as of the principal productions of the country that I now quit, after a sojourn of three years. This is what I shall try to do in the following chapters.

#### CHAPTER XVIII

Situation of the Columbia River — Qualities of its Soil — Climate, &c. — Vegetable and Animal Productions of the Country.

THE mouth of the Columbia river is situated in  $46^{\circ} 19'$  north latitude, and  $125^{\circ}$  or  $126^{\circ}$  of longitude west of the meridian of Greenwich. The highest tides are very little over nine or ten feet, at its entrance, and are felt up stream for a distance of twenty-five or thirty leagues.

During the three years I spent there, the cold never was much below the freezing point; and I do not think the heat ever exceeded  $76^{\circ}$ . Westerly winds prevail from the early part of spring, and during a part of the summer; that wind generally springs up with the flood tide, and tempers the heat of the day. The northwest wind prevails during the latter part of summer and commencement of autumn. This last is succeeded by a southeast wind, which blows almost without intermission from the beginning of October to the end of December, or commencement of January. This interval is the rainy season, the most disagreeable of the year. Fogs (so thick that sometimes for days no object is discernible for five or six hundred yards from the beach), are also very prevalent.

The surface of the soil consists (in the valleys) of a layer of black vegetable mould, about five or six inches thick at most; under this layer is found another of gray and loose, but extremely cold earth; below which is a bed of coarse sand and gravel, and next to that pebble or hard rock. On the more elevated parts, the same black vegetable mould is found, but much thinner, and under it is the trap rock. We found along the seashore, south of Point Adams, a bank of earth white as chalk, which we used for white-washing our walls. The natives also brought us several specimens of blue, red and yellow earth or clay, which they said was to be found at a great distance south; and also a sort of shining earth, resembling lead ore. We found no limestone, although we burnt

several kilns, but never could get one ounce of lime.

We had brought with us from New York a variety of garden seeds, which were put in the ground in the month of May, 1811, on a rich piece of land laid out for the purpose on a sloping ground in front of our establishment. The garden had a fine appearance in the month of August; but although the plants were left in the ground until December, not one of them came to maturity, with the exception of the radishes, the turnips, and the potatoes. The turnips grew to a prodigious size; one of the largest we had the curiosity to weigh and measure; its circumference was thirty-three inches, its weight fifteen and a half pounds. The radishes were in full blossom in the month of December, and were left in the ground to perfect the seeds for the ensuing season, but they were all destroyed by the ground mice, who hid themselves under the stumps which we had not rooted out, and infested our garden. With all the care we could bestow on them during the passage from New York, only twelve potatoes were saved, and even these so shrivelled up, that we despaired of raising any from the few sprouts that still gave signs of life. Nevertheless we raised one hundred and ninety potatoes the first season, and after sparing a few plants for our inland traders, we planted about fifty or sixty hills, which produced five bushels the second year; about two of these were planted, and gave us a welcome crop of fifty bushels the year 1813.

It would result from these facts, that the soil on the banks of the river, as far as tide water, or for a distance of fifty or sixty miles, is very little adapted for agriculture; at all events, vegetation is very slow. It may be that the soil is not everywhere so cold as the spot we selected for our garden, and some other positions might have given a better reward for our labor: this supposition is rendered more than probable when we take into consideration the great difference in the indigenous vegetables of the country in different localities.

The forest trees most common at the mouth of the river and near our establishment, were cedar, hemlock, white and red spruce, and alder. There were a few dwarf white and gray ashes; and here and there a soft maple. The alder grows also to a very large size; I measured some of twelve to fifteen inches diameter; the wood was used by us in preference, to make charcoal for the blacksmith's forge. But the largest of all the trees that I saw in the country, was a white spruce: this tree, which had lost its top branches, and bore evident marks of having been struck by lightning, was a mere, straight trunk of about eighty to one hundred feet in height; its bark whitened by age, made it very conspicuous among the other trees with their brown bark and dark foliage, like a huge column of white marble. It stood on a slope of a hill immediately in the rear of our palisades. Seven of us placed ourselves round its trunk, and we could not embrace it by extending our arms and touching merely the tips of our fingers; we measured; it afterward in a more regular manner, and found it forty-two feet in circumference. It kept the same size, or nearly the same, to the very top. We had it in contemplation at one time to construct a circular staircase to its summit, and erect a platform thereon for an observatory, but more necessary and pressing demands on our time made us abandon the project.

A short distance above Astoria, the oak and ash are plentiful, but neither of these is of much value or beauty.

From the middle of June to the middle of October, we had abundance of wild fruit; first, strawberries, almost white, small but very sweet; then raspberries, both red and orange color. These grow on a bush sometimes twelve feet in height: they are not sweet, but of a large size.

The months of July and August furnish a small berry of an agreeable, slightly acid flavor; this

berry grows on a slender bush of some eight to nine feet high, with small round leaves; they are in size like a wild cherry: some are blue, while others are of a cherry red: the last being smaller; they have no pits, or stones in them, but seeds, such as are to be seen in currants.

I noticed in the month of August another berry growing in bunches or grapes like the currant, on a bush very similar to the currant bush: the leaves of this shrub resemble those of the laurel: they are very thick and always green. The fruit is oblong, and disposed in two rows on the stem: the extremity of the berry is open, having a little speck or tuft like that of an apple. It is not of a particularly fine flavor, but it is wholesome, and one may eat a quantity of it, without inconvenience. The natives make great use of it; they prepare it for the winter by bruising and drying it; after which it is moulded into cakes according to fancy, and laid up for use. There is also a great abundance of cranberries, which proved very useful as an antiscorbutic.

We found also the whortleberry, chokecherries, goose-berries, and black currants with wild crab-apples: these last grow in clusters, are of small size and very tart. On the upper part of the river are found blackberries, hazel-nuts, acorns, &c. The country also possesses a great variety of nutritive roots: the natives make great use of those which have the virtue of curing or preventing the scurvy. We ate freely of them with the same intention, and with the same success. One of these roots, which much resembles a small onion, serves them, in some sort, in place of cheese. Having gathered a sufficient quantity, they bake them with red-hot stones, until the steam ceases to ooze from the layer of grass and earth with which the roots are covered; then they pound them into a paste, and make the paste into loaves, of five or six pounds weight: the taste is not unlike liquorice, but not of so sickly a sweetness. When we made our first voyage up the river the natives gave us square biscuits, very well worked, and printed with different figures. These are made of a white root, pounded, reduced to paste, and dried in the sun. They call it Chapaleel: it is not very palatable, nor very nutritive.

But the principal food of the natives of the Columbia is fish. The salmon-fishery begins in July: that fish is here of an exquisite flavor, but it is extremely fat and oily; which renders it unwholesome for those who are not accustomed to it, and who eat too great a quantity: thus several of our people were attacked with diarrhoea in a few days after we began to make this fish our ordinary sustenance; but they found a remedy in the raspberries of the country which have an astringent property.

The months of August and September furnish excellent sturgeon. This fish varies exceedingly in size; I have seen some eleven feet long; and we took one that weighed, after the removal of the eggs and intestines, three hundred and ninety pounds. We took out nine gallons of roe. The sturgeon does not enter the river in so great quantities as the salmon.

In October and November we had salmon too, but of a quite different species — lean, dry and insipid. It differs from the other sort in form also; having very long teeth, and a hooked nose like the beak of a parrot. Our men termed it in derision “seven bark salmon,” because it had almost no nutritive substance.

February brings a small fish about the size of a sardine. It has an exquisite flavor, and is taken in immense quantities, by means of a scoop net, which the Indians, seated in canoes, plunge into the schools: but the season is short, not even lasting two weeks.

The principal quadrupeds of the country are the elk, the black and white tailed deer; four species of bear, distinguished chiefly by the color of the fur or poil, to wit, the black, brown, white

and grisly bear; the grisly bear is extremely ferocious; the white is found on the seashore toward the north; the wolf, the panther, the catamount, the lynx, the raccoon, the ground hog, opossum, mink, fisher, beaver, and the land and sea otter. The sea otter has the handsomest fur that is known; the skin surpasses that of the land variety in size and in the beauty of the poil; the most esteemed color is the silver gray, which is highly prized in the Indies, and commands a great price. The most remarkable birds are the eagle, the turkey-buzzard, the hawk, pelican, heron, gull, cormorant, crane, swan, and a great variety of wild ducks and geese. The pigeon, woodcock, and pheasant, are found in the forests as with us.

#### CHAPTER XIX

Manners, Custom, Occupations, &c., of the Natives on the River Columbia

THE natives inhabiting on the Columbia, from the mouth of that river to the falls, that is to say, on a space extending about 250 miles from east to west, are, generally speaking, of low stature, few of them passing five feet six inches, and many not even five feet. They pluck out the beard, in the manner of the other Indians of North America; but a few of the old men only suffer a tuft to grow upon their chins. On arriving among them we were exceedingly surprised to see that they had almost all flattened heads. This configuration is not a natural deformity, but an effect of art, caused by compression of the skull in infancy. It shocks strangers extremely, especially at first sight; nevertheless, among these barbarians it is an indispensable ornament: and when we signified to them how much this mode of flattening the forehead appeared to us to violate nature and good taste, they answered that it was only slaves who had not their heads flattened. The slaves, in fact, have the usual rounded head, and they are not permitted to flatten the foreheads of their children, destined to bear the chains of their sires. The natives of the Columbia procure these slaves from the neighboring tribes, and from the interior, in exchange for beads and furs. They treat them with humanity while their services are useful, but as soon as they become incapable of labor, neglect them and suffer them to perish of want. When dead, they throw their bodies, without ceremony, under the stump of an old decayed tree, or drag them to the woods to be devoured by the wolves and vultures.

The Indians of the Columbia are of a light copper color, active in body, and, above all, excellent swimmers. They are addicted to theft, or rather, they make no scruple of laying hands on whatever suits them in the property of strangers, whenever they can find an opportunity. The goods and effects of European manufacture are so precious in the eyes of these barbarians, that they rarely resist the temptation of stealing them.

These savages are not addicted to intemperance, unlike, in that respect the other American Indians, if we must not also except the Patagonians, who, like the Flatheads, regard intoxicating drinks as poisons, and drunkenness as disgraceful. I will relate a fact in point: one of the sons of the chief Comcomly being at the establishment one day, some of the gentlemen amused themselves with making him drink wine, and he was very soon drunk. He was sick in consequence, and remained in a state of stupor for two days. The old chief came to reproach us, saying that we had degraded his son by exposing him to the ridicule of the slaves, and besought us not to induce him to take strong liquors in future.

The men go entirely naked, not concealing any part of their bodies. Only in winter they throw over the shoulders a panther's skin, or else a sort of mantle made of the skins of wood-rats sewed together. In rainy weather I have seen them wear a mantle of rush mats, like a Roman toga, or the

vestment which a priest wears in celebrating mass; thus equipped, and furnished with a conical hat made from fibrous roots and impermeable, they may call themselves rain-proof. The women, in addition to the mantle of skins, wear a petticoat made of the cedar bark, which they attach round the girdle, and which reaches to the middle of the thigh. It is a little longer behind than before, and is fabricated in the following manner: They strip off the fine bark of the cedar, soak it as one soaks hemp, and when it is drawn out into fibres, work it into a fringe; then with a strong cord they bind the fringes together. With so poor a vestment they contrive to satisfy the requirements of modesty; when they stand it drapes them fairly enough; and when they squat down in their manner, it falls between their legs, leaving nothing exposed but the bare knees and thighs. Some of the younger women twist the fibres of bark into small cords, knotted at the ends, and so form the petticoat, disposed in a fringe, like the first, but more easily kept clean and of better appearance.

Cleanliness is not a virtue among these females, who, in that respect, resemble the other Indian women of the continent. They anoint the body and dress the hair with fish oil, which does not diffuse an agreeable perfume. Their hair (which both sexes wear long) is jet black; it is badly combed, but parted in the middle, as is the custom of the sex everywhere, and kept shining by the fish-oil before-mentioned. Sometimes, in imitation of the men, they paint the whole body with a red earth mixed with fish-oil. Their ornaments consist of bracelets of brass, which they wear indifferently on the wrists and ankles; of strings of beads of different colors (they give a preference to the blue), and displayed in great profusion around the neck, and on the arms and legs; and of white shells, called Haiqua, which are their ordinary circulating medium. These shells are found beyond the straits of Juan de Fuca, and are from one to four inches long, and about half an inch in diameter: they are a little curved and naturally perforated: the longest are most valued. The price of all commodities is reckoned in these shells; a fathom string of the largest of them is worth about ten beaver skins.

Although a little less slaves than the greater part of the Indian women elsewhere, the women on the Columbia are, nevertheless, charged with the most painful labors; they fetch water and wood, and carry the goods in their frequent changes of residence; they dean the fish and cut it up for drying; they prepare the food and cook the fruits in their season. Among their principal occupations is that of making rush mats, baskets for gathering roots, and hats very ingeniously wrought. As they want little clothing, they do not sew much, and the men have the needle in hand oftener than they.

The men are not lazy, especially during the fishing season. Not being hunters, and eating, consequently, little flesh-meat (although they are fond of it), fish makes, as I have observed, their principal diet. They profit, therefore, by the season when it is to be had, by taking as much as they can; knowing that the intervals will be periods of famine and abstinence, unless they provide sufficiently beforehand.

Their canoes are all made of cedar, and of a single trunk: we saw some which were five feet wide at midships, and thirty feet in length; these are the largest, and will carry from 25 to 30 men; the smallest will carry but two or three. The bows terminate in a very elongated point, running out four or five feet from the water line. It constitutes a separate piece, very ingeniously attached, and serves to break the surf in landing, or the wave on a rough sea. In landing they put the canoe round, so as to strike the beach stern on. Their oars or paddles are made of ash, and are about five

feet long, with a broad blade, in the shape of an inverted crescent, and a cross at the top, like the handle of a crutch. The object of the crescent shape of the blade is to be able to draw it, edge-wise, through the water without making any noise, when they hunt the sea-otter, an animal which can only be caught when it is lying asleep on the rocks, and which has the sense of hearing very acute. All their canoes are painted red, and fancifully decorated.

Their houses, constructed of cedar, are remarkable for their form and size: some of them are one hundred feet in length by thirty or forty feet in width. They are constructed as follows: An oblong square of the intended size of the building is dug out to the depth of two or three feet; a double row of cedar posts is driven into the earth about ten feet apart; between these the planks are laid, overlapping each other to the requisite height. The roof is formed by a ridge-pole laid on taller posts, notched to receive it, and is constructed with rafters and planks laid clapboard-wise, and secured by cords for want of nails. When the house is designed for several families, there is a door for each, and a separate fireplace; the smoke escapes through an aperture formed by removing one of the boards of the roof. The door is low, of an oval shape, and is provided with a ladder, cut out of a log, to descend into the lodge. The entrance is generally effected stern-foremost.

The kitchen utensils consist of plates of ashwood, bowls of fibrous roots, and a wooden kettle: with these they succeed in cooking their fish and meat in less time than we take with the help of pots and stewpans. See how they do it! Having heated a number of stones red-hot, they plunge them, one by one, in the vessel which is to contain the food to be prepared; as soon as the water boils, they put in the fish or meat, with some more heated stones on top, and cover up the whole with small rush mats, to retain the steam. In an incredibly short space of time the article is taken out and placed on a wooden platter, perfectly done and very palatable. The broth is taken out also, with a ladle of wood or horn.

It will be asked, no doubt, what instruments these savages use in the construction of their canoes and their houses. To cause their patience and industry to be admired as much as they deserve, it will be sufficient for me to mention that we did not find among them a single hatchet: their only tools consisted of an inch or half-inch chisel, usually made of an old file, and of a mallet, which was nothing but an oblong stone. With these wretched implements, and wedges made of hemlock knots, steeped in oil and hardened by the fire, they would undertake to cut down the largest cedars of the forest, to dig them out and fashion them into canoes, to split them, and get out the boards wherewith to build their houses. Such achievements with such means, are a marvel of ingenuity and patience.

#### CHAPTER XX

Manners and Customs of the Natives continued — Their Wars — Their Marriages — Medicine Men — Funeral Ceremonies — Religious Notions — Language.

THE politics of the natives of the Columbia are a simple affair: each village has its chief, but that chief does not seem to exercise a great authority over his fellow-citizens. Nevertheless, at his death, they pay him great honors: they use a kind of mourning, which consists in painting the face with black, in lieu of gay colors; they chant his funeral song or oration for a whole month. The chiefs are considered in proportion to their riches: such a chief has a great many wives, slaves, and strings of beads — he is accounted a great chief. These barbarians approach in that respect to certain civilized nations, among whom the worth of a man is estimated by the quantity of gold he possesses.

---

As all the villages form so many independent sovereignties, differences sometimes arise, whether between the chiefs or the tribes. Ordinarily, these terminate by compensations equivalent to the injury. But when the latter is of a grave character, like a murder (which is rare), or the abduction of a woman (which is very common), the parties, having made sure of a number of young braves to aid them, prepare for war. Before commencing hostilities, however, they give notice of the day when they will proceed to attack the hostile village; not following in that respect the custom of almost all other American Indians, who are wont to burst upon their enemy unawares, and to massacre or carry off men, women, and children; these people, on the contrary, embark in their canoes, which on these occasions are paddled by the women, repair to the hostile village, enter into parley, and do all they can to terminate the affair amicably: sometimes a third party becomes mediator between the first two, and of course observes an exact neutrality. If those who seek justice do not obtain it to their satisfaction, they retire to some distance, and the combat begins, and is continued for some time with fury on both sides; but as soon as one or two men are killed, the party which has lost these, owns itself beaten and the battle ceases. If it is the people of the village attacked who are worsted, the others do not retire without receiving presents. When the conflict is postponed till the next day (for they never fight but in open daylight, as if to render nature witness of their exploits), they keep up frightful cries all night long, and, when they are sufficiently near to understand each other, defy one another by menaces, railleries, and sarcasms, like the heroes of Homer and Virgil. The women and children are always removed from the village before the action.

Their combats are almost all maritime: for they fight ordinarily in their pirogues, which they take care to careen, so as to present the broadside to the enemy, and half lying down, avoid the greater part of the arrows let fly at them.

But the chief reason of the bloodlessness of their combats is the inefficiency of their offensive weapons, and the excellence of their defensive armor. Their offensive arms are merely a bow and arrow, and a kind of double edged sabre, about two and a half feet long, and six inches wide in the blade: they rarely come to sufficiently close quarters to make use of the last. For defensive armor they wear a cassock or tunic of elk-skin double, descending to the ankles, with holes for the arms. It is impenetrable by their arrows, which can not pierce two thicknesses of leather; and as their heads are also covered with a sort of helmet, the neck is almost the only part in which they can be wounded. They have another kind of corslet, made like the corsets of our ladies, of splinters of hard wood interlaced with nettle twine. The warrior who wears this cuirass does not use the tunic of elk-skin; he is consequently less protected, but a great deal more free; the said tunic being very heavy and very stiff.

It is almost useless to observe that, in their military expeditions, they have their bodies and faces daubed with different paints, often of the most extravagant designs. I remember to have seen a war-chief, with one exact half of his face painted white and the other half black.

Their marriages are conducted with a good deal of ceremony. When a young man seeks a girl in marriage his parents make the proposals to those of the intended bride, and when it has been agreed upon what presents the future bridegroom is to offer to the parents of the bride, all parties assemble at the house of the latter, whither the neighbors are invited to witness the contract. The presents, which consist of slaves, strings of beads, copper bracelets, haiqua shells, &c., are distributed by the young man, who, on his part receives as many, and sometimes more, according to the

means or the munificence of the parents of his betrothed. The latter is then led forward by the old matrons and presented to the young man, who takes her as his wife, and all retire to their quarters.

The men are not very scrupulous in their choice, and take small pains to inform themselves what conduct a young girl has observed before her nuptials; and it must be owned that few marriages would take place, if the youth would only espouse maidens without reproach on the score of chastity; for the unmarried girls are by no means scrupulous in that particular, and their parents give them, on that head, full liberty. But once the marriage is contracted, the spouses observe toward each other an inviolable fidelity; adultery is almost unknown among them, and the woman who should be guilty of it would be punished with death. At the same time, the husband may repudiate his wife, and the latter may then unite herself in marriage to another man. Polygamy is permitted, indeed is customary; there are some who have as many as four or five wives; and although it often happens that the husband loves one better than the rest, they never show any jealousy, but live together in the most perfect concord.

There are charlatans everywhere, but they are more numerous among savages than anywhere else, because among these ignorant and superstitious people the trade is at once more profitable and less dangerous. As soon as a native of the Columbia is indisposed, no matter what the malady, they send for the medicine man, who treats the patient in the absurd manner usually adopted by these impostors, and with such violence of manipulation, that often a sick man, whom a timely bleeding or purgative would have saved, is carried off by a sudden death.

They deposit their dead in canoes, on rocks sufficiently elevated not to be overflowed by the spring freshets. By the side of the dead are laid his bow, his arrows, and some of his fishing implements; if it is a woman, her beads and bracelets: the wives, the relatives and the slaves of the defunct cut their hair in sign of grief, and for several days, at the rising and setting of the sun, go to some distance from the village to chant a funeral song.

These people have not, properly speaking, a public worship. I could never perceive, during my residence among them, that they worshipped any idol. They had, nevertheless, some small sculptured figures; but they appeared to hold them in light esteem, offering to barter them for trifles. Having travelled with one of the sons of the chief of the Chinooks (Comcomly), an intelligent and communicative young man, I put to him several questions touching their religious belief, and the following is, in substance, what he told me respecting it: Men, according to their ideas, were created by a divinity whom they name Etalapass; but they were imperfect, having a mouth that was not opened, eyes that were fast dosed, hands and feet that were not moveable; in a word, they were rather statues of flesh, than living men. A second divinity, whom they call Ecannum, less powerful, but more benign than the former, having seen men in their state of imperfection, took a sharp stone and laid open their mouths and eyes; he gave agility, also, to their feet, and motion to their hands. This compassionate divinity was not content with conferring these first benefits; he taught men to make canoes, paddles, nets, and, in a word, all the tools and instruments they use. He did still more: he threw great rocks into the river, to obstruct the ascent of the salmon, in order that they might take as many as they wanted.

The natives of the Columbia further believe, that the men who have been good citizens, good fathers, good husbands, and good fishermen, who have not committed murder, &c., will be perfectly happy after their death, and will go to a country where they will find fish, fruit, &c., in abun-

dance; and that, on the contrary, those who have lived wickedly, will inhabit a country of fasting and want, where they will eat nothing but bitter roots, and have nothing to drink but salt water. If these notions in regard to the origin and future destiny of man are not exactly conformed to sound reason or to divine revelation, it will be allowed that they do not offer the absurdities with which the mythologies of many ancient nations abound. The article which makes skill in fishing a virtue worthy of being compensated in the other world, does not disfigure the salutary and consoling dogma of the immortality of the soul, and that of future rewards and punishments, so much as one is at first tempted to think; for if we reflect a little, we shall discover that the skilful fisherman, in laboring for himself, labors also for society; he is a useful citizen, who contributes, as much as lies in his power, to avert from his fellow-men the scourge of famine; he is a religious man, who honors the divinity by making use of his benefits. Surely a great deal of the theology of a future life prevalent among civilized men, does not excel this in profundity.

It is not to be expected that men perfectly ignorant, like these Indians, should be free from superstitions: one of the most ridiculous they have, regards the method of preparing and eating fish. In the month of July, 1811, the natives brought us at first a very scanty supply of the fresh salmon, from the fear that we would cut the fish crosswise instead of lengthwise; being persuaded that if we did so, the river would be obstructed, and the fishing ruined. Having reproached the chief on that account, they brought us a greater quantity, but all cooked, and which, not to displease them, it was necessary to eat before sunset. Re-assured at last by our solemn promises not to cut the fish crosswise, they supplied us abundantly during the remainder of the season.

In spite of the vices that may be laid to the charge of the natives of the Columbia, I regard them as nearer to a state of civilization than any of the tribes who dwell east of the Rocky mountains. They did not appear to me so attached to their customs that they could not easily adopt those of civilized nations: they would dress themselves willingly in the European mode, if they had the means. To encourage this taste, we lent pantaloons to the chiefs who visited us, when they wished to enter our houses, never allowing them to do it in a state of nudity. They possess, in an eminent degree, the qualities opposed to indolence, improvidence, and stupidity: the chiefs, above all, are distinguished for their good sense and intelligence. Generally speaking, they have a ready intellect and a tenacious memory. Thus old Comcomly recognised the mate of the Albatross as having visited the country sixteen years before, and recalled to the latter the name of the captain under whom he had sailed at that period.

The Chinook language is spoken by all the nations from the mouth of the Columbia to the falls. It is hard and difficult to pronounce, for strangers; being full of gutturals, like the Gaelic. The combinations thl , or tl , and lt , are as frequent in the Chinook as in the Mexican.

#### CHAPTER XXI

Departure from Astoria or Fort George — Accident — Passage of the Dalles or Narrows — Great Columbian Desert — Aspect of the Country — Wallawalla and Shaptin Rivers — Rattle-snakes — Some Details regarding the Natives of the Upper Columbia.

WE quitted Fort George (or Astoria, if you please) on Monday morning, the 4th of April, 1814, in ten canoes, five of which were of bark and five of cedar wood, carrying each seven men as crew, and two passengers, in all ninety persons, and all well armed. Messrs. J. G. M'Tavish, D. Stuart, J. Clarke, B. Pillet, W. Wallace, D. M'Gillis, D. M'Kenzie, &c., were of the party. Nothing remarkable occurred to us as far as the first falls, which we reached on the 10th. The portage was effected im-

mediately, and we encamped on an island for the night. Our numbers had caused the greater part of the natives to take to flight, and those who remained in the villages showed the most pacific dispositions. They sold us four horses and thirty dogs, which were immediately slaughtered for food.

We resumed our route on the 11th, at an early hour. The wind was favorable, but blew with violence. Toward evening, the canoe in which Mr. M'Tavish was, in doubling a point of rock, was run under by its press of sail, and sunk. Happily the river was not deep at this place; no one was drowned; and we succeeded in saving all the goods. This accident compelled us to camp at an early hour.

On the 12th, we arrived at a rapid called the Dalles : this is a channel cut by nature through the rocks, which are here almost perpendicular: the channel is from 150 to 300 feet wide, and about two miles long. The whole body of the river rushes through it, with great violence, and renders navigation impracticable. The portage occupied us till dusk. Although we had not seen a single Indian in the course of the day, we kept sentinels on duty all night: for it was here that Messrs. Stuart and Reed were attacked by the natives.

On the 13th, we made two more portages, and met Indians, of whom we purchased horses and wood. We camped early on a sandy plain, where we passed a bad night; the wind, which blew violently, raised clouds of sand, which incommoded us greatly, and spoiled every mouthful of food we took.

On the 14th and 15th, we passed what are called the great plains of the Columbia. From the top of the first rapid to this point, the aspect of the country becomes more and more triste and disagreeable; one meets at first nothing but bare hills, which scarcely offer a few isolated pines, at a great distance from each other; after that, the earth, stripped of verdure, does not afford you the sight of a single shrub; the little grass which grows in that arid soil, appears burnt by the rigor of the climate. The natives who frequent the banks of the river, for the salmon fishery, have no other wood but that which they take floating down. We passed several rapids, and a small stream called Utalah, which flows from the southeast.

On the 16th, we found the river narrowed; the banks rose on either side in elevations, without, however, offering a single tree. We reached the river Wallawalla , which empties into the Columbia on the southeast. It is narrow at its confluence, and is not navigable for any great distance. A range of mountains was visible to the S. E., about fifty or sixty miles off. Behind these mountains the country becomes again flat and sandy, and is inhabited by a tribe called the Snakes. We found on the left bank of the Wallawalla , an encampment of Indians, consisting of about twenty lodges. They sold us six dogs and eight horses, the greater part extremely lean. We killed two of the horses immediately: I mounted one of the six that remained; Mr. Ross took another; and we drove the other four before us. Toward the decline of day we passed the river Lewis , called, in the language of the country, the Sha-ap-tin. It comes from the S. E., and is the same that Lewis and Clarke descended scended in 1805. The Sha-ap-tin appeared to me to have little depth, and to be about 300 yards wide, at its confluence.

The country through which we were now passing, was a mingling of hills, steep rocks, and valleys covered with wormwood; the stems of which shrub are nearly six inches thick, and might serve for fuel. We killed six rattlesnakes on the 15th, and on the 16th saw a great many more among the rocks. These dangerous reptiles appeared to be very numerous in this part of the country.

The plains are also inhabited by a little quadruped, only about eight or nine inches in length, and approaching the dog in form. These animals have the hair, or poil, of a reddish brown, and strong fore-paws, armed with long claws which serve them to dig out their holes under the earth. They have a great deal of curiosity: as soon as they hear a noise they come out of their holes and bark. They are not vicious, but, though easily tamed, can not be domesticated.

The natives of the upper Columbia, beginning at the falls, differ essentially in language, manners, and habits, from those of whom I have spoken in the preceding chapters. They do not dwell in villages, like the latter, but are nomads, like the Tartars and the Arabs of the desert: their women are more industrious, and the young girls more reserved and chaste than those of the populations lower down. They do not go naked, but both sexes wear habits made of dressed deer-skin, which they take care to rub with chalk, to keep them clean and white. They are almost always seen on horseback, and are in general good riders; they pursue the deer and penetrate even to Missouri, to kill buffalo, the flesh of which they dry, and bring it back on their horses, to make their principal food during the winter. These expeditions are not free from danger; for they have a great deal to apprehend from the Black-feet, who are their enemies. As this last tribe is powerful and ferocious, the Snakes, the Pierced-noses or Sha-ap-tins, the Flatheads, &c., make common cause against them, when the former go to hunt east of the mountains. They set out with their families, and the cavalcade often numbers two thousand horses. When they have the good fortune not to encounter the enemy, they return with the spoils of an abundant chase; they load a part of their horses with the hides and beef, and return home to pass the winter in peace. Sometimes, on the contrary, they are so harassed by the Blackfeet, who surprise them in the night and carry off their horses, that they are forced to return light-handed, and then they have nothing to eat but roots, all the winter.

These Indians are passionately fond of horse-races: by the bets they make on these occasions they sometimes lose all that they possess. The women ride, as well as the men. For a bridle they use a cord of horse-hair, which they attach round the animal's mouth; with that he is easily checked, and by laying the hand on his neck, is made to wheel to this side or that. The saddle is a cushion of stuffed deer-skin, very suitable for the purpose to which it is destined, rarely hurting the horse, and not fatiguing the rider so much as our European saddles. The stirrups are pieces of hardwood, ingeniously wrought, and of the same shape as those which are used in civilized countries. They are covered with a piece of deer-skin, which is sewed on wet, and in drying stiffens and becomes hard and firm. The saddles for women differ in form, being furnished with the antlers of a deer, so as to resemble the high pommel saddle of the Mexican ladies.

They procure their horses from the herds of these animals which are found in a wild state in the country extending between the northern latitudes and the gulf of Mexico, and which sometimes count a thousand or fifteen hundred in a troop. These horses come from New Mexico, and are of Spanish race. We even saw some which had been marked with a hot iron by Spaniards. Some of our men, who had been at the south, told me that they had seen among the Indians, bridles, the bits of which were of silver. The form of the saddles used by the females, proves that they have taken their pattern from the Spanish ones destined for the same use. One of the partners of the N. W. Company (Mr. M'Tavish) assured us that he had seen among the Spokans, an old woman who told him that she had seen men ploughing the earth; she told him that she had also seen churches, which she made him understand by imitating the sound of a bell, and the action of pulling a bell-

rope; and further to confirm her account, made the sign of the cross. That gentleman concluded that she had been made prisoner and sold to the Spaniards on the Del Norte ; but I think it more probable it was nearer, in North California, at the mission of San Carlos or San Francisco.

As the manner of taking wild horses should not be generally known to my readers, I will relate it here in few words. The Indian who wishes to capture some horses, mounts one of his fleetest coursers, being armed with a long cord of horsehair, one end of which is attached to his saddle, and the other is a running noose. Arrived at the herd, he dashes into the midst of it, and flinging his cord, or lasso, passes it dexterously over the head of the animal he selects; then wheeling his courser, draws the cord after him; the wild horse, finding itself strangling, makes little resistance; the Indian then approaches, ties his fore and hind legs together, and leaves him till he has taken in this manner as many as he can. He then drives them home before him, and breaks them in at leisure.

#### CHAPTER XXII

Meeting with the Widow of a Hunter — Her Narrative — Reflections of the Author — Priest's Rapid — River Okenakan — Kettle Falls — Pine Moss — Scarcity of Food — Rivers, Lakes, &c. — Accident — A Rencontre — First View of the Rocky Mountains.

ON the 17th, the fatigue I had experienced the day before, on horseback, obliged me to re-embark in my canoe. About eight o'clock, we passed a little river flowing from the N. W. We perceived, soon after, three canoes, the persons in which were struggling with their paddles to overtake us. As we were still pursuing our way, we heard a child's voice cry out in French — "arrêtez donc, arrêtez donc" — (stop! stop!). We put ashore, and the canoes having joined us, we perceived in one of them the wife and children of a man named Pierre Dorion , a hunter, who had been sent on with a party of eight, under the command of Mr. J. Reed, among the Snakes , to join there the hunters left by Messrs. Hunt and Crooks, near Fort Henry, and to secure horses and provisions for our journey. This woman informed us, to our no small dismay, of the tragical fate of all those who composed that party. She told us that in the month of January, the hunters being dispersed here and there, setting their traps for the beaver, Jacob Regner, Gilles Leclerc, and Pierre Dorion, her husband, had been attacked by the natives. Leclerc, having been mortally wounded, reached her tent or hut, where he expired in a few minutes, after having announced to her that her husband had been killed. She immediately took two horses that were near the lodge, mounted her two boys upon them, and fled in all haste to the wintering house of Mr. Reed, which was about five days' march from the spot where her husband fell. Her horror and disappointment were extreme, when she found the house — a log cabin — deserted, and on drawing nearer, was soon convinced, by the traces of blood, that Mr. Reed also had been murdered. No time was to be lost in lamentations, and she had immediately fled toward the mountains south of the Wallawalla , where, being impeded by the depth of the snow, she was forced to winter, having killed both the horses to subsist herself and her children. But at last, finding herself out of provisions, and the snow beginning to melt, she had crossed the mountains with her boys, hoping to find some more humane Indians, who would let her live among them till the boats from the fort below should be ascending the river in the spring, and so reached the banks of the Columbia, by the Wallawalla. Here, indeed, the natives had received her with much hospitality, and it was the Indians of Wallawalla who brought her to us. We made them some presents to repay their care and pains, and they returned well satisfied.

---

The persons who lost their lives in this unfortunate wintering party, were Mr. John Reed, (clerk), Jacob Regner, John Hubbough, Pierre Dorion (hunters), Gilles Leclerc, François Landry, J. B. Turcotte, André la Chapelle and Pierre De Launay, ( voyageurs ). We had no doubt that this massacre was an act of vengeance, on the part of the natives, in retaliation for the death of one of their people, whom Mr. John Clark had hanged for theft the spring before. This fact, the massacre on the Tonquin, the unhappy end of Captain Cook, and many other similar examples, prove how carefully the Europeans, who have relations with a barbarous people, should abstain from acting in regard to them on the footing of too marked an inequality, and especially from punishing their offences according to usages and codes, in which there is too often an enormous disproportion between the crime and the punishment. If these pretended exemplary punishments seem to have a good effect at first sight, they almost always produce terrible consequences in the sequel.

On the 18th, we passed Priest's Rapid, so named by Mr. Stuart and his people, who saw at this spot, in 1811, as they were ascending the river, a number of savages, one of whom was performing on the rest certain aspersions and other ceremonies, which had the air of being coarse imitations of the Catholic worship. For our part, we met here some Indians of whom we bought two horses. The banks of the river at this place are tolerably high, but the country back of them is flat and uninteresting.

On the 20th, we arrived at a place where the bed of the river is extremely contracted, and where we were obliged to make a portage. Messrs. J. Stuart and Clarke left us here, to proceed on horseback to the Spokan trading house, to procure there the provisions which would be necessary for us, in order to push on to the mountains.

On the 21st, we lightened of their cargoes, three canoes, in which those who were to cross the continent embarked, to get on with greater speed. We passed several rapids, and began to see mountains covered with snow.

On the 22d, we began to see some pines on the ridge of the neighboring hills; and at evening we encamped under trees, a thing which had not happened to us since the 12th.

On the 23d, toward 9, A. M., we reached the trading post established by D. Stuart, at the mouth of the river Okenakan. The spot appeared to us charming, in comparison with the country through which we had journeyed for twelve days past: the two rivers here meeting, and the immense prairies covered with a fine verdure, strike agreeably the eye of the observer; but there is not a tree or a shrub to diversify the scene, and render it a little less naked and less monotonous. We found here Messrs. J. M'Gillivray and Ross, and Mr. O. de Montigny, who had taken service with the N. W. Company, and who charged me with a letter for his brother.

Toward midday we re-embarked, to continue our journey. After having passed several dangerous rapids without accident, always through a country broken by shelving rocks, diversified with hills and verdant prairies, we arrived, on the 29th, at the portage of the Chaudieres or Kettle falls. This is a fall where the water precipitates itself over an immense rock of white marble, veined with red and green, that traverses the bed of the river from N. W. to S. E. We effected the portage immediately, and encamped on the edge of a charming prairie.

We found at this place some Indians who had been fasting, they assured us, for several days. They appeared, in fact, reduced to the most pitiable state, having nothing left but skin and bones, and scarcely able to drag themselves along, so that not without difficulty could they even reach the margin of the river, to get a little water to wet their parched lips. It is a thing that often happens to

these poor people, when their chase has not been productive; their principal nourishment consisting, in that case, of the pine moss, which they boil till it is reduced to a sort of glue or black paste, of a sufficient consistence to take the form of biscuit. I had the curiosity to taste this bread, and I thought I had got in my mouth a bit of soap. Yet some of our people, who had been reduced to eat this glue, assured me that when fresh made it had a very good taste, seasoned with meat. We partly relieved these wretched natives from our scanty store.

On the 30th, while we were yet encamped at Kettle falls, Messrs. J. Stuart and Clarke arrived from the post at Spokane. The last was mounted on the finest-proportioned gray charger, full seventeen hands high, that I had seen in these parts: Mr. Stuart had got a fall from his, in trying to urge him, and had hurt himself severely. These gentlemen not having brought us the provisions we expected, because the hunters who had been sent for that purpose among the Flatheads, had not been able to procure any, it was resolved to divide our party, and that Messrs. M'Donald, J. Stuart, and M'Kenzie should go forward to the post situated east of the mountains, in order to send us thence horses and supplies. These gentlemen quitted us on the 1st of May. After their departure we killed two horses and dried the meat; which occupied us the rest of that day and all the next. In the evening of the 2d, Mr. A. Stuart arrived at our camp. He had recovered from his wounds (received in the conflict with the natives, before related), and was on his way to his old wintering place on Slave lake, to fetch his family to the Columbia.

We resumed our route on the morning of the 3d of May, and went to encamp that evening at the upper-end of a rapid, where we began to descry mountains covered with forests, and where the banks of the river themselves were low and thinly timbered.

On the 4th, after having passed several considerable rapids, we reached the confluence of Flathead river. This stream comes from the S. E., and falls into the Columbia in the form of a cascade: it may be one hundred and fifty yards wide at its junction.

On the morning of the 5th, we arrived at the confluence of the Coutonais river. This stream also flows from the south, and has nearly the same width as the Flathead. Shortly after passing it, we entered a lake or enlargement of the river, which we crossed to encamp at its upper extremity. This lake may be thirty or forty miles, and about four wide at its broadest part: it is surrounded by lofty hills, which for the most part have their base at the water's edge, and rise by gradual and finely-wooded terraces, offering a sufficiently pretty view.

On the 6th, after we had run through a narrow strait or channel some fifteen miles long, we entered another lake, of less extent than the former but equally picturesque. When we were nearly in the middle of it, an accident occurred which, if not very disastrous, was sufficiently singular. One of the men, who had been on the sick-list for several days, requested to be landed for an instant. Not being more than a mile from the shore, we acceded to his request, and made accordingly for a projecting head-land; but when we were about three hundred or four hundred yards from the point, the canoe struck with force against the trunk of a tree which was planted in the bottom of the lake, and the extremity of which barely reached the surface of the water. It needed no more to break a hole in so frail a vessel; the canoe was pierced through the bottom and filled in a trice; and despite all our efforts we could not get off the tree, which had penetrated two or three feet within her; perhaps that was our good fortune, for the opening was at least a yard long. One of the men, who was an expert swimmer, stripped, and was about to go ashore with an axe lashed to his back, to make a raft for us, when the other canoe, which had been proceeding up the lake, and was a

mile ahead, perceived our signals of distress, and came to our succor. They carried us to land, where it was necessary to encamp forthwith, as well to dry ourselves as to mend the canoe.

On the 7th, Mr. A. Stuart, whom we had left behind at Kettle falls, came up with us, and we pursued our route in company. Toward evening we met natives, camped on the bank of the river: they gave us a letter from which we learned that Mr. M'Donald and his party had passed there on the 4th. The women at this camp were busy spinning the coarse wool of the mountain sheep: they had blankets or mantles, woven or platted of the same material, with a heavy fringe all round: I would gladly have purchased one of these, but as we were to carry all our baggage on our backs across the mountains, was forced to relinquish the idea. Having bought of these savages some pieces of dried venison, we pursued our journey. The country began to be ascending; the stream was very rapid; and we made that day little progress.

On the 8th we began to see snow on the shoals or sandbanks of the river: the atmosphere grew very cold. The banks on either side presented only high hills covered to the top with impenetrable forests. While the canoes were working up a considerable rapid, I climbed the hills with Mr. M'Gillis, and we walked on, following the course of the river, some five or six miles. The snow was very deep in the ravines or narrow gorges which are found between the bases of the hills. The most common trees are the Norway pine and the cedar: the last is here, as on the borders of the sea, of a prodigious size.

On the 9th and 10th, as we advanced but slowly, the country presented the same aspect as on the 8th. Toward evening of the 10th, we perceived a-head of us a chain of high mountains entirely covered with snow. The bed of the river was hardly more than sixty yards wide, and was filled with dry banks composed of coarse gravel and small pebble.

#### CHAPTER XXIII

Course of the Columbia River — Canoe River — Footmarch toward the Rocky Mountains — Passage of the Mountains.

ON the 11th, that is to say, one month, day for day, after our departure from the falls, we quitted the Columbia, to enter a little stream to which Mr. Thompson had given, in 1811, the name of Canoe river, from the fact that it was on this fork that he constructed the canoes which carried him to the Pacific.

The Columbia, which in the portion above the falls (not taking into consideration some local sinuosities) comes from the N. N. E., takes a bend here so that the stream appears to flow from the S. E. Some boatmen, and partic Mr. Regis Bruguier, who had ascended that river to its source, informed me that it came out of two small lakes, not far from the chain of the Rocky Mountains, which, at that place, diverges considerably to the east. According to Arrowsmith's map, the course of the Tacoutche Tessé, from its mouth in the Pacific Ocean, to its source in the Rocky mountains, is about twelve hundred English miles, or four hundred French leagues of twenty-five to a degree; that is to say, from two hundred and forty to two hundred and eighty miles from west to east, from its mouth to the first falls: seven hundred and fifty miles nearly from S. S. W. to N. N. E., from the first rapids to the bend at the confluence of Canoe river; and one hundred and fifty or one hundred and eighty miles from that confluence to its source. We were not provided with the necessary instruments to determine the latitude, and still less the longitude, of our different stations; but it took us four or five days to go up from the factory at Astoria to the falls, and we could not have made less than sixty miles a day: and, as I have just remarked, we occupied an entire

---

month in getting from the falls to Canoe river: deducting four or five days, on which we did not travel, there remain twenty-five days march; and it is not possible that we made less than thirty miles a day, one day with another.

We ascended Canoe river to the point where it ceases to be navigable, and encamped in the same place where Mr. Thompson wintered in 1810–11. We proceeded immediately to secure our canoes, and to divide the baggage among the men, giving each fifty pounds to carry, including his provisions. A sack of pemican, or pounded meat, which we found in a cache, where it had been left for us, was a great acquisition, as our supplies were nearly exhausted.

On the 12th we began our foot march to the mountains, being twenty-four in number, rank and file. Mr. A. Stuart remained at the portage to bestow in a place of safety the effects which we could not carry, such as boxes, kegs, camp-kettles, &c. We traversed first some swamps, next a dense bit of forest, and then we found ourselves marching up the gravelly banks of the little Canoe river.

Fatigue obliged us to camp early.

On the 13th we pursued our journey, and entered into the valleys between the mountains, where there lay not less than four or five feet of snow. We were obliged to ford the river ten or a dozen times in the course of the day, sometimes with the water up to our necks. These frequent fordings were rendered necessary by abrupt and steep rocks or bluffs, which it was impossible to get over without plunging into the wood for a great distance. The stream being very swift, and rushing over a bed of stones, one of the men fell and lost a sack containing our last piece of salt pork, which we were preserving as a most precious treasure. The circumstances in which we found ourselves made us regard this as a most unfortunate accident. We encamped that night at the foot of a steep mountain, and sent on Mr. Pillet and the guide, M'Kay, to hasten a supply of provisions to meet us.

On the morning of the 14th we began to climb the mountain which we had before us. We were obliged to stop every moment, to take breath, so stiff was the ascent. Happily it had frozen hard the night before, and the crust of the snow was sufficient to bear us. After two or three hours of incredible exertions and fatigues, we arrived at the plateau or summit, and followed the foot-prints of those who had preceded us. This mountain is placed between two others a great deal more elevated, compared with which it is but a hill, and of which, indeed, it is only, as it were, the valley. Our march soon became fatiguing, on account of the depth of the snow, which, softened by the rays of the sun, could no longer bear us as in the morning. We were obliged to follow exactly the traces of those who had preceded us, and to plunge our legs up to the knees in the holes they had made, so that it was as if we had put on and taken off, at every step, a very large pair of boots. At last we arrived at a good hard bottom, and a clear space, which our guide said was a little lake frozen over, and here we stopped for the night. This lake, or rather these lakes (for there are two) are situated in the midst of the valley or cup of the mountains. On either side were immense glaciers, or ice-bound rocks, on which the rays of the setting sun reflected the most beautiful prismatic colors. One of these icy peaks was like a fortress of rock; it rose perpendicularly some fifteen or eighteen hundred feet above the level of the lakes, and had the summit covered with ice. Mr. J. Henry, who first discovered the pass, gave this extraordinary rock the name of M'Gillivray's Rock, in honor of one of the partners of the N. W. Company. The lakes themselves are not much over three or four hundred yards in circuit, and not over two hundred yards apart. Canoe river, which, as we have already seen, flows to the west, and falls into the Columbia, takes its rise in one

---

of them; while the other gives birth to one of the branches of the Athabasca, which runs first eastward, then northward, and which, after its junction with the Unjighah, north of the Lake of the Mountains, takes the name of Slave river, as far [as] the lake of that name, and afterward that of M'Kenzie river, till it empties into, or is lost in, the Frozen ocean. Having cut a large pile of wood, and having, by tedious labor for nearly an hour, got through the ice to the clear water of the lake on which we were encamped, we supped frugally on pounded maize, arranged our bivouac, and passed a pretty good night, though it was bitterly cold. The most common wood of the locality was cedar and stunted pine. The heat of our fire made the snow melt, and by morning the embers had reached the solid ice: the depth from the snow surface was about five feet.

On the 15th, we continued our route, and soon began to descend the mountain. At the end of three hours, we reached the banks of a stream — the outlet of the second lake above mentioned — here and there frozen over, and then again tumbling down over rock and pebbly bottom in a thousand fantastic gambols; and very soon we had to ford it. After a tiresome march, by an extremely difficult path in the midst of woods, we encamped in the evening under some cypresses. I had hit my right knee against the branch of a fallen tree on the first day of our march, and now began to suffer acutely with it. It was impossible, however, to flinch, as I must keep up with the party or be left to perish.

On the 16th, our path lay through thick swamps and forest; we recrossed the small stream we had forded the day before, and our guide conducted us to the banks of the Athabasca, which we also forded. As this passage was the last to be made, we dried our clothes, and pursued our journey through a more agreeable country than on the preceding days. In the evening we camped on the margin of a verdant plain, which, the guide informed us, was called Coro prairie. We had met in the course of the day several buffalo tracks, and a number of the bones of that quadruped bleached by time. Our flesh-meat having given out entirely, our supper consisted in some handfuls of corn, which we parched in a pan.

We resumed our route very early on the 17th, and after passing a forest of trembling poplar or aspen, we again came in sight of the river which we had left the day before. Arriving then at an elevated promontory or cape, our guide made us turn back in order to pass it at its most accessible point. After crossing it, not without difficulty, we soon came upon fresh horse-prints, a sure indication that there were some of those animals in our neighborhood. Emerging from the forest, each took the direction which he thought would lead soonest to an encampment. We all presently arrived at an old house which the traders of the N. W. Company had once constructed, but which had been abandoned for some four or five years. The site of this trading post is the most charming that can be imagined: suffice to say that it is built on the bank of the beautiful river Athabasca, and is surrounded by green and smiling prairies and superb woodlands. Pity there is nobody there to enjoy these rural beauties and to praise, while admiring them, the Author of Nature. We found there Mr. Pillet, and one of Mr. J. M'Donald's party, who had his leg broken by the kick of a horse. After regaling ourselves with pemican and some fresh venison, we set out again, leaving two of the party to take care of the lame man, and went on about eight or nine miles farther to encamp.

On the 18th, we had rain. I took the lead, and after having walked about ten or twelve miles, on the slope of a mountain denuded of trees, I perceived some smoke issuing from a tuft of trees in the bottom of the valley, and near the river. I descended immediately, and reached a small camp,

---

where I found two men who were coming to meet us with four horses. I made them fire off two guns as a signal to the rest of our people who were coming up in the rear, and presently we heard it repeated on the river, from which we were not far distant. We repaired thither, and found two of the men, who had been left at the last ford, and who, having constructed a bark canoe, were descending the river. I made one of them disembark, and took his place, my knee being so painful that I could walk no further. Meanwhile the whole party came up; they loaded the horses, and pursued their route. In the course of the day my companion (an Iroquois) and I, shot seven ducks. Coming, at last, to a high promontory called Millet's rock, we found some of our foot-travellers with Messrs. Stewart and Clarke, who were on horseback, all at a stand, doubting whether it would answer to wade round the base of the rock, which dipped in the water. We sounded the stream for them, and found it fordable. So they all passed round, thereby avoiding the inland path, which is excessively fatiguing by reason of the hills, which it is necessary perpetually to mount and descend. We encamped, to the number of seven, at the entrance of what at high water might be a lake, but was then but a flat of blackish sand, with a narrow channel in the centre. Here we made an excellent supper on the wild ducks, while those who were behind had nothing to eat.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Arrival at the Fort of the Mountains—Description of this Post—Some Details in Regard to the Rocky Mountains —Mountain Sheep, &c.—Continuation of the Journey —Unhappy Accident—Reflections—News from Canada—Hunter's Lodge—Pimbina and Red Deer Rivers.

ON the 19th we raised our camp and followed the shore of the little dry lake, along a smooth sandy beach, having abandoned our little bark canoe, both because it had become nearly unserviceable, and because we knew ourselves to be very near the Rocky Mountains House. In fact, we had not gone above five or six miles when we discerned a column of smoke on the opposite side of the stream. We immediately forded across, and arrived at the post, where we found Messrs. M'Donald, Stuart, and M'Kenzie, who had preceded us only two days.

The post of the Rocky Mountains, in English, Rocky Mountains House, is situated on the shore of the little lake I have mentioned, in the midst of a wood, and is surrounded, except on the water side, by steep rocks, inhabited only by the mountain sheep and goat. Here is seen in the west the chain of the Rocky Mountains, whose summits are covered with perpetual snow. On the lake side, Millet's Rock, of which I have spoken above, is in full view, of an immense height, and resembles the front of a huge church seen in perspective. The post was under the charge of a Mr. Decoigne. He does not procure many furs for the company, which has only established the house as a provision depôt, with the view of facilitating the passage of the mountains to those of its employés who are repairing to, or returning from, the Columbia.

People speak so often of the Rocky Mountains, and appear to know so little about them, that the reader will naturally desire me to say here a word on that subject. If we are to credit travellers, and the most recent maps, these mountains extend nearly in a straight line, from the 35th or 36th degree of north latitude, to the mouth of the Unjighah, or M'Kenzie's river, in the Arctic ocean, in latitude 65° or 66° N. This distance of thirty degrees of latitude, or seven hundred and fifty leagues, equivalent to two thousand two hundred and fifty English miles or thereabouts, is, however, only the mean side of a right-angled triangle, the base of which occupies twenty-six degrees of longitude, in latitude 35° or 36°, that is to say, is about sixteen hundred miles long, while the chain of mountains forms the hypotenuse; so that the real, and as it were diagonal, length of the

chain, across the continent, must be very near three thousand miles from S. E. to N. W. In such a vast extent of mountains, the perpendicular height and width of base must necessarily be very unequal. We were about eight days in crossing them; whence I conclude, from our daily rate of travel, that they may have, at this point, i. e., about latitude 54°, a base of two hundred miles. The geographer Pinkerton is assuredly mistaken, when he gives these mountains an elevation of but three thousand feet above the level of the sea; from my own observations I would not hesitate to give them six thousand; we attained, in crossing them, an elevation probably of fifteen hundred feet above the valleys, and were not, perhaps, nearer than half way of their total height, while the valleys themselves must be considerably elevated above the level of the Pacific, considering the prodigious number of rapids and falls which are met in the Columbia, from the first falls to Canoe river. Be that as it may, if these mountains yield to the Andes in elevation and extent, they very much surpass in both respects the Apalachian chain, regarded until recently as the principal mountains of North America: they give rise, accordingly, to an infinity of streams, and to the greatest rivers of the continent.

They offer a vast and unexplored field to natural history: no botanist, no mineralogist, has yet examined them. The first travellers called them the Glittering mountains, on account of the infinite number of immense rock crystals, which, they say, cover their surface, and which, when they are not covered with snow, or in the bare places, reflect to an immense distance the rays of the sun. The name of Rocky mountains was given them, probably, by later travellers, in consequence of the enormous isolated rocks which they offer here and there to the view. In fact, Millet's rock, and M'Gillivray's above all, appeared to me wonders of nature. Some think that they contain metals, and precious stones.

With the exception of the mountain sheep and goat, the animals of the Rocky mountains, if these rocky passes support any, are not better known than their vegetable and mineral productions. The mountain sheep resorts generally to steep rocks, where it is impossible for men or even for wolves to reach them: we saw several on the rocks which surround the Mountain House. This animal has great curved horns, like those of the domestic ram: its wool is long, but coarse; that on the belly is the finest and whitest. The Indians who dwell near the mountains, make blankets of it, similar to ours, which they exchange with the Indians of the Columbia for fish, and other commodities. The ibex, or mountain goat, frequents, like the sheep, the top and the declivities of the rocks: it differs from the sheep in having hair instead of wool, and straight horns projecting backward, instead of curved ones. The color is also different. The natives soften the horns of these animals by boiling, and make platters, spoons, &c., of them, in a very artistic manner.

Mr. Decoigne had not sufficient food for us, not having expected so many people to arrive at once. His hunters were then absent on Smoke river (so called by some travellers who saw in the neighborhood a volcanic mountain belching smoke), in quest of game. We were therefore compelled to kill one of the horses for food. We found no birch bark either to make canoes, and set the men to work in constructing some of wood. For want of better materials, we were obliged to use poplar. On the 22d, the three men whom we had left at the old-house, arrived in a little canoe made of two elk-skins sewed together, and stretched like a drum, on a frame of poles.

On the 24th, four canoes being ready, we fastened them together two and two, and embarked, to descend the river to an old post called Hunter's Lodge, where Mr. Decoigne, who was to return with us to Canada, informed us that we should find some bark canoes en cache, placed there for

the use of the persons who descend the river. The water was not deep, and the stream was rapid; we glided along, so to speak, for ten or a dozen leagues, and encamped, having lost sight of the mountains. In proportion as we advanced, the banks of the river grew less steep, and the country became more agreeable.

On the 25th, having only a little pemican left, which we wished to keep, we sent forward a hunter in the little elk-skin canoe, to kill some game. About ten o'clock, we found him waiting for us with two moose that he had killed. He had suspended the hearts from the branch of a tree as a signal. We landed some men to help him in cutting up and shipping the game. We continued to glide safely down. But toward two o'clock, P. M., after doubling a point, we got into a considerable rapid, where, by the maladroitness of those who managed the double pirogue in which I was, we met with a melancholy accident. I had proposed to go ashore, in order to lighten the canoes, which were loaded to the water's edge; but the steersman insisted that we could go down safe, while the bow-man was turning the head of the pirogue toward the beach; by this manoeuvre we were brought athwart the stream, which was carrying us fast toward the falls; just then our frail bark struck upon a sunken rock; the lower canoe broke amid-ships and filled instantly, and the upper one being lighted, rolled over, precipitating us all into the water. Two of our men, Olivier Roy Lapensée and André Bélanger, were drowned; and it was not without extreme difficulty that we succeeded in saving Messrs. Pillet and Wallace, as well as a man named J. Hurteau. The latter was so far gone that we were obliged to have recourse to the usual means for the resuscitation of drowned persons. The men lost all their effects; the others recovered but a part of theirs; and all our provisions went. Toward evening, in ascending the river (for I had gone about two miles below, to recover the effects floating down), we found the body of Lapensée. We interred it as decently as we could, and planted at his grave a cross, on which I inscribed with the point of my knife, his name and the manner and date of his death. Bélanger's body was not found. If anything could console the shades of the departed for a premature and unfortunate end, it would be, no doubt, that the funeral rites have been paid to their remains, and that they themselves have given their names to the places where they perished: it is thus that the shade of Palinurus rejoiced in the regions below, at learning from the mouth of the Sibyl, that the promontory near which he was drowned would henceforth be called by his name: *gaudet cognomine terra*. The rapid and the point of land where the accident I have described took place, will bear, and bears already, probably, the name of Lapensée.

On the 26th, a part of our people embarked in the three canoes which remained, and the others followed the banks of the river on foot. We saw in several places some veins of bituminous coal, on the banks between the surface of the water and that of the plain, say thirty feet below the latter; the veins had a dip of about 25°. We tried some and found it to burn well. We halted in the evening near a small stream, where we constructed some rafts, to carry all our people.

On the 27th, I went forward in the little canoe of skins, with the two hunters. We soon killed an elk, which we skinned and suspended the hide, besmeared with blood, from the branch of a tree at the extremity of a point, in order that the people behind, as they came up, might perceive and take in the fruit of our chase. After fortifying ourselves with a little food, we continued to glide down, and encamped for the night near a thick wood where our hunters, from the tracks they observed, had hopes of encountering and capturing some bears. This hope was not realized.

On the 28th, a little after quitting camp, we killed a swan. While I was busy cooking it, the hunters

having plunged into the wood, I heard a rifle-shot, which seemed to me to proceed from a direction opposite to that which they had taken. They returned very soon running, and were extremely surprised to learn that it was not I who had fired it. Nevertheless, the canoes and rafts having overtaken us, we continued to descend the river. Very soon we met a bark canoe, containing two men and a woman, who were ascending the river and bringing letters and some goods for the Rocky Mountains House. We learned from these letters addressed to Mr. Decoigne, several circumstances of the war, and among others the defeat of Captain Barclay on Lake Erie. We arrived that evening at Hunter's Lodge, where we found four new birchbark canoes. We got ready two of them, and resumed our journey down, on the 31st. Mr. Pillet set out before us with the hunters, at a very early hour. They killed an elk, which they left on a point, and which we took in. The country through which we passed that day is the most charming possible; the river is wide, handsome, and bordered with low outjutting points, covered with birch and poplar.

On the 1st of June, in the evening, we encamped at the confluence of the river Pembina. This stream comes from the south, and takes its rise in one of the spurs of the great chain of the Rocky mountains; ascending it for two days, and crossing a neck of land about seventy-five miles, one reaches Fort Augustus, a trading-post on the Saskatchewan river. Messrs. M'Donald and M'Kenzie had taken this route, and had left for us half a sack of pemican in a cache, at the mouth of the river Pembina. After landing that evening, Mr. Stuart and I amused ourselves with angling, but took only five or six small fish.

On the 2d, we passed the confluence of Little Slave Lake river. At eight o'clock in the morning, we met a band or family of Indians, of the Knisteneaux tribe. They had just killed a buffalo, which we bought of them for a small brass-kettle. We could not have had a more seasonable rencontre, for our provisions were all consumed.

On the 3d, we reached Little Red Elk river, which we began to ascend, quitting the Athabasca, or Great Red Elk. This stream was very narrow in its channel, and obstructed with boulders: we were obliged to take to the shore, while some of the men dragged along the canoes. Their method was to lash poles across, and wading themselves, lift the canoes over the rocks—a laborious and infinitely tedious operation. The march along the banks was not less disagreeable: for we had to traverse points of forest where the fire had passed, and which were filled with fallen trees.

Wallace and I having stopped to quench our thirst at a rill, the rest got in advance of us; and we lost our way in a labyrinth of buffalo tracks which we mistook for the trail, so that we wandered about for three hours before we came up with the party, who began to fear for our safety, and were firing signal-guns to direct us. As the river now grew deeper, we all embarked in the canoes, and about evening overtook our hunters, who had killed a moose and her two calves.

We continued our journey on the 4th, sometimes seated in our canoes, sometimes marching along the river on foot, and encamped in the evening, excessively fatigued.

#### CHAPTER XXV

Red Deer Lake — Antoine Déjarlais — Beaver River — N. Nadeau — Moose River — Bridge Lake — Saskatchewan River — Fort Vermilion — Mr. Hallet — Trading-Houses — Beautiful Country — Reflections.

THE 5th of June brought us to the beautiful sheet of water called Red Deer lake, irregular in shape, dotted with islands, and about forty miles in length by thirty in its greatest width. We met, about the middle of it, a small canoe conducted by two young women. They were searching for

---

gulls' and ducks' eggs on the islands, this being the season of laying for those aquatics. They told us that their father was not far distant from the place where we met them. In fact, we presently saw him appear in a canoe with his two boys, rounding a little isle. We joined him, and learned that his name was Antoine Déjarlais; that he had been a guide in the services of the Northwest Company, but had left them since 1805. On being made acquainted with our need of provisions, he offered us a great quantity of eggs, and made one of our men embark with his two daughters in their little canoe, to seek some more substantial supplies at his cabin, on the other side of the lake. He himself accompanied us as far as a portage of about twenty-five yards formed at the outlet of the lake by a Beaver dam. Having performed the portage, and passed a small pond or marsh, we encamped to await the return of our man. He arrived the next morning, with Déjarlais, bringing us about fifty pounds of dried venison and from ten to twelve pounds of tallow. We invited our host to breakfast with us: it was the least we could do after the good offices he had rendered us. This man was married to an Indian woman, and lived with his family, on the produce of his chase; he appeared quite contented with his lot. Nobody at least disputed with him the sovereignty of Red Deer lake, of which he had, as it were, taken possession. He begged me to read for him two letters which he had had in his possession for two years, and of which he did not yet know the contents. They were from one of his sisters, and dated at Verchères, in Canada. I even thought that I recognised the handwriting of Mr. L. G. Labadie, teacher of that parish. At last, having testified to this good man, in suitable terms, our gratitude for the services he had rendered us, we quitted him and prosecuted our journey.

After making two portages, we arrived on the banks of Beaver river, which was here but a rivulet. It is by this route that the canoes ordinarily pass to reach Little Slave lake and the Athabasca country, from the head of Lake Superior, via., Cumberland House, on English river. We were obliged by the shallowness of the stream, to drag along our canoes, walking on a bottom or beach of sand, where we began to feel the importunity of the mosquitoes. One of the hunters scoured the woods for game but without success. By-and-by we passed a small canoe turned bottom up and covered with a blanket. Soon after we came to a cabin or lodge, where we found an old Canadian hunter named Nadeau. He was reduced to the last stage of weakness, having had nothing to eat for two days. Nevertheless, a young man who was married to one of his daughters, came in shortly after, with the good news that he had just killed a buffalo; a circumstance which determined us to encamp there for the night. We sent some of our men to get in the meat. Nadeau gave us half of it, and told us that we should find, thirty miles lower down, at the foot of a pine tree, a cache, where he had deposited ten swan-skins, and some of martin, with a net, which he prayed us to take to the next trading-post. We quitted this good fellow the next morning, and pursued our way. Arriving at the place indicated, we found the cache, and took the net, leaving the other articles. A short distance further, we came to Moose river, which we had to ascend, in order to reach the lake of that name. The water in this river was so low that we were obliged entirely to unload the canoes, and to lash poles across them, as we had done before, that the men might carry them on their shoulders over the places where they could not be floated. Having distributed the baggage to the remainder of the hands, we pursued our way through the woods, under the guidance of Mr. Decoigne.

This gentleman, who had not passed here for nineteen years, soon lost his way, and we got separated into small parties, in the course of the afternoon, some going one way, and some another, in

search of Moose lake. But as we had outstripped the men who carried the baggage and the small stock of provision that old Nadeau had given us, Mr. Wallace and I thought it prudent to retrace our steps and keep with the rear-guard. We soon met Mr. Pillet and one of the hunters. The latter, ferreting the woods on both sides of a trail that he had discovered, soon gave a whoop, to signify that we should stop. Presently emerging from the underwood, he showed us a horsewhip which he had found, and from which and from other unmistakeable signs, he was confident the trail would lead either to the lake or a navigable part of the river. The men with the baggage then coming up, we entered the thicket single file, and were conducted by this path, in a very short time, to the river, on the banks of which were visible the traces of an old camping ground. The night was coming on; and soon after, the canoes arrived, to our great satisfaction; for we had begun to fear that they had already passed. The splashing of their paddles was a welcome sound, and we who had been wise enough to keep behind, all encamped together.

Very early on the 8th, I set out accompanied by one of the hunters, in quest of Messrs. D. Stuart, Clarke and Decoigne, who had gone on ahead, the night previous. I soon found MM. Clarke and M'Gillis encamped on the shore of the lake. The canoes presently arrived and we embarked; MM. Stuart and Decoigne rejoined us shortly after, and informed us that they had bivouacked on the shore of Lac Puant, or Stinking lake, a pond situated about twelve miles E. N. E. from the lake we were now entering. Finding ourselves thus reunited, we traversed the latter, which is about eighteen miles in circuit, and has very pretty shores. We encamped, very early, on an island, in order to use old Nadeau's fishing net. I visited it that evening and brought back three carp and two water-hens. We left it set all night, and the next morning found in it twenty white-fish. Leaving camp at an early hour, we gained the entrance of a small stream that descends between some hills of moderate elevation, and there stopped to breakfast. I found the white-fish more delicious in flavor, even than the salmon. We had again to foot it, following the bank of this little stream. It was a painful task, as we were obliged to open a path through thick underbrush, in the midst of a rain that lasted all day and kept us drenched. Two men being left in each canoe, conveyed them up the river about thirty miles, as far as Long lake — a narrow pond, on the margin of which we spent the night.

On the 10th, we got through this lakelet, and entered another small stream, which it was necessary to navigate in the same manner as the preceding, and which conducted us to Bridge lake. The latter received its name from a sort of bridge or causeway, formed at its southern extremity, and which is nothing more than a huge beaver dam. We found here a lodge, where were a young man and two women, who had charge of some horses appertaining to one of the Hudson's Bay trading houses. We borrowed of them half a dozen pack horses, and crossed the bridge with them. After surmounting a considerable hill, we reached an open, level, and dry prairie, which conducted us in about two hours to an ancient trading-post on the banks of the Saskatchewan. Knowing that we were near a factory, we made our toilets as well as we could, before arriving. Toward sundown, we reached Fort Vermilion, which is situated on the bank of a river, at the foot of a superb hill. We found at this post some ninety persons, men, women, and children; these people depend for subsistence on the chase, and fishing with hooks and lines, which is very precarious. Mr. Hallet, the clerk in charge was absent, and we were dismayed to hear that there were no provisions on the place: a very disagreeable piece of news for people famished as we were. We had been led to suppose that if we could only reach the plains of the Saskatchewan we should be in the land of

---

plenty. Mr. Hallet, however, was not long in arriving: he had two quarters of buffalo meat brought out, which had been laid in ice, and prepared us supper. Mr. Hallet was a polite sociable man, loving his ease passably well, and desirous of living in these wild countries, as people do in civilized lands. Having testified to him our surprise at seeing in one of the buildings a large cariole, like those of Canada, he informed us that having horses, he had had this carriage made in order to enjoy a sleigh-ride; but that the workmen having forgot to take the measure of the doors of the building before constructing it, it was found when finished, much too large for them, and could never be got out of the room where it was; and it was like to remain there a long time, as he was not disposed to demolish the house for the pleasure of using the cariole.

By the side of the factory of the Northwest Company, is another belonging to the Company of Hudson's Bay. In general these trading-houses are constructed thus, one close to the other, and surrounded with a common palisade, with a door of communication in the interior for mutual succor, in case of attack on the part of the Indians. The latter, in this region, particularly the Blackfeet, Gros-ventres, and those of the Yellow river, are very ferocious: they live by the chase, but bring few furs to the traders; and the latter maintain these posts principally to procure themselves provisions.

On the 11th, after breakfasting at Fort Vermilion, we resumed our journey, with six or seven pounds of tallow for our whole stock of food. This slender supply brought us through to the evening of the third day, when we had for supper two ounces of tallow each.

On the 14th, in the morning, we killed a wild goose, and toward midday, collected some flag-root and chouxgras, a wild herb, which we boiled with the small game: we did not forget to throw into the pot the little tallow we had left, and made a delicious repast. Toward the decline of day, we had the good luck to kill a buffalo.

On the 15th, MM. Clarke and Decoigne having landed during our course, to hunt, returned presently with the agreeable intelligence that they had killed three buffaloes. We immediately encamped, and sent the greater part of the men to cut up the meat and jerk it. This operation lasted till the next evening, and we set forward again in the canoes on the 17th, with about six hundred pounds of meat half cured. The same evening we perceived from our camp several herds of buffaloes, but did not give chase, thinking we had enough meat to take us to the next post.

The river Saskatchewan flows over a bed composed of sand and marl, which contributes not a little to diminish the purity and transparency of its waters, which, like those of the Missouri, are turbid and whitish. Except for that it is one of the prettiest rivers in the world. The banks are perfectly charming, and offer in many places a scene the fairest, the most smiling, and the best diversified that can be seen or imagined: hills in varied forms, crowned with superb groves; valleys agreeably embrowned, at evening and morning, by the prolonged shadow of the hills, and of the woods which adorn them; herds of light-limbed antelopes, and heavy colossal buffalo — the former bounding along the slopes of the hills, the latter trampling under their heavy feet the verdure of the plains; all these champaign beauties reflected and doubled as it were, by the waters of the river; the melodious and varied song of a thousand birds, perched on the tree-tops; the refreshing breath of the zephyrs; the serenity of the sky; the purity and salubrity of the air; all, in a word, pours contentment and joy into the soul of the enchanted spectator. It is above all in the morning, when the sun is rising, and in the evening when he is setting, that the spectacle is really ravishing. I could not detach my regards from that superb picture, till the nascent obscurity had obliterated

---

its perfection. Then, to the sweet pleasure that I had tasted, succeeded a triste, not to say, a sombre, melancholy. How comes it to pass, I said to myself, that so beautiful a country is not inhabited by human creatures? The songs, the hymns, the prayers, of the laborer and the artisan, shall they never be heard in these fine plains? Wherefore, while in Europe, and above all in England, so many thousands of men do not possess as their own an inch of ground, and cultivate the soil of their country for proprietors who scarcely leave them whereon to support existence; — wherefore — do so many millions of acres of apparently fat and fertile land, remain uncultivated and absolutely useless? Or, at least, why do they support only herds of wild animals? Will men always love better to vegetate all their lives on an ungrateful soil, than to seek afar fertile regions, in order to pass in peace and plenty, at least the last portion of their days? But I deceive myself; it is not so easy as one thinks, for the poor man to better his condition: he has not the means of transporting himself to distant countries, or he has not those of acquiring a property there; for these untilled lands, deserted, abandoned, do not appertain to whoever wishes to establish himself upon them and reduce them to culture; they have owners, and from these must be purchased the right of rendering them productive! Besides one ought not to give way to illusions: these countries, at times so delightful, do not enjoy a perpetual spring; they have their winter, and a rigorous one; a piercing cold is then spread through the atmosphere; deep snows cover the surface; the frozen rivers flow only for the fish; the trees are stripped of their leaves and hung with icicles; the verdure of the plains has disappeared; the hills and valleys offer but a uniform whiteness; Nature has lost all her beauty; and man has enough to do, to shelter himself from the injuries of the inclement season.

#### CHAPTER XXVI

Fort Montée — Cumberland House — Lake Bourbon — Great Winipeg Rapids — Lake Winipeg — Trading— House — Lake of the Woods — Rainy Lake House, &c.

ON the 18th of June (a day which its next anniversary was to render forever celebrated in the annals of the world), we re-embarked at an early hour: and the wind rising, spread sail, a thing we had not done before, since we quitted the river Columbia. In the afternoon the clouds gathered thick and black, and we had a gust, accompanied with hail, but of short duration; the weather cleared up again, and about sundown we arrived at Le Fort de la Montée, so called, on account of its being a dépôt, where the traders going south, leave their canoes and take pack-horses to reach their several posts. We found here, as at Fort Vermilion, two trading-houses joined together, to make common cause against the Indians; one belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, the other to the company of the Northwest: the Hudson's Bay house being then under the charge of a Mr. Prudent, and the N. W. Company's under a Mr. John M'Lean. Mr. de Roche Blave, one of the partners of the last company having the superintendence of this district, where he had wintered, had gone to Lake Superior to attend the annual meeting of the partners. There were cultivated fields around the house; the barley and peas appeared to promise an abundant harvest. Mr. M'Lean received us as well as circumstances permitted; but that gentleman having no food to give us, and our buffalo meat beginning to spoil, we set off the next morning, to reach Cumberland house as quick as possible. In the course of the day, we passed two old forts, one of which had been built by the French before the conquest of Canada. According to our guide, it was the most distant western post that the French traders ever had in the northwestern wilderness. Toward evening we shot a moose. The aspect of the country changes considerably since leaving Montée; the banks of the river rise more boldly, and the country is covered with forests.

---

On the 20th, we saw some elms — a tree that I had not seen hitherto, since my departure from Canada. We reached Fort Cumberland a little before the setting of the sun. This post, called in English Cumberland House, is situated at the outlet of the Saskatchewan, where it empties into English lake, between the 53d and 54th degrees of north latitude. It is a depot for those traders who are going to Slave lake or the Athabasca, or are returning thence, as well as for those destined for the Rocky mountains. It was under the orders of Mr. J. D. Campbell, who having gone down to Fort William, however, had left it in charge of a Mr. Harrison. There are two factories, as at Vermilion and la Montée. At this place the traders who resort every year to Fort William, leave their half-breed or Indian wives and families, as they can live here at little expense, the lake abounding in fish. Messrs. Clarke and Stuart, who were behind, arrived on the 22d, and in the evening we had a dance. They gave us four sacks of pemican, and we set off again, on the 23d, at eight A. M. We crossed the lake, and entered a small river, and having made some eighty or ninety miles under sail, encamped on a low shore, where the mosquitoes tormented us horribly all night. On the 24th, we passed Muddy lake, and entered Lake Bourbon, where we fell in with a canoe from York factory, under the command of a Mr. Kennedy, clerk of the Hudson's Bay Company. We collected some dozens of gull's eggs, on the rocky islands of the lake: and stopping on one of the last at night, having a little flour left, Mr. Decoigne and I amused ourselves in making fritters for the next day's breakfast: an occupation, which despite the small amount of materials, employed us till we were surprised by the daybreak; the night being but brief at this season in that high latitude. At sunrise on the 25th, we were again afloat, passed Lake Travers, or Cross lake, which empties into Lake Winipeg by a succession of rapids; shot down these cascades without accident, and arrived, toward noon, at the great rapid Ouénipic or Winipeg, which is about four miles long. We disembarked here, and the men worked down the canoes. At the foot of this rapid, which is the inlet of Winipeg, we found an old Canadian fisherman, who called himself King of the lake. He might fairly style himself king of the fish, which are abundant and which he alone enjoyed. Having made a boil, and regaled ourselves with excellent sturgeon, we left this old man, and entered the great lake Winipeg, which appeared to me like a sea of fresh water. This lake is now too well known to need a particular description: I will content myself with saying that it visibly yields in extent only to Lake Superior and Great Slave lake: it has for tributaries several large rivers, and among others the Saskatchewan, the Winipeg, in the east; and Red river in the south; and empties into Hudson's bay by the Nelson, N. N. E., and the Severn, E. N. E. The shores which it bathes are generally very low; it appears to have little depth, and is dotted with a vast number of islands, lying pretty close to land. We reached one called Egg island, whence it was necessary to cross to the south to reach the main; but the wind was so violent that it was only at decline of day that we could perform the passage. We profited by the calm, to coast along all day and a part of the night of the 26th; but to pay for it, remained in camp on the 27th, till evening: the wind not suffering us to proceed. The wind having appeared to abate somewhat after sunset, we embarked, but were soon forced to land again. On the 28th, we passed the openings of several deep bays, and the isles of St. Martin, and camped at the bottom of a little bay, where the mosquitoes did not suffer us to close our eyes all night. We were rejoiced when dawn appeared, and were eager to embark, to free ourselves from these inconvenient guests. A calm permitted us that day to make good progress with our oars, and we camped at Buffalo Strait. We saw that day two Indian wigwams.

---

The 30th brought us to Winipeg river, which we began to ascend, and about noon reached Fort Bas de la Rivière. This trading post had more the air of a large and well-cultivated farm, than of a fur traders' factory: a neat and elegant mansion, built on a slight eminence, and surrounded with barns, stables, storehouses, &c., and by fields of barley, peas, oats, and potatoes, reminded us of the civilized countries which we had left so long ago. Messrs. Crébassa and Kennedy, who had this post in charge, received us with all possible hospitality, and supplied us with all the political news which had been learned through the arrival of canoes from Canada.

They also informed us that Messrs. M'Donald and de Rocheblave had passed, a few days before our arrival, having been obliged to go up Red river to stop the effusion of blood, which would probably have taken place but for their intervention, in the colony founded on that river by the earl of Selkirk. Mr. Miles M'Donnell, the governor of that colony, or rather of the Assiniboyne district, had issued a proclamation forbidding all persons whomsoever, to send provisions of any kind out of the district. The Hudson's Bay traders had conformed to this proclamation, but those of the Northwest Company paid no attention to it, thinking it illegal, and had sent their servants, as usual to get provisions up the river. Mr. M'Donnell having heard that several hundred sacks of pemican were laid up in a storehouse under the care of a Mr. Pritchard, sent to require their surrender. Pritchard refused to deliver them, whereupon Mr. M'Donnell had them carried off by force. The traders who winter on Little Slave lake, English river, the Athabasca country, &c., learning this, and being aware that they would not find their usual supply at Bas de la Rivière, resolved to go and recover the seized provisions by force, if they were not peaceably given up. Things were in this position when Messrs. de Rocheblave and M'Donald arrived. They found the Canadian voyageurs in arms, and ready to give battle to the colonists, who persisted in their refusal to surrender the bags of pemican. The two peacemakers visited the governor, and having explained to him the situation in which the traders of the Northwest Company would find themselves, by the want of necessary provisions to enable them to transport their peltries to Fort William, and the exasperation of their men, who saw no other alternative for them, but to get possession of those provisions or to perish of hunger, requested him to surrender the same without delay. Mr. M'Donnell, on his part, pointed out the misery to which the colonists would be reduced by a failure in the supply of food. In consequence of these mutual representations, it was agreed that one half of the pemican should be restored, and the other half remain for the use of the colonists. Thus was arranged, without bloodshed, the first difficulty which occurred between the rival companies of the Northwest, and of Hudson's Bay.

Having spent the 1st of July in repairing our canoes, we re-embarked on the 2d, and continued to ascend Winipeg river, called also White river, on account of the great number of its cascades, which being very near each other, offer to the sight an almost continuous foam. We made that day twenty-seven portages, all very short. On the 3d, and 4th, we made nine more, and arrived on the 5th, at the Lake of the Woods. This lake takes its name from the great number of woody islands with which it is dotted. Our guide pointed out to me one of these isles, telling me that a Jesuit father had said mass there, and that it was the most remote spot to which those missionaries had ever penetrated. We encamped on one of the islands. The next day the wind did not allow us to make much progress. On the 7th, we gained the entrance of Rainy Lake river. I do not remember ever to have seen elsewhere so many mosquitoes as on the banks of this river. Having landed near a little rapid to lighten the canoes, we had the misfortune, in getting through the brush, to

---

dislodge these insects from under the leaves where they had taken refuge from the rain of the night before; they attached themselves to us, followed us into the canoes, and tormented us all the remainder of the day.

On the 8th, at sunset, we reached Rainy Lake House. This fort is situated about a mile from a considerable rapid. We saw here cultivated fields and domestic animals, such as horses, oxen, cows, &c. The port is a *dépôt* for the wintering parties of the Athabasca, and others still more remote, who bring to it their peltries and return from it with their outfits of merchandise. Mr. John Dease, to whose charge the place had been confided, received us in the most friendly manner possible; and after having made an excellent supper, we danced a part of the evening.

We took leave of Mr. Dease on the 10th, well provided for the journey, and passing round Rainy Lake falls, and then traversing the lake itself, which I estimated to be forty miles long, we encamped at the entrance of a small river. On the next day we pursued our way, now thridding streams impeded with wild rice, which rendered our progress difficult, now traversing little lakes, now passing straits where we scarcely found water to float our canoes. On the 13th, we encamped near Dog Portage ( *Portage des chiens* ), where, from not having followed the advice of Mr. Dease, who had counselled us to take along a bag of pemican, we found ourselves absolutely without food.

#### CHAPTER XXVII

Arrival at Fort William — Description of the Fort — News from the River Columbia

STARVING men are early-risers. We set out on the 14th before day, and effected the portage, which is long and difficult. At the foot of the rapid we found a sort of restaurant or cabaret, kept by a man named Boucher. We treated the men to a little *eau de vie*, and breakfasted on some detestable sausages, poisoned with salt.

After this wretched repast, we set out again, and passed toward noon, the Mountain Portage. Here the river Kaministiquia flings itself over a rock of immense height, and forms a fall scarcely less curious to see than that of Niagara. Below, the succession of falls and rapids is constant, so that we made no fewer than thirty-six portages in the course of the day. Nevertheless we pursued our laborious way with good cheer, and without a murmur from our Canadian boatmen, who kept their spirits up by singing their voyageur songs. At last, at about nine o'clock in the evening, we arrived at Fort William.

Fort William is situated on Lake Superior, at the mouth of the Kaministiquia river, about forty-five miles north of old Grand Portage. It was built in 1805, when the two rival Canadian companies were united, and was named in honor of Mr. (now the Honorable) William M'Gillivray, principal agent of the Northwest Company. The proprietors, perceiving that the old fort of Grand Portage was on the territory claimed by the American government, resolved to demolish it and build another on the British territory. No site appeared more advantageous than the present for the purposes intended; the river is deep, of easy access, and offers a safe harbor for shipping. It is true they had to contend with all the difficulties consequent on a low and swampy soil; but by incredible labor and perseverance, they succeeded in draining the marshes and reducing the loose and yielding soil to solidity.

Fort William has really the appearance of a fort, with its palisade fifteen feet high, and that of a pretty village, from the number of edifices it encloses. In the middle of a spacious square rises a large building elegantly constructed, though of wood, with a long piazza or portico, raised about five feet from the ground, and surmounted by a balcony, extending along the whole front. In the

centre is a saloon or hall, sixty feet in length by thirty in width, decorated with several pieces of painting, and some portraits of the leading partners. It is in this hall that the agents, partners, clerks, interpreters, and guides, take their meals together, at different tables. At each extremity of the apartment are two rooms; two of these are destined for the two principal agents; the other two to the steward and his department. The kitchen and servants' rooms are in the basement. On either side of this edifice, is another of the same extent, but of less elevation; they are each divided by a corridor running through its length, and contain each, a dozen pretty bed-rooms. One is destined for the wintering partners, the other for the clerks. On the east of the square is another building similar to the last two, and intended for the same use, and a warehouse where the furs are inspected and repacked for shipment. In the rear of these, are the lodging-house of the guides, another fur-warehouse, and finally, a powder magazine. The last is of stone, and has a roof covered with tin. At the angle is a sort of bastion, or look-out place, commanding a view of the lake. On the west side is seen a range of buildings, some of which serve for stores, and others for workshops; there is one for the equipment of the men, another for the fitting out of the canoes, one for the retail of goods, another where they sell liquors, bread, pork, butter, &c., and where a treat is given to the travellers who arrive. This consists in a white loaf, half a pound of butter, and a gill of rum. The voyageurs give this tavern the name of Cantine salope. Behind all this is another range, where we find the counting-house, a fine square building, and well-lighted; another store-house of stone, tin-roofed; and a jail, not less necessary than the rest. The voyageurs give it the name of pot au beurre, the butter-tub. Beyond these we discover the shops of the carpenter, the cooper, the tinsmith, the blacksmith, &c.; and spacious yards and sheds for the shelter, reparation, and construction of canoes. Near the gate of the fort, which is on the south, are the quarters of the physician, and those of the chief clerk. Over the gate is a guard-house.

As the river is deep at its entrance, the company has had a wharf constructed, extending the whole length of the fort, for the discharge of the vessels which it keeps on Lake Superior, whether to transport its furs from Fort William to the Saut Ste. Marie, or merchandise and provisions from Saut Ste. Marie to Fort William. The land behind the fort and on both sides of it, is cleared and under tillage. We saw barley, peas, and oats, which had a very fine appearance. At the end of the clearing is the burying-ground. There are also, on the opposite bank of the river, a certain number of log-houses, all inhabited by old Canadian voyageurs, worn out in the service of the company, without having enriched themselves. Married to women of the country, and incumbered with large families of half-breed children, these men prefer to cultivate a little Indian corn and potatoes, and to fish, for a subsistence, rather than return to their native districts, to give their relatives and former acquaintance certain proofs of their misconduct or their imprudence.

Fort William is the grand depôt of the Northwest Company for their interior posts, and the general rendezvous of the partners. The agents from Montreal and the wintering partners assemble here every summer, to receive the returns of the respective outfits, prepare for the operations of the ensuing season, and discuss the general interests of their association. The greater part of them were assembled at the time of our arrival. The wintering hands who are to return with their employers pass also a great part of the summer here; they form a great encampment on the west side of the fort, outside the palisades. Those who engage at Montreal to go no further than Fort William or Rainy lake, and who do not winter, occupy yet another space, on the east side. The winterers, or hivernants, give to these last the name of mangeurs de lard, or pork-eaters. They

---

are also called comers-and-goers. One perceives an astonishing difference between these two camps, which are composed sometimes of three or four hundred men each; that of the pork-eaters is always dirty and disorderly, while that of the winterers is clean and neat.

To clear its land and improve its property, the company inserts a clause in the engagement of all who enter its service as canoe-men, that they shall work for a certain number of days during their stay at Fort William. It is thus that it has cleared and drained the environs of the fort, and has erected so many fine buildings. But when a hand has once worked the stipulated number of days, he is for ever after exempt, even if he remain in the service twenty or thirty years, and should come down to the fort every summer.

They received us very courteously at Fort William, and I perceived by the reception given to myself in particular, that thanks to the Chinook dialect of which I was sufficiently master, they would not have asked better than to give me employment, on advantageous terms. But I felt a great deal more eagerness to arrive in Montreal, than desire to return to the River Columbia.

A few days after we reached Fort William, Mr. Keith made his appearance there from Fort George, or Astoria, with the news of the arrival of the "Isaac Todd" in the Columbia river. This vessel, which was a dull sailer, had been kept back a long time by contrary winds in doubling Cape Horn, and had never been able to rejoin the vessels-of-war, her consorts, from which she was then separated. When she reached the rendezvous at the island of Juan Fernandez, finding that the three ships-of-war had sailed, the captain and passengers, as they were short of provisions, determined to range the coast. Entering the harbor of Monterey, on the coast of California, in order to obtain provisions, they learned that there was an English vessel-of-war in distress, in the bay of San Francisco. They repaired thither accordingly, and found, to their great surprise, that it was the sloop Raccoon. This vessel, in getting out of the River Columbia, had touched on the bar, with such violence, that a part of her false keel was carried away; and she had with difficulty made San Francisco, with seven feet of water in the hold, although her crew had been constantly at the pumps. Captain Black, finding it impossible to repair his ship, had decided to abandon her, and to cross the continent to the Gulf of Mexico, thence to reach some of the British West India islands. However, on the arrival of the Isaac Todd, means were found to careen the vessel and repair the damage. The Isaac Todd then pursued her voyage and entered the Columbia on the 17th of April, thirteen months after her departure from England.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII

Departure from Fort William—Navigation on Lake Superior—Michipicoton Bay—Meeting a Canoe—Batchawainon Bay—Arrival at Saut Ste. Marie—Occurrences there—Departure—Lake Huron—French River—Lake Nipissing—Ottawa River—Kettle Falls—Rideau River—Long-Saut—Arrival in Montreal—Conclusion.

ON the 20th of July, in the evening, Mr. D. Stuart notified me that he should start the next morning for Montreal, in a light canoe. I immediately wrote to my relatives: but the next morning Mr. Stuart told me that I was to be myself the bearer of my letters, by embarking with him. I got ready my effects, and toward evening we quitted Fort William, with fourteen stout voyageurs to man our large canoe, and were soon floating on the bosom of the largest body of fresh water on the surface of the globe. We counted six passengers, namely, Messrs. D. Stuart, D. M'Kenzie, J. M'Donald, J. Clarke, myself, and a little girl of eight or nine years, who came from Kildonan, on Red river. We passed the first night on one of the islands in Thunder bay, so named on account of

---

the frequent storms, accompanied with lightning and thunder, which burst over it at certain seasons of the year. On the 22d and 23d, we continued to range the southern coast of Lake Superior. The navigation of this superb lake would be extremely agreeable but for the thick fogs which reign during a part of the day, and do not permit a rapid progress. On the 24th, we dined at a small trading establishment called Le Pic, where we had excellent fish.

On the 26th, we crossed Michipicoton bay, which, at its entrance, may be nine miles wide, and twenty fathoms deep. As we were nearing the eastern point, we met a small canoe, having on board Captain M'Cargo, and the crew of one of the schooners owned by the company. Mr. M'Cargo informed us that he had just escaped from Saut Ste. Marie, whither the Americans had sent a detachment of one hundred and fifty men; and that having been obliged to abandon his schooner, he had set fire to her. In consequence of this news it was resolved that the canoe on which we were proceeding, should return to Fort William. I embarked with Mr. Stuart and two men, in Captain M'Cargo's canoe, while he and his crew took our places. In the haste and confusion of this exchange, which was made on the lake, they gave us a ham, a little tea and sugar, and a bag containing about twenty-five pounds of flour, but forgot entirely a kettle, knives, forks, and so on, all articles which Mr. M'Cargo had not time to take when he left Saut Ste. Marie. We subsisted miserably in consequence for two days and a half that we continued to coast the lake before reaching any post. We moistened in the bag a little flour, and having kneaded it, made cakes, which we baked on flat stones by our camp fire.

On the 29th, we reached Batchawainon, where we found some women, who prepared us food and received us well. It is a poor little post, situated at the bottom of a sandy cove, which offers nothing agreeable to the eye. Mr. Frederic Goedike, who resided here, was gone to see what had taken place at Saut Ste. Marie. He returned the next day, and told us that the Americans had come, with a force of one hundred and fifty men, under the command of Major Holmes; and that after having pillaged all that they considered worth taking, of the property of the N. W. Company and that of a Mr. Johnston, they had set fire to the houses, warehouses, &c., belonging to the company and to that gentleman, and retired, without molesting any other person. Our canoe arrived from Fort William in the evening, with that of Mr. M'Gillivray; and on the morrow we all repaired to Saut Ste. Marie, where we saw the ruins which the enemy had left. The houses, stores, and saw-mills of the company were still smoking. The schooner was at the foot of the rapids; the Americans had run her down, but she grounded on a ledge of rocks, whence they could not dislodge her, and so they had burnt her to the water's edge.

Le Saut de Ste. Marie, or as it is shortly called, Saut Ste. Marie, is a rapid at the outlet of Lake Superior, and may be five hundred or six hundred yards wide; its length may be estimated at three quarters of a mile, and the descent of the water at about twenty feet. At the lower extremity the river widens to about a mile, and here there are a certain number of houses. The north bank belongs to Great Britain; the southern to the United States. It was on the American side that Mr. Johnston lived. Before the war he was collector of the port for the American government. On the same side resided a Mr. Nolin, with his family, consisting of three half-breed boys and as many girls, one of whom was passably pretty. He was an old Indian trader, and his house and furniture showed signs of his former prosperity. On the British side we found Mr. Charles Ermatinger, who had a pretty establishment: he dwelt temporarily in a house that belonged to Nolin, but he was building another of stone, very elegant, and had just finished a grist mill. He thought

---

that the last would lead the inhabitants to sow more grain than they did. These inhabitants are principally old Canadian boatmen, married to half-breed or Indian women. The fish afford them subsistence during the greater part of the year, and provided they secure potatoes enough to carry them through the remainder, they are content. It is to be regretted that these people are not more industrious, for the land is very fertile.

On the 1st of August, an express was sent to Michilimackinac (Mackinaw) to inform the commandant thereof what had happened at Saut Ste. Marie. While expecting the return of the messenger, we put ourselves in a state of defence, in case that by chance the Americans should make another irruption. The thing was not improbable, for according to some expressions which fell from one of their number who spoke French, their object was to capture the furs of the Northwest Company, which were expected to arrive shortly from the interior. We invited some Indians, who were camped on Pine Point, at some distance from the Saut, to help us in case of need; which they promised to do. Meanwhile we had no provisions, as everything had been carried off by the American forces, and were obliged to subsist on such brook trout as we could take with hook and line, and on wild raspberries.

On the 4th, the express returned, without having been able to accomplish his mission: he had found the island of Mackinaw so completely blockaded by the enemy, that it was impossible to reach it, without running the greatest risk of being made prisoner.

On the 12th, we heard distinctly the discharges of artillery which our people were firing off at Michilimackinac, although the distance was nearly sixty miles. We thought it was an attempt of the enemy to retake that post, but we afterward learned that it was only a royal salute in honor of the birthday of the prince regent. We learned, however, during our stay at Saut Ste. Marie, that the Americans had really made a descent upon the island, but were compelled to retire with a considerable loss.

On the 19th, some of the partners arrived from Fort William, preceding the flotilla which was coming down richly laden with furs. They sent on Mr. Decoigne in a light canoe, with letters to Montreal, to order provisions to meet this brigade.

On the 21st, the canoe on which I was a passenger, was sent to the mouth of French river, to observe the motions of the enemy. The route lay between a range of low islands, and a shelvy beach, very monotonous and dreary. We remained at the entrance of the aforesaid river till the 25th, when the fleet of loaded canoes, forty-seven in number, arrived there. The value of the furs which they carried could not be estimated at less than a million of dollars: an important prize for the Americans, if they could have laid their hands upon it. We were three hundred and thirty-five men, all well armed; a large camp was formed, with a breast-work of fur-packs, and we kept watch all night. The next morning we began to ascend the French river, and were soon out of reach of the dreaded foe. French river flows from the N. E. and empties into Lake Huron, about one hundred and twenty miles from Saut Ste. Marie. We reached Lake Nipissing, of which it is the outlet, the same evening, and encamped. We crossed that lake on the 27th, made a number of portages, and encamped again, not far from Mattawan.

On the 28th we entered, at an early hour, the river Ottawa, and encamped, in the evening, at the Portage des deux Joachims. This is a grand river, but obstructed by many falls and rapids on its way to join the St. Lawrence; which caused us to make many portages, and so we arrived on the 31st at Kettle falls.

The rock which here arrests the course of the Ottawa , extends from shore to shore, and so completely cuts off the waters, that at the time we passed none was seen falling over, but sinking by subterranean channels, or fissures in the rock, it boiled up below, from seven or eight different openings, not unlike water in a huge caldron, whence the first explorers of the country gave it the name of Chaudière or Caldron falls. Mr. P. Wright resided in this place, where he had a fine establishment and a great number of men employed in cultivating the land, and getting out lumber. We left the Chaudières a little before sunset, and passed very soon the confluence of the Rideau or Curtain river. This river, which casts itself into the Ottawa over a rock twenty-five by thirty feet high, is divided in the middle of the fall by a little island, which parts the waters into two white sheets, resembling a double curtain open in the middle and spreading out below. The coup d'œil is really picturesque; the rays of the setting sun, which struck the waters obliquely as we passed, heightened exceedingly their beauty, and rendered it worthy of a pencil more skilful than mine. We voyaged till midnight, when we stopped to let our men take a little repose. This rest was only for two hours. At sunrise on the 1st September, we reached Long-Saut, where, having procured guides, we passed that dangerous rapid, and set foot on shore near the dwelling-house of a Mr. M'Donell, who sent us milk and fruits for our breakfast. Toward noon we passed the lake of the Two Mountains, where I began to see the mountain of my native isle. About two o'clock, we passed the rapids of St. Ann. Soon after we came opposite Saut St. Louis and the village of Caughnawago , passed that last rapid of so many, and landed at Montreal, a little before sunset. I hastened to the paternal roof, where the family were not less surprised than overjoyed at beholding me. Not having heard of me, since I had sailed from New York, they had believed, in accordance with the common report, that I had been murdered by the savages, with Mr. M'Kay and the crew of the Tonquin: and certainly, it was by the goodness of Providence that I found myself thus safe and sound, in the midst of my relations and friends, at the end of a voyage accompanied by so many perils, and in which so many of my companions had met with an untimely death.

#### CHAPTER XXIX

Present State of the Countries visited by the Author— Correction of Mr. Irving's Statements respecting St. Louis.

THE last chapter closes the original French narrative of my travels around and across the continent, as published thirty-three years ago. The translation follows that narrative as exactly as possible, varying from it only in the correction of a few not very important errors of fact. It speaks of places and persons as I spoke of them then. I would not willingly lose the veri-similitude of this natural and unadorned description, in order to indulge in any new turns of style or more philosophical reflections.

But since that period many changes have occurred in the scenes which I so long ago visited and described. Though they are well known, I may be pardoned for alluding to them.

The natives of the Sandwich islands, who were in a state of paganism at that time, have since adopted a form of Christianity, have made considerable progress in imitating the civilization of Europe, and even, at this moment, begin to entertain the idea of annexation to the United States. It appears, however, that the real natives are rapidly dwindling away by the effects of their vices, which an exotic and ill-assimilated civilization has rather increased than diminished, and to which religion has not succeeded in applying a remedy.

At the mouth of the Columbia, whole tribes, and among them, the Clatsops , have been swept

---

away by disease. Here again, licentious habits universally diffused, spread a fatal disorder through the whole nation, and undermining the constitutions of all, left them an easy prey to the first contagion or epidemic sickness. But missionaries of various Christian sects have labored among the Indians of the Columbia also; not to speak of the missions of the Catholic Church, so well known by the narrative of Father De Smet and others; and numbers have been taught to cultivate the soil, and thus to provide against the famines to which they were formerly exposed from their dependence on the precarious resources of the chase; while others have received, in the faith of Christ, the true principle of national permanence, and a living germ of civilization, which may afterward be developed.

Emigration has also carried to the Oregon the axe of the settler, as well as the canoe and pack of the fur-trader. The fertile valleys and prairies of the Willamet — once the resort of the deer, the elk, and the antelope, are now tilled by the industrious husbandman. Oregon City, so near old "Astoria," whose first log fort I saw and described, is now an Archiepiscopal see, and the capital of a territory, which must soon be a state of the Union.

Of the regions east of the mountains described in my itinerary, little can be said in respect to improvement: they remain in the same wild state. The interest of the Hudson's Bay Company, as an association of fur-traders, is opposed to agricultural improvements, whose operation would be to drive off and extinguish the wild animals that furnish their commerce with its object. But on Lake Superior steamboats have supplanted the birchbark canoe of the Indian and the fur-trader, and at Saut Ste. Marie, especially on the American side, there is now every sign of prosperity. How remote and wild was the region beyond, through which I passed, may be estimated by the fact that in thirty-eight years the onward-rolling wave of our population has but just reached its confines. Canada, although it has not kept pace with the United States, has yet wonderfully advanced in forty years. The valley of the Ottawa, that great artery of the St. Lawrence, where I thought it worth while to notice the residence of an enterprising farmer and lumber merchant, is now a populous district, well cultivated, and sprinkled with villages, towns, and cities.

The reader, in perusing my first chapter, found a description of the city of New York in 1810, and of the neighboring village of Brooklyn. It would be superfluous to establish a comparison at this day. At that time, it will be observed, the mere breaking out of war between America and England was thought to involve the sacrifice of an American commercial establishment on the Pacific, on the ground of its supplies being necessarily cut off (it was supposed), and of the United States government being unable to protect it from hostile attack. At present it suffices to remark that while New York, then so inconsiderable a port, is now perhaps the third city in the world, the United States also, are, undoubtedly, a first-rate power, unassailable at home, and formidable abroad, to the greatest nations.

As in my preface I alluded to Mr. Irving's "Astoria," as reflecting, in my opinion, unjustly, upon the young men engaged in the first expedition to the mouth of the Columbia, it may suffice here to observe, without entering into particulars, that my narrative, which I think answers for its own fidelity, clearly shows that some of them, at least did not want courage, activity, zeal for the interests of the company, while it existed, and patient endurance of hardship. And although it forms no part of the narrative or my voyage, yet as subsequent visits to the West and an intimate knowledge of St. Louis, enable me to correct Mr. Irving's poetical rather than accurate description of that place, I may well do it here. St. Louis now bids fair to rival ere long the "Queen of the West;" Mr.

---

Irving describes her as a small trading place, where trappers, halfbreeds, gay, frivolous Canadian boatmen, &c., &c., congregated and revelled, with that lightness and buoyancy of spirit inherited from their French forefathers; the indolent Creole of St. Louis caring for little more than the enjoyment of the present hour; a motley population, half-civilized, half-barbarous, thrown, on his canvas, into one general, confused (I allow highly picturesque ) mass, without respect of persons: but it is fair to say, with due homage to the talent of the sketcher, who has verged slightly on caricature in the use of that humor-loving pencil admired by all the world, that St. Louis even then contained its noble, industrious, and I may say, princely merchants; it could boast its Chouteaus, Soulands, Céré, Chéniers, Vallées, and La Croix , with other kindred spirits, whose descendants prove the worth of their sires by their own, and are now among the leading business men, as their fathers were the pioneers, of the flourishing St. Louis.

With these remarks, which I make simply as an act of justice in connection with the general subject of the founding of "Astoria," but in which I mean to convey no imputation on the intentional fairness of the accomplished author to whom I have alluded, I take a respectful leave of my readers.

#### APPENDIX

IN Chapter XVII, I promised the reader to give him an account of the fate of some of the persons who left Astoria before, and after its sale or transfer to the British. I will now redeem that pledge. Messrs. Ramsay Crooks, R. M'Lelland, and Robert Stuart, after enduring all sorts of fatigue, dangers and hair-breadth escapes with their lives — all which have been so graphically described by Washington Irving in his "Astoria," finally reached St. Louis and New York.

Mr. Clapp went to the Marquesas Islands, where he entered into the service of his country in the capacity of midshipman under Commodore Porter — made his escape from there in company with Lieutenant Gamble of the Marine corps, by directions of the Commodore, was captured by the British, landed at Buenos Ayres, and finally reached New York.

D. M'Dougall, as a reward for betraying the trust reposed in him by Mr. Astor, was made a Partner of the Northwest Company, crossed the mountains, and died a miserable death at Bas de la Rivière , Winipeg. Donald M'Kenzie, his coadjutor, went back to the Columbia River, where he amassed a considerable fortune, with which he retired, and lived in Chautauque County in this state, where he died a few years since unknown and neglected: — he was a very selfish man, who cared for no one but himself.

It remains only to speak of Messrs. J. C. Halsey, Russell Farnham, and Alfred Seton, who, it will be remembered, embarked with Mr. Hunt on the "Pedlar," in Feb. 1814.

Leaving the River about the 1st of April, they proceeded to the Russian establishment at Sitka, Norfolk Sound, where they fell in with two or three more American vessels, which had come to trade with the natives or to avoid the British cruisers. While there, a sail under British colors appeared, and Mr. Hunt sent Mr. Seton to ascertain who she was. She turned out to be the "Forester," Captain Pigott, a repeating signal ship and letter-of-marque, sent from England in company of a fleet intended for the South Seas. On further acquaintance with the captain, Mr. Seton (from whom I derive these particulars) learned a fact which has never before been published, and which will show the solicitude and perseverance of Mr. ASTOR. After despatching the "Lark" from New York, fearing that she might be intercepted by the British, he sent orders to his correspondent in England to purchase and fit out a British bottom, and despatch her to the Columbia to relieve the

---

establishment.

When Mr. Hunt learned this fact, he determined to leave Mr. Halsey at Sitka, and proceeding himself northward, landed Mr. Farnham on the coast of Kamskatka, to go over land with despatches for Mr. Astor. Mr. Farnham accomplished the journey, reached Hamburg, whence he sailed for the West Indies, and finally arrived at New York, having made the entire circuit of the globe.

The "Pedlar" then sailed to the southeast, and soon reached the coast of California, which she approached to get a supply of provisions. Nearing one of the harbors, they descried a vessel at anchor inside, showing American colors. Hauling their wind, they soon came close to the stranger, which, to their surprise, turned out to be the Spanish corvette "Santa Barbara," which sent boats alongside the "Pedlar," and captured her, and kept possession of the prize for some two months, during which they dropped down to San Blas. Here Mr. Hunt proposed to Mr. Seton to cross the continent and reach the United States the best way he could. Mr. Seton, accordingly, went to the Isthmus of Darien, where he was detained several months by sickness, but finally reached Cartagena, where a British fleet was lying in the roads, to take off the English merchants, who in consequence of the revolutionary movements going on, sought shelter under their own flag. Here Mr. Seton, reduced to the last stage of destitution and squalor, boldly applied to Captain Bentham, the commander of the squadron, who, finding him to be a gentleman, offered him every needful assistance, gave him a berth in his own cabin, and finally landed him safely on the Island of Jamaica, whence he, too, found his way to New York.

Of all those engaged in the expedition there are now but four survivors — Ramsay Crooks, Esq. the late President of the American Fur Company; Alfred Seton, Esq., Vice-president of the Sun Mutual Insurance Company; both of New York city; Benjamin Pillet of Canada; and the author, living also in New York. All the rest have paid the debt of nature, but their names are recorded in the foregoing pages.

Notwithstanding the illiberal remarks made by Captain Thorn on the persons who were on board the ill-fated Tonquin, and reproduced by Mr. Irving in his "Astoria" — these young men who were represented as "Bar keepers or Billiard markers, most of whom had fled from Justice, &c." — I feel it a duty to say that they were for the most part, of good parentage, liberal education and every way were qualified to discharge the duties of their respective stations. The remarks on the general character of the voyageurs employed as boat-men and Mechanics, and the attempt to cast ridicule on their "Braggart and swaggering manners" come with a bad grace from the author of "Astoria," when we consider that in that very work Mr. Irving is compelled to admit their indomitable energy, their fidelity to their employers, and their cheerfulness under the most trying circumstances in which men can be placed.

With respect to Captain Thorn, I must confess that though a stern commander and an irritable man, he paid the strictest attention to the health of his crew. His complaints of the squalid appearance of the Canadians and mechanics who were on board, can be abated of their force by giving a description of the accommodation of these people. The Tonquin was a small ship; its fore-castle was destined for the crew performing duty before the mast. The room allotted for the accommodation of the twenty men destined for the establishment, was abaft the fore-castle; a bulk-head had been let across, and a door led from the fore-castle into a dark, unventilated, unwholesome place, where they were all heaped together, without means of locomotion, and consequently deprived

of that exercise of the body so necessary to health. Add to that, we had no physician on board. In view of these facts, can the complaints of the gallant Captain be sustained? Of course Mr. Irving was ignorant of these circumstances, as well as of many others which he might have known, had some one suggested to him to ask a few questions of persons who were within his reach at the time of his publication. I have (I need scarcely say) no personal animosity against the unfortunate Captain; he always treated me, individually, as well as I could expect; and if, in the course of my narrative, I have been severe on his actions, I was impelled by a sense of justice to my friends on board, as well as by the circumstance that such explanations of his general deportment were requisite to convey the historical truth to my readers.

The idea of a conspiracy against him on board is so absurd that it really does not deserve notice. The threat, or rather the proposal made to him by Mr. M'Kay, in the following words — "if you say fight, fight it is" — originated in a case where one of the sailors had maltreated a Canadian lad, who came to complain to Mr. M'Kay. The captain would not interpose his authority, and said in my presence, "Let them fight out their own battles:" — it was upon that answer that Mr. M'Kay gave vent to the expression quoted above. I might go on with a long list of inaccuracies, more or less grave or trivial, in the beautifully written work of Mr. Irving, but it would be tedious to go through the whole of them. The few remarks to which I have given place above, will suffice to prove that the assertion made in the preface was not unwarranted. It is far from my intention to enter the lists with a man of the literary merit and reputation of Mr. Irving, but as a narrator of events of which I was an EYE-WITNESS, I felt bound to tell the truth, although that truth might impugn the historical accuracy of a work which ranks as a classic in the language. At the same time I entirely exonerate Mr. Irving from any intention of prejudicing the minds of his reader, as he doubtless had only in view to support the character of his friend: that sentiment is worthy of a generous heart, but it should not be gratified, nor would he wish to gratify it, I am sure, at the expense of the character of others.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

Perhaps even contrary to the wish of Mr. Franchere, I have left the above almost word for word as he wrote it. It is a part of the history of the affairs related as well in Mr. Irving's *ASTORIA* as in the present volume, that the reclamations of one of the clerks on that famous and unfortunate voyage of the *Tonquin*, against the disparaging description of himself and his colleagues given in the former work, should be fairly recorded. At the same time, I can not help stating my own impression that a natural susceptibility roused by those slighting remarks from Captain Thorn's correspondence, to which Mr. Irving as an historian gives currency, has somewhat blinded my excellent friend to the tone of banter, so characteristic of the chronicler of the *Knickerbockers*, in which all these particulars are given, more as traits of the character of the stern old sea-captain, with his hearty contempt for land-lubbers and literary clerks, than as a dependable account of the persons on board his ship, some of whom might have been, and as we see by the present work, were, in fact, very meritorious characters, for whose literary turn, and faithful journalizing (which seems to have especially provoked the captain's wrath), now at the end of more than forty years, we have so much reason to be thankful. Certainly Mr. Irving himself, who has drawn frequently on Mr. Franchere's narrative, could not, from his well-known taste in such matters, be insensible to the Defoe-like simplicity thereof, nor to the picturesque descriptions, worthy of a professional pen, with which it is sprinkled.

---

— Huntington  
THE END

Voyage of Mr. Hunt and his companions from St Louis to the mouth of the Columbia by a new route across the Rocky Mountains

By July 18, 1811, Misters McKenzie, Crooks, Miller, McClellan, Reed, and Hunt, in company with fifty-six men, a woman, and two children had traveled up the Missouri River from St. Louis to the village of the Aricaras. We left there with eighty-two horses packing commodities, munitions, food, and animal traps. Everyone walked except the company partners and the woman, a squaw. We took a southwesterly route and came to the banks of the Ramparre, a little river that flows into the Missouri below the Aricaras' village.

Without doubt the name Ramparre comes from the French hunters, for it means "provided with many forts." On the same day we camped near a small stream a short distance from its confluence with the Grand River. This we forded on July 21, and on the 24th we pitched camp on the banks of one of its tributaries. We had covered sixty-seven miles, keeping our course a little more to the west in the prairies, where the grass was knee-high and where the horses could graze contentedly. The countryside was bare except for a few cottonwood trees growing along the rivers.

Several members of the company were ill, and we rested here until August 5. During this interval I visited the camp of some Cheyenne Indians. I bought thirty-six horses there at a price better than that which I paid the Aricaras. Their camp was in the middle of a prairie near a small stream. These Indians burn buffalo chips to keep themselves warm. Their teepees are made of buffalo skins carefully sewn together and supported by poles joined at the top. They often hold as many as fifty people. The Cheyennes are honest and clean. They hunt buffalo, and they raise horses that each year they trade to the Aricaras for corn, kidney beans, pumpkins, and some merchandise.

They had a dozen beaver skins, but they did not seem to know how to trap these animals. We rearranged our packs so that no horse would be loaded too heavily and resumed our journey on August 6. We now had enough horses so that two men could ride alternately. I assigned six to hunters and sent them to look for buffalo. We crossed several hillocks, or isolated knolls, that were composed of red earth as hard as brick. Other signs indicated that this area had been burned over, for at the base of several knolls we saw cinders and pumice stones. This rugged terrain had very little grass.

It appeared that at one time some straggling trees had grown on these plains. We found the rotted remains of a few of them. Stumps still stood and we could see from the remnants that they were pine and oak. On the 6th we camped along a tributary of the Grand River and on the 7th near a pond in the prairie. Buffalo chips served for our fuel. We killed several buffalo; in fact, they were everywhere around us, for they were breeding. They made a frightful noise that sounded like distant thunder. The males tore up the earth with their hooves and horns.

We covered forty-two miles on the 6th and 7th. But after that we slowed our pace so that our hunters, who were behind us, could rejoin the main party. The countryside became mountainous and water scarce. The slopes were covered with crags of white sandstone, ranging from southeast to northwest. We saw some big horn [sheep] there, and we built fires on the summits to guide our hunters. At first we used buffalo chips, but after that we could use pine wood. (40 miles south-

west)

On August 11 we crossed a range of mountains like those of preceding days. The trail was tiring because of its precipitousness and the great number of rocks. On the 12th we forded two tributaries of the Grand River that flowed from the southwest, one of them appearing to be the main branch. We saw many petrifications that several of our companions collected to use as whetstones. (27 miles)

Since we supposed that our hunters were still to our right, on the 13th we traveled more to the west, crossing a tributary of the Little Missouri that was three hundred feet wide, its current swift, muddy, and swirling with eddies. To the west the mountains appeared to bar our passage. Three of our hunters returned at sunset. (12 miles)

On the 14th, we made camp beside a tributary of the Little Missouri. The evening was very cold. To the north we found pine-covered mountains that we crossed on the 15th. The terrain was extremely rugged. It became even worse on the 17th, and we could find no passage through these mountains. We killed a big horn whose meat is good, not unlike mutton. Usually we found these animals on mountains where no other animals could go. Several ran and leaped on the very edges of precipices. We also saw some black-tailed deer, larger than the red deer and with very big ears. Their flesh is not so tasty as that of the red deer. The tips of their tails are black, and they are to be found only in mountainous country. (45 miles southwest)

On the 18th we found it necessary to leave the mountains and turn back toward the broken countryside. There we met our hunters who had killed eight buffalo. When we had pitched camp to the left of the pine-covered mountains, Mr. McKenzie and I scaled the nearby slopes. Our view extended in all directions. In the west we saw far off some mountains that appeared white in several spots, and we assumed that this was the snow-covered Big Horn [Range]. Below the peaks herds of buffalo ran over the plains. (10 miles)

On the 19th, we camped in the midst of some hills near a pond of clear water. All around grew reeds, gooseberries, and prickly gooseberries with yellow and red fruit. Clusters of cherry trees showed signs of the habitual paths of the black bear, so that the slightest wind that stirred the bushes gave us some feelings of trepidation. However, we had to this point seen only three of the animals. (21 miles southwest)

We stopped on the 20th beside a branch of the Little Missouri, thought to be the largest tributary. The weather was cold and disagreeable. It froze during the night and the ice was as thick as a dollar. The countryside was high and irregular. This is the spot that separates the waters that flow east into the Missouri and west into the Yellowstone. (34 miles west)

On the 22nd we ran into what we thought to be the usual route of the Absaroka [usually called the Crow] Indians coming from the Mandan villages. The little river beside which we camped and which flowed north was doubtless a tributary of the Powder River. On the 23rd we found another branch; but before we got there we passed through some mountains and some dry gullies. The great heat, the treacherous trail, and the lack of water caused much suffering. Several people were at the point of losing their courage. Mr. McKenzie's dog died from exhaustion. While trudging through these barren, arid mountains we could no longer kill buffalo, for they usually keep near water. However, on the 25th we found a few in this area. The hunters stalked them and killed five. The day before, some of the company had eaten a wolf, which they found quite good. We made camp near a third tributary of the Powder River. (58 miles southwest)

---

We left the river on the 30th, and camped near Mt. Big Horn [probably Cloud Peak] that had been ahead of us for so long. The day before, our hunters had seen signs of Indians. For several days we had been on the lookout for them, but they discovered us first. On the evening of the 30th, two Crow Indians came to our camp and the next morning many more appeared. They were all on horseback. Not even the children were on foot. These Indians are such excellent horsemen that they ride up and down the mountains and craggy heights as if they were galloping in a riding school. We followed their to their settlement that was beside a clear brook on the slope of a mountain.

The chief came to meet us. He received us amicably, led us to his tent, and pointed to a spot convenient for our camp. I gave him presents of tobacco, knives, and some trifles to distribute among his people. To him personally I gave a piece of scarlet cloth, some powder, bullets, and other items.

We spent the first day of September buying some robes and pelts and trading our tired, maimed horses for fresh ones. A few of our company bought some, thereby augmenting the number of our horses to about 121, most of which were well-trained and able to cross the mountains.

On the 2nd we resumed our journey along the foot of the mountains and stopped near a small river that is said to be a tributary of the Powder River. We tried for half a day on the 3rd to get away from the precipices and the bare mountain heights; but we were forced to retrace our steps and return to the banks of a small stream. We killed several very large elk. (21 miles)

We had in our company a hunter by the name of Rose, a very unpleasant, insolent man. We had been warned that he planned to desert us when we came across the Crow Indians, to persuade as many of our men as he could to abandon us, and to steal our horses. For that reason we kept close watch at night. Moreover, we were afraid that if, despite our vigilance, he succeeded in carrying out his traitorous design, he would greatly damage our expedition. Thus, with the thought in mind that his plan might be more extensive than we suspected, we resolved to frustrate it. On September 2 we had received a visit from some Crow Indians of a tribe different from the one which we had just left and which was camped on the mountainside. At that point I suggested to Rose that he remain with [the] Crow Indians; and I offered him half a year's wages, a horse, three beaver traps, and some other commodities. He accepted my conditions; and he immediately abandoned his fellow conspirators who, without a leader, remained with our expedition.

So Rose joined the first Crow Indians whom we encountered. Their chief realized that we had followed a wrong course and on the 4th sent Rose to tell us and to put us on the right trail that crossed the mountains and that was both shorter and better. We soon met Crows who were taking the same route as we, a meeting that gave me an opportunity to admire the horsemanship of these Indians. It was truly unbelievable. There, among others, was a child tied to a two-year-old colt. He held the reins in one hand and frequently used his whip. I asked about his age and was told that he had seen two winters. He did not yet talk!

We camped at the source of the small river that we had reached the day before, resting there on the 5th. We wished to await the return of our hunters who appeared that evening. They had killed two buffalo and a gray bear. We were in the middle of the Big Horn mountains, so called because of the river by that name. The river runs along the mountain base, flowing northeast to southwest. The Big Horns are an advanced part of the Rockies. They are covered with pines, with many shrubs, and with plants that were actually in bloom. (16 miles)

---

On the 6th we met eight Indians and three families, some of them Flatheads and some Snakes. As we continued on our way westward across the mountains and crags, we saw some beautiful country: an abundance of springs, verdant grasslands, forests of pine, and innumerable plants in bloom. Nevertheless, it froze continually. We camped near a brook that flowed north and emptied into the Big Horn River. The ground was covered with gooseberries of two species, the best that I have ever eaten. One of our men brought me some strawberries that he had just picked. We had killed an elk and several black-tailed deer. Buffalo were quite numerous, too, so that the mountainside looked like one continuous barnyard. Farther on, however, we found only an occasional animal. We could see clearly a third, snow-covered mountain; we had avoided the first and now turned southward. (20 miles)

By the 7th we went down onto the plains, where we traveled until the 9th. We thus reached the banks of the Big Horn, here called the Wind River because the wind blows so continually that the snow never remains on the ground. We camped twice along this stream. On the morning of the 8th we paid the Indians the price of a horse that they offered us and set out for the village of the Arapaho Indians, a tribe of the Panis who live along the Platte River. One of our men left a gun at the camp, but the Indians had run off with it before he could return. That evening we were on the banks of a small river into which flows a brook that has a great quantity of beaver. At the spot where we camped, the Big Horn flows swiftly, is quite clear, and is about three hundred feet wide. We could see below us the canyon through which it escaped the mountain meadows. It is a very narrow gorge flanked on both sides by precipices. (45 miles west)

On the 10th we went along the banks of the Wind River, going upstream through a beautiful plain. Some trees grow along its banks but there are no beaver. Its torrents have covered the banks with gravel. We saw two bears that we could not get near, but we caught some fish that were much like herring. On the 11th we forded a rather large tributary of the Wind River that flows out of the mountains rising from the south. On the plain we often used sagebrush for our fires. It grows here to a great height. I rode through a thicket of it that was as tall as I on horseback and extremely full. Two species of gooseberries are quite common. We saw many flights of robins and other small birds. By the 12th we found mountains to the north and to the south of us. They seemed to join in the west. We crossed the Wind River and found the trail hilly. (38 miles)

From the 13th to the 15th, we crossed and recrossed the Wind River as well as two of its tributaries, the larger of which flowed from the northwest. The land produces a great amount of wild flax which is much like ours in height, in the texture of its stem, and in its husk, though the husk is smaller and lighter in color. The mountains closed in and the countryside became very rugged, the footing tortuous among the high peaks. On the 15th we left the river and, trekking southwest, followed an Indian trail into the mountains. One of our hunters who had been on the banks the Columbia pointed out three immense and snow-covered peaks which, he said, bordered a tributary of the river [the Snake]. (50 miles southwest)

On the 16th we frequently encountered snow. There were large beds of it on the summit and slopes of the mountains visible to the north. We halted beside the Spanish River [Green River], a large stream on whose banks, according to some Indians, the Spanish live. It flows west and, it may be supposed, empties into the Gulf of California. We were surrounded by mountains in which we found beautiful green meadows where many herds of buffalo graze - a fact the more interesting to us because we had not seen a single one of these animals for several days. I found

three different species of gooseberries: the common type with red berries, low bushes, and very spiny stems; a second with excellent yellow berries and non-spiny stems; and a third with dark red berries that taste much like our winter grapes. It is nearly as large and has very spiny stems. I also saw three kinds of currants; one has red berries, large and savory, with bushes eight or nine feet high; another with yellow berries about the size of ordinary currants, and with bushes about four or five feet high; and a third with bright red berries that are almost as sweet as strawberries but are rather insipid. Their bushes are small. (20 miles)

On the 17th we continued to follow the river to the opposite end of the mountains. Beaver and otter seemed to be everywhere. In fact, for some distance down the mountainside the area appears to be very favorable for trapping beaver. Ducks and geese are also plentiful. (15 miles southwest)

On the 18th we left the river and, as we trekked to the northwest, we went up a small stream that flows from the mountains. We stopped there to dry enough buffalo meat to last until we reached the banks of the Columbia and other rivers where we hoped to catch fish. While hunting, some of our men met Indians who seemed to be extremely frightened at the appearance of our men and who immediately took flight. I went after them with Mr. McKenzie, Mr. McClellan, and two others. We had gone about eight miles before we found them some distance away, pursuing a buffalo. When they saw us they again ran away and again we followed them. Finally we overtook two young men whose horses were not so fast as those of their comrades. At first they seemed to be greatly disturbed, but we soon put them at ease. They led us to their camp. They belonged, we found, to a tribe of Snake Indians that had come to this district to dry meat. They had a great amount of it, all very fat. They live in skin tents and own many horses. Several among them had never before seen white men and they were very happy about our visit. They fed us and in all made us thoroughly welcome. They had no pelts other than buffalo and a dozen beaver, which we bought; and we urged them to kill more of the beaver. We told them that we would return to their camp to trade with them and they seemed pleased. We bought from them nearly two thousand pounds of dried buffalo meat which, with the more than four thousand that our men had prepared, loaded all our horses but six. (8 miles)

Afterward, when we had climbed a small mountain, we came to a good trail leading to a tributary of the Columbia where it flows into the fourth range. Several tributaries of the Columbia flow from this same range. We had snow on both sides and ahead of us on all the peaks. (15 miles west)

The little brook that we followed is fed by several others and becomes a small river. On the 25th and 26th we had to ford it often, but its current is so swift that no one could cross it without help. Our trail was quite tortuous, winding through small mountains and along the edge of precipices that surrounded us. One of our pack horses fell into the river from a height of nearly two hundred feet but was not hurt. (20 miles)

We left these mountains on the 27th and camped at the confluence of a small river and another stream that we had seen recently. Americans call it the Mad River because of its swiftness. On its banks and somewhat above this confluence rise the three peaks that we had seen on the 15th. We ought, before, to have continued to follow the Wind River and crossed one of these mountains because we would have reached its source. But our lack of provisions had forced us to head for the banks of the Spanish River. (12 miles west)

Since it was at this point from which we hoped to continue our journey by water, we began on the

28th to look for trees suitable for building canoes. With another man I climbed about twelve miles on the other side of the river and saw many signs of beaver; I also saw gray bear tracks and a herd of elk. That evening when I returned to camp I learned that no one had been any more successful than I in finding suitable wood. The trees, a variety of poplar, were too frail; their leaves are like those of the willow. There were also some spruce, but they were so full of knots that we had no hope that our axes could get through them. The other trees that we had seen were cherries, small pines, sorbs [service trees], and some cedars.

Thus, on the 29th we moved our camp farther downriver because the trees there better suited our purpose, even though, as it seemed to me, we would have to make a canoe out of two pieces. On the 30th we set to work and we felled many trees that were not useful. However, since I feared that the river would not be navigable below the point where it flowed into the mountains, Mr. Reed and two other men went ahead to explore it for the distance of four days of travel downstream. On October 1, it rained in the valley and snowed in the mountains. Several of our men left to catch beaver. At evening two Snake Indians who had followed us since we left the Crows came to our camp. They made us fear that we should not be able to travel on the river. On the 2nd Mr. Reed returned. At the end of two days he had been obliged to leave his horses which were of no help to him in climbing the mountains and crags. After an hour's effort to get through on foot along the river banks he had been forced to abandon his attempt. To try to get across the peaks would have been an endless labor. The river became very narrow, its twisting course obstructed by many rapids. It became necessary then to look farther downstream for wood for our canoes and the hope of navigating. So far as Mr. Reed could see, the river continued to flow through the heart of the mountains. Among other things he had found signs of beaver and had seen two bears, one black and one gray.

Rain and sleet fell all day on the 3rd. Everything was readied to cross the mountain that we believed was our last. The storm ended on the 4th, but all the slopes around us were covered with snow. We forded the Mad River with the water up to the bellies of our horses, and camped at the foot of the mountain. On the 5th we climbed it, following an easy and much-traveled trail. Snow whitened the summit and the northern slopes of the heights. The Snakes served as our guides, though two of our hunters had the year before come through this area. (18 miles)

On the 6th we camped near a little brook that washes the northwest borders of a beautiful plain. The next day we stopped by a river that flows to the northwest, crossing it on the 7th. It joins several other streams and becomes quite large. After merging with another stream of equal size, it runs west. We saw many herds of antelopes. Wild cherries are common, about the size of ordinary red cherries, but they were not yet ripe. About twelve miles northwest of our camp there is a hot spring. I went to it with Mr. McKenzie and, though it was not boiling, steam constantly spouted from it.

The 8th was cold all day. The wind from the west blew with a fury, and a little snow fell. We reached the fort of Mr. Andrew Henry. It has several small buildings that lie constructed in order to spend the past winter there. All stand along a tributary of the Columbia about 300 to 450 feet wide. We hoped to navigate it and we found some trees suitable for canoes. By the 9th we had already begun to build eight of them, all from cottonwood. The cottonwood, the aspen, and some small willows are the only trees that thrive in this area.

Mr. Miller left us on the 10th, with four hunters and four horses, to trap beaver. They took the two

Snakes with them and traveled down along the mountainside, hoping to find a tribe of Indians from whom they could get information useful to their hunting. Every evening we caught some beaver and some small salmon trout. On the 14th a Snake Indian came to our camp half dead from hunger and clothed in rags.

On the 17th we were all ready to embark. We had cached our saddles in a spot that we showed the two young Snakes. They promised to take care not only of the saddles but also of our seventy-seven horses until one of us returned. The poor devil whom we had seen on the 14th came back with his son, who was even more ragged than he. We fed them. Then they gathered up the paws and entrails of the beavers we had killed and said goodbye to us. The people of this area must suffer terribly from a lack of game. Buffalo come here in some seasons; their tracks are numerous. There are also some elk and some extremely wild antelope. During our stay in this district the wind blew constantly from the west, often quite violently. I observed that it is the prevailing wind in these mountains where it causes considerable damage, uprooting large trees over a vast area and blowing their branches for great distances.

With the cargoes loaded into our canoes, we left this place on the 19th. The force of the current hurried us along at a rapid pace, and we were not long in passing the little river that I mentioned on the 7th. Beyond its confluence with the Mad River it becomes large enough to make navigation possible for canoes of all sizes. Its water is a light green. Since it had no name, I gave it one: the Canoe River [Teton River]. Its banks are lined with small cottonwoods. Several markings made me think that within the last few days some gray bears had been here in the thickets. Beaver, ducks, and geese are very common. It was cold and it snowed all day. (30 miles south)

As we went on downstream the river became more beautiful and much larger; a space of from 1,200 to 1,800 feet separated its two banks. We made 40 miles on the 20th, but throughout the last twenty the river bed was broken by rapids, and we found two other rapids farther downstream. In going through these, two of our canoes were swamped and we had to stop at once. I sent my canoe and one other to the rescue. We saved the men, but we lost a good deal of merchandise and many supplies, as well as one of the canoes. We continued to find the mountains on our left, ranging parallel to the river. It was cold. We could still see Pilot Knob [Grand Teton] that we had seen on September 15. (40 miles southeast)

When on the 21st we had passed two rapids, we came to a portage of a mile and a quarter. We carried the supplies by land and towed the canoes. For nearly a half mile the river narrows between two sheer mountain walls to not more than sixty feet, in a few places to even less. (6 miles) We passed over the rapids with the canoes tied to a rope, but we did not delay re-embarking on the 21st. Thereafter we came to a series of rapids, two of which forced us to portage. One of the small canoes swamped and capsized and we lost more supplies. (6 miles)

On the 23rd we lightened the loads in our canoes in order to pass through some very rough waters. After that we found several rapids which were not dangerous but in which the current was very swift. Beaver, geese, and ducks are common here. We found no other trees but the cottonwoods and willows, and on the plains some wild pears. The prairies were marked by buffalo tracks, but these were quite old. From time to time we saw flights of magpies and robins. The mountains fan out in different directions here. (75 miles south)

Toward the end of the day the river current slowed. From either side, the [larger] Canoe River is joined by a small stream. A tribe of Snakes and one Shoshone fled when we appeared. In their

camp we found some tiny fish that were not more than an inch long; we found, in addition, some roots and seeds that they were drying for winter, some pots of woven grass and twigs for water, and a well-made fish net of flax or nettle. We left some small commodities and two knives in the camp. Somewhat farther downstream we met three of these Indians on a slight raft of reeds and we stopped them. Except for a fragment of a rabbitskin robe thrown over their shoulders, they were completely naked. Their bows and arrows are artistically wrought. The bow is of pine or cedar, or of bone reinforced by animal sinews. The arrow is of reed or well-worked wood, tipped with a green stone. We made camp near a waterfall about thirty feet high. (70 miles)

On the 25th we crossed to the south bank and traveled on land so that we could avoid the waterfall and some small rapids below it. Six miles downstream a rock obstructs the river channel from one bank to the other; but because the south bank is less high, we could lower the canoes by rope. Several of them swamped while we were passing through a series of rapids and again we lost some of our merchandise. The river is winding, the countryside rugged and rocky. The mountains reach down to the very edge of the water on the south bank. (12 miles)

On the 26th the rapids were again numerous but not precarious. In some places the water was calm. We left the mountains and took a northwesterly route. When we landed to visit a camp of Indians, the poor creatures fled at our approach. By making signs of friendship, I persuaded one of them to return. He was on horseback and seemed better equipped than those whom I had seen earlier. He had some trout and some dried meat that he traded for a few knives, but his fear of us was so great that I could not get him to show me, by sign language, the route that I should take. His only concern was that I not take away his fish and meat and that I commend him to the care of the Great Spirit. (70 miles)

The skies were cloudy and it rained on the afternoon of the 27th. We had come to only two rapids in the morning. The river is nearly a half mile wide here, and beaver are plentiful. (40 miles southwest)

Our journey was less fortunate on the 28th; for after passing through several rapids, we came to the entrance of a narrow gorge. Mr. Crook's canoe capsized, one of his companions drowned, and we lost a great deal of merchandise. (18 miles)

On the 29th I went with three men to see if we could take our canoes through the north side of the gorge. For thirty-five miles I went along the banks of the river, which continues to carve a passage northwest through the mountains. Its bed is no more than sixty to ninety feet wide, it is full of rapids, and its course is broken by falls ten to forty feet high. Except at two spots where I went down to get water, the banks are precipitous everywhere. We had only some fruit from a rose tree for supper; then we slept beside our fire. On the 29th we returned to camp, tired out and famished. Those whom I had sent south had found a place where they believed that we could get through with our canoes by making a portage of about six miles.

Our situation became critical. We had enough food for about five days. On the 31st Mr. Reed and three others went downstream to try to get some horses and provisions from the Indians and to learn if, below the spot that I had reached, it was possible to navigate the river. Sixteen men, with four of our best canoes, went to attempt the passage. Then, because our lack of food prevented any delay of our journeys we put to one side those things that were most needful to us and began to dig holes in which to cache the remainder. Rain fell so heavily that we could not finish our digging.

On November 1 we changed our plans. In trying to descend the rapids with a rope, our sixteen men lost one of the canoes and its load of merchandise; the other canoes were caught among the rocks. We saw no way to continue our journey by water and prepared to go in different directions in search of Indians. The rain still hindered our work and we could not finish it until the 2nd, when we put our baggage and merchandise into six caches. Mr. McKenzie, along with four men, set out northward toward the plains, hoping to find the Columbia. Mr. McClellan and three other men went downstream on the Canoe River. Mr. Crooks and three men went upstream toward the river source. I remained with thirty-one men, a woman, and two children. We set a net in the river but caught only one fish. I ordered our four canoes loaded and we paddled upstream. While going around a point, in the midst of some rapids we lost a canoe but we saved the cargo. Our hunters who had caught up with us on the 4th had killed eight beaver. That was scanty relief. Mr. Crooks returned. He had found the distance by land greater than he expected and concluded that he could not reach Fort Henry and get back this winter. Thus he abandoned the scheme. I stopped at my camp of October 27.

I spent the 5th making all necessary arrangements for procuring food for several days, until we had news from Mr. Reed. We caught four beaver, drying the tails and the innards. I had the dried meat inspected and aired. On the 6th, despite our efforts, we found only one fish in the net. Two of Mr. Reed's men returned. After they had explored for two days they realized that the river did not improve farther downstream. Consequently we agreed with Mr. Crooks that the best course was to divide our company into two parties, each to proceed on its own. For that reason I cached still other things, and all the essentials I put into packs of about twenty pounds each.

On the 7th I returned to our camp of October 28. We had wasted nine days in futile explorations. We had caught eight beaver; but we had eaten the dried meat, for its quality is superior to beaver meat.

I cached still more goods on the 8th, distributing to each member of our party all that remained of our food. Every person had five and a quarter pounds of meat. We had, besides, forty pounds of corn, twenty of fat, and nearly five pounds of bouillon tablets. That had to keep more than twenty people alive.

On the 9th I set out on the north bank of the river with nineteen men, a woman, and two children. Mr. Crooks, with nineteen others, traveled on the south bank. It rained in the afternoon. We camped under some rocks on the river's edge and had great difficulty getting water.

All day on the 10th we went on, unable to [reach any water to] drink, except the little we found in the hollows of rocks. Finally we came to a spot where we could reach the river. Everywhere else its banks are sheer walls two to three hundred feet high. Its bed is broken by rapids; but in the space between these rapids the water is quiet. Today we could have navigated it for thirty miles. Some willows grow along its banks. (32 miles northwest)

On the 11th we found at the water's edge a trail worn by horses. I chose to follow it rather than again to clamber over rocks. Before long we met two Shoshone Indians who showed me a knife that they had got from some of our companions. One of them led us along a path that took us away from the river; we crossed a prairie and came to the village of his people. The women fled in such haste that they did not have time to take their children who could not walk, but simply covered them with straw.

The poor little creatures were terrified when I lifted the straw to look at them. Even the men trem-

bled, as though I were some ferocious animal. Nevertheless, they gave us a small amount of dried fish that we found most edible, and they sold us a dog. One of these Indians accompanied us and we soon found the river again. It was lined by their tents. We camped nearby and before long about fifty men came to see us. They were very honest and very obliging. As on the day before, the river course was broken by rapids. (26 miles northwest)

On the 12th I visited some tepees where I found a great quantity of salmon. These structures are of straw and are, in form, like stacks of wheat. They are warm and snug. In front of the doorways we saw large piles of sagebrush used for fires. I bought two dogs and we ate one for breakfast. These Indians have good buffalo-skin robes which they told me they had got in trade for their salmon. After we left them, we went on for some time along the river and forded a little brook. We saw mountains to the north. (16 miles northwest)

On the 13th we camped at a spot where a small stream flows out of the mountains. (25 miles north, northwest)

On the 14th we came across an Indian camp with three tepees. All around these structures we saw an immense number of salmon heads and skins with pieces of meat still attached, but the best part of the meat had been cached. None of these Indians ran away when we appeared. The women were poorly clothed, the children even more shabbily, though each one had a robe of buffalo skin, or of rabbit, badger, fox, wolf, or possibly some skins of ducks sewn together. All these animals, with the exception of rabbits, are rarely found on these plains. We had not seen a buffalo for a long time. (22 miles northwest)

We bought two dogs and some salmon on the 15th. Before us was a snow-covered mountain that the river seemed to penetrate. The river banks were littered with dead salmon that sent up a frightful stench. The river course, so far as I could see, had no rapids. We met some horses whose owners took great care to keep them out of our way. The Indians told us that some of our people had passed through this area. (28 miles northwest)

Early on the 16th the river reappeared, but now it was narrow, filled with rapids, and bordered by sheer rocks. As we approached the mountains, we had only some parched corn and the remnants of our meat to keep ourselves alive. Fortunately, on the 17th I traded an old kettle for a horse, though the Indians showed no interest in anything else that we were carrying. I also got two dogs. The countryside was bare of woods and even the sagebrush had disappeared. We camped beside the river. (35 miles northwest)

We put our baggage on the horse. We had only a quart of grain and a small piece of fat for each person. On the 18th we continued our trail to the northwest, along the river banks. (30 miles)

On the 19th, following the advice of some Indians whom we met, we changed our course and crossed a prairie where we found no water at all. Everything seemed to suggest that we would be luckier on the next day. But what discouragement for people whose only food was dried fish! By good fortune we bought a horse. (25 miles northeast)

On the 20th the rain that had begun to fall the night before gave us a little water. This relief came in good time, for several Canadians had begun to drink their urine. (33 miles north)

The rain continued all night. On the 21st at daybreak we saw ahead of us a river that flowed to the west, its banks lined with cottonwood and willow trees. Some Indians who had pitched camp there had many horses and were far better clothed than those whom we had seen recently. They told us that farther upstream beaver were plentiful, though in the vicinity of our camp there were

---

very few. When we arrived at the Indian village I lost my horse; an Indian told me that we had stolen it from him. However, as it was necessary to get food for our company, I bought some fish and two dogs [saying nothing further about the horse]. (12 miles)

It rained constantly and we could not make much headway on the trail. On the 22nd we met some Indians. As I gathered from the few words that I could understand, the distance from this spot to the Columbia was very considerable; but the Indians told me nothing about the route that I should take. We got some fish, seven dogs, and two horses. We continued our way westward along the river (35 miles) and on the 24th forded it a little above our Canoe River which flowed northward. The mountains ahead were all covered with snow. (18 miles northwest) On the 25th, despite the rigors of the season, our exhaustion, and our weakness we forded another river, waist high, that flowed from the east. (27 miles)

The foothills began to appear on the 26th, spreading along the snowy mountains. We crossed another little stream that flows from the east, like the others. It brought us, on the 27th, to a pass so narrow that it scarcely left enough space for us to get through. We were often forced to take the baggage from the backs of our horses and wade through the water. On the previous evening we had caught a beaver that furnished us with a meager breakfast and we made a supper of some bouillon tablets. I ordered a horse killed and my people thought the meat very good. I could eat it only with regret because I had become attached to the poor animal. (33 miles northwest)

On the 28th we arrived early at a Shoshone village. The Indians had just killed two colts for food. Except for the seeds of a plant that looks like flax and that they pulverize, the horsemeat was their only food. I bought a sack of the former, as well as some pieces of horsemeat which was fat and tender. I dreaded to remain several days in these narrows and I camped near the Indians in the hope of trading some goods for a horse. But no matter what I offered, I could make no bargain. When the women saw that I was insistent, they raised cries of fright, as though I wanted to rob them. The men told me about some whites who had followed the same trail as the one we were taking and about some others who had passed on the opposite side of the river. This news relieved me greatly regarding Mr. Crooks and his companions, especially when I learned that he still had his dogs; for I could believe that he had not suffered too much from hunger. The Indians added that I would sleep three more nights in the mountains and that after six nights on the trail I would arrive at the Great Falls of the Columbia. Nevertheless, I had little confidence in this talk because it seemed to me that they were only impatient to see us leave. (10 miles north)

On the 29th the bad footing forced us to unload our horses and occasionally to leave the river banks. We climbed mountains so high that I could hardly believe our horses would get over them. On the 30th the mountains further narrowed the river channel. The heights were covered with pines and snow. We could advance only with the greatest difficulty because of the sharp rocks, and the precipices plunge to the very banks of the river that here flows northeast and then north northwest. We killed a black-tailed deer which gave us an excellent meal. (28 miles)

On December 1 it rained in the valley and snowed in the mountains. As I climbed them to look for a passageway, I found the snow knee deep. I saw many black cherries that were delicious probably because the frost had cut their tartness. Snow fell so heavily on the mountain slopes we had to cross that visibility was no more than a half mile. We were compelled to rest in camp on the 2nd. The evening before we had caught a beaver, but as we had nothing more to eat I killed another horse.

Rain and snow fell all day on the 3rd, and we traveled only nine miles. We unloaded our horses so that we could keep to our trail along the river, and we carried the baggage in our arms, trudging to the northeast. On the 4th, we had to leave the river course and again climb the mountains whose ranges extended all around us and were covered with snow. Pines and other evergreens grew on the slopes of a few of them. The snow came above our knees and it was extremely cold. We were nearly exhausted by the harshness of the weather when we had the good luck of reaching a patch of pine trees at sunset. We comforted ourselves by a good fire. Although we had struggled ahead all day we were, because of the twisting course of the river, only four miles from our camp of the day before.

The snowstorm that commenced on the 5th reduced visibility to about three hundred feet, but we succeeded in reaching the river by sliding down the mountainside. The roar of the water guided us. One horse fell several hundred feet with his load but was not hurt. The weather was much less severe in the valley than on the mountain slopes, for it rained there and the snow was only ankle deep. I slaughtered another horse. (6 miles)

We were just setting out on the 6th when to my astonishment and distress I saw Mr. Crooks and his people on the other side of the river. I returned to camp at once and built a canoe with the hide of the horse I had killed the night before. Then I launched some food in it, sending it across the river to our starving companions. Mr. Crooks and one of his men came across to us. Poor man! He was almost completely exhausted by fatigue and hunger. He told me that he had already traveled for three days downstream, that the mountains there were even higher and narrowed to not more than sixty to a hundred feet between sheer walls. It was impossible for men in their condition to get through. For six days they had had only the meat of their dogs for food. Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Reed had passed and Mr. Crooks had talked with them only a few days earlier. They told him that Mr. McClellan had left the river and crossed the mountains, hoping to find the Flathead Indians. In the place where we met, the river flowed almost exactly east. Mr. Crooks said that it continued to run in that direction.

I spent the night reflecting on our situation. I had to answer for the needs of more than twenty famished people and, moreover, to do all that I could for Mr. Crooks and his men. Despite all the discouraging reports that he had given me about the countryside below, I should have gone my way through the mountains if, as I had already learned, the depth of the snow had not made such a journey impracticable. To my great regret it was thus necessary to backtrack with the hope of finding some Indians on one of the three small rivers beyond these mountains. I counted on buying from them a large enough number of horses to feed us until we reached the Columbia, a move I flattered myself in thinking we could effect this winter. I nevertheless believed that Mr. Crooks and several of his men would not be able to follow us. What a prospect! We had to plan on having nothing to eat for several days; for on this side of the Indian village that we had left on November 29, we had found nothing but cherries, and perhaps there would be no more of them in the same places. The horsehide canoe had been lost. We made a raft so that Mr. Crooks and his companions could cross to the other side of the river with some meat, but the attempt was unsuccessful. On the 7th we were reduced to a very slow pace because Mr. Crooks was so weak that he could follow along only with great difficulty. Most of my men went on ahead. On the 8th we made another raft; but, after repeated attempts, Mr. Crooks and his men could not make the crossing because of the swift current. I had of course to wait for them, and my men complained. They said

---

that we would all die from starvation and urged me by all means to go on. To add to my distress, Mr. Crooks was very ill during the night. I realized that this unfortunate situation could delay for two days my reaching the Indian village. I therefore left three men with Mr. Crooks and set out on the 9th with two others to rejoin my group. I had three beaver skins and I left two; my men and I made a supper of the third. The weather was extremely cold.

Early on the 10th I overtook my people. We had only one horse left and that belonged to Dorion, one of our Canadians. We suggested slaughtering it, but Dorion would not consent to the idea. We finally agreed that it would be better to let the animal live until we knew whether or not the Indian village was still in the same place. I approved this plan quite willingly because the poor horse was only skin and bones. We had not gone far on the trail before we found some tepees of the Shoshones who had come down from the mountains after our departure. I approached them cautiously so as to keep them from hiding their horses. They had twenty and sold us five, one of which I had slaughtered at once, and I sent a man to Mr. Crooks with some of the meat. Several of my men had not eaten since the 7th, the day on which they had left me.

Then on the 11th a new misfortune struck us. One of Mr. Crook's men drowned while crossing the river in a canoe that capsized with a load of goods. I ordered another horse killed; and I left two animals with Mr. Crooks along with some of the meat of a third, hoping that with this help he could reach the Indians upstream. On the 13th we came to the village that we had seen during our descent from the mountain heights. The Indians traded a horse for an old pewter kettle and some glass beads, but they refused a gun.

On the 16th we at last left the mountains and camped on the banks of a river that we had forded on the 26th of the previous month. Thus for twenty days we had worn ourselves out futilely trying to find a passage along the lower part of this river. On the previous day rain and snow had fallen. Ice floated on the river and the weather was extremely cold. Luckily for us, in this district we found a dozen tepees of the Shoshones who had come since we had camped there. They told me that it would [not?] have been possible for us to find a passage by following the river. This news heightened my anxiety about Mr. McKenzie and his company. On the 17th I went up the little stream and camped near a Shoshone village. From these Indians I bought a horse and a dog, and on the 18th I got another horse, some dried fish, a few roots, and some pounded dried cherries. I spent most of the day getting information about our route and about the time it would take to reach the village of Sciatogas. These Indians gave us different advice; but they did agree in saying that the trail was good, that it would take us seventeen to twenty-one nights to reach our destination, and that in the mountains we would be in snow up to our waists. I offered a gun, some pistols, a horse, etc., to whoever would serve me as a guide. They all replied that we would freeze to death and pleaded with me to remain with them during the winter.

I tried again on the 19th to find a guide. I went to every tepee along the river banks, but without success. I could not get along without one, for that meant running the risk that we would all die. But to remain in this place would be still worse, after having come so far and at such great cost. I ended by telling the Indians that they spoke with forked tongues, that they were lying to me. I accused them of being women; in short, I challenged them with whatever expressions would goad them most. At last, one of them found courage enough to volunteer to be our guide as far as the village of the Sciatogas. According to the report of our Shoshones, these Indians live on the west side of the mountains and own many horses.

---

Thus, we once more resumed our journey. On the 21st two other Indians joined our guide who led us at once to our Canoe River. We did not find any reed canoes there for the crossing; so we killed two horses and made a canoe with the hide of one of them. In this we got across the river. On the other side I found thirteen of Mr. Crook's men who told me that since we had left they had not seen either Mr. Crooks or the two men who were with him. When we had all effected a crossing by the 23rd, my people took heart. All of Mr. Crook's men were extremely weak and exhausted, four of them even more than the others. They handed over to me a horse and some goods. When three of them expressed the wish to remain with the Snakes, I gave them a canoe and some supplies. They crossed the river on the following day, and I hoped that they would not be long in finding Mr. Crooks and his party.

My group was now made up of thirty-two white men, a woman eight months pregnant, her two children, and three Indians. We had only five puny horses to feed us during our trip over the mountains. On the 24th I [at last] turned away from the Canoe River, remembrance of which will always cause us some moments of unhappiness. We traveled west, crossing hills by a trail that was sometimes level enough, more often irregular, but always good. A little snow fell and a little rain. On the 28th we crossed a brook that flowed northward. Mountains crowded us on each side; to the left was one that we had to climb. It extended from north to south, was heavily wooded, and was covered with snow. On the 29th we had a good trail through a level valley and we forded the river twice. ( 106 miles west)

On the 30th, after we had left the river at a spot where it thrusts into the mountains to the north, we came to another beautiful valley several miles wide and very long. A pretty stream meanders there and the beaver seem to be plentiful. Happily we found six Shoshone tepees and many horses. These Indians sold us four horses, as well as three dogs and some roots. They told me that we still had three nights to sleep before we came to the Sciutoga village and they showed me a pass in the mountains through which we had to travel. They added that not much snow was there, but they had so often given me erroneous reports that I did not take this news seriously. On every side of us snow blanketed the mountains. The pregnant woman gave birth to her child early the next morning. Her husband [Dorion] remained with her in the camp for a day, then rejoined us on the 31st. His wife rode horseback with her newly born child in her arms. Another child, two years old and wrapped in a blanket, was fastened by her side. One would have thought, from her behavior, that nothing had happened to her. (21 miles west)

My people asked me not to travel on the 1st of January without first celebrating the new year. I agreed to the idea willingly because most of them were very tired from having daily no more than a meager meal of horse meat and from carrying packs on their shoulders while crossing the mountains.

From the 2nd to the 7th of January we crossed the valley, following a small stream for several miles into the mountains and climbing many pine-covered hills. On the peaks we waded through snow half way up our legs, at times plunging into it to our waists. We lacked water. On the 4th we were at a point as high as the mountains that surrounded us, some wooded, but all covered with snow. The weather was overcast and cold. On the 6th we saw the sun for the first time since climbing into these mountains, and the snow decreased. To the west we could see what appeared to be a plain. On the 7th we came to a small stream that led us to an extremely narrow pass through mountains of immense height. Everywhere we found horse trails used by the Indians in hunting

---

deer which must be plentiful here, for we saw many herds of black-tail. The snow disappeared entirely. The Dorion baby died. By nightfall several of our men had not arrived at camp. (68 miles west)

The little stream joins another much larger one, and near their confluence on the 8th we found a village of Sciatogas and Tushepahs made up of thirty-four tepees. They had at least two thousand horses. Their tepees are made of matting. They are clothed in good robes of buffalo or deerskin; they have deerskin shirts and leggings and in every respect their clothing is as good as any of the best-provided Indian peoples. In their homes they have kettles and copper pots, as well as other things that suggest some intercourse with the inhabitants along the seacoast. They have some axes, too, and a skillfully wrought stone hammer that they use to pound roots, cherries, and other fruits, as well as fish. Pointed pieces of elkhorn serve in lieu of wedges to split wood. Women have willow-twig hats very neatly made and decorated. Their water containers are also made of willow, and in these they cook their meat by putting red-hot stones from the fire into them. However, copper kettles are preferred, three or four of them usually hanging in their tepees. (15 miles west) These Indians pleased me greatly when they told me that some white men had reached the Columbia, a two-day trek from this spot. It appears that grass grows here all winter long, for the mountain slopes are green.

All my men rejoined me except the Canadian CarriŠre. Someone had seen him on the previous afternoon sitting on horseback behind a Snake Indian. They were in front of a lodge that we had passed a few miles from our camp of the night before.

I cannot thank Providence enough for our having reached this point, for we were excessively tired and weak. We had only two horses left, both no more than skin and bones. That night we dined on some rather poor deer meat and some roots.

We remained six days in this place. I bought eight horses and two colts. We ate two of the horses and I gave two to our guides in payment for their services. Some of my men also bought horses. Several men were ill, some from overeating, others apparently from eating roots. Still others were lame. On our last day here, each one made moccasins for himself and prepared to continue the journey. I dispatched two men to look for CarriŠre but they did not find him. This unfortunate fellow had probably followed an Indian hunting trail and become lost. The Snakes had moved their lodges elsewhere, and my men could get no information about him. The Sciatogas also moved their tepees a day's journey downstream.

We got under way again on the 15th and reached the village of the Sciatogas on the banks of the Umatilla River. These Indians told us about a river upstream that they called the Walla Walla. According to Clark's map, I supposed it to be the little river that he places at a confluence with the Columbia, near some beds of shellfish. From what I learned, the Canoe River is Lewis's Kemoe-noum. (15 miles northwest)

These Indians had some venison, but they wanted to sell it at such a high price that I could not afford it. They hunt deer by chasing them on horseback and surrounding them. They use the bow and arrow with remarkable skill, and are superb horsemen.

It rained so heavily during our stay on the banks of the Umatilla that the water rose with amazing speed. We were compelled to break camp in a hurry. Three of our horses tied to stakes in the lowlands were drowned. The Indians also had to move to higher ground. I bought four horses from them. I wanted quite a number because the Indians told me that I could get a canoe in exchange

for a horse. They added that in about six nights I would be at the Great Falls of the Columbia. On the 19th we continued downstream along the Umatilla. Beaver must be abundant here, for many places were filled by their dams. Several of my people traveled on horseback, as I did. On the opposite side of the river we saw the lodges of the Akaitehis Indians who live on the Columbia. One of them swam to our camp and gave us some very satisfying details about the white men who had preceded us going downriver. (15 miles northwest)

I bought still another horse from the Sciatogas who again had moved their camp below us, and I said good-bye to them. They are the cleanest Indians that I know of and, like all the others, they are very proud. They eat neither dogs nor horses, and they will not allow anyone to bring the meat of these animals into their tents. I pleased them no end when I told them that I would return to their village with merchandise to trade for beaver. They already had some pelts and they told a very confusing tale about some white men who came to trade and who gave them tobacco and smoked with them. One of the white men, they said, had a house on the Columbia. My Canadians thought that the white man in question must be an agent of the Northwest Company. (12 miles west)

At last, on the 21st, we reached the banks of the Columbia, for such a long long time our cherished goal. We had come 1,751 miles and had lived through unbelievable hardship and privation. I expressed with difficulty our joy at the sight of this river. It was three quarters of a mile wide here; its banks were bare of trees, were filled with pebbles and in some places with steep rocks. The area was inhabited by the Akaitchis Indians, a wretchedly poor tribe that have neither moccasins nor leggings. Their clothing consists of only a robe of buffalo, deer, rabbit, fox, or even duck skin. To this meager equipment, they sometimes add wolf-skin sleeves. Their huts are well constructed of matting with roofs like the roofs of houses. These structures are very light and warm. Holes scooped out of the ground and lined with mats are living quarters for the women, who are usually naked. Some have a fragment of robe to cover their shoulders, but all of them wear around their waists a leather belt that passes between their thighs and indicates that they aim to be modest.

These Indians are better stocked with food than the Snakes, for it seems that dried salmon is plentiful in their homes. They gave us many fresh salmon trout that they had caught at the mouth of the Umatilla River. This is excellent fish. Their canoes are made of pine trunks split in half, and consequently they are not raised at either bow or stern. Since they have no special tool, they use fire to hollow out their trees.

We crossed the river because the Akaitchis told us that the trail passed along the right, or north, bank. We left on the 23rd after purchasing some fresh fish and nine dogs. The route along the river was very good. We camped that night close to a village of Indians who had about 50 canoes. I bought nine dogs that were quite fat and made a delicious dinner. Their meat seemed most savory to us, both wholesome and strengthening; on the other hand, horsemeat, however well prepared, is not nourishing, no matter how much of it one eats. The weather was beautiful and very mild, much like the beautiful days of the month of October. (12 miles)

From the 24th to the 28th we followed the river which flows almost directly west. Its banks are generally bare. Frequently we came upon Indian lodges and the Indians sold us dogs, but they put such a high price on elk or deer meat that I could not afford it. Moreover, they caused us much trouble by stealing the ropes by which our horses were tethered. The animals ran away and we lost

a great deal of time rounding them up. Sometimes the Indians stole the horses and hid them. The natives here ate acorns and told me that a short distance from the river we could find many white oaks. (57 miles west)

On the 28th the countryside again became quite mountainous. The Indians seemed to be less wretched. They told me of some white men who had built a large house at the mouth of the river, surrounding it with stakes, etc. They themselves had not gone to the river mouth, but they insisted that the white men were concerned and were waiting for a large number of their friends. They watched constantly from the banks of the Columbia, these Indians said, and when their friends arrived, those at the river's mouth would dry their tears and sing and dance.

On the 29th the mountains and rocks along the riverside became more numerous. The Indians whom we saw had many horses, and we began to set up a watch at night. (15 miles)

We camped on the 30th opposite the mouth of the Deschutes, called Tou-et-ka by the Indians. They came in great numbers to dance in honor of our arrival, but their multitude worried me. I pretended to be ill and asked that I be left alone. In a short time they complied with my wishes. (14 miles)

On the 31st we passed Celilo Falls that we had viewed in the distance the day before. I could not see the largest of them which was on the south bank. The river course is dammed by rocks over which the water rushes violently through several channels.

A village called Ouaioumpoum is situated on the north river bank at that spot where the Falls begin. The Indians give a special name to each village that has more than one lodge in it, and they love to talk about their villages to strangers.

At an early hour we reached the village of Wishram. It is at the entrance to a long gorge through which the river has carved a channel of from 200 to 240 feet wide and several miles long. This is the great fishing ground of the Columbia. It looks like one of the seaport villages on the east coast of the United States. On both sides of the river we saw large platforms made of carefully woven stakes. On these the Indians dry their fish. The ground around them is covered with bones and heads of fish. In the spring when the river waters are high, the salmon arrive in schools so large that the Indians can catch them in purse nets attached to the ends of poles. To accomplish this they stand on the edges of those rocks that extend farthest in to the river.

The Indians in this area are the most intelligent that I have met so far. One of them who knew a few English words told me that Mr. David Stuart had gone to one of the northern tributaries of the Columbia to spend the winter; he had, in fact, seen Stuart's trading post. And he recounted for me the disaster that overtook Mr. McKay and the ship Tonquin.

Today we saw some little white oaks. The countryside became more rugged and the mountains higher. Not far below the Falls, on the south bank, we saw a snow-covered peak that I had first seen on the 20th of this month and that I guessed was Vancouver's Mt. Hood. (12 miles)

February 1. A great number of Indians gathered this evening near our camp. Since they found no opportunity to steal our horses or baggage, they planned a unique stratagem in order to get something. They told us that about forty Indians were coming from downriver to attack us and take our horses. We paid little attention to their narrative and later some chiefs of their village arrived, armed with knives, spears, etc., telling us the same story, and saying that they wanted to stay with us. I received them most coldly, though we smoked a pipe together. Then I assembled everybody in our camp and placed watches at several spots. This procedure produced the effect that I had

---

hoped for. The Indians soon left and brought to me a man who they said, was chief of the village that had planned to attack us. They gave him credit for having dispersed the crowd. I smoked with them again, and a little before daylight they returned to their homes. These rascals thought that by frightening us I would give them two or three horses to assure the safety of the rest. As one of our horses had got loose on the evening before and was not to be found in the morning, I sold him for two packs of pounded and dried salmon I each weighing seventy pounds. We camped that night on the hills in the midst of bushes, pines, and oaks. (10 miles)

I could find only one canoe, that I could get in exchange for a horse. The Indians have large numbers of them, strongly made of pine and raised at both bow and stern, some of them capable of carrying three thousand pounds. Despite my injunctions that we keep close watch, the Indians stole an axe. Encouraged by their success, several of them followed us on the 2nd. They snatched two guns from us and, although our horses were in our camp, made off with one of them at eleven o'clock at night. On the 3rd I embarked in a canoe and sent my horses ahead.

I met my people at a village at the mouth of the Klickitat River that enters the Columbia from the north bank. I bought three canoes, each costing one a horse; but while I traded, the Indians stole a tomahawk and our last axe. They also made off with Dorion's horse that grazed near his tent. The Canadian had unwisely raised his tent some distance from our camp. (9 miles)

On the 4th the violence of the wind compelled me to remain, in spite of myself, in this den of thieves. I bought still another canoe for a horse; and on the next day when I reached another village, I traded our last three horses for two canoes. It seemed to me that the trail by land ended at this village. Hills became snow-covered mountains on which we saw pines. They bordered the river on both sides. Cottonwoods, oaks, and ash trees grew on the waterside, oaks on the nearby hills.

The rain increased greatly and the wind held me for several days opposite an Indian village. A Clatsop Indian came to see us and spoke to me about the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia - as well as about the tragic loss of Mr. McKay. He was the third man to relate to me this grievous story. He knew a few English words and asked me for news about Mr. Lewis and Mr. Clark and some of their companions. However, he had learned of the death of Mr. Lewis. (26 miles)

The wind subsided on the 10th and we got under way early. When we arrived at the beginning of some large rapids (15 miles), I examined the portage on the north bank. The trail was only good for something over a mile. We therefore landed all our canoes at ten o'clock and within an hour we were below the rapids which are very large. In dashing against the rocks, the water produces some unusually high waves. No boat could ride through them, at least in the present condition of the river which narrows formidably between hills and rocks. From this point on downriver, oaks and ash become more common. We saw quantities of hazelnut trees, too. At these rapids we found a second salmon fishery, a village on the north bank, and three lodges on the opposite side. The Indians here have a penchant for blue glass beads. Numerous rivulets that plunge down from the mountains above add to the beauty of the countryside. (16 miles)

On the 11th rapids covering space of miles forced us again to land our canoes. Finally about eight miles from the great rapids we encountered the last of them. Below this the river spreads to its usual width, which is about three-quarters of a mile wide. The hills diminish in size and retreat from the river banks. The intervening space is covered with pine, oak, ash, cottonwood, maple,

hazel, and willow trees. (12 miles)

On the 13th I passed the confluence of the Sandy River, which rushes from the south bank of the Columbia through two mouths, thereby forming a great sandbar. Twenty miles farther downstream the Columbia is joined by another river [the Willamette] that is nearly 1,800 feet wide. A large island [Sauvie Island] stands before its mouth and several small islands below it. The Columbia at this point is about a mile and a quarter wide. On both sides we found vast rush-covered areas, some small prairies, and often some ponds. Seals were numerous here. We could see more distinctly than before the mountain that I mentioned earlier and that I have no doubt is Vancouver's Mt. Hood. For two days the wind blew with great force. Rain, hail, and snow fell. (52 miles)

On the 14th the mountains once more drew close. We camped at the mouth of a small river on the north bank [the Cowlitz]. Indians spoke to us about the establishment of our compatriots, adding that we had one more night before arriving. (36 miles)

On the 15th we passed several large islands. The terrain on the north bank was covered with oak and ash trees but all were inundated. I stopped by some Indian huts where I found four of our Fort Astoria men who were trading sturgeon and fishing for some excellent little fish that are about six inches long. The Indians call them othlecan [candlefish] and catch many of them in the spring. We made camp on two low islands near the south bank. (27 miles)

During our trip on the river we had frequently come to the lodges of Indians who sold us dogs, dried salmon, beaver pelts, wapattoo roots - which are the ouapasippin of Mississippi - finally some Othlecan.

On the 16th we departed early. It had rained during the night and the fog was so thick that we could see only the lowlands and some small islands. All were inundated. The fog dissipated in the afternoon at high tide. I realized that we were paddling through a large bay and soon afterward I saw Fort Astoria on the south bank. (30 miles)

I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. McKenzie and Mr. McClellan once again. They had arrived a month earlier after suffering unbelievable hardships. In my diary I had noted February 16. At the fort it was counted the 15th. It was a great delight for travelers overcome with weariness to rest comfortably, surrounded by friends, after such a long journey in the midst of savage people of whom it is always wise to be wary.

We had covered 2,073 miles since leaving the village of the Aricaras.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER I.

Objects of American Enterprise.--Gold Hunting and Fur Trading.-- Their Effect on Colonization.--Early French Canadian Settlers.-- Ottawa and Huron Hunters.--An Indian Trading Camp.--Coureurs Des Bois, or Rangers of the Woods.--Their Roaming Life.--Their Revels and Excesses.--Licensed Traders.--Missionaries.--Trading Posts.--Primitive French Canadian Merchant.--His Establishment and Dependents.--British Canadian Fur Merchant.--Origin of the Northwest Company.--Its Constitution.--Its Internal Trade.--A Candidate for the Company.--Privations in the Wilderness.--Northwest Clerks. --Northwest Partners.--Northwest Nabobs.--Feudal Notions in the Forests.--The Lords of the Lakes.--Fort William.--Its Parliamentary Hall and Banqueting Room.--Wassailing in the Wilderness.

TWO leading objects of commercial gain have given birth to wide and daring enterprise in the early history of the Americas; the precious metals of the South, and the rich peltries of the North. While the fiery and magnificent Spaniard, inflamed with the mania for gold, has extended his discoveries and conquests over those brilliant countries scorched by the ardent sun of the tropics, the adroit and buoyant Frenchman, and the cool and calculating Briton, have pursued the less splendid, but no less lucrative, traffic in furs amidst the hyperborean regions of the Canadas, until they have advanced even within the Arctic Circle.

These two pursuits have thus in a manner been the pioneers and precursors of civilization. Without pausing on the borders, they have penetrated at once, in defiance of difficulties and dangers, to the heart of savage countries: laying open the hidden secrets of the wilderness; leading the way to remote regions of beauty and fertility that might have remained unexplored for ages, and beckoning after them the slow and pausing steps of agriculture and civilization.

It was the fur trade, in fact, which gave early sustenance and vitality to the great Canadian provinces. Being destitute of the precious metals, at that time the leading objects of American enterprise, they were long neglected by the parent country. The French adventurers, however, who had settled on the banks of the St. Lawrence, soon found that in the rich peltries of the interior, they had sources of wealth that might almost rival the mines of Mexico and Peru. The Indians, as yet unacquainted with the artificial value given to some descriptions of furs, in civilized life, brought quantities of the most precious kinds and bartered them away for European trinkets and cheap commodities. Immense profits were thus made by the early traders, and the traffic was pursued with avidity.

As the valuable furs soon became scarce in the neighborhood of the settlements, the Indians of the vicinity were stimulated to take a wider range in their hunting expeditions; they were generally accompanied on these expeditions by some of the traders or their dependents, who shared in the toils and perils of the chase, and at the same time made themselves acquainted with the best

hunting and trapping grounds, and with the remote tribes, whom they encouraged to bring their peltries to the settlements. In this way the trade augmented, and was drawn from remote quarters to Montreal. Every now and then a large body of Ottawas, Hurons, and other tribes who hunted the countries bordering on the great lakes, would come down in a squadron of light canoes, laden with beaver skins, and other spoils of their year's hunting. The canoes would be unladen, taken on shore, and their contents disposed in order. A camp of birch bark would be pitched outside of the town, and a kind of primitive fair opened with that grave ceremonial so dear to the Indians. An audience would be demanded of the governor-general, who would hold the conference with becoming state, seated in an elbow-chair, with the Indians ranged in semicircles before him, seated on the ground, and silently smoking their pipes. Speeches would be made, presents exchanged, and the audience would break up in universal good humor.

Now would ensue a brisk traffic with the merchants, and all Montreal would be alive with naked Indians running from shop to shop, bargaining for arms, kettles, knives, axes, blankets, bright-colored cloths, and other articles of use or fancy; upon all which, says an old French writer, the merchants were sure to clear at least two hundred per cent. There was no money used in this traffic, and, after a time, all payment in spirituous liquors was prohibited, in consequence of the frantic and frightful excesses and bloody brawls which they were apt to occasion.

Their wants and caprices being supplied, they would take leave of the governor, strike their tents, launch their canoes, and ply their way up the Ottawa to the lakes.

A new and anomalous class of men gradually grew out of this trade. These were called *coureurs des bois*, rangers of the woods; originally men who had accompanied the Indians in their hunting expeditions, and made themselves acquainted with remote tracts and tribes; and who now became, as it were, peddlers of the wilderness. These men would set out from Montreal with canoes well stocked with goods, with arms and ammunition, and would make their way up the mazy and wandering rivers that interlace the vast forests of the Canadas, coasting the most remote lakes, and creating new wants and habitudes among the natives. Sometimes they sojourned for months among them, assimilating to their tastes and habits with the happy facility of Frenchmen, adopting in some degree the Indian dress, and not unfrequently taking to themselves Indian wives.

Twelve, fifteen, eighteen months would often elapse without any tidings of them, when they would come sweeping their way down the Ottawa in full glee, their canoes laden down with packs of beaver skins. Now came their turn for revelry and extravagance. "You would be amazed," says an old writer already quoted, "if you saw how lewd these peddlers are when they return; how they feast and game, and how prodigal they are, not only in their clothes, but upon their sweethearts. Such of them as are married have the wisdom to retire to their own houses; but the bachelors act just as an East Indiaman and pirates are wont to do; for they lavish, eat, drink, and play all away as long as the goods hold out; and when these are gone, they even sell their embroidery, their lace, and their clothes. This done, they are forced upon a new voyage for subsistence." (1)

Many of these *coureurs des bois* became so accustomed to the Indian mode of living, and the

---

perfect freedom of the wilderness, that they lost relish for civilization, and identified themselves with the savages among whom they dwelt, or could only be distinguished from them by superior licentiousness. Their conduct and example gradually corrupted the natives, and impeded the works of the Catholic missionaries, who were at this time prosecuting their pious labors in the wilds of Canada.

To check these abuses, and to protect the fur trade from various irregularities practiced by these loose adventurers, an order was issued by the French government prohibiting all persons, on pain of death, from trading into the interior of the country without a license.

These licenses were granted in writing by the governor-general, and at first were given only to persons of respectability; to gentlemen of broken fortunes; to old officers of the army who had families to provide for; or to their widows. Each license permitted the fitting out of two large canoes with merchandise for the lakes, and no more than twenty-five licenses were to be issued in one year. By degrees, however, private licenses were also granted, and the number rapidly increased. Those who did not choose to fit out the expeditions themselves, were permitted to sell them to the merchants; these employed the *coureurs des bois*, or rangers of the woods, to undertake the long voyages on shares, and thus the abuses of the old system were revived and continued.<sup>(2)</sup>

The pious missionaries employed by the Roman Catholic Church to convert the Indians, did everything in their power to counteract the profligacy caused and propagated by these men in the heart of the wilderness. The Catholic chapel might often be seen planted beside the trading house, and its spire surmounted by a cross, towering from the midst of an Indian village, on the banks of a river or a lake. The missions had often a beneficial effect on the simple sons of the forest, but had little power over the renegades from civilization.

At length it was found necessary to establish fortified posts at the confluence of the rivers and the lakes for the protection of the trade, and the restraint of these profligates of the wilderness. The most important of these was at Michilimackinac, situated at the strait of the same name, which connects Lakes Huron and Michigan. It became the great interior mart and place of deposit, and some of the regular merchants who prosecuted the trade in person, under their licenses, formed establishments here. This, too, was a rendezvous for the rangers of the woods, as well those who came up with goods from Montreal as those who returned with peltries from the interior. Here new expeditions were fitted out and took their departure for Lake Michigan and the Mississippi; Lake Superior and the Northwest; and here the peltries brought in return were embarked for Montreal.

The French merchant at his trading post, in these primitive days of Canada, was a kind of commercial patriarch. With the lax habits and easy familiarity of his race, he had a little world of self-indulgence and misrule around him. He had his clerks, canoe men, and retainers of all kinds, who lived with him on terms of perfect sociability, always calling him by his Christian name; he had his harem of Indian beauties, and his troop of halfbreed children; nor was there ever wanting

a louting train of Indians, hanging about the establishment, eating and drinking at his expense in the intervals of their hunting expeditions.

The Canadian traders, for a long time, had troublesome competitors in the British merchants of New York, who inveigled the Indian hunters and the *coureurs des bois* to their posts, and traded with them on more favorable terms. A still more formidable opposition was organized in the Hudson's Bay Company, chartered by Charles II., in 1670, with the exclusive privilege of establishing trading houses on the shores of that bay and its tributary rivers; a privilege which they have maintained to the present day. Between this British company and the French merchants of Canada, feuds and contests arose about alleged infringements of territorial limits, and acts of violence and bloodshed occurred between their agents.

In 1762, the French lost possession of Canada, and the trade fell principally into the hands of British subjects. For a time, however, it shrunk within narrow limits. The old *coureurs des bois* were broken up and dispersed, or, where they could be met with, were slow to accustom themselves to the habits and manners of their British employers. They missed the freedom, indulgence, and familiarity of the old French trading houses, and did not relish the sober exactness, reserve, and method of the new-comers. The British traders, too, were ignorant of the country, and distrustful of the natives. They had reason to be so. The treacherous and bloody affairs of Detroit and Michilimackinac showed them the lurking hostility cherished by the savages, who had too long been taught by the French to regard them as enemies.

It was not until the year 1766, that the trade regained its old channels; but it was then pursued with much avidity and emulation by individual merchants, and soon transcended its former bounds. Expeditions were fitted out by various persons from Montreal and Michilimackinac, and rivalships and jealousies of course ensued. The trade was injured by their artifices to outbid and undermine each other; the Indians were debauched by the sale of spirituous liquors, which had been prohibited under the French rule. Scenes of drunkenness, brutality, and brawl were the consequence, in the Indian villages and around the trading houses; while bloody feuds took place between rival trading parties when they happened to encounter each other in the lawless depths of the wilderness.

To put an end to these sordid and ruinous contentions, several of the principal merchants of Montreal entered into a partnership in the winter of 1783, which was augmented by amalgamation with a rival company in 1787. Thus was created the famous "Northwest Company," which for a time held a lordly sway over the wintry lakes and boundless forests of the Canadas, almost equal to that of the East India Company over the voluptuous climes and magnificent realms of the Orient.

The company consisted of twenty-three shareholders, or partners, but held in its employ about two thousand persons as clerks, guides, interpreters, and "voyageurs," or boatmen. These were distributed at various trading posts, established far and wide on the interior lakes and rivers, at immense distances from each other, and in the heart of trackless countries and savage tribes.

Several of the partners resided in Montreal and Quebec, to manage the main concerns of the company. These were called agents, and were personages of great weight and importance; the other partners took their stations at the interior posts, where they remained throughout the winter, to superintend the intercourse with the various tribes of Indians. They were thence called wintering partners.

The goods destined for this wide and wandering traffic were put up at the warehouses of the company in Montreal, and conveyed in batteaux, or boats and canoes, up the river Attawa, or Ottawa, which falls into the St. Lawrence near Montreal, and by other rivers and portages, to Lake Nipising, Lake Huron, Lake Superior, and thence, by several chains of great and small lakes, to Lake Winnipeg, Lake Athabasca, and the Great Slave Lake. This singular and beautiful system of internal seas, which renders an immense region of wilderness so accessible to the frail bark of the Indian or the trader, was studded by the remote posts of the company, where they carried on their traffic with the surrounding tribes.

The company, as we have shown, was at first a spontaneous association of merchants; but, after it had been regularly organized, admission into it became extremely difficult. A candidate had to enter, as it were, "before the mast," to undergo a long probation, and to rise slowly by his merits and services. He began, at an early age, as a clerk, and served an apprenticeship of seven years, for which he received one hundred pounds sterling, was maintained at the expense of the company, and furnished with suitable clothing and equipments. His probation was generally passed at the interior trading posts; removed for years from civilized society, leading a life almost as wild and precarious as the savages around him; exposed to the severities of a northern winter, often suffering from a scarcity of food, and sometimes destitute for a long time of both bread and salt. When his apprenticeship had expired, he received a salary according to his deserts, varying from eighty to one hundred and sixty pounds sterling, and was now eligible to the great object of his ambition, a partnership in the company; though years might yet elapse before he attained to that enviable station.

Most of the clerks were young men of good families, from the Highlands of Scotland, characterized by the perseverance, thrift, and fidelity of their country, and fitted by their native hardihood to encounter the rigorous climate of the North, and to endure the trials and privations of their lot; though it must not be concealed that the constitutions of many of them became impaired by the hardships of the wilderness, and their stomachs injured by occasional famishing, and especially by the want of bread and salt. Now and then, at an interval of years, they were permitted to come down on a visit to the establishment at Montreal, to recruit their health, and to have a taste of civilized life; and these were brilliant spots in their existence.

As to the principal partners, or agents, who resided in Montreal and Quebec, they formed a kind of commercial aristocracy, living in lordly and hospitable style. Their posts, and the pleasures, dangers, adventures, and mishaps which they had shared together in their wild wood life, had linked them heartily to each other, so that they formed a convivial fraternity. Few travellers that

have visited Canada some thirty years since, in the days of the M'Tavishes, the M'Gillivrays, the M'Kenzies, the Frobishers, and the other magnates of the Northwest, when the company was in all its glory, but must remember the round of feasting and revelry kept up among these hyperborean nabobs.

Sometimes one or two partners, recently from the interior posts, would make their appearance in New York, in the course of a tour of pleasure and curiosity. On these occasions there was a degree of magnificence of the purse about them, and a peculiar propensity to expenditure at the goldsmith's and jeweler's for rings, chains, brooches, necklaces, jeweled watches, and other rich trinkets, partly for their own wear, partly for presents to their female acquaintances; a gorgeous prodigality, such as was often to be noticed in former times in Southern planters and West India creoles, when flush with the profits of their plantations.

To behold the Northwest Company in all its state and grandeur, however, it was necessary to witness an annual gathering at the great interior place of conference established at Fort William, near what is called the Grand Portage, on Lake Superior. Here two or three of the leading partners from Montreal proceeded once a year to meet the partners from the various trading posts of the wilderness, to discuss the affairs of the company during the preceding year, and to arrange plans for the future.

On these occasions might be seen the change since the unceremonious times of the old French traders; now the aristocratic character of the Briton shone forth magnificently, or rather the feudal spirit of the Highlander. Every partner who had charge of an interior post, and a score of retainers at his Command, felt like the chieftain of a Highland clan, and was almost as important in the eyes of his dependents as of himself. To him a visit to the grand conference at Fort William was a most important event, and he repaired there as to a meeting of parliament.

The partners from Montreal, however, were the lords of the ascendant; coming from the midst of luxurious and ostentatious life, they quite eclipsed their compeers from the woods, whose forms and faces had been battered and hardened by hard living and hard service, and whose garments and equipments were all the worse for wear. Indeed, the partners from below considered the whole dignity of the company as represented in their persons, and conducted themselves in suitable style. They ascended the rivers in great state, like sovereigns making a progress: or rather like Highland chieftains navigating their subject lakes. They were wrapped in rich furs, their huge canoes freighted with every convenience and luxury, and manned by Canadian voyageurs, as obedient as Highland clansmen. They carried up with them cooks and bakers, together with delicacies of every kind, and abundance of choice wines for the banquets which attended this great convocation. Happy were they, too, if they could meet with some distinguished stranger; above all, some titled member of the British nobility, to accompany them on this stately occasion, and grace their high solemnities.

Fort William, the scene of this important annual meeting, was a considerable village on the banks of Lake Superior. Here, in an immense wooden building, was the great council hall, as also the

---

banqueting chamber, decorated with Indian arms and accoutrements, and the trophies of the fur trade. The house swarmed at this time with traders and voyageurs, some from Montreal, bound to the interior posts; some from the interior posts, bound to Montreal. The councils were held in great state, for every member felt as if sitting in parliament, and every retainer and dependent looked up to the assemblage with awe, as to the House of Lords. There was a vast deal of solemn deliberation, and hard Scottish reasoning, with an occasional swell of pompous declamation.

These grave and weighty councils were alternated by huge feasts and revels, like some of the old feasts described in Highland castles. The tables in the great banqueting room groaned under the weight of game of all kinds; of venison from the woods, and fish from the lakes, with hunters' delicacies, such as buffalos' tongues, and beavers' tails, and various luxuries from Montreal, all served up by experienced cooks brought for the purpose. There was no stint of generous wine, for it was a hard-drinking period, a time of loyal toasts, and bacchanalian songs, and brimming bumpers.

While the chiefs thus revelled in hall, and made the rafters resound with bursts of loyalty and old Scottish songs, chanted in voices cracked and sharpened by the northern blast, their merriment was echoed and prolonged by a mongrel legion of retainers, Canadian voyageurs, half-breeds, Indian hunters, and vagabond hangers-on who feasted sumptuously without on the crumbs that fell from their table, and made the welkin ring with old French ditties, mingled with Indian yelps and yellings.

Such was the Northwest Company in its powerful and prosperous days, when it held a kind of feudal sway over a vast domain of lake and forest. We are dwelling too long, perhaps, upon these individual pictures, endeared to us by the associations of early life, when, as yet a stripling youth, we have sat at the hospitable boards of the "mighty Northwesters," the lords of the ascendant at Montreal, and gazed with wondering and inexperienced eye at the baronial wassailing, and listened with astonished ear to their tales of hardship and adventures. It is one object of our task, however, to present scenes of the rough life of the wilderness, and we are tempted to fix these few memorials of a transient state of things fast passing into oblivion;--for the feudal state of Fort William is at an end, its council chamber is silent and deserted; its banquet hall no longer echoes to the burst of loyalty, or the "auld world" ditty; the lords of the lakes and forests have passed away; and the hospitable magnates of Montreal--where are they?

1. La Hontan, v. i. let. 4.

2. The following are the terms on which these expeditions were commonly undertaken. The merchant holding the license would fit out the two canoes with a thousand crowns' worth of goods, and put them under the conduct of six *coureuis des bois*, to whom the goods were charged at the rate of fifteen per cent above the ready money price in the colony. The *coureurs des bois*, in their turn, dealt so sharply with the savages that they generally returned, at the end of a year or so, with four canoes well laden, so as to insure a clear profit of seven hundred per cent., insomuch that the thousand crowns invested, produced eight thousand. Of this extravagant profit the merchant had the lion's share. In the first place he would set aside six hundred crowns for the cost of his license, then a thousand crowns for the cost of the original merchandise. This would leave six thousand four hundred crowns, from which he would take forty per cent., for bottomry, amounting to two

thousand five hundred and sixty crowns. The residue would be equally divided among the six wood rangers, who would thus receive little more than six hundred crowns for all their toils and perils.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER II.

Rise of the Mackinaw Company.-- Attempt of the American Government to Counteract Foreign Influence Over the Indian Tribes.-- John Jacob Astor.-- His Birth-Place.-- His Arrival in the United States.-- What First Turned His Attention to the Fur Trade.-- His Character, Enterprises, and Success.-- His Communications With the American Government.-- Origin of the American Fur Company

THE success of the Northwest Company stimulated further enterprise in this opening and apparently boundless field of profit. The traffic of that company lay principally in the high northern latitudes, while there were immense regions to the south and west, known to abound with valuable peltries; but which, as yet, had been but little explored by the fur trader. A new association of British merchants was therefore formed, to prosecute the trade in this direction. The chief factory was established at the old emporium of Michilimackinac, from which place the association took its name, and was commonly called the Mackinaw Company.

While the Northwesters continued to push their enterprises into the hyperborean regions from their stronghold at Fort William, and to hold almost sovereign sway over the tribes of the upper lakes and rivers, the Mackinaw Company sent forth their light perogues and barks, by Green Bay, Fox River, and the Wisconsin, to that areas artery of the West, the Mississippi; and down that stream to all its tributary rivers. In this way they hoped soon to monopolize the trade with all the tribes on the southern and western waters, and of those vast tracts comprised in ancient Louisiana.

The government of the United States began to view with a wary eye the growing influence thus acquired by combinations of foreigners, over the aboriginal tribes inhabiting its territories, and endeavored to counteract it. For this purpose, as early as 1796, the government sent out agents to establish rival trading houses on the frontier, so as to supply the wants of the Indians, to link their interests and feelings with those of the people of the United States, and to divert this important branch of trade into national channels.

The expedition, however, was unsuccessful, as most commercial expedients are prone to be, where the dull patronage of government is counted upon to outvie the keen activity of private enterprise. What government failed to effect, however, with all its patronage and all its agents, was at length brought about by the enterprise and perseverance of a single merchant, one of its adopted citizens; and this brings us to speak of the individual whose enterprise is the especial subject of the following pages; a man whose name and character are worthy of being enrolled in the history of commerce, as illustrating its noblest aims and soundest maxims. A few brief anecdotes of his early

life, and of the circumstances which first determined him to the branch of commerce of which we are treating, cannot be but interesting.

John Jacob Astor, the individual in question, was born in the honest little German village of Waldorf, near Heidelberg, on the banks of the Rhine. He was brought up in the simplicity of rural life, but, while yet a mere stripling, left his home, and launched himself amid the busy scenes of London, having had, from his very boyhood, a singular presentiment that he would ultimately arrive at great fortune.

At the close of the American Revolution he was still in London, and scarce on the threshold of active life. An elder brother had been for some few years resident in the United States, and Mr. Astor determined to follow him, and to seek his fortunes in the rising country. Investing a small sum which he had amassed since leaving his native village, in merchandise suited to the American market, he embarked, in the month of November, 1783, in a ship bound to Baltimore, and arrived in Hampton Roads in the month of January. The winter was extremely severe, and the ship, with many others, was detained by the ice in and about Chesapeake Bay for nearly three months.

During this period, the passengers of the various ships used occasionally to go on shore, and mingle sociably together. In this way Mr. Astor became acquainted with a countryman of his, a furrier by trade. Having had a previous impression that this might be a lucrative trade in the New World, he made many inquiries of his new acquaintance on the subject, who cheerfully gave him all the information in his power as to the quality and value of different furs, and the mode of carrying on the traffic. He subsequently accompanied him to New York, and, by his advice, Mr. Astor was induced to invest the proceeds of his merchandise in furs. With these he sailed from New York to London in 1784, disposed of them advantageously, made himself further acquainted with the course of the trade, and returned the same year to New York, with a view to settle in the United States.

He now devoted himself to the branch of commerce with which he had thus casually been made acquainted. He began his career, of course, on the narrowest scale; but he brought to the task a persevering industry, rigid economy, and strict integrity. To these were added an aspiring spirit that always looked upwards; a genius bold, fertile, and expansive; a sagacity quick to grasp and convert every circumstance to its advantage, and a singular and never wavering confidence of signal success.(1)

As yet, trade in peltries was not organized in the United States, and could not be said to form a regular line of business. Furs and skins were casually collected by the country traders in their dealings with the Indians or the white hunters, but the main supply was derived from Canada. As Mr. Astor's means increased, he made annual visits to Montreal, where he purchased furs from the houses at that place engaged in the trade. These he shipped from Canada to London, no direct trade being allowed from that colony to any but the mother country.

In 1794 or '95, a treaty with Great Britain removed the restrictions imposed upon the trade with

---

the colonies, and opened a direct commercial intercourse between Canada and the United States. Mr. Astor was in London at the time, and immediately made a contract with the agents of the Northwest Company for furs. He was now enabled to import them from Montreal into the United States for the home supply, and to be shipped thence to different parts of Europe, as well as to China, which has ever been the best market for the richest and finest kinds of peltry.

The treaty in question provided, likewise, that the military posts occupied by the British within the territorial limits of the United States, should be surrendered. Accordingly, Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, Michilimackinac, and other posts on the American side of the lakes, were given up. An opening was thus made for the American merchant to trade on the confines of Canada, and within the territories of the United States. After an interval of some years, about 1807, Mr. Astor embarked in this trade on his own account. His capital and resources had by this time greatly augmented, and he had risen from small beginnings to take his place among the first merchants and financiers of the country. His genius had ever been in advance of his circumstances, prompting him to new and wide fields of enterprise beyond the scope of ordinary merchants. With all his enterprise and resources however, he soon found the power and influence of the Michilimackinac (or Mackinaw) Company too great for him, having engrossed most of the trade within the American borders.

A plan had to be devised to enable him to enter into successful competition. He was aware of the wish of the American government, already stated, that the fur trade within its boundaries should be in the hands of American citizens, and of the ineffectual measures it had taken to accomplish that object. He now offered, if aided and protected by government, to turn the whole of that trade into American channels. He was invited to unfold his plans to government, and they were warmly approved, though the executive could give no direct aid.

Thus countenanced, however, he obtained, in 1809, a charter from the legislature of the State of New York, incorporating a company under the name of "The American Fur Company," with a capital of one million of dollars, with the privilege of increasing it to two millions. The capital was furnished by himself -- he, in fact, constituted the company; for, though he had a board of directors, they were merely nominal; the whole business was conducted on his plans and with his resources, but he preferred to do so under the imposing and formidable aspect of a corporation, rather than in his individual name, and his policy was sagacious and effective.

As the Mackinaw Company still continued its rivalry, and as the fur trade would not advantageously admit of competition, he made a new arrangement in 1811, by which, in conjunction with certain partners of the Northwest Company, and other persons engaged in the fur trade, he bought out the Mackinaw Company, and merged that and the American Fur Company into a new association, to be called the "Southwest Company." This he likewise did with the privity and approbation of the American government.

By this arrangement Mr. Astor became proprietor of one half of the Indian establishments and goods which the Mackinaw Company had within the territory of the Indian country in the Unit-

ed States, and it was understood that the whole was to be surrendered into his hands at the expiration of five years, on condition that the American Company would not trade within the British dominions.

Unluckily, the war which broke out in 1812 between Great Britain and the United States suspended the association; and, after the war, it was entirely dissolved; Congress having passed a law prohibiting the British fur traders from prosecuting their enterprises within the territories of the United States.

1. An instance of this buoyant confidence, which no doubt aided to produce the success it anticipated, we have from the lips of Mr. A. himself. While yet almost a stranger in the city, and in very narrow circumstances, he passed by where a row of houses had just been erected in Broadway, and which, from the superior style of their architecture, were the talk and boast of the city. "I'll build, one day or other, a greater house than any of these, in this very street," said he to himself. He has accomplished his prediction.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER III.

Fur Trade in the Pacific- American Coasting Voyages- Russian Enterprises.- Discovery of the Columbia River.- Carver's Project to Found a Settlement There.-Mackenzie's Expedition.- Lewis and Clarke's Journey Across the Rocky Mountains- Mr. Astor's Grand Commercial Scheme.-His Correspondence on the Subject With Mr. Jefferson.His Negotiations With the Northwest Company.- His Steps to Carry His Scheme Into Effect.

WHILE the various companies we have noticed were pushing their enterprises far and wide in the wilds of Canada, and along the course of the great western waters, other adventurers, intent on the same objects, were traversing the watery wastes of the Pacific and skirting the northwest coast of America. The last voyage of that renowned but unfortunate discoverer, Captain Cook, had made known the vast quantities of the sea-otter to be found along that coast, and the immense prices to be obtained for its fur in China. It was as if a new gold coast had been discovered. Individuals from various countries dashed into this lucrative traffic, so that in the year 1792, there were twenty-one vessels under different flags, plying along the coast and trading with the natives. The greater part of them were American, and owned by Boston merchants. They generally remained on the coast and about the adjacent seas, for two years, carrying on as wandering and adventurous a commerce on the water as did the traders and trappers on land. Their trade extended along the whole coast from California to the high northern latitudes. They would run in near shore, anchor, and wait for the natives to come off in their canoes with peltries. The trade exhausted at one place, they would up anchor and off to another. In this way they would consume the summer, and when autumn came on, would run down to the Sandwich Islands and winter in some friendly and plentiful harbor. In the following year they would resume their summer trade, commencing at California and proceeding north: and, having in the course of the two seasons collected a sufficient cargo of peltries, would make the best of their way to China. Here they would sell their furs, take in teas, nankeens, and other merchandise, and return to Boston, after

an absence of two or three years.

The people, however, who entered most extensively and effectively in the fur trade of the Pacific, were the Russians. Instead of making casual voyages, in transient ships, they established regular trading houses in the high latitudes, along the northwest coast of America, and upon the chain of the Aleutian Islands between Kamtschatka and the promontory of Alaska.

To promote and protect these enterprises, a company was incorporated by the Russian government with exclusive privileges, and a capital of two hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling; and the sovereignty of that part of the American continent, along the coast of which the posts had been established, was claimed by the Russian crown, on the plea that the land had been discovered and occupied by its subjects.

As China was the grand mart for the furs collected in these quarters, the Russians had the advantage over their competitors in the trade. The latter had to take their peltries to Canton, which, however, was a mere receiving mart, from whence they had to be distributed over the interior of the empire and sent to the northern parts, where there was the chief consumption. The Russians, on the contrary, carried their furs, by a shorter voyage, directly to the northern parts of the Chinese empire; thus being able to afford them in the market without the additional cost of internal transportation.

We come now to the immediate field of operation of the great enterprise we have undertaken to illustrate.

Among the American ships which traded along the northwest coast in 1792, was the Columbia, Captain Gray, of Boston. In the course of her voyage she discovered the mouth of a large river in lat. 46 19' north. Entering it with some difficulty, on account of sand-bars and breakers, she came to anchor in a spacious bay. A boat was well manned, and sent on shore to a village on the beach, but all the inhabitants fled excepting the aged and infirm. The kind manner in which these were treated, and the presents given them, gradually lured back the others, and a friendly intercourse took place. They had never seen a ship or a white man. When they had first descried the Columbia, they had supposed it a floating island; then some monster of the deep; but when they saw the boat putting for shore with human beings on board, they considered them cannibals sent by the Great Spirit to ravage the country and devour the inhabitants. Captain Gray did not ascend the river farther than the bay in question, which continues to bear his name. After putting to sea, he fell in with the celebrated discoverer, Vancouver, and informed him of his discovery, furnished him with a chart which he had made of the river. Vancouver visited the river, and his lieutenant, Broughton, explored it by the aid of Captain Gray's chart; ascending it upwards of one hundred miles, until within view of a snowy mountain, to which he gave the name of Mt. Hood, which it still retains.

The existence of this river, however, was known long before the visits of Gray and Vancouver, but the information concerning it was vague and indefinite, being gathered from the reports of Indi-

ans. It was spoken of by travellers as the Oregon, and as the Great River of the West. A Spanish ship is said to have been wrecked at the mouth, several of the crew of which lived for some time among the natives. The Columbia, however, is believed to be the first ship that made a regular discovery and anchored within its waters, and it has since generally borne the name of that vessel. As early as 1763, shortly after the acquisition of the Canadas by Great Britain, Captain Jonathan Carver, who had been in the British provincial army, projected a journey across the continent between the forty-third and forty-sixth degrees of northern latitude to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. His objects were to ascertain the breadth of the continent at its broadest part, and to determine on some place on the shores of the Pacific, where government might establish a post to facilitate the discovery of a northwest passage, or a communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean. This place he presumed would be somewhere about the Straits of Annian, at which point he supposed the Oregon disembogued itself. It was his opinion, also, that a settlement on this extremity of America would disclose new sources of trade, promote many useful discoveries, and open a more direct communication with China and the English settlements in the East Indies, than that by the Cape of Good Hope or the Straits of Magellan. \* This enterprising and intrepid traveller was twice baffled in individual efforts to accomplish this great journey. In 1774, he was joined in the scheme by Richard Whitworth, a member of Parliament, and a man of wealth. Their enterprise was projected on a broad and bold plan. They were to take with them fifty or sixty men, artificers and mariners. With these they were to make their way up one of the branches of the Missouri, explore the mountains for the source of the Oregon, or River of the West, and sail down that river to its supposed exit, near the Straits of Annian. Here they were to erect a fort, and build the vessels necessary to carry their discoveries by sea into effect. Their plan had the sanction of the British government, and grants and other requisites were nearly completed, when the breaking out of the American Revolution once more defeated the undertaking. \*\*

The expedition of Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1793, across the continent to the Pacific Ocean, which he reached in lat. 52° 20' 48", again suggested the possibility of linking together the trade of both sides of the continent. In lat. 52° 30' he had descended a river for some distance which flowed towards the south, and was called by the natives Tacoutche Tesse, and which he erroneously supposed to be the Columbia. It was afterwards ascertained that it emptied itself in lat. 49 degrees, whereas the mouth of the Columbia is about three degrees further south.

When Mackenzie some years subsequently published an account of his expeditions, he suggested the policy of opening an intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and forming regular establishments through the interior and at both extremes, as well as along the coasts and islands. By this means, he observed, the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained from lat. 48 north to the pole, excepting that portion held by the Russians, for as to the American adventurers who had hitherto enjoyed the traffic along the northwest coast, they would instantly disappear, he added, before a well regulated trade.

A scheme of this kind, however, was too vast and hazardous for individual enterprise; it could only be undertaken by a company under the sanction and protection of a government; and as there might be a clashing of claims between the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Company, the one

holding by right of charter, the other by right of possession, he proposed that the two companies should coalesce in this great undertaking. The long-cherished jealousies of these two companies, however, were too deep and strong to allow them to listen to such counsel.

In the meantime the attention of the American government was attracted to the subject, and the memorable expedition under Messrs. Lewis and Clarke fitted out. These gentlemen, in 1804, accomplished the enterprise which had been projected by Carver and Whitworth in 1774. They ascended the Missouri, passed through the stupendous gates of the Rocky Mountains, hitherto unknown to white men; discovered and explored the upper waters of the Columbia, and followed that river down to its mouth, where their countryman, Gray, had anchored about twelve years previously. Here they passed the winter, and returned across the mountains in the following spring. The reports published by them of their expedition demonstrated the practicability of establishing a line of communication across the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

It was then that the idea presented itself to the mind of Mr. Astor, of grasping with his individual hand this great enterprise, which for years had been dubiously yet desirously contemplated by powerful associations and maternal governments. For some time he revolved the idea in his mind, gradually extending and maturing his plans as his means of executing them augmented. The main feature of his scheme was to establish a line of trading posts along the Missouri and the Columbia, to the mouth of the latter, where was to be founded the chief trading house or mart. Inferior posts would be established in the interior, and on all the tributary streams of the Columbia, to trade with the Indians; these posts would draw their supplies from the main establishment, and bring to it the peltries they collected. Coasting craft would be built and fitted out, also at the mouth of the Columbia, to trade, at favorable seasons, all along the northwest coast, and return, with the proceeds of their voyages, to this place of deposit. Thus all the Indian trade, both of the interior and the coast, would converge to this point, and thence derive its sustenance.

A ship was to be sent annually from New York to this main establishment with reinforcements and supplies, and with merchandise suited to the trade. It would take on board the furs collected during the preceding year, carry them to Canton, invest the proceeds in the rich merchandise of China, and return thus freighted to New York.

As, in extending the American trade along the coast to the northward, it might be brought into the vicinity of the Russian Fur Company, and produce a hostile rivalry, it was part of the plan of Mr. Astor to conciliate the good-will of that company by the most amicable and beneficial arrangements. The Russian establishment was chiefly dependent for its supplies upon transient trading vessels from the United States. These vessels, however, were often of more harm than advantage. Being owned by private adventurers, or casual voyagers, who cared only for present profit, and had no interest in the permanent prosperity of the trade, they were reckless in their dealings with the natives, and made no scruple of supplying them with fire-arms. In this way several fierce tribes in the vicinity of the Russian posts, or within the range of their trading excursions, were furnished with deadly means of warfare, and rendered troublesome and dangerous neighbors.

The Russian government had made representations to that of the United States of these malpractices on the part of its citizens, and urged to have this traffic in arms prohibited; but, as it did not infringe any municipal law, our government could not interfere. Yet, still it regarded, with solicitude, a traffic which, if persisted in, might give offence to Russia, at that time almost the only friendly power to us. In this dilemma the government had applied to Mr. Astor, as one conversant in this branch of trade, for information that might point out a way to remedy the evil. This circumstance had suggested to him the idea of supplying the Russian establishment regularly by means of the annual ship that should visit the settlement at the mouth of the Columbia (or Oregon) ; by this means the casual trading vessels would be excluded from those parts of the coast where their malpractices were so injurious to the Russians.

Such is a brief outline of the enterprise projected by Mr. Astor, but which continually expanded in his mind. Indeed it is due to him to say that he was not actuated by mere motives of individual profit. He was already wealthy beyond the ordinary desires of man, but he now aspired to that honorable fame which is awarded to men of similar scope of mind, who by their great commercial enterprises have enriched nations, peopled wildernesses, and extended the bounds of empire. He considered his projected establishment at the mouth of the Columbia as the emporium to an immense commerce; as a colony that would form the germ of a wide civilization; that would, in fact, carry the American population across the Rocky Mountains and spread it along the shores of the Pacific, as it already animated the shores of the Atlantic.

As Mr. Astor, by the magnitude of his commercial and financial relations, and the vigor and scope of his self-taught mind, had elevated himself into the consideration of government and the communion and correspondence with leading statesmen, he, at an early period, communicated his schemes to President Jefferson, soliciting the countenance of government. How highly they were esteemed by that eminent man, we may judge by the following passage, written by him some time afterwards.

“I remember well having invited your proposition on this subject,\*\* and encouraged it with the assurance of every facility and protection which the government could properly afford. I considered, as a great public acquisition, the commencement of a settlement on that point of the western coast of America, and looked forward with gratification to the time when its descendants should have spread themselves through the whole length of that coast, covering it with free and independent Americans, unconnected with us but by the ties of blood and interest, and enjoying like us the rights of self-government.”

The cabinet joined with Mr. Jefferson in warm approbation of the plan, and held out assurance of every protection that could, consistently with general policy, be afforded.

Mr. Astor now prepared to carry his scheme into prompt execution. He had some competition, however, to apprehend and guard against. The Northwest Company, acting feebly and partially upon the suggestions of its former agent, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, had pushed one or two advanced trading posts across the Rocky Mountains, into a tract of country visited by that enterprising traveller, and since named New Caledonia. This tract lay about two degrees north of the Columbia, and intervened between the territories of the United States and those of Russia. Its

length was about five hundred and fifty miles, and its breadth, from the mountains to the Pacific, from three hundred to three hundred and fifty geographic miles.

Should the Northwest Company persist in extending their trade in that quarter, their competition might be of serious detriment to the plans of Mr. Astor. It is true they would contend with him to a vast disadvantage, from the checks and restrictions to which they were subjected. They were straitened on one side by the rivalry of the Hudson's Bay Company; then they had no good post on the Pacific where they could receive supplies by sea for their establishments beyond the mountains; nor, if they had one, could they ship their furs thence to China, that great mart for peltries; the Chinese trade being comprised in the monopoly of the East India Company. Their posts beyond the mountains had to be supplied in yearly expeditions, like caravans, from Montreal, and the furs conveyed back in the same way, by long, precarious, and expensive routes, across the continent. Mr. Astor, on the contrary, would be able to supply his proposed establishment at the mouth of the Columbia by sea, and to ship the furs collected there directly to China, so as to undersell the Northwest Company in the great Chinese market.

Still, the competition of two rival companies west of the Rocky Mountains could not but prove detrimental to both, and fraught with those evils, both to the trade and to the Indians, that had attended similar rivalries in the Canadas. To prevent any contest of the kind, therefore, he made known his plan to the agents of the Northwest Company, and proposed to interest them, to the extent of one third, in the trade thus to be opened. Some correspondence and negotiation ensued. The company were aware of the advantages which would be possessed by Mr. Astor should he be able to carry his scheme into effect; but they anticipated a monopoly of the trade beyond the mountains by their establishments in New Caledonia, and were loth to share it with an individual who had already proved a formidable competitor in the Atlantic trade. They hoped, too, by a timely move, to secure the mouth of the Columbia before Mr. Astor would be able to put his plans into operation; and, that key to the internal trade once in their possession, the whole country would be at their command. After some negotiation and delay, therefore, they declined the proposition that had been made to them, but subsequently despatched a party for the mouth of the Columbia, to establish a post there before any expedition sent out by Mr. Astor might arrive.

In the meantime Mr. Astor, finding his overtures rejected, proceeded fearlessly to execute his enterprise in face of the whole power of the Northwest Company. His main establishment once planted at the mouth of the Columbia, he looked with confidence to ultimate success. Being able to reinforce and supply it amply by sea, he would push his interior posts in every direction up the rivers and along the coast; supplying the natives at a lower rate, and thus gradually obliging the Northwest Company to give up the competition, relinquish New Caledonia, and retire to the other side of the mountains. He would then have possession of the trade, not merely of the Columbia and its tributaries, but of the regions farther north, quite to the Russian possessions. Such was a part of his brilliant and comprehensive plan.

He now proceeded, with all diligence, to procure proper agents and coadjutors, habituated to the Indian trade and to the life of the wilderness. Among the clerks of the Northwest Company were

several of great capacity and experience, who had served out their probationary terms, but who, either through lack of interest and influence, or a want of vacancies, had not been promoted. They were consequently much dissatisfied, and ready for any employment in which their talents and acquirements might be turned to better account.

Mr. Astor made his overtures to several of these persons, and three of them entered into his views. One of these, Mr. Alexander M'Kay, had accompanied Sir Alexander Mackenzie in both of his expeditions to the northwest coast of America in 1789 and 1793. The other two were Duncan M'Dougal and Donald M'Kenzie. To these were subsequently added Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, of New Jersey. As this gentleman was a native born citizen of the United States, a person of great probity and worth, he was selected by Mr. Astor to be his chief agent, and to represent him in the contemplated establishment.

On the 23d of June, 1810, articles of agreement were entered into between Mr. Astor and those four gentlemen, acting for themselves and for the several persons who had already agreed to become, or should thereafter become, associated under the firm of "The Pacific Fur Company."

According to these articles, Mr. Astor was to be at the head of the company, and to manage its affairs in New York. He was to furnish vessels, goods, provisions, arms, ammunition, and all other requisites for the enterprise at first cost and charges, provided that they did not, at any time, involve an advance of more than four hundred thousand dollars.

The stock of the company was to be divided into a hundred equal shares, with the profits accruing thereon. Fifty shares were to be at the disposition of Mr. Astor, and the other fifty to be divided among the partners and their associates.

Mr. Astor was to have the privilege of introducing other persons into the connection as partners, two of whom, at least, should be conversant with the Indian trade, and none of them entitled to more than three shares.

A general meeting of the company was to be held annually at Columbia River, for the investigation and regulation of its affairs; at which absent members might be represented, and might vote by proxy under certain specified conditions.

The association, if successful, was to continue for twenty years; but the parties had full power to abandon and dissolve it within the first five years, should it be found unprofitable. For this term Mr. Astor covenanted to bear all the loss that might be incurred; after which it was to be borne by all the partners, in proportion to their respective shares.

The parties of the second part were to execute faithfully such duties as might be assigned to them by a majority of the company on the northwest coast, and to repair to such place or places as the majority might direct.

An agent, appointed for the term of five years, was to reside at the principal establishment on the northwest coast, and Wilson Price Hunt was the one chosen for the first term. Should the interests of the concern at any time require his absence, a person was to be appointed, in general meeting, to take his place.

Such were the leading conditions of this association; we shall now proceed to relate the various hardy and eventful expeditions, by sea and land, to which it gave rise.

\* Carver's Travels, Introd. b. iii. Philad. 1796.

\*\* Carver's Travels, p. 360.

\*\*\* On this point Mr. Jefferson's memory was in error. The proposition alluded to was the one, already mentioned, for the establishment of an American Fur Company in the Atlantic States. The great enterprise beyond the mountains, that was to sweep the shores of the Pacific, originated in the mind of Mr. Astor, and was proposed by him to the government.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER IV.

Two Expeditions Set on Foot.- The Tonquin and Her Crew.- Captain Thorn, His Character.- The Partners and Clerks - Canadian Voyageurs, Their Habits, Employments, Dress, Character, Songs.- Expedition of a Canadian Boat and Its Crew by Land and Water.- Arrival at New York.- Preparations for a Sea Voyage.- Northwest Braggarts. -Underhand Precautions- Letter of Instructions.

IN prosecuting his great scheme of commerce and colonization, two expeditions were devised by Mr. Astor, one by sea, the other by land. The former was to carry out the people, stores, ammunition, and merchandise, requisite for establishing a fortified trading post at the mouth of Columbia River. The latter, conducted by Mr. Hunt, was to proceed up the Missouri, and across the Rocky Mountains, to the same point; exploring a line of communication across the continent and noting the places where interior trading posts might be established. The expedition by sea is the one which comes first under consideration.

A fine ship was provided called the Tonquin, of two hundred and ninety tons burden, mounting ten guns, with a crew of twenty men. She carried an assortment of merchandise for trading with the natives of the seaboard and of the interior, together with the frame of a schooner, to be employed in the coasting trade. Seeds also were provided for the cultivation of the soil, and nothing was neglected for the necessary supply of the establishment. The command of the ship was intrusted to Jonathan Thorn, of New York, a lieutenant in the United States navy, on leave of absence. He was a man of courage and firmness, who had distinguished himself in our Tripolitan war, and, from being accustomed to naval discipline, was considered by Mr. Astor as well fitted to take charge of an expedition of the kind. Four of the partners were to embark in the ship, namely, Messrs. M'Kay, M'Dougal, David Stuart, and his nephew, Robert Stuart. Mr. M'Dougal was empowered by Mr. Astor to act as his proxy in the absence of Mr. Hunt, to vote for him and in his name, on any question that might come before any meeting of the persons interested in the voyage.

Besides the partners, there were twelve clerks to go out in the ship, several of them natives of Canada, who had some experience in the Indian trade. They were bound to the service of the company for five years, at the rate of one hundred dollars a year, payable at the expiration of the term, and an annual equipment of clothing to the amount of forty dollars. In case of ill conduct they were liable to forfeit their wages and be dismissed; but, should they acquit themselves well, the confident expectation was held out to them of promotion, and partnership. Their interests were thus, to some extent, identified with those of the company.

Several artisans were likewise to sail in the ship, for the supply of the colony; but the most peculiar and characteristic part of this motley embarkation consisted of thirteen Canadian "voyageurs," who had enlisted for five years. As this class of functionaries will continually recur in the course of the following narrations, and as they form one of those distinct and strongly marked castes or orders of people, springing up in this vast continent out of geographical circumstances, or the varied pursuits, habitudes, and origins of its population, we shall sketch a few of their characteristics for the information of the reader.

The "voyageurs" form a kind of confraternity in the Canadas, like the arrieros, or carriers of Spain, and, like them, are employed in long internal expeditions of travel and traffic: with this difference, that the arrieros travel by land, the voyageurs by water; the former with mules and horses, the latter with batteaux and canoes. The voyageurs may be said to have sprung up out of the fur trade, having originally been employed by the early French merchants in their trading expeditions through the labyrinth of rivers and lakes of the boundless interior. They were coeval with the coureurs des bois, or rangers of the woods, already noticed, and, like them, in the intervals of their long, arduous, and laborious expeditions, were prone to pass their time in idleness and revelry about the trading posts or settlements; squandering their hard earnings in heedless conviviality, and rivaling their neighbors, the Indians, in indolent indulgence and an imprudent disregard of the morrow.

When Canada passed under British domination, and the old French trading houses were broken up, the voyageurs, like the coureurs des bois, were for a time disheartened and disconsolate, and with difficulty could reconcile themselves to the service of the new-comers, so different in habits, manners, and language from their former employers. By degrees, however, they became accustomed to the change, and at length came to consider the British fur traders, and especially the members of the Northwest Company, as the legitimate lords of creation.

The dress of these people is generally half civilized, half savage. They wear a capot or surcoat, made of a blanket, a striped cotton shirt, cloth trousers, or leathern leggins, moccasins of deer-skin, and a belt of variegated worsted, from which are suspended the knife, tobacco-pouch, and other implements. Their language is of the same piebald character, being a French patois, embroidered with Indian and English words and phrases.

The lives of the voyageurs are passed in wild and extensive roving, in the service of individuals,

but more especially of the fur traders. They are generally of French descent, and inherit much of the gayety and lightness of heart of their ancestors, being full of anecdote and song, and ever ready for the dance. They inherit, too, a fund of civility and complaisance; and, instead of that hardness and grossness which men in laborious life are apt to indulge towards each other, they are mutually obliging and accommodating; interchanging kind offices, yielding each other assistance and comfort in every emergency, and using the familiar appellations of "cousin" and "brother" when there is in fact no relationship. Their natural good-will is probably heightened by a community of adventure and hardship in their precarious and wandering life.

No men are more submissive to their leaders and employers, more capable of enduring hardship, or more good-humored under privations. Never are they so happy as when on long and rough expeditions, toiling up rivers or coasting lakes; encamping at night on the borders, gossiping round their fires, and bivouacking in the open air. They are dextrous boatmen, vigorous and adroit with the oar and paddle, and will row from morning until night without a murmur. The steersman often sings an old traditional French song, with some regular burden in which they all join, keeping time with their oars; if at any time they flag in spirits or relax in exertion, it is but necessary to strike up a song of the kind to put them all in fresh spirits and activity. The Canadian waters are vocal with these little French chansons, that have been echoed from mouth to mouth and transmitted from father to son, from the earliest days of the colony; and it has a pleasing effect, in a still golden summer evening, to see a batteau gliding across the bosom of a lake and dipping its oars to the cadence of these quaint old ditties, or sweeping along in full chorus on a bright sunny morning, down the transparent current of one of the Canada rivers.

But we are talking of things that are fast fading away! The march of mechanical invention is driving everything poetical before it. The steamboats, which are fast dispelling the wildness and romance of our lakes and rivers, and aiding to subdue the world into commonplace, are proving as fatal to the race of the Canadian voyageurs as they have been to that of the boatmen of the Mississippi. Their glory is departed. They are no longer the lords of our internal seas, and the great navigators of the wilderness. Some of them may still occasionally be seen coasting the lower lakes with their frail barks, and pitching their camps and lighting their fires upon the shores; but their range is fast contracting to those remote waters and shallow and obstructed rivers unvisited by the steamboat. In the course of years they will gradually disappear; their songs will die away like the echoes they once awakened, and the Canadian voyageurs will become a forgotten race, or remembered, like their associates, the Indians, among the poetical images of past times, and as themes for local and romantic associations.

An instance of the buoyant temperament and the professional pride of these people was furnished in the gay and braggart style in which they arrived at New York to join the enterprise. They were determined to regale and astonish the people of the "States" with the sight of a Canadian boat and a Canadian crew. They accordingly fitted up a large but light bark canoe, such as is used in the fur trade; transported it in a wagon from the banks of the St. Lawrence to the shores of Lake Champlain; traversed the lake in it, from end to end; hoisted it again in a wagon and wheeled it off to Lansingburgh, and there launched it upon the waters of the Hudson. Down this river they plied

their course merrily on a fine summer's day, making its banks resound for the first time with their old French boat songs; passing by the villages with whoop and halloo, so as to make the honest Dutch farmers mistake them for a crew of savages. In this way they swept, in full song and with regular flourish of the paddle, round New York, in a still summer evening, to the wonder and admiration of its inhabitants, who had never before witnessed on their waters, a nautical apparition of the kind.

Such was the variegated band of adventurers about to embark in the Tonquin on this arduous and doubtful enterprise. While yet in port and on dry land, in the bustle of preparation and the excitement of novelty, all was sunshine and promise. The Canadians, especially, who, with their constitutional vivacity, have a considerable dash of the gascon, were buoyant and boastful, and great brag arts as to the future; while all those who had been in the service of the Northwest Company, and engaged in the Indian trade, plumed themselves upon their hardihood and their capacity to endure privations. If Mr. Astor ventured to hint at the difficulties they might have to encounter, they treated them with scorn. They were "northwesters;" men seasoned to hardships, who cared for neither wind nor weather. They could live hard, lie hard, sleep hard, eat dogs! - in a word they were ready to do and suffer anything for the good of the enterprise. With all this profession of zeal and devotion, Mr. Astor was not overconfident of the stability and firm faith of these mercurial beings. He had received information, also, that an armed brig from Halifax, probably at the instigation of the Northwest Company, was hovering on the coast, watching for the Tonquin, with the purpose of impressing the Canadians on board of her, as British subjects, and thus interrupting the voyage. It was a time of doubt and anxiety, when the relations between the United States and Great Britain were daily assuming a more precarious aspect and verging towards that war which shortly ensued. As a precautionary measure, therefore, he required that the voyageurs, as they were about to enter into the service of an American association, and to reside within the limits of the United States, should take the oaths of naturalization as American citizens. To this they readily agreed, and shortly afterward assured him that they had actually done so. It was not until after they had sailed that he discovered that they had entirely deceived him in the matter.

The confidence of Mr. Astor was abused in another quarter. Two of the partners, both of them Scotchmen, and recently in the service of the Northwest Company, had misgivings as to an enterprise which might clash with the interests and establishments protected by the British flag. They privately waited upon the British minister, Mr. Jackson, then in New York, laid open to him the whole scheme of Mr. Astor, though intrusted to them in confidence, and dependent, in a great measure, upon secrecy at the outset for its success, and inquired whether they, as British subjects, could lawfully engage in it. The reply satisfied their scruples, while the information they imparted excited the surprise and admiration of Mr. Jackson, that a private individual should have conceived and set on foot at his own risk and expense so great an enterprise.

This step on the part of those gentlemen was not known to Mr. Astor until some time afterwards, or it might have modified the trust and confidence reposed in them.

To guard against any interruption to the voyage by the armed brig, said to be off the harbor, Mr.

Astor applied to Commodore Rodgers, at that time commanding at New York, to give the Tonquin safe convoy off the coast. The commodore having received from a high official source assurance of the deep interest which the government took in the enterprise, sent directions to Captain Hull, at that time cruising off the harbor, in the frigate Constitution, to afford the Tonquin the required protection when she should put to sea.

Before the day of embarkation, Mr. Astor addressed a letter of instruction to the four partners who were to sail in the ship. In this he enjoined them, in the most earnest manner, to cultivate harmony and unanimity, and recommended that all differences of opinions on points connected with the objects and interests of the voyage should be discussed by the whole, and decided by a majority of votes. He, moreover, gave them especial caution as to their conduct on arriving at their destined port; exhorting them to be careful to make a favorable impression upon the wild people among whom their lot and the fortunes of the enterprise would be cast. "If you find them kind," said he, "as I hope you will, be so to them. If otherwise, act with caution and forbearance, and convince them that you come as friends."

With the same anxious forethought he wrote a letter of instructions to Captain Thorn, in which he urged the strictest attention to the health of himself and his crew, and to the promotion of good-humor and harmony on board his ship. "To prevent any misunderstanding," added he, "will require your particular good management." His letter closed with an injunction of wariness in his intercourse with the natives, a subject on which Mr. Astor was justly sensible he could not be too earnest. "I must recommend you," said he, "to be particularly careful on the coast, and not to rely too much on the friendly disposition of the natives. All accidents which have as yet happened there arose from too much confidence in the Indians."

The reader will bear these instructions in mind, as events will prove their wisdom and importance, and the disasters which ensued in consequence of the neglect of them.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER V.

Sailing of the Tonquin. - A Rigid Commander and a Reckless Crew. - Landsmen on Shipboard.- Fresh-Water Sailors at Sea.- Lubber Nests. - Ship Fare.- A Labrador Veteran- Literary Clerks.- Curious Travellers.- Robinson Crusoe's Island.- Quarter-Deck Quarrels.- Falkland Islands.- A Wild-Goose Chase.- Port Egmont.- Epitaph Hunting.- Old Mortality- Penguin Shooting.- Sportsmen Left in the Lurch.-A Hard Pull.- Further Altercations.- Arrival at Owyhee.

ON the eighth of September, 1810, the Tonquin put to sea, where she was soon joined by the frigate Constitution. The wind was fresh and fair from the southwest, and the ship was soon out of sight of land and free from the apprehended danger of interruption. The frigate, therefore, gave her "God speed," and left her to her course.

The harmony so earnestly enjoined by Mr. Astor on this heterogeneous crew, and which had been

---

so confidently promised in the buoyant moments of preparation, was doomed to meet with a check at the very outset.

Captain Thorn was an honest, straightforward, but somewhat dry and dictatorial commander, who, having been nurtured in the system and discipline of a ship of war, and in a sacred opinion of the supremacy of the quarter-deck, was disposed to be absolute lord and master on board of his ship. He appears, moreover, to have had no great opinion, from the first, of the persons embarked with him - He had stood by with surly contempt while they vaunted so bravely to Mr. Astor of all they could do and all they could undergo; how they could face all weathers, put up with all kinds of fare, and even eat dogs with a relish, when no better food was to be had. He had set them down as a set of landlubbers and braggadocios, and was disposed to treat them accordingly. Mr. Astor was, in his eyes, his only real employer, being the father of the enterprise, who furnished all funds and bore all losses. The others were mere agents and subordinates, who lived at his expense. He evidently had but a narrow idea of the scope and nature of the enterprise, limiting his views merely to his part of it; everything beyond the concerns of his ship was out of his sphere; and anything that interfered with the routine of his nautical duties put him in a passion.

The partners, on the other hand, had been brought up in the service of the Northwest Company, and in a profound idea of the importance, dignity, and authority of a partner. They already began to consider themselves on a par with the M'Tavishes, the M'Gillivrays, the Frobishers, and the other magnates of the Northwest, whom they had been accustomed to look up to as the great ones of the earth; and they were a little disposed, perhaps, to wear their suddenly-acquired honors with some air of pretension. Mr. Astor, too, had put them on their mettle with respect to the captain, describing him as a gunpowder fellow who would command his ship in fine style, and, if there was any fighting to do, would "blow all out of the water."

Thus prepared to regard each other with no very cordial eye, it is not to be wondered at that the parties soon came into collision. On the very first night Captain Thorn began his man-of-war discipline by ordering the lights in the cabin to be extinguished at eight o'clock.

The pride of the partners was immediately in arms. This was an invasion of their rights and dignities not to be borne. They were on board of their own ship, and entitled to consult their ease and enjoyment. M'Dougal was the champion of their cause. He was an active, irritable, fuming, vain-glorious little man, and elevated in his own opinion, by being the proxy of Mr. Astor. A violent altercation ensued, in the course of which Thorn threatened to put the partners in irons should they prove refractory; upon which M'Dougal seized a pistol and swore to be the death of the captain should he ever offer such an indignity. It was some time before the irritated parties could be pacified by the more temperate bystanders.

Such was the captain's outset with the partners. Nor did the clerks stand much higher in his good graces; indeed, he seems to have regarded all the landsmen on board his ship as a kind of live lumber, continually in the way. The poor voyageurs, too, continually irritated his spleen by their "lubberly" and unseemly habits, so abhorrent to one accustomed to the cleanliness of a man-of-

war. These poor fresh-water sailors, so vainglorious on shore, and almost amphibious when on lakes and rivers, lost all heart and stomach the moment they were at sea. For days they suffered the doleful rigors and retchings of sea-sickness, lurking below in their berths in squalid state, or emerging now and then like spectres from the hatchways, in capotes and blankets, with dirty nightcaps, grizzly beard, lantern visage and unhappy eye, shivering about the deck, and ever and anon crawling to the sides of the vessel, and offering up their tributes to the windward, to infinite annoyance of the captain.

His letters to Mr. Astor, wherein he pours forth the bitterness of his soul, and his seamanlike impatience of what he considers the "lubberly" character and conduct of those around him, are before us, and are amusingly characteristic. The honest captain is full of vexation on his own account, and solicitude on account of Mr. Astor, whose property he considers at the mercy of a most heterogeneous and wasteful crew.

As to the clerks, he pronounced them mere pretenders, not one of whom had ever been among the Indians, nor farther to the northwest than Montreal, nor of higher rank than barkeeper of a tavern or marker of a billiard-table, excepting one, who had been a school-master, and whom he emphatically sets down for "as foolish a pedant as ever lived."

Then as to the artisans and laborers who had been brought from Canada and shipped at such expense, the three most respectable, according to the captain's account, were culprits, who had fled from Canada on account of their misdeeds; the rest had figured in Montreal as draymen, barbers, waiters, and carriage drivers, and were the most helpless, worthless beings "that ever broke sea-biscuit."

It may easily be imagined what a series of misunderstandings and cross-purposes would be likely to take place between such a crew and such a commander. The captain, in his zeal for the health and cleanliness of his ship, would make sweeping visitations to the "lubber nests" of the unlucky "voyageurs" and their companions in misery, ferret them out of their berths, make them air and wash themselves and their accoutrements, and oblige them to stir about briskly and take exercise.

Nor did his disgust and vexation cease when all hands had recovered from sea-sickness, and become accustomed to the ship, for now broke out an alarming keenness of appetite that threatened havoc to the provisions. What especially irritated the captain was the daintiness of some of his cabin passengers. They were loud in their complaints of the ship's fare, though their table was served with fresh pork, hams, tongues, smoked beef, and puddings. "When thwarted in their cravings for delicacies," said he, "they would exclaim it was d-d hard they could not live as they pleased upon their own property, being on board of their own ship, freighted with their own merchandise. And these," added he, "are the fine fellows who made such boast that they could 'eat dogs.'"

In his indignation at what he termed their effeminacy, he would swear that he would never take them to sea again "without having Fly-market on the fore-castle, Covent-garden on the poop, and

a cool spring from Canada in the maintop. “

As they proceeded on their voyage and got into the smooth seas and pleasant weather of the tropics, other annoyances occurred to vex the spirit of the captain. He had been crossed by the irritable mood of one of the partners; he was now excessively annoyed by the good-humor of another. This was the elder Stuart, who was an easy soul, and of a social disposition. He had seen life in Canada, and on the coast of Labrador; had been a fur trader in the former, and a fisherman on the latter; and, in the course of his experience, had made various expeditions with voyageurs. He was accustomed, therefore, to the familiarity which prevails between that class and their superiors, and the gossipings which take place among them when seated round a fire at their encampments. Stuart was never so happy as when he could seat himself on the deck with a number of these men round him, in camping style, smoke together, passing the pipe from mouth to mouth, after the manner of the Indians, sing old Canadian boat-songs, and tell stories about their hardships and adventures, in the course of which he rivaled Sinbad in his long tales of the sea, about his fishing exploits on the coast of Labrador.

This gossiping familiarity shocked the captain's notions of rank and subordination, and nothing was so abhorrent to him as the community of pipe between master and man, and their mingling in chorus in the outlandish boat-songs.

Then there was another whimsical source of annoyance to him. Some of the young clerks, who were making their first voyage, and to whom everything was new and strange, were, very rationally, in the habit of taking notes and keeping journals. This was a sore abomination to the honest captain, who held their literary pretensions in great contempt. “The collecting of materials for long histories of their voyages and travels,” said he, in his letter to Mr. Astor, “appears to engross most of their attention.” We can conceive what must have been the crusty impatience of the worthy navigator, when, on any trifling occurrence in the course of the voyage, quite commonplace in his eyes, he saw these young landsmen running to record it in their journals; and what indignant glances he must have cast to right and left, as he worried about the deck, giving out his orders for the management of the ship, surrounded by singing, smoking, gossiping, scribbling groups, all, as he thought, intent upon the amusement of the passing hour, instead of the great purposes and interests of the voyage.

It is possible the captain was in some degree right in his notions. Though some of the passengers had much to gain by the voyage, none of them had anything positively to lose. They were mostly young men, in the heyday of life; and having got into fine latitudes, upon smooth seas, with a well-stored ship under them, and a fair wind in the shoulder of the sail, they seemed to have got into a holiday world, and were disposed to enjoy it. That craving desire, natural to untravelled men of fresh and lively minds, to see strange lands, and to visit scenes famous in history or fable, was expressed by some of the partners and clerks, with respect to some of the storied coasts and islands that lay within their route. The captain, however, who regarded every coast and island with a matter-of-fact eye, and had no more associations connected with them than those laid down in his sea-chart, considered all this curiosity as exceedingly idle and childish. “In the first part of the

voyage," says he in his letter, "they were determined to have it said they had been in Africa, and therefore insisted on stopping at the Cape de Verdes. Next they said the ship should stop on the coast of Patagonia, for they must see the large and uncommon inhabitants of that place. Then they must go to the island where Robinson Crusoe had so long lived. And lastly, they were determined to see the handsome inhabitants of Easter Island."

To all these resolves, the captain opposed his peremptory veto, as "contrary to instructions." Then would break forth an unavailing explosion of wrath on the part of certain of the partners, in the course of which they did not even spare Mr. Astor for his act of supererogation in furnishing orders for the control of the ship while they were on board, instead of leaving them to be the judges where it would be best for her to touch, and how long to remain. The choleric M'Dougal took the lead in these railings, being, as has been observed, a little puffed up with the idea of being Mr. Astor's proxy.

The captain, however, became only so much the more crusty and dogged in his adherence to his orders, and touchy and harsh in his dealings with the passengers, and frequent altercations ensued. He may in some measure have been influenced by his seamanlike impatience of the interference of landsmen, and his high notions of naval etiquette and quarter-deck authority; but he evidently had an honest, trusty concern for the interests of his employer. He pictured to himself the anxious projector of the enterprise, who had disbursed so munificently in its outfit, calculating on the zeal, fidelity, and singleness of purpose of his associates and agents; while they, on the other hand, having a good ship at their disposal and a deep pocket at home to bear them out, seemed ready to loiter on every coast, and amuse themselves in every port.

On the fourth of December they came in sight of the Falkland Islands. Having been for some time on an allowance of water, it was resolved to anchor here and obtain a supply. A boat was sent into a small bay to take soundings. Mr. M'Dougal and Mr. M'Kay took this occasion to go on shore, but with a request from the captain that they would not detain the ship. Once on shore, however, they were in no haste to obey his orders, but rambled about in search of curiosities. The anchorage proving unsafe, and water difficult to be procured, the captain stood out to sea, and made repeated signals for those on shore to rejoin the ship, but it was not until nine at night that they came on board.

The wind being adverse, the boat was again sent on shore on the following morning, and the same gentlemen again landed, but promised to come off at a moment's warning; they again forgot their promise in their eager pursuit of wild geese and seawolves. After a time the wind hauled fair, and signals were made for the boat. Half an hour elapsed but no boat put off. The captain reconnoitered the shore with his glass, and, to his infinite vexation, saw the loiterers in the full enjoyment of their "wildgoose-chase." Nettled to the quick, he immediately made sail. When those on shore saw the ship actually under way, they embarked with all speed, but had a hard pull of eight miles before they got on board, and then experienced but a grim reception, notwithstanding that they came well laden with the spoils of the chase.

Two days afterwards, on the seventh of December, they anchored at Fort Egmont, in the same island, where they remained four days taking in water and making repairs. This was a joyous time for the landsmen. They pitched a tent on shore, had a boat at their command, and passed their time merrily in rambling about the island, and coasting along the shores, shooting sealions, seals, foxes, geese, ducks, and penguins. None were keener in pursuit of this kind of game than M'Dougal and David Stuart; the latter was reminded of aquatic sports on the coast of Labrador, and his hunting exploits in the Northwest.

In the meantime the captain addressed himself steadily to the business of his ship, scorning the holiday spirit and useless pursuits of his emancipated messmates, and warning them, from time to time, not to wander away nor be out of hail. They promised, as usual, that the ship should never experience a moment's detention on their account, but, as usual, forgot their promise.

On the morning of the 11th, the repairs being all finished, and the water casks replenished, the signal was given to embark, and the ship began to weigh anchor. At this time several of the passengers were dispersed about the island, amusing themselves in various ways. Some of the young men had found two inscriptions, in English, over a place where two unfortunate mariners had been buried in this desert island. As the inscriptions were worn out by the time and weather, they were playing the part of "Old Mortality," and piously renewing them. The signal from the ship summoned them from their labors; they saw the sails unfurled, and that she was getting under way. The two sporting partners, however, Mr. M'Dougal and David Stuart, had strolled away to the south of the island in pursuit of penguins. It would never do to put off without them, as there was but one boat to convey the whole.

While this delay took place on shore, the captain was storming on board. This was the third time his orders had been treated with contempt, and the ship wantonly detained, and it should be the last; so he spread all sail and put to sea, swearing he would leave the laggards to shift for themselves. It was in vain that those on board made remonstrances and entreaties, and represented the horrors of abandoning men upon a sterile and uninhabited island; the sturdy captain was inflexible.

In the meantime the penguin hunters had joined the engravers of tombstones, but not before the ship was already out at sea. They all, to the number of eight, threw themselves into their boat, which was about twenty feet in length, and rowed with might and main. For three hours and a half did they tug anxiously and severely at the oar, swashed occasionally by the surging waves of the open sea, while the ship inexorably kept on her course, and seemed determined to leave them behind.

On board the ship was the nephew of David Stuart, a young man of spirit and resolution. Seeing, as he thought, the captain obstinately bent upon abandoning his uncle and the others, he seized a pistol, and in a paroxysm of wrath swore he would blow out the captain's brains, unless he put about or shortened sail.

Fortunately for all parties, the wind just then came ahead, and the boat was enabled to reach the ship; otherwise, disastrous circumstances might have ensued. We can hardly believe that the captain really intended to carry his threat into full effect, and rather think he meant to let the laggards off for a long pull and a hearty fright. He declared, however, in his letter to Mr. Astor, that he was serious in his threats, and there is no knowing how far such an iron man may push his notions of authority.

“Had the wind,” writes he, “(unfortunately) not hauled ahead soon after leaving the harbor’s mouth, I should positively have left them; and, indeed, I cannot but think it an unfortunate circumstance for you that it so happened, for the first loss in this instance would, in my opinion, have proved the best, as they seem to have no idea of the value of property, nor any apparent regard for your interest, although interwoven with their own.”

This, it must be confessed, was acting with a high hand, and carrying a regard to the owner’s property to a dangerous length. Various petty feuds occurred also between him and the partners in respect to the goods on board ship, some articles of which they wished to distribute for clothing among the men, or for other purposes which they deemed essential. The captain, however, kept a mastiff watch upon the cargo, and growled and snapped if they but offered to touch box or bale. “It was contrary to orders; it would forfeit his insurance; it was out of all rule.” It was in vain they insisted upon their right to do so, as part owners, and as acting for the good of the enterprise; the captain only stuck to his point the more stanchly. They consoled themselves, therefore, by declaring, that as soon as they made land, they would assert their rights, and do with ship and cargo as they pleased.

Beside these feuds between the captain and the partners, there were feuds between the partners themselves, occasioned, in some measure, by jealousy of rank. M’Dougal and M’Kay began to draw plans for the fort, and other buildings of the intended establishment. They agreed very well as to the outline and dimensions, which were on a sufficiently grand scale; but when they came to arrange the details, fierce disputes arose, and they would quarrel by the hour about the distribution of the doors and windows. Many were the hard words and hard names bandied between them on these occasions, according to the captain’s account. Each accused the other of endeavoring to assume unwarrantable power, and take the lead; upon which Mr. M’Dougal would vauntingly lay down Mr. Astor’s letter, constituting him his representative and proxy, a document not to be disputed.

These wordy contests, though violent, were brief; “and within fifteen minutes,” says the captain, “they would be caressing each other like children.”

While all this petty anarchy was agitating the little world within the Tonquin, the good ship prosperously pursued her course, doubled Cape Horn on the 25th of December, careered across the bosom of the Pacific, until, on the 11th of February, the snowy peaks of Owyhee were seen brightening above the horizon.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER VI.

Owyhee.- Sandwich Islanders- Their Nautical Talents.- Tamaahmaah. -His Navy.- His Negotiations.- Views of Mr. Astor With Respect to the Sandwich Islands- Karakakooa.- Royal Monopoly of Pork.- Description of the Islanders-Gayeties on Shore.- Chronicler of the Island. -Place Where Captain Cook was Killed.- John Young, a Nautical Governor.- His Story.- Waititi - A Royal Residence.- A Royal Visit - Grand Ceremonials.- Close Dealing- A Royal Pork Merchant- Grievances of a Matter-of-Fact Man.

OWYHEE, or Hawaii, as it is written by more exact orthographers, is the largest of the cluster, ten in number, of the Sandwich Islands. It is about ninety-seven miles in length, and seventy-eight in breadth, rising gradually into three pyramidal summits or cones; the highest, Mouna Roa, being eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, so as to domineer over the whole archipelago, and to be a landmark over a wide extent of ocean. It remains a lasting monument of the enterprising and unfortunate Captain Cook, who was murdered by the natives of this island.

The Sandwich Islanders, when first discovered, evinced a character superior to most of the savages of the Pacific isles. They were frank and open in their deportment, friendly and liberal in their dealings, with an apt ingenuity apparent in all their rude inventions.

The tragical fate of the discoverer, which, for a time, brought them under the charge of ferocity, was, in fact, the result of sudden exasperation, caused by the seizure of their chief.

At the time of the visit of the Tonquin, the islanders had profited, in many respects, by occasional intercourse with white men; and had shown a quickness to observe and cultivate those arts important to their mode of living. Originally they had no means of navigating the seas by which they were surrounded, superior to light pirogues, which were little competent to contend with the storms of the broad ocean. As the islanders are not in sight of each other, there could, therefore, be but casual intercourse between them. The traffic with white men had put them in possession of vessels of superior description; they had made themselves acquainted with their management, and had even made rude advances in the art of ship-building.

These improvements had been promoted, in a great measure, by the energy and sagacity of one man, the famous Tamaahmaah. He had originally been a petty eri, or chief; but, being of an intrepid and aspiring nature, he had risen in rank, and, availing himself of the superior advantages now afforded in navigation, had brought the whole archipelago in subjection to his arms. At the time of the arrival of the Tonquin he had about forty schooners, of from twenty to thirty tons burden, and one old American ship. With these he held undisputed sway over his insular domains, and carried on intercourse with the chiefs or governors whom he had placed in command of the several islands.

The situation of this group of islands, far in the bosom of the vast Pacific, and their abundant fer-

tility, render them important stopping-places on the highway to China, or to the northwest coast of America. Here the vessels engaged in the fur trade touched to make repairs and procure provisions; and here they often sheltered themselves during the winters that occurred in their long coasting expeditions.

The British navigators were, from the first, aware of the value of these islands to the purposes of commerce; and Tamaahmaah, not long after he had attained the sovereign sway, was persuaded by Vancouver, the celebrated discoverer, to acknowledge, on behalf of himself, and subjects, allegiance to the king of Great Britain. The reader cannot but call to mind the visit which the royal family and court of the Sandwich Islands was, in late years, induced to make to the court of St. James; and the serio-comic ceremonials and mock parade which attended that singular travesty of monarchal style.

It was a part of the wide and comprehensive plan of Mr. Astor to establish a friendly intercourse between these islands and his intended colony, which might, for a time, have occasion to draw supplies thence; and he even had a vague idea of, some time or other, getting possession of one of their islands as a rendezvous for his ships, and a link in the chain of his commercial establishments.

On the evening of the 12th of February, the Tonquin anchored in the bay of Karakakooa, in the island of Owyhee. The surrounding shores were wild and broken, with overhanging cliffs and precipices of black volcanic rock. Beyond these, however, the country was fertile and well cultivated, with inclosures of yams, plantains, sweet potatoes, sugar-canes, and other productions of warm climates and teeming soils; and the numerous habitations of the natives were pleasantly sheltered beneath clumps of cocoanut and bread-fruit trees, which afforded both food and shade. This mingled variety of garden and grove swept gradually up the sides of the mountains, until succeeded by dense forests, which in turn gave place to naked and craggy rocks, until the summits rose into the regions of perpetual snow.

The royal residence of Tamaahmaah was at this time at another island named Woahoo. The island of Owyhee was under the command of one of his eris, or chiefs, who resided at the village of To-caigh, situated on a different part of the coast from the bay of Karakakooa.

On the morning after her arrival, the ship was surrounded by canoes and pirogues, filled with the islanders of both sexes, bringing off supplies of fruits and vegetables, bananas, plantains, water-melons, yams, cabbages and taro. The captain was desirous, however, of purchasing a number of hogs, but there were none to be had - The trade in pork was a royal monopoly, and no subject of the great Tamaahmaah dared to meddle with it. Such provisions as they could furnish, however, were brought by the natives in abundance, and a lively intercourse was kept up during the day, in which the women mingled in the kindest manner.

The islanders are a comely race, of a copper complexion. The men are tall and well made, with forms indicating strength and activity; the women with regular and occasionally handsome

features, and a lascivious expression, characteristic of their temperament. Their style of dress was nearly the same as in the days of Captain Cook. The men wore the maro, a band one foot in width and several feet in length, swathed round the loins, and formed of tappa, or cloth of bark; the kihei, or mantle, about six feet square, tied in a knot over one shoulder, passed under the opposite arm, so as to leave it bare, and falling in graceful folds before and behind, to the knee, so as to bear some resemblance to a Roman toga.

The female dress consisted of the pau, a garment formed of a piece of tappa, several yards in length and one in width, wrapped round the waist, and reaching like a petticoat, to the knees. Over this kihei, or mantle, larger than that of the men, sometimes worn over both shoulders, like a shawl, sometimes over one only. These mantles were seldom worn by either sex during the heat of the day, when the exposure of their persons was at first very revolting to a civilized eye.

Towards evening several of the partners and clerks went on shore, where they were well received and hospitably entertained. A dance was performed for their amusement, in which nineteen young women and one man figured very gracefully, singing in concert, and moving to the cadence of their song.

All this, however, was nothing to the purpose in the eyes of Captain Thorn, who, being disappointed in his hope of obtaining a supply of pork, or finding good water, was anxious to be off. This it was not so easy to effect. The passengers, once on shore, were disposed, as usual, to profit by the occasion. The partners had many inquiries to make relative to the island, with a view to business; while the young clerks were delighted with the charms and graces of the dancing damsels.

To add to their gratifications, an old man offered to conduct them to the spot where Captain Cook was massacred. The proposition was eagerly accepted, and all hands set out on a pilgrimage to the place. The veteran islander performed his promise faithfully, and pointed out the very spot where the unfortunate discoverer fell. The rocks and cocoa-trees around bore record of the fact, in the marks of the balls fired from the boats upon the savages. The pilgrims gathered round the old man, and drew from him all the particulars he had to relate respecting this memorable event; while the honest captain stood by and bit his nails with impatience. To add to his vexation, they employed themselves in knocking off pieces of the rocks, and cutting off the bark of the trees marked by the balls, which they conveyed back to the ship as precious relics.

Right glad, therefore, was he to get them and their treasures fairly on board, when he made sail from this unprofitable place, and steered for the Bay of Tocaigh, the residence of the chief or governor of the island, where he hoped to be more successful in obtaining supplies. On coming to anchor the captain went on shore, accompanied by Mr. M'Dougal and Mr. M'Kay, and paid a visit to the governor. This dignitary proved to be an old sailor, by the name of John Young; who, after being tossed about the seas like another Sinbad, had, by one of the whimsical freaks of fortune, been elevated to the government of a savage island. He received his visitors with more hearty familiarity than personages in his high station are apt to indulge, but soon gave them to understand

that provisions were scanty at Tocaigh, and that there was no good water, no rain having fallen in the neighborhood in three years.

The captain was immediately for breaking up the conference and departing, but the partners were not so willing to part with the nautical governor, who seemed disposed to be extremely communicative, and from whom they might be able to procure some useful information. A long conversation accordingly ensued, in the course of which they made many inquiries about the affairs of the islands, their natural productions, and the possibility of turning them to advantage in the way of trade; nor did they fail to inquire into the individual history of John Young, and how he came to be governor. This he gave with great condescension, running through the whole course of his fortunes "even from his boyish days."

He was a native of Liverpool, in England, and had followed the sea from boyhood, until, by dint of good conduct, he had risen so far in his profession as to be boatswain of an American ship called the *Eleanor*, commanded by Captain Metcalf. In this vessel he had sailed in 1789, on one of those casual expeditions to the northwest coast, in quest of furs. In the course of the voyage, the captain left a small schooner, named the *Fair American*, at Nootka, with a crew of five men, commanded by his son, a youth of eighteen. She was to follow on in the track of the *Eleanor*.

In February, 1790, Captain Metcalf touched at the island of Mowee, one of the Sandwich group. While anchored here, a boat which was astern of the *Eleanor* was stolen, and a seaman who was in it was killed. The natives, generally, disclaimed the outrage, and brought the shattered remains of the boat and the dead body of the seaman to the ship. Supposing that they had thus appeased the anger of the captain, they thronged, as usual, in great numbers about the vessel, to trade. Captain Metcalf, however, determined on a bloody revenge. The *Eleanor* mounted ten guns. All these he ordered to be loaded with musket-balls, nails, and pieces of old iron, and then fired them, and the small arms of the ship, among the natives. The havoc was dreadful; more than a hundred, according to Young's account, were slain.

After this signal act of vengeance, Captain Metcalf sailed from Mowee, and made for the island of Owyhee, where he was well received by Tamaahmaah. The fortunes of this warlike chief were at that time on the rise. He had originally been of inferior rank, ruling over only one or two districts of Owyhee, but had gradually made himself sovereign of his native island.

The *Eleanor* remained some few days at anchor here, and an apparently friendly intercourse was kept up with the inhabitants. On the 17th March, John Young obtained permission to pass the night on shore. On the following morning a signal-gun summoned him to return on board.

He went to the shore to embark, but found all the canoes hauled up on the beach and rigorously tabooed, or interdicted. He would have launched one himself, but was informed by Tamaahmaah that if he presumed to do so he would be put to death.

Young was obliged to submit, and remained all day in great perplexity to account for this myste-

rious taboo, and fearful that some hostility was intended. In the evening he learned the cause of it, and his uneasiness was increased. It appeared that the vindictive act of Captain Metcalf had recoiled upon his own head. The schooner *Fair American*, commanded by his son, following in his track, had fallen into the hands of the natives to the southward of Tocaigh Bay, and young Metcalf and four of the crew had been massacred.

On receiving intelligence of this event, Tamaahmaah had immediately tabooed all the canoes, and interdicted all intercourse with the ship, lest the captain should learn the fate of the schooner, and take his revenge upon the island. For the same reason he prevented Young from rejoining his countrymen. The *Eleanor* continued to fire signals from time to time for two days, and then sailed; concluding, no doubt, that the boatswain had deserted.

John Young was in despair when he saw the ship make sail; and found himself abandoned among savages;—and savages, too, sanguinary in their character, and inflamed by acts of hostility. He was agreeably disappointed, however, in experiencing nothing but kind treatment from Tamaahmaah and his people. It is true, he was narrowly watched whenever a vessel came in sight, lest he should escape and relate what had passed; but at other times he was treated with entire confidence and great distinction. He became a prime favorite, cabinet counsellor, and active coadjutor of Tamaahmaah, attending him in all his excursions, whether of business or pleasure, and aiding in his warlike and ambitious enterprises. By degrees he rose to the rank of a chief, espoused one of the beauties of the island, and became habituated and reconciled to his new way of life; thinking it better, perhaps, to rule among savages than serve among white men; to be a feathered chief than a tarpaulin boatswain. His favor with Tamahmaah, never declined; and when that sagacious, intrepid, and aspiring chieftain had made himself sovereign over the whole group of islands, and removed his residence to Woahoo, he left his faithful adherent John Young in command of Owyhee.

Such is an outline of the history of Governor Young, as furnished by himself; and we regret that we are not able to give any account of the state maintained by this seafaring worthy, and the manner in which he discharged his high functions; though it is evident he had more of the hearty familiarity of the forecastle than the dignity of the gubernatorial office.

These long conferences were bitter trials to the patience of the captain, who had no respect either for the governor or his island, and was anxious to push on in quest of provisions and water. As soon as he could get his inquisitive partners once more on board, he weighed anchor, and made sail for the island of Woahoo, the royal residence of Tamaahmaah.

This is the most beautiful island of the Sandwich group. It is forty-six miles in length and twenty-three in breadth. A ridge of volcanic mountains extends through the centre, rising into lofty peaks, and skirted by undulating hills and rich plains, where the cabins of the natives peep out from beneath groves of cocoanut and other luxuriant trees.

On the 21st of February the *Tonquin* cast anchor in the beautiful bay before the village of Waititi, (pronounced Whyteetee.) the abode of Tamaahmaah. This village contained about two hundred

habitations, composed of poles set in the ground, tied together at the ends, and thatched with grass, and was situated in an open grove of cocoanuts. The royal palace of Tamaahmaah was a large house of two stories; the lower of stone, the upper of wood. Round this his body-guard kept watch, composed of twenty-four men in long blue cassocks, turned up with yellow, and each armed with a musket.

While at anchor at this place, much ceremonious visiting and long conferences took place between the potentate of the islands and the partners of the company. Tamaahmaah came on board of the ship in royal style, in his double pirogue. He was between fifty and sixty years of age, above the middle size, large and well made, though somewhat corpulent. He was dressed in an old suit of regimentals, with a sword by his side, and seemed somewhat embarrassed by his magnificent attire. Three of his wives accompanied him. They were almost as tall, and quite as corpulent as himself; but by no means to be compared with him in grandeur of habiliments, wearing no other garb than the pan. With him, also, came his great favorite and confidential counsellor, Kraimaker; who, from holding a post equivalent to that of prime minister, had been familiarly named Billy Pitt by the British visitors to the islands.

The sovereign was received with befitting ceremonial. The American flag was displayed, four guns were fired, and the partners appeared in scarlet coats, and conducted their illustrious guests to the cabin, where they were regaled with wine. In this interview the partners endeavored to impress the monarch with a sense of their importance, and of the importance of the association to which they belonged. They let him know that they were eris, or chiefs, of a great company about to be established on the northwest coast, and talked of the probability of opening a trade with his islands, and of sending ships there occasionally. All this was gratifying and interesting to him, for he was aware of the advantages of trade, and desirous of promoting frequent intercourse with white men. He encouraged Europeans and Americans to settle in his islands and intermarry with his subjects. There were between twenty and thirty white men at that time resident in the island, but many of them were mere vagabonds, who remained there in hopes of leading a lazy and an easy life. For such Tamaahmaah had a great contempt; those only had his esteem and countenance who knew some trade or mechanic art, and were sober and industrious.

On the day subsequent to the monarch's visit, the partners landed and waited upon him in return. Knowing the effect of show and dress upon men in savage life, and wishing to make a favorable impression as the eris, or chiefs, of the great American Fur Company, some of them appeared in Highland plaids and kilts to the great admiration of the natives.

While visits of ceremony and grand diplomatic conferences were going on between the partners and the king, the captain, in his plain, matter-of-fact way, was pushing what he considered a far more important negotiation; the purchase of a supply of hogs. He found that the king had profited in more ways than one by his intercourse with white men. Above all other arts he had learned the art of driving a bargain. He was a magnanimous monarch, but a shrewd pork merchant; and perhaps thought he could not do better with his future allies, the American Fur Company, than to begin by close dealing. Several interviews were requisite, and much bargaining, before he could be

brought to part with a bristle of his bacon, and then he insisted upon being paid in hard Spanish dollars; giving as a reason that he wanted money to purchase a frigate from his brother George, as he affectionately termed the king of England. \*

At length the royal bargain was concluded; the necessary supply of hogs obtained, besides several goats, two sheep, a quantity of poultry, and vegetables in abundance. The partners now urged to recruit their forces from the natives of this island. They declared they had never seen watermen equal to them, even among the voyageurs of the Northwest; and, indeed, they are remarkable for their skill in managing their light craft, and can swim and dive like waterfowl. The partners were inclined, therefore, to take thirty or forty with them to the Columbia, to be employed in the service of the company. The captain, however, objected that there was not room in his vessel for the accommodation of such a number. Twelve, only, were therefore enlisted for the company, and as many more for the service of the ship. The former engaged to serve for the term of three years, during , which they were to be fed and clothed; and at the expiration of the time were to receive one hundred dollars in merchandise.

And now, having embarked his live-stock, fruits, vegetables, and water, the captain made ready to set sail. How much the honest man had suffered in spirit by what he considered the freaks and vagaries of his passengers, and how little he had understood their humors and intentions, is amusingly shown in a letter written to Mr. Astor from Woahoo, which contains his comments on the scenes we have described.

“It would be difficult,” he writes, “to imagine the frantic gambols that are daily played off here; sometimes dressing in red coats, and otherwise very fantastically, and collecting a number of ignorant natives around them, telling them that they are the great eris of the Northwest, and making arrangements for sending three or four vessels yearly to them from the coast with spars, &c.; while those very natives cannot even furnish a hog to the ship. Then dressing in Highland plaids and kilts, and making similar arrangements, with presents of rum, wine, or anything that is at hand. Then taking a number of clerks and men on shore to the very spot on which Captain Cook was killed, and each fetching off a piece of the rock or tree that was touched by the shot. Then sitting down with some white man or some native who can be a little understood, and collecting the history of those islands, of Tamaahmaah's wars, the curiosities of the islands, &c., preparatory to the histories of their voyages; and the collection is indeed ridiculously contemptible. To enumerate the thousand instances of ignorance, filth, &c., - or to particularize all the frantic gambols that are daily practiced, would require Volumes.

Before embarking, the great eris of the American Fur Company took leave of their illustrious ally in due style, with many professions of lasting friendship and promises of future intercourse; while the matter-of-fact captain anathematized him in his heart for a grasping, trafficking savage; as shrewd and sordid in his dealings as a white man. As one of the vessels of the company will, in the course of events, have to appeal to the justice and magnanimity of this island potentate, we shall see how far the honest captain was right in his opinion.

\* It appears, from the accounts of subsequent voyagers, that Tamaahmaah afterwards succeeded in his wish of purchasing a large ship. In this he sent a cargo of sandal-wood to Canton, having discovered that the foreign merchants trading with him made large profits on this wood, shipped by them from the islands to the Chinese markets. The ship was manned by natives, but the officers were Englishmen. She accomplished her voyage, and returned in safety to the islands, with the Hawaiian flag floating gloriously in the breeze. The king hastened on board, expecting to find his sandal-wood converted into crapes and damasks, and other rich stuffs of China, but found, to his astonishment, by the legerdemain of traffic, his cargo had all disappeared, and, in place of it, remained a bill of charges amounting to three thousand dollars. It was some time before he could be made to comprehend certain of the most important items of the bill, such as pilotage, anchorage, and custom-house fees; but when he discovered that maritime states in other countries derived large revenues in this manner, to the great cost of the merchant, "Well," cried he, "then I will have harbor fees also." He established them accordingly. Pilotage a dollar a foot on the draft of each vessel. Anchorage from sixty to seventy dollars. In this way he greatly increased the royal revenue, and turned his China speculation to account.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER VII.

Departure From the Sandwich Islands.- Misunderstandings- Miseries of a Suspicious Man.- Arrival at the Columbia - Dangerous Service. - Gloomy Apprehensions- Bars and Breakers.- Perils of the Ship. Disasters of a Boat's Crew.-Burial of a Sandwich Islander.

IT was on the 28th of February that the Tonquin set sail from the Sandwich Islands. For two days the wind was contrary, and the vessel was detained in their neighborhood; at length a favorable breeze sprang up, and in a little while the rich groves, green hills, and snowy peaks of those happy islands one after another sank from sight, or melted into the blue distance, and the Tonquin ploughed her course towards the sterner regions of the Pacific.

The misunderstandings between the captain and his passengers still continued; or rather, increased in gravity. By his altercations and his moody humors, he had cut himself off from all community of thought, or freedom of conversation with them. He disdained to ask questions as to their proceedings, and could only guess at the meaning of their movements, and in so doing indulged in conjectures and suspicions, which produced the most whimsical self-torment.

Thus, in one of his disputes with them, relative to the goods on board, some of the packages of which they wished to open, to take out articles of clothing for the men or presents for the natives, he was so harsh and peremptory that they lost all patience, and hinted that they were the strongest party, and might reduce him to a very ridiculous dilemma, by taking from him the command.

A thought now flashed across the captain's mind that they really had a plan to depose him, and that, having picked up some information at Owyhee, possibly of war between the United States and England, they meant to alter the destination of the voyage; perhaps to seize upon ship and

cargo for their own use.

Once having conceived this suspicion, everything went to foster it. They had distributed fire-arms among some of their men, a common precaution among the fur traders when mingling with the natives. This, however, looked like preparation. Then several of the partners and clerks and some of the men, being Scotsmen, were acquainted with the Gaelic, and held long conversations together in that language. These conversations were considered by the captain of a "mysterious and unwarranted nature," and related, no doubt, to some foul conspiracy that was brewing among them. He frankly avows such suspicions, in his letter to Mr. Astor, but intimates that he stood ready to resist any treasonous outbreak; and seems to think that the evidence of preparation on his part had an effect in overawing the conspirators.

The fact is, as we have since been informed by one of the parties, it was a mischievous pleasure with some of the partners and clerks, who were young men, to play upon the suspicious temper and sullen humors of the captain. To this we may ascribe many of their whimsical pranks and absurd propositions, and, above all, their mysterious colloquies in Gaelic.

In this sore and irritable mood did the captain pursue his course, keeping a wary eye on every movement, and bristling up whenever the detested sound of the Gaelic language grated upon his ear. Nothing occurred, however, materially to disturb the residue of the voyage excepting a violent storm; and on the twenty-second of March, the Tonquin arrived at the mouth of the Oregon, or Columbia River.

The aspect of the river and the adjacent coast was wild and dangerous. The mouth of the Columbia is upwards of four miles wide with a peninsula and promontory on one side, and a long low spit of land on the other; between which a sand bar and chain of breakers almost block the entrance. The interior of the country rises into successive ranges of mountains, which, at the time of the arrival of the Tonquin, were covered with snow.

A fresh wind from the northwest sent a rough tumbling sea upon the coast, which broke upon the bar in furious surges, and extended a sheet of foam almost across the mouth of the river. Under these circumstances the captain did not think it prudent to approach within three leagues, until the bar should be sounded and the channel ascertained. Mr. Fox, the chief mate, was ordered to this service in the whaleboat, accompanied by John Martin, an old seaman, who had formerly visited the river, and by three Canadians. Fox requested to have regular sailors to man the boat, but the captain would not spare them from the service of the ship, and supposed the Canadians, being expert boatmen on lakes and rivers, were competent to the service, especially when directed and aided by Fox and Martin. Fox seems to have lost all firmness of spirit on the occasion, and to have regarded the service with a misgiving heart. He came to the partners for sympathy, knowing their differences with the captain, and the tears were in his eyes as he represented his case. "I am sent off," said he, "without seamen to man my boat, in boisterous weather, and on the most dangerous part of the northwest coast. My uncle was lost a few years ago on this same bar, and I am now going to lay my bones alongside of his." The partners sympathized in his apprehensions, and

remonstrated with the captain. The latter, however, was not to be moved. He had been displeased with Mr. Fox in the earlier part of the voyage, considering him indolent and inactive; and probably thought his present repugnance arose from a want of true nautical spirit. The interference of the partners in the business of the ship, also, was not calculated to have a favorable effect on a stickler for authority like himself, especially in his actual state of feeling towards them.

At one o'clock, P.m., therefore, Fox and his comrades set off in the whaleboat, which is represented as small in size, and crazy in condition. All eyes were strained after the little bark as it pulled for shore, rising and sinking with the huge rolling waves, until it entered, a mere speck, among the foaming breakers, and was soon lost to view. Evening set in, night succeeded and passed away, and morning returned, but without the return of the boat.

As the wind had moderated, the ship stood near to the land, so as to command a view of the river's mouth. Nothing was to be seen but a wild chaos of tumbling waves breaking upon the bar, and apparently forming a foaming barrier from shore to shore. Towards night the ship again stood out to gain sea-room, and a gloom was visible in every countenance. The captain himself shared in the general anxiety, and probably repented of his peremptory orders. Another weary and watchful night succeeded, during which the wind subsided, and the weather became serene.

On the following day, the ship having drifted near the land, anchored in fourteen fathoms water, to the northward of the long peninsula or promontory which forms the north side of the entrance, and is called Cape Disappointment. The pinnace was then manned, and two of the partners, Mr. David Stuart and Mr. M'Kay, set off in the hope of learning something of the fate of the whaleboat. The surf, however, broke with such violence along the shore that they could find no landing place. Several of the natives appeared on the beach and made signs to them to row round the cape, but they thought it most prudent to return to the ship.

The wind now springing up, the Tonquin got under way, and stood in to seek the channel; but was again deterred by the frightful aspect of the breakers, from venturing within a league. Here she hove to; and Mr. Mumford, the second mate, was despatched with four hands, in the pinnace, to sound across the channel until he should find four fathoms depth. The pinnace entered among the breakers, but was near being lost, and with difficulty got back to the ship. The captain insisted that Mr. Mumford had steered too much to the southward. He now turned to Mr. Aiken, an able mariner, destined to command the schooner intended for the coasting trade, and ordered him, together with John Coles, sail-maker, Stephen Weekes, armorer, and two Sandwich Islanders, to proceed ahead and take soundings, while the ship should follow under easy sail. In this way they proceeded until Aiken had ascertained the channel, when signal was given from the ship for him to return on board. He was then within pistol shot, but so furious was the current, and tumultuous the breakers, that the boat became unmanageable, and was hurried away, the crew crying out piteously for assistance. In a few moments she could not be seen from the ship's deck. Some of the passengers climbed to the mizzen top, and beheld her still struggling to reach the ship; but shortly after she broached broadside to the waves, and her case seemed desperate. The attention of those on board of the ship was now called to their own safety. They were in shallow water; the vessel

struck repeatedly, the waves broke over her, and there was danger of her foundering. At length she got into seven fathoms water, and the wind lulling, and the night coming on, cast anchor. With the darkness their anxieties increased. The wind whistled, the sea roared, the gloom was only broken by the ghastly glare of the foaming breakers, the minds of the seamen were full of dreary apprehensions, and some of them fancied they heard the cries of their lost comrades mingling with the uproar of the elements. For a time, too, the rapidly ebbing tide threatened to sweep them from their precarious anchorage. At length the reflux of the tide, and the springing up of the wind, enabled them to quit their dangerous situation and take shelter in a small bay within Cape Disappointment, where they rode in safety during the residue of a stormy night, and enjoyed a brief interval of refreshing sleep.

With the light of day returned their cares and anxieties. They looked out from the mast-head over a wild coast, and wilder sea, but could discover no trace of the two boats and their crews that were missing. Several of the natives came on board with peltries, but there was no disposition to trade. They were interrogated by signs after the lost boats, but could not understand the inquiries.

Parties now went on shore and scoured the neighborhood. One of these was headed by the captain. They had not proceeded far when they beheld a person at a distance in civilized garb. As he drew near he proved to be Weekes, the armorer. There was a burst of joy, for it was hoped his comrades were near at hand. His story, however, was one of disaster. He and his companions had found it impossible to govern their boat, having no rudder, and being beset by rapid and whirling currents and boisterous surges. After long struggling they had let her go at the mercy of the waves, tossing about, sometimes with her bow, sometimes with her broadside to the surges, threatened each instant with destruction, yet repeatedly escaping, until a huge sea broke over and swamped her. Weekes was overwhelmed by the broiling waves, but emerging above the surface, looked round for his companions. Aiken and Coles were not to be seen; near him were the two Sandwich Islanders, stripping themselves of their clothing that they might swim more freely. He did the same, and the boat floating near to him he seized hold of it. The two islanders joined him, and, uniting their forces, they succeeded in turning the boat upon her keel; then bearing down her stern and rocking her, they forced out so much water that she was able to bear the weight of a man without sinking. One of the islanders now got in, and in a little while bailed out the water with his hands. The other swam about and collected the oars, and they all three got once more on board.

By this time the tide had swept them beyond the breakers, and Weekes called on his companions to row for land. They were so chilled and benumbed by the cold, however, that they lost all heart, and absolutely refused. Weekes was equally chilled, but had superior sagacity and self-command. He counteracted the tendency to drowsiness and stupor which cold produces by keeping himself in constant exercise; and seeing that the vessel was advancing, and that everything depended upon himself, he set to work to scull the boat clear of the bar, and into quiet water.

Toward midnight one of the poor islanders expired; his companion threw himself on his corpse and could not be persuaded to leave him. The dismal night wore away amidst these horrors: as the

day dawned, Weekes found himself near the land. He steered directly for it, and at length, with the aid of the surf, ran his boat high upon a sandy beach.

Finding that one of the Sandwich Islanders yet gave signs of life, he aided him to leave the boat, and set out with him towards the adjacent woods. The poor fellow, however, was too feeble to follow him, and Weekes was soon obliged to abandon him to his fate and provide for his own safety. Falling upon a beaten path, he pursued it, and after a few hours came to a part of the coast, where, to his surprise and joy, he beheld the ship at anchor and was met by the captain and his party.

After Weekes had related his adventures, three parties were despatched to beat up the coast in search of the unfortunate islander. They returned at night without success, though they had used the utmost diligence. On the following day the search was resumed, and the poor fellow was at length discovered lying beneath a group of rocks, his legs swollen, his feet torn and bloody from walking through bushes and briars, and himself half-dead with cold, hunger, and fatigue. Weekes and this islander were the only survivors of the crew of the jolly-boat, and no trace was ever discovered of Fox and his party. Thus eight men were lost on the first approach to the coast; a commencement that cast a gloom over the spirits of the whole party, and was regarded by some of the superstitious as an omen that boded no good to the enterprise.

Towards night the Sandwich Islanders went on shore, to bury the body of their unfortunate countryman who had perished in the boat. On arriving at the place where it had been left, they dug a grave in the sand, in which they deposited the corpse, with a biscuit under one of the arms, some lard under the chin, and a small quantity of tobacco, as provisions for its journey in the land of spirits. Having covered the body with sand and flints, they kneeled along the grave in a double row, with their faces turned to the east, while one who officiated as a priest sprinkled them with water from a hat. In so doing he recited a kind of prayer or invocation, to which, at intervals, the others made responses. Such were the simple rites performed by these poor savages at the grave of their comrade on the shores of a strange land; and when these were done, they rose and returned in silence to the ship, without once casting a look behind.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER VIII.

Mouth of the Columbia.- The Native Tribes.- Their Fishing.- Their Canoes.- Bold Navigators- Equestrian Indians and Piscatory Indians, Difference in Their Physical Organization.- Search for a Trading Site. - Expedition of M'Dougal and David Stuart- Comcomly, the OneEyed Chieftain.- Influence of Wealth in Savage Life.- Slavery Among the Natives.-An Aristocracy of Flatheads.- Hospitality Among the Chinooks- Comcomly's Daughter.- Her Conquest.

THE Columbia, or Oregon, for the distance of thirty or forty miles from its entrance into the sea, is, properly speaking, a mere estuary, indented by deep bays so as to vary from three to seven miles in width; and is rendered extremely intricate and dangerous by shoals reaching nearly from shore to shore, on which, at times, the winds and currents produce foaming and tumultuous

breakers. The mouth of the river proper is but about half a mile wide, formed by the contracting shores of the estuary. The entrance from the sea, as we have already observed, is bounded on the south side by a flat sandy spit of land, stretching in to the ocean. This is commonly called Point Adams. The opposite, or northern side, is Cape Disappointment; a kind of peninsula, terminating in a steep knoll or promontory crowned with a forest of pine-trees, and connected with the mainland by a low and narrow neck. Immediately within this cape is a wide, open bay, terminating at Chinook Point, so called from a neighboring tribe of Indians. This was called Baker's Bay, and here the Tonquin was anchored.

The natives inhabiting the lower part of the river, and with whom the company was likely to have the most frequent intercourse, were divided at this time into four tribes, the Chinooks, Clatsops, Wahkiacums, and Cathlamahs. They resembled each other in person, dress, language, and manner; and were probably from the same stock, but broken into tribes, or rather hordes, by those feuds and schisms frequent among Indians.

These people generally live by fishing. It is true they occasionally hunt the elk and deer, and ensnare the water-fowl of their ponds and rivers, but these are casual luxuries. Their chief subsistence is derived from the salmon and other fish which abound in the Columbia and its tributary streams, aided by roots and herbs, especially the wappatoo, which is found on the islands of the river.

As the Indians of the plains who depend upon the chase are bold and expert riders, and pride themselves upon their horses, so these piscatory tribes of the coast excel in the management of canoes, and are never more at home than when riding upon the waves. Their canoes vary in form and size. Some are upwards of fifty feet long, cut out of a single tree, either fir or white cedar, and capable of carrying thirty persons. They have thwart pieces from side to side about three inches thick, and their gunwales flare outwards, so as to cast off the surges of the waves. The bow and stern are decorated with grotesque figures of men and animals, sometimes five feet in height.

In managing their canoes they kneel two and two along the bottom, sitting on their heels, and wielding paddles from four to five feet long, while one sits on the stern and steers with a paddle of the same kind. The women are equally expert with the men in managing the canoe, and generally take the helm.

It is surprising to see with what fearless unconcern these savages venture in their light barks upon the roughest and most tempestuous seas. They seem to ride upon the waves like sea-fowl. Should a surge throw the canoe upon its side and endanger its overturn, those to windward lean over the upper gunwale, thrust their paddles deep into the wave, apparently catch the water and force it under the canoe, and by this action not merely regain an equilibrium, but give their bark a vigorous impulse forward.

The effect of different modes of life upon the human frame and human character is strikingly instanced in the contrast between the hunting Indians of the prairies, and the piscatory Indians

of the sea-coast. The former, continually on horseback scouring the plains, gaining their food by hardy exercise, and subsisting chiefly on flesh, are generally tall, sinewy, meagre, but well formed, and of bold and fierce deportment: the latter, lounging about the river banks, or squatting and curved up in their canoes, are generally low in stature, ill-shaped, with crooked legs, thick ankles, and broad flat feet. They are inferior also in muscular power and activity, and in game qualities and appearance, to their hard-riding brethren of the prairies.

Having premised these few particulars concerning the neighboring Indians, we will return to the immediate concerns of the Tonquin and her crew.

Further search was made for Mr. Fox and his party, but with no better success, and they were at length given up as lost. In the meantime, the captain and some of the partners explored the river for some distance in a large boat, to select a suitable place for the trading post. Their old jealousies and differences continued; they never could coincide in their choice, and the captain objected altogether to any site so high up the river. They all returned, therefore, to Baker's Bay in no very good humor. The partners proposed to examine the opposite shore, but the captain was impatient of any further delay. His eagerness to "get on" had increased upon him. He thought all these excursions a sheer loss of time, and was resolved to land at once, build a shelter for the reception of that part of his cargo destined for the use of the settlement, and, having cleared his ship of it and of his irksome shipmates, to depart upon the prosecution of his coasting voyage, according to orders.

On the following day, therefore, without troubling himself to consult the partners, he landed in Baker's Bay, and proceeded to erect a shed for the reception of the rigging, equipments, and stores of the schooner that was to be built for the use of the settlement.

This dogged determination on the part of the sturdy captain gave high offense to Mr. M'Dougal, who now considered himself at the head of the concern, as Mr. Astor's representative and proxy. He set off the same day, (April 5th) accompanied by David Stuart, for the southern shore, intending to be back by the seventh. Not having the captain to contend with, they soon pitched upon a spot which appeared to them favorable for the intended establishment. It was on a point of land called Point George, having a very good harbor, where vessels, not exceeding two hundred tons burden, might anchor within fifty yards of the shore.

After a day thus profitably spent, they recrossed the river, but landed on the northern shore several miles above the anchoring ground of the Tonquin, in the neighborhood of Chinooks, and visited the village of that tribe. Here they were received with great hospitality by the chief, who was named Comcomly, a shrewd old savage, with but one eye, who will occasionally figure in this narrative. Each village forms a petty sovereignty, governed by its own chief, who, however, possesses but little authority, unless he be a man of wealth and substance; that is to say, possessed of canoe, slaves, and wives. The greater the number of these, the greater is the chief. How many wives this one-eyed potentate maintained we are not told, but he certainly possessed great sway, not merely over his own tribe, but over the neighborhood.

Having mentioned slaves, we would observe that slavery exists among several of the tribes beyond the Rocky Mountains. The slaves are well treated while in good health, but occupied in all kinds of drudgery. Should they become useless, however, by sickness or old age, they are totally neglected, and left to perish; nor is any respect paid to their bodies after death.

A singular custom prevails, not merely among the Chinooks, but among most of the tribes about this part of the coast, which is the flattening of the forehead. The process by which this deformity is effected commences immediately after birth. The infant is laid in a wooden trough, by way of cradle. The end on which the head reposes is higher than the rest. A padding is placed on the forehead of the infant, with a piece of bark above it, and is pressed down by cords, which pass through holes on each side of the trough. As the tightening of the padding and the pressing of the head to the board is gradual, the process is said not to be attended with much pain. The appearance of the infant, however, while in this state of compression, is whimsically hideous, and "its little black eyes," we are told, "being forced out by the tightness of the bandages, resemble those of a mouse choked in a trap."

About a year's pressure is sufficient to produce the desired effect, at the end of which time the child emerges from its bandages a complete flathead, and continues so through life. It must be noted that this flattening of the head has something in it of aristocratical significancy, like the crippling of the feet among the Chinese ladies of quality. At any rate, it is a sign of freedom. No slave is permitted to bestow this enviable deformity upon his child; all the slaves, therefore, are roundheads.

With this worthy tribe of Chinooks the two partners passed a part of the day very agreeably. M'Dougal, who was somewhat vain of his official rank, had given it to be understood that they were two chiefs of a great trading company, about to be established here, and the quick-sighted, though one-eyed chief, who was somewhat practiced in traffic with white men, immediately perceived the policy of cultivating the friendship of two such important visitors. He regaled them, therefore, to the best of his ability, with abundance of salmon and wappatoo. The next morning, April 7th, they prepared to return to the vessel, according to promise. They had eleven miles of open bay to traverse; the wind was fresh, the waves ran high. Comcomly remonstrated with them on the hazard to which they would be exposed. They were resolute, however, and launched their boat, while the wary chieftain followed at some short distance in his canoe. Scarce had they rowed a mile, when a wave broke over their boat and upset it. They were in imminent peril of drowning, especially Mr. M'Dougal, who could not swim. Comcomly, however, came bounding over the waves in his light canoe, and snatched them from a watery grave.

They were taken on shore and a fire made, at which they dried their clothes, after which Comcomly conducted them back to his village. Here everything was done that could be devised for their entertainment during three days that they were detained by bad weather. Comcomly made his people perform antics before them; and his wives and daughters endeavored, by all the soothing and endearing arts of women, to find favor in their eyes. Some even painted their bodies

with red clay, and anointed themselves with fish oil, to give additional lustre to their charms. Mr. M'Dougal seems to have had a heart susceptible to the influence of the gentler sex. Whether or no it was first touched on this occasion we do not learn; but it will be found, in the course of this work, that one of the daughters of the hospitable Comcomly eventually made a conquest of the great eri of the American Fur Company.

When the weather had moderated and the sea became tranquil, the one-eyed chief of the Chinnooks manned his state canoe, and conducted his guests in safety to the ship, where they were welcomed with joy, for apprehensions had been felt for their safety. Comcomly and his people were then entertained on board of the Tonquin, and liberally rewarded for their hospitality and services. They returned home highly satisfied, promising to remain faithful friends and allies of the white men.

Washington Irving's Astoria

#### CHAPTER IX.

Point George- Founding of Astoria- Indian Visitors.- Their Reception.- The Captain Taboos the Ship.- Departure of the Tonquin. - Comments on the Conduct of Captain Thorn.

FROM the report made by the two exploring partners, it was determined that Point George should be the site of the trading house. These gentlemen, it is true, were not perfectly satisfied with the place, and were desirous of continuing their search; but Captain Thorn was impatient to land his cargo and continue his voyage, and protested against any more of what he termed "sporting excursions."

Accordingly, on the 12th of April the launch was freighted with all things necessary for the purpose, and sixteen persons departed in her to commence the establishment, leaving the Tonquin to follow as soon as the harbor could be sounded.

Crossing the wide mouth of the river, the party landed, and encamped at the bottom of a small bay within Point George. The situation chosen for the fortified post was on an elevation facing to the north, with the wide estuary, its sand bars and tumultuous breakers spread out before it, and the promontory of Cape Disappointment, fifteen miles distant, closing the prospect to the left. The surrounding country was in all the freshness of spring; the trees were in the young leaf, the weather was superb, and everything looked delightful to men just emancipated from a long confinement on shipboard. The Tonquin shortly afterwards made her way through the intricate channel, and came to anchor in the little bay, and was saluted from the encampment with three volleys of musketry and three cheers. She returned the salute with three cheers and three guns.

All hands now set to work cutting down trees, clearing away thickets, and marking out the place for the residence, storehouse, and powder magazine, which were to be built of logs and covered with bark. Others landed the timbers intended for the frame of the coasting vessel, and proceeded to put them together, while others prepared a garden spot, and sowed the seeds of various vegetables.

The next thought was to give a name to the embryo metropolis: the one that naturally presented itself was that of the projector and supporter of the whole enterprise. It was accordingly named ASTORIA.

The neighboring Indians now swarmed about the place. Some brought a few land-otter and sea-otter skins to barter, but in very scanty parcels; the greater number came prying about to gratify their curiosity, for they are said to be impertinently inquisitive; while not a few came with no other design than to pilfer; the laws of meum and tuum being but slightly respected among them. Some of them beset the ship in their canoes, among whom was the Chinook chief Comcomly, and his liege subjects. These were well received by Mr. M'Dougal, who was delighted with an opportunity of entering upon his functions, and acquiring importance in the eyes of his future neighbors. The confusion thus produced on board, and the derangement of the cargo caused by this petty trade, stirred the spleen of the captain, who had a sovereign contempt for the one-eyed chieftain and all his crew. He complained loudly of having his ship lumbered by a host of "Indian ragamuffins," who had not a skin to dispose of, and at length put his positive interdict upon all trafficking on board. Upon this Mr. M'Dougal was fain to land, and establish his quarters at the encampment, where he could exercise his rights and enjoy his dignities without control.

The feud, however, between these rival powers still continued, but was chiefly carried on by letter. Day after day and week after week elapsed, yet the store-house requisite for the reception of the cargo was not completed, and the ship was detained in port; while the captain was teased by frequent requisitions for various articles for the use of the establishment, or the trade with the natives. An angry correspondence took place, in which he complained bitterly of the time wasted in "smoking and sporting parties," as he termed the reconnoitering expeditions, and in clearing and preparing meadow ground and turnip patches, instead of despatching his ship. At length all these jarring matters were adjusted, if not to the satisfaction, at least to the acquiescence of all parties. The part of the cargo destined for the use of Astoria was landed, and the ship left free to proceed on her voyage.

As the Tonquin was to coast to the north, to trade for peltries at the different harbors, and to touch at Astoria on her return in the autumn, it was unanimously determined that Mr. M'Kay should go in her as supercargo, taking with him Mr. Lewis as ship's clerk. On the first of June the ship got under way, and dropped down to Baker's Bay, where she was detained for a few days by a head wind; but early in the morning of the fifth stood out to sea with a fine breeze and swelling canvas, and swept off gaily on her fatal voyage, from which she was never to return!

On reviewing the conduct of Captain Thorn, and examining his peevish and somewhat whimsical correspondence, the impression left upon our mind is, upon the whole, decidedly in his favor. While we smile at the simplicity of his heart and the narrowness of his views, which made him regard everything out of the direct path of his daily duty, and the rigid exigencies of the service, as trivial and impertinent, which inspired him with contempt for the swelling vanity of some of his coadjutors, and the literary exercises and curious researches of others, we cannot but applaud that

strict and conscientious devotion to the interests of his employer, and to what he considered the true objects of the enterprise in which he was engaged. He certainly was to blame occasionally for the asperity of his manners, and the arbitrary nature of his measures, yet much that is exceptionable in this part of his conduct may be traced to rigid notions of duty acquired in that tyrannical school, a ship of war, and to the construction given by his companions to the orders of Mr. Astor, so little in conformity with his own. His mind, too, appears to have become almost diseased by the suspicions he had formed as to the loyalty of his associates, and the nature of their ultimate designs; yet on this point there were circumstances to, in some measure, justify him. The relations between the United States and Great Britain were at that time in a critical state; in fact, the two countries were on the eve of a war. Several of the partners were British subjects, and might be ready to desert the flag under which they acted, should a war take place. Their application to the British minister at New York shows the dubious feeling with which they had embarked in the present enterprise. They had been in the employ of the Northwest Company, and might be disposed to rally again under that association, should events threaten the prosperity of this embryo establishment of Mr. Astor. Besides, we have the fact, averred to us by one of the partners, that some of them, who were young and heedless, took a mischievous and unwarrantable pleasure in playing upon the jealous temper of the captain, and affecting mysterious consultations and sinister movements.

These circumstances are cited in palliation of the doubts and surmises of Captain Thorn, which might otherwise appear strange and unreasonable. That most of the partners were perfectly upright and faithful in the discharge of the trust reposed in them we are fully satisfied; still the honest captain was not invariably wrong in his suspicions; and that he formed a pretty just opinion of the integrity of that aspiring personage, Mr. M'Dougal, will be substantially proved in the sequel.

Washington Irving's Astoria

#### CHAPTER X.

Disquieting Rumors From the Interior.- Reconnoitring Party- Preparations for a Trading Post.- An Unexpected Arrival - A Spy in the Camp.- Expedition Into the Interior- Shores of the Columbia - Mount Coffin.- Indian Sepulchre.- The Land of Spirits- Columbian Valley- Vancouver's Point.- Falls and Rapids.- A Great Fishing Mart.- The Village of Wishram. - Difference Between Fishing Indians and Hunting Indians- Effects of Habits of Trade on the Indian Character.- Post Established at the Oakinagan.

WHILE the Astorians were busily occupied in completing their factory and fort, a report was brought to them by an Indian from the upper part of the river, that a party of thirty white men had appeared on the banks of the Columbia, and were actually building houses at the second rapids. This information caused much disquiet. We have already mentioned that the Northwest Company had established posts to the west of the Rocky Mountains, in a district called by them New Caledonia, which extended from lat. 52 to 55 deg north, being within the British territories. It was now apprehended that they were advancing within the American limits, and were endeavoring to seize upon the upper part of the river and forestall the American Fur Company in the surrounding trade; in which case bloody feuds might be anticipated, such as had prevailed be-

tween the rival fur companies in former days.

A reconnoitring party was sent up the river to ascertain the truth of the report. They ascended to the foot of the first rapid, about two hundred miles, but could hear nothing of any white men being in the neighborhood.

Not long after their return, however, further accounts were received, by two wandering Indians, which established the fact that the Northwest Company had actually erected a trading house on the Spokane River, which falls into the north branch of the Columbia.

What rendered this intelligence the more disquieting was the inability of the Astorians, in their present reduced state as to numbers, and the exigencies of their new establishment, to furnish detachments to penetrate the country in different directions, and fix the posts necessary to secure the interior trade.

It was resolved, however, at any rate, to advance a countercheck to this post on the Spokan, and one of the partners, Mr. David Stuart, prepared to set out for the purpose with eight men and a small assortment of goods. He was to be guided by the two Indians, who knew the country and promised to take him to a place not far from the Spokan River, and in a neighborhood abounding with beaver. Here he was to establish himself and to remain for a time, provided he found the situation advantageous and the natives friendly.

On the 15th of July, when Mr. Stuart was nearly ready to embark, a canoe made its appearance, standing for the harbor, and manned by nine white men. Much speculation took place who these strangers could be, for it was too soon to expect their own people, under Mr. Hunt, who were to cross the continent. As the canoe drew near, the British standard was distinguished: on coming to land, one of the crew stepped on shore, and announced himself as Mr. David Thompson, astronomer, and partner of the Northwest Company. According to his account, he had set out in the preceding year with a tolerably strong party, and a supply of Indian goods, to cross the Rocky Mountains. A part of his people, however, had deserted him on the eastern side, and returned with the goods to the nearest Northwest post. He had persisted in crossing the mountains with eight men, who remained true to him. They had traversed the higher regions, and ventured near the source of the Columbia, where, in the spring, they had constructed a cedar canoe, the same in which they had reached Astoria.

This, in fact, was the party despatched by the Northwest Company to anticipate Mr. Astor in his intention of effecting a settlement at the mouth of the Columbia River. It appears, from information subsequently derived from other sources, that Mr. Thompson had pushed on his course with great haste, calling at all the Indian villages in his march, presenting them with British flags, and even planting them at the forks of the rivers, proclaiming formally that he took possession of the country in the name of the king of Great Britain for the Northwest Company. As his original plan was defeated by the desertion of his people, it is probable that he descended the river simply to reconnoitre, and ascertain whether an American settlement had been commenced.

Mr. Thompson was, no doubt, the first white man who descended the northern branch of the Columbia from so near its source. Lewis and Clarke struck the main body of the river at the forks, about four hundred miles from its mouth. They entered it from Lewis River, its southern branch, and thence descended.

Though Mr. Thompson could be considered as little better than a spy in the camp, he was received with great cordiality by Mr. M'Dougal, who had a lurking feeling of companionship and goodwill for all of the Northwest Company. He invited him to head-quarters, where he and his people were hospitably entertained. Nay, further, being somewhat in extremity, he was furnished by Mr. M'Dougal with goods and provisions for his journey back across the mountains, much against the wishes of Mr. David Stuart, who did not think the object of his visit entitled him to any favor.

On the 23rd of July, Mr. Stuart set out upon his expedition to the interior. His party consisted of four of the clerks, Messrs. Pillet, Ross, M'Lennon, and Montigny, two Canadian voyageurs, and two natives of the Sandwich Islands. They had three canoes well laden with provisions, and with goods and necessities for a trading establishment.

Mr. Thompson and his party set out in company with them, it being his intention to proceed direct to Montreal. The partners at Astoria forwarded by him a short letter to Mr. Astor, informing him of their safe arrival at the mouth of the Columbia, and that they had not yet heard of Mr. Hunt. The little squadron of canoes set sail with a favorable breeze, and soon passed Tongue Point, a long, high, and rocky promontory, covered with trees, and stretching far into the river. Opposite to this, on the northern shore, is a deep bay, where the Columbia anchored at the time of the discovery, and which is still called Gray's Bay, from the name of her commander.

From hence, the general course of the river for about seventy miles was nearly southeast; varying in breadth according to its bays and indentations, and navigable for vessels of three hundred tons. The shores were in some places high and rocky, with low marshy islands at their feet, subject to inundation, and covered with willows, poplars, and other trees that love an alluvial soil. Sometimes the mountains receded, and gave place to beautiful plains and noble forests. While the river margin was richly fringed with trees of deciduous foliage, the rough uplands were crowned by majestic pines, and firs of gigantic size, some towering to the height of between two and three hundred feet, with proportionate circumference. Out of these the Indians wrought their great canoes and pirogues.

At one part of the river, they passed, on the northern side, an isolated rock, about one hundred and fifty feet high, rising from a low marshy soil, and totally disconnected with the adjacent mountains. This was held in great reverence by the neighboring Indians, being one of their principal places of sepulture. The same provident care for the deceased that prevails among the hunting tribes of the prairies is observable among the piscatory tribes of the rivers and sea-coast. Among the former, the favorite horse of the hunter is buried with him in the same funereal mound, and his bow and arrows are laid by his side, that he may be perfectly equipped for the "happy hunting

grounds" of the land of spirits. Among the latter, the Indian is wrapped in his mantle of skins, laid in his canoe, with his paddle, his fishing spear, and other implements beside him, and placed aloft on some rock or other eminence overlooking the river, or bay, or lake, that he has frequented. He is thus fitted out to launch away upon those placid streams and sunny lakes stocked with all kinds of fish and waterfowl, which are prepared in the next world for those who have acquitted themselves as good sons, good fathers, good husbands, and, above all, good fishermen, during their mortal sojourn.

The isolated rock in question presented a spectacle of the kind, numerous dead bodies being deposited in canoes on its summit; while on poles around were trophies, or, rather, funeral offerings of trinkets, garments, baskets of roots, and other articles for the use of the deceased. A reverential feeling protects these sacred spots from robbery or insult. The friends of the deceased, especially the women, repair here at sunrise and sunset for some time after his death, singing his funeral dirge, and uttering loud wailings and lamentations.

From the number of dead bodies in canoes observed upon this rock by the first explorers of the river, it received the name of Mount Coffin, which it continues to bear.

Beyond this rock they passed the mouth of a river on the right bank of the Columbia, which appeared to take its rise in a distant mountain covered with snow. The Indian name of this river was the Cowleskee. Some miles further on they came to the great Columbian Valley, so called by Lewis and Clarke. It is sixty miles in width, and extends far to the southeast between parallel ridges of mountains, which bound it on the east and west. Through the centre of this valley flowed a large and beautiful stream, called the Wallamot, which came wandering for several miles, through a yet unexplored wilderness. The sheltered situation of this immense valley had an obvious effect upon the climate. It was a region of great beauty and luxuriance, with lakes and pools, and green meadows shaded by noble groves. Various tribes were said to reside in this valley, and along the banks of the Wallamot.

About eight miles above the mouth of the Wallamot the little squadron arrived at Vancouver's Point, so called in honor of that celebrated voyager by his lieutenant (Broughton) when he explored the river. This point is said to present one of the most beautiful scenes on the Columbia; a lovely meadow, with a silver sheet of limpid water in the center, enlivened by wild-fowl, a range of hills crowned by forests, while the prospect is closed by Mount Hood, a magnificent mountain rising into a lofty peak, and covered with snow; the ultimate landmark of the first explorers of the river.

Point Vancouver is about one hundred miles from Astoria. Here the reflux of the tide ceases to be perceptible. To this place vessels of two and three hundred tons burden may ascend. The party under the command of Mr. Stuart had been three or four days in reaching it, though we have forborne to notice their daily progress and nightly encampments.

From Point Vancouver the river turned towards the northeast, and became more contracted and

---

rapid, with occasional islands and frequent sand-banks. These islands are furnished with a number of ponds, and at certain seasons abound with swans, geese, brandts, cranes, gulls, plover, and other wild-fowl. The shores, too, are low and closely wooded, with such an undergrowth of vines and rushes as to be almost impassable.

About thirty miles above Point Vancouver the mountains again approach on both sides of the river, which is bordered by stupendous precipices, covered with the fir and the white cedar, and enlivened occasionally by beautiful cascades leaping from a great height, and sending up wreaths of vapor. One of these precipices, or cliffs, is curiously worn by time and weather so as to have the appearance of a ruined fortress, with towers and battlements, beetling high above the river, while two small cascades, one hundred and fifty feet in height, pitch down from the fissures of the rocks.

The turbulence and rapidity of the current continually augmenting as they advanced, gave the voyagers intimation that they were approaching the great obstructions of the river, and at length they arrived at Strawberry Island, so called by Lewis and Clarke, which lies at the foot of the first rapid. As this part of the Columbia will be repeatedly mentioned in the course of this work, being the scene of some of its incidents, we shall give a general description of it in this place.

The falls or rapids of the Columbia are situated about one hundred and eighty miles above the mouth of the river. The first is a perpendicular cascade of twenty feet, after which there is a swift descent for a mile, between islands of hard black rock, to another pitch of eight feet divided by two rocks. About two and a half miles below this the river expands into a wide basin, seemingly dammed up by a perpendicular ridge of black rock. A current, however, sets diagonally to the left of this rocky barrier, where there is a chasm forty-five yards in width. Through this the whole body of the river roars along, swelling and whirling and boiling for some distance in the wildest confusion. Through this tremendous channel the intrepid explorers of the river, Lewis and Clarke, passed in their boats; the danger being, not from the rocks, but from the great surges and whirlpools.

At the distance of a mile and a half from the foot of this narrow channel is a rapid, formed by two rocky islands; and two miles beyond is a second great fall, over a ledge of rocks twenty feet high, extending nearly from shore to shore. The river is again compressed into a channel from fifty to a hundred feet wide, worn through a rough bed of hard black rock, along which it boils and roars with great fury for the distance of three miles. This is called "The Long Narrows."

Here is the great fishing place of the Columbia. In the spring of the year, when the water is high, the salmon ascend the river in incredible numbers. As they pass through this narrow strait, the Indians, standing on the rocks, or on the end of wooden stages projecting from the banks, scoop them up with small nets distended on hoops and attached to long handles, and cast them on the shore.

They are then cured and packed in a peculiar manner. After having been opened and disembow-

eled, they are exposed to the sun on scaffolds erected on the river banks. When sufficiently dry, they are pounded fine between two stones, pressed into the smallest compass, and packed in baskets or bales of grass matting, about two feet long and one in diameter, lined with the cured skin of a salmon. The top is likewise covered with fish skins, secured by cords passing through holes in the edge of the basket. Packages are then made, each containing twelve of these bales, seven at bottom, five at top, pressed close to each other, with the corded side upward, wrapped in mats and corded. These are placed in dry situations, and again covered with matting. Each of these packages contains from ninety to a hundred pounds of dried fish, which in this state will keep sound for several years.\*\* (Lewis and Clarke, vol. ii. p. 32.)

We have given this process at some length, as furnished by the first explorers, because it marks a practiced ingenuity in preparing articles of traffic for a market, seldom seen among our aboriginals. For like reason we would make especial mention of the village of Wishram, at the head of the Long Narrows, as being a solitary instance of an aboriginal trading mart, or emporium. Here the salmon caught in the neighboring rapids were "warehoused," to await customers. Hither the tribes from the mouth of the Columbia repaired with the fish of the sea-coast, the roots, berries, and especially the wappatoo, gathered in the lower parts of the river, together with goods and trinkets obtained from the ships which casually visit the coast. Hither also the tribes from the Rocky Mountains brought down horses, bear-grass, quamash, and other commodities of the interior. The merchant fishermen at the falls acted as middlemen or factors, and passed the objects of traffic, as it were, cross-handed; trading away part of the wares received from the mountain tribes to those of the rivers and plains, and vice versa: their packages of pounded salmon entered largely into the system of barter, and being carried off in opposite directions, found their way to the savage hunting camps far in the interior, and to the casual white traders who touched upon the coast.

We have already noticed certain contrarieties of character between the Indian tribes, produced by their diet and mode of life; and nowhere are they more apparent than about the falls of the Columbia. The Indians of this great fishing mart are represented by the earliest explorers as sleeker and fatter, but less hardy and active, than the tribes of the mountains and prairies, who live by hunting, or of the upper parts of the river, where fish is scanty, and the inhabitants must eke out their subsistence by digging roots or chasing the deer. Indeed, whenever an Indian of the upper country is too lazy to hunt, yet is fond of good living, he repairs to the falls, to live in abundance without labor.

"By such worthless dogs as these," says an honest trader in his journal, which now lies before us, "by such worthless dogs as these are these noted fishing-places peopled, which, like our great cities, may with propriety be called the headquarters of vitiated principles."

The habits of trade and the avidity of gain have their corrupting effects even in the wilderness, as may be instanced in the members of this aboriginal emporium; for the same journalist denounces them as "saucy, impudent rascals, who will steal when they can, and pillage whenever a weak party falls in their power."

That he does not belie them will be evidenced hereafter, when we have occasion again to touch at Wishram and navigate the rapids. In the present instance the travellers effected the laborious ascent of this part of the river, with all its various portages, without molestation, and once more launched away in smooth water above the high falls.

The two parties continued together, without material impediment, for three or four hundred miles further up the Columbia; Mr. Thompson appearing to take great interest in the success of Mr. Stuart, and pointing out places favorable, as he said, to the establishment of his contemplated trading post.

Mr. Stuart, who distrusted his sincerity, at length pretended to adopt his advice, and, taking leave of him, remained as if to establish himself, while the other proceeded on his course towards the mountains. No sooner, however, had he fairly departed than Mr. Stuart again pushed forward, under guidance of the two Indians, nor did he stop until he had arrived within about one hundred and forty miles of the Spokan River, which he considered near enough to keep the rival establishment in check. The place which he pitched upon for his trading post was a point of land about three miles in length and two in breadth, formed by the junction of the Oakinagan with the Columbia. The former is a river which has its source in a considerable lake about one hundred and fifty miles west of the point of junction. The two rivers, about the place of their confluence, are bordered by immense prairies covered with herbage, but destitute of trees. The point itself was ornamented with wild flowers of every hue, in which innumerable humming-birds were "banqueting nearly the livelong day."

The situation of this point appeared to be well adapted for a trading post. The climate was salubrious, the soil fertile, the rivers well stocked with fish, the natives peaceable and friendly. There were easy communications with the interior by the upper waters of the Columbia and the lateral stream of the Oakinagan, while the downward current of the Columbia furnished a highway to Astoria.

Availing himself, therefore, of the driftwood which had collected in quantities in the neighboring bends of the river, Mr. Stuart and his men set to work to erect a house, which in a little while was sufficiently completed for their residence; and thus was established the first interior post of the company. We will now return to notice the progress of affairs at the mouth of the Columbia.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER XI.

Alarm at Astoria.- Rumor of Indian Hostilities.- Preparations for Defense.- Tragic Fate of the Tonquin.

THE sailing of the Tonquin, and the departure of Mr. David Stuart and his detachment, had produced a striking effect on affairs at Astoria. The natives who had swarmed about the place began immediately to drop off, until at length not an Indian was to be seen. This, at first, was attributed to the want of peltries with which to trade; but in a little while the mystery was explained in

---

a more alarming manner. A conspiracy was said to be on foot among the neighboring tribes to make a combined attack upon the white men, now that they were so reduced in number. For this purpose there had been a gathering of warriors in a neighboring bay, under pretext of fishing for sturgeon; and fleets of canoes were expected to join them from the north and South. Even Comcomly, the one-eyed chief, notwithstanding his professed friendship for Mr. M'Dougal, was strongly suspected of being concerned in this general combination.

Alarmed at rumors of this impending danger, the Astorians suspended their regular labor, and set to work, with all haste, to throw up temporary works for refuge and defense. In the course of a few days they surrounded their dwelling-house and magazines with a picket fence ninety feet square, flanked by two bastions, on which were mounted four four-pounders. Every day they exercised themselves in the use of their weapons, so as to qualify themselves for military duty, and at night ensconced themselves in their fortress and posted sentinels, to guard against surprise. In this way they hoped, even in case of attack, to be able to hold out until the arrival of the party to be conducted by Mr. Hunt across the Rocky Mountains, or until the return of the Tonquin. The latter dependence, however, was doomed soon to be destroyed. Early in August, a wandering band of savages from the Strait of Juan de Fuca made their appearance at the mouth of the Columbia, where they came to fish for sturgeon. They brought disastrous accounts of the Tonquin, which were at first treated as fables, but which were too sadly confirmed by a different tribe that arrived a few days subsequently. We shall relate the circumstances of this melancholy affair as correctly as the casual discrepancies in the statements that have reached us will permit.

We have already stated that the Tonquin set sail from the mouth of the river on the fifth of June. The whole number of persons on board amounted to twenty-three. In one of the outer bays they picked up, from a fishing canoe, an Indian named Lamazee, who had already made two voyages along the coast and knew something of the language of the various tribes. He agreed to accompany them as interpreter.

Steering to the north, Captain Thorn arrived in a few days at Vancouver's Island, and anchored in the harbor of Neweetee, very much against the advice of his Indian interpreter, who warned him against the perfidious character of the natives of this part of the coast. Numbers of canoes soon came off, bringing sea-otter skins to sell. It was too late in the day to commence a traffic, but Mr. M'Kay, accompanied by a few of the men, went on shore to a large village to visit Wicananish, the chief of the surrounding territory, six of the natives remaining on board as hostages. He was received with great professions of friendship, entertained hospitably, and a couch of sea-otter skins prepared for him in the dwelling of the chieftain, where he was prevailed upon to pass the night.

In the morning, before Mr. M'Kay had returned to the ship, great numbers of the natives came off in their canoes to trade, headed by two sons of Wicananish. As they brought abundance of sea-otter skins, and there was every appearance of a brisk trade, Captain Thorn did not wait for the return of Mr. M'Kay, but spread his wares upon the deck, making a tempting display of blankets, cloths, knives, beads, and fish-hooks, expecting a prompt and profitable sale. The Indians, however, were not so eager and simple as he had supposed, having learned the art of bargaining and the

value of merchandise from the casual traders along the coast. They were guided, too, by a shrewd old chief named Nookamis, who had grown gray in traffic with New England skippers, and prided himself upon his acuteness. His opinion seemed to regulate the market. When Captain Thorn made what he considered a liberal offer for an otter-skin, the wily old Indian treated it with scorn, and asked more than double. His comrades all took their cue from him, and not an otter-skin was to be had at a reasonable rate.

The old fellow, however, overshot his mark, and mistook the character of the man he was treating with. Thorn was a plain, straightforward sailor, who never had two minds nor two prices in his dealings, was deficient in patience and pliancy, and totally wanting in the chicanery of traffic. He had a vast deal of stern but honest pride in his nature, and, moreover, held the whole savage race in sovereign contempt. Abandoning all further attempts, therefore, to bargain with his shuffling customers, he thrust his hands into his pockets, and paced up and down the deck in sullen silence. The cunning old Indian followed him to and fro, holding out a sea-otter skin to him at every turn, and pestering him to trade. Finding other means unavailing, he suddenly changed his tone, and began to jeer and banter him upon the mean prices he offered. This was too much for the patience of the captain, who was never remarkable for relishing a joke, especially when at his own expense. Turning suddenly upon his persecutor, he snatched the proffered otter-skin from his hands, rubbed it in his face, and dismissed him over the side of the ship with no very complimentary application to accelerate his exit. He then kicked the peltries to the right and left about the deck, and broke up the market in the most ignominious manner. Old Nookamis made for shore in a furious passion, in which he was joined by Shewish, one of the sons of Wicananish, who went off breathing vengeance, and the ship was soon abandoned by the natives.

When Mr. M'Kay returned on board, the interpreter related what had passed, and begged him to prevail upon the captain to make sail, as from his knowledge of the temper and pride of the people of the place, he was sure they would resent the indignity offered to one of their chiefs. Mr. M'Kay, who himself possessed some experience of Indian character, went to the captain, who was still pacing the deck in moody humor, represented the danger to which his hasty act had exposed the vessel, and urged him to weigh anchor. The captain made light of his counsels, and pointed to his cannon and fire-arms as sufficient safeguard against naked savages. Further remonstrances only provoked taunting replies and sharp altercations. The day passed away without any signs of hostility, and at night the captain retired as usual to his cabin, taking no more than the usual precautions.

On the following morning, at daybreak, while the captain and Mr. M'Kay were yet asleep, a canoe came alongside in which were twenty Indians, commanded by young Shewish. They were unarmed, their aspect and demeanor friendly, and they held up otter-skins, and made signs indicative of a wish to trade. The caution enjoined by Mr. Astor, in respect to the admission of Indians on board of the ship, had been neglected for some time past, and the officer of the watch, perceiving those in the canoe to be without weapons, and having received no orders to the contrary, readily permitted them to mount the deck. Another canoe soon succeeded, the crew of which was likewise admitted. In a little while other canoes came off, and Indians were soon clambering into

the vessel on all sides.

The officer of the watch now felt alarmed, and called to Captain Thorn and Mr. M'Kay. By the time they came on deck, it was thronged with Indians. The interpreter noticed to Mr. M'Kay that many of the natives wore short mantles of skins, and intimated a suspicion that they were secretly armed. Mr. M'Kay urged the captain to clear the ship and get under way. He again made light of the advice; but the augmented swarm of canoes about the ship, and the numbers still putting off from shore, at length awakened his distrust, and he ordered some of the crew to weigh anchor, while some were sent aloft to make sail.

The Indians now offered to trade with the captain on his own terms, prompted, apparently, by the approaching departure of the ship. Accordingly, a hurried trade was commenced. The main articles sought by the savages in barter were knives; as fast as some were supplied they moved off, and others succeeded. By degrees they were thus distributed about the deck, and all with weapons.

The anchor was now nearly up, the sails were loose, and the captain, in a loud and peremptory tone, ordered the ship to be cleared. In an instant, a signal yell was given; it was echoed on every side, knives and war-clubs were brandished in every direction, and the savages rushed upon their marked victims.

The first that fell was Mr. Lewis, the ship's clerk. He was leaning, with folded arms, over a bale of blankets, engaged in bargaining, when he received a deadly stab in the back, and fell down the companion-way.

Mr. M'Kay, who was seated on the taffrail, sprang on his feet, but was instantly knocked down with a war-club and flung backwards into the sea, where he was despatched by the women in the canoes.

In the meantime Captain Thorn made desperate fight against fearful odds. He was a powerful as well as a resolute man, but he had come upon deck without weapons. Shewish, the young chief singled him out as his peculiar prey, and rushed upon him at the first outbreak. The captain had barely time to draw a clasp-knife with one blow of which he laid the young savage dead at his feet. Several of the stoutest followers of Shewish now set upon him. He defended himself vigorously, dealing crippling blows to right and left, and strewing the quarter-deck with the slain and wounded. His object was to fight his way to the cabin, where there were fire-arms; but he was hemmed in with foes, covered with wounds, and faint with loss of blood. For an instant he leaned upon the tiller wheel, when a blow from behind, with a war-club, felled him to the deck, where he was despatched with knives and thrown overboard.

While this was transacting upon the quarter-deck, a chance-medley fight was going on throughout the ship. The crew fought desperately with knives, handspikes, and whatever weapon they could seize upon in the moment of surprise. They were soon, however, overpowered by numbers, and mercilessly butchered.

As to the seven who had been sent aloft to make sail, they contemplated with horror the carnage that was going on below. Being destitute of weapons, they let themselves down by the running rigging, in hopes of getting between decks. One fell in the attempt, and was instantly despatched; another received a death-blow in the back as he was descending; a third, Stephen Weekes, the armorer, was mortally wounded as he was getting down the hatchway.

The remaining four made good their retreat into the cabin, where they found Mr. Lewis, still alive, though mortally wounded. Barricading the cabin door, they broke holes through the companion-way, and, with the muskets and ammunition which were at hand, opened a brisk fire that soon cleared the deck.

Thus far the Indian interpreter, from whom these particulars are derived, had been an eye-witness to the deadly conflict. He had taken no part in it, and had been spared by the natives as being of their race. In the confusion of the moment he took refuge with the rest, in the canoes. The survivors of the crew now sallied forth, and discharged some of the deck-guns, which did great execution among the canoes, and drove all the savages to shore.

For the remainder of the day no one ventured to put off to the ship, deterred by the effects of the fire-arms. The night passed away without any further attempts on the part of the natives. When the day dawned, the Tonquin still lay at anchor in the bay, her sails all loose and flapping in the wind, and no one apparently on board of her. After a time, some of the canoes ventured forth to reconnoitre, taking with them the interpreter.

They paddled about her, keeping cautiously at a distance, but growing more and more emboldened at seeing her quiet and lifeless. One man at length made his appearance on the deck, and was recognized by the interpreter as Mr. Lewis. He made friendly signs, and invited them on board. It was long before they ventured to comply. Those who mounted the deck met with no opposition; no one was to be seen on board; for Mr. Lewis, after inviting them, had disappeared. Other canoes now pressed forward to board the prize; the decks were soon crowded, and the sides covered with clambering savages, all intent on plunder. In the midst of their eagerness and exultation, the ship blew up with a tremendous explosion. Arms, legs, and mutilated bodies were blown into the air, and dreadful havoc was made in the surrounding canoes. The interpreter was in the main-chains at the time of the explosion, and was thrown unhurt into the water, where he succeeded in getting into one of the canoes. According to his statement, the bay presented an awful spectacle after the catastrophe. The ship had disappeared, but the bay was covered with fragments of the wreck, with shattered canoes, and Indians swimming for their lives, or struggling in the agonies of death; while those who had escaped the danger remained aghast and stupefied, or made with frantic panic for the shore. Upwards of a hundred savages were destroyed by the explosion, many more were shockingly mutilated, and for days afterwards the limbs and bodies of the slain were thrown upon the beach.

The inhabitants of Neweetee were overwhelmed with consternation at this astounding calamity,

---

which had burst upon them in the very moment of triumph. The warriors sat mute and mournful, while the women filled the air with loud lamentations. Their weeping and walling, however, was suddenly changed into yells of fury at the sight of four unfortunate white men, brought captive into the village. They had been driven on shore in one of the ship's boats, and taken at some distance along the coast.

The interpreter was permitted to converse with them. They proved to be the four brave fellows who had made such desperate defense from the cabin. The interpreter gathered from them some of the particulars already related. They told him further, that after they had beaten off the enemy and cleared the ship, Lewis advised that they should slip the cable and endeavor to get to sea. They declined to take his advice, alleging that the wind set too strongly into the bay and would drive them on shore. They resolved, as soon as it was dark, to put off quietly in the ship's boat, which they would be able to do unperceived, and to coast along back to Astoria. They put their resolution into effect; but Lewis refused to accompany them, being disabled by his wound, hopeless of escape, and determined on a terrible revenge. On the voyage out, he had repeatedly expressed a presentiment that he should die by his own hands; thinking it highly probable that he should be engaged in some contest with the natives, and being resolved, in case of extremity, to commit suicide rather than be made a prisoner. He now declared his intention to remain on board of the ship until daylight, to decoy as many of the savages on board as possible, then to set fire to the powder magazine, and terminate his life by a signal of vengeance. How well he succeeded has been shown. His companions bade him a melancholy adieu, and set off on their precarious expedition. They strove with might and main to get out of the bay, but found it impossible to weather a point of land, and were at length compelled to take shelter in a small cove, where they hoped to remain concealed until the wind should be more favorable. Exhausted by fatigue and watching, they fell into a sound sleep, and in that state were surprised by the savages. Better had it been for those unfortunate men had they remained with Lewis, and shared his heroic death: as it was, they perished in a more painful and protracted manner, being sacrificed by the natives to the manes of their friends with all the lingering tortures of savage cruelty. Some time after their death, the interpreter, who had remained a kind of prisoner at large, effected his escape, and brought the tragical tidings to Astoria.

Such is the melancholy story of the Tonquin, and such was the fate of her brave but headstrong commander, and her adventurous crew. It is a catastrophe that shows the importance, in all enterprises of moment, to keep in mind the general instructions of the sagacious heads which devise them. Mr. Astor was well aware of the perils to which ships were exposed on this coast from quarrels with the natives, and from perfidious attempts of the latter to surprise and capture them in unguarded moments. He had repeatedly enjoined it upon Captain Thorn, in conversation, and at parting, in his letter of instructions, to be courteous and kind in his dealings with the savages, but by no means to confide in their apparent friendship, nor to admit more than a few on board of his ship at a time.

Had the deportment of Captain Thorn been properly regulated, the insult so wounding to savage pride would never have been given. Had he enforced the rule to admit but a few at a time, the

savages would not have been able to get the mastery. He was too irritable, however, to practice the necessary self-command, and, having been nurtured in a proud contempt of danger, thought it beneath him to manifest any fear of a crew of unarmed savages.

With all his faults and foibles, we cannot but speak of him with esteem, and deplore his untimely fate; for we remember him well in early life, as a companion in pleasant scenes and joyous hours. When on shore, among his friends, he was a frank, manly, sound-hearted sailor. On board ship he evidently assumed the hardness of deportment and sternness of demeanor which many deem essential to naval service. Throughout the whole of the expedition, however, he showed himself loyal, single-minded, straightforward, and fearless; and if the fate of his vessel may be charged to his harshness and imprudence, we should recollect that he paid for his error with his life.

The loss of the Tonquin was a grievous blow to the infant establishment of Astoria, and one that threatened to bring after it a train of disasters. The intelligence of it did not reach Mr. Astor until many months afterwards. He felt it in all its force, and was aware that it must cripple, if not entirely defeat, the great scheme of his ambition. In his letters, written at the time, he speaks of it as "a calamity, the length of which he could not foresee." He indulged, however, in no weak and vain lamentation, but sought to devise a prompt and efficient remedy. The very same evening he appeared at the theatre with his usual serenity of countenance. A friend, who knew the disastrous intelligence he had received, expressed his astonishment that he could have calmness of spirit sufficient for such a scene of light amusement. "What would you have me do?" was his characteristic reply; "would you have me stay at home and weep for what I cannot help?"

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XII.

Gloom at Astoria- An Ingenious Stratagem.- The Small-Pox Chief. - Launching of the Dolly.-An Arrival. - A Canadian Trapper.-A Freeman of the Forest- An Iroquois Hunter.- Winter on the Columbia.-Festivities of New Year.

THE tidings of the loss of the Tonquin, and the massacre of her crew, struck dismay into the hearts of the Astorians. They found themselves a mere handful of men, on a savage coast, surrounded by hostile tribes, who would doubtless be incited and encouraged to deeds of violence by the late fearful catastrophe. In this juncture Mr. M'Dougal, we are told, had recourse to a stratagem by which to avail himself of the ignorance and credulity of the savages, and which certainly does credit to his ingenuity.

The natives of the coast, and, indeed, of all the regions west of the mountains, had an extreme dread of the small-pox; that terrific scourge having, a few years previously, appeared among them, and almost swept off entire tribes. Its origin and nature were wrapped in mystery, and they conceived it an evil inflicted upon them by the Great Spirit, or brought among them by the white men. The last idea was seized upon by Mr. M'Dougal. He assembled several of the chieftains whom he believed to be in the conspiracy. When they were all seated around, he informed them that he had heard of the treachery of some of their northern brethren towards the Tonquin, and

was determined on vengeance. "The white men among you," said he, "are few in number, it is true, but they are mighty in medicine. See here," continued he, drawing forth a small bottle and holding it before their eyes, "in this bottle I hold the small-pox, safely corked up; I have but to draw the cork, and let loose the pestilence, to sweep man, woman, and child from the face of the earth."

The chiefs were struck with horror and alarm. They implored him not to uncork the bottle, since they and all their people were firm friends of the white men, and would always remain so; but, should the small-pox be once let out, it would run like wildfire throughout the country, sweeping off the good as well as the bad; and surely he would not be so unjust as to punish his friends for crimes committed by his enemies.

Mr. M'Dougal pretended to be convinced by their reasoning, and assured them that, so long as the white people should be unmolested, and the conduct of their Indian neighbors friendly and hospitable, the phial of wrath should remain sealed up; but, on the least hostility, the fatal cork should be drawn.

From this time, it is added, he was much dreaded by the natives, as one who held their fate in his hands, and was called, by way of preeminence, "the Great Small-pox Chief."

All this while, the labors at the infant settlement went on with unremitting assiduity, and, by the 26th of September, a commodious mansion, spacious enough to accommodate all hands, was completed. It was built of stone and clay, there being no calcareous stone in the neighborhood from which lime for mortar could be procured. The schooner was also finished, and launched, with the accustomed ceremony, on the second of October, and took her station below the fort. She was named the Dolly, and was the first American vessel launched on this coast.

On the 5th of October, in the evening, the little community at Astoria was enlivened by the unexpected arrival of a detachment from Mr. David Stuart's post on the Oakinagan. It consisted of two of the clerks and two of the privates. They brought favorable accounts of the new establishment, but reported that, as Mr. Stuart was apprehensive there might be a difficulty of subsisting his whole party throughout the winter, he had sent one half back to Astoria, retaining with him only Ross, Montigny, and two others. Such is the hardihood of the Indian trader. In the heart of a savage and unknown country, seven hundred miles from the main body of his fellow-adventurers, Stuart had dismissed half of his little number, and was prepared with the residue to brave all the perils of the wilderness, and the rigors of a long and dreary winter.

With the return party came a Canadian creole named Regis Brugiere and an Iroquois hunter, with his wife and two children. As these two personages belong to certain classes which have derived their peculiar characteristics from the fur trade, we deem some few particulars concerning them pertinent to the nature of this work.

Brugiere was of a class of beaver trappers and hunters technically called "Freemen," in the language of the traders. They are generally Canadians by birth, and of French descent, who have

been employed for a term of years by some fur company, but, their term being expired, continue to hunt and trap on their own account, trading with the company like the Indians. Hence they derive their appellation of Freemen, to distinguish them from the trappers who are bound for a number of years, and receive wages, or hunt on shares.

Having passed their early youth in the wilderness, separated almost entirely from civilized man, and in frequent intercourse with the Indians, they relapse, with a facility common to human nature, into the habitudes of savage life. Though no longer bound by engagements to continue in the interior, they have become so accustomed to the freedom of the forest and the prairie, that they look back with repugnance upon the restraints of civilization. Most of them intermarry with the natives, and, like the latter, have often a plurality of wives. Wanderers of the wilderness, according to the vicissitudes of the seasons, the migrations of animals, and the plenty or scarcity of game, they lead a precarious and unsettled existence; exposed to sun and storm, and all kinds of hardships, until they resemble Indians in complexion as well as in tastes and habits. From time to time, they bring the peltries they have collected to the trading houses of the company in whose employ they have been brought up. Here they traffic them away for such articles of merchandise or ammunition as they may stand in need of. At the time when Montreal was the great emporium of the fur trader, one of these freemen of the wilderness would suddenly return, after an absence of many years, among his old friends and comrades. He would be greeted as one risen from the dead; and with the greater welcome, as he returned flush of money. A short time, however, spent in revelry, would be sufficient to drain his purse and sate him with civilized life, and he would return with new relish to the unshackled freedom of the forest.

Numbers of men of this class were scattered throughout the northwest territories. Some of them retained a little of the thrift and forethought of the civilized man, and became wealthy among their improvident neighbors; their wealth being chiefly displayed in large bands of horses, which covered the prairies in the vicinity of their abodes. Most of them, however, were prone to assimilate to the red man in their heedlessness of the future.

Such was Regis Brugiere, a freeman and rover of the wilderness. Having been brought up in the service of the Northwest Company, he had followed in the train of one of its expeditions across the Rocky Mountains, and undertaken to trap for the trading post established on the Spokane River. In the course of his hunting excursions he had either accidentally, or designedly, found his way to the post of Mr. Stuart, and had been prevailed upon to ascend the Columbia, and "try his luck" at Astoria.

Ignace Shonowane, the Iroquois hunter, was a specimen of a different class. He was one of those aboriginals of Canada who had partially conformed to the habits of civilization and the doctrines of Christianity, under the influence of the French colonists and the Catholic priests; who seem generally to have been more successful in conciliating, taming, and converting the savages, than their English and Protestant rivals. These half-civilized Indians retained some of the good, and many of the evil qualities of their original stock. They were first-rate hunters, and dexterous in the management of the canoe. They could undergo great privations, and were admirable for the ser-

vice of the rivers, lakes, and forests, provided they could be kept sober, and in proper subordination; but once inflamed with liquor, to which they were madly addicted, all the dormant passions inherent in their nature were prone to break forth, and to hurry them into the most vindictive and bloody acts of violence.

Though they generally professed the Roman Catholic religion, yet it was mixed, occasionally, with some of their ancient superstitions; and they retained much of the Indian belief in charms and omens. Numbers of these men were employed by the Northwest Company as trappers, hunters, and canoe men, but on lower terms than were allowed to white men. Ignace Shonowane had, in this way, followed the enterprise of the company to the banks of the Spokan, being, probably, one of the first of his tribe that had traversed the Rocky Mountains.

Such were some of the motley populace of the wilderness, incident to the fur trade, who were gradually attracted to the new settlement of Astoria.

The month of October now began to give indications of approaching winter. Hitherto, the colonists had been well pleased with the climate. The summer had been temperate, the mercury never rising above eighty degrees. Westerly winds had prevailed during the spring and the early part of the summer, and been succeeded by fresh breezes from the northwest. In the month of October the southerly winds set in, bringing with them frequent rain.

The Indians now began to quit the borders of the ocean, and to retire to their winter quarters in the sheltered bosom of the forests, or along the small rivers and brooks. The rainy season, which commences in October, continues, with little intermission, until April; and though the winters are generally mild, the mercury seldom sinking below the freezing point, yet the tempests of wind and rain are terrible. The sun is sometimes obscured for weeks, the brooks swell into roaring torrents, and the country is threatened with a deluge.

The departure of the Indians to their winter quarters gradually rendered provisions scanty, and obliged the colonists to send out foraging expeditions in the Dolly. Still the little handful of adventurers kept up their spirits in their lonely fort at Astoria, looking forward to the time when they should be animated and reinforced by the party under Mr. Hunt, that was to come to them across the Rocky Mountains.

The year gradually wore away. The rain, which had poured down almost incessantly since the first of October, cleared up towards the evening of the 31st of December, and the morning of the first of January ushered in a day of sunshine.

The hereditary French holiday spirit of the French voyageurs is hardly to be depressed by any adversities; and they can manage to get up a fete in the most squalid situations, and under the most untoward circumstances. An extra allowance of rum, and a little flour to make cakes and puddings, constitute a "regale;" and they forget all their toils and troubles in the song and dance.

On the present occasion, the partners endeavored to celebrate the new year with some effect. At sunrise the drums beat to arms, the colors were hoisted, with three rounds of small arms and three discharges of cannon. The day was devoted to games of agility and strength, and other amusements; and grog was temperately distributed, together with bread, butter, and cheese. The best dinner their circumstances could afford was served up at midday. At sunset the colors were lowered, with another discharge of artillery. The night was spent in dancing; and, though there was a lack of female partners to excite their gallantry, the voyageurs kept up the ball with true French spirit, until three o'clock in the morning. So passed the new year festival of 1812 at the infant colony of Astoria.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XIII.

Expedition by Land.- Wilson P. Hunt.- His Character.- Donald M'Kenzie.- Recruiting Service Among the Voyageurs. - A Bark Canoe.- Chapel of St. Anne.- Votive Offerings.- Pious Carousals, - A Ragged Regiment.- Mackinaw.- Picture of a Trading Post.- Frolicking Voyageurs.- Swells and Swaggerers.- Indian Coxcombs.- A Man of the North.- Jockeyship of Voyageurs- Inefficacy of Gold.- Weight of a Feather- Mr. Ramsay Crooks- His Character.- His Risks Among the Indians.- His Warning Concerning Sioux and Blackfeet.- Embarkation of Recruits.- Parting Scenes Between Brothers, Cousins, Wives, Sweethearts, and Pot Companions.

WE have followed up the fortunes of the maritime part of this enterprise to the shores of the Pacific, and have conducted the affairs of the embryo establishment to the opening of the new year; let us now turn back to the adventurous band to whom was intrusted the land expedition, and who were to make their way to the mouth of the Columbia, up vast rivers, across trackless plains, and over the rugged barriers of the Rocky Mountains.

The conduct of this expedition, as has been already mentioned, was assigned to Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, of Trenton, New Jersey, one of the partners of the company, who was ultimately to be at the head of the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia. He is represented as a man scrupulously upright and faithful his dealings, amicable in his disposition, and of most accommodating manners; and his whole conduct will be found in unison with such a character. He was not practically experienced in the Indian trade; that is to say, he had never made any expeditions of traffic into the heart of the wilderness, but he had been engaged in commerce at St. Louis, then a frontier settlement on the Mississippi, where the chief branch of his business had consisted in furnishing Indian traders with goods and equipments. In this way, he had acquired much knowledge of the trade at second hand, and of the various tribes, and the interior country over which it extended.

Another of the partners, Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, was associated with Mr. Hunt in the expedition, and excelled on those points in which the other was deficient; for he had been ten years in the interior, in the service of the Northwest Company, and valued himself on his knowledge of "woodcraft," and the strategy of Indian trade and Indian warfare. He had a frame seasoned to toils and hardships; a spirit not to be intimidated, and was reputed to be a "remarkable shot;" which of

itself was sufficient to give him renown upon the frontier.

Mr. Hunt and his coadjutor repaired, about the latter part of July, 1810, to Montreal, the ancient emporium of the fur trade where everything requisite for the expedition could be procured. One of the first objects was to recruit a complement of Canadian voyageurs from the disbanded herd usually to be found loitering about the place. A degree of jockeyship, however, is required for this service, for a Canadian voyageur is as full of latent tricks and vice as a horse; and when he makes the greatest external promise, is prone to prove the greatest "take in." Besides, the Northwest Company, who maintained a long established control at Montreal, and knew the qualities of every voyageur, secretly interdicted the prime hands from engaging in this new service; so that, although liberal terms were offered, few presented themselves but such as were not worth having.

From these Mr. Hunt engaged a number sufficient, as he supposed, for present purposes; and, having laid in a supply of ammunition, provisions, and Indian goods, embarked all on board one of those great canoes at that time universally used by the fur traders for navigating the intricate and often-obstructed rivers. The canoe was between thirty and forty feet long, and several feet in width; constructed of birch bark, sewed with fibres of the roots of the spruce tree, and daubed with resin of the pine, instead of tar. The cargo was made up in packages, weighing from ninety to one hundred pounds each, for the facility of loading and unloading, and of transportation at portages. The canoe itself, though capable of sustaining a freight of upwards of four tons, could readily be carried on men's shoulders. Canoes of this size are generally managed by eight or ten men, two of whom are picked veterans, who receive double wages, and are stationed, one at the bow and the other at the stern, to keep a look-out and to steer. They are termed the foreman and the steersman. The rest, who ply the paddles, are called middle men. When there is a favorable breeze, the canoe is occasionally navigated with a sail.

The expedition took its regular departure, as usual, from St. Anne's, near the extremity of the island of Montreal, the great starting-place of the traders to the interior. Here stood the ancient chapel of St. Anne, the patroness of the Canadian voyageurs; where they made confession, and offered up their vows, previous to departing on any hazardous expedition. The shrine of the saint was decorated with relics and votive offerings hung up by these superstitious beings, either to propitiate her favor, or in gratitude for some signal deliverance in the wilderness. It was the custom, too, of these devout vagabonds, after leaving the chapel, to have a grand carouse, in honor of the saint and for the prosperity of the voyage. In this part of their devotions, the crew of Mr. Hunt proved themselves by no means deficient. Indeed, he soon discovered that his recruits, enlisted at Montreal, were fit to vie with the ragged regiment of Falstaff. Some were able-bodied, but inexperienced; others were expert, but lazy; while a third class were expert and willing, but totally worn out, being broken-down veterans, incapable of toil.

With this inefficient crew he made his way up the Ottawa River, and by the ancient route of the fur traders, along a succession of small lakes and rivers, to Michilimackinac. Their progress was slow and tedious. Mr. Hunt was not accustomed to the management of "voyageurs," and he had a crew admirably disposed to play the old soldier, and balk their work; and ever ready to come to a

halt, land, make a fire, put on the great pot, and smoke, and gossip, and sing by the hour.

It was not until the 22d of July that they arrived at Mackinaw, situated on the island of the same name, at the confluence of lakes Huron and Michigan. This famous old French trading post continued to be a rallying point for a multifarious and motley population. The inhabitants were amphibious in their habits, most of them being, or having been voyageurs or canoe men. It was the great place of arrival and departure of the southwest fur trade. Here the Mackinaw Company had established its principal post, from whence it communicated with the interior and with Montreal. Hence its various traders and trappers set out for their respective destinations about Lake Superior and its tributary waters, or for the Mississippi, the Arkansas, the Missouri, and the other regions of the west. Here, after the absence of a year, or more, they returned with their peltries, and settled their accounts; the furs rendered in by them being transmitted in canoes from hence to Montreal. Mackinaw was, therefore, for a great part of the year, very scantily peopled; but at certain seasons the traders arrived from all points, with their crews of voyageurs, and the place swarmed like a hive.

Mackinaw, at that time, was a mere village, stretching along a small bay, with a fine broad beach in front of its principal row of houses, and dominated by the old fort, which crowned an impending height. The beach was a kind of public promenade where were displayed all the vagaries of a seaport on the arrival of a fleet from a long cruise. Here voyageurs frolicked away their wages, fiddling and dancing in the booths and cabins, buying all kinds of knick-knacks, dressing themselves out finely, and parading up and down, like arrant braggarts and coxcombs. Sometimes they met with rival coxcombs in the young Indians from the opposite shore, who would appear on the beach painted and decorated in fantastic style, and would saunter up and down, to be gazed at and admired, perfectly satisfied that they eclipsed their pale-faccd competitors.

Now and then a chance party of "Northwesters" appeared at Mackinaw from the rendezvous at Fort William. These held themselves up as the chivalry of the fur trade. They were men of iron; proof against cold weather, hard fare, and perils of all kinds. Some would wear the Northwest button, and a formidable dirk, and assume something of a military air. They generally wore feathers in their hats, and affected the "brave." "Je suis un homme du nord!" - "I am a man of the north," - one of these swelling fellows would exclaim, sticking his arms akimbo and ruffling by the Southwesters, whom he regarded with great contempt, as men softened by mild climates and the luxurious fare of bread and bacon, and whom he stigmatized with the inglorious name of pork-eaters. The superiority assumed by these vainglorious swaggerers was, in general, tacitly admitted. Indeed, some of them had acquired great notoriety for deeds of hardihood and courage; for the fur trade had its heroes, whose names resounded throughout the wilderness.

Such was Mackinaw at the time of which we are treating. It now, doubtless, presents a totally different aspect. The fur companies no longer assemble there; the navigation of the lake is carried on by steamboats and various shipping, and the race of traders, and trappers, and voyageurs, and Indian dandies, have vaped out their brief hour and disappeared. Such changes does the lapse of a handful of years make in this ever-changing country.

---

At this place Mr. Hunt remained for some time, to complete his assortment of Indian goods, and to increase his number of voyageurs, as well as to engage some of a more efficient character than those enlisted at Montreal.

And now commenced another game of Jockeyship. There were able and efficient men in abundance at Mackinaw, but for several days not one presented himself. If offers were made to any, they were listened to with a shake of the head. Should any one seem inclined to enlist, there were officious idlers and busybodies, of that class who are ever ready to dissuade others from any enterprise in which they themselves have no concern. These would pull him by the sleeve, take him on one side, and murmur in his ear, or would suggest difficulties outright.

it was objected that the expedition would have to navigate unknown rivers, and pass through howling wildernesses infested by savage tribes, who had already cut off the unfortunate voyageurs that had ventured among them; that it was to climb the Rocky Mountains and descend into desolate and famished regions, where the traveller was often obliged to subsist on grasshoppers and crickets, or to kill his own horse for food.

At length one man was hardy enough to engage, and he was used like a "stool-pigeon," to decoy others; but several days elapsed before any more could be prevailed upon to join him. A few then came to terms. It was desirable to engage them for five years, but some refused to engage for more than three. Then they must have part of their pay in advance, which was readily granted. When they had pocketed the amount, and squandered it in regales or in outfits, they began to talk of pecuniary obligations at Mackinaw, which must be discharged before they would be free to depart; or engagements with other persons, which were only to be canceled by a "reasonable consideration." It was in vain to argue or remonstrate. The money advanced had already been sacked and spent, and must be lost and the recruits left behind, unless they could be freed from their debts and engagements. Accordingly, a fine was paid for one; a judgment for another; a tavern bill for a third, and almost all had to be bought off from some prior engagement, either real or pretended.

Mr. Hunt groaned in spirit at the incessant and unreasonable demands of these worthies upon his purse; yet with all this outlay of funds, the number recruited was but scanty, and many of the most desirable still held themselves aloof, and were not to be caught by a golden bait. With these he tried another temptation. Among the recruits who had enlisted he distributed feathers and ostrich plumes. These they put in their hats, and thus figured about Mackinaw, assuming airs of vast importance, as "voyageurs" in a new company, that was to eclipse the Northwest. The effect was complete. A French Canadian is too vain and mercurial a being to withstand the finery and ostentation of the feather. Numbers immediately pressed into the service. One must have an ostrich plume; another, a white feather with a red end; a third, a bunch of cock's tails. Thus all paraded about, in vainglorious style, more delighted with the feathers in their hats than with the money in their pockets; and considering themselves fully equal to the boastful "men of the north."

While thus recruiting the number of rank and file, Mr. Hunt was joined by a person whom he

had invited, by letter, to engage as a partner in the expedition. This was Mr. Ramsay Crooks, a young man, a native of Scotland, who had served under the Northwest Company, and been engaged in trading expeditions upon his individual account, among the tribes of the Missouri. Mr. Hunt knew him personally, and had conceived a high and merited opinion of his judgment, enterprise, and integrity; he was rejoiced, therefore, when the latter consented to accompany him. Mr. Crooks, however, drew from experience a picture of the dangers to which they would be subjected, and urged the importance of going with a considerable force. In ascending the upper Missouri they would have to pass through the country of the Sioux Indians, who had manifested repeated hostility to the white traders, and rendered their expeditions extremely perilous; firing upon them from the river banks as they passed beneath in their boats, and attacking them in their encampments. Mr. Crooks himself, when voyaging in company with another trader of the name of M'Lellan, had been interrupted by these marauders, and had considered himself fortunate in escaping down the river without loss of life or property, but with a total abandonment of his trading voyage.

Should they be fortunate enough to pass through the country of the Sioux without molestation, they would have another tribe still more savage and warlike beyond, and deadly foes of white men.

These were the Blackfeet Indians, who ranged over a wide extent of country which they would have to traverse. Under all these circumstances, it was thought advisable to augment the party considerably. It already exceeded the number of thirty, to which it had originally been limited; but it was determined, on arriving at St. Louis, to increase it to the number of sixty.

These matters being arranged, they prepared to embark; but the embarkation of a crew of Canadian voyageurs, on a distant expedition, is not so easy a matter as might be imagined; especially of such a set of vainglorious fellows with money in both pockets, and cocks' tails in their hats. Like sailors, the Canadian voyageurs generally preface a long cruise with a carouse. They have their cronies, their brothers, their cousins, their wives, their sweethearts, all to be entertained at their expense. They feast, they fiddle, they drink, they sing, they dance, they frolic and fight, until they are all as mad as so many drunken Indians. The publicans are all obedience to their commands, never hesitating to let them run up scores without limit, knowing that, when their own money is expended, the purses of their employers must answer for the bill, or the voyage must be delayed. Neither was it possible, at that time, to remedy the matter at Mackinaw. In that amphibious community there was always a propensity to wrest the laws in favor of riotous or mutinous boatmen. It was necessary, also, to keep the recruits in good humor, seeing the novelty and danger of the service into which they were entering, and the ease with which they might at anytime escape it by jumping into a canoe and going downstream.

Such were the scenes that beset Mr. Hunt, and gave him a foretaste of the difficulties of his command. The little cabarets and sutlers' shops along the bay resounded with the scraping of fiddles, with snatches of old French songs, with Indian whoops and yells, while every plumed and feathered vagabond had his troop of loving cousins and comrades at his heels. It was with the utmost

difficulty they could be extricated from the clutches of the publicans and the embraces of their pot companions, who followed them to the water's edge with many a hug, a kiss on each cheek, and a maudlin benediction in Canadian French.

It was about the 12th of August that they left Mackinaw, and pursued the usual route by Green Bay, Fox and Wisconsin rivers, to Prairie du Chien, and thence down the Mississippi to St. Louis, where they landed on the 3d of September.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XIV.

St. Louis.- Its Situation.- Motley Population.- French Creole Traders and Their Dependants.- Missouri Fur Company- Mr. Manuel Lisa. - Mississippi Boatmen. - Vagrant Indians. - Kentucky Hunters - Old French Mansion- Fiddling- Billiards- Mr. Joseph Miller - His Character- Recruits- Voyage Up the Missouri. - Difficulties of the River.- Merits of Canadian Voyageurs.- Arrival at the Nodowa.- Mr. Robert M'Lellan joins the Party- John Day, a Virginia Hunter. Description of Him.- Mr. Hunt Returns to St. Louis.

ST. LOUIS, which is situated on the right bank of the Mississippi River, a few miles below the mouth of the Missouri, was, at that time, a frontier settlement, and the last fitting-out place for the Indian trade of the Southwest. It possessed a motley population, composed of the creole descendants of the original French colonists; the keen traders from the Atlantic States; the back-woodsmen of Kentucky and Tennessee; the Indians and half-breeds of the prairies; together with a singular aquatic race that had grown up from the navigation of the rivers - the "boatmen of the Mississippi;- who possessed habits, manners, and almost a language, peculiarly their own, and strongly technical. They, at that time, were extremely numerous, and conducted the chief navigation and commerce of the Ohio and the Mississippi, as the voyageurs did of the Canadian waters; but, like them, their consequence and characteristics are rapidly vanishing before the all-pervading intrusion of steamboats.

The old French houses engaged in the Indian trade had gathered round them a train of dependents, mongrel Indians, and mongrel Frenchmen, who had intermarried with Indians. These they employed in their various expeditions by land and water. Various individuals of other countries had, of late years, pushed the trade further into the interior, to the upper waters of the Missouri, and had swelled the number of these hangers-on. Several of these traders had, two or three years previously, formed themselves into a company, composed of twelve partners, with a capital of about forty thousand dollars, called the Missouri Fur Company; the object of which was, to establish posts along the upper part of that river, and monopolize the trade. The leading partner of this company was Mr. Manuel Lisa, a Spaniard by birth, and a man of bold and enterprising character, who had ascended the Missouri almost to its source, and made himself well acquainted and popular with several of its tribes. By his exertions, trading posts had been established, in 1808, in the Sioux country, and among the Aricara and Mandan tribes; and a principal one, under Mr. Henry, one of the partners, at the forks of the Missouri. This company had in its employ about two hundred and fifty men, partly American and partly creole voyageurs.

All these circumstances combined to produce a population at St. Louis even still more motley than that at Mackinaw. Here were to be seen, about the river banks, the hectoring, extravagant bragging boatmen of the Mississippi, with the gay, grimacing, singing, good-humored Canadian voyageurs. Vagrant Indians, of various tribes, loitered about the streets. Now and then a stark Kentucky hunter, in leathern hunting-dress, with rifle on shoulder and knife in belt, strode along. Here and there were new brick houses and shops, just set up by bustling, driving, and eager men of traffic from the Atlantic States; while, on the other hand, the old French mansions, with open casements, still retained the easy, indolent air of the original colonists; and now and then the scraping of a fiddle, a strain of an ancient French song, or the sound of billiard balls, showed that the happy Gallic turn for gayety and amusement still lingered about the place.

Such was St. Louis at the time of Mr. Hunt's arrival there, and the appearance of a new fur company, with ample funds at its command, produced a strong sensation among the I traders of the place, and awakened keen jealousy and opposition on the part of the Missouri Company. Mr. Hunt proceeded to strengthen himself against all competition. For this purpose, he secured to the interests of the association another of those enterprising men, who had been engaged in individual traffic with the tribes of the Missouri. This was a Mr. Joseph Miller, a gentleman well educated and well informed, and of a respectable family of Baltimore. He had been an officer in the army of the United States, but had resigned in disgust, on being refused a furlough, and had taken to trapping beaver and trading among the Indians. He was easily induced by Mr. Hunt to join as a partner, and was considered by him, on account of his education and acquirements, and his experience in Indian trade, a valuable addition to the company.

Several additional men were likewise enlisted at St. Louis, some as boatmen, and others as hunters. These last were engaged, not merely to kill game for provisions, but also, and indeed chiefly, to trap beaver and other animals of rich furs, valuable in the trade. They enlisted on different terms. Some were to have a fixed salary of three hundred dollars; others were to be fitted out and maintained at the expense of the company, and were to hunt and trap on shares.

As Mr. Hunt met with much opposition on the part of rival traders, especially the Missouri Fur Company, it took him some weeks to complete his preparations. The delays which he had previously experienced at Montreal, Mackinaw, and on the way, added to those at St. Louis, had thrown him much behind his original calculations, so that it would be impossible to effect his voyage up the Missouri in the present year. This river, flowing from high and cold latitudes, and through wide and open plains, exposed to chilling blasts, freezes early. The winter may be dated from the first of November; there was every prospect, therefore, that it would be closed with ice long before Mr. Hunt could reach its upper waters. To avoid, however, the expense of wintering at St. Louis, he determined to push up the river as far as possible, to some point above the settlements, where game was plenty, and where his whole party could be subsisted by hunting, until the breaking up of the ice in the spring should permit them to resume their voyage.

Accordingly on the twenty-first of October he took his departure from St. Louis. His party was

distributed in three boats. One was the barge which he had brought from Mackinaw; another was of a larger size, such as was formerly used in navigating the Mohawk River, and known by the generic name of the Schenectady barge; the other was a large keel boat, at that time the grand conveyance on the Mississippi.

In this way they set out from St. Louis, in buoyant spirits, and soon arrived at the mouth of the Missouri. This vast river, three thousand miles in length, and which, with its tributary streams, drains such an immense extent of country, was as yet but casually and imperfectly navigated by the adventurous bark of the fur trader. A steamboat had never yet stemmed its turbulent current. Sails were but of casual assistance, for it required a strong wind to conquer the force of the stream. The main dependence was on bodily strength and manual dexterity. The boats, in general, had to be propelled by oars and setting poles, or drawn by the hand and by grappling hooks from one root or overhanging tree to another; or towed by the long cordelle, or towing line, where the shores were sufficiently clear of woods and thickets to permit the men to pass along the banks.

During this slow and tedious progress the boat would be exposed to frequent danger from floating trees and great masses of drift-wood, or to be impaled upon snags and sawyers; that is to say, sunken trees, presenting a jagged or pointed end above the surface of the water. As the channel of the river frequently shifted from side to side according to the bends and sand-banks, the boat had, in the same way, to advance in a zigzag course. Often a part of the crew would have to leap into the water at the shallows, and wade along with the towing line, while their comrades on board toilsomely assisted with oar and setting pole. Sometimes the boat would seem to be retained motionless, as if spell-bound, opposite some point round which the current set with violence, and where the utmost labor scarce effected any visible progress.

On these occasions it was that the merits of the Canadian voyageurs came into full action. Patient of toil, not to be disheartened by impediments and disappointments, fertile in expedients, and versed in every mode of humoring and conquering the wayward current, they would ply every exertion, sometimes in the boat, sometimes on shore, sometimes in the water, however cold; always alert, always in good humor; and, should they at any time flag or grow weary, one of their popular songs, chanted by a veteran oarsman, and responded to in chorus, acted as a never-failing restorative.

By such assiduous and persevering labor they made their way about four hundred and fifty miles up the Missouri, by the 16th of November, to the mouth of the Nodowa. As this was a good hunting country, and as the season was rapidly advancing, they determined to establish their winter quarters at this place; and, in fact, two days after they had come to a halt, the river closed just above their encampment.

The party had not been long at this place when they were joined by Mr. Robert M'Lellan, another trader of the Missouri; the same who had been associated with Mr. Crooks in the unfortunate expedition in which they had been intercepted by the Sioux Indians, and obliged to make a rapid retreat down the river.

M'Lellan was a remarkable man. He had been a partisan under General Wayne, in his Indian wars, where he had distinguished himself by his fiery spirit and reckless daring, and marvelous stories were told of his exploits. His appearance answered to his character. His frame was meagre, but muscular; showing strength, activity, and iron firmness. His eyes were dark, deep-set, and piercing. He was restless, fearless, but of impetuous and sometimes ungovernable temper. He had been invited by Mr. Hunt to enroll himself as a partner, and gladly consented; being pleased with the thoughts of passing with a powerful force through the country of the Sioux, and perhaps having an opportunity of revenging himself upon that lawless tribe for their past offenses.

Another recruit that joined the camp at Nodowa deserves equal mention. This was John Day, a hunter from the backwoods of Virginia, who had been several years on the Missouri in the service of Mr. Crooks, and of other traders. He was about forty years of age, six feet two inches high, straight as an Indian; with an elastic step as if he trod on springs, and a handsome, open, manly countenance. It was his boast that, in his younger days, nothing could hurt or daunt him; but he had "lived too fast," and injured his constitution by his excesses. Still he was strong of hand, bold of heart, a prime woodman, and an almost unerring shot. He had the frank spirit of a Virginian, and the rough heroism of a pioneer of the west.

The party were now brought to a halt for several months. They were in a country abounding with deer and wild turkeys, so that there was no stint of provisions, and every one appeared cheerful and contented. Mr. Hunt determined to avail himself of this interval to return to St. Louis and obtain a reinforcement.

He wished to procure an interpreter, acquainted with the language of the Sioux, as, from all accounts, he apprehended difficulties in passing through the country of that nation. He felt the necessity, also, of having a greater number of hunters, not merely to keep up a supply of provisions throughout their long and arduous expedition, but also as a protection and defense, in case of Indian hostilities. For such service the Canadian voyageurs were little to be depended upon, fighting not being a part of their profession. The proper kind of men were American hunters, experienced in savage life and savage warfare, and possessed of the true game spirit of the west.

Leaving, therefore, the encampment in charge of the other partners, Mr. Hunt set off on foot on the first of January (1810), for St. Louis. He was accompanied by eight men as far as Fort Osage, about one hundred and fifty miles below Nodowa. Here he procured a couple of horses, and proceeded on the remainder of his journey with two men, sending the other six back to the encampment. He arrived at St. Louis on the 20th of January.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XV.

Opposition of the Missouri Fur Company.-Blackfeet Indians.- Pierre Dorion, a Half-Breed Interpreter.- Old Dorion and His Hybrid Progeny- Family Quarrels.- Cross Purposes Between Dorion and Lisa. - Renegades From Nodowa.- Perplexities of a Commander.- Messrs. Bradbury and

---

Nuttall Join the Expedition.- Legal Embarrassments of Pierre Dorion.- Departure From St. Louis.- Conjugal Discipline of a Half-Breed.- Annual Swelling of the Rivers.- Daniel Boone, the Patriarch of Kentucky.- John Colter.- His Adventures Among the Indians.- Rumors of Danger Ahead.- Fort Osage.- An Indian War-Feast.- Troubles in the Dorion Family.- Buffaloes and Turkey-Buzzards.

ON this his second visit to St. Louis, Mr. Hunt was again impeded in his plans by the opposition of the Missouri Fur Company. The affairs of that company were, at this time, in a very dubious state. During the preceding year, their principal establishment at the forks of the Missouri had been so much harassed by the Blackfeet Indians, that its commander, Mr. Henry, one of the partners, had been compelled to abandon the post and cross the Rocky Mountains, with the intention of fixing himself upon one of the upper branches of the Columbia. What had become of him and his party was unknown. The most intense anxiety was felt concerning them, and apprehensions that they might have been cut off by the savages. At the time of Mr. Hunt's arrival at St. Louis, the Missouri Company were fitting out an expedition to go in quest of Mr. Henry. It was to be conducted by Mr. Manuel Lisa, the partner already mentioned.

There being thus two expeditions on foot at the same moment, an unusual demand was occasioned for hunters and voyageurs, who accordingly profited by the circumstance, and stipulated for high terms. Mr. Hunt found a keen and subtle competitor in Lisa, and was obliged to secure his recruits by liberal advances of pay, and by other pecuniary indulgences.

The greatest difficulty was to procure the Sioux interpreter. There was but one man to be met with at St. Louis who was fitted for the purpose, but to secure him would require much management. The individual in question was a half-breed, named Pierre Dorion; and, as he figures hereafter in this narrative, and is, withal, a striking specimen of the hybrid race on the frontier, we shall give a few particulars concerning him. Pierre was the son of Dorion, the French interpreter, who accompanied Messrs. Lewis and Clark in their famous exploring expedition across the Rocky Mountains. Old Dorion was one of those French creoles, descendants of the ancient Canadian stock, who abound on the western frontier, and amalgamate or cohabit with the savages. He had sojourned among various tribes, and perhaps left progeny among them all; but his regular, or habitual wife, was a Sioux squaw. By her he had a hopeful brood of half-breed sons, of whom Pierre was one. The domestic affairs of old Dorion were conducted on the true Indian plan. Father and sons would occasionally get drunk together, and then the cabin was a scene of ruffian brawl and fighting, in the course of which the old Frenchman was apt to get soundly belabored by his mongrel offspring. In a furious scuffle of the kind, one of the sons got the old man upon the ground, and was upon the point of scalping him. "Hold! my son," cried the old fellow, in imploring accents, "you are too brave, too honorable to scalp your father!" This last appeal touched the French side of the half-breed's heart, so he suffered the old man to wear his scalp unharmed.

Of this hopeful stock was Pierre Dorion, the man whom it was now the desire of Mr. Hunt to engage as an interpreter. He had been employed in that capacity by the Missouri Fur Company during the preceding year, and conducted their traders in safety through the different tribes of the Sioux. He had proved himself faithful and serviceable while sober; but the love of liquor, in which

---

he had been nurtured and brought up, would occasionally break out, and with it the savage side of his character.

It was his love of liquor which had embroiled him with the Missouri Company. While in their service at Fort Mandan, on the frontier, he had been seized with a whiskey mania; and, as the beverage was only to be procured at the company's store, it had been charged in his account at the rate of ten dollars a quart. This item had ever remained unsettled, and a matter of furious dispute, the mere mention of which was sufficient to put him in a passion.

The moment it was discovered by Mr. Lisa that Pierre Dorion was in treaty with the new and rival association, he endeavored, by threats as well as promises, to prevent his engaging in their service. His promises might, perhaps, have prevailed; but his threats, which related to the whiskey debt, only served to drive Pierre into the opposite ranks. Still he took advantage of this competition for his services to stand out with Mr. Hunt on the most advantageous terms, and, after a negotiation of nearly two weeks, capitulated to serve in the expedition, as hunter and interpreter, at the rate of three hundred dollars a year, two hundred of which were to be paid in advance.

When Mr. Hunt had got everything ready for leaving St. Louis, new difficulties arose. Five of the American hunters from the encampment at Nodowa, suddenly made their appearance. They alleged that they had been ill treated by the partners at the encampment, and had come off clandestinely, in consequence of a dispute. It was useless at the present moment, and under present circumstances, to attempt any compulsory measures with these deserters. Two of them Mr. Hunt prevailed upon, by mild means, to return with him. The rest refused; nay, what was worse, they spread such reports of the hardships and dangers to be apprehended in the course of the expedition, that they struck a panic into those hunters who had recently engaged at St. Louis, and, when the hour of departure arrived, all but one refused to embark. It was in vain to plead or remonstrate; they shouldered their rifles and turned their backs upon the expedition, and Mr. Hunt was fain to put off from shore with the single hunter and a number of voyageurs whom he had engaged. Even Pierre Dorion, at the last moment, refused to enter the boat until Mr. Hunt consented to take his squaw and two children on board also. But the tissue of perplexities, on account of this worthy individual, did not end here.

Among the various persons who were about to proceed up the Missouri with Mr. Hunt, were two scientific gentlemen; one Mr. John Bradbury, a man of mature age, but great enterprise and personal activity, who had been sent out by Linnaean Society of Liverpool to make a collection of American plants; the other, a Mr. Nuttall, likewise an Englishman, younger in years, who has since made himself known as the author of *Travels in Arkansas*, and a work on the *Genera of American Plants*. Mr. Hunt had offered them the protection and facilities of his party, in their scientific research up the Missouri River. As they were not ready to depart at the moment of embarkation, they put their trunks on board of the boat, but remained at St. Louis until the next day, for the arrival of the post, intending to join the expedition at St. Charles, a short distance above the mouth of the Missouri.

The same evening, however, they learned that a writ had been issued against Pierre Dorion for his whiskey debt, by Mr. Lisa, as agent of the Missouri Company, and that it was the intention to entrap the mongrel linguist on his arrival at St. Charles.

Upon hearing this, Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Nuttall set off a little after midnight, by land, got ahead of the boat as it was ascending the Missouri, before its arrival at St. Charles, and gave Pierre Dorion warning of the legal toil prepared to ensnare him.

The knowing Pierre immediately landed and took to the woods, followed by his squaw laden with their papooses, and a large bundle containing their most precious effects, promising to rejoin the party some distance above St. Charles. There seemed little dependence to be placed upon the promises of a loose adventurer of the kind, who was at the very time playing an evasive game with his former employers; who had already received two-thirds of his year's pay, and his rifle on his shoulder, his family and worldly fortunes at his heels, and the wild woods before him. There was no alternative, however, and it was hoped his pique against his old employers would render him faithful to his new ones.

The party reached St. Charles in the afternoon, but the harpies of the law looked in vain for their expected prey. The boats resumed their course on the following morning, and had not proceeded far when Pierre Dorion made his appearance on the shore. He was gladly taken on board, but he came without his squaw. They had quarreled in the night; Pierre had administered the Indian discipline of the cudgel, whereupon she had taken to the woods, with their children and all their worldly goods. Pierre evidently was deeply grieved and disconcerted at the loss of his wife and his knapsack, whereupon Mr. Hunt despatched one of the Canadian voyageurs in search of the fugitive; and the whole party, after proceeding a few miles further, encamped on an island to wait his return. The Canadian rejoined the party, but without the squaw; and Pierre Dorion passed a solitary and anxious night, bitterly regretting his indiscretion in having exercised his conjugal authority so near home. Before daybreak, however, a well-known voice reached his ears from the opposite shore. It was his repentant spouse, who had been wandering the woods all night in quest of the party, and had at length descried it by its fires. A boat was despatched for her, the interesting family was once more united, and Mr. Hunt now flattered himself that his perplexities with Pierre Dorion were at an end.

Bad weather, very heavy rains, and an unusually early rise in the Missouri, rendered the ascent of the river toilsome, slow, and dangerous. The rise of the Missouri does not generally take place until the month of May or June: the present swelling of the river must have been caused by a freshet in some of its more southern branches. It could not have been the great annual flood, as the higher branches must still have been ice-bound.

And here we cannot but pause, to notice the admirable arrangement of nature, by which the annual swellings of the various great rivers which empty themselves into the Mississippi, have been made to precede each other at considerable intervals. Thus, the flood of the Red River precedes that of the Arkansas by a month. The Arkansas, also, rising in a much more southern latitude than

the Missouri, takes the lead of it in its annual excess, and its superabundant waters are disgorged and disposed of long before the breaking up of the icy barriers of the north; otherwise, did all these mighty streams rise simultaneously, and discharge their vernal floods into the Mississippi, an inundation would be the consequence, that would submerge and devastate all the lower country.

On the afternoon of the third day, January, 17th, the boats touched at Charette, one of the old villages founded by the original French colonists. Here they met with Daniel Boone, the renowned patriarch of Kentucky, who had kept in the advance of civilization, and on the borders of the wilderness, still leading a hunter's life, though now in his eighty-fifth year. He had but recently returned from a hunting and trapping expedition, and had brought nearly sixty beaver skins as trophies of his skill. The old man was still erect in form, strong in limb, and unflinching in spirit, and as he stood on the river bank, watching the departure of an expedition destined to traverse the wilderness to the very shores of the Pacific, very probably felt a throb of his old pioneer spirit, impelling him to shoulder his rifle and join the adventurous band. Boone flourished several years after this meeting, in a vigorous old age, the Nestor of hunters and backwoodsmen; and died, full of sylvan honor and renown, in 1818, in his ninety-second year.

The next morning early, as the party were yet encamped at the mouth of a small stream, they were visited by another of these heroes of the wilderness, one John Colter, who had accompanied Lewis and Clarke in their memorable expedition. He had recently made one of those vast internal voyages so characteristic of this fearless class of men, and of the immense regions over which they hold their lonely wanderings; having come from the head waters of the Missouri to St. Louis in a small canoe. This distance of three thousand miles he had accomplished in thirty days. Colter kept with the party all the morning. He had many particulars to give them concerning the Black-foot Indians, a restless and predatory tribe, who had conceived an implacable hostility to the white men, in consequence of one of their warriors having been killed by Captain Lewis, while attempting to steal horses. Through the country infested by these savages the expedition would have to proceed, and Colter was urgent in reiterating the precautions that ought to be observed respecting them. He had himself experienced their vindictive cruelty, and his story deserves particular citation, as showing the hairbreadth adventures to which these solitary rovers of the wilderness are exposed.

Colter, with the hardihood of a regular trapper, had cast himself loose from the party of Lewis and Clarke in the very heart of the wilderness, and had remained to trap beaver alone on the head waters of the Missouri. Here he fell in with another lonely trapper, like himself, named Potts, and they agreed to keep together. They were in the very region of the terrible Blackfeet, at that time thirsting to revenge the death of their companion, and knew that they had to expect no mercy at their hands. They were obliged to keep concealed all day in the woody margins of the rivers, setting their traps after nightfall and taking them up before daybreak. It was running a fearful risk for the sake of a few beaver skins; but such is the life of the trapper.

They were on a branch of the Missouri called Jefferson Fork, and had set their traps at night,

---

about six miles up a small river that emptied into the fork. Early in the morning they ascended the river in a canoe, to examine the traps. The banks on each side were high and perpendicular, and cast a shade over the stream. As they were softly paddling along, they heard the trampling of many feet upon the banks. Colter immediately gave the alarm of "Indians!" and was for instant retreat. Potts scoffed at him for being frightened by the trampling of a herd of buffaloes. Colter checked his uneasiness and paddled forward. They had not gone much further when frightful whoops and yells burst forth from each side of the river, and several hundred Indians appeared on either bank. Signs were made to the unfortunate trappers to come on shore. They were obliged to comply. Before they could get out of their canoe, a savage seized the rifle belonging to Potts. Colter sprang on shore, wrestled the weapon from the hands of the Indian, and restored it to his companion, who was still in the canoe, and immediately pushed into the stream. There was the sharp twang of a bow, and Potts cried out that he was wounded. Colter urged him to come on shore and submit, as his only chance for life; but the other knew there was no prospect of mercy, and determined to die game. Leveling his rifle, he shot one of the savages dead on the spot. The next moment he fell himself, pierced with innumerable arrows.

The vengeance of the savages now turned upon Colter. He was stripped naked, and, having some knowledge of the Blackfoot language, overheard a consultation as to the mode of despatching him, so as to derive the greatest amusement from his death. Some were for setting him up as a mark, and having a trial of skill at his expense. The chief, however, was for nobler sport. He seized Colter by the shoulder, and demanded if he could run fast. The unfortunate trapper was too well acquainted with Indian customs not to comprehend the drift of the question. He knew he was to run for his life, to furnish a kind of human hunt to his persecutors. Though in reality he was noted among his brother hunters for swiftness of foot, he assured the chief that he was a very bad runner. His stratagem gained him some vantage ground. He was led by the chief into the prairie, about four hundred yards from the main body of savages, and then turned loose to save himself if he could. A tremendous yell let him know that the whole pack of bloodhounds were off in full cry. Colter flew rather than ran; he was astonished at his own speed; but he had six miles of prairie to traverse before he should reach the Jefferson Fork of the Missouri; how could he hope to hold out such a distance with the fearful odds of several hundred to one against him! The plain, too, abounded with the prickly pear, which wounded his naked feet. Still he fled on, dreading each moment to hear the twang of a bow, and to feel an arrow quivering at his heart. He did not even dare to look round, lest he should lose an inch of that distance on which his life depended. He had run nearly half way across the plain when the sound of pursuit grew somewhat fainter, and he ventured to turn his head. The main body of his pursuers were a considerable distance behind; several of the fastest runners were scattered in the advance; while a swift-footed warrior, armed with a spear, was not more than a hundred yards behind him.

Inspired with new hope, Colter redoubled his exertions, but strained himself to such a degree, that the blood gushed from his mouth and nostrils, and streamed down his breast. He arrived within a mile of the river. The sound of footsteps gathered upon him. A glance behind showed his pursuer within twenty yards, and preparing to launch his spear. Stopping short he turned round and spread out his arms. The savage, confounded by this sudden action, attempted to stop

and hurl his spear, but fell in the very act. His spear stuck in the ground, and the shaft broke in his hand. Colter plucked up the pointed part, pinned the savage to the earth, and continued his flight. The Indians, as they arrived at their slaughtered companion, stopped to howl over him. Colter made the most of this precious delay, gained the skirt of cotton-wood bordering the river, dashed through it, and plunged into the stream. He swam to a neighboring island, against the upper end of which the driftwood had lodged in such quantities as to form a natural raft; under this he dived, and swam below water until he succeeded in getting a breathing place between the floating trunks of trees, whose branches and bushes formed a covert several feet above the level of the water. He had scarcely drawn breath after all his toils, when he heard his pursuers on the river bank, whooping and yelling like so many fiends. They plunged in the river, and swam to the raft. The heart of Colter almost died within him as he saw them, through the chinks of his concealment, passing and repassing, and seeking for him in all directions. They at length gave up the search, and he began to rejoice in his escape, when the idea presented itself that they might set the raft on fire. Here was a new source of horrible apprehension, in which he remained until nightfall. Fortunately the idea did not suggest itself to the Indians. As soon as it was dark, finding by the silence around that his pursuers had departed, Colter dived again and came up beyond the raft. He then swam silently down the river for a considerable distance, when he landed, and kept on all night, to get as far as possible from this dangerous neighborhood.

By daybreak he had gained sufficient distance to relieve him from the terrors of his savage foes; but now new sources of inquietude presented themselves. He was naked and alone, in the midst of an unbounded wilderness; his only chance was to reach a trading post of the Missouri Company, situated on a branch of the Yellowstone River. Even should he elude his pursuers, days must elapse before he could reach this post, during which he must traverse immense prairies destitute of shade, his naked body exposed to the burning heat of the sun by day, and the dews and chills of the night season, and his feet lacerated by the thorns of the prickly pear. Though he might see game in abundance around him, he had no means of killing any for his sustenance, and must depend for food upon the roots of the earth. In defiance of these difficulties he pushed resolutely forward, guiding himself in his trackless course by those signs and indications known only to Indians and backwoodsmen; and after braving dangers and hardships enough to break down any spirit but that of a western pioneer, arrived safe at the solitary post in question. \* (\* Bradbury, *Travels in America*, p. 17.)

Such is a sample of the rugged experience which Colter had to relate of savage life; yet, with all these perils and terrors fresh in his recollection, he could not see the present band on their way to those regions of danger and adventure, without feeling a vehement impulse to join them. A western trapper is like a sailor; past hazards only stimulate him to further risks. The vast prairie is to the one what the ocean is to the other, a boundless field of enterprise and exploit. However he may have suffered in his last cruise, he is always ready to join a new expedition; and the more adventurous its nature, the more attractive is it to his vagrant spirit.

Nothing seems to have kept Colter from continuing with the party to the shores of the Pacific but the circumstances of his having recently married. All the morning he kept with them, balancing

---

in his mind the charms of his bride against those of the Rocky Mountains; the former, however, prevailed, and after a march of several miles, he took a reluctant leave of the travellers, and turned his face homeward.

Continuing their progress up the Missouri, the party encamped on the evening of the 21st of March, in the neighborhood of a little frontier village of French creoles. Here Pierre Dorion met with some of his old comrades, with whom he had a long gossip, and returned to the camp with rumors of bloody feuds between the Osages and the loways, or Ayaways, Potowatomies, Sioux, and Sawkees. Blood had already been shed, and scalps been taken. A war party, three hundred strong, were prowling in the neighborhood; others might be met with higher up the river; it behooved the travellers, therefore, to be upon their guard against robbery or surprise, for an Indian war-party on the march is prone to acts of outrage.

In consequence of this report, which was subsequently confirmed by further intelligence, a guard was kept up at night round the encampment, and they all slept on their arms. As they were sixteen in number, and well supplied with weapons and ammunition, they trusted to be able to give any marauding party a warm reception. Nothing occurred, however, to molest them on their voyage, and on the 8th of April they came in sight of Fort Osage. On their approach the flag was hoisted on the fort, and they saluted it by a discharge of fire-arms. Within a short distance of the fort was an Osage village, the inhabitants of which, men, women, and children, thronged down to the water side to witness their landing. One of the first persons they met on the river bank was Mr. Crooks, who had come down in a boat, with nine men, from their winter encampment at Nodowa to meet them.

They remained at Fort Osage a part of three days, during which they were hospitably entertained at the garrison by Lieutenant Brownson, who held a temporary command. They were regaled also with a war-feast at the village; the Osage warriors having returned from a successful foray against the loways, in which they had taken seven scalps. They were paraded on poles about the village, followed by the warriors decked out in all their savage ornaments, and hideously painted as if for battle.

By the Osage warriors, Mr. Hunt and his companions were again warned to be on their guard in ascending the river, as the Sioux tribe meant to lay in wait and attack them.

On the 10th of April they again embarked their party, being now augmented to twenty-six, by the addition of Mr. Crooks and his boat's crew. They had not proceeded far, however, when there was a great outcry from one of the boats; it was occasioned by a little domestic discipline in the Dorion family. The squaw of the worthy interpreter, it appeared, had been so delighted with the scalp-dance, and other festivities of the Osage village, that she had taken a strong inclination to remain there. This had been as strongly opposed by her liege lord, who had compelled her to embark. The good dame had remained sulky ever since, whereupon Pierre, seeing no other mode of exorcising the evil spirit out of her, and being, perhaps, a little inspired by whiskey, had resorted to the Indian remedy of the cudgel, and before his neighbors could interfere, had belabored her

so soundly, that there is no record of her having shown any refractory symptoms throughout the remainder of the expedition.

For a week they continued their voyage, exposed to almost incessant rains. The bodies of drowned buffaloes floated past them in vast numbers; many had drifted upon the shore, or against the upper ends of the rafts and islands. These had attracted great flights of turkey-buzzards; some were banqueting on the carcasses, others were soaring far aloft in the sky, and others were perched on the trees, with their backs to the sun, and their wings stretched out to dry, like so many vessels in harbor, spreading their sails after a shower.

The turkey-buzzard (*vultur aura*, or golden vulture), when on the wing, is one of the most specious and imposing of birds. Its flight in the upper regions of the air is really sublime, extending its immense wings, and wheeling slowly and majestically to and fro, seemingly without exerting a muscle or fluttering a feather, but moving by mere volition, and sailing on the bosom of the air, as a ship upon the ocean. Usurping the empyreal realm of the eagle, he assumes for a time the port and dignity of that majestic bird, and often is mistaken for him by ignorant crawlers upon the earth. It is only when he descends from the clouds to pounce upon carrion that he betrays his low propensities, and reveals his caitiff character. Near at hand he is a disgusting bird, ragged in plumage, base in aspect, and of loathsome odor.

On the 17th of April Mr. Hunt arrived with his party at the station near the Nodowa River, where the main body had been quartered during the winter.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XVI.

Return of Spring.- Appearance of Snakes.- Great Flights of Wild Pigeons.- Renewal of the Voyage.- Night Encampments.- Platte River. - Ceremonials on Passing It.- Signs of Indian War Parties.- Magnificent Prospect at Papillion Creek.- Desertion of Two Hunters.An Irruption Into the Camp of Indian Desperadoes.- Village of the Omahas.-A necdotes of the Tribe.- Feudal Wars of the Indians.-Story of Blackbird, the Famous Omaha Chief.

THE weather continued rainy and ungenial for some days after Mr. Hunt's return to Nodowa; yet spring was rapidly advancing and vegetation was putting forth with all its early freshness and beauty. The snakes began to recover from their torpor and crawl forth into day; and the neighborhood of the wintering house seems to have been much infested with them. Mr. Bradbury, in the course of his botanical researches, found a surprising number in a half torpid state, under flat stones upon the banks which overhung the cantonment, and narrowly escaped being struck by a rattlesnake, which darted at him from a cleft in the rock, but fortunately gave him warning by his rattle.

The pigeons, too, were filling the woods in vast migratory flocks. It is almost incredible to describe the prodigious flights of these birds in the western wildernesses. They appear absolutely in clouds, and move with astonishing velocity, their wings making a whistling sound as they fly.

The rapid evolutions of these flocks wheeling and shifting suddenly as if with one mind and one impulse; the flashing changes of color they present, as their backs' their breasts, or the under part of their wings are turned to the spectator, are singularly pleasing. When they alight, if on the ground, they cover whole acres at a time; if upon trees, the branches often break beneath their weight. If suddenly startled while feeding in the midst of a forest, the noise they make in getting on the wing is like the roar of a cataract or the sound of distant thunder.

A flight of this kind, like an Egyptian flight of locusts, devours everything that serves for its food as it passes along. So great were the numbers in the vicinity of the camp that Mr. Bradbury, in the course of a morning's excursion, shot nearly three hundred with a fowling-piece. He gives a curious, though apparently a faithful, account of the kind of discipline observed in these immense flocks, so that each may have a chance of picking up food. As the front ranks must meet with the greatest abundance, and the rear ranks must have scanty pickings, the instant a rank finds itself the hindmost, it rises in the air, flies over the whole flock and takes its place in the advance. The next rank follows in its course, and thus the last is continually becoming first and all by turns have a front place at the banquet.

The rains having at length subsided, Mr. Hunt broke up the encampment and resumed his course up the Missouri.

The party now consisted of nearly sixty persons, of whom five were partners, one, John Reed, was a clerk; forty were Canadian "voyageurs," or "engages," and there were several hunters. They embarked in four boats, one of which was of a large size, mounting a swivel, and two howitzers. All were furnished with masts and sails, to be used when the wind was sufficiently favorable and strong to overpower the current of the river. Such was the case for the first four or five days, when they were wafted steadily up the stream by a strong southeaster.

Their encampments at night were often pleasant and picturesque: on some beautiful bank, beneath spreading trees, which afforded them shelter and fuel. The tents were pitched, the fires made, and the meals prepared by the voyageurs, and many a story was told, and joke passed, and song sung round the evening fire. All, however, were asleep at an early hour. Some under the tents, others wrapped in blankets before the fire, or beneath the trees; and some few in the boats and canoes.

On the 28th, they breakfasted on one of the islands which lie at the mouth of the Nebraska or Platte River - the largest tributary of the Missouri, and about six hundred miles above its confluence with the Mississippi. This broad but shallow stream flows for an immense distance through a wide and verdant valley scooped out of boundless prairies. It draws its main supplies, by several forks or branches, from the Rocky Mountains. The mouth of this river is established as the dividing point between the upper and lower Missouri; and the earlier voyagers, in their toilsome ascent, before the introduction of steamboats, considered one-half of their labors accomplished when they reached this place. The passing of the mouth of the Nebraska, therefore, was equivalent among boatmen to the crossing of the line among sailors, and was celebrated with like ceremo-

nials of a rough and waggish nature, practiced upon the uninitiated; among which was the old nautical joke of shaving. The river deities, however, like those of the sea, were to be propitiated by a bribe, and the infliction of these rude honors to be parried by a treat to the adepts.

At the mouth of the Nebraska new signs were met with of war parties which had recently been in the vicinity. There was the frame of a skin canoe, in which the warriors had traversed the river. At night, also, the lurid reflection of immense fires hung in the sky, showing the conflagration of great tracts of the prairies. Such fires not being made by hunters so late in the season, it was supposed they were caused by some wandering war parties. These often take the precaution to set the prairies on fire behind them to conceal their traces from their enemies. This is chiefly done when the party has been unsuccessful, and is on the retreat and apprehensive of pursuit. At such time it is not safe even for friends to fall in with them, as they are apt to be in savage humor, and disposed to vent their spleen in capricious outrage. These signs, therefore, of a band of marauders on the prowl, called for some degree of vigilance on the part of the travellers.

After passing the Nebraska, the party halted for part of two days on the bank of the river, a little above Papillion Creek, to supply themselves with a stock of oars and poles from the tough wood of the ash, which is not met with higher up the Missouri. While the voyagers were thus occupied, the naturalists rambled over the adjacent country to collect plants. From the summit of a range of bluffs on the opposite side of the river, about two hundred and fifty feet high, they had one of those vast and magnificent prospects which sometimes unfold themselves in those boundless regions. Below them was the Valley of the Missouri, about seven miles in breadth, clad in the fresh verdure of spring; enameled with flowers and interspersed with clumps and groves of noble trees, between which the mighty river poured its turbulent and turbid stream. The interior of the country presented a singular scene; the immense waste being broken up by innumerable green hills, not above eight feet in height, but extremely steep, and actually pointed at their summits. A long line of bluffs extended for upwards of thirty miles parallel to the Missouri, with a shallow lake stretching along their base, which had evidently once formed a bed of the river. The surface of this lake was covered with aquatic plants, on the broad leaves of which numbers of water-snakes, drawn forth by the genial warmth of spring, were basking in the sunshine.

On the 2d day of May, at the usual hour of embarking, the camp was thrown into some confusion by two of the hunters, named Harrington, expressing their intention to abandon the expedition and return home. One of these had joined the party in the preceding autumn, having been hunting for two years on the Missouri; the other had engaged at St. Louis, in the following March, and had come up from thence with Mr. Hunt. He now declared that he had enlisted merely for the purpose of following his brother, and persuading him to return; having been enjoined to do so by his mother, whose anxiety had been awakened by the idea of his going on such a wild and distant expedition.

The loss of two stark hunters and prime riflemen was a serious affair to the party, for they were approaching the region where they might expect hostilities from the Sioux; indeed, throughout the whole of their perilous journey, the services of such men would be all important, for little

reliance was to be placed upon the valor of the Canadians in case of attack. Mr. Hunt endeavored by arguments, expostulations, and entreaties, to shake the determination of the two brothers. He represented to them that they were between six and seven hundred miles above the mouth of the Missouri; that they would have four hundred miles to go before they could reach the habitation of a white man, throughout which they would be exposed to all kinds of risks; since, he declared, if they persisted in abandoning him and breaking their faith, he would not furnish them with a single round of ammunition. All was in vain; they obstinately persisted in their resolution; whereupon, Mr. Hunt, partly incited by indignation, partly by the policy of deterring others from desertion, put his threat into execution, and left them to find their way back to the settlements without, as he supposed, a single bullet or charge of powder.

The boats now continued their slow and toilsome course for several days, against the current of the river. The late signs of roaming war parties caused a vigilant watch to be kept up at night when the crews encamped on shore; nor was this vigilance superfluous; for on the night of the seventh instant, there was a wild and fearful yell, and eleven Sioux warriors, stark naked, with tomahawks in their hands, rushed into the camp. They were instantly surrounded and seized, whereupon their leader called out to his followers to desist from any violence, and pretended to be perfectly pacific in his intentions. It proved, however, that they were a part of the war party, the skeleton of whose canoe had been seen at the mouth of the river Platte, and the reflection of whose fires had been descried in the air. They had been disappointed or defeated in the foray, and in their rage and mortification these eleven warriors had "devoted their clothes to the medicine." This is a desperate act of Indian braves when foiled in war, and in dread of scoffs and sneers. In such case they sometimes threw off their clothes and ornaments, devote themselves to the Great Spirit, and attempt some reckless exploit with which to cover their disgrace. Woe to any defenseless party of white men that may then fall in their way!

Such was the explanation given by Pierre Dorion, the half-breed interpreter, of this wild intrusion into the camp; and the party were so exasperated when appraised of the sanguinary intentions of the prisoners, that they were for shooting them on the spot. Mr. Hunt, however, exerted his usual moderation and humanity, and ordered that they should be conveyed across the river in one of the boats, threatening them however, with certain death if again caught in any hostile act.

On the 10th of May the party arrived at the Omaha (pronounced Omawhaw) village, about eight hundred and thirty miles above the mouth of the Missouri, and encamped in its neighborhood. The village was situated under a hill on the bank of the river, and consisted of about eighty lodges. These were of a circular and conical form, and about sixteen feet in diameter; being mere tents of dressed buffalo skins, sewed together and stretched on long poles, inclined towards each other so as to cross at about half their height. Thus the naked tops of the poles diverge in such a manner that, if they were covered with skins like the lower ends, the tent would be shaped like an hour-glass, and present the appearance of one cone inverted on the apex of another.

The forms of Indian lodges are worthy of attention, each tribe having a different mode of shaping and arranging them, so that it is easy to tell, on seeing a lodge or an encampment at a distance, to

what tribe the inhabitants belong. The exterior of the Omaha lodges have often a gay and fanciful appearance, being painted with undulating bands of red or yellow, or decorated with rude figures of horses, deer, and buffaloes, and with human faces, painted like full moons, four and five feet broad.

The Omahas were once one of the numerous and powerful tribes of the prairies, vying in warlike might and prowess with the Sioux, the Pawnees, the Sauks, the Kongsas, and the Iatans. Their wars with the Sioux, however, had thinned their ranks, and the small-pox in 1802 had swept off two thirds of their number. At the time of Mr. Hunt's visit they still boasted about two hundred warriors and hunters, but they are now fast melting away, and before long, will be numbered among those extinguished nations of the west that exist but in tradition.

In his correspondence with Mr. Astor, from this point of his journey, Mr. Hunt gives a sad account of the Indian tribes bordering on the river. They were in continual war with each other, and their wars were of the most harassing kind; consisting, not merely of main conflicts and expeditions of moment, involving the sackings, burnings, and massacres of towns and villages, but of individual acts of treachery, murder, and cold-blooded cruelty; or of vaunting and foolhardy exploits of single warriors, either to avenge some personal wrong, or gain the vainglorious trophy of a scalp. The lonely hunter, the wandering wayfarer, the poor squaw cutting wood or gathering corn, was liable to be surprised and slaughtered. In this way tribes were either swept away at once, or gradually thinned out, and savage life was surrounded with constant horrors and alarms. That the race of red men should diminish from year to year, and so few should survive of the numerous nations which evidently once peopled the vast regions of the west, is nothing surprising; it is rather matter of surprise that so many should survive; for the existence of a savage in these parts seems little better than a prolonged and all-besetting death. It is, in fact, a caricature of the boasted romance of feudal times; chivalry in its native and uncultured state, and knight-errantry run wild.

In their most prosperous days, the Omahas looked upon themselves as the most powerful and perfect of human beings, and considered all created things as made for their peculiar use and benefit. It is this tribe of whose chief, the famous Wash-ing-guhsah-ba, or Blackbird, such savage and romantic stories are told. He had died about ten years previous to the arrival of Mr. Hunt's party, but his name was still mentioned with awe by his people. He was one of the first among the Indian chiefs on the Missouri to deal with the white traders, and showed great sagacity in levying his royal dues. When a trader arrived in his village, he caused all his goods to be brought into his lodge and opened. From these he selected whatever suited his sovereign pleasure; blankets, tobacco, whiskey, powder, ball, beads, and red paint; and laid the articles on one side, without deigning to give any compensation. Then calling to him his herald or crier, he would order him to mount on top of the lodge and summon all the tribe to bring in their peltries, and trade with the white man. The lodge would soon be crowded with Indians bringing bear, beaver, otter, and other skins. No one was allowed to dispute the prices fixed by the white trader upon his articles; who took care to indemnify himself five times over for the goods set apart by the chief. In this way the Blackbird enriched himself, and enriched the white men, and became exceedingly popular

---

among the traders of the Missouri. His people, however, were not equally satisfied by a regulation of trade which worked so manifestly against them, and began to show signs of discontent. Upon this a crafty and unprincipled trader revealed a secret to the Blackbird, by which he might acquire unbounded sway over his ignorant and superstitious subjects. He instructed him in the poisonous qualities of arsenic, and furnished him with an ample supply of that baneful drug. From this time the Blackbird seemed endowed with supernatural powers, to possess the gift of prophecy, and to hold the disposal of life and death within his hands. Woe to any one who questioned his authority or dared to dispute his commands! The Blackbird prophesied his death within a certain time, and he had the secret means of verifying his prophecy. Within the fated period the offender was smitten with strange and sudden disease, and perished from the face of the earth. Every one stood aghast at these multiplied examples of his superhuman might, and dreaded to displease so omnipotent and vindictive a being; and the Blackbird enjoyed a wide and undisputed sway.

It was not, however, by terror alone that he ruled his people; he was a warrior of the first order, and his exploits in arms were the theme of young and old. His career had begun by hardships, having been taken prisoner by the Sioux, in early youth. Under his command, the Omahas obtained great character for military prowess, nor did he permit an insult or an injury to one of his tribe to pass unrevenged. The Pawnee republicans had inflicted a gross indignity on a favorite and distinguished Omaha brave. The Blackbird assembled his warriors, led them against the Pawnee town, attacked it with irresistible fury, slaughtered a great number of its inhabitants, and burnt it to the ground. He waged fierce and bloody war against the Ottoes for many years, until peace was effected between them by the mediation of the whites. Fearless in battle, and fond of signaling himself, he dazzled his followers by daring acts. In attacking a Kanza village, he rode singly round it, loading and discharging his rifle at the inhabitants as he galloped past them. He kept up in war the same idea of mysterious and supernatural power. At one time, when pursuing a war party by their tracks across the prairies, he repeatedly discharged his rifle into the prints made by their feet and by the hoofs of their horses, assuring his followers that he would thereby cripple the fugitives, so that they would easily be overtaken. He in fact did overtake them, and destroyed them almost to a man; and his victory was considered miraculous, both by friends and foe. By these and similar exploits, he made himself the pride and boast of his people, and became popular among them, notwithstanding his death-denouncing fiat.

With all his savage and terrific qualities, he was sensible of the power of female beauty, and capable of love. A war party of the Poncas had made a foray into the lands of the Omahas, and carried off a number of women and horses. The Blackbird was roused to fury, and took the field with all his braves, swearing to "eat up the Ponca nation" - the Indian threat of exterminating war. The Poncas, sorely pressed, took refuge behind a rude bulwark of earth; but the Blackbird kept up so galling a fire, that he seemed likely to execute his menace. In their extremity they sent forth a herald, bearing the calumet or pipe of peace, but he was shot down by order of the Blackbird. Another herald was sent forth in similar guise, but he shared a like fate. The Ponca chief then, as a last hope, arrayed his beautiful daughter in her finest ornaments, and sent her forth with a calumet, to sue for peace. The charms of the Indian maid touched the stern heart of the Blackbird; he accepted the pipe at her hand, smoked it, and from that time a peace took place between the Poncas and

---

the Omahas.

This beautiful damsel, in all probability, was the favorite wife whose fate makes so tragic an incident in the story of the Blackbird. Her youth and beauty had gained an absolute sway over his rugged heart, so that he distinguished her above all of his other wives. The habitual gratification of his vindictive impulses, however, had taken away from him all mastery over his passions, and rendered him liable to the most furious transports of rage. In one of these his beautiful wife had the misfortune to offend him, when suddenly drawing his knife, he laid her dead at his feet with a single blow.

In an instant his frenzy was at an end. He gazed for a time in mute bewilderment upon his victim; then drawing his buffalo robe over his head, he sat down beside the corpse, and remained brooding over his crime and his loss. Three days elapsed, yet the chief continued silent and motionless; tasting no food, and apparently sleepless. It was apprehended that he intended to starve himself to death; his people approached him in trembling awe, and entreated him once more to uncover his face and be comforted; but he remained unmoved. At length one of his warriors brought in a small child, and laying it on the ground, placed the foot of the Blackbird upon its neck. The heart of the gloomy savage was touched by this appeal; he threw aside his robe; made an harangue upon what he had done; and from that time forward seemed to have thrown the load of grief and remorse from his mind.

He still retained his fatal and mysterious secret, and with it his terrific power; but, though able to deal death to his enemies, he could not avert it from himself or his friends. In 1802 the small-pox, that dreadful pestilence, which swept over the land like a fire over the prairie, made its appearance in the village of the Omahas. The poor savages saw with dismay the ravages of a malady, loathsome and agonizing in its details, and which set the skill and experience of their conjurors and medicine men at defiance. In a little while, two thirds of the population were swept from the face of the earth, and the doom of the rest seemed sealed. The stoicism of the warriors was at an end; they became wild and desperate; some set fire to the village as a last means of checking the pestilence; others, in a frenzy of despair, put their wives and children to death, that they might be spared the agonies of an inevitable disease, and that they might all go to some better country.

When the general horror and dismay was at its height, the Blackbird himself was struck down with the malady. The poor savages, when they saw their chief in danger, forgot their own miseries, and surrounded his dying bed. His dominant spirit, and his love for the white men, were evinced in his latest breath, with which he designated his place of sepulture. It was to be on a hill or promontory, upwards of four hundred feet in height, overlooking a great extent of the Missouri, from whence he had been accustomed to watch for the barks of the white men. The Missouri washes the base of the promontory, and after winding and doubling in many links and mazes in the plain below, returns to within nine hundred yards of its starting-place; so that for thirty miles navigating with sail and oar the voyager finds himself continually near to this singular promontory as if spell-bound.

It was the dying command of the Blackbird that his tomb should be on the summit of this hill, in which he should be interred, seated on his favorite horse, that he might overlook his ancient domain, and behold the barks of the white men as they came up the river to trade with his people.

His dying orders were faithfully obeyed. His corpse was placed astride of his war-steed and a mound raised over them on the summit of the hill. On top of the mound was erected a staff, from which fluttered the banner of the chieftain, and the scalps that he had taken in battle. When the expedition under Mr. Hunt visited that part of the country, the staff still remained, with the fragments of the banner; and the superstitious rite of placing food from time to time on the mound, for the use of the deceased, was still observed by the Omahas. That rite has since fallen into disuse, for the tribe itself is almost extinct. Yet the hill of the Blackbird continues an object of veneration to the wandering savage, and a landmark to the voyager of the Missouri; and as the civilized traveller comes within sight of its spell-bound crest, the mound is pointed out to him from afar, which still incloses the grim skeletons of the Indian warrior and his horse.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XVII.

Rumors of Danger From the Sioux Tetons.- Ruthless Character of Those Savages.- Pirates of the Missouri.- Their Affair with Crooks and M'Lellan.- A Trading Expedition Broken Up.- M'Lellan's Vow of Vengeance.- Uneasiness in the Camp.- Desertions.- Departure From the Omaha Village.- Meeting With Jones and Carson, two Adventurous Trappers.- Scientific Pursuits of Messrs. Bradbury and Nuttall. - Zeal of a Botanist.- Adventure of Mr. Bradbury with a Ponca Indian. - Expedient of the Pocket Compass and Microscope.- A Messenger From Lisa.- Motives for Pressing Forward.

WHILE Mr. Hunt and his party were sojourning at the village of the Omahas, three Sioux Indians of the Yankton Alma tribe arrived, bringing unpleasant intelligence. They reported that certain bands of the Sioux Tetons, who inhabited a region many leagues further up the Missouri, were near at hand, awaiting the approach of the party, with the avowed intention of opposing their progress.

The Sioux Tetons were at that time a sort of pirates of the Missouri, who considered the well freighted bark of the American trader fair game. They had their own traffic with the British merchants of the Northwest, who brought them regular supplies of merchandise by way of the river St. Peter. Being thus independent of the Missouri traders for their supplies, they kept no terms with them, but plundered them whenever they had an opportunity. It has been insinuated that they were prompted to these outrages by the British merchants, who wished to keep off all rivals in the Indian trade; but others allege another motive, and one savoring of a deeper policy. The Sioux, by their intercourse with the British traders, had acquired the use of firearms, which had given them vast superiority over other tribes higher up the Missouri. They had made themselves also, in a manner, factors for the upper tribes, supplying them at second hand, and at greatly advanced prices, with goods derived from the white men. The Sioux, therefore, saw with jealousy the American traders pushing their way up the Missouri; foreseeing that the upper tribes would

thus be relieved from all dependence on them for supplies; nay, what was worse, would be furnished with fire-arms, and elevated into formidable rivals.

We have already alluded to a case in which Mr. Crooks and Mr. M'Lellan had been interrupted in a trading voyage by these ruffians of the river, and, as it is in some degree connected with circumstances hereafter to be related, we shall specify it more particularly.

About two years before the time of which we are treating, Crooks and M'Lellan were ascending the river in boats with a party of about forty men, bound on one of their trading expeditions to the upper tribes. In one of the bends of the river, where the channel made a deep curve under impending banks, they suddenly heard yells and shouts above them, and beheld the cliffs overhead covered with armed savages. It was a band of Sioux warriors, upwards of six hundred strong. They brandished their weapons in a menacing manner, and ordered the boats to turn back and land lower down the river. There was no disputing these commands, for they had the power to shower destruction upon the white men, without risk to themselves. Crooks and M'Lellan, therefore, turned back with feigned alacrity, and, landing, had an interview with the Sioux. The latter forbade them, under pain of exterminating hostility, from attempting to proceed up the river, but offered to trade peacefully with them if they would halt where they were. The party, being principally composed of voyageurs, was too weak to contend with so superior a force, and one so easily augmented; they pretended, therefore, to comply cheerfully with their arbitrary dictation, and immediately proceeded to cut down trees and erect a trading house. The warrior band departed for their village, which was about twenty miles distant, to collect objects of traffic; they left six or eight of their number, however, to keep watch upon the white men, and scouts were continually passing to and fro with intelligence.

Mr. Crooks saw that it would be impossible to prosecute his voyage without the danger of having his boats plundered, and a great part of his men massacred; he determined, however, not to be entirely frustrated in the objects of his expedition. While he continued, therefore, with great apparent earnestness and assiduity, the construction of the trading house, he despatched the hunters and trappers of his party in a canoe, to make their way up the river to the original place of destination, there to busy themselves in trapping and collecting peltries, and to await his arrival at some future period.

As soon as the detachment had had sufficient time to ascend beyond the hostile country of the Sioux, Mr. Crooks suddenly broke up his feigned trading establishment, embarked his men and effects, and, after giving the astonished rear-guard of savages a galling and indignant message to take to their countrymen, pushed down the river with all speed, sparing neither oar nor paddle, day nor night, until fairly beyond the swoop of these river hawks.

What increased the irritation of Messrs. Crooks and M'Lellan, at this mortifying check to their gainful enterprise, was the information that a rival trader was at the bottom of it; the Sioux, it is said, having been instigated to this outrage by Mr. Manuel Lisa, the leading partner and agent of the Missouri Fur Company, already mentioned. This intelligence, whether true or false, so roused

the fiery temper of M'Lellan, that he swore, if ever he fell in with Lisa in the Indian country, he would shoot him on the spot; a mode of redress perfectly in unison with the character of the man, and the code of honor prevalent beyond the frontier.

If Crooks and M'Lellan had been exasperated by the insolent conduct of the Sioux Tetons, and the loss which it had occasioned, those freebooters had been no less indignant at being outwitted by the white men, and disappointed of their anticipated gains, and it was apprehended they would be particularly hostile against the present expedition, when they should learn that these gentlemen were engaged in it.

All these causes of uneasiness were concealed as much as possible from the Canadian voyageurs, lest they should become intimidated; it was impossible, however, to prevent the rumors brought by the Indians from leaking out, and they became subjects of gossiping and exaggeration. The chief of the Omahas, too, on returning from a hunting excursion, reported that two men had been killed some distance above, by a band of Sioux. This added to the fears that already began to be excited. The voyageurs pictured to themselves bands of fierce warriors stationed along each bank of the river, by whom they would be exposed to be shot down in their boats: or lurking hordes, who would set on them at night, and massacre them in their encampments. Some lost heart, and proposed to return, rather than fight their way, and, in a manner, run the gauntlet through the country of these piratical marauders. In fact, three men deserted while at this village. Luckily, their place was supplied by three others who happened to be there, and who were prevailed on to join the expedition by promises of liberal pay, and by being fitted out and equipped in complete style.

The irresolution and discontent visible among some of his people, arising at times almost to mutiny, and the occasional desertions which took place while thus among friendly tribes, and within reach of the frontiers, added greatly to the anxieties of Mr. Hunt, and rendered him eager to press forward and leave a hostile tract behind him, so that it would be as perilous to return as to keep on, and no one would dare to desert.

Accordingly, on the 15th of May he departed from the village of the Omahas, and set forward towards the country of the formidable Sioux Tetons. For the first five days they had a fair and fresh breeze, and the boats made good progress. The wind then came ahead, and the river beginning to rise, and to increase in rapidity, betokened the commencement of the annual flood, caused by the melting of the snow on the Rocky Mountains, and the vernal rains of the upper prairies.

As they were now entering a region where foes might be lying in wait on either bank, it was determined, in hunting for game, to confine themselves principally to the islands, which sometimes extend to considerable length, and are beautifully wooded, affording abundant pasturage and shade. On one of these they killed three buffaloes and two elks, and halting on the edge of a beautiful prairie, made a sumptuous hunter's repast. They had not long resumed their boats and pulled along the river banks when they descried a canoe approaching, navigated by two men, whom, to their surprise, they ascertained to be white men. They proved to be two of those strange and

fearless wanderers of the wilderness, the trappers. Their names were Benjamin Jones and Alexander Carson. They had been for two years past hunting and trapping near the head of the Missouri, and were thus floating for thousands of miles in a cockle-shell, down a turbulent stream, through regions infested by savage tribes, yet apparently as easy and unconcerned as if navigating securely in the midst of civilization.

The acquisition of two such hardy, experienced, and dauntless hunters was peculiarly desirable at the present moment. They needed but little persuasion. The wilderness is the home of the trapper; like the sailor, he cares but little to which point of the compass he steers; and Jones and Carson readily abandoned their voyage to St. Louis, and turned their faces towards the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific.

The two naturalists, Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Nuttall, who had joined the expedition at St. Louis, still accompanied it, and pursued their researches on all occasions. Mr. Nuttall seems to have been exclusively devoted to his scientific pursuits. He was a zealous botanist, and all his enthusiasm was awakened at beholding a new world, as it were, opening upon him in the boundless prairies, clad in the vernal and variegated robe of unknown flowers. Whenever the boats landed at meal times, or for any temporary purpose, he would spring on shore, and set out on a hunt for new specimens. Every plant or flower of a rare or unknown species was eagerly seized as a prize. Delighted with the treasures spreading themselves out before him, he went groping and stumbling along among the wilderness of sweets, forgetful of everything but his immediate pursuit, and had often to be sought after when the boats were about to resume their course. At such times he would be found far off in the prairies, or up the course of some petty stream, laden with plants of all kinds.

The Canadian voyageurs, who are a class of people that know nothing out of their immediate line, and with constitutional levity make a jest of anything they cannot understand, were extremely puzzled by this passion for collecting what they considered mere useless weeds. When they saw the worthy botanist coming back heavy laden with his specimens, and treasuring them up as carefully as a miser would his hoard, they used to make merry among themselves at his expense, regarding him as some whimsical kind of madman.

Mr. Bradbury was less exclusive in his tastes and habits, and combined the hunter and sportsman with the naturalist. He took his rifle or his fowling-piece with him in his geological researches, conformed to the hardy and rugged habits of the men around him, and of course gained favor in their eyes. He had a strong relish for incident and adventure, was curious in observing savage manners, and savage life, and ready to join any hunting or other excursion. Even now, that the expedition was proceeding through a dangerous neighborhood, he could not check his propensity to ramble. Having observed, on the evening of the 22d of May, that the river ahead made a great bend which would take up the navigation of the following day, he determined to profit by the circumstance. On the morning of the 23d, therefore, instead of embarking, he filled his shot-pouch with parched corn, for provisions, and set off to cross the neck on foot and meet the boats in the afternoon at the opposite side of the bend. Mr. Hunt felt uneasy at his venturing thus alone, and reminded him that he was in an enemy's country; but Mr. Bradbury made light of the danger,

and started off cheerily upon his ramble. His day was passed pleasantly in traversing a beautiful tract, making botanical and geological researches, and observing the habits of an extensive village of prairie dogs, at which he made several ineffectual shots, without considering the risk he ran of attracting the attention of any savages that might be lurking in the neighborhood. In fact he had totally forgotten the Sioux Tetons, and all the other perils of the country, when, about the middle of the afternoon, as he stood near the river bank, and was looking out for the boat, he suddenly felt a hand laid on his shoulder. Starting and turning round, he beheld a naked savage with a bow bent, and the arrow pointed at his breast. In an instant his gun was leveled and his hand upon the lock. The Indian drew his bow still further, but forbore to launch the shaft. Mr. Bradbury, with admirable presence of mind, reflected that the savage, if hostile in his intents, would have shot him without giving him a chance of defense; he paused, therefore, and held out his hand. The other took it in sign of friendship, and demanded in the Osage language whether he was a Big Knife, or American. He answered in the affirmative, and inquired whether the other were a Sioux. To his great relief he found that he was a Ponca. By his time two other Indians came running up, and all three laid hold of Mr. Bradbury and seemed disposed to compel him to go off with them among the hills. He resisted, and sitting down on a sand hill contrived to amuse them with a pocket compass. When the novelty of this was exhausted they again seized him, but he now produced a small microscope. This new wonder again fixed the attention of the savages, who have more curiosity than it has been the custom to allow them. While thus engaged, one of them suddenly leaped up and gave a war-whoop. The hand of the hardy naturalist was again on his gun, and he was prepared to make battle, when the Indian pointed down the river and revealed the true cause of his yell. It was the mast of one of the boats appearing above the low willows which bordered the stream. Mr. Bradbury felt infinitely relieved by the sight. The Indians on their part now showed signs of apprehension, and were disposed to run away; but he assured them of good treatment and something to drink if they would accompany him on board of the boats. They lingered for a time, but disappeared before the boats came to land.

On the following morning they appeared at camp accompanied by several of their tribe. With them came also a white man, who announced himself as a messenger bearing missives for Mr. Hunt. In fact he brought a letter from Mr. Manuel Lisa, partner and agent of the Missouri Fur Company. As has already been mentioned, this gentleman was going in search of Mr. Henry and his party, who had been dislodged from the forks of the Missouri by the Blackfeet Indians, and had shifted his post somewhere beyond the Rocky Mountains. Mr. Lisa had left St. Louis three weeks after Mr. Hunt, and having heard of the hostile intentions of the Sioux, had made the greatest exertions to overtake him, that they might pass through the dangerous part of the river together. He had twenty stout oarsmen in his service and they plied their oars so vigorously, that he had reached the Omaha village just four days after the departure of Mr. Hunt. From this place he despatched the messenger in question, trusting to his overtaking the barges as they toiled up against the stream, and were delayed by the windings of the river. The purport of his letter was to entreat Mr. Hunt to wait until he could come up with him, that they might unite their forces and be a protection to each other in their perilous course through the country of the Sioux. In fact, as it was afterwards ascertained, Lisa was apprehensive that Mr. Hunt would do him some ill office with the Sioux band, securing his own passage through their country by pretending that he, with

whom they were accustomed to trade, was on his way to them with a plentiful supply of goods. He feared, too, that Crooks and M'Lellan would take this opportunity to retort upon him the perfidy which they accused him of having used, two years previously, among these very Sioux. In this respect, however, he did them signal injustice. There was no such thing as court design or treachery in their thought; but M'Lellan, when he heard that Lisa was on his way up the river, renewed his open threat of shooting him the moment he met him on Indian land.

The representations made by Crooks and M'Lellan of the treachery they had experienced, or fancied, on the part of Lisa, had great weight with Mr. Hunt, especially when he recollected the obstacles that had been thrown in his way by that gentleman at St. Louis. He doubted, therefore, the fair dealing of Lisa, and feared that, should they enter the Sioux country together, the latter might make use of his influence with that tribe, as he had in the case of Crooks and M'Lellan, and instigate them to oppose his progress up the river.

He sent back, therefore, an answer calculated to beguile Lisa, assuring him that he would wait for him at the Poncas village, which was but a little distance in advance; but, no sooner had the messenger departed, than he pushed forward with all diligence, barely stopping at the village to procure a supply of dried buffalo meat, and hastened to leave the other party as far behind as possible, thinking there was less to be apprehended from the open hostility of Indian foes than from the quiet strategy of an Indian trader.

Washington Irving's Astoria

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

Camp Gossip.- Deserters.- Recruits.- Kentucky Hunters.- A Veteran Woodman.- Tidings of Mr. Henry.- Danger From the Blackfeet. - Alteration of Plans.- Scenery of the River.- Buffalo Roads.- Iron Ore.- Country of the Sioux.- A Land of Danger.- apprehensions of the Voyageurs.- Indian Scouts.- Threatened Hostilities.- A Council of War.- An Array of Battle.- A Parley.- The Pipe of Peace.- Speech-Making.

IT was about noon when the party left the Poncas village, about a league beyond which they passed the mouth of the Quicourt, or Rapid River (called, in the original French, l'Eau Qui Court). After having proceeded some distance further, they landed, and encamped for the night. In the evening camp, the voyageurs gossiped, as usual, over the events of the day; and especially over intelligence picked up among the Poncas. These Indians had confirmed the previous reports of the hostile intentions of the Sioux, and had assured them that five tribes, or bands, of that fierce nation were actually assembled higher up the river, and waiting to cut them off. This evening gossip, and the terrific stories of Indian warfare to which it gave rise, produced a strong effect upon the imagination of the irresolute; and in the morning it was discovered that the two men, who had joined the party at the Omaha village, and been so bounteously fitted out, had deserted in the course of the night, carrying with them all their equipments. As it was known that one of them could not swim, it was hoped that the banks of the Quicourt River would bring them to a halt. A general pursuit was therefore instituted, but without success.

On the following morning (May 26th), as they were all on shore, breakfasting on one of the beautiful banks of the river, they observed two canoes descending along the opposite side. By the aid of spy-glasses, they ascertained that there were two white men in one of the canoes, and one in the other. A gun was discharged, which called the attention of the voyagers, who crossed over. They proved to be the three Kentucky hunters, of the true "dreadnought" stamp. Their names were Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Rizner. Robinson was a veteran backwoodsman, sixty-six years of age. He had been one of the first settlers of Kentucky, and engaged in many of the conflicts of the Indians on "the Bloody Ground." In one of these battles he had been scalped, and he still wore a handkerchief bound round his head to protect the part. These men had passed several years in the upper wilderness. They had been in the service of the Missouri Company under Mr. Henry, and had crossed the Rocky Mountains with him in the preceding year, when driven from his post on the Missouri by the hostilities of the Blackfeet. After crossing the mountains, Mr. Henry had established himself on one of the head branches of the Columbia River. There they had remained with him some months, hunting and trapping, until, having satisfied their wandering propensities, they felt disposed to return to the families and comfortable homes which they had left in Kentucky. They had accordingly made their way back across the mountains, and down the rivers, and were in full career for St. Louis, when thus suddenly interrupted. The sight of a powerful party of traders, trappers, hunters, and voyageurs, well armed and equipped, furnished at all points, in high health and spirits, and banqueting lustily on the green margin of the river, was a spectacle equally stimulating to these veteran backwoodsmen with the glorious array of a campaigning army to an old soldier; but when they learned the grand scope and extent of the enterprise in hand, it was irresistible; homes and families and all the charms of green Kentucky vanished from their thoughts; they cast loose their canoes to drift down the stream, and joyfully enlisted in the band of adventurers. They engaged on similar terms with some of the other hunters. The company was to fit them out, and keep them supplied with the requisite equipments and munitions, and they were to yield one half of the produce of their hunting and trapping.

The addition of three such staunch recruits was extremely acceptable at this dangerous part of the river. The knowledge of the country which they had acquired, also, in their journeys and hunting excursions along the rivers and among the Rocky Mountains was all important; in fact, the information derived from them induced Mr. Hunt to alter his future course. He had hitherto intended to proceed by the route taken by Lewis and Clarke in their famous exploring expedition, ascending the Missouri to its forks, and thence going, by land, across the mountains. These men informed him, however, that, on taking that course he would have to pass through the country invested by the savage tribe of the Blackfeet, and would be exposed to their hostilities; they being, as has already been observed, exasperated to deadly animosity against the whites, on account of the death of one of their tribe by the hand of Captain Lewis. They advised him rather to pursue a route more to the southward, being the same by which they had returned. This would carry them over the mountains about where the head-waters of the Platte and the Yellowstone take their rise, at a place much more easy and practicable than that where Lewis and Clarke had crossed. In pursuing this course, also, he would pass through a country abounding with game, where he would have a better chance of procuring a constant supply of provisions than by the other route, and would run less risk of molestation from the Blackfeet. Should he adopt this advice, it would be better for him

to abandon the river at the Arickara town, at which he would arrive in the course of a few days. As the Indians at that town possessed horses in abundance, he might purchase a sufficient number of them for his great journey overland, which would commence at that place.

After reflecting on this advice, and consulting with his associates, Mr. Hunt came to the determination to follow the route thus pointed out, to which the hunters engaged to pilot him.

The party continued their voyage with delightful May weather. The prairies bordering on the river were gayly painted with innumerable flowers, exhibiting the motley confusion of colors of a Turkey carpet. The beautiful islands, also, on which they occasionally halted, presented the appearance of mingled grove and garden. The trees were often covered with clambering grapevines in blossom, which perfumed the air. Between the stately masses of the groves were grassy lawns and glades, studded with flowers, or interspersed with rose-bushes in full bloom. These islands were often the resort of the buffalo, the elk, and the antelope, who had made innumerable paths among the trees and thickets, which had the effect of the mazy walks and alleys of parks and shrubberies. Sometimes, where the river passed between high banks and bluffs, the roads made by the tramp of buffaloes for many ages along the face of the heights, looked like so many well-travelled highways. At other places the banks were banded with great veins of iron ore, laid bare by the abrasion of the river. At one place the course of the river was nearly in a straight line for about fifteen miles. The banks sloped gently to its margin, without a single tree, but bordered with grass and herbage of a vivid green. Along each bank, for the whole fifteen miles, extended a stripe, one hundred yards in breadth, of a deep rusty brown, indicating an inexhaustible bed of iron, through the center of which the Missouri had worn its way. Indications of the continuance of this bed were afterwards observed higher up the river. It is, in fact, one of the mineral magazines which nature has provided in the heart of this vast realm of fertility, and which, in connection with the immense beds of coal on the same river, seem garnered up as the elements of the future wealth and power of the mighty West.

The sight of these mineral treasures greatly excited the curiosity of Mr. Bradbury, and it was tantalizing to him to be checked in his scientific researches, and obliged to forego his usual rambles on shore; but they were now entering the fated country of the Sioux Tetons, in which it was dangerous to wander about unguarded.

This country extends for some days' journey along the river, and consists of vast prairies, here and there diversified by swelling hills, and cut up by ravines, the channels of turbid streams in the rainy seasons, but almost destitute of water during the heats of summer. Here and there on the sides of the hills, or along the alluvial borders and bottoms of the ravines, are groves and skirts of forest: but for the most part the country presented to the eye a boundless waste, covered with herbage, but without trees.

The soil of this immense region is strongly impregnated with sulphur, copperas, alum, and glauber salts; its various earths impart a deep tinge to the streams which drain it, and these, with the crumbling of the banks along the Missouri, give to the waters of that river much of the coloring

---

matter with which they are clouded.

Over this vast tract the roving bands of the Sioux Tetons hold their vagrant sway, subsisting by the chase of the buffalo, the elk, the deer, and the antelope, and waging ruthless warfare with other wandering tribes.

As the boats made their way up the stream bordered by this land of danger, many of the Canadian voyageurs, whose fears had been awakened, would regard with a distrustful eye the boundless waste extending on each side. All, however, was silent, and apparently untenanted by a human being. Now and then a herd of deer would be seen feeding tranquilly among the flowery herbage, or a line of buffaloes, like a caravan on its march, moving across the distant profile of the prairie. The Canadians, however, began to apprehend an ambush in every thicket, and to regard the broad, tranquil plain as a sailor eyes some shallow and perfidious sea, which, though smooth and safe to the eye, conceals the lurking rock or treacherous shoal. The very name of a Sioux became a watchword of terror. Not an elk, a wolf, or any other animal, could appear on the hills, but the boats resounded with exclamations from stem to stern, "voila les Sioux! voila les Sioux!" (there are the Sioux! there are the Sioux!) Whenever it was practicable, the night encampment was on some island in the center of the stream.

On the morning of the 31st of May, as the travellers were breakfasting on the right bank of the river, the usual alarm was given, but with more reason, as two Indians actually made their appearance on a bluff on the opposite or northern side, and harangued them in a loud voice. As it was impossible at that distance to distinguish what they said, Mr. Hunt, after breakfast, crossed the river with Pierre Dorion, the interpreter, and advanced boldly to converse with them, while the rest remained watching in mute suspense the movements of the parties. As soon as Mr. Hunt landed, one of the Indians disappeared behind the hill, but shortly reappeared on horseback, and went scouring off across the heights. Mr. Hunt held some conference with the remaining savage, and then recrossed the river to his party.

These two Indians proved to be spies or scouts of a large war party encamped about a league off, and numbering two hundred and eighty lodges, or about six hundred warriors, of three different tribes of Sioux; the Yangtons Ahna, the Tetons Bois-brule, and the Tetons Min-na-kine-azzo. They expected daily to be reinforced by two other tribes, and had been waiting eleven days for the arrival of Mr. Hunt's party, with a determination to oppose their progress up the river; being resolved to prevent all trade of the white men with their enemies the Arickaras, Mandans, and Minatarees. The Indian who had galloped off on horseback had gone to give notice of the approach of the party, so that they might now look out for some fierce scenes with those piratical savages, of whom they had received so many formidable accounts.

The party braced up their spirits to the encounter, and reembarking, pulled resolutely up the stream. An island for some time intervened between them and the opposite side of the river; but on clearing the upper end, they came in full view of the hostile shore. There was a ridge of hills down which the savages were pouring in great numbers, some on horseback, and some on foot.

Reconnoitering them with the aid of glasses, they perceived that they were all in warlike array, painted and decorated for battle. Their weapons were bows and arrows, and a few short carbines, and most of them had round shields. Altogether they had a wild and gallant appearance, and, taking possession of a point which commanded the river, ranged themselves along the bank as if prepared to dispute their passage.

At sight of this formidable front of war, Mr. Hunt and his companions held counsel together. It was plain that the rumors they had heard were correct, and the Sioux were determined to oppose their progress by force of arms. To attempt to elude them and continue along the river was out of the question. The strength of the mid-current was too violent to be withstood, and the boats were obliged to ascend along the river banks. These banks were often high and perpendicular, affording the savages frequent stations, from whence, safe themselves, and almost unseen, they might show down their missiles upon the boats below, and retreat at will, without danger from pursuit. Nothing apparently remained, therefore, but to fight or turn back. The Sioux far outnumbered them, it is true, but their own party was about sixty strong, well armed and supplied with ammunition; and, beside their guns and rifles, they had a swivel and two howitzers mounted in the boats. Should they succeed in breaking this Indian force by one vigorous assault, it was likely they would be deterred from making any future attack of consequence. The fighting alternative was, therefore, instantly adopted, and the boats pulled to shore nearly opposite to the hostile force. Here the arms were all examined and put in order. The swivel and howitzers were then loaded with powder and discharged, to let the savages know by the report how formidably they were provided. The noise echoed along the shores of the river, and must have startled the warriors who were only accustomed to sharp reports of rifles. The same pieces were then loaded with as many bullets as they would probably bear; after which the whole party embarked, and pulled across the river. The Indians remained watching them in silence, their painted forms and visages glaring in the sun, and their feathers fluttering in the breeze. The poor Canadians eyed them with rueful glances, and now and then a fearful ejaculation escaped them. "Parbleu! this is a sad scrape we are in, brother!" one would mutter to the next oarsman. "Aye, aye!" the other would reply, "we are not going to a wedding, my friend!"

When the boats arrived within rifle-shot, the hunters and other fighting personages on board seized their weapons, and prepared for action. As they rose to fire, a confusion took place among the savages. They displayed their buffalo robes, raised them with both hands above their heads, and then spread them before them on the ground. At sight of this, Pierre Dorion eagerly cried out to the party not to fire, as this movement was a peaceful signal, and an invitation to a parley. Immediately about a dozen of the principal warriors, separating from the rest, descended to the edge of the river, lighted a fire, seated themselves in a semicircle round it, and, displaying the calumet, invited the party to land. Mr. Hunt now called a council of the partners on board of his boat. The question was, whether to trust to the amicable overtures of these ferocious people? It was determined in the affirmative; for, otherwise, there was no alternative but to fight them. The main body of the party were ordered to remain on board of the boats, keeping within shot and prepared to fire in case of any signs of treachery; while Mr. Hunt and the other partners (M'Kenzie, Crooks, Miller, and M'Lellan) proceeded to land, accompanied by the interpreter and Mr. Bradbury. The

chiefs, who awaited them on the margin of the river, remained seated in their semicircle, without stirring a limb or moving a muscle, motionless as so many statues. Mr. Hunt and his companions advanced without hesitation, and took their seats on the sand so as to complete the circle. The band of warriors who lined the banks above stood looking down in silent groups and clusters, some ostentatiously equipped and decorated, others entirely naked but fantastically painted, and all variously armed.

The pipe of peace was now brought forward with due ceremony. The bowl was of a species of red stone resembling porphyry; the stem was six feet in length, decorated with tufts of horse-hair dyed red. The pipe-bearer stepped within the circle, lighted the pipe, held it towards the sun, then towards the different points of the compass, after which he handed it to the principal chief. The latter smoked a few whiffs, then, holding the head of the pipe in his hand, offered the other end to Mr. Hunt, and to each one successively in the circle. When all had smoked, it was considered that an assurance of good faith and amity had been interchanged. Mr. Hunt now made a speech in French, which was interpreted as he proceeded by Pierre Dorion. He informed the Sioux of the real object of the expedition of himself and his companions, which was, not to trade with any of the tribes up the river, but to cross the mountains to the great salt lake in the west, in search of some of their brothers, whom they had not seen for eleven months. That he had heard of the intention of the Sioux to oppose his passage, and was prepared, as they might see, to effect it at all hazards; nevertheless, his feelings towards the Sioux were friendly, in proof of which he had brought them a present of tobacco and corn. So saying, he ordered about fifteen carottes of tobacco, and as many bags of corn, to be brought from the boat and laid in a heap near the council fire.

The sight of these presents mollified the chieftain, who had, doubtless, been previously rendered considerate by the resolute conduct of the white men, the judicious disposition of their little armament, the completeness of their equipments, and the compact array of battle which they presented. He made a speech in reply, in which he stated the object of their hostile assemblage, which had been merely to prevent supplies of arms and ammunition from going to the Arickaras, Mandans, and Minatarees, with whom they were at war; but being now convinced that the party were carrying no supplies of the kind, but merely proceeding in quest of their brothers beyond the mountains, they would not impede them in their voyage. He concluded by thanking them for their present, and advising them to encamp on the opposite side of the river, as he had some young men among his warriors for whose discretion he could not be answerable, and who might be troublesome.

Here ended the conference: they all arose, shook hands, and parted. Mr. Hunt and his companions re-embarked, and the boats proceeded on their course unmolested.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XIX.

The Great Bend of the Missouri- Crooks and M'Lellan Meet With Two of Their Indian Opponents- Wanton Outrage of a White Man the Cause of Indian Hostility- Dangers and Precautions.-An Indian War Party.- Dangerous Situation of Mr. Hunt.- A Friendly Encampment.

---

-Feasting and Dancing.- Approach of Manuel Lisa and His Party -.A Grim Meeting Between Old Rivals.- Pierre Dorion in a Fury.- A Burst of chivalry.

ON the afternoon of the following day (June 1st) they arrived at the great bend, where the river winds for about thirty miles round a circular peninsula, the neck of which is not above two thousand yards across. On the succeeding morning, at an early hour, they descried two Indians standing on a high bank of the river, waving and spreading their buffalo robes in signs of amity. They immediately pulled to shore and landed. On approaching the savages, however, the latter showed evident symptoms of alarm, spreading out their arms horizontally, according to their mode of supplicating clemency. The reason was soon explained. They proved to be two chiefs of the very war party that had brought Messrs. Crooks and M'Lellan to a stand two years before, and obliged them to escape down the river. They ran to embrace these gentlemen, as if delighted to meet with them; yet they evidently feared some retaliation of their past misconduct, nor were they quite at ease until the pipe of peace had been smoked.

Mr. Hunt having been informed that the tribe to which these men belonged had killed three white men during the preceding summer, reproached them with the crime, and demanded their reasons for such savage hostility. "We kill white men," replied one of the chiefs, "because white men kill us. That very man," added he, pointing to Carson, one of the new recruits, "killed one of our brothers last summer. The three white men were slain to avenge his death."

Their chief was correct in his reply. Carson admitted that, being with a party of Arickaras on the banks of the Missouri, and seeing a war party of Sioux on the opposite side, he had fired with his rifle across. It was a random shot, made without much expectation of effect, for the river was full half a mile in breadth. Unluckily it brought down a Sioux warrior, for whose wanton destruction threefold vengeance had been taken, as has been stated. In this way outrages are frequently committed on the natives by thoughtless or mischievous white men; the Indians retaliate according to a law of their code, which requires blood for blood; their act, of what with them is pious vengeance, resounds throughout the land, and is represented as wanton and unprovoked; the neighborhood is roused to arms; a war ensues, which ends in the destruction of half the tribe, the ruin of the rest, and their expulsion from their hereditary homes. Such is too often the real history of Indian warfare, which in general is traced up only to some vindictive act of a savage; while the outrage of the scoundrel white man that provoked it is sunk in silence.

The two chiefs, having smoked their pipe of peace and received a few presents, departed well satisfied. In a little while two others appeared on horseback, and rode up abreast of the boats. They had seen the presents given to their comrades, but were dissatisfied with them, and came after the boats to ask for more. Being somewhat peremptory and insolent in their demands, Mr. Hunt gave them a flat refusal, and threatened, if they or any of their tribes followed him with similar demands, to treat them as enemies. They turned and rode off in a furious passion. As he was ignorant what force these chiefs might have behind the hills, and as it was very possible they might take advantage of some pass of the river to attack the boats, Mr. Hunt called all stragglers on board and prepared for such emergency. It was agreed that the large boat commanded by Mr.

Hunt should ascend along the northeast side of the river, and the three smaller boats along the south side. By this arrangement each party would command a view of the opposite heights above the heads and out of sight of their companions, and could give the alarm should they perceive any Indians lurking there. The signal of alarm was to be two shots fired in quick succession.

The boats proceeded for the greater part of the day without seeing any signs of an enemy. About four o'clock in the afternoon the large boat, commanded by Mr. Hunt, came to where the river was divided by a long sand-bar, which apparently, however, left a sufficient channel between it and the shore along which they were advancing. He kept up this channel, therefore, for some distance, until the water proved too shallow for the boat. It was necessary, therefore, to put about, return down the channel, and pull round the lower end of the sand-bar into the main stream. Just as he had given orders to this effect to his men, two signal guns were fired from the boats on the opposite side of the river. At the same moment, a file of savage warriors was observed pouring down from the impending bank, and gathering on the shore at the lower end of the bar. They were evidently a war party, being armed with bows and arrows, battle clubs and carbines, and round bucklers of buffalo hide, and their naked bodies were painted with black and white stripes. The natural inference was, that they belonged to the two tribes of Sioux which had been expected by the great war party, and that they had been incited to hostility by the two chiefs who had been enraged by the refusal and the menace of Mr. Hunt. Here then was a fearful predicament. Mr. Hunt and his crew seemed caught, as it were, in a trap. The Indians, to a number of about a hundred, had already taken possession of a point near which the boat would have to pass: others kept pouring down the bank, and it was probable that some would remain posted on the top of the height.

The hazardous situation of Mr. Hunt was perceived by those in the other boats, and they hastened to his assistance. They were at some distance above the sand-bar, however, and on the opposite side of the river, and saw, with intense anxiety, the number of savages continually augmenting, at the lower end of the channel, so that the boat would be exposed to a fearful attack before they could render it any assistance. Their anxiety increased, as they saw Mr. Hunt and his party descending the channel and dauntlessly approaching the point of danger; but it suddenly changed into surprise on beholding the boat pass close by the savage horde unmolested, and steer out safely into the broad river.

The next moment the whole band of warriors was in motion. They ran along the bank until they were opposite to the boats, then throwing by their weapons and buffalo robes, plunged into the river, waded and swam off to the boats and surrounded them in crowds, seeking to shake hands with every individual on board; for the Indians have long since found this to be the white man's token of amity, and they carried it to an extreme.

All uneasiness was now at an end. The Indians proved to be a war party of Arickaras, Mandans, and Minatarees, consisting of three hundred warriors, and bound on a foray against the Sioux. Their war plans were abandoned for the present, and they determined to return to the Arickara town, where they hoped to obtain from the white men arms and ammunition that would enable them to take the field with advantage over their enemies.

The boats now sought the first convenient place for encamping. The tents were pitched; the warriors fixed their camp at about a hundred yards distant; provisions were furnished from the boats sufficient for all parties; there was hearty though rude feasting in both camps, and in the evening the red warriors entertained their white friends with dances and songs, that lasted until after midnight.

On the following morning (July 3) the travellers re-embarked, and took a temporary leave of their Indian friends, who intended to proceed immediately for the Arickara town, where they expected to arrive in three days, long before the boats could reach there. Mr. Hunt had not proceeded far before the chief came galloping along the shore and made signs for a parley. He said, his people could not go home satisfied unless they had something to take with them to prove that they had met with the white men. Mr. Hunt understood the drift of the speech, and made the chief a present of a cask of powder, a bag of balls, and three dozen of knives, with which he was highly pleased. While the chief was receiving these presents an Indian came running along the shore, and announced that a boat, filled with white men, was coming up the river. This was by no means agreeable tidings to Mr. Hunt, who correctly concluded it to be the boat of Mr. Manuel Lisa; and he was vexed to find that alert and adventurous trader upon his heels, whom he hoped to have out-manuevered, and left far behind. Lisa, however, was too much experienced in the wiles of Indian trade to be lulled by the promise of waiting for him at the Poncas village; on the contrary, he had allowed himself no repose, and had strained every nerve to overtake the rival party, and availing himself of the moonlight, had even sailed during a considerable part of the night. In this he was partly prompted by his apprehensions of the Sioux, having met a boat which had probably passed Mr. Hunt's party in the night, and which had been fired into by these savages.

On hearing that Lisa was so near at hand, Mr. Hunt perceived that it was useless to attempt any longer to evade him; after proceeding a few miles further, therefore, he came to a halt and waited for him to come up. In a little while the barge of Lisa made its appearance. It came sweeping gently up the river, manned by its twenty stout oarsmen, and armed by a swivel mounted at the bow. The whole number on board amounted to twenty-six men: among whom was Mr. Henry Breckenridge, then a young, enterprising man; who was a mere passenger, tempted by notions of curiosity to accompany Mr. Lisa. He has since made himself known by various writings, among which may be noted a narrative of this very voyage.

The approach of Lisa, while it was regarded with uneasiness by Mr. Hunt, roused the ire of M'Lellan; who, calling to mind old grievances, began to look round for his rifle, as if he really intended to carry his threat into execution and shoot him on the spot; and it was with some difficulty that Mr. Hunt was enabled to restrain his ire, and prevent a scene of outraged confusion.

The meeting between the two leaders, thus mutually distrustful, could not be very cordial: and as to Messrs. Crooks and M'Lellan, though they refrained from any outbreak, yet they regarded in grim defiance their old rival and underplotter. In truth a general distrust prevailed throughout the party concerning Lisa and his intentions. They considered him artful and slippery, and secret-

ly anxious for the failure of their expedition. There being now nothing more to be apprehended from the Sioux, they suspected that Lisa would take advantage of his twenty-oared barge to leave them and get first among the Arickaras. As he had traded with those people and possessed great influence over them, it was feared he might make use of it to impede the business of Mr. Hunt and his party. It was resolved, therefore, to keep a sharp look-out upon his movements; and M'Lellan swore that if he saw the least sign of treachery on his part, he would instantly put his old threat into execution.

Notwithstanding these secret jealousies and heart-burnings, the two parties maintained an outward appearance of civility, and for two days continued forward in company with some degree of harmony. On the third day, however, an explosion took place, and it was produced by no less a personage than Pierre Dorion, the half-breed interpreter. It will be recollected that this worthy had been obliged to steal a march from St. Louis, to avoid being arrested for an old whiskey debt which he owed to the Missouri Fur Company, and by which Mr. Lisa had hoped to prevent his enlisting in Mr. Hunt's expedition. Dorion, since the arrival of Lisa, had kept aloof and regarded him with a sullen and dogged aspect. On the fifth of July the two parties were brought to a halt by a heavy rain, and remained encamped about a hundred yards apart. In the course of the day Lisa undertook to tamper with the faith of Pierre Dorion, and, inviting him on board of his boat, regaled him with his favorite whiskey. When he thought him sufficiently mellowed, he proposed to him to quit the service of his new employers and return to his old allegiance. Finding him not to be moved by soft words, he called to mind his old debt to the company, and threatened to carry him off by force, in payment of it. The mention of this debt always stirred up the gall of Pierre Dorion, bringing with it the remembrance of the whiskey extortion. A violent quarrel arose between him and Lisa, and he left the boat in high dudgeon. His first step was to repair to the tent of Mr. Hunt and reveal the attempt that had been made to shake his faith. While he was yet talking Lisa entered the tent, under the pretext of coming to borrow a towing line. High words instantly ensued between him and Dorion, which ended by the half-breed's dealing him a blow. A quarrel in the "Indian country", however, is not to be settled with fisticuffs. Lisa immediately rushed to his boat for a weapon. Dorion snatched up a pair of pistols belonging to Mr. Hunt, and placed himself in battle array. The noise had roused the camp, and every one pressed to know the cause. Lisa now reappeared upon the field with a knife stuck in his girdle. Mr. Breckenridge, who had tried in vain to mollify his ire, accompanied him to the scene of action. Pierre Dorion's pistols gave him the advantage, and he maintained a most warlike attitude. In the meantime, Crooks and M'Lellan had learnt the cause of the affray, and were each eager to take the quarrel into their own hands. A scene of uproar and hubbub ensued that defies description. M'Lellan would have brought his rifle into play and settled all old and new grudges by a pull of the trigger, had he not been restrained by Mr. Hunt. That gentleman acted as moderator, endeavoring to prevent a general melee; in the midst of the brawl, however, an expression was made use of by Lisa derogatory to his own honor. In an instant the tranquil spirit of Mr. Hunt was in a flame. He now became as eager for the fight as any one on the ground, and challenged Lisa to settle the dispute on the spot with pistols. Lisa repaired to his boat to arm himself for the deadly feud. He was followed by Messrs. Bradbury and Breckenridge, who, novices in Indian life and the "chivalry" of the frontier, had no relish for scenes of blood and brawl. By their earnest mediation the quarrel was brought to a close without

bloodshed; but the two leaders of the rival camps separated in anger, and all personal intercourse ceased between them.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER XX.

Features of the Wilderness- Herds of Buffalo.- Antelopes- Their Varieties and Habits.- John Day.- His Hunting Strategy- Interview with Three Arickaras- Negotiations Between the Rival Parties - The Left-Handed and the Big Man, two Arickara Chiefs.- Arickara Village- Its Inhabitants- Ceremonials on Landing- A Council Lodge.- Grand Conference - Speech of Lisa.- Negotiation for Horses. -Shrewd Suggestion of Gray Eyes, an Arickara Chief -Encampment of the Trading Parties.

THE rival parties now coasted along the opposite sides of the river, within sight of each other; the barges of Mr. Hunt always keeping some distance in the advance, lest Lisa should push on and get first to the Arickara village. The scenery and objects, as they proceeded, gave evidence that they were advancing deeper and deeper into the domains of savage nature. Boundless wastes kept extending to the eye, more and more animated by herds of buffalo. Sometimes these unwieldy animals were seen moving in long procession across the silent landscape; at other times they were scattered about, singly or in groups, on the broad, enameled prairies and green acclivities, some cropping the rich pasturage, others reclining amidst the flowery herbage; the whole scene realizing in a manner the old Scriptural descriptions of the vast pastoral countries of the Orient, with "cattle upon a thousand hills."

At one place the shores seemed absolutely lined with buffaloes; many were making their way across the stream, snorting, and blowing, and floundering. Numbers, in spite of every effort, were borne by the rapid current within shot of the boats, and several were killed. At another place a number were descried on the beach of a small island, under the shade of the trees, or standing in the water, like cattle, to avoid the flies and the heat of the day.

Several of the best marksmen stationed themselves in the bow of a barge which advanced slowly and silently, stemming the current with the aid of a broad sail and a fair breeze. The buffaloes stood gazing quietly at the barge as it approached, perfectly unconscious of their danger. The fattest of the herd was selected by the hunters, who all fired together and brought down their victim.

Besides the buffaloes they saw abundance of deer, and frequent gangs of stately elks, together with light troops of sprightly antelopes, the fleetest and most beautiful inhabitants of the prairies.

There are two kinds of antelopes in these regions, one nearly the size of the common deer, the other not much larger than a goat. Their color is a light gray, or rather dun, slightly spotted with white; and they have small horns like those of the deer, which they never shed. Nothing can surpass the delicate and elegant finish of their limbs, in which lightness, elasticity, and strength are wonderfully combined. All the attitudes and movements of this beautiful animal are graceful and picturesque; and it is altogether as fit a subject for the fanciful uses of the poet as the oft-sung gazelle of the East.

Their habits are shy and capricious; they keep on the open plains, are quick to take the alarm, and bound away with a fleetness that defies pursuit. When thus skimming across a prairie in the autumn, their light gray or dun color blends with the hue of the withered herbage, the swiftness of their motion baffles the eye, and they almost seem unsubstantial forms, driven like gossamer before the wind.

While they thus keep to the open plain and trust to their speed, they are safe; but they have a prurient curiosity that sometimes betrays them to their ruin. When they have scud for some distance and left their pursuer behind, they will suddenly stop and turn to gaze at the object of their alarm. If the pursuit is not followed up they will, after a time, yield to their inquisitive hankering, and return to the place from whence they have been frightened.

John Day, the veteran hunter already mentioned, displayed his experience and skill in entrapping one of these beautiful animals. Taking advantage of its well known curiosity, he laid down flat among the grass, and putting his handkerchief on the end of his ramrod, waved it gently in the air. This had the effect of the fabled fascination of the rattlesnake. The antelope approached timidly, pausing and reconnoitering with increased curiosity; moving round the point of attraction in a circle, but still drawing nearer and nearer, until being within range of the deadly rifle, he fell a victim to his curiosity.

On the 10th of June, as the party were making brisk progress with a fine breeze, they met a canoe with three Indians descending the river. They came to a parley, and brought news from the Arickara village. The war party, which had caused such alarm at the sand-bar, had reached the village some days previously, announced the approach of a party of traders, and displayed with great ostentation the presents they had received from them. On further conversation with these three Indians, Mr. Hunt learnt the real danger which he had run, when hemmed up within the sand-bar. The Mandans who were of the war party, when they saw the boat so completely entrapped and apparently within their power, had been eager for attacking it, and securing so rich a prize. The Minatarees, also, were nothing loath, feeling in some measure committed in hostility to the whites, in consequence of their tribe having killed two white men above the fort of the Missouri Fur Company. Fortunately, the Arickaras, who formed the majority of the war party, proved true in their friendship to the whites, and prevented any hostile act, otherwise a bloody affray, and perhaps a horrible massacre might have ensued.

On the 11th of June, Mr. Hunt and his companions encamped near an island about six miles below the Arickara village. Mr. Lisa encamped, as usual, at no great distance; but the same sullen jealous reserve and non-intercourse continued between them. Shortly after pitching the tents, Mr. Breckenridge made his appearance as an ambassador from the rival camp. He came on behalf of his companions, to arrange the manner of making their entrance into the village and of receiving the chiefs; for everything of the kind is a matter of grave ceremonial among the Indians.

The partners now expressed frankly their deep distrust of the intentions of Mr. Lisa, and their

---

apprehensions, that, out of the jealousy of trade, and resentment of recent disputes, he might seek to instigate the Arickaras against them. Mr. Breckenridge assured them that their suspicions were entirely groundless, and pledged himself that nothing of the kind should take place. He found it difficult, however, to remove their distrust; the conference, therefore, ended without producing any cordial understanding; and M'Lellan recurred to his old threat of shooting Lisa the instant he discovered anything like treachery in his proceedings.

That night the rain fell in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning. The camp was deluged, and the bedding and baggage drenched. All hands embarked at an early hour, and set forward for the village. About nine o'clock, when half way, they met a canoe, on board of which were two Arickara dignitaries. One, a fine-looking man, much above the common size, was hereditary chief of the village; he was called the Left-handed, on account of a personal peculiarity. The other, a ferocious-looking savage, was the war chief, or generalissimo; he was known by the name of the Big Man, an appellation he well deserved from his size, for he was of a gigantic frame. Both were of fairer complexion than is usual with savages.

They were accompanied by an interpreter; a French creole, one of those haphazard wights of Gallic origin who abound upon our frontiers, living among the Indians like one of their own race. He had been twenty years among the Arickaras, had a squaw and troop of piebald children, and officiated as interpreter to the chiefs. Through this worthy organ the two dignitaries signified to Mr. Hunt their sovereign intention to oppose the further progress of the expedition up the river unless a boat were left to trade with them. Mr. Hunt, in reply, explained the object of his voyage, and his intention of debarking at their village and proceeding thence by land; and that he would willingly trade with them for a supply of horses for his journey. With this explanation they were perfectly satisfied, and putting about, steered for their village to make preparations for the reception of the strangers.

The village of the Rikaras, Arickaras, or Ricarees, for the name is thus variously written, is between the 46th and 47th parallels of north latitude, and fourteen hundred and thirty miles above the mouth of the Missouri. The party reached it about ten o'clock in the morning, but landed on the opposite side of the river, where they spread out their baggage and effects to dry. From hence they commanded an excellent view of the village. It was divided into two portions, about eighty yards apart, being inhabited by two distinct bands. The whole extended about three-quarters of a mile along the river bank, and was composed of conical lodges, that looked like so many small hillocks, being wooden frames intertwined with osier, and covered with earth. The plain beyond the village swept up into hills of considerable height, but the whole country was nearly destitute of trees. While they were regarding the village, they beheld a singular fleet coming down the river. It consisted of a number of canoes, each made of a single buffalo hide stretched on sticks, so as to form a kind of circular trough. Each one was navigated by a single squaw, who knelt in the bottom and paddled; towing after her frail bark a bundle of floating wood intended for firing. This kind of canoe is in frequent use among the Indians; the buffalo hide being readily made up into a bundle and transported on horseback; it is very serviceable in conveying baggage across the rivers.

The great number of horses grazing around the village, and scattered over the neighboring hills and valleys, bespoke the equestrian habit of the Arickaras, who are admirable horsemen. Indeed, in the number of his horses consists the wealth of an Indian of the prairies; who resembles an Arab in his passion for this noble animal, and in his adroitness in the management of it.

After a time, the voice of the sovereign chief, "the Left-handed," was heard across the river, announcing that the council lodge was preparing, and inviting the white men to come over. The river was half a mile in width, yet every word uttered by the chieftain was heard; this may be partly attributed to the distinct manner in which every syllable of the compound words in the Indian language is articulated and accented; but in truth, a savage warrior might often rival Achilles himself for force of lungs. \* (\* Bradbury, p. 110.)

Now came the delicate point of management - how the two rival parties were to conduct their visit to the village with proper circumspection and due decorum. Neither of the leaders had spoken to each other since their quarrel. All communication had been by ambassadors. Seeing the jealousy entertained of Lisa, Mr. Breckenridge, in his negotiation, had arranged that a deputation from each party should cross the river at the same time, so that neither would have the first access to the ear of the Arickaras.

The distrust of Lisa, however, had increased in proportion as they approached the sphere of action; and M'Lellan, in particular, kept a vigilant eye upon his motions, swearing to shoot him if he attempted to cross the river first.

About two o'clock the large boat of Mr. Hunt was manned, and he stepped on board, accompanied by Messrs. M'Kenzie and M'Lellan; Lisa at the same time embarked in his barge; the two deputations amounted in all to fourteen persons, and never was any movement of rival potentates conducted with more wary exactness.

They landed amidst a rabble crowd, and were received on the bank by the left-handed chief, who conducted them into the village with grave courtesy; driving to the right and left the swarms of old squaws, imp-like boys, and vagabond dogs, with which the place abounded. They wound their way between the cabins, which looked like dirt-heaps huddled together without any plan, and surrounded by old palisades; all filthy in the extreme, and redolent of villainous smells.

At length they arrived at the council lodge. It was somewhat spacious, and formed of four forked trunks of trees placed upright, supporting cross-beams and a frame of poles interwoven with osiers, and the whole covered with earth. A hole sunken in the center formed the fireplace, and immediately above was a circular hole in the apex of the lodge, to let out the smoke and let in the daylight. Around the lodge were recesses for sleeping, like the berths on board ships, screened from view by curtains of dressed skins. At the upper end of the lodge was a kind of hunting and warlike trophy, consisting of two buffalo heads garishly painted, surmounted by shields, bows, quivers of arrows, and other weapons.

On entering the lodge the chief pointed to mats or cushions which had been placed around for the strangers, and on which they seated themselves, while he placed himself on a kind of stool. An old man then came forward with the pipe of peace or good-fellowship, lighted and handed it to the chief, and then falling back, squatted himself near the door. The pipe was passed from mouth to mouth, each one taking a whiff, which is equivalent to the inviolable pledge of faith, of taking salt together among the ancient Britons. The chief then made a sign to the old pipe-bearer, who seemed to fill, likewise, the station of herald, seneschal, and public crier, for he ascended to the top of the lodge to make proclamation. Here he took his post beside the aperture for the emission of smoke and the admission of light; the chief dictated from within what he was to proclaim, and he bawled it forth with a force of lungs that resounded over all the village. In this way he summoned the warriors and great men to council; every now and then reporting progress to his chief through the hole in the roof.

In a little while the braves and sages began to enter one by one, as their names were called or announced, emerging from under the buffalo robe suspended over the entrance instead of a door, stalking across the lodge to the skins placed on the floor, and crouching down on them in silence. In this way twenty entered and took their seats, forming an assemblage worthy of the pencil: for the Arickaras are a noble race of men, large and well formed, and maintain a savage grandeur and gravity of demeanor in their solemn ceremonials.

All being seated, the old seneschal prepared the pipe of ceremony or council, and having lit it, handed it to the chief. He inhaled the sacred smoke, gave a puff upward to the heaven, then downward to the earth, then towards the east; after this it was as usual passed from mouth to mouth, each holding it respectfully until his neighbor had taken several whiffs; and now the grand council was considered as opened in due form.

The chief made an harangue welcoming the white men to his village, and expressing his happiness in taking them by the hand as friends; but at the same time complaining of the poverty of himself and his people; the usual prelude among Indians to begging or hard bargaining.

Lisa rose to reply, and the eyes of Hunt and his companions were eagerly turned upon him, those of M'Lellan glaring like a basilisk's. He began by the usual expressions of friendship, and then proceeded to explain the object of his own party. Those persons, however, said he, pointing to Mr. Hunt and his companions, are of a different party, and are quite distinct in their views; but, added he, though we are separate parties, we make but one common cause when the safety of either is concerned. Any injury or insult offered to them I shall consider as done to myself, and will resent it accordingly. I trust, therefore, that you will treat them with the same friendship that you have always manifested for me, doing everything in your power to serve them and to help them on their way. The speech of Lisa, delivered with an air of frankness and sincerity, agreeably surprised and disappointed the rival party.

Mr. Hunt then spoke, declaring the object of his journey to the great Salt Lake beyond the moun-

---

tains, and that he should want horses for the purpose, for which he was ready to trade, having brought with him plenty of goods. Both he and Lisa concluded their speeches by making presents of tobacco.

The left-handed chieftain in reply promised his friendship and aid to the new comers, and welcomed them to his village. He added that they had not the number of horses to spare that Mr. Hunt required, and expressed a doubt whether they should be able to part with any. Upon this, another chieftain, called Gray Eyes, made a speech, and declared that they could readily supply Mr. Hunt with all the horses he might want, since, if they had not enough in the village, they could easily steal more. This honest expedient immediately removed the main difficulty; but the chief deferred all trading for a day or two; until he should have time to consult with his subordinate chiefs as to market rates; for the principal chief of a village, in conjunction with his council, usually fixes the prices at which articles shall be bought and sold, and to them the village must conform.

The council now broke up. Mr. Hunt transferred his camp across the river at a little distance below the village, and the left-handed chief placed some of his warriors as a guard to prevent the intrusion of any of his people. The camp was pitched on the river bank just above the boats. The tents, and the men wrapped in their blankets and bivouacking on skins in the open air, surrounded the baggage at night. Four sentinels also kept watch within sight of each other outside of the camp until midnight, when they were relieved by four others who mounted guard until daylight. Mr. Lisa encamped near to Mr. Hunt, between him and the village.

The speech of Mr. Lisa in the council had produced a pacific effect in the encampment. Though the sincerity of his friendship and good-will towards the new company still remained matter of doubt, he was no longer suspected of an intention to play false. The intercourse between the two leaders was therefore resumed, and the affairs of both parties went on harmoniously.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER XXI.

An Indian Horse Fair.- Love of the Indians for Horses- Scenes in the Arickara Village.-Indian Hospitality.- Duties of Indian Women. Game Habits of the Men.-Their Indolence.-Love of Gossiping. - Rumors of Lurking Enemies.- Scouts.- An Alarm.-A Sallying Forth. -Indian Dogs.-Return of a Horse-Stealing Party.-An Indian Deputation.-Fresh Alarms.-Return of a Successful War Party.-Dress of the Arickaras.- Indian Toilet.- Triumphal Entry of the War Party. - Meetings of Relations and Friends.-Indian Sensibility.- Meeting of a Wounded Warrior and His Mother.- Festivities and Lamentations.

A TRADE now commenced with the Arickaras under the regulation and supervision of their two chieftains. Lisa sent a part of his goods to the lodge of the left-handed dignitary, and Mr. Hunt established his mart in the lodge of the Big Man. The village soon presented the appearance of a busy fair; and as horses were in demand, the purlieu and the adjacent plain were like the vicinity of a Tartar encampment; horses were put through all their paces, and horsemen were careering

about with that dexterity and grace for which the Arickaras are noted. As soon as a horse was purchased, his tail was cropped, a sure mode of distinguishing him from the horses of the tribe; for the Indians disdain to practice this absurd, barbarous, and indecent mutilation, invented by some mean and vulgar mind, insensible to the merit and perfections of the animal. On the contrary, the Indian horses are suffered to remain in every respect the superb and beautiful animals which nature formed them.

The wealth of an Indian of the far west consists principally in his horses, of which each chief and warrior possesses a great number, so that the plains about an Indian village or encampment are covered with them. These form objects of traffic, or objects of depredation, and in this way pass from tribe to tribe over great tracts of country. The horses owned by the Arickaras are, for the most part, of the wild stock of the prairies; some, however, had been obtained from the Poncas, Pawnees, and other tribes to the southwest, who had stolen them from the Spaniards in the course of horse-stealing expeditions into Mexican territories. These were to be known by being branded; a Spanish mode of marking horses not practiced by the Indians.

As the Arickaras were meditating another expedition against their enemies the Sioux, the articles of traffic most in demand were guns, tomahawks, scalping-knives, powder, ball, and other munitions of war. The price of a horse, as regulated by the chiefs, was commonly ten dollars' worth of goods at first cost. To supply the demand thus suddenly created, parties of young men and braves had sallied forth on expeditions to steal horses; a species of service among the Indians which takes precedence of hunting, and is considered a department of honorable warfare.

While the leaders of the expedition were actively engaged in preparing for the approaching journey, those who had accompanied it for curiosity or amusement, found ample matter for observation in the village and its inhabitants. Wherever they went they were kindly entertained. If they entered a lodge, the buffalo robe was spread before the fire for them to sit down; the pipe was brought, and while the master of the lodge conversed with his guests, the squaw put the earthen vessel over the fire well filled with dried buffalo-meat and pounded corn; for the Indian in his native state, before he has mingled much with white men, and acquired their sordid habits, has the hospitality of the Arab: never does a stranger enter his door without having food placed before him; and never is the food thus furnished made a matter of traffic.

The life of an Indian when at home in his village is a life of indolence and amusement. To the woman is consigned the labors of the household and the field; she arranges the lodge; brings wood for the fire; cooks; jerks venison and buffalo meat; dresses the skins of the animals killed in the chase; cultivates the little patch of maize, pumpkins, and pulse, which furnishes a great part of their provisions. Their time for repose and recreation is at sunset, when the labors of the day being ended, they gather together to amuse themselves with petty games, or to hold gossiping convocations on the tops of their lodges.

As to the Indian, he is a game animal, not to be degraded by useful or menial toil. It is enough that he exposes himself to the hardships of the chase and the perils of war; that he brings home

food for his family, and watches and fights for its protection. Everything else is beneath his attention. When at home, he attends only to his weapons and his horses, preparing the means of future exploit. Or he engages with his comrades in games of dexterity, agility and strength; or in gambling games in which everything is put at hazard with a recklessness seldom witnessed in civilized life.

A great part of the idle leisure of the Indians when at home is passed in groups, squatted together on the bank of a river, on the top of a mound on the prairie, or on the roof of one of their earth-covered lodges, talking over the news of the day, the affairs of the tribe, the events and exploits of their last hunting or fighting expedition; or listening to the stories of old times told by some veteran chronicler; resembling a group of our village quidnuncs and politicians, listening to the prosings of some superannuated oracle, or discussing the contents of an ancient newspaper.

As to the Indian women, they are far from complaining of their lot. On the contrary, they would despise their husbands could they stoop to any menial office, and would think it conveyed an imputation upon their own conduct. It is the worst insult one virago can cast upon another in a moment of altercation. "Infamous woman!" will she cry, "I have seen your husband carrying wood into his lodge to make the fire. Where was his squaw, that he should be obliged to make a woman of himself!"

Mr. Hunt and his fellow-travellers had not been many days at the Arickara village, when rumors began to circulate that the Sioux had followed them up, and that a war party, four or five hundred in number, were lurking somewhere in the neighborhood. These rumors produced much embarrassment in the camp. The white hunters were deterred from venturing forth in quest of game, neither did the leaders think it proper to expose them to such a risk. The Arickaras, too, who had suffered greatly in their wars with this cruel and ferocious tribe, were roused to increased vigilance, and stationed mounted scouts upon the neighboring hills. This, however, is a general precaution among the tribes of the prairies. Those immense plains present a horizon like the ocean, so that any object of importance can be descried afar, and information communicated to a great distance. The scouts are stationed on the hills, therefore, to look out both for game and for enemies, and are, in a manner, living telegraphs conveying their intelligence by concerted signs. If they wish to give notice of a herd of buffalo in the plain beyond, they gallop backwards and forwards abreast, on the summit of the hill. If they perceive an enemy at hand, they gallop to and fro, crossing each other; at sight of which the whole village flies to arms.

Such an alarm was given in the afternoon of the 15th. Four scouts were seen crossing and recrossing each other at full gallop, on the summit of a hill about two miles distant down the river. The cry was up that the Sioux were coming. In an instant the village was in an uproar. Men, women, and children were all brawling and shouting; dogs barking, yelping, and howling. Some of the warriors ran for the horses to gather and drive them in from the prairie, some for their weapons. As fast as they could arm and equip they sallied forth; some on horseback, some on foot. Some hastily arrayed in their war dress, with coronets of fluttering feathers, and their bodies smeared with paint; others naked and only furnished with the weapons they had snatched up. The wom-

en and children gathered on the tops of the lodges and heightened the confusion of the scene by their vociferation. Old men who could no longer bear arms took similar stations, and harangued the warriors as they passed, exhorting them to valorous deeds. Some of the veterans took arms themselves, and sallied forth with tottering steps. In this way, the savage chivalry of the village to the number of five hundred, poured forth, helter-skelter, riding and running, with hideous yells and war-whoops, like so many bedlamites or demoniacs let loose.

After a while the tide of war rolled back, but with far less uproar. Either it had been a false alarm, or the enemy had retreated on finding themselves discovered, and quiet was restored to the village. The white hunters continuing to be fearful of ranging this dangerous neighborhood, fresh provisions began to be scarce in the camp. As a substitute, therefore, for venison and buffalo meat, the travellers had to purchase a number of dogs to be shot and cooked for the supply of the camp. Fortunately, however chary the Indians might be of their horses, they were liberal of their dogs. In fact, these animals swarm about an Indian village as they do about a Turkish town. Not a family but has two or three dozen belonging to it, of all sizes and colors; some of a superior breed are used for hunting; others, to draw the sledge, while others, of a mongrel breed, and idle vagabond nature, are fattened for food. They are supposed to be descendant from the wolf, and retain something of his savage but cowardly temper, howling rather than barking; showing their teeth and snarling on the slightest provocation, but sneaking away on the least attack.

The excitement of the village continued from day to day. On the day following the alarm just mentioned, several parties arrived from different directions, and were met and conducted by some of the braves to the council lodge, where they reported the events and success of their expeditions, whether of war or hunting; which news was afterwards promulgated throughout the village, by certain old men who acted as heralds or town criers. Among the parties which arrived was one that had been among the Snake nation stealing horses, and returned crowned with success. As they passed in triumph through the village they were cheered by the men, women, and children, collected as usual on the tops of the lodges, and were exhorted by the Nesters of the village to be generous in their dealings with the white men.

The evening was spent in feasting and rejoicing among the relations of the successful warriors; but the sounds of grief and wailing were heard from the hills adjacent to the village - the lamentations of women who had lost some relative in the foray.

An Indian village is subject to continual agitations and excitements. The next day arrived a deputation of braves from the Cheyenne or Shienne nation; a broken tribe, cut up, like the Arickaras, by wars with the Sioux, and driven to take refuge among the Black Hills, near the sources of the Cheyenne River, from which they derive their name. One of these deputies was magnificently arrayed in a buffalo robe, on which various figures were fancifully embroidered with split quills dyed red and yellow; and the whole was fringed with the slender hoofs of young fawns, that rattled as he walked.

The arrival of this deputation was the signal for another of those ceremonials which occupy so

much of Indian life; for no being is more courtly and punctilious, and more observing of etiquette and formality than an American savage.

The object of the deputation was to give notice of an intended visit of the Shienne (or Cheyenne) tribe to the Arickara village in the course of fifteen days. To this visit Mr. Hunt looked forward to procure additional horses for his journey; all his bargaining being ineffectual in obtaining a sufficient supply from the Arickaras. Indeed, nothing could prevail upon the latter to part with their prime horses, which had been trained to buffalo hunting.

As Mr. Hunt would have to abandon his boats at this place, Mr. Lisa now offered to purchase them, and such of his merchandise as was superfluous, and to pay him in horses to be obtained at a fort belonging to the Missouri Fur Company, situated at the Mandan villages, about a hundred and fifty miles further up the river. A bargain was promptly made, and Mr. Lisa and Mr. Crooks, with several companions, set out for the fort to procure the horses. They returned, after upwards of a fortnight's absence, bringing with them the stipulated number of horses. Still the cavalry was not sufficiently numerous to convey the party and baggage and merchandise, and a few days more were required to complete the arrangements for the journey.

On the 9th of July, just before daybreak, a great noise and vociferation was heard in the village. This being the usual Indian hour of attack and surprise, and the Sioux being known to be in the neighborhood, the camp was instantly on the alert. As the day broke Indians were descried in considerable number on the bluffs, three or four miles down the river. The noise and agitation in the village continued. The tops of the lodges were crowded with the inhabitants, all earnestly looking towards the hills, and keeping up a vehement chattering. Presently an Indian warrior galloped past the camp towards the village, and in a little while the legions began to pour forth.

The truth of the matter was now ascertained. The Indians upon the distant hills were three hundred Arickara braves, returning home from a foray. They had met the war party of Sioux who had been so long hovering about the neighborhood, had fought them the day before, killed several, and defeated the rest with the loss of but two or three of their own men and about a dozen wounded; and they were now halting at a distance until their comrades in the village should come forth to meet them, and swell the parade of their triumphal entry. The warrior who had galloped past the camp was the leader of the party hastening home to give tidings of his victory.

Preparations were now made for this great martial ceremony. All the finery and equipments of the warriors were sent forth to them, that they might appear to the greatest advantage. Those, too, who had remained at home, tasked their wardrobes and toilets to do honor to the procession.

The Arickaras generally go naked, but, like all savages, they have their gala dress, of which they are not a little vain. This usually consists of a gray surcoat and leggins of the dressed skin of the antelope, resembling chamois leather, and embroidered with porcupine quills brilliantly dyed. A buffalo robe is thrown over the right shoulder, and across the left is slung a quiver of arrows. They wear gay coronets of plumes, particularly those of the swan; but the feathers of the black eagle are

considered the most worthy, being a sacred bird among the Indian warriors.

He who has killed an enemy in his own land, is entitled to drag at his heels a fox-skin attached to each moccasin; and he who has slain a grizzly bear, wears a necklace of his claws, the most glorious trophy that a hunter can exhibit.

An Indian toilet is an operation of some toil and trouble; the warrior often has to paint himself from head to foot, and is extremely capricious and difficult to please, as to the hideous distribution of streaks and colors. A great part of the morning, therefore, passed away before there were any signs of the distant pageant. In the meantime a profound stillness reigned over the village. Most of the inhabitants had gone forth; others remained in mute expectation. All sports and occupations were suspended, excepting that in the lodges the painstaking squaws were silently busied in preparing the repasts for the warriors.

It was near noon that a mingled sound of voices and rude music, faintly heard from a distance, gave notice that the procession was on the march. The old men and such of the squaws as could leave their employments hastened forth to meet it. In a little while it emerged from behind a hill, and had a wild and picturesque appearance as it came moving over the summit in measured step, and to the cadence of songs and savage instruments; the warlike standards and trophies flaunting aloft, and the feathers, and paint, and silver ornaments of the warriors glaring and glittering in the sunshine.

The pageant had really something chivalrous in its arrangement. The Arickaras are divided into several bands, each bearing the name of some animal or bird, as the buffalo, the bear, the dog, the pheasant. The present party consisted of four of these bands, one of which was the dog, the most esteemed in war, being composed of young men under thirty, and noted for prowess. It is engaged in the most desperate occasions. The bands marched in separate bodies under their several leaders. The warriors on foot came first, in platoons of ten or twelve abreast; then the horsemen. Each band bore as an ensign a spear or bow decorated with beads, porcupine quills, and painted feathers. Each bore its trophies of scalps, elevated on poles, their long black locks streaming in the wind. Each was accompanied by its rude music and minstrelsy. In this way the procession extended nearly a quarter of a mile. The warriors were variously armed, some few with guns, others with bows and arrows, and war clubs; all had shields of buffalo hide, a kind of defense generally used by the Indians of the open prairies, who have not the covert of trees and forests to protect them. They were painted in the most savage style. Some had the stamp of a red hand across their mouths, a sign that they had drunk the life-blood of a foe!

As they drew near to the village the old men and the women began to meet them, and now a scene ensued that proved the fallacy of the old fable of Indian apathy and stoicism. Parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters met with the most rapturous expressions of joy; while wailings and lamentations were heard from the relatives of the killed and wounded. The procession, however, continued on with slow and measured step, in cadence to the solemn chant, and the warriors maintained their fixed and stern demeanor.

Between two of the principal chiefs rode a young warrior who had distinguished himself in the battle. He was severely wounded, so as with difficulty to keep on his horse; but he preserved a serene and steadfast countenance, as if perfectly unharmed. His mother had heard of his condition. She broke through the throng, and rushing up, threw her arms around him and wept aloud. He kept up the spirit and demeanor of a warrior to the last, but expired shortly after he had reached his home.

The village was now a scene of the utmost festivity and triumph. The banners, and trophies, and scalps, and painted shields were elevated on poles near the lodges. There were warfeasts, and scalp-dances, with warlike songs and savage music; all the inhabitants were arrayed in their festal dresses; while the old heralds went round from lodge to lodge, promulgating with loud voices the events of the battle and the exploits of the various warriors.

Such was the boisterous revelry of the village; but sounds of another kind were heard on the surrounding hills; piteous wailings of the women, who had retired thither to mourn in darkness and solitude for those who had fallen in battle. There the poor mother of the youthful warrior who had returned home in triumph but to die, gave full vent to the anguish of a mother's heart. How much does this custom among the Indian woman of repairing to the hilltops in the night, and pouring forth their wailings for the dead, call to mind the beautiful and affecting passage of Scripture, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXII.

Wilderness of the Far West.- Great American Desert- Parched Seasons. -Black Hills.- Rocky Mountains.- Wandering and Predatory Hordes. -Speculations on What May Be the Future Population.-Apprehended Dangers.-A Plot to Desert.-Rose the Interpreter.- His Sinister Character-Departure From the Arickara Village.

WHILE Mr. Hunt was diligently preparing for his arduous journey, some of his men began to lose heart at the perilous prospect before them; but before we accuse them of want of spirit, it is proper to consider the nature of the wilderness into which they were about to adventure. It was a region almost as vast and trackless as the ocean, and, at the time of which we treat, but little known, excepting through the vague accounts of Indian hunters. A part of their route would lay across an immense tract, stretching north and south for hundreds of miles along the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and drained by the tributary streams of the Missouri and the Mississippi. This region, which resembles one of the immeasurable steppes of Asia, has not inaptly been termed "the great American desert." It spreads forth into undulating and treeless plains, and desolate sandy wastes wearisome to the eye from their extent and monotony, and which are supposed by geologists to have formed the ancient floor of the ocean, countless ages since, when its primeval waves beat against the granite bases of the Rocky Mountains.

It is a land where no man permanently abides; for, in certain seasons of the year there is no food either for the hunter or his steed. The herbage is parched and withered; the brooks and streams are dried up; the buffalo, the elk and the deer have wandered to distant parts, keeping within the verge of expiring verdure, and leaving behind them a vast uninhabited solitude, seamed by ravines, the beds of former torrents, but now serving only to tantalize and increase the thirst of the traveller.

Occasionally the monotony of this vast wilderness is interrupted by mountainous belts of sand and limestone, broken into confused masses; with precipitous cliffs and yawning ravines, looking like the ruins of a world; or is traversed by lofty and barren ridges of rock, almost impassable, like those denominated the Black Hills. Beyond these rise the stern barriers of the Rocky Mountains, the limits, as it were, of the Atlantic world. The rugged defiles and deep valleys of this vast chain form sheltering places for restless and ferocious bands of savages, many of them the remnants of tribes, once inhabitants of the prairies, but broken up by war and violence, and who carry into their mountain haunts the fierce passions and reckless habits of desperadoes.

Such is the nature of this immense wilderness of the far West; which apparently defies cultivation, and the habitation of civilized life. Some portions of it along the rivers may partially be subdued by agriculture, others may form vast pastoral tracts, like those of the East; but it is to be feared that a great part of it will form a lawless interval between the abodes of civilized man, like the wastes of the ocean or the deserts of Arabia; and, like them, be subject to the depredations of the marauder. Here may spring up new and mongrel races, like new formations in geology, the amalgamation of the "debris" and "abrasions" of former races, civilized and savage; the remains of broken and almost extinguished tribes; the descendants of wandering hunters and trappers; of fugitives from the Spanish and American frontiers; of adventurers and desperadoes of every class and country, yearly ejected from the bosom of society into the wilderness. We are contributing incessantly to swell this singular and heterogeneous cloud of wild population that is to hang about our frontier, by the transfer of whole tribes from the east of the Mississippi to the great wastes of the far West. Many of these bear with them the smart of real or fancied injuries; many consider themselves expatriated beings, wrongfully exiled from their hereditary homes, and the sepulchres of their fathers, and cherish a deep and abiding animosity against the race that has dispossessed them. Some may gradually become pastoral hordes, like those rude and migratory people, half shepherd, half warrior, who, with their flocks and herds, roam the plains of upper Asia; but others, it is to be apprehended, will become predatory bands, mounted on the fleet steeds of the prairies, with the open plains for their marauding grounds, and the mountains for their retreats and lurking-places. Here they may resemble those great hordes of the North, "Gog and Magog with their bands," that haunted the gloomy imaginations of the prophets. "A great company and a mighty host, all riding upon horses, and warring upon those nations which were at rest, and dwelt peaceably, and had gotten cattle and goods."

The Spaniards changed the whole character and habits of the Indians when they brought the horse among them. In Chili, Tucuman, and other parts, it has converted them, we are told, into Tartar-like tribes, and enabled them to keep the Spaniards out of their country, and even to make

it dangerous for them to venture far from their towns and settlements. Are we not in danger of producing some such state of things in the boundless regions of the far West? That these are not mere fanciful and extravagant suggestions we have sufficient proofs in the dangers already experienced by the traders to the Spanish mart of Santa Fe, and to the distant posts of the fur companies. These are obliged to proceed in armed caravans, and are subject to murderous attacks from bands of Pawnees, Camanches, and Blackfeet, that come scouring upon them in their weary march across the plains, or lie in wait for them among the passes of the mountains.

We are wandering, however, into excursive speculations, when our intention was merely to give an idea of the nature of the wilderness which Mr. Hunt was about to traverse; and which at that time was far less known than at present; though it still remains in a great measure an unknown land. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that some of the resolute of his party should feel dismay at the thoughts of adventuring into this perilous wilderness under the uncertain guidance of three hunters, who had merely passed once through the country and might have forgotten the landmarks. Their apprehensions were aggravated by some of Lisa's followers, who, not being engaged in the expedition, took a mischievous pleasure in exaggerating its dangers. They painted in strong colors, to the poor Canadian voyageurs, the risk they would run of perishing with hunger and thirst; of being cut off by war-parties of the Sioux who scoured the plains; of having their horses stolen by the Upsarokas or Crows, who infested the skirts of the Rocky Mountains; or of being butchered by the Blackfeet, who lurked among the defiles. In a word, there was little chance of their getting alive across the mountains; and even if they did, those three guides knew nothing of the howling wilderness that lay beyond.

The apprehensions thus awakened in the minds of some of the men came well-nigh proving detrimental to the expedition. Some of them determined to desert, and to make their way back to St. Louis. They accordingly purloined several weapons and a barrel of gunpowder, as ammunition for their enterprise, and buried them in the river bank, intending to seize one of the boats, and make off in the night. Fortunately their plot was overheard by John Day, the Kentuckian, and communicated to the partners, who took quiet and effectual means to frustrate it.

The dangers to be apprehended from the Crow Indians had not been overrated by the camp gossips. These savages, through whose mountain haunts the party would have to pass, were noted for daring and excursive habits, and great dexterity in horse stealing. Mr. Hunt, therefore, considered himself fortunate in having met with a man who might be of great use to him in any intercourse he might have with the tribe. This was a wandering individual named Edward Rose, whom he had picked up somewhere on the Missouri - one of those anomalous beings found on the frontier, who seem to have neither kin nor country. He had lived some time among the Crows, so as to become acquainted with their language and customs; and was, withal, a dogged, sullen, silent fellow, with a sinister aspect, and more of the savage than the civilized man in his appearance. He was engaged to serve in general as a hunter, but as guide and interpreter when they should reach the country of the Crows.

On the 18th of July, Mr. Hunt took up his line of march by land from the Arickara village, leaving

Mr. Lisa and Mr. Nuttall there, where they intended to await the expected arrival of Mr. Henry from the Rocky Mountains. As to Messrs. Bradbury and Breckenridge, they had departed some days previously, on a voyage down the river to St. Louis, with a detachment from Mr. Lisa's party. With all his exertions, Mr. Hunt had been unable to obtain a sufficient number of horses for the accommodation of all his people. His cavalcade consisted of eighty-two horses, most of them heavily laden with Indian goods, beaver traps, ammunition, Indian corn, corn meal and other necessaries. Each of the partners was mounted, and a horse was allotted to the interpreter, Pierre Dorion, for the transportation of his luggage and his two children. His squaw, for the most part of the time, trudged on foot, like the residue of the party; nor did any of the men show more patience and fortitude than this resolute woman in enduring fatigue and hardship.

The veteran trappers and voyageurs of Lisa's party shook their heads as their comrades set out, and took leave of them as of doomed men; and even Lisa himself gave it as his opinion, after the travellers had departed, they would never reach the shores of the Pacific, but would either perish with hunger in the wilderness, or be cut off by the savages.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXIII.

Summer Weather of the Prairies.- Purity of the Atmosphere.- Canadians on the March.- Sickness in the Camp.- Big River.- Vulgar Nomenclature.- Suggestions About the Original Indian Names.- Camp of Cheyennes.- Trade for Horses.- Character of the Cheyennes.- Their Horsemanship.- Historical Anecdotes of the Tribe.

THE course taken by Mr. Hunt was at first to the northwest, but soon turned and kept generally to the southwest, to avoid the country infested by the Blackfeet. His route took him across some of the tributary streams of the Missouri, and over immense prairies, bounded only by the horizon, and destitute of trees. It was now the height of summer, and these naked plains would be intolerable to the traveller were it not for the breezes which swept over them during the fervor of the day, bringing with them tempering airs from the distant mountains. To the prevalence of these breezes, and to the want of all leafy covert, may we also attribute the freedom from those flies and other insects so tormenting to man and beast during the summer months, in the lower plains, which are bordered and interspersed with woodland.

The monotony of these immense landscapes, also, would be as wearisome as that of the ocean, were it not relieved in some degree by the purity and elasticity of the atmosphere, and the beauty of the heavens. The sky has that delicious blue for which the sky of Italy is renowned; the sun shines with a splendor unobscured by any cloud or vapor, and a starlight night on the prairies is glorious. This purity and elasticity of atmosphere increases as the traveller approaches the mountains and gradually rises into more elevated prairies.

On the second day of the journey, Mr. Hunt arranged the party into small and convenient messes, distributing among them the camp kettles. The encampments at night were as before; some sleeping under tents, and others bivouacking in the open air. The Canadians proved as patient

of toll and hardship on the land as on the water; indeed, nothing could surpass the patience and good-humor of these men upon the march. They were the cheerful drudges of the party, loading and unloading the horses, pitching the tents, making the fires, cooking; in short, performing all those household and menial offices which the Indians usually assign to the squaws; and, like the squaws, they left all the hunting and fighting to others. A Canadian has but little affection for the exercise of the rifle.

The progress of the party was but slow for the first few days. Some of the men were indisposed; Mr. Crooks, especially, was so unwell that he could not keep on his horse. A rude kind of litter was, therefore, prepared for him, consisting of two long poles, fixed, one on each side of two horses, with a matting between them, on which he reclined at full length, and was protected from the sun by a canopy of boughs.

On the evening of the 23d (July) they encamped on the banks of what they term Big River; and here we cannot but pause to lament the stupid, commonplace, and often ribald names entailed upon the rivers and other features of the great West, by traders and settlers. As the aboriginal tribes of these magnificent regions are yet in existence, the Indian names might easily be recovered; which, besides being in general more sonorous and musical, would remain mementoes of the primitive lords of the soil, of whom in a little while scarce any traces will be left. Indeed, it is to be wished that the whole of our country could be rescued, as much as possible, from the wretched nomenclature inflicted upon it, by ignorant and vulgar minds; and this might be done, in a great degree, by restoring the Indian names, wherever significant and euphonious. As there appears to be a spirit of research abroad in respect to our aboriginal antiquities, we would suggest, as a worthy object of enterprise, a map, or maps, of every part of our country, giving the Indian names wherever they could be ascertained. Whoever achieves such an object worthily, will leave a monument to his own reputation.

To return from this digression. As the travellers were now in a country abounding with buffalo, they remained for several days encamped upon the banks of Big River, to obtain a supply of provisions, and to give the invalids time to recruit.

On the second day of their sojourn, as Ben Jones, John Day, and others of the hunters were in pursuit of game, they came upon an Indian camp on the open prairie, near to a small stream which ran through a ravine. The tents or lodges were of dressed buffalo skins, sewn together and stretched on tapering pine poles, joined at top, but radiating at bottom, so as to form a circle capable of admitting fifty persons. Numbers of horses were grazing in the neighborhood of the camp, or straying at large in the prairie; a sight most acceptable to the hunters. After reconnoitering the camp for some time, they ascertained it to belong to a band of Cheyenne Indians, the same that had sent a deputation to the Arickaras. They received the hunters in the most friendly manner; invited them to their lodges, which were more cleanly than Indian lodges are prone to be, and set food before them with true uncivilized hospitality. Several of them accompanied the hunters back to the camp, when a trade was immediately opened. The Cheyennes were astonished and delighted to find a convoy of goods and trinkets thus brought into the very heart of the prairie; while Mr.

Hunt and his companions were overjoyed to have an opportunity of obtaining a further supply of horses from these equestrian savages.

During a fortnight that the travellers lingered at this place, their encampment was continually thronged by the Cheyennes. They were a civil, well-behaved people, cleanly in their persons, and decorous in their habits. The men were tall, straight and vigorous, with aquiline noses, and high cheek bones. Some were almost as naked as ancient statues, and might have stood as models for a statuary; others had leggins and moccasins of deer skin, and buffalo robes, which they threw gracefully over their shoulders. In a little while, however, they began to appear in more gorgeous array, tricked out in the finery obtained from the white men; bright cloths, brass rings, beads of various colors; and happy was he who could render himself hideous with vermilion.

The travellers had frequent occasions to admire the skill and grace with which these Indians managed their horses. Some of them made a striking display when mounted; themselves and their steeds decorated in gala style; for the Indians often bestow more finery upon their horses than upon themselves. Some would hang around the necks, or rather on the breasts of their horses, the most precious ornaments they had obtained from the white men; others interwove feathers in their manes and tails. The Indian horses, too, appear to have an attachment to their wild riders, and indeed, it is said that the horses of the prairies readily distinguish an Indian from a white man by the smell, and give a preference to the former. Yet the Indians, in general, are hard riders, and, however they may value their horses, treat them with great roughness and neglect. Occasionally the Cheyennes joined the white hunters in pursuit of the elk and buffalo; and when in the ardor of the chase, spared neither themselves nor their steeds, scouring the prairies at full speed, and plunging down precipices and frightful ravines that threatened the necks of both horse and horseman. The Indian steed, well trained to the chase, seems as mad as the rider, and pursues the game as eagerly as if it were his natural prey, on the flesh of which he was to banquet.

The history of the Cheyennes is that of many of those wandering tribes of the prairies. They were the remnant of a once powerful people called the Shaways, inhabiting a branch of the Red River which flows into Lake Winnipeg. Every Indian tribe has some rival tribe with which it wages implacable hostility. The deadly enemies of the Shaways were the Sioux, who, after a long course of warfare, proved too powerful for them, and drove them across the Missouri. They again took root near the Warricanne Creek, and established themselves there in a fortified village.

The Sioux still followed with deadly animosity; dislodged them from their village, and compelled them to take refuge in the Black Hills, near the upper waters of the Sheyenne or Cheyenne River. Here they lost even their name, and became known among the French colonists by that of the river they frequented.

The heart of the tribe was now broken; its numbers were greatly thinned by their harassing wars. They no longer attempted to establish themselves in any permanent abode that might be an object of attack to their cruel foes. They gave up the cultivation of the fruits of the earth, and became a wandering tribe, subsisting by the chase, and following the buffalo in its migrations.

Their only possessions were horses, which they caught on the prairies, or reared, or captured on predatory incursions into the Mexican territories, as has already been mentioned. With some of these they repaired once a year to the Arickara villages, exchanged them for corn, beans, pumpkins, and articles of European merchandise, and then returned into the heart of the prairies.

Such are the fluctuating fortunes of these savage nations. War, famine, pestilence, together or singly, bring down their strength and thin their numbers. Whole tribes are rooted up from their native places, wander for a time about these immense regions, become amalgamated with other tribes, or disappear from the face of the earth. There appears to be a tendency to extinction among all the savage nations; and this tendency would seem to have been in operation among the aboriginals of this country long before the advent of the white men, if we may judge from the traces and traditions of ancient populousness in regions which were silent and deserted at the time of the discovery; and from the mysterious and perplexing vestiges of unknown races, predecessors of those found in actual possession, and who must long since have become gradually extinguished or been destroyed. The whole history of the aboriginal population of this country, however, is an enigma, and a grand one - will it ever be solved?

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXIV.

New Distribution of Horses- Secret Information of Treason in the Camp.- Rose the Interpreter- His Perfidious Character- His Plots. -Anecdotes of the Crow Indians.- Notorious Horse Stealers.- Some Account of Rose.- A Desperado of the Frontier.

ON the sixth of August the travellers bade farewell to the friendly band of Cheyennes, and resumed their journey. As they had obtained thirty-six additional horses by their recent traffic, Mr. Hunt made a new arrangement. The baggage was made up in smaller loads. A horse was allotted to each of the six prime hunters, and others were distributed among the voyageurs, a horse for every two, so that they could ride and walk alternately. Mr. Crooks being still too feeble to mount the saddle, was carried on a litter.

Their march this day lay among singular hills and knolls of an indurated red earth, resembling brick, about the bases of which were scattered pumice stones and cinders, the whole bearing traces of the action of fire. In the evening they encamped on a branch of Big River.

They were now out of the tract of country infested by the Sioux, and had advanced such a distance into the interior that Mr. Hunt no longer felt apprehensive of the desertion of any of his men. He was doomed, however, to experience new cause of anxiety. As he was seated in his tent after nightfall, one of the men came to him privately, and informed him that there was mischief brewing in the camp. Edward Rose, the interpreter, whose sinister looks we have already mentioned, was denounced by this secret informer as a designing, treacherous scoundrel, who was tampering with the fidelity of certain of the men, and instigating them to a flagrant piece of treason. In the course of a few days they would arrive at the mountainous district infested by the Upsarokas or

Crows, the tribe among which Rose was to officiate as interpreter. His plan was that several of the men should join with him, when in that neighborhood, in carrying off a number of the horses with their packages of goods, and deserting to those savages. He assured them of good treatment among the Crows, the principal chiefs and warriors of whom he knew; they would soon become great men among them, and have the finest women, and the daughters of the chiefs for wives; and the horses and goods they carried off would make them rich for life.

The intelligence of this treachery on the part of Rose gave much disquiet to Mr. Hunt, for he knew not how far it might be effective among his men. He had already had proofs that several of them were disaffected to the enterprise, and loath to cross the mountains. He knew also that savage life had charms for many of them, especially the Canadians, who were prone to intermarry and domesticate themselves among the Indians.

And here a word or two concerning the Crows may be of service to the reader, as they will figure occasionally in the succeeding narration.

The tribe consists of four bands, which have their nestling-places in fertile, well-wooded valleys, lying among the Rocky Mountains, and watered by the Big Horse River and its tributary streams; but, though these are properly their homes, where they shelter their old people, their wives, and their children, the men of the tribe are almost continually on the foray and the scamper. They are, in fact, notorious marauders and horse-stealers; crossing and re-crossing the mountains, robbing on the one side, and conveying their spoils to the other. Hence, we are told, is derived their name, given to them on account of their unsettled and predatory habits; winging their flight, like the crows, from one side of the mountains to the other, and making free booty of everything that lies in their way. Horses, however, are the especial objects of their depredations, and their skill and audacity in stealing them are said to be astonishing. This is their glory and delight; an accomplished horse-stealer fills up their idea of a hero. Many horses are obtained by them, also, in barter from tribes in and beyond the mountains. They have an absolute passion for this noble animal; besides which he is with them an important object of traffic. Once a year they make a visit to the Mandans, Minatarees, and other tribes of the Missouri, taking with them droves of horses which they exchange for guns, ammunition, trinkets, vermilion, cloths of bright colors, and various other articles of European manufacture. With these they supply their own wants and caprices, and carry on the internal trade for horses already mentioned.

The plot of Rose to rob and abandon his countrymen when in the heart of the wilderness, and to throw himself into the hands of savages, may appear strange and improbable to those unacquainted with the singular and anomalous characters that are to be found about the borders. This fellow, it appears, was one of those desperadoes of the frontiers, outlawed by their crimes, who combine the vices of civilized and savage life, and are ten times more barbarous than the Indians with whom they consort. Rose had formerly belonged to one of the gangs of pirates who infested the islands of the Mississippi, plundering boats as they went up and down the river, and who sometimes shifted the scene of their robberies to the shore, waylaying travellers as they returned by land from New Orleans with the proceeds of their downward voyage, plundering them of their

money and effects, and often perpetrating the most atrocious murders.

These hordes of villains being broken up and dispersed, Rose had betaken himself to the wilderness, and associated himself with the Crows, whose predatory habits were congenial with his own, had married a woman of the tribe, and, in short, had identified himself with those vagrant savages.

Such was the worthy guide and interpreter, Edward Rose. We give his story, however, not as it was known to Mr. Hunt and his companions at the time, but as it has been subsequently ascertained. Enough was known of the fellow and his dark and perfidious character to put Mr. Hunt upon his guard: still, as there was no knowing how far his plans might have succeeded, and as any rash act might blow the mere smouldering sparks of treason into a sudden blaze, it was thought advisable by those with whom Mr. Hunt consulted, to conceal all knowledge or suspicion of the meditated treachery, but to keep up a vigilant watch upon the movements of Rose, and a strict guard upon the horses at night.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXV.

Substitute for Fuel on the Prairies.- Fossil Trees.- Fierceness of the Buffaloes When in Heat.- Three Hunters Missing.- Signal Fires and Smokes.- Uneasiness Concerning the Lost Men.- A Plan to Forestall a Rogue.- New Arrangement With Rose.- Return of the Wanderers.

THE plains over which the travellers were journeying continued to be destitute of trees or even shrubs; insomuch that they had to use the dung of the buffalo for fuel, as the Arabs of the desert use that of the camel. This substitute for fuel is universal among the Indians of these upper prairies, and is said to make a fire equal to that of turf. If a few chips are added, it throws out a cheerful and kindly blaze.

These plains, however, had not always been equally destitute of wood, as was evident from the trunks of the trees which the travellers repeatedly met with, some still standing, others lying about in broken fragments, but all in a fossil state, having flourished in times long past. In these singular remains, the original grain of the wood was still so distinct that they could be ascertained to be the ruins of oak trees. Several pieces of the fossil wood were selected by the men to serve as whetstones.

In this part of the journey there was no lack of provisions, for the prairies were covered with immense herds of buffalo. These, in general, are animals of peaceful demeanor, grazing quietly like domestic cattle; but this was the season when they are in heat, and when the bulls are usually fierce and pugnacious. There was accordingly a universal restlessness and commotion throughout the plain; and the amorous herds gave utterance to their feelings in low bellowings that resounded like distant thunder. Here and there fierce duellos took place between rival enamorados; butting their huge shagged fronts together, goring each other with their short black horns, and tearing up the earth with their feet in perfect fury.

In one of the evening halts, Pierre Dorion, the interpreter, together with Carson and Gardpie, two of the hunters, were missing, nor had they returned by morning. As it was supposed they had wandered away in pursuit of buffalo, and would readily find the track of the party, no solicitude was felt on their account. A fire was left burning, to guide them by its column of smoke, and the travellers proceeded on their march. In the evening a signal fire was made on a hill adjacent to the camp, and in the morning it was replenished with fuel so as to last throughout the day. These signals are usual among the Indians, to give warnings to each other, or to call home straggling hunters; and such is the transparency of the atmosphere in those elevated plains, that a slight column of smoke can be discerned from a great distance, particularly in the evenings. Two or three days elapsed, however, without the reappearance of the three hunters; and Mr. Hunt slackened his march to give them time to overtake him.

A vigilant watch continued to be kept upon the movements of Rose, and of such of the men as were considered doubtful in their loyalty; but nothing occurred to excite immediate apprehensions. Rose evidently was not a favorite among his comrades, and it was hoped that he had not been able to make any real partisans.

On the 10th of August they encamped among hills, on the highest peak of which Mr. Hunt caused a huge pyre of pine wood to be made, which soon sent up a great column of flame that might be seen far and wide over the prairies. This fire blazed all night, and was amply replenished at day-break; so that the towering pillar of smoke could not but be descried by the wanderers if within the distance of a day's journey.

It is a common occurrence in these regions, where the features of the country so much resemble each other, for hunters to lose themselves and wander for many days, before they can find their way back to the main body of their party. In the present instance, however, a more than common solicitude was felt, in consequence of the distrust awakened by the sinister designs of Rose.

The route now became excessively toilsome, over a ridge of steep rocky hills, covered with loose stones. These were intersected by deep valleys, formed by two branches of Big River, coming from the south of west, both of which they crossed. These streams were bordered by meadows, well stocked with buffaloes. Loads of meat were brought in by the hunters; but the travellers were rendered dainty by profusion, and would cook only the choice pieces.

They had now travelled for several days at a very slow rate, and had made signal-fires and left traces of their route at every stage, yet nothing was heard or seen of the lost men. It began to be feared that they might have fallen into the hands of some lurking band of savages. A party numerous as that of Mr. Hunt, with a long train of pack horses, moving across plains or naked hills, is discoverable at a great distance by Indian scouts, who spread the intelligence rapidly to various points, and assemble their friends to hang about the skirts of the travellers, steal their horses, or cut off any stragglers from the main body.

Mr. Hunt and his companions were more and more sensible how much it would be in the power of this sullen and daring vagabond Rose, to do them mischief, when they should become entangled in the defiles of the mountains, with the passes of which they were wholly unacquainted, and which were infested by his freebooting friends, the Crows. There, should he succeed in seducing some of the party into his plans, he might carry off the best horses and effects, throw himself among his savage allies, and set all pursuit at defiance. Mr. Hunt resolved, therefore, to frustrate the knave, divert him, by management, from his plans, and make it sufficiently advantageous for him to remain honest.

He took occasion, accordingly, in the course of conversation, to inform Rose that, having engaged him chiefly as a guide and interpreter through the country of the Crows, they would not stand in need of his services beyond. Knowing, therefore, his connection by marriage with that tribe, and his predilection for a residence among them, they would put no restraint upon his will, but, whenever they met with a party of that people, would leave him at liberty to remain among his adopted brethren. Furthermore, that, in thus parting with him, they would pay him a half a year's wages in consideration of his past services, and would give him a horse, three beaver traps, and sundry other articles calculated to set him up in the world.

This unexpected liberality, which made it nearly as profitable and infinitely less hazardous for Rose to remain honest than to play the rogue, completely disarmed him. From that time his whole deportment underwent a change. His brow cleared up and appeared more cheerful; he left off his sullen, skulking habits, and made no further attempts to tamper with the faith of his comrades.

On the 13th of August Mr. Hunt varied his course, and inclined westward, in hopes of falling in with the three lost hunters; who, it was now thought, might have kept to the right hand of Big River. This course soon brought him to a fork of the Little Missouri, about a hundred yards wide, and resembling the great river of the same name in the strength of its current, its turbid water, and the frequency of drift-wood and sunken trees.

Rugged mountains appeared ahead, crowding down to the water edge, and offering a barrier to further progress on the side they were ascending. Crossing the river, therefore, they encamped on its northwest bank, where they found good pasturage and buffalo in abundance. The weather was overcast and rainy, and a general gloom pervaded the camp; the voyageurs sat smoking in groups, with their shoulders as high as their heads, croaking their foreboding, when suddenly towards evening a shout of joy gave notice that the lost men were found. They came slowly lagging into camp, with weary looks, and horses jaded and wayworn. They had, in fact, been for several days incessantly on the move. In their hunting excursion on the prairies they had pushed so far in pursuit of buffalo, as to find it impossible to retrace their steps over plains trampled by innumerable herds; and were baffled by the monotony of the landscape in their attempts to recall landmarks. They had ridden to and fro until they had almost lost the points of the compass, and became totally bewildered; nor did they ever perceive any of the signal fires and columns of smoke made by their comrades. At length, about two days previously, when almost spent by anxiety and hard riding, they came, to their great joy, upon the "trail" of the party, which they had since followed

up steadily.

Those only who have experienced the warm cordiality that grows up between comrades in wild and adventurous expeditions of the kind, can picture to themselves the hearty cheering with which the stragglers were welcomed to the camp. Every one crowded round them to ask questions, and to hear the story of their mishaps; and even the squaw of the moody half-breed, Pierre Dorion, forgot the sternness of his domestic rule, and the conjugal discipline of the cudgel, in her joy at his safe return.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Black Mountains.- Haunts of Predatory Indians.- Their Wild and Broken Appearance.- Superstitions Concerning Them - Thunder Spirits.- Singular Noises in the Mountains- Secret Mines.-Hidden Treasures.- Mountains in Labor. - Scientific Explanation.-Impassable Defiles.- Black-Tailed Deer.-The Bighorn or Ahsahta.- Prospect From a Lofty Height.- Plain With Herds of Buffalo.- Distant Peaks of the Rocky Mountains.- Alarms in the Camp.- Tracks of Grizzly Bears.- Dangerous Nature of This Animal.- Adventures of William Cannon and John Day With Grizzly Bears.

MR. Hunt and his party were now on the skirts of the Black Hills, or Black Mountains, as they are sometimes called; an extensive chain, lying about a hundred miles east of the Rocky Mountains, and stretching in a northeast direction from the south fork of the Nebraska, or Platte River, to the great north bend of the Missouri. The Sierra or ridge of the Black Hills, in fact, forms the dividing line between the waters of the Missouri and those of the Arkansas and the Mississippi, and gives rise to the Cheyenne, the Little Missouri, and several tributary streams of the Yellowstone.

The wild recesses of these hills, like those of the Rocky Mountains, are retreats and lurking-places for broken and predatory tribes, and it was among them that the remnants of the Cheyenne tribe took refuge, as has been stated, from their conquering enemies, the Sioux.

The Black Hills are chiefly composed of sandstone, and in many places are broken into savage cliffs and precipices, and present the most singular and fantastic forms; sometimes resembling towns and castellated fortresses. The ignorant inhabitants of plains are prone to clothe the mountains that bound their horizon with fanciful and superstitious attributes. Thus the wandering tribes of the prairies, who often behold clouds gathering round the summits of these hills, and lightning flashing, and thunder pealing from them, when all the neighboring plains are serene and sunny, consider them the abode of the genii or thunder-spirits who fabricate storms and tempests. On entering their defiles, therefore, they often hang offerings on the trees, or place them on the rocks, to propitiate the invisible "lords of the mountains," and procure good weather and successful hunting; and they attach unusual significance to the echoes which haunt the precipices. This superstition may also have arisen, in part, from a natural phenomenon of a singular nature. In the most calm and serene weather, and at all times of the day or night, successive reports are now and then heard among these mountains, resembling the discharge of several pieces of ar-

tillery. Similar reports were heard by Messrs. Lewis and Clarke in the Rocky Mountains, which they say were attributed by the Indians to the bursting of the rich mines of silver contained in the bosom of the mountains.

In fact, these singular explosions have received fanciful explanations from learned men, and have not been satisfactorily accounted for even by philosophers. They are said to occur frequently in Brazil. Vasconcelles, Jesuit father, describes one which he heard in the Sierra, or mountain region of Piratininga, and which he compares to the discharges of a park of artillery. The Indians told him that it was an explosion of stones. The worthy father had soon a satisfactory proof of the truth of their information, for the very place was found where a rock had burst and exploded from its entrails a stony mass, like a bomb-shell, and of the size of a bull's heart. This mass was broken either in its ejection or its fall, and wonderful was the internal organization revealed. It had a shell harder even than iron; within which were arranged, like the seeds of a pomegranate, jewels of various colors; some transparent as crystals; others of a fine red, and others of mixed hues. The same phenomenon is said to occur occasionally in the adjacent province of Guayra, where stones of the bigness of a man's hand are exploded, with a loud noise, from the bosom of the earth, and scatter about glittering and beautiful fragments that look like precious gems, but are of no value.

The Indians of the Orellanna, also, tell of horrible noises heard occasionally in the Paraguaxo, which they consider the throes and groans of the mountains, endeavoring to cast forth the precious stones hidden within its entrails. Others have endeavored to account for these discharges of "mountain artillery" on humbler principles; attributing them to the loud reports made by the disruption and fall of great masses of rock, reverberated and prolonged by the echoes; others, to the disengagement of hydrogen, produced by subterraneous beds of coal in a state of ignition. In whatever way this singular phenomenon may be accounted for, the existence of it appears to be well established. It remains one of the lingering mysteries of nature which throw something of a supernatural charm over her wild mountain solitudes; and we doubt whether the imaginative reader will not rather join with the poor Indian in attributing it to the thunderspirits, or the guardian genii of unseen treasures, than to any commonplace physical cause.

Whatever might be the supernatural influences among these mountains, the travellers found their physical difficulties hard to cope with. They made repeated attempts to find a passage through or over the chain, but were as often turned back by impassable barriers. Sometimes a defile seemed to open a practicable path, but it would terminate in some wild chaos of rocks and cliffs, which it was impossible to climb. The animals of these solitary regions were different from those they had been accustomed to. The black-tailed deer would bound up the ravines on their approach, and the bighorn would gaze fearlessly down upon them from some impending precipice, or skip playfully from rock to rock. These animals are only to be met with in mountainous regions. The former is larger than the common deer, but its flesh is not equally esteemed by hunters. It has very large ears, and the tip of the tail is black, from which it derives its name.

The bighorn is so named from its horns; which are of a great size, and twisted like those of a ram.

---

It is called by some the argali, by others the ibex, though differing from both of these animals. The Mandans call it the ahsakta, a name much better than the clumsy appellation which it generally bears. It is of the size of a small elk, or large deer, and of a dun color, excepting the belly and round the tail, where it is white. In its habits it resembles the goat, frequenting the rudest precipices; cropping the herbage from their edges; and like the chamois, bounding lightly and securely among dizzy heights, where the hunter dares not venture. It is difficult, therefore, to get within shot of it. Ben Jones the hunter, however, in one of the passes of the Black Hills, succeeded in bringing down a bighorn from the verge of a precipice, the flesh of which was pronounced by the gormands of the camp to have the flavor of excellent mutton.

Baffled in his attempts to traverse this mountain chain, Mr. Hunt skirted along it to the southwest, keeping it on the right; and still in hopes of finding an opening. At an early hour one day, he encamped in a narrow valley on the banks of a beautifully clear but rushy pool; surrounded by thickets bearing abundance of wild cherries, currants, and yellow and purple gooseberries.

While the afternoon's meal was in preparation, Mr. Hunt and Mr. M'Kenzie ascended to the summit of the nearest hill, from whence, aided by the purity and transparency of the evening atmosphere, they commanded a vast prospect on all sides. Below them extended a plain, dotted with innumerable herds of buffalo. Some were lying among the herbage, others roaming in their unbounded pastures, while many were engaged in fierce contests like those already described, their low bellowings reaching the ear like the hoarse murmurs of the surf on a distant shore.

Far off in the west they descried a range of lofty mountains printing the clear horizon, some of them evidently capped with snow. These they supposed to be the Bighorn Mountains, so called from the animal of that name, with which they abound. They are a spur of the great Rocky chain. The hill from whence Mr. Hunt had this prospect was, according to his computation, about two hundred and fifty miles from the Arickara village.

On returning to the camp, Mr. Hunt found some uneasiness prevailing among the Canadian voyageurs. In straying among the thickets they had beheld tracks of grizzly bears in every direction, doubtless attracted thither by the fruit. To their dismay, they now found that they had encamped in one of the favorite resorts of this dreaded animal. The idea marred all the comfort of the encampment. As night closed, the surrounding thickets were peopled with terrors; insomuch that, according to Mr. Hunt, they could not help starting at every little breeze that stirred the bushes.

The grizzly bear is the only really formidable quadruped of our continent. He is the favorite theme of the hunters of the far West, who describe him as equal in size to a common cow and of prodigious strength. He makes battle if assailed, and often, if pressed by hunger, is the assailant. If wounded, he becomes furious and will pursue the hunter. His speed exceeds that of a man but is inferior to that of a horse. In attacking he rears himself on his hind legs, and springs the length of his body. Woe to horse or rider that comes within the sweep of his terrific claws, which are sometimes nine inches in length, and tear everything before them.

---

At the time we are treating of, the grizzly bear was still frequent on the Missouri and in the lower country, but, like some of the broken tribes of the prairie, he has gradually fallen back before his enemies, and is now chiefly to be found in the upland regions, in rugged fastnesses like those of the Black Hills and the Rocky Mountains. Here he lurks in caverns, or holes which he has dugged in the sides of hills, or under the roots and trunks of fallen trees. Like the common bear, he is fond of fruits, and mast, and roots, the latter of which he will dig up with his foreclaws. He is carnivorous also, and will even attack and conquer the lordly buffalo, dragging his huge carcass to the neighborhood of his den, that he may prey upon it at his leisure.

The hunters, both white and red men, consider this the most heroic game. They prefer to hunt him on horseback, and will venture so near as sometimes to singe his hair with the flash of the rifle. The hunter of the grizzly bear, however, must be an experienced hand, and know where to aim at a vital part; for of all quadrupeds, he is the most difficult to be killed. He will receive repeated wounds without flinching, and rarely is a shot mortal unless through the head or heart.

That the dangers apprehended from the grizzly bear, at this night encampment, were not imaginary, was proved on the following morning. Among the hired men of the party was one William Cannon, who had been a soldier at one of the frontier posts, and entered into the employ of Mr. Hunt at Mackinaw. He was an inexperienced hunter and a poor shot, for which he was much bantered by his more adroit comrades. Piqued at their raillery, he had been practicing ever since he had joined the expedition, but without success. In the course of the present afternoon, he went forth by himself to take a lesson in venerie and, to his great delight, had the good fortune to kill a buffalo. As he was a considerable distance from the camp, he cut out the tongue and some of the choice bits, made them into a parcel, and slinging them on his shoulders by a strap passed round his forehead, as the voyageurs carry packages of goods, set out all glorious for the camp, anticipating a triumph over his brother hunters. In passing through a narrow ravine, he heard a noise behind him, and looking round beheld, to his dismay, a grizzly bear in full pursuit, apparently attracted by the scent of the meat. Cannon had heard so much of the invulnerability of this tremendous animal, that he never attempted to fire, but, slipping the strap from his forehead, let go the buffalo meat and ran for his life. The bear did not stop to regale himself with the game, but kept on after the hunter. He had nearly overtaken him when Cannon reached a tree, and, throwing down his rifle scrambled up it. The next instant Bruin was at the foot of the tree; but, as this species of bear does not climb, he contented himself with turning the chase into a blockade. Night came on. In the darkness Cannon could not perceive whether or not the enemy maintained his station; but his fears pictured him rigorously mounting guard. He passed the night, therefore, in the tree, a prey to dismal fancies. In the morning the bear was gone. Cannon warily descended the tree, gathered up his gun, and made the best of his way back to the camp, without venturing to look after his buffalo meat.

While on this theme we will add another anecdote of an adventure with a grizzly bear, told of John Day, the Kentucky hunter, but which happened at a different period of the expedition. Day was hunting in company with one of the clerks of the company, a lively youngster, who was a

great favorite with the veteran, but whose vivacity he had continually to keep in check. They were in search of deer, when suddenly a huge grizzly bear emerged from a thicket about thirty yards distant, rearing himself upon his hind legs with a terrific growl, and displaying a hideous array of teeth and claws. The rifle of the young man was leveled in an instant, but John Day's iron hand was as quickly upon his arm. "Be quiet, boy! be quiet!" exclaimed the hunter between his clenched teeth, and without turning his eyes from the bear. They remained motionless. The monster regarded them for a time, then, lowering himself on his fore paws, slowly withdrew. He had not gone many paces, before he again returned, reared himself on his hind legs, and repeated his menace. Day's hand was still on the arm of his young companion; he again pressed it hard, and kept repeating between his teeth, "Quiet, boy! - keep quiet! - keep quiet!" - though the latter had not made a move since his first prohibition. The bear again lowered himself on all fours, retreated some twenty yards further, and again turned, reared, showed his teeth, and growled. This third menace was too much for the game spirit of John Day. "By Jove!" exclaimed he, "I can stand this no longer," and in an instant a ball from his rifle whizzed into his foe. The wound was not mortal; but, luckily, it dismayed instead of enraged the animal, and he retreated into the thicket.

Day's companion reproached him for not practicing the caution which he enjoined upon others. "Why, boy," replied the veteran, "caution is caution, but one must not put up with too much, even from a bear. Would you have me suffer myself to be bullied all day by a varmint?"

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXVII.

Indian Trail.- Rough Mountain Travelling.- Sufferings From Hunger and Thirst- Powder River.- Game in Abundance.-A Hunter's Paradise.- Mountain Peak Seen at a Great Distance.- One of the Bighorn Chain.- Rocky Mountains.- Extent.- Appearance.- Height.- The Great American Desert.- Various Characteristics of the Mountains.- Indian Superstitions Concerning Them.- Land of Souls.- Towns of the Free and Generous Spirits- Happy Hunting Grounds.

FOR the two following days, the travellers pursued a westerly course for thirty-four miles along a ridge of country dividing the tributary waters of the Missouri and the Yellowstone. As landmarks they guided themselves by the summits of the far distant mountains, which they supposed to belong to the Bighorn chain. They were gradually rising into a higher temperature, for the weather was cold for the season, with a sharp frost in the night, and ice of an eighth of an inch in thickness.

On the twenty-second of August, early in the day, they came upon the trail of a numerous band. Rose and the other hunters examined the foot-prints with great attention, and determined it to be the trail of a party of Crows, returning from an annual trading visit to the Mandans. As this trail afforded more commodious travelling, they immediately struck into it, and followed it for two days. It led them over rough hills, and through broken gullies, during which time they suffered great fatigue from the ruggedness of the country. The weather, too, which had recently been frosty, was now oppressively warm, and there was a great scarcity of water, insomuch that a valuable dog belonging to Mr. M'Kenzie died of thirst.

---

At one time they had twenty-five miles of painful travel, without a drop of water, until they arrived at a small running stream. Here they eagerly slaked their thirst; but, this being allayed, the calls of hunger became equally importunate. Ever since they had got among these barren and arid hills where there was a deficiency of grass, they had met with no buffaloes; those animals keeping in the grassy meadows near the streams. They were obliged, therefore, to have recourse to their corn meal, which they reserved for such emergencies. Some, however, were lucky enough to kill a wolf, which they cooked for supper, and pronounced excellent food.

The next morning they resumed their wayfaring, hungry and jaded, and had a dogged march of eighteen miles among the same kind of hills. At length they emerged upon a stream of clear water, one of the forks of Powder River, and to their great joy beheld once more wide grassy meadows, stocked with herds of buffalo. For several days they kept along the banks of the river, ascending it about eighteen miles. It was a hunter's paradise; the buffaloes were in such abundance that they were enabled to kill as many as they pleased, and to jerk a sufficient supply of meat for several days' journeying. Here, then, they reveled and reposed after their hungry and weary travel, hunting and feasting, and reclining upon the grass. Their quiet, however, was a little marred by coming upon traces of Indians, who, they concluded, must be Crows: they were therefore obliged to keep a more vigilant watch than ever upon their horses. For several days they had been directing their march towards the lofty mountain descried by Mr. Hunt and Mr. M'Kenzie on the 17th of August, the height of which rendered it a landmark over a vast extent of country. At first it had appeared to them solitary and detached; but as they advanced towards it, it proved to be the principal summit of a chain of mountains. Day by day it varied in form, or rather its lower peaks, and the summits of others of the chain emerged above the clear horizon, and finally the inferior line of hills which connected most of them rose to view. So far, however, are objects discernible in the pure atmosphere of these elevated plains, that, from the place where they first descried the main mountain, they had to travel a hundred and fifty miles before they reached its base. Here they encamped on the 30th of August, having come nearly four hundred miles since leaving the Arickara village.

The mountain which now towered above them was one of the Bighorn chain, bordered by a river, of the same name, and extending for a long distance rather east of north and west of south. It was a part of the great system of granite mountains which forms one of the most important and striking features of North America, stretching parallel to the coast of the Pacific from the Isthmus of Panama almost to the Arctic Ocean; and presenting a corresponding chain to that of the Andes in the southern hemisphere. This vast range has acquired, from its rugged and broken character and its summits of naked granite, the appellation of the Rocky Mountains, a name by no means distinctive, as all elevated ranges are rocky. Among the early explorers it was known as the range of Chippewyan Mountains, and this Indian name is the one it is likely to retain in poetic usage. Rising from the midst of vast plains and prairies, traversing several degrees of latitude, dividing the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific, and seeming to bind with diverging ridges the level regions on its flanks, it has been figuratively termed the backbone of the northern continent.

The Rocky Mountains do not present a range of uniform elevation, but rather groups and occasionally detached peaks. Though some of these rise to the region of perpetual snows, and are upwards of eleven thousand feet in real altitude, yet their height from their immediate basis is not so great as might be imagined, as they swell up from elevated plains, several thousand feet above the level of the ocean. These plains are often of a desolate sterility; mere sandy wastes, formed of the detritus of the granite heights, destitute of trees and herbage, scorched by the ardent and reflected rays of the summer's sun, and in winter swept by chilling blasts from the snow-clad mountains. Such is a great part of that vast region extending north and south along the mountains, several hundred miles in width, which has not improperly been termed the Great American Desert. It is a region that almost discourages all hope of cultivation, and can only be traversed with safety by keeping near the streams which intersect it. Extensive plains likewise occur among the higher regions of the mountains, of considerable fertility. Indeed, these lofty plats of table-land seem to form a peculiar feature in the American continents. Some occur among the Cordilleras of the Andes, where cities, and towns, and cultivated farms are to be seen eight thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The Rocky Mountains, as we have already observed, occur sometimes singly or in groups, and occasionally in collateral ridges. Between these are deep valleys, with small streams winding through them, which find their way into the lower plains, augmenting as they proceed, and ultimately discharging themselves into those vast rivers, which traverse the prairies like great arteries, and drain the continent.

While the granitic summits of the Rocky Mountains are bleak and bare, many of the inferior ridges are scantily clothed with scrubbed pines, oaks, cedar, and furze. Various parts of the mountains also bear traces of volcanic action. Some of the interior valleys are strewn with scoria and broken stones, evidently of volcanic origin; the surrounding rocks bear the like character, and vestiges of extinguished craters are to be seen on the elevated heights.

We have already noticed the superstitious feelings with which the Indians regard the Black Hills; but this immense range of mountains, which divides all that they know of the world, and gives birth to such mighty rivers, is still more an object of awe and veneration. They call it "the crest of the world," and think that Wacondah, or the master of life, as they designate the Supreme Being, has his residence among these aerial heights. The tribes on the eastern prairies call them the mountains of the setting sun. Some of them place the "happy hunting-grounds," their ideal paradise, among the recesses of these mountains; but say that they are invisible to living men. Here also is the "Land of Souls," in which are the "towns of the free and generous spirits," where those who have pleased the master of life while living, enjoy after death all manner of delights.

Wonders are told of these mountains by the distant tribes, whose warriors or hunters have ever wandered in their neighborhood. It is thought by some that, after death, they will have to travel to these mountains and ascend one of their highest and most rugged peaks, among rocks and snows and tumbling torrents. After many moons of painful toil they will reach the summit, from whence they will have a view over the land of souls. There they will see the happy hunting-grounds, with

the souls of the brave and good living in tents in green meadows, by bright running streams, or hunting the herds of buffalo, and elk, and deer, which have been slain on earth. There, too, they will see the villages or towns of the free and generous spirits brightening in the midst of delicious prairies. If they have acquitted themselves well while living, they will be permitted to descend and enjoy this happy country; if otherwise they will but be tantalized with this prospect of it, and then hurled back from the mountain to wander about the sandy plains, and endure the eternal pangs of unsatisfied thirst and hunger.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Region of the Crow Indians- Scouts on the Lookout- Visit From a Crew of Hard Riders.- A Crow Camp.- Presents to the Crow Chief.-Bargaining.-Crow Bullies.-Rose Among His Indian Friends.-Parting With the Crows.- Perplexities Among the Mountains.- More of the Crows.- Equestrian Children.- Search After Stragglers.

THE travellers had now arrived in the vicinity of the mountain regions infested by the Crow Indians. These restless marauders, as has already been observed, are apt to be continually on the prowl about the skirts of the mountains; and even when encamped in some deep and secluded glen, they keep scouts upon the cliffs and promontories, who, unseen themselves, can discern every living thing that moves over the subjacent plains and valleys. It was not to be expected that our travellers could pass unseen through a region thus vigilantly sentineled; accordingly, in the edge of the evening, not long after they had encamped at the foot of the Bighorn Sierra, a couple of wild-looking beings, scantily clad in skins, but well armed, and mounted on horses as wild-looking as themselves, were seen approaching with great caution from among the rocks. They might have been mistaken for two of the evil spirits of the mountains so formidable in Indian fable.

Rose was immediately sent out to hold a parley with them, and invite them to the camp. They proved to be two scouts from the same band that had been tracked for some days past, and which was now encamped at some distance in the folds of the mountain. They were easily prevailed upon to come to the camp, where they were well received, and, after remaining there until late in the evening, departed to make a report of all they had seen and experienced to their companions.

The following day had scarce dawned, when a troop of these wild mountain scamperers came galloping with whoops and yells into the camp, bringing an invitation from their chief for the white men to visit him. The tents were accordingly struck, the horses laden, and the party were soon on the march. The Crow horsemen, as they escorted them, appeared to take pride in showing off their equestrian skill and hardihood; careering at full speed on their half-savage steeds, and dashing among rocks and crags, and up and down the most rugged and dangerous places with perfect ease and unconcern.

A ride of sixteen miles brought them, in the afternoon, in sight of the Crow camp. It was composed of leathern tents, pitched in a meadow on the border of a small clear stream at the foot of the mountain. A great number of horses were grazing in the vicinity, many of them doubtless

captured in marauding excursions,

The Crow chieftain came forth to meet his guests with great professions of friendship, and conducted them to his tents, pointing out, by the way, a convenient place where they might fix their camp. No sooner had they done so, than Mr. Hunt opened some of the packages and made the chief a present of a scarlet blanket and a quantity of powder and ball; he gave him also some knives, trinkets, and tobacco to be distributed among his warriors, with all which the grim potentate seemed, for the time, well pleased. As the Crows, however, were reputed to be perfidious in the extreme, and as errant freebooters as the bird after which they were so worthily named; and as their general feelings towards the whites were known to be by no means friendly, the intercourse with them was conducted with great circumspection.

The following day was passed in trading with the Crows for buffalo robes and skins, and in bartering galled and jaded horses for others that were in good condition. Some of the men, also, purchased horses on their own account, so that the number now amounted to one hundred and twenty-one, most of them sound and active, and fit for mountain service.

Their wants being supplied, they ceased all further traffic, much to the dissatisfaction of the Crows, who became extremely urgent to continue the trade, and, finding their importunities of no avail, assumed an insolent and menacing tone. All this was attributed by Mr. Hunt and his associates to the perfidious instigations of Rose the interpreter, whom they suspected of the desire to foment ill-will between them and the savages, for the promotion of his nefarious plans. M'Lellan, with his usual tranchant mode of dealing out justice, resolved to shoot the desperado on the spot in case of any outbreak. Nothing of the kind, however, occurred. The Crows were probably daunted by the resolute, though quiet demeanor of the white men, and the constant vigilance and armed preparations which they maintained; and Rose, if he really still harbored his knavish designs, must have perceived that they were suspected, and, if attempted to be carried into effect, might bring ruin on his own head.

The next morning, bright and early, Mr. Hunt proposed to resume his journeying. He took a ceremonious leave of the Crow chieftain, and his vagabond warriors, and according to previous arrangements, consigned to their cherishing friendship and fraternal adoption, their worthy confederate Rose; who, having figured among the water pirates of the Mississippi, was well fitted to rise to distinction among the land pirates of the Rocky Mountains.

It is proper to add, that the ruffian was well received among the tribe, and appeared to be perfectly satisfied with the compromise he had made; feeling much more at his ease among savages than among white men. It is outcasts from justice, and heartless desperadoes of this kind who sow the seeds of enmity and bitterness among the unfortunate tribes of the frontier. There is no enemy so implacable against a country or a community as one of its own people who has rendered himself an alien by his crimes.

Right glad to be delivered from this treacherous companion, Mr. Hunt pursued his course along

---

the skirts of the mountain, in a southern direction, seeking for some practicable defile by which he might pass through it; none such presented, however, in the course of fifteen miles, and he encamped on a small stream, still on the outskirts. The green meadows which border these mountain streams are generally well stocked with game, and the hunters killed several fat elks, which supplied the camp with fresh meat. In the evening the travellers were surprised by an unwelcome visit from several Crows belonging to a different band from that which they recently left, and who said their camp was among the mountains. The consciousness of being environed by such dangerous neighbors, and of being still within the range of Rose and his fellow ruffians, obliged the party to be continually on the alert, and to maintain weary vigils throughout the night, lest they should be robbed of their horses.

On the third of September, finding that the mountain still stretched onwards, presenting a continued barrier, they endeavored to force a passage to the westward, but soon became entangled among rocks and precipices which set all their efforts at defiance. The mountain seemed, for the most part, rugged, bare, and sterile; yet here and there it was clothed with pines, and with shrubs and flowering plants, some of which were in bloom. In toiling among these weary places, their thirst became excessive, for no water was to be met with. Numbers of the men wandered off into rocky dells and ravines in hopes of finding some brook or fountain; some of whom lost their way and did not rejoin the main party.

After a day of painful and fruitless scrambling, Mr. Hunt gave up the attempt to penetrate in this direction, and, returning to the little stream on the skirts of the mountain, pitched his tents within six miles of his encampment of the preceding night. He now ordered that signals should be made for the stragglers in quest of water; but the night passed away without their return.

The next morning, to their surprise, Rose made his appearance at the camp, accompanied by some of his Crow associates. His unwelcome visit revived their suspicions; but he announced himself as a messenger of good-will from the chief, who, finding they had taken the wrong road, had sent Rose and his companions to guide them to a nearer and better one across the mountain.

Having no choice, being themselves utterly at fault, they set out under this questionable escort. They had not gone far before they fell in with the whole party of Crows, who, they now found, were going the same road with themselves. The two cavalcades of white and red men, therefore, pushed on together, and presented a wild and picturesque spectacle, as, equipped with various weapons and in various garbs, with trains of pack-horses, they wound in long lines through the rugged defiles, and up and down the crags and steepes of the mountain.

The travellers had again an opportunity to see and admire the equestrian habitudes and address of this hard-riding tribe. They were all mounted, man, woman, and child, for the Crows have horses in abundance, so that no one goes on foot. The children are perfect imps on horseback. Among them was one so young that he could not yet speak. He was tied on a colt of two years old, but managed the reins as if by instinct, and plied the whip with true Indian prodigality. Mr. Hunt inquired the age of this infant jockey, and was answered that "he had seen two winters."

This is almost realizing the fable of the centaurs; nor can we wonder at the equestrian adroitness of these savages, who are thus in a manner cradled in the saddle, and become in infancy almost identified with the animal they bestride.

The mountain defiles were exceedingly rough and broken, and the travelling painful to the burdened horses. The party, therefore, proceeded but slowly, and were gradually left behind by the band of Crows, who had taken the lead. It is more than probable that Mr. Hunt loitered in his course, to get rid of such doubtful fellow-travellers. Certain it is that he felt a sensation of relief as he saw the whole crew, the renegade Rose and all, disappear among the windings of the mountain, and heard the last yelp of the savages die away in the distance.

When they were fairly out of sight, and out of hearing, he encamped on the head waters of the little stream of the preceding day, having come about sixteen miles. Here he remained all the succeeding day, as well to give time for the Crows to get in the advance, as for the stragglers, who had wandered away in quest of water two days previously, to rejoin the camp. Indeed, considerable uneasiness began to be felt concerning these men, lest they should become utterly bewildered in the defiles of the mountains, or should fall into the hands of some marauding band of savages. Some of the most experienced hunters were sent in search of them; others, in the meantime, employed themselves in hunting. The narrow valley in which they encamped being watered by a running stream, yielded fresh pasturage, and though in the heart of the Bighorn Mountains, was well stocked with buffalo. Several of these were killed, as also a grizzly bear. In the evening, to the satisfaction of all parties, the stragglers made their appearance, and provisions being in abundance, there was hearty good cheer in the camp.

Washington Irving's Astoria

#### CHAPTER XXIX

Mountain Glens.- Wandering Band of Savages- Anecdotes of Shoshonies and Flatheads.- Root Diggers- Their Solitary Lurking Habits.- Gnomes of the Mountains.- Wind River.- Scarcity of Food.- Alteration of Route.- The Pilot Knobs or Tetons.- Branch of the Colorado. - Hunting Camp.

RESUMING their course on the following morning, Mr. Hunt and his companions continued on westward through a rugged region of hills and rocks, but diversified in many places by grassy little glens, with springs of water, bright sparkling brooks, clumps of pine trees, and a profusion of flowering plants, which were in bloom, although the weather was frosty. These beautiful and verdant recesses, running through and softening the rugged mountains, were cheering and refreshing to the wayworn travellers.

In the course of the morning, as they were entangled in a defile, they beheld a small band of savages, as wild-looking as the surrounding scenery, who reconnoitred them warily from the rocks before they ventured to advance. Some of them were mounted on horses rudely caparisoned with bridles or halters of buffalo hide, one end trailing after them on the ground. They proved to be a mixed party of Flatheads and Shoshonies, or Snakes; and as these tribes will be frequently men-

tioned in the course of this work, we shall give a few introductory particulars concerning them.

The Flatheads in question are not to be confounded with those of the name who dwell about the lower waters of the Columbia; neither do they flatten their heads, as the others do. They inhabit the banks of a river on the west side of the mountains, and are described as simple, honest, and hospitable. Like all people of similar character, whether civilized or savage, they are prone to be imposed upon; and are especially maltreated by the ruthless Blackfeet, who harass them in their villages, steal their horses by night, or openly carry them off in the face of day, without provoking pursuit or retaliation.

The Shoshonies are a branch of the once powerful and prosperous tribe of the Snakes, who possessed a glorious hunting country about the upper forks of the Missouri, abounding in beaver and buffalo. Their hunting ground was occasionally invaded by the Blackfeet, but the Snakes battled bravely for their domains, and a long and bloody feud existed, with variable success. At length the Hudson's Bay Company, extending their trade into the interior, had dealings with the Blackfeet, who were nearest to them, and supplied them with fire-arms. The Snakes, who occasionally traded with the Spaniards, endeavored, but in vain, to obtain similar weapons; the Spanish traders wisely refused to arm them so formidably. The Blackfeet had now a vast advantage, and soon dispossessed the poor Snakes of their favorite hunting grounds, their land of plenty, and drove them from place to place, until they were fain to take refuge in the wildest and most desolate recesses of the Rocky Mountains. Even here they are subject to occasional visits from their implacable foes, as long as they have horses, or any other property to tempt the plunderer. Thus by degrees the Snakes have become a scattered, broken-spirited, impoverished people; keeping about lonely rivers and mountain streams, and subsisting chiefly upon fish. Such of them as still possess horses, and occasionally figure as hunters, are called Shoshonies; but there is another class, the most abject and forlorn, who are called Shuckers, or more commonly Diggers and Root Eaters. These are a shy, secret, solitary race, who keep in the most retired parts of the mountains, lurking like gnomes in caverns and clefts of the rocks, and subsisting in a great measure on the roots of the earth. Sometimes, in passing through a solitary mountain valley, the traveller comes perchance upon the bleeding carcass of a deer or buffalo that has just been slain. He looks round in vain for the hunter; the whole landscape is lifeless and deserted: at length he perceives a thread of smoke, curling up from among the crags and cliffs, and scrambling to the place, finds some forlorn and skulking brood of Diggers, terrified at being discovered.

The Shoshonies, however, who, as has been observed, have still "horse to ride and weapon to wear," are somewhat bolder in their spirit, and more open and wide in their wanderings. In the autumn, when salmon disappear from the rivers, and hunger begins to pinch, they even venture down into their ancient hunting grounds, to make a foray among the buffaloes. In this perilous enterprise they are occasionally joined by the Flatheads, the persecutions of the Blackfeet having produced a close alliance and cooperation between these luckless and maltreated tribes. Still, notwithstanding their united force, every step they take within the debatable ground is taken in fear and trembling, and with the utmost precaution: and an Indian trader assures us that he has seen at least five hundred of them, armed and equipped for action, and keeping watch upon the hill

tops, while about fifty were hunting in the prairie. Their excursions are brief and hurried; as soon as they have collected and jerked sufficient buffalo meat for winter provisions, they pack their horses, abandon the dangerous hunting grounds, and hasten back to the mountains, happy if they have not the terrible Blackfeet rattling after them.

Such a confederate band of Shoshonies and Flatheads was the one met by our travellers. It was bound on a visit to the Arrapahoes, a tribe inhabiting the banks of the Nebraska. They were armed to the best of their scanty means, and some of the Shoshonies had bucklers of buffalo hide, adorned with feathers and leathern fringes, and which have a charmed virtue in their eyes, from having been prepared, with mystic ceremonies, by their conjurers.

In company with this wandering band our travellers proceeded all day. In the evening they encamped near to each other in a defile of the mountains, on the borders of a stream running north, and falling into Bighorn River. In the vicinity of the camp, they found gooseberries, strawberries, and currants in great abundance. The defile bore traces of having been a thoroughfare for countless herds of buffaloes, though not one was to be seen. The hunters succeeded in killing an elk and several black-tailed deer.

They were now in the bosom of the second Bighorn ridge, with another lofty and snow-crowned mountain full in view to the west. Fifteen miles of western course brought them, on the following day, down into an intervening plain, well stocked with buffalo. Here the Snakes and Flatheads joined with the white hunters in a successful hunt, that soon filled the camp with provisions.

On the morning of the 9th of September, the travellers parted company with their Indian friends, and continued on their course to the west. A march of thirty miles brought them, in the evening, to the banks of a rapid and beautifully clear stream about a hundred yards wide. It is the north fork or branch of the Bighorn River, but bears its peculiar name of the Wind River, from being subject in the winter season to a continued blast which sweeps its banks and prevents the snow from lying on them. This blast is said to be caused by a narrow gap or funnel in the mountains, through which the river forces its way between perpendicular precipices, resembling cut rocks.

This river gives its name to a whole range of mountains consisting of three parallel chains, eighty miles in length, and about twenty or twenty-five broad. One of its peaks is probably fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, being one of the highest of the Rocky Sierra. These mountains give rise, not merely to the Wind or Bighorn River, but to several branches of the Yellowstone and the Missouri on the east, and of the Columbia and Colorado on the west; thus dividing the sources of these mighty streams.

For five succeeding days, Mr. Hunt and his party continued up the course of the Wind River, to the distance of about eighty miles, crossing and recrossing it, according to its windings, and the nature of its banks; sometimes passing through valleys, at other times scrambling over rocks and hills. The country in general was destitute of trees, but they passed through groves of wormwood, eight and ten feet in height, which they used occasionally for fuel, and they met with large quanti-

ties of wild flax.

The mountains were destitute of game; they came in sight of two grizzly bears, but could not get near enough for a shot; provisions, therefore, began to be scanty. They saw large flights of the kind of thrush commonly called the robin, and many smaller birds of migratory species; but the hills in general appeared lonely and with few signs of animal life. On the evening of the 14th September, they encamped on the forks of the Wind or Bighorn River. The largest of these forks came from the range of Wind River Mountains.

The hunters who served as guides to the party in this part of their route, had assured Mr. Hunt that, by following up Wind River, and crossing a single mountain ridge, he would come upon the head waters of the Columbia. This scarcity of game, however, which already had been felt to a pinching degree, and which threatened them with famine among the sterile heights which lay before them, admonished them to change their course. It was determined, therefore, to make for a stream, which they were informed passed the neighboring mountains, to the south of west, on the grassy banks of which it was probable they would meet with buffalo. Accordingly, about three o'clock on the following day, meeting with a beaten Indian road which led in the proper direction, they struck into it, turning their backs upon Wind River.

In the course of the day, they came to a height that commanded an almost boundless prospect. Here one of the guides paused, and, after considering the vast landscape attentively, pointed to three mountain peaks glistening with snow, which rose, he said, above a fork of Columbia River. They were hailed by the travellers with that joy with which a beacon on a seashore is hailed by mariners after a long and dangerous voyage.

It is true there was many a weary league to be traversed before they should reach these landmarks, for, allowing for their evident height and the extreme transparency of the atmosphere, they could not be much less than a hundred miles distant. Even after reaching them, there would yet remain hundreds of miles of their journey to be accomplished. All these matters were forgotten in the joy at seeing the first landmarks of the Columbia, that river which formed the bourne of the expedition. These remarkable peaks were known as the Tetons; as guiding points for many days, to Mr. Hunt, he gave them the names of the Pilot Knobs.

The travellers continued their course to the south of west for about forty miles, through a region so elevated that patches of snow lay on the highest summits and on the northern declivities. At length they came to the desired stream, the object of their search, the waters of which flowed to the west. It was, in fact, a branch of the Colorado, which falls into the Gulf of California, and had received from the hunters the name of Spanish River, from information given by the Indians that Spaniards resided upon its lower waters.

The aspect of this river and its vicinity was cheering to the wayworn and hungry travellers. Its banks were green, and there were grassy valleys running from it various directions, into the heart of the rugged mountains, with herds of buffalo quietly grazing. The hunters sallied forth with

keen alacrity, and soon returned laden with provisions.

In this part of the mountains Mr. Hunt met with three different kinds of gooseberries. The common purple, on a low and very thorny bush; a yellow kind, of an excellent flavor, growing on a stock free from thorns; and a deep purple, of the size and taste of our winter grape, with a thorny stalk. There were also three kinds of currants, one very large and well tasted, of a purple color, and growing on a bush eight or nine feet high. Another of a yellow color, and of the size and taste of the large red currant, the bush four or five feet high; and the third a beautiful scarlet, resembling the strawberry in sweetness, though rather insipid, and growing on a low bush.

On the 17th they continued down the course of the river, making fifteen miles to the southwest. The river abounded with geese and ducks, and there were signs of its being inhabited by beaver and otters: indeed they were now approaching regions where these animals, the great objects of the fur trade, are said to abound. They encamped for the night opposite the end of a mountain in the west, which was probably the last chain of the Rocky Mountains. On the following morning they abandoned the main course of the Spanish River, and taking a northwest direction for eight miles, came upon one of its little tributaries, issuing out of the bosom of the mountains, and running through green meadows, yielding pasturage to herds of buffalo. As these were probably the last of that animal they would meet with, they encamped on the grassy banks of the river, determined to spend several days in hunting, so as to be able to jerk sufficient meat to supply them until they should reach the waters of the Columbia, where they trusted to find fish enough for their support. A little repose, too, was necessary for both men and horses, after their rugged and incessant marching; having in the course of the last seventeen days traversed two hundred and sixty miles of rough, and in many parts sterile, mountain country.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXX.

A Plentiful Hunting Camp.-Shoshonie Hunters - Hoback's River - Mad River- Encampment Near the Pilot Knobs.- A Consultation. - Preparations for a Perilous Voyage.

FIVE days were passed by Mr. Hunt and his companions in the fresh meadows watered by the bright little mountain stream. The hunters made great havoc among the buffaloes, and brought in quantities of meat; the voyageurs busied themselves about the fires, roasting and stewing for present purposes, or drying provisions for the journey; the pack-horses, eased of their burdens, rolled on the grass, or grazed at large about the ample pasture; those of the party who had no call upon their services, indulged in the luxury of perfect relaxation, and the camp presented a picture of rude feasting and revelry, of mingled bustle and repose, characteristic of a halt in a fine hunting country. In the course of one of their excursions, some of the men came in sight of a small party of Indians, who instantly fled in great apparent consternation. They immediately retreated to camp with the intelligence: upon which Mr. Hunt and four others flung themselves upon their horses, and sallied forth to reconnoitre. After riding for about eight miles, they came upon a wild mountain scene. A lonely green valley stretched before them, surrounded by rugged heights. A herd of buffalo were careering madly through it, with a troop of savage horsemen in full chase,

plying them with their bows and arrows. The appearance of Mr. Hunt and his companions put an abrupt end to the hunt; the buffalo scuttled off in one direction, while the Indians plied their lashes and galloped off in another, as fast as their steeds could carry them. Mr. Hunt gave chase; there was a sharp scamper, though of short continuance. Two young Indians, who were indifferently mounted, were soon overtaken. They were terribly frightened, and evidently gave themselves up for lost. By degrees their fears were allayed by kind treatment; but they continued to regard the strangers with a mixture of awe and wonder, for it was the first time in their lives they had ever seen a white man.

They belonged to a party of Snakes who had come across the mountains on their autumnal hunting excursion to provide buffalo meat for the winter. Being persuaded of the peaceful intentions of Mr. Hunt and his companions, they willingly conducted them to their camp. It was pitched in a narrow valley on the margin of a stream. The tents were of dressed skins, some of them fantastically painted; with horses grazing about them. The approach of the party caused a transient alarm in the camp, for these poor Indians were ever on the look-out for cruel foes. No sooner, however, did they recognize the garb and complexion of their visitors, than their apprehensions were changed into Joy; for some of them had dealt with white men, and knew them to be friendly, and to abound with articles of singular value. They welcomed them, therefore, to their tents, set food before them; and entertained them to the best of their power.

They had been successful in their hunt, and their camp was full of jerked buffalo meat, all of the choicest kind, and extremely fat. Mr. Hunt purchased enough of them, in addition to what had been killed and cured by his own hunters, to load all the horses excepting those reserved for the partners and the wife of Pierre Dorion. He found, also, a few beaver skins in their camp, for which he paid liberally, as an inducement to them to hunt for more; informing them that some of his party intended to live among the mountains, and trade with the native hunters for their peltries. The poor Snakes soon comprehended the advantages thus held out to them, and promised to exert themselves to procure a quantity of beaver skins for future traffic. Being now well supplied with provisions, Mr. Hunt broke up his encampment on the 24th of September, and continued on to the west. A march of fifteen miles, over a mountain ridge, brought them to a stream about fifty feet in width, which Hoback, one of their guides, who had trapped about the neighborhood when in the service of Mr. Henry, recognized for one of the head waters of the Columbia. The travellers hailed it with delight, as the first stream they had encountered tending toward their point of destination. They kept along it for two days, during which, from the contribution of many rills and brooks, it gradually swelled into a small river. As it meandered among rocks and precipices, they were frequently obliged to ford it, and such was its rapidity that the men were often in danger of being swept away. Sometimes the banks advanced so close upon the river that they were obliged to scramble up and down their rugged promontories, or to skirt along their bases where there was scarce a foothold. Their horses had dangerous falls in some of these passes. One of them rolled, with his load, nearly two hundred feet down hill into the river, but without receiving any injury. At length they emerged from these stupendous defiles, and continued for several miles along the bank of Hoback's River, through one of the stern mountain valleys. Here it was joined by a river of greater magnitude and swifter current, and their united waters swept off through the valley

in one impetuous stream, which, from its rapidity and turbulence, had received the name of the Mad River. At the confluence of these streams the travellers encamped. An important point in their arduous journey had been attained; a few miles from their camp rose the three vast snowy peaks called the Tetons, or the Pilot Knobs, the great landmarks of the Columbia, by which they had shaped their course through this mountain wilderness. By their feet flowed the rapid current of Mad River, a stream ample enough to admit of the navigation of canoes, and down which they might possibly be able to steer their course to the main body of the Columbia. The Canadian voyageurs rejoiced at the idea of once more launching themselves upon their favorite element; of exchanging their horses for canoes, and of gliding down the bosoms of rivers, instead of scrambling over the backs of mountains. Others of the party, also, inexperienced in this kind of travelling, considered their toils and troubles as drawing to a close. They had conquered the chief difficulties of this great rocky barrier, and now flattered themselves with the hope of an easy downward course for the rest of their journey. Little did they dream of the hardships and perils by land and water, which were yet to be encountered in the frightful wilderness that intervened between them and the shores of the Pacific!

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXXI.

A Consultation Whether to Proceed by Land or Water- Preparations for Boat-Building.- An Exploring Party.- A Party of Trappers Detached.- Two Snake Visitors.- Their Report Concerning the River. - Confirmed by the Exploring Party. - Mad River Abandoned.- Arrival at Henry's Fort.- Detachment of Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner to Trap.- Mr. Miller Resolves to Accompany Them.- Their Departure.

ON the banks of Mad River Mr. Hunt held a consultation with the other partners as to their future movements. The wild and impetuous current of the river rendered him doubtful whether it might not abound with impediments lower down, sufficient to render the navigation of it slow and perilous, if not impracticable. The hunters who had acted as guides knew nothing of the character of the river below; what rocks, and shoals, and rapids might obstruct it, or through what mountains and deserts it might pass. Should they then abandon their horses, cast themselves loose in fragile barks upon this wild, doubtful, and unknown river; or should they continue their more toilsome and tedious, but perhaps more certain wayfaring by land?

The vote, as might have been expected, was almost unanimous for embarkation; for when men are in difficulties every change seems to be for the better. The difficulty now was to find timber of sufficient size for the construction of canoes, the trees in these high mountain regions being chiefly a scrubbed growth of pines and cedars, aspens, haws, and service-berries, and a small kind of cotton-tree, with a leaf resembling that of the willow. There was a species of large fir, but so full of knots as to endanger the axe in hewing it. After searching for some time, a growth of timber, of sufficient size, was found lower down the river, whereupon the encampment was moved to the vicinity.

The men were now set to work to fell trees, and the mountains echoed to the unwonted sound of

their axes. While preparations were thus going on for a voyage down the river, Mr. Hunt, who still entertained doubts of its practicability, despatched an exploring party, consisting of John Reed, the clerk, John Day, the hunter, and Pierre Dorion, the interpreter, with orders to proceed several days' march along the stream, and notice its course and character.

After their departure, Mr. Hunt turned his thoughts to another object of importance. He had now arrived at the head waters of the Columbia, which were among the main points embraced by the enterprise of Mr. Astor. These upper streams were reputed to abound in beaver, and had as yet been unmolested by the white trapper. The numerous signs of beaver met with during the recent search for timber gave evidence that the neighborhood was a good "trapping ground." Here, then, it was proper to begin to cast loose those leashes of hardy trappers, that are detached from trading parties, in the very heart of the wilderness. The men detached in the present instance were Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michel, Pierre Detaye, and Pierre Delaunay. Trappers generally go in pairs, that they may assist, protect, and comfort each other in their lonely and perilous occupations. Thus Carson and St. Michel formed one couple, and Detaye and Delaunay another. They were fitted out with traps, arms, ammunition, horses, and every other requisite, and were to trap upon the upper part of Mad River, and upon the neighboring streams of the mountains. This would probably occupy them for some months; and, when they should have collected a sufficient quantity of peltries, they were to pack them upon their horses and make the best of their way to the mouth of Columbia River, or to any intermediate post which might be established by the company. They took leave of their comrades and started off on their several courses with stout hearts and cheerful countenances; though these lonely cruisions into a wild and hostile wilderness seem to the uninitiated equivalent to being cast adrift in the ship's yawl in the midst of the ocean.

Of the perils that attend the lonely trapper, the reader will have sufficient proof, when he comes, in the after part of this work, to learn the hard fortunes of these poor fellows in the course of their wild peregrinations.

The trappers had not long departed, when two Snake Indians wandered into the camp. When they perceived that the strangers were fabricating canoes, they shook their heads and gave them to understand that the river was not navigable. Their information, however, was scoffed at by some of the party, who were obstinately bent on embarkation, but was confirmed by the exploring party, who returned after several days' absence. They had kept along the river with great difficulty for two days, and found it a narrow, crooked, turbulent stream, confined in a rocky channel, with many rapids, and occasionally overhung with precipices. From the summit of one of these they had caught a bird's-eye view of its boisterous career for a great distance through the heart of the mountain, with impending rocks and cliffs. Satisfied from this view that it was useless to follow its course, either by land or water, they had given up all further investigation.

These concurring reports determined Mr. Hunt to abandon Mad River, and seek some more navigable stream. This determination was concurred in by all his associates excepting Mr. Miller, who had become impatient of the fatigue of land travel, and was for immediate embarkation at all hazards. This gentleman had been in a gloomy and irritated state of mind for some time past,

being troubled with a bodily malady that rendered travelling on horseback extremely irksome to him, and being, moreover, discontented with having a smaller share in the expedition than his comrades. His unreasonable objections to a further march by land were overruled, and the party prepared to decamp.

Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner, the three hunters who had hitherto served as guides among the mountains, now stepped forward, and advised Mr. Hunt to make for the post established during the preceding year by Mr. Henry, of the Missouri Fur Company. They had been with Mr. Henry, and, as far as they could judge by the neighboring landmarks, his post could not be very far off. They presumed there could be but one intervening ridge of mountains, which might be passed without any great difficulty. Henry's post, or fort, was on an upper branch of the Columbia, down which they made no doubt it would be easy to navigate in canoes.

The two Snake Indians being questioned in the matter, showed a perfect knowledge of the situation of the post, and offered, with great alacrity, to guide them to the place. Their offer was accepted, greatly to the displeasure of Mr. Miller, who seemed obstinately bent upon braving the perils of Mad River.

The weather for a few days past had been stormy, with rain and sleet. The Rocky Mountains are subject to tempestuous winds from the west; these sometimes come in flaws or currents, making a path through the forests many yards in width, and whirling off trunks and branches to a great distance. The present storm subsided on the third of October, leaving all the surrounding heights covered with snow; for while rain had fallen in the valley, it had snowed on the hill tops.

On the 4th, they broke up their encampment, and crossed the river, the water coming up to the girths of their horses. After travelling four miles, they encamped at the foot of the mountain, the last, as they hoped, which they should have to traverse. Four days more took them across it, and over several plains, watered by beautiful little streams, tributaries of Mad River. Near one of their encampments there was a hot spring continually emitting a cloud of vapor. These elevated plains, which give a peculiar character to the mountains, are frequented by large gangs of antelopes, fleet as the wind.

On the evening of the 8th of October, after a cold wintry day, with gusts of westerly wind and flurries of snow, they arrived at the sought-for post of Mr. Henry. Here he had fixed himself, after being compelled by the hostilities of the Blackfeet, to abandon the upper waters of the Missouri. The post, however, was deserted, for Mr. Henry had left it in the course of the preceding spring, and, as it afterwards appeared, had fallen in with Mr. Lisa, at the Arickara village on the Missouri, some time after the separation of Mr. Hunt and his party.

The weary travellers gladly took possession of the deserted log huts which had formed the post, and which stood on the bank of a stream upwards of a hundred yards wide, on which they intended to embark. There being plenty of suitable timber in the neighborhood, Mr. Hunt immediately proceeded to construct canoes. As he would have to leave his horses and their accoutrements

here, he determined to make this a trading post, where the trappers and hunters, to be distributed about the country, might repair; and where the traders might touch on their way through the mountains to and from the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia. He informed the two Snake Indians of this determination, and engaged them to remain in that neighborhood and take care of the horses until the white men should return, promising them ample rewards for their fidelity. It may seem a desperate chance to trust to the faith and honesty of two such vagabonds; but, as the horses would have, at all events, to be abandoned, and would otherwise become the property of the first vagrant horde that should encounter them, it was one chance in favor of their being regained.

At this place another detachment of hunters prepared to separate from the party for the purpose of trapping beaver. Three of these had already been in this neighborhood, being the veteran Robinson and his companions, Hoback and Rezner, who had accompanied Mr. Henry across the mountains, and who had been picked up by Mr. Hunt on the Missouri, on their way home to Kentucky. According to agreement they were fitted out with horses, traps, ammunition, and everything requisite for their undertaking, and were to bring in all the peltries they should collect, either to this trading post, or to the establishment at the mouth of Columbia River. Another hunter, of the name of Cass, was associated with them in their enterprise. It is in this way that small knots of trappers and hunters are distributed about the wilderness by the fur companies, and like cranes and bitterns, haunt its solitary streams. Robinson, the Kentuckian, the veteran of the "bloody ground," who, as has already been noted, had been scalped by the Indians in his younger days, was the leader of this little band. When they were about to depart, Mr. Miller called the partners together and threw up his share in the company, declaring his intention of joining the party of trappers.

This resolution struck every one with astonishment, Mr. Miller being a man of education and of cultivated habits, and little fitted for the rude life of a hunter. Besides, the precarious and slender profits arising from such a life were beneath the prospects of one who held a share in the general enterprise. Mr. Hunt was especially concerned and mortified at his determination, as it was through his advice and influence he had entered into the concern. He endeavored, therefore, to dissuade him from this sudden resolution; representing its rashness, and the hardships and perils to which it would expose him. He earnestly advised him, however he might feel dissatisfied with the enterprise, still to continue on in company until they should reach the mouth of Columbia River. There they would meet the expedition that was to come by sea; when, should he still feel disposed to relinquish the undertaking, Mr. Hunt pledged himself to furnish him a passage home in one of the vessels belonging to the company.

To all this Miller replied abruptly, that it was useless to argue with him, as his mind was made up. They might furnish him, or not, as they pleased, with the necessary supplies, but he was determined to part company here, and set off with the trappers. So saying, he flung out of their presence without vouchsafing any further conversation.

Much as this wayward conduct gave them anxiety, the partners saw it was in vain to remonstrate.

---

Every attention was paid to fit him out for his headstrong undertaking. He was provided with four horses, and all the articles he required. The two Snakes undertook to conduct him and his companions to an encampment of their tribe, lower down among the mountains, from whom they would receive information as to the trapping grounds. After thus guiding them, the Snakes were to return to Fort Henry, as the new trading post was called, and take charge of the horses which the party would leave there, of which, after all the hunters were supplied, there remained seventy-seven. These matters being all arranged, Mr. Miller set out with his companions, under guidance of the two Snakes, on the 10th of October; and much did it grieve the friends of that gentleman to see him thus wantonly casting himself loose upon savage life. How he and his comrades fared in the wilderness, and how the Snakes acquitted themselves of their trust respecting the horses, will hereafter appear in the course of these rambling anecdotes.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXXII.

Scanty Fare.- A Mendicant Snake.- Embarkation on Henry River- Joy of the Voyageurs.-Arrival at Snake River.- Rapids and Breakers. - Beginning of Misfortunes.- Snake Encampments.- Parley With a Savage.- A Second Disaster. - Loss of a Boatman.- The Caldron Linn.

WHILE the canoes were in preparation, the hunters ranged about the neighborhood, but with little success. Tracks of buffaloes were to be seen in all directions, but none of a fresh date. There were some elk, but extremely wild; two only were killed. Antelopes were likewise seen, but too shy and fleet to be approached. A few beavers were taken every night, and salmon trout of a small size, so that the camp had principally to subsist upon dried buffalo meat.

On the 14th, a poor, half-naked Snake Indian, one of that forlorn caste called the Shuckers, or Diggers, made his appearance at the camp. He came from some lurking-place among the rocks and cliffs, and presented a picture of that famishing wretchedness to which these lonely fugitives among the mountains are sometimes reduced. Having received wherewithal to allay his hunger, he disappeared, but in the course of a day or two returned to the camp, bringing with him his son, a miserable boy, still more naked and forlorn than himself. Food was given to both; they skulked about the camp like hungry hounds, seeking what they might devour, and having gathered up the feet and entrails of some beavers that were lying about, slunk off with them to their den among the rocks.

By the 18th of October, fifteen canoes were completed, and on the following day the party embarked with their effects; leaving their horses grazing about the banks, and trusting to the honesty of the two Snakes, and some special turn of good luck for their future recovery.

The current bore them along at a rapid rate; the light spirits of the Canadian voyageurs, which had occasionally flagged upon land, rose to their accustomed buoyancy on finding themselves again upon the water. They wielded their paddles with their wonted dexterity, and for the first time made the mountains echo with their favorite boat songs.

In the course of the day the little squadron arrived at the confluence of Henry and Mad Rivers, which, thus united, swelled into a beautiful stream of a light pea-green color, navigable for boats of any size, and which, from the place of junction, took the name of Snake River, a stream doomed to be the scene of much disaster to the travellers. The banks were here and there fringed with willow thickets and small cotton-wood trees. The weather was cold, and it snowed all day, and great flocks of ducks and geese, sporting in the water or streaming through the air, gave token that winter was at hand; yet the hearts of the travellers were light, and, as they glided down the little river, they flattered themselves with the hope of soon reaching the Columbia. After making thirty miles in a southerly direction, they encamped for the night in a neighborhood which required some little vigilance, as there were recent traces of grizzly bears among the thickets.

On the following day the river increased in width and beauty; flowing parallel to a range of mountains on the left, which at times were finely reflected in its light green waters. The three snowy summits of the Pilot Knobs or Tetons were still seen towering in the distance. After pursuing a swift but placid course for twenty miles, the current began to foam and brawl, and assume the wild and broken character common to the streams west of the Rocky Mountains. In fact the rivers which flow from those mountains to the Pacific are essentially different from those which traverse the prairies on their eastern declivities. The latter, though sometimes boisterous, are generally free from obstructions, and easily navigated; but the rivers to the west of the mountains descend more steeply and impetuously, and are continually liable to cascades and rapids. The latter abounded in the part of the river which the travellers were now descending. Two of the canoes filled among the breakers; the crews were saved, but much of the lading was lost or damaged, and one of the canoes drifted down the stream and was broken among the rocks.

On the following day, October 21st, they made but a short distance when they came to a dangerous strait, where the river was compressed for nearly half a mile between perpendicular rocks, reducing it to the width of twenty yards, and increasing its violence. Here they were obliged to pass the canoes down cautiously by a line from the impending banks. This consumed a great part of a day; and after they had reembarked they were soon again impeded by rapids, when they had to unload their canoes and carry them and their cargoes for some distance by land. It is at these places, called "portages," that the Canadian voyageur exhibits his most valuable qualities; carrying heavy burdens, and toiling to and fro, on land and in the water, over rocks and precipices, among brakes and brambles, not only without a murmur, but with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity, joking and laughing and singing scraps of old French ditties.

The spirits of the party, however, which had been elated on first varying their journeying from land to water, had now lost some of their buoyancy. Everything ahead was wrapped in uncertainty. They knew nothing of the river on which they were floating. It had never been navigated by a white man, nor could they meet with an Indian to give them any information concerning it. It kept on its course through a vast wilderness of silent and apparently uninhabited mountains, without a savage wigwam upon its banks, or bark upon its waters. The difficulties and perils they had already passed made them apprehend others before them, that might effectually bar their progress. As they glided onward, however, they regained heart and hope. The current continued

---

to be strong; but it was steady, and though they met with frequent rapids, none of them were bad. Mountains were constantly to be seen in different directions, but sometimes the swift river glided through prairies, and was bordered by small cotton-wood trees and willows. These prairies at certain seasons are ranged by migratory herds of the wide-wandering buffalo, the tracks of which, though not of recent date, were frequently to be seen. Here, too, were to be found the prickly pear or Indian fig, a plant which loves a more southern climate. On the land were large flights of magpies and American robins; whole fleets of ducks and geese navigated the river, or flew off in long streaming files at the approach of the canoes; while the frequent establishments of the painstaking and quiet-loving beaver showed that the solitude of these waters was rarely disturbed, even by the all-pervading savage.

They had now come near two hundred and eighty miles since leaving Fort Henry, yet without seeing a human being, or a human habitation; a wild and desert solitude extended on either side of the river, apparently almost destitute of animal life. At length, on the 24th of October, they were gladdened by the sight of some savage tents, and hastened to land and visit them, for they were anxious to procure information to guide them on their route. On their approach, however, the savages fled in consternation. They proved to be a wandering band of Shoshonies. In their tents were great quantities of small fish about two inches long, together with roots and seeds, or grain, which they were drying for winter provisions. They appeared to be destitute of tools of any kind, yet there were bows and arrows very well made; the former were formed of pine, cedar, or bone, strengthened by sinews, and the latter of the wood of rosebushes, and other crooked plants, but carefully straightened, and tipped with stone of a bottle-green color.

There were also vessels of willow and grass, so closely wrought as to hold water, and a seine neatly made with meshes, in the ordinary manner, of the fibres of wild flax or nettle. The humble effects of the poor savages remained unmolested by their visitors, and a few small articles, with a knife or two, were left in the camp, and were no doubt regarded as invaluable prizes.

Shortly after leaving this deserted camp, and reembarking in the canoes, the travellers met with three of the Snakes on a triangular raft made of flags or reeds; such was their rude mode of navigating the river. They were entirely naked excepting small mantles of hare skins over their shoulders. The canoes approached near enough to gain a full view of them, but they were not to be brought to a parley.

All further progress for the day was barred by a fall in the river of about thirty feet perpendicular; at the head of which the party encamped for the night.

The next day was one of excessive toil and but little progress: the river winding through a wild rocky country, and being interrupted by frequent rapids, among which the canoes were in great peril. On the succeeding day they again visited a camp of wandering Snakes, but the inhabitants fled with terror at the sight of a fleet of canoes, filled with white men, coming down their solitary river.

As Mr. Hunt was extremely anxious to gain information concerning his route, he endeavored by all kinds of friendly signs to entice back the fugitives. At length one, who was on horseback, ventured back with fear and trembling. He was better clad, and in better condition, than most of his vagrant tribe that Mr. Hunt had yet seen. The chief object of his return appeared to be to intercede for a quantity of dried meat and salmon trout, which he had left behind; on which, probably, he depended for his winter's subsistence. The poor wretch approached with hesitation, the alternate dread of famine and of white men operating upon his mind. He made the most abject signs, imploring Mr. Hunt not to carry off his food. The latter tried in every way to reassure him, and offered him knives in exchange for his provisions; great as was the temptation, the poor Snake could only prevail upon himself to spare a part; keeping a feverish watch over the rest, lest it should be taken away. It was in vain Mr. Hunt made inquiries of him concerning his route, and the course of the river. The Indian was too much frightened and bewildered to comprehend him or to reply; he did nothing but alternately commend himself to the protection of the Good Spirit, and supplicate Mr. Hunt not to take away his fish and buffalo meat; and in this state they left him, trembling about his treasures.

In the course of that and the next day they made nearly eight miles; the river inclined to the south of west, and being clear and beautiful, nearly half a mile in width, with many populous communities of the beaver along its banks. The 28th of October, however, was a day of disaster. The river again became rough and impetuous, and was chafed and broken by numerous rapids. These grew more and more dangerous, and the utmost skill was required to steer among them. Mr. Crooks was seated in the second canoe of the squadron, and had an old experienced Canadian for steersman, named Antoine Clappine, one of the most valuable of the voyageurs. The leading canoe had glided safely among the turbulent and roaring surges, but in following it, Mr. Crooks perceived that his canoe was bearing towards a rock. He called out to the steersman, but his warning voice was either unheard or unheeded. In the next moment they struck upon the rock. The canoe was split and overturned. There were five persons on board. Mr. Crooks and one of his companions were thrown amidst roaring breakers and a whirling current, but succeeded, by strong swimming, to reach the shore. Clappine and two others clung to the shattered bark, and drifted with it to a rock. The wreck struck the rock with one end, and swinging round, flung poor Clappine off into the raging stream, which swept him away, and he perished. His comrades succeeded in getting upon the rock, from whence they were afterwards taken off.

This disastrous event brought the whole squadron to a halt, and struck a chill into every bosom. Indeed they had arrived at a terrific strait, that forbade all further progress in the canoes, and dismayed the most experienced voyageur. The whole body of the river was compressed into a space of less than thirty feet in width, between two ledges of rocks, upwards of two hundred feet high, and formed a whirling and tumultuous vortex, so frightfully agitated as to receive the name of "The Caldron Linn." Beyond this fearful abyss, the river kept raging and roaring on, until lost to sight among impending precipices.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Gloomy Council.-Exploring Parties- Discouraging Reports- Disastrous Experiment.- Detachments in Quest of Succor.- Caches, How Made. -Return of One of the Detachments- Unsuccessful.- Further Disappointments- The Devil's Scuttle Hole

MR. HUNT and his companions encamped upon the borders of the Caldron Linn, and held gloomy counsel as to their future course. The recent wreck had dismayed even the voyageurs, and the fate of their popular comrade, Clappine, one of the most adroit and experienced of their fraternity, had struck sorrow to their hearts, for with all their levity, these thoughtless beings have great kindness towards each other.

The whole distance they had navigated since leaving Henry's Fort was computed to be about three hundred and forty miles; strong apprehensions were now entertained that the tremendous impediments before them would oblige them to abandon their canoes. It was determined to send exploring parties on each side of the river to ascertain whether it was possible to navigate it further. Accordingly, on the following morning, three men were despatched along the south bank, while Mr. Hunt and three others proceeded along the north. The two parties returned after a weary scramble among swamps, rocks, and precipices, and with very disheartening accounts. For nearly forty miles that they had explored, the river foamed and roared along through a deep and narrow channel, from twenty to thirty yards wide, which it had worn, in the course of ages, through the heart of a barren, rocky country. The precipices on each side were often two and three hundred feet high, sometimes perpendicular, and sometimes overhanging, so that it was impossible, excepting in one or two places, to get down to the margin of the stream. This dreary strait was rendered the more dangerous by frequent rapids, and occasionally perpendicular falls from ten to forty feet in height; so that it seemed almost hopeless to attempt to pass the canoes down it. The party, however, who had explored the south side of the river, had found a place, about six miles from the camp, where they thought it possible the canoes might be carried down the bank and launched upon the stream, and from whence they might make their way with the aid of occasional portages. Four of the best canoes were accordingly selected for the experiment, and were transported to the place on the shoulders of sixteen of the men. At the same time Mr. Reed, the clerk, and three men were detached to explore the river still further down than the previous scouting parties had been, and at the same time to look out for Indians, from whom provisions might be obtained, and a supply of horses, should it be found necessary to proceed by land.

The party who had been sent with the canoes returned on the following day, weary and dejected. One of the canoes had been swept away with all the weapons and effects of four of the voyageurs, in attempting to pass it down a rapid by means of a line. The other three had stuck fast among the rocks, so that it was impossible to move them; the men returned, therefore, in despair, and declared the river unnavigable.

The situation of the unfortunate travellers was now gloomy in the extreme. They were in the heart of an unknown wilderness, untraversed as yet by a white man. They were at a loss what route to take, and how far they were from the ultimate place of their destination, nor could they meet in these uninhabited wilds with any human being to give them information. The repeated accidents

to their canoes had reduced their stock of provisions to five days' allowance, and there was now every appearance of soon having famine added to their other sufferings.

This last circumstance rendered it more perilous to keep together than to separate. Accordingly, after a little anxious but bewildered counsel, it was determined that several small detachments should start off in different directions, headed by the several partners. Should any of them succeed in falling in with friendly Indians, within a reasonable distance, and obtaining a supply of provisions and horses, they were to return to the aid of the main body: otherwise they were to shift for themselves, and shape their course according to circumstances; keeping the mouth of the Columbia River as the ultimate point of their wayfaring. Accordingly, three several parties set off from the camp at Caldron Linn, in opposite directions. Mr. M'Lellan, with three men, kept down along the bank of the river. Mr. Crooks, with five others, turned their steps up it; retracing by land the weary course they had made by water, intending, should they not find relief nearer at hand, to keep on until they should reach Henry's Fort, where they hoped to find the horses they had left there, and to return with them to the main body.

The third party, composed of five men, was headed by Mr. M'Kenzie, who struck to the northward, across the desert plains, in hopes of coming upon the main stream of the Columbia.

Having seen these three adventurous bands depart upon their forlorn expeditions, Mr. Hunt turned his thoughts to provide for the subsistence of the main body left to his charge, and to prepare for their future march. There remained with him thirty-one men, besides the squaw and two children of Pierre Dorion. There was no game to be met with in the neighborhood; but beavers were occasionally trapped about the river banks, which afforded a scanty supply of food; in the meantime they comforted themselves that some one or other of the foraging detachments would be successful, and return with relief.

Mr. Hunt now set to work with all diligence, to prepare caches, in which to deposit the baggage and merchandise, of which it would be necessary to disburden themselves, preparatory to their weary march by land: and here we shall give a brief description of those contrivances, so noted in the wilderness.

A cache is a term common among traders and hunters, to designate a hiding-place for provisions and effects. It is derived from the French word "cacher", to conceal, and originated among the early colonists of Canada and Louisiana; but the secret depository which it designates was in use among the aboriginals long before the intrusion of the white men. It is, in fact, the only mode that migratory hordes have of preserving their valuables from robbery, during their long absences from their villages or accustomed haunts, on hunting expeditions, or during the vicissitudes of war. The utmost skill and caution are required to render these places of concealment invisible to the lynx eye of an Indian. The first care is to seek out a proper situation, which is generally some dry, low, bank of clay, on the margin of a water-course. As soon as the precise spot is pitched upon, blankets, saddle-cloths, and other coverings are spread over the surrounding grass and bushes, to prevent foot-tracks, or any other derangement; and as few hands as possible are

employed. A circle of about two feet in diameter is then nicely cut in the sod, which is carefully removed, with the loose soil immediately beneath it, and laid aside in a place where it will be safe from anything that may change its appearance. The uncovered area is then dug perpendicular to the depth of about three feet, and is then gradually widened so as to form a conical chamber six or seven feet deep. The whole of the earth displaced by this process, being of a different color from that on the surface, is handed up in a vessel, and heaped into a skin or cloth, in which it is conveyed to the stream and thrown into the midst of the current, that it may be entirely carried off. Should the cache not be formed in the vicinity of a stream, the earth thus thrown up is carried to a distance, and scattered in such manner as not to leave the minutest trace. The cave, being formed, is well lined with dry grass, bark, sticks, and poles, and occasionally a dried hide. The property intended to be hidden is then laid in, after having been well aired: a hide is spread over it, and dried grass, brush, and stones thrown in, and trampled down until the pit is filled to the neck. The loose soil which had been put aside is then brought and rammed down firmly, to prevent its caving in, and is frequently sprinkled with water, to destroy the scent, lest the wolves and bears should be attracted to the place, and root up the concealed treasure. When the neck of the cache is nearly level with the surrounding surface, the sod is again fitted in with the utmost exactness, and any bushes, stocks, or stones, that may have originally been about the spot, are restored to their former places. The blankets and other coverings are then removed from the surrounding herbage; all tracks are obliterated; the grass is gently raised by the hand to its natural position, and the minutest chip or straw is scrupulously gleaned up and thrown into the stream. After all this is done, the place is abandoned for the night, and, if all be right next morning, is not visited again, until there be a necessity for reopening the cache. Four men are sufficient, in this way, to conceal the amount of three tons weight of merchandise in the course of two days. Nine caches were required to contain the goods and baggage which Mr. Hunt found it necessary to leave at this place.

Three days had been thus employed since the departure of the several detachments, when that of Mr. Crooks unexpectedly made its appearance. A momentary joy was diffused through the camp, for they supposed succor to be at hand. It was soon dispelled. Mr. Crooks and his companions had been completely disheartened by this retrograde march through a bleak and barren country; and had found, computing from their progress and the accumulating difficulties besetting every step, that it would be impossible to reach Henry's Fort and return to the main body in the course of the winter. They had determined, therefore, to rejoin their comrades, and share their lot.

One avenue of hope was thus closed upon the anxious sojourners at the Caldron Linn; their main expectation of relief was now from the two parties under Reed and M'Lellan, which had proceeded down the river; for, as to Mr. M'Kenzie's detachment, which had struck across the plains, they thought it would have sufficient difficulty in struggling forward through the trackless wilderness. For five days they continued to support themselves by trapping and fishing. Some fish of tolerable size were speared at night by the light of cedar torches; others, that were very small, were caught in nets with fine meshes. The product of their fishing, however, was very scanty. Their trapping was also precarious; and the tails and bellies of the beavers were dried and put by for the journey.

At length two of the companions of Mr. Reed returned, and were hailed with the most anxious ea-

gerness. Their report served but to increase the general despondency. They had followed Mr. Reed for some distance below the point to which Mr. Hunt had explored, but had met with no Indians from whom to obtain information and relief. The river still presented the same furious aspect, brawling and boiling along a narrow and rugged channel, between rocks that rose like walls.

A lingering hope, which had been indulged by some of the party, of proceeding by water, was now finally given up: the long and terrific strait of the river set all further progress at defiance, and in their disgust at the place, and their vexation at the disasters sustained there, they gave it the indignant, though not very decorous, appellation of the Devil's Scuttle Hole.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Determination of the Party to Proceed on Foot.- Dreary Deserts Between Snake River and the Columbia.- Distribution of Effects Preparatory to a March- Division of the Party.- Rugged March Along the River.- Wild and Broken Scenery.- Shoshonies.- Alarm of a Snake Encampment- Intercourse with the Snakes.- Horse Dealing. - Value of a Tin Kettle.- Sufferings From Thirst- A Horse Reclaimed. -Fortitude of an Indian Woman.- Scarcity of Food.- Dog's Flesh a Dainty.-News of Mr. Crooks and His Party.-Painful Travelling Among the Mountains.- Snow Storms.- A Dreary Mountain Prospect. -A Bivouac During a Wintry Night.- Return to the River Bank.

THE resolution of Mr. Hunt and his companions was now taken to set out immediately on foot. As to the other detachments that had in a manner gone forth to seek their fortunes, there was little chance of their return; they would probably make their own way through the wilderness. At any rate, to linger in the vague hope of relief from them would be to run the risk of perishing with hunger. Besides, the winter was rapidly advancing, and they had a long journey to make through an unknown country, where all kinds of perils might await them. They were yet, in fact, a thousand miles from Astoria, but the distance was unknown to them at the time: everything before and around them was vague and conjectural, and wore an aspect calculated to inspire despondency.

In abandoning the river, they would have to launch forth upon vast trackless plains destitute of all means of subsistence, where they might perish of hunger and thirst. A dreary desert of sand and gravel extends from Snake River almost to the Columbia. Here and there is a thin and scanty herbage, insufficient for the pasturage of horse or buffalo. Indeed, these treeless wastes between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific are even more desolate and barren than the naked, upper prairies on the Atlantic side; they present vast desert tracts that must ever defy cultivation, and interpose dreary and thirsty wilds between the habitations of man, in traversing which the wanderer will often be in danger of perishing.

Seeing the hopeless character of these wastes, Mr. Hunt and his companions determined to keep along the course of the river, where they would always have water at hand, and would be able occasionally to procure fish and beaver, and might perchance meet with Indians, from whom they could obtain provisions.

They now made their final preparations for the march. All their remaining stock of provisions consisted of forty pounds of Indian corn, twenty pounds of grease, about five pounds of portable soup, and a sufficient quantity of dried meat to allow each man a pittance of five pounds and a quarter, to be reserved for emergencies. This being properly distributed, they deposited all their goods and superfluous articles in the caches, taking nothing with them but what was indispensable to the journey. With all their management, each man had to carry twenty pounds' weight besides his own articles and equipments.

That they might have the better chance of procuring subsistence in the scanty region they were to traverse, they divided their party into two bands. Mr. Hunt, with eighteen men, besides Pierre Dorion and his family, was to proceed down the north side of the river, while Mr. Crooks, with eighteen men, kept along the south side.

On the morning of the 9th of October, the two parties separated and set forth on their several courses. Mr. Hunt and his companions followed along the right bank of the river, which made its way far below them, brawling at the foot of perpendicular precipices of solid rock, two and three hundred feet high. For twenty-eight miles that they travelled this day, they found it impossible to get down to the margin of the stream. At the end of this distance they encamped for the night at a place which admitted a scrambling descent. It was with the greatest difficulty, however, that they succeeded in getting up a kettle of water from the river for the use of the camp. As some rain had fallen in the afternoon, they passed the night under the shelter of the rocks.

The next day they continued thirty-two miles to the northwest, keeping along the river, which still ran in its deep-cut channel. Here and there a shady beach or a narrow strip of soil, fringed with dwarf willows, would extend for a little distance along the foot of the cliffs, and sometimes a reach of still water would intervene like a smooth mirror between the foaming rapids.

As through the preceding day, they journeyed on without finding, except in one instance, any place where they could get down to the river's edge, and they were fain to allay the thirst caused by hard travelling, with the water collected in the hollow of the rocks.

In the course of their march on the following morning, they fell into a beaten horse path leading along the river, which showed that they were in the neighborhood of some Indian village or encampment. They had not proceeded far along it, when they met with two Shoshonies, or Snakes. They approached with some appearance of uneasiness, and accosting Mr. Hunt, held up a knife, which by signs they let him know they had received from some of the white men of the advance parties. It was with some difficulties that Mr. Hunt prevailed upon one of the savages to conduct him to the lodges of his people. Striking into a trail or path which led up from the river, he guided them for some distance in the prairie, until they came in sight of a number of lodges made of straw, and shaped like hay-stacks. Their approach, as on former occasions, caused the wildest affright among the inhabitants. The women hid such of their children as were too large to be carried, and too small to take care of themselves, under straw, and, clasping their infants to

their breasts, fled across the prairie. The men awaited the approach of the strangers, but evidently in great alarm.

Mr. Hunt entered the lodges, and, as he was looking about, observed where the children were concealed; their black eyes glistening like those of snakes, from beneath the straw. He lifted up the covering to look at them; the poor little beings were horribly frightened, and their fathers stood trembling, as if a beast of prey were about to pounce upon their brood.

The friendly manner of Mr. Hunt soon dispelled these apprehensions; he succeeded in purchasing some excellent dried salmon, and a dog, an animal much esteemed as food by the natives; and when he returned to the river one of the Indians accompanied him. He now came to where the lodges were frequent along the banks, and, after a day's journey of twenty-six miles to the northwest, encamped in a populous neighborhood. Forty or fifty of the natives soon visited the camp, conducting themselves in a very amicable manner. They were well clad, and all had buffalo robes, which they procured from some of the hunting tribes in exchange for salmon. Their habitations were very comfortable; each had its pile of wormwood at the door for fuel, and within was abundance of salmon, some fresh, but the greater part cured. When the white men visited the lodges, however, the women and children hid themselves through fear. Among the supplies obtained here were two dogs, on which our travellers breakfasted, and found them to be very excellent, well-flavored, and hearty food.

In the course of the three following days they made about sixty-three miles, generally in a northwest direction. They met with many of the natives in their straw-built cabins, who received them without alarm. About their dwellings were immense quantities of the heads and skins of salmon, the best part of which had been cured, and hidden in the ground. The women were badly clad; the children worse; their garments were buffalo robes, or the skins of foxes, hares, and badgers, and sometimes the skins of ducks, sewed together, with the plumage on. Most of the skins must have been procured by traffic with other tribes, or in distant hunting excursions, for the naked prairies in the neighborhood afforded few animals, excepting hares, which were abundant. There were signs of buffaloes having been there, but a long time before.

On the 15th of November they made twenty-eight miles along the river, which was entirely free from rapids. The shores were lined with dead salmon, which tainted the whole atmosphere. The natives whom they met spoke of Mr. Reed's party having passed through that neighborhood. In the course of the day Mr. Hunt saw a few horses, but the owners of them took care to hurry them out of the way. All the provisions they were able to procure were two dogs and a salmon. On the following day they were still worse off, having to subsist on parched corn and the remains of their dried meat. The river this day had resumed its turbulent character, forcing its way through a narrow channel between steep rocks and down violent rapids. They made twenty miles over a rugged road, gradually approaching a mountain in the northwest, covered with snow, which had been in sight for three days past.

On the 17th they met with several Indians, one of whom had a horse. Mr. Hunt was extremely

desirous of obtaining it as a pack-horse; for the men, worn down by fatigue and hunger, found the loads of twenty pounds' weight which they had to carry, daily growing heavier and more galling. The Indians, however, along this river, were never willing to part with their horses, having none to spare. The owner of the steed in question seemed proof against all temptation; article after article of great value in Indian eyes was offered and refused. The charms of an old tin-kettle, however, were irresistible, and a bargain was concluded.

A great part of the following morning was consumed in lightening the packages of the men and arranging the load for the horse. At this encampment there was no wood for fuel, even the wormwood on which they had frequently depended having disappeared. For the two last days they had made thirty miles to the northwest.

On the 19th of November, Mr. Hunt was lucky enough to purchase another horse for his own use, giving in exchange a tomahawk, a knife, a fire steel, and some beads and gartering. In an evil hour, however, he took the advice of the Indians to abandon the river, and follow a road or trail leading into the prairies. He soon had cause to regret the change. The road led across a dreary waste, without verdure; and where there was neither fountain, nor pool, nor running stream. The men now began to experience the torments of thirst, aggravated by their diet of dried fish. The thirst of the Canadian voyageurs became so insupportable as to drive them to the most revolting means of allaying it. For twenty-five miles did they toll on across this dismal desert, and laid themselves down at night, parched and disconsolate, beside their wormwood fires; looking forward to still greater sufferings on the following day. Fortunately it began to rain in the night, to their infinite relief; the water soon collected in puddles and afforded them delicious draughts.

Refreshed in this manner, they resumed their wayfaring as soon as the first streaks of dawn gave light enough for them to see their path. The rain continued all day, so that they no longer suffered from thirst, but hunger took its place, for after travelling thirty-three miles they had nothing to sup on but a little parched corn.

The next day brought them to the banks of a beautiful little stream, running to the west, and fringed with groves of cottonwood and willow. On its borders was an Indian camp, with a great many horses grazing around it. The inhabitants, too, appeared to be better clad than usual. The scene was altogether a cheering one to the poor half-famished wanderers. They hastened to their lodges, but on arriving at them met with a check that at first dampened their cheerfulness. An Indian immediately laid claim to the horse of Mr. Hunt, saying that it had been stolen from him. There was no disproving a fact supported by numerous bystanders, and which the horse stealing habits of the Indians rendered but too probable; so Mr. Hunt relinquished his steed to the claimant; not being able to retain him by a second purchase.

At this place they encamped for the night, and made a sumptuous repast upon fish and a couple of dogs, procured from their Indian neighbors. The next day they kept along the river, but came to a halt after ten miles' march, on account of the rain. Here they again got a supply of fish and dogs from the natives; and two of the men were fortunate enough each to get a horse in exchange

for a buffalo robe. One of these men was Pierre Dorion, the half-breed interpreter, to whose suffering family the horse was a timely acquisition. And here we cannot but notice the wonderful patience, perseverance, and hardihood of the Indian women, as exemplified in the conduct of the poor squaw of the interpreter. She was now far advanced in her pregnancy, and had two children to take care of; one four, and the other two years of age. The latter of course she had frequently to carry on her back, in addition to the burden usually imposed upon the squaw, yet she had borne all her hardships without a murmur, and throughout this weary and painful journey had kept pace with the best of the pedestrians. Indeed on various occasions in the course of this enterprise, she displayed a force of character that won the respect and applause of the white men.

Mr. Hunt endeavored to gather some information from these Indians concerning the country and the course of the rivers. His communications with them had to be by signs, and a few words which he had learnt, and of course were extremely vague. All that he could learn from them was that the great river, the Columbia, was still far distant, but he could ascertain nothing as to the route he ought to take to arrive at it. For the two following days they continued westward upwards of forty miles along the little stream, until they crossed it just before its junction with Snake River, which they found still running to the north. Before them was a wintry-looking mountain covered with snow on all sides.

In three days more they made about seventy miles; fording two small rivers, the waters of which were very cold. Provisions were extremely scarce; their chief sustenance was portable soup; a meagre diet for weary pedestrians.

On the 27th of November the river led them into the mountains through a rocky defile where there was scarcely room to pass. They were frequently obliged to unload the horses to get them by the narrow places; and sometimes to wade through the water in getting round rocks and butting cliffs. All their food this day was a beaver which they had caught the night before; by evening, the cravings of hunger were so sharp, and the prospect of any supply among the mountains so faint, that they had to kill one of the horses. "The men," says Mr. Hunt in his journal, "find the meat very good, and, indeed, so should I, were it not for the attachment I have to the animal."

Early the following day, after proceeding ten miles to the north, they came to two lodges of Shoshonies, who seemed in nearly as great extremity as themselves, having just killed two horses for food. They had no other provisions excepting the seed of a weed which they gather in great quantities, and pound fine. It resembles hemp-seed. Mr. Hunt purchased a bag of it, and also some small pieces of horse flesh, which he began to relish, pronouncing them "fat and tender."

From these Indians he received information that several white men had gone down the river, some one side, and a good many on the other; these last he concluded to be Mr. Crooks and his party. He was thus released from much anxiety about their safety, especially as the Indians spoke about Mr. Crooks having one of his dogs yet, which showed that he and his men had not been reduced to extremity of hunger.

As Mr. Hunt feared that he might be several days in passing through this mountain defile, and run the risk of famine, he encamped in the neighborhood of the Indians, for the purpose of bartering with them for a horse. The evening was expended in ineffectual trials. He offered a gun, a buffalo robe, and various other articles. The poor fellows had, probably, like himself, the fear of starvation before their eyes. At length the women, learning the object of his pressing solicitations and tempting offers, set up such a terrible hue and cry that he was fairly howled and scolded from the ground.

The next morning early, the Indians seemed very desirous to get rid of their visitors, fearing, probably, for the safety of their horses. In reply to Mr. Hunt's inquiries about the mountains, they told him that he would have to sleep but three nights more among them; and that six days' travelling would take him to the falls of the Columbia; information in which he put no faith, believing it was only given to induce him to set forward. These, he was told, were the last Snakes he would meet with, and that he would soon come to a nation called Sciatogas.

Forward then did he proceed on his tedious journey, which, at every step, grew more painful. The road continued for two days through narrow defiles, where they were repeatedly obliged to unload the horses. Sometimes the river passed through such rocky chasms and under such steep precipices that they had to leave it, and make their way, with excessive labor, over immense hills, almost impassable for horses. On some of these hills were a few pine trees, and their summits were covered with snow. On the second day of this scramble one of the hunters killed a black-tailed deer, which afforded the half-starved travellers a sumptuous repast. Their progress these two days was twenty-eight miles, a little to the northward of east.

The month of December set in drearily, with rain in the valleys and snow upon the hills. They had to climb a mountain with snow to the midleg, which increased their painful toil. A small beaver supplied them with a scanty meal, which they eked out with frozen blackberries, haws, and choke-cherries, which they found in the course of their scramble. Their journey this day, though excessively fatiguing, was but thirteen miles; and all the next day they had to remain encamped, not being able to see half a mile ahead, on account of a snow-storm. Having nothing else to eat, they were compelled to kill another of their horses. The next day they resumed their march in snow and rain, but with all their efforts could only get forward nine miles, having for a part of the distance to unload the horses and carry the packs themselves. On the succeeding morning they were obliged to leave the river and scramble up the hills. From the summit of these, they got a wide view of the surrounding country, and it was a prospect almost sufficient to make them despair. In every direction they beheld snowy mountains, partially sprinkled with pines and other evergreens, and spreading a desert and toilsome world around them. The wind howled over the bleak and wintry landscape, and seemed to penetrate to the marrow of their bones. They waded on through the snow, which at every step was more than knee deep.

After tolling in this way all day, they had the mortification to find that they were but four miles distant from the encampment of the preceding night, such was the meandering of the river among these dismal hills. Pinched with famine, exhausted with fatigue, with evening approach-

ing, and a wintry wild still lengthening as they advanced, they began to look forward with sad forebodings to the night's exposure upon this frightful waste. Fortunately they succeeded in reaching a cluster of pines about sunset. Their axes were immediately at work; they cut down trees, piled them in great heaps, and soon had huge fires "to cheer their cold and hungry hearts."

About three o'clock in the morning it again began to snow, and at daybreak they found themselves, as it were, in a cloud, scarcely being able to distinguish objects at the distance of a hundred yards. Guarding themselves by the sound of running water, they set out for the river, and by slipping and sliding contrived to get down to its bank. One of the horses, missing his footing, rolled down several hundred yards with his load, but sustained no injury. The weather in the valley was less rigorous than on the hills. The snow lay but ankle deep, and there was a quiet rain now falling. After creeping along for six miles, they encamped on the border of the river. Being utterly destitute of provisions, they were again compelled to kill one of their horses to appease their famishing hunger.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XXXV.

An Unexpected Meeting.-Navigation in a Skin Canoe.-Strange Fears of Suffering Men.-Hardships of Mr. Crooks and His Comrades.-Tidings of McLellan.- A Retrograde March.- A Willow Raft.- Extreme Suffering of Some of the Party - Illness of Mr. Crooks.- Impatience of Some of the Men.- Necessity of Leaving the Laggards Behind.

THE wanderers had now accomplished four hundred and seventy-two miles of their dreary journey since leaving the Caldron Linn; how much further they had yet to travel, and what hardships to encounter, no one knew.

On the morning of the 6th of December, they left their dismal encampment, but had scarcely begun their march when, to their surprise, they beheld a party of white men coming up along the opposite bank of the river. As they drew nearer, they were recognized for Mr. Crooks and his companions. When they came opposite, and could make themselves heard across the murmuring of the river, their first cry was for food; in fact, they were almost starved. Mr. Hunt immediately returned to the camp, and had a kind of canoe made out of the skin of the horse killed on the preceding night. This was done after the Indian fashion, by drawing up the edges of the skin with thongs, and keeping them distended by sticks or thwart pieces. In this frail bark, Sardepie, one of the Canadians, carried over a portion of the flesh of the horse to the famishing party on the opposite side of the river, and brought back with him Mr. Crooks and the Canadian, Le Clerc. The forlorn and wasted looks and starving condition of these two men struck dismay to the hearts of Mr. Hunt's followers. They had been accustomed to each other's appearance, and to the gradual operation of hunger and hardship upon their frames, but the change in the looks of these men, since last they parted, was a type of the famine and desolation of the land; and they now began to indulge the horrible presentiment that they would all starve together, or be reduced to the direful alternative of casting lots!

When Mr. Crooks had appeased his hunger, he gave Mr. Hunt some account of his wayfaring. On the side of the river along which he had kept, he had met with but few Indians, and those were too miserably poor to yield much assistance. For the first eighteen days after leaving the Caldron Linn, he and his men had been confined to half a meal in twenty-four hours; for three days following, they had subsisted on a single beaver, a few wild cherries, and the soles of old moccasins; and for the last six days their only animal food had been the carcass of a dog. They had been three days' journey further down the river than Mr. Hunt, always keeping as near to its banks as possible, and frequently climbing over sharp and rocky ridges that projected into the stream. At length they had arrived to where the mountains increased in height, and came closer to the river, with perpendicular precipices, which rendered it impossible to keep along the stream. The river here rushed with incredible velocity through a defile not more than thirty yards wide, where cascades and rapids succeeded each other almost without intermission. Even had the opposite banks, therefore, been such as to permit a continuance of their journey, it would have been madness to attempt to pass the tumultuous current either on rafts or otherwise. Still bent, however, on pushing forward, they attempted to climb the opposing mountains; and struggled on through the snow for half a day until, coming to where they could command a prospect, they found that they were not half way to the summit, and that mountain upon mountain lay piled beyond them, in wintry desolation. Famished and emaciated as they were, to continue forward would be to perish; their only chance seemed to be to regain the river, and retrace their steps up its banks. It was in this forlorn and retrograde march that they had met Mr. Hunt and his party.

Mr. Crooks also gave information of some others of their fellow adventurers. He had spoken several days previously with Mr. Reed and Mr. M'Kenzie, who with their men were on the opposite side of the river, where it was impossible to get over to them. They informed him that Mr. M'Lellan had struck across from the little river above the mountains, in the hope of falling in with some of the tribe of Flatheads, who inhabit the western skirts of the Rocky range. As the companions of Reed and M'Kenzie were picked men, and had found provisions more abundant on their side of the river, they were in better condition, and more fitted to contend with the difficulties of the country, than those of Mr. Crooks, and when he lost sight of them, were pushing onward, down the course of the river.

Mr. Hunt took a night to revolve over his critical situation, and to determine what was to be done. No time was to be lost; he had twenty men and more in his own party, to provide for, and Mr. Crooks and his men to relieve. To linger would be to starve. The idea of retracing his steps was intolerable, and, notwithstanding all the discouraging accounts of the ruggedness of the mountains lower down the river, he would have been disposed to attempt them, but the depth of the snow with which they were covered deterred him; having already experienced the impossibility of forcing his way against such an impediment.

The only alternative, therefore, appeared to be, return and seek the Indian bands scattered along the small rivers above the mountains. Perhaps, from some of these he might procure horses enough to support him until he could reach the Columbia; for he still cherished the hope of arriving at that river in the course of the winter, though he was apprehensive that few of Mr. Crooks's

---

party would be sufficiently strong to follow him. Even in adopting this course, he had to make up his mind to the certainty of several days of famine at the outset, for it would take that time to reach the last Indian lodges from which he had parted, and until they should arrive there, his people would have nothing to subsist upon but haws and wild berries, excepting one miserable horse, which was little better than skin and bone.

After a night of sleepless cogitation, Mr. Hunt announced to his men the dreary alternative he had adopted, and preparations were made to take Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc across the river, with the remainder of the meat, as the other party were to keep up along the opposite bank. The skin canoe had unfortunately been lost in the night; a raft was constructed therefore, after the manner of the natives, of bundles of willows, but it could not be floated across the impetuous current. The men were directed, in consequence, to keep on along the river by themselves, while Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc would proceed with Mr. Hunt. They all, then, took up their retrograde march with drooping spirits.

In a little while, it was found that Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc were so feeble as to walk with difficulty, so that Mr. Hunt was obliged to retard his pace, that they might keep up with him. His men grew impatient at the delay. They murmured that they had a long and desolate region to traverse, before they could arrive at the point where they might expect to find horses; that it was impossible for Crooks and Le Clerc, in their feeble condition, to get over it; that to remain with them would only be to starve in their company. They importuned Mr. Hunt, therefore, to leave these unfortunate men to their fate, and think only of the safety of himself and his party. Finding him not to be moved either by entreaties or their clamors, they began to proceed without him, singly and in parties. Among those who thus went off was Pierre Dorion, the interpreter. Pierre owned the only remaining horse; which was now a mere skeleton. Mr. Hunt had suggested, in their present extremity, that it should be killed for food; to which the half-breed flatly refused his assent, and cudgeling the miserable animal forward, pushed on sullenly, with the air of a man doggedly determined to quarrel for his right. In this way Mr. Hunt saw his men, one after another, break away, until but five remained to bear him company.

On the following morning another raft was made, on which Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc again attempted to ferry themselves across the river, but after repeated trials had to give up in despair. This caused additional delay; after which they continued to crawl forward at a snail's pace. Some of the men who had remained with Mr. Hunt now became impatient of these incumbrances, and urged him clamorously to push forward, crying out that they should all starve. The night which succeeded was intensely cold, so that one of the men was severely frost-bitten. In the course of the night, Mr. Crooks was taken ill, and in the morning was still more incompetent to travel. Their situation was now desperate, for their stock of provisions was reduced to three beaver skins. Mr. Hunt, therefore, resolved to push on, overtake his people, and insist upon having the horse of Pierre Dorion sacrificed for the relief of all hands. Accordingly, he left two of his men to help Crooks and Le Clerc on their way, giving them two of the beaver skins for their support; the remaining skin he retained, as provision for himself and the three other men who struck forward with him.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER XXXVI.

Mr. Hunt Overtakes the Advance Party.- Pierre Dorion, and His Skeleton Horse.- A Shoshonie Camp.- A Justifiable Outrage.- Feasting on Horse Flesh.- Mr. Crooks Brought to the Camp.- Undertakes to Relieve His Men.- The Skin Ferry-Boat.- Frenzy of Prevost.- His Melancholy Fate.- Enfeebled State of John Day.-Mr. Crooks Again Left Behind.-The Party Emerge From Among the Mountains.-Interview With Shoshonies.-A Guide Procured to Conduct the Party Across a Mountain. -Ferriage Across Snake River.-Reunion With Mr Crook's Men.- Final Departure From the River.

ALL that day, Mr. Hunt and his three comrades travelled without eating. At night they made a tantalizing supper on their beaver skin, and were nearly exhausted by hunger and cold. The next day, December 10th, they overtook the advance party, who were all as much famished as themselves, some of them not having eaten since the morning of the seventh. Mr. Hunt now proposed the sacrifice of Pierre Dorion's skeleton horse. Here he again met with positive and vehement opposition from the half-breed, who was too sullen and vindictive a fellow to be easily dealt with. What was singular, the men, though suffering such pinching hunger, interfered in favor of the horse.

They represented that it was better to keep on as long as possible without resorting to this last resource. Possibly the Indians, of whom they were in quest, might have shifted their encampment, in which case it would be time enough to kill the horse to escape starvation. Mr. Hunt, therefore, was prevailed upon to grant Pierre Dorion's horse a reprieve.

Fortunately, they had not proceeded much further, when, towards evening, they came in sight of a lodge of Shoshonies, with a number of horses grazing around it. The sight was as unexpected as it was joyous. Having seen no Indians in this neighborhood as they passed down the river, they must have subsequently come out from among the mountains. Mr. Hunt, who first descried them, checked the eagerness of his companions, knowing the unwillingness of these Indians to part with their horses, and their aptness to hurry them off and conceal them, in case of an alarm. This was no time to risk such a disappointment. Approaching, therefore, stealthily and silently, they came upon the savages by surprise, who fled in terror. Five of their horses were eagerly seized, and one was despatched upon the spot. The carcass was immediately cut up, and a part of it hastily cooked and ravenously devoured. A man was now sent on horseback with a supply of the flesh to Mr. Crooks and his companions. He reached them in the night; they were so famished that the supply sent them seemed but to aggravate their hunger, and they were almost tempted to kill and eat the horse that had brought the messenger. Availing themselves of the assistance of the animal, they reached the camp early in the morning.

On arriving there, Mr. Crooks was shocked to find that, while the people on this side of the river were amply supplied with provisions, none had been sent to his own forlorn and famishing men on the opposite bank. He immediately caused a skin canoe to be constructed, and called out to his

men to fill their camp-kettles with water and hang them over the fire, that no time might be lost in cooking the meat the moment it should be received. The river was so narrow, though deep, that everything could be distinctly heard and seen across it. The kettles were placed on the fire, and the water was boiling by the time the canoe was completed. When all was ready, however, no one would undertake to ferry the meat across. A vague and almost superstitious terror had infected the minds of Mr. Hunt's followers, enfeebled and rendered imaginative of horrors by the dismal scenes and sufferings through which they had passed. They regarded the haggard crew, hovering like spectres of famine on the opposite bank, with indefinite feelings of awe and apprehension: as if something desperate and dangerous was to be feared from them.

Mr. Crooks tried in vain to reason or shame them out of this singular state of mind. He then attempted to navigate the canoe himself, but found his strength incompetent to brave the impetuous current. The good feelings of Ben Jones, the Kentuckian, at length overcame his fears, and he ventured over. The supply he brought was received with trembling avidity. A poor Canadian, however, named Jean Baptiste Prevost, whom famine had rendered wild and desperate, ran frantically about the bank, after Jones had returned, crying out to Mr. Hunt to send the canoe for him, and take him from that horrible region of famine, declaring that otherwise he would never march another step, but would lie down there and die.

The canoe was shortly sent over again, under the management of Joseph Delaunay, with further supplies. Prevost immediately pressed forward to embark. Delaunay refused to admit him, telling him that there was now a sufficient supply of meat on his side of the river. He replied that it was not cooked, and he should starve before it was ready; he implored, therefore, to be taken where he could get something to appease his hunger immediately. Finding the canoe putting off without him, he forced himself aboard. As he drew near the opposite shore, and beheld meat roasting before the fire, he jumped up, shouted, clapped his hands, and danced in a delirium of joy, until he upset the canoe. The poor wretch was swept away by the current and drowned, and it was with extreme difficulty that Delaunay reached the shore.

Mr. Hunt now sent all his men forward excepting two or three. In the evening he caused another horse to be killed, and a canoe to be made out of the skin, in which he sent over a further supply of meat to the opposite party. The canoe brought back John Day, the Kentucky hunter, who came to join his former employer and commander, Mr. Crooks. Poor Day, once so active and vigorous, was now reduced to a condition even more feeble and emaciated than his companions. Mr. Crooks had such a value for the man, on account of his past services and faithful character, that he determined not to quit him; he exhorted Mr. Hunt, however, to proceed forward, and join the party, as his presence was all important to the conduct of the expedition. One of the Canadians, Jean Baptiste Dubreuil, likewise remained with Mr. Crooks.

Mr. Hunt left two horses with them, and a part of the carcass of the last that had been killed. This, he hoped, would be sufficient to sustain them until they should reach the Indian encampment.

One of the chief dangers attending the enfeebled condition of Mr. Crooks and his companions

---

was their being overtaken by the Indians whose horses had been seized, though Mr. Hunt hoped that he had guarded against any resentment on the part of the savages, by leaving various articles in their lodge, more than sufficient to compensate for the outrage he had been compelled to commit.

Resuming his onward course, Mr. Hunt came up with his people in the evening. The next day, December 13th, he beheld several Indians, with three horses, on the opposite side of the river, and after a time came to the two lodges which he had seen on going down. Here he endeavored in vain to barter a rifle for a horse, but again succeeded in effecting the purchase with an old tin kettle, aided by a few beads.

The two succeeding days were cold and stormy; the snow was augmenting, and there was a good deal of ice running in the river. Their road, however, was becoming easier; they were getting out of the hills, and finally emerged into the open country, after twenty days of fatigue, famine, and hardship of every kind, in the ineffectual attempt to find a passage down the river.

They now encamped on a little willowed stream, running from the east, which they had crossed on the 26th of November. Here they found a dozen lodges of Shoshonies, recently arrived, who informed them that had they persevered along the river, they would have found their difficulties augment until they became absolutely insurmountable. This intelligence added to the anxiety of Mr. Hunt for the fate of Mr. M'Kenzie and his people, who had kept on.

Mr. Hunt now followed up the little river, and encamped at some lodges of Shoshonies, from whom he procured a couple of horses, a dog, a few dried fish, and some roots and dried cherries. Two or three days were exhausted in obtaining information about the route, and what time it would take to get to the Sciatogas, a hospitable tribe on the west of the mountains, represented as having many horses. The replies were various, but concurred in saying that the distance was great, and would occupy from seventeen to twenty-one nights. Mr. Hunt then tried to procure a guide; but though he sent to various lodges up and down the river, offering articles of great value in Indian estimation, no one would venture. The snow, they said, was waist deep in the mountains; and to all his offers they shook their heads, gave a shiver, and replied, "we shall freeze! we shall freeze!" at the same time they urged him to remain and pass the winter among them.

Mr. Hunt was in a dismal dilemma. To attempt the mountains without a guide would be certain death to him and all his people; to remain there, after having already been so long on the journey, and at such great expense, was worse to him, he said, than two "deaths." He now changed his tone with the Indians, charged them with deceiving him in respect to the mountains, and talking with a "forked tongue," or, in other words, with lying. He upbraided them with their want of courage, and told them they were women, to shrink from the perils of such a journey. At length one of them, piqued by his taunts, or tempted by his offers, agreed to be his guide; for which he was to receive a gun, a pistol, three knives, two horses, and a little of every article in possession of the party; a reward sufficient to make him one of the wealthiest of his vagabond nation.

Once more, then, on the 21st of December, they set out upon their wayfaring, with newly excited spirits. Two other Indians accompanied their guide, who led them immediately back to Snake River, which they followed down for a short distance, in search of some Indian rafts made of reeds, on which they might cross. Finding none, Mr. Hunt caused a horse to be killed, and a canoe to be made out of its skin. Here, on the opposite bank, they saw the thirteen men of Mr. Crooks's party, who had continued up along the river. They told Mr. Hunt, across the stream, that they had not seen Mr. Crooks, and the two men who had remained with him, since the day that he had separated from them.

The canoe proving too small, another horse was killed, and the skin of it joined to that of the first. Night came on before the little bark had made more than two voyages. Being badly made it was taken apart and put together again, by the light of the fire. The night was cold; the men were weary and disheartened with such varied and incessant toil and hardship. They crouched, dull and drooping, around their fires; many of them began to express a wish to remain where they were for the winter. The very necessity of crossing the river dismayed some of them in their present enfeebled and dejected state. It was rapid and turbulent, and filled with floating ice, and they remembered that two of their comrades had already perished in its waters. Others looked forward with misgivings to the long and dismal journey through lonesome regions that awaited them, when they should have passed this dreary flood.

At an early hour of the morning, December 23d, they began to cross the river. Much ice had formed during the night, and they were obliged to break it for some distance on each shore. At length they all got over in safety to the west side; and their spirits rose on having achieved this perilous passage. Here they were rejoined by the people of Mr. Crooks, who had with them a horse and a dog, which they had recently procured. The poor fellows were in the most squalid and emaciated state. Three of them were so completely prostrated in strength and spirits that they expressed a wish to remain among the Snakes. Mr. Hunt, therefore, gave them the canoe, that they might cross the river, and a few articles, with which to procure necessities, until they should meet with Mr. Crooks. There was another man, named Michael Carriere, who was almost equally reduced, but he determined to proceed with his comrades, who were now incorporated with the party of Mr. Hunt. After the day's exertions they encamped together on the banks of the river. This was the last night they were to spend upon its borders. More than eight hundred miles of hard travelling, and many weary days, had it cost them; and the sufferings connected with it rendered it hateful in their remembrance, so that the Canadian voyageurs always spoke of it as "La maudite riviere enragee" - the accursed mad river - thus coupling a malediction with its name.

Washington Irving's Astoria

#### CHAPTER XXXVII

Departure From Snake River- Mountains to the North.- Wayworn Travellers- An Increase of the Dorion Family.- A Camp of Shoshonies.-A New-Year Festival Among the Snakes.-A Wintry March Through the Mountains.-A Sunny Prospect, and Milder Climate.- Indian Horse-Tracks.- Grassy Valleys.- A Camp of Sciatogas.- Joy of the Travellers.-Dangers of Abundance.-Habits of the Sciatogas.- Fate of Carriere.- The Umatilla.- Arrival at the Banks of the Columbia.-Tidings of the

---

Scattered Members of the Expedition.- Scenery on the Columbia.- Tidings of Astoria- Arrival at the Falls.

ON the 24th of December, all things being arranged, Mr. Hunt turned his back upon the disastrous banks of Snake River, and struck his course westward for the mountains. His party, being augmented by the late followers of Mr. Crooks, amounted now to thirty-two white men, three Indians, and the squaw and two children of Pierre Dorion. Five jaded, halfstarved horses were laden with their luggage, and, in case of need, were to furnish them with provisions. They travelled painfully about fourteen miles a day, over plains and among hills, rendered dreary by occasional falls of snow and rain. Their only sustenance was a scanty meal of horse flesh once in four-and-twenty hours.

On the third day the poor Canadian, Carriere, one of the famished party of Mr. Crooks, gave up in despair, and laying down upon the ground declared he could go no further. Efforts were made to cheer him up, but it was found that the poor fellow was absolutely exhausted and could not keep on his legs. He was mounted, therefore, upon one of the horses, though the forlorn animal was in little better plight than himself.

On the 28th, they came upon a small stream winding to the north, through a fine level valley; the mountains receding on each side. Here their Indian friends pointed out a chain of woody mountains to the left, running north and south, and covered with snow, over which they would have to pass. They kept along the valley for twenty-one miles on the 29th, suffering much from a continued fall of snow and rain, and being twice obliged to ford the icy stream. Early in the following morning the squaw of Pierre Dorion, who had hitherto kept on without murmuring or flinching, was suddenly taken in labor, and enriched her husband with another child. As the fortitude and good conduct of the poor woman had gained for her the goodwill of the party, her situation caused concern and perplexity. Pierre, however, treated the matter as an occurrence that could soon be arranged and need cause no delay. He remained by his wife in the camp, with his other children and his horse, and promised soon to rejoin the main body, who proceeded on their march.

Finding that the little river entered the mountains, they abandoned it, and turned off for a few miles among hills. Here another Canadian, named La Bonte, gave out, and had to be helped on horseback. As the horse was too weak to bear both him and his pack, Mr. Hunt took the latter upon his own shoulders. Thus, with difficulties augmenting at every step, they urged their toilsome way among the hills, half famished and faint at heart, when they came to where a fair valley spread out before them, of great extent and several leagues in width, with a beautiful stream meandering through it. A genial climate seemed to prevail here, for though the snow lay upon all the mountains within sight, there was none to be seen in the valley. The travellers gazed with delight upon this serene, sunny landscape, but their joy was complete on beholding six lodges of Shoshonies pitched upon the borders of the stream, with a number of horses and dogs about them. They all pressed forward with eagerness and soon reached the camp. Here their first attention was to obtain provisions. A rifle, an old musket, a tomahawk, a tin kettle, and a small quantity of am-

munition soon procured them four horses, three dogs, and some roots. Part of the live stock was immediately killed, cooked with all expedition, and as promptly devoured. A hearty meal restored every one to good spirits. In the course of the following morning the Dorion family made its reappearance. Pierre came trudging in the advance, followed by his valued, though skeleton steed, on which was mounted his squaw with her new-born infant in her arms, and her boy of two years old wrapped in a blanket and slung at her side. The mother looked as unconcerned as if nothing had happened to her; so easy is nature in her operations in the wilderness, when free from the enfeebling refinements of luxury, and the tamperings and appliances of art.

The next morning ushered in the new year (1812). Mr. Hunt was about to resume his march, when his men requested permission to celebrate the day. This was particularly urged by the Canadian voyageurs, with whom New-Year's day is a favorite festival; and who never willingly give up a holiday, under any circumstances. There was no resisting such an application; so the day was passed in repose and revelry; the poor Canadians contrived to sing and dance in defiance of all their hardships; and there was a sumptuous New-Year's banquet of dog's meat and horse flesh.

After two days of welcome rest, the travellers addressed themselves once more to the painful journey. The Indians of the lodges pointed out a distant gap through which they must pass in traversing the ridge of mountains. They assured them that they would be but little incommoded by snow, and in three days would arrive among the Sciatogas. Mr. Hunt, however, had been so frequently deceived by Indian accounts of routes and distances, that he gave but little faith to this information.

The travellers continued their course due west for five days, crossing the valley and entering the mountains. Here the travelling became excessively toilsome, across rough stony ridges, and amidst fallen trees. They were often knee deep in snow, and sometimes in the hollows between the ridges sank up to their waists. The weather was extremely cold; the sky covered with clouds so that for days they had not a glimpse of the sun. In traversing the highest ridge they had a wide but chilling prospect over a wilderness of snowy mountains.

On the 6th of January, however, they had crossed the dividing summit of the chain, and were evidently under the influence of a milder climate. The snow began to decrease; the sun once more emerged from the thick canopy of clouds, and shone cheerfully upon them, and they caught a sight of what appeared to be a plain, stretching out in the west. They hailed it as the poor Israelites hailed the first glimpse of the promised land, for they flattered themselves that this might be the great plain of the Columbia, and that their painful pilgrimage might be drawing to a close,

It was now five days since they had left the lodges of the Shoshonies, during which they had come about sixty miles, and their guide assured them that in the course of the next day they would see the Sciatogas.

On the following morning, therefore, they pushed forward with eagerness, and soon fell upon a stream which led them through a deep narrow defile, between stupendous ridges. Here among

the rocks and precipices they saw gangs of that mountain-loving animal, the black-tailed deer, and came to where great tracks of horses were to be seen in all directions, made by the Indian hunters.

The snow had entirely disappeared, and the hopes of soon coming upon some Indian encampment induced Mr. Hunt to press on. Many of the men, however, were so enfeebled that they could not keep up with the main body, but lagged at intervals behind; and some of them did not arrive at the night encampment. In the course of this day's march the recently-born child of Pierre Dorion died.

The march was resumed early the next morning, without waiting for the stragglers. The stream which they had followed throughout the preceding day was now swollen by the influx of another river; the declivities of the hills were green and the valleys were clothed with grass. At length the jovial cry was given of "an Indian camp!" It was yet in the distance, in the bosom of the green valley, but they could perceive that it consisted of numerous lodges, and that hundreds of horses were grazing the grassy meadows around it. The prospect of abundance of horse flesh diffused universal joy, for by this time the whole stock of travelling provisions was reduced to the skeleton steed of Pierre Dorion, and another wretched animal, equally emaciated, that had been repeatedly reprieved during the journey.

A forced march soon brought the weary and hungry travellers to the camp. It proved to be a strong party of Sciatogas and Tusche-pas. There were thirty-four lodges, comfortably constructed of mats; the Indians, too, were better clothed than any of the wandering bands they had hitherto met on this side of the Rocky Mountains. Indeed, they were as well clad as the generality of the wild hunter tribes. Each had a good buffalo or deer skin robe; and a deer skin hunting shirt and leggins. Upwards of two thousand horses were ranging the pastures around their encampment; but what delighted Mr. Hunt was, on entering the lodges, to behold brass kettles, axes, copper tea-kettles, and various other articles of civilized manufacture, which showed that these Indians had an indirect communication with the people of the sea-coast who traded with the whites. He made eager inquiries of the Sciatogas, and gathered from them that the great river (the Columbia) was but two days' march distant, and that several white people had recently descended it; who he hoped might prove to be M'Lellan, M'Kenzie, and their companions.

It was with the utmost joy and the most profound gratitude to heaven, that Mr. Hunt found himself and his band of weary and famishing wanderers thus safely extricated from the most perilous part of their long journey, and within the prospect of a termination of their toils. All the stragglers who had lagged behind arrived, one after another, excepting the poor Canadian voyageur, Carriere. He had been seen late in the preceding afternoon, riding behind a Snake Indian, near some lodges of that nation, a few miles distant from the last night's encampment; and it was expected that he would soon make his appearance. The first object of Mr. Hunt was to obtain provisions for his men. A little venison, of an indifferent quality, and some roots were all that could be procured that evening; but the next day he succeeded in purchasing a mare and colt, which were immediately killed, and the cravings of the half-starved people in some degree appeased.

---

For several days they remained in the neighborhood of these Indians, reposing after all their hardships, and feasting upon horse flesh and roots, obtained in subsequent traffic. Many of the people ate to such excess as to render themselves sick, others were lame from their past journey; but all gradually recruited in the repose and abundance of the valley. Horses were obtained here much more readily, and at a cheaper rate, than among the Snakes. A blanket, a knife, or a half pound of blue beads would purchase a steed, and at this rate many of the men bought horses for their individual use.

This tribe of Indians, who are represented as a proud-spirited race, and uncommonly cleanly, never eat horses or dogs, nor would they permit the raw flesh of either to be brought into their huts. They had a small quantity of venison in each lodge, but set so high a price upon it that the white men, in their impoverished state could not afford to purchase it. They hunted the deer on horseback, "ringing," or surrounding them, and running them down in a circle. They were admirable horsemen, and their weapons were bows and arrows, which they managed with great dexterity. They were altogether primitive in their habits, and seemed to cling to the usages of savage life, even when possessed of the aids of civilization. They had axes among them, yet they generally made use of a stone mallet wrought into the shape of a bottle, and wedges of elk horn, in splitting their wood. Though they might have two or three brass kettles hanging, in their lodges, yet they would frequently use vessels made of willow, for carrying water, and would even boll their meat in them, by means of hot stones. Their women wore caps of willow neatly worked and figured.

As Carriere, the Canadian straggler, did not make his appearance for two or three days after the encampment in the valley two men were sent out on horseback in search of him. They returned, however, without success. The lodges of the Snake Indians near which he had been seen were removed, and they could find no trace of him. Several days more elapsed, yet nothing was seen or heard of him, or the Snake horseman, behind whom he had been last observed. It was feared, therefore, that he had either perished through hunger and fatigue; had been murdered by the Indians; or, being left to himself, had mistaken some hunting tracks for the trail of the party, and been led astray and lost.

The river on the banks of which they were encamped, emptied into the Columbia, was called by the natives the Eu-o-tal-la, or Umatilla, and abounded with beaver. In the course of their sojourn in the valley which it watered, they twice shifted their camp, proceeding about thirty miles down its course, which was to the west. A heavy fall of rain caused the river to overflow its banks, dislodged them from their encampment, and drowned three of their horses which were tethered in the low ground.

Further conversation with the Indians satisfied them that they were in the neighborhood of the Columbia. The number of the white men who they said had passed down the river, agreed with that of M'Lellan, M'Kenzie, and their companions, and increased the hope of Mr. Hunt that they might have passed through the wilderness with safety.

These Indians had a vague story that white men were coming to trade among them; and they often spoke of two great men named Ke-Koosh and Jacquean, who gave them tobacco, and smoked with them. Jacquean, they said, had a house somewhere upon the great river. Some of the Canadians supposed they were speaking of one Jacquean Finlay, a clerk of the Northwest Company, and inferred that the house must be some trading post on one of the tributary streams of the Columbia. The Indians were overjoyed when they found this band of white men intended to return and trade with them. They promised to use all diligence in collecting quantities of beaver skins, and no doubt proceeded to make deadly war upon that sagacious, but ill-fated animal, who, in general, lived in peaceful insignificance among his Indian neighbors, before the intrusion of the white trader. On the 20th of January, Mr. Hunt took leave of these friendly Indians, and of the river on which they encamped, and continued westward.

At length, on the following day, the wayworn travellers lifted up their eyes and beheld before them the long-sought waters of the Columbia. The sight was hailed with as much transport as if they had already reached the end of their pilgrimage; nor can we wonder at their joy. Two hundred and forty miles had they marched, through wintry wastes and rugged mountains, since leaving Snake River; and six months of perilous wayfaring had they experienced since their departure from the Arickara village on the Missouri. Their whole route by land and water from that point had been, according to their computation, seventeen hundred and fifty-one miles, in the course of which they had endured all kinds of hardships. In fact, the necessity of avoiding the dangerous country of the Blackfeet had obliged them to make a bend to the south and traverse a great additional extent of unknown wilderness.

The place where they struck the Columbia was some distance below the junction of its two great branches, Lewis and Clarke rivers, and not far from the influx of the Wallah-Wallah. It was a beautiful stream, three-quarters of a mile wide, totally free from trees; bordered in some places with steep rocks, in others with pebbled shores.

On the banks of the Columbia they found a miserable horde of Indians, called Akai-chies, with no clothing but a scanty mantle of the skins of animals, and sometimes a pair of sleeves of wolf's skin. Their lodges were shaped like a tent, and very light and warm, being covered with mats and rushes; besides which they had excavations in the ground, lined with mats, and occupied by the women, who were even more slightly clad than the men. These people subsisted chiefly by fishing; having canoes of a rude construction, being merely the trunks of pine trees split and hollowed out by fire. Their lodges were well stored with dried salmon, and they had great quantities of fresh salmon trout of an excellent flavor, taken at the mouth of the Umatilla; of which the travellers obtained a most acceptable supply.

Finding that the road was on the north side of the river, Mr. Hunt crossed, and continued five or six days travelling rather slowly down along its banks, being much delayed by the straying of the horses, and the attempts made by the Indians to steal them. They frequently passed lodges, where they obtained fish and dogs. At one place the natives had just returned from hunting, and had brought back a large quantity of elk and deer meat, but asked so high a price for it as to be

beyond the funds of the travellers, so they had to content themselves with dog's flesh. They had by this time, however, come to consider it very choice food, superior to horse flesh, and the minutes of the expedition speak rather exultingly now and then, of their having made a famous "repast," where this viand happened to be unusually plenty.

They again learnt tidings of some of the scattered members of the expedition, supposed to be M'Kenzie, M'Lellan, and their men, who had preceded them down the river, and had overturned one of their canoes, by which they lost many articles. All these floating pieces of intelligence of their fellow adventurers, who had separated from them in the heart of the wilderness, they received with eager interest.

The weather continued to be temperate, marking the superior softness of the climate on this side of the mountains. For a great part of the time, the days were delightfully mild and clear, like the serene days of October on the Atlantic borders. The country in general, in the neighborhood of the river, was a continual plain, low near the water, but rising gradually; destitute of trees, and almost without shrubs or plants of any kind, excepting a few willow bushes. After travelling about sixty miles, they came to where the country became very hilly and the river made its way between rocky banks and down numerous rapids. The Indians in this vicinity were better clad and altogether in more prosperous condition than those above, and, as Mr. Hunt thought, showed their consciousness of ease by something like sauciness of manner. Thus prosperity is apt to produce arrogance in savage as well as in civilized life. In both conditions, man is an animal that will not bear pampering.

From these people Mr. Hunt for the first time received vague but deeply interesting intelligence of that part of the enterprise which had proceeded by sea to the mouth of the Columbia. The Indians spoke of a number of white men who had built a large house at the mouth of the great river, and surrounded it with palisades. None of them had been down to Astoria themselves; but rumors spread widely and rapidly from mouth to mouth among the Indian tribes, and are carried to the heart of the interior by hunting parties and migratory hordes.

The establishment of a trading emporium at such a point, also, was calculated to cause a sensation to the most remote parts of the vast wilderness beyond the mountains. It in a manner struck the pulse of the great vital river, and vibrated up all its tributary streams.

It is surprising to notice how well this remote tribe of savages had learnt, through intermediate gossips, the private feelings of the colonists at Astoria; it shows that Indians are not the incurious and indifferent observers that they have been represented. They told Mr. Hunt that the white people at the large house had been looking anxiously for many of their friends, whom they had expected to descend the great river; and had been in much affliction, fearing that they were lost. Now, however, the arrival of him and his party would wipe away all their tears, and they would dance and sing for joy.

On the 31st of January, Mr. Hunt arrived at the falls of the Columbia, and encamped at the village

---

of the Wish-ram, situated at the head of that dangerous pass of the river called "the Long Narrows".

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Village of Wish-ram.- Roguery of the Inhabitants.- Their Habitations.- Tidings of Astoria.- Of the Tonquin Massacre.- Thieves About the Camp.- A Band of Braggarts- Embarkation.- Arrival at Astoria.- A Joyful Reception.- Old Comrades- Adventures of Reed, M'Lellan, and M'Kenzie Among the Snake River Mountains.- Rejoicing at Astoria.

OF the village of Wish-ram, the aborigines' fishing mart of the Columbia, we have given some account in an early chapter of this work. The inhabitants held a traffic in the productions of the fisheries of the falls, and their village was the trading resort of the tribes from the coast and from the mountains. Mr. Hunt found the inhabitants shrewder and more intelligent than any Indians he had met with. Trade had sharpened their wits, though it had not improved their honesty; for they were a community of arrant rogues and freebooters. Their habitations comported with their circumstances, and were superior to any the travellers had yet seen west of the Rocky Mountains. In general, the dwellings of the savages on the Pacific side of that great barrier were mere tents and cabins of mats, or skins, or straw, the country being destitute of timber. In Wish-ram, on the contrary, the houses were built of wood, with long sloping roofs. The floor was sunk about six feet below the surface of the ground, with a low door at the gable end, extremely narrow, and partly sunk. Through this it was necessary to crawl and then to descend a short ladder. This inconvenient entrance was probably for the purpose of defense; there were loop-holes also under the eaves, apparently for the discharge of arrows. The houses were large, generally containing two or three families. Immediately within the door were sleeping places, ranged along the walls, like berths in a ship; and furnished with pallets of matting. These extended along one half of the building; the remaining half was appropriated to the storing of dried fish.

The trading operations of the inhabitants of Wish-ram had given them a wider scope of information, and rendered their village a kind of headquarters of intelligence. Mr. Hunt was able, therefore, to collect more distinct tidings concerning the settlement of Astoria and its affairs. One of the inhabitants had been at the trading post established by David Stuart on the Oakinagan, and had picked up a few words of English there. From him, Mr. Hunt gleaned various particulars about that establishment, as well as about the general concerns of the enterprise. Others repeated the name of Mr. M'Kay, the partner who perished in the massacre on board of the Tonquin, and gave some account of that melancholy affair. They said Mr. M'Kay was a chief among the white men, and had built a great house at the mouth of the river, but had left it and sailed away in a large ship to the northward where he had been attacked by bad Indians in canoes. Mr. Hunt was startled by this intelligence, and made further inquiries. They informed him that the Indians had lashed their canoes to the ship, and fought until they killed him and all his people. This is another instance of the clearness with which intelligence is transmitted from mouth to mouth among the Indian tribes. These tidings, though but partially credited by Mr. Hunt, filled his mind with anxious forebodings. He now endeavored to procure canoes, in which to descend the Columbia,

---

but none suitable for the purpose were to be obtained above the Narrows; he continued on, therefore, the distance of twelve miles, and encamped on the bank of the river. The camp was soon surrounded by loitering savages, who went prowling about seeking what they might pilfer. Being baffled by the vigilance of the guard, they endeavored to compass their ends by other means. Towards evening, a number of warriors entered the camp in ruffling style; painted and dressed out as if for battle, and armed with lances, bows and arrows, and scalping knives. They informed Mr. Hunt that a party of thirty or forty braves were coming up from a village below to attack the camp and carry off the horses, but that they were determined to stay with him and defend him. Mr. Hunt received them with great coldness, and, when they had finished their story, gave them a pipe to smoke. He then called up all hands, stationed sentinels in different quarters, but told them to keep as vigilant an eye within the camp as without.

The warriors were evidently baffled by these precautions, and, having smoked their pipe, and vaped off their valor, took their departure. The farce, however, did not end here. After a little while the warriors returned, ushering in another savage, still more heroically arrayed. This they announced as the chief of the belligerent village, but as a great pacificator. His people had been furiously bent upon the attack, and would have doubtless carried it into effect, but this gallant chief had stood forth as the friend of white men, and had dispersed the throng by his own authority and prowess. Having vaunted this signal piece of service, there was a significant pause; all evidently expecting some adequate reward. Mr. Hunt again produced the pipe, smoked with the chieftain and his worthy compeers; but made no further demonstrations of gratitude. They remained about the camp all night, but at daylight returned, baffled and crestfallen, to their homes, with nothing but smoke for their pains.

Mr. Hunt now endeavored to procure canoes, of which he saw several about the neighborhood, extremely well made, with elevated stems and sterns, some of them capable of carrying three thousand pounds weight. He found it extremely difficult, however, to deal with these slippery people, who seemed much more inclined to pilfer. Notwithstanding a strict guard maintained round the camp, various implements were stolen, and several horses carried off. Among the latter, we have to include the long-cherished steed of Pierre Dorion. From some wilful caprice, that worthy pitched his tent at some distance from the main body, and tethered his invaluable steed beside it, from whence it was abstracted in the night, to the infinite chagrin and mortification of the hybrid interpreter.

Having, after several days' negotiation, procured the requisite number of canoes, Mr. Hunt would gladly have left this thievish neighborhood, but was detained until the 5th of February by violent head winds, accompanied by snow and rain. Even after he was enabled to get under way, he had still to struggle against contrary winds and tempestuous weather. The current of the river, however, was in his favor; having made a portage at the grand rapid, the canoes met with no further obstruction, and, on the afternoon of the 15th of February, swept round an intervening cape, and came in sight of the infant settlement of Astoria. After eleven months wandering in the wilderness, a great part of the time over trackless wastes, where the sight of a savage wigwam was a rarity, we may imagine the delight of the poor weatherbeaten travellers, at beholding the embryo

establishment, with its magazines, habitations, and picketed bulwarks, seated on a high point of land, dominating a beautiful little bay, in which was a trim-built shallop riding quietly at anchor. A shout of joy burst from each canoe at the long-wished-for sight. They urged their canoes across the bay, and pulled with eagerness for shore, where all hands poured down from the settlement to receive and welcome them. Among the first to greet them on their landing, were some of their old comrades and fellow-sufferers, who, under the conduct of Reed, M'Lellan, and M'Kenzie, had parted from them at the Caldron Linn. These had reached Astoria nearly a month previously, and, judging from their own narrow escape from starvation, had given up Mr. Hunt and his followers as lost. Their greeting was the more warm and cordial. As to the Canadian voyageurs, their mutual felicitations, as usual, were loud and vociferous, and it was almost ludicrous to behold these ancient "comrades" and "confreres," hugging and kissing each other on the river bank.

When the first greetings were over, the different bands interchanged accounts of their several wanderings, after separating at Snake River; we shall briefly notice a few of the leading particulars. It will be recollected by the reader, that a small exploring detachment had proceeded down the river, under the conduct of Mr. John Reed, a clerk of the company; that another had set off under M'Lellan, and a third in a different direction, under M'Kenzie. After wandering for several days without meeting with Indians, or obtaining any supplies, they came together fortuitously among the Snake River mountains, some distance below that disastrous pass or strait which had received the appellation of the Devil's Scuttle Hole.

When thus united, their party consisted of M'Kenzie, M'Lellan, Reed, and eight men, chiefly Canadians. Being all in the same predicament, without horses, provisions, or information of any kind, they all agreed that it would be worse than useless to return to Mr. Hunt and encumber him with so many starving men, and that their only course was to extricate themselves as soon as possible from this land of famine and misery and make the best of their way for the Columbia. They accordingly continued to follow the downward course of Snake River; clambering rocks and mountains, and defying all the difficulties and dangers of that rugged defile, which subsequently, when the snows had fallen, was found impassable by Messrs. Hunt and Crooks.

Though constantly near to the borders of the river, and for a great part of the time within sight of its current, one of their greatest sufferings was thirst. The river had worn its way in a deep channel through rocky mountains, destitute of brooks or springs. Its banks were so high and precipitous, that there was rarely any place where the travellers could get down to drink of its waters. Frequently they suffered for miles the torments of Tantalus; water continually within sight, yet fevered with the most parching thirst. Here and there they met with rainwater collected in the hollows of the rocks, but more than once they were reduced to the utmost extremity; and some of the men had recourse to the last expedient to avoid perishing.

Their sufferings from hunger were equally severe. They could meet with no game, and subsisted for a time on strips of beaver skin, broiled on the coals. These were doled out in scanty allowances, barely sufficient to keep up existence, and at length failed them altogether. Still they crept feebly on, scarce dragging one limb after another, until a severe snow-storm brought them to a

pause. To struggle against it, in their exhausted condition, was impossible, so cowering under an impending rock at the foot of a steep mountain, they prepared themselves for that wretched fate which seemed inevitable.

At this critical juncture, when famine stared them in the face, M'Lellan casting up his eyes, beheld an ahsahta, or bighorn, sheltering itself under a shelving rock on the side of the hill above them. Being in a more active plight than any of his comrades, and an excellent marksman, he set off to get within shot of the animal. His companions watched his movements with breathless anxiety, for their lives depended upon his success. He made a cautious circuit; scrambled up the hill with the utmost silence, and at length arrived, unperceived, within a proper distance. Here leveling his rifle he took so sure an aim, that the bighorn fell dead on the spot; a fortunate circumstance, for, to pursue it, if merely wounded, would have been impossible in his emaciated state. The declivity of the hill enabled him to roll the carcass down to his companions, who were too feeble to climb the rocks. They fell to work to cut it up; yet exerted a remarkable self-denial for men in their starving condition, for they contented themselves for the present with a soup made from the bones, reserving the flesh for future repasts. This providential relief gave them strength to pursue their journey, but they were frequently reduced to almost equal straits, and it was only the smallness of their party, requiring a small supply of provisions, that enabled them to get through this desolate region with their lives.

At length, after twenty-one days of to 11 and suffering, they got through these mountains, and arrived at a tributary stream of that branch of the Columbia called Lewis River, of which Snake River forms the southern fork. In this neighborhood they met with wild horses, the first they had seen west of the Rocky Mountains. From hence they made their way to Lewis River, where they fell in with a friendly tribe of Indians, who freely administered to their necessities. On this river they procured two canoes, in which they dropped down the stream to its confluence with the Columbia, and then down that river to Astoria, where they arrived haggard and emaciated, and perfectly in rags.

Thus, all the leading persons of Mr. Hunt's expedition were once more gathered together, excepting Mr. Crooks, of whose safety they entertained but little hope, considering the feeble condition in which they had been compelled to leave him in the heart of the wilderness.

A day was now given up to jubilee, to celebrate the arrival of Mr. Hunt and his companions, and the joyful meeting of the various scattered bands of adventurers at Astoria. The colors were hoisted; the guns, great and small, were fired; there was a feast of fish, of beaver, and venison, which relished well with men who had so long been glad to revel on horse flesh and dogs' meat; a genial allowance of grog was issued, to increase the general animation, and the festivities wound up, as usual, with a grand dance at night, by the Canadian voyageurs. \*

\*The distance from St. Louis to Astoria, by the route travelled by Hunt and M'Kenzie, was upwards of thirty-five hundred miles, though in a direct line it does not exceed eighteen hundred.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Scanty Fare During the Winter.- A Poor Hunting Ground.- The Return of the Fishing Season.- The Uthlecan or Smelt.- Its Qualities. - Vast Shoals of it.- Sturgeon.- Indian Modes of Taking It.- The Salmon- Different Species.- Nature of the Country About the Coast. -Forests and Forest Trees.- A Remarkable Flowering Vine.- Animals. - Birds.- Reptiles - Climate West of the Mountains - Mildness of the Temperature.- Soil of the Coast and the Interior.

THE winter passed away tranquilly at Astoria. The apprehensions of hostility from the natives had subsided; indeed, as the season advanced, the Indians for the most part had disappeared from the neighborhood, and abandoned the sea-coast, so that, for want of their aid, the colonists had at times suffered considerably for want of provisions. The hunters belonging to the establishment made frequent and wide excursions, but with very moderate success. There were some deer and a few bears to be found in the vicinity, and elk in great numbers; the country, however, was so rough, and the woods so close and entangled that it was almost impossible to beat up the game. The prevalent rains of winter, also, rendered it difficult for the hunter to keep his arms in order. The quantity of game, therefore, brought in by the hunters was extremely scanty, and it was frequently necessary to put all hands on very moderate allowance. Towards spring, however, the fishing season commenced - the season of plenty on the Columbia. About the beginning of February, a small kind of fish, about six inches long, called by the natives the uthlecan, and resembling the smelt, made its appearance at the mouth of the river. It is said to be of delicious flavor, and so fat as to burn like a candle, for which it is often used by the natives. It enters the river in immense shoals, like solid columns, often extending to the depth of five or more feet, and is scooped up by the natives with small nets at the end of poles. In this way they will soon fill a canoe, or form a great heap upon the river banks. These fish constitute a principal article of their food; the women drying them and stringing them on cords. As the uthlecan is only found in the lower part of the river, the arrival of it soon brought back the natives to the coast; who again resorted to the factory to trade, and from that time furnished plentiful supplies of fish.

The sturgeon makes its appearance in the river shortly after the uthlecan, and is taken in different ways by the natives: sometimes they spear it; but oftener they use the hook and line, and the net. Occasionally, they sink a cord in the river by a heavy weight, with a buoy at the upper end, to keep floating. To this cord several hooks are attached by short lines, a few feet distant from each other, and baited with small fish. This apparatus is often set towards night, and by the next morning several sturgeon will be found hooked by it; for though a large and strong fish, it makes but little resistance when ensnared.

The salmon, which are the prime fish of the Columbia, and as important to the piscatory tribes as are the buffaloes to the hunters of the prairies, do not enter the river until towards the latter part of May, from which time, until the middle of August, they abound and are taken in vast quantities, either with the spear or seine, and mostly in shallow water. An inferior species succeeds, and continues from August to December. It is remarkable for having a double row of teeth, half an inch long and extremely sharp, from whence it has received the name of the dog-toothed salmon. It is generally killed with the spear in small rivulets, and smoked for winter provision. We have

noticed in a former chapter the mode in which the salmon are taken and cured at the falls of the Columbia; and put tip in parcels for exportation. From these different fisheries of the river tribes, the establishment at Astoria had to derive much of its precarious supplies of provisions.

A year's residence at the mouth of the Columbia, and various expeditions in the interior, had now given the Astorians some idea of the country. The whole coast is described as remarkably rugged and mountainous; with dense forests of hemlock, spruce, white and red cedar, cotton-wood, white oak, white and swamp ash, willow, and a few walnut. There is likewise an undergrowth of aromatic shrubs, creepers, and clambering vines, that render the forests almost impenetrable; together with berries of various kinds, such as gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries, both red and yellow, very large and finely flavored whortleberries, cranberries, serviceberries, blackberries, currants, sloes, and wild and choke cherries.

Among the flowering vines is one deserving of particular notice. Each flower is composed of six leaves or petals, about three inches in length, of a beautiful crimson, the inside spotted with white. Its leaves, of a fine green, are oval, and disposed by threes. This plant climbs upon the trees without attaching itself to them; when it has reached the topmost branches, it descends perpendicularly, and as it continues to grow, extends from tree to tree, until its various stalks interlace the grove like the rigging of a ship. The stems or trunks of this vine are tougher and more flexible than willow, and are from fifty to one hundred fathoms in length. From the fibres, the Indians manufacture baskets of such close texture as to hold water.

The principal quadrupeds that had been seen by the colonists in their various expeditions were the stag, fallow deer, hart, black and grizzly bear, antelope, ahsahta or bighorn, beaver, sea and river otter, muskrat, fox, wolf, and panther, the latter extremely rare. The only domestic animals among the natives were horses and dogs.

The country abounded with aquatic and land birds, such as swans, wild geese, brant, ducks of almost every description, pelicans, herons, gulls, snipes, curlews, eagles, vultures, crows, ravens, magpies, woodpeckers, pigeons, partridges, pheasants, grouse, and a great variety of singing birds.

There were few reptiles; the only dangerous kinds were the rattlesnake, and one striped with black, yellow, and white, about four feet long. Among the lizard kind was one about nine or ten inches in length, exclusive of the tail, and three inches in circumference. The tail was round, and of the same length as the body. The head was triangular, covered with small square scales. The upper part of the body was likewise covered with small scales, green, yellow, black, and blue. Each foot had five toes, furnished with strong nails, probably to aid it in burrowing, as it usually lived under ground on the plains.

A remarkable fact, characteristic of the country west of the Rocky Mountains, is the mildness and equability of the climate. The great mountain barrier seems to divide the continent into different climates, even in the same degrees of latitude. The rigorous winters and sultry summers, and all the capricious inequalities of temperature prevalent on the Atlantic side of the mountains, are

but little felt on their western declivities. The countries between them and the Pacific are blessed with milder and steadier temperature, resembling the climates of parallel latitudes in Europe. In the plains and valleys but little snow falls throughout the winter, and usually melts while falling. It rarely lies on the ground more than two days at a time, except on the summits of the mountains. The winters are rainy rather than cold. The rains for five months, from the middle of October to the middle of March, are almost incessant, and often accompanied by tremendous thunder and lightning. The winds prevalent at this season are from the south and southeast, which usually bring rain. Those from the north to the southwest are the harbingers of fair weather and a clear sky. The residue of the year, from the middle of March to the middle of October, an interval of seven months, is serene and delightful. There is scarcely any rain throughout this time, yet the face of the country is kept fresh and verdant by nightly dews, and occasionally by humid fogs in the mornings. These are not considered prejudicial to health, since both the natives and the whites sleep in the open air with perfect impunity. While this equable and bland temperature prevails throughout the lower country, the peaks and ridges of the vast mountains by which it is dominated, are covered with perpetual snow. This renders them discernible at a great distance, shining at times like bright summer clouds, at other times assuming the most aerial tints, and always forming brilliant and striking features in the vast landscape. The mild temperature prevalent throughout the country is attributed by some to the succession of winds from the Pacific Ocean, extending from latitude twenty degrees to at least fifty degrees north. These temper the heat of summer, so that in the shade no one is incommoded by perspiration; they also soften the rigors of winter, and produce such a moderation in the climate, that the inhabitants can wear the same dress throughout the year.

The soil in the neighborhood of the sea-coast is of a brown color, inclining to red, and generally poor; being a mixture of clay and gravel. In the interior, and especially in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, the soil is generally blackish, though sometimes yellow. It is frequently mixed with marl, and with marine substances in a state of decomposition. This kind of soil extends to a considerable depth, as may be perceived in the deep cuts made by ravines, and by the beds of rivers. The vegetation in these valleys is much more abundant than near the coast; in fact, it is these fertile intervals, locked up between rocky sierras, or scooped out from barren wastes, that population must extend itself, as it were, in veins and ramifications, if ever the regions beyond the mountains should become civilized.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER XL.

Natives in the Neighborhood of Astoria- Their Persons and Characteristics. - Causes of Deformity -- Their Dress. - Their Contempt of Beards- Ornaments- Armor and Weapons.-Mode of Flattening the Head.- Extent of the Custom.- Religious Belief.- The Two Great Spirits of the Air and of the Fire.- Priests or Medicine Men.- The Rival Idols.- Polygamy a Cause of Greatness- Petty Warfare.- Music, Dancing, Gambling.- Thieving a Virtue.- Keen Traders- Intrusive Habits - Abhorrence of Drunkenness- Anecdote of Comcomly.

A BRIEF mention has already been made of the tribes or hordes existing about the lower part

---

of the Columbia at the time of the settlement; a few more particulars concerning them may be acceptable. The four tribes nearest to Astoria, and with whom the traders had most intercourse, were, as has heretofore been observed, the Chinooks, the Clatsops, the Wahkiacums, and the Cathlamets. The Chinooks reside chiefly along the banks of a river of the same name, running parallel to the sea-coast, through a low country studded with stagnant pools, and emptying itself into Baker's Bay, a few miles from Cape Disappointment. This was the tribe over which Comcomly, the one-eyed chieftain, held sway; it boasted two hundred and fourteen fighting men. Their chief subsistence was on fish, with an occasional regale of the flesh of elk and deer, and of wild-fowl from the neighboring ponds.

The Clatsops resided on both sides of Point Adams; they were the mere relics of a tribe which had been nearly swept off by the small-pox, and did not number more than one hundred and eighty fighting men.

The Wahkiacums, or Waak-i-cums, inhabited the north side of the Columbia, and numbered sixty-six warriors. They and the Chinooks were originally the same; but a dispute arising about two generations previous to the time of the settlement, between the ruling chief and his brother Wahkiacum, the latter seceded, and with his adherents formed the present horde which continues to go by his name. In this way new tribes or clans are formed, and lurking causes of hostility engendered.

The Cathlamets lived opposite to the lower village of the Wahkiacums, and numbered ninety-four warriors.

These four tribes, or rather clans, have every appearance of springing from the same origin, resembling each other in person, dress, language, and manners. They are rather a diminutive race, generally below five feet five inches, with crooked legs and thick ankles - a deformity caused by their passing so much of their time sitting or squatting upon the calves of their legs and their heels, in the bottom of their canoes - a favorite position, which they retain, even when on shore. The women increase the deformity by wearing tight bandages round the ankles, which prevent the circulation of the blood, and cause a swelling of the muscles of the leg.

Neither sex can boast of personal beauty. Their faces are round, with small but animated eyes. Their noses are broad and flat at top, and fleshy at the end, with large nostrils. They have wide mouths, thick lips, and short, irregular and dirty teeth. Indeed good teeth are seldom to be seen among the tribes west of the Rocky Mountains, who live simply on fish.

In the early stages of their intercourse with white men, these savages were but scantily clad. In summer time the men went entirely naked; in the winter and in bad weather the men wore a small robe, reaching to the middle of the thigh, made of the skins of animals, or of the wool of the mountain sheep. Occasionally, they wore a kind of mantle of matting, to keep off the rain but, having thus protected the back and shoulders, they left the rest of the body naked.

The women wore similar robes, though shorter, not reaching below the waist; besides which, they had a kind of petticoat, or fringe, reaching from the waist to the knee, formed of the fibres of cedar bark, broken into strands, or a tissue of silk grass twisted and knotted at the ends. This was the usual dress of the women in summer; should the weather be inclement, they added a vest of skins, similar to the robe.

The men carefully eradicated every vestige of a beard, considering it a great deformity. They looked with disgust at the whiskers and well-furnished chins of the white men, and in derision called them Long-beards. Both sexes, on the other hand, cherished the hair of the head, which with them is generally black and rather coarse. They allowed it to grow to a great length and were very proud and careful of it, sometimes wearing it plaited, sometimes wound round the head in fanciful tresses. No greater affront could be offered to them than to cut off their treasured locks.

They had conical hats with narrow rims, neatly woven of bear grass or of the fibres of cedar bark, interwoven with designs of various shapes and colors; sometimes merely squares and triangles, at other times rude representations of canoes, with men fishing and harpooning. These hats were nearly waterproof, and extremely durable.

The favorite ornaments of the men were collars of bears' claws, the proud trophies of hunting exploits; while the women and children wore similar decorations of elks' tusks. An intercourse with the white traders, however, soon effected a change in the toilets of both sexes. They became fond of arraying themselves in any article of civilized dress which they could procure, and often made a most grotesque appearance. They adapted many articles of finery, also, to their own previous tastes. Both sexes were fond of adorning themselves with bracelets of iron, brass, or copper. They were delighted, also, with blue and white beads, particularly the former, and wore broad tight bands of them round the waist and ankles, large rolls of them round the neck, and pendants of them in the ears. The men, especially, who in savage life carry a passion for personal decoration further than the females, did not think their gala equipments complete unless they had a jewel of hiaqua, or wampum, dangling at the nose. Thus arrayed, their hair besmeared with fish oil, and their bodies bedaubed with red clay, they considered themselves irresistible.

When on warlike expeditions, they painted their faces and bodies in the most hideous and grotesque manner, according to the universal practice of American savages. Their arms were bows and arrows, spears, and war clubs. Some wore a corselet of pieces of hard wood laced together with bear grass, so as to form a light coat of mail, pliant to the body; and a kind of casque of cedar bark, leather, and bear grass, sufficient to protect the head from an arrow or war club. A more complete article of defensive armor was a buff jerkin or shirt of great thickness, made of doublings of elk skin, and reaching to the feet, holes being left for the head and arms. This was perfectly arrowproof; add to which, it was often endowed with charmed virtues, by the spells and mystic ceremonials of the medicine man, or conjurer.

Of the peculiar custom, prevalent among these people, of flattening the head, we have already spoken. It is one of those instances of human caprice, like the crippling of the feet of females in

China, which are quite incomprehensible. This custom prevails principally among the tribes on the sea-coast, and about the lower parts of the rivers. How far it extends along the coast we are not able to ascertain. Some of the tribes, both north and south of the Columbia, practice it; but they all speak the Chinook language, and probably originated from the same stock. As far as we can learn, the remoter tribes, which speak an entirely different language, do not flatten the head. This absurd custom declines, also, in receding from the shores of the Pacific; few traces of it are to be found among the tribes of the Rocky Mountains, and after crossing the mountains it disappears altogether. Those Indians, therefore, about the head waters of the Columbia, and in the solitary mountain regions, who are often called Flatheads, must not be supposed to be characterized by this deformity. It is an appellation often given by the hunters east of the mountain chain, to all western Indians, excepting the Snakes.

The religious belief of these people was extremely limited and confined; or rather, in all probability, their explanations were but little understood by their visitors. They had an idea of a benevolent and omnipotent spirit, the creator of all things. They represent him as assuming various shapes at pleasure, but generally that of an immense bird. He usually inhabits the sun, but occasionally wings his way through the aerial regions, and sees all that is doing upon earth. Should anything displease him, he vents his wrath in terrific storms and tempests, the lightning being the flashes of his eyes, and the thunder the clapping of his wings. To propitiate his favor they offer to him annual sacrifices of salmon and venison, the first fruits of their fishing and hunting.

Besides this aerial spirit they believe in an inferior one, who inhabits the fire, and of whom they are in perpetual dread, as, though he possesses equally the power of good and evil, the evil is apt to predominate. They endeavor, therefore, to keep him in good humor by frequent offerings. He is supposed also to have great influence with the winged spirit, their sovereign protector and benefactor. They implore him, therefore, to act as their interpreter, and procure them all desirable things, such as success in fishing and hunting, abundance of game, fleet horses, obedient wives, and male children.

These Indians have likewise their priests, or conjurers, or medicine men, who pretend to be in the confidence of the deities, and the expounders and enforcers of their will. Each of these medicine men has his idols carved in wood, representing the spirits of the air and of the fire, under some rude and grotesque form of a horse, a bear, a beaver, or other quadruped, or that of bird or fish. These idols are hung round with amulets and votive offerings, such as beavers' teeth, and bears' and eagles' claws.

When any chief personage is on his death-bed, or dangerously ill, the medicine men are sent for. Each brings with him his idols, with which he retires into a canoe to hold a consultation. As doctors are prone to disagree, so these medicine men have now and then a violent altercation as to the malady of the patient, or the treatment of it. To settle this they beat their idols soundly against each other; whichever first loses a tooth or a claw is considered as confuted, and his votary retires from the field. Polygamy is not only allowed, but considered honorable, and the greater number of wives a man can maintain, the more important is he in the eyes of the tribe. The first wife,

however, takes rank of all the others, and is considered mistress of the house. Still the domestic establishment is liable to jealousies and cabals, and the lord and master has much difficulty in maintaining harmony in his jangling household.

In the manuscript from which we draw many of these particulars, it is stated that he who exceeds his neighbors in the number of his wives, male children, and slaves, is elected chief of the village; a title to office which we do not recollect ever before to have met with.

Feuds are frequent among, these tribes, but are not very deadly. They have occasionally pitched battles, fought on appointed days, and at specific places, which are generally the banks of a rivulet. The adverse parties post themselves on the opposite sides of the stream, and at such distances that the battles often last a long while before any blood is shed. The number of killed and wounded seldom exceed half a dozen. Should the damage be equal on each side, the war is considered as honorably concluded; should one party lose more than the other, it is entitled to a compensation in slaves or other property, otherwise hostilities are liable to be renewed at a future day. They are also given to predatory inroads into the territories of their enemies, and sometimes of their friendly neighbors. Should they fall upon a band of inferior force, or upon a village, weakly defended, they act with the ferocity of true poltroons, slaying all the men, and carrying off the women and children as slaves. As to the property, it is packed upon horses which they bring with them for the purpose. They are mean and paltry as warriors, and altogether inferior in heroic qualities to the savages of the buffalo plains on the east side of the mountains.

A great portion of their time is passed in revelry, music, dancing, and gambling. Their music scarcely deserves the name; the instruments being of the rudest kind. Their singing is harsh and discordant; the songs are chiefly extempore, relating to passing circumstances, the persons present, or any trifling object that strikes the attention of the singer. They have several kinds of dances, some of them lively and pleasing. The women are rarely permitted to dance with the men, but form groups apart, dancing to the same instrument and song.

They have a great passion for play, and a variety of games. To such a pitch of excitement are they sometimes roused, that they gamble away everything they possess, even to their wives and children. They are notorious thieves, also, and proud of their dexterity. He who is frequently successful, gains much applause and popularity; but the clumsy thief, who is detected in some bungling attempt, is scoffed at and despised, and sometimes severely punished.

Such are a few leading characteristics of the natives in the neighborhood of Astoria. They appear to us inferior in many respects to the tribes east of the mountains, the bold rovers of the prairies; and to partake much of Esquimaux character; elevated in some degree by a more genial climate and more varied living style.

The habits of traffic engendered at the cataracts of the Columbia, have had their influence along the coast. The Chinooks and other Indians at the mouth of the river, soon proved themselves keen traders, and in their early dealings with the Astorians never hesitated to ask three times what they

considered the real value of an article. They were inquisitive, also, in the extreme, and impertinently intrusive; and were prone to indulge in scoffing and ridicule at the expense of the strangers.

In one thing, however, they showed superior judgment and self-command to most of their race; this was, in their abstinence from ardent spirits, and the abhorrence and disgust with which they regarded a drunkard. On one occasion a son of Comcomly had been induced to drink freely at the factory, and went home in a state of intoxication, playing all kinds of mad pranks, until he sank into a stupor, in which he remained for two days. The old chieftain repaired to his friend, M'Dougal, with indignation flaming in his countenance, and bitterly reproached him for having permitted his son to degrade himself into a beast, and to render himself an object of scorn and laughter to his slave.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLI.

Spring Arrangements at Astoria.- Various Expeditions Set Out.- The Long Narrows.- Pilfering Indians.- Thievish Tribe at Wish-ram. - Portage at the Falls- Portage by Moonlight.- An Attack, a Route, and a Robbery.- Indian Cure for Cowardice.- A Parley and Compromise.- The Despatch Party Turn Back.- Meet Crooks and John Day.- Their Sufferings.- Indian Perfidy.- Arrival at Astoria.

AS the spring opened, the little settlement of Astoria was in agitation, and prepared to send forth various expeditions. Several important things were to be done. It was necessary to send a supply of goods to the trading post of Mr. David Stuart, established in the preceding autumn on the Oakinagan. The cache, or secret deposit, made by Mr. Hunt at the Caldron Linn, was likewise to be visited, and the merchandise and other effects left there, to be brought to Astoria. A third object of moment was to send despatches overland to Mr. Astor at New York, informing him of the state of affairs at the settlement, and the fortunes of the several expeditions.

The task of carrying supplies to Oakinagan was assigned to Mr. Robert Stuart, a spirited and enterprising young man, nephew to the one who had established the post. The cache was to be sought out by two of the clerks, named Russell Farnham and Donald M'Gilles, conducted by a guide, and accompanied by eight men, to assist in bringing home the goods.

As to the despatches, they were confided to Mr. John Reed, the clerk, the same who had conducted one of the exploring detachments of Snake River. He was now to trace back his way across the mountains by the same route by which he had come, with no other companions or escort than Ben Jones, the Kentucky hunter, and two Canadians. As it was still hoped that Mr. Crooks might be in existence, and that Mr. Reed and his party might meet with him in the course of their route, they were charged with a small supply of goods and provisions, to aid that gentleman on his way to Astoria.

When the expedition of Reed was made known, Mr. M'Lellan announced his determination to

---

accompany it. He had long been dissatisfied with the smallness of his interest in the copartnership, and had requested an additional number of shares; his request not being complied with, he resolved to abandon the company. M'Lellan was a man of a singularly self-willed and decided character, with whom persuasion was useless; he was permitted, therefore, to take his own course without opposition.

As to Reed, he set about preparing for his hazardous journey with the zeal of a true Irishman. He had a tin case made, in which the letters and papers addressed to Mr. Astor were carefully soldered up. This case he intended to strap upon his shoulders, so as to bear it about with him, sleeping and waking, in all changes and chances, by land or by water, and never to part with it but with his life!

As the route of these several parties would be the same for nearly four hundred miles up the Columbia, and within that distance would lie through the piratical pass of the rapids, and among the freebooting tribes of the river, it was thought advisable to start about the same time, and to keep together. Accordingly, on the 22d of March, they all set off, to the number of seventeen men, in two canoes - and here we cannot but pause to notice the hardihood of these several expeditions, so insignificant in point of force, and severally destined to traverse immense wildernesses where larger parties had experienced so much danger and distress. When recruits were sought in the preceding year among experienced hunters and voyageurs at Montreal and St. Louis, it was considered dangerous to attempt to cross the Rocky Mountains with less than sixty men; and yet here we find Reed ready to push his way across those barriers with merely three companions. Such is the fearlessness, the insensibility to danger, which men acquire by the habitude of constant risk. The mind, like the body, becomes callous by exposure.

The little associated band proceeded up the river, under the command of Mr. Robert Stuart, and arrived early in the month of April at the Long Narrows, that notorious plundering place. Here it was necessary to unload the canoes, and to transport both them and their cargoes to the head of the Narrows by land. Their party was too few in number for the purpose. They were obliged, therefore, to seek the assistance of the Cathlasco Indians, who undertook to carry the goods on their horses. Forward then they set, the Indians with their horses well freighted, and the first load convoyed by Reed and five men, well armed; the gallant Irishman striding along at the head, with his tin case of despatches glittering on his back. In passing, however, through a rocky and intricate defile, some of the freebooting vagrants turned their horses up a narrow path and galloped off, carrying with them two bales of goods, and a number of smaller articles. To follow them was useless; indeed, it was with much ado that the convoy got into port with the residue of the cargoes; for some of the guards were pillaged of their knives and pocket handkerchiefs, and the lustrous tin case of Mr. John Reed was in imminent jeopardy.

Mr. Stuart heard of these depredations, and hastened forward to the relief of the convoy, but could not reach them before dusk, by which time they had arrived at the village of Wish-ram, already noted for its great fishery, and the knavish propensities of its inhabitants. Here they found themselves benighted in a strange place, and surrounded by savages bent on pilfering, if not upon open

robbery. Not knowing what active course to take, they remained under arms all night, without closing an eye, and at the very first peep of dawn, when objects were yet scarce visible, everything was hastily embarked, and, without seeking to recover the stolen effects, they pushed off from shore, "glad to bid adieu," as they said, "to this abominable nest of miscreants."

The worthies of Wish-ram, however, were not disposed to part so easily with their visitors. Their cupidity had been quickened by the plunder which they had already taken, and their confidence increased by the impunity with which their outrage had passed. They resolved, therefore, to take further toll of the travellers, and, if possible, to capture the tin case of despatches; which shining conspicuously from afar, and being guarded by John Reed with such especial care, must, as they supposed, be "a great medicine."

Accordingly, Mr. Stuart and his comrades had not proceeded far in the canoes, when they beheld the whole rabble of Wishram stringing in groups along the bank, whooping and yelling, and gibbering in their wild jargon, and when they landed below the falls, they were surrounded by upwards of four hundred of these river ruffians, armed with bows and arrows, war clubs, and other savage weapons. These now pressed forward, with offers to carry the canoes and effects up the portage. Mr Stuart declined forwarding the goods, alleging the lateness of the hour; but, to keep them in good humor, informed them, that, if they conducted themselves well, their offered services might probably be accepted in the morning; in the meanwhile, he suggested that they might carry up the canoes. They accordingly set off with the two canoes on their shoulders, accompanied by a guard of eight men well armed.

When arrived at the head of the falls, the mischievous spirit of the savages broke out, and they were on the point of destroying the canoes, doubtless with a view to impede the white men from carrying forward their goods, and laying them open to further pilfering. They were with some difficulty prevented from committing this outrage by the interference of an old man, who appeared to have authority among them; and, in consequence of his harangue, the whole of the hostile band, with the exception of about fifty, crossed to the north side of the river, where they lay in wait, ready for further mischief.

In the meantime, Mr. Stuart, who had remained at the foot of the falls with the goods, and who knew that the proffered assistance of the savages was only for the purpose of having an opportunity to plunder, determined, if possible, to steal a march upon them, and defeat their machinations. In the dead of the night, therefore, about one o'clock, the moon shining brightly, he roused his party, and proposed that they should endeavor to transport the goods themselves, above the falls, before the sleeping savages could be aware of their operations. All hands sprang to the work with zeal, and hurried it on in the hope of getting all over before daylight. Mr. Stuart went forward with the first loads, and took his station at the head of the portage, while Mr. Reed and Mr. M'Lellan remained at the foot to forward the remainder.

The day dawned before the transportation was completed. Some of the fifty Indians who had remained on the south side of the river, perceived what was going on, and, feeling themselves too

weak for an attack, gave the alarm to those on the opposite side, upwards of a hundred of whom embarked in several large canoes. Two loads of goods yet remained to be brought up. Mr. Stuart despatched some of the people for one of the loads, with a request to Mr. Reed to retain with him as many of the men as he thought necessary to guard the remaining load, as he suspected hostile intentions on the part of the Indians. Mr. Reed, however, refused to retain any of them, saying that M'Lellan and himself were sufficient to protect the small quantity that remained. The men accordingly departed with the load, while Mr. Reed and M'Lellan continued to mount guard over the residue. By this time, a number of the canoes had arrived from the opposite side. As they approached the shore, the unlucky tin box of John Reed, shining afar like the brilliant helmet of Euryalus, caught their eyes. No sooner did the canoes touch the shore, than they leaped forward on the rocks, set up a war-whoop, and sprang forward to secure the glittering prize. Mr. M'Lellan, who was at the river bank, advanced to guard the goods, when one of the savages attempted to hoodwink him with his buffalo robe with one hand, and to stab him with the other. M'Lellan sprang back just far enough to avoid the blow, and raising his rifle, shot the ruffian through the heart.

In the meantime, Reed, who with the want of forethought of an Irishman, had neglected to remove the leathern cover from the lock of his rifle, was fumbling at the fastenings, when he received a blow on the head with a war club that laid him senseless on the ground. In a twinkling he was stripped of his rifle and pistols, and the tin box, the cause of all this onslaught, was borne off in triumph.

At this critical juncture, Mr. Stuart, who had heard the war-whoop, hastened to the scene of action with Ben Jones, and seven others of the men. When he arrived, Reed was weltering in his blood, and an Indian standing over him and about to despatch him with a tomahawk. Stuart gave the word, when Ben Jones leveled his rifle, and shot the miscreant on the spot. The men then gave a cheer, and charged upon the main body of the savages, who took to instant flight. Reed was now raised from the ground, and borne senseless and bleeding to the upper end of the portage. Preparations were made to launch the canoes and embark in all haste, when it was found that they were too leaky to be put in the water, and that the oars had been left at the foot of the falls. A scene of confusion now ensued. The Indians were whooping and yelling, and running about like fiends. A panic seized upon the men, at being thus suddenly checked, the hearts of some of the Canadians died within them, and two young men actually fainted away. The moment they recovered their senses, Mr. Stuart ordered that they should be deprived of their arms, their under garments taken off, and that a piece of cloth should be tied round their waists, in imitation of a squaw; an Indian punishment for cowardice. Thus equipped, they were stowed away among the goods in one of the canoes. This ludicrous affair excited the mirth of the bolder spirits, even in the midst of their perils, and roused the pride of the wavering. The Indians having crossed back again to the north side, order was restored, some of the hands were sent back for the oars, others set to work to calk and launch the canoes, and in a little while all were embarked and were continuing their voyage along the southern shore.

No sooner had they departed, than the Indians returned to the scene of action, bore off their two

comrades who had been shot, one of whom was still living, and returned to their village. Here they killed two horses; and drank the hot blood to give fierceness to their courage. They painted and arrayed themselves hideously for battle; performed the dead dance round the slain, and raised the war song of vengeance. Then mounting their horses to the number of four hundred and fifty men, and brandishing their weapons, they set off along the northern bank of the river, to get ahead of the canoes, lie in wait for them, and take a terrible revenge on the white men.

They succeeded in getting some distance above the canoes without being discovered, and were crossing the river to post themselves on the side along which the white men were coasting, when they were fortunately descried. Mr. Stuart and his companions were immediately on the alert. As they drew near to the place where the savages had crossed, they observed them posted among steep and overhanging rocks, close along which, the canoes would have to pass. Finding that the enemy had the advantage of the ground, the whites stopped short when within five hundred yards of them, and discharged and reloaded their pieces. They then made a fire, and dressed the wounds of Mr. Reed, who had received five severe gashes in the head. This being done, they lashed the canoes together, fastened them to a rock at a small distance from the shore, and there awaited the menaced attack.

They had not been long posted in this manner, when they saw a canoe approaching. It contained the war-chief of the tribe, and three of his principal warriors. He drew near, and made a long harangue, in which he informed them that they had killed one and wounded another of his nation; that the relations of the slain cried out for vengeance, and he had been compelled to lead them to fight. Still he wished to spare unnecessary bloodshed; he proposed, therefore, that Mr. Reed, who, he observed, was little better than a dead man, might be given up to be sacrificed to the manes of the deceased warrior. This would appease the fury of his friends; the hatchet would then be buried, and all thenceforward would be friends. The answer was a stern refusal and a defiance, and the war-chief saw that the canoes were well prepared for a vigorous defense. He withdrew, therefore, and returning to his warriors among the rocks held long deliberations. Blood for blood is a principle in Indian equity and Indian honor; but though the inhabitants of Wish-ram were men of war, they were likewise men of traffic, and it was suggested that honor for once might give way to profit. A negotiation was accordingly opened with the white men, and after some diplomacy, the matter was compromised for a blanket to cover the dead, and some tobacco to be smoked by the living. This being granted, the heroes of Wish-ram crossed the river once more, returned to their villages to feast upon the horses whose blood they had so vaingloriously drunk, and the travellers pursued their voyage without further molestation.

The tin case, however, containing the important despatches for New York, was irretrievably lost; the very precaution taken by the worthy Hibernian to secure his missives, had, by rendering them conspicuous, produced their robbery. The object of his overland journey, therefore, being defeated, he gave up the expedition. The whole party repaired with Mr. Robert Stuart to the establishment of Mr. David Stuart, on the Oakinagan River. After remaining here two or three days, they all set out on their return to Astoria accompanied by Mr. David Stuart. This gentleman had a large quantity of beaver skins at his establishment, but did not think it prudent to take them with him.

---

fearing the levy of "black mail" at the falls.

On their way down, when below the forks of the Columbia, they were hailed one day from the shore in English. Looking around, they descried two wretched men, entirely naked. They pulled to shore; the men came up and made themselves known. They proved to be Mr. Crooks and his faithful follower, John Day.

The reader will recollect that Mr. Crooks, with Day and four Canadians, had been so reduced by famine and fatigue, that Mr. Hunt was obliged to leave them, in the month of December, on the banks of the Snake River. Their situation was the more critical, as they were in the neighborhood of a band of Shoshonies, whose horses had been forcibly seized by Mr. Hunt's party for provisions. Mr. Crooks remained here twenty days, detained by the extremely reduced state of John Day, who was utterly unable to travel, and whom he would not abandon, as Day had been in his employ on the Missouri, and had always proved himself most faithful. Fortunately the Shoshonies did not offer to molest them. They had never before seen white men, and seemed to entertain some superstitions with regard to them, for though they would encamp near them in the daytime, they would move off with their tents in the night; and finally disappeared, without taking leave.

When Day was sufficiently recovered to travel, they kept feebly on, sustaining themselves as well as they could, until in the month of February, when three of the Canadians, fearful of perishing with want, left Mr. Crooks on a small river, on the road by which Mr Hunt had passed in quest of Indians. Mr. Crooks followed Mr. Hunt's track in the snow for several days, sleeping as usual in the open air, and suffering all kinds of hardships. At length, coming to a low prairie, he lost every appearance of the "trail," and wandered during the remainder of the winter in the mountains, subsisting sometimes on horse meat, sometimes on beavers and their skins, and a part of the time on roots.

About the last of March, the other Canadian gave out and was left with a lodge of Shoshonies; but Mr. Crooks and John Day still kept on, and finding the snow sufficiently diminished, undertook, from Indian information, to cross the last mountain ridge. They happily succeeded, and afterwards fell in with the Wallah-Wallahs, a tribe of Indians inhabiting the banks of a river of the same name, and reputed as being frank, hospitable, and sincere. They proved worthy of the character, for they received the poor wanderers kindly, killed a horse for them to eat, and directed them on their way to the Columbia. They struck the river about the middle of April, and advanced down it one hundred miles, until they came within about twenty miles of the falls.

Here they met with some of the "chivalry" of that noted pass, who received them in a friendly way, and set food before them; but, while they were satisfying their hunger, perfidiously seized their rifles. They then stripped them naked, and drove them off, refusing the entreaties of Mr. Crooks for a flint and steel of which they had robbed him; and threatening his life if he did not instantly depart

In this forlorn plight, still worse off than before, they renewed their wanderings. They now sought

to find their way back to the hospitable Wallah-Wallahs, and had advanced eighty miles along the river, when fortunately, on the very morning that they were going to leave the Columbia and strike inland, the canoes of Mr. Stuart hove in sight.

It is needless to describe the joy of these poor men at once more finding themselves among countrymen and friends, or of the honest and hearty welcome with which they were received by their fellow adventurers. The whole party now continued down the river, passed all the dangerous places without interruption, and arrived safely at Astoria on the 11th of May.

Washington Irving's Astoria

#### CHAPTER XLII

Comprehensive Views.- To Supply the Russian Fur Establishment.- An Agent Sent to Russia.- Project of an Annual Ship.- The Beaver Fitted Out.- Her Equipment and Crew.- Instructions to the Captain.- The Sandwich Islands. Rumors of the Fate of the Tonquin.- Precautions on Reaching the Mouth of the Columbia.

HAVING traced the fortunes of the two expeditions by sea and land to the mouth of the Columbia, and presented a view of affairs at Astoria, we will return for a moment to the master spirit of the enterprise, who regulated the springs of Astoria, at his residence in New York.

It will be remembered, that a part of the plan of Mr. Astor was to furnish the Russian fur establishment on the northwest coast with regular supplies, so as to render it independent of those casual vessels which cut up the trade and supplied the natives with arms. This plan had been countenanced by our own government, and likewise by Count Pahlen, the Russian minister at Washington. As its views, however, were important and extensive, and might eventually affect a wide course of commerce, Mr Astor was desirous of establishing a complete arrangement on the subject with the Russian American Fur Company, under the sanction of the Russian government. For this purpose, in March 1811, he despatched a confidential agent to St. Petersburg, full empowered to enter into the requisite negotiations. A passage was given to this gentleman by the government of the United States in the John Adams, an armed vessel, bound for Europe.

The next step of Mr. Astor was, to despatch the annual ship contemplated on his general plan. He had as yet heard nothing of the success of the previous expeditions, and had to proceed upon the presumption that everything had been effected according to his instructions. He accordingly fitted out a fine ship of four hundred and ninety tons, called the Beaver, and freighted her with a valuable cargo destined for the factory at the mouth of the Columbia, the trade along the coast, and the supply of the Russian establishment. In this ship embarked a reinforcement, consisting of a partner, five clerks, fifteen American laborers, and six Canadian voyageurs. In choosing his agents for his first expedition, Mr. Astor had been obliged to have recourse to British subjects experienced in the Canadian fur trade; henceforth it was his intention, as much as possible, to select Americans, so as to secure an ascendancy of American influence in the management of the company, and to make it decidedly national.

Accordingly, Mr. John Clarke, the partner who took the lead in the present expedition, was a

native of the United States, though he had passed much of his life in the northwest, having been employed in the trade since the age of sixteen. Most of the clerks were young gentlemen of good connections in the American cities, some of whom embarked in the hope of gain, others through the mere spirit of adventure incident to youth.

The instructions given by Mr. Astor to Captain Sowle, the commander of the *Beaver*, were, in some respects, hypothetical, in consequence of the uncertainty resting upon the previous steps of the enterprise.

He was to touch at the Sandwich Islands, inquire about the fortunes of the *Tonquin*, and whether an establishment had been formed at the mouth of the *Columbia*. If so, he was to take as many Sandwich Islanders as his ship could accommodate, and proceed thither. On arriving at the river, he was to observe great caution, for even if an establishment should have been formed, it might have fallen into hostile hands. He was, therefore, to put in as if by casualty or distress, to give himself out as a coasting trader, and to say nothing about his ship being owned by Mr. Astor, until he had ascertained that everything was right. In that case, he was to land such part of his cargo as was intended for the establishment, and to proceed to New Archangel with the supplies intended for the Russian post at that place, where he could receive peltries in payment. With these he was to return to Astoria; take in the furs collected there, and, having completed his cargo by trading along the coast, was to proceed to Canton. The captain received the same injunctions that had been given to Captain Thorn of the *Tonquin*, of great caution and circumspection in his intercourse with the natives, and that he should not permit more than one or two to be on board at a time.

The *Beaver* sailed from New York on the 10th of October, 1811, and reached the Sandwich Islands without any occurrence of moment. Here a rumor was heard of the disastrous fate of the *Tonquin*. Deep solicitude was felt by every one on board for the fate of both expeditions, by sea and land. Doubts were entertained whether any establishment had been formed at the mouth of the *Columbia*, or whether any of the company would be found there. After much deliberation, the Captain took twelve Sandwich Islanders on board, for the service of the factory, should there be one in existence, and proceeded on his voyage.

On the 6th of May, he arrived off the mouth of the *Columbia* and running as near as possible, fired two signal guns. No answer was returned, nor was there any signal to be descried. Night coming on, the ship stood out to sea, and every heart drooped as the land faded away. On the following morning they again ran in within four miles of shore, and fired other signal guns, but still without reply. A boat was then despatched, to sound the channel, and attempt an entrance; but returned without success there being a tremendous swell, and breakers. Signal guns were fired again in the evening, but equally in vain, and once more the ship stood off to sea for the night. The captain now gave up all hope of finding any establishment at the place, and indulged in the most gloomy apprehensions. He feared his predecessor had been massacred before they had reached their place of destination; or if they should have erected a factory, that it had been surprised and destroyed by the natives.

In this moment of doubt and uncertainty, Mr. Clarke announced his determination, in case of the worst, to found an establishment with the present party, and all hands bravely engaged to stand by him in the undertaking. The next morning the ship stood in for the third time, and fired three signal guns, but with little hope of reply. To the great joy of the crew, three distinct guns were heard in answer. The apprehensions of all but Captain Sowle were now at rest. That cautious commander recollected the instructions given him by Mr. Astor, and determined to proceed with great circumspection. He was well aware of Indian treachery and cunning. It was not impossible, he observed, that these cannon might have been fired by the savages themselves. They might have surprised the fort, massacred its inmates; and these signal guns might only be decoys to lure him across the bar, that they might have a chance of cutting him off, and seizing his vessel.

At length a white flag was descried hoisted as a signal on Cape Disappointment. The passengers pointed to it in triumph, but the captain did not yet dismiss his doubts. A beacon fire blazed through the night on the same place, but the captain observed that all these signals might be treacherous.

On the following morning, May 9th, the vessel came to anchor off Cape Disappointment, outside of the bar. Towards noon an Indian canoe was seen making for the ship and all hands were ordered to be on the alert. A few moments afterwards, a barge was perceived following the canoe. The hopes and fears of those on board of the ship were in tumultuous agitation, as the boat drew nigh that was to let them know the fortunes of the enterprise, and the fate of their predecessors. The captain, who was haunted with the idea of possible treachery, did not suffer his curiosity to get the better of his caution, but ordered a party of his men under arms, to receive the visitors. The canoe came first alongside, in which were Comcomly and six Indians; in the barge were M'Dougal, M'Lellan, and eight Canadians. A little conversation with these gentlemen dispelled all the captain's fears, and the Beaver crossing the bar under their pilotage, anchored safely in Baker's Bay.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLIII.

Active Operations at Astoria- Various Expeditions Fitted Out.- Robert Stuart and a Party Destined for New York - Singular Conduct of John Day.- His Fate.- Piratical Pass and Hazardous Portage.-Rattlesnakes. - Their Abhorrence of Tobacco.- Arrival Among the Wallah-Wallahs. - Purchase of Horses- Departure of Stuart and His Band for the Mountains.

THE arrival of the Beaver with a reinforcement and supplies, gave new life and vigor to affairs at Astoria. These were means for extending the operations of the establishment, and founding interior trading posts. Two parties were immediately set on foot to proceed severally under the command of Messrs. M'Kenzie and Clarke, and establish posts above the forks of the Columbia, at points where most rivalry and opposition were apprehended from the Northwest Company.

A third party, headed by Mr. David Stuart, was to repair with supplies to the post of that gen-

tleman on the Oakinagan. In addition to these expeditions, a fourth was necessary to convey despatches to Mr. Astor, at New York, in place of those unfortunately lost by John Reed. The safe conveyance of these despatches was highly important, as by them Mr. Astor would receive an account of the state of the factory, and regulate his reinforcements and supplies accordingly. The mission was one of peril and hardship and required a man of nerve and vigor. It was confided to Robert Stuart, who, though he had never been across the mountains, and a very young man, had given proofs of his competency to the task. Four trusty and well-trying men, who had come overland in Mr. Hunt's expedition, were given as his guides and hunters. These were Ben Jones and John Day, the Kentuckians, and Andri Vallar and Francis Le Clerc, Canadians. Mr. M'Lellan again expressed his determination to take this opportunity of returning to the Atlantic States. In this he was joined by Mr. Crooks, -who, notwithstanding all that he had suffered in the dismal journey of the preceding winter, was ready to retrace his steps and brave every danger and hardship, rather than remain at Astoria. This little handful of adventurous men we propose to accompany in its long and perilous peregrinations.

The several parties we have mentioned all set off in company on the 29th of June, under a salute of cannon from the fort. They were to keep together for mutual protection through the piratical passes of the river, and to separate, on their different destinations, at the forks of the Columbia. Their number, collectively, was nearly sixty, consisting of partners and clerks, Canadian voyageurs, Sandwich Islanders, and American hunters; and they embarked in two barges and ten canoes.

They had scarcely got under way, when John Day, the Kentucky hunter, became restless and uneasy, and extremely wayward in his deportment. This caused surprise, for in general he was remarkable for his cheerful, manly deportment. It was supposed that the recollection of past sufferings might harass his mind in undertaking to retrace the scenes where they had been experienced. As the expedition advanced, however, his agitation increased. He began to talk wildly and incoherently, and to show manifest symptoms of derangement.

Mr. Crooks now informed his companions that in his desolate wanderings through the Snake River country during the preceding winter, in which he had been accompanied by John Day, the poor fellow's wits had been partially unsettled by the sufferings and horrors through which they had passed, and he doubted whether they had ever been restored to perfect sanity. It was still hoped that this agitation of spirits might pass away as they proceeded; but, on the contrary, it grew more and more violent. His comrades endeavored to divert his mind and to draw him into rational conversation, but he only became the more exasperated, uttering wild and incoherent ravings. The sight of any of the natives put him in an absolute fury, and he would heap on them the most opprobrious epithets; recollecting, no doubt, what he had suffered from Indian robbers.

On the evening of the 2d of July he became absolutely frantic, and attempted to destroy himself. Being disarmed, he sank into quietude, and professed the greatest remorse for the crime he had meditated. He then pretended to sleep, and having thus lulled suspicion, suddenly sprang up, just before daylight, seized a pair of loaded pistols, and endeavored to blow out his brains. In his hurry

he fired too high, and the balls passed over his head. He was instantly secured and placed under a guard in one of the boats. How to dispose of him was now the question, as it was impossible to keep him with the expedition. Fortunately Mr. Stuart met with some Indians accustomed to trade with Astoria. These undertook to conduct John Day back to the factory, and deliver him there in safety. It was with the utmost concern that his comrades saw the poor fellow depart; for, independent of his invaluable services as a first-rate hunter, his frank and loyal qualities had made him a universal favorite. It may be as well to add that the Indians executed their task faithfully, and landed John Day among his friends at Astoria; but his constitution was completely broken by the hardships he had undergone, and he died within a year.

On the evening of the 6th of July the party arrived at the piratical pass of the river, and encamped at the foot of the first rapid. The next day, before the commencement of the portage, the greatest precautions were taken to guard against lurking treachery, or open attack. The weapons of every man were put in order, and his cartridge-box replenished. Each one wore a kind of surcoat made of the skin of the elk, reaching from his neck to his knees, and answering the purpose of a shirt of mail, for it was arrow proof, and could even resist a musket ball at the distance of ninety yards. Thus armed and equipped, they posted their forces in military style. Five of the officers took their stations at each end of the portage, which was between three and four miles in length; a number of men mounted guard at short distances along the heights immediately overlooking the river, while the residue, thus protected from surprise, employed themselves below in dragging up the barges and canoes, and carrying up the goods along the narrow margin of the rapids. With these precautions they all passed unmolested. The only accident that happened was the upsetting of one of the canoes, by which some of the goods sunk, and others floated down the stream. The alertness and rapacity of the hordes which infest these rapids, were immediately apparent. They pounced upon the floating merchandise with the keenness of regular wreckers. A bale of goods which landed upon one of the islands was immediately ripped open, one half of its contents divided among the captors, and the other half secreted in a lonely hut in a deep ravine. Mr. Robert Stuart, however, set out in a canoe with five men and an interpreter, ferreted out the wreckers in their retreat, and succeeded in wresting from them their booty.

Similar precautions to those already mentioned, and to a still greater extent, were observed in passing the Long Narrows, and the falls, where they would be exposed to the depredations of the chivalry of Wish-ram, and its freebooting neighborhood. In fact, they had scarcely set their first watch one night, when an alarm of "Indians!" was given. "To arms" was the cry, and every man was at his post in an instant. The alarm was explained; a war party of Shoshonies had surprised a canoe of the natives just below the encampment, had murdered four men and two women, and it was apprehended they would attack the camp. The boats and canoes were immediately hauled up, a breastwork was made of them and the packages, forming three sides of a square, with the river in the rear, and thus the party remained fortified throughout the night.

The dawn, however, dispelled the alarm; the portage was conducted in peace; the vagabond warriors of the vicinity hovered about them while at work, but were kept at a wary distance. They regarded the loads of merchandise with wistful eyes, but seeing the "long-beards" so formidable in

number, and so well prepared for action, they made no attempt either by open force or sly pilfering to collect their usual toll, but maintained a peaceful demeanor, and were afterwards rewarded for their good conduct with presents of tobacco.

Fifteen days were consumed in ascending from the foot of the first rapid to the head of the falls, a distance of about eighty miles, but full of all kinds of obstructions. Having happily accomplished these difficult portages, the party, on the 19th of July, arrived at a smoother part of the river, and pursued their way up the stream with greater speed and facility.

They were now in the neighborhood where Mr. Crooks and John Day had been so perfidiously robbed and stripped a few months previously, when confiding in the proffered hospitality of a ruffian band. On landing at night, therefore, a vigilant guard was maintained about the camp. On the following morning a number of Indians made their appearance, and came prowling round the party while at breakfast. To his great delight, Mr. Crooks recognized among them two of the miscreants by whom he had been robbed. They were instantly seized, bound hand and foot, and thrown into one of the canoes. Here they lay in doleful fright, expecting summary execution. Mr. Crooks, however, was not of a revengeful disposition, and agreed to release the culprits as soon as the pillaged property should be restored. Several savages immediately started off in different directions, and before night the rifles of Crooks and Day were produced; several of the smaller articles pilfered from them, however, could not be recovered.

The bands of the culprits were then removed, and they lost no time in taking their departure, still under the influence of abject terror, and scarcely crediting their senses that they had escaped the merited punishment of their offenses.

The country on each side of the river now began to assume a different character. The hills, and cliffs, and forests disappeared; vast sandy plains, scantily clothed here and there with short tufts of grass, parched by the summer sun, stretched far away to the north and south. The river was occasionally obstructed with rocks and rapids, but often there were smooth, placid intervals, where the current was gentle, and the boatmen were enabled to lighten their labors with the assistance of the sail.

The natives in this part of the river resided entirely on the northern side. They were hunters, as well as fishermen, and had horses in plenty. Some of these were purchased by the party, as provisions, and killed on the spot, though they occasionally found a difficulty in procuring fuel wherewith to cook them. One of the greatest dangers that beset the travellers in this part of their expedition, was the vast number of rattlesnakes which infested the rocks about the rapids and portages, and on which the men were in danger of treading. They were often found, too, in quantities about the encampments. In one place, a nest of them lay coiled together, basking in the sun. Several guns loaded with shot were discharged at them, and thirty-seven killed and wounded. To prevent any unwelcome visits from them in the night, tobacco was occasionally strewed around the tents, a weed for which they have a very proper abhorrence.

On the 28th of July the travellers arrived at the mouth of the Wallah-Wallah, a bright, clear stream, about six feet deep, and fifty-five yards wide, which flows rapidly over a bed of sand and gravel, and throws itself into the Columbia, a few miles below Lewis River. Here the combined parties that had thus far voyaged together were to separate, each for its particular destination.

On the banks of the Wallah-Wallah lived the hospitable tribe of the same name who had succored Mr. Crooks and John Day in the time of their extremity. No sooner did they hear of the arrival of the party, than they hastened to greet them. They built a great bonfire on the bank of the river, before the camp, and men and women danced round it to the cadence of their songs, in which they sang the praises of the white men, and welcomed them to their country.

On the following day a traffic was commenced, to procure horses for such of the party as intended to proceed by land. The Wallah-Wallahs are an equestrian tribe. The equipments of their horses were rude and inconvenient. High saddles, roughly made of deer skin, stuffed with hair, which chafe the horse's back and leave it raw; wooden stirrups, with a thong of raw hide wrapped round them; and for bridles they have cords of twisted horse-hair, which they tie round the under jaw. They are, like most Indians, bold but hard riders, and when on horseback gallop about the most dangerous places, without fear for themselves, or pity for their steeds.

From these people Mr. Stuart purchased twenty horses for his party; some for the saddle, and others to transport the baggage. He was fortunate in procuring a noble animal for his own use, which was praised by the Indians for its great speed and bottom, and a high price set upon it. No people understand better the value of a horse than these equestrian tribes; and nowhere is speed a greater requisite, as they frequently engage in the chase of the antelope, one of the fleetest of animals. Even after the Indian who sold this boasted horse to Mr. Stuart had concluded his bargain, he lingered about the animal, seeming loth to part from him, and to be sorry for what he had done.

A day or two were employed by Mr. Stuart in arranging packages and pack-saddles, and making other preparations for his long and arduous journey. His party, by the loss of John Day, was now reduced to six, a small number for such an expedition. They were young men, however, full of courage, health, and good spirits, and stimulated rather than appalled by danger.

On the morning of the 31st of July, all preparations being concluded, Mr. Stuart and his little band mounted their steeds and took a farewell of their fellow-travellers, who gave them three hearty cheers as they set out on their dangerous journey. The course they took was to the southeast, towards the fated region of the Snake River. At an immense distance rose a chain of craggy mountains, which they would have to traverse; they were the same among which the travellers had experienced such sufferings from cold during the preceding winter, and from their azure tints, when seen at a distance, had received the name of the Blue Mountains.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLIV.

Route of Mr. Stuart- Dreary Wilds.- Thirsty Travelling.- A Grove and Streamlet.- The Blue Moun-

---

tains.- A Fertile Plain With Rivulets.- Sulphur Spring- Route Along Snake River- Rumors of White Men.-The Snake and His Horse.- A Snake Guide.-A Midnight Decampment.- Unexpected Meeting With Old Comrades- Story of Trappers' Hardships- Salmon Falls- A Great Fishery.- Mode of Spearing Salmon.- Arrival at the Caldron Linn.- State of the Caches. - New Resolution of the Three Kentucky Trappers.

IN retracing the route which had proved so disastrous to Mr. Hunt's party during the preceding winter, Mr. Stuart had trusted, in the present more favorable season, to find easy travelling and abundant supplies. On these great wastes and wilds, however, each season has its peculiar hardships. The travellers had not proceeded far, before they found themselves among naked and arid hills, with a soil composed of sand and clay, baked and brittle, that to all appearance had never been visited by the dews of heaven.

Not a spring, or pool, or running stream was to be seen; the sunburnt country was seamed and cut up by dry ravines, the beds of winter torrents, serving only to balk the hopes of man and beast with the sight of dusty channels, where water had once poured along in floods.

For a long summer day they continued onward without halting, a burning sky above their heads, a parched desert beneath their feet, with just wind enough to raise the light sand from the knolls, and envelop them in stifling clouds. The sufferings from thirst became intense; a fine young dog, their only companion of the kind, gave out, and expired. Evening drew on without any prospect of relief, and they were almost reduced to despair, when they descried something that looked like a fringe of forest along the horizon. All were inspired with new hope, for they knew that on these arid wastes, in the neighborhood of trees, there is always water.

They now quickened their pace; the horses seemed to understand their motives, and to partake of their anticipations; for, though before almost ready to give out, they now required neither whip nor spur. With all their exertions, it was late in the night before they drew near to the trees. As they approached, they heard, with transport, the rippling of a shallow stream. No sooner did the refreshing sound reach the ears of the horse, than the poor animals snuffed the air, rushed forward with ungovernable eagerness, and plunging their muzzles into the water, drank until they seemed in danger of bursting. Their riders had but little more discretion, and required repeated draughts to quench their excessive thirst. Their weary march that day had been forty-five miles, over a tract that might rival the deserts of Africa for aridity. Indeed, the sufferings of the traveller on these American deserts is frequently more severe than in the wastes of Africa or Asia, from being less habituated and prepared to cope with them.

On the banks of this blessed stream the travellers encamped for the night; and so great had been their fatigue, and so sound and sweet was their sleep, that it was a late hour the next morning before they awoke. They now recognized the little river to be the Umatilla, the same on the banks of which Mr. Hunt and his followers had arrived after their painful struggle through the Blue Mountains, and experienced such a kind relief in the friendly camp of the Sciatogas.

That range of Blue Mountains now extended in the distance before them; they were the same among which poor Michael Carriere had perished. They form the southeast boundary of the great plains along the Columbia, dividing the waters of its main stream from those of Lewis River. They are, in fact, a part of a long chain, which stretches over a great extent of country, and includes in its links the Snake River Mountains.

The day was somewhat advanced before the travellers left the shady banks of the Umatilla. Their route gradually took them among the Blue Mountains, which assumed the most rugged aspect on a near approach. They were shagged with dense and gloomy forests, and cut up by deep and precipitous ravines, extremely toilsome to the horses. Sometimes the travellers had to follow the course of some brawling stream, with a broken, rocky bed, which the shouldering cliffs and promontories on either side obliged them frequently to cross and recross. For some miles they struggled forward through these savage and darkly wooded defiles, when all at once the whole landscape changed, as if by magic. The rude mountains and rugged ravines softened into beautiful hills, and intervening meadows, with rivulets winding through fresh herbage, and sparkling and murmuring over gravelly beds, the whole forming a verdant and pastoral scene, which derived additional charms from being locked up in the bosom of such a hard-hearted region.

Emerging from the chain of Blue Mountains, they descended upon a vast plain, almost a dead level, sixty miles in circumference, Of excellent soil, with fine streams meandering through it in every direction, their courses marked out in the wide landscape by serpentine lines of cotton-wood trees, and willows, which fringed their banks, and afforded sustenance to great numbers of beavers and otters.

In traversing this plain, they passed, close to the skirts of the hills, a great pool of water, three hundred yards in circumference, fed by a sulphur spring, about ten feet in diameter, boiling up in one corner. The vapor from this pool was extremely noisome, and tainted the air for a considerable distance. The place was much frequented by elk, which were found in considerable numbers in the adjacent mountains, and their horns, shed in the spring-time, were strewed in every direction around the pond.

On the 10th of August, they reached the main body of Woodvile Creek, the same stream which Mr. Hunt had ascended in the preceding year, shortly after his separation from Mr. Crooks.

On the banks of this stream they saw a herd of nineteen antelopes; a sight so unusual in that part of the country, that at first they doubted the evidence of their senses. They tried by every means to get within shot of them, but they were too shy and fleet, and after alternately bounding to a distance, and then stopping to gaze with capricious curiosity at the hunter, they at length scampered out of sight.

On the 12th of August, the travellers arrived on the banks of Snake River, the scene of so many trials and mishaps to all of the present party excepting Mr. Stuart. They struck the river just above the place where it entered the mountains, through which Messrs. Stuart and Crooks had vainly

endeavored to find a passage. The river was here a rapid stream, four hundred yards in width, with high sandy banks, and here and there a scanty growth of willow. Up the southern side of the river they now bent their course, intending to visit the caches made by Mr. Hunt at the Caldron Linn.

On the second evening, a solitary Snake Indian visited their camp, at a late hour, and informed them that there was a white man residing at one of the cantonments of his tribe, about a day's journey higher up the river. It was immediately concluded that he must be one of the poor fellows of Mr. Hunt's party, who had given out, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, in the wretched journey of the preceding winter. All present who had borne a part in the sufferings of that journey, were eager now to press forward, and bring relief to a lost comrade. Early the next morning, therefore, they pushed forward with unusual alacrity. For two days, however, did they travel without being able to find any trace of such a straggler.

On the evening of the second day, they arrived at a place where a large river came in from the east, which was renowned among all the wandering hordes of the Snake nation for its salmon fishery, that fish being taken in incredible quantities in this neighborhood. Here, therefore, during the fishing season, the Snake Indians resort from far and near, to lay in their stock of salmon, which, with esculent roots, forms the principal food of the inhabitants of these barren regions.

On the bank of a small stream emptying into Snake River at this place, Mr. Stuart found an encampment of Shoshonies. He made the usual inquiry of them concerning the white man of whom he had received intelligence. No such person was dwelling among them, but they said there were white men residing with some of their nation on the opposite side of the river. This was still more animating information. Mr. Crooks now hoped that these might be the men of his party, who, disheartened by perils and hardships, had preferred to remain among the Indians. Others thought they might be Mr. Miller and the hunters who had left the main body at Henry's Fort, to trap among the mountain streams. Mr. Stuart halted, therefore, in the neighborhood of the Shoshonie lodges, and sent an Indian across the river to seek out the white men in question, and bring them to his camp.

The travellers passed a restless, miserable night. The place swarmed with myriads of mosquitoes, which, with their stings and their music, set all sleep at defiance. The morning dawn found them in a feverish, irritable mood, and their spleen was completely aroused by the return of the Indian without any intelligence of the white men. They now considered themselves the dupes of Indian falsehoods, and resolved to put no more confidence in Snakes. They soon, however, forgot this resolution. In the course of the morning, an Indian came galloping after them; Mr. Stuart waited to receive him; no sooner had he come up, than, dismounting and throwing his arms around the neck of Mr. Stuart's horse, he began to kiss and caress the animal, who, on his part, seemed by no means surprised or displeased with his salutation. Mr. Stuart, who valued his horse highly, was somewhat annoyed by these transports; the cause of them was soon explained. The Snake said the horse had belonged to him, and been the best in his possession, and that it had been stolen by the Wallah-Wallahs. Mr. Stuart was by no means pleased with this recognition of his steed, nor

disposed to admit any claim on the part of its ancient owner. In fact, it was a noble animal, admirably shaped, of free and generous spirit, graceful in movement, and fleet as an antelope. It was his intention, if possible, to take the horse to New York, and present him to Mr. Astor.

In the meantime, some of the party came up, and immediately recognized in the Snake an old friend and ally. He was, in fact, one of the two guides who had conducted Mr. Hunt's party, in the preceding autumn, across Mad River Mountain to Fort Henry, and who subsequently departed with Mr. Miller and his fellow trappers, to conduct them to a good trapping ground. The reader may recollect that these two trusty Snakes were engaged by Mr. Hunt to return and take charge of the horses which the party intended to leave at Fort Henry, when they should embark in canoes.

The party now crowded round the Snake, and began to question him with eagerness. His replies were somewhat vague, and but partially understood. He told a long story about the horses, from which it appeared that they had been stolen by various wandering bands, and scattered in different directions. The cache, too, had been plundered, and the saddles and other equipments carried off. His information concerning Mr. Miller and his comrades was not more satisfactory. They had trapped for some time about the upper streams, but had fallen into the hands of a marauding party of Crows, who had robbed them of horses, weapons, and everything.

Further questioning brought forth further intelligence, but all of a disastrous kind. About ten days previously, he had met with three other white men, in very miserable plight, having one horse each, and but one rifle among them. They also had been plundered and maltreated by the Crows, those universal freebooters. The Snake endeavored to pronounce the names of these three men, and as far as his imperfect sounds could be understood, they were supposed to be three of the party of four hunters, namely, Carson, St. Michael, Detaye, and Delaunay, who were detached from Mr. Hunt's party on the 28th of September, to trap beaver on the head waters of the Columbia.

In the course of conversation, the Indian informed them that the route by which Mr. Hunt had crossed the Rocky Mountains was very bad and circuitous, and that he knew one much shorter and easier. Mr. Stuart urged him to accompany them as guide, promising to reward him with a pistol with powder and ball, a knife, an awl, some blue beads, a blanket, and a looking-glass. Such a catalogue of riches was too tempting to be resisted; besides the poor Snake languished after the prairies; he was tired, he said, of salmon, and longed for buffalo meat, and to have a grand buffalo hunt beyond the mountains. He departed, therefore, with all speed, to get his arms and equipments for the journey, promising to rejoin the party the next day. He kept his word, and, as he no longer said anything to Mr. Stuart on the subject of the pet horse, they journeyed very harmoniously together; though now and then, the Snake would regard his quondam steed with a wistful eye.

They had not travelled many miles, when they came to a great bend in the river. Here the Snake informed them that, by cutting across the hills they would save many miles of distance. The route across, however, would be a good day's journey. He advised them, therefore, to encamp here for

the night, and set off early in the morning. They took his advice, though they had come but nine miles that day.

On the following morning they rose, bright and early, to ascend the hills. On mustering their little party, the guide was missing. They supposed him to be somewhere in the neighborhood, and proceeded to collect the horses. The vaunted steed of Mr. Stuart was not to be found. A suspicion flashed upon his mind. Search for the horse of the Snake! He likewise was gone -- the tracks of two horses, one after the other, were found, making off from the camp. They appeared as if one horse had been mounted, and the other led. They were traced for a few miles above the camp, until they both crossed the river. It was plain the Snake had taken an Indian mode of recovering his horse, having quietly decamped with him in the night.

New vows were made never more to trust in Snakes, or any other Indians. It was determined, also, to maintain, hereafter, the strictest vigilance over their horses, dividing the night into three watches, and one person mounting guard at a time. They resolved, also, to keep along the river, instead of taking the short cut recommended by the fugitive Snake, whom they now set down for a thorough deceiver. The heat of the weather was oppressive, and their horses were, at times, rendered almost frantic by the stings of the prairie flies. The nights were suffocating, and it was almost impossible to sleep, from the swarms of mosquitoes.

On the 20th of August they resumed their march, keeping along the prairie parallel to Snake River. The day was sultry, and some of the party, being parched with thirst, left the line of march, and scrambled down the bank of the river to drink. The bank was overhung with willows, beneath which, to their surprise, they beheld a man fishing. No sooner did he see them, than he uttered an exclamation of joy. It proved to be John Hoback, one of their lost comrades. They had scarcely exchanged greetings, when three other men came out from among the willows. They were Joseph Miller, Jacob Rezner, and Robinson, the scalped Kentuckian, the veteran of the Bloody Ground.

The reader will perhaps recollect the abrupt and willful manner in which Mr. Miller threw up his interest as a partner of the company, and departed from Fort Henry, in company with these three trappers, and a fourth, named Cass. He may likewise recognize in Robinson, Rezner, and Hoback, the trio of Kentucky hunters who had originally been in the service of Mr. Henry, and whom Mr. Hunt found floating down the Missouri, on their way homeward; and prevailed upon, once more, to cross the mountains. The haggard looks and naked condition of these men proved how much they had suffered. After leaving Mr. Hunt's party, they had made their way about two hundred miles to the southward, where they trapped beaver on a river which, according to their account, discharged itself into the ocean to the south of the Columbia, but which we apprehend to be Bear River, a stream emptying itself into Lake Bonneville, an immense body of salt water, west of the Rocky Mountains.

Having collected a considerable quantity of beaver skins, they made them into packs, loaded their horses, and steered two hundred miles due east. Here they came upon an encampment of sixty lodges of Arapahays, an outlawed band of the Arrapahoes, and notorious robbers. These fell

upon the poor trappers; robbed them of their peltries, most of their clothing, and several of their horses. They were glad to escape with their lives, and without being entirely stripped, and after proceeding about fifty miles further, made their halt for the winter.

Early in the spring they resumed their wayfaring, but were unluckily overtaken by the same rufian horde, who levied still further contributions, and carried off the remainder of their horses, excepting two. With these they continued on, suffering the greatest hardships. They still retained rifles and ammunition, but were in a desert country, where neither bird nor beast was to be found. Their only chance was to keep along the rivers, and subsist by fishing; but at times no fish were to be taken, and then their sufferings were horrible. One of their horses was stolen among the mountains by the Snake Indians; the other, they said, was carried off by Cass, who, according to their account, "villainously left them in their extremities." Certain dark doubts and surmises were afterwards circulated concerning the fate of that poor fellow, which, if true, showed to what a desperate state of famine his comrades had been reduced.

Being now completely unhorsed, Mr. Miller and his three companions wandered on foot for several hundred miles, enduring hunger, thirst, and fatigue, while traversing the barren wastes which abound beyond the Rocky Mountains. At the time they were discovered by Mr. Stuart's party, they were almost famished, and were fishing for a precarious meal. Had Mr. Stuart made the short cut across the hills, avoiding this bend of the river, or had not some of his party accidentally gone down to the margin of the stream to drink, these poor wanderers might have remained undiscovered, and have perished in the wilderness. Nothing could exceed their joy on thus meeting with their old comrades, or the heartiness with which they were welcomed. All hands immediately encamped; and the slender stores of the party were ransacked to furnish out a suitable regale.

The next morning they all set out together; Mr. Miller and his comrades being resolved to give up the life of a trapper, and accompany Mr. Stuart back to St. Louis.

For several days they kept along the course of Snake River, occasionally making short cuts across hills and promontories, where there were bends in the stream. In their way they passed several camps of Shoshonies, from some of whom they procured salmon, but in general they were too wretchedly poor to furnish anything. It was the wish of Mr. Stuart to purchase horses for the recent recruits of his party; but the Indians could not be prevailed upon to part with any, alleging that they had not enough for their own use.

On the 25th of August they reached a great fishing place, to which they gave the name of the Salmon Falls. Here there is a perpendicular fall of twenty feet on the north side of the river, while on the south side there is a succession of rapids. The salmon are taken here in incredible quantities, as they attempt to shoot the falls. It was now a favorable season, and there were about one hundred lodges of Shoshonies busily engaged killing and drying fish. The salmon begin to leap shortly after sunrise. At this time the Indians swim to the centre of the falls, where some station themselves on rocks, and others stand to their waists in the water, all armed with spears, with which they assail the salmon as they attempt to leap, or fall back exhausted. It is an incessant

slaughter, so great is the throng of the fish.

The construction of the spears thus used is peculiar. The head is a straight piece of elk horn, about seven inches long, on the point of which an artificial barb is made fast, with twine well gummed. The head is stuck on the end of the shaft, a very long pole of willow, to which it is likewise connected by a strong cord, a few inches in length. When the spearsman makes a sure blow, he often strikes the head of the spear through the body of the fish. It comes off easily, and leaves the salmon struggling with the string through its body, while the pole is still held by the spearsman. Were it not for the precaution of the string, the willow shaft would be snapped by the struggles and the weight of the fish. Mr. Miller, in the course of his wanderings, had been at these falls, and had seen several thousand salmon taken in the course of one afternoon. He declared that he had seen a salmon leap a distance of about thirty feet, from the commencement of the foam at the foot of the falls, completely to the top.

Having purchased a good supply of salmon from the fishermen, the party resumed their journey, and on the twenty-ninth, arrived at the Caldron Linn, the eventful scene of the preceding autumn. Here, the first thing that met their eyes was a memento of the perplexities of that period; the wreck of a canoe lodged between two ledges of rocks. They endeavored to get down to it, but the river banks were too high and precipitous.

They now proceeded to that part of the neighborhood where Mr. Hunt and his party had made the caches, intending to take from them such articles as belonged to Mr. Crooks, M'Lellan, and the Canadians. On reaching the spot, they found, to their astonishment, six of the caches open and rifled of their contents, excepting a few books which lay scattered about the vicinity. They had the appearance of having been plundered in the course of the summer. There were tracks of wolves in every direction, to and from the holes, from which Mr. Stuart concluded that these animals had first been attracted to the place by the smell of the skins contained in the caches, which they had probably torn up, and that their tracks had betrayed the secret to the Indians.

The three remaining caches had not been molested; they contained a few dry goods, some ammunition, and a number of beaver traps. From these Mr. Stuart took whatever was requisite for his party; he then deposited within them all his superfluous baggage, and all the books and papers scattered around; the holes were then carefully closed up, and all traces of them effaced. And here we have to record another instance of the indomitable spirit of the western trappers. No sooner did the trio of Kentucky hunters, Robinson, Rezner, and Hoback, find that they could once more be fitted out for a campaign of beaver-trapping, than they forgot all that they had suffered, and determined upon another trial of their fortunes; preferring to take their chance in the wilderness, rather than return home ragged and penniless. As to Mr. Miller, he declared his curiosity and his desire of travelling through the Indian countries fully satisfied; he adhered to his determination, therefore, to keep on with the party to St. Louis, and to return to the bosom of civilized society.

The three hunters, therefore, Robinson, Rezner, and Hoback, were furnished, as far as the caches and the means of Mr. Stuart's party afforded, with the requisite munitions and equipments for a

“two years' hunt;” but as their fitting out was yet incomplete, they resolved to wait in this neighborhood until Mr. Reed should arrive; whose arrival might soon be expected, as he was to set out for the caches about twenty days after Mr. Stuart parted with him at the Wallah-Wallah River.

Mr. Stuart gave in charge to Robinson a letter to Mr. Reed, reporting his safe journey thus far, and the state in which he had found the caches. A duplicate of this letter he elevated on a pole, and set it up near the place of deposit.

All things being thus arranged, Mr. Stuart and his little band, now seven in number, took leave of the three hardy trappers, wishing them all possible success in their lonely and perilous sojourn in the wilderness; and we, in like manner, shall leave them to their fortunes, promising to take them up again at some future page, and to close the story of their persevering and ill-fated enterprise.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLV.

The Snake River Deserts.- Scanty Fare.- Bewildered Travellers -.Prowling Indians- A Giant Crow Chief.- A Bully Rebuked- Indian Signals.- Smoke on the Mountains.- Mad River.- An Alarm.- An Indian Foray- A Scamper.- A Rude Indian joke.- A Sharp-Shooter Balked of His Shot.

ON the 1st of September, Mr. Stuart and his companions resumed their journey, bending their course eastward, along the course of Snake River. As they advanced the country opened. The hills which had hemmed in the river receded on either hand, and great sandy and dusty plains extended before them. Occasionally there were intervals of pasturage, and the banks of the river were fringed with willows and cottonwood, so that its course might be traced from the hilltops, winding under an umbrageous covert, through a wide sunburnt landscape. The soil, however, was generally poor; there was in some places a miserable growth of wormwood, and a plant called saltweed, resembling pennyroyal; but the summer had parched the plains, and left but little pasturage. The game, too, had disappeared. The hunter looked in vain over the lifeless landscape; now and then a few antelope might be seen, but not within reach of the rifle. We forbear to follow the travellers in a week's wandering over these barren wastes, where they suffered much from hunger, having to depend upon a few fish from the streams, and now and then a little dried salmon, or a dog, procured from some forlorn lodge of Shoshonies.

Tired of these cheerless wastes, they left the banks of Snake River on the 7th of September, under guidance of Mr. Miller, who having acquired some knowledge of the country during his trapping campaign, undertook to conduct them across the mountains by a better route than that by Fort Henry, and one more out of the range of the Blackfeet. He proved, however, but an indifferent guide, and they soon became bewildered among rugged hills and unknown streams, and burnt and barren prairies.

At length they came to a river on which Mr. Miller had trapped, and to which they gave his name; though, as before observed, we presume it to be the same called Bear River, which empties itself into Lake Bonneville. Up this river and its branches they kept for two or three days, supporting

themselves precariously upon fish. They soon found that they were in a dangerous neighborhood. On the 12th of September, having encamped early, they sallied forth with their rods to angle for their supper. On returning, they beheld a number of Indians prowling about their camp, whom, to their infinite disquiet, they soon perceived to be Upsarokas, or Crows. Their chief came forward with a confident air. He was a dark herculean fellow, full six feet four inches in height, with a mingled air of the ruffian and the rogue. He conducted himself peaceably, however, and despatched some of his people to their camp, which was somewhere in the neighborhood, from whence they returned with a most acceptable supply of buffalo meat. He now signified to Mr. Stuart that he was going to trade with the Snakes who reside on the west base of the mountains, below Henry's Fort. Here they cultivate a delicate kind of tobacco, much esteemed and sought after by the mountain tribes. There was something sinister, however, in the look of this Indian, that inspired distrust. By degrees, the number of his people increased, until, by midnight, there were twenty-one of them about the camp, who began to be impudent and troublesome. The greatest uneasiness was now felt for the safety of the horses and effects, and every one kept vigilant watch throughout the night.

The morning dawned, however, without any unpleasant occurrence, and Mr. Stuart, having purchased all the buffalo meat that the Crows had to spare, prepared to depart. His Indian acquaintances, however, were disposed for further dealings; and above all, anxious for a supply of gunpowder, for which they offered horses in exchange. Mr. Stuart declined to furnish them with the dangerous commodity. They became more importunate in their solicitations, until they met with a flat refusal.

The gigantic chief now stepped forward, assumed a swelling air, and, slapping himself upon the breast, gave Mr. Crooks to understand that he was a chief of great power and importance. He signified, further, that it was customary for great chiefs when they met, to make each other presents. He requested, therefore, that Mr. Stuart would alight, and give him the horse upon which he was mounted. This was a noble animal, of one of the wild races of the prairies; on which Mr. Stuart set great value; he, of course, shook his head at the request of the Crow dignitary. Upon this the latter strode up to him, and taking hold of him, moved him backwards and forwards in his saddle, as if to make him feel that he was a mere child within his grasp. Mr. Stuart preserved his calmness, and still shook his head. The chief then seized the bridle, and gave it a jerk that startled the horse, and nearly brought the rider to the ground. Mr. Stuart instantly drew forth a pistol, and presented it at the head of the bully-ruffian. In a twinkling his swaggering was at an end, and he dodged behind his horse to escape the expected shot. As his subject Crows gazed on the affray from a little distance, Mr. Stuart ordered his men to level their rifles at them, but not to fire. The whole crew scampered among the bushes, and throwing themselves upon the ground, vanished from sight.

The chieftain thus left alone was confounded for an instant; but, recovering himself with true Indian shrewdness, burst into a loud laugh, and affected to turn off the whole matter as a piece of pleasantry. Mr. Stuart by no means relished such equivocal joking, but it was not his policy to get into a quarrel; so he joined with the best grace he could assume in the merriment of the jocular giant; and, to console the latter for the refusal of the horse, made him a present of twenty charges

of powder. They parted, according to all outward professions, the best friends in the world; it was evident, however, that nothing but the smallness of his own force, and the martial array and alertness of the white men, had prevented the Crow chief from proceeding to open outrage. As it was, his worthy followers, in the course of their brief interview, had contrived to purloin a bag containing almost all the culinary utensils of the party.

The travellers kept on their way due east, over a chain of hills. The recent rencontre showed them that they were now in a land of danger, subject to the wide roamings of a predacious tribe; nor, in fact, had they gone many miles before they beheld sights calculated to inspire anxiety and alarm. From the summits of some of the loftiest mountains, in different directions, columns of smoke began to rise. These they concluded to be signals made by the runners of the Crow chieftain, to summon the stragglers of his band, so as to pursue them with greater force. Signals of this kind, made by outrunners from one central point, will rouse a wide circuit of the mountains in a wonderfully short space of time; and bring the straggling hunters and warriors to the standard of their chieftain.

To keep as much as possible out of the way of these freebooters, Mr. Stuart altered his course to the north, and, quitting the main stream of Miller's River, kept up a large branch that came in from the mountains. Here they encamped, after a fatiguing march of twenty-five miles. As the night drew on, the horses were hobbled or fettered, and tethered close to the camp; a vigilant watch was maintained until morning, and every one slept with his rifle on his arm.

At sunrise, they were again on the march, still keeping to the north. They soon began to ascend the mountains, and occasionally had wide prospects over the surrounding country. Not a sign of a Crow was to be seen; but this did not assure them of their security, well knowing the perseverance of these savages in dogging any party they intend to rob, and the stealthy way in which they can conceal their movements, keeping along ravines and defiles. After a mountain scramble of twenty-one miles, they encamped on the margin of a stream running to the north.

In the evening there was an alarm of Indians, and everyone was instantly on the alert. They proved to be three miserable Snakes, who were no sooner informed that a band of Crows was prowling in the neighborhood than they made off with great signs of consternation.

A couple more of weary days and watchful nights brought them to a strong and rapid stream, running due north, which they concluded to be one of the upper branches of Snake River. It was probably the same since called Salt River.

They determined to bend their course down this river, as it would take them still further out of the dangerous neighborhood of the Crows. They then would strike upon Mr. Hunt's track of the preceding autumn, and retrace it across the mountains. The attempt to find a better route under guidance of Mr. Miller had cost them a large bend to the south; in resuming Mr. Hunt's track, they would at least be sure of their road. They accordingly turned down along the course of this stream, and at the end of three days' journey came to where it was joined by a larger river, and

assumed a more impetuous character, raging and roaring among rocks and precipices. It proved, in fact, to be Mad River, already noted in the expedition of Mr. Hunt. On the banks of this river, they encamped on the 18th of September, at an early hour.

Six days had now elapsed since their interview with the Crows; during that time they had come nearly a hundred and fifty miles to the north and west, without seeing any signs of those marauders. They considered themselves, therefore, beyond the reach of molestation, and began to relax in their vigilance, lingering occasionally for part of a day, where there was good pasturage. The poor horses needed repose.

They had been urged on, by forced marches, over rugged heights, among rocks and fallen timber, or over low swampy valleys, inundated by the labors of the beaver. These industrious animals abounded in all the mountain streams and watercourses, wherever there were willows for their subsistence. Many of them they had so completely dammed up as to inundate the low grounds, making shallow pools or lakes, and extensive quagmires; by which the route of the travellers was often impeded.

On the 19th of September, they rose at early dawn; some began to prepare breakfast, and others to arrange the packs preparatory to a march. The horses had been hobbled, but left at large to graze upon the adjacent pasture. Mr. Stuart was on the bank of a river, at a short distance from the camp, when he heard the alarm cry - "Indians! Indians! -to arms! to arms!"

A mounted Crow galloped past the camp, bearing a red flag. He reined his steed on the summit of a neighboring knoll, and waved his flaring banner. A diabolical yell now broke forth on the opposite side of the camp, beyond where the horses were grazing, and a small troop of savages came galloping up, whooping and making a terrific clamor. The horses took fright, and dashed across the camp in the direction of the standard-bearer, attracted by his waving flag. He instantly put spurs to his steed, and scoured off followed by the panic-stricken herd, their fright being increased by the yells of the savages in their rear.

At the first alarm, Mr. Stuart and his comrades had seized their rifles, and attempted to cut off the Indians who were pursuing the horses. Their attention was instantly distracted by whoops and yells in an opposite direction.

They now apprehended that a reserve party was about to carry off their baggage. They ran to secure it. The reserve party, however, galloped by, whooping and yelling in triumph and derision. The last of them proved to be their commander, the identical giant joker already mentioned. He was not cast in the stern poetical mold of fashionable Indian heroism, but on the contrary, was grievously given to vulgar jocularities. As he passed Mr. Stuart and his companions, he checked his horse, raised himself in his saddle, and clapping his hand on the most insulting part of his body, uttered some jeering words, which, fortunately for their delicacy, they could not understand. The rifle of Ben Jones was leveled in an instant, and he was on the point of whizzing a bullet into the target so tauntingly displayed. "Not for your life! not for your life!" exclaimed Mr. Stuart, "you will

bring destruction on us all!"

It was hard to restrain honest Ben, when the mark was so fair and the insult so foul. "O, Mr. Stuart," exclaimed he, "only let me have one crack at the infernal rascal, and you may keep all the pay that is due to me."

"By heaven, if you fire," cried Mr. Stuart, "I'll blow your brains out."

By this time the Indian was far out of reach, and had rejoined his men, and the whole dare-devil band, with the captured horses, scuttled off along the defiles, their red flag flaunting overhead, and the rocks echoing to their whoops and yells, and demoniac laughter.

The unhorsed travellers gazed after them in silent mortification and despair; yet Mr. Stuart could not but admire the style and spirit with which the whole exploit had been managed, and pronounced it one of the most daring and intrepid actions he had ever heard of among Indians. The whole number of the Crows did not exceed twenty. In this way a small gang of lurkers will hurry off the cavalry of a large war party, for when once a drove of horses are seized with panic, they become frantic, and nothing short of broken necks can stop them.

No one was more annoyed by this unfortunate occurrence than Ben Jones. He declared he would actually have given his whole arrears of pay, amounting to upwards of a year's wages, rather than be balked of such a capital shot. Mr. Stuart, however, represented what might have been the consequence of so rash an act. Life for life is the Indian maxim. The whole tribe would have made common cause in avenging the death of a warrior. The party were but seven dismounted men, with a wide mountain region to traverse, infested by these people, and which might all be roused by signal fires. In fact, the conduct of the band of marauders in question, showed the perseverance of savages when once they have fixed their minds upon a project. These fellows had evidently been silent and secretly dogging the party for a week past, and a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, keeping out of sight by day, lurking about the encampment at night, watching all their movements, and waiting for a favorable moment when they should be off their guard. The menace of Mr. Stuart, in their first interview, to shoot the giant chief with his pistol, and the fright caused among the warriors by presenting the rifles, had probably added the stimulus of pique to their usual horse-stealing propensities. And in this mood of mind they would doubtless have followed the party throughout their whole course over the Rocky Mountains, rather than be disappointed in their scheme.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLVI.

Travellers Unhorsed- Pedestrian Preparations- Prying Spies.- Bonfires of Baggage- A March on Foot.- Rafting a River - The Wounded Elk.- Indian Trails.- Willful Conduct of Mr. M'Lellan.- Grand Prospect From a Mountain.- Distant Craters of Volcanoes- Illness of Mr. Crooks.

FEW reverses in this changeful world are more complete and disheartening than that of a travel-

---

ler, suddenly unhorsed, in the midst of the wilderness. Our unfortunate travellers contemplated their situation, for a time, in perfect dismay. A long journey over rugged mountains and immeasurable plains lay before them, which they must painfully perform on foot, and everything necessary for subsistence or defense must be carried on their shoulders. Their dismay, however, was but transient, and they immediately set to work, with that prompt expediency produced by the exigencies of the wilderness, to fit themselves for the change in their condition.

Their first attention was to select from their baggage such articles as were indispensable to their journey; to make them up into convenient packs, and to deposit the residue in caches. The whole day was consumed in these occupations; at night, they made a scanty meal of their remaining provisions, and lay down to sleep with heavy hearts. In the morning, they were up and about at an early hour, and began to prepare their knapsacks for a march, while Ben Jones repaired to an old beaver trap which he had set in the river bank at some little distance from the camp. He was rejoiced to find a middle-sized beaver there, sufficient for a morning's meal to his hungry comrades. On his way back with his prize, he observed two heads peering over the edge of an impending cliff, several hundred feet high, which he supposed to be a couple of wolves. As he continued on, he now and then cast his eye up; heads were still there, looking down with fixed and watchful gaze. A suspicion now flashed across his mind that they might be Indian scouts; and, had they not been far above the reach of his rifle, he would undoubtedly have regaled them with a shot.

On arriving at the camp, he directed the attention of his comrades to these aerial observers. The same idea was at first entertained, that they were wolves; but their immovable watchfulness soon satisfied every one that they were Indians. It was concluded that they were watching the movements of the party, to discover their place of concealment of such articles as they would be compelled to leave behind. There was no likelihood that the caches would escape the search of such keen eyes and experienced rummagers, and the idea was intolerable that any more booty should fall into their hands. To disappoint them, therefore, the travellers stripped the caches of the articles deposited there, and collecting together everything that they could not carry away with them, made a bonfire of all that would burn, and threw the rest into the river. There was a forlorn satisfaction in thus balking the Crows, by the destruction of their own property; and, having thus gratified their pique, they shouldered their packs, about ten o'clock in the morning, and set out on their pedestrian wayfaring.

The route they took was down along the banks of Mad River. This stream makes its way through the defiles of the mountains, into the plain below Fort Henry, where it terminates in Snake River. Mr. Stuart was in hopes of meeting with Snake encampments in the plain, where he might procure a couple of horses to transport the baggage. In such case, he intended to resume his eastern course across the mountains, and endeavor to reach the Cheyenne River before winter. Should he fail, however, of obtaining horses, he would probably be compelled to winter on the Pacific side of the mountains, somewhere on the head waters of the Spanish or Colorado River.

With all the care that had been observed in taking nothing with them that was not absolutely necessary, the poor pedestrians were heavily laden, and their burdens added to the fatigues of their

rugged road. They suffered much, too, from hunger. The trout they caught were too poor to yield much nourishment; their main dependence, therefore, was upon an old beaver trap, which they had providentially retained. Whenever they were fortunate enough to entrap a beaver, it was cut up immediately and distributed, that each man might carry his share.

After two days of toilsome travel, during which they made but eighteen miles, they stopped on the 21st, to build two rafts on which to cross to the north side of the river. On these they embarked on the following morning, four on one raft, and three on the other, and pushed boldly from shore. Finding the rafts sufficiently firm and steady to withstand the rough and rapid water, they changed their minds, and instead of crossing, ventured to float down with the current. The river was, in general, very rapid, and from one to two hundred yards in width, winding in every direction through mountains of hard black rock, covered with pines and cedars. The mountains to the east of the river were spurs of the Rocky range, and of great magnitude; those on the west were little better than hills, bleak and barren, or scantily clothed with stunted grass.

Mad River, though deserving its name from the impetuosity of its current, was free from rapids and cascades, and flowed on in a single channel between gravel banks, often fringed with cotton-wood and dwarf willows in abundance. These gave sustenance to immense quantities of beaver, so that the voyagers found no difficulty in procuring food. Ben Jones, also, killed a fallow deer and a wolverine, and as they were enabled to carry the carcasses on their rafts, their larder was well supplied. Indeed, they might have occasionally shot beavers that were swimming in the river as they floated by, but they humanely spared their lives, being in no want of meat at the time. In this way, they kept down the river for three days, drifting with the current and encamping on land at night, when they drew up their rafts on shore. Towards the evening of the third day, they came to a little island on which they descried a gang of elk. Ben Jones landed, and was fortunate enough to wound one, which immediately took to the water, but, being unable to stem the current, drifted above a mile, when it was overtaken and drawn to shore. As a storm was gathering, they now encamped on the margin of the river, where they remained all the next day, sheltering themselves as well as they could from the rain and snow - a sharp foretaste of the impending winter. During their encampment, they employed themselves in jerking a part of the elk for future supply. In cutting up the carcass, they found that the animal had been wounded by hunters, about a week previously, an arrow head and a musket ball remaining in the wounds. In the wilderness, every trivial circumstance is a matter of anxious speculation. The Snake Indians have no guns; the elk, therefore, could not have been wounded by one of them. They were on the borders of the country infested by the Blackfeet, who carry fire-arms. It was concluded, therefore, that the elk had been hunted by some of that wandering and hostile tribe, who, of course, must be in the neighborhood. The idea put an end to the transient solace they had enjoyed in the comparative repose and abundance of the river.

For three days longer they continued to navigate with their rafts. The recent storm had rendered the weather extremely cold. They had now floated down the river about ninety-one miles, when finding the mountains on the right diminished to moderate sized hills, they landed, and prepared to resume their journey on foot. Accordingly, having spent a day in preparations, making moc-

casins, and parceling out their jerked meat in packs of twenty pounds to each man, they turned their backs upon the river on the 29th of September and struck off to the northeast, keeping along the southern skirt of the mountain on which Henry's Fort was situated.

Their march was slow and toilsome; part of the time through an alluvial bottom, thickly grown with cotton-wood, hawthorn, and willows, and part of the time over rough hills. Three antelopes came within shot, but they dared not fire at them, lest the report of their rifles should betray them to the Blackfeet. In the course of the day, they came upon a large horse-track, apparently about three weeks old, and in the evening encamped on the banks of a small stream, on a spot which had been the camping place of this same band.

On the following morning they still observed the Indian track, but after a time they came to where it separated in every direction, and was lost. This showed that the band had dispersed in various hunting parties, and was, in all probability, still in the neighborhood; it was necessary, therefore, to proceed with the utmost caution. They kept a vigilant eye as they marched, upon every height where a scout might be posted, and scanned the solitary landscapes and the distant ravines, to observe any column of smoke; but nothing of the kind was to be seen; all was indescribably stern and lifeless.

Towards evening they came to where there were several hot springs, strongly impregnated with iron and sulphur, and sending up a volume of vapor that tainted the surrounding atmosphere, and might be seen at the distance of a couple of miles.

Near to these they encamped in a deep gully, which afforded some concealment. To their great concern, Mr. Crooks, who had been indisposed for the two preceding days, had a violent fever in the night.

Shortly after daybreak they resumed their march. On emerging from the glen, a consultation was held as to their course. Should they continue round the skirt of the mountain, they would be in danger of falling in with the scattered parties of Blackfeet, who were probably hunting in the plain. It was thought most advisable, therefore, to strike directly across the mountain, since the route, though rugged and difficult, would be most secure. This counsel was indignantly derided by M'Lellan as pusillanimous. Hot-headed and impatient at all times, he had been rendered irascible by the fatigues of the journey, and the condition of his feet, which were chafed and sore. He could not endure the idea of encountering the difficulties of the mountain, and swore he would rather face all the Blackfeet in the country. He was overruled, however, and the party began to ascend the mountain, striving, with the ardor and emulation of young men, who should be first up. M'Lellan, who was double the age of some of his companions, soon began to lose breath, and fall in the rear. In the distribution of burdens, it was his turn to carry the old beaver trap. Piqued and irritated, he suddenly came to a halt, swore he would carry it no further, and jerked it half-way down the hill. He was offered in place of it a package of dried meat, but this he scornfully threw upon the ground. They might carry it, he said, who needed it; for his part, he could provide his daily bread with his rifle. He concluded by flinging off from the party, and keeping along the

skirts of the mountain, leaving those, he said, to climb rocks, who were afraid to face Indians. It was in vain that Mr. Stuart represented to him the rashness of his conduct, and the dangers to which he exposed himself: he rejected such counsel as craven. It was equally useless to represent the dangers to which he subjected his companions; as he could be discovered at a great distance on those naked plains, and the Indians, seeing him, would know that there must be other white men within reach. M'Lellan turned a deaf ear to every remonstrance, and kept on his wilful way.

It seemed a strange instance of perverseness in this man thus to fling himself off alone, in a savage region, where solitude itself was dismal, and every encounter with his fellow-man full of peril. Such, however, is the hardness of spirit, and the insensibility to danger that grow upon men in the wilderness. M'Lellan, moreover, was a man of peculiar temperament, ungovernable in his will, of a courage that absolutely knew no fear, and somewhat of a braggart spirit, that took a pride in doing desperate and hair-brained things.

Mr. Stuart and his party found the passages of the mountain somewhat difficult, on account of the snow, which in many places was of considerable depth, though it was but the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. They crossed the summit early in the afternoon, and beheld below them, a plain about twenty miles wide, bounded on the opposite side by their old acquaintances, the Pilot Knobs, those towering mountains which had served Mr. Hunt as landmarks in part of his route of the preceding year. Through the intermediate plain wandered a river about fifty yards wide, sometimes gleaming in open day, but oftener running through willowed banks, which marked its serpentine course.

Those of the party who had been across these mountains, pointed out much of the bearings of the country to Mr. Stuart. They showed him in what direction must lie the deserted post called Henry's Fort, where they had abandoned their horses and embarked in canoes, and they informed him that the stream which wandered through the plain below them, fell into Henry River, half way between the fort and the mouth of Mad or Snake River. The character of all this mountain region was decidedly volcanic; and to the northwest, between Henry's Fort and the source of the Missouri, Mr. Stuart observed several very high peaks covered with snow, from two of which smoke ascended in considerable volumes, apparently from craters in a state of eruption.

On their way down the mountain, when they had reached the skirts, they descried M'Lellan at a distance, in the advance, traversing the plain. Whether he saw them or not, he showed no disposition to rejoin them, but pursued his sullen and solitary way.

After descending into the plain, they kept on about six miles, until they reached the little river, which was here about knee deep, and richly fringed with willow. Here they encamped for the night. At this encampment the fever of Mr. Crooks increased to such a degree that it was impossible for him to travel. Some of the men were strenuous for Mr. Stuart to proceed without him, urging the imminent danger they were exposed to by delay in that unknown and barren region, infested by the most treacherous and inveterate foes. They represented that the season was rapidly advancing; the weather for some days had been extremely cold; the mountains were already almost impassable from snow, and would soon present effectual barriers. Their provisions were

exhausted; there was no game to be seen, and they did not dare to use their rifles, through fear of drawing upon them the Blackfeet.

The picture thus presented was too true to be contradicted, and made a deep impression on the mind of Mr. Stuart; but the idea of abandoning a fellow being, and a comrade, in such a forlorn situation, was too repugnant to his feelings to be admitted for an instant. He represented to the men that the malady of Mr. Crooks could not be of long duration, and that, in all probability, he would be able to travel in the course of a few days. It was with great difficulty, however, that he prevailed upon them to abide the event.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLVII.

Ben Jones and a Grizzly Bear.- Rocky Heights- Mountain Torrents. -Traces of M'Lellan.- Volcanic Remains- Mineral Earths.- Peculiar Clay for Pottery.- Dismal Plight of M'Lellan.- Starvation.- Shocking Proposition of a Desperate Man.- A Broken-Down Bull.- A Ravenous Meal.- Indian Graves- Hospitable Snakes.-A Forlorn Alliance.

AS the travellers were now in a dangerous neighborhood, where the report of a rifle might bring the savages upon them, they had to depend upon their old beaver-trap for subsistence. The little river on which they were encamped gave many "beaver signs," and Ben Jones set off at daybreak, along the willowed banks, to find a proper trapping-place. As he was making his way among the thickets, with his trap on his shoulder and his rifle in his hand, he heard a crushing sound, and turning, beheld a huge grizzly bear advancing upon him, with terrific growl. The sturdy Kentuckian was not to be intimidated by man or monster. Leveling his rifle, he pulled the trigger. The bear was wounded, but not mortally: instead, however, of rushing upon his assailant, as is generally the case with this kind of bear, he retreated into the bushes. Jones followed him for some distance, but with suitable caution, and Bruin effected his escape.

As there was every prospect of a detention of some days in this place, and as the supplies of the beaver-trap were too precarious to be depended upon, it became absolutely necessary to run some risk of discovery by hunting in the neighborhood. Ben Jones, therefore, obtained permission to range with his rifle some distance from the camp, and set off to beat up the river banks, in defiance of bear or Blackfeet.

He returned in great spirits in the course of a few hours, having come upon a gang of elk about six miles off, and killed five. This was joyful news, and the party immediately moved forward to the place where he had left the carcasses. They were obliged to support Mr. Crooks the whole distance, for he was unable to walk. Here they remained for two or three days, feasting heartily on elk meat, and drying as much as they would be able to carry away with them.

By the 5th of October, some simple prescriptions, together with an "Indian sweat," had so far benefited Mr. Crooks, that he was enabled to move about; they therefore set forward slowly, dividing his pack and accoutrements among them, and made a creeping day's progress of eight

miles south. Their route for the most part lay through swamps caused by the industrious labors of the beaver; for this little animal had dammed up numerous small streams, issuing from the Pilot Knob Mountains, so that the low grounds on their borders were completely inundated. In the course of their march they killed a grizzly bear, with fat on its flanks upwards of three inches in thickness. This was an acceptable addition to their stock of elk meat. The next day Mr. Crooks was sufficiently recruited in strength to be able to carry his rifle and pistols, and they made a march of seventeen miles along the borders of the plain.

Their journey daily became more toilsome, and their sufferings more severe, as they advanced. Keeping up the channel of a river, they traversed the rugged summit of the Pilot Knob Mountain, covered with snow nine inches deep. For several days they continued, bending their course as much as possible to the east, over a succession of rocky heights, deep valleys, and rapid streams. Sometimes their dizzy path lay along the margin of perpendicular precipices, several hundred feet in height, where a single false step might precipitate them into the rocky bed of a torrent which roared below. Not the least part of their weary task was the fording of the numerous windings and branchings of the mountain rivers, all boisterous in their currents, and icy cold.

Hunger was added to their other sufferings, and soon became the keenest. The small supply of bear and elk meat which they had been able to carry, in addition to their previous burdens, served but for a short time. In their anxiety to struggle forward, they had but little time to hunt, and scarce any game in their path. For three days they had nothing to eat but a small duck, and a few poor trout. They occasionally saw numbers of the antelopes, and tried every art to get within shot; but the timid animals were more than commonly wild, and after tantalizing the hungry hunters for a time, bounded away beyond all chance of pursuit. At length they were fortunate enough to kill one: it was extremely meagre, and yielded but a scanty supply; but on this they subsisted for several days.

On the 11th, they encamped on a small stream, near the foot of the Spanish River Mountain. Here they met with traces of that wayward and solitary being, M'Lellan, who was still keeping on ahead of them through these lonely mountains. He had encamped the night before on this stream; they found the embers of the fire by which he had slept, and the remains of a miserable wolf on which he had supped. It was evident he had suffered, like themselves, the pangs of hunger, though he had fared better at this encampment; for they had not a mouthful to eat.

The next day, they rose hungry and alert, and set out with the dawn to climb the mountain, which was steep and difficult. Traces of volcanic eruptions were to be seen in various directions. There was a species of clay also to be met with, out of which the Indians manufactured pots and jars, and dishes. It is very fine and light, of an agreeable smell, and of a brown color spotted with yellow, and dissolves readily in the mouth. Vessels manufactured of it are said to impart a pleasant smell and flavor to any liquids. These mountains abound also with mineral earths, or chalks of various colors; especially two kinds of ochre, one a pale, the other a bright red, like vermilion; much used by the Indians, in painting their bodies.

About noon, the travellers reached the "drains" and brooks that formed the head waters of the river, and later in the day, descended to where the main body, a shallow stream, about a hundred and sixty yards wide, poured through its mountain valley.

Here the poor famishing wanderers had expected to find buffalo in abundance, and had fed their hungry hopes during their scrambling toll, with the thoughts of roasted ribs, juicy humps, and broiled marrow bones. To their great disappointment, the river banks were deserted - a few old tracks showed where a herd of bulls had some time before passed along, but not a horn nor hump was to be seen in the sterile landscape. A few antelopes looked down upon them from the brow of a crag, but flitted away out of sight at the least approach of the hunter.

In the most starving mood they kept for several miles further along the bank of the river, seeking for "beaver signs." Finding some, they encamped in the vicinity, and Ben Jones immediately proceeded to set the trap. They had scarce come to a halt, when they perceived a large smoke at some distance to the southwest. The sight was hailed with joy, for they trusted it might rise from some Indian camp, where they could procure something to eat, and the dread of starvation had now overcome even the terror of the Blackfeet. Le Clerc, one of the Canadians, was instantly despatched by Mr. Stuart, to reconnoitre; and the travellers sat up till a late hour, watching and listening for his return, hoping he might bring them food. Midnight arrived, but Le Clerc did not make his appearance, and they laid down once more supperless to sleep, comforting themselves with the hopes that their old beaver trap might furnish them with a breakfast.

At daybreak they hastened with famished eagerness to the trap. They found in it the forepaw of a beaver, the sight of which tantalized their hunger, and added to their dejection. They resumed their journey with flagging spirits, but had not gone far when they perceived Le Clerc approaching at a distance. They hastened to meet him, in hopes of tidings of good cheer. He had none to give them; but news of that strange wanderer, M'Lellan. The smoke had risen from his encampment which took fire while he was at a little distance from it fishing. Le Clerc found him in forlorn condition. His fishing had been unsuccessful. During twelve days that he had been wandering alone through these savage mountains, he had found scarce anything to eat. He had been ill, wayworn, sick at heart, still he had kept forward; but now his strength and his stubbornness were exhausted. He expressed his satisfaction at hearing that Mr. Stuart and his party were near, and said he would wait at his camp for their arrival, in hopes they would give him something to eat, for without food he declared he should not be able to proceed much further.

When the party reached the place, they found the poor fellow lying on a parcel of withered grass, wasted to a perfect skeleton, and so feeble that he could scarce raise his head or speak. The presence of his old comrades seemed to revive him, but they had no food to give him, for they themselves were almost starving. They urged him to rise and accompany them, but he shook his head. It was all in vain, he said; there was no prospect of their getting speedy relief, and without it he should perish by the way; he might as well, therefore, stay and die where he was. At length, after much persuasion, they got him upon his legs; his rifle and other effects were shared among them, and he was cheered and aided forward. In this way they proceeded for seventeen miles, over a

level plain of sand, until seeing a few antelopes in the distance, they encamped on the margin of a small stream. All now that were capable of the exertion, turned out to hunt for a meal. Their efforts were fruitless, and after dark they returned to their camp, famished almost to desperation.

As they were preparing for the third time to lay down to sleep without a mouthful to eat, Le Clerc, one of the Canadians, gaunt and wild with hunger, approached Mr. Stuart with his gun in his hand. "It was all in vain," he said, "to attempt to proceed any further without food. They had a barren plain before them, three or four days' journey in extent, on which nothing was to be procured. They must all perish before they could get to the end of it. It was better, therefore, that one should die to save the rest." He proposed, therefore, that they should cast lots; adding, as an inducement for Mr. Stuart to assent to the proposition, that he, as leader of the party, should be exempted.

Mr. Stuart shuddered at the horrible proposition, and endeavored to reason with the man, but his words were unavailing. At length, snatching up his rifle, he threatened to shoot him on the spot if he persisted. The famished wretch dropped on his knees, begged pardon in the most abject terms, and promised never again to offend him with such a suggestion.

Quiet being restored to the forlorn encampment, each one sought repose. Mr. Stuart, however, was so exhausted by the agitation of the past scene, acting upon his emaciated frame, that he could scarce crawl to his miserable couch; where, notwithstanding his fatigues, he passed a sleepless night, revolving upon their dreary situation, and the desperate prospect before them.

Before daylight the next morning, they were up and on their way; they had nothing to detain them; no breakfast to prepare, and to linger was to perish. They proceeded, however, but slowly, for all were faint and weak. Here and there they passed the skulls and bones of buffaloes, which showed that these animals must have been hunted here during the past season; the sight of these bones served only to mock their misery. After travelling about nine miles along the plain, they ascended a range of hills, and had scarcely gone two miles further, when, to their great joy, they discovered "an old run-down buffalo bull;" the laggard probably of some herd that had been hunted and harassed through the mountains. They now all stretched themselves out to encompass and make sure of this solitary animal, for their lives depended upon their success. After considerable trouble and infinite anxiety, they at length succeeded in killing him. He was instantly flayed and cut up, and so ravenous was their hunger, that they devoured some of the flesh raw. The residue they carried to a brook near by, where they encamped, lit a fire, and began to cook.

Mr. Stuart was fearful that in their famished state they would eat to excess and injure themselves. He caused a soup to be made of some of the meat, and that each should take a quantity of it as a prelude to his supper. This may have had a beneficial effect, for though they sat up the greater part of the night, cooking and cramming, no one suffered any inconvenience.

The next morning the feasting was resumed, and about midday, feeling somewhat recruited and refreshed, they set out on their journey with renovated spirits, shaping their course towards a

---

mountain, the summit of which they saw towering in the east, and near to which they expected to find the head waters of the Missouri.

As they proceeded, they continued to see the skeletons of buffaloes scattered about the plain in every direction, which showed that there had been much hunting here by the Indians in the recent season. Further on they crossed a large Indian trail forming a deep path, about fifteen days old, which went in a north direction. They concluded it to have been made by some numerous band of Crows, who had hunted in this country for the greater part of the summer.

On the following day they forded a stream of considerable magnitude, with banks clothed with pine trees. Among these they found the traces of a large Indian camp, which had evidently been the headquarters of a hunting expedition, from the great quantities of buffalo bones strewed about the neighborhood. The camp had apparently been abandoned about a month.

In the centre was a singular lodge one hundred and fifty feet in circumference, supported by the trunks of twenty trees, about twelve inches in diameter and forty-four feet long. Across these were laid branches of pine and willow trees, so as to yield a tolerable shade. At the west end, immediately opposite to the door, three bodies lay interred with their feet towards the east. At the head of each was a branch of red cedar firmly planted in the ground. At the foot was a large buffalo's skull, painted black. Savage ornaments were suspended in various parts of the edifice, and a great number of children's moccasins. From the magnitude of this building, and the time and labor that must have been expended in erecting it, the bodies which it contained were probably those of noted warriors and hunters.

The next day, October 17th, they passed two large tributary streams of the Spanish River. They took their rise in the Wind River Mountains, which ranged along to the east, stupendously high and rugged, composed of vast masses of black rock, almost destitute of wood, and covered in many places with snow. This day they saw a few buffalo bulls, and some antelopes, but could not kill any; and their stock of provisions began to grow scanty as well as poor.

On the 18th, after crossing a mountain ridge, and traversing a plain, they waded one of the branches of Spanish River, and on ascending its bank, met with about a hundred and thirty Snake Indians. They were friendly in their demeanor, and conducted them to their encampment, which was about three miles distant. It consisted of about forty wigwams, constructed principally of pine branches. The Snakes, like most of their nation, were very poor; the marauding Crows, in their late excursion through the country, had picked this unlucky band to the very bone, carrying off their horses, several of their squaws, and most of their effects. In spite of their poverty, they were hospitable in the extreme, and made the hungry strangers welcome to their cabins. A few trinkets procured from them a supply of buffalo meat, and of leather for moccasins, of which the party were greatly in need. The most valuable prize obtained from them, however, was a horse; it was a sorry old animal in truth, but it was the only one that remained to the poor fellows, after the fell swoop of the Crows; yet this they were prevailed upon to part with to their guests for a pistol, an axe, a knife, and a few other trifling articles.

They had doleful stories to tell of the Crows, who were encamped on a river at no great distance to the east, and were in such force that they dared not venture to seek any satisfaction for their outrages, or to get back a horse or squaw. They endeavored to excite the indignation of their visitors by accounts of robberies and murders committed on lonely white hunters and trappers by Crows and Blackfeet. Some of these were exaggerations of the outrages already mentioned, sustained by some of the scattered members of Mr. Hunt's expedition; others were in all probability sheer fabrications, to which the Snakes seem to have been a little prone. Mr. Stuart assured them that the day was not far distant when the whites would make their power to be felt throughout that country, and take signal vengeance on the perpetrators of these misdeeds. The Snakes expressed great joy at the intelligence, and offered their services to aid the righteous cause, brightening at the thoughts of taking the field with such potent allies, and doubtless anticipating their turn at stealing horses and abducting squaws. Their offers, of course, were accepted; the calumet of peace was produced, and the two forlorn powers smoked eternal friendship between themselves, and vengeance upon their common spoilers, the Crows.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Spanish River Scenery.-Trail of Crow Indians.- A Snow-Storm.- A Rousing Fire and a Buffalo Feast.-A Plain of Salt.-Climbing a Mountain. -Volcanic Summit.- Extinguished Crater.- Marine Shells.- Encampment on a Prairie. - Successful Hunting.- Good Cheer.- Romantic Scenery - Rocky Defile.- Foaming Rapids.- The Fiery Narrows.

BY sunrise on the following morning (October 19th) , the travellers had loaded their old horse with buffalo meat, sufficient for five days' provisions, and, taking leave of their new allies, the poor, but hospitable Snakes, set forth in somewhat better spirits, though the increasing cold of the weather, and the sight of the snowy mountains which they had yet to traverse, were enough to chill their very hearts. The country along this branch of the Spanish River, as far as they could see, was perfectly level, bounded by ranges of lofty mountains, both to the east and west. They proceeded about three miles to the south, where they came again upon the large trail of Crow Indians, which they had crossed four days previously, made, no doubt, by the same marauding band that had plundered the Snakes; and which, according to the account of the latter, was now encamped on a stream to the eastward. The trail kept on to the southeast, and was so well beaten by horse and foot, that they supposed at least a hundred lodges had passed along it. As it formed, therefore, a convenient highway, and ran in a proper direction, they turned into it, and determined to keep along it as far as safety would permit: as the Crow encampment must be some distance off, and it was not likely those savages would return upon their steps. They travelled forward, therefore, all that day, in the track of their dangerous predecessors, which led them across mountain streams, and long ridges, and through narrow valleys, all tending generally towards the southeast. The wind blew coldly from the northeast, with occasional flurries of snow, which made them encamp early, on the sheltered banks of a brook. The two Canadians, Vallee and Le Clerc, killed a young buffalo bull in the evening, which was in good condition, and afforded them a plentiful supply of fresh beef. They loaded their spits, therefore, and crammed their camp kettle

with meat, and while the wind whistled, and the snow whirled around them, huddled round a rousing fire, basked in its warmth, and comforted both soul and body with a hearty and invigorating meal. No enjoyments have greater zest than these, snatched in the very midst of difficulty and danger; and it is probable the poor wayworn and weather-beaten travellers relished these creature comforts the more highly from the surrounding desolation, and the dangerous proximity of the Crows.

The snow which had fallen in the night made it late in the morning before the party loaded their solitary packhorse, and resumed their march. They had not gone far before the Crow trace which they were following changed its direction, and bore to the north of east. They had already begun to feel themselves on dangerous ground in keeping along it, as they might be descried by some scouts and spies of that race of Ishmaelites, whose predatory life required them to be constantly on the alert. On seeing the trace turn so much to the north, therefore, they abandoned it, and kept on their course to the southeast for eighteen miles, through a beautifully undulating country, having the main chain of mountains on the left, and a considerably elevated ridge on the right. Here the mountain ridge which divides Wind River from the head waters of the Columbia and Spanish Rivers, ends abruptly, and winding to the north of east, becomes the dividing barrier between a branch of the Big Horn and Cheyenne Rivers, and those head waters which flow into the Missouri below the Sioux country.

The ridge which lay on the right of the travellers having now become very low, they passed over it, and came into a level plain, about ten miles in circumference, and incrustated to the depth of a foot or eighteen inches with salt as white as snow. This is furnished by numerous salt springs of limpid water, which are continually welling up, overflowing their borders, and forming beautiful crystallizations. The Indian tribes of the interior are excessively fond of this salt, and repair to the valley to collect it, but it is held in distaste by the tribes of the sea-coast, who will eat nothing that has been cured or seasoned by it.

This evening they encamped on the banks of a small stream, in the open prairie. The northeast wind was keen and cutting; they had nothing wherewith to make a fire, but a scanty growth of sage, or wormwood, and were fain to wrap themselves up in their blankets, and huddle themselves in their "nests," at an early hour. In the course of the evening, Mr. M'Lellan, who had now regained his strength, killed a buffalo, but it was some distance from the camp, and they postponed supplying themselves from the carcass until the following morning.

The next day (October 21st), the cold continued, accompanied by snow. They set forward on their bleak and toilsome way, keeping to the east northeast, towards the lofty summit of a mountain, which it was necessary for them to cross. Before they reached its base they passed another large trail, steering a little to the right of the point of the mountain. This they presumed to have been made by another band of Crows, who had probably been hunting lower down on the Spanish River.

The severity of the weather compelled them to encamp at the end of fifteen miles, on the skirts

---

of the mountain, where they found sufficient dry aspen trees to supply them with fire, but they sought in vain about the neighborhood for a spring or rill of water.

At daybreak they were up and on the march, scrambling up the mountain side for the distance of eight painful miles. From the casual hints given in the travelling memoranda of Mr. Stuart, this mountain would seem to offer a rich field of speculation for the geologist. Here was a plain three miles in diameter, strewn with pumice stones and other volcanic reliques, with a lake in the centre, occupying what had probably been the crater. Here were also, in some places, deposits of marine shells, indicating that this mountain crest had at some remote period been below the waves.

After pausing to repose, and to enjoy these grand but savage and awful scenes, they began to descend the eastern side of the mountain. The descent was rugged and romantic, along deep ravines and defiles, overhung with crags and cliffs, among which they beheld numbers of the ahsahta or bighorn, skipping fearlessly from rock to rock. Two of them they succeeded in bringing down with their rifles, as they peered fearlessly from the brow of their airy precipices.

Arrived at the foot of the mountain, the travellers found a rill of water oozing out of the earth, and resembling in look and taste, the water of the Missouri. Here they encamped for the night, and supped sumptuously upon their mountain mutton, which they found in good condition, and extremely well tasted.

The morning was bright, and intensely cold. Early in the day they came upon a stream running to the east, between low hills of bluish earth, strongly impregnated with copperas. Mr. Stuart supposed this to be one of the head waters of the Missouri, and determined to follow its banks. After a march of twenty-six miles, however, he arrived at the summit of a hill, the prospect of which induced him to alter his intention. He beheld, in every direction south of east, a vast plain, bounded only by the horizon, through which wandered the stream in question, in a south-south-east direction. It could not, therefore, be a branch of the Missouri. He now gave up all idea of taking the stream for his guide, and shaped his course towards a range of mountains in the east, about sixty miles distant, near which he hoped to find another stream.

The weather was now so severe, and the hardships of travelling so great, that he resolved to halt for the winter, at the first eligible place. That night they had to encamp on the open prairie, near a scanty pool of water, and without any wood to make a fire. The northeast wind blew keenly across the naked waste, and they were fain to decamp from their inhospitable bivouac before the dawn.

For two days they kept on in an eastward direction, against wintry blasts and occasional snow storms. They suffered, also, from scarcity of water, having occasionally to use melted snow; this, with the want of pasturage, reduced their old pack-horse sadly. They saw many tracks of buffalo, and some few bulls, which, however, got the wind of them, and scampered off.

On the 26th of October, they steered east-northeast, for a wooded ravine in a mountain, at a small distance from the base of which, to their great joy, they discovered an abundant stream, running

---

between willowed banks. Here they halted for the night, and Ben Jones having luckily trapped a beaver, and killed two buffalo bulls, they remained all the next day encamped, feasting and reposing, and allowing their jaded horse to rest from his labors.

The little stream on which they were encamped, was one of the head waters of the Platte River, which flows into the Missouri; it was, in fact, the northern fork, or branch of that river, though this the travellers did not discover until long afterwards. Pursuing the course of this stream for about twenty miles, they came to where it forced a passage through a range of high hills, covered with cedars, into an extensive low country, affording excellent pasture to numerous herds of buffalo. Here they killed three cows, which were the first they had been able to get, having hitherto had to content themselves with bull beef, which at this season of the year is very poor. The hump meat afforded them a repast fit for an epicure.

Late on the afternoon of the 30th, they came to where the stream, now increased to a considerable size, poured along in a ravine between precipices of red stone, two hundred feet in height. For some distance it dashed along, over huge masses of rock, with foaming violence, as if exasperated by being compressed into so narrow a channel, and at length leaped down a chasm that looked dark and frightful in the gathering twilight.

For a part of the next day, the wild river, in its capricious wanderings, led them through a variety of striking scenes. At one time they were upon high plains, like platforms among the mountains, with herds of buffaloes roaming about them; at another among rude rocky defiles, broken into cliffs and precipices, where the blacktailed deer bounded off among the crags, and the bighorn basked in the sunny brow of the precipice.

In the after part of the day, they came to another scene, surpassing in savage grandeur those already described. They had been travelling for some distance through a pass of the mountains, keeping parallel with the river, as it roared along, out of sight, through a deep ravine. Sometimes their devious path approached the margin of cliffs below which the river foamed, and boiled, and whirled among the masses of rock that had fallen into its channel. As they crept cautiously on, leading their solitary pack-horse along these giddy heights, they all at once came to where the river thundered down a succession of precipices, throwing up clouds of spray, and making a prodigious din and uproar. The travellers remained, for a time, gazing with mingled awe and delight, at this furious cataract, to which Mr. Stuart gave, from the color of the impending rocks, the name of "The Fiery Narrows."

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER XLIX.

Wintry Storms.- A Halt and Council.- Cantonment for the Winter. - Fine Hunting Country.- Game of the Mountains and Plains.- Successful Hunting- Mr. Crooks and a Grizzly Bear.- The Wigwam. - Bighorn and Black-Tails.- Beef and Venison.- Good Quarters and Good Cheer.- An Alarm.- An Intrusion.- Unwelcome Guests.- Desolation of the Larder. - Gormandizing Exploits of Hungry Savages. - Good Quarters Abandoned.

---

THE travellers encamped for the night on the banks of the river below the cataract. The night was cold, with partial showers of rain and sleet. The morning dawned gloomily, the skies were sullen and overcast, and threatened further storms; but the little band resumed their journey, in defiance of the weather. The increasing rigor of the season, however, which makes itself felt early in these mountainous regions, and on these naked and elevated plains, brought them to a pause, and a serious deliberation, after they had descended about thirty miles further along the course of the river.

All were convinced that it was in vain to attempt to accomplish their journey, on foot, at this inclement season. They had still many hundred miles to traverse before they should reach the main course of the Missouri, and their route would lay over immense prairies, naked and bleak, and destitute of fuel. The question then was, where to choose their wintering place, and whether or not to proceed further down the river. They had at first imagined it to be one of the head waters, or tributary streams, of the Missouri. Afterwards they had believed it to be the Rapid, or Quicourt River, in which opinion they had not come nearer to the truth; they now, however, were persuaded, with equal fallacy, by its inclining somewhat to the north of east, that it was the Cheyenne. If so, by continuing down it much further they must arrive among the Indians, from whom the river takes its name. Among these they would be sure to meet some of the Sioux tribe. These would appraise their relatives, the piratical Sioux of the Missouri, of the approach of a band of white traders; so that, in the spring time, they would be likely to be waylaid and robbed on their way down the river, by some party in ambush upon its banks.

Even should this prove to be the Quicourt or Rapid River, it would not be prudent to winter much further down upon its banks, as, though they might be out of the range of the Sioux, they would be in the neighborhood of the Poncas, a tribe nearly as dangerous. It was resolved, therefore, since they must winter somewhere on this side of the Missouri, to descend no lower, but to keep up in these solitary regions, where they would be in no danger of molestation.

They were brought the more promptly and unanimously to this decision, by coming upon an excellent wintering place, that promised everything requisite for their comfort. It was on a fine bend of the river, just below where it issued out from among a ridge of mountains, and bent towards the northeast. Here was a beautiful low point of land, covered by cotton-wood, and surrounded by a thick growth of willow, so as to yield both shelter and fuel, as well as materials for building. The river swept by in a strong current, about a hundred and fifty yards wide. To the southeast were mountains of moderate height, the nearest about two miles off, but the whole chain ranging to the east, south, and southwest, as far as the eye could reach. Their summits were crowned with extensive tracts of pitch pine, checkered with small patches of the quivering aspen. Lower down were thick forests of firs and red cedars, growing out in many places from the very fissures of the rocks. The mountains were broken and precipitous, with huge bluffs protruding from among the forests.

Their rocky recesses and beetling cliffs afforded retreats to innumerable flocks of the bighorn,

---

while their woody summits and ravines abounded with bears and black-tailed deer. These, with the numerous herds of buffalo that ranged the lower grounds along the river, promised the travelers abundant cheer in their winter quarters.

On the 2d of November, therefore, they pitched their camp for the winter, on the woody point, and their first thought was to obtain a supply of provisions. Ben Jones and the two Canadians accordingly sallied forth, accompanied by two others of the party, leaving but one to watch the camp. Their hunting was uncommonly successful. In the course of two days, they killed thirty-two buffaloes, and collected their meat on the margin of a small brook, about a mile distant. Fortunately, a severe frost froze the river, so that the meat was easily transported to the encampment. On a succeeding day, a herd of buffalo came trampling through the woody bottom on the river banks, and fifteen more were killed.

It was soon discovered, however, that there was game of a more dangerous nature in the neighborhood. On one occasion, Mr. Crooks had wandered about a mile from the camp, and had ascended a small hill commanding a view of the river. He was without his rifle, a rare circumstance, for in these wild regions, where one may put up a wild animal, or a wild Indian, at every turn, it is customary never to stir from the camp-fire unarmed. The hill where he stood overlooked the place where the massacre of the buffalo had taken place. As he was looking around on the prospect, his eye was caught by an object below, moving directly towards him. To his dismay, he discovered it to be a grizzly bear, with two cubs. There was no tree at hand into which he could climb; to run, would only be to provoke pursuit, and he should soon be overtaken. He threw himself on the ground, therefore, and lay motionless, watching the movements of the animal with intense anxiety. It continued to advance until at the foot of the hill, when it turned, and made into the woods, having probably gorged itself with buffalo flesh. Mr. Crooks made all haste back to the camp, rejoicing at his escape, and determining never to stir out again without his rifle. A few days after this circumstance, a grizzly bear was shot in the neighborhood by Mr. Miller.

As the slaughter of so many buffaloes had provided the party with beef for the winter, in case they met with no further supply, they now set to work, heart and hand, to build a comfortable wigwam. In a little while the woody promontory rang with the unwonted sound of the axe. Some of its lofty trees were laid low, and by the second evening the cabin was complete. It was eight feet wide, and eighteen feet long. The walls were six feet high, and the whole was covered with buffalo skins. The fireplace was in the centre, and the smoke found its way out by a hole in the roof.

The hunters were next sent out to procure deer-skins for garments, moccasins, and other purposes. They made the mountains echo with their rifles, and, in the course of two days' hunting, killed twenty-eight bighorns and black-tailed deer.

The party now revelled in abundance. After all that they had suffered from hunger, cold, fatigue and watchfulness; after all their perils from treacherous and savage men, they exulted in the snugness and security of their isolated cabin, hidden, as they thought, even from the prying eyes of Indian scouts, and stored with creature comforts; and they looked forward to a winter of peace

and quietness, of roasting, and boiling, and broiling, and feasting upon venison, and mountain mutton, and bear's meat, and marrow bones, and buffalo humps, and other hunter's dainties, and of dozing and reposing round their fire, and gossiping over past dangers and adventures, and telling long hunting stories, until spring should return; when they would make canoes of buffalo skins and float themselves down the river.

From such halcyon dreams, they were startled one morning, at daybreak, by a savage yell. They started tip and seized their rifles. The yell was repeated by two or three voices. Cautiously peeping out, they beheld, to their dismay, several Indian warriors among the trees, all armed and painted in warlike style; being evidently bent on some hostile purpose.

Miller changed countenance as he regarded them. "We are in trouble," said he, "these are some of the rascally Arapahays that robbed me last year." Not a word was uttered by the rest of the party, but they silently slung their powder horns and ball pouches, and prepared for battle. M'Lellan, who had taken his gun to pieces the evening before, put it together in all haste. He proposed that they should break out the clay from between the logs, so as to be able to fire upon the enemy.

"Not yet," replied Stuart; "it will not do to show fear or distrust; we must first hold a parley. Some one must go out and meet them as a friend."

Who was to undertake the task! It was full of peril, as the envoy might be shot down at the threshold.

"The leader of a party," said Miller, "always takes the advance."

"Good!" replied Stuart; "I am ready." He immediately went forth; one of the Canadians followed him; the rest of the party remained in the garrison, to keep the savages in check.

Stuart advanced holding his rifle in one hand, and extending the other to the savage that appeared to be the chief. The latter stepped forward and took it; his men followed his example, and all shook hands with Stuart, in token of friendship. They now explained their errand. They were a war party of Arapahay braves. Their village lay on a stream several days' journey to the eastward. It had been attacked and ravaged during their absence, by a band of Crows, who had carried off several of their women, and most of their horses. They were in quest of vengeance. For sixteen days they had been tracking the Crows about the mountains, but had not yet come upon them. In the meantime, they had met with scarcely any game, and were half famished. About two days previously, they had heard the report of fire-arms among the mountains, and on searching in the direction of the sound, had come to a place where a deer had been killed. They had immediately put themselves upon the track of the hunters, and by following it up, had arrived at the cabin.

Mr. Stuart now invited the chief and another, who appeared to be his lieutenant, into the hut, but made signs that no one else was to enter. The rest halted at the door; others came straggling up, until the whole party, to the number of twenty-three, were gathered before the hut. They were

armed with bows and arrows, tomahawks and scalping knives, and some few with guns. All were painted and dressed for war, and had a wild and fierce appearance. Mr. Miller recognized among them some of the very fellows who had robbed him in the preceding year; and put his comrades upon their guard. Every man stood ready to resist the first act of hostility; the savages, however, conducted themselves peaceably, and showed none of that swaggering arrogance which a war party is apt to assume.

On entering the hut the chief and his lieutenant cast a wistful look at the rafters, laden with venison and buffalo meat. Mr. Stuart made a merit of necessity, and invited them to help themselves. They did not wait to be pressed. The rafters were soon eased of their burden; venison and beef were passed out to the crew before the door, and a scene of gormandizing commenced, of which few can have an idea, who have not witnessed the gastronomic powers of an Indian, after an interval of fasting. This was kept up throughout the day; they paused now and then, it is true, for a brief interval, but only to return to the charge with renewed ardor. The chief and the lieutenant surpassed all the rest in the vigor and perseverance of their attacks; as if from their station they were bound to signalize themselves in all onslaughts. Mr. Stuart kept them well supplied with choice bits, for it was his policy to overfeed them, and keep them from leaving the hut, where they served as hostages for the good conduct of their followers. Once, only, in the course of the day, did the chief sally forth. Mr. Stuart and one of his men accompanied him, armed with their rifles, but without betraying any distrust. The chieftain soon returned, and renewed his attack upon the larder. In a word, he and his worthy coadjutor, the lieutenant, ate until they were both stupefied.

Towards evening the Indians made their preparations for the night according to the practice of war parties. Those outside of the hut threw up two breastworks, into which they retired at a tolerably early hour, and slept like overfed hounds. As to the chief and his lieutenant, they passed the night in the hut, in the course of which, they, two or three times, got up to eat. The travellers took turns, one at a time, to mount guard until the morning.

Scarce had the day dawned, when the gormandizing was renewed by the whole band, and carried on with surprising vigor until ten o'clock, when all prepared to depart. They had six days' journey yet to make, they said, before they should come up with the Crows, who, they understood, were encamped on a river to the northward. Their way lay through a hungry country, where there was no game; they would, moreover, have but little time to hunt; they, therefore, craved a small supply of provisions for their journey. Mr. Stuart again invited them to help themselves. They did so with keen forethought, loading themselves with the choicest parts of the meat, and leaving the late plenteous larder far gone in a consumption. Their next request was for a supply of ammunition, having guns, but no powder and ball. They promised to pay magnificently out of the spoils of their foray. "We are poor now," said they, "and are obliged to go on foot, but we shall soon come back laden with booty, and all mounted on horseback, with scalps hanging at our bridles. We will then give each of you a horse to keep you from being tired on your journey."

"Well," said Mr. Stuart, "when you bring the horses, you shall have the ammunition, but not before." The Indians saw by his determined tone, that all further entreaty would be unavailing, so

they desisted, with a good-humored laugh, and went off exceedingly well freighted, both within and without, promising to be back again in the course of a fortnight.

No sooner were they out of hearing, than the luckless travellers held another council. The security of their cabin was at an end and with it all their dreams of a quiet and cozy winter. They were between two fires. On one side were their old enemies, the Crows; on the other side, the Arapahays, no less dangerous freebooters. As to the moderation of this war party, they considered it assumed, to put them off their guard against some more favorable opportunity for a surprisal. It was determined, therefore, not to await their return, but to abandon, with all speed, this dangerous neighborhood. From the accounts of their recent visitors, they were led to believe, though erroneously, that they were upon the Quicourt, or Rapid River. They proposed now to keep along it to its confluence with the Missouri; but, should they be prevented by the rigors of the season from proceeding so far, at least to reach a part of the river where they might be able to construct canoes of greater strength and durability than those of buffalo skins.

Accordingly, on the 13th of December, they bade adieu, with many a regret, to their comfortable quarters where for five weeks they had been indulging the sweets of repose, of plenty, and of fancied security. They were still accompanied by their veteran pack-horse, which the Arapahays had omitted to steal, either because they intended to steal him on their return, or because they thought him not worth stealing.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER L.

Rough Wintry Travelling - Hills and Plains.- Snow and Ice.- Disappearance of Game.- A Vast Dreary Plain.- A. Second Halt for the Winter.- Another Wigwam.- New Year's Feast.- Buffalo Humps, Tongues, and Marrow-Bones.- Return of Spring.- Launch of Canoes. - Bad Navigation. - Pedestrian March. - Vast Prairies. - Deserted Camps.- Pawnee Squaws.- An Otto Indian.- News of War.- Voyage Down the Platte and the Missouri.- Reception at Fort Osage. - Arrival at St. Louis.

THE interval of comfort and repose which the party had enjoyed in their wigwam, rendered the renewal of their fatigues intolerable for the first two or three days. The snow lay deep, and was slightly frozen on the surface, but not sufficiently to bear their weight. Their feet became sore by breaking through the crust, and their limbs weary by floundering on without firm foothold. So exhausted and dispirited were they, that they began to think it would be better to remain and run the risk of being killed by the Indians, than to drag on thus painfully, with the probability of perishing by the way. Their miserable horse fared no better than themselves, having for the first day or two no other fodder than the ends of willow twigs, and the bark of the cotton-wood tree.

They all, however, appeared to gain patience and hardihood as they proceeded, and for fourteen days kept steadily on, making a distance of about three hundred and thirty miles. For some days, the range of mountains which had been near to their wigwam kept parallel to the river at no great distance, but at length subsided into hills. Sometimes they found the river bordered with alluvial bottoms, and groves with cotton-wood and willows; sometimes the adjacent country was naked

and barren. In one place it ran for a considerable distance between rocky hills and promontories covered with cedar and pitch pines, and peopled with the bighorn and the mountain deer; at other places it wandered through prairies well stocked with buffaloes and antelopes. As they descended the course of the river, they began to perceive the ash and white oak here and there among the cotton-wood and willow; and at length caught a sight of some wild horses on the distant prairies.

The weather was various; at one time the snow lay deep; then they had a genial day or two, with the mildness and serenity of autumn; then, again, the frost was so severe that the river was sufficiently frozen to bear them upon the ice.

During the last three days of their fortnight's travel, however, the face of the country changed. The timber gradually diminished, until they could scarcely find fuel sufficient for culinary purposes. The game grew more and more scanty, and, finally, none were to be seen but a few miserable broken-down buffalo bulls, not worth killing. The snow lay fifteen inches deep, and made the traveling grievously painful and toilsome. At length they came to an immense plain, where no vestige of timber was to be seen; nor a single quadruped to enliven the desolate landscape. Here, then, their hearts failed them, and they held another consultation. The width of the river, which was upwards of a mile, its extreme shallowness, the frequency of quicksands, and various other characteristics, had at length made them sensible of their errors with respect to it, and they now came to the correct conclusion, that they were on the banks of the Platte or Shallow River. What were they to do? Pursue its course to the Missouri? To go on at this season of the year seemed dangerous in the extreme. There was no prospect of obtaining either food or firing. The country was destitute of trees, and though there might be drift-wood along the river, it lay too deep beneath the snow for them to find it.

The weather was threatening a change, and a snowstorm on these boundless wastes might prove as fatal as a whirlwind of sand on an Arabian desert. After much dreary deliberation, it was at length determined to retrace their three last days' journey of seventy-seven miles, to a place which they had remarked where there was a sheltering growth of forest trees, and a country abundant in game. Here they would once more set up their winter quarters, and await the opening of the navigation to launch themselves in canoes.

Accordingly, on the 27th of December, they faced about, retraced their steps, and on the 30th, regained the part of the river in question. Here the alluvial bottom was from one to two miles wide, and thickly covered with a forest of cotton-wood trees; while herds of buffalo were scattered about the neighboring prairie, several of which soon fell beneath their rifles.

They encamped on the margin of the river, in a grove where there were trees large enough for canoes. Here they put up a shed for immediate shelter, and immediately proceeded to erect a hut. New Year's day dawned when, as yet, but one wall of their cabin was completed; the genial and jovial day, however, was not permitted to pass uncelebrated, even by this weatherbeaten crew of wanderers. All work was suspended, except that of roasting and boiling. The choicest of the buf-

falo meat, with tongues, and humps, and marrow-bones, were devoured in quantities that would astonish any one that has not lived among hunters or Indians; and as an extra regale, having no tobacco left, they cut up an old tobacco pouch, still redolent with the potent herb, and smoked it in honor of the day. Thus for a time, in present revelry, however uncouth, they forgot all past troubles and all anxieties about the future, and their forlorn wigwam echoed to the sound of gayety.

The next day they resumed their labors, and by the 6th of the month it was complete. They soon killed abundance of buffalo, and again laid in a stock of winter provisions. The party were more fortunate in this, their second cantonment. The winter passed away without any Indian visitors, and the game continued to be plenty in the neighborhood. They felled two large trees, and shaped them into canoes; and, as the spring opened, and a thaw of several days' continuance melted the ice in the river, they made every preparation for embarking. On the 8th of March they launched forth in their canoes, but soon found that the river had not depth sufficient even for such slender barks. It expanded into a wide but extremely shallow stream, with many sand-bars, and occasionally various channels. They got one of their canoes a few miles down it, with extreme difficulty, sometimes wading and dragging it over the shoals; at length they had to abandon the attempt, and to resume their journey on foot, aided by their faithful old pack-horse, who had recruited strength during the repose of the winter.

The weather delayed them for a few days, having suddenly become more rigorous than it had been at any time during the winter; but on the 20th of March they were again on their journey.

In two days they arrived at the vast naked prairie, the wintry aspect of which had caused them, in December, to pause and turn back. It was now clothed in the early verdure of spring, and plentifully stocked with game. Still, when obliged to bivouac on its bare surface, without any shelter, and by a scanty fire of dry buffalo dung, they found the night blasts piercing cold. On one occasion, a herd of buffalo straying near their evening camp, they killed three of them merely for their hides, wherewith to make a shelter for the night.

They continued on for upwards of a hundred miles; with vast prairies extending before them as they advanced; sometimes diversified by undulating hills, but destitute of trees. In one place they saw a gang of sixty-five wild horses, but as to the buffaloes, they seemed absolutely to cover the country. Wild geese abounded, and they passed extensive swamps that were alive with innumerable flocks of water-fowl, among which were a few swans, but an endless variety of ducks.

The river continued a winding course to the east-north-east, nearly a mile in width, but too shallow to float even an empty canoe. The country spread out into a vast level plain, bounded by the horizon alone, excepting to the north, where a line of hills seemed like a long promontory stretching into the bosom of the ocean. The dreary sameness of the prairie wastes began to grow extremely irksome. The travellers longed for the sight of a forest, or grove, or single tree, to break the level uniformity, and began to notice every object that gave reason to hope they were drawing towards the end of this weary wilderness. Thus the occurrence of a particular kind of grass was hailed as a proof that they could not be far from the bottoms of the Missouri; and they were

rejoiced at putting up several prairie hens, a kind of grouse seldom found far in the interior. In picking up driftwood for fuel, also, they found on some pieces the mark of an axe, which caused much speculation as to the time when and the persons by whom the trees had been felled. Thus they went on, like sailors at sea, who perceive in every floating weed and wandering bird, harbingers of the wished-for land.

By the close of the month the weather became very mild, and, heavily burdened as they were, they found the noontide temperature uncomfortably warm. On the 30th, they came to three deserted hunting camps, either of Pawnees or Ottoes, about which were buffalo skulls in all directions; and the frames on which the hides had been stretched and cured. They had apparently been occupied the preceding autumn.

For several days they kept patiently on, watching every sign that might give them an idea as to where they were, and how near to the banks of the Missouri.

Though there were numerous traces of hunting parties and encampments, they were not of recent date. The country seemed deserted. The only human beings they met with were three Pawnee squaws, in a hut in the midst of a deserted camp. Their people had all gone to the south, in pursuit of the buffalo, and had left these poor women behind, being too sick and infirm to travel.

It is a common practice with the Pawnees, and probably with other roving tribes, when departing on a distant expedition, which will not admit of incumbrance or delay, to leave their aged and infirm with a supply of provisions sufficient for a temporary subsistence. When this is exhausted, they must perish; though sometimes their sufferings are abridged by hostile prowlers who may visit the deserted camp.

The poor squaws in question expected some such fate at the hands of the white strangers, and though the latter accosted them in the kindest manner, and made them presents of dried buffalo meat, it was impossible to soothe their alarm, or get any information from them.

The first landmark by which the travellers were enabled to conjecture their position with any degree of confidence, was an island about seventy miles in length, which they presumed to be Grand Isle. If so, they were within one hundred and forty miles of the Missouri. They kept on, therefore, with renewed spirit, and at the end of three days met with an Otto Indian, by whom they were confirmed in their conjecture. They learnt at the same time another piece of information, of an uncomfortable nature. According to his account, there was war between the United States and England, and in fact it had existed for a whole year, during which time they had been beyond the reach of all knowledge of the affairs of the civilized world.

The Otto conducted the travellers to his village, situated a short distance from the banks of the Platte. Here they were delighted to meet with two white men, Messrs. Dornin and Roi, Indian traders recently from St. Louis. Of these they had a thousand inquiries to make concerning all affairs, foreign and domestic, during their year of sepulture in the wilderness; and especially about

the events of the existing war.

They now prepared to abandon their weary travel by land, and to embark upon the water. A bargain was made with Mr. Dornin, who engaged to furnish them with a canoe and provisions for the voyage, in exchange for their venerable and well-trying fellow traveller, the old Snake horse.

Accordingly, in a couple of days, the Indians employed by that gentleman constructed for them a canoe twenty feet long, four feet wide, and eighteen inches deep. The frame was of poles and willow twigs, on which were stretched five elk and buffalo hides, sewed together with sinews, and the seams payed with unctuous mud. In this they embarked at an early hour on the 16th of April, and drifted down ten miles with the stream, when the wind being high they encamped, and set to work to make oars, which they had not been able to procure at the Indian village.

Once more afloat, they went merrily down the stream, and after making thirty-five miles, emerged into the broad turbid current of the Missouri. Here they were borne along briskly by the rapid stream; though, by the time their fragile bark had floated a couple of hundred miles, its frame began to show the effects of the voyage. Luckily they came to the deserted wintering place of some hunting party, where they found two old wooden canoes. Taking possession of the largest, they again committed themselves to the current, and after dropping down fifty-five miles further, arrived safely at Fort Osage.

Here they found Lieutenant Brownson still in command; the officer who had given the expedition a hospitable reception on its way up the river, eighteen months previously. He received this remnant of the party with a cordial welcome, and endeavored in every way to promote their comfort and enjoyment during their sojourn at the fort. The greatest luxury they met with on their return to the abode of civilized man, was bread, not having tasted any for nearly a year.

Their stay at Fort Osage was but short. On re-embarking they were furnished with an ample supply of provisions by the kindness of Lieutenant Brownson, and performed the rest of their voyage without adverse circumstance. On the 30th of April they arrived in perfect health and fine spirits at St. Louis, having been ten months in performing this perilous expedition from Astoria. Their return caused quite a sensation at the place, bringing the first intelligence of the fortune of Mr. Hunt and his party in their adventurous route across the Rocky Mountains, and of the new establishment on the shores of the Pacific.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER LI.

Agreement Between Mr. Astor and the Russian Fur Company- War Between the United States and Great Britain.- Instructions to Captain Sowle of the Beaver- Fitting Out of the Lark.- News of the Arrival of Mr. Stuart.

IT is now necessary, in linking together the parts of this excursive narrative, that we notice the proceedings of Mr. Astor in support of his great undertaking. His project with respect to the

---

Russian establishments along the northwest coast had been diligently prosecuted. The agent sent by him to St. Petersburg, to negotiate in his name as president of the American Fur Company, had, under sanction of the Russian government, made a provisional agreement with the Russian company.

By this agreement, which was ratified by Mr. Astor in 1813, the two companies bound themselves not to interfere with each other's trading and hunting grounds, nor to furnish arms and ammunition to the Indians. They were to act in concert, also, against all interlopers, and to succor each other in case of danger. The American company was to have the exclusive right of supplying the Russian posts with goods and necessaries, receiving peltries in payment at stated prices. They were also, if so requested by the Russian governor, to convey the furs of the Russian company to Canton, sell them on commission, and bring back the proceeds, at such freight as might be agreed on at the time. This agreement was to continue in operation four years, and to be renewable for a similar term, unless some unforeseen contingency should render a modification necessary.

It was calculated to be of great service to the infant establishment at Astoria; dispelling the fears of hostile rivalry on the part of the foreign companies in its neighborhood, and giving a formidable blow to the irregular trade along the coast. It was also the intention of Mr. Astor to have coasting vessels of his own, at Astoria, of small tonnage and draft of water, fitted for coasting service. These, having a place of shelter and deposit, could ply about the coast in short voyages, in favorable weather, and would have vast advantage over chance ships, which must make long voyages, maintain numerous crews, and could only approach the coast at certain seasons of the year. He hoped, therefore, gradually to make Astoria the great emporium of the American fur trade in the Pacific, and the nucleus of a powerful American state. Unfortunately for these sanguine anticipations, before Mr. Astor had ratified the agreement, as above stated, war broke out between the United States and Great Britain. He perceived at once the peril of the case. The harbor of New York would doubtless be blockaded, and the departure of the annual supply ship in the autumn prevented; or, if she should succeed in getting out to sea, she might be captured on her voyage.

In this emergency, he wrote to Captain Sowle, commander of the *Beaver*. The letter, which was addressed to him at Canton, directed him to proceed to the factory at the mouth of the *Columbia*, with such articles as the establishment might need; and to remain there, subject to the orders of Mr. Hunt, should that gentleman be in command there.

The war continued. No tidings had yet been received from Astoria; the despatches having been delayed by the misadventure of Mr. Reed at the falls of the *Columbia*, and the unhorsing of Mr. Stuart by the Crows among the mountains. A painful uncertainty, also, prevailed about Mr. Hunt and his party. Nothing had been heard of them since their departure from the Arickara village; Lisa, who parted from them there, had predicted their destruction; and some of the traders of the Northwest Company had actually spread a rumor of their having been cut off by the Indians.

It was a hard trial of the courage and means of an individual to have to fit out another costly expedition, where so much had already been expended, so much uncertainty prevailed, and where the

risk of loss was so greatly enhanced, that no insurance could be effected.

In spite of all these discouragements, Mr. Astor determined to send another ship to the relief of the settlement. He selected for this purpose a vessel called the Lark, remarkable for her fast sailing. The disordered state of the times, however, caused such a delay, that February arrived, while the vessel was yet lingering in port.

At this juncture, Mr. Astor learnt that the Northwest Company were preparing to send out an armed ship of twenty guns, called the Isaac Todd, to form an establishment at the mouth of the Columbia. These tidings gave him great uneasiness. A considerable proportion of the persons in his employ were Scotchmen and Canadians, and several of them had been in the service of the Northwest Company. Should Mr. Hunt have failed to arrive at Astoria, the whole establishment would be under the control of Mr. M'Dougal, of whose fidelity he had received very disparaging accounts from Captain Thorn. The British government, also, might deem it worth while to send a force against the establishment, having been urged to do so some time previously by the Northwest Company.

Under all these circumstances, Mr. Astor wrote to Mr. Monroe, then secretary of state, requesting protection from the government of the United States. He represented the importance of his settlement, in a commercial point of view, and the shelter it might afford to the American vessels in those seas. All he asked was that the American government would throw forty or fifty men into the fort at his establishment, which would be sufficient for its defense until he could send reinforcements over land.

He waited in vain for a reply to this letter, the government, no doubt, being engrossed at the time by an overwhelming crowd of affairs. The month of March arrived, and the Lark was ordered by Mr. Astor to put to sea. The officer who was to command her shrunk from his engagement, and in the exigency of the moment, she was given in charge to Mr. Northrup, the mate. Mr. Nicholas G. Ogden, a gentleman on whose talents and integrity the highest reliance could be placed, sailed as supercargo. The Lark put to sea in the beginning of March, 1813.

By this opportunity, Mr. Astor wrote to Mr. Hunt, as head of the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia, for he would not allow himself to doubt of his welfare. "I always think you are well," said he, "and that I shall see you again, which Heaven, I hope, will grant."

He warned him to be on his guard against any attempts to surprise the post; suggesting the probability of armed hostility on the part of the Northwest Company, and expressing his indignation at the ungrateful returns made by that association for his frank and open conduct, and advantageous overtures. "Were I on the spot," said he, "and had the management of affairs, I would defy them all; but, as it is, everything depends upon you and your friends about you. Our enterprise is grand, and deserves success, and I hope in God it will meet it. If my object was merely gain of money, I should say, think whether it is best to save what we can, and abandon the place; but the very idea is like a dagger to my heart." This extract is sufficient to show the spirit and the views

which actuated Mr. Astor in this great undertaking.

Week after week and month after month elapsed, without anything to dispel the painful incertitude that hung over every part of this enterprise. Though a man of resolute spirit, and not easily cast down, the dangers impending over this darling scheme of his ambition, had a gradual effect upon the spirits of Mr. Astor. He was sitting one gloomy evening by his window, revolving over the loss of the Tonquin and the fate of her unfortunate crew, and fearing that some equally tragical calamity might have befallen the adventurers across the mountains, when the evening newspaper was brought to him. The first paragraph that caught his eye, announced the arrival of Mr. Stuart and his party at St. Louis, with intelligence that Mr. Hunt and his companions had effected their perilous expedition to the mouth of the Columbia. This was a gleam of sunshine that for a time dispelled every cloud, and he now looked forward with sanguine hope to the accomplishment of all his plans.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER LII.

Banks of the Wallah-Wallah.- Departure of David Stuart for the Oakinagan.- Mr. Clarke's Route Up Lewis River.- Chipunnish, or Pierced-Nose Indians- Their Character, Appearance, and Habits.- Thievish Habits.- Laying Up of the Boats.- Post at Pointed Heart and Spokane Rivers.- M'Kenzie, His Route Up the Camoenum.- Bands of Travelling Indians.- Expedition of Reed to the Caches.- Adventures of Wandering Voyageurs and Trappers.

THE course of our narrative now takes us back to the regions beyond the mountains, to dispose of the parties that set out from Astoria, in company with Mr. Robert Stuart, and whom he left on the banks of the Wallah-Wallah. Those parties likewise separated from each other shortly after his departure, proceeding to their respective destinations, but agreeing to meet at the mouth of the Wallah-Wallah about the beginning of June in the following year, with such peltries as they should have collected in the winter, so as to convoy each other through the dangerous passes of the Columbia.

Mr. David Stuart, one of the partners, proceeded with his men to the post already established by him at the mouth of the Oakinagan; having furnished this with goods and ammunition, he proceeded three hundred miles up that river, where he established another post in a good trading neighborhood.

Mr. Clarke, another partner, conducted his little band up Lewis River to the mouth of a small stream coming in from the north, to which the Canadians gave the name of the Pavion. Here he found a village or encampment of forty huts or tents, covered with mats, and inhabited by Nez Perces, or Pierced-nose Indians, as they are called by the traders; but Chipunnish, as they are called by themselves. They are a hardy, laborious, and somewhat knavish race, who lead a precarious life, fishing and digging roots during the summer and autumn, hunting the deer on snowshoes during the winter, and traversing the Rocky Mountains in the spring, to trade for buffalo skins with the hunting tribes of the Missouri. In these migrations they are liable to be waylaid

and attacked by the Blackfeet, and other warlike and predatory tribes, and driven back across the mountains with the loss of their horses, and of many of their comrades.

A life of this unsettled and precarious kind is apt to render man selfish, and such Mr. Clarke found the inhabitants of this village, who were deficient in the usual hospitality of Indians; parting with everything with extreme reluctance, and showing no sensibility to any act of kindness. At the time of his arrival, they were all occupied in catching and curing salmon. The men were stout, robust, active, and good looking, and the women handsomer than those of the tribes nearer to the coast.

It was the plan of Mr. Clarke to lay up his boats here, and proceed by land to his place of destination, which was among the Spokane tribe of Indians, about a hundred and fifty miles distant. He accordingly endeavored to purchase horses for the journey, but in this he had to contend with the sordid disposition of these people. They asked high prices for their horses, and were so difficult to deal with, that Mr. Clarke was detained seven days among them before he could procure a sufficient number. During that time he was annoyed by repeated pilferings, for which he could get no redress. The chief promised to recover the stolen articles; but failed to do so, alleging that the thieves belonged to a distant tribe, and had made off with their booty. With this excuse Mr. Clarke was fain to content himself, though he laid up in his heart a bitter grudge against the whole Pierced-nose race, which it will be found he took occasion subsequently to gratify in a signal manner.

Having made arrangements for his departure, Mr. Clarke laid up his barge and canoes in a sheltered place, on the banks of a small bay, overgrown with shrubs and willows, confiding them to the care of the Nez Perce chief, who, on being promised an ample compensation, engaged to have a guardian eye upon them; then mounting his steed, and putting himself at the head of his little caravan, he shook the dust off his feet as he turned his back upon this village of rogues and hard dealers. We shall not follow him minutely in his journey; which lay at times over steep and rocky hills, and among crags and precipices; at other times over vast naked and sunburnt plains, abounding with rattlesnakes, in traversing which, both men and horses suffered intolerably from heat and thirst. The place on which he fixed for a trading post, was a fine point of land, at the junction of the Pointed Heart and Spokane Rivers. His establishment was intended to compete with a trading post of the Northwest Company, situated at no great distance, and to rival it in the trade with the Spokane Indians; as well as with the Cootonais and Flatheads. In this neighborhood we shall leave him for the present.

Mr. M'Kenzie, who conducted the third party from the Wallah-Wallah, navigated for several days up the south branch of the Columbia, named the Camoenum by the natives, but commonly called Lewis River, in honor of the first explorer. Wandering bands of various tribes were seen along this river, travelling in various directions; for the Indians generally are restless, roving beings, continually intent on enterprises of war, traffic, and hunting. Some of these people were driving large gangs of horses, as if to a distant market. Having arrived at the mouth of the Shahaptan, he ascended some distance up that river, and established his trading post upon its banks. This ap-

peared to be a great thoroughfare for the tribes from the neighborhood of the Falls of the Columbia, in their expeditions to make war upon the tribes of the Rocky Mountains; to hunt buffalo on the plains beyond, or to traffic for roots and buffalo robes. It was the season of migration, and the Indians from various distant parts were passing and repassing in great numbers.

Mr. M'Kenzie now detached a small band, under the conduct of Mr. John Reed, to visit the caches made by Mr. Hunt at the Caldron Linn, and to bring the contents to his post; as he depended, in some measure, on them for his supplies of goods and ammunition. They had not been gone a week, when two Indians arrived of the Pallatapalla tribe, who live upon a river of the same name. These communicated the unwelcome intelligence that the caches had been robbed. They said that some of their tribe had, in the course of the preceding spring, been across the mountains, which separated them from Snake River, and had traded horses with the Snakes in exchange for blankets, robes and goods of various descriptions. These articles the Snakes had procured from caches to which they were guided by some white men who resided among them, and who afterwards accompanied them across the Rocky Mountains. This intelligence was extremely perplexing to Mr. M'Kenzie, but the truth of part of it was confirmed by the two Indians, who brought them an English saddle and bridle, which was recognized as having belonged to Mr. Crooks. The perfidy of the white men who revealed the secret of the caches, was, however, perfectly inexplicable. We shall presently account for it in narrating the expedition of Mr. Reed.

That worthy Hibernian proceeded on his mission with his usual alacrity. His forlorn travels of the preceding winter had made him acquainted with the topography of the country, and he reached Snake River without any material difficulty. Here, in an encampment of the natives, he met with six white men, wanderers from the main expedition of Mr. Hunt, who, after having had their respective shares of adventures and mishaps, had fortunately come together at this place. Three of these men were Turcotte, La Chapelle, and Francis Landry; the three Canadian voyageurs who, it may be recollected, had left Mr. Crooks in February, in the neighborhood of Snake River, being dismayed by the increasing hardships of the journey, and fearful of perishing of hunger. They had returned to a Snake encampment, where they passed the residue of the winter.

Early in the spring, being utterly destitute, and in great extremity, and having worn out the hospitality of the Snakes, they determined to avail themselves of the buried treasures within their knowledge. They accordingly informed the Snake chieftains that they knew where a great quantity of goods had been left in caches, enough to enrich the whole tribe; and offered to conduct them to the place, on condition of being rewarded with horses and provisions. The chieftains pledged their faith and honor as great men and Snakes, and the three Canadians conducted them to the place of deposit at the Caldron Linn. This is the way that the savages got knowledge of the caches, and not by following the tracks of wolves, as Mr. Stuart had supposed. Never did money diggers turn up a miser's hoard with more eager delight, than did the savages lay open the treasures of the caches. Blankets and robes, brass trinkets and blue beads were drawn forth with chuckling exultation, and long strips of scarlet cloth produced yells of ecstasy.

The rifling of the caches effected a change in the fortunes and deportment of the whole party. The

---

Snakes were better clad and equipped than ever were Snakes before, and the three Canadians, suddenly finding themselves with horse to ride and weapon to wear, were like beggars on horse-back, ready to ride on any wild scamper. An opportunity soon presented. The Snakes determined on a hunting match on the buffalo prairies, to lay in a supply of beef, that they might live in plenty, as became men of their improved condition. The three newly mounted cavaliers, must fain accompany them. They all traversed the Rocky Mountains in safety, descended to the head waters of the Missouri, and made great havoc among the buffaloes.

Their hunting camp was full of meat; they were gorging themselves, like true Indians, with present plenty, and drying and jerking great quantities for a winter's supply. In the midst of their revelry and good cheer, the camp was surprised by the Blackfeet. Several of the Snakes were slain on the spot; the residue, with their three Canadian allies, fled to the mountains, stripped of horses, buffalo meat, everything; and made their way back to the old encampment on Snake River, poorer than ever, but esteeming themselves fortunate in having escaped with their lives. They had not been long there when the Canadians were cheered by the sight of a companion in misfortune, Dubreull, the poor voyageur who had left Mr. Crooks in March, being too much exhausted to keep on with him. Not long afterwards, three other straggling members of the main expedition made their appearance. These were Carson, St. Michael, and Pierre Delaunay, three of the trappers who, in company with Pierre Detaye, had been left among the mountains by Mr. Hunt, to trap beaver, in the preceding month of September. They had departed from the main body well armed and provided, with horses to ride, and horses to carry the peltries they were to collect. They came wandering into the Snake camp as ragged and destitute as their predecessors. It appears that they had finished their trapping, and were making their way in the spring to the Missouri, when they were met and attacked by a powerful band of the all-pervading Crows. They made a desperate resistance, and killed seven of the savages, but were overpowered by numbers. Pierre Detaye was slain, the rest were robbed of horses and effects, and obliged to turn back, when they fell in with their old companions as already mentioned.

We should observe, that at the heels of Pierre Delaunay came dragging an Indian wife, whom he had picked up in his wanderings; having grown weary of celibacy among the savages.

The whole seven of this forlorn fraternity of adventurers, thus accidentally congregated on the banks of Snake River, were making arrangements once more to cross the mountains, when some Indian scouts brought word of the approach of the little band headed by John Reed.

The latter, having heard the several stories of these wanderers, took them all into his party, and set out for the Caldron Linn, to clear out two or three of the caches which had not been revealed to the Indians.

At that place he met with Robinson, the Kentucky veteran, who, with his two comrades, Reznor and Hoback, had remained there when Mr. Stuart went on. This adventurous trio had been trapping higher up the river, but Robinson had come down in a canoe, to await the expected arrival of the party, and obtain horses and equipments. He told Reed the story of the robbery of his party by

the Arapahays, but it differed, in some particulars, from the account given by him to Mr. Stuart. In that, he had represented Cass as having shamefully deserted his companions in their extremity, carrying off with him a horse; in the one now given, he spoke of him as having been killed in the affray with the Arapahays. This discrepancy, of which, of course, Reed could have had no knowledge at the time, concurred with other circumstances, to occasion afterwards some mysterious speculations and dark surmises as to the real fate of Cass; but as no substantial grounds were ever adduced for them, we forbear to throw any deeper shades into this story of sufferings in the wilderness.

Mr. Reed, having gathered the remainder of the goods from the caches, put himself at the head of his party, now augmented by the seven men thus casually picked up, and the squaw of Pierre Delaunay, and made his way successfully to M'Kenzie's Post, on the waters of the Shahaptan.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER LIII.

Departure of Mr. Hunt in the Beaver- Precautions at the Factory.- Detachment to the Wollamut.- Gloomy Apprehensions.- Arrival of M'Kenzie.- Affairs at the Shahaptan.- News of War.- Dismay of M'Dougal.- Determination to Abandon Astoria.- Departure of M'Kenzie for the Interior.- Adventure at the Rapids.- Visit to the Ruffians of Wish-ram. - A Perilous Situation.- Meeting With M'Tavish and His Party.- Arrival at the Shahaptan.- Plundered Caches.- Determination of the Wintering Partners Not to Leave the Country.- Arrival of Clarke Among the Nez Perces.- The Affair of the Silver Goblet.- Hanging of An Indian.- Arrival of the Wintering Partners at Astoria.

AFTER the departure of the different detachments, or brigades, as they are called by the fur traders, the Beaver prepared for her voyage along the coast, and her visit to the Russian establishment, at New Archangel, where she was to carry supplies. It had been determined in the council of partners at Astoria, that Mr. Hunt should embark in this vessel, for the purpose of acquainting himself with the coasting trade, and of making arrangements with the commander of the Russian post, and that he should be re-landed in October, at Astoria, by the Beaver, on her way to the Sandwich Islands and Canton.

The Beaver put to sea in the month of August. Her departure and that of the various brigades, left the fortress of Astoria but slightly garrisoned. This was soon perceived by some of the Indian tribes, and the consequence was increased insolence of deportment, and a disposition to hostility. It was now the fishing season, when the tribes from the northern coast drew into the neighborhood of the Columbia. These were warlike and perfidious in their dispositions; and noted for their attempts to surprise trading ships. Among them were numbers of the Neweetees, the ferocious tribe that massacred the crew of the Tonquin.

Great precautions, therefore, were taken at the factory, to guard against surprise while these dangerous intruders were in the vicinity. Galleries were constructed inside of the palisades; the bastions were heightened, and sentinels were posted day and night. Fortunately, the Chinooks and other tribes resident in the vicinity manifested the most pacific disposition. Old Comcomly,

---

who held sway over them, was a shrewd calculator. He was aware of the advantages of having the whites as neighbors and allies, and of the consequence derived to himself and his people from acting as intermediate traders between them and the distant tribes. He had, therefore, by this time, become a firm friend of the Astorians, and formed a kind of barrier between them and the hostile intruders from the north.

The summer of 1812 passed away without any of the hostilities that had been apprehended; the Neweetees, and other dangerous visitors to the neighborhood, finished their fishing and returned home, and the inmates of the factory once more felt secure from attack.

It now became necessary to guard against other evils. The season of scarcity arrived, which commences in October, and lasts until the end of January. To provide for the support of the garrison, the shallop was employed to forage about the shores of the river. A number of the men, also, under the command of some of the clerks, were sent to quarter themselves on the banks of the Wollamut (the Multnomah of Lewis and Clarke), a fine river which disembogues itself into the Columbia, about sixty miles above Astoria. The country bordering on the river is finely diversified with prairies and hills, and forests of oak, ash, maple, and cedar. It abounded, at that time, with elk and deer, and the streams were well stocked with beaver. Here the party, after supplying their own wants, were enabled to pack up quantities of dried meat, and send it by canoes to Astoria.

The month of October elapsed without the return of the Beaver. November, December, January, passed away, and still nothing was seen or heard of her. Gloomy apprehensions now began to be entertained: she might have been wrecked in the course of her coasting voyage, or surprised, like the Tonquin, by some of the treacherous tribes of the north.

No one indulged more in these apprehensions than M'Dougal, who had now the charge of the establishment. He no longer evinced the bustling confidence and buoyancy which once characterized him. Command seemed to have lost its charms for him, or rather, he gave way to the most abject despondency, decrying the whole enterprise, magnifying every untoward circumstance, and foreboding nothing but evil.

While in this moody state, he was surprised, on the 16th of January, by the sudden appearance of M'Kenzie, wayworn and weather-beaten by a long wintry journey from his post on the Shaphtan, and with a face the very frontispiece for a volume of misfortune. M'Kenzie had been heartily disgusted and disappointed at his post. It was in the midst of the Tushepaws, a powerful and warlike nation, divided into many tribes, under different chiefs, who possessed innumerable horses, but, not having turned their attention to beaver trapping, had no furs to offer. According to M'Kenzie, they were but a "rascally tribe;" from which we may infer that they were prone to consult their own interests more than comported with the interests of a greedy Indian trader.

Game being scarce, he was obliged to rely, for the most part, on horse-flesh for subsistence, and the Indians discovering his necessities, adopted a policy usual in civilized trade, and raised the price of horses to an exorbitant rate, knowing that he and his men must eat or die. In this way, the

goods he had brought to trade for beaver skins, were likely to be bartered for horseflesh, and all the proceeds devoured upon the spot.

He had despatched trappers in various directions, but the country around did not offer more beaver than his own station. In this emergency he began to think of abandoning his unprofitable post, sending his goods to the posts of Clarke and David Stuart, who could make a better use of them, as they were in a good beaver country, and returning with his party to Astoria, to seek some better destination. With this view he repaired to the post of Mr. Clarke, to hold a consultation. While the two partners were in conference in Mr. Clarke's wigwam, an unexpected visitor came bustling in upon them.

This was Mr. John George M'Tavish, a partner of the Northwest Company, who had charge of the rival trading posts established in that neighborhood. Mr. M'Tavish was the delighted messenger of bad news. He had been to Lake Winnipeg, where he received an express from Canada, containing the declaration of war, and President Madison's proclamation, which he handed with the most officious complaisance to Messrs. Clarke and M'Kenzie. He moreover told them that he had received a fresh supply of goods from the Northwest posts on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, and was prepared for vigorous opposition to the establishment of the American Company. He capped the climax of this obliging but belligerent intelligence, by informing them that the armed ship, Isaac Todd, was to be at the mouth of the Columbia about the beginning of March, to get possession of the trade of the river, and that he was ordered to join her there at that time.

The receipt of this news determined M'Kenzie. He immediately returned to the Shahaptan, broke up his establishment, deposited his goods in cache, and hastened with all his people to Astoria.

The intelligence thus brought, completed the dismay of M'Dougal, and seemed to produce a complete confusion of mind. He held a council of war with M'Kenzie, at which some of the clerks were present, but of course had no votes. They gave up all hope of maintaining their post at Astoria. The Beaver had probably been lost; they could receive no aid from the United States, as all the ports would be blockaded. From England nothing could be expected but hostility. It was determined, therefore, to abandon the establishment in the course of the following spring, and return across the Rocky Mountains. In pursuance of this resolution, they suspended all trade with the natives, except for provisions, having already more peltries than they could carry away, and having need of all the goods for the clothing and subsistence of their people, during the remainder of their sojourn, and on their journey across the mountains, This intention of abandoning Astoria was, however, kept secret from the men, lest they should at once give up all labor, and become restless and insubordinate.

In the meantime, M'Kenzie set off for his post at the Shahaptan, to get his goods from the caches, and buy horses and provisions with them for the caravan across the mountains. He was charged with despatches from M'Dougal to Messrs. Stuart and Clarke, appraising them of the intended migration, that they might make timely preparations.

M'Kenzie was accompanied by two of the clerks, Mr. John Reed, the Irishman, and Mr. Alfred Seton, of New York. They embarked in two canoes, manned by seventeen men, and ascended the river without any incident of importance, until they arrived in the eventful neighborhood of the rapids. They made the portage of the narrows and the falls early in the afternoon, and, having partaken of a scanty meal, had now a long evening on their hands.

On the opposite side of the river lay the village of Wish-ram, of freebooting renown. Here lived the savages who had robbed and maltreated Reed, when bearing his tin box of despatches. It was known that the rifle of which he was despoiled was retained as a trophy at the village. M'Kenzie offered to cross the river, and demand the rifle, if any one would accompany him. It was a hare-brained project, for these villages were noted for the ruffian character of their inhabitants; yet two volunteers promptly stepped forward; Alfred Seton, the clerk, and Joe de la Pierre, the cook. The trio soon reached the opposite side of the river. On landing, they freshly primed their rifles and pistols. A path winding for about a hundred yards among rocks and crags, led to the village. No notice seemed to be taken of their approach. Not a solitary being, man, woman, or child, greeted them.

The very dogs, those noisy pests of an Indian town, kept silence. On entering the village, a boy made his appearance, and pointed to a house of larger dimensions than the rest. They had to stoop to enter it; as soon as they had passed the threshold, the narrow passage behind them was filled up by a sudden rush of Indians, who had before kept out of sight.

M'Kenzie and his companions found themselves in a rude chamber of about twenty-five feet long and twenty wide. A bright fire was blazing at one end, near which sat the chief, about sixty years old. A large number of Indians, wrapped in buffalo robes, were squatted in rows, three deep, forming a semicircle round three sides of the room. A single glance around sufficed to show them the grim and dangerous assembly into which they had intruded, and that all retreat was cut off by the mass which blocked up the entrance.

The chief pointed to the vacant side of the room opposite to the door, and motioned for them to take their seats. They complied. A dead pause ensued. The grim warriors around sat like statues; each muffled in his robe, with his fierce eyes bent on the intruders. The latter felt they were in a perilous predicament.

"Keep your eyes on the chief while I am addressing him," said M'Kenzie to his companions. "Should he give any sign to his band, shoot him, and make for the door."

M'Kenzie advanced, and offered the pipe of peace to the chief, but it was refused. He then made a regular speech, explaining the object of their visit, and proposing to give in exchange for the rifle two blankets, an axe, some beads and tobacco.

When he had done, the chief rose, began to address him in a low voice, but soon became loud and violent, and ended by working himself up into a furious passion. He upbraided the white men for

---

their sordid conduct in passing and repassing through their neighborhood, without giving them a blanket or any other article of goods, merely because they had no furs to barter in exchange, and he alluded, with menaces of vengeance, to the death of the Indian killed by the whites in the skirmish at the falls.

Matters were verging to a crisis. It was evident the surrounding savages were only waiting a signal from the chief to spring upon their prey. M'Kenzie and his companions had gradually risen on their feet during the speech, and had brought their rifles to a horizontal position, the barrels resting in their left hands; the muzzle of M'Kenzie's piece was within three feet of the speaker's heart. They cocked their rifles; the click of the locks for a moment suffused the dark cheek of the savage, and there was a pause. They coolly, but promptly, advanced to the door; the Indians fell back in awe, and suffered them to pass. The sun was just setting, as they emerged from this dangerous den. They took the precaution to keep along the tops of the rocks as much as possible on their way back to the canoe, and reached their camp in safety, congratulating themselves on their escape, and feeling no desire to make a second visit to the grim warriors of Wish-ram.

M'Kenzie and his party resumed their journey the next morning. At some distance above the falls of the Columbia, they observed two bark canoes, filled with white men, coming down the river, to the full chant of a set of Canadian voyageurs. A parley ensued. It was a detachment of North-westerners, under the command of Mr. John George M'Tavish, bound, full of song and spirit, to the mouth of the Columbia, to await the arrival of the Isaac Todd.

Mr. M'Kenzie and M'Tavish came to a halt, and landing, encamped for the night. The voyageurs of either party hailed each other as brothers, and old "comrades," and they mingled together as if united by one common interest, instead of belonging to rival companies, and trading under hostile flags.

In the morning they proceeded on their different ways, in style corresponding to their different fortunes: the one toiling painfully against the stream, the other sweeping down gayly with the Current.

M'Kenzie arrived safely at his deserted post on the Shahaptan, but found, to his chagrin, that his caches had been discovered and rifled by the Indians. Here was a dilemma, for on the stolen goods he had depended to purchase horses of the Indians. He sent out men in all directions to endeavor to discover the thieves, and despatched Mr. Reed to the posts of Messrs. Clarke and David Stuart, with the letters of Mr. M'Dougal.

The resolution announced in these letters, to break up and depart from Astoria, was condemned by both Clarke and Stuart. These two gentlemen had been very successful at their posts, and considered it rash and pusillanimous to abandon, on the first difficulty, an enterprise of such great cost and ample promise. They made no arrangements, therefore, for leaving the country, but acted with a view to the maintenance of their new and prosperous establishments.

The regular time approached, when the partners of the interior -posts were to rendezvous at the mouth of the Wallah-Wallah, on their way to Astoria, with the peltries they had collected. Mr. Clarke accordingly packed all his furs on twenty-eight horses, and, leaving a clerk and four men to take charge of the post, departed on the 25th of May with the residue of his force.

On the 30th, he arrived at the confluence of the Pavion and Lewis rivers, where he had left his barge and canoes, in the guardianship of the old Pierced-nosed chieftain. That dignitary had acquitted himself more faithfully to his charge than Mr. Clarke had expected, and the canoes were found in very tolerable order. Some repairs were necessary, and, while they were making, the party encamped close by the village. Having had repeated and vexatious proofs of the pilfering propensities of this tribe during his former visit, Mr. Clarke ordered that a wary eye should be kept upon them.

He was a tall, good-looking man, and somewhat given to pomp and circumstance, which made him an object of note in the eyes of the wondering savages. He was stately, too, in his appointments, and had a silver goblet or drinking cup, out of which he would drink with a magnificent air, and then lock it up in a large garde vin, which accompanied him in his travels, and stood in his tent. This goblet had originally been sent as a present from Mr. Astor to Mr. M'Kay, the partner who had unfortunately been blown up in the Tonquin. As it reached Astoria after the departure of that gentleman, it had remained in the possession of Mr. Clarke.

A silver goblet was too glittering a prize not to catch the eye of a Pierced-nose. It was like the shining tin case of John Reed. Such a wonder had never been seen in the land before. The Indians talked about it to one another. They marked the care with which it was deposited in the garde vin, like a relic in its shrine, and concluded that it must be a "great medicine." That night Mr. Clarke neglected to lock up his treasure; in the morning the sacred casket was open - the precious relic gone!

Clarke was now outrageous. All the past vexations that he had suffered from this pilfering community rose to mind, and he threatened that, unless the goblet was promptly returned, he would hang the thief, should he eventually discover him. The day passed away, however, without the restoration of the cup. At night sentinels were secretly posted about the camp. With all their vigilance, a Pierced-nose contrived to get into the camp unperceived, and to load himself with booty; it was only on his retreat that he was discovered and taken.

At daybreak the culprit was brought to trial, and promptly convicted. He stood responsible for all the spoliations of the camp, the precious goblet among the number, and Mr. Clarke passed sentence of death upon him.

A gibbet was accordingly constructed of oars; the chief of the village and his people were assembled, and the culprit was produced, with his legs and arms pinioned. Clarke then made a harangue. He reminded the tribe of the benefits he had bestowed upon them during his former visits, and the many thefts and other misdeeds which he had overlooked. The prisoner, especially,

---

had always been peculiarly well treated by the white men, but had repeatedly been guilty of pilfering. He was to be punished for his own misdeeds, and as a warning to his tribe.

The Indians now gathered round Mr. Clarke, and interceded for the culprit. They were willing he should be punished severely, but implored that his life might be spared. The companions, too, of Mr. Clarke, considered the sentence too severe, and advised him to mitigate it; but he was inexorable. He was not naturally a stern or cruel man; but from his boyhood he had lived in the Indian country among Indian traders, and held the life of a savage extremely cheap. He was, moreover, a firm believer in the doctrine of intimidation.

Farnham, a clerk, a tall "Green Mountain boy" from Vermont, who had been robbed of a pistol, acted as executioner. The signal was given, and the poor Pierced-nose resisting, struggling, and screaming, in the most frightful manner, was launched into eternity. The Indians stood round gazing in silence and mute awe, but made no attempt to oppose the execution, nor testified any emotion when it was over. They locked up their feelings within their bosoms until an opportunity should arrive to gratify them with a bloody act of vengeance.

To say nothing of the needless severity of this act, its impolicy was glaringly obvious. Mr. M'Lennan and three men were to return to the post with the horses, their loads having been transferred to the canoes. They would have to pass through a tract of country infested by this tribe, who were all horsemen and hard riders, and might pursue them to take vengeance for the death of their comrade. M'Lennan, however, was a resolute fellow, and made light of all dangers. He and his three men were present at the execution, and set off as soon as life was extinct in the victim; but, to use the words of one of their comrades, "they did not let the grass grow under the heels of their horses, as they clattered out of the Pierced-nose country," and were glad to find themselves in safety at the post.

Mr. Clarke and his party embarked about the same time in their canoes, and early on the following day reached the mouth of the Wallah-Wallah, where they found Messrs. Stuart and M'Kenzie awaiting them; the latter having recovered part of the goods stolen from his cache. Clarke informed them of the signal punishment he had inflicted on the Pierced-nose, evidently expecting to excite their admiration by such a hardy act of justice, performed in the very midst of the Indian country, but was mortified at finding it strongly censured as inhuman, unnecessary, and likely to provoke hostilities.

The parties thus united formed a squadron of two boats and six canoes, with which they performed their voyage in safety down the river, and arrived at Astoria on the 12th of June, bringing with them a valuable stock of peltries.

About ten days previously, the brigade which had been quartered on the banks of the Wollamut, had arrived with numerous packs of beaver, the result of a few months' sojourn on that river. These were the first fruits of the enterprise, gathered by men as yet mere strangers in the land; but they were such as to give substantial grounds for sanguine anticipations of profit, when the coun-

try should be more completely explored, and the trade established.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER LIV.

The Partners Displeas'd With M'Dougal.- Equivocal Conduct of That Gentleman.- Partners Agree to Abandon Astoria.- Sale of Goods to M'Tavish.- Arrangements for the Year.- Manifesto Signed by the Partners.- Departure of M'Tavish for the Interior.

THE partners found Mr. M'Dougal in all the bustle of preparation; having about nine days previously announced at the factory, his intention of breaking up the establishment, and fixed upon the 1st of July for the time of departure. Messrs. Stuart and Clarke felt highly displeas'd at his taking so precipitate a step, without waiting for their concurrence, when he must have known that their arrival could not be far distant.

Indeed, the whole conduct of Mr. M'Dougal was such as to awaken strong doubts as to his loyal devotion to the cause. His old sympathies with the Northwest Company seem to have revived. He had received M'Tavish and his party with uncalled for hospitality, as though they were friends and allies, instead of being a party of observation, come to reconnoitre the state of affairs at Astoria, and to await the arrival of a hostile ship. Had they been left to themselves, they would have been starved off for want of provisions, or driven away by the Chinooks, who only wanted a signal from the factory to treat them as intruders and enemies. M'Dougal, on the contrary, had supplied them from the stores of the garrison, and had gained them the favor of the Indians, by treating them as friends.

Having set his mind fixedly on the project of breaking up the establishment at Astoria, in the current year, M'Dougal was sorely disappoint'd at finding that Messrs. Stuart and Clarke had omitted to comply with his request to purchase horses and provisions for the caravan across the mountains. It was now too late to make the necessary preparations in time for traversing the mountains before winter, and the project had to be postponed.

In the meantime, the non-arrival of the annual ship, and the apprehensions entertain'd of the loss of the Beaver and of Mr. Hunt, had their effect upon the minds of Messrs. Stuart and Clarke. They began to listen to the desponding representations of M'Dougal, seconded by M'Kenzie, who inveigh'd against their situation as desperate and forlorn; left to shift for themselves, or perish upon a barbarous coast; neglected by those who sent them there; and threaten'd with dangers of every kind. In this way they were brought to consent to the plan of abandoning the country in the ensuing year.

About this time, M'Tavish apply'd at the factory to purchase a small supply of goods wherewith to trade his way back to his post on the upper waters of the Columbia, having waited in vain for the arrival of the Isaac Todd. His request brought on a consultation among the partners. M'Dougal urg'd that it should be complied with. He furthermore propos'd, that they should give up to M'Tavish, for a proper consideration, the post on the Spokan, and all its dependencies, as they

had not sufficient goods on hand to supply that post themselves, and to keep up a competition with the Northwest Company in the trade with the neighboring Indians. This last representation has since been proved incorrect. By inventories, it appears that their stock in hand for the supply of the interior posts, was superior to that of the Northwest Company; so that they had nothing to fear from competition.

Through the influence of Messrs. M'Dougal and M'Kenzie, this proposition was adopted, and was promptly accepted by M'Tavish. The merchandise sold to him amounted to eight hundred and fifty-eight dollars, to be paid for, in the following spring, in horses, or in any other manner most acceptable to the partners at that period.

This agreement being concluded, the partners formed their plans for the year that they would yet have to pass in the country. Their objects were, chiefly, present subsistence, and the purchase of horses for the contemplated journey, though they were likewise to collect as much peltries as their diminished means would command. Accordingly, it was arranged that David Stuart should return to his former post on the Oakinagan, and Mr. Clarke should make his sojourn among the Flat-heads. John Reed, the sturdy Hibernian, was to undertake the Snake River country, accompanied by Pierre Dorion and Pierre Delaunay, as hunters, and Francis Landry, Jean Baptiste Turcotte, Andre la Chapelle, and Gilles le Clerc, Canadian voyageurs.

Astoria, however, was the post about which they felt the greatest solicitude, and on which they all more or less depended. The maintenance of this in safety throughout the coming year, was, therefore, their grand consideration. Mr. M'Dougal was to continue in command of it, with a party of forty men. They would have to depend chiefly upon the neighboring savages for their subsistence. These, at present, were friendly, but it was to be feared that, when they should discover the exigencies of the post, and its real weakness, they might proceed to hostilities; or, at any rate, might cease to furnish their usual supplies. It was important, therefore, to render the place as independent as possible, of the surrounding tribes for its support; and it was accordingly resolved that M'Kenzie, with four hunters, and eight common men, should winter in the abundant country of Wollamut, from whence they might be enabled to furnish a constant supply of provisions to Astoria.

As there was too great a proportion of clerks for the number of privates in the service, the engagements of three of them, Ross Cox, Ross, and M'Lennan, were surrendered to them, and they immediately enrolled themselves in the service of the Northwest Company; glad, no doubt, to escape from what they considered a sinking ship.

Having made all these arrangements, the four partners, on the first of July, signed a formal manifesto, stating the alarming state of their affairs, from the non-arrival of the annual ship, and the absence and apprehended loss of the Beaver, their want of goods, their despair of receiving any further supply, their ignorance of the coast, and their disappointment as to the interior trade, which they pronounced unequal to the expenses incurred, and incompetent to stand against the powerful opposition of the Northwest Company. And as by the 16th article of the company's

---

agreement, they were authorized to abandon this undertaking, and dissolve the concern, if before the period of five years it should be found unprofitable, they now formally announced their intention to do so on the 1st day of June, of the ensuing year, unless in the interim they should receive the necessary support and supplies from Mr. Astor, or the stockholders, with orders to continue.

This instrument, accompanied by private letters of similar import, was delivered to Mr. M'Tavish, who departed on the 5th of July. He engaged to forward the despatches to Mr. Astor, by the usual winter express sent overland by the Northwest Company.

The manifesto was signed with great reluctance by Messrs. Clarke and D. Stuart, whose experience by no means justified the discouraging account given in it of the internal trade, and who considered the main difficulties of exploring an unknown and savage country, and of ascertaining the best trading and trapping grounds, in a great measure overcome. They were overruled, however, by the urgent instances of M'Dougal and M'Kenzie, who, having resolved upon abandoning the enterprise, were desirous of making as strong a case as possible to excuse their conduct to Mr. Astor and to the world.

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER LV.

Anxieties of Mr. Astor.- Memorial of the Northwest Company.- Tidings of a British Naval Expedition Against Astoria. - Mr. Astor Applies to Government for Protection.- The Frigate Adams Ordered to be Fitted Out.- Bright News From Astoria.- Sunshine Suddenly Overclouded.

WHILE difficulties and disasters had been gathering about the infant settlement of Astoria, the mind of its projector at New York was a prey to great anxiety. The ship Lark, despatched by him with supplies for the establishment, sailed on the 6th of March, 1813. Within a fortnight afterwards, he received intelligence which justified all his apprehensions of hostility on the part of the British. The Northwest Company had made a second memorial to that government, representing Astoria as an American establishment, stating the vast scope of its contemplated operations, magnifying the strength of its fortifications, and expressing their fears that, unless crushed in the bud, it would effect the downfall of their trade.

Influenced by these representations, the British government ordered the frigate Phoebe to be detached as a convoy for the armed ship, Isaac Todd, which was ready to sail with men and munitions for forming a new establishment. They were to proceed together to the mouth of the Columbia, capture or destroy whatever American fortress they should find there, and plant the British flag on its ruins.

Informed of these movements, Mr. Astor lost no time in addressing a second letter to the secretary of state, communicating this intelligence, and requesting it might be laid before the President; as no notice, however, had been taken of his previous letter, he contented himself with this simple communication, and made no further application for aid.

Awakened now to the danger that menaced the establishment at Astoria, and aware of the importance of protecting this foothold of American commerce and empire on the shores of the Pacific, the government determined to send the frigate Adams, Captain Crane, upon this service. On hearing of this determination, Mr. Astor immediately proceeded to fit out a ship called the Enterprise, to sail in company with the Adams, freighted with additional supplies and reinforcements for Astoria.

About the middle of June, while in the midst of these preparations, Mr. Astor received a letter from Mr. R. Stuart, dated St. Louis, May 1st, confirming the intelligence already received through the public newspapers, of his safe return, and of the arrival of Mr. Hunt and his party at Astoria, and giving the most flattering accounts of the prosperity of the enterprise.

So deep had been the anxiety of Mr. Astor, for the success of this object of his ambition, that this gleam of good news was almost overpowering. "I felt ready," said he, "to fall upon my knees in a transport of gratitude."

At the same time he heard that the Beaver had made good her voyage from New York to the Columbia. This was additional ground of hope for the welfare of the little colony. The post being thus relieved and strengthened, with an American at its head, and a ship of war about to sail for its protection, the prospect for the future seemed full of encouragement, and Mr. Astor proceeded with fresh vigor to fit out his merchant ship.

Unfortunately for Astoria, this bright gleam of sunshine was soon overclouded. just as the Adams had received her complement of men, and the two vessels were ready for sea, news came from Commodore Chauncey, commanding on Lake Ontario, that a reinforcement of seamen was wanted in that quarter. The demand was urgent, the crew of the Adams was immediately transferred to that service, and the ship was laid up.

This was a most ill-timed and discouraging blow, but Mr. Astor would not yet allow himself to pause in his undertaking. He determined to send the Enterprise to sea alone, and let her take the chance of making her unprotected way across the ocean. Just at this time, however, a British force made its appearance off the Hook; and the port of New York was effectually blockaded. To send a ship to sea under these circumstances, would be to expose her to almost certain capture. The Enterprise was, therefore, unloaded and dismantled, and Mr. Astor was obliged to comfort himself with the hope that the Lark might reach Astoria in safety and, that, aided by her supplies, and by the good management of Mr. Hunt and his associates, the little colony might be able to maintain itself until the return of peace.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER LVI.

Affairs of State at Astoria.-M'Dougal Proposes for the Hand of An Indian Princess- Matrimonial Embassy to Comcomly.- Matrimonial Notions Among the Chinooks.- Settlements and Pin-Money.- The Bringing Home of the Bride.- A Managing Father-in-Law.- Arrival of Mr. Hunt at Asto-

---

ria.

WE have hitherto had so much to relate of a gloomy and disastrous nature, that it is with a feeling of momentary relief we turn to something of a more pleasing complexion, and record the first, and indeed only nuptials in high life that took place in the infant settlement of Astoria.

M'Dougal, who appears to have been a man of a thousand projects, and of great, though somewhat irregular ambition, suddenly conceived the idea of seeking the hand of one of the native princesses, a daughter of the one-eyed potentate Comcomly, who held sway over the fishing tribe of the Chinooks, and had long supplied the factory with smelts and sturgeons.

Some accounts give rather a romantic origin to this affair, tracing it to the stormy night when M'Dougal, in the course of an exploring expedition, was driven by stress of weather to seek shelter in the royal abode of Comcomly. Then and there he was first struck with the charms of the piscatory princess, as she exerted herself to entertain her father's guest.

The "journal of Astoria," however, which was kept under his own eye, records this union as a high state alliance, and great stroke of policy. The factory had to depend, in a great measure, on the Chinooks for provisions. They were at present friendly, but it was to be feared they would prove otherwise, should they discover the weakness and the exigencies of the post, and the intention to leave the country. This alliance, therefore, would infallibly rivet Comcomly to the interests of the Astorians, and with him the powerful tribe of the Chinooks. Be this as it may, and it is hard to fathom the real policy of governors and princes, M'Dougal despatched two of the clerks as ambassadors extraordinary, to wait upon the one-eyed chieftain, and make overtures for the hand of his daughter.

The Chinooks, though not a very refined nation, have notions of matrimonial arrangements that would not disgrace the most refined sticklers for settlements and pin-money. The suitor repairs not to the bower of his mistress, but to her father's lodge, and throws down a present at his feet. His wishes are then disclosed by some discreet friend employed by him for the purpose. If the suitor and his present find favor in the eyes of the father, he breaks the matter to his daughter, and inquires into the state of her inclinations. Should her answer be favorable, the suit is accepted and the lover has to make further presents to the father, of horses, canoes, and other valuables, according to the beauty and merits of the bride; looking forward to a return in kind whenever they shall go to housekeeping.

We have more than once had occasion to speak of the shrewdness, of Comcomly; but never was it exerted more adroitly than on this occasion. He was a great friend of M'Dougal, and pleased with the idea of having so distinguished a son-in-law; but so favorable an opportunity of benefiting his own fortune was not likely to occur a second time, and he determined to make the most of it. Accordingly, the negotiation was protracted with true diplomatic skill. Conference after conference was held with the two ambassadors. Comcomly was extravagant in his terms; rating the charms of his daughter at the highest price, and indeed she is represented as having one of the flattest and

most aristocratical heads in the tribe. At length the preliminaries were all happily adjusted. On the 20th of July, early in the afternoon, a squadron of canoes crossed over from the village of the Chinooks, bearing the royal family of Comcomly, and all his court.

That worthy sachem landed in princely state, arrayed in a bright blue blanket and red breech clout, with an extra quantity of paint and feathers, attended by a train of half-naked warriors and nobles. A horse was in waiting to receive the princess, who was mounted behind one of the clerks, and thus conveyed, coy but compliant, to the fortress. Here she was received with devout, though decent joy, by her expecting bridegroom.

Her bridal adornments, it is true, at first caused some little dismay, having painted and anointed herself for the occasion according to the Chinook toilet; by dint, however, of copious ablutions, she was freed from all adventitious tint and fragrance, and entered into the nuptial state, the cleanest princess that had ever been known, of the somewhat unctuous tribe of the Chinooks.

From that time forward, Comcomly was a daily visitor at the fort, and was admitted into the most intimate councils of his son-in-law. He took an interest in everything that was going forward, but was particularly frequent in his visits to the blacksmith's shop; tasking the labors of the artificer in iron for every state, insomuch that the necessary business of the factory was often postponed to attend to his requisitions.

The honey-moon had scarce passed away, and M'Dougal was seated with his bride in the fortress of Astoria, when, about noon of the 20th of August, Gassacop, the son of Comcomly, hurried into his presence with great agitation, and announced a ship at the mouth of the river. The news produced a vast sensation. Was it a ship of peace or war? Was it American or British? Was it the Beaver or the Isaac Todd? M'Dougal hurried to the waterside, threw himself into a boat, and ordered the hands to pull with all speed for the mouth of the harbor. Those in the fort remained watching the entrance of the river, anxious to know whether they were to prepare for greeting a friend or fighting an enemy. At length the ship was descried crossing the bar, and bending her course towards Astoria. Every gaze was fixed upon her in silent scrutiny, until the American flag was recognized. A general shout was the first expression of joy, and next a salutation was thundered from the cannon of the fort.

The vessel came to anchor on the opposite side of the river, and returned the salute. The boat of Mr. M'Dougal went on board, and was seen returning late in the afternoon. The Astorians watched her with straining eyes, to discover who were on board, but the sun went down, and the evening closed in, before she was sufficiently near. At length she reached the land, and Mr. Hunt stepped on shore. He was hailed as one risen from the dead, and his return was a signal for merriment almost equal to that which prevailed at the nuptials of M'Dougal.

We must now explain the cause of this gentleman's long absence, which had given rise to such gloomy and dispiriting surmises.

Washington Irving's Astoria

---

CHAPTER LVII.

Voyage of the Beaver to New Archangel.- A Russian Governor.-Roystering Rule.- The Tyranny of the Table- Hard Drinking Bargainings.- Voyage to Kamtschatka.- Seal Catching Establishment at St. Paul's.- Storms at Sea.- Mr. Hunt Left at the Sandwich Islands. -Transactions of the Beaver at Canton.-Return of Mr. Hunt to Astoria.

IT will be recollected that the destination of the Boston, when she sailed from Astoria on the 4th of August in 1812, was to proceed northwardly along the coast to Sheetka, or New Archangel, there to dispose of that part of her cargo intended for the supply of the Russian establishment at that place, and then to return to Astoria, where it was expected she would arrive in October.

New Archangel is situated in Norfolk Sound, lat. 57deg 2' N., long. 135deg 50' W. It was the head-quarters of the different colonies of the Russian Fur Company, and the common rendezvous of the American vessels trading along the coast.

The Beaver met with nothing worthy of particular mention in her voyage, and arrived at New Archangel on the 19th of August. The place at that time was the residence of Count Baranoff, the governor of the different colonies; a rough, rugged, hospitable, hard-drinking old Russian; somewhat of a soldier; somewhat of a trader; above all, a boon companion of the old roystering school, with a strong cross of the bear.

Mr. Hunt found this hyperborean veteran ensconced in a fort which crested the whole of a rocky promontory. It mounted one hundred guns, large and small, and was impregnable to Indian attack, unaided by artillery. Here the old governor lorded it over sixty Russians, who formed the corps of the trading establishment, besides an indefinite number of Indian hunters of the Kodiak tribe, who were continually coming and going, or lounging and loitering about the fort like so many hounds round a sportsman's hunting quarters. Though a loose liver among his guests, the governor was a strict disciplinarian among his men; keeping them in perfect subjection, and having seven on guard night and day.

Besides those immediate serfs and dependents just mentioned, the old Russian potentate exerted a considerable sway over a numerous and irregular class of maritime traders, who looked to him for aid and munitions, and through whom he may be said to have, in some degree, extended his power along the whole northwest coast. These were American captains of vessels engaged in a particular department of the trade. One of these captains would come, in a manner, empty-handed to New Archangel. Here his ship would be furnished with about fifty canoes and a hundred Kodiak hunters, and fitted out with provisions, and everything necessary for hunting the sea-otter on the coast of California, where the Russians have another establishment. The ship would ply along the California coast from place to place, dropping parties of otter hunters in their canoes, furnishing them only with water, and leaving them to depend upon their own dexterity for a maintenance. When a sufficient cargo was collected, she would gather up her canoes and hunters, and return with them to Archangel; where the captain would render in the returns of his voyage,

and receive one half of the skins for his share.

Over these coasting captains, as we have hinted, the veteran governor exerted some sort of sway, but it was of a peculiar and characteristic kind; it was the tyranny of the table. They were obliged to join him in his "prosnics" or carousals, and to drink "potations pottle deep." His carousals, too, were not of the most quiet kind, nor were his potations as mild as nectar. "He is continually," said Mr. Hunt, "giving entertainments by way of parade, and if you do not drink raw rum, and boiling punch as strong as sulphur, he will insult you as soon as he gets drunk, which is very shortly after sitting down to table."

As to any "temperance captain" who stood fast to his faith, and refused to give up his sobriety, he might go elsewhere for a market, for he stood no chance with the governor. Rarely, however, did any cold-water caitiff of the kind darken the doors of old Baranoff; the coasting captains knew too well his humor and their own interests; they joined in his revels, they drank, and sang, and whooped, and hiccuped, until they all got "half seas over," and then affairs went on swimmingly.

An awful warning to all "flinchers" occurred shortly before Mr. Hunt's arrival. A young naval officer had recently been sent out by the emperor to take command of one of the company's vessels. The governor, as usual, had him at his "prosnics," and plied him with fiery potations. The young man stood on the defensive until the old count's ire was completely kindled; he carried his point, and made the greenhorn tipsy, willy nilly. In proportion as they grew fuddled they grew noisy, they quarrelled in their cups; the youngster paid old Baranoff in his own coin by rating him soundly; in reward for which, when sober, he was taken the rounds of four pickets, and received seventy-nine lashes, taled out with Russian punctuality of punishment.

Such was the old grizzled bear with whom Mr. Hunt had to do his business. How he managed to cope with his humor; whether he pledged himself in raw rum and blazing punch, and "clinked the can" with him as they made their bargains, does not appear upon record; we must infer, however, from his general observations on the absolute sway of this hard-drinking potentate, that he had to conform to the customs of his court, and that their business transactions presented a maudlin mixture of punch and peltry.

The greatest annoyance to Mr. Hunt, however, was the delay to which he was subjected, in disposing of the cargo of the ship, and getting the requisite returns. With all the governor's devotions to the bottle, he never obfuscated his faculties sufficiently to lose sight of his interest, and is represented by Mr. Hunt as keen, not to say crafty, at a bargain, as the most arrant waterdrinker. A long time was expended negotiating with him, and by the time the bargain was concluded, the month of October had arrived. To add to the delay he was to be paid for his cargo in seal skins. Now it so happened that there was none of this kind of peltry at the fort of old Baranoff. It was necessary, therefore, for Mr. Hunt to proceed to a seal-catching establishment, which the Russian company had at the island of St. Paul, in the Sea of Kamtschatka. He accordingly set sail on the 4th of October, after having spent forty-five days at New Archangel boosing and bargaining with its roystering commander, and right glad was he to escape from the clutches of "this old man of the sea."

The Beaver arrived at St. Paul's on the 31st of October; by which time, according to arrangement, he ought to have been back at Astoria. The island of St. Paul is in latitude 57deg N., longitude 170deg or 171deg W. Its shores, in certain places, and at certain seasons, are covered with seals, while others are playing about in the water. Of these, the Russians take only the small ones, from seven to ten months old, and carefully select the males, giving the females their freedom, that the breed may not be diminished. The islanders, however, kill the large ones for provisions, and for skins wherewith to cover their canoes. They drive them from the shore over the rocks, until within a short distance of their habitations, where they kill them. By this means, they save themselves the trouble of carrying the skins and have the flesh at hand. This is thrown in heaps, and when the season for skinning is over, they take out the entrails and make one heap of the blubber. This, with drift-wood, serves for fuel, for the island is entirely destitute of trees. They make another heap of the flesh, which, with the eggs of sea-fowls, preserved in oil, an occasional sea-lion, a few ducks in winter, and some wild roots, compose their food.

Mr. Hunt found several Russians at the island, and one hundred hunters, natives of Oonalaska, with their families. They lived in cabins that looked like canoes; being, for the most part formed of the jaw-bone of a whale, put up as rafters, across which were laid pieces of driftwood covered over with long grass, the skins of large sea animals, and earth; so as to be quite comfortable, in despite of the rigors of the climate; though we are told they had as ancient and fish-like an odor, "as had the quarters of Jonah, when he lodged within the whale."

In one of these odoriferous mansions, Mr. Hunt occasionally took up his abode, that he might be at hand to hasten the loading of the ship. The operation, however, was somewhat slow, for it was necessary to overhaul and inspect every pack to prevent imposition, and the peltries had then to be conveyed in large boats, made of skins, to the ship, which was some little distance from the shore, standing off and on.

One night, while Mr. Hunt was on shore, with some others of the crew, there arose a terrible gale. When the day broke, the ship was not to be seen. He watched for her with anxious eyes until night, but in vain. Day after day of boisterous storms, and howling wintry weather, were passed in watchfulness and solicitude. Nothing was to be seen but a dark and angry sea, and a scowling northern sky; and at night he retired within the jaws of the whale, and nestled disconsolately among seal skins.

At length, on the 13th of November, the Beaver made her appearance; much the worse for the stormy conflicts which she had sustained in those hyperborean seas. She had been obliged to carry a press of sail in heavy gales to be able to hold her ground, and had consequently sustained great damage in her canvas and rigging. Mr. Hunt lost no time in hurrying the residue of the cargo on board of her; then, bidding adieu to his seal-fishing friends, and his whalebone habitation, he put forth once more to sea.

He was now for making the best of his way to Astoria, and fortunate would it have been for the

interests of that place, and the interests of Mr. Astor, had he done so; but, unluckily, a perplexing question rose in his mind. The sails and rigging of the *Beaver* had been much rent and shattered in the late storm; would she be able to stand the hard gales to be expected in making Columbia River at this season? Was it prudent, also, at this boisterous time of the year to risk the valuable cargo which she now had on board, by crossing and recrossing the dangerous bar of that river? These doubts were probably suggested or enforced by Captain Sowle, who, it has already been seen, was an over-cautious, or rather, a timid seaman, and they may have had some weight with Mr. Hunt; but there were other considerations, which more strongly swayed his mind. The lateness of the season, and the unforeseen delays the ship had encountered at New Archangel, and by being obliged to proceed to St. Paul's, had put her so much back in her calculated time, that there was a risk of her arriving so late at Canton, as to come to a bad market, both for the sale of her peltries, and the purchase of a return cargo. He considered it to the interest of the company, therefore, that he should proceed at once to the Sandwich Islands; there wait the arrival of the annual vessel from New York, take passage in her to Astoria, and suffer the *Beaver* to continue on to Canton.

On the other hand, he was urged to the other course by his engagements; by the plan of the voyage marked out for the *Beaver*, by Mr. Astor; by his inclination, and the possibility that the establishment might need his presence, and by the recollection that there must already be a large amount of peltries collected at Astoria, and waiting for the return of the *Beaver*, to convey them to market.

These conflicting questions perplexed and agitated his mind and gave rise to much anxious reflection, for he was a conscientious man that seems ever to have aimed at a faithful discharge of his duties, and to have had the interests of his employers earnestly at heart. His decision in the present instance was injudicious, and proved unfortunate. It was, to bear away for the Sandwich Islands. He persuaded himself that it was a matter of necessity, and that the distressed condition of the ship left him no other alternative; but we rather suspect he was so persuaded by the representations of the timid captain. They accordingly stood for the Sandwich Islands, arrived at Woahoo, where the ship underwent the necessary repairs, and again put to sea on the 1st of January, 1813; leaving Mr. Hunt on the island.

We will follow the *Beaver* to Canton, as her fortunes, in some measure, exemplify the evil of commanders of ships acting contrary to orders; and as they form a part of the tissue of cross purposes that marred the great commercial enterprise we have undertaken to record.

The *Beaver* arrived safe at Canton, where Captain Sowle found the letter of Mr. Astor, giving him information of the war and directing him to convey the intelligence to Astoria. He wrote a reply, dictated either by timidity or obstinacy, in which he declined complying with the orders of Mr. Astor, but said he would wait for the return of peace, and then come home. The other proceedings of Captain Sowle were equally wrongheaded and unlucky. He was offered one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the fur he had taken on board at St. Paul's. The goods for which it had been procured cost but twenty-five thousand dollars in New York. Had he accepted this offer,

and re-invested the amount in nankeens, which at that time, in consequence of the interruption to commerce by the war, were at two thirds of their usual price, the whole would have brought three hundred thousand dollars in New York. It is true, the war would have rendered it unsafe to attempt the homeward voyage, but he might have put the goods in store at Canton, until after the peace, and have sailed without risk of capture to Astoria; bringing to the partners at that place tidings of the great profits realized on the outward cargo, and the still greater to be expected from the returns. The news of such a brilliant commencement to their undertaking would have counterbalanced the gloomy tidings of the war; it would have infused new spirit into them all, and given them courage and constancy to persevere in the enterprise. Captain Sowle, however, refused the offer of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and stood wavering and chaffering for higher terms. The furs began to fall in value; this only increased his irresolution; they sunk so much that he feared to sell at all; he borrowed money on Mr. Astor's account at an interest of eighteen per cent, and laid up his ship to await the return of peace.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Hunt soon saw reason to repent the resolution he had adopted in altering the destination of the ship. His stay at the Sandwich Islands was prolonged far beyond expectation. He looked in vain for the annual ship in the spring. Month after month passed by, and still she did not make her appearance. He, too, proved the danger of departing from orders. Had he returned from St. Paul's to Astoria, all the anxiety and despondency about his fate, and about the whole course of the undertaking, would have been obviated. The Beaver would have received the furs collected at the factory and taken them to Canton, and great gains, instead of great losses, would have been the result. The greatest blunder, however, was that committed by Captain Sowle.

At length, about the 20th of June, the ship Albatross, Captain Smith, arrived from China, and brought the first tidings of the war to the Sandwich Islands. Mr. Hunt was no longer in doubt and perplexity as to the reason of the non-appearance of the annual ship. His first thoughts were for the welfare of Astoria, and, concluding that the inhabitants would probably be in want of provisions, he chartered the Albatross for two thousand dollars, to land him, with some supplies, at the mouth of the Columbia, where he arrived, as we have seen, on the 20th of August, after a year's seafaring that might have furnished a chapter in the wanderings of Sinbad.

Washington Irving's Astoria

#### CHAPTER LVIII.

Arrangements Among the Partners- Mr. Hunt Sails in the Albatross. - Arrives at the Marquesas- News of the Frigate Phoebe.- Mr. Hunt Proceeds to the Sandwich Islands.- Voyage of the Lark.- Her Shipwreck.- Transactions With the Natives of the Sandwich Islands - Conduct of Tamaah-maah.

MR. HUNT was overwhelmed with surprise when he learnt the resolution taken by the partners to abandon Astoria. He soon found, however, that matters had gone too far, and the minds of his colleagues had become too firmly bent upon the measure, to render any opposition of avail. He was beset, too, with the same disparaging accounts of the interior trade, and of the whole concerns and prospects of the company that had been rendered to Mr. Astor. His own experience had

been full of perplexities and discouragements. He had a conscientious anxiety for the interests of Mr. Astor, and, not comprehending the extended views of that gentleman, and his habit of operating with great amounts, he had from the first been daunted by the enormous expenses required, and had become disheartened by the subsequent losses sustained, which appeared to him to be ruinous in their magnitude. By degrees, therefore, he was brought to acquiesce in the step taken by his colleagues, as perhaps advisable in the exigencies of the case; his only care was to wind up the business with as little further loss as possible to Mr. Astor.

A large stock of valuable furs was collected at the factory, which it was necessary to get to a market. There were twenty-five Sandwich Islanders also in the employ of the company, whom they were bound, by express agreement, to restore to their native country. For these purposes a ship was necessary.

The Albatross was bound to the Marquesas, and thence to the Sandwich Islands. It was resolved that Mr. Hunt should sail in her in quest of a vessel, and should return, if possible, by the 1st of January, bringing with him a supply of provisions. Should anything occur, however, to prevent his return, an arrangement was to be proposed to Mr. M'Tavish, to transfer such of the men as were so disposed, from the service of the American Fur Company into that of the Northwest, the latter becoming responsible for the wages due them, on receiving an equivalent in goods from the storehouse of the factory. As a means of facilitating the despatch of business, Mr. M'Dougal proposed, that in case Mr. Hunt should not return, the whole arrangement with Mr. M'Tavish should be left solely to him. This was assented to; the contingency being considered possible, but not probable.

It is proper to note, that, on the first announcement by Mr. M'Dougal of his intention to break up the establishment, three of the clerks, British subjects, had, with his consent, passed into the service of the Northwest Company, and departed with Mr. M'Tavish for his post in the interior.

Having arranged all these matters during a sojourn of six days at Astoria, Mr. Hunt set sail in the Albatross on the 26th of August, and arrived without accident at the Marquesas. He had not been there long, when Porter arrived in the frigate Essex, bringing in a number of stout London whalers as prizes, having made a sweeping cruise in the Pacific. From Commodore Porter he received the alarming intelligence that the British frigate Phoebe, with a store-ship mounted with battering pieces, calculated to attack forts, had arrived at Rio Janeiro, where she had been joined by the sloops of war Cherub and Raccoon, and that they had all sailed in company on the 6th of July for the Pacific, bound, as it was supposed, to Columbia River.

Here, then, was the death-warrant of unfortunate Astoria! The anxious mind of Mr. Hunt was in greater perplexity than ever. He had been eager to extricate the property of Mr. Astor from a failing concern with as little loss as possible; there was now danger that the whole would be swallowed up. How was it to be snatched from the gulf? It was impossible to charter a ship for the purpose, now that a British squadron was on its way to the river. He applied to purchase one of the whale ships brought in by Commodore Porter. The commodore demanded twenty-five thousand dollars for her. The price appeared exorbitant, and no bargain could be made. Mr. Hunt

then urged the commodore to fit out one of his prizes, and send her to Astoria, to bring off the property and part of the people, but he declined, "from want of authority." He assured Mr. Hunt, however, that he would endeavor to fall in with the enemy, or should he hear of their having certainly gone to the Columbia, he would either follow or anticipate them, should his circumstances warrant such a step.

In this tantalizing state of suspense, Mr. Hunt was detained at the Marquesas until November 23d, when he proceeded in the Albatross to the Sandwich Islands. He still cherished a faint hope that, notwithstanding the war, and all other discouraging circumstances, the annual ship might have been sent by Mr. Astor, and might have touched at the islands, and proceeded to the Columbia. He knew the pride and interest taken by that gentleman in his great enterprise, and that he would not be deterred by dangers and difficulties from prosecuting it; much less would he leave the infant establishment without succor and support in the time of trouble. In this, we have seen, he did but justice to Mr. Astor; and we must now turn to notice the cause of the non-arrival of the vessel which he had despatched with reinforcements and supplies. Her voyage forms another chapter of accidents in this eventful story.

The Lark sailed from New York on the 6th of March, 1813, and proceeded prosperously on her voyage, until within a few degrees of the Sandwich Islands. Here a gale sprang up that soon blew with tremendous violence. The Lark was a staunch and noble ship, and for a time buffeted bravely with the storm. Unluckily, however, she "broached to," and was struck by a heavy sea, that hove her on her beam-ends. The helm, too, was knocked to leeward, all command of the vessel was lost, and another mountain wave completely overset her. Orders were given to cut away the masts. In the hurry and confusion, the boats also were unfortunately cut adrift. The wreck then righted, but was a mere hulk, full of water, with a heavy sea washing over it, and all the hatches off. On mustering the crew, one man was missing, who was discovered below in the forecabin, drowned.

In cutting away the masts, it had been utterly impossible to observe the necessary precaution of commencing with the lee rigging, that being, from the position of the ship, completely under water. The masts and spars, therefore, being linked to the wreck by the shrouds and the rigging, remained alongside for four days. During all this time the ship lay rolling in the trough of the sea, the heavy surges breaking over her, and the spars heaving and banging to and fro, bruising the half-drowned sailors that clung to the bowsprit and the stumps of the masts. The sufferings of these poor fellows were intolerable. They stood to their waists in water, in imminent peril of being washed off by every surge. In this position they dared not sleep, lest they should let go their hold and be swept away. The only dry place on the wreck was the bowsprit. Here they took turns to be tied on, for half an hour at a time, and in this way gained short snatches of sleep.

On the 14th, the first mate died at his post, and was swept off by the surges. On the 17th, two seamen, faint and exhausted, were washed overboard. The next wave threw their bodies back upon the deck, where they remained, swashing backward and forward, ghastly objects to the almost perishing survivors. Mr. Ogden, the supercargo, who was at the bowsprit, called to the men nearest to the bodies, to fasten them to the wreck; as a last horrible resource in case of being driven to

extremity by famine!

On the 17th the gale gradually subsided, and the sea became calm. The sailors now crawled feebly about the wreck, and began to relieve it from the main incumbrances. The spars were cleared away, the anchors and guns heaved overboard; the sprit-sail yard was rigged for a jury-mast, and a mizzen topsail set upon it. A sort of stage was made of a few broken spars, on which the crew were raised above the surface of the water, so as to be enabled to keep themselves dry, and to sleep comfortably. Still their sufferings from hunger and thirst were great; but there was a Sandwich Islander on board, an expert swimmer, who found his way into the cabin, and occasionally brought up a few bottles of wine and porter, and at length got into the rum, and secured a quarter cask of wine. A little raw pork was likewise procured, and dealt out with a sparing hand. The horrors of their situation were increased by the sight of numerous sharks prowling about the wreck, as if waiting for their prey. On the 24th, the cook, a black man, died, and was cast into the sea, when he was instantly seized on by these ravenous monsters.

They had been several days making slow headway under their scanty sail, when, on the 25th, they came in sight of land. It was about fifteen leagues distant, and they remained two or three days drifting along in sight of it. On the 28th, they descried, to their great transport, a canoe approaching, managed by natives. They came alongside, and brought a most welcome supply of potatoes. They informed them that the land they had made was one of the Sandwich Islands. The second mate and one of the seamen went on shore in the canoe for water and provisions, and to procure aid from the islanders, in towing the wreck into a harbor.

Neither of the men returned, nor was any assistance sent from shore. The next day, ten or twelve canoes came alongside, but roamed round the wreck like so many sharks, and would render no aid in towing her to land.

The sea continued to break over the vessel with such violence, that it was impossible to stand at the helm without the assistance of lashings. The crew were now so worn down by famine and thirst, that the captain saw it would be impossible for them to withstand the breaking of the sea, when the ship should ground; he deemed the only chance for their lives, therefore, was to get to land in the canoes, and stand ready to receive and protect the wreck when she should drift ashore. Accordingly, they all got safe to land, but had scarcely touched the beach when they were surrounded by the natives, who stripped them almost naked. The name of this inhospitable island was Tahoorowa.

In the course of the night, the wreck came drifting to the strand, with the surf thundering around her, and shortly afterwards bilged. On the following morning, numerous casks of provisions floated on shore. The natives staved them for the sake of the iron hoops, but would not allow the crew to help themselves to the contents, or to go on board of the wreck.

As the crew were in want of everything, and as it might be a long time before any opportunity occurred for them to get away from these islands, Mr. Ogden, as soon as he could get a chance,

made his way to the island of Owyhee, and endeavored to make some arrangement with the king for the relief of his companions in misfortune.

The illustrious Tamaahmaah, as we have shown on a former occasion, was a shrewd bargainer, and in the present instance proved himself an experienced wrecker. His negotiations with M'Dougal, and the other "Eris of the great American Fur Company," had but little effect on present circumstances, and he proceeded to avail himself of their misfortunes. He agreed to furnish the crew with provisions during their stay in his territories, and to return to them all their clothing that could be found, but he stipulated that the wreck should be abandoned to him as a waif cast by fortune on his shores. With these conditions Mr. Ogden was fain to comply. Upon this the great Tamaahmaah deputed his favorite, John Young, the tarpaulin governor of Owyhee, to proceed with a number of royal guards, and take possession of the wreck on behalf of the crown. This was done accordingly, and the property and crew were removed to Owyhee. The royal bounty appears to have been but scanty in its dispensations. The crew fared but meagerly; though, on reading the journal of the voyage, it is singular to find them, after all the hardships they had suffered, so sensitive about petty inconveniences, as to exclaim against the king as a "savage monster," for refusing them a "pot to cook in," and denying Mr. Ogden the use of a knife and fork which had been saved from the wreck.

Such was the unfortunate catastrophe of the Lark; had she reached her destination in safety, affairs at Astoria might have taken a different course. A strange fatality seems to have attended all the expeditions by sea, nor were those by land much less disastrous.

Captain Northrop was still at the Sandwich Islands, on December 20th, when Mr. Hunt arrived. The latter immediately purchased, for ten thousand dollars, a brig called the Pedler, and put Captain Northrop in command of her. They set sail for Astoria on the 22d January, intending to remove the property from thence as speedily as possible to the Russian settlements on the northwest coast, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the British. Such were the orders of Mr. Astor, sent out by the Lark.

We will now leave Mr. Hunt on his voyage, and return to see what has taken place at Astoria during his absence.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER LIX.

Arrival of M'Tavish at Astoria.- Conduct of His Followers.- Negotiations of M'Dougal and M'Tavish. - Bargain for the Transfer of Astoria- Doubts Entertained of the Loyalty of M'Dougal.

ON the 2d of October, about five weeks after Mr. Hunt had sailed in the Albatross from Astoria, Mr. M'Kenzie set off with two canoes, and twelve men, for the posts of Messrs. Stuart and Clarke, to appraise them of the new arrangements determined upon in the recent conference of the partners at the factory.

He had not ascended the river a hundred miles, when he met a squadron of ten canoes, sweeping merrily down under British colors, the Canadian oarsmen, as usual, in full song.

It was an armament fitted out by M'Tavish, who had with him Mr. J. Stuart, another partner of the Northwest Company, together with some clerks, and sixty-eight men - seventy-five souls in all. They had heard of the frigate Phoebe and the Isaac Todd being on the high seas, and were on their way down to await their arrival. In one of the canoes Mr. Clarke came as a passenger, the alarming intelligence having brought him down from his post on the Spokan. Mr. M'Kenzie immediately determined to return with him to Astoria, and, veering about, the two parties encamped together for the night. The leaders, of course, observed a due decorum, but some of the subalterns could not restrain their chuckling exultation, boasting that they would soon plant the British standard on the walls of Astoria, and drive the Americans out of the country.

In the course of the evening, Mr. M'Kenzie had a secret conference with Mr. Clarke, in which they agreed to set off privately before daylight, and get down in time to appraise M'Dougal of the approach of these Northwesters. The latter, however, were completely on the alert; just as M'Kenzie's canoes were about to push off, they were joined by a couple from the Northwest squadron, in which was M'Tavish, with two clerks, and eleven men. With these, he intended to push forward and make arrangements, leaving the rest of the convoy, in which was a large quantity of furs, to await his orders.

The two parties arrived at Astoria on the 7th of October. The Northwesters encamped under the guns of the fort, and displayed the British colors. The young men in the fort, natives of the United States, were on the point of hoisting the American flag, but were forbidden by Mr. M'Dougal. They were astonished at such a prohibition, and were exceedingly galled by the tone and manner assumed by the clerks and retainers of the Northwest Company, who ruffled about in that swelling and braggart style which grows up among these heroes of the wilderness; they, in fact, considered themselves lords of the ascendant and regarded the hampered and harassed Astorians as a conquered people.

On the following day M'Dougal convened the clerks, and read to them an extract from a letter from his uncle, Mr. Angus Shaw, one of the principal partners of the Northwest Company, announcing the coming of the Phoebe and Isaac Todd, "to take and destroy everything American on the northwest coast."

This intelligence was received without dismay by such of the clerks as were natives of the United States. They had felt indignant at seeing their national flag struck by a Canadian commander, and the British flag flowed, as it were, in their faces. They had been stung to the quick, also, by the vaunting airs assumed by the Northwesters. In this mood of mind, they would willingly have nailed their colors to the staff, and defied the frigate. She could not come within many miles of the fort, they observed, and any boats she might send could be destroyed by their cannon.

There were cooler and more calculating spirits, however, who had the control of affairs, and

felt nothing of the patriotic pride and indignation of these youths. The extract of the letter had, apparently, been read by M'Dougal, merely to prepare the way for a preconcerted stroke of management. On the same day Mr. M'Tavish proposed to purchase the whole stock of goods and furs belonging to the company, both at Astoria and in the interior, at cost and charges. Mr. M'Dougal undertook to comply; assuming the whole management of the negotiation in virtue of the power vested in him, in case of the non-arrival of Mr. Hunt. That power, however, was limited and specific, and did not extend to an operation of this nature and extent; no objection, however, was made to his assumption, and he and M'Tavish soon made a preliminary arrangement, perfectly satisfactory to the latter.

Mr. Stuart, and the reserve party of Northwesters, arrived shortly afterwards, and encamped with M'Tavish. The former exclaimed loudly against the terms of the arrangement, and insisted upon a reduction of the prices. New negotiations had now to be entered into. The demands of the Northwesters were made in a peremptory tone, and they seemed disposed to dictate like conquerors. The Americans looked on with indignation and impatience. They considered M'Dougal as acting, if not a perfidious, certainly a craven part. He was continually repairing to the camp to negotiate, instead of keeping within his walls and receiving overtures in his fortress. His case, they observed, was not so desperate as to excuse such crouching. He might, in fact, hold out for his own terms. The Northwest party had lost their ammunition; they had no goods to trade with the natives for provisions; and they were so destitute that M'Dougal had absolutely to feed them, while he negotiated with them. He, on the contrary, was well lodged and victualled; had sixty men, with arms, ammunition, boats, and everything requisite either for defense or retreat. The party, beneath the guns of his fort, were at his mercy; should an enemy appear in the offing, he could pack up the most valuable part of the property and retire to some place of concealment, or make off for the interior.

These considerations, however, had no weight with Mr. M'Dougal, or were overruled by other motives. The terms of sale were lowered by him to the standard fixed by Mr. Stuart, and an agreement executed on the 16th of October, by which the furs and merchandise of all kinds in the country, belonging to Mr. Astor, passed into the possession of the Northwest Company at about a third of their value. \* A safe passage through the Northwest posts was guaranteed to such as did not choose to enter into the service of that Company, and the amount of wages due to them was to be deducted from the price paid for Astoria.

The conduct and motives of Mr. M'Dougal, throughout the whole of this proceeding, have been strongly questioned by the other partners. He has been accused of availing himself of a wrong construction of powers vested in him at his own request, and of sacrificing the interests of Mr. Astor to the Northwest Company, under the promise or hope of advantage to himself.

He always insisted, however, that he made the best bargain for Mr. Astor that circumstances would permit; the frigate being hourly expected, in which case the whole property of that gentleman would be liable to capture. That the return of Mr. Hunt was problematical; the frigate intending to cruise along the coast for two years, and clear it of all American vessels. He moreover

averred, and M'Tavish corroborated his averment by certificate, that he proposed an arrangement to that gentleman, by which the furs were to be sent to Canton, and sold there at Mr. Astor's risk, and for his account; but the proposition was not acceded to.

Notwithstanding all his representations, several of the persons present at the transaction, and acquainted with the whole course of the affair, and among the number Mr. M'Kenzie himself, his occasional coadjutor, remained firm in the belief that he had acted a hollow part. Neither did he succeed in exculpating himself to Mr. Astor; that gentleman declaring, in a letter written some time afterwards, to Mr. Hunt, that he considered the property virtually given away. "Had our place and our property," he adds, "been fairly captured, I should have preferred it; I should not feel as if I were disgraced."

All these may be unmerited suspicions; but it certainly is a circumstance strongly corroborative of them, that Mr. M'Dougal, shortly after concluding this agreement, became a member of the Northwest Company, and received a share productive of a handsome income.

\* Not quite \$40,000 were allowed for furs worth upwards of \$100,000. Beaver was valued at two dollars per skin, though worth five dollars. Land otter at fifty cents, though worth five dollars. Sea-otter at twelve dollars, worth from forty-five to sixty dollars; and for several kinds of furs nothing was allowed. Moreover, the goods and merchandise for the Indian trade ought to have brought three times the amount for which they were sold.

The following estimate has been made of the articles on hand, and the prices:

17,705 lbs. beaver parchment, valued at \$2.00 worth \$5.00

465 old coat beaver, valued at 1.66 worth 3.50

907 land otter, valued at .50 worth 5.00

68 sea-otter, valued at 12.00 worth 45 to 60.00

30 sea-otter, valued at 5.00 worth 25.00

Nothing was allowed for

179 mink skins, worth each .40

22 raccoon, worth each .40

28 lynx, worth each 2.00

18 fox, worth each 1.00

106 fox, worth each 1.50

71 black bear, worth each 4.00

16 grizzly bear, worth each 10.00

Washington Irving's Astoria

CHAPTER LX.

Arrival of a Strange Sail.- Agitation at Astoria.- Warlike Offer of Comcomly. - Astoria Taken Possession of by the British. - Indignation of Comcomly at the Conduct of His Son-in-Law.

ON the morning of the 30th of November, a sail was descried doubling Cape Disappointment. It

came to anchor in Baker's Bay, and proved to be a ship of war. Of what nation? was now the anxious inquiry. If English, why did it come alone? where was the merchant vessel that was to have accompanied it? If American, what was to become of the newly acquired possession of the Northwest Company?

In this dilemma, M'Tavish, in all haste, loaded two barges with all the packages of furs bearing the mark of the Northwest Company, and made off for Tongue Point, three miles up the river. There he was to await a preconcerted signal from M'Dougal, on ascertaining the character of the ship. If it should prove American, M'Tavish would have a fair start, and could bear off his rich cargo to the interior. It is singular that this prompt mode of conveying valuable, but easily transportable effects beyond the reach of a hostile ship should not have suggested itself while the property belonged to Mr. Astor.

In the meantime, M'Dougal, who still remained nominal chief at the fort, launched a canoe, manned by men recently in the employ of the American Fur Company, and steered for the ship. On the way, he instructed his men to pass themselves for Americans or Englishmen, according to the exigencies of the case.

The vessel proved to be the British sloop of war Raccoon, of twenty-six guns, and one hundred and twenty men, commanded by Captain Black. According to the account of that officer, the frigate Phoebe, and two sloops of war Cherub and Raccoon, had sailed in convoy of the Isaac Todd from Rio Janeiro. On board of the Phoebe, Mr. John M'Donald, a partner of the Northwest Company, embarked as passenger, to profit by the anticipated catastrophe at Astoria. The convoy was separated by stress of weather off Cape Horn. The three ships of war came together again at the island of Juan Fernandez, their appointed rendezvous, but waited in vain for the Isaac Todd.

In the meantime, intelligence was received of the mischief that Commodore Porter was doing among the British whale ships. Commodore Hillyer immediately set sail in quest of him with the Phoebe and the Cherub, transferring Mr. M'Donald to the Raccoon, and ordered that vessel to proceed to the Columbia.

The officers of the Raccoon were in high spirits. The agents of the Northwest Company, in instigating the expedition, had talked of immense booty to be made by the fortunate captors of Astoria. Mr. M'Donald had kept up the excitement during the voyage, so that not a midshipman but revelled in dreams of ample prize-money, nor a lieutenant that would have sold his chance for a thousand pounds. Their disappointment, therefore, may easily be conceived, when they learned that their warlike attack upon Astoria had been forestalled by a snug commercial arrangement; that their anticipated booty had become British property in the regular course of traffic, and that all this had been effected by the very Company which had been instrumental in getting them sent on what they now stigmatized as a fool's errand. They felt as if they had been duped and made tools of, by a set of shrewd men of traffic, who had employed them to crack the nut, while they carried off the kernel. In a word, M'Dougal found himself so ungraciously received by his countrymen on board of the ship, that he was glad to cut short his visit, and return to shore. He was

busy at the fort, making preparations for the reception of the captain of the Raccoon, when his one-eyed Indian father-in-law made his appearance, with a train of Chinook warriors, all painted and equipped in warlike style.

Old Comcomly had beheld, with dismay, the arrival of a "big war canoe" displaying the British flag. The shrewd old savage had become something of a politician in the course of his daily visits at the fort. He knew of the war existing between the nations, but knew nothing of the arrangement between M'Dougal and M'Tavish. He trembled, therefore, for the power of his white son-in-law, and the new-fledged grandeur of his daughter, and assembled his warriors in all haste. "King George," said he, "has sent his great canoe to destroy the fort, and make slaves of all the inhabitants. Shall we suffer it? The Americans are the first white men that have fixed themselves in the land. They have treated us like brothers. Their great chief has taken my daughter to be his squaw: we are, therefore, as one people."

His warriors all determined to stand by the Americans to the last, and to this effect they came painted and armed for battle. Comcomly made a spirited war-speech to his son-in-law. He offered to kill every one of King George's men that should attempt to land. It was an easy matter. The ship could not approach within six miles of the fort; the crew could only land in boats. The woods reached to the water's edge; in these, he and his warriors would conceal themselves, and shoot down the enemy as fast as they put foot on shore.

M'Dougal was, doubtless, properly sensible of this parental devotion on the part of his savage father-in-law, and perhaps a little rebuked by the game spirit, so opposite to his own. He assured Comcomly, however, that his solicitude for the safety of himself and the princess was superfluous; as, though the ship belonged to King George, her crew would not injure the Americans, or their Indian allies. He advised him and his warriors, therefore, to lay aside their weapons and war shirts, wash off the paint from their faces and bodies, and appear like clean and civil savages, to receive the strangers courteously.

Comcomly was sorely puzzled at this advice, which accorded so little with his Indian notions of receiving a hostile nation, and it was only after repeated and positive assurances of the amicable intentions of the strangers that he was induced to lower his fighting tone. He said something to his warriors explanatory of this singular posture of affairs, and in vindication, perhaps, of the pacific temper of his son-in-law. They all gave a shrug and an Indian grunt of acquiescence, and went off sulkily to their village, to lay aside their weapons for the present.

The proper arrangements being made for the reception of Captain Black, that officer caused his ship's boats to be manned, and landed with befitting state at Astoria. From the talk that had been made by the Northwest Company of the strength of the place, and the armament they had required to assist in its reduction, he expected to find a fortress of some importance. When he beheld nothing but stockades and bastions, calculated for defense against naked savages, he felt an emotion of indignant surprise, mingled with something of the ludicrous. "Is this the fort," cried he, "about which I have heard so much talking? D-n me, but I'd batter it down in two hours with a

four pounder!"

When he learned, however, the amount of rich furs that had been passed into the hands of the Northwesters, he was outrageous, and insisted that an inventory should be taken of all the property purchased of the Americans, "with a view to ulterior measures in England, for the recovery of the value from the Northwest Company."

As he grew cool, however, he gave over all idea of preferring such a claim, and reconciled himself, as well as he could, to the idea of having been forestalled by his bargaining coadjutors.

On the 12th of December, the fate of Astoria was consummated by a regular ceremonial. Captain Black, attended by his officers, entered the fort, caused the British standard to be erected, broke a bottle of wine and declared, in a loud voice, that he took possession of the establishment and of the country, in the name of his Britannic Majesty, changing the name of Astoria to that of Fort George.

The Indian warriors, who had offered their services to repel the strangers, were present on this occasion. It was explained to them as being a friendly arrangement and transfer, but they shook their heads grimly, and considered it an act of subjugation of their ancient allies. They regretted that they had complied with M'Dougal's wishes, in laying aside their arms, and remarked, that, however the Americans might conceal the fact, they were undoubtedly all slaves; nor could they be persuaded of the contrary, until they beheld the Raccoon depart without taking away any prisoners.

As to Comcomly, he no longer prided himself upon his white son-in-law, but, whenever he was asked about him, shook his head, and replied, that his daughter had made a mistake, and, instead of getting a great warrior for a husband, had married herself to a squaw.

Washington Irving's Astoria  
CHAPTER LXI.

Arrival of the Brig Pedler at Astoria.- Breaking Up of the Establishment .-Departure of Several of the Company. - Tragical Story Told by the Squaw of Pierre Dorion.- Fate of Reed and His Companions. - Attempts of Mr. Astor to Renew His Enterprise.- Disappointment. - Concluding Observations and Reflection.

HAVING given the catastrophe at the Fort of Astoria, it remains now but to gather up a few loose ends of this widely excursive narrative and conclude. On the 28th of February the brig Pedler anchored in Columbia River. It will be recollected that Mr. Hunt had purchased this vessel at the Sandwich Islands, to take off the furs collected at the factory, and to restore the Sandwich Islanders to their homes. When that gentleman learned, however, the precipitate and summary manner in which the property had been bargained away by M'Dougal, he expressed his indignation in the strongest terms, and determined to make an effort to get back the furs. As soon as his wishes were known in this respect, M'Dougal came to sound him on behalf of the Northwest Company,

---

intimating that he had no doubt the peltries might be repurchased at an advance of fifty per cent. This overture was not calculated to soothe the angry feelings of Mr. Hunt, and his indignation was complete, when he discovered that M'Dougal had become a partner of the Northwest Company, and had actually been so since the 23d of December. He had kept his partnership a secret, however; had retained the papers of the Pacific Fur Company in his possession; and had continued to act as Mr. Astor's agent, though two of the partners of the other company, Mr. M'Kenzie and Mr. Clarke, were present. He had, moreover, divulged to his new associates all that he knew as to Mr. Astor's plans and affairs, and had made copies of his business letters for their perusal.

Mr. Hunt now considered the whole conduct of M'Dougal hollow and collusive. His only thought was, therefore, to get all the papers of the concern out of his hands, and bring the business to a close; for the interests of Mr. Astor were yet completely at stake; the drafts of the Northwest Company in his favor, for the purchase money, not having yet been obtained. With some difficulty he succeeded in getting possession of the papers. The bills or drafts were delivered without hesitation. The latter he remitted to Mr. Astor by some of his associates, who were about to cross the continent to New York. This done, he embarked on board the *Pedler*, on the 3d of April, accompanied by two of the clerks, Mr. Seton and Mr. Halsey, and bade a final adieu to Astoria.

The next day, April 4th, Messrs. Clarke, M'Kenzie, David Stuart, and such of the Astorians as had not entered into the service of the Northwest Company, set out to cross the Rocky Mountains. It is not our intention to take the reader another journey across those rugged barriers; but we will step forward with the travellers to a distance on their way, merely to relate their interview with a character already noted in this work.

As the party were proceeding up the Columbia, near the mouth of the Wallah-Wallah River, several Indian canoes put off from the shore to overtake them, and a voice called upon them in French and requested them to stop. They accordingly put to shore, and were joined by those in the canoes. To their surprise, they recognized in the person who had hailed them the Indian wife of Pierre Dorion, accompanied by her two children. She had a story to tell, involving the fate of several of our unfortunate adventurers.

Mr. John Reed, the Hibernian, it will be remembered, had been detached during the summer to the Snake River. His party consisted of four Canadians, Giles Le Clerc, Francois Landry, Jean Baptiste Turcot, and Andre La Chapelle, together with two hunters, Pierre Dorion and Pierre Delaunay; Dorion, as usual, being accompanied by his wife and children. The objects of this expedition were twofold: to trap beaver, and to search for the three hunters, Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner.

In the course of the autumn, Reed lost one man, Landry, by death; another one, Pierre Delaunay, who was of a sullen, perverse disposition, left him in a moody fit, and was never heard of afterwards. The number of his party was not, however, reduced by these losses, as the three hunters, Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner, had joined it.

Reed now built a house on the Snake River, for their winter quarters; which being completed, the party set about trapping. Rezner, Le Clerc, and Pierre Dorion went about five days' journey from the wintering house, to a part of the country well stocked with beaver. Here they put up a hut, and proceeded to trap with great success. While the men were out hunting, Pierre Dorion's wife remained at home to dress the skins and prepare the meals. She was thus employed one evening about the beginning of January, cooking the supper of the hunters, when she heard footsteps, and Le Clerc staggered, pale and bleeding, into the hut. He informed her that a party of savages had surprised them, while at their traps, and had killed Rezner and her husband. He had barely strength left to give this information, when he sank upon the ground.

The poor woman saw that the only chance for life was instant flight, but, in this exigency, showed that presence of mind and force of character for which she had frequently been noted. With great difficulty, she caught two of the horses belonging to the party. Then collecting her clothes and a small quantity of beaver meat and dried salmon, she packed them upon one of the horses, and helped the wounded man to mount upon it. On the other horse she mounted with her two children, and hurried away from this dangerous neighborhood, directing her flight to Mr. Reed's establishment. On the third day, she descried a number of Indians on horseback proceeding in an easterly direction. She immediately dismounted with her children, and helped LeClerc likewise to dismount, and all concealed themselves. Fortunately they escaped the sharp eyes of the savages, but had to proceed with the utmost caution. That night they slept without fire or water; she managed to keep her children warm in her arms; but before morning, poor Le Clerc died.

With the dawn of day the resolute woman resumed her course, and, on the fourth day, reached the house of Mr. Reed. It was deserted, and all round were marks of blood and signs of a furious massacre. Not doubting that Mr. Reed and his party had all fallen victims, she turned in fresh horror from the spot. For two days she continued hurrying forward, ready to sink for want of food, but more solicitous about her children than herself. At length she reached a range of the Rocky Mountains, near the upper part of the Wallah-Wallah River. Here she chose a wild lonely ravine, as her place of winter refuge.

She had fortunately a buffalo robe and three deer-skins; of these, and of pine bark and cedar branches, she constructed a rude wigwam, which she pitched beside a mountain spring. Having no other food, she killed the two horses, and smoked their flesh. The skins aided to cover her hut. Here she dragged out the winter, with no other company than her two children. Towards the middle of March her provisions were nearly exhausted. She therefore packed up the remainder, slung it on her back, and, with her helpless little ones, set out again on her wanderings. Crossing the ridge of mountains, she descended to the banks of the Wallah-Wallah, and kept along them until she arrived where that river throws itself into the Columbia. She was hospitably received and entertained by the Wallah-Wallahs, and had been nearly two weeks among them when the two canoes passed.

On being interrogated, she could assign no reason for this murderous attack of the savages; it appeared to be perfectly wanton and unprovoked. Some of the Astorians supposed it an act of

---

butchery by a roving band of Blackfeet; others, however, and with greater probability of correctness, have ascribed it to the tribe of Pierced-nose Indians, in revenge for the death of their comrade hanged by order of Mr. Clarke. If so, it shows that these sudden and apparently wanton outbreaks of sanguinary violence on the part of the savages have often some previous, though perhaps remote, provocation.

The narrative of the Indian woman closes the checkered adventures of some of the personages of this motley story; such as the honest Hibernian Reed, and Dorion the hybrid interpreter. Turcot and La Chapelle were two of the men who fell off from Mr. Crooks in the course of his wintry journey, and had subsequently such disastrous times among the Indians. We cannot but feel some sympathy with that persevering trio of Kentuckians, Robinson, Rezner, and Hoback, who twice turned back when on their way homeward, and lingered in the wilderness to perish by the hands of savages.

The return parties from Astoria, both by sea and land, experienced on the way as many adventures, vicissitudes, and mishaps, as the far-famed heroes of the Odyssey; they reached their destination at different times, bearing tidings to Mr. Astor of the unfortunate termination of his enterprise.

That gentleman, however, was not disposed, even yet, to give the matter up as lost. On the contrary, his spirit was roused by what he considered ungenerous and unmerited conduct on the part of the Northwest Company. "After their treatment of me," said he, in a letter to Mr. Hunt, "I have no idea of remaining quiet and idle." He determined, therefore, as soon as circumstances would permit, to resume his enterprise.

At the return of peace, Astoria, with the adjacent country, reverted to the United States by the treaty of Ghent, on the principle of status ante bellum, and Captain Biddle was despatched in the sloop of war, Ontario, to take formal possession.

In the winter of 1815, a law was passed by Congress prohibiting all traffic of British traders within the territories of the United States.

The favorable moment seemed now to Mr. Astor to have arrived for the revival of his favorite enterprise, but new difficulties had grown up to impede it. The Northwest Company were now in complete occupation of the Columbia River, and its chief tributary streams, holding the posts which he had established, and carrying on a trade throughout the neighboring region, in defiance of the prohibitory law of Congress, which, in effect, was a dead letter beyond the mountains.

To dispossess them would be an undertaking of almost a belligerent nature; for their agents and retainers were well armed, and skilled in the use of weapons, as is usual with Indian traders. The ferocious and bloody contests which had taken place between the rival trading parties of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies had shown what might be expected from commercial feuds in the lawless depths of the wilderness. Mr. Astor did not think it advisable, therefore, to at-

tempt the matter without the protection of the American flag; under which his people might rally in case of need. He accordingly made an informal overture to the President of the United States, Mr. Madison, through Mr. Gallatin, offering to renew his enterprise, and to reestablish Astoria, provided it would be protected by the American flag, and made a military post; stating that the whole force required would not exceed a lieutenant's command.

The application, approved and recommended by Mr. Gallatin, one of the most enlightened statesmen of our country, was favorably received, but no step was taken in consequence; the President not being disposed, in all probability, to commit himself by any direct countenance or overt act. Discouraged by this supineness on the part of the government, Mr. Astor did not think fit to renew his overtures in a more formal manner, and the favorable moment for the re-occupation of Astoria was suffered to pass unimproved.

The British trading establishments were thus enabled, without molestation, to strike deep their roots, and extend their ramifications, in despite of the prohibition of Congress, until they had spread themselves over the rich field of enterprise opened by Mr. Astor. The British government soon began to perceive the importance of this region, and to desire to include it within their territorial domains. A question has consequently risen as to the right to the soil, and has become one of the most perplexing now open between the United States and Great Britain. In the first treaty relative to it, under date of October 20th, 1818, the question was left unsettled, and it was agreed that the country on the northwest coast of America, westward of the Rocky Mountains, claimed by either nation, should be open to the inhabitants of both for ten years, for the purpose of trade, with the equal right of navigating all its rivers. When these ten years had expired, a subsequent treaty, in 1828, extended the arrangement to ten additional years. So the matter stands at present.

On casting back our eyes over the series of events we have recorded, we see no reason to attribute the failure of this great commercial undertaking to any fault in the scheme, or omission in the execution of it, on the part of the projector. It was a magnificent enterprise; well concerted and carried on, without regard to difficulties or expense. A succession of adverse circumstances and cross purposes, however, beset it almost from the outset; some of them, in fact, arising from neglect of the orders and instructions of Mr. Astor. The first crippling blow was the loss of the *Tonquin*, which clearly would not have happened, had Mr. Astor's earnest injunctions with regard to the natives been attended to. Had this ship performed her voyage prosperously, and revisited Astoria in due time, the trade of the establishment would have taken its preconcerted course, and the spirits of all concerned been kept up by a confident prospect of success. Her dismal catastrophe struck a chill into every heart, and prepared the way for subsequent despondency.

Another cause of embarrassment and loss was the departure from the plan of Mr. Astor, as to the voyage of the *Beaver*, subsequent to her visiting Astoria. The variation from this plan produced a series of cross purposes, disastrous to the establishment, and detained Mr. Hunt absent from his post, when his presence there was of vital importance to the enterprise; so essential is it for an agent, in any great and complicated undertaking, to execute faithfully, and to the letter, the part marked out for him by the master mind which has concerted the whole.

The breaking out of the war between the United States and Great Britain multiplied the hazards and embarrassments of the enterprise. The disappointment as to convoy rendered it difficult to keep up reinforcements and supplies; and the loss of the Lark added to the tissue of misadventures.

That Mr. Astor battled resolutely against every difficulty, and pursued his course in defiance of every loss, has been sufficiently shown. Had he been seconded by suitable agents, and properly protected by government, the ultimate failure of his plan might yet have been averted. It was his great misfortune that his agents were not imbued with his own spirit. Some had not capacity sufficient to comprehend the real nature and extent of his scheme; others were alien in feeling and interest, and had been brought up in the service of a rival company. Whatever sympathies they might originally have had with him, were impaired, if not destroyed, by the war. They looked upon his cause as desperate, and only considered how they might make interest to regain a situation under their former employers. The absence of Mr. Hunt, the only real representative of Mr. Astor, at the time of the capitulation with the Northwest Company, completed the series of cross purposes. Had that gentleman been present, the transfer, in all probability, would not have taken place.

It is painful, at all times, to see a grand and beneficial stroke of genius fall of its aim: but we regret the failure of this enterprise in a national point of view; for, had it been crowned with success, it would have redounded greatly to the advantage and extension of our commerce. The profits drawn from the country in question by the British Fur Company, though of ample amount, form no criterion by which to judge of the advantages that would have arisen had it been entirely in the hands of the citizens of the United States. That company, as has been shown, is limited in the nature and scope of its operations, and can make but little use of the maritime facilities held out by an emporium and a harbor on that coast. In our hands, besides the roving bands of trappers and traders, the country would have been explored and settled by industrious husbandmen; and the fertile valleys bordering its rivers, and shut up among its mountains, would have been made to pour forth their agricultural treasures to contribute to the general wealth.

In respect to commerce, we should have had a line of trading posts from the Mississippi and the Missouri across the Rocky Mountains, forming a high road from the great regions of the west to the shores of the Pacific. We should have had a fortified post and port at the mouth of the Columbia, commanding the trade of that river and its tributaries, and of a wide extent of country and sea-coast; carrying on an active and profitable commerce with the Sandwich Islands, and a direct and frequent communication with China. In a word, Astoria might have realized the anticipations of Mr. Astor, so well understood and appreciated by Mr. Jefferson, in gradually becoming a commercial empire beyond the mountains, peopled by "free and independent Americans, and linked with us by ties of blood and interest."

We repeat, therefore, our sincere regret that our government should have neglected the overture of Mr. Astor, and suffered the moment to pass by, when full possession of this region might have been taken quietly, as a matter of course, and a military post established, without dispute, at Asto-

ria. Our statesmen have become sensible, when too late, of the importance of this measure. Bills have repeatedly been brought into Congress for the purpose, but without success; and our rightful possessions on that coast, as well as our trade on the Pacific, have no rallying point protected by the national flag, and by a military force.

In the meantime, the second period of ten years is fast elapsing. In 1838, the question of title will again come up, and most probably, in the present amicable state of our relations with Great Britain, will be again postponed. Every year, however, the litigated claim is growing in importance. There is no pride so jealous and irritable as the pride of territory. As one wave of emigration after another rolls into the vast regions of the west, and our settlements stretch towards the Rocky Mountains, the eager eyes of our pioneers will pry beyond, and they will become impatient of any barrier or impediment in the way of what they consider a grand outlet of our empire. Should any circumstance, therefore, unfortunately occur to disturb the present harmony of the two nations, this ill-adjusted question, which now lies dormant, may suddenly start up into one of belligerent import, and Astoria become the watchword in a contest for dominion on the shores of the Pacific.

Since the above was written, the question of dominion over the vast territory beyond the Rocky Mountains, which for a time threatened to disturb the peaceful relations with our transatlantic kindred, has been finally settled in a spirit of mutual concession, and the venerable projector whose early enterprise forms the subject of this work had the satisfaction of knowing, ere his eyes closed upon the world, that the flag of his country again waved over "ASTORIA."

Washington Irving's Astoria

APPENDIX

Draught of a Petition to Congress, sent by Mr. Astor in 1812.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled,

The petition of the American Fur Company respectfully sheweth:

THAT the trade with the several Indian tribes of North America has, for many years past, been almost exclusively carried on by the merchants of Canada; who, having formed powerful and extensive associations for that purpose, being aided by British capital, and being encouraged by the favor and protection of the British government, could not be opposed, with any prospect of success by individuals of the United States.

That by means of the above trade, thus systematically pursued, not only the inhabitants of the United States have been deprived of commercial profits and advantages, to which they appear to have just and natural pretensions, but a great and dangerous influence has been established over the Indian tribes, difficult to be counteracted, and capable of being exerted at critical periods, to

the great injury and annoyance of our frontier settlements.

That in order to obtain at least a part of the above trade, and more particularly that which is within the boundaries of the United States, your petitioners, in the year 1808, obtained an act of incorporation from the State of New York, whereby they are enabled, with a competent capital, to carry on the said trade with the Indians in such a manner as may be conformable to the laws and regulations of the United States, in relation to such a commerce.

That the capital mentioned in the said act, amounting to one million of dollars, having been duly formed, your petitioners entered with zeal and alacrity into those large and important arrangements, which were necessary for, or conducive to the object of their incorporation; and, among other things, purchased a great part of the stock in trade, and trading establishments, of the Michilimackinac Company of Canada. Your petitioners also, with the expectation of great public and private advantages from the use of the said establishments, ordered, during the spring and summer of 1810, an assortment of goods from England, suitable for the Indian trade; which, in consequence of the President's proclamation of November of that year, were shipped to Canada instead of New York, and have been transported, under a very heavy expense, into the interior of the country. But as they could not legally be brought into the Indian country within the boundaries of the United States, they have been stored on the Island of St. Joseph, in Lake Huron, where they now remain.

Your petitioners, with great deference and implicit submission to the wisdom of the national legislature, beg leave to suggest for consideration, whether they have not some claim to national attention and encouragement, from the nature and importance of their undertaking; which though hazardous and uncertain as concerns their private emolument, must, at any rate, redound to the public security and advantage. If their undertaking shall appear to be of the description given, they would further suggest to your honorable bodies, that unless they can procure a regular supply for the trade in which they are engaged, it may languish, and be finally abandoned by American citizens; when it will revert to its former channel, with additional, and perhaps with irresistible, power.

Under these circumstances, and upon all those considerations of public policy which will present themselves to your honorable bodies, in connection with those already mentioned, your petitioners respectfully pray that a law may be passed to enable the President, or any of the heads of departments acting under his authority, to grant permits for the introduction of goods necessary for the supply of the Indians, into the Indian country that is within the boundaries of the United States, under such regulations, and with such restrictions, as may secure the public revenue and promote the public welfare.

And your petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

In witness whereof, the common seal of the American Fur Company is

hereunto affixed, the day of March, 1812.

By order of the Corporation.

---

AN ACT to enable the American Fur Company, and other citizens, to introduce goods necessary for the Indian trade into the territories within the boundaries of the United State.

WHEREAS, the public peace and welfare require that the native Indian tribes, residing within the boundaries of the United States, should receive their necessary supplies under the authority and from the citizens of the United States: Therefore, be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled, that it shall be lawful for the President of the United States, or any of the heads of departments thereunto by him duly authorized, from time to time to grant permits to the American Fur Company, their agents or factors, or any other citizens of the United States engaged in the Indian trade, to introduce into the Indian country, within the boundaries of the United States, such goods, wares, and merchandise, as may be necessary for the said trade, under such regulations and restrictions as the said President or heads of departments may judge proper; any law or regulation to the contrary, in anywise, notwithstanding.

---

Letter from Mr. Gallatin to Mr. Astor, dated

New York, August 5, 1835.

DEAR SIR, - In compliance with your request, I will state such facts as I recollect touching the subjects mentioned in your letter of 28th ult. I may be mistaken respecting dates and details, and will only relate general facts, which I well remember.

In conformity with the treaty of 1794 with Great Britain, the citizens and subjects of each country were permitted to trade with the Indians residing in the territories of the other party. The reciprocity was altogether nominal. Since the conquest of Canada, the British had inherited from the French the whole fur trade, through the great lakes and their communications, with all the western Indians, whether residing in the British dominions or the United States. They kept the important western posts on those lakes till about the year 1797. And the defensive Indian war, which the United States had to sustain from 1776 to 1795, had still more alienated the Indians, and secured to the British their exclusive trade, carried through the lakes, wherever the Indians in that quarter lived. No American could, without imminent danger of property and life, carry on that trade, even within the United States, by the way of either Michilimackinac or St. Mary's. And independent of the loss of commerce, Great Britain was enabled to preserve a most dangerous influence over our Indians.

---

It was under these circumstances that you communicated to our government the prospect you had to be able, and your intention, to purchase one half of the interest of the Canadian Fur Company, engaged in trade by the way of Michilimackinac with our own Indians. You wished to know whether the plan met with the approbation of government, and how far you could rely on its protection and encouragement. This overture was received with great satisfaction by the administration, and Mr. Jefferson, then President, wrote you to that effect. I was also directed, as Secretary of the Treasury, to write to you an official letter to the same purpose. On investigating the subject, it was found that the Executive had no authority to give you any direct aid; and I believe you received nothing more than an entire approbation of your plan, and general assurances of the protection due to every citizen engaged in lawful and useful pursuits.

You did effect the contemplated purchase, but in what year I do not recollect. Immediately before the war, you represented that a large quantity of merchandise, intended for the Indian trade, and including arms and munitions of war, belonging to that concern of which you owned one half, was deposited at a post on Lake Huron, within the British dominions; that, in order to prevent their ultimately falling into the hands of Indians who might prove hostile, you were desirous to try to have them conveyed into the United States; but that you were prevented by the then existing law of non-intercourse with the British dominions.

The Executive could not annul the provisions of that law. But I was directed to instruct the collectors on the lakes, in case you and your agents should voluntarily bring in and deliver to them any part of the goods above mentioned, to receive and keep them in their guard, and not to commence prosecutions until further instructions: the intention being then to apply to Congress for an act remitting the forfeiture and penalties. I wrote accordingly, to that effect, to the collectors of Detroit and Michilimackinac.

The attempt to obtain the goods did not, however, succeed; and I cannot say how far the failure injured you. But the war proved fatal to another much more extensive and important enterprise.

Previous to that time, but I also forget the year, you had undertaken to carry on a trade on your own account, though I believe under the New York charter of the American Fur Company, with the Indians west of the Rocky Mountains. This project was also communicated to government, and met, of course, with its full approbation, and best wishes, for your success. You carried it on, on the most extensive scale, sending several ships to the mouth of the Columbia River, and a large party by land across the mountains, and finally founding the establishment of Astoria.

This unfortunately fell into the hands of the enemy during the war, from circumstances with which I am but imperfectly acquainted - being then absent on a foreign mission. I returned in September, 1815, and sailed again on a mission to France in June, 1816. During that period I visited Washington twice - in October or November, 1815, and in March, 1816. On one of these occasions, and I believe on the last, you mentioned to me that you were disposed once more to renew the attempt, and to reestablish Astoria, provided you had the protection of the American flag; for

which purpose, a lieutenant's command would be sufficient to you. You requested me to mention this to the President, which I did. Mr. Madison said he would consider the subject, and, although he did not commit himself, I thought that he received the proposal favorably. The message was verbal, and I do not know whether the application was ever renewed in a more formal manner. I sailed soon after for Europe, and was seven years absent. I never had the pleasure, since 1816, to see Mr. Madison, and never heard again anything concerning the subject in question.

I remain, dear sir, most respectfully, Your obedient servant,

ALBERT GALLATIN.

John Jacob Astor, Esq.,  
New York.

---

Notices of the Present State of the Fur Trade, chiefly extracted from an article published in Silliman's Magazine for January, 1834.

THE Northwest Company did not long enjoy the sway they had acquired over the trading regions of the Columbia. A competition, ruinous in its expenses, which had long existed between them and the Hudson's Bay Company, ended in their downfall and the ruin of most of the partners. The relict of the company became merged in the rival association, and the whole business was conducted under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company.

This coalition took place in 1821. They then abandoned Astoria, and built a large establishment sixty miles up the river, on the right bank, which they called Fort Vancouver. This was in a neighborhood where provisions could be more readily procured, and where there was less danger from molestation by any naval force. The company are said to carry on an active and prosperous trade, and to give great encouragement to settlers. They are extremely jealous, however, of any interference or participation in their trade, and monopolize it from the coast of the Pacific to the mountains, and for a considerable extent north and south. The American traders and trappers who venture across the mountains, instead of enjoying the participation in the trade of the river and its tributaries, that had been stipulated by treaty, are obliged to keep to the south, out of the track of the Hudson's Bay parties.

Mr. Astor has withdrawn entirely from the American Fur Company, as he has, in fact, from active business of every kind. That company is now headed by Mr. Ramsay Crooks; its principal establishment is at Michilimackinac, and it receives its furs from the posts depending on that station, and from those on the Mississippi, Missouri, and Yellow Stone Rivers, and the great range of country extending thence to the Rocky Mountains. This company has steamboats in its employ, with which it ascends the rivers, and penetrates to a vast distance into the bosom of those regions formerly so painfully explored in keel-boats and barges, or by weary parties on horseback and on foot. The first irruption of steamboats in the heart of these vast wildernesses is said to have caused

the utmost astonishment and affright among their savage inhabitants.

In addition to the main companies already mentioned, minor associations have been formed, which push their way in the most intrepid manner to the remote parts of the far West, and beyond the mountain barriers. One of the most noted of these is Ashley's company, from St. Louis, who trap for themselves, and drive an extensive trade with the Indians. The spirit, enterprise, and hardihood of Ashley are themes of the highest eulogy in the far West, and his adventures and exploits furnish abundance of frontier stories.

Another company of one hundred and fifty persons from New York, formed in 1831, and headed by Captain Bonneville of the United States army, has pushed its enterprise into tracts before but little known, and has brought considerable quantities of furs from the region between the Rocky Mountains and the coasts of Monterey and Upper California, on the Buenaventura and Timpanogos rivers.

The fur countries, from the Pacific, east to the Rocky Mountains, are now occupied (exclusive of private combinations and individual trappers and traders) by the Russians; and on the northwest from Behring's Strait to Queen Charlotte's Island, in north latitude fifty-three degrees, and by the Hudson's Bay Company thence, south of the Columbia River; while Ashley's company, and that under Captain Bonneville, take the remainder of the region to California. Indeed, the whole compass from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean is traversed in every direction. The mountains and forests, from the Arctic Sea to the Gulf of Mexico, are threaded through every maze, by the hunter. Every river and tributary stream, from the Columbia to the mouth of the Rio del Norte, and from the M'Kenzie to the Colorado of the West, from their head springs to their junction, are searched and trapped for beaver. Almost all the American furs, which do not belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, find their way to New York, and are either distributed thence for home consumption, or sent to foreign markets.

The Hudson's Bay Company ship their furs from their factories of York Fort and from Moose River, on Hudson's Bay; their collection from Grand River, &c., they ship from Canada; and the collection from Columbia goes to London. None of their furs come to the United States, except through the London market.

The export trade of furs from the United States is chiefly to London. Some quantities have been sent to Canton, and some few to Hamburg; and an increasing export trade in beaver, otter, nutria, and vicunia wool, prepared for the hatter's use, is carried on in Mexico. Some furs are exported from Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston; but the principal shipments from the United States are from New York to London, from whence they are sent to Leipsic, a well-known mart for furs, where they are disposed of during the great fair in that city, and distributed to every part of the continent.

The United States import from South America, nutria, vicunia, chinchilla, and a few deer-skins; also fur seals from the Lobos Islands, off the river Plate. A quantity of beaver, otter, &c., are

brought annually from Santa Fe. Dressed furs for edgings, linings, caps, muffs, &c., such as squirrel, genet, fitch-skins, and blue rabbit, are received from the north of Europe; also cony and hare's fur; but the largest importations are from London, where is concentrated nearly the whole of the North American fur trade.

Such is the present state of the fur trade, by which it will appear that the extended sway of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the monopoly of the region of which Astoria was the key, has operated to turn the main current of this opulent trade into the coffers of Great Britain, and to render London the emporium instead of New York, as Mr. Astor had intended.

We will subjoin a few observations on the animals sought after in this traffic, extracted from the same intelligent source with the preceding remarks.

Of the fur-bearing animals, "the precious ermine," so called by way of preeminence, is found, of the best quality, only in the cold regions of Europe and Asia. \* Its fur is of the most perfect whiteness, except the tip of its tail, which is of a brilliant shining black. With these back tips tacked on the skins, they are beautifully spotted, producing an effect often imitated, but never equalled in other furs. The ermine is of the genus *mustela* (weasel), and resembles the common weasel in its form, is from fourteen to sixteen inches from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail. The body is from ten to twelve inches long. It lives in hollow trees, river banks, and especially in beech forests; preys on small birds, is very shy, sleeping during the day, and employing the night in search of food. The fur of the older animals is preferred to the younger. It is taken by snares and traps, and sometimes shot with blunt arrows. Attempts have been made to domesticate it; but it is extremely wild and has been found untameable.

The sable can scarcely be called second to the ermine. It is a native of Northern Europe and Siberia, and is also of the genus *mustela*. In Samoieda, Yakutsk, Kamtschatka, and Russian Lapland, it is found of the richest quality, and darkest color. In its habits, it resembles the ermine. It preys on small squirrels and birds, sleeps by day, and prowls for food during the night. It is so like the marten in every particular except its size, and the dark shade of its color, that naturalists have not decided whether it is the richest and finest of the marten tribe, or a variety of that species: It varies in dimensions from eighteen to twenty inches.

The rich dark shades of the sable, and the snowy whiteness of the ermine, the great depth, and the peculiar, almost flowing softness of their skins and fur, have combined to gain them a preference in all countries, and in all ages of the world. In this age, they maintain the same relative estimate in regard to other furs, as when they marked the rank of the proud crusader, and were emblazoned in heraldry: but in most European nations, they are now worn promiscuously by the opulent.

The martens from Northern Asia and the Mountains of Kamtschatka are much superior to the American, though in every pack of American marten skins there are a certain number which are beautifully shaded, and of a dark brown olive color, of great depth and richness.

Next these in value, for ornament and utility, are the sea-otter, the mink, and the fiery fox.

The fiery fox is the bright red of Asia; is more brilliantly colored and of finer fur than any other of the genus. It is highly valued for the splendor of its red color and the fineness of its fur. It is the standard of value on the northeastern coast of Asia.

The sea-otter which was first introduced into commerce in 1725, from the Aleutian and Kurile Islands, is an exceedingly fine, soft, close fur, jet black in winter, with a silken gloss. The fur of the young animal is of a beautiful brown color. It is met with in great abundance in Behring's Island, Kamtschatka, Aleutian and Fox Islands, and is also taken on the opposite coasts of North America. It is sometimes taken with nets, but more frequently with clubs and spears. Their food is principally lobster and other shell-fish.

In 1780 furs had become so scarce in Siberia that the supply was insufficient for the demand in the Asiatic countries. It was at this time that the sea-otter was introduced into the markets for China. The skins brought such incredible prices, as to originate immediately several American and British expeditions to the northern islands of the Pacific, to Nootka Sound, and the northwest coast of America; but the Russians already had possession of the tract which they now hold, and had arranged a trade for the sea-otter with the Koudek tribes. They do not engross the trade, however; the American northwest trading ships procure them, all along the coast, from the Indians.

At one period, the fur seals formed no inconsiderable item in the trade. South Georgia, in south latitude fifty-five degrees, discovered in 1675, was explored by Captain Cook in 1771. The Americans immediately commenced carrying seal skins thence to China, where they obtained the most exorbitant prices. One million two hundred thousand skins have been taken from that island alone, and nearly an equal number from the Island of Desolation, since they were first resorted to for the purpose of commerce.

The discovery of the South Shetlands, sixty-three degrees south latitude, in 1818, added surprisingly to the trade in fur seals. The number taken from the South Shetlands in 1821 and 1822 amounted to three hundred and twenty thousand. This valuable animal is now almost extinct in all these islands, owing to the exterminating system adopted by the hunters. They are still taken on the Lobos Islands, where the provident government of Montevideo restrict the fishery, or hunting, within certain limits, which insures an annual return of the seals. At certain seasons, these amphibia, for the purpose of renewing their coat, come up on the dark frowning rocks and precipices, where there is not a trace of vegetation. In the middle of January, the islands are partially cleared of snow, where a few patches of short straggling grass spring up in favorable situations; but the seals do not resort to it for food. They remain on the rocks not less than two months, without any sustenance, when they return much emaciated to the sea.

Bears of various species and colors, many varieties of the fox, the wolf, the beaver, the otter, the marten, the raccoon, the badger, the wolverine, the mink, the lynx, the muskrat, the woodchuck,

---

the rabbit, the hare, and the squirrel, are natives of North America.

The beaver, otter, lynx fisher, hare, and raccoon, are used principally for hats; while the bears of several varieties furnish an excellent material for sleigh linings, for cavalry caps, and other military equipments. The fur of the black fox is the most valuable of any of the American varieties; and next to that the red, which is exported to China and Smyrna. In China, the red is employed for trimmings, linings, and robes; the latter being variegated by adding the black fur of the paws, in spots or waves. There are many other varieties of American fox, such as the gray, the white, the cross, the silver, and the dun-colored. The silver fox is a rare animal, a native of the woody country below the falls of the Columbia River. It has a long, thick, deep lead-colored fur, intermingled with long hairs, invariably white at the top, forming a bright lustrous silver gray, esteemed by some more beautiful than any other kind of fox.

The skins of the buffalo, of the Rocky Mountain sheep, of various deer and of the antelope, are included in the fur trade with the Indians and trappers of the north and west.

Fox and seal skins are sent from Greenland to Denmark. The white fur of the arctic fox and polar bear is sometimes found in the packs brought to the traders by the most northern tribes of Indians, but is not particularly valuable. The silver-tipped rabbit is peculiar to England, and is sent thence to Russia and China.

Other furs are employed and valued according to the caprices of fashion, as well in those countries where they are needed for defenses against the severity of the seasons, as among the inhabitants of milder climates, who, severely of Tartar or Slavonian descent, are said to inherit an attachment to furred clothing. Such are the inhabitants of Poland, of Southern Russia, of China, of Persia, of Turkey, and all the nations of Gothic origin in the middle and western parts of Europe. Under the burning suns of Syria and Egypt, and the mild climes of Bucharia and Independent Tartary, there is also a constant demand, and a great consumption, where there exists no physical necessity. In our own temperate latitudes, besides their use in the arts, they are in request for ornament and warmth during the winter, and large quantities are annually consumed for both purposes in the United States.

From the foregoing statements, it appears that the fur trade must henceforward decline. The advanced state of geographical science shows that no new countries remain to be explored. In North America the animals are slowly decreasing, from the persevering efforts and the indiscriminate slaughter practiced by the hunters, and by the appropriation to the uses of man of those forests and rivers which have afforded them food and protection. They recede with the aborigines, before the tide of civilization; but a diminished supply will remain in the mountains and uncultivated tracts of this and other countries, if the avidity of the hunter can be restrained within proper limitations.

\* An animal called the stoat, a kind of ermine, is said to be found in North America, but very inferior to the European and Asiatic.

\* \* The finest fur and the darkest color are most esteemed; and whether the difference arises from the age of the animal, or from some peculiarity of location, is not known. They do not vary more from the common marten than the Arabian horse from the shaggy Canadian.

---

Height of the Rocky Mountains.

VARIOUS estimates have been made of the height of the Rocky Mountains, but it is doubtful whether any have, as yet, done justice to their real altitude, which promises to place them only second to the highest mountains of the known world. Their height has been diminished to the eye by the great elevation of the plains from which they rise. They consist, according to Long, of ridges, knobs, and peaks, variously disposed. The more elevated parts are covered with perpetual snows, which contribute to give them a luminous, and, at a great distance, even a brilliant appearance; whence they derive, among some of the first discoverers, the name of the Shining Mountains.

James's Peak has generally been cited as the highest of the chain; and its elevation above the common level has been ascertained, by a trigonometrical measurement, to be about eight thousand five hundred feet. Mr. Long, however, judged, from the position of the snow near the summits of other peaks and ridges at no great distance from it, that they were much higher. Having heard Professor Renwick, of New York, express an opinion of the altitude of these mountains far beyond what had usually been ascribed to them, we applied to him for the authority on which he grounded his observation, and here subjoin his reply:

Columbia College, New York, February 23, 1836.

Dear Sir, - In compliance with your request, I have to communicate some facts in relation to the heights of the Rocky Mountains, and the sources whence I obtained the information.

In conversation with Simon M'Gillivray, Esq., a partner of the Northwest Company, he stated to me his impression, that the mountains in the vicinity of the route pursued by the traders of that company were nearly as high as the Himalayas. He had himself crossed by this route, seen the snowy summits of the peaks, and experienced a degree of cold which required a spirit thermometer to indicate it. His authority for the estimate of the heights was a gentleman who had been employed for several years as surveyor of that company. This conversation occurred about sixteen years since.

A year or two afterwards, I had the pleasure of dining, at Major Delafield's with Mr. Thompson, the gentleman referred to by Mr. M'Gillivray. I inquired of him in relation to the circumstances mentioned by Mr. M'Gillivray, and he stated that, by the joint means of the barometric and trigonometric measurement, he had ascertained the height of one of the peaks to be about twenty-five thousand feet, and there were others of nearly the same height in the vicinity.

---

I am, dear sir,  
To W. Irving, Esq.  
Yours truly,  
JAMES RENWICK.

---

Suggestions with respect to the Indian tribes, and the protection of our Trade.

IN the course of this work, a few general remarks have been hazarded respecting the Indian tribes of the prairies, and the dangers to be apprehended from them in future times to our trade beyond the Rocky Mountains and with the Spanish frontiers. Since writing those remarks, we have met with some excellent observations and suggestions, in manuscript, on the same subject, written by Captain Bonneville, of the United States army, who had lately returned from a long residence among the tribes of the Rocky Mountains. Captain B. approves highly of the plan recently adopted by the United States government for the organization of a regiment of dragoons for the protection of our western frontier, and the trade across the prairies. "No other species of military force," he observes, "is at all competent to cope with these restless and wandering hordes, who require to be opposed with swiftness quite as much as with strength; and the consciousness that a troop, uniting these qualifications, is always on the alert to avenge their outrages upon the settlers and traders, will go very far towards restraining them from the perpetration of those thefts and murders which they have heretofore committed with impunity, whenever stratagem or superiority of force has given them the advantage. Their interest already has done something towards their pacification with our countrymen. From the traders among them, they receive their supplies in the greatest abundance, and upon very equitable terms; and when it is remembered that a very considerable amount of property is yearly distributed among them by the government, as presents, it will readily be perceived that they are greatly dependent upon us for their most valued resources. If, superadded to this inducement, a frequent display of military power be made in their territories, there can be little doubt that the desired security and peace will be speedily afforded to our own people. But the idea of establishing a permanent amity and concord amongst the various east and west tribes themselves, seems to me, if not wholly impracticable, at least infinitely more difficult than many excellent philanthropists have hoped and believed. Those nations which have so lately emigrated from the midst of our settlements to live upon our western borders, and have made some progress in agriculture and the arts of civilization, have, in the property they have acquired, and the protection and aid extended to them, too many advantages to be induced readily to take up arms against us, particularly if they can be brought to the full conviction that their new homes will be permanent and undisturbed; and there is every reason and motive, in policy as well as humanity, for our ameliorating their condition by every means in our power. But the case is far different with regard to the Osages, the Kanzas, the Pawnees, and other roving hordes beyond the frontiers of the settlements. Wild and restless in their character and habits, they are by no means so susceptible of control or civilization; and they are urged by strong, and, to them, irresistible causes in their situation and necessities, to the daily perpetuation of violence and fraud. Their permanent subsistence, for example, is derived from the buffalo hunting grounds, which lie a great distance from their towns. Twice a year they are obliged to make long and dangerous expe-

ditions, to procure the necessary provisions for themselves and their families. For this purpose horses are absolutely requisite, for their own comfort and safety, as well as for the transportation of their food, and their little stock of valuables; and without them they would be reduced, during a great portion of the year, to a state of abject misery and privation. They have no brood mares, nor any trade sufficiently valuable to supply their yearly losses, and endeavor to keep up their stock by stealing horses from the other tribes to the west and southwest. Our own people, and the tribes immediately upon our borders, may indeed be protected from their depredations; and the Kansas, Osages, Pawnees, and others, may be induced to remain at peace among themselves, so long as they are permitted to pursue the old custom of levying upon the Camanches and other remote nations for their complement of steeds for the warriors, and pack-horses for their transportation to and from the hunting ground. But the instant they are forced to maintain a peaceful and inoffensive demeanor towards the tribes along the Mexican border, and find that every violation of their rights is followed by the avenging arm of our government, the result must be, that, reduced to a wretchedness and want which they can ill brook, and feeling the certainty of punishment for every attempt to ameliorate their condition in the only way they as yet comprehend, they will abandon their unfruitful territory and remove to the neighborhood of the Mexican lands, and there carry on a vigorous predatory warfare indiscriminately upon the Mexicans and our own people trading or travelling in that quarter.

“The Indians of the prairies are almost innumerable. Their superior horsemanship, which in my opinion, far exceeds that of any other people on the face of the earth, their daring bravery, their cunning and skill in the warfare of the wilderness, and the astonishing rapidity and secrecy with which they are accustomed to move in their martial expeditions, will always render them most dangerous and vexatious neighbors, when their necessities or their discontents may drive them to hostility with our frontiers. Their mode and principles of warfare will always protect them from final and irretrievable defeat, and secure their families from participating in any blow, however severe, which our retribution might deal out to them.

“The Camanches lay the Mexicans under contribution for horses and mules, which they are always engaged in stealing from them in incredible numbers; and from the Camanches, all the roving tribes of the far West, by a similar exertion of skill and daring, supply themselves in turn. It seems to me, therefore, under all these circumstances, that the apparent futility of any philanthropic schemes for the benefit of these nations, and a regard for our own protection, concur in recommending that we remain satisfied with maintaining peace upon our own immediate borders, and leave the Mexicans and the Camanches, and all the tribes hostile to these last, to settle their differences and difficulties in their own way.

“In order to give full security and protection to our trading parties circulating in all directions through the great prairies, I am under the impression that a few judicious measures on the part of the government, involving a very limited expense, would be sufficient. And, in attaining this end, which of itself has already become an object of public interest and import, another, of much greater consequence, might be brought about, namely, the securing to the States a most valuable and increasing trade, now carried on by caravans directly to Santa Fe.

“As to the first desideratum: the Indians can only be made to respect the lives and property of the American parties, by rendering them dependent upon us for their supplies; which alone can be done with complete effect by the establishment of a trading post, with resident traders, at some point which will unite a sufficient number of advantages to attract the several tribes to itself, in preference to their present places of resort for that purpose; for it is a well-known fact that the Indians will always protect their trader, and those in whom he is interested, so long as they derive benefits from him. The alternative presented to those at the north, by the residence of the agents of the Hudson’s Bay Company amongst them, renders the condition of our people in that quarter less secure; but I think it will appear at once, upon the most cursory examination, that no such opposition further south could be maintained, so as to weaken the benefits of such an establishment as is here suggested.

“In considering this matter, the first question which presents itself is, where do these tribes now make their exchanges, and obtain their necessary supplies. They resort almost exclusively to the Mexicans, who, themselves, purchase from us whatever the Indians most seek for. In this point of view, therefore, *coeteris paribus*, it would be an easy matter for us to monopolize the whole traffic. All that is wanted is some location more convenient for the natives than that offered by the Mexicans, to give us the undisputed superiority; and the selection of such a point requires but a knowledge of the single fact, that these nations invariably winter upon the head waters of the Arkansas, and there prepare all their buffalo robes for trade. These robes are heavy, and, to the Indian, very difficult of transportation. Nothing but necessity induces them to travel any great distance with such inconvenient baggage. A post, therefore, established upon the head waters of the Arkansas, must infallibly secure an uncontested preference over that of the Mexicans; even at their prices and rates of barter. Then let the dragoons occasionally move about among these people in large parties, impressing them with the proper estimate of our power to protect and to punish, and at once we have complete and assured security for all citizens whose enterprise may lead them beyond the border, and an end to the outrages and depredations which now dog the footsteps of the traveller, in the prairies, and arrest and depress the most advantageous commerce. Such a post need not be stronger than fifty men; twenty-five to be employed as hunters, to supply the garrison, and the residue as a defense against any hostility. Situated here upon the good lands of the Arkansas, in the midst of abundance of timber, while it might be kept up at a most inconsiderable expense, such an establishment within ninety miles of Santa Fe or Taos would be more than justified by the other and more important advantages before alluded to, leaving the protection of the traders with the Indian tribes entirely out of the question.

“This great trade, carried on by caravans to Santa Fe, annually loads one hundred wagons with merchandise, which is bartered in the northern provinces or Mexico for cash and for beaver furs. The numerous articles excluded as contraband, and the exorbitant duties laid upon all those that are admitted by the Mexican government, present so many obstacles to commerce, that I am well persuaded, that if a post, such as is here suggested, should be established on the Arkansas, it would become the place of deposit, not only for the present trade, but for one infinitely more extended. Here the Mexicans might purchase their supplies, and might well afford to sell them at

prices which would silence all competition from any other quarter.

“These two trades, with the Mexicans and the Indians, centring at this post, would give rise to a large village of traders and laborers, and would undoubtedly be hailed, by all that section of country, as a permanent and invaluable advantage. A few pack-horses would carry all the clothing and ammunition necessary for the post during the first year, and two light field-pieces would be all the artillery required for its defense. Afterwards, all the horses required for the use of the establishment might be purchased from the Mexicans at the low price of ten dollars each; and, at the same time, whatever animals might be needed to supply the losses among the dragoons traversing the neighborhood, could be readily procured. The Upper Missouri Indians can furnish horses, at very cheap rates, to any number of the same troops who might be detailed for the defense of the northern frontier; and, in other respects, a very limited outlay of money would suffice to maintain a post in that section of the country.

“From these considerations, and my own personal observations, I am, therefore, disposed to believe that two posts established by the government, one at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, and one on the Arkansas, would completely protect all our people in every section of the great wilderness of the West; while other advantages, at least with regard to one of them, confirm and urge the suggestion. A fort at the mouth of the Yellowstone, garrisoned by fifty men would be perfectly safe. The establishment might be constructed simply with a view to the stores, stables for the dragoons' horses, and quarters for the regular garrison; the rest being provided with sheds or lodges, erected in the vicinity, for their residence during the winter months.”

THE END

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 1

State of the fur trade of the Rocky Mountains-- American enterprises--General Ashley and his associates--Sublette, a famous leader--Yearly rendezvous among the mountains--Stratagems and dangers of the trade--Bands of trappers--Indian banditti--Crows and Blackfeet--Mountaineers--Traders of the Far West--Character and habits of the trapper

IN A RECENT WORK we have given an account of the grand enterprise of Mr. John Jacob Astor to establish an American emporium for the fur trade at the mouth of the Columbia, or Oregon River; of the failure of that enterprise through the capture of Astoria by the British, in 1814; and of the way in which the control of the trade of the Columbia and its dependencies fell into the hands of the Northwest Company. We have stated, likewise, the unfortunate supineness of the American government in neglecting the application of Mr. Astor for the protection of the American flag, and a small military force, to enable him to reinstate himself in the possession of Astoria at the return of peace; when the post was formally given up by the British government, though still occupied by the Northwest Company. By that supineness the sovereignty in the country has been virtually lost to the United States; and it will cost both governments much trouble and difficulty to settle matters on that just and rightful footing on which they would readily have been placed had the proposition of Mr. Astor been attended to. We shall now state a few particulars of subsequent events, so as to lead the reader up to the period of which we are about to treat, and to prepare him for the circumstances of our narrative.

In consequence of the apathy and neglect of the American government, Mr. Astor abandoned all thoughts of regaining Astoria, and made no further attempt to extend his enterprises beyond the Rocky Mountains; and the Northwest Company considered themselves the lords of the country. They did not long enjoy unmolested the sway which they had somewhat surreptitiously attained. A fierce competition ensued between them and their old rivals, the Hudson's Bay Company; which was carried on at great cost and sacrifice, and occasionally with the loss of life. It ended in the ruin of most of the partners of the Northwest Company; and the merging of the relics of that establishment, in 1821, in the rival association. From that time, the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed a monopoly of the Indian trade from the coast of the Pacific to the Rocky Mountains, and for a considerable extent north and south. They removed their emporium from Astoria to Fort Vancouver, a strong post on the left bank of the Columbia River, about sixty miles from its mouth; whence they furnished their interior posts, and sent forth their brigades of trappers.

The Rocky Mountains formed a vast barrier between them and the United States, and their stern and awful defiles, their rugged valleys, and the great western plains watered by their rivers, remained almost a terra incognita to the American trapper. The difficulties experienced in 1808, by Mr. Henry of the Missouri Company, the first American who trapped upon the head-waters of the Columbia; and the frightful hardships sustained by Wilson P. Hunt, Ramsay Crooks, Robert Stuart, and other intrepid Astorians, in their ill-fated expeditions across the mountains, appeared for a time to check all further enterprise in that direction. The American traders contented themselves with following up the head branches of the Missouri, the Yellowstone, and other rivers and streams on the Atlantic side of the mountains, but forbore to attempt those great snow-crowned sierras.

One of the first to revive these tramontane expeditions was General Ashley, of Missouri, a man

whose courage and achievements in the prosecution of his enterprises have rendered him famous in the Far West. In conjunction with Mr. Henry, already mentioned, he established a post on the banks of the Yellowstone River in 1822, and in the following year pushed a resolute band of trappers across the mountains to the banks of the Green River or Colorado of the West, often known by the Indian name of the Seeds-ke-dee Agie. This attempt was followed up and sustained by others, until in 1825 a footing was secured, and a complete system of trapping organized beyond the mountains.

It is difficult to do justice to the courage, fortitude, and perseverance of the pioneers of the fur trade, who conducted these early expeditions, and first broke their way through a wilderness where everything was calculated to deter and dismay them. They had to traverse the most dreary and desolate mountains, and barren and trackless wastes, uninhabited by man, or occasionally infested by predatory and cruel savages. They knew nothing of the country beyond the verge of their horizon, and had to gather information as they wandered. They beheld volcanic plains stretching around them, and ranges of mountains piled up to the clouds, and glistening with eternal frost: but knew nothing of their defiles, nor how they were to be penetrated or traversed. They launched themselves in frail canoes on rivers, without knowing whither their swift currents would carry them, or what rocks and shoals and rapids they might encounter in their course. They had to be continually on the alert, too, against the mountain tribes, who beset every defile, laid ambushes in their path, or attacked them in their night encampments; so that, of the hardy bands of trappers that first entered into these regions, three-fifths are said to have fallen by the hands of savage foes.

In this wild and warlike school a number of leaders have sprung up, originally in the employ, subsequently partners of Ashley; among these we may mention Smith, Fitzpatrick, Bridger, Robert Campbell, and William Sublette; whose adventures and exploits partake of the wildest spirit of romance. The association commenced by General Ashley underwent various modifications. That gentleman having acquired sufficient fortune, sold out his interest and retired; and the leading spirit that succeeded him was Captain William Sublette; a man worthy of note, as his name has become renowned in frontier story. He is a native of Kentucky, and of game descent; his maternal grandfather, Colonel Wheatley, a companion of Boon, having been one of the pioneers of the West, celebrated in Indian warfare, and killed in one of the contests of the "Bloody Ground." We shall frequently have occasion to speak of this Sublette, and always to the credit of his game qualities. In 1830, the association took the name of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, of which Captain Sublette and Robert Campbell were prominent members.

In the meantime, the success of this company attracted the attention and excited the emulation of the American Fur Company, and brought them once more into the field of their ancient enterprise. Mr. Astor, the founder of the association, had retired from busy life, and the concerns of the company were ably managed by Mr. Ramsay Crooks, of Snake River renown, who still officiates as its president. A competition immediately ensued between the two companies for the trade with the mountain tribes and the trapping of the head-waters of the Columbia and the other great tributaries of the Pacific. Beside the regular operations of these formidable rivals, there have been from time to time desultory enterprises, or rather experiments, of minor associations, or of adventurous individuals beside roving bands of independent trappers, who either hunt for themselves, or engage for a single season, in the service of one or other of the main companies.

---

The consequence is that the Rocky Mountains and the ulterior regions, from the Russian possessions in the north down to the Spanish settlements of California, have been traversed and ransacked in every direction by bands of hunters and Indian traders; so that there is scarcely a mountain pass, or defile, that is not known and threaded in their restless migrations, nor a nameless stream that is not haunted by the lonely trapper.

The American fur companies keep no established posts beyond the mountains. Everything there is regulated by resident partners; that is to say, partners who reside in the tramontane country, but who move about from place to place, either with Indian tribes, whose traffic they wish to monopolize, or with main bodies of their own men, whom they employ in trading and trapping. In the meantime, they detach bands, or "brigades" as they are termed, of trappers in various directions, assigning to each a portion of country as a hunting or trapping ground. In the months of June and July, when there is an interval between the hunting seasons, a general rendezvous is held, at some designated place in the mountains, where the affairs of the past year are settled by the resident partners, and the plans for the following year arranged.

To this rendezvous repair the various brigades of trappers from their widely separated hunting grounds, bringing in the products of their year's campaign. Hither also repair the Indian tribes accustomed to traffic their peltries with the company. Bands of free trappers resort hither also, to sell the furs they have collected; or to engage their services for the next hunting season.

To this rendezvous the company sends annually a convoy of supplies from its establishment on the Atlantic frontier, under the guidance of some experienced partner or officer. On the arrival of this convoy, the resident partner at the rendezvous depends to set all his next year's machinery in motion.

Now as the rival companies keep a vigilant eye upon each other, and are anxious to discover each other's plans and movements, they generally contrive to hold their annual assemblages at no great distance apart. An eager competition exists also between their respective convoys of supplies, which shall first reach its place of rendezvous. For this purpose, they set off with the first appearance of grass on the Atlantic frontier and push with all diligence for the mountains. The company that can first open its tempting supplies of coffee, tobacco, ammunition, scarlet cloth, blankets, bright shawls, and glittering trinkets has the greatest chance to get all the peltries and furs of the Indians and free trappers, and to engage their services for the next season. It is able, also, to fit out and dispatch its own trappers the soonest, so as to get the start of its competitors, and to have the first dash into the hunting and trapping grounds.

A new species of strategy has sprung out of this hunting and trapping competition. The constant study of the rival bands is to forestall and outwit each other; to supplant each other in the good will and custom of the Indian tribes; to cross each other's plans; to mislead each other as to routes; in a word, next to his own advantage, the study of the Indian trader is the disadvantage of his competitor.

The influx of this wandering trade has had its effects on the habits of the mountain tribes. They have found the trapping of the beaver their most profitable species of hunting; and the traffic with the white man has opened to them sources of luxury of which they previously had no idea. The introduction of firearms has rendered them more successful hunters, but at the same time, more formidable foes; some of them, incorrigibly savage and warlike in their nature, have found the expeditions of the fur traders grand objects of profitable adventure. To waylay and harass a band

of trappers with their pack-horses, when embarrassed in the rugged defiles of the mountains, has become as favorite an exploit with these Indians as the plunder of a caravan to the Arab of the desert. The Crows and Blackfeet, who were such terrors in the path of the early adventurers to Astoria, still continue their predatory habits, but seem to have brought them to greater system. They know the routes and resorts of the trappers; where to waylay them on their journeys; where to find them in the hunting seasons, and where to hover about them in winter quarters. The life of a trapper, therefore, is a perpetual state militant, and he must sleep with his weapons in his hands. A new order of trappers and traders, also, has grown out of this system of things. In the old times of the great Northwest Company, when the trade in furs was pursued chiefly about the lakes and rivers, the expeditions were carried on in batteaux and canoes. The voyageurs or boatmen were the rank and file in the service of the trader, and even the hardy "men of the north," those great rufflers and game birds, were fain to be paddled from point to point of their migrations.

A totally different class has now sprung up:--"the Mountaineers," the traders and trappers that scale the vast mountain chains, and pursue their hazardous vocations amidst their wild recesses. They move from place to place on horseback. The equestrian exercises, therefore, in which they are engaged, the nature of the countries they traverse, vast plains and mountains, pure and exhilarating in atmospheric qualities, seem to make them physically and mentally a more lively and mercurial race than the fur traders and trappers of former days, the self-vaunting "men of the north." A man who bestrides a horse must be essentially different from a man who cowers in a canoe. We find them, accordingly, hardy, lithe, vigorous, and active; extravagant in word, and thought, and deed; heedless of hardship; daring of danger; prodigal of the present, and thoughtless of the future.

A difference is to be perceived even between these mountain hunters and those of the lower regions along the waters of the Missouri. The latter, generally French creoles, live comfortably in cabins and log-huts, well sheltered from the inclemencies of the seasons. They are within the reach of frequent supplies from the settlements; their life is comparatively free from danger, and from most of the vicissitudes of the upper wilderness. The consequence is that they are less hardy, self-dependent and game-spirited than the mountaineer. If the latter by chance comes among them on his way to and from the settlements, he is like a game-cock among the common roosters of the poultry-yard. Accustomed to live in tents, or to bivouac in the open air, he despises the comforts and is impatient of the confinement of the log-house. If his meal is not ready in season, he takes his rifle, hies to the forest or prairie, shoots his own game, lights his fire, and cooks his repast. With his horse and his rifle, he is independent of the world, and spurns at all its restraints. The very superintendents at the lower posts will not put him to mess with the common men, the hirelings of the establishment, but treat him as something superior.

There is, perhaps, no class of men on the face of the earth, says Captain Bonneville, who lead a life of more continued exertion, peril, and excitement, and who are more enamored of their occupations, than the free trappers of the West. No toil, no danger, no privation can turn the trapper from his pursuit. His passionate excitement at times resembles a mania. In vain may the most vigilant and cruel savages beset his path; in vain may rocks and precipices and wintry torrents oppose his progress; let but a single track of a beaver meet his eye, and he forgets all dangers and defies all difficulties. At times, he may be seen with his traps on his shoulder, buffeting his way across rapid streams, amidst floating blocks of ice: at other times, he is to be found with his

---

traps swung on his back clambering the most rugged mountains, scaling or descending the most frightful precipices, searching, by routes inaccessible to the horse, and never before trodden by white man, for springs and lakes unknown to his comrades, and where he may meet with his favorite game. Such is the mountaineer, the hardy trapper of the West; and such, as we have slightly sketched it, is the wild, Robin Hood kind of life, with all its strange and motley populace, now existing in full vigor among the Rocky Mountains.

Having thus given the reader some idea of the actual state of the fur trade in the interior of our vast continent, and made him acquainted with the wild chivalry of the mountains, we will no longer delay the introduction of Captain Bonneville and his band into this field of their enterprise, but launch them at once upon the perilous plains of the Far West.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 2

Departure from Fort Osage--Modes of transportation--Pack-horses--Wagons--Walker and Cerre; their characters--Buoyant feelings on launching upon the prairies--Wild equipments of the trappers--Their gambols and antics--Difference of character between the American and French trappers--Agency of the Kansas--General Clarke--White Plume, the Kansas chief--Night scene in a trader's camp--Colloquy between White Plume and the captain--Bee-hunters--Their expeditions--Their feuds with the Indians--Bargaining talent of White Plume

IT WAS ON THE FIRST of May, 1832, that Captain Bonneville took his departure from the frontier post of Fort Osage, on the Missouri. He had enlisted a party of one hundred and ten men, most of whom had been in the Indian country, and some of whom were experienced hunters and trappers. Fort Osage, and other places on the borders of the western wilderness, abound with characters of the kind, ready for any expedition.

The ordinary mode of transportation in these great inland expeditions of the fur traders is on mules and pack-horses; but Captain Bonneville substituted wagons. Though he was to travel through a trackless wilderness, yet the greater part of his route would lie across open plains, destitute of forests, and where wheel carriages can pass in every direction. The chief difficulty occurs in passing the deep ravines cut through the prairies by streams and winter torrents. Here it is often necessary to dig a road down the banks, and to make bridges for the wagons.

In transporting his baggage in vehicles of this kind, Captain Bonneville thought he would save the great delay caused every morning by packing the horses, and the labor of unpacking in the evening. Fewer horses also would be required, and less risk incurred of their wandering away, or being frightened or carried off by the Indians. The wagons, also, would be more easily defended, and might form a kind of fortification in case of attack in the open prairies. A train of twenty wagons, drawn by oxen, or by four mules or horses each, and laden with merchandise, ammunition, and provisions, were disposed in two columns in the center of the party, which was equally divided into a van and a rear-guard. As subleaders or lieutenants in his expedition, Captain Bonneville had made choice of Mr. I. R. Walker and Mr. M. S. Cerre. The former was a native of Tennessee, about six feet high, strong built, dark complexioned, brave in spirit, though mild in manners. He had resided for many years in Missouri, on the frontier; had been among the earliest adventurers to Santa Fe, where he went to trap beaver, and was taken by the Spaniards. Being liberated, he engaged with the Spaniards and Sioux Indians in a war against the Pawnees; then returned to

---

Missouri, and had acted by turns as sheriff, trader, trapper, until he was enlisted as a leader by Captain Bonneville.

Cerre, his other leader, had likewise been in expeditions to Santa Fe, in which he had endured much hardship. He was of the middle size, light complexioned, and though but about twenty-five years of age, was considered an experienced Indian trader. It was a great object with Captain Bonneville to get to the mountains before the summer heats and summer flies should render the travelling across the prairies distressing; and before the annual assemblages of people connected with the fur trade should have broken up, and dispersed to the hunting grounds.

The two rival associations already mentioned, the American Fur Company and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, had their several places of rendezvous for the present year at no great distance apart, in Pierre's Hole, a deep valley in the heart of the mountains, and thither Captain Bonneville intended to shape his course.

It is not easy to do justice to the exulting feelings of the worthy captain at finding himself at the head of a stout band of hunters, trappers, and woodmen; fairly launched on the broad prairies, with his face to the boundless West. The tamest inhabitant of cities, the veriest spoiled child of civilization, feels his heart dilate and his pulse beat high on finding himself on horseback in the glorious wilderness; what then must be the excitement of one whose imagination had been stimulated by a residence on the frontier, and to whom the wilderness was a region of romance!

His hardy followers partook of his excitement. Most of them had already experienced the wild freedom of savage life, and looked forward to a renewal of past scenes of adventure and exploit. Their very appearance and equipment exhibited a piebald mixture, half civilized and half savage. Many of them looked more like Indians than white men in their garbs and accoutrements, and their very horses were caparisoned in barbaric style, with fantastic trappings. The outset of a band of adventurers on one of these expeditions is always animated and joyous. The welkin rang with their shouts and yelps, after the manner of the savages; and with boisterous jokes and light-hearted laughter. As they passed the straggling hamlets and solitary cabins that fringe the skirts of the frontier, they would startle their inmates by Indian yells and war-whoops, or regale them with grotesque feats of horsemanship, well suited to their half-savage appearance. Most of these abodes were inhabited by men who had themselves been in similar expeditions; they welcomed the travellers, therefore, as brother trappers, treated them with a hunter's hospitality, and cheered them with an honest God speed at parting.

And here we would remark a great difference, in point of character and quality, between the two classes of trappers, the "American" and "French," as they are called in contradistinction. The latter is meant to designate the French creole of Canada or Louisiana; the former, the trapper of the old American stock, from Kentucky, Tennessee, and others of the western States. The French trapper is represented as a lighter, softer, more self-indulgent kind of man. He must have his Indian wife, his lodge, and his petty conveniences. He is gay and thoughtless, takes little heed of landmarks, depends upon his leaders and companions to think for the common weal, and, if left to himself, is easily perplexed and lost.

The American trapper stands by himself, and is peerless for the service of the wilderness. Drop him in the midst of a prairie, or in the heart of the mountains, and he is never at a loss. He notices every landmark; can retrace his route through the most monotonous plains, or the most perplexed labyrinths of the mountains; no danger nor difficulty can appal him, and he scorns to

complain under any privation. In equipping the two kinds of trappers, the Creole and Canadian are apt to prefer the light fusee; the American always grasps his rifle; he despises what he calls the "shot-gun." We give these estimates on the authority of a trader of long experience, and a foreigner by birth. "I consider one American," said he, "equal to three Canadians in point of sagacity, aptness at resources, self-dependence, and fearlessness of spirit. In fact, no one can cope with him as a stark tramper of the wilderness."

Beside the two classes of trappers just mentioned, Captain Bonneville had enlisted several Delaware Indians in his employ, on whose hunting qualifications he placed great reliance.

On the 6th of May the travellers passed the last border habitation, and bade a long farewell to the ease and security of civilization. The buoyant and clamorous spirits with which they had commenced their march gradually subsided as they entered upon its difficulties. They found the prairies saturated with the heavy cold rains, prevalent in certain seasons of the year in this part of the country, the wagon wheels sank deep in the mire, the horses were often to the fetlock, and both steed and rider were completely jaded by the evening of the 12th, when they reached the Kansas River; a fine stream about three hundred yards wide, entering the Missouri from the south. Though fordable in almost every part at the end of summer and during the autumn, yet it was necessary to construct a raft for the transportation of the wagons and effects. All this was done in the course of the following day, and by evening, the whole party arrived at the agency of the Kansas tribe. This was under the superintendence of General Clarke, brother of the celebrated traveller of the same name, who, with Lewis, made the first expedition down the waters of the Columbia. He was living like a patriarch, surrounded by laborers and interpreters, all snugly housed, and provided with excellent farms. The functionary next in consequence to the agent was the blacksmith, a most important, and, indeed, indispensable personage in a frontier community. The Kansas resemble the Osages in features, dress, and language; they raise corn and hunt the buffalo, ranging the Kansas River, and its tributary streams; at the time of the captain's visit, they were at war with the Pawnees of the Nebraska, or Platte River.

The unusual sight of a train of wagons caused quite a sensation among these savages; who thronged about the caravan, examining everything minutely, and asking a thousand questions: exhibiting a degree of excitability, and a lively curiosity totally opposite to that apathy with which their race is so often reproached.

The personage who most attracted the captain's attention at this place was "White Plume," the Kansas chief, and they soon became good friends. White Plume (we are pleased with his chivalrous soubriquet) inhabited a large stone house, built for him by order of the American government: but the establishment had not been carried out in corresponding style. It might be palace without, but it was wigwam within; so that, between the stateliness of his mansion and the squalidness of his furniture, the gallant White Plume presented some such whimsical incongruity as we see in the gala equipments of an Indian chief on a treaty-making embassy at Washington, who has been generously decked out in cocked hat and military coat, in contrast to his breech-clout and leathern legging; being grand officer at top, and ragged Indian at bottom.

White Plume was so taken with the courtesy of the captain, and pleased with one or two presents received from him, that he accompanied him a day's journey on his march, and passed a night in his camp, on the margin of a small stream. The method of encamping generally observed by the captain was as follows: The twenty wagons were disposed in a square, at the distance of thir-

ty-three feet from each other. In every interval there was a mess stationed; and each mess had its fire, where the men cooked, ate, gossiped, and slept. The horses were placed in the centre of the square, with a guard stationed over them at night.

The horses were "side lined," as it is termed: that is to say, the fore and hind foot on the same side of the animal were tied together, so as to be within eighteen inches of each other. A horse thus fettered is for a time sadly embarrassed, but soon becomes sufficiently accustomed to the restraint to move about slowly. It prevents his wandering; and his being easily carried off at night by lurking Indians. When a horse that is "foot free" is tied to one thus secured, the latter forms, as it were, a pivot, round which the other runs and curvets, in case of alarm. The encampment of which we are speaking presented a striking scene. The various mess-fires were surrounded by picturesque groups, standing, sitting, and reclining; some busied in cooking, others in cleaning their weapons: while the frequent laugh told that the rough joke or merry story was going on. In the middle of the camp, before the principal lodge, sat the two chieftains, Captain Bonneville and White Plume, in soldier-like communion, the captain delighted with the opportunity of meeting on social terms with one of the red warriors of the wilderness, the unsophisticated children of nature. The latter was squatted on his buffalo robe, his strong features and red skin glaring in the broad light of a blazing fire, while he recounted astounding tales of the bloody exploits of his tribe and himself in their wars with the Pawnees; for there are no old soldiers more given to long campaigning stories than Indian "braves."

The feuds of White Plume, however, had not been confined to the red men; he had much to say of brushes with bee hunters, a class of offenders for whom he seemed to cherish a particular abhorrence. As the species of hunting prosecuted by these worthies is not laid down in any of the ancient books of venerie, and is, in fact, peculiar to our western frontier, a word or two on the subject may not be unacceptable to the reader.

The bee hunter is generally some settler on the verge of the prairies; a long, lank fellow, of fever and ague complexion, acquired from living on new soil, and in a hut built of green logs. In the autumn, when the harvest is over, these; frontier settlers form parties of two or three, and prepare for a bee hunt. Having provided themselves with a wagon, and a number of empty casks, they sally off, armed with their rifles, into the wilderness, directing their course east, west, north, or south, without any regard to the ordinance of the American government, which strictly forbids all trespass upon the lands belonging to the Indian tribes.

The belts of woodland that traverse the lower prairies and border the rivers are peopled by innumerable swarms of wild bees, which make their hives in hollow trees and fill them with honey tolled from the rich flowers of the prairies. The bees, according to popular assertion, are migrating like the settlers, to the west. An Indian trader, well experienced in the country, informs us that within ten years that he has passed in the Far West, the bee has advanced westward above a hundred miles. It is said on the Missouri, that the wild turkey and the wild bee go up the river together: neither is found in the upper regions. It is but recently that the wild turkey has been killed on the Nebraska, or Platte; and his travelling competitor, the wild bee, appeared there about the same time.

Be all this as it may: the course of our party of bee hunters is to make a wide circuit through the woody river bottoms, and the patches of forest on the prairies, marking, as they go out, every tree in which they have detected a hive. These marks are generally respected by any other bee hunter

that should come upon their track. When they have marked sufficient to fill all their casks, they turn their faces homeward, cut down the trees as they proceed, and having loaded their wagon with honey and wax, return well pleased to the settlements.

Now it so happens that the Indians relish wild honey as highly as do the white men, and are the more delighted with this natural luxury from its having, in many instances, but recently made its appearance in their lands. The consequence is numberless disputes and conflicts between them and the bee hunters: and often a party of the latter, returning, laden with rich spoil, from one of their forays, are apt to be waylaid by the native lords of the soil; their honey to be seized, their harness cut to pieces, and themselves left to find their way home the best way they can, happy to escape with no greater personal harm than a sound rib-roasting.

Such were the marauders of whose offences the gallant White Plume made the most bitter complaint. They were chiefly the settlers of the western part of Missouri, who are the most famous bee hunters on the frontier, and whose favorite hunting ground lies within the lands of the Kansas tribe. According to the account of White Plume, however, matters were pretty fairly balanced between him and the offenders; he having as often treated them to a taste of the bitter, as they had robbed him of the sweets.

It is but justice to this gallant chief to say that he gave proofs of having acquired some of the lights of civilization from his proximity to the whites, as was evinced in his knowledge of driving a bargain. He required hard cash in return for some corn with which he supplied the worthy captain, and left the latter at a loss which most to admire, his native chivalry as a brave, or his acquired adroitness as a trader.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 3

Wide prairies--Vegetable productions--Tabular hills-- Slabs of sandstone--Nebraska or Platte River--Scanty fare--Buffalo skulls--Wagons turned into boats-- Herds of buffalo--Cliffs resembling castles--The chimney--Scott's Bluffs--Story connected with them--The bighorn or ahsahta--Its nature and habits--Difference between that and the "woolly sheep," or goat of the mountains  
FROM THE MIDDLE to the end of May, Captain Bonneville pursued a western course over vast undulating plains, destitute of tree or shrub, rendered miry by occasional rain, and cut up by deep water-courses where they had to dig roads for their wagons down the soft crumbling banks and to throw bridges across the streams. The weather had attained the summer heat; the thermometer standing about fifty-seven degrees in the morning, early, but rising to about ninety degrees at noon. The incessant breezes, however, which sweep these vast plains render the heats endurable. Game was scanty, and they had to eke out their scanty fare with wild roots and vegetables, such as the Indian potato, the wild onion, and the prairie tomato, and they met with quantities of "red root," from which the hunters make a very palatable beverage. The only human being that crossed their path was a Kansas warrior, returning from some solitary expedition of bravado or revenge, bearing a Pawnee scalp as a trophy.

The country gradually rose as they proceeded westward, and their route took them over high ridges, commanding wide and beautiful prospects. The vast plain was studded on the west with innumerable hills of conical shape, such as are seen north of the Arkansas River. These hills have

---

their summits apparently cut off about the same elevation, so as to leave flat surfaces at top. It is conjectured by some that the whole country may originally have been of the altitude of these tabular hills; but through some process of nature may have sunk to its present level; these insulated eminences being protected by broad foundations of solid rock.

Captain Bonneville mentions another geological phenomenon north of Red River, where the surface of the earth, in considerable tracts of country, is covered with broad slabs of sandstone, having the form and position of grave-stones, and looking as if they had been forced up by some subterranean agitation. "The resemblance," says he, "which these very remarkable spots have in many places to old church-yards is curious in the extreme. One might almost fancy himself among the tombs of the pre-Adamites."

On the 2d of June, they arrived on the main stream of the Nebraska or Platte River; twenty-five miles below the head of the Great Island. The low banks of this river give it an appearance of great width. Captain Bonneville measured it in one place, and found it twenty-two hundred yards from bank to bank. Its depth was from three to six feet, the bottom full of quicksands. The Nebraska is studded with islands covered with that species of poplar called the cotton-wood tree. Keeping up along the course of this river for several days, they were obliged, from the scarcity of game, to put themselves upon short allowance, and, occasionally, to kill a steer. They bore their daily labors and privations, however, with great good humor, taking their tone, in all probability, from the buoyant spirit of their leader. "If the weather was inclement," said the captain, "we watched the clouds, and hoped for a sight of the blue sky and the merry sun. If food was scanty, we regaled ourselves with the hope of soon falling in with herds of buffalo, and having nothing to do but slay and eat." We doubt whether the genial captain is not describing the cheeriness of his own breast, which gave a cheery aspect to everything around him.

There certainly were evidences, however, that the country was not always equally destitute of game. At one place, they observed a field decorated with buffalo skulls, arranged in circles, curves, and other mathematical figures, as if for some mystic rite or ceremony. They were almost innumerable, and seemed to have been a vast hecatomb offered up in thanksgiving to the Great Spirit for some signal success in the chase.

On the 11th of June, they came to the fork of the Nebraska, where it divides itself into two equal and beautiful streams. One of these branches rises in the west-southwest, near the headwaters of the Arkansas. Up the course of this branch, as Captain Bonneville was well aware, lay the route to the Camanche and Kioway Indians, and to the northern Mexican settlements; of the other branch he knew nothing. Its sources might lie among wild and inaccessible cliffs, and tumble and foam down rugged defiles and over craggy precipices; but its direction was in the true course, and up this stream he determined to prosecute his route to the Rocky Mountains. Finding it impossible, from quicksands and other dangerous impediments, to cross the river in this neighborhood, he kept up along the south fork for two days, merely seeking a safe fording place. At length he encamped, caused the bodies of the wagons to be dislodged from the wheels, covered with buffalo hide, and besmeared with a compound of tallow and ashes; thus forming rude boats. In these,

they ferried their effects across the stream, which was six hundred yards wide, with a swift and strong current. Three men were in each boat, to manage it; others waded across pushing the barks before them. Thus all crossed in safety. A march of nine miles took them over high rolling prairies to the north fork; their eyes being regaled with the welcome sight of herds of buffalo at a distance, some careering the plain, others grazing and reposing in the natural meadows.

Skirting along the north fork for a day or two, excessively annoyed by mosquitoes and buffalo gnats, they reached, in the evening of the 17th, a small but beautiful grove, from which issued the confused notes of singing birds, the first they had heard since crossing the boundary of Missouri. After so many days of weary travelling through a naked, monotonous and silent country, it was delightful once more to hear the song of the bird, and to behold the verdure of the grove. It was a beautiful sunset, and a sight of the glowing rays, mantling the tree-tops and rustling branches, gladdened every heart. They pitched their camp in the grove, kindled their fires, partook merrily of their rude fare, and resigned themselves to the sweetest sleep they had enjoyed since their outset upon the prairies.

The country now became rugged and broken. High bluffs advanced upon the river, and forced the travellers occasionally to leave its banks and wind their course into the interior. In one of the wild and solitary passes they were startled by the trail of four or five pedestrians, whom they supposed to be spies from some predatory camp of either Arickara or Crow Indians. This obliged them to redouble their vigilance at night, and to keep especial watch upon their horses. In these rugged and elevated regions they began to see the black-tailed deer, a species larger than the ordinary kind, and chiefly found in rocky and mountainous countries. They had reached also a great buffalo range; Captain Bonneville ascended a high bluff, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding plains. As far as his eye could reach, the country seemed absolutely blackened by innumerable herds. No language, he says, could convey an adequate idea of the vast living mass thus presented to his eye. He remarked that the bulls and cows generally congregated in separate herds.

Opposite to the camp at this place was a singular phenomenon, which is among the curiosities of the country. It is called the chimney. The lower part is a conical mound, rising out of the naked plain; from the summit shoots up a shaft or column, about one hundred and twenty feet in height, from which it derives its name. The height of the whole, according to Captain Bonneville, is a hundred and seventy-five yards. It is composed of indurated clay, with alternate layers of red and white sandstone, and may be seen at the distance of upward of thirty miles.

On the 21st, they encamped amidst high and beetling cliffs of indurated clay and sandstone, bearing the semblance of towers, castles, churches, and fortified cities. At a distance, it was scarcely possible to persuade one's self that the works of art were not mingled with these fantastic freaks of nature. They have received the name of Scott's Bluffs, from a melancholy circumstance. A number of years since, a party were descending the upper part of the river in canoes, when their frail barks were overturned and all their powder spoiled. Their rifles being thus rendered useless, they were unable to procure food by hunting and had to depend upon roots and wild fruits for subsis-

tence. After suffering extremely from hunger, they arrived at Laramie's Fork, a small tributary of the north branch of the Nebraska, about sixty miles above the cliffs just mentioned. Here one of the party, by the name of Scott, was taken ill; and his companions came to a halt, until he should recover health and strength sufficient to proceed. While they were searching round in quest of edible roots, they discovered a fresh trail of white men, who had evidently but recently preceded them. What was to be done? By a forced march they might overtake this party, and thus be able to reach the settlements in safety. Should they linger, they might all perish of famine and exhaustion. Scott, however, was incapable of moving; they were too feeble to aid him forward, and dreaded that such a clog would prevent their coming up with the advance party. They determined, therefore, to abandon him to his fate. Accordingly, under presence of seeking food, and such simples as might be efficacious in his malady, they deserted him and hastened forward upon the trail. They succeeded in overtaking the party of which they were in quest, but concealed their faithless desertion of Scott; alleging that he had died of disease.

On the ensuing summer, these very individuals visiting these parts in company with others, came suddenly upon the bleached bones and grinning skull of a human skeleton, which, by certain signs they recognized for the remains of Scott. This was sixty long miles from the place where they had abandoned him; and it appeared that the wretched man had crawled that immense distance before death put an end to his miseries. The wild and picturesque bluffs in the neighborhood of his lonely grave have ever since borne his name.

Amidst this wild and striking scenery, Captain Bonneville, for the first time, beheld flocks of the ahsahta or bighorn, an animal which frequents these cliffs in great numbers. They accord with the nature of such scenery, and add much to its romantic effect; bounding like goats from crag to crag, often trooping along the lofty shelves of the mountains, under the guidance of some venerable patriarch with horns twisted lower than his muzzle, and sometimes peering over the edge of a precipice, so high that they appear scarce bigger than crows; indeed, it seems a pleasure to them to seek the most rugged and frightful situations, doubtless from a feeling of security.

This animal is commonly called the mountain sheep, and is often confounded with another animal, the "woolly sheep," found more to the northward, about the country of the Flatheads. The latter likewise inhabits cliffs in summer, but descends into the valleys in the winter. It has white wool, like a sheep, mingled with a thin growth of long hair; but it has short legs, a deep belly, and a beard like a goat. Its horns are about five inches long, slightly curved backwards, black as jet, and beautifully polished. Its hoofs are of the same color. This animal is by no means so active as the bighorn; it does not bound much, but sits a good deal upon its haunches. It is not so plentiful either; rarely more than two or three are seen at a time. Its wool alone gives a resemblance to the sheep; it is more properly of the flesh is said to have a musty flavor; some have thought the fleece might be valuable, as it is said to be as fine as that of the goat Cashmere, but it is not to be procured in sufficient quantities.

The ahsahta, argali, or bighorn, on the contrary, has short hair like a deer, and resembles it in shape, but has the head and horns of a sheep, and its flesh is said to be delicious mutton. The Indians consider it more sweet and delicate than any other kind of venison. It abounds in the

Rocky Mountains, from the fiftieth degree of north latitude, quite down to California; generally in the highest regions capable of vegetation; sometimes it ventures into the valleys, but on the least alarm, regains its favorite cliffs and precipices, where it is perilous, if not impossible for the hunter to follow.

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 4

An alarm--Crow Indians--Their appearance--Mode of approach--Their vengeful errand--Their curiosity--Hostility between the Crows and Blackfeet-- Loving conduct of the Crows--Laramie's Fork-- First navigation of the Nebraska--Great elevation of the country--Rarity of the atmosphere--Its effect on the wood-work of wagons--Black Hills--Their wild and broken scenery--Indian dogs--Crow trophies-- Sterile and dreary country--Banks of the Sweet Water--Buffalo hunting--Adventure of Tom Cain the Irish cook

WHEN ON THE MARCH, Captain Bonneville always sent some of his best hunters in the advance to reconnoitre the country, as well as to look out for game. On the 24th of May, as the caravan was slowly journeying up the banks of the Nebraska, the hunters came galloping back, waving their caps, and giving the alarm cry, Indians! Indians!

The captain immediately ordered a halt: the hunters now came up and announced that a large war-party of Crow Indians were just above, on the river. The captain knew the character of these savages; one of the most roving, warlike, crafty, and predatory tribes of the mountains; horse-stealers of the first order, and easily provoked to acts of sanguinary violence. Orders were accordingly given to prepare for action, and every one promptly took the post that had been assigned him in the general order of the march, in all cases of warlike emergency.

Everything being put in battle array, the captain took the lead of his little band, and moved on slowly and warily. In a little while he beheld the Crow warriors emerging from among the bluffs. There were about sixty of them; fine martial-looking fellows, painted and arrayed for war, and mounted on horses decked out with all kinds of wild trappings. They came prancing along in gallant style, with many wild and dexterous evolutions, for none can surpass them in horsemanship; and their bright colors, and flaunting and fantastic embellishments, glaring and sparkling in the morning sunshine, gave them really a striking appearance.

Their mode of approach, to one not acquainted with the tactics and ceremonies of this rude chivalry of the wilderness, had an air of direct hostility. They came galloping forward in a body, as if about to make a furious charge, but, when close at hand, opened to the right and left, and wheeled in wide circles round the travellers, whooping and yelling like maniacs.

This done, their mock fury sank into a calm, and the chief, approaching the captain, who had remained warily drawn up, though informed of the pacific nature of the maneuver, extended to him the hand of friendship. The pipe of peace was smoked, and now all was good fellowship.

The Crows were in pursuit of a band of Cheyennes, who had attacked their village in the night and killed one of their people. They had already been five and twenty days on the track of the marauders, and were determined not to return home until they had sated their revenge.

A few days previously, some of their scouts, who were ranging the country at a distance from the main body, had discovered the party of Captain Bonneville. They had dogged it for a time in secret, astonished at the long train of wagons and oxen, and especially struck with the sight of a cow and calf, quietly following the caravan; supposing them to be some kind of tame buffalo. Having

satisfied their curiosity, they carried back to their chief intelligence of all that they had seen. He had, in consequence, diverged from his pursuit of vengeance to behold the wonders described to him. "Now that we have met you," said he to Captain Bonneville, "and have seen these marvels with our own eyes, our hearts are glad." In fact, nothing could exceed the curiosity evinced by these people as to the objects before them. Wagons had never been seen by them before, and they examined them with the greatest minuteness; but the calf was the peculiar object of their admiration. They watched it with intense interest as it licked the hands accustomed to feed it, and were struck with the mild expression of its countenance, and its perfect docility.

After much sage consultation, they at length determined that it must be the "great medicine" of the white party; an appellation given by the Indians to anything of supernatural and mysterious power that is guarded as a talisman. They were completely thrown out in their conjecture, however, by an offer of the white men to exchange the calf for a horse; their estimation of the great medicine sank in an instant, and they declined the bargain.

At the request of the Crow chieftain the two parties encamped together, and passed the residue of the day in company. The captain was well pleased with every opportunity to gain a knowledge of the "unsophisticated sons of nature," who had so long been objects of his poetic speculations; and indeed this wild, horse-stealing tribe is one of the most notorious of the mountains. The chief, of course, had his scalps to show and his battles to recount. The Blackfoot is the hereditary enemy of the Crow, toward whom hostility is like a cherished principle of religion; for every tribe, besides its casual antagonists, has some enduring foe with whom there can be no permanent reconciliation. The Crows and Blackfeet, upon the whole, are enemies worthy of each other, being rogues and ruffians of the first water. As their predatory excursions extend over the same regions, they often come in contact with each other, and these casual conflicts serve to keep their wits awake and their passions alive.

The present party of Crows, however, evinced nothing of the invidious character for which they are renowned. During the day and night that they were encamped in company with the travellers, their conduct was friendly in the extreme. They were, in fact, quite irksome in their attentions, and had a caressing manner at times quite importunate. It was not until after separation on the following morning that the captain and his men ascertained the secret of all this loving-kindness. In the course of their fraternal caresses, the Crows had contrived to empty the pockets of their white brothers; to abstract the very buttons from their coats, and, above all, to make free with their hunting knives.

By equal altitudes of the sun, taken at this last encampment, Captain Bonneville ascertained his latitude to be 41° 47' north. The thermometer, at six o'clock in the morning, stood at fifty-nine degrees; at two o'clock, P. M., at ninety-two degrees; and at six o'clock in the evening, at seventy degrees.

The Black Hills, or Mountains, now began to be seen at a distance, printing the horizon with their rugged and broken outlines; and threatening to oppose a difficult barrier in the way of the travellers.

On the 26th of May, the travellers encamped at Laramie's Fork, a clear and beautiful stream, rising in the west-southwest, maintaining an average width of twenty yards, and winding through broad meadows abounding in currants and gooseberries, and adorned with groves and clumps of trees. By an observation of Jupiter's satellites, with a Dolland reflecting telescope, Captain Bonneville

ascertained the longitude to be 102° 57' west of Greenwich.

We will here step ahead of our narrative to observe that about three years after the time of which we are treating, Mr. Robert Campbell, formerly of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, descended the Platte from this fork, in skin canoes, thus proving, what had always been discredited, that the river was navigable. About the same time, he built a fort or trading post at Laramie's Fork, which he named Fort William, after his friend and partner, Mr. William Sublette. Since that time, the Platte has become a highway for the fur traders.

For some days past, Captain Bonneville had been made sensible of the great elevation of country into which he was gradually ascending by the effect of the dryness and rarefaction of the atmosphere upon his wagons. The wood-work shrunk; the paint boxes of the wheels were continually working out, and it was necessary to support the spokes by stout props to prevent their falling asunder. The travellers were now entering one of those great steppes of the Far West, where the prevalent aridity of the atmosphere renders the country unfit for cultivation. In these regions there is a fresh sweet growth of grass in the spring, but it is scanty and short, and parches up in the course of the summer, so that there is none for the hunters to set fire to in the autumn. It is a common observation that "above the forks of the Platte the grass does not burn." All attempts at agriculture and gardening in the neighborhood of Fort William have been attended with very little success. The grain and vegetables raised there have been scanty in quantity and poor in quality. The great elevation of these plains, and the dryness of the atmosphere, will tend to retain these immense regions in a state of pristine wildness.

In the course of a day or two more, the travellers entered that wild and broken tract of the Crow country called the Black Hills, and here their journey became toilsome in the extreme. Rugged steeps and deep ravines incessantly obstructed their progress, so that a great part of the day was spent in the painful toil of digging through banks, filling up ravines, forcing the wagons up the most forbidding ascents, or swinging them with ropes down the face of dangerous precipices. The shoes of their horses were worn out, and their feet injured by the rugged and stony roads. The travellers were annoyed also by frequent but brief storms, which would come hurrying over the hills, or through the mountain defiles, rage with great fury for a short time, and then pass off, leaving everything calm and serene again.

For several nights the camp had been infested by vagabond Indian dogs, prowling about in quest of food. They were about the size of a large pointer; with ears short and erect, and a long bushy tail--altogether, they bore a striking resemblance to a wolf. These skulking visitors would keep about the purlieu of the camp until daylight; when, on the first stir of life among the sleepers, they would scamper off until they reached some rising ground, where they would take their seats, and keep a sharp and hungry watch upon every movement. The moment the travellers were fairly on the march, and the camp was abandoned, these starving hangers-on would hasten to the deserted fires, to seize upon the half-picked bones, the offal and garbage that lay about; and, having made a hasty meal, with many a snap and snarl and growl, would follow leisurely on the trail of the caravan. Many attempts were made to coax or catch them, but in vain. Their quick and suspicious eyes caught the slightest sinister movement, and they turned and scampered off. At length one was taken. He was terribly alarmed, and crouched and trembled as if expecting instant death. Soothed, however, by caresses, he began after a time to gather confidence and wag his tail, and at length was brought to follow close at the heels of his captors, still, however, darting around furtive

and suspicious glances, and evincing a disposition to scamper off upon the least alarm. On the first of July the band of Crow warriors again crossed their path. They came in vaunting and vainglorious style; displaying five Cheyenne scalps, the trophies of their vengeance. They were now bound homewards, to appease the manes of their comrade by these proofs that his death had been revenged, and intended to have scalp-dances and other triumphant rejoicings. Captain Bonneville and his men, however, were by no means disposed to renew their confiding intimacy with these crafty savages, and above all, took care to avoid their pilfering caresses. They remarked one precaution of the Crows with respect to their horses; to protect their hoofs from the sharp and jagged rocks among which they had to pass, they had covered them with shoes of buffalo hide. The route of the travellers lay generally along the course of the Nebraska or Platte, but occasionally, where steep promontories advanced to the margin of the stream, they were obliged to make inland circuits. One of these took them through a bold and stern country, bordered by a range of low mountains, running east and west. Everything around bore traces of some fearful convulsion of nature in times long past. Hitherto the various strata of rock had exhibited a gentle elevation toward the southwest, but here everything appeared to have been subverted, and thrown out of place. In many places there were heavy beds of white sandstone resting upon red. Immense strata of rocks jutted up into crags and cliffs; and sometimes formed perpendicular walls and overhanging precipices. An air of sterility prevailed over these savage wastes. The valleys were destitute of herbage, and scantily clothed with a stunted species of wormwood, generally known among traders and trappers by the name of sage. From an elevated point of their march through this region, the travellers caught a beautiful view of the Powder River Mountains away to the north, stretching along the very verge of the horizon, and seeming, from the snow with which they were mantled, to be a chain of small white clouds, connecting sky and earth.

Though the thermometer at mid-day ranged from eighty to ninety, and even sometimes rose to ninety-three degrees, yet occasional spots of snow were to be seen on the tops of the low mountains, among which the travellers were journeying; proofs of the great elevation of the whole region.

The Nebraska, in its passage through the Black Hills, is confined to a much narrower channel than that through which it flows in the plains below; but it is deeper and clearer, and rushes with a stronger current. The scenery, also, is more varied and beautiful. Sometimes it glides rapidly but smoothly through a picturesque valley, between wooded banks; then, forcing its way into the bosom of rugged mountains, it rushes impetuously through narrow defiles, roaring and foaming down rocks and rapids, until it is again soothed to rest in some peaceful valley.

On the 12th of July, Captain Bonneville abandoned the main stream of the Nebraska, which was continually shouldered by rugged promontories, and making a bend to the southwest, for a couple of days, part of the time over plains of loose sand, encamped on the 14th on the banks of the Sweet Water, a stream about twenty yards in breadth, and four or five feet deep, flowing between low banks over a sandy soil, and forming one of the forks or upper branches of the Nebraska. Up this stream they now shaped their course for several successive days, tending, generally, to the west. The soil was light and sandy; the country much diversified. Frequently the plains were studded with isolated blocks of rock, sometimes in the shape of a half globe, and from three to four hundred feet high. These singular masses had occasionally a very imposing, and even sublime appearance, rising from the midst of a savage and lonely landscape.

As the travellers continued to advance, they became more and more sensible of the elevation of the country. The hills around were more generally capped with snow. The men complained of cramps and colics, sore lips and mouths, and violent headaches. The wood-work of the wagons also shrank so much that it was with difficulty the wheels were kept from falling to pieces. The country bordering upon the river was frequently gashed with deep ravines, or traversed by high bluffs, to avoid which, the travellers were obliged to make wide circuits through the plains. In the course of these, they came upon immense herds of buffalo, which kept scouring off in the van, like a retreating army.

Among the motley retainers of the camp was Tom Cain, a raw Irishman, who officiated as cook, whose various blunders and expedients in his novel situation, and in the wild scenes and wild kind of life into which he had suddenly been thrown, had made him a kind of butt or droll of the camp. Tom, however, began to discover an ambition superior to his station; and the conversation of the hunters, and their stories of their exploits, inspired him with a desire to elevate himself to the dignity of their order. The buffalo in such immense droves presented a tempting opportunity for making his first essay. He rode, in the line of march, all prepared for action: his powder-flask and shot-pouch knowingly slung at the pommel of his saddle, to be at hand; his rifle balanced on his shoulder. While in this plight, a troop of Buffalo came trotting by in great alarm. In an instant, Tom sprang from his horse and gave chase on foot. Finding they were leaving him behind, he levelled his rifle and pulled [the] trigger. His shot produced no other effect than to increase the speed of the buffalo, and to frighten his own horse, who took to his heels, and scampered off with all the ammunition. Tom scampered after him, hallooing with might and main, and the wild horse and wild Irishman soon disappeared among the ravines of the prairie. Captain Bonneville, who was at the head of the line, and had seen the transaction at a distance, detached a party in pursuit of Tom. After a long interval they returned, leading the frightened horse; but though they had scoured the country, and looked out and shouted from every height, they had seen nothing of his rider.

As Captain Bonneville knew Tom's utter awkwardness and inexperience, and the dangers of a bewildered Irishman in the midst of a prairie, he halted and encamped at an early hour, that there might be a regular hunt for him in the morning.

At early dawn on the following day scouts were sent off in every direction, while the main body, after breakfast, proceeded slowly on its course. It was not until the middle of the afternoon that the hunters returned, with honest Tom mounted behind one of them. They had found him in a complete state of perplexity and amazement. His appearance caused shouts of merriment in the camp,--but Tom for once could not join in the mirth raised at his expense: he was completely chapfallen, and apparently cured of the hunting mania for the rest of his life.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 5

Magnificent scenery-- Wind River Mountains-- Treasury of waters-- A stray horse-- An Indian trail-- Trout streams-- The Great Green River Valley-- An alarm-- A band of trappers-- Fontenelle, his information-- Sufferings of thirst-- Encampment on the Seeds-ke-dee-- Strategy of rival traders-- Fortification of the camp-- The Blackfeet-- Banditti of the mountains-- Their character and habits

---

IT WAS ON THE 20TH of July that Captain Bonneville first came in sight of the grand region of his hopes and anticipations, the Rocky Mountains. He had been making a bend to the south, to avoid some obstacles along the river, and had attained a high, rocky ridge, when a magnificent prospect burst upon his sight. To the west rose the Wind River Mountains, with their bleached and snowy summits towering into the clouds. These stretched far to the north-northwest, until they melted away into what appeared to be faint clouds, but which the experienced eyes of the veteran hunters of the party recognized for the rugged mountains of the Yellowstone; at the feet of which extended the wild Crow country: a perilous, though profitable region for the trapper. To the southwest, the eye ranged over an immense extent of wilderness, with what appeared to be a snowy vapor resting upon its horizon. This, however, was pointed out as another branch of the Great Chippewyan, or Rocky chain; being the Eutaw Mountains, at whose basis the wandering tribe of hunters of the same name pitch their tents. We can imagine the enthusiasm of the worthy captain when he beheld the vast and mountainous scene of his adventurous enterprise thus suddenly unveiled before him. We can imagine with what feelings of awe and admiration he must have contemplated the Wind River Sierra, or bed of mountains; that great fountainhead from whose springs, and lakes, and melted snows some of those mighty rivers take their rise, which wander over hundreds of miles of varied country and clime, and find their way to the opposite waves of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

The Wind River Mountains are, in fact, among the most remarkable of the whole Rocky chain; and would appear to be among the loftiest. They form, as it were, a great bed of mountains, about eighty miles in length, and from twenty to thirty in breadth; with rugged peaks, covered with eternal snows, and deep, narrow valleys full of springs, and brooks, and rock-bound lakes. From this great treasury of waters issue forth limpid streams, which, augmenting as they descend, become main tributaries of the Missouri on the one side, and the Columbia on the other; and give rise to the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, the great Colorado of the West, that empties its current into the Gulf of California.

The Wind River Mountains are notorious in hunters' and trappers' stories: their rugged defiles, and the rough tracts about their neighborhood, having been lurking places for the predatory hordes of the mountains, and scenes of rough encounter with Crows and Blackfeet. It was to the west of these mountains, in the valley of the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, that Captain Bonneville intended to make a halt for the purpose of giving repose to his people and his horses after their weary journeying; and of collecting information as to his future course. This Green River valley, and its immediate neighborhood, as we have already observed, formed the main point of rendezvous, for the present year, of the rival fur companies, and the motley populace, civilized and savage, connected with them. Several days of rugged travel, however, yet remained for the captain and his men before they should encamp in this desired resting-place.

On the 21st of July, as they were pursuing their course through one of the meadows of the Sweet Water, they beheld a horse grazing at a little distance. He showed no alarm at their approach, but suffered himself quietly to be taken, evincing a perfect state of tameness. The scouts of the party were instantly on the look-out for the owners of this animal; lest some dangerous band of savages might be lurking in the vicinity. After a narrow search, they discovered the trail of an Indian party, which had evidently passed through that neighborhood but recently. The horse was accordingly taken possession of, as an stray; but a more vigilant watch than usual was kept round the camp

at nights, lest his former owners should be upon the prowl.

The travellers had now attained so high an elevation that on the 23d of July, at daybreak, there was considerable ice in the waterbuckets, and the thermometer stood at twenty-two degrees. The rarefy of the atmosphere continued to affect the wood-work of the wagons, and the wheels were incessantly falling to pieces. A remedy was at length devised. The tire of each wheel was taken off; a band of wood was nailed round the exterior of the felloes, the tire was then made red hot, replaced round the wheel, and suddenly cooled with water. By this means, the whole was bound together with great compactness.

The extreme elevation of these great steppes, which range along the feet of the Rocky Mountains, takes away from the seeming height of their peaks, which yield to few in the known world in point of altitude above the level of the sea.

On the 24th, the travellers took final leave of the Sweet Water, and keeping westwardly, over a low and very rocky ridge, one of the most southern spurs of the Wind River Mountains, they encamped, after a march of seven hours and a half, on the banks of a small clear stream, running to the south, in which they caught a number of fine trout.

The sight of these fish was hailed with pleasure, as a sign that they had reached the waters which flow into the Pacific; for it is only on the western streams of the Rocky Mountains that trout are to be taken. The stream on which they had thus encamped proved, in effect, to be tributary to the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, into which it flowed at some distance to the south.

Captain Bonneville now considered himself as having fairly passed the crest of the Rocky Mountains; and felt some degree of exultation in being the first individual that had crossed, north of the settled provinces of Mexico, from the waters of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific, with wagons. Mr. William Sublette, the enterprising leader of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, had, two or three years previously, reached the valley of the Wind River, which lies on the northeast of the mountains; but had proceeded with them no further.

A vast valley now spread itself before the travellers, bounded on one side by the Wind River Mountains, and to the west, by a long range of high hills. This, Captain Bonneville was assured by a veteran hunter in his company, was the great valley of the Seedske-dee; and the same informant would have fain persuaded him that a small stream, three feet deep, which he came to on the 25th, was that river. The captain was convinced, however, that the stream was too insignificant to drain so wide a valley and the adjacent mountains: he encamped, therefore, at an early hour, on its borders, that he might take the whole of the next day to reach the main river; which he presumed to flow between him and the distant range of western hills.

On the 26th of July, he commenced his march at an early hour, making directly across the valley, toward the hills in the west; proceeding at as brisk a rate as the jaded condition of his horses would permit. About eleven o'clock in the morning, a great cloud of dust was descried in the rear, advancing directly on the trail of the party. The alarm was given; they all came to a halt, and held a council of war. Some conjectured that the band of Indians, whose trail they had discovered in the neighborhood of the stray horse, had been lying in wait for them in some secret fastness of the mountains; and were about to attack them on the open plain, where they would have no shelter. Preparations were immediately made for defence; and a scouting party sent off to reconnoitre. They soon came galloping back, making signals that all was well. The cloud of dust was made by a band of fifty or sixty mounted trappers, belonging to the American Fur Company, who soon

---

came up, leading their pack-horses. They were headed by Mr. Fontenelle, an experienced leader, or "partisan," as a chief of a party is called in the technical language of the trappers.

Mr. Fontenelle informed Captain Bonneville that he was on his way from the company's trading post on the Yellowstone to the yearly rendezvous, with reinforcements and supplies for their hunting and trading parties beyond the mountains; and that he expected to meet, by appointment, with a band of free trappers in that very neighborhood. He had fallen upon the trail of Captain Bonneville's party, just after leaving the Nebraska; and, finding that they had frightened off all the game, had been obliged to push on, by forced marches, to avoid famine: both men and horses were, therefore, much travel-worn; but this was no place to halt; the plain before them he said was destitute of grass and water, neither of which would be met with short of the Green River, which was yet at a considerable distance. He hoped, he added, as his party were all on horseback, to reach the river, with hard travelling, by nightfall: but he doubted the possibility of Captain Bonneville's arrival there with his wagons before the day following. Having imparted this information, he pushed forward with all speed.

Captain Bonneville followed on as fast as circumstances would permit. The ground was firm and gravelly; but the horses were too much fatigued to move rapidly. After a long and harassing day's march, without pausing for a noontide meal, they were compelled, at nine o'clock at night, to encamp in an open plain, destitute of water or pasturage. On the following morning, the horses were turned loose at the peep of day; to slake their thirst, if possible, from the dew collected on the sparse grass, here and there springing up among dry sand-banks. The soil of a great part of this Green River valley is a whitish clay, into which the rain cannot penetrate, but which dries and cracks with the sun. In some places it produces a salt weed, and grass along the margins of the streams; but the wider expanses of it are desolate and barren. It was not until noon that Captain Bonneville reached the banks of the Seeds-ke-dee, or Colorado of the West; in the meantime, the sufferings of both men and horses had been excessive, and it was with almost frantic eagerness that they hurried to allay their burning thirst in the limpid current of the river.

Fontenelle and his party had not fared much better; the chief part had managed to reach the river by nightfall, but were nearly knocked up by the exertion; the horses of others sank under them, and they were obliged to pass the night upon the road.

On the following morning, July 27th, Fontenelle moved his camp across the river; while Captain Bonneville proceeded some little distance below, where there was a small but fresh meadow yielding abundant pasturage. Here the poor jaded horses were turned out to graze, and take their rest: the weary journey up the mountains had worn them down in flesh and spirit; but this last march across the thirsty plain had nearly finished them.

The captain had here the first taste of the boasted strategy of the fur trade. During his brief, but social encampment, in company with Fontenelle, that experienced trapper had managed to win over a number of Delaware Indians whom the captain had brought with him, by offering them four hundred dollars each for the ensuing autumnal hunt. The captain was somewhat astonished when he saw these hunters, on whose services he had calculated securely, suddenly pack up their traps, and go over to the rival camp. That he might in some measure, however, be even with his competitor, he dispatched two scouts to look out for the band of free trappers who were to meet Fontenelle in this neighborhood, and to endeavor to bring them to his camp.

As it would be necessary to remain some time in this neighborhood, that both men and horses

might repose, and recruit their strength; and as it was a region full of danger, Captain Bonneville proceeded to fortify his camp with breastworks of logs and pickets.

These precautions were, at that time, peculiarly necessary, from the bands of Blackfeet Indians which were roving about the neighborhood. These savages are the most dangerous banditti of the mountains, and the inveterate foe of the trappers. They are Ishmaelites of the first order, always with weapon in hand, ready for action. The young braves of the tribe, who are destitute of property, go to war for booty; to gain horses, and acquire the means of setting up a lodge, supporting a family, and entitling themselves to a seat in the public councils. The veteran warriors fight merely for the love of the thing, and the consequence which success gives them among their people.

They are capital horsemen, and are generally well mounted on short, stout horses, similar to the prairie ponies to be met with at St. Louis. When on a war party, however, they go on foot, to enable them to skulk through the country with greater secrecy; to keep in thickets and ravines, and use more adroit subterfuges and stratagems. Their mode of warfare is entirely by ambush, surprise, and sudden assaults in the night time. If they succeed in causing a panic, they dash forward with headlong fury: if the enemy is on the alert, and shows no signs of fear, they become wary and deliberate in their movements.

Some of them are armed in the primitive style, with bows and arrows; the greater part have American fuses, made after the fashion of those of the Hudson's Bay Company. These they procure at the trading post of the American Fur Company, on Marias River, where they traffic their peltries for arms, ammunition, clothing, and trinkets. They are extremely fond of spirituous liquors and tobacco; for which nuisances they are ready to exchange not merely their guns and horses, but even their wives and daughters. As they are a treacherous race, and have cherished a lurking hostility to the whites ever since one of their tribe was killed by Mr. Lewis, the associate of General Clarke, in his exploring expedition across the Rocky Mountains, the American Fur Company is obliged constantly to keep at that post a garrison of sixty or seventy men.

Under the general name of Blackfeet are comprehended several tribes: such as the Surcies, the Peagans, the Blood Indians, and the Gros Ventres of the Prairies: who roam about the southern branches of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, together with some other tribes further north. The bands infesting the Wind River Mountains and the country adjacent at the time of which we are treating, were Gros Ventres of the Prairies, which are not to be confounded with Gros Ventres of the Missouri, who keep about the lower part of that river, and are friendly to the white men. This hostile band keeps about the headwaters of the Missouri, and numbers about nine hundred fighting men. Once in the course of two or three years they abandon their usual abodes, and make a visit to the Arapahoes of the Arkansas. Their route lies either through the Crow country, and the Black Hills, or through the lands of the Nez Perces, Flatheads, Bannacks, and Shoshonies. As they enjoy their favorite state of hostility with all these tribes, their expeditions are prone to be conducted in the most lawless and predatory style; nor do they hesitate to extend their maraudings to any party of white men they meet with; following their trails; hovering about their camps; waylaying and dogging the caravans of the free traders, and murdering the solitary trapper. The consequences are frequent and desperate fights between them and the "mountaineers," in the wild defiles and fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains.

The band in question was, at this time, on their way homeward from one of their customary visits to the Arapahoes; and in the ensuing chapter we shall treat of some bloody encounters between

them and the trappers, which had taken place just before the arrival of Captain Bonneville among the mountains.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 6

Sublette and his band--Robert Campbell--Mr. Wyeth and a band of "down-easters" --Yankee enterprise-- Fitzpatrick--His adventure with the Blackfeet--A rendezvous of mountaineers--The battle of Pierre's Hole--An Indian ambush--Sublette's return

LEAVING CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE and his band ensconced within their fortified camp in the Green River valley, we shall step back and accompany a party of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in its progress, with supplies from St. Louis, to the annual rendezvous at Pierre's Hole. This party consisted of sixty men, well mounted, and conducting a line of packhorses. They were commanded by Captain William Sublette, a partner in the company, and one of the most active, intrepid, and renowned leaders in this half military kind of service. He was accompanied by his associate in business, and tried companion in danger, Mr. Robert Campbell, one of the pioneers of the trade beyond the mountains, who had commanded trapping parties there in times of the greatest peril.

As these worthy compeers were on their route to the frontier, they fell in with another expedition, likewise on its way to the mountains. This was a party of regular "down-easters," that is to say, people of New England, who, with the all-penetrating and all-pervading spirit of their race, were now pushing their way into a new field of enterprise with which they were totally unacquainted. The party had been fitted out and was maintained and commanded by Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, of Boston. This gentleman had conceived an idea that a profitable fishery for salmon might be established on the Columbia River, and connected with the fur trade. He had, accordingly, invested capital in goods, calculated, as he supposed, for the Indian trade, and had enlisted a number of eastern men in his employ, who had never been in the Far West, nor knew anything of the wilderness. With these, he was bravely steering his way across the continent, undismayed by danger, difficulty, or distance, in the same way that a New England coaster and his neighbors will coolly launch forth on a voyage to the Black Sea, or a whaling cruise to the Pacific.

With all their national aptitude at expedient and resource, Wyeth and his men felt themselves completely at a loss when they reached the frontier, and found that the wilderness required experience and habitudes of which they were totally deficient. Not one of the party, excepting the leader, had ever seen an Indian or handled a rifle; they were without guide or interpreter, and totally unacquainted with "wood craft" and the modes of making their way among savage hordes, and subsisting themselves during long marches over wild mountains and barren plains.

In this predicament, Captain Sublette found them, in a manner becalmed, or rather run aground, at the little frontier town of Independence, in Missouri, and kindly took them in tow. The two parties travelled amicably together; the frontier men of Sublette's party gave their Yankee comrades some lessons in hunting, and some insight into the art and mystery of dealing with the Indians, and they all arrived without accident at the upper branches of the Nebraska or Platte River. In the course of their march, Mr. Fitzpatrick, the partner of the company who was resident at that time beyond the mountains, came down from the rendezvous at Pierre's Hole to meet them and hurry them forward. He travelled in company with them until they reached the Sweet Water; then

taking a couple of horses, one for the saddle, and the other as a pack-horse, he started off express for Pierre's Hole, to make arrangements against their arrival, that he might commence his hunting campaign before the rival company.

Fitzpatrick was a hardy and experienced mountaineer, and knew all the passes and defiles. As he was pursuing his lonely course up the Green River valley, he described several horsemen at a distance, and came to a halt to reconnoitre. He supposed them to be some detachment from the rendezvous, or a party of friendly Indians. They perceived him, and setting up the war-whoop, dashed forward at full speed: he saw at once his mistake and his peril--they were Blackfeet. Springing upon his fleetest horse, and abandoning the other to the enemy, he made for the mountains, and succeeded in escaping up one of the most dangerous defiles. Here he concealed himself until he thought the Indians had gone off, when he returned into the valley. He was again pursued, lost his remaining horse, and only escaped by scrambling up among the cliffs. For several days he remained lurking among rocks and precipices, and almost famished, having but one remaining charge in his rifle, which he kept for self-defence.

In the meantime, Sublette and Campbell, with their fellow traveller, Wyeth, had pursued their march unmolested, and arrived in the Green River valley, totally unconscious that there was any lurking enemy at hand. They had encamped one night on the banks of a small stream, which came down from the Wind River Mountains, when about midnight, a band of Indians burst upon their camp, with horrible yells and whoops, and a discharge of guns and arrows. Happily no other harm was done than wounding one mule, and causing several horses to break loose from their pickets. The camp was instantly in arms; but the Indians retreated with yells of exultation, carrying off several of the horses under cover of the night.

This was somewhat of a disagreeable foretaste of mountain life to some of Wyeth's band, accustomed only to the regular and peaceful life of New England; nor was it altogether to the taste of Captain Sublette's men, who were chiefly creoles and townsmen from St. Louis. They continued their march the next morning, keeping scouts ahead and upon their flanks, and arrived without further molestation at Pierre's Hole.

The first inquiry of Captain Sublette, on reaching the rendezvous, was for Fitzpatrick. He had not arrived, nor had any intelligence been received concerning him. Great uneasiness was now entertained, lest he should have fallen into the hands of the Blackfeet who had made the midnight attack upon the camp. It was a matter of general joy, therefore, when he made his appearance, conducted by two half-breed Iroquois hunters. He had lurked for several days among the mountains, until almost starved; at length he escaped the vigilance of his enemies in the night, and was so fortunate as to meet the two Iroquois hunters, who, being on horseback, conveyed him without further difficulty to the rendezvous. He arrived there so emaciated that he could scarcely be recognized.

The valley called Pierre's Hole is about thirty miles in length and fifteen in width, bounded to the west and south by low and broken ridges, and overlooked to the east by three lofty mountains, called the three Tetons, which domineer as landmarks over a vast extent of country.

A fine stream, fed by rivulets and mountain springs, pours through the valley toward the north, dividing it into nearly equal parts. The meadows on its borders are broad and extensive, covered with willow and cotton-wood trees, so closely interlocked and matted together as to be nearly impassable.

---

In this valley was congregated the motley populace connected with the fur trade. Here the two rival companies had their encampments, with their retainers of all kinds: traders, trappers, hunters, and half-breeds, assembled from all quarters, awaiting their yearly supplies, and their orders to start off in new directions. Here, also, the savage tribes connected with the trade, the Nez Perces or Chopunnish Indians, and Flatheads, had pitched their lodges beside the streams, and with their squaws, awaited the distribution of goods and finery. There was, moreover, a band of fifteen free trappers, commanded by a gallant leader from Arkansas, named Sinclair, who held their encampment a little apart from the rest. Such was the wild and heterogeneous assemblage, amounting to several hundred men, civilized and savage, distributed in tents and lodges in the several camps. The arrival of Captain Sublette with supplies put the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in full activity. The wares and merchandise were quickly opened, and as quickly disposed of to trappers and Indians; the usual excitement and revelry took place, after which all hands began to disperse to their several destinations.

On the 17th of July, a small brigade of fourteen trappers, led by Milton Sublette, brother of the captain, set out with the intention of proceeding to the southwest. They were accompanied by Sinclair and his fifteen free trappers; Wyeth, also, and his New England band of beaver hunters and salmon fishers, now dwindled down to eleven, took this opportunity to prosecute their cruise in the wilderness, accompanied with such experienced pilots. On the first day, they proceeded about eight miles to the southeast, and encamped for the night, still in the valley of Pierre's Hole. On the following morning, just as they were raising their camp, they observed a long line of people pouring down a defile of the mountains. They at first supposed them to be Fontenelle and his party, whose arrival had been daily expected. Wyeth, however, reconnoitred them with a spy-glass, and soon perceived they were Indians. They were divided into two parties, forming, in the whole, about one hundred and fifty persons, men, women, and children. Some were on horseback, fantastically painted and arrayed, with scarlet blankets fluttering in the wind. The greater part, however, were on foot. They had perceived the trappers before they were themselves discovered, and came down yelling and whooping into the plain. On nearer approach, they were ascertained to be Blackfeet.

One of the trappers of Sublette's brigade, a half-breed named Antoine Godin, now mounted his horse, and rode forth as if to hold a conference. He was the son of an Iroquois hunter, who had been cruelly murdered by the Blackfeet at a small stream below the mountains, which still bears his name. In company with Antoine rode forth a Flathead Indian, whose once powerful tribe had been completely broken down in their wars with the Blackfeet. Both of them, therefore, cherished the most vengeful hostility against these marauders of the mountains. The Blackfeet came to a halt. One of the chiefs advanced singly and unarmed, bearing the pipe of peace. This overture was certainly pacific; but Antoine and the Flathead were predisposed to hostility, and pretended to consider it a treacherous movement.

"Is your piece charged?" said Antoine to his red companion.

"It is."

"Then cock it, and follow me."

They met the Blackfoot chief half way, who extended his hand in friendship. Antoine grasped it.

"Fire!" cried he.

The Flathead levelled his piece, and brought the Blackfoot to the ground. Antoine snatched off

---

his scarlet blanket, which was richly ornamented, and galloped off with it as a trophy to the camp, the bullets of the enemy whistling after him. The Indians immediately threw themselves into the edge of a swamp, among willows and cotton-wood trees, interwoven with vines. Here they began to fortify themselves; the women digging a trench, and throwing up a breastwork of logs and branches, deep hid in the bosom of the wood, while the warriors skirmished at the edge to keep the trappers at bay.

The latter took their station in a ravine in front, whence they kept up a scattering fire. As to Wyeth, and his little band of "downeasters," they were perfectly astounded by this second specimen of life in the wilderness; the men, being especially unused to bushfighting and the use of the rifle, were at a loss how to proceed. Wyeth, however, acted as a skilful commander. He got all his horses into camp and secured them; then, making a breastwork of his packs of goods, he charged his men to remain in garrison, and not to stir out of their fort. For himself, he mingled with the other leaders, determined to take his share in the conflict.

In the meantime, an express had been sent off to the rendezvous for reinforcements. Captain Sublette, and his associate, Campbell, were at their camp when the express came galloping across the plain, waving his cap, and giving the alarm; "Blackfeet! Blackfeet! a fight in the upper part of the valley!--to arms! to arms!"

The alarm was passed from camp to camp. It was a common cause. Every one turned out with horse and rifle. The Nez Perces and Flatheads joined. As fast as horseman could arm and mount he galloped off; the valley was soon alive with white men and red men scouring at full speed. Sublette ordered his men to keep to the camp, being recruits from St. Louis, and unused to Indian warfare. He and his friend Campbell prepared for action. Throwing off their coats, rolling up their sleeves, and arming themselves with pistols and rifles, they mounted their horses and dashed forward among the first. As they rode along, they made their wills in soldier-like style; each stating how his effects should be disposed of in case of his death, and appointing the other his executor. The Blackfeet warriors had supposed the brigade of Milton Sublette all the foes they had to deal with, and were astonished to behold the whole valley suddenly swarming with horsemen, galloping to the field of action. They withdrew into their fort, which was completely hid from sight in the dark and tangled wood. Most of their women and children had retreated to the mountains. The trappers now sallied forth and approached the swamp, firing into the thickets at random; the Blackfeet had a better sight at their adversaries, who were in the open field, and a half-breed was wounded in the shoulder.

When Captain Sublette arrived, he urged to penetrate the swamp and storm the fort, but all hung back in awe of the dismal horrors of the place, and the danger of attacking such desperadoes in their savage den. The very Indian allies, though accustomed to bushfighting, regarded it as almost impenetrable, and full of frightful danger. Sublette was not to be turned from his purpose, but offered to lead the way into the swamp. Campbell stepped forward to accompany him. Before entering the perilous wood, Sublette took his brothers aside, and told them that in case he fell, Campbell, who knew his will, was to be his executor. This done, he grasped his rifle and pushed into the thickets, followed by Campbell. Sinclair, the partisan from Arkansas, was at the edge of the wood with his brother and a few of his men. Excited by the gallant example of the two friends, he pressed forward to share their dangers.

The swamp was produced by the labors of the beaver, which, by damming up a stream, had in-

undated a portion of the valley. The place was all overgrown with woods and thickets, so closely matted and entangled that it was impossible to see ten paces ahead, and the three associates in peril had to crawl along, one after another, making their way by putting the branches and vines aside; but doing it with caution, lest they should attract the eye of some lurking marksman. They took the lead by turns, each advancing about twenty yards at a time, and now and then hallooing to their men to follow. Some of the latter gradually entered the swamp, and followed a little distance in their rear.

They had now reached a more open part of the wood, and had glimpses of the rude fortress from between the trees. It was a mere breastwork, as we have said, of logs and branches, with blankets, buffalo robes, and the leathern covers of lodges, extended round the top as a screen. The movements of the leaders, as they groped their way, had been descried by the sharp-sighted enemy. As Sinclair, who was in the advance, was putting some branches aside, he was shot through the body. He fell on the spot. "Take me to my brother," said he to Campbell. The latter gave him in charge to some of the men, who conveyed him out of the swamp.

Sublette now took the advance. As he was reconnoitring the fort, he perceived an Indian peeping through an aperture. In an instant his rifle was levelled and discharged, and the ball struck the savage in the eye. While he was reloading, he called to Campbell, and pointed out to him the hole; "Watch that place," said he, "and you will soon have a fair chance for a shot." Scarce had he uttered the words, when a ball struck him in the shoulder, and almost wheeled him around. His first thought was to take hold of his arm with his other hand, and move it up and down. He ascertained, to his satisfaction, that the bone was not broken. The next moment he was so faint that he could not stand. Campbell took him in his arms and carried him out of the thicket. The same shot that struck Sublette wounded another man in the head.

A brisk fire was now opened by the mountaineers from the wood, answered occasionally from the fort. Unluckily, the trappers and their allies, in searching for the fort, had got scattered, so that Wyeth, and a number of Nez Perces, approached the fort on the northwest side, while others did the same on the opposite quarter. A cross-fire thus took place, which occasionally did mischief to friends as well as foes. An Indian was shot down, close to Wyeth, by a ball which, he was convinced, had been sped from the rifle of a trapper on the other side of the fort.

The number of whites and their Indian allies had by this time so much increased by arrivals from the rendezvous, that the Blackfeet were completely overmatched. They kept doggedly in their fort, however, making no offer of surrender. An occasional firing into the breastwork was kept up during the day. Now and then, one of the Indian allies, in bravado, would rush up to the fort, fire over the ramparts, tear off a buffalo robe or a scarlet blanket, and return with it in triumph to his comrades. Most of the savage garrison that fell, however, were killed in the first part of the attack. At one time it was resolved to set fire to the fort; and the squaws belonging to the allies were employed to collect combustibles. This however, was abandoned; the Nez Perces being unwilling to destroy the robes and blankets, and other spoils of the enemy, which they felt sure would fall into their hands.

The Indians, when fighting, are prone to taunt and revile each other. During one of the pauses of the battle, the voice of the Blackfeet chief was heard.

"So long," said he, "as we had powder and ball, we fought you in the open field: when those were spent, we retreated here to die with our women and children. You may burn us in our fort; but,

stay by our ashes, and you who are so hungry for fighting will soon have enough. There are four hundred lodges of our brethren at hand. They will soon be here--their arms are strong--their hearts are big--they will avenge us!"

This speech was translated two or three times by Nez Perce and creole interpreters. By the time it was rendered into English, the chief was made to say that four hundred lodges of his tribe were attacking the encampment at the other end of the valley. Every one now was for hurrying to the defence of the rendezvous. A party was left to keep watch upon the fort; the rest galloped off to the camp. As night came on, the trappers drew out of the swamp, and remained about the skirts of the wood. By morning, their companions returned from the rendezvous with the report that all was safe. As the day opened, they ventured within the swamp and approached the fort. All was silent. They advanced up to it without opposition. They entered: it had been abandoned in the night, and the Blackfeet had effected their retreat, carrying off their wounded on litters made of branches, leaving bloody traces on the herbage. The bodies of ten Indians were found within the fort; among them the one shot in the eye by Sublette. The Blackfeet afterward reported that they had lost twenty-six warriors in this battle. Thirty-two horses were likewise found killed; among them were some of those recently carried off from Sublette's party, in the night; which showed that these were the very savages that had attacked him. They proved to be an advance party of the main body of Blackfeet, which had been upon the trail of Sublette's party. Five white men and one halfbreed were killed, and several wounded. Seven of the Nez Perces were also killed, and six wounded. They had an old chief, who was reputed as invulnerable. In the course of the action he was hit by a spent ball, and threw up blood; but his skin was unbroken. His people were now fully convinced that he was proof against powder and ball.

A striking circumstance is related as having occurred the morning after the battle. As some of the trappers and their Indian allies were approaching the fort through the woods, they beheld an Indian woman, of noble form and features, leaning against a tree. Their surprise at her lingering here alone, to fall into the hands of her enemies, was dispelled, when they saw the corpse of a warrior at her feet. Either she was so lost in grief as not to perceive their approach; or a proud spirit kept her silent and motionless. The Indians set up a yell, on discovering her, and before the trappers could interfere, her mangled body fell upon the corpse which she had refused to abandon. We have heard this anecdote discredited by one of the leaders who had been in the battle: but the fact may have taken place without his seeing it, and been concealed from him. It is an instance of female devotion, even to the death, which we are well disposed to believe and to record. After the battle, the brigade of Milton Sublette, together with the free trappers, and Wyeth's New England band, remained some days at the rendezvous, to see if the main body of Blackfeet intended to make an attack; nothing of the kind occurring, they once more put themselves in motion, and proceeded on their route toward the southwest. Captain Sublette having distributed his supplies, had intended to set off on his return to St. Louis, taking with him the peltries collected from the trappers and Indians. His wound, however obliged him to postpone his departure. Several who were to have accompanied him became impatient of this delay. Among these was a young Bostonian, Mr. Joseph More, one of the followers of Mr. Wyeth, who had seen enough of mountain life and savage warfare, and was eager to return to the abodes of civilization. He and six others, among whom were a Mr. Foy, of Mississippi, Mr. Alfred K. Stephens, of St. Louis, and two grandsons of the celebrated Daniel Boon, set out together, in advance of Sublette's party, thinking

they would make their way through the mountains.

It was just five days after the battle of the swamp that these seven companions were making their way through Jackson's Hole, a valley not far from the three Tetons, when, as they were descending a hill, a party of Blackfeet that lay in ambush started up with terrific yells. The horse of the young Bostonian, who was in front, wheeled round with affright, and threw his unskilled rider. The young man scrambled up the side of the hill, but, unaccustomed to such wild scenes, lost his presence of mind, and stood, as if paralyzed, on the edge of a bank, until the Blackfeet came up and slew him on the spot. His comrades had fled on the first alarm; but two of them, Foy and Stephens, seeing his danger, paused when they got half way up the hill, turned back, dismounted, and hastened to his assistance. Foy was instantly killed. Stephens was severely wounded, but escaped, to die five days afterward. The survivors returned to the camp of Captain Sublette, bringing tidings of this new disaster. That hardy leader, as soon as he could bear the journey, set out on his return to St. Louis, accompanied by Campbell. As they had a number of pack-horses richly laden with peltries to convoy, they chose a different route through the mountains, out of the way, as they hoped, of the lurking bands of Blackfeet. They succeeded in making the frontier in safety. We remember to have seen them with their band, about two or three months afterward, passing through a skirt of woodland in the upper part of Missouri. Their long cavalcade stretched in single file for nearly half a mile. Sublette still wore his arm in a sling. The mountaineers in their rude hunting dresses, armed with rifles and roughly mounted, and leading their pack-horses down a hill of the forest, looked like banditti returning with plunder. On the top of some of the packs were perched several half-breed children, perfect little imps, with wild black eyes glaring from among elf locks. These, I was told, were children of the trappers; pledges of love from their squaw spouses in the wilderness.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 7

Retreat of the Blackfeet--Fontenelle's camp in danger--Captain Bonneville and the Blackfeet--Free trappers--Their character, habits, dress, equipments, horses--Game fellows of the mountains-- Their visit to the camp--Good fellowship and good cheer --A carouse--A swagger, a brawl, and a reconciliation

THE BLACKFEET WARRIORS, when they effected their midnight retreat from their wild fastness in Pierre's Hole, fell back into the valley of the Seeds-ke-dee, or Green River where they joined the main body of their band. The whole force amounted to several hundred fighting men, gloomy and exasperated by their late disaster. They had with them their wives and children, which incapacitated them from any bold and extensive enterprise of a warlike nature; but when, in the course of their wanderings they came in sight of the encampment of Fontenelle, who had moved some distance up Green River valley in search of the free trappers, they put up tremendous war-cries, and advanced fiercely as if to attack it. Second thoughts caused them to moderate their fury. They recollected the severe lesson just received, and could not but remark the strength of Fontenelle's position; which had been chosen with great judgment.

A formal talk ensued. The Blackfeet said nothing of the late battle, of which Fontenelle had as yet received no accounts; the latter, however, knew the hostile and perfidious nature of these savages, and took care to inform them of the encampment of Captain Bonneville, that they might know

there were more white men in the neighborhood. The conference ended, Fontenelle sent a Delaware Indian of his party to conduct fifteen of the Blackfeet to the camp of Captain Bonneville. There was [sic] at that time two Crow Indians in the captain's camp, who had recently arrived there. They looked with dismay at this deputation from their implacable enemies, and gave the captain a terrible character of them, assuring him that the best thing he could possibly do, was to put those Blackfeet deputies to death on the spot. The captain, however, who had heard nothing of the conflict at Pierre's Hole, declined all compliance with this sage counsel. He treated the grim warriors with his usual urbanity. They passed some little time at the camp; saw, no doubt, that everything was conducted with military skill and vigilance; and that such an enemy was not to be easily surprised, nor to be molested with impunity, and then departed, to report all that they had seen to their comrades.

The two scouts which Captain Bonneville had sent out to seek for the band of free trappers, expected by Fontenelle, and to invite them to his camp, had been successful in their search, and on the 12th of August those worthies made their appearance.

To explain the meaning of the appellation, free trapper, it is necessary to state the terms on which the men enlist in the service of the fur companies. Some have regular wages, and are furnished with weapons, horses, traps, and other requisites. These are under command, and bound to do every duty required of them connected with the service; such as hunting, trapping, loading and unloading the horses, mounting guard; and, in short, all the drudgery of the camp. These are the hired trappers.

The free trappers are a more independent class; and in describing them, we shall do little more than transcribe the graphic description of them by Captain Bonneville. "They come and go," says he, "when and where they please; provide their own horses, arms, and other equipments; trap and trade on their own account, and dispose of their skins and peltries to the highest bidder. Sometimes, in a dangerous hunting ground, they attach themselves to the camp of some trader for protection. Here they come under some restrictions; they have to conform to the ordinary rules for trapping, and to submit to such restraints, and to take part in such general duties, as are established for the good order and safety of the camp. In return for this protection, and for their camp keeping, they are bound to dispose of all the beaver they take, to the trader who commands the camp, at a certain rate per skin; or, should they prefer seeking a market elsewhere, they are to make him an allowance, of from thirty to forty dollars for the whole hunt."

There is an inferior order, who, either from prudence or poverty, come to these dangerous hunting grounds without horses or accoutrements, and are furnished by the traders. These, like the hired trappers, are bound to exert themselves to the utmost in taking beaver, which, without skinning, they render in at the trader's lodge, where a stipulated price for each is placed to their credit. These though generally included in the generic name of free trappers, have the more specific title of skin trappers.

The wandering whites who mingle for any length of time with the savages have invariably a proneness to adopt savage habitudes; but none more so than the free trappers. It is a matter of vanity and ambition with them to discard everything that may bear the stamp of civilized life, and to adopt the manners, habits, dress, gesture, and even walk of the Indian. You cannot pay a free trapper a greater compliment, than to persuade him you have mistaken him for an Indian brave; and, in truth, the counterfeit is complete. His hair suffered to attain to a great length, is

carefully combed out, and either left to fall carelessly over his shoulders, or plaited neatly and tied up in otter skins, or parti-colored ribands. A hunting-shirt of ruffled calico of bright dyes, or of ornamented leather, falls to his knee; below which, curiously fashioned legging, ornamented with strings, fringes, and a profusion of hawks' bells, reach to a costly pair of moccasins of the finest Indian fabric, richly embroidered with beads. A blanket of scarlet, or some other bright color, hangs from his shoulders, and is girt around his waist with a red sash, in which he bestows his pistols, knife, and the stem of his Indian pipe; preparations either for peace or war. His gun is lavishly decorated with brass tacks and vermilion, and provided with a fringed cover, occasionally of buckskin, ornamented here and there with a feather. His horse, the noble minister to the pride, pleasure, and profit of the mountaineer, is selected for his speed and spirit, and prancing gait, and holds a place in his estimation second only to himself. He shares largely of his bounty, and of his pride and pomp of trapping. He is caparisoned in the most dashing and fantastic style; the bridles and crupper are weightily embossed with beads and cockades; and head, mane, and tail, are interwoven with abundance of eagles' plumes, which flutter in the wind. To complete this grotesque equipment, the proud animal is bestreaked and bespotted with vermilion, or with white clay, whichever presents the most glaring contrast to his real color.

Such is the account given by Captain Bonneville of these rangers of the wilderness, and their appearance at the camp was strikingly characteristic. They came dashing forward at full speed, firing their fuses, and yelling in Indian style. Their dark sunburned faces, and long flowing hair, their legging, flaps, moccasins, and richly-dyed blankets, and their painted horses gaudily caparisoned, gave them so much the air and appearance of Indians, that it was difficult to persuade one's self that they were white men, and had been brought up in civilized life.

Captain Bonneville, who was delighted with the game look of these cavaliers of the mountains, welcomed them heartily to his camp, and ordered a free allowance of grog to regale them, which soon put them in the most braggart spirits. They pronounced the captain the finest fellow in the world, and his men all *bons garçons*, jovial lads, and swore they would pass the day with them. They did so; and a day it was, of boast, and swagger, and *rodomontade*. The prime bullies and braves among the free trappers had each his circle of novices, from among the captain's band; mere greenhorns, men unused to Indian life; *mangeurs de lard*, or pork-eaters; as such new-comers are superciliously called by the veterans of the wilderness. These he would astonish and delight by the hour, with prodigious tales of his doings among the Indians; and of the wonders he had seen, and the wonders he had performed, in his adventurous peregrinations among the mountains.

In the evening, the free trappers drew off, and returned to the camp of Fontenelle, highly delighted with their visit and with their new acquaintances, and promising to return the following day. They kept their word: day after day their visits were repeated; they became "hail fellow well met" with Captain Bonneville's men; treat after treat succeeded, until both parties got most potently convinced, or rather confounded, by liquor. Now came on confusion and uproar. The free trappers were no longer suffered to have all the swagger to themselves. The camp bullies and prime trappers of the party began to ruffle up, and to brag, in turn, of their perils and achievements. Each now tried to out-boast and out-talk the other; a quarrel ensued as a matter of course, and a general fight, according to frontier usage. The two factions drew out their forces for a pitched battle. They fell to work and belabored each other with might and main; kicks and cuffs and dry

blows were as well bestowed as they were well merited, until, having fought to their hearts' content, and been drubbed into a familiar acquaintance with each other's prowess and good qualities, they ended the fight by becoming firmer friends than they could have been rendered by a year's peaceable companionship.

While Captain Bonneville amused himself by observing the habits and characteristics of this singular class of men, and indulged them, for the time, in all their vagaries, he profited by the opportunity to collect from them information concerning the different parts of the country about which they had been accustomed to range; the characters of the tribes, and, in short, everything important to his enterprise. He also succeeded in securing the services of several to guide and aid him in his peregrinations among the mountains, and to trap for him during the ensuing season. Having strengthened his party with such valuable recruits, he felt in some measure consoled for the loss of the Delaware Indians, decoyed from him by Mr Fontenelle.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 8

Plans for the winter--Salmon River--Abundance of salmon west of the mountains--New arrangements-- Caches--Cerre's detachment--Movements in Fontenelle's camp--Departure of the Black-foot--Their fortunes--Wind Mountain streams--Buckeye, the Delaware hunter, and the grizzly bear--Bones of murdered travellers--Visit to Pierre's Hole--Traces of the battle--Nez Perce Indians--Arrival at Salmon River

THE INFORMATION derived from the free trappers determined Captain Bonneville as to his further movements. He learned that in the Green River valley the winters were severe, the snow frequently falling to the depth of several feet; and that there was no good wintering ground in the neighborhood. The upper part of Salmon River was represented as far more eligible, besides being in an excellent beaver country; and thither the captain resolved to bend his course.

The Salmon River is one of the upper branches of the Oregon or Columbia; and takes its rise from various sources, among a group of mountains to the northwest of the Wind River chain. It owes its name to the immense shoals of salmon which ascend it in the months of September and October. The salmon on the west side of the Rocky Mountains are, like the buffalo on the eastern plains, vast migratory supplies for the wants of man, that come and go with the seasons. As the buffalo in countless throngs find their certain way in the transient pasturage on the prairies, along the fresh banks of the rivers, and up every valley and green defile of the mountains, so the salmon, at their allotted seasons, regulated by a sublime and all-seeing Providence, swarm in myriads up the great rivers, and find their way up their main branches, and into the minutest tributary streams; so as to pervade the great arid plains, and to penetrate even among barren mountains. Thus wandering tribes are fed in the desert places of the wilderness, where there is no herbage for the animals of the chase, and where, but for these periodical supplies, it would be impossible for man to subsist.

The rapid currents of the rivers which run into the Pacific render the ascent of them very exhausting to the salmon. When the fish first run up the rivers, they are fat and in fine order. The struggle against impetuous streams and frequent rapids gradually renders them thin and weak, and great numbers are seen floating down the rivers on their backs. As the season advances and the water becomes chilled, they are flung in myriads on the shores, where the wolves and bears assemble

to banquet on them. Often they rot in such quantities along the river banks as to taint the atmosphere. They are commonly from two to three feet long.

Captain Bonneville now made his arrangements for the autumn and the winter. The nature of the country through which he was about to travel rendered it impossible to proceed with wagons. He had more goods and supplies of various kinds, also, than were required for present purposes, or than could be conveniently transported on horseback; aided, therefore, by a few confidential men, he made caches, or secret pits, during the night, when all the rest of the camp were asleep, and in these deposited the superfluous effects, together with the wagons. All traces of the caches were then carefully obliterated. This is a common expedient with the traders and trappers of the mountains. Having no established posts and magazines, they make these caches or deposits at certain points, whither they repair, occasionally, for supplies. It is an expedient derived from the wandering tribes of Indians.

Many of the horses were still so weak and lame, as to be unfit for a long scramble through the mountains. These were collected into one cavalcade, and given in charge to an experienced trapper, of the name of Matthieu. He was to proceed westward, with a brigade of trappers, to Bear River; a stream to the west of the Green River or Colorado, where there was good pasturage for the horses. In this neighborhood it was expected he would meet the Shoshonie villages or bands, on their yearly migrations, with whom he was to trade for peltries and provisions. After he had traded with these people, finished his trapping, and recruited the strength of the horses, he was to proceed to Salmon River and rejoin Captain Bonneville, who intended to fix his quarters there for the winter.

While these arrangements were in progress in the camp of Captain Bonneville, there was a sudden bustle and stir in the camp of Fontenelle. One of the partners of the American Fur Company had arrived, in all haste, from the rendezvous at Pierre's Hole, in quest of the supplies. The competition between the two rival companies was just now at its height, and prosecuted with unusual zeal. The tramontane concerns of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were managed by two resident partners, Fitzpatrick and Bridger; those of the American Fur Company, by Vanderburgh and Dripps. The latter were ignorant of the mountain regions, but trusted to make up by vigilance and activity for their want of knowledge of the country.

Fitzpatrick, an experienced trader and trapper, knew the evils of competition in the same hunting grounds, and had proposed that the two companies should divide the country, so as to hunt in different directions: this proposition being rejected, he had exerted himself to get first into the field. His exertions, as have already been shown, were effectual. The early arrival of Sublette, with supplies, had enabled the various brigades of the Rocky Mountain Company to start off to their respective hunting grounds. Fitzpatrick himself, with his associate, Bridger, had pushed off with a strong party of trappers, for a prime beaver country to the north-northwest.

This had put Vanderburgh upon his mettle. He had hastened on to meet Fontenelle. Finding him at his camp in Green River valley, he immediately furnished himself with the supplies; put himself at the head of the free trappers and Delawares, and set off with all speed, determined to follow hard upon the heels of Fitzpatrick and Bridger. Of the adventures of these parties among the mountains, and the disastrous effects of their competition, we shall have occasion to treat in a future chapter.

Fontenelle having now delivered his supplies and accomplished his errand, struck his tents and set

off on his return to the Yellowstone. Captain Bonneville and his band, therefore, remained alone in the Green River valley; and their situation might have been perilous, had the Blackfeet band still lingered in the vicinity. Those marauders, however, had been dismayed at finding so many resolute and well-appointed parties of white men in the neighborhood. They had, therefore, abandoned this part of the country, passing over the headwaters of the Green River, and bending their course towards the Yellowstone. Misfortune pursued them. Their route lay through the country of their deadly enemies, the Crows. In the Wind River valley, which lies east of the mountains, they were encountered by a powerful war party of that tribe, and completely put to rout. Forty of them were killed, many of their women and children captured, and the scattered fugitives hunted like wild beasts until they were completely chased out of the Crow country.

On the 22d of August Captain Bonneville broke up his camp, and set out on his route for Salmon River. His baggage was arranged in packs, three to a mule, or pack-horse; one being disposed on each side of the animal and one on the top; the three forming a load of from one hundred and eighty to two hundred and twenty pounds. This is the trappers' style of loading pack-horses; his men, however, were inexpert at adjusting the packs, which were prone to get loose and slip off, so that it was necessary to keep a rear-guard to assist in reloading. A few days' experience, however, brought them into proper training.

Their march lay up the valley of the Seeds-ke-dee, overlooked to the right by the lofty peaks of the Wind River Mountains. From bright little lakes and fountain-heads of this remarkable bed of mountains poured forth the tributary streams of the Seeds-ke-dee. Some came rushing down gullies and ravines; others tumbled in crystal cascades from inaccessible clefts and rocks, and others winding their way in rapid and pellucid currents across the valley, to throw themselves into the main river. So transparent were these waters that the trout with which they abounded could be seen gliding about as if in the air; and their pebbly beds were distinctly visible at the depth of many feet. This beautiful and diaphanous quality of the Rocky Mountain streams prevails for a long time after they have mingled their waters and swollen into important rivers.

Issuing from the upper part of the valley, Captain Bonneville continued to the east-northeast, across rough and lofty ridges, and deep rocky defiles, extremely fatiguing both to man and horse. Among his hunters was a Delaware Indian who had remained faithful to him. His name was Buckeye. He had often prided himself on his skill and success in coping with the grizzly bear, that terror of the hunters. Though crippled in the left arm, he declared he had no hesitation to close with a wounded bear, and attack him with a sword. If armed with a rifle, he was willing to brave the animal when in full force and fury. He had twice an opportunity of proving his prowess, in the course of this mountain journey, and was each time successful. His mode was to seat himself upon the ground, with his rifle cocked and resting on his lame arm. Thus prepared, he would await the approach of the bear with perfect coolness, nor pull trigger until he was close at hand. In each instance, he laid the monster dead upon the spot.

A march of three or four days, through savage and lonely scenes, brought Captain Bonneville to the fatal defile of Jackson's Hole, where poor More and Foy had been surprised and murdered by the Blackfeet. The feelings of the captain were shocked at beholding the bones of these unfortunate young men bleaching among the rocks; and he caused them to be decently interred.

On the 3d of September he arrived on the summit of a mountain which commanded a full view of the eventful valley of Pierre's Hole; whence he could trace the winding of its stream through green

meadows, and forests of willow and cotton-wood, and have a prospect, between distant mountains, of the lava plains of Snake River, dimly spread forth like a sleeping ocean below.

After enjoying this magnificent prospect, he descended into the valley, and visited the scenes of the late desperate conflict. There were the remains of the rude fortress in the swamp, shattered by rifle shot, and strewed with the mingled bones of savages and horses. There was the late populous and noisy rendezvous, with the traces of trappers' camps and Indian lodges; but their fires were extinguished, the motley assemblage of trappers and hunters, white traders and Indian braves, had all dispersed to different points of the wilderness, and the valley had relapsed into its pristine solitude and silence.

That night the captain encamped upon the battle ground; the next day he resumed his toilsome peregrinations through the mountains. For upwards of two weeks he continued his painful march; both men and horses suffering excessively at times from hunger and thirst. At length, on the 19th of September, he reached the upper waters of Salmon River.

The weather was cold, and there were symptoms of an impending storm. The night set in, but Buckeye, the Delaware Indian, was missing. He had left the party early in the morning, to hunt by himself, according to his custom. Fears were entertained lest he should lose his way and become bewildered in tempestuous weather. These fears increased on the following morning, when a violent snow-storm came on, which soon covered the earth to the depth of several inches. Captain Bonneville immediately encamped, and sent out scouts in every direction. After some search Buckeye was discovered, quietly seated at a considerable distance in the rear, waiting the expected approach of the party, not knowing that they had passed, the snow having covered their trail.

On the ensuing morning they resumed their march at an early hour, but had not proceeded far when the hunters, who were beating up the country in the advance, came galloping back, making signals to encamp, and crying Indians! Indians!

Captain Bonneville immediately struck into a skirt of wood and prepared for action. The savages were now seen trooping over the hills in great numbers. One of them left the main body and came forward singly, making signals of peace. He announced them as a band of Nez Perces or Pierced-nose Indians, friendly to the whites, whereupon an invitation was returned by Captain Bonneville for them to come and encamp with him. They halted for a short time to make their toilette, an operation as important with an Indian warrior as with a fashionable beauty. This done, they arranged themselves in martial style, the chiefs leading the van, the braves following in a long line, painted and decorated, and topped off with fluttering plumes. In this way they advanced, shouting and singing, firing off their fuses, and clashing their shields. The two parties encamped hard by each other. The Nez Perces were on a hunting expedition, but had been almost famished on their march. They had no provisions left but a few dried salmon, yet finding the white men equally in want, they generously offered to share even this meager pittance, and frequently repeated the offer, with an earnestness that left no doubt of their sincerity. Their generosity won the heart of Captain Bonneville, and produced the most cordial good will on the part of his men. For two days that the parties remained in company, the most amicable intercourse prevailed, and they parted the best of friends. Captain Bonneville detached a few men, under Mr. Cerre, an able leader, to accompany the Nez Perces on their hunting expedition, and to trade with them for meat for the winter's supply. After this, he proceeded down the river, about five miles below the forks, when he came to a halt on the 26th of September, to establish his winter quarters.

---

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 9

Horses turned loose--Preparations for winter quarters--Hungry times--Nez Perces, their honesty, piety, pacific habits, religious ceremonies--Captain Bonneville's conversations with them--Their love of gambling

IT WAS GRATIFYING to Captain Bonneville, after so long and toilsome a course of travel, to relieve his poor jaded horses of the burden under which they were almost ready to give out, and to behold them rolling upon the grass, and taking a long repose after all their sufferings. Indeed, so exhausted were they, that those employed under the saddle were no longer capable of hunting for the daily subsistence of the camp.

All hands now set to work to prepare a winter cantonment. A temporary fortification was thrown up for the protection of the party; a secure and comfortable pen, into which the horses could be driven at night; and huts were built for the reception of the merchandise.

This done, Captain Bonneville made a distribution of his forces: twenty men were to remain with him in garrison to protect the property; the rest were organized into three brigades, and sent off in different directions, to subsist themselves by hunting the buffalo, until the snow should become too deep.

Indeed, it would have been impossible to provide for the whole party in this neighborhood. It was at the extreme western limit of the buffalo range, and these animals had recently been completely hunted out of the neighborhood by the Nez Perces, so that, although the hunters of the garrison were continually on the alert, ranging the country round, they brought in scarce game sufficient to keep famine from the door. Now and then there was a scanty meal of fish or wild-fowl, occasionally an antelope; but frequently the cravings of hunger had to be appeased with roots, or the flesh of wolves and muskrats. Rarely could the inmates of the cantonment boast of having made a full meal, and never of having wherewithal for the morrow. In this way they starved along until the 8th of October, when they were joined by a party of five families of Nez Perces, who in some measure reconciled them to the hardships of their situation by exhibiting a lot still more destitute. A more forlorn set they had never encountered: they had not a morsel of meat or fish; nor anything to subsist on, excepting roots, wild rosebuds, the barks of certain plants, and other vegetable production; neither had they any weapon for hunting or defence, excepting an old spear: yet the poor fellows made no murmur nor complaint; but seemed accustomed to their hard fare. If they could not teach the white men their practical stoicism, they at least made them acquainted with the edible properties of roots and wild rosebuds, and furnished them a supply from their own store. The necessities of the camp at length became so urgent that Captain Bonneville determined to dispatch a party to the Horse Prairie, a plain to the north of his cantonment, to procure a supply of provisions. When the men were about to depart, he proposed to the Nez Perces that they, or some of them, should join the hunting-party. To his surprise, they promptly declined. He inquired the reason for their refusal, seeing that they were in nearly as starving a situation as his own people. They replied that it was a sacred day with them, and the Great Spirit would be angry should they devote it to hunting. They offered, however, to accompany the party if it would delay its departure until the following day; but this the pinching demands of hunger would not permit, and the detachment proceeded.

A few days afterward, four of them signified to Captain Bonneville that they were about to hunt. "What!" exclaimed he, "without guns or arrows; and with only one old spear? What do you expect to kill?" They smiled among themselves, but made no answer. Preparatory to the chase, they performed some religious rites, and offered up to the Great Spirit a few short prayers for safety and success; then, having received the blessings of their wives, they leaped upon their horses and departed, leaving the whole party of Christian spectators amazed and rebuked by this lesson of faith and dependence on a supreme and benevolent Being. "Accustomed," adds Captain Bonneville, "as I had heretofore been, to find the wretched Indian revelling in blood, and stained by every vice which can degrade human nature, I could scarcely realize the scene which I had witnessed. Wonder at such unaffected tenderness and piety, where it was least to have been sought, contended in all our bosoms with shame and confusion, at receiving such pure and wholesome instructions from creatures so far below us in the arts and comforts of life." The simple prayers of the poor Indians were not unheard. In the course of four or five days they returned, laden with meat. Captain Bonneville was curious to know how they had attained such success with such scanty means. They gave him to understand that they had chased the buffalo at full speed, until they tired them down, when they easily dispatched them with the spear, and made use of the same weapon to flay the carcasses. To carry through their lessons to their Christian friends, the poor savages were as charitable as they had been pious, and generously shared with them the spoils of their hunting, giving them food enough to last for several days.

A further and more intimate intercourse with this tribe gave Captain Bonneville still greater cause to admire their strong devotional feeling. "Simply to call these people religious," says he, "would convey but a faint idea of the deep hue of piety and devotion which pervades their whole conduct. Their honesty is immaculate, and their purity of purpose, and their observance of the rites of their religion, are most uniform and remarkable. They are, certainly, more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages."

In fact, the antibelligerent policy of this tribe may have sprung from the doctrines of Christian charity, for it would appear that they had imbibed some notions of the Christian faith from Catholic missionaries and traders who had been among them. They even had a rude calendar of the fasts and festivals of the Romish Church, and some traces of its ceremonials. These have become blended with their own wild rites, and present a strange medley; civilized and barbarous. On the Sabbath, men, women, and children array themselves in their best style, and assemble round a pole erected at the head of the camp. Here they go through a wild fantastic ceremonial; strongly resembling the religious dance of the Shaking Quakers; but from its enthusiasm, much more striking and impressive. During the intervals of the ceremony, the principal chiefs, who officiate as priests, instruct them in their duties, and exhort them to virtue and good deeds.

"There is something antique and patriarchal," observes Captain Bonneville, "in this union of the offices of leader and priest; as there is in many of their customs and manners, which are all strongly imbued with religion."

The worthy captain, indeed, appears to have been strongly interested by this gleam of unlooked for light amidst the darkness of the wilderness. He exerted himself, during his sojourn among this simple and well-disposed people, to inculcate, as far as he was able, the gentle and humanizing precepts of the Christian faith, and to make them acquainted with the leading points of its history; and it speaks highly for the purity and benignity of his heart, that he derived unmixed happi-

ness from the task.

"Many a time," says he, "was my little lodge thronged, or rather piled with hearers, for they lay on the ground, one leaning over the other, until there was no further room, all listening with greedy ears to the wonders which the Great Spirit had revealed to the white man. No other subject gave them half the satisfaction, or commanded half the attention; and but few scenes in my life remain so freshly on my memory, or are so pleasurably recalled to my contemplation, as these hours of intercourse with a distant and benighted race in the midst of the desert."

The only excesses indulged in by this temperate and exemplary people, appear to be gambling and horseracing. In these they engage with an eagerness that amounts to infatuation. Knots of gamblers will assemble before one of their lodge fires, early in the evening, and remain absorbed in the chances and changes of the game until long after dawn of the following day. As the night advances, they wax warmer and warmer. Bets increase in amount, one loss only serves to lead to a greater, until in the course of a single night's gambling, the richest chief may become the poorest varlet in the camp.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 10

Black feet in the Horse Prairie--Search after the hunters--Difficulties and dangers--A card party in the wilderness--The card party interrupted--"Old Sledge" a losing game--Visitors to the camp--Ir-  
quois hunters--Hanging-eared Indians.

ON the 12th of October, two young Indians of the Nez Perce tribe arrived at Captain Bonneville's encampment. They were on their way homeward, but had been obliged to swerve from their ordinary route through the mountains, by deep snows. Their new route took them though the Horse Prairie. In traversing it, they had been attracted by the distant smoke of a camp fire, and on stealing near to reconnoitre, had discovered a war party of Blackfeet. They had several horses with them; and, as they generally go on foot on warlike excursions, it was concluded that these horses had been captured in the course of their maraudings.

This intelligence awakened solicitude on the mind of Captain Bonneville for the party of hunters whom he had sent to that neighborhood; and the Nez Percés, when informed of the circumstances, shook their heads, and declared their belief that the horses they had seen had been stolen from that very party. Anxious for information on the subject, Captain Bonneville dispatched two hunters to beat up the country in that direction. They searched in vain; not a trace of the men could be found; but they got into a region destitute of game, where they were well-nigh famished. At one time they were three entire days with-out a mouthful of food; at length they beheld a buffalo grazing at the foot of the mountain. After manoeuvring so as to get within shot, they fired, but merely wounded him. He took to flight, and they followed him over hill and dale, with the eagerness and per-severance of starving men. A more lucky shot brought him to the ground. Stanfield sprang upon him, plunged his knife into his throat, and allayed his raging hunger by drinking his blood: A fire was instantly kindled beside the carcass, when the two hunters cooked, and ate again and again, until, perfectly gorged, they sank to sleep before their hunting fire. On the following morning they rose early, made another hearty meal, then loading themselves with buffalo meat, set out on their return to the camp, to report the fruitlessness of their mission.

At length, after six weeks' absence, the hunters made their appearance, and were received with joy proportioned to the anxiety that had been felt on their account. They had hunted with success on the prairie, but, while busy drying buffalo meat, were joined by a few panic-stricken Flatheads, who informed them that a powerful band of Blackfeet was at hand. The hunters immediately abandoned the dangerous hunting ground, and accompanied the Flatheads to their village. Here they found Mr. Cerre, and the detachment of hunters sent with him to accompany the hunting party of the Nez Percés.

After remaining some time at the village, until they supposed the Blackfeet to have left the neighborhood, they set off with some of Mr. Cerre's men for the cantonment at Salmon River, where they arrived without accident. They informed Captain Bonneville, however, that not far from his quarters they had found a wallet of fresh meat and a cord, which they supposed had been left by some prowling Blackfeet. A few days afterward Mr. Cerre, with the remainder of his men, likewise arrived at the cantonment.

Mr. Walker, one of his subleaders, who had gone with a band of twenty hunters to range the country just beyond the Horse Prairie, had likewise his share of adventures with the all-pervading Blackfeet. At one of his encampments the guard stationed to keep watch round the camp grew weary of their duty, and feeling a little too secure, and too much at home on these prairies, retired to a small grove of willows to amuse themselves with a social game of cards called "old sledge," which is as popular among these trampers of the prairies as whist or ecarte among the polite circles of the cities. From the midst of their sport they were suddenly roused by a discharge of firearms and a shrill war-whoop. Starting on their feet, and snatching up their rifles, they beheld in dismay their horses and mules already in possession of the enemy, who had stolen upon the camp unperceived, while they were spell-bound by the magic of old sledge. The Indians sprang upon the animals barebacked, and endeavored to urge them off under a galling fire that did some execution. The mules, however, confounded by the hurly-burly and disliking their new riders kicked up their heels and dismounted half of them, in spite of their horsemanship. This threw the rest into confusion; they endeavored to protect their unhorsed comrades from the furious assaults of the whites; but, after a scene of "confusion worse confounded," horses and mules were abandoned, and the Indians betook themselves to the bushes. Here they quickly scratched holes in the earth about two feet deep, in which they prostrated themselves, and while thus screened from the shots of the white men, were enabled to make such use of their bows and arrows and fuses, as to repulse their assailants and to effect their retreat. This adventure threw a temporary stigma upon the game of "old sledge."

In the course of the autumn, four Iroquois hunters, driven by the snow from their hunting grounds, made their appearance at the cantonment. They were kindly welcomed, and during their sojourn made themselves useful in a variety of ways, being excellent trappers and first-rate woodsmen. They were of the remnants of a party of Iroquois hunters that came from Canada into these mountain regions many years previously, in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were led by a brave chieftain, named Pierre, who fell by the hands of the Blackfeet, and gave his

name to the fated valley of Pierre's Hole. This branch of the Iroquois tribe has ever since remained among these mountains, at mortal enmity with the Blackfeet, and have lost many of their prime hunters in their feuds with that ferocious race. Some of them fell in with General Ashley, in the course of one of his gallant excursions into the wilderness, and have continued ever since in the employ of the company.

Among the motley Visitors to the winter quarters of Captain Bonneville was a party of Pends Oreilles (or Hanging-ears) and their chief. These Indians have a strong resemblance, in character and customs, to the Nez Perces. They amount to about three hundred lodges, are well armed, and possess great numbers of horses. During the spring, summer, and autumn, they hunt the buffalo about the head-waters of the Missouri, Henry's Fork of the Snake River, and the northern branches of Salmon River. Their winter quarters are upon the Racine Amere, where they subsist upon roots and dried buffalo meat. Upon this river the Hudson's Bay Company have established a trading post, where the Pends Oreilles and the Flatheads bring their peltries to exchange for arms, clothing and trinkets.

This tribe, like the Nez Perces, evince strong and peculiar feelings of natural piety. Their religion is not a mere superstitious fear, like that of most savages; they evince abstract notions of morality; a deep reverence for an overruling spirit, and a respect for the rights of their fellow men. In one respect their religion partakes of the pacific doctrines of the Quakers. They hold that the Great Spirit is displeased with all nations who wantonly engage in war; they abstain, therefore, from all aggressive hostilities. But though thus unoffending in their policy, they are called upon continually to wage defensive warfare; especially with the Blackfeet; with whom, in the course of their hunting expeditions, they come in frequent collision and have desperate battles. Their conduct as warriors is without fear or reproach, and they can never be driven to abandon their hunting grounds.

Like most savages they are firm believers in dreams, and in the power and efficacy of charms and amulets, or medicines as they term them. Some of their braves, also, who have had numerous hairbreadth 'scapes, like the old Nez Perce chief in the battle of Pierre's Hole, are believed to wear a charmed life, and to be bullet-proof. Of these gifted beings marvelous anecdotes are related, which are most potently believed by their fellow savages, and sometimes almost credited by the white hunters.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 11

Rival trapping parties--Manoeuvring--A desperate game--Vanderburgh and the Blackfeet--Deserted camp fire--A dark defile--An Indian ambush--A fierce melee--Fatal consequences--Fitzpatrick and Bridger--Trappers precautions--Meeting with the Blackfeet--More fighting--Anecdote of a young Mexican and an Indian girl.

WHILE Captain Bonneville and his men are sojourning among the Nez Perces, on Salmon River, we will inquire after the fortunes of those doughty rivals of the Rocky Mountains and American Fur Companies, who started off for the trapping grounds to the north-northwest.

---

Fitzpatrick and Bridger, of the former company, as we have already shown, having received their supplies, had taken the lead, and hoped to have the first sweep of the hunting grounds. Vanderburgh and Dripps, however, the two resident partners of the opposite company, by extraordinary exertions were enabled soon to put themselves upon their traces, and pressed forward with such speed as to overtake them just as they had reached the heart of the beaver country. In fact, being ignorant of the best trapping grounds, it was their object to follow on, and profit by the superior knowledge of the other party.

Nothing could equal the chagrin of Fitzpatrick and Bridger at being dogged by their inexperienced rivals, especially after their offer to divide the country with them. They tried in every way to blind and baffle them; to steal a march upon them, or lead them on a wrong scent; but all in vain. Vanderburgh made up by activity and intelligence for his ignorance of the country; was always wary, always on the alert; discovered every movement of his rivals, however secret and was not to be eluded or misled.

Fitzpatrick and his colleague now lost all patience; since the others persisted in following them, they determined to give them an unprofitable chase, and to sacrifice the hunting season rather than share the products with their rivals. They accordingly took up their line of march down the course of the Missouri, keeping the main Blackfoot trail, and tramping doggedly forward, without stopping to set a single trap. The others beat the hoof after them for some time, but by degrees began to perceive that they were on a wild-goose chase, and getting into a country perfectly barren to the trapper. They now came to a halt, and be-thought themselves how to make up for lost time, and improve the remainder of the season. It was thought best to divide their forces and try different trapping grounds. While Dripps went in one direction, Vanderburgh, with about fifty men, proceeded in another. The latter, in his headlong march had got into the very heart of the Blackfoot country, yet seems to have been unconscious of his danger. As his scouts were out one day, they came upon the traces of a recent band of savages. There were the deserted fires still smoking, surrounded by the carcasses of buffaloes just killed. It was evident a party of Blackfeet had been frightened from their hunting camp, and had retreated, probably to seek reinforcements. The scouts hastened back to the camp, and told Vanderburgh what they had seen. He made light of the alarm, and, taking nine men with him, galloped off to reconnoitre for himself. He found the deserted hunting camp just as they had represented it; there lay the carcasses of buffaloes, partly dismembered; there were the smouldering fires, still sending up their wreaths of smoke; everything bore traces of recent and hasty retreat; and gave reason to believe that the savages were still lurking in the neighborhood. With heedless daring, Vanderburgh put himself upon their trail, to trace them to their place of concealment: It led him over prairies, and through skirts of woodland, until it entered a dark and dangerous ravine. Vanderburgh pushed in, without hesitation, followed by his little band. They soon found themselves in a gloomy dell, between steep banks overhung with trees, where the profound silence was only broken by the tramp of their own horses.

Suddenly the horrid war-whoop burst on their ears, mingled with the sharp report of rifles, and a legion of savages sprang from their concealments, yelling, and shaking their buffalo robes to frighten the horses. Vanderburgh's horse fell, mortally wounded by the first discharge. In his fall he pinned his rider to the ground, who called in vain upon his men to assist in extricating him. One was shot down scalped a few paces distant; most of the others were severely wounded, and sought their safety in flight. The savages approached to dispatch the unfortunate leader, as he lay

struggling beneath his horse.. He had still his rifle in his hand and his pistols in his belt. The first savage that advanced received the contents of the rifle in his breast, and fell dead upon the spot; but before Vanderburgh could draw a pistol, a blow from a tomahawk laid him prostrate, and he was dispatched by repeated wounds.

Such was the fate of Major Henry Vanderburgh, one of the best and worthiest leaders of the American Fur Company, who by his manly bearing and dauntless courage is said to have made himself universally popular among the bold-hearted rovers of the wilderness.

Those of the little band who escaped fled in consternation to the camp, and spread direful reports of the force and ferocity of the enemy. The party, being without a head, were in complete confusion and dismay, and made a precipitate retreat, without attempting to recover the remains of their butchered leader. They made no halt until they reached the encampment of the Pends Oreilles, or Hanging-ears, where they offered a reward for the recovery of the body, but without success; it never could be found.

In the meantime Fitzpatrick and Bridger, of the Rocky Mountain Company, fared but little better than their rivals. In their eagerness to mislead them they betrayed themselves into danger, and got into a region infested with the Blackfeet. They soon found that foes were on the watch for them; but they were experienced in Indian warfare, and not to be surprised at night, nor drawn into an ambush in the daytime. As the evening advanced, the horses were all brought in and picketed, and a guard was stationed round the camp. At the earliest streak of day one of the leaders would mount his horse, and gallop off full speed for about half a mile; then look round for Indian trails, to ascertain whether there had been any lurkers round the camp; returning slowly, he would reconnoitre every ravine and thicket where there might be an ambush. This done, he would gallop off in an opposite direction and repeat the same scrutiny. Finding all things safe, the horses would be turned loose to graze, but always under the eye of a guard.

A caution equally vigilant was observed in the march, on approaching any defile or place where an enemy might lie in wait; and scouts were always kept in the advance, or along the ridges and rising grounds on the flanks.

At length, one day, a large band of Blackfeet appeared in the open field, but in the vicinity of rocks and cliffs. They kept at a wary distance, but made friendly signs. The trappers replied in the same way, but likewise kept aloof. A small party of Indians now advanced, bearing the pipe of peace; they were met by an equal number of white men, and they formed a group midway between the two bands, where the pipe was circulated from hand to hand, and smoked with all due ceremony. An instance of natural affection took place at this pacific meeting. Among the free trappers in the Rocky Mountain band was a spirited young Mexican named Loretto, who, in the course of his wanderings, had ransomed a beautiful Blackfoot girl from a band of Crows by whom she had been captured. He made her his wife, after the Indian style, and she had followed his fortunes ever since, with the most devoted affection.

Among the Blackfeet warriors who advanced with the calumet of peace she recognized a brother. Leaving her infant with Loretto she rushed forward and threw herself upon her brother's neck, who clasped his long-lost sister to his heart with a warmth of affection but little compatible with the reputed stoicism of the savage.

While this scene was taking place, Bridger left the main body of trappers and rode slowly toward the group of smokers, with his rifle resting across the pommel of his saddle. The chief of the

Blackfeet stepped forward to meet him. From some unfortunate feeling of distrust Bridger cocked his rifle just as the chief was extending his hand in friendship. The quick ear of the savage caught the click of the lock; in a twinkling he grasped the barrel, forced the muzzle downward, and the contents were discharged into the earth at his feet. His next movement was to wrest the weapon from the hand of Bridger and fell him with it to the earth. He might have found this no easy task had not the unfortunate leader received two arrows in his back during the struggle.

The chief now sprang into the vacant saddle and galloped off to his band. A wild hurry-scurry scene ensued; each party took to the banks, the rocks and trees, to gain favorable positions, and an irregular firing was kept up on either side, without much effect. The Indian girl had been hurried off by her people at the outbreak of the affray. She would have returned, through the dangers of the fight, to her husband and her child, but was prevented by her brother. The young Mexican saw her struggles and her agony, and heard her piercing cries. With a generous impulse he caught up the child in his arms, rushed forward, regardless of Indian shaft or rifle, and placed it in safety upon her bosom. Even the savage heart of the Blackfoot chief was reached by this noble deed. He pronounced Loretto a madman for his temerity, but bade him depart in peace. The young Mexican hesitated; he urged to have his wife restored to him, but her brother interfered, and the countenance of the chief grew dark. The girl, he said, belonged to his tribe-she must remain with her people. Loretto would still have lingered, but his wife implored him to depart, lest his life should be endangered. It was with the greatest reluctance that he returned to his companions.

The approach of night put an end to the skirmishing fire of the adverse parties, and the savages drew off without renewing their hostilities. We cannot but remark that both in this affair and that of Pierre's Hole the affray commenced by a hostile act on the part of white men at the moment when the Indian warrior was extending the hand of amity. In neither instance, as far as circumstances have been stated to us by different persons, do we see any reason to suspect the savage chiefs of perfidy in their overtures of friendship. They advanced in the confiding way usual among Indians when they bear the pipe of peace, and consider themselves sacred from attack. If we violate the sanctity of this ceremonial, by any hostile movement on our part, it is we who incur the charge of faithlessness; and we doubt not that in both these instances the white men have been considered by the Blackfeet as the aggressors, and have, in consequence, been held up as men not to be trusted.

A word to conclude the romantic incident of Loretto and his Indian bride. A few months subsequent to the event just related, the young Mexican settled his accounts with the Rocky Mountain Company, and obtained his discharge. He then left his comrades and set off to rejoin his wife and child among her people; and we understand that, at the time we are writing these pages, he resides at a trading-house established of late by the American Fur Company in the Blackfoot country, where he acts as an interpreter, and has his Indian girl with him.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 12

A winter camp in the wilderness--Medley of trappers, hunters, and Indians--Scarcity of game--New arrangements in the camp--Detachments sent to a distance--Carelessness of the Indians when encamped--Sickness among the Indians--Excellent character of the Nez Perces--The Captain's effort as a pacificator--A Nez Perce's argument in favor of war--Robberies, by the Black

---

feet--Long suffering of the Nez Perces--A hunter's Elysium among the mountains--More robberies--The Captain preaches up a crusade--The effect upon his hearers.

FOR the greater part of the month of November Captain Bonneville remained in his temporary post on Salmon River. He was now in the full enjoyment of his wishes; leading a hunter's life in the heart of the wilderness, with all its wild populace around him. Beside his own people, motley in character and costume--creole, Kentuckian, Indian, half-breed, hired trapper, and free trapper--he was surrounded by encampments of Nez Perces and Flatheads, with their droves of horses covering the hills and plains. It was, he declares, a wild and bustling scene. The hunting parties of white men and red men, continually sallying forth and returning; the groups at the various encampments, some cooking, some working, some amusing themselves at different games; the neighing of horses, the braying of asses, the resounding strokes of the axe, the sharp report of the rifle, the whoop, the halloo, and the frequent burst of laughter, all in the midst of a region suddenly roused from perfect silence and loneliness by this transient hunters' sojourn, realized, he says, the idea of a "populous solitude."

The kind and genial character of the captain had, evidently, its influence on the opposite races thus fortuitously congregated together. The most perfect harmony prevailed between them. The Indians, he says, were friendly in their dispositions, and honest to the most scrupulous degree in their intercourse with the white men. It is true they were somewhat importunate in their curiosity, and apt to be continually in the way, examining everything with keen and prying eye, and watching every movement of the white men. All this, however, was borne with great good-humor by the captain, and through his example by his men. Indeed, throughout all his transactions he shows himself the friend of the poor Indians, and his conduct toward them is above all praise.

The Nez Perces, the Flatheads, and the Hanging-ears pride themselves upon the number of their horses, of which they possess more in proportion than any other of the mountain tribes within the buffalo range. Many of the Indian warriors and hunters encamped around Captain Bonneville possess from thirty to forty horses each. Their horses are stout, well-built ponies, of great wind, and capable of enduring the severest hardship and fatigue. The swiftest of them, however, are those obtained from the whites while sufficiently young to become acclimated and inured to the rough service of the mountains.

By degrees the populousness of this encampment began to produce its inconveniences. The immense droves of horses owned by the Indians consumed the herbage of the surrounding hills; while to drive them to any distant pasturage, in a neighborhood abounding with lurking and deadly enemies, would be to endanger the loss both of man and beast. Game, too, began to grow scarce. It was soon hunted and frightened out of the vicinity, and though the Indians made a wide circuit through the mountains in the hope of driving the buffalo toward the cantonment, their expedition was unsuccessful. It was plain that so large a party could not subsist themselves there, nor in any one place throughout the winter. Captain Bonneville, therefore, altered his whole arrangements. He detached fifty men toward the south to winter upon Snake River, and to trap about its waters in the spring, with orders to rejoin him in the month of July at Horse Creek, in Green River Valley, which he had fixed upon as the general rendezvous of his company for the ensuing year.

Of all his late party, he now retained with him merely a small number of free trappers, with whom he intended to sojourn among the Nez Perces and Flatheads, and adopt the Indian mode

of moving with the game and grass. Those bands, in effect, shortly afterward broke up their encampments and set off for a less beaten neighborhood. Captain Bonneville remained behind for a few days, that he might secretly prepare caches, in which to deposit everything not required for current use. Thus lightened of all superfluous encumbrance, he set off on the 20th of November to rejoin his Indian allies. He found them encamped in a secluded part of the country, at the head of a small stream. Considering themselves out of all danger in this sequestered spot from their old enemies, the Blackfeet, their encampment manifested the most negligent security. Their lodges were scattered in every direction, and their horses covered every hill for a great distance round, grazing upon the upland bunch grass which grew in great abundance, and though dry, retained its nutritious properties instead of losing them like other grasses in the autumn.

When the Nez Percés, Flatheads, and Pends Oreilles are encamped in a dangerous neighborhood, says Captain Bonneville, the greatest care is taken of their horses, those prime articles of Indian wealth, and objects of Indian depredation. Each warrior has his horse tied by one foot at night to a stake planted before his lodge. Here they remain until broad daylight; by that time the young men of the camp are already ranging over the surrounding hills. Each family then drives its horses to some eligible spot, where they are left to graze unattended. A young Indian repairs occasionally to the pasture to give them water, and to see that all is well. So accustomed are the horses to this management, that they keep together in the pasture where they have been left. As the sun sinks behind the hills, they may be seen moving from all points toward the camp, where they surrender themselves to be tied up for the night. Even in situations of danger, the Indians rarely set guards over their camp at night, intrusting that office entirely to their vigilant and well-trained dogs. In an encampment, however, of such fancied security as that in which Captain Bonneville found his Indian friends, much of these precautions with respect to their horses are omitted. They merely drive them, at nightfall, to some sequestered little dell, and leave them there, at perfect liberty, until the morning.

One object of Captain Bonneville in wintering among these Indians was to procure a supply of horses against the spring. They were, however, extremely unwilling to part with any, and it was with great difficulty that he purchased, at the rate of twenty dollars each, a few for the use of some of his free trappers who were on foot and dependent on him for their equipment.

In this encampment Captain Bonneville remained from the 21st of November to the 9th of December. During this period the thermometer ranged from thirteen to forty-two degrees. There were occasional falls of snow; but it generally melted away almost immediately, and the tender blades of new grass began to shoot up among the old. On the 7th of December, however, the thermometer fell to seven degrees.

The reader will recollect that, on distributing his forces when in Green River Valley, Captain Bonneville had detached a party, headed by a leader of the name of Matthieu, with all the weak and disabled horses, to sojourn about Bear River, meet the Shoshonie bands, and afterward to rejoin him at his winter camp on Salmon River.

More than sufficient time had elapsed, yet Matthieu failed to make his appearance, and uneasiness began to be felt on his account. Captain Bonneville sent out four men, to range the country through which he would have to pass, and endeavor to get some information concerning him; for his route lay across the great Snake River plain, which spreads itself out like an Arabian desert, and on which a cavalcade could be descried at a great distance. The scouts soon returned, having

proceeded no further than the edge of the plain, pretending that their horses were lame; but it was evident they had feared to venture, with so small a force, into these exposed and dangerous regions.

A disease, which Captain Bonneville supposed to be pneumonia, now appeared among the Indians, carrying off numbers of them after an illness of three or four days. The worthy captain acted as physician, prescribing profuse sweatings and copious bleedings, and uniformly with success, if the patient were subsequently treated with proper care. In extraordinary cases, the poor savages called in the aid of their own doctors or conjurors, who officiated with great noise and mummery, but with little benefit. Those who died during this epidemic were buried in graves, after the manner of the whites, but without any regard to the direction of the head. It is a fact worthy of notice that, while this malady made such ravages among the natives, not a single white man had the slightest symptom of it.

A familiar intercourse of some standing with the Pierced-nose and Flathead Indians had now convinced Captain Bonneville of their amicable and inoffensive character; he began to take a strong interest in them, and conceived the idea of becoming a pacificator, and healing the deadly feud between them and the Blackfeet, in which they were so deplorably the sufferers. He proposed the matter to some of the leaders, and urged that they should meet the Blackfeet chiefs in a grand pacific conference, offering to send two of his men to the enemy's camp with pipe, tobacco and flag of truce, to negotiate the proposed meeting.

The Nez Percés and Flathead sages upon this held a council of war of two days' duration, in which there was abundance of hard smoking and long talking, and both eloquence and tobacco were nearly exhausted. At length they came to a decision to reject the worthy captain's proposition, and upon pretty substantial grounds, as the reader may judge.

"War," said the chiefs, "is a bloody business, and full of evil; but it keeps the eyes of the chiefs always open, and makes the limbs of the young men strong and supple. In war, every one is on the alert. If we see a trail we know it must be an enemy; if the Blackfeet come to us, we know it is for war, and we are ready. Peace, on the other hand, sounds no alarm; the eyes of the chiefs are closed in sleep, and the young men are sleek and lazy. The horses stray into the mountains; the women and their little babes go about alone. But the heart of a Blackfoot is a lie, and his tongue is a trap. If he says peace it is to deceive; he comes to us as a brother; he smokes his pipe with us; but when he sees us weak, and off our guard, he will slay and steal. We will have no such peace; let there be war!"

With this reasoning Captain Bonneville was fain to acquiesce; but, since the sagacious Flatheads and their allies were content to remain in a state of warfare, he wished them at least to exercise the boasted vigilance which war was to produce, and to keep their eyes open. He represented to them the impossibility that two such considerable clans could move about the country without leaving trails by which they might be traced. Besides, among the Blackfeet braves were several Nez Percés, who had been taken prisoners in early youth, adopted by their captors, and trained up and imbued with warlike and predatory notions; these had lost all sympathies with their native tribe, and would be prone to lead the enemy to their secret haunts. He exhorted them, therefore, to keep upon the alert, and never to remit their vigilance while within the range of so crafty and cruel a foe. All these counsels were lost upon his easy and simple-minded hearers. A careless indifference reigned throughout their encampments, and their horses were permitted to range the hills at

night in perfect freedom. Captain Bonneville had his own horses brought in at night, and properly picketed and guarded. The evil he apprehended soon took place. In a single night a swoop was made through the neighboring pastures by the Blackfeet, and eighty-six of the finest horses carried off. A whip and a rope were left in a conspicuous situation by the robbers, as a taunt to the simpletons they had unhorsed.

Long before sunrise the news of this calamity spread like wildfire through the different encampments. Captain Bonneville, whose own horses remained safe at their pickets, watched in momentary expectation of an outbreak of warriors, Pierced-nose and Flathead, in furious pursuit of the marauders; but no such thing -- they contented themselves with searching diligently over hill and dale, to glean up such horses as had escaped the hands of the marauders, and then resigned themselves to their loss with the most exemplary quiescence.

Some, it is true, who were entirely unhorsed, set out on a begging visit to their cousins, as they called them, the Lower Nez Perces, who inhabit the lower country about the Columbia, and possess horses in abundance. To these they repair when in difficulty, and seldom fail, by dint of begging and bartering, to get themselves once more mounted on horseback.

Game had now become scarce in the neighborhood of the camp, and it was necessary, according to Indian custom, to move off to a less beaten ground. Captain Bonneville proposed the Horse Prairie; but his Indian friends objected that many of the Nez Perces had gone to visit their cousins, and that the whites were few in number, so that their united force was not sufficient to venture upon the buffalo grounds, which were infested by bands of Blackfeet.

They now spoke of a place at no great distance, which they represented as a perfect hunter's elysium. It was on the right branch, or head stream of the river, locked up among cliffs and precipices where there was no danger from roving bands, and where the Blackfeet dare not enter. Here, they said, the elk abounded, and the mountain sheep were to be seen trooping upon the rocks and hills. A little distance beyond it, also, herds of buffalo were to be met with, Out of range of danger. Thither they proposed to move their camp.

The proposition pleased the captain, who was desirous, through the Indians, of becoming acquainted with all the secret places of the land. Accordingly, on the 9th of December, they struck their tents, and moved forward by short stages, as many of the Indians were yet feeble from the late malady.

Following up the right fork of the river they came to where it entered a deep gorge of the mountains, up which lay the secluded region so much valued by the Indians. Captain Bonneville halted and encamped for three days before entering the gorge. In the meantime he detached five of his free trappers to scour the hills, and kill as many elk as possible, before the main body should enter, as they would then be soon frightened away by the various Indian hunting parties.

While thus encamped, they were still liable to the marauds of the Blackfeet, and Captain Bonneville admonished his Indian friends to be upon their guard. The Nez Perces, however, notwithstanding their recent loss, were still careless of their horses; merely driving them to some secluded spot, and leaving them there for the night, without setting any guard upon them. The consequence was a second swoop, in which forty-one were carried off. This was borne with equal philosophy with the first, and no effort was made either to recover the horses, or to take vengeance on the thieves.

The Nez Perces, however, grew more cautious with respect to their remaining horses, driving

---

them regularly to the camp every evening, and fastening them to pickets. Captain Bonneville, however, told them that this was not enough. It was evident they were dogged by a daring and persevering enemy, who was encouraged by past impunity; they should, therefore, take more than usual precautions, and post a guard at night over their cavalry. They could not, however, be persuaded to depart from their usual custom. The horse once picketed, the care of the owner was over for the night, and he slept profoundly. None waked in the camp but the gamblers, who, absorbed in their play, were more difficult to be roused to external circumstances than even the sleepers.

The Blackfeet are bold enemies, and fond of hazardous exploits. The band that were hovering about the neighborhood, finding that they had such pacific people to deal with, redoubled their daring. The horses being now picketed before the lodges, a number of Blackfeet scouts penetrated in the early part of the night into the very centre of the camp. Here they went about among the lodges as calmly and deliberately as if at home, quietly cutting loose the horses that stood picketed by the lodges of their sleeping owners. One of these prowlers, more adventurous than the rest, approached a fire round which a group of Nez Perces were gambling with the most intense eagerness. Here he stood for some time, muffled up in his robe, peering over the shoulders of the players, watching the changes of their countenances and the fluctuations of the game. So completely engrossed were they, that the presence of this muffled eaves-dropper was unnoticed and, having executed his bravado, he retired undiscovered.

Having cut loose as many horses as they could conveniently carry off, the Blackfeet scouts rejoined their comrades, and all remained patiently round the camp. By degrees the horses, finding themselves at liberty, took their route toward their customary grazing ground. As they emerged from the camp they were silently taken possession of, until, having secured about thirty, the Blackfeet sprang on their backs and scampered off. The clatter of hoofs startled the gamblers from their game. They gave the alarm, which soon roused the sleepers from every lodge. Still all was quiescent; no marshalling of forces, no saddling of steeds and dashing off in pursuit, no talk of retribution for their repeated outrages. The patience of Captain Bonneville was at length exhausted. He had played the part of a pacificator without success; he now altered his tone, and resolved, if possible, to rouse their war spirit.

Accordingly, convoking their chiefs, he inveighed against their craven policy, and urged the necessity of vigorous and retributive measures that would check the confidence and presumption of their enemies, if not inspire them with awe. For this purpose, he advised that a war party should be immediately sent off on the trail of the marauders, to follow them, if necessary, into the very heart of the Blackfoot country, and not to leave them until they had taken signal vengeance. Beside this, he recommended the organization of minor war parties, to make reprisals to the extent of the losses sustained. "Unless you rouse yourselves from your apathy," said he, "and strike some bold and decisive blow, you will cease to be considered men, or objects of manly warfare. The very squaws and children of the Blackfeet will be set against you, while their warriors reserve themselves for nobler antagonists."

This harangue had evidently a momentary effect upon the pride of the hearers. After a short pause, however, one of the orators arose. It was bad, he said, to go to war for mere revenge. The Great Spirit had given them a heart for peace, not for war. They had lost horses, it was true, but they could easily get others from their cousins, the Lower Nez Perces, without incurring any risk;

whereas, in war they should lose men, who were not so readily replaced. As to their late losses, an increased watchfulness would prevent any more misfortunes of the kind. He disapproved, therefore, of all hostile measures; and all the other chiefs concurred in his opinion.

Captain Bonneville again took up the point. "It is true," said he, "the Great Spirit has given you a heart to love your friends; but he has also given you an arm to strike your enemies. Unless you do something speedily to put an end to this continual plundering, I must say farewell. As yet I have sustained no loss; thanks to the precautions which you have slighted; but my property is too unsafe here; my turn will come next; I and my people will share the contempt you are bringing upon yourselves, and will be thought, like you, poor-spirited beings, who may at any time be plundered with impunity."

The conference broke up with some signs of excitement on the part of the Indians. Early the next morning, a party of thirty men set off in pursuit of the foe, and Captain Bonneville hoped to hear a good account of the Blackfeet marauders. To his disappointment, the war party came lagging back on the following day, leading a few old, sorry, broken-down horses, which the free-booters had not been able to urge to sufficient speed. This effort exhausted the martial spirit, and satisfied the wounded pride of the Nez Perces, and they relapsed into their usual state of passive indifference.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 13

Story of Kosato, the Renegade Blackfoot.

IF the meekness and long-suffering of the Pierced-noses grieved the spirit of Captain Bonneville, there was another individual in the camp to whom they were still more annoying. This was a Blackfoot renegade, named Kosato, a fiery hot-blooded youth who, with a beautiful girl of the same tribe, had taken refuge among the Nez Perces. Though adopted into the tribe, he still retained the warlike spirit of his race, and loathed the peaceful, inoffensive habits of those around him. The hunting of the deer, the elk, and the buffalo, which was the height of their ambition, was too tame to satisfy his wild and restless nature. His heart burned for the foray, the ambush, the skirmish, the scamper, and all the haps and hazards of roving and predatory warfare.

The recent hoverings of the Blackfeet about the camp, their nightly prowls and daring and successful marauds, had kept him in a fever and a flutter, like a hawk in a cage who hears his late companions swooping and screaming in wild liberty above him. The attempt of Captain Bonneville to rouse the war spirit of the Nez Perces, and prompt them to retaliation, was ardently seconded by Kosato. For several days he was incessantly devising schemes of vengeance, and endeavoring to set on foot an expedition that should carry dismay and desolation into the Blackfeet town. All his art was exerted to touch upon those springs of human action with which he was most familiar. He drew the listening savages round him by his nervous eloquence; taunted them with recitals of past wrongs and insults; drew glowing pictures of triumphs and trophies within their reach; recounted tales of daring and romantic enterprise, of secret marchings, covert lurkings, midnight surprisals, sackings, burnings, plunderings, scalplings; together with the triumphant return, and the feasting and rejoicing of the victors. These wild tales were intermingled with the beating of the drum, the yell, the war-whoop and the war-dance, so inspiring to Indian valor. All, however, were lost upon the peaceful spirits of his hearers; not a Nez Perce was to be

roused to vengeance, or stimulated to glorious war. In the bitterness of his heart, the Blackfoot renegade repined at the mishap which had severed him from a race of congenial spirits, and driven him to take refuge among beings so destitute of martial fire.

The character and conduct of this man attracted the attention of Captain Bonneville, and he was anxious to hear the reason why he had deserted his tribe, and why he looked back upon them with such deadly hostility. Kosato told him his own story briefly: it gives a picture of the deep, strong passions that work in the bosoms of these miscalled stoics.

"You see my wife," said he, "she is good; she is beautiful --I love her. Yet she has been the cause of all my troubles. She was the wife of my chief. I loved her more than he did; and she knew it. We talked together; we laughed together; we were always seeking each other's society; but we were as innocent as children. The chief grew jealous, and commanded her to speak with me no more. His heart became hard toward her; his jealousy grew more furious. He beat her without cause and without mercy; and threatened to kill her outright if she even looked at me. Do you want traces of his fury? Look at that scar! His rage against me was no less persecuting. War parties of the Crows were hovering round us; our young men had seen their trail. All hearts were roused for action; my horses were before my lodge. Suddenly the chief came, took them to his own pickets, and called them his own. What could I do? he was a chief. I durst not speak, but my heart was burning. I joined no longer in the council, the hunt, or the war-feast. What had I to do there? an unhorsed, degraded warrior. I kept by myself, and thought of nothing but these wrongs and outrages.

"I was sitting one evening upon a knoll that overlooked the meadow where the horses were pastured. I saw the horses that were once mine grazing among those of the chief. This maddened me, and I sat brooding for a time over the injuries I had suffered, and the cruelties which she I loved had endured for my sake, until my heart swelled and grew sore, and my teeth were clinched. As I looked down upon the meadow I saw the chief walking among his horses. I fastened my eyes upon him as a hawk's; my blood boiled; I drew my breath hard. He went among the willows. In an instant I was on my feet; my hand was on my knife --I flew rather than ran -- before he was aware I sprang upon him, and with two blows laid him dead at my feet. I covered his body with earth, and strewed bushes over the place; then I hastened to her I loved, told her what I had done, and urged her to fly with me. She only answered me with tears. I reminded her of the wrongs I had suffered, and of the blows and stripes she had endured from the deceased; I had done nothing but an act of justice. I again urged her to fly; but she only wept the more, and bade me go. My heart was heavy, but my eyes were dry. I folded my arms. 'Tis well,' said I; 'Kosato will go alone to the desert. None will be with him but the wild beasts of the desert. The seekers of blood may follow on his trail. They may come upon him when he sleeps and glut their revenge; but you will be safe. Kosato will go alone.

"I turned away. She sprang after me, and strained me in her arms. 'No,' she cried, 'Kosato shall not go alone! Wherever he goes I will go -- he shall never part from me.

"We hastily took in our hands such things as we most needed, and stealing quietly from the village, mounted the first horses we encountered. Speeding day and night, we soon reached this tribe. They received us with welcome, and we have dwelt with them in peace. They are good and kind; they are honest; but their hearts are the hearts of women.

Such was the story of Kosato, as related by him to Captain Bonneville. It is of a kind that often occurs in Indian life; where love elopements from tribe to tribe are as frequent as among the nov-

el-read heroes and heroines of sentimental civilization, and often give rise to bloods and lasting feuds.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 14

The party enters the mountain gorge--A wild fastness among hills--Mountain mutton--Peace and plenty--The amorous trapper--A piebald wedding--A free trapper's wife--Her gala equipments--Christmas in the wilderness.

ON the 19th of December Captain Bonneville and his confederate Indians raised their camp, and entered the narrow gorge made by the north fork of Salmon River. Up this lay the secure and plenteous hunting region so temptingly described by the Indians.

Since leaving Green River the plains had invariably been of loose sand or coarse gravel, and the rocky formation of the mountains of primitive limestone. The rivers, in general, were skirted with willows and bitter cottonwood trees, and the prairies covered with wormwood. In the hollow breast of the mountains which they were now penetrating, the surrounding heights were clothed with pine; while the declivities of the lower hills afforded abundance of bunch grass for the horses. As the Indians had represented, they were now in a natural fastness of the mountains, the ingress and egress of which was by a deep gorge, so narrow, rugged, and difficult as to prevent secret approach or rapid retreat, and to admit of easy defence. The Blackfeet, therefore, refrained from venturing in after the Nez Perces, awaiting a better chance, when they should once more emerge into the open country.

Captain Bonneville soon found that the Indians had not exaggerated the advantages of this region. Besides the numerous gangs of elk, large flocks of the ahsahta or bighorn, the mountain sheep, were to be seen bounding among the precipices. These simple animals were easily circumvented and destroyed. A few hunters may surround a flock and kill as many as they please. Numbers were daily brought into camp, and the flesh of those which were young and fat was extolled as superior to the finest mutton.

Here, then, there was a cessation from toil, from hunger, and alarm. Past ills and dangers were forgotten. The hunt, the game, the song, the story, the rough though good-humored joke, made time pass joyously away, and plenty and security reigned throughout the camp.

Idleness and ease, it is said, lead to love, and love to matrimony, in civilized life, and the same process takes place in the wilderness. Filled with good cheer and mountain mutton, one of the free trappers began to repine at the solitude of his lodge, and to experience the force of that great law of nature, "it is not meet for man to live alone."

After a night of grave cogitation he repaired to Kowsoter, the Pierced-nose chief, and unfolded to him the secret workings of his bosom.

"I want," said he, "a wife. Give me one from among your tribe. Not a young, giddy-pated girl, that will think of nothing but flaunting and finery, but a sober, discreet, hard-working squaw; one that will share my lot without flinching, however hard it may be; that can take care of my lodge, and be a companion and a helpmate to me in the wilderness." Kowsoter promised to look round among the females of his tribe, and procure such a one as he desired. Two days were requisite for the search. At the expiration of these, Kowsoter, called at his lodge, and informed him that he would bring his bride to him in the course of the afternoon. He kept his word. At the appointed time he

approached, leading the bride, a comely copper-colored dame attired in her Indian finery. Her father, mother, brothers by the half dozen and cousins by the score, all followed on to grace the ceremony and greet the new and important relative.

The trapper received his new and numerous family connection with proper solemnity; he placed his bride beside him, and, filling the pipe, the great symbol of peace, with his best tobacco, took two or three whiffs, then handed it to the chief who transferred it to the father of the bride, from whom it was passed on from hand to hand and mouth to mouth of the whole circle of kinsmen round the fire, all maintaining the most profound and becoming silence.

After several pipes had been filled and emptied in this solemn ceremonial, the chief addressed the bride, detailing at considerable length the duties of a wife which, among Indians, are little less onerous than those of the pack-horse; this done, he turned to her friends and congratulated them upon the great alliance she had made. They showed a due sense of their good fortune, especially when the nuptial presents came to be distributed among the chiefs and relatives, amounting to about one hundred and eighty dollars. The company soon retired, and now the worthy trapper found indeed that he had no green girl to deal with; for the knowing dame at once assumed the style and dignity of a trapper's wife: taking possession of the lodge as her undisputed empire, arranging everything according to her own taste and habitudes, and appearing as much at home and on as easy terms with the trapper as if they had been man and wife for years.

We have already given a picture of a free trapper and his horse, as furnished by Captain Bonneville: we shall here subjoin, as a companion picture, his description of a free trapper's wife, that the reader may have a correct idea of the kind of blessing the worthy hunter in question had invoked to solace him in the wilderness.

"The free trapper, while a bachelor, has no greater pet than his horse; but the moment he takes a wife (a sort of brevet rank in matrimony occasionally bestowed upon some Indian fair one, like the heroes of ancient chivalry in the open field), he discovers that he has a still more fanciful and capricious animal on which to lavish his expenses.

"No sooner does an Indian belle experience this promotion, than all her notions at once rise and expand to the dignity of her situation, and the purse of her lover, and his credit into the bargain, are taxed to the utmost to fit her out in becoming style. The wife of a free trapper to be equipped and arrayed like any ordinary and undistinguished squaw? Perish the grovelling thought! In the first place, she must have a horse for her own riding; but no jaded, sorry, earth-spirited hack, such as is sometimes assigned by an Indian husband for the transportation of his squaw and her pap-pooes: the wife of a free trader must have the most beautiful animal she can lay her eyes on. And then, as to his decoration: headstall, breast-bands, saddle and crupper are lavishly embroidered with beads, and hung with thimbles, hawks' bells, and bunches of ribbons. From each side of the saddle hangs an esquimoot, a sort of pocket, in which she bestows the residue of her trinkets and nick-nacks, which cannot be crowded on the decoration of her horse or herself. Over this she folds, with great care, a drapery of scarlet and bright-colored calicoes, and now considers the caparison of her steed complete.

"As to her own person, she is even still more extravagant. Her hair, esteemed beautiful in proportion to its length, is carefully plaited, and made to fall with seeming negligence over either breast. Her riding hat is stuck full of parti-colored feathers; her robe, fashioned somewhat after that of the whites, is of red, green, and sometimes gray cloth, but always of the finest texture that can be

procured. Her leggings and moccasins are of the most beautiful and expensive workman-ship, and fitted neatly to the foot and ankle, which with the Indian woman are generally well formed and delicate. Then as to jewelry: in the way of finger-rings, ear-rings, necklaces, and other female glories, nothing within reach of the trapper's means is omitted that can tend to impress the beholder with an idea of the lady's high estate. To finish the whole, she selects from among her blankets of various dyes one of some glowing color, and throwing it over her shoulders with a native grace, vaults into the saddle of her gay, prancing steed, and is ready to follow her mountaineer 'to the last gasp with love and loyalty.' "

Such is the general picture of the free trapper's wife, given by Captain Bonneville; how far it applied in its details to the one in question does not altogether appear, though it would seem from the outset of her connubial career, that she was ready to avail herself of all the pomp and circumstance of her new condition. It is worthy of mention that wherever there are several wives of free trappers in a camp, the keenest rivalry exists between them, to the sore detriment of their husbands' purses. Their whole time is expended and their ingenuity tasked by endeavors to eclipse each other in dress and decoration. The jealousies and heart-burnings thus occasioned among these so-styled children of nature are equally intense with those of the rival leaders of style and fashion in the luxurious abodes of civilized life.

The genial festival of Christmas, which throughout all Christendom lights up the fireside of home with mirth and jollity, followed hard upon the wedding just described. Though far from kindred and friends, Captain Bonneville and his handful of free trappers were not disposed to suffer the festival to pass unenjoyed; they were in a region of good cheer, and were disposed to be joyous; so it was determined to "light up the yule clog," and celebrate a merry Christmas in the heart of the wilderness.

On Christmas eve, accordingly, they began their rude fetes and rejoicings. In the course of the night the free trappers surrounded the lodge of the Pierced-nose chief and in lieu of Christmas carols, saluted him with a feude joie.

Kowsoter received it in a truly Christian spirit, and after a speech, in which he expressed his high gratification at the honor done him, invited the whole company to a feast on the following day. His invitation was gladly accepted. A Christmas dinner in the wigwam of an Indian chief! There was novelty in the idea. Not one failed to be present. The banquet was served up in primitive style: skins of various kinds, nicely dressed for the occasion, were spread upon the ground; upon these were heaped up abundance of venison, elk meat, and mountain mutton, with various bitter roots which the Indians use as condiments.

After a short prayer, the company all seated themselves cross-legged, in Turkish fashion, to the banquet, which passed off with great hilarity. After which various games of strength and agility by both white men and Indians closed the Christmas festivities.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 15

A hunt after hunters--Hungry times--A voracious repast--Wintry weather--Godin's River--Splendid winter scene on the great Lava Plain of Snake River--Severe travelling and tramping in the snow--Manoeuvres of a solitary Indian horseman--Encampment on Snake River--Banneck Indians--The horse chief--His charmed life.

---

THE continued absence of Matthieu and his party had, by this time, caused great uneasiness in the mind of Captain Bonneville; and, finding there was no dependence to be placed upon the perseverance and courage of scouting parties in so perilous a quest, he determined to set out himself on the search, and to keep on until he should ascertain something of the object of his solicitude. Accordingly on the 20th December he left the camp, accompanied by thirteen stark trappers and hunters, all well mounted and armed for dangerous enterprise. On the following morning they passed out at the head of the mountain gorge and sallied forth into the open plain. As they confidently expected a brush with the Blackfeet, or some other predatory horde, they moved with great circumspection, and kept vigilant watch in their encampments.

In the course of another day they left the main branch of Salmon River, and proceeded south toward a pass called John Day's defile. It was severe and arduous travelling. The plains were swept by keen and bitter blasts of wintry wind; the ground was generally covered with snow, game was scarce, so that hunger generally prevailed in the camp, while the want of pasturage soon began to manifest itself in the declining vigor of the horses.

The party had scarcely encamped on the afternoon of the 28th, when two of the hunters who had sallied forth in quest of game came galloping back in great alarm. While hunting they had perceived a party of savages, evidently manoeuvring to cut them off from the camp; and nothing had saved them from being entrapped but the speed of their horses.

These tidings struck dismay into the camp. Captain Bonneville endeavored to reassure his men by representing the position of their encampment, and its capability of defence. He then ordered the horses to be driven in and picketed, and threw up a rough breastwork of fallen trunks of trees and the vegetable rubbish of the wilderness. Within this barrier was maintained a vigilant watch throughout the night, which passed away without alarm. At early dawn they scrutinized the surrounding plain, to discover whether any enemies had been lurking about during the night; not a foot-print, however, was to be discovered in the coarse gravel with which the plain was covered. Hunger now began to cause more uneasiness than the apprehensions of surrounding enemies. After marching a few miles they encamped at the foot of a mountain, in hopes of finding buffalo. It was not until the next day that they discovered a pair of fine bulls on the edge of the plain, among rocks and ravines. Having now been two days and a half without a mouthful of food, they took especial care that these animals should not escape them. While some of the surest marksmen advanced cautiously with their rifles into the rough ground, four of the best mounted horsemen took their stations in the plain, to run the bulls down should they only be maimed.

The buffalo were wounded and set off in headlong flight. The half-famished horses were too weak to overtake them on the frozen ground, but succeeded in driving them on the ice, where they slipped and fell, and were easily dispatched. The hunters loaded themselves with beef for present and future supply, and then returned and encamped at the last night's fire. Here they passed the remainder of the day, cooking and eating with a voracity proportioned to previous starvation, forgetting in the hearty revel of the moment the certain dangers with which they were environed. The cravings of hunger being satisfied, they now began to debate about their further progress. The men were much disheartened by the hardships they had already endured. Indeed, two who had been in the rear guard, taking advantage of their position, had deserted and returned to the lodges of the Nez Perces. The prospect ahead was enough to stagger the stoutest heart. They were in the dead of winter. As far as the eye could reach the wild landscape was wrapped in snow, which

---

was evidently deepening as they advanced. Over this they would have to toil, with the icy wind blowing in their faces: their horses might give out through want of pasturage, and they themselves must expect intervals of horrible famine like that they had already experienced.

With Captain Bonneville, however, perseverance was a matter of pride; and, having undertaken this enterprise, nothing could turn him back until it was accomplished: though he declares that, had he anticipated the difficulties and sufferings which attended it, he should have flinched from the undertaking.

Onward, therefore, the little band urged their way, keeping along the course of a stream called John Day's Creek. The cold was so intense that they had frequently to dismount and travel on foot, lest they should freeze in their saddles. The days which at this season are short enough even in the open prairies, were narrowed to a few hours by the high mountains, which allowed the travellers but a brief enjoyment of the cheering rays of the sun. The snow was generally at least twenty inches in depth, and in many places much more: those who dismounted had to beat their way with toilsome steps. Eight miles were considered a good day's journey. The horses were almost famished; for the herbage was covered by the deep snow, so that they had nothing to subsist upon but scanty wisps of the dry bunch grass which peered above the surface, and the small branches and twigs of frozen willows and wormwood.

In this way they urged their slow and painful course to the south down John Day's Creek, until it lost itself in a swamp. Here they encamped upon the ice among stiffened willows, where they were obliged to beat down and clear away the snow to procure pasturage for their horses.

Hence they toiled on to Godin River; so called after an Iroquois hunter in the service of Sublette, who was murdered there by the Blackfeet. Many of the features of this remote wilderness are thus named after scenes of violence and bloodshed that occurred to the early pioneers. It was an act of filial vengeance on the part of Godin's son Antoine that, as the reader may recollect, brought on the recent battle at Pierre's Hole.

From Godin's River, Captain Bonneville and his followers came out upon the plain of the Three Butes, so called from three singular and isolated hills that rise from the midst. It is a part of the great desert of Snake River, one of the most remarkable tracts beyond the mountains. Could they have experienced a respite from their sufferings and anxieties, the immense landscape spread out before them was calculated to inspire admiration. Winter has its beauties and glories as well as summer; and Captain Bonneville had the soul to appreciate them.

Far away, says he, over the vast plains, and up the steep sides of the lofty mountains, the snow lay spread in dazzling whiteness: and whenever the sun emerged in the morning above the giant peaks, or burst forth from among clouds in his midday course, mountain and dell, glazed rock and frosted tree, glowed and sparkled with surpassing lustre. The tall pines seemed sprinkled with a silver dust, and the willows, studded with minute icicles reflecting the prismatic rays, brought to mind the fairy trees conjured up by the caliph's story-teller to adorn his vale of diamonds.

The poor wanderers, however, nearly starved with hunger and cold, were in no mood to enjoy the glories of these brilliant scenes; though they stamped pictures on their memory which have been recalled with delight in more genial situations.

Encamping at the west Bute, they found a place swept by the winds, so that it was bare of snow, and there was abundance of bunch grass. Here the horses were turned loose to graze throughout the night. Though for once they had ample pasturage, yet the keen winds were so intense that, in

the morning, a mule was found frozen to death. The trappers gathered round and mourned over him as over a cherished friend. They feared their half-famished horses would soon share his fate, for there seemed scarce blood enough left in their veins to withstand the freezing cold. To beat the way further through the snow with these enfeebled animals seemed next to impossible; and despondency began to creep over their hearts, when, fortunately, they discovered a trail made by some hunting party. Into this they immediately entered, and proceeded with less difficulty. Shortly afterward, a fine buffalo bull came bounding across the snow and was instantly brought down by the hunters. A fire was soon blazing and crackling, and an ample repast soon cooked, and sooner dispatched; after which they made some further progress and then encamped. One of the men reached the camp nearly frozen to death; but good cheer and a blazing fire gradually restored life, and put his blood in circulation.

Having now a beaten path, they proceeded the next morning with more facility; indeed, the snow decreased in depth as they receded from the mountains, and the temperature became more mild. In the course of the day they discovered a solitary horseman hovering at a distance before them on the plain. They spurred on to overtake him; but he was better mounted on a fresher steed, and kept at a wary distance, reconnoitring them with evident distrust; for the wild dress of the free trappers, their leggings, blankets, and cloth caps garnished with fur and topped off with feathers, even their very elf-locks and weather-bronzed complexions, gave them the look of Indians rather than white men, and made him mistake them for a war party of some hostile tribe.

After much manoeuvring, the wild horseman was at length brought to a parley; but even then he conducted himself with the caution of a knowing prowler of the prairies. Dismounting from his horse, and using him as a breastwork, he levelled his gun across his back, and, thus prepared for defence like a wary cruiser upon the high seas, he permitted himself to be approached within speaking distance.

He proved to be an Indian of the Banneck tribe, belonging to a band at no great distance. It was some time before he could be persuaded that he was conversing with a party of white men and induced to lay aside his reserve and join them. He then gave them the interesting intelligence that there were two companies of white men encamped in the neighborhood. This was cheering news to Captain Bonneville; who hoped to find in one of them the long-sought party of Matthieu. Pushing forward, therefore, with renovated spirits, he reached Snake River by nightfall, and there fixed his encampment.

Early the next morning (13th January, 1833), diligent search was made about the neighborhood for traces of the reported parties of white men. An encampment was soon discovered about four miles farther up the river, in which Captain Bonneville to his great joy found two of Matthieu's men, from whom he learned that the rest of his party would be there in the course of a few days. It was a matter of great pride and selfgratulation to Captain Bonneville that he had thus accomplished his dreary and doubtful enterprise; and he determined to pass some time in this encampment, both to await the return of Matthieu, and to give needful repose to men and horses.

It was, in fact, one of the most eligible and delightful wintering grounds in that whole range of country. The Snake River here wound its devious way between low banks through the great plain of the Three Butes; and was bordered by wide and fertile meadows. It was studded with islands which, like the alluvial bottoms, were covered with groves of cotton-wood, thickets of willow, tracts of good lowland grass, and abundance of green rushes. The adjacent plains were so vast in

---

extent that no single band of Indians could drive the buffalo out of them; nor was the snow of sufficient depth to give any serious inconvenience. Indeed, during the sojourn of Captain Bonneville in this neighborhood, which was in the heart of winter, he found the weather, with the exception of a few cold and stormy days, generally mild and pleasant, freezing a little at night but invariably thawing with the morning's sun-resembling the spring weather in the middle parts of the United States.

The lofty range of the Three Tetons, those great landmarks of the Rocky Mountains rising in the east and circling away to the north and west of the great plain of Snake River, and the mountains of Salt River and Portneuf toward the south, catch the earliest falls of snow. Their white robes lengthen as the winter advances, and spread themselves far into the plain, driving the buffalo in herds to the banks of the river in quest of food; where they are easily slain in great numbers. Such were the palpable advantages of this winter encampment; added to which, it was secure from the prowlings and plunderings of any petty band of roving Blackfeet, the difficulties of retreat rendering it unwise for those crafty depredators to venture an attack unless with an overpowering force.

About ten miles below the encampment lay the Banneck Indians; numbering about one hundred and twenty lodges. They are brave and cunning warriors and deadly foes of the Blackfeet, whom they easily overcome in battles where their forces are equal. They are not vengeful and enterprising in warfare, however; seldom sending war parties to attack the Blackfeet towns, but contenting themselves with defending their own territories and house. About one third of their warriors are armed with fuses, the rest with bows and arrows.

As soon as the spring opens they move down the right bank of Snake River and encamp at the heads of the Boisee and Payette. Here their horses wax fat on good pasturage, while the tribe revels in plenty upon the flesh of deer, elk, bear, and beaver. They then descend a little further, and are met by the Lower Nez Perces, with whom they trade for horses; giving in exchange beaver, buffalo, and buffalo robes. Hence they strike upon the tributary streams on the left bank of Snake River, and encamp at the rise of the Portneuf and Blackfoot streams, in the buffalo range. Their horses, although of the Nez Perce breed, are inferior to the parent stock from being ridden at too early an age, being often bought when but two years old and immediately put to hard work. They have fewer horses, also, than most of these migratory tribes.

At the time that Captain Bonneville came into the neighborhood of these Indians, they were all in mourning for their chief, surnamed The Horse. This chief was said to possess a charmed life, or rather, to be invulnerable to lead; no bullet having ever hit him, though he had been in repeated battles, and often shot at by the surest marksmen. He had shown great magnanimity in his intercourse with the white men. One of the great men of his family had been slain in an attack upon a band of trappers passing through the territories of his tribe. Vengeance had been sworn by the Bannecks; but The Horse interfered, declaring himself the friend of white men and, having great influence and authority among his people, he compelled them to forgo all vindictive plans and to conduct themselves amicably whenever they came in contact with the traders.

This chief had bravely fallen in resisting an attack made by the Blackfeet upon his tribe, while encamped at the head of Godin River. His fall in nowise lessened the faith of his people in his charmed life; for they declared that it was not a bullet which laid him low, but a bit of horn which had been shot into him by some Blackfoot marksman aware, no doubt, of the inefficacy of lead.

Since his death there was no one with sufficient influence over the tribe to restrain the wild and predatory propensities of the young men. The consequence was they had become troublesome and dangerous neighbors, openly friendly for the sake of traffic, but disposed to commit secret depredations and to molest any small party that might fall within their reach.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 16

Misadventures of Matthieu and his party -- Return to the caches at Salmon River -- Battle between Nez Perces and Black feet -- Heroism of a Nez Perce woman -- Enrolled among the braves. ON the 3d of February Matthieu, with the residue of his band, arrived in camp. He had a disastrous story to relate. After parting with Captain Bonneville in Green River Valley he had proceeded to the westward, keeping to the north of the Eutaw Mountains, a spur of the great Rocky chain. Here he experienced the most rugged travelling for his horses, and soon discovered that there was but little chance of meeting the Shoshonie bands. He now proceeded along Bear River, a stream much frequented by trappers, intending to shape his course to Salmon River to rejoin Captain Bonneville.

He was misled, however, either through the ignorance or treachery of an Indian guide, and conducted into a wild valley where he lay encamped during the autumn and the early part of the winter, nearly buried in snow and almost starved. Early in the season he detached five men, with nine horses, to proceed to the neighborhood of the Sheep Rock, on Bear River, where game was plenty, and there to procure a supply for the camp.

They had not proceeded far on their expedition when their trail was discovered by a party of nine or ten Indians, who immediately commenced a lurking pursuit, dogging them secretly for five or six days. So long as their encampments were well chosen and a proper watch maintained the wary savages kept aloof; at length, observing that they were badly encamped, in a situation where they might be approached with secrecy, the enemy crept stealthily along under cover of the river bank, preparing to burst suddenly upon their prey.

They had not advanced within striking distance, however, before they were discovered by one of the trappers. He immediately but silently gave the alarm to his companions. They all sprang upon their horses and prepared to retreat to a safe position. One of the party, however, named Jennings, doubted the correctness of the alarm, and before he mounted his horse wanted to ascertain the fact. His companions urged him to mount, but in vain; he was incredulous and obstinate. A volley of firearms by the savages dispelled his doubts, but so overpowered his nerves that he was unable to get into his saddle. His comrades, seeing his peril and confusion, generously leaped from their horses to protect him. A shot from a rifle brought him to the earth; in his agony he called upon the others not to desert him. Two of them, Le Roy and Ross, after fighting desperately, were captured by the savages; the remaining two vaulted into their saddles and saved themselves by headlong flight, being pursued for nearly thirty miles. They got safe back to Matthieu's camp, where their story inspired such dread of lurking Indians that the hunters could not be prevailed upon to undertake another foray in quest of provisions. They remained, therefore, almost starving in their camp; now and then killing an old or disabled horse for food, while the elk and the mountain sheep roamed unmolested among the surrounding mountains.

The disastrous surprisal of this hunting party is cited by Captain Bonneville to show the impor-

---

tance of vigilant watching and judicious encampments in the Indian country. Most of this kind of disasters to traders and trappers arise from some careless inattention to the state of their arms and ammunition, the placing of their horses at night, the position of their camping ground, and the posting of their night watches. The Indian is a vigilant and crafty foe, by no means given to hair-brained assaults; he seldom attacks when he finds his foe well prepared and on the alert. Caution is at least as efficacious a protection against him as courage.

The Indians who made this attack were at first supposed to be Blackfeet; until Captain Bonneville found subsequently, in the camp of the Bannecks, a horse, saddle, and bridle, which he recognized as having belonged to one of the hunters. The Bannecks, however, stoutly denied having taken these spoils in fight, and persisted in affirming that the outrage had been perpetrated by a Black-foot band.

Captain Bonneville remained on Snake River nearly three weeks after the arrival of Matthieu and his party. At length his horses having recovered strength sufficient for a journey, he prepared to return to the Nez Percés, or rather to visit his caches on Salmon River; that he might take thence goods and equipments for the opening season. Accordingly, leaving sixteen men at Snake River, he set out on the 19th of February with sixteen others on his journey to the caches.

Fording the river, he proceeded to the borders of the deep snow, when he encamped under the lee of immense piles of burned rock. On the 21st he was again floundering through the snow, on the great Snake River plain, where it lay to the depth of thirty inches. It was sufficiently incrustated to bear a pedestrian, but the poor horses broke through the crust, and plunged and strained at every step. So lacerated were they by the ice that it was necessary to change the front every hundred yards, and put a different one in advance to break the way. The open prairies were swept by a piercing and biting wind from the northwest. At night, they had to task their ingenuity to provide shelter and keep from freezing. In the first place, they dug deep holes in the snow, piling it up in ramparts to windward as a protection against the blast. Beneath these they spread buffalo skins, upon which they stretched themselves in full dress, with caps, cloaks, and moccasins, and covered themselves with numerous blankets; notwithstanding all which they were often severely pinched with the cold.

On the 28th of February they arrived on the banks of Godin River. This stream emerges from the mountains opposite an eastern branch of the Malade River, running southeast, forms a deep and swift current about twenty yards wide, passing rapidly through a defile to which it gives its name, and then enters the great plain where, after meandering about forty miles, it is finally lost in the region of the Burned Rocks.

On the banks of this river Captain Bonneville was so fortunate as to come upon a buffalo trail. Following it up, he entered the defile, where he remained encamped for two days to allow the hunters time to kill and dry a supply of buffalo beef. In this sheltered defile the weather was moderate and grass was already sprouting more than an inch in height. There was abundance, too, of the salt weed which grows most plentiful in clayey and gravelly barrens. It resembles pennyroyal, and derives its name from a partial saltness. It is a nourishing food for the horses in the winter, but they reject it the moment the young grass affords sufficient pasturage.

On the 6th of March, having cured sufficient meat, the party resumed their march, and moved on with comparative ease, excepting where they had to make their way through snow-drifts which

had been piled up by the wind.

On the 11th, a small cloud of smoke was observed rising in a deep part of the defile. An encampment was instantly formed and scouts were sent out to reconnoitre. They returned with intelligence that it was a hunting party of Flatheads, returning from the buffalo range laden with meat. Captain Bonneville joined them the next day, and persuaded them to proceed with his party a few miles below to the caches, whither he proposed also to invite the Nez Perces, whom he hoped to find somewhere in this neighborhood. In fact, on the 13th, he was rejoined by that friendly tribe who, since he separated from them on Salmon River, had likewise been out to hunt the buffalo, but had continued to be haunted and harassed by their old enemies the Blackfeet, who, as usual, had contrived to carry off many of their horses.

In the course of this hunting expedition, a small band of ten lodges separated from the main body in search of better pasturage for their horses. About the 1st of March, the scattered parties of Blackfoot banditti united to the number of three hundred fighting men, and determined upon some signal blow. Proceeding to the former camping ground of the Nez Perces, they found the lodges deserted; upon which they hid themselves among the willows and thickets, watching for some straggler who might guide them to the present "whereabout" of their intended victims. As fortune would have it Kosato, the Blackfoot renegade, was the first to pass along, accompanied by his blood-bought bride. He was on his way from the main body of hunters to the little band of ten lodges. The Blackfeet knew and marked him as he passed; he was within bowshot of their ambush; yet, much as they thirsted for his blood, they forbore to launch a shaft; sparing him for the moment that he might lead them to their prey. Secretly following his trail, they discovered the lodges of the unfortunate Nez Perces, and assailed them with shouts and yellings. The Nez Perces numbered only twenty men, and but nine were armed with fusees. They showed themselves, however, as brave and skilful in war as they had been mild and long-suffering in peace. Their first care was to dig holes inside of their lodges; thus ensconced they fought desperately, laying several of the enemy dead upon the ground; while they, though some of them were wounded, lost not a single warrior.

During the heat of the battle, a woman of the Nez Perces, seeing her warrior badly wounded and unable to fight, seized his bow and arrows, and bravely and successfully defended his person, contributing to the safety of the whole party.

In another part of the field of action, a Nez Perce had crouched behind the trunk of a fallen tree, and kept up a galling fire from his covert. A Blackfoot seeing this, procured a round log, and placing it before him as he lay prostrate, rolled it forward toward the trunk of the tree behind which his enemy lay crouched. It was a moment of breathless interest; whoever first showed himself would be in danger of a shot. The Nez Perce put an end to the suspense. The moment the logs touched he sprang upon his feet and discharged the contents of his fusee into the back of his antagonist. By this time the Blackfeet had got possession of the horses, several of their warriors lay dead on the field, and the Nez Perces, ensconced in their lodges, seemed resolved to defend themselves to the last gasp. It so happened that the chief of the Blackfeet party was a renegade from the Nez Perces; unlike Kosato, however, he had no vindictive rage against his native tribe, but was rather disposed, now he had got the booty, to spare all unnecessary effusion of blood. He held a long parley, therefore, with the besieged, and finally drew off his warriors, taking with him seventy horses. It appeared, afterward, that the bullets of the Blackfeet had been entirely expended

---

in the course of the battle, so that they were obliged to make use of stones as substitute. At the outset of the fight Kosato, the renegade, fought with fury rather than valor, animating the others by word as well as deed. A wound in the head from a rifle ball laid him senseless on the earth. There his body remained when the battle was over, and the victors were leading off the horses. His wife hung over him with frantic lamentations. The conquerors paused and urged her to leave the lifeless renegade, and return with them to her kindred. She refused to listen to their solicitations, and they passed on. As she sat watching the features of Kosato, and giving way to passionate grief, she thought she perceived him to breathe. She was not mistaken. The ball, which had been nearly spent before it struck him, had stunned instead of killing him. By the ministry of his faithful wife he gradually recovered, reviving to a redoubled love for her, and hatred of his tribe.

As to the female who had so bravely defended her husband, she was elevated by the tribe to a rank far above her sex, and beside other honorable distinctions, was thenceforward permitted to take a part in the war dances of the braves!

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 17

Opening of the caches -- Detachments of Cerre and Hodgkiss -- Salmon River Mountains -- Superstition of an Indian trapper -- Godin's River -- Preparations for trapping -- An alarm -- An interruption -- A rival band -- Phenomena of Snake River Plain -- Vast clefts and chasms -- Ingulfed streams -- Sublime scenery -- A grand buffalo hunt.

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE found his caches perfectly secure, and having secretly opened them he selected such articles as were necessary to equip the free trappers and to supply the inconsiderable trade with the Indians, after which he closed them again. The free trappers, being newly rigged out and supplied, were in high spirits, and swaggered gayly about the camp. To compensate all hands for past sufferings, and to give a cheerful spur to further operations, Captain Bonneville now gave the men what, in frontier phrase, is termed "a regular blow-out." It was a day of uncouth gambols and frolics and rude feasting. The Indians joined in the sports and games, and all was mirth and good-fellowship.

It was now the middle of March, and Captain Bonneville made preparations to open the spring campaign. He had pitched upon Malade River for his main trapping ground for the season. This is a stream which rises among the great bed of mountains north of the Lava Plain, and after a winding course falls into Snake River. Previous to his departure the captain dispatched Mr. Cerre, with a few men, to visit the Indian villages and purchase horses; he furnished his clerk, Mr. Hodgkiss, also, with a small stock of goods, to keep up a trade with the Indians during the spring, for such peltries as they might collect, appointing the caches on Salmon River as the point of rendezvous, where they were to rejoin him on the 15th of June following.

This done he set out for Malade River, with a band of twenty-eight men composed of hired and free trappers and Indian hunters, together with eight squaws. Their route lay up along the right fork of Salmon River, as it passes through the deep defile of the mountains. They travelled very slowly, not above five miles a day, for many of the horses were so weak that they faltered and staggered as they walked. Pasturage, however, was now growing plentiful. There was abundance of fresh grass, which in some places had attained such height as to wave in the wind. The native

flocks of the wilderness, the mountain sheep, as they are called by the trappers, were continually to be seen upon the hills between which they passed, and a good supply of mutton was provided by the hunters, as they were advancing toward a region of scarcity.

In the course of his journey Captain Bonneville had occasion to remark an instance of the many notions, and almost superstitions, which prevail among the Indians, and among some of the white men, with respect to the sagacity of the beaver. The Indian hunters of his party were in the habit of exploring all the streams along which they passed, in search of "beaver lodges," and occasionally set their traps with some success. One of them, however, though an experienced and skilful trapper, was invariably unsuccessful. Astonished and mortified at such unusual bad luck, he at length conceived the idea that there was some odor about his person of which the beaver got scent and retreated at his approach. He immediately set about a thorough purification. Making a rude sweating-house on the banks of the river, he would shut himself up until in a reeking perspiration, and then suddenly emerging, would plunge into the river. A number of these sweatings and plungings having, as he supposed, rendered his person perfectly "inodorous," he resumed his trapping with renovated hope.

About the beginning of April they encamped upon Godin's River, where they found the swamp full of "musk-rat houses." Here, therefore, Captain Bonneville determined to remain a few days and make his first regular attempt at trapping. That his maiden campaign might open with spirit, he promised the Indians and free trappers an extra price for every musk-rat they should take. All now set to work for the next day's sport. The utmost animation and gayety prevailed throughout the camp. Everything looked auspicious for their spring campaign. The abundance of musk-rats in the swamp was but an earnest of the nobler game they were to find when they should reach the Malade River, and have a capital beaver country all to themselves, where they might trap at their leisure without molestation.

In the midst of their gayety a hunter came galloping into the camp, shouting, or rather yelling, "A trail! a trail! -- lodge poles! lodge poles!"

These were words full of meaning to a trapper's ear. They intimated that there was some band in the neighborhood, and probably a hunting party, as they had lodge poles for an encampment. The hunter came up and told his story. He had discovered a fresh trail, in which the traces made by the dragging of lodge poles were distinctly visible. The buffalo, too, had just been driven out of the neighborhood, which showed that the hunters had already been on the range.

The gayety of the camp was at an end; all preparations for musk-rat trapping were suspended, and all hands sallied forth to examine the trail. Their worst fears were soon confirmed. Infallible signs showed the unknown party in the advance to be white men; doubtless, some rival band of trappers! Here was competition when least expected; and that too by a party already in the advance, who were driving the game before them. Captain Bonneville had now a taste of the sudden transitions to which a trapper's life is subject. The buoyant confidence in an uninterrupted hunt was at an end; every countenance lowered with gloom and disappointment.

Captain Bonneville immediately dispatched two spies to over-take the rival party, and endeavor to learn their plans; in the meantime, he turned his back upon the swamp and its musk-rat houses and followed on at "long camps, which in trapper's language is equivalent to long stages. On the 6th of April he met his spies returning. They had kept on the trail like hounds until they overtook the party at the south end of Godin's defile. Here they found them comfortably encamped: twen-

ty-two prime trappers, all well appointed, with excellent horses in capital condition led by Milton Sublette, and an able coadjutor named Jarvie, and in full march for the Malade hunting ground. This was stunning news. The Malade River was the only trapping ground within reach; but to have to compete there with veteran trappers, perfectly at home among the mountains, and admirably mounted, while they were so poorly provided with horses and trappers, and had but one man in their party acquainted with the country-it was out of the question.

The only hope that now remained was that the snow, which still lay deep among the mountains of Godin's River and blocked up the usual pass to the Malade country, might detain the other party until Captain Bonneville's horses should get once more into good condition in their present ample pasturage.

The rival parties now encamped together, not out of companionship, but to keep an eye upon each other. Day after day passed by without any possibility of getting to the Malade country. Sublette and Jarvie endeavored to force their way across the mountain; but the snows lay so deep as to oblige them to turn back. In the meantime the captain's horses were daily gaining strength, and their hoofs improving, which had been worn and battered by mountain service. The captain, also was increasing his stock of provisions; so that the delay was all in his favor.

To any one who merely contemplates a map of the country this difficulty of getting from Godin to Malade River will appear inexplicable, as the intervening mountains terminate in the great Snake River plain, so that, apparently, it would be perfectly easy to proceed round their bases.

Here, however, occur some of the striking phenomena of this wild and sublime region. The great lower plain which extends to the feet of these mountains is broken up near their bases into crests, and ridges resembling the surges of the ocean breaking on a rocky shore.

In a line with the mountains the plain is gashed with numerous and dangerous chasms, from four to ten feet wide, and of great depth. Captain Bonneville attempted to sound some of these openings, but without any satisfactory result. A stone dropped into one of them reverberated against the sides for apparently a very great depth, and, by its sound, indicated the same kind of substance with the surface, as long as the strokes could be heard. The horse, instinctively sagacious in avoiding danger, shrinks back in alarm from the least of these chasms, pricking up his ears, snorting and pawing, until permitted to turn away.

We have been told by a person well acquainted with the country that it is sometimes necessary to travel fifty and sixty miles to get round one of these tremendous ravines. Considerable streams, like that of Godin's River, that run with a bold, free current, lose themselves in this plain; some of them end in swamps, others suddenly disappear, finding, no doubt, subterranean outlets.

Opposite to these chasms Snake River makes two desperate leaps over precipices, at a short distance from each other; one twenty, the other forty feet in height.

The volcanic plain in question forms an area of about sixty miles in diameter, where nothing meets the eye but a desolate and awful waste; where no grass grows nor water runs, and where nothing is to be seen but lava. Ranges of mountains skirt this plain, and, in Captain Bonneville's opinion, were formerly connected, until rent asunder by some convulsion of nature. Far to the east the Three Tetons lift their heads sublimely, and dominate this wide sea of lava -- one of the most striking features of a wilderness where everything seems on a scale of stern and simple grandeur.

We look forward with impatience for some able geologist to explore this sublime but almost un-

known region.

It was not until the 25th of April that the two parties of trappers broke up their encampments, and undertook to cross over the southwest end of the mountain by a pass explored by their scouts. From various points of the mountain they commanded boundless prospects of the lava plain, stretching away in cold and gloomy barrenness as far as the eye could reach. On the evening of the 26th they reached the plain west of the mountain, watered by the Malade, the Boisee, and other streams, which comprised the contemplated trapping-ground.

The country about the Boisee (or Woody) River is extolled by Captain Bonneville as the most enchanting he had seen in the Far West, presenting the mingled grandeur and beauty of mountain and plain, of bright running streams and vast grassy meadows waving to the breeze.

We shall not follow the captain throughout his trapping campaign, which lasted until the beginning of June, nor detail all the manoeuvres of the rival trapping parties and their various schemes to outwit and out-trap each other. Suffice it to say that, after having visited and camped about various streams with varying success, Captain Bonneville set forward early in June for the appointed rendezvous at the caches. On the way, he treated his party to a grand buffalo hunt. The scouts had reported numerous herds in a plain beyond an intervening height. There was an immediate halt; the fleetest horses were forthwith mounted and the party advanced to the summit of the hill. Hence they beheld the great plain below; absolutely swarming with buffalo. Captain Bonneville now appointed the place where he would encamp; and toward which the hunters were to drive the game. He cautioned the latter to advance slowly, reserving the strength and speed of the horses until within a moderate distance of the herds. Twenty-two horsemen descended cautiously into the plain, conformably to these directions. "It was a beautiful sight," says the captain, "to see the runners, as they are called, advancing in column, at a slow trot, until within two hundred and fifty yards of the outskirts of the herd, then dashing on at full speed until lost in the immense multitude of buffaloes scouring the plain in every direction." All was now tumult and wild confusion. In the meantime Captain Bonneville and the residue of the party moved on to the appointed camping ground; thither the most expert runners succeeded in driving numbers of buffalo, which were killed hard by the camp, and the flesh transported thither without difficulty. In a little while the whole camp looked like one great slaughter-house; the carcasses were skilfully cut up, great fires were made, scaffolds erected for drying and jerking beef, and an ample provision was made for future subsistence. On the 15th of June, the precise day appointed for the rendezvous, Captain Bonneville and his party arrived safely at the caches.

Here he was joined by the other detachments of his main party, all in good health and spirits. The caches were again opened, supplies of various kinds taken out, and a liberal allowance of aqua vitae distributed throughout the camp, to celebrate with proper conviviality this merry meeting.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 18

Meeting with Hodgkiss -- Misfortunes of the Nez Perces -- Schemes of Kosato, the renegado -- His foray into the Horse Prairie-Invasion of Black feet -- Blue John and his forlorn hope -- Their generous enterprise-Their fate-Consternation and despair of the village-Solemn obsequies-Attempt at Indian trade-Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly-Arrangements for autumn-Breaking up of an encampment.

---

HAVING now a pretty strong party, well armed and equipped, Captain Bonneville no longer felt the necessity of fortifying himself in the secret places and fastnesses of the mountains; but sallied forth boldly into the Snake River plain, in search of his clerk, Hodgkiss, who had remained with the Nez Perces. He found him on the 24th of June, and learned from him another chapter of misfortunes which had recently befallen that ill-fated race.

After the departure of Captain Bonneville in March, Kosato, the renegade Blackfoot, had recovered from the wound received in battle; and with his strength revived all his deadly hostility to his native tribe. He now resumed his efforts to stir up the Nez Perces to reprisals upon their old enemies; reminding them incessantly of all the outrages and robberies they had recently experienced, and assuring them that such would continue to be their lot until they proved themselves men by some signal retaliation.

The impassioned eloquence of the desperado at length produced an effect; and a band of braves enlisted under his guidance, to penetrate into the Blackfoot country, harass their Villages, carry off their horses, and commit all kinds of depredations.

Kosato pushed forward on his foray as far as the Horse Prairie, where he came upon a strong party of Blackfeet. Without waiting to estimate their force, he attacked them with characteristic fury, and was bravely seconded by his followers. The contest, for a time, was hot and bloody; at length, as is customary with these two tribes, they paused, and held a long parley, or rather a war of words.

“What need,” said the Blackfoot chief, tauntingly, “have the Nez Perces to leave their homes, and sally forth on war parties, when they have danger enough at their own doors? If you want fighting, return to your villages; you will have plenty of it there. The Blackfeet warriors have hitherto made war upon you as children. They are now coming as men. A great force is at hand; they are on their way to your towns, and are determined to rub out the very name of the Nez Perces from the mountains. Return, I say, to your towns, and fight there, if you wish to live any longer as a people.”

Kosato took him at his word; for he knew the character of his native tribe. Hastening back with his band to the Nez Perces village, he told all that he had seen and heard, and urged the most prompt and strenuous measures for defence. The Nez Perces, however, heard him with their accustomed phlegm; the threat of the Blackfeet had been often made, and as often had proved a mere bravado; such they pronounced it to be at present, and, of course, took no precautions. They were soon convinced that it was no empty menace. In a few days a band of three hundred Blackfeet warriors appeared upon the hills. All now was consternation in the village. The force of the Nez Perces was too small to cope with the enemy in open fight; many of the young men having gone to their relatives on the Columbia to procure horses. The sages met in hurried council. What was to be done to ward off a blow which threatened annihilation? In this moment of imminent peril, a Pierced-nose chief, named Blue John by the whites, offered to approach secretly with a small, but chosen band, through a defile which led to the encampment of the enemy, and, by a sudden onset, to drive off the horses. Should this blow be successful, the spirit and strength of the invaders would be broken, and the Nez Perces, having horses, would be more than a match for them. Should it fail, the village would not be worse off than at present, when destruction appeared inevitable.

Twenty-nine of the choicest warriors instantly volunteered to follow Blue John in this hazardous

enterprise. They prepared for it with the solemnity and devotion peculiar to the tribe. Blue John consulted his medicine, or talismanic charm, such as every chief keeps in his lodge as a supernatural protection. The oracle assured him that his enterprise would be completely successful, provided no rain should fall before he had passed through the defile; but should it rain, his band would be utterly cut off.

The day was clear and bright; and Blue John anticipated that the skies would be propitious. He departed in high spirits with his forlorn hope; and never did band of braves make a more gallant display-horsemen and horses being decorated and equipped in the fiercest and most glaring style - glittering with arms and ornaments, and fluttering with feathers.

The weather continued serene until they reached the defile; but just as they were entering it a black cloud rose over the mountain crest, and there was a sudden shower. The warriors turned to their leader, as if to read his opinion of this unlucky omen; but the countenance of Blue John remained unchanged, and they continued to press forward. It was their hope to make their way undiscovered to the very vicinity of the Blackfoot camp; but they had not proceeded far in the defile, when they met a scouting party of the enemy. They attacked and drove them among the hills, and were pursuing them with great eagerness when they heard shouts and yells behind them, and beheld the main body of the Blackfeet advancing.

The second chief wavered a little at the sight and proposed an instant retreat. "We came to fight!" replied Blue John, sternly. Then giving his war-whoop, he sprang forward to the conflict. His braves followed him. They made a headlong charge upon the enemy; not with the hope of victory, but the determination to sell their lives dearly. A frightful carnage, rather than a regular battle, succeeded. The forlorn band laid heaps of their enemies dead at their feet, but were overwhelmed with numbers and pressed into a gorge of the mountain; where they continued to fight until they were cut to pieces. One only, of the thirty, survived. He sprang on the horse of a Blackfoot warrior whom he had slain, and escaping at full speed, brought home the baleful tidings to his village. Who can paint the horror and desolation of the inhabitants? The flower of their warriors laid low, and a ferocious enemy at their doors. The air was rent by the shrieks and lamentations of the women, who, casting off their ornaments and tearing their hair, wandered about, frantically bewailing the dead and predicting destruction to the living. The remaining warriors armed themselves for obstinate defence; but showed by their gloomy looks and sullen silence that they considered defence hopeless. To their surprise the Blackfeet refrained from pursuing their advantage; perhaps satisfied with the blood already shed, or disheartened by the loss they had themselves sustained. At any rate, they disappeared from the hills, and it was soon ascertained that they had returned to the Horse Prairie.

The unfortunate Nez Perces now began once more to breathe. A few of their warriors, taking pack-horses, repaired to the defile to bring away the bodies of their slaughtered brethren. They found them mere headless trunks; and the wounds with which they were covered showed how bravely they had fought. Their hearts, too, had been torn out and carried off; a proof of their signal valor; for in devouring the heart of a foe renowned for bravery, or who has distinguished himself in battle, the Indian victor thinks he appropriates to himself the courage of the deceased. Gathering the mangled bodies of the slain, and strapping them across their pack-horses, the warriors returned, in dismal procession, to the village. The tribe came forth to meet them; the women with piercing cries and wailings; the men with downcast countenances, in which gloom and sor-

row seemed fixed as if in marble. The mutilated and almost undistinguishable bodies were placed in rows upon the ground, in the midst of the assemblage; and the scene of heart-rending anguish and lamentation that ensued would have confounded those who insist on Indian stoicism.

Such was the disastrous event that had overwhelmed the Nez Perces tribe during the absence of Captain Bonneville; and he was informed that Kosato, the renegade, who, being stationed in the village, had been prevented from going on the forlorn hope, was again striving to rouse the vindictive feelings of his adopted brethren, and to prompt them to revenge the slaughter of their devoted braves.

During his sojourn on the Snake River plain, Captain Bonneville made one of his first essays at the strategy of the fur trade. There was at this time an assemblage of Nez Perces, Flatheads, and Cottonois Indians encamped together upon the plain; well provided with beaver, which they had collected during the spring. These they were waiting to traffic with a resident trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was stationed among them, and with whom they were accustomed to deal. As it happened, the trader was almost entirely destitute of Indian goods; his spring supply not having yet reached him. Captain Bonneville had secret intelligence that the supplies were on their way, and would soon arrive; he hoped, however, by a prompt move, to anticipate their arrival, and secure the market to himself. Throwing himself, therefore, among the Indians, he opened his packs of merchandise and displayed the most tempting wares: bright cloths, and scarlet blankets, and glittering ornaments, and everything gay and glorious in the eyes of warrior or squaw; all, however, was in vain. The Hudson's Bay trader was a perfect master of his business, thoroughly acquainted with the Indians he had to deal with, and held such control over them that none dared to act openly in opposition to his wishes; nay, more -- he came nigh turning the tables upon the captain, and shaking the allegiance of some of his free trappers, by distributing liquors among them. The latter, therefore, was glad to give up a competition, where the war was likely to be carried into his own camp.

In fact, the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company have advantages over all competitors in the trade beyond the Rocky Mountains. That huge monopoly centers within itself not merely its own hereditary and long-established power and influence; but also those of its ancient rival, but now integral part, the famous Northwest Company. It has thus its races of traders, trappers, hunters, and voyageurs, born and brought up in its service, and inheriting from preceding generations a knowledge and aptitude in everything connected with Indian life, and Indian traffic. In the process of years, this company has been enabled to spread its ramifications in every direction; its system of intercourse is founded upon a long and intimate knowledge of the character and necessities of the various tribes; and of all the fastnesses, defiles, and favorable hunting grounds of the country. Their capital, also, and the manner in which their supplies are distributed at various posts, or forwarded by regular caravans, keep their traders well supplied, and enable them to furnish their goods to the Indians at a cheap rate. Their men, too, being chiefly drawn from the Canadas, where they enjoy great influence and control, are engaged at the most trifling wages, and supported at little cost; the provisions which they take with them being little more than Indian corn and grease. They are brought also into the most perfect discipline and subordination, especially when their leaders have once got them to their scene of action in the heart of the wilderness.

These circumstances combine to give the leaders of the Hudson's Bay Company a decided advan-

tage over all the American companies that come within their range, so that any close competition with them is almost hopeless.

Shortly after Captain Bonneville's ineffectual attempt to participate in the trade of the associated camp, the supplies of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived; and the resident trader was enabled to monopolize the market.

It was now the beginning of July; in the latter part of which month Captain Bonneville had appointed a rendezvous at Horse Creek in Green River Valley, with some of the parties which he had detached in the preceding year. He now turned his thoughts in that direction, and prepared for the journey.

The Cottonois were anxious for him to proceed at once to their country; which, they assured him, abounded in beaver. The lands of this tribe lie immediately north of those of the Flatheads and are open to the inroads of the Blackfeet. It is true, the latter professed to be their allies; but they had been guilty of so many acts of perfidy, that the Cottonois had, latterly, renounced their hollow friendship and attached themselves to the Flatheads and Nez Perces. These they had accompanied in their migrations rather than remain alone at home, exposed to the outrages of the Blackfeet. They were now apprehensive that these marauders would range their country during their absence and destroy the beaver; this was their reason for urging Captain Bonneville to make it his autumnal hunting ground. The latter, however, was not to be tempted; his engagements required his presence at the rendezvous in Green River Valley; and he had already formed his ulterior plans.

An unexpected difficulty now arose. The free trappers suddenly made a stand, and declined to accompany him. It was a long and weary journey; the route lay through Pierre's Hole, and other mountain passes infested by the Blackfeet, and recently the scenes of sanguinary conflicts. They were not disposed to undertake such unnecessary toils and dangers, when they had good and secure trapping grounds nearer at hand, on the head-waters of Salmon River.

As these were free and independent fellows, whose will and whim were apt to be law -- who had the whole wilderness before them, "where to choose," and the trader of a rival company at hand, ready to pay for their services -- it was necessary to bend to their wishes. Captain Bonneville fitted them out, therefore, for the hunting ground in question; appointing Mr. Hodgkiss to act as their partisan, or leader, and fixing a rendezvous where he should meet them in the course of the ensuing winter. The brigade consisted of twenty-one free trappers and four or five hired men as camp-keepers. This was not the exact arrangement of a trapping party; which when accurately organized is composed of two thirds trappers whose duty leads them continually abroad in pursuit of game; and one third camp-keepers who cook, pack, and unpack; set up the tents, take care of the horses and do all other duties usually assigned by the Indians to their women. This part of the service is apt to be fulfilled by French creoles from Canada and the valley of the Mississippi.

In the meantime the associated Indians having completed their trade and received their supplies, were all ready to disperse in various directions. As there was a formidable band of Blackfeet just over a mountain to the northeast, by which Hodgkiss and his free trappers would have to pass; and as it was known that those sharp-sighted marauders had their scouts out watching every movement of the encampments, so as to cut off stragglers or weak detachments, Captain Bonneville prevailed upon the Nez Perces to accompany Hodgkiss and his party until they should be beyond the range of the enemy.

The Cottonois and the Pends Oreilles determined to move together at the same time, and to pass close under the mountain infested by the Blackfeet; while Captain Bonneville, with his party, was to strike in an opposite direction to the southeast, bending his course for Pierre's Hole, on his way to Green River.

Accordingly, on the 6th of July, all the camps were raised at the same moment; each party taking its separate route. The scene was wild and picturesque; the long line of traders, trappers, and Indians, with their rugged and fantastic dresses and accoutrements; their varied weapons, their innumerable horses, some under the saddle, some burdened with packages, others following in droves; all stretching in lengthening cavalcades across the vast landscape, making for different points of the plains and mountains.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 19

Precautions in dangerous defiles -- Trappers' mode of defence on a prairie -- A mysterious visitor -- Arrival in Green River Valley -- Adventures of the detachments -- The forlorn partisan -- His tale of disasters.

AS the route of Captain Bonneville lay through what was considered the most perilous part of this region of dangers, he took all his measures with military skill, and observed the strictest circumspection. When on the march, a small scouting party was thrown in the advance to reconnoitre the country through which they were to pass. The encampments were selected with great care, and a watch was kept up night and day. The horses were brought in and picketed at night, and at daybreak a party was sent out to scour the neighborhood for half a mile round, beating up every grove and thicket that could give shelter to a lurking foe. When all was reported safe, the horses were cast loose and turned out to graze. Were such precautions generally observed by traders and hunters, we should not so often hear of parties being surprised by the Indians.

Having stated the military arrangements of the captain, we may here mention a mode of defence on the open prairie, which we have heard from a veteran in the Indian trade. When a party of trappers is on a journey with a convoy of goods or peltries, every man has three pack-horses under his care; each horse laden with three packs. Every man is provided with a picket with an iron head, a mallet, and hobbles, or leathern fetters for the horses. The trappers proceed across the prairie in a long line; or sometimes three parallel lines, sufficiently distant from each other to prevent the packs from interfering. At an alarm, when there is no covert at hand, the line wheels so as to bring the front to the rear and form a circle. All then dismount, drive their pickets into the ground in the centre, fasten the horses to them, and hobble their forelegs, so that, in case of alarm, they cannot break away. Then they unload them, and dispose of their packs as breastworks on the periphery of the circle; each man having nine packs behind which to shelter himself. In this promptly-formed fortress, they await the assault of the enemy, and are enabled to set large bands of Indians at defiance.

The first night of his march, Captain Bonneville encamped upon Henry's Fork; an upper branch of Snake River, called after the first American trader that erected a fort beyond the mountains. About an hour after all hands had come to a halt the clatter of hoofs was heard, and a solitary female, of the Nez Perce tribe, came galloping up. She was mounted on a mustang or half wild

horse, which she managed by a long rope hitched round the under jaw by way of bridle. Dismounting, she walked silently into the midst of the camp, and there seated herself on the ground, still holding her horse by the long halter.

The sudden and lonely apparition of this woman, and her calm yet resolute demeanor, awakened universal curiosity. The hunters and trappers gathered round, and gazed on her as something mysterious. She remained silent, but maintained her air of calmness and self-possession. Captain Bonneville approached and interrogated her as to the object of her mysterious visit. Her answer was brief but earnest -- "I love the whites -- I will go with them." She was forthwith invited to a lodge, of which she readily took possession, and from that time forward was considered one of the camp.

In consequence, very probably, of the military precautions of Captain Bonneville, he conducted his party in safety through this hazardous region. No accident of a disastrous kind occurred, excepting the loss of a horse, which, in passing along the giddy edge of a precipice, called the Cornice, a dangerous pass between Jackson's and Pierre's Hole, fell over the brink, and was dashed to pieces.

On the 13th of July (1833), Captain Bonneville arrived at Green River. As he entered the valley, he beheld it strewn in every direction with the carcasses of buffaloes. It was evident that Indians had recently been there, and in great numbers. Alarmed at this sight, he came to a halt, and as soon as it was dark, sent out spies to his place of rendezvous on Horse Creek, where he had expected to meet with his detached parties of trappers on the following day. Early in the morning the spies made their appearance in the camp, and with them came three trappers of one of his bands, from the rendezvous, who told him his people were all there expecting him. As to the slaughter among the buffaloes, it had been made by a friendly band of Shoshonies, who had fallen in with one of his trapping parties, and accompanied them to the rendezvous. Having imparted this intelligence, the three worthies from the rendezvous broached a small keg of "alcohol," which they had brought with them. to enliven this merry meeting. The liquor went briskly round; all absent friends were toasted, and the party moved forward to the rendezvous in high spirits.

The meeting of associated bands, who have been separated from each other on these hazardous enterprises, is always interesting; each having its tales of perils and adventures to relate. Such was the case with the various detachments of Captain Bonneville's company, thus brought together on Horse Creek. Here was the detachment of fifty men which he had sent from Salmon River, in the preceding month of November, to winter on Snake River. They had met with many crosses and losses in the course of their spring hunt, not so much from Indians as from white men. They had come in competition with rival trapping parties, particularly one belonging to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company; and they had long stories to relate of their manoeuvres to forestall or distress each other. In fact, in these virulent and sordid competitions, the trappers of each party were more intent upon injuring their rivals, than benefitting themselves; breaking each other's traps, trampling and tearing to pieces the beaver lodges, and doing every thing in their power to mar the success of the hunt. We forbear to detail these pitiful contentions.

The most lamentable tale of disasters, however, that Captain Bonneville had to hear, was from a partisan, whom he had detached in the preceding year, with twenty men, to hunt through the outskirts of the Crow country, and on the tributary streams of the Yellowstone; whence he was to proceed and join him in his winter quarters on Salmon River. This partisan appeared at the ren-

devious without his party, and a sorrowful tale of disasters had he to relate. In hunting the Crow country, he fell in with a village of that tribe; notorious rogues, jockeys, and horse stealers, and errant scamperers of the mountains. These decoyed most of his men to desert, and carry off horses, traps, and accoutrements. When he attempted to retake the deserters, the Crow warriors ruffled up to him and declared the deserters were their good friends, had determined to remain among them, and should not be molested. The poor partisan, therefore, was fain to leave his vagabonds among these birds of their own feather, and being too weak in numbers to attempt the dangerous pass across the mountains to meet Captain Bonneville on Salmon River, he made, with the few that remained faithful to him, for the neighborhood of Tullock's Fort, on the Yellowstone, under the protection of which he went into winter quarters.

He soon found out that the neighborhood of the fort was nearly as bad as the neighborhood of the Crows. His men were continually stealing away thither, with whatever beaver skins they could secrete or lay their hands on. These they would exchange with the hangers-on of the fort for whiskey, and then revel in drunkenness and debauchery.

The unlucky partisan made another move. Associating with his party a few free trappers, whom he met with in this neighborhood, he started off early in the spring to trap on the head waters of Powder River. In the course of the journey, his horses were so much jaded in traversing a steep mountain, that he was induced to turn them loose to graze during the night. The place was lonely; the path was rugged; there was not the sign of an Indian in the neighborhood; not a blade of grass that had been turned by a footstep. But who can calculate on security in the midst of the Indian country, where the foe lurks in silence and secrecy, and seems to come and go on the wings of the wind? The horses had scarce been turned loose, when a couple of Arickara (or Rickaree) warriors entered the camp. They affected a frank and friendly demeanor; but their appearance and movements awakened the suspicions of some of the veteran trappers, well versed in Indian wiles. Convinced that they were spies sent on some sinister errand, they took them in custody, and set to work to drive in the horses. It was too late -- the horses were already gone. In fact, a war party of Arickaras had been hovering on their trail for several days, watching with the patience and perseverance of Indians, for some moment of negligence and fancied security, to make a successful swoop. The two spies had evidently been sent into the camp to create a diversion, while their confederates carried off the spoil.

The unlucky partisan, thus robbed of his horses, turned furiously on his prisoners, ordered them to be bound hand and foot, and swore to put them to death unless his property were restored. The robbers, who soon found that their spies were in captivity, now made their appearance on horseback, and held a parley. The sight of them, mounted on the very horses they had stolen, set the blood of the mountaineers in a ferment; but it was useless to attack them, as they would have but to turn their steeds and scamper out of the reach of pedestrians. A negotiation was now attempted. The Arickaras offered what they considered fair terms; to barter one horse, or even two horses, for a prisoner. The mountaineers spurned at their offer, and declared that, unless all the horses were relinquished, the prisoners should be burnt to death. To give force to their threat, a pyre of logs and fagots was heaped up and kindled into a blaze.

The parley continued; the Arickaras released one horse and then another, in earnest of their proposition; finding, however, that nothing short of the relinquishment of all their spoils would purchase the lives of the captives, they abandoned them to their fate, moving off with many parting

---

words and lamentable howlings. The prisoners seeing them depart, and knowing the horrible fate that awaited them, made a desperate effort to escape. They partially succeeded, but were severely wounded and retaken; then dragged to the blazing pyre, and burnt to death in the sight of their retreating comrades.

Such are the savage cruelties that white men learn to practise, who mingle in savage life; and such are the acts that lead to terrible recrimination on the part of the Indians. Should we hear of any atrocities committed by the Arickaras upon captive white men, let this signal and recent provocation be borne in mind. Individual cases of the kind dwell in the recollections of whole tribes; and it is a point of honor and conscience to revenge them.

The loss of his horses completed the ruin of the unlucky partisan. It was out of his power to prosecute his hunting, or to maintain his party; the only thought now was how to get back to civilized life. At the first water-course, his men built canoes, and committed themselves to the stream. Some engaged themselves at various trading establishments at which they touched, others got back to the settlements. As to the partisan, he found an opportunity to make his way to the rendezvous at Green River Valley; which he reached in time to render to Captain Bonneville this forlorn account of his misadventures.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 20

Gathering in Green River valley--Visitings and feastings of leaders--Rough wassailing among the trappers--Wild blades of the mountains--Indian belles--Potency of bright beads and red blankets--Arrival of supplies--Revelry and extravagance--Mad wolves--The lost Indian

THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY was at this time the scene of one of those general gatherings of traders, trappers, and Indians, that we have already mentioned. The three rival companies, which, for a year past had been endeavoring to out-trade, out-trap and out-wit each other, were here encamped in close proximity, awaiting their annual supplies. About four miles from the rendezvous of Captain Bonneville was that of the American Fur Company, hard by which, was that also of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

After the eager rivalry and almost hostility displayed by these companies in their late campaigns, it might be expected that, when thus brought in juxtaposition, they would hold themselves warily and sternly aloof from each other, and, should they happen to come in contact, brawl and bloodshed would ensue.

No such thing! Never did rival lawyers, after a wrangle at the bar, meet with more social good humor at a circuit dinner. The hunting season over, all past tricks and manoeuvres are forgotten, all feuds and bickerings buried in oblivion. From the middle of June to the middle of September, all trapping is suspended; for the beavers are then shedding their furs and their skins are of little value. This, then, is the trapper's holiday, when he is all for fun and frolic, and ready for a saturnalia among the mountains.

At the present season, too, all parties were in good humor. The year had been productive. Competition, by threatening to lessen their profits, had quickened their wits, roused their energies, and

made them turn every favorable chance to the best advantage; so that, on assembling at their respective places of rendezvous, each company found itself in possession of a rich stock of peltries.

The leaders of the different companies, therefore, mingled on terms of perfect good fellowship; interchanging visits, and regaling each other in the best style their respective camps afforded. But the rich treat for the worthy captain was to see the "chivalry" of the various encampments, engaged in contests of skill at running, jumping, wrestling, shooting with the rifle, and running horses. And then their rough hunters' feasting and carousels. They drank together, they sang, they laughed, they whooped; they tried to out-brag and out-lie each other in stories of their adventures and achievements. Here the free trappers were in all their glory; they considered themselves the "cocks of the walk," and always carried the highest crests. Now and then familiarity was pushed too far, and would effervesce into a brawl, and a "rough and tumble" fight; but it all ended in cordial reconciliation and maudlin endearment.

The presence of the Shoshonie tribe contributed occasionally to cause temporary jealousies and feuds. The Shoshonie beauties became objects of rivalry among some of the amorous mountaineers. Happy was the trapper who could muster up a red blanket, a string of gay beads, or a paper of precious vermilion, with which to win the smiles of a Shoshonie fair one.

The caravans of supplies arrived at the valley just at this period of gallantry and good fellowship. Now commenced a scene of eager competition and wild prodigality at the different encampments. Bales were hastily ripped open, and their motley contents poured forth. A mania for purchasing spread itself throughout the several bands--munitions for war, for hunting, for gallantry, were seized upon with equal avidity--rifles, hunting knives, traps, scarlet cloth, red blankets, garish beads, and glittering trinkets, were bought at any price, and scores run up without any thought how they were ever to be rubbed off. The free trappers, especially, were extravagant in their purchases. For a free mountaineer to pause at a paltry consideration of dollars and cents, in the attainment of any object that might strike his fancy, would stamp him with the mark of the beast in the estimation of his comrades. For a trader to refuse one of these free and flourishing blades a credit, whatever unpaid scores might stare him in the face, would be a flagrant affront scarcely to be forgiven.

Now succeeded another outbreak of revelry and extravagance. The trappers were newly fitted out and arrayed, and dashed about with their horses caparisoned in Indian style. The Shoshonie beauties also flaunted about in all the colors of the rainbow. Every freak of prodigality was indulged to its fullest extent, and in a little while most of the trappers, having squandered away all their wages, and perhaps run knee-deep in debt, were ready for another hard campaign in the wilderness.

During this season of folly and frolic, there was an alarm of mad wolves in the two lower camps. One or more of these animals entered the camps for three nights successively, and bit several of the people.

Captain Bonneville relates the case of an Indian, who was a universal favorite in the lower camp.

He had been bitten by one of these animals. Being out with a party shortly afterwards, he grew silent and gloomy, and lagged behind the rest as if he wished to leave them. They halted and urged him to move faster, but he entreated them not to approach him, and, leaping from his horse, began to roll frantically on the earth, gnashing his teeth and foaming at the mouth. Still he retained his senses, and warned his companions not to come near him, as he should not be able to restrain himself from biting them. They hurried off to obtain relief; but on their return he was nowhere to be found. His horse and his accoutrements remained upon the spot. Three or four days afterwards a solitary Indian, believed to be the same, was observed crossing a valley, and pursued; but he darted away into the fastnesses of the mountains, and was seen no more.

Another instance we have from a different person who was present in the encampment. One of the men of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had been bitten. He set out shortly afterwards in company with two white men on his return to the settlements. In the course of a few days he showed symptoms of hydrophobia, and became raving toward night. At length, breaking away from his companions, he rushed into a thicket of willows, where they left him to his fate!

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 21

Schemes of Captain Bonneville--The Great Salt Lake--Expedition to explore it--Preparations for a journey to the Bighorn

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE now found himself at the head of a hardy, well-seasoned and well-appointed company of trappers, all benefited by at least one year's experience among the mountains, and capable of protecting themselves from Indian wiles and stratagems, and of providing for their subsistence wherever game was to be found. He had, also, an excellent troop of horses, in prime condition, and fit for hard service. He determined, therefore, to strike out into some of the bolder parts of his scheme. One of these was to carry his expeditions into some of the unknown tracts of the Far West, beyond what is generally termed the buffalo range. This would have something of the merit and charm of discovery, so dear to every brave and adventurous spirit. Another favorite project was to establish a trading post on the lower part of the Columbia River, near the Multnomah valley, and to endeavor to retrieve for his country some of the lost trade of Astoria.

The first of the above mentioned views was, at present, uppermost in his mind--the exploring of unknown regions. Among the grand features of the wilderness about which he was roaming, one had made a vivid impression on his mind, and been clothed by his imagination with vague and ideal charms. This is a great lake of salt water, laving the feet of the mountains, but extending far to the west-southwest, into one of those vast and elevated plateaus of land, which range high above the level of the Pacific.

Captain Bonneville gives a striking account of the lake when seen from the land. As you ascend the mountains about its shores, says he, you behold this immense body of water spreading itself before you, and stretching further and further, in one wide and far-reaching expanse, until the eye, wearied with continued and strained attention, rests in the blue dimness of distance, upon lofty ranges of mountains, confidently asserted to rise from the bosom of the waters. Nearer to

you, the smooth and unruffled surface is studded with little islands, where the mountain sheep roam in considerable numbers. What extent of lowland may be encompassed by the high peaks beyond, must remain for the present matter of mere conjecture though from the form of the summits, and the breaks which may be discovered among them, there can be little doubt that they are the sources of streams calculated to water large tracts, which are probably concealed from view by the rotundity of the lake's surface. At some future day, in all probability, the rich harvest of beaver fur, which may be reasonably anticipated in such a spot, will tempt adventurers to reduce all this doubtful region to the palpable certainty of a beaten track. At present, however, destitute of the means of making boats, the trapper stands upon the shore, and gazes upon a promised land which his feet are never to tread.

Such is the somewhat fanciful view which Captain Bonneville gives to this great body of water. He has evidently taken part of his ideas concerning it from the representations of others, who have somewhat exaggerated its features. It is reported to be about one hundred and fifty miles long, and fifty miles broad. The ranges of mountain peaks which Captain Bonneville speaks of, as rising from its bosom, are probably the summits of mountains beyond it, which may be visible at a vast distance, when viewed from an eminence, in the transparent atmosphere of these lofty regions. Several large islands certainly exist in the lake; one of which is said to be mountainous, but not by any means to the extent required to furnish the series of peaks above mentioned.

Captain Sublette, in one of his early expeditions across the mountains, is said to have sent four men in a skin canoe, to explore the lake, who professed to have navigated all round it; but to have suffered excessively from thirst, the water of the lake being extremely salt, and there being no fresh streams running into it.

Captain Bonneville doubts this report, or that the men accomplished the circumnavigation, because, he says, the lake receives several large streams from the mountains which bound it to the east. In the spring, when the streams are swollen by rain and by the melting of the snows, the lake rises several feet above its ordinary level during the summer, it gradually subsides again, leaving a sparkling zone of the finest salt upon its shores.

The elevation of the vast plateau on which this lake is situated, is estimated by Captain Bonneville at one and three-fourths of a mile above the level of the ocean. The admirable purity and transparency of the atmosphere in this region, allowing objects to be seen, and the report of firearms to be heard, at an astonishing distance; and its extreme dryness, causing the wheels of wagons to fall in pieces, as instanced in former passages of this work, are proofs of the great altitude of the Rocky Mountain plains. That a body of salt water should exist at such a height is cited as a singular phenomenon by Captain Bonneville, though the salt lake of Mexico is not much inferior in elevation.

To have this lake properly explored, and all its secrets revealed, was the grand scheme of the captain for the present year; and while it was one in which his imagination evidently took a leading part, he believed it would be attended with great profit, from the numerous beaver streams with

which the lake must be fringed.

This momentous undertaking he confided to his lieutenant, Mr. Walker, in whose experience and ability he had great confidence. He instructed him to keep along the shores of the lake, and trap in all the streams on his route; also to keep a journal, and minutely to record the events of his journey, and everything curious or interesting, making maps or charts of his route, and of the surrounding country.

No pains nor expense were spared in fitting out the party, of forty men, which he was to command. They had complete supplies for a year, and were to meet Captain Bonneville in the ensuing summer, in the valley of Bear River, the largest tributary of the Salt Lake, which was to be his point of general rendezvous.

The next care of Captain Bonneville was to arrange for the safe transportation of the peltries which he had collected to the Atlantic States. Mr. Robert Campbell, the partner of Sublette, was at this time in the rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, having brought up their supplies. He was about to set off on his return, with the peltries collected during the year, and intended to proceed through the Crow country, to the head of navigation on the Bighorn River, and to descend in boats down that river, the Missouri, and the Yellowstone, to St. Louis.

Captain Bonneville determined to forward his peltries by the same route, under the especial care of Mr. Cerre. By way of escort, he would accompany Cerre to the point of embarkation, and then make an autumnal hunt in the Crow country.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 22

The Crow country--A Crow paradise--Habits of the Crows--Anecdotes of Rose, the renegade white man-- His fights with the Blackfeet--His elevation--His death--Arapoosh, the Crow chief--His eagle-- Adventure of Robert Campbell--Honor among Crows

BEFORE WE ACCOMPANY Captain Bonneville into the Crow country, we will impart a few facts about this wild region, and the wild people who inhabit it. We are not aware of the precise boundaries, if there are any, of the country claimed by the Crows; it appears to extend from the Black Hills to the Rocky Mountains, including a part of their lofty ranges, and embracing many of the plains and valleys watered by the Wind River, the Yellowstone, the Powder River, the Little Missouri, and the Nebraska. The country varies in soil and climate; there are vast plains of sand and clay, studded with large red sand-hills; other parts are mountainous and picturesque; it possesses warm springs, and coal mines, and abounds with game.

But let us give the account of the country as rendered by Arapoosh, a Crow chief, to Mr. Robert Campbell, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

“The Crow country,” said he, “is a good country. The Great Spirit has put it exactly in the right place; while you are in it you fare well; whenever you go out of it, whichever way you travel, you

fare worse.

“If you go to the south, you have to wander over great barren plains j the water is warm and bad, and you meet the fever and ague.

“To the north it is cold; the winters are long and bitter, with no grass j you cannot keep horses there, but must travel with dogs. What is a country without horses?

“On the Columbia they are poor and dirty, paddle about in canoes, and eat fish. Their teeth are worn out; they are always taking fish-bones out of their mouths. Fish is poor food.

“To the east, they dwell in villages; they live well; but they drink the muddy water of the Missouri--that is bad. A Crow's dog would not drink such water.

“About the forks of the Missouri is a fine country; good water; good grass; plenty of buffalo. In summer, it is almost as good as the Crow country; but in winter it is cold; the grass is gone; and there is no salt weed for the horses.

“The Crow country is exactly in the right place. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains; all kinds of climates and good things for every season. When the summer heats scorch the prairies, you can draw up under the mountains, where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snow-banks. There you can hunt the elk, the deer, and the antelope, when their skins are fit for dressing; there you will find plenty of white bears and mountain sheep.

“In the autumn, when your horses are fat and strong from the mountain pastures, you can go down into the plains and hunt the buffalo, or trap beaver on the streams. And when winter comes on, you can take shelter in the woody bottoms along the rivers; there you will find buffalo meat for yourselves, and cotton-wood bark for your horses: or you may winter in the Wind River valley, where there is salt weed in abundance.

“The Crow country is exactly in the right place. Everything good is to be found there. There is no country like the Crow country.”

Such is the eulogium on his country by Arapooish.

We have had repeated occasions to speak of the restless and predatory habits of the Crows. They can muster fifteen hundred fighting men, but their incessant wars with the Blackfeet, and their vagabond, predatory habits, are gradually wearing them out.

In a recent work, we related the circumstance of a white man named Rose, an outlaw, and a designing vagabond, who acted as guide and interpreter to Mr. Hunt and his party, on their journey across the mountains to Astoria, who came near betraying them into the hands of the Crows,

and who remained among the tribe, marrying one of their women, and adopting their congenial habits. A few anecdotes of the subsequent fortunes of that renegade may not be uninteresting, especially as they are connected with the fortunes of the tribe.

Rose was powerful in frame and fearless in spirit; and soon by his daring deeds took his rank among the first braves of the tribe. He aspired to command, and knew it was only to be attained by desperate exploits. He distinguished himself in repeated actions with Blackfeet. On one occasion, a band of those savages had fortified themselves within a breastwork, and could not be harmed. Rose proposed to storm the work. "Who will take the lead?" was the demand. "I!" cried he; and putting himself at their head, rushed forward. The first Blackfoot that opposed him he shot down with his rifle, and, snatching up the war-club of his victim, killed four others within the fort. The victory was complete, and Rose returned to the Crow village covered with glory, and bearing five Blackfoot scalps, to be erected as a trophy before his lodge. From this time, he was known among the Crows by the name of Che-ku-kaats, or "the man who killed five." He became chief of the village, or rather band, and for a time was the popular idol. His popularity soon awakened envy among the native braves; he was a stranger, an intruder, a white man. A party seceded from his command. Feuds and civil wars succeeded that lasted for two or three years, until Rose, having contrived to set his adopted brethren by the ears, left them, and went down the Missouri in 1823. Here he fell in with one of the earliest trapping expeditions sent by General Ashley across the mountains. It was conducted by Smith, Fitzpatrick, and Sublette. Rose enlisted with them as guide and interpreter. When he got them among the Crows, he was exceedingly generous with their goods; making presents to the braves of his adopted tribe, as became a high-minded chief.

This, doubtless, helped to revive his popularity. In that expedition, Smith and Fitzpatrick were robbed of their horses in Green River valley; the place where the robbery took place still bears the name of Horse Creek. We are not informed whether the horses were stolen through the instigation and management of Rose; it is not improbable, for such was the perfidy he had intended to practice on a former occasion toward Mr. Hunt and his party.

The last anecdote we have of Rose is from an Indian trader. When General Atkinson made his military expedition up the Missouri, in 1825, to protect the fur trade, he held a conference with the Crow nation, at which Rose figured as Indian dignitary and Crow interpreter. The military were stationed at some little distance from the scene of the "big talk"; while the general and the chiefs were smoking pipes and making speeches, the officers, supposing all was friendly, left the troops, and drew near the scene of ceremonial. Some of the more knowing Crows, perceiving this, stole quietly to the camp, and, unobserved, contrived to stop the touch-holes of the field-pieces with dirt. Shortly after, a misunderstanding occurred in the conference: some of the Indians, knowing the cannon to be useless, became insolent. A tumult arose. In the confusion, Colonel O'Fallan snapped a pistol in the face of a brave, and knocked him down with the butt end. The Crows were all in a fury. A chance-medley fight was on the point of taking place, when Rose, his natural sympathies as a white man suddenly recurring, broke the stock of his fusée over the head of a Crow warrior, and laid so vigorously about him with the barrel, that he soon put the whole throng to flight. Luckily, as no lives had been lost, this sturdy rib roasting calmed the fury of the

Crows, and the tumult ended without serious consequences.

What was the ultimate fate of this vagabond hero is not distinctly known. Some report him to have fallen a victim to disease, brought on by his licentious life; others assert that he was murdered in a feud among the Crows. After all, his residence among these savages, and the influence he acquired over them, had, for a time, some beneficial effects. He is said, not merely to have rendered them more formidable to the Blackfeet, but to have opened their eyes to the policy of cultivating the friendship of the white men.

After Rose's death, his policy continued to be cultivated, with indifferent success, by Arapooish, the chief already mentioned, who had been his great friend, and whose character he had contributed to develop. This sagacious chief endeavored, on every occasion, to restrain the predatory propensities of his tribe when directed against the white men. "If we keep friends with them," said he, "we have nothing to fear from the Blackfeet, and can rule the mountains." Arapooish pretended to be a great "medicine man", a character among the Indians which is a compound of priest, doctor, prophet, and conjurer. He carried about with him a tame eagle, as his "medicine" or familiar. With the white men, he acknowledged that this was all charlatanism, but said it was necessary, to give him weight and influence among his people.

Mr. Robert Campbell, from whom we have most of these facts, in the course of one of his trapping expeditions, was quartered in the village of Arapooish, and a guest in the lodge of the chieftain. He had collected a large quantity of furs, and, fearful of being plundered, deposited but a part in the lodge of the chief; the rest he buried in a cache. One night, Arapooish came into the lodge with a cloudy brow, and seated himself for a time without saying a word. At length, turning to Campbell, "You have more furs with you," said he, "than you have brought into my lodge?"

"I have," replied Campbell.

"Where are they?"

Campbell knew the uselessness of any prevarication with an Indian; and the importance of complete frankness. He described the exact place where he had concealed his peltries.

" 'Tis well," replied Arapooish; "you speak straight. It is just as you say. But your cache has been robbed. Go and see how many skins have been taken from it."

Campbell examined the cache, and estimated his loss to be about one hundred and fifty beaver skins.

Arapooish now summoned a meeting of the village. He bitterly reproached his people for robbing a stranger who had confided to their honor; and commanded that whoever had taken the skins, should bring them back: declaring that, as Campbell was his guest and inmate of his lodge, he would not eat nor drink until every skin was restored to him.

The meeting broke up, and every one dispersed. Arapooish now charged Campbell to give neither reward nor thanks to any one who should bring in the beaver skins, but to keep count as they were delivered.

In a little while, the skins began to make their appearance, a few at a time; they were laid down in the lodge, and those who brought them departed without saying a word. The day passed away. Arapooish sat in one corner of his lodge, wrapped up in his robe, scarcely moving a muscle of his countenance. When night arrived, he demanded if all the skins had been brought in. Above a hundred had been given up, and Campbell expressed himself contented. Not so the Crow chief-tain. He fasted all that night, nor tasted a drop of water. In the morning, some more skins were brought in, and continued to come, one and two at a time, throughout the day, until but a few were wanting to make the number complete. Campbell was now anxious to put an end to this fasting of the old chief, and again declared that he was perfectly satisfied. Arapooish demanded what number of skins were yet wanting. On being told, he whispered to some of his people, who disappeared. After a time the number were brought in, though it was evident they were not any of the skins that had been stolen, but others gleaned in the village.

"Is all right now?" demanded Arapooish.

"All is right," replied Campbell.

"Good! Now bring me meat and drink!"

When they were alone together, Arapooish had a conversation with his guest.

"When you come another time among the Crows," said he, "don't hide your goods: trust to them and they will not wrong you. Put your goods in the lodge of a chief, and they are sacred; hide them in a cache, and any one who finds will steal them. My people have now given up your goods for my sake; but there are some foolish young men in the village, who may be disposed to be troublesome. Don't linger, therefore, but pack your horses and be off."

Campbell took his advice, and made his way safely out of the Crow country. He has ever since maintained that the Crows are not so black as they are painted. "Trust to their honor," says he, "and you are safe: trust to their honesty, and they will steal the hair off your head."

Having given these few preliminary particulars, we will resume the course of our narrative.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 23

Departure from Green River valley--Popo Agie--Its course--The rivers into which it runs--Scenery of the Bluffs--the great Tar Spring--Volcanic tracts in the Crow country--Burning Mountain of Powder River--Sulphur springs--Hidden fires--Colter's Hell--Wind River--Campbell's par-

---

ty--Fitzpatrick and his trappers--Captain Stewart, an amateur traveller--Nathaniel Wyeth--Anecdotes of his expedition to the Far West--Disaster of Campbell's party--A union of bands--The Bad Pass--The rapids--Departure of Fitzpatrick--Embarkation of peltries--Wyeth and his bull boat--Adventures of Captain Bonneville in the Bighorn Mountains--Adventures in the plain--Traces of Indians--Travelling precautions--Dangers of making a smoke-- The rendezvous

ON THE 25TH of July, Captain Bonneville struck his tents, and set out on his route for the Bighorn, at the head of a party of fifty-six men, including those who were to embark with Cerre. Crossing the Green River valley, he proceeded along the south point of the Wind River range of mountains, and soon fell upon the track of Mr. Robert Campbell's party, which had preceded him by a day. This he pursued, until he perceived that it led down the banks of the Sweet Water to the southeast. As this was different from his proposed direction, he left it; and turning to the northeast, soon came upon the waters of the Popo Agie. This stream takes its rise in the Wind River Mountains. Its name, like most Indian names, is characteristic. Popo, in the Crow language, signifies head; and Agie, river. It is the head of a long river, extending from the south end of the Wind River Mountains in a northeast direction, until it falls into the Yellowstone. Its course is generally through plains, but is twice crossed by chains of mountains; the first called the Littlehorn; the second, the Bighorn. After it has forced its way through the first chain, it is called the Horn River; after the second chain, it is called the Bighorn River. Its passage through this last chain is rough and violent; making repeated falls, and rushing down long and furious rapids, which threaten destruction to the navigator; though a hardy trapper is said to have shot down them in a canoe. At the foot of these rapids, is the head of navigation; where it was the intention of the parties to construct boats, and embark.

Proceeding down along the Popo Agie, Captain Bonneville came again in full view of the "Bluffs," as they are called, extending from the base of the Wind River Mountains far away to the east, and presenting to the eye a confusion of hills and cliffs of red sandstone, some peaked and angular, some round, some broken into crags and precipices, and piled up in fantastic masses; but all naked and sterile. There appeared to be no soil favorable to vegetation, nothing but coarse gravel; yet, over all this isolated, barren landscape, were diffused such atmospherical tints and hues, as to blend the whole into harmony and beauty.

In this neighborhood, the captain made search for "the great Tar Spring," one of the wonders of the mountains; the medicinal properties of which, he had heard extravagantly lauded by the trappers. After a toilsome search, he found it at the foot of a sand-bluff, a little east of the Wind River Mountains; where it exuded in a small stream of the color and consistency of tar. The men immediately hastened to collect a quantity of it, to use as an ointment for the galled backs of their horses, and as a balsam for their own pains and aches. From the description given of it, it is evidently the bituminous oil, called petroleum or naphtha, which forms a principal ingredient in the potent medicine called British Oil. It is found in various parts of Europe and Asia, in several of the West India islands, and in some places of the United States. In the state of New York, it is called Seneca Oil, from being found near the Seneca lake.

The Crow country has other natural curiosities, which are held in superstitious awe by the In-

---

dians, and considered great marvels by the trappers. Such is the Burning Mountain, on Powder River, abounding with anthracite coal. Here the earth is hot and cracked; in many places emitting smoke and sulphurous vapors, as if covering concealed fires. A volcanic tract of similar character is found on Stinking River, one of the tributaries of the Bighorn, which takes its unhappy name from the odor derived from sulphurous springs and streams. This last mentioned place was first discovered by Colter, a hunter belonging to Lewis and Clarke's exploring party, who came upon it in the course of his lonely wanderings, and gave such an account of its gloomy terrors, its hidden fires, smoking pits, noxious streams, and the all-pervading "smell of brimstone," that it received, and has ever since retained among trappers, the name of "Colter's Hell!"

Resuming his descent along the left bank of the Popo Agie, Captain Bonneville soon reached the plains; where he found several large streams entering from the west. Among these was Wind River, which gives its name to the mountains among which it takes its rise. This is one of the most important streams of the Crow country. The river being much swollen, Captain Bonneville halted at its mouth, and sent out scouts to look for a fording place. While thus encamped, he beheld in the course of the afternoon a long line of horsemen descending the slope of the hills on the opposite side of the Popo Agie. His first idea was that they were Indians; he soon discovered, however, that they were white men, and, by the long line of pack-horses, ascertained them to be the convoy of Campbell, which, having descended the Sweet Water, was now on its way to the Horn River.

The two parties came together two or three days afterwards, on the 4th of August, after having passed through the gap of the Littlehorn Mountain. In company with Campbell's convoy was a trapping party of the Rocky Mountain Company, headed by Fitzpatrick; who, after Campbell's embarkation on the Bighorn, was to take charge of all the horses, and proceed on a trapping campaign. There were, moreover, two chance companions in the rival camp. One was Captain Stewart, of the British army, a gentleman of noble connections, who was amusing himself by a wandering tour in the Far West; in the course of which, he had lived in hunter's style; accompanying various bands of traders, trappers, and Indians; and manifesting that relish for the wilderness that belongs to men of game spirit.

The other casual inmate of Mr. Campbell's camp was Mr. Nathaniel Wyeth; the self-same leader of the band of New England salmon fishers, with whom we parted company in the valley of Pierre's Hole, after the battle with the Blackfeet. A few days after that affair, he again set out from the rendezvous in company with Milton Sublette and his brigade of trappers. On his march, he visited the battle ground, and penetrated to the deserted fort of the Blackfeet in the midst of the wood. It was a dismal scene. The fort was strewed with the mouldering bodies of the slain; while vultures soared aloft, or sat brooding on the trees around; and Indian dogs howled about the place, as if bewailing the death of their masters. Wyeth travelled for a considerable distance to the southwest, in company with Milton Sublette, when they separated; and the former, with eleven men, the remnant of his band, pushed on for Snake River; kept down the course of that eventful stream; traversed the Blue Mountains, trapping beaver occasionally by the way, and finally, after hardships of all kinds, arrived, on the 29th of October, at Vancouver, on the Columbia, the main factory of the Hudson's Bay Company.

---

He experienced hospitable treatment at the hands of the agents of that company; but his men, heartily tired of wandering in the wilderness, or tempted by other prospects, refused, for the most part, to continue any longer in his service. Some set off for the Sandwich Islands; some entered into other employ. Wyeth found, too, that a great part of the goods he had brought with him were unfitted for the Indian trade; in a word, his expedition, undertaken entirely on his own resources, proved a failure. He lost everything invested in it, but his hopes. These were as strong as ever. He took note of every thing, therefore, that could be of service to him in the further prosecution of his project; collected all the information within his reach, and then set off, accompanied by merely two men, on his return journey across the continent. He had got thus far "by hook and by crook," a mode in which a New England man can make his way all over the world, and through all kinds of difficulties, and was now bound for Boston; in full confidence of being able to form a company for the salmon fishery and fur trade of the Columbia.

The party of Mr. Campbell had met with a disaster in the course of their route from the Sweet Water. Three or four of the men, who were reconnoitering the country in advance of the main body, were visited one night in their camp, by fifteen or twenty Shoshonies. Considering this tribe as perfectly friendly, they received them in the most cordial and confiding manner. In the course of the night, the man on guard near the horses fell sound asleep; upon which a Shoshonie shot him in the head, and nearly killed him. The savages then made off with the horses, leaving the rest of the party to find their way to the main body on foot.

The rival companies of Captain Bonneville and Mr. Campbell, thus fortuitously brought together, now prosecuted their journey in great good fellowship; forming a joint camp of about a hundred men. The captain, however, began to entertain doubts that Fitzpatrick and his trappers, who kept profound silence as to their future movements, intended to hunt the same grounds which he had selected for his autumnal campaign; which lay to the west of the Horn River, on its tributary streams. In the course of his march, therefore, he secretly detached a small party of trappers, to make their way to those hunting grounds, while he continued on with the main body; appointing a rendezvous, at the next full moon, about the 28th of August, at a place called the Medicine Lodge.

On reaching the second chain, called the Bighorn Mountains, where the river forced its impetuous way through a precipitous defile, with cascades and rapids, the travellers were obliged to leave its banks, and traverse the mountains by a rugged and frightful route, emphatically called the "Bad Pass." Descending the opposite side, they again made for the river banks; and about the middle of August, reached the point below the rapids where the river becomes navigable for boats. Here Captain Bonneville detached a second party of trappers, consisting of ten men, to seek and join those whom he had detached while on the route; appointing for them the same rendezvous, (at the Medicine Lodge,) on the 28th of August.

All hands now set to work to construct "bull boats," as they are technically called; a light, fragile kind of bark, characteristic of the expedients and inventions of the wilderness; being formed of

buffalo skins, stretched on frames. They are sometimes, also, called skin boats. Wyeth was the first ready; and, with his usual promptness and hardihood, launched his frail bark, singly, on this wild and hazardous voyage, down an almost interminable succession of rivers, winding through countries teeming with savage hordes. Milton Sublette, his former fellow traveller, and his companion in the battle scenes of Pierre's Hole, took passage in his boat. His crew consisted of two white men, and two Indians. We shall hear further of Wyeth, and his wild voyage, in the course of our wanderings about the Far West.

The remaining parties soon completed their several armaments. That of Captain Bonneville was composed of three bull boats, in which he embarked all his peltries, giving them in charge of Mr. Cerre, with a party of thirty-six men. Mr. Campbell took command of his own boats, and the little squadrons were soon gliding down the bright current of the Bighorn.

The secret precautions which Captain Bonneville had taken to throw his men first into the trapping ground west of the Bighorn, were, probably, superfluous. It did not appear that Fitzpatrick had intended to hunt in that direction. The moment Mr. Campbell and his men embarked with the peltries, Fitzpatrick took charge of all the horses, amounting to above a hundred, and struck off to the east, to trap upon Littlehorn, Powder, and Tongue rivers. He was accompanied by Captain Stewart, who was desirous of having a range about the Crow country. Of the adventures they met with in that region of vagabonds and horse stealers, we shall have something to relate hereafter.

Captain Bonneville being now left to prosecute his trapping campaign without rivalry, set out, on the 17th of August, for the rendezvous at Medicine Lodge. He had but four men remaining with him, and forty-six horses to take care of; with these he had to make his way over mountain and plain, through a marauding, horse-stealing region, full of peril for a numerous cavalcade so slightly manned. He addressed himself to his difficult journey, however, with his usual alacrity of spirit.

In the afternoon of his first day's journey, on drawing near to the Bighorn Mountain, on the summit of which he intended to encamp for the night, he observed, to his disquiet, a cloud of smoke rising from its base. He came to a halt, and watched it anxiously. It was very irregular; sometimes it would almost die away; and then would mount up in heavy volumes. There was, apparently, a large party encamped there; probably, some ruffian horde of Blackfeet. At any rate, it would not do for so small a number of men, with so numerous a cavalcade, to venture within sight of any wandering tribe. Captain Bonneville and his companions, therefore, avoided this dangerous neighborhood; and, proceeding with extreme caution, reached the summit of the mountain, apparently without being discovered. Here they found a deserted Blackfoot fort, in which they ensconced themselves; disposed of every thing as securely as possible, and passed the night without molestation. Early the next morning they descended the south side of the mountain into the great plain extending between it and the Littlehorn range. Here they soon came upon numerous footprints, and the carcasses of buffaloes; by which they knew there must be Indians not far off. Captain Bonneville now began to feel solicitude about the two small parties of trappers which he had detached, lest the Indians should have come upon them before they had united their forces. But

he felt still more solicitude about his own party; for it was hardly to be expected he could traverse these naked plains undiscovered, when Indians were abroad; and should he be discovered, his chance would be a desperate one. Everything now depended upon the greatest circumspection. It was dangerous to discharge a gun, or light a fire, or make the least noise, where such quick-eared and quick-sighted enemies were at hand. In the course of the day they saw indubitable signs that the buffalo had been roaming there in great numbers, and had recently been frightened away. That night they encamped with the greatest care; and threw up a strong breastwork for their protection.

For the two succeeding days they pressed forward rapidly, but cautiously, across the great plain; fording the tributary streams of the Horn River; encamping one night among thickets; the next, on an island; meeting, repeatedly, with traces of Indians; and now and then, in passing through a defile, experiencing alarms that induced them to cock their rifles.

On the last day of their march hunger got the better of their caution, and they shot a fine buffalo bull at the risk of being betrayed by the report. They did not halt to make a meal, but carried the meat on with them to the place of rendezvous, the Medicine Lodge, where they arrived safely, in the evening, and celebrated their arrival by a hearty supper.

The next morning they erected a strong pen for the horses, and a fortress of logs for themselves; and continued to observe the greatest caution. Their cooking was all done at mid-day, when the fire makes no glare, and a moderate smoke cannot be perceived at any great distance. In the morning and the evening, when the wind is lulled, the smoke rises perpendicularly in a blue column, or floats in light clouds above the tree-tops, and can be discovered from afar.

In this way the little party remained for several days, cautiously encamped, until, on the 29th of August, the two detachments they had been expecting, arrived together at the rendezvous. They, as usual, had their several tales of adventures to relate to the captain, which we will furnish to the reader in the next chapter.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 24

Adventures of the party of ten--The Balaamite mule-- A dead point--The mysterious elks--A night attack-- A retreat--Travelling under an alarm--A joyful meeting--Adventures of the other party--A decoy elk--Retreat to an island--A savage dance of triumph--Arrival at Wind River  
THE ADVENTURES of the detachment of ten are the first in order. These trappers, when they separated from Captain Bonneville at the place where the furs were embarked, proceeded to the foot of the Bighorn Mountain, and having encamped, one of them mounted his mule and went out to set his trap in a neighboring stream. He had not proceeded far when his steed came to a full stop. The trapper kicked and cudgelled, but to every blow and kick the mule snorted and kicked up, but still refused to budge an inch. The rider now cast his eyes warily around in search of some cause for this demur, when, to his dismay, he discovered an Indian fort within gunshot distance, lowering through the twilight. In a twinkling he wheeled about; his mule now seemed as eager to

---

get on as himself, and in a few moments brought him, clattering with his traps, among his comrades. He was jeered at for his alacrity in retreating; his report was treated as a false alarm; his brother trappers contented themselves with reconnoitring the fort at a distance, and pronounced that it was deserted.

As night set in, the usual precaution, enjoined by Captain Bonneville on his men, was observed. The horses were brought in and tied, and a guard stationed over them. This done, the men wrapped themselves in their blankets, stretched themselves before the fire, and being fatigued with a long day's march, and gorged with a hearty supper, were soon in a profound sleep.

The camp fires gradually died away; all was dark and silent; the sentinel stationed to watch the horses had marched as far, and supped as heartily as any of his companions, and while they snored, he began to nod at his post. After a time, a low trampling noise reached his ear. He half opened his closing eyes, and beheld two or three elks moving about the lodges, picking, and smelling, and grazing here and there. The sight of elk within the purlieu of the camp caused some little surprise; but having had his supper, he cared not for elk meat, and, suffering them to graze about unmolested, soon relapsed into a doze.

Suddenly, before daybreak, a discharge of firearms, and a struggle and tramp of horses, made every one start to his feet. The first move was to secure the horses. Some were gone; others were struggling, and kicking, and trembling, for there was a horrible uproar of whoops, and yells, and firearms. Several trappers stole quietly from the camp, and succeeded in driving in the horses which had broken away; the rest were tethered still more strongly. A breastwork was thrown up of saddles, baggage, and camp furniture, and all hands waited anxiously for daylight. The Indians, in the meantime, collected on a neighboring height, kept up the most horrible clamor, in hopes of striking a panic into the camp, or frightening off the horses. When the day dawned, the trappers attacked them briskly and drove them to some distance. A desultory fire was kept up for an hour, when the Indians, seeing nothing was to be gained, gave up the contest and retired. They proved to be a war party of Blackfeet, who, while in search of the Crow tribe, had fallen upon the trail of Captain Bonneville on the Popo Agie, and dogged him to the Bighorn; but had been completely baffled by his vigilance. They had then waylaid the present detachment, and were actually housed in perfect silence within their fort, when the mule of the trapper made such a dead point.

The savages went off uttering the wildest denunciations of hostility, mingled with opprobrious terms in broken English, and gesticulations of the most insulting kind.

In this melee, one white man was wounded, and two horses were killed. On preparing the morning's meal, however, a number of cups, knives, and other articles were missing, which had, doubtless, been carried off by the fictitious elk, during the slumber of the very sagacious sentinel.

As the Indians had gone off in the direction which the trappers had intended to travel, the latter changed their route, and pushed forward rapidly through the "Bad Pass," nor halted until night; when, supposing themselves out of the reach of the enemy, they contented themselves with tying up their horses and posting a guard. They had scarce laid down to sleep, when a dog strayed into

the camp with a small pack of moccasins tied upon his back; for dogs are made to carry burdens among the Indians. The sentinel, more knowing than he of the preceding night, awoke his companions and reported the circumstance. It was evident that Indians were at hand. All were instantly at work; a strong pen was soon constructed for the horses, after completing which, they resumed their slumbers with the composure of men long inured to dangers.

In the next night, the prowling of dogs about the camp, and various suspicious noises, showed that Indians were still hovering about them. Hurrying on by long marches, they at length fell upon a trail, which, with the experienced eye of veteran woodmen, they soon discovered to be that of the party of trappers detached by Captain Bonneville when on his march, and which they were sent to join. They likewise ascertained from various signs, that this party had suffered some maltreatment from the Indians. They now pursued the trail with intense anxiety; it carried them to the banks of the stream called the Gray Bull, and down along its course, until they came to where it empties into the Horn River. Here, to their great joy, they discovered the comrades of whom they were in search, all strongly fortified, and in a state of great watchfulness and anxiety.

We now take up the adventures of this first detachment of trappers. These men, after parting with the main body under Captain Bonneville, had proceeded slowly for several days up the course of the river, trapping beaver as they went. One morning, as they were about to visit their traps, one of the camp-keepers pointed to a fine elk, grazing at a distance, and requested them to shoot it. Three of the trappers started off for the purpose. In passing a thicket, they were fired upon by some savages in ambush, and at the same time, the pretended elk, throwing off his hide and his horn, started forth an Indian warrior.

One of the three trappers had been brought down by the volley; the others fled to the camp, and all hands, seizing up whatever they could carry off, retreated to a small island in the river, and took refuge among the willows. Here they were soon joined by their comrade who had fallen, but who had merely been wounded in the neck.

In the meantime the Indians took possession of the deserted camp, with all the traps, accoutrements, and horses. While they were busy among the spoils, a solitary trapper, who had been absent at his work, came sauntering to the camp with his traps on his back. He had approached near by, when an Indian came forward and motioned him to keep away; at the same moment, he was perceived by his comrades on the island, and warned of his danger with loud cries. The poor fellow stood for a moment, bewildered and aghast, then dropping his traps, wheeled and made off at full speed, quickened by a sportive volley which the Indians rattled after him.

In high good humor with their easy triumph, the savages now formed a circle round the fire and performed a war dance, with the unlucky trappers for rueful spectators. This done, emboldened by what they considered cowardice on the part of the white men, they neglected their usual mode of bush-fighting, and advanced openly within twenty paces of the willows. A sharp volley from the trappers brought them to a sudden halt, and laid three of them breathless. The chief, who had stationed himself on an eminence to direct all the movements of his people, seeing three of his warriors laid low, ordered the rest to retire. They immediately did so, and the whole band soon

disappeared behind a point of woods, carrying off with them the horses, traps, and the greater part of the baggage.

It was just after this misfortune that the party of ten men discovered this forlorn band of trappers in a fortress, which they had thrown up after their disaster. They were so perfectly dismayed, that they could not be induced even to go in quest of their traps, which they had set in a neighboring stream. The two parties now joined their forces, and made their way, without further misfortune, to the rendezvous.

Captain Bonneville perceived from the reports of these parties, as well as from what he had observed himself in his recent march, that he was in a neighborhood teeming with danger. Two wandering Snake Indians, also, who visited the camp, assured him that there were two large bands of Crows marching rapidly upon him. He broke up his encampment, therefore, on the 1st of September, made his way to the south, across the Littlehorn Mountain, until he reached Wind River, and then turning westward, moved slowly up the banks of that stream, giving time for his men to trap as he proceeded. As it was not in the plan of the present hunting campaigns to go near the caches on Green River, and as the trappers were in want of traps to replace those they had lost, Captain Bonneville undertook to visit the caches, and procure a supply. To accompany him in this hazardous expedition, which would take him through the defiles of the Wind River Mountains, and up the Green River valley, he took but three men; the main party were to continue on trapping up toward the head of Wind River, near which he was to rejoin them, just about the place where that stream issues from the mountains. We shall accompany the captain on his adventurous errand.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 25

Captain Bonneville sets out for Green River valley-- Journey up the Popo Agie--Buffaloes--The staring white bears--The smoke--The warm springs-- Attempt to traverse the Wind River Mountains--The Great Slope--Mountain dells and chasms--Crystal lakes--Ascent of a snowy peak--Sublime prospect-- A panorama--"Les dignes de pitie," or wild men of the mountains  
HAVING FORDED WIND RIVER a little above its mouth, Captain Bonneville and his three companions proceeded across a gravelly plain, until they fell upon the Popo Agie, up the left bank of which they held their course, nearly in a southerly direction. Here they came upon numerous droves of buffalo, and halted for the purpose of procuring a supply of beef. As the hunters were stealing cautiously to get within shot of the game, two small white bears suddenly presented themselves in their path, and, rising upon their hind legs, contemplated them for some time with a whimsically solemn gaze. The hunters remained motionless; whereupon the bears, having apparently satisfied their curiosity, lowered themselves upon all fours, and began to withdraw. The hunters now advanced, upon which the bears turned, rose again upon their haunches, and repeated their serio-comic examination. This was repeated several times, until the hunters, piqued at their unmannerly staring, rebuked it with a discharge of their rifles. The bears made an awkward bound or two, as if wounded, and then walked off with great gravity, seeming to commune together, and every now and then turning to take another look at the hunters. It was well for the

latter that the bears were but half grown, and had not yet acquired the ferocity of their kind.

The buffalo were somewhat startled at the report of the firearms; but the hunters succeeded in killing a couple of fine cows, and, having secured the best of the meat, continued forward until some time after dark, when, encamping in a large thicket of willows, they made a great fire, roasted buffalo beef enough for half a score, disposed of the whole of it with keen relish and high glee, and then "turned in" for the night and slept soundly, like weary and well fed hunters.

At daylight they were in the saddle again, and skirted along the river, passing through fresh grassy meadows, and a succession of beautiful groves of willows and cotton-wood. Toward evening, Captain Bonneville observed a smoke at a distance rising from among hills, directly in the route he was pursuing. Apprehensive of some hostile band, he concealed the horses in a thicket, and, accompanied by one of his men, crawled cautiously up a height, from which he could overlook the scene of danger. Here, with a spy-glass, he reconnoitred the surrounding country, but not a lodge nor fire, not a man, horse, nor dog, was to be discovered; in short, the smoke which had caused such alarm proved to be the vapor from several warm, or rather hot springs of considerable magnitude, pouring forth streams in every direction over a bottom of white clay. One of the springs was about twenty-five yards in diameter, and so deep that the water was of a bright green color.

They were now advancing diagonally upon the chain of Wind River Mountains, which lay between them and Green River valley. To coast round their southern points would be a wide circuit; whereas, could they force their way through them, they might proceed in a straight line. The mountains were lofty, with snowy peaks and cragged sides; it was hoped, however, that some practicable defile might be found. They attempted, accordingly, to penetrate the mountains by following up one of the branches of the Popo Agie, but soon found themselves in the midst of stupendous crags and precipices that barred all progress. Retracing their steps, and falling back upon the river, they consulted where to make another attempt. They were too close beneath the mountains to scan them generally, but they now recollected having noticed, from the plain, a beautiful slope rising, at an angle of about thirty degrees, and apparently without any break, until it reached the snowy region. Seeking this gentle acclivity, they began to ascend it with alacrity, trusting to find at the top one of those elevated plains which prevail among the Rocky Mountains. The slope was covered with coarse gravel, interspersed with plates of freestone. They attained the summit with some toil, but found, instead of a level, or rather undulating plain, that they were on the brink of a deep and precipitous ravine, from the bottom of which rose a second slope, similar to the one they had just ascended. Down into this profound ravine they made their way by a rugged path, or rather fissure of the rocks, and then labored up the second slope. They gained the summit only to find themselves on another ravine, and now perceived that this vast mountain, which had presented such a sloping and even side to the distant beholder on the plain, was shagged by frightful precipices, and seamed with longitudinal chasms, deep and dangerous.

In one of these wild dells they passed the night, and slept soundly and sweetly after their fatigues. Two days more of arduous climbing and scrambling only served to admit them into the heart of

this mountainous and awful solitude; where difficulties increased as they proceeded. Sometimes they scrambled from rock to rock, up the bed of some mountain stream, dashing its bright way down to the plains; sometimes they availed themselves of the paths made by the deer and the mountain sheep, which, however, often took them to the brinks of fearful precipices, or led to rugged defiles, impassable for their horses. At one place, they were obliged to slide their horses down the face of a rock, in which attempt some of the poor animals lost their footing, rolled to the bottom, and came near being dashed to pieces.

In the afternoon of the second day, the travellers attained one of the elevated valleys locked up in this singular bed of mountains. Here were two bright and beautiful little lakes, set like mirrors in the midst of stern and rocky heights, and surrounded by grassy meadows, inexpressibly refreshing to the eye. These probably were among the sources of those mighty streams which take their rise among these mountains, and wander hundreds of miles through the plains.

In the green pastures bordering upon these lakes, the travellers halted to repose, and to give their weary horses time to crop the sweet and tender herbage. They had now ascended to a great height above the level of the plains, yet they beheld huge crags of granite piled one upon another, and beetling like battlements far above them. While two of the men remained in the camp with the horses, Captain Bonneville, accompanied by the other men [man], set out to climb a neighboring height, hoping to gain a commanding prospect, and discern some practicable route through this stupendous labyrinth. After much toil, he reached the summit of a lofty cliff, but it was only to behold gigantic peaks rising all around, and towering far into the snowy regions of the atmosphere. Selecting one which appeared to be the highest, he crossed a narrow intervening valley, and began to scale it. He soon found that he had undertaken a tremendous task; but the pride of man is never more obstinate than when climbing mountains. The ascent was so steep and rugged that he and his companion were frequently obliged to clamber on hands and knees, with their guns slung upon their backs. Frequently, exhausted with fatigue, and dripping with perspiration, they threw themselves upon the snow, and took handfuls of it to allay their parching thirst. At one place, they even stripped off their coats and hung them upon the bushes, and thus lightly clad, proceeded to scramble over these eternal snows. As they ascended still higher, there were cool breezes that refreshed and braced them, and springing with new ardor to their task, they at length attained the summit.

Here a scene burst upon the view of Captain Bonneville, that for a time astonished and overwhelmed him with its immensity. He stood, in fact, upon that dividing ridge which Indians regard as the crest of the world; and on each side of which, the landscape may be said to decline to the two cardinal oceans of the globe. Whichever way he turned his eye, it was confounded by the vastness and variety of objects. Beneath him, the Rocky Mountains seemed to open all their secret recesses: deep, solemn valleys; treasured lakes; dreary passes; rugged defiles, and foaming torrents; while beyond their savage precincts, the eye was lost in an almost immeasurable landscape; stretching on every side into dim and hazy distance, like the expanse of a summer's sea. Whichever way he looked, he beheld vast plains glimmering with reflected sunshine; mighty streams wandering on their shining course toward either ocean, and snowy mountains, chain

---

beyond chain, and peak beyond peak, till they melted like clouds into the horizon. For a time, the Indian fable seemed realized: he had attained that height from which the Blackfoot warrior, after death, first catches a view of the land of souls, and beholds the happy hunting grounds spread out below him, brightening with the abodes of the free and generous spirits. The captain stood for a long while gazing upon this scene, lost in a crowd of vague and indefinite ideas and sensations. A long-drawn inspiration at length relieved him from this enthrallment of the mind, and he began to analyze the parts of this vast panorama. A simple enumeration of a few of its features may give some idea of its collective grandeur and magnificence.

The peak on which the captain had taken his stand commanded the whole Wind River chain; which, in fact, may rather be considered one immense mountain, broken into snowy peaks and lateral spurs, and seamed with narrow valleys. Some of these valleys glittered with silver lakes and gushing streams; the fountain heads, as it were, of the mighty tributaries to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Beyond the snowy peaks, to the south, and far, far below the mountain range, the gentle river, called the Sweet Water, was seen pursuing its tranquil way through the rugged regions of the Black Hills. In the east, the head waters of Wind River wandered through a plain, until, mingling in one powerful current, they forced their way through the range of Horn Mountains, and were lost to view. To the north were caught glimpses of the upper streams of the Yellowstone, that great tributary of the Missouri. In another direction were to be seen some of the sources of the Oregon, or Columbia, flowing to the northwest, past those towering landmarks the Three Tetons, and pouring down into the great lava plain; while, almost at the captain's feet, the Green River, or Colorado of the West, set forth on its wandering pilgrimage to the Gulf of California; at first a mere mountain torrent, dashing northward over a crag and precipice, in a succession of cascades, and tumbling into the plain where, expanding into an ample river, it circled away to the south, and after alternately shining out and disappearing in the mazes of the vast landscape, was finally lost in a horizon of mountains. The day was calm and cloudless, and the atmosphere so pure that objects were discernible at an astonishing distance. The whole of this immense area was inclosed by an outer range of shadowy peaks, some of them faintly marked on the horizon, which seemed to wall it in from the rest of the earth.

It is to be regretted that Captain Bonneville had no instruments with him with which to ascertain the altitude of this peak. He gives it as his opinion that it is the loftiest point of the North American continent; but of this we have no satisfactory proof. It is certain that the Rocky Mountains are of an altitude vastly superior to what was formerly supposed. We rather incline to the opinion that the highest peak is further to the northward, and is the same measured by Mr. Thompson, surveyor to the Northwest Company; who, by the joint means of the barometer and trigonometric measurement, ascertained it to be twenty-five thousand feet above the level of the sea; an elevation only inferior to that of the Himalayas.

For a long time, Captain Bonneville remained gazing around him with wonder and enthusiasm; at length the chill and wintry winds, whirling about the snow-clad height, admonished him to descend. He soon regained the spot where he and his companions [companion] had thrown off their coats, which were now gladly resumed, and, retracing their course down the peak, they safe-

ly rejoined their companions on the border of the lake.

Notwithstanding the savage and almost inaccessible nature of these mountains, they have their inhabitants. As one of the party was out hunting, he came upon the solitary track of a man in a lonely valley. Following it up, he reached the brow of a cliff, whence he beheld three savages running across the valley below him. He fired his gun to call their attention, hoping to induce them to turn back. They only fled the faster, and disappeared among the rocks. The hunter returned and reported what he had seen. Captain Bonneville at once concluded that these belonged to a kind of hermit race, scanty in number, that inhabit the highest and most inaccessible fastnesses. They speak the Shoshonie language, and probably are offsets from that tribe, though they have peculiarities of their own, which distinguish them from all other Indians. They are miserably poor; own no horses, and are destitute of every convenience to be derived from an intercourse with the whites. Their weapons are bows and stone-pointed arrows, with which they hunt the deer, the elk, and the mountain sheep. They are to be found scattered about the countries of the Shoshonie, Flathead, Crow, and Blackfeet tribes; but their residences are always in lonely places, and the clefts of the rocks.

Their footsteps are often seen by the trappers in the high and solitary valleys among the mountains, and the smokes of their fires descried among the precipices, but they themselves are rarely met with, and still more rarely brought to a parley, so great is their shyness, and their dread of strangers.

As their poverty offers no temptation to the marauder, and as they are inoffensive in their habits, they are never the objects of warfare: should one of them, however, fall into the hands of a war party, he is sure to be made a sacrifice, for the sake of that savage trophy, a scalp, and that barbarous ceremony, a scalp dance. These forlorn beings, forming a mere link between human nature and the brute, have been looked down upon with pity and contempt by the creole trappers, who have given them the appellation of "les dignes de pitie," or "the objects of pity"; They appear more worthy to be called the wild men of the mountains.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 26

A retrograde move--Channel of a mountain torrent--Alpine scenery--Cascades--Beaver valleys--Beavers at work--Their architecture--Their modes of felling trees--Mode of trapping beaver--Contests of skill--A beaver "up to trap"--Arrival at the Green River caches

THE VIEW from the snowy peak of the Wind River Mountains, while it had excited Captain Bonneville's enthusiasm, had satisfied him that it would be useless to force a passage westward, through multiplying barriers of cliffs and precipices. Turning his face eastward, therefore, he endeavored to regain the plains, intending to make the circuit round the southern point of the mountain. To descend, and to extricate himself from the heart of this rock-piled wilderness, was almost as difficult as to penetrate it. Taking his course down the ravine of a tumbling stream, the commencement of some future river, he descended from rock to rock, and shelf to shelf, between stupendous cliffs and beetling crags that sprang up to the sky. Often he had to cross and recross

the rushing torrent, as it wound foaming and roaring down its broken channel, or was walled by perpendicular precipices; and imminent was the hazard of breaking the legs of the horses in the clefts and fissures of slippery rocks. The whole scenery of this deep ravine was of Alpine wildness and sublimity. Sometimes the travellers passed beneath cascades which pitched from such lofty heights that the water fell into the stream like heavy rain. In other places, torrents came tumbling from crag to crag, dashing into foam and spray, and making tremendous din and uproar.

On the second day of their descent, the travellers, having got beyond the steepest pitch of the mountains, came to where the deep and rugged ravine began occasionally to expand into small levels or valleys, and the stream to assume for short intervals a more peaceful character. Here, not merely the river itself, but every rivulet flowing into it, was dammed up by communities of industrious beavers, so as to inundate the neighborhood, and make continual swamps.

During a mid-day halt in one of these beaver valleys, Captain Bonneville left his companions, and strolled down the course of the stream to reconnoitre. He had not proceeded far when he came to a beaver pond, and caught a glimpse of one of its painstaking inhabitants busily at work upon the dam. The curiosity of the captain was aroused, to behold the mode of operating of this far-famed architect; he moved forward, therefore, with the utmost caution, parting the branches of the water willows without making any noise, until having attained a position commanding a view of the whole pond, he stretched himself flat on the ground, and watched the solitary workman. In a little while, three others appeared at the head of the dam, bringing sticks and bushes. With these they proceeded directly to the barrier, which Captain Bonneville perceived was in need of repair. Having deposited their loads upon the broken part, they dived into the water, and shortly reappeared at the surface. Each now brought a quantity of mud, with which he would plaster the sticks and bushes just deposited. This kind of masonry was continued for some time, repeated supplies of wood and mud being brought, and treated in the same manner. This done, the industrious beavers indulged in a little recreation, chasing each other about the pond, dodging and whisking about on the surface, or diving to the bottom; and in their frolic, often slapping their tails on the water with a loud clacking sound. While they were thus amusing themselves, another of the fraternity made his appearance, and looked gravely on their sports for some time, without offering to join in them. He then climbed the bank close to where the captain was concealed, and, rearing himself on his hind quarters, in a sitting position, put his forepaws against a young pine tree, and began to cut the bark with his teeth. At times he would tear off a small piece, and holding it between his paws, and retaining his sedentary position, would feed himself with it, after the fashion of a monkey. The object of the beaver, however, was evidently to cut down the tree; and he was proceeding with his work, when he was alarmed by the approach of Captain Bonneville's men, who, feeling anxious at the protracted absence of their leader, were coming in search of him. At the sound of their voices, all the beavers, busy as well as idle, dived at once beneath the surface, and were no more to be seen. Captain Bonneville regretted this interruption. He had heard much of the sagacity of the beaver in cutting down trees, in which, it is said, they manage to make them fall into the water, and in such a position and direction as may be most favorable for conveyance to the desired point. In the present instance, the tree was a tall straight pine, and as it grew perpendicularly, and there was not a breath of air stirring the beaver could have felled it in any direc-

tion he pleased, if really capable of exercising a discretion in the matter. He was evidently engaged in "belting" the tree, and his first incision had been on the side nearest to the water.

Captain Bonneville, however, discredits, on the whole, the alleged sagacity of the beaver in this particular, and thinks the animal has no other aim than to get the tree down, without any of the subtle calculation as to its mode or direction of falling. This attribute, he thinks, has been ascribed to them from the circumstance that most trees growing near water-courses, either lean bodily toward the stream, or stretch their largest limbs in that direction, to benefit by the space, the light, and the air to be found there. The beaver, of course, attacks those trees which are nearest at hand, and on the banks of the stream or pond. He makes incisions round them, or in technical phrase, belts them with his teeth, and when they fall, they naturally take the direction in which their trunks or branches preponderate.

"I have often," says Captain Bonneville, "seen trees measuring eighteen inches in diameter, at the places where they had been cut through by the beaver, but they lay in all directions, and often very inconveniently for the after purposes of the animal. In fact, so little ingenuity do they at times display in this particular, that at one of our camps on Snake River, a beaver was found with his head wedged into the cut which he had made, the tree having fallen upon him and held him prisoner until he died."

Great choice, according to the captain, is certainly displayed by the beaver in selecting the wood which is to furnish bark for winter provision. The whole beaver household, old and young, set out upon this business, and will often make long journeys before they are suited. Sometimes they cut down trees of the largest size and then cull the branches, the bark of which is most to their taste. These they cut into lengths of about three feet, convey them to the water, and float them to their lodges, where they are stored away for winter. They are studious of cleanliness and comfort in their lodges, and after their repasts, will carry out the sticks from which they have eaten the bark, and throw them into the current beyond the barrier. They are jealous, too, of their territories, and extremely pugnacious, never permitting a strange beaver to enter their premises, and often fighting with such virulence as almost to tear each other to pieces. In the spring, which is the breeding season, the male leaves the female at home, and sets off on a tour of pleasure, rambling often to a great distance, recreating himself in every clear and quiet expanse of water on his way, and climbing the banks occasionally to feast upon the tender sprouts of the young willows. As summer advances, he gives up his bachelor rambles, and bethinking himself of housekeeping duties, returns home to his mate and his new progeny, and marshals them all for the foraging expedition in quest of winter provisions.

After having shown the public spirit of this praiseworthy little animal as a member of a community, and his amiable and exemplary conduct as the father of a family, we grieve to record the perils with which he is environed, and the snares set for him and his painstaking household.

Practice, says Captain Bonneville, has given such a quickness of eye to the experienced trapper in all that relates to his pursuit, that he can detect the slightest sign of beaver, however wild; and al-

though the lodge may be concealed by close thickets and overhanging willows, he can generally, at a single glance, make an accurate guess at the number of its inmates. He now goes to work to set his trap; planting it upon the shore, in some chosen place, two or three inches below the surface of the water, and secures it by a chain to a pole set deep in the mud. A small twig is then stripped of its bark, and one end is dipped in the "medicine," as the trappers term the peculiar bait which they employ. This end of the stick rises about four inches above the surface of the water, the other end is planted between the jaws of the trap. The beaver, possessing an acute sense of smell, is soon attracted by the odor of the bait. As he raises his nose toward it, his foot is caught in the trap. In his fright he throws a somerset into the deep water. The trap, being fastened to the pole, resists all his efforts to drag it to the shore; the chain by which it is fastened defies his teeth; he struggles for a time, and at length sinks to the bottom and is drowned.

Upon rocky bottoms, where it is not possible to plant the pole, it is thrown into the stream. The beaver, when entrapped, often gets fastened by the chain to sunken logs or floating timber; if he gets to shore, he is entangled in the thickets of brook willows. In such cases, however, it costs the trapper diligent search, and sometimes a bout at swimming, before he finds his game.

Occasionally it happens that several members of a beaver family are trapped in succession. The survivors then become extremely shy, and can scarcely be "brought to medicine," to use the trapper's phrase for "taking the bait." In such case, the trapper gives up the use of the bait, and conceals his traps in the usual paths and crossing places of the household. The beaver now being completely "up to trap," approaches them cautiously, and springs them ingeniously with a stick. At other times, he turns the traps bottom upwards, by the same means, and occasionally even drags them to the barrier and conceals them in the mud. The trapper now gives up the contest of ingenuity, and shouldering his traps, marches off, admitting that he is not yet "up to beaver."

On the day following Captain Bonneville's supervision of the industrious and frolicsome community of beavers, of which he has given so edifying an account, he succeeded in extricating himself from the Wind River Mountains, and regaining the plain to the eastward, made a great bend to the south, so as to go round the bases of the mountains, and arrived without further incident of importance, at the old place of rendezvous in Green River valley, on the 17th of September.

He found the caches, in which he had deposited his superfluous goods and equipments, all safe, and having opened and taken from them the necessary supplies, he closed them again; taking care to obliterate all traces that might betray them to the keen eyes of Indian marauders.

ON THE 18TH of September, Captain Bonneville and his three companions set out, bright and early, to rejoin the main party, from which they had parted on Wind River. Their route lay up the Green River valley, with that stream on their right hand, and beyond it, the range of Wind River Mountains. At the head of the valley, they were to pass through a defile which would bring them out beyond the northern end of these mountains, to the head of Wind River; where they expected to meet the main party, according to arrangement.

We have already adverted to the dangerous nature of this neighborhood, infested by roving bands of Crows and Blackfeet; to whom the numerous defiles and passes of the country afford capital places for ambush and surprise. The travellers, therefore, kept a vigilant eye upon everything that might give intimation of lurking danger.

About two hours after mid-day, as they reached the summit of a hill, they discovered buffalo on the plain below, running in every direction. One of the men, too, fancied he heard the report of a gun. It was concluded, therefore, that there was some party of Indians below, hunting the buffalo.

The horses were immediately concealed in a narrow ravine; and the captain, mounting an eminence, but concealing himself from view, reconnoitred the whole neighborhood with a telescope. Not an Indian was to be seen; so, after halting about an hour, he resumed his journey. Convinced, however, that he was in a dangerous neighborhood, he advanced with the utmost caution; winding his way through hollows and ravines, and avoiding, as much as possible, any open tract, or rising ground, that might betray his little party to the watchful eye of an Indian scout.

Arriving, at length, at the edge of the open meadow-land bordering on the river, he again observed the buffalo, as far as he could see, scampering in great alarm. Once more concealing the horses, he and his companions remained for a long time watching the various groups of the animals, as each caught the panic and started off; but they sought in vain to discover the cause.

They were now about to enter the mountain defile, at the head of Green River valley, where they might be waylaid and attacked; they, therefore, arranged the packs on their horses, in the manner most secure and convenient for sudden flight, should such be necessary. This done, they again set forward, keeping the most anxious look-out in every direction.

It was now drawing toward evening; but they could not think of encamping for the night, in a place so full of danger. Captain Bonneville, therefore, determined to halt about sunset, kindle a fire, as if for encampment, cook and eat supper; but, as soon as it was sufficiently dark, to make a rapid move for the summit of the mountain, and seek some secluded spot for their night's lodgings.

Accordingly, as the sun went down, the little party came to a halt, made a large fire, spitted their buffalo meat on wooden sticks, and, when sufficiently roasted, planted the savory viands before them; cutting off huge slices with their hunting knives, and supping with a hunter's appetite. The light of their fire would not fail, as they knew, to attract the attention of any Indian horde in the

neighborhood; but they trusted to be off and away, before any prowlers could reach the place. While they were supping thus hastily, however, one of their party suddenly started up and shouted "Indians!" All were instantly on their feet, with their rifles in their hands; but could see no enemy. The man, however, declared that he had seen an Indian advancing, cautiously, along the trail which they had made in coming to the encampment; who, the moment he was perceived, had thrown himself on the ground, and disappeared. He urged Captain Bonneville instantly to decamp. The captain, however, took the matter more coolly. The single fact, that the Indian had endeavored to hide himself, convinced him that he was not one of a party, on the advance to make an attack. He was, probably, some scout, who had followed up their trail, until he came in sight of their fire. He would, in such case, return, and report what he had seen to his companions. These, supposing the white men had encamped for the night, would keep aloof until very late, when all should be asleep. They would, then, according to Indian tactics, make their stealthy approaches, and place themselves in ambush around, preparatory to their attack, at the usual hour of daylight.

Such was Captain Bonneville's conclusion; in consequence of which, he counselled his men to keep perfectly quiet, and act as if free from all alarm, until the proper time arrived for a move. They, accordingly, continued their repast with pretended appetite and jollity; and then trimmed and replenished their fire, as if for a bivouac. As soon, however, as the night had completely set in, they left their fire blazing; walked quietly among the willows, and then leaping into their saddles, made off as noiselessly as possible. In proportion as they left the point of danger behind them, they relaxed in their rigid and anxious taciturnity, and began to joke at the expense of their enemy; whom they pictured to themselves mousing in the neighborhood of their deserted fire, waiting for the proper time of attack, and preparing for a grand disappointment.

About midnight, feeling satisfied that they had gained a secure distance, they posted one of their number to keep watch, in case the enemy should follow on their trail, and then, turning abruptly into a dense and matted thicket of willows, halted for the night at the foot of the mountain, instead of making for the summit, as they had originally intended.

A trapper in the wilderness, like a sailor on the ocean, snatches morsels of enjoyment in the midst of trouble, and sleeps soundly when surrounded by danger. The little party now made their arrangements for sleep with perfect calmness; they did not venture to make a fire and cook, it is true, though generally done by hunters whenever they come to a halt, and have provisions. They comforted themselves, however, by smoking a tranquil pipe; and then calling in the watch, and turning loose the horses, stretched themselves on their pallets, agreed that whoever should first awake, should rouse the rest, and in a little while were all as sound asleep as though in the midst of a fortress.

A little before day, they were all on the alert; it was the hour for Indian maraud. A sentinel was immediately detached, to post himself at a little distance on their trail, and give the alarm, should he see or hear an enemy.

With the first blink of dawn, the rest sought the horses; brought them to the camp, and tied them

---

up, until an hour after sunrise; when, the sentinel having reported that all was well, they sprang once more into their saddles, and pursued the most covert and secret paths up the mountain, avoiding the direct route.

At noon, they halted and made a hasty repast; and then bent their course so as to regain the route from which they had diverged. They were now made sensible of the danger from which they had just escaped. There were tracks of Indians, who had evidently been in pursuit of them; but had recently returned, baffled in their search.

Trusting that they had now got a fair start, and could not be overtaken before night, even in case the Indians should renew the chase, they pushed briskly forward, and did not encamp until late; when they cautiously concealed themselves in a secure nook of the mountains.

Without any further alarm, they made their way to the head waters of Wind River, and reached the neighborhood in which they had appointed the rendezvous with their companions. It was within the precincts of the Crow country; the Wind River valley being one of the favorite haunts of that restless tribe. After much searching, Captain Bonneville came upon a trail which had evidently been made by his main party. It was so old, however, that he feared his people might have left the neighborhood; driven off, perhaps by some of those war parties which were on the prowl. He continued his search with great anxiety, and no little fatigue; for his horses were jaded, and almost crippled, by their forced marches and scramblings through rocky defiles.

On the following day, about noon, Captain Bonneville came upon a deserted camp of his people, from which they had, evidently, turned back; but he could find no signs to indicate why they had done so; whether they had met with misfortune, or molestation, or in what direction they had gone. He was now, more than ever, perplexed.

On the following day, he resumed his march with increasing anxiety. The feet of his horses had by this time become so worn and wounded by the rocks, that he had to make moccasins for them of buffalo hide. About noon, he came to another deserted camp of his men; but soon after lost their trail. After great search, he once more found it, turning in a southerly direction along the eastern bases of the Wind River Mountains, which towered to the right. He now pushed forward with all possible speed, in hopes of overtaking the party. At night, he slept at another of their camps, from which they had but recently departed. When the day dawned sufficiently to distinguish objects, he perceived the danger that must be dogging the heels of his main party. All about the camp were traces of Indians who must have been prowling about it at the time his people had passed the night there; and who must still be hovering about them. Convinced, now, that the main party could not be at any great distance, he mounted a scout on the best horse, and sent him forward to overtake them, to warn them of their danger, and to order them to halt, until he should rejoin them.

In the afternoon, to his great joy, he met the scout returning, with six comrades from the main party, leading fresh horses for his accommodation; and on the following day (September 25th),

all hands were once more reunited, after a separation of nearly three weeks. Their meeting was hearty and joyous; for they had both experienced dangers and perplexities.

The main party, in pursuing their course up the Wind River valley, had been dogged the whole way by a war party of Crows. In one place, they had been fired upon, but without injury; in another place, one of their horses had been cut loose, and carried off. At length, they were so closely beset, that they were obliged to make a retrograde move, lest they should be surprised and overcome. This was the movement which had caused such perplexity to Captain Bonneville.

The whole party now remained encamped for two or three days, to give repose to both men and horses. Some of the trappers, however, pursued their vocations about the neighboring streams. While one of them was setting his traps, he heard the tramp of horses, and looking up, beheld a party of Crow braves moving along at no great distance, with a considerable cavalcade. The trapper hastened to conceal himself, but was discerned by the quick eye of the savages. With whoops and yells, they dragged him from his hiding-place, flourished over his head their tomahawks and scalping-knives, and for a time, the poor trapper gave himself up for lost. Fortunately, the Crows were in a jocose, rather than a sanguinary mood. They amused themselves heartily, for a while, at the expense of his terrors; and after having played off divers Crow pranks and pleasantries, suffered him to depart unharmed. It is true, they stripped him completely, one taking his horse, another his gun, a third his traps, a fourth his blanket, and so on, through all his accoutrements, and even his clothing, until he was stark naked; but then they generously made him a present of an old tattered buffalo robe, and dismissed him, with many complimentary speeches, and much laughter. When the trapper returned to the camp, in such sorry plight, he was greeted with peals of laughter from his comrades and seemed more mortified by the style in which he had been dismissed, than rejoiced at escaping with his life. A circumstance which he related to Captain Bonneville, gave some insight into the cause of this extreme jocularly on the part of the Crows. They had evidently had a run of luck, and, like winning gamblers, were in high good humor. Among twenty-six fine horses, and some mules, which composed their cavalcade, the trapper recognized a number which had belonged to Fitzpatrick's brigade, when they parted company on the Big-horn. It was supposed, therefore, that these vagabonds had been on his trail, and robbed him of part of his cavalry.

On the day following this affair, three Crows came into Captain Bonneville's camp, with the most easy, innocent, if not impudent air imaginable; walking about with the imperturbable coolness and unconcern, in which the Indian rivals the fine gentleman. As they had not been of the set which stripped the trapper, though evidently of the same band, they were not molested. Indeed, Captain Bonneville treated them with his usual kindness and hospitality; permitting them to remain all day in the camp, and even to pass the night there. At the same time, however, he caused a strict watch to be maintained on all their movements; and at night, stationed an armed sentinel near them. The Crows remonstrated against the latter being armed. This only made the captain suspect them to be spies, who meditated treachery; he redoubled, therefore, his precautions. At the same time, he assured his guests, that while they were perfectly welcome to the shelter and comfort of his camp, yet, should any of their tribe venture to approach during the night, they

would certainly be shot; which would be a very unfortunate circumstance, and much to be deplored. To the latter remark, they fully assented; and shortly afterward commenced a wild song, or chant, which they kept up for a long time, and in which they very probably gave their friends, who might be prowling round the camp, notice that the white men were on the alert. The night passed away without disturbance. In the morning, the three Crow guests were very pressing that Captain Bonneville and his party should accompany them to their camp, which they said was close by. Instead of accepting their invitation, Captain Bonneville took his departure with all possible dispatch, eager to be out of the vicinity of such a piratical horde; nor did he relax the diligence of his march, until, on the second day, he reached the banks of the Sweet Water, beyond the limits of the Crow country, and a heavy fall of snow had obliterated all traces of his course.

He now continued on for some few days, at a slower pace, round the point of the mountain toward Green River, and arrived once more at the caches, on the 14th of October.

Here they found traces of the band of Indians who had hunted them in the defile toward the head waters of Wind River. Having lost all trace of them on their way over the mountains, they had turned and followed back their trail down the Green River valley to the caches. One of these they had discovered and broken open, but it fortunately contained nothing but fragments of old iron, which they had scattered about in all directions, and then departed. In examining their deserted camp, Captain Bonneville discovered that it numbered thirty-nine fires, and had more reason than ever to congratulate himself on having escaped the clutches of such a formidable band of freebooters.

He now turned his course southward, under cover of the mountains, and on the 25th of October reached Liberge's Ford, a tributary of the Colorado, where he came suddenly upon the trail of this same war party, which had crossed the stream so recently that the banks were yet wet with the water that had been splashed upon them. To judge from their tracks, they could not be less than three hundred warriors, and apparently of the Crow nation.

Captain Bonneville was extremely uneasy lest this overpowering force should come upon him in some place where he would not have the means of fortifying himself promptly. He now moved toward Hane's Fork, another tributary of the Colorado, where he encamped, and remained during the 26th of October. Seeing a large cloud of smoke to the south, he supposed it to arise from some encampment of Shoshonies, and sent scouts to procure information, and to purchase a lodge. It was, in fact, a band of Shoshonies, but with them were encamped Fitzpatrick and his party of trappers. That active leader had an eventful story to relate of his fortunes in the country of the Crows. After parting with Captain Bonneville on the banks of the Bighorn, he made for the west, to trap upon Powder and Tongue Rivers. He had between twenty and thirty men with him, and about one hundred horses. So large a cavalcade could not pass through the Crow country without attracting the attention of its freebooting hordes. A large band of Crows was soon on their traces, and came up with them on the 5th of September, just as they had reached Tongue River. The Crow chief came forward with great appearance of friendship, and proposed to Fitzpatrick that they should encamp together. The latter, however, not having any faith in Crows, declined

the invitation, and pitched his camp three miles off. He then rode over with two or three men, to visit the Crow chief, by whom he was received with great apparent cordiality. In the meantime, however, a party of young braves, who considered them absolved by his distrust from all scruples of honor, made a circuit privately, and dashed into his encampment. Captain Stewart, who had remained there in the absence of Fitzpatrick, behaved with great spirit; but the Crows were too numerous and active. They had got possession of the camp, and soon made booty of every thing --carrying off all the horses. On their way back they met Fitzpatrick returning to his camp; and finished their exploit by rifling and nearly stripping him.

A negotiation now took place between the plundered white men and the triumphant Crows; what eloquence and management Fitzpatrick made use of, we do not know, but he succeeded in prevailing upon the Crow chieftain to return him his horses and many of his traps; together with his rifles and a few rounds of ammunition for each man. He then set out with all speed to abandon the Crow country, before he should meet with any fresh disasters.

After his departure, the consciences of some of the most orthodox Crows pricked them sorely for having suffered such a cavalcade to escape out of their hands. Anxious to wipe off so foul a stigma on the reputation of the Crow nation, they followed on his trail, nor quit hovering about him on his march until they had stolen a number of his best horses and mules. It was, doubtless, this same band which came upon the lonely trapper on the Popo Agie, and generously gave him an old buffalo robe in exchange for his rifle, his traps, and all his accoutrements. With these anecdotes, we shall, for present, take our leave of the Crow country and its vagabond chivalry.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 28

A region of natural curiosities--The plain of white clay--Hot springs--The Beer Spring--Departure to seek the free trappers--Plain of Portneuf--Lava-- Chasms and gullies--Bannack Indians--Their hunt of the buffalo--Hunter's feast--Trencher heroes-- Bullying of an absent foe--The damp comrade--The Indian spy--Meeting with Hodgkiss--His adventures--Poordevil Indians--Triumph of the Bannacks--Blackfeet policy in war

CROSSING AN ELEVATED RIDGE, Captain Bonneville now came upon Bear River, which, from its source to its entrance into the Great Salt Lake, describes the figure of a horse-shoe. One of the principal head waters of this river, although supposed to abound with beaver, has never been visited by the trapper; rising among rugged mountains, and being barricadoed [sic] by fallen pine trees and tremendous precipices.

Proceeding down this river, the party encamped, on the 6th of November, at the outlet of a lake about thirty miles long, and from two to three miles in width, completely imbedded in low ranges of mountains, and connected with Bear River by an impassable swamp. It is called the Little Lake, to distinguish it from the great one of salt water.

On the 10th of November, Captain Bonneville visited a place in the neighborhood which is quite a region of natural curiosities. An area of about half a mile square presents a level surface of white

clay or fuller's earth, perfectly spotless, resembling a great slab of Parian marble, or a sheet of dazzling snow. The effect is strikingly beautiful at all times: in summer, when it is surrounded with verdure, or in autumn, when it contrasts its bright immaculate surface with the withered herbage. Seen from a distant eminence, it then shines like a mirror, set in the brown landscape. Around this plain are clustered numerous springs of various sizes and temperatures. One of them, of scalding heat, boils furiously and incessantly, rising to the height of two or three feet. In another place, there is an aperture in the earth, from which rushes a column of steam that forms a perpetual cloud. The ground for some distance around sounds hollow, and startles the solitary trapper, as he hears the tramp of his horse giving the sound of a muffled drum. He pictures to himself a mysterious gulf below, a place of hidden fires, and gazes round him with awe and uneasiness.

The most noted curiosity, however, of this singular region, is the Beer Spring, of which trappers give wonderful accounts. They are said to turn aside from their route through the country to drink of its waters, with as much eagerness as the Arab seeks some famous well of the desert. Captain Bonneville describes it as having the taste of beer. His men drank it with avidity, and in copious draughts. It did not appear to him to possess any medicinal properties, or to produce any peculiar effects. The Indians, however, refuse to taste it, and endeavor to persuade the white men from doing so.

We have heard this also called the Soda Spring, and described as containing iron and sulphur. It probably possesses some of the properties of the Ballston water.

The time had now arrived for Captain Bonneville to go in quest of the party of free trappers, detached in the beginning of July, under the command of Mr. Hodgkiss, to trap upon the head waters of Salmon River. His intention was to unite them with the party with which he was at present travelling, that all might go into quarters together for the winter. Accordingly, on the 11th of November, he took a temporary leave of his band, appointing a rendezvous on Snake River, and, accompanied by three men, set out upon his journey. His route lay across the plain of the Portneuf, a tributary stream of Snake River, called after an unfortunate Canadian trapper murdered by the Indians. The whole country through which he passed bore evidence of volcanic convulsions and conflagrations in the olden time. Great masses of lava lay scattered about in every direction; the crags and cliffs had apparently been under the action of fire; the rocks in some places seemed to have been in a state of fusion; the plain was rent and split with deep chasms and gullies, some of which were partly filled with lava.

They had not proceeded far, however, before they saw a party of horsemen, galloping full tilt toward them. They instantly turned, and made full speed for the covert of a woody stream, to fortify themselves among the trees. The Indians came to a halt, and one of them came forward alone. He reached Captain Bonneville and his men just as they were dismounting and about to post themselves. A few words dispelled all uneasiness. It was a party of twenty-five Bannack Indians, friendly to the whites, and they proposed, through their envoy, that both parties should encamp together, and hunt the buffalo, of which they had discovered several large herds hard by. Captain Bonneville cheerfully assented to their proposition, being curious to see their manner of hunting.

Both parties accordingly encamped together on a convenient spot, and prepared for the hunt. The Indians first posted a boy on a small hill near the camp, to keep a look-out for enemies. The "runners," then, as they are called, mounted on fleet horses, and armed with bows and arrows, moved slowly and cautiously toward the buffalo, keeping as much as possible out of sight, in hollows and ravines. When within a proper distance, a signal was given, and they all opened at once like a pack of hounds, with a full chorus of yells, dashing into the midst of the herds, and launching their arrows to the right and left. The plain seemed absolutely to shake under the tramp of the buffalo, as they scoured off. The cows in headlong panic, the bulls furious with rage, uttering deep roars, and occasionally turning with a desperate rush upon their pursuers. Nothing could surpass the spirit, grace, and dexterity, with which the Indians managed their horses; wheeling and coursing among the affrighted herd, and launching their arrows with unerring aim. In the midst of the apparent confusion, they selected their victims with perfect judgment, generally aiming at the fattest of the cows, the flesh of the bull being nearly worthless, at this season of the year. In a few minutes, each of the hunters had crippled three or four cows. A single shot was sufficient for the purpose, and the animal, once maimed, was left to be completely dispatched at the end of the chase. Frequently, a cow was killed on the spot by a single arrow. In one instance, Captain Bonneville saw an Indian shoot his arrow completely through the body of a cow, so that it struck in the ground beyond. The bulls, however, are not so easily killed as the cows, and always cost the hunter several arrows; sometimes making battle upon the horses, and chasing them furiously, though severely wounded, with the darts still sticking in their flesh.

The grand scamper of the hunt being over, the Indians proceeded to dispatch the animals that had been disabled; then cutting up the carcasses, they returned with loads of meat to the camp, where the choicest pieces were soon roasting before large fires, and a hunters' feast succeeded; at which Captain Bonneville and his men were qualified, by previous fasting, to perform their parts with great vigor.

Some men are said to wax valorous upon a full stomach, and such seemed to be the case with the Bannack braves, who, in proportion as they crammed themselves with buffalo meat, grew stout of heart, until, the supper at an end, they began to chant war songs, setting forth their mighty deeds, and the victories they had gained over the Blackfeet. Warming with the theme, and inflating themselves with their own eulogies, these magnanimous heroes of the trencher would start up, advance a short distance beyond the light of the fire, and apostrophize most vehemently their Blackfeet enemies, as though they had been within hearing. Ruffling, and swelling, and snorting, and slapping their breasts, and brandishing their arms, they would vociferate all their exploits; reminding the Blackfeet how they had drenched their towns in tears and blood; enumerate the blows they had inflicted, the warriors they had slain, the scalps they had brought off in triumph. Then, having said everything that could stir a man's spleen or pique his valor, they would dare their imaginary hearers, now that the Bannacks were few in number, to come and take their revenge--receiving no reply to this valorous bravado, they would conclude by all kinds of sneers and insults, deriding the Blackfeet for dastards and poltroons, that dared not accept their challenge. Such is the kind of swaggering and rhodomontade in which the "red men" are prone to indulge in

their vainglorious moments; for, with all their vaunted taciturnity, they are vehemently prone at times to become eloquent about their exploits, and to sound their own trumpet.

Having vented their valor in this fierce effervescence, the Bannack braves gradually calmed down, lowered their crests, smoothed their ruffled feathers, and betook themselves to sleep, without placing a single guard over their camp; so that, had the Blackfeet taken them at their word, but few of these braggart heroes might have survived for any further boasting.

On the following morning, Captain Bonneville purchased a supply of buffalo meat from his bragadocio friends; who, with all their vapping, were in fact a very forlorn horde, destitute of fire-arms, and of almost everything that constitutes riches in savage life. The bargain concluded, the Bannacks set off for their village, which was situated, they said, at the mouth of the Portneuf, and Captain Bonneville and his companions shaped their course toward Snake River.

Arrived on the banks of that river, he found it rapid and boisterous, but not too deep to be forded. In traversing it, however, one of the horses was swept suddenly from his footing, and his rider was flung from the saddle into the midst of the stream. Both horse and horseman were extricated without any damage, excepting that the latter was completely drenched, so that it was necessary to kindle a fire to dry him. While they were thus occupied, one of the party looking up, perceived an Indian scout cautiously reconnoitring them from the summit of a neighboring hill. The moment he found himself discovered, he disappeared behind the hill. From his furtive movements, Captain Bonneville suspected him to be a scout from the Blackfeet camp, and that he had gone to report what he had seen to his companions. It would not do to loiter in such a neighborhood, so the kindling of the fire was abandoned, the drenched horseman mounted in dripping condition, and the little band pushed forward directly into the plain, going at a smart pace, until they had gained a considerable distance from the place of supposed danger. Here encamping for the night, in the midst of abundance of sage, or wormwood, which afforded fodder for their horses, they kindled a huge fire for the benefit of their damp comrade, and then proceeded to prepare a sumptuous supper of buffalo humps and ribs, and other choice bits, which they had brought with them. After a hearty repast, relished with an appetite unknown to city epicures, they stretched themselves upon their couches of skins, and under the starry canopy of heaven, enjoyed the sound and sweet sleep of hardy and well-fed mountaineers.

They continued on their journey for several days, without any incident worthy of notice, and on the 19th of November, came upon traces of the party of which they were in search; such as burned patches of prairie, and deserted camping grounds. All these were carefully examined, to discover by their freshness or antiquity the probable time that the trappers had left them; at length, after much wandering and investigating, they came upon the regular trail of the hunting party, which led into the mountains, and following it up briskly, came about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th, upon the encampment of Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, in the bosom of a mountain valley.

It will be recollected that these free trappers, who were masters of themselves and their move-

ments, had refused to accompany Captain Bonneville back to Green River in the preceding month of July, preferring to trap about the upper waters of the Salmon River, where they expected to find plenty of beaver, and a less dangerous neighborhood. Their hunt had not been very successful. They had penetrated the great range of mountains among which some of the upper branches of Salmon River take their rise, but had become so entangled among immense and almost impassable barricades of fallen pines, and so impeded by tremendous precipices, that a great part of their season had been wasted among these mountains. At one time, they had made their way through them, and reached the Boisee River; but meeting with a band of Bannack Indians, from whom they apprehended hostilities, they had again taken shelter among the mountains, where they were found by Captain Bonneville. In the neighborhood of their encampment, the captain had the good fortune to meet with a family of those wanderers of the mountains, emphatically called "les dignes de pitie," or Poordevil Indians. These, however, appear to have forfeited the title, for they had with them a fine lot of skins of beaver, elk, deer, and mountain sheep. These, Captain Bonneville purchased from them at a fair valuation, and sent them off astonished at their own wealth, and no doubt objects of envy to all their pitiful tribe.

Being now reinforced by Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, Captain Bonneville put himself at the head of the united parties, and set out to rejoin those he had recently left at the Beer Spring, that they might all go into winter quarters on Snake River. On his route, he encountered many heavy falls of snow, which melted almost immediately, so as not to impede his march, and on the 4th of December, he found his other party, encamped at the very place where he had partaken in the buffalo hunt with the Bannacks.

That braggart horde was encamped but about three miles off, and were just then in high glee and festivity, and more swaggering than ever, celebrating a prodigious victory. It appeared that a party of their braves being out on a hunting excursion, discovered a band of Blackfeet moving, as they thought, to surprise their hunting camp. The Bannacks immediately posted themselves on each side of a dark ravine, through which the enemy must pass, and, just as they were entangled in the midst of it, attacked them with great fury. The Blackfeet, struck with sudden panic, threw off their buffalo robes and fled, leaving one of their warriors dead on the spot. The victors eagerly gathered up the spoils; but their greatest prize was the scalp of the Blackfoot brave. This they bore off in triumph to their village, where it had ever since been an object of the greatest exultation and rejoicing. It had been elevated upon a pole in the centre of the village, where the warriors had celebrated the scalp dance round it, with war feasts, war songs, and warlike harangues. It had then been given up to the women and boys; who had paraded it up and down the village with shouts and chants and antic dances; occasionally saluting it with all kinds of taunts, invectives, and revilings.

The Blackfeet, in this affair, do not appear to have acted up to the character which has rendered them objects of such terror. Indeed, their conduct in war, to the inexperienced observer, is full of inconsistencies; at one time they are headlong in courage, and heedless of danger; at another time cautious almost to cowardice. To understand these apparent incongruities, one must know their principles of warfare. A war party, however triumphant, if they lose a warrior in the fight, bring back a cause of mourning to their people, which casts a shade over the glory of their achievement.

Hence, the Indian is often less fierce and reckless in general battle, than he is in a private brawl; and the chiefs are checked in their boldest undertakings by the fear of sacrificing their warriors.

This peculiarity is not confined to the Blackfeet. Among the Osages, says Captain Bonneville, when a warrior falls in battle, his comrades, though they may have fought with consummate valor, and won a glorious victory, will leave their arms upon the field of battle, and returning home with dejected countenances, will halt without the encampment, and wait until the relatives of the slain come forth and invite them to mingle again with their people.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 29

Winter camp at the Portneuf--Fine springs--The Bannack Indians--Their honesty--Captain Bonneville prepares for an expedition--Christmas--The American Falls--Wild scenery--Fishing Falls--Snake Indians--Scenery on the Bruneau--View of volcanic country from a mountain--Powder River-- Shoshokoes, or Root Diggers--Their character, habits, habitations, dogs--Vanity at its last shift

IN ESTABLISHING his winter camp near the Portneuf, Captain Bonneville had drawn off to some little distance from his Bannack friends, to avoid all annoyance from their intimacy or intrusions. In so doing, however, he had been obliged to take up his quarters on the extreme edge of the flat land, where he was encompassed with ice and snow, and had nothing better for his horses to subsist on than wormwood. The Bannacks, on the contrary, were encamped among fine springs of water, where there was grass in abundance. Some of these springs gush out of the earth in sufficient quantity to turn a mill; and furnish beautiful streams, clear as crystal, and full of trout of a large size, which may be seen darting about the transparent water.

Winter now set in regularly. The snow had fallen frequently, and in large quantities, and covered the ground to a depth of a foot; and the continued coldness of the weather prevented any thaw.

By degrees, a distrust which at first subsisted between the Indians and the trappers, subsided, and gave way to mutual confidence and good will. A few presents convinced the chiefs that the white men were their friends; nor were the white men wanting in proofs of the honesty and good faith of their savage neighbors. Occasionally, the deep snow and the want of fodder obliged them to turn their weakest horses out to roam in quest of sustenance. If they at any time strayed to the camp of the Bannacks, they were immediately brought back. It must be confessed, however, that if the stray horse happened, by any chance, to be in vigorous plight and good condition, though he was equally sure to be returned by the honest Bannacks, yet it was always after the lapse of several days, and in a very gaunt and jaded state; and always with the remark that they had found him a long way off. The uncharitable were apt to surmise that he had, in the interim, been well used up in a buffalo hunt; but those accustomed to Indian morality in the matter of horseflesh, considered it a singular evidence of honesty that he should be brought back at all.

Being convinced, therefore, from these, and other circumstances, that his people were encamped in the neighborhood of a tribe as honest as they were valiant, and satisfied that they would pass

their winter unmolested, Captain Bonneville prepared for a reconnoitring expedition of great extent and peril. This was, to penetrate to the Hudson's Bay establishments on the banks of the Columbia, and to make himself acquainted with the country and the Indian tribes; it being one part of his scheme to establish a trading post somewhere on the lower part of the river, so as to participate in the trade lost to the United States by the capture of Astoria. This expedition would, of course, take him through the Snake River country, and across the Blue Mountains, the scenes of so much hardship and disaster to Hunt and Crooks, and their Astorian bands, who first explored it, and he would have to pass through it in the same frightful season, the depth of winter.

The idea of risk and hardship, however, only served to stimulate the adventurous spirit of the captain. He chose three companions for his journey, put up a small stock of necessaries in the most portable form, and selected five horses and mules for themselves and their baggage. He proposed to rejoin his band in the early part of March, at the winter encampment near the Portneuf. All these arrangements being completed, he mounted his horse on Christmas morning, and set off with his three comrades. They halted a little beyond the Bannack camp, and made their Christmas dinner, which, if not a very merry, was a very hearty one, after which they resumed their journey.

They were obliged to travel slowly, to spare their horses; for the snow had increased in depth to eighteen inches; and though somewhat packed and frozen, was not sufficiently so to yield firm footing. Their route lay to the west, down along the left side of Snake River; and they were several days in reaching the first, or American Falls. The banks of the river, for a considerable distance, both above and below the falls, have a volcanic character: masses of basaltic rock are piled one upon another; the water makes its way through their broken chasms, boiling through narrow channels, or pitching in beautiful cascades over ridges of basaltic columns.

Beyond these falls, they came to a picturesque, but inconsiderable stream, called the Cassie. It runs through a level valley, about four miles wide, where the soil is good; but the prevalent coldness and dryness of the climate is unfavorable to vegetation. Near to this stream there is a small mountain of mica slate, including garnets. Granite, in small blocks, is likewise seen in this neighborhood, and white sandstone. From this river, the travellers had a prospect of the snowy heights of the Salmon River Mountains to the north; the nearest, at least fifty miles distant.

In pursuing his course westward, Captain Bonneville generally kept several miles from Snake River, crossing the heads of its tributary streams; though he often found the open country so encumbered by volcanic rocks, as to render travelling extremely difficult. Whenever he approached Snake River, he found it running through a broad chasm, with steep, perpendicular sides of basaltic rock. After several days' travel across a level plain, he came to a part of the river which filled him with astonishment and admiration. As far as the eye could reach, the river was walled in by perpendicular cliffs two hundred and fifty feet high, beetling like dark and gloomy battlements, while blocks and fragments lay in masses at their feet, in the midst of the boiling and whirling current. Just above, the whole stream pitched in one cascade above forty feet in height, with a thundering sound, casting up a volume of spray that hung in the air like a silver mist. These are called by some the Fishing Falls, as the salmon are taken here in immense quantities. They cannot

get by these falls.

After encamping at this place all night, Captain Bonneville, at sunrise, descended with his party through a narrow ravine, or rather crevice, in the vast wall of basaltic rock which bordered the river; this being the only mode, for many miles, of getting to the margin of the stream.

The snow lay in a thin crust along the banks of the river, so that their travelling was much more easy than it had been hitherto. There were foot tracks, also, made by the natives, which greatly facilitated their progress. Occasionally, they met the inhabitants of this wild region; a timid race, and but scantily provided with the necessaries of life. Their dress consisted of a mantle about four feet square, formed of strips of rabbit skins sewed together; this they hung over their shoulders, in the ordinary Indian mode of wearing the blanket. Their weapons were bows and arrows; the latter tipped with obsidian, which abounds in the neighborhood. Their huts were shaped like haystacks, and constructed of branches of willow covered with long grass, so as to be warm and comfortable. Occasionally, they were surrounded by small inclosures of wormwood, about three feet high, which gave them a cottage-like appearance. Three or four of these tenements were occasionally grouped together in some wild and striking situation, and had a picturesque effect. Sometimes they were in sufficient number to form a small hamlet. From these people, Captain Bonneville's party frequently purchased salmon, dried in an admirable manner, as were likewise the roes. This seemed to be their prime article of food; but they were extremely anxious to get buffalo meat in exchange.

The high walls and rocks, within which the travellers had been so long inclosed, now occasionally presented openings, through which they were enabled to ascend to the plain, and to cut off considerable bends of the river.

Throughout the whole extent of this vast and singular chasm, the scenery of the river is said to be of the most wild and romantic character. The rocks present every variety of masses and grouping. Numerous small streams come rushing and boiling through narrow clefts and ravines: one of a considerable size issued from the face of a precipice, within twenty-five feet of its summit; and after running in nearly a horizontal line for about one hundred feet, fell, by numerous small cascades, to the rocky bank of the river.

In its career through this vast and singular defile, Snake River is upward of three hundred yards wide, and as clear as spring water. Sometimes it steals along with a tranquil and noiseless course; at other times, for miles and miles, it dashes on in a thousand rapids, wild and beautiful to the eye, and lulling the ear with the soft tumult of plashing waters.

Many of the tributary streams of Snake River, rival it in the wildness and picturesqueness of their scenery. That called the Bruneau; is particularly cited. It runs through a tremendous chasm, rather than a valley, extending upwards of a hundred and fifty miles. You come upon it on a sudden, in traversing a level plain. It seems as if you could throw a stone across from cliff to cliff; yet, the valley is near two thousand feet deep: so that the river looks like an inconsiderable stream. Basaltic

rocks rise perpendicularly, so that it is impossible to get from the plain to the water, or from the river margin to the plain. The current is bright and limpid. Hot springs are found on the borders of this river. One bursts out of the cliffs forty feet above the river, in a stream sufficient to turn a mill, and sends up a cloud of vapor.

We find a characteristic picture of this volcanic region of mountains and streams, furnished by the journal of Mr. Wyeth, which lies before us; who ascended a peak in the neighborhood we are describing. From this summit, the country, he says, appears an indescribable chaos; the tops of the hills exhibit the same strata as far as the eye can reach; and appear to have once formed the level of the country; and the valleys to be formed by the sinking of the earth, rather than the rising of the hills. Through the deep cracks and chasms thus formed, the rivers and brooks make their way, which renders it difficult to follow them. All these basaltic channels are called cut rocks by the trappers. Many of the mountain streams disappear in the plains; either absorbed by their thirsty soil, and by the porous surface of the lava, or swallowed up in gulfs and chasms.

On the 12th of January (1834), Captain Bonneville reached Powder River; much the largest stream that he had seen since leaving the Portneuf. He struck it about three miles above its entrance into Snake River. Here he found himself above the lower narrows and defiles of the latter river, and in an open and level country. The natives now made their appearance in considerable numbers, and evinced the most insatiable curiosity respecting the white men; sitting in groups for hours together, exposed to the bleakest winds, merely for the pleasure of gazing upon the strangers, and watching every movement. These are of that branch of the great Snake tribe called Shoshokoes, or Root Diggers, from their subsisting, in a great measure, on the roots of the earth; though they likewise take fish in great quantities, and hunt, in a small way. They are, in general, very poor; destitute of most of the comforts of life, and extremely indolent: but a mild, inoffensive race. They differ, in many respects, from the other branch of the Snake tribe, the Shoshonies; who possess horses, are more roving and adventurous, and hunt the buffalo.

On the following day, as Captain Bonneville approached the mouth of Powder River, he discovered at least a hundred families of these Diggers, as they are familiarly called, assembled in one place. The women and children kept at a distance, perched among the rocks and cliffs; their eager curiosity being somewhat dashed with fear. From their elevated posts, they scrutinized the strangers with the most intense earnestness; regarding them with almost as much awe as if they had been beings of a supernatural order.

The men, however, were by no means so shy and reserved; but importuned Captain Bonneville and his companions excessively by their curiosity. Nothing escaped their notice; and any thing they could lay their hands on underwent the most minute examination. To get rid of such inquisitive neighbors, the travellers kept on for a considerable distance, before they encamped for the night.

The country, hereabout, was generally level and sandy; producing very little grass, but a considerable quantity of sage or wormwood. The plains were diversified by isolated hills, all cut off, as

it were, about the same height, so as to have tabular summits. In this they resembled the isolated hills of the great prairies, east of the Rocky Mountains; especially those found on the plains of the Arkansas.

The high precipices which had hitherto walled in the channel of Snake River had now disappeared; and the banks were of the ordinary height. It should be observed, that the great valleys or plains, through which the Snake River wound its course, were generally of great breadth, extending on each side from thirty to forty miles; where the view was bounded by unbroken ridges of mountains.

The travellers found but little snow in the neighborhood of Powder River, though the weather continued intensely cold. They learned a lesson, however, from their forlorn friends, the Root Diggers, which they subsequently found of great service in their wintry wanderings. They frequently observed them to be furnished with long ropes, twisted from the bark of the wormwood. This they used as a slow match, carrying it always lighted. Whenever they wished to warm themselves, they would gather together a little dry wormwood, apply the match, and in an instant produce a cheering blaze.

Captain Bonneville gives a cheerless account of a village of these Diggers, which he saw in crossing the plain below Powder River. "They live," says he, "without any further protection from the inclemency of the season, than a sort of break-weather, about three feet high, composed of sage (or wormwood), and erected around them in the shape of a half moon." Whenever he met with them, however, they had always a large suite of half-starved dogs: for these animals, in savage as well as in civilized life, seem to be the concomitants of beggary.

These dogs, it must be allowed, were of more use than the beggary curs of cities. The Indian children used them in hunting the small game of the neighborhood, such as rabbits and prairie dogs; in which mongrel kind of chase they acquitted themselves with some credit.

Sometimes the Diggers aspire to nobler game, and succeed in entrapping the antelope, the fleetest animal of the prairies. The process by which this is effected is somewhat singular. When the snow has disappeared, says Captain Bonneville, and the ground become soft, the women go into the thickest fields of wormwood, and pulling it up in great quantities, construct with it a hedge, about three feet high, inclosing about a hundred acres. A single opening is left for the admission of the game. This done, the women conceal themselves behind the wormwood, and wait patiently for the coming of the antelopes; which sometimes enter this spacious trap in considerable numbers. As soon as they are in, the women give the signal, and the men hasten to play their part. But one of them enters the pen at a time; and, after chasing the terrified animals round the inclosure, is relieved by one of his companions. In this way the hunters take their turns, relieving each other, and keeping up a continued pursuit by relays, without fatigue to themselves. The poor antelopes, in the end, are so wearied down, that the whole party of men enter and dispatch them with clubs; not one escaping that has entered the inclosure. The most curious circumstance in this chase is, that an animal so fleet and agile as the antelope, and straining for its life, should range round and

---

round this fated inclosure, without attempting to overleap the low barrier which surrounds it. Such, however, is said to be the fact; and such their only mode of hunting the antelope.

Notwithstanding the absence of all comfort and convenience in their habitations, and the general squalidness of their appearance, the Shoshokoes do not appear to be destitute of ingenuity. They manufacture good ropes, and even a tolerably fine thread, from a sort of weed found in their neighborhood; and construct bowls and jugs out of a kind of basket-work formed from small strips of wood plaited: these, by the aid of a little wax, they render perfectly water tight. Beside the roots on which they mainly depend for subsistence, they collect great quantities of seed, of various kinds, beaten with one hand out of the tops of the plants into wooden bowls held for that purpose. The seed thus collected is winnowed and parched, and ground between two stones into a kind of meal or flour; which, when mixed with water, forms a very palatable paste or gruel.

Some of these people, more provident and industrious than the rest, lay up a stock of dried salmon, and other fish, for winter: with these, they were ready to traffic with the travellers for any objects of utility in Indian life; giving a large quantity in exchange for an awl, a knife, or a fish-hook. Others were in the most abject state of want and starvation; and would even gather up the fish-bones which the travellers threw away after a repast, warm them over again at the fire, and pick them with the greatest avidity.

The farther Captain Bonneville advanced into the country of these Root Diggers, the more evidence he perceived of their rude and forlorn condition. "They were destitute," says he, "of the necessary covering to protect them from the weather; and seemed to be in the most unsophisticated ignorance of any other propriety or advantage in the use of clothing. One old dame had absolutely nothing on her person but a thread round her neck, from which was pendant a solitary bead."

What stage of human destitution, however, is too destitute for vanity! Though these naked and forlorn-looking beings had neither toilet to arrange, nor beauty to contemplate, their greatest passion was for a mirror. It was a "great medicine," in their eyes. The sight of one was sufficient, at any time, to throw them into a paroxysm of eagerness and delight; and they were ready to give anything they had for the smallest fragment in which they might behold their squalid features. With this simple instance of vanity, in its primitive but vigorous state, we shall close our remarks on the Root Diggers.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 30

Temperature of the climate--Root Diggers on horseback--An Indian guide--Mountain prospects--The Grand Rond--Difficulties on Snake River--A scramble over the Blue Mountains--Sufferings from hunger--Prospect of the Immahah Valley-- The exhausted traveller

THE TEMPERATURE of the regions west of the Rocky Mountains is much milder than in the same latitudes on the Atlantic side; the upper plains, however, which lie at a distance from the sea-coast, are subject in winter to considerable vicissitude; being traversed by lofty "sierras," crowned with perpetual snow, which often produce flaws and streaks of intense cold This was

experienced by Captain Bonneville and his companions in their progress westward. At the time when they left the Bannacks Snake River was frozen hard: as they proceeded, the ice became broken and floating; it gradually disappeared, and the weather became warm and pleasant, as they approached a tributary stream called the Little Wyer; and the soil, which was generally of a watery clay, with occasional intervals of sand, was soft to the tread of the horses. After a time, however, the mountains approached and flanked the river; the snow lay deep in the valleys, and the current was once more icebound.

Here they were visited by a party of Root Diggers, who were apparently rising in the world, for they had "horse to ride and weapon to wear," and were altogether better clad and equipped than any of the tribe that Captain Bonneville had met with. They were just from the plain of Boisee River, where they had left a number of their tribe, all as well provided as themselves; having guns, horses, and comfortable clothing. All these they obtained from the Lower Nez Perces, with whom they were in habits [sic] of frequent traffic. They appeared to have imbibed from that tribe their noncombative principles, being mild and inoffensive in their manners. Like them, also, they had something of religious feelings; for Captain Bonneville observed that, before eating, they washed their hands, and made a short prayer; which he understood was their invariable custom. From these Indians, he obtained a considerable supply of fish, and an excellent and well-conditioned horse, to replace one which had become too weak for the journey.

The travellers now moved forward with renovated spirits; the snow, it is true, lay deeper and deeper as they advanced, but they trudged on merrily, considering themselves well provided for the journey, which could not be of much longer duration.

They had intended to proceed up the banks of Gun Creek, a stream which flows into Snake River from the west; but were assured by the natives that the route in that direction was impracticable. The latter advised them to keep along Snake River, where they would not be impeded by the snow. Taking one of the Diggers for a guide, they set off along the river, and to their joy soon found the country free from snow, as had been predicted, so that their horses once more had the benefit of tolerable pasturage. Their Digger proved an excellent guide, trudging cheerily in the advance. He made an unsuccessful shot or two at a deer and a beaver; but at night found a rabbit hole, whence he extracted the occupant, upon which, with the addition of a fish given him by the travellers, he made a hearty supper, and retired to rest, filled with good cheer and good humor.

The next day the travellers came to where the hills closed upon the river, leaving here and there intervals of undulating meadow land. The river was sheeted with ice, broken into hills at long intervals. The Digger kept on ahead of the party, crossing and recrossing the river in pursuit of game, until, unluckily, encountering a brother Digger, he stole off with him, without the ceremony of leave-taking.

Being now left to themselves, they proceeded until they came to some Indian huts, the inhabitants of which spoke a language totally different from any they had yet heard. One, however, understood the Nez Perce language, and through him they made inquiries as to their route. These Indians were extremely kind and honest, and furnished them with a small quantity of meat; but none of them could be induced to act as guides.

Immediately in the route of the travellers lay a high mountain, which they ascended with some difficulty. The prospect from the summit was grand but disheartening. Directly before them towered the loftiest peaks of Immahah, rising far higher than the elevated ground on which they

stood: on the other hand, they were enabled to scan the course of the river, dashing along through deep chasms, between rocks and precipices, until lost in a distant wilderness of mountains, which closed the savage landscape.

They remained for a long time contemplating, with perplexed and anxious eye, this wild congregation of mountain barriers, and seeking to discover some practicable passage. The approach of evening obliged them to give up the task, and to seek some camping ground for the night. Moving briskly forward, and plunging and tossing through a succession of deep snow-drifts, they at length reached a valley known among trappers as the "Grand Rond," which they found entirely free from snow.

This is a beautiful and very fertile valley, about twenty miles long and five or six broad; a bright cold stream called the Fourche de Glace, or Ice River, runs through it. Its sheltered situation, embosomed in mountains, renders it good pasturing ground in the winter time; when the elk come down to it in great numbers, driven out of the mountains by the snow. The Indians then resort to it to hunt. They likewise come to it in the summer time to dig the camash root, of which it produces immense quantities. When this plant is in blossom, the whole valley is tinted by its blue flowers, and looks like the ocean when overcast by a cloud.

After passing a night in this valley, the travellers in the morning scaled the neighboring hills, to look out for a more eligible route than that upon which they had unluckily fallen; and, after much reconnoitring, determined to make their way once more to the river, and to travel upon the ice when the banks should prove impassable.

On the second day after this determination, they were again upon Snake River, but, contrary to their expectations, it was nearly free from ice. A narrow riband ran along the shore, and sometimes there was a kind of bridge across the stream, formed of old ice and snow. For a short time, they jogged along the bank, with tolerable facility, but at length came to where the river forced its way into the heart of the mountains, winding between tremendous walls of basaltic rock, that rose perpendicularly from the water's edge, frowning in bleak and gloomy grandeur. Here difficulties of all kinds beset their path. The snow was from two to three feet deep, but soft and yielding, so that the horses had no foothold, but kept plunging forward, straining themselves by perpetual efforts. Sometimes the crags and promontories forced them upon the narrow riband of ice that bordered the shore; sometimes they had to scramble over vast masses of rock which had tumbled from the impending precipices; sometimes they had to cross the stream upon the hazardous bridges of ice and snow, sinking to the knee at every step; sometimes they had to scale slippery acclivities, and to pass along narrow cornices, glazed with ice and sleet, a shouldering wall of rock on one side, a yawning precipice on the other, where a single false step would have been fatal. In a lower and less dangerous pass, two of their horses actually fell into the river; one was saved with much difficulty, but the boldness of the shore prevented their rescuing the other, and he was swept away by the rapid current.

In this way they struggled forward, manfully braving difficulties and dangers, until they came to where the bed of the river was narrowed to a mere chasm, with perpendicular walls of rock that defied all further progress. Turning their faces now to the mountain, they endeavored to cross directly over it; but, after clambering nearly to the summit, found their path closed by insurmountable barriers.

Nothing now remained but to retrace their steps. To descend a cragged mountain, however, was

more difficult and dangerous than to ascend it. They had to lower themselves cautiously and slowly, from steep to steep; and, while they managed with difficulty to maintain their own footing, to aid their horses by holding on firmly to the rope halters, as the poor animals stumbled among slippery rocks, or slid down icy declivities. Thus, after a day of intense cold, and severe and incessant toil, amidst the wildest of scenery, they managed, about nightfall, to reach the camping ground, from which they had started in the morning, and for the first time in the course of their rugged and perilous expedition, felt their hearts quailing under their multiplied hardships.

A hearty supper, a tranquillizing pipe, and a sound night's sleep, put them all in better mood, and in the morning they held a consultation as to their future movements. About four miles behind, they had remarked a small ridge of mountains approaching closely to the river. It was determined to scale this ridge, and seek a passage into the valley which must lie beyond. Should they fail in this, but one alternative remained. To kill their horses, dry the flesh for provisions, make boats of the hides, and, in these, commit themselves to the stream--a measure hazardous in the extreme. A short march brought them to the foot of the mountain, but its steep and cragged sides almost discouraged hope. The only chance of scaling it was by broken masses of rock, piled one upon another, which formed a succession of crags, reaching nearly to the summit. Up these they wrought their way with indescribable difficulty and peril, in a zigzag course, climbing from rock to rock, and helping their horses up after them; which scrambled among the crags like mountain goats; now and then dislodging some huge stone, which, the moment they had left it, would roll down the mountain, crashing and rebounding with terrific din. It was some time after dark before they reached a kind of platform on the summit of the mountain, where they could venture to encamp. The winds, which swept this naked height, had whirled all the snow into the valley beneath, so that the horses found tolerable winter pasturage on the dry grass which remained exposed. The travellers, though hungry in the extreme, were fain to make a very frugal supper; for they saw their journey was likely to be prolonged much beyond the anticipated term.

In fact, on the following day they discerned that, although already at a great elevation, they were only as yet upon the shoulder of the mountain. It proved to be a great sierra, or ridge, of immense height, running parallel to the course of the river, swelling by degrees to lofty peaks, but the outline gashed by deep and precipitous ravines. This, in fact, was a part of the chain of Blue Mountains, in which the first adventurers to Astoria experienced such hardships.

We will not pretend to accompany the travellers step by step in this tremendous mountain scramble, into which they had unconsciously betrayed themselves. Day after day did their toil continue; peak after peak had they to traverse, struggling with difficulties and hardships known only to the mountain trapper. As their course lay north, they had to ascend the southern faces of the heights, where the sun had melted the snow, so as to render the ascent wet and slippery, and to keep both men and horses continually on the strain; while on the northern sides, the snow lay in such heavy masses, that it was necessary to beat a track down which the horses might be led. Every now and then, also, their way was impeded by tall and numerous pines, some of which had fallen, and lay in every direction.

In the midst of these toils and hardships, their provisions gave out. For three days they were without food, and so reduced that they could scarcely drag themselves along. At length one of the mules, being about to give out from fatigue and famine, they hastened to dispatch him. Husbanding this miserable supply, they dried the flesh, and for three days subsisted upon the nutriment

extracted from the bones. As to the meat, it was packed and preserved as long as they could do without it, not knowing how long they might remain bewildered in these desolate regions.

One of the men was now dispatched ahead, to reconnoitre the country, and to discover, if possible, some more practicable route. In the meantime, the rest of the party moved on slowly. After a lapse of three days, the scout rejoined them. He informed them that Snake River ran immediately below the sierra or mountainous ridge, upon which they were travelling; that it was free from precipices, and was at no great distance from them in a direct line; but that it would be impossible for them to reach it without making a weary circuit. Their only course would be to cross the mountain ridge to the left.

Up this mountain, therefore, the weary travellers directed their steps; and the ascent, in their present weak and exhausted state, was one of the severest parts of this most painful journey. For two days were they toiling slowly from cliff to cliff, beating at every step a path through the snow for their faltering horses. At length they reached the summit, where the snow was blown off; but in descending on the opposite side, they were often plunging through deep drifts, piled in the hollows and ravines.

Their provisions were now exhausted, and they and their horses almost ready to give out with fatigue and hunger; when one afternoon, just as the sun was sinking behind a blue line of distant mountain, they came to the brow of a height from which they beheld the smooth valley of the Immahah stretched out in smiling verdure below them.

The sight inspired almost a frenzy of delight. Roused to new ardor, they forgot, for a time, their fatigues, and hurried down the mountain, dragging their jaded horses after them, and sometimes compelling them to slide a distance of thirty or forty feet at a time. At length they reached the banks of the Immahah. The young grass was just beginning to sprout, and the whole valley wore an aspect of softness, verdure, and repose, heightened by the contrast of the frightful region from which they had just descended. To add to their joy, they observed Indian trails along the margin of the stream, and other signs, which gave them reason to believe that there was an encampment of the Lower Nez Perces in the neighborhood, as it was within the accustomed range of that pacific and hospitable tribe.

The prospect of a supply of food stimulated them to new exertion, and they continued on as fast as the enfeebled state of themselves and their steeds would permit. At length, one of the men, more exhausted than the rest, threw himself upon the grass, and declared he could go no further. It was in vain to attempt to rouse him; his spirit had given out, and his replies only showed the dogged apathy of despair. His companions, therefore, encamped on the spot, kindled a blazing fire, and searched about for roots with which to strength~n and revive him. They all then made a starveling repast; but gathering round the fire, talked over past dangers and troubles, soothed themselves with the persuasion that all were now at an end, and went to sleep with the comforting hope that the morrow would bring them into plentiful quarters.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 31

Progress in the valley--An Indian cavalier--The captain falls into a lethargy--A Nez Perce patriarch-- Hospitable treatment--The bald head--Bargaining-- Value of an old plaid cloak--The family horse-- The cost of an Indian present

---

A TRANQUIL NIGHT'S REST had sufficiently restored the broken down traveller to enable him to resume his wayfaring, and all hands set forward on the Indian trail. With all their eagerness to arrive within reach of succor, such was their feeble and emaciated condition, that they advanced but slowly. Nor is it a matter of surprise that they should almost have lost heart, as well as strength. It was now (the 16th of February) fifty-three days that they had been travelling in the midst of winter, exposed to all kinds of privations and hardships: and for the last twenty days, they had been entangled in the wild and desolate labyrinths of the snowy mountains; climbing and descending icy precipices, and nearly starved with cold and hunger.

All the morning they continued following the Indian trail, without seeing a human being, and were beginning to be discouraged, when, about noon, they discovered a horseman at a distance. He was coming directly toward them; but on discovering them, suddenly reined up his steed, came to a halt, and, after reconnoitring them for a time with great earnestness, seemed about to make a cautious retreat. They eagerly made signs of peace, and endeavored, with the utmost anxiety, to induce him to approach. He remained for some time in doubt; but at length, having satisfied himself that they were not enemies, came galloping up to them. He was a fine, haughty-looking savage, fancifully decorated, and mounted on a high-mettled steed, with gaudy trappings and equipments. It was evident that he was a warrior of some consequence among his tribe. His whole deportment had something in it of barbaric dignity; he felt, perhaps, his temporary superiority in personal array, and in the spirit of his steed, to the poor, ragged, travel-worn trappers and their half-starved horses. Approaching them with an air of protection, he gave them his hand, and, in the Nez Perce language, invited them to his camp, which was only a few miles distant; where he had plenty to eat, and plenty of horses, and would cheerfully share his good things with them. His hospitable invitation was joyfully accepted: he lingered but a moment, to give directions by which they might find his camp, and then, wheeling round, and giving the reins to his mettlesome steed, was soon out of sight. The travellers followed, with gladdened hearts, but at a snail's pace; for their poor horses could scarcely drag one leg after the other. Captain Bonneville, however, experienced a sudden and singular change of feeling. Hitherto, the necessity of conducting his party, and of providing against every emergency, had kept his mind upon the stretch, and his whole system braced and excited. In no one instance had he flagged in spirit, or felt disposed to succumb. Now, however, that all danger was over, and the march of a few miles would bring them to repose and abundance, his energies suddenly deserted him; and every faculty, mental and physical, was totally relaxed. He had not proceeded two miles from the point where he had had the interview with the Nez Perce chief, when he threw himself upon the earth, without the power or will to move a muscle, or exert a thought, and sank almost instantly into a profound and dreamless sleep. His companions again came to a halt, and encamped beside him, and there they passed the night. The next morning, Captain Bonneville awakened from his long and heavy sleep, much refreshed; and they all resumed their creeping progress. They had not long been on the march, when eight or ten of the Nez Perce tribe came galloping to meet them, leading fresh horses to bear them to their camp. Thus gallantly mounted, they felt new life infused into their languid frames, and dashing forward, were soon at the lodges of the Nez Percés. Here they found about twelve families living together, under the patriarchal sway of an ancient and venerable chief. He received them with the hospitality of the golden age, and with something of the same kind of fare; for, while he opened his arms to make them welcome, the only repast he set before them consisted of roots.

---

They could have wished for something more hearty and substantial; but, for want of better, made a voracious meal on these humble viands. The repast being over, the best pipe was lighted and sent round: and this was a most welcome luxury, having lost their smoking apparatus twelve days before, among the mountains.

While they were thus enjoying themselves, their poor horses were led to the best pastures in the neighborhood, where they were turned loose to revel on the fresh sprouting grass; so that they had better fare than their masters.

Captain Bonneville soon felt himself quite at home among these quiet, inoffensive people. His long residence among their cousins, the Upper Nez Perces, had made him conversant with their language, modes of expression, and all their habitudes. He soon found, too, that he was well known among them, by report, at least, from the constant interchange of visits and messages between the two branches of the tribe. They at first addressed him by his name; giving him his title of captain, with a French accent: but they soon gave him a title of their own; which, as usual with Indian titles, had a peculiar signification. In the case of the captain, it had somewhat of a whimsical origin.

As he sat chatting and smoking in the midst of them, he would occasionally take off his cap. Whenever he did so, there was a sensation in the surrounding circle. The Indians would half rise from their recumbent posture, and gaze upon his uncovered head, with their usual exclamation of astonishment. The worthy captain was completely bald; a phenomenon very surprising in their eyes. They were at a loss to know whether he had been scalped in battle, or enjoyed a natural immunity from that belligerent infliction. In a little while, he became known among them by an Indian name, signifying "the bald chief." "A sobriquet," observes the captain, "for which I can find no parallel in history since the days of 'Charles the Bald.'"

Although the travellers had banqueted on roots, and been regaled with tobacco smoke, yet their stomachs craved more generous fare. In approaching the lodges of the Nez Perces, they had indulged in fond anticipations of venison and dried salmon; and dreams of the kind still haunted their imaginations, and could not be conjured down. The keen appetites of mountain trappers, quickened by a fortnight's fasting, at length got the better of all scruples of pride, and they fairly begged some fish or flesh from the hospitable savages. The latter, however, were slow to break in upon their winter store, which was very limited; but were ready to furnish roots in abundance, which they pronounced excellent food. At length, Captain Bonneville thought of a means of attaining the much-coveted gratification.

He had about him, he says, a trusty plaid; an old and valued travelling companion and comforter; upon which the rains had descended, and the snows and winds beaten, without further effect than somewhat to tarnish its primitive lustre. This coat of many colors had excited the admiration, and inflamed the covetousness of both warriors and squaws, to an extravagant degree. An idea now occurred to Captain Bonneville, to convert this rainbow garment into the savory viands so much desired. There was a momentary struggle in his mind, between old associations and projected indulgence; and his decision in favor of the latter was made, he says, with a greater promptness, perhaps, than true taste and sentiment might have required. In a few moments, his plaid cloak was cut into numerous strips. "Of these," continues he, "with the newly developed talent of a man-miliner, I speedily constructed turbans a la Turque, and fanciful head-gears of divers conformations. These, judiciously distributed among such of the womenkind as seemed of most consequence

---

and interest in the eyes of the patres conscripti, brought us, in a little while, abundance of dried salmon and deers' hearts; on which we made a sumptuous supper. Another, and a more satisfactory smoke, succeeded this repast, and sweet slumbers answering the peaceful invocation of our pipes, wrapped us in that delicious rest, which is only won by toil and travail." As to Captain Bonneville, he slept in the lodge of the venerable patriarch, who had evidently conceived a most disinterested affection for him; as was shown on the following morning. The travellers, invigorated by a good supper, and "fresh from the bath of repose," were about to resume their journey, when this affectionate old chief took the captain aside, to let him know how much he loved him. As a proof of his regard, he had determined to give him a fine horse, which would go further than words, and put his good will beyond all question. So saying, he made a signal, and forthwith a beautiful young horse, of a brown color, was led, prancing and snorting, to the place. Captain Bonneville was suitably affected by this mark of friendship; but his experience in what is proverbially called "Indian giving," made him aware that a parting pledge was necessary on his own part, to prove that his friendship was reciprocated. He accordingly placed a handsome rifle in the hands of the venerable chief, whose benevolent heart was evidently touched and gratified by this outward and visible sign of amity.

Having now, as he thought, balanced this little account of friendship, the captain was about to shift his saddle to this noble gift-horse when the affectionate patriarch plucked him by the sleeve, and introduced to him a whimpering, whining, leathern-skinned old squaw, that might have passed for an Egyptian mummy, without drying. "This," said he, "is my wife; she is a good wife--I love her very much.--She loves the horse--she loves him a great deal--she will cry very much at losing him.--I do not know how I shall comfort her--and that makes my heart very sore."

What could the worthy captain do, to console the tender-hearted old squaw, and, peradventure, to save the venerable patriarch from a curtain lecture? He bethought himself of a pair of ear-bobs: it was true, the patriarch's better-half was of an age and appearance that seemed to put personal vanity out of the question, but when is personal vanity extinct? The moment he produced the glittering earbobs, the whimpering and whining of the sempiternal beldame was at an end. She eagerly placed the precious baubles in her ears, and, though as ugly as the Witch of Endor, went off with a sideling gait and coquettish air, as though she had been a perfect Semiramis.

The captain had now saddled his newly acquired steed, and his foot was in the stirrup, when the affectionate patriarch again stepped forward, and presented to him a young Pierced-nose, who had a peculiarly sulky look. "This," said the venerable chief, "is my son: he is very good; a great horseman--he always took care of this very fine horse--he brought him up from a colt, and made him what he is.--He is very fond of this fine horse--he loves him like a brother-- his heart will be very heavy when this fine horse leaves the camp."

What could the captain do, to reward the youthful hope of this venerable pair, and comfort him for the loss of his foster-brother, the horse? He bethought him of a hatchet, which might be spared from his slender stores. No sooner did he place the implement into the hands of the young hopeful, than his countenance brightened up, and he went off rejoicing in his hatchet, to the full as much as did his respectable mother in her ear-bobs.

The captain was now in the saddle, and about to start, when the affectionate old patriarch stepped forward, for the third time, and, while he laid one hand gently on the mane of the horse, held up the rifle in the other. "This rifle," said he, "shall be my great medicine. I will hug it to my heart--I

will always love it, for the sake of my good friend, the bald-headed chief.--But a rifle, by itself, is dumb--I cannot make it speak. If I had a little powder and ball, I would take it out with me, and would now and then shoot a deer; and when I brought the meat home to my hungry family, I would say--This was killed by the rifle of my friend, the bald-headed chief, to whom I gave that very fine horse."

There was no resisting this appeal; the captain, forthwith, furnished the coveted supply of powder and ball; but at the same time, put spurs to his very fine gift-horse, and the first trial of his speed was to get out of all further manifestation of friendship, on the part of the affectionate old patriarch and his insinuating family.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 32

Nez Perce camp--A chief with a hard name--The Big Hearts of the East--Hospitable treatment--The Indian guides--Mysterious councils--The loquacious chief--Indian tomb--Grand Indian reception--An Indian feast--Town-criers--Honesty of the Nez Percés--The captain's attempt at healing.

FOLLOWING THE COURSE of the Immahah, Captain Bonneville and his three companions soon reached the vicinity of Snake River. Their route now lay over a succession of steep and isolated hills, with profound valleys. On the second day, after taking leave of the affectionate old patriarch, as they were descending into one of those deep and abrupt intervals, they descried a smoke, and shortly afterward came in sight of a small encampment of Nez Percés.

The Indians, when they ascertained that it was a party of white men approaching, greeted them with a salute of firearms, and invited them to encamp. This band was likewise under the sway of a venerable chief named Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut; a name which we shall be careful not to inflict often than is necessary upon the reader. This ancient and hard-named chieftain welcomed Captain Bonneville to his camp with the same hospitality and loving kindness that he had experienced from his predecessor. He told the captain he had often heard of the Americans and their generous deeds, and that his buffalo brethren (the Upper Nez Percés) had always spoken of them as the Big-hearted whites of the East, the very good friends of the Nez Percés.

Captain Bonneville felt somewhat uneasy under the responsibility of this magnanimous but costly appellation; and began to fear he might be involved in a second interchange of pledges of friendship. He hastened, therefore, to let the old chief know his poverty-stricken state, and how little there was to be expected from him.

He informed him that he and his comrades had long resided among the Upper Nez Percés, and loved them so much, that they had thrown their arms around them, and now held them close to their hearts. That he had received such good accounts from the Upper Nez Percés of their cousins, the Lower Nez Percés, that he had become desirous of knowing them as friends and brothers.

That he and his companions had accordingly loaded a mule with presents and set off for the country of the Lower Nez Percés; but, unfortunately, had been entrapped for many days among the snowy mountains; and that the mule with all the presents had fallen into Snake River, and been swept away by the rapid current. That instead, therefore, of arriving among their friends, the Nez Percés, with light hearts and full hands, they came naked, hungry, and broken down; and instead of making them presents, must depend upon them even for food. "But," concluded he, "we are

going to the white men's fort on the Wallah-Wallah, and will soon return; and then we will meet our Nez Perce friends like the true Big Hearts of the East."

Whether the hint thrown out in the latter part of the speech had any effect, or whether the old chief acted from the hospitable feelings which, according to the captain, are really inherent in the Nez Perce tribe, he certainly showed no disposition to relax his friendship on learning the destitute circumstances of his guests. On the contrary, he urged the captain to remain with them until the following day, when he would accompany him on his journey, and make him acquainted with all his people. In the meantime, he would have a colt killed, and cut up for travelling provisions. This, he carefully explained, was intended not as an article of traffic, but as a gift; for he saw that his guests were hungry and in need of food.

Captain Bonneville gladly assented to this hospitable arrangement. The carcass of the colt was forthcoming in due season, but the captain insisted that one half of it should be set apart for the use of the chieftain's family.

At an early hour of the following morning, the little party resumed their journey, accompanied by the old chief and an Indian guide. Their route was over a rugged and broken country; where the hills were slippery with ice and snow. Their horses, too, were so weak and jaded, that they could scarcely climb the steep ascents, or maintain their foothold on the frozen declivities. Throughout the whole of the journey, the old chief and the guide were unremitting in their good offices, and continually on the alert to select the best roads, and assist them through all difficulties. Indeed, the captain and his comrades had to be dependent on their Indian friends for almost every thing, for they had lost their tobacco and pipes, those great comforts of the trapper, and had but a few charges of powder left, which it was necessary to husband for the purpose of lighting their fires. In the course of the day the old chief had several private consultations with the guide, and showed evident signs of being occupied with some mysterious matter of mighty import. What it was, Captain Bonneville could not fathom, nor did he make much effort to do so. From some casual sentences that he overheard, he perceived that it was something from which the old man promised himself much satisfaction, and to which he attached a little vainglory but which he wished to keep a secret; so he suffered him to spin out his petty plans unmolested.

In the evening when they encamped, the old chief and his privy counsellor, the guide, had another mysterious colloquy, after which the guide mounted his horse and departed on some secret mission, while the chief resumed his seat at the fire, and sat humming to himself in a pleasing but mystic reverie.

The next morning, the travellers descended into the valley of the Way-lee-way, a considerable tributary of Snake River. Here they met the guide returning from his secret errand. Another private conference was held between him and the old managing chief, who now seemed more inflated than ever with mystery and self-importance. Numerous fresh trails, and various other signs, persuaded Captain Bonneville that there must be a considerable village of Nez Perces in the neighborhood; but as his worthy companion, the old chief, said nothing on the subject, and as it appeared to be in some way connected with his secret operations, he asked no questions, but patiently awaited the development of his mystery.

As they journeyed on, they came to where two or three Indians were bathing in a small stream. The good old chief immediately came to a halt, and had a long conversation with them, in the course of which he repeated to them the whole history which Captain Bonneville had related to

him. In fact, he seems to have been a very sociable, communicative old man; by no means afflicted with that taciturnity generally charged upon the Indians. On the contrary, he was fond of long talks and long smokings, and evidently was proud of his new friend, the bald-headed chief, and took a pleasure in sounding his praises, and setting forth the power and glory of the Big Hearts of the East.

Having disburdened himself of everything he had to relate to his bathing friends, he left them to their aquatic disports, and proceeded onward with the captain and his companions. As they approached the Way-lee-way, however, the communicative old chief met with another and a very different occasion to exert his colloquial powers. On the banks of the river stood an isolated mound covered with grass. He pointed to it with some emotion. "The big heart and the strong arm," said he, "lie buried beneath that sod."

It was, in fact, the grave of one of his friends; a chosen warrior of the tribe; who had been slain on this spot when in pursuit of a war party of Shoshokoes, who had stolen the horses of the village. The enemy bore off his scalp as a trophy; but his friends found his body in this lonely place, and committed it to the earth with ceremonials characteristic of their pious and reverential feelings. They gathered round the grave and mourned; the warriors were silent in their grief; but the women and children bewailed their loss with loud lamentations. "For three days," said the old man, "we performed the solemn dances for the dead, and prayed the Great Spirit that our brother might be happy in the land of brave warriors and hunters. Then we killed at his grave fifteen of our best and strongest horses, to serve him when he should arrive at the happy hunting grounds; and having done all this, we returned sorrowfully to our homes."

While the chief was still talking, an Indian scout came galloping up, and, presenting him with a powder-horn, wheeled round, and was speedily out of sight. The eyes of the old chief now brightened; and all his self-importance returned. His petty mystery was about to explode. Turning to Captain Bonneville, he pointed to a hill hard by, and informed him, that behind it was a village governed by a little chief, whom he had notified of the approach of the bald-headed chief, and a party of the Big Hearts of the East, and that he was prepared to receive them in becoming style. As, among other ceremonials, he intended to salute them with a discharge of firearms, he had sent the horn of gunpowder that they might return the salute in a manner correspondent to his dignity.

They now proceeded on until they doubled the point of the hill, when the whole population of the village broke upon their view, drawn out in the most imposing style, and arrayed in all their finery. The effect of the whole was wild and fantastic, yet singularly striking. In the front rank were the chiefs and principal warriors, glaringly painted and decorated; behind them were arranged the rest of the people, men, women, and children.

Captain Bonneville and his party advanced slowly, exchanging salutes of firearms. When arrived within a respectful distance, they dismounted. The chiefs then came forward successively, according to their respective characters and consequence, to offer the hand of good fellowship; each filing off when he had shaken hands, to make way for his successor. Those in the next rank followed in the same order, and so on, until all had given the pledge of friendship. During all this time, the chief, according to custom, took his stand beside the guests. If any of his people advanced whom he judged unworthy of the friendship or confidence of the white men, he motioned them off by a wave of the hand, and they would submissively walk away. When Captain Bonneville turned upon

him an inquiring look, he would observe, "he was a bad man," or something quite as concise, and there was an end of the matter.

Mats, poles, and other materials were now brought, and a comfortable lodge was soon erected for the strangers, where they were kept constantly supplied with wood and water, and other necessaries; and all their effects were placed in safe keeping. Their horses, too, were unsaddled, and turned loose to graze, and a guard set to keep watch upon them.

All this being adjusted, they were conducted to the main building or council house of the village, where an ample repast, or rather banquet, was spread, which seemed to realize all the gastronomical dreams that had tantalized them during their long starvation; for here they beheld not merely fish and roots in abundance, but the flesh of deer and elk, and the choicest pieces of buffalo meat. It is needless to say how vigorously they acquitted themselves on this occasion, and how unnecessary it was for their hosts to practice the usual cramming principle of Indian hospitality.

When the repast was over, a long talk ensued. The chief showed the same curiosity evinced by his tribe generally, to obtain information concerning the United States, of which they knew little but what they derived through their cousins, the Upper Nez Perces; as their traffic is almost exclusively with the British traders of the Hudson's Bay Company. Captain Bonneville did his best to set forth the merits of his nation, and the importance of their friendship to the red men, in which he was ably seconded by his worthy friend, the old chief with the hard name, who did all that he could to glorify the Big Hearts of the East.

The chief, and all present, listened with profound attention, and evidently with great interest; nor were the important facts thus set forth, confined to the audience in the lodge; for sentence after sentence was loudly repeated by a crier for the benefit of the whole village.

This custom of promulgating everything by criers, is not confined to the Nez Perces, but prevails among many other tribes. It has its advantage where there are no gazettes to publish the news of the day, or to report the proceedings of important meetings. And in fact, reports of this kind, viva voce, made in the hearing of all parties, and liable to be contradicted or corrected on the spot, are more likely to convey accurate information to the public mind than those circulated through the press. The office of crier is generally filled by some old man, who is good for little else. A village has generally several of these walking newspapers, as they are termed by the whites, who go about proclaiming the news of the day, giving notice of public councils, expeditions, dances, feasts, and other ceremonials, and advertising anything lost. While Captain Bonneville remained among the Nez Perces, if a glove, handkerchief, or anything of similar value, was lost or mislaid, it was carried by the finder to the lodge of the chief, and proclamation was made by one of their criers, for the owner to come and claim his property.

How difficult it is to get at the true character of these wandering tribes of the wilderness! In a recent work, we have had to speak of this tribe of Indians from the experience of other traders who had casually been among them, and who represented them as selfish, inhospitable, exorbitant in their dealings, and much addicted to thieving; Captain Bonneville, on the contrary, who resided much among them, and had repeated opportunities of ascertaining their real character, invariably speaks of them as kind and hospitable, scrupulously honest, and remarkable, above all other Indians that he had met with, for a strong feeling of religion. In fact, so enthusiastic is he in their praise, that he pronounces them, all ignorant and barbarous as they are by their condition, one of the purest hearted people on the face of the earth.

---

Some cures which Captain Bonneville had effected in simple cases, among the Upper Nez Perces, had reached the ears of their cousins here, and gained for him the reputation of a great medicine man. He had not been long in the village, therefore, before his lodge began to be the resort of the sick and the infirm. The captain felt the value of the reputation thus accidentally and cheaply acquired, and endeavored to sustain it. As he had arrived at that age when every man is, experimentally, something of a physician, he was enabled to turn to advantage the little knowledge in the healing art which he had casually picked up; and was sufficiently successful in two or three cases, to convince the simple Indians that report had not exaggerated his medical talents. The only patient that effectually baffled his skill, or rather discouraged any attempt at relief, was an antiquated squaw with a churchyard cough, and one leg in the grave; it being shrunk and rendered useless by a rheumatic affection. This was a case beyond his mark; however, he comforted the old woman with a promise that he would endeavor to procure something to relieve her, at the fort on the Wallah-Wallah, and would bring it on his return; with which assurance her husband was so well satisfied, that he presented the captain with a colt, to be killed as provisions for the journey: a medical fee which was thankfully accepted.

While among these Indians, Captain Bonneville unexpectedly found an owner for the horse which he had purchased from a Root Digger at the Big Wyr. The Indian satisfactorily proved that the horse had been stolen from him some time previous, by some unknown thief. "However," said the considerate savage, "you got him in fair trade--you are more in want of horses than I am: keep him; he is yours--he is a good horse; use him well."

Thus, in the continued experience of acts of kindness and generosity, which his destitute condition did not allow him to reciprocate, Captain Bonneville passed some short time among these good people, more and more impressed with the general excellence of their character.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 33

Scenery of the Way-lee-way--A substitute for tobacco--Sublime scenery of Snake River--The garrulous old chief and his cousin--A Nez Perce meeting--A stolen skin--The scapegoat dog--Mysterious conferences--The little chief--His hospitality--The captain's account of the United States--His healing skill

IN RESUMING HIS JOURNEY, Captain Bonneville was conducted by the same Nez Perce guide, whose knowledge of the country was important in choosing the routes and resting places. He also continued to be accompanied by the worthy old chief with the hard name, who seemed bent upon doing the honors of the country, and introducing him to every branch of his tribe. The Way-lee-way, down the banks of which Captain Bonneville and his companions were now travelling, is a considerable stream winding through a succession of bold and beautiful scenes. Sometimes the landscape towered into bold and mountainous heights that partook of sublimity; at other times, it stretched along the water side in fresh smiling meadows, and graceful undulating valleys.

Frequently in their route they encountered small parties of the Nez Perces, with whom they invariably stopped to shake hands; and who, generally, evinced great curiosity concerning them and their adventures; a curiosity which never failed to be thoroughly satisfied by the replies of the worthy Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut, who kindly took upon himself to be spokesman of the party.

The incessant smoking of pipes incident to the long talks of this excellent, but somewhat garru-

lous old chief, at length exhausted all his stock of tobacco, so that he had no longer a whiff with which to regale his white companions. In this emergency, he cut up the stem of his pipe into fine shavings, which he mixed with certain herbs, and thus manufactured a temporary succedaneum to enable him to accompany his long colloquies and harangues with the customary fragrant cloud. If the scenery of the Way-lee-way had charmed the travellers with its mingled amenity and grandeur, that which broke upon them on once more reaching Snake River, filled them with admiration and astonishment. At times, the river was overhung by dark and stupendous rocks, rising like gigantic walls and battlements; these would be rent by wide and yawning chasms, that seemed to speak of past convulsions of nature. Sometimes the river was of a glassy smoothness and placidity; at other times it roared along in impetuous rapids and foaming cascades. Here, the rocks were piled in the most fantastic crags and precipices; and in another place, they were succeeded by delightful valleys carpeted with green-award. The whole of this wild and varied scenery was dominated by immense mountains rearing their distant peaks into the clouds. "The grandeur and originality of the views, presented on every side," says Captain Bonneville, "beggar both the pencil and the pen. Nothing we had ever gazed upon in any other region could for a moment compare in wild majesty and impressive sternness, with the series of scenes which here at every turn astonished our senses, and filled us with awe and delight."

Indeed, from all that we can gather from the journal before us, and the accounts of other travellers, who passed through these regions in the memorable enterprise of Astoria, we are inclined to think that Snake River must be one of the most remarkable for varied and striking scenery of all the rivers of this continent. From its head waters in the Rocky Mountains, to its junction with the Columbia, its windings are upward of six hundred miles through every variety of landscape. Rising in a volcanic region, amid extinguished craters, and mountains awful with the traces of ancient fires, it makes its way through great plains of lava and sandy deserts, penetrates vast sierras or mountainous chains, broken into romantic and often frightful precipices, and crowned with eternal snows; and at other times, careers through green and smiling meadows, and wide landscapes of Italian grace and beauty. Wildness and sublimity, however, appear to be its prevailing characteristics.

Captain Bonneville and his companions had pursued their journey a considerable distance down the course of Snake River, when the old chief halted on the bank, and dismounting, recommended that they should turn their horses loose to graze, while he summoned a cousin of his from a group of lodges on the opposite side of the stream. His summons was quickly answered. An Indian, of an active elastic form, leaped into a light canoe of cotton-wood, and vigorously plying the paddle, soon shot across the river. Bounding on shore, he advanced with a buoyant air and frank demeanor, and gave his right hand to each of the party in turn. The old chief, whose hard name we forbear to repeat, now presented Captain Bonneville, in form, to his cousin, whose name, we regret to say, was no less hard being nothing less than Hay-she-in-cow-cow. The latter evinced the usual curiosity to know all about the strangers, whence they came whither they were going, the object of their journey, and the adventures they had experienced. All these, of course, were ample and eloquently set forth by the communicative old chief. To all his grandiloquent account of the bald-headed chief and his countrymen, the Big Hearts of the East, his cousin listened with great attention, and replied in the customary style of Indian welcome. He then desired the party to await his return, and, springing into his canoe, darted across the river. In a little while he re-

turned, bringing a most welcome supply of tobacco, and a small stock of provisions for the road, declaring his intention of accompanying the party. Having no horse, he mounted behind one of the men, observing that he should procure a steed for himself on the following day.

They all now jogged on very sociably and cheerily together. Not many miles beyond, they met others of the tribe, among whom was one, whom Captain Bonneville and his comrades had known during their residence among the Upper Nez Perces, and who welcomed them with open arms. In this neighborhood was the home of their guide, who took leave of them with a profusion of good wishes for their safety and happiness. That night they put up in the hut of a Nez Perce, where they were visited by several warriors from the other side of the river, friends of the old chief and his cousin, who came to have a talk and a smoke with the white men. The heart of the good old chief was overflowing with good will at thus being surrounded by his new and old friends, and he talked with more spirit and vivacity than ever. The evening passed away in perfect harmony and good-humor, and it was not until a late hour that the visitors took their leave and recrossed the river.

After this constant picture of worth and virtue on the part of the Nez Perce tribe, we grieve to have to record a circumstance calculated to throw a temporary shade upon the name. In the course of the social and harmonious evening just mentioned, one of the captain's men, who happened to be something of a virtuoso in his way, and fond of collecting curiosities, produced a small skin, a great rarity in the eyes of men conversant in peltries. It attracted much attention among the visitors from beyond the river, who passed it from one to the other, examined it with looks of lively admiration, and pronounced it a great medicine.

In the morning, when the captain and his party were about to set off, the precious skin was missing. Search was made for it in the hut, but it was nowhere to be found; and it was strongly suspected that it had been purloined by some of the connoisseurs from the other side of the river. The old chief and his cousin were indignant at the supposed delinquency of their friends across the water, and called out for them to come over and answer for their shameful conduct. The others answered to the call with all the promptitude of perfect innocence, and spurned at the idea of their being capable of such outrage upon any of the Big-hearted nation. All were at a loss on whom to fix the crime of abstracting the invaluable skin, when by chance the eyes of the worthies from beyond the water fell upon an unhappy cur, belonging to the owner of the hut. He was a gallops-looking dog, but not more so than most Indian dogs, who, take them in the mass, are little better than a generation of vipers. Be that as it may, he was instantly accused of having devoured the skin in question. A dog accused is generally a dog condemned; and a dog condemned is generally a dog executed. So was it in the present instance. The unfortunate cur was arraigned; his thievish looks substantiated his guilt, and he was condemned by his judges from across the river to be hanged. In vain the Indians of the hut, with whom he was a great favorite, interceded in his behalf. In vain Captain Bonneville and his comrades petitioned that his life might be spared. His judges were inexorable. He was doubly guilty: first, in having robbed their good friends, the Big Hearts of the East; secondly, in having brought a doubt on the honor of the Nez Perce tribe. He was, accordingly, swung aloft, and pelted with stones to make his death more certain. The sentence of the judges being thoroughly executed, a post mortem examination of the body of the dog was held, to establish his delinquency beyond all doubt, and to leave the Nez Perces without a shadow of suspicion. Great interest, of course, was manifested by all present, during this opera-

tion. The body of the dog was opened, the intestines rigorously scrutinized, but, to the horror of all concerned, not a particle of the skin was to be found--the dog had been unjustly executed! A great clamor now ensued, but the most clamorous was the party from across the river, whose jealousy of their good name now prompted them to the most vociferous vindications of their innocence. It was with the utmost difficulty that the captain and his comrades could calm their lively sensibilities, by accounting for the disappearance of the skin in a dozen different ways, until all idea of its having been stolen was entirely out of the question.

The meeting now broke up. The warriors returned across the river, the captain and his comrades proceeded on their journey; but the spirits of the communicative old chief, Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut, were for a time completely dampened, and he evinced great mortification at what had just occurred. He rode on in silence, except, that now and then he would give way to a burst of indignation, and exclaim, with a shake of the head and a toss of the hand toward the opposite shore--"bad men, very bad men across the river"; to each of which brief exclamations, his worthy cousin, Hay-she-in-cow-cow, would respond by a guttural sound of acquiescence, equivalent to an amen. After some time, the countenance of the-old chief again cleared up, and he fell into repeated conferences, in an under tone, with his cousin, which ended in the departure of the latter, who, applying the lash to his horse, dashed forward and was soon out of sight. In fact, they were drawing near to the village of another chief, likewise distinguished by an appellation of some longitude, O-pushy-e-cut; but commonly known as the great chief. The cousin had been sent ahead to give notice of their approach; a herald appeared as before, bearing a powder-horn, to enable them to respond to the intended salute. A scene ensued, on their approach to the village, similar to that which had occurred at the village of the little chief. The whole population appeared in the field, drawn up in lines, arrayed with the customary regard to rank and dignity. Then came on the firing of salutes, and the shaking of hands, in which last ceremonial every individual, man, woman, and child, participated; for the Indians have an idea that it is as indispensable an overture of friendship among the whites as smoking of the pipe is among the red men. The travellers were next ushered to the banquet, where all the choicest viands that the village could furnish, were served up in rich profusion. They were afterwards entertained by feats of agility and horseraces; indeed, their visit to the village seemed the signal for complete festivity. In the meantime, a skin lodge had been spread for their accommodation, their horses and baggage were taken care of, and wood and water supplied in abundance. At night, therefore, they retired to their quarters, to enjoy, as they supposed, the repose of which they stood in need. No such thing, however, was in store for them. A crowd of visitors awaited their appearance, all eager for a smoke and a talk. The pipe was immediately lighted, and constantly replenished and kept alive until the night was far advanced. As usual, the utmost eagerness was evinced by the guests to learn everything within the scope of their comprehension respecting the Americans, for whom they professed the most fraternal regard. The captain, in his replies, made use of familiar illustrations, calculated to strike their minds, and impress them with such an idea of the might of his nation, as would induce them to treat with kindness and respect all stragglers that might fall in their path. To their inquiries as to the numbers of the people of the United States, he assured them that they were as countless as the blades of grass in the prairies, and that, great as Snake River was, if they were all encamped upon its banks, they would drink it dry in a single day. To these and similar statistics, they listened with profound attention, and apparently, implicit belief. It was, indeed, a striking scene: the captain,

with his hunter's dress and bald head in the midst, holding forth, and his wild auditors seated around like so many statues, the fire lighting up their painted faces and muscular figures, all fixed and motionless, excepting when the pipe was passed, a question propounded, or a startling fact in statistics received with a movement of surprise and a half-suppressed ejaculation of wonder and delight.

The fame of the captain as a healer of diseases, had accompanied him to this village, and the great chief, O-push-y-e-cut, now entreated him to exert his skill on his daughter, who had been for three days racked with pains, for which the Pierced-nose doctors could devise no alleviation. The captain found her extended on a pallet of mats in excruciating pain. Her father manifested the strongest paternal affection for her, and assured the captain that if he would but cure her, he would place the Americans near his heart. The worthy captain needed no such inducement. His kind heart was already touched by the sufferings of the poor girl, and his sympathies quickened by her appearance; for she was but about sixteen years of age, and uncommonly beautiful in form and feature. The only difficulty with the captain was, that he knew nothing of her malady, and that his medical science was of a most haphazard kind. After considering and cogitating for some time, as a man is apt to do when in a maze of vague ideas, he made a desperate dash at a remedy. By his directions, the girl was placed in a sort of rude vapor bath, much used by the Nez Percés, where she was kept until near fainting. He then gave her a dose of gunpowder dissolved in cold water, and ordered her to be wrapped in buffalo robes and put to sleep under a load of furs and blankets. The remedy succeeded: the next morning she was free from pain, though extremely languid; whereupon, the captain prescribed for her a bowl of colt's head broth, and that she should be kept for a time on simple diet.

The great chief was unbounded in his expressions of gratitude for the recovery of his daughter. He would fain have detained the captain a long time as his guest, but the time for departure had arrived. When the captain's horse was brought for him to mount, the chief declared that the steed was not worthy of him, and sent for one of his best horses, which he presented in its stead; declaring that it made his heart glad to see his friend so well mounted. He then appointed a young Nez Perce to accompany his guest to the next village, and "to carry his talk" concerning them; and the two parties separated with mutual expressions of good will.

The vapor bath of which we have made mention is in frequent use among the Nez Perce tribe, chiefly for cleanliness. Their sweating houses, as they call them, are small and close lodges, and the vapor is produced by water poured slowly upon red-hot stones.

On passing the limits of O-push-y-e-cut's domains, the travellers left the elevated table-lands, and all the wild and romantic scenery which has just been described. They now traversed a gently undulating country, of such fertility that it excited the rapturous admiration of two of the captain's followers, a Kentuckian and a native of Ohio. They declared that it surpassed any land that they had ever seen, and often exclaimed what a delight it would be just to run a plough through such a rich and teeming soil, and see it open its bountiful promise before the share.

Another halt and sojourn of a night was made at the village of a chief named He-mim-el-pilp, where similar ceremonies were observed and hospitality experienced, as at the preceding villages. They now pursued a west-southwest course through a beautiful and fertile region, better wooded than most of the tracts through which they had passed. In their progress, they met with several bands of Nez Percés, by whom they were invariably treated with the utmost kindness. Within

---

seven days after leaving the domain of He-mim-el-pilp, they struck the Columbia River at Fort Wallah-Wallah, where they arrived on the 4th of March, 1834.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 34

Fort Wallah-Wallah--Its commander--Indians in its neighborhood--Exertions of Mr. Pambrune for their improvement--Religion--Code of laws--Range of the Lower Nez Perces--Camash, and other roots-- Nez Perce horses--Preparations for departure-- Refusal of supplies--Departure--A laggard and glutton

FORT WALLAH - WALLAH is a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, situated just above the mouth of the river by the same name, and on the left bank of the Columbia. It is built of drift-wood, and calculated merely for defence against any attack of the natives. At the time of Captain Bonneville's arrival, the whole garrison mustered but six or eight men; and the post was under the superintendence of Mr. Pambrune, an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The great post and fort of the company, forming the emporium of its trade on the Pacific, is Fort Vancouver; situated on the right bank of the Columbia, about sixty miles from the sea, and just above the mouth of the Wallamut. To this point, the company removed its establishment from Astoria, in 1821, after its coalition with the Northwest Company.

Captain Bonneville and his comrades experienced a polite reception from Mr. Pambrune, the superintendent: for, however hostile the members of the British Company may be to the enterprises of American traders, they have always manifested great courtesy and hospitality to the traders themselves.

Fort Wallah-Wallah is surrounded by the tribe of the same name, as well as by the Skynses and the Nez Perces; who bring to it the furs and peltries collected in their hunting expeditions. The Wallah-Wallahs are a degenerate, worn-out tribe. The Nez Perces are the most numerous and tractable of the three tribes just mentioned. Mr. Pambrune informed Captain Bonneville that he had been at some pains to introduce the Christian religion, in the Roman Catholic form, among them, where it had evidently taken root; but had become altered and modified, to suit their peculiar habits of thought, and motives of action; retaining, however, the principal points of faith, and its entire precepts of morality. The same gentleman had given them a code of laws, to which they conformed with scrupulous fidelity. Polygamy, which once prevailed among them to a great extent, was now rarely indulged. All the crimes denounced by the Christian faith met with severe punishment among them. Even theft, so venial a crime among the Indians, had recently been punished with hanging, by sentence of a chief.

There certainly appears to be a peculiar susceptibility of moral and religious improvement among this tribe, and they would seem to be one of the very, very few that have benefited in morals and manners by an intercourse with white men. The parties which visited them about twenty years previously, in the expedition fitted out by Mr. Astor, complained of their selfishness, their extortion, and their thievish propensities. The very reverse of those qualities prevailed among them during the prolonged sojourns of Captain Bonneville.

The Lower Nez Perces range upon the Way-lee-way, Immahah, Yenghies, and other of the streams west of the mountains. They hunt the beaver, elk, deer, white bear, and mountain sheep. Besides the flesh of these animals, they use a number of roots for food; some of which would be well

---

worth transplanting and cultivating in the Atlantic States. Among these is the camash, a sweet root, about the form and size of an onion, and said to be really delicious. The cowish, also, or biscuit root, about the size of a walnut, which they reduce to a very palatable flour; together with the jackap, aisish, quako, and others; which they cook by steaming them in the ground.

In August and September, these Indians keep along the rivers, where they catch and dry great quantities of salmon; which, while they last, are their principal food. In the winter, they congregate in villages formed of comfortable huts, or lodges, covered with mats. They are generally clad in deer skins, or woollens, and extremely well armed. Above all, they are celebrated for owning great numbers of horses; which they mark, and then suffer to range in droves in their most fertile plains. These horses are principally of the pony breed; but remarkably stout and long-winded. They are brought in great numbers to the establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company, and sold for a mere trifle.

Such is the account given by Captain Bonneville of the Nez Perces; who, if not viewed by him with too partial an eye, are certainly among the gentlest, and least barbarous people of these remote wildernesses. They invariably signified to him their earnest wish that an American post might be established among them; and repeatedly declared that they would trade with Americans, in preference to any other people.

Captain Bonneville had intended to remain some time in this neighborhood, to form an acquaintance with the natives, and to collect information, and establish connections that might be advantageous in the way of trade. The delays, however, which he had experienced on his journey, obliged him to shorten his sojourn, and to set off as soon as possible, so as to reach the rendezvous at the Portneuf at the appointed time. He had seen enough to convince him that an American trade might be carried on with advantage in this quarter; and he determined soon to return with a stronger party, more completely fitted for the purpose.

As he stood in need of some supplies for his journey, he applied to purchase them of Mr. Pambrune; but soon found the difference between being treated as a guest, or as a rival trader. The worthy superintendent, who had extended to him all the genial rites of hospitality, now suddenly assumed a withered-up aspect and demeanor, and observed that, however he might feel disposed to serve him, personally, he felt bound by his duty to the Hudson's Bay Company, to do nothing which should facilitate or encourage the visits of other traders among the Indians in that part of the country. He endeavored to dissuade Captain Bonneville from returning through the Blue Mountains; assuring him it would be extremely difficult and dangerous, if not impracticable, at this season of the year; and advised him to accompany Mr. Payette, a leader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was about to depart with a number of men, by a more circuitous, but safe route, to carry supplies to the company's agent, resident among the Upper Nez Perces. Captain Bonneville, however, piqued at his having refused to furnish him with supplies, and doubting the sincerity of his advice, determined to return by the more direct route through the mountains; though varying his course, in some respects, from that by which he had come, in consequence of information gathered among the neighboring Indians.

Accordingly, on the 6th of March, he and his three companions, accompanied by their Nez Perce guides, set out on their return. In the early part of their course, they touched again at several of the Nez Perce villages, where they had experienced such kind treatment on their way down. They were always welcomed with cordiality; and everything was done to cheer them on their journey.

On leaving the Way-lee-way village, they were joined by a Nez Perce, whose society was welcomed on account of the general gratitude and good will they felt for his tribe. He soon proved a heavy clog upon the little party, being doltish and taciturn, lazy in the extreme, and a huge feeder. His only proof of intellect was in shrewdly avoiding all labor, and availing himself of the toil of others. When on the march, he always lagged behind the rest, leaving to them the task of breaking a way through all difficulties and impediments, and leisurely and lazily jogging along the track, which they had beaten through the snow. At the evening encampment, when others were busy gathering fuel, providing for the horses, and cooking the evening repast, this worthy Sancho of the wilderness would take his seat quietly and cosily by the fire, puffing away at his pipe, and eyeing in silence, but with wistful intensity of gaze, the savory morsels roasting for supper. When meal-time arrived, however, then came his season of activity. He no longer hung back, and waited for others to take the lead, but distinguished himself by a brilliancy of onset, and a sustained vigor and duration of attack, that completely shamed the efforts of his competitors--albeit, experienced trenchermen of no mean prowess. Never had they witnessed such power of mastication, and such marvellous capacity of stomach, as in this native and uncultivated gastronome. Having, by repeated and prolonged assaults, at length completely gorged himself, he would wrap himself up and lie with the torpor of an anaconda; slowly digesting his way on to the next repast. The gormandizing powers of this worthy were, at first, matters of surprise and merriment to the travellers; but they soon became too serious for a joke, threatening devastation to the fleshpots; and he was regarded askance, at his meals, as a regular kill-crop, destined to waste the substance of the party. Nothing but a sense of the obligations they were under to his nation induced them to bear with such a guest; but he proceeded, speedily, to relieve them from the weight of these obligations, by eating a receipt in full.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 35

The uninvited guest--Free and easy manners--Salutary jokes--A prodigal son--Exit of the glutton-- A sudden change in fortune--Danger of a visit to poor relations--Plucking of a prosperous man--A vagabond toilet--A substitute for the very fine horse--Hard travelling--The uninvited guest and the patriarchal colt--A beggar on horseback--A catastrophe--Exit of the merry vagabond

As CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE and his men were encamped one evening among the hills near Snake River, seated before their fire, enjoying a hearty supper, they were suddenly surprised by the visit of an uninvited guest. He was a ragged, half-naked Indian hunter, armed with bow and arrows, and had the carcass of a fine buck thrown across his shoulder. Advancing with an alert step, and free and easy air, he threw the buck on the ground, and, without waiting for an invitation, seated himself at their mess, helped himself without ceremony, and chatted to the right and left in the liveliest and most unembarrassed manner. No adroit and veteran dinner hunter of a metropolis could have acquitted himself more knowingly. The travellers were at first completely taken by surprise, and could not but admire the facility with which this ragged cosmopolite made himself at home among them. While they stared he went on, making the most of the good cheer upon which he had so fortunately alighted; and was soon elbow deep in "pot luck," and greased from the tip of his nose to the back of his ears.

As the company recovered from their surprise, they began to feel annoyed at this intrusion. Their uninvited guest, unlike the generality of his tribe, was somewhat dirty as well as ragged and they had no relish for such a messmate. Heaping up, therefore, an abundant portion of the "provant" upon a piece of bark, which served for a dish, they invited him to confine himself thereto, instead of foraging in the general mess.

He complied with the most accommodating spirit imaginable; and went on eating and chatting, and laughing and smearing himself, until his whole countenance shone with grease and good-humor. In the course of his repast, his attention was caught by the figure of the gastronome, who, as usual, was gorging himself in dogged silence. A droll cut of the eye showed either that he knew him of old, or perceived at once his characteristics. He immediately made him the butt of his pleasantries; and cracked off two or three good hits, that caused the sluggish dolt to prick up his ears, and delighted all the company. From this time, the uninvited guest was taken into favor; his jokes began to be relished; his careless, free and easy air, to be considered singularly amusing; and in the end, he was pronounced by the travellers one of the merriest companions and most entertaining vagabonds they had met with in the wilderness.

Supper being over, the redoubtable Shee-wee-she-ouaiter, for such was the simple name by which he announced himself, declared his intention of keeping company with the party for a day or two, if they had no objection; and by way of backing his self-invitation, presented the carcass of the buck as an earnest of his hunting abilities. By this time, he had so completely effaced the unfavorable impression made by his first appearance, that he was made welcome to the camp, and the Nez Perce guide undertook to give him lodging for the night. The next morning, at break of day, he borrowed a gun, and was off among the hills, nor was anything more seen of him until a few minutes after the party had encamped for the evening, when he again made his appearance, in his usual frank, careless manner, and threw down the carcass of another noble deer, which he had borne on his back for a considerable distance.

This evening he was the life of the party, and his open communicative disposition, free from all disguise, soon put them in possession of his history. He had been a kind of prodigal son in his native village; living a loose, heedless life, and disregarding the precepts and imperative commands of the chiefs. He had, in consequence, been expelled from the village, but, in nowise disheartened at this banishment, had betaken himself to the society of the border Indians, and had led a careless, haphazard, vagabond life, perfectly consonant to his humors; heedless of the future, so long as he had wherewithal for the present; and fearing no lack of food, so long as he had the implements of the chase, and a fair hunting ground.

Finding him very expert as a hunter, and being pleased with his eccentricities, and his strange and merry humor, Captain Bonneville fitted him out handsomely as the Nimrod of the party, who all soon became quite attached to him. One of the earliest and most signal services he performed, was to exorcise the insatiate kill-crop that hitherto oppressed the party. In fact, the doltish Nez Perce, who had seemed so perfectly insensible to rough treatment of every kind, by which the travellers had endeavored to elbow him out of their society, could not withstand the good-humored bantering, and occasionally sharp wit of She-wee-she. He evidently quailed under his jokes, and sat blinking like an owl in daylight, when pestered by the flouts and peckings of mischievous birds. At length his place was found vacant at meal-time; no one knew when he went off, or whither he had gone, but he was seen no more, and the vast surplus that remained when the

repast was over, showed what a mighty gormandizer had departed.

Relieved from this incubus, the little party now went on cheerily. She-wee-she kept them in fun as well as food. His hunting was always successful; he was ever ready to render any assistance in the camp or on the march; while his jokes, his antics, and the very cut of his countenance, so full of whim and comicality, kept every one in good-humor.

In this way they journeyed on until they arrived on the banks of the Immahah, and encamped near to the Nez Perce lodges. Here She-wee-she took a sudden notion to visit his people, and show off the state of worldly prosperity to which he had so suddenly attained. He accordingly departed in the morning, arrayed in hunter's style, and well appointed with everything benefitting his vocation. The buoyancy of his gait, the elasticity of his step, and the hilarity of his countenance, showed that he anticipated, with chuckling satisfaction, the surprise he was about to give those who had ejected him from their society in rags. But what a change was there in his whole appearance when he rejoined the party in the evening! He came skulking into camp like a beaten cur, with his tail between his legs. All his finery was gone; he was naked as when he was born, with the exception of a scanty flap that answered the purpose of a fig leaf. His fellow-travellers at first did not know him, but supposed it to be some vagrant Root Digger sneaking into the camp; but when they recognized in this forlorn object their prime wag, She-wee-she, whom they had seen depart in the morning in such high glee and high feather, they could not contain their merriment, but hailed him with loud and repeated peals of laughter.

She-wee-she was not of a spirit to be easily cast down; he soon joined in the merriment as heartily as any one, and seemed to consider his reverse of fortune an excellent joke. Captain Bonneville, however, thought proper to check his good-humor, and demanded, with some degree of sternness, the cause of his altered condition. He replied in the most natural and self-complacent style imaginable, "that he had been among his cousins, who were very poor; they had been delighted to see him; still more delighted with his good fortune; they had taken him to their arms; admired his equipments; one had begged for this; another for that"--in fine, what with the poor devil's inherent heedlessness, and the real generosity of his disposition, his needy cousins had succeeded in stripping him of all his clothes and accoutrements, excepting the fig leaf with which he had returned to camp.

Seeing his total want of care and forethought, Captain Bonneville determined to let him suffer a little, in hopes it might prove a salutary lesson; and, at any rate, to make him no more presents while in the neighborhood of his needy cousins. He was left, therefore, to shift for himself in his naked condition; which, however, did not seem to give him any concern, or to abate one jot of his good-humor. In the course of his lounging about the camp, however, he got possession of a deer skin; whereupon, cutting a slit in the middle, he thrust his head through it, so that the two ends hung down before and behind, something like a South American poncho, or the tabard of a herald. These ends he tied together, under the armpits; and thus arrayed, presented himself once more before the captain, with an air of perfect self-satisfaction, as though he thought it impossible for any fault to be found with his toilet.

A little further journeying brought the travellers to the petty village of Nez Perces, governed by the worthy and affectionate old patriarch who had made Captain Bonneville the costly present of the very fine horse. The old man welcomed them once more to his village with his usual cordiality, and his respectable squaw and hopeful son, cherishing grateful recollections of the hatchet and

ear-bobs, joined in a chorus of friendly gratulation.

As the much-vaunted steed, once the joy and pride of this interesting family, was now nearly knocked up by travelling, and totally inadequate to the mountain scramble that lay ahead, Captain Bonneville restored him to the venerable patriarch, with renewed acknowledgments for the invaluable gift. Somewhat to his surprise, he was immediately supplied with a fine two years' old colt in his stead, a substitution which he afterward learnt, according to Indian custom in such cases, he might have claimed as a matter of right. We do not find that any after claims were made on account of this colt. This donation may be regarded, therefore, as a signal punctilio of Indian honor; but it will be found that the animal soon proved an unlucky acquisition to the party.

While at this village, the Nez Perce guide had held consultations with some of the inhabitants as to the mountain tract the party were about to traverse. He now began to wear an anxious aspect, and to indulge in gloomy forebodings. The snow, he had been told, lay to a great depth in the passes of the mountains, and difficulties would increase as he proceeded. He begged Captain Bonneville, therefore, to travel very slowly, so as to keep the horses in strength and spirit for the hard times they would have to encounter. The captain surrendered the regulation of the march entirely to his discretion, and pushed on in the advance, amusing himself with hunting, so as generally to kill a deer or two in the course of the day, and arriving, before the rest of the party, at the spot designated by the guide for the evening's encampment.

In the meantime, the others plodded on at the heels of the guide, accompanied by that merry vagabond, She-wee-she. The primitive garb worn by this droll left all his nether man exposed to the biting blasts of the mountains. Still his wit was never frozen, nor his sunshiny temper beclouded; and his innumerable antics and practical jokes, while they quickened the circulation of his own blood, kept his companions in high good-humor.

So passed the first day after the departure from the patriarch's. The second day commenced in the same manner; the captain in the advance, the rest of the party following on slowly. She-wee-she, for the greater part of the time, trudged on foot over the snow, keeping himself warm by hard exercise, and all kinds of crazy capers. In the height of his foolery, the patriarchal colt, which, unbroken to the saddle, was suffered to follow on at large, happened to come within his reach. In a moment, he was on his back, snapping his fingers, and yelping with delight. The colt, unused to such a burden, and half wild by nature, fell to prancing and rearing and snorting and plunging and kicking; and, at length, set off full speed over the most dangerous ground. As the route led generally along the steep and craggy sides of the hills, both horse and horseman were constantly in danger, and more than once had a hairbreadth escape from deadly peril. Nothing, however, could daunt this madcap savage. He stuck to the colt like a plaister [sic], up ridges, down gullies; whooping and yelling with the wildest glee. Never did beggar on horseback display more headlong horsemanship. His companions followed him with their eyes, sometimes laughing, sometimes holding in their breath at his vagaries, until they saw the colt make a sudden plunge or start, and pitch his unlucky rider headlong over a precipice. There was a general cry of horror, and all hastened to the spot. They found the poor fellow lying among the rocks below, sadly bruised and mangled. It was almost a miracle that he had escaped with life. Even in this condition, his merry spirit was not entirely quelled, and he summoned up a feeble laugh at the alarm and anxiety of those who came to his relief. He was extricated from his rocky bed, and a messenger dispatched to inform Captain Bonneville of the accident. The latter returned with all speed, and encamped

---

the party at the first convenient spot. Here the wounded man was stretched upon buffalo skins, and the captain, who officiated on all occasions as doctor and surgeon to the party, proceeded to examine his wounds. The principal one was a long and deep gash in the thigh, which reached to the bone. Calling for a needle and thread, the captain now prepared to sew up the wound, admonishing the patient to submit to the operation with becoming fortitude. His gayety was at an end; he could no longer summon up even a forced smile; and, at the first puncture of the needle, flinched so piteously, that the captain was obliged to pause, and to order him a powerful dose of alcohol. This somewhat rallied up his spirit and warmed his heart; all the time of the operation, however, he kept his eyes riveted on the wound, with his teeth set, and a whimsical wincing of the countenance, that occasionally gave his nose something of its usual comic curl.

When the wound was fairly closed, the captain washed it with rum, and administered a second dose of the same to the patient, who was tucked in for the night, and advised to compose himself to sleep. He was restless and uneasy, however; repeatedly expressing his fears that his leg would be so much swollen the next day, as to prevent his proceeding with the party; nor could he be quieted, until the captain gave a decided opinion favorable to his wishes.

Early the next morning, a gleam of his merry humor returned, on finding that his wounded limb retained its natural proportions. On attempting to use it, however, he found himself unable to stand. He made several efforts to coax himself into a belief that he might still continue forward; but at length, shook his head despondingly, and said, that "as he had but one leg," it was all in vain to attempt a passage of the mountain.

Every one grieved to part with so boon a companion, and under such disastrous circumstances. He was once more clothed and equipped, each one making him some parting present. He was then helped on a horse, which Captain Bonneville presented to him; and after many parting expressions of good will on both sides, set off on his return to his old haunts; doubtless, to be once more plucked by his affectionate but needy cousins.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 36

The difficult mountain--A smoke and consultation--The captain's speech--An icy turnpike-- Danger of a false step-- Arrival on Snake River-- Return to Portneuf-- Meeting of comrades

CONTINUING THEIR JOURNEY UP the course of the Immahah, the travellers found, as they approached the headwaters, the snow increased in quantity, so as to lie two feet deep. They were again obliged, therefore, to beat down a path for their horses, sometimes travelling on the icy surface of the stream. At length they reached the place where they intended to scale the mountains; and, having broken a pathway to the foot, were agreeably surprised to find that the wind had drifted the snow from off the side, so that they attained the summit with but little difficulty. Here they encamped, with the intention of beating a track through the mountains. A short experiment, however, obliged them to give up the attempt, the snow lying in vast drifts, often higher than the horses' heads.

Captain Bonneville now took the two Indian guides, and set out to reconnoitre the neighborhood. Observing a high peak which overtopped the rest, he climbed it, and discovered from the summit a pass about nine miles long, but so heavily piled with snow, that it seemed impracticable. He now lit a pipe, and, sitting down with the two guides, proceeded to hold a consultation after

the Indian mode. For a long while they all smoked vigorously and in silence, pondering over the subject matter before them. At length a discussion commenced, and the opinion in which the two guides concurred was, that the horses could not possibly cross the snows. They advised, therefore, that the party should proceed on foot, and they should take the horses back to the village, where they would be well taken care of until Captain Bonneville should send for them. They urged this advice with great earnestness; declaring that their chief would be extremely angry, and treat them severely, should any of the horses of his good friends, the white men, be lost, in crossing under their guidance; and that, therefore, it was good they should not attempt it.

Captain Bonneville sat smoking his pipe, and listening to them with Indian silence and gravity. When they had finished, he replied to them in their own style of language.

"My friends," said he, "I have seen the pass, and have listened to your words; you have little hearts. When troubles and dangers lie in your way, you turn your backs. That is not the way with my nation. When great obstacles present, and threaten to keep them back, their hearts swell, and they push forward. They love to conquer difficulties. But enough for the present. Night is coming on; let us return to our camp."

He moved on, and they followed in silence. On reaching the camp, he found the men extremely discouraged. One of their number had been surveying the neighborhood, and seriously assured them that the snow was at least a hundred feet deep. The captain cheered them up, and diffused fresh spirit in them by his example. Still he was much perplexed how to proceed. About dark there was a slight drizzling rain. An expedient now suggested itself. This was to make two light sleds, place the packs on them, and drag them to the other side of the mountain, thus forming a road in the wet snow, which, should it afterward freeze, would be sufficiently hard to bear the horses. This plan was promptly put into execution; the sleds were constructed, the heavy baggage was drawn backward and forward until the road was beaten, when they desisted from their fatiguing labor. The night turned out clear and cold, and by morning, their road was incrustated with ice sufficiently strong for their purpose. They now set out on their icy turnpike, and got on well enough, excepting that now and then a horse would sidle out of the track, and immediately sink up to the neck. Then came on toil and difficulty, and they would be obliged to haul up the floundering animal with ropes. One, more unlucky than the rest, after repeated falls, had to be abandoned in the snow. Notwithstanding these repeated delays, they succeeded, before the sun had acquired sufficient power to thaw the snow, in getting all the rest of their horses safely to the other side of the mountain.

Their difficulties and dangers, however, were not yet at an end. They had now to descend, and the whole surface of the snow was glazed with ice. It was necessary; therefore, to wait until the warmth of the sun should melt the glassy crust of sleet, and give them a foothold in the yielding snow. They had a frightful warning of the danger of any movement while the sleet remained. A wild young mare, in her restlessness, strayed to the edge of a declivity. One slip was fatal to her; she lost her balance, careered with headlong velocity down the slippery side of the mountain for more than two thousand feet, and was dashed to pieces at the bottom. When the travellers afterward sought the carcass to cut it up for food, they found it torn and mangled in the most horrible manner.

It was quite late in the evening before the party descended to the ultimate skirts of the snow. Here they planted large logs below them to prevent their sliding down, and encamped for the night.

The next day they succeeded in bringing down their baggage to the encampment; then packing all up regularly, and loading their horses, they once more set out briskly and cheerfully, and in the course of the following day succeeded in getting to a grassy region.

Here their Nez Perce guides declared that all the difficulties of the mountains were at an end, and their course was plain and simple, and needed no further guidance; they asked leave, therefore, to return home. This was readily granted, with many thanks and presents for their faithful services. They took a long farewell smoke with their white friends, after which they mounted their horses and set off, exchanging many farewells and kind wishes.

On the following day, Captain Bonneville completed his journey down the mountain, and encamped on the borders of Snake River, where he found the grass in great abundance and eight inches in height. In this neighborhood, he saw on the rocky banks of the river several prismoids of basaltes, rising to the height of fifty or sixty feet.

Nothing particularly worthy of note occurred during several days as the party proceeded up along Snake River and across its tributary streams. After crossing Gun Creek, they met with various signs that white people were in the neighborhood, and Captain Bonneville made earnest exertions to discover whether they were any of his own people, that he might join them. He soon ascertained that they had been starved out of this tract of country, and had betaken themselves to the buffalo region, whither he now shaped his course. In proceeding along Snake River, he found small hordes of Shoshonies lingering upon the minor streams, and living upon trout and other fish, which they catch in great numbers at this season in fish-traps. The greater part of the tribe, however, had penetrated the mountains to hunt the elk, deer, and ahsahta or bighorn.

On the 12th of May, Captain Bonneville reached the Portneuf River, in the vicinity of which he had left the winter encampment of his company on the preceding Christmas day. He had then expected to be back by the beginning of March, but circumstances had detained him upward of two months beyond the time, and the winter encampment must long ere this have been broken up. Halting on the banks of the Portneuf, he dispatched scouts a few miles above, to visit the old camping ground and search for signals of the party, or of their whereabouts, should they actually have abandoned the spot. They returned without being able to ascertain anything.

Being now destitute of provisions, the travellers found it necessary to make a short hunting excursion after buffalo. They made caches, therefore, on an island in the river, in which they deposited all their baggage, and then set out on their expedition. They were so fortunate as to kill a couple of fine bulls, and cutting up the carcasses, determined to husband this stock of provisions with the most miserly care, lest they should again be obliged to venture into the open and dangerous hunting grounds. Returning to their island on the 18th of May, they found that the wolves had been at the caches, scratched up the contents, and scattered them in every direction. They now constructed a more secure one, in which they deposited their heaviest articles, and then descended Snake River again, and encamped just above the American Falls. Here they proceeded to fortify themselves, intending to remain here, and give their horses an opportunity to recruit their strength with good pasturage, until it should be time to set out for the annual rendezvous in Bear River valley.

On the first of June they descried four men on the other side of the river, opposite to the camp, and, having attracted their attention by a discharge of rifles, ascertained to their joy that they were some of their own people. From these men Captain Bonneville learned that the whole party

which he had left in the preceding month of December were encamped on Blackfoot River, a tributary of Snake River, not very far above the Portneuf. Thither he proceeded with all possible dispatch, and in a little while had the pleasure of finding himself once more surrounded by his people, who greeted his return among them in the heartiest manner; for his long-protracted absence had convinced them that he and his three companions had been cut off by some hostile tribe.

The party had suffered much during his absence. They had been pinched by famine and almost starved, and had been forced to repair to the caches at Salmon River. Here they fell in with the Blackfeet bands, and considered themselves fortunate in being able to retreat from the dangerous neighborhood without sustaining any loss.

Being thus reunited, a general treat from Captain Bonneville to his men was a matter of course. Two days, therefore, were given up to such feasting and merriment as their means and situation afforded. What was wanting in good cheer was made up in good will; the free trappers in particular, distinguished themselves on the occasion, and the saturnalia was enjoyed with a hearty holiday spirit, that smacked of the game flavor of the wilderness.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 37

Departure for the rendezvous--A war party of Blackfeet--A mock bustle--Sham fires at night--Warlike precautions--Dangers of a night attack-- A panic among horses--Cautious march--The Beer Springs--A mock carousel--Skirmishing with buffaloes--A buffalo bait--Arrival at the rendezvous-- Meeting of various bands

AFTER THE TWO DAYS of festive indulgence, Captain Bonneville broke up the encampment, and set out with his motley crew of hired and free trappers, half-breeds, Indians, and squaws, for the main rendezvous in Bear River valley. Directing his course up the Blackfoot River, he soon reached the hills among which it takes its rise. Here, while on the march, he descried from the brow of a hill, a war party of about sixty Blackfeet, on the plain immediately below him. His situation was perilous; for the greater part of his people were dispersed in various directions. Still, to betray hesitation or fear would be to discover his actual weakness, and to invite attack. He assumed, instantly, therefore, a belligerent tone; ordered the squaws to lead the horses to a small grove of ashen trees, and unload and tie them; and caused a great bustle to be made by his scanty handful; the leaders riding hither and thither, and vociferating with all their might, as if a numerous force was getting under way for an attack.

To keep up the deception as to his force, he ordered, at night, a number of extra fires to be made in his camp, and kept up a vigilant watch. His men were all directed to keep themselves prepared for instant action. In such cases the experienced trapper sleeps in his clothes, with his rifle beside him, the shot-belt and powder-flask on the stock: so that, in case of alarm, he can lay his hand upon the whole of his equipment at once, and start up, completely armed.

Captain Bonneville was also especially careful to secure the horses, and set a vigilant guard upon them; for there lies the great object and principal danger of a night attack. The grand move of the lurking savage is to cause a panic among the horses. In such cases one horse frightens another, until all are alarmed, and struggle to break loose. In camps where there are great numbers of Indians, with their horses, a night alarm of the kind is tremendous. The running of the horses that

have broken loose; the snorting, stamping, and rearing of those which remain fast; the howling of dogs; the yelling of Indians; the scampering of white men, and red men, with their guns; the overturning of lodges, and trampling of fires by the horses; the flashes of the fires, lighting up forms of men and steeds dashing through the gloom, altogether make up one of the wildest scenes of confusion imaginable. In this way, sometimes, all the horses of a camp amounting to several hundred will be frightened off in a single night.

The night passed off without any disturbance; but there was no likelihood that a war party of Blackfeet, once on the track of a camp where there was a chance for spoils, would fail to hover round it. The captain, therefore, continued to maintain the most vigilant precautions; throwing out scouts in the advance, and on every rising ground.

In the course of the day he arrived at the plain of white clay, already mentioned, surrounded by the mineral springs, called Beer Springs, by the trappers. Here the men all halted to have a regale. In a few moments every spring had its jovial knot of hard drinkers, with tin cup in hand, indulging in a mock carouse; quaffing, pledging, toasting, bandying jokes, singing drinking songs, and uttering peals of laughter, until it seemed as if their imaginations had given potency to the beverage, and cheated them into a fit of intoxication. Indeed, in the excitement of the moment, they were loud and extravagant in their commendations of "the mountain tap"; elevating it above every beverage produced from hops or malt. It was a singular and fantastic scene; suited to a region where everything is strange and peculiar:--These groups of trappers, and hunters, and Indians, with their wild costumes, and wilder countenances; their boisterous gayety, and reckless air; quaffing, and making merry round these sparkling fountains; while beside them lay their weep ons, ready to be snatched up for instant service. Painters are fond of representing banditti at their rude and picturesque carousels; but here were groups, still more rude and picturesque; and it needed but a sudden onset of Blackfeet, and a quick transition from a fantastic revel to a furious melee, to have rendered this picture of a trapper's life complete.

The beer frolic, however, passed off without any untoward circumstance; and, unlike most drinking bouts, left neither headache nor heartache behind. Captain Bonneville now directed his course up along Bear River; amusing himself, occasionally, with hunting the buffalo, with which the country was covered. Sometimes, when he saw a huge bull taking his repose in a prairie, he would steal along a ravine, until close upon him; then rouse him from his meditations with a pebble, and take a shot at him as he started up. Such is the quickness with which this animal springs upon his legs, that it is not easy to discover the muscular process by which it is effected. The horse rises first upon his fore legs; and the domestic cow, upon her hinder limbs; but the buffalo bounds at once from a couchant to an erect position, with a celerity that baffles the eye. Though from his bulk, and rolling gait, he does not appear to run with much swiftness; yet, it takes a stanch horse to overtake him, when at full speed on level ground; and a buffalo cow is still fleeter in her motion.

Among the Indians and half-breeds of the party, were several admirable horsemen and bold hunters; who amused themselves with a grotesque kind of buffalo bait. Whenever they found a huge bull in the plains, they prepared for their teasing and barbarous sport. Surrounding him on horseback, they would discharge their arrows at him in quick succession, goading him to make an attack; which, with a dexterous movement of the horse, they would easily avoid. In this way, they hovered round him, feathering him with arrows, as he reared and plunged about, until he was

bristled all over like a porcupine. When they perceived in him signs of exhaustion, and he could no longer be provoked to make battle, they would dismount from their horses, approach him in the rear, and seizing him by the tail, jerk him from side to side, and drag him backward; until the frantic animal, gathering fresh strength from fury, would break from them, and rush, with flashing eyes and a hoarse bellowing, upon any enemy in sight; but in a little while, his transient excitement at an end, would pitch headlong on the ground, and expire. The arrows were then plucked forth, the tongue cut out and preserved as a dainty, and the carcass left a banquet for the wolves. Pursuing his course up Bear River, Captain Bonneville arrived, on the 13th of June, at the Little Snake Lake; where he encamped for four or five days, that he might examine its shores and outlets. The latter, he found extremely muddy, and so surrounded by swamps and quagmires, that he was obliged to construct canoes of rushes, with which to explore them. The mouths of all the streams which fall into this lake from the west, are marshy and inconsiderable; but on the east side, there is a beautiful beach, broken, occasionally, by high and isolated bluffs, which advance upon the lake, and heighten the character of the scenery. The water is very shallow, but abounds with trout, and other small fish.

Having finished his survey of the lake, Captain Bonneville proceeded on his journey, until on the banks of the Bear River, some distance higher up, he came upon the party which he had detached a year before, to circumambulate the Great Salt Lake, and ascertain its extent, and the nature of its shores. They had been encamped here about twenty days; and were greatly rejoiced at meeting once more with their comrades, from whom they had so long been separated. The first inquiry of Captain Bonneville was about the result of their journey, and the information they had procured as to the Great Salt Lake; the object of his intense curiosity and ambition. The substance of their report will be found in the following chapter.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 38

Plan of the Salt Lake expedition--Great sandy deserts--Sufferings from thirst--Ogden's River--Trails and smoke of lurking savages--Thefts at night-- A trapper's revenge--Alarms of a guilty conscience-- A murderous victory--Californian mountains--Plains along the Pacific--Arrival at Monterey--Account of the place and neighborhood--Lower California-- Its extent--The Peninsula--Soil--Climate-- Production--Its settlements by the Jesuits--Their sway over the Indians--Their expulsion--Ruins of a missionary establishment--Sublime scenery--Upper California--Missions--Their power and policy-- Resources of the country--Designs of foreign nations

IT WAS ON THE 24TH of July, in the preceding year (1833), that the brigade of forty men set out from Green River valley, to explore the Great Salt Lake. They were to make the complete circuit of it, trapping on all the streams which should fall in their way, and to keep journals and make charts, calculated to impart a knowledge of the lake and the surrounding country. All the resources of Captain Bonneville had been tasked to fit out this favorite expedition. The country lying to the southwest of the mountains, and ranging down to California, was as yet almost unknown; being out of the buffalo range, it was untraversed by the trapper, who preferred those parts of the wilderness where the roaming herds of that species of animal gave him comparatively an abundant and luxurious life. Still it was said the deer, the elk, and the bighorn were to be found there, so that, with a little diligence and economy, there was no danger of lacking food. As a precaution,

however, the party halted on Bear River and hunted for a few days, until they had laid in a supply of dried buffalo meat and venison; they then passed by the head waters of the Cassie River, and soon found themselves launched on an immense sandy desert. Southwardly, on their left, they beheld the Great Salt Lake, spread out like a sea, but they found no stream running into it. A desert extended around them, and stretched to the southwest, as far as the eye could reach, rivalling the deserts of Asia and Africa in sterility. There was neither tree, nor herbage, nor spring, nor pool, nor running stream, nothing but parched wastes of sand, where horse and rider were in danger of perishing.

Their sufferings, at length, became so great that they abandoned their intended course, and made towards a range of snowy mountains, brightening in the north, where they hoped to find water. After a time, they came upon a small stream leading directly towards these mountains. Having quenched their burning thirst, and refreshed themselves and their weary horses for a time, they kept along this stream, which gradually increased in size, being fed by numerous brooks. After approaching the mountains, it took a sweep toward the southwest, and the travellers still kept along it, trapping beaver as they went, on the flesh of which they subsisted for the present, husbanding their dried meat for future necessities.

The stream on which they had thus fallen is called by some, Mary River, but is more generally known as Ogden's River, from Mr. Peter Ogden, an enterprising and intrepid leader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who first explored it. The wild and half-desert region through which the travellers were passing, is wandered over by hordes of Shoshokoes, or Root Diggers, the forlorn branch of the Snake tribe. They are a shy people, prone to keep aloof from the stranger. The travellers frequently met with their trails, and saw the smoke of their fires rising in various parts of the vast landscape, so that they knew there were great numbers in the neighborhood, but scarcely ever were any of them to be met with.

After a time, they began to have vexatious proofs that, if the Shoshokoes were quiet by day, they were busy at night. The camp was dogged by these eavesdroppers; scarce a morning, but various articles were missing, yet nothing could be seen of the marauders. What particularly exasperated the hunters, was to have their traps stolen from the streams. One morning, a trapper of a violent and savage character, discovering that his traps had been carried off in the night, took a horrid oath to kill the first Indian he should meet, innocent or guilty. As he was returning with his comrades to camp, he beheld two unfortunate Diggers, seated on the river bank, fishing. Advancing upon them, he levelled his rifle, shot one upon the spot, and flung his bleeding body into the stream. The other Indian fled and was suffered to escape. Such is the indifference with which acts of violence are regarded in the wilderness, and such the immunity an armed ruffian enjoys beyond the barriers of the laws, that the only punishment this desperado met with, was a rebuke from the leader of the party. The trappers now left the scene of this infamous tragedy, and kept on westward, down the course of the river, which wound along with a range of mountains on the right hand, and a sandy, but somewhat fertile plain, on the left. As they proceeded, they beheld columns of smoke rising, as before, in various directions, which their guilty consciences now converted into alarm signals, to arouse the country and collect the scattered bands for vengeance. After a time, the natives began to make their appearance, and sometimes in considerable numbers, but always pacific; the trappers, however, suspected them of deep-laid plans to draw them into ambuscades; to crowd into and get possession of their camp, and various other crafty and

daring conspiracies, which, it is probable, never entered into the heads of the poor savages. In fact, they are a simple, timid, inoffensive race, unpractised in warfare, and scarce provided with any weapons, excepting for the chase. Their lives are passed in the great sand plains and along the adjacent rivers; they subsist sometimes on fish, at other times on roots and the seeds of a plant, called the cat's-tail. They are of the same kind of people that Captain Bonneville found upon Snake River, and whom he found so mild and inoffensive.

The trappers, however, had persuaded themselves that they were making their way through a hostile country, and that implacable foes hung round their camp or beset their path, watching for an opportunity to surprise them. At length, one day they came to the banks of a stream emptying into Ogden's River, which they were obliged to ford. Here a great number of Shoshokoes were posted on the opposite bank. Persuaded they were there with hostile intent, they advanced upon them, levelled their rifles, and killed twenty five of them upon the spot. The rest fled to a short distance, then halted and turned about, howling and whining like wolves, and uttering the most piteous wailings. The trappers chased them in every direction; the poor wretches made no defence, but fled with terror; neither does it appear from the accounts of the boasted victors, that a weapon had been wielded or a weapon launched by the Indians throughout the affair. We feel perfectly convinced that the poor savages had no hostile intention, but had merely gathered together through motives of curiosity, as others of their tribe had done when Captain Bonneville and his companions passed along Snake River.

The trappers continued down Ogden's River, until they ascertained that it lost itself in a great swampy lake, to which there was no apparent discharge. They then struck directly westward, across the great chain of California mountains intervening between these interior plains and the shores of the Pacific.

For three and twenty days they were entangled among these mountains, the peaks and ridges of which are in many places covered with perpetual snow. Their passes and defiles present the wildest scenery, partaking of the sublime rather than the beautiful, and abounding with frightful precipices. The sufferings of the travellers among these savage mountains were extreme: for a part of the time they were nearly starved; at length, they made their way through them, and came down upon the plains of New California, a fertile region extending along the coast, with magnificent forests, verdant savannas, and prairies that looked like stately parks. Here they found deer and other game in abundance, and indemnified themselves for past famine. They now turned toward the south, and passing numerous small bands of natives, posted upon various streams, arrived at the Spanish village and post of Monterey.

This is a small place, containing about two hundred houses, situated in latitude 37° north. It has a capacious bay, with indifferent anchorage. The surrounding country is extremely fertile, especially in the valleys; the soil is richer, the further you penetrate into the interior, and the climate is described as a perpetual spring. Indeed, all California, extending along the Pacific Ocean from latitude 19° 30' to 42° north, is represented as one of the most fertile and beautiful regions in North America.

Lower California, in length about seven hundred miles, forms a great peninsula, which crosses the tropics and terminates in the torrid zone. It is separated from the mainland by the Gulf of California, sometimes called the Vermilion Sea; into this gulf empties the Colorado of the West, the Seeds-ke-dee, or Green River, as it is also sometimes called. The peninsula is traversed by stern

and barren mountains, and has many sandy plains, where the only sign of vegetation is the cylindrical cactus growing among the clefts of the rocks. Wherever there is water, however, and vegetable mould, the ardent nature of the climate quickens everything into astonishing fertility. There are valleys luxuriant with the rich and beautiful productions of the tropics. There the sugar-cane and indigo plant attain a perfection unequalled in any other part of North America. There flourish the olive, the fig, the date, the orange, the citron, the pomegranate, and other fruits belonging to the voluptuous climates of the south; with grapes in abundance, that yield a generous wine. In the interior are salt plains; silver mines and scanty veins of gold are said, likewise, to exist; and pearls of a beautiful water are to be fished upon the coast.

The peninsula of California was settled in 1698, by the Jesuits, who, certainly, as far as the natives were concerned, have generally proved the most beneficent of colonists. In the present instance, they gained and maintained a footing in the country without the aid of military force, but solely by religious influence. They formed a treaty, and entered into the most amicable relations with the natives, then numbering from twenty-five to thirty thousand souls, and gained a hold upon their affections, and a control over their minds, that effected a complete change in their condition. They built eleven missionary establishments in the various valleys of the peninsula, which formed rallying places for the surrounding savages, where they gathered together as sheep into the fold, and surrendered themselves and their consciences into the hands of these spiritual pastors. Nothing, we are told, could exceed the implicit and affectionate devotion of the Indian converts to the Jesuit fathers, and the Catholic faith was disseminated widely through the wilderness. The growing power and influence of the Jesuits in the New World at length excited the jealousy of the Spanish government, and they were banished from the colonies. The governor, who arrived at California to expel them, and to take charge of the country, expected to find a rich and powerful fraternity, with immense treasures hoarded in their missions, and an army of Indians ready to defend them. On the contrary, he beheld a few venerable silverhaired priests coming humbly forward to meet him, followed by a throng of weeping, but submissive natives. The heart of the governor, it is said, was so touched by this unexpected sight, that he shed tears; but he had to execute his orders.

The Jesuits were accompanied to the place of their embarkation by their simple and affectionate parishioners, who took leave of them with tears and sobs. Many of the latter abandoned their hereditary abodes, and wandered off to join their southern brethren, so that but a remnant remained in the peninsula. The Franciscans immediately succeeded the Jesuits, and subsequently the Dominicans; but the latter managed their affairs ill. But two of the missionary establishments are at present occupied by priests; the rest are all in ruins, excepting one, which remains a monument of the former power and prosperity of the order. This is a noble edifice, once the seat of the chief of the resident Jesuits. It is situated in a beautiful valley, about half way between the Gulf of California and the broad ocean, the peninsula being here about sixty miles wide. The edifice is of hewn stone, one story high, two hundred and ten feet in front, and about fifty-five feet deep. The walls are six feet thick, and sixteen feet high, with a vaulted roof of stone, about two feet and a half in thickness. It is now abandoned and desolate; the beautiful valley is without an inhabitant-- not a human being resides within thirty miles of the place!

In approaching this deserted mission-house from the south, the traveller passes over the mountain of San Juan, supposed to be the highest peak in the Californias. From this lofty eminence, a vast and magnificent prospect unfolds itself; the great Gulf of California, with the dark blue sea

beyond, studded with islands; and in another direction, the immense lava plain of San Gabriel. The splendor of the climate gives an Italian effect to the immense prospect. The sky is of a deep blue color, and the sunsets are often magnificent beyond description. Such is a slight and imperfect sketch of this remarkable peninsula.

Upper California extends from latitude  $31^{\circ} 10'$  to  $42^{\circ}$  on the Pacific, and inland, to the great chain of snow-capped mountains which divide it from the sand plains of the interior. There are about twenty-one missions in this province, most of which were established about fifty years since, and are generally under the care of the Franciscans. These exert a protecting sway over about thirty-five thousand Indian converts, who reside on the lands around the mission houses. Each of these houses has fifteen miles square of land allotted to it, subdivided into small lots, proportioned to the number of Indian converts attached to the mission. Some are enclosed with high walls; but in general they are open hamlets, composed of rows of huts, built of sunburnt bricks; in some instances whitewashed and roofed with tiles. Many of them are far in the interior, beyond the reach of all military protection, and dependent entirely on the good will of the natives, which never fails them. They have made considerable progress in teaching the Indians the useful arts. There are native tanners, shoemakers, weavers, blacksmiths, stonecutters, and other artificers attached to each establishment. Others are taught husbandry, and the rearing of cattle and horses; while the females card and spin wool, weave, and perform the other duties allotted to their sex in civilized life. No social intercourse is allowed between the unmarried of the opposite sexes after working hours; and at night they are locked up in separate apartments, and the keys delivered to the priests.

The produce of the lands, and all the profits arising from sales, are entirely at the disposal of the priests; whatever is not required for the support of the missions, goes to augment a fund which is under their control. Hides and tallow constitute the principal riches of the missions, and, indeed, the main commerce of the country. Grain might be produced to an unlimited extent at the establishments, were there a sufficient market for it. Olives and grapes are also reared at the missions. Horses and horned cattle abound throughout all this region; the former may be purchased at from three to five dollars, but they are of an inferior breed. Mules, which are here of a large size and of valuable qualities, cost from seven to ten dollars.

There are several excellent ports along this coast. San Diego, San Barbara, Monterey, the bay of San Francisco, and the northern port of Bondago; all afford anchorage for ships of the largest class. The port of San Francisco is too well known to require much notice in this place. The entrance from the sea is sixty-seven fathoms deep, and within, whole navies might ride with perfect safety. Two large rivers, which take their rise in mountains two or three hundred miles to the east, and run through a country unsurpassed for soil and climate, empty themselves into the harbor. The country around affords admirable timber for ship-building. In a word, this favored port combines advantages which not only fit it for a grand naval depot, but almost render it capable of being made the dominant military post of these seas.

Such is a feeble outline of the Californian coast and country, the value of which is more and more attracting the attention of naval powers. The Russians have always a ship of war upon this station, and have already encroached upon the Californian boundaries, by taking possession of the port of Bondago, and fortifying it with several guns. Recent surveys have likewise been made, both by the Russians and the English; and we have little doubt, that, at no very distant day, this neglected,

and, until recently, almost unknown region, will be found to possess sources of wealth sufficient to sustain a powerful and prosperous empire. Its inhabitants, themselves, are but little aware of its real riches; they have not enterprise sufficient to acquaint themselves with a vast interior that lies almost a terra incognita; nor have they the skill and industry to cultivate properly the fertile tracts along the coast; nor to prosecute that foreign commerce which brings all the resources of a country into profitable action.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 39

Gay life at Monterey--Mexican horsemen--A bold dragoon--Use of the lasso--Vaqueros--Noosing a bear--Fight between a bull and a bear--Departure from Monterey--Indian horse stealers--Outrages committed by the travellers--Indignation of Captain Bonneville

THE WANDERING BAND of trappers was well received at Monterey, the inhabitants were desirous of retaining them among them, and offered extravagant wages to such as were acquainted with any mechanic art. When they went into the country, too, they were kindly treated by the priests at the missions; who are always hospitable to strangers, whatever may be their rank or religion. They had no lack of provisions; being permitted to kill as many as they pleased of the vast herds of cattle that graze the country, on condition, merely, of rendering the hides to the owners. They attended bull-fights and horseraces; forgot all the purposes of their expedition; squandered away, freely, the property that did not belong to them; and, in a word, revelled in a perfect fool's paradise.

What especially delighted them was the equestrian skill of the Californians. The vast number and the cheapness of the horses in this country makes every one a cavalier. The Mexicans and half-breeds of California spend the greater part of their time in the saddle. They are fearless riders; and their daring feats upon unbroken colts and wild horses, astonished our trappers; though accustomed to the bold riders of the prairies.

A Mexican horseman has much resemblance, in many points, to the equestrians of Old Spain; and especially to the vain-glorious caballero of Andalusia. A Mexican dragoon, for instance, is represented as arrayed in a round blue jacket, with red cuffs and collar; blue velvet breeches, unbuttoned at the knees to show his white stockings; bottinas of deer skin; a round-crowned Andalusian hat, and his hair cued. On the pommel of his saddle, he carries balanced a long musket, with fox skin round the lock. He is cased in a cuirass of double-fold deer skin, and carries a bull's hide shield; he is forked in a Moorish saddle, high before and behind; his feet are thrust into wooden box stirrups, of Moorish fashion, and a tremendous pair of iron spurs, fastened by chains, jingle at his heels. Thus equipped, and suitably mounted, he considers himself the glory of California, and the terror of the universe.

The Californian horsemen seldom ride out without the laso [sic]; that is to say, a long coil of cord, with a slip noose; with which they are expert, almost to a miracle. The laso, now almost entirely confined to Spanish America, is said to be of great antiquity; and to have come, originally, from the East. It was used, we are told, by a pastoral people of Persian descent; of whom eight thousand accompanied the army of Xerxes. By the Spanish Americans, it is used for a variety of purposes; and among others, for hauling wood. Without dismounting, they cast the noose around a log, and thus drag it to their houses. The vaqueros, or Indian cattle drivers, have also learned the use of

the laso from the Spaniards; and employ it to catch the half-wild cattle by throwing it round their horns.

The laso is also of great use in furnishing the public with a favorite, though barbarous sport; the combat between a bear and a wild bull. For this purpose, three or four horsemen sally forth to some wood, frequented by bears, and, depositing the carcass of a bullock, hide themselves in the vicinity. The bears are soon attracted by the bait. As soon as one, fit for their purpose, makes his appearance, they run out, and with the laso, dexterously noose him by either leg. After dragging him at full speed until he is fatigued, they secure him more effectually; and tying him on the carcass of the bullock, draw him in triumph to the scene of action. By this time, he is exasperated to such frenzy, that they are sometimes obliged to throw cold water on him, to moderate his fury; and dangerous would it be, for horse and rider, were he, while in this paroxysm, to break his bonds.

A wild bull, of the fiercest kind, which has been caught and exasperated in the same manner, is now produced; and both animals are turned loose in the arena of a small amphitheatre. The mortal fight begins instantly; and always, at first, to the disadvantage of Bruin; fatigued, as he is, by his previous rough riding. Roused, at length, by the repeated goading of the bull, he seizes his muzzle with his sharp claws, and clinging to this most sensitive part, causes him to bellow with rage and agony. In his heat and fury, the bull lolls out his tongue; this is instantly clutched by the bear; with a desperate effort he overturns his huge antagonist; and then dispatches him without difficulty. Beside this diversion, the travellers were likewise regaled with bull-fights, in the genuine style of Old Spain; the Californians being considered the best bull-fighters in the Mexican dominions. After a considerable sojourn at Monterey, spent in these very edifying, but not very profitable amusements, the leader of this vagabond party set out with his comrades, on his return journey. Instead of retracing their steps through the mountains, they passed round their southern extremity, and, crossing a range of low hills, found themselves in the sandy plains south of Ogden's River; in traversing which, they again suffered, grievously, for want of water.

In the course of their journey, they encountered a party of Mexicans in pursuit of a gang of natives, who had been stealing horses. The savages of this part of California are represented as extremely poor, and armed only with stone-pointed arrows; it being the wise policy of the Spaniards not to furnish them with firearms. As they find it difficult, with their blunt shafts, to kill the wild game of the mountains, they occasionally supply themselves with food, by entrapping the Spanish horses. Driving them stealthily into fastnesses and ravines, they slaughter them without difficulty, and dry their flesh for provisions. Some they carry off to trade with distant tribes; and in this way, the Spanish horses pass from hand to hand among the Indians, until they even find their way across the Rocky Mountains.

The Mexicans are continually on the alert, to intercept these marauders; but the Indians are apt to outwit them, and force them to make long and wild expeditions in pursuit of their stolen horses. Two of the Mexican party just mentioned joined the band of trappers, and proved themselves worthy companions. In the course of their journey through the country frequented by the poor Root Diggers, there seems to have been an emulation between them, which could inflict the greatest outrages upon the natives. The trappers still considered them in the light of dangerous foes; and the Mexicans, very probably, charged them with the sin of horse-stealing; we have no other mode of accounting for the infamous barbarities of which, according to their own story, they were

guilty; hunting the poor Indians like wild beasts, and killing them without mercy. The Mexicans excelled at this savage sport; chasing their unfortunate victims at full speed; noosing them round the neck with their lasos, and then dragging them to death!

Such are the scanty details of this most disgraceful expedition; at least, such are all that Captain Bonneville had the patience to collect; for he was so deeply grieved by the failure of his plans, and so indignant at the atrocities related to him, that he turned, with disgust and horror, from the narrators. Had he exerted a little of the Lynch law of the wilderness, and hanged those dexterous horsemen in their own lasos, it would but have been a well-merited and salutary act of retributive justice. The failure of this expedition was a blow to his pride, and a still greater blow to his purse. The Great Salt Lake still remained unexplored; at the same time, the means which had been furnished so liberally to fit out this favorite expedition, had all been squandered at Monterey; and the peltries, also, which had been collected on the way. He would have but scanty returns, therefore, to make this year, to his associates in the United States; and there was great danger of their becoming disheartened, and abandoning the enterprise.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 40

Traveller's tales -- Indian lurkers -- Prognostics of Buckeye -- Signs and portents -- The medicine wolf -- An alarm -- An ambush -- The captured provant Triumph of Buckeye -- Arrival of supplies -- Grand carouse -- Arrangements for the year -- Mr. Wyeth and his new-levied band.

THE horror and indignation felt by Captain Bonneville at the excesses of the Californian adventurers were not participated by his men; on the contrary, the events of that expedition were favorite themes in the camp. The heroes of Monterey bore the palm in all the gossipings among the hunters. Their glowing descriptions of Spanish bear-baits and bull-fights especially, were listened to with intense delight; and had another expedition to California been proposed, the difficulty would have been to restrain a general eagerness to volunteer.

The captain had not long been at the rendezvous when he perceived, by various signs, that Indians were lurking in the neighborhood. It was evident that the Blackfoot band, which he had seen when on his march, had dogged his party, and were intent on mischief. He endeavored to keep his camp on the alert; but it is as difficult to maintain discipline among trappers at a rendezvous as among sailors when in port.

Buckeye, the Delaware Indian, was scandalized at this heedlessness of the hunters when an enemy was at hand, and was continually preaching up caution. He was a little prone to play the prophet, and to deal in signs and portents, which occasionally excited the merriment of his white comrades. He was a great dreamer, and believed in charms and talismans, or medicines, and could foretell the approach of strangers by the howling or barking of the small prairie wolf. This animal, being driven by the larger wolves from the carcasses left on the hunting grounds by the hunters, follows the trail of the fresh meat carried to the camp. Here the smell of the roast and broiled, mingling with every breeze, keeps them hovering about the neighborhood; scenting every blast, turning up their noses like hungry hounds, and testifying their pinching hunger by long whining howls and impatient barkings. These are interpreted by the superstitious Indians into warnings that strangers are at hand; and one accidental coincidence, like the chance fulfillment of an almanac prediction, is sufficient to cover a thousand failures. This little, whining, feast-smelling animal

is, therefore, called among Indians the "medicine wolf;" and such was one of Buckeye's infallible oracles.

One morning early, the soothsaying Delaware appeared with a gloomy countenance. His mind was full of dismal presentiments, whether from mysterious dreams, or the intimations of the medicine wolf, does not appear. "Danger," he said, "was lurking in their path, and there would be some fighting before sunset." He was bantered for his prophecy, which was attributed to his having supped too heartily, and been visited by bad dreams. In the course of the morning a party of hunters set out in pursuit of buffaloes, taking with them a mule, to bring home the meat they should procure. They had been some few hours absent, when they came clattering at full speed into camp, giving the war cry of Blackfeet! Blackfeet! Every one seized his weapon and ran to learn the cause of the alarm. It appeared that the hunters, as they were returning leisurely, leading their mule well laden with prime pieces of buffalo meat, passed close by a small stream overhung with trees, about two miles from the camp. Suddenly a party of Blackfeet, who lay in ambush along the thickets, sprang up with a fearful yell, and discharged a volley at the hunters. The latter immediately threw themselves flat on their horses, put them to their speed, and never paused to look behind, until they found themselves in camp. Fortunately they had escaped without a wound; but the mule, with all the "provant," had fallen into the hands of the enemy. This was a loss, as well as an insult, not to be borne. Every man sprang to horse, and with rifle in hand, galloped off to punish the Blackfeet, and rescue the buffalo beef. They came too late; the marauders were off, and all that they found of their mule was the dents of his hoofs, as he had been conveyed off at a round trot, bearing his savory cargo to the hills, to furnish the scampering savages with a banquet of roast meat at the expense of the white men.

The party returned to camp, balked of their revenge, but still more grievously balked of their supper. Buckeye, the Delaware, sat smoking by his fire, perfectly composed. As the hunters related the particulars of the attack, he listened in silence, with unruffled countenance, then pointing to the west, "the sun has not yet set," said he: "Buckeye did not dream like a fool!"

All present now recollected the prediction of the Indian at daybreak, and were struck with what appeared to be its fulfilment. They called to mind, also, a long catalogue of foregone presentiments and predictions made at various times by the Delaware, and, in their superstitious credulity, began to consider him a veritable seer; without thinking how natural it was to predict danger, and how likely to have the prediction verified in the present instance, when various signs gave evidence of a lurking foe.

The various bands of Captain Bonneville's company had now been assembled for some time at the rendezvous; they had had their fill of feasting, and frolicking, and all the species of wild and often uncouth merrymaking, which invariably take place on these occasions. Their horses, as well as themselves, had recovered from past famine and fatigue, and were again fit for active service; and an impatience began to manifest itself among the men once more to take the field, and set off on some wandering expedition.

At this juncture M. Cerre arrived at the rendezvous at the head of a supply party, bringing goods and equipments from the States. This active leader, it will be recollected, had embarked the year previously in skin-boats on the Bighorn, freighted with the year's collection of peltries. He had met with misfortune in the course of his voyage: one of his frail barks being upset, and part of the furs lost or damaged.

The arrival of the supplies gave the regular finish to the annual revel. A grand outbreak of wild debauch ensued among the mountaineers; drinking, dancing, swaggering, gambling, quarrelling, and fighting. Alcohol, which, from its portable qualities, containing the greatest quantity of fiery spirit in the smallest compass, is the only liquor carried across the mountains, is the inflammatory beverage at these carousals, and is dealt out to the trappers at four dollars a pint. When inflamed by this fiery beverage, they cut all kinds of mad pranks and gambols, and sometimes burn all their clothes in their drunken bravadoes. A camp, recovering from one of these riotous revels, presents a seriocomic spectacle; black eyes, broken heads, lack-lustre visages. Many of the trappers have squandered in one drunken frolic the hard-earned wages of a year; some have run in debt, and must toil on to pay for past pleasure. All are sated with this deep draught of pleasure, and eager to commence another trapping campaign; for hardship and hard work, spiced with the stimulants of wild adventures, and topped off with an annual frantic carousal, is the lot of the restless trapper. The captain now made his arrangements for the current year. Cerre and Walker, with a number of men who had been to California, were to proceed to St. Louis with the packages of furs collected during the past year. Another party, headed by a leader named Montero, was to proceed to the Crow country, trap upon its various streams, and among the Black Hills, and thence to proceed to the Arkansas, where he was to go into winter quarters.

The captain marked out for himself a widely different course. He intended to make another expedition, with twenty-three men to the lower part of the Columbia River, and to proceed to the valley of the Multnomah; after wintering in those parts, and establishing a trade with those tribes, among whom he had sojourned on his first visit, he would return in the spring, cross the Rocky Mountains, and join Montero and his party in the month of July, at the rendezvous of the Arkansas; where he expected to receive his annual supplies from the States.

If the reader will cast his eye upon a map, he may form an idea of the contempt for distance which a man acquires in this vast wilderness, by noticing the extent of country comprised in these projected wanderings. Just as the different parties were about to set out on the 3d of July, on their opposite routes, Captain Bonneville received intelligence that Wyeth, the indefatigable leader of the salmon-fishing enterprise, who had parted with him about a year previously on the banks of the Bighorn, to descend that wild river in a bull boat, was near at hand, with a new levied band of hunters and trappers, and was on his way once more to the banks of the Columbia,

As we take much interest in the novel enterprise of this eastern man," and are pleased with his pushing and persevering spirit; and as his movements are characteristic of life in the wilderness, we will, with the reader's permission, while Captain Bonneville is breaking up his camp and saddling his horses, step back a year in time, and a few hundred miles in distance to the bank of the Bighorn, and launch ourselves with Wyeth in his bull boat; and though his adventurous voyage will take us many hundreds of miles further down wild and wandering rivers; yet such is the magic power of the pen, that we promise to bring the reader safe to Bear River Valley, by the time the last horse is saddled.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 41

A voyage in a bull boat.

It was about the middle of August (1833) that Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, as the reader may recol-

---

lect, launched his bull boat at the foot of the rapids of the Bighorn, and departed in advance of the parties of Campbell and Captain Bonneville. His boat was made of three buffalo skins, stretched on a light frame, stitched together, and the seams paid with elk tallow and ashes. It was eighteen feet long, and about five feet six inches wide, sharp at each end, with a round bottom, and drew about a foot and a half of water—a depth too great for these upper rivers, which abound with shallows and sand-bars. The crew consisted of two half-breeds, who claimed to be white men, though a mixture of the French creole and the Shawnee and Potawattomie. They claimed, moreover, to be thorough mountaineers, and first-rate hunters -- the common boast of these vagabonds of the wilderness. Besides these, there was a Nez Perce lad of eighteen years of age, a kind of servant of all work, whose great aim, like all Indian servants, was to do as little work as possible; there was, moreover, a half-breed boy, of thirteen, named Baptiste, son of a Hudson's Bay trader by a Flat-head beauty; who was travelling with Wyeth to see the world and complete his education. Add to these, Mr. Milton Sublette, who went as passenger, and we have the crew of the little bull boat complete.

It certainly was a slight armament with which to run the gauntlet through countries swarming with hostile hordes, and a slight bark to navigate these endless rivers, tossing and pitching down rapids, running on snags and bumping on sand-bars; such, however, are the cockle-shells with which these hardy rovers of the wilderness will attempt the wildest streams; and it is surprising what rough shocks and thumps these boats will endure, and what vicissitudes they will live through. Their duration, however, is but limited; they require frequently to be hauled out of the water and dried, to prevent the hides from becoming water-soaked; and they eventually rot and go to pieces.

The course of the river was a little to the north of east; it ran about five miles an hour, over a gravelly bottom. The banks were generally alluvial, and thickly grown with cottonwood trees, intermingled occasionally with ash and plum trees. Now and then limestone cliffs and promontories advanced upon the river, making picturesque headlands. Beyond the woody borders rose ranges of naked hills.

Milton Sublette was the Pelorus of this adventurous bark; being somewhat experienced in this wild kind of navigation. It required all his attention and skill, however, to pilot her clear of sand-bars and snags of sunken trees. There was often, too, a perplexity of choice, where the river branched into various channels, among clusters of islands; and occasionally the voyagers found themselves aground and had to turn back.

It was necessary, also, to keep a wary eye upon the land, for they were passing through the heart of the Crow country, and were continually in reach of any ambush that might be lurking on shore. The most formidable foes that they saw, however, were three grizzly bears, quietly promenading along the bank, who seemed to gaze at them with surprise as they glided by. Herds of buffalo, also, were moving about, or lying on the ground, like cattle in a pasture; excepting such inhabitants as these, a perfect solitude reigned over the land. There was no sign of human habitation; for the Crows, as we have already shown, are a wandering people, a race of hunters and warriors, who live in tents and on horseback, and are continually on the move.

At night they landed, hauled up their boat to dry, pitched their tent, and made a rousing fire. Then, as it was the first evening of their voyage, they indulged in a regale, relishing their buffalo beef with inspiring alcohol; after which, they slept soundly, without dreaming of Crows or Black-

feet. Early in the morning, they again launched the boat and committed themselves to the stream. In this way they voyaged for two days without any material occurrence, excepting a severe thunder storm, which compelled them to put to shore, and wait until it was passed. On the third morning they descried some persons at a distance on the river bank. As they were now, by calculation, at no great distance from Fort Cass, a trading post of the American Fur Company, they supposed these might be some of its people. A nearer approach showed them to be Indians. Descrying a woman apart from the rest, they landed and accosted her. She informed them that the main force of the Crow nation, consisting of five bands, under their several chiefs, were but about two or three miles below, on their way up along the river. This was unpleasant tidings, but to retreat was impossible, and the river afforded no hiding place. They continued forward, therefore, trusting that, as Fort Cass was so near at hand, the Crows might refrain from any depredations. Floating down about two miles further, they came in sight of the first band, scattered along the river bank, all well mounted; some armed with guns, others with bows and arrows, and a few with lances. They made a wildly picturesque appearance managing their horses with their accustomed dexterity and grace. Nothing can be more spirited than a band of Crow cavaliers. They are a fine race of men averaging six feet in height, lithe and active, with hawks' eyes and Roman noses. The latter feature is common to the Indians on the east side of the Rocky Mountains; those on the western side have generally straight or flat noses.

Wyeth would fain have slipped by this cavalcade unnoticed; but the river, at this place, was not more than ninety yards across; he was perceived, therefore, and hailed by the vagabond warriors, and, we presume, in no very choice language; for, among their other accomplishments, the Crows are famed for possessing a Billingsgate vocabulary of unrivalled opulence, and for being by no means sparing of it whenever an occasion offers. Indeed, though Indians are generally very lofty, rhetorical, and figurative in their language at all great talks, and high ceremonials, yet, if trappers and traders may be believed, they are the most unsavory vagabonds in their ordinary colloquies; they make no hesitation to call a spade a spade; and when they once undertake to call hard names, the famous pot and kettle, of vituperating memory, are not to be compared with them for scurrility of epithet.

To escape the infliction of any compliments of this kind, or the launching, peradventure, of more dangerous missiles, Wyeth landed with the best grace in his power and approached the chief of the band. It was Arapooish, the quondam friend of Rose the outlaw, and one whom we have already mentioned as being anxious to promote a friendly intercourse between his tribe and the white men. He was a tall, stout man, of good presence, and received the voyagers very graciously. His people, too, thronged around them, and were officiously attentive after the Crow fashion. One took a great fancy to Baptiste the Flathead boy, and a still greater fancy to a ring on his finger, which he transposed to his own with surprising dexterity, and then disappeared with a quick step among the crowd.

Another was no less pleased with the Nez Perce lad, and nothing would do but he must exchange knives with him; drawing a new knife out of the Nez Perce's scabbard, and putting an old one in its place. Another stepped up and replaced this old knife with one still older, and a third helped himself to knife, scabbard and all. It was with much difficulty that Wyeth and his companions extricated themselves from the clutches of these officious Crows before they were entirely plucked. Falling down the river a little further, they came in sight of the second band, and sheered to the

opposite side, with the intention of passing them. The Crows were not to be evaded. Some pointed their guns at the boat, and threatened to fire; others stripped, plunged into the stream, and came swimming across. Making a virtue of necessity, Wyeth threw a cord to the first that came within reach, as if he wished to be drawn to the shore.

In this way he was overhauled by every band, and by the time he and his people came out of the busy hands of the last, they were eased of most of their superfluities. Nothing, in all probability, but the proximity of the American trading post, kept these land pirates from making a good prize of the bull boat and all its contents.

These bands were in full march, equipped for war, and evidently full of mischief. They were, in fact, the very bands that overran the land in the autumn of 1833; partly robbed Fitzpatrick of his horses and effects; hunted and harassed Captain Bonneville and his people; broke up their trapping campaigns, and, in a word, drove them all out of the Crow country. It has been suspected that they were set on to these pranks by some of the American Fur Company, anxious to defeat the plans of their rivals of the Rocky Mountain Company; for at this time, their competition was at its height, and the trade of the Crow country was a great object of rivalry. What makes this the more probable, is, that the Crows in their depredation seemed by no means bloodthirsty, but intent chiefly on robbing the parties of their traps and horses, thereby disabling them from prosecuting their hunting.

We should observe that this year, the Rocky Mountain Company were pushing their way up the rivers, and establishing rival posts near those of the American Company; and that, at the very time of which we are speaking, Captain Sublette was ascending the Yellowstone with a keel boat, laden with supplies; so that there was every prospect of this eager rivalry being carried to extremes.

The last band of Crow warriors had scarcely disappeared in the clouds of dust they had raised, when our voyagers arrived at the mouth of the river and glided into the current of the Yellowstone. Turning down this stream, they made for Fort Cass, which is situated on the right bank, about three miles below the Bighorn. On the opposite side they beheld a party of thirty-one savages, which they soon ascertained to be Blackfeet. The width of the river enabled them to keep at a sufficient distance, and they soon landed at Fort Cass. This was a mere fortification against Indians; being a stockade of about one hundred and thirty feet square, with two bastions at the extreme corners. M'Tulloch, an agent of the American Company, was stationed there with twenty men; two boats of fifteen tons burden were lying here; but at certain seasons of the year a steamboat can come up to the fort.

They had scarcely arrived, when the Blackfeet warriors made their appearance on the opposite bank, displaying two American flags in token of amity. They plunged into the river, swam across, and were kindly received at the fort. They were some of the very men who had been engaged, the year previously, in the battle at Pierre's Hole, and a fierce-looking set of fellows they were; tall and hawk-nosed, and very much resembling the Crows. They professed to be on an amicable errand, to make peace with the Crows, and set off in all haste, before night, to overtake them. Wyeth predicted that they would lose their scalps; for he had heard the Crows denounce vengeance on them, for having murdered two of their warriors who had ventured among them on the faith of a treaty of peace. It is probable, however, that this pacific errand was all a pretence, and that the real object of the Blackfeet braves was to hang about the skirts of the Crow band, steal their horses,

and take the scalps of stragglers.

At Fort Cass, Mr. Wyeth disposed of some packages of beaver, and a quantity of buffalo robes. On the following morning (August 18th), he once more launched his bull boat, and proceeded down the Yellowstone, which inclined in an east-northeast direction. The river had alluvial bottoms, fringed with great quantities of the sweet cotton-wood, and interrupted occasionally by "bluffs" of sandstone. The current occasionally brings down fragments of granite and porphyry.

In the course of the day, they saw something moving on the bank among the trees, which they mistook for game of some kind; and, being in want of provisions, pulled toward shore. They discovered, just in time, a party of Blackfeet, lurking in the thickets, and sheered, with all speed, to the opposite side of the river.

After a time, they came in sight of a gang of elk. Wyeth was immediately for pursuing them, rifle in hand, but saw evident signs of dissatisfaction in his half-breed hunters; who considered him as trenching upon their province, and meddling with things quite above his capacity; for these veterans of the wilderness are exceedingly pragmatical, on points of venery and woodcraft, and tenacious of their superiority; looking down with infinite contempt upon all raw beginners. The two worthies, therefore, sallied forth themselves, but after a time returned empty-handed. They laid the blame, however, entirely on their guns; two miserable old pieces with flint locks, which, with all their picking and hammering, were continually apt to miss fire. These great boasters of the wilderness, however, are very often exceeding bad shots, and fortunate it is for them when they have old flint guns to bear the blame.

The next day they passed where a great herd of buffalo was bellowing on a prairie. Again the Castor and Pollux of the wilderness sallied forth, and again their flint guns were at fault, and missed fire, and nothing went off but the buffalo. Wyeth now found there was danger of losing his dinner if he depended upon his hunters; he took rifle in hand, therefore, and went forth himself. In the course of an hour he returned laden with buffalo meat, to the great mortification of the two regular hunters, who were annoyed at being eclipsed by a greenhorn.

All hands now set to work to prepare the midday repast. A fire was made under an immense cotton-wood tree, that overshadowed a beautiful piece of meadow land; rich morsels of buffalo hump were soon roasting before it; in a hearty and prolonged repast, the two unsuccessful hunters gradually recovered from their mortification; threatened to discard their old flint guns as soon as they should reach the settlements, and boasted more than ever of the wonderful shots they had made, when they had guns that never missed fire.

Having hauled up their boat to dry in the sun, previous to making their repast, the voyagers now set it once more afloat, and proceeded on their way. They had constructed a sail out of their old tent, which they hoisted whenever the wind was favorable, and thus skimmed along down the stream. Their voyage was pleasant, notwithstanding the perils by sea and land, with which they were environed. Whenever they could they encamped on islands for the greater security. If on the mainland, and in a dangerous neighborhood, they would shift their camp after dark, leaving their fire burning, dropping down the river some distance, and making no fire at their second encampment. Sometimes they would float all night with the current; one keeping watch and steering while the rest slept. In such case, they would haul their boat on shore, at noon of the following day to dry; for notwithstanding every precaution, she was gradually getting water-soaked and rotten. There was something pleasingly solemn and mysterious in thus floating down these wild rivers at

---

night. The purity of the atmosphere in these elevated regions gave additional splendor to the stars, and heightened the magnificence of the firmament. The occasional rush and laving of the waters; the vague sounds from the surrounding wilderness; the dreary howl, or rather whine of wolves from the plains; the low grunting and bellowing of the buffalo, and the shrill neighing of the elk, struck the ear with an effect unknown in the daytime.

The two knowing hunters had scarcely recovered from one mortification when they were fated to experience another. As the boat was gliding swiftly round a low promontory, thinly covered with trees, one of them gave the alarm of Indians. The boat was instantly shoved from shore and every one caught up his rifle. "Where are they?" cried Wyeth.

"There -- there! riding on horseback!" cried one of the hunters.

"Yes; with white scarfs on!" cried the other.

Wyeth looked in the direction they pointed, but descried nothing but two bald eagles, perched on a low dry branch beyond the thickets, and seeming, from the rapid motion of the boat, to be moving swiftly in an opposite direction. The detection of this blunder in the two veterans, who prided themselves on the sureness and quickness of their sight, produced a hearty laugh at their expense, and put an end to their vauntings.

The Yellowstone, above the confluence of the Bighorn, is a clear stream; its waters were now gradually growing turbid, and assuming the yellow clay color of the Missouri. The current was about four miles an hour, with occasional rapids; some of them dangerous, but the voyagers passed them all without accident. The banks of the river were in many places precipitous with strata of bituminous coal.

They now entered a region abounding with buffalo -- that ever-journeying animal, which moves in countless droves from point to point of the vast wilderness; traversing plains, pouring through the intricate defiles of mountains, swimming rivers, ever on the move, guided on its boundless migrations by some traditionary knowledge, like the finny tribes of the ocean, which, at certain seasons, find their mysterious paths across the deep and revisit the remotest shores.

These great migratory herds of buffalo have their hereditary paths and highways, worn deep through the country, and making for the surest passes of the mountains, and the most practicable fords of the rivers. When once a great column is in full career, it goes straight forward, regardless of all obstacles; those in front being impelled by the moving mass behind. At such times they will break through a camp, trampling down everything in their course.

It was the lot of the voyagers, one night, to encamp at one of these buffalo landing places, and exactly on the trail. They had not been long asleep, when they were awakened by a great bellowing, and tramping, and the rush, and splash, and snorting of animals in the river. They had just time to ascertain that a buffalo army was entering the river on the opposite side, and making toward the landing place. With all haste they moved their boat and shifted their camp, by which time the head of the column had reached the shore, and came pressing up the bank.

It was a singular spectacle, by the uncertain moonlight, to behold this countless throng making their way across the river, blowing, and bellowing, and splashing. Sometimes they pass in such dense and continuous column as to form a temporary dam across the river, the waters of which rise and rush over their backs, or between their squadrons. The roaring and rushing sound of one of these vast herds crossing a river, may sometimes in a still night be heard for miles.

The voyagers now had game in profusion. They could kill as many buffaloes as they pleased, and,

---

occasionally, were wanton in their havoc; especially among scattered herds, that came swimming near the boat. On one occasion, an old buffalo bull approached so near that the half-breeds must fain try to noose him as they would a wild horse. The noose was successfully thrown around his head, and secured him by the horns, and they now promised themselves ample sport. The buffalo made prodigious turmoil in the water, bellowing, and blowing, and floundering; and they all floated down the stream together. At length he found foothold on a sandbar, and taking to his heels, whirled the boat after him like a whale when harpooned; so that the hunters were obliged to cast off their rope, with which strange head-gear the venerable bull made off to the prairies. On the 24th of August, the bull boat emerged, with its adventurous crew, into the broad bosom of the mighty Missouri. Here, about six miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone, the voyagers landed at Fort Union, the distributing post of the American Fur Company in the western country. It was a stockaded fortress, about two hundred and twenty feet square, pleasantly situated on a high bank. Here they were hospitably entertained by Mr. M'Kenzie, the superintendent, and remained with him three days, enjoying the unusual luxuries of bread, butter, milk, and cheese, for the fort was well supplied with domestic cattle, though it had no garden. The atmosphere of these elevated regions is said to be too dry for the culture of vegetables; yet the voyagers, in coming down the Yellowstone, had met with plums, grapes, cherries, and currants, and had observed ash and elm trees. Where these grow the climate cannot be incompatible with gardening.

At Fort Union, Wyeth met with a melancholy memento of one of his men. This was a powder-flask, which a clerk had purchased from a Blackfoot warrior. It bore the initials of poor More, the unfortunate youth murdered the year previously, at Jackson's Hole, by the Blackfeet, and whose bones had been subsequently found by Captain Bonneville. This flask had either been passed from hand to hand of the youth, or, perhaps, had been brought to the fort by the very savage who slew him.

As the bull boat was now nearly worn out, and altogether unfit for the broader and more turbulent stream of the Missouri, it was given up, and a canoe of cottonwood, about twenty feet long, fabricated by the Blackfeet, was purchased to supply its place. In this Wyeth hoisted his sail, and bidding adieu to the hospitable superintendent of Fort Union, turned his prow to the east, and set off down the Missouri.

He had not proceeded many hours, before, in the evening, he came to a large keel boat at anchor. It proved to be the boat of Captain William Sublette, freighted with munitions for carrying on a powerful opposition to the American Fur Company. The voyagers went on board, where they were treated with the hearty hospitality of the wilderness, and passed a social evening, talking over past scenes and adventures, and especially the memorable fight at Pierre's Hole.

Here Milton Sublette determined to give up further voyaging in the canoe, and remain with his brother; accordingly, in the morning, the fellow-voyagers took kind leave of each other. and Wyeth continued on his course. There was now no one on board of his boat that had ever voyaged on the Missouri; it was, however, all plain sailing down the stream, without any chance of missing the way.

All day the voyagers pulled gently along, and landed in the evening and supped; then re-embarking, they suffered the canoe to float down with the current; taking turns to watch and sleep. The night was calm and serene; the elk kept up a continual whinnying or squealing, being the commencement of the season when they are in heat. In the midst of the night the canoe struck on a

sand-bar, and all hands were roused by the rush and roar of the wild waters, which broke around her. They were all obliged to jump overboard, and work hard to get her off, which was accomplished with much difficulty.

In the course of the following day they saw three grizzly bears at different times along the bank. The last one was on a point of land, and was evidently making for the river, to swim across. The two half-breed hunters were now eager to repeat the manoeuvre of the noose; promising to entrap Bruin, and have rare sport in strangling and drowning him. Their only fear was, that he might take fright and return to land before they could get between him and the shore. Holding back, therefore, until he was fairly committed in the centre of the stream, they then pulled forward with might and main, so as to cut off his retreat, and take him in the rear. One of the worthies stationed himself in the bow, with the cord and slip-noose, the other, with the Nez Perce, managed the paddles. There was nothing further from the thoughts of honest Bruin, however, than to beat a retreat. Just as the canoe was drawing near, he turned suddenly round and made for it, with a horrible snarl and a tremendous show of teeth. The affrighted hunter called to his comrades to paddle off. Scarce had they turned the boat when the bear laid his enormous claws on the gunwale, and attempted to get on board. The canoe was nearly overturned, and a deluge of water came pouring over the gunwale. All was clamor, terror, and confusion. Every one bawled out - the bear roared and snarled - one caught up a gun; but water had rendered it useless. Others handled their paddles more effectually, and beating old Bruin about the head and claws, obliged him to relinquish his hold. They now plied their paddles with might and main, the bear made the best of his way to shore, and so ended the second exploit of the noose; the hunters determined to have no more naval contests with grizzly bears.

The voyagers were now out of range of Crows and Black-feet; but they were approaching the country of the Rees, or Arickaras; a tribe no less dangerous; and who were, generally, hostile to small parties.

In passing through their country, Wyeth laid by all day, and drifted quietly down the river at night. In this way he passed on, until he supposed himself safely through the region of danger; when he resumed his voyage in the open day. On the 3d of September he had landed, at midday, to dine; and while some were making a fire, one of the hunters mounted a high bank to look out for game. He had scarce glanced his eye round, when he perceived horses grazing on the opposite side of the river. Crouching down he slunk back to the camp, and reported what he had seen. On further reconnoitering, the voyagers counted twenty-one lodges; and from the number of horses, computed that there must be nearly a hundred Indians encamped there. They now drew their boat, with all speed and caution, into a thicket of water willows, and remained closely concealed all day. As soon as the night closed in they re-embarked. The moon would rise early; so that they had but about two hours of darkness to get past the camp. The night, however, was cloudy, with a blustering wind. Silently, and with muffled oars, they glided down the river, keeping close under the shore opposite to the camp; watching its various lodges and fires, and the dark forms passing to and fro between them. Suddenly, on turning a point of land, they found themselves close upon a camp on their own side of the river. It appeared that not more than one half of the band had crossed. They were within a few yards of the shore; they saw distinctly the savages -- some standing, some lying round the fire. Horses were grazing around. Some lodges were set up, others had been sent across the river. The red glare of the fires upon these wild groups and harsh faces,

contrasted with the surrounding darkness, had a startling effect, as the voyagers suddenly came upon the scene. The dogs of the camp perceived them, and barked; but the Indians, fortunately, took no heed of their clamor. Wyeth instantly sheered his boat out into the stream; when, unluckily it struck upon a sand-bar, and stuck fast. It was a perilous and trying situation; for he was fixed between the two camps, and within rifle range of both. All hands jumped out into the water, and tried to get the boat off; but as no one dared to give the word, they could not pull together, and their labor was in vain. In this way they labored for a long time; until Wyeth thought of giving a signal for a general heave, by lifting his hat. The expedient succeeded. They launched their canoe again into deep water, and getting in, had the delight of seeing the camp fires of the savages soon fading in the distance.

They continued under way the greater part of the night, until far beyond all danger from this band, when they pulled to shore, and encamped.

The following day was windy, and they came near upsetting their boat in carrying sail. Toward evening, the wind subsided and a beautiful calm night succeeded. They floated along with the current throughout the night, taking turns to watch and steer. The deep stillness of the night was occasionally interrupted by the neighing of the elk, the hoarse lowing of the buffalo, the hooting of large owls, and the screeching of the small ones, now and then the splash of a beaver, or the gonglike sound of the swan.

Part of their voyage was extremely tempestuous; with high winds, tremendous thunder, and soaking rain; and they were repeatedly in extreme danger from drift-wood and sunken trees. On one occasion, having continued to float at night, after the moon was down, they ran under a great snag, or sunken tree, with dry branches above the water. These caught the mast, while the boat swung round, broadside to the stream, and began to fill with water. Nothing saved her from total wreck, but cutting away the mast. She then drove down the stream, but left one of the unlucky half-breeds clinging to the snag, like a monkey to a pole. It was necessary to run in shore, toil up, laboriously, along the eddies and to attain some distance above the snag, when they launched forth again into the stream and floated down with it to his rescue.

We forbear to detail all the circumstances and adventures of upward of a months voyage, down the windings and doublings of this vast river; in the course of which they stopped occasionally at a post of one of the rival fur companies, or at a government agency for an Indian tribe. Neither shall we dwell upon the changes of climate and productions, as the voyagers swept down from north to south, across several degrees of latitude; arriving at the regions of oaks and sycamores; of mulberry and basswood trees; of paroquets and wild turkeys. This is one of the characteristics of the middle and lower part of the Missouri; but still more so of the Mississippi, whose rapid current traverses a succession of latitudes so as in a few days to float the voyager almost from the frozen regions to the tropics.

The voyage of Wyeth shows the regular and unobstructed flow of the rivers, on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, in contrast to those of the western side; where rocks and rapids continually menace and obstruct the voyager. We find him in a frail bark of skins, launching himself in a stream at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and floating down from river to river, as they empty themselves into each other; and so he might have kept on upward of two thousand miles, until his little bark should drift into the ocean. At present we shall stop with him at Cantonment Leavenworth, the frontier post of the United States; where he arrived on the 27th of September.

---

Here his first care was to have his Nez Perce Indian, and his half-breed boy, Baptiste, vaccinated. As they approached the fort, they were hailed by the sentinel. The sight of a soldier in full array, with what appeared to be a long knife glittering on the end of a musket, struck Baptiste with such affright that he took to his heels, bawling for mercy at the top of his voice. The Nez Perce would have followed him, had not Wyeth assured him of his safety. When they underwent the operation of the lancet, the doctor's wife and another lady were present; both beautiful women. They were the first white women that they had seen, and they could not keep their eyes off of them. On returning to the boat, they recounted to their companions all that they had observed at the fort; but were especially eloquent about the white squaws, who, they said, were white as snow, and more beautiful than any human being they had ever beheld.

We shall not accompany the captain any further in his Voyage; but will simply state that he made his way to Boston, where he succeeded in organizing an association under the name of "The Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company," for his original objects of a salmon fishery and a trade in furs. A brig, the *May Dacres*, had been dispatched for the Columbia with supplies; and he was now on his way to the same point, at the head of sixty men, whom he had enlisted at St. Louis; some of whom were experienced hunters, and all more habituated to the life of the wilderness than his first band of "down-easters."

We will now return to Captain Bonneville and his party, whom we left, making up their packs and saddling their horses, in Bear River Valley.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 42

Departure of Captain Bonneville for the Columbia -- Advance of Wyeth -- Efforts to keep the lead -- Hudson's Bay party -- A junketing -- A delectable beverage -- Honey and alcohol -- High carousing -- The Canadian "bon vivant" -- A cache -- A rapid move -- Wyeth and his plans -- His travelling companions -- Buffalo hunting -- More conviviality -- An interruption.

IT was the 3d of July that Captain Bonneville set out on his second visit to the banks of the Columbia, at the head of twenty-three men. He travelled leisurely, to keep his horses fresh, until on the 10th of July a scout brought word that Wyeth, with his band, was but fifty miles in the rear, and pushing forward with all speed. This caused some bustle in the camp; for it was important to get first to the buffalo ground to secure provisions for the journey. As the horses were too heavily laden to travel fast, a cache was dugged, as promptly as possible, to receive all superfluous baggage. Just as it was finished, a spring burst out of the earth at the bottom. Another cache was therefore digged, about two miles further on; when, as they were about to bury the effects, a line of horsemen with pack-horses, were seen streaking over the plain, and encamped close by.

It proved to be a small band in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, under the command of a veteran Canadian; one of those petty leaders, who, with a small party of men, and a small supply of goods, are employed to follow up a band of Indians from one hunting ground to another, and buy up their peltries.

Having received numerous civilities from the Hudson's Bay Company, the captain sent an invitation to the officers of the party to an evening regale; and set to work to make jovial preparations. As the night air in these elevated regions is apt to be cold, a blazing fire was soon made, that

---

would have done credit to a Christmas dinner, instead of a midsummer banquet. The parties met in high good-fellowship. There was abundance of such hunters' fare as the neighborhood furnished; and it was all discussed with mountain appetites. They talked over all the events of their late campaigns; but the Canadian veteran had been unlucky in some of his transactions; and his brow began to grow cloudy. Captain Bonneville remarked his rising spleen, and regretted that he had no juice of the grape to keep it down.

A man's wit, however, is quick and inventive in the wilderness; a thought suggested itself to the captain, how he might brew a delectable beverage. Among his stores was a keg of honey but half exhausted. This he filled up with alcohol, and stirred the fiery and mellifluous ingredients together. The glorious results may readily be imagined; a happy compound of strength and sweetness, enough to soothe the most ruffled temper and unsettle the most solid understanding.

The beverage worked to a charm; the can circulated merrily; the first deep draught washed out every care from the mind of the veteran; the second elevated his spirit to the clouds. He was, in fact, a boon companion; as all veteran Canadian traders are apt to be. He now became glorious; talked over all his exploits, his huntings, his fightings with Indian braves, his loves with Indian beauties; sang snatches of old French ditties, and Canadian boat songs; drank deeper and deeper, sang louder and louder; until, having reached a climax of drunken gayety, he gradually declined, and at length fell fast asleep upon the ground. After a long nap he again raised his head, imbibed another potation of the "sweet and strong," flashed up with another slight blaze of French gayety, and again fell asleep.

The morning found him still upon the field of action, but in sad and sorrowful condition; suffering the penalties of past pleasures, and calling to mind the captain's dulcet compound, with many a retch and spasm. It seemed as if the honey and alcohol, which had passed so glibly and smoothly over his tongue, were at war within his stomach; and that he had a swarm of bees within his head. In short, so helpless and woebegone was his plight, that his party proceeded on their march without him; the captain promised to bring him on in safety in the after part of the day.

As soon as this party had moved off, Captain Bonneville's men proceeded to construct and fill their cache; and just as it was completed the party of Wyeth was descried at a distance. In a moment all was activity to take the road. The horses were prepared and mounted; and being lightened of a great part of their burdens, were able to move with celerity. As to the worthy convive of the preceding evening, he was carefully gathered up from the hunter's couch on which he lay, repentant and supine, and, being packed upon one of the horses, was hurried forward with the convoy, groaning and ejaculating at every jolt.

In the course of the day, Wyeth, being lightly mounted, rode ahead of his party, and overtook Captain Bonneville. Their meeting was friendly and courteous; and they discussed, sociably, their respective fortunes since they separated on the banks of the Bighorn. Wyeth announced his intention of establishing a small trading post at the mouth of the Portneuf, and leaving a few men there, with a quantity of goods, to trade with the neighboring Indians. He was compelled, in fact, to this measure, in consequence of the refusal of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to take a supply of goods which he had brought out for them according to contract; and which he had no other mode of disposing of. He further informed Captain Bonneville that the competition between the Rocky Mountain and American Fur Companies which had led to such nefarious stratagems and deadly feuds, was at an end; they having divided the country between them, allotting boundaries

---

within which each was to trade and hunt, so as not to interfere with the other.

In company with Wyeth were travelling two men of science; Mr. Nuttall, the botanist; the same who ascended the Missouri at the time of the expedition to Astoria; and Mr. Townshend, an ornithologist; from these gentlemen we may look forward to important information concerning these interesting regions. There were three religious missionaries, also, bound to the shores of the Columbia, to spread the light of the Gospel in that far wilderness.

After riding for some time together, in friendly conversation, Wyeth returned to his party, and Captain Bonneville continued to press forward, and to gain ground. At night he sent off the sadly sober and moralizing chief of the Hudson's Bay Company, under a proper escort, to rejoin his people; his route branching off in a different direction. The latter took a cordial leave of his host, hoping, on some future occasion, to repay his hospitality in kind.

In the morning the captain was early on the march; throwing scouts out far ahead, to scour hill and dale, in search of buffalo. He had confidently expected to find game in abundance, on the head-waters of the Portneuf; but on reaching that region, not a track was to be seen.

At length, one of the scouts, who had made a wide sweep away to the head-waters of the Blackfoot River, discovered great herds quietly grazing in the adjacent meadows. He set out on his return, to report his discoveries; but night overtaking him, he was kindly and hospitably entertained at the camp of Wyeth. As soon as day dawned he hastened to his own camp with the welcome intelligence; and about ten o'clock of the same morning, Captain Bonneville's party were in the midst of the game.

The packs were scarcely off the backs of the mules, when the runners, mounted on the fleetest horses, were full tilt after the buffalo. Others of the men were busied erecting scaffolds, and other contrivances, for jerking or drying meat; others were lighting great fires for the same purpose; soon the hunters began to make their appearance, bringing in the choicest morsels of buffalo meat; these were placed upon the scaffolds, and the whole camp presented a scene of singular hurry and activity. At daylight the next morning, the runners again took the field, with similar success; and, after an interval of repose made their third and last chase, about twelve o'clock; for by this time, Wyeth's party was in sight. The game being now driven into a valley, at some distance, Wyeth was obliged to fix his camp there; but he came in the evening to pay Captain Bonneville a visit. He was accompanied by Captain Stewart, the amateur traveller; who had not yet sated his appetite for the adventurous life of the wilderness. With him, also, was a Mr. M'Kay, a half-breed; son of the unfortunate adventurer of the same name who came out in the first maritime expedition to Astoria and was blown up in the Tonquin. His son had grown up in the employ of the British fur companies; and was a prime hunter, and a daring partisan. He held, moreover, a farm in the valley of the Wallamut.

The three visitors, when they reached Captain Bonneville's camp, were surprised to find no one in it but himself and three men; his party being dispersed in all directions, to make the most of their present chance for hunting. They remonstrated with him on the imprudence of remaining with so trifling a guard in a region so full of danger. Captain Bonneville vindicated the policy of his conduct. He never hesitated to send out all his hunters, when any important object was to be attained; and experience had taught him that he was most secure when his forces were thus distributed over the surrounding country. He then was sure that no enemy could approach, from any direction, without being discovered by his hunters; who have a quick eye for detecting the slightest

---

signs of the proximity of Indians; and who would instantly convey intelligence to the camp. The captain now set to work with his men, to prepare a suitable entertainment for his guests. It was a time of plenty in the camp; of prime hunters' dainties; of buffalo humps, and buffalo tongues; and roasted ribs, and broiled marrow-bones: all these were cooked in hunters' style; served up with a profusion known only on a plentiful hunting ground, and discussed with an appetite that would astonish the puny gourmands of the cities. But above all, and to give a bacchanalian grace to this truly masculine repast, the captain produced his mellifluous keg of home-brewed nectar, which had been so potent over the senses of the veteran of Hudson's Bay. Potations, pottle deep, again went round; never did beverage excite greater glee, or meet with more rapturous commendation. The parties were fast advancing to that happy state which would have insured ample cause for the next day's repentance; and the bees were already beginning to buzz about their ears, when a messenger came spurring to the camp with intelligence that Wyeth's people had got entangled in one of those deep and frightful ravines, piled with immense fragments of volcanic rock, which gash the whole country about the head-waters of the Blackfoot River. The revel was instantly at an end; the keg of sweet and potent home-brewed was deserted; and the guests departed with all speed to aid in extricating their companions from the volcanic ravine.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville  
Chapter 43

A rapid march -- A cloud of dust -- Wild horsemen -- "High Jinks" -- Horseracing and rifle-shooting -- The game of hand -- The fishing season -- Mode of fishing -- Table lands -- Salmon fishers -- The captain's visit to an Indian lodge -- The Indian girl -- The pocket mirror -- Supper -- Troubles of an evil conscience.

"UP and away!" is the first thought at daylight of the Indian trader, when a rival is at hand and distance is to be gained. Early in the morning, Captain Bonneville ordered the half dried meat to be packed upon the horses, and leaving Wyeth and his party to hunt the scattered buffalo, pushed off rapidly to the east, to regain the plain of the Portneuf. His march was rugged and dangerous; through volcanic hills, broken into cliffs and precipices; and seamed with tremendous chasms, where the rocks rose like walls.

On the second day, however, he encamped once more in the plain, and as it was still early some of the men strolled out to the neighboring hills. In casting their eyes round the country, they perceived a great cloud of dust rising in the south, and evidently approaching. Hastening back to the camp, they gave the alarm. Preparations were instantly made to receive an enemy; while some of the men, throwing themselves upon the "running horses" kept for hunting, galloped off to reconnoitre. In a little while, they made signals from a distance that all was friendly. By this time the cloud of dust had swept on as if hurried along by a blast, and a band of wild horsemen came dashing at full leap into the camp, yelling and whooping like so many maniacs. Their dresses, their accoutrements, their mode of riding, and their uncouth clamor, made them seem a party of savages arrayed for war; but they proved to be principally half-breeds, and white men grown savage in the wilderness, who were employed as trappers and hunters in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Here was again "high jinks" in the camp. Captain Bonneville's men hailed these wild scamperers as congenial spirits, or rather as the very game birds of their class. They entertained them with

the hospitality of mountaineers, feasting them at every fire. At first, there were mutual details of adventures and exploits, and broad joking mingled with peals of laughter. Then came on boasting of the comparative merits of horses and rifles, which soon engrossed every tongue. This naturally led to racing, and shooting at a mark; one trial of speed and skill succeeded another, shouts and acclamations rose from the victorious parties, fierce altercations succeeded, and a general melee was about to take place, when suddenly the attention of the quarrellers was arrested by a strange kind of Indian chant or chorus, that seemed to operate upon them as a charm. Their fury was at an end; a tacit reconciliation succeeded and the ideas of the whole mongrel crowd whites, half-breeds and squaws were turned in a new direction. They all formed into groups and taking their places at the several fires, prepared for one of the most exciting amusements of the Nez Percés and the other tribes of the Far West.

The choral chant, in fact, which had thus acted as a charm, was a kind of wild accompaniment to the favorite Indian game of "Hand." This is played by two parties drawn out in opposite platoons before a blazing fire. It is in some respects like the old game of passing the ring or the button, and detecting the hand which holds it. In the present game, the object hidden, or the cache as it is called by the trappers, is a small splint of wood, or other diminutive article that may be concealed in the closed hand. This is passed backward and forward among the party "in hand," while the party "out of hand" guess where it is concealed. To heighten the excitement and confuse the guessers, a number of dry poles are laid before each platoon, upon which the members of the party "in hand" beat furiously with short staves, keeping time to the choral chant already mentioned, which waxes fast and furious as the game proceeds. As large bets are staked upon the game, the excitement is prodigious. Each party in turn bursts out in full chorus, beating, and yelling, and working themselves up into such a heat that the perspiration rolls down their naked shoulders, even in the cold of a winter night. The bets are doubled and trebled as the game advances, the mental excitement increases almost to madness, and all the worldly effects of the gamblers are often hazarded upon the position of a straw.

These gambling games were kept up throughout the night; every fire glared upon a group that looked like a crew of maniacs at their frantic orgies, and the scene would have been kept up throughout the succeeding day, had not Captain Bonneville interposed his authority, and, at the usual hour, issued his marching orders.

Proceeding down the course of Snake River, the hunters regularly returned to camp in the evening laden with wild geese, which were yet scarcely able to fly, and were easily caught in great numbers. It was now the season of the annual fish-feast, with which the Indians in these parts celebrate the first appearance of the salmon in this river. These fish are taken in great numbers at the numerous falls of about four feet pitch. The Indians flank the shallow water just below, and spear them as they attempt to pass. In wide parts of the river, also, they place a sort of chevaux-de-frize, or fence, of poles interwoven with withes, and forming an angle in the middle of the current, where a small opening is left for the salmon to pass. Around this opening the Indians station themselves on small rafts, and ply their spears with great success.

The table lands so common in this region have a sandy soil, inconsiderable in depth, and covered with sage, or more properly speaking, wormwood. Below this is a level stratum of rock, riven occasionally by frightful chasms. The whole plain rises as it approaches the river, and terminates with high and broken cliffs, difficult to pass, and in many places so precipitous that it is impossi-

ble, for days together, to get down to the water's edge, to give drink to the horses. This obliges the traveller occasionally to abandon the vicinity of the river, and make a wide sweep into the interior. It was now far in the month of July, and the party suffered extremely from sultry weather and dusty travelling. The flies and gnats, too, were extremely troublesome to the horses; especially when keeping along the edge of the river where it runs between low sand-banks. Whenever the travellers encamped in the afternoon, the horses retired to the gravelly shores and remained there, without attempting to feed until the cool of the evening. As to the travellers, they plunged into the clear and cool current, to wash away the dust of the road and refresh themselves after the heat of the day. The nights were always cool and pleasant.

At one place where they encamped for some time, the river was nearly five hundred yards wide, and studded with grassy islands, adorned with groves of willow and cotton-wood. Here the Indians were assembled in great numbers, and had barricaded the channels between the islands, to enable them to spear the salmon with greater facility. They were a timid race, and seemed unaccustomed to the sight of white men. Entering one of the huts, Captain Bonneville found the inhabitants just proceeding to cook a fine salmon. It is put into a pot filled with cold water, and hung over the fire. The moment the water begins to boil, the fish is considered cooked.

Taking his seat unceremoniously, and lighting his pipe, the captain awaited the cooking of the fish, intending to invite himself to the repast. The owner of the hut seemed to take his intrusion in good part. While conversing with him the captain felt something move behind him, and turning round and removing a few skins and old buffalo robes, discovered a young girl, about fourteen years of age, crouched beneath, who directed her large black eyes full in his face, and continued to gaze in mute surprise and terror. The captain endeavored to dispel her fears, and drawing a bright ribbon from his pocket, attempted repeatedly to tie it round her neck. She jerked back at each attempt, uttering a sound very much like a snarl; nor could all the blandishments of the captain, albeit a pleasant, good-looking, and somewhat gallant man, succeed in conquering the shyness of the savage little beauty. His attentions were now turned toward the parents, whom he presented with an awl and a little tobacco, and having thus secured their good-will, continued to smoke his pipe, and watch the salmon. While thus seated near the threshold, an urchin of the family approached the door, but catching a sight of the strange guest, ran off screaming with terror and ensconced himself behind the long straw at the back of the hut.

Desirous to dispel entirely this timidity, and to open a trade with the simple inhabitants of the hut, who, he did not doubt, had furs somewhere concealed, the captain now drew forth that grand lure in the eyes of a savage, a pocket mirror. The sight of it was irresistible. After examining it for a long time with wonder and admiration, they produced a musk-rat skin, and offered it in exchange. The captain shook his head; but purchased the skin for a couple of buttons - superfluous trinkets! as the worthy lord of the hovel had neither coat nor breeches on which to place them. The mirror still continued the great object of desire, particularly in the eyes of the old housewife, who produced a pot of parched flour and a string of biscuit roots. These procured her some trifle in return; but could not command the purchase of the mirror. The salmon being now completely cooked, they all joined heartily in supper. A bounteous portion was deposited before the captain by the old woman, upon some fresh grass, which served instead of a platter; and never had he tasted a salmon boiled so completely to his fancy.

Supper being over, the captain lighted his pipe and passed it to his host, who, inhaling the smoke,

puffed it through his nostrils so assiduously, that in a little while his head manifested signs of confusion and dizziness. Being satisfied, by this time, of the kindly and companionable qualities of the captain, he became easy and communicative; and at length hinted something about exchanging beaver skins for horses. The captain at once offered to dispose of his steed, which stood fastened at the door. The bargain was soon concluded, whereupon the Indian, removing a pile of bushes under which his valuables were concealed, drew forth the number of skins agreed upon as the price.

Shortly afterward, some of the captain's people coming up, he ordered another horse to be saddled, and, mounting it, took his departure from the hut, after distributing a few trifling presents among its simple inhabitants. During all the time of his visit, the little Indian girl had kept her large black eyes fixed upon him, almost without winking, watching every movement with awe and wonder; and as he rode off, remained gazing after him, motionless as a statue. Her father, however, delighted with his new acquaintance, mounted his newly purchased horse, and followed in the train of the captain, to whom he continued to be a faithful and useful adherent during his sojourn in the neighborhood.

The cowardly effects of an evil conscience were evidenced in the conduct of one of the captain's men, who had been in the California expedition. During all their intercourse with the harmless people of this place, he had manifested uneasiness and anxiety. While his companions mingled freely and joyously with the natives, he went about with a restless, suspicious look; scrutinizing every painted form and face and starting often at the sudden approach of some meek and inoffensive savage, who regarded him with reverence as a superior being. Yet this was ordinarily a bold fellow, who never flinched from danger, nor turned pale at the prospect of a battle. At length he requested permission of Captain Bonneville to keep out of the way of these people entirely. Their striking resemblance, he said, to the people of Ogden's River, made him continually fear that some among them might have seen him in that expedition; and might seek an opportunity of revenge. Ever after this, while they remained in this neighborhood, he would skulk out of the way and keep aloof when any of the native inhabitants approached. "Such," observed Captain Bonneville, "is the effect of self-reproach, even upon the roving trapper in the wilderness, who has little else to fear than the stings of his own guilty conscience."

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 44

Outfit of a trapper -- Risks to which he is subjected -- Partnership of trappers -- Enmity of Indians -- Distant smoke -- A country on fire -- Gun Creek -- Grand Rond Fine pastures -- Perplexities in a smoky country -- Conflagration of forests.

IT had been the intention of Captain Bonneville, in descending along Snake River, to scatter his trappers upon the smaller streams. In this way a range of country is trapped by small detachments from a main body. The outfit of a trapper is generally a rifle, a pound of powder, and four pounds of lead, with a bullet mould, seven traps, an axe, a hatchet, a knife and awl, a camp kettle, two blankets, and, where supplies are plenty, seven pounds of flour. He has, generally, two or three horses, to carry himself and his baggage and peltries. Two trappers commonly go together, for the purposes of mutual assistance and support; a larger party could not easily escape the eyes of the Indians. It is a service of peril, and even more so at present than formerly, for the Indians, since

they have got into the habit of trafficking peltries with the traders, have learned the value of the beaver, and look upon the trappers as poachers, who are filching the riches from their streams, and

interfering with their market. They make no hesitation, therefore, to murder the solitary trapper, and thus destroy a competitor, while they possess themselves of his spoils. It is with regret we add, too, that this hostility has in many cases been instigated by traders, desirous of injuring their rivals, but who have themselves often reaped the fruits of the mischief they have sown.

When two trappers undertake any considerable stream, their mode of proceeding is, to hide their horses in some lonely glen, where they can graze unobserved. They then build a small hut, dig out a canoe from a cotton-wood tree, and in this poke along shore silently, in the evening, and set their traps. These they revisit in the same silent way at daybreak. When they take any beaver they bring it home, skin it, stretch the skins on sticks to dry, and feast upon the flesh. The body, hung up before the fire, turns by its own weight, and is roasted in a superior style; the tail is the trapper's tidbit; it is cut off, put on the end of a stick, and toasted, and is considered even a greater dainty than the tongue or the marrow-bone of a buffalo.

With all their silence and caution, however, the poor trappers cannot always escape their hawk-eyed enemies. Their trail has been discovered, perhaps, and followed up for many a mile; or their smoke has been seen curling up out of the secret glen, or has been scented by the savages, whose sense of smell is almost as acute as that of sight. Sometimes they are pounced upon when in the act of setting their traps; at other times, they are roused from their sleep by the horrid war-whoop; or, perhaps, have a bullet or an arrow whistling about their ears, in the midst of one of their beaver banquets. In this way they are picked off, from time to time, and nothing is known of them, until, perchance, their bones are found bleaching in some lonely ravine, or on the banks of some nameless stream, which from that time is called after them. Many of the small streams beyond the mountains thus perpetuate the names of unfortunate trappers that have been murdered on their banks.

A knowledge of these dangers deterred Captain Bonneville, in the present instance, from detaching small parties of trappers as he had intended; for his scouts brought him word that formidable bands of the Bannock Indians were lying on the Boisee and Payette Rivers, at no great distance, so that they would be apt to detect and cut off any stragglers. It behooved him, also, to keep his party together, to guard against any predatory attack upon the main body; he continued on his way, therefore, without dividing his forces. And fortunate it was that he did so; for in a little while he encountered one of the phenomena of the western wilds that would effectually have prevented his scattered people from finding each other again. In a word, it was the season of setting fire to the prairies. As he advanced he began to perceive great clouds of smoke at a distance, rising by degrees, and spreading over the whole face of the country. The atmosphere became dry and surcharged with murky vapor, parching to the skin, and irritating to the eyes. When travelling among the hills, they could scarcely discern objects at the distance of a few paces; indeed, the least exertion of the vision was painful. There was evidently some vast conflagration in the direction toward which they were proceeding; it was as yet at a great distance, and during the day they could only see the smoke rising in larger and denser volumes, and rolling forth in an immense canopy. At night the skies were all glowing with the reflection of unseen fires, hanging in an immense body of lurid light high above the horizon.

Having reached Gun Creek, an important stream coming from the left, Captain Bonneville turned up its course, to traverse the mountain and avoid the great bend of Snake River. Being now out of the range of the Bannecks, he sent out his people in all directions to hunt the antelope for present supplies; keeping the dried meats for places where game might be scarce.

During four days that the party were ascending Gun Creek, the smoke continued to increase so rapidly that it was impossible to distinguish the face of the country and ascertain landmarks. Fortunately, the travellers fell upon an Indian trail, which led them to the head-waters of the Fourche de Glace or Ice River, sometimes called the Grand Rond. Here they found all the plains and valleys wrapped in one vast conflagration; which swept over the long grass in billows of flame, shot up every bush and tree, rose in great columns from the groves, and set up clouds of smoke that darkened the atmosphere. To avoid this sea of fire, the travellers had to pursue their course close along the foot of the mountains; but the irritation from the smoke continued to be tormenting. The country about the head-waters of the Grand Rond spreads out into broad and level prairies, extremely fertile, and watered by mountain springs and rivulets. These prairies are resorted to by small bands of the Skynses, to pasture their horses, as well as to banquets upon the salmon which abound in the neighboring waters. They take these fish in great quantities and without the least difficulty; simply taking them out of the water with their hands, as they flounder and struggle in the numerous long shoals of the principal streams. At the time the travellers passed over these prairies, some of the narrow, deep streams by which they were intersected were completely choked with salmon, which they took in great numbers. The wolves and bears frequent these streams at this season, to avail themselves of these great fisheries.

The travellers continued, for many days, to experience great difficulties and discomforts from this wide conflagration, which seemed to embrace the whole wilderness. The sun was for a great part of the time obscured by the smoke, and the loftiest mountains were hidden from view. Blundering along in this region of mist and uncertainty, they were frequently obliged to make long circuits, to avoid obstacles which they could not perceive until close upon them. The Indian trails were their safest guides, for though they sometimes appeared to lead them out of their direct course, they always conducted them to the passes.

On the 26th of August, they reached the head of the Way-lee-way River. Here, in a valley of the mountains through which this head-water makes its way, they found a band of the Skynses, who were extremely sociable, and appeared to be well disposed, and as they spoke the Nez Perce language, an intercourse was easily kept up with them.

In the pastures on the bank of this stream, Captain Bonneville encamped for a time, for the purpose of recruiting the strength of his horses. Scouts were now sent out to explore the surrounding country, and search for a convenient pass through the mountains toward the Wallamut or Multnomah. After an absence of twenty days they returned weary and discouraged. They had been harassed and perplexed in rugged mountain defiles, where their progress was continually impeded by rocks and precipices. Often they had been obliged to travel along the edges of frightful ravines, where a false step would have been fatal. In one of these passes, a horse fell from the brink of a precipice, and would have been dashed to pieces had he not lodged among the branches of a tree, from which he was extricated with great difficulty. These, however, were not the worst of their difficulties and perils. The great conflagration of the country, which had harassed the main party in its march, was still more awful the further this exploring party proceeded. The flames

which swept rapidly over the light vegetation of the prairies assumed a fiercer character and took a stronger hold amid the wooded glens and ravines of the mountains. Some of the deep gorges and defiles sent up sheets of flame, and clouds of lurid smoke, and sparks and cinders that in the night made them resemble the craters of volcanoes. The groves and forests, too, which crowned the cliffs, shot up their towering columns of fire, and added to the furnace glow of the mountains. With these stupendous sights were combined the rushing blasts caused by the rarefied air, which roared and howled through the narrow glens, and whirled forth the smoke and flames in impetuous wreaths. Ever and anon, too, was heard the crash of falling trees, sometimes tumbling from crags and precipices, with tremendous sounds.

In the daytime, the mountains were wrapped in smoke so dense and blinding, that the explorers, if by chance they separated, could only find each other by shouting. Often, too, they had to grope their way through the yet burning forests, in constant peril from the limbs and trunks of trees, which frequently fell across their path. At length they gave up the attempt to find a pass as hopeless, under actual circumstances, and made their way back to the camp to report their failure.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 45

Skynses -- Their traffic -- Hunting -- Food -- Horses -- A horse-race -- Devotional feeling of the Skynses, Nez Perces and Flatheads -- Prayers -- Exhortations -- A preacher on horseback -- Effect of religion on the manners of the tribes -- A new light.

DURING the absence of this detachment, a sociable intercourse had been kept up between the main party and the Skynses, who had removed into the neighborhood of the camp. These people dwell about the waters of the Way-lee-way and the adjacent country, and trade regularly with the Hudson's Bay Company; generally giving horses in exchange for the articles of which they stand in need. They bring beaver skins, also, to the trading posts; not procured by trapping, but by a course of internal traffic with the shy and ignorant Shoshokoes and Too-el-icans, who keep in distant and unfrequented parts of the country, and will not venture near the trading houses. The Skynses hunt the deer and elk occasionally; and depend, for a part of the year, on fishing. Their main subsistence, however, is upon roots, especially the kamash. This bulbous root is said to be of a delicious flavor, and highly nutritious. The women dig it up in great quantities, steam it, and deposit it in caches for winter provisions. It grows spontaneously, and absolutely covers the plains. This tribe was comfortably clad and equipped. They had a few rifles among them, and were extremely desirous of bartering for those of Captain Bonneville's men; offering a couple of good running horses for a light rifle. Their first-rate horses, however, were not to be procured from them on any terms. They almost invariably use ponies; but of a breed infinitely superior to any in the United States. They are fond of trying their speed and bottom, and of betting upon them. As Captain Bonneville was desirous of judging of the comparative merit of their horses, he purchased one of their racers, and had a trial of speed between that, an American, and a Shoshonie, which were supposed to be well matched. The race-course was for the distance of one mile and a half out and back. For the first half mile the American took the lead by a few hands; but, losing his wind, soon fell far behind; leaving the Shoshonie and Skynse to contend together. For a mile and a half they went head and head: but at the turn the Skynse took the lead and won the race with great ease, scarce drawing a quick breath when all was over.

The Skynses, like the Nez Perces and the Flatheads, have a strong devotional feeling, which has been successfully cultivated by some of the resident personages of the Hudson's Bay Company. Sunday is invariably kept sacred among these tribes. They will not raise their camp on that day, unless in extreme cases of danger or hunger: neither will they hunt, nor fish, nor trade, nor perform any kind of labor on that day. A part of it is passed in prayer and religious ceremonies. Some chief, who is generally at the same time what is called a "medicine man," assembles the community. After invoking blessings from the Deity, he addresses the assemblage, exhorting them to good conduct; to be diligent in providing for their families; to abstain from lying and stealing; to avoid quarrelling or cheating in their play, and to be just and hospitable to all strangers who may be among them. Prayers and exhortations are also made, early in the morning, on week days. Sometimes, all this is done by the chief from horseback; moving slowly about the camp, with his hat on, and uttering his exhortations with a loud voice. On all occasions, the bystanders listen with profound attention; and at the end of every sentence respond one word in unison, apparently equivalent to an amen. While these prayers and exhortations are going on, every employment in the camp is suspended. If an Indian is riding by the place, he dismounts, holds his horse, and attends with reverence until all is done. When the chief has finished his prayer or exhortation, he says, "I have done," upon which there is a general exclamation in unison.

With these religious services, probably derived from the white men, the tribes above-mentioned mingle some of their old Indian ceremonials, such as dancing to the cadence of a song or ballad, which is generally done in a large lodge provided for the purpose. Besides Sundays, they likewise observe the cardinal holidays of the Roman Catholic Church.

Whoever has introduced these simple forms of religions among these poor savages, has evidently understood their characters and capacities, and effected a great melioration of their manners. Of this we speak not merely from the testimony of Captain Bonneville, but likewise from that of Mr. Wyeth, who passed some months in a travelling camp of the Flatheads. "During the time I have been with them," says he, "I have never known an instance of theft among them: the least thing, even to a bead or pin, is brought to you, if found; and often, things that have been thrown away. Neither have I known any quarrelling, nor lying. This absence of all quarrelling the more surprised me, when I came to see the various occasions that would have given rise to it among the whites: the crowding together of from twelve to eighteen hundred horses, which have to be driven into camp at night, to be picketed, to be packed in the morning; the gathering of fuel in places where it is extremely scanty. All this, however, is done without confusion or disturbance.

"They have a mild, playful, laughing disposition; and this is portrayed in their countenances. They are polite, and unobtrusive. When one speaks, the rest pay strict attention: when he is done, another assents by 'yes,' or dissents by 'no;' and then states his reasons, which are listened to with equal attention. Even the children are more peaceable than any other children. I never heard an angry word among them, nor any quarrelling; although there were, at least, five hundred of them together, and continually at play. With all this quietness of spirit, they are brave when put to the test; and are an overmatch for an equal number of Blackfeet."

The foregoing observations, though gathered from Mr. Wyeth as relative to the Flatheads, apply, in the main, to the Skynses also. Captain Bonneville, during his sojourn with the latter, took constant occasion, in conversing with their principal men, to encourage them in the cultivation of moral and religious habits; drawing a comparison between their peaceable and comfortable

---

course of life and that of other tribes, and attributing it to their superior sense of morality and religion. He frequently attended their religious services, with his people; always enjoining on the latter the most reverential deportment; and he observed that the poor Indians were always pleased to have the white men present.

The disposition of these tribes is evidently favorable to a considerable degree of civilization. A few farmers settled among them might lead them, Captain Bonneville thinks, to till the earth and cultivate grain; the country of the Skynses and Nez Perces is admirably adapted for the raising of cattle. A Christian missionary or two, and some trifling assistance from government, to protect them from the predatory and warlike tribes, might lay the foundation of a Christian people in the midst of the great western wilderness, who would "wear the Americans near their hearts."

We must not omit to observe, however, in qualification of the sanctity of this Sabbath in the wilderness, that these tribes who are all ardently addicted to gambling and horseracing, make Sunday a peculiar day for recreations of the kind, not deeming them in any wise out of season. After prayers and pious ceremonies are over, there is scarce an hour in the day, says Captain Bonneville, that you do not see several horses racing at full speed; and in every corner of the camp are groups of gamblers, ready to stake everything upon the all-absorbing game of hand. The Indians, says Wyeth, appear to enjoy their amusements with more zest than the whites. They are great gamblers; and in proportion to their means, play bolder and bet higher than white men.

The cultivation of the religious feeling, above noted, among the savages, has been at times a convenient policy with some of the more knowing traders; who have derived great credit and influence among them by being considered "medicine men;" that is, men gifted with mysterious knowledge. This feeling is also at times played upon by religious charlatans, who are to be found in savage as well as civilized life. One of these was noted by Wyeth, during his sojourn among the Flat-heads. A new great man, says he, is rising in the camp, who aims at power and sway. He covers his designs under the ample cloak of religion; inculcating some new doctrines and ceremonials among those who are more simple than himself. He has already made proselytes of one-fifth of the camp; beginning by working on the women, the children, and the weak-minded. His followers are all dancing on the plain, to their own vocal music. The more knowing ones of the tribe look on and laugh; thinking it all too foolish to do harm; but they will soon find that women, children, and fools, form a large majority of every community, and they will have, eventually, to follow the new light, or be considered among the profane. As soon as a preacher or pseudo prophet of the kind gets followers enough, he either takes command of the tribe, or branches off and sets up an independent chief and "medicine man."

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 46

Scarcity in the camp -- Refusal of supplies by the Hudson's Bay Company -- Conduct of the Indians -- A hungry retreat -- John Day's River -- The Blue Mountains -- Salmon fishing on Snake River -- Messengers from the Crow country -- Bear River Valley -- immense migration of buffalo -- Danger of buffalo hunting -- A wounded Indian -- Eutaw Indians -- A "surround" of antelopes. PROVISIONS were now growing scanty in the camp, and Captain Bonneville found it necessary to seek a new neighborhood. Taking leave, therefore, of his friends, the Skynses, he set off to the

---

westward, and, crossing a low range of mountains, encamped on the head-waters of the Ottolais. Being now within thirty miles of Fort Wallah-Wallah, the trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, he sent a small detachment of men thither to purchase corn for the subsistence of his party. The men were well received at the fort; but all supplies for their camp were peremptorily refused. Tempting offers were made them, however, if they would leave their present employ, and enter into the service of the company; but they were not to be seduced.

When Captain Bonneville saw his messengers return empty-handed, he ordered an instant move, for there was imminent danger of famine. He pushed forward down the course of the Ottolais, which runs diagonal to the Columbia, and falls into it about fifty miles below the Wallah-Wallah. His route lay through a beautiful undulating country, covered with horses belonging to the Skynses, who sent them there for pasturage.

On reaching the Columbia, Captain Bonneville hoped to open a trade with the natives, for fish and other provisions, but to his surprise they kept aloof, and even hid themselves on his approach. He soon discovered that they were under the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had forbidden them to trade, or hold any communion with him. He proceeded along the Columbia, but it was everywhere the same; not an article of provisions was to be obtained from the natives, and he was at length obliged to kill a couple of his horses to sustain his famishing people. He now came to a halt, and consulted what was to be done. The broad and beautiful Columbia lay before them, smooth and unruffled as a mirror; a little more journeying would take them to its lower region; to the noble valley of the Wallamut, their projected winter quarters. To advance under present circumstances would be to court starvation. The resources of the country were locked against them, by the influence of a jealous and powerful monopoly. If they reached the Wallamut, they could scarcely hope to obtain sufficient supplies for the winter; if they lingered any longer in the country the snows would gather upon the mountains and cut off their retreat. By hastening their return, they would be able to reach the Blue Mountains just in time to find the elk, the deer, and the bighorn; and after they had supplied themselves with provisions, they might push through the mountains before they were entirely blocked by snow. Influenced by these considerations, Captain Bonneville reluctantly turned his back a second time on the Columbia, and set off for the Blue Mountains. He took his course up John Day's River, so called from one of the hunters in the original Astorian enterprise. As famine was at his heels, he travelled fast, and reached the mountains by the 1st of October. He entered by the opening made by John Day's River; it was a rugged and difficult defile, but he and his men had become accustomed to hard scrambles of the kind. Fortunately, the September rains had extinguished the fires which recently spread over these regions; and the mountains, no longer wrapped in smoke, now revealed all their grandeur and sublimity to the eye.

They were disappointed in their expectation of finding abundant game in the mountains; large bands of the natives had passed through, returning from their fishing expeditions, and had driven all the game before them. It was only now and then that the hunters could bring in sufficient to keep the party from starvation.

To add to their distress, they mistook their route, and wandered for ten days among high and bald hills of clay. At length, after much perplexity, they made their way to the banks of Snake River, following the course of which, they were sure to reach their place of destination.

It was the 20th of October when they found themselves once more upon this noted stream. The

Shoshokoes, whom they had met with in such scanty numbers on their journey down the river, now absolutely thronged its banks to profit by the abundance of salmon, and lay up a stock for winter provisions. Scaffolds were everywhere erected, and immense quantities of fish drying upon them. At this season of the year, however, the salmon are extremely poor, and the travellers needed their keen sauce of hunger to give them a relish.

In some places the shores were completely covered with a stratum of dead salmon, exhausted in ascending the river, or destroyed at the falls; the fetid odor of which tainted the air.

It was not until the travellers reached the head-waters of the Portneuf that they really found themselves in a region of abundance. Here the buffaloes were in immense herds; and here they remained for three days, slaying and cooking, and feasting, and indemnifying themselves by an enormous carnival, for a long and hungry Lent. Their horses, too, found good pasturage, and enjoyed a little rest after a severe spell of hard travelling.

During this period, two horsemen arrived at the camp, who proved to be messengers sent express for supplies from Montero's party; which had been sent to beat up the Crow country and the Black Hills, and to winter on the Arkansas. They reported that all was well with the party, but that they had not been able to accomplish the whole of their mission, and were still in the Crow country, where they should remain until joined by Captain Bonneville in the spring. The captain retained the messengers with him until the 17th of November, when, having reached the caches on Bear River, and procured thence the required supplies, he sent them back to their party; appointing a rendezvous toward the last of June following, on the forks of Wind River Valley, in the Crow country.

He now remained several days encamped near the caches, and having discovered a small band of Shoshonies in his neighborhood, purchased from them lodges, furs, and other articles of winter comfort, and arranged with them to encamp together during the winter.

The place designed by the captain for the wintering ground was on the upper part of Bear River, some distance off. He delayed approaching it as long as possible, in order to avoid driving off the buffaloes, which would be needed for winter provisions. He accordingly moved forward but slowly, merely as the want of game and grass obliged him to shift his position. The weather had already become extremely cold, and the snow lay to a considerable depth. To enable the horses to carry as much dried meat as possible, he caused a cache to be made, in which all the baggage that could be spared was deposited. This done, the party continued to move slowly toward their winter quarters.

They were not doomed, however, to suffer from scarcity during the present winter. The people upon Snake River having chased off the buffaloes before the snow had become deep, immense herds now came trooping over the mountains; forming dark masses on their sides, from which their deep-mouthed bellowing sounded like the low peals and mutterings from a gathering thunder-cloud. In effect, the cloud broke, and down came the torrent thundering into the valley. It is utterly impossible, according to Captain Bonneville, to convey an idea of the effect produced by the sight of such countless throngs of animals of such bulk and spirit, all rushing forward as if swept on by a whirlwind.

The long privation which the travellers had suffered gave uncommon ardor to their present hunting. One of the Indians attached to the party, finding himself on horseback in the midst of the buffaloes, without either rifle, or bow and arrows, dashed after a fine cow that was passing close

by him, and plunged his knife into her side with such lucky aim as to bring her to the ground. It was a daring deed; but hunger had made him almost desperate.

The buffaloes are sometimes tenacious of life, and must be wounded in particular parts. A ball striking the shagged frontlet of a bull produces no other effect than a toss of the head and greater exasperation; on the contrary, a ball striking the forehead of a cow is fatal. Several instances occurred during this great hunting bout, of bulls fighting furiously after having received mortal wounds. Wyeth, also, was witness to an instance of the kind while encamped with Indians. During a grand hunt of the buffaloes, one of the Indians pressed a bull so closely that the animal turned suddenly on him. His horse stopped short, or started back, and threw him. Before he could rise the bull rushed furiously upon him, and gored him in the chest so that his breath came out at the aperture. He was conveyed back to the camp, and his wound was dressed. Giving himself up for slain, he called round him his friends, and made his will by word of mouth. It was something like a death chant, and at the end of every sentence those around responded in concord. He appeared no ways intimidated by the approach of death. "I think," adds Wyeth, "the Indians die better than the white men; perhaps from having less fear about the future."

The buffaloes may be approached very near, if the hunter keeps to the leeward; but they are quick of scent, and will take the alarm and move off from a party of hunters to the windward, even when two miles distant.

The vast herds which had poured down into the Bear River Valley were now snow-bound, and remained in the neighborhood of the camp throughout the winter. This furnished the trappers and their Indian friends a perpetual carnival; so that, to slay and eat seemed to be the main occupations of the day. It is astonishing what loads of meat it requires to cope with the appetite of a hunting camp.

The ravens and wolves soon came in for their share of the good cheer. These constant attendants of the hunter gathered in vast numbers as the winter advanced. They might be completely out of sight, but at the report of a gun, flights of ravens would immediately be seen hovering in the air, no one knew whence they came; while the sharp visages of the wolves would peep down from the brow of every hill, waiting for the hunter's departure to pounce upon the carcass.

Besides the buffaloes, there were other neighbors snow-bound in the valley, whose presence did not promise to be so advantageous. This was a band of Eutaw Indians who were encamped higher up on the river. They are a poor tribe that, in a scale of the various tribes inhabiting these regions, would rank between the Shoshonies and the Shoshokoes or Root Diggers; though more bold and warlike than the latter. They have but few rifles among them, and are generally armed with bows and arrows.

As this band and the Shoshonies were at deadly feud, on account of old grievances, and as neither party stood in awe of the other, it was feared some bloody scenes might ensue. Captain Bonneville, therefore, undertook the office of pacificator, and sent to the Eutaw chiefs, inviting them to a friendly smoke, in order to bring about a reconciliation. His invitation was proudly declined; whereupon he went to them in person, and succeeded in effecting a suspension of hostilities until the chiefs of the two tribes could meet in council. The braves of the two rival camps sullenly acquiesced in the arrangement. They would take their seats upon the hill tops, and watch their quondam enemies hunting the buffalo in the plain below, and evidently repine that their hands were tied up from a skirmish. The worthy captain, however, succeeded in carrying through his be-

nevolent mediation. The chiefs met; the amicable pipe was smoked, the hatchet buried, and peace formally proclaimed. After this, both camps united and mingled in social intercourse. Private quarrels, however, would occasionally occur in hunting, about the division of the game, and blows would sometimes be exchanged over the carcass of a buffalo; but the chiefs wisely took no notice of these individual brawls.

One day the scouts, who had been ranging the hills, brought news of several large herds of antelopes in a small valley at no great distance. This produced a sensation among the Indians, for both tribes were in ragged condition, and sadly in want of those shirts made of the skin of the antelope. It was determined to have "a surround," as the mode of hunting that animal is called. Everything now assumed an air of mystic solemnity and importance. The chiefs prepared their medicines or charms each according to his own method, or fancied inspiration, generally with the compound of certain simples; others consulted the entrails of animals which they had sacrificed, and thence drew favorable auguries. After much grave smoking and deliberating it was at length proclaimed that all who were able to lift a club, man, woman, or child, should muster for "the surround." When all had congregated, they moved in rude procession to the nearest point of the valley in question, and there halted. Another course of smoking and deliberating, of which the Indians are so fond, took place among the chiefs. Directions were then issued for the horsemen to make a circuit of about seven miles, so as to encompass the herd. When this was done, the whole mounted force dashed off simultaneously, at full speed, shouting and yelling at the top of their voices. In a short space of time the antelopes, started from their hiding-places, came bounding from all points into the valley. The riders, now gradually contracting their circle, brought them nearer and nearer to the spot where the senior chief, surrounded by the elders, male and female, were seated in supervision of the chase. The antelopes, nearly exhausted with fatigue and fright, and bewildered by perpetual whooping, made no effort to break through the ring of the hunters, but ran round in small circles, until man, woman, and child beat them down with bludgeons. Such is the nature of that species of antelope hunting, technically called "a surround."

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville  
Chapter 47

A festive winter -- Conversion of the Shoshonies -- Visit of two free trappers -- Gayety in the camp -- A touch of the tender passion -- The reclaimed squaw -- An Indian fine lady -- An elopement -- A pursuit -- Market value of a bad wife.

GAME continued to abound throughout the winter, and the camp was overstocked with provisions. Beef and venison, humps and haunches, buffalo tongues and marrow-bones, were constantly cooking at every fire; and the whole atmosphere was redolent with the savory fumes of roast meat. It was, indeed, a continual "feast of fat things," and though there might be a lack of "wine upon the lees," yet we have shown that a substitute was occasionally to be found in honey and alcohol.

Both the Shoshonies and the Eutaws conducted themselves with great propriety. It is true, they now and then filched a few trifles from their good friends, the Big Hearts, when their backs were turned; but then, they always treated them to their faces with the utmost deference and respect, and good-humoredly vied with the trappers in all kinds of feats of activity and mirthful sports. The two tribes maintained toward each other, also a friendliness of aspect which gave Captain

Bonneville reason to hope that all past animosity was effectually buried.

The two rival bands, however, had not long been mingled in this social manner before their ancient jealousy began to break out in a new form. The senior chief of the Shoshonies was a thinking man, and a man of observation. He had been among the Nez Percés, listened to their new code of morality and religion received from the white men, and attended their devotional exercises. He had observed the effect of all this, in elevating the tribe in the estimation of the white men; and determined, by the same means, to gain for his own tribe a superiority over their ignorant rivals, the Eutaws. He accordingly assembled his people, and promulgated among them the mongrel doctrines and form of worship of the Nez Percés; recommending the same to their adoption. The Shoshonies were struck with the novelty, at least, of the measure, and entered into it with spirit. They began to observe Sundays and holidays, and to have their devotional dances, and chants, and other ceremonials, about which the ignorant Eutaws knew nothing; while they exerted their usual competition in shooting and horseracing, and the renowned game of hand.

Matters were going on thus pleasantly and prosperously, in this motley community of white and red men, when, one morning, two stark free trappers, arrayed in the height of savage finery, and mounted on steeds as fine and as fiery as themselves, and all jingling with hawks' bells, came galloping, with whoop and halloo, into the camp.

They were fresh from the winter encampment of the American Fur Company, in the Green River Valley; and had come to pay their old comrades of Captain Bonneville's company a visit. An idea may be formed from the scenes we have already given of conviviality in the wilderness, of the manner in which these game birds were received by those of their feather in the camp; what feasting, what revelling, what boasting, what bragging, what ranting and roaring, and racing and gambling, and squabbling and fighting, ensued among these boon companions. Captain Bonneville, it is true, maintained always a certain degree of law and order in his camp, and checked each fierce excess; but the trappers, in their seasons of idleness and relaxation require a degree of license and indulgence, to repay them for the long privations and almost incredible hardships of their periods of active service.

In the midst of all this feasting and frolicking, a freak of the tender passion intervened, and wrought a complete change in the scene. Among the Indian beauties in the camp of the Eutaws and Shoshonies, the free trappers discovered two, who had whilom figured as their squaws. These connections frequently take place for a season, and sometimes continue for years, if not perpetually; but are apt to be broken when the free trapper starts off, suddenly, on some distant and rough expedition.

In the present instance, these wild blades were anxious to regain their belles; nor were the latter loath once more to come under their protection. The free trapper combines, in the eye of an Indian girl, all that is dashing and heroic in a warrior of her own race -- whose gait, and garb, and bravery he emulates -- with all that is gallant and glorious in the white man. And then the indulgence with which he treats her, the finery in which he decks her out, the state in which she moves, the sway she enjoys over both his purse and person; instead of being the drudge and slave of an Indian husband, obliged to carry his pack, and build his lodge, and make his fire, and bear his cross humors and dry blows. No; there is no comparison in the eyes of an aspiring belle of the wilderness, between a free trapper and an Indian brave.

With respect to one of the parties the matter was easily arranged. 'The beauty in question was a

pert little Eutaw wench, that had been taken prisoner, in some war excursion, by a Shoshonie. She was readily ransomed for a few articles of trifling value; and forthwith figured about the camp in fine array, "with rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes," and a tossed-up coquettish air that made her the envy, admiration, and abhorrence of all the leathern-dressed, hard-working squaws of her acquaintance.

As to the other beauty, it was quite a different matter. She had become the wife of a Shoshonie brave. It is true, he had another wife, of older date than the one in question; who, therefore, took command in his household, and treated his new spouse as a slave; but the latter was the wife of his last fancy, his latest caprice; and was precious in his eyes. All attempt to bargain with him, therefore, was useless; the very proposition was repulsed with anger and disdain. The spirit of the trapper was roused, his pride was piqued as well as his passion. He endeavored to prevail upon his quondam mistress to elope with him. His horses were fleet, the winter nights were long and dark, before daylight they would be beyond the reach of pursuit; and once at the encampment in Green River Valley, they might set the whole band of Shoshonies at defiance.

The Indian girl listened and longed. Her heart yearned after the ease and splendor of condition of a trapper's bride, and throbbed to be free from the capricious control of the premier squaw; but she dreaded the failure of the plan, and the fury of a Shoshonie husband. They parted; the Indian girl in tears, and the madcap trapper more than ever, with his thwarted passion.

Their interviews had, probably, been detected, and the jealousy of the Shoshonie brave aroused: a clamor of angry voices was heard in his lodge, with the sound of blows, and of female weeping and lamenting. At night, as the trapper lay tossing on his pallet, a soft voice whispered at the door of his lodge. His mistress stood trembling before him. She was ready to follow whithersoever he should lead.

In an instant he was up and out. He had two prime horses, sure and swift of foot, and of great wind. With stealthy quiet, they were brought up and saddled; and in a few moments he and his prize were careering over the snow, with which the whole country was covered. In the eagerness of escape, they had made no provision for their journey; days must elapse before they could reach their haven of safety, and mountains and prairies be traversed, wrapped in all the desolation of winter. For the present, however they thought of nothing but flight; urging their horses forward over the dreary wastes, and fancying, in the howling of every blast, they heard the yell of the pursuer.

At early dawn, the Shoshonie became aware of his loss. Mounting his swiftest horse, he set off in hot pursuit. He soon found the trail of the fugitives, and spurred on in hopes of overtaking them. The winds, however, which swept the valley, had drifted the light snow into the prints made by the horses' hoofs. In a little while he lost all trace of them, and was completely thrown out of the chase. He knew, however, the situation of the camp toward which they were bound, and a direct course through the mountains, by which he might arrive there sooner than the fugitives. Through the most rugged defiles, therefore, he urged his course by day and night, scarce pausing until he reached the camp. It was some time before the fugitives made their appearance. Six days had they traversed the wintry wilds. They came, haggard with hunger and fatigue, and their horses faltering under them. The first object that met their eyes on entering the camp was the Shoshonie brave. He rushed, knife in hand, to plunge it in the heart that had proved false to him. The trapper threw himself before the cowering form of his mistress, and, exhausted as he was, prepared for a deadly

struggle. The Shoshonie paused. His habitual awe of the white man checked his arm; the trapper's friends crowded to the spot, and arrested him. A parley ensued. A kind of crim. con. adjudication took place; such as frequently occurs in civilized life. A couple of horses were declared to be a fair compensation for the loss of a woman who had previously lost her heart; with this, the Shoshonie brave was fain to pacify his passion. He returned to Captain Bonneville's camp, somewhat crest-fallen, it is true; but parried the officious condolences of his friends by observing that two good horses were very good pay for one bad wife.

---

Washington Irving's The Adventures of Captain Bonneville

Chapter 48

Breaking up of winter quarters -- Move to Green River -- A trapper and his rifle -- An arrival in camp -- A free trapper and his squaw in distress -- Story of a Blackfoot belle.

THE winter was now breaking up, the snows were melted, from the hills, and from the lower parts of the mountains, and the time for decamping had arrived. Captain Bonneville dispatched a party to the caches, who brought away all the effects concealed there, and on the 1st of April (1835), the camp was broken up, and every one on the move. The white men and their allies, the Eutaws and Shoshonies, parted with many regrets and sincere expressions of good-will; for their intercourse throughout the winter had been of the most friendly kind.

Captain Bonneville and his party passed by Ham's Fork, and reached the Colorado, or Green River, without accident, on the banks of which they remained during the residue of the spring. During this time, they were conscious that a band of hostile Indians were hovering about their vicinity, watching for an opportunity to slay or steal; but the vigilant precautions of Captain Bonneville baffled all their manoeuvres. In such dangerous times, the experienced mountaineer is never without his rifle even in camp. On going from lodge to lodge to visit his comrades, he takes it with him. On seating himself in a lodge, he lays it beside him, ready to be snatched up; when he goes out, he takes it up as regularly as a citizen would his walking-staff. His rifle is his constant friend and protector.

On the 10th of June, the party was a little to the east of the Wind River Mountains, where they halted for a time in excellent pasturage, to give their horses a chance to recruit their strength for a long journey; for it was Captain Bonneville's intention to shape his course to the settlements; having already been detained by the complication of his duties, and by various losses and impediments, far beyond the time specified in his leave of absence.

While the party was thus reposing in the neighborhood of the Wind River Mountains, a solitary free trapper rode one day into the camp, and accosted Captain Bonneville. He belonged, he said, to a party of thirty hunters, who had just passed through the neighborhood, but whom he had abandoned in consequence of their ill treatment of a brother trapper; whom they had cast off from their party, and left with his bag and baggage, and an Indian wife into the bargain, in the midst of a desolate prairie. The horseman gave a piteous account of the situation of this helpless pair, and solicited the loan of horses to bring them and their effects to the camp.

The captain was not a man to refuse assistance to any one in distress, especially when there was a woman in the case; horses were immediately dispatched, with an escort, to aid the unfortunate couple. The next day they made their appearance with all their effects; the man, a stalwart mountaineer, with a peculiarly game look; the woman, a young Blackfoot beauty, arrayed in the trap-

pings and trinketry of a free trapper's bride.

Finding the woman to be quick-witted and communicative, Captain Bonneville entered into conversation with her, and obtained from her many particulars concerning the habits and customs of her tribe; especially their wars and huntings. They pride themselves upon being the "best legs of the mountains," and hunt the buffalo on foot. This is done in spring time, when the frosts have thawed and the ground is soft. The heavy buffaloes then sink over their hoofs at every step, and are easily overtaken by the Blackfeet, whose fleet steps press lightly on the surface. It is said, however, that the buffaloes on the Pacific side of the Rocky Mountains are fleeter and more active than on the Atlantic side; those upon the plains of the Columbia can scarcely be overtaken by a horse that would outstrip the same animal in the neighborhood of the Platte, the usual hunting ground of the Blackfeet. In the course of further conversation, Captain Bonneville drew from the Indian woman her whole story; which gave a picture of savage life, and of the drudgery and hardships to which an Indian wife is subject.

"I was the wife," said she, "of a Blackfoot warrior, and I served him faithfully. Who was so well served as he? Whose lodge was so well provided, or kept so clean? I brought wood in the morning, and placed water always at hand. I watched for his coming; and he found his meat cooked and ready. If he rose to go forth, there was nothing to delay him. I searched the thought that was in his heart, to save him the trouble of speaking. When I went abroad on errands for him, the chiefs and warriors smiled upon me, and the young braves spoke soft things, in secret; but my feet were in the straight path, and my eyes could see nothing but him.

"When he went out to hunt, or to war, who aided to equip him, but I? When he returned, I met him at the door; I took his gun; and he entered without further thought. While he sat and smoked, I unloaded his horses; tied them to the stakes, brought in their loads, and was quickly at his feet. If his moccasins were wet I took them off and put on others which were dry and warm. I dressed all the skins he had taken in the chase. He could never say to me, why is it not done? He hunted the deer, the antelope, and the buffalo, and he watched for the enemy. Everything else was done by me. When our people moved their camp, he mounted his horse and rode away; free as though he had fallen from the skies. He had nothing to do with the labor of the camp; it was I that packed the horses and led them on the journey. When we halted in the evening, and he sat with the other braves and smoked, it was I that pitched his lodge; and when he came to eat and sleep, his supper and his bed were ready.

"I served him faithfully; and what was my reward? A cloud was always on his brow, and sharp lightning on his tongue. I was his dog; and not his wife.

"Who was it that scarred and bruised me? It was he. My brother saw how I was treated. His heart was big for me. He begged me to leave my tyrant and fly. Where could I go? If retaken, who would protect me? My brother was not a chief; he could not save me from blows and wounds, perhaps death. At length I was persuaded. I followed my brother from the village. He pointed away to the Nez Percés, and bade me go and live in peace among them. We parted. On the third day I saw the lodges of the Nez Percés before me. I paused for a moment, and had no heart to go on; but my horse neighed, and I took it as a good sign, and suffered him to gallop forward. In a little while I was in the midst of the lodges. As I sat silent on my horse, the people gathered round me, and inquired whence I came. I told my story. A chief now wrapped his blanket close around him, and bade me dismount. I obeyed. He took my horse to lead him away. My heart grew small within

---

me. I felt, on parting with my horse, as if my last friend was gone. I had no words, and my eyes were dry. As he led off my horse a young brave stepped forward. 'Are you a chief of the people?' cried he. 'Do we listen to you in council, and follow you in battle? Behold! a stranger flies to our camp from the dogs of Blackfeet, and asks protection. Let shame cover your face! The stranger is a woman, and alone. If she were a warrior, or had a warrior at her side, your heart would not be big enough to take her horse. But he is yours. By right of war you may claim him; but look!' - his bow was drawn, and the arrow ready! - 'you never shall cross his back!' The arrow pierced the heart of the horse, and he fell dead.

"An old woman said she would be my mother. She led me to her lodge; my heart was thawed by her kindness, and my eyes burst forth with tears; like the frozen fountains in springtime. She never changed; but as the days passed away, was still a mother to me. The people were loud in praise of the young brave, and the chief was ashamed. I lived in peace.

"A party of trappers came to the village, and one of them took me for his wife. This is he. I am very happy; he treats me with kindness, and I have taught him the language of my people. As we were travelling this way, some of the Blackfeet warriors beset us, and carried off the horses of the party. We followed, and my husband held a parley with them. The guns were laid down, and the pipe was lighted; but some of the white men attempted to seize the horses by force, and then a battle began. The snow was deep, the white men sank into it at every step; but the red men, with their snow-shoes, passed over the surface like birds, and drove off many of the horses in sight of their owners. With those that remained we resumed our journey. At length words took place between the leader of the party and my husband. He took away our horses, which had escaped in the battle, and turned us from his camp. My husband had one good friend among the trappers. That is he (pointing to the man who had asked assistance for them). He is a good man. His heart is big. When he came in from hunting, and found that we had been driven away, he gave up all his wages, and followed us, that he might speak good words for us to the white captain."

Rendezvous at Wind River -- Campaign of Montero and his brigade in the Crow country -- Wars between the Crows and Blackfeet -- Death of Arapooish Blackfeet lurkers -- Sagacity of the horse -- Dependence of the hunter on his horse -- Return to the settlements.

ON the 22d of June Captain Bonneville raised his camp, and moved to the forks of Wind River; the appointed place of rendezvous. In a few days he was joined there by the brigade of Montero, which had been sent, in the preceding year, to beat up the Crow country, and afterward proceed to the Arkansas. Montero had followed the early part of his instructions; after trapping upon some of the upper streams, he proceeded to Powder River. Here he fell in with the Crow villages or bands, who treated him with unusual kindness, and prevailed upon him to take up his winter quarters among them.

The Crows at that time were struggling almost for existence with their old enemies, the Blackfeet; who, in the past year, had picked off the flower of their warriors in various engagements, and among the rest, Arapooish, the friend of the white men. That sagacious and magnanimous chief had beheld, with grief, the ravages which war was making in his tribe, and that it was declining in force, and must eventually be destroyed unless some signal blow could be struck to retrieve its

fortunes. In a pitched battle of the two tribes, he made a speech to his warriors, urging them to set everything at hazard in one furious charge; which done, he led the way into the thickest of the foe. He was soon separated from his men, and fell covered with wounds, but his self-devotion was not in vain. The Blackfeet were defeated; and from that time the Crows plucked up fresh heart, and were frequently successful.

Montero had not been long encamped among them, when he discovered that the Blackfeet were hovering about the neighborhood. One day the hunters came galloping into the camp, and proclaimed that a band of the enemy was at hand. The Crows flew to arms, leaped on their horses, and dashed out in squadrons in pursuit. They overtook the retreating enemy in the midst of a plain. A desperate fight ensued. The Crows had the advantage of numbers, and of fighting on horseback. The greater part of the Blackfeet were slain; the remnant took shelter in a close thicket of willows, where the horse could not enter; whence they plied their bows vigorously.

The Crows drew off out of bow-shot, and endeavored, by taunts and bravadoes, to draw the warriors out of their retreat. A few of the best mounted among them rode apart from the rest. One of their number then advanced alone, with that martial air and equestrian grace for which the tribe is noted. When within an arrow's flight of the thicket, he loosened his rein, urged his horse to full speed, threw his body on the opposite side, so as to hang by one leg, and present no mark to the foe; in this way he swept along in front of the thicket, launching his arrows from under the neck of his steed. Then regaining his seat in the saddle, he wheeled round and returned whooping and scoffing to his companions, who received him with yells of applause.

Another and another horseman repeated this exploit; but the Blackfeet were not to be taunted out of their safe shelter. The victors feared to drive desperate men to extremities, so they forbore to attempt the thicket. Toward night they gave over the attack, and returned all-glorious with the scalps of the slain. Then came on the usual feasts and triumphs, the scalp-dance of warriors round the ghastly trophies, and all the other fierce revelry of barbarous warfare. When the braves had finished with the scalps, they were, as usual, given up to the women and children, and made the objects of new parades and dances. They were then treasured up as invaluable trophies and decorations by the braves who had won them.

It is worthy of note, that the scalp of a white man, either through policy or fear, is treated with more charity than that of an Indian. The warrior who won it is entitled to his triumph if he demands it. In such case, the war party alone dance round the scalp. It is then taken down, and the shagged frontlet of a buffalo substituted in its place, and abandoned to the triumph and insults of the million.

To avoid being involved in these guerillas, as well as to escape from the extremely social intercourse of the Crows, which began to be oppressive, Montero moved to the distance of several miles from their camps, and there formed a winter cantonment of huts. He now maintained a vigilant watch at night. Their horses, which were turned loose to graze during the day, under heedful eyes, were brought in at night, and shut up in strong pens, built of large logs of cotton-wood. The snows, during a portion of the winter, were so deep that the poor animals could find but little sustenance. Here and there a tuft of grass would peer above the snow; but they were in general driven to browse the twigs and tender branches of the trees. When they were turned out in the morning, the first moments of freedom from the confinement of the pen were spent in frisking and gambolling. This done, they went soberly and sadly to work, to glean their scanty subsistence

for the day. In the meantime the men stripped the bark of the cotton-wood tree for the evening fodder. As the poor horses would return toward night, with sluggish and dispirited air, the moment they saw their owners approaching them with blankets filled with cotton-wood bark, their whole demeanor underwent a change. A universal neighing and capering took place; they would rush forward, smell to the blankets, paw the earth, snort, whinny and prance round with head and tail erect, until the blankets were opened, and the welcome provender spread before them. These evidences of intelligence and gladness were frequently recounted by the trappers as proving the sagacity of the animal.

These veteran rovers of the mountains look upon their horses as in some respects gifted with almost human intellect. An old and experienced trapper, when mounting guard upon the camp in dark nights and times of peril, gives heedful attention to all the sounds and signs of the horses. No enemy enters nor approaches the camp without attracting their notice, and their movements not only give a vague alarm, but it is said, will even indicate to the knowing trapper the very quarter whence the danger threatens.

In the daytime, too, while a hunter is engaged on the prairie, cutting up the deer or buffalo he has slain, he depends upon his faithful horse as a sentinel. The sagacious animal sees and smells all round him, and by his starting and whinnying, gives notice of the approach of strangers. There seems to be a dumb communion and fellowship, a sort of fraternal sympathy between the hunter and his horse. They mutually rely upon each other for company and protection; and nothing is more difficult, it is said, than to surprise an experienced hunter on the prairie while his old and favorite steed is at his side.

Montero had not long removed his camp from the vicinity of the Crows, and fixed himself in his new quarters, when the Blackfeet marauders discovered his cantonment, and began to haunt the vicinity. He kept up a vigilant watch, however, and foiled every attempt of the enemy, who, at length, seemed to have given up in despair, and abandoned the neighborhood. The trappers relaxed their vigilance, therefore, and one night, after a day of severe labor, no guards were posted, and the whole camp was soon asleep. Toward midnight, however, the lightest sleepers were roused by the trampling of hoofs; and, giving the alarm, the whole party were immediately on their legs and hastened to the pens. The bars were down; but no enemy was to be seen or heard, and the horses being all found hard by, it was supposed the bars had been left down through negligence. All were once more asleep, when, in about an hour there was a second alarm, and it was discovered that several horses were missing. The rest were mounted, and so spirited a pursuit took place, that eighteen of the number carried off were regained, and but three remained in possession of the enemy. Traps for wolves, had been set about the camp the preceding day. In the morning it was discovered that a Blackfoot was entrapped by one of them, but had succeeded in dragging it off. His trail was followed for a long distance which he must have limped alone. At length he appeared to have fallen in with some of his comrades, who had relieved him from his painful encumbrance.

These were the leading incidents of Montero's campaign in the Crow country. The united parties now celebrated the 4th of July, in rough hunters' style, with hearty conviviality; after which Captain Bonneville made his final arrangements. Leaving Montero with a brigade of trappers to open another campaign, he put himself at the head of the residue of his men, and set off on his return to civilized life. We shall not detail his journey along the course of the Nebraska, and so, from

point to point of the wilderness, until he and his band reached the frontier settlements on the 22d of August.

Here, according to his own account, his cavalcade might have been taken for a procession of tatterdemalion savages; for the men were ragged almost to nakedness, and had contracted a wildness of aspect during three years of wandering in the wilderness. A few hours in a populous town, however, produced a magical metamorphosis. Hats of the most ample brim and longest nap; coats with buttons that shone like mirrors, and pantaloons of the most ample plenitude, took place of the well-worn trapper's equipments; and the happy wearers might be seen strolling about in all directions, scattering their silver like sailors just from a cruise.

The worthy captain, however, seems by no means to have shared the excitement of his men, on finding himself once more in the thronged resorts of civilized life, but, on the contrary, to have looked back to the wilderness with regret. "Though the prospect," says he, "of once more tasting the blessings of peaceful society, and passing days and nights under the calm guardianship of the laws, was not without its attractions; yet to those of us whose whole lives had been spent in the stirring excitement and perpetual watchfulness of adventures in the wilderness, the change was far from promising an increase of that contentment and inward satisfaction most conducive to happiness. He who, like myself, has roved almost from boyhood among the children of the forest, and over the unfurrowed plains and rugged heights of the western wastes, will not be startled to learn, that notwithstanding all the fascinations of the world on this civilized side of the mountains, I would fain make my bow to the splendors and gayeties of the metropolis, and plunge again amidst the hardships and perils of the wilderness."

We have Only to add that the affairs of the captain have been satisfactorily arranged with the War Department, and that he is actually in service at Fort Gibson, on our western frontier, where we hope he may meet with further opportunities of indulging his peculiar tastes, and of collecting graphic and characteristic details of the great western wilds and their motley inhabitants.

--

We here close our picturings of the Rocky Mountains and their wild inhabitants, and of the wild life that prevails there; which we have been anxious to fix on record, because we are aware that this singular state of things is full of mutation, and must soon undergo great changes, if not entirely pass away. The fur trade itself, which has given life to all this portraiture, is essentially evanescent. Rival parties of trappers soon exhaust the streams, especially when competition renders them heedless and wasteful of the beaver. The furbearing animals extinct, a complete change will come over the scene; the gay free trapper and his steed, decked out in wild array, and tinkling with bells and trinketry; the savage war chief, plumed and painted and ever on the prowl; the traders' cavalcade, winding through defiles or over naked plains, with the stealthy war party lurking on its trail; the buffalo chase, the hunting camp, the mad carouse in the midst of danger, the night attack, the stampede, the scamper, the fierce skirmish among rocks and cliffs -- all this romance of savage life, which yet exists among the mountains, will then exist but in frontier story, and seem like the fictions of chivalry or fairy tale.

Some new system of things, or rather some new modification, will succeed among the roving people of this vast wilderness; but just as opposite, perhaps, to the inhabitants of civilization. The great Chippewyan chain of mountains, and the sandy and volcanic plains which extend on either side, are represented as incapable of cultivation. The pasturage which prevails there during a cer-

tain portion of the year, soon withers under the aridity of the atmosphere, and leaves nothing but dreary wastes. An immense belt of rocky mountains and volcanic plains, several hundred miles in width, must ever remain an irreclaimable wilderness, intervening between the abodes of civilization, and affording a last refuge to the Indian. Here roving tribes of hunters, living in tents or lodges, and following the migrations of the game, may lead a life of savage independence, where there is nothing to tempt the cupidity of the white man. The amalgamation of various tribes, and of white men of every nation, will in time produce hybrid races like the mountain Tartars of the Caucasus. Possessed as they are of immense droves of horses should they continue their present predatory and warlike habits, they may in time become a scourge to the civilized frontiers on either side of the mountains, as they are at present a terror to the traveller and trader.

The facts disclosed in the present work clearly manifest the policy of establishing military posts and a mounted force to protect our traders in their journeys across the great western wilds, and of pushing the outposts into the very heart of the singular wilderness we have laid open, so as to maintain some degree of sway over the country, and to put an end to the kind of "blackmail," levied on all occasions by the savage "chivalry of the mountains."

---

Washington Irving's *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*  
Appendix

---

Nathaniel J. Wyeth, and the Trade of the Far West

WE HAVE BROUGHT Captain Bonneville to the end of his western campaigning; yet we cannot close this work without subjoining some particulars concerning the fortunes of his contemporary, Mr. Wyeth; anecdotes of whose enterprise have, occasionally, been interwoven in the party-colored web of our narrative. Wyeth effected his intention of establishing a trading post on the Portneuf, which he named Fort Hall. Here, for the first time, the American flag was unfurled to the breeze that sweeps the great naked wastes of the central wilderness. Leaving twelve men here, with a stock of goods, to trade with the neighboring tribes, he prosecuted his journey to the Columbia; where he established another post, called Fort Williams, on Wappatoo Island, at the mouth of the Wallamut. This was to be the head factory of his company; whence they were to carry on their fishing and trapping operations, and their trade with the interior; and where they were to receive and dispatch their annual ship.

The plan of Mr. Wyeth appears to have been well concerted. He had observed that the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the bands of free trappers, as well as the Indians west of the mountains, depended for their supplies upon goods brought from St. Louis; which, in consequence of the expenses and risks of a long land carriage, were furnished them at an immense advance on first cost. He had an idea that they might be much more cheaply supplied from the Pacific side. Horses would cost much less on the borders of the Columbia than at St. Louis: the transportation by land was much shorter; and through a country much more safe from the hostility of savage tribes; which, on the route from and to St. Louis, annually cost the lives of many men. On this idea, he grounded his plan. He combined the salmon fishery with the fur trade. A fortified trading post was to be established on the Columbia, to carry on a trade with the natives for salmon and peltries, and to fish and trap on their own account. Once a year, a ship was to come from the United States, to bring out goods for the interior trade, and to take home the salmon and furs which had

been collected. Part of the goods, thus brought out, were to be dispatched to the mountains, to supply the trapping companies and the Indian tribes, in exchange for their furs; which were to be brought down to the Columbia, to be sent home in the next annual ship: and thus an annual round was to be kept up. The profits on the salmon, it was expected, would cover all the expenses of the ship; so that the goods brought out, and the furs carried home, would cost nothing as to freight.

His enterprise was prosecuted with a spirit, intelligence, and perseverance, that merited success. All the details that we have met with, prove him to be no ordinary man. He appears to have the mind to conceive, and the energy to execute extensive and striking plans. He had once more reared the American flag in the lost domains of Astoria; and had he been enabled to maintain the footing he had so gallantly effected, he might have regained for his country the opulent trade of the Columbia, of which our statesmen have negligently suffered us to be dispossessed.

It is needless to go into a detail of the variety of accidents and cross-purposes, which caused the failure of his scheme. They were such as all undertakings of the kind, involving combined operations by sea and land, are liable to. What he most wanted, was sufficient capital to enable him to endure incipient obstacles and losses; and to hold on until success had time to spring up from the midst of disastrous experiments.

It is with extreme regret we learn that he has recently been compelled to dispose of his establishment at Wappatoo Island, to the Hudson's Bay Company; who, it is but justice to say, have, according to his own account, treated him throughout the whole of his enterprise, with great fairness, friendship, and liberality. That company, therefore, still maintains an unrivalled sway over the whole country washed by the Columbia and its tributaries. It has, in fact, as far as its chartered powers permit, followed out the splendid scheme contemplated by Mr. Astor, when he founded his establishment at the mouth of the Columbia. From their emporium of Vancouver, companies are sent forth in every direction, to supply the interior posts, to trade with the natives, and to trap upon the various streams. These thread the rivers, traverse the plains, penetrate to the heart of the mountains, extend their enterprises northward, to the Russian possessions, and southward, to the confines of California. Their yearly supplies are received by sea, at Vancouver; and thence their furs and peltries are shipped to London. They likewise maintain a considerable commerce, in wheat and lumber, with the Pacific islands, and to the north, with the Russian settlements.

Though the company, by treaty, have a right to a participation only, in the trade of these regions, and are, in fact, but tenants on sufferance; yet have they quietly availed themselves of the original oversight, and subsequent supineness of the American government, to establish a monopoly of the trade of the river and its dependencies; and are adroitly proceeding to fortify themselves in their usurpation, by securing all the strong points of the country.

Fort George, originally Astoria, which was abandoned on the removal of the main factory to Vancouver, was renewed in 1830; and is now kept up as a fortified post and trading house. All the places accessible to shipping have been taken possession of, and posts recently established at them by the company.

The great capital of this association; their long established system; their hereditary influence over the Indian tribes; their internal organization, which makes every thing go on with the regularity of a machine; and the low wages of their people, who are mostly Canadians, give them great advantages over the American traders: nor is it likely the latter will ever be able to maintain any

footing in the land, until the question of territorial right is adjusted between the two countries. The sooner that takes place, the better. It is a question too serious to national pride, if not to national interests, to be slurred over; and every year is adding to the difficulties which environ it. The fur trade, which is now the main object of enterprise west of the Rocky Mountains, forms but a part of the real resources of the country. Beside the salmon fishery of the Columbia, which is capable of being rendered a considerable source of profit; the great valleys of the lower country, below the elevated volcanic plateau, are calculated to give sustenance to countless flocks and herds, and to sustain a great population of graziers and agriculturists.

Such, for instance, is the beautiful valley of the Wallamut; from which the establishment at Vancouver draws most of its supplies. Here, the company holds mills and farms; and has provided for some of its superannuated officers and servants. This valley, above the falls, is about fifty miles wide, and extends a great distance to the south. The climate is mild, being sheltered by lateral ranges of mountains; while the soil, for richness, has been equalled to the best of the Missouri lands. The valley of the river Des Chutes, is also admirably calculated for a great grazing country. All the best horses used by the company for the mountains are raised there. The valley is of such happy temperature, that grass grows there throughout the year, and cattle may be left out to pasture during the winter.

These valleys must form the grand points of commencement of the future settlement of the country; but there must be many such, enfolded in the embraces of these lower ranges of mountains; which, though at present they lie waste and uninhabited, and to the eye of the trader and trapper, present but barren wastes, would, in the hands of skilful agriculturists and husbandmen, soon assume a different aspect, and teem with waving crops, or be covered with flocks and herds.

The resources of the country, too, while in the hands of a company restricted in its trade, can be but partially called forth; but in the hands of Americans, enjoying a direct trade with the East Indies, would be brought into quickening activity; and might soon realize the dream of Mr. Astor, in giving rise to a flourishing commercial empire.

---

#### Wreck of a Japanese Junk on the Northwest Coast

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT of a letter which we received, lately, from Mr. Wyeth, may be interesting, as throwing some light upon the question as to the manner in which America has been peopled.

“Are you aware of the fact, that in the winter of 1833, a Japanese junk was wrecked on the northwest coast, in the neighborhood of Queen Charlotte’s Island; and that all but two of the crew, then much reduced by starvation and disease, during a long drift across the Pacific, were killed by the natives? The two fell into the hands of the Hudson’s Bay Company, and were sent to England. I saw them, on my arrival at Vancouver, in 1834.”

---

Instructions to Captain Bonneville from the Major-General Commanding the Army of the United States.

Copy

Head Quarters of the Army.

Washington 29th July 1831.

Sir,

The leave of absence which you have asked for the purpose of enabling you to carry into execution your designs of exploring the country to the Rocky Mountains, and beyond with a view of ascertaining the nature and character of the various tribes of Indians inhabiting those regions; the trade which might be profitably carried on with them, the quality of the soil, the productions, the minerals, the natural history, the climate, the Geography, and Topography, as well as Geology of the various parts of the Country within the limits of the Territories belonging to the United States, between our frontier, and the Pacific;--has been duly considered, and submitted to the War Department, for approval, and has been sanctioned.

You are therefore authorised to be absent from the Army until October 1833.

It is understood that the Government is to be at no expence, in reference to your proposed expedition, it having originated with yourself, and all that you required was the permission from the proper authority to undertake the enterprise. You will naturally in providing your self for the expedition, provide suitable instruments, and especially the best Maps of the interior to be found. It is desirable besides what is enumerated as the object of enterprise that you note particularly the number of Warriors that may belong to each tribe, or nation that you may meet with: their alliances with other tribes and their relative position as to a state of peace or war, and whether their friendly or warlike dispositions towards each other are recent or of long standing. You will gratify us by describing the manner of their making War, of the mode of subsisting themselves during a state of war, and a state of peace, their Arms, and the effect of them, whether they act on foot or on horse back, detailing the discipline, and manuevers of the war parties, the power of their horses, size and general discription; in short any information which you may conceive would be useful to the Government. You will avail yourself of every opportunity of informing us of your position and progress, and at the expiration of your leave of absence will join your proper station.

I have the honor to be Sir,

Your Ot St

(Signed) Alexr Macomb Maj Genl Comg

To Cap: B. L E Bonneville

7th Regt Infantry

New York

---

#### Bibliographical Information

This work was originally published as:

- James, Thomas. Three years among the Indians and Mexicans. Waterloo, Ill., Printed at the office of the "War Eagle," 1846.

Subsequent printings include:

- James, Thomas. Three years among the Indians and Mexicans. Douglas, Walter B. ed. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1916.
- James, Thomas. Three years among the Indians and Mexicans. Quaife, Milo Milton ed. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley, 1953.
- James, Thomas. Three years among the Indians and Mexicans. Nasatir, Abraham P. ed. New York: Lippincott, 1962.
- James, Thomas. Three years among the Indians and Mexicans. New York : Citadel Press, c1966.

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Washington Irving's *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*

---

- James, Thomas. *Three years among the Indians and Mexicans*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.

This on-line edition is based on the original 1846 edition.

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans  
By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans  
By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois  
Waterloo, Ill

Printed at the Office of the "War Eagle."

1846

Contents

Chapter I

Introduction — Missouri Fur Company — Terms of Engagement with them — Departure for the Trapping Grounds — Incidents on the Route — The Pork Meeting — Scenery — Check — A Western Pioneer — His affair with the Irishman — A Hunting Excursion — The Rickarees — The Mandans — The Gros Ventres — The Company's Fort — Cheek and Ried — Friends between the French and Americans — Violation of Contract by Company — Departure for Upper Missouri — Wintering — Trip across the Country — Famine and Cold — Scenery on the Yellow Stone — Manuel's Fort — Col. Menard and Manuel Liza — Indian Murders — A Snow Storm in the Mountains — Blindness — Arrival at the Forks of the Missouri — Preparations for business.

I HAVE OFTEN amused myself and friends, by relating stories of my adventures in the West, and am led to believe, by the, perhaps, too partial representations of those friends, that my life in the Prairies and Mountains for three years, is worthy of a record more enduring than their memories. I have passed a year and a half on the head waters of the Missouri and among the gorges of the Rocky Mountains, as a hunter and a trapper, and two years among the Spaniards and Camanches. I have suffered much from the inclemency of nature and of man, had many "hair breadth 'scapes" and acquired considerable information illustrative of Indian and Mexican character and customs. By a plain, unvarnished tale of Western life, of perils and of hardships, I hope to amuse the reader who delights in accounts of wild adventure, though found out of the pages of a novel and possessing no attraction but their unadorned truthfulness. I am now on the shady side of sixty, with mind and memory unimpaired. If my reminiscences, as recorded in the following pages, serve to awaken my countrymen of the West and South-west, now thank God, including Texas, to the importance of peaceful and friendly relations with the most powerful tribe of Indians on the continent, the Camanches, I shall not regard the labor of preparing these sheets as bestowed in vain. In the year 1803, when twenty-two years of age, I emigrated with my father from Kentucky to Illinois. In the spring of 1807 we removed from Illinois to Missouri, which were then, both Territories, and settled in the town of St. Ferdinand, near St. Louis. In the fall of this year, Lewis and Clark returned from Oregon and the Pacific Ocean, whither they had been sent by the administration of Jefferson in the first exploring expedition west of the Rocky Mountains, and their accounts of that wild region, with those of their companions, first excited a spirit of trafficking adventure among the young men of the West. They had brought with them from the Upper Missouri, a Chief named Shehaka, of the Mandan tribe of Indians. This Chief, in company with Lewis and Clark visited the "Great Father" at Washington City, and returned to St. Louis in the following Spring (1808) with Lewis, who, in the mean time had been appointed Governor of Missouri Territory. He sent the Chief Shehaka up the Missouri with an escort of about forty United States troops, under Capt. Prior. On their arrival in the country of the Rickarees, a war-like tribe, next East or this side of the Mandans, they were attacked by the former tribe, and eight or ten soldiers killed. This event so disheartened the rest, that they returned with Shehaka to St.

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

Louis. The Missouri Fur Company had just been formed, and they projected an expedition up the Missouri and to the Rocky Mountains, which was to start in the spring of the following year, 1809. The company consisted of ten partners, among whom was M. Gratiot, Pierre Menard, Sam'l. Morrison, Pierrie Chouteau, Manuel Liza, Major Henry, M. L'Abbadeau and Reuben Lewis. Gov. Lewis was also said to have had an interest in the concern. The company contracted with him to convey the Mandan Chief to his tribe, for the sum, as I was informed of \$10,000. I enlisted in this expedition, which was raised for trading with the Indians and trapping for beaver on the head waters of the Missouri and Columbia rivers. The whole party, at starting, consisted of 350 men, of whom about one half were Americans and the remainder Canadian Frenchmen and Creoles of Kaskaskia, St. Louis and other places. The French were all veteran voyageurs, thoroughly inured to boating and trapping. Manuel Liza, called by the men "Esaw" had enlisted many of them in Detroit for this expedition, and hired them by the year. We Americans were all private adventurers, each on his own hook, and were led into the enterprise by the promises of the company, who agreed to subsist us to the trapping grounds, we helping to navigate the boats, and on our arrival there they were to furnish us each with a rifle and sufficient ammunition, six good beaver traps and also four men of their hired French, to be under our individual commands for a period of three years. By the terms of the contract each of us was to divide one-fourth of the profits of our joint labor with the four men thus to be appointed to us. How we were deceived and taken in, will be seen in the sequel. The "company" made us the fairest promises in St. Louis, only to break them in the Indian country. Liza, or Esaw, or Manuel as he was variously called, had the principal command. He was a Spaniard or Mexican by birth, and bore a very bad reputation in the country and among the Americans. He had been on the head waters of the Missouri, the year before with a company of about fifty men and had met with great success in catching beaver and trading with the Indians. He had built a Fort, called "Manuel's Fort" at the junction or fork of the Big Horn and Yellow Stone rivers, and left a garrison of hunters in it when he returned in the Spring of this year, and went into the Missouri Fur Company. He was suspected of having invited the Rickarees to attack the Government troops under Capt. Prior, with Shehaka the year before, for the purpose of preventing the traders and trappers who were with the troops from getting into the upper country. Mr. Choteau and Col. Menard acted jointly with Liza in conducting the expedition. I went as steersman or "captain" of one of the barges, with about twenty-four men, all Americans, under my command. There were thirteen barges and keel boats in all. On my barge I had Doct. Thomas, the surgeon of the company, and Reuben Lewis, brother of Merryweather Lewis, the Governor. We started from St. Louis in the month of June, A. D. 1809, and ascended the Missouri by rowing, pushing with poles, cordeling, or pulling with ropes, warping, and sailing. My crew were light hearted, jovial men, with no care or anxiety for the future, and little fear of any danger. In the morning we regularly started by day break and stopped, generally, late at night. The partners or bourgeois, as the French called them, were in the forward barge, with a strong crew of hardy and skilful voyageurs, and there Liza and some of his colleagues forded it over the poor fellows most arrogantly, and made them work as if their lives depended on their getting forward, with the greatest possible speed. They peremptorily required all the boats to stop in company for the night, and our barge being large and heavily loaded, the crew frequently had great difficulty in overtaking them in the evening. We occasionally had races with some of the forward barges, in which my crew of Americans proved themselves equal in a short race to their more experienced French

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

competitors. We thus continued, with nothing of interest occurring till we passed the Platte. Six weeks of hard labor on our part, had been spent, when our allotted provisions gave out and we were compelled to live on boiled corn, without salt. At the same time all the other boats were well supplied and the gentlemen proprietors in the leading barge were faring in the most sumptuous and luxurious manner. The French hands were much better treated on all occasions than the Americans. The former were employed for a long period at stated wages and were accustomed to such service and such men as those in command of them, while we were private adventurers for our own benefit, as well as that of the company, who regarded us with suspicion and distrust. Many Americans on the passage up the river, disgusted with the treatment they received, fell off in small companies and went back. At Cote Sans Desans, opposite the mouth of the Osage, most of them returned. On reaching the Mandan country we numbered about ten Americans, having started from St. Louis with about one hundred and seventy-five and an equal number of French. After passing the Platte river my crew were worn down with hard labor and bad fare. Their boiled corn without salt or meat, did not sustain them under the fatigue of navigating the barge and the contrast between their treatment and that of the French enraged them. A meeting was the result. The company had, on our barge, thirty barrels of pork, and one morning my crew came to me in a body demanding some of these provisions. I commanded them not to break into the pork without permission, and promised, if they would work and keep up till noon, to procure some for dinner. At noon when we stopped, the men rolled up a barrel of pork on to the deck and one of them, named Cheek bestrided with a tomahawk, crying out "give the word Captain." I forbade them, as before, and went ashore to find Lewis, who had left the boat at the beginning of trouble. He said the pork was the company's and told me not to touch it. I said the men would and should have some of it, and went back to the boat to give the "word" to Cheek. Lewis hastened to the "bourgeoise" in their barge close by, to give the alarm. I could see them in their cabin, from the shore where I stood, playing cards and drinking. Lewis entered with the news that "James' crew were taking the provisions." Manuel Liza seized his pistols and ran out followed by the other partners. "What the devil, said he to me, is the matter with you and your men?" We are starving, said I, and we must have something better than boiled corn. At the same time Cheek was brandishing his tomahawk over the pork barrel and clamoring for the "word." "Shall I break it open Captain, speak the word," he cried, while the rest of my crew were drawn up in line on the boat, with rifles, ready for action. The gentlemen bourgeoisie, yielded before this determined array, and gave us a large supply of pork; that is, as much as we pleased to take. A few days after this we stopped to clean out the barges and the pork in ours was removed to another and its place supplied with lead. The Cheek who figured as ring-leader on this occasion was a Tennessean, about six feet high and well proportioned. His courage was equal to any enterprise, and his rashness and headstrong obstinacy at last, in the Indian country, cost him his life. I had on my barge a large, lazy, and very impertinent Irishman, who was frequently very sulky and remiss in his duties. I was compelled one day, to call him by name for not working at the oars, saying to him he was not rowing the weight of his head. The height of disgrace among boatsmen is, to be publicly named by the Captain. The Irishman took my treatment in very ill humour and swore he would have satisfaction for the insult. When the boat stopped for breakfast, the men dispersed as usual, to get wood, and with them went Cheek and my friend, the Irishman. Cheek returned without him and informed me, he had whipped him "for saucing the captain." I said, Cheek I can attend to my own fighting

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

without your assistance, or any other man's. "No by G — d said he, my Captain shan't fight while I am about." The Irishman returned, at length, to the boat, but was so badly hurt as to be unable to work for several days.

The scenery of the Upper Missouri is so familiar to the world as to render any particular description unnecessary. As you ascend the river, the woods diminish in number and extent. Beyond Council Bluffs, about 700 miles above the mouth they entirely disappear, except on the river bottoms, which are heavily timbered. The Prairies were covered with a short thick grass, about three or four inches high. At this time the game was very abundant. We saw Elk and Buffalo in vast numbers, and killed many of them. Prairie dogs and wolves were also very numerous. The Indians have thinned off the game since that time, so much that their own subsistence is frequently very scanty, and they are often in danger of starvation. Their range for hunting now extends far down into the Camanche country and Texas, and the buffalo, their only game of importance, are fast disappearing. When these valuable animals are all gone, when they are extinct on the West as they are on the East side of the Mississippi, then will the Indian race, the aboriginals of that vast region, be near their own extinction and oblivion. They cannot survive the game and with it will disappear.

The Western declivity of the Mississippi valley from the mountains to the "Father of Waters" is nearly all one great plain, with occasional rocky elevations. We saw hills at the foot of which were large heaps of pumice stone, which had the appearance of having been crumbled off from above by the action of fire. The scenery of Illinois or Missouri is a fair example of that of the whole country West to the mountains. The Prairies here, however, are vaster and more desolate. One extensive plain is usually presented to the eye of the traveller, and stretches to the horizon, without a hill, mound, tree or shrub to arrest the sight.

We continued our ascent of the river without any occurrence of importance. Below Council Bluffs we met Capt. Crooks, agent for John J. Astor, and who was trading with the Mohaws. Here all the few Americans remaining, with myself, were on the point of returning. By the solicitations and promises of the company we were induced to continue with them.

The first Indians we saw were a party of Mohaws hunting; with them were two Sioux Chiefs. They sent forward a runner to their village above and themselves came on board our boats. We found the village at the mouth of the Jaques river, perhaps twelve hundred miles, by its course, from the mouth of the Missouri. They were of the Teton tribe, which is kindred with the Sioux. As we approached the bank, which was lined with hundreds; they fired into the water before the forward barge, and as we landed, they retreated with great rapidity, making a startling noise with whistles and rattles. After landing and making fast the boats, about fifty savages took charge of them, as a guard. They wore raven feathers on the head. Their bodies were naked, save about the middle, and painted entirely black. They presented on the whole a most martial and warlike appearance in their savage mode, and performed their office of guarding the boats so well that not even a Chief was allowed to go onto them. Other Indians came with buffalo skins to be used as pulanquins or litters for carrying the partners to their council house; each was taken up and carried off in state. I was compelled by some Indians to go in the same style to the place of council. Here was a large company of old men awaiting us, and for dinner we had served up a great feast of dog's meat — a great delicacy with the Indians. The rich repast was served in forty-one wooden bowls, as I counted them, and from each bowl a dog's foot was hanging out, evidently to prove that this rarity was

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

not a sham but a reality. Not feeling very desirous of eating of this particular dainty, I stole out and was pulled by a young Indian and invited to his wigwam. I went and partook with him of buffalo meat. We stayed with these hospitable savages two days. On arriving, we found the British flag flying, but easily persuaded them to haul it down. The Hudson's Bay Company had had their emisaries among them and were then dealing with them precisely as they are now dealing with the savages in our territory of Oregon — namely: buying them up with presents and promises, and persuading them to act as allies of Britain, in any future war with the United States. On the third day we left the friendly Tetons and proceeded up the river as before. Capt. Choteau had conceived a prejudice against Cheek, and on one occasion, ordered him to leave the boats. Lewis conveyed the order to me. I remonstrated against the cruelty of sending a man adrift in a wilderness, 1400 miles from home. He insisted, and Cheek took his gun as if he was going to obey. Lewis ordered him to leave the gun behind, which he refused to do. Lewis then commanded me to take it from him. I replied, that he or Choteau might do that themselves. The men of my boat flew to their arms, and avowed their determination of defending Cheek and sharing his fate. The order was not pursued any further. Such recontres and difficulties between the Americans and the partners, embittered their hands against us, and ultimately did us no good. Much of the ill treatment we afterwards received from them, was probably owing to the reckless assertion of our independence on every occasion and at every difficulty that occurred. After leaving the Teton village, our boat again failed of provisions, and by request of Lewis I went ashore on the North bank with one of our best hunters, named Brown, to kill some game. We went up the river, and in the evening, killed an elk, brought it to the river bank, and waited there for the boats till morning. They came up on the opposite shore and sent over a canoe to take us and our game across. The wind rose in the mean time, and blew so strong as to raise the waves very high, and render it dangerous for us all to cross together in the same canoe. We sent over the game and Brown and myself continued our course, afoot, expecting to get aboard when the boats crossed at some one of the river bends. By the middle of the day the wind had risen so high that the boats with sails hoisted, quickly went out of sight. We travelled on till evening, and struck a large bayou, which we could not cross, and took the backward course till we encamped within a mile of the spot where we had stayed the night before. The next morning we struck off from the river into the prairie, and took the best course we could, to reach the boats. Seven days elapsed, however, before we overtook them. The wind blew a strong breeze, and drove the boats along very rapidly. We killed another elk and some small game, which subsisted us till the fifth day, when our amunition gave out. Our moccasins being worn out, fell off and our feet were perfectly cut up by the prickly pear, which abounds on these prairies. At last, nearly famished and worn down, sore, lame and exhausted, we found the boats. My crew had, in vain, requested leave to wait for us, and we might have perished before the bourgeois would have slackened their speed in the least, on our account. We had a narrow escape from starvation in this excursion and I was ever afterwards careful to have plenty of amunition with me when I went out — as I frequently did — on similar expeditions.

In two days after this event, we arrived at the country of the Rickarees. On approaching their village, we took precautions against an attack. A guard marched along the shore, opposite to the boats, well armed. My crew composed a part of this force. When within half a mile of the village we drew up the cannon and prepared to encamp. The whole village came out in a body, as it seemed, to met us. They had not come far toward us when an old chief rode out at full speed and

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

with violent gestures and exclamations, warned and motioned back his countrymen from before our cannon. The event of the year before was fresh in his recollection. He supposed we were about to inflict a proper and deserved punishment for the attack on Capt. Prior's troops and the murder of eight or ten of them, the year before. This old chief drove back all who were coming out to meet us. Choteau then sent for the chief to come down to his camp and hold a council. They refused to comply with this request and appeared very suspicious of our designs. After further negotiation, they agreed to come to us and hold a council if the company's force would lay aside their arms and turn the cannon in the opposite direction. This was agreed to by the company, with the provision that a guard should be on the ground, armed, during the conference. The council was held, and Choteau harangued them on the crime committed against the government the year before. They promised better conduct for the future, but made no reparation or apology even, for the past. In a few days we started forward through a country marked by the same general features as that described before. Thousands of buffaloe cover the prairies on both sides of the river, making them black as far as the eye could reach. In ten or twelve days the boats reached the Mandan village, where I was awaiting them. I had sallied out five days before in a hunting excursion, and arrived at the village of the Mandans in advance of the boats. These are a poor, thieving, spiritless tribe, tributary to the Gros-Ventres, who inhabit the country above them on the river. The village is on the north side of the river. The boats came up on the opposite shore. The wind, as they arrived, blew a hurricane and lashed the waves to a prodigious height. The Indians saw their chief, Shehaka, on our boats, and were almost frantic with joy and eagerness to speak with him. They have a round canoe made of hoops fastened together and a buffalo's skin stretched over them, very light and portable. With these they rowed themselves across the turbulent river, one moment lost from view between the waves, and the next, riding over them like corks. In these tubs of canoes they crossed the stream to our boats. The natives made a jubilee and celebration for the return of Shehaka and neglected every thing and every body else. They hardly saw or took the least notice of their white visitors. The partners distributed the presents sent by the government and we then made haste to leave this boorish inhospitable tribe. We ascended the Missouri to the village of the Gros-Ventres, on the south side of the river, fifteen miles above that of the Mandans. Here we found a far different race from the last; a manly, warlike and independent tribe, who might well be called for their daring and enterprising qualities, the Gros-coeurs or big-hearts instead of bigbellies. Here was our place of stopping for a short time, and of preparation for the business which had brought us hither. On our arrival at their village, four or five agents of the Hudson's Bay Company were among them, but immediately crossed the river with their goods, and bore off to the north east. We suspected them of inciting the Black Feet against us and many of our company attributed our subsequent misfortunes to their hostility. We afterwards heard that a large army of these Indians were encamped at the falls above. They traded regularly with the British traders and procured of them their arms and amunition. We built a fort near the Gros-Ventre village, and unloaded all the larger boats for the purpose of sending them back to the settlements. Having now arrived at our destination and being near the beaver region, we, the Americans, ten in number, requested the partners to furnish out traps, amunition, guns and men, according to contract. But this, they seemed to have forgotten entirely, or intended never to fulfil. We found ourselves taken in, cheated chizzled, gulfed and swindled in a style that has not, perhaps, been excelled by Yankees or French, or men of any other nation, at any time in the thirty-six

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

years that have passed over my head since this feat was performed. A stock of old and worthless traps had been brought up the river, apparently to be put off on the Americans. They offered us these traps, which we refused to take. They then endeavored to deprive us of the arms and amunition belonging to them, in our possession, and they succeeded in getting from most of us all the guns and powder of theirs that we had. Mine were taken from me with the others, by order of the partners. I do not know that all of them consented to this nefarious proceeding; I hope and should have expected that several of them would not sanction such conduct. But I heard of no protest or opposition to the acts of the majority, who behaved toward us with a want of principle and of honor that would shame most gentleman robbers of the highway. They seemed determined to turn us out on the prairie and among the Indians, without arms, provisions or amunition. Our situation in that event, would have nearly realized the one implied in the popular expression "a cat in hell without claws." We were kept waiting two or three weeks without employment or any provisions, except what we purchased at most exhorbitant prices. We bought goods, knives, &c. of the company, on credit, and sold them to the Indians for provisions and in this way were rapidly running in debt, which the company expected us to discharge to them in beaver fur. Their object was to make the most out of us without regard to their previous professions and promises. Finding myself, like most of my comrades, destitute of all means of support and sustenance, of defense and offense, I looked around for something by which I could live in that wild region. On Arriving at the Gros-Ventre village we had found a hunter and trapper named Colter, who had been one of Lewis & Clarke's men, and had returned thus far with them in 1807. Of him I purchased a set of beaver traps for \$120, a pound and a half of powder for \$6, and a gun for \$40. Seeing me thus equipped, Liza, the most active, the meanest and most rascally of the whole, offered me new and good traps, a gun and amunition. I told him he appeared willing enough to help when help was not needed, and after I was provided at my own expense. I then selected two companions, Miller and McDaniel, who had been imposed on by the bourgeoisie in the same manner with myself, and in their company I prepared to begin business. These two had, by good fortune bought with them six traps, two guns and amunition of their own. We cut down a tree and of the trunk made a canoe in which we prepared to ascend to the "Forks" and head waters of the Missouri and the mountains. We were young, and sanguine of success. No fears of the future clouded our prospects and the adventures that lay before us excited our hopes and fancies to the highest pitch. "No dangers daunted and no labors tired us." Before leaving the Fort and my old companions, I will relate a characteristic anecdote of Cheek, who so soon after this, expiated his follies by a violent death. In an early part of the voyage, when coming up the river, about two months before, I had sent Cheek to draw our share of provisions from the provision boat. Francois Ried, who dealt them out for the company, offered Cheek a bear's head, saying it was good enough for "you fellows," by this meaning the Americans. Cheek returned to his boat in great rage at the insult, as he deemed it, and threatened to whip him (Ried) for the said contumely on himself and fellow companions, as soon as he was out of Government employ — that is, as soon as we had delivered up Shehaka to the Mandans. The matter passed on and I supposed was forgotten by Cheek himself, until the Fort was built, and the Americans were about separating with many grievances unredressed and wrongs unavenged. Cheek meeting Ried one morning on the bank of the river, told him that he had promised to whip him and that he could not break his word on any account. He thereupon struck at the audacious Frenchman, who had presumed to call Americans "fellows,"

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

and offer them a bear's head. Ried saved himself by running aboard one of the boats, where he obtained a reinforcement. Cheek beat a retreat, and a truce was observed by both parties till night fall. I had encamped with Cheek and two others, a few hundred yards above the Fort. We were all, except Cheek, in the tent, about nine o'clock in the evening, when Ried with a company, all armed with pistols and dirks came up and demanded to see Cheek, saying that he had attacked him within the lines of the Fort, when he knew he could not fight without violating orders. I told him that Cheek was not in the tent. "He is hid, the cowardly rascal," cried Ried, and went to searching the bushes. After he and his company were gone, I found Cheek at Major Henry's tent, amusing himself with cards and wine. I took him with me to our own tent, fearing that Ried's company might kill him if they found him that night. He was silent while hearing my account and for some minutes after entering our tent. He then spoke as if on maturest reflection, and said that he had intended to have let Ried go, with what he had got, "but now I will whip him in the morning if I lose my life by it." In the morning he started unarmed and wrapped in his blanket for the Fort. I with a few others followed to see fair play which is ever a jewel with the American. Cheek soon found Ried and accosted him in front of the Fort, by informing him that he had come down to accommodate him with the interview which he had understood had been sought for, so anxiously the night before. Ried said he was in liquor the night before — wanted to have nothing to do with him and began to make for the Fort. "You must catch a little anyhow" said Cheek, and springing towards Ried like a wild cat, with one blow he felled him to the earth. Capt. Chouteau who had seen the whole proceeding from the Fort, immediately rushed out with about thirty of his men all armed. "Bring out the irons, seize him, seize him," cried Chouteau, frantic with passion, and raging like a mad bull. Cheek prudently retired to our company on the bank of the river, a short distance, and said he would die rather than be ironed. We were ready to stand by him to the last. Chouteau now ordered his men to fire on us and the next moment would have seen blood-shed and the death of some of us, had not L'Abbadieu, Valle, Menard, Morrison, Henry and one of Chouteau's sons thrown themselves between us and the opposite party and thus preventing the execution of Chouteau's order. Him they forced back, struggling like a mad child in its mothers arms into the Fort. On the next day after this fracas, Miller, McDaniel and myself parted from our companions after agreeing to meet them again on the Forks or head-waters of the Missouri and started in our canoe up the river. The river is very crooked in this part and much narrower than we had found it below. We came to a Mandan village on the south side of the stream on the day of our departure from the Fort. On arriving here, we were on the north side of the river, and on account of the violence of the wind, did not cross to the village. Late in the evening a woman in attempting to cross in a skin canoe, was upset in the middle of the river. She was seen from the village, and immediately, a multitude of men rushed into the water and seemed to run rather than swim to the woman whom they rescued from the water with wonderful rapidity. Their dexterity in swimming was truly astonishing to us. We pushed or rather paddled on in a shower of rain, till late that night and encamped. In the morning we went on in a snowstorm and in four days the ice floating in the river, prevented further navigation of the stream with the canoe. We stopped on the south side of the river, built a small cabin, banked it round with earth and soon made ourselves quite comfortable. This was in the month of November. We had caught a few beaver skins in our route from the Gros-Ventre village, and were employed ourselves in making moccasins and leggins and in killing game which was very plenty all around us. Here we determined to pass the

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

winter and in the Spring continue our ascent of the Missouri to the Forks. On Christmas day I froze my feet and became so disabled as to be confined to the house unable to walk. Miller and McDaniel soon after started back for the Fort, with our stock of beaver skins to exchange them for ammunition. They were gone twice the length of time agreed on for their stay. I began to consume the last of my rations and should have suffered for food, had not a company of friendly Indians called at the cabin and bartered provisions for trinkets and tobacco. My next visitors were two Canadians and an American named Ayers, from the Fort, who were going on with despatches for the main company, that was supposed to be at Manual's Fort at the mouth of the Big Horn, a branch of the Yellow Stone. These men informed me that Miller and McDaniel had changed their mind; that they did not intend to continue further up the river and seemed to be in no haste to return to me. They urged me to accompany them, and promised me the use of one of their horses till my feet should become well enough for me to walk. I consented to go with them and prepared to leave my cabin. Before doing so, I buried the traps and other accoutrements of my two former companions in a corner of the lodge, and peeling off the bark from a log above them, I wrote on it, "In this corner your things lie" I learned on my return in the Spring that both of them had been killed as was supposed by the Rickarees. Their guns, traps, &c., were seen in the hands of some of that tribe; but they were never heard of afterwards.

On the third of February, 1810, eight months after my departure from St. Louis, I started from my winter lodge; but I soon repented my undertaking. The horses were all too weak to carry more than the load appropriated to them, and I was thus compelled to walk. My feet became very sore and gave me great pain, while the crust on the snow made the traveling of all of us, both slow and difficult. I suffered severely at starting but gradually improved in strength and was able in a few days to keep up with less torture to myself than at first. We ascended the south bank of the river till we struck the Little Missouri a branch from the south. Here we found some Indians who advised us to keep up the banks of this river for two days, and then turning northwardly, a half-days travel would bring us to the Gunpowder river near its head: this is a branch of the Yellow Stone. We travelled two days as directed and left the Little Missouri in search of the river. We missed it entirely, on account of our traveling so much slower than the Indians are accustomed to do. Over two day's travel was not greater than one of theirs. For five days we kept our course to the north in an open plain, and in the heart of winter. The cold was intense and the wind from the mountains most piercing. The snow blew directly in our faces and ice was formed on our lips and eyebrows. In this high latitude and in the open prairies in the vicinity of the mountains where we then were, the winters are very cold. On the first night we were covered where we lay to the depth of three feet by the snow. No game was to be seen and we were destitute of provisions. For five days we tasted not a morsel of food, and not even the means of making a fire. We saw not a mound or hill, tree or shrub, not a beast nor a bird until the fifth day when we discried afar off a high mound. We were destitute, alone in that vast desolate and to us limitless expanse, of drifting snow, which the winds drove into our faces and heaped around our steps. Snow was our only food and drink, and snow made our covering at night. We suffered dreadfully from hunger. On the first and second days after leaving the Little Missouri for the desert we were now traversing, our appetites were sharper and the pangs of hunger more intense than afterwards. A languor and faintness succeeded which made travelling most laborious and painful. On the fifth day we had lost so much of strength and felt such weakness for want of food, that the most terrible of deaths, a death by

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

famine, stared us in the face. The pangs and miseries we endured are vividly described by Mr. Kendall, from actual experience in his "Santa Fe Expedition." My feet, in addition to all other sufferings, now became sore and more painful than ever. The men had made for me a moccasin of skin taken from the legs of a buffalo, and which I wore with the hair next my feet and legs. I felt the blood gurgling and bubbling in this casing at every step. We were about to ward off starvation by killing a horse, and eating the raw flesh and blood, when on the fifth day of our wandering in this wilderness a mound was seen, as above mentioned, in the distance. We reached and ascended it in the evening, whence we saw woods and buffaloes before us. We hastened to kill several of these noblest of all animals of game, and encamped in the woods, where we quickly made a fire and cut up the meat. We were all so voracious in our appetites, as not to wait for the cooking, but ate great quantities nearly raw. The first taste, stimulated our languor and appetites to an ungovernable pitch. We ate and ate and ate, as if there were no limit to our capacity, and no quantity could satisfy us. At length when gorged to the full and utterly unable to hold any more, we gave out and sought repose about midnight under our tents. But sleep fled from our eyes and in the morning we arose, without having rested, feverish and more fatigued than when we supped and retired the night before. Our feet, limbs and bodies were swollen and bloated, and we all found ourselves laid up on the sick list, by our debauch on buffaloe meat. We had no desire to eat again on that day, and remained in camp utterly unable to travel, till the next morning, when we started forward, travelling slowly. We soon struck the river which we had suffered so much in seeking, and bent our course up the stream, crossing its bends on the ice. On one occasion when saving distance by cutting off a bend of the river, the horse carrying my pack and worldly goods, fell into an air hole and would have instantly disappeared had I not caught him by the tail and dragged him out to some distance, with a risk to myself of plunging under the ice into a rapid current, that made me shudder the moment I coolly looked at the danger. Hair breadth escapes from death are so frequent in the life of a hunter in this wild region as to lose all novelty and may seem unworthy of mention. I shall relate a few as I proceed, for the purpose of strewing the slight tenure the pioneer holds of life. And yet Boone, the prince of the prairies, "lived hunting up to ninety." Perhaps pure air and continual exercise are more than a counterbalance toward a long life, against all the dangers of a hunters and trappers existence, even among hostile savages, such as we were now rapidly approaching.

We continued our course up the Yellow Stone, gradually recovering from the effects of our unnatural surfeit and gross gormandizing of buffalo meat. The country here is one immense, level plain, and abounded, at this time, with large herds of buffalo, which subsisted on the buds of trees and the grass which the powerful winds laid bare of snow in many places. The river was skirted on either side by woods. At last, after fifteen days of painful travel and much suffering, we reached "Manuel's Fort," at the mouth of the Big Horn, where I found the most of my crew, and a small detachment of the company's men from whom I had parted the previous fall. This Fort, as before mentioned, was built by Liza in the spring of 1808, and a small garrison left in it, who had remained there ever since. Here I found Cheek, Brown, Dougherty and the rest of my crew rejoicing to see me. I was not a little surprised to find Col. Pierre Menard in command, who was to have returned to St. Louis from the Fort at the Gros Ventre village, and Liza intended to take command of the party on the head waters of the Missouri. Such was the arrangement at the commencement of the voyage. I soon learned from the men what they supposed to be the cause of the change. The

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

next day after I had left the Fort on the Missouri, in the fall, Cheek and several Americans were in the office or marque of the company, endeavoring to get their equipments according to contract. Liza was present. Chouteau's name was mentioned in the course of the conversation, when Cheek coolly remarked that if he caught Chouteau a hundred yards from camp he would shoot him. "Cheek! Cheek!!" exclaimed Liza, "mind what you say." "I do that," said Cheek, "and Liza, I have heard some of our boys say that if they ever caught you two hundred yards from camp they would shoot you, and if they don't I will. You ought not to expect any thing better from the Americans after having treated them with so much meanness, treachery and cruelty as you have. Now Liza," continued he, "you are going to the forks of the Missouri, mark my words, you will never come back alive." Liza's cheeks blanched at this bold and reckless speech from a man who always performed his promises, whether good or evil. He returned to St. Louis and sent up Col. Menard's in his place. Col. M. was an honorable, high minded gentleman and enjoyed our esteem in a higher degree than any other at the company. Liza we thoroughly detested and despised, both for his acts and his reputation. There were many tales afloat concerning villainies said to have been perpetrated by him on the frontiers. These may have been wholly false or greatly exaggerated, but in his looks there was no deception. Rascality sat on every feature of his dark complexioned, Mexican face — gleamed from his black, Spanish, eyes, and seemed enthroned in a forehead "villainous low." We were glad to be relieved of his presence. After remaining at this Fort or camp a few days we started westward for the "Forks" and mountains in a company of thirty-two men, French and Americans. On first arriving at the Fort I had learned that two of the men with an Indian chief of the Snake tribe and his two wives and a son had gone forward, with the intention of killing game for our company and awaiting our approach on the route. Our second day's journey brought us to an Indian lodge; stripped, and near by, we saw a woman and boy lying on the ground, with their heads split open, evidently by a tomahawk. These were the Snake's elder wife and son, he having saved himself and his younger wife by flight on horseback. Our two men who had started out in company with him, were not molested. They told us that a party of Gros Ventres had come upon them, committed these murders, and passed on as if engaged in a lawful and praiseworthy business. These last were the most powerful and warlike Indians of that region. The poor Snake tribe, on the contrary, were the weakest, and consequently became the prey and victims of the others. They inhabit the caves and chasms of the mountains and live a miserable and precarious life in eluding the pursuit of enemies. All the neighboring tribes were at war with these poor devils. Every party we met pretended to be out on an expedition against the Snakes, when they frequently reduce to slavery. Thus the strong prey upon the weak in savage as well as civilized life. Our course now lay to the north-west for the Forks of the Missouri, which meet in latitude — — among the mountains, whence the last named river runs directly north as high as latitude — — miles, where it turns to the south and south east, which last course it generally holds to its junction with the Mississippi. On the evening of the day when we left Manuel's Fort, my friend Brown became blind from the reflection of the sun on the snow; his eyes pained him so much that he implored us to put an end to his torment by shooting him. I watched him during that night for fear he would commit the act himself. He complained that his eye balls had bursted, and moaned and groaned most piteously. In the morning, I opened the swollen lids, and informed him to his great joy that the balls were whole and sound. He could now distinguish a faint glimmering of light. I led him all that day and the next, on the third he had so far recovered that he could

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

see, though but indistinctly. Our guide on this route was Colter, who thoroughly knew the road, having twice escaped over it from capture and death at the hands of the Indians. In ten or twelve days after leaving the Fort we reentered an opening or gap in the mountains, where it commenced snowing most violently and so continued all night. The morning showed us the heads and backs of our horses just visible above the snow which had crushed down all our tents. We proceeded on with the greatest difficulty. As we entered the ravine or opening of the mountain the snow greatly increased in depth being in places from fifty to sixty feet on the ground, a third of which had fallen and drifted in that night. The wind had heaped it up in many places to a prodigious height. The strongest horses took the front to make a road for us, but soon gave out and the ablest bodied men took their places as pioneers. A horse occasionally stepped out of the beaten track and sunk entirely out of sight in the snow. By night we had made about four miles for that day's travel. By that night we passed the ravine and reached the Gallatin river, being the eastern fork of the Missouri. The river sweeps rapidly by the pass at its western extremity, on each side of which the mountain rises perpendicularly from the bank of the river; and apparently stopped our progress up and down the east side of the stream. I forded it and was followed by Dougherty, Ware, and another, when Colter discovered an opening through the mountain on the right or north side, and through it led the rest of the company. We, however, proceeded down the left bank of the river till night, when we encamped and supped (four of us) on a piece of buffalo meat about the size of the two hands. During this and the proceeding day we suffered from indistinct vision, similar to Brown's affliction of leaving the Big Horn. We all now became blind as he had been, from the reflection of the sun's rays on the snow. The hot tears trickled from the swollen eyes nearly blistering the cheeks, and the eye-balls seemed bursting from our heads. At first, the sight was obscured as by a silk veil or handkerchief, and we were unable to hunt. Now we could not even see our way before us, and in this dreadful situation we remained two days and nights. Hunger was again inflicting its sharp pangs upon us, and we were upon the point of killing one of the pack horses, when on the fourth day after crossing the Gallatin, one of the men killed a goose, of which, being now somewhat recovered from our blindness, we made a soup and stayed the gnawings of hunger. The next day our eyes were much better, and we fortunately killed an elk, of which we ate without excess, being taught by experience, the dangers of gluttony after a fast. We continued on down the river and soon came in sight of our comrades in the main body on the right bank. They, like ourselves, had all been blind, and had suffered more severely than we from the same causes. They had killed three dogs, one a present to me from an Indian, and two horses to appease the demands of hunger before they had sufficiently recovered to take sight on their guns. Which in this distressed situation enveloped by thick darkness at midday, thirty Snake Indians came among them, and left without committing any depredation. Brown and another, who suffered less than the others, saw and counted these Indians, who might have killed them all and escaped with their effects with perfect impunity. Their preservation was wonderful. When we overtook them they were slowly recovering from blindness and we all encamped together, with thankful and joyous hearts for our late narrow escape from painful and lingering death. We proceeded on in better spirits. On the next day we passed a battle field of the Indians, where the skulls and bones were lying around on the ground in vast numbers. The battle which had caused this terrible slaughter, took place in 1808, the year but one before, between the Black-Foot to the number of fifteen hundred on the one side, and the Flat-Heads and Crows, numbering together about eight hundred on the other.

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

Colter was in the battle on the side of the latter, and was wounded in the leg, and thus disabled from standing. He crawled to a small thicket and there loaded and fired while sitting on the ground. The battle was desperately fought on both sides, but victory remained with the weaker party. The Black-Feet engaged at first with about five hundred Flat-Heads, whom they attacked in great fury. The noise, shouts and firing brought a reinforcement of Crows to the Flat-Heads, who were fighting with great spirit and defending the ground manfully. The Black-Feet who are the Arabs of this region, were at length repulsed, but retired in perfect order and could hardly be said to have been defeated. The Flat-Heads are a noble race of men, brave, generous and hospitable. They might be called the Spartans of Oregon. Lewis & Clark had received much kindness from them in their expedition to the Columbia, which waters their country; and at the time of this well fought battle, Colter was leading them to Manuel's Fort to trade with the Americans, when the Black Feet fell upon them in such numbers as seemingly to make their destruction certain. Their desperate courage saved them from a general massacre.

The following day we reached the long sought "Forks of the Missouri," or the place of confluence of the Gallatin, Madison and Jefferson rivers. Here at last, after ten months of travel, we encamped, commenced a Fort in the point made by the Madison and Jefferson forks, and prepared to begin business. This point was the scene of Colter's escape in the fall of the year but one before, from the Indians and a death by torture; an event so extraordinary and thrilling, as he related it to me, that it deserves a brief narration.

NOTE. — The following is the description given by G. W. KENDALL, of the sufferings from starvation, referred to on the 19th page.

"For the first two days through which a strong and hearty man is doomed to exist upon nothing, his sufferings are, perhaps, more acute than in the remaining stages. He feels an inordinate, unappeasable, craving at the stomach, night and day. The mind runs upon beef, bread and other substantial; but still in a great measure, the body retains its strength. On the third and fourth days, but especially on the fourth, this incessant craving gives place to a sinking and weakness of the stomach, accompanied by nausea. The unfortunate sufferer still desires food, but with loss of strength he loses that eager craving which is felt in the earlier stages. Should he chance to obtain a morsel or two of food, as was occasionally the case with us, he swallows it with a wolfish avidity; but five minutes afterwards his sufferings are more intense than ever. He feels as if he had swallowed a living lobster, which is clawing and feeding upon the very foundations of his existence. On the fifth day his cheeks suddenly appear hollow and sunken, his body attenuated, his color an ashy pale, and his eye wild, glassy, cannibalish. The different parts of the system now wage war with each other. The stomach calls upon the legs to go with it, in quest of food: the legs from very weakness refuse. The sixth day brings with it incessant suffering, although the pangs of hunger are lost in an overpowering languor and sickness. The head becomes giddy — the ghosts of well remembered dinners pass in hideous procession through the mind. The seventh day comes bringing in train lassitude and further prostration of the system. The arms hang listlessly, the legs drag heavily. The desire for food is still left, to a degree, but it must be brought, not sought. The miserable remnant of life which still hangs to the sufferer is a burden almost too grievous to be borne, yet his inherent love of existence induces a desire still to preserve it, if it can be saved without a tax upon bodily exertion. The mind wanders. At one moment he thinks his weary limbs cannot sustain him a mile — the next he is endowed with unnatural strength and if there be a certainty

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

of relief before him, dashes bravely and strongly onward, wondering where proceeds this new and sudden impulse. Farther than this my experience runneth not." — Vol. I. P. 266. The whole of the company — ninety eight men — subsisted for thirteen days on what was "really not provisions enough for three, and then came upon a herd of 17000 sheep, about eighty miles south east of Santa fe. Here a scene of feasting ensued which beggars description. \* \* \* Our men abandoned themselves at once to eating — perhaps I should rather call it gormandizing or stuffing. \* \* \* Had the food been any thing but mutton, and had we not procured an ample supply of salt from the Mexicans to season it, our men might have died of the surfeit." — p. 265.

This lively writer, Geo. W. Kendall, has told a tale in the book just quoted, of prairie life and adventures as well as of Mexican barbarity and treachery, and his embellished his story with all the graces of style and description calculated to render it a work of enduring interest.

Chapter II

Colter's Race and escapes — Separation for trapping — Descent of the Missouri — A fine Landscape — Bad luck — Alarm from Indians — Retreat to the Fort — Death of Cheek — Pursuit of the Indians — Return — The White Bears — Incidents of hunting — Return to the Twenty Five Yard river — A party of Gros Ventres — Suspected Robbery — Interview with the Crows — Rapid crossing of the Yellow Stone — Descent to the Fort and the "Cache" — Robbery made certain — Passage to the Missouri — Indian character and customs — A Spree, ending almost tragically — Generosity of the Company — Settlement with them — A sage reflection.

WHEN COLTER was resuming in 1807 with Lewis & Clark, from Oregon, he met a company of hunters ascending the Missouri, by whom he was persuaded to return to the trapping region, to hunt and trap with them. Here he was found by Liza in the following year, whom he assisted in building the Fort at the Big Horn. In one of his many excursions from this post to the Forks of the Missouri, for beaver, he made the wonderful escape adverted to in the last chapter and which I give precisely as he related it to me. His veracity was never questioned among us and his character was that of a true American backwoodsman. He was about thirty-five years of age, five feet ten inches in height and wore an open, ingenious, and pleasing countenance of the Daniel Boone stamp. Nature had formed him, like Boone, for hardy endurance of fatigue, privations and perils. He had gone with a companion named Potts to the Jefferson river, which is the most western of the three Forks, and runs near the base of the mountains. They were both proceeding up the river in search of beaver, each in his own canoe, when a war party of about eight hundred Black-Foot Indians suddenly appeared on the east bank of the river. The Chiefs ordered them to come ashore, and apprehending robbery only, and knowing the utter hopelessness of flight and having dropped his traps over the side of the canoe from the Indians, into the water, which was here quite shallow, he hastened to obey their mandate. On reaching the shore, he was seized, disarmed and stripped entirely naked. Potts was still in his canoe in the middle of the stream, where he remained stationary, watching the result. Colter requested him to come ashore, which he refused to do, saying he might as well lose his life at once, as be stripped and robbed in the manner Colter had been. An Indian immediately fired and shot him about the hip; he dropped down in the canoe, but instantly rose with his rifle in his hands. "Are you hurt," said Colter. "Yes, said he, too much hurt to escape; if you can get away do so. I will kill at least one of them." He leveled his rifle and shot an Indian dead. In an instant, at least a hundred bullets pierced his body and as many savages rushed into the stream and pulled the canoe, containing his riddled corpse, ashore. They dragged the

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

body up onto the bank, and with their hatchets and knives cut and hacked it all to pieces, and limb from limb. The entrails, heart, lungs, &c., they threw into Colter's face. The relations of the killed Indian were furious with rage and struggled, with tomahawk in hand, to reach Colter, while others held them back. He was every moment expecting the death blow or the fatal shot that should lay him beside his companion. A council was hastily held over him and his fate quickly determined upon. He expected to die by tomahawk, slow, lingering and horrible. But they had magnanimously determined to give him a chance, though a slight one, for his life. After the council, a Chief pointed to the prairie and motioned him away with his hand, saying in the Crow language, "go — go away." He supposed they intended to shoot him as soon as he was out of the crowd and presented a fair mark to their guns. He started in a walk, and an old Indian with impatient signs and exclamations, told him to go faster, and as he still kept a walk, the same Indian manifested his wishes by still more violent gestures and adjurations. When he had gone a distance of eighty or a hundred yards from the army of his enemies, he saw the younger Indians throwing off their blankets, leggings, and other incumbrances, as if for a race. Now he knew their object. He was to run a race, of which the prize was to be his own life and scalp. Off he started with the speed of the wind. The war-whoop and yell immediately arose behind him; and looking back, he saw a large company of young warriors, with spears, in rapid pursuit. He ran with all the strength that nature, excited to the utmost, could give; fear and hope lent a supernatural vigor to his limbs and the rapidity of his flight astonished himself. The Madison Fork lay directly before him, five miles from his starting place. He had run half the distance when his strength began to fail and the blood to gush from his nostrils. At every leap the red stream spurted before him, and his limbs were growing rapidly weaker and weaker. He stopped and looked back; he had far outstripped all his pursuers and could get off if strength would only hold out. One solitary Indian, far ahead of the others, was rapidly approaching, with a spear in his right hand, and a blanket streaming behind from his left hand and shoulder. Despairing of escape, Colter awaited his pursuer and called to him in the Crow language, to save his life. The savage did not seem to hear him, but letting go his blanket, and seizing his spear with both hands, he rushed at Colter, naked and defenseless as he stood before him and made a desperate lunge to transfix him. Colter seized the spear, near the head, with his right hand, and exerting his whole strength, aided by the weight of the falling Indian, who had lost his balance in the fury of the onset, he broke off the iron head or blade which remained in his hand, while the savage fell to the ground and lay prostrate and disarmed before him. Now was his turn to beg for his life, which he did in the Crow language, and held up his hands imploringly, but Colter was not in a mood to remember the golden rule, and pinned his adversary through the body to the earth one stab with the spear head. He quickly drew the weapon from the body of the now dying Indian, and seizing his blanket as lawful spoil, he again set out with renewed strength, feeling, he said to me, as if he had not run a mile. A shout and yell arose from the pursuing army in his rear as from a legion of devils, and he saw the prairie behind him covered with Indians in full and rapid chase. Before him, if any where was life and safety; behind him certain death; and running as never man before sped the foot, except, perhaps, at the Olympic Games, he reached his goal, the Madison river and the end of his five mile heat. Dashing through the willows on the bank he plunged into the stream and saw close beside him a beaver house, standing like a coal-pit about ten feet above the surface of the water, which was here of about the same depth. This presented to him a refuge from his ferocious enemies of which he

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

immediately availed himself. Diving under the water he arose into the beaver house, where he found a dry and comfortable resting place on the upper floor or story of this singular structure. The Indians soon came up, and in their search for him they stood upon the roof of his house of refuge, which he expected every moment to hear them breaking open. He also feared that they would set it on fire. After a diligent search on that side of the river, they crossed over, and in about two hours returned again to his temporary habitation in which he was enjoying bodily rest, though with much anxious foreboding. The beaver houses are divided into two stories and will generally accommodate several men in a dry and comfortable lodging. In this asylum Colter kept fast till night. The cries of his terrible enemies had gradually died away, and all was still around him, when he ventured out of his hiding place, by the same opening under the water by which he entered and which admits the beavers to their building. He swam the river and hastened towards the mountain gap or ravine, about thirty miles above on the river, through which our company passed in the snow with so much difficulty. Fearing that the Indians might have guarded this pass, which was the only outlet from the valley, and to avoid the danger of a surprise, Colter ascended the almost perpendicular mountain before him, the tops and sides of which a great way down, were covered with perpetual snow. He clambered up this fearful ascent about four miles below the gap, holding on by the rocks, shrubs and branches of trees, and by morning had reached the top. He lay there concealed all that day, and at night proceeded on in the descent of the mountain, which he accomplished by dawn. He now hastened on in the open plain towards Manuel's Fort on the Big Horn, about three hundred miles a head in the north-east. He travelled day and night, stopping only for necessary repose, and eating roots and the bark of trees for eleven days. He reached the Fort, nearly exhausted by hunger, fatigue and excitement. His only clothing was the Indian's blanket, whom he had killed in the race, and his only weapon, the same Indian's spear which he brought to the Fort as a trophy. His beard was long, his face and whole body were thin and emaciated by hunger, and his limbs and feet swollen and sore. The company at the Fort did not recognize him in this dismal plight until he had made himself known. Colter now with me passed over the scene of his capture and wonderful escape, and described his emotions during the whole adventure with great minuteness. Not the least of his exploits was the scaling of the mountain, which seemed to me impossible even by the mountain goat. As I looked at its rugged and perpendicular sides I wondered how he ever reached the top — a feat probably never performed before by mortal man. The whole affair is a fine example of the quick and ready thoughtfulness and presence of mind in a desperate situation, and the power of endurance, which characterise the western pioneer. As we passed over the ground where Colter ran his race, and listened to his story an undefinable fear crept over all. We felt awe-struck by the nameless and numerous dangers that evidently beset us on every side. Even Cheek's courage sunk and his hitherto buoyant and cheerful spirit was depressed at hearing of the perils of the place. He spoke despondingly and his mind was uneasy, restless and fearful. "I am afraid," said he, "and I acknowledge it. I never felt fear before but now I feel it." A melancholy that seemed like a presentiment of his own fate, possessed him, and to us he was serious almost to sadness, until he met his death a few days afterwards from the same Blackfeet from whom Colter escaped. Colter told us the particulars of a second adventure which I will give to the reader. In the winter when he had recovered from the fatigues of his long race and journey, he wished to recover the traps which he had dropped into the Jefferson Fork on the first appearance of the Indians who captured him. He supposed the Indians were all

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

quiet in winter quarters, and retraced his steps to the Gallatin Fork. He had just passed the mountain gap, and encamped on the bank of the river for the night and kindled a fire to cook his supper of buffalo meat when he heard the crackling of leaves and branches behind him in the direction of the river. He could see nothing, it being quite dark, but quickly he heard the cocking of guns and instantly leaped over the fire. Several shots followed and bullets whistled around him, knocking the coals off his fire over the ground. Again he fled for life, and the second time, ascended the perpendicular mountain which he had gone up in his former flight fearing now as then, that the pass might be guarded by Indians. He reached the top before morning and resting for the day descended the next night, and then made his way with all possible speed, to the Fort. He said that at the time, he promised God Almighty that he would never return to this region again if he were only permitted to escape once more with his life. He did escape once more, and was now again in the same country, courting the same dangers, which he had so often braved, and that seemed to have for him a kind of fascination. Such men, and there are thousands of such, can only live in a state of excitement and constant action. Perils and danger are their natural element and their familiarity with them and indifference to their fate, are well illustrated in these adventures of Colter.

A few days afterward, when Cheek was killed and Colter had another narrow escape, he came into the Fort, and said he had promised his Maker to leave the country, and “now” said he, throwing down his hat on the ground, “If God will only forgive me this time and let me off I will leave the country day after tomorrow — and be d — d if I ever come into it again.” He left accordingly, in company with young Bryant of Philadelphia, whose father was a merchant of that city, and one other whose name I forget. They were attacked by the Blackfeet just beyond the mountains, but escaped by hiding in a thicket, where the Indians were afraid to follow them, and at night they proceeded towards the Big Horn, lying concealed in the daytime. They reached St. Louis safely and a few years after I heard of Colter’s death by jaundice.

We arrived at the Forks of the Missouri on the third day of April, 1810, ten months after leaving St. Louis and two months and one day after quitting my cabin above the Gros Ventre village. We had now reached our place of business, trapping for beaver, and prepared to set to work. Dougherty, Brown, Ware and myself agreed to trap in company on the Missouri between the Forks and the Falls, which lie several hundred miles down the river to the north, from the Forks. We made two canoes by hollowing out the trunks of two trees and on the third or fourth day after our arrival at the Forks we were ready to start on an expedition down the river. The rest of the Americans with a few French, in all eighteen in number, determined to go up the Jefferson river for trapping, and the rest of the company under Col. Menard remained to complete the Fort and trading house at the Forks between the Jefferson and Madison rivers. On parting from Cheek, he said in a melancholy tone, “James you are going down the Missouri, and it is the general opinion that you will be killed. The Blackfeet are at the falls, encamped I hear, and we fear you will never come back. But I am afraid for myself as well as you. I know not the cause, but I have felt fear ever since I came to the Forks, and I never was afraid of anything before. You may come out safe, and I may be killed. Then you will say, there was Cheek afraid to go with us down the river for fear of death, and now he has found his grave by going up the river. I may be dead when you return.” His words made little impression on me at the time, but his tragical end a few days afterwards recalled them to my mind and stamped them on my memory forever. I endeavored to persuade him to

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

join our party, while he was equally urgent for me to join his, saying that if we went in one company our force would afford more protection from Indians, than in small parties, while I contended that the fewer our numbers the better would be our chance of concealment and escape from any war parties that might be traversing the country. We parted never to meet again, taking opposite directions and both of us going into the midst of dangers. My company of four started down the river and caught some beaver on the first day. On the second we passed a very high spur of the mountain on our right. The mountains in sight on our left, were not so high as those to the east of us. On the third day we issued from very high and desolate mountains on both sides of us, whose tops are covered with snow throughout the year, and came upon a scene of beauty and magnificence combined, unequalled by any other view of nature that I ever beheld. It really realized all my conception of the Garden of Eden. In the west the peaks and pinnacles of the Rocky Mountains shone resplendent in the sun. The snow on their tops sent back a beautiful reflection of the rays of the morning sun. From the sides of the dividing ridge between the waters of the Missouri and Columbia, there sloped gradually down to the bank of the river we were on, a plain, then covered with every variety of wild animals peculiar to this region, while on the east another plain arose by a very gradual ascent, and extended as far as the eye could reach. These and the mountain sides were dark with Buffalo, Elk, Deer, Moose, wild Goats and wild Sheep; some grazing, some lying down under the trees and all enjoying a perfect millenium of peace and quiet. On the margin the swan, geese, and pelicans, cropped the grass or floated on the surface of the water. The cotton wood trees seemed to have been planted by the hand of man on the bank of the river to shade our way, and the pines and cedars waved their tall, majestic heads along the base and on the sides of the mountains. The whole landscape was that of the most splendid English park. The stillness, beauty and loveliness of this scene, stuck us all with indescribable emotions. We rested on the oars and enjoyed the whole view in silent astonishment and admiration. Nature seemed to have rested here, after creating the wild mountains and chasms among which we had voyaged for two days. Dougherty, as if inspired by the scene with the spirit of poetry and song, broke forth in one of Burns' noblest lyrics, which found a deep echo in our hearts. We floated on till evening through this most delightful country, when we stopped and prepared supper on the bank of the river. We set our traps and before going to rest for the night we examined them and found a beaver in every one, being twenty-three in all. In the evening we were nearly as successful as before and were cheered with thoughts of making a speedy fortune. We determined to remain in this second paradise as long as our pursuits would permit. We skinned our beaver, ate breakfast and started to go further down the river in search of a good camp ground. Brown and Dougherty started in a canoe, before Ware and I were ready, and after going about two hundred yards, they struck a rock concealed under the water, overturned the canoe, and lost all our skins and amunition except the little powder in our horns and few skins left behind. They also lost their guns, but saved themselves and the canoe. Ware and I soon followed them, and we all encamped at the mouth of a small creek on the left side of the river. Here Ware and I remained while the two others went back to the Fort to procure other guns and amunition, taking with them one of our guns. They reached the Fort the first night, having saved a great distance by crossing the country and cutting off the bend of the river which here makes a large sweep to the east. They went up on the west side or that next to the mountains, waded Jefferson's Fork and entered the Fort late at night. Early the next morning the whole garrison was

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

aroused by an alarm made by Valle and several Frenchmen who came in, as if pursued by enemies, and informed them that the whole party who had gone up the Jefferson, at the time of our departure down the Missouri, had been killed by the Indians, and that they expected an immediate attack on the Fort. The whole garrison prepared for resistance. The next morning after Valle's arrival, Colter came in unhurt, with a few others, and said there were no Indians near the Fort. Col. Menard despatched Dougherty and Brown, on the same day, to us with the request that we should hasten to the Fort to assist in its defense. Being well mounted, they came up to our camp as we were preparing dinner. Their faces were pale with fright, and in great trepidation they told us they had seen Indian "signs" on the route from the Fort — that a horse with a rope about his neck had run up and snuffed around them as if in search of his master, and then disappeared — that an Indian dog had performed the same action. Every thing indicated that Indians were near, and we hastened to depart for the Fort. We proceeded up the creek near whose mouth we had encamped, and were screened from view on the north by the willows on our right. We had gone very cautiously four miles, when we left the river, and I perceived a small herd of buffalo in the creek bottom far to our right, start bounding off as if from pursuers in the rear, and immediately after, I descried through an opening in the willows, eight Indians, walking rapidly across the plain in the direction of our late camp. I informed the others of my observation, and Ware horror stricken proposed immediate flight. I protested against this course and no one seconded him, but we were all alarmed and the chins and lips of some quivered as they spoke. I said that we could not all escape, having but two horses among us, that we had, perhaps, seen the whole force of the Indians, and that they might not have seen us at all; that we could fight eight with success. I proposed that if attacked we should make a breast-work of our horses and two of us should fire upon them at a hundred yards, that the other two should fire at fifty yards, that the reloaded guns should despatch the third couple, and our knives and pistols finish the seventh and eighth. This Bobadil proposition revived their spirits wonderfully, and they instantly dismissed all thoughts of flight. Ware and I ascended a small height to watch the Indians, while the rest went on with the horses, which travelled slowly with packs. Here we saw the Indians go up to our deserted camp, the smoke from which had attracted them thither. The smoke in this clear atmosphere is visible to a great distance. The hunters said they had seen the smoke from an ordinary fire in the prairies for three hundred miles. We proceeded without pursuit, and at two o'clock the next morning we reached the Jefferson Fork, opposite the Fort. Unwilling to risk the danger of an attack by delay we forded the river with great difficulty, and went towards the Fort, whence some dogs rushed upon us, barking furiously. I spoke to the dogs, and a voice hailed us from the Fort with "who's there"? I answered promptly, and thus saved ourselves from a volley, for when we entered the Fort, the whole garrison was drawn up with fingers upon triggers. They were expecting an attack every moment, and did not look for us so soon. They were all in the greatest consternation. Lieutenant Emmel with those before mentioned of the trapping party up the river, had come in and they supposed that all the rest had been killed. They had had a very narrow escape themselves, as all but Colter probably considered it; he with his large experience, naturally looked upon the whole as an ordinary occurrence. During the day others came in and we learned from them the extent of our losses. The company consisting of eighteen, had proceeded up the bank of the Jefferson, trapping, and on the third day had pitched their tents for the night, near the river, and about forty miles from the Fort. Cheek, Hull and Ayers were employed in preparing the camp,

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

while the rest had dispersed in various directions to kill game, when some thirty or forty Indians appeared on the prairie south of them, running a foot and on horses, toward the camp. Valle and two men whose names I forget, came running up to Cheek and others and told them to catch their horses and escape. This Cheek refused to do, but, seizing his rifle and pistols, said he would stay and abide his fate. "My time has come, but I will kill at least two of them, and then I don't care." His gloomy forebodings were about to be fulfilled through his own recklessness and obstinacy. Ayers ran frantically about, paralysed by fear and crying, "O God, O God, what can I do." Though a horse was within his reach he was disabled by terror from mounting and saving his life. Courage and cowardice met the same fate, though in very different manners. Hull stood coolly examining his rifle as if for battle. The enemy were coming swiftly toward them, and Valle and his two companions started off pursued by mounted Indians. The sharp reports of Cheek's rifle and pistols were soon heard, doing the work of death upon the savages, and then a volley of musketry sent the poor fellow to his long home.

Lieutenant Emmel and another came in from hunting, about dusk, ignorant of the fate of their fellows, and seeing the tent gone they supposed the place of the camp had been changed. Hearing a noise at the river, Emmel went down to the bank, whence he saw through the willows, on the opposite side, a camp of thirty Indian lodges, a woman coming down to the river with a brass kettle which he would have sworn was his own, and also a white man bound by both arms to a tree. He could not recognise the prisoner, but supposed he was an American. On returning to the place where Cheek had pitched his tent, he saw his dead body without the scalp, lying where he had bravely met his end. He then hastened to the Fort where his arrival has been noticed before. A greater part of the garrison, with myself, started out on the morning of my coming in to go in pursuit of the Indians, up the river, and to bury our dead. We found and buried the corpses of our murdered comrades, Cheek and Ayers; the latter being found in the river near the bank. Hull was never heard of, and two others, Rucker and Fleehart were also missing; being killed or taken prisoners by the Indians. An Indian was found dead, with two bullets in his body, supposed to be from Cheek's pistol. The body was carefully concealed under leaves and earth, and surrounded by logs. We followed the trail of the savages for two days when we missed it and gave up the chase. Many of the men wished to pursue them into the mountains, but Col. Menard judged it imprudent to go further in search of them, as we should, probably, come upon an army of which this party was but a detachment. He thought the main body was very large, and not distant from us or the Fort, and therefore determined to return and await them there. We accordingly retraced our steps to the Fort, and remained in it, with our whole force, for several days, expecting an attack. No attack was made, however, nor did an enemy make his appearance afterwards, except in the shape of white, grey, brown and grizzly bears. Seeing nothing of our enemies, the Blackfeet, we soon became emboldened and ventured out of the Fort to hunt and trap, to the distance of about six miles. In these short expeditions the men had frequent encounters with bears, which in this region are of enormous size, sometimes weighing 800 pounds each, and when wounded, are the most terribly ferocious and dangerous to the hunter of all other animals. The African Lion and Bengal Tiger are the only beasts of prey, that in ferocity and power, can be compared with the Grey or Grizzly Bear of the Rocky Mountains. These were the terrors of our men as much as were the Indians, and they usually spoke of them both as equally terrible and equally to be avoided. The great strength of the Bear, his swiftness and utter insensibility to danger when wounded,

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

render him as dangerous to the hunter as the Tiger or the Lion. The first shot is seldom fatal upon him, on account of the thickness of his skin and skull, and the great quantity of fat and flesh that envelope his heart, and make an almost impenetrable shield in front. I will relate a few adventures with this North American king of beasts, and then proceed with my narrative.

Ware, an American, was hunting on an island in the Madison river, a short distance from the Fort and came suddenly, in a buffalo path, upon a white or grey Bear. He fired at the monster, wounded him in the breast, and then ran for his life, with the Bear at his heels, and saved himself by plunging into the river. His pursuer laid himself down on the bank and in the last struggle of death, fell into the water, where he died. Ware drew him out, took off the skin and was cutting and hanging up the meat, when he heard the noise of another Bear in the thicket near by. He hastened to the Fort for assistance and a party, with me, went over to the island. When there, we separated in our search, and in beating about the bushes, I, with my dog, entered a narrow path, and had gone some distance, when I saw the dog ahead, suddenly bristle up, bark and walk lightly as if scenting danger. I called to the men to come up, and watched the dog. He soon found the bear guarding a dead elk, which he and his dead companion had killed and covered with leaves. As soon as he saw the dog he plunged at him, and came furiously toward me, driving the dog before him and snorting and raging like a mad bull. I levelled my gun and snapped, and then ran with the bear at my heels, and his hot breath upon me. I reached the river bank, and turned short up a path, in which I met my companions coming to my call. They, however, seeing me running, were panic stricken and took to their heels also, thus were we all in full retreat from bruin, who crossed the river and fled through the willows on the other side. We heard him crashing his way for many hundred yards. On another occasion, a party had wounded a bear which instantly gave chase and overtook a Shawnee Indian in the company named Luthecaw, who had stumbled over some brush and fallen. He grasped the Indian by the double capeau and coat collar and stood over him, while we fired six shots into the bear, which fell dead upon the Indian, who cried out that the bear was crushing him to death, but arose unhurt, as soon as we removed the tremendous weight of the dead monster from his body. His jaws were firmly closed upon the Shawnee's "capeau" and coat collar, who arose at last with "sacre moste, l'est crazy, monte" — "damn the bear, he almost mashed me."

We kept the flag flying a month, frequently seeing Indians without getting an interview with them; they always fleeing at our approach. We then pulled down the flag and hoisted the scalp of the Indian whom Cheek had killed. By this time the Fort was completed and put in a good state of defense. We subsisted ourselves in the meantime, by hunting in small parties, which started out of Fort before day and went some twenty or thirty miles, and after having killed a buffalo or elk, come back with the meat loaded on the horses.

The Grizzly Bears frequently made their appearance and we killed great numbers of them. A Yankee, named Pelton, was remarkable for his contracted, narrow eyes, which resembled those of a bear. He was a jovial, popular fellow, and had greatly amused the company in coming up the river, by his songs and sermons. At every stopping place he held a meeting for the mock trial of offenders and exhorted us in the New England style to mend our courses and eschew sin. He had an adventure with a bear, about this time, which is worth relating. While trapping near the Fort with a small party, including myself, he was watching his traps alone, a short distance from us, when he heard a rustling in the bushes at his right, and before turning around he was attacked by

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

a large bear, which grasped him by the breast, bore him to the earth and stood over him with his head back and eyes fixed on his face as if observing his features; Pelton screamed and yelled in a most unearthly manner, and his new acquaintance, as if frightened by his appearance and voice, leaped from over his body, stood and looked at him a moment, over his shoulder, growled, and then walked off. We ran in the direction of the cries and soon met Pelton coming towards us in a walk, grumbling and cursing, with his head down, as if he had been disturbed in a comfortable sleep, and altogether wearing an air of great dissatisfaction. He told us the story, and thought he owed his escape to his bearish eyes which disconcerted his friendly relation in the act of making a dinner of him.

The Indians, we thought, kept the game away from the vicinity of the Fort. Thus we passed the time till the month of May, when a party of twenty-one, of whom I was one, determined to go up the Jefferson river to trap. By keeping together we hoped to repel any attack of the savages. We soon found the trapping in such numbers not very profitable, and changed our plan by separating in companies of four, of whom, two men would trap while two watched the camp. In this manner we were engaged, until the fear of Indians began to wear off, and we all became more venturesome. One of our company, a Shawnee half-breed named Druyer, the principal hunter of Lewis & Clark's party, went up the river one day and set his traps about a mile from the camp. In the morning he returned alone and brought back six beavers. I warned him of his danger. "I am too much of an Indian to be caught by Indians," said he. On the next day he repeated the adventure and returned with the product of his traps, saying, "this is the way to catch beavers." On the third morning he started again up the river to examine his traps, when we advised him to wait for the whole party, which was about moving further up the stream, and at the same time two other Shawnees left us against our advice, to kill deer. We started forward in company, and soon found the dead bodies of the last mentioned hunters, pierced with lances, arrows and bullets and lying near each other. Further on, about one hundred and fifty yards, Druyer and his horse lay dead, the former mangled in a horrible manner; his head was cut off, his entrails torn out and his body hacked to pieces. We saw from the marks on the ground that he must have fought in a circle on horseback, and probably killed some of his enemies, being a brave man, and well armed with a rifle, pistol, knife and tomahawk. We pursued the trail of the Indians till night, without overtaking them, and then returned, having buried our dead, with saddened hearts to Fort.

Soon after this time, Marie and St. John, my two Canadian companions on the route from my winter quarters on the Missouri to the Big Horn, came to the Fort at the Forks. Marie's right eye was out and he carried the yet fresh marks of a horrible wound on his head and under his jaw. After I had left them at the Big Horn to come to the Forks, they came on to the Twenty-five Yard river, the most western branch of the Yellow Stone, for the purpose of trapping. One morning after setting his traps, Marie strolled out into the prairie for game, and soon perceived a large White Bear rolling on the ground in the shade of a tree. Marie fired at and missed him. The bear snuffed around him without rising, and did not see the hunter until he had re-loaded, fired again and wounded him. His majesty instantly, with ears set back, flew towards his enemy like an arrow, who ran for life, reached a beaver dam across the river, and seeing no escape by land, plunged into the water above the dam. The Bear followed and soon proved himself as much superior to his adversary in swimming as in running. Marie dove and swam under the water as long as he could, when he rose to the surface near the Bear. He saved himself by diving and swimming in

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

this manner several times, but his enemy followed close upon him and watched his motions with the sagacity which distinguishes these animals. At last he came up from under the water, directly beneath the jaws of the monster, which seized him by the head, the tushes piercing the scalp and neck under the right jaw and crushing the ball of his right eye. In this situation with his head in the Bear's mouth and he swimming with him ashore, St. John having heard his two shots in quick succession, came running to his rescue. St. John levelled his rifle and shot the Bear in the head, and then dragged out Marie from the water more dead than alive. I saw him six days afterwards, with a swelling on his head an inch thick, and his food and drink gushed through the opening under his jaw, made by the teeth of his terrible enemy.

We made frequent hunting excursions in small parties, in which nothing of consequence occurred. Many of us had narrow escapes from Indians and still narrower from the Grizzly and White Bears. Game became very scarce and our enemies seemed bent upon starving us out. We all became tired of this kind of life, cooped up in a small enclosure and in perpetual danger of assassination when outside the pickets. The Blackfeet manifested so determined a hatred and jealousy of our presence, that we could entertain no hope of successfully prosecuting our business, even if we could save our lives, in their country. Discouraged by the prospect before us, most of the Americans prepared to go back to the settlements, while Col. Henry and the greater part of the company, with a few Americans were getting ready to cross the mountains and go onto the Columbia beyond the vicinity of our enemies. A party which had been left at Manuel's Fort, for the purpose, had brought up one of the boats and part of the goods from the "cache" on the Yellow Stone below the Fort, as far as Clark's river, where, on account of the rapidity of the current, they had been compelled to leave them. Thither Menard went with men and horses to get the goods for the trip to the Columbia, and I accompanied him with most of the Americans on our way back to civilized life and the enjoyments of home. When we reached the Twenty-five Yard river we met one hundred and fifty Indians of the Gros Ventre tribe. One of the men observing a new calico shirt belonging to him, around the neck of an Indian, informed Menard of his suspicions that this party had robbed the "cache" (from the French, *cachee* to hide, ) of the goods which they had hid in the earth near the bank of the Yellow Stone, in the fall before. Menard questioned them, but they denied the theft, saying they got the calico at the trading house. In the evening they entrenched themselves behind breastworks of logs and brush, as if fearing an attack from us, and in the morning, departed on an expedition against the snakes, of which miserable nation, we heard afterwards, they killed and took for slaves, a large number. Thus the whales of this wilderness destroy the minnows.

Here we made three canoes of buffalo bull's skins, by sewing together two skins, for each canoe, and then stretching them over a frame similar in shape to a Mackinaw boat. Our canoe contained three men, about sixty steel traps, five hundred beaver skins, our guns and ammunition, besides other commodities. Nine of us started down the river in these canoes and in two days reached Clark's river where the boats with the goods was awaiting us. The rest with the horses by land. Clark's river enters the Yellow Stone from the south; near its mouth we found an army of the Crow nation encamped. This is a wandering tribe like most of the Indians in this region, without any fixed habitation. These were then at war with the Blackfeet, whom they were seeking to give battle. Having remained with us a few days, they went off towards the south. One of our hunters came into camp, on the evening of the day when they had departed, and informed us of

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

a large force of Indians about four miles to the north, stationed behind a breast-work of rock and earth near a cliff. These were supposed to be Blackfeet, and early in the morning, the land party with the horses, having arrived, we mustered our whole force and went out to attack them in their entrenchment. We were all eager for the fight, and advancing upon them in Indian style, we discovered instead of Blackfeet, about a hundred warriors of the Crow nation, who had been out in an expedition against the Blackfeet and had just returned. They were a detachment from the army which had left us the day before. They marched into our camp on horse, two abreast, and there learning from us the news of their comrades, they immediately crossed the river in pursuit of them. Their manner of crossing the river was singular, and reminded me of the roving Tartars. They stripped themselves entirely naked, and every ten piled their accoutrements together, blankets, saddles, weapons, &c., on a tent skin made of buffalo robes, and tying it up in a large round bundle, threw it into the river and plunged after, some swimming with these huge heaps, floating like corks, and others riding the horses or holding by the tails till they had all crossed the river. Arrived on the opposite bank, which they reached in little less time than I have taken to describe their passage, they dressed, mounted their horses, and marched off two and two, as before, and were quickly out of our sight.

Here we parted from our companions, who were going to the Columbia, and who returned hence to the Forks with the goods and amunition for their trip, while we, the homeward bound, continued our course down the river in the canoes and the boat they had left, to the Fort on the Big Horn. We remained here several days, repairing a keel boat left by Manuel two years before, which we loaded with the goods from the canoes, and then recommended our descent of the Yellow Stone with the canoes and two boats. Col. Menard accompanied us in one of the boats, and I with two companions kept to our canoe in advance of the others for the purpose of killing game. On reaching the place "cacheing" the goods and leaving the boats, on account of the ice the year before, Menard verified his suspicions of the Gros Ventres whom he met on the Twenty-five Yard river. The pit containing the goods and effects of the men had been opened and forty trunks robbed of their contents. Another pit containing the company's goods had also been opened, and the most valuable of its store left by Menard was taken off by the Gros Ventres. They had also cut up and nearly destroyed the boats. We required one with the fragments of the other, and then passed down the river with three boats. I kept ahead as before in my skin canoe. This river is very rapid throughout its whole course, and very shallow. We were now near the Falls which are difficult and dangerous of navigation. In the morning I killed two buffalos with my pistol and rifle, and my two companions killed two more, which we up and stowed away. We approached the Falls sooner than we expected, and were directing our course to the left side among the sunken rocks and breakers, where we would certainly have been lost, when we heard a gun behind and saw the men on the boats waving us with handkerchiefs to the right. We were barely able to gain the channel, when the canoe shot down the descent with wonderful rapidity. We flew along the water like a sledge down an icy hill. My two companions lay in the bottom of the canoe, which frequently rebounded from the waves made by the rocks under the water and stood nearly upright. The waves washed over us and nearly filled the canoe with water. The boats behind commenced the descent soon after we had ended it in safety. They several times struck and one of them hung fast on a concealed rock. We hauled our canoe ashore, carried it above, and coming down to the foundered boat and lighting it of part of its load, we got it off the rocks. We now passed rapidly down

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

to the Missouri river, where I left my friendly canoe and went aboard one of the boats. Here my spirits were cheered with the near prospect of home. I longed to see the familiar faces of kindred and friends with a yearning of the heart, which few can realize who have not wandered as I had done, among savages and wild beasts and made the earth my bed and the sky my canopy for more than a year. My way homeward was clear and comparatively safe; the tribes along the river being friendly, or if hostile, unable to annoy us as the Blackfeet had done so long in the prairies.

In my wanderings in this expedition I saw much of the Indians and their manner of living. Those in this region were then more savage, less degraded, and more virtuous than they are at the present time. The white man and his "fire water" have sadly demoralized them, thinned their numbers, and will soon sink them into oblivion. They are no longer the proud, haughty, simple minded warriors and orators that I found so many of them to be in 1809-10. Sunk in poverty and intemperance, they are fast dwindling away. I have seen some of the finest specimens of men among our North American Indians. I have seen Chiefs with the dignity of real Princes and the eloquence of real orators, and Braves with the valor of the ancient Spartans. Their manner of speaking is extremely dignified and energetic. They gesticulate with infinite grace, freedom and animation. Their words flow deliberately, conveying their ideas with great force and vividness of expression, deep into the hearts of their hearers. Among their speakers I recognized all the essentials in manner of consummate orators. I shall have occasion, in the following chapters to bring out some of their nobler qualities in bolder relief than was possible in the preceding, on account of the more intimate relations I afterwards formed with these children of nature and the prairies.

In five days after entering the Missouri, we descended to the Gros Ventre village and our Fort, and were there joyfully received by our old companions. Whiskey flowed like milk and honey in the land of Canaan, being sold to the men by the disinterested and benevolent gentlemen of the Missouri Fur Company, for the moderate sum of twelve dollars per gallon, they taking in payment, beaver skins at one dollar and a half, each, which were worth in St. Louis, six. Their prices for every thing else were in about the same proportion. Even at this price some of the men bought whiskey by the bucket full, and drank.

'Till they forgot their loves and debts  
And cared for grief na mair.

During the carousel an incident occurred that nearly brought ruin upon us all. Three Shawnee Indians in the company from Kaskaskia, had started from the Upper Yellow Stone in a skin canoe, in advance, and had arrived a day or two before us. In their way down, one of them named Placota had wantonly killed a Crow Indian on the Yellow Stone, and a Gros Ventre on the Missouri, about sixty miles above the village, and taken their scalps. In his drunken fit Placota brought out one of these scalps in full view of the friendly Gros Ventres. Menard caught it out of his hand and hid it from view. The Indians became greatly excited, crowded around us and demanded to know whose scalp it was. Menard then produced to them the scalp of the Indian whom Cheek had killed and which they had seen before. They said this was a "dry" and the other a "green" scalp. We at last, and with great difficulty, pacified them and quieted their suspicions. Placota, who was raging mad, by Menard's orders was tied behind the trading house till he became sober, when I released him on his promise of good behavior.

This tribe was then very powerful, having in all five villages, and mustering, in case of emergency, as many as three thousand warriors. I have already noticed their character and warlike qualities.

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

A singular custom prevails among them in cutting off a finger or inflicting a severe wound in remembrance of any severe misfortune. Few of the men thirty years of age, were without the marks of these wounds, made on the death of some near relation or on occasion of a defeat of the nation in war. Some I saw with three and one with four fingers cut off. I saw a young man bewailing the death of his father in a battle with the Blackfeet. He had compelled his friends to draw leather cords through the flesh under his arms and on his back, and attaching three Buffalo skulls, weighing at least twenty-five pounds, to the ends of the cords he dragged them over the ground after him through the village, moaning and lamenting in great distress. At their meals, the Indians on the Missouri, throw the first piece of meat in the direction of an absent friend. In smoking, they send the first whiff upwards in honor of the Great Spirit, the second downward as a tribute to their great mother, the third to the right and the fourth to the left, in thanks to the Great Spirit for the game. He sends them so abundantly on the bosom of the earth. Their name for Chief is Inca, the same as that of the South American and Mexican Indians. For knife they say messa; for horses, cowalla. A comparison of their languages will show an identity in their origin and race. They secure their dead by setting four poles, forked at the top, and about twenty five feet in height, in the ground. On these they put a scaffold of buffalo skin, fastened to the poles, and on this the corpse is placed, covered by a buffalo skin bound around it very tightly. In this way the corpse is protected from the birds and beasts, and thus it remains till the scaffold falls by decay. The bones are then gathered by the relatives and put into a common heap. I saw in the rear of the Gros Ventre village an immense extent of ground covered by these tombs in the air, and near by was a heap of skulls and bones which had fallen to the earth from these air graves.

After a few day's stay at the Fort and village, we again started down the river with Col. Menard and two boats. We arrived at St. Louis in the month of August, A. D. 1810, without any occurrence of interest on the voyage. We never got our dues or any thing of the least similitude to justice from the company. They brought me in their debt two hundred dollars, and some of the other Americans, for still larger sums. The reader may ask how this could be. He can easily imagine the process when he is told that the company charged us six dollars per pound for powder, three dollars for lead, six dollars for coarse calico shirts, one dollar and a half per yard for coarse tow linen for tents, the same for a common butcher knife, and so on, and allowed us only what I have mentioned for our beaver skins, our only means of payment. Capt. Lewis told me not to lay in any supplies in St. Louis, as the Company had plenty and could sell them to me as cheaply as I could get them in St. Louis, or nearly so, allowing only for a reasonable profit. Lewis did not intend to deceive us and was chagrined at the villanous conduct of the Company afterwards. This, with the fraudulent violation of their contracts and promises in the Indian country, by this concern, makes up a piece of extortion, fraud and swindling, that ought to consign the parties engaged in it to eternal infamy. The heaviest blame must rest on the unprincipled Liza; but the rest of the company must suffer the stigma of having connived at and profited by the villainy, if they did not actually originate and urge it onward. I sued them on my contract, and was the only one who did so. After many delays and continuances from term to term, I was glad to get rid of the suits and them, by giving my note for one hundred dollars to the Company. This, with my debt to Colter, made me a loser to the amount of three hundred dollars by one years trapping on the head waters of the Missouri. Some of the Americans, however, fared much worse, and were deterred from returning to the settlements at all, by their debts to the Company, which they were hopeless of

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

discharging by any ordinary business in which they could engage. Such is one instance of the kind and considerate justice of wealth, to defenceless poverty, beautifully illustrating the truth of the sentiment uttered by somebody, "take care of the rich and the rich will take care of the poor."

Chapter III

Employment from 1810 to 1821 — The First Santa Fe Traders — Members of the Fourth Santa Fe expedition — Ascent of the Arkansas — Vaugan — Removal of the Town of Little Rock — Fort Smith and Major Bradford — Trading with the Osages — Capt. Prior — Salt River — Salt Plains and Shining Mountains — Robbery by the Indians — Sufferings from thirst — Attack by the Indians — Further Robberies — The One Eyed Chief and Big Star — Indian Council — Critical Situation — Rescue by Spanish officers — Cordaro — Journey continued — San Miguil Peccas and its Indian inhabitants — Santa Fe — Farming.

AFTER MY RETURN from the Upper Missouri, I went in the fall of 1810 to Pennsylvania, where I remained two years and married. I returned to St. Louis, in the fall of 1813, procured a keel-boat and with it, navigated the Ohio and Mississippi, between Pittsburgh and St. Louis, carrying goods for large profits. I continued in this business till the fall of 1815, when I took a stock of goods from McKnight & Brady of St. Louis, and opened a store in Harrisonville, Illinois, dividing profits equally among us. In the fall of 1818, I went to Baltimore with letters of recommendation and bought goods for cash and on credit to the amount of seventeen thousand dollars, and brought them in waggons to Pittsburgh where I left them to await a rise of the river, which was too low for navigation, and came to St. Louis. My goods were not sent on till the following spring, when they had greatly fallen in price and the market was filled with a large supply. I was unable to dispose of my stock even at cost. I struggled on through the years 1819-'20, with the certain prospect of bankruptcy before my face, amid the clamors of creditors, and without the hope of extricating myself from impending ruin. About this time Baum, Beard, and Chambers, with some others, came to St. Louis from Santa Fe, where they had been imprisoned by the Government ever since the year 1810. They, with Robert, brother of John McKnight of the firm of McKnight and Brady, and eight others, were the first American Santa Fe traders that carried goods from St. Louis to New Mexico. Immediately on reaching Santa Fe their goods were confiscated by the Governor, sold at public auction, and themselves taken to Chihuahua and there thrown into prison, where they were kept in more or less strict confinement for the space of ten years, being supported during that time by the proceeds of McKnight's goods, the Government allowing 18 3/4 cents per day to each man. This, I believe was the second company of Americans that ever entered Santa Fe. Clem. Morgan, a Portuguese and very wealthy, made his way thither at a very early day, while Louisiana belonged to Spain, and returned in safety, making a good venture. Gen. Zebulon Pike was the first American visitor to that country. He went in the year 1807, and on his arrival was marched through Mexico as a prisoner of war, but was soon after released on demand of our Government. One of his men was detained thirteen years by the Spaniards, and returned with Chambers to St. Louis. Pike in the beginning of our last war with England, met a soldier's death at Queenston Heights. The second company from the United States was McKnight's and their treatment has been noticed. The third was under the command of Augustus Chouteau and Demun of St. Louis, and was composed entirely of French. They made a very unsuccessful venture, being deprived of their goods worth \$40,000., without the least remuneration, and themselves imprisoned for a short time. I commanded the fourth expedition to Santa Fe from the United

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

States, and the first that was made after the Mexican Revolution and the declaration of their independence on Spain, and I was the first American that ever visited the country and escaped a prison while there. John McKnight desired to go to Mexico to see his brother, procure his release if he were still in prison, and return with him to the States. The first information he had received, concerning Robert, in ten years, came by his companions above named, who had left him in the interior of Mexico. He proposed that I should take my goods and accompany him, and supposed that under Spanish protection we could go unmolested by the Government. The news of the Revolution had not yet reached this country. This appeared to be the best course to retrieve my affairs, and I prepared for the journey by procuring a passport from Don Onis the Spanish Minister, countersigned by John Q. Adams, then Secretary of State under Monroe. I loaded a keel-boat with goods to the value of \$10,000, and laid in a large quantity of biscuit, whiskey, flour, lead and powder, for trading with the Indians on the route. I started from St. Louis on the tenth of May, A. D. 1821, and descended the Mississippi to the mouth of the Arkansas. The company consisted, besides myself, of McKnight, my brother John G. James, David Kirkee, Wm. Shearer, Alexander Howard, Benjamin Potter, John Ivy, and Francois Maesaw, a Spaniard. Two joined us after starting, Frederick Hector at the mouth of the Ohio, and James Wilson in the Cherokee country, making eleven in all, young and daring men, eager for excitement and adventure. Ascending the Arkansas, the first settlement we reached was "Eau Post," inhabited principally by French. A few days afterwards we arrived in the country of the Quawpaws, where we met with a Frenchman named Veaugean, an old man of considerable wealth, who treated us with hospitality. His son had just returned from hunting with a party of Quawpaws and had been attacked by the Pawnees, who killed several of his Indian companions. Pawnee was then the name of all the tribes that are now known as Camanches. I had never known or heard of any Indians of that name before I visited their country on my way to Santa Fe. The Americans previously knew them only as Pawnees. The account brought by Veaugean's son surprised me, as we had heard that all the Indians on our route were friendly. Leaving Veaugean's, we proceeded up the river through a very fertile country. Dense and heavy woods of valuable timber lined both sides of the river, both below "Eau Post" and above as far as we went, and the river bottoms, which are large, were covered by extensive cane-brakes, which appeared impenetrable even by the rattlesnake. Small fields of corn, squash and pumpkins, cultivated by Indians, appeared in view on the low banks of the river. Since entering the Arkansas we had found the country quite level; after sailing and pushing about three hundred miles from the mouth, we now reached the first high land, near Little Rock the capital of the Territory as established that spring. The archives had not yet been removed from Eau Post, the former capital. As we approached Little Rock we beheld a scene of true Western life and character, that no other country could present. First we saw a large wood and stone building in flames, and then about one hundred men, painted, masked and disguised in almost every conceivable manner, engaged in removing the Town. These men, with ropes and chains would march off a frame house on wheels and logs, place it about three or four hundred yards from its former site and then return and move off another in the same manner. They all seemed tolerably drunk, and among them I recognized almost every European language spoken. They were a jolly set indeed. Thus they worked amid songs and shouts, until by night-fall they had completely changed the site of their Town. Such buildings as they could not move they burned down, without a dissentant voice. The occasion of this strange proceeding was as follows: The Territorial Court was then in session

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

at Diamond Hill, about thirty miles distant on the river above, and the news had reached Little Rock on the morning of our arrival, that a suit pending in this Court and involving the title to the town, wherein one Russell of St. Louis was the claimant, had gone against the citizens of Little Rock and in favor of Russell. The whole community instantly turned out en masse and in one day and night Mr. Russell's land was disencumbered of the Town of Little Rock. They coolly and quietly, though not without much unnecessary noise, took the Town up and set it down on a neighboring claim of the Quawpaw tribe, and fire removed what was irremovable in a more convenient way. The free and enlightened citizens of Little Rock made a change of Landlords more rapidly than Bonaparte took Moscow. Here I saw Matthew Lyon, then quite an old man, canvassing for Congress. He was a man of some note in John Adam's administration, by whom he was imprisoned, under the Alien and Sedition law. He came into Little Rock, with the Judge and Lawyers, from Diamond Hill, the day after the grand moving of the Town. He rode a mule, which had thrown him into a bayou, and his appearance as he came in, covered with mud from head to foot, was a subject of much laughter for his companions and the town of Little Rock, which had now began to assume a look of some age, being just twenty-four hours old. Lyon was not returned to Congress and he died a few years afterwards. In 1824 I saw his grave at Spadre, in the Cherokee country, where he had kept a trading establishment. Before I left Little Rock I procured a license to trade with all the Indian tribes on the Arkansas and its tributaries, from Secretary Charles Crittenden, Governor Miller being out of the Territory. I gave bond in the sum of \$3000, with Judge Scott as security, to observe the laws of the United States, and it always appeared to me that I was entitled to indemnity from my country for the robberies which I suffered from the Indians. My losses in this way were tremendous and have weighed me down to the earth from that day to this, the best portion of my life; but not one cent have I ever been able to obtain from the justice of Congress, whose laws I was bound to obey, whose license from the hands of a Government officer I carried with me, and who by every rule of justice was bound to protect me in a business which it authorized by license and regulated by heavy penalties.

Continuing our course up the river, we passed through a more rocky and uneven country than that below Little Rock. The Maumel mountain, some fifty or sixty miles above this Town, and a mile from the south bank of the river, is a great curiosity. It rises six hundred feet above the level of the river, and in shape resembles a coal-pint. A large spring of fresh water gushes from the top and runs down its side to the river. We now passed through the country of the Cherokees, whose farms and log houses made a fine appearance on the banks of the river, and would compare favorably with those of any western State. They were at this time highly civilized and have since made great advances in the arts. These were that part of the nation called the Rogers party, who just emigrated from the east to the west side of the Mississippi, and ultimately, about the year 1833, with the powerful agency of the General Government, caused the removal of the whole nation to this country, where they are making rapid progress in national prosperity. Their Delegate will take his seat in our next Congress as Representative of the first Indian Territory ever organized. If this nation shall form a nucleus for the preservation of the race from annihilation, the cheerless predictions of the Physiologists will be most fortunately falsified, and the Philanthropist will rejoice in the perpetuation of the true Indian race and character.

Fort Smith lies about six hundred miles from the mouth of the Arkansas on the western confines of the Cherokee country, and near that of the Osages, which tribes were now at war with each

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

other. We stopped a few days at this post, where we were well received by Lieutenant Scott and the commandant Major Bradford, who examined and approved our license. The Major was a small stern looking man, an excellent disciplinarian and a gallant officer. He invited McKnight and me to make his house our home until we had rested our company and put our guns in good order preparatory to entering the Indian country. He and his wife treated us with the utmost kindness and hospitality, and on leaving, presented us a large supply of garden vegetables, with a barrel of onions, which we were not to broach until we had killed our first buffalo, when we were enjoined to have "a general feast in honor of old Billy Bradford." His kindness made a deep impression on us. We here tried to mark out our course for the future, which we determined should be the Arkansas to within sixty miles Loas in New Mexico, Baum having told me that this river was navigable thus far, and the Canadian being too shallow for our boat. Parting from the hospitable old Major, we ascended the river to the Salt Fork, which enters from the south, passing in our way the Grand River, then called the Six Bulls, and the Verdigris, at whose mouth Fort Gibson has since been built. The waters of the Salt Fork are very much saturated with salt, tasting like strong brine where they enter the Arkansas. After this we proceeded with great difficulty, and about thirty miles above the South Fork our further progress was entirely stopped by the lowness of the water. There being no prospect of a speedy rise in the river at this time, which was the mouth of August, we returned four miles to an Osage road, which we had observed in going up, and here I sent three men to the Osage village, which I knew could not be far distant, for the purpose of opening a trade with this tribe. In five or six days these men returned to me with forty Osages and a Capt. Prior, formerly of the United States army. I mentioned him in the first chapter as the commander of the escort of the Mandan Chief Shehaka. He was a Sergeant in Lewis and Clark's expedition, and a Captain at the battle of New Orleans. On the reduction of the army after the war, he was discharged to make way for some parlor soldier and sunshine patriot, and turned out in his old age upon the "world's wide common." I found him here among the Osages, with whom he had taken refuge from his country's ingratitude, and was living as one of their tribe, where he may yet be unless death has discharged the debt his country owed him.

I took out some goods, and with McKnight, my brother, and the Spaniard Macsaw, accompanied Capt. Prior and the Indians to their village, to the south east, which we reached in two days. Here we found our old friend, Maj. Bradford Hugh Glenn, from Cincinnati, with goods and about twenty men, on his way to the Spanish country, and also, Capt. Barbour, and Indian trader from the mouth of the Verdigris, and formerly of Pittsburgh. I proposed to Glenn, whom I shall have to mention unfavorably hereafter, to travel in company to the Spanish country; but he appearing averse to the arrangement, I did not urge it upon him. I bought twenty-three horses of the Osages at high prices, for packing my goods, and agreed with Barbour to "cache" (hide in the earth) my heaviest and least portable goods near the Arkansas, for him to take in the following spring down to his store at the mouth of the Verdigris, sell them and account to me for the proceeds on my return. I returned with my companions to the river and carefully concealed my flour, whiskey, lead, hardware and other heavy goods. I showed Capt. Prior, who came up the next day with a party of Osages going out on their fall hunt, the place where I had hid these goods, and packing the rest on my horses, we left the Arkansas to our right, or the north, and travelled with Prior and the Indians for two days toward the south-west. We then left them and bore directly to the west in the direction as pointed out to us by the Indians, of the Salt Plains and Shining Mountains. In eleven

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

days we struck the Salt Fork, mentioned before, and which is set down on the latest maps as the Cinnamon river. In the distance before us we discerned the bright mountains before mentioned, which the Indians had directed us to pass in our route. We held on our course for two days along the right bank of the Salt Fork, over mounds and between hills of sand which the wind had blown up in some place to the height of one hundred feet. Our progress was very slow, the horses sometimes sinking to their breasts in the sand. The bed of the river in many places was quite dry, the water being lost in the sand, and as we advanced, it appeared covered over with salt, like snow. The water, mantled over with salt, stood in frequent pools, from the bottom of which we could scoop up that mineral in bushels. The channel of the Salt river became narrower and more shallow as we proceeded. The sand so obstructed our progress that we crossed the river where traveling was less difficult, and soon struck a branch of the Salt Fork, equally impregnated with salt as the main stream. Large crusts of salt lay at the water's edge. Proceeding on we came to the Shining Mountains, and a high hill evidently based upon salt. It stands near the salt branch, the banks of which were composed of salt rocks, from which the men broke off large pieces with their tomahawks. Here, and in the Salt river was enough of this valuable mineral to supply the world for an indefinite period. The Shining Mountains lay south of us about four miles and had been visible for several days. We visited them and found one of the greatest curiosities in our country. I have never seen them nor the salt plains in which they stand put down on any map or described by any white man. All of our travellers in this region appear to have passed to the north or south of them, as I have never seen or heard of a description of them, except by the Indians, who come here regularly and in great force, for salt. The mountains stand separate from each other, are about three hundred feet in height, and are quite flat on the summit. They are composed, in part, of a shining semi-transparent rock, which reflects the rays of the sun to a great distance. It is soft, being easily cut with a knife, and the hand is visible through thin pieces of it when held in the sun light. They extend about thirty miles on the left of Salt river in a north-west and south-east direction, are all of an equal height, containing an area on the top of from ten rods to a hundred acres, and are entirely destitute of timber. The tops of most of them were inaccessible. With great difficulty we ascended one of about ten acres in extent, from which we saw along the tops of the others, they all being on the same plane. We found the short thin grass of the prairie below, but no shrub except the prickly pear. The ground was covered with immense quantities of buffalo manure, when left there it would be vain to conjecture. The substance from the ground was clay for upwards of two hundred feet, then came the rock from ten to twenty feet thick, projecting over the earth, and the soil above was about ten feet in depth. The rock is fast crumbling away by the action of water, which seems to dissolve it, as we found very few fragments at the foot of the mountains and none of any considerable size. The whole country was evidently at one time, on a level with these singular elevations.

We continued our course up the bank of the same branch of Salt river by which we had come. Its water was now, after leaving the salt plains, fresh and wholesome, and we travelled along its bank two days, when finding it took us too much to the north, we left it and bore to the southwest. This was the sixth day after reaching the Salt Fork, and seventeen after parting with Capt. Prior and the Osages. We killed seven buffalo after leaving the Shining Mountains, and dried the meat. The carcasses of the buffaloes attracting the buzzards with some old shoes and other small articles left on the ground by the men, served to discover us to a war party of Camanches who were now on

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

our trail. After leaving the Salt Branch we travelled till near night without finding wood or water, and then bore again to the north-west till we struck the Branch. We cooked our meat with fuel of buffalo manure which we gathered for the purpose. Towards morning we were all alarmed by the barking of our dogs, followed by a clapping noise and the sound of footsteps. We slept no more on that night, and in the morning saw upwards of a hundred Indians at a short distance coming with the design of intercepting our horses, which were some distance from the camp. One horse was pierced by a lance. I exhibited the flag, which diverted their course, and they came among us in a very hostile manner, seizing whatever they could lay their hands on. The interpreter told us they were a war party and advised me to make peace with them by giving them presents. I did so, distributing about three thousand dollars worth of goods among them. There were two Chiefs in this party, one of whom was friendly and the other, called the one-eyed Chief, seemed determined to take our lives. His party, however, was in a minority and soon after went off. The friendly Chief then came up to me and on account of his interference in our behalf demanded more presents, which I made to him. He told me that if I came to the village I should be well treated and implored me not to go up the Arkansas. I afterwards learned that the one-eyed Chief had left me with the purpose of waylaying us on that river and taking our lives, which was the reason of the friendly Chief's advice. Those who were hostile, and they were the whole of the one-eyed Chief's party, seemed perfectly infuriated against us. They scrutinized our equipments, said we had Osage horses and were spies of that nation, with whom they were then at war. At last we were rid of the presence of these unpleasant visitors with many dismal apprehensions for the future. The friendly Chief left a Mexican Indian, an interpreter, with us as a guide. With him we struck from the south branch of Salt river, for the north Fork of the Canadian, which the Indians told us we should reach in one day's travel. Going in a direction west of south we struck the river on the second day, having suffered dreadfully for want of water. McKnight and I went forward to find water and killed a buffalo. We drank large draughts of the blood of this animal, which I recollect tasted like milk. We found several ponds of water, so tainted with buffalo manure as to cause us to vomit on drinking of it. We missed the party on that night and found them on the next day, all sick from the water they had drunk, and exhausted by previous fatigue and thirst. The horses were nearly worn out by the same causes. We travelled along the North Fork of the Canadian for seven or eight days, until we reached its head in a large morass, or swamp, about two miles wide, and five or six long, situate in a valley which gradually narrows and disappears at last in the vast plain to the west. We went up this valley which was now dry, but in the spring is filled with a rapid stream. We saw thousands of buffalo along its course, and found a large pond about an acre in extent, but the water was so spoiled by manure, as to sicken us all. After passing through this valley we bore for the Canadian river towards the south, and on the second day, after intense suffering from thirst, we struck a fine spring of fresh water. This was a rich source of real refreshment and enjoyment. Following the stream made by this spring we reached the Canadian, and travelled up its course for several days. We had encamped for the night on the twenty-first day after meeting the Camanches who had robbed us on the branch of Salt river, when we saw a great number of mounted Indians coming over a rising ground in our front, and at their head the friendly Chief, who advanced with outstretched hands crying towauc, towae, - "good, good." Coming up he embraced me in Indian custom, and requested me to go with him to his village. Here an Indian seized a brass kettle and rode off with it. This act alarmed me, and I asked the

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

Chief if he could protect my property if I went with him. He said he could not, and I declined his invitation for that night, and requested him to leave a body of trusty Indians, to defend me till morning. He did so, and we were not molested that night. In the morning we marched with our guard from the left bank of the river, where we had encamped, to the right bank, and in two miles above we found the whole village of the Indians, numbering a thousand lodges, situated in the bottom near the base of a large mound. We were met by one of the principal Chiefs, whose looks were to me ominous of evil. He was a little vicious looking old man and eyed me most maliciously. We were taken close to the foot of the mound near this Chief's lodge, and there we encamped, having piled up my goods and covered them with skins. The Indians then demanded presents and about a thousand chiefs and warriors surrounded us. I laid out for them tobacco, powder, lead, vermilion, calico, and other articles, amounting to about \$1,000 in value. This did not satisfy them, and they began to break open my bales of cloth and divide my finest woolens designed for the Spanish market, among them. After losing about \$1000 more in this way, I induced them to desist from further robbery. The principal chief named Big Star, now appeared and said they had enough. They divided the spoil among two or three thousand, of whom all got some. They tore up the cloth into garments for the middle and blankets. They tied the silk handkerchiefs to their hair as ornaments, which streamed in the wind. This robbery over, I smoked with them and prepared to go on my journey. This they forbade and we were compelled to stay over that day. We kept a strong guard through the night on our goods and horses. On the next morning they pretended that another party had arrived who required presents. This information was brought by a one-eyed Spaniard, who acted as interpreter and had got from me as a present, a whole suit of cloth and a large supply of ammunition. He was the instigator of this new demand. The Indians began to gather around us, and break open and drag about the goods. The Chiefs stood off, taking no part. I then made them another set of presents, worth, probably, a thousand dollars more. We now hoped to be allowed to pass on, and requested leave to go, but they refused it; and the friendly chief advised us to stay. I had seen many savages, but none so suspicious and little as these. They seemed to regard us as spies in their country. We staid with them the second day and night without any further robbery than that I have mentioned. On the third day of my stay, the one-eyed Chief came into the village from the Arkansas, where he had been, with a hundred men, awaiting us with murderous designs. On his coming in, the interpreter, Maesaw, ran to me, saying we should certainly be killed, and the woman and children ran from their lodges like chickens before a hawk. I had made the Big Star Chief my friend by presenting him with a splendid sword. He now came up and took me into the little old Chiefs lodge, saying I would be shot if I remained out. Our time seemed nearly come. In the distance we saw the one-eyed with his troop approaching, all painted black and armed with guns, bows and arrows and lances. We were eleven against a hundred at least, perhaps thousands. The Big Star sent a messenger to my enemy and asked him what would satisfy him in lieu of our lives. He replied that he must have for each of his men as much cloth as his outstretched arms would once measure; an equal quantity of calico; powder, lead, vermilion, knives, beads, looking glasses, &c., and for himself the sword which he had seen on the south branch of Salt river. I sent him word that I had not the vermilion, knives, beads and looking glasses, nor the sword, which I had presented to the Big Star. He said the story about the sword was a lie, that I had given it to Big Star to prevent him from getting it, and that he would have it or my scalp, and as to the other articles he would take cloth instead of them. The Big Star

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

here sent to his lodge for the sword, and taking it in his hand, he pressed its side to his heart and then handed it to me, saying, "take it and send it to the one-eyed Chief. You have no other way of saving your life and the lives of your people." I did as he advised, and measured off about five hundred yards of cloth and calicoe, of which the former cost me seven dollars per yard in Baltimore, and sent them to my deadly enemy. This appeared to pacify him and again I proposed to go on my way. To this they again objected, saying that the whole village would go down the river in the morning, and we should then be permitted to part from them and continue our course up the river as before meeting with them. We had the horses brought up, and prepared, that evening, for an early start in the morning. One half kept guard while the rest of our party endeavored to sleep. But there was no rest for any of us on that most dismal night. This was the third sleepless night which we had passed with these ferocious savages, and we were nearly worn down by fatigue, anxiety and watching. Before day-light a party of boys ascended the mound in our rear, and from the top stoned our company until they were dislodged and driven down by the exertions of the friendly Chief. Uncertain of our fate and nearly exhausted, we awaited in sullen patience, the issue of events. The sun as he rose seemed to wear an aspect of gloom, and every thing portended evil to our little band. Six of my horses had been taken in the night, and I ordered my men out to find and bring them back. The friendly Chief now came to me with great concern and dejection in his countenance, and begged of me not to leave my station or allow the men to go out.

"Keep together," said he, "or you will be killed. The men that go out will be murdered. Don't try to get back your horses." I saw that the whole army were preparing to decamp, and pulling down their lodges. Sometime after sunrise, I perceived about fifty of the Chiefs and older Indians going up unto the mound above us, in our rear, followed by a multitude of young warriors and boys. An old man turned and drove them back: the two friendly Chiefs did not go up. Arrived at the top, this company formed the circle, sat down and smoked. Then one of their number commenced what seemed to us, from his gestures, to be a violent harangue, designed to inflame their passions. I told my company that this council would decide our fate. They asked me how I knew this. If they come down, said I, friendly, we shall have nothing to fear; but if sulky, and out of humor, we have nothing to hope. Put your guns in good order, and be prepared for the worst. We must sell our lives as dearly as possible. In this sentiment they all agreed with me, and we prepared to meet our fate, whatever it should be, like men. During this time, the lodges, with the women and children, were fast disappearing, and the men assembling before us on horseback and afoot, armed with guns, bows, and lances. The council on the hill, after an hour's consultation, descended, and we soon learned that our deaths were determined upon. Those Indians who before were sociable, were now distant and sulky. When spoken to by any of us they made no answer.

The friendly Chief and Big Star, who had taken no part in the council, now came and shook hands, and bade us farewell. I besought them to stay with us; shaking their heads sorrowfully, they went away. The press in front now greatly increased. Nearly two thousand warriors stood before and around us, with the evident intention of making an attack, and appeared to be waiting the signal for the onslaught. We stood in a circle with our backs to the goods and saddles heaped up above all our heads; and with our rifles raised to our breasts, and our fingers on the triggers. We were also armed with knives and tomahawks. Old Jemmy Wilson seized an axe, having no gun, and swore he would hew his way as far as he could. Thus we stood eleven against two thousand, with death staring us in the face. All seemed unwilling to commence the bloody work. The

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

suspense was awful. I stood between John McKnight and my brother, and noticed their countenances. McKnight's face was white, and his chin and lips were quivering. My brother, as brave a man as ever lived, looked desperate and determined. Not a man but seemed bent to die in arms and fighting, and none were overcome by fear.

Thus we stood near half an hour in deathly silence; at length the White Bear warrior, a Chief dressed in a whole Bear skin, with the claws hanging over his hands, rode swiftly towards us, through the crowd, with his lance in his hand, as if to annihilate us at once; but seeing the dangerous position he was in, he stopped short about five paces from us, and glared upon me with the most deadly malignity. Finding he could not reach me with his lance, he took out his pistol, examined the priming, tossed out the powder from the pan, re-primed, and again fixed his devilish eyes full upon me. But he saw that I could fire first, and he kept his pistol down. Here McKnight first broke the dreadful silence, saying, "let us commence James, you will be the first one killed — this suspense is worse than death; the black Chief is my mark." I said no, McKnight, let us forbear as long as they do; for us to begin is folly in the extreme; but as soon as a gun is fired, we must fire, rush in and sell our lives as dearly as possible. Here Kirker walked out with his gun over his head, gave it up, and passed into the crowd unmolested. In a minute afterwards we heard a cry from a distance, approaching nearer and nearer, of Tabbaho, Tabbaho.\* (\*White men.) This I supposed was on account of Kirker's surrender. The cry increased and spread throughout the crowd. Looking towards the south-west, whence the cry arose, while the White Bear's attention was withdrawn, I saw six horsemen riding at full speed, and as they came nearer, we heard the words in Spanish, save them! save them! In a moment a Spanish officer rushed into our arms, exclaiming, thank God we are in time; you are all safe and unhurt. He said that he had heard of our danger by accident, that morning, and ridden twenty miles to save us. All the circumstances of our rescue we learned the next day. With joyous and thankful hearts for our escape from a death that, five minutes before seemed inevitable, we prepared to depart with our preservers. I had bidden farewell, as I thought forever, to my wife, child, home and all its endearments, and the thoughts of them were now overpowering to me. The Spaniards asked the Indians why they were going to kill us. They answered, that the Spanish governor at Santa Fe had commanded them not to let any American pass, but that we were determined to go in spite of them, so that to stop us and keep their promise to the Spanish Governor, they thought they were compelled to take our lives. The Spaniards told them that this was under the government of Spain, but that they were now independent and free, and brothers to the Americans. This was the first news I had heard of the Mexican revolution.

The two friendly Chiefs now returned, and I showed the Spaniards our passport. The Indians brought in and delivered up four of my horses. The whole village, soon after the arrival of the Spaniards, went down the river; and our party, except Maesaw and myself, with two of the Spanish officers, started forward towards the Spanish camp, about twenty miles distant. We four remained behind to recover the two missing horses, and then followed our companions. We were lost, at dark, among the cliffs bordering the river, where we made fire for cooking our suppers, and encamped for the night. Early the next morning we reached the Spanish encampment, where our party was awaiting us. As we approached the camp there came out to meet us, a tall Indian of about seventy years of age, dressed in the complete regimentals of an American Colonel, with blue coat, red sash, white pantaloons, epaulets and sword. He advanced with an erect, military air

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

and saluted us with great dignity and address. His eyes were still bright and piercing, undimmed in the least by age, and he had a high, noble forehead and Roman nose. His whole port and air struck me forcibly as those of a real commander and a hero. After saluting us he handed me a paper which I read as follows, as nearly as I now remember.

This is to certify that Cordaro, a Chief of the Camanches has visited the Fort at Nacotoche with fifteen of his tribe, that he remained here two weeks, and during the whole time behaved very well. It is my request that all Americans who meet him or any of his tribe, should treat him and them with great respect and kindness, as they are true friends of the United States.

JOHN JAMESON

U. S. Indian Agent at Nacotoche on Red River

This Chief, Cordaro, was the cause of our being then in existence. He told us he had promised his "great friend at Nacotoche" that he would protect all Americans that came through his country, and he very earnestly requested us to inform his "great friend" that he had been as good as his word. On entering the encampment, we found about fifty Spaniards and three hundred Camanche warriors, who had just returned from an expedition against the Navahoes, a tribe inhabiting the country west of Santa Fe and the mountains, and who were then at war with the Spaniards. On their return from this campaign this party had come from Santa Fe with their Camanche allies into their country to hunt for buffalo and had encamped the night before our rescue from the Camanches, on the spot where we now found them. On the next morning a party of Indians belong to this band were hunting their horses in the prairie and met another party from the army below, who had us in custody, engaged in the same manner, who informed them that their countrymen had taken a company of Americans prisoners, and were going to kill them all that morning, and divide their goods among the army; that the whole village was breaking up and preparing to go down the Canadian, and that the pulling down of the last lodge was to be the signal for our massacre. On hearing this the first party hastened back to their camp with the news which brought out most of the young warriors to come down for a share of the plunder of my goods. The Chief Cordaro went instantly, on hearing this account, to the Spanish officers, told them that a company of Americans were to be murdered that morning by his countrymen, mentioned the signal for the attack, said he was too old to ride fast, or he would go himself to the rescue, and adjured them to mount and ride without sparing the horses, as not a moment was to be lost. Six of them mounted and rode as Cordaro had told them to do, and we saw their foaming steeds and heard the cry of Tabbaho — (white men) — just in time to save us from extermination. A minute after would probably have been too late. Our determined attitude averted the blow and prolonged our time to the last moment, when our deliverers appeared; but without them, the next instant would have seen a volley of shot and arrows lay most of us low and the lance and tomahawk would have soon completed the work on us all.

Cordaro, the noble and true hearted savage, appeared to rejoice at our escape as much as we. He desired particularly that his "great friend" at Nacotoche should hear of his agency in saving us, and I had to promise him repeatedly that I would surely inform Col. Jameson when I saw him, of the manner in which his friend, Cordaro, had performed his promise to him. If John Jameson be still alive and this page meet his eye, I shall have cause to felicitate myself in having at last kept my word to my Camanche preserver.

We spent that day with Cordaro and the Spaniards, and held a council or "talk" with them. Corda-

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

ro made a speech dissuading me from going to Santa Fe on account of the treatment which the Americans had always received from the Government there. "They will imprison you," said he to me, "as they have imprisoned all Americans that ever went to Santa Fe. You will meet the fate of all your countrymen before you." The Spanish officers, who were all present at this harangue, smiled and said there was no danger of any mis-treatment to us, now that they had an independent government. Cordaro shook his head incredulously, and told them that we were under his protection; that he would himself go to Sante Fe after we had arrived there, and if he found us imprisoned, he would immediately go to war with them. "The Americans are my friends," said he, "and I will not permit them to be hurt. I have promised my great friend of Nacotoche to protect all Americans that come through my country." The Spaniards promised to treat us well, but our protector seemed to be very suspicious of them and evidently gave little faith to their promises. We found at this camp an excellent Spanish interpreter, who spoke the Camanche language as well as his own. By him I was informed that the Indians took me for the Frenchman Vaugan, whom we had seen in the country of the Quawpaws, a tribe of kin to the Osages, and who, while hunting on the Canadian in the spring before with a party of thirty French and Indians of the former tribe, had been attacked by the Camanches, who were defeated and driven back with considerable loss. Vaugan, like myself, was a tall man, and the Indians here and those we had met before, considered me the commander in this battle. The one-eyed interpreter had concealed this fact from me, and we now had some difficulty in satisfying the Indians that we were not the same party who with Vaugan, were in alliance with their enemies, the Osages. The charge was frequently renewed, but we at last succeeded in repelling it and quieting their suspicions. On the next day, the third day after meeting with the Spanish officers, we parted with Cordero who followed his countrymen down the Canadian, with the Spanish force in his company. Two of the Spanish officers remained to accompany us to Santa Fe. They were all very gentlemanly and liberal minded men. One Spanish citizen of Santa Fe had hired to return with me as a guide. We once more took up our march along the Canadian and over the immense plains by the trail of the Spaniards we had just parted with. The whole country here is one immense prairie. I observed many huge granite rocks standing like stone buildings, some of them, one hundred feet high. The earth seemed to have been washed from around them and the prairies below to have been formed by deposits of earth and crumbled rocks from these and similar elevations. Some were covered with earth and cedar trees, but most of them were entirely bare. In three days after leaving Cordaro we came in sight of the Rocky Mountains, whose three principal peaks, covered with perpetual snow were glittering in the sun. The most northern and highest of these peaks is set down on the latest map I have seen as "James' Peak or Pike's." Gen. Pike endeavored to reach its top, but without success. After my return I made a rough map with a pen, of this country, for the use of Senator Kane of Illinois, and in the next map published by Government, I saw my name affixed to this peak, as I supposed, by the agency of Mr. Kane. The peak bore no name known to our company when we saw it and I gave it none then or afterwards. In two days more we came to an old Spanish Fort, dismantled and deserted, which had been built many years before in expectation of an invasion from the United States. This was about one hundred miles from Sante Fe. We soon encountered large herds of sheep, attended by Shepherds, and on the second day after passing the Fort, came to a small town in a narrow ravine on the Peccas river and at the foot of a high cliff. Here I became acquainted with an old Spaniard, named Ortiso, who in his youth had been cap-

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

tured by the Pawnees and sold to Chouteau of St. Louis, where he had learned French and whence he returned home by the way of New Orleans, St. Antoine in Texas and the interior of Mexico. He informed me more particularly than I had yet heard, of the Mexican Revolution, and foretold that Iturbide would be elected President at the ensuing election. We proceeded up the bank of the Peccas by a narrow road, impassable for waggons. One of the horses with all my powder and some of the most valuable goods, here fell down a precipice into a beaver dam in the river. The horse was uninjured but the goods were nearly all spoiled. The next town on our route was San Miguel, fifteen miles from the last, an old Spanish town of about a hundred houses, a large church, and two miserably constructed flour mills. Here was the best water-power for mills, and the country in the vicinity abounded in the finest pine timber I had ever seen. But no attempt is made to improve the immense advantages which nature offers. Every thing that the inhabitants were connected with seemed going to decay. We left San Miguel on the following morning with the Alcalde and a company of Spaniards bound for Sante Fe. We stopped at night at the ancient Indian village of Peccas about fifteen miles from San Miguel. I slept in the Fort, which encloses two or three acres in an oblong, the sides of which are bounded by brick houses three stories high, and without any entrances in front. The window frames were five feet long and three-fourths of a foot in width, being made thus narrow to prevent all ingress through them. The lights were made of izing-glass and each story was supplied with similar windows. A balcony surmounted the first and second stories and moveable ladders were used in ascending to them on the front. We entered the Fort by a gate which led into a large square. On the roofs, which like those of all the houses in Mexico are flat, were large heaps of stones for annoying an enemy. I noticed that the timbers which extended out from the walls about six feet and supported the balconies, were all hewn with stone hatchets. The floors were of brick, laid on poles, bark and mortar. The brick was burned in the sun and made much larger than ours, being about two feet by one. The walls were covered with plaster made of lime and izing-glass. I was informed by the Spaniards and Indians that this town and Fort are of unknown antiquity, and stood there in considerable splendor in the time of the Conquerors. The climate being dry and equable and the wood in the buildings the best of pine and cedar, the towns here suffer but little by natural decay. The Indians have lost all tradition of the settlement of the town of Peccas. It stood a remarkable proof of the advance made by them in the arts of civilization before the Spaniards came among them. All the houses are well built and showed marks of comfort and refinement. The inhabitants, who were all Indians, treated us with great kindness and hospitality. In the evening I employed an Indian to take my horses to pasture, and in the morning when he brought them up I asked him what I should pay him. He asked for powder and I was about to give him some, when the Spanish officer forbade me, saying it was against the law to supply the Indians with ammunition. Arms are kept out of their hands by their masters who prohibit all trade in those articles with any of the tribes around them. On the next day in the evening, we came in sight of Santa Fe, which presented a fine appearance in the distance. It is beautifully situated on a plain of dry and rolling ground, at the foot of a high mountain, and a small stream which rises in the mountain to the west runs directly through the city. It contained a population at this time of six thousand. The houses were all white-washed outside and in, and presented a very neat and pleasing sight to the eye of the traveller. They are all flat on the roof and most of them one story in height. There are five very splendid churches, all Roman Catholic, which are embellished with pictures, and ornaments of gold and silver in the most

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

costly style. The chalices were of pure gold and candlesticks of silver. The principal buildings, including the Fort, are built around the public square in the middle of the city. The Fort, which occupies the whole side of this square, encloses about ten acres, and is built on the plan of the Peccas Fort above described. There is an outer wall about eight feet in height, enclosing the buildings, which like those at Peccas bound the inner square. The whole was falling to decay and but few soldiers were stationed in it. The farms are without fences or walls, and the cattle, hogs, &c., have to be confined during the raising and harvesting of crops. They raise onions, peas, beans, corn, wheat and red pepper — the last a principal ingredient in Spanish food. Potatoes and turnips were unknown. I saw peach trees, but none of apples, cherries, or pears. The gardens were enclosed.

The country is entirely destitute of rains except in the month of June and July, when the rivers are raised to a great height. A continual drought prevails throughout all the rest of the year, not even relieved by dews. Consequently the ground has to be irrigated by means of the many streams which rise in the mountains and flow into the Rio Grande; and for this purpose canals are cut through every farm. Land that can be watered is of immense value, while that which is not near the streams is worthless. While in Santa Fe, a Spaniard took me sixteen miles south, to show me his farm of 15 acres, for which he had just paid \$100 per acre, and which lay conveniently to water. Hogs and poultry are scarce, while sheep, goats, and cattle are very abundant.

Chapter IV

Interview with Governor Malgaris — Commencement of business — Departure of McKnight — Arrival of Cordaro — His Speech — His visit to Nacotoche — His death and character — Hugh Glenn — Celebration of Mexican Independence — Gambling and dissipation — Mexican Indians — Domestic manufactures — Visit of the Utahs — Their Horses — Speech of the Chief Lechat — War with the Navahoes — Cowardly murder of their Chiefs by the Spaniards — Militia of Santa Fe — Attempt to go to Senoria — Stopped by the Governor — Interview with the Adjutant — Selling out — Hugh Glenn again — How the Governor paid me a Debt — Spanish Justice — Departure for home.

I ENTERED SANTE FE on the first day of December, A. D. 1821, and immediately went with Ortise as interpreter, to the Governor's palatia or house, to whom I made known my object in visiting his country, and showed my passport. He remarked on reading it, that they were entirely independent of Spain, that the new government had not laid any duties on imports and gave me permission to vend my goods. I rented a house, and on the next day commenced business. In about two weeks I took in \$200, which I advanced to John McKnight for the expenses of his journey to Durango, about sixteen hundred miles south, where his brother Robert was living after his enlargement from prison. They both returned in the month of April following. Soon after McKnight's departure, I heard of Hugh Glenn's arrival at Loas, sixty miles north of Santa Fe and was soon after favored with a visit from him. He came down to Santa Fe, borrowed \$60 from me, and at the end of a week returned to Loas.

About six weeks after I reached Santa Fe my true friend and protector, Cordaro, came in according to promise, with thirty of his tribe, to ascertain if we were at liberty. He was dressed in his full regimentals and commanded the respect of the Spanish officials, who behaved towards him with great deference. By his request a council was held, which convened in the Spanish Council House on the public square, and was attended by the Spanish officers, magistrates, and principal citizens

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

of Santa Fe. Cordaro made the speech for which he had caused the council to be held. He expressed his pleasure at finding that we and the Spaniards were friends, that he would be pleased to see us always living together like brothers and hoped that the American trade would come to his country as well as to the Spaniards. He complained that we traded with their enemies, the Osages, and furnished them with powder, lead, and guns, but had no intercourse with the Camanches. He hoped the Government of the United States would interfere and stop the depredations of the Osages upon his nation. "They steal our horses and murder our people," said he, "and the Americans sell them the arms and amunition which they use in war upon us. We want your trade, and if you will come among us we will not cheat nor rob you. I have had a talk with my nation and told them they had done a great wrong in treating you as they did, and they promised never to do so again. They say they will pay you in horses and mules for the goods they took from you on the Canadian, if you will only come once more into our country. Come with your goods among us; you shall be well treated. I pledge you my word, the word of Cordaro, that you shall not be hurt nor your goods taken from you without full payment. Each of my nation promises to give you a horse if you will come and trade with us once more, and though poor, and though I got none of your goods, yet will I give you two of the best horses in the nation. Come to our country once more and you shall find friends among the Camanches. Come and you shall be safe. Cordaro says it." The old warrior spoke like an orator and looked like a statesman. He appeared conscious of the vast superiority of the whites, or rather of the Americans, to his own race and desired the elevation of his countrymen by adopting some of our improvements and customs. For the Spaniards he entertained a strong aversion and dislike; not at all mingled with fear, however, for he spoke to them always as an equal or superior. They refused to trade with his nation in arms and had nothing besides which his people wanted. Their remarkable disposition to treachery appeared to be perfectly known to the old Chieftain.

After the council, Cordaro desired me to write a letter for him to his great friend Col. Jameson of Nacatoche, and make known to him the manner in which he had remembered his promise to protect the Americans in his country, by saving me and my company from death at the hands of his countrymen. I wrote the letter and delivered it to him. On the next day we parted, and I never saw him again. In my trip to the Camanche country in 1824 I was informed by the Indians that he went to Nacatoche with my letter to Col. Jameson, who gave him three horses, loaded with presents. By this means he returned to his country a rich man, and soon after became sick and died. He was a sagacious, right-hearted patriot and a brave warrior, who in different circumstances might have accomplished the destiny of a hero and savior of his country.

I continued my trading, though without much success on account of the scarcity of money. I had seen enough of Mexican society to be thoroughly disgusted with it. I had not supposed it possible for any society to be as profligate and vicious as I found all ranks of that in Santa Fe. The Indians are much superior to their Spanish masters in all the qualities of a useful and meritorious population.

On the fifth of February a celebration took place of Mexican Independence. A few days before this appointed time, a meeting of the Spanish officers and principal citizens was held at the house of the Alcalde to make arrangements for the celebration. They sent for me, asked what was the custom in my country on such occasions, and requested my advice in the matter. I advised them to raise a liberty pole, hoist a flag, and fire a salute for each Province. They counted up the Prov-

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

inces or States, and discovered that Mexico contained twenty-one, including Texas. They said they knew nothing of the rule of proceeding in such cases and desired me to superintend the work. I sent out men to the neighboring mountains for the tallest pine that could be found. They returned with one thirty feet long. I sent them out again, and they brought in another much longer than the first. I spliced these together, prepared a flag rope, and raised the whole, as a liberty pole, about seventy feet high. There was now great perplexity for a national emblem and motto for the flag, none having yet been devised, and those of Spain being out of the question. I recommended the Eagle, but they at last agreed upon two clasped hands in sign of brotherhood and amity with all nations. By day light on the morning of the fifth I was aroused to direct the raising of the flag. I arose and went to the square, where I found about a dozen men with the Governor, John Facundo Malgaris, all in a quandary, not knowing what to do. I informed the Governor that all was ready for raising the flag, which honor belonged to him. "Oh do it yourself," said he, "you understand such things." So, I raised the first flag in the free and independent State of New Mexico. As the flag went up, the cannon fired and men and women from all quarters of the city came running, some half dressed, to the public square, which was soon filled with the population of this city. The people of the surrounding country also came in, and for five days the square was covered with Spaniards and Indians from every part of the province. During this whole time the city exhibited a scene of universal carousing and revelry. All classes abandoned themselves to the most reckless dissipation and profligacy. No Italian carnival ever exceeded this celebration in thoughtlessness, vice and licentiousness of every description. Men, women and children crowded every part of the city, and the carousal was kept up equally by night and day. There seemed to be no time for sleep. Tables for gambling surrounded the square and continually occupied the attention of crowds. Dice and Faro-banks were all the time in constant play. I never saw any people so infatuated with the passion for gaming. Women of rank were seen betting at the Faro-banks and dice tables. They frequently lost all their money; then followed the jewelry from their fingers, arms and ears: then the ribose or sash edged with gold, which they wear over the shoulders, was staked and lost, when the fair gamesters would go to their homes for money to redeem the last pledge and if possible, continue the play. Men and women on all sides of me, were thus engaged, and were all equally absorbed in the fluctuating fortunes of these games. The Demon of chance and of avarice seemed to possess them all, to the loss of what little reason nature had originally made theirs. One universal jubilee, like bedlam broke loose, reigned in Santa Fe for five days and nights. Freedom without restraint or license, was the order of the day; and thus did these rejoicing republicans continue the celebration of their Independence, till nature was too much exhausted to support the dissipation any longer. The crowds then dispersed to their homes with all the punishments of excess, with which pleasure visits her votaries. I saw enough during this five days revelry to convince me that the republicans of New Mexico were unfit to govern themselves or any body else. The Indians acted with more moderation and reason in their rejoicing than the Spaniards. On the second day of the celebration a large company of men and women from San Felipe, an Indian town forty miles south of Santa Fe, marched into the city, displaying the best formed persons I had yet seen in the country. The men were a head taller than the Spaniards around them, and their women were extremely beautiful, with fine figure and a graceful, elegant carriage. They were all tastefully dressed in cotton cloth of their own weaving and decorated with coral beads of a brilliant red color. Many wore rich pearl necklaces and jewelry of great value. I was told by Ortise that the ornaments of

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

stone, silver and gold which some of these Indian ladies wore, were worth five hundred dollars. The red coral was worth one hundred dollars per pound. Many of the Indians, as the reader may suppose from this description of their women, are very wealthy. The men were also elegantly dressed in fine cloth, manufactured by their own wives and daughters. The Americans with their Tariff and "protection of home industry," might learn a lesson from these wise and industrious Indians. I heard nothing among them of a Tariff to protect their "domestic manufactures." They worked and produced and protection came of itself without the curse of government interference. This Indian company danced very gracefully upon the public square to the sound of a drum and the singing of the older members of their band. In this exercise they displayed great skill and dexterity. When intermingled in apparently hopeless confusion in a very complicated figure, so that the dance seemed on the point of breaking up, suddenly at the tap of the drum, each found his partner and each couple their place, without the least disorder and in admirable harmony. About the same time the Peccas Indians came into the city, dressed in skins of bulls and bears. At a distance their disguise was quite successful and they looked like the animals which they counterfeited so well that the people fled frightened at their appearance, in great confusion from the square. I have spoken before, in favorable terms of the Mexican Indians. They are a nobler race of people than their masters the descendants of the conquerors; more courageous and more generous; more faithful to their word and more ingenious and intellectual than the Spaniards. The men are generally six feet in stature, well formed and of an open, frank, and manly deportment. Their women are very fascinating, and far superior in virtue, as in beauty, to the greater number of the Spanish females. I was informed that all the tribes, the Utahs, the Navahoes, and others inhabiting the country west of the Mountains to the Gulf of California, like those in Mexico, lived in comfortable houses, raised wheat and corn, and had good mills for grinding their grain. I saw many specimens of their skills in the useful arts, and brought home with me some blankets and counterpanes, of Indian manufacture, of exquisite workmanship, which I have used in my family for twenty-five years. They are, generally far in advance of the Spaniards around them, in all the arts of civilized life as well as in the virtues that give value to national character.

In the latter part of February I received a deputation of fifty Indians from the Utah tribe on the west side of the mountains. They came riding into the city, and paraded on the public square, all well mounted on the most elegant horses I had ever seen. The animals were of a very superior breed, with their slender tapering legs and short, fine hair, like our best blooded racers. They were of almost every color, some spotted and striped as if painted for ornament. The Indians alighted at the Council House and sent a request for me to visit them. On arriving I found them all awaiting me in the Council House, with a company of Spanish officers and gentlemen led hither by curiosity. On entering I was greeted by the Chief and his companions, who shook hands with me. The Chief, whose name was Lechat, was a young man of about thirty and of a right Princely port and bearing. He told me in the Spanish language, which he spoke fluently, that he had come expressly to see me and have a talk with me. "You are Americans, we are told, and you have come from your country afar off to trade with the Spaniards. We want your trade. Come to our country with your goods. Come and trade with the Utahs. We have horses, mules and sheep, more than we want. We heard that you wanted beaver skins. The beavers in our country are eating up our corn. All our rivers are full of them. Their dams back up the water in the rivers all along their course from the mountains to the Big water. Come over among us and you shall have as many beaver skins as you

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

want.” Turning round and pointing to the Spaniards, in most contemptuous manner and with a scornful look he said, “What can you get from these? They have nothing to trade with you. They have nothing but a few poor horses and mules, a little puncha, and a little tola (tobacco and corn meal porridge ) not fit for any body to use. They are poor — too poor for you to trade with. Come among the Utahs if you wish to trade with profit. Look at our horses here. Have the Spaniards any such horses? No, they are too poor. Such as these we have in our country by the thousand, and also cattle, sheep and mules. These Spaniards,” said he, turning and pointing his finger at them in a style of contempt which John Randolph would have envied, “what are they? What have they? They wont even give us two loads of powder and lead for a beaver skin, and for a good reason they have not as much as they want themselves. They have nothing that you want. We have every thing that they have, and many things that they have not.” Here a Spaniard cried out: “You have no money.” Like a true stump orator the Utah replied, “and you have very little. You are depicca.” In other words you are poor miserable devils and we are the true capitalists of the country. With this and much more of the same purport, he concluded his harangue, which was delivered in the most independent and lordly manner possible. He looked like a King upbraiding his subjects for being poor, when they might be rich, and his whole conduct seemed to me like bearding a wild beast in his den. The “talk” being had, Lechat produced the calama or pipe, and we smoked together in the manner of the Indians. I sent to my store and procured six plugs of tobacco and some handkerchiefs, which I presented to him and his company, telling them when they smoked the tobacco with their Chiefs to remember the Americans, and treat all who visited their country from mine as they would their own brothers. The council now broke up and the Chief, reiterating his invitations to me to visit his country, mounted his noble steed, and with his company rode out of the city, singing and displaying the handkerchiefs I had presented them, from the ends of their lances as standards. They departed without the least show of respect for the Spaniards, but rather with a strong demonstration on the part of Lechat of contempt for them. I noticed them at the council enquiring of this Chief with considerable interest what the Navahoes were doing, and whether they were preparing to attack the Spanish settlements. They had been at war with this tribe for several years, and seemed to fear that the Utahs might take part in it as allies of the Navahoes, for which reason they conducted themselves with the utmost respect and forbearance towards Lechat and his band. What was the immediate cause of this war, I did not learn, but I saw and heard enough of it to enlist my sympathies with the Navahoes. A few days after the visit of the Utahs, I saw a solitary Indian of that tribe, crossing the public square in the direction of the Governor’s house, and driving before him a fat heifer. He went up to the Governor’s door, to whom he sent word that he had a present for him, and was admitted. What followed I learned from Ortise, an old Alcalde, with whom I boarded during the time of my stay in Santa Fe. As he entered the room of the Governor, the Navaho prostrated himself on his face. The Governor stepped towards him and with a spurning motion of the foot, which touched the Indians head, asked him who he was and what he wanted. The poor Indian arose on his knees and said he was a Navaho, and had come to implore peace for his nation. “We are tired of war and we want peace,” said he; “our crops are destroyed, our women and children are starving. Oh! give us peace!” The Governor asked the interpreter what he said, and being told, the christian replied — “Tell him I do not want peace, I want war.” With this answer the Indian was dismissed, the Governor keeping his heifer. The poor fellow came to my store, announced his name and nation, and requested me

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

to go among his tribe and trade. He said the rivers were full of beaver and beaver dams — that they had horses and mules which they would exchange for powder, lead and tobacco. The Indians are destitute of amunition and guns, and Spanish laws prohibit all trade with them in these articles. I gave him several plugs of tobacco, a knife and other small articles, and told him when he went back to his country to smoke my tobacco with his Chiefs and tell them if any Americans came to their country to treat them like brothers. He went off with a guard as far as the outposts on the route to his country. But I have no doubt he was murdered by the Spaniards long before reaching his home. About a week after this, sixteen Navaho Chiefs came into the town of St. James, sixty miles below Santa Fe on the Del Norte, and requested the commander of the Fort to allow them to pass on to the Governor at Santa Fe, saying that they had come to make peace. The commander invited them into the Fort, smoked with them and made a show of friendship. He had placed a Spaniard on each side of every Indian as they sat and smoked in a circle, and at a signal each Indian was seized by his two Spanish companions and held fast while others despatched them by stabbing each one to the heart. A Spaniard who figured in this butchery showed me his knife which he said had killed eight of them. Their dead bodies were thrown over the wall of the Fort and covered with a little earth in a gully. A few days afterwards five more of the same nation appeared on the bank of the river opposite the town, and enquired for their countrymen. The Spaniards told them they had gone on to Sante Fe, invited them to come over the river, and said they should be well treated. They crossed and were murdered in the same manner as the others. There again appeared three Indians on the opposite bank, enquiring for their Chiefs. They were decoyed across, taken into the town under the mask of friendship, and also murdered in cold blood. In a few days two more appeared, but could not be induced to cross; when some Spanish horsemen went down the river to intercept them. Perceiving this movement, they fled and no more embassies came in. The next news that came told of a descent made by the Navahoes in great force, on the settlements in the south, in which they killed all of every age and condition, burned and destroyed all they could not take away with them, and drove away the sheep, cattle and horses. They came from the south directly towards Santa Fe, sweeping everything before them, and leaving the land desolate behind them. They recrossed the Del Norte below Santa Fe, and passed to the north, laid bare the country around the town of Toas, and then disappeared with all their booty. While this was going on, Malgaris was getting out the militia, and putting nearly all the inhabitants under arms, preparatory to an expedition. I was requested to go, but I preferred to be a spectator in such a war. The militia of Santa Fe when on parade, beggared all description. Falstaff's company was well equipped and well furnished compared with these troops of Gov. Malgaris! Such a gang of tatterdemallions I never saw before or since. They were of all colors, with all kinds of dresses and every species of arms. Some were bare headed, others bare backed — some had hats without rims or crowns, and some wore coats without skirts; others again wore coats without sleeves. Most of them were armed with bows and arrows. A few had guns that looked as if they had been imported by Cortez, while others had iron hoops fastened to the ends of poles, which passed for lances. The doughty Governor Facunda Malgaris, on foot, in his cloak and chapeau de bras, was reviewing this noble army. He was five feet high, nearly as thick as he was long, and as he waddled from one end of the line to the other I thought of Alexander and Hannibal and Caesar, and how their glories would soon be eclipsed by this hero of Santa Fe. After him followed the Adjutant in his jacket with red cuffs and collar, and with his frog-stick-

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

er, called a sword, at his side. He examined the bows and arrows, lances and other arms of these invincibles. He with the little Governor seemed big with the fate of New Mexico. At last when all was ready the Governor sent them forth to the war and himself went to his dinner. In the mean time where was the enemy — the blood-thirsty Navahoes? They had returned in safety to their own country with all their plunder, and were even then far beyond the reach of Gov. Malgaris' troop of scare crows.

In the beginning of March finding that trade was dull and money very scarce in Santa Fe, I enquired for a better place of business and was advised by Ortise to go to Senora on the Gulf of California, where gold and silver was more abundant than in New Mexico. I requested him to go with me; he declined going himself but procured his brother, whom I hired, to go as guide for \$12, for each mule load. I packed up my goods, and had got ready for the journey when Ortise came in with a gloomy countenance and asked if I had asked permission of the Governor to go to Senora. I said I had not, and he advised me to see him. I went to his house, apprehensive of hostility, and found the dignitary walking with a lordly air up and down his piazza. As I approached he strutted away from me to the opposite end of the gallery without deigning to notice me. I stood and awaited his return, and as he came up, I accosted him politely, and said I could not sell my goods in Santa Fe and had called to obtain his permission to go with them to Senora, where I had understood money was more plenty than in Santa Fe. "You can't go sir," growled his Excellency, and continued his promenade. I followed and asked him why I could not go. He said he had no orders to let me go. I asked him if he had any orders to prevent me. He said no. I then said, you know that I have a passport from my government, approved by the Spanish minister. "Oh we have nothing to do with the Spanish Government." But you have something to do with my Government. I shall start for Senora, and if you arrest or imprison me on my way, my Government shall hear from me. This appeared to agitate the little grandee and set him to thinking for a moment. He paced to and fro a while, stopped short, and asked how I was going. With Don Francisco Ortise, as guide. At this he burst into a loud laugh. "Ho, ho! Don Francisco will go with you, will he? Well Don Thomas, you can go, but I will send a party of soldiers with you to the outposts, and if any Spaniard attempt to go further with you I will have him brought back in irons and thrown into prison. You will have to pass through the country of the Apaches, and you will be robbed, perhaps murdered if you have no Spaniard with you. Now go, Don Thomas, now go — ha, ha, ha." I now turned and left him. Ortise, whom I considered my friend, advised me by no means, to make the attempt to reach Senora without a Spanish guide and I gave up the project. I regarded this, the result of a plot to detain me in Santa Fe till Spring, when they knew I was to return, and would have to sell my goods at any price. I went on the evening of my interview with the Governor, to the house of a sick Lieutenant, where I found the Adjutant and several other officers. They asked, with a sly glance at each other, when I was going to Senora. I am not going. "Why so, we heard you were all ready to start. You have a passport, have you not?" Yes, said I, but the Governor threatens to imprison any Spaniard that attempts to go with me. He has imprisoned all my countrymen that came here before me, and I suppose, if he dared, he would imprison me. Here the sick Lieutenant shook my knee by way of caution, and the Adjutant leaped up exclaiming, "If he dared! What do you mean sir, be careful how you talk;" and put his hand on the butcher knife at his side, called a sword. I had a dirk at my breast, as good a weapon as his, and facing him I repeated, yes, if he dared; but he dares not, nor dare any of you imprison me while I observe your laws. You have

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

robbed and imprisoned all my countrymen heretofore, but my Government will now stop this baseness and cruelty to the Americans. If you violate my rights while I have an American passport my Government will avenge my wrongs on your heads. This appeared to cool the Adjutant, who said we were friends and that he would not tell the Governor. Tell him or not as you please said I. I wish for the honor of my country, or rather of my Government, that the name of American citizen were a better protection in a foreign country than it is. Ancient Rome and modern England are examples to us in this respect. A subject of the English monarchy in a foreign country is sure that any flagrant violation of his natural rights will be avenged, if necessary, by the whole military and naval power of his country. An Englishman like an ancient Roman citizen, knows that his Government will look after him and is sure of protection. An American is sure of nothing. His Government may amid the turmoil of electioneering, demand him from his jailors, but it is much more likely to overlook him entirely as beneath its regard. The case of Robert McKnight, who returned in April with John, his brother, from Durango, after an imprisonment of ten years, was a remarkable instance of the delinquency of our Government in this particular. His goods had been confiscated and himself and his companions thrown into prison, where they remained ten years, and during the whole time their own Government was sleeping on their wrongs. No notice whatever was taken of them; and when McKnight returned to his country he was equally unsuccessful in seeking redress. "I will go back to Mexico, said he, swear allegiance to their Government and become a citizen. I have resided the prescribed term of years, and there is a better chance for obtaining justice from the Mexicans, scoundrels as they are, than from my own Government. I will go and recover as a citizen of Mexico what I lost as a citizen of the United States. My own Government refuses to do me justice, and I will renounce it forever. I would not raise a straw in its defence." He accordingly returned to Mexico, where he probably received remuneration for his losses, and where he now lives a citizen of the country.

While in Santa Fe I was a frequent visitor at the house of the parish Priest, a very gentlemanly, intelligent man, where I often found an interesting company assembled. I supped at his house on one occasion with sixteen Spanish gentlemen of education, and some of distinction. The conversation happened to turn on the power and condition of the United States, and particularly on the country west of the Mississippi. They said the country west of this river once belonged to them, and agreed that it would some day return to their possession. They said that Spain had ceded it to Bonaparte without their consent, and that, it of right, belonged to Mexico. They also expressed great dissatisfaction with the line of the Sabine, alleging that it ought to have been and would yet be the Mississippi instead of the former river. I told them that my countrymen were also dissatisfied with the Sabine as the boundary. "Ah exclaimed one, then we shall have little difficulty in changing it; both sides will be agreed." Not so fast, said I, we think the boundary ought to have been the Rio Del Norte. "What! said they, the Del Norte; that would take in Santa Fe." Yes, Seignors, said I, we claim to the Del Norte. "Never, never — you will never get it, and if it ever comes to a trial of power between Mexico and the States, we will have to the Mississippi. You will be compelled to give it to us." I told them to mark my words and said, if ever the boundary is changed you will see it go westward and not to the east.

The Spring was nearly gone and most of my goods remained unsold. Money was very scarce, and I had little prospect of selling them at any price. I offered them at cost, and at last found a purchaser of most of them in a Spaniard named Pino, who paid me one thousand dollars in cash and

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

an equal sum in horses and mules. He borrowed the money of Francisco Chavis, the father of Antonio, who was murdered in the United States by Mason, Brown and McDaniel. The last two were convicted of the murder on the testimony of Mason, and executed in St. Louis in 1844. After this trade with Pino I had still on my hands a large quantity of brown and grey cloths, which were unsaleable in the Spanish market; blue and other colors being preferred. These cloths I sold to Hugh Glenn, who again honored me with a visit in the latter part of May, staid with me two weeks, borrowed forty dollars, in addition to the sixty I had already loaned him, and gave me his note for the money and goods, which (the note) I have held to this day. He wanted the goods to sell to his company who were trapping near Toas, and promised to pay me the money as soon as he reached St. Louis and disposed of his beaver fur. Taking him for a man of honor I treated him as such, to my own loss. I was now ready to depart for home, having disposed or got rid rather of my goods and collected all my debts except one from the Governor. During the winter his Excellency had sent his Excellency's Secretary to my store for some samples of cloth. The Secretary after taking these with some shawls for the examination of his master, returned and purchased goods for his Excellency to the sum of eighty-three dollars and told me to charge them to his Excellency. I did so, and on the day before my departure I called at his Excellency's house and found his Excellency looking every inch a Governor, and very pompously pacing the piazza as was the custom of his Excellency. I remarked that I was going home. "Very well," said his Excellency, "you can go;" and walked on. I awaited his Excellency's return, and again remarked that I was going home; that I did not expect to return, and would be thankful for the amount of his Excellency's account with me. "I have not a dollar. The Government has not paid me in ten years, and how can I pay my creditors." I offered to take two mules. "I have no more mules than I want myself," said his Excellency. With this I parted forever with Gov. Malgaris of New Mexico. Ortise told me I could not sue him as he was "the head of the law."

Some time before this I saw a Spaniard who had been imprisoned for more than a year, and was then set at liberty. He had just come from the Commandant, whom he asked for the cause of his imprisonment. "You are at liberty now, are you not?" "Yes; but I wish to know why I have been so long deprived of liberty." "You are at liberty now, and that is enough for you to know," said the Commandant: And this was all the satisfaction the poor Spaniard could get. The following will illustrate the summary method of administering justice in Santa Fe. There were many American deserters in the city from the Fort at Nacatoche, some of whom had lived here sixteen years, and were generally of bad character. Robert McKnight had entrusted one of these, named Finch, with a valuable sword to sell for him. Finch pawned the sword for twelve dollars, and seeing him with money I told McKnight he would never get any thing for his sword as Finch was spending the money he had raised on it. "There is no danger," said he, "Finch would not trifle with me." On the next day he demanded his sword or the money from Finch, who refused to give him any satisfaction; whereupon McKnight seized and dashed him about twelve feet, head foremost against a door of the Fort. I interfered and saved Finch from any further injury than a severe cut on his head. He then confessed the fact of his having pawned the sword and named the place where it could be found. McKnight now went before the Alcalde, a stern old Spaniard, who called his officer and handed him his gold headed cane as a warrant bringing up Finch, the sword and the pawnee. They all arrived, Finch with his head tied up in a handkerchief, when the Alcade took the sword from the Spaniard who had taken it in pledge, and asked him if he knew for what purpose

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

Finch had received it. He admitted that Finch told him at the time of pawning it, that he had received it to sell. "Then," said the Alcalde, "if you had bought it, though only for five dollars, you could now keep it, but you had no right to take it in pawn;" and thereupon handed the sword to McKnight as the true owner. "But who will pay me my twelve dollars?" said the bailee. "That lies between you and Finch." "And what am I to get for my broken head," said Finch. "I know nothing about that Finch," said the magistrate, "but if you do not behave yourself better than you have done of late, I will drive you out of the province." So, McKnight got his sword and a little revenge without having a bill of costs or lawyer's fee to pay.

Most of my company had been engaged in trapping during my stay in Santa Fe, and some had gone far into the interior of Mexico. Collecting such as remained, and in company with the McKnights, I now, on the first of June 1822, bade adieu forever to the capital of New Mexico, and was perfectly content never to repeat my visit to it or any other part of the country.

Chapter V

Col. Glenn's conversion — His profits thereby — Avenues to New Mexico — An instance of Spanish treachery and cruelty — Glenn's cowardice — Meeting with the Pawnees — Mexican Indians — Battle between the Pawnees and Osages — Disappearance of Glenn — Chouteau and the Osages — Indian revenge — Passage of the Shoshoua — Singular Ferrying — Entrance into Missouri — Robbery by the Osages — Interview with Missionaries — Arrival at St. Louis — More of Glenn — Home — Still greater troubles with creditors than with the Indians.

I STARTED FROM Santa Fe with Hugh Glenn on his return to Toas, whence he was to go with me to St. Louis. On arriving at the Spanish village of San Domingo, about thirty miles north of Santa Fe and five from the Indian village of St. John, we stopped by invitation, at the house of the parish Priest, where the principal citizens visited us during the evening. Here I was somewhat astonished to hear Glenn, late at night, tell the Priest that he wished to be baptised and join the Church. He said in answer to the Priest's questions, that he had entertained this intention for a long time before coming to this country; that he had endeavored to instruct himself in relation to the tenets of the Church, and produced a Catholic book, called the "Pious Guide." The Priest told him to reflect on the subject and pray to the Almighty for light. In the morning Glenn appeared with a very sanctimonious face, and repeated his request. The Priest questioned him on the Catholic faith and the noviciate answered very intelligently. It being Sunday, they went to the Church to have the ceremony of baptism performed on the new convert. Leroy, one of his company, acted as God-father, and the Priest procured a very respectable old lady of the place to act as God-mother. The saintly Colonel Glenn looked the very picture of sanctity during the performance of the rite; and he afterwards made a good penny by the operation. The people were very fond of their new convert, and showered honors and presents on Col. Glenn. He was talking of coming back from the States with goods for this market, and many of the inhabitants entrusted him with mules and money to make purchases for them, of which they never heard again. Among his religious rewards was a lot of the finest Indian blankets. The Colonel was a great and good man among the people from this time and bore the cross of his religion with edifying humility. On the next day we reached Toas, a small settlement near the mountains, in a beautiful and fertile valley through which the Rio Grande flows and offers most valuable inducements to the manufacturer by its water power; but none are here found with sufficient enterprise to seize the offer. The country in the hands of the Americans would bloom like a garden, while now it languishes in a

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

state of half wilderness — half cultivation.

Leaving Toas with eighty-three horses and mules, with Glenn and his company who had about sixty, we travelled in one day half way over the mountains, stopping at night in the middle of the pass. Here we were overtaken by some Spaniards with a mule load of bread, biscuit, sugar, chocolate and other delicacies, all sent as a present to the godly Glenn by his God-mother. He took them, I suppose, with pious thankfulness, much as a hog takes the acorns that fall to him from an oak tree — without ever looking up. On my return to St. Louis I heard of Glenn's sneers and ridicule of the clergy of New Mexico. The truth concerning them was bad enough, but I was astonished to hear them villified and abused by the so lately converted Col. Glenn. He changed his religion more rapidly than his clothes, and made each change a profitable speculation to himself. Such pliability of conscience may serve a temporary purpose to its fortunate possessor, but I have found very few of my countrymen, thank God, so base as to practice hypocrisy to the alarming extent to which this sordid miscreant carried its exercise.

On the next day we marched to the foot of the mountain over which we had travelled for about fifty miles, with the utmost ease through a regular and even pass with a very gradual ascent half the distance and thence with an equally gradual descent. There are three principal routes over the mountains to New Mexico. One below San Miguel, by which I went to Santa Fe, and which is easily passible for a large army without danger of surprise. The second, through which I was now returning to the States, and the third, a few miles to the north of this last and of Toas, are both excellent passes for travellers and emigrants, but would not admit of an army in the face of an enemy. They are quite narrow and closed in by mountains of a great height and by numerous defiles, which in possession of an enemy would present great obstacles to an invading army. McKnight, who came through the northern pass, informed me that it was much better than this, near Toas. These three passes are all of slight elevation, and present a gradual ascent and descent for about fifty miles, of no difficulty to the passenger and his teams. The most northern pass will probably become the great outlet of American emigration to California.

At the end of our two days journey from Toas we encamped at the foot of the mountain near large piles of stones placed on each side of a ravine or gully. These were in shape like immense walls, from ten to sixty feet in length, about ten wide, and from four to six feet in height. They were the tombs of Camanche Indians, who had been massacred at this place many years before by the Spaniards. An old man in Santa Fe whom I employed about my store, informed me of the circumstances of this cold blooded butchery, in which he as a Spanish soldier took part. It happened when my informant was about twenty years of age, which was a few years previous to our revolutionary war. According to his account, the Spaniards and Camanches had been at war with each other for many years with various fortune on both sides, when the Spanish authorities determined to offer peace to their enemies. For this purpose they marched with a large army to this place of tombs, and encamped, whence they sent out heralds to the Camanches with an invitation to the whole nation to come in and smoke the pipe of peace and bury the hatchet of war forever. The unsuspecting Indians came in pursuant to the invitation, and brought their women and children to the number of several thousands. The council was held and a solemn treaty formed which one side hoped and expected would be inviolate forever. They smoked the pipe of peace and of brotherhood. Every thing betokened lasting harmony, and for three days an apparently friendly and cordial intercourse took place between the two powers. During this time the Spaniards insidious-

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

ly bought up all the bows and arrows, and other arms of the Indians, at very high prices, and the third day found these simple children of nature stripped of their arms and entirely defenceless, in the midst of their treacherous enemies. Then ensued a scene of murder exceeding in atrocity even the celebrated slaughter of Glenco, which occurred in Scotland a few years before this, and under very similar circumstances. The Spaniards having surrounded the Indians, fell suddenly, at a concerted signal upon them and killed all without regard to age or sex. The women and children clung to their protectors, who would not leave them and could not fight, and thus they were all slaughtered together. The bloody work continued most of the day and the dead were left in large heaps over the ground. The drain or gully, between the stone walls ran with blood on this terrible day, as the old Spaniard told me, like a spring freshet. Not a man, woman or child was spared; and my informant supposed that the example had deterred all the tribes of Camanches from making war on the people of Santa Fe from that day to this. The citizens of this town may have been exempt from attack, but we have always heard of the incursions of these tribes on the Spanish settlements, and conduct like this of the Spaniards near Toas would, and did sow deep the seeds of incurable hate which have frequently germinated since in bloody retributions. The countrymen of the slaughtered Indians afterwards erected the stone walls near to which we were now encamped, and which covered a large extent of ground, as tombs and monuments for the dead. Their power was greatly broken by the loss of so many warriors and the nation was a long time in recovering its former strength.

On the next morning after crossing the mountain we entered the prairies, which were frequently quite broken and uneven. The spurs of the mountains were covered with pine and cedar. Directing our course to the northeast, in four days we struck the Arkansas a considerable distance from its head. On the next day, and the seventh since leaving Toas, Col. Glenn, who marched in advance of me, sent back a man with the news that the "Camanches were ahead." I hastened forward with the McKnights, and found Glenn stretched out on his blanket in a cold sweat and shaking with fear as if he had the ague. I asked, where are the Indians? "Oh there they are, hid behind that willow bar." I searched and found nothing, when Glenn again cried out, "Oh there they are," pointing to two men riding towards us on the opposite or north side of river, and also to a company of about two lodges, or twelve Indians going from us to the north-west. I soon perceived that the two men first seen were white, and one crossed the river to our company. They were a company of about twelve from Boone's Lick, of whom one was named Cooper, on their way to Santa Fe. Glenn, as much frightened as before, now insisted that the Indians whom we had seen had gone off to bring up their companions to attack us in the night. He had his horses and mules tied together and ordered his company to prepare for action. I determined to allow my horses to separate for grazing, and in looking for a good place for herding them, I espied and shot a buffalo under the cliff. This brought up all my company and a part of Glenn's to ascertain the cause of the shot, while Glenn was crying out to them, "Come back, you'll all be killed by the Indians." When I returned to the camp I told him to send some of his men for a part of the buffalo, if he wanted any meat. "No, I want no meat and I will not travel with men so rash as to fire their guns while so near the Indians." In the morning we took up our march, with one of Cooper's party on his return St. Louis, and with Glenn in advance, who, intent on getting out of danger, soon outtravelled us. About two o'clock one of his men returned at full speed, calling to us to hurry on — "here are two thousand Pawnees." On overtaking Glenn I found two Indians, who said the main army would

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

soon be with them. I had brought with me from Toas two Mexican Indians who wished to go to the United States.

Glenn knowing that the Pawnees were at war with the Spaniards, said these Mexicans would be killed on the coming up of the Pawnee army, and implored us to let them be killed "peaceably" and not endanger the whole party by any unnecessary resistance. I replied that these Indians were under my protection and should not be hurt. In a short time we saw the whole army pouring over the bend or knove before us, which for half a mile was red with them, all afoot, except three, and every man carrying a rope lasso or cabras in his hand. Again did Glenn shake as with the ague, and the cold sweat stood on his face in drops. "Oh they are coming, they are coming," said he. One of their three horsemen rode past our band, then returned and halted at some distance as for a parley. I told Glenn to get up from the ground where he was lying and go out to speak with this Indian. No, no, said he, we shall be shot down if we go out there. The creature's courage and senses seemed to have left him together. I went out with McKnight, shook hands with the Chiefs and brought them in among our men who spread buffalo skins on the ground for their reception, while I prepared the pipe which we smoked together. The leader of this army was a brother of the head Chief of the Pawnee nation, and one of the finest formed and best looking men I have ever seen. He was six feet in height, with large and powerful limbs, a large head, with a well developed front, and keen dark hazel eyes. His manner was dignified and commanding, and he evidently possessed the confidence of his tribe. There was something in him that at once drew out my heart towards him and secured my esteem and respect. He was now going, he told me, down to the country of the Camanches, Arrippahoes and other tribes, near the Salt Plains, to conclude treaties of peace. They had been out ten days from their country and would have passed this place five days before had not this Chief been taken sick. He now looked feverish and weak. After smoking, the whole party of Indians, to the number of one thousand, gathered around us and four of them marched my Mexican friends into the circle and placed them before the Chief above mentioned, who was sitting on the ground. All the Indians except this Chief declared that these two were Mexicans and therefore their enemies, and many called for their scalps. A Kioway Chief made a violent speech against them. He understanding the Spanish language, desired them to speak with each other. They remained silent, he then requested me to make them speak. I appeared not to understand, but said they were my men and under my protection. The Kioway then walked close to the Mexicans and in a friendly manner and confidential tone he said: "You are Spanish Indians, are you not? You can tell me; I am your friend. You know I am a Kioway; we are not at war with you. We are friends. You are a Spanish Indian are you not? The Mexicans looked like condemned criminals during this shower of questions, and one of them looking up and meeting the eye of the Kioway, slightly nodded an affirmative to the last question. Instantly that Chief clapped his hands and exclaimed: "Do you hear that, they acknowledge it — they are Spaniards, these are the men who have been murdering your women and children; kill them — kill them." I placed myself before the Mexicans to defend them, and told the Pawnee Chiefs they should not be killed, and the older Chiefs cried out, "come, come, go and get some wood and make fires. Kill some buffalos and get something to eat." This entirely changed the current. Loosing sight of their Mexican enemies, they ran off with a shout in obedience to their Chief and scattered over the prairies on my horses which I loaned them. Away they went in all directions and soon returned with an abundance of buffalo meat.

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

When they had disappeared, the Chief who had so soon dispersed them looked at me with a smile and said, pointing to the two Mexicans, "they are Spanish Indians I know; but they are with you and shall not be hurt. Last winter my brother went to Washington and saw our Great Father there. He said a great many things to my brother and made him a great many presents. And what he said went into his ear, and my brother told it again to me and it went into my ear and down to my heart. Our Great Father told my brother to treat all Americans well who visited his country, and my brother promised the Great Father, in the name of the whole nation, that we would do as he wished us to do towards the Americans. You and your friends are safe. You shall not be hurt." This Chief told me of some of his exploits as a warrior, one of which, then the latest, I will relate. His nation were at war with the Osages and in the fall before he had approached near to one of their largest villages with a war party, too small however, to risk an attack. He concealed himself and his men behind a large mound in the prairie at some distance from the village, and sent forward eight well mounted Pawnees to reconnoitre. A large party of Osages gave chase to these eight, who retreated before them to the mound and then separated, four going to the right and four to the left around the mound, and were followed by their enemies who rushed blindly into the ambuscade. Our hero, the Pawnee, now gave the war whoop, and fell upon the Osages, whose jaded horses were unable to carry them out of danger. A hundred of the Osages were killed in the fight or rather flight, and our hero, the Pawnee Chief, felt all the pride and pleasure of a Spartan in relating the triumph of his craft and valor.

We encamped at night in company with the Indians, the Chief lying near me, and in the morning nothing had been disturbed. I made presents of tobacco to the Indians and selecting one of my best horses and a Spanish saddle, bridle and rope, and leading him up to the Chief, who had no horse of his own, I presented him with this one and the trappings. The Chief appeared ashamed at not having any thing to give in return, and said, "if you ever come again to my country, I will have two horses ready for you." I told him to treat all Americans well when visiting his country, and to protect them from their enemies. He appeared greatly affected and at parting, embraced me with both arms.

After proceeding about a mile on our way we saw about thirty Indians running towards us and Glenn took another fright, said that these were coming to kill the two Mexicans, and again prayed me to give them up "peaceably." I said no, and the McKnights swore they would die themselves, rather than desert any of their comrades. They, with the rest of my company formed a circle around the Mexicans, while Glenn and his men hurried forward, and I stopped to speak with the advancing Indians. These were a hunting party belonging to the Pawnee army, who had not seen us before, having just returned from hunting, and now came to shake hands with us. They overtook Glenn for the same friendly purpose and then returned in high spirits to their countrymen. Glenn now pushed on in a trot and soon went out of my sight where he has remained from that day to this. He sold his fur in St. Louis, went to Cincinnati, and cheated me out of his debt to me, as I ought to have expected him to do after his previous cowardice and hypocrisy.

We now kept our course down the Arkansas, and on the next day crossed to the north bank of the river. One of my trunks fell into the river in crossing, and some rhubarb dissolving, became mixed with my shirts, journal, invoice and other papers in the trunk, and entirely destroyed them. The writing was obliterated from the papers, and my journal which I had kept since leaving home was rendered useless. My memory, which was always very retentive of events and incidents, en-

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

ables me to supply this loss with sufficient accuracy.

On the third day after parting with the Pawnees we found the prairie strewed with buffalo skeletons, and saw at a distance in a bend of the river, a company of men wearing hats. I learned afterwards that this was a company of traders bound for Santa Fe, who had been robbed by the Osages. Supposing it to be Glenn's company, I passed on without hailing them, and encamped at night in a small grove in the edge of the prairie. We secured the horses and prepared our camp with care against an attack from Indians, who were evidently in our vicinity. One-half of our band slept while the rest stood as sentinels. In the morning about an hour before day a sound of violent crying and lamentation was heard, such as is customary with the Indians when bewailing the loss of a near relation. This is usually continued from early dawn till sun-rise, when they end in a sobbing hiccough like that of children after long crying. A mounted Indian soon after day light, circled around the camp and stopped at a distance of a quarter of a mile. I cried out Mawhatonga, (long knife). The Indian repeated the word interrogatively, Mawhatonga? The Indians call the whites Longknives, from their swords. On my answering howai, (yes ) this Indian came into our camp and informed me that an Osage village was near by, and that Chouteau, Tonish and Pelche, French traders, were with them. I started with the Indian for the village and came in view of it on ascending a hill a short way from the camp, where my companion went off at full speed, shouting at the top of his voice, and soon brought out the whole village with Chouteau and other French traders to meet me. A large company of Indians passed me to meet the company with the horses behind, and by their shouts and tumultuous riding gave my drove a stampede which made the earth shake beneath them. Chouteau invited me to breakfast with him, assuring me that my horses, which were now out of sight, would be recovered. I partook with him of a dish of coffee, the first I had tasted in twelve months, and of bread and other luxuries of civilization, which brought before my mind all the comforts of home to which I had been so long a stranger. After returning from Chouteau's marqui, about noon, we discovered that four horses and several articles belonging to me and McKnight and a keg of Chouteau's powder had been stolen by the Indians. Chouteau raged and stormed like a mad man and threatened to abandon the nation forever and stop all the American trade with them, unless they produced the stolen articles and abstained from molesting the property of his friends. At last two of the horses were brought up. Chouteau commanded them to return the rest of the missing goods, which however, could not be found. The Conjuror now appeared with his wand lined with bells, which he carried jingling through the village. When he started, Chouteau remarked that the lost goods would certainly be found by him; as the Indians had no hope of concealing any thing from their medicine man. The wand carried him directly towards the place of concealment, and the thieves to avoid detection soon brought up the goods which they had fortunately found. Two of my horses were lost beyond recovery. I remained with Chouteau that day till evening, and was treated by him and his French companions, like a brother. I saw a singular instance of Indian revenge, while here, which will illustrate their stern and inflexible sense of wrong. An old Osage was sitting on the ground when a younger Indian with a rope in hand stopped before him and said: "You struck me one blow when I was a boy, I will now return it." The sitting Indian without a murmur bent his head and body forward to receive the justice which awaited him, while the avenger of youthful wrongs drew two large knots in his rope, and after swinging it around his head several times, brought it down with all his weight upon the back of his old enemy. The knots seemed to sink into his back their whole

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

depth. Leaping up in a furious rage, the culprit rushed at the executioner, seized the rope and endeavored to wrest it from him, claiming one blow in return. As the pain subsided they became friends and thought no more of the old feud. "An eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth," is strictly their motto. The blow which he had received when a boy, had rankled in this Indian's heart for ten or twenty years, and now having paid it back with interest, he was satisfied and happy. Their method of curing diseases is very similar to the operations of our animal magnetizers. The Con-jour or Medicine man has an old cloth, which they supposed possessed the charm and power to restore health. With this magic cloth assisted by other Indians in the same exercise, he rubs the patient from head to foot, in manner similar to the passes of the magnetizers, on their subjects. This is continued until the patient acknowledges himself relieved, or relief is proved to be hopeless. My company started forward before me, and I remained behind till evening with Cunigam, for the purpose of finding the two missing horses, which were among the best. Failing in this, I with my companion, followed in the track of the company. Before we had gone far a black cloud gathered over our heads, with thunder and lightning in terrific grandeur. We hastened forward till night, when the storm broke upon us in torrents of rain which deluged the earth. We lay in the rain all night, and in the morning the river had risen above the banks, and nearly reached our place of sleeping. The marks of the muddy water and leaves was visible in a straight line on my companion as he lay asleep in a gully which the flood had washed without waking him. We saw, a little distance off, our company, encamped on the spot occupied by the Osages, the night but one before. Pursuing our course down the river, we came to the Little Arkansas, which enters the main river from the north, and crossing it, we encamped on its bank which is here very high. The river rose twenty feet during the night from the heavy rains which had just fallen. Here we left the Arkansas, which goes to the south, after making what is called the great northern bend. We travelled to the northeast, the rain falling abundantly, and came to a creek we were unable to cross. We encamped on its bank for that night, and the next morning before starting, some thirty Osages came up with some goods which they had stolen from a party of Santa Fe traders on the Arkansas above, and offered to us for sale. Our refusal to buy incensed them greatly, and they blustered and bullied around us until we showed them plainly how little we were effected by their bravado. One seized a belt of McKnight's, who wrenched it out of his hands and struck him with it a tremendous blow over the shoulder. After these Indians left us, we pursued our course on the trail of the Osages. The streams were all full and difficult in crossing, and the game exceedingly scarce. In ten or twelve days, after severe suffering for want of food, we reached the Shoshona or Grand River, where we found corn growing: this was just in the silk without any grain on the ear. We boiled and ate the cob with a hearty relish. Soon after this we were hailed by Indians, who came from the north, and finding we were whites, approached us in a friendly manner and invited us to their village, two miles distant. They laughed at our last meal and promised us something better than corn cobs. We fared well, with them, on hominy, meat and bread, which last was made of flour furnished to them by Mr. Sibley, the factor at Fiery-Prairie Fort. After smoking with these friendly Osages, we proceeded on our way, and with great difficulty crossed the Shoshona, which flowed with the rapidity of a mill race. I hired some Indians to swim our horses and goods tied up in buffalo skins, across, while we followed, some swimming and others in skin boats towed by men and women in the water. I was ferried over by two women and a man, the former swimming with cords between their teeth attached to the boat, and the latter pushing behind, by which

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

means I was safely landed on the shore. Here I found a new party of Indians, who while our party was crossing the river had stolen three of my horses. Continuing our course we crossed a creek on a raft near the White-haired village, which was deserted, and in the evening of the third day after passing the Shoshona, we crossed the Missouri line. Here my brother exclaimed, - "Thank God we are once more in the United States." We encamped for the night, and lay down in fancied security, without setting a guard, and in the morning discovered that a large number of the horses and mules had been stolen. We had not seen any Indians for three days, but had been followed by the prowling Osages, who had now effected their designs upon us. Thirty-eight of my best horses and mules were missing. We followed the thieves to the White-haired village, and found that they had crossed the creek on our rafts, and were now beyond all pursuit. We returned and proceeded on with the remains of my drove. Our next stopping place was Chouteau's trading house on the north side of the Osage river, about six miles from our last, where we found a hospitable reception from the French traders. McKnight and I went to the factory or Government store a few miles above on the river, where we saw a few Indians, the factor, and an interpreter, who advised me to go, or send some persons back to Grand River for my horses, where they would probably be found. I hired him and an Indian, for forty dollars, to return with one of my men to recover the stolen property. In a few days they came back with the news that the thieves had hastened on towards Chermout's village on the Arkansas, where they had probably concealed my chattels. Giving them up for lost, I returned to Chouteau's establishment and endeavored to obtain a skiff for descending the river. Most of my remaining horses were sore on the back or jaded so much as to be unable to carry any burdens. We learned from a blacksmith that there was a missionary station on the river a few miles above, where a good skiff which he had made, could be procured. The two McKnights, the blacksmith, and myself, went up to the station, where we found a small village of about fifty inhabitants, old and young, and a dozen houses. A fine water mill was going up on the opposite or south side of the river. We found the owners of the skiff, related to them our wants and misfortunes, and requested the privilege of buying their skiff. They doubted if they could spare the skiff. We went down to the river and examined the subject of our negotiation, which was a rough made article, of the value in St. Louis of about three dollars. "We have no stuff to make another with, should we let this go," said one of the missionaries. "I have some plank," said the blacksmith, "the same as this was made of, that you may have to make another if you wish it. These men," continued he, "have been very unfortunate, and by letting them have the skiff you will do an act of charity. They can't travel without it;" and I told them I would give any reasonable price for the accommodation. "Well, said the missionary, what would you be willing to give?" Ten dollars.

"Ho, ho! — I couldn't take that for the skiff, even if I could spare it. But we can't let it go, we want it for crossing the river to the mill. I v(e)ow and declare I can't spare it." I will give you fifteen dollars, said I. "Oh no," whined the philanthropist, "we couldn't take that little, and besides I have no nails to make another with." "I will make nails for you said the blacksmith; that need not be in your way," and again the benevolent trader was headed. "But I v(e)ow I don't know how to spare it," said he. I then offered twenty dollars in specie. "Oh no," said the missionary, "the skiff is worth more than that, but I don't think we can spare it;" and here the negotiation ended, my companions protesting that I had offered too much already. We went up to the village where they had three half-breed children under instruction, and these were all their pupils or converts whom

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

they were paid by Government to instruct — truly a disinterested company of men. Learning that we had arrived from Mexico, a number of them gathered around us with many questions concerning that country, and one asked if they were not in need of missionaries in that country, and whether much good could not be done and many converts made there Robert McKnight replied, “they would convert you into the calaboose d — nd quick, if you were to go among them — you had better stay here.” We left then, shaking the dust of the town from our feet and glad to get rid of the canting sharpers. We returned to the trading post, made a few bark canoes, and proceeded down the river; part of our company being in the canoes and the rest afoot with the horses and goods. At the mouth of the Osage, Rogers, the ferryman, informed us that at the village of Cote Sans Desans, on the opposite side of the Missouri, I could procure some perogues of the French inhabitants there. I crossed over to the village and purchased a canoe and perogue for sixteen dollars — loaded them with goods, and with the McKnights I hastened forward to St. Louis. The rest of my company with the horses, joined me soon afterwards. I here heard that Glenn had sold out his fur and gone to Cincinnati. As I remarked before, he has been among the missing to me ever since. His note I will sell for one per cent on the principal.

I learned on the morning of my arrival at St. Louis, that Col. Graham, the Indian Agent, had just started for the Osage country, to pay out annuities to the Osages. The two McKnights pursued and overtook him — gave him a written statement of my losses by that tribe, and claimed compensation, which he undertook to obtain for me. The Osages delivered up twenty-seven of my horses and mules, and said that these were all they had taken. The agent took their words for the fact against the written and sworn statements of the McKnights, which could have been corroborated by the oaths of my whole company, and neglected to retain the amount of what they had cost me in Santa Fe, which was forty dollars each, out of the annuities of the Osages, which were then paid in money. He brought on the twenty-seven, which he recovered as far as the Osage river in Missouri, where he left them, at the house of a man named Rogers, who wrote to inform me in the winter following that they were dying with hunger. Col. Graham had turned them out to go at large, and when two men whom I sent for them, arrived, only sixteen could be found. Four mules which were unable to travel were left, and only twelve horses and mules were brought back; to recover which I expended much more than their value. The agent, Col. Graham, was greatly culpable in not retaining the whole value of the horses stolen, out of the annuities of the Osages. The claim was proved and might and ought to have been secured by him.

In the latter part of July, 1822, I arrived at my home in Monroe county, Illinois, after an absence of fifteen months. I was supposed to be dead by many, and my family were entertaining the most alarming apprehensions for me. The husband and the father only, can appreciate the joy and rejoicing which my coming occasioned, and the cordial welcome I received. After the hardships, exposures and wearing anxieties which I had endured for more than a year, I needed repose and relaxation, and I hoped to enjoy them for a short time. But in this hope I was disappointed. My creditors swarmed around me like bees, and were as clamorous as a drove of hungry wolves. I had brought from Santa Fe about \$2500, the sole proceeds of my stock of \$12000 with which I had left St. Louis the year before. This sum I immediately paid on my debts, and offered all my remaining property to my creditors; but they wanted money. The Sheriff, the Marshal, and Constables immediately beset me on every side, and seized and sold almost every thing of mine that was levyable. I worked and struggled bravely to emerge from this thick cloud of difficulties. I drove a mill and

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

distillery, and fattened a drove of hogs for which I could find no sale. The way was dark before me and I found more real trouble and corroding care in getting out of debt than I had experienced among the savages. Man in civilized society frequently requires more firmness of mind, constancy, fortitude, and real strength of character than in the most critical and dangerous crisis of a savage state. The poor man, struggling bravely against an accumulation of debt and difficulty, I have always thought, is entitled to more respect than the military chieftain, whose courage is only inflamed by the excitements of war and ambition. Peace has its victories as well as war, and a high state of civilization as it has stronger temptations to evil and higher though less pressing incitements to exertion, so it requires more energy and determined resolution of mind than any other condition of human existence. Many a brave and true man in the peaceful shades of private life will receive a meed of honor equal to that of

Great men battling with the storms of fate

And greatly falling with a falling State.

Chapter VI

Endeavors to get out of debt — Proposition of John McKnight — Preparations for another expedition — Journey to the Arkansas — Ascent of the Canadian and North Fork — Hunting Bears, Elks, &c. — Fort commenced — Conversation with McKnight and his departure in search of Camanches — Continued ascent of the Canadian North Fork — A new Fort — Return of Potter and Ivy — Robert McKnight goes out in search of his brother — He returns with Indians — Charges them with the murder of his brother — I go out to the Camanche village — Incidents there — A council — The One Eyed Chief — The whole band start for the Fort — A guard placed over me — Encampment — The One Eyed adopts me as his brother — He changes my relations with his tribes — Catching wild horses — Arrival at the Fort — Fright of some “brave” men — Trade — A robbery — The One Eyed punishes the thieves — Fate of John McKnight — Mourning stopped — Indian customs — A dance — A case of arbitration by the One Eyed — Indian horsemanship — Parting with the Chiefs — Conversation with Alsarea — The horse Checoba — A Bucephalus.

SEEING NO WAY of extricating myself from debt by any regular employment at home, I cast about for some other means of self preservation. John McKnight, who was to me a true and faithful friend, went to the mines to obtain for me a lucrative situation, but without success. He then proposed to make another venture among the Camanches, and endeavor to obtain from them the fulfilment of Cordaro’s promise to remunerate my losses among his countrymen. McKnight was sanguine of success, and I fell in with his proposal. We procured goods in St. Louis, on credit, to the value of \$5500, shipped them on a keel boat, and the two McKnights, John and Robert, with eight men, started with them in the fall of 1822 for the mouth of the Canadian, where I was to meet them in the winter following. I went by land to the place of rendezvous, with a company of twelve men, through the towns of Batesville, ( now Fredericktown, ) St. Francisville, and the Cherokee country, and joined McKnight in the latter part of February. We had five horses with packs and travelled the whole route afoot. McKnight had awaited us about six weeks. We found him with the boat frozen up, about four miles above the Canadian, on the north side of the Arkansas and about thirty miles below Barbour’s trading house. On going up to Barbour’s, McKnight and I found that he had secured the goods which we had cached on the island above in my former trip; but that the flour was damaged when he took it down to his house. He was just starting, when we

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

arrived, for New Orleans, with furs and peltry on my keel-boat, which I had left with him the year before, and he promised to pay me, on his return, for the boat and goods. I never saw him again: he died on this trip in New Orleans. The ice being now gone, and our boat released, we prepared for ascending the Canadian. Robert McKnight with most of the men, descended the Arkansas with the boat, to enter the Canadian four miles below, while John, who was seldom separated from me, with the horses and a few men crossed the point and awaited them. After joining them we travelled in sight of the boat till we passed the falls about twenty five miles from the mouth, when we struck into the best farming country I had ever seen; a beautiful land of prairies and woods in fine proportion. Below the falls we passed a very salt spring. Elk, buffalo, deer, wild turkeys and black bears were very abundant, and we fared on the fat of the land. The soil is extremely fertile, judging from the heavy grass of the prairies and the large and valuable timber of the woods, which were composed of walnut, ash, hackberry, spice, pawpaw, and oaks of a very heavy growth and of every species. The Canadian is very crooked and bounded by extensive bottoms. After travelling five days through this fine region, we struck the North Fork of the Canadian at its mouth. This river, like the other, is exceedingly crooked, and numerous rapids greatly obstruct its navigation. Our ascent was slow and difficult, and the boat twice stopped at night within a hundred yards of our encampment of the night before, owing to the irregular course of the stream. Our progress in the boat was at length stopped entirely by a rapid which we could not ascend. We made fast the boat to trees with strong ropes, put our bear and deer skins into it, and buried the heaviest hardware in the ground, where it remains probably to this day, as I never returned to its place of concealment. We made three perouges, into which we put our remaining goods except such as could be packed on the horses, and with them, we continued our ascent of the Canadian North Fork. Game of every kind known to the country was extremely plenty. We killed on this and the main river about twenty black bears, all of which we found in the hollow of trees where they had remained in a torpid state all winter. In one tree four were found, a she and three yearling cubs, which the men killed with axes, after felling the tree and stopping up the top to prevent their escape. After proceeding with our perouges about ten days the game became scarce and the company began to suffer from want of food. We stopped and all sallied out to hunt: the first day furnished but one wild turkey. The second and third days produced nothing more, the turkey subsisting us all for three days. John McKnight and I then went about ten miles in search of game, and found a bear's track, but our pursuit of the bear was unsuccessful. Returning by a different route from that by which we came, we descried a herd of elk, lying down in the prairie. We crept on our hands and knees in the short grass to within two hundred yards of them, when one discovered us, leaped up, snorted and brought the rest to their feet. I instantly fired and wounded one, which we found and killed, and returned with a part of the meat to our companions, who were feasting on a wild horse. In the morning, after bringing in the remainder of my elk, we pursued our journey and in a few days the game, became plentiful. We had hitherto travelled through a very fertile and beautiful country, which will in a few years teem with a dense population. The prairies are interspersed with valuable woodland, and will make as fine a farming country as any in the Union. We now reached the vast and sterile prairie west of the Cross-Timbers, through the northern end of which we had passed, and we commenced our journey over the boundless plains beyond them. This is the region designated on the maps as the Great American Desert, though it is very different from those plains of sand in the Old World which bear that name. A short grass

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

grows here, but no timber except the cottonwood and willows in the bends of the rivers. Our path had before lain through fine groves of oak, walnut and ash as we issued from one prairie and entered another, but now one vast plain extending on all sides to the horizon, presented no object to relieve the vision.

We soon discovered trails of Indians and came upon a deserted camp of what seemed a Camanche war party about five hundred strong. As we proceeded, the Indian "sign" increased. We next struck an Osage camp, also deserted, which seemed to have been made a few weeks before by a war party or a horse stealing party of Osages on their route northward from a plundering expedition against the Camanches. The country, as we proceeded, became more and more sterile, the grass shorter and the timber on the river banks smaller and more scarce than before. Travelling on, through a country nearly destitute of vegetation, in about ten days after passing the Osage camp, we arrived at the place of encampment of an immense Indian force in the summer previous, as we judged from the signs on the ground. The river had now become too shallow to be navigated any further without great difficulty, even by perogues. Here we stopped and commenced the building of a Fort. One of the men, now a near neighbor of mine, Justus Varnum, had taken a cold, so severe that it affected his hip and back and prevented him from walking. He was conveyed up the river in a perogue for several weeks previous to our stopping, and he had to be carried every night in a blanket from the boat to the fires of the camp, and back again to the boats in the morning. One of the men, when we had stopped to build a Fort, killed a large rattlesnake with the entire bodies of two prairie dogs, larger than squirrels, contained within the stomach of his snakeship. I advised Varnum to try out the oil of the snake and rub it on his joints as a remedy. He applied the oil as I recommended, and in consequence became so limber and supple as to render walking painful to him, when I told him to stop the applications. I have frequently tried the same remedy for stiffness of the joints and think it might be of service in rheumatism.

The Fort being nearly completed, I proposed to go out with two men and find the Camanches, in whose country we then were, and who, we supposed from "signs" around us, could not be very distant. John McKnight objected to my going out, saying that he or I must remain with the men and superintend the building of the Fort, as his brother Robert could not govern the company. "You, James," said he, "have a family. I have none, and therefore I can better afford to lose my life than you. As we cannot, both of us go, you must remain." At his urgent solicitation, I acquiesced, though unwillingly, in this arrangement, and agreed with him in the event of the river's rising before we finished the Fort, to put the goods in the perogues, and ascend the stream a hundred miles, after leaving a letter for him in a certain part of the Fort. I wished to get into the heart of the Camanche country with my goods, where I would sooner be able to open a trade with the nation. McKnight departed according to our arrangement towards the south, in company with Potter, Ivy, and Clark, the last of whom was an obstinate, disaffected man, and went against the desire of McKnight. He, poor fellow, never returned. He found a soldier's death and a brave man's grave from the hands of the Camanche warriors. He was my friend — faithful and true to me — and I mourned his loss as that of one whose place could never be supplied to me or to society. I learned soon after this, the probable circumstances attending his death. A few days after McKnight left us, a heavy rain fell, causing the river to rise, and we thereupon abandoned the Fort about half completed, and with our perogues and goods ascended about the distance agreed upon, where the low water stopped our fur-progress. We encamped and commenced a Fort in an

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

excellent position where the timber was abundant. We proceeded in building the Fort as expeditiously as possible, and with great labor soon completed it and a trading house, surrounded by stockades and defended by our swivel, which we mounted on wheels in an angle of the Fort. Before this, however, Potter and Ivy returned with the news that on the ninth day after their departure they fell in with Camanches and were conducted to one of their principal villages, (the bands in camp, are called by that name) and that McKnight called a counsel with their Chiefs, but could not, for want of an interpreter, make himself well understood; Potter knowing less of the language than was supposed. McKnight then gave them to understand that he had a good interpreter in Spanish, referring to his brother Robert, and requested leave to return to us for him, in company with one man. The Indians permitted him to start alone and kept the remaining three as hostages. They gave him five days for his journey to our camp and back to them, and he left them with the promise to return on the fifth day. After his departure, Clark made known to them by signs that McKnight's company had many guns and a cannon. This excited their fears and they gave evident symptoms of alarm. On the same day a party of Indians came in, as from a hunt, and the Americans were told that two Camanches of their village had just been killed by Osages. The whole army then decamped and removed fifteen miles further south. The three prisoners heard moaning and lamentation for the deceased in two lodges, during the whole night. For seven days they were kept awaiting McKnight, when the Indians upbraided them with his failure and pretended treachery, but permitted Potter and Ivy to go out for the Spanish interpreter. They came in much surprised that McKnight had not appeared. I instantly conjectured his fate. A man sent by me down to the unfinished Fort, returned with the information that the letter, I had left, was still there. Robert McKnight returned with Potter and Ivy to the Camanche village, and here he charged the Indians with the murder of his brother. His conduct among them was like a mad man's, storming and raging with no regard to consequences. At length they were persuaded, on the assurance that I was at the Fort, to send out forty mounted warriors, with McKnight, while the rest remained as hostages. On the third day after Robert McKnight went out, I saw an Indian on a mound, surveying our encampment. I hoisted the flag and fired the swivel, when he was soon joined by others, all splendidly mounted on the best of horses, and I noticed Robert McKnight on a mule in their midst, and guarded. They stopped on the hill as if waiting for a parley with us, and I took my pistols, placed a plume in my hat, and went out to them. McKnight pointed me to their Chief, who was a Towash, and whom I invited into the Fort. He advanced with his band very cautiously and when within two hundred yards of the Fort alighted and walked around to the river bank, looking for some traces of the Osages. Finding none, but still suspicious, he entered the Fort and examined every nook and corner of it, and then looked at my goods. He appeared satisfied and called to his company, who rode up; but before they would enter the Fort, they searched up and down the river bank for vestiges of their enemies. I entertained them with boiled buffalo meat, and while they were eating I enquired of McKnight if Big Star was at the village. He said no, and that these were another tribe whom I had not seen before. I remarked to him that I recognised one Indian among them, whom I had certainly seen before, and had endeavored to hire as an interpreter, at the village where we were robbed in my former trip. His name said I is Whon, ( from the Spanish John ). As I mentioned his name the Indian raised his head, looked at me and instantly cast his eyes on the ground. The Chief asked the interpreter what I said, and on hearing it, asked me where I had seen Whon. When I had told him of our former acquaintance,

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

he and Whon conversed together a moment, when Whon arose and threw his arms around my neck and asked in Spanish how I had been. McKnight asked why he had not spoken to him in Spanish as he spoke it so well. He said he had come to see if I was really the man spoken of by John McKnight and that he had been commanded not to speak Spanish or let us know who he was. John McKnight had told them as plainly as he could by Potter, that I had visited their country the year before, and had now returned because I had promised Cordaro that I would do so, for the purpose of trading with them. The Chief now told me that the nation would not come to the Fort to trade, on account of the Osages, and I agreed to go with them in the morning with goods to their village. McKnight proposed in the night to put all the goods into the boats and escape down the river, as they had undoubtedly killed his brother and might do the same deed upon us all. He was an impulsive, passionate man, with but little cool reflection. His courage in the midst of danger was of the highest order and perfectly unyielding, but he was unfit for a leader or guide in critical situations, requiring coolness and presence of mind. I refused to attempt an escape as utterly impracticable, and the height of injustice to the men who were in custody with the Camanches. In the morning I started alone with four mules loaded with goods and escorted by the Indians under Alsarea, for the village, where we arrived in the evening and were met by the head Chief about two miles from the town. He appeared friendly and took the goods and deposited them in his lodge. Potter and the other hostages were all in safety and had been well treated. They informed me that my old and formidable enemy the One-Eyed Chief was in the village. On the next morning, I prepared for trading by making presents, according to custom, of knives, tobacco, cloths for breech garments, &c., which, though a large heap when together, made a small appearance when divided among all this band. The trade then began. They claimed twelve articles for a horse. I made four yards of British strouding at \$5.50 per yard and two yards of calico at 62 cents to count three, and a knife, flint, tobacco, looking-glass, and other small articles made up the compliment. They brought to me some horses for which I refused the stipulated price. They then produced others, which were really fine animals, worth at least \$100 each in St. Louis. I bought seventeen of these, but would not take any more at the same price, the rest being inferior. The refusal enraged the Chief, who said I must buy them, and on my persisting in my course, drove away the Indians from around me, and left me alone. After a short time he returned with a request that I should buy some buffalo and beaver skins, to which I acceded. He went away and the woman soon returned with the fur and skins, of which I bought a much larger quantity than I wished then to have on my hands. The Chief again came up and drove away all my women customers, and I was again left alone with the three who had come with McKnight. No Indian came near me for the rest of the day, and I sauntered around the village and amused myself as well as I could till night-fall. During this time and most of the night before I had heard moaning, lamentations and weeping from two lodges in the outskirts of the village, on account of the two Indians, killed, their countrymen said, by Osages, but who undoubtedly met their death from the hands of John McKnight, fighting desperately in his own defence. In the evening the old Chief in whose lodge I staid, entered my tent with five old Indians, and all with a grave and solemn air sat themselves down in silence. The Chief, who was a little, low flat headed and simple looking old man, soon arose, took a pipe which he filled with tobacco and presented it to each of his companions in succession. He passed me by unnoticed and all regarded me with lowering brows. This I knew portended evil, and I feared the worst. After they had all smoked, the Chief made them a speech

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

in Camanche, which I knew nothing of, and then turned to me and spoke in Spanish fluently. I understood perfectly, every word he uttered and heard him with intense interest. He asked when I was going away. I replied that I was an American and had come from my own country, a great distance, to trade with his people, because I had promised the Chief Cordaro the year before that I would come; that I had done according to my promise and brought them guns, powder, knives, tomahawks, and other things which I knew his people wanted. The Chief replied that they did not want to trade, but wished me to go immediately out of their country. "We are going to the Nachatoshauwa, ( Red River) and you must leave us." I offered to accompany them. "No, no," said he, "our meat is scarce, the game is scarce; you must not go; away! away! (waving his hand) go out of our country." I felt that my fate and that of my men rested with this council, and that as they arose friendly or hostile, should we live or die the death of John McKnight. This old Chief evidently wished me to start on my way back to the Fort, and intended then to pursue me with his warriors and make my scalp and goods the prizes of the race or the spoil of the battle. I concealed all alarm in my demeanor, and reaching back as I sat to a tobacco keg, I broke off twelve plugs, and took out of a box six wampums, which are strings of long beads, variously colored, and greatly prized by the Indians. I then took out my calama or Indian pipe, and slowly filled it with tobacco, saying in an under tone and a musing manner, as if speaking to myself as much as to them, I shall have to go back to my own country after coming all this distance to trade with my red brethren, and when I tell the people of my nation how our red brothers have treated me, they will never come into this country. I have bought every thing that my red brothers want for war or for peace, guns and powder and ball, and clothes for their women, and now they are driving me out of their country like a spy or a thief, instead of a friend and brother as I am. When I had lighted the pipe, I presented it with one hand and the two plugs of tobacco and a wampum with the other, to the Chief, saying to him, this is better than you get from the Spaniards. I well knew the sacredness of this offer, and that the Indian dare not offend the Great Spirit by refusing a present of tobacco and wampum, even from his bitterest enemy. The Chief hesitated long, but at last slowly raised his hand, took my presents and smoked the pipe. Giving one puff to the skies, one to the earth, two to the winds and waters on the right and left, and then a few whiffs on his own and our accounts, he returned the pipe to me. In the same manner I presented it to an old Indian who sat beside me, and who kept his head down and his eyes shut. I held the presents close to his face for some time, when the Chief spoke to him, and he slowly raised his hand without looking up, took the presents, smelled of the tobacco, pressed it to his heart and raised his head with a smile. Then white man had gained the ascendant. The scene changed and all was friendly welcome where before was nothing but menacing and frowning coldness. All the others now received my presents and we smoked out the pipe in the friendship and confidence of brothers. The Chief then very earnestly asked me if I had seen the Osages. I said, I have not, but you know that this is their hunting ground and they may be in the country. They said they knew this, and some further conversation established our intimacy on a firm footing. The Chief then went out into the village and proclaimed in a loud voice that all should prepare to go next morning, over to the Canadian, to trade with the Tabbahoes, their white friends. Before this we were called Americanos, which was a less familiar and friendly appellation than the former. The proclamation was continued by the herald on horseback till late at night, each sentence ending with Tabbahoes. "Get up your horses and make ready to go over to the white man's and trade with the Tabbahoes. They have come a great

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

way and brought us many good things — the Tabbahoes are good.” This was loudly sounded before my lodge, and throughout the village all was preparation, joy and gladness.

About sundown Potter entered our lodge with the greatest alarm depicted in his countenance, and gave me a gun barrel which the One Eyed Chief had just thrown down before him, and told him to carry to me. This was the last man on earth that I desired to see, for I regarded him my most deadly and most dangerous enemy, who had probably killed John McKnight and was now seeking my blood. I asked Potter what else he said, and as he answered, “nothing more,” he looked out and exclaimed, “there he is now, sitting on his horse. What shall I say to him?” I walked out to my old enemy and offered my hand. He took it with a steady and piercing look into my very soul; I returned his glance with an air of calm consideration and requested him to alight and enter my lodge. He did so, after delivering his horse to a bystander. In the lodge I motioned to him to be seated on a heap of skins. He sat down in silence and deep gravity. I lighted and smoked out the pipe with him in utter silence, and then took a silver gorges or breast-plate, and with a ribbon attached I hung it around his neck and placed two silver arm bands just above the elbows, and two upon his wrists. The warrior submitted to all this in passive and abstracted silence, as if unconscious of what I was doing. I then put two plugs of tobacco, a knife and wampum, in his lap, while he preserved the rigid and inflexible appearance of a statue. I again lighted the pipe and smoked with him, when he arose, without a word, went out, and rode off with great rapidity.

In the morning, all was confusion and busy activity in the village, and one half of the band started for the Fort before me. I followed with the three men, and without a guard. In crossing a creek near the village, a horse became entangled and I told the men to hasten on and take care of the goods, while I loosened the horse, which I did, and on crossing the creek found sixty men drawn up in two lines on either side and who closed around me as I approached them. I asked the Chief — who was Alasarea, the Towash — what he meant by this conduct. “Kesh, kesh, kinsable,” said he, “stop, stop; who knows but you are taking us over to your Fort to have us all killed by the Osages?” I asked him if he ever knew me to lie. He said he had not, but he knew that the Spaniards were great liars. That may be said I, but the Americans never lie. “I do not know the Americans, said he, but I know that the Spaniards are great liars. I then reiterated my bold assertion of American veracity and said, when your tribe robbed me on the South Fork and I promised to visit your village on the Canadian and trade with you, did I not go as I promised? “Yes,” said the Chief. And when Cordaro came to see me in Santa Fe, I promised him to go home and return with goods this year to your country. You know this, and have I not performed my promise? “Yes you have,” he said, and asked if I had not seen Osages. I told him I had not. With my words he appeared but partially satisfied, and reluctantly proceeded with me under a strong guard, but promised that my mules, horses, and goods, should be secured. In this manner I traveled all day, during which time the One Eyed spoke not a word to me. Late in the evening we crossed the Canadian and encamped on the bank. I was marched to the head Chief’s lodge, where I found the men at liberty and my horses, &c., in good order. I went into the lodge to prepare for passing the night as comfortably as possible, and was engaged in looking at my goods, when my enemy the One Eyed rode up and to my surprise addressed me fluently in the Spanish language. This was the first time he had ever spoken to me. The man who had done me more injury than any other human being, from whose hands I had twice, narrowly escaped a bloody death, such, as I had every reason to suppose, McKnight had suffered from him — this man spoke to me kindly and invited me to go

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

with him to his lodge. Suspecting treachery, I was loath to accept the invitation, and while I was hesitating, the old Chief came up, and called me to him. On hearing what the One Eyed wanted, he told me not to go, because "he is a bad man." Again the One Eyed came to me and repeated his request, which I refused peremptorily, and he walked a few steps away with an impatient, angry air, then suddenly turning around, he fixed his piercing black eye intently upon me, walked up to me and implored, with a beseeching look and tones, that I should go with him to his lodge. I saw that he was unarmed, while I had two pistols, a tomahawk, and knife in my belt, and could anticipate the first hostile motion from him; also, that we were four men, in the midst of three thousand, and entirely at their mercy should they design to do us any injury. I offered to visit the One Eyed on the following morning. "No, no," said he, "come now — oh! do come — come with me," in a tone of supplication. I, at length, yielded and walked on towards his lodge, till the village dogs attacked me so furiously that he was obliged to dismount from his horse to my defence. He then offered me a seat on his horse, in front of him. I mounted behind him as the safest position, when he applied the whip and flew with me to his lodge, which we entered and were received by one of his wives with smiles and glad welcoming. A wife of the One Eyed took his horse as he alighted. In the lodge I took a seat opposite that of the Chief, and, facing his arms which hung over his bed or cot of buffalo robe. I could thus watch his motions and foil any murderous design that he might manifest, by shooting him on the spot and making my escape on his horse. He lighted a pipe, however, and we smoked till his wife brought in some buffalo meat, of which we ate, while she apologised to me very kindly and politely for its poorness. "We have no marrow to cook with the meat and the buffalo are poor. It is the best we have, and you are welcome," said this charming squaw. The One Eyed only urged me to eat heartily, and when the repast was over, we again smoked the pipe in silence. Shaking the ashes into his hand, he slowly raised his head, looked into my face and asked if I knew him. I replied, yes. "Where did you first see me?" On the Salt Fork of the Canadian. "Where, the second time?" At the village on the Canadian Fork. "Did you know then that I wanted to kill you?" Yes I knew it. "True, I sought your life, and but for Big Star, the head Chief of the Ampireka band, I should have killed you and your men. I knew that you were traders with the Osages; you had their horses, their ropes, their skins, their saddles. The Osages had come and taken about two hundred of our horses, and I went out with a war party to recover them and punish the robbers. We found them, and fought a battle with them, in which my brother was killed. My brother was a great warrior, a good hunter and a good man. I loved my brother." He then talked in a strain of mournful eulogy on his brother, while the tears coursed down his face, and he ended in violent weeping. Recovering himself, he said that he had gone out on a second expedition to revenge his brother's death, when he overtook me on the Salt Fork of the Canadian, and there intended to murder our company. He then put the ashes which he held in his hand, on the ground, and taking a handful of earth from the fire place, covered the ashes with it, patting it three times with his hand. Another handful he used in the same manner, and then a third, during which time he moaned and wept violently; so much so that I was uneasy for my own safety in this outbreak of grief. He then looked up with an altered countenance, and exclaimed, "there, I have now buried my brother; but I have found another. I will take you for my brother;" and in a transport of feeling he embraced me with the words, "my brother my brother." He then placed a charm around my neck, which he said would protect me from all enemies. It had been his brother's, but when going into his last battle with the Osages, the owner left it behind with his

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

blanket, and therefore, was killed. He then asked if the old Chief had tried to dissuade me from coming to his lodge, and on hearing that he had, he said: "He is an old fool: he does not know whether he will kill you or not, and he wants me to be your enemy, so that he may have my assistance should he determine to destroy you. If he dreams a good dream he is pleasant and friendly to you; if a bad one, he is grum and gloomy and wishes me to join him in killing you. He is an old fool. He and his men expect to get back all the horses that you bought of them at the village, and that was the reason of their selling so many of the best to you; but you are now safe, you and your property. They shall not harm you or take back any of the horses. Though my men are few, yet every Indian in the nation fears me. They shall treat you well. I will describe you to all the nation, so that whenever you come among us you shall be safe from all danger. I will tell them you are my brother." We then conversed on various subjects, the battles he had fought, his ideas of religion, &c. He bore proofs of his courage on his person, in five wounds; some of them large and dangerous. An arrow had pierced his left eye and a lance his side; but owing to the charm, or "medicine," which he wore, his enemies had been unable to kill him. He had been christened in the Spanish country, and said, "I believe as you do in the Great Spirit. If I do well I shall go to a good place and be happy. If I do badly I shall go to the bad place and be miserable.

On taking leave, I requested him to accompany me to keep off the dogs. Take my horse said he. But how shall I return him? "You will not return him, you will keep him my brother — keep him in remembrance of me." I left with a lighter heart than I had brought to the lodge of the One Eyed Chief. I counted much on the benefit of his friendship, and subsequent events proved that I did not overrate its advantages. I met the old Chief on my return, who asked me if I had bought the horse of the One Eyed. His countenance fell on hearing the manner of my acquiring the animal, and he requested me to exchange for a fine spotted war horse of his own, and then offered to give two for that of "my brother's". I refused the insidious proposal, which was intended only to sow dissension between me and my new friend, and the Chief appeared very angry at his failure. Early the following morning, I saw the One Eyed Chief coming with two ribs of buffalo meat, and calling to me moneta, moneta, (my brother) "your sister has sent some buffalo meat for your breakfast." The Chiefs of the army, who were all present and heard this unexpected salutation, looked at each other in astonishment at this extraordinary treatment of me by their greatest brave, who so lately appeared so implacable in his hostility to me. Their conduct towards me and the men immediately changed. No guard was, after this, kept over us, and we were treated with respect and kindness. My powerful "brother," put a new face on our affairs and very probably saved us from the fate of McKnight. We now proceeded towards the Fort, the One Eyed riding by my side and talking very good humoredly and with great animation on a variety of topics. About the middle of the day I noticed preparations making by the warriors as for battle. I asked the One Eyed what this signified, and before he could reply, Alasarea rode up and exclaimed, "Osages, Osages, a heap," and asked me whether I would stay or go over to them. I will stay said I. "Will you fight for us?" I will, said I, and the One Eyed laughed and said they were only wild horses that had caused the alarm. I ascended a mound with him, whence I could observe the manner of catching these animals. In an incredible short time one hundred were captured and tamed so as to be nearly as subject to their masters as domestic horses reared on a farm. A small party of less than a hundred well mounted Indians were in ambush, while a multitude scattered themselves over the prairie in all directions and drove the wild horses to the place where the others were concealed,

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

which was a deep ravine. As soon as the wild drove were sufficiently near, these last rushed among them and every Indian secured his horse with his lasso or noosed rope, which he threw around the neck of the animal, and by a sudden turn brought him to the ground and there tied his heels together. This was the work of a few minutes, during which both horses and men were intermingled together in apparently inextricable confusion. The whole drove was taken at the first onset, except a fine black stud which flew like the wind, pursued by a hundred Indians, and in about two hours was brought back tamed and gentle. He walked close by the Indian who had captured him, and who led him by a rope and wished to sell him to me. I feared his wild look and dilated eye, but his Indian master and protector said he was gentle and gave me the end of the rope with which he led him, when the noble animal immediately came near to me as to a new friend and master. He seemed by his manner to have ratified the transfer and chosen me in preference to the Indian. In twenty-four hours after their capture these horses became tamed and ready for use, and keep near to their owners as their only friends. I could perceive little difference between them and our farm horses. The Indians use their fleetest horses for catching the wild ones, and throw the lasso with great dexterity over their necks, when by turning quickly round and sometimes entangling their feet in the rope, they throw them on the ground, and then tie their legs together two and two, after which they release the neck from the tightened noose which in a short time would produce death by strangling. The sport is attended with the wildest excitement, and exceeds in interest and enjoyment all other sports of the chase that I ever saw.

A thunder shower now blew up, and the army stretched their lodges and encamped. After the shower, a war party of about seven hundred men, under the command of Alasarea, started with me for the Fort, where we arrived about sundown. Each Indian was armed with a short gun, a bow and arrows, and a lance; some had pistols, and each had two horses, one of which he rode for marching, and one, his war horse, which he led, for the battle. Their appearance was formidable indeed as they approached the Fort, and somewhat alarmed the garrison. They encamped for that night outside of the Fort, and in the morning I made them presents with which they were greatly pleased. At about ten o'clock the whole Camanche army came in sight, when some of my company were still more alarmed than they had been the day before. Several who before starting, talked boastingly of making a razor strap of an Indian's skin, now lay in their tents quaking with fear and sweating cold drops. This was the first Indian army they had ever seen, and their courage fast melted away before the spectacle. Come out, said I to them, now is your time to get a razor strap. The Camanches encamped in front of the Fort, on a space a mile and a half in length and about half a mile wide, and exhibited a friendly disposition. I traded with them for horses, mules, beaver fur, and buffalo robes. The former I sent as fast as I bought them, to a drove about a mile from the village, under charge of three men. On the morning of the third day four Indians, armed, went to the drove and took four of the best horses, in spite of the resistance of the guard, who were intimidated by their violence. I immediately went to my "brother," the One Eyed, and informed him of the robbery. He mounted his horse, with whip in hand, and in about two hours returned with two of the stolen horses. In the afternoon he brought back a third, and at night, came up with the fourth. His whip was bloody, and his face distorted with rage. He was in a mood to make men tremble before him, when none but the boldest spirits would dare to cross his path or oppose his will. After he had left the last horse with me, I heard his voice in every part of the camp, proclaiming what, the interpreter told me was a warning for the protection of my property. "Your horses

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

are yours," said he, "to sell or keep as you please; but when you once sell them you cannot take them back. My brother has come from afar to trade with you and brought things that are good for you; and when you have sold him your horses and got your pay, you must not take them back." After this I was not molested again in a similar manner. The One Eyed Chief spent much of his time in my trading house, and assisted me by his advice and influence over the Indians. He allowed me to judge of the horses for myself, but selected the buffalo robes for me and settled their prices. I bought many more of the latter than I brought back with me and might have purchased thousands. One plug of tobacco, a knife and a few strings of beads, in all worth but little more than a dime, bought one of these valuable skins or "rober," worth at least five dollars in any of the States.

The Indians had with them a great many young Spaniards as prisoners, one of whom, an excellent interpreter, wished me to purchase him. I offered the price of ten horses for him, but without success. I gave him many presents, which, he said, his masters took from him as soon as they saw them, and he requested me to give him no more, as said he, "it is of no use." He was an intelligent and interesting boy.

The Indians spent much time in drilling and fighting mock battles. Their skill and discipline would have made our militia dragoons blush for their inferiority. They marched and counter-marched, charged and retreated, rapidly and in admirable order. Their skill in horsemanship is truly wonderful, and I think, is not surpassed by that of the Cossacks or Mamelukes. I frequently put a plug of tobacco on the ground for them to pick up when riding at full speed. A dozen horsemen would start in a line for the prize, and if the leader missed it, the second or third was always successful in seizing it, when he took the rear to give the others fair chance in the next race.

There were six Pawnees from the river Platte, among these Camanches; one of whom came to me and said he knew me. Where did you ever see me? "At the Osage village, said he, when you were buying horses." I then recollected that this Pawnee with several others had come into the village to make a treaty. He knew O'Fallan, of Council Bluff, very well, and gave me some news of the Upper Missouri, and the traders there. He went off and soon returned with several Camanches, and again talked about the Osages and my trading with them. Perceiving his treacherous purpose, I made no reply to his remarks which were as follows: "I saw you with the Osages; you bought horses of the Osages. Do you know where Osage village is? Is it not here?" marking on the ground the courses of the Arkansas, the Grand and the Verdigris rivers, and pointing to the place of their enemies' village. At last I told him I knew nothing about the Osages or their villages, which seemed to enrage him greatly, and he reiterated his assertions about having met me among the hereditary enemies of the Pawnees and Camanches. Seeing the evil suspicions produced by his talk among the Indians, and the necessity of putting down the bad report without delay, I went to my "brother" and told him the Pawnee was setting his countrymen against me. He immediately went with me to the head Chief's lodge and had my Pawnee enemy brought before him. Fixing his dark eye upon him, the One Eyed Chief regarded him a moment in silence, and then said, "we have treated you well ever since you came among us. You lied to us when you said that you had seen the 'white haired man' (meaning John McKnight) at the village of the Osages. And now you say you have seen my brother, too, among the Osages. This is all a lie. You are trying to make mischief between our people and my brother, and if you say any thing more against him I will drive you out of the nation. You shall not stay with us." The Pawnee trembled under this rebuke and walked off in

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

silence, with the manner of a whipped spaniel. I heard no more from him.

On one occasion my "brother" asked permission to bring, in the evening, a party of his friends into the Fort to dance, and I consenting to the proposal, a party of forty, headed by the One Eyed, entered the Fort and danced for several hours, to their own singing and the sound of bells on a wand, carried by their leader. They were gorgeously attired in the height of Indian fashion and bon ton. They wore eagle and owl feathers, and were gaudily painted in every conceivable manner. The One Eyed wore a showy head dress of feather work, from under which, the false hair fell to the ground; they all danced with wonderful agility and grace, and kept time better than most of dancers in more civilized and fashionable life. At the close they danced backward out of the gate, the Chief in front driving them with his wand, and they, in compliment to their host, feigning reluctance to go. With a loud shout of pleasure they at last went out together with regularity and order.

At night we were aroused by shouting and singing on all sides of the Fort, and we took our arms to repel an attack. I saw hundreds of Indians, most of them young men, clambering up the sides of the Fort and trying the doors to get in. The noise suddenly ceased and in the morning the One Eyed told me that the young men had taken the opportunity when the old men were asleep to improve their acquaintance with me and to get some presents of tobacco as the dancing party had done in the evening before, and that he had quelled the disturbance and driven them off. I heard among this party, both here and at the village where I first met them, the sound of moaning and loud wailing in two lodges, from a short time before sun set till dark. I had made a present of a gorges and arm bands to the Chief who befriended me so much on the Salt Fork of the Canadian in my former expedition, and who was now in the village. A young Indian came to me, one evening, with the gorges and arm bands as a token, and requested me to go and see this Chief in his tent. I went with the young man towards the tent whence the sound of weeping was heard, and when within thirty steps, the messenger stopped and looked at my feet. I noticed that he was bare-footed; he took off my shoes, and with me approached the Chief, who was sitting in front of his lodge with bare feet, like the spectators who were standing deferentially around; and on the ground I saw two women and two girls, also barefooted and smeared over the heads and faces, with mud and ashes. These were the same, whose voices I had heard on first entering the Camanche village. They were now rolling on the ground from side to side and weeping violently. Occasionally they scattered ashes over their heads, and after short intervals of quiet, arising from exhaustion, they would burst out afresh in irrepressible fits of weeping and sobbing. The Chief arose, took me aside, and said that I could make these women stop crying. On my enquiring how I could do this, he replied, "by covering them with cloth;" meaning calico. I went to the store and got four pieces of calico, with which I returned, and covered each with a piece. The Chief now spoke to them in his language, and appeared to console them, and remonstrated against any further exhibition of grief. Their crying gradually subsided into deep, long drawn sobs and hiccoughs, like those of children after violent weeping. From this night forth I heard their lamentations no more, and a few Indians who had heretofore been cold and distant, now became friendly to me. I concluded that McKnight, in fighting for his life, had killed the husbands of the women and fathers of the two girls who were thus lamenting, and that they required a token of friendship from me as an atonement and sign of reconciliation. The Indians had now discovered their mistake; that in killing McKnight they had destroyed a friend instead of an enemy, and all

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

regarded me more kindly on account of their own injustice to my friend. The One Eyed Chief, who was probably foremost in the murder, had taken me to his heart as his only brother, and was now ready to die for me, to atone for depriving me of my bosom friend, McKnight — “the white haired Tabbaho.” The Pawnee’s tale of having seen McKnight at the Osage village, was, I suppose, the reason for dispatching him; and in doing this, they had met with a desperate resistance from their victim, who was well armed and a most excellent marksman. The One Eyed did all in his power to recompense me for his loss. He was my fast friend, and exerted himself to the utmost to advance all my interests and wishes. His wife daily sent to her “brother” some delicacy, such as buffalo tongue, carefully cooked by herself. I began to be reconciled to a savage life and enamored with the simplicity of nature. Here were no debts, no Sheriffs or Marshals; no hypocrisies or false friendships. With these simple children of the mountains and prairies, love and hate are honestly felt and exerted in their full intensity. No half-way passions, no interested feelings govern their attachments to their friends. When once enlisted for or against you, little short of Omnipotence can reverse the Indian’s position. He loves and hates with steady persistence and consistency, and generally carries his first feelings regarding you, to his grave. His revenge is sure, his love is true and disinterested. You can count upon either with certainty, and need entertain no fear of being deceived as to their operations.

A scouting war party on one occasion, brought in seven American horses, shod and branded, a tent, a kettle, an axe, and some other articles, which I knew must have belonged to a trading party. They brought up the horses to the Fort to have the shoes taken off by our blacksmith, when I charged them with the robbery of my countrymen. They denied the charge, and said that they had taken this spoil from a party of Osages with whom they had had a battle, and exhibited, in proof of their operations, two scalps as those of their deadly enemies, the Osages. I learned, at Barbour’s, on my return that they told me the truth. The Osages had robbed a Santa Fe company and were themselves attacked in the night, by a party they knew not of what tribe, who killed two men and robbed them of the booty I have mentioned. It was a fair instance of the biters being bitten, the game played by Prince Hal upon Falstaff, who, after robbing four travellers was attacked by the Prince and plundered of his spoil. From the warriors of this scouting party we learned that the whole nation of Osages was very near to us; being encamped on the Salt Fork at the distance of about a day’s journey, and they advised us to leave our present position for one of more safety. The Camanche Chiefs held a council of war, or grand talk, and determined to go out and give battle to their enemies. On the next day they sent all their women and children up the river and went themselves, with their warriors, towards the Salt Fork in quest of the Osages. When the last of the nation were about going, an Indian came to me and claimed his horse, which another Indian had sold to me without his authority. I was about to give him the horse, when the One Eyed came up and enquired into the case, which he decided at once in my favor and told the claimant he must look to the Indian who sold him, for his indemnity. Not liking the law of this decision, I paid the Indian for his horse, and he went away satisfied and highly pleased. Before starting, the Chiefs in a body, came and expressed great friendship for me and regret at leaving me as they were compelled to do. They said they wanted the American trade, and united in requesting me to encourage my countrymen to visit them with goods and trade with them. Trade with the Spaniards they said, was unprofitable; they had nothing to give them for their horses except ammunition, and this they refused to sell to the Indians They wished the Americans to be friendly and intimate with

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

them, and complained bitterly that we supplied their enemies, the Osages, with arms and ammunition with which they made war upon the Camanches. "The Osages" said they, "get their powder, balls and guns from the Americans, but we can get none, or very few from them; this is wrong, very wrong." The One Eyed, and several other Chiefs wished to visit their "Great Father," the President, and have a talk with him. They would have offered to accompany me to my "village" to see the Great Father, but said they, "you cannot defend us from the Osages, the Cherokees, and the Choctaws; these nations are all at war with us, and we should have to go through their country. But tell our Great Father when you go back to your village, that we want him to stop these nations from stealing our horses and killing our people, as they have been doing for many years! Tell him to protect us and send his people out to trade with us. We will not hurt his people, but will defend them when they come among us. We will be brothers with the Americans." The Chief of the Towashes told me that his tribe lived on the head waters of the Red River, and owned sixteen thousand horses, which were better than any I had bought of them. Judging from those which his warriors rode, I could believe what he said respecting the quality of their horses. He wished me to visit his tribe and trade with them. Many things did these wild Chiefs tell me to say for them to the "Great Father" when I reached my "village," and all insisted very earnestly that I should return to them in the Fall with goods, and bring the answer of their Great Father and all he said about them. "Then," said they, "we will go back with you and talk with him face to face." My "brother" told me to ascend the Red River in the Fall, and I should find the nation not far from the three big mounds near the head of that river, by which I suppose he meant some spurs of the Rocky mountains. "And when you reach these mounds," said he, "you will see the smoke from the grass that we will burn every day so that you may find us. You can come with but two men and you shall be safe. I will speak of you to all the Camanches, and tell them you are my brother: and none will hurt you. You can travel without fear through all our country; no one will dare to injure you or take your property." At parting with the Chiefs, they all embraced me most affectionately. My "brother," especially, showed all the feeling of a real brother; he threw his arms around my neck and burst into tears. Alasarea, the Towash, came to me last, and sat down with a grave and serious countenance. He several times struck his breast and said his heart was troubled. On my asking him the cause of his trouble, he said "when you came here, you had twenty-three men and now you have but twenty-two; one is dead. You say he was a good man." Yes, said I, he was a very good man. "You do not know how he was killed." No, I do not, but perhaps I shall know one day. "Many Camanches," said he, "are bad; many Quampas are bad; many of the Arripahoes are bad; many Towashes are bad, and so are many Pawnees. Some of all these are bad and they all hunt in this country. They might have killed the white haired man. He might have wounded a buffalo and been killed by him. A rattlesnake might have bit him. He is dead and you know not how. Here is my war horse Checoba. I give him to you: no horse among the Camanches will catch him. He will carry you away from every enemy and out of any danger." With this he led up a splendid black horse, worthy and fit to have borne a Richard Coeur De Leon, or a Saladin, into their greatest battles. No Arab could ever boast a finer animal than this; the finest limbed, the best proportioned, the swiftest and the most beautiful I ever saw. I brought him home, but before leaving the wilderness, his speed was greatly impaired by the bite of a rattlesnake.

Chapter VII

We start for home — A stampedo — Loss of a hundred horses — Interview with a Chief and his

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

tribe — Pursued by Indians — Passage through the Cross Timbers — Death of horses by flies — Night travelling — Arrival at the Arkansas — Death of horses by the Feresy — Loss of skins and robes by embezzlement — Start for home — Breakfast with a Cherokee Chief — James Rogers — An old Cherokee — Interview with Missionaries — Arrival at home — Troubles from debt — An emergence at last — Conclusion.

AFTER PARTING with these simple children of nature, we prepared for our departure homeward. On the next day after packing up the goods, we abandoned the Fort and began to descend the river in perogues and by land, with the horses. Those in the boats who started before the others with the horses, were to stop at the unfinished Fort one hundred miles below, and there await them. I travelled by land with the horses and met with no occurrence worth mentioning till the second day. Then commenced a series of misfortunes and unavoidable accidents, which continued till I reached the settlements, and which destroyed all hope of profit from the adventure, and the consequences of which, have weighed upon me to this day with a crushing weight. As we travelled along the north bank of the river, a small herd of buffalo suddenly rushed out from the river bank on our left, before the horses and frightened many of them into a stampede as the Spaniards call the thundering sound of their stamping, flying hoofs on the prairie. A few of the men rode after them and succeeded in turning them back; but their shouts and use of the whips gave them another fright and they returned in a stampede among the drove, and thus spread the panic among them. About one hundred ran off at a furious rate, on the route of the river by which we had come. Placing the best rider in my company on Checoba, I ordered him to try his best speed and bottom in the pursuit. He started and ran sixteen miles, where he headed the flying horses that had become mingled with a wild drove, and he was driving them all before him and Checoba, when a rattlesnake bit the noble animal on the fore foot. Checoba immediately sickened and was brought back with great difficulty. On the following morning his foot and leg were swelled, and he was very lame and weak. I placed him in mud and water where he stood for several hours, when the swelling subsided and he was much relieved. By this accident I lost all the horses which ran off in the stampede, and Checoba was materially injured for life. I remained till the next morning, when Checoba was able to travel, and I started with him in advance of the company. Soon after crossing a small branch, I saw an Indian about two hundred yards ahead in the prairie, who riding onto a high mound, hailed me with the word Tabbaho? As I replied, yes. I perceived several Indians approaching me from the prairie and my company behind, also observed them. McKnight and Adams hastened to reach me before the Indians, who came up friendly, and spoke to us in the Spanish language. As we three spoke Spanish, they took us for Spaniards, and said that they were of the Caddo tribe, who were in alliance with the Camanches. Some of the latter tribe and a number of Towashes were in their party, which they said was on its march behind them. They had just come out of a battle with the Osages, by whom they had been defeated, and were proceeding to tell us of the battle when I observed a party of about two hundred Indians coming towards us and also noticed a small grove a short distance before us. I ordered my party to hasten forward to this grove and occupy it in advance of the Indians. As they drove the horses forward, the rope which held the pack on a horse, which I had brought from home with me, got loose and was trod on by the horses behind, which pulled the pack under his belly. He started forward, kicking and pitching until he had got rid of his load, and then returned at full speed among the drove, which broke into another stampede. Off they flew, and many of them ran entirely out

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

of sight on the level prairie, with the speed of birds on the wing. I lost about thirty in this flight. We reached the grove at the same time with the Indians, who then discovered us to be Americans and not Spaniards, which greatly displeased some. The Chief, however, was friendly. An Indian took up and examined McKnight's gun, which he had left leaning against a tree, and riding into the crowd, brandished it over his head, exclaiming that we had stolen the horses; that they ought to take them from us and kill us. The old Chief ordered him to be silent, and he said if they would not kill us he would go and bring men who would do so, and started off in a gallop towards the Canadian with McKnight's gun. Many of the Indians charged us with having stolen Checoba from Alasarea the Towash, and seemed to believe the charge, and to consider us thieves who had been preying upon their countrymen. One who appeared to be the most blood thirsty, shot an arrow into the side of one of their own horses near the lights. The horse bounded forward and fell dead. This act excited them to the highest pitch, and the old Chief had great difficulty in protecting us from an attack; by an harangue and a decisive course he at length assuaged their animosity and excitement. Their late defeat by the Osages had embittered their minds, and pre-disposed them to view us with suspicion. Seven men among them carried wounds received in the late battle, and by request of the Chief I dressed these wounds with salve and sticking plaster. While I was thus engaged, I sent the men forward a short distance, when they awaited me with their rifles ready to return the fire of the Indians. But they parted with us peaceably, and the Chief with great cordiality entreated me to return to his country and trade with his tribe. We want, said he, the friendship and trade of the Americans. I always observed that the most sagacious and far-seeing of the Camanche Chieftains sincerely desired the friendship and alliance of the Americans. A proper course towards them will make them our fast friends and most valuable allies. An opposite one will render them most deadly and dangerous enemies, and especially so in the event of a war with England. A course of justice, fairness and liberality is the only judicious one; and in dealing with them, the greatest tact and much knowledge of Indian character is requisite for success in gaining their confidence and securing their lasting esteem and friendship. The Pawnees and all the tribes west of the Osages, called by the national name of Camanches, are all of the same original tribe, though bearing various names, and all speak the same language. They are in the strictest alliance with each other, and could probably muster a force of forty or fifty thousand warriors at the time I was among them. The United States should provide against the consequences of their hostility. After parting from the Caddo Chief, I sent the company with the horses forward, and remained behind with McKnight to watch against pursuit by the Indians. Finding that we were not followed, we hastened on and overtook the rest of the company, and all reached the unfinished Fort in the afternoon, where we found the perogues and swivel in charge of the men who had brought them down the river and were awaiting us according to arrangement. We travelled on in company till night fall, when the land party crossed the river at a bend and encamped with the others in a grove. We carefully secured our horses. On the following morning, as we issued from the timber into the prairie, a dead buffalo cow was seen with her calf standing near her. We soon saw another cow lately killed by a party evidently in pursuit of us. We travelled in company with the perogues, that we might have the benefit of the swivel in case of an attack. In the Cross Timbers, which we reached in four or five days after leaving the last mentioned Fort; we again parted company with the perogues and struck out into the prairie. Here we soon afterwards observed a herd of buffalo running rapidly with their tongues hanging out of their mouths, and also, eight Indians mounted,

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

who did not perceive us. In three days we passed the Cross Timbers and reached the long-grass prairies on the east of them. Here the horse flies were so numerous and ravenous as nearly to destroy the horses which were frequently covered entirely by them. Many of the horses died and all were wasting away under the inflictions of these venomous insects. To avoid them, we travelled only by night and slept by day. I took the direction by guess and in eight days, or rather, nights, we struck the Arkansas just five miles below the three forks, where Fort Gibson now stands, and the point which I was aiming to reach. I went up to the forks where Barbour's trading establishment was then situated and there obtained a canoe. Barbour, I afterwards learned, had died in New Orleans, whither he started with my keel boat on my outward trip. We travelled down the Arkansas to the mouth of the Canadian, and found the rest of my company with the perogues, awaiting us at the Salt works. Here I took an account of my stock, and found that out of three hundred and twenty-three horses and mules which I had purchased of the Indians and started with for home, I had lost by flies and stampedos, just two hundred and fifty-three, leaving but seventy-one now in my possession. These I allowed to rest one day, and on the next day lost five of them by a disease called the Feresy, which causes a swelling of the breast and belly and generally terminates fatally. On the day and night following, eight or ten more of the horses died and about twenty were sick with the disease. I was too anxious for my family and too desirous of seeing them to delay my departure any longer. Here, at the mouth of the Illinois River, a branch of the Arkansas, and near the mouth of the Canadian, I left the few horses and mules remaining, and the perogue containing the skins and robes, in charge of Adams & Denison. I never saw them again and lost all — horses and mules, beaver skins and buffalo robes. I returned home with five horses; just the same number I had started out with. Most of them died, and those that lived were never accounted for to me. The skins and robes were sold by James Adams, at Eau-Post, in Arkansas, on the river of that name, and the whole proceeds, amounting to a large sum of my money, were embezzled by him, the said Adams. He had been employed by McKnight and was unknown to me. In every respect, pecuniarily and otherwise, this was a most unfortunate venture. I lost by it my best and dearest friend, John McKnight, and all the money I had invested in it, with the vain hope of being thereby set free from debt and made an independent man. The object was a great one, and the risk proportionately great. I lost all that I had set upon the stake and was still more deeply involved than before. A dreary future lay ahead, but I determined to meet and struggle with it like a man. Leaving the river, in company with twelve men, some afoot and some with horses, we directed our course for the Cherokee country. We found no game and for several days all suffered severely from hunger. We at length approached the Cherokee settlements; and I went forward alone promising the men to have a meal prepared for them at the house of John Rogers, a half breed Cherokee Chief. When in sight of his place I met Rogers and told him I wanted breakfast for myself and twelve men; that I had been among the Camanches trading, and that my company was coming up nearly starved. He replied that his tribe had been at war that year, with the Osages and had raised but a small crop, and that he had to pay one dollar per bushel for his bread "But," said he, "I will get you something to eat," and entering his house, requested his wife to prepare breakfast for twelve men, and with a smile, "twelve hungry men at that." I noticed in his house, all the usual furniture of our best farmers, and he was evidently living well and comfortably. The men came up, and by their rough exteriors, long beards and hair, lantern jaws and lank bodies, they strongly impressed me with the idea of a gang of famished wolves. They glared at Mrs. Rogers, while she

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

was getting their breakfast, like so many cannibals, and had she not been very quick in appeasing their appetites, I cannot swear but that they would have eaten her up. She, the good woman, squaw though she was, exerted herself in our behalf like an angel of mercy, and in a miraculously short time she set before us a noble meal of bacon, eggs, corn bread, milk and coffee; there was enough for us all and we arose filled, leaving some on the table, not from politeness but from inability to eat any more. Well Mr. Rogers, said I, what shall I pay you for our breakfast. "What," said he, laughing, "would be the use of charging men who have just come out of the woods and cannot possibly have any money." No, said I, I am not begging my way; I will pay you with goods that I have. I then drew out my stock and sold him twelve dollars' worth, after paying for our meal. The father and sister of Rogers now came in and talked with us some time. The father, who was a white man, said that his son John killed the first Indian at the battle of the Horse-shoe, where both served on the side of the Americans under Jackson. "The Creeks," said he, "always fight till death. It takes one Cherokee for every Creek, and of the whites a little more than one for one." Both father and son spoke in the highest terms of Gen. Jackson, as a man, a soldier and a commander.

I requested provisions to subsist us till we could get a supply, and obtained from him sufficient to carry us to Matthew Lyon's trading house at the Spadre. Below this is a large Missionary station, which we were informed was well supplied with flour and meat, of which a boat load for their use had lately arrived. "If you find the missionaries in good humor," said Mrs. Rogers, "and do not go on the Lord's Day, you will be able to get some provisions, but not without. I was down at the station last week on Saturday and staid over Sunday. A Cherokee woman came in on Sunday from Piney, twenty miles above on the river, with some chickens to buy some sugar and coffee for a poor woman who had been lately confined. I interpreted for the woman, and went to brother Vail and told him what the woman wanted. I don't deal with the females, said he; you must go to sister — — . We went to the sister that brother Vail had named, and she told me that they neither bought nor sold on the Lord's Day. Then take the chickens as a gift said I, and give the woman what she wants. We neither give nor take on the Lord's Day, said she, and the poor woman had to go back with her chickens, and so I advise you not to go to the Missionaries on the Lord's Day." I could hardly believe that bigotry and fanaticism could go so far as this, until I found by experience, when I reached the station, that their meanness was fully equal to all I had heard. We left the hospitable house of the Cherokee Chief with many thanks and proceeded on our way. At a short distance from the Spadre, I was riding alone in advance of the company, when I met a gentlemanly and intelligent halfbreed Cherokee, of whom I enquired if I could procure provisions at that place. He said I could not, but invited me to alight and take breakfast with him. There are too many of us said I, twelve beside myself. This did not daunt him and he immediately extended his invitation to all, and the whole company accordingly entered his house and partook of an excellent breakfast, such as that which his brother had furnished us two days before. This man was James, the brother of John Rogers, and lived like him in comfort and elegance. His wife was a handsome half-breed, whom I presented with some articles of dress, against the wish of her husband, who refused all pay for our breakfast. He purchased of me goods to the amount of fifteen dollars and paid me the money for them. We passed the Spadre that morning, where I saw the grave of Matthew Lyon, a man who made a considerable figure in politics in the Alien and Sedition times of John Adams. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well." At Piney I saw a number of

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

Indians, and enquired of them for provisions. We are hungry said I, and have nothing to eat. A negro woman said they were starving themselves and could not help us to any thing. I told the man we should be compelled to fast until we reached Weber's or the Missionaries. An old Indian who stood behind me during this colloquy, caught hold of my arm as I started on, and with a sharp enquiring look into my eyes, exclaimed, "nothing! nothing to eat?" Nothing at all said I. Come with me said he. I followed him about one hundred yards up the bank of a creek where he turned up a hollow and entered a cabin under the brow of a hill: going to the chimney he took from within it a stick holding three pieces of bacon and gave me two of them. I offered him money. "No, said he, I take no money, but when you meet a hungry Cherokee share with him whatever you have, as I have shared with you." Such conduct as this, thought I, is practical Christianity, call it by what name you please. Parting with this warmhearted Indian, we hastened on toward the Missionary station, which we reached the next day. This was situated on the north side of the river, and was composed of about one hundred persons, old and young, who occupied some twenty buildings arranged in a square. Here we hoped to obtain a full supply of provisions, being informed that one hundred barrels of pork and one hundred and fifty barrels of flour had lately arrived for the use of the Missionaries and their families. Entering the town I enquired for and found the head of the concern, named Vail, laid before him our destitute condition and misfortunes in the Camanche country, and asked him for provisions enough to last us to the settlements on the Little Red, seventy miles below. "Well, said he, I will speak to brother such a one about it," and went away for that purpose. Another man soon came up and asked me how much we wanted. I replied, about one hundred pounds of flour and fifty of pork. "Well I vow and declare, I don't know how we shall be able to spare it; how much would you be willing to give?" Any reasonable price said I; what do you ask? We are suffering from hunger and must have provisions. He left me, saying he would see brother Vail about it and I waited an hour without seeing either of them. I then searched out brother Vail and repeated my request for provisions. He vowed and declared that he did not think they had more than enough "to do them the year round." I then asked for one half the quantity I had named before. "We have a very large family, and if we should get out we could not get any more from the settlements." I said that what little we wanted would not make more than one meal for his family, and he could easily procure a new supply to prevent any suffering. "Well, said he, what would you be willing to give?" Set your own price on your property, said I, and I will give it, as I cannot do without provisions. He then went away, saying he would see the others, naming them. Robert McKnight now came from the blacksmith's shop, where he had got his mule shod on the fore feet and had been charged for that service the sum of two dollars. We concluded that they knew the price of horse-shoes, if not of flour and pork. Again I sought out the "brethren," Vail and the other, reiterated to them our wants, and requested relief as before: the eternal question was again put, what would you be willing to give? Any thing that you choose to ask said I. "We do not think we can spare any provisions," said one. They were waiting for a bid, and I determined not to huckster with the canting hypocrites, nor gratify them by paying an outrageously exorbitant price, which they were expecting to get from my necessities. Without further parley I left them and went up to the bakery of the Station, where some of my company were trying to get some bread. I offered to pay for whatever they could sell. "No, we can't sell any thing without brother Vail's permission. I offered to buy two or three bushels of fragments of bread, which I noticed on the table in a corner. 'We

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

use them in soups and for puddings and do not waste any thing." My men were now furious and ready to take possession of the bakery and divide it out among them. With great difficulty I restrained them from this act. I told them they would render us all infamous in the settlements as robbers of Missionaries, those holy men of God; that we should be regarded with horror by all, wherever we went, if we preyed upon these lamb-like and charitable christians. I told them we must go on and trust to Providence. "What!" said McKnight, "travel on without provisions when there are plenty of them here. I will have some if need be by force." I at length prevailed on them to start without committing any depredation. When leaving the town, I saw Vail at a distance, rode up to him asked, what are you doing here? "We are instructing the Indians in the Christian religion." I think, said I, you might learn some of the principles of your religion from the Indians themselves. An old Cherokee yesterday gave me two out of three pieces of meat which he had, and refused pay for them in money. He told me to do the same by a Cherokee should I meet one in want. Here you are afraid to put a price on your flour and meat for fear of not charging enough. You wish me to name an exorbitant price. You wish to make the most out of me and you shall make nothing. He was saying that charity began at home, he must provide for his own household and so forth, as I left him in disgust with his meanness and hypocrisy. We now left the river and bore eastwardly, and that evening killed a turkey, upon which we lived two days and a half, when we reached Little Red River, where we procured an excellent dinner, and a supply of food from a settler whose name I forget. This was the first meal we had eaten, sufficient to break our fasts, since we had left James Rogers' house, five days before.

From this place I hastened home without any occurrence of note. My family was sick when I arrived, and my creditors soon became more clamorous than ever: each endeavored to anticipate the others, and the executive officers of all the Courts, from the United States District Court down to those of Justices of the Peace, swarmed around me like insects in August. I gave up all my property, even the beds upon which my children were born, and after all was sold, though the officers supposed there was enough to satisfy the judgments against me, there yet remained a large amount still due. The whole is now paid: in the twenty years which have intervened, I discharged all my debts on account of these two expeditions of which the narration is now closed. I lost by them about the sum of twelve thousand dollars, and after all the hardships I had endured, found myself poorer than ever. The reader has been told how I incurred these losses, most of which were, perhaps, under the circumstances, to have been expected. I was the first American that ever went among the Camanches for the purpose of trading. Before my first trip among them, their name was unknown to our people: the Americans called them Pawnees and knew them only by that name. They were then wilder and more ignorant of our power than now, when they have probably learned that we do not all live in one village, and derived from their kindred tribe, the Pawnees, and other neighbors, a tolerably correct idea of our strength and numbers. Traders would now run very little risk of the robberies which I suffered from them, and probably none at all of being killed in time of peace. The trade would now be profitable; equally so as when I was among them, and from the greater cheapness of goods a greater profit could be made, while the dangers would be far less. Were it not for advancing age, I should repeat the adventures, notwithstanding their unfortunate issues heretofore. Age, however, forbids any farther attempts to retrieve my fortune in this manner. I have been enabled through the real friendship of a brother to support my family and give my children the rudiments and foundation of an education;

---

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans

By Gen. Thomas James, of Monroe County, Illinois

---

which, though not such as I would have given them had better fortune attended me, is sufficient, if properly improved, to enable them to go through the world with honor and usefulness. I have uniformly endeavored to instil in their minds principles of integrity and republicanism; and for myself, to bequeath, as the richest inheritance I could leave them, a good example and an unsullied name. With strong bodies and habits of labor, with honor and intelligence, they will succeed in a country of liberty and equal rights to all. I have always been true to my country, and uniformly studied to advance the interests of my countrymen in all my transactions with the savages and Spaniards; and I have my reward in the satisfaction derived from a consciousness and patriotic discharge of duty on all occasions. At the age of sixty-three, with broken health, I feel none of the peevishness of age; I look forward cheerfully and hopefully on the coming days, without Shuddering to feel their shadows o'er me creep, and rejoice, in my decline, over the rise and glorious prospects of my country. I have the consolation of being able to recall to my mind several manifestations of the confidence and esteem of my fellow-citizens, exerted towards me at a time when the hand of misfortune bore heaviest upon my head. They did me the honor, in eighteen hundred and twenty-five, of electing me General of the Second Brigade, First Division of the Militia of Illinois, an office which I now hold. I was also elected, in the same year, to represent the country of Monroe in the Legislature of Illinois, of which I was a member for two sessions. I was appointed Post Master in the same county in eighteen hundred and twenty-seven and have held the appointment ever since. I would mention my agency in the Black Hawk war of eighteen hundred and thirty-two, in which I served as Major, were it not a war in which no honor was gained by any one; and the history of which, for the credit of the country, ought never to be written. These proofs of the esteem of my countrymen are gratifying and consoling amidst the difficulties which have so long weighed me down, and are evidence that a generous people will appreciate the intrinsic character of a man, independent of adventitious circumstances, the frowns or the favors of fortune.

THE END

Bibliographical Information on

Larocque's Rocky Mountain Journal

Larocque's narrative was originally published by the Canadian Government Printing Bureau, Ottawa, 1910.

Larocque's Journal has more recently been included in:

The Journal of Francois Larocque. Published by Ye Galleon Press, Fairfield, WA. 1981.

A copy of the original journal is in the Library of Laval University, Montreal.

Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains

Francois Antoine Larocque

---

Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains

From My Leaving the Assinibois River on the 2nd June, 1805

Francois Antoine Larocque

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS FROM MY LEAVING THE ASSINIBOIS RIVER ON THE 2nd JUNE, 1805.

At my arrival at Rivière Fort de la Bosse I prepared for going on a voyage of discovery to the Rocky Mountains and set off on the 2nd June with two men having each of us two horses, one of which was laden with goods to facilitate an intercourse with the Indians we might happen to see on our road. Mr. Charles McKenzie and Mr. Lassana set out with me to go & pass the summer at the Missouri, and having to pursue the same road we kept company as far as the B.B. village. Mr. McKenzie with the other men set off about two in the afternoon, but I having [been] so very busy that I had not as yet been able to write my letters to my friends remained and wrote letters and settled some little business of my own. After sunset we supped & bidding farewell to Mr. Chabelly & Henry & to all the people, departed, every one being affected at our departure thinking it more than probable that I should not return with my men, and I confess I left the fort with a heavy heart but riding at a good rate I soon got cheerful again, and thought of nothing but the [means] of ensuring success to my undertaking.

At 10 at night I arrived at the River aux Prunes where I found the people encamped asleep. Monday 3rd. I sat up early in the morning and stopped at 12 to refresh our horses, and encamped at night at River la Sorie, where we had not been two hours encamped when three, and after many other Assinibois rushed in upon us, a few endeavouring to take our horses, but seeing our guns and running to them we made them depart. They ran afterwards to our fire and seeing us well armed and by our looks that we would well defend ourselves and our property they remained quiet. There were 40 tents of them not 10 acres from us without that we had perceived them. I gave 1 fm. tobacco to their Chief to make his young men smoke & engage them to remain peaceable. Some of them offered to accompany us to the Missouri, but upon being told that we would like it well they spoke no more of it.

Thinking it however not prudent to pass the night so close to them we saddled our horses and departed although they did all in their power of engaging us to sleep at those tents. One of them conducted us to a good fording place of River la Sourie which we crossed striking in the plain. We walked all night to come out of their reach for they are worst cunning horse thieves that ever I said or heard of. A little before day light we stopped and took a nap.

Tuesday 4th. We proceeded on our journey early in the morning having very fine weather all day, and at night encamped on the banks of the River la Sourie at a place called Green River for its having no wood on its side for about 30 miles. We saw no other animals but four cabois of which we killed two.

Wednesday 5th. We followed the Green River till eleven o'clock when we arrived at the woods, where being an appearance of rainy weather we encamped. There was no Buffalo in sight. At 12 it began to rain and continued hard and uninterruptedly until next morning. Here we saw plenty of wild fowls, Ducks, Bustards, Geese, Swans, &c., and killed a number of them.

Thursday 6th. There being an appearance of fine weather, we set off and walked about three miles, when the weather being cloudy we stopped to encamp, but before we could make a hut for our goods the rain began again, and fell amazingly hard so that in a few hours every hollow or valley

in the plains were full of water, and every brook or creek was swollen to rivers. There were plenty of Buffaloes and the rain ceasing in the evening we killed a very fat young bull and a fat Elk deer. At night the rain began again and continued without intermission until morning.

Friday 7th. The weather continued cloudy, but the sun appearing now and then we hoped for fair weather and past of but as yesterday it began to rain at 12, at two we found some wood on some sandy hills in the plains where we stopped to cook our goods, being completely trenched [drenched]. There being no water on the sand hills, we raised a Bark of Elm tree and pulling one end in a Kettle, the other end a little higher, all the water that fell on the Bark ran into the kettle and we had presently a sufficient quantity; we also made a tent with bark and passed the night comfortably enough.

Saturday 8th. We sat of to go to a hill called Grosse Butte to dry our things, and water our horses, but their being none here, arrived there two hours and a half where we stopped for the remainder of the day & night. The Grosse Bute is a high hill which is seen at 20 miles off on either side. At its foot on the north side is a Lake of about 8 miles in circumference in which there are middle sized pikes. Between the Lake and the hill there is some wood chiefly Elm; all around are many lakes, which by the late rain communicated with each other. From the top of the hill the turtle mountain was soon being due North, River la Sourie likewise was of in N.N.E. and south and south west, being seen on all sides of the hill excepted west.

Sunday 9th. We sat of early in the morning, in a course S.S.W. and at 1 o'clock in the afternoon we arrived on the Bank of the River la Sourie. The water being amazing high we made a raft to cross our things over the River and the horses swam over. We saddled immediately and encamped in a Coulé about three miles from the River.

Monday 10th. Leaving this we went and slept in the Mandan plain, saw plenty of buffaloes all along, but did not dare to fire at them, being on the enemies lands is Sioux. It rained a little in the night.

Tuesday 11th. At 8 in the morning I saw the banks of the Missouri, at 12 arrived at the River Bourbeuse, when we unsad[dl]ed our horses where we unloaded our horses and crossed the property on our shoulders there being not more than 2 feet of water, but we sunk up to our middle in mud, the horses bemired themselves in crossing and it was with difficulty we got them over the bank beings bogs as also the bed of the river. We intended to get the villages today but being overtaken by a Shower of rain we encamped in a coulé at the Serpent lodge, being a winter vil-lage of the B. Belly's at the Elbow of the River, where I passed part of last winter. Being unwilling to untie my things before the Indians of the village as I was necessarily be put to some expence I took here a small equipment of different article for present expence, as the sight of my goods would perhaps cause the B.B. to refuse our passage to the Rocky Mountains.

Wednesday 12th. I arrived at 9 o'clock in the morning on the banks of the Missouri, fired a few shots to inform the Indians of our being there and in a few hours many came over with Canoes to cross us and our things.

Lafrance proceeded to the Mandans but I and my men with Mr. McKenzie crossed here at the B. Belly's & entered into dift lodges, gave my men each a small equipment of Knives Tobacco and ammunition to give the landlords.

Thursday, 13th. Three Assiniboins arrived in the evening. 4 Canadians from the Illinois, who are hunting Beaver in these parts, came to see me. I gave each of them 6 inches of [Brazil] Tobacco

which pleased them very much as they had for several months not smoked any but Indian Tobacco.

Fryday 14th. The Indians here are exceedingly troublesome to sell their horses to us, the prise that we usually pay them for a horse can purchas two from the Rocky Mountain Indians who are expected dayly, & they would wish us to have more goods when those Indians arrive, so as to have the whole trade themselves. I told them that the purpose of our coming was not to purchase horses either from them or the Rocky Mountains, that we came for Skins and Robes and that for that purpose one of us was to pass the summer with them and one at the Mandans; that I and two men were sent by the white people's Chief to smoke a pipe of peace & amity with the Rocky Mountain Indians and to accompany them to their lands to examine them and see if there were Beavers as is reported & to engage them to hunt it, that we would not purchase a horse from none, therefore that their best plan would be to dress Buffalo Robes, so as to have ammuniton to trade with the Rocky Mountain Indians.

They pretend to be in fear of the surrounding nations, that is Assineboines, Sioux, Cheyennes & Ricaras, so as to have an excuse for not trading their guns with the Rocky Mountain Indians, and likewise to prevent us. Some of those Rocky Mountain Indians have been here already and are gone back, but more are expected, with whom I intend to go.

Saturday 15th. I was sent for by one of the Chiefs who asked me what I intended to do with the pipe stem I had brought, upon my telling him that it was for the Rocky Mountain Indians he made a long harangue to dissuade me from going there, saying that I would be obliged to winter there on account of the length of the way, that the Cheyennes and Ricaras were enemies and constantly on the Road, and that it was probable we should be killed by them. He gave the worst character possible to the Rocky Mountain Indians, saying they were thieves and liar, of which he gave an example that is of a Canadian of the name of Menard, who had lived here about 40 years and a few years ago sett of to go to the Rocky Mountains to trade horses and Beavers, these Indians did all in their power to prevent him, but seeing him absolutely bent upon going they let him go, he arrived at the Rocky Mountain Indians tents, where he was well treated, & got 9 horses and 2 female slaves, besides a quantity of Beaver, he left the lodge very well pleased, but were followed by some young men who in the night stole 7 horses, a few nights after his 2 Slaves deserted with the other horses and other young men coming took from him everything he had even to his knife, he came crying to the B. B. Village almost dead having but his robe to make shoes (with flint stone) which he tied about his feet with cords, which so pained the B.B. that they killed some of the Roche Mountain for revenge & &. he told me many other stories, to all which I answered that my Chief had sent me to go, and that I would or die.

There is seven nights that 5 young men are gone to meet the Rocky Mountain Indians, they are expected dayly & the Rocky Mountain with them.

Sunday 16th. This Evening the Indian women danced the scalp of a Black feet Indian which they killed the last spring. The Canadians from below said they had killed some white men at the same time, that they had seen cloths such as Corduroy jackets and trousers, collars, shirts, part of Linnen Tents, Casimer waist coats, and many other things belonging to the whites. The Borgne the Great Chief of this village told me that war party had fired upon and killed people who were going down a very large River, in skin canoes, but that they could not tell whether they were Crees or Sauteux or whites. I spoke to old Cerina Grape the father of the Chief of that party, and to the

Chief himself, they prove by the fire, Earth and Heaven that they were not whites. They made a plan of the Country through which they passed, and in my opinion it is some where [about] the Sas Ratchewini or its branches. They showed me part of what they plundered but I saw nothing that could prove them to have killed Whites except the quantity of gun powder he had, for it was no less than half a Keg and at least 200 balls. Their plunder was parted among all the warriors and their relations. Among the articles that the Cerina Grappe showed me there was a Coat made of the skin of a young horse wrought with porcupine quills and human hair, 2 skunk skins garnished with red stroud and blue beads which those Indians generally wear round their ancles, one musket by Ketland one gun by Barnett, and lastly one scalp which was evidently that of an Indian. But I really believe they have killed some white people about Fort Des Prairies for they brought more goods than ever I saw in the possession of Indians at one time.

Monday 17th. I went down to the Mandan Village on horse back and purchased a saddle there for which I paid 30 lbs ammunition desired Lafrance to get some provision made for my voyage as there is no corn where I live. I returned home to my lodge. In the evening having settled some business with a man of the name of Jusseaux who was indebted to the Company.

Tuesday 18th. The son of the White Wolf fell from his horse and bruised his leg terribly, the flesh was taken clean of the bone from the ancle, round the leg to the calf. The Indian doctor was sent for who began his cure by blowing and singing while the child suffered quietly. Thunder storm.

Wednesday 19th. There being another sick person in my Lodge and there being rather too much fuss about medicines, conjuring & singing I went & lived in another lodge where I had placed one of my men before. Went to see the Borgne our Chief and being desirous that he should stand by me in case of need I made him a present of  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. Tobacco, one knife and 50 Rounds of ammunition at which he was well pleased—he is the greatest Chief in this place, but does not talk against our going to the Rocky Mountains as the other Chiefs do—Thunder and rain at night.

Thursday 20th. I was again teased by some of the Chief to purchase horses and was told the Big Bellys had two hearts and that they not know whether they would allow me to go to the Rocky Mountains, and in the course of a long harangue they made use of all their art to induce me not to go representing the journey as dangerous to the last degree and that the Rocky Mountain would not come, for they were afraid of the Ricaras & Assiniboines to all which I could make no answer but by signs, as there was no one present that could speak to them properly, one of my men of the name of Souci spoke the Sioux language but there was no one there that understood that language. About [noon] two of the young B.B. that had been sent to meet the Rocky Mountains arrived, they left the Rocky Mountain Indians in the morning and they will be here in 3 or 4 days. Upon the receipt of those news, the Chief pretended to have received information that the Crils & Assiniboines were assembled to come and war upon them (which is false) and harangues were made to the people to keep their guns and ammunitions and not to trade them with the Rocky Mountain Indians, &c. All this I believe a scheme to prevent me from going, for as yet they do not like to tell me so exactly, but are for ever saying that they have two hearts which means that they are undetermined in what manner to act.

Fryday 21st. I went to see the Borgne enquired of him what he and the Big Bellys thought of our going to the Rocky Mountains and whether they have a mind to prevent us. He answered to my wish, that the Rocky Mountains were good people, that they had plenty of Beaver on their hands, and that his adopted son, one of the Chiefs of the Rocky Mountains & the greater would

take care of us, for that he would strongly recommend to him to put the white people in his heart and watch over them. I told him that the B.B. had no reason to be displeased for that one of us remains with them who has plenty of ammunition, Knives, tobacco, Hatchets and other articles, where with to supply their wants, whenever they would be disposed to trade. He said it was true that none would molest us. He is the only Chief that speaks so, but as he has the most authority of any I hope by his means we will pass. A certain method to get the road clear would be to assemble the Chiefs, make them a present of Tobacco and ammunition, make them smoke & speak to them what occasion I may have for them in future. I like not to do it only when I see that I cannot otherwise for assembling a Council and haranging without a present is no better than speaking to a heap of stones. Besides I am apprehensive that paying as it were for our first going to these nations will give a footing to the B. Bellys which they will endeavour to improve every time we should go there if a trading interest takes place. So we pass this time without making them any present at all, I believe it will be done away for ever. If the Borgne retains that authority he formerly had he alone will be able to clear the Road for us and he appears to be sincerely our friend.

Saturday 22nd. In the beginning I went to an Indian's tent whose two sons had been in that party that defeated the White on the Saskatchion, he gave me a full account and more like truth than any other. He says there were four Linnen tents and four leather on the sides of the River where there were Skin Canoes; they fired upon the largest leather tent and Killed three men, two of whom were Indians, the other they believe to be a White man but not certain. They brought one scalp & if it is that which they showed me, it is an Indian. There was plenty of tents in all kinds besides goods. What they could not take with them, they broke and threw in the River.

Sunday 23rd. Three men and one woman arrived from the Rocky Mountains about noon, the other are near hand and would have arrived today but for rain which fell in the evening.

In the evening I went to see the Brother of the Borgne, where I found two Rocky Mountain Indians, one of whom was the Chief of whom the Borgne had spoken with me . I smoked with them for some time when the Borgne told them that I was going with them and spoke very much in our favor. They appeared to be very well pleased.

Monday 24th. Lafrance, with the other white people from below who reside at the Mandans came to see the people which were arrived from the Rocky Mountains, who were prevented from coming by appearance of bad weather. It thundered the whole day but it did not rain. I gave a small knife to my Land Lady.

Tuesday 25th. About one in the afternoon the Rocky Mountain Indians arrived, they encamped at a little distance from the village with the warriors, to the number of 645, passed through the village on horseback with their shields & other war-like implements, they proceeded to the little village, Souliers and then to the Mandans and returned.

There did not remain 20 persons in the village, men women and children all went to the newly arrived camp carrying a quantity of Corn raw and cooked which they traded for Leggins, Robes and dried meat. There are 20 lodges of the snake Indians & about 40 men. The other bands are more numerous.

This morning the Borgne sent for me, he showed me the Rocky Mountain Chief of the Ererokas, and told him before me that I was going with him & to take good care of us & he spoke very much in our favour telling me that the B. Bellys were undetermined whether they would allow us to go or not, but that we would go if we liked it for that he would clear the road before us if necessary. I

Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains

Francois Antoine Larocque

---

gave to two of the Ererokas each 6 [feet] of tobacco and 20 Rounds of ammunitions.

Wednesday 26th. The Mandans, Souliers, little village people & the people of the Village, went on horse back and arived to perform the same ceremonys round the Rocky Mountain Camp, as the Rocky Mountains did yesterday here, they were about 500, but a great many Warriors are absent being gone to war.

Thursday 27th. Assembled the chiefs of the different Bands of the Rocky Mountains and made them a present of

2 Large Axes

2 Small Axes

8 Ivory Combs

10 Wampum Shells

8 fire steels and Flint

4 cassetete

6 Masses B.C. Beads

4 f. Tobacco

8 Cock feathers

16 large Knives

12 Small do

2 lbs. Vermillion

8 doz. Rings

4 papers co'd Glasses

4 Doz. Awls

11/ lb. Blue Beads

2 Doz. do

1000 balls & powder

Made them smoke in a stem which I told them was that of the Chief of the White people who was desirous of making them his Children & Brethren, that he knew they were pitiful and had no arms to defend themselves from their enemies, but that they should cease to be pityful as soon as they would make themselves brave hunters. That I and two men were going with them to see their lands and that we took with us some articles to supply their present want. That our Chief sent them those goods that lay before them, to make them listen to what we were now telling them, that he expected they would treat all white people as their Brethren for that we were in peace and friendship with the Red skined people and did not go about to get a scalp, that probably they would see White people on their lands from another quarter but that they were our brethren and of course we expected they would not hurt them, that a few years ago they pillaged and ill treated a white man who went to trade with them, that we would see how they would treat us and if they have behaved well towards us and kill Beavers, Otters & Bears they would have white people on the lands in a few years, who would winter with them and supply them with all their wants & &. I told them many other things which I thought was necessary and closed the Harangue by making them smoke the Medicin Pipe. They thanked [me] and make a present of 6 robes, one Tyger skin, 4 shirts, 2 women Cotillons 2 dressed Elk skins, 3 saddles and 13 pair leggins. I clothed the Chief of the Ererokas at the same time and gave him a flag and a Wanpoon Belt and told them that our Chief did not expect that we would pass many different nations and therefore had sent but one

Chief Clothing, but that in the course of the summer we would fix upon a spot most convenient for them all where we would build & trade with them, if we saw that they wished to encourage the white people to go on their lands by being good hunters and that then all their Chiefs who would behave well would get a Coat.

The ceremony of adopting Children was going on at the same time, but I was so very busy that I could not attend, but about the middle of the ceremony, and therefore can give but an imperfect account of it from my own observation, but as the two people were present I will give an account of it in another place.

Fryday 28th. I preferred to go of in the evening to the lodge of the Ereroka Chief in order to be ready with them in the morning but he and the other Chiefs were called to a farewell Council in the Borges Lodge so that I did not Stir.

Saturday 29th. Saddled our horses and left the B. Belly village. We remained about half an hour in the Rocky Mountain Camp where they threw down their tents and all sat of. We marched along the Knife Rivers for about eight miles when we stopped and encamped. The Borgne and many other B. Belly's came and slept with us.

Sunday 30th. We followed a south course for about 4 mile and stoped to dine and resumed a S.S.W. course and encamped for night, Knife River in Sight when no hills intervned, about 6 miles on our right, a thunder storm in the evening.

July 1st, Monday. We sat [out] at 8 o'clock in the morning and encamped at 12 having followed a South West course; we crossed three small creeks running North and N. East into the Knife River. It began to rain as soon as the lodges were pitched and continued so all day. The Indians hunted and Killed a few Bulls. I gave the people of my lodge a few articles, as Beads, Knives.

Tuesday 2nd. We sat out at 9 o'clock followed a south Course and encamped at 2 after noon. It thundered very much the whole of the afternoon and at sun set there fell such a shower of hail as I never saw before, some of the hail stones being as large as hen eggs and the rest as a Yolk; they fell with amazing violence and broke down several tents. The wind during the storm was West, it breezed to the North and continued during the whole night.

Wednesday 3rd. We continued our journey for about 4 hours, through a very hilly country and encamped at the foot of a very high Hill on the top of which I ascended, but could see at no considerable distance, another range of hills surrounding this on all sides. I lost my spy glass in coming down the hill and could not find it again. Our course was south.

Thursday 4th. We stopped after a south course for the night on the side of a small hill at a Creek which empties in the Missouri above the Panis village about 5 leagues distant from our last encampment having crossed another a little before emptying in the Missury about one mile below the Mandans. The Scouts reported that Buffaloes were at hand.

Fryday 5th. We discovered a thief last night in the act of stealing a gun from under our loads thinking we were asleep. The Chief sent two young men to sleep behind the lodge and guard our property. After three hours and a half march in a southerly direction we espied Buffaloes, and stopped all. The Chief harangued and the young men set out to hunt after which we marched on for about a league and a half and encamped. There was no Creek or River here for water only a few ponds of stagnant water which by reason of so many dogs and horses bathing in them was not drinkeable being as thick as mud.

Saturday 6th. A Big Belly found my spy glass and returned it to me, we set of at 8. At 11 the scouts

reported that they had seen enemies. We all stopped, the men armed themselves and mounting their fleetest horses went in pursuit. They returned in a few hours, as what the scouts had taken for enemies were a party of their own people who were gone hunting and not been seen. We proceeded and encamped at one on the side of a small River running West and emptying in the lesser Missouri. It blew a hurricane in the evening. Course south about four leagues.

Sunday 7th. At ten o'clock we rose the Camp and at 3 we saw Buffaloes, harangues were made to the Young Men to go and hunt while a party of these latter who are a guard of soldiers paraded before the body of the people preventing any one from setting off till all the huntsmen were gone; after which we set off again and encamped at the foot of a hill, which we had in sight since the day before yesterday. Course S. West about 18 miles.

Monday 8th. Before we rose the camp a general muster of all the guns in the Camp was taken and the number found to be 204 exclusive of ours. Our huntsmen had brought in a plenty of Buffaloes. We marched this day by a south Course about 7 miles.

Tuesday 9th. From the Big Belly village to the place I lost my spy glass the country was very hilly, from that to this place it was much more upon a level though not entirely so. The plains produce plenty of fine grass. In the course of this days journey we passed between two big hills on the top of which as far as the eye could discern Buffalo were seen in amazing number, we camped on the side of a small Creek running West into the lesser Missouri. The Indian hunted and killed many Buffaloes. Course South S. West & S.W. 9 miles. It blew a hurricane at night without rain. Many lodges were thrown down although well tied and picketed.

Wednesday 10th. We remained the greatest part of the day at this place to dry the meat and bury a woman that died here, and sat of at 4 in the afternoon and pitched the tents by a small creek running west after having pursued our road S.W. by West for 5 miles. The Country was hilly but producing plenty of grass and numberless flowers of different Kinds.

Thursday 11th. We passed through a range of hills of about 3 miles broad, on the top of every one was a heap of stones appearing as if burnt, part of the rocks had fallen down the hills. Leaving those hills we had a pretty level plain till we reach a small brook running N. West where we encamped, the lesser Missouri in Sight at about 4 miles on our right, by a course south west, we had advanced about 12 miles. On our way we saw a few Rattle Snakes but none of them very large; they are the first I saw in the Indian countries and none are to be found more northwards.

Fryday 12th. This day we passed through a pleasant plain and pitched the tents by a small brook 5 miles S.W. of our last encampment.

Saturday 13th. We set of at 9 through hilly and barren Country, in crossing two small Creeks, and arrived at 12 on the bank of lesser Missouri. We crossed it and encamped on its border about 2 miles higher. The River is here about 3/4 of an acre in breadth from bank to bank but there is very little water running, the bed appearing dry in many places and is of sand and gravel. A few liards scattered thinly along its banks. The rugged and barren aspect of the hills which are composed of Whitish Clay looking like rocks at a distance. The ground on which [we] stood [was covered] with a prickly heap of..... so very thick that one does not know where to set ones feet, no grass at all. The whole forms a prospect far from pleasing. Our Course was for 12 miles S.S.W. A few days ago a child being sick I gave him a few drops of Turlington balsam which eased him immediately of his cholic. This cure gave me such a reputation of being a great physician that I am plagered to cure every distemper in the camp. A man came today to me desiring me to act the man mid wife

to his wife.

Sunday 14th. We remained the whole day here the Indians being busy with drying meat. I went a little distance up the River and saw a little Beaver work.

Monday 15th. We crossed the river at three different times in the Course of this days journey when it happened to intersect the line of our course which was S.S.W. and encamped on its borders about 14 miles higher up. It had the same appearance in every respect as when we arrived at it. The Indians Killed a few Beavers of which I got two dressed by my men to show them how to do it.

Tuesday 16th. We remained here the whole day. The Indians tried to dance the Bull dance in imitation of the B. Belly's but did it very ill.

Wednesday 17th. It rained in the morning, at 11 before noon the weather clearing up, we sat of following the river in a Course S.S. West about 9 miles. The bed and Banks in many places were solid Rock; there is very little water running. There is a few trees in the decline of the hill here.

Thursday 18th. I went hunting with the Chief while the camp flitted, we killed one cow and returned to the river at 3 in the after noon where we found the people encamped 15 miles S.W. of our last encampment. The banks and bed of the river are rocks; the plains are a continual series of high rocky hills whose sides and tops are partly covered with the red pine and other wood such as poplar, Elm, Ash, and a kind of Maple.

Fryday 19th. We [stopped] at an hour before sun set and encamped 5 miles higher up the river.

Saturday 20th. Some one being sick we did not stir. Here the point of the River was pretty large and well stocked with wood, viz. Liard, Ash and a kind of shrub resembling the prickly Ash which bears a fruit of the size of a small pea, red and of a sourish taste but not disagreeable.

Sunday 21st. The Camp rose at 8 in the morning and proceeded along the River for about 15 miles in a S.S. Westerly direction; the banks and bed of the river are of soil but muddy. I saw a beaver lying dead on the banks, here the river is fordable, without wetting ones feet in stepping over upon loose large stones, as we trotted almost the whole of this day's journey the unusual jolting of the Packages on the horses back occasioned the breaking of my thermometre. From this place we left the lesser Missouri on our left, its Course above this appears to be South to north, and stopping in the plains we encamped at one in the after noon on the side of a little river running into the lesser Missouri our course S.W. The Banks of L.M. [Lesser Missouri] in sight. We crossed two small Creeks in which there was no running water but many deep ponds in which there are Beavers. We saw this day plenty of Buffaloes.

We remained at this place 2 days. I have been very sick since some time, and so weak that it was difficult I could keep my saddle, the Indians on that occasion did not flit. I traded a few Beavers.

Thursday 25th. We sat of this morning at 10 following the little Creek on which we were encamped for 4 miles by a S.W. course and encamped. Wind S. E.

Fryday 26th. We passed through a Range of hills whose tops and sides are covered with pine, and at the foot are many small creeks well wooded with Ash and Maple, there are plenty of different kinds of mint here which emit a very odoriferant smell. We crossed three small Creeks running north and N.W. into the Powder River whose bancs we had in sight from the top of those hills. The wind was N.W. & very strong, a hurricane blew at night. The course we have pursued on a very barren soil for 22 Miles was West.

Saturday 27th. We arrived at noon at the Powder River after 6 hours ride by course West by South

Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains  
Francois Antoine Larocque

---

for about 20 miles. The Powder River is here about 3/4 of an acre in breadth, its waters middling deep, but it appears to have risen lately as a quantity of leaves and wood was drifting on it. The points of the river are large with plenty of full grown trees, but no underwood, so that on our arrival we perceived diverse herds of Elk Deers through the woods. There are Beaver dams all along the river. Three of these animals have been felled by our Indians.

When we arrived here the plains on the western side of the river were covered with Buffaloes and the bottoms full of Elk and jumping deers & Bears which last are mostly yellow and very fierce. It is amazing how very barren the ground is between this and the lesser Missouri, nothing can hardly be seen but those Corne de Raquettes. Our horses were nearly starved. There is grass in the woods but none in the plains which by the by might with more propriety be called hills, for though there is very little wood it is impossible to find a level spot of one or two miles in extent except close to the River. The current in that river is very strong and the water so muddy as to be hardly drinkable. The Indians say it is always so, and that is the reason they call it Powder River, from the quantity of drifting fine sand set in motion by the coast wind which blinds people and dirtys the water. There are very large sand shoals along the river for several acres breadth and length, the bed of the river is likewise sand, and its Course North East.

Sunday 28th. We remained here the whole day to let the horses feed, the women were bussily employed in dressing and drying the skins of those animals that were Killed Yesterday. I traded one 3 Beavers and one Bear skin.

Monday 29th. We rose the Camp late in the evening and pitched the tents about 4 miles higher up the river having followed for that short space a course S. W.

Tuesday 30th. Early this morning we set out; the body of the people followed the river for about 17 miles S.W. while I with the Chief and a few others went hunting. We wounded Cabrio, Buffalo, and the large horned animal, but did not Kill any, which made the Chief say that some one had thrown bad medicin on our guns and that if he could Know him he would surely die.

The Country is very hilly about the river, but it does not appear to be so much so towards the North. About two miles above the encampment a range of high hills begins on the west side of the River, and Continues North for about 20 miles, when it appears to finish. The tongu River is close on the other side of it. There is a parting ridge between the two Rivers.

I assended some very high hills on the side of which I found plenty of shells of the Comu amonys Species by some called snake shell, likewise a kind of shining stone lying bare at the surface of the ground having to all appearance been left there by the rain water washing away the surrounding earth, they are of different size and form, of a Clear water Colour and reflect with as much force as a looking glass of its size. It is certainly those stones that have given the name of shining to that Mountain. The hills are high, rugged and barren mostly Rocks with beds of loose red gravel on their tops or near it which being washed down by the rain water give the hills a redish appearance. On many hills a heape of calomid stone among which some time I find pumice stone.

When we left the encampment this morning we were stopped by a party of their soldiers who would not allow us to proceed, as they intended to have a general hunt, for fear that we should rise the Buffaloes, but upon promise being made by the Chief whom I accompanied that he would not hunt in the way of the Camp, and partly on my account we were suffered to go on. We were however under the necessity of gliding away unperceived to prevent Jealousy.

Wednesday 31st. We sat out at 7 in the morning and proceeded up the River in a Southern course

for about 13 miles and encamped about mid day; the weather being very warm and the wind from the south. I traded a few Beaver skins.

Thursday August 1st. Rain and thunder storm prevented our stirring this day. The water rose about 6 inches in the river and is as thick as mud. The current very swift.

Fryday 2nd. Last night some children playing at some distance from the Camp on the river, were fired at. The Camp was alarmed and watchers were set for the night but nothing appeared. It rained hard during most part of the night. We rose the Camp at one in the afternoon following the river for about 9 miles in a south course. The hills of the River are at a less distance from one another than they were here tofore. The bottoms or points of the river are not so large nor so well wooded and the grass entirely eat up by the Buffaloes and Elk.

Saturday 3rd. We sat out at sun rise and encamped at one in the afternoon having pursued a South Course with fare [fair] weather and a south east wind. We followed the River as usually; its bends are very short not exceeding two miles and many not one. The face of the Country indicates our approach to the large Mountains and to the heads of the River. A few jumping [deer] or chevreuils were Killed today. It has been very Cold these few nights.

Sunday 4th. We did not rise the Camp till late in the evening. In the morning we assended the hills of the River and saw the Rocky Mountains not at a very great distance with Spy Glass, its cliffs and hollows could be easily observed with the wood interspersed among the Rocks. We removed our camp about 4 miles higher up the River having pursued a S.E. Course.

Monday 5th. We had a thick fog in the morning, the night was so Cold that one Blanket could not Keep us warm enough to sleep, so that I purchased two Buffaloe Robes. About midday however it is generally very warm. We sat of at 7 and continued our way for about 12 miles by a south course along the River and with a north West wind. We arrived at the forks of the Pine River which are assunder for about one mile, and encamped. The water in this River is clear and good issuing from the Mountains at a short distance from this, and is very cold, while that of the Powder River was so muddy that the Indians were under the necessity of making [holes] in the Beach and drink the water that gathered in them. We left this last mentioned river on our left where we went up the Pine River which is between 20 & 30 yards in breadth and runs over rocks. There is a rapid at every point and very little wood along its banks.

Tuesday 6th. We rose the Camp at 7 and proceeded upwards along the Pine River in a S. Western direction for 12 miles, having the Rocky Mountains ahead and in sight all day. The weather was foggy with a N.W. wind. An Indian shot another mans wife in the breast and wounded her dangerously. Jealousy was the occasion thereof. The Indian after inquire when I intend to depart. They appear to wish me to be off. I have 23 Beaver skins which they think a great deal, and more than we have occasion for. They thought that upon seeing the Rocky Mountains we would immediately depart as they cannot imagine what I intend to see in them. It is hard to make them understand by signs only, especially in this case for they do not want to understand.

Wednesday 7th. We sat of at 6 and pitched the tents at 9 miles higher up the River having followed a South course. The Indians hunted and killed many Buffaloes and one cow came and took refuge among the horses where she were killed. At 5 in the evening we again flitted and encamped 5 miles higher up having pursued the same course as in the morning with a head wind.

Thursday 8th. We marched 24 miles in a south West course along the Pine River. Many small Branches fall in it at a little distance from one another. A man and horse were wounded by a Bear

but not dangerously. There is much fruit here about and many Bears. Wind S.E. We are here encamped at the foot of the mountain.

Fryday 9th. The people went out hunting and returned with many skins to be dressed for tents. The weather is Cloudy and the wind south. Rapids succeed each other in the River here very fast and the current between is very swift running on a bed of Rocks.

Saturday 10th. Some Indians arrived from hunting and brought 9 Beavers which I traded for Beads. Weather the same as yesterday.

Sunday 11th. They are undetermined in what course to proceed from this place they have sent a party of young men along the Mountains Westerly and are to wait here until they return. They often enquire with anxious expectation of our departure when I intend to leave them and to day they were more troublesome than usual. What I have seen of their lands hitherto has not given me the satisfaction I look for [in] Beavers. I told them that I would remain with them 20 or 30 days more. That I wished very much to see the River aux Roches Jaunes and the place they usually inhabit, otherwise that I would be unable to return and bring them their wants. They saw it was true, but to remove the objection of my not knowing their lands a few of them assembled and draughted on a dressed skin I believe a very good map of their Country and they showed me the place where at different season they were to be found. The only reason I think they have in wishing my departure, is their haste to get what goods I still have. Besides we not a little embarrass the people in whose tent we live. They pretend to be fond of us, treat us well and say they will shed tears when we leave them.

Monday 12th. In the evening the young men that had been sent to reconnoitre returned and reported that there was plenty of Buffaloes & fruit on the tongue and small horn River, that they had seen a lately left encampment of their people who had not been at the Missouri (about 9 lodges) that they were gone across the Mountains that they had seen no appearance of their being enemies on that side. A Council ensued, and harangues were made to raise the Camp in the morning and proceed along to the River aux Roches Jaunes.

Tuesday 13th. We sat of at half after 8 in the morning following a West Course along the Mountain, through Creeks and hills such as I never saw before, it being impossible to climb these hills with Loaded Horses we were obliged to go round them about the middle of their hight from whence we were in imminent danger of rolling down being so steep that one side of the horses load rubbed against the side of the hill. One false step of the horse would certainly have been fatal to himself and rider. The wind was S. E. in the morning and north W. in the evening and the weather sultry. We encamped at 12 on the banks of a small branch of the Tongue River, whose water was very clear and cold as Ice. The people Killed two Bears to day. I traded a few Bears. I saw a few crows today which are the only birds I have seen since I left the Missouri except a few wood Peckers.

Wednesday 14th. It rained part of the morning, as soon as the rain ceased we sat off when it began again and continued raining until we reached another branch of the Tongue River, where we encamped. We went close along the mountain all the way for about 10 miles by a West Course crossing many small Creeks all running into the Tongue River, most of them were dry but thickly wooded with the Saule blanc; there was no Beaver work I saw a few Cranes.

Thursday 15th. Fine clear weather. I traded 8 Beavers and purchased a horse for which I paid a gun 200 balls, one flanel Robe, one shirt, one half axe, one battle do, one bow iron, one comb, one

Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains

Francois Antoine Larocque

---

But Knife, one small do, 2 Wampoon hair pipes, one....., 2 axes, one Wampoon shell, 40 B. Blue Beads, 2 Mass Barley Corn do and one fm W.S. Red Stroud. We left this place at 11 before noon and proceeded 9 miles in a North West Course and encamped on another branch of the Tongue River. Wind N.W. fine warm weather. The Indians Killed Buffaloes and a few Bears, the latter they hunt for pleasure only as they do not eat the flesh but in case of absolute necessity. Perhaps the whole nation is employed about a bear, whom they have caused to take refuge in a thicket, there they plague him a long while and then Kill him, he is seldom stript of his skin.

Fryday 16th. I purchased a saddle and [bridle?] for the horse I purchased yesterday for which I paid 40 shots Powder Being short of Balls. I gave 20 pounds Powder only for a Beaver 1 Knife, I sell 2 Beavers 10 String Blue Beads, 1 Beaver & so on. We proceeded along the mountain as usual by a N.W. Course about 15 miles, crossed 3 small Creeks emptying in the Tongue River where we arrived at one in the afternoon, we forded it and encamped on the north side, N. & N.E. is a small Mountain lying between this river and the large Horn River, they call it the Wolf Teeth. (Se la is in the Rocky Mountain language and Seja in the Big Belly's.) Fine weather wind N.W.

Saturday 17th. The Indians having hunted yesterday we did not rise the Camp but remained here all day. There were many Bears here about, who are attracted by the quantity of Choak Cherries and other fruit there is here. The Woods along the Rivers are as thickly covered with Bears Dung as a Barn door is of that of the Cattle, large Cherry trees are broken down by them in Great number. The Indians Kill one or two almost every day. The Tongue River here is small being only about 20 feet broad with two feet water in the deepest part of the rapids. It receives many additional small stream in its way to the River Roches Jaunes. The points of the River are pretty large and well stocked with wood viz.... & maple.

Sunday 18th. At 7 o'clock we left our encampment and proceeded Northward; at noon we stopped on a branch of the small Horn River & the greatest part of the Indians went on to the small Horn River to hunt. At half past two in the afternoon we sat off again and crossing the River we encamped on its Borders where we found the hunting party with their horses loaded with fresh meat. We travelled about 15 miles this day and are farther from the mountain than yesterday though still close to it.

Monday 19th. Since we are close to the mountain many women have deserted with their lovers to their fine tents that are across the mountain, there are no Cattle in the mountain nor on the other side, so that they are loth to go that way, while the desertion of their wives strongly Call them there. Harangues were twice made to rise the Camp, and counter order were given before the tents were thrown down. The reason of this is that the wife of the Spotted Crow who regulates our mo[ve]ments has deserted, he is for going one way while the Chief of the other bands are for following our old course. Horses have been Killed and women wounded since I am with them on the score of jealousy. Today a snake Indian shot his wife dead but it seems not without reason for it is said it was the third time he found her and the Gallant together. The Small Horn river runs East from the Mountain to this place here it makes a bend N by East and passing round of the wolf teeth it falls into the large Horn river. The bed of the River here is Rocks a continual rapid, the water clear and cold as Ice, the ground barren and the banks of the river thinly wooded with same Kind of wood as heretofore. I traded 6 Beavers.

Tuesday 20th. We flitted and encamped 3 miles higher up the River on a beautiful spot where there was plenty of fine grass for the horses, our Course West. I traded 3 Beavers.

---

Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains

Francois Antoine Larocque

---

Wednesday 21st. I made a present of a few articles to the Chief and a few other Considered Persons. We remained here all day. There is plenty of ash here. There were very few persons in the Camp that were not employed in making themselves horse whip handles with that wood; it was with that design they came here, as that wood is seldom found elsewhere. I saw some Beavers work on that River.

Thursday 22nd. Water froze the thickness of paper last night in horsetracks. I was called to a Council in the Chiefs Brothers tent Lodge, where the Spotted Crow resigned his employment of regulating our marches, an other old man took the office upon himself and told me that he intended to pursue their old course to the River aux Roches Jaune. I traded 8 Beavers with the Snake Indians in whose possession I saw a Kettle or Pot hewn out of a solid stone, it was about 11/ inch thick & contained about 6 or 8 quarts; it had been made with no other instrument but a piece of Iron.

Fryday 23rd. We rose the Camp at 11 in the forenoon and followed a N.E. Course for one mile N.W. 6 de, & encamped on a branch of the .... River, where there is a Beaver Dam and other work occasionally found. I traded -- 4 Beavers. Wind S.E. the only roads practicable to Cross the mountain are at the heads of this and the Tongue River.

Saturday 24th. This morning we were allarmed by the report that three Indians had been seen on the first hill of the mountain and that three Buffaloes were in motion and that two shots had been heard towards the large Horn River. Thirty men saddled their horses and immediately went off to see what was the matter while all the other Kept in readiness to follow if necessary. In a few hours some came back and told us that they had seen 35 on foot walking on the banks of one of the branches of the Large Horn River. In less time than the Courier Could well tell his news no one remained in the Camp, but a few old men and women, all the rest scampered off in pursuit. I went along with them we did not all Set off together nor could we all Keep together as some horses were slower than others but the foremost stopped galloping on a hill, and continued on with a small trot as people came up. They did the dance when the Chief arrived, he and his band or part of it galloped twice before the main body of the people who still continued their trot intersecting the line of their course while one of his friends I suppose his aide de Camp harangued. They were all dressed in their best Cloths. Many of them were followed by their wives who carried their arms, and who were to deliver them at the time of Battle. There were likewise many children, but who could Keep their saddles. Ahead of us were some young men on different hills making signs with their Robes which way we were to go. As soon as all the Chiefs were come up and had made their harangue every one set off the way he liked best and pursued according to his own judgement. The Country is very hilly and full of large Creeks whose banks are Rocks so that the pursued had the advantage of being able to get into places where it was impossible to go with horses & hide themselves. All escaped but two of the foremost who being scouts of the party had advanced nearer to us than the others and had not discovered us, they were surrounded after a long race but Killed and scalped in a twinkling. When I arrived at the dead bodies they had taken but his scalp and the fingers of his right hand with which the outor was off. The[y] Borrowed my hanger with which the[y] cut off his left hand and returned it [the knife] to me bloody as a mark of honour and desired me to..... at him. Men women and children were thronging to see the dead Bodies and taste the Blood. Everyone was desirous of stabbing the bodies to show what he would have done had he met them alive and insulted & frotted at them in the worst language they

---

could give. In a short time the remains of a human body was hardly distinguishable. Every young man had a piece of flesh tied to his gun or lance with which he rode off to the Camp singing and exultingly showing it to every young woman in his way, some women had whole limb dangling from their saddles. The sight made me Shudder with horror at such Cruelties and I returned home in quite [a] different frame from that in which I left it.

Sunday 25th. The Scalp dance was danced all night and the scalps carried in procession through the day.

Monday 26th. It rained in the morning as it did yesterday, at noon the Weather Clearing we sat off Course S.W. wind S.E. fine weather. We encamped in the mountain 9 miles distant from our last encampment by a small Creek in which there was little running water, but an amazing number of Beaver Dams. I counted 6 in about 2 points of the River but most of them appeared to be old Dams. The young men paraded all day with the scalps tied to their horses bridles sing[ing] and keeping time with the Drum and Sheskequois or Rattle.

Tuesday 27th. We remained here all day, 10 Young Men were sent to observe the motions of those who were routed lately, they are afraid of being attacked having seen the road of a numerous body of people on the large Horn River. In the evening news came that the Buffaloes were in motion on the Large Horn River, and harangues were made to guard the Camp.

Wednesday 28th. Two hours before day light, all the Indians horses were saddled at their doors, they put all their young children on horse back & tied to the saddles, then they slept the remainder of the night. They likewise loaded some horses with the most valuable part of their property while they in the expectation of being attacked sat in the tents their arms ready & their horses saddled at the door. At broad day light nothing appearing they took in their children and unloaded their horses. At 9 in the morning 4 young men arrived and reported that they had seen nothing of the enemy, that there were party Buffaloes between the Large Horn and the River aux Roches Jaunes.

Thursday 29th. We rose the Camp this morning and marched a Course West by North. The Indians hunted and saw Strange Indians. There was a Continual harangue by different Chiefs the whole night which with the singing and dancing of the scalp prevented any Sleep being had. We pitched the tents on a small creek running into the large Horn River distant about 20 miles from our last encampment.

Fryday 30th. We left the place and encamped on the Large Horn River close to the foot of the mountain and of very high Rocks. Course West about 5 miles.

Saturday 31st. We remained at this place the whole day. Some young one who had been en découverte returned from a deserted camp of about 30 Lodges where they found Chief Coats N.B. straud Wampoon shells and other articles, which it seems had been left by the people inhabiting those tents upon some panic. This is what these Indians say but it is my opinion that those goods are rather an offering to the supreme being which those Indians often make and leave in tree well wrapt up, and which our young men found. This River is broad deep and clear water strong courrent, bed stone and gravel about 1/2 mile above this encampment, the River runs between 2 big Rocks & loses 2/3 of its breadth but gains proportionally in depth. There is no beach at the foot of the Rocks, they are but perpendicular down to the water. It is aweful to behold and makes one giddy to look down upon the river from the top of those Rocks. The River appears quite narrow and runs with great rapidity immediately under our feet, so that I did not dare to look down but

---

when I could find a stone behind which I could keep & looking over it to see the foaming water without danger of falling in. This river does not take its rise in this mountain, it passes through the mountains and takes its water in the next range. There is a fall in this River 30 or 40 miles above this where presides a Manitou or Devil. These Indians say it is a Man Wolf who lives in the fall and rises out of it to devour any person or beast that go to near. They say it is impossible to Kill him for he is ball proof. I measured a Ram's horn which I found when walking along the River, it was 5 spans in length and was very weighty, it seems to me that the animal who carried it died of old age for the small end of the horn was much worn and broke into small splinters, which was not the case in any of the animals I saw Killed, nor were their horns of that size neither.

The Mountain is here a solid Rock in most places bare and naked, in other places Cloathed with a few Red Pine. The sides of some Coulé are as smooth and perpendicular as any wall, and of an amazing hight; and in places there are holes in those perpendicular Rocks resembling much those niches in which statues are placed. Others like church doors & vaults, the tout ensemble is grand and striking. Beautiful prospects are to be had from some parts of those Rocks, but the higher places are inaccessible. The Large Horn River is seen winding through a level plain of about 3 miles breadth for a great distance almost to its conflux with the River aux Roches Jaunes.

Sunday, September 1st. We Left this place and pitched our tents about 3 miles lower down where we remained two days, while we were here a Snake Indian arrived, he had been absent since the Spring and had seen part of his nation who traded with the Spaniards, he brought a Spanish B[r]idle and Battle ax, a large thick blanket, striped white and black and a few other articles, such as Beads, etc. A Missouri Big Belly fished here and caught 14 moyens Cat fish in a very short time. We had much dancing at this place still for the scalps. There are Islands in the River here but most of them are heaps of sand. The Wooded points of the River do not join the open plain is seen between them but there is plenty of wood in some places. The leaves beg[in] to fall.

Wednesday 4th. We left the encampment and proceeded N.W. by North about 15 miles and pitched the tents on a Small Creek running into the Large Horn River. Where we left the River we had a level plain for about 4 or 5 miles when the Country became hilly and barren.

Thursday 5th. We Kept the same Course as yesterday and encamped on a most small Creek running as the former about the same nature.

Fryday 6th. We rose the Camp early and at 11 before noon arrived at Mampoia or Shot stone River, from whence the Indians went out to hunt, there being plenty of Buffaloes on the road to this place, the mountains were as follows. The mountain along which we travelled from the Pine River lay S. E. another called Amanchabé Clije south, the Boa [or Bod] Mountain S.W. but appeared faintly on account of a thick fog that covered it.

Saturday 7th. We remained all day here, the Indian women being very bussy to dry tongues and the best part of the meat and dressing skins for a great feast they are preparing while their war exploits are recapitulated.

Sunday 8th. I sat off early this morning with two Indians to visit the River aux Roches Jaunes and the adjacent part. I intended to return from this place as the Indians will take a very round about road to go there. We were not half ways, when we fell in with Buffaloes, my guides were so bent upon hunting that they did not guide me where I wanted, and we returned at night to the tents with meat, but with rain as it rained from noon till night. The Indians showed me a mountain lying North West which they told me was in direct line to the Missouri falls and not far from it.

We passed through two new raised Camps of strange Indians at the door of the largest tent were 7 heaps of sticks each containing 10 sticks denoting the number of lodges in the Camp, to have been 70.

Monday 9th. I purchased a horse we had information that four strangers had been seen who likewise saw our people & hid themselves. At night a young man arrived who saw and conversed (I cannot say he spoke for the whole conversation was carried on by signs they not understanding one another language) with a fort de prairie Big Belly, they wanted to bring each other to their respective Camps but both were afraid and neither of them dared to go to the other Camp. The B.B. are encamped on the large Horn River behind the mountain and are come on peaceable terms they are 275 or 300 Lodges.

Tuesday 10th. We rose the Camp at 9 and took a N. West Course to the River aux Roches Jaunes where we arrived at two in the afternoon distant 16 miles we forded into a large Island in which we encamped. This is a fine large River in which there is a strong current, but the Indians say there are no falls. Fordable places are not easily found although I believe the water to be at its lowest. The bottoms are large and well wooded.

Wednesday 11th. 5 Big Bellies arrived and came into our lodge being the Chief Lodge. They brought words of peace from their nation and say they Come to trade horses. They were well received by the Indians and presents of different articles were made them. They told me they had traded last winter with Mr. Donald whom they made Known to me a[s] crooked arm. I went round the Island in which we are encamped, it is about 5 miles in circumference and thickly wooded in some places all along the North Side of the Island. The Beaver has cut down about 50 feet of the wood. 9 Lodges of the people that were left in the Spring was joined in they are 15 tents at present, they encamped on the opposite side of the River.

Thursday 12th. I traded six large Beavers from the Snake Indians. We crossed from the Island to the West side of the River & proceeded upward for about 9 miles south West and encamped in a point where they usually make their fall medicine.

Fryday 13th. I bought a Horn Bow & a few Arrows a Saddle & pichimom, part of a tent and a few of those blue Glass Beads they have from the Spaniards, and on which they set such value that a horse is given for 100 grains.

Saturday 14th. Having now full filled the instructions I received from Mr. Chaboillez, which were to examine the lands of the Crow Indians and see if there is Beaver as was reported, and I to invite them to hunt it, I now prepared to depart, I assembled the Chiefs in Council, and after having smoked a few pipes, I informed them that I was setting off, that I was well pleased with them and their behaviour towards me, and that I would return to them next fall. I desired them to kill Beavers and Bears all winter for that I would come and trade with them and bring them their wants. I added many reasons to show them that it was their interest to hunt Beavers, and then proceeded to settle the manners of Knowing one another next fall, and how I am to find them which is as follows. Upon my arrival at the Island if I do not find them I am to go to the Mountain called Amanchabé Chije & then light 4 dift fires on 4 successive days, and they will Come to us (for it is very high and the fire can be seen at a great distance) in number 4 & not more, if more than four come to us we are to act upon the defensive for it will be other Indians. If we light less than 3 fires they will not come to us but think it is enemies. They told me that in winter they were always to be found at a Park by the foot of the Mountain a few miles from this or thereabouts. In the spring

and fall they are upon this River and in summer upon the Tongue and Horses River.

I have 122 Beavers 4 Bears and two otters which I traded not so much for their value (for they are all summer skins) as to show them that I set some value on the Beavers and our property. The presents I made them I thought were sufficient to gain their good will in which I think I succeeded. I never gave them any thing without finding means to let them know it was not for nothing. Had more been given they would have thought that good[s] were so common among us than to set no value upon them, for Indians that have seen few White men will be more thankful for a few articles given them than for great many, as they think that little or no value is attached to what is so liberally given. It was therefore I purchased their Bears and likewise as a proof that there is Beaver in those parts, besides it saved to distribute the good I had into the most deserving hands, that is the less lazy.

We departed about noon 2 Chiefs accompanied us about 8 miles, we stopped and smoked a parting pipe, the[y] embrased us, we shook hands & parted they followed us about one mile, at a distance gradually lessening their steps till we were almost out of sight and Crying or pretending to Cry they then turned their backs and went home. At parting they promised that none of their young men would follow us, they took heaven and earth to witness to attest their sincerity in what they had told us, and that they had opened their ears to my words and would do as I desired them, they made me swear by the same that I would return and that I told them no false words (and certainly I had no intention of breaking my oath nor have I still. If I do not keep them my word it certainly is not my fault).

Our course was N.E. 20 miles, a little before sun set we were overtaken by a storm which forced us into a point of the River where we encamped & passed the night during which our horses were frightened & it was with difficulty we could get them together again. We Kept watch by night. Sunday 15th. We followed a N.E. course and crossed the River Roches Jaunes at 9 and proceeded along the South side, at 10 we crossed Manpoa River at its entrance into River Roches Jaunes, Manpoa or the Shot Storm River is about 10 feet in breadth and with very little water it take its waters in Amanabe Chief at a short distance there is wood along its Banks, especially close to the mountain and Beaver on the east side of this River, close to its discharge in the River Roches Jaunes is a Whitish perpendicular Rock on which is painted with Red earth a battle between three persons on horseback and 3 on foot, at 2 in the afternoon we arrived at a high hill on the side of the river called by the Natives Erpian Macolié where we stopped to refresh our horses & killed one Cow. An hour before sun set we sat of again and encamped after dark making no fire for fear of being discovered by horse thieves or enemies. From Manpoa to this p[l]ace our Course was east. Buffaloes and Elk we found in great plenty. Wind S.W.

Monday 16th. It froze hard last night North, Weather Cloudy N.E. 9 miles and stopped to Cook victuals for the day as we make no fire at night. Elk and Buffaloes in the greatest plenty. It rained till 3 in the afternoon, when weather clearing we sat off and encamped at the Rocks of the large Horn River where we arrived at 8 in the evening.

Tuesday 17th. We crossed the river early in the morning, its points here are large & beautiful well stocked with wood, we passed through a most abominable Country and often despaired of being able to get clear of this place enceting (sic) with Rocks which it was impossible to ascend or to go round so we were obliged often to go back on other road which presented us with the same difficulties, at last we ascended the hill but being on the top did not offer a more pleasing prospect,

we were often obliged to unload the horses and carry baggage ourselves and the horses being light we made chump [jump] over ..... in the Rock and climb precipices, but were near losing then at last at 3 in the afternoon we passed the whole of that bad road and arrived at the Border of Rocks where we could see a fine level country before us but the sun was set before we could find a practicable road to come down to it, which we effected not without unloading the horses and carrying down their loads part of the way, while: the horses slid down upon their rumps about 25 yards. We broke some of our saddles, and arrived in the plain just as the day was setting and encamped further on by the side of the River. It is probable that had we had a guide with us we could have avoided those Rocks, while our ignorance of the Road made us enter into & once engaged among the difficulty was as great to return as to proceed. We Kept no regular course, but went on as we could to all points of the compass in order to extricate ourselves. We Killed one Elk.

Wednesday 18th. This morning we saw the points of wood where we encamped last night 9 miles south of us from which we were parted by the River on one side and the Rocks on the other. I heard the noise of the fall or Great Rapids yesterday, but now at too great a distance from the River and too busily engaged to go and see it. It froze hard last night, we left our encampment later our horses were tired, but after having set out did not stop till after sun set having followed for 22 miles a north East course wind South West. Fine weather plenty Elk and Buffaloes.

Thursday 19th. Cold and Cloudy and followed the same course as last day for 22 miles stopped at 2 in the afternoon. and Killed a stag which was very poor being its Rutting Season. We resumed our course to the N. East for 8 miles and encamped for the night.

Friday 20th. We sat this day early out, assended the hills which are rugged and barren proceeding N.E. for 36 miles. Killed one large . . , fine weather with a N.E. wind.

Saturday 21st. We had a very bad road. Came down to the River to see if we could find a better passage but it was impossible, the River striking the Rock at every bend and assended the hill again and with difficulty made our way over Rocks. After sun set we encamped on the River a la Langue Killed 2 Elks which were very fat. Course East for 18 miles wind N. E.

Sunday 22nd. We crossed the River a la Langue and passed over a plain of about 9 miles in breadth where we came again to Rocks and precipices without number over which we jogged on without stopping till 2 hours before sun set when we encamped on the side of the River close to a Rapid. There is little or no wood here along the River except a few Liards scattered here and there and no grass at all. Course N.E. for about 18 miles. Wind S.W.

Monday 23rd. We had a pretty level plain the whole of the day 12 miles West and 24 miles N. E. At 10 we crossed the Powder River, 121 it has no wood on its bank here and is much shallower than when we crossed it going; its water is the same being still muddy, we encamped at night by a small Creek, having been unable to find grass for our horses throughout the day we were obliged to cut down three Lair[d]s and let the horses feed on the bark.

Tuesday 24th. Set off early, at 9 in the morning we found a place where there was grass where we stopped and let our horses eat. At three in the afternoon we saddled our horses and went on until we encamped after sunset having followed an Eastern Course for 13 miles. Wind S.W. fine weather. It is 4 nights since it froze.

Wednesday 25th. We passed through a very uneven country, but there being no Rocks we had no very great difficulties and encamped at night in a very large point of wood in which there was plenty of Deer -- watched all night having seen something like a man Creeping on the beach.

We had made this day 37 miles by a North Course. The fire is in the plains from which the wind brought columns of thick smoke in abundance so that we could barely see. We shod our horses with raw deer hide as their hoofs are worn out to the flesh with continual walking since last Spring setting their feet on loose stones lames then & sometimes makes them bleed.

Thursday 26th. What we saw last night and mistook for a man was a Bear whose tracks we found this morning. We sat out at 8 and the plain being even we went on at a great rate, at 2 in the afternoon we stopped to Kill a cow, our provision being out, at three we sat off again and met on our road a female bear eating .... we killed her and took the skin it being good. At five we stopped for the night.

Here the River is divided into many channels forming so many islands, the banks and islands are thickly covered with woods, chiefly Liard, oak and maple. Our course was North which followed for 39 miles having the wind ahead, which brought us thick smoke in abundance. We saw this day plenty Elk and Buffaloes.

Fryday 27th. We crossed a plain of about 6 miles and arrived at a bend of the River where it was impossible to continue on the hill so that we were fain to descend to the River and Beach. We bemired 3 of our horses and got them out but with great difficulty. At one we stopped to let the horses eat. The wind was south and we had no appearance of smoke but the weather threatened rain. We encamped at sun set after having followed a North course for 24 miles and found plenty of grass.

Saturday 28th. This whole day we travelled through a level country having fine weather. We made 30 miles in a Northerly direction and passed 3 Indian encampment of this summer, whom I suppose must have been occupied by warriors for the[y] had no tents.

Sunday 29th. We passed through a most beautiful and pleasant country, the river being well wooded. We found here more fine grass than in any place since I left the Missouri and of course the greatest number of Buffaloes. The wind was N.W. and the weather Cloudy and Cold. Having made 30 miles by a N.N.E. Course we encamped on a small creek round which the river passed.

Monday 30th. We assended the hill which produces plenty of fine grass; about 6 miles further we saw the forks of the River aux Roches Jaunes and the Missouri Course N.E. 27 miles and descended to the River (the Missouri) having but a bend. We had followed the River for 7 miles when we heard the report of a gun twice, and the voice of a woman as crying. We stopped and sent Morrison en decouverté and I and Souci remained to watch the horses and property. Morrison returned in about 2 hours and reported that what we had taken for a Woman's voice was that of a young Cub, and as to the gun we supposed it proceeded from trees thrown down by the wind, as it blew very hard, and the Buffaloes, Bears and Elk were very quiet in the wood and plain, so that there was no appearance of being any human Creature there about. We went on & assended the hills to cut a large bend of the River following an east course for 11 miles and encamped in a large point of Elm trees for the night. The Wind was North West and very strong tearing down trees by their roots every moment.

Tuesday October 1st. Weather Cloudy raining now and then, Wind N.W. very cold Course North 12 miles. Passing through a Coulé yesterday I found a lodge made in the form of those of the Mandans & Big Bellys (I suppose made by them) surrounded by a small Fort. The Lodge appears to have been made 3 or 4 years ago but was inhabited last winter. Outside of the fort was a Kind of Stable in which the[y] kept their horses. There was plenty of Buffaloes heads in the Fort some of

them painted red.

Wednesday 2nd. Strong N.W. wind Cold and Cloudy-Course N.E. 26 miles Killed a Cow – Country even plenty of grass.

Thursday 3rd. Set off at 7 through a very hilly and bad country N.E. 20 miles east 15 and encamped on the River it rained part of the day Wind north West very Cold.

Fryday 4th. It rained and was bad weather all night, at break of the day it began to snow and continued snowing very hard till 2 in the afternoon. Strong N.W. wind. We sought our horses all day without being able to find them till after sun set; the bad weather having drawn them in the woods.

Saturday 5th. Sat off early, fine weather Course S.E. by E. 26 miles plenty of Buffaloes on both sides of the River. Killed Cow.

Sunday 6th. All the small Creeks and Ponds were frozen over this morning Course S. E. by S. 20 miles Sout[h] – passed through a thick wood of about 4 miles.

Monday 7th. East 2 miles south 11 we arrived at the lesser Missory which we crossed S.E. 3 miles saw many Bears and Skunks.

Tuesday 8th. Assended the hills, Plains even 39 miles S.S.E. fine warm weather wind S.W.

Wednesday 9th. Proceeded on the hills through a fine Country course E. by S. 12 miles. South 2 miles and arrived at the Big Bellys who were encamped about 3 miles above their village. I found here a letter of Mr. Charles McKenzie to me.

Thursday 10th. I remained here all day to refresh the horses before I proceed to the Assinibois River. Among other news the Indians tell me that there are 14 American Crafts below the [villages?] who are ascending to this place. The Sioux have Killed 8 White men last spring upon St. Peters River & 3 Big Bellys here.

Fryday 11th. I intended crossing over today but was prevented by the strength of the wind which blew all day with amazing violence from the North West. I got a few pair of shoes made and Corn pounded for provision, news came that the Sioux were seen encamped at a short distance below. Expecting to be attacked they [the Big Bellies] were under arms all night.

Saturday 12th. About noon the weather being calm & warm we crossed the River; the horses swam the whole bredth of the River & were nearly spent. We met with 3 Assiniboines and their wives on the North side of the River who were going to the Big Bellys to trade. We went slowly on till sun set when we encamped on the side of a small lake in the Plains which are burning to the West. Course North.

Sunday 13th. Fine weather, wind N.W. plenty of ..... Buffaloes just arriving in the plain. Few being on all sides. The Buffaloes were in motion so that we could not get near enough to get a shot at them, & our horses so tired & fatigued that I did not chuse to run them. We crossed the fire at sun set and encamped by the side of a small lake whose borders had escaped the general Conflagration.

Monday 14th. We watched our horses all that night for fear of Assiniboines, of whom we had seen the tracks, in the evening; sat off before sun rise and arrived at 10 in the forenoon at the River la Sourie where we stopped for the remainder of the day. The grass on either side of the river here is not burnt but the fire appears on both sides at a distance, West and north. Soon in the evening the Buffaloes were in motion on the North side of the River which made us fear for our horses.

Journal of a Voyage to the Rocky Mountains

Francois Antoine Larocque

---

Tuesday 15th. After dark last night we left our encampment and mar[ched] two and a half hours by star light, when Clouds gathering so as to obscure our sight of the stars and of course being unable to regulate our course we stopped in a Creek and there passed the night being free of anxiety.

In the morning we proceeded weather Cold and Cloudy wind N. W. We stopped for the Night on the deep River, which does not draw the name of a Riper, being a hallow .... in the plain in which there are small deep ponds communicating with each other in the spring and rainy seasons only, nor is there a single twig to be found about. At sun set it began to rain and continued so all night. We covered the property with part of a tent we had, and we passed the whole night Shivering by a small fire made of Cowdung (which we had taken care to gather before the rain began) with the assistance of our saddle on our back, by the way of Cloaks.

Wednesday 16th. It snowed rained and hailed the whole day. Wind N.W. and amazing strong. We arrived after dark at the woods of one of the Elk Head Rivers, wet to the skin and quite benumbed with Cold.

Thursday 17th. Weather Cloudy and wind N.W. and very Cold so we were fain to stop, make a fire and warm ourselves, especially as we are not over and above well dressed to Keep off the Cold. We wrapt ourselves in Buffaloe Robes and proceeded to the Grand Coulé and encamped on the very same spot where we had the quarrel last spring with the Assiniboine.

Fryday 18th. In the morning we met with a few Assiniboines coming from the Fort, we stopped and smoked a pipe with them. They told us that Mount a la Bosse [fort] had been evacuated and that Mr. Falcon was building a house to winter in, about half ways between that and R. qu'il appelle Fort. We arrived at Mount a la Bosse Fort, where I found Mr. Charles McKenzie and 3 men taking care of the remaining property.

I remained here one day and then went to see Mr. Falcon at the Grand Bois about 15 miles above this, returned the next day and then sat out for River la Sourie Fort where I arrived the 22 October.

So ends my journal of my Journey to the Rocky Mountains.

Bibliographical Information

This work was originally published as:

- Larpenteur, Charles. Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri. Coues, Elliott, ed. 1898, Francis P. Harper, New York

Subsequent printings include:

- 1933, Lakeside Press, R.R. Donnelly. Edited by Milo Milton Quaife.
- 1962, Ross & Haines, Minneapolis.
- 1989, Bison Books, Lincoln and London.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur,  
1833-1872

Contents

Chapter 1

(1807—33)

MY PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE

In order to inspire the reader with confidence in the veracity of my writing — for it must be borne in mind that I write this book for true and faithful information of the public — I thought it would be well to give him an introduction to myself, before entering on the journey.

I was born in France, in the year 1807, five miles from Fontainebleau, on the border of the beautiful Seine, 45 miles from Paris. My father, who was neither rich nor poor, but a great Bonapartist, left France for America immediately after the battle of Waterloo, thinking that the American government would make some attempt to get Napoleon off the island of St. Helena; but after conversing with several individuals, and particularly with Commodore Porter, he found that the government would countenance no such attempt. So the project was abandoned — I say the project, for it had been started by the many French officers who were at the time in Philadelphia. Louis XVIII having issued a pardon, most of them returned to France. My father returned after an absence of one year, during which he found the American government and the country to suit him. So he sold all his property and left France in 1818, with a family of four children—three boys and one daughter, I being the youngest son. In his travels in America he had chosen Baltimore as his future residence. Having landed at New York we came to Baltimore, where he purchased a small farm of 60 acres, five miles from the city. This farm belonged to some French who had been forced to emigrate by the massacre of St. Domingo, and was established by Monsieur La Bié Du Bourgh De Berg; it was well supplied with fruits, but the soil was poor and stony, and this lad got sick of it. Hearing much of the fine rich soil of Missouri, I determined to try my luck in the Far West — for at that time it was considered quite a journey to St. Louis.

So at the age of twenty-one I determined to leave home, and started with a gentleman by the name of J. W. Johnson, who had been a sutler at Prairie du Chien, and had a large number of negroes whom he was taking to Missouri. I assisted him as far as Wheeling, where he took a steamer, and I went across country on horseback alone.

That is 43 years ago. I had a fine trip of 22 days. I remained two years about St. Louis in the capacity of overseer for Major Benjamin O'Fallon, a retired Indian agent, with whom I had a great deal to talk about Indians and Indian countries, which finally induced me to try the wilderness.

My first trip was up the Mississippi to Des Moines Rapids, the year previous to the Black Hawk War of 1832. At this time there were two stores at Keokuk — not yet called by that name; one of them belonged to an individual named Stillwell, and the other to Mr. Davenport, who was afterward murdered on Rock Island. I came up to the place in a small steamer called the Red Rover, commanded by Capt. Throckmorton, who is still alive and has made many trips up this river — as fine a gentleman as I ever knew. On the way up I became acquainted with Mr. Blondo, interpreter for the Sac and Fox Indians. He took a great fancy to me, and nothing would do but I must go with him to his farm, seven miles up the rapids, and remain there until the boat got over the rapids, which it was supposed would take a long time, as the river was very low. I consented, got a horse caloh [calesh], and we started. The improvements consisted of a comfortable log cabin,

and Blondo was indeed well fixed for the country at the time. After some little time he took me into the village and introduced me to several of the leading men, of whom a great many were drunk, and toward evening he got so drunk himself that he frequently asked me if I did not want to "smell powder," but as I never felt like smelling powder as he proposed, I declined, not knowing why he used the expression. After the spree the old gentleman was very kind, took me all over the half-breed reservation — as fine country as I ever saw — and finally remarked that he would give me all the land I wanted if I should happen to make a match with his niece, Louise Dauphin. That was said after I had given up the idea of going on to Prairie du Chien, where I was bound; but, thinking myself too young, I declined all overtures, although I confess that I came very near accepting the offer, for Louise was one of the handsomest girls I ever saw — it cost me many long sighs to leave her, and more afterward.

After two months' residence at the rapids I returned to St. Louis, with full determination to see more of the wild Indians. General Ashley, who was then carrying on great beaver trapping in the Rocky Mountains, was in the habit of hiring as many as 100 men every spring. They were engaged for 18 months, to return in the fall of the following year with the furs. Not long after I came from the rapids General Ashley's party returned from the mountains with 100 packs of beaver. A pack of beaver is made up of 60 average beavers, supposed to weigh 100 lbs., worth in New York at that time from \$7 to \$8 per lb. It is impossible to describe my feelings at the sight of all that beaver — all those mountain men unloading their mules, in their strange mountain costume — most of their garments of buckskin and buffalo hide, but all so well greased and worn that it took close examination to tell what they were made of. To see the mules rolling and dusting is interesting and shocking at the same time; most of them, having carried their burdens of 200 pounds' weight for about 2,000 miles, return with scarcely any skin on their backs; they are peeled from withers to tail, raw underneath from use of the surcingle, and many are also lame.

William Sublette and Robert Campbell had attended General Ashley on several trips to the mountains — Campbell as clerk, mostly on account of his health; he had previously been clerk for Keith and O'Fallon. Sublette was a farmer near St. Louis, but was more for trapping beaver than farming.

The sight of all this made me determined to take a trip of the same kind. The journey to the Rocky Mountains at that early period was considered very hard, and dangerous on account of the Pawnees and Blackfeet. While trapping that summer William Sublette had been badly wounded in the shoulder in a fight with the Blackfeet. But not all this danger, and the hardships to be endured on such a trip, could prevent me from engaging, in the spring of 1833.

I first provided myself with a good recommendation from Major Benjamin O'Fallon, who was well known for his integrity, and would give no one a recommendation unless he deserved it. Provided with this document I next made application to the American Fur Company, which was then carried on by P. Chouteau and Co. J. J. Astor was still in the company. Mr. J. B. Sarpy was at the time the person who engaged the men. As I was young, well dressed, and not a badlooking lad, but did not seem to be very robust, he remarked that he did not think I would answer for his purposes. I then showed him my document from the major, whom we both knew well, and the remark he made was, "Ah, if you had not deserved this, you would not have gotten it." Then, said he, "you are a Frenchman?" I replied in the affirmative. "You have some education," he continued; "why do you want to engage as a common hand?" I then told him that my desire was to see

---

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

the Rocky mountains, that I was willing to undergo all the hardships of such a voyage, and that I wished to start from this place on horseback. He then referred me to Messrs. Sublette and Campbell, saying that, if I engaged with him, I should have to go as far as Fort Pierre, and there start for the mountains with Mr. Fontenelle. Being anxious for an immediate ride, that proposition did not suit me. I then went to the office of Sublette and Co., which firm had bought out all Gen. Ashley's interests in the mountains, and were also making up an outfit to carry on an opposition to all the trading posts of the American Fur Co. on the Missouri; but I did not know this when I first applied to them. I found Mr. Campbell in his store, and on informing him of my intentions he appeared to have pretty much the same ideas as Mr. Sarpy. I soon discovered this and showed him my recommendation. Being very much of a gentleman, he had the politeness to invite me to his office, and there did all he could to make me abandon the idea of taking such a trip, giving me a full description of what I should be likely to undergo. But nothing could deter me; go I must, and under the promise that he should never hear me grumble, I signed an article of agreement for 18 months, for the sum \$296 and such food as could be procured in the Indian country — that excluded bread, sugar, and coffee.

Now I was thus enlisted, ready for service; but Mr. Campbell was kind to me and always did his best to make my situation pleasant. So he employed me in St. Louis to assist in packing goods for the upper country, and in equipping the men who were getting ready to leave with the mules for Lexington, Mo., to await the arrival of the steamer which was to bring all their goods up to that point, and of the keel boat which was intended to be cordelled or towed as far as Fort Union with goods for the Indian trade. I was kept in the store until all the outfits had left St. Louis.

April 7th, 1833. — Now, my dear reader, my mule is saddled, bridled, and hitched at the store in Washington Avenue, St. Louis, ready to take me to Lexington, to join the party. If you wish to sacrifice all the comforts of civil life, come with me and share what I shall endure but no! you can do better than that. For a small sum wherewith to purchase this book you can know it all without leaving your comfortable room. So good-by to civilization — not for eighteen months, but for forty years.

Myself and an individual by the name of Redman started in advance of Mr. Campbell, who was to join us at St. Charles. After we had been there two days he arrived with a young man named James Lee, and a little Snake Indian called Friday, who had been adopted by Mr. Fitzpatrick, a trapper in the mountains and afterward an Indian agent—for which tribe I do not recollect. I shall not be able to give exact dates, as I did not expect to ever write a book; but I will endeavor to come as near as possible. We were eight days on our journey from St. Charles to Lexington; we fared extremely well, Mr. Campbell having treated us like himself wherever we put up.

On the 18th [or 20th] of April we reached Lexington, where we found our party camped in tents, awaiting our arrival. There the sumptuous fares were all over. Mr. Campbell called me up and said, "Charles, I will now assign you to your mess. I have a mess of nine first-rate old voyageurs — French boys from Cahokia — you will be well off with them." I was not quite a stranger to them, having formed acquaintance with some of them before leaving St. Louis; and I am glad to say that they did all they could for me as long as I remained with them. None of those men had any education, and would frequently remark that if I took care of myself I could get into good business. Our fare during our stay at Lexington was not bad; we drew rations like soldiers, and having yet a little pocket money we could add to our provisions considerably. As to our bedding, it was not

very soft, for we were not allowed to carry more than one pair of 3-pound blankets. A few days after our arrival mules were given to each of us — two to pack and one to ride. Mr. Campbell gave me his favorite mule Simon to ride; old Simon was not so kind that he would not buck me off his back when he took a notion to do so, but on the whole was a good fellow in comparison with many others. My two pack mules were very gentle, but would kick off their packs sometimes. My two loads consisted of beaver traps and a small top pack — a choice load, not likely to turn over like dry goods. As I was a green hand my mates assisted me a great deal, and I was always thankful to them for it.

Chapter 2

(1833)

OVER THE PLAINS TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

On the 12th of May we took our departure for the mountains, and at the same time the keel boat left Lexington Landing, manned by thirty men with the cordell on their shoulders, some of them for the distance of about 1800 miles. Our party consisted of 40 enlisted men; Robert Campbell, boss in charge; Louis Vasquez, an old mountain man; Mr. Johnesse, a clerk in charge of the men, whose place it was to remain in the rear to aid in readjusting the loads, which would get out of order, and to have an eye to the whole cavalcade. As guests, were Captain Stewart from England, on a pleasure trip; old General Harrison's son with the view to break him from drinking whiskey; and Mr. Edmund Christy, of St. Louis.

Now hard times commenced. At first the mules kicking off packs and running away was amusing for those who were all right, but mighty disagreeable for the poor fellows who were out of luck. I had my share of this, but it was not to be compared with the troubles of some of my comrades. This kind of kicking up lasted three or four days in full blast; it finally subsided, yet there would be a runaway almost every day. Our fare consisted of bacon and hard-tack — no sugar nor coffee — for three or four days, after which we each received a small piece of sheep meat, as we had a drove to last us until we got into the buffalo. While the sheep lasted we had but that alone. I then commenced to think that what Mr. Campbell had remarked was on the march. About a week after we had been under march the guard was established, and I was appointed an officer. It became the duty of the officer every third day to post his men around the camp, as soon as all the animals were brought in and picketed in the circle of the camp; those men were to remain quite still at their stations; the officer was to cry out "All's well" every 20 minutes, and the men to cry out the same, so as to find out whether they were asleep or awake. Should any one fail to reply, it was then the duty of the officer to go the rounds to find out the individual, and if caught asleep to take his gun to the boss' tent; then in the morning he would be informed of what he had to undergo, which was a \$5 fine and three walks. The men on guard were not permitted to move from their stations, as it was considered dangerous on account of Indians being known to creep up to camp and watch to shoot someone whom they could discover strolling about; so the officer was more in danger than his men. The usual time of guard was 2 1/2 hours. Having traveled all day, being obliged to remain quiet at one's post was very trying on the sleeping organs, and consequently there would be some poor fellow trudging along on foot almost every day. Our route, as well as I can remember, crossed the Little and Big Blue rivers and continued along the south side of the Platte. I complained, as my messmates did, of the sheep meat, but they consoled me as well as themselves by speaking of the fine feast we soon would have on the buffalo, which they said they

would prefer to all the good messes that could be gotten up in the States. Three days after we had reached the Platte the hunters brought in one evening a load of meat; but the cry of "buffalo meat!" was heard long before they came in, and there was great rejoicement in camp. Sheep meat could be had very cheap that evening, and it was amusing to see the cooks hunting their kettles — some cursing them for being too small, as though it was the poor kettle's fault for its size; but it was not long before they found the kettles were large enough. Then came trouble — there was no wood to be found about camp, and all the fuel we could obtain was the stalks of some large dried weeds, the wild sunflower. Now and then some hungry fellow would bring in a small armful of that kind of fuel, and his first words would be, "Is the kettle boiling?" Upon being answered in the negative a long string of bad expressions would be heard, the mildest being, "Waugh! I believe that damned kettle won't never boil!" Thanks to the virtue of sunflower stalks, however, it boiled at last, and every countenance became pleasant at the thought of tasting that much-talked-of buffalo meat. When it was thought cooked by the old voyageurs, preparations were made to dish it out; but, as we had no pans, a clean place was looked for on the grass, and the contents of the kettle were poured out. All hands seated around the pile hauled out their long butcher knives, opened their little sacks of salt, and then began operations. But it was not long before bad expressions were again used in regard to the highly praised quality of buffalo meat. "I can't chew it" — "Tougher'n whalebone" — "If that's the stuff we've got to live on for eighteen months, God have mercy on us!" For my part I thought about the same, but said nothing; and after I had chewed as long as I could without being able to get it in swallowing condition, I would seize an opportunity to spit it into my hand, and throw it out unseen behind me. My comrades asked me how I liked buffalo meat; I replied I thought it might be some better than it was, and they said, "Never mind, Larpenteur; wait until we get among the fat cows — then you will see the difference." At this time of the year, in the early part of June, the cows are not fit to kill; for they have their young calves, and are very poor. For several days after this sheep meat would have kept up its price, and perhaps would have risen in value; but none was allowed to come into market, what little there was being reserved for the boss' mess. So we had to go it on buffalo alone; but, thank Providence! we soon got into fine fat cows, and fared well. My comrades had told me that we should now get a sickness called by them *le mal de vache*; it is a dysentery caused by eating too much fat meat alone, and some are known to have died of it. So it was not long after we fared so well on the fat of the land that very bad expressions were used in reference to living on meat alone.

I cannot say that anything of great importance took place during our journey to the rendezvous; but nowadays, when we have a great deal to say in the newspapers about traveling from Sioux City to Fort Randall, I think that I may indulge in a few more remarks before I reach Green River. After crossing the South Fork of the Platte, the only curiosity of note is Chimney Rock; that part of the country is too well known at present for me to enter into any description of it. From this point to La Ramie's fort nothing took place worth mentioning except the overthrow of our long friend Marsh. It happened that, in traveling through a country thickly settled with prickly pears, bad luck would have it that a small particle of one accidentally found itself under the tail of his riding mule. The poor animal, finding itself so badly pricked, kicked and bucked at such a rate that our long friend was soon unsaddled, and thrown flat on his back in a large bunch of the prickly pears. Although he was over six feet in his stockings, the length of his limbs was not enough to reach out of the patch; and there he lay, begging for pity's sake of his comrades, as they

passed by, to help him out of his prickly situation. But all he heard in reply to his entreaties was bursts of laughter throughout the company as they passed by, till he was relieved by Mr. Johnesse, who had charge of the rear. I could but pity the poor fellow, but, at the same time, his situation excited mirth. There he lay in a large bunch of prickly pears, stretched out as though he had been crucified. Poor Marsh! I shall remember him as long as I live.

On approaching La Ramie's River we discovered three large buffaloes lying dead close together. The party was ordered to stop and form in double line, while the hunters were gone to find out the cause of those buffaloes' deaths, surmising that they had been killed by Indians. They were gone but a little while before they returned, reporting that the animals had been killed by lightning during a storm we had the previous day; so our fears of Indians were removed, and the party resumed their march. We soon reached the [Laramie] river, where we were ordered to dismount and go to work making a boat out of the hides of the buffalo — quite a new kind of boat to me. But the boat was made, and the party with all the goods were crossed over by sunset. The next day, or the day after, according to custom Mr. Campbell sent Mr. Vasquez with two men to hunt up some trappers, in order to find out where the rendezvous would be, and we awaited their return at this place. They were gone eight days, which time we enjoyed in hunting and feasting on the best of buffalo meat. On the arrival of the trappers and hunters a big drunken spree took place. Our boss, who was a good one, and did not like to be backward in such things, I saw flat on his belly on the green grass, pouring out what he could not hold in. Early next morning everything was right again, and orders were given to catch up and start. Everything moved quite smoothly until we reached the Divide, where my faithful old Simon — I may say the whole trinity — played out on me. About two hours before camping time the pack of one of my mules got so much out of order that I was obliged to stop to lash it again. Mr. Simon, who was in the habit of waiting for me on occasions of that kind, changed his notion and took it into his head to follow the party without me; the well packed one followed suit, and it was all I could do to prevent the third one from leaving before getting his pack on; but as soon as that was done the gentleman took to his heels, and all three got into camp about an hour before me. The want of Simon was the cause of my being obliged to wade a small creek — tributary to the Sweetwater — which was very cold, although it was the 2d of July. I was wet up to my waist, and it was my guard late that night. When I was awakened to go on guard my clothes were still wet, and on that morning, the 3d of July, water froze in our kettles nearly a quarter of an inch thick. I felt quite chilly and was sick for about eight days.

As near as I can remember we reached the rendezvous on Green River on the 8th of July. There were still some of Capt. Bonneville's men in a small stockade. He had come up the year previous [1832]. Thus ended our journey so far.

### Chapter 3

(1833)

### FROM GREEN RIVER RENDEZVOUS BY THE BIG HORN AND THE YELLOWSTONE TO THE MISSOURI

The day after we reached the rendezvous Mr. Campbell, with ten men, started to raise a beaver cache at a place called by the French Trou à Pierre, which means Peter's Hole. As I was sick, Mr. Campbell left me in camp, and placed Mr. Fitzpatrick in charge during his absence, telling the latter to take good care of me, and if the man Redman, whom he left as clerk, did not answer, to

try me. In a short time a tent was rigged up into a kind of saloon, and such drinking, yelling, and shooting as went on I, of course, never had heard before. Mr. Redman, among the rest, finally got so drunk that Mr. Fitzpatrick could do nothing with him, and there was not a sober man to be found in camp but myself. So Mr. Fitzpatrick asked me if I would try my hand at clerking. I remarked that I was willing to do my best, and at it I went. For several days nothing but whisky was sold, at \$5 a pint. There were great quarrels and fights outside, but I must say the men were very civil to me. Mr. Fitzpatrick was delighted, and wondered to me why Mr. Campbell had not mentioned me for clerk in the first instance instead of that drunken Redman. After seven or eight days Mr. Campbell returned with ten packs of beaver. A few days afterward the rumor was circulated in camp that he was about to sell out their interest in the mountains to Fitzpatrick, Edmund Christy, Frap, and Gervais. In the meantime sprees abated, and the trappers commenced to buy their little outfits, consisting of blankets, scarlet shirts, tobacco, and some few trinkets to trade with the Snake Indians, during which transactions I officiated as clerk.

The rumors at last became verified; the sales were effected, but things went on as usual until Mr. Campbell sent for me one morning. On entering his tent I was presented with a good cup of coffee and a large-sized biscuit; this was a great treat, for I believe that it was the first coffee I had drunk since I left Lexington. Then he remarked, "Charles, I suppose you have heard that I sold out our interest in the mountains; but I have reserved all your mess, ten mules, and the cattle (we had four cows and two bulls, intended for the Yellowstone). I have 30 packs of beaver, which Fitz is to assist me with as far as the Big Horn River, where I intend to make skin boats and take my beaver down to the mouth of the Yellowstone. There I expect to meet Sublette, who is to take the packs on to St. Louis. You are one of the ten men whom I have reserved, but Fitz would like much to have you remain with him, and I leave you the choice, to stay with him or come with me." My reply was, "Mr. Campbell, I have engaged to you, you have treated me like a gentleman, and I wish to follow you wherever you go." Upon which he said, "Very well, very well," with a kind smile; "go to your mess." On returning, my messmates, expecting some news, asked me what was the result of my visit to the boss; and, on being informed, a great shout of joy was the answer. The beaver was all packed and pressed ready for the march; so the next day the order came to catch up the animals, receive our packs, and move camp. This was not our final departure; it was merely to get a fresh grazing ground for the mules and horses.

A day or so later we learned that a mad wolf had got into Mr. Fontenelle's camp about five miles from us, and had bitten some of his men and horses. My messmates, who were old hands, had heard of the like before, when men had gone mad. It was very warm, toward the latter end of July; we were in the habit of sleeping in the open air, and never took the trouble to put up the tent, except in bad weather; but when evening came the boys set up the tent. Some of the other messes asked, "What is that for?" The reply was, "Oh, mad wolf come — he bite me." When the time came to retire the pack saddles were brought up to barricade the entrance of our tent; the only one up in camp, excepting that of the boss. After all hands had retired nothing was heard in the camp except, now and then, the cry of "All's well," and some loud snoring, till the sudden cry of, "Oh, I'm bitten!" — then immediately another, and another. Three of our men were bitten that night, all of them in the face. One poor fellow, by the name of George Holmes, was badly bitten on the right ear and face. All hands got up with their guns in pursuit of the animal, but he made his escape. When daylight came men were mounted to go in search, but nothing could be seen of

him. It was then thought that he had gone and was not likely to return, and no further precaution was taken than the night before. But it seems that Mr. Wolf, who was thought far away, had hidden near camp; for about midnight the cry of "mad wolf" was heard again. This time the animal was among the cattle and bit our largest bull, which went mad afterward on the Big Horn, where we made the boats. The wolf could have been shot, but orders were not to shoot in camp, for fear of accidentally killing some one, and so Mr. Wolf again escaped. But we learned afterward that he had been killed by some of Mr. Fontenelle's men.

As well as I can remember it was the first week in August when we were ordered to take final leave for the Horn. Our party was then much reduced; the members of the new company remained on Green River with the intention, according to custom, to set out through the mountains so soon as trapping time commenced. Fitzpatrick came with us, with about 20 of his men; Harrison was with Fitz, intending to winter in the mountains. We turned back on the same route by which we had reached the rendezvous, to Sweetwater, from which we struck off for Wind River. Two days after leaving the Sweetwater we reached Wind River, near the mouth of a small stream called Pappah-ah je, which place Dr. Harrison visited on account of the remarkable oil spring which puts into that stream. Some distance from the river we learned by one of the men, who had gone ahead to find a good encampment, that the Indians, the night previous, had shot a trapper asleep through the ear, that the ball had come out under his jaw, and that he had an arrow-point in his shoulder-blade. Three old trappers had left Green River some time before us, intending to meet us on Wind River. Dr. Harrison extracted the arrow-point and dressed the wound, which he pronounced not dangerous. We remained in camp two days. From this point until we got to the other side of the mountains, game became so scarce that we had to live for two days on such berries and roots as we could find. Two days before reaching the Horn one of our bulls commenced to show some symptoms of hydrophobia by bellowing at a great rate, and pawing the ground. This scared my poor friend Holmes, who was still in our party, but not destined to reach the Yellowstone. He was a young man from New York, well educated, and we became quite attached to each other on our long journey. The poor fellow now and then asked me if I thought he would go mad; although thinking within myself he would, being so badly bitten, I did all I could to make him believe otherwise. When he said to me, "Larpenteur, don't you hear the bull—he is going mad—I am getting scared," I do believe I felt worse than he did, and scarcely knew how to answer him. The bull died two days after we arrived at the Horn, and I learned, some time afterward, from Mr. Fontenelle, that Holmes had gone mad. For some days he could not bear to cross the small streams which they struck from time to time, so that they had to cover him over with a blanket to get him across; and at last they had to leave him with two men until his fit should be over. But the men soon left him and came to camp. Mr. Fontenelle immediately sent back after him; but when they arrived at the place, they found only his clothes, which he had torn off his back. He had run away quite naked, and never was found. This ended my poor friend Holmes.

It was about the 10th of August when we reached the Horn, which is the same as Wind River, only the latter loses its name after crossing the mountains. It is not navigable through the mountains, I am informed, even for a small canoe; and this is the reason why our boats had to be made on this side of the mountain. So, immediately after our arrival, a large party of hunters, with men and mules, started out, with the view of bringing in hides rather than meat; but, as luck would have it, Mr. Vasquez, clerk and old mountain man, killed one of the fattest buffalo I ever saw. Three days

---

after this three boats were completed, and everything in readiness to leave. In the morning I was sent for by Mr. Campbell, who then gave me some instructions I was not expecting. "Now," said he, "Charles, I am going down by the river with my beaver. Mr. Vasquez will go down by land in charge of the party, with the mules and cattle. There will be but five of you. You are going to travel through the most dangerous part of the country. Mr. Vasquez will keep ahead of the party on the strict lookout, and should anything happen to him, I wish you to take charge of the party." My reply was, "Very well, sir," though such instructions, I must confess, made me feel a little nervous. But it did not last; I very soon became quite cheerful, and anxious to be under way. Mr. Campbell started that same day, and we all left early next morning. For the four first days we traveled slowly and quietly. We could not travel fast on account of the cattle, whose feet were badly worn out and tender. On the fifth morning, a little while after, we left camp, we saw Mr. Vasquez coming back toward us, which made us suspect he had discovered something; we thought it might have been a band of buffalo. But when he came up to us he said that he had discovered Indians—three, on the other side of the river; but he was sure we had not been discovered by them, and moved that we should go near the river, to secure water and make some kind of a fort, for defense in case of attack. As he was in charge, and an old experienced man, we readily consented. So on we went to the river, but on arrival we found, to our great surprise, the opposite shore red with Indians, who commenced to yell enough to frighten Old Nick himself. No time to make a fort, or even to unsaddle, before they began to throw themselves into the river and make toward us. Mr. Vasquez ordered us to take position behind a large cluster of cottonwoods and cock our rifles, but not to shoot until he gave the order. So there we stood in readiness, like veterans; the first fright was over, and we were ready to make the Indians pay dearly for our hair. None of us understanding their language, we made sure they were Blackfeet, and fight we must. In less time than it takes me to write this, they were upon us. One tall scoundrel came up a little ahead of the rest with a white flag, making signs not to shoot. An old French mountaineer named Paulette Desjardins understood a few words of Crow, and as the Indian pronounced the name of his tribe, the old man said "They are Crows —there is no danger for our lives, but they are great thieves." Mr. Vasquez also knew as much about them as the old man did, and so we let them come up. Then the shaking of hands took place, and our hearts went back into the right place again. As we had a large supply of buffalo meat, we made a feast, which they appeared to relish very much, and then they expressed a desire to open trade; but we had no goods for that purpose.

We had not gone more than three miles when we discovered some ten Indians galloping toward us as fast as their horses could go; we stopped until they approached us, when we found that they were the chiefs and leading men of the camp. They looked splendid, dressed in the best of Indian costumes, and mounted on fat ponies. They all shook hands and made signs that they would look for a good place to camp, and for us to follow. Somewhat against our will we did so. It was not long before the desired spot was found, and the whole camp soon made its appearance, containing upward of 400 lodges. This was a great sight for me, who had never seen such a formidable Indian camp. The Crows, at that time, generally roamed together, and on this particular occasion they looked richer than any other Indians, for they had just made their trade at the fort, one day's march from where we were. The Crows did not drink then, and for many years remained sober; it was not until a few years ago, when they were driven out of their country by the Sioux, and became a part of the tribe on the Missouri, that they took to drinking with the Assiniboines. As they

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

did not drink, their trade was all in substantial goods, which kept them always well dressed, and extremely rich in horses; so it was really a beautiful sight to see that tribe on the move. As soon as the proper place was found for encamping, the chief made us a sign to unsaddle and to put all our plunder in a circle which he himself described; and on the arrival of the camp his lodge was immediately erected over it, so that all was safe.

We finally left the Crow camp and soon reached Fort Cass, then in charge of Mr. Tulloch, who was a man possessed of good common sense, very reliable, and brave withal. He was called the Crane by all the Indians, on account of the extreme length and slenderness for which he was remarkable—almost a curiosity; he was extremely popular among the Crows, and well liked by the mountain men. When he left Fort Union to establish this new post, Mr. McKenzie requested him to take all such articles as the Crows might fetch, so as to get them in the way of trade. His first returns consisted mostly of elk, deer, and all kinds of horns, which made great mirth at Fort Union; yet his trade had been profitable. It was started again, and when we arrived there it was his second year. We learned that this was a very dangerous post; they had had some men killed by the Blackfeet, and were even afraid to go out to chop wood. This fort was situated about two miles below the mouth of the Horn.

Next day at ten o'clock we were again on the move, with a journey of about 250 miles before us, to reach the mouth of the Yellowstone. Nothing worthy of note took place during this part of our journey, which would have been extremely pleasant had it not been for anticipated danger from Indians. We had to erect a large pen for our animals every night, for fear of sudden attacks, and to stand frequent guard, as our party was small. But we lived on the fat of the land, as at that season game was in good order, and the Yellowstone Valley abounded with all kinds of game at that early period, and for many subsequent years. We were often frightened at large bands of elk, which, at a distance, bear the exact appearance of a mounted party of Indians, till, by the aid of a good spyglass, our fears were relieved. Our two cows added a great deal to our good living; as we had no coffee, milk was a great relish. We made but slow progress, on account of the cattle, whose feet became very tender, and finally got so bad that we were obliged to make shoes of raw buffalo hide. We arrived safe and sound at the mouth of the Yellowstone on the 3d of September, and thus ended our long trip. We were soon discovered by our people, who were at the landing where our fort was to be erected, two miles below the mouth of the Yellowstone, and were informed that Mr. William Sublette arrived there eight days before and Mr. Campbell three; but he had capsized in the Horn, lost two packs of beaver, and been near losing his life. Otherwise everything was right; they would have been glad to see us across, but it was too late in the evening to attempt this, as we had to swim. Now that I am obliged to pass a night on this side, if my reader will be so kind as to help me we will try to find out how long I have been in the saddle. As near as I can come, it is five months lacking four days. We should have been much better pleased if we could have crossed over on our arrival; still we felt quite merry, and it was a long time before we could go to sleep. In the evening, after we caught up our stock, one could hear great talk to the mules, calling them by name, telling them that they were near the end of their journey, and what they might expect in future; it was really amusing, and it was almost thought that the poor dumb beasts understood what was said to them. All hands were up early, mules and cattle turned out, and we waited impatiently to cross over. Between 10 and 11 a.m. Mr. Johnesse, who had come down by water with Mr. Campbell, and was still our foreman, appeared on the opposite shore to show us the place

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

where we had to swim the stock across. The river at that season was low, and the channel so narrow that we could plainly hear all he said. When we got ready to drive the stock in, he halloosed to me, thinking I did not know how to swim, to take hold of the bull's tail. Not being an expert in the science, I took his advice and the bull's tail too, and, making use of my three loose limbs, I reached the opposite shore with ease. In a short time we were all safe on the north bank of the Missouri, upward of 2000 miles from St. Louis.

Chapter 4

(1833-34)

FORT WILLIAM

Soon after crossing the Missouri we were again in company with our former messmates, and some of our other acquaintances who had come down the Yellowstone by water; the meeting was indeed a cause for rejoicing. We were now altogether about 30 men, encamped in the willows on the river bank, about 300 yards from where Fort William was to be erected, and to be so called in honor of William Sublette. As we had no tents those willows sheltered us from the wind, and enabled us to make comfortable cabins. Next day operations commenced for building the fort; some men getting out pickets for the stockade, others sawing logs, etc. Seeing the necessity of having safer quarters, we went to work with all our might every day, and Sunday too; and by the 15th of November got into our comfortable quarters, after which the Sunday work was stopped. The day we moved in was a holiday, and in the evening a great feast was given us by Mr. Campbell — Mr. Sublette having left in the keel boat a few days after our arrival, taking with him about ten men. It consisted of half a pint of flour to each man, one cup of coffee, one of sugar, and one of molasses, to four men. Out of this a becoming feast was made, consisting of thick pancakes, the batter containing no other ingredient than pure Missouri water, greased with buffalo tallow; but as I had had nothing of the kind for upward of six months, I thought I had never tasted anything so good in my life, and swore I would have plenty of the like if I ever got back to the States.

After this our work was changed in some respects. I was appointed carter, as I was not a very good hand with an ax, and soon equipped with an old cart purchased from some of the half-breeds, who had come over early in the fall, and an American horse, which had been brought to this place by Paulette Desjardins, who had come with us as a freeman, but had sold his small outfit to Mr. Campbell and engaged in the capacity of cook. This horse was an old, overgrown, broken-winded beast, which would groan tremendously on starting his load, and keep it up for about a hundred yards afterward, at which I could not help laughing. Here I am, a regular carter of Fort William, dressed in cowskin pants, cowskin coat, buckskin shirt, wolfskin cap, red flannel undershirt, and a blue check shirt over that, stepping along behind my old horse and cart. This great suit was intended to last my time out, under faithful promise, made to myself, to leave the country as soon as my engagement should be up; for I began to find that I was in a bad box. There had been some trading previous to our entering the fort, but none of importance except one, which took place about two weeks after, as I will now relate.

The news came by an Indian that Gauché, the great chief of the Assiniboines and the terror of all the neighboring tribes, was coming in to trade with about 200 buffalo robes, beside many small peltries. As Mr. Campbell had not yet been able to turn any of the chiefs from the American Fur Company's Fort Union, Gauché was not expected to come to us. But as he was a queer kind of a grizzly-bear fellow, very odd in his way, Mr. Campbell thought he might try his luck with

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Gauché; so he sent his interpreter and me along to see what we could do — for I must remark that, although I was only a carter, I slept in the store and assisted in trade at night. This was the favorite time for the Indians, so that I frequently traded most of the night and went to my carting in the morning. When we reached the place where the Indians had stopped, as was the custom, to vermilion and dress themselves before entering Fort Union, where their reception was awaited with the American flag up and the cannon loaded, ready for the salute, the interpreter of the Big Fort, as Fort Union was called, had already arrived on the spot. Shaking hands with the old man, he said: “Well, I hope you will not fork to-day. The great chief of the big fort has sent me after you, and he is well prepared to receive you. I hope you will not make me ashamed by going with those one-winter-house traders.” The old man was listening with half an intention; and, as we approached him, looked the interpreter straight in the face and said: “If your great chief had sent any other but you I would have gone to him, but I don’t go with the biggest liar in the country.” Then he made a sign to his people to get on the move, crying out now and then, “Co-han ! Co-han ! “ which meant “Hurry up!” I found out afterward that this was a favorite expression of his. So, to the great astonishment of Mr. Campbell and all the others, we made our triumphant entrance into Fort William. We learned afterward that Mr. McKenzie was not at all surprised at the old fellow’s caper, for he knew Gauché of old.

It was not until night that we all got ready to trade. It must be remembered that liquor, at that early day, was the principal and most profitable article of trade, although it was strictly prohibited by law, and all the boats on the Missouri were thoroughly searched on passing Fort Leavenworth. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Sublette had managed to pass through what he wanted for his trade all along the Missouri; but the American Fur Company, having at one time been detected and had their liquor confiscated, erected a distillery at Fort Union, and obtained their corn from the Gros Ventres and Mandans. I will say more, in future, about this distillery.

The liquor trade started at dark, and soon the singing and yelling commenced. The Indians were all locked up in the fort, for fear that some might go to Fort Union, which was but 2 ½ miles distant. Imagine the noise — upward of 500 Indians, with their squaws, all drunk as they could be, locked up in the small space. The old devil Gauché had provided himself with a pint tin cup, which I know he did not let go during the whole spree, and every now and then he would rush into the store with his cup, and it was “Co-han “ — telling me to fill it — and “Co-han ! hurry up about it, too!” This was a great night, but I wished that the old rascal and his band had gone to the big fort. At last daylight came and the spree abated; a great many had gone to sleep, and the goods trade did not commence until the afternoon; but old Co-han, with his cup, kept on the move pretty much of the time. It was not until midnight that the trade was entirely over, and early next morning they moved away, with the exception of the old man and a few of his staff of loafing beggars.

Mr. Campbell, who was anxious to secure Gauché for the winter, thought to make him a very impressive speech previous to his departure. So the old bear was invited into Mr. Campbell’s room, and, after quite a lengthy speech, during which the old fellow made no reply, not even by a grunt, he merely said, “Are you a-going to give me some salt before I leave?” This being all the satisfaction Mr. Campbell received for his long speech, he could not refrain from laughing. The old devil got his salt, with some other small presents, and then departed without leaving any sign of his intention to return. Thus ended this trade.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Mr. Campbell happened to be out of luck this year, owing to the very warm fall of 1833, which kept the buffalo far north, and the winter trade of 1833-34 was a poor one; the Indians had no confidence in his remaining, so that the bulk of the trade went to the big American Company in spite of all we could do. Fortunately for us working hands, a small trade was done in the early part of the fall, or we should have fared much worse than we did — which was bad enough, as I will go on to explain. The jerked buffalo meat which had been traded from the Indians lasted but a little while, and after this our rations consisted of about a pint of pounded meat, which had been prepared and was brought in by the squaws. This is what pemmican is made of; it has to be mixed with grease to be eaten, but the tallow for this purpose we had to buy. This was sold at 50 cents per bladder, in which it was put up by the squaws, and which weighed from five to eight pounds. I had a partner, a German, and we could together purchase a bladder; but as to salt and pepper, which we had also to buy — salt \$1 a pint, pepper \$2 — we were not in partnership; each had his small sack containing pepper and salt mixed, and used it as he thought proper. This was all we could get — no sugar, — no coffee — nothing but cold water to wash the meat down. This was generally given to us for our breakfast, then lyed corn for dinner and supper. This was pretty good, but it went so hard on the salt and pepper that I began to think that I scarcely earned my salt. This kind of living lasted nearly all winter, with the exception of a deer or an elk which the hunters would now and then kill near the fort; but, true to my word, I entered no complaint. I will here describe the construction of Fort William, which was after the usual formation of trading posts. It was first erected precisely on the spot where the Fort Buford sawmill now [about 1871] stands; but then it was about 200 yards farther from the river, the bank having caved in to that distance. It was 150 feet front and 130 deep. The stockade was of cottonwood logs, called pickets, 18 feet in length, hewn on three sides and planted three feet in the ground. The boss' house stood back, opposite the front door; it consisted of a double cabin, having two rooms of 18x20 feet, with a passage between them 12 feet wide. There was a store and warehouse 40 feet in length and 18 feet in width; two rooms for the men's quarters 16x18 feet, a carpenter's shop, blacksmith's shop, ice house, meat house, and two splendid bastions. The whole was completed by Christmas of 1833. The bastions were built more for amusement than for protection against hostile Indians; for, at that time, although they were constantly at war with other tribes, there was not the least danger for any white men except the free trappers, and we could go hunting in all directions with perfect safety. Large war parties frequently came to the fort, but behaved very well, taking their leave after getting a few loads of ammunition and some tobacco.

This post was not the only one which was out of luck, for all those along the Missouri proved a failure. Sublette, being apprised of this, sold out during the winter of 1833-34 to the American Fur Company — as I learned afterward, very much to the displeasure of Mr. McKenzie, who wished to break us down completely, as a warning to any one who might oppose such a formidable and well-conducted company.

It was not until about the 10th of June, 1834, that an express arrived, informing us of the sale, and that the steamer would be up some time between that date and the 1st of July. This news was of little importance to me, as I had made up my mind to leave, and thought that nothing could induce me to remain in the country. In those days there was but one steamer a year up river this far, and great was always the rejoicement on its arrival. This was the Assiniboine; the boat made her appearance on the 24th of June, having on board the gentlemen who were to take inventories

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

of all the posts belonging to the American Fur Company, as old Mr. Astor had this year sold out to Pierre Chouteau and Co. A few days after the arrival of the steamer the transfer of goods and peltries took place. Of the latter there were very few — 70 packs of robes, 10 in a pack, which made 700 robes; 16 packs of wolves, 30 to the pack; and some few red and gray foxes.

In the meantime preparations were made for departure, which was to be in a large Mackinaw boat. While these were going on my occupation was that of horse guard. The idea of returning to the States was indeed very pleasant; while lying on the grass the thought of relating to Baltimore friends my mountain stories would make me feel, as the Indian says, “Big man me.” Best of all, I had the means to accomplish my journey; for, out of my wages of \$296 I had saved over \$200, thanks to not indulging too much in pancake parties. Coffee being \$1 a pint, sugar \$1, and flour 25 cents, many of my poor comrades came out in debt.

One fine day [July 2, 1834] I was sent for by Mr. Campbell — I could not imagine what for. I had not yet shed my winter garments, which had become by this time quite greasy; and had it not been for my blue check shirt, which happened to be clean at the time, I should have been taken for a very dirty man. Imagine my surprise, on entering Mr. Campbell’s room, to find myself in the presence of Mr. McKenzie, who was at that time considered the king of the Missouri; and, from the style in which he was dressed, I thought really he was a king. Without any introduction he immediately asked me if I would engage to him. Having made my plans to go home and not knowing but what he wanted me for a common hand, my reply was a short “No, sir,” after which I made for the door and returned to my duty. The same evening, after I had brought in the horses, Mr. Campbell sent for me again, and then said: “Charles, I omitted to inform you of the conversation I had yesterday about you with Mr. McKenzie. This was the cause of his coming to-day. He did not want to engage you as a common hand; he wanted you for a clerk, and I should advise you to see him. He is very much of a gentleman, and I think you will do well. You will act as you think proper — but this is my advice.” Then I had to combat my made-up plans, and give up all idea of returning to Baltimore. This I thought I could never do. I did not sleep much that night.

Next morning, while I was not feeling disposed to see Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Campbell said, “Well, Charles, are you going to try your luck?” My reply induced him to think that I was not much in favor of that. Said he again, “Charles, try it — there will be no harm in that.” Knowing him to be kind, and confident that he wished me well, I at last started. I had not gone more than halfway when I turned back a few steps; but I finally made up my mind to “try my luck” as Mr. Campbell had suggested. So I resumed my journey and soon entered Fort Union, where I met Mr. McKenzie in the yard, not quite so royally attired. He came to meet me, and offered me his hand. After the usual compliments had been exchanged I remarked that I had not been apprised of his intentions when he spoke of engaging me, and that, thinking he wished to hire me as a common hand, I had declined, having had enough of it; but that, having been since informed to the contrary, I had thought I would come to see him, and hoped there was no harm done, in case no bargain were made. To which he replied, “All right! All right! No, I did not wish to engage you as a common hand. I wanted you for a clerk. You will eat at my table, and fare the same as myself. Your work will be no other than that which is the duty of all clerks in this country. Now,” he continued, “I will tell you how we engage clerks — that is, inexperienced ones. We engage them for three years, for which term we give them \$500 and a complete suit of fine broadcloth; but as you have been already one year in the country I will engage you for two years.” These terms did not suit me;

---

my strong inclination to go home made me feel quite independent, and I preferred to miss the bargain. I replied I did not feel like engaging for so long a term; but that I would engage for one year, and then, if he were pleased with me, and I with him, we should have no difficulty in arranging for another year. Finally he consented to this and the bargain was struck for one year, for which he allowed me \$250 and a complete suit of clothes.

Bargain made [July 3, 1834], I was almost sorry for it. I started back to Fort William, not after my wardrobe, which I could very well sacrifice, but to thank Mr. Campbell, and to bid adieu to my comrades. Mr. Campbell was extremely pleased to hear the result; he gave me a check for the amount due me, and after a long shake of the hand, with all his good wishes as well as those of my old messmates and others, I left Fort William. My load to Fort Union was not very encumbering; my old saddle bags, made of a yard of brown muslin, sewed at both ends with a slit in the middle, containing two red flannel shirts, pretty well worn, and one check shirt, and one old white 3-point blanket, were about all I had brought to Fort Union; my tin pan and cup I left behind. I should have been ashamed to be caught there in my skin suit, which was also sacrificed to Fort William. Now I am at Fort Union, in the service of the great American Fur Company.

#### Chapter 5

(1834-35)

#### FORT UNION

I must remark here that my dress was a little improved. I happened to have a pair of gray cassimette pants which I had brought from the States, and had seldom worn; that and my clean blue check shirt and my old cap were the only dress I possessed on entering Fort Union. All the clerks were strangers to me, and when the bell rang for supper I saw them put on their coats, for, as I found out afterward, they were not allowed to go to table in shirtsleeves. One of them, perceiving that I was coatless, was so kind as to lend me a coat, and so we started for supper. On entering the eating hall, I found a splendidly set table with a very white tablecloth, and two waiters, one a negro. Mr. McKenzie was sitting at the head of the table, extremely well dressed. The victuals consisted of fine fat buffalo meat, with plenty of good fresh butter, cream, and milk for those that chose; but I saw that only two biscuits were allowed to each one, as these were placed at each plate. I soon discovered, by the manner in which the clerks took their seats, that mine would come very near the end of the table, for it appeared to go by grade; but it was not many years until I reached next to head. I was hungry, and had such victuals been placed before me the day previous, while I was on horse guard, I should have played my part like a man. But among strangers I could not help being a little backward, and did not eat half to my satisfaction. As good luck would have it, some of the clerks used to take lunch before going to bed; so a large kettle of fat buffalo meat was put on to boil, and out of this I finished filling up. Then I went to bed with the expectation of curious dreams. What I dreamed I don't remember, neither do I now care. I awoke early, perhaps thinking in my sleep that I had my horses to turn out; but no, there were no horses for me to turn out. Mr. McKenzie, who played the nabob, went to bed late, and rose later, and as nothing could be served till he was ready, it was nine o'clock before we got to breakfast. But it came at last, and this morning I filled up fuller, with more ease.

Between ten and eleven, Mr. McKenzie sent his servant to tell me to call at the office. On entering he told me to sit down, and said, "Well, Larpenteur, we will assign you some little duty to try your hand upon, and if you prove faithful and attentive, as I hope and have all reason to believe

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

you will, your salary will be increased next year, provided you wish to remain." My reply was that I hoped he would have no cause to complain. He then went to a place where the keys were hung, and handed me a bunch, saying, "Here are the keys of the fort gates, of the tool house and harness house, and of the bastions. Now it will be your duty to open the gates early in the morning, and lock them at night; to see that the tools and harness be kept in order, and all in their proper places; and you will also lend a hand, in case it should be required, about the stores." Such was my first employment at Fort Union.

Thus I went on quite easily for some time, and I thought my berth a very light one; but it was not long before I was promoted, and this made quite an addition to my former duties. Early in September, after all the hay had been hauled in, Fort William was to be rebuilt within 150 yards of Union. A clerk by the name of Moncrévie, who was at the time a trader, and also in charge of the men, had this to attend to; but he was a little too fond of whisky, and much too fond of the squaws, to do this work or any other as it should be done.

One afternoon, after the rebuilding of the fort had commenced, Mr. Hamilton, who was in charge at the time, went to see how it was progressing. The men had half of one side of the fort up, but it was an awful piece of work. The pickets were set in crooked, some too high, some too low, and the sight made the old gentleman furious. "Where is that Moncrévie, that he is not here to attend to the work?" he asked. Being told that Moncrévie had gone to the fort, he started off quite mad and rushed into our room, his nose appearing to have grown bigger on a sudden — for such was the case whenever he got out of humor. "Mr. Moncrévie," he exclaimed, "why are you not with your men? That is a nice piece of work they are doing there!" Moncrévie, all confused, was hurrying out, when the old gentleman said, "No! no! you need not go," and then turned round to me, saying, "Mr. Larpenteur, go and oversee that work and see if you cannot do better than that Mr. Moncrévie." So I started, and when I got to the men they began to laugh, saying they expected as much. I told them that I was ordered to boss the job, of which they appeared to be glad. Then I ordered them to take all the pickets down, which was soon done, after which I had the trench straightened and the bottom leveled. Next day about noon Mr. Hamilton came to examine the work, and said, with the pleasant countenance he could assume when he chose, "Oh! this looks something like work — not like what that good-for-nothing Moncrévie has been doing." At that time I had only charge of the men allotted for the rebuilding of the fort; but that same evening Mr. Hamilton sent for me and said, "Larpenteur, I now wish you to take charge of all the men, for that Moncrévie will not do." Thus came my first promotion. Notwithstanding this addition to my former duties I still thought my situation pleasant, although it was, at times, rather disagreeable to command the men, and not infrequently some fight would come off; but the most disagreeable part of it was to come. Early in the fall trade commenced, principally in jerked buffalo meat and tallow, both mostly traded for liquor. The liquor business, which was always done at night, sometimes kept me up all night turning out drunken Indians, often by dragging them out by arms and legs. Although the still house had been destroyed, the Company found means to smuggle plenty of liquor.

Before proceeding with my narrative I will detain the reader to explain how it happened that the distillery was given up. A certain gentleman from the Eastern States, by the name of Capt. Wheitte, who had been on a tour to the Columbia, and returned by way of the Big Horn and the Yellowstone in 1833, reaching Fort Union about 10 days before we did, thought proper to have

better means of going down the Missouri, and called on Mr. McKenzie to make the necessary preparations for this journey. Mr. McKenzie, who was a perfect gentleman, not suspecting the captain, who I cannot say was a spy, did all he could to make his stay pleasant, showed all the arrangements of the fort, explained how trade was carried on, what immense profit was derived, and also showed him the distillery. Capt. Wheitte appeared to be delighted to see this fine establishment, and probably would not have done what he did, had he not found, when everything was in readiness for his departure and he came to settle his bill, that the charges were exorbitant. He said nothing, settled, and started; but made it his business, as soon as he arrived, to report Mr. McKenzie. A dispatch was sent up that winter for the distillery to be destroyed. This was the last distillery in the Indian country.

All went on as smoothly as could be expected through our many drinking scrapes with Indians and obstreperous Canadians. The time to re-engage came, and pretty soon my case was carried to the office. Mr. McKenzie said, "Well, Larpenteur, what do you think? Will you hire for another year?" My reply was, "I believe so, sir." "Well," said he, "if you wish to remain, I will allow you \$350 for this year." "All right," was my answer. And now for another year in the American Fur Company.

My first year was not yet up, but all engagements had to be made before the arrival of the steamer, and the shipping of the returns; so that, in case any men declined to re-engage, they could be sent off by one or another conveyance. All the clerks were reengaged except Moncrévie, who happened to be discharged. Nothing took place worth mentioning until the fall, after the return of some of the free trappers. There was a half-breed family named Deschamps, consisting of ten persons, among whom were the old man and three grown sons, who were in the habit of trapping, and were the very worst of subjects; and another half-breed family, headed by Jack Rem. He had two sons-in-law, and a son 19 years of age, all of whom started on their trapping expeditions together, and returned together. It was customary, on their return from a hunt, to have a spree; and as they had been lucky the hunt was big, and so was the spree. They soon began a fight in which Jack Rem's son had his brains knocked out with the butt of a gun by one of the numerous and wicked Deschamps family. Mr. Lafferrier, who was at the time the trader and storekeeper, became alarmed, for they began to threaten his life, and attempted to get liquor of him without paying for it. Mr. Hamilton, who was still in charge, did not know what to do to stop them, but at last advised Mr. Lafferrier to put laudanum in the whiskey. This advice was followed; they soon fell down and lay stretched out on the ground in every direction, so sound asleep that Mr. Hamilton became alarmed, thinking the dose had been so strong that they would never wake up again. I happened not to be there at the time, having that afternoon gone down to the garden, which was about three-quarters of a mile distant from the fort. Mr. Hamilton came there as fast as he could, half scared to death, to tell me the story. I could not help laughing at the idea, and we immediately returned to the fort. On my arrival I saw this amiable family scattered along the river bank, still fast asleep; but at dark they awakened and went home to Fort William, where all those families were kept, as were also some of the Company's men who had squaws, and the horse guard with the horses. Thus this spree ended. Nothing remarkable took place until May of the following spring [1835] — It was customary, when buffalo got too far from the fort, for hunters to camp out, and from time to time send in loads of fresh meat. On such occasions all their families also went into camp to make dried meat for their own use, and also for a kind of recreation. Such

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

a camp was called by the half-breeds of the north, who spoke broken French, mixed with many Cree words, "nick-ah-wah"; and to go into it was "aller en nick-ah-wah." It happened that, in this camp, there was a beautiful half-breed by the name of Baptiste Gardepie. The Deschamps family, who were there also, got jealous of him and, it was reported, had attempted to take his life. I will now relate an affray which took place at the fort, while they were in camp.

In the spring, after the trade was over, some stragglers always remained in camp at the fort, in spite of all we could do to get them off; for they were great nuisances, and it was dangerous for them to camp at the fort on account of hostile Indians. Early in May an express arrived from Fort Clark by which we were apprised that there would soon be a large war-party of Gros Ventres and Mandans at Fort Union. The chief wished to inform us of this and to warn our young men not to sleep in any of the Indian lodges; for, should there be any at the fort when the war-party came, they would shoot into the lodges, but would not like to kill any of the whites. So the young men were notified, and for my part I did all I could to induce Mr. Hamilton to let the Indians sleep in the Indian house, but he would not listen to me. There were only two lodges of Indians, and almost every night, unknown to the old gentleman, I let them into the fort. But, fearing to be caught at this and thus displease my boss, some nights I made them stay outside. It happened to be one of these nights that the war party of Gros Ventres arrived about twelve o'clock and fired into the two lodges. We heard the shots plainly, and immediately the cry of "Open the door!" — for there had been three white men in the lodges at the time. On our entering them to ascertain what damage had been done we found one squaw dead, shot plumb through the heart; one shot through both thighs; one through the calf of her leg, smashing the shin bone; an old woman shot through the wrist; a little boy 12 years of age shot through the bowels; and one of the white men with two balls through the left thigh, a little above the knee, cutting the artery. He died the same morning at ten o'clock; the squaw shot through the thighs died two days afterward, and the little boy the next day — sad indeed was this affair! Mr. Hamilton repented not letting them into the fort, but it was too late — the damage had been done. But the old Englishman was soon to see what could not be called fun, and be badly put to his trumps.

About a week later a party of Assiniboines, who had gone to war on the Gros Ventres and Mandans, arrived at Fort Union; and about ten o'clock at night a rap was heard at the door. As I was still doorkeeper, I went to see who was there. On asking who they were, they replied that they were a war party of 20 men, on their return from the Gros Ventres. At this time all the wounded and well Indians were inside the fort, and we were but few whites, as most of our men were in camp. Not thinking it prudent to let the Indians in, for fear of a row, I apprised Mr. Hamilton of the arrival; but he told me to let them in if there were but 20 men. I suggested to him to send them to Fort William, where there was no one at the time, the families having all gone to camp; but, as usual, he would not listen to me, and in I let them. Soon afterward more knocking at the door was heard, and the Indians in the fort said it was the balance of their party, consisting of 70 men. I went again to Mr. Hamilton, who said, "Well, we may as well let the balance in, for it may make matters worse to send them to the other fort." A little while after their entrance something unpleasant was evidently going to happen, and from what I could understand it became necessary to adopt means for our safety. So I informed Mr. Hamilton of what was going on, upon which the old gentleman, who had a sound old English head, told me to bring eight or ten muskets out of the bastion and put them on the men's table in the dining room; also to put one of the smallest

cannon in the passage of the main quarters. This was to be done with all care possible, that the Indians should know nothing of it until the proper time came; for if they saw us make such preparations, they might nip his plan in the bud. Very soon we were ready; the window blinds of the dining room were opened, and there could be seen by the three candles the bright muskets, plenty of cartridges scattered over the table, and four men ready for action. The piece of artillery was rolled back and forward in the passage, making a tremendous noise, and two men mounted guard with muskets and fixed bayonets. Such preparations the Indians had never seen or heard of before, and they became, in their turn, more frightened than we had been. They had been very lively on the move and very insulting at times, but they soon lay down and went to sleep, or pretended to, so that all became suddenly quiet. Still, we did not feel quite safe; we thought that perhaps they were shamming and that they might try what they could do before morning. This was about midnight. To my great surprise, just at the peep of day, I was called up; that was easily done, for I was wide awake, with all my clothes on. The partisan said that the Indians wished to go out, and asked me to open the door for them; and in less than ten minutes not one of the party was left in the fort. One may imagine how relieved all hands were, when informed of this, for most of them had almost made up their minds that this would be their last night. As it was yet early, I told them to go and take a nap. I then went to Mr. Hamilton's room, and, after I had informed him of this, he said, "Well, Mr. Larpenteur, what do you think of my stratagem?" To which I replied that I felt confident it had been the means of saving our lives. "Yes, yes, said he; "now go to the cellar, fill this bottle with that good Madeira; we will have a glass, and then you will have time to take a little rest before breakfast, for I presume you have not slept much." I obeyed his orders, took a drink of Madeira, and went to bed. Thus ended the fright.

As I have had frequent occasion to mention Mr. "Hamilton," I will introduce him to the reader. His real name was Archibald Palmer. He was an English nobleman who, from some cause or other unknown to many, had been obliged to leave England and come to America, apparently without any means. How Mr. McKenzie became acquainted with him I am not able to say. Mr. Hamilton was a man of uncommon education, conversant with many subjects, and quite capable of keeping books. As Mr. McKenzie required a bookkeeper at Fort Union, he made arrangements with Mr. Hamilton to come here. What salary he received I never learned. Mr. Hamilton — as I shall continue to call him, for his real name was not known until after he left Fort Union and his English difficulties were over, when he resumed his proper name — was a man of fifty, who had habitually lived high, in consequence of which he had the gout. This brought him to the two extremes of being either very pleasant or very crabbed, but, upon the whole, kept him crabbed; so he was not liked, though much respected. He remained a few years at Union, and died in St. Louis as cashier of the American Fur Company. I must say I got along remarkably well with him and was very sorry to learn of his death. Now I will return to my stories, of which I have many in store.

Chapter 6  
(1835-36)

FORT UNION: CONTINUED

A week or ten days after the above-mentioned fright, the hunters were ordered to return; the camp was broken up, and all the half-breed families went into their former quarters in Fort William, as well as some of the company's men who had families, and were to take care of the horses.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

When they had all arrived and were reorganized, a conspiracy was gotten up, unknown to me, to kill old man Deschamps and his eldest son, François. The conspirators were Baptiste Gardepie, the two sons-in-law of Jack Rem, and Mr. Lafferrier — the latter a great hypocrite. This was in July, 1835. As Deschamps used to come to our room almost every morning after breakfast, the killing was to take place there. For this murderous work a rifle barrel was placed in the chimney corner, and Lafferrier put his dirk under his pillow, for Gardepie, who was to commence the job. François Deschamps, the son, was about 27 or 28 years old — a fine stout young man; he was then interpreter for Fort Union, and ate at the table with the boss and the clerks. Soon after breakfast the father and son came into our room, where the conspirators were already assembled. It was a fine July morning and I, knowing nothing of this, had taken a walk alone down by the garden which was already progressing well, about three-quarters of a mile from the fort. After some little conversation, which naturally took place before coming to the point, Gardepie got up and addressed the old man, saying, “Deschamps, I want to know now whether you will make peace or war with me; you have frequently attempted my life, and I find it necessary to ask you this question now, what is your answer?” To which old Deschamps replied, “I will never make peace with you as long as there is a drop of blood in my veins.” Some blood was quickly out of his veins, for Gardepie immediately seized the rifle barrel and struck a fatal blow on the old man’s head. Then he turned round to the son, and, with another blow, knocked him down. But this wound not being a mortal one, François made out to creep under one of the beds, where he begged for his life until the conspirators took pity on him. Gardepie was induced to desist from killing him; but, not thinking that the father had been mortally struck, he reached for the dirk and ripped the old man’s bowels out — which operation was not necessary. All this was done in a very short time. Returning from the garden and approaching our quarters I observed that the curtains were down, which was an unusual thing, and when I came to open the door I found it locked on the inside. At my request it was immediately opened to admit me, but directly closed again. The door being shut and curtains down, I could not at first discover what had taken place, but soon saw a sheet spread on the floor and knew there was a corpse under it. On looking about, I saw young François Deschamps sitting at a table with his head held down in his hands, which were still all bloody. No one else was in the room but Gardepie, who said, “I have settled with the old man, and I would have done the same with this coward here, had he not begged so hard for his life.” I made no reply, though, of course, I pitied the poor fellow, who was so near the corpse of his father, and uncertain as yet of his own life. It was a sad sight. Mr. Lafferrier, who, as I have already remarked, was a great hypocrite and had thus acquired his popularity among the Indians and half-breeds, had gone to the fort with the pipe of peace, to try to bring about a reconciliation between those two families; and in this he finally succeeded. The old man was buried the same day, and to all appearances everything went on as usual.

It was thought that this peace would last, as Jack Rem’s family was considered revenged by the death of the old man, and had thus been made nearly equal in strength to that of the Deschamps. What afterward induced us to think the peace would be kept was that Gardepie went on a beaver hunt with the three young Deschamps and never offered to molest them. Michel Gravel and Little Frenchman were the names of Jack Rem’s two sons-in-law who went the following fall [1835] on their hunt on Milk River, which abounded with beaver, and, like all beaver trappers, fell in with a war party of Blackfeet, by whom they were both killed. This accident reduced Jack’s family consid-

erably and enabled the Deschamps to show their wicked dispositions again. But before describing a big battle which took place the following summer [1836], I will relate a little story to show you how cunningly and quickly Indians can work destruction, and also give the character of Gauché, Robert Campbell's chief, whom I have already called Co-han (Hurry Up). Gauché was his French name, which means Left Hand. But by his tribe he was called Meenah-yau-henno, meaning the One who Holds the Knife — with which they said he could cut a rock in two, owing to his strong medicine. As I have already remarked, Hurry Up was feared by all the surrounding tribes, and was called by the whites the Wild Bonaparte. The old fellow had been so successful in his warfare that he found no difficulty in raising the number of warriors he wanted. At this time he had raised a party of 250 to 300, to make war on the Blackfeet, who were very rich in horses. Being considered so great a medicineman and warrior, he had no trouble with his young men, and could order the rush as he thought proper. On this their success always depends, for Indians seldom stand a long battle, and when they do it does not amount to much. About the middle of March the old man came within one day's march of Fort McKenzie, where he fell on the trail of a camp of Blackfeet, containing about 30 lodges, on the way to their fort to make their last spring trade. The old fellow could tell by the looks of things in their camping-place that they were rich in tradegoods and in horses, and that a big drunk would be sure to take place; for the Blackfeet are great drunkards. After the chief had well examined everything about the camping grounds he went to work at his medicine. He then told his people that he had seen a great deal of blood on the enemy's side, but very little on theirs, and that most, if not all of them, would return on horseback with many scalps, if they would obey his commands. The old fellow was not mistaken. They soon approached the Blackfoot camp, which was near the fort, making ready for a big spree. It was Gauché's intention to rush on the camp when they should be at the height of the spree, too drunk to defend themselves. When it was near daylight the order was given for the rush, and so well was it executed that in a very short time few were left alive in camp, and all the horses were captured with ease — as we learned, upward of 300 head. So great and glorious was the old man's campaign; and then it was "Co-han ! hurry up! let us go home and dance the scalp dance" — for many were the scalps they had taken of men, women, and children. We will let them go and I will return to the little story I promised to relate.

There was an old Assiniboine who had remained after our last trade, with the intention, as he said, to go down to Fort Clark in the steamer, although no peace as yet had been made between the Assiniboines and the Gros Ventres. In the meantime a war party of about 150 Blackfeet, all on horseback, came to Fort Union in search of the Assiniboines, to be revenged on the camp of old Co-han; this was about the 1st of June, and at that season men were always scarce in the fort, as most of them were required to take down the returns. So we would not allow more than 20 Indians at a time in the fort. The partisan and other important men in the Blackfoot party commenced by making a great deal of the old man, smoking with him, and telling him that they were in search of the Assiniboines with the intention of making peace with them, and that they would be very glad if he would go with them. They also said they had some fine horses which were intended for the Assiniboines, in case they would make peace, and if he would go with them they would make him a present of a nice pony. They did all they could to persuade him to go, and we did all we could to put him out of the notion. Finally the time came for them to start, and not finding the old fellow quite decided, they sent in a beautiful pony, saddled and bridled, telling him it should be his if he

would come along. The old man was tempted, mounted the pony, and started. By this time most of the party had left, and were seated on the hills back of the fort, awaiting the rest, and expecting that the old Assiniboine would be along with them; there were also 12 or 15 young men mounted on ponies, ready apparently to serve as an escort for the old man. As soon as I had turned him out — for I was still the doorkeeper — I made haste to run up on the bastion to see what would happen. The escort had not gone over 200 yards from the fort before they fired a volley into the old man, who fell dead off his pony, and in less than no time was scalped. After they had all reached the hills they made us signs that there was no danger for us, and disappeared. I then took a party of six or seven men, wrapped the old man in his robe, and stuck him up in a large elm tree to dry, as this was their own custom.

Now, reader, make ready for the battle, as it will soon come off. In the latter part of June, shortly after the last-mentioned affray took place, the company's steamboat arrived. After her departure, it was customary to have a big drunk throughout. At this time there were between 60 and 70 men at the fort. The half-breeds who were in Fort William with some of our own men also got gloriously drunk. About midnight old Mother Deschamps said to her children, "Now, my sons, if you are men, you will revenge the death of your father." This struck them favorably, and being in liquor they immediately killed old Jack Rem, swore they would also kill all the half-breeds whom they considered his friends, and even threatened the whites in the fort. This took place about midnight, when the spree in Fort Union had subsided and all hands had gone to sleep. I was awakened by loud raps and voices at the door, which latter I could distinguish to be those of females, crying, "Open the door! quick — they are fighting — they have killed my father." They were the widow of Michel Gravel and her mother, the wife of Jack Rem. I had not shut the door before eight or ten of our men came running in great fury, swearing vengeance against the Deschamps family, all of whom they would destroy, big and small. They raised all hands, and in a body went to Mr. McKenzie, of whom they demanded arms and ammunition in angry tones, declaring they were determined to put an end to the Deschamps family. This demand was made in such terms that Mr. McKenzie could not well refuse, fearing the consequences, and not being himself much averse to their intention. Having been furnished with a cannon, muskets, and ammunition, they went to work. But, in the first place, all the horses and all the company's effects were removed from the fort, and before the fight commenced the Deschamps were required to turn out their squaws, who were Assiniboine women, whom we did not want to kill for fear of the tribe. Thinking the fight would not take place as long as they kept in the squaws, they refused to turn them out. After allowing them what time we thought necessary to make up their minds on this subject, the order to fire was given. As we had a cannon we supposed they would not go into the bastions, and as we found their shots were only fired out of their own dwellings we aimed altogether at these houses. When they found we were determined to put our threats into execution they turned out their squaws, who told us that we had already killed one man, but that it would be difficult for us to destroy them all, as they had dug holes under the floors, where our balls could not reach them. Yet we kept constantly firing into the houses, until at last the old lady herself came out with the pipe of peace, begging for her life and that of her children; but she was shot through the heart in stepping out of the fort. As she was holding her pipe straight in front of her when she was hit, she fell precisely on top of it, at which the boys exclaimed in great mirth, "There's an end to the mother of the devils." In the meantime our firing was kept up; but few shots were heard from

them, and at last some of our party ventured into the fort, thinking they were all killed; but that was a mistake. They commenced firing again, and our side made a doublequick retreat; but one of them was shot through the neck as he was stooping through the small door of the fort. It was by this time getting rather late in the day, and it was feared that the fight might continue until night, under cover of which they could make their escape, which would prove serious to the Company in future; and as the bloody work had been begun, it was obliged to be accomplished. In order to do so it was thought proper to set the fort on fire, with the view of burning them in it; but for fear that some might escape through the fire, the hunter of the fort and several other good horsemen were mounted on the best horses to run them down like buffalo, should they make such an attempt. These precautions having been taken, a fire was started; as the fort was dry it soon began to blaze, and in a little while the houses were consumed. We saw one man run out of them and take refuge in the east bastion, into which the cannon was fired several times, but the ball went through without other damage than making its hole. Meanwhile the fire stopped, having burned only one side of the fort and the houses; so the bastion stood with this individual inside it, and was dangerous to approach. One of our men [Vivié], wanting to display his bravery, went near it to get a good shot through the cracks; but this cost him his life. A shot through the heart made him jump up about six feet in the air and fall dead on the spot, on which a loud yell was heard from the man in the bastion. The firing on our side was renewed faster than ever, until it was found that no shot was fired out of the bastion, when some of the boldest of our party determined to see if the individual inside it was dead or alive. On entering the bastion they discovered him backed up in one corner; they immediately fired and he fell dead. This was François Deschamps, the last survivor, as all the rest had been burned or shot in the houses. After he was brought out we found that he had a broken wrist and was out of ammunition. Had he not been thus disabled and defenseless he would probably have killed several of us and made his escape. The men thought he might go, like the balance, into flames; so they threw him into the fire with one of his brothers, and both were burned to ashes. A hole was dug, into which the old woman was put without any ceremony. Thus the battle ended, about sunset, in the death of eight of the family. The youngest son, about ten years of age, after being wounded, was suffered to come out; but he died the next day. Such was the end of this troublesome family, after which peace and comfort were enjoyed.

Now, as I have remarked, all was quieted. Outfits were made up and started for the Blackfeet and Crows, and we were left with none but the men allotted for Fort Union, numbering about 30, all told. These were assigned to their several duties, including the horse guard, for which a Mexican, a Dutchman, and a Canadian named Tibeau were appointed. The Mexican was not fit for anything else; the Dutchman was very green in one sense, and very white in another, as will be seen presently. All went on peaceably until about the middle of September [1836], when the Mexican thought he would take a ride back to Mexico on the best horse in the band, and picked out the green Dutchman to assist him in the execution of his plans. But it seems that they both were tolerably green. On one fine day they proposed to Tibeau to go to their dinner first, saying that they would not be long, and that he could go afterward and stay in the fort as long as he pleased. The proposition was accepted by Tibeau, and off started the two gentlemen, who, sure enough, were not gone long; and immediately on their return Tibeau went to his dinner. At this early time the guard was kept up more with a view to prevent the horses from straying away than for fear of

their being stolen by hostile Indians. This induced Tibeau to delay; but, fearing that he might be hurried out of the fort by the proper authorities, which he had reason to believe would be done rather roughly, he at last started back. On his return to the guard he could see neither of the two men; but, thinking that they might have gone a little way, made nothing of it and began to look around. Still seeing nothing of them, he commenced to hallo; but no answer was heard. Then he began to surmise that things were not all right, the men having been so willing to remain, and thought he would examine the band of horses. He soon discovered that the two best American horses were missing. Yet, as all the men were in the habit of strolling in search of antelope, and sometimes for pleasure, he waited a while, thinking they would soon make their appearance; but no one came, and he finally went to report the matter. Men were immediately sent in search of the thieves. Thinking that the Mexican would attempt to cross the river above, the men were first ordered up, but returned at night, having seen no tracks. Instead of going up, as it was thought they had, the Mexican and his man had concealed themselves in the point below the fort, it being his plan to steal the ferryboat at night and cross over. That night they came within three-quarters of a mile below the fort, where the Mexican left the Dutchman with the horses, while he went after the ferryboat. But when he came to the fort, it seems that he got scared at the barking of the dogs and could find no opportunity to get the boat off. When day was about breaking, he concluded to abandon that project and returned to the Dutchman, whom he found sound asleep and the horses gone. By this time it was daylight, and fearing to be discovered if they should attempt to look for the horses, they thought it advisable for each one to do as he thought proper. The Dutchman decided to give himself up to the mercy of the authorities; the Mexican concluded to try his luck at large for a while. When the door of the fort was opened one of the men, who happened to go out first, saw two horses near the hills, and came to me saying, "There are two horses which look very much like the stolen ones." I immediately sent after them, and to be sure they were the very two — Mr. McKenzie's favorite horse and the next best, a fine iron-gray. The question then was, What had become of the men? Some thought one thing, and some another, but none guessed right. Soon after breakfast Mr. Dutchman appeared, all in a tremble, and commenced to make up a story which had neither head nor tail. Not even giving him time to finish it, Mr. McKenzie requested me to take his gun from him, and put him in irons in the blacksmith shop. This was done immediately. He knew not what had become of the Mexican. Four or five days after this the Mexican came to deliver himself up, saying, "Mr. McKenzie, I have done wrong; here I am, do with me what you choose; but please don't send me to the States." Without replying to him Mr. McKenzie requested me to have him ironed and placed in confinement with the Dutchman, to await trial. Four days afterward they were tried, convicted, and sentenced to receive thirty-nine lashes. So they were tied to the flagstaff to take their punishment. The Dutchman was flogged first. When stripped to the waist his skin looked fair and tender, and was actually so; for at every blow the blood flew at such a rate that his sentence was reduced one-half. But the Mexican's hide was brown and tough; he hardly groaned, and received the full number of lashes. Both were soon taken to the States by James Beckwith," the great mulatto brave among the Crows, whose life was published some time afterward. Thus ended this scrape.

Chapter 7

(1836-38)

FORT UNION: CONTINUED

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Having frequently mentioned Mr. McKenzie as a member of the American Fur Company, I will give him a more ample introduction to the reader. Kenneth McKenzie was born in Scotland of very respectable parents, and was some near connection of the great explorer, Sir Alexander McKenzie. He engaged to the North West at the time that Company was formed to oppose the Hudson's Bay Company. It was the custom to engage clerks for the term of three years; but after they had served seven, they had the privilege of entering the Company as partners. Those young men had to be of good standing and bear good characters. The North West could not compete with the strong Hudson's Bay Company and were finally obliged to abandon the country.

Mr. McKenzie, who had taken some liking to the trade and thought there was money in it, struck off for the upper waters of the Mississippi, in the regions where the American Fur Company was carrying on trade, in small furs particularly, to a great extent. Whether he had any means at the time I am unable to say, and also in what capacity he entered the American Fur Company; but he probably came in as a member, and they soon placed unbounded confidence in him. Having served the North West, he had become acquainted with the manner in which trade was carried on in the north, and also with the tribes in that region. He soon persuaded the American Fur Company to extend their trade on the Upper Missouri, for he knew that the Hudson's Bay Company did not and could not trade buffalo robes, which would not pay for transportation over their portages, and that their trade was entirely confined to fine furs. This idea in regard to extending trade was correct, but the distance was tremendous, as those going up had to be towed in keel boats a distance of 2,000 miles. But, as I have remarked, the persuasion of Mr. McKenzie, and the unbounded confidence they had in him, overcame all difficulties. About the year 1827 an outfit was made up and started for the mouth of the Yellowstone, Mr. McKenzie in charge. They did not reach that far the first year, but established a wintering post [1827-28] at the mouth of White River, halfway between Forts Union and Berthold — say 150 miles below the Yellowstone. After the post was finished Mr. McKenzie started for the States, and Mr. Honor & Picotte remained in charge. The returns were found encouraging, and the following year [1829] he went on to the mouth of the Yellowstone, where the chief of the band of the Rocks had desired him to build, and which was a beautiful site, abounding in the best of timber, above, below, and opposite the fort, and with all kinds of game. Mr. McKenzie made this his residence and very soon messengers were dispatched north, inviting all Assiniboines, Crees, and Chippewas to the Missouri. When they learned that Mr. McKenzie was there it was not long before large numbers of these Indians came over, together with many half-breed families. Next year [1830] he determined to extend the trade, both up the Missouri for the Blackfeet and up the Yellowstone for the Crows. As to the Crows there was no difficulty, but the Blackfeet, who were deadly enemies to the Americans, he could not well manage against their will, nor did he think it advisable to start up an outfit before learning how they were disposed. It happened at the time that there was then at the fort an old trapper named Berger, who had been in his young days in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, at the Fort of the Prairie, when Mr. John Rowand was in charge; and this having been a post for the Blackfeet, he had acquired the language and could speak it fluently. So Mr. McKenzie proposed to send Berger to the Blackfeet, to try to bring down a party with whom he would endeavor to make a treaty before sending up an outfit. Berger consented; but as this undertaking was extremely dangerous, Mr. McKenzie would not take it upon himself to order any of the men on the expedition. Not less than 12 men would do; but there was no difficulty in raising the required number of

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

volunteers, who were soon ready for the march. The forlorn hope, as they were called, started with the American flag unfurled, hardly expecting to return. But Mr. McKenzie was in good hopes, for they were young Canadians, who knew not a word of English, and the Blackfeet were accustomed to them, as they were also employed by the Hudson's Bay Company. He anticipated no danger, except that of being surprised by a war party while encamped, which was also Berger's fear. Having searched for the Blackfeet for about four weeks, the men were at last so fortunate as to discover a large camp, without being discovered themselves; and the time had come to try their pluck. "Blackfeet in sight — that awful tribe, of whom we have heard so many terrible stories — what is going to be our fate?" was the talk. Some moves were made to abandon the idea of entering the camp, and to skedaddle if possible; but old man Berger was grit, and succeeded in getting his men along. He knew the Indian customs as well as their language; the men put great confidence in him, and determined to follow, saying, "Now for the butcher shop!" Berger took the lead with the flag bearer by his side, and his little frightened party close in the rear. Soon after they had got on their march they were discovered, and in less time after that a large party of mounted Indians were making for them at full speed. Berger, having caused his little party to stop, advanced with the flag bearer. The Indians, perceiving this maneuver, and not knowing what to make of it, paused for a while. Berger advanced, and when at a hearing distance cried out his name; at which they rushed up to shake hands, and the party which had kept their position were ordered to come up. How their pulses quickened and their hearts thumped is not hard to imagine, for fear had not entirely left them, and they did not know what fate was reserved for them in the Blackfoot camp. They would have preferred to turn back, but it was too cowardly as well as too late, and on they had to go. On entering camp there was great yelling and shouting in all directions; but after this had subsided they were lodged, feasts commenced, and all was done in such a friendly manner that the boys began to feel reassured. When Berger had made his intentions known, a party of 40 Indians consented to accompany him to the Yellowstone. None of them had ever been there, and some showed a little reluctance; at which Berger, in order to induce them to come, represented the distance to be somewhat shorter than it really was. The party was soon ready, and they all set off. Then came trouble and renewed fear in camp, for the Indians soon commenced to complain of the distance, thinking a trap had been laid by the whites to destroy them, and it was with great difficulty that Berger could make them agree to proceed. Things began to look rather dark, but at last they consented to go on a few days more. One night, when they had come within one day's march of the fort, as Berger knew very well, the Indians swore they would go no further — that he had lied to them, and they would have revenge. Berger was put to his trumps; but, being sure of reaching the fort next day, made them a speech, saying, "I tell you you will be in the fort to-morrow, smoking the pipe of peace with the great chief who sent me. Here I am with my party and horses; if I don't bring you to the fort to-morrow, you are welcome to my scalp and all the horses." This struck them with a great deal of force, and they consented to go on another day. Next morning an early start was made to give ample time to finish the journey, and about three in the afternoon they arrived on a ridge, in full view of the fort, where they sat down to smoke and vermilion themselves. Soon they saw the large flag hoisted, heard the cannon firing, and a little while after that the forlorn hope, with all the Blackfeet, entered Fort Union. In course of time a treaty was made, and next spring [1831] an outfit was started under Mr. James Kipp, with instructions to build at the mouth of Marias River, which was the first trading post established for the Blackfeet,

and called Fort McKenzie. Fort Cass was built next spring [1832]; and after those two forts were established, the Upper Missouri Department was formed, of which Mr. McKenzie was the agent. Berger received \$800 per annum as interpreter for the Blackfeet.

Having done my best to post the reader on these matters [of 1827-33], I resume my personal narrative. Yet a few words more in reference to the energy of Mr. McKenzie, who once remarked to me, in a conversation on Indian trade, that his intention had been at that time to extend the trade into the Rocky Mountains; and that, not feeling disposed to do so without a charter, he made application to the government; but that ours being a free government, no charter could be allowed him, and thus the project was abandoned.

After the flogging of our gentlemen nothing special took place until a certain free trapper named Augustin Bourbonnais came down the Missouri in a canoe. As it was yet early, about the 1st of November [1836], his idea was to keep on to Fort Clark and winter there. But as he found many of his friends at Union, he changed his plans and made up his mind to spend the winter at this place. He had been lucky on his hunt, and had about a pack of beaver, worth something like \$500, which made him feel rich and quite able to pass a pleasant winter. Bourbonnais was only about 20 years of age, a very handsome fellow, and one thing in his favor was his long yellow hair, so much admired by the female sex of this country. This they call pah-ha-zee-zee, and one who is so adorned is sure to please them. A few days before his arrival Mr. McKenzie, who was nearly 50 years old, and perhaps thought it was too cold to sleep alone in winter, had taken to himself a pretty young bedfellow. Mr. Bourbonnais had not been long in the fort before he went shopping, and very soon was seen strolling about the fort in a fine suit of clothes, as large as life, with his long pah-ha-zee-zee hanging down over his shoulders; if he had looked well in his buckskins, he surely looked charming then. Cupid, I suppose, commenced to shoot his arrows so fast that they struck Bourbonnais, unfortunately for himself, as they also had Mr. McKenzie; and as such arrows generally wound to the heart, Mr. McKenzie determined to go on the war path. Being somewhat advanced in age, he found he could not carry on the war with arrows; so he armed himself with a good-sized cudgel and watched his opportunity. It happened one evening that Mr. Bourbonnais, encouraged by favorable returns of affection, went so far as to enter the apartments reserved for Mr. McKenzie. The latter, hearing some noises which he thought he ought not to have heard, rushed in upon the lovers and made such a display of his sprig of a shillelah that Mr. Bourbonnais incontinently found his way not only out of the house but also out of the fort, with Mr. McKenzie after him. It was amusing to see the genteel Mr. Bourbonnais, in his fine suit of broadcloth, with the tail of his surtout stretched horizontally to its full extent; but, unfortunately for the poor fellow, he would not let the affair end in that way, and swore vengeance on Mr. McKenzie. Of course, having been driven out of the fort with a club, he did not think it proper or consistent with his dignity to attempt to enter again; so he took board and lodging in an Indian tent, many of which were pitched near the fort, and all his effects were delivered to him. Then it was reported that Mr. McKenzie would be killed; for, "kill him I must," Bourbonnais had said; but, thinking that his angry passion would soon subside, we made or thought little of the threat. Yet, sure enough, he was seen next morning dressed again in buckskin, with his rifle on his shoulder and pistol in his belt, defying Mr. McKenzie to come out of the fort and swearing that he would kill him if he had to remain on the watch for him all winter. Still thinking that such performances would not last long, Mr. McKenzie preferred to remain a day or so in the fort, rather than have

any further disturbance. But Bourbonnais kept up his guard longer than Mr. McKenzie felt like remaining a prisoner in his besieged fort; in consequence of which a council of all the clerks was called with the view of raising the siege either by persuasion or by force, and so it was agreed that Bourbonnais' life was to be taken in case he could not be induced to desist. As a measure of precaution a written instrument was immediately prepared and presented to the men of the fort, to sign if they thought proper, and they were particularly informed that the main object was to scare Bourbonnais away — as in reality it was. Next morning one of his friends was sent to him on the part of Mr. McKenzie, to notify him of what had taken place, and to advise him to leave; but that availed not, for he continued his hostile demonstrations. Having given him ample time to change his mind, and seeing that he did not budge, a mulatto named John Brazo — a man of strong nerves and a brave fellow, who had on several occasions been employed to flog men at the flagstaff — was sent for and asked if he thought he had nerve enough to shoot Bourbonnais, in case he should be desired to do so. To which he replied, "Yes, sir — plenty!" "Well, will you do it?" "Yes, sir; I am ready at any time." John was then ordered to take his rifle into one of the bastions, and shoot when he got a chance. John, as good as his word, took his position. I recollect that it was early one Sunday morning, a little before sunrise, when Brazo came to my room, saying, "Mr. Larpenteur, I have shot Bourbonnais." As none of the men were up, I went to apprise Mr. McKenzie of it, who said, "Has Brazo killed him?" Bourbonnais had fallen, but it was not yet known whether he had been killed or only wounded, and I was told to take three or four men to see about it. Mr. E. T. Denig, the bookkeeper, who understood some little surgery, went with us. When we reached the spot we found Bourbonnais only wounded and that not mortally, the ball having struck him above the right breast, and gone out through the right shoulder. He was then brought into the men's quarters, where his wounds were dressed by Mr. Denig, but it was not until the following spring that he was able to leave the fort. He remarked that when he was shot he was on his way to his canoe, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, with the intention of going down to Fort Clark. He left early in the spring and what became of him I never heard; as he was quite pale and not entirely cured when he left, it was thought he might die.

Now, gentle reader, that story is told, and next comes one concerning myself, which has nothing to do with Cupid's arrows, but something to say of those made and shot by Indians. That same spring, on the 1st of March [1837], an express arrived with the information that an individual named Millieu was coming with a small outfit to trade with a band of Canoe Assiniboines who generally remained in the neighborhood of White River, and requesting Mr. McKenzie to send a party from Fort Union to oppose him. I was pitched upon to go, and next day started down with a small outfit on three one-mule sleds. These Canoes were considered at that time the worst band of Assiniboines — great thieves and troublesome to the traders; they seldom came to the fort and left it without committing depredations, and it had happened that they stole several head of horses the previous fall. As liquor was the surest means to recover stolen horses, I was provided with the article for that purpose, as well as for another. But as luck would have it, I was prevented from reaching the Indian camp on this trip, for at our first camp, which was at the Big Muddy River, 24 miles below Union, a young Assiniboine appeared with a letter from Mr. McKenzie, requesting me to turn back, as Millieu had been killed by the Sioux and there would be no opposition; besides which, the Indians had threatened to cut the ears off my mules, and would be likely to rob me. Early next morning we were on our way back to Fort Union, which we reached in good time

that day.

Having been quietly reinstated in my former functions, I thought no more of taking a tramp until another express brought the information that the Opposition had come up river and were already with the band of Canoes; and that Mr. D. D. Mitchell, the person in charge of Fort Clark, had sent a half-breed named Pierre Garreau after them, but requested Mr. McKenzie in the meantime to send some few goods, such as Garreau did not have. I was called on again, and started next day with three dog-sleds and some liquor, to recover the stolen horses if possible. The third day I arrived in camp, which was then called the Tobacco Garden; it was 100 miles by water from Union. Soon after my arrival I sent for the chiefs, and told them that the chief of the big fort had requested me to assemble them to assist me in recovering the stolen horses, and that I would make them a present of a little liquor. I then gave them each a pint of whiskey. Two of the horses were soon brought to me, for which I gave the Indians a small keg containing one gallon. For fear that those horses might be retaken, I mounted two good men upon them, and ordered them to put for the fort. There was an Indian by the name of Pet-cah-shah, which is their word for Tortoise, who was known as the greatest scamp of this band; he was the son of their biggest chief, and the identical genius who had stolen the horses. The liquor trade meanwhile commenced. Mr. Tortoise got very drunk, and rushed into my lodge, saying, "You are the meanest white man I ever saw — you traded a lodge from me too cheap last fall — you would not give me the knife I asked you for." He went on enumerating his grievances and exclaimed, "I will kill you to-night!" We knew he was not a bit too good to do it, and soon heard him yelling in an awful manner. Suddenly he rushed into the lodge with his bow and arrows, and had it not been for a young Indian — a friend of mine — who had time to draw his knife and cut the bow string, very likely I should not now be writing. After this performance he came up to me holding a handful of arrows with which he punched me in the breast, saying, "You dog of a white man, I will kill you yet!" He rushed out again and was soon seen with a short Indian gun cocked, but it was taken out of his hands by main force and the priming removed. Then he went to the fire, from which he took out some large smoldering chunks of wood and commenced to rub his dirty head with them, making the live coals fly in all parts of the lodge, as though he intended to set it afire. I don't believe Old Nick himself could have cut a worse figure in his infernal regions. But he was plainly getting too drunk for this sort of thing to last; after cutting a few more capers he rushed out again, and this was the last we saw of him that night.

Soon after that another and still uglier-looking devil of an Indian made his appearance, rushing about in the same manner. This was Hooting Owl, upward of six feet tall, blind in one eye, naked but for his breech-clout, painted in a most hideous manner, and with a long scalper in his hand. Standing immediately before us, he commenced to talk at a great rate, and was apparently very angry; but what he meant by his remarks I could not understand, as I was not well acquainted with the language. But from his postures and gestures I made sure we were gone up this time. To strengthen me in this belief he began to tear up the ground with his long knife, like a furious bull; then, without saying another word, rushed out of the lodge. I asked Garreau what this meant, to which he replied that the Indian was all right; he had only been saying that he had just heard how we had been treated by the Tortoise, and that he intended to cut up the first Indian who should trouble us again, just as he had cut up the ground. This was good news, and I thought that if I were to adopt a bird as an emblem, I would take the hooting owl in preference to the eagle. I had

already made away with the liquor on the sly, as the Indians would not let me do so publicly; the noise subsided and finally ceased, and thus the frolic ended.

Next morning some chiefs and big men came to express their regret that I had been so badly treated, and everything went on quite smoothly; but Mr. Pet-cah-shah never showed himself again. My orders being not to remain more than three days, and not knowing the way back from this camp to the Big Muddy, but wishing to make the fort the same day — a distance of 40 miles — I hired an Indian as guide. When I told him that I intended to reach the fort that day he remarked that I could not do it; that we would have to travel at night, which was impossible, on account of the prickly pears. Seeing him determined to turn back when we had come in sight of Big Muddy, and knowing the road myself from that river to the fort, I agreed to let him go. I sat down, took out my pocket book, and drew him an order for what he was to receive for his trouble, as Garreau could neither read nor write. Although I was not much of a draughtsman he understood the picture very well when I was through with the drawing, which indicated a looking-glass, a number of hawk-bells, a knife, a pallet of vermilion, and a piece of scarlet cloth in the shape of a breech-clout — though this last I had to explain to him. After he had got this and smoked his pipe we separated, and about eleven o'clock at night I entered Fort Union with my feet nearly frozen. As this was the end of March, and it had thawed all day, the river bottom was all water; but at sundown the wind changed to the northwest, the water commenced to freeze, and when I got to the fort my moccasins were so hard frozen that I had to let them thaw before I could get them off. Had there been an hour longer to travel, my feet would surely have been frozen.

Thus ended my first introduction to an Indian camp. Hoping that I should never have another occasion, I went to bed and slept soundly; but it will be seen in the sequel that I was frustrated in my hopes, if my reader will have the patience to read this book through. As I have to go on with my stories in rotation, it will be some time before I again take him to trade whiskey in an Indian camp.

After my return from the Canoe camp nothing worthy of remark took place until the arrival of the steamer, late in June [1837]. The mirth usual on such occasions was not of long duration, for immediately on the landing of the boat we learned that smallpox was on board. Mr. J. Halsey, the gentleman who was to take charge this summer, had the disease, of which several of the hands had died; but it had subsided, and this was the only case on board. Our only apprehensions were that the disease might spread among the Indians, for Mr. Halsey had been vaccinated, and soon recovered. Prompt measures were adopted to prevent an epidemic. As we had no vaccine matter we decided to inoculate with the smallpox itself; and after the systems of those who were to be inoculated had been prepared according to Dr. Thomas' medical book, the operation was performed upon about 30 Indian squaws and a few white men. This was done with the view to have it all over and everything cleaned up before any Indians should come in, on their fall trade, which commenced early in September. The smallpox matter should have been taken from a very healthy person; but, unfortunately, Mr. Halsey was not sound, and the operation proved fatal to most of our patients. About 15 days afterward there was such a stench in the fort that it could be smelt at the distance of 300 yards. It was awful — the scene in the fort, where some went crazy, and others were half eaten up by maggots before they died; yet, singular to say, not a single bad expression was ever uttered by a sick Indian. Many died, and those who recovered were so much disfigured that one could scarcely recognize them. While the epidemic was at its height a party of about 40

Indians came in, not exactly on a trade, but more on a begging visit, under the celebrated old chief Co-han; and the word was, "Hurry up! Open the door!" which had been locked for many days, to keep the crazy folks in.

Nothing else would do — we must open the door; but on showing him a little boy who had not recovered, and whose face was still one solid scab, by holding him above the pickets, the Indians finally concluded to leave. Not long afterward we learned that more than one-half of the party had died — some said all of them. In the course of time the fort became clear of the smallpox, but the danger of infection continued. Fort William was still standing, and the remaining houses, which were no longer inhabited, were used as hospitals for Indians, with no other attendants than some old squaws. It became the duty of John Brazo to take out the dead and dump them into the bushes, and some mornings, on asking him "How many?" he would say, "Only three, sir; but, according to appearances in the hospital, I think I shall have a full load to-morrow or next day." This seemed to be fun for Brazo, but was not for others, particularly myself, as I happened to be the trader, who was liable to be shot at any time; but, singular to say, not even a threat was made, though the tribe was reduced more than one-half by next spring [1838]. Trade continued very nearly up to the average; on being asked how it happened that there were so many robes brought in, the Indians would say laughingly that they expected to die soon, and wanted to have a frolic till the end came. The winter [of 1837-38] was spent in great suspense and fear, but, fortunately, nothing serious occurred except some few shots fired at me through the wicket during the night liquor trade; and as this had frequently happened before, it was not attributed to revenge for the smallpox.

Chapter 8  
(1838)

#### ROUND TRIP TO THE STATES

It happened that this was an open winter; the ice broke up early in March, and the river was clear on the 22d of that month, at which date I left for Baltimore in a small canoe, with Mr. Robert Christy of St. Louis. He had come up in the fall to winter at Fort Union for his health, and becoming anxious to return, had made up his mind to leave, in spite of all the dangers represented to him. On my part, I had not seen my parents for ten years, and as this early start would give me ample time to visit them, until our party should be ready to return in the fall, nothing could persuade me out of the notion. Mr. D. D. Mitchell, a member of the Company, and very much of a gentleman, got me to engage for another year, previous to my departure, allowing my wages to run on during my absence; so this trip was considered as a furlough.

Matters being thus well fixed Mr. Christy and I left, with two men to row our canoe.

The day was calm and beautiful; and we made good speed. I was young, and full of mirth at the idea of returning to my parents, whom I intended to take by surprise, and many other fine plans I had formed made me so happy that I forgot the danger of Indians. Suddenly a party of them, who had concealed themselves along the river banks, rose up with their bows and arrows, ready to shoot. We were not more than 20 yards from them, and their work of destruction would have been quickly done had it not been for one among them whom we saw running to and fro with his bow in his hand, striking right and left. He finally succeeded in preventing the threatened attack; and, as one can imagine, the progress of our little craft was speedily increased. We were told, on our return, by Mr. Chardon, a member of the Company in charge of Fort Clark, that we had no

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

idea how near we came to losing our lives on that occasion. Those Indians were a party of 80 Rees [Arikaras], who had gone to war on the Assiniboines; and had it not been for their partisan's great influence over them we surely would have all been killed. The Rees had had the smallpox severely, and were therefore badly disposed toward the whites. This was fright No. 1, after which I remember well the first words spoken by Mr. Christy: "Larpenteur, I think we had better stayed at Union." But it was already too late to repent; we were under way and could not turn back.

At ten o'clock of the second day after this, when we were near Heart River, on the south side of the Missouri, we discovered six Indians, who had gone hunting while the ice was still strong; but it had broken up before their return, and now they had no means of crossing the river. Thinking this a good opportunity to save themselves the trouble of making their own boat, they made signs to us to come for them. These Indians belonged to the band of Canoe Assiniboines, who had had the smallpox badly, and whom I had known to accept pay for being ferried over the river, instead of paying us for the privilege; so of course I declined the job. As soon as they saw our craft steered away from them, they threw off their robes, and, with nothing on but their leggings and breech-clouts, ran to head us off. This they were near doing, as we had to go close to the shore to avoid the waves caused by the strong current washing against sand bars. As we approached they seated themselves, steadied their guns with the ramrods to take good aim, and let fly at us. But by this time we had got a little ahead of them, rowing all the time with all our might, though we could see the flashes from the muzzles of their guns and hear the bullets strike the water. Mr. Christy, who was steering, dodged like a duck passing under a bridge, to avoid the balls which whistled about his ears. We soon got out of their reach, but this danger was not the worst that appeared. The Indian camp was only a little way off, and, having heard the firing, they were all on the alert, thinking we were enemies. They soon found out the cause of the firing, and ran down to the next bend with the intention of giving us another volley. They fired at us again, but, fortunately for us, the river was wide, the current free from waves, and we could keep our distance from the shore. Bullets fell on the water like hail, some even beyond us, and three of them lodged in our canoe. These we afterward extracted with our knives. At length, finding ourselves out of danger, and also out of breath after having paddled with all our might through two attacks, those who had pipes began to smoke, and jocose remarks were made in regard to our scare. Some said, "This is fright No. 2; I wonder what No. 3 is going to be? It cannot fail to happen, as we have already had two in so short a distance, and the third time we must surely go up!" I began to feel like agreeing with Christy, that we had better have remained at Union.

After the pipes were emptied, the paddles were again plied, and our little wounded craft slid down stream gently. We kept on in a pleasant manner until next day, at about eleven o'clock, when we discovered a large number of Indians on the south side of the river, running back and forth and gathering on a small hill quite near the bank. Their maneuvers appearing hostile to us, we knew not what to do, and began to fear we were surely gone up this time. It was thought best to land on the opposite shore, to decide upon what course to adopt, and it was left optional with each one to 'take it by land or water. Not feeling like footing it, I went in for the boat; and after a little further parley, seeing me determined to do so, they all agreed to follow my example. So I placed a good supply of tobacco on the bow of the canoe, in full sight, to produce a good effect, if possible, and on we started. When they saw us coming they increased in number and our fears rose in proportion; but keep on we must. When our fears were at the highest pitch we perceived an individual

---

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

with pants and a red flannel shirt on, looking very much like a white man. To our surprise and joy, we found that it was old Mr. Charbonneau, who had been 40 years among the Missouri Indians. He used to say that when he first came on the river it was so small that he could straddle it. Imagine our joy to find ourselves befriended instead of butchered, as we had thought we were surely going to be. The tobacco was presented to such Indians as the old gentleman advised, and we resumed our paddles.

Charbonneau told us that we were then something like 70 miles from Fort Clark, but thought that we would be detained by the ice, as frequently happened, this being about the most northern point on the Missouri. Gladdened again, fright No. 3 being over, and fairly under way, we traveled well the balance of that day. The next day we found but little current, and had to paddle hard to make much headway. We went on thus until about three in the afternoon, when we found the river nearly blocked by large dykes, which had formed across it and caused the slowness of the current; but we forced our way through a narrow channel, and kept on by hard paddling. By the time we were about 10 miles from Fort Clark the dyke broke loose and the ice came down upon us with such a rush, and tossing our canoe like an old log at such a rate, that we thought ourselves in greater danger of our lives than we had been from the Indians; but at last it brought our canoe of its accord to shore about a mile above the fort, where we were obliged to remain two days till the ice subsided. Mr. F. A. Chardon, who was then in charge, and a very singular kind of a man, entertained us in the best manner. Mr. Christy had a two-gallon keg of good whiskey, of which Mr. Chardon was so fond that he helped himself about every fifteen minutes, saying he had "a great many worms in his throat" — to the sorrow of Mr. Christy, who found his keg so nearly empty that he concluded to make Mr. Chardon a present of what was left. We remained there two days; on the third we took leave of Mr. Chardon who, not knowing he was to fall heir to the balance of the whiskey, and not having as yet destroyed all the worms in his throat, would have been glad for us to remain another day, and insisted very strongly that we should do so. I cannot say whether it was because the whiskey had been put on board before Mr. Christy made up his mind about it, that Mr. Chardon accompanied us to the boat, or whether he did so through politeness; but he felt very happy at the presentation, and hastened back to the fort in double-quick time.

All right and off again; and I am glad to say that, with the exception of high winds, which at times kept us, for three days together, camped in the willows, nothing took place worth mentioning — till we reached the Vermilion Post. Mr. Dickson, who shortly afterward committed suicide, was in charge, and showed us great kindness during the night we stayed with him. After relating to him our narrow escapes, he remarked that we were now out of danger, being among a different kind of Indians. This information sounded pleasant.

After a good breakfast next morning we left the kind Mr. Dickson, who, it appeared, did not quite know his Indians; for we had not made more than 20 miles when a volley of rifle-shots was fired at us by a deer-hunting party of Omahas. Fortunately we happened to be in a wide part of the river. The attack was so sudden that we had no time for fright before it was over; but, after this, we came to the conclusion that we could not consider ourselves safe until we reached the States. In constant dread of Indians, we kept paddling on our way, trusting to good luck to get out of the Indian country; it was a long way to travel, as there was no settlement at that time on the Missouri above Independence, Mo. Our provisions were getting low, and altogether we were not in very good humor. On reaching the mouth of the Platte we perceived a steamer; and as but one steamer

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

a year came that far up, we made sure it was the Company's boat. Our hearts were glad, expecting to hear all the news and procure a supply of eatables. We were soon on board the Antelope — that being her name. Mr. McKenzie, who was on his way to Fort Union, was much surprised to see me. Said he, "My God! Larpenteur, what's the matter? Why have you come down so early in the season?" After learning the circumstances and being assured that all was right above, he became reconciled, and told me that he had been to my father's, in Baltimore, and had left them all well; "but go on," said he, "they will be very glad to see you." After a little more talk, we continued down river, well supplied with provisions and in a very good humor, though we had still a long distance to paddle. A few days after leaving the steamer we reached a small town called Camden, where we met a boat bound for Fort Leavenworth, and made arrangements for our passage to St. Louis on her return, which we awaited at this little town. Having no further use for our little craft, we made a present of it to our two men, and next day we were comfortably lodged on board the steamer, whose name I have forgotten, as well as that of the captain. Great was the change, after paddling our own canoe for a month through all kinds of dangers, to find ourselves seated at table and gliding down stream at the rate of 20 miles an hour. At that rate it was not many days before we reached St. Louis.

I left next day for Baltimore by stage to Louisville, thence to Cincinnati, thence to Brownsville; then stage again to Baltimore. But at that time the stage stopped at Frederickstown — I believe 40 miles from Baltimore — where we took cars which were propelled by horse power, not having as yet any engine.

As it is mostly my object to relate what happened in the Indian country, I will merely state here that I had great pleasure in seeing my relatives again, after the absence of 10 years; and as nothing was spared to make my stay agreeable, I enjoyed myself very much. Leaving the reader to imagine the surprise of my unexpected return, I will soon take him with me on the way back to Fort Union. But, before starting up the Missouri, I will give a little incident of my return to St. Louis. This took place in a small town in the Alleghany Mountains called McConnellstown, and will show how one may get praised without deserving it, as happened to be my case. Mr. Denig, the bookkeeper of Fort Union, whose parents resided in this town, had given me a letter of introduction to his father, the doctor, and also a letter of his own to his parents, both of which I delivered with pleasure, as the place was on the stage route. There was great rejoicing on my arrival at Dr. Denig's. The old gentleman was about fifty and the old lady not far from it; both were good, respectable people, who paid all the attention to me that could be expected. I remained three days, during which a report was circulated that there was, at the Doctor's, a certain gentleman who was said to be a crack shot. So a target was prepared for a shooting match. Although I did not consider myself a marksman, and, in reality, was not, I accepted the challenge. There was no betting — it was merely to try me as a sharpshooter. Their best marksman was picked out — one that could knock out a squirrel's eye on the top of the highest tree in the mountains at every pop. Accompanied by the two sons of Dr. Denig, and two hired men, we started for the appointed place, where a large crowd of all sorts of people was awaiting my arrival, with targets all ready for action! The conditions were best three out of five shots at thirty paces, unless the center was driven. My opponent was a stout, fine-looking Pennsylvania Dutchman named Keizer. It was my first shot, and I made a close one; he shot nearly a tie; but out of the five I happened to have the best three. The target was taken down and handed to me, and another immediately put up. It was my

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

first shot again, close to the black on the right side; Keizer shot next, on the left, somewhat nearer than mine. Then came my second shot, when I remarked, by way of braggadocio, being far from expecting to make good my boast, "Now, gentlemen, this is what I like! When there is a shot on each side of the black, it serves as a guide to me, and I generally drive the center." As much to my own surprise as to that of all the rest, it was driven — so well that this could not have been more precisely done by hand. Imagine the looks in that crowd, disappointed to see their crack man so badly beaten! But Keizer said it was owing to his having chased his sheep that day, which made him so nervous that he could not shoot. I put both targets in my pocketbook, and brought them to Mr. Denig at Union. Old Dr. Denig was well pleased, and said, "Were I in your place, now that your name is up, I would not shoot any more." Neither did I.

Next day I left McConnellstown, and nothing took place worth mentioning on the journey to St. Louis until our departure thence for Fort Union. I should have said before that I left Baltimore on the 13th of September, 1838. Mr. D. D. Mitchell, who had come down in the steamer, and was about to return to Union, was our chief; besides whom, Clerk Jacques Bruguière, myself, and two men composed the party. We traveled on pleasantly until we reached Ponca Creek, when most of our men were taken with fever and ague at such a rate that, instead of eating down they were all throwing up. This kept us two or three days longer than we should have stayed at the creek. The day we left to strike for White Earth River I was taken with such an awful shake that, when on horseback, I could keep my seat only by holding on with all my might to my rifle across my saddle; and I cut such a figure that it excited the mirth of the party, who laughed at me all through their pretended sympathy. After the shake came the fever, and then thirst — but no water — I thought I should die for want of water. I had two such shakes before we arrived at Fort Pierre, where we remained two days. Mr. Halsey gave me some good medicine, and after a couple of light shakes I recovered entirely. Then came the tremendous appetite. I was really ashamed of myself at meal time. But Mr. Mitchell was very liberal in helping us to well-filled plates, and when he saw that I had made away with the contents of mine, would say, "Back up your cart, Larpenteur, for another load." Only those who have traveled the prairie know what a voracious appetite is acquired on such tramps. Having had the ague, which is always followed by an increase of the regular prairie appetite, we became ravenous, and soon made away with our provisions. Three days before our arrival at Fort Clark, at the Mandans, we were out of everything except sugar and coffee; for, singular to say, even at that early period buffalo had become scarce.

Thus far I had proved myself to be about the best hunter in the company, having killed some few antelopes, badgers, and prairie-dogs, as we had been all this time in the open prairies. When we were approaching Fort Clark, and had reached the points of timber of the Missouri, I proposed to Mr. Mitchell to try my luck in search of deer, as our rations had given out and we had but one cup of coffee left. He readily consented, saying, "Take Brazo along; he is somewhat of a hunter." Having been told where he would camp, I and my man started together; but we soon separated, each choosing his own direction through the wooded point. I soon perceived a fine large buck. I knew that my old horse would stand fire — you might shoot off the whole of the United States artillery around him without making him move — standing still was his forte. I rose in my stirrups and pulled the trigger; but away went the buck, not without leaving a lock of his hair, which I saw fly. Being sure that I had made a good shot, I got off my steady old horse and commenced the search. In the meantime Brazo, who had heard the shot, came up and asked what I had fired at. I replied,

“A large buck, which I am sure I wounded.” So he joined me in the search; but, as I could find no blood, I soon proposed to abandon the trail. Brazo then remarked, “No, Mr. Larpenteur, I have seen blood; let us look a little while longer.” Encouraged by this we resumed our search, and in less than ten minutes we saw the fine buck, stretched dead, having been shot through the heart. In a little while he was cut up and put on my horse, and we were on our way to camp. Brazo, not liking the idea of coming into camp without any game, struck out to try his luck again. I did not expect to get any more game on the way to camp; but luckily came full on a band of five deer, which stood about 80 paces from me. I drew a bead on one of them, which fell at the crack of the gun. No need looking for this one, as it was shot through the neck. Poor Brazo, who had got but a little way off, came up to ask what I had killed. I told him “A fine fat doe.” “Well, you are in luck!” said he. Having cut up the meat and loaded it on Brazo’s horse, we struck for camp, which we reached just at dark. I leave the reader to imagine the exclamations of joy made at the sight of so much fine meat; but the question arose, “Who killed all that?” I said I had killed both deer. Then it was “Hurrah for Larpenteur! Come, boys, get up your kettles!” While the kettles were boiling French voyageur songs resounded, and all felt quite set up except poor Brazo, who seemed to be down in the dumps.

The third day we entered Fort Clark early and found Mr. Chardon in charge, who received us with hoisted flag and several rounds from his small piece of artillery. There we took supplies to last us to Union, and the following morning resumed our journey, Mr. Mitchell being our boss and guide. It was now October and the mornings were getting quite cold, with heavy white frosts. The second morning after we left Fort Clark my old horse tumbled into a miry little creek, and, not being able to extricate himself, came down broadside before I could jump out of the saddle. When they saw me so well drenched they could not refrain from indulging in mirth at my misfortune. Our guide, not being very well scienced, struck too far south, in consequence of which we were three nights without wood and had to burn buffalo chips; but, as good luck would have it, we were favored with clear, dry weather and could make good fires. But our animals fared badly, as the route we took brought us into alkali country; some we had to leave, and others died at the fort. On the fifth day after we left Fort Clark we struck White River, too far up; but we got into some scrawly timber, which was mighty good after having nothing but buffalo chips to burn for three nights. Brazo, who was in the habit of coming into camp last, said he had heard dogs barking, and also thought he had heard squaws talking, and added, “There’s Indians close by.” This news put a stop to our pleasant feelings and a guard was set. Apprehending attack early in the morning, sleep was light that night; but we happened to be mistaken in our apprehensions. Daylight came all right, breakfast was gotten up, and still no Indians; so we commenced to think Brazo had been mistaken. But we had not left camp more than an hour when some one cried out, “Indians!” Before any preparations could be made, a whole host was upon us; but we soon found that they were some Assiniboines who had camped a little above where we did last night; it was only on account of our late arrival that they had not discovered us. They told us it would take us two more days to get to Fort Union, for our horses were poor and we could not travel fast. Some of the leading men proposed to go along with us, which was agreed upon; for the sake of a little whiskey they would have gone any distance. But some of the rabble followed, whose looks we did not like, and whom we would have been glad to see turn back; for they looked very much like those who made it a habit to borrow, and forget to return, a white man’s horse. As they excited great suspicion, the

guard was doubled; but, in spite of all our precautions, they managed to get off with two horses, one of which belonged to an individual by the name of Antoine Frenier, a half-breed whom Mr. Mitchell had engaged at Fort Clark as interpreter for Fort Union. When he found that his favorite horse had been borrowed and was not likely to be returned, he began to give the Assiniboines such a blessing, with the aid of the Virgin Mary, whom he invoked to assist him in strengthening his remarks, that I defy any Catholic priest to make a better one. The Indians, who had learned by this time that he was to be the interpreter, were convinced, by this blessing, that he understood their language. In spite of all this we were under way by sunrise, with glad hearts after all, thinking that we had but once more to sleep outside, excepting the old interpreter, who now and then addressed a prayer to the Holy Virgin for the benefit of the Assiniboines, and to the great mirth of the company, sometimes in French and sometimes in Assiniboine, but always mixed with a little Cree, as he was a half-breed from the North. It seemed impossible for him to recover from the loss of his nag sufficiently to abstain from his devotions.

Our last camp was on the Big Muddy. Although we hoped that we had gotten rid of the horse thieves, it was thought proper to keep up a strong guard, which consisted of one-half of the party for each half of the night; but as it was very dark, the Assiniboines made out to take two of our best horses, one of which was Mr. Mitchell's. The chiefs said that they knew who had stolen the horses, and told us not to be uneasy, for we should get the animals back again. They proved as good as their word; our two horses were returned shortly afterward, though the interpreter's was never recovered. Thus, half consoled, we again got under way, and did not stop until we entered Fort Union, which we did about 4 p. m., with a salute of many shots from the artillery, and the large flag flying. This was on the 12th of October [1838]; and my reader can guess who felt good after a six-weeks' ride through the wild prairies.

Chapter 9  
(1838-42)

COMPOSED OF ALL SORTS

Thanks to kind Providence, here I am again in good old Fort Union, at a splendid table, with that great prairie appetite to do it justice. The day after my arrival I was reinstated in the liquor shop, and as it was the height of the meat trade I had enough to do, night and day. Excepting plenty of buffalo, deer, and rabbit hunting, nothing took place worth mentioning until Christmas [1838]. On this anniversary a great dinner is generally made, but that was never the case here, as it was always taken out in drinkables instead of eatables; and I, who did not drink, had to do without my dinner. At the height of the spree the tailor and one of the carpenters had a fight in the shop, while others took theirs outside, and toward evening I was informed that Marseillais, our hunter, had been killed and thrown into the fireplace. We immediately ran in, and sure enough, there he was, badly burned and senseless, but not dead yet. We were not at first sure whether this was the mere effect of liquor, or had happened from fighting; but we learned that a fight had taken place, and on examination we found that he had been stabbed in several places with a small dirk. Knowing that the tailor had such a weapon, we suspected him and demanded it. He was at that time standing behind his table; I saw him jerk the dirk out of his pocket and throw it under the table. I immediately picked it up; it was bloody, and from its size we judged it to be the weapon with which the wounds had been inflicted. Having learned that the carpenter had also been in the fight, they both were placed in irons and confined to await their trial. As such Christmas frolics

could not be brought to a head much under three days, the trial took place on the fourth day, when a regular court was held. Everything being ready, the criminals were sent for, the witnesses were well examined, and after a short session the jury returned a verdict, "Guilty of murder." The judge then pronounced sentence on the convicted murderers, which was that they be hanged by the neck, until they were "dead, dead, dead!" But, not considering it entirely safe to have this sentence executed, he changed it to thirty-nine lashes apiece. John Brazo was appointed executioner. Always ready for such sport, he immediately went in quest of his large ox-whip, and, not making any difference between men and oxen, he applied it at such a rate that Mr. Mitchell, the judge, had now and then to say, "Moderate, John, moderate"; for had John been suffered to keep on, it is very likely that the first sentence would have been executed.

After this everything went on perfectly smooth. A very large trade was made, and everybody was satisfied; and in time preparations were made to take down the returns. On the 3d of June [1839] I was sent to St. Louis in charge of eight Mackinaw boats, each containing 250 packs of buffalo robes, besides many small furs. The trip was very pleasant, with the exception of being nearly shot by Assiniboines at the same place where we had been attacked the previous spring. The disagreeable features of these trips are caused, mainly, by the crews getting whiskey and becoming unruly; but I managed to get along admirably well, and succeeded in landing all my boats safe in the port of St. Louis. These were the last landed there, as no companies would insure below St. Joseph, on account of the drunkenness of the men, which had caused the loss of many boats.

For what reason I have never been able to find out, though I always attributed it to that old tyrant, Mr. Laidlaw, the Company would not then hire me again; so I remained that winter [of 1839-40] in St. Louis. It happened during this time that Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Mitchell, and old Mr. Chabané got at difference with the American Fur Co., in consequence of which they raised a large outfit to oppose it; but by some means the misunderstanding was made up.

In the meantime I had been re-engaged, and arrangements were made for my return to Fort Union. On the 31st of March [1840] I was on the steamer Trapper, and after a long, tedious trip we reached Union on the 27th of June. My being a sober man was not much to my advantage, keeping me constantly in the liquor trade, and out of the charge of posts which some of my fellow-clerks took charge of, while I did all the work, and was really in charge when they got dead drunk. Mr. Laidlaw the Father, Mr. Denig the Son, and Mr. Jacques Bruguière the Holy Ghost, formed the Trinity at Union last [?] winter, and a trio of greater drunkards could not have been got together. The consequence was that the large meat trade was lost. Indians would trade robes with Mr. Laidlaw in the office, steal them back, and trade them again with Mr. Bruguière at the regular shop. The reason why Mr. Laidlaw opened trade in the office was, he said, that Bruguière got too drunk to hold out; but Laidlaw was the greater drunkard of the two.

About the latter part of May, 1842, Mr. Alexander Culbertson, who was in charge of Union, sent me up to Fort Van Buren, at the mouth of Rosebud River, on the Yellowstone, with a party of 10 men, to bring down the returns. He also instructed me to build another post at Adams Prairie, about 20 miles above, where he expected me to remain in charge, as he was not sure that Mr. Murray, who was then in charge of Van Buren, would be re-engaged. Next day we left Union, and a pleasant trip we had. Our guide, a young man by the name of Lee, who was a first-rate hunter, made us live on buffalo tongues and marrow bones. A few days after my arrival at Van Buren the boats were off with the returns, and I remained in charge of my first post.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Nothing of importance occurred during the time I remained at this place except one little incident, which I think deserves a place in this narrative. Two or three weeks after the boat left, a certain Mexican, who had been employed at Fort Union, made his appearance with his squaw nearly naked, and said to me, "Mr. Larpenteur, I will tell you the truth. I killed a squaw at the meat camp. I did not intend to kill her; but she made me mad. I took a stick, struck her on the back of the head, and she fell dead. I then ran off, fearing some of her connections, who were in camp. That is the whole truth, captain" — as he called me. "Now I am very poor," he continued, "and my India" — as he called his squaw — "is going to have a child. Will you please let me go into your fort? I will do anything you want me to do." Having but four men with me, all told, and seeing the Mexican so pitiable, I allowed him to come in. Mexicans being only fit to herd horses, I employed him on horse-guard. Had his India not been with him and so near confinement, I would not have given him that employment. For a while he did very well, being attentive to his duties, and all were pleased with him. One fine afternoon he came to me, saying, "My horses are all doing well. I have got them in a good safe place. Will you be so kind as to let me go with my India in search of some pomme blanche?" which is the French name for Indian turnips. As he had done so well and his India was so near her time, I consented, and off he started, assuring me that he would not be gone more than a couple of hours. But that time passed, and neither the Mexican nor his India appeared; and some of the men said they should not wonder if he had made his escape. This being the general impression, they examined a little old box in which he kept his duds and found it empty. I immediately sent after the horses, which we supposed he had mounted, but found them all right. Next morning, knowing the situation of his squaw, and thinking that he might be lurking around for a chance to steal horses, I sent my hunter and an old Crow in search of the Mexican, under promise of \$10 reward if they should find him. About 3 p.m., I saw them returning; the old Indian having the squaw behind him on his horse, with the child in her arms, and the Mexican trotting behind with nothing on but his shirt — thus all ready to be tied up to the flagstaff. This was immediately done, and he would have received a good dose, had not he begged so hard and looked so pitiable that he was let go unpunished. They had found him about 10 miles below the fort on the banks of the Yellowstone, where he had made a raft to cross over; but the raft, not being well constructed, came apart when in the middle of the river, and he lost all his duds except his shirt in saving his squaw, who, he said, had her child immediately on landing, the fright having hurried the birth. I pitied the squaw, but the Mexican I determined to ship off. So the next morning I gave him a skin boat, a little dried buffalo meat, a knife, a steel for striking fire, and a fish-hook and line, with which I told him to clear out and never make his appearance at this place again.

Not long after this occurrence Mr. Auguste Chouteau arrived with the outfit for the Crows, also bringing back the Mexican and his lady. On reprimanding him for so doing, he told me that he could not well help it, considering the situation in which he had found them. It had happened that the Mexican, on his way down river, saw a buffalo mired near the bank; and, having no meat, thought this would be a good opportunity to lay in a supply. Judge of his surprise when Mr. Bruin, who was lying in wait behind the buffalo, made a grab at the man, tearing him so badly that, when he was met by Mr. Chouteau, he was scarcely expected to live. Thus ends the story of the Mexican, except that, some time afterward, he was killed by the relations of the squaw he had murdered at Union.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Among the news that Mr. Chouteau brought up was that of Alexander Harvey's killing Isidoro, the Spaniard. As I shall have frequent occasion to mention Harvey, I will here give some idea of his character. He was a native of St. Louis, who served some time learning the saddle trade with Thornton Grimsley. As he happened to be one of those men that never can be convinced, and with whom it was no use to argue unless one wished to get into a fight, he remained but a short time at his trade. Though not yet of age he engaged with a fur-trapping company for the Rocky Mountains. Having found his way to the mouth of the Yellowstone about the time that Fort McKenzie was built, he engaged with the American Fur Company for that post. There he remained for a number of years [to fall of 1839]; but became so wicked and troublesome, and was so much feared by all hands at the fort, that reports were made to Mr. Chouteau in St. Louis, who sent him his discharge by the fall express, which did not reach Fort McKenzie until about Christmas. He was undoubtedly the boldest man that was ever on the Missouri — I mean in the Indian country; a man about six feet tall, weighing 160 or 170 pounds, and inclined to do right when sober. On hearing of his discharge, and being requested to report in person at St. Louis — which was simply to get him out of the country — he remarked, "I will not let Mr. Chouteau wait long on me. I shall start in the morning; all I want for my journey is my rifle, and my dog to carry bedding." Sure enough, in spite of all remonstrances regarding the hardships to which he would expose himself on such a long journey alone at that season of the year, he set out, good as his word.

Early in March he reached St. Louis, to the great astonishment of Mr. Chouteau, who, after hearing Harvey's story, and learning what a journey he had performed, could not but re-engage him to return to Fort McKenzie. He returned at the same time that I reached Union, in the steamer *Trapper* [June 27, 1840]. On the way up he now and then remarked to me, "Larpenteur, I have several settlements to make with those gentlemen who caused me last winter's tramp; I never forget or forgive; it may not be for ten years, but they all will have to catch it." Being as good as his word, at Fort Clark he pounded awfully one of the men who had reported him, saying, "That's No. 1." On his arrival at Fort Union, where many had come down with the returns, intending to go back with the outfit to Fort McKenzie, and never thinking of coming in contact with Harvey, they were much surprised when he made his appearance among about 60 men, in search of reporters; and at every glimpse he could get of one of them it was a knockdown, followed by a good pounding. Whiskey had nothing to do with this; he was perfectly sober, only fulfilling his promises. This will show what sort of a man Harvey was; but there is more to tell, and now we return to the Spaniard's story.

It was in 1841, when the Spaniard and Harvey happened to go down together with the returns, which were then taken in Mackinaw boats to St. Louis. Both intended to return in the steamer, which they expected to meet below Fort Pierre. The report was generally believed, though I placed no reliance on it, that a plot had been laid on the way up to Union, by some members of the American Fur Company, for the Spaniard to kill Harvey. Both had long been stationed at Fort McKenzie, but had never agreed, being jealous of each other and great enemies. The next day after the departure of the steamer — a day given to the men to look about and arrange their little effects — the Spaniard took occasion to commence hostilities, and was soon parading with his rifle, saying that he would kill Harvey. For the first time in his life Harvey was persuaded to remain in the house, supposing it was only liquor that caused the Spaniard to make those threats; so the day passed, and Harvey was still alive. The second day, all the clerks were called up to get the

---

equipments ready for Fort McKenzie. Mr. Culbertson, who was in charge of Union, came into the warehouse; not seeing the Spaniard with the other clerks, he asked where the man was, and, being told, sent for him. But Isidoro, instead of going to the warehouse, went into the retail store and remained behind the counter. Mr. Culbertson and Harvey both being in the store, Harvey began by asking the Spaniard what he meant by his behavior the day before. "You are too big a coward to come out and fight me like a man; you want to shoot me behind my back!" So saying, he left the store and dared the Spaniard to come out; but the latter never moved. When Harvey found that his enemy would not come out, he went back in the store and said, "You won't fight me like a man, so take that!" and shot him through the head. After this he went to the middle of the fort, saying, "I, Alexander Harvey, have killed the Spaniard. If there are any of his friends who want to take it up, let them come on"; but no one dared to do so, and this was the last of the Spaniard. Now we will set fire to Fort Van Buren, according to instructions, and proceed to erect Fort Alexander, which I named in honor of Mr. Alexander Culbertson.

Having burned Fort Van Buren, I left with 20 laboring men for Adams Prairie, 20 miles above by land, about 40 by water. With the exception of having my horses stolen by Assiniboines on two occasions, and going on a bear hunt with Indians, which latter incident I will narrate, nothing took place at Van Buren worth mentioning. The theft of the horses put me to a great deal of trouble, and was a great drawback in the building of the new fort. One fine evening, early in September [1842], a certain Crow returned from searching for his horses, saying that a Mr. Grizzly was breakfasting on one of them, and that, as one man was not enough to make the bear let go his prey, he came for assistance. A bear being considered by Indians a more dangerous enemy than a man, a good force was raised, and I, wishing to see the fun, volunteered to go with them. We soon came to the spot, where we saw Bruin lying fast asleep behind the remains of his breakfast. Knowing that Indians considered it braver to strike an enemy after he had been shot down, than to shoot him down, I was prepared to be very brave. When we were within 30 steps, one of the Indians made a little noise, at which the bear awoke and rose up to see who were the intruders. A volley was fired; the bear dropped dead behind his breastworks, and we all counted coups upon his carcass with our ramrods, I among the first.

Soon after that Mr. Chouteau returned from St. Louis to Fort Union, having gone down with Father De Smet, who was on his way from the Columbia to the States. His most important news was that a strong Opposition had arrived; the firm was Fox, Livingston and Co. of New York. They had come up in a steamer, with a large outfit, and were building a Mackinaw boat for the Crows' trade of the Yellowstone; so that we should have opposition here. This news I did not relish; for opposition is necessarily a great nuisance.

In the meantime the work on Fort Alexander was progressing finely; my men were good hands, determined to put up a well-built little fort, which was very near completion by the 15th of November [1842]. I was already in my quarters, very comfortably located, thinking that I was going to pass a pleasant winter with my family. Like all other traders, I had taken a better half, who had made me the father of my first child on the 9th of last August. But all these fine expectations were ended by the unexpected arrival of Mr. Murray, who had been engaged to take charge of Fort Alexander, with letters from Mr. Culbertson requesting me to return immediately to Fort Union, where I was wanted mightily bad in the liquor department. This was not the first time I had found out that being a sober man was no advantage to me.

---

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

I left next day with one man and two horses — one to ride and one to pack. As it was cold, and snow on the ground, I had to leave my better half behind. One of our horses soon gave out, and our trip of eight days was a tough one.

I should remark here that, about two weeks before I left Fort Alexander, a gentleman by the name of Frederick Groscloud arrived in charge of a Mackinaw boat, with a fine equipment. He had been formerly in the employ of Mr. Tulloch, and understood the Crow language, but was not considered a person of much force of character.

Chapter 10

(1843-44)

WINTERING AT WOODY MOUNTAIN

About the 1st of December, 1842, I made my entrance again in Fort Union. It was at night; a large trading party were at the highest pitch of drunkenness; boss and clerks not far behind them in this respect. But I did not find it strange or surprising. Mr. Culbertson, on seeing me, remarked, "Well, Larpenteur, I am mighty glad to see you. We are having a hot time, and I'm tired of it. I suppose you are tired, too, and want to go to sleep." I supposed that he, having drunk so much, did not think about eating, for I had not got that invitation as yet, so I replied, "I'm not so tired as I am hungry." "Well," said he, "there's plenty to eat." I ran to the kitchen, and the cook got me up a rousing supper. I ate too much, and next morning found myself foundered; but I had received orders to resume the grog department, and, notwithstanding my stiffness, went on to set things in order. They needed it very much.

In the course of time I was informed of the cause of this appointment. A certain individual by the name of Ebbitt had, a year previous, brought up a small equipment and made his way as far as the Sioux district. He had a small Mackinaw with 12 men, which was considered by the American Fur Company too slight an affair to oppose; in consequence of which he made a very profitable return of 500 packs of robes. Elated with his success he went to New York with his returns, and there formed an acquaintance with the great firm of Fox, Livingston and Co., telling them how cheaply he had traded, and also remarking that the American Fur Company so abused the Indians and clerks that everything was working against them — in fact, if a large company, such as would inspire confidence among whites and Indians, should be organized, the American Fur Company would soon leave the country. This story took well; such a company was formed, and started in charge of a gentleman by the name of Kelsey, one of the members of the new firm. Mr. Kelsey had not ascended the Missouri very far before he began to regret what he had done, which was that he had put \$20,000 into the concern. The farther he came up river the more he regretted it; and when he arrived at the mouth of the Yellowstone and saw Fort Union in its full splendor, he could not refrain from remarking to Mr. Culbertson, "Had I known how the American Fur Company were situated, I would have kept clear of investing in this opposition"; and concluded by saying, "I hope you will not be too hard on us." The old gentleman went off, leaving a man named Cotton in charge. Mr. Kelsey, who, according to agreement, was to remain in the Indian country and make his headquarters among the Sioux, chose a point 20 miles below Fort Pierre, opposite a beautiful island. Upon this there were four men living in a small cabin, which he considered his. He ordered them several times to leave; but they paid no attention to him, and remained in possession. One morning the old gentleman armed himself and determined to make the men leave. On entering the cabin he fired at one of them, who was in the act of taking a kettle off the fire, and who

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

fell dead in the fire. Another one, who ran out, was also shot, and fell dead over the fence. By that time a third man, who was trying to escape in double-quick time, was shot through the shoulder, of which wound he came near losing his life. During the following night the old gentleman made his escape. I was informed that he went to Mexico. This was the last of Mr. Kelsey.

Mr. Cotton, the person left in charge at Fort William, which he now called Fort Mortimer, had not yet got dry — he was still green cotton, full of Mr. Ebbitt's stories about the general discontentment of Indians and whites. He soon commenced to try his hand on one of the most important chiefs of the tribe, Crazy Bear, who, like many others, on learning that a big Opposition had arrived, came in with his band to pay them a visit. Mr. Cotton invited him into his room, made him a great speech, dressed him up in a splendid military suit, such as had never been brought into the country before, and then laid a two-gallon keg of whiskey at his feet. Crazy Bear's band was at Union, waiting for his return; but, instead of going directly to them, he went into Mr. Culbertson's private room, not very drunk, took a seat, and remained some time without saying a word. Mr. Culbertson, surprised to see him so splendidly dressed, and thinking that he had lost his chief, was also silent. Finally Crazy Bear broke the ice by saying, "I suppose you think I have left our big house. No; I am not a child. I went below to see the chief, who treated me well. I did not ask him for anything. I did not refuse his presents. But these cannot make me abandon this house, where are buried the remains of our fathers, whose tracks are yet fresh in all the paths leading to this place. No, I will not abandon this house!" After which he rose from his seat and took off his fine fur hat and feathers, which he threw on the floor with all his might; then unbuckled his beautiful sword, with which he did the same; and kept on till he had stripped himself of all his fine clothes, without speaking a word. When this performance was over he said to Mr. Culbertson, who stood in great astonishment, "Take away all these things and give me such as you see fit, and don't think I am a child who can be seduced with trinkets." This Crazy Bear, who was not at all crazy, proved afterward to be the greatest chief of the Assiniboines.

Mr. Cotton, on hearing of this, was so surprised he could scarcely believe it; but when Mr. Culbertson showed him the suit which had been badly torn, he was convinced, and began to think that Mr. Ebbitt's stories had been somewhat exaggerated. That was the way the green cotton commenced to dry. Still, his trade was pushed to the extreme. He had plenty of goods and was very liberal with them. Both sides then began to send out men to the Indian camps; but as all the most important camps were soon supplied, I began to think that I might escape that disagreeable trade. Being always an unlucky man, I was still disappointed in this.

One evening toward the last of January [1844], while I was thinking of anything but that which was forthcoming, Mr. Culbertson sent for me to come to his room. It was extremely cold and a great deal of snow was on the ground. This, I believe, was the reason he did not broach the subject at once, but finally said, "Larpenteur, I want you to go to Woody Mountain to a camp of Crees and Chippewas, who have plenty of robes, and have sent for traders from both companies. The Assiniboines have also sent for traders at the meat-pen, which is on the same road that you are going. I want you and Mr. Denig to go into the store, get up your equipment to-night, and start in the morning." Such were my orders, at short notice, after thinking I was going to remain at the fort. I had to make a trip of at least 100 miles, northward into the British possessions, and this was not calculated to make me feel very good. But Mr. Denig and I went to work, and at midnight the equipments were ready. Next morning with one sled apiece, two mules and one driver to each

---

sled, we started on our journey, accompanied by several Indians, among whom was one called Wounded Leg, chief of the band of the Rocks, whose camp was at the sand hills, about 60 miles on our road from the fort to Woody Mountain.

At our first camp my interpreter, a half-breed named Andrew, was taken sick; he complained of headache, and in the morning he was so ill that I had to let him go back to the fort. I understood some little Cree, and, as many of them spoke Assiniboine, I thought I could do without him. Next day we reached Wounded Leg's camp, and took a night's lodging with him. My friend Denig had been for the past few days in such a state that it was impossible for him to freeze — he was too full of alcohol. He had not walked one step; this disgusted the chief, who proved an enemy afterward. The morning was so stormy that we would not have left camp had we not learned that the Opposition had gone by with dogsleds. Not wishing to be outdone by them, I awoke Mr. Denig, who was still under the influence of liquor, and told him that we must be off — that the Opposition had gone by, and that if they could travel I did not see why we should not. When the chief saw that I was determined to leave, he remarked that it would be well for us to go; that a certain Indian was expected from the fort with a large keg of whiskey, and that it would not be well for us to remain in camp while they were drunk; for, as he knew, we had to leave Mr. Denig behind. The mules were soon harnessed up, and into the hard storm we started, with but one Indian, who was my guide. It was an awful day; we could see no distance in any direction, floundered in deep snowdrifts, and knew not where to go for timber. But our guide was a good one, who brought us to a small cluster of scrubby elms. The snow had drifted so deep that we could find no dry wood and had to go to bed without a fire. We made ourselves as comfortable as we could by digging holes in the snow for shelter. We were then only a little distance from the meat-pen, where Mr. Denig was to stop, and reached it early next day. Mr. Denig wanted me to remain with him over night, but as he had to make a liquor trade, and I did not wish to be serenaded, I declined his kind offer. Having packed the contents of my sled on my two mules, and left the sled, which I found to be a nuisance, I proceeded on my journey to Woody Mountain. After this snowstorm the wind changed to a strong, extremely cold northwester. There were only three of us — myself; my guide, a young Chippewa; and my driver, a young Canadian named Piché, which means pitcher. As my poor Pitcher contained more water than whiskey, I was much afraid he would freeze and crack; but he was made of good metal, that could stand heat or cold. Early this evening we came to a good camping place, with plenty of dry firewood; but it was so intensely cold, and we had to dig so deep in the snow to make a fireplace, that it was with the greatest difficulty we could start a fire. But we succeeded at last in making a comfortable camp — the best one we had had since we left the fort. A little while after this we were sitting at a good supper of dried buffalo meat, a few hard-tacks we had saved, and a strong cup of coffee. After supper arrangements were made for sleeping, as a bedroom had yet to be cleared out, in a deep snowdrift, where my friend Pitcher was to be my bedfellow. We proceeded to excavate, and soon had ourselves buried alive in the snow. I believe this was the coldest night I ever felt. The guide got up first, to make a fire, to the delight of Pitcher and myself. A breakfast much like our supper was soon ready, the mules were packed, and we were off again. We had not traveled more than an hour when the wind rose, and the snow began to drift, so blinding us that we could scarcely see. We had over 10 miles to travel to timber; but, fortunately, we were on the main road, which the Indians had made so hard, in going from one camp to another, that the drifting snow could not lodge on it; so the tracks remained visible,

which enabled us to reach camp in good time. At sunset the wind fell, and we had an easy time in making preparations for our last night out. There being no road between this place and the Indian camp, which was 20 miles off, over level prairie, and wishing to reach the camp in good time, we made an early start next morning.

The day was clear, cold, and calm. In my small outfit I had about five gallons of alcohol, in two kegs of three and two gallons, neatly packed in the bales of goods. I thought this quantity would be too much to bring in camp at once and concluded to cache one of the kegs on the road, for I knew it would be impossible to keep it concealed in the Indian lodge. In order to do this my guide must be dispatched ahead, for I did not think he could be trusted. So, when we got within about five miles of the camp, I remarked to him that I wished him to go on into camp and tell Broken Arm, the chief of the Crees, that I wished him to prepare me a large lodge and make ready for a big spree to-night. To this proposition the guide readily consented, and, having pointed out the direction of the camp, he left on a dogtrot. As soon as he was out of sight and we had reached a place that my friend Pitcher would be sure to find again, we cached the smaller keg in a snowbank and resumed our journey.

We had made but a few miles when we came in sight of Indians; but, as we could see no lodges, we presumed they were Indians returning from a hunt. We soon discovered men, women, and children; still no camp, and the prairie looking level as far as the eye could reach. We could not imagine what this meant, and were not relieved of our uneasiness till some of the bucks came running up and told us that there was the camp, pointing to a deep valley. Having gone about half a mile we came to a precipice, on the north of which the Indians were camped, near the bottom. It was an awful place; I could not imagine how they could stand such a place without freezing, for the sun did not reach them more than two hours out of the twenty-four. "Now," said I, to my friend Pitcher, "we are north of north here." "Yes, sir," said he, "and we'll freeze. I can't see what made them d-d Indians camp here." For the first time my good Pitcher was overflowing with bad humor, and indeed I did not blame him, for the prospect of staying in such a hole was anything but encouraging. But there was no alternative; we had to enter the lodge — a large double one — which we found already prepared for our reception. After our mules were unpacked and our baggage was arranged, a kettle of boiled buffalo tongues was brought in; a strong cup of coffee was made from our own stores, and we took supper alongside a good fire, after which symptoms of good humor returned.

Being now ready for operations, I sent for water, telling the Indians it was to make fire-water, and it was not long in forthcoming; the news circulated through the camp, and before I was prepared to trade the lodge was full of Indians, loaded with robes, ready for the spree. The liquor trade commenced with a rush, and it was not long before the whole camp was in a fearful uproar; but they were good Indians, and there was no more trouble than is usual on such occasions.

This was the first time that I ever felt snowblind; during the spree, which lasted the whole night, I complained considerably of sore eyes, attributing it to the smoky lodge. They told me the lodge did not smoke, except at the place where it ought to, and said I must be getting snowblind. This I found to be the case, and, though I was soon over it, it was bad enough to be extremely painful. By morning I had traded 150 fine robes, about all there were dressed in the camp, and during the day I traded 30 more for goods. I then feared no opposition, as their robes were nearly all traded — that is, the dressed ones. We had plenty of leisure after that, but tremendously cold weather. It

---

frequently happens in that part of the country, that, after a clear, calm morning, a cloud rises in the northwest about ten o'clock, and in a very short time a tremendous snowdrift comes on, which lasts all day; but the weather generally becomes calm at sunset, turning very clear and cold. Such weather we were blessed with most of the time we remained there, which was about six weeks. Imagine the pleasant time we spent in camp under that steep hill, where I am certain the sun did not shine more than 24 hours altogether during those six weeks.

The third day after we arrived I sent my Pitcher to see how the mules were getting along; the Indians had them in their charge, but I wanted to know their actual condition from a surer source during such intensely cold weather: The Pitcher was so benumbed that he was unable to tell the news on his return until he had warmed his mouth, which appeared so stiff with cold that he could not move his jaws; but I could see in his countenance that something was wrong. Being anxious to learn what the matter was, and giving him scarcely time to thaw out, I said, "Well, Pitcher, how are the mules?" "Ha! the mules both froze dead — one standing up, the other down. My good fat white mule standing up — thought she alive, but she standing stiff dead." By this time his jaws had got limber, and he made them move at a great rate, with some mighty rude expressions in regard to the place where we were. When well warmed up he began to crack a smile again, and all went well until a couple of days afterward, when I found him so much out of humor one morning that I thought surely my poor Pitcher must be broken, or at least badly cracked. When breakfast was served by the wife of Mr. Broken Arm, the great chief of the Crees, who had been to Washington, Pitcher would not partake. "What is the matter, Pitcher," said I, "are you sick? Why not have some of this good fat buffalo meat?" "Not much the matter," he replied; "I will tell after a while" — fearing perhaps that the story he had to tell would not agree with my digestive organs. Some time after that, when the things were removed, dishes washed up, and the cook had gone out, my Pitcher poured out his story. "Mr. Larpenteur," he said, "if you please, after this I will do our cooking." "Why so," said I. "Why, sir, because that enfant de garce — that old squaw is too dirty. Sacré! She scrape the cloths of that baby of hers with her knife, give it a wipe, cut up the meat with it, and throw into the kettle. This morning I see some old crust on the knife — that what the matter — too much for me." After this explanation I was no longer surprised at poor Pitcher's looking so broken; and if my digestive powers had not been strong, as they have always proven to be, I am afraid my own breakfast would have returned the way it went; but with me, whenever the meat-trap was once shut down it was not easily opened again, and things had to take their natural course.

Shortly after the death of our two mules, I traded a pony of an Indian, and Pitcher would now and then go to see how the animal stood this latitude. Then the time came when I thought the Indians might have robes enough dressed to raise a frolic; so one morning I sent for the keg of alcohol I had cached on the road. Not wishing the Indians to know what we were about, on their asking where my man was going, I told them he was going to look after my pony. He delayed longer than they thought necessary, and they remarked it; but finally he appeared in the lodge with the keg on his back — that being the kind of a pony he had gone to take care of. I was soon prepared for operations, and another glorious drunk took place; but the robe trade was light, only 50 in number. This ended the business, there being no liquor and hardly any robes left in camp.

I then sent the Indian to Fort Union with a letter for Mr. Culbertson, requesting from him the means to bring back the robes I had traded. Notwithstanding continued severely cold weather, ten

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

days afterward a party of eight men and 20 horses arrived in camp, in charge of the hunter of the fort, Antoine Le Brun. Those men had suffered so much with the cold that it was almost impossible to recognize them — noses, cheeks, and eyes all scabby from frost-bite, and so dark from exposure that they looked more like Indians than white men. Mr. Culbertson's letter was anything but satisfactory, its contents being about as follows: "Larpenteur, I send you 20 horses, thinking them sufficient to bring in your trade; if not, try to get some good Indians to help you; tell them I will pay them well. From what I can learn some Indians, who are moving north on your route, have said they will steal all your horses; therefore I advise you to take a different route."

Now, what to do? The snow was drifted so deep in all the hollows that I could not possibly take any road but the old beaten one. To go any other way would be at the risk of freezing to death — or at least of losing all my animals in the snow; I preferred to take the chances of being robbed and perhaps beaten on the old road.

Next morning by ten o'clock we were under way, with all my trade. I had some few goods remaining, which I carefully concealed between the packs of robes, so that they could not be seen by the Indians whom we expected to meet; and I kept a few trinkets in sight, to make some small presents, should it be necessary. With much difficulty we made out to extricate ourselves from the awful abyss into which we had plunged when we came to this camp. The morning was clear, but extremely cold, and as we reached the level prairie we perceived the usual cloud, indicating a snowdrift. Not long afterward it came on, so bad that we had great trouble to keep our horses in the track. As the old saying is, "There is no bad wind but what will bring some good." This wind was one of them. We should have reached our camping place in good time, had it not been for this heavy snowdrift. A little before dark, when we came to camp, we were surprised by the barking of Indian dogs, which appeared to be not far off. The country was here very broken, and wooded with small oaks. We concluded that this was the camp of the very Indians who intended to rob us. Owing to the heavy snowdrift, which had lasted all day, they had not discovered us, and we arrived unknown to them. Finding ourselves undiscovered, I told the men to make no noise, build no fires, and early in the morning to go for the horses, as I wanted to be off by the peep of day. Some were reluctant to obey orders, but consented to do so on my telling them they did not know what might happen. Sleeping without any fire, in such cold weather, was certainly a hardship, but I thought it necessary for our safety. Supper was made on a little dried buffalo meat — about all we had. After a long, sleepless night, at break of day the horses were all brought up to pack, and at clear day we were under march. On the first hill we ascended we perceived an Indian with his hand on his mouth, which is a sign of surprise. He called out, "Ho! ho! have you traveled all night?" I answered, "No, we camped at the spring." "Why," said he, "did you not come to our camp? You would have been well off with us — we have meat, sugar, and coffee." I told him that if I had known the camp was so near, I certainly would have gone there. All this time my men were filing by, and as each one passed me I told him to hurry up; that I would remain behind with my packhorse, and get out of the scrape the best I could. The news soon reached the Indian camp, and in a little while I was surrounded. Their main object was to trade horses, and they wanted me to stop my men. I told them the men would not stop; they were cold, and had gone too far off. "Well," said they, "we have got a few robes we would like to trade." I found from their actions, after my poor excuse for declining the horse trade, that they were not so badly disposed as Mr. Culbertson had represented them to be; yet, if they had got the chance at night, I believe they would

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

have relieved me of some of the horses, if not the whole band. They brought a few robes, which I traded; and not wishing my men to get too far off, I made the Indians a present of what little stuff I had left. When they found I was so generous they let me go in peace, with my good Pitcher, whom I had kept by me.

With much relieved hearts we started double-quick, and soon overtook the party. We found them delighted at our good success, and glad they had followed my advice, saying, "If we had been discovered, we should not have one horse left, and God knows what would become of us." One said, "Did you see that big painted rascal, how he look? Bet you he'd have mounted one of them"; and, after several such expressions, it was agreed among them that I was a first-rate leader.

The day became pleasant, we traveled well, and came to camp at the meat-pen, where we fell in with two Indian lodges. One of these was that of He Who Fears his War Club, a respectable and brave man, who I knew could be relied on. After we had gotten everything righted in camp, the old fellow told me to come to his lodge, that he had something to tell me. As we had little to eat in camp I was in hopes that I would get a supper out of him, and perhaps something for my men to eat; but I was disappointed in that, for he was as bad off as we were. On entering he bade me sit down; and having smoked a few whiffs, he asked me if I had heard the latest news from the fort. I told him I had learned none since the news brought to me by my men. "Well," said he, "something very bad has taken place since, and, if I were in your place, I would not go to Wounded Leg's camp; for he has had a quarrel with Long Knife (meaning Mr. Denig) and your chief (meaning Mr. Culbertson). They took him by the arms and legs and threw him out of the fort, and he has sworn vengeance against the whites. It will not be good for you to go to his camp, or even in sight of it, for I tell you he is very mad."

This news struck me pretty hard. I had got out of one scrape, but was already in another; this was something else for me to cipher on that night, and if my stomach was empty my head was full. On my return to camp I was asked what the old fellow had said; the men suspected that all was not quite right, so I told them the whole story. "Now we are in a pretty fix again," said one. "Yes," said another, "they get drunk with the Indians and fight, but don't think much of us poor fellows on the prairie," and all such expressions. One said, "Don't go that way"; and another replied, "You d-d old fool, what other way can we go in this deep snow?" Finding them disconcerted, I said, "Don't be uneasy, boys; I'll figure out a plan to get through."

Meanwhile two strapping big bucks made their appearance in camp, and, of course, they were supposed to be horse thieves; but their story was that they were going to the fort, expecting to join a war party. Notwithstanding this, a guard was placed over them and I took care that they should have a good bed in camp, where they could be easily watched. Early in the morning all hands were roused up; our thieves were all right, but one of the old chief's little boys, about fourteen, had got up still earlier and mounted one of our best horses. He was seen in the act, but could not be overtaken. His father, a good man, was very sorry, and said that the horse would not be lost to the Company. The theft, at this time, was of great importance, as all our horses were getting very poor and weak.

From this place to Wounded Leg's camp was a good level road, about 25 miles, which we expected to make early. Now that all was ready for the move, the boys expressed a desire to know what plan I had to get them through safe. I said to them, "This is my plan: I am going on this road right straight to Wounded Leg's lodge. I know him well; he is a good friend of mine, and I am sure I can

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

fetch him all right. When we come in sight of the camp I will go ahead alone. You can come on slowly; if anything happens to me, do the best you can for yourselves; but if things are all right, I will make you signs to come in." They were apparently satisfied, placing confidence in me and so we started; but, moving at too fast a gait, we were obliged to leave two horses, which had given out. This made three loads which had been divided on the others; it was very hard on them, and we commenced to think we should be forced to leave some of our robes on the way also. About three in the afternoon the dreaded camp was in sight. I caused all hands to halt, and told them, Now, boys, I am going to the camp. When you get within 400 or 500 yards of it, stop. If you see Indians coming, not out of a walk, remain until they reach you; but if they come rushing, make up your minds that Larpenteur is gone up, and defend yourselves the best you can." Off I started. When I came into camp I inquired for Wounded Leg's lodge, which was immediately shown to me. On entering I found his old woman alone. She felt somewhat surprised, but looked cheerful, and we shook hands. She had always been a good friend of mine, and I thought myself pretty safe as far as she was concerned. I asked her where her old man was. She said he had gone to the lodge of such a one. I then requested her to send for him, which she did, and a few minutes afterward he made his appearance. His countenance was not calculated to inspire confidence. Having shaken hands, he sat down and prepared to smoke, as is customary before conversing. I had to hold my tongue, but my eyes were wide open, watching the face of my enemy while he was making ready for the smoke. To my great satisfaction I thought I could perceive a change in my favor. The pipe being ready a few whiffs were exchanged, and time to break silence came. Upon which I commenced, saying, "Comrade, I have heard some very bad talk about you. I was told not to come to your lodge, or to your camp; that you intended to harm me and my men. Knowing you to be a good friend of mine, I would not mind that talk, and you see I have come straight to your lodge." His first remark was, "Who told you all this?" On my naming the individual, he said, "He told you the truth. I did say all that. I was very angry at the way in which I had been treated at the big house. But I have thought the matter over, and given up the idea of putting my threat into execution; though I am not pleased yet." I soon found that I was in a pretty fair way of success; yet something farther on my part was to be said. So, knowing the Indian character, and, for one thing, that praise of their children goes a long way with them, I commenced thus: "Now, my comrade, you know that the difficulty you had with those men at the big house was when you were all in liquor. You know very well that you are liked by the whites. You are a chief; you have a son — your only child you love him. He is a fine boy. Although but a boy, you know that the chief of the big house has already armed him like a chief. Would you do anything to deprive your only child, as well as yourself, of chiefhood? No! certainly not. I know you too well for that." At this speech I heard the old woman groan; and, during the pause which ensued, I observed that I had them both about melted down into my affections. The idea of his boy's being so much liked and respected by the whites took the old man's fancy, and a pleasanter or more cheerful chap could scarcely have been raked up.

"Now," said I, "this is not all. I want my men to come in camp and stay with you to-night, and I want you to go to the fort with me. I assure you they will be glad to see you, and I will see that you are well paid for your trouble." Turning to the old lady, I added, "I will send you a nice cotillion." "How!" said she, which meant "Thank you!" Then Wounded Leg said, "That is all right, but you must not come into this camp; it would not be good for you. We are starving, our dogs also; they

would eat up your saddles and the cords of your packs. You had better go to camp in the cherry bushes," which he then showed me about a mile off.

Taking his advice, I started back to the boys, and when near them made signs for them to come on. Meeting me and learning the result of my mission, they could not help laughing at the way I had "battered the old fool," as they said. We steered our course for the cherry bushes, which we reached at sunset. The wind had changed to the north; it became again very cold, and to save our lives we could not get a fire out of those green bushes. There was not a stick of dry wood to be found, and a tremendous hard night we had. Sleep was out of the question, and it was too cold to stand a good guard; the result was that the two bucks, who had followed us thus far, disappeared with two of our best horses, one of which we called Father De Smet, because he had been brought from the Flatheads on that missionary's return from the Columbia. We were then nearly 50 miles from the fort, which distance would have taken us two days; but now, being short of horses, it would take us double that time. I found an Indian, whom I knew to be a good traveler, and asked him if he could go to the fort by sunset; he said he could, for he had already done it. I dispatched him with a letter to Mr. Culbertson to send me more horses, and also some dried meat, as we were starving. Dividing the loads as best we could, we got under way again, making but slow progress, with Wounded Leg, several other men, and some squaws in company. We again camped, as we all hoped for the last time; but where was supper to come from? We had not a thing to eat and were mighty hungry. I thought of trying rawhide cords, of which we had a few bundles left. I got a squaw to cut them up fine and boil them; besides which, as a great favor, I got an Indian dog killed and boiled. That I knew would be good; and as I could not obtain more than one dog, the cords, if the cooking proved successful, would help to fill up. I am sorry to say that I was defeated there, for the longer they boiled the harder they got, and they could not be brought into condition to swallow. So there was only the dog for supper. I had sent it to a squaw to cook for us, and when she gave it to us some of the boys cried, "Mad dog! mad dog!" Sure enough, he did look like a mad dog; for there was his head sticking partly out of the kettle, with a fine set of ivories, growling as it were, and the scum was frothing about his teeth. After the mirth had abated, and no one offered to dish out the "mad dog," I appointed Pitcher master of ceremonies, thinking a pitcher could pour out soup and hold some of it too. He commenced with great dignity, but some of the boys refused to partake, saying they would rather be excused, and could stand it until they got to the fort. This made the portions so much the larger for the balance of us; the biggest part of the thigh fell to my share, which I soon demolished, and I must say it sat very well on my stomach. But some of the boys began to say the "mad dog" was trying to run out the same way he went in; and some noises heard outside might have been taken to signify that the animal was escaping. It was no trouble to get all hands up next morning, but some of our worn-out horses had to be whipped up. When once loaded and warmed up by means of the whip, they could only be made to keep on their feet by the same cruel means, which we were obliged to use pretty lively all the morning. Between the hours of eleven and twelve o'clock we perceived the re-enforcement from the fort, at which a great cry of joy was heard throughout the company. The loads were soon rearranged; each man took a piece of dried buffalo meat in his hands to eat on the way; the march was resumed, all eating and whipping, as there was no time to spare to reach the fort that day. Owing to those double exertions, by sunset we were on the ridge, in sight of Union and of its fine large American flag. This had been hoisted on our return from an expedition which had caused much

uneasiness, from the many reports which had made it doubtful whether we could ever get back. We were also in sight of the Opposition, and I afterward heard that Mr. Cotton, on seeing us, said, "Well, Larpenteur was not badly robbed — see what a fine lot of robes he has!" In ten minutes after reaching the ridge we were safe in the fort.

Chief Wounded Leg, like the rest of us, met with a cordial welcome; and as a large trading party had just arrived, a keg of liquor was presented him, to drink with his friends. Among them was a certain Indian named The Hand, the greatest rascal in the tribe, it was believed, who had retaken two horses from some Assiniboines who had stolen them from the fort, and he had come to return them, in company with us. In some drunken spree he had killed an individual whose relations were in the trading party above mentioned. Fearing that he might be killed, I remarked to Mr. Culbertson that it would not be advisable to let him go out and drink with the other Indians — better let him have a little liquor in the fort, and if he got too troublesome we could tie him. This plan was adopted; and as I was much fatigued, I retired, telling Mr. Culbertson to awaken me in case they could not manage him without me. He got so drunk they could do nothing with him, and insisted on leaving; so the door was opened and the gentleman turned out. Early in the morning, I was again on duty. The doors were still shut; but, being tired of hearing a constant knocking, I went to see who was there. By the sound of the voice I knew who he was, and that he was all right; so I opened the small door. "Here," said the Indian, "I killed a dog last night. Take him in and shut the door." This dog was Mr. Hand, whose corpse had been wrapped up in his robe and bundled on a dog-travaille. So much for him, and we were not sorry, as he was a devil.

Shortly afterward we learned that another individual had killed his own father. I shall have occasion to mention him again. Some time before our return I learned that my interpreter had died about eight days after he reached the fort, complaining of headache. The vulgar said he died of the hollow horn; and others, of the hollow head. My good friend Pitcher, I was informed long afterward, struck for Virginia City, where I hope he became a pitcher full of gold.

#### Chapter 11

(1844-45)

#### CARNIVAL OF CRIME

Jim Bridger, being a great trapper, and having been told that there were many beaver on Milk River, thought of trying his luck in that direction. He left the mountains with a picked party of 30 men, all good trappers and Indian fighters. Nothing unusual transpired at Fort Union until about the month of November [1844] when Bridger and his men made their appearance, having come from Milk River with the intention of passing the winter with us. Mr. Laidlaw, who was in charge at the time, offered him all assistance he could afford, to make his winter quarters pleasant and comfortable, and so Bridger pitched his camp about half a mile from the fort. But he had been deceived by exaggerated reports of the quantity of beaver that could be had on Milk River, and his hunt had been a very poor one. The main substance of Bridger's conversation was his brave men, his fast horses, and his fights with Blackfeet, till we were induced to believe that, with such a party to defend us, there would be no danger for us in case of an attack by Sioux. At that time such affairs became quite frequent, and the Sioux generally came in large parties. Bridger soon had an opportunity to display the bravery of his men, whom he had cracked up so highly. A few days before Christmas [1844] a large war party made a raid on the band of horses belonging to the fort, running off six of them, and wounding one of the guard in the leg with buckshot. The alarm was

immediately given, and the braves were mounted to pursue the Sioux. Bridger's clerk, who had been left in camp, came running into the fort out of breath, scared to death. "Get up all the men you can! The Sioux are in camp — they are butchering us!" Mr. Denig and I, with a few men, all we could get, took our guns, and ran with all our might to render what assistance we could. Finding that this was a case in which we had to be cautious, we went along under the steep bank of the river till we thought ourselves about opposite the camp, where we stopped to listen for the cries of the reported butchering. Hearing nothing, we cautiously raised our heads over the bank, to see some of the performance. Neither seeing nor hearing anything, we came to the conclusion the murderous work had been done, and determined to go to the camp, expecting to find people cut to pieces and scalped. To our great surprise we saw nothing — not a sign that any Indians had been near the camp. Now assured that Bridger's brave clerk had lied, we returned to the fort laughing at his fright.

During our absence on this dangerous sortie, Mr. Laidlaw was left alone — that is, without a clerk. I had, in my hurry, taken the key of the store with me, and pressing demands were made for ammunition. Mr. Laidlaw, who was a fiery, quick-tempered old Scotchman, smashed in the window of the retail store. Seeing this, on our entrance, we could not imagine what could have been the matter. No word had been received from Bridger's army, but we expected them to return with the recaptured horses and with scalps flying. But soon, to our great disappointment, came the report that a man had been killed; that a mare belonging to Mr. Ellingsworth, the Opposition bookkeeper, had been shot through the hip, and that the Indians were daring the whites to fight. The Opposition, who had seen Bridger's men turn out to fight, had concluded to join them. Mr. Ellingsworth had bought this fine American mare of Mr. Laidlaw, who had brought her here in the fall. An old half-breed Creek was also well mounted, and they both very soon came up with Bridger's party, who had halted at the foot of the hills. When Ellingsworth and the old man approached they saw the cause of the halt; the Sioux were on a hill, making signs for them to come on and fight. By this time their party had been re-enforced, and Bridger's men, not accustomed to deal with such a large force, declined the invitation. The old half-breed, who was clear grit, put the whip to his horse, telling the balance to come on; but only Ellingsworth followed. The Sioux, who understood this kind of warfare, and expected the whites to accept the challenge, had left concealed in a ravine a small body of their party, ready to let fly in case the enemy attempted to come on. As the old Indian went by at full speed with Ellingsworth, the Indians fired a volley, which dropped the former dead off his horse, and wounded Ellingsworth's mare in the hip; but did not come so near killing her that Ellingsworth could not make his escape. The Indians, seeing this, commenced to yell, and renewed their defiance. But the brave party concluded to turn back, somewhat ashamed of themselves. Bridger was extremely mortified, and said he could not account for the cowardice of his men on this occasion. At the funeral of Gardepie — that being the name of the old man — these words were pronounced: "This burial is caused by the cowardice of Bridger's party." This expression, it was thought, would result in a fight with the Opposition; but the discontentment disappeared without any disturbance. In the meantime the Sioux went away, having killed one man, wounded another's mare, and taken six head of horses. Bridger became very much dissatisfied with his men, who dispersed in all directions, and he returned to the mountains.

Before I come to the story of the Blackfoot massacre, which is not yet known, I will explain the

manner in which trade was carried on this winter [1844-45]. Owing to the local laws which were put in force, we were not allowed to go into Indian camps to trade; the trade had to be done either at the fort, or at an outpost allowed by the agent. So we had to drum up Indians to get them into the fort, and be on the lookout for trading parties coming in. Being well supplied with horses, which we kept constantly in the fort, we had a great advantage over our opponents, who were deficient in that respect. As soon as our pickets, whom we always kept out, in every direction, made the signs agreed upon, we immediately mounted; and, according to signs understood by us, the required number of horses followed. With our pockets full of tobacco and vermilion, we galloped as fast as we could, in order to get ahead of the Opposition, and induce the Indians to consent to come to our fort. But frequently, whether yes or whether no, their robes were put on our horses, and taken to the fort. When the party was large, and some trouble was expected in bringing in the chiefs, a sled was brought out, having a small keg of liquor placed on it, to treat the gentlemen; and a band of music, bearing the flag, was also in attendance. The instruments consisted of a clarionette, a drum, a violin, and a triangle, besides the jingling bells on the sled, and it was almost impossible for Indians to refuse such an invitation. They laughed with delight at the display, and the Opposition could not "come it over them," as the saying is. Mr. Cotton found himself about as badly used up this winter as he had been last; he learned that he stood a poor show in opposing the American Fur Company, and that it would take Mr. Ebbitt, or any other man, a long time to get a footing in the country.

This winter [1844-45 ?] we learned that Mr. F. A. Chardon had had a fight with the Blood Indians, a band of Blackfeet bearing that name; but no particulars were known until the arrival of the returns, which generally came down the latter part of April or the first part of May. At that time I was well informed on the subject by Mr. Des Hôtel, one of the clerks, in whom full confidence could be placed.

Mr. Chardon, who, as has been stated, was the man who [in 1843] built the Blackfoot post at the mouth of Judith River, generally called Fort Chardon, happened to have a man killed by that band of Blood Indians last winter. This man was a negro by the name of Reese. Mr. Chardon, it appears, set great store by that negro and swore vengeance on the band. He communicated his designs to Alexander Harvey, who, wishing no better fun, agreed to take an important part. They also got old man Berger to join them. The plot was, when the band came to trade, to invite three of the head men into the fort, where Harvey was to have the cannon in the bastion which commanded the front door loaded with balls; when the Indians should be gathered thickly at the door, waiting for the trade to commence, at a given signal the three head men were to be massacred in the fort, and Harvey was to kill as many others as he could at one discharge; on which they expected the surviving Indians to run away, abandoning all their robes and horses, of which the three whites were to become the owners, share and share alike. But it did not happen quite to their satisfaction; for, through some means, the wicked plot was made known in time for the chiefs to run out of the office and escape by jumping over the pickets. Mr. Chardon was quick enough to shoot, and broke the thigh of the principal chief. Harvey touched off the cannon, but, as the Indians had commenced to scatter, he killed but three and wounded two. The rest quickly made their escape, leaving all their plunder; but saved nearly all their horses, most of which were at some distance from the fort. After firing the shot, Harvey came out of the bastion and finished the wounded Indians with his large dagy. I was told he then licked the blood off the dagy and afterward made the

---

squaws of the fort dance the scalp dance around the scalps, which he had raised himself. I will conclude this chapter with one more of Harvey's awful deeds. It happened that, while he was at old Fort McKenzie, some Indians, who had a spite against the fort, took it into their heads to kill some of the cattle. One day a party of five chased away some of the milch cows, one of which they shot when they had gone a short distance from the fort. On learning this, Harvey and some others got on their horses and went in pursuit. Harvey, who always kept a No. 1 horse, soon overtook the Indian who had shot the cow, and when he got within a few steps fired and broke his thigh; the Indian fell off his horse, and there he lay. Harvey came up to him, got off his horse, and took his seat near the wounded Indian, saying, "Now, comrade, I have got you. You must die. But, before you die, you must smoke a pipe with me." Having lighted his pipe and made the poor Indian smoke, he then said, "I am going to kill you, but I will give you a little time to take a good look at your country." The Indian begged for his life, saying, "Comrade, it is true I was a fool. I killed your cow; but now that you have broken my thigh, this ought to make us even — spare my life!" "No," said Harvey; "look well, for the last time, at all those nice hills — at all those paths which lead to the fort, where you came with your parents to trade, playing with your sweethearts — look at that, will you, for the last time." So saying, with his gun pointed at the head of his victim, he pulled the trigger and the Indian was no more.

Chapter 12

(1845-46)

#### POPLAR RIVER CAMP

The steamer made her appearance at the usual time, in June [1845], Mr. Honoré Picotte in charge. As it was customary for all the partners to meet in St. Louis in summer, I was left in charge of Fort Union until one of them returned in the fall. I asked Mr. Picotte what kind of men he had brought up; to which he replied, "First-rate men." "Will they not be apt to desert?" "No," said he, "not one." My fear of their desertion was based on their probably being unwilling to go to the Blackfoot post, on account of the massacre of last [?] winter. The steamer left the same day, in the evening. During the night I was made the father of a fine son. In the morning the artillery was playing, and, in consequence of this, something extra must be done. All hands had a holiday, with the promise of a big ball at night. Scrubbing, washing, and cooking went on all day, and at night the ball opened; it went off peaceably, which was rarely the case in this place. All hands retired in good time, and had a good night's sleep. Mr. Auguste Chouteau, who was clerk and had charge of the men, came to my room early in the morning, saying, "Mr. Larpenteur, twelve men left last night." Although I expected some desertions, I did not think any would occur until the men were notified to go to the Blackfeet; but they had been persuaded by some of the Opposition who came to the ball, and being afraid they would have to go, they thought best to disappear while they could get employment elsewhere. I had still many men left, went on preparing the outfit, and in a few days all was ready for their departure. James Lee had been sent for by Mr. Chardon, who had heard he was a bully and a bravo. Lee was to go up to the Blackfoot post, and it afterward appeared that he intended to chastise Harvey. During the outfitting we learned enough to induce us to believe that a plot had been made to pound Harvey on their arrival, but not to murder him. Mr. Chardon was then at Fort Clark, his old station. Mr. Culbertson was in charge of the Blackfoot outfit, with the understanding that he was to burn down Fort Chardon, and build farther up the Missouri.

---

I finally succeeded in getting the outfit all right, but with a frightened set of men. As they pushed off a large number of the Opposition men were on the shore, crying out to them, "You are going to the butcher-shop — good-by forever!" But the boys, who felt the effects of a good jigger to which they had just been treated, scoffed at this, and went off finely. After this I had the Crow outfit to start off; but there were plenty of men left for this, and for my own use at the fort. Early next morning Mr. Chouteau came to me again, saying, "Seven more men gone last night." This was rather a striker, but on counting the number left, I found that I could send up the Crow outfit, and went to work at the equipment. The following morning, however, three more had deserted, and others kept leaving, one by one, until I had to abandon the Crow outfit. Desertions continued until I was left with but four men all told. This number being too few to keep the fort in safety until the return of the gentlemen in the fall, I immediately dispatched Owen McKenzie, the son of Kenneth McKenzie, with letters to Fort Pierre, to be forwarded thence to St. Louis. Much were they astonished when the dispatch arrived. Men were immediately engaged and sent up by Mr. Denig, who had gone on a visit to his friends this summer. Having so few men with me, the Opposition men became very troublesome; so much so that I had to lock the door on them. Shortly after the return of McKenzie from Fort Pierre, a party of Sioux came to war on the Assiniboines, and had taken all the horses belonging to the Opposition when the alarm was given. We ascended the bastion to see the performance, but it was all over, and the Sioux made bold enough to sit on the hill, quietly smoking their pipes, in full view of both forts. McKenzie, who was very young, active, and brave, said to me, "Mr. Larpenteur, this is too bad; let us go and exchange shots, and see if we cannot get back some of those old plugs." As I agreed to this, we ran down at once, mounted the two swiftest horses in the fort, and off we went. Bullets were soon flying about us, but we succeeded in recapturing four head of horses, which we generously gave back to the Opposition, and our names went high up among the bucks and squaws who were singing and dancing around the fort.

After this times passed off somewhat more smoothly. Mr. Denig, who had been started up with a new supply of men, arrived early in October [1845], and things became quite lively again. Soon after his return, when we were sitting on the porch one evening, we saw Harvey walking up to the house with his rifle across his arm. At a little distance he stopped to ask, "Am I among friends or enemies here?" Being told that we did not think he was in any danger here, he entered and commenced his story with, "Boys, I came very near being killed." Being asked by whom, he replied, "By Malcolm Clark, Jim Lee, and old man Berger; but the d -d cowards could not do it." Then he pulled off his hat, showing the mark of Clark's tomahawk, with which his head had been broken; and his hand was injured where Lee had struck him with a pistol. Being then asked the particulars, he said that, on learning of the arrival of the boat, he got on his horse to meet it and learn the news, as is customary on such occasions. Having gone about 20 miles below the fort, he saw the boat, and beckoned them to land. As he had been left in charge of the fort, they could not well refuse to do so. As the boat landed he gave his horse in care of the man whom he had taken with him, and suspecting nothing, but glad to see the men, he jumped on board and entered the cabin where the three gentlemen were sitting. He offered his hand to Clark, who said, "I don't shake hands with such a d -d rascal as you," on which a blow of his tomahawk followed, and then a blow with the butt of a rifle from Berger. In spite of all this he would have succeeded in throwing Clark into the river, had it not been for Lee, who struck him such a severe blow on the hand with

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

a pistol that he had to let go his hold and make his escape. "I then got on my horse," he continued, "and when I arrived at the fort I told the men my story. They were much displeased, and as they did not like Clark, and had already learned Lee's character, they consented to protect me. I told them that I intended to hold the fort and not let a d-d one in."

To this the men agreed, and preparations were made for defense. When the boat arrived no one was allowed to enter, not even Mr. Culbertson. But after hard pleadings Mr. Culbertson, who had always proved a friend to Harvey, made him agree to give up the fort, on condition that Mr. Culbertson should give him a draft for all his wages, and a good recommendation. On receiving those papers, Harvey left in a small canoe with one man.

He remained but a couple of days at Union, and, on leaving, said, "Never mind! you will see old Harvey bobbing about here again; they think they have got me out of the country; but they are damnably mistaken. I'll come across Clark again."

Fort Pierre was then the headquarters of the trading posts on the Missouri; all drafts and papers had to be examined and signed there. The company owed Harvey \$5000, and he had to get his draft there for the whole amount. Mr. Picotte appeared somewhat slow and did not come to time until Harvey threatened to pound him, when the draft was made out.

It happened that, when Harvey arrived at Fort Pierre, the most important clerks of the post were dissatisfied with their treatment, and had made up a company in opposition to the American Fur Company. The members of this new organization were Harvey himself, Charles Primeau, Joseph Picotte (nephew of Honoré Picotte), and Bonise, the bookkeeper of Fort Pierre, under the firm name of Harvey, Primeau and Co. Under those agreements, which were not known at the time, Harvey immediately left for St. Louis. There he apprised Colonel Robert Campbell of the arrangements, and in the spring [1846] the company started operations, with a large outfit, sufficient to establish themselves at all the posts of the American Fur Company. Harvey came up to the mouth of the Yellowstone in the steamer, and went on to Benton in a Mackinaw with his outfit.

A short time after Harvey left us Mr. Kenneth McKenzie arrived to take charge of Fort Union. He had left the country six or seven years previously, but had reserved a share in the Company, on condition that in case of opposition he would return, should it be deemed necessary by the members of the Company, and on that understanding he now returned. This was about the commencement of the meat trade [of 1845]; on his arrival my charge ended, and I was reinstated in the liquor shop. Mr. McKenzie was pleased with my administration; he found everything to his satisfaction, and said I had done well, though I ought not to have left the fort, at a time when I had so few men, to fight Indians.

The American Fur Company, having always had more influence in this country than the Indian department, thought they would abolish the local law, and carry on trade on the old principle, which was camp trading. So when the robe trade commenced, traders were dispersed in all directions. But Mr. McKenzie, like Mr. Culbertson, kept me at the fort until the last. Finally my turn came, and I was sent with a good outfit into a large camp on Poplar River, about 60 miles by land above Union. As a matter of course I took plenty of liquor. I had four men and ten horses — more than I wanted — but the intention was for me to send them back loaded with meat for the fort. A certain Indian by the name of Iron-eyed Dog was known as the greatest rascal and ugliest Indian in the camp; his brother had been killed while camped at the fort by a war party of Sioux, who surprised them in the night. This brother was a chief, called the One who Guards the Whites — a

very good Indian for us to have. He was shot in the back, the ball passing through his breast. The Indians, knowing that the whites thought much of him, and believing their medicine might cure him, brought him to the fort from camp, which was not more than 300 yards off. That happened about midnight. Shortly after he was brought in his brother, the Iron-eyed Dog, came knocking at the door to be let in; but as many others had knocked, we paid no attention to him. This made him extremely angry, and he swore he would kill me on the first opportunity, for he knew I was the doorkeeper. Such was the character with whom I expected to have to deal in this camp, where I arrived on the third day out from Union.

After I had stored everything properly, I was invited into the lodges of the chiefs and leading men, to partake of a dish of pounded buffalo meat and marrow grease, as is their custom. In one of the lodges, where several Indians had assembled, I was informed that Iron-eyed Dog, whom they call in their language Shonkish-ta-man-zah, had gone to the fort, but was expected back that night, and would be apt to make much trouble, and very likely kill me; but they thought I might be able to reconcile him by talking to him and making him a little present, as usual on such occasions. Knowing the Dog of old, I invited the principal chief to my lodge and gave him what he thought was sufficient; he started off, saying that he, with the others, would do their utmost for me. This was some consolation, but did not go very far toward making me feel safe.

That night, when the liquor trade commenced, the very devil was raised in camp. Iron-eyed Dog, who had arrived, and all the other dogs, including my life preservers, soon got drunk. There was I, with only four other men, among about 300 drunken Indians, with no alternative but to trust to luck. One stout, fine-looking Indian whom I had never seen before, and who suspected something, took his seat by my side, holding a large war-club between his knees, and kept very quiet the whole time. At first I did not know what he was there for, but soon found out; things were as I suspected and feared. Suddenly in came Iron-eyed Dog in great fury, saying, "Here you are! Do you expect to live through this night — you who would not open the door for me when my brother was killed? Did I not say I would kill you?" He went on like this at a tremendous rate, and then rushed out again. But it seemed to me that he did not like the looks of the man with the war-club, who now and then pressed his hand on my knee, as much as to say, "Be not afraid." Then came two more drunken Indians; one of them named Cougher, and the other an individual who had killed his own father; both had plotted with others to murder me in the lodge and plunder my outfit. But it happened that I had a good old friend in camp, whose name was The Haranguer, and who made such a fine speech that they abandoned the idea. This is about as near as I can interpret it: "What is it that I hear? Brothers and kindred, do you think you will need your trader no longer, now that spring is come and trade is over? You have your fill of everything, and now talk of killing your trader. Where will you go? Go north and starve? Give away your hunts for nothing? Why kill this poor white man? What has he done to you? No, brothers! have pity upon him, upon me; spare his life." On his saying this, which they understood to be the conclusion of his speech, a young man got up and handed him his knife, as a sign of approval, and so the idea was given up. My war-club man all this time said never a word, but the repeated applications of his hand inspired a sense of safety in my badly frightened heart.

After that came the One Who Killed His Father, and Mr. The Cougher, when all the liquor was gone, wanting absolutely to get some more, saying, "If you have none, make some. You whites are strong medicine. You can make fire-water." Seeing, however, that I was not "medicine," they in-

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

sisted on my giving their squaws some trinkets, and off they went, saying that they would soon be back. Then in popped the Dog again, and came at me with his pipe, saying, "Smoke! smoke! Why don't you smoke? I'll make you smoke — you dog, you." This Indian knew I seldom smoked, and only during some of their ceremonies, so he kept running in and out in this manner, and never left the lodge without threatening to kill me.

At last this night, so long to me, wore away; when day came all was quiet in camp, and I felt as though I had been on board a vessel in a gale which had subsided in a perfect calm. After such a storm my appetite was not very sharp, but we had to get breakfast early, before any Indians came loafing in. A strong cup of coffee was soon ready; this revived me, but the dread of seeing the mad dog again was still heavy on my mind. My war-club man was gone, and I saw no one about me that would be likely to take my part. Iron-eyed Dog soon made his appearance with about 20 of his young men, all armed and painted, and I thought then surely I was gone up. The Dog was quite sober, and said to me, "It was a good thing for you that I got too drunk to come to your lodge once more last night, for I did intend to kill you. Now you must give each of my young men some ammunition, tobacco, and vermilion, a knife, and a looking glass; and give those," he continued — pointing to four or five — "a breech-cloth apiece." This being done, he ordered them to go away; "and now," said he, "give me my present." So I gave him 50 rounds of ammunition — the usual allowance for a big man — eight small plugs of tobacco, one knife, one palette of vermilion, and a breech-cloth. To his squaw who was present, I gave a cotillion of cloth, some beads, and other trinkets. He went off without saying another word and I never saw him again; but what became of him will be made known in the sequel.

The trading being nearly over, I sent to the fort for horses to bring in my returns, and five days afterward eight men arrived with 32 head of horses. Mr. McKenzie advised me by letter to be very cautious on my return, as a party of young men had gone up my way with the intention of stealing the horses; to stand strong guard each night, and, if possible, get some good Indians to come with me. I had all my returns ready to be loaded, and next day we got under march with 35 packs of robes, besides some small furs. The second night we reached Big Muddy River, about 30 miles from Union. This being a place which I thought dangerous, and likely to be my last camp, I stood the first guard, with one-half of my party. I had taken with me one of the first chiefs of the Indian camp, with three of his most reliable soldiers, which made our party rather strong. About eleven o'clock I discovered the gentlemanly horse thieves coming straight into camp; they shook hands, seemed glad to see us, and after smoking a while laid down to sleep. Seeing us so well on our guard, they gave up the idea of robbing us; early in the morning they took their leave, and glad we were to see them off. The morning was fine and warm, which enabled us to get an early start. We expected to encamp at the Little Muddy, ten miles above Union; but arriving there about two hours before sunset, and not liking the idea of another night's guard, we concluded to push on to the fort. After smoking a pipe we resumed our march, and entered the fort a little after dark. The fort was full of drunken Indians, as usual. Mr. McKenzie was extremely glad to see me back, and began to tell me how things had gone on during my absence, saying he was at a loss how to get through with all those drunken Indians, with the traders he had in that shop. Finally he said, "Larpenteur, I am forced to ask you to finish this trade, although I know you must be tired. I have been frequently tempted to go and trade myself, but you know that would never do." Finding the old gentleman in such trouble, although much fatigued I went into the shop after a good supper,

traded all that night, finished the business, and got the Indians off next day.

This [1845-46] winter's trade convinced the New York firm of Fox, Livingston and Co. that it was a losing game to oppose the American Fur Company; they came to the conclusion to sell out, and we were again left masters of the country.

Chapter 13

(1846-47)

#### FORT LOUIS AND THENCE TO ST. LOUIS

Early in the spring [of 1846] Mr. McKenzie left on a Mackinaw boat for St. Louis. Nothing of importance took place after his departure until the Company's steamer again arrived, at its usual time, Mr. Honor & Picotte in charge. Mr. Culbertson, who went up a previous summer [in 1844], had burned down Fort Chardon, and gone on with his outfit, according to understanding, to build another post. He had selected, for that purpose, a site five or six miles above Benton, on the south side of the Missouri, named it Fort Louis, and left Mr. Clark in charge. From what motive I cannot say, Mr. Picotte wanted him removed, and on that account arranged with me to go up with the outfit and take charge. I was then getting \$600 a year, which he increased to \$700. On the 8th of July [1846] I found myself on board a keel boat called the Bear, with 30 men on shore, the tow cord on their shoulders, going at the rate of about 1 1/2 mile an hour, with upward of 800 miles before us. On board were one steersman, two bowmen, two cooks, and one hunter, who had two men with him and three horses. The boat was well-rigged for sailing in case of fair wind, and supplied with sweeps and poles. Though we started at the rate I have said, few know what slow progress is made in such navigation. The banks of the Missouri are lined with thick rosebushes and bull-berry bushes, which are thorny, and sometimes attain the height of 12 feet. Such thickets being impenetrable, men must be sent ahead of the cordelle men, as those who tow the boat are called, to prepare a path for them. Besides this, snags and other incumbrances must be chopped down to clear the cordelle, poling is always slow work, and there are rapids to be overcome, of which I will speak when we reach them. It takes Canadian French boys to do all this, on meat alone, or only lyed corn, when meat cannot be obtained.

At this slow rate we finally reached a place called Amell's island, a little below the [Picotte's] rapids, where I stopped to make a Mackinaw boat to lighten up the rapids, and also to enable me to keep on to Fort Louis, as the river was very low. A few days after I commenced my boat two men on horseback appeared on the opposite shore. They were sent for and on landing informed us that Harvey had arrived at the mouth of the Yellowstone with a large steamer in opposition, and was making a Mackinaw boat to go up to trade with the Blackfeet. Those men had been sent with a letter to me, requesting me to send them on post-haste to Fort Louis with a letter to Mr. Clark to engage all such freemen as he thought might be of service to Harvey. They were dispatched immediately, and a few days afterward Mr. Clark unexpectedly made his appearance. As I had not sent his letters, he thought that I was coming to take the charge, and that he would have to serve under me; and after reading his letter from the Company, observed that he would not have served under me had he been ordered to remain, for the reason that he had been a long time with the Blackfeet and thought himself entitled to the charge during the absence of the owner. This Mr. Clark had been educated at West Point, and was extremely punctilious. The next day he started back to Fort Louis.

In about a week my boat was finished, we were under way again, and soon came to the rapids.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Our lightener did not avail us much, for the river was so low that both boats had to be completely unloaded, and the goods to be carried 400 or 500 yards over the rapids, on the men's backs. The boats were pried over by main force, after clearing the channel of rocks; but this was done with the intention of throwing those rocks back into the channel, so as not to let Harvey overtake us. Under such slow progress I reached Fort Louis 70 days after my departure from Union. But I must remark that I had great sport hunting. The points above Milk River being cleaner of rubbish than those below, I commenced my hunt from that river, and the boat was so slow that I had plenty of time. I killed 35 deer and 15 elk. On arrival at Fort Louis I met with Father De Smet, who was again on his return from the Columbia to the States. In about three days Clark left in a skiff with two men, and then I remained in full charge. The fort was a good one, well arranged for the time which had been spent on it. I was pleased, and getting along so finely that, had my family been with me, I should have been perfectly contented; but I had left them at Union.

One fine Indian summer day, about the last of October [1846], Mr. Clark unexpectedly made his reappearance, having received orders at Fort Pierre to return to Fort Louis, and take charge. I felt mortified at having my charge taken away from me, and not even receiving the scrape of a pen from any one. Feeling myself slighted and remembering what Clark had said to me in regard to his charge of forts, I remarked that I supposed he would be willing to admit that the rule should work both ways. "I am not willing to serve under you," I said; "I have been in this Company's service ten years longer than you have, and I think that ought to entitle me to a charge — or, at all events, to justify me in not serving under you. So I am going to Fort Union." Upon which he remarked that he had nothing to say in the matter, and if I made up my mind to go, he was willing to supply me with the means for my trip.

All the men were displeased with the way I had been treated, and angry to see Clark in charge; for they disliked him as much as they had Harvey. They proposed my remaining in charge, and assured me they would see me through all right, if I would say the word. But I thanked them, and the second day after Clark's arrival I left on horseback with a first-rate guide named Joseph Howard, one of the oldest hands. Our journey was a pleasant one, but with nothing worth mentioning, and on the 15th of November [1846] we reached Fort Union.

My reception by Mr. James Kipp, who was in charge at the time, was rather cool — "Well, Larpenteur, what brings you down here?" On my relating to him the circumstances, said he, "I am sorry for all that, but I have nothing to do with it. Mr. Picotte engaged you, this is all his doing, and you must see him about it. My arrangements are all made for this winter. I cannot give you employment." Thus finding that I should not be a pleasant subject in the fort this winter [1846-47], I made up my mind to leave, bag and baggage. So I immediately got some buffalo hides to make a bull-boat, and in two days after my arrival was under way for some lower post, hoping to be able to reach Fort Pierre. This was about the 20th of November [1846], altogether too late for such a journey; but the weather was fine and I thought I might reach some point where I could pass the winter, and thus keep out of Fort Union, where I did not think myself welcome. But the weather changed suddenly, and the next morning after leaving Union, full of ire at finding that I could not proceed any farther, I was obliged to return.

I must say that Mr. Kipp was fair enough with me. He furnished me with a room for myself and family, and provided my firewood and water, which had to be hauled from the river, all free of charge, and also allowed me to trade all the dried meat I wanted, charging myself what was thus

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

expended. This enabled me to pass a half-pleasant winter; but, doubting that I should ever be re-engaged, I made up my mind to leave the Company, and take my family to the Flathead Mission," of which Father de Smet had so favorably spoken to me. So I made arrangements with Mr. Kipp to build me a boat, in which I was to leave early enough to reach the States in time to get off with the Mormon emigration.

According to agreement the boat was ready, and on the 5th of April [1847] I left Fort Union with my family, consisting of six children, accompanied also by Mr. Latty, son-in-law of Mr. Laidlaw, who had come up in the fall for his health, and two men. We had a pleasant trip, excepting some high winds, which sometimes caused us to remain as much as three days camped in the willows, and one fright from a war party of Rees.

When we stopped at Fort Clark, Mr. Des Hôtel, who was in charge, told us that a party of 22 Rees had gone to war on the Sioux in 11 bull-boats, two in each boat; but remarked that there would be no danger for us, as the partisan was a young man friendly to the whites. "This partisan is the son of Old Star," said he, pointing to the old man, "and there is Old Star himself"; and a very fine looking fellow he was. The following morning we left, expecting to meet them on that or the following day, as they had started the day we arrived; but it was not till the second day, about noon, that we discovered the party. Although we had been well armed at the fort, and were not in much danger for ourselves, we could not feel entirely safe, on account of my family of Assiniboines, who were deadly enemies to the Rees; for I knew the latter to be worse than any others, in taking revenge on women. But we were soon discovered by them, and on we had to go. As soon as we came near they commenced to yell at a great rate, and in a moment our boat was surrounded. All those that could get hold grasped our boat; but this appeared to be done in good humor. As we thus drifted along with the current, they gave us some of their provisions, which were little balls made of pounded parched corn, mixed with marrow fat, and some boiled squashes; in exchange for which we gave them some fine fat buffalo meat. Ahead of us there was a boat which we afterward found contained the partisan, who, having given his orders, had gone on to find a suitable landing; and in a little while his party, who held us prisoners, landed us in his presence. He was a very fine-looking young man, and had his pipe ready for a smoke; but he understood so few words of Assiniboine that I could make out little of what he said, and was anxious to be out of the clutches of his party. I got out what tobacco I had, a good bundle of dried buffalo meat, and some sugar, of which I knew they were fond, and after this made a sign that I wanted to proceed on my journey; upon which he gave me the sign to go, charging me not to let any one at Fort Pierre know they were under way. Under such fair promises we took our leave of the gentlemen, having fared much better than we expected.

On we proceeded again, quite jovial, and praising the partisan, who we hoped might exchange his boats for horse-flesh, as that was what the party were after, and take some Sioux scalps, if these could be obtained. As we went along I began to think of what kind of a reception I should have from Mr. Picotte at Fort Pierre, which I somewhat dreaded to enter. But as I was a free man, who owed the Company nothing, I did not think there would be much danger in approaching him; and if he would not let me come into his fort, I could very well sleep outside, as I was used to it by this time.

At last we came in sight of the fort, and as ours was the first boat down this spring, many persons came to the landing to see who had arrived, and to learn the news. A little before landing, I saw

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Mr. Picotte at the head of the crowd, who had made way for him to be the first to receive us. He looked very pleasant, and I supposed he was glad to see Mr. Latty, who handed him the mail; but I soon found him well disposed toward us all. He shook hands with me in a very friendly manner, and invited me up to the fort, saying, "Never mind your baggage; I will send the wagon for it, and for your family." This was rather a surprise to me, who expected anything else but such a kind reception. We walked up to the office, where he opened the letters, read several, and after a while said, "Larpenteur, come to my room." I could not think what this private invitation meant, and supposed it would end in a scolding; but as he had been so kind as to invite me into his fort, and send for my family, I did not think it would be a very serious one. There was no one else in his room, where he bade me be seated, and then asked abruptly, "What made you leave the Company?" I replied that I had not left the Company; that I had left Clark only. After I had related the particulars he smiled and said, "It is true, Larpenteur, that I ought to have written to you; yet you did wrong — you who have been so long in the Company should have overlooked that, knowing how much we thought of you; and it would have been better for you, if you did not want to serve under Mr. Clark, to have remained at Fort Louis until the arrival of Mr. Culbertson, who you knew was to be up in the fall." To which I remarked that probably that would have been better, but that it would have been very disagreeable for both of us. "Now then," he continued, "I am told that Mr. Kipp treated you badly last winter. Did you have any words with him?" I then told him such reports were false; that I had no complaint to make against Mr. Kipp. "Well, now, here is a draft of \$200 on your friend Johnson in St. Louis, in favor of the Company; what is that draft for?" "It is for provisions which I got during the winter," I replied. He then tore the draft to pieces and threw it into the fire. "Now," said he, "how much did you expect to save of your wages this year?" I told him that according to arrangements I had made with Mr. Denig, the clerk of Fort Union, I expected to save \$300, if not more. "Well," said he, "come to the office; I will get the bookkeeper to make you out a draft on the Company for \$300."

While the clerk was making out the draft supper was announced, and well was I prepared for that. After supper we all retired to the office, where most of the conversation was on the great discovery of gold in California, this being the first that we had heard of it; for the news had just reached Fort Pierre, and some could scarcely credit it. Mr. Picotte then said to me, "What are you going to do with your family? Are you going to settle below?" After telling him that my intention was to go on to the Flatheads, in company with the Mormon emigration, he said I should be too late for that; but, if I wished, he would give me a letter to Bordeaux, the person in charge of Fort John on the Platte, where I could remain all winter and proceed on my journey early in the following spring; or, better than that, I could engage with the Company for another year, make arrangements with them to take me up as far as Fort Benton, and go from there to the Flatheads. This was very kind of him. Being prepared to go either by the Platte or by the Missouri, and convinced that I stood fair in the estimation of the Company, I left Fort Pierre next morning in great glee, holding Mr. Picotte high in my esteem.

On reaching the settlements, I learned that the Mormon emigration had gone, and that I was too late. So I went down as far as St. Joseph, Mo., where I left my family, and immediately proceeded to St. Louis, where I arrived in time for the Company's steamer to the Yellowstone. I made arrangements to serve one season, and they were to bring up my small outfit for the Flatheads the following summer. Everything being thus arranged to my satisfaction, I took my family on board

at St. Joe, and after a pleasant trip of six weeks we reached Fort Union on the 27th of June [1847].

Chapter 14

(1847-49)

#### FORT BENTON AND ELSEWHERE

A few days after my return to Fort Union I was reinstated in my former department; but as some of the clerks had gone to the States, and were not to return till the fall, I had an addition to my duties, having the retail store and the men to command, besides the trade. All went on smoothly, excepting that a war party of Sioux attacked the men at the hay field, wounding one, and killing four oxen which had been hitched to the shafts of the carts, in Red River fashion. The men came running, out of breath, to report the attack, saying they thought the oxen were all killed. I then took two Spaniards, mounted the best horses in the fort, and went to see how matters stood. On our arrival at the spot, ten miles from the fort, we found three carts turned over, the animals dead in the shafts, and the fourth ox standing in a ravine with several arrows in him, mortally wounded.

The usual time for the fall express arrived, and on the 15th of October [1847] Mr. James Kipp and suite made their entrance into Union, including Mr. James Bruguière, his nephew, who had formerly charge of the retail store and command of the men. So I was relieved and had only to attend to the Indians. For some time after Iron-eyed Dog had so much troubled me, young men who called at the fort on their warpaths would ask me how I liked my comrade, the Iron-eyed Dog; to which I would very imprudently reply that I had made my medicine for him, that I thought would be as strong as theirs if not stronger, and that they would find it out before the summer were over. Should anything happen to him after I made such a declaration my chance to escape unhurt would be small. To my great astonishment, a party of Blackfeet happened to surprise the Assiniboines during the summer and shot the Dog through the back. This was a bad shot for me, although I must confess that I was not sorry to hear of it, but the scamp was not killed. This news kept me somewhat uneasy. Harvey's Opposition boat having been icebound 18 miles below Union, he concluded to winter there; so a trader had to be sent from Union to oppose him, and I was chosen, for Mr. Kipp did not like to send his own dear nephew. So, toward the last of October [1847], I was dispatched with an outfit to build in opposition to Mr. Husband, that being the name of the gentleman in charge. I dreaded going to this place, for we had learned before arrival of the Opposition that the Dog had been killed by the Rees. At this time a good strong peace had been made with the Assiniboines by the Gros Ventres, Mandans, and Rees, and in the fall they would visit and trade corn. Mr. the Iron-eyed Dog was a great gambler; he had won a large quantity of goods from the Rees, and was returning to his camp well packed, when a small party of Rees overtook and shot him. My medicine was strong! Now his brother was in the camp where I had to go and build, on the bank of the Missouri, and the Dog had been killed about three weeks before. If I had been uneasy before, imagine how I felt now.

On my arrival in camp I was invited by the chiefs and most of the leading men into their lodges, as usual. After accepting many invitations, I returned to my own lodge, which I found well lined with visitors. A little while after I had taken my seat, hoping that invitations were all over, a little Indian boy came in, saying, "He invites you." Indians do not like to mention each other's names, on which account there is often trouble to get at the right name. At last one said, "He is the brother of the one who was killed by the Rees — look out for him!" "Now," said I to myself, "here is

another scrape"; but knowing the Indian character, and understanding their language, I thought I could get out of it. So I followed the boy to the lodge. On entering, I saw a great six-footer, in full mourning — that is, daubed all over with white clay, legs full of blood, head full of mud, and hair cut short; indeed, he did look like a monster. On my entering, without shaking hands he bade me sit down, and then commenced to light the pipe without saying another word. During this time I did my best to assume a sad countenance, to correspond with his own. At last he got through with the preparation of his pipe, lighted it, and having handed it to me, said, "I suppose you have learned of the misfortune I have met with." I then answered, "Yes, we have, and on learning this sad news we were all very sorry. It is true your brother was troublesome when in liquor, but this we always overlooked, knowing it was not his fault, and, aside from liquor, he was a good man — a good robe-maker, whom the chief of the post thought a great deal of. I have heard my chief say that he thought the Dog would become the chief of the band of the One who Holds the Knife [Gauché]; and indeed I was of the same opinion." The poor fellow, or the villain, thinking by my talk that he had lost a greater brother than he had supposed, burst into a tremendous lamentation, which I did not know how to take; but it did not last long. During my confab a small wooden bowl was placed before me, filled with pounded buffalo meat and a few pieces of marrow fat; but I had already been to so many feasts that I could not partake of this. When I thought the mourning ceremony over, I told the monster my reason for not eating, said that I would take it to my family, and asked him to send his little boy with me for the pan. This is customary with them. The little boy followed me to my lodge. Having shaken hands with him, I gave the boy a large plug of tobacco, put some hawk-bells, some vermilion, a knife, and various small trinkets in his pan, and sent him back. My success was so great that I got all this man's trade during the winter, and he remained my best friend. So much for having buttered him so well!

During this winter [1847-48], myself and James Bruguière, who each had an Indian family, formed a partnership to open trade with the Flatheads. We sent down our requisition and were to go up in the keel boat to Benton, where we were to proceed to the Flatheads with a wagon and pack-horses. Mr. Culbertson had moved Fort Louis down the previous spring [of 1847], this being the season after Fort Benton was built.

The steamer, which never failed, arrived on time [in the summer of 1848], bringing up our requisition. Being put in charge of the keel boat I started on my second trip to the Blackfeet. Unfortunately for us the river was even lower this season than it was last and we were 90 days on our trip. The Flatheads had news that we were coming, and as they were at peace with the Blackfeet, a party had come to Fort Benton, thinking it was about time we arrived. They had been disappointed, but left word where we could find them, saying they would assist us over the mountains; but we were frustrated in this good thing.

A band of Blackfeet, called the Little Robes, after the name of their chief, instead of following the rest of the tribe north after trade was over, remained on the south side of the Missouri. Some of Little Robe's young men happened to have a fight with the Flatheads; some one of each party was killed and horses were stolen. So the peace was broken, and the Flatheads returned to their country as fast as they could. This was bad news for us, as the peace had been an inducement for us to undertake this trade.

Still, go we must, and horses must be had, which could not be procured without going to Little Robe's camp to trade them; and there was some risk in that. At this time Mr. Clark was in charge

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

of Benton, and I must say he did all he could for me. He lent me horses to go to the camp and also sent his interpreter with me; a very good one he was, and had he not been with me, it is doubtful whether I should have returned. The second day after we left the fort we came to the camp; it was yet early, and the horse trade soon commenced. This was going on finely, when an old rascal commenced a harangue, in which he said, "Why do you trade horses to that stranger? He wants them to take arms to trade with your enemies. You had better take what he has, and send him home," and a great deal of other bad talk, which at last induced them to take back their horses, for which, however, they returned to us very nearly the correct payment. All this was owing to my interpreter, for, had any other than him been with me, they never would have brought back anything, and most likely would have taken our pile. At last he said, "We had better pack up and leave; the longer we stay the worse it will be for us." Taking his advice, we packed up and went away, leaving the old scoundrel still at his harangue, and having been able to retain but two horses out of eight which we had traded. After this bad luck, we reached Fort Benton next day.

As the season was far advanced, we had no time to wait for the return of the Indians from the north, nor did we think it advisable to do so under the present circumstances. Through the kind efforts of Mr. Clark, we were furnished with two wagons, two carts, and eight pack-horses, besides the four horses to each wagon, and two to each cart; also, with ten men, and a good guide — at least, one who was thought good. It was about the end of October [1848] when we left Fort Benton again. As our horses were not well broken to harness, we had some trouble for the first few days, after which we went along about half right. On the fourth day out we reached Sun River early. My hunter had been in luck, having killed three grizzly bears, and he brought to camp the meat of the cubs, which, at this season, are very fat. It was but fun for this hunter to kill them. He came into the mountains at the same time I did, with Robert Campbell [in 1833], and had remained all this time in and about them; he had been hunter for Captain Stewart, who came out from England two seasons in succession to hunt in the Rocky Mountains.

While the fat cubs were boiling we dug the bank of Sun River to make a crossing place, mine being the first spade ever sunk in this ground by a white man, and my wagon the first to cross this stream, in the year 1848. After a good dinner we hitched up again; the river was fordable, with a good gravelly bottom, and our crossing was made without much trouble. We camped a short distance below the ford, where we had plenty of grass and wood. Our guide, who was a young Piegan Indian, had not been seen since breakfast, as he knew we were acquainted with this part of the country. We thought he might have gone in search of deer or bighorns, and were not uneasy about him till it became dark, when some began to think he had deserted us; at bedtime he had not made his appearance, and in the morning we found ourselves without a guide. Now what to do was the question. No one knew the way to the Flatheads, even by a foot path. I thought of my hunter, who was accustomed to travel through mountains, and proposed to take him with me, and try to find the Flatheads.

The next morning we started, thinking we had given our guide sufficient time to make his appearance. Expecting to find game, we took nothing with us but a little sugar and coffee; but we were mistaken in that, for when one gets in the mountains he is out of the range of game, as I found out afterward. On the fourth day, when on the summit of a mountain, there was a heavy snow, and we had eaten but one partridge and two ducks since the day after we left camp. After this fall of snow, having found no practicable wagon road, nor even any fit one for pack animals, we concluded to

turn back.

At this time we had already been three days without eating. Now the fine dreams of well-set tables commenced, with no conversation at noon or at night camp, and this lasted three days longer. On the morning of the sixth day of our starvation my hunter found a mare and colt. Having traveled about two hours, we perceived a party of warriors; but, fortunately for us, we saw them first, turned back a few steps, and then struck for the roughest part of the mountains to hide and select a good place for defense, in case we should be found. During this rambling I thought of a dried buffalo sinew which I had in my bullet pouch to mend moccasins. I pulled it out and cut it in two, offering my hunter a part of it, which he refused, saying, "Eat it all; I believe I can starve better than you." So, without asking him a second time, I soon demolished the sinew, which I found excellent, except that it was too small. We at last found a good hiding place among the rocks, where we remained concealed till near sunset, scared and mighty hungry. The mare was a fine, fat one, but she had gone lame in one of her hips. My hunter, being by this time perhaps as hungry as I was, went out of our hiding place, and very soon I heard a shot. He came back, saying, "We shall have plenty to eat now." "What have you killed?" I asked. "I have shot the old mare," he replied. We both got a piece of the liver and some ribs, went to a place where there was wood, near by, made a small fire, and began to cook. The liver we threw on the embers, but the coals of tamarack pine turned it so very black that, at first, I thought it impossible to eat any. On digging pretty well into it, I found some of it eatable; but this was laid aside when the fine fat ribs were roasted. The fat tasted excellent, but the lean part was rather insipid, and appeared to need a great deal of seasoning to make it palatable. As bad luck would have it, we had forgotten our salt at last night's camp; so I tried sugar, but that was worse than without. However, we made a fine supper, and grew a little more talkative. In the morning, having looked around as well as we could, to see if we could discover Indians, and found no signs of any, we made up our minds to get under way again, and did so, taking with us a good supply of mare meat. We now traveled without fear of starvation, though our great uneasiness regarding enemies rendered the journey very unpleasant; but we were so fortunate as to reach camp the next day, having seen nothing alarming. We found them all right in camp, but without much to eat, meat being all out. I offered them some of the meat I had, but when they found out what kind it was they declined, saying they thought they could hold out a while longer. As I did not have much left, and had got used to it by this time, I was not sorry for their refusal, now that I had pepper and salt. I can assure the reader that horse meat makes excellent steaks.

Finding no road, winter advancing, fear of war parties — all those things taken into consideration induced us to make up our minds to turn back and winter at Benton. This move, which was the best I could make under the circumstances, was anything but consoling to me. I knew that I was a ruined man. Aside from the danger apprehended on our return to Benton, my situation was an awful one; but there was no alternative. Next morning we got under way for Benton. On the following day, in the afternoon, we discovered Indians on the other side of the Missouri, yelling with all their might and making signs for us to come to them. This gave us a great fright, the women and children crying and going on at a great rate, knowing that we could not reach timber in time should the enemy rush on us. Yet nothing better could be done than to try to make the timber. Had it not been for the women and children, we would have stood our ground behind our wagons, but on their account we made for timber. In the meantime we saw the Indians going

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

up the Missouri, not appearing to want to cross; and, applying the whip pretty sharply, we finally reached the so-much-desired timber, where, losing no time, we forted the best we could, expecting an immediate attack. Night came without further alarm, and arrangements were made for a good strong guard. Just after we had retired a tremendous croaking and cawing of crows was heard, which brought all hands up again, much frightened. The women and children being as well secreted as we could, every man stood to his gun, awaiting the attack; but, when an hour or more passed and nothing happened the fright subsided, and all came out of their hiding places — I mean the women folks and children. Then the talk was that it was a bad omen to hear crows croak at night, and my Canadians had a long sitting up, relating their superstitious stories. I thought that the crows might have been frightened by Indians, who, seeing us thus put on our guard, had concluded to delay the attack until morning. So the same guard was continued, and after a little all was quiet again.

Morning came and all was right. My hunter, who had got up earlier than the others and gone to see what he could discover, soon returned, saying that he had found out why the crows made such a noise last night. The party of Indians we had seen had passed through the timber, where they had killed two elk, taken most of the meat, and gone on their way. The crows had feasted on part of it, when Mr. Bruin, coming for his share at night, had frightened the birds away from their repast. This was the whole cause of their alarming noise. Luckily for us there was more meat than the bear and all the crows could eat, and my hunter brought enough of their leavings to make us a good breakfast. We were soon hitched up and ready to start, hoping to reach Benton the next day, provided we met with no accident on the way. Our hopes being realized, we entered Benton, all safe and sound.

Upon arrival we were informed that the Indians we had seen were those who had killed the elk we had found. They were a party going to war on the Flatheads, and had left the fort shortly after we did, having been told that we were on our way to the Flatheads, and warned not to trouble us if they saw us. They were Piegans — good Indians, who promised not to harm us; and we afterward learned from a couple of them that they had seen us and made signs for us to come after meat; but, seeing that we were frightened, kept on their way.

At the time we returned to Benton, the Indians had commenced to arrive from the north. Among them was a small Indian named Sata, a half-breed Flathead and Blackfoot, who had guided Father De Smet and others from the Flathead Mission. He said he could find a wagon road, and if I wished would show me the way. Having been inspired with confidence in him by the people of the fort, and being anxious to see the Flatheads, wagon road or no wagon road, I determined to try that famous guide.

The third day after my return to Benton I was on the way again, taking one of my men who understood the Blackfoot language well. I was mounted on a fine stuball horse, much fancied by Indians, well dressed and well equipped; my man was also well arranged, and we felt sure this time of seeing the Flatheads. The first evening, about camping time, we fell in with a small camp of Blackfeet, who invited us to stay over night with them, and we willingly did so, saving ourselves the trouble of making camp. But it was not long before I repented of having accepted the invitation. I soon felt a crawling in my underclothes, and by morning it seemed as though I were being raised clear out of bed. I never before felt so miserable in my life, and in spite of all I could do, I could not get rid of the lice till I returned to Benton.

Our next encampment was at the Great Falls of the Missouri. The noise was so great that we could scarcely hear each other talk, but I could very well feel the graybacks hunting for their suppers in my shirt. Sata happened to kill a fine buck and we had a glorious supper. Having traveled for two days without any unusual occurrence, pretty much on the same kind of road as on my former trip, we reached the base of the mountains. Sata remarked that we had best try to get some meat, as game was scarce in the mountains, and now was the time to provide for ourselves. Thinking myself somewhat of a hunter I went a little ahead of the party next morning, and soon saw some objects crossing a small brook, at so great a distance that I was unable to distinguish whether they were men or game. Hoping they were deer, I slipped the cover off my double-barrel, and went after them. When in the act of shooting, I discovered on my left, behind a small hill, an object which I could not make out, but thought was probably a wolf. Sata and my man, who had come up by this time, asked me, "What have you seen?" I replied in Blackfoot, "Matahpey," meaning "people." On our advancing a few steps, fifteen naked Indians, with guns, bows, and arrows rose up before us, ready to shoot; but Sata cried out, "My brothers! my brothers! don't shoot! It is I." Hearing this they put down their arms, came up, and shook hands. They said, then, that they had discovered us, taken us for beaver trappers, and had made arrangements to kill us. As to myself, whom they took to be the chief, they had me killed already in imagination; one was to have my stuball horse, one my sky-blue coat, another my gun, and so on in the partition of my effects. The object I had taken to be a wolf was one of the Indians, who remarked himself that he had got a little nearer me than the balance of his party, and that I might be glad his gun was hard on the trigger; for he had aimed well at my breast, and I surely would have been a dead man, had he got his gun to go off. On learning where we were going, they told my guide that it was impossible for us to cross the mountains; that they had had great trouble to return, and that our animals could not get over. Thereupon, my Sata gave up the idea of going any farther, and concluded to turn back with them.

So there was another trip for nothing, except gathering an awful crop of graybacks, which I thought would devour me before my return to Benton. The Indians were delighted to see us turn back, immediately struck out on a hunt, and at the place agreed upon to encamp, came in with three fine deer, of which little was left in the morning. This was a party of young men, full of fun and mirth. I could not have been better treated than I was by them. On arriving in camp my place was prepared for me; the best spot was made as soft as it could be, by pulling and cutting small willows on which to spread my bedding. Then the best pieces of meat were cooked in various ways, and given to me first of all. There were roast and boiled meat, liver and guts broiled on the coals, blood pudding — in fact, all that was considered eatable of the animals. They kept this cooking going on almost all night — it is incredible what a quantity an Indian can eat. With the exception of such feasts nothing took place on our return worth mentioning, and on the fourth day after falling in with this party we entered Fort Benton again.

Although all my efforts had been in vain, I did not yet abandon the idea of the undertaking, which I intended to put through early in the spring. Eight or ten days after my return, I was taken with a pain in the breast, which I laid to my starvation and exposure, and the failure of my undertaking. I could not help taking my disappointment to heart, and this, I believe, was the cause of a great derangement of my nervous system, from which I never completely recovered. Mr. Culbertson, who had returned from the States, treated me extremely well, and I passed as pleasant a

---

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

winter [of 1848-49] as could be expected, situated as we were.

During this winter the whole tribe of the Blackfeet learned that our intentions were to proceed to the Flatheads in the spring, and remonstrated against it. The leading chiefs advised us not to go, saying that it would not be good for us, even if we succeeded in getting there safe; that we would not be safe when we got there; that there would be war parties constantly about the Missouri; and that the tribe would not go north as usual, but would remain south of the Missouri, with the intention of carrying on war with the Flatheads.

This information, from such sources, induced us to abandon the project. We sold out to the Company, and early in the spring [of 1849] went down to Fort Union with Mr. Culbertson. We left Benton in a large Mackinaw boat. Having started so early, we were sometimes ice-bound, and suffered a great deal from cold. The water was very low, and frequently we had to jump into the river to get the boat off sand bars, while there was ice running. I was generally one of the first in and last out of the water. Twenty days out from Benton we landed at Union.

On my arrival I was offered \$1000 a year to take charge of Fort Alexander, which, at that time, was considered the most dangerous post the Company had. But, wishing to take my family to some place where I could open a small farm, on which they could remain, should I return to the Indian country, and feeling sick besides, I refused the offer.

While at Union I learned that the Company wanted to sell Vermilion Post. So I concluded to go down and see what I could do in that line. I procured a small canoe, hired one man, and started for the States. There I was, again on the march, in a hollow log, for the distance of 1200 or 1500 miles. Luckily, this time I reached Trading Point without any accident, and remained there awaiting the arrival of the Company's steamer to return to Union. On my way down I stopped a few days at the Vermilion Post, but was not pleased with it, and abandoned the idea of making any arrangements there.

At last the steamer arrived. I went on board, where a letter was handed to me from my father, saying that he had sold his farm near Baltimore, and gone to St. Paul with my brother Eugene, to assist him to settle there, and also to see his grandson, A. L. Larpenteur. He was then to proceed to France, which he wanted to see once more before his death, and then to return and die in America with his children. He urged me strongly to leave the Indian country and settle near the rest of the family, where what property I might have, with what he could do for me, would enable me to live more comfortably than I could while wandering in the Indian country, exposing myself to the risk of losing my scalp.

Situated as I was, this news was well calculated to revive my hopes; but being born for bad luck, my agreeable expectations were not of long duration. Yet I had some pleasant moments, thinking that I should meet my old father again, whom I had not seen since 1838, and be united again with all the family after a separation of upward of 20 years; and I began to think that perhaps it was well for me not to have reached the Flatheads.

On reaching the Vermilion I was informed that a gentleman had just arrived from St. Paul, across the country, to take the census of the Santee half-breeds; and, at the same moment, the person himself came on board. After being introduced I asked him if he was acquainted with A. L. Larpenteur, to which he replied, "I know him very well." I then asked him if he knew whether Mr. Larpenteur's grandfather had come from Baltimore. He answered in the affirmative, but added that he had bad news for me; which was that the old gentleman had died the third day after arriv-

al at St. Paul, and that he, my informant, had attended the funeral.

I will leave the reader to imagine my feelings, and to sympathize with me, if there is any sympathy in him. The steamer is pushing off, and I must resume my journey, as well as my story.

During my short stay at the Vermilion, on my way down, Mr. Culbertson had overtaken me there, also on his way to meet the steamer; but, learning that there was cholera on board, he made up his mind to go no further, and to return to Fort Pierre. His reason for going to meet the boat was that they apprehended difficulty with the Indians at Crow Creek Agency, in case their annuities were not on board. So Mr. Culbertson told me, privately, of his writing to Mr. Sarpy, who was in charge, to tell him, in case the annuities were not on board, to send a dispatch to Fort Pierre, and he would come down and help to pass the boat; but, if they had the annuities, it would not be necessary for him to be there. At this time Major Hatting, their "father," a young man of about 26 or 27, was on board.

Five or six days after we left the Vermilion Post we arrived at Crow Creek, or as it was called, the Collins Campbell houses. After the boat landed, three barrels of hard-tack were put ashore, with some sugar and coffee, and given to the Indian soldiers; after which the men were sent to take in wood, which was all ready for the boat. In the meantime the Indians, who had not been invited on board, as was customary, took offense, and knocked the heads out of the barrels of hardtack, which they threw into the river; then they horsewhipped the men away from the woodpile, and placed a guard at the line; after which the chiefs, without invitation, came on board. After they had seated themselves one got up and said, "It is customary, when the boat arrives, to invite us on board, to shake hands, and tell us the news. What is the matter with you this year? Do you think that we have got the itch? Is that the reason you don't wish to shake hands?" Being told that their father was on board, they asked if their annuities were also on the boat. On being answered in the affirmative, they said, "Do you intend to take them to Fort Pierre?" Having been told that was the intention, the Indians remonstrated, saying they had been promised that the annuities were to be distributed at this place, and that they would have them left here; for they had nothing to do with the fort. The agent, giving no decided answer in this regard, went and sat down near the chiefs, who were all holding their heads in expectation of some reply from their father. Things were thus at a standstill for some time; but at last a tall, robust Indian got up, saying, "I am not a chief; but I am a soldier. I see that my chiefs all hang their heads down, as though they did not know what to say or do. But I know what to do." With that he struck a heavy blow with his tomahawk on the table, and then, addressing himself to the agent, said, "Hold up your head — when you speak with chiefs or soldiers, look them in the face. You are young, but we suppose you must have some sense, or our great father would not have sent you up here. My chiefs have spoken, but it seems that they have not been heard. I am a soldier; I tell you that those goods were promised us here, and they will not go any farther. I know that all the chiefs are not here yet; but we have sent for them. If you think that we want to distribute the goods during their absence you can put them in the store, and keep the key until they come; but we will not go to the fort. Do you hear that? That is what I have to say as a soldier."

The Indians were perfectly correct. I was on board the boat last season, when Major Matlock, at this very place, made them the promise and made up their requisition for the goods now on board; the Indians were then well pleased, and the major said he would throw in a box of sugar as the tail, which was 500 pounds.

During this great debate a cup of coffee and a hard tack had been presented to all who were in attendance, and as soon as the soldier and speaker was through, they all took leave. Upon consultation among the authorities it was agreed to unload the annuities — a very prudent forced move; and the following morning we were permitted to depart. Those Indians had been much displeased, the year before, with the behavior of the agent; they had shot at him while on board, but missed him, and killed one of the hands instead. We reached Union early in July [1849].

Chapter 15

(1849-55)

#### FORT VERMILION, LITTLE SIOUX, AND PONCA POST

With the intention to proceed to St. Paul I got all my family on board, and shipped for St. Louis, and thence for St. Paul. On examining affairs it was found that my father had not had time to accomplish his will properly. I went to Baltimore, applied to the Orphan Court, and had the will broken. All being arranged to my satisfaction I was ready to return. Being still sick, I applied to a physician, Dr. John Buckley, who said that a sea voyage might prove beneficial to me. So I embarked on a small merchant ship, and in 45 days landed in New Orleans. I put up at the St. Charles Hotel, where I remained a week; but the climate did not appear to agree with me, and I took a steamer for St. Louis.

About the latter end of February [1850] I arrived in St. Louis, where I had to remain until navigation opened to St. Paul. During my stay I made arrangements with the Company to take charge of the Vermilion Post, on condition that, if I chose, I could purchase it at a certain stipulated price. About the 15th of March I left for St. Paul. When the boat reached Galena it was learned that the ice on Lake Pepin was still too strong, and we had to remain a few days longer. At last the captain concluded to start. On arriving at the lake, it was impossible to get through, and as it appeared to the captain that we would be likely to be detained there long, he preferred to return to Galena. After waiting there a week we again started. The ice was still strong, but by main force, cutting the slushy ice like an old ram, the boat succeeded in getting through. I believe it was on the 8th of April that she landed at St. Paul, being the second boat up that season.

I remained in St. Paul until a St. Louis boat arrived, which was on the 15th of April. Next day I got all my family on board for St. Louis. On my arrival there, the Company's steamer was not yet ready to start; so I took my family up to St. Charles to await her arrival. On the 10th of May the steamer arrived, and I went on board, bound for the Vermilion Post.

About a week after we got under way cholera broke out among the men below, and grew so bad that we boxed up three and four in a night. The boat at last stopped. We put everything out, aired and limed the boat well, and about eight days afterward started again. The disease abated, though there were a few more cases, among which was my woman; but she recovered. Finally we reached the Vermilion Post, where I was deposited for one year, very glad to get out of that steamer.

The post, the country, all pleased me well enough, but I found there was nothing more to be made in the Indian trade, and the place was too much exposed to hostile Indians for me to remain there as a farmer. The Indians robbed me of all my corn, as well as all the half-breeds who were settled near the post; they were obliged to abandon their places and most of them went to settle at Sergeant's Bluffs. Had my health been good, I should have enjoyed myself well that winter [1850-51]. Trade was not bad, and there were good hunting grounds. One young Indian went out turkey hunting by moonlight, and returned in the morning with 14 fine large turkeys. I traded six of

him, among which one weighed 24 pounds.

Finding that the Vermilion Post would not suit me, and learning that there were good claims to be had cheap down about Little Sioux River, I sent my clerk to see how it looked there, and if possible to purchase for me a certain claim which, from the description given, I thought would be likely to suit me. The situation was about 85 miles from this place [Fort Vermilion]. On his return he said that the claim was a good one, but that it had not been represented correctly; for, in order to have it right, I must purchase a part of the neighboring claim, and that being the case, I had better go and see for myself. A few days afterward I went down, made the purchase to suit me, also arranged to have a ferryboat built, and then returned to my post. At the time I am speaking of there was no settlement between Sergeant's Bluffs and the place I bought — a distance of 50 miles.

About the 15th of May [1851], when Mr. Honoré Picotte came down from Fort Pierre in a Mackinaw, I embarked with him, bound for Sergeant's Bluffs, from which place I intended to go down to my claim by land. We had had a great deal of rain; the Missouri, as well as all other streams, had overflowed their banks, and the bottoms were all inundated. I had to remain about 15 days at Sergeant's Bluffs, waiting for the roads to become practicable. I purchased four Indian ponies, two French carts, and hired a guide, at \$2 a day, to pilot me through the water, for there was very little dry land to be seen between this and my place. About the last of May or first of June, my guide said he thought he could get me through; so we hitched up and started. The fourth day, after traveling through mud and water, we reached a place called Silver Lake. Our ponies were then nearly broken down, although they had not made over 35 miles during the four days. As this was the best part of the road, my guide said that it would be impossible for us to reach my place with the carts; that we still had 25 miles to make; "and," said he, "you have not seen anything yet; wait till we get near the ferry." He advised making horse travailles, which consist of two long poles, tied about three feet apart and extending eight or ten feet at the far ends, which drag on the ground, with crossbars fastened to them behind the horse, so as to make a kind of platform on which plunder is loaded.

The travailles being thus prepared, and the children loaded on them, we proceeded on our journey. Having made about 10 miles, we camped at Laidlaw's Grove, which was afterward called Ash-ton's Grove, and goes by that name still. We were then 16 miles from my place, which we had to reach next day or camp in the water, as there was no dry place to be found. We could have made that distance easily in a half day had the road been good. We rose early, and having placed the children to the best advantage on this kind of conveyance, got under march, not expecting to stop to lunch, as there was no fit place. On we went, my guide taking the lead; I behind him, leading a pony, and my woman behind me, also leading one. The nearer we came to the ferry, the deeper the water became, and the sun was already approaching the western horizon. Finally it came up to the armpit of my guide, and the children were dragged almost afloat on their travailles, crying and lamenting, saying, "Father, we will drown — we are going to die in this water — turn back." At times the ponies were swimming, but there was no use of turning back; the timber on dry land ahead was the nearest point; there was nothing to be seen behind us but a sheet of water, and the sun was nearly down. So on we pushed on, in spite of the distressing cries of the children, whom we landed safely on dry ground just at dark.

We had not eaten a bite since morning; but the children were so tired, and had been so frightened, that they laid down, and, in spite of the mosquitoes, which were tremendously bad, went to

sleep without asking for supper. This was certainly one of the most distressing days I had ever experienced; but we old folks felt like taking a good cup of coffee after such a day's work. A fire was immediately made, the coffee was soon served, and no time was lost in turning in for the night. Next morning we did not rise very early, but took our time, got up a good breakfast, and then called out for the boatman. Mr. Condit and Mr. Chase, the gentlemen of whom I had purchased the place, came to ferry us over, and in a little while I was in my log cabin, about 15 feet square. As I had left the carts and my effects at Silver Lake, I left the ponies on the other side, intending to return next day; but as it seemed impossible to bring my stuff through that deep water with my ponies and carts, I arranged with Mr. Chase to meet me with a yoke of cattle hitched to a large canoe. With that understanding, I started next morning with my guide; we pushed the march, and reached Silver Lake about ten at night. Then a tremendous dark cloud rose in the west, and just as we were going to take supper — about the hour of eleven — it blew a hurricane, or, rather, a whirlwind [cyclone], which took our lodge clear up in the air, and then blew the fire into the baggage. It was all we could do to save our plunder, and the lodge we did not find till next day. The latter was so suddenly taken up that we felt like two fools for a moment, not knowing what had become of it. Our supper, as you may say, was good as gone; but, fortunately for us, it was all wind. When we got up in the morning we found that a great many things were missing from our baggage, and much time was lost in searching for lost articles which had been blown so far off by the hurricane. Having succeeded in finding them, and made ready for a start, we saw a wagon coming from above with four yoke of cattle, and I found it was my old friend, Théophile Bruguière, an old Indian trader, and the first settler at the mouth of Big Sioux River. On his approach he cried out, "Hello, Larpenteur! what in the devil are you doing here? You're in a pretty fix, aint you?" "Yes," said I, "and I'm mighty glad to see you." "You are, hay? Well, put some of your stuff in my wagon — bet you I see you through." Bruguière was one of those plain, goodhearted sort of men, who would help anyone out of such a scrape. Having thus arranged matters, we got under way, and camped that night at Laidlaw's Grove. Early next morning we again got under way, and, being so well fixed, had little difficulty in reaching the ferry. I must not omit to say that we met Mr. Chase, who had been as good as his word, about four miles this side of the ferry, coming to meet me with his oxen and canoe; but we did not need his assistance, and left him to follow us empty. We reached the ferry in time to cross, and, all this trouble being over, I was soon safe in my cabin. We had as good a supper as our means could afford, and after much talk over the eight days out from Sergeant's Bluffs we retired for the night.

Although there were a few Mormons scattered in this part of the country, it might still be considered an Indian country. It was occupied, at the time, by Omahas, and frequent parties of Sioux went back and forth to war on the Omahas and Ottos. After I had arranged with Mr. Amos Chase to get me out logs for a house, and provided for my family, I started for St. Louis to raise what funds I had in the Company's hands, and also to procure some groceries. On my return I found most of my family down with the ague. Mr. Chase had gotten all the logs out, and I immediately began to build, but, as there were no mills, I had to hire a sawyer to work with a pit saw. About November [1851] I got into my house. But a short time afterward a small party of Omahas came to trade, who had the smallpox, unknown to me. In a couple of weeks my smallest child, a beautiful little boy, took the disease and died the third day. His mother fretted so that she never fairly got over it.

---

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

During the winter I made arrangements with Mr. Peter H. Sarpy to go up to Running Water, to take charge of his trading post for the Poncas. In the spring [of 1852] I rented my place, left my family on it, and early in April started for the Niobrara, or Running Water. The post, a very poor establishment, was situated immediately on the bank of that river, about a quarter of a mile from the Missouri. I had but three laboring men, and one cook. That summer I had no other pastime but that of fishing, and had to smoke away mosquitoes every evening.

In September [1852] the news came that all my children had died. I did not think this possible — some might have died, but not all. Not long afterward I received a letter from Mr. Sarpy, saying that I had lost two of my children. No end to bad luck for me!

The Poncas were a small tribe, who made but few robes. Having been accustomed to large tribes of Indians, and to big trades, I did not pay much attention to them, and have nothing to relate except one little incident which happened in the early part of the winter [of 1852-53]. After Indians have gone on their usual hunt, more or fewer loafers always remain about a post, instead of following the main camp, and become a great nuisance. Just such a set remained here — about six lodges in all. There were six able-bodied men among them; we were but five, all told, and as the laboring men had to be out, only myself and the cook remained at the post. The Indians became such beggars that I was obliged to refuse them a great many things; and they appeared so regularly at meal times that I became disgusted, and sometimes told the cook not to give them one mouthful to eat. One morning they came into my room, after my men had gone to their work. They took their seat on the floor, and I could perceive that there was some dissatisfaction in the assembly. I called to the cook to come in. This cook was a Frenchman from St. Louis, named Louis Menard, about six feet three, weighing about 130 pounds; but though he had no belly he looked as though he might swallow the biggest Indian of the lot. He was an old voyageur, who had been with Fremont on his trip to California. Just after he came in an old Indian, who had not appeared with the first ones, entered and bolted the door inside. I observed this, but said nothing. Several of those Poncas could speak Sioux, and one of them got up to make a speech, which, of course, was to find fault with my way of treating them. By the discourse I began to see that they intended to take advantage of there being none but us two in to force me to give them eatables. I had a small squaw ax under my bed, which I took out and handed to Louis. I then drew my pistol from under my pillow and placed my gun near at hand. Surprised to see these maneuvers, without saying another word they immediately rose and left the room, somewhat faster than they had entered it. This put an end to their begging and loafing, and I afterward gave them a cup of coffee only when I thought proper. Some days after this incident they came and made an apology, requesting me not to say anything about it to the chief when he returned from the hunt.

The Poncas, at that time, were divided into two bands, one led by a chief called The Whip, who kept on this side of the Running Water, and the other named The Drum, who remained on Ponca Creek. Those two chiefs were jealous of each other, and it was thought that they would become hostile.

This winter's trade was small, and we were now so close to settlements that it did not pay to keep up the post; so it was abandoned. I was thus the last person in charge of the Vermilion, and at the Ponca. I had great sport hunting deer at this place. The Indians being out on their winter hunt, I remained the only hunter at this place. We had a great deal of snow, which brought the deer into the wooded points along the river, where they were so plentiful that I killed five in one day with

small shot.

Early in the spring [1853] I returned to my farm. The individual to whom I had rented it died in the summer; but he had done well, and I had 40 acres well broken and fenced. During my absence the travel had greatly increased, and settlers were now coming in fast, so I rented my farm and devoted my attention entirely to the traveling community. Notwithstanding the increase of the settlements, the Omahas continued to hunt in their old grounds, and I always kept a few trinkets for their trade. All went on quite smoothly through the summer — good crops, plenty of travel. About midwinter a party of Sioux, who had gone to war on the Omahas, killed four of them, and stolen some ponies, passed my place on their return. The day they arrived being extremely cold, they concluded to camp on the river bank near my house. While camped there some of the young men went out hunting, and killed a deer in the timber below my field. They brought in a part of it, and one of them told my woman where he had hung the balance in a tree, a short distance from the house, saying that they did not want it, and if she chose to go after it, she was welcome to do so. Early next morning the party left; toward noon the weather moderated, and she remarked that she had a mind to go after that meat. I told her to do as she pleased about it, and she finally concluded to go. Wrapping up warm in her blanket, and taking her daughter along, she started in quest of the meat. As I was building a bridge at the time, I was left alone at home, my men being all out getting out timber. She had been gone but a little while when a party of six Omahas came in. From their daubed appearance I soon found out that they were in pursuit of the Sioux, and became alarmed about my woman; for, although they knew her well, and were aware that she was an Assiniboine, and therefore belonged among the deadly enemies of the Sioux, yet they looked upon her as a Sioux, as she spoke that language. I did the best I could to induce them to stay long enough to give my woman time to return, but they appeared in a great hurry, and soon started. Just as they were stepping off the entry I saw her coming home, about 300 yards from the house. When she saw them approaching she exclaimed to her daughter, “My daughter, we are lost!” She knew who they were, knew their customs, and rightly judged that her time had come. On meeting her they shook hands; but the next thing was the report of a gun, and she fell dead, shot through the heart. One among them then wanted to shoot her daughter, but he was not permitted to do so, being told, “We have killed her mother — that is sufficient.” This deed was done as quick as lightning; then, throwing away some of their little effects, they ran off as fast as their legs would carry them. The alarm was given, but to no purpose. My wife never said a word, having been instantly killed. She was also struck across the face with some kind of blunt weapon. Her daughter was about 18 years of age. One year afterward I married again.

Chapter 16  
(1855-61)

#### FORT STEWART AND THE POPLAR RIVER POST

All this time the travel increased fast, and as I built considerable, I found myself a little in debt in the crisis of 1857. Seeing no show of getting out of debt without making too great sacrifices, I concluded to engage to the firm of Clark, Primeau, and Co., to go and take charge of Fort Stewart, 35 miles above Fort Union. This fort was built during the time of the firm of Frost, Todd, and Co., who, having been too extravagant, were obliged to give it up.

On the 7th of June, 1859, I took passage at Sioux City on Captain Throckmorton's steamer, whose name I have forgotten. On the 24th of the same month I was landed at my post, and again among

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

the Assiniboines. I found this fort in a very bad condition, but in the course of the summer I got it in order, and had very comfortable quarters. I had not seen the Assiniboines during the last six years, and believe I was about as glad to meet them again as they were to see me. As I was now working for the Opposition, against the "big house," I had to use all my knowledge and experience to draw them to my side. In order to effect this I had to dress some of the big chiefs, and make presents to some of the leading men. On the first arrival of any Assiniboine I would make inquiries about such a one, and about that other one, whom I had known, saying that I had made up my mind to make these individuals some little presents. I knew this would flatter them, and at the same time, they must have the presents they expected or my inquiries would not have the desired effect. So they would come to me, in the best of humor, and, after some conversation, would say, "Is that so? I understood you have made inquiries about me." And I could observe that every Indian was delighted to find that I had asked after him. I proceeded in this way through the whole tribe, and soon had them bound to give me almost all their trade.

This [1859-60] was the pleasantest winter I ever spent with the Assiniboines. We had great dances and talks, which always ended with a treat of a large kettle of mush sweetened with molasses. Although my name was White Man Bear, in their language Mato Washejoe, the buffalo dance was my favorite, and we also sometimes danced the bear dance. What had brought me very high in their estimation was that, buffalo being very plentiful, during summer and winter they made surrounds, in which they killed plenty of meat within 300 yards of the fort. My trade this winter was very good, consisting of 300 robes, beside a great many other skins; but the firm, fearing the American Fur Company, consolidated, and as they needed but few clerks or traders, I was thrown out of employment. I was not very well pleased with Mr. Clark, who had promised to take care that I should have a good place. Those gentlemen, seeing that they had the country to themselves, reduced the number of their clerks, and the wages also; they even cut down on their men and Indians.

On my way down the Missouri I found, at Fort Berthold, Jefferson Smith, an old trader, who, like the balance, was out of employment, and who had about \$4000. There I also met a young man by the name of Boller, who said that he could raise \$2000 from his father in Philadelphia. I felt sure that I could obtain my share from Mr. Robert Campbell in St. Louis. Under such an understanding we agreed to meet in St. Louis. My plan for taking up our outfit was to go around by the way of St. Paul, thence on to Pembina, and through part of the British possessions, with the view to avoid the Sioux. This was a road which no one of us had traveled. As those men had to wait for the return of Mr. Chouteau, who had gone up to Fort Benton, it was not till the last of July [1860] that we met in St. Louis. I had arrived a few days before, and had informed Mr. Campbell of our project, of which he approved, and readily advanced me my portion of the outfit. I also informed Mr. Kenneth McKenzie, who knew something of that country; he said that my plan was a good one, and wished me success, adding that he was sure I would do well. One of Mr. Campbell's clerks by the name of Robert Lemon joined the company. A few days after the arrival of the other two partners we went into operation, Mr. Boller having obtained by telegraph the amount required. Our opposition move was soon reported to Mr. Chouteau, who said that it would prove an abortion; that we would never reach our intended points. I was to go to the Assiniboines, at the same place as last winter [1859-60]. Smith and Boller were to winter at Berthold. Our equipments were soon ready and shipped to St. Paul, where we were to purchase our cattle.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

On the 5th of September [1860] we left St. Paul with eight wagons and eleven men. Our train, at this early time, attracted the attention of many as we went along; we were often asked where we were bound, and on telling our destination, the answer would be, "Why! you are going a round-about way to the Yellowstone! You will not get there this winter." We could have taken Governor Stevens' route, which would have been somewhat shorter, but this would have taken us among the Sioux, whom I wanted to avoid, as well as all other Indians, hostile or friendly, as I knew such meetings were always expensive and bothersome. We had some little trouble at the start, as our cattle were not well broken; but it did not last long. The weather being fine, we traveled well. We crossed the Red River of the North at Georgetown, and thence struck for Pembina. This part of the road was quite level, well watered, and sufficiently wooded. About the middle of October [1860] we reached Pembina. There we crossed on a very poor bridge near the mouth of Pembina River. Next day we proceeded 30 miles up this river to a small village called St. Joseph, at the base of Pembina Mountain, inhabited by Canadian French half-breeds. Many of my acquaintances who had been on the Missouri had settled at this place, where I almost felt myself at home and had no trouble in procuring such a guide as I wanted. I told him that I wished to avoid all Indians, if possible — my friends, the Assiniboines, as well as all others; and to find a good practicable route for my wagons, even if it took us out of the most direct road. Upon which he replied that he could take me exactly as I required, and that he knew all the camps we had to make from the start, for he had the map in his head. Being asked what his charge would be, he said that he should want two buffalo horses, meaning runners which can overtake buffalo. This price agreed upon, we left next day.

The weather was fine, the roads were good, and we traveled well till our cattle began to get tender-footed, when we had to go slow. When we reached Mouse [or Souris] River they got so lame that we had to shoe them in some manner or other; so we thought of the iron bands of our trunks, examined the thickest, and with these made shoes which

helped us considerably, though they wore out fast, and detained us much on our march. When we arrived on a little river called the Elk Head, Smith and Boller, with their four wagons, left for Berthold.

I kept on with my old guide and Mr. Lemon, with our four wagons, for the Missouri or Fort Stewart. At the last crossing of Mouse River our guide remarked that we had better take on all the dry firewood we could find, as we would not have any more till we should come near the Bad Lands of the Missouri. Having acted upon his advice, and done some more shoeing, we again got under way, driving at the rate of about ten miles a day. On leaving this point our spirits rose, and though we traveled slowly we still hoped to reach our destination in good time. According to the camps which our guide could count up, we should not be much over eight days. Although our guide knew the way well, he missed one camp. When we neared the Missouri one evening, the old man, who had gone ahead, returned to camp saying, "Good news! You need not spare your firewood; I have seen the Missouri." At this news a cry of joy burst through our little squad, who threw up their hats and jumped about like crazy men. Good fires were made, and in the morning the last stick was burned; we were glad of it, and left camp fully expecting to reach the Missouri early. But we were disappointed in that; we traveled the whole day without wood or water, and it was dark when we reached a small stream, nearly dry, and without wood, and we had to gather

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

buffalo chips to make fire. No Missouri having been seen, there was great discontentment in camp that night, for we knew not exactly where we were. The old guide was much put out; but, knowing that he had not been much mistaken, got up early, mounted his horse, and very soon returned, saying, "Those who believe that I have not seen the river can come with me, and I will make them see it." Thinking we were lost we had camped within ten miles of Fort Stewart, which we reached a little before sundown on the 9th of November, 1860, all safe and sound, having lost on the whole journey nothing but one ax, which we forgot in our camp on Mouse River.

Thus this great journey was performed, being the first ever made with such wagons. I had been informed that Fort Kipp, which was within 200 yards of Fort Stewart, had been burned down by the Indians, but was in hopes to find Fort Stewart still standing. In this I was disappointed; it had also been burned, and I found myself obliged to build. As all the chimneys of Fort Kipp were still standing, and this was a great item, I concluded to build on the same spot, and next day commenced operations.

On the following day two men and one Indian came up from Fort Union. They were much surprised to find me there, and said that Mr. Clark and the Indian agent were on their way up to Poplar River to invite the Crows, who were camped there, to trade at the fort; and that there would be no going out to camps this winter. From this man I learned some particulars of Fort Union. He observed that Clark thought himself a king, being a member of the American Fur Company, in charge of Union, with no opposition, and that he had made himself quite comfortable, but had reduced the men's rations, particularly their biscuits, which had become very small. For his part, he said he was mighty glad I had come, and added, "How glad they will be when they hear that at the fort!"

Clark and the agent, who had taken the ridge road, about two miles back of the fort, came on to our tracks. On examining them, finding that the wheels were iron-bound, they thought that the party could not have been half-breeds, but might have been whiskey peddlers; but as such would have been contrabands, they put spurs to their horses after us. On learning that the agent of the United States was Major Schoonover, whom I knew well, I hoisted a small American flag. On discovering this, they could not make out who we were, but very soon found out. Clark, on approaching me, turned as pale as a corpse, saying, "Larpenteur, I'm glad to see you, in one sense, but, in another, I'm d--d sorry." Thinking that we might not be acting according to law, he then remarked, "I presume you are well prepared to carry on trade?" I observed, "The major already possesses the necessary documents." "All right, all right!" was his answer. After which he asked in a light manner, "Would you not like to sell out?" I replied that I had come to sell to the Indians, not to the Company, and that I thought I could sell to them to as good advantage as I could to Mr. Chouteau. Finding that there was no chance to make a purchase, he observed that he would turn back immediately, and send men to build at Poplar River. Knowing that this river was a good place for Indians to winter, and that it would suit them better than if I stayed at Fort Kipp, I concluded to abandon this point, where I had not done much in the way of building.

My wagons being still loaded, we were under way again next morning. We had about 25 miles to make, which we accomplished early next day; and I don't believe that Lafayette was more cheerfully received in the United States than I was in that camp. Next day I selected a place for building, and began operations at once. I was favored by good weather, and succeeded in building quite a neat little establishment. In a short time Mr. Clark came here to build, intending to oppose me

himself the coming winter [of 1860-61]. I was not sorry for this, for I knew him to be very unpopular with both whites and Indians.

My equipment was not large, but well selected for the Indian trade. I made a small reduction in prices which satisfied the Indians, and I knew that if I sold out, even at this reduction, I would do well. This gave me the first run of the trade. Clark, in the meantime, had made great calculations on the number of robes the Indians already had in camp, besides the many more they would acquire before the season should be over. He did not think it worth while to make much effort, as he thought also that my four wagon loads could not last long. But he happened to be mistaken in his calculations. Out of my four wagon loads I traded upward of 2000 robes, besides a great many other skins and hides, and the consequence was that he found himself badly beaten in the spring. This winter was mild, and it would have been a very pleasant one to me, had it not been for Jeff Smith, who proved to be a sharp trader, and Boller a young blatherskite. They wrote letters to Mr. Lemon against me, even requesting him to keep an eye on me, saying that they believed it was my intention to take my robes around by St. Paul, and cheat them out of that trade, and much more to that effect. As Mr. Lemon was a new hand in the country, he did not know how to take such stuff, which made him look and act quite cross at times. I also received letters from the same parties, in which they used up Lemon about as badly as they did me. Thus matters stood until near spring [1861] when, one day, after a few sharp words, the secret cause of our ill feelings toward each other came out. We then compared letters, upon which everything was explained, the doings of my two partners found out, and harmony re-established between Lemon and myself. I thus found out that Smith had sent two men up to bring down the cattle, to prevent me from taking away the robes. The letter which those men had brought made that request, but I did not wish to risk cattle on that trip, to be stolen or killed by the Sioux, nor did I want to part with them. Besides putting up my little fort I got all the saw logs I needed to make a large Mackinaw boat, to take down the returns, and also a skiff for Mr. Lemon and Boller to go down as soon as navigation opened. They being the financiers, and myself and Smith the traders, we were to remain at our respective posts till the returns went down. Boller, who was not over 23, and had been but two years in the country, took it upon himself to write long letters from Berthold about what I was to do and not to do, and, above all, warned me not to be extravagant in building — as though I had just come into the country!

As I had not sent the cattle down, Smith concluded to send Boller up to see how matters stood. About the middle of March [1861] Boller arrived, and, as it was at night, he had to knock at the door of my extravagant improvements. His supper for himself and man was gotten up, and then it was so late that little was said. In the morning I showed him my store and warehouse, both full of robes, all my fine logs, timber to make the skiff, about which he had written to me so often, and also the cattle, which were in first-rate order for the time of the year, remarking at the same time, "They will do first-rate to take a trip to St. Paul." After I had showed him the establishment inside and out, at which I saw he was astonished and pleased, particularly at the sight of the pile of robes, I remarked, "Do you think I have been extravagant? I have scarcely room enough." To which he replied, "I am really surprised. You are well fixed here. We live more like hogs than like people with old Jeff Smith, and I have had a mighty disagreeable winter of it." I then asked, "What were all those letters written for — that one, in particular, about my taking the robes and peltries to St. Paul, to cheat you two gentlemen out of them? All you see here belongs to Robert Campbell

till we have a settlement with him; after which, if there is anything to divide among ourselves, each will get his share. Every hair of this goes to St. Louis, not to St. Paul." All his reply was, "Let us bury the hatchet."

The river was ready for navigation on the 3d of April [1861], and on the 5th the two great financiers departed for St. Louis. On their arrival at Berthold Mr. Smith, instead of remaining at his post like myself, got in the skiff and went to St. Louis. Mr. Campbell, astonished to see him, asked what brought him down. Not liking the reception he was given by Mr. Campbell, or from some other cause, he went to Mr. Chouteau. Mr. Lemon, who could not get a steamer with an outfit, as he had expected, was obliged to go up again, to assist in bringing down our returns. Not knowing that Smith had hired to Chouteau, Lemon looked for him in all such places as those where he generally kept himself, but Smith could not be found. He had gone up to some place on the river with the intention of returning to Berthold with Mr. Chouteau. Mr. Lemon made arrangements with Mr. Chouteau to take passage with him, and also to bring down our returns.

On the 19th of June, 1861, we learned by an Indian who came from Union that Mr. Chouteau had arrived there with two steamers, and, on making further inquiries, found that Mr. Lemon was on board one of them. The second day after that an individual by the name of Louis Dauphin — a renowned hunter — made his appearance, and from him I learned that Mr. Lemon was coming up on the Chippewa, that the other steamer, the Spread Eagle, had turned back from Union, and that the Chippewa would be up this far to-morrow or next day. On reaching Dauphin houses, about six miles below my place by

land, but double that distance by water, Mr. Lemon got off to come ahead of the boat to give me the news. After the greetings usual on such arrivals were passed, he remarked: "Larpenteur, I have bad news to give you. In the first place, I came up with Mr. Chouteau, having made arrangements with him to take down our returns, but the boat is burned up. I had been off her but a little while when I saw her all on fire, and immediately heard the report of the explosion. In the second place, war is declared; the United States are in a great revolution, and there is no sale for anything. In the third place, old Smith has deserted us, and won't let us have his robes. I have other news, but I hate to tell it to you." On my insisting, he said, "All your improvements are burned down. Your house caught fire in the middle of the night, and not even a stitch of clothing was saved." On saying this he paused, and I exclaimed, "Is there any more?" "Is that not enough?" said he. "Yes," I replied, "it is more than enough to lose my home at Little Sioux. But it is no use to cry over spilt milk, and it is under such circumstances that a man is tried."

It was a little before sunset when Lemon arrived, and just at dark we learned the particulars of the accident. The boat was set on fire by one of the hands, who had gone down into the hold to steal liquor. Some of it having run upon his clothes while he was drawing it, the candle came in contact with the wet parts and ignited them. He was burned badly, and then the boat took fire. Immediately upon the alarm being given the boat was landed, and she was abandoned as soon as all passengers and hands were ashore. Nothing could be saved for fear of an explosion of the magazine, in which there was a great quantity of powder. After being abandoned she drifted about two miles, and then exploded on the south side of the river. Owing to this accident we sold our cattle and wagons to very good advantage to some gentlemen who resided in Bitterroot Valley, one of them a merchant named Warren, and others going to the Columbia.

Not expecting any steamer to take down our returns I had pushed work on the boat so well that,

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

six days after Lemon's arrival, it was completed; she was 65 feet in length and 11 feet in breadth of beam, being thus large enough to take my returns and those of Smith. The bursting of the Chipewewa set my men almost crazy, thinking they would get a fortune out of the wreckage. They did not like the idea of rowing my boat down, although they were engaged to do so; and besides, they feared the draft, on account of the rebellion in the United States. I was therefore forced to give \$100 for the trip. I had engaged a pilot for \$300, but he at last refused to go. At last I succeeded in getting a crew, consisting of four to row and one pilot, and on the 2d of July, 1861, we left Poplar River. On the fourth day after our departure we reached Union. At the same time Mr. Rider came from Berthold with two of our wagons and four yoke of our cattle, Jeff Smith having made some arrangement with the company. This accounted for his having sent for the cattle I had; for he wanted to dispose of them to his own private interest. Mr. Lemon having demanded pay for the cattle, a check on Mr. Chouteau for the amount agreed upon was given, which was so much saved. Smith had no idea that we would fall in with the cattle where we did.

We remained at Union about two hours, and pushed off again. On the fourth day out from this place we landed at Berthold. We called on Smith for the robes, but failed, after all our efforts, having been able to get nothing more than the buffalo tongues. Without any accident we went on well, and a little below Nebraska City met the steamer Emilie, Captain Nicholas Wall, bound for Omaha. We made arrangements with him to take down our robes, and waited for his return. It was still considered dangerous to travel down the river, though not nearly so much so as it had been, and when the boat returned there was a company of soldiers on board from Omaha, bound for St. Louis; but no bushwhackers were seen, and on the 4th of August we reached the port of St. Louis, all safe.

Chapter 17

(1861-63)

FORT STEWART AGAIN: FORT GALPIN

As Mr. Lemon had reported, there was no sale for robes. The best part of our robes had been stolen. No longer had I a house to live in. Now what to do? Mr. Campbell, who saw what a plight we were in, said, "Gentlemen, I cannot sell your robes, except at a great sacrifice, which I see no necessity to make. If you wish to return I will furnish your outfit. Now make up your minds and let me know." Having consulted upon what to do we made up our minds to return. Smith, of course, was out; we allowed Boller a small share, but he was to remain out of the country.

Our outfit was soon ready and shipped again by St. Paul, where we bought our cattle. This time we adopted Burbank's way of freighting. We bought light wagons and put but one yoke to each. In this way one man can drive two wagons, and it is no trouble to get through swampy places, as each wagon takes only from 18 to 20 hundredweight.

We left St. Paul on the 14th of September [1861], with seven wagons and eight men, bound for Poplar River. We traveled well, but I was so sick most of the way that it was feared at one time I was going to leave my bones in the prairie. The weather was also very disagreeable. The previous trip I walked the whole way, nearly 900 miles, except two days; but this time I rode more than half the time. We went pretty nearly the same route; the only difference was that we struck direct for St. Joseph instead of Pembina. We had provided ourselves with ox shoes, and got our cattle shod on arriving there. I got another first-rate guide, by the name of Louison Vallée. This guide was one of the best hunters I ever saw for buffalo, as well as for small game; he was near fifty, about

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

six feet three, built in proportion, a very powerful man, and a tremendous walker. He made us live on ducks and geese at the start, and, when we got in among buffalo, on the fat of the land. His killing so many fine fat ducks I believe saved my life. In coming in with a load of ducks he would exclaim: "Monsieur Larpenteur, c'est bon pour la moustache," for he could not speak English. He was as good a guide as my first one; he took us farther north, but managed to get us through without seeing Indians, except the day previous to our arrival.

When we came near the Missouri he observed that he had never been up to Poplar River; he could put us on the Missouri, but not take us direct to the spot. That did not make much difference with us, as we had a man by the name of Joseph Ramsay, who had been the hunter for Fort Union for 20 years, and said he knew the country well. So the remainder of the journey was left to Ramsay. We did not, at the time, consider ourselves more than two days' travel from our destination. In the morning Ramsay took the lead, and the guide went ahead of the teams, in his own direction toward the Missouri, expecting to fall in with us from time to time. I remained with Ramsay, going ahead of the teams. After traveling about an hour I observed that I thought he was going too far north. "No," said he, "I am on the direct way. You see that big hill yonder, with that pile of rocks on it? From there you can see the Missouri." When we came near the hill, being anxious to see the Missouri, and, at the same time, thinking that my man was lost, I started ahead of him. But, when I reached the top of the hill, the Missouri was not to be seen, nor any sign of it. As Ramsay came up I asked him to show me the Missouri. He looked around, very much surprised, not knowing what to say, and I saw plainly that he was lost. I then pointed out a direction, went back to the wagons, and changed our course. We had gone but a little way when we saw an Indian coming after us at full gallop. On approaching us he asked: "Are you going to Woody Mountain?" Ramsay had taken quite a northerly direction.

This Indian was Broken Arm, the chief of the Canoe band of Assiniboines; he said that they had come across our tracks, and made sure whose they were. Many of his people wanted to follow him, but he did not allow them to do so, as he knew I would not like it. He then asked me where I was going to winter. I told him at my former place. He remarked that it was not so suitable as Fort Stewart, where all his band intended to winter; that I had better change my plans; that there were no Indians as yet on the Missouri, but they would all come to my place as soon as they should learn that I had arrived. This was all a lie, for I found out afterward that most of the Assiniboines were at Fort Charles, about 50 miles by land above Fort Stewart.

Owing to his report I consented to go to Fort Stewart; the Indian guided us, saying we would get there the next day. It was late at night when our guide Vallée came to the camp, quite angry with Ramsay. It snowed that night about four inches, and kept quite cold all the next forenoon, but moderated in the afternoon. A little before sunset we were at Fort Stewart, strange to say, again on the same date as last year — the 9th of November, 1861.

It was a glad set of men who put up the lodge, not to be taken down till comfortable quarters were made; and, after a bouncing supper, we turned in, with the pleasant idea that there would be no hitching up in the morning. Had Ramsay taken us in the right direction, we should have reached Poplar River the day the Indian overtook us, and found good quarters already built. My own had been burned down, but those of Clark were still up, and would have saved us a great deal of disagreeable labor.

On rising in the morning we found about five inches of snow on the ground, and it was still

snowing; but the wind soon changed and a cold northwester made it impossible to work. From this time until March [1862] extremely cold weather continued. Through the assistance of squaws whom I employed to heat water and daub the houses, we succeeded in getting ourselves comfortable quarters, but no stockade. I made use of the places we prepared the previous fall. Buffalo were so plentiful here last summer that they ate up all the grass; it looked as though fire had burned the prairies. In consequence of this and the hard winter [of 1861-62] I lost all my cattle — 20 head. Owing to the severity of this winter my trade was light, after that of the Assiniboines was over. I had but 1000 robes, a great many goods left on hand, and more trade must be made. I knew the Gros Ventres of the Prairie were at war with the Blackfeet — that is, with the Piegans; that they dared not go to Benton; that few traders had been in their camp; and, consequently, that they must have yet a great many robes.

Matters standing thus, I proposed to Lemon to go after the Gros Ventres. I had a man in view for this trip who knew the country, and intended to send him with Lemon. After a great deal of persuasion Lemon agreed to go. My man, whose name was Louis El, was ready. My instructions to Lemon were, in the first place, to do all he could to bring the Indians down with their robes; and, secondly, if he could not succeed in that, to get enough of them to come with what number of horses would be required to take all my goods up to Milk River at Dauphin's old fort, where I intended to remain during the summer, and where I would have a boat ready for him to go down with what returns I should have; but by all means to do his best to bring them down with robes. Under those instructions and conditions they started afoot, with their rifles on their shoulders and a dog to carry or drag their sugar and coffee, about the 10th of May [1862].

In the meantime I set to work on my boat, which went very slowly, as I was out of provisions and had neither horse nor mule to send after meat. I had traded a horse and a mule, but one Mr. Assiniboine had relieved me of both; and I had to send my men with the cart after meat, when it was not killed too far from the establishment, or to pack it on their backs.

Twelve days after Lemon's departure he returned with a trading party of Gros Ventres, having 450 robes. After this trade was over, I proposed to put my plan into execution; but Lemon objected, saying that the Indians would rob me of all my goods, and that we had better go down together. As he had been quite contrary all winter, and fretful at every little disappointment, I became dissatisfied with him, and determined to have nothing more to do with him. So I went on preparing to go down stream. On the 4th of June [1862], we were ready to start, with oars all shipped, when a steamer hove in sight. We awaited her arrival, and found she was the Shreveport, Captain John La Barge, who informed us that his brother Joseph was not far behind, coming up with the Emilie, and that he had letters for us from Robert Campbell, also some provisions. When we were ready to push off, he asked us if we had any ice. I told him that he would find some in a barrel. The ice had been so thick that a large cake of it, which we had covered in the sand, had kept until this time. The steamer resumed its way up, and we made our oars ply down stream. We learned by John La Barge that they had formed a company to oppose the American Fur Company, the firm being La Barge, Harkness, and Co. We met the Emilie about 20 miles below Big Muddy River. By the letter from Mr. Campbell we learned that robes and all furs and peltries had risen in price, and also that he had sent us groceries of all kinds, as Captain John La Barge had already informed us. I was sorry that Lemon had not consented to let me take my goods up to Milk River; had he done so, I should have found myself well supplied, and we would have done well in that country. But, as

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

a large company was now organized to oppose the American Fur Company, I did not think it advisable to return with the boat, though I could have done so at but little expense, and most likely would have done so, if Lemon had been the right kind of a man. Taking everything into consideration, I thought best to sell out.

So we sold out to Joseph La Barge. Mr. Lemon went on down to Berthold with the boat to deliver the goods, and await the return of the Emilie. I turned back with Captain La Barge, under a provisional understanding, to examine and select a point to build near the mouth of Milk River. Having examined that vicinity, I chose a situation at the head of Moose Point, about 10 miles above Milk River by land and 15 by the Missouri.

I remained there until the return of the Emilie from Benton, when I again got on board, bound for St. Louis. At Berthold we took on our robes and proceeded. At Fort Pierre we learned that Smith, who had gone down with his robes in a small Mackinaw, had returned with Mr. Chouteau, whom he had met a little below, and had left his robes at Fort Pierre, in charge of Mr. Charles Primeau. Mr. Lemon demanded them as our property. Mr. Primeau consented to give them up on our paying him \$50 for storage. We gave the required amount, and took them on board the Emilie. So we got out our robes at last, though, from what we learned afterward, we supposed Smith had sold them to Mr. Chouteau. They both felt very much surprised, on their return to Fort Pierre, to find the robes gone.

Early in July [1862] we reached St. Louis, where, after a final settlement, I found myself with \$1400, from our dividends. This was my all, after two years of hard work, trouble, and exposure. Having made arrangements with the firm of La Barge and Co., which was to give me one-fourth of the net proceeds of the Assiniboine and Gros Ventres of the Prairie trade, I left for my place at Little Sioux.

On arrival I found my family all well, but living in a very poor log house, which was standing about 40 steps from my main buildings, and had escaped the fire. All I could see of my improvements, which had cost me upward of \$3000, was a pile of ashes; and I had no insurance.

I went the rounds at once, settled all my debts, big and small, and eight days afterward was again under way for the upper country, having shipped at Sioux City, on the Shreveport, bound for Benton, with goods for the Indian trade.

Late in August [1862] we reached Milk River, when the Missouri became so low that the steamer could proceed no further. The next day, while we were taking the goods into Dauphin Fort, a large war party of Sioux gave us a few shots, and stole several head of horses from the Crows. The Shreveport left, and I remained in Dauphin until teams came from Benton to take up what goods the company had for that place, and also to move me up to the fort, which I called Galpin. On our way up we left Owen McKenzie about 150 miles below this point, to build a trading post for the Assiniboines.

Here I erected a handsome, good little fort, and might have had a pleasant time. But in consequence of the very mild winter we had no buffalo, and the Indians, who were starving as well as ourselves, became very unruly. At one time they threatened to pillage my stores, and for a while our case looked rather dark; but they contented themselves with stealing a few articles. I tried my men, but they refused to fight, saying they would rather let the Indians take all the goods than expose their own lives. I had a mean, cowardly set of men, many of whom had been hired by Captain John La Barge on his return from Benton, during his first trip. I knew them of old, and had I

had my own way about this, they should never have been in my employment.

In spite of all this my trade was tolerably fair this winter [1862-63]. McKenzie did little. Early in the fall he had a fight with the Sioux, in which one man was killed, besides one Assiniboine and several horses. This was a party of about 200 warriors, who attacked our men in their house. The latter immediately cut portholes, and defended themselves through them. Our man was killed in the house by a ball which penetrated the door. The Indians were bold enough to come and shoot through the portholes; but one of them remained there. The fight lasted all day; there were but four white men and six Assiniboines on our side. The next day three Sioux were found dead, and there were signs of several wounded ones, who had been taken away. This fight frightened the Assiniboines away from the post, and was the cause why McKenzie did but little trade — only 350 robes.

Toward spring [1863] we were in a starving condition, game of all kinds extremely scarce, and men afraid to go out for a hunt. For about six weeks I lived on nothing but jerked elk meat, having some salt but being entirely out of other groceries. There is little substance in elk meat. I became so weak that I could scarcely get up the river bank with a bucket of water; my knees felt like giving way. It was only by seeking for coffee in the warehouse, picking it up grain by grain out of the dirt, that I now and then got a cup of coffee, without sugar; but it was a great treat notwithstanding. On the 11th of June, 1863, Captain John La Barge landed at this place, bound again for Benton, or, rather, for Fort La Barge, which the firm had built in opposition to Benton. Having heard some great stories, all of which he or they believed, previous to seeing me, the firm had made up their minds to discharge me. In consequence of this they abandoned Owen McKenzie's post and brought him up to take charge of Fort Galpin. McKenzie was a great drunkard, not at all fit to be in charge of such an establishment; but, without any inquiries, my charge was made over to him. Captain La Barge, not satisfied with this, and being the meanest man I ever worked for, except his brother, told some of the men that I had given him a very bad account of their behavior. This set them against me; and now that I was no longer in charge, one gentleman among them — a bully nearly six feet six inches tall — took it into his head one fine day to give me a pounding. He would have done so had it not been for my son, who was about 20 years of age, and much of a man. He saw me in a quarrel, and, thinking that there would be a fight, went into the house, and got his rifle. By that time we were engaged in the fight. I received a severe blow, which stunned me; and when I recovered I saw my antagonist lying as if dead at my feet. I made sure it was none of my doing, and next saw my son in the act of giving him another blow, saying, "Let me kill the son of a b-h." McKenzie, who had come up, said, "Don't strike him again, Charles; you have killed him." During all this time the men were standing outside near their houses, not daring to approach, and when we left him they came and took him in for dead; but he recovered.

McKenzie now being in charge, my presence was no longer needed at this place. I got a canoe, and, taking my son and a young freeman named Keiser, went down to meet Captain Joseph La Barge, who was coming up with the steamer Robert Campbell, loaded mostly with the Blackfoot annuities. Instead of meeting the Robert Campbell, which we thought would be the first boat up, we met Mr. Chouteau, on the steamer Nellie Rogers, bound for Fort Benton. This was at Fort Kipp, where we got on board to return to Fort Galpin, as we had learned that the Robert Campbell was yet far below. About 50 miles below Fort Galpin we met the Shreveport, on her return from Benton. We boarded her and proceeded on our way down; but she was to turn back to assist

the Robert Campbell up with the annuities. At Heart River we met the Robert Campbell, and, as agreed upon, we turned back in her company.

The third day afterward we were fired upon by a party of Sioux, while wooding, but no one was hurt. We went on again to a place called the Tobacco Garden, about 100 miles below the mouth of the Yellowstone, where we saw a large war party of Sioux on the south side of the river. The two boats came within 100 yards of each other, and anchored in the middle of the river to see what those Indians were going to do. After the Sioux had all gathered up, they cried out for the boat, saying they wanted to have a talk, and were out of tobacco. There were two Indian agents on board, Major Latta for the Gros Ventres, Mandans, and Assiniboines, and Major Reed for the Blackfeet. I was at the time on the Shreveport. The captain and those gentlemen, not knowing much about Indians, thought best to send for the head men of the party, and in spite of all that could be done from our boat to make them abandon the idea, Captain Joseph La Barge would send out the yawl. The first crew ordered refused to go; the mate, not wishing to insist on sending another crew, without further orders, reported to the captain that the men had refused, and was sent back very roughly with orders to send another crew. So seven men were ordered out. One young man of this crew, already in the yawl, caught hold of the steamboat, saying, "I don't want to go — we'll all be killed." The mate threatened to break his fingers if he did not loosen his hold, and he was obliged to go with the crew — never to return. As soon as they started I took my double-barreled gun and ran up on the hurricane deck. When the Indians saw the yawl coming they jumped down the bank, and the moment the yawl landed, discharged a volley, killing three men and wounding another, who, it was thought, would not recover. From the steamboat we fired several volleys, but to no effect. A few shots were afterward fired from the willows by the Indians, also without effect, and about three o'clock in the afternoon we got under way.

The next day, at 10 a. m., we buried the three poor fellows in one grave; the young man Martin was one of them. Two days afterward we reached the mouth of the Yellowstone, where both boats stopped, it being impossible for them to proceed farther.

Although they were on bad terms with the American Fur Company they concluded to ask Mr. Hodgkiss, who was in charge, to let them store their goods in Fort Union. Knowing that Mr. Hodgkiss was very fond of liquor, they made sure of success, and certainly succeeded.

When we came to the fort we learned that Malcolm Clark had shot Owen McKenzie. Mr. Chouteau had not been able to ascend the Missouri farther than Milk River, where he had to put out all his freight, to be hauled up to Benton with wagons. While he was there McKenzie came down to the boat. McKenzie had disputed with Clark in regard to some settlements of the time of Frost, Todd, and Co. Clark had been in charge for that company, and McKenzie was not on good terms with him. So McKenzie got very drunk and commenced to quarrel with Clark, who, knowing him to be a dangerous man, took out his pistol and shot three balls through McKenzie, killing him instantly. Thus one of Captain La Barge's best kind of men gone, there was no one in charge of Fort Galpin. They put in charge Louis Dauphin, whom I knew to be a regular thief, and who did not know his a b c of the business. Finding themselves in a bad fix about Galpin, they had the brass to ask me how I would like to go there again; but I bade them to be so kind as to excuse me, as they could find plenty of better men than myself. Shortly after this Dauphin was killed by the Sioux. A young man named Antoine Primeau was shot by Jerry Potts, a half-breed. My cook, a nice young man, who wanted to display his bravery, was killed by some Sioux near the fort. James Windle

was killed by a bull-driver who came down from Benton. All this happened at Fort Galpin shortly after I left, and the goods which the La Barges had brought up were nearly all lost.

The annuities being all stored, we started for the States. A few miles below Sioux City the mate had a quarrel with his hands, in which he stabbed one of them, who died in fifteen minutes. The gentlemanly La Barges, having treated all their clerks about the same as they did me, drew out of the Indian trade. This was in 1863.

Chapter 18

(1864-66)

#### FORT UNION ONCE MORE: HOME AGAIN

In the spring of 1864 I made arrangements with Mr. Charles Chouteau to take charge of Fort Union. As he was not ready to leave St. Louis, I started ahead of him on the steamer Benton, in charge of 50 tons of commissary freight, having been appointed as commissary by General Alfred Sully of the U. S. Army. I was to be relieved on the arrival of his fleet, which was to be up during the summer. The main reason of my appointment was that we had 17 barrels of whiskey in this freight.

We left St. Louis on the 26th of March. On arriving at Fort Randall, we learned that 1500 lodges of Sioux were camped near Fort Berthold, determined to stop all navigation, and so placed that they could sink boats by rolling rocks down the bank. Those who knew neither the country nor the Indians believed all this rubbish, and some of the ladies who were on board, bound for Montana, expressed a desire to turn back. We kept on our voyage, which was very tedious, on account of low water.

On the 6th of May we reached Fort Sully with a part of our load, having been obliged to make a double trip. On our arrival Colonel Bartlett, in command of Sully, informed us that, owing to reports of hostile Indians being strongly fortified near Berthold, he had just received a dispatch from headquarters, ordering him to prevent any steamers from going farther up till a sufficient number arrived to justify him in sending an escort with them, which was left, in a great measure, to his own judgment. He said that he would let us know shortly what he would determine upon, and requested the captain to call again the next day. Being anxious to move on, and not putting much faith in any such stories as we had learned, we called on the commander. As I was a commissary, and had been for many years with the Indians, he would have me let him know what I thought about the matter. To which I replied that I thought all those reports, like many others, much exaggerated, and should not be at all surprised if we did not see a single Indian on our journey. For one thing there was no game on the river, and it was impossible for 1500 lodges to remain long in camp together; and as to any place where they could roll rocks down the bank and sink the boat, I knew of none such — at which he smiled. As to danger, I could not say there was none; we might be fired on and some persons might be killed, but as there were nearly 150 men on board, all well armed, I did not apprehend much danger. The greatest danger would be at night, but good care would be taken to always anchor on a sand bar in the middle of the river. Colonel Bartlett then asked the captain when he thought he would be ready to leave; the answer was, "In a couple of days." "Well," said he, "when you are ready, let me know; something more favorable may turn up in that time."

With the consent of the commander we resumed our journey on the 9th of May. The river being still very low, we made but slow progress. No Indians were seen until we came to the mouth of

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

Heart River, where, on the 24th, about 9 a. m. we discovered a few Indians in the broken banks of the Missouri, awaiting our arrival with the American flag hoisted. Being well prepared, we landed, and gave them some few provisions and a little tobacco. They were but 12 in all — a half-starved looking set. After proceeding about 10 miles, we saw three Indians, who desired us to land; we did so, and found that one of them was Black Catfish, chief of the Yanktonais, who showed his papers from General William S. Harney. Having given them a good cup of coffee on board, and a few presents, we again got under way; and those were the last Indians we saw.

We landed safe and sound at Union on the last day of May, being the first boat up this season. We arrived early in the morning and came in sight of the fort unobserved. The doors were all closed, and not a living object was stirring except some buffalo, pasturing about 300 yards from the fort. But the door was soon opened, the flag hoisted, and the artillery fired; to which salute the boat responded. We were informed that the Sioux had been, and were still, so bad that the men dared not keep the doors open. The Indians had at one time made a rush, and shot a squaw through the thigh just as she was entering the fort. The Benton left about 3 p.m., having discharged 50 tons of freight, which pleased the passengers very much.

I have omitted to say that, while at Berthold, I was informed of Mr. Hodgkiss' death; this news had not reached St. Louis when I left. Mr. I. C. Rolette was then in charge.

I was not to take charge of Union until the return of Mr. Chouteau from Benton. On the 13th of June Mr. Chouteau arrived with his steamer, the Yellowstone, bringing a company of soldiers for the protection of the fort, and of the Assiniboines; it was Company I, Wisconsin Volunteers, commanded by Captain Greer, and Major Wilkinson, the Indian agent, also arrived. The Yellowstone left for Benton the same day.

On the 2d day of July the Yellowstone returned from Benton, and, after all arrangements had been made, I took charge of Fort Union for the last year of the American Fur Company; but I still retained my position as commissary until the arrival of General Sully's fleet.

Now a few words in regard to that expedition. Previous to my leaving St. Louis General Sully, one day, while at Mr. Chouteau's office, took pains to tell me the route he was going to take to the mouth of the Big Horn. He showed me the map, observing that the route from Heart River, at which point he intended to leave the Missouri and strike for the Horn, was the shortest, and could be accomplished in little time. I had been on the Horn, and had also traveled some on the Little Missouri. I knew the latter to be very rough country, which, further up than I had been, was almost all Bad Lands. This made me observe that I thought he would have a great deal of trouble in getting through with his command; but with a map and some good brandy, in Chouteau's office, one can get through anywhere. I found him convinced that he would meet with little difficulty; but I was satisfied to the contrary. After this he went on with his talk, saying, "I have a fleet of five steamers, which are going up as far as Union. Among them I have two light ones, intended to bring up all the goods and implements to the mouth of the Horn, where I expect to meet them." This notion I knew would never be realized; he might get to the Horn with his command, but for a steamboat to ascend the Yellowstone that distance I knew to be impossible, and was much surprised at the idea.

Now we will return to Fort Union, and relate what took place until the arrival of the fleet. Captain Greer had not been long stationed in the fort when a war party of Sioux, early one morning, stole all the horses, not, more than 40 steps from one of the bastions. He started a detail of 20 men

in pursuit on foot; had the Indians been so disposed, they could have destroyed those men with all ease. Two weeks later another party made an attack. It happened that there were a few Gros Ventres of the Missouri, at the fort, who, with some soldiers, succeeded in overtaking one of the Sioux; they pretty soon returned with his scalp, ears, and nose, and a great scalp dance followed. After this everything went smoothly till the 20th of November [1864], when a party of 83 miners arrived on their return trip to the States on the Yellowstone; they had been frozen in about 20 miles from the mouth of that river and obliged to abandon their boats. Finding that they could not all be entertained comfortably in the fort, and some wishing to go to the States, half of the party made up their minds to take it afoot. Those remaining would have proved very troublesome, and more dangerous than the hostile or friendly Indians, had not Captain Greer, who was quartered in the fort, kept them quite civil. They were a rough set. Early in the spring [1865] I made them a large Mackinaw, on which they left two days after the ice broke on the 17th of April. Captain Greer went with them, to meet the steamer Yellowstone.

We were not troubled by the hostiles that winter [1864-65], and should have had a pleasant time, had not scurvy broken out toward the end of that season; three soldiers died. As we had seen no enemies all winter, when spring came the soldiers went out hunting in all directions, as though there was no danger, and became very careless. On the 26th of April [1865] two of them returned from a hunt, and said they had found the remains of an elk which had been wounded and died, and was partly eaten up by a grizzly bear. The orderly sergeant and those two men agreed to go early next morning to see if they could get a shot at Mr. Grizzly, and gave orders to the guard to awake them by daylight. The guard did as he had been ordered, and the three hunters went after the bear. When they had gone about three-quarters of a mile, and were passing through some thick bushes, they were fired upon by a party of concealed hostiles, about 40 in number, and one of them was shot down. Another of them shot and killed an Indian. The orderly sergeant, who had had the scurvy, could not run; the Indians rushed upon him, shot nine arrows into him, pounded him with their war-clubs, and then scalped him, not leaving a hair upon his head. The young man who fell at the first discharge was shot with one ball, above his left breast, and two in his leg. The bushes were thick where he was lying, and he saw them looking for him; but as the alarm had been given at the fort, by the guard, who had seen and heard the firing, they had no time to search, and ran away, leaving their own dead man. In the afternoon a party of soldiers went to the spot and hung him in some elm trees where he could be seen dangling from the Fort. Nothing worthy of note took place from this time till the arrival of the Yellowstone, on the 5th of June. Mr. Chouteau arrived this time in great distress; having been reported as a rebel he could not obtain a license, and was obliged to sell out all his trading-posts, except Benton; all other posts he sold to Hubble, Hawley and Co., of which A. B. Smith of Chicago was the head; it was called the North West Fur Company. This being the case, we immediately set to work taking the inventory. When the post was turned over to the N. W. Co. I made arrangements to take charge of it for this new firm. Captain Upton of the regulars, who arrived to relieve Captain Greer, had instructions to take possession of Fort Union for the United States, and turn all citizens out. So I had to turn out my men, and would have been obliged to leave myself, had not the captain suffered me to keep my own room and my cook. I thus found myself, as it were, under arrest, but this did not last long.

On the 14th of August Captain Upton was ordered away, and I was again in full possession of the

fort. Two days afterward Mr. Frederick D. Pease, a member of the Company, arrived to attend the sale of the commissary goods. He asked my opinion in regard to sending after the Crows, who, he thought, had still many robes. I remarked that I would not send; that they could not have much left to trade, as so many boats had been up the river; and, for another thing, that I knew Captain Greer, during the past winter, had created such a jealousy between them and the Assiniboines that if they met it was sure to be war. So I did not think advisable to send; it would be better to wait till the arrival of the agent. But, in spite of all I said or could do, he would send. After the sale he left, and I remained with six men in a place where a company of soldiers had once been thought required for safety.

On the 21st of August Mr. Pease and all the Government officers left Fort Union; I resumed full charge, being left with six working men, one clerk, and one loafer named Conklin, who Mr. Pease said he thought was a government spy, and who turned out to be a perfect blatherskite. After the departure of all the force which had been stationed here the men at times became quite unruly, and threatened to leave, which made it very disagreeable to me. During the night of September 10th the forerunners of the Crows arrived, with three white men who had been in their camps, reporting that these Indians would be in next day. There happened to be in the Fort a few young Assiniboines, who left that same night for their camp, about 20 miles distant. In the mean time the Crows arrived, with but little to trade, and camped close to the fort — about 200 in all, men and women. On their arrival the chief demanded the annuities, but, as I had not been instructed to give them, I declined, but promised that if the agent did not arrive within eight days, I would then do as he desired. He said that was a long time, but finally agreed to wait; but trade commenced, and all went on well.

On the 12th of September, 1865, a little before sunrise, I was awakened by my interpreter, saying, “Mr. Larpenteur — the Sioux! the Sioux! they have made a rush on the Crow horses, driven them all off, and are now fighting.” I immediately got up, and ran up on the gallery; by this time the Indians had got out of sight, but I could hear the firing. A little while afterward the report came that there were some Assiniboines among them. By another dispatch we learned that they were all Assiniboines, that the Crows had already killed two, and were still fighting. After the battle we learned that there were four Assiniboines killed, two Crows wounded, not dangerously; and that the latter had lost 45 head of horses. It was fortunate for us that no Crows were killed; for, had there been, we could not have saved the Assiniboines who were in the fort at the time; and it was only after a great deal of talk that we pacified the Crows. Then the chief, called Rotten Tail, came to me and said, “You must give me the annuities. You see that we cannot remain here any longer, the Assiniboines will have some more of our horses if we do.” The old chief was right; I could no longer refuse him his annuities, and granted his request. But a little while afterward he came in with his soldiers, requesting me to give him the Assiniboines’ annuities in payment for the 45 horses they had stolen, and also saying that the Crows must have ammunition. I saw plainly that they meant no good. I told the old Chief that I would give him his annuities, but that I had nothing else to give him, and that if he wanted pay for his horses he would have to wait till his father arrived on the steamer, which I expected would be up in a few days. Seeing that something was wrong, I had my men all well armed, and the cannon loaded. After a little more argument on the subject, the old fellow concluded to take his annuities. I then took him into the warehouse and showed him his pile, saying, “This is yours, just as it was sent up. Here are your papers, calling for

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of  
Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

so many boxes, sacks, barrels, and bales. You can see that none of them have been opened. Now I will send them out to your camp. You can remain here, to see that they all go, and after that you can divide them to suit yourselves." He then remarked that he would rather have me divide them. I told him I would have nothing more to do with them; that Indians always accused the whites of stealing annuities, which was my reason for refusing to make any division. Then he asked if I would let my "little whites," as the laboring men are called, divide, or help divide. I told him that would be as they chose. Finally the goods were divided, and the next morning, when all were ready to leave, the old chief came to me in the best of humor, saying, "Well, I have come to take breakfast with you before I go, and see if you have any more documents for me to sign." I told him I had some breakfast for him to eat, but no documents to be signed. When the old man was ready to go he shook hands in a very friendly manner, saying, "I am well pleased, but sorry that my friends the Assiniboines have been fools. You can tell them, from me, that I am still their friend, and willing to smoke with them. The scalps which were taken were given to your interpreter to bury and were not allowed to be danced, as we do with those of our enemies." Upon which he put the whip to his horse, and it was good-by, Mr. Crow. This being the result of Mr. Pease's dispatch. On the 17th of September the Hattie May arrived, bringing Mr. A. B. Smith, the Chicago hypocrite, Mr. Hawley, and Mr. Pease. Having found myself slighted, and not liking the proceedings of this new firm, I requested my discharge of Mr. Pease last August; but he then said he could not do that, and I would have to await the arrival of the steamer. On her arrival I was discharged. The steamer on which I went left at noon next day, and was to wait for those gentlemen in the point below Union, where the captain would take on a little wood; but as they did not come at the appointed time, he went down to the Fort William landing, only 2 ½ miles by land, to wait for them there. While landed there I found that I had forgotten some documents, which I had left with Mr. Thomas Campbell, and wanted to go back to the fort for them. A great many ponies were seen, supposed to be those of Sioux, which had kept those gentlemen at the fort. But I knew that the Assiniboines were camped near by and that the ponies were those of this party, who, on hearing the cannon firing at the arrival of the boat, had come to the fort. Now that it was nearly dark, and those gentlemen had not arrived, the captain, who knew that I wanted to go to the fort, said, "Larpenteur, if you want to go you can; I will not leave to-night." I asked someone to accompany me, but none dared go, saying, "Those Indians may be Sioux"; so I started alone. The fort was locked up on my arrival, and, as my business was with Campbell, who was in a small cabin about 100 yards off, I passed by the fort. There I saw many of my old friends among the Assiniboines, who shook hands with me, saying they were sorry to see me go. Having been satisfied about the documents I started back to the boat. During my absence those gentlemen arrived in a skiff. Not knowing, as yet, that I had gone to the fort, they said that it was a good thing for me that I was not at the fort, for the Assiniboines would surely have killed me; then blaming me for that scrape with the Crows. At this the captain remarked, "Larpenteur has just gone to the fort." "Well," said they, "it is not good for him; we should not be surprised if he does not return." Not long after that I fired off my pistol and the yawl came for me. When the captain told me what had been said, I remarked that, if I had been obliged to leave the country whenever Indians threatened to kill me, I should, have been gone long ago.

We left next morning, and, without anything worthy of notice, reached Sioux City on the 4th of October. Having remained at Little Sioux River a week, I started for St. Louis, to have a settlement

with Mr. Chouteau. He received me like a gentleman, being pleased with the winding up of his affairs at Union. We settled up satisfactorily to both parties, and then I returned to pass the winter at my place.

Chapter 19

(1866-72)

#### ON AND AFTER THE PEACE COMMISSION

On the 29th of April, 1866, I received an appointment from Governor Edmond as interpreter with the Peace Commissioners for the Assiniboines. I started immediately for Yankton, went on to Randall by stage, and then by land to Sully, at which point I boarded the steamer *Sunset*, and reached Fort Union on the 11th of June.

On my arrival I found that the Assiniboines had been sent for; they soon came in, and I had everything arranged for the treaty on the arrival of the steamer *Ben Johnson*, on which the commissioners were coming. They were Governor Edmond of Dakota Territory, General Curtis of Iowa, Judge Gurnsey of Wisconsin, Elder W. Reed of anywhere, and Mr. M. K. Armstrong, secretary. The treaty, like many others which were never realized, was made for the purchase of all the Assiniboine lands on the south side of the Missouri, and 20 miles square on the north side, directly opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone River. In consideration of this they were to receive \$30,000 per annum, for the term of 20 years; and I, for my children, was to get a section of land wherever I chose to take it on the Assiniboine land; but nothing of this was realized.

The following summer General Sully was sent by the department to treat with the Assiniboines. At the council they asked him if he knew anything of the boat which was to fetch them money according to last summer's treaty. He told them he knew nothing about it. They said they thought it very singular, if he came from their great father's house, that he knew nothing about their boat. Then they told him he lied like all the others; that they had been filled with talk up to their throats, and did not want any more. A few annuities were sent them this year, but, as bad luck would have it, the steamer on which the goods were coming sunk, and their groceries were all lost.

General Sully's object was to find out something about the treaty of last summer, and to show them what could be done without an Indian's having Ely Samuel Parker as an example, and Father De Smet to inspire them with a conviction that the truth was spoken. I will say nothing of what remarks the Indians made. General Sully's commission was the most useless one I ever saw in the country, and the great Peace Commission was a complete failure.

On the 19th of July we left Union. On reaching the landing at Buford we learned that the Sioux had fired on the traders whom Mr. Gaben had sent from Union to them, after obtaining permission of the Peace Commissioners to do so. One was shot in the back with an arrow; and at least one ball glanced off the other, having struck the brass mounting of his belt. The fort was set on fire last night; but as many were moving about, it was discovered in time, and no injury was done. Having stolen many goods the Indians made their escape. The boat took on all that was left, and we proceeded down river.

As the treaty had not been made coming up, the Commission had to stop at Berthold, which we reached on the 21st of July. The council was held next day. As the interpreter, Pierre Garreau, could not speak good English, I was appointed to interpret from his French into English. As the Gros Ventres did not feel inclined to sell their lands — at least, the portion the Commissioners

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

wanted — the council lasted a long while. In some of their speeches the Commissioners remarked that they had treated with all the neighboring tribes, who would all be well off, and the Gros Ventres alone would remain poor; even some of the Sioux, who were considered hostile, had made peace, and now would listen to their words. The chief said: "I like to see you all. You look well — very nice-looking men indeed; but we think you lie, like all the others. One reason why we don't wish to sell you the land you want is that we have been much deceived. When we make treaties — for a long time, we get pretty well paid for a while; but it tapers off to a very small point, and then we see how completely we have been cheated. It is plain that you don't know what you are talking about when you say the Sioux are going to listen to your words; the Sioux are dogs — wolves — liars; and you will find it out ere long."

Not more than an hour after the Indian's speech the alarm of "Sioux! Sioux!" was given, and in less than half of a minute not a man was left in the council lodge — every Indian fled to his gun or bow and arrows, and was off in pursuit of the Sioux. About sunset they returned with five scalps, which they exhibited in front of the store to the gaze of the gentlemanly commissioners. Some of the Indians also had Sioux feet and hands tied around their horses' necks, while old squaws were dancing and jumping upon the scalps. They also took nine horses, but most of them died, having been overfed. "Now," said they, "here are your Sioux; see how well they listen to your words! They are the very same Sioux with whom you have just been making peace. We finished them with the fine new guns you gave them, and scalped them with your own knives. They are the very ones; and you will see some more of them at Fort Rice."

The treaty was finally concluded, resulting in the purchase of 15 miles square at Snake River, 16 miles below Fort Berthold, where Fort Stevenson is now standing.

On the 28th we left Berthold, and next day reached Rice, where we found, as the Indians had said, the partisan of the war party, who had been at Berthold; they were 22 in number. Further down we stopped at the Santee Agency, at Running Water [the Niobrara]. The commissioners had a long sitting with these Indians, who requested them to tell their Great Father to give them a better place, for they could not stand it here — no wood, and subject to overflow. They were afterward removed lower down. On the 5th of August we reached Sioux City, where ended the great Peace Commission, and whence all went to their respective homes.

On the 12th of September I lost my daughter — 25 years of age. On the 14th of February [1867] my son Charles died, 23 years of age. In the spring I went to St. Louis and made arrangements with the firm of Durfee and Peck to take charge of Union, in opposition to the North West Company. We reached that place on the 19th of June, 1867.

According to the request of the gentlemen of this Company, and contrary to my knowledge of the affairs of the concern, I erected an adobe store, 96 by 20 feet. During the summer Colonel Rankin, commander of Fort Buford, purchased Fort Union, to use the materials in building Buford. The North West Company then moved down and built at Buford. Finding that all the business of the country would finally be done at Buford, I abandoned my adobe store and erected one there of logs, 120 feet in length.

At this place I had to oppose the military sutler and the North West Company. In spite of this I traded 2000 buffalo robes, 900 elk hides, 1800 deerskins, and 1000 wolves', worth, in cash, \$5000; but, owing to some jealousies, malicious reports were made against me, and I was discharged on the arrival of the steamer, on the 18th of May [1868].

I immediately went to the States, got up an outfit for Indian trade and sutler business, and on the 18th of August I was at Buford again, on my own hook. Having made some reductions on all sutler goods, I acquired popularity among the soldiers, and did well, considering my small outfit. On the 3d of June [1869] I went down again and brought up another outfit the following August. All went on flourishing with me till the 1st of February, 1870, when I had the misfortune to break my thigh.

On the 7th of June [1870] I went down to Omaha, to settle with the firm of Richard Whitney and Co., with whom I was concerned. I bought them out, and returned to Buford. On this trip I was partly carried by some good folks, who would transport me from one car to the other, and in hobbling on crutches I suffered very much. Notwithstanding this great misfortune, I was getting along pretty well. I had a splendid establishment at Buford, where I was living with my family, having made it my home. But, being born for misfortune, I was ruined by the army bill, which passed Congress the previous July, allowing but one post sutler; this we did not learn till the following January [1871]. My daughter died on the following 14th of February. On the arrival of the new post sutler, Mr. Alvin C. Leighton, my store was closed, like that of the other sutlers. On the 14th of May, 1871, I left Buford, bag and baggage, for the States, and that was the last of the Indian country for me.

At the time those orders came from headquarters, I was a regular licensed trader, having been appointed sutler by General Hancock at St. Paul. Notwithstanding that it was in January, we were ordered forthwith off the reservation, which is only 30 miles square. Through the kindness of Colonel Gilbert, the commanding officer, we were permitted to remain on the reservation till spring, but our stores were closed. A month afterward we were allowed to open again and go on till the arrival of the regularly appointed sutler. On the 22d of June I took possession of my three forties which I had purchased of the railroad, and built a good house. On the 9th of December my little boy Louis, aged 12 years, died of inflammation of the lungs, after an illness of 48 hours.

Forty years ago was my first winter [1833-34] in the Indian country, at Fort William, when the stars appeared to fall. That my lucky star fell is plainly to be seen in this narrative. Whether there are any such stars may be a question, but there is no question of my being out of luck.

#### Chapter 20

#### INDIAN LAWS AND CUSTOMS

Among the Blackfeet the law in regard to adultery is death for the adulteress, and forfeiture of all the property of the adulterer. His lodge is cut into pieces, his horses are either killed or taken from him, and the woman must suffer death.

While I was at Benton an instance of this occurred in a very respectable family — for there are such among Indians. I should have said in two families. The woman was very young and handsome. Contrary to custom they had made it up, and the Indian could be seen with his wife as usual; but, being sensible that he had broken the law, he thought that he was looked upon as a weak-hearted man, and could not resist this tormenting idea. She was handsome; he loved her; he must either keep her or kill her. Tortured by reflections, which he could endure no longer, he took her out to walk, as he had been accustomed to do. They were sitting together, when he took her on his lap, combed her hair neatly — which is a mark of love with all Indians — vermilioned her face beautifully, and told her to sit by his side again. He then said, “My good wife, you have done wrong. I thought at one time I could overlook it, but I am scorned by my people. I cannot suffer

you to be the wife of another. I love you too much for that. You must die." So saying, he buried his tomahawk in her skull.

When an Indian sees that his wife makes too free with young men, the penalty for such an offense is a piece of the nose. I have seen several who have undergone that punishment, and awful did they look. After cutting off her nose the husband says, "Go now and see how fond the young men will be of talking to you."

Among the Assiniboines there is no particular law in regard to adultery. This is left at the disposition of the injured individual, who sometimes revenges himself; but, if the relatives of the adulterer are strong, he may be content with a payment. Some give the woman a flogging, and then either drive her away or keep her. Nothing will be said about it, but the woman then bears a bad name — in their language Wittico Weeon, which means a prostitute, but not one of the first degree. A regular prostitute has no husband, and goes about to "lend herself," as they term it, for pay. Such a woman is gone beyond redemption. There are three different degrees of prostitution, one of which is looked upon as legal. This is when she is loaned with the consent of her parents, and then the larger the payment the more honor it is for the woman. When little quarrels arise among mothers in regard to the characters of their daughters, they will say, "What have you to say against my daughter? What did yours get when you lent her? Look at mine — what she got! You are making a Wittico Weeon of your daughter."

The young man who is courting dresses himself in the best style he can afford. His hair, which is the main point of attraction, is generally well combed in front, taking care that his stiff topknot stands straight up, while a long braid of false hair hangs down to his heels. With large pieces of California shells [abalone-Haliotis] in his ears, his neck and breast covered with an immense necklace of beads, his face vermilioned, and a fine pair of moccasins on his feet, his dress is complete. His over garment is either a blanket or a robe. Attired in this style, he commences his courtship by standing quite still in a place where he thinks that she will be likely to see him. This may last for many days without saying a word to her. He then makes friends with her brothers, particularly the elder one, who has a great deal to say in regard to the marrying of his sister. Then he watches for her when she goes for wood or water, saying a few words to her, and giving her a finger ring. When he makes small presents to the mother, father, and brothers they discover what he is after; but he never enters the lodge of his sweetheart. At this stage of the proceedings, if the young couple get very much in love with each other, and the young man cannot obtain the means to buy her, they elope to another band of the same tribe. But if he be a young man of means, and has obtained the consent of the woman, he ties a horse at her lodge; if the horse is accepted, the girl goes that night to his lodge; if not, the horse remains tied at the lodge, and the young man sends for it in the morning. If he has other horses, and loves the girl enough, the following day he ties two; and sometimes four or five horses are thus tied — the more horses, the greater honor for all parties. An elopement may also take place when the old folks will not consent, after the girl has been given the refusal of a horse. She is never forced to marry. Sometimes the individual who wants to buy a girl has never asked her whether she would have him or not, but has made very inducing offers to her parents, who then do all they can to persuade her, saying, "Take pity on us, daughter! This man likes us. He has given us a great many things. We are poor; we stand much in need of horses. He is a good hunter; he will make you live well; you need not remain poor." Yet, if the girl does not consent, they will not force her.

After marriage the woman belongs to the man. No one else has any right to her; and if she be the eldest, and have two or three sisters, they are also considered his wives, and cannot be disposed of without his consent. It frequently happens that he will take them all. The son-in-law never speaks to or looks at either of his parents-in-law. When invited to a feast or council where his father-in-law is to be he is duly apprised of it, and he covers himself with his robe and turns his back upon the old gentleman. An Indian who has but one wife will always be poor; but one that has three to four wives may become rich — one of the leading men, if not a chief. The reason of this is that the more wives the more children, and children are a source of wealth, resulting in a large family connection, which gives him power; for “might makes right” with them. An Indian marries also in this light: When his family has increased with one wife till they find it impossible to get along without help, he buys a servant, as there is no such thing as hiring one; but she also becomes his wife, and is not looked upon as a servant. In all cases the old wife is always looked up to as the mistress of the whole. The son-in-law never keeps anything to himself until he gets a family; everything goes to his wife’s relations, and this may continue even after he has a considerable family. From such customs it is plainly to be seen that the more wives an Indian has the richer he is — contrary to what the case may be with the whites. Notwithstanding customs so strange to us, these Indians live as peaceably and contentedly as civilized people do. It is a fine sight to see one of those big men among the Blackfeet, who has two or three lodges, five or six wives, twenty or thirty children, and fifty to a hundred head of horses; for his trade amounts to upward of \$2000 a year, and I assure you such a man has a great deal of dignity about him.

The medicine lodge, which takes place once a year, in June, is conducted with the view to show how strong are Indians’ hearts, and to beg the Great Spirit to have mercy upon the tribe. This lodge is erected of a size suitable to hold whatever number of spectators may be in attendance. A very large pole is planted in the ground, and many smaller ones are set up against it, in the manner of an ordinary lodge. One half of the space inside is reserved for those who are to undergo the torture, of which there are three kinds. In this half of the lodge pews are made with green bushes about four feet high; those for the women being separated from the others. When all is ready for the services to commence, the supposed strong-hearted persons come in and take their stands. They are painted in all colors, looking like so many devils — men and women alike; the former are naked down to their waists, but the latter are dressed. Holding in their mouths a small whistle made of the bone of a crow or pelican, and looking straight up to the center post of the lodge, they keep whistling and jumping up and down for three days and three nights, without drinking or eating; during which time eight or ten musicians, all blackened over, beat drums the whole night and day.

The second torture is done by piercing a hole through the skin of each breast, just above the nipple, and tying to each a lariat, which is then fastened by the other end to the top of the lodge-pole. Bearing all the weight they can upon the lariat, they trot back and forth outside the lodge, the space allowed each being according to the number of performers. This kind of torture goes on with a piteous groaning and lamentation, and these devotees are also painted in all sorts of colors, like the dancers. The third medicine or torture is performed by piercing a hole in each shoulder, to which lariats are fastened as before, but the other ends are tied to three or four dry buffalo skulls, which the communicant drags over the prairie, sometimes even up high ridges, weeping and wailing. Such performances are a great sight to behold.

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

An Indian chief is looked upon by most civilized people as a powerful and almost absolute ruler of his tribe; but he is not. Every tribe, no matter how small, is divided into bands, each of which has its chief and roams in a different part of the territory belonging to the tribe. As everything must have a head, a chief is appointed to represent the band in councils with the whites, and be consulted in the way of governing. He is a man who has power to do a great deal of harm, but as a general thing does little good. The soldier is the one who governs the band, and rules the chief, too, with a kind of government which the civilians do not like; for when the soldier is established, they are under martial law. His lodge, pitched in the center of the camp, is organized with the view to keep order and regulate the camp; mostly to prevent anyone from going out alone on a hunt, so as not to raise the buffalo, but also for mutual protection against enemies. When anyone is caught outside his dogs are shot, his lodge is cut to pieces, and if he rebels he gets a pounding — the chief not excepted. Those soldiers have their head soldier, to whom each one applies to have his rights respected or enforced. If anything be stolen, the head soldier is apprised of the theft; he takes some of the soldiers to examine the lodges, and if the property is found it is given back to the owner, but nothing is done with the thief. This lodge is supported by the people, who have to find wood, water, and meat. Buffalo tongues go mostly to the soldiers' lodge, and, if there be more than can be eaten, they are sent to be traded for sugar, coffee, and flour to make a big feast. But the regular soldiers' feast is dog, and when they feel like having such, no poor old squaw's fine, fat, young dogs are spared. Take it on the whole, Indians are very glad when the lodge breaks up, and each one can go where he pleases. After that the chief will be left with eight or ten lodges, as they then go by those family connections which make leading men, some of whom actually have more influence than the chief himself — I mean with the people of the band.

All things considered, an educated man will see that their whole system of government amounts to nothing; that they are incapable of enforcing any laws like those of a civilized nation, and consequently not able to comply with treaties made with the United States. But such laws as they have answer their own purposes. As a nation they are kind and good to one another, and live in about as much peace and comfort as civilized people — that is, in their own way. One hears less complaint about hard times among them than among ourselves, except when they make a speech to a white man; then they are all very poor and pitiful, on the begging order. As a general thing the men are not quarrelsome. A fight will take place almost without a word. The women quarrel a good deal, and frequently fight with knives or clubs.

There are men and women doctors among them. They use some kinds of herbs and roots, but their greatest medical reliance is the magic of superstition. When the doctor is sent for, he comes with his drum, and a rattle, made of a gourd or dry hide filled with gravel. He sits beside the patient, and commences to beat the drum and shake the rattle at a great rate, singing a kind of song, or rather mumbling some awful noise. He always finds out what ails the patient. Sometimes it is a spell which has been thrown on him by some medicine man in camp, who had a spite against him. Such spells vary. Sometimes they are cords which have been passed through the limbs; at other times wolf hairs have been put between the skin and flesh, or bird claws of different kinds. But all of these he extracts by his magic, and shows the patient the hairs, claws, cords, or whatever may have been the spell. But some maladies are due to the devil, who has got into the sick person. In a case of that kind the doctor stations three or four boys with loaded guns outside the lodge at night; then he beats his drum at an awful rate, and at a certain sound, which is understood by

the boys, they fire off their guns at the ground, as though they were shooting at rats running out of the lodge. These are supposed to be the devils whom the doctor has driven out of his patient. Should he continue sick, the treatment is repeated until he is cured or given up. Indians spare nothing to have their families or themselves doctored; they will give their guns, lodges, horses — everything they possess — to a doctor who will cure them. I have seen some completely stripped of all they had to pay the doctor. When a child dies the parents give everything away to mourners; and if the family is rich there will be a great many mourners, particularly among the women, who come to shed a few tears for the sake of plunder. It is thought, “She cries; she loved my child; she must have something.” The mourning lasts for a year, unless some relation kills one of their enemies; then the family blacken their faces, which does away with the period of mourning. After this, someone will give a gun, another a horse, some other a lodge, and thus the Indian will get a start again.

Medicine men who are thought able to lay spells are much in danger, and sometimes lose their lives at the hands of the relations of one who dies by such magic. I myself saw a young man kill a fine-looking Indian for having, as he said, laid a spell on his father, who died of consumption. The young man shot him at night, about twenty steps from the fort. We went to see him in the morning; he was lying dead, the ball having penetrated his heart. The young man was there, laughing and whirling his tomahawk over him, saying, “That doctor will lay no more spells.”

Indians have no words for swearing or cursing, like whites, but they have a way to express wrath a great deal more scornfully than a white man can in words. This is done by gathering the four fingers against the thumb and letting them spring open, at the same time throwing out the arm, straight in one’s face, with the body and face half turned away, saying, “Warchtshnee,” which means, as nearly as I can interpret it, “You villain!”

The Indian idea of futurity and immortality of the soul is something about which I never could find out much. All Indians believe in a Great Spirit, the ruler of all they see and know, but of any future existence, in which the wicked are punished and the good rewarded, they know nothing. They believe in ghosts, who live again in an invisible form, thinking that their dead relations come to see them; and that the only way ghosts make themselves known is by whistling, mostly at night, but sometimes by day, in very lonesome places. In consequence of this belief, they make feasts for the ghosts, consisting principally of dried berries, which they would not for anything omit to gather. They boil these berries with meat, or pound a quantity of buffalo meat with marrow fat, with either of which they go to the place where the dead is deposited, say a few words to the departed, hold the eatables up for him or her to partake of, and then divide the feast among the living who are in attendance. Anyone is allowed to attend this ceremony. But whether the ghosts are in a state of happiness or not, they do not pretend to say, nor do they know what distinction may be made between the good and the wicked. To themselves it makes no difference; they feed both good and bad alike.

On being very hard pressed for a statement expressing their ideas regarding resurrection, most Indians would finally say that they thought once dead was the last of a person. In conversation with them I found much pleasure in hearing their stories, which they relate with great eloquence, using a great many figurative expressions. I had some books printed in their language, which I brought with me from St. Paul. These were religious books, gotten up by missionaries of Minnesota, containing Noah’s Ark, Jonah swallowed by the whale, and other miracles; at which they would

laugh heartily when I read to them, and then say, "Do the whites believe all this rubbish, or are they stories such as we make up to amuse ourselves on long winter nights?" They were very fond of having me read them such stories; that big boat tickled them, and how could Noah get all those animals into it was the question. Then they would say, "The white man can beat us in making up stories." Telling stories is a great pastime with Indians. There are many among them who are good at it; they are always glad to see such come into a company, saying, "Here is such a one; now we'll have some stories told."

The Indian is born, bred, and taught to be a warrior and a hunter; he aspires to nothing else. There is no regular habit of husbandry among them; they always live from hand to mouth. During the 40 years I was in their country I saw no disposition on their part to ameliorate their condition. They are still in the same state. They have no intellectual invention. In regard to their "medicine," one performance which has attracted my attention I do not attribute to magic but to skill. This is the way in which they bring a band of buffalo into their pens. Such a pen is constructed of poles, and bushes, and any other combustibles they can obtain to make a kind of fence, which is by no means sufficient to keep in the buffalo. This inclosure is made of different sizes, but is generally capable of containing 200 or 300 buffaloes. It is made round, and a pole is stuck up in the middle, with scarlet cloth, kettles, pans, and a great many other articles tied to the top. Those are sacrifices to the Great Spirit, made by the individual who is to go after the buffalo. When this pen is finished two wings are made extending a great distance from the entrance, like an immense quail net. These wings are made either of snow or of buffalo chips, gathered at intervals into small heaps sufficiently large to conceal a person. As the pen must be made where there is little wood, it frequently happens that the buffalo are discovered two or three days' march from the spot. When all is ready, the medicine man starts after the buffalo. When the people of the camp see him coming, they all surround the pen, except those who are stationed at intervals along the wings, each hidden behind a pile of snow or chips. The buffalo follow him, and when the last one has passed, the herd being completely within the wings, the people all rise from their places of concealment. The buffalo then rush into the pen. Then the people who surround the pen also rise up, and are joined by those who were behind the wings. The buffalo, being frightened, keep away from the sides of the pen, running around the pole in the middle; though it sometimes happens that, the pen being too small or too weak, they break through in spite of all the Indians can do. With their bows and arrows the Indians begin the work of destruction, and go on till all the buffalo are killed. It is a good sight to see that one Indian bring in a large band of buffalo, which has followed him for two or three days. He is considered a great medicine man.

#### Chapter 21

#### INDIAN AGENTS AND AGENCIES

Before offering some suggestions I wish to make in regard to future rules and regulations for Indians and their country, I will introduce all the Indian agents I have personally known on the Missouri.

In 1832 Major Sanford took from Union to Washington three chiefs — one Assiniboine, one Cree, and one Chippewa. The Assiniboine was the son of the chief of the Rock or Stone band, named Wan-hee-manza (the Iron Arrow-point). He was a fine-looking man about 30 years of age, named Lya janjan (the Shining Man). All the manners and other good things which he brought from Washington, to show his people what an advance he had made in civilization, was a white

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

towel, which he used to wipe his face and hands, and a house-bell, which he tied to the door of his lodge. His people said that all he had got from the whites was a gift of the gab. After his return he passed himself off for a great medicine man, and said that no ball could penetrate his skin. He had a strong connection, and was much feared. But the next summer a certain individual thought he would try the strength of his medicine, and shot a bullet through his head. The ball was harder than his head, and went through in spite of the strength of his medicine. He was brought to Fort Union, and buried after their own way in a tree. In the summer a requisition for Indian skulls was made by some physicians from St. Louis. His head was cut off and sent down in a sack with many others. Which of them came out first is hard to tell; but I don't think his did. This is the whole amount of good that chief did. As he went down during President Jackson's administration, his name, with the whites, was Jackson. The Cree chief never amounted to anything, nor did the Chippewa.

Major Sanford was very much of a gentleman, but cared more for the interests of the American Fur Company than for Indian affairs. He afterward married Mr. Pierre Chouteau's daughter, and one can judge in whose favor his reports would be likely to be made.

Major Ferguson, the greenest of all agents I ever saw, was paid \$1500 for a pleasure trip from St. Louis to Fort Union. He came up in the steamer, saw no Indians, and left what few annuities he had to be divided among them by the Company. What report could that agent make in regard to his Indians? None, of course. That was the last of him.

Major More was a great drunkard, who came up to Union in the steamer, remained 24 hours, and returned to Fort Pierre. It was reported by a person whom I believe, that the Indians there kicked his stern, taking him for a dog, when he was crawling out of the room where they had been sleeping, and laughingly said they were very sorry that they had kicked their father.

Major Matlock was a drunken gambler. The last I saw of him was at Trading Point, opposite Bellevue, where he was drinking and gambling, and kept several Mormon women. I was informed that he died, shortly afterward, in poverty.

Major Dripps was, I believe, a good, honest old beaver trapper. He was sent to examine the trading posts, to find out about the liquor trade. He sent his interpreter ahead to let us know he was coming. On his arrival he looked in all places except in the cellar, where there was upward of 30 barrels of alcohol. The major was afterward equipped by the American Fur Company, and went on the Platte, where he died.

Major Hatting was a young man about 27 or 28 years old, a drunkard and a gambler, almost gone up by the bad disorder. He was of no earthly account. I could say much more, but decency forbids.

Major Norwood, instead of being with his Indians, kept himself about Sergeant's Bluffs, attending balls and parties given by whites and half-breeds, and was finally killed by William Thompson, who knocked his brains out with the butt of a rifle. This was the last of the major.

Major Redfield went 50 miles up the Yellowstone, on his way to the Crows, was taken sick, and returned to the States in the fall; his goods were left to be divided by the Company. I knew nothing regarding his personal character.

Major Vaughan was a jovial old fellow, who had a very fine paunch for brandy, and, when he could not get brandy, would take almost anything which would make drunk come. He was one who remained most of his time with his Indians, but what accounts for that is the fact that, he had

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

a pretty young squaw for a wife; and as he received many favors from the Company, his reports must have been in their favor.

I have but little to say about Major Schoonover, who remained one winter at Union, powerless, like all others, being dependent on the American Fur Company.

Major Latta was a pretty fair kind of a man, but the less said of him the better. He came up to Union, put the annuities out on the bar, and next day was off.

Major Mahlon Wilkinson came as near doing the right thing as was in his power, but he was too lazy to do much of anything.

Major Clifford was a captain of the regular army, which rendered him unfit for such an office, not caring a fig about Indians. I could say a great deal more if I felt so disposed. From what I have been able to learn I fully believe that all the Indian agents were of the same material; and had those men been ever so well qualified to fill their office, they could not have done it under the existing rules and regulations. Once in the Indian country they came entirely under the influence of the American Fur Company, and could not help themselves.

Those gentlemen were appointed by the Indian Department not only as agents, but as fathers to the Indians; to remain with their children, and to make true reports to their Great Father at Washington of the behavior of the Indians and of all transactions in their country that come to the agent's notice, thus keeping the department well posted. The question is, Was that done? No; evidence shows the contrary. In consequence of this bad state of affairs, the department remained ignorant of the true condition of the country, and could never hold the proper kind of council with the Indians; and, finally, war broke out. Of all the councils I attended, I never saw one properly held, according to my knowledge of Indian character and customs.

I will mention one, which was the most absurd I ever heard of — though gotten up by men who should have known better. This is the Laramie treaty of 1851.

David D. Mitchell, who had been an Indian trader, was the superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis. I suppose speculation, as in the case of all other treaties, was the cause of this one. It was gotten up with the intention of making a general peace between all the tribes on the Missouri and the Platte. For this purpose two or three chiefs of each tribe were invited to the treaty. Anyone who has the least knowledge of Indian character ought to know that they are not capable of keeping such a peace. Of course any Indian, for the sake of presents, will say "How" to any proposition made to him; but, after that, what assurance have you to rely upon that this Indian will comply with the stipulations of the treaty? None at all. You may say that, if he does not comply, he shall forfeit a part of his annuities. But if you make him forfeit his annuities it will be worse; for, although this will have been explained to him, he will think that he had a right to do as he did. He will say that his young men had no ears; that he did all in his power, but could not control them; and still think himself entitled to the annuities. He will surely find some excuse.

The result of the Laramie treaty was that the Indians fought before they got home; war was carried on among them the same as before, and afterward war with the whites. At the time of this treaty, did the Crows think the Sioux would be permitted by the Government, after all the promises made them, to drive away their traders from the Yellowstone, and that they themselves would then be driven out of their own country? Did Crazy Bear, chief of the Assiniboines, expect his people to be removed from their country into that of their enemies? "No," they said, "the whites have lied to us. They have taken our country. They say they bring soldiers to protect us; but, when

Forty years a fur trader on the upper Missouri: the personal narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872

---

they come, they bring the Sioux with them. Loads of provisions come out of their garrisons for the Sioux, who are on our own lands, and we can get nothing. Do they give rations to the Sioux because they are afraid of them, or is it because the Sioux drive away their cattle and kill their soldiers? We cannot understand those whites. We had a good country, which we always thought they would save for us; they have given it to our enemies. Fort Union, the house built for our old fathers, — in the heart of our country, — the soldiers have pulled it down to build their Fort Buford, where we are scarcely permitted to enter.”

It is plainly to be seen that treaties made with Indians have never amounted to anything, and never will. The Government must manage them; but, to do so, must be well acquainted with their wants. They are called children, and must be treated as such. The father should know his children; but how can he know them if he is not with them? And if he be a worthless father, how can he bring up his children right? My suggestions will show the proper way to manage Indians. I think I have plainly shown errors in the Indian Department. Treaties, councils, and expeditions have not had the desired effect.

One not acquainted with Indians might say that the army has been the means of bringing them under some subjection. I know that the chief motive for yielding was not the sword, the bullet, or the bayonet, but hunger and the prospect of starvation. Had the Indians continued to possess the buffalo which were theirs 25 years ago, a different display of armed forces would have been made. Hunger has somewhat tamed them, much against their will. When I first came into the country few Indians liked coffee, and they looked at a white man's eating pork as we did an Indian's eating dog.

It must be borne in mind that the Indian is wild, and that any attempt to tame him is going entirely contrary to his nature. The question remains with me, can it be done? From what I have seen, and knowing him as I do, I would say it cannot be done; yet there is nothing like trying. The following suggestions are those I propose for the trial. In the first place, much of the Indian country is not capable of large settlements, on account of the insusceptibility of the soil for agriculture, and the scarcity of timber. I would divide the tribes into agencies according to their population, and establish regularly surveyed boundaries to each of those agencies. In all tribes in which there were more than one agent, I would have a superintendent, who should be called the governor of the tribe. All agents should be obliged to remain nine months in the year at their agencies. They should keep a regular diary of all transactions, and a regular list of chiefs and leading men of the tribe, stating their characters and giving all such other information as would tend to bring them to the acquaintance of his successor. In tribes where there was but one agency, this agent should be the governor of the entire tribe, and have the power to issue a license for trading with Indians or whites to any American citizen, without bonds. This agency should be the point where all business should be transacted. No traders or storekeepers should be allowed to establish themselves more than 500 yards from the agency, and under no consideration should they be permitted to go among the Indians to trade. Every trader and storekeeper should be provided with the rules and regulations of the agency, and, should he violate any of them, his store should be closed, and himself ordered out of the country, never to be allowed to trade again in any of the Indian countries. No white man should be allowed to live with a squaw for a wife, unless lawfully married; and such marriage should entitle him to the same privileges as an Indian. The agent should be allowed 25 laboring men, two carpenters, one wheelwright, one blacksmith, one engineer, and one sawyer.

---

All laborers should be enlisted for the term of two years, under military rules and regulations, but allowed to dress as they pleased. A laundress should be provided by the department for the benefit of the men, her wages to be \$30 per month. The amount of washing allowed at this rate to each man per week should be two shirts, one pair of drawers, two pair of socks, and two handkerchiefs; all fine linen shirts to be paid for extra. Laborers should receive \$30 per month, paid every two months. No house should be frame, but all built of sawed or hewn logs, roofed with earth, having pine floors, doors, and casings for windows and doors.

The agent or governor should have full control over the territory said to belong to his Indians. To give him power to enforce rules and regulations and to police his territory well, I would recommend a military post of one or more companies, according to the Indian population, to be established not over half a mile from the agency. The troops should be cavalry, as infantry avails naught in the Indian country. The commander of such a post should have nothing to do with Indians, being only stationed there to assist and protect the governor, and should never be permitted to act without the latter's consent.

This governor should be provided with all kinds of agricultural implements, to be distributed to his Indians. He should furnish them with timber to build and allow them each a certain sum in payment for every panel of fence any Indian might put up, besides furnishing him with material to make it; and so much an acre for breaking his land, let it be with the plow or hoe. All fences should be horse-high, bull-strong, and hog-tight. Hogs, cattle, and chickens should be distributed, and there should be an agricultural fair annually, as in the States. Every three months inspect the Indian houses, and give premiums to the first, second, and third best housekeeper. Hold monthly meetings with chiefs and leading men, and as many others as the house can hold. There are many other regulations I could suggest, but the above are the main ones. Agencies being established in this manner, the agent cannot fail to be well posted on the state of affairs in his territory, and can thus govern with due care.

In regard to schools and missions I think that the Indians are still too wild for any such establishments or institutions. They must first be turned to agriculture, be taught habits of industry and economy, and thus become gradually accustomed to the ways of the whites. It would be better, in my opinion, to postpone the institutions for a few years. Teach them the Ten Commandments, and try to make them obey them — which I leave for the governor to do if he can. There are two strong obstacles to success — the wild nature of the Indians, and the sterility of their soil.

To secure an agent or a governor fit for such an office would require a salary of at least \$3000 a year, instead of \$1500.

After all, whether agencies be established in this manner or not, I see no use of the military posts now on the Missouri. I do not propose to abolish them with the view of saving expense to the Government, but rather to apply the military to the work of ameliorating the condition of the Indian. Supposing agencies established as I have suggested, what would be the use of Randall, Sully, Rice, Stevenson, and Buford? To my knowledge they have never been of any use. They have reservations 30 miles square, upon which no one is allowed to remain but themselves, their sutler, and contractor; and that land is generally taken from the best part of the Indian country. Thus stationed, far apart, with infantry only, what good do they do? Whom have they to protect but themselves? From Berthold to Peck, a distance of at least 500 miles, there are no agencies, nor traders. Buford is situated about the middle of this distance, with three or four companies of

infantry. What are they there for but to do nothing on the best of the land at the greatest expense? Stevenson is perfectly useless. Rice is situated where no Indians go, 125 miles from Stevenson, and about the same distance from Grand River agency; of what use is it, with its four companies? None. Sully is in sight of the Cheyenne agency, with one or two companies, and all the organized agencies below. I pronounce it of no earthly use. Randall ditto. The country will not support such large garrisons. The scarcity of grass and fuel will not admit of such forts, which destroy the best locations on the river and displease the Indians to no purpose. Buford has one of the best locations, which would answer for a very extensive Indian reservation; there is not another such point on the river between Randall and Benton. It is now spoiling that fine country for the mere sake of living there.

On these large military reservations no licensed Indian traders are allowed; but the sutler is allowed to trade with Indians, and they are permitted to come on the reservation. If a licensed trader wishes to establish a post he cannot do so nearer than 15 miles from the garrison, much too far to receive any protection, and this gives the sutler the monopoly of the Indian trade. As the soldier trade is well secured, it is plainly to be seen that the military rule the Indian country. But my suggestions would put the control of the Indian and his country where it properly belongs. If the Indians should commit depredations requiring punishment, would those garrisons, organized as they are now, be able to pursue and chastise them? Surely not; and, if they had absolutely to be punished, the government would have to send a different force after them, and let the garrisons eat their pork and beans uselessly, as usual.

A few days after writing my remonstrance in regard to the garrisons on the Missouri, I saw in the Sioux City Journal a report made by a gentleman named A. D. Rodefer, in reference to the pastimes of the officers of Fort Rice. During his stay at the post he participated in a deer-hunt with the officers. There are sixteen hounds at the fort, and a number of experienced hunters; and what with the hunters and the hounds, the officers' tables are constantly supplied with game. The amusements at Rice are numerous and varied. Two nights in the week the post is entertained by amateur theatrical and minstrel troupes. One night is devoted to dancing, and the rest to epicurean parties, etc.

Such reports, I think, show the uselessness of these garrisons. Why do the soldiers not amuse themselves by running after this famous Sitting Bull, who, the same reporter says, is bound to take Fort Peck this winter? No; they would freeze. It is best for them to dance all winter, and let the United States send somebody else after Sitting Bull when the grass grows in the spring.

Ta-tang-ah-eeoting's or Sitting Bull's ideas in regard to the whites were expressed in my presence at Fort Union in 1867. He remarked: "I have killed, robbed, and injured too many white men to believe in a good peace. They are medicine, and I would eventually die a lingering death. I had rather die on the field of battle " — or, as he put it "have my

The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

Clerk of the Missouri Fur Company

---

1812

Friday the 8th of May, I started from St. Louis to Bellefontaine 1 to meet the Boats bound up the Missouri River, arriving there at 1. o'clock P.M., took in Meal and Corn, arranged the Loading, and started at 3. o'clock, went about 4 Miles with a head wind.

Saturday the 9th head wind and strong Currents made very little way, at noon met Mr. Immel 2 with Boat coming from his winter quarters of the Sioux, this Morning Mr. Manuel Lisa came on Board at the Charbonnier 3 made about 5 miles distance.

Sunday the 10th, came too opposite 4 St. Charles 5 at noon Mr. Manuel Lisa crossed for some Men, rested all Day.

Monday the 11th Mr. Manuel Lisa & Choteau 6 came on Board at 9. o'clock A.M. took in some traps, and made the best of our way at 12. o'clock, having a head wind made very little distance.

Tuesday the 12th, head wind and strong Current, made not much Distance.

Wednesday the 13th, the same as yesterday.

Thursday the 14th, the same . . . .

Friday the 15th in the Morning about 8 o'clock - Mr. Majet 7, Patroon 8 of the large Boat fell over Board on account of a Log slamming against the Rudder, he saved himself by taking hold of the Rudder, and got on Board, both Rudder Irons broke and Lost, were detained to make a steering Oar, head wind all Day, sent some Irons on shore by Mr. Richardson 9, and camped at Burgois Creek 10.

Saturday the 16th, detained on Account of the Iron, which however came about 11 o'clock A.M., hard Rain and bad weather, fixed the Rudder and went about 2 Miles distance, Killed 1 Deer.

Sunday the 17th blowing very hard ahead and strong Current we had to stop for several hours, made sail, about 2 P.M., just at starting a Bear crossed the River towards us, Killed him close in shore, and found him very fat.

Monday 18th, still head wind the Rudder Irons of the little Boat broke, and had to lay by all Day. this Day Killed four Deer 2 Turkeys.

Tuesday 19th bad weather and head wind made about one mile all Day distance.

Wednesday 20, head wind and strong Current, made not much Distance.

Thursday, the 21. arrived at 11 o'clock A.M. at Cote sans Dessin 11, rested all Day. traded some Beaver, and took LaChapel 12 on Board.

Friday the 22d. started at 6 in the Morning with a favorable breeze, found the River more gentle, had fine weather. Killed two Deer and 1 Bear, made good head way.

Saturday, the 23d, fine weather & fair wind made about 25 miles distance. Killed 1 Deer.

Sunday, the 24th clear weather and fair wind made about 20 miles, and camped about 1 mile above the Widow Cole 13, Killed 1 Deer and 1 Bear.

Monday the 25th commenced with a thunder storm and hard Rain, cleared up about 11 A.M. with a fine fair wind, made about 27 Miles and Killed 1 Bear.

Tuesday the 26, hard Rain and squalls all Day made not much distance, killed 1 Bear 2 Turkeys.

Wednesday, the 27. bad weather and head wind again, killed two Deer, and not much distance.

---

Thursday, the 28, head wind and strong Current accompanied by heavy Squalls, LaChapel killed a fine female Bear, and 3 of her Cubs, and 1 Turkey, made only 5 miles this Day and camped at black snake Creek 14.

Friday the 29th departed at Day light, opposite the little Osage Island 15 we were obliged to stop on account of head wind and strong Current, arranged a new top Mast, went fishing with the Seine and caught 13 large fish 1 Turtle, the wind having somewhat abated we made way at 2 P.M. but still wind a heads, at the little Osage Prairie 16 we stopped for the little Boat which got around, met a shoal of Cat fish close in shore the Men who were Cordelling killed one with a stick which weighed after cleaning 40 lbs, went on a little way and found a small Run full of fish, the other Boat not having come up as yet we took our Seine and caught 161 Bass and other fish, which we salted, camped and killed 2 Deer.

Saturday, the 30th fine weather, but very hard water, swung 3 times at a point of a sandbar, the little Boat broke her Rudder Irons again, repaired at Dinner, Killed 2 Deer 1 Beaver 1 Pelican, made not much Distance.

Sunday the 31st fortune still ahead, strong currents and head winds were our Daily Companions, made no way. Killed 2 Deer and 1 Beaver.

Monday the 1st of June, hard wind a head with fine weather met 4 Batteaux going to St. Louis, a little above the Prairie du Feu 17 had to stop and make another top mast of Oak, the last one made of Hichberry was crooked and good for nothing, Killed 3 Deer 1 Bear.

Tuesday, the 2nd, the wind and weather the same as yesterday. Killed this Day 2 Deer and 1 fox, camped at fire Prairie Creek 18.

Wednesday the 3d fine weather and head wind and Current as usual at 10 A.M. arrived below fort Osage 19, saluted with 17 Guns which was politely returned by the Commander Capt Climson 20, on arrival were invited to Capt Climson, who treated us very handsomly, discharged our freight for this place and arranged our Cargoes, had a present made of Ice, which regaled us exceedingly.

Thursday the 4th started after breakfast, about 9 A.M. met several Perogues coming from their Winter quarters, Mess fr Robideau 21, La Jeuness 22 & others, Louis Bijou 23 embarked with us, as also two hunters embarked at fort Osage Greenwood 24 & Laurison 25 Immel went back to the fort for his dog and on his Return in formed of the party going to Santa fe 26 he met this Day at the fort. strong Current, made 9 Miles Distance.

Friday the 5th wind and Current as usual. fine weather made about 12 miles distance Killed 1 Deer.

Saturday 6th the same wind & Current, Killed 3 Bear the 3 Deer 1 Turkey camped opposite Can-sas River 27 distance 15 Miles.

Sunday the 7th a fine morning, in the afternoon cloudy and distant Thunder, Killed 2 Deer, made 16 Miles distance, camped 4 Miles above little Platte River 28.

Monday 8th fine weather, at 8 A.M. a fair Breeze sprung up though feeble, we made 18 Miles distance, Killed 3 Deer 3 Bear, caught 17 fish, camped 2 Miles below the old Canzas Village 29.

Tuesday 9th headwind again, strong Current, made only 9 Miles distance this Day, Killed 6 Deer.

Wednesday 10th, fine weather, had a small Breeze in our favor, Killed nothing today, distance made, 19 Miles.

Thursday the 11th fine weather head wind but still, all hunters out, passed the upper old Canzas Village, Killed 7 Deer, distance 15 Miles.

The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Friday the 12th, fine weather, made good way cordelling the wind all Day against us, distance 21 Miles camped on a large Sandbar where we found a quantity of turtle Eggs, this Day lost one of our Swivels when swinging round and run against the other Boat, Killed 3 Deer, 2 Turkeys.

Saturday the 13 the fine weather and head wind, this Day had bad luck, crossing for some of our Hunters we came in hard water, and cordelling on a Prairie encountered many Rafts, after having passed we dined 2 Miles above the Prairie 30. Mr. Manuel L. put our 2 Hogs in the River to wash but they swam off, we were obliged to turn about and followed them several Miles, after two Attempts we caught them, turning a rocky point we had hard work, the little Boat which was a head swung round and went off like lightning, the Cordells broke, and we were obliged to put the hands of both Boats to one to mount distance 12 Miles killed 5 Deer 1 Racoon,.

Sunday the 14th fine weather, but head wind, passed the Nabowa River 31 at noon, camped 8 Miles above made 16 Miles distance and had this Day 4 Deer Killed gathered about 100 turtle Eggs.

Monday 15th about one o'clock this Morning it began to blow furiously, were obliged to put out our fires, the wind blowing form all quarters, a clear Sky, finished our cooking in the Morning at 6 in the Morning went « miles but were stopt by hard head wind and Current crossed the River to find some Hickory for making an Axe handles and Ramrods, but were disappointed, crossed again and sopped till 5 P.M. started about 1 Mile took the Cordell the Boat swung and went down the River like the Wind in full speed, leaving all hands on shore, the few which were on Board landed the Boat opposite to our last nights Lodgings, our hands came on board made a new start, but night overtook us, got on a sandbar and were very near lost running against a Sawyer 32 had to cross again to the North Side, the other Boat came to close swept by the Current we unshipped our Rudder, run against a tree and broke her mast, this ended this dolefull Day camped at 11 o'clock at night distance 1 « Mile, left our hunters on the opposite side Killed 1 Deer, wind N.W. fresh Gales.

Tuesday the 16, hard wind from N.W., went about 1 Mile in the Morning when we had to stop, all hands went out to gather wood for Axe helms, Ramrods and a new Mast, and Game, the first was found but no meat, our hunters on the opposite Side had also been unsuccessful, and crossed the River on a Raft, facing wind and Current about 6 Miles swimming. Killed 1 Deer.

Wednesday 17th wind still a head, but abated, made this Day 16 Miles, Killed 3 Deer, when camped a fair breeze sprung up.

Thursday the 18th at 3 o'clock in the Morning a heavy Thunder storm, at starting we had a fair wind which however lasted not long, had to try oars. Poles & cordells all Day, pass the Nimohar River 33 at 11 A.M. dined at Wolf River 34, and camped on a Sand Bar, made 16 miles distance Killed 3 Deer.

Friday, the 19th During Night blew very hard until 6 in the morning, we stopped for some time having head wind and strong Current, the River high, made this Day about 15 Miles distance by hard work. Killed nothing, although 7 hunters out of Boats.

Saturday, 20th, hard Gales all night, in the Morning cloudy with some flaws of wind in our favor, about 8 A.M. the wind increased, and we sailed at intervals very fast, until 2 P.M. when Thunder storm attended with a hard rain arose. this Day at 10 A.M. passed Ichinipokins River 35 at the North Side, at 7 P.M. little Mahonir River 36 on the South Side, -- made about 20 Miles distance, Killed 2 Deer, Game scarce.

The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Sunday, the 21st fine weather with head wind and Currents, all hunters out, on the Island Beaux Soleil 37. Killed 2 Deer 3 Bear, 1 Turkey, 1 Rabbitt the hunters on the Prairies killed nothing, distance about 15 Miles, camped 1 Mile above the Island.

Monday, the 22d, cloudy had now and then some Sailing, the River still rising and strong Currents, at 4 P.M. a thunder storm arose which raged furiously, the hurricane swayed the trees every where luckily we got under some Willows and lay safe, were obliged to Camp, distance 10 Miles, Killed 1 Deer, 1 Turkey.

Tuesday the 23d started at Day light as usual, passed Le Cote grand Brule 38, opposite the head of, we had to stop to make a new top Mast for the other Boat. fine weather, Current very hard, River still rising, distance 14 Miles, Killed 3 Deer.

Wednesday, the 24th, St. John 39, started at 3 in the Morning with fair wind, but had not come 1/4 Mile when the Wind changed ahead, worked hard against the Current, very warm and clear, made only 9 Miles in 14 hours distance Killed 1 Deer 2 Turkey, 2 Racoons, found plenty fresh tracks of Elk.

Thursday, the 25th This Morning a fine breeze sprung up and we had sailing all Day, but by the Mismanagement of the Patron of the little Boat were detained several times we camped before Sunset to let the little Boat come up with us, about dark we heard a Gun, but she did not come to our Camp, the wind blew fresh all night made about 15 Miles distance.

Friday the 26th at 2 o'clock 25 Minutes in the Morning we turned about to look for the little Boat and found her safe 1 Mile below our Camp, we set sail, and went pretty well till Sunrise, when the Wind failed, very strong Current, and hard work to gain way, at 7 A.M. Baptiste Latouipe 40 of St. Louis, fell over Board and never seen again, the two Boats being close together, he could not rise, or was entangled by the Roots of a large tree, which he was going to strike with his Pole. -- made River Platte 41 at 11 A.M., dined and weather very hot, remained three hours, at 3 P.M. passed River Papillion 42 made 12 Miles distance, Killed 1 Deer.

Saturday, the 27th departed as usual and the Water not so strong as below, the River Platte, this Morning passed Mosquito River 43, distance 20 Miles, Killed 4 Deer 1 Goose.

Sunday the 28th, made pretty good way in the Morning but about 10 A.M. the Rudder stay broke of the little Boat we were obliged to cross the River to find a place to unload her, and make a steering Oar, which took up all Day. distance 6 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

Monday the 29th This Day had at Intervals some sailing the River crooked as a zick zack, passed River Boje 44 at 9 A.M. point Jacques 45 at 2 P.M. and council Bluff 46 at 4 P.M. distance 20 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

Tuesday, the 30th fine weather and sailing we pushed on very well, and would have made considerable way if it had not been for the other Boat, were obliged to stop to make another steering Oar for her, during which time our hunters killed 3 Deer, distance 27 Miles.

Wednesday, the 1 of July. fine weather and fine sailing at 3 P.M. passed Soldier River 47, Missouri very crooked, no hunters out, distance 34 Miles, saw some Elk.

Thursday the 2d fine weather head wind but good water made good way, cordelling all Day, camped at the Mouth of the little Sioux River 48, distance 23 Miles, Killed 4 Deer 1 Duck.

Friday. the 3d of July. fine weather and light favorable Winds in the forenoon., at 1 P.M. passed Coup Loysele 49, distance 18 Miles.

Saturday the 4th of July., we had ourselves prepared to salute the Day, which gave Birth to the

The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Independence of the United States, but a Salute from Heaven prevented us, a thunder storm arose at 2 in the Morning and the Bank of the River where we camped fell in upon us momentarily. Mr Manuel was nearly drowned in his Bed, and we had run off., rowing and poling all Day, about Sunset a favorable wind sprung up and carried us several Miles, were obliged to leave a large Buck and an Elk which our Hunters had Killed behind, camped at Black Birds Hill 50, distance 15 Miles.

Sunday the 5th fine weather at 8 A.M. came to a Channel which we entered, in hopes to go through, to cut off 6 -- Leagues of the River, but were disappointed, having ascended within 150 yards toward the head of it, the Water became so rapid as to endanger our Boat to sink, we returned with Difficulty, at a little Distance found another, which was also tried, but to our Sorrow found not Water enough at the head and returned took the old Route, and were stopped at 5 P.M. by a Thunderstorm, distance 15 Miles.

Monday the 6th rained very hard last night, cleared up and we made best of our way at 4 o'clock in the Morning had a few Squalls and rain, at 8 A.M. a fair wind arose and had fine sailing for several hours, the River very crooked had to row at times, at 2;30 P.M. passed Mohaw River 52, and opposite the Village at 4 P.M. 2 Men went to see if any Indians were there, they returned not being able to get to the Village on account of swamp and musquitos, camped on a Sand bar, distance 30 Miles.

Tuesday, 7th started at Day break, cloudy, head wind and rain, in the afternoon passed Floyds River 53, Sun River 54 and at dark Big Sioux River 55, distance 18 Miles.

Wednesday the 8, Head wind and Rain, hard work all day toward Evening had some sailing on a Sand bar 56, Musquitos in Clouds. distance 18 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

Thursday the 9th departed early, took a Channel which we found shut up, and lost the Morning, at Dinner several Hunters went out to make fires to give Notice to the Indians of our approach, passed a small River named Iowa 57, in the afternoon had fine sailing, distance 24 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

Friday the 10th Had wind and stronger Current all Day. the River very high, left 5 Hunters on shore, - distance 10 Miles Killed 1 Deer.

Saturday the 11, Rain & cloudy Morning, at 8 A.M. cleared up with a fair wind, took in our hunters, set sail, at noon waited one Hour for the little Boat passed Vermillion River 58 on the North side and at 5 P.M. the River Arck 59 on the South side waited for the little Boat and had to camp before Sunset to let her come up with us, lost some elegant sailing on her account distance 33 Miles.

Sunday, the 12th, set sail early in the Morning and by all appearances were to make a good Days Journey, but the other Boat not keeping up with us we were obliged to wait several hours for her, and lost considerable in making way, the wind changing at noon, at 8 A.M. passed River Jacques 60, Missouri still high, distance 18 Miles.

Monday the 13th, head wind and hard Current, rowed, poled and cordelled all Day, several hunters went out returned at 4 P.M., no game but had seen many fresh track of elk, waited 2 hours for the other Boat at 5 P.M. made Island of Bonhomme 61 and Ponca 62 Country we had flattered ourselves to meet some Indians of Buffaloe but were disappointed, by this time we had passed the Countries of the following Nations, Little and Big Osage 63, Mahas 64, Otoes 65, Yencions 66, & Kansas, this Morning Immel & Lorimier 67 went a head by land, all hunters went on the Island,

Killed but 1 Elk, two of them camped on the N. Side and Boats on the South Side of the Island, distance 18 Miles.

Tuesday, the 14th fine weather head wind and hard water at 7 A.M. took in our hunters they had killed 1 Elk 1 Deer. had to stop again at 9 A.M. to arrange another Mast for the other Boat and fix the old Rudder, crossed the River where we found some fine Cedar for the Purpose, stayed all day unloaded and loaded, put up the Mast and Rudder, camped and made this Day 4 Miles distance Killed 1 Deer.

Wednesday July 15th, made an early start and good way at 9 A.M. met the Company Boat coming from the Rees 68 with Peltries, Papin 69 and Men. Mr Manuel Lisa thought proper to take her back a gain having not sufficient Loading to defray the expense, passed River Luipere 70 and another small River 71, in the afternoon Squalls and Rain, camped 3 Miles below Liquicourt River 72, a distance 16 Miles.

Thursday 16 July, rained all night, and cleared up Sunrise at 8 A.M. passed Leauquicour River very high and full. Mess. Sanguinett 73 & Bijou went out to make fires as we expected the Indians soon to meet, camped opposite an Island 74 not far from Poca River, distance 18 Miles Killed 1 Deer.

Friday the 17, a fine Morning the Mackina Boat took 5 hunters to the Island and we continued our Route passed Ponca River 75, cordelling on the South Side along the Hills till Dinner; the Boat came up and brought 1 Deer 1 Beaver cordelled all Afternoon distance 17 Miles.

Saturday 18, cloudy about 8 A.M. a fine favorable wind took us and we had good sailing untill 2 o'clock P.M. when we discovered 3 Lodges of Sioux Indians 76 and found Mr. Immel & Lorimier, the Chief of them, LeNez 77 traded with us 32 Beaver 3 otter 2 Robes bufflao 3 Bladders of tallow and upwards of 300 lbs. of dried neat. camped 1 Mile above them, killed 1 Deer distance 24 Miles.

Sunday the 19th fine Morning about 7 A.M. we took in 2 Sioux who had been hunting, belonging to a band on white River 78, gave us a buffaloe tounge and stayed on Board all Day, our hunters went in search of Buffaloe but found none, passed Little Cedar Island 79 distance 18 Miles.

Monday the 20, set sail at 4 in the Morning with a fine wind the Indians left us, sailed till 10 A.M. when the wind changed and blew hard a head, at 4 P.M. met with Sioux Chief called the Sleeper 80 and 20 Soldier had some talk and camped with them, distance 15 Miles.

Tuesday the 21, departed at Sunrise as also the Indians we stopped at a small River 81 where 4 Sioux Chiefs came to us, the Black Sky, Black Buffaloe 82 Big Horse 83 and Crooked hand 84 we had Counsol and they informed Mr. Manuel Lisa, that at present they had nothing to trade, but would have plenty next fall Immel went with them to their Village, 3 Chiefs and 2 young Man remained to fix on a spot for a trading house they went with us across the River to the Northside 1 Mile below where we camped, laid out the house for Mr. Bijou 85 who was to remain to trade with the Yentonas, Tatons 86 Shaunee 87 Mr Manuel present presented the Chief with 10 Carrots of Tobacco and some Powder and Ball they were seemingly well contented, Killed 1 Buffaloe and the Indians brought also some fresh Meat.

Wednesday the 22d rose early, all hands except some lazy Rascals under pretence of being sick went to work. -- at 3 P.M. Mr. Immel returned with 2 young Indians, the Chief Black Sky had presented him a horse, he reported the Chiefs and warriors would be with us to morrow -- he found upwards of 400 Lodges and plenty of Buffaloe in the Morning when he started from there he saw several Buffaloe enter in the Village, this Day raised part of the house, Killed 1 Deer, caught sever-

al Catfish and 1 Beaver.

Thursday the 23, early to work, but unfortunately the house fell down when nearly raised, and had to go over the same work, caught 7 fine fish in the forenoon which provided a fine Dinner, at 5 P.M. a party of Indians came opposite which we crossed and found them to be all Boys about 30 in Number they came to give us a Dance, they were all neat and handsome clothed, more so then I saw the Sioux of the Mississippi, in the Evening they danced and we gave them some Biscuit hardtack and 1 Carrot Tobacco they bought plenty Meat with them and gave plenty to the Boats. Friday the 24th finished the house, in the afternoon sent Mr. Bijou, Equipment on shore, the Indians went over the River, and Mr. Manuel Lisa gave the Chief black Buffalo the present from Government as also for crooked hand which Chief had promised to come over but did not come, he left it with Mr. Bijou to be given to him whenever he would arrive there left 2 hunters and 3 Engagees with Bijou, discharged Bapt. Alar 88 a good for nothing fellow.

Saturday the 25, set sail at 4 in the Morning, fair wind took 6 Indians with us which we landed and stood under sail till 11 A.M. when we took the Cordell for about 1 hour dined, and set sail again, passed white River at 2 P.M. the slakening about 4 P.M. we took the Cordell again, Mr. Manuels Negro Boy Charles went out the Boat to get some grass or grasshoppers for a Prairie Dog which he had caught some days ago, he the Boy went upon the Hills unperceived, they are very high he fell down a precipice overhanging rock, precipice into the River, the Man who was steering the Mackina Boat saw it , and cried out to Mr. Lewis who was walking in the Rear of the Boats to save the Boy but Mr. Lewis 89 unfortunately did not understand the men however saw something struggling in the water, but thought the Boy was a swimming, when the Men came towards him, they went to find the Boy, alas he was gone, he must have been stunned by the fall or otherwise would have saved himself, the River was not 4 feet deep, he drowned at 5 o'clock P.M. we searched for him some time but the Current had swept him off, cordelled a little way, crossed to an Island, set out 3 hunters, at sunset the Wind fair, set sail, took in our hunters, camped on a Sand bar the wind blowing fresh all night distance 30 Miles.

Sunday the 26, set sail at 3 in the Morning, at 8 A.M. Immel & Queenville 90 went out to hunt and to visit his house were he lived last Winter 91, we came up with the house very fast stopped a few Minutes the wind fresh in our favor, took in Immel, Queenville had run after some Buffaloe, we pretty fast and were obliged to stop for Queenville, who was far behind we gave him signal, and embarked him, he had Killed 1 Buffaloe but we left the Meat, taking care of the wind at 1 P.M. made Big Bend 92, camped on the North Side. -- Distance 36 Miles.

Monday the 27th departed at 4 in the Morning a fresh wind sprung up and carried us out of the Bend, the wind slackening we had to take to our Oars, at 8 A.M. we set sail again and sailed till 11 A.M. after Dinner Immel Lorimier and Greenwood went out the Boat to go by Land to the Rees. cordelled all afternoon, and camped at the point of Cedar Island 93, distance 21 Miles. Killed 1 Deer.

Tuesday the 28, set sail with a favorable wind at 3:30 minutes in the Morning, but the wind falling had to take to cordelling, last night caught 3 Beavers, Killed Cabri 2 Elks, distance 18 Miles

Wednesday the 29th head wind and clear, cordelling all Day at 4 P.M. passed little Missouri River, Killed 1 Buffaloe 2 Deer 1 Badger, distance 21 Miles

Thursday the 30th fine weather but head wind, had to cordell all Day saw a band of about 50 to 60 Elk, 3 of them close to us in the River, but had no Luck to Kill the Mackina Boat was gone a head

with the hunters and did not come to our Camp that night, distance 18 Miles.

Friday the 31st departed early cloudy and head wind cordelled all Morning at 7 A.M. met the Mackina Boat they had Killed 2 Dear and 1 fawn, crossed the River after Breakfast the wind becoming very hard made very little way. Killed 1 Buffaloe 4 Deer, distance 12 Miles. This Morning we left our old she Cat at Camp, at breakfast I missed her, and Mr Manuel sent a Man for the Cat, he returned in the Evening with the Cat to our great satisfaction this Remark may seem rediculous, but an Animal of this kind, is more valuable the this Country than a fine Horse. Mice are in great Abundance and the Company have lost for want of Cats, several Thousand Dollars in Merchandie, which were destroyed at the Bigbellies station, there has not a night passed since our departure from Belefontaine where I got that Cat, that she has not caught from 4 to 10 Mice and brought them to her Kittens.

Saturday the 1st of August last night caught 2 young Beaver, cordelled all Morning, still and very little Current at 10:15 A.M. passed Chajenne River 96 very low at this time saw several Buffaloe, chased, but without Success, crossed the River, and cordelled along the Bluffs, at Dinner we stopped at some Bluffs above Chajenne River about 4 Miles, where I found plenty of Iron Ore, and somewhat higher up signs of Saltpeter. Distance 18 Miles Killed 2 Deer.

Sunday the 2d some Rain fell last night, cloudy in the Morning, 6 A.M. cordelling the little Boat joined us, they had meat of 3 Buffaloes, one Cow they found wounded with an Arrow, she came into their Camp. Distance 18 Miles Killed 1 Deer.

Monday the 3 at 2 A.M. a Canoe with Garrow 97, the Interpreter, 2 Engagees and Goshe 98 a Ree Chief came to us, they brought some Corn and a Letter from Immel at noon passing along a Bottom, we found a Mocassin tied to a tree in which we also found a Letter from Immel informing us they were well and would be at the Rees from thence in One Dat. Distance 21 Miles, Killed 5 Deer.

Tuesday the 4th headwind as usual, cordelling out Hunters went out this Morning and at dinner brought 3 Deer 1 Buffaloe 4 Ducks, passed Mauro River 99, in the afternoon Killed 1 very large Buck. at 5 P.M. a heavy storm arose and we had to lay by. at 6 P.M. 2 Skin Canoes met us, with Lorimier, Greenwood, Dougherty 100 and Weir 101, it continued raining and we were obliged to Camp. Distance 15 Miles.

Wednesday the 5th cleared up in the Morning and we went on Cordelling, but the good Luck they got fast 3 times, at Dinner our hunters brought 1 large Cabri and 2 Deer very fat, 1 Goose, pursued our Voyage and at 5 P.M. met 3 more hunters of the Company from the Rees, camped 3 miles below the Grand River 102. --

Thursday 6th at 6 A.M. passed Grand River, Mr. M. Lisa had intended to build a fort here, but finding the Situation not eligible for a Fort, moved on and camped about 12 Miles below the Rees. Distance 15 Miles.

Friday the 7th has a little Wind in favor set sail and at 12 o'clock M. arrived at fort 103, all Indians in Motion to a Number of about 1200 souls, Mr. Manuel L could not immediately go on shore, as he had his Leg strained this Morning when Jumping out of the Boat, and got very Lame, a horse was procured and he went to the Village and held Council with the Principal Chiefs did not come to Council and Jealousy reigned among them, about 2 P.M. the Women and Children who were about our Boats were called away to the Village, and in a few Minutes the Coast was clear, this was not a friendly Signal, and we prepared for the worst, after Dinner Mr M.L. -- resolved to go to the

Fort, he went with 10 armed Men and sent for the Chiefs to explain their Conduct. when it appeared that Goshe had received his presents and they not, and further complained on Account of the Merchandize to be taken away from them to trade Mr. M. L., came to an absolution and they gave up, they were satisfied to have a Fort built at their Village about 12 Miles distance 104. La Plume 105 the Chief of the 2d Village received his Present and harmonie was restored, they traded some in the afternoon loaded the Peltries ect... ect... and prepared for Morning, set a Volunteer Guard, though guarded, the Indians would pilfer every thing they could lay their hands on.

Saturday the 8th started early without trouble, several went by Land as also some Indians, Goshe and La Plume overtook us at noon, in order to stop us and not go too high from their Village 106, but the Place where we were did not answer for our purpose pursued our Route, the Chiefs went back seemingly displeased, camped 12 Miles above the Village, last night had our 2 Cats stolen.

Sunday the 9th of August started early and at 7 A.M. arrived at a beautiful Prairie Bluff with several Bottoms of fine timber around, made Arrangement for our Camp and in the afternoon discharged the Boats, every Men happy to have come thus far of our Voyage 107.

Monday the 10th sent out one Boat across the River with hands to cut timber for a Blacksmith Shop and Provision house all hands employed to fix a temporary Camp.

Tuesday the 11th, no news from the Village untill noon when our Interpreter Garrow and a Soldier arrived, every thing quiet, they reported that a Shuking Big Belly entered the Village at dark yesterday and Killed 1 Ree.

Wednesday the 12, were informed a war party had gone on, to fight the Bigbellies 108.

Thursday the 13th, Mr. M. Lisa had resolved to go up with a party to the Bigbellies to arrange Matters with them and bring down the Peltries, the Bigbellies having 2 hunters and stole 26 Company horses, as also detained the Trader they had with them, he accordingly went this Morning at 8 o'clock and 26 Men with him. At 10 P.M. 60 Rees composing a War party arrived they requested something to eat, our hunters had just come in with 3 Buffaloes and 1 Deer, we gave them some Meat, and ferried them across the River, this Day cut timber for different Buildings, at the same time the Rees were crossing the River 8 canoes move in sight coming down with Meat, the Men in the Canoes saw so many Indians crossing, took the terrors put their Canoes on shore and run off, both parties thinking they were Enemies, as soon as the war party arrived on the other they gave the Halloo and run in full Speed to the Canoes. finding nobody and seeing the Canoes belonging to their own Nation, they took some Meat and without searching for their friends went off, 2 hours afterwards 2 Indians appeared and ventured to come over to our side, on arrival we found them to be 2 Squaws the Men consisting of 2 Rees, 2 Panis 109, 2 Chayenne 110, had run off, and left every thing behind them.

Friday the 14th This Morning at one o'clock were alarmed by the firing of a Gun, and heard the Dashing of Oars when to our Surprize we saw Mr. Manuel & party returning he having been informed by one of those Cowards who had run off from the Canoes, that all the white men were Killed and that the Indians had crossed the River in our Boat to Kill them also, supposed by the Sioux, Mr. M.L. alarmed on this Account returned immediately to Camp, finding however to his great Satisfaction the History of the Indian false, he remained till breakfast and pursued his first Intentions, last night about 40 Indians camped with us they were gathering Cherries and other fruits about the Country finished the Blacksmith shop and Provisison house, caught 8 fine Cat fish.

Saturday the 15th This Morning cloudy, some hunters went out, no Meat at home, caught 8 Cat fish, Rain at intervals.

Sunday the 16th hard Rain last night, cleared up in the Morning and all hands went for timber, at 5 P.M. our hunters returned with Meat they had Killed 11 Buffaloe, caught 11 Cat fish, and Killed 11 Ducks.

Monday the 17th, clear, all hands cutting timber and making Hay, caught 15 fish, and Killed 15 Ducks.

Tuesday the 18th all hands employed as yesterday. 2 Hunters went out for Buffaloe, caught 4 fish.

Wednesday the 19. the hands employed in Work as yesterday at noon our hunters came in with Meat for 2 Cows. Killed 10 Ducks.

Thursday the 20, North wind & cold, cloudy in the forenoon hands at work as yesterday, fine afternoon Mr. Lewis caught a Prairie Dog, caught 4 fish, Killed 1 Pheasant.

Friday the 21st, clear and hard wind, still at work cutting timber and making hay. Killed 6 Ducks. Mr Lewis's Prairie Dog was nearly Killed by one of our Dog who broke the Chain and run off with him.

Saturday the 22d, clear and windy, the same Work going on. at noon Goehe and Nez Corbain 111 a Yentonas Chief arrived with four Sioux, at 6 P.M. our hunters came in with Meat of 5 Cows. This Day blew a very hard Gale from the South west. Killed 28 Plover and 4 Ducks.

Sunday the 23d, clear wind west N. west, the same work, at noon La Plume paid us a Visit, dried some Meat very warm.

Monday the 24th clear, wind west, 3 hunters went out being informed the Buffaloe was near by a party of Indians which had been hunting at 10 A.M. 12 Canoes arrived with meat they made a present of 18 Tongues and went off at noon caught 10 fish.

Tuesday the 25th cloudy and disagreeable, hands at work as usual.

Wednesday the 26, cloudy and cold, at 7 A.M. Mr. Manuel Lisa returned with part of the Men from his expedition, the Rest of the Men were coming by Land with the horses he traded and given up by the Bigbellies, the Chief Brone 112 refused to give up the stolen horses, Mr. Manuel cleared the trading of peltrie and Goods and took off the whites, at 11 P.M. Gray Eye 113 Ree Chief, arrived with 100 Men from a war tour, they had not Killed nor even seeing Enemy, in the Evening a larger Party passed by with two Scalps which they carried before then in triumph at dark some more arrived and camped with us.

Thursday 27, clear and fresh, the Big white 114 Mandan Chief arrived, with several of his Bravos and family, to pay a visit, he had a few Robes which he traded, and took some articles on Credit, at noon Nez Corbain came again to receive a Present from Mr. Manuel Lisa and as soon as received for the Village.

Friday the 28, clear and the house fur trade was commenced made 36 Packs 115 of different Peltries and prepared the Boat which had to go to St. Louis,

Saturday the 29th, clear, this Morning the Men which came by Land from the Bigbellies arrived with the horses, they had met with no Accident, they informed that the Mandan 116 had made a Hunt and Killed on One Day 450 Buffaloe, employed in -- setting Accounts and writing, at 5 P.M. out hunters brought in the Meat of 5 Cows.

Sunday the 30th clear, at 10 A.M. the Boat started for St. Louis 117 with 13 Men, several others went to the Ree Village to purchase Corn and Skins for covering of the Boat, in the evening they

returned and had only succeeded to buy two Bushels of Corn and 8 Hides, the Indians not being willing to trade.

Monday the 31st cloudy and hard wind from the S.W. -- made up an assortment to go to the Mandan and purchase Horses for the parties going up River.

Tuesday Sept. 1, cloudy and heavy Squalls, four Men went to the Men to buy horses, made a fish trap of willows, and caught 31 Cat fish, hunters went out this Morning, and returned in the Evening had Killed 11 Cow.

Sept. 2d Wednesday hard Gales from N.W. La Plume came to Camp, the wind abated about Sun set cloudy and cold.

Thursday Sept. 3. clear and warm, caught 6 fish very large.

Friday Sept. 4 nothing remarkable, cloudy and cold.

Saturday 5 the same " " " " .

Sunday 6 the same " " " " .

Monday 7 moved in the new house and begun to make Equipments for the Parties going up the Missouri.

Tuesday 8 finished Equipments, Killed 14 Ducks.

Wednesday 9 our hunter brought Meat of 9 Buffaloe, were informed the Sioux and Rees had fought a Battle 2 Sioux Killed 3 Rees wounded.

Thursday 10 clear and warm, the Gray Eye Chief and 3 Men arrived from a Scout.

Friday the 11th early rise, the parties prepared to start. Mr Sanguinette and 2 Men with 5 horses for the Spanish waters 118 Mr. Lorimier and four for the Wind River 119, Mr. Lewis, two engag-ees and the trappers for the little Horn 120 in all 18 Men, at noon a Sioux Chief arrived to have a talk with Mr. M. L. and 9 Men with him, cloudy & rain we traded some dry meat and 1 Robe.

Saturday the 12, the Sioux started this Morning, as also Mercier 121, LaChapel, and Carriere 122 for their fall hunt down the Missouri, Killed 14 Ducks.

Sunday the 13th fine weather, began to hawl stone for Chimneys our hunters went out, finished the Store caught 15 large fish.

Monday the 14 last Night a Ree Chief Legross 123, came to fore with his Wife he was lamenting the Death of one of his Children which had died 2 Days ago, Mr. Manuel covered the Dead Child, Legross being a good Indian, this morning had 22 fish fine warn weather, our hunters returned with 6 Cows and the pleasing news of plenty in the prairies.

Tuesday the 15, moved in the Store, took and Inventory caught 8 fish, warm and clear.

Wednesday the 16 fine weather nothing remarkable.

Thursday the 17 the Wind blew heavy from the N.W., about 6 A.M. the Men who went to get the Horses, came back and told the sad news that 5 Indians, supposing Grosventers had mounted the horses in their Sight and rode them off. 7 in Number, Charbonneau 124 who was on horse back came in full speed to the fort and cried out; TO ARMS, Lecomte 125 is Killed, the run off and left the poor fellow, that Indians spoke to Lecomte and they told him to go about his business he ask them what Nation they were, they answered Crows 126 if the Indians had an Idea to kill him they might easy have done it, 10 armed Men went immediatly after them but returned without Success they saw them no more, a cloudy Day and cold.

Friday the 18 disagreeable weather, the wife of Elie 127 a Snake Squaw died, made a Wolf trap and raised the Mens house.

Saturday the 19th Charbanneau and Jessaume departed for to go to the Bigbellies, to try to get the horses Bijou arrived from his Station with 10 Sioux, Saunie 128 to make peace with the Rees, as Mr. M. L. had proposed, at 2 P.M. our hunters brought in 3 Elk fine Evening.

Sunday the 20th a clear but cold Morning 2 Rees arrived in search of a Women which had run off, after Breakfast Immel had 4 Men went hunting, in the afternoon Goshe and 3 Men arrived he seemed not much pleased with the Sioux, they harangued much this Evening, and to Morrow was fixed to smoke and made Peace.

Monday 21st fine weather and warm, one of the Warriors of the Sioux after having talked a little mixed whisky, pretended to be drunk, and cut Capers about like a mad Man, which determined the Business with the Rees, it was resolved that the Sioux should de part in the Evening unseen by the other Indians which might hurt them, they spent the Day agreable together and at 8 o'clock in the Evening they crossed the River, accompanied by a few Presents. Bijou who was to go by water found the Canoes not good and remained.

Tuesday the 22d fine warm weather and clear Bijou loaded his Canoe and went down the River with Manegre 129, at 10 A.M. Goshe and party also started and Immel came home with 1 Elk and 2 Deer very fat he found no Buffaloes traded 2 horses, in the Evening a Ree and 2 Women to trade a horse.

Wednesday the 23 fine clear weather, set 2 hens with 22 Eggs, traded the horse in the Evening another arrived to trade a horse and also his Wife, a handsome Squaw he found trade for the horse but not for the Wife, a Mandan arrived, no news from above.

Thursday the 24th fine warm weather for the Season traded some Corn the Indians went to the Village, Immel and 3 men went hunting took 10 traps and 7 Horses with him, in the evening Nez Corbain and 50 Men of the Yentonas arrived.

Friday 25th, Rain and windy traded some Meat with the Indians, after dinner they brought in their Plunder for trade and we traded several Peltries, a large quantity of dry meat and tallow held a Council and made a Present of 10 lbs powder 15 lbs Ball, 1 Kegg of mixed Whisky.

Saturday the 26th, they were preparing to move, when we found they had stolen a foot Adze and a handsaw, by giving a Hand Kerchief to the Chief he promised to return them we got the Adge but not the Saw, when they were gone we found our table Knives and the Door of a ?large? ahd also departed at 2 P.M. our hunters came in with 4 Buffaloes, they had left Immel with one Man to trap Beaver.

Sunday the 27th nothing remarkable, Rain, blew a hard Gale and continued so all Night ---

Monday the 28 in the Morning when it cleared up our Hunters went out for Meat, and in the afternoon about 40 Sioux arrived to trade, in the Evening a hard thunder Storm --

Tuesday the 29th had cleared up, began to trade they had not much peltry, at 9 A.M. the Indians crossed again,

Wednesday the 30th clear and fresh at 2 P.M. our hunters came in with the Meat of 3 Cows 2 Deer, 2 Beaver and Beaver meat, Immel having caught 14 Beaver.

Thursday the 1st of October, at Sunrise we had to cross a band of Sioux, accompanied by Nez Corbain and another Chief called Boite about 40 in Number they traded and returned at noon satisfied, in the afternoon 7 Men started up the River with the Mackina Boat to hunt Buffalo, and Immel came home with 15 Beaver 1 Otter and 2 Muskrats, wind blew very hard from N.W. and the Boat returned.

Friday the 2d the Boat went again early in the Morning the wind arose from the same quarter they stopped at the first point above, four Rees came to fort.

Saturday the 3, clear and cold had white frost this Morning Majet and all hands employed to cut Picketts, at Sunset 2 Mandans arrived with the sad news of the Big white and Little Crow 130 being Killed by the Bigbellies and 3 Mandans wounded, the Bigbellies had 11 Men Killed and a Number wounded, at night Charbonneau, Jessaume returned and brought with them 3 of the horses which had been stolen by the Mandans and not Bigbellies as supposed a lesson to take care of our property, no matter friend or Enemy.

Sunday the 4th the Mandans went to the Rees accompanied by 3 Rees fine weather.

Monday the 5th Immel went to the Village with Mr. Manuel returned in the Evening they were informed the Sioux had stolen 3 horses from us in the night of the 3d instant and by examination we found one of the Company's, one of Goshe, and one of Charbonneau gone.

Tuesday the 6th last night the Dogs made alarm we went patrolling and some whistling of Men, but found in the Morning our horses safe, raised the right wing of the out houses and Kept our horses housed.

Wednesday the 7th fine warm weather all hands to cut Pickets a beautiful Day for the Season nothing remarkable ----

Thursday the 8th this Morning 2 horses were stolen in sight of the house, distance 150 steps the Men who had to take care of the horses went to his Breakfast and returned the horses were gone.

Friday the 9th clear and fine weather, in the afternoon 4 Rees arrived to give us Notice that their Corn was gathered and ready for trade. Charbonneau & Jessaume Keep us in Constant uproar with their Histories wild story telling and wish to make fear among the Engagees, these two Rascals ought to be hung for their perfidy, they do more harm than good to the American Government, stir up the Indians and pretend to be friends to the white People at the same time but we find them to be our Enemies.

Saturday the 10, fine weather, the Rees went home Garrows Wife a Ree Sister to the Chief Goshe, came to fort last night, this Morning she was going to shoot her husband, she came here with that Intention, some Rees arrived which were enraged against Charbonneau & Jessaume, having of their arrival from the Bigbellies they said that C. & J. were Lyars and not to be considered as good French men, and if Mr. Manuel Lisa would send them to the Grosventer with a pipe they would not consent such Credit have these Men amongst the Indians they find their Character gone and try every Scheme, to Keep themselves alive like a Man a Drowning, I shall leave them for a while, and go on with my Observations.

Sunday the 11th Immel and others went with the Boat to the Ree Village to take Corn, late last Evening the Boat and hunters arrived with a fine Canoe of Meat they had Killed 19 Cows and 4 Elk, but lost the meat of 7 Cows by the Wolves. There are incredible quantities of Wolves in these parts, they go in gangs of 3 to 400 and at Nights the Prairies echo with their howling by nothing of this Kind can prevent the Savage of his favorite walk, to Kill and steal at night, this Day finished our New Provision Store, and go on with the other houses, the Horses are Kept under Lock and we fear no Lurking Savage.

Monday the 12th we had frost last night, the Vessels full of Ice clear and cold Morning, but calm and warm in the afternoon cloudy evening.

Tuesday the 13, white frost, cloudy, this Morning our Cart man was attacked by 5 Wolves, but

cleared himself Immel returned, the Rees will not trade Corn with us.

Wednesday the 14th, fine clear weather, 4 Men went out to hunt, some Rees arrived to trade a little Corn and a Girl the first was traded, but the last not, she wanted to be the Wife of Frenchman, and not his concubine, --- Chastity, --- got this Day 21 Chickins.

Thursday the 15, This Morning Immel, Papin and Charbonneau started for the Grosventer, Mr. M. Lisa having engaged Charbonneau for some good Reasons at 8 A.M. a Band of Chajennes about 12 Lodges arrived their Chief named Lessaroco, they had plenty Women & Children and a great Number of Dogs, traded some Beaver, and about 50 Bushels of Corn.

Friday the 16th, clear and warm, the Chajennes went off they behaved very well. traded tranquil and in the afternoon 2 young Men brought our Hogs back which had followed them.

Saturday the 17, cloudy, Majet and hands crossed the River for Picketts, in the afternoon some Rees arrived, traded 6 Beaver and some Corn.

Sunday the 18, cloudy & cold, Boat went for Picketts again.

Monday the 19 the same as yesterday.

Tuesday the 20, snowstorm, at 3 P.M. Goshe arrived with 4 Chajennes of a large band, they came to inform themselves how we traded, and observe we had not Goods enough for their Peltries, we shall see when they come.

Wednesday the 21st cold and cloudy, this Morning the Chajennes went off and Goshe remained, at noon 2 of our hunters came in with Meat of 2 Cows.

Thursday the 22d clear and cold, the 2 hunters went out again, commenced the Stockade of the fort.

Friday the 23 clear and cold had 3 Kittens this Day.

Saturday the 24 clear and cold after Dinner our Heroes arrived from the Bigbellies, they brought a Pipe and 3 Bladder for the Rees, their Mission had been successful and all Differences existing between them and the whites settled at the same time our hunters arrived with Meat of 2 Cows. They had Killed 7 and caught 20 Beaver 1 Otter 2 Muskrats and Killed 2 Wolves.

Sunday the 25, clear and cold nothing to remark.

Monday the 26, the same. Mr. Manuel L. went accompanied by the 2 Interpreters, Papin and 3 Men to the Ree Village with the Pipe of the Bigbellies.

Tuesday the 27 clear and cold hunters went with 7 Horses but returned in the Evening, having seen some Lurking Savages. Mr. M. L. returned from the Village successful.

Wednesday the 28th clear and moderate warm, our hunter took an early start across the River with 6 Horses. At Evening 4 Rees and 1 Mandan came to the fort from the Mandans, they informed the brother of Legrand 131 had died of his wounds, received in the Battle with the Bigbellies.

Thursday the 29th clear and warm, finished writing and at 11 A.M. Lajoie 132 and Gogal 133 two Engagees set sail in a Canoe for St. Louis, with a few Peltries, ect., ect... cloudy Evening at 11 P.M. Goshe and Legross with 4 Warriors came to fort with a Pipe for the Bigbellies.

Friday the 30th Charbonneau and the 4 Warriors marched off to the Bigbellies, our hunters returned with Meat of 2 Cows, they had met plenty but very wild and could not Kill.

Saturday the 31st Snow this Morning, cleared up at noon and had fine weather, nothing to remark.

Sunday, November 1, frost last Night, cold and clear several Rees came to the fort, Woahl 134 and

Chaine 135 returned from trapping, they brought 53 Beaver 1 Otter 5 Muskrats 2 Wolves 2 Mink 20 Foxes 7 Elk Skins.

Monday the 2d, cloudy and hard Gales from West a hunting party was prepared to go up the River in the Boat, but blowing too hard were prevented.

Tuesday the 3d clear and cold the Boat started with 12 Men at 8 A.M. in the afternoon a Partizan / Camerad 136 of Mr. M. L. of the Sioux / Saunies / arrived with 19 Men, they wanted absolutely Mr. Manuel Lisa to go with them to their hunting ground and trade very hard Gales and cloudy Evening late in the Evening Gray head a Mandan Chief came to the fort with his family

Wednesday the 4th cloudy and Snow Squalls Mr. M. L. wished to follow the Boat by Land was prevented by the Sioux, they were not willing to go home in the Evening several Rees and 3 Mandans arrived

Thursday the 5th Snow storms all last night until 8 this Morning when it cleared up, cold weather

Friday the 6th clear and cold, much Ice in the River the Sioux went off this Morning across the River fearing to go on this Side of the Rees, Gray head, Rees and Mandan started also, and Garrow the Interpreter left the fort with his Wife, on Account of a quarrel between his Wife and Baptiste Provost 137.

Saturday the 7th Baptiste Provost was turned out the fort Immel went to hunt with 3 Men and 6 Horses, at 11 A.M. Langue de Buche a Ree Chief and his party arrived engaged Pierre Chaine to hunt for the fort in the place of Baptiste Provost, the River full of Ice, clear and cold.

Sunday the 8th Langue de Bache 138 and party went off to make his Camp for winter about 6 miles above the fort 139, at 2 P.M. Immel returned with Meat of 4 Buffaloe several Rees at the fort, clear and cold.

Monday the 9th, cloudy and moderate, snow fell in the afternoon nothing remarkable.

Tuesday the 10th, snowed all night, cleared up about 8 o'clock in the Morning, moderate, Immel went out again to hunt with the same Men, Buffalos in Sight some Rees arrived

Wednesday the 11 clear and moderate, nothing remarkable.

Thursday the 12, cloudy 3 Rees which had camped with us last night went away displeased getting not enough to eat and set the Prairie around us a fire, Immel returned with 5 Cows.

Friday the 13th Papin and 1 Man went to the Village, to try to get the Rees to make a great Hunt for us. Mr. Manuel promised 20 Loads Powder and Ball for each Cow the Buffaloe being very hard and plenty. Charbonneau returned in the afternoon from the Bigbellies and four of their head Men with him, the Chief Cheveux Loup and 3 others, some Rees and a Chajenne Chief Papilliar arrived in the Evening with the news the Chajenne were close by and came to trade, traded 2 Beaver.

Saturday the 14th, cloudy and cold, Papin returned with -- tidings that the Rees were preparing to make war on us. Baptiste Provost and Garrow had told them many Lies and roused the Chiefs and Nation against us, which proved to be fact, we found this that 6 of our Horses stolen, 2 Rees arrived to sound us if we were inclined for War, the Chajenne Chief went to the Village.

Sunday the 15th This Morning, Immel Papin and Charbonneau left this for the Village, with the Bigbellies and 3 Rees, to see into the Misconduct of those fellows and try to settle amicably, the Rees which remained at fort, seemed tranquil and content, we stopt all Work cleared the fort, and prepared for Defense in Case of Necessity, sent Pierre Chaine & Pointsabl 140 to the Camp Langue de Buche, to hear some news of the stolen horses.

Monday the 16, last Night Pierre Chaine returned and informed that the horses had been stolen by the Rees, by the Order of Garrow and were at the hunting Camp of Grey Eye, Langue de Buche arrived this Morning with 8 Men going to the Village he promised to deliver the horses in three Days, and requested Mr. M.L. to be tranquil, Matters would be settled, -- traded some Meat and 1 white Bear Skin of them -- at 4 P.M. our Deputies returned with the Bigbellies accompanied by Goshe and Plume d'aigle, Garrow and many other Rees, to arrange the Difficulties which had arisen, all was thrown on the Shoulders of Baptiste Provost.

Tuesday the 17th fine weather, clear and warm, held Council and finished with Peace, two of our horses were brought in this Morning, finished the Enclosure of the fort.

Wednesday the 18, fine weather, and tranquility restored the Bigbellies requested a trader and being promised one, left this for their Village, as also the Rees very well satisfied, another horse was brought in, Pierre Chaine and 2 Men went over the River hunting buffaloe and Elk in Sight.

Thursday the 19th clear and warm little Ice in the River at four o'clock in the after noon hung the great Door of the Entrance of the fort, which ceremony was saluted by 7 Guns and 3 rounds of Musketry, made the Tour -- around the Fort and Baptized the same FORT MANUEL. 141. In the Evening a good Supper and a cheerful glass of Whiskey was given to the Men, and a Dance at which all the Ladies then in the fort attended, concluded the Day, Garrow brought his family to fort again and traded of the Rees a horse which had been stolen of the Company last year by the Sioux.---

Friday the 20th, clear and cold, had a Deer Killed, nothing remarkable happened.

Saturday the 21, cloudy Morning, cleared up at noon Immel & Papin went to the hunting Camp of Gray Eye, to get if possible the Remainder of the stolen Horses. Legross came to the Fort with Baptist Provost to explain his Conduct and be taken in favor again. Provost was not permitted to enter, they blamed Garrow for all the Mischief which had been done, but went off without Success, Immel returned with only our Running Mare the other 2 horses they the Indians had sent to the Village loaded with Meat, the horses returned were all ruined and their Backs very soar, the Chajenne Chief returned from the Village.

Sunday the 22d Morning clear and moderate, the Chajenne Chief went to his Village, in the Evening out hunters came to fort, they had Killed only 1 Cow and 1 Deer and found very few Buffaloe, evening cold.

Monday the 23d Snow in the Morning, having been informed, the Saunie, Sioux had arrived with about 150 Lodges at the Rees, Charbonneau and Garrow set off for the Ree Village, to Know if they the Sioux had any thing to trade. Mr M. L., Immel and Chain went to a band of Chajennes which were camped about 5 Miles above 142 the fort, with the same intention but returned shortly afterwards, having met with one Chief and 2 Partizans coming to pay us a Visit, and in form themselves how we traded, cleared up at noon pretty cold, wind North, plenty Ice in the River, this Day crossed our horses to the other Side.

Tuesday the 24th clear and very cold, Garrow & Charbonneau returned from the Sioux, with News that they had nothing to trade but Meat; the Chajennes went to their Camp, and promised to come to trade with what they had, five Rees arrived at fort.

Wednesday the 25th hard frost last night, and cloudy. hauled the Boats out of the Ice, this Evening a Number of Rees came to the fort to camp.

Thursday the 26th, moderate and cloudy, the Rees went off, and our hunters started with 8 horses,

at noon the Chajennes arrived with 26 Lodges and made their camp at the Point above us, 5 of their Chiefs came to the fort. they have a vast quantity of horses and Dogs. Rain.

Friday the 27th Snow in the Morning and cold, plenty Chajenne in the fort, they invited Mr. Manuel to a feast, to which he and Immel went, Grey Eye brought the last stolen horses, traded some Beaver.

Saturday the 28th last Night the River closed, moderate and clear, plenty Visitors, but no trading.

--

Sunday the 29th cloudy and cold, traded some Beaver, Robes etc. ect..

Monday the 30th, cloudy and cold, traded again one of our hunters came in with the Meat of 2 Cows were informed by the Rees that Mercier, Lachapel and Carriere were Killed by the Sioux, these 3 Men were trapping about the Big Bend.

Thursday the 1st of December, cloudy and very cold. traded little, the Chajennes informed us that 2 very large Bands of their Nation where camped above them, which would also come to trade.

Wednesday the 2d several Mandans arrived and demanded a trader, Pierre Chaine brought in 1 Cow.

Thursday the 3d, cloudy and very cold, Immel and 3 Men went out hunting.

Friday the 4th, cloudy and cold, Pierre Chaine and 1 Man went out spying for Buffaloe, the Chajenne Chief (Medicine Man) brought us 1 Cow, round, the 5 Chiefs received a small present and were well satisfied with our treatment, I wished to Know their Name, but would only learn, besides the one named above one more, which was named the Poor Little Wolf. --

Saturday the 5th Pierre Chaine sent in this Morning for horses, he had Killed 4 Cows, fine clear and cold weather the Meat of Chaine and Immel with Meat of 2 Cows arrived in the Evening.

Sunday the 6th, clear and cold. Mr. Manuel L. went on a Hunting Party with the Chajennes, there being 1000 of Buffaloe opposite, returned at noon and had Killed 12 Woahl also brought in one Cow, Baptiste Provost came to the fort again, Mr. Manuel having pardoned him by information received, that it was not all together his fault, Goshe and many Rees arrived.

Monday the 7th cold and cloudy, nothing remarkable.

Tuesday the 8. the same as yesterday.

Wednesday the 9th clear and fine moderate weather Baptiste and 5 Men went out hunting, Goshe to his Village.

Thursday the 10th clear as yesterday, nothing remarkable.

Friday the 11th the same, the Chajennes left us to camp and hunt at the fourth Point above us, we had traded with them 75 Beaver, 2 Muskrats, 4 dressed Buff. Skins, 7 white Bear, 10 Robes, 5 Otter, 3 Foxes, 1 wildCat 450 pair of Moccassins a quantity of tongues and some Meat.

Saturday the 12, cloudy, opposite the fort the Prairie is covered with Buffaloe, Baptiste and Men arrived this Morning had Killed 4 Cows and 2 Bulls, in the afternoon, Baptiste, Antoine alias Machecou 144, arrived express from Mr. Lewis and brought the displeasing news, that the hunters which were equipped by the Company and which had been on the Spanish Waters trapping, had been robbed by the Crows, one of them Danis 145 was Killed by some Indian supposed Grosventres, the Day Messrs. Lewis & Lorinier arrived at the little Horn River, Machecou departed from the Little Horn River in Company with Duroche 146, but unfortunately separated 2 days in a Snow Storm, Duroche has the Letters of Messrs Lewis and Lorimier.

Sunday the 13th cloudy, some Rees of whom we have always plenty in the fort / went over the

River hunting in the afternoon.

Cadet Chevalier 147 arrived express from Me. Charles Sanguinette with a letter dated the 3d instant in the Prairie on his Return from the Arepaos 148, in which he confirmed the sad News of the hunters, he found none and was informed by the Areapos, that 3 of them were Killed by the Blackfeet, supposed Champlain 149 and 2 others, Lafargue 150 and 5 others had run off to the -- Spaniards, 8 of them had gone to the Crows which now are with Mr. Lewis, and 3 or 4 others they knew nothing at all, they the hunters had much Beaver some cached and the Remainder plundered with all other things. Mr. Sanguinette requested 2 Men to meet him to transport a parcel of horses, which he had traded with the Arepaos, the Rees brought in 2 Cows they had Killed 3 had to leave the Meat having no horses, more Rees arrived from the Village.

Monday the 14th Baptieste and some Men went out to hunt, plenty Buffaloe about, prepared an Equipment for Immel, who was to go to the Mandan for to trade at 2 P.M. Machecou, Cadet and Colla Glineau 151 went to Meet Mr. Sanguinette

Tuesday the 15th fine clear weather, Buffaloe constant in the Prairie, Immel and 3 Men went with 2 Sleighs on the River to the Mandans, had Informed that about 80 Lodges of Sioux had arrived with the Rees and still more expected. Garrow went to the Village to invite them again to a general hunting Party all Rees started only One Man remaining, no News of Duroche.

Wednesday the 16th at 1 in the Morning Garrow returned with the News that the Rees were willing to come if their critical situation with the Sioux would allow it they had quarreled together and expected to fight a Battle to Day, the Sioux wanted to force and go past the Rees, and Camp higher and nearer to us, which the Rees opposed on Account of the Buffaloe, the Rees came and told us a dreadful History which they had been informed by the Sioux, as they say, that the Sioux had Killed Bijou, and plundered the trading house and were singing the Chevalier 152 the French, and that they would come to our fort and do the same, if we would not come to their own terms trading, and in Regard to their Histories Mr. Manuel resolved immediately to write a Letter to Bijou and sent it express by a Sioux promising a horse if an answer should be brought to the Letter, at 11 A.M. Papin went off with the Letter. Bapteste sent in Meat of 8 Cows, and the Men returned to the hunting Camp, at Sunset Duroche made his Appearance with the Letters of Lewis & Lorimier which gave some Satisfaction from their quarters they had by hunting 12 Pack of Beaver in Store, and purchased ten for their Use. At 11 o'clock P.M. Papin returned, the Sioux had taken the Letter and promised to deliver an Answer, which our hopes that that the News of Bijou's Death was not true.

Thursday the 17th fine moderate weather, in the Evening a party of Rees arrived and camped in the fort.

Friday the 18th fine moderate weather, and indeed considering the Season so far advanced is like Spring; we have but very little snow and of late moderate so that any Work out of doors may be done, at 1 o'clock P.M. we received 2 horse Loads of Meat say 2 Cows, at 6 P.M. Goshe, Legross and several Rees came to fort, to make a hunting party Mr. Manuel having promised a horse to each Chief 4 in Number, when our horses would arrive.

Saturday the 19th fine clear weather, and hard wind all Day, no hunting party of Chajenne arrived from the upper Band with one Chief going to the Rees.

Sunday the 20th, clear and moderate, our hunters say Rees went out and Killed 20 Cows head and foot was received them Evening, purchased a fine Dog of the Chajennes, this Evening the Wife of

Charbonneau a Snake 153 Squaw 154, died of a putrid fever she was a good and best Woman in the fort, aged about 25 years she left a fine infant girl.

Monday the 21st, clear and moderate, paid off our Indian hunters, and they left fort together with the Chajennes for their Village in the Evening, several Rees came from the Mandans, and told us that Immel coming also from the Mandans had been robbed and whipped by the Band of Chajennes at the River Bullet 155.

Tuesday the 22d fine weather, Garrow and Papin went off early in the Morning to meet Immel, at 10 o'clock A.M. Immel arrived and the History of the Indians -- proved to be a lie, it was true that he had a quarrel with the Chajennes, by refusing them their Demands which he could not comply with, but they did forbear being only a few to do harm, seeing him on his Guard at noon the Sleigh arrived as also 15 Mandans with them, in the afternoon the three Men which were sent by Mr. M. L. to meet Sanguineete returned without finding him, they found a track of a party of Indians and were afraid to march forward.

Wednesday the 23d fine weather, the Mandans set off for the Rees several Rees arrived in the afternoon, all tranquil and happy in situation.

Thursday the 24th clear and hard wind but moderate the Rees went off again gave 30lb flour and 30lb Tallow to the Boys for regaling themselves tomorrow, in the afternoon the Chajennes Chief returned from the Village he had heard of the Affair of his Village with Immel, he was very sorry fired his Gun backward on entering the house and promised to see every thing arranged to our Satisfaction, this Evening the Boys had a treat of Whisky and made merry fired 3 Guns at Sunset in honor of the approaching night.

Friday the 25th fine moderate weather, indeed it looked more like Easter, than Christmas, were roused by a Salute last Night some Indians were lurking about the fort, and some Men stood guard in the Bastion they saw some thing in the Dark, fired and had Killed an Indian Dog, taking him to be an Indian the Chejennes were afraight to go to their Village and requested a guard, Six Volunteer offered immediately and escorted them untill out of Danger.

Saturday the 26th, at four o'clock in the Morning Messrs. M. Lisa, Immel and four Men went to the Sioux, to sound their Sentiments, in the afternoon a party of Mandans arrived at fort with several Rees, and at Sundown our party from the Sioux, they rejected our friendship and will trade as they please, or plunder, fine weather.

Sunday the 27th the weather continuing fine, the Mandans went to their Village, Mr. M. L. sent Jolla Glineau along with them, to carry some more Articles to our trader.

Monday the 28th fine weather, made up Equipment for Charbonneau and Woahl to go and trade with the Bigbellies, Baptiste went hunting Killed a Calf.

Tuesday the 29th Charbonneau and Woahl set off for their Station 2 Men and 4 horses, in the afternoon we had the pleasure to receive and Answer to the Letter sent to Bijou, to the greatest Satisfaction of Mr. M. L., Bijou having traded very well more than expected, Antoine Citoleux 156 had started with the Indian from below but would not Keep up walking with him the three which were reported to be Killed were with him, and proved another made History of the Rees.

Wednesday the 30, fine weather the Sioux went off with their pay a horse and 2 Carrots Tobacco.

Thursday the 31st Rain this Morning, nothing remarkable at Sunset saluted the exile year, the Boys and Whisky and a Dance, all Cares and troubles were forgotten and drowned in oblivion and so concluded again a year with, I may say, a cheerful night.

---1813---

January the 1st, The new year was ushered in by firing a Salute and paying the Complement of the Season, every One seemed rejoiced of having lived to see another year, fine moderate weather in the Evening several Rees arrived, they brought a Present for Mr. Manuel, but he would not accept it, I took it and paid pretty high.

Saturday the 2d fine weather and fresh, nothing to remark,

Sunday the 3d fine weather as yesterday, at noon Goshe and a party of Rees arrived, carrying a Pipe to the Chajennes, and came to Council with Mr. M. L. on that Subject.

Monday the 4th fine weather, Goshe went off Cadet Chevalier paid the Dept of Nature at noon he died of a putrid fever.

Tuesday the 5th fine weather and moderate, in the afternoon Antoine Citoleux arrived, in the Evening a Band of Rees headed by Plume D'aigle arrived, carrying a Pipe to Mandans.

Wednesday the 6th the same weather as yesterday the Rees left us and Directly after I found they had stolen our only he Cat TOM, Baptiste went hunting at noon Sanguinette, Latour 157 and Large 158 arrived they had left their horses 31 in Number at the little Chajenne fork 159, prepared for an Expedition to the little Horn. wrote Letters to Lewis & Lorimier, in the afternoon Baptiste brought in the Meat of 3 Cows, cloudy evening.

Thursday the 7th at 4 o'clock in the Morning, Duroche, Machesou and Fouche 160 left the fort with 3 horses loaded with Tobacco and Powder for to go to the little Horn to Mr. Lewis, cloudy and windy many Rees passed by, at 3 P.M. we saw to our Surprise the Men which had started this Morning for the little Horn, returning, they reported, they had seed something like Men and got scared, they would not go on, returned the Goods, but Kept their Equipments for the Voyage which made their tale doubtful, and it seemed they had had no Idea to go, and cheat the Company out of their Goods. Goshe returned from the Chajennes stayed at night.

Friday the 8, Immel went early this Morning with 6 Men after the horses which Sanguinette had left, the Indians Killed 6 Cows for us, and our hunter 2 Bulls and 1 Deer, the Meat of the Bulls is not good and it is only to have the Hides for covering, cloudy and cold.

Saturday the 9th hard wind from N.W. rain and Squally all Day, Cleared up in the Evening and cold.

Sunday the 10th fine cold weather, nothing to remark.

Monday the 11th fine and moderate, " " "

Tuesday the 12th, the same " " " "

Wednesday the 13 the same, the Indians Killed 3 Cows towards evening had a Bull chase on the Ice, the poor Animal when found he was pursued, fell several times, and at last tired could not get up, -- surrounded by many he awaited his fate patiently cold and cloudy.

Thursday the 14th cloudy and moderate, Indian Killed 1 Cow a party Mandans camped at fort.

Friday the 15th the Present I received the 1st instant I had to throw away to the Damage of 114 Dollars on my Side a Lesson I shall not soon forget, in Evening a party of Chajennes came to fort, carrying a Pipe to the Rees and Sioux, some snow fell, but moderate.

Saturday the 16, fine moderate weather, snow melted away, I took a Walk across the River where two of our Men are cutting firewood, I never saw a finer Spot for Cultivation, a fine timbered bottom and a beautiful Prairie late in the Evening two Rees stopped and told us that the Sioux had commenced war on them and had Killed a Young Man in their own Village.

Sunday 17th fine weather, plenty Indians passing by.

Monday the 18th fine moderate weather, in the afternoon the Chajennes returned, the Rees were preparing to war and summoned all Men which were absent from the Village, at Evening a large party of Women and Children took refuge in the fort, to sleep in Security they were lodged just above us in 5 Lodges, and the Men all absent.

Tuesday the 19th hard wind and cold, at 8 A.M. Immel & party Arrived with the Indians in the afternoon a party of Sioux with the Chief Crooked Hand Arrived with the American Standard flying before them they said they were going to the Chajennes to smoke which was a falsehood, when we first saw the Rees run to and fro, crying the Sioux come to Kill, and made a terrible noise, We traded 32 Robes, 20 Beaver, 5 Otter, they went off at their favorite time, at 9 o'clock at night, plenty Rees at the fort.

Wednesday the 20th hard wind & cloudy all the Rees went to their Village except 2 hunters and their families.

Thursday the 21st the wind and weather as yesterday Latour, Machecou, Duroche and Joseph Laderoute 161 were ordered out of the fort, they had made a ?compliant? against the adopted Principles of the Company Mr. Manuel tried every way to get them in Employment but they would neither engage nor hunt nor pay their Debts, Latour had brought 4 horses from the Arepaos Mr. Manuel wanted to buy them against his Debt, NO, he offered 300 Dollars wages per year to hunt for the forts or be otherwise employed, they refused, they only wanted to get the necessaries, and Equipments to squander away, and set by the fireside at ease eat our Provisions, take out of store when pleased and let the Company go Destruction, their Character is through-out vicious and Dangerous, the Company looses considerable by them, say about 4000 Dollars, Laderoute wanted to take a girl which Immel had given him, and Immel would not permit her to go in the Situation she was in, high pregnant, but Laderoute wanted to take her by force like a Brute without nourishment and cold Season, the dispute ended by both remaining, one of the Indian hunters got displeased, on Account we would give him no meat for his family, he sold us each Cow for 3 dollars and then wanted to eat the Meat, avaricious design, last night we saw plenty fires opposite side which included us to believe that the Sioux and fought with the Chajennes made up an Equipment for Mahas poncas ect.. ect..

Friday the 22d last Night Laderoute's Girl had a little Girl, cold and cloudy.

Saturday the 23d, cold and cloudy, our hunters went out returned with the Meat of 3 Cows, the news from this day was that a Sioux Chief was Killed by the Rees, and a Ree Woman by the Sioux.

Sunday the 24th snow and cold, this Day sent the 4 horses promised to Ree Chief for make a hunt.

Monday the 25th clear and cold, nothing to remark.

Tuesday the 26 cloudy and cold, this Evening the Men who guarded the horses found two missing supposed to be stolen by Langus de Buche.

Wednesday the 27th clear and cold Sanguinette and a party went hunting, Immel, Papin and another party went to Langue de Bache, which as suspected, had been the Case as were informed that his party had stolen the horses, they returned in afternoon in several parties, one party found and Indian who had stolen a horse this Day close to the fort of Colla Citoleux, and Immel seeing another Savage stealing the Way of him suspected some thing wrong, made up to him, and found the running Mare of Mr. M. L. thus were tow more horses rescued their report was that they had found no horses nor Langue de Buche he himself was gone to the Chajennes probably to trade

then away for Meat.

Thursday the 28th Mr Manuel L. and 12 Men went to the Camp of Langue de Buche, to demand the horses, on their arrival they took possession of the Indian fort and made some sham prisoners, they did not find the horses and were told they the horses were out hunting, the Indians began to make overtures and begged, promised to return the horses to fort. Mr. Manuel pitied them and left one Man to receive the horses, who returned in the Evening Mr. M & party arriving at noon with only one horse which belonged to Jessaume, the other not given up, this Day fine clear and cold weather.

Friday the 29th, cloudy in the Morning, cold and Snow Squalls, last night Laderoute and his girl deserted through one of the port holes in the Bastion Garrow went to the Village to see how the Rees were situated, he returned late at night and told the Goshe and his Band wished to come and live at the point above us if we would sent horses to carry their Luggage, Indians and hunters went out to Day but Killed nothing.

Saturday the 30th clear but very cold, the hunters went out again but returned the weather being too severe.

Sunday the 31st, moderate and clear, Immel, Sanguinette and four Men with 20 horses started for the Village, to bring the Rees this Day our hunters Killed 4 Cows.

Monday the 1st of Febry, clear and fine moderate weather, in the afternoon Immel and party with Goshe and 4 Lodges of his Band arrived, but instead of camping at point took their Lodgings in the fort, hunters were out again to Day and Killed 3 Cows and 2 deer. ---

Tuesday the 2d, fine weather, nothing remarkable.

Wednesday the 3d the same, the Rees went out hunting and in the absence of the Men the Women began to quarrel among themselves, and left the fort sack and pack, there being 5 Lodges of wood at the point they went there, but returned about 10 o'clock in the night, being afraid of the Sioux, three Indians came to fort with 4 Cows, the remaining camped out.

Thursday the 4th fine weather and warm, the 2 stolen horses were brought in, Goshe and his hunting party returned they had Killed 7 Cows. At 4 P.M. 12 Soldiers of the Band of Goshe arrived, thawed very much and plenty on the Ice.

Friday the 5th, clear and moderate, the Men which came yesterday belonging to Goeshe's Band went off again to the Village to bring their families, at noon became cloudy and heavy Squalls towards evening a young man of the Bigbellies of which we had two families in the fort went out hunting on foot for some deer or Elk, and about 8 o'clock P.M. we heard the Cry TO ARMS and two guns fired at the same time which proved to be out of the fort, opening the Door of the fort we found the above Young Man breathing his last, we found him shot in the Belly and Breast his hunt laid a little ways off, he had Killed and Elk and brought only the Calf, a favorite Dish with the Indians we expected a Return and Kept Guards, the Sioux were perpetrators of this Act, he died 1 hour after, blew a hard gale all night.

Saturday the 6th the wind continuing blowing very hard found 2 Arrows in the fort which had been thrown through the Crevices of the Pickets, the arrows found were of the Sioux Nation, and had been leveled perhaps at some of us, a singular Circumstance happened the Day before with the same young fellow who was killed, he quarrelled with a women the wife of a Mandan in the fort, and was going to Kill her, when her husband who was absent at the time of the quarrel, arrived and being informed what had passed, went to him if you want to fight, do it with the men

and not women come out and measure your Bow with mine but proved coward, next day he met his fate at 2 P.M. our hunters brought in 5 Cows 2 Calfs, a fine afternoon, late at Evening Le Gross arrived at the fort from the Chajennes, he reported they made plenty Robes, and would come to trade in the Spring.

Sunday the 7th disagreeable and snowing, Immel, Sanguinette, Gilneau and Lange went with 8 horses to the Mandans to fetch the Peltries traded with that Nation, Le Gross with all Bravos which were in the fort amounting to 26 to the Village, I made a Census of the Indians remaining in the fort and found 65 souls left most Women and Children -- -- in the afternoon 2 more Lodges, fine afternoon.

Monday the 8 fine clear weather nothing remarkable.

Tuesday the 9th the same.

Wednesday the 10 the same but hard wind Killed 1 Elk.

Thursday the 11th cloudy and hard winds, cleared up in the afternoon, at 9 o'clock in the Evening we heard several guns firing, and directly afterwards 3 Rees young men arrived, who had run away from a fray which they and with the Sioux, they reported that 4 of them were Killed, all Indians in the fort in uproar we watched all night, but nothing occurred.

Friday the 12, clear and cold, the refugees reported last evening that the Son of Goshe, with 2 young Men and 1 Woman was Killed, Goshe started, Mr Manuel L. gave him a Blanket and Vermillion and 30 Loads of Powder & Ball to cover the Corps as customary with the Indians, at 10 A.M. the party returned they had found but 2 Corps of Men and 1 Woman, a Child which the Woman had was taken prisoner and the son of Goshe had found blind as he is the way in the woods to hid himself, they found him laying among the Brushes, when he heard himself discovered, cried out who is there and finding his friends was rejoiced Goshe gave him the Blanket ect.. ect.. and sent him off in the afternoon 10 Chajenne Chiefs Arrived and about 150 Rees to go to the Chajennes for Meat.

Saturday the 13th the Chajenne Chief went away seemingly satisfied and the Rees with them Mr. Manuel Lisa gave 5 Carrots 4 Twist Tobacco 3 lbs Powder and 6 lbs Ball as a present, at 2 P.M. Immel and his party returned from the Mandans with Peltries at 4 P.M. about 15 or 60 Rees arrived from the Village with Plume D'aigle to bury as they said their slain brethren -- fine weather and moderate.

Sunday the 14th, cloudy and snow squalls, the Reed went off.

Monday the 15, cloudy and cold, the Rees returned from the Chajennes.

Tuesday the 16th clear and cold, all the Rees which had hitherto stayed in the fort went off to their Village being advised by the Chajennes to Leave the fort, only 5 Women and 2 Girls remaining, cloudy evening.

Wednesday, the 17 cloudy and hard winds nothing to remark.

Thursday the 18, clear and very cold, Killed 2 Deer.

Friday the 19 same as yesterday, nothing to remark.

Saturday the 20 cloudy and cold, in afternoon Snow Squalls our Sow brought 17 Dead Pigs, a great loss.

Sunday the 21 clear and cold, this day is the coldest we have had this Winter, at 12 o'clock this Day Charbonneau and 1 Engagee arrived from the Bigbellies, himself and Woahl had traded out of 492 Plus only 168, the Chief named Borne was thrown off by the Nation only 5 Lodges remained

with him, and had a separate Village, he persuaded Charbonneau to come with some Powder & ect... ect... to his Village to trade, he went and took 25 lbs of powder and 50 lbs of Ball of which he was robbed off when Charbonneau was informed by the Chief Chrveux De Loup who first Chief among them that 4 or 5 Days after his Arrival from hence in December last, 2 from the N.W. Company had been with them, they came under pretext to trade dressed Buffaloe Skins, and made some Presents to the Chiefs, and began to harangue against the American traders, told them we would give them nothing, but a little powder, and that they the N.W. Company would furnish them with every thing without Pay of they would go to war, and rob and Kill the Americans, this had the desired effect on Borne, and he made several Speeches to that purpose, but being disgraced and not liked he retired without Success, though himself fulfilled his promise to rob, but was afraid to Kill, thus are those Bloodhounds the British constantly employed and do every thing in their Power to annoy and destroy the Americans and their trade, they have nothing to fear on Account and in Respect of our Government, all though in our territories, and in fact our Government does not care to meddle with them, nor how many Citizens are sacrificed by the British influence with the Indians, if there was a fort at the River St. Peters 162 as was promised by Liet. Pike 163 and another in these Parts of the Missouri, it would do infinitely good to hunters and traders, and bring great wealth to the States, but this is out of question, they have a strong Garrison at Bellefontaine, and that is enough, the soldiers parade, eat and drink and spent their time in Idleness, is there any necessity to keep so many idle fellows in a settled Country, they do not even prevent and cannot protect out Settlers about 80 or 90 Miles above, and we have seen outrages committed by the Indians, horrid to relate, there was after the Sheep were destroyed by the Wolves, a small Garrison erected on Salt River 164, Mississippi which will do more good than all Bellefontaine, and if one was to be erected about 500 Leagues up the Missouri it would be very good to Keep the Indians in their Bounds, Provisions are plenty and the other necessaries could be sent by the traders, but it has been frequently the Case, and has been said our Citizens have no Business to go among the Indians to trade but the profits thereof are not considered, and this Branch of Business will never succeed if not protected by Government, to seat of the British Traders.

When Charbonneau passed the Chajennes which are above us about 4 Leagues 165, they warned him to be cautious and take care of his Life that they had discovered 27 Men lurking about, supposing to be the Saunies Sioux, he arrived however without accident.

Monday the 22d fine weather and cold some Buffaloes in Sight, 7 Men went across the River to hunt, and returned about noon, having Killed but 1 Cow, 2 Bulls the weather being to cold, to pursue the Buffaloe, at 1 o'clock 45 Min. P.M. we were alarmed by the Cry TO ARMS, Archambeau 166 is Killed, and by sorting found us surrounded by Indians on all sides, out the reach of our Guns, Archambeau was hauling hay with a Sleigh from the other Side, and just on coming on the River he was shot and Killed Immediately he was a very good Man and had been 6 years on the Missouri, we put ourselves immediately in Defense, and placed two swivels on the Bank of the River, but unfortunately of Balls did not reach across, and those on this Side Kept out of Reach of our fire, and dare not come to an open Attack, their Numbers was between 4 and 500, they took the Scalp and cut him nearly to pieces, they marched off about 4 o'clock, leaving us to lament the Death of a fellow citizen unrevenged, a party of our Men went across to Bring the Croups which they found terrible mangled, they brought 29 Arrows which were sticking in his body and a good

many more broken to pieces, his Head broken the Brains scattered about his nose and ears cut off his teeth Knocked out, and more terrible Deeds which I will not express with my Pen. We mustered in the Evening and found ourselves 26 Men strong, selected Guards for the night, divided in 5 Watches, 4 Men in each and 3 in each Bastion, gave the Boys a Draw and every one was in Readiness for defense to the last moment our situation in general is not very lasting at this time menaced by the Sioux, below, and we dare not trust too much the Chajennes above, they have made a vast quantity of Robes and wish to augment the trade we are told and they showed a Horn which they made which holds 40 Loads of Powder, instead of giving 20 Loads for a Plus 167, I hope we will have no Row with them as to the Rees we fear nothing, they are a sett of lying and good for nothing fellows.

Tuesday the 23d passed a quiet night, and our Guards saw nothing, after Breakfast Immel and four Men went out reconnoitering on swift horses, returned at noon and reported they had found the tracks of the war party and judged by the Size of the Road they had made to have about 400, the Road went right across the Hills and the party which was stationed above the fort say about 60 had met them at right angles, about 2 Miles west of the fort, we interred the Remains of our poor fellow Citizen Archambeau, and guarded in the afternoon saw some Buffaloe chased on the other Side, supposed by the same Party, we also saw Dogs on the Ice which returned to the Woods at the point above us, and made us certain there was some hid in the Woods, as also by a track which we found, descending the Coast on our Side 1 Mile below the fort, set guard for the Night had a fine Day but cold and cloudy evening.

Wednesday the 24th passed a tranquil night, but saw some running fires, the Signal of Indians after Battle, 3 Men went to Langue de Buche's Camp to hear of their Situation a fine Day but cold, set all our Dogs our of fort for guard.

Thursday the 25th passed a quiet night, I guarded till 4 o'clock in the morning the 3 Men went out yesterday did not Return, Dogs out guarding, dark and cloudy evening.

Friday the 26th snowed last night and this Morning we are constant watching in our careful Situation, we hear and see nobody from all around us, and are like Prisoners in Deserts to expect every moment our fate.

At 3 o'clock P.M. our 3 Men returned with Machecou, the whites and Indians who camp above us had heard nothing of the fracas which had happened, the Chajennes had the next Day after the affair, 24 horses stolen by the Sioux, undoubtedly the same party who attacked us there Scheme was to plunder the fort, expecting that we would divide and a party would run across the River to rescue the Man which was Killed, and then come between us and plunder and Kill those in the fort. cleared up towards evening and cold.

Saturday the 27th passed another tranquil Night cloudy at Sunrise, cleared up at 8 A.M. cold weather.

Sunday the 28th, Snowed last night and this Morning the most which has fell this Winter about 4 Inches deep, cleared up in the afternoon with cold weather. nothing remarkable these 2 Days past.

Monday the 1st of March, 1813 clear and cold, after dinner Charbonneau and Leclair 168 set off for their Stations at the Bigbellies took some Powder and Ball to complete his Equipment, they were escorted by 5 of our Men, untill he would be out of Danger, at Sunset it began to Snow.

Tuesday the 2d a vast deal of snow had fell last night, but was clear and cold in the Morning, cloudy afternoon, at 2 P.M. 7 Men and 2 Women of the Rees arrived at the fort, the first which

made their appearance since Goshe left us, 4 Men 1 Woman went to Langue de Buche the others remained.

Wednesday the 3d, clear and cold, the Indians which arrived yesterday said that the upper Village of the Rees would come this Day to trade, which however proved to be a lie, at noon 7 Rees arrived from above, as also our party which had escorted Charbonneau, with Latour, Machecou, Duroche, and Laderoute 2 Squaws and 3 Children, a party of Men went over the River to out firewood, had a fine warm Day and cloudy evening.

Thursday the 4th last night about 3 inches of snow had fell cloudy and cold Morning, in the afternoon 4 Mandans arrived from their Village on their way to the Rees, no news.

Friday the 5th Snowstorm last night and continued snowing all this Day the Mandans pursued their Route.

END

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition  
on the Upper Missouri  
1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

Clerk of the Missouri Fur Company  
1812

Friday the 8th of May, I started from St. Louis to Bellefontaine 1 to meet the Boats bound up the Missouri River, arriving there at 1. o'clock P.M., took in Meal and Corn, arranged the Loading, and started at 3. o'clock, went about 4 Miles with a head wind.

Saturday the 9th head wind and strong Currents made very little way, at noon met Mr. Immel 2 with Boat coming from his winter quarters of the Sioux, this Morning Mr. Manuel Lisa came on Board at the Charbonnier 3 made about 5 miles distance.

Sunday the 10th, came too opposite 4 St. Charles 5 at noon Mr. Manuel Lisa crossed for some Men, rested all Day.

Monday the 11th Mr. Manuel Lisa & Choteau 6 came on Board at 9. o'clock A.M. took in some traps, and made the best of our way at 12. o'clock, having a head wind made very little distance.

Tuesday the 12th, head wind and strong Current, made not much Distance.

Wednesday the 13th, the same as yesterday.

Thursday the 14th, the same .. ..

Friday the 15th in the Morning about 8 o'clock - Mr. Majet 7, Patroon 8 of the large Boat fell over Board on account of a Log slamming against the Rudder, he saved himself by taking hold of the Rudder, and got on Board, both Rudder Irons broke and Lost, were detained to make a steering Oar, head wind all Day, sent some Irons on shore by Mr. Richardson 9, and camped at Burgois Creek 10.

Saturday the 16th, detained on Account of the Iron, which however came about 11 o'clock A.M., hard Rain and bad weather, fixed the Rudder and went about 2 Miles distance, Killed 1 Deer.

Sunday the 17th blowing very hard ahead and strong Current we had to stop for several hours, made sail, about 2 P.M., just at starting a Bear crossed the River towards us, Killed him close in shore, and found him very fat.

Monday 18th, still head wind the Rudder Irons of the little Boat broke, and had to lay by all Day. this Day Killed four Deer 2 Turkeys.

Tuesday 19th bad weather and head wind made about one mile all Day distance.

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Wednesday 20, head wind and strong Current, made not much Distance.

Thursday, the 21. arrived at 11 o'clock A.M. at Cote sans Dessin 11, rested all Day. traded some Beaver, and took LaChapel 12 on Board.

Friday the 22d. started at 6 in the Morning with a favorable breeze, found the River more gentle, had fine weather. Killed two Deer and 1 Bear, made good head way.

Saturday, the 23d, fine weather & fair wind made about 25 miles distance. Killed 1 Deer.

Sunday, the 24th clear weather and fair wind made about 20 miles, and camped about 1 mile above the Widow Cole 13, Killed 1 Deer and 1 Bear.

Monday the 25th commenced with a thunder storm and hard Rain, cleared up about 11 A.M. with a fine fair wind, made about 27 Miles and Killed 1 Bear.

Tuesday the 26, hard Rain and squalls all Day made not much distance, killed 1 Bear 2 Turkeys.

Wednesday, the 27. bad weather and head wind again, killed two Deer, and not much distance.

Thursday, the 28, head wind and strong Current accompanied by heavy Squalls, LaChapel killed a fine female Bear, and 3 of her Cubs, and 1 Turkey, made only 5 miles this Day and camped at black snake Creek 14.

Friday the 29th departed at Day light, opposite the little Osage Island 15 we were obliged to stop on account of head wind and strong Current, arranged a new top Mast, went fishing with the Seine and caught 13 large fish 1 Turtle, the wind having somewhat abated we made way at 2 P.M. but still wind a heads, at the little Osage Prairie 16 we stopped for the little Boat which got around, met a shoal of Cat fish close in shore the Men who were Cordelling killed one with a stick which weighed after cleaning 40 lbs, went on a little way and found a small Run full of fish, the other Boat not having come up as yet we took our Seine and caught 161 Bass and other fish, which we salted, camped and killed 2 Deer.

Saturday, the 30th fine weather, but very hard water, swung 3 times at a point of a sandbar, the little Boat broke her Rudder Irons again, repaired at Dinner, Killed 2 Deer 1 Beaver 1 Pelican, made not much Distance.

Sunday the 31st fortune still ahead, strong currents and head winds were our Daily Companions, made no way. Killed 2 Deer and 1 Beaver.

Monday the 1st of June, hard wind a head with fine weather met 4 Batteaux going to St. Louis, a little above the Prairie du Feu 17 had to stop and make another top mast of Oak, the last one

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

made of Hichberry was crooked and good for nothing, Killed 3 Deer 1 Bear.

Tuesday, the 2nd, the wind and weather the same as yesterday. Killed this Day 2 Deer and 1 fox, camped at fire Prairie Creek 18.

Wednesday the 3d fine weather and head wind and Current as usual at 10 A.M. arrived below fort Osage 19, saluted with 17 Guns which was politely returned by the Commander Capt Climson 20, on arrival were invited to Capt Climson, who treated us very handsomly, discharged our freight for this place and arranged our Cargoes, had a present made of Ice, which regaled us exceedingly.

Thursday the 4th started after breakfast, about 9 A.M. met several Perogues coming from their Winter quarters, Mess fr Robideau 21, La Jeuness 22 & others, Louis Bijou 23 embarked with us, as also two hunters embarked at fort Osage Greenwood 24 & Laurison 25 Immel went back to the fort for his dog and on his Return in formed of the party going to Santa fe 26 he met this Day at the fort. strong Current, made 9 Miles Distance.

Friday the 5th wind and Current as usual. fine weather made about 12 miles distance Killed 1 Deer.

Saturday 6th the same wind & Current, Killed 3 Bear the 3 Deer 1 Turkey camped opposite Can-sas River 27 distance 15 Miles.

Sunday the 7th a fine morning, in the afternoon cloudy and distant Thunder, Killed 2 Deer, made 16 Miles distance, camped 4 Miles above little Platte River 28.

Monday 8th fine weather, at 8 A.M. a fair Breeze sprung up though feeble, we made 18 Miles distance, Killed 3 Deer 3 Bear, caught 17 fish, camped 2 Miles below the old Canzas Village 29.

Tuesday 9th headwind again, strong Current, made only 9 Miles distance this Day, Killed 6 Deer.

Wednesday 10th, fine weather, had a small Breeze in our favor, Killed nothing today, distance made, 19 Miles.

Thursday the 11th fine weather head wind but still, all hunters out, passed the upper old Canzas Village, Killed 7 Deer, distance 15 Miles.

Friday the 12th, fine weather, made good way cordelling the wind all Day against us, distance 21 Miles camped on a large Sandbar where we found a quantity of turtle Eggs, this Day lost one of our Swivels when swinging round and run against the other Boat, Killed 3 Deer, 2 Turkeys.

Saturday the 13 the fine weather and head wind, this Day had bad luck, crossing for some of our Hunters we came in hard water, and cordelling on a Prairie encountered many Rafts, after having passed we dined 2 Miles above the Prairie 30. Mr. Manuel L. put our 2 Hogs in the River to

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

wash but they swam off, we were obliged to turn about and followed them several Miles, after two Attempts we caught them, turning a rocky point we had hard work, the little Boat which was a head swung round and went off like lightning, the Cordells broke, and we were obliged to put the hands of both Boats to one to mount distance 12 Miles killed 5 Deer 1 Racoon,.

Sunday the 14th fine weather, but head wind, passed the Nabowa River 31 at noon, camped 8 Miles above made 16 Miles distance and had this Day 4 Deer Killed gathered about 100 turtle Eggs.

Monday 15th about one o'clock this Morning it began to blow furiously, were obliged to put out our fires, the wind blowing form all quarters, a clear Sky, finished our cooking in the Morning at 6 in the Morning went « miles but were stopt by hard head wind and Current crossed the River to find some Hickory for making an Axe handles and Ramrods, but were disappointed, crossed again and sopped till 5 P.M. started about 1 Mile took the Cordell the Boat swung and went down the River like the Wind in full speed, leaving all hands on shore, the few which were on Board landed the Boat opposite to our last nights Lodgings, our hands came on board made a new start, but night overtook us, got on a sandbar and were very near lost running against a Sawyer 32 had to cross again to the North Side, the other Boat came to close swept by the Current we unshipped our Rudder, run against a tree and broke her mast, this ended this dolefull Day camped at 11 o'clock at night distance 1 « Mile, left our hunters on the opposite side Killed 1 Deer, wind N.W. fresh Gales.

Tuesday the 16, hard wind from N.W., went about 1 Mile in the Morning when we had to stop, all hands went out to gather wood for Axe helms, Ramrods and a new Mast, and Game, the first was found but no meat, our hunters on the opposite Side had also been unsuccessful, and crossed the River on a Raft, facing wind and Current about 6 Miles swimming. Killed 1 Deer.

Wednesday 17th wind still a head, but abated, made this Day 16 Miles, Killed 3 Deer, when camped a fair breeze sprung up.

Thursday the 18th at 3 o'clock in the Morning a heavy Thunder storm, at starting we had a fair wind which however lasted not long, had to try oars. Poles & cordells all Day, pass the Nimohar River 33 at 11 A.M. dined at Wolf River 34, and camped on a Sand Bar, made 16 miles distance Killed 3 Deer.

Friday, the 19th During Night blew very hard until 6 in the morning, we stopped for some time having head wind and strong Current, the River high, made this Day about 15 Miles distance by hard work. Killed nothing, allthough 7 hunters out of Boats.

Saturday, 20th, hard Gales all night, in the Morning cloudy with some flaws of wind in our favor, about 8 A.M. the wind increased, and we sailed at intervals very fast, until 2 P.M. when Thunder storm attended with a hard rain arose. this Day at 10 A.M. passed Ichinipokins River 35 at the North Side, at 7 P.M. little Mahonir River 36 on the South Side, -- made about 20 Miles distance,

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Killed 2 Deer, Game scarce.

Sunday, the 21st fine weather with head wind and Currents, all hunters out, on the Island Beaux Soleil 37. Killed 2 Deer 3 Bear, 1 Turkey, 1 Rabbitt the hunters on the Prairies killed nothing, distance about 15 Miles, camped 1 Mile above the Island.

Monday, the 22d, cloudy had now and then some Sailing, the River still rising and strong Currents, at 4 P.M. a thunder storm arose which raged furiously, the hurricane swayed the trees every where luckily we got under some Willows and lay safe, were obliged to Camp, distance 10 Miles, Killed 1 Deer, 1 Turkey.

Tuesday the 23d started at Day light as usual, passed Le Cote grand Brule 38, opposite the head of, we had to stop to make a new top Mast for the other Boat. fine weather, Current very hard, River still rising, distance 14 Miles, Killed 3 Deer.

Wednesday, the 24th, St. John 39, started at 3 in the Morning with fair wind, but had not come 1/4 Mile when the Wind changed ahead, worked hard against the Current, very warm and clear, made only 9 Miles in 14 hours distance Killed 1 Deer 2 Turkey, 2 Racoons, found plenty fresh tracks of Elk.

Thursday, the 25th This Morning a fine breeze sprung up and we had sailing all Day, but by the Mismanagement of the Patron of the little Boat were detained several times we camped before Sunset to let the little Boat come up with us, about dark we heard a Gun, but she did not come to our Camp, the wind blew fresh all night made about 15 Miles distance.

Friday the 26th at 2 o'clock 25 Minutes in the Morning we turned about to look for the little Boat and found her safe 1 Mile below our Camp, we set sail, and went pretty well till Sunrise, when the Wind failed, very strong Current, and hard work to gain way, at 7 A.M. Baptiste Latouipe 40 of St. Louis, fell over Board and never seen again, the two Boats being close together, he could not rise, or was entangled by the Roots of a large tree, which he was going to strike with his Pole. -- made River Platte 41 at 11 A.M., dined and weather very hot, remained three hours, at 3 P.M. passed River Papillion 42 made 12 Miles distance, Killed 1 Deer.

Saturday, the 27th departed as usual and the Water not so strong as below, the River Platte, this Morning passed Mosquito River 43, distance 20 Miles, Killed 4 Deer 1 Goose.

Sunday the 28th, made pretty good way in the Morning but about 10 A.M. the Rudder stay broke of the little Boat we were obliged to cross the River to find a place to unload her, and make a steering Oar, which took up all Day. distance 6 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

Monday the 29th This Day had at Intervals some sailing the River crooked as a zick zack, passed River Boje 44 at 9 A.M. point Jacques 45 at 2 P.M. and council Bluff 46 at 4 P.M. distance 20 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Tuesday, the 30th fine weather and sailing we pushed on very well, and would have made considerable way if it had not been for the other Boat, were obliged to stop to make another steering Oar for her, during which time our hunters killed 3 Deer, distance 27 Miles.

Wednesday, the 1 of July. fine weather and fine sailing at 3 P.M. passed Soldier River 47, Missouri very crooked, no hunters out, distance 34 Miles, saw some Elk.

Thursday the 2d fine weather head wind but good water made good way, cordelling all Day, camped at the Mouth of the little Sioux River 48, distance 23 Miles, Killed 4 Deer 1 Duck.

Friday. the 3d of July. fine weather and light favorable Winds in the forenoon., at 1 P.M. passed Coup Loysel 49, distance 18 Miles.

Saturday the 4th of July., we had ourselves prepared to salute the Day, which gave Birth to the Independence of the United States, but a Salute from Heaven prevented us, a thunder storm arose at 2 in the Morning and the Bank of the River where we camped fell in upon us momentarily. Mr Manuel was nearly drowned in his Bed, and we had run off., rowing and poling all Day, about Sunset a favorable wind sprung up and carried us several Miles, were obliged to leave a large Buck and an Elk which our Hunters had Killed behind, camped at Black Birds Hill 50, distance 15 Miles.

Sunday the 5th fine weather at 8 A.M. came to a Channel which we entered, in hopes to go through, to cut off 6 -- Leagues of the River, but were disappointed, having ascended within 150 yards toward the head of it, the Water became so rapid as to endanger our Boat to sink, we returned with Difficulty, at a little Distance found another, which was also tried, but to our Sorrow found not Water enough at the head and returned took the old Route, and were stopped at 5 P.M. by a Thunderstorm, distance 15 Miles.

Monday the 6th rained very hard last night, cleared up and we made best of our way at 4 o'clock in the Morning had a few Squalls and rain, at 8 A.M. a fair wind arose and had fine sailing for several hours, the River very crooked had to row at times, at 2;30 P.M. passed Mohaw River 52, and opposite the Village at 4 P.M. 2 Men went to see if any Indians were there, they returned not being able to get to the Village on account of swamp and musquitos, camped on a Sand bar, distance 30 Miles.

Tuesday, 7th started at Day break, cloudy, head wind and rain, in the afternoon passed Floyds River 53, Sun River 54 and at dark Big Sioux River 55, distance 18 Miles.

Wednesday the 8, Head wind and Rain, hard work all day toward Evening had some sailing on a Sand bar 56, Musquitos in Clouds. distance 18 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

Thursday the 9th departed early, took a Channel which we found shut up, and lost the Morning,

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

at Dinner several Hunters went out to make fires to give Notice to the Indians of our approach, passed a small River named Iowa 57, in the afternoon had fine sailing, distance 24 Miles, Killed 1 Deer.

Friday the 10th Had wind and stronger Current all Day. the River very high, left 5 Hunters on shore, - distance 10 Miles Killed 1 Deer.

Saturday the 11, Rain & cloudy Morning, at 8 A.M. cleared up with a fair wind, took in our hunters, set sail, at noon waited one Hour for the little Boat passed Vermillion River 58 on the North side and at 5 P.M. the River Arck 59 on the South side waited for the little Boat and had to camp before Sunset to let her come up with us, lost some elegant sailing on her account distance 33 Miles.

Sunday, the 12th, set sail early in the Morning and by all appearances were to make a good Days Journey, but the other Boat not keeping up with us we were obliged to wait several hours for her, and lost considerable in making way, the wind changing at noon, at 8 A.M. passed River Jacques 60, Missouri still high, distance 18 Miles.

Monday the 13th, head wind and hard Current, rowed, poled and cordelled all Day, several hunters went out returned at 4 P.M., no game but had seen many fresh track of elk, waited 2 hours for the other Boat at 5 P.M. made Island of Bonhomme 61 and Ponca 62 Country we had flattered ourselves to meet some Indians of Buffaloe but were dissappointed, by this time we had passed the Countries of the following Nations, Little and Big Osage 63, Mahas 64, Otoes 65, Yenctons 66, & Kansas, this Morning Immel & Lorimier 67 went a head by land, all hunters went on the Island, Killed but 1 Elk, two of them camped on the N. Side and Boats on the South Side of the Island, distance 18 Miles.

Tuesday, the 14th fine weather head wind and hard water at 7 A.M. took in our hunters they had killed 1 Elk 1 Deer. had to stop again at 9 A.M. to arrange another Mast for the other Boat and fix the old Rudder, crossed the River where we found some fine Cedar for the Purpose, stayed all day unloaded and loaded, put up the Mast and Rudder, camped and made this Day 4 Miles distance Killed 1 Deer.

Wednesday July 15th, made an early start and good way at 9 A.M. met the Company Boat coming from the Rees 68 with Peltries, Papin 69 and Men. Mr Manuel Lisa thought proper to take her back a gain having not sufficient Loading to defray the expense, passed River Luipere 70 and another small River 71, in the afternoon Squalls and Rain, camped 3 Miles below Liquicourt River 72, a distance 16 Miles.

Thursday 16 July, rained all night, and cleared up Sunrise at 8 A.M. passed Leauquicour River very high and full. Mess. Sanguinett 73 & Bijou went out to make fires as we expected the Indians soon to meet, camped opposite an Island 74 not far from Poca River, distance 18 Miles Killed 1 Deer.

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Friday the 17, a fine Morning the Mackina Boat took 5 hunters to the Island and we continued our Route passed Ponca River 75, cordelling on the South Side along the Hills till Dinner; the Boat came up and brought 1 Deer 1 Beaver cordelled all Afternoon distance 17 Miles.

Saturday 18, cloudy about 8 A.M. a fine favorable wind took us and we had good sailing untill 2 o'clock P.M. when we discovered 3 Lodges of Sioux Indians 76 and found Mr. Immel & Lorimier, the Chief of them, LeNez 77 traded with us 32 Beaver 3 otter 2 Robes bufflao 3 Bladders of tallow and upwards of 300 lbs. of dried neat. camped 1 Mile above them, killed 1 Deer distance 24 Miles.

Sunday the 19th fine Morning about 7 A.M. we took in 2 Sioux who had been hunting, belonging to a band on white River 78, gave us a buffaloe tounge and stayed on Board all Day, our hunters went in search of Buffaloe but found none, passed Little Cedar Island 79 distance 18 Miles.

Monday the 20, set sail at 4 in the Morning with a fine wind the Indians left us, sailed till 10 A.M. when the wind changed and blew hard a head, at 4 P.M. met with Sioux Chief called the Sleeper 80 and 20 Soldier had some talk and camped with them, distance 15 Miles.

Tuesday the 21, departed at Sunrise as also the Indians we stopped at a small River 81 where 4 Sioux Chiefs came to us, the Black Sky, Black Buffaloe 82 Big Horse 83 and Crooked hand 84 we had Counsol and they informed Mr. Manuel Lisa, that at present they had nothing to trade, but would have plenty next fall Immel went with them to their Village, 3 Chiefs and 2 young Man remained to fix on a spot for a trading house they went with us across the River to the Northside 1 Mile below where we camped, laid out the house for Mr. Bijou 85 who was to remain to trade with the Yentonas, Tatons 86 Shaunee 87 Mr Manuel present presented the Chief with 10 Carrots of Tobacco and some Powder and Ball they were seemingly well contented, Killed 1 Buffaloe and the Indians brought also some fresh Meat.

Wednesday the 22d rose early, all hands except some lazy Rascals under pretence of being sick went to work. -- at 3 P.M. Mr. Immel returned with 2 young Indians, the Chief Black Sky had presented him a horse, he reported the Chiefs and warriors would be with us to morrow -- he found upwards of 400 Lodges and plenty of Buffaloe in the Morning when he started from there he saw several Buffaloe enter in the Village, this Day raised part of the house, Killed 1 Deer, caught several Catfish and 1 Beaver.

Thursday the 23, early to work, but unfortunately the house fell down when nearly raised, and had to go over the same work, caught 7 fine fish in the forenoon which provided a fine Dinner, at 5 P.M. a party of Indians came opposite which we crossed and found them to be all Boys about 30 in Number they came to give us a Dance, they were all neat and handsome clothed, more so then I saw the Sioux of the Mississippi, in the Evening they danced and we gave them some Biscuit hardtack and 1 Carrot Tobacco they bought plenty Meat with them and gave plenty to the Boats.

Friday the 24th finished the house, in the afternoon sent Mr. Bijou, Equipment on shore, the

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Indians went over the River, and Mr. Manuel Lisa gave the Chief black Buffalo the present from Government as also for crooked hand which Chief had promised to come over but did not come, he left it with Mr. Bijou to be given to him whenever he would arrive there left 2 hunters and 3 Engagees with Bijou, discharged Bapt. Alar 88 a good for nothing fellow.

Saturday the 25, set sail at 4 in the Morning, fair wind took 6 Indians with us which we landed and stood under sail till 11 A.M. when we took the Cordell for about 1 hour dined, and set sail again, passed white River at 2 P.M. the slakening about 4 P.M. we took the Cordell again, Mr. Manuels Negro Boy Charles went out the Boat to get some grass or grasshoppers for a Prairie Dog which he had caught some days ago, he the Boy went upon the Hills unperceived, they are very high he fell down a precipe overhanging rock, precipice into the River, the Man who was steering the Mackina Boat saw it , and cried out to Mr. Lewis who was walking in the Rear of the Boats to save the Boy but Mr. Lewis 89 unfortunately did not understand the men however saw something struggling in the water, but thought the Boy was a swimming, when the Men came towards him, they went to find the Boy, alas he was gone, he must have been stunned by the fall or otherwise would have saved himself, the River was not 4 feet deep, he drowned at 5 o'clock P.M. we searched for him some time but the Current had swept him off, cordelled a little way, crossed to an Island, set out 3 hunters, at sunset the Wind fair, set sail, took in our hunters, camped on a Sand bar the wind blowing fresh all night distance 30 Miles.

Sunday the 26, set sail at 3 in the Morning, at 8 A.M. Immel & Queenville 90 went out to hunt and to visit his house were he lived last Winter 91, we came up with the house very fast stopped a few Minutes the wind fresh in our favor, took in Immel, Queenville had run after some Buffalo, we pretty fast and were obliged to stop for Queenville, who was far behind we gave him signal, and embarked him, he had Killed 1 Buffalo but we left the Meat, taking care of the wind at 1 P.M. made Big Bend 92, camped on the North Side. -- Distance 36 Miles.

Monday the 27th departed at 4 in the Morning a fresh wind sprung up and carried us out of the Bend, the wind slackening we had to take to our Oars, at 8 A.M. we set sail again and sailed till 11 A.M. after Dinner Immel Lorimier and Greenwood went out the Boat to go by Land to the Rees. cordelled all afternoon, and camped at the point of Cedar Island 93, distance 21 Miles. Killed 1 Deer.

Tuesday the 28, set sail with a favorable wind at 3:30 minutes in the Morning, but the wind falling had to take to cordelling, last night caught 3 Beavers, Killed Cabri 2 Elks, distance 18 Miles

Wednesday the 29th head wind and clear, cordelling all Day at 4 P.M. passed little Missouri River, Killed 1 Buffalo 2 Deer 1 Badger, distance 21 Miles

Thursday the 30th fine weather but head wind, had to cordell all Day saw a band of about 50 to 60 Elk, 3 of them close to us in the River, but had no Luck to Kill the Mackina Boat was gone a head with the hunters and did not come to our Camp that night, distance 18 Miles.

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Friday the 31st departed early cloudy and head wind cordelled all Morning at 7 A.M. met the Mackina Boat they had Killed 2 Dear and 1 fawn, crossed the River after Breakfast the wind becoming very hard made very little way. Killed 1 Buffaloe 4 Deer, distance 12 Miles. This Morning we left our old she Cat at Camp, at breakfast I missed her, and Mr Manuel sent a Man for the Cat, he returned in the Evening with the Cat to our great satisfaction this Remark may seem ridiculous, but an Animal of this kind, is more valuable the this Country than a fine Horse. Mice are in great Abundance and the Company have lost for want of Cats, several Thousand Dollars in Merchandie, which were destroyed at the Bigbellies station, there has not a night passed since our departure from Belefontaine where I got that Cat, that she has not caught from 4 to 10 Mice and brought them to her Kittens.

Saturday the 1st of August last night caught 2 young Beaver, cordelled all Morning, still and very little Current at 10:15 A.M. passed Chajenne River 96 very low at this time saw several Buffaloe, chased, but without Success, crossed the River, and cordelled along the Bluffs, at Dinner we stopped at some Bluffs above Chajenne River about 4 Miles, where I found plenty of Iron Ore, and somewhat higher up signs of Saltpeter. Distance 18 Miles Killed 2 Deer.

Sunday the 2d some Rain fell last night, cloudy in the Morning, 6 A.M. cordelling the little Boat joined us, they had meat of 3 Buffaloes, one Cow they found wounded with an Arrow, she came into their Camp. Distance 18 Miles Killed 1 Deer.

Monday the 3 at 2 A.M. a Canoe with Garrow 97, the Interpreter, 2 Engagees and Goshe 98 a Ree Chief came to us, they brought some Corn and a Letter from Immel at noon passing along a Bottom, we found a Mocassin tied to a tree in which we also found a Letter from Immel informing us they were well and would be at the Rees from thence in One Dat. Distance 21 Miles, Killed 5 Deer.

Tuesday the 4th headwind as usual, cordelling out Hunters went out this Morning and at dinner brought 3 Deer 1 Buffaloe 4 Ducks, passed Mauro River 99, in the afternoon Killed 1 very large Buck. at 5 P.M. a heavy storm arose and we had to lay by. at 6 P.M. 2 Skin Canoes met us, with Lorimier, Greenwood, Dougherty 100 and Weir 101, it continued raining and we were obliged to Camp. Distance 15 Miles.

Wednesday the 5th cleared up in the Morning and we went on Cordelling, but the good Luck they got fast 3 times, at Dinner our hunters brought 1 large Cabri and 2 Deer very fat, 1 Goose, pursued our Voyage and at 5 P.M. met 3 more hunters of the Company from the Rees, camped 3 miles below the Grand River 102. --

Thursday 6th at 6 A.M. passed Grand River, Mr. M. Lisa had intended to build a fort here, but finding the Situation not eligible for a Fort, moved on and camped about 12 Miles below the Rees. Distance 15 Miles.

Friday the 7th has a little Wind in favor set sail and at 12 o'clock M. arrived at fort 103, all Indians

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

in Motion to a Number of about 1200 souls, Mr. Manuel L could not immediately go on shore, as he had his Leg strained this Morning when Jumping out of the Boat, and got very Lame, a horse was procured and he went to the Village and held Council with the Principal Chiefs did not come to Council and Jealousy reigned among them, about 2 P.M. the Women and Children who were about our Boats were called away to the Village, and in a few Minutes the Coast was clear, this was not a friendly Signal, and we prepared for the worst, after Dinner Mr M.L. -- resolved to go to the Fort, he went with 10 armed Men and sent for the Chiefs to explain their Conduct. when it appeared that Goshe had received his presents and they not, and further complained on Account of the Merchandize to be taken away from them to trade Mr. M. L., came to an absolution and they gave up, they were satisfied to have a Fort built at their Village about 12 Miles distance 104. La Plume 105 the Chief of the 2d Village received his Present and harmonie was restored, they traded some in the afternoon loaded the Peltries ect... ect... and prepared for Morning, set a Volunteer Guard, though guarded, the Indians would pilfer every thing they could lay their hands on.

Saturday the 8th started early without trouble, several went by Land as also some Indians, Goshe and La Plume overtook us at noon, in order to stop us and not go too high from their Village 106, but the Place where we were did not answer for our purpose pursued our Route, the Chiefs went back seemingly displeased, camped 12 Miles above the Village, last night had our 2 Cats stolen.

Sunday the 9th of August started early and at 7 A.M. arrived at a beautiful Prairie Bluff with several Bottoms of fine timber around, made Arrangement for our Camp and in the afternoon discharged the Boats, every Men happy to have come thus far of our Voyage 107.

Monday the 10th sent out one Boat across the River with hands to cut timber for a Blacksmith Shop and Provision house all hands employed to fix a temporary Camp.

Tuesday the 11th, no news from the Village until noon when our Interpreter Garrow and a Soldier arrived, every thing quiet, they reported that a Shuking Big Belly entered the Village at dark yesterday and Killed 1 Ree.

Wednesday the 12, were informed a war party had gone on, to fight the Bigbellies 108.

Thursday the 13th, Mr. M. Lisa had resolved to go up with a party to the Bigbellies to arrange Matters with them and bring down the Peltries, the Bigbellies having 2 hunters and stole 26 Company horses, as also detained the Trader they had with them, he accordingly went this Morning at 8 o'clock and 26 Men with him. At 10 P.M. 60 Rees composing a War party arrived they requested something to eat, our hunters had just come in with 3 Buffaloes and 1 Deer, we gave them some Meat, and ferried them across the River, this Day cut timber for different Buildings, at the same time the Rees were crossing the River 8 canoes move in sight coming down with Meat, the Men in the Canoes saw so many Indians crossing, took the terrors put their Canoes on shore and run off, both parties thinking they were Enemies, as soon as the war party arrived on the other they gave the Halloo and run in full Speed to the Canoes. finding nobody and seeing the Canoes belonging to their own Nation, they took some Meat and without searching for their friends went off, 2

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

hours afterwards 2 Indians appeared and ventured to come over to our side, on arrival we found them to be 2 Squaws the Men consisting of 2 Rees, 2 Panis 109, 2 Chayenne 110, had run off, and left every thing behind them.

Friday the 14th This Morning at one o'clock were alarmed by the firing of a Gun, and heard the Dashing of Oars when to our Surprise we saw Mr. Manuel & party returning he having been informed by one of those Cowards who had run off from the Canoes, that all the white men were Killed and that the Indians had crossed the River in our Boat to Kill them also, supposed by the Sioux, Mr. M.L. alarmed on this Account returned immediately to Camp, finding however to his great Satisfaction the History of the Indian false, he remained till breakfast and pursued his first Intentions, last night about 40 Indians camped with us they were gathering Cherries and other fruits about the Country finished the Blacksmith shop and Provisison house, caught 8 fine Cat fish.

Saturday the 15th This Morning cloudy, some hunters went out, no Meat at home, caught 8 Cat fish, Rain at intervals.

Sunday the 16th hard Rain last night, cleared up in the Morning and all hands went for timber, at 5 P.M. our hunters returned with Meat they had Killed 11 Buffaloe, caught 11 Cat fish, and Killed 11 Ducks.

Monday the 17th, clear, all hands cutting timber and making Hay, caught 15 fish, and Killed 15 Ducks.

Tuesday the 18th all hands employed as yesterday. 2 Hunters went out for Buffaloe, caught 4 fish.

Wednesday the 19. the hands employed in Work as yesterday at noon our hunters came in with Meat for 2 Cows. Killed 10 Ducks.

Thursday the 20, North wind & cold, cloudy in the forenoon hands at work as yesterday, fine afternoon Mr. Lewis caught a Prairie Dog, caught 4 fish, Killed 1 Pheasant.

Friday the 21st, clear and hard wind, still at work cutting timber and making hay. Killed 6 Ducks. Mr Lewis's Prairie Dog was nearly Killed by one of our Dog who broke the Chain and run off with him.

Saturday the 22d, clear and windy, the same Work going on. at noon Goehe and Nez Corbain 111 a Yentonas Chief arrived with four Sioux, at 6 P.M. our hunters came in with Meat of 5 Cows. This Day blew a very hard Gale from the South west. Killed 28 Plover and 4 Ducks.

Sunday the 23d, clear wind west N. west, the same work, at noon La Plume paid us a Visit, dried some Meat very warm.

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Monday the 24th clear, wind west, 3 hunters went out being informed the Buffalo was near by a party of Indians which had been hunting at 10 A.M. 12 Canoes arrived with meat they made a present of 18 Tongues and went off at noon caught 10 fish.

Tuesday the 25th cloudy and disagreeable, hands at work as usual.

Wednesday the 26, cloudy and cold, at 7 A.M. Mr. Manuel Lisa returned with part of the Men from his expedition, the Rest of the Men were coming by Land with the horses he traded and given up by the Bigbellies, the Chief Brone 112 refused to give up the stolen horses, Mr. Manuel cleared the trading of peltrie and Goods and took off the whites, at 11 P.M. Gray Eye 113 Ree Chief, arrived with 100 Men from a war tour, they had not Killed nor even seeing Enemy, in the Evening a larger Party passed by with two Scalps which they carried before then in triumph at dark some more arrived and camped with us.

Thursday 27, clear and fresh, the Big white 114 Mandan Chief arrived, with several of his Bravos and family, to pay a visit, he had a few Robes which he traded, and took some articles on Credit, at noon Nez Corbain came again to receive a Present from Mr. Manuel Lisa and as soon as received for the Village.

Friday the 28, clear and the house fur trade was commenced made 36 Packs 115 of different Peltries and prepared the Boat which had to go to St. Louis,

Saturday the 29th, clear, this Morning the Men which came by Land from the Bigbellies arrived with the horses, they had met with no Accident, they informed that the Mandan 116 had made a Hunt and Killed on One Day 450 Buffalo, employed in -- setting Accounts and writing, at 5 P.M. out hunters brought in the Meat of 5 Cows.

Sunday the 30th clear, at 10 A.M. the Boat started for St. Louis 117 with 13 Men, several others went to the Ree Village to purchase Corn and Skins for covering of the Boat, in the evening they returned and had only succeeded to buy two Bushels of Corn and 8 Hides, the Indians not being willing to trade.

Monday the 31st cloudy and hard wind from the S.W. -- made up an assortment to go to the Mandan and purchase Horses for the parties going up River.

Tuesday Sept. 1, cloudy and heavy Squalls, four Men went to the Men to buy horses, made a fish trap of willows, and caught 31 Cat fish, hunters went out this Morning, and returned in the Evening had Killed 11 Cow.

Sept. 2d Wednesday hard Gales from N.W. La Plume came to Camp, the wind abated about Sun set cloudy and cold.

Thursday Sept. 3. clear and warm, caught 6 fish very large.

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Friday Sept. 4 nothing remarkable, cloudy and cold.

Saturday 5 the same " " " " .

Sunday 6 the same " " " " .

Monday 7 moved in the new house and begun to make Equipments for the Parties going up the Missouri.

Tuesday 8 finished Equipments, Killed 14 Ducks.

Wednesday 9 our hunter brought Meat of 9 Buffaloe, were informed the Sioux and Rees had fought a Battle 2 Sioux Killed 3 Rees wounded.

Thursday 10 clear and warm, the Gray Eye Chief and 3 Men arrived from a Scout.

Friday the 11th early rise, the parties prepared to start. Mr Sanguinette and 2 Men with 5 horses for the Spanish waters 118 Mr. Lorimier and four for the Wind River 119, Mr. Lewis, two engag-ees and the trappers for the little Horn 120 in all 18 Men, at noon a Sioux Chief arrived to have a talk with Mr. M. L. and 9 Men with him, cloudy & rain we traded some dry meat and 1 Robe.

Saturday the 12, the Sioux started this Morning, as also Mercier 121, LaChapel, and Carriere 122 for their fall hunt down the Missouri, Killed 14 Ducks.

Sunday the 13th fine weather, began to hawl stone for Chimneys our hunters went out, finished the Store caught 15 large fish.

Monday the 14 last Night a Ree Chief Legross 123, came to fore with his Wife he was lamenting the Death of one of his Children which had died 2 Days ago, Mr. Manuel covered the Dead Child, Legross being a good Indian, this morning had 22 fish fine warn weather, our hunters returned with 6 Cows and the pleasing news of plenty in the prairies.

Tuesday the 15, moved in the Store, took and Inventory caught 8 fish, warm and clear.

Wednesday the 16 fine weather nothing remarkable.

Thursday the 17 the Wind blew heavy from the N.W., about 6 A.M. the Men who went to get the Horses, came back and told the sad news that 5 Indians, supposing Grosventers had mounted the horses in their Sight and rode them off. 7 in Number, Charbonneau 124 who was on horse back came in full speed to the fort and cried out; TO ARMS, Lecomte 125 is Killed, the run off and left the poor fellow, that Indians spoke to Lecomte and they told him to go about his business he ask them what Nation they were, they answered Crows 126 if the Indians had an Idea to kill him they

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

might easy have done it, 10 armed Men went immediatly after them but returned without Success they saw them no more, a cloudy Day and cold.

Friday the 18 disagreeable weather, the wife of Elie 127 a Snake Squaw died, made a Wolf trap and raised the Mens house.

Saturday the 19th Charbanneau and Jessaume departed for to go to the Bigbellies, to try to get the horses Bijou arrived from his Station with 10 Sioux, Saunie 128 to make peace with the Rees, as Mr. M. L. had proposed, at 2 P.M. our hunters brought in 3 Elk fine Evening.

Sunday the 20th a clear but cold Morning 2 Rees arrived in search of a Women which had run off, after Breakfast Immel had 4 Men went hunting, in the afternoon Goshe and 3 Men arrived he seemed not much pleased with the Sioux, they harangued much this Evening, and to Morrow was fixed to smoke and made Peace.

Monday 21st fine weather and warm, one of the Warriors of the Sioux after having talked a little mixed whisky, pretended to be drunk, and cut Capers about like a mad Man, which determined the Business with the Rees, it was resolved that the Sioux should de part in the Evening unseen by the other Indians which might hurt them, they spent the Day agreable together and at 8 o'clock in the Evening they crossed the River, accompanied by a few Presents. Bijou who was to go by water found the Canoes not good and remained.

Tuesday the 22d fine warm weather and clear Bijou loaded his Canoe and went down the River with Manegre 129, at 10 A.M. Goshe and party also started and Immel came home with 1 Elk and 2 Deer very fat he found no Buffaloes traded 2 horses, in the Evening a Ree and 2 Women to trade a horse.

Wednesday the 23 fine clear weather, set 2 hens with 22 Eggs, traded the horse in the Evening another arrived to trade a horse and also his Wife, a handsome Squaw he found trade for the horse but not for the Wife, a Mandan arrived, no news from above.

Thursday the 24th fine warm weather for the Season traded some Corn the Indians went to the Village, Immel and 3 men went hunting took 10 traps and 7 Horses with him, in the evening Nez Corbain and 50 Men of the Yentonas arrived.

Friday 25th, Rain and windy traded some Meat with the Indians, after dinner they brought in their Plunder for trade and we traded several Peltries, a large quantity of dry meat and tallow held a Council and made a Present of 10 lbs powder 15 lbs Ball, 1 Kegg of mixed Whisky.

Saturday the 26th, they were preparing to move, when we found they had stolen a foot Adze and a handsaw, by giving a Hand Kerchief to the Chief he promised to return them we got the Adge but not the Saw, when they were gone we found our table Knives and the Door of a ?large? ahd also departed at 2 P.M. our hunters came in with 4 Buffaloes, they had left Immel with one Man to

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

trap Beaver.

Sunday the 27th nothing remarkable, Rain, blew a hard Gale and continued so all Night till ---

Monday the 28 in the Morning when it cleared up our Hunters went out for Meat, and in the afternoon about 40 Sioux arrived to trade, in the Evening a hard thunder Storm --

Tuesday the 29th had cleared up, began to trade they had not much peltry, at 9 A.M. the Indians crossed again,

Wednesday the 30th clear and fresh at 2 P.M. our hunters came in with the Meat of 3 Cows 2 Deer, 2 Beaver and Beaver meat, Immel having caught 14 Beaver.

Thursday the 1st of October, at Sunrise we had to cross a band of Sioux, accompanied by Nez Corbain and another Chief called Boite about 40 in Number they traded and returned at noon satisfied, in the afternoon 7 Men started up the River with the Mackina Boat to hunt Buffaloe, and Immel came home with 15 Beaver 1 Otter and 2 Muskrats, wind blew very hard from N.W. and the Boat returned.

Friday the 2d the Boat went again early in the Morning the wind arose from the same quarter they stopped at the first point above, four Rees came to fort.

Saturday the 3, clear and cold had white frost this Morning Majet and all hands employed to cut Picketts, at Sunset 2 Mandans arrived with the sad news of the Big white and Little Crow 130 being Killed by the Bigbellies and 3 Mandans wounded, the Bigbellies had 11 Men Killed and a Number wounded, at night Charbonneau, Jessaume returned and brought with them 3 of the horses which had been stolen by the Mandans and not Bigbellies as supposed a lesson to take care of our property, no matter friend or Enemy.

Sunday the 4th the Mandans went to the Rees accompanied by 3 Rees fine weather.

Monday the 5th Immel went to the Village with Mr. Manuel returned in the Evening they were informed the Sioux had stolen 3 horses from us in the night of the 3d instant and by examination we found one of the Company's, one of Goshe, and one of Charbonneau gone.

Tuesday the 6th last night the Dogs made alarm we went patrolling and some whistling of Men, but found in the Morning our horses safe, raised the right wing of the out houses and Kept our horses housed.

Wednesday the 7th fine warm weather all hands to cut Pickets a beautiful Day for the Season nothing remarkable ----

Thursday the 8th this Morning 2 horses were stolen in sight of the house, distance 150 steps the

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Men who had to take care of the horses went to his Breakfast and returned the horses were gone.

Friday the 9th clear and fine weather, in the afternoon 4 Rees arrived to give us Notice that their Corn was gathered and ready for trade. Charbonneau & Jessaume Keep us in Constant uproar with their Histories wild story telling and wish to make fear among the Engagees, these two Rascals ought to be hung for their perfidy, they do more harm than good to the American Government, stir up the Indians and pretend to be friends to the white People at the same time but we find them to be our Enemies.

Saturday the 10, fine weather, the Rees went home Garrows Wife a Ree Sister to the Chief Goshe, came to fort last night, this Morning she was going to shoot her husband, she came here with that Intention, some Rees arrived which were enraged against Charbonneau & Jessaume, having of their arrival from the Bigbellies they said that C. & J. were Lyars and not to be considered as good French men, and if Mr. Manuel Lisa would send them to the Grosventer with a pipe they would not consent such Credit have these Men amongst the Indians they find their Character gone and try every Scheme, to Keep themselves alive like a Man a Drowning, I shall leave them for a while, and go on with my Observations.

Sunday the 11th Immel and others went with the Boat to the Ree Village to take Corn, late last Evening the Boat and hunters arrived with a fine Canoe of Meat they had Killed 19 Cows and 4 Elk, but lost the meat of 7 Cows by the Wolves. There are incredible quantities of Wolves in these parts, they go in gangs of 3 to 400 and at Nights the Prairies echo with their howling by nothing of this Kind can prevent the Savage of his favorite walk, to Kill and steal at night, this Day finished our New Provision Store, and go on with the other houses, the Horses are Kept under Lock and we fear no Lurking Savage.

Monday the 12th we had frost last night, the Vessels full of Ice clear and cold Morning, but calm and warm in the afternoon cloudy evening.

Tuesday the 13, white frost, cloudy, this Morning our Cart man was attacked by 5 Wolves, but cleared himself Immel returned, the Rees will not trade Corn with us.

Wednesday the 14th, fine clear weather, 4 Men went out to hunt, some Rees arrived to trade a little Corn and a Girl the first was traded, but the last not, she wanted to be the Wife of Frenchman, and not his concubine, --- Chastity, --- got this Day 21 Chickins.

Thursday the 15, This Morning Immel, Papin and Charbonneau started for the Grosventer, Mr. M. Lisa having engaged Charbonneau for some good Reasons at 8 A.M. a Band of Chajennes about 12 Lodges arrived their Chief named Lessaroco, they had plenty Women & Children and a great Number of Dogs, traded some Beaver, and about 50 Bushels of Corn.

Friday the 16th, clear and warm, the Chajennes went off they behaved very well. traded tranquil and in the afternoon 2 young Men brought our Hogs back which had followed them.

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Saturday the 17, cloudy, Majet and hands crossed the River for Picketts, in the afternoon some Rees arrived, traded 6 Beaver and some Corn.

Sunday the 18, cloudy & cold, Boat went for Picketts again.

Monday the 19 the same as yesterday.

Tuesday the 20, snowstorm, at 3 P.M. Goshe arrived with 4 Chajennes of a large band, they came to inform themselves how we traded, and observe we had not Goods enough for their Peltries, we shall see when they come.

Wednesday the 21st cold and cloudy, this Morning the Chajennes went off and Goshe remained, at noon 2 of our hunters came in with Meat of 2 Cows.

Thursday the 22d clear and cold, the 2 hunters went out again, commenced the Stockade of the fort.

Friday the 23 clear and cold had 3 Kittens this Day.

Saturday the 24 clear and cold after Dinner our Heroes arrived from the Bigbellies, they brought a Pipe and 3 Bladder for the Rees, their Mission had been successful and all Differences existing between them and the whites settled at the same time our hunters arrived with Meat of 2 Cows. They had Killed 7 and caught 20 Beaver 1 Otter 2 Muskrats and Killed 2 Wolves.

Sunday the 25, clear and cold nothing to remark.

Monday the 26, the same. Mr. Manuel L. went accompanied by the 2 Interpreters, Papin and 3 Men to the Ree Village with the Pipe of the Bigbellies.

Tuesday the 27 clear and cold hunters went with 7 Horses but returned in the Evening, having seen some Lurking Savages. Mr. M. L. returned from the Village successful.

Wednesday the 28th clear and moderate warm, our hunter took an early start across the River with 6 Horses. At Evening 4 Rees and 1 Mandan came to the fort from the Mandans, they informed the brother of Legrand 131 had died of his wounds, received in the Battle with the Bigbellies.

Thursday the 29th clear and warm, finished writing and at 11 A.M. Lajoie 132 and Gogal 133 two Engagees set sail in a Canoe for St. Louis, with a few Peltries, ect., ect... cloudy Evening at 11 P.M. Goshe and Legross with 4 Warriors came to fort with a Pipe for the Bigbellies.

Friday the 30th Charbonneau and the 4 Warriors marched off to the Bigbellies, our hunters re-

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

turned with Meat of 2 Cows, they had met plenty but very wild and could not Kill.

Saturday the 31st Snow this Morning, cleared up at noon and had fine weather, nothing to remark.

Sunday, November 1, frost last Night, cold and clear several Rees came to the fort, Woahl 134 and Chaine 135 returned from trapping, they brought 53 Beaver 1 Otter 5 Muskrats 2 Wolves 2 Mink 20 Foxes 7 Elk Skins.

Monday the 2d, cloudy and hard Gales from West a hunting party was prepared to go up the River in the Boat, but blowing to hard were prevented.

Tuesday the 3d clear and cold the Boat started with 12 Men at 8 A.M. in the afternoon a Partizan / Camerad 136 of Mr. M. L. of the Sioux / Saunies / arrived with 19 Men, they wanted absolutely Mr. Manuel Lisa to go with them to their hunting ground and trade very hard Gales and cloudy Evening late in the Evening Gray head a Mandan Chief came to the fort with his family

Wednesday the 4th cloudy and Snow Squalls Mr. M. L. wished to follow the Boat by Land was prevented by the Sioux, they were not willing to go home in the Evening several Rees and 3 Mandans arrived

Thursday the 5th Snow storms all last night until 8 this Morning when it cleared up, cold weather

Friday the 6th clear and cold, much Ice in the River the Sioux went off this Morning across the River fearing to go on this Side of the Rees, Gray head, Rees and Mandan started also, and Garrow the Interpreter left the fort with his Wife, on Account of a quarrel between his Wife and Baptiste Provost 137.

Saturday the 7th Baptiste Provost was turned out the fort Immel went to hunt with 3 Men and 6 Horses, at 11 A.M. Langue de Buche a Ree Chief and his party arrived engaged Pierre Chaine to hunt for the fort in the place of Baptiste Provost, the River full of Ice, clear and cold.

Sunday the 8th Langue de Bache 138 and party went off to make his Camp for winter about 6 miles above the fort 139, at 2 P.M. Immel returned with Meat of 4 Buffaloe several Rees at the fort, clear and cold.

Monday the 9th, cloudy and moderate, snow fell in the afternoon nothing remarkable.

Tuesday the 10th, snowed all night, cleared up about 8 oclock in the Morning, moderate, Immel went out again to hunt with the same Men, Buffalos in Sight some Rees arrived

Wednesday the 11 clear and moderate, nothing remarkable.

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Thursday the 12, cloudy 3 Rees which had camped with us last night went away displeased getting not enough to eat and set the Prairie around us a fire, Immel returned with 5 Cows.

Friday the 13th Papin and 1 Man went to the Village, to try to get the Rees to make a great Hunt for us. Mr. Manuel promised 20 Loads Powder and Ball for each Cow the Buffaloe being very hear and plenty. Charbonneau returned in the afternoon from the Bigbellies and four of their head Men with him, the Chief Cheveux Loup and 3 others, some Rees and a Chajenne Chief Papilliar arrived in the Evening with the news the Chajenne were close be and came to trade, traded 2 Beaver.

Saturday the 14th, cloudy and cold, Papin returned with -- tidings that the Rees were preparing to make war on us. Baptiste Provost and Garrow had told them many Lies and roused the Chiefs and Nation against us, which proved to be fact, we found this that 6 of our Horses stolen, 2 Rees arrived to sound us if we were inclined for War, the Chajenne Chief went to the Village.

Sunday the 15th This Morning, Immel Papin and Charbonneau left this for the Village, with the Bigbellies and 3 Rees, to see into the Misconduct of those fellows and try to settle amicable, the Rees which remained at fort, seemed tranquil and content, we stopt all Work cleared the fort, and prepared for Defense in Case of Necessity, sent Pierre Chaine & Pointsabl 140 to the Camp Langue de Buche, to hear some news of the stolen horses.

Monday the 16, last Night Pierre Chaine returned and informed that the horses had been stolen by the Rees, by the Order of Garrow and were at the hunting Camp of Grey Eye, Langue de Buche arrived this Morning with 8 Men going to the Village he promised to deliver the horses in three Days, and requested Mr. M.L. to be tranquil, Matters would be settled, -- traded some Meat and 1 white Bear Skin of them -- at 4 P.M. our Deputies returned with the Bigbellies accompanied by Goshe and Plume d'aigle, Garrow and many other Rees, to arrange the Difficulties which had arisen, all was thrown on the Shoulders of Baptiste Provost.

Tuesday the 17th fine weather, clear and warm, held Council and finished with Peace, two of our horses were brought in this Morning, finished the Enclosure of the fort.

Wednesday the 18, fine weather, and tranquility restored the Bigbellies requested a trader and being promised one, left this for their Village, as also the Rees very well satisfied, another horse was brought in, Pierre Chaine and 2 Men went over the River hunting buffaloe and Elk in Sight.

Thursday the 19th clear and warm little Ice in the River at four o'clock in the after noon hung the great Door of the Entrance of the fort, which ceremony was saluted by 7 Guns and 3 rounds of Musketry, made the Tour -- around the Fort and Baptized the same FORT MANUEL. 141. In the Evening a good Supper and a cheerful glass of Whiskey was given to the Men, and a Dance at which all the Ladies then in the fort attended, concluded the Day, Garrow brought his family to fort again and traded of the Rees a horse which had been stolen of the Company last year by the Sioux.---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Friday the 20th, clear and cold, had a Deer Killed, nothing remarkable happened.

Saturday the 21, cloudy Morning, cleared up at noon Immel & Papin went to the hunting Camp of Gray Eye, to get if possible the Remainder of the stolen Horses. Legross came to the Fort with Baptist Provost to explain his Conduct and be taken in favor again. Provost was not permitted to enter, they blamed Garrow for all the Mischief which had been done, but went off without Success, Immel returned with only our Running Mare the other 2 horses they the Indians had sent to the Village loaded with Meat, the horses returned were all ruined and their Backs very soar, the Chajenne Chief returned from the Village.

Sunday the 22d Morning clear and moderate, the Chajenne Chief went to his Village, in the Evening out hunters came to fort, they had Killed only 1 Cow and 1 Deer and found very few Buffalo, evening cold.

Monday the 23d Snow in the Morning, having been informed, the Saunie, Sioux had arrived with about 150 Lodges at the Rees, Charbonneau and Garrow set off for the Ree Village, to Know if they the Sioux had any thing to trade. Mr M. L., Immel and Chain went to a band of Chajennes which were camped about 5 Miles above 142 the fort, with the same intention but returned shortly afterwards, having met with one Chief and 2 Partizans coming to pay us a Visit, and in form themselves how we traded, cleared up at noon pretty cold, wind North, plenty Ice in the River, this Day crossed our horses to the other Side.

Tuesday the 24th clear and very cold, Garrow & Charbonneau returned from the Sioux, with News that they had nothing to trade but Meat; the Chajennes went to their Camp, and promised to come to trade with what they had, five Rees arrived at fort.

Wednesday the 25th hard frost last night, and cloudy. hauled the Boats out of the Ice, this Evening a Number of Rees came to the fort to camp.

Thursday the 26th, moderate and cloudy, the Rees went off, and our hunters started with 8 horses, at noon the Chajennes arrived with 26 Lodges and made their camp at the Point above us, 5 of their Chiefs came to the fort. they have a vast quantity of horses and Dogs. Rain.

Friday the 27th Snow in the Morning and cold, plenty Chajenne in the fort, they invited Mr. Manuel to a feast, to which he and Immel went, Grey Eye brought the last stolen horses, traded some Beaver.

Saturday the 28th last Night the River closed, moderate and clear, plenty Visitors, but no trading.

--

Sunday the 29th cloudy and cold, traded some Beaver, Robes etc. ect..

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Monday the 30th, cloudy and cold, traded again one of our hunters came in with the Meat of 2 Cows were informed by the Rees that Mercier, Lachapel and Carriere were Killed by the Sioux, these 3 Men were trapping about the Big Bend.

Thursday the 1st of December, cloudy and very cold. traded little, the Chajennes informed us that 2 very large Bands of their Nation where camped above them, which would also come to trade.

Wednesday the 2d several Mandans arrived and demanded a trader, Pierre Chaine brought in 1 Cow.

Thursday the 3d, cloudy and very cold, Immel and 3 Men went out hunting.

Friday the 4th, cloudy and cold, Pierre Chaine and 1 Man went out spying for Buffaloe, the Chajenne Chief (Medicine Man) brought us 1 Cow, round, the 5 Chiefs received a small present and were well satisfied with our treatment, I wished to Know their Name, but would only learn, besides the one named above one more, which was named the Poor Little Wolf. --

Saturday the 5th Pierre Chaine sent in this Morning for horses, he had Killed 4 Cows, fine clear and cold weather the Meat of Chaine and Immel with Meat of 2 Cows arrived in the Evening.

Sunday the 6th, clear and cold. Mr. Manuel L. went on a Hunting Party with the Chajennes, there being 1000 of Buffaloe opposite, returned at noon and had Killed 12 Woahl also brought in one Cow, Baptiste Provost came to the fort again, Mr. Manuel having pardoned him by information received, that it was not all together his fault, Goshe and many Rees arrived.

Monday the 7th cold and cloudy, nothing remarkable.

Tuesday the 8. the same as yesterday.

Wednesday the 9th clear and fine moderate weather Baptiste and 5 Men went out hunting, Goshe to his Village.

Thursday the 10th clear as yesterday, nothing remarkable.

Friday the 11th the same, the Chajennes left us to camp and hunt at the fourth Point above us, we had traded with them 75 Beaver, 2 Muskrats, 4 dressed Buff. Skins, 7 white Bear, 10 Robes, 5 Otter, 3 Foxes, 1 wildCat 450 pair of Moccassins a quantity of tongues and some Meat.

Saturday the 12, cloudy, opposite the fort the Prairie is covered with Buffaloe, Baptiste and Men arrived this Morning had Killed 4 Cows and 2 Bulls, in the afternoon, Baptiste, Antoine alias Machecou 144, arrived express from Mr. Lewis and brought the displeasing news, that the hunters which were equipped by the Company and which had been on the Spanish Waters trapping, had been robbed by the Crows, one of them Danis 145 was Killed by some Indian supposed Grosven-

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

tres, the Day Messrs. Lewis & Lorinier arrived at the little Horn River, Machecou departed from the Little Horn River in Company with Duroche 146, but unfortunately separated 2 days in a Snow Storm, Duroche has the Letters of Messrs Lewis and Lorimier.

Sunday the 13th cloudy, some Rees of whom we have always plenty in the fort / went over the River hunting in the afternoon.

Cadet Chevalier 147 arrived express from Me. Charles Sanguinette with a letter dated the 3d instant in the Prairie on his Return from the Arepaos 148, in which he confirmed the sad News of the hunters, he found none and was informed by the Areapos, that 3 of them were Killed by the Blackfeet, supposed Champlain 149 and 2 others, Lafargue 150 and 5 others had run off to the -- Spaniards, 8 of them had gone to the Crows which now are with mr. Lewis, and 3 or 4 others they knew nothing at all, they the hunters had much Beaver some cached and the Remainder plundered with all other things. Mr. Sanguinette requested 2 Men to meet him to transport a parcel of horses, which he had traded with the Arepaos, the Rees brought in 2 Cows they had Killed 3 had to leave the Meat having no horses, more Rees arrived from the Village.

Monday the 14th Baptieste and some Men went out to hunt, plenty Buffaloe about, prepared an Equipment for Immel, who was to go to the Mandan for to trade at 2 P.M. Machecou, Cadet and Colla Glineau 151 went to Meet Mr. Sanguinette

Tuesday the 15th fine clear weather, Buffaloe constant in the Prairie, Immel and 3 Men went with 2 Sleighs on the River to the Mandans, had Informed that about 80 Lodges of Sioux had arrived with the Rees and still more expected. Garrow went to the Village to invite them again to a general hunting Party all Rees started only One Man remaining, no News of Duroche.

Wednesday the 16th at 1 in the Morning Garrow returned with the News that the Rees were willing to come if their critical situation with the Sioux would allow it they had quarreled together and expected to fight a Battle to Day, the Sioux wanted to force and go past the Rees, and Camp higher and nearer to us, which the Rees opposed on Account of the Buffaloe, the Rees came and told us a dreadful History which they had been informed by the Sioux, as they say, that the Sioux had Killed Bijou, and plundered the trading house and were singing the Chevalier 152 the French, and that they would come to our fort and do the same, if we would not come to their own terms trading, and in Regard to their Histories Mr. Manuel resolved immediately to write a Letter to Bijou and sent it express by a Sioux promising a horse if an answer should be brought to the Letter, at 11 A.M. Papin went off with the Letter. Bapteste sent in Meat of 8 Cows, and the Men returned to the hunting Camp, at Sunset Duroche made his Appearance with the Letters of Lewis & Lorimier which gave some Satisfaction from their quarters they had by hunting 12 Pack of Beaver in Store, and purchased ten for their Use. At 11 o'clock P.M. Papin returned, the Sioux had taken the Letter and promised to deliver an Answer, which our hopes that that the News of Bijou's Death was not true.

Thursday the 17th fine moderate weather, in the Evening a party of Rees arrived and camped in

---

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

the fort.

Friday the 18th fine moderate weather, and indeed considering the Season so far advanced is like Spring; we have but very little snow and of late moderate so that any Work out of doors may be done, at 1 o'clock P.M. we received 2 horse Loads of Meat say 2 Cows, at 6 P.M. Goshe, Legross and several Rees came to fort, to make a hunting party Mr. Manuel having promised a horse to each Chief 4 in Number, when our horses would arrive.

Saturday the 19th fine clear weather, and hard wind all Day, no hunting party of Chajenne arrived from the upper Band with one Chief going to the Rees.

Sunday the 20th, clear and moderate, our hunters say Rees went out and Killed 20 Cows head and foot was received them Evening, purchased a fine Dog of the Chajennes, this Evening the Wife of Charbonneau a Snake 153 Squaw 154, died of a putrid fever she was a good and best Woman in the fort, aged about 25 years she left a fine infant girl.

Monday the 21st, clear and moderate, paid off our Indian hunters, and they left fort together with the Chajennes for their Village in the Evening, several Rees came from the Mandans, and told us that Immel coming also from the Mandans had been robbed and whipped by the Band of Chajennes at the River Bullet 155.

Tuesday the 22d fine weather, Garrow and Papin went off early in the Morning to meet Immel, at 10 o'clock A.M. Immel arrived and the History of the Indians -- proved to be a lie, it was true that he had a quarrel with the Chajennes, by refusing them their Demands which he could not comply with, but they did forbear being only a few to do harm, seeing him on his Guard at noon the Sleigh arrived as also 15 Mandans with them, in the afternoon the three Men which were sent by Mr. M. L. to meet Sanguineete returned without finding him, they found a track of a party of Indians and were afraid to march forward.

Wednesday the 23d fine weather, the Mandans set off for the Rees several Rees arrived in the afternoon, all tranquil and happy in situation.

Thursday the 24th clear and hard wind but moderate the Rees went off again gave 30lb flour and 30lb Tallow to the Boys for regaling themselves tomorrow, in the afternoon the Chajennes Chief returned from the Village he had heard of the Affair of his Village with Immel, he was very sorry fired his Gun backward on entering the house and promised to see every thing arranged to our Satisfaction, this Evening the Boys had a treat of Whisky and made merry fired 3 Guns at Sunset in honor of the approaching night.

Friday the 25th fine moderate weather, indeed it looked more like Easter, than Christmas, were roused by a Salute last Night some Indians were lurking about the fort, and some Men stood guard in the Bastion they saw some thing in the Dark, fired and had Killed an Indian Dog, taking him to be an Indian the Chejennes were afraid to go to their Village and requested a guard, Six

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Volunteer offered immediately and escorted them until out of Danger.

Saturday the 26th, at four o'clock in the Morning Messrs. M. Lisa, Immel and four Men went to the Sioux, to sound their Sentiments, in the afternoon a party of Mandans arrived at fort with several Rees, and at Sundown our party from the Sioux, they rejected our friendship and will trade as they please, or plunder, fine weather.

Sunday the 27th the weather continuing fine, the Mandans went to their Village, Mr. M. L. sent Jolla Glineau along with them, to carry some more Articles to our trader.

Monday the 28th fine weather, made up Equipment for Charbonneau and Woahl to go and trade with the Bigbellies, Baptiste went hunting Killed a Calf.

Tuesday the 29th Charbonneau and Woahl set off for their Station 2 Men and 4 horses, in the afternoon we had the pleasure to receive and Answer to the Letter sent to Bijou, to the greatest Satisfaction of Mr. M. L., Bijou having traded very well more than expected, Antoine Citoleux 156 had started with the Indian from below but would not Keep up walking with him the three which were reported to be Killed were with him, and proved another made History of the Rees.

Wednesday the 30, fine weather the Sioux went off with their pay a horse and 2 Carrots Tobacco.

Thursday the 31st Rain this Morning, nothing remarkable at Sunset saluted the exile year, the Boys and Whisky and a Dance, all Cares and troubles were forgotten and drowned in oblivion and so concluded again a year with, I may say, a cheerful night.

---1813---

January the 1st, The new year was ushered in by firing a Salute and paying the Complement of the Season, every One seemed rejoiced of having lived to see another year, fine moderate weather in the Evening several Rees arrived, they brought a Present for Mr. Manuel, but he would not accept it, I took it and paid pretty high.

Saturday the 2d fine weather and fresh, nothing to remark,

Sunday the 3d fine weather as yesterday, at noon Goshe and a party of Rees arrived, carrying a Pipe to the Chajennes, and came to Council with Mr. M. L. on that Subject.

Monday the 4th fine weather, Goshe went off Cadet Chevalier paid the Dept of Nature at noon he died of a putrid fever.

Tuesday the 5th fine weather and moderate, in the afternoon Antoine Citoleux arrived, in the Evening a Band of Rees headed by Plume D'aigle arrived, carrying a Pipe to Mandans.

Wednesday the 6th the same weather as yesterday the Rees left us and Directly after I found they

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

had stolen our only he Cat TOM, Baptiste went hunting at noon Sanguinette, Latour 157 and Large 158 arrived they had left their horses 31 in Number at the little Chajenne fork 159, prepared for an Expedition to the little Horn. wrote Letters to Lewis & Lorimier, in the afternoon Baptiste brought in the Meat of 3 Cows, cloudy evening.

Thursday the 7th at 4 o'clock in the Morning, Duroche, Machesou and Fouche 160 left the fort with 3 horses loaded with Tobacco and Powder for to go to the little Horn to Mr. Lewis, cloudy and windy many Rees passed by, at 3 P.M. we saw to our Surprise the Men which had started this Morning for the little Horn, returning, they reported, they had seed something like Men and got scared, they would not go on, returned the Goods, but Kept their Equipments for the Voyage which made their tale doubtful, and it seemed they had had no Idea to go, and cheat the Compa-ny out of their Goods. Goshe returned from the Chajennes stayed at night.

Friday the 8, Immel went early this Morning with 6 Men after the horses which Sanguinette had left, the Indians Killed 6 Cows for us, and our hunter 2 Bulls and 1 Deer, the Meat of the Bulls is not good and it is only to have the Hides for covering, cloudy and cold.

Saturday the 9th hard wind from N.W. rain and Squally all Day, Cleared up in the Evening and cold.

Sunday the 10th fine cold weather, nothing to remark.

Monday the 11th fine and moderate, “ “ “

Tuesday the 12th, the same “ “ “

Wednesday the 13 the same, the Indians Killed 3 Cows towards evening had a Bull chase on the Ice, the poor Animal when found he was pursued, fell several times, and at last tired could not get up, -- surrounded by many he awaited his fate patiently cold and cloudy.

Thursday the 14th cloudy and moderate, Indian Killed 1 Cow a party Mandans camped at fort.

Friday the 15th the Present I received the 1st instant I had to throw away to the Damage of 114 Dollars on my Side a Lesson I shall not soon forget, in Evening a party of Chajennes came to fort, carrying a Pipe to the Rees and Sioux, some snow fell, but moderate.

Saturday the 16, fine moderate weather, snow melted away, I took a Walk across the River where two of our Men are cutting firewood, I never saw a finer Spot for Cultivation, a fine timbered bottom and a beautiful Prairie late in the Evening two Rees stopped and told us that the Sioux had commenced war on them and had Killed a Young Man in their own Village.

Sunday 17th fine weather, plenty Indians passing by.

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Monday the 18th fine moderate weather, in the afternoon the Chajennes returned, the Rees were preparing to war and summoned all Men which were absent from the Village, at Evening a large party of Women and Children took refuge in the fort, to sleep in Security they were lodged just above us in 5 Lodges, and the Men all absent.

Tuesday the 19th hard wind and cold, at 8 A.M. Immel & party Arrived with the Indians in the afternoon a party of Sioux with the Chief Crooked Hand Arrived with the American Standard flying before them they said they were going to the Chajennes to smoke which was a falsehood, when we first saw the Rees run to and fro, crying the Sioux come to Kill, and made a terrible noise, We traded 32 Robes, 20 Beaver, 5 Otter, they went off at their favorite time, at 9 o'clock at night, plenty Rees at the fort.

Wednesday the 20th hard wind & cloudy all the Rees went to their Village except 2 hunters and their families.

Thursday the 21st the wind and weather as yesterday Latour, Machecou, Duroche and Joseph Laderoute 161 were ordered out of the fort, they had made a ?compliant? against the adopted Principles of the Company Mr. Manuel tried every way to get them in Employment but they would neither engage nor hunt nor pay their Debts, Latour had brought 4 horses from the Arepaos Mr. Manuel wanted to buy them against his Debt, NO, he offered 300 Dollars wages per year to hunt for the forts or be otherwise employed, they refused, they only wanted to get the necessaries, and Equipments to squander away, and set by the fireside at ease eat our Provisions, take out of store when pleased and let the Company go Destruction, their Character is through-out vicious and Dangerous, the Company looses considerable by them, say about 4000 Dollars, Laderoute wanted to take a girl which Immel had given him, and Immel would not permit her to go in the Situation she was in, high pregnant, but Laderoute wanted to take her by force like a Brute without nourishment and cold Season, the dispute ended by both remaining, one of the Indian hunters got displeased, on Account we would give him no meat for his family, he sold us each Cow for 3 dollars and then wanted to eat the Meat, avaricious design, last night we saw plenty fires opposite side which included us to believe that the Sioux and fought with the Chajennes made up an Equipment for Mahas poncas ect.. ect..

Friday the 22d last Night Laderoute's Girl had a little Girl, cold and cloudy.

Saturday the 23d, cold and cloudy, our hunters went out returned with the Meat of 3 Cows, the news from this day was that a Sioux Chief was Killed by the Rees, and a Ree Woman by the Sioux.

Sunday the 24th snow and cold, this Day sent the 4 horses promised to Ree Chief for make a hunt.

Monday the 25th clear and cold, nothing to remark.

Tuesday the 26 cloudy and cold, this Evening the Men who guarded the horses found two missing supposed to be stolen by Langus de Buche.

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

Wednesday the 27th clear and cold Sanguinette and a party went hunting, Immel, Papin and another party went to Langue de Bache, which as suspected, had been the Case as were informed that his party had stolen the horses, they returned in afternoon in several parties, one party found and Indian who had stolen a horse this Day close to the fort of Colla Citoleux, and Immel seeing another Savage stealing the Way of him suspected some thing wrong, made up to him, and found the running Mare of Mr. M. L. thus were tow more horses rescued their report was that they had found no horses nor Langue de Buche he himself was gone to the Chajennes probably to trade then away for Meat.

Thursday the 28th Mr Manuel L. and 12 Men went to the Camp of Langue de Buche, to demand the horses, on their arrival they took possession of the Indian fort and made some sham prisoners, they did not find the horses and were told they the horses were out hunting, the Indians began to make overtures and begged, promised to return the horses to fort. Mr. Manuel pitied them and left one Man to receive the horses, who returned in the Evening Mr. M & party arriving at noon with only one horse which belonged to Jessaume, the other not given up, this Day fine clear and cold weather.

Friday the 29th, cloudy in the Morning, cold and Snow Squalls, last night Laderoute and his girl deserted through one of the port holes in the Bastion Garrow went to the Village to see how the Rees were situated, he returned late at night and told the Goshe and his Band wished to come and live at the point above us if we would sent horses to carry their Luggage, Indians and hunters went out to Day but Killed nothing.

Saturday the 30th clear but very cold, the hunters went out again but returned the weather being too severe.

Sunday the 31st, moderate and clear, Immel, Sanguinette and four Men with 20 horses started for the Village, to bring the Rees this Day our hunters Killed 4 Cows.

Monday the 1st of Febry, clear and fine moderate weather, in the afternoon Immel and party with Goshe and 4 Lodges of his Band arrived, but instead of camping at point took their Lodgings in the fort, hunters were out again to Day and Killed 3 Cows and 2 deer. ---

Tuesday the 2d, fine weather, nothing remarkable.

Wednesday the 3d the same, the Rees went out hunting and in the absence of the Men the Women began to quarrel among themselves, and left the fort sack and pack, there being 5 Lodges of wood at the point they went there, but returned about 10 o'clock in the night, being afraid of the Sioux, three Indians came to fort with 4 Cows, the remaining camped out.

Thursday the 4th fine weather and warm, the 2 stolen horses were brought in, Goshe and his hunting party returned they had Killed 7 Cows. At 4 P.M. 12 Soldiers of the Band of Goshe ar-

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

rived, thawed very much and plenty on the Ice.

Friday the 5th, clear and moderate, the Men which came yesterday belonging to Goeshe's Band went off again to the Village to bring their families, at noon became cloudy and heavy Squalls towards evening a young man of the Bigbellies of which we had two families in the fort went out hunting on foot for some deer or Elk, and about 8 o'clock P.M. we heard the Cry TO ARMS and two guns fired at the same time which proved to be out of the fort, opening the Door of the fort we found the above Young Man breathing his last, we found him shot in the Belly and Breast his hunt laid a little ways off, he had Killed an Elk and brought only the Calf, a favorite Dish with the Indians we expected a Return and Kept Guards, the Sioux were perpetrators of this Act, he died 1 hour after, blew a hard gale all night.

Saturday the 6th the wind continuing blowing very hard found 2 Arrows in the fort which had been thrown through the Crevices of the Pickets, the arrows found were of the Sioux Nation, and had been leveled perhaps at some of us, a singular Circumstance happened the Day before with the same young fellow who was killed, he quarrelled with a woman the wife of a Mandan in the fort, and was going to Kill her, when her husband who was absent at the time of the quarrel, arrived and being informed what had passed, went to him if you want to fight, do it with the men and not women come out and measure your Bow with mine but proved coward, next day he met his fate at 2 P.M. our hunters brought in 5 Cows 2 Calfs, a fine afternoon, late at Evening Le Gross arrived at the fort from the Chajennes, he reported they made plenty Robes, and would come to trade in the Spring.

Sunday the 7th disagreeable and snowing, Immel, Sanguinette, Gilneau and Lange went with 8 horses to the Mandans to fetch the Peltries traded with that Nation, Le Gross with all Bravos which were in the fort amounting to 26 to the Village, I made a Census of the Indians remaining in the fort and found 65 souls left most Women and Children -- -- in the afternoon 2 more Lodges, fine afternoon.

Monday the 8 fine clear weather nothing remarkable.

Tuesday the 9th the same.

Wednesday the 10 the same but hard wind Killed 1 Elk.

Thursday the 11th cloudy and hard winds, cleared up in the afternoon, at 9 o'clock in the Evening we heard several guns firing, and directly afterwards 3 Rees young men arrived, who had run away from a fray which they and with the Sioux, they reported that 4 of them were Killed, all Indians in the fort in uproar we watched all night, but nothing occurred.

Friday the 12, clear and cold, the refugees reported last evening that the Son of Goshe, with 2 young Men and 1 Woman was Killed, Goshe started, Mr Manuel L. gave him a Blanket and Vermillion and 30 Loads of Powder & Ball to cover the Corps as customary with the Indians, at

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

10 A.M. the party returned they had found but 2 Corps of Men and 1 Woman, a Child which the Woman had was taken prisoner and the son of Goshe had found blind as he is the way in the woods to hid himself, they found him laying among the Brushes, when he heard himself discovered, cried out who is there and finding his friends was rejoiced Goshe gave him the Blanket ect.. ect.. and sent him off in the afternoon 10 Chajenne Chiefs Arrived and about 150 Rees to go to the Chajennes for Meat.

Saturday the 13th the Chajenne Chief went away seemingly satisfied and the Rees with them Mr. Manuel Lisa gave 5 Carrots 4 Twist Tobacco 3 lbs Powder and 6 lbs Ball as a present, at 2 P.M. Immel and his party returned form the Mandans with Peltries at 4 P.M. about 15 or 60 Rees arrived from the Village with Plume D'aigle to bury as they said their slain brethren -- fine weather and moderate.

Sunday the 14th, cloudy and snow squalls, the Reed went off.

Monday the 15, cloudy and cold, the Rees returned from the Chajennes.

Tuesday the 16th clear and cold, all the Rees which had hitherto stayed in the fort went off to their Village being advised by the Chajennes to Leave the fort, only 5 Women and 2 Girls remaining, cloudy evening.

Wednesday, the 17 cloudy and hard winds nothing to remark.

Thursday the 18, clear and very cold, Killed 2 Deer.

Friday the 19 same as yesterday, nothing to remark.

Saturday the 20 cloudy and cold, in afternoon Snow Squalls our Sow brought 17 Dead Pigs, a great loss.

Sunday the 21 clear and cold, this day is the coldest we have had this Winter, at 12 o'clock this Day Charbonneau and 1 Engagee arrived from the Bigbellies, himself and Woahl had traded out of 492 Plus only 168, the Chief named Borne was thrown off by the Nation only 5 Lodges remained with him, and had a separate Village, he persuaded Charbonneau to come with some Powder & ect... ect... to his Village to trade, he went and took 25 lbs of powder and 50 lbs of Ball of which he was robbed off when Charbonneau was informed by the Chief Chrveux De Loup who first Chief among them that 4 or 5 Days after his Arrival from hence in December last, 2 from the N.W. Company had been with them, they came under pretext to trade dressed Buffalo Skins, and made some Presents to the Chiefs, and began to harangue against the American traders, told them we would give them nothing, but a little powder, and that they the N.W. Company would furnish them with every thing without Pay of they would go to war, and rob and Kill the Americans, this had the desired effect on Borne, and he made several Speeches to that purpose, but being disgraced and not liked he retired without Success, though himself fulfilled his promise to

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

rob, but was afraid to Kill, thus are those Bloodhounds the British constantly employed and do every thing in their Power to annoy and destroy the Americans and their trade, they have nothing to fear on Account and in Respect of our Government, all though in our territories, and in fact our Government does not care to meddle with them, nor how many Citizens are sacrificed by the British influence with the Indians, if there was a fort at the River St. Peters 162 as was promised by Liet. Pike 163 and another in these Parts of the Missouri, it would do infinitely good to hunters and traders, and bring great wealth to the States, but this is out of question, they have a strong Garrison at Bellefontaine, and that is enough, the soldiers parade, eat and drink and spent their time in Idleness, is there any necessity to keep so many idle fellows in a settled Country, they do not even prevent and cannot protect out Settlers about 80 or 90 Miles above, and we have seen outrages committed by the Indians, horrid to relate, there was after the Sheep were destroyed by the Wolves, a small Garrison erected on Salt River 164, Mississippi which will do more good than all Bellefontaine, and if one was to be erected about 500 Leagues up the Missouri it would be very good to Keep the Indians in their Bounds, Provisions are plenty and the other necessaries could be sent by the traders, but it has been frequently the Case, and has been said our Citizens have no Business to go among the Indians to trade but the profits thereof are not considered, and this Branch of Business will never succeed if not protected by Government, to seat of the British Traders.

When Charbonneau passed the Chajennes which are above us about 4 Leagues 165, they warned him to be cautious and take care of his Life that they had discovered 27 Men lurking about, supposing to be the Saunies Sioux, he arrived however without accident.

Monday the 22d fine weather and cold some Buffaloes in Sight, 7 Men went across the River to hunt, and returned about noon, having Killed but 1 Cow, 2 Bulls the weather being too cold, to pursue the Buffalo, at 1 o'clock 45 Min. P.M. we were alarmed by the Cry TO ARMS, Archambeau 166 is Killed, and by sorting found us surrounded by Indians on all sides, out the reach of our Guns, Archambeau was hauling hay with a Sleigh from the other Side, and just on coming on the River he was shot and Killed Immediately he was a very good Man and had been 6 years on the Missouri, we put ourselves immediately in Defense, and placed two swivels on the Bank of the River, but unfortunately of Balls did not reach across, and those on this Side Kept out of Reach of our fire, and dare not come to an open Attack, their Numbers was between 4 and 500, they took the Scalp and cut him nearly to pieces, they marched off about 4 o'clock, leaving us to lament the Death of a fellow citizen unrevenged, a party of our Men went across to Bring the Croups which they found terrible mangled, they brought 29 Arrows which were sticking in his body and a good many more broken to pieces, his Head broken the Brains scattered about his nose and ears cut off his teeth Knocked out, and more terrible Deeds which I will not express with my Pen. We mustered in the Evening and found ourselves 26 Men strong, selected Guards for the night, divided in 5 Watches, 4 Men in each and 3 in each Bastion, gave the Boys a Draw and every one was in Readiness for defense to the last moment our situation in general is not very lasting at this time menaced by the Sioux, below, and we dare not trust too much the Chajennes above, they have made a vast quantity of Robes and wish to augment the trade we are told and they showed a Horn which they made which holds 40 Loads of Powder, instead of giving 20 Loads for a Plus 167, I

## The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

hope we will have no Row with them as to the Rees we fear nothing, they are a sett of lying and good for nothing fellows.

Tuesday the 23d passed a quiet night, and our Guards saw nothing, after Breakfast Immel and four Men went out reconnoitering on swift horses, returned at noon and reported they had found the tracks of the war party and judged by the Size of the Road they had made to have about 400, the Road went right across the Hills and the party which was stationed above the fort say about 60 had met them at right angles, about 2 Miles west of the fort, we interred the Remains of our poor fellow Citizen Archambeau, and guarded in the afternoon saw some Buffaloe chased on the other Side, supposed by the same Party, we also saw Dogs on the Ice which returned to the Woods at the point above us, and made us certain there was some hid in the Woods, as also by a track which we found, descending the Coast on our Side 1 Mile below the fort, set guard for the Night had a fine Day but cold and cloudy evening.

Wednesday the 24th passed a tranquil night, but saw some running fires, the Signal of Indians after Battle, 3 Men went to Langue de Buche's Camp to hear of their Situation a fine Day but cold, set all our Dogs our of fort for guard.

Thursday the 25th passed a quiet night, I guarded till 4 o'clock in the morning the 3 Men went out yesterday did not Return, Dogs out guarding, dark and cloudy evening.

Friday the 26th snowed last night and this Morning we are constant watching in our careful Situation, we hear and see nobody from all around us, and are like Prisoners in Deserts to expect every moment our fate.

At 3 o'clock P.M. our 3 Men returned with Machecou, the whites and Indians who camp above us had heard nothing of the fracas which had happened, the Chajennes had the next Day after the affair, 24 horses stolen by the Sioux, undoubtedly the same party who attacked us there Scheme was to plunder the fort, expecting that we would divide and a party would run across the River to rescue the Man which was Killed, and then come between us and plunder and Kill those in the fort. cleared up towards evening and cold.

Saturday the 27th passed another tranquil Night cloudy at Sunrise, cleared up at 8 A.M. cold weather.

Sunday the 28th, Snowed last night and this Morning the most which has fell this Winter about 4 Inches deep, cleared up in the afternoon with cold weather. nothing remarkable these 2 Days past.

Monday the 1st of March, 1813 clear and cold, after dinner Charbonneau and Leclair 168 set off for their Stations at the Bigbellies took some Powder and Ball to complete his Equipment, they were escorted by 5 of our Men, untill he would be out of Danger, at Sunset it began to Snow.

Tuesday the 2d a vast deal of snow had fell last night, but was clear and cold in the Morning,

The Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813

By John C. Luttig

---

cloudy afternoon, at 2 P.M. 7 Men and 2 Women of the Rees arrived at the fort, the first which made their appearance since Goshe left us, 4 Men 1 Woman went to Langue de Buche the others remained.

Wednesday the 3d, clear and cold, the Indians which arrived yesterday said that the upper Village of the Rees would come this Day to trade, which however proved to be a lie, at noon 7 Rees arrived from above, as also our party which had escorted Charbonneau, with Latour, Machecou, Duroche, and Laderoute 2 Squaws and 3 Children, a party of Men went over the River to out fire-wood, had a fine warm Day and cloudy evening.

Thursday the 4th last night about 3 inches of snow had fell cloudy and cold Morning, in the afternoon 4 Mandans arrived from their Village on their way to the Rees, no news.

Friday the 5th Snowstorm last night and continued snowing all this Day the Mandans pursued their Route.

END

The Autobiography of Stephen Hall Meek

I was born in Washington County Virginia, on the 4th of July, 1805, and am a relative of Pres. Polk. I attended the common schools of the day. When scarcely twenty years of age I became imbued with that restless spirit of adventure that has since been a marked characteristic of my life, and left my home for the then comparatively unknown West. St. Louis was at that time the center of the fur trade of the United States, and when I reached that city I engaged with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, to work in their warehouses. I was placed in the cellar by the celebrated William Sublette with several other green hands to "rum the beaver," which operation consisted of spreading the skins out upon the cellar floor and sprinkling them with rum for preservation. Sublette left us with the remark "Don't you boys get tight now," at which idea we all laughed. Soon the fumes of the rum began to affect us and it was not long before we were reeling around the room apparently helplessly drunk. Sublette then put in an appearance, and pretended to be angry with us "Can't I leave you here alone for a few minutes, without your getting drunk? Do you think that this is the kind of men I want around me? Here!" said he "drink this?" and he drew a cup from the barrel. This had the effect of making us sober again and Sublette again left us with the remark "The next time you rum the beaver, just rum yourselves first."

In 1829, I went to Lexington, Missouri, and worked in a steam saw-mill erected by my brother, Hiram C. Meek, then a merchant of that place. In the spring of 1830, I joined a party being taken to the mountains by William Sublette and Robert Campell, and then commenced that wild life of adventure which I led so many years. The great annual meeting of the trappers that season was held at the favorite rendezvous on Green River, and four rival companies were then competing for the patronage of the Indians and free trappers, the Rocky Mountain Co., the American Co., the Hudson Bay Co. and an independent company. It was the custom to send trapping parties or brigades, in different directions to trap, all of them assembling the next summer at some rendezvous previously agreed upon.

I joined the brigade of Milton Sublette, and went to the Lewis fork of the Columbia River and wintered at Blackfoot Lake. In the fall of 1831 I was again with Milton Sublette and trapped in the Black Hills, near where Fort Larimie was afterwards built, on the head waters of the Platte. The winter was spent on Powder river, and in the spring we went to Wind river and trapped on that stream, the Yellowstone, Mussel Shell river, and back through Jackson's Hole to Wind river, the rendezvous being at the mouth of Tar, or Popyoisa, river, a tributary of that stream. In the fall of 1832 I went to the Blackfoot country with Bridger's brigade; crossed to Powder and Yellowstone, and then to the Missouri; went up that stream to Three Forks, and up the lefthand fork to the head of Big Gray Bull river, a tributary of the Yellowstone; then to Green River, and finally wintered on Snake River, where Fort Hall was afterwards built. In the spring we trapped Salmon, Snake and Point Neuf, and then went to Green River rendezvous. There I hired to Capt. B. L. E. Bonneville to accompany an expedition of 34 men, under Joseph Walker, to explore the Great Salt Lake. We got too far West, and finally started down the Mary's, or Humboldt, river for California, over a country entirely unknown to trappers.

We discovered Truckee, Carson and Walker rivers, Donner lake and Walker's pass, through which we went and pitched our camp for the winter on the shore of Tulare Lake, in December, 1833.

Walker, with a party of ten men, went to Monterey and returned in March, when they broke camp and retraced their steps to Humboldt river, thence south to the Colorado, thence up that stream,

thence north again, passing West of Great Salt Lake to Bear river, where we met Bonneville. In the fall of 1834 I went with Bonneville and 22 men and trapped Snake river and all its tributaries to Walla Walla; then up John Day river, over to Lake Harney; then to Malheur, Owyhee and Powder rivers, and wintered on Snake river. In the spring of 1835, I started for the Willamette valley, and when I reached Walla Walla engaged to the Hudson Bay Co., staying until the spring of 1836 at Vancouver. That spring I went with a party of men under the celebrated Tom McKay to California, trapping Scott river and the Sacramento. We went to Yerba Buena (San Francisco) and left our furs with the agent of the company, Mr. Ray, and then returned, trapping on the American, Yuba, Feather, Pit, McLeod and Shasta rivers, and then to Vancouver. In the spring of 1837, I went to the Rocky Mountains with a few companions, trapping on the way, selling pelts to Bridger at Green river. I then trapped in the Black Hills, on the Sweetwater and Platte, and wintered at Fort Laramie, which was just built by Wm. Sublette. In the spring of 1838 I went south to Pike's Peak; then to Taos, New Mexico; then to the Arkansas and to the north fork of the Platte, and wintered at the mouth of Cherry Creek, where Andrew Sublette built Fort Robert (Campbell), opposite the city of Denver. That winter I went to Independence on horseback, carrying the annual express. Having ten days to spare, I went to Lexington to see my brother and sister. While there I called on some young ladies, to whom I related many incidents of my mountain life, which so startled their worthy mother that she exclaimed:

"Law sakes! Mr. Meek, didn't you never get killed by none of them Indians and bears?"

"Oh, yes, madam," said I gravely, "I was frequently killed."

Going back to Laramie with the express, I made the spring hunt with Trapp's brigade, and in July went as wagon-master of the train of ox-teams, taking the furs to Independence. I spent the winter in St. Louis, and in the spring of 1840 engaged with McGoffin Bros. to take a train of wagons to Santa Fe and Chihuahua. I wintered in the latter place, and in the winter of 1841 joined a party of American mountaineers under James Kirke, engaged by the Governor of Chihuahua to fight the Apaches. Several battles were fought, but in the fall a new governor was appointed, who thought Mexican troops should fight Mexican battles, and the Americans were recalled. We came in with fifteen thousand head of captured stock, for which we received two and one-half dollars each, according to agreement. I again spent the winter there, and in March, 1842, returned to Independence, where I found seventeen families waiting to go to Oregon, who engaged me as a guide. I took them as far as Green river, where they were overtaken by Fitzpatrick's brigade on the way to Fort Hall, and several of the families cut up their wagons and made packsaddles, and packing their effects on their animals, went along with Fitzpatrick. The balance of the wagons I conducted safely to Fort Hall, and by going through a new route, known as "Meek's and Sublette's cut-off," I arrived there the same day the others did, much to their surprise.

The wagons were left there, and the goods were then packed upon the animals. They went down the Snake, and by Boise river, to its mouth, crossed Snake again, down to Brule or Burnt river, up to Powder and Grand Ronde, crossed the Blue Mountains at Jason Lee's encampment to the Umatilla, down the Columbia and to the Dalles, then by the Mount Hood trail to Oregon City, which was laid out that fall by L. W. Hastings, of this train, as agent of Dr. McLaughlin, I carrying the chain.

In the spring of 1843, I piloted a few of those who had become dissatisfied with Oregon, to California, over the Old Hudson Bay trail, meeting Capt. Joe Walker and others in Rogue River Valley,

The Autobiography of Stephen Hall Meek

---

with two thousand head of cattle, coming from California. I went to Sutter's fort and Monterey, where I spent the winter. Here I met Capt. Smith, with the trading vessel George and Henry, of Baltimore, who persuaded me to start on a voyage with him around the world.

When we reached Valparaiso, Smith received advices that called him at once to Baltimore, and he and I started in a packet for the Isthmus. We reached Guaquil, Colombia, where I nearly died with the yellow fever, then to Panama, where we took the vessel for New York. Arriving there in July, 1844, I went to Pittsburg with some Santa Fe traders, then to my old home in Virginia, where I found an absence of seventeen years had made me almost a stranger.

In March, 1845, I went to New Orleans and then up the river to St. Louis, where I got letters of recommendation from Fitzpatrick, Wm. Sublette and Rob. Campbell, which secured me the position as guide to the immense emigrant train of 480 wagons then preparing to go to Oregon. We started on the 11th of May, 1845, on which day I first saw Elizabeth Schoonover, whom I married a week later.

Arriving at Fort Hall, one-third of the train under Wm. B. Ide, of bear flag notoriety, went to California, guided by the old trapper, Greenwood. The remainder, I conducted safely to Oregon, the first large train of wagons ever taken there.

I lived in Linn City and Oregon City till the spring of 1848, when I went with my wife and child to San Francisco. In October of that year I went to the mines at Coloma, and in January, 1849, opened a butcher shop there. That summer my wife went to Oregon and in December, 1850, I followed.

In the spring of 1851, I started for Scott river, but stopped at Yreka and mined till October, when I returned with \$6000. In the spring I went by sea to San Francisco with my family and took a stock of goods to Coloma, which I sold and went to mining. The mine caved in and I sold out and went to Santa Cruz and opened a butcher shop. While here I paid \$3,400 for a Mexican grant near Watsonville, which the former owner's heirs got away from me again in the courts. Being now poor again, I went to Frazer river in the excitement of 1858, but returned poorer than before. In 1859 I went to Jackson, Amador County, and mined until the death of my wife in 1865. Taking my youngest child, George, then four years of age, I went in search of my wife's father, and found him at Humboldt Bay. In the spring of 1867 I took a train of twenty-two wagons, loaded with quartz machinery from Sacramento to South Boise, Idaho, and then went to the ranch of my brother, the well-known Joe Meek, near Portland, where I spent the winter. In 1868 I piloted a party of thirty men to Melheur river, where rumor had located the famous Blue Bucket diggings. This wild-goose chase being over, I engaged as wagon master for the government during the Bannock war, and soon became scout for Gen. Cook, finding in a few days the hiding place of the Indians, Sugar Loaf and Crater Hole which the troops had sought in vain all summer. The war being ended by the battle that took place there, I went to Silver City, Idaho, thence by stage to Winnemucca, and by rail to Sacramento. I spent the winter in Amador county, and the summer at Humboldt Bay, the next winter in Amador, and then lived in Truckee till the fall of 1871. Being now advanced in years and having lost all the money my good fortune and hard labor had brought me, I was compelled to take to the mountains to secure a livelihood. I went to Red Bluff, bought animals and traps and have ever since been trapping the waters of Sacramento, Pit, McLeod, Scott, Trinity and other rivers of northern California. I make the house of Josiah Doll, in Scott Valley, my headquarters, and from there range through the mountains with my son George, or as guide to hunting

---

parties.

Reports of the activities of the Missouri Fur Company at the Three Forks of the Missouri, Summer 1810  
by Pierre Menard

---

Reports of the activities of the Missouri Fur Company  
at the Three Forks of the Missouri, Summer 1810  
by Pierre Menard

---

(1) Letter to Pierre Chouteau, reprinted in: Chittenden, Hiram Martin, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 1902, appendix A.

Three Forks of the Missouri,  
April 21, 1810

Mr. Pierre Chouteau, Esq.,

DEAR SIR and BROTHER IN-LAW: -- I had hoped to be able to write you more favorably than I am now able to do. The outlook before us was much more flattering ten days ago than it is today. A party of our hunters was defeated by the Blackfeet on the 12th inst. There were two men killed, all their beaver stolen, many of their traps lost, and the ammunition of several of them, and also seven of our horses. We set out in pursuit of the Indians but unfortunately could not overtake them. We have recovered forty-four traps and three horses, which we brought back here, and we hope to find a few more traps.

This unfortunate affair has quite discouraged our hunters, who are unwilling to hunt any more here. There will start out tomorrow, however, a party of thirty who are all gens a gage, fourteen loues and sixteen French. They go to the place where the others were defeated. I shall give them only three traps each, not deeming it prudent to risk more, especially since they are not to separate, and half are to remain in camp.

The party which was defeated consisted of eleven persons, and eight or nine of them were absent tending their traps when the savages pounced upon the camp. The two persons killed are James Cheeks, and one Ayres, an engage of Messrs. Crooks and McLellan whom Messrs. Silvester and Auguste (Chouteau) had equipped to hunt on shares. Besides these two, there are missing young Hull who was of the same camp, and Freeheartly and his man who were camped about two miles farther up. We have found four traps belonging to these men and the place where they were pursued by the savages, but we have not yet found the place where they were killed.

In the camp where the first two men were killed we found a Blackfoot who had also been killed, and upon following their trail we saw that another had been dangerously wounded. Both of them, if the wounded man dies, came to their death at the hand of Cheeks, for he alone defended himself.

This unhappy miscarriage causes us a considerable loss, but I do not propose on that account to lose heart. The resources of this country in beaver fur are immense. It is true that we shall accomplish nothing this spring, but I trust that we shall next Autumn. I hope between now and then to see the Snake and Flathead Indians. My plan is to induce them to stay here, if possible, and make war upon the Blackfeet so that we may take some prisoners and send back one with propositions of peace--which I think can easily be secured by leaving traders among them below the Falls of the Missouri. Unless we can have peace with these (ma--?) or unless they can be destroyed, it is idle to think of maintaining an establishment at this point.

Assure Madame Chouteau of my most sincere esteem as well as your dear children, and believe me always your devoted

Pierre Menard.

---

We are daily expecting to see the Blackfeet here and are desirous of meeting them.

---

(2) Interview With Pierre Menard, from Louisiana Gazette, Thursday July 26th, 1810. Reprinted in James, Thomas, Three years among the Indians and Mexicans, edited by Walter B. Douglas, St. Louis, Missouri Historical Society, 1916.

A few days ago Mr. Menard with some of the gentlemen attached to the Missouri Fur Company arrived here from their Fort at the head waters of the Missouri, by whom we learn that they had experienced considerable opposition from the Blackfoot Indians; this adverse feeling arose from the jealousy prevalent among all savage (and some civilized) nations of those who trade with their enemies. The Crows and Blackfeet are almost continually at war. The Company detached a party to trade with the latter, This gave offence to the Blackfeet who had not the same opportunity of procuring Arms, &c. The Hudson Bay Factory\* being several days journey from their hunting grounds, and with whom they cannot trade with equal advantage.

A hunting party which had been detached from the Fort to the Forks of Jefferson River were attacked in the neighborhood of their encampment on the 12th of April by a strong party of the Blackfeet, whom they kept at bay for sometime, but we are sorry to say unavailingly, as the Indians were too numerous; the party consisted of 14 or 15 of whom five were killed, say, Hull, Cheeks, Ayres, Rucker and Freehearty; Messrs Valle, Immel and companions escaped and carried the unpleasant tidings to the Fort, but with the loss of Tents, Arms, Traps, &c.

Early in May George Druillard accompanied by some Delawares, who were in the employ of the Company, went out to hunt, contrary to the wishes of the rest of the party who were confident the Indians were in motion around them, and that from a hostile disposition they had already shewn it would be attended with danger, their presages were too true, he had not proceeded more than two miles from the camp before he was attacked by a party in ambush by which himself and two of his men were literally cut to pieces. It appears from circumstances that Druillard made a most obstinate resistance as he made a kind of breastwork of his horse, whom he made to turn in order to receive the enemy's fire, his bulwark, of course, soon failed and he became the next victim of their fury. It is lamentable that although this happened within a short distance of relief, the fire was not heard so as to afford it, in consequence of a high wind which prevailed at the time.

Adding all those untoward circumstances the Fur Company have every prospect of success, although the majority of the season was occupied in distributing the hunting parties and exploring the foot of the mountains: although they have had upwards of \$12,000 worth of valuable furs consumed, yet they have been able to send down about fifty packs of Beaver, besides other Furs of a considerable amount and have taken measures to ensure more than double that quantity in the Spring.

\* The Hudson Bay Company have Factory's on the head waters of the Red River, on the same river the Mackinaw Com. have two trading houses; these houses are established for the purpose of procuring dried Buffalo and Venison from the Missouri Indians, the north country being destitute of that kind of food. Our hunters who visited the british factories say that they are mostly Scotsmen having European wives, and living in well built log houses, and in possession of as much comfort as any person can enjoy so near the Pole--they were informed that the north sea was about 1800 miles from their Forts calculating the meanderings of the Red river.

MEMORANDUM

of

Robert Newell's Travels in the Territory of Missouri

March 7, 1829. I left St Louis with Mr Wm Sublette who was the proprietor of our Camp on a hunting expediton for beever 55 men in all arived at the foot of the mountains on Sweet water the 17th of July whare we met his hunters or a part and crossed the mountain from the waters of the Missouri to the Columbia and on piers fork we fell in with Messers Smith & Jackson partners of Mr Subletts august 20th held Randezvous and Seperated for Beever hunting when all together about 175 men

It fell to my lot to go with Smith and Sublette we we went up henryes fork of Snake river on to Lewises fork crossed the mountain on to the waters of missourie took up winter quarters on the Bighorn and went to powder river and Remained untill Spring that winter Mr Sublette went to St Louis and Mr Smith in the Spring [24] went in Serch of beever from Powder to Tongue River little horn Clarks fork through priers gape to to the yellow Stone River Returned to wind river in July and about the last of July or the first of august met Mr Sublette with our equipment from St Louis and Mr Jackson from the snake Country with the ballance of forces

This Summer 1830 Messers Smith Jackson & Sublette Sold out and left the country their Successors ware Mr Fitzpatric M. Sublette Freab Gerva and J Bridger our Squad now consists of about 200 men our Randezvous over Freab & Garvie went to the Snake Country and hunters in different directions for Beever Mr fitzpatric and Sublette went to the Black foot Country with 81 men myself one of the number went to the three forks of Missouri Returned took up winter quarters on the yellow Stone

The Spring of 1831 Mr Fitzpatrick went to St Louis for Supplies Mr M. G Sublette and Bridger proceded from the yellow Stone River[25] South Came to Tongue River lost 57 head of animals by the Crows indians this is the first time I went to war on foot and probably will give my adventures at Some future time went from thare to powder River thare Bridger & Sublette Separated Sublette went to the Park on the Platte I being one of Bridgers number went with him to the head of Laramas fork met Sublette in the Park from thare to the Snake Country on Bear River near the Big lake took up Summer quarters to wait the arival of Mr Fitzpatrick with Supplies but in vain

left for fall hunt from Bear River to Greys fork of Snake River (a Scrimmge with Black feet) from thare to Snake River and on to Psalmon River a fork of the Columbia on to deer lodge River and on to the head of flat hed River at that time was called a fork of the River Missouri by our heds, Bridger and Sublette but Since[26] I travled to [k]now Better from thare we Returned to Psalmon River and met Mr Freab with Supplies from Mr Fitzpatrick and took up winter quarters with the flat heads and napercies

Spring of 1832 hunted from Psalmon River to hennrys fork to Lewises fort [fork] up Salt River Round to Piers hole Met all hunters of these parts Vanderberg Drips & Co with about 175 men William Sublette arived with Supplies for our Camp Mr fitzpatrick who was with Sublette left to come to us but was chased by the indians and Detained and Just escaped death [to] come to us. this is to be Remembered to be the largest party of whites ever Seen together north west or west of the yellow stones mouth or even thare except our American troops (aug 1832) up to the above date I think our number to exceed 350 but not much but in all whites and indians all sorts and

kinds of men about 600, (a [s]cimmage with the Black feet-)[27]

Into Rondezvous got our Supplies and Scatterd in the following courses to our profession Wm Sublette to the States with the Returns M. Sublette to the west down Snake River Mr Fitzpatrick to the north wone of that number from Piers hole to Psalmon River crossed the mountain to the 3 forks of Missouri (a scrimmage with Black feet) Up to the head of the galiton fork met craig and some of our hunters we parted with at the Rondezvous (met Some black feet 60 warriors made piece with them and the next day fought another party) Returned to Psalmon River and took up winter quarters.

The Spring of 1833 (I left Mr Fitzpatrick the 25 of Jany and Joined Capt Boniville) Broke up winter quarters and hunted on to green River whare all opposition Companies met I left Capt Boniville and engaged to Messers Fontinell and Drips Rondezvous held broke up I was Sent to fontinell & Drips to the flat heads to trade with 7 men after 31 Days travel I found them [28] on Bitter Root River (near a place called hellsgates) on a large fork of the Columbia I Returned to Snake River whare I joined my employer Mr Drips and took up winter a quarters

In the Spring of 1834 I was Sent again to the flat heads left in March the 20th and arived at the village by the way of the head of Missouri on account of Snow on Deer lodge River nears its mouth in April with 9 men (a Scrimmage with the black feet) went with the indians up deer lodge on to the head of Missouri then on to Psalmon River on to a fork of Snake River called Commerce Creek (a party of hundred Black feet c[h]arged on our village) left there for green River accompanied by 25 indians for Suplies met the company held Rondezvous at hams fork Returned with goods to the flat head indians after 51 days travel came to the Village on Bitter root river from thare up Deer loge River on to [29] the head of Missouri Bridger came to us on piers fork near horse prairie from thare to Snake River and wintered

In the Spring of 1835 went up lewises fork in to Greys hole (a Scrimmage with Black feet on lewises fork) from thare to Salt River on to bear River up it and on to green River whare we met our Supplies from St Louis Rondezvous over I Started from My home to go to St Louis as it appeared went to the Council Bluffs and to St Louis from thare to Kentuck and to Ohio Cincinnati my former Residence

Returned in the Spring of 1836 to St Lewis from thare independence brot me up Standing engaged to Messers Bent & St Vrain, lef thare for arkansas River on the 25 of may and arived at fort Wm Safe on the 11th of July left thare for the South fork of Platte with Wm Bent Arived and Returned the next morning was Sent [to] the arappahoes to Remain for the [30] winter found them on the fountain Caboie Remained thare untill the 8th of nov I was sent from thare to the South fork of the platte with 5 men and goods to trade with the Chiannes and Remained with them till Spring 1837.

In may I left the South fork platte returned to the arkansas fort with Bent & St vrain returned to the platte with animals delivered up my winters trade made preperations to leave for the mountans in a fuw days all was ready We left Sublette & Vasques fort on the 19th of may Our party now consists of three P Thompson myself and a man we engaged to assist us in packing our little bagage Subletts & Vasques fort is about 12 miles from the mountain near longs peak from thare through the Park by the way of laramas fork in the mountain over to the head of little Snake river found the Snake village four or five hundred lodges from thare to green river up the river above hams fork we found the whites engaged with the ponach indians fighting we

joined the sport and shortly afterwards give up the contest as they had been engaged for 2 Days and the indians ware fortified in the ground and [had] plenty of horses for their consuspion [31] We proceeded up green river to the mouth of hors creek whare all hunters ware wating the arival of the Supplies from St Louis we arived here on the 10th of June I engaged to Drips & fontinelle for one year for the perpose to trade with the crow indians I left with a small party of crows and 2 white men on the 22d of July from green river at the mouth of horse creek to Sweet water past the head of popo isha to the head of powder river to Tongue river on a north fork of tongue river we discovered a party of black feet they ran and concealed themselves in som brush our party in Searching for Some whips cords &c which they thought their enemy had left on ariving near the brush the black feet lay wait fired and killed one of our party after cutting of heads and hair we intered the body and on the next day we arived at the crow village on the little horn (a fork of Mo) the 17th august 1837-

As the crows had committed So many depradations on the whites heretofore by Killing and robings it was their intention to Send me with them a small Supply of goods to induce them to let the whites pass in peace. in a few days after I arived the news came that the Small pox was at Fort Vanburon on the yellow Stone river (a fork Mo) the crow trading post [32] the fear of that Complant Set them running from it So verry hard it wore out severel hundred horses before we stoped the retreat we went from the little horn to the head of powder river to the big horn up to wind river and to its head whare they stopped to recruit their animals.

I left thare five in numbers to go to another village on big horn the 20th of Oct but missing that village I went on to the Yellowstone to fine our camp according to promise but being disappointed I went down to fort Vanburon for Safety I met with a party of black feet at the mouth of the big horn but being fortunate to discover them first we had no intercourse &c to the great joy of our whole army of five men (thare is no more dangerous a Country than this at present in these parts or even in north america) Fort Vanburon is conducted by Samuel Tulloch for the American fur Company.

Four of our men has been robed and Striped by the crows Since I left the village and probably killed I arived at the fort on the 9th of Nov during my stay at this place indians came and took of horses severel times and I having good luck to Save mine though concluded they must go Soon I thought it best to hunt for our camp [33] and on the 13th Dec. I left with four men one woman and child I traveled at a good rate untill Sun down camped and next morning got up and to our great dissatisfaction found our horses ware gone our little goods and chattles we put under ground and returned to fort Vanburon on foot horeseless

On the day following Some men took dogs and went and brought our baggage: dogs is used here in the winter to pack hawl trai[l or n?]s in place of horses. Mr Tullock Sent a man on express to the crows as he has Stayed 20 Days over his time we think he is killed this is now the 21 of December and no news from our camp the wether extremngly cold buffalow in abundance

On the 22d of Dec I herd forom our camp on Powder river I went up and got my peltries I cashed one [on] my way from the crows in Nov found every thing Safe returned to fort vanburon on the 28th Dec much fatigued as we had to travle on foot and Snow bad our little party was Seven and like my Self a goode faged [a good deal fagged?] as we had to travle Day and Knight for Safety and now as I am making preparations to Start for Powder river about one hundred miles I will Stop writing till I get thare

---

The express Mr Tulloch Sent to the crows returned Safe

I left fort Vanburon on the 29th of December with five men 5 horses one woman and child for Powder river [34] went up rosebud two days travel (a fork of the yellowstone) over to tongue river up it a Small distance and on to powder River our Seventh day from the fort we found it cold and bad walking up powder river eight Days whare we found Mr Fontinells camp this was a hard trip as we had to perform it on foot Snow bad and extreme Cold weather I found our camp all well Mr fontinelle had gone with 25 men to the north fork of the platte for Suplies but has not yet returned. out Camp went through the black foot Country last fall without Seeing any indians we suppose many of them have died with the Small pox

We are now on powder river wating for Mr fontinelle our camp is eighty strong Coldwether and the 22d of January 1838 Mr orrick has opened trade with the crows and is much anoyed by them indians has repast too our camp and have made threts of hostility

4th of March A tremendous Storm we have lost Severel horses and mules by hard weather this winter Severel men left camp and Joined orrick our time is principally Spent in peeling cotton wood bark for our horses as that is their principal food on the north fork of the platte times is hard about five trading houses to eight hundred lodges of Soux we have news of Santa fee and tous [Taos] the Spaniards have rebeled and done all they could to put down their govoner by Killing all thir officers of peace and many rich forriners they cut off the head of the governor [35] and kicked it about the Streets burnt and destroyed many buildings of value this is on a count of high duties they put on american traders times is getting hard all over this part of the Country beever Scarce and low all peltries are on the decline

We left Powder river on the 29th of March in search of bever by the way of tongue river to the little horn met the crows on to the big horn to the yellow Stone this is beautiful Country Buffalow in abundance and Elk Deer Sheep and other game inhabit the mountains

We are at this time Lying at the mouth of 25 Yd River and our hunters out in Search of Beever May 15th 1838 Up 25 Yd River onto the Missouri the Galiton fork from thare to the Madison fork found the blackfoot trail about 5 or 6 hundred Lodges they Seperated and the largest part of them went over to the Jefferson fork of Missouri the ballance went up the Madison that being our route we overtook them in a few days a battle ensued the first Scrimage we Killed 7 wounded 15 as we was informed afterwards the following morning in attempting to pass up the river they made a second charge but had to give way for us to pass we past in sight of thir village Keeping up constant fire untill we had past

[36] Two Days afterwards on the head waters of Missouri we Discovered a Small village at henrys lake they Sewed [showed] all Sines of friend Ship we left them after a few hours met an man and his wife 1 child Spared this life from thare on to the watters of the Columbia Snake river found a small party of our camp lost all their horses one man wounded Henry Legon David White Stol horses from our camp and have likely made thir way to the Hudson bay Co this is a beautiful Country the largest mountains one [on] windriver and the Columbia mountains We are at this time on Snake River June 12th 1838 3 men left this morning for to hunt the flat head village 12th. the mishonaries taking indians out of their Country General Conduct of the men Bridger with the Camp. Black feet and Small pox

From piers hole to Jacksons hole Lewis fork June 17th No Buffalow warm and pleasant we went up the grovonters fork one encampment upit [I] left the party and went in search of the

St Louis out fit I went down green river at the mouth of horse creek I found whare Some of that party had been [37] that day in two days after I found them on a fork of green river they informed me the St Louis party was on their way to wind river whare they intended to hold randezvous I returned to our camp and found them on the head of green river we changed our Course went on to the head of wind river from thare down to the fork of po po isha whare we found Mr Drips with our Supplies Commenced Sales and men who had been in the company a long time commenced leaving owing to the Company being So hard Some run off Stole horses traps and other articles of value After a long and tedious time we left for hunting went up wind river in to Jacksons hole on to piers hole and on the 5th of august I left for the hudsons bay Co on Snake river with my woman and two little boys the Distance of 150 miles we arived thare Safe and found Mr Eramatinger in Charge and I was well received and treated by him and Mr McClain. times is hard and peltries low provisions scarce indians in a bundence going in all parts in Serch of Something to Stay their Stomachs

Mr J Walker went to the Snake Country with a part of Drips camp 30 or 40 men [38] Drips took with him 80 or 90 Some severel in other directions this Randezvous august or in July terminating in august 1838 [pencilled in, obviously of a later date but in Newell's handwriting: "at Riverton, Wyo on Wind River"]

After I went to the fort a party was fitted out for the hunt of buffalow 9 of us Started from fort hall up to Camance prarie had four horses Stole after 30 Days arived [back at Fort Hall] I then left fort hall and Joined Mr Drips in piers hole went from thare [to] the head of Green River commen[ced] winter quarters with 8 men and verry Cold Nov 20 1838

Capt Drips left in Dec for wind river with his camp Capt Walker remained on Green river with a Small party whare we are now Snow about 1 foot Jan 26 1839 buffalo Scarse I spent last Christmas in Jackson hole a large vally on lewis for[k] on a hunt of Buffalo Snow about 2 feet and game in a bundence After a serious trip of Sixteen days arived found all Safe encamped with the Bonacks and Snakes we Spent the ballance of the winter Down on Green River over to hams [39] fork

This Spring commenced to open first of march 1839 on to Blacks fork Green River one of the best of places for wintering in the Rocky mountains Except Game that Generly Scarse we arived there on the 10th of march and now the 21 our horses are mending fast but poor yet we had a verry hard winter lost Severel horses and mu[les] Snow 2 & 3 feet verry cold Tedious from Blacks fork out to Bear River left Walker on to hams fork to Green River met Drips with 4 Carts of Supplies from below held randezvous I left with Mr F Eramatinger to fort hall left on the 9 of July arived at fort hall on the 20 1839 Missionaries from the States Griffin and Monger with their Ladies Left fort hall on the 11 of august for Browns hole up Rosses creek on to portnef up bear river found the Snake village up on bear river above muddy on to blacks fork owens and Carson came to us on muddy [40] of Blacks fork 23 aug

1839 On to Browns hole 1st of September Baker arived for Bent & St vrain to trade 23d Biggs from Vasques 25th opposition high

I left for fort hall with Meek and one other man for goods arived thare Safe got my Supplies 45 horse loads and arived on green river mouth of Blacks fork 9th of november nothing to eat on to Browns hole found all Safe thare except about 100 head of horses that had been Stolen by the Shyanes and on account of that the whites a party from Browns hole heded by phillip

---

Thompson and michel [went] to fort hall and Stole 14 horses and on their Return Stole 30 from the Snakes the horse thieves about 10 or 15 are gone to California for the purpose of Robbing and Steeling Shuch thing never has been Known till late. I left Browns hole for fort hall on 7th February 1840 with 300 beaver after a long trip of 45 Days I arived snow verry bad and provi-sions Scarse

[41] This 3d of april fine wether plenty of indians all over the country no goods times hard &c &c the horse thieves or banditti consists of Phillip Thompson. Mo. William New. Eleven michel. Ohio. Richard owens. Oh. Kelly belcour Exevia Malona. St Louis, Mo.

Mr Eramatinger arivd 13th June

I went to the Amarican randezvous Mr Drips Feab & Bridger from St Louis with goods but times was certainly hard no beaver and everything dull some Missionaries came along with them for the Columbia Messers Clark Smith Littlejohn I engaged to pilot them over the moun-tains with their waggons and succeeded in crossing to fort hall thare I bought their waggons also of which I perchased and Sold them to the H Bay Co while at Rondezvous I had Some diffiquilty with a man by the name of Moses Harris I think he intended murder he Shot at me about 70 or 80 yards but done no damage only to [42] him self. I left the randezvous our little party consisted of 9 men and 3 woman in 17 days we arived at fort hall found all well and on the 27th of September 1840 with two waggons and my family I left fort hall for the Columbia and with Some little Difiquly I arived at walla walla thare I left one waggon and the other I had took down in a boat to vancouver and have it at this time on my farm about 25 miles from vancouver west. I arivd at the willamitte on the 15 of December 1840 and on the 25 of the Same month came to this place called the Folitine planes I likewise brought 2 american cows with me. this is to be remembered that I Robert Newell was the first who brought waggons across the rocky mountains and up to this 19th of April 1841

this year has been Spent in farming this country is not So good as Suposed as the climate is not So healthy I have had Some Sickess and also my family this country is under the influence of the hudson bay company and the [43] methodist Mission the farmers get all thir Supplies from the two places and also they are resorted to for advise in case of death to Settle their affairs the latter however I believe does the most of this as the Peoples choice Jason Lee is Supervisor of the M. Mission he has Severel Branches in this country also Several ministers of the gospel and I believe but for this mission that this little colony would do badly the Hudson B. company has encouraged Sebtlers here thare is also a Catholic mission here which influences the french or canadians who has been Servents of the H. B. Co. as yet we have no Shools here of note this has been a dry Season Small crops. I have herd from the mountains and thare has been some of my acquaintnces Kiled Since I left - Freab and others the H B Co is Still Supplying the mount[ains] with goods and on the east Side of the Rocky mountains as thare is no laws in this country we do the best we can. 1842 is past

Jan 1

Shiane

nuncha 1

nish 2

nihe 3

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

MEMORANDUM of Robert Newell's Travels in the Territory of Missouri

---

nibe 4  
nuhon 5  
ne sute 6  
nes sute 7  
man oote 8  
Sotie 9  
Nich took 10  
Ebois Stan e live

Oct  
11 1836  
to Ft  
Caboie Liquor came from Fort Wm  
Frank Returned Jan 8th 1837 to fount Cab...  
Vasques Sent to North Fork Platte 25 Jan  
Newell 300 Robes 5th of Feb  
New from Arkansas to Platte on the 6 of February  
2 1/2 feet Snow fell the 7th  
Discharged Spaniard on 11th of Feb for  
neglect of Duty and Stealing &c  
Received letter of Simpson from  
fontinelle to B & S -- on the 22 of Feb  
2 ft Snow fell on 23 Feb  
Fitzpatrick back from the States March 17th

William Kittson's Journal Covering  
Peter Skene Ogden's 1824-1825 Snake Country  
Expedition  
Kittson's Journal(5)  
April 26 - May 31, 1825

Tuesday 26.- Resumed our march early through a fine country and after making about 8 miles we fell on a large river which the Deceased Michel Bourdon(6) named Bear river from the great number of those animals on its borders. It comes from the east and runs due South for some distance. Followed it for about two miles and Encamped on its borders, which is lined with poplar and Pine. The water of it is white and thick. Some signs of our men ahead; and the Americans(7) have gone upwards and we are to follow it downward in order to find where it runs to. Course S.E. 10 miles S. 2. Fair weather.

Wednesday 27.- This morning we crossed the river a little above our encampment(8) and as the river took a bend to the S. W. we therefore cut a neck of land, made a South course. On our way we met with four trappers, three of whom had been absent since we left Pienoir river.(9) We continued our journey for about 9 miles, crossed Bear River and encamped on its borders.(10) Two more of the absent men have joined us. The beaver got this day amount to 133 and 1 otter. We have now completed our first thousand. Came through a fine level country and we are encamped in a beautiful green plain. Fair weather.

Thursday 28th.-Changed our encampment for about 1/2 a mile(11) for the purpose of feeding our poor horses. More of the freemen are ahead and no news of their stopping for us. It is also thought that eight trappers are behind hunting on Portneufs river. The bear river takes here a S. E. course for 1/2 a mile. 20 Beaver to day. Very warm weather.

Friday 29th.-Did not raise camp, resting the horses. No news from those behind, they left us on the 23rd Instant. More of the trappers left us to go ahead being vexed at the others not waiting us. Some Black Feet dogs seen near the camp loaded.(12) Strick watch on the horses. 16 Beavers to day. Fine weather.

Saturday 30th.-Raised camp, came through a plain along the river for about 3 miles, and as the main river took a S. E. course through cut rocks, we had to take a S. by W. route passing over a neck of land full of hills and ravines, for 3 more miles we fell on a small fork coming from S. W. here we put up.(13) 76 Beavers brought in. Some good signs of beaver on this small river. Course this day S. E. 3 & S. by W. 3. It rained in the evening.

Sunday 1st May.-Commenced our journey this morning by ascending a steep hill, then descended along the borders of a rivulet, crossed several others and encamped on account of rain on one of the many small streams we had crossed.(14) S. Course 4 miles. Paul, Laurent and Beauchamp are still ahead. 40 Beavers to day.

Monday 2nd.-Raised camp and made the following courses before we came to Bear river vizt, S. 2, S. W. 6 and S. 29 miles,(15) crossed the river and encamped a little below the crossing place.(16) The Country we came this day was barren as usual, but very uneven. Buffaloe and Antelope seen, none killed. The river is well furnished in Wild Fowls, such as Geese, Ducks and Pelicans, trout of a small kind is also found here.(17) 74 Beaver and a Pelican from the traps. Laurent and Beauchamp joined us this evening. Fine weather.

Tuesday 3rd.- Raised camp and took an eastern course leaving the river on our right. More Black Feet seen. Encamped on a small river well lined with willows, after making about 10 miles East. This stream is large and comes from the N.E. direction and steering a S. W. course to Bear river. (18) Grey left behind making a skin Canoe, in which he is to come down the Main Branche. In the afternoon 7 Snake Indians paid us a visit, they were very shy at first but soon got acquainted with us. They were well mounted and wore their war garments. They said that 25 Americans had wintered on this river last winter and had made many skins but left them en Cache in the Mountains.(19) Fair weather.

Wednesday 4th.- Last night we received 13 Beaver from the Traps. On account of bad weather this day we did not raise camp. Depot had a narrow escape from a Grizzly Bear, attacking him while setting his traps, he saved his life by diving into the river. We had rain, snow and hail during the day. 7 Beavers from the Traps.

Thursday 5th.-Raised camp and steered a S. W. Course to the Main River. On our road several bulls and calves were killed.(20) The eight men that were absent since the 23rd Ulto. came up to us as we were encamping. They report that for 4 days trapping on Portneufs river they had made 172 Beavers and Otters, a sign that many skins are still behind us. 17 Beaver in camp total 189. Weather cloudy most part of the day. Made only 4 miles this days journey.

Friday 6th.-Remained in camp. Payette, Paul and Annance have come up from ahead. left their beaver en Cache, 41 Beaver to day.(21) weather Bad.

Saturday 7th.-Raised camp towards the river of the 4th Instant a N. E. course from Bear river.(22) Crossed the American Branche and then took a Southern course for a mile put up on its borders which here makes a bend of N and S. Made about 5 miles. To day 31 Beaver.

Sunday 8th.-Began our march over a level plain, Course South for 6 miles crossed a small river coming from an eastern direction and running west. Put up on its borders.(23) The snakes numbering 4 Lodges came up and pitched near us.(24) Iroquois as usual commenced trade and bought a horse at an enormous price. Fair weather. 22 beavers brought in.

Monday 9th.- Resumed our journey over level country came to a fork after making about 9 miles on which we encamped. This fork is one that Michel Bourdon called Little Bear and it has three others falling into it before it enters the Bear River main Branch. The one here runs east and west. (25) Course today S-. The Cache of Payette Paul and Annance produced 110 Beaver, and 9 from

---

the Camp traps Total 119. Weather Cloudy with rain and hail.

Tuesday 10th.-Remained in camp in order to visit this fork, but our expectation in finding beaver failed. 25 Beaver to day.

Wednesday 11th.-We raised camp and took a S. E. course after crossing the fork we were upon, made about 5 miles and fell on another falling into the one we left. This fork is called Bourdon or middle Fork,(26) we put up on its borders, great signs of Beavers, but the Americans have trapped on it. 70 Beaver to day weather cloudy with a little rain.

Thursday 12th.-Remained in camp. McKay went on a high Mountain where he had a view of the Country round us. A large lake into which Bear River falls in, is not above 12 miles from this and bearing about S. W. from this spot.(27)  
18 Beavers brought in.

Friday 13th.-After crossing the middle Fork we took a S. W. course across the country, made about 6 miles and came to the South Fork which appears larger than the other two.(28) This fork enters the middle one, and the three join into one before they enter the Main Bear river. Near here the South Fork divides into three distinct branches, taking or coming from different courses, one N. E. the second S. and the third or right hand fork S. W. they are small and have been well furnished in beaver, but the Americans got the best of them. White Maple and Oak are to be found here.(29) The river or Fork is lined with poplar and aspin. 79 Beaver, meat of Buffaloe and Elk brought into camp. Completed our second thousand.

Saturday 14th.-Remained in Camp. Several trappers gone ahead and three are still behind us. 31 Beaver. Fair weather.

Sunday 15th.-Resumed our march, made 1 mile east and 4 miles South on the small right hand Fork on which we encamped. Soon after Annance cast up from ahead with the favourable news of plenty beaver, Several of the Trappers have gone there. 16 Beaver to day. It thundered and rained.

Monday 16th.-Raised camp early and took a South course over a rugged road, continuing on the right hand until its source then crossed over a high hill and fell on a river coming from the N. W. and running S. E. for some distance. Made about 7 miles South and 2 S. E. along the borders of new river and put up. We are now in a hole as I may say; as the place is surrounded by lofty mountains and hills. No signs of Americans having been here and the beaver are numerous. This place Mr. Ogden named new hole and the river bears the same name. It is lined with poplar and willows and about 6 yards in breadth. 52 Beavers brought into camp. Fine weather.

Tuesday 17th.-Raised camp and proceeded on a S. E. course leaving the new river on our right crossed over a small branche and came to the edge of another, then put up. This hole is but small not being above 50 miles in circumference, of an oblong shape. through the middle of which runs New River coming from the N.W. and taking a S. W. course near this place. It falls into the lake

already mentioned. Made about 9 miles. 244 Beaver from the traps.

Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th.-Remained in camp. Traps sett last night produced this morning 109 Beaver. It rained last evening but fair and warm all day. 19th we got 68 beaver.

Friday 20th.-Raised camp and made about 2 miles S. E. course along the new hole, came to another small fork and put up. This fork comes from the N. E. and running westerly to new river into which it enters. 67 Beavers to day. Fair weather.

Saturday 21st.-Remained in Camp. Several men have left us with the intention of sleeping out. 23 Beaver to day. The men gone are 17 in number.

Sunday 22nd.-As we were raising camp two Deserters of the year 21 bravely paid us a visit. One of them promised to keep with us, but the other, refused, yet said he would pay his debt. Raised camp and left the new hole by taking a South course over a rugged hill and vallies and after making about 4 miles we fell on a small branch running N. and S. entering another, at 2 miles distance where we saw it, of a larger size and coming from the eastward, at the joining point of the two Branches, (where we encamped ) now in one they take a South course for about 1/2 a mile, then S. W. disappearing from our view through the mountains and falling into the Large Bear Lake already mentioned. Soon after we had put up the tents the two Deserters left us for theirs, and said they would return to our camp tomorrow. Here we are situated on the borders of the Utas lands, indians belonging to the Spaniards. They are, as we are told mostly all Christians, and three of them whom our men saw, bore the Cross to their necks made of Brass and Silver. Made about 6 miles South. 22 Beaver to day. 15 men are still absent. Fair and warm weather.

Monday 23rd.-Remained in camp in order to wait our men. In the Afternoon Jack McLoed and Lazard the two Deserters came up to us with their camp consisting of besides them, 3 Canadians, a Russian, and an old Spaniard. This party under the Command of one Provost. Soon after this, our absent men (excepting five), cast up bringing with them a Strong party of Americans bearing flags and under different heads. One of them (Gardner) proclaimed in the camp the freedom of the country they were on, being as he said American Territories, and that whomsoever wished to go with him they were welcome. No man would dare opposed the measures they would take, he and his party were ready to stand by, any that wished to Desert Mr. Ogden, Free or Engaged men were the same on this land of Liberty, and night coming on, no more was said. Strick watch set for the night. Fair weather.

Tuesday 23rd. [sic].-This morning Gardner paid a visit to our tent and had a long conversation with Mr. Ogden. The purport of which was as follows, knowing well how our party stood, he boldly asked Mr. Ogden, why he came on these Lands in order as he said to steal our money, by taking the Beaver and that if he Mr. O. knew what was good for himself and party he would return home. Mr. Ogden answered that as to the Country alluded to, he knew full well that it was still a disputed point between the two Governments and as he had received no orders from his Government to leave it, he was determined on making his best through it. here Gardner was

called out. Soon after Old Pierre Tevanitagon entered with two iroquois both Deserters of the year 21) he first began to state that the debts of these two villains were settled and paid to the Company by the remaining 11 Iroquois who kept true to the Concern. On his presenting notes made by himself, I interfere[d] pointed out the errors in the notes and they left us fully aware of Pierre's mistake. Mr. Ogden seeing Gardner going to an Iroquois Tent (John Grey) he followed, and learnt that mostly all the Freemen whites and all the Iroquois were going to leave him. I not being present cannot tell what conversation was held in the tent, however soon after perceived several tents coming down and Mr. Ogden busily employed in getting skins belonging to others who were absent. I immediately went to his assistance. A scuffle took place between Old Pierre and Mr. Ogden regarding the horses lent by that Gentleman to the old villain, who was supported by all the Americans and 13 of our scamps of Freemen. Mr. Ogden had me, McKay Quintal and Roy to his aid, few as we were we succeeded in getting one and the payment of the other. Soon after they left the camp together with the most part of their hunts leaving heavy debts behind them. Three of them however paid up their debts. The following names are those that left us this day vizt.

- 1 Alexander Carson Paid up his debt
- 2 Charles Duford not pd.
- 3 Martin Miaquin “
- 4 Pierre Tevaiitagon “
- 5 Jaques Osteaceroko “
- 6 Ignace Deohdiouwassere “
- 7 Ignace Hatchiorauquasha or Grey)
- 8 Laurent Karahouton not pd.
- 9 Baptise Sawenrego “
- 10 Lazard Kayenquaretcha “
- 11 Joseph Perreault “
- 12 Louis Kanota “

In the evening hearing that Carson had taken Annance's horse, McKay was sent to bring it back. he returned soon with the animal. The above man says that he was ill treated by Master Grey who wanted to fire at him, but on McKay's turning to face him he soon got quiet. More of the party are said to be preparing to leave us tomorrow. Every thing put into order of defence as we hear that the Americans and Iroquois are coming tomorrow to pillage us. Double watch set for the night. Orders to move back in the morning. Fair weather.

Wednesday 25th.-Early this morning on raising Mr. Montour, Antoine Clement, Annance, Prudhomme and Sansfacon began the same story of yesterday. Gardner with his gang of villains soon came to assist and debauch others to separate from us. Montour asked me for his account. I showed him the amount of Debt due by him to the Company, he then said to Mr. Ogden, I have about £289 in the Companys hands for which they seem not to give me Interest, let them now keep it altogether for my Debt and that of Prudhomme's. It was of no use in us to argue or point out their foolishness, go they must, Sansfacon being rather too slow in his determination, I told him to make haste as we wished to go, he then said I follow the Americans. On seeing Mr. Ogden

---

laying hold of the beaver, I order'd Sansfacon to call out that the beaver and horse belonged to the Company. Which he did, and we got them. Gardner immediately turns to me saying Sir I think you speak too bravely you better take care or I will soon settle your business. well says I you seem to look for Blood do your worse and make it a point of dispute between our two Governments. One thing I have to say is, that you had better begin the threats you so often make use of in order that we may know the worse of this shameful business. We are now ready to start though our party is now small still have a hope of its reaching the Point of Destination without danger, although we were again to loose men. Mr. Ogden called to me and we therefore separated without more ado leaving them at our camp and we retracing back our steps to Main Snake River. I kept behind all day through Mr. Ogdens orders, fearing that more would leave us on the road. Encamped at our place of the 16th Instant. Our party is now reduced to the number of 22 Freeman, 11 Engages and 6 Boys besides Mr. Ogden and I. Total 41. Fair weather.

Thursday 26th.-Late last night Fras. Sasanare and Ant. Crevaise (two of the five that were absent) arrived. They reported that they had seen a different band of Americans who pillaged them of their traps and furs and would have kept them prisoners if they had not made their escape during the night. All well told but I thought it lies. Raised camp and I kept all day behind watching the movements of several suspicious fellows who lurked in the rear of the party. In the evening we put up at our encamp. of the 14th Instant. 5 Beaver to day. Traps set for the night. Fine weather.

Friday 27th.-Resumed our march in the usual manner I and McKay keeping watch behind. Encamped in the evening at the same place of the 9th Instant. 1 Beaver to day.

Saturday 28th.-Continued our march early this morning. On our way three more villains were looking out for an opportunity to desert with their furs but were too well watched. All reached the encampment of the 2nd Instant. Here on arrival rafts were made of bulrushes for crossing the Property over Bear river. Strick orders given to the watch this night. Rained.

Sunday 29th.-This morning Two of the Canadian Freeman gave up their furs, Traps and a couple horses and said to Mr. Ogden they would go back to join the rest of the villains that left us, and as it was in vain for us to stop them, they seperated. One of them however was mortified at his Son not going with him. This man is Theery Goddin and the other J. Bte. Gervais. the latter paid up his debt and the former has still a balance against him. After crossing bear river we took a N. W. course leaving the above river and making towards the Snake waters. Made about 18 miles through a level country and came to a small creek crossing our road lined with willows on which we encamped. Another scamp left us on the road, it is not surprising he being an Iroquois by the Name of Fras. Sasanare. He took nothing with him but his riding horse. Left wife and furs behind. Fair weather. Plenty Buffaloes and many killed.

Monday 30th.-Raised camp, made about 20 miles N. W. and put up on a west Fork of Riviere Portneuf. Fair weather.

Tuesday 31st.-Resumed our march as usual descending the west fork and made about 16 miles

---

and put up on the borders of the same branch. From a few traps set last night we got this morning 7 Beavers. Fair weather. Bulls killed.

1. Dr. Miller is on the staff of the department of history at the University of Utah. He is a specialist in Utah and western United States history. A small grant from the University of Utah Research fund helped defray costs of the field work in connection with this article.
2. E. E. Rich, ed., *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1824-25 and 1825-26* (The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, XIII [London, 1950]). As soon as I had a chance to examine the published journals I realized that adequate field work had not been done in preparing them for publication - especially in the Utah area. (This statement should not be construed as a criticism of the editors who prepared the journals. I realize that they were working under war conditions that seriously curtailed travel for such activities and that the time allotted them was inadequate.) Believing that the value of the journals would be greatly increased by more thorough field work and editing, the Utah Historical Society sought permission from the Hudson's Bay Record Society to republish those parts of the journals dealing with Ogden's penetration into Utah. This request was graciously granted, and I was given the task of preparing the journals for publication - in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Ogden's journal appearing in the April, 1952 issue.
3. A copy of Kittson's map was published in connection with the Ogden journal. See David E. Miller, "Peter Skene Ogden's journal of His Expedition to Utah, 1825," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XX (April, 1952), 165. Unfortunately, however, too much "art work" was done on it in preparing the cut for the press. The result was that the southernmost penetration of the Ogden expedition and the camp site on Weber River were omitted. This was a serious error. As then published the map indicated that Huntsville was the southernmost point of the Ogden trek. The map was, therefore, out of harmony with the facts, the original journals, and the original map. In republishing the map as part of Kittson's journal, proper correction has been made.
4. Dr. C. G. Crampton, Jesse Jameson and I did this field work in November, 1951.
5. For biographical material concerning William Kittson see Ogden's *Snake Country Journals*, Introduction. The Utah State Historical Society wishes to express sincere appreciation to the Hudson's Bay Record Society for granting permission to republish this portion of Kittson's journal and map. The journal is reproduced exactly as it appeared in the above-named publication - no attempt has been made to correct spelling or other punctuation.
6. For information concerning Michel Bourdon see Miller, *op. cit.*, 166n.
7. The Americans referred to here were Jedediah S. Smith and six companions who had shadowed the Ogden camp much of the time since December 29, 1824. The fact that the Americans headed upstream while Ogden and his party turned downstream is of significance in view of the fact that it virtually excludes Smith from any claim he may have (or numerous writers have claimed for him) to the honor of having discovered Great Salt Lake. Several men saw it before he could have arrived at its shores.
8. Kittson's accurate description of the geographical features helps materially in locating the actual

camp sites. This crossing is just about two miles south of Alexander, Idaho. It is the only place immediately below the great bend of Bear River where the stream could be reached and forded because of the high precipitous banks of lava rock.

9. Ogden usually had trappers out in front scouting and trapping; a few were sometimes left behind to finish working a stream.

10. Ogden's entry for his day gives the distance as 18 miles, which is about twice the actual distance. However, Kittson was not always more accurate than his superior officer, as will be seen in later journal entries. The route this day was southerly via Grace and Miter, Idaho. The river was probably crossed at Burton's Ford and camp established in a flat meadow on the west bank just a few miles below the Grace power plant.

11. Ogden says one mile.

12. The "Black Feet" were considered unfriendly, to say the least. Any indication of their presence resulted in extreme caution and heavy guards.

13. The route this day was down the west side of Bear River, through the present community of Thatcher. Just below the Thatcher school, Bear River has cut a narrow gorge through a lava bed, making it impossible to continue down the bank of the stream. Kittson's description of this is very accurate; his recorded distances are about right. Ogden's route was probably not far from the present highway. Camp was made that night on Cottonwood Creek, probably about a mile above its mouth.

14. Climbing out of Cottonwood Creek the party reached the headwaters of one of the tributaries of Battle Creek and camped after a short day's march.

15. Ogden gives the distance as 10 miles, which is more nearly correct.

16. The crossing was probably made not far from the present bridge on U.S. Highway 91 northwest of Preston. See Miller, *op. cit.*, 169n.

17. The mention of the numerous species of wild life in the region is of special interest. Ogden also mentions "crickets by millions."

18. This day the party crossed the level country through Preston and Whitney to the Cub River which they probably reached just a short distance above the present location of Franklin.

19. This is one of the most significant entries in the Kittson and Ogden journals for it definitely locates (for the first time) the camp of John Weber's party of Rocky Mountain trappers known to have been in the region that winter. (By guesswork the location has been placed in various spots in Cache Valley.) It was probably from this American camp near Franklin, Idaho, that Jim Bridger made his famous "bull boat voyage" down Bear River to discover Great Salt Lake--eittier in the fall of 1824 or the following winter.

The use of the term "en Cache" also is significant. This is the earliest recorded use of this term in this region, as far as I am aware.

20. The presence of large numbers of buffalo and elk from time to time is very interesting, especially to those interested in the biology of the Great Basin. Ogden makes mention of large numbers of seagulls in this same vicinity (the earliest mention of gulls in Utah), and speculates that there must be a large lake not too far away.

The company probably crossed the present Utah-Idaho line, entering Utah this day. See Miller, *op. cit.*, 171n.

21. These men had been as far south as Logan River. Their cache yielded 110 skins a few days

later.

22. Information from the trappers, who had come in from the south evidently induced the leaders of the expedition to leave Bear River and skirt the foothills along the base of the Wasatch, striking for the cache mentioned above. Kittson calls Cub River the "American Branche" because the Americans had wintered on it the previous winter.

23. This would be at the present location of Smithfield. Kittson's map indicates that camp was established on the south side of the stream.

24. Ogden says that these Snakes joined the British brigade. Four lodges would be about 20 persons.

25. This day's journey brought the brigade to Logan River which Kittson calls "Little Bear." Camp was pitched on the north bank. As the journals point out, three forks (present-day Logan River, Blacksmith's Fork and Little Bear River all join together before entering the main branch - Bear River.

It is very interesting to note and contemplate the statement that Michel Bourdon had evidently been that far south several years before - in 1819. As far as I know, this is the first indication that British trappers had penetrated that far south prior to the Ogden expedition.

26. This is Blacksmith's Fork. They camped in the flat meadowland on the north side of the stream, probably a half mile or more below the canyon mouth.

27. This is the most significant entry in this portion of Kittson's journal, for it is the earliest known eyewitness, written account of the discovery of Great Salt Lake. Charles McKay had been sent by Ogden to examine the upper waters of the stream (Blacksmith's Fork) to determine the extent of beaver to be taken there. While on this reconnaissance he had obviously ascended one of the high mountain peaks to the east from which point he could see over the mountain range between Hyrum and Brigham City and a distant view of Great Salt Lake. It is rather remarkable that Ogden's journal contains no mention of McKay's important discovery. It should be remembered, of course, that Bridger (and probably others) had seen the lake before this time. But this is the earliest written record of such discovery.

28. Raising camp on the morning of Friday 13, the party passed through what is now Hyrum, reached the Little Bear River and ascended it to a point just south of Paradise. Ogden indicates that some of his men crossed the divide into Ogden Valley on this day.

29. The mention of white maple and oak is of particular interest to botanists in their study of the migration of plants.

JOURNAL OF PETER SKENE OGDEN: SNAKE EXPEDITION, 1826-7.

(As copied by Miss Agnes C. Laut in 1905 from Original in Hudson's Bay Company House, London. England.)

Monday, 12th Sept. (1826). Took my departure (from Fort Vancouver) 2 boats 12 men bound for Snake Country and reached main Falls of Columbia 100 miles from Ft. Vancouver 4th day early. Found Mr. McKay and party with 100 odd horses waiting my arrival. The natives had already succeeded in stealing one prime horse. I sent back boats under La Framboise and 5 men and wrote Jno. McLoughlin. 17 and 18 employed giving horses to men with their loads. Sent off Mr. Black's(1) men with 1100 salmon as far as falls whence they will proceed in canoes to Nez Perces Ft.

19th. Gave call to collect horses and raise camp. 35 men in all assisted by Mr. McKay, who discovered an Indian stealing 2 (horses) which he secured. Followed banks of Columbia for 2 miles and bade it adieu. God grant we reach it again in safety. Course from Columbia S. E. 6 miles.(2) Many horses are wild and throw their loads. Indians are moving in all directions. Strict watch is kept day and night. The natives are already starving.

Tuesday, 20th. Raised camp early to avoid the heat of the day. S. W. distance 8 miles.(3)

Wednesday, 21st. Left our old tracks of last year for a fork of River of the Falls.(4) A fall 40 ft. high, 20 yds. wide. 2 wild horses made their escape into mountains and an Iroquois lost his with its load. Mr. McKay and 6 men are to go in search. 5 Indians visited us and returned a blanket stolen last year. Their numbers are few or they would not deal so fairly: distance 15 m. S. S. E.

Thursday, 22nd. The horse with his load was found neighing across the river last night; but not the two wild horses. Proceeded down River of the Falls to the Falls(5) where we found an Indian camp of 20 families. Finding a canoe also a bridge(6) made of slender wood we began crossing, 5 horses were lost thro' the bridge. I am informed the salmon do not ascend beyond these falls. Course N.W.

Friday 30. Gervais(7) and party of 8 men with horses and mules joins us.

Wednesday, 5th Oct. We had certainly a most providential escape. Last night the Indians crossed the river(8) and set fire to the grass within 10 yards of our camp. The watch perceived it and gave the alarm. Had there not been a bunch of willows to arrest it everything would have been lost; a gale blowing at the time. This morning every Indian had decamped. If ever Indians deserve to be punished these do. They were well treated and fed by us and in return attempted to destroy us. This is Indian gratitude.

Saturday, 8 Oct. At an early hour Mr. McKay with 25 trappers 2 horses each well loaded with traps started for the river discovered last summer by Sylville, 3 days from here. The different streams

here,(9) I am of opinion discharge in Day's River.

Tuesday, 11th Oct. Reached the river(10) and joined Mr. McKay. 18 beaver from the traps.

Sunday, 16 Oct. Having dried our lodges we followed the banks of the river till 1 p.m. when reaching 12 of our trappers we encamped. From this point 7 horses were stolen yesterday and two men wounded. Mr. McKay related the particulars. The night before last 3 Snake Indians stole 7 horses and crossing over a point of land to their surprise met Payette and Baptiste the Iroquois visiting traps. The latter pursued. The Indians offered no resistance and delivered up the horses. This did not satisfy the two men who demanded payment. The Indians offered 2 boats. This did not satisfy Baptiste who said "let us beat them well but not kill them" began with his whip handle. The Indians endured but becoming vexed one seized Bap. the other Payette. A scuffle ensued. One Indian was killed, both our men severely wounded, only saved themselves by flight leaving arms and horses. The Indians killed 4 of the stolen horses, then seeing a man coming made off with 3 horses, and guns and rifles of wounded men. The whole thing is disgraceful to us;(11) 65 beaver to-day; distance 10 miles.

Tuesday, 18 Oct. 134 beaver and 1 otter, a (Indian) woman missing from the camp. She is either lost or a victim to the Snakes--the men have gone in search of the missing woman, leaving their traps. Mr. McKay and party found the woman with her horses. Benighted, she had very prudently camped.

Saturday, 29 Oct. In the afternoon Mr. McKay and party arrived,(12) and reported--their Snake guide conducted them to a country of rivers and lakes, one of the latter the water is salt; its length they could not ascertain; it is a swampy country and the waters of this river as well as the other streams discharge into this lake. It must be low and deep to receive no less than 3 different streams without one discharging from it. Their traps they left from whence the party returned. As far as they could see, the country was level. The country is destitute of animals and we may prepare to starve altho' wild fowl seem to abound.

November, Tuesday 1st. At sunset we reached the lakes. A small ridge of land an acre in width divides the fresh water from the salt lakes. These two lakes(13) have no intercourse. The fresh water has an unpleasant taste 1 mile wide 9 long. In this (salt) lake discharge Sylvailles River and 2 small forks; but it has no discharge. Salt Lake at the south end is 3 miles wide. Its length at present unknown to us but appears to be a large body of saltish water. All hands gave it a trial but none could drink it. All the country is low and bare of wood except worm wood and brush. We had trouble finding wood to cook supper. The trappers did not see a vestige of beaver. Great stress was laid on the expedition visiting this quarter. Here we are now all ignorant of the country, traps in camp, provisions scarce prospects gloomy. Buffalo have been here and heads are to be seen. Fowl in abundance but very shy.

Wednesday 2nd. At an early hour Mr. McKay with a party started well loaded with traps following Salt Lake(14) west to ascertain its length; and if any rivers discharge into it. I await him here. The

rest of the men hunting fowls.

Thursday 3rd. From 4 a. m. snow has fallen. This will make it difficult for my 2 express men from Ft. Vancouver to find our tracks though every precaution was taken making marks at different camps, if only the Indians do not destroy these marks. It is incredible the number of Indians in this quarter. We cannot go 10 yds. without finding them. Huts generally of grass of a size to hold 6 or 8 persons. No Indian nation so numerous as these in all North America. I include both Upper and Lower Snakes, the latter as wild as deer, fit subjects for the missionary who could twist them in any form they pleased. What a fine field for the society; one equal to it not to be found. They lead a most wandering life. An old woman camped with us the other night; and her information I have found most correct. From the severe weather last year, her people were reduced for want of food to subsist on the bodies of relations and children. She herself had not killed any one but had fed on two of her own children who died thro' weakness. Unfortunate creatures what privations you are doomed to endure; what an example for us at present reduced to one meal a day, how loudly and grievously we complain; when I consider the Snake sufferings compared to our own! Many a day they pass without food and without a murmur. Had they arms and ammunition they might resort to buffalo; but without this region the war tribes would soon destroy them. This country is bare of beaver to enable them to procure arms. Indian traders cannot afford to supply them free. Before this happens a wonderful change must happen. One of Mr. McKay's party was sent back to request us to raise camp and follow his tracks. A chain of lakes was all they had seen, no game. Truly, gloomy are our prospects.

Friday, 4th Nov. Raised camp taking west course and soon reached the end of Salt Lake(15) not near so long as I expected, in some parts nearly 5 miles wide and deep, its borders flat and sandy. At evening, we camped near three small lakes. Swans numerous. Tho' 100 shots fired, not one killed. Nothing but worm wood this day. Salt ( ? ) Lake may be 10 miles in length. Mr. McKay and party arrived with the following accounts--no beaver, same level country a chain of lakes of fresh water. This adds to the general gloom prevailing in camp, with all in a starving condition, so that plots are forming (among) the Freemen to separate. Should we not find animals our horses will fall to the kettle. I am at a loss how to act.

Saturday, 5th Nov. Bad as prospects were yesterday they are worse to-day. It snowed all night and day. If this snow does not disappear our express men will never reach us. I hope they will not fall a prey to the Snakes. I intend to take the nearest route I can discover to the (16)Clammitte Country. My provisions and are fast decreasing. The hunters are discouraged. Day after day from morning to night in quest of animals; but not one track do they see.

Saturday, 12 Nov. 2 herds of antelope seen but the hunters did not get a shot. They were fortunate with a small black bear. This with 9 beaver and 1 otter infused general joy among all. Tracks of Indians seen not of old date. This gives hope of finding a river. Snow scarce for water. Tho' repeated attempts have been made to melt snow in skins, they will not drink. Two Indians give a hunter to understand, the river is still 3 days' march distant. Within the last 10 days we have had only 6 meals. It was now 2 mos. since we set out, and we have only 500 beaver.

Wednesday, 16th Nov. Ascended the divide(17) descended and had the pleasure of finding 2 lakes(18) one small the other large due west Salt Lake. These lakes are a God-send. It was a consolation to see our poor horses quench their thirst. Pines and hemlocks are the only trees. Numbers of bear tracks seen. This is the season bears seek winter lodgings and are fat. Our hunters came in without success.

Thursday, 17 Nov. Reached a river at sunset. It must discharge in the Clammitte Country or near the River of the Falls.

Friday, 18 Nov. Reached the River of the Falls so desired by us all. Thank God! The road to the Clammitte we all know.(19) 7 white tailed deer brought in.

November 25th, Friday. We had a view of the Umqua Mts. to-day, no snow on them.

Sunday, 27th Nov. We are to leave the River of the Falls and cross over to the waters of the Clammitte. One horse killed for food to-day. My provisions are nearly exhausted. The waters of the Clammitte do not discharge in the Columbia and must discharge in some river to the ocean. It is from this river I have hopes of beaver.

Wednesday, 30th Nov. Course south to Clammitt River(20) 25 miles from River of the Falls. Mr. McKay proceeded ahead to an Indian village distant 3 miles. It was composed of 20 tents built on the water surrounded by water approachable only by canoes, the tents built of large logs shaped like block houses the foundation stone or gravel made solid by piles sunk 6 ft. deep. Their tents are constantly guarded. They regretted we had opened a communication from the mountains. They said "The Nez Perces have made different attempts to reach our village but could not succeed. Even last summer we discovered a war party of Cayouse and Nez Perces in search of us; but they did not find us. Now they will have yr. road to follow. We have no fire arms. Still we fear them not."

They are well provided with bows and arrows. They have only one horse. Snow is so deep, horses perish for want of food. In winter, they live on roots. In summer on antelope and fish.

December 1st. 30 Clammite Indians paid us a visit; fine men in good condition, but wretchedly clad. They say the river to the ocean is far distant and beaver they do not know. They say the Indians become more numerous as we advance to the ocean.

Friday 2nd. Late last night I was overjoyed by the arrival of one of my express men. One of the men gone back in quest of horses discovered them, otherwise tho' the distance is only 4 miles, they would never have reached the camp. They could no longer walk or crawl. For 14 days they were without food; for 9 days without quenching thirst. Their horses were stolen on the River of the Falls by the Snakes. One mule escaped. On entering the lodge the man fell from weakness and could not rise. I immediately sent for the other man and about midnight they brought him in,

thank God, safe.

Saturday 3rd. 2 horses, killed for food; terrible storms of snow and sleet! What will become of us? Course S.

Tuesday 6th. Reached Indian village of five huts, hut large size square made of earth flat on top the door at the top a defence, against arrows but not balls. 200 of them collected about our camp and traded 4 days. The 2 chiefs delivered traps lost by Mr. McDonald last year with 8 beaver. This is much in favor of their honesty. On our march this day, we passed the camps from wh. Mr. McDonald turned back last year and are consequently strangers to the country in advance.

Thursday 8th. About 300 Indians around our camp. We advanced 6 miles south following the river south. I estimate the Clammitte nation 250 men.

Monday 12th. Reached the lake(21) 1 1/2 x 15 miles well wooded with maple and hazel; course S.

Sunday 25th, Christmas. I did not raise camp and we are reduced to one meal a day.

Saturday 31 Mr. McKay started in advance. Our hunters have no success. Discontent prevails. I gave rations to all. This closes the year; and my stock of provisions also. They have been measured out with a sparing hand. We have yet 3 mos. of winter. God grant them well over, and our horses escape the kettle! I have been the most unfortunate man; but the Lord's will be done!

1827, Sunday 1st. New Years commences with a mild day. The men paid me their respects. I gave each a dram and tobacco. Goat killed. Mr. McKay reports as far as he could see one chain of mountains and no water. Return we must to seek food.

Wednesday 18th. I am wretched! No beaver! The country trapped by Mr. Ross 3 years since(22) may yield a few beaver but will not give us big returns.

Sunday 22nd. Late last night two of my Iroquois came in with 7 deer. This news caused joy in camp.

Sunday 29th. We are indebted to the late American Fur Company for introducing rifles on the Columbia. From a gun of 10 shots, 1 only kills. There is waste of ammunition; course now N. N. W.

Friday, 10th Feb. The Indians here have a contemptible opinion of all traders. Of the numerous murders and thefts committed,(23) not one example has been made. Indians in general give us no credit for humanity, but attribute our not revenging murders to cowardice. When ever an opportunity offers of murder or theft, they allow it not to pass. I am of opinion if on first discovery of a strange tribe a dozen of them were shot, it would be the means of preserving many lives. Had this plan been adopted with the Snakes, they would not have been so daring and murdered 40 men.

The same is the case with all Indians. Scripture gives us the right to retaliate in kind on those who murder. If men have means of preventing, why not put the means in execution. Why allow ourselves to be butchered and property stolen by such vile wretches who are not deserving to be numbered among the living the sooner dead the better. Trappers would make hunts and traders become rich men. Here we are among the Sastise.(24) Course this day west. The stream(25) we are on has no connection with the Clammitte River; it flows south then west to a large river. These Indians know nothing of the ocean.

Mr. McKay roused me last night to say the Indians were on the point of attacking our camp. Our numbers amounting only to 8 men.

Sunday, 12 of February. The croaking of the frogs last night surprised me. This is certainly early. The weather has been cloudy. From appearances, we shall soon have rain. A number of Indians paid us a visit. There being 2 who understood the Clammitte language, that it(26) takes a western course. These forks have become a large river. The further we advance the more beaver will be found. These Indians eat beaver meat raw. Among the visitors was one who had only one arm. On questioning how he lost the other, he informed me he had been severely wounded in battle the wounds would not heal and were most painful, so he cut it off about 3 inches below the socket with his flint knife and an axe made of flint. It is 3 years since. He healed it with roots and is free from pain. He is about 30 years of age and of slender frame. 15 beaver to-day.

Monday 13 Mr. McKay roused me from sleep to say an Indian had arrived with word the Indians had assembled in numbers and were on the eve of attacking our camp. We were soon on the alert our number being only 8 men, the rest of camp afield, as half of my men had never fired shots, resistance would not last long. The night was very dark and blowing a gale. This morning our scalps and horses are safe. I am inclined to believe it was a false report, given to receive a reward. He will be disappointed. We all know Indians are treacherous, bloodthirsty. The sooner the exterminating system be introduced among them, the better. The rear party of trappers arrived tonight with 29 beaver.

Tuesday 14th. Wind blew a gale. If the ship destined for the Columbia be on the coast in this stormy weather, I should feel anxious for her. Having 40 beaver to skin and dress I did not raise camp. It is a pleasure to observe the ladys of the camp vieing who will produce on their return to Ft. Vancouver the cleanest and best dressed beaver. One of the trappers yesterday saw a domestic cat gone wild. It must have come from the coast. All the Indians persist in saying they know nothing of the sea. I have named this river Sastise(27) River. There is a mountain equal in height to Mount Hood or Vancouver, I have named Mt. Sastise. I have given these names from the tribes of Indians.(28)

Tuesday, 21st Feb. Late last night 7 of the 9 absent trappers made their appearance;(29) only 93 beaver and 9 otter. The Indians where they have been most numerous and friendly, villages built of planks, large enough for 30 families in each, fine large canoes resembling the Chinooks, have various trading articles from the American ships, they informed the men it was only 4 days to the

sea. The two missing men remained in the rear to trap.

Wednesday 22nd. We have this day 15 beaver, wh. completes our first 1000 and have 2 to begin our 2nd.

Thursday 23rd. The two absent men made their appearance with 14 beaver.

Saturday 25. Should we not find beaver soon, starvation will make its appearance. We have only 2 mos. more but they are the most to be dreaded in the mountains. I wish they were past and our horses escaped from the kettle. Some already complain of scarcity of food; but fortunately our camp contains many sick and while they remain so, will be the means of destroying less food. One woman is so ill she must be tied on a horse. Nor can we afford her any relief. A sick person in this country is not only a burden to himself but to all; and the Canadians are not overstocked with tender feelings.

Wednesday 29. I propose sending Mr. McKay to cross the Clammitte River,(30) and I shall proceed down this stream as far as we can go.

Thursday 1st Mar. Mr. McKay with 13 men separated from us. Payette, a steady man accompanied him. My party is 24. We left taking an east course to falls and cascades. Soon a village large enough to contain 100 families of Indians. On seeing us they ascended a hill with their women and children.

Friday 2nd. All are more or less without food. Traps set gave but 2 beaver. On an average we require 15 a day for food.

Monday 5th. Men killed 2 deer and report bears numerous. These gents will soon leave their winter quarters and ravage about in quest of food after 4 mos. of quiet.

Friday 9th. At early hour with aid of 2 small canoes crossed over Sasty River, all safe over by 4 P. M. Huts no sooner made than rain came in torrents. Our leather tents are in a rotten state and I can swear our blankets have not been dry for 20 days. I am afraid this rain will be snow in the Mtns.--and I apprehend for Mr. McKay. Indians troublesome and numerous. It is almost a sin to see the number of small beaver we destroy. Some of the females have no less than 5 young. This is the effect of traps. They spare neither male or female.

Sunday 11th. The trappers have come in with 72 beaver and 1 otter.

Tuesday, 13 Mar. We left the Sasty Forks in our rear taking W. N. W. 8 miles encamped by a lofty range of mountains. Had trouble to persuade our guide to ride nor would he till he made me promise to lead his horse. He had many falls and I was obliged to tie him on by ropes, wh. caused my men great diversion. All obliged to sleep out in pouring rain and without blankets. Not one complaint. This life makes a young man sixty in a few years. Wading in cold water all day, they

earn 10 shillings P. beaver. A convict at Botany Bay is a gentleman at care compared to my trappers. Still they are happy. A roving life suits them. They would regard it as a punishment to be sent to Canada. God grant some kind friend to succeed me, and I wd. steer my course from whence I came although I am a Canadian.

Thursday, 22 March. Reached a fine large river having crossed the mtns.(31) where we had to throw our horses over banks--storm of wind and rain saturated us--course W. Our guide went to visit the Indians and returned with the information the Umpqua chief with the trappers from Willamette has visited this region and taken all the beaver. These waters have no communication with Umpqua but discharge in Clammitte. Gervais with 4 men will trap the forks of this river, and open a way to Ft. Vancouver.

Monday, 26 March. The Indian guide saw a grizzly bear of large size, wh. the trappers fired at and wounded. The Indian requested the loan of a small axe with bow and arrows. Stripping himself naked, he rushed on the bear but paid dearly for his rashness. I do not suppose he will recover. He was injured in the head and lost one eye wh. was literally torn out. The bear remained in the bushes.

April 6. Retraced our crossing the Sasty River.

Sat. 7th April. We shall proceed slowly to Clammitte Lake and await Mr. McKay's party.

Sunday, 22nd April. Late this afternoon I was surprised by Mr. McKay's arrival. He left his party crossing over their furs. His success amounts to 735 beaver and otter taken on 2 small streams that discharged in Clammitte River. My returns now amount to 2230 beaver and otter. McKay's party were obliged to kill, their horses owing to their feet.

May 13th. Have sent Mr. McKay to explore the sources of the Willamette,(32) wh. to this day have not been discovered. This party with Gervais may collect some skins.

May 14. Mt. McKay will not go as I intended. We shall cross the mountains eastward.(33)

Wednesday, 23 May. I did not raise camp, but sent 6 men in different directions. One of the men hunting fowl saw an Indian on horse back on the opposite side of the river. He made signs to him to cross but the fellow disappeared. How vexing! Within the last 10 days, 3 horses have been killed for food.

Thursday 24. Two of the men report they found springs of fresh water ahead, south east. Of course I shall take that direction. Proceeded to the main stream of Salt Lake River. Crossed a stony point, reached the entrance of Salt Lake south of the lake level covered with worm wood. The men I sent in quest of Indians returned without success.

Friday, 25th May. Two fine mares dead from lack of water, the carcasses purchased by men for

food. Some of the men tried bathing in the lake but their limbs were as red as if pickled and I am without guides nor has a person in camp the slightest idea of where he is.

Sunday 27th. Our horses found scattered--all the men on the alert. They returned reporting 56 stolen. This was a blow I did not anticipate in this barren country nor could I credit it, and I gave orders to make strict search. At 9 all but 7 were found, the missing no doubt stolen as tracks have been discovered. Shd. the thieves be Snakes we may find a guide. Mr. McKay with 12 men pursued the tracks 5 of them were returned with word the thieves had gone east, then turned back on their tracks west taking stony ground to conceal their course. They followed to Upper Salt Lake River which they crossed tho' the water had risen 4 feet. Mr. McKay was the first to plunge in and 7 followed, the other 5 returned.

Monday, 28 May. At 8 A. M. 2 of McKay's men arrived with 2 of the stolen horses. The thieves from some high hill had seen the pursuit, and these horses being fatigued abandoned them. At 1 P. M. another man arrived with another horse. He left Mr. McKay at dawn of day with full hope of rescue.

Tuesday 29th. At 12 A. M. Mr. McKay and rest of his men arrived with 2 more of the horses. The thieves escaped with 2 only, and this owing to the cowardice of the 5 men who turned back, the thieves' camp consisted of 14 tents. I have done my duty examining this barren country, but our loss has been greater than our profit. The horses that pursued as well as those that were stolen can scarcely crawl.

Wednesday 30th. Proceeded along the border of Salt Lake east, then S. E. over a hilly country to a small fresh lake. The country appears to be a level plain covered with worm wood. The lake is 15 miles long, the south bank high and rocky, the east low and stony which lamed our horses so they can scarcely crawl. An Ibex killed to-day, and a young one taken alive. I shall feed it with mare's milk till we reach Ft. Vancouver.

Friday, June 1st. Rain all night; our course southeast over a level plain; I sent 3 men off in advance; they report no appearance of water; this is critical. I have no cause to complain of the conduct of the men, altho' obliged to subsist on horseflesh and scanty at that. Still the country must be explored as long as we find water or the means of advancing. Unfortunately this country has been too long neglected. We cannot advance till we find water. On the borders of these muddy lakes we found huts of Snakes, I suppose.

Saturday, June 2nd. At dawn of day I started 2 men to proceed S. E. to return tomorrow morning; as they have 2 meals, they will march all night and I wish them success. If we do not succeed in that direction, our starvation will be most distressing and in the extreme.

Sunday, 3rd of June. 8 A. M. The two men arrive and report so far as they have been, and the distance must be great, as they did not encamp, they only found water in a small lake at no distance from this, and the country they traveled over continued barren plains covered with worm

wood; no appearance of mountains and unfortunately for us, no river. No hope in that quarter. On receiving these tidings, I ordered the men off again in a northeast course, one to return this night or tomorrow if they found water, the other to proceed. At 9 A. M. they started. One-fourth of the party sick owing to the muddy, stagnant water. If I escape this year, I will not be doomed to endure another.

Monday 4th. At dawn of day the man arrived and reported he had found water and a high hill which he saw when we were here last fall.(34) On giving the call for our horses, two were found missing; their tracks seen; also Indians. At 9 A. M. we started northeast over a hilly and stony country; at 2 P. M. we reached a deep gully; finding water, encamped.

Tuesday, 5th June. 5 A. M. Advanced at a quick pace *saue qui peut*. At 3 P. M. we overtook our 2 absent men and camped, altho' water was scarce and muddy--over a dreary, desolate country, soil sandy and stony. Horses suffer from thirst.

Wednesday, 6th June. 6 A.M. N. N. E. over stony road. At 3 P.M. reached camp of last November, to the great joy of all, and now that we know where we are, we must look for beaver. To return to Ft. Vancouver with our present returns will be most galling.

Friday, 8 June. Did not camp until we reached the end of Salt Lake,(35) seen last fall. The water is very high. The waters of Sylvailles river and lakes discharge into it. The stench of the lake is terrible.

Tuesday 12. From illness unable to leave my bed and so continued to 22nd. During my illness the trappers have not been idle, collecting 74 beaver; but the Snakes are most numerous and daring, determined to steal Horses. The natives have destroyed in this region upwards of 60,000 [?] beaver, not one of which reached our forts.

Sunday, 24 June. Reached Sylvailles River and crossed; one horse stolen.

Tuesday, 26 June. Reached the source of River Malheur. Took 81 beaver, all in prime state, which I cannot explain except on account of moist climate.(36) The trappers have not averaged 100 beavers each this year.

Tuesday, 3rd July. Seven trappers left for upper part of Sandwich Island river.

Tuesday, July 10. Three of Payette's men back--seven men about 100 beaver; others are at Snake river, having crossed Frazer's [?] river. We have taken 300 beaver in the same time. The heat is terrible and all are short of food.

Monday, 16 July. Started at 6 A. M. and reached the Snake river below River Malheur.

Wednesday, 18 July. 5 A. M. Not wishing to lose any time at Ft. Nez Perce, I take my depar-

ture,(37) with 4 men to make necessary preparations, leaving Mr. McKay in charge of the party.

JOURNAL OF PETER SKENE OGDEN; SNAKE EXPEDITION, 1827-1828

(As copied by Miss Agnes C. Laut in 1905, from original in Hudson's Bay Company House, London, England)

August 24. Left Ft. Vancouver for the Snake Country with 28 trappers and hopes far from sanguine.

1st Sept. we reached Nez Perces,(2) on 5th Sept. set off.

Sept. 6, Friday. left Mr. Black and overtook the party encamped on W. Walow River 12 miles from fort.

Tuesday 10th. commenced crossing over the Blue Mtns; camped at 11 A. M. drenched in rain and fatigued from windfall. This is the best trail across the Blue Mtns. from the source of the Walla Walla.(3)

Friday 13th. All hands employed making poles for leather tents.

Saturday 14th. Reached Clay River(4) or River de Grande Ronde wh. discharges in s. branch of Columbia 2 days march from Nez Perces. A Cayouse reported a party of American trappers are on the way to Nez Perces Fort.

Tuesday 17th. Crossed over the Fork of Powder River and encamped on main branch.

Wednesday 19th. encamped on River Brule.(5)

Saturday 21st. Mr. McKay to explore sources of Sandwich Island River,(6) with 11 men.

Sunday 22nd. Camped opposite Wayer's (Wazer's)(7) River; commenced guarding our horses.

Wednesday 25th. Trappers report traps of strangers set along this river. Shortly after an American by name Johnson appeared and informed us he and 5 others were on this stream. Their party consists of 40 men with a band of Nez Perces working in the direction Mr. McKay has taken. My sanguine hopes of beaver here are blasted. I shall send Sylvaile with 5 men to Payette's River; and proceed to Burnt and Day's River. Encamped in company with the Americans. The trappers were in every direction in quest of beaver. The Americans will not part with one.(8)

Saturday 28th. Our traps gave but one otter. Before all were raised it was 10 A. M. Advanced south on the fork.(9) The Americans informed me it was their intention to follow me to the Columbia. I informed them I could not offer them better terms than my own men had. With this they were satisfied.

Sunday 6th Oct. Reached Reed's River.(10) I have little hope as the American trappers are every-

where.

Thursday 10th Oct. Only 9 beaver, consequently no longer necessary for us to remain. It was from Wazer's, Payette's and this river we expected our returns and they have produced only 140 beaver. I must now reach another quarter after junction with Mr. McKay. Course s. from Reed's River.

Sunday 13th Oct. reached Prairie de Camasse, a fine stream discharging in Reed's River; course south. It is from near this point the Snakes form into a body prior to their starting for buffalo; they collect camasse for the journey across the mountains. Their camp is 300 tents. In spring they scatter from this place for the salmon and horse thieving expeditions. Crossed streams that discharge in River au Malade. Sylvaile and party appeared with only 20 beaver.

Thursday, 17th Oct. Crossed Camasse plains and encamped at Sunset on fork of Malade River. (11) Here we found a camp of Americans, men of the same party who had joined us on Wazer's River.

Thursday Oct. 24. The Americans being in want of supplies, applied for trade. They consented to 1/4 less than Indian tariff. I obtained 13 large beaver, 19 small, 25 musquash; also received from Henry Goddin 35 large beaver in payment of his debt to the company. This man deserted 3 years ago.(12) Since the Americans have been with us they have taken only 13 beaver and are discouraged.

Sunday 27th Oct. The trappers had advanced with their traps but gone only half an hour when all returned having met a trapper who had been pursued by a party of Indians whether blackfeet or Snakes be could not tell. 6 absent since yesterday; I am uneasy. Course s. e.

November Thursday 1st. Reached the heights of land that separates Goddin's from Sickly (Malade) River, a steep ascent, most dangerous to man and beast, upwards of a foot of snow on top, the descent very gradual.

Friday 2nd November. Stormy weather prevented starting. It is my intent to amuse the American party now with us so that McKay's men may have time to trap the beaver where the Americans purpose going. As they are not aware of this, it is so much the more in our favor. Should McKay not appear at the appointed place Day's Defile there will grass for our horses and buffalo for our support.

Saturday 3rd. Followed down Goddin's River s. e. Ten buffalo killed this day. It is incredible the herds of antelope seen.

Wednesday 7 Nov. Reached the Fork of Salmon(13) River called by Mr. Rose Malade his men having been attacked with beaver illness here. S. E. 10 cows killed.

Saturday 10 Nov. Reached Day's River at the point where Mr. McKay was to come. There being no

buffalo nor a blade of grass I must push on. A camp of Snakes of upward Of 300 tents 1500 souls have been here 3000 horses. I must proceed to Snake River for food.

Sunday 11th. I left a note for Mr. McKay telling him what route to follow. Proceeded along Day's Defile following Day's River to Mr. McKenzie's(14) winter encampment. Hunters killed 5 cows.

Friday 16th Nov. Cold severe weather. At dawn we are in motion following Day's River over a barren plain till sunset when we reached the Great Barren Snake Plains in full view of Pilot Knob(15) also S. Knob in the centre of the plain, the former dividing the waters of Columbia from Missouri and Spanish River. The waters of Goddin's and Day's River disappear at the entrance of this plain and take a subterranean route to Snake River.

Sunday 18th. At three this morning all were in motion; 2 P. M. reached Goddin's River; see the tracks of a Snake camp. They have no doubt waited for the snow not daring to cross the plain without it. Course s. e.

Wednesday 21st. At 3 A. M. I gave the call.(16) At 6 A. M. started, At 7 P. M. all reached the fountain. found 7 of the Snake horses standing in the plain exhausted. This plain is not less than 50 miles across E. S. E.

Thursday 22nd. Reached Snake River at 11 A. M. crossed and camped on an island; 50 Snakes paid us a visit also 7 Nez Perce's lately with American trappers. If the Snakes are not too troublesome we shall remain some days.

Sunday 25th. The chief of the lower Snakes with 300 followers paid me a visit, by name The Horse. He carries an American flag. I made him the following presents, 1 calico shirt, 2 scalpers, 1 1/2 lb. ball, 1/2 powder, 1 looking glass, 1/4 lb. glass beads, 1 half axe, 2 awls, 3 flints. They departed but not without some petty thefts.

Wednesday 28. Encamped on Fork Portneuf River, which draws its waters from hot springs. We are now 3 miles from Blackfoot Hill,(17) 2 from Snake camp.

Friday 30th. This morning the Americans who have been in company with us since 18th Oct. started for Salt Lake.(18) The beaver we have traded from them exceed 100. During the time they have been with us, they have trapped only 26, so they lost more by meeting with than we have.

[US] Saturday, Dec. 1. The day and month have begun with a wild storm of wind and snow. 5 Snake tents have joined our camp. I had rather they kept at a distance as they answer as a screen for horse thieves. Our numbers are but 12 men; the Snakes exceed 1500. We are completely at their mercy. I am on good terms with the chiefs and will try to remain so. I feel most anxious in regard to McKay's party, also the man I left on Sickly River. Now 4 inches of snow on the plains which helps our horses' feet. No trapper can do justice to his traps unless he has 4 good horses. My party average this; but the horses too young to endure privations. One died today. Very severe

cold. The trappers came in covered with ice and nearly froze.

Tuesday 4 Dec. The Snake camp in motion towards Blackfoot Hill. A stolen trap restored to me today by the chief. It is the opinion of many that winters in the Snake country are mild; but the bareness of the plains causes us to feel the cold greater than it is. In my leather hut with only willows for fire I find it far from pleasant. We now number 900 beaver. We shall raise camp in quest of buffalo tomorrow.

Saturday 8 Dec. Followed down the fork to Portneuf River and this stream to its discharge on Snake River south and camped.(19) Have grass for our horses and wood for fires. It was my opinion that a trapper with his family could be fully equipped with a year's supplies for Snake country for L15, but I think now for blankets etc. it should be L25.

Friday, 14 Dec. It would relieve me to hear of Mr. McKay. Mr. S. McGillvray's party from the east side of the mtns.(20) if no accident has happened ought to be in the waters of Salmon River. If the same severe weather exists he will have to remain quiet till April and so lose the hunt. The hunters killed 12 buffalo, the greater part of the meat being left for the wolves and starving Snakes. The Snake camp 12 miles off laying up buffalo meat. Have never seen buffalo so numerous.

Thursday 20 Dec. At mid-day 2 Americans of a party of 7 arrived and informed me two days since they separated from Mr. McKay and party in Day's Defile with perhaps 500 beaver. He cannot cross the mts. owing to the snow and the weak state of his horses. These Americans traded 49 horses from the Nez Perces at an extravagant rate averaging \$50. They lost 19 crossing the plains from Day's Defile. They were obliged to eat 6. The Americans had 10 stolen by the Snakes; one American remained with Mr. McKay. They had commenced trapping Sandwich Island River when Mr. McKay joined them.

Friday 21st. The Americans left to join the camp at Blackfoot Hill.

Monday 24 Dec. Snow again last night. At an early hour, we were in motion ascending Snake River 2 miles and camped. The American party of 6 joined us, their leader a man named Tulloch(21) a decent fellow. He informed me his company would readily enter into an agreement regarding deserters. He informed me the conduct of Gardner's at our meeting 4 yrs.(22) since has not been approved. Tulloch speaks highly of the treatment he received from McKay. I shd. certainly be shocked if any man of principle approved of such conduct as Gardner's.

Tuesday 25 Dec. Arrival of one of our men from Sickly River relieves me of anxiety. He reports they have 100 beavers and are not far. Our total number of beaver exceeds my expectations.

1828 January 1. The men paid me their respects and were politely received. The Americans followed the example and received the same treatment. The Americans leave for Salt Lake. The hunters are now making snow shoes as the depth of snow keeps increasing. The others pass their time in gambling. No cards are sold to the men at Ft. Vancouver. Still they procure them.

Saturday 5th Jan. It has ceased snowing but continues to blow a gale from the North. One of the party who accompanied the Americans as far as the source of Portneuf River arrived this A. M. and reported snow not so deep in that quarter numerous herds of buffalo crossing and recrossing. They have hope of succeeding in reaching Salt Lake. If so we may see them again 15 days. It is more than probable one of the chief traders<sup>(23)</sup> of the company will return with them to arrange about deserters. This would be most desirable. Altho' our trappers have their goods on moderate terms, the price of their beaver is certainly low compared to Americans. With them, beaver large and small are averaged @ \$5 each; with us \$2 for large and \$1 for small. Here is a wide difference. All to their liberty to trade with the natives. It is optional with them to take furs to St. Louis where they obtain \$5 1/2. One third of the American trappers followed this plan. Goods are sold to them at least 150 Pc. dearer than we do but they have the advantage of receiving them in the waters of the Snake country. An American trapper from the short distance he has to travel is not obliged to transport provisions requires only 1/2 the number of horses and very moderate in his advances. For 3 years prior to the last ones, General Ashley transported supplies to this country and in that period has cleared \$80,000 and retired, selling the remainder of his goods in hand at an advance of 150 P cent, payable in 5-years in beaver @ \$5 P beaver, or in cash optional with the purchasers. Three young men Smith, Jackson and Subletz purchased them,<sup>(24)</sup> who have in this first year made \$20,000. It is to be observed, finding themselves alone, they sold their goods 1-3 dearer than Ashley did, but have held out a promise of a reduction in prices this year. What a contrast between these young men and myself. They have been only 6 yrs. in the country and without a doubt in as many more will be independent men. The state of uncertainty I am now in regarding the absent men and McKay's party and the gloomy prospects for a spring hunt make me wretched and unhappy.

Wednesday 16th. The Americans are anxious to procure snow shoes, and I am equally so they should not as I am of opinion they are anxious to bring over a party of trappers to this quarter. I have given orders to all not to make any for the Americans. This day they offered \$25 for one pair \$20 for another but failed. 5 men traded leather with the Snakes.

Friday 18 Jan. I proposed to one of the trappers to set off in quest of Mr. McKay and he consented without hesitation. The Americans continue offers for snow shoes but without success.

Sunday 20th. Early this morning, Portneuf started to find Mr. McKay. I have given him information of the country with a map of the different streams. If McKay be on Goddin's River or Salmon River, I am in hopes he will find him. He would not consent to any one accompanying him, apprehending loss of time and discovery by Blackfeet. He is well provided with blankets and ammunition. I forwarded a general letter to the Columbia by him asking Mr. McKay to forward it to the Flat Heads. Tullock, the American, who failed to get thro' the snow to Salt Lake tried to engage an Indian to carry letters to the American depot at Salt Lake. This I cannot prevent. It is impossible for me to bribe so many Indians with my party. I have succeeded in preventing them from procuring snow shoes. The Indian trade of the Columbia is one third less than it was. In Thompson River district not more than 200 skins were traded at the fort, and the returns not more than

2000. At present not one. These returns were procured by sending traders in every direction.

Tuesday 22 Jan. A Snake arrived and informed the American trader one of their caches had been stolen by the Plains Snakes. From the manner he describes the place, no doubt remains of its being stolen. In my mind this fellow is one of the thieves. Property in it valued at about \$600. How long will the Snakes be allowed to steal and murder I cannot say. The Americans are most willing to declare war against them and requested if they did in the spring would I assist them. To this I replied, if I found myself in company with them I would not stand idle. I am most willing to begin but not knowing the opinion of the Company it is a delicate point to decide. Acting for myself, I will not hesitate to say I would willingly sacrifice a year or two to exterminate the whole Snake tribe, women and children excepted. In so doing I could fully justify myself before God and man. Those who live at a distance are of a different opinion. My reply to them is: Come out and suffer and judge for yourselves if forbearance has not been carried beyond bounds ordained by Scripture and surely this is the only guide a Christian sh'd follow. A hunter today killed 22 antelope by driving them in a bank of snow and knifing them, not allowing one to escape. 200 of antelope have been killed wantonly in the last week, for not more than 1/4 of the meat has been brought to camp. No place is more suitable for a large party to winter than this.

Wednesday 23rd. The American is now very low spirited. He cannot hire a man to go to his cache nor snow shoes, nor does he suspect that I prevented. This day he offered 8 beaver and \$50 for a pair and a prime horse to anyone who would carry a letter to the American camp. In this also he failed. I have supplied the American with meat as they cannot procure it without snow shoes. The Americans are starving on Bear River according to report, no buffalo in that quarter, they are reduced to eat horses and dogs. We could not learn from Indians if the American traders had come up from St. Louis.

Friday 25th. Snow and storms continue, a terrible winter. A man who went in quest of lost traps arrived with reports of fearful distress of the Americans. Horses dead, caches rifled. I believe this as a trapper saw calico among the Snakes, traded from the Snakes of the Plains. The Americans are determined to proceed but find it is to no purpose these extravagant offers. They are making snow-shoes themselves wh. they ought to have done 2 wks. ago. I cannot ascertain the motive of their journey south. I dread their returning with liquor.<sup>(25)</sup> A small quantity would be most advantageous to them but the reverse to me. I know not their intentions but had I the same chance they have, long since I would have had a good stock of liquor here, and every beaver in the camp would be mine. If they succeed in reaching their camp they may bring 20 or 30 trappers here which would be most injurious to my spring hunt. As the party have now only 10 traps, no good can result to us if they succeed in reaching their depot and returning here. We have this in our favor; they have a mountain to cross, and before the snow melts can convey but little property from the depot as with horses they cannot reach here before April.

Saturday 26. The Snakes have now about 400 guns obtained in war excursions against Blackfeet and from trappers they have killed and stolen caches. In the plunder of Reid's Fort,<sup>(26)</sup> they secured 40. Still these villains are allowed to go unmolested In any other part of the world, the guilty

are punished in England a man is executed. Power gives the right. Here we have both power and right, but dare not punish the guilty. Were proper statements sent to England or to the Honorable Hudson's Bay Com. I am confident greater power would be granted to Indian traders; and surely they would not make an improper use of them. This is the plan the American gentlemen adopt with tribes on the Missouri; the Spanish also. The missionaries have done but little: and murders are no longer heard of among the Spaniards. Threats are of no avail among the Snakes.

Sunday 27th. The Americans expect to start tomorrow. Their snow shoes are poor make-shifts and will give them trouble. It will be a month before they can return. Meanwhile there will be no beaver skins left among the Snakes.

Monday 28. At midnight we were surprised to see Portneuf make his appearance. This man set out on the 20th to carry despatches to Mr. McKay and since his departure has only reached Goddin's River wh. distance with our weak horses we performed in 2 1/2 camps. On reaching the river he broke the cock of his rifle. Depth of snow, slow progress, sore eyes, he considered it wisest to return. This is a cruel blow to my prospects. I shall make another attempt by sending three men as soon as I can have snow-shoes made. Only 3 men here have ever seen Salmon River. One is next to blind, the other 2 lame. One of the latter must go. Two Americans this day started for Salt Lake. They are not sanguine; as the man I sent out has failed. They have an arduous task, wretched snow-shoes and this is the first time they ever used them. I sent men with them as far as the Indian village, as they intend sleeping there to-night (in case of stray beaver skin). The ice is very weak. One of the Americans had a narrow escape, a minute more and he would have gone. He made a noble struggle for his life.

Wednesday 30th I fear the man I sent with the Americans has gone off with them. I sent a messenger to the Indian village after him.

Thursday 31. The absent man arrived.

February 1. Men started with express in quest of McKay.

Monday 4th. The 2 Americans who left on 28th unexpectedly made their appearance. Most agreeable to me but a cruel disappointment to them. They could only reach the sources of Portneuf River, whence they returned.

Wednesday 6th. The Americans again making preparations to start for their depot. From precautions taken they may succeed and reach Salt Lake. This will be their third attempt, and they will have no time to lose if they are to return for the spring hunt.

Sunday 10. Men who started in quest of McKay arrived. Again have they failed. Their guide had to return on account of lameness. They reached Day's Defile. I am obliged to make another attempt. It is impossible to make spring arrangements without McKay's party. My men will start again. The 2 Americans again set out for their cache. It is laughable, so many attempts on both sides and no

success. Was it not I feared a strong American party here I shd undertake the journey myself and would succeed.

Tuesday 12th Feb. At dawn of day Payette and 2 men set out in quest of McKay. A war party of Blackfeet has taken the direction of Salt Lake. The Americans left here are alarmed at the news not only on account of the two men but for their camp in that quarter. The Americans have only 24 horses left, the rest dead from cold & of the 50 they brought I have no hope one horse can escape, though covered with robes each night. It will be difficult to reach Nez Perce's without them. The distance from this place to Burnt River is 400 miles, with the exception of 80 the navigation is good and with time we could pack our property over this distance.

Saturday 16th. The 2 Americans arrived this afternoon accompanied by one of their traders,(27) and 2 men they met on Portneuf River near the source. They report a fight with the Blackfeet and old Pierre the Iroquois who deserted from me 4 yrs. ago was killed and cut in pieces. Pierre owes a debt to the company but as we have a mortgage on his property in Canada we shall recover. Their traders from St. Louis did not arrive last fall owing to the severe weather in Salt Lake region. All except the freemen of the Flat Heads reached the depot safely. The loss in horses by Blackfeet has been 60. It was a novel sight in this part of the world to see a party arrive with dogs and sleds; for seldom are 2 in. of snow to be found here. They informed me His Royal Highness the Duke of York was dead, and of course the old story that we shall soon be obliged to leave the Columbia. At all events tho' they have later news than I have, the treaty(28) does not expire before November. Then we shall know what to expect.

Monday 18th. By the arrival of the Americans we have a new stock of cards in camp, eight packs. Some of the American trappers have already lost upwards of \$400 equal to 200 beavers, or to the Americans 800 beavers. Old Goddin who left me in the fall is in a fair way of going to St. Louis having sold his 8 horses and 10 traps for \$1500. He has his fall and spring hunt equal to 600 more wh. makes him an independent man. In the H. B. service with the strictest economy barring accidents in the course of 10 years he might collect that sum. it surprising men, give preference to the American service and pay extravagant prices for beavers?

Tuesday 19th. More rain. The Americans are making preparations to go to the Flat Heads. Their trader, Mr. Campbell, informed me 2 of their trappers Goodrich and Johnson who joined my camp last fall are heavily indebted to his concern. I replied I had no knowledge of the same and that it was his duty to secure his men and debts also. I said my conduct to them was far different from theirs to me four years since.(29) He said it was regretted; that there was no regular company otherwise I shd. have received compensation. It may be so. At all events, dependent on me, they cannot acknowledge less. I have acted honorable and shall continue so.

Wednesday 20th. The 2 trappers are to return to the Americans. 30 tents of Snakes are starving near us. Stormy weather prevents the Americans attempting to cross the Barren Plains.

Saturday 23rd. American party left for the Flat Heads and perhaps the Kootenays. They have a

long journey but are well provided, tho' very silent regarding the object of the journey. I believe they intend trapping the forks of the Missouri for which they are strong enough in numbers. Two of our horses dying a day from cold.

March 1828. Cloudy cold weather. Scarcely risen when Payette made his appearance with 2 of McKay's men. He found McKay camped on the forks of Salmon River. He had sent 3 times in quest of us, but without success. He reports beaver 350, loss of horses 8. They found snug winter quarters, buffalo numerous, only 6 inches of snow. The men arrived snow blind.

Monday 3rd March. Two Americans off for Salt Lake. They do not intend to return. The Indian who started last fall with my express for McKay, and did not reach him, and I concluded he is dead. I wish my letter could reach the Columbia before the spring express starts for York.

Monday 17. The Americans now 5 in number more or less starving do not attempt to take beaver but gamble from morning to night. May they continue. My trappers are not idle. One canoe is finished; preparations for 2 more. Will take beaver with our canoes.

Wednesday 26 March. Americans with us since December departed for Salt Lake. We separated on good terms.

Thursday 27. Two Americans arrived from Salt Lake surprised not to find their party here, whom they came to assist across the mountains. They intend going to the Utahs and started for Portneuf River. Two of McKay's men arrived with a letter. He cannot reach Day's Defile owing to the great depth of snow. He despairs of joining me. It will be impossible for us to go to Henry's Fork. Our numbers are too weak to face the war tribes. I have ordered McKay to try and join me.

Saturday 30th. Moved to Portneuf River opposite the American camp.

Tuesday 1st Ap. Encamped at Snake River.

8th Tuesday. I have appointed Sylvaille to trap Sickly River with 6 men to be at Nez Perces by end of July.

Tuesday 17 April. Encamped Snake River 100 yds. from Benoit's grave. I warned the trappers to on guard against the Blackfeet. I have doubled day and night guard owing to the Blackfeet across the river.

Wednesday 23rd. Encamped on Blackfoot Hills.

Thursday 24th. Have completed our 2nd M of beaver, independent of McKay's success. If no accident happens Sylvaille's part, I might reach Vancouver with 4000. I have only 16 men and dare not go to the source of these streams.

Friday 25th Ap. Fine weather at last, 2 of the trappers arrived having narrowly escaped the Blackfeet. I wish to God McKay's party would make their appearance, and relieve my anxiety. Shd. an accident happen us all is lost.

Sunday 27 Apr. Crossed Blackfoot Hills and camped opposite side Blackfoot River near to discharge in south branch. From the top of Blackfoot Hill I could see plainly the Barren Plains of Three Knobs and entrance of Day's Defile no appearance of snow. At a loss to account for McKay's delay.

Tuesday 6 May. Began retracing steps for Ft. Vancouver from entrance of Blackfoot River. Heard 5 shots across river, sent to reconnoitre and found 5 of McKay's men who reported that gentleman 5 miles distant. They have been detained by snow.

Thursday 8th. McKay and party arrived with 440 beaver. This strengthens us against the Blackfeet.

Saturday 10th May. Fine weather; saw the track of a large band of horses and suspect the Blackfeet have stolen them from the Americans. The day guard called to arms and at a distance we saw an armed party on horseback making for our camp. In a second we were in readiness and having secured horses advanced to

meet them but in lieu of Blackfeet they proved to be Plains Snakes returned from Henry Forks. They report 2 days since raiding a party of Blackfeet. In the loot were clothes, hunters hats shoes etc horses belonging to the Americans who wintered with us. The furs were left on the plains. A convincing proof the Americans have been murdered and pillaged, knowing how blood thirsty the Bl. are and how careless the Americans. The sight of this caused gloom in camp. We may be doomed to the same fate. God preserve us. The Snakes are on the way to Salt Lake to find Americans there and obtain reward for restoration of property.

Saturday 24. Again a stormy night of rain. Trappers started at an early hour and soon 2 arrived with the alarm Blkft! that Louis La Valle was killed within half a mile of camp. I gave orders to secure the horses and sent McKay with 12 men to rescue 4 trappers in the same direction fearing they were also killed. At mid day he returned with the body of the deceased wh. he found naked on the plains but not scalped. The absent trapper also came in with him. After the Blk. had killed La Valle they were discovered by the trappers, who hid. The war party 60 in number have come from Salt Lake. They had a bale wrapper with the Am. Co's name on it. I had the body interred-valuable smart loss. He leaves a wife and 3 children, destitute.

(The month of June spent in crossing back over the mountains.)

Tuesday 8 July. At dawn of day Mr. McKay left with a man preceding us to Sandwich Island River to find Sylvaille whom he found at the Indian Fish Pen. Two had gone to Nez Perces and they had been attacked by 150 Blkft. on May 20 one woman killed. one Blkft. killed all horses lost but 650 beaver concealed in a cache on Sickly River.

---

Monday 14 July. Left South Branch of Snake River and reached Burnt River; joined by 40 Indians on the way to the fort.

Thursday 17 July. Reached powder River were met by 20 men sent from Nez Perces by Mr. Black. The interior brigade,(30) has not yet reached Fort Nez Perces. Leaving the brigade in charge of F. Payette, I shall to-morrow leave for the fort.

Saturday 19th. Reached Nez Perces--all well.

Tuesday 22nd July. Brigade arrived safe. Mr. McKay's party will join us at Ft. Vancouver. So ends my 4th trip to the Snake Country and I have to regret the loss of lives. The returns far exceed my expectations.

Journal of Peter Skene Ogden; Snake Expedition, 1828-1829

(As copied by Miss Agnes C. Laut in 1905, from Original in Hudson's Bay Company House, London, England.)

September Monday 22nd. This day at 8 A. M. I took my departure from Fort Nez Perces once more for the Snake Country. at 3 P. M. I joined my party at the foot of the mountains(1) waiting my arrival. We are well provided regarding horses and traps but of indifferent quality. I am confident if we find beaver we shall always find ways of conveying them to Columbia River.

Tuesday 23rd. At sunrise horses were assembled two found missing as we have a long days march and hard roads, I gave orders to start, remaining in the rear to look for the strays, one of the men requested to return to the fort for medicine this I granted. At 10 we found the lost horses and I overtook camp in the middle of the mountain, 9 of our horses gave out.

Wednesday Ag. 24. Our horses were soon found. At 7 A. M. we started and reached the entrance of Grand Rondeau(2) at sunset all safe with the exception of 3/2 bg of pease lost by a horse taking fright.

Thursday 25th. Late in the night, the sick man arrived from the fort. He obtained some relief. I recd a few lines from Mr. Black. He has no complaint. We remained to make our tent poles(3) beyond this is no wood fit for the purpose. Two of the trappers started with traps. Hunters also started in pursuit of game but returned without success.

Friday 26th. Started at an early hour 6 A. M. and encamped on the Grand Ronde at 2 P. M. our horses fatigued, 8 in the rear -- wild horses are very unfit for a long journey. Two trappers joined us with 4 beaver.

Saturday 27th. Started at 7 A. M. crossed the Grand Ronde, ascended high stony hills advanced 6 miles, encamped on a small creek, 12 trappers started with their traps. They are to join us in 2 days.

Sunday Sept 28th. Reached the fork of Powder River. Trappers came in with 9 beaver.

Monday Sept 29. Encamped on Powder River; heat very great; 7 beaver.

Tuesday 30th Sept. Sent off 6 men with lodges to Burnt River from thence to go up River Malheur where we shall meet. Also sent off 5 men across country to rejoin us on the forks of Malheur. It is only by dividing that returns can be made. Encamped at the Fountain.(4) One trap gave us 11 beaver.

Wednesday 1st Oct. Encamped on fork of Burnt River.

Thursday 2nd Oct. Encamped half way down Burnt River, a hilly country; 10 beaver.

Sunday 5th. Appointed Payette and 7 trappers and 3 Indians to proceed to north and south branches. In case of seeing Americans I gave Payette a small trading assortment.

Monday 6th. did not reach unfortunate Malheur River till 4 P. M. At this point a Snake Indian was to assist as guide but so far no sign.

Thursday 9th Oct. One of the 5 men who started on the 20th arrived with word 8 of their horses were stolen 2 nights ago, and success in beaver is not great. In three days I shall join this party.

Saturday 11th Oct. At dusk reached a small fall of River Malheur a stony hilly road.

Friday 17 Oct. One of the party who separated from us on Powder River arrived. I shall proceed to Sandwich Island River. Our trip gave us 7 beaver.

Sunday 26th Oct. Started at day break. Advanced six miles. Reached a long lake,(5) not suspecting the water was salt we advanced, when discovering it, we were obliged to retrace our steps to a small brook and camped at 4 P. M. having travelled all day to little purpose. Course S. E.

Monday 27th. Started at 7 A. M. following the banks of Salt Lake 9 miles long 4 wide without a discharge. We passed a hot spring in a boiling state strong smell of sulphur, tracks and huts of Indians. All have fled.

Saturday 1st November. Started at 7 A. M. our tracks this day between mountains on both sides over a plain covered with worm wood. The men saw 2 Indians whom they secured and brought to camp. More stupid brutes I never saw nor could we make him understand our meaning. Gave him a looking glass and his liberty. In less than 10 minutes he was far from us.

Monday 3rd. Had not advanced 3 miles when we found 3 large lakes covered with wild fowl, The water's have the taste of Globular salts.

Tuesday 4th Nov. The three men in advance discovered 4 Indians one of whom directed them to follow the trail to a large river and he advanced some distance with them, then deserted. A cold night. Reached a bend of the river and camped. Indians are most numerous, their subsistence grass roots and wild fowl. They fly in all directions. We are the first whites they have seen and they think we have come with no good intentions.

Wednesday 5th Nov. Sent out 6 men to ascend the mountains in the highest parts and reconnoitre, followed the Indian back to the sources of the river. Passed the night without supper or sleep unable to come back to camp.

FridaY 7 Nov. At 7 A. M. we crossed over the river wh. from running thro' a number of lakes I have named River of the Lakes, although not a wide stream certainly a long one.

Saturday 8 Nov. Crossed a plain and reached a stream similar in size to the River of the Lakes. The banks of the river are lined with huts and the river has natives most numerous.

Sunday 9th Nov. One of the hunters in advance returned with word this river discharges into a lake no water or grass beyond only hills of sand. Reached the lake and camped. Surprised to find tho' the river discharges in the lake and takes a subterranean passage it appears again taking an easterly course. Had not advanced 4 miles when a large stream appeared lined with willows. So glad was I to see it that at the risk of my life, over swamps, hills and rocks, I made all speed to reach it and the first thing I saw was a beaver house well stocked.

Monday 10th Nov. Long before dawn of day every trap, trapper was in motion. As dawn came the camp was deserted, success to them. I gave orders for all to ascend the river as the season is now advanced we may expect the river to be frozen. Should this river flow to Sandwich Island River I trust we shall have full time to trap it.

Tuesday 11th. To ascertain if possible what course this river takes, I started at daylight and continued down the river till one P. M. As far as I could see, it must return from whence it came. Found trappers had arrived at night with 50 beavers.

Thursday 13th. Had a cold night. Half our trappers absent. Those that came in brought 30 beaver. 6 Indians paid us a visit and traded 3 beaver. On asking what they had done with other skins, they pointed to their shoes and examination showed them to be made of beaver. This accounts for beaver being so wild. They told us toward the sources we shall find beaver more numerous.

Monday 17th Nov. Started with the camp to find grass for the horses. Advanced 6 miles 6 of the trappers came in with 41 beaver. The river is scarce of wood.

Tuesday 18 Nov. At this season last year, we were surrounded by snow and ice. Weather is mild as September and the rattlesnakes have not yet gone. This gives us hope the winter will be mild.

Wednesday 19 Nov. At 8 A. M. we started following the stream advanced 10 miles and encamped as usual on the banks of the river lined with deserted Indian villages, no less than 50 tents. 150 Indians paid us a visit, miserable looking wretches, with scarcely any covering, the greater part without bows and arrows without any defence. They were fat and in good condition. Six trappers came in with 58 beaver, and 10 traded from the Indians make 68. They report the river lined with Indians. On our arrival, they took us for a war party but are now convinced we war only on the beaver. They annoy us and have stolen 2 traps. By following us they make the beaver very wild.

Thursday 20th Nov. Again 60 beaver to skin and dress. I wish the same cause may often detain us. Recovered one trap. 300 Indians around our camp: very peacable. This river takes a southern

course.

Saturday 22nd. 52 beaver; the river still fine; dead water and willows in abundance: gale of wind from the south and appearances of rain.

Sunday 23rd. Rain: three Snake Indians arrived and informed us they were from the Twin Falls(6) of the Snakes and that 2 mos. since 6 Americans had been killed there, by the Snake camp. I am confident it is not Payette's Party, as they were not to go in that direction. Course south, mountains visible in all directions. We need 200 to complete our 1st thousand beaver.

Tuesday 25th Nov. stormy night: 2 inches of snow. Bad weather and the arrival of one of the trappers late last night dangerously ill prevented us raising camp. This poor man stands but a slight chance of recovery.

Wednesday Aug 26th. The sick man dangerously ill. On requesting if we could raise camp he replied he could not move and requested us as an act of charity to end his sufferings by throwing him in the river. I am not of opinion he will recover. Yet he may linger for days.

Saturday 29th. Trappers started at dawn of day. I wish it was in my power to follow them but the sick man cannot stir.

Thursday 4 Dec. Cold, severe. Sick man no better. If the weather would moderate I would make an attempt to move. It is the general opinion he cannot survive. At all events by care and attention we shall not hasten his death, nor prevent recovery; but are in a critical situation, our horses starving, our provisions low. Granting it may hasten the death of our sick man, we have no alternative left. God forbid it should hasten his death. At the same time the interests of the others who are now becoming most anxious from the low ebb of provisions must be attended to. So long as they had food, there was no murmur. Now it is the reverse and I cannot blame them.

Saturday 6th Dec. With 2 men to assist the sick man, we raised camp, had a fire made and place cleared for his arrival. He did not suffer more than usual. One Snake tells us we shall soon reach buffalo.

Monday 8th. At 9 A. M. we started. I gave the sick man 2 men to assist him and lead his horse, taking every precaution to have him well covered with robes and blankets as from the cold and our having a long point of land to cross over, we had a hilly road, snow 2 ft. deep, camp 3 P. M. Shortly after one of the men in charge of the sick man arrived and reported the horse had become so fatigued they could not advance. I sent off 2 horses to their aid. About 7 P. M. they arrived. He does not complain of having suffered. Course S. E.

Tuesday 9th. From the sufferings of the man during the night, it was impossible to raise camp. Cold most severe. The river fast bound with ice. Provisions very low. Not a track of an animal to be seen.

Wednesday 10th. Cold. 2 men came forward this A. M. and volunteered to remain with the sick man as the latter requested I would consent to go on without him in quest of provisions and not apprehending danger from natives, I gave my consent. In fact there was no alternative. It is impossible for the whole party to remain here and feed on horse flesh for four months. 100 would scarcely suffice, and what would become of us afterwards? I secured an Indian to accompany us as guide, informing them of our intention to return and not to molest those I left behind, otherwise I would not only retaliate on them, but on the one who accompanied us. I gave the men a bag of pease and a 3 yr. old colt and strict orders of every precaution for their safety. At 10 A. M. we started along the banks of the River: crossed over on the ice and camped at sunset.

Thursday 18 Dec. At 9 A. M. we started. Travelled over a level country until 2 P. M. when we crossed over a large range of high hills and descended a very high hill where we reached a fine level plain with scarcely any snow. Here we found a small lake and encamped at dusk. Course east. Our guide informed us we were near the Uta Country not far distant from Salt Lake. I am fully aware we shall find nothing but salt water not palatable in our starving state.

Friday 19th Dec. 10 A. M. started north east over a barren plain covered with worm wood at a good pace till night when finding snow in abundance I camped. 2 horses killed for food. A gloomy barren country. Except for tracks of wolves no other animals seen.

Sunday 21st. Our guide informed me by starting at an early hour we would find water for camp, which our horses stand greatly in need of. Tho' we travelled as fast as our worn out horses could, it was night ere we crossed the plain and reached a small brook and piercing the ice found the water too salt to drink but by melting the ice it was tolerable. This day the (\_\_\_) killed an antelope. A large herd seen but very wild.

Monday 22nd. Our horses appeared to relish the salt water for we had difficulty driving them from it. At 2 P. M. fell on a large Indian track of not long since Snakes wh. appear to be travelling in the same direction as we, no doubt in pursuit of the same object.

Tuesday 23rd. It was fortunate we had a track. Otherwise from the fog we should have been obliged to remain in camp.

Wednesday 24th. Our guide quarrelled over horses and deserted.

Friday 26th. Had a distant view of great Salt Lake. heavy fogs around it. Country is covered with cedars. From the tracks, buffalo must be abundant. At present none. On the eve of camping we were surprised to see our guide come in with a cheerful countenance. He informed us he had seen an Indian who reported buffalo, not far off. I trust this is true, as we are wretched reduced to skin and bone. Hunters killed 3 antelope. This will assist, tho' poor food at this season, but far preferable to horse flesh that die of disease.

Sunday 28th. With my consent 8 men started in advance in quest of food, the party having been three days without food. Here we are at the end of Great Salt Lake having this season explored one half of the north side of it and can safely assert as the Americans have of the south side that it is a barren country destitute of everything. Continued over a barren plain. Seeing it was impossible to reach the mountains we encamped.

Monday 29th. Late ere our horses were found. Had not advanced more than half a mile when we found 2 springs of fresh water for our poor horses. We continued till 3 P. M. when we reached the mountains and camped. Here again disappointed, no water. One of our horses fell down so weak and reduced he could rise no more. I had him killed and the meat gave those most in want. To be reduced to food of diseased horses is not desirable.

Tuesday 30th. Descended into a level plain and found 2 camps of Snake Indians who can give little assistance in provisions. The men who started on the 28th succeeded in killing 2 buffalo. There was no appearance of any herd. Indians numerous but not troublesome.

1829 Thursday 1 Jan. One of the trappers left in charge of the sick man arrived with his horse fatigued and informed me that our sick man Joseph Paul died 8 days after we left suffering most severely, a young man only 29, steady and a first rate trapper. There remains now only one man of all the Snake men of 1829.(7)

All have been killed with the exception of 2 who died a natural death and are scattered over the Snake Country. It is incredible the number that have fallen in this country. I sent 2 horses back to assist the remaining man to camp.

Saturday 3rd. This day kept by all as a feast and I gave all a dram and a foot of tobacco per man. I purpose remaining to rest our horses. They would require a month to have their feet healed.

Sunday 4 Jan. Two men in the rear arrived but a woman two children and one pack of beaver 9 traps and 6 horses have been lost for 3 days. Among so many Indians I apprehend the worst and sent 4 men to the place she was last seen. Four Indians arrived well armed. Traps gave 11 beaver as good fur as in the Columbia.

Monday 5th Jan. Truly glad to see the lost women with all the property. She blames herself for having gone astray. Day after she lost our tracks she fell in with 2 Indians who behaved most kindly towards her, defended her property from other Indians who attempted to molest her and rendered her every assistance. It is strange there should be beaver here as the Americans have been in this country for 4 years. I cannot ascertain if this stream,(8) discharges in Salt Lake or in Bear River. 14 beaver. I omitted to assert that I sent 10 Indians to Snake River with a letter addressed to Mr. C. Grant intimating I could not form a union with him owing to the low state of my horses recommending him to the South Branch,(9) sending this letter by a Snake Chief, but they inform me there are no traders in that quarter. So I suppose the York Factory(10) Snake expedition has been retarded; and the accounts they give of the Americans corresponds with the traders here -- they had all gone towards the Flat Head Country probably to the Blackfeet; no

buffalo in the Snake River; but Blackfeet numerous.

Monday 12th. A stormy night. Crossed over the height of land and camped on the forks of Portneuf River. We must cross to the waters of Bear's River and if there be no Americans I expect to find buffalo. On the lower part of this river, the Snake camp is starving.

Thursday 15th. We have commenced our 2nd thousand of beaver. I do not despair of completing 2 more before reaching Nez Perces. From Payette's party no accounts have come.

Tuesday 17 Jan. The cold has not moderated for a month but on the increase: a sick man still complaining. I have given him all the purges I have and it is his duty to recover; for he can expect no more assistance from me.(11)

Monday 29th March. In sight of Salt Lake again. As there appears to be a defile for crossing the mountains, I proposed for our men to fish and follow by track of 1826. The Blackfeet and Snakes are now scattered in quest of fish and roots. I am in hopes the party will collect 400 beaver. This leaves me only 14 men and if I may judge from what I saw last fall an unknown River, we shall require to be on our guard against Indians. It being the first year we have had any intercourse with the Indians they are very shy. Since starting from Fort Nez Perces my party is divided into three. God prosper us all! To the separating party I gave directions to reach the Columbia by the 30th of July, gave the charge to Plante.

Tuesday 30th. This morning 12 men 24 horses and all our traps started for Unknown River. They will reach the river 8 days before me. I wish them success. All is now in motion. Reached Foggy Encampment,(12) the weather being clear had a good view of Salt Lake and Mountain Island(13) prom. point which from its snow must be very high. On both sides of the Salt Lake is high land surrounded by mountains. Beyond these mountains west tho' the lake has no discharge, there must be a large river in a barren country.

Thursday 8 Ap. At 11 A. M. we reached the forks of Unknown River, and found trappers awaiting with 43 beaver. Our trappers being at the upper part of the river and finding no beaver have gone down. Crossed over the river still very low and descended down the stream finding Indians fishing salmon trout.

Sunday 11 Ap. Reached the place where we left this river last fall. Three of the absent trappers arrived with 57 beaver.

Tuesday 13 Apr. Continued our course down the river to within a mile of Paul's Grave where we found the other trappers with 50 beaver. We shall steer our course in quest of Sandwich Island River 4 days travel from Unknown River. All the Indians say we shall find beaver there. Paul's grave examined. All safe.

Thursday 15 April: Crossed mtns. and plain and reached the junction of the forks of Sandwich

Island River. Trappers took 32 beaver.

Sunday 2nd May: Sandwich Island River has disappointed us in beaver. I must retrace our way to Unknown River.

Saturday 7th May: Before starting this day, I learned 2 Indians who accompanied us from the Columbia started last night on a horse thieving expedition. Hunting to-day they discovered tracks of horses and are gone in pursuit to rejoin us in 4 days. They stand a chance of losing their lives.

Sunday 8th. Followed down Unknown River. Keep most strict watch day and night on our horses. The Snakes on this river dress in beaver skin. Trappers brought in 41 beaver. We require 300 to complete our 2nd M. The horse thieving Indians have come back, having been pursued and compelled to abandon the 5 horses they stole. Country is level as far as the eye can see. I am at a loss to know where this river discharges.

Sunday 15th May: Started at dawn to escape the heat, the journey over beds of sand the horses sinking half leg deep, the country level tho' at distance hilly, course S. W. The Indians are not numerous in this quarter, but from the number of fires seen on the mountains are fully aware of our presence, and we must look out for our horses. 75 traps produced 37 beaver. This is tolerable; for we usually receive only a third. In no part have I found beaver so abundant. The total number of American trappers in this region at this time exceeds 80. I have only 28 trappers, 15 in 2 parties, and shall be well pleased if one of the 2 parties escapes. The trappers now average 125 beaver a man and are greatly pleased with their success.

Tuesday 17th May. large tracks of pelicans seen indicate a lake. If it prove salt; beaver will be at an end. Two Indians seen at a distance.

Thursday 21st May. Remained in camp to dry our beaver. One of the trappers in the rear visiting his traps had his horses stolen before he could come out of the bushes the Indian was nearly out of sight. Another trapper who had been to the lower part of the river to set traps was on his return when 4 Indians seized his gun and would have taken his life had he not escaped, 3 arrows being sent after him. This is a strong tribe of natives probably the same branch as in Pitts River very daring.(14) I have ordered the trappers to go out only in twos and to be strictly on their guard.

Friday 27th May. Encamped within a mile of a large lake.(15) The river is not half the size it was, no doubt spreading in the swamp we have passed. It is 2 1/2 ft. deep and only 10 yds. wide. We may now think of retracing our steps. It is too far on in the season to proceed on discovery. Course S. W.

Saturday 28th May. 3 of the trappers came in with word of more traps stolen. He pursued the thieves and punished them but could not recover the traps. A man who had gone to explore the lake at this moment dashed in and gave the alarm of the enemy. He had a most narrow escape, only the fleetness of his horse saved his life. When rounding a point within sight of the lake, 20

---

men on horse back gave the war cry. He fled. An Indian would have overtaken him, but he discharged his gun. He says the hills are covered with Indians. I gave orders to secure the horses, 10 men then started in advance to ascertain what the Indians were doing but not to risk a battle as we were too weak. They reported upwards of 200 Indians marching on our camp. They came on. Having signalled a spot for them about 500 yards from our camp, I desired them to be seated. This order was obeyed.(16) From their dress and drums and the fact only one elderly man was with them, I concluded it was a war party. If they had not been discovered, they had intended to attack us, weak as we were in guns -- only 12 -- they would have been successful. It was a narrow escape. They gave us the following information through the Snake interpreter: this river discharges in a lake which has no outlet. In 8 days, march (westward) there is a large river but no beaver, salmon abundant. There is also another river which must be Pitt's River. We saw rifles ammunition and arms among them and I think this must be the plunder of Smith's(17) party of 10, who were murdered here in the fall. They requested to be allowed to enter the camp. I refused. A more daring set I have not seen.

Sunday 29 May. The night dark and stormy, but this morning all safe. The Indians had fires all night. As I do not wish to infringe on McLeod's territory, I gave orders to raise camp and return. McLeod's territory is the water discharging in the ocean.(18) If Mr. McLeod has succeeded in reaching Bona Ventura he must have crossed this strewn. We have only 50 traps remaining and my party are too weak to advance. I told the Indians in three months they would see us again.(19)

Thursday 2nd of June. We are directing our course to Sylvaille's River Day's Defile and Snake River, Unknown River is known as Swampy River or Paul's River,(20) as he must remain here till the great trumpet shall sound.

Sunday 5th June: Left Unknown River in the rear.

Saturday 25th June: we are now across the Blue Mountains reaching a small fork of Day's River. Hope to reach Nez Perces in 12 days.

Tuesday 5 July: As the track to Nez Perces is now well known, and no danger to be apprehended, I shall to-morrow leave with 2 men for the fort. Thus ends my 5th trip to the Snake Country. We have no cause to complain of our returns.(21)

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830  
From the original edition: Cincinnati, 1831

---

THE  
PERSONAL NARRATIVE  
OF  
JAMES O. PATTIE,  
OF  
KENTUCKY,  
DURING AN EXPEDITION FROM ST. LOUIS, THROUGH THE VAST REGIONS BETWEEN  
THAT PLACE AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN, AND THENCE BACK THROUGH THE CITY OF  
MEXICO TO VERA CRUZ, DURING JOURNEYINGS OF SIX YEARS; IN WHICH HE AND  
HIS FATHER, WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM, SUFFERED UNHEARD OF HARDSHIPS AND  
DANGERS, HAD VARIOUS CONFLICTS WITH THE INDIANS, AND WERE MADE CAP-  
TIVES, IN WHICH CAPTIVITY HIS FATHER DIED; TOGETHER WITH A DESCRIPTION  
OF THE COUNTRY, AND THE VARIOUS NATION THROUGH WHICH THEY PASSED.  
EDITED BY TIMOTHY FLINT.  
CINCINNATI:  
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JOHN H. WOOD.  
1831.

---

DISTRICT OF OHIO, TO WIT:

BE it Remembered, that on the 18th day of Oct., Anno Domini 1831; John H. Wood, of the said District, hath deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the title of which is in the words following, to wit:

“The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie, of Kentucky, during an expedition from St. Louis, through the vast regions between that place and the Pacific ocean, and thence back through the city of Mexico to Vera Cruz, during journeyings of six years; in which he and his father who accompanied him, suffered unheard of hardships and dangers; had various conflicts with the Indians, and were made captives, in which captivity his father died, together with a description of the country, and the various nations through which they passed.”

The right whereof he claims as proprietor, in conformity with an act of Congress, entitled “An act to amend the several acts respecting copyrights.”

Attest, WILLIAM MINER,  
Clerk of the District.

---

EDITOR'S PREFACE

IT has been my fortune to be known as a writer of works of the imagination. I am solicitous that this Journal should lose none of its intrinsic interest, from its being supposed that in preparing it for the press, I have drawn from the imagination, either in regard to the incidents or their coloring. For, in the literal truth of the facts, incredible as some of them may appear, my grounds of conviction are my acquaintance with the Author, the impossibility of inventing a narrative

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

like the following, the respectability of his relations, the standing which his father sustained, the confidence reposed in him by the Hon. J. S. Johnston, the very respectable senator in congress from Louisiana, who introduced him to me, the concurrent testimony of persons now in this city, who saw him at different points in New Mexico, and the reports, which reached the United States, during the expedition of many of the incidents here recorded.

When my family first arrived at St. Charles' in 1816, the fame of the exploits of his father, as an officer of the rangers, was fresh in the narratives of his associates and fellow soldiers. I have been on the ground, at Cap au Gris, where he was besieged by the Indians. I am not unacquainted with the scenery through which he passed on the Missouri, and I, too, for many years was a sojourner in the prairies.

These circumstances, along with a conviction of the truth of the narrative, tended to give me an interest in it, and to qualify me in some degree to judge of the internal evidences contained in the journal itself, of its entire authenticity. It will be perceived at once, that Mr. Pattie, with Mr. McDuffie, thinks more of action than literature, and is more competent to perform exploits, than blazon them in eloquent periods. My influence upon the narrative regards orthography, and punctuation [iv] and the occasional interposition of a topographical illustration, which my acquaintance with the accounts of travellers in New Mexico, and published views of the country have enabled me to furnish. The reader will award me the confidence of acting in good faith, in regard to drawing nothing from my own thoughts. I have found more call to suppress, than to add, to soften, than to show in stronger relief many of the incidents. Circumstances of suffering, which in many similar narratives have been given in downright plainness of detail, I have been impelled to leave to the reader's imagination, as too revolting to be recorded.

The very texture of the narrative precludes ornament and amplification. The simple record of events as they transpired, painted by the hungry, toil-worn hunter, in the midst of the desert, surrounded by sterility, espying the foot print of the savage, or discerning him couched behind the tree or hillock, or hearing the distant howl of wild beasts, will naturally bear characteristics of stern disregard of embellishment. To alter it, to attempt to embellish it, to divest it of the peculiar impress of the narrator and his circumstances, would be to take from it its keeping, the charm of its simplicity, and its internal marks of truth. In these respects I have been anxious to leave the narrative as I found it.

The journalist seems in these pages a legitimate descendant of those western pioneers, the hunters of Kentucky, a race passing unrecorded from history. The pencil of biography could seize upon no subjects of higher interest. With hearts keenly alive to the impulses of honor and patriotism, and the charities of kindred and friends; they possessed spirits impassible to fear, that no form of suffering or death could daunt; and frames for strength and endurance, as if ribbed with brass and sinewed with steel. For them to traverse wide deserts, climb mountains, swim rivers, grapple with the grizzly bear, and encounter the savage, in a sojourn in the wilderness of years, far from the abodes of civilized men, was but a spirit-stirring and holiday mode of life.

[v] To me, there is a kind of moral sublimity in the contemplation of the adventures and daring of such men. They read a lesson to shrinking and effeminate spirits, the men of soft hands and fashionable life, whose frames the winds of heaven are not allowed to visit too roughly. They tend to re-inspire something of that simplicity of manners, manly hardihood, and Spartan energy and force of character, which formed so conspicuous a part of the nature of the settlers of the western

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

wilderness.

Every one knows with what intense interest the community perused the adventures of Captain Riley, and other intrepid mariners shipwrecked and enslaved upon distant and barbarous shores. It is far from my thoughts to detract from the intrepidity of American mariners, which is known, wherever the winds blow, or the waves roll; or to depreciate the interest of the recorded narratives of their sufferings. A picture more calculated to arouse American sympathies cannot be presented, than that of a ship's crew, driven by the fierce winds and the mountain waves upon a rock bound shore, and escaping death in the sea, only to encounter captivity from the barbarians on the land. Yet much of the courage, required to encounter these emergencies is passive, counselling only the necessity of submission to events, from which there is no escape, and to which all resistance would be unavailing.

The courage requisite to be put forth in an expedition such as that in which Mr. Pattie and his associates were cast, must be both active and passive, energetic and ever vigilant, and never permitted to shrink, or intermit a moment for years. At one time it is assailed by hordes of yelling savages, and at another, menaced with the horrible death of hunger and thirst in interminable forests, or arid sands. Either position offers perils and sufferings sufficiently appalling. But fewer spirits, I apprehend, are formed to brave those of the field,

'Where wilds immeasurably spread,  
Seem lengthening as they go.'

than of the ocean, where the mariner either soon finds rest beneath its tumultuous bosom, or joyfully spreads his sails again to the breeze.

---

#### INTRODUCTION

THE grandfather of the author of this Journal, was born in Caroline county, Virginia, in 1750. Soon after he was turned of twenty-one, he moved to Kentucky, and became an associate with those fearless spirits who first settled in the western forests. To qualify him to meet the dangers and encounter the toils of his new position, he had served in the revolutionary war, and had been brought in hostile contact with the British in their attempt to ascend the river Potomac.

He arrived in Kentucky, in company with twenty emigrant families, in 1781, and settled on the south side of the Kentucky river. The new settlers were beginning to build houses with internal finishing. His pursuit, which was that of a house carpenter, procured him constant employment, but he sometimes diversified it by teaching school. Soon after his arrival, the commencing settlement experienced the severest and most destructive assaults from the Indians. In August, 1782, he was one of the party who marched to the assistance of Bryant's station, and shared in the glory of relieving that place by the memorable defeat of the savages.

Not long afterwards he was called upon by Col. Logan to join a party led by him against the Indians, who had gained a bloody victory over the Kentuckians at the Blue Licks. He was present on the spot, where the bodies of the slain lay unburied, and assisted in their interment. During his absence on this expedition, Sylvester Pattie, father of the author, was born, August 25, 1782.

In November of the same year, his grand-father was summoned to join a party commanded by Col. Logan, in an expedition against the Indians at the Shawnee towns, in the limits of the present state of Ohio. They crossed the Ohio just below [viii] the mouth of the Licking, opposite the site of what is now Cincinnati, which was at that time an unbroken forest, without the appearance of a

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

human habitation. They were here joined by Gen. Clark with his troops from the falls of the Ohio, or what is now Louisville. The united force marched to the Indian towns, which they burnt and destroyed.

Returning from this expedition, he resumed his former occupations, witnessing the rapid advance of the country from immigration. When the district, in which he resided, was constituted Bracken county, he was appointed one of the judges of the court of quarter sessions, which office he filled sixteen years, until his place was vacated by an act of the legislature reducing the court to a single judge.

Sylvester Pattie, the father of the author, as was common at that period in Kentucky, married early, having only reached nineteen. He settled near his father's house, and there remained until there began to be a prevalent disposition among the people to move to Missouri. March 14, 1812, he removed to that country, the author being then eight years old. Born and reared amidst the horrors of Indian assaults and incursions, and having lived to see Kentucky entirely free from these dangers, it may seem strange, that he should have chosen to remove a young family to that remote country, then enduring the same horrors of Indian warfare, as Kentucky had experienced twenty-five years before. It was in the midst of the late war with England, which, it is well known, operated to bring the fiercest assaults of savage incursion upon the remote frontiers of Illinois and Missouri.

To repel these incursions, these then territories, called out some companies of rangers, who marched against the Sac and Fox Indians, between the Mississippi and the lakes, who were at that time active in murdering women and children, and burning their habitations during the absence of the male heads of families. When Pattie was appointed lieutenant in one of these companies, he left his family at St. Charles' where he was then residing. It may be imagined, that the condition of his wife was sufficiently lonely, as this village contained but one American [ix] family besides her own, and she was unable to converse with its French inhabitants. His company had several skirmishes with the Indians, in each of which it came off successful.

The rangers left him in command of a detachment, in possession of the fort at Cap au Gris. Soon after the main body of the rangers had marched away, the fort was besieged by a body of English and Indians. The besiegers made several attempts to storm the fort, but were repelled by the garrison.— The foe continued the siege for a week, continually firing upon the garrison, who sometimes, though not often, for want of ammunition, returned the fire. Lieutenant Pattie, perceiving no disposition in the enemy to withdraw, and discovering that his ammunition was almost entirely exhausted, deemed it necessary to send a despatch to Bellefontaine, near the point of the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi, where was stationed a considerable American force. He proposed to his command, that a couple of men should make their way through the enemy, cross the Mississippi, and apprise the commander of Bellefontaine of their condition. No one was found willing to risk the attempt, as the besiegers were encamped entirely around them. Leaving Thomas McNair in command in his place, and putting on the uniform of one of the English soldiers, whom they had killed during one of the attempts to storm the fort, he passed by night safely through the camp of the enemy, and arrived at the point of his destination, a distance of over forty miles: 500 soldiers were immediately dispatched from Bellefontaine to the relief of the besieged at Cap au Gris. As soon as this force reached the fort, the British and Indians decamped, not, however, without leaving many of their lifeless companions behind them.

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

Lieutenant Pattie remained in command of Cap au Gris, being essentially instrumental in repressing the incursions of the Sacs and Foxes, and disposing them to a treaty of peace, until the close of the war. In 1813 he received his discharge, and returned to his family, with whom he enjoyed domestic happiness in privacy and repose for some years. St. Louis and St. Charles [x] were beginning rapidly to improve; American families were constantly immigrating to these towns. The timber in their vicinity is not of the best kind for building. Pine could no where be obtained in abundance, nearer than on the Gasconade, a stream that enters on the south side of the Missouri, about one hundred and fifty miles up that river. Mr. Pattie, possessing a wandering and adventurous spirit, meditated the idea of removing to this frontier and unpeopled river, to erect Mills upon it, and send down pine lumber in rafts to St. Louis, and the adjoining country. He carried his plan into operation, and erected a Saw and Grist Mill upon the Gasconade. It proved a very fortunate speculation, as there was an immediate demand at St. Louis and St. Charles for all the plank the mill could supply.

In this remote wilderness, Mr. Pattie lived in happiness and prosperity, until the mother of the author was attacked by consumption. Although her husband was, as has been said, strongly endowed with the wandering propensity, he was no less profoundly attached to his family; and in this wild region, the loss of a beloved wife was irreparable. She soon sunk under the disorder, leaving nine young children. Not long after, the youngest died, and was deposited by her side in this far land.

The house, which had been the scene of domestic quiet, cheerfulness and joy, and the hospitable home of the stranger, sojourning in these forests, became dreary and desolate. Mr. Pattie, who had been noted for the buoyancy of his gay spirit, was now silent, dejected, and even inattentive to his business; which, requiring great activity and constant attention, soon ran into disorder.

About this time, remote trapping and trading expeditions up the Missouri, and in the interior of New Mexico began to be much talked of. Mr. Pattie seemed to be interested in these expeditions, which offered much to stir the spirit and excite enterprise. To arouse him from his indolent melancholy, his friends advised him to sell his property, convert it into merchandize and equipments for trapping and hunting, and to join in such an undertaking. To a man born and reared under the circumstances [xi] of his early life — one to whom forests, and long rivers, adventures, and distant mountains, presented pictures of familiar and birth day scenes — one, who confided in his rifle, as a sure friend, and who withal, connected dejection and bereavement with his present desolate residence; little was necessary to tempt him to such an enterprise.

In a word, he adopted the project with that undoubting and unshrinking purpose, with which to will is to accomplish. Arrangements were soon made. The Children were provided for among his relations. The Author was at school; but inheriting the love of a rifle through so many generations, and nursed amid such scenes, he begged so earnestly of his father that he might be allowed to accompany the expedition, that he prevailed. The sad task remained for him to record the incidents of the expedition, and the sufferings and death of his father.

---

COMMENCEMENT OF THE EXPEDITION

I PASS by, as unimportant in this Journal, all the circumstances of our arrangements for setting out on our expedition; together with my father's sorrow and mine, at leaving the spot where his wife and my mother was buried, the place, which had once been so cheerful, and was now so

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

gloomy to us. We made our purchases at St. Louis. Our company consisted of five persons. We had ten horses packed with traps, trapping utensils, guns, ammunition, knives, tomahawks, provisions, blankets, and some surplus arms, as we anticipated that we should be able to gain some additions to our number by way of recruits, as we proceeded onward. But when the trial came, so formidable seemed the danger, fatigue, distance, and uncertainty of the expedition, that not an individual could be persuaded to share our enterprize.

June 20, 1824, we crossed the Missouri at a small town called Newport, and meandered the river as far as Pilcher's fort, without any incident worthy of record, except that one of our associates, who had become too unwell to travel, was left at Charaton, the remotest village on this frontier of any size. We arrived at Pilcher's fort, on the 13th day of July. There we remained, until the 28th, waiting the arrival of a keel boat from below, that was partly freighted with merchandize for us, with which we intended to trade with the Indians.

On the 28th, our number diminished to four, we set off for a trading establishment eight miles above us on the Missouri, belonging to Pratte, Choteau and Company. In this place centres most of the trade with the Indians on the upper Missouri. Here we met with Sylvester, son of Gen. Pratte, who was on his way [14] to New Mexico, with purposes similar to ours. His company had preceded him, and was on the river Platte waiting for him.

We left this trading establishment for the Council Bluffs, six miles above. When we arrived there, the commanding officer demanded to see our license for trading with the Indians. We informed him, that we neither had any, nor were aware that any was necessary. We were informed, that we could be allowed to ascend the river no higher without one. This dilemma brought our onward progress to a dead stand. We were prompt, however, in making new arrangements. We concluded to sell our surplus arms in exchange for merchandize, and change our direction from the upper Missouri, to New Mexico. One of our number was so much discouraged with our apparent ill success, and so little satisfied with this new project, that he came to the determination to leave our ranks. The remainder, though dispirited by the reduction of our number, determined not to abandon the undertaking. Our invalid having rejoined us, we still numbered four. We remained some time at this beautiful position, the Council Bluffs. I have seen much that is beautiful, interesting and commanding in the wild scenery of nature, but no prospect above, around, and below more so than from this spot. Our object and destination being the same as Mr. Pratte's, we concluded to join his company on the Platte.

We left the Bluffs, July 30th, and encamped the night after our departure on a small stream, called the Elkhorn. We reached it at a point thirty miles S. W. from the Bluffs. The Pawnee Indians sometimes resort upon the banks of this stream. The country is so open and bare of timber, that it was with difficulty we could find sufficient wood to cook with, even on the banks of the river, where wood is found, if at all, in the prairie country.

Early the next morning we commenced our march up the bottoms of the stream, which we continued to ascend, until almost night fall, when we concluded to cross it to a small grove of timber that we descried on the opposite shore, where we encamped [15] for the night, securing our horses with great care, through fear that they would be stolen by the Indians.

In the morning, as we were making arrangements to commence our march, we discovered a large body of Indians, running full speed towards us. When they had arrived within a hundred yards of us, we made signs, that they must halt, or that we should fire upon them. They halted, and

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

we inquired of them, as one of our number spoke their language, to what nation they belonged? They answered the Pawnee. Considering them friendly, we permitted them to approach us. It was on our way, to pass through their town, and we followed them thither. As soon as we arrived at their town, they conducted us to the lodge of their chief, who posted a number of his warriors at the door, and called the rest of his chiefs, accompanied by an interpreter. They formed a circle in the centre of the lodge. The elder chief then lighting a pipe, commenced smoking; the next chief holding the bowl of his pipe. This mode of smoking differed from that of any Indians we had yet seen. He filled his mouth with the smoke, then puffed it in our bosoms, then on his own, and then upward, as he said, toward the Great Spirit, that he would bestow upon us plenty of fat buffaloes, and all necessary aid on our way. He informed us, that he had two war parties abroad. He gave us a stick curiously painted with characters, I suppose something like hieroglyphics, bidding us, should we see any of his warriors, to give them that stick; in which case they would treat us kindly. The pipe was then passed round, and we each of us gave it two or three light whiffs. We were then treated with fat buffaloe meat, and after we had eaten, he gave us counsel in regard to our future course, particularly not to let our horses loose at night. His treatment was altogether paternal.

Next morning we left the village of this hospitable old chief, accompanied by a pilot, dispatched to conduct us to Mr. Pratte's company on the Platte. This is one of the three villages of the Republican Pawnees. It is situated on the little Platte River, in the centre of an extensive prairie plain; having near [16] it a small strip of wood extending from the village to the river. The houses are coneshaped, like a sugar loaf. The number of lodges may amount to six hundred.

The night after we left this village, we encamped on the banks of a small creek called the Mad Buffaloe. Here we could find no wood for cooking, and made our first experiment of the common resort in these wide prairies; that is, we were obliged to collect the dung of the buffaloe for that purpose. Having taken our supper, some of us stood guard through the night, while the others slept, according to the advice of the friendly chief. Next morning we commenced our march at early dawn, and by dint of hard travelling through the prairies, we arrived about sunset, on the main Platte, where we joined Mr. Pratte and his company. We felt, and expressed gratitude to the pilot, who, by his knowledge of the country, had conducted us by the shortest and easiest route. We did not forget the substantial expression of our good will, in paying him. He started for his own village the same evening, accompanying us here, and returning, on foot, although he could have had a horse for the journey.

At this encampment, on the banks of the Platte, we remained four days, during which time we killed some antelopes and deer, and dressed their skins to make us moccasins. Among our arrangements with Mr. Pratte, one was, that my father should take the command of this company, to which proposition my father and our associates consented. The honor of this confidence was probably bestowed upon him, in consequence of most of the company having served under him, as rangers, during the late war. Those who had not, had been acquainted with his services by general report.

In conformity with the general wish, my father immediately entered upon his command, by making out a list of the names of the whole company, and dividing it into four messes; each mess having to furnish two men, to stand guard by reliefs, during the night. The roll was called, and the company was found to be a hundred and sixteen. We had three hundred mules, and some [17]

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

horses. A hundred of them were packed with goods and baggage. The guard was posted as spies, and all the rest were ordered to commence the arrangements of packing for departure. The guard was detached, to keep at some distance from the camp, reconnoitre, and discover if any Indians were lurking in the vicinity. When on the march, the guards were ordered to move on within sight of our flank, and parallel to our line of march. If any Indians were descried, they were to make a signal by raising their hats; or if not in sight of us, to alarm us by a pistol shot. These arrangements gave us a chance always to have some little time to make ready for action.

It may be imagined, that such a caravan made no mean figure, or inconsiderable dust, in moving along the prairies. We started on the morning of the 6th of August, travelling up the main Platte, which at this point is more than a hundred yards wide, very shallow, with a clean sand bottom, and very high banks. It is skirted with a thin belt of cotton-wood and willow trees, from which beautiful prairie plains stretch out indefinitely on either side. We arrived in the evening at a village of the Pawnee Loups. It is larger than the village of the Republican Pawnees, which we had left behind us. The head chief of this village received us in the most affectionate and hospitable manner, supplying us with such provisions as we wanted. He had been all the way from these remote prairies, on a visit to the city of Washington. He informed us, that before he had taken the journey, he had supposed that the white people were a small tribe, like his own, and that he had found them as numberless as the spires of grass on his prairies. The spectacle, however, that had struck him with most astonishment, was bullets as large as his head, and guns of the size of a log of wood. His people cultivate corn, beans, pumpkins and watermelons.

Here we remained five days, during which time Mr. Pratte purchased six hundred Buffalo skins, and some horses. A Pawnee war party came in from an expedition against a hostile tribe of whom they had killed and scalped four, and taken twenty horses. We were affected at the sight of a little child, taken [18] captive, whose mother they had killed and scalped. They could not account for bringing in this child, as their warfare is an indiscriminate slaughter, of men, women and children.

A day or two after their arrival, they painted themselves for a celebration of their victory, with great labor and care. The chiefs were dressed in skins of wild animals, with the hair on.— These skins were principally those of the bear, wolf, panther and spotted or ring tailed panther. They wore necklaces of bear's and panther's claws. The braves, as a certain class of the warriors are called, in addition to the dress of the other chiefs, surmounted their heads with a particular feather from a species of eagle, that they call the war eagle. This feather is considered worth the price of ten ordinary horses. None but a brave is permitted to wear it as a badge. A brave, gains his name and reputation as much by cunning and dexterity in stealing and robbing, as by courage and success in murdering. When by long labor of the toilette, they had painted and dressed themselves to their liking, they marched forth in the array of their guns, bows, arrows and war clubs, with all the other appendages of their warfare. They then raised a tall pole, on the top of which were attached the scalps of the foes they had killed. It must be admitted, that they manifested no small degree of genius and inventiveness, in making themselves frightful and horrible. When they began their triumphal yelling, shouting, singing and cutting antic capers, it seemed to us, that a recruit of fiends from the infernal regions could hardly have transcended them in genuine diabolical display. They kept up this infernal din three days. During all this time, the poor little captive child, barely fed to sustain life, lay in sight, bound hand and foot. When their rage at length seemed sated, and

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

exhausted, they took down the pole, and gave the scalps to the women.

We now witnessed a new scene of yells and screams, and infuriated gestures; the actors kicking the scalps about, and throwing them from one to the other with strong expressions of rage and contempt. When they also ceased, in the apparent satisfaction of gratified revenge, the men directed their attention [19] to the little captive. It was removed to the medicine lodge, where the medicine men perform their incantations, and make their offerings to the Great Spirit. We perceived that they were making preparations to burn the child. Alike affected with pity and horror, our party appealed, as one man, to the presiding chief, to spare the child. Our first proposition was to purchase it. It was received by the chief with manifest displeasure. In reply to our strong remonstrances, he gravely asked us, if we, seeing a young rattlesnake in our path, would allow it to move off uninjured, merely because it was too small and feeble to bite? We undertook to point out the want of resemblance in the circumstances of the comparison, observing that the child, reared among them, would know no other people, and would imbibe their habits and enmities, and become as one of them. The chief replied, that he had made the experiment, and that the captive children, thus spared and raised, had only been instrumental, as soon as they were grown, of bringing them into difficulties. 'It is' said he, 'like taking the eggs of partridges and hatching them; you may raise them ever so carefully in a cage; but once turn them loose, and they show their nature, not only by flying away, but by bringing the wild partridges into your corn fields: eat the eggs, and you have not only the food, but save yourself future trouble.' We again urged that the child was too small to injure them, and of too little consequence to give them the pleasure of revenge in its destruction. To enforce our arguments, we showed him a roll of red broad cloth, the favorite color with the Indians. This dazzled and delighted him, and he eagerly asked us, how much we would give him. We insisted upon seeing the child, before we made him an offer. He led us to the lodge, where lay the poor little captive, bound so tight with thongs of raw hide, that the flesh had so swelled over the hard and dried leather, that the strings could no longer be perceived. It was almost famished, having scarcely tasted food for four days, and seemed rather dead than alive. With much difficulty we disengaged its limbs from the thongs, and perceiving that it seemed to revive, we offered him [20] ten yards, of the red cloth. Expatiating upon the trouble and danger of his warriors in the late expedition, he insisted, that the price was too little. Having the child in our possession, and beginning to be indignant at this union of avarice and cruelty, our company exchanged glances of intelligence. A deep flush suffused the countenance of my father. 'My boys,' said he, 'will you allow these unnatural devils to burn this poor child, or practice extortion upon us, as the price of its ransom?' The vehemence and energy, with which these questions were proposed, had an effect, that may be easily imagined, in kindling the spirits of the rest of us. We carried it by acclamation, to take the child, and let them seek their own redress.

My father again offered the chief ten yards of cloth, which was refused as before. Our remark then was, that we would carry off the child, with, or without ransom, at his choice.— Meanwhile the child was sent to our encampment, and our men ordered to have their arms in readiness, as we had reason to fear that the chief would let loose his warriors upon us, and take the child by force. The old chief looked my father full in the face, with an expression of apparent astonishment. 'Do you think' said he, 'you are strong enough to keep the child by force?' 'We will do it,' answered my father, 'or every man of us die in the attempt, in which case our countrymen will come, and gather up our bones, and avenge our death, by destroying your nation.' The chief replied with well dis-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

sembled calmness, that he did not wish to incur the enmity of our people, as he well knew that we were more powerful than they; alledging, beside, that he had made a vow never to kill any more white men; and he added, that if we would give the cloth, and add to it a paper of vermilion, the child should be ours. To this we consented, and the contract was settled.

We immediately started for our encampment, where we were aware our men had been making arrangements for a battle. We had hardly expected, under these circumstances that the chief would have followed us alone into a camp, where every thing appeared hostile. But he went on with us unhesitatingly, [21] until he came to the very edge of it. Observing that our men had made a breast work of the baggage, and stood with their arms leaning against it ready for action, he paused a moment, as if faltering in his purpose to advance. With the peculiar Indian exclamation, he eagerly asked my father, if he had thought that he would fight his friends, the white people, for that little child? The reply was, that we only meant to be ready for them, if they had thought to do so. With a smiling countenance the chief advanced, and took my father's hand exclaiming, that they were good friends. 'Save your powder and lead,' he added, 'to kill buffaloes and your enemies.' So saying he left us for his own lodge.

This tribe is on terms of hostility with two or three of the tribes nearest their hunting grounds. They make their incursions on horseback, and often extend them to the distance of six or seven hundred miles. They chiefly engage on horseback, and their weapons, for the most part, consist of a bow and arrows, a lance and shield, though many of them at present have fire arms. Their commander stations himself in the rear of his warriors, seldom taking a part in the battle, unless he should be himself attacked, which is not often the case. They show no inconsiderable military stratagem in their marches, keeping spies before and behind, and on each flank, at the distance of a few days travel; so that in their open country, it is almost impossible to come upon them by surprise. The object of their expeditions is quite as often to plunder and steal horses, as to destroy their enemies. Each one is provided with the Spanish noose, to catch horses. They often extend these plundering expeditions as far as the interior of New Mexico. When they have reached the settled country, they lurk about in covert places, until an opportunity presents to seize on their prey. They fall upon the owner of a large establishment of cattle and horses, kill him during the night, or so alarm him as to cause him to fly, and leave his herds and family unprotected; in which case they drive off his horses, and secrete them in the mountains. In these fastnesses of nature they consider them safe; [22] aware that the Mexicans, partly through timidity, and partly through indolence, will not pursue them to any great distance.

We left this village on the 11th of August, taking with us two of its inhabitants, each having a trap to catch, and a hoe to dig the beavers from their burrows. During this day's march we traversed a wide plain, on which we saw no game but antelopes and white wolves. At five in the evening, our front guard gave the preconcerted alarm by firing their pistols, and falling back a few moments afterwards, upon the main body.— We shortly afterwards discovered a large body of Indians on horseback, approaching us at full speed. When they were within hailing distance, we made them a signal to halt: they immediately halted. Surveying us a moment, and discovering us to be whites, one of them came towards us. We showed him the painted stick given us by the Pawnee Republican chief. He seemed at once to comprehend all that it conveyed, and we were informed, that this was a band of the Republican Pawnee warriors. He carried the stick among them. It passed from hand to hand, and appeared at once to satisfy them in regard to our peaceable intentions, for they

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

continued their march without disturbing us. But our two associate Indians, hearing their yells, as they rode off, took them to be their enemies, from whom they had taken the child. They immediately disappeared, and rejoined us no more. We travelled a few miles further, and encamped for the night on a small stream, called Smoking river. It is a tributary stream of the main Platte. On this stream a famous treaty had been made between the Pawnees and Shienne; and from the friendly smoking of the calumet on this occasion it received its name.

Next morning we made an early start, and marched rapidly all day, in order to reach water at night. We halted at sunset to repose ourselves, and found water for our own drinking, but none for our mules and horses. As soon as the moon arose, we started again, travelling hard all night, and until ten the next morning. At this time we reached a most singular spring fountain, forming a basin four hundred yards in diameter, in the centre [23] of which the water boiled up five or six feet higher, than it was near the circumference. We encamped here, to rest, and feed our mules and horses, the remainder of the day, during which we killed some antelopes, that came here to drink.

Near this place was a high mound, from which the eye swept the whole horizon, as far as it could reach, and on this mound we stationed our guard.

Next morning we commenced the toil of our daily march, pursuing a S. W. course, over the naked plains, reaching a small and, as far as I know, a nameless stream at night, on the borders of which were a few sparse trees, and high grass. Here we encamped for the night. At twelve next day we halted in consequence of a pouring rain, and encamped for the remainder of the day. This was the first point, where we had the long and anxiously expected pleasure of seeing buffaloes. We killed one, after a most animating sport in shooting at it.

Next day we made an early start, as usual, and travelled hard all day over a wide plain, meeting with no other incidents, than the sight of buffaloes, which we did not molest. We saw, in this day's march, neither tree nor rising ground. The plains are covered with a short, fine grass, about four inches high, of such a kind, as to be very injurious to the hoofs of animals, that travel over it. It seems to me, that ours would not have received more injury from travelling over a naked surface of rock. In the evening we reached a small collection of water, beside which we encamped. We had to collect our customary inconvenient substitute for fuel, not only this evening, but the whole distance hence to the mountains.

On the morning of the 17th, we commenced, as usual, our early march, giving orders to our advance guard to kill a buffalo bull, and make moccasins for some of our horses, from the skin, their feet having become so tender from the irritation of the sharp grass, as to make them travel with difficulty. This was soon accomplished, furnishing the only incident of this day's travel. We continued the next day to make our way over the same wearying plain, without water or timber, having been obliged [24] to provide more of our horses with buffalo skin moccasins. This day we saw numerous herds of buffalo bulls. It is a singular fact, in the habits of these animals, that during one part of the year, the bulls all range in immense flocks without a cow among them, and all the cows equally without the bulls. The herd, which we now saw, showed an evident disposition to break into our caravan. They seemed to consider our horses and mules, as a herd of their cows. We prevented their doing it, by firing on them, and killing several.

This evening we arrived on one of the forks of the Osage, and encamped. Here we caught a beaver, the first I had ever seen. On the 20th, we started late, and made a short day's travel, encamping

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

by water. Next morning we discovered vast numbers of buffaloes, all running in one direction, as though they were flying from some sort of pursuit. We immediately detached men to reconnoitre and ascertain, whether they were not flying from the Indians. They soon discovered a large body of them in full chase of these animals, and shooting at them with arrows. As their course was directly towards our camp, they were soon distinctly in sight. At this moment one of our men rode towards them, and discharged his gun. This immediately turned their attention from the pursuit of the game, to us. The Indians halted a moment, as if in deliberation, and rode off in another direction with great speed. We regretted that we had taken no measures to ascertain, whether they were friendly or not. In the latter case we had sufficient ground to apprehend, that they would pursue us at a distance, and attack us in the night. We made our arrangements, and resumed our march in haste, travelling with great caution, and posting a strong guard at night.

The next day, in company with another, I kept guard on the right flank. We were both strictly enjoined not to fire on the buffaloes, while discharging this duty. Just before we encamped, which was at four in the afternoon, we discovered a herd of buffalo cows, the first we had seen, and gave notice on our arrival at the camp. Mr. Pratte insisted, that we had mistaken, and said, that we were not yet far enough advanced into the country, [25] to see cows, they generally herding in the most retired depths of the prairies. We were not disposed to contest the point with him, but proposed a bet of a suit of the finest cloth, and to settle the point by killing one of the herd, if the commander would permit us to fire upon it. The bet was accepted, and the permission given. My companion was armed with a musket, and I with a rifle. When we came in sight of the herd, it was approaching a little pond to drink. We concealed ourselves, as they approached, and my companion requested me to take the first fire, as the rifle was surer and closer than the musket. When they were within shooting distance, I levelled one; as soon as it fell, the herd, which consisted of a thousand or more, gathered in crowds around the fallen one. Between us we killed eleven, all proving, according to our word, to be cows. We put our mules in requisition to bring in our ample supply of meat. Mr. Pratte admitted, that the bet was lost, though we declined accepting it.

About ten at night it commenced raining; the rain probably caused us to intermit our caution; for shortly after it began, the Indians attacked our encampment, firing a shower of arrows upon us. We returned their fire at random, as they retreated: they killed two of our horses, and slightly wounded one of our men; we found four Indians killed by our fire, and one wounded. The wounded Indian informed our interpreter, that the Indians, who attacked us, were Arrickarees. We remained encamped here four days, attending our wounded man, and the wounded Indian, who died, however, the second day, and here we buried him.

We left this encampment on the 26th, and through the day met with continued herds of buffaloes and wild horses, which, however, we did not disturb. In the evening we reached a fork of the Platte, called Hyde Park. This stream, formerly noted for beavers, still sustains a few. Here we encamped, set our traps, and caught four beavers. In the morning we began to ascend this stream, and during our progress, we were obliged to keep men in advance, to affrighten the buffaloes and wild horses [26] from our path. They are here in such prodigious numbers, as literally to have eaten down the grass of the prairies.

Here we saw multitudes of prairie dogs. They have large village establishments of burrows, where they live in society. They are sprightly, bold and self important animals, of the size of a Norwegian rat. On the morning of the 28th, our wounded companion was again unable to travel, in conse-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

quence of which we were detained at our encampment three days. Not wholly to lose the time, we killed during these three days 110 buffaloes, of which we saved only the tongues and hump ribs. On the morning of the 31st, our wounded associate being somewhat recovered, we resumed our march. Ascending the stream, in the course of the day we came upon the dead bodies of two men, so much mangled, and disfigured by the wild beasts, that we could only discover that they were white men. They had been shot by the Indians with arrows, the ground near them being stuck full of arrows. They had been scalped. Our feelings may be imagined, at seeing the mangled bodies of people of our own race in these remote and unpeopled prairies. We consoled ourselves with believing that they died like brave men. We had soon afterwards clear evidence of this fact, for, on surveying the vicinity at the distance of a few hundred yards, we found the bodies of five dead Indians. The ground all around was torn and trampled by horse and footmen. We collected the remains of the two white men, and buried them. We then ascended the stream a few miles, and encamped. Finding signs of Indians, who could have left the spot but a few hours before, we made no fire for fear of being discovered, and attacked in the night. Sometime after dark, ten of us started up the creek in search of their fires. About four miles from our encampment, we saw them a few hundred yards in advance. Twenty fires were distinctly visible. We counselled with each other, whether to fire on them or not. Our conclusion was, that the most prudent plan was to return, and apprise our companions of what we had seen. In consequence of our information, on our return, sixty men were chosen, headed by my father, who set off in order [27] to surround their camp before daylight. I was one of the number, as I should have little liked to have my father go into battle without me, when it was in my power to accompany him. The remainder were left in charge of our camp, horses, and mules. We had examined our arms and found them in good order. About midnight we came in sight of their fires, and before three o'clock were posted all around them, without having betrayed ourselves. We were commanded not to fire a gun, until the word was given. As it was still sometime before daylight, we became almost impatient for the command. As an Indian occasionally arose and stood for a moment before the fire, I involuntarily took aim at him with the thought, how easily I could destroy him, but my orders withheld me. Twilight at length came, and the Indians began to arise. They soon discovered two of our men, and instantly raising the war shout, came upon us with great fury. Our men stood firm, until they received the order which was soon given. A well directed and destructive fire now opened on them, which they received, and returned with some firmness. But when we closed in upon them they fled in confusion and dismay. The action lasted fifteen minutes. Thirty of their dead were left on the field, and we took ten prisoners, whom we compelled to bury the dead. One of our men was wounded, and died the next day. We took our prisoners to our encampment, where we questioned them with regard to the two white men, we had found, and buried the preceding day. They acknowledged, that their party killed them, and assigned as a reason for so doing, that when the white men were asked by the chief to divide their powder and balls with him, they refused. It was then determined by the chief, that they should be killed, and the whole taken. In carrying this purpose into effect, the Indians lost four of their best young men, and obtained but little powder and lead, as a compensation.

We then asked them to what nation they belonged? They answered the Crow. This nation is distinguished for bravery and skill in war. Their bows and arrows were then given them, and they were told, that we never killed defenceless prisoners, but [28] that they must tell their brothers of

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

us, and that we should not have killed any of their nation, had not they killed our white brothers; and if they did so in future, we should kill all we found of them, as we did not fear any number, they could bring against us. They were then allowed to go free, which delighted them, as they probably expected that we should kill them, it being their custom to put all their prisoners to death by the most shocking and cruel tortures. That they may not lose this diabolical pleasure by the escape of their prisoners, they guard them closely day and night. One of them, upon being released, gave my father an eagle's feather, saying, you are a good and brave man, I will never kill another white man.

We pursued our journey on the 1st of September. Our advance was made with great caution, as buffaloes were now seen in immense herds, and the danger from Indians was constant. Wandering tribes of these people subsist on the buffaloes, which traverse the interior of these plains, keeping them constantly in sight.

On the morning of the 2d, we started early. About ten o'clock we saw a large herd of buffaloes approaching us with great speed. We endeavored to prevent their running among our pack mules, but it was in vain. They scattered them in every direction over the plain; and although we rode in among the herd, firing on them, we were obliged to follow them an hour, before we could separate them sufficiently to regain our mules. After much labor we collected all, with the exception of one packed with dry goods, which the crowd drove before them. The remainder of the day, half our company were employed as a guard, to prevent a similar occurrence. When we encamped for the night, some time was spent in driving the buffaloes a considerable distance from our camp. But for this precaution, we should have been in danger of losing our horses and mules entirely.

The following morning, we took a S. S. W. course, which led us from the stream, during this day's journey. Nothing occurred worthy of mention, except that we saw a great number of [29] wolves, which had surrounded a small herd of buffalo cows and calves, and killed and eaten several. We dispersed them by firing on them. We judged, that there were at least a thousand. They were large and as white as sheep. Near this point we found water, and encamped for the night.

On the morning of the 4th, a party was sent out to kill some buffalo bulls, and get their skins to make moccasins for our horses, which detained us until ten o'clock. We then packed up and travelled six miles. Finding a lake, we encamped for the night. From this spot, we saw one of the most beautiful landscapes, that ever spread out to the eye. As far as the plain was visible in all directions, innumerable herds of wild horses, buffaloes, antelopes, deer, elk, and wolves, fed in their wild and fierce freedom. Here the sun rose, and set, as unobscured from the sight, as on the wastes of ocean. Here we used the last of our salt, and as for bread, we had seen none, since we had left the Pawnee village. I hardly need observe, that these are no small deprivations.

The next day we travelled until evening, nothing occurring, that deserves record. Our encampment was near a beautiful spring, called Bellefontaine, which is visited by the Indians, at some seasons of the year. Near it were some pumpkins, planted by the Indians. I cooked one, but did not find it very palatable: The next day we encamped without water. Late in the evening of the following day we reached a stream, and encamped. As we made our arrangements for the night, we came upon a small party of Indians. They ran off immediately, but we pursued them, caught four, and took them to the camp they had left, a little distant from ours. It contained between twenty and thirty women and children, beside three men. The women were frightened at our

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

approach, and attempted to run. The Indians in our possession said something to them in their own language, that induced them to stop; but it was sometime, before they were satisfied, that we intended them no harm. We returned to our camp, and were attending to our mules and horses. Our little Indian boy was playing about the camp, as usual. [30] Suddenly our attention was arrested by loud screams or cries; and looking up, we saw our little boy in the arms of an Indian, whose neck he was closely clasping, as the Indian pressed him to his bosom, kissing him, and crying at the same time. As we moved towards the spot, the Indian approached us, still holding the child in his arms; and falling on his knees, made us a long speech, which we understood only through his signs. During his speech, he would push the child from him, and then draw it back to him, and point to us. He was the father of this boy, whom we saved from being burnt by the Pawnees. He gave us to understand by his signs, that his child was carried off by his enemies. When the paroxysm of his joy was past, we explained, as well as we could, how we obtained the child. Upon hearing the name Pawnee, he sprang upon his feet, and rushed into his tent. He soon came out, bringing with him two Indian scalps, and his bow and arrows, and insisted, that we should look at the scalps, making signs to tell us, that they were Pawnee scalps, which he took at the time he lost his child. After he finished this explanation, he would lay the scalps a short distance from him, and shoot his arrows through them, to prove his great enmity to this nation. He then presented my father a pair of leggins and a pipe, both neatly decorated with porcupine quills; and accompanied by his child, withdrew to his tent, for the night. Just as the morning star became visible, we were aroused from our slumbers, by the crying and shouting of the Indians in their tent. We arose, and approached it, to ascertain the cause of the noise. Looking in, we saw the Indians all laying prostrate with their faces to the ground. We remained observing them, until the full light of day came upon them.—They then arose, and placed themselves around the fire. The next movement was to light a pipe, and begin to smoke. Seeing them blow the smoke first towards the point where the sun arose, and then towards heaven, our curiosity was aroused, to know the meaning of what we had seen. The old chief told us by signs, that they had been thanking the Great Spirit for allowing them to see another day. We then purchased a few beaver [31] skins of them, and left them. Our encampment for the evening of this day, was near a small spring, at the head of which we found a great natural curiosity. A rock sixteen yards in circumference, rises from eighty to ninety feet in height, according to our best judgment, from a surface upon which, in all directions, not the smallest particle of rock, not even a pebble can be found. We were unable to reach the top of it, although it was full of holes, in which the hawks and ravens built their nests. We gave the spring the name of Rock Castle spring. On the morning of the 9th, we left this spot, and at night reached the foot of a large dividing ridge, which separates the waters of the Platte from those of the Arkansas. After completing our arrangements for the night, some of us ascended to the top of the ridge, to look out for Indians; but we saw none.

The succeeding morning we crossed the ridge, and came to water in the evening, where we encamped. Here we killed a white bear, which occupied several of us at least an hour. It was constantly in chase of one or another of us, thus withholding us from shooting at it, through fear of wounding each other. This was the first, I had ever seen. His claws were four inches long, and very sharp. He had killed a buffaloe bull, eaten a part of it, and buried the remainder. When we came upon him, he was watching the spot, where he had buried it, to keep off the wolves, which literally surrounded him.

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

On the 11th, we travelled over some hilly ground. In the course of the day, we killed three white bears, the claws of which I saved, they being of considerable value among the Indians, who wear them around the neck, as the distinguishing mark of a brave. Those Indians, who wear this ornament, view those, who do not, as their inferiors. We came to water, and encamped early. I was one of the guard for the night, which was rather cloudy. About the middle of my guard, our horses became uneasy, and in a few moments more, a bear had gotten in among them, and sprung upon one of them, The others were so much alarmed, that they burst their fastenings, and darted off at full speed. Our camp was soon aroused, and [32] in arms, for defence, although much confused, from not knowing what the enemy was, nor from what direction to expect the attack. Some, however, immediately set off in pursuit of our horses. I still stood at my post, in no little alarm, as I did not know with the rest, if the Indians were around us or not. All around was again stillness, the noise of those in pursuit of the horses being lost in the distance. Suddenly my attention was arrested, as I gazed in the direction, from which the alarm came, by a noise like that of a struggle at no great distance from me. I espied a hulk, at which I immediately fired. It was the bear devouring a horse, still alive. My shot wounded him. The report of my gun, together with the noise made by the enraged bear, brought our men from the camp, where they awaited a second attack from the unknown enemy in perfect stillness.—Determined to avenge themselves, they now sallied forth, although it was so dark, that an object ten steps in advance could not be seen. The growls of the bear, as he tore up the ground around him with his claws, attracted all in his direction. Some of the men came so near, that the animal saw them, and made towards them. They all fired at him, but did not touch him. All now fled from the furious animal, as he seemed intent on destroying them. In this general flight one of the men was caught. As he screamed out in his agony, I, happening to have reloaded my gun, ran up to relieve him. Reaching the spot in an instant, I placed the muzzle of my gun against the bear, and discharging it, killed him. Our companion was literally torn in pieces. The flesh on his hip was torn off, leaving the sinews bare, by the teeth of the bear. His side was so wounded in three places, that his breath came through the openings; his head was dreadfully bruised, and his jaw broken. His breath came out from both sides of his windpipe, the animal in his fury having placed his teeth and claws in every part of his body. No one could have supposed, that there was the slightest possibility of his recovery, through any human means. We remained in our encampment three days, attending upon him, without seeing any change for the worse or better in his situation. [33] He had desired us from the first to leave him, as he considered his case as hopeless as ourselves did. We then concluded to move from our encampment, leaving two men with him, to each of whom we gave one dollar a day, for remaining to take care of him, until he should die, and to bury him decently.

On the 14th we set off, taking, as we believed, a final leave of our poor companion. Our feelings may be imagined, as we left this suffering man to die in this savage region, unfriended and unpitied. We travelled but a few miles before we came to a fine stream and some timber. Concluding that this would be a better place for our unfortunate companion, than the one where he was, we encamped with the intention of sending back for him. We despatched men for him, and began to prepare a shelter for him, should he arrive. This is a fork of Smoke Hill river, which empties into the Platte. We set traps, and caught eight beavers, during the night. Our companions with the wounded man on a litter, reached us about eight o'clock at night.

In the morning we had our painful task of leave taking to go through again. We promised to wait

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

for the two we left behind at the Arkansas river. We travelled all day up this stream.—I counted, in the course of the day, two hundred and twenty white bears. We killed eight, that made an attack upon us; the claws of which I saved. Leaving the stream in the evening we encamped on the plain. A guard of twenty was relieved through the night, to prevent the bears from coming in upon us. Two tried to do it and were killed.

In the morning we began our march as usual: returning to the stream, we travelled until we came to its head. The fountain, which is its source, boils up from the plain, forming a basin two hundred yards in circumference, as clear as crystal, about five feet in depth. Here we killed some wild geese and ducks. After advancing some distance farther we encamped for the night. Buffaloes were not so numerous, during this day's journey, as they had been some time previous, owing, we judged, to the great numbers of white bears.

[34] On the 17th we travelled until sunset, and encamped near water. On the 18th we found no water, but saw great numbers of wild horses and elk. The succeeding morning we set off before light, and encamped at 4 o'clock in the afternoon by a pond, the water of which was too brackish to drink. On the 20th we found water to encamp by. In the course of the day I killed two fat buffaloe cows. One of them had a calf, which I thought I would try to catch alive. In order to do so, I concluded it would be well to be free from any unnecessary incumbrances, and accordingly laid aside my shot-pouch, gun and pistols. I expected it would run, but instead of that, when I came within six or eight feet of it, it turned around, and ran upon me, butting me like a ram, until I was knocked flat upon my back. Every time I attempted to rise, it laid me down again. At last I caught by one of its legs, and stabbed it with my butcher knife, or I believe it would have butted me to death. I made up my mind, that I would never attempt to catch another buffaloe calf alive, and also, that I would not tell my companions what a capsizing I had had, although my side did not feel any better for the butting it had received. I packed on my horse as much meat as he could carry, and set out for the camp, which I reached a little after dark. My father was going in search of me, believing me either lost, or killed. He had fired several guns, to let me know the direction of the camp.

We travelled steadily on the 21st, and encamped at night on a small branch of the Arkansas. During the day, we had seen large droves of buffaloes running in the same direction, in which we travelled, as though they were pursued. We could, however, see nothing in pursuit. They appeared in the same confusion all night. On the 22d, we marched fast all day, the buffaloes still running before us. In the evening we reached the main Arkansas, and encamped. The sky indicating rain, we exerted ourselves, and succeeded in pitching our tents and kindling fires, before the rain began to fall. Our meat was beginning to roast, when we saw some Indians about half a mile distant, looking at us from a hill. We immediately tied our [35] mules and horses. A few minutes after, ten Indians approached us with their guns on their shoulders. This open, undisguised approach made us less suspicious of them, than we should otherwise have been. When they were within a proper distance, they stopped, and called out Amigo, Amigo. One of our number understood them, and answered Amigo, which is friend, when they came up to us. They were Comanches, and one of them was a chief. Our interpreter understood and spoke their language quite well. The chief seemed bold, and asked who was our captain? My father was pointed out to him. He then asked us to go and encamp with him, saying that his people and the whites were good friends. My father answered, that we had encamped before we knew where they were, and that if we moved now, we

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

feared that the goods would be wet. The chief said, this was very good; but that, as we now knew where his camp was, we must move to it. To this my father returned, that if it did not rain next morning, we would; but as before, that we did not wish to get the goods wet to night. The chief then said, in a surly manner, 'you don't intend then to move to my camp to night?' My father answered, 'No!' The chief said he should, or he would come upon us with his men, kill us, and take every thing we had. Upon this my father pushed the chief out of the tent, telling him to send his men as soon as he pleased; that we would kill them, as fast as they came. In reply the chief pointed his finger to the spot, where the sun would be at eight o'clock the next morning, and said, 'If you do not come to my camp, when the sun is there, I will set all my warriors upon you.' He then ran off through the rain to his own camp. We began, immediately, a kind of breastwork, made by chopping off logs, and putting them together. Confidently expecting an attack in the night, we tied our horses and mules in a sink hole between us and the river. It was now dark. I do not think an eye was closed in our camp that night; but the morning found us unmolested; nor did we see any Indians, before the sun was at the point spoken of. When it had reached it, an army of between six and eight hundred mounted [36] Indians, with their faces painted as black as though they had come from the infernal regions, armed with fuzees and spears and shields appeared before us. Every thing had been done by the Indians to render this show as intimidating as possible. We discharged a couple of guns at them to show that we were not afraid, and were ready to receive them. A part advanced towards us; but one alone, approaching at full speed, threw down his bow and arrows, and sprang in among us, saying in broken English 'Commanches no good, me Iotan, good man.' He gave us to understand, that the Iotan nation was close at hand, and would not let the Commanches hurt us, and then started back. The Commanches fired some shots at us, but from such a distance, that we did not return them. In less than half an hour, we heard a noise like distant thunder. It became more and more distinct, until a band of armed Indians, whom we conjectured to be Iotans, became visible in the distance. When they had drawn near, they reined up their horses for a moment, and then rushed in between us and Commanches, who charged upon the Iotans. The latter sustained the charge with firmness. The discharge of their fire arms and the clashing of their different weapons, together with their war-yell, and the shrieks of the wounded and dying were fit accompaniments to the savage actors and scene. I do not pretend to describe this deadly combat between two Indian nations; but, as far as I could judge, the contest lasted fifteen minutes. I was too deeply interested in watching the event, to note it particularly. We wished to assist the Iotans, but could not distinguish them from the mass, so closely were the parties engaged. We withheld our fire through fear of injuring the Iotans, whom we considered our friends. It was not long before we saw, to our great satisfaction, the Commanches dismounted, which was the signal of their entire defeat. The Iotans then left the Commanches, and returned to their women and children, whom they had left some distance behind. They brought them to our camp, and pitched their own tents all around us, except that of the chief, which was placed in the centre with ours. A guard of warriors was then posted around [37] the encampment, and an order given for the wounded Iotans to be brought into the tent of the chief. There were ten, two of whom died before night. A message was now sent to the chief of the Commanches, in obedience to which he came to the Iotan chief. A council then seemed to be held, and a peace was made, the terms of which were, that the Iotan chief should pay the Commanche chief two horses for every warrior, he had lost in the battle, over the number of Iotans killed. We gave the Iotan chief goods

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

to the amount of one hundred dollars, which pleased him exceedingly. He expressed himself perfectly satisfied with this recompense for the warriors he had lost in our defence. The knowledge, that a party as large as ours was traversing the country, had soon spread in all directions from the reports of Indians, who had met with us, and we became to these savage tribes a matter of interest, as a source of gain to be drawn from us by robbing, kindness or trade.—Our movements were observed. The Commanches determined to possess themselves of their object by force; and the Iotans interfered in our defence, that they might thus gain their point by extortion from friends. Not a single Commanche was allowed to enter our camp, as arrangements were making for the Iotans to trade with us. All, who had any beaver skins, or dressed deer skins, were sent for. A guard was placed around in a circle, inside of which the skins were thrown down. Each Indian then inquired for the article he wanted. In this way we exchanged with them butcher knives, paint, and powder and ball, for beaver and deer skins, to the amount of fifteen hundred dollars, allowing them what we considered the value of the skins.

The old Commanche chief came to the Iotan chief to ask permission to talk with us, but was forbidden; and we were told not to have any dealings with him. We did not. The Iotan chief then gave us the character of the Commanche chief. He seemed to be thinking some time before he began. 'I know,' said he, 'you must think it strange that I should fight with the Commanches, and then pay them for their warriors killed, over [38] our own number lost, and make peace with them. I will give you my reasons for doing so. Four years ago, this Commanche chief with his followers, went in company with my father, who was a chief, and a few of his followers, in search of buffaloes. After they had killed what they wanted, they divided the meat. The Commanche took all the best of it, leaving the remains for my father. The old man put up with it, and said nothing. On their return, close to this place they met a band of Nabahoes, a nation that had long been at war with ours, and killed a great number of our people. My father wanted to kill them, and began to fire upon them. The Commanches joined the Nabahoes, and together they killed my father and most of his men. He then paid for the lives he had taken, in horses, giving twenty for my father, and four for each warrior. I only give two horses for a warrior. I am now happy. I have killed three times as many of them, as they did of us, and paid less for it. I know they can never get the upper hand of me again. This Commanche chief is a mean man, for whenever he has power, he makes others do as he pleases, or he kills them, and takes all they have. He wanted to act in this way with you; but I do not think he could, for you know how to shoot better than he does; and you would not give up, as long as you had powder and ball and one man alive.' My father as commander, said, 'his men were all good soldiers, and knew how to get the advantage in fighting; and that we had plenty of ammunition and good guns, and were not in the least afraid of being beaten by them.' 'I think so,' replied the chief; 'But I thank the Great Spirit, that it happened as it did. I have taken revenge for the death of my father, and his people, and gained, I hope, at the same time the love of a good and brave people by defending them.' We assured him that he had, expressing our thanks for his aid, and regret for those who had been killed in our defence. 'Yes,' said the chief, 'they were brave men; but they loved my father, whom they have now gone to see, where they will have plenty to eat, and drink, without having to fight for it.' These were his thoughts, as near as I can express them.

The Commanche chief made a second application for permission to talk with us, which was now granted. His object in conversing [39] with us, was, as he said, to make friends with us, and in-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

duce us to give him some powder and ball. We told him that we would willingly make peace with him; but not give him any thing, as we did not break the peace. He had threatened to kill us, and take our property without any provocation from us, and certainly, if any present was necessary, it must come from him. We did not, however, wish any present from him, and would make peace with him, provided he promised never to kill, or try to kill a white man. He answered, that he had neither done it, or intended to do it; that with regard to us, he only sought to frighten us, so that we should come to his camp, before the Iotans came up, whom he knew to be not far distant, in order that he might precede them in trading with us, adding that as he had been so disappointed, he thought we ought to give him a little powder and ball. Our answer was, that we had no more ammunition to spare; and that we could not depart from our resolution of not purchasing a treaty from him; but we would give him a letter of recommendation to the next company that came in this direction, by means of which he might trade with them, and obtain what he wanted of these articles. He consented to a treaty on these conditions, and lighting his pipes we smoked friends. He then asked us if we came through the Pawnee village? We answered in the affirmative. His next question was, had they plenty of ammunition? Our reply was again, yes. We were then given to understand, that he was then at war with them, and had been for a number of years, and that he should soon either make peace with them, or have a general engagement. He would prefer peace, as they were at war with the Spaniards, as well as himself. By uniting forces, they could beat the Spaniards, though in case of a treaty or not, he intended to go against the Spaniards, as soon as he should return from the country of the Pawnees. He added, 'I suppose you are friends with the Spaniards, and are now going to trade with them.' Our commander replied, that we were going to trade with them, but not to fight for them. That, said the chief, is [40] what I wanted to know. I do not want war with your people, and should we accidentally kill any of them, you must not declare war against us, as we will pay you for them in horses or beaver skins. We did not express our natural feeling, that the life of one man was worth more than all the horses or beaver skins, his nation could bring forth; but told him, that we would not injure his people, unless they did ours, on purpose. He returned, apparently satisfied, to his camp. We were detained here until the fourth of November by our promise of awaiting the arrival of the two men, we had left with our wounded companion. They came, and brought with them his gun and ammunition. He died the fifth day, after we had left him, and was buried as decently, as the circumstances would allow.

On the 5th of November we again set off in company with a party of Iotans. The Arkansas is here wide and shallow, like the Platte; and has wide but thinly timbered bottoms on both sides. Extending from the bottom ten or twelve miles on the south side, are low hills composed principally of sand. We found travelling upon them very fatiguing, particularly as we met with no water. Late in the evening we reached water, and encamped. The next morning we resumed our journey. We were exceedingly diverted, during the day, to see the Iotan Indians in company with us, chase the buffaloes on horseback. They killed them with their arrows. The force, with which they shoot these arrows, is astonishing. I saw one of them shoot an arrow through a buffalo bull, that had been driven close to our camp. We were again upon level plains, stretching off in all directions beyond the reach of the eye. The few high mounds scattered over them could not but powerfully arrest the curiosity. From the summit of one I again looked down upon innumerable droves of wild animals, dotting the surface, as they seemed to forget their savage natures, and fed, or reposed in peace. I indulged the thoughts natural to such a position and scene. The remembrance

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

of home, with its duties and pleasures, came upon my mind in strong contrast with my actual circumstances. [41] I was interrupted by the discharge of guns, and the screams and yells of Indians. The Iotans had found six Nabahoos a half a mile from us, and were killing them. Three were killed. The others, being well mounted, made their escape. The Iotans came to our camp with their scalps, leaving their bodies to be eaten by wild animals. My father sent men to bury them. The Iotans danced around these scalps all night, and in the morning took up the bodies, we had buried, and cut them in pieces. They then covered themselves with the skins of bears and panthers, and, taking the hearts of the dead men, cut them into pieces of the size of a mouthful, and laid them upon the ground, and kneeling put their hands on the ground, and crawled around the pieces of hearts, growling as though they were enraged bears, or panthers, ready to spring upon them, and eat them. This is their mode of showing hatred to their enemies. Not relishing such detestable conduct, we so manifested our feelings, that these Indians went to their own camps. We encamped the evening of the next day near water. Nothing worthy of record occurred during the journey of the four succeeding days, except that we came to a small creek called Simaronee. Here we encamped, and killed some buffaloes, and shod our horses. We travelled up this stream some distance, and left it on the 15th.

On the 16th we encamped on a creek, where we found four gentle mules, which we caught. I could not account for their being there. Nothing of importance occurred in the two last days. From the 17th to the 20th, we journeyed without interruption. The latter day we came in view of a mountain covered with snow, called Taos mountain. This object awakened in our minds singular but pleasant feelings. On the 23d we reached its foot. Here Mr. Pratte concealed a part of his goods by burying them in the ground. We were three days crossing this mountain.

On the evening of the 26th, we arrived at a small town in Taos, called St. Ferdinando, situated just at the foot of the mountain on the west side. The alcalde asked us for the invoice [42] of our goods, which we showed him, and paid the customary duties on them. This was a man of a swarthy complexion having the appearance of pride and haughtiness.

The door-way of the room, we were in, was crowded with men, women and children, who stared at us, as though they had never seen white men before, there being in fact, much to my surprize and disappointment, not one white person among them. I had expected to find no difference between these people and our own, but their language. I was never so mistaken. The men and women were not clothed in our fashion, the former having short pantaloons fastened below the waist with a red belt and buck skin leggins put on three or four times double. A Spanish knife is stuck in by the side of the leg, and a small sword worn by the side. A long jacket or blanket is thrown over, and worn upon the shoulders. They have few fire arms, generally using upon occasions which require them, a bow and spear, and never wear a hat, except when they ride. When on horse back, they face towards the right side of the animal. The saddle, which they use, looks as ours would, with something like an arm chair fastened upon it.

The women wear upon the upper part of the person a garment resembling a shirt, and a short petticoat fastened around the waist with a red or blue belt, and something of the scarf kind wound around their shoulders. Although appearing as poorly, as I have described, they are not destitute of hospitality; for they brought us food, and invited us into their houses to eat, as we walked through the streets.

The first time my father and myself walked through the town together, we were accosted by a

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

woman standing in her own door-way. She made signs for us to come in. When we had entered, she conducted us up a flight of steps into a room neatly whitewashed, and adorned with images of saints, and a crucifix of brass nailed to a wooden cross. She gave us wine, and set before us a dish composed of red pepper, ground and mixed with corn meal, stewed in fat and water. We could not eat it. She then brought forward some tortillas and milk. Tortillas [43] are a thin cake made of corn and wheat ground between two flat stones by the women. This cake is called in Spanish, metate. We remained with her until late in the evening, when the bells began to ring. She and her children knelt down to pray. We left her, and returned. On our way we met a bier with a man upon it, who had been stabbed to death, as he was drinking whiskey.

This town stands on a beautiful plain, surrounded on one side by the Rio del Norte, and on the other by the mountain, of which I have spoken, the summit being covered with perpetual snow. We set off for Santa Fe on the 1st of November. Our course for the first day led us over broken ground. We passed the night in a small town, called Callacia, built on a small stream, that empties into the del Norte. The country around this place presents but a small portion of level surface. The next day our path lay over a point of the mountain. We were the whole day crossing. We killed a grey bear, that was exceedingly fat. It had fattened on a nut of the shape and size of a bean, which grows on a tree resembling the pine, called by the Spanish, pinion. We took a great part of the meat with us. We passed the night again in a town called Albuquerque.

The following day we passed St. Thomas, a town situated on the bank of the del Norte, which is here a deep and muddy stream, with bottoms from five to six miles wide on both sides. These bottoms sustain numerous herds of cattle. The small huts of the shepherds, who attend to them, were visible here and there. We reached another town called Elgidonis, and stopped for the night. We kept guard around our horses all night, but in the morning four of our mules were gone. We hunted for them until ten o'clock, when two Spaniards came, and asked us, what we would give them, if they would find our mules? We told them to bring the mules, and we would pay them a dollar. They set off, two of our men following them without their knowledge and went into a thicket, where they had tied the mules, and returned with them to us. As may be supposed, we gave them both a good whipping. It seemed at first, that the whole [44] town would rise against us in consequence. But when we related the circumstances fairly to the people, the officer corresponding to our justice of the peace, said, we had done perfectly right, and had the men put in the stocks.

We recommenced our journey, and passed a mission of Indians under the control of an old priest. After crossing a point of the mountain, we reached Santa Fe, on the 5th. This town contains between four and five thousand inhabitants. It is situated on a large plain. A handsome stream runs through it, adding life and beauty to a scene striking and agreeable from the union of amenity and cultivation around, with the distant view of the snow clad mountains. It is pleasant to walk on the flat roofs of the houses in the evening, and look on the town and plain spread below. The houses are low, with flat roofs as I have mentioned. The churches are differently constructed from the other buildings and make a beautiful show. They have a great number of large bells, which, when disturbed, make a noise, that would almost seem sufficient to awaken the dead.

We asked the governor for permission to trap beaver in the river Helay. His reply was that, he did not know if he was allowed by the law to do so; but if upon examination it lay in his power, he would inform us on the morrow, if we would come to his office at 9 o'clock in the morning. According to this request, we went to the place appointed, the succeeding day, which was the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

9th of November. We were told by the governor, that he had found nothing, that would justify him, in giving us the legal permission, we desired. We then proposed to him to give us liberty to trap, upon the condition, that we paid him five per cent on the beaver we might catch. He said, he would consider this proposition, and give us an answer the next day at the same hour. The thoughts of our hearts were not at all favorable to this person, as we left him.

About ten o'clock at night an express came from the river Pacus, on which the nobles have their country seats and large farming establishments, stating, that a large body of Indians had come upon several families, whom they had either robbed, or [45] murdered. Among the number two Americans had been killed, and the wife of one taken prisoner, in company with four Spanish women, one of whom was daughter of the former governor, displaced because he was an European. The drum and fife and French horn began to sound in a manner, that soon awakened, and alarmed the whole town. The frightened women, and the still more fear-stricken men, joining in a full chorus of screams and cries, ran some to where the drum was beating in the public square, and others to our quarters. Upon the first sound of alarm we had prepared to repel the enemy, whatever it might be, provided it troubled us. When this group came rushing towards us, the light of the moon enabled us to discern them with sufficient clearness to prevent our doing them any injury. We did not sleep any more that night, for the women, having got the wrong story, as most women do in a case of the kind, told us that the Comanches were in town, killing the people. We awaited an attack, without, however, hearing any sound of fire arms. Our conclusion was, that they were skulking around, dealing out death in darkness and silence with their arrows; and in the feelings, which were its natural result, the remainder of the night passed. The first light of morning showed us a body of four hundred men ready to mount their horses. At sunrise the governor came to us to ask, if we would aid in the attempt to recapture the prisoners taken by the Comanches, relating to us the real cause of the alarm of the preceding night. We complied readily with his request, as we were desirous of gaining the good will of the people. Our arrangements were soon made, and we set off in company with the troops I have mentioned.

The 12th was spent in travelling. We stopped for the night at St. John's, a small town. On the 13th we reached the spot, where the murders and robbery were committed. Here we took the course the Indians had marked in their retreat, stopping only for refreshments. We pressed on all night, as we found their fires still smoking. At eight on the morning of the 15th, the trail being fresh, we increased our speed, and at twelve came in sight of them, as they advanced toward a low gap in [46] the mountains. We now halted, and counselled together with regard to the next movements. The commander of the Spaniards proposed, that my father should direct the whole proceedings, promising obedience on his own part and that of his troops.

The gap in the mountains, of which I spoke, was made by a stream. The Indians were now entering it. My father formed a plan immediately, and submitted it to the Spanish commander, who promised to aid in carrying it into effect. In conformity to it, the Spaniards were directed to keep in rear of the Indians, without being seen by them. We took a circuitous route, screened from sight by the highland, that lay between us and the Indians, in order to gain unobserved a hollow in advance of them, in which we might remain concealed, until they approached within gunshot of us. Our main object was to surprize them, and not allow them time to kill their captives, should they be still alive. The party in the rear were to close in, upon hearing the report of our guns, and not allow them to return to the plain. Our plan seemed to assure us success. We succeeded

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

in reaching the hollow, in which we placed ourselves in the form of a half circle, extending from one side of it to the other, our horses being tied behind us. Every man was then ordered to prime, and pick his gun afresh. The right flank was to fire first, the left reserving theirs to give a running fire, that should enable the right to re-load. The Indians, surrounding the prisoners, were to be taken as the first aim, to prevent the immediate murder of them by their captors. My post was in the centre of the line. We waited an hour and a half behind our screens of rocks and trees, before our enemies made their appearance. The first object, that came in sight, were women without any clothing, driving a large drove of sheep and horses. These were immediately followed by Indians. When the latter were within thirty or forty yards of us, the order to fire was given. The women ran towards us the moment they heard the report of our guns. In doing this they encountered the Indians behind them, and three fell pierced by the spears of these savages. The cry among us now was, 'save the women!' Another young man and [47] myself sprang forward, to rescue the remaining two. My companion fell in the attempt. An Indian had raised his spear, to inflict death upon another of these unfortunate captives, when he received a shot from one of our men, that rendered him incapable of another act of cruelty. The captives, one of whom was a beautiful young lady, the daughter of the governor before spoken of, both reached me. The gratitude of such captives, so delivered, may be imagined. Fears, thanks and exclamations in Spanish were the natural expression of feeling in such a position. My companions aided me in wrapping blankets around them, for it was quite cold; and making the best arrangements in our power for their comfort and safety. This was all done in less time, than is required to relate it, and we returned to our post. The Indians stood the second fire, and then retreated. We pursued keeping up a quick fire, expecting every moment to hear the Spaniards in the rear following our example to check them in their retreat; but we could discover the entrance upon the plain, before we heard any thing from our Spanish muskets. The Indians then began to yell; but the Spaniards, after one discharge from their fire arms, fled. Being mounted on good horses the Indians did not pursue them, but satisfied as to our numbers, now that we were upon the plain, they rallied, and rushed upon us. Our commander now ordered us to retreat into the woods, and to find shelter behind trees, and take aim that every shot might tell, as it was of the utmost importance, not to waste ammunition, saying, 'stand resolute, my boys, and we make them repent, if they follow us, although those \*\* Spaniards have deserted us, when we came to fight for them. We are enough for these \*\* devils alone.' As they came near us, we gave them a scattering though destructive fire, which they returned bravely, still pressing towards us. It was a serious contest for about ten minutes, after they approached within pistol shot of us. From their yells, one would have thought that the infernal regions were open before them, and that they were about to be plunged in headlong. They finally began to retreat again, and we soon [48] put them completely to flight. The Spaniards, though keeping a safe distance, while this was going forward, saw the state of affairs, and joined us in the pursuit, still taking especial care not to come near enough to the Indians, to hurt them, or receive any injury themselves. After the Indians rallied, we lost ten men, and my father received a slight wound in the shoulder.

We removed our horses and the rescued captives into the plain, and encamped. The Spaniards had killed an Indian already wounded, and were riding over the dead bodies of those on the ground, spearing them and killing any, who still breathed. My father commanded them to desist, or he would fire upon them, and the Spanish officer added his order to the same effect. The

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

latter then demanded of us, the two women, whom we had rescued, with as much assurance, as though himself had been the cause of their deliverance. My father replied, by asking what authority or right he had, to make such a request, when his cowardice withheld him from aiding in their release? The officer became enraged, and said, that he was unable to rally his men, and that he did not consider the captives any safer in our hands than in those of the Indians, as we were not christians. This insult, coupled with such a lame apology, only made my father laugh, and reply, that if cowardice constituted a claim to christianity, himself and his men were prime and undoubted christians. He added further, that if the rescued women preferred to accompany him, rather than remain, until he should have buried his brave comrades, who fell in their defence, and accept his protection, he had nothing to say. The subjects of our discussion, being present while it took place, decided the point before they were appealed to. The youngest said, that nothing would induce her to leave her deliverers, and that when they were ready to go, she would accompany them, adding, that she should pray hourly for the salvation of those, who had resigned their lives in the preservation of hers. The other expressed herself willing to remain with her, and manifested the same confidence and gratitude. The enraged officer and his men set off on their return to Santa Fe.

[49] The sun was yet an hour from its setting. We availed ourselves of the remaining light to make a breastwork with the timber, that had drifted down the stream, that we might be prepared for the Indians, in case they should return. We finished it, and posted our sentinels by sunset. The governor's daughter now inquired for the individual, who first met her in her flight from the Indians, and so humanely and bravely conducted her out of danger, and provided for her comfort. I cannot describe the gratitude and loveliness, that appeared in her countenance, as she looked on me, when I was pointed out to her. Not attaching any merit to the act, I had performed, and considering it merely as a duty, I did not know how to meet her acknowledgments, and was embarrassed. On the morning of the 16th we buried our dead. My father's shoulder was a little stiff, and somewhat swollen. We saddled our horses, and began our return journey. I gave up my horse to one of the ladies, and made my way on foot. We drove the sheep, which escaped the balls, before us. Our last look at the ground of our late contest gave a view sufficiently painful to any one, who had a heart; horses and their riders lay side by side. The bodies of robbers surrounded by the objects of their plunder would probably remain, scattered as they were, unburied and exposed to the wild beasts.

We halted in the evening for the refreshment of ourselves and horses. This done, we again set off travelling all night. The sheep giving out, we were obliged to leave them. At twelve next day we reached Pacus. Here we met the father of the youngest of the two ladies accompanied by a great number of Spaniards. The old man was transported almost to frenzy, when he saw his daughter. We remained here for the day. On the morning of the 18th we all set off together, the old governor insisting, that my father and myself must ride in the carriage with him; but we excused ourselves, and rode by the side of it with the interpreter. The father caressed us exceedingly, and said a great many things about me in particular, which I did not think, I deserved.

[50] The next day at two in the afternoon, we arrived at Santa Fe. We were received with a salute, which we returned with our small arms. The governor came in the evening, and invited my father and the interpreter to sup with him. He ordered some fat beeves to be killed for the rest of us. The father of Jacova, for that was the name of the young lady, I had rescued, came, and invited us all

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

to go, and drink coffee at his son-in-law's, who kept a coffee-house. We went, and when we had finished our coffee, the father came, and took me by the hand, and led me up a flight of steps, and into a room, where were his two daughters. As soon as I entered the room, Jacova and her sister both came, and embraced me, this being the universal fashion of interchanging salutations between men and women among these people, even when there is nothing more, than a simple introduction between strangers. After I had been seated an hour, looking at them, as they made signs, and listening to their conversation, of which I did not understand a syllable, I arose with the intention of returning to my companions for the night. But Jacova, showing me a bed, prepared for me, placed herself between me and the door. I showed her that my clothes were not clean. She immediately brought me others belonging to her brother-in-law. I wished to be excused from making use of them, but she seemed so much hurt, that I finally took them, and reseated myself. She then brought me my leather hunting shirt, which I had taken off to aid in protecting her from the cold, and begged the interpreter who was now present, to tell me, that she intended to keep it, as long as she lived. She then put it on, to prove to me that she was not ashamed of it.

I went to bed early, and arose, and returned to my companions, before any of the family were visible. At eight the governor and my father came to our quarters, and invited us all to dine with him at two in the afternoon. Accordingly we all dressed in our best, and went at the appointed time. A band of musicians played during dinner. After it was finished, and the table removed, a fandango was begun. The ladies flocked in, in great numbers. The instruments, to which the dancers' moved, were [51] a guitar and violin. Six men and six women also added their voices. Their mode of dancing was a curiosity to me. The women stood erect, moving their feet slowly, without any spring or motion of the body, and the men half bent, moved their feet like drum sticks. This dance is called ahavave. I admired another so much, that I attempted to go through it. It was a waltz, danced to a slow and charming air. It produces a fine effect, when twenty or thirty perform it together. The dancing continued, until near morning, when we retired to rest.

At eight the following morning we received a license, allowing us to trap in different parts of the country. We were now divided into small parties. Mr. Pratte added three to our original number, they making the company, to which my father and myself belonged, seven. On the 22d, we set off. Our course lay down the del Norte to the Helay, a river never before explored by white people. We left our goods with a merchant, until we should return in the spring. Our whole day's journey lay over a handsome plain covered with herds of the different domestic animals. We reached Picacheh a small town in the evening. Jacova and her father overtook us here, on their way home, which was eighty miles distant from Santa Fe.

In the morning we began our journey, together. During the day we passed several small villages and stopped for the night in one called St. Philip, situated on the banks of the del Norte, surrounded by large vineyards. Jacova's father insisted upon our drinking plentifully of the wine made at this place.

The morning of the 24th saw us again on our journey. Our companion, the old governor, was much amused at seeing us kill wild geese and prairie wolves with our rifles, the latter being abundant in this country. In the evening we reached another small town, called St. Louis. All these inconsiderable villages contain a church. The succeeding day we traversed the same beautiful plain country, which had made our journey so far, delightful. The same multitude of domestic animals still grazed around our path.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

[52] On the 27th, we arrived at the residence of Jacova and her father. It was a large and even magnificent building. We remained here until the 30th, receiving the utmost attention and kindness. At our departure, the kind old governor pressed a great many presents upon us; but we refused all, except a horse for each one of us, some flour and dried meat.

Seven hunters coming up with us, who were going in our direction, we concluded to travel with them, as our united strength would better enable us to contend with the hostile Indians, through whose country our course lay. We made our way slowly, descending the river bank, until we reached the last town or settlement in this part of the province, called Socoro. The population of the part of the country, through which we travelled was entirely confined to a chain of settlements along the bottoms of the del Norte, and those of some of the rivers, which empty into it. I did not see, during the whole of this journey, an enclosed field, and not even a garden.

After remaining one day here, in order to recruit our horses, we resumed our course down the river, Dec. 3d. The bottoms, through which we now passed, were thinly timbered, and the only growth was cotton-wood and willow. We saw great numbers of bears, deer and turkeys. A bear having chased one of our men into the camp, we killed it.

On the 7th we left the del Norte, and took a direct course for the Copper mines. We next travelled from the river over a very mountainous country four days, at the expiration of which time we reached this point of our destination. We were here but one night, and I had not leisure to examine the mode, in which the copper was manufactured. In the morning we hired two Spanish servants to accompany us; and taking a north-west course pursued our journey, until we reached the Helay on the 14th. We found the country the greater part of the two last days hilly and somewhat barren with a growth of pine, live oak, pinion, cedar and some small trees, of which I did not know the name. We caught thirty beavers, the first night we encamped on this river. The next morning, accompanied by another man, [53] I began to ascend the bank of the stream to explore, and ascertain if beaver were to be found still higher, leaving the remainder of the party to trap slowly up, until they should meet us on our return. We threw a pack over our shoulders, containing a part of the beavers, we had killed, as we made our way on foot. The first day we were fatigued by the difficulty of getting through the high grass, which covered the heavily timbered bottom. In the evening we arrived at the foot of mountains, that shut in the river on both sides, and encamped. We saw during the day several bears, but did not disturb them, as they showed no ill feeling towards us.

On the morning of the 13th we started early, and crossed the river, here a beautiful clear stream about thirty yards in width, running over a rocky bottom, and filled with fish. We made but little advance this day, as bluffs came in so close to the river, as to compel us to cross it thirty-six times. We were obliged to scramble along under the cliffs, sometimes upon our hands and knees, through a thick tangle of grape-vines and under-brush. Added to the unpleasantness of this mode of getting along in itself, we did not know, but the next moment would bring us face to face with a bear, which might accost us suddenly. We were rejoiced, when this rough ground gave place again to the level bottom. At night we reached a point, where the river forked, and encamped on the point between the forks. We found here a boiling spring so near the main stream, that the fish caught in the one might be thrown into the other without leaving the spot, where it was taken. In six minutes it would be thoroughly cooked.

The following morning my companion and myself separated, agreeing to meet after four days at

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

this spring. We were each to ascend a fork of the river. The banks of that which fell to my lot, were very brushy, and frequented by numbers of bears, of whom I felt fearful, as I had never before travelled alone in the woods. I walked on with caution until night, and encamped near a pile of drift wood, which I set on fire, thinking thus to frighten any animals that might approach during the night. [54] I placed a spit, with a turkey I had killed upon it, before the fire to roast. After I had eaten my supper I laid down by the side of a log with my gun by my side. I did not fall asleep for some time. I was aroused from slumber by a noise in the leaves, and raising my head saw a panther stretched on the log by which I was lying, within six feet of me. I raised my gun gently to my face, and shot it in the head. Then springing to my feet, I ran about ten steps, and stopped to reload my gun, not knowing if I had killed the panther or not. Before I had finished loading my gun, I heard the discharge of one on the other fork, as I concluded, the two running parallel with each other, separated only by a narrow ridge. A second discharge quickly followed the first, which led me to suppose, that my comrade was attacked by Indians.

I immediately set out and reached the hot spring by day break, where I found my associate also. The report of my gun had awakened him, when he saw a bear standing upon its hind feet within a few yards of him growling. He fired his gun, then his pistol, and retreated, thinking, with regard to me, as I had with regard to him, that I was attacked by Indians. Our conclusion now was, to ascend one of the forks in company, and then cross over, and descend the other. In consequence we resumed the course, I had taken the preceding day. We made two day's journey, without beaver enough to recompense us for our trouble, and then crossed to the east fork, trapping as we went, until we again reached the main stream. Some distance below this, we met those of our party we had left behind, with the exception of the seven, who joined us on the del Norte. They had deserted the expedition, and set off upon their return down the river. We now all hastened on to overtake them, but it was to no purpose. They still kept in advance, trapping clean as they went, so that we even found it difficult to catch enough to eat.

Finding it impossible to come up with them, we ceased to urge our poor horses, as they were much jaded, and tender footed beside, and travelled slowly, catching what beaver we [55] could, and killing some deer, although the latter were scarce, owing, probably to the season of the year. The river here was beautiful, running between banks covered with tall cotton-woods and willows. This bottom extended back a mile on each side. Beyond rose high and rather barren hills.

On the 20th we came to a point, where the river entered a cavern between two mountains. We were compelled to return upon our steps, until we found a low gap in the mountains. We were three day's crossing, and the travelling was both fatiguing and difficult. We found nothing to kill. On the 23d we came upon the river, where it emptied into a beautiful plain. We set our traps, but to no purpose, for the beavers were all caught, or alarmed. The river here pursues a west course. We travelled slowly, using every effort to kill something to eat, but without success.

On the morning of the 26th we concluded, that we must kill a horse, as we had eaten nothing for four day's and a half, except the small portion of a hare caught by my dogs, which fell to the lot of each of a party of seven. Before we obtained this, we had become weak in body and mind, complaining, and desponding of our success in search of beaver. Desirous of returning to some settlement, my father encouraged our party to eat some of the horses, and pursue our journey. We were all reluctant to begin to partake of the horse-flesh; and the actual thing without bread or salt was as bad as the anticipation of it. We were somewhat strengthened, however, and hastened on,

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

while our supply lasted, in the hope of either overtaking those in advance of us, or finding another stream yet undiscovered by trappers.

The latter desire was gratified the first of January, 1825. The stream, we discovered, carried as much water as the Helay, heading north. We called it the river St. Francisco. After travelling up its banks about four miles, we encamped, and set all our traps, and killed a couple of fat turkies. In the morning we examined our traps, and found in them 37 beavers! This success restored our spirits instantaneously. Exhilarating [56] prospects now opened before us, and we pushed on with animation. The banks of this river are for the most part incapable of cultivation being in many places formed of high and rugged mountains. Upon these we saw multitudes of mountain sheep. These animals are not found on level ground, being there slow of foot, but on these cliffs and rocks they are so nimble and expert in jumping from point to point, that no dog or wolf can overtake them. One of them that we killed had the largest horns, that I ever saw on animals of any description. One of them would hold a gallon of water. Their meat tastes like our mutton. Their hair is short like a deer's, though fine. The French call them the gros cornes, from the size of their horns which curl around their ears, like our domestic sheep. These animals are about the size of a large deer. We traced this river to its head, but not without great difficulty, as the cliffs in many places came so near the water's edge, that we were compelled to cross points of the mountain, which fatigued both ourselves and our horses exceedingly.

The right hand fork of this river, and the left of the Helay head in the same mountain, which is covered with snow, and divides its waters from those of Red river. We finished our trapping on this river, on the 14th. We had caught the very considerable number of 250 beavers, and had used and preserved most of the meat, we had killed. On the 19th we arrived on the river Helay, encamped, and buried our furs in a secure position, as we intended to return home by this route. On the 20th we began to descend the Helay, hoping to find in our descent another beaver stream emptying into it. We had abandoned the hope of rejoining the hunters, that had left us, and been the occasion of our being compelled to feed upon horse flesh. No better was to be expected of us, than that we should take leave to imprecate many a curse upon their heads; and that they might experience no better fate, than to fall into the hands of the savages, or be torn in pieces by the white bears. At the same time, so ready are the hearts of mountain hunters to relent, that I have not a doubt that each man of us would [57] have risked his life to save any one of them from the very fate, we imprecated upon them.

In fact, on the night of the 22d, four of them, actually half starved, arrived at our camp, declaring, that they had eaten nothing for five days. Notwithstanding our recent curses bestowed upon them, we received them as brothers. They related that the Indians had assaulted and defeated them, robbing them of all their horses, and killing one of their number. Next day the remaining two came in, one of them severely wounded in the head by an Indian arrow. They remained with us two days, during which we attempted to induce them to lead us against the Indians, who had robbed them, that we might assist them to recover what had been robbed from them. No persuasion would induce them to this course. They insisted at the same time, that if we attempted to go on by ourselves, we should share the same fate, which had befallen them.

On the morning of the 25th, we gave them three horses, and as much dried meat as would last them to the mines, distant about 150 miles. Fully impressed, that the Indians would massacre us, they took such a farewell of us, as if never expecting to see us again.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

In the evening of the same day, although the weather threatened a storm, we packed up, and began to descend the river. We encamped this night in a huge cavern in the midst of the rocks. About night it began to blow a tempest, and to snow fast. Our horses became impatient under the pelting of the storm, broke their ropes, and disappeared. In the morning, the earth was covered with snow, four or five inches deep. One of our companions accompanied me to search for our horses. We soon came upon their trail, and followed it, until it crossed the river. We found it on the opposite side, and pursued it up a creek, that empties into the Helay on the north shore. We passed a cave at the foot of the cliffs. At its mouth I remarked, that the bushes were beaten down, as though some animal had been browsing upon them. I was aware, that a bear had entered the cave. We collected some pine knots, split them with our toma-hawks, and kindled torches, with which I proposed to [58] my companion, that we should enter the cave together, and shoot the bear. He gave me a decided refusal, notwithstanding I reminded him, that I had, more than once, stood by him in a similar adventure; and notwithstanding I made him sensible, that a bear in a den is by no means so formidable, as when ranging freely in the woods. Finding it impossible to prevail on him to accompany me, I lashed my torch to a stick, and placed it parallel with the gun barrel, so as that I could see the sights on it, and entered the cave. I advanced cautiously onward about twenty yards, seeing nothing. On a sudden the bear reared himself erect within seven feet of me, and began to growl, and gnash his teeth. I levelled my gun and shot him between the eyes, and began to retreat. Whatever light it may throw upon my courage, I admit, that I was in such a hurry, as to stumble, and extinguish my light. The growling and struggling of the bear did not at all contribute to allay my apprehensions. On the contrary, I was in such haste to get out of the dark place, thinking the bear just at my heels, that I fell several times on the rocks, by which I cut my limbs, and lost my gun. When I reached the light, my companion declared, and I can believe it, that I was as pale as a corpse. It was some time, before I could summon sufficient courage to re-enter the cavern for my gun. But having re-kindled my light, and borrowed my companion's gun, I entered the cavern again, advanced and listened. All was silent, and I advanced still further, and found my gun, near where I had shot the bear. Here again I paused and listened. I then advanced onward a few strides, where to my great joy I found the animal dead. I returned, and brought my companion in with me. We attempted to drag the carcass from the den, but so great was the size, that we found ourselves wholly unable. We went out, found our horses, and returned to camp for assistance. My father severely reprimanded me for venturing to attack such a dangerous animal in its den, when the failure to kill it outright by the first shot, would have been sure to be followed by my death.

Four of us were detached to the den. We were soon enabled [59] to drag the bear to the light, and by the aid of our beast to take it to camp. It was both the largest and whitest bear I ever saw. The best proof, I can give, of the size and fatness is, that we extracted ten gallons of oil from it. The meat we dried, and put the oil in a trough, which we secured in a deep crevice of a cliff, beyond the reach of animals of prey. We were sensible that it would prove a treasure to us on our return. On the 28th we resumed our journey, and pushed down the stream to reach a point on the river, where trapping had not been practised. On the 30th, we reached this point, and found the man, that the Indians had killed. They had cut him in quarters, after the fashion of butchers. His head, with the hat on, was stuck on a stake. It was full of the arrows, which they had probably discharged into it, as they had danced around it. We gathered up the parts of the body, and buried

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

them.

At this point we commenced setting our traps. We found the river skirted with very wide bottoms, thick-set with the musquito trees, which bear a pod in the shape of a bean, which is exceedingly sweet. It constitutes one of the chief articles of Indian subsistence; and they contrive to prepare from it a very palatable kind of bread, of which we all became very fond. The wild animals also feed upon this pod.

On the 31st we moved our camp ten miles. On the way we noted many fresh traces of Indians, and killed a bear, that attacked us. The river pursues a west course amidst high mountains on each side. We trapped slowly onward, still descending the river, and unmolested by the Indians. On the 8th of February, we reached the mouth of a small river entering the Helay on the north shore. Here we unexpectedly came upon a small party of Indians, that fled at the sight of us, in such consternation and hurry, as to leave all their effects, which consisted of a quantity of the bread mentioned above, and some robes made of rabbit skins. Still more; they left a small child. The child was old enough to distinguish us from its own people, for it opened its little throat, and screamed so lustily, that we feared it would have fits. The poor thing meanwhile made its [60] best efforts to fly from us. We neither plundered nor molested their little store. We bound the child in such a manner, that it could not stray away, and get lost, aware, that after they deemed us sufficiently far off, the parents would return, and take the child away. We thence ascended the small river about four miles, and encamped. For fear of surprize, and apprehending the return of the savages, that had fled from us, and perhaps in greater force, we secured our camp with a small breast-work.

We discovered very little encouragement in regard to our trapping pursuit, for we noted few signs of beavers on this stream. The night passed without bringing us any disturbance. In the morning two of us returned to the Indian camp. The Indians had re-visited it, and removed every thing of value, and what gave us great satisfaction, their child. In proof, that the feelings of human nature are the same every where, and that the language of kindness is a universal one; in token of their gratitude, as we understood it, they had suspended a package on a kind of stick, which they had stuck erect. Availing ourselves of their offer, we examined the present, and found it to contain a large dressed buck skin, an article, which we greatly needed for moccasins, of which some of us were in pressing want. On the same stick we tied a red handkerchief by way of some return.

We thence continued to travel up this stream four days in succession, with very little incident to diversify our march. We found the banks of this river plentifully timbered with trees of various species, and the land fine for cultivation. On the morning of the 13th, we returned to the Helay, and found on our way, that the Indians had taken the handkerchief, we had left, though none of them had shown any disposition, as we had hoped, to visit us. We named the stream we had left, the deserted fork, on account of having found it destitute of beavers. We thence resumed our course down the Helay, which continues to flow through a most beautiful country. Warned by the frequent traces of fresh Indian foot-prints, we every night adopted [61] the expedient of enclosing our horses in a pen, feeding them with cotton-wood bark, which we found much better for them than grass.

On the 16th, we advanced to a point, where the river runs between high mountains, in a ravine so narrow, as barely to afford it space to pass. We commenced exploring them to search for a gap, through which we might be able to pass. We continued our expedition, travelling north, until we discovered a branch, that made its way out of the mountains. Up its ravine we ascended to the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

head of the branch. Its fountains were supplied by an immense snow bank, on the summit of the mountain. With great labor and fatigue we reached this summit, but could descry no plains within the limits of vision. On every side the peaks of ragged and frowning mountains rose above the clouds, affording a prospect of dreariness and desolation, to chill the heart. While we could hear the thunder burst, and see the lightning glare before us, we found an atmosphere so cold, that we were obliged to keep up severe and unremitting exercise, to escape freezing.

We commenced descending the western declivity of the mountains, amidst thick mists and dark clouds, with which they were enveloped. We pitied our horses and mules, that were continually sliding and falling, by which their limbs were strained, and their bodies bruised. To our great joy, we were not long, before we came upon the ravine of a branch, that wound its way through the vast masses of crags and mountains. We were disappointed, however, in our purpose to follow it to the Helay. Before it mingled with that stream, it engulfed itself so deep between the cliffs, that though we heard the dash of the waters in their narrow bed, we could hardly see them. We were obliged to thread our way, as we might, along the precipice, that constituted the banks of the creek. We were often obliged to unpack our mules and horses, and transport their loads by hand from one precipice to another. We continued wandering among the mountains in this way, until the 23d. Our provisions were at this time exhausted, and our horses and [62] mules so worn out, that they were utterly unable to proceed further. Thus we were absolutely obliged to lie by two days. During this time, Allen and myself commenced climbing towards the highest peak of the mountains in our vicinity. It was night-fall, before we gained it. But from it we could distinctly trace the winding path of the river in several places; and what was still more cheering, could see smokes arising from several Indian camps. To meet even enemies, was more tolerable, than thus miserably to perish with hunger and cold in the mountains. Our report on our return animated the despair of our companions. On the morning of the 25th we resumed our painful efforts to reach the river. On the 28th, to our great joy, we once more found ourselves on its banks. A party of Indians, encamped there, fled at our approach. But fortunately they left a little mush prepared from the seeds of grass. Without scruple we devoured it with appetites truly ravenous. In the morning we took ten beavers in our traps, and Allen was detached with me to clear away a path, through which the pack horses might pass. We were obliged to cross the river twelve times in the course of a single day. We still discovered the fresh footprints of Indians, who had deserted their camps, and fled before us. We were continually apprehensive, that they would fire their arrows upon us, or overwhelm us with rocks, let loose upon us from the summits of the high cliffs, directly under which we were obliged to pass. The third day, after we had left our company, I shot a wild goose in the river. The report of my gun raised the screams of women and children. Too much alarmed to stop for my game, I mounted my horse, and rode toward them, with a view to convince them, or in some way, to show them, that we intended them no harm. We discovered them ahead of us, climbing the mountains, the men in advance of the women, and all fleeing at the top of their speed. As soon as they saw us, they turned, and let fly a few arrows at us, one of which would have despatched my companion, had he not been infinitely dextrous in dodging. Hungry and fatigued and by no means in the best humor, my companion returned [63] them abundance of curses for their arrows. From words he was proceeding to deeds, and would undoubtedly have shot one of them, had I not caught his gun, and made him sensible of the madness of such a deed. It was clearly our wisdom to convince them, that we had no inclination to injure

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

them. Some of them were clad in robes of rabbit skins, part of which they shed, in their hurry to clamber over the rocks.

Finding ourselves unable to overtake them, we returned to their camp, to discover if they had left any thing that we could eat. At no great distance from their camp, we observed a mound of fresh earth, in appearance like one of our coal kilns. Considering it improbable, that the Indians would be engaged in burning coal, we opened the mound, and found it to contain a sort of vegetable that had the appearance of herbage, which seemed to be baking in the ground, to prepare it for eating. I afterwards ascertained, that it was a vegetable, called by the Spanish, *mascal*, (probably *maguey*.) The Indians prepare it in this way, so as to make a kind of whiskey of it, tasting like crab-apple cider. The vegetable grows in great abundance on these mountains.

Next day we came to the point, where the river discharges its waters from the mountains on to the plains. We thence returned, and rejoined our company, that had been making their way onward behind us. March 3d, we trapped along down a small stream, that empties into the Helay on the south side, having its head in a south west direction. It being very remarkable for the number of its beavers, we gave it the name of Beaver river. At this place we collected 200 skins; and on the 10th continued to descend the Helay, until the 20th, when we turned back with as much fur, as our beasts could pack. As yet we had experienced no molestation from the Indians, although they were frequently descried skulking after us, and gathering up the pieces of meat, we had thrown away. On the morning of the 20th we were all prepared for an early start, and my father, by way of precaution, bade us all discharge our guns at the word of command, and then re-load them afresh, [64] that we might, in case of emergency, be sure of our fire. We were directed to form in a line, take aim, and at the word, fire at a tree. We gave sufficient proofs, that we were no strangers to the rifle, for every ball had lodged close to the centre of our mark. But the report of our guns was answered by the yell of more than an hundred savages, above us on the mountains. We immediately marched out from under the mountains on to the plains, and beckoned them to come down, by every demonstration of friendship in our power. Nothing seemed to offer stronger enticement, than to hold out to them our red cloth. This we did, but without effect, for they either understood us not, or were reluctant to try our friendship. Leaving one of our number to watch their deportment, and to note if they followed us, we resumed our march. It would have been a great object to us to have been able to banish their suspicions, and make a treaty with them. But we could draw from them no demonstrations, but those of fear and surprize. On the 25th we returned to Beaver river, and dug up the furs that we had buried, or cashed, as the phrase is, and concluded to ascend it, trapping towards its head, whence we purposed to cross over to the Helay above the mountains, where we had suffered so much in crossing. About six miles up the stream, we stopped to set our traps, three being selected to remain behind in the camp to dry the skins, my father to make a pen for the horses, and I to guard them, while they were turned loose to feed in the grass. We had pitched our camp near the bank of the river, in a thick grove of timber, extending about a hundred yards in width. Behind the timber was a narrow plain of about the same width, and still further on was a high hill, to which I repaired, to watch my horses, and descry whatever might pass in the distance. Immediately back of the hill I discovered a small lake, by the noise made by the ducks and geese in it. Looking more attentively, I remarked what gave me much more satisfaction, that is to say, three beaver lodges. I returned, and made my father acquainted with my discovery. The party despatched to set traps had returned. My father informed [65] them of my

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

discovery, and told them to set traps in the little lake. As we passed towards the lake, we observed the horses and mules all crowded together. At first we concluded that they collected together in this way, because they had fed enough. We soon discovered, that it was owing to another cause. I had put down my gun, and stepped into the water, to prepare a bed for my trap, while the others were busy in preparing theirs. Instantly the Indians raised a yell, and the quick report of guns ensued. This noise was almost drowned in the fierce shouts that followed, succeeded by a shower of arrows falling among us like hail. As we ran for the camp leaving all the horses in their power, we saw six Indians stealthily following our trail, as though they were tracking a deer. They occasionally stopped, raised themselves, and surveyed every thing around them. We concealed ourselves behind a large cotton-wood tree, and waited until they came within a hundred yards of us. Each of us selected a separate Indian for a mark, and our signal to fire together was to be a whistle. The sign was given, and we fired together. My mark fell dead, and my companions' severely wounded. The other Indians seized their dead and wounded companions, and fled.

We now rejoined our company, who were busily occupied in dodging the arrows, that came in a shower from the summit of the hill, where I had stationed myself to watch our horses. Discovering that they were too far from us, to be reached by our bullets, we retreated to the timber, in hopes to draw them down to the plain. But they had had too ample proofs of our being marksmen, to think of returning down to our level, and were satisfied to remain yelling, and letting fly their arrows at random. We found cause both for regret and joy; regret, that our horses were in their power, and joy, that their unprovoked attack had been defeated with loss to themselves, and none to us.

At length they ceased yelling, and disappeared. We, on our part, set ourselves busily to work to fortify our camp for the night. Meanwhile our savage enemy devised a plan, which, but for the circumspection of my father, would have enabled [66] them to destroy us. They divided themselves into two parties, the one party mounted on horses, stolen from us, and so arranged as to induce the belief, that they constituted the whole party. They expected that we would pursue them, to recover our horses. As soon as we should be drawn out from behind our fortification, they had a reserve party, on foot, who were to rush in, between us and our camp, and thus, between two fires, cut us all off together. It so happened, that I had retired a little distance from the camp, in the direction of the ambush party on foot. I met them, and they raised a general yell. My father, supposing me surrounded, ran in the direction of the yell, to aid me. He, too, came in direct contact with the foot party, who let fly a shower of arrows at him, from which nothing but good providence preserved him. He returned the fire with his gun and pistols, by which he killed two of them, and the report of which immediately brought his companions to his side. The contest was a warm one for a few minutes, when the Indians fled. This affair commenced about three in the afternoon; and the Indians made their final retreat at five; and the succeeding night passed without further molestation from them.

In the morning of the 26th, we despatched two of our men to bring our traps and furs. We had no longer any way of conveying them with us, for the Indians had taken all our horses. We, however, in the late contest, had taken four of their's, left behind in the haste of their retreat. As our companions were returning to camp with the traps, which they had taken up to bury, they discovered the Indians, sliding along insidiously towards our camp. We were all engaged in eating our breakfast in entire confidence. Our men cried out to us, that the enemy was close upon us. We sprang

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

to our arms. The Indians instantly fled to the top of the hill, which we had named battlehill. In a few minutes they were all paraded on the horses and mules stolen from us. They instantly began to banter us in Spanish to come up to them. One of our number who could speak Spanish, asked them to what nation they belonged? They answered, Eiotaro. In return, they asked us, who we were? We answered Americans. Hearing this, they stood in apparent [67] surprise and astonishment for some moments. They then replied, that they had thought us too brave and too good marksmen, to be Spaniards; that they were sorry for what they had done, under the mistake of supposing us Spaniards. They declared themselves ready to make a treaty with us, provided that we would return the four horses, we had taken from them, and bring them up the hill, where they promised us they would restore us our own horses in exchange. We were at once impressed, that the proposal was a mere trick, to induce us to place ourselves in their power. We therefore answered their proposal by another, which was, that they should bring down our horses, and leave them by the pen, where they had taken them, and we in return would let their horses loose, and make friendship with them. They treated our proposal with laughter, which would have convinced us, had we doubted it before, that their only purpose had been to ensnare us. We accordingly faced them, and fired upon them, which induced them to clear themselves most expeditiously.

We proceeded to bury our furs; and having packed our four horses with provisions and two traps, we commenced our march. Having travelled about ten miles, we encamped in a thicket without kindling a fire, and kept a strict guard all night. Next morning we made an early march, still along the banks of the river. Its banks are still plentifully timbered with cotton-wood and willow. The bottoms on each side afford a fine soil for cultivation. From these bottoms the hills rise to an enormous height, and their summits are covered with perpetual snow. In these bottoms are great numbers of wild hogs, of a species entirely different from our domestic swine. They are fox-colored, with their navel on their back, towards the back part of their bodies. The hoof of their hind feet has but one dew-claw, and they yield an odor not less offensive than our polecat. Their figure and head are not unlike our swine, except that their tail resembles that of a bear. We measured one of their tusks, of a size so enormous, that I am afraid to commit my credibility, by giving the dimensions. They remain undisturbed [68] by man and other animals, whether through fear or on account of their offensive odor, I am unable to say. That they have no fear of man, and that they are exceedingly ferocious, I can bear testimony myself. I have many times been obliged to climb trees to escape their tusks. We killed a great many, but could never bring ourselves to eat them. The country presents the aspect of having been once settled at some remote period of the past. Great quantities of broken pottery are scattered over the ground, and there are distinct traces of ditches and stone walls, some of them as high as a man's breast, with very broad foundations. A species of tree, which I had never seen before, here arrested my attention. It grows to the height of forty or fifty feet. The top is cone shaped, and almost without foliage. The bark resembles that of the prickly pear; and the body is covered with thorns. I have seen some three feet in diameter at the root, and throwing up twelve distinct shafts.

On the 29th, we made our last encampment on this river, intending to return to it no more, except for our furs. We set our two traps for the last time, and caught a beaver in each.— We skinned the animals, and prepared the skins to hold water, through fear, that we might find none on our unknown route through the mountains to the Helay, from which we judged ourselves

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

distant two hundred miles. Our provisions were all spoiled. We had nothing to carry with us to satisfy hunger, but the bodies of the two beavers which we had caught, the night before. We had nothing to sustain us in this disconsolate march, but our trust in providence; for we could not but foresee hunger, fatigue and pain, as the inevitable attendants upon our journey. To increase the depression of our spirits, our moccasins were worn out, our feet sore and tender, and the route full of sharp rocks.

On the 31st, we reached the top of the mountain, and fed upon the last meat of our beavers. We met with no traces of game. What distressed me most of all was, to perceive my father, who had already passed the meridian of his days, sinking with fatigue and weakness. On the morning of the first of April, [69] we commenced descending the mountain, from the side of which we could discern a plain before us, which, however, it required two severe days travel to reach. During these two days we had nothing either to eat or drink. In descending from these icy mountains, we were surprised to find how warm it was on the plains. On reaching them I killed an antelope, of which we drank the warm blood; and however revolting the recital may be, to us it was refreshing, tasting like fresh milk. The meat we put upon our horses, and travelled on until twelve o'clock, before we found water.

Here we encamped the remainder of the day, to rest, and refresh ourselves. The signs of antelopes were abundant, and the appearances were, that they came to the water to drink; from which we inferred, that there was no other drinking place in the vicinity. Some of our hunters went out in pursuit of the antelopes. From the numbers of these animals, we called the place Antelope Plain. The land lies very handsomely, and is a rich, black soil, with heavily timbered groves in the vicinity.

On the morning of the 3d, though exceedingly stiff and sore, we resumed our march, and reaching the opposite side of the plain, encamped at a spring, that ran from the mountain. Next day we ascended this mountain to its summit, which we found covered with iron ore. At a distance we saw a smoke on our course. We were aware that it was the smoke of an Indian camp, and we pushed on towards it. In the evening we reached the smoke, but found it deserted of Indians. All this day's march was along a country abundant in minerals. In several places we saw lead and copper ore. I picked up a small parcel of ore, which I put in my shot-pouch, which was proved afterward to be an ore of silver. The misfortune of this region is, that there is no water near these mineral hills. We commenced our morning march half dead with thirst, and pushed on with the eagerness inspired by that tormenting appetite. Late in the evening we found a little water, for our own drinking, in the bottom of a rock. Not a drop remained for our four horses, that evidently showed a thirst no less devouring than ours. [70] Their feet were all bleeding, and the moment we paused to rest ourselves, the weary companions of our journey instantly laid down. It went still more to my heart, to see my two faithful dogs, which had followed me all the way from my father's house, where there was always bread enough and to spare, looking to me with an expression, which a hunter in the desert only can understand, as though begging food and water. Full gladly would I have explained to them, that the sterile wilderness gave me no means of supplying their wants.

We had scarcely commenced the next morning's march, when, at a little distance from our course, we saw a smoke. Supposing it an Indian camp, we immediately concluded to attack it. Adopting their own policy, we slipped onward in silence and concealment, until we were close by it. We

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

found the persons women and children. Having no disposition to harm them, we fired a gun over their heads, which caused them instantly to fly at the extent of their speed. Hunger knows no laws; and we availed ourselves of their provision, which proved to be mascal, and grass seed, of which we made mush. Scanty as this nutriment was, it was sufficient to sustain life.

We commenced an early march on the 6th, and were obliged to move slowly, as we were bare-footed, and the mountains rough and steep. We found them either wholly barren, or only covered with a stunted growth of pine and cedar, live oak and barbary bushes. On the 8th, our provisions were entirely exhausted, and so having nothing to eat, we felt the less need of water. Our destitute and forlorn condition goaded us on, so that we reached the Helay on the 12th. We immediately began to search for traces of beavers, where to set our traps, but found none. On the morning of the 13th, we killed a raven, which we cooked for seven men. It was unsavory flesh in itself, and would hardly have afforded a meal for one hungry man. The miserable condition of our company may be imagined, when seven hungry men, who had not eaten a full meal for ten days, were all obliged to breakfast on this nauseous bird. We were all weak and emaciated. But I was young [71] and able to bear hardships. My heart only ached for my poor father who was reduced to a mere skeleton. We moved on slowly and painfully, until evening, when we encamped. On my return from setting our two traps, I killed a buzzard, which, disagreeable as it was, we cooked for supper. In the morning of the 18th, I found one of the traps had caught an otter.

This served for breakfast and supper. It seemed the means of our present salvation, for my father had become so weak, that he could no longer travel. We therefore encamped early, and three of us went out to hunt deer among the hills. But in this sad emergency we could find none. When we returned, my father had prepared lots, that we should draw, to determine who of us should kill one of the dogs. I refused through fear that the lot would fall to me. These faithful companions of our sufferings were so dear to me, that I felt as though I could not allow them to be killed to save my own life; though to save my father, I was aware that it was a duty to allow it to be done.

We lay here until the 18th, my father finding the flesh of the dog both sweet, nutritive and strengthening. On the 18th, he was again able to travel; and on the 20th, we arrived at Bear creek, where we hid the bears oil, which we found unmolested. We lay here two days, during which time we killed four deer and some turkies. The venison we dried, and cased the skin of one of the deer, in which to carry our oil. We commenced an early march on the 23d, and on the 25th reached the river San Francisco, where we found our buried furs all safe. I suffered exceedingly from the soreness of my feet, giving me great pain and fever at night. We made from our raw deer skins a very tolerable substitute for shoes. The adoption of this important expedient enabled us to push on, so that we reached the Copper mines on the 29th.

The Spaniards seemed exceedingly rejoiced, and welcomed us home, as though we were of their own nation, religion and kindred. They assured us, that they had no expectation ever to see us again. The superintendent of the mines, especially, who appeared to me a gentleman of the highest order, received [72] us with particular kindness, and supplied all our pressing wants. Here we remained, to rest and recruit ourselves, until the 2d of May. My father then advised me to travel to Santa Fe, to get some of our goods, and purchase a new supply of horses, with which to return, and bring in our furs. I had a horse, which we had taken from the Indians, shod with copper shoes, and in company with four of my companions, and the superintendent of the mines, I started for Santa Fe. The superintendent assured us, that he would gladly have furnished us horses;

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

but the Appache Indians had recently made an incursion upon his establishment, stealing all his horses, and killing three men, that were herding them. This circumstance had suspended the working of the mines. Besides he was unable to procure the necessary coal, with which to work them, because the Appaches way-laid the colliers, and killed them, as often as they attempted to make coal.

We arrived at the house of the governor on the 12th. Jacova, his daughter, received us with the utmost affection; and shed tears on observing me so ill; as I was in fact reduced by starvation and fatigue, to skin and bone. Beings in a more wretched plight she could not often have an opportunity to see. My hair hung matted and uncombed. My head was surmounted with an old straw hat. My legs were fitted with leather leggins, and my body arrayed in a leather hunting shirt, and no want of dirt about any part of the whole. My companions did not shame me, in comparison, by being better clad. But all these repulsive circumstances notwithstanding, we were welcomed by the governor and Jacova, as kindly, as if we had been clad in a manner worthy of their establishment.

We rested ourselves here three days. I had left my more decent apparel in the care of Jacova, when we started from the house into the wilderness on our trapping expedition. She had had my clothes prepared in perfect order. I once more dressed myself decently, and spared to my companions all my clothes that fitted them. We all had our hair trimmed. All this had much improved our appearance. When we started [73] on the 15th, the old gentleman gave each of us a good horse, enabling us to travel at our ease.

On the 18th we arrived at Santa Fe, where we immediately met some of our former companions. It hardly need be added, that the joy of this recognition was great and mutual. We found Mr. Pratte ill in bed. He expressed himself delighted to see me, and was still more desirous to see my father. He informed me, that four of the company that he had detached to trap, had been defeated by the Indians, and the majority of them killed. He had, also, despaired of ever seeing us again. I took a part of my goods, and started back to the mines on the 21st. None of my companions were willing to accompany me on account of the great apprehended danger from the Indians between this place and the mines. In consequence, I hired a man to go with me, and having purchased what horses I wanted, we two travelled on in company. I would have preferred to have purchased my horses of the old governor. But I knew that his noble nature would impel him to give them to me, and felt reluctant to incur such an obligation. When I left his house, he insisted on my receiving a gold chain, in token of the perpetual remembrance of his daughter. I saw no pretext for refusing it, and as I received it, she assured me that she should always make mention of my father and me in her prayers.

I left this hospitable place on the 24th, taking all my clothes with me, except the hunting shirt, which I had worn in the battle with the Commanches. This she desired to retain, insisting, that she wished to preserve this memorial to the day of her death. We arrived at the mines the first day of June, having experienced no molestation from the Indians. We continued here, making arrangements for our expedition to bring in the furs, until the 6th. The good natured commander gave us provisions to last us to the point where our furs were buried, and back again. Still more, he armed ten of his laborers, and detached them to accompany us. The company consisted of four Americans, the man hired at Santa Fe, and the commander's ten men, fifteen in all.

[74] We left the mines on the 7th, and reached Battle-hill on Beaver river on the 22d. I need not

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

attempt to describe my feelings, for no description could paint them, when I found the furs all gone, and perceived that the Indians had discovered them and taken them away. All that, for which we had hazarded ourselves, and suffered every thing but death, was gone. The whole fruit of our long, toilsome and dangerous expedition was lost, and all my golden hopes of prosperity and comfort vanished like a dream. I tried to convince myself, that repining was of no use, and we started for the river San Francisco on the 29th. Here we found the small quantity buried there, our whole compensation for a year's toil, misery and danger. We met no Indians either going or returning.

We arrived at the mines the 8th of July, and after having rested two days proposed to start for Santa Fe. The commander, don Juan Unis, requested us to remain with him two or three months, to guard his workmen from the Indians, while pursuing their employment in the woods. He offered, as a compensation, a dollar a day. We consented to stay, though without accepting the wages. We should have considered ourselves ungrateful, after all the kindness, he had rendered us at the hour of our greatest need, either to have refused the request, or to have accepted a compensation. Consequently we made our arrangements to stay.

We passed our time most pleasantly in hunting deer and bears, of which there were great numbers in the vicinity. We had no other duties to perform, than to walk round in the vicinity of the workmen, or sit by and see them work. Most of my time was spent with don Juan, who kindly undertook to teach me to speak Spanish. Of him, having no other person with whom to converse, I learned the language easily, and rapidly. One month of our engagement passed off without any molestation from the Indians. But on the first day of August, while three of us were hunting deer, we discovered the trail of six Indians approaching the mines. We followed the trail, and within about a mile from the mines, we came up with them. [75] They fled, and we pursued close at their heels. Gaining upon them, one of them dodged us, into the head of a hollow. We surrounded him. As soon as he saw that we had discovered him, and that escape was impossible, he sprung on his feet, threw away his bow and arrows, and begged us most submissively not to shoot him. One of our men made up to him, while the other man and myself stood with our guns cocked, and raised to our faces, ready to shoot him, if he made the least motion towards his bow. But he remained perfectly still, crossing his hands, that we might tie them. Having done it, we drove him on before us. We had advanced about a hundred yards from the point where we took him, when he pointed out to us a hollow tree, intimating that there was another Indian concealed there. We bade him instruct his companion to make no resistance, and to surrender himself, or we would kill him. He explained our words to his companion in the tree. He immediately came forth from his concealment with his bow, and we tied his hands in the same way as the other's. We marched them before us to the mines, where we put them in prison. The Spaniards, exasperated with their recent cruelties and murders, would have killed them. We insisted that they should be spared, and they remained in prison until the next morning.

We then brought them out of prison, conversed with them, and showed them how closely we could fire. We instructed one of them to tell his chief to come in, accompanied by all his warriors, to make peace. We retained one of the prisoners as a hostage, assuring the other, that if his chief did not come in to make peace, we would put the hostage to death. In regard to the mode of making it, we engaged, that only four of our men should meet them at a hollow, half a mile from the mine. We enjoined it on him to bring them there within the term of four days. We readily discov-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

ered by the tranquil countenance of our hostage, that he had no apprehensions that they would not come in.

Afterwards, by way of precaution, my father put in requisition all the arms he could find in the vicinity of the mines, with [76] which he armed thirty Spaniards. He then ordered a trench dug, at a hundred yard's distance from the point designated for the Indians to occupy. This trench was to be occupied by our armed men, during the time of the treaty, in case, that if the Indians should be insolent or menacing, these men might be at hand to overawe them, or aid us, according to circumstances.

On the 5th, we repaired to the place designated, and in a short time, the Indians to the number of 80, came in sight. We had prepared a pipe, tobacco, and a council fire, and had spread a blanket, on which the chief might sit down. As soon as they came near us, they threw down their arms. The four chiefs came up to us, and we all sat down on the blanket. We commenced discussing the subject, for which they were convened. We asked them, if they were ready to make a peace with us; and if not what were the objections? They replied, that they had no objections to a peace with the Americans, but would never make one with the Spaniards. When we asked their reasons, they answered that they had been long at war with the Spaniards, and that a great many murders had been mutually inflicted on either side. They admitted, that they had taken a great many horses from the Spaniards, but indignantly alleged, that a large party of their people had come in to make peace with the Spaniards, of which they pretended to be very desirous; that with such pretexts, they had decoyed the party within their walls, and then commenced butchering them like a flock of sheep. The very few who had escaped, had taken an unalterable resolution never to make peace with them. 'In pursuance,' they continued, 'of our purposes of revenge, great numbers of our nation went in among the Spaniards, and were baptized. There they remain faithful spies for us, informing us when and where there were favorable opportunities to kill, and plunder our enemies.'

We told them in reply, that if they really felt disposed to be at peace with the Americans, these mines were now working jointly by us and the Spaniards; that it was wrong in them to revenge the crimes of the guilty upon the innocent, and that [77] these Spaniards had taken no part in the cowardly and cruel butchery, of which they had spoken; and that if they would not be peaceable, and allow us to work the mines unmolested, the Americans would consider them at war, and would raise a sufficient body of men to pursue them to their lurking places in the mountains; that they had good evidence that our people could travel in the woods and among the mountains, as well as themselves; and that we could shoot a great deal better than either they or the Spaniards, and that we had no cowards among us, but true men, who had no fear and would keep their word. The chiefs answered, that if the mines belonged to the Americans, they would promise never to disturb the people that worked them. We left them, therefore, to infer that the mines belonged to us, and took them at their word. We then lit the pipe, and all the Indians gathered in a circle round the fire. The four chiefs, each in succession made a long speech, in which we could often distinguish the terms Americans, and Espanola. The men listened with profound attention, occasionally sanctioning what was said by a nod of the head. We then commenced smoking, and the pipe passed twice round the circle. They then dug a hole in the ground in the centre of the circle, and each one spat in it. They then filled it up with earth, danced round it, and stuck their arrows in the little mound. They then gathered a large pile of stones over it, and painted themselves red.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

Such are their ceremonies of making peace. All the forms of the ceremony were familiar to us, except the pile of stones, and spitting in the hole they had dug, which are not practised by the Indians on the American frontiers. We asked them the meaning of the spitting. They said, that they did it in token of spitting out all their spite and revenge, and burying their anger under the ground.

It was two o'clock before all these ceremonies were finished. We then showed them our reserve force in the trench. They evinced great alarm to see their enemies the Spaniards so close to them, and all ready for action. We explained to them, that we intended to be in good faith, if they were; and that these [78] men were posted there, only in case they showed a disposition to violence. Their fears vanished and tranquility returned to their countenances. The chiefs laughed, and said to each other, these Americans know how to fight, and make peace too. But were they to fight us, they would have to get a company entirely of their own people; for that if they took any Spaniards into their company, they would be sure to desert them in the time of action.

We thence all marched to the mines, where we killed three beeves to feed the Indians. After they had eaten, and were in excellent humor, the head chief made a present to my father, of ten miles square of a tract of land lying on a river about three miles from the mines. It was very favorable for cultivation, and the Spaniards had several times attempted to make a crop of grain upon it; but the Indians had as often either killed the cultivators, or destroyed the grain. My father informed them, that though the land might be his, he should be obliged to employ Spaniards to cultivate it for him; and that, having made the land his, they must consider these cultivators his people, and not molest them. With a look of great firmness, the chief said 'that he was a man of truth, and had given his word, and that we should find that nothing belonging to the mines would be disturbed, for that he never would allow the treaty to be violated.' He went on to add, 'that he wanted to be at peace with us, because he had discovered, that the Americans never showed any disposition to kill, except in battle; that they had had a proof of this in our not killing the two prisoners we had taken; but had sent one of them to invite his people to come in, and make peace with us, and that he took pleasure in making known to us, that they were good people too, and had no wish to injure men that did not disturb or injure them.'

All this farce of bringing the Indians to terms of peace with this establishment was of infinite service to the Spaniards, though of none to us; for we neither had any interest in the mines, nor intended to stay there much longer. But we were glad to oblige don Juan who had been so great a benefactor [79] to us. He, on his part, was most thankful to us; for he could now work the mines without any risk of losing men or cattle. He could now raise his own grain, which he had hitherto been obliged to pack 200 miles, not without having many of those engaged in bringing it, either killed or robbed. The Indians now had so much changed their deportment as to bring in horses or cows, that they found astray from the mines. They regularly brought in deer and turkies to sell, which don Juan, to keep alive their friendship, purchased, whether he needed the articles or not. Every day more or less Indians came into the settlement to go and hunt deer and bears with us. They were astonished at the closeness of our shooting; and nothing seemed to delight them so much, as our telling them, we would learn them to shoot our guns. My father had the honor to be denominated in their language, the big Captain.

Don Juan, apprehending that the truce with the Indians would last no longer than while we staid, and that after our departure, the Indians would resume their former habits of robbery and mur-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

der, was desirous to retain us as long as possible. We agreed to stay until December, when our plan was to commence another trapping expedition on the Helay, following it down to its mouth. With every disposition on the part of don Juan to render our stay agreeable, the time passed away pleasantly. On the 16th of September, the priest, to whose diocese the mines belonged, made a visit to the mines, to release the spirits of those who had died since his last visit, from purgatory, and to make Christians by baptising the little persons who had been born in the same time. This old priest, out of a reverend regard to his own person, had fled from this settlement at the commencement of the Indian disturbances; and had not returned until now, when the Indians had made peace. A body of Indians happened to be in, when the priest came. We were exceedingly amused with the interview between the priest and an Indian chief, who, from having had one of his hands bitten off by a bear, was called Mocho Mano. The priest asked the one handed chief, why [80] he did not offer himself for baptism? Mocho remained silent for some time, as if ruminating an answer. He then said, 'the Appache chief is a very big rogue now. Should he get his crown sprinkled with holy water, it would either do him no good at all, or if it had any effect, would make him a greater rogue; for that the priests, who made the water holy, and then went sprinkling it about among the people for money, were the biggest rogues of all.' This made the priest as angry as it made us merry.

When we had done laughing, Mocho asked us, how we baptised among our people? I answered that we had two ways of performing it; but that one way was, to plunge the baptised person under water. He replied promptly, 'now there is some sense in that;' adding that when a great quantity of rain fell from the clouds, it made the grass grow; but that it seemed to him that sprinkling a few drops of water amounted to nothing.

The priest, meanwhile, prophesied, that the peace between the Spaniards and Indians would be of very short duration. On the 18th, he left the mines, and returned to the place whence he had come. On the 20th, we started with some Indian guides to see a mountain of salt, that they assured us existed in their country. We travelled a northerly course through a heavily timbered country, the trees chiefly of pine and live oak. We killed a great number of bears and deer on the first day; and on account of their reverence for my father, they treated me as if I had been a prince. On the second we arrived at the salt hill, which is about one hundred miles north of the mines. The hill is about a quarter of a mile in length, and on the front side of it is the salt bluff, eight or ten feet in thickness. It has the appearance of a black rock, divided from the earthy matters, with which the salt is mixed. What was to me the most curious circumstance of the whole, was to see a fresh water spring boiling up within twenty feet from the salt bluff, which is a detached and solitary hill, rising out of a valley, which is of the richest and blackest soil, and heavily timbered [81] with oak, ash and black walnut. I remained here two days, during which I killed fifteen deer, that came to lick salt.

An Indian woman of our company dressed all my deer skins, and we loaded two mules with the salt, and started back to the mines, where we arrived the first of October. Nothing could have been more seasonable or acceptable to don Juan, than the salt we brought with us. Having mentioned these mines so often, perhaps it may not be amiss, to give a few details respecting them. Within the circumference of three miles, there is a mine of copper, gold and silver, and beside, a cliff of load stone. The silver mine is not worked, as not being so profitable, as either the copper or gold mines.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

We remained here to the last of December, when the settlement was visited by a company of French trappers, who were bound for Red river. We immediately made preparations to return with them, which again revived the apprehensions of don Juan, that the Indians would break in upon the settlement as soon as we were gone, and again put an end to the working of the mines. To detain us effectually, he proposed to rent the mines to us for five years, at a thousand dollars a year. He was willing to furnish provisions for the first year gratis, and pay us for all the improvements we should make on the establishment. We could not but be aware, that this was an excellent offer. My father accepted it. The writings were drawn, and my father rented the establishment on his own account, selecting such partners as he chose.

I, meanwhile, felt within me an irresistible propensity to resume the employment of trapping. I had a desire, which I can hardly describe, to see more of this strange and new country. My father suffered greatly in the view of my parting with him, and attempted to dissuade me from it. He strongly painted the dangers of the route, and represented to me, that I should not find these Frenchmen like my own country people, for companions. All was unavailing to change my fixed purpose, and we left the mines, January 2d, 1826.

We travelled down the river Helay, of which I have formerly [82] given a description, as far as the point where we had left it for Battle-hill. Here, although we saw fresh Indian signs, we met with no Indians. Where we encamped for the night, there were arrows sticking in the ground. We made an early start on the 16th, and at evening came upon the self same party of Indians, that had robbed us of our horses, the year past. Some of them had on articles of my father's clothes, that he had left where we buried our furs. They had made our beaver skins into robes, which we now purchased of them. While this bargain was transacting, I observed one of the Indians mounted on the self same horse, on which my father had travelled from the States. My blood instantly boiled within me, and, presenting my gun at him, I ordered him instantly to dismount. He immediately did as I bade him, and at once a trepidation and alarm ran through the whole party. They were but twenty men, and they were encumbered with women and children. We were thirteen, well mounted and armed. The chief of the party came to me, and asked me, 'if I knew this horse?' I answered, that 'I did, and that it was mine.' He asked me again, 'if we were the party, whose horses and furs they had taken the year before?' I answered, that I was one of them, and that if he did not cause my furs and horses to be delivered up to me, we would kill them all on the spot. He immediately brought me 150 skins and three horses, observing, that they had been famished, and had eaten the rest, and that he hoped this would satisfy me, for that in the battle they had suffered more than we, he having lost ten men, and we having taken from them four horses with their saddles and bridles. I observed to him in reply, that he must remember that they were the aggressors, and had provoked the quarrel, in having robbed us of our horses, and attempting to kill us. He admitted that they were the aggressors, in beginning the quarrel, but added, by way of apology, that they had thought us Spaniards, not knowing that we were Americans; but that now, when he knew us, he was willing to make peace, and be in perpetual friendship. On this we lit the pipe of peace, and smoked friends. I gave him some red [83] cloth, with which he was delighted. I then asked him about the different nations, through which our route would lead us? He named four nations, with names, as he pronounced them, sufficiently barbarous. All these nations he described as bad, treacherous and quarrelsome.

Though it was late in the evening, we resumed our march, until we had reached the point where

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

the river runs between mountains, and where I had turned back the year before. There is here little timber, beside musqueto-wood, which stands thick. We passed through the country of the first two tribes, which the Indian chief had described to us, without meeting an individual of them. On the 25th, we arrived at an Indian village situated on the south bank of the river. Almost all the inhabitants of this village speak Spanish, for it is situated only three days journey from a Spanish fort in the province of Sonora, through which province this river runs. The Indians seemed disposed to be friendly to us. They are to a considerable degree cultivators, raising wheat, corn and cotton, which they manufacture into cloths. We left this village on the 25th, and on the 28th in the evening arrived at the Papawar village, the inhabitants of which came running to meet us, with their faces painted, and their bows and arrows in their hands. We were alarmed at these hostile appearances, and halted. We told them that we were friends, at which they threw down their arms, laughing the while, and showing by their countenances that they were aware that we were frightened. We entered the village, and the French began to manifest their uncontrollable curiosity, by strolling about in every direction. I noted several crowds of Indians, collected in gangs, and talking earnestly. I called the leader of my French companions, and informed him that I did not like these movements of the Indians, and was fearful that they were laying a plan to cut us all up. He laughed at my fears, telling me I was a coward. I replied, that I did not think that to be cautious, and on our guard, was to show cowardice, and that I still thought it best for us to start [84] off. At this he became angry, and told me that I might go when I pleased, and that he would go when he was ready.

I then spoke to a Frenchman of our number, that I had known for a long time in Missouri; I proposed to him to join me, and we would leave the village and encamp by ourselves. He consented, and we went out of the village to the distance of about 400 yards, under the pretext of going there to feed our horses. When the sun was about half an hour high, I observed the French captain coming out towards us, accompanied by a great number of Indians, all armed with bows and arrows. This confirmed me in my conviction that they intended us no good. Expressing my apprehensions to my French companion, he observed in his peculiar style of English, that the captain was too proud and headstrong, to allow him to receive instruction from any one, for that he thought nobody knew any thing but himself.

Agreeing that we had best take care of ourselves, we made us a fire, and commenced our arrangements for spending the night. We took care not to unsaddle our horses, but to be in readiness to be off at a moment's warning. Our French captain came and encamped within a hundred yards of us, accompanied by not less than a hundred Indians. They were all exceedingly officious in helping the party unpack their mules; and in persuading the captain, that there was no danger in turning them all loose, they promised that they would guard them with their own horses. This proposal delighted the lazy Frenchmen, who hated to go through the details of preparing for encampment, and had a particular dislike to standing guard in the night. The Indian chief then proposed to the captain to stack their arms against a tree, that stood close by. To this also, under a kind of spell of infatuation he consented. The Indian chief took a rope, and tied the arms fast to a tree.

As I saw this, I told the captain that it seemed to me no mark of their being friendly, for them to retain their own arms, and persuade us to putting ours out of our power, and that one, who had known Indians, ought to be better acquainted with their character, than to encamp with them,

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

without his men having [85] their own arms in their hand. On this he flew into a most violent passion, calling me, with a curse added to the epithet, a coward, wishing to God that he had never taken me with him, to dishearten his men, and render them insubordinate. Being remarkable neither for forbearance, or failing to pay a debt of hard words, I gave him as good as he sent, telling him, among other things no ways flattering, that he was a liar and a fool, for that none other than a fool would disarm his men, and go to sleep in the midst of armed savages in the woods. To this he replied, that he would not allow me to travel any longer in his company. I answered that I was not only willing, but desirous to leave him, for that I considered myself safer in my own single keeping, than under the escort of such a captain, and that I estimated him only to have sense enough to lead people to destruction.

He still continued to mutter harsh language in reply, as I returned to my own camp. It being now dusk, we prepared, and ate our supper. We had just finished it, when the head chief of the village came to invite us to take our supper with them, adding, by way of inducement, that they had brought some fine pumpkins to camp, and had cooked them for the white people. We told him, we had taken supper; and the more he insisted, the more resolutely we refused. Like the French captain, he began to abuse us, telling us we had bad hearts. We told him, that when with such people, we chose rather to trust to our heads than our hearts. He then asked us to let some of his warriors come and sleep with us, and share our blankets, alleging, as a reason for the request, that the nights were cold, and his warriors too poor to buy blankets. We told him, that he could easily see that we were poor also, and were no ways abundantly supplied with blankets, and that we should not allow them to sleep with us. He then marched off to the French camp, evidently sulky and in bad temper. While roundly rating us to the French captain, he gave as a reason why we ought not to sleep by ourselves, that we were in danger of being killed in the night by another tribe of Indians, with whom he was at war.

[86] The captain, apparently more calm, came to us, and told us, that our conduct was both imprudent and improper, in not conciliating the Indians by consenting to eat with them, or allowing them to sleep with us. My temper not having been at all sweetened by any thing that had occurred since we fell out, I told him, that if he had a fancy to eat, or sleep with these Indians, I had neither power nor the will to control him; but that, being determined, that neither he nor they should sleep with me, he had better go about his business, and not disturb me with useless importunity. At this he began again to abuse and revile me, to which I made no return. At length, having exhausted his stock of epithets, he returned to his camp.

As soon as we were by ourselves, we began to cut grass for our horses, not intending either to unsaddle, or let them loose for the night. My companion and myself were alike convinced, that some catastrophe was in reserve from the Indians, and seeing no chance of defending ourselves against an odds of more than twenty to one, we concluded, as soon as all should be silent in the camp, to fly. We packed our mules so as to leave none of our effects behind, and kept awake. We remained thus, until near midnight, when we heard a fierce whistle, which we instantly understood to be the signal for an attack on the French camp. But a moment ensued, before we heard the clashing of war clubs, followed by the shrieks and heavy groans of the dying French, mingled with the louder and more horrible yells of these treacherous and blood thirsty savages. A moment afterwards, we heard a party of them making towards us. To convince them that they could not butcher us in our defenceless sleep, we fired upon them. This caused them to retreat. Convinced

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

that we had no time to lose, we mounted our horses, and fled at the extent of our speed. We heard a single gun discharged in the Indian camp, which we supposed the act of an Indian, who had killed the owner. We took our direction towards a high mountain on the south side of the river, and pushed for it as fast as we thought our horses could endure to be driven. We reached the mountain at day break, [87] and made our way about three miles up a creek, that issued from the mountain. Here we stopped to refresh our horses, and let them feed, and take food ourselves. The passage of the creek was along a kind of crevice of the mountain, and we were strongly convinced that the Indians would not follow upon our trail further than the entrance to the mountain. One of us ascended a high ridge, to survey whatever might be within view. My companion, having passed nearly an hour in the survey, returned to me, and said he saw something on the plain approaching us. I ascended with him to the same place, and plainly perceived something black approaching us. Having watched it for some time, I thought it a bear. At length it reached a tree on the plain, and ascended it. We were then convinced, that it was no Indian, but a bear searching food. We could see the smokes arising from the Indian town, and had no doubt, that the savages were dancing at the moment around the scalps of the unfortunate Frenchmen, who had fallen the victims of their indolence and rash confidence in these faithless people. All anger for their abuse of me for my timely advice was swallowed up in pity for their fate. But yesterday these people were the merriest of the merry. What were they now? Waiting a few moments, we saw the supposed bear descend the tree, and advance directly to the branch on which we were encamped. We had observed that the water of this branch, almost immediately upon touching the plain, was lost in the sand, and gave no other evidence of its existence, than a few green trees. In a moment we saw buttons glitter on this object from the reflected glare of the sun's rays. We were undeceived in regard to our bear, and now supposed it an Indian, decorated with a coat of the unfortunate Frenchmen. We concluded to allow him to approach close enough to satisfy our doubts, before we fired upon him. We lay still, until he came within fair rifle distance, when to our astonishment, we discovered it to be the French captain! We instantly made ourselves known from our perch. He uttered an exclamation of joy, and fell prostrate on the earth. Fatigue and [88] thirst had brought him to death's door. We raised him, and carried him to our camp. He was wounded in the head and face with many and deep wounds, the swelling of which had given him fever. I happened to have with me some salve, which my father gave me when I left the mines. I dressed his wounds. Having taken food, and sated his thirst, hope returned to him. So great was his change in a few hours, that he was able to move off with us that evening. In his present miserable and forlorn condition, I exercised too much humanity and forbearance to think of adverting to our quarrel of the preceding evening. Probably estimating my forbearance aright, he himself led to the subject. He observed in a tone apparently of deep compunction, that if he had had the good sense and good temper to have listened to my apprehensions and cautions, both he and his people might have been now gaily riding over the prairies. Oppressed with mixed feelings, I hardly knew what reply to make, and only remarked, that it was too late now to lament over what was unchangeable, and that the will of God had been done. After a silence of some time, he resumed the conversation, and related all the particulars of the terrible disaster, that had come to his knowledge. His own escape he owed to retaining a pocket pistol, when the rest of their arms were stacked. This he fired at an Indian approaching him, who fell, and thus enabled him to fly; not, however, until he had received a number of severe wounds from their clubs. I had not the heart to hear him relate what

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

became of the rest of his comrades. I could easily divine that the treacherous savages had murdered every one. Feelings of deep and burning revenge arose in my bosom, and I longed for nothing so much as to meet with these monsters on any thing like terms of equality. About sunset we could distinctly discern the river bottom about five miles distant from us. When it became dark, we descried three fires close together, which we judged to be those of savages in pursuit of us. Like some white people, the Indians never forgive any persons that they have outraged and injured. We halted, and took counsel, what [89] was to be done. We concluded that my companion and myself should leave our wounded companion to take care of the horses, and go and reconnoitre the camp, in which were these fires, and discover the number of the Indians, and if it was great, to see how we could be most likely to pass them unobserved. When we had arrived close to the fires, we discovered a considerable number of horses tied, and only two men guarding them. We crawled still closer, to be able to discern their exact number and situation.

In this way we arrived within fifty yards of their camp, and could see no one, but the two, any where in the distance. We concluded, that all the rest of the company were asleep in some place out of our view. We presumed it would not be long before some of them would awake, it being now ten at night. Our intention was to take aim at them, as they should pass between us and their fire, and drop them both together. We could distinctly hear them speaking about their horses. At length one of them called to the other, in English, to go and wake their relief guards. Words would poorly express my feelings, at hearing these beloved sounds. I sprang from my couching posture, and ran towards them. They were just ready to shoot me, when I cried a friend, a friend ! One of them exclaimed, 'where in God's name did you spring from.' 'You seem to have come out of the earth.' The surprise and joy upon mutual recognition was great on both sides. I gave him a brief sketch of the recent catastrophe of our company, as we followed them to camp. The company was all roused and gathered round us, eagerly listening to the recital of our recent disaster. At hearing my sad story, they expressed the hearty sorrow of good and true men, and joined us in purposes of vengeance against the Indians.

We were now thirty-two in all. We fired twelve guns, a signal which the wounded captain heard and understood, for he immediately joined us. We waited impatiently for the morning. As soon as it was bright dawn, we all formed under a genuine American leader, who could be entirely relied upon. [90] His orders were, that twenty should march in front of the pack horses, and twelve behind. In the evening we encamped within five miles of the Indian village, and made no fires. In the morning of the 31st, we examined all our arms, and twenty-six of us started to attack the village. When we had arrived close to it, we discovered most fortunately, what we considered the dry bed of a creek, though we afterwards discovered it to be the old bed of the river, that had very high banks, and ran within a hundred yards of the village. In this bed we all formed ourselves securely and at our leisure, and marched quite near to the verge of the village without being discovered. Every man posted himself in readiness to fire. Two of our men were then ordered to show themselves on the top of the bank. They were immediately discovered by the Indians, who considered them, I imagine, a couple of the Frenchmen that they had failed to kill. They raised the yell, and ran towards the two persons, who instantly dropped down under the bank. There must have been at least 200 in pursuit. They were in a moment close on the bank. In order to prevent the escape of the two men, they spread into a kind of circle to surround them. This brought the whole body abreast of us. We allowed them to approach within twenty yards, when we gave them

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

our fire. They commenced a precipitate retreat, we loading and firing as fast as was in our power. They made no pause in their village, but ran off, men, women and children, towards a mountain distant 700 yards from their village. In less than ten minutes, the village was so completely evacuated, that not a human being was to be found, save one poor old blind and deaf Indian, who sat eating his mush as unconcernedly as if all had been tranquil in the village. We did not molest him. We appropriated to our own use whatever we found in the village that we judged would be of any service to us. We then set fire to their wigwams, and returned to our camp. They were paid a bloody price for their treachery, for 110 of them were slain. At twelve we returned to the village in a body, and retook all the horses of the Frenchmen, that they had killed. [91] We then undertook the sad duty of burying the remains of the unfortunate Frenchmen. A sight more horrible to behold, I have never seen. They were literally cut in pieces, and fragments of their bodies scattered in every direction, round which the monsters had danced, and yelled. We then descended the river about a mile below the village, to the point where it enters the Helay from the north. It affords as much water at this point as the Helay.

In the morning of the 1st of February, we began to ascend Black river. We found it to abound with beavers. It is a most beautiful stream, bounded on each side with high and rich bottoms. We travelled up this stream to the point where it forks in the mountains; that is to say, about 80 miles from its mouth. Here our company divided, a part ascending one fork, and a part the other. The left fork heads due north, and the right fork north east. It was my lot to ascend the latter. It heads in mountains covered with snow, near the head of the left hand fork of the San Francisco. On the 16th, we all met again at the junction of the forks. The other division found that their fork headed in snow covered mountains, as they supposed near the waters of Red river. They had also met a tribe of Indians, who called themselves Mokee. They found them no ways disposed to hostility. From their deportment it would seem as if they had never seen white people before. At the report of a gun they fell prostrate on the ground. They knew no other weapon of war than a sling, and with this they had so much dexterity and power, that they were able to bring down a deer at the distance of 100 yards.

We thence returned down the Helay, which is here about 200 yards wide, with heavily timbered bottoms. We trapped its whole course, from where we met it, to its junction with Red river. The point of junction is inhabited by a tribe of Indians called Umene. Here we encamped for the night. On the morning of the 26th, a great many of these Indians crossed the river to our camp, and brought us dried beans, for which we paid them with red cloth, with which they were delighted beyond [92] measure, tearing it into ribbands, and tying it round their arms and legs; for if the truth must be told, they were as naked as Adam and Eve in their birth day suit. They were the stoutest men, with the finest forms I ever saw, well proportioned, and as straight as an arrow. They contrive, however, to inflict upon their children an artificial deformity. They flatten their heads, by pressing a board upon their tender scalps, which they bind fast by a ligature. This board is so large and light, that I have seen women, when swimming the river with their children, towing them after them by a string, which they held in their mouth. The little things neither suffered nor complained, but floated behind their mothers like ducks.

At twelve we started up Red river, which is between two and three hundred yards wide, a deep, bold stream, and the water at this point entirely clear. The bottoms are a mile in general width, with exceedingly high, barren cliffs. The timber of the bottoms is very heavy, and the grass rank

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

and high. Near the river are many small lakes, which abound in beavers.

March 1st we came among a tribe of Indians, called Cocomarecopper. At sight of us they deserted their wigwams, one and all, and fled to the mountains, leaving all their effects at our discretion. Of course we did not meddle with any thing. Their corn was knee high. We took care not to let our horses injure it, but marched as fast as we could from their village, to deprive them of their homes [in] as little time as possible. About four miles above the town we encamped, and set our traps. About twelve next day it began to rain, and we pitched our tents.

We had scarce kindled our fires, when 100 Indians came to our camp, all painted red in token of amity. They asked fire, and when we had given it, they went about 20 yards from us, and as the rain had been heavy and the air cool, they made a great fire, round which they all huddled. We gave them the bodies of six large fat beavers, which they cooked by digging holes in the ground, at the bottom of which they kindled fires, and on the fires threw the beavers which they covered with dirt. This dainty, thus prepared they greedily devoured, entrails [93] and all. Next morning, fearful that our guns might have experienced inconvenience from the rain, we fired them off to load them afresh. They were amazed and alarmed, to see us make, what they called thunder and lightning. They were still more startled, to see the bullet holes in the tree, at which we had aimed. We made signs to them, that one ball would pass through the body of two men. Some of our men had brought with them some scalps of the Papawars, the name of the tribe where our French captain lost his company. They informed us that they were at war with that tribe, and begged some of the scalps to dance round. They were given them, and they began to cut their horrid anticks about it.

Our traps had taken thirty beavers the last night. We gave them the meat of twenty, with which present they were delighted, their gratitude inducing them to manifest affection to us. They ate and danced all day and most of the night. On the morning of the 3d, they left us, returning to their camps. We resumed our march, and on the 6th arrived at another village of Indians called Mohawa. When we approached their village, they were exceedingly alarmed. We marched directly through their village, the women and children screaming, and hiding themselves in their huts. We encamped about three miles above the village. We had scarcely made our arrangements for the night, when 100 of these Indians followed us. The chief was a dark and sulky looking savage, and he made signs that he wanted us to give him a horse. We made as prompt signs of refusal. He replied to this, by pointing first to the river, and then at the furs we had taken, intimating, that the river, with all it contained, belonged to him; and that we ought to pay him for what we had taken, by giving him a horse. When he was again refused, he raised himself erect, with a stem and fierce air, and discharged his arrow into the tree, at the same time raising his hand to his mouth, and making their peculiar yell. Our captain made no other reply, than by raising his gun and shooting the arrow, as it still stuck in the tree, in two. The chief seemed bewildered with this mark of close [94] marksmanship, and started off with his men. We had no small apprehensions of a night attack from these Indians. We erected a hasty fortification with logs and skins, but sufficiently high and thick, to arrest their arrows in case of attack. The night, contrary to our fears, passed without interruption from them. On the morning of the 7th, the chief returned on horse back, and in the same sulky tone again demanded a horse. The captain bade him be off, in a language and with a tone alike understood by all people. He started off on full gallop, and as he passed one of our horses, that was tied a few yards from the camp, he fired a spear through the animal. He had not

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

the pleasure to exult in his revenge for more than fifty yards, before he fell pierced by four bullets. We could not doubt, that the Indians would attempt to revenge the death of their chief. After due consideration, we saw no better place in which to await their attack, than the one we now occupied. On the rear we were defended by the river, and in front by an open prairie. We made a complete breastwork, and posted spies in the limbs of the tall trees, to descry the Indians, if any approached us, while still at a distance. No Indians approached us through the day, and at night a heavy rain commenced falling. We posted sentinels, and secured our horses under the river bank. We kindled no fires, and we passed the night without annoyance. But at day break, they let fly at us a shower of arrows. Of these we took no notice. Perhaps, thinking us intimidated, they then raised the war whoop, and made a charge upon us. At the distance of 150 yards we gave them a volley of rifle balls. This brought them to a halt, and a moment after to a retreat, more rapid than their advance had been. We sallied out after them, and gave them the second round, which induced all, that were not forever stopped, to fly at the top of their speed. We had killed sixteen of their number. We returned to our camp, packed, and started, having made a determination not to allow any more Indians to enter our camp. This affair happened on the 9th.

We pushed on as rapidly as possible, fearful that these red [95] children of the desert, who appear to inherit an equal hatred of all whites, would follow us, and attack us in the night. With timely warning we had no fear of them by day, but the affair of the destruction of the French company, proved that they might become formidable foes by night. To prevent, as far as might be, such accidents, we raised a fortification round our camp every night, until we considered ourselves out of their reach, which was on the evening of the 12th. This evening we erected no breast-work, placed no other guard than one person to watch our horses, and threw ourselves in careless security round our fires. We had taken very little rest for four nights, and being exceedingly drowsy, we had scarcely laid ourselves down, before we were sound asleep. The Indians had still followed us, too far off to be seen by day, but had probably surveyed our camp each night. At about 11 o'clock this night, they poured upon us a shower of arrows, by which they killed two men, and wounded two more; and what was most provoking, fled so rapidly that we could not even give them a round. One of the slain was in bed with me. My own hunting shirt had two arrows in it, and my blanket was pinned fast to the ground by arrows. There were sixteen arrows discharged into my bed. We extinguished our fires, and it may easily be imagined, slept no more that night.

In the morning, eighteen of us started in pursuit of them, leaving the rest of the company to keep camp and bury our dead. We soon came upon their trail, and reached them late in the evening. They were encamped, and making their supper from the body of a horse. They got sight of us before we were within shooting distance, and fled. We put spurs to our horses, and overtook them just as they were entering a thicket. Having every advantage, we killed a greater part of them, it being a division of the band that had attacked us. We suspended those that we had killed upon the trees, and left their bodies to dangle in terror to the rest, and as a proof, how we retaliated aggression. We then returned to our company, who had each received sufficient warning not to encamp in the territories [96] of hostile Indians without raising a breast-work round the camp. Red river at this point bears a north course, and affords an abundance of the finest lands. We killed plenty of mountain sheep and deer, though no bears. We continued our march until the 16th, without seeing any Indians. On that day we came upon a small party, of whom the men fled, leaving a single woman. Seeing herself in our power, she began to beat her breast, and cry Cowera, Cowera

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

; from which we gathered, that she belonged to that tribe. We treated her kindly, and travelled on. On the 23d, we came to a village of the Shuena Indians. As we approached it, they came out and began to fire arrows upon us. We gave them in return a round of rifle balls. In the excitement of an attack, we laughed heartily to see these sons of the desert dodge, and skulk away half bent, as though the heavens were falling upon them. From their manner we inferred, that they were in fact wholly unacquainted with white people, or at least they never before heard the report of a gun. The whole establishment dispersed to the mountains, and we marched through the village without seeing any inhabitants, except the bodies of those we had killed. We had received more than one lesson of caution, and we moved on with great circumspection. But so much of our time was taken up in defence and attacks, and fortifying our camps, that we had little leisure to trap. In order that our grand object should not be wholly defeated, we divided our men into two companies, the one to trap and the other to keep guard. This expedient at once rendered our trapping very productive. We discovered little change in the face of the country. The course of the river still north, flowing through a rich valley, skirted with high mountains, the summits of which were white with snow.

On the 25th we reached a small stream, emptying into Red river through the east bank, up which we detached three men, each carrying a trap, to discover if beavers abounded in that stream. They were to return the next day, while we were engaged in shoeing our horses. The next day elapsed, but none returned. We became anxious about their fate; and on the [97] 27th, started to see what had become of them. At mid-day we found their bodies cut in pieces, and spitted before a great fire, after the same fashion which is used in roasting beaver. The Indians who had murdered them, saw us as we came on, and fled to the mountains, so that we had no chance of avenging the death of our unfortunate companions. We gathered the fragments of their bodies together and buried them. With sadness in our hearts, and dejection on our countenances, we returned to our camp, struck our tents, and marched on. The temperature in this region is rather severe, and we were wretchedly clad to encounter the cold.

On the 28th, we reached a point of the river where the mountains shut in so close upon its shores, that we were compelled to climb a mountain, and travel along the acclivity, the river still in sight, and at an immense depth beneath us. — Through this whole distance, which we judged to be, as the river meanders, 100 leagues, we had snow from a foot to eighteen inches deep. The river bluffs on the opposite shore, were never more than a mile from us. It is perhaps, this very long and formidable range of mountains, which has caused, that this country of Red river, has not been more explored, at least by the American people. A march more gloomy and heart-wearing, to people hungry, poorly clad, and mourning the loss of their companions, cannot be imagined. Our horses had picked a little herbage, and had subsisted on the bark of shrubs. Our provisions were running low, and we expected every hour to see our horses entirely give out.

April 10th, we arrived where the river emerges from these horrid mountains, which so cage it up, as to deprive all human beings of the ability to descend to its banks, and make use of its waters. No mortal has the power of describing the pleasure I felt, when I could once more reach the banks of the river.— Our traps, by furnishing us beavers, soon enabled us to renew our stock of provisions. We likewise killed plenty of elk, and dressed their skins for clothing. On the 13th we reached another part of the river, emptying into the main river from the [98] north. Up this we all trapped two days. During this excursion we met a band of hostile Indians, who attacked us with

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

an unavailing discharge of arrows, of whom we killed four.

On the 15th, we returned to the banks of Red river, which is here a clear beautiful stream. We moved very slowly, for our beasts were too lean and worn down, to allow us to do otherwise. On the 16th we met with a large party of the Shoshonees, a tribe of Indians famous for the extent of their wanderings, and for the number of white people they had killed, by pretending friendship to them, until they found them disarmed, or asleep. One of our company could speak their language, from having been a prisoner among them for a year. They were warmly clad with buffaloe robes, and they had muskets, which we knew they must have taken from the white people. We demanded of them to give up the fire arms, which they refused. On this we gave them our fire, and they fled to the mountains, leaving their women and children in our power.— We had no disposition to molest them. We learned from these women, that they had recently destroyed a company of French hunters on the head waters of the Platte. We found six of their yet fresh scalps, which so exasperated us, that we hardly refrained from killing the women. We took from them all the beaver skins which they had taken from the slain French, and five of their mules, and added to our provisions their stock of dried buffaloe meat. We had killed eight of their men, and we mortified the women excessively, by compelling them to exchange the scalps of the unfortunate Frenchmen for those of their own people.

We resumed our march, and ascended the river to the point where it forked again, neither fork being more than from twenty-five to thirty yards wide. On the 19th, we began to ascend the right hand fork, which pursues a N. E. course. On the 23d, we arrived at the chief village of the Nabahoos, a tribe that we knew to be friendly to the whites. We enquired of them, if we could cross the Rocky Mountains best at the head of this fork or the other; and they informed us, that the mountains [99] were impassable, except by following the left hand fork. Knowing that they were at war with the Shoshonee, we let them know how many of them we had killed. With this they were delighted, and gave us eight horses, one for each man we had slain. They sent with us, moreover, ten Indians to point out to us the route, in which to cross the mountains.

On the 25th, we started up the left hand fork, and arrived on the 30th, in the country of the Pewee tribe, who are friendly to the Nabahoos. Their chief village is situated within two days' travel of the low gap, at which we were to cross the mountains, at which gap we arrived on the first of May. The crossing was a work, the difficulty of which may be imagined from the nature of the case and the character of the mountains.— The passage occupied six days, during which we had to pass along compact drifts of snow, higher than a man on horseback. The narrow path through these drifts is made by the frequent passing of buffaloes, of which we found many dead bodies in the way. We had to pack cotton-wood bark on the horses for their own eating, and the wood necessary to make fires for our cooking. Nothing is to be seen among these mountains, but bare peaks and perpetual snow. Every one knows, that these mountains divide between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. At the point where we crossed them, they run in a direction a little north of west, and south of east, further than the eye can reach.

On the 7th, we struck the south fork of the Platte, near Long's Peak, and descended it five days. We then struck across the plain to the main Platte, on which we arrived on the 16th. In descending it we found the beavers scarce, for all these rivers had been thoroughly trapped. The river is skirted with only a few small willows, and the country is open prairie, entirely destitute of trees. We saw immense droves of elk, buffaloes, and white bears, which haunt the buffaloe range to prey

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

upon those noble animals. We had the merriest sport imaginable, in chasing the buffaloes over these perfectly level plains, and shooting them with the arrows we had taken from the Indians [100] we had killed. I have killed myself, and seen others kill a buffalo, with a single shot of an arrow. The bows are made with ribs of buffaloes, and drive the arrows with prodigious force. On the 20th, we left this river and started for the Big Horn, a fork of the Yellow Stone, itself a considerable river of the Missouri. We reached the Big Horn on the 31st, and found but few beavers. June 2d, we struck over towards the main Yellow Stone, and on the 3d entered the country of the Flat Heads, who were entirely friendly. We purchased some furs of them. They are Indians of exceedingly handsome forms, were it not for the horrid deformity of their heads, which are transversely from ear to ear but a few inches in diameter, and in the other direction monstrous, giving them the appearance of wearing a military cap with all its plumage. This plumage is furnished by their matted tresses of hair, painted and skewered up to a high point. This monstrosity is occasioned by binding two pieces of board on each side of the head of the new-born infant, which is kept secure with bandages, until the child is three years old, at which time the head bones have acquired a firmness to retain their then shape during life.

On the 11th, we reached the Yellow Stone, and ascended it to its head; and thence crossed the ridges of the Rocky Mountains to Clarke's fork of the Columbia. But all these streams had been so much trapped, as to yield but few beavers. Clarke's fork is a hundred yards wide, a bold, clear, pleasant stream, remarkable for the number and excellence of its fish, and most beautiful country of fertile land on its shores. We ascended this river to its head, which is in Long's Peak, near the head waters of the Platte. We thence struck our course for the head waters of the Arkansas, on which we arrived July 1st. Here we met a band of the Grasshopper Indians, who derive their name from gathering grasshoppers, drying them, and pulverizing them, with the meal of which they make mush and bread; and this is their chief article of food. They are so little improved, as not even to have furnished themselves with [101] the means of killing buffaloes. At sight of us, these poor two-legged animals, dodged into the high grass like so many partridges.

We marched up this stream, trapping for the few beavers which it afforded. Its banks are scantily timbered, being only skirted with a few willows. On the 5th, we met a war party of the Black Foot Indians, all well mounted. As soon as they saw us, they came fiercely upon us, yelling as though the spirit of darkness had loaned them the voices of all his tenants. We dismounted, and as soon as they were within shooting distance, we gave them our fire, which they promptly returned. The contest was fierce for something more than 20 minutes, a part of the time not more than 50 yards apart. They then retreated, and we mounted our horses, and gave them chase, though unavailingly, for their horses were as fleet as the wind, compared with ours. We soon desisted from so useless a pursuit, and returned to the battle ground. We found sixteen Blackfeet dead, and with infinite anguish, counted four of our own companions weltering in their blood. We buried them with sorrowful hearts, and eyes full of tears. Ah! Among those who live at home, surrounded by numerous relations and friends, in the midst of repose, plenty and security, when one of the number droops, and dies with sickness or age, his removal leaves a chasm that is not filled for years. Think how we must have mourned these brave men, who had shared so many dangers, and on whose courage and aid we had every day relied for protection. Here on these remote plains, far from their friends, they had fallen by the bloody arrow or spear of these red, barbarous Ishmaelites of the desert, but neither unwept nor unrevenged. Having performed the sad task of deposit-

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

ing the bodies of these once warm hearted friends in the clay, we ascended to the head of this river, and crossed the mountain that separates its waters from those of the Rio del Norte, which river we struck on the 20th. We began to descend it, and on the 23d met a band of the Nabahoes, who accompanied us [102] quite to their chief village. It will be seen, that all these streams upon which we have been trapping, rise from sources which interlock with each other, and the same range of peaks at very short distances from each other. These form the heads of Red river of the east, and the Colorado of the west, Rio del Norte, Arkansas, Platte, Yellow Stone, Missouri and Columbia. The village of these Indians is distant 50 miles from the Rio del Norte. We remained at it two days, and rested our horses, and refreshed ourselves. This tribe some years since had been at war with the Spanish, during which they plundered them of great numbers of horses, mules and cattle, which caused that they had now large stocks of these animals, together with flocks of sheep. They raise a great abundance of grain, and manufacture their wool much better than the Spanish. On the first of August we arrived at Santa Fe, with a fine amount of furs. Here disaster awaited us. The Governor, on the pretext that we had trapped without a license from him, robbed us of all our furs. We were excessively provoked, and had it not been from a sense of duty to our own beloved country, we would have redressed our wrongs, and retaken our furs with our own arms. Here I remained until the 18th, disposing of a part of my goods, and reserving the remainder for a trip which I contemplated to the province of Sonora. I had the pleasure once more of receiving the affectionate greeting of Jacova, who gave me the most earnest counsels to quit this dangerous and rambling way of life, and settle myself down in a house of my own. I thanked her for her kindness and good counsel, and promised to follow it, after rambling another year in the wilderness.— Thence I went to the mines, where I had the inexpressible satisfaction again to embrace my dear father, whom I found in perfect health, and making money rapidly. I remained there three days, and, accompanied with one servant, arrived in Hanas on the first of September. This is a small town situated in the province of Biscay, between the province of Sonora and New Mexico, in a direction S. W. from the copper mines.

[103] The country is generally of that character, denominated in Kentucky, barren. The soil is level and black. These people raise a great quantity of stock, such as horses, cows, sheep and goats. Their farming implements are clumsy and indifferent. They use oxen entirely in their agriculture. Their ploughs are a straight piece of timber, five feet long and eight inches thick, mortised for two other pieces of timber, one to be fitted to the beam, by which the oxen draw, and another to the handle, by which the man holds the plough. The point that divides the soil, is of wood, and hewed sloping to such a point, that a hollow piece of iron is fastened on it at the end. This is one inch thick, and three inches broad at top, and slopes also to a point.

Their hoes, axes and other tools are equally indifferent; and they are precisely in such a predicament, as might be expected of a people who have no saw mills, no labor saving machinery, and do every thing by dint of hard labor, and are withal very indolent and unenterprising.

I amused myself at times with an old man, who daily fell in my way, who was at once rich and to the last degree a miser; and yet devotedly attached to the priests, who were alone able to get a little money out of him. He often spoke to me about the unsafeness of my religion. Instead of meeting his remarks with an argument, I generally affronted him at once, and then diverted myself with his ways of showing his anger. I told him that his priest treated him as the Spanish hostlers do their horses. He asked me to explain the comparison. I observed, 'you know how the hostler in

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

the first place throws his lasso over the mule's neck. That secures the body of the beast. Next the animal is blindfolded. That hinders his seeing where he is led. Next step he binds the saddle safe and fast. Then the holy father rigs his heels with spurs. Next come spur and lash, and the animal is now restive to no purpose. There is no shaking off the rider. On he goes, till the animal under him dies, and both go to hell together!' At this he flew into such a violent rage, as to run at me with his knife. I dodged out of his [104] way, and appeased him by convincing him that I was in jest. The rich, in their way of living, unite singular contrasts of magnificence and meanness. For instance, they have few of the useful articles of our dining and tea sets, but a great deal of massive silver plate, and each guest a silver fork and spoon. The dining room is contiguous to the kitchen. A window is thrown open, and the cook hands a large dish through the window to a servant, who bears it to the table. The entertainer helps himself first, and passes the dish round to all the guests. Then another and another is brought on, often to the number of sixteen. All are savored so strong with garlic and red pepper, that an American at first cannot eat them. The meat is boiled to such a consistency that a spoon manages it better than a knife. At the close of the dinner they bring in wine and cigars, and they sit and smoke and drink wine until drowsiness steals upon them, and they go to bed for their siesta. They sleep until three in the afternoon, at which time the church bell tolls. They rise, take a cup of chocolate, and handle the wine freely. This short affair over, they return and sit down on the shaded side of the house, and chatter like so many geese till night, when they divide, a part to mass, and a part to the card table, where I have seen the poor, betting their shirts, hats and shoes. The village contains 700 souls.

On the 6th, I departed from this town, travelling a west course through a most beautiful country, the plains of which were covered with domestic animals running wild. On the 8th I arrived at the foot of the mountain, that divides the province of Sonora from Biscay. I slept at a country seat, where they were making whiskey of a kind of plantain, of which I have spoken before, which they called Mascal (Maguey). Here were assembled great numbers of Spaniards and Indians. They were soon drunk, and as a matter of course, fighting with knives and clubs. In the morning, two Spaniards and one Indian were found dead. Late in the morning, a file of soldiers arrived, and took the suspected murderers to prison.

In the morning I commenced climbing the mountain before [105] me, and in the evening arrived at a small town in Sonoro, called Barbisca; situated on the bank of a most beautiful little stream, called Iago, which discharges itself into the Pacific ocean, near the harbor of Ymus. Its banks are not much timbered, nor is the soil uncommonly good. The morning of the 9th was a great religious festival, or famous Saint's day, which collected a vast crowd of people. After breakfast and mass, the image of the virgin Mary was paraded round the public square in solemn procession, during which there was a constant crash of cannon and small arms. Then an old priest headed a procession, bearing the image of Christ, nailed to a cross. After these images were returned to their church, they brought into a square enclosure, strongly fenced for that purpose, a wild bull, which they threw down, tied and sharpened its horns. The tops of the houses were all covered with people to see the spectacle that was performing. The bull was covered with red cloth, and two men entered the enclosure, each holding in the right hand a bundle of sky rockets, and in the left a red handkerchief. The rockets were lashed to a stick a foot long, in the end of which was a small nail, a half an inch long, with a beard at the end, like that of a fish hook. They then untied the fierce animal. No sooner was he on his feet, than he sprang at one of his assailants, who avoid-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

ed his attack, by dextrously slipping aside, and as the animal darted by him, stuck in his neck two small rockets, one on each side. The other assailant then gave a sharp whistle to draw the infuriated animal upon him. The bull snorted and dashed at him. He dodged the animal in the same manner, as the other had done, and left sticking in his forehead, as he passed, a garland of artificial flowers, made of paper, beautifully cut and painted, and large enough to cover his whole forehead. In this way they kept alternately driving him this way and that, sticking rockets in him as he dashed by them, until he was covered with eight or ten, clinging to his neck and shoulders. They then touched the crackers with a lighted match. Words would not paint the bull's expressions of rage and terror, as he bounded round the enclosure, covered with fire, [106] and the rockets every moment discharging like fire arms. After this, a man entered with a small sword. The bull bel- lowed and darted at him. As the bull dropped his head to toss him, he set his feet upon the horns, and in a twinkling, thrust his sword between the shoulder blades, so as to touch the spinal mar- row. The animal dropped as dead as a stone. The drum and fife then struck up, as a signal for the horsemen to come and carry off the dead animal, and bring in a fresh one. All this was conducted with incredible dispatch. In this way seven bulls were successively tortured to death, by footmen. After this, four men entered on horseback, equipped with spears in the shape of a trowel, and a handle four feet long. With this spear in the one hand, and a noose in the other, they galloped round the bull. The bull immediately made at the horsemen passing him, who moved just at such a pace, as not to allow the bull to toss the horse. The horseman then couched his spear backwards, so as to lay it on the bull's neck. The bull instantly reared and tossed, and in the act forced the spear between his fore shoulders, so as to hit the spinal marrow. If the spear is laid rightly, and the animal makes his accustomed motions, he drops instantly dead. But to do this requires infinite dexterity and fearlessness. If the man be clumsy, or of weak-nerves, he is apt to fail in couching the spear right, in which case, as a matter of course, the horse is gored, and it is ten to one that the man is slain. In this way fourteen bulls were killed, and with them, five horses and one man, during this festival. At night commenced gambling and card playing, and both as fiercely pursued as the bull fighting. This great feast lasted three days, during which, as the people were in a very purchasable humor, I sold a number of hundred dollar's worth of my goods.

On the morning of the 12th, I left this place, and in the evening arrived at a small town called Vassarac, and remained there one day. The country in the vicinity is well timbered and very hilly. The woods are full of wild cattle and horses. On the 13th, I travelled through a fine rich country, abounding with cattle, and arrived in the evening at a town called Tepac, [107] situated on a small creek, near a mountain, in which there is a gold mine worked by the Iago Indians, a nation for- merly under the protection of an old priest. He attempted to practice some new imposition upon them, and they killed him some years ago. On this the Spaniards made war upon them, and the conflict was continued some years. They lost the best and bravest of their men, and the remnant were obliged to submit to such terms as the Spaniards saw fit to impose. They were either con- demned to the mines, or to raise food for those who wrought them.

I remained in this town three days, and purchased gold in bars and lumps of the Indians, at the rate of ten dollars per ounce. The diggings seldom exceed twenty feet in depth. Most of the gold is found on the surface after hard rains. Their mode of extracting the gold from the earth with which it is mixed, or the stone in which it is imbedded, is this. The stone is pulverised or ground, still keeping the matter wet. It is carefully mixed with mercury, and kneaded with the hands, until

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

the water is separated from the mass, and the mercury is perfectly incorporated with it. This process is repeated, until the water runs off perfectly clear. They then grind or triturate the mass anew until all the particles of earthy matter are washed away. The remaining matter is amalgam, of the color of silver, and the consistency of mush. They then put it into a wet deer skin, and strain the mercury by pressure through the pores of the skin. The gold is left, still retaining enough mercury to give it the color of silver. The coarse way of managing it afterwards, is to put it in the fire, and evaporate all the mercury from it, and it is then pure virgin gold. There is a more artificial way of managing it, by which the mercury is saved.

This province would be among the richest of the Mexican country, if it were inhabited by an enlightened, enterprising and industrious people. Nothing can exceed the indolence of the actual inhabitants. The only point, in which I ever saw them display any activity, is in throwing the lasso, and in horsemanship. In this I judge, they surpass all other people. Their great [108] business and common pursuit, is in noosing and taming wild horses and cattle.

On the 15th, I left this place and travelled through a country well timbered and watered, though the land is too broken to be cultivated, and in the evening arrived in a town called Varguacha. This is a place miserably poor, the people being both badly fed and clothed. But their indolence alone is in fault. The land in the immediate vicinity of the town is good, and the woods teem with wild cattle. But they are too lazy to provide more meat than will serve them from day to day. On the 17th I continued my course through a beautiful country, thinly settled by civilized Indians, who raise sugar cane and abundance of stock. They are obviously more enterprising and industrious than the Spaniards. Approaching the shore of the great Pacific, I found the country more level and better settled. Some rich and noble sugar farms lay in my view.

On the 22d I arrived in Patoka, which is a considerable town, and the capital of this province. It is two day's travel hence to Ymus. The people here seemed to me more enlightened, and to have a higher air of civilization than any I had seen in the whole country. It probably results from the intercourse they have with foreigners, from their vicinity to the Pacific. Most of them are dressed in the style of the American people. Their houses are much better furnished, and the farmers are supplied with superior farming utensils, compared with any thing I saw in the interior. The chief manufactures are soap and sugar, the latter of an inferior quality, I imagine, in consequence of the clumsy mode of manufacturing it. From the port of Ymus they also export considerable quantities of tallow and hides, for which the farmers are repaid in merchandize at an enormous advance. A great many horses and mules are driven from the interior to this port. Many also are taken to the American states. The price of mules in this province is from three to four dollars a head.

I remained here until I had disposed of all my goods. On the 26th, I left this town, and travelled on to port Ymus, at which [109] I arrived on the 28th, and first saw the waters of the vast Pacific. I spent a day here on board an American ship, the master of which was surprised at the account I gave of myself, and would hardly believe that I had travelled to this place from the United States. I was equally amazed at hearing him relate the disasters which had befallen him at sea. On the 29th, I left this port, and travelled a N. W. course, through a country full of inhabitants, and abounding in every species of fruit. Snow never falls, although the general temperature is not so warm but that woollen garments may be worn. To add to its advantages, it is very healthy. On the 7th of October, I arrived at a town called Oposard. The population amounts to about 8000 souls. I here became acquainted with one of my own countrymen, married to a Spanish woman. He

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

informed me, that he had been in this country thirty years, eight of which he had spent in prison. The sufferings he endured from the Spaniards were incredible; and I internally shuddered, as he related, lest I, in travelling through the country might fall into similar misfortunes. As some palliation of their cruelty, he observed, that he was made prisoner at the period when the revolution was just commencing in that country. At that time the Inquisition was still in force, and committed many a poor mortal to the flames, for his alleged heresy. He assured me, that he should have met the same fate, had he not become a member of their church. He afterwards married a lady, who had gained his affections by being kind to him in prison.

I remained with this man two days, and on the third resumed my journey, travelling an easterly course, and part of the time over a very rough country. I met no inhabitants, but Indians, who were uniformly friendly. On the 10th, I arrived at the mines of Carrocha, which were in the province of Chihuahua, situated between two mountains, and considered the richest silver mines in New Mexico. There are about 800 miners working this mine, and they have advanced under ground at least half a mile. On the 12th, I started for the capital, and reached it on the 16th, passing over great tracts of good and bad land, all [110] untilled, and most of it an uninhabited wilderness. This city is the next largest in New Mexico. It is the largest and handsomest town I had ever seen, though the buildings are not so neat and well arranged as in our country. The roofs are flat, the walls well painted, and the streets kept very clean. Here they smelt and manufacture copper and silver, and several other metals. They have also a mint. The terms of their currency are very different from ours. They count eight rials, or sixteen four pence half pennies, to the dollar. Their merchandize is packed from Ymus, or Mexico.

I have heard much talk about the Splendid churches in this city. It is for others, who think much of such immense buildings, wrung from the labors of the poor, to describe them. For my part, having said it is a large and clean town, I present a result of their institutions and manners, which I considered the more important sort of information. During a stay of only three days here, ten dead bodies were brought into town, of persons who had been murdered in the night. Part of the number were supposed to have been killed on account of having been known to carry a great deal of money with them, and part to have had a quarrel about some abandoned women. This last is a most common occasion of night murders, the people being still more addicted to jealousy, and under still less restraints of law, than in old Spain, in the cities of which, assassinations from this cause are notoriously frequent.

I asked my informant touching these matters, if there was no police in the city? He answered, that the forms of the law were complete, and that they had a numerous guard, and that it was quite as likely they committed the murders themselves, as not. I came to the same conclusion, for in a small and regular city like this, it was impossible that so many guards, parading the streets by night, should not be aware of the commission of such deeds, and acquainted with the perpetrators. No inquest of any sort was held over the bodies. They were, however, paraded through the streets to beg money to pay the priests for performing funeral rites at their burial. This excited in me [111] still more disgust, than the murders. I expressed myself in consequence, with so much freedom, in regard to this sort of miserable imposition, as to give great offence to my host, who, like most of the people, was rigidly devoted to the religion of the church. On the evening of 16th, I left this city, and travelled through a fine country, thickly inhabited by shepherds, who live in small towns, and possess a vast abundance of stock. It is well watered, but thinly timbered. The

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

most magnificent part of the spectacle is presented in the lofty snow covered mountains, that rise far in the distance, and have their summits lost in the clouds, glistening in indescribable brilliance in the rays of the rising and setting sun.

The road at this time was deemed to be full of robbers, and very dangerous. I was so fortunate as to meet with none. On the 18th, I arrived at a small town, called San Bueneventura, which is surrounded with a wall. In fact, most of the considerable villages are walled. They are called in Spanish, Presidio, the English of which is, a garrison. In the forenoon, I crossed a small river called Rio Grande, and travelled down this stream all day, the banks of which were thickly settled, and in high cultivation, with wheat, corn and barley. On the 22d, I arrived at a village called Casas Grandes, or the Great Houses? On the 23d, I pursued an east course towards Passo del Norte, situated on the banks of the Rio del Norte. I travelled over a very rough country with some high mountains, inhabited by a wandering tribe of the Apache Indians, that live by seizing their opportunities for robbery and murder among the Spaniards, riding off upon the stolen horses, to the obscure and almost inaccessible fastnesses of their mountains, where they subsist upon the stolen horseflesh.

I know not, whether to call the Passo del Norte, a settlement or a town. It is in fact a kind of continued village, extending eight miles on the river. Fronting this large group of houses, is a nursery of the fruit trees, of almost all countries and climes. It has a length of eight miles and a breadth of nearly three. I was struck with the magnificent vineyards of this place, from [112] which are made great quantities of delicious wine. The wheat fields were equally beautiful, and the wheat of a kind I never saw before, the stalks generally yielding two heads each. The land is exceedingly rich, and its fertility increased by irrigation.

On the 28th, I started for the Copper mines, wrought by my father. This day my course led me up the del Norte, the bottoms of which are exceedingly rich. At a very short distance from the Passo, I began to come in contact with grey bears, and other wild animals. At a very little distance on either side are high and ragged mountains, entirely sterile of all vegetation. I had no encounter with the bears, save in one instance. A bear exceedingly hungry, as I suppose, came upon my horses as I was resting them at mid-day, and made at one of them. I repaid him for his impudence by shooting him through the brain. I made a most delicious dinner of the choice parts of his flesh. My servant would not touch it, his repugnance being shared by great numbers in his condition. It is founded on the notion, that the bear is a sort of degenerated man, and especially, that the entrails are exactly like those of human beings.

On the 30th, I struck off from the del Norte, and took my course for the Copper mines directly over the mountains, among which we toiled onward, subsisting by what we packed with us, or the product of the rifle, until the 11th of November, when I had once more the satisfaction of embracing my father at the Copper mines. He was in perfect health, and delighted to see me again. He urged me so earnestly to remain with him, though a stationary life was not exactly to my taste, that I consented from a sense of filial duty, and to avoid importunity. I remained here until the first of December, amusing myself sometimes by hunting, and sometimes by working in the gold mine, an employment in which I took much pleasure.

In a hunting excursion with a companion who was an American, he one morning saw fit to start out of bed, and commence his hunt while I was yet asleep in bed. He had scarcely advanced a league, before he killed a deer on the top of a high ridge. He was so inadvertent, as to commence

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

skinning the animal, before [113] he had re-loaded his rifle. Thus engaged, he did not perceive a bear with her cubs, which had advanced within a few feet of him. As soon as he saw his approaching companion, without coveting any farther acquaintance, he left deer and rifle, and ran for his life. He stopped not, until he arrived at the mines. The bear fell to work for a meal upon the deer, and did not pursue him. We immediately started back to have the sport of hunting this animal. As we approached the ridge, where he had killed the deer, we discovered the bear descending the ridge towards us. We each of us chose a position, and his was behind a tree, which he could mount, in case he wounded, without killing her. This most ferocious and terrible animal, the grizzly or grey bear, does not climb at all. I chose my place opposite him, behind a large rock, which happened to be near a precipice, that I had not observed. Our agreement was to wait until she came within 30 yards, and then he was to give her the first fire. He fired, but the powder being damp, his gun made long fire, whence it happened that he shot her too low, the ball passing through the belly, and not a mortal part. She made at him in terrible rage. He sprang up his tree, the bear close at his heels. She commenced biting and scratching the tree, making, as a Kentuckian would phrase it, the lint fly. But finding that she could not bite the tree down, and being in an agony of pain, she turned the course of her attack, and came growling and tearing up the bushes before her, towards me. My companion bade me lie still, and my own purpose was to wait until I could get a close fire. So I waited until the horrible animal was within six feet of me. I took true aim at her head. My gun flashed in the pan. She gave one growl and sprang at me with her mouth open. At two strides I leapt down the unperceived precipice. My jaw bone was split on a sharp rock, on which my chin struck at the bottom. Here I lay senseless. When I regained recollection, I found my companion had bled me with the point of his butcher knife, and was sitting beside me with his hat full of water, bathing my head and face. It was perhaps an hour, before I gained full recollection, [114] so as to be able to walk. My companion had cut a considerable orifice in my arm with his knife, which I deemed rather supererogation; for I judged, that I had bled sufficiently at the chin.

When I had come entirely to myself, my companion proposed that we should finish the campaign with the bear. I, for my part, was satisfied with what had already been done, and proposed to retreat. He was importunate, however, and I consented. We ascended the ridge to where he had seen the bear lie down in the bushes. We fixed our guns so that we thought ourselves sure of their fire. We then climbed two trees, near where the bear was, and made a noise, that brought her out of her lair, and caused her to spring fiercely towards our trees. We fired together, and killed her dead. We then took after the cubs. They were three in number. My companion soon overtook them. They were of the size of the largest rackoons. These imps of the devil turned upon him and made fight. I was in too much pain and weakness to assist him. They put him to all he could do to clear himself of them. He at length got away from them, leaving them masters of the field, and having acquired no more laurels than I, from my combat with my buffaloe calf. His legs were deeply bit and scratched, and what was worse, such was the character of the affair, he only got ridicule for his assault of the cubs. I was several weeks in recovering, during which time, I ate neither meat nor bread, being able to swallow nothing but liquids.

The country abounds with these fierce and terrible animals, to a degree, that in some districts they are truly formidable. They get into the corn fields. The owners hear the noise, which they make among the corn, and supposing it occasioned by cows and horses that have broken into

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

the fields, they rise from their beds, and go to drive them out, when instead of finding retreating domestic animals, they are assailed by the grizzly bear. I have been acquainted with several fatal cases of that sort. One of them was a case, that intimately concerned me. Iago, my servant, went out with a man to get a load of [115] wood. A bear came upon this man and killed him and his ass in the team. A slight flight of snow had fallen. Some Spaniards, who had witnessed the miserable fate of their companion, begged some of us to go and aid them in killing the bear. Four of us joined them. We trailed the bear to its den, which was a crevice in the bluff. We came to the mouth and fired a gun. The animal, confident in his fierceness, came out, and we instantly killed it. This occurred in New Mexico.

This stationary and unruffled sort of life had become unendurable, and with fifteen Americans, we arranged a trapping expedition on the Pacos. My father viewed my rambling propensities with stern displeasure. He had taken in a Spanish superintendent, who acted as clerk. This person had lived in the United States from the age of 18 to 30, and spoke English, French and Spanish. This man arranged the calculations, and kept the accounts of my father's concerns, and had always acted with intelligence and fidelity. The concern was on the whole prosperous; and although I felt deep sorrow to leave my father against his wishes, I had at least the satisfaction to know, that I was of no other use to him, than giving him the pleasure of my society.

On the 7th, our company arrived on the del Norte, and crossed it in the evening to the eastern shore. On the evening of the 8th, we struck the Pacos about twenty miles above its junction with the del Norte. This day's travel was through a wild and precipitous country, inhabited by no human being. We killed plenty of bears and deer, and caught some beavers. On the 9th, we began to ascend the river through a rich and delightful plain, on which are to be seen abundance of deserted sheep folds, and horse pens, where the Spanish vachers once kept their stock. The constant incursions of the Indians compelled this peaceful people to desert these fair plains. Their deserted cottages inspired a melancholy feeling. This river runs from N. E. to S. W. and is a clear, beautiful stream, 20 yards wide, with high and dry bottoms of a black and rich soil. The mountains run almost parallel to the river, and at the distance of [116] eight or ten miles. They are thickly covered with noble pine forests, in which aspen trees are intermixed. From their foot gush out many beautiful clear springs. On the whole, this is one of the loveliest regions for farmers that I have ever seen, though no permanent settlements could be made there, until the murderous Indians, who live in the mountains, should be subdued.

We advanced slowly onward, until the 15th, without meeting any Indians. At day break of this day, our sentinels apprized us, that savages were at hand. We had just time to take shelter behind the trees, when they began to let their arrows fly at us. We returned them the compliment with balls, and at the first shot a number of them fell. They remained firm and continued to pour in their arrows from every side. We began to find it exceedingly difficult to dodge them, though we gave them some rounds before any one of our men was struck. At length one man was pierced, and they rushed forward to scalp him. I darted from behind my tree to prevent them. I was assailed by a perfect shower of arrows, which I dodged for a moment, and was then struck down by an arrow in the hip. Here I should have been instantly killed, had not my companions made a joint fire at the Indians, who were rushing upon me, by which a number of them were laid dead. But the agony of my pain was insupportable, for the arrow was still fast in my hip. A momentary cessation of their arrows enabled me to draw out the arrow from my hip, and to commence

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

re-loading my gun. I had partly accomplished this, when I received another arrow under my right breast, between the bone and the flesh. This gave me less pain than the other shot, and finding I could not by any effort extract the arrow, I snapped it off, and finished loading my gun. The Indian nearest me fell dead, and I hobbled off, glad to be once more sheltered by a tree. My companions were not slow in making their rifles crack, and in raising mutual cheers of encouragement. The Indians were vastly our superiors in numbers, and we found it convenient to slip under the river bank. We were now completely sheltered [117] from their arrows. After we had gained this security, they stood but a few shots more, before they fled, leaving their dead and wounded at our mercy. Truth is, we were too much exasperated to show mercy, and we cut off the heads of all, indiscriminately.

Our loss was one killed, and two wounded, another beside myself though neither of us dangerously. The Indians had 28 killed. Luckily our horses were on an island in the river, or we should have lost every one of them. Our only loss of property was a few blankets, which they took, as they fled by our camp. During the 20 minutes that the contest lasted, I had a fragment of an arrow fast in my breast, and the spike of the other in my hip. I suffered, it may be imagined, excruciating pain, and still severer pain during the operation of extraction. This operation, one of my companions undertook. He was some minutes in effecting it. The spike could not be entirely extracted from my hip, for being of flint, it had shivered against the bone.

The Indians that attacked us, were a tribe of the Muscallaros, a very warlike people, although they have no other arms except bows and arrows, which are, however, the most powerful weapons of the kind. They are made of an elastic and flexible wood, backed with the sinews of a buffalo or elk. Their arrows are made of a species of reed grass, and are very light, though easily broken. In the end is stuck a hard piece of wood, which is pointed by a spike of flint an inch in length, and a quarter of an inch in width, and ground to the sharpest point. The men, though not tall, are admirably formed, with fine features and a bright complexion inclining to yellow. Their dress is a buckskin belt about the loins, with a shirt and moccasins to match. Their long black hair hangs in imbraided masses over their shoulders, in some cases almost extending to the heels. They make a most formidable appearance, when completely painted, and prepared for battle.

On the 16th, having made our arrangements for departure, I applied my father's admirable salve to my two severe wounds, [118] and to my companion's slight wound in the arm, and we both felt able to join our companions in their march. We travelled all this day and the following night a west course, and the following day, without stopping longer than was necessary to take a little food. After this we stopped and rested ourselves and horses all night. I need not attempt to describe the bitter anguish I endured, during this long and uninterrupted ride. It will be only necessary to conceive my situation to form a right conception of it. Our grand object had been to avoid another contest with the Muscallaros. In the evening we fell in with a party of the Nabahoes, who were now out on an expedition against the Muscallaros, who had recently killed one of their people, and against whom they had sworn immediate revenge. We showed the manifest proof of the chastisement they had received from us. Never had I seen such frantic leaps and gestures of joy. The screams and yells of exultation were such as cannot be imagined. It seemed as though a whole bedlam had broke loose. When we told them that we had lost but one man, their screams became more frantic still. Their medicine man was then called, and he produced an emollient

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

poultice, the materials of which I did not know but the effect was that the anguish of our wounds was at once assuaged. By the application of this same remedy, my wounds were quite healed in a fortnight.

The scalps, which some of our number had taken from the Muscallaros, were soon erected on a pole by the Nabahoes. They immediately commenced the fiercest dancing and singing I had yet seen, which continued without interruption three days and nights. During all this time, we endured a sort of worship from them, particularly the women. They were constantly presenting us with their favorite dishes, served in different ways, with dried berries and sweet vegetables, some of which, to people in our condition, were really agreeable.

In size and complexion these people resemble the Muscallaros, and their bows and arrows are similar; though some of the latter have fire arms, and their dress is much superior.— [119] Part of their dress is of the same kind with that of the former, though the skins are dressed in a more workmanlike manner, and they have plenty of blankets of their own manufacturing, and constituting a much better article than that produced by the Spaniards. They dye the wool of different and bright colors, and stripe them with very neat figures. The women are much handsomer, and have lighter complexions than the men. They are rather small in stature, and modest and reserved in their behaviour. Their dress is chiefly composed of skins made up with no small share of taste; and showily corded at the bottom, forming a kind of belt of beads and porcupine quills.— They are altogether the handsomest women I have seen among the red people, and not inferior in appearance to many Spanish women. Their deportment to our people, was a mixture of kindness and respect.

On the 21st, we started back to the river, accompanied by the whole party of Nabahoes, who assured us that they would guard us during the remainder of our hunt. We returned to the river through a beautiful and level country, most of it well timbered and watered. On our return we killed several bears, the talons of which the Indians took for necklaces. On the 26th, we arrived at our battle ground. The view of the bodies of the slain, all torn in pieces by wild beasts, inexpressibly disgusting to us, was equally a spectacle of pleasure to our red friends. We pointed out the grave of our companion. They all walked in solemn procession round it, singing their funeral songs. As they left it, every one left a present on the grave; some an arrow, others meat, moccasins, tobacco, war-feathers, and the like, all articles of value to them. These simple people believe that the spirit of the deceased will have immediate use for them in the life to come. Viewing their offerings in this light, we could not but be affected with these testimonies of kind feeling to a dead stranger. They then gathered up the remains of their slaughtered enemies, threw them in a heap, and cut a great quantity of wood, which they piled over the remains. They then set fire to the wood. We struck our tents, [120] marched about five miles up the river, set our traps, and encamped for the night. But the Nabahoes danced and yelled through the night to so much effect, as to keep all the beavers shut up in their houses, for, having been recently trapped, they were exceedingly cautious.

On the morning of the 27th, we informed them why we had taken no beavers, and during the following night they were perfectly quiet. We marched onward slowly, trapping as we went, until we reached the Spanish settlements on this river. On New Year's eve, January 1st, 1827, the Spaniards of the place gave a fandango, or Spanish ball. All our company were invited to it, and went. We appeared before the Alcalde, clad not unlike our Indian friends; that is to say, we were dressed

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

in deer skin, with leggins, moccasins and hunting shirts, all of this article, with the addition of the customary Indian article of dress around the loins, and this was of red cloth, not an article of which had been washed since we left the Copper Mines. It may be imagined that we did not cut a particular dandy-like figure, among people, many of whom were rich, and would be considered well dressed any where. Notwithstanding this, it is a strong proof of their politeness, that we were civilly treated by the ladies, and had the pleasure of dancing with the handsomest and richest of them. When the ball broke up, it seemed to be expected of us, that we should each escort a lady home, in whose company we passed the night, and we none of us brought charges of severity against our fair companions.

The fandango room was about forty by eighteen or twenty feet, with a brick floor raised four or five feet above the earth. That part of the room in which the ladies sat, was carpetted with carpeting on the benches, for them to sit on. Simple benches were provided for the accommodation of the gentlemen. Four men sang to the music of a violin and guitar. All that chose to dance stood up on the floor, and at the striking up of a certain note of the music, they all commenced clapping their hands. The ladies then advanced, one by one, and stood facing their partners. The dance then changed to a waltz, each [121] man taking his lady rather unceremoniously, and they began to whirl round, keeping true, however, to the music, and increasing the swiftness of their whirling. Many of the movements and figures seemed very easy, though we found they required practise, for we must certainly have made a most laughable appearance in their eyes, in attempting to practise them. Be that as it may, we cut capers with the nimblest, and what we could not say, we managed by squeezes of the hand, and little signs of that sort, and passed the time to a charm. The village, in which was this ball, is called Perdido, or the lost town, probably from some circumstances in its history. It contains about 500 souls and one church. The bishop was present at this ball, and not only bestowed his worshipful countenance, but danced before the Lord, like David, with all his might. The more general custom of the ladies, as far as I observed, is to sit cross legged on the floor like a tailor. They are considerably addicted to the industry of spinning, but the mode has no resemblance to the spinning of our country. For a wheel, they have a straight stick about a foot long, rounded like the head of a spool. In the middle of the stick is a hole, through which the stick is fastened. Their mode of spinning with this very simple instrument reminded me strongly of the sport of my young days, spinning a top, for they give this spinning affair a twirl, and let it run on until it has lost its communicated motion to impart it anew. This shift for a spinning wheel they call necataro. They manufacture neither cotton nor wool into cloth, and depend altogether on foreign trade for their clothing. The greatest part of this supply comes over land from the United States. On the 2d, we started for San Tepec, through a country generally barren, though abounding in water. We saw plenty of bears, deer and antelope. Some of the first we killed, because we needed their flesh, and others we killed for the same reason that we were often obliged to kill Indians, that is, to mend their rude manners, in fiercely making at us, and to show them that we were not Spaniards, to give them the high sport of seeing us run. We arrived in the above named town [122] on the 5th, and sold our furs. Here I met again some of the companions who came with me in the first instance from the United States. I enquired about others, whom I held in kind remembrance. Some had died by lingering diseases, and others by the fatal ball or arrow, so that out of 116 men, who came from the United States in 1824, there were not more than sixteen alive. Most of the fallen were as true men, and as brave as ever poised a rifle, and yet in these

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

remote and foreign deserts found not even the benefit of a grave, but left their bodies to be torn by the wild beasts, or mangled by the Indians. When I heard the sad roll of the dead called over, and thought how often I had been in equal danger, I felt grateful to my Almighty Benefactor, that I was alive and in health. A strong perception of the danger of such courses as mine, as shown by the death of these men, came over my mind, and I made a kind of resolution, that I would return to my home, and never venture into the woods again. Among the number of my fallen companions, I ought not to forget the original leader of our company, Mr. Pratte, who died in his prime, of a lingering disease, in this place.

On the 10th, I commenced descending the Del Norte for the Copper Mines, in hopes once more to have the pleasure of embracing my father, and relate to him what I had suffered in body and mind, for neglecting to follow his wise and fatherly counsel. I now travelled slowly and by myself, and on the 12th, arrived at the house of my old friend the governor, who met me at his door, and gave me such an embrace, as to start the blood from my scarcely healed wound. I did not perceive at the moment, that his embrace had produced this effect, and entered the house, where I met Jacova, who received me with a partial embrace, and a manner of constrained politeness. She then sat down by me on the sofa, and began asking me many questions about my adventure since we had parted, often observing that I looked indisposed. At length she discovered the blood oozing through my waistcoat. She exclaimed, putting her hand on the wound, 'and good reason you have to look [123] so, for you are wounded to death.' The look that accompanied this remark, I may not describe, for I would not be thought vain, and the stern character of my adventures forbids the intermixture of any thing of an entirely different aspect. I was not long, however, in convincing her that my wound was not really dangerous, and that I owed its present bleeding to the friendship of her father, a cause too flattering to be matter of regret. This drew from me a narrative of the occasion of my wound, which I related in the same simple terms and brief manner in which it is recorded in my journal. A long conversation of questions and replies ensued, of a nature and on subjects not necessary to relate. On the 20th, imploring God that we might meet again, we parted, and I resumed my journey, travelling slowly for my father's residence at the Copper Mines. I paused to rest and amuse myself in several of the small towns on my way. On the 26th, I had the high satisfaction once more to hold the hand of my father, and to find him in health and prosperity, and apparently with nowise abated affection for me, though I had rejected his counsels. This affection seemed to receive a warmer glow, when he heard my determination not to take to the woods again. I then in return wished to make myself acquainted with the true state of his affairs. He had established a vacherie on the river Membry where he kept stock. He had also opened a farm on the land which the old Appache chief had given him, which enabled him to raise grain for the use of his own establishment at the mines. He had actually a supply of grain in advance for the next year. He had made similar improvements upon every thing appertaining to the mines. The result of the whole seemed to be, that he was making money rapidly.

He still retained the Spaniard, of whom I have spoken before, as clerk and superintendent, believing him to be a man of real stability and weight of character, and placing the most entire reliance both upon his capacity and integrity. I was less sanguine, and had my doubts, though having seen no decided facts, [124] upon which to ground them, I did not deem myself justified in honor to impart my doubts to my father.

On the 10th of February, my father requested me, on his account, to take a trip to Alopaz, to pur-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

chase for his establishment some wine and whiskey, which articles sell at the mines at a dollar and a half a pint. I started with one servant and six pack mules, each having a couple of small barrels fastened over their saddles, after the manner of our panniers. On the 16th, I reached the place, and purchased my cargo, but the weather was so inclement, that I thought it best not to return until it softened. I became acquainted with an American, married in this place. He was by pursuit a gunsmith, and had been up the upper Missouri with Col. Henry, and an old and noted trader on that river. The mutual story of what we two had seen and suffered, would probably appear incredible, and beyond the common order of things, to most people, except those who have hunted and trapped in the western parts of this continent, among the mountains and savages, and has nothing upon which to depend, but his own firmness of heart, the defence of his rifle, and the protection of the all present God. To such persons, the incidents which we mutually related, would all seem natural.

I remained here until the 1st of April. Spring in its peculiar splendor and glory in this country, had now wakened the fields and forests into life, and was extending its empire of verdure and flowers higher and higher up the mountains towards their snowy peaks. On this day I commenced my journey of return to the mines, with my servant and my cargo bestowed on my mules. Though the face of the country was all life and beauty, the roads so recently thawed, were exceedingly muddy and heavy. One of my mules in consequence gave out the second day. My servant packed the load of the tired mule upon his riding one, and walked on foot the remainder of the day. During the day we discovered fresh bear tracks in the wood, and my servant advised me to have my gun loaded. At this remark I put my hand in my shot pouch, and found but a single ball, and [125] no lead with which to make more. At this discovery I saw at once the uselessness of self reproach of my own carelessness and neglect, though it will be easily imagined, what anxiety it created, aware that I had to travel through a long and dreary wilderness, replenished with grizzly bears and hostile Indians. Neither did I dare disclose a particle of what was passing in my mind to my servant, through fear that he would be discouraged, in which case, I knew his first step would be to turn back, and leave me to make the journey alone. It would have been impossible for me to do this, as we were both scarcely able to arrange the affairs of the journey. We advanced cautiously and were unmolested through the day. But I passed a most uncomfortable night through fear of the bears, which, thawed out, were emerging from their winter dens with appetites rendered ravenous by their long winter fast. We and our mules would have furnished them a delicious feast, after the hunger of months. No sleep visited my eyes that night.

At ten o'clock of the 3d, we met a Spaniard on horse back. I accosted him in the usual terms, and asked if he had met any Indians on his way? He answered that he had, and that there was a body of friendly Appaches encamped near the road, at a distance of a little more than a league. I was delighted with this information, for I supposed I should be able to purchase a horse of them, on which I might mount my servant. While I was reflecting on this thought, my servant proposed to purchase his horse, and offered him a blanket in exchange. He instantly dismounted, took the blanket, and handed over the horse. Happy to see the poor fellow once more comfortably mounted, we bade the easy Spaniard adieu, and gaily resumed our journey. In a short time, according to his information, we saw the Indian camp near the road, from which their smokes were visible. We were solicitous to pass them unobserved and pushed on towards a stopping place, which we might reach at twelve o'clock. Here we stopped to enable our horses to rest, and eat, for the grass

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

was fine. I ordered my servant to spancel the mules, and tether the horse to a shrub by a long rope. [126] My gun reclined upon the packs. We ate a little ourselves, and afterwards I spread my blanket on the grass, close by the horses, and lay down to repose myself, though not intending to go to sleep. But the bright beams of the sun fell upon me in the midst of the green solitude, and I was soon in a profound sleep. A large straw hat on the side of my face shaded my head from the sun.

While enjoying this profound sleep, four of the Appaches came in pursuit of us. It seems our Spaniard had stolen his horse from them, a few hours before. They came upon us in possession of the horse, and supposed me the thief. One of them rode close to me, and made a dart at me with his spear. The stroke was aimed at my neck, and passed through my hat, nailing it to the ground just back of my neck, which the cold steel barely touched. It awakened me, and I sprang to my feet. Four Indians on horse back were around me, and the spear, which had been darted at me, still nailed my hat to the ground. I immediately seized the spear and elevated it towards the Indian, who in turn made his horse spring out of my reach. I called my servant, who had seen the Indians approaching me, and had hidden himself in the bushes. I then sprang to my gun, at the distance of ten or fifteen paces. When I had reached and cocked it, I presented it at an Indian who was unsheathing his fusil. As soon as he discovered my piece elevated, he threw himself from his horse, fell on his knees, and called for mercy. What surprized me, and arrested my fire, was to hear him call me by my Christian name. I returned my rifle to my shoulder and asked him who he was? He asked me, if I did not know Targuarcha? He smote his breast as he asked the question. The name was familiar. The others dismounted, and gathered round. An understanding ensued. When they learned the manner in which we came by the horse, their countenances were expressive of real sorrow. They had supposed me a Spaniard, as they said, and the thief of their horse. They begged me not to be angry, with a laughable solicitude, offering me the horse as the price of friendship. Above all, they were [127] anxious that I should not relate the affair to my father. They seemed to have an awe of him, resembling that due to the Supreme Being. This awe he had maintained by his steady deportment, and keeping up in their minds the impression, that he always had a large army at command, and was able, and disposed at the first insult, or breach of the treaty on their part, to bring it upon them to their utter destruction.

To all their apologies and kind words and excuses, I answered that I knew them as well as any other man, and that they were not to expect to atone for a dastardly attempt to take my life, and coming within a hair's breadth of taking it, by offering me a present, that I believed that they knew who I was, and only wanted an opportunity, when they could steal upon me unarmed, and kill me, as they had probably committed many other similar murders; that were ready enough to cry pardon, as soon as they saw me handling my rifle, hoping to catch me asleep again, but that they would henceforward be sure to find me on my guard.

At this the Indian who had darted the spear at me, exclaimed that he loved me as a brother, and would at any occasion risk his life in my defence. I then distinctly recollected him, and that I had been two months with the band, to which he belonged, roving in the woods about the mines. Targuarcha had shown a singular kind of attachment to me, waiting upon me as if I had been his master. I was perfectly convinced that he had thrust his spear at me in absolute ignorance, that it was me. Still I thought it necessary to instil a lesson of caution into them, not to kill any one for an imagined enemy, until they were sure that he was guilty of the supposed wrong. Consequently

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

I dissembled distrust, and told him, that it looked very little like friendship, to dart a spear at the neck of a sleeping man, and that to tell the plain truth, I had as little confidence in him, as a white bear. At this charge of treachery, he came close to me, and looking affectionately in my face, exclaimed in Spanish, 'if you think me such a traitor, kill me. Here is my breast. Shoot.' At the same time he bared his breast with his hand, with such a [128] profound expression of sorrow in his countenance, as no one was ever yet able to dissemble. I was softened to pity, and told him that I sincerely forgave him, and that I would henceforward consider him my friend, and not inform my father what he had done. They all promised that they would never attempt to kill any one again, until they knew who it was, and were certain that he was guilty of the crime charged upon him. Here we all shook hands, and perfect confidence was restored.

I now called again for my servant, and after calling till I was hoarse, he at length crawled from behind the bushes, like a frightened turkey or deer, and looking wild with terror. He had the satisfaction of being heartily laughed at, as a person who had deserted his master in the moment of peril. They are not a people to spare the feelings of any one who proves himself a coward by deserting his place. They bestowed that term upon him without mercy. All his reply was, sullenly to set himself to packing his mules.

Now arose a friendly controversy about the horse, they insisting that I should take it, as the price of our renewed friendship, and I, that I would not take it, except on hire or purchase. They were obstinate in persisting that I should take the horse along with me, and finally promised if I would consent, that they would return to camp and bring their families, and escort me to the mines. To this I consented, though I had first taken the precaution to procure some rifle balls of them. We then resumed our journey, and travelled on without incident till the 5th, when they overtook us, and we travelled on very amicably together, until we reached the Membry, which runs a south course, and is lost in a wide arid plain, after winding its way through prodigious high, craggy mountains. It affords neither fish nor beavers, but has wide and rich bottoms, of which as I have mentioned, they gave my father as much as he chose to cultivate.

From the point where the road crosses this river to the mines, is reckoned 15 miles. Here we met the chief of this band of the Appaches, with a great number of his people. They were [129] all delighted to see us, and not the less so, when they discovered that we had spirituous liquors, of which they are fond to distraction. There was no evading the importunities of the chief to stay all night with him, he promising, if I would that he would go in next day with me to my father. I had scarcely arrived an hour, when I saw the Indian, that had darted his spear at me, come to the chief with shirt laid aside, and his back bare. He handed the chief a stout switch, asking him to whip him. The chief immediately flayed away about 50 lashes, the blood showing at every stroke. He then asked me, if the thing had been done to my satisfaction? I told him that I had no satisfaction to demand. The chief who had whipped him, was positively ignorant of the crime, for which he had suffered this infliction. But he said, when one of his men begged a flogging, he took it for granted, that it was not for the good deeds of the sufferer, and that he deserved it. When I learned that it was a voluntary penance for his offence to me on the road, I felt really sorry, and made him a present of a quart of whiskey, as an internal unction for the smart of his stripes, a medicine in high esteem among the Indians in such cases.

When we arrived at the mines, the old chief enquired what had been done to me on the road? As soon as he was informed, he sprang up, tore his hair, and seized a gun to shoot the poor culprit. I

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

interposed between them, and convinced him, that Taguarcha had not been really to blame in any thing but his haste, and that if I had really been the thief, he would have done right to kill me, and get back his horse, and that not even my father would have thought the worse of him, but that we should both now like him better, as well as his people, for what had happened.

On the 15th, my father proposed to give me a sum of money, with which to go into the United States to purchase goods for the mines. The laborers much preferred goods, at the customary rate, to money, and the profit at that rate was at least 200 per cent on the cost. I was reluctant to do this, for my thoughts still detained me in that country. It was then concluded to [130] send the before mentioned Spanish clerk on the commission, with sufficient money to pay for the goods, consigned to merchants in Santa Fe, to be purchased there, provided a sufficient quantity had recently arrived from the United States to furnish an assortment, and if not, he was recommended to merchants in St. Louis, to make the purchases there.

On the 18th, he started under these orders, under the additional one, that on his arriving at Santa Fe, and learning the state of things there, he should immediately write to the mines to that effect. In the customary order of things, this letter was to be expected in one month from the day he left the mines. After he was departed, he left none behind to doubt his truth and honor, nor was there the least suspicion of him, until the time had elapsed without a letter. A dim surmise began then to grow up, that he had run off with the money. We were still anxiously waiting for intelligence. During this interval I had occupied the place of clerk in his stead. It was now insisted that I should go in search of the villain, who had obtained a good start of a month ahead of us, and 30,000 dollars value in gold bullion to expedite his journey. On the 20th, I started in the search, which I confess seemed hopeless, for he was a man of infinite ingenuity, who could enact Spaniard, which he really was, or Russian, Frenchman or Englishman, as he spoke the languages of these people with fluency. Still I pushed on with full purpose to make diligent and unsparing search.

On the 30th, I arrived at Santa Fe. I made the most anxious and careful enquiry for him, and gave the most accurate descriptions of him there. But no one had seen or heard of such a person. I sorrowfully retraced my steps down the Rio del Norte, now without a doubt of his treachery, and bitterly reflecting on myself for my heedless regard of my father's request. Had I done it, we had both secured an affluence. Now I clearly foresaw poverty and misfortune opening before us in the future. For myself I felt little, as I was young and the world before me; and I felt secure about taking care of myself. [131] My grief was for my father and his companions, who had toiled night and day with unwearied assiduity, to accumulate something for their dear and helpless families, whom they had left in Missouri; and for the love of whom they had ventured into this rough and unsettled country, full of thieves and murderers. My father in particular, had left a large and motherless family, at a time of life to be wholly unable to take care of themselves, and altogether dependent on him for subsistence. There is no misery like self condemnation; and I suffered it in all its bitterness. The reflections that followed upon learning the full extent of the disaster, which I could but charge in some sense upon myself, came, as such reflections generally come, too late. I arrived at the Passo del Norte on the 10th of May, and repeated the same descriptions and enquiries to no purpose.— Not a trace remained of him here; and I almost concluded to abandon the search in despair. I could imagine but one more chance. The owner of the mines lived at Chihuahua. As a forlorn hope I concluded to proceed to that city, and inform the governor of our

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

misfortune. So I pushed to Chihuahua, where I arrived on the 23d.

I found the owner of the mines in too much anxiety and grief of mind on his own account, to be cool enough to listen [to] the concerns of others. The President of the Mexican republic had issued orders, that all Spaniards born in old Spain, should be expelled from the Mexican country, giving them but a month's notice, in which to settle their affairs and dispose of their property. He being one of that class, had enough to think of on his own account. However, when he heard of our misfortune, he appeared to be concerned. He then touched upon the critical state of his own affairs.

Among other things, he said he had all along hoped that my father was able and disposed to purchase those mines. He had, therefore, a motive personal to himself, to make him regret my father's loss and inability to make the purchase. He was now obliged to sell them at any sacrifice, and had but a very short time in which to settle his [132] affairs, and leave the country. He requested me to be ready to start the next day in company with him to the mines.

Early on the 24th, we started with relays of horses and mules. As we travelled very rapidly we arrived at the mines on the 30th, where I found my father and his companions in the utmost anxiety to learn something what had happened to me. When they discovered the owner of the mines, whose name was Don Francisco Pablo de Lagera, they came forth in a body with countenances full of joy. That joy was changed to sadness, as soon as Don Pablo informed them the object of his visit. They perceived in a moment, that nothing now remained for them but to settle their affairs, and search for other situations in the country, or return to the United States in a worse condition than when they left it. My father determined at once not to think of this. Nothing seemed so feasible, and conformable to his pursuits, as a trapping expedition. With the pittance that remained to him, after all demands against the firm were discharged, and the residue according to the articles of agreement divided, he purchased trapping equipments for four persons, himself included. The other three he intended to hire to trap for him.

On the 1st of July, all these matters had been arranged, and my father and myself started for Santa Fe, with a view to join the first company that should start on a trapping expedition from that place. On the 10th, we arrived at Santa Fe, where we remained until the 22d, when a company of thirty men were about to commence an expedition of that sort down Red river. My father joined this company, and in the name of the companions made application for license of safe transit through the province of Chihuahua, and Sonora, through which runs the Red river, on which we meant to trap. The governor gave us a passport in the following terms:

[133] Custom House of the frontier town of Santa Fe, in the territory of New Mexico.

Custom House Certificate.

Allow Sylvester Pattie, to pursue his journey with certain beasts, merchandize and money, in the direction of Chihuahua and Sonora; to enter in beasts and money an amount equal to this invoice, in whatsoever place he shall appear, according to the rules of the Custom House, on his passage; and finally let him return this permit to the government of this city in days. Do this under the established penalties.

Given at Santa Fe, in New Mexico.

RAMON ATTREN

September 22 d, 1827.

On the 23d, my father was chosen captain or commander of the company, and we started on our

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

expedition. We retraced our steps down the del Norte, and by the mines to the river Helay, on which we arrived on the 6th of October, and began to descend it, setting our traps as we went, near our camp, whenever we saw signs of beavers. But our stay on this stream was short, for it had been trapped so often, that there were but few beavers remaining, and those few were exceedingly shy. We therefore pushed on to some place where they might be more abundant, and less shy. We left this river on the 12th, and on the 15th reached Beaver river. Here we found them in considerable numbers, and we concluded to proceed in a south course, and trap the river in its downward course. But to prevent the disagreement and insubordination which are apt to spring up in these associations, my father drew articles of agreement, purporting that we should trap in partnership, and that the first one who should show an open purpose to separate from the company, or desert it, should be shot dead; and that if any one should disobey orders, he should be tried by a jury of our number, and if found guilty should be fined fifty dollars, to be paid in fur. To this instrument we all agreed, and signed our names.

[134] The necessity of some such compact had been abundantly discovered in the course of our experience. Men bound only by their own will and sense of right, to the duties of such a sort of partnership are certain to grow restless, and to form smaller clans, disposed to dislike and separate from each other, in parties of one by one to three by three. They thus expose themselves to be cut up in detail by the savages, who comprehend all their movements, and are ever watchful for an opportunity to show their hatred of the whites to be fixed and inextinguishable. The following are some of the more common causes of separation: Men of incompatible tempers and habits are brought together; and such expeditions call out innumerable occasions to try this disagreement of character. Men, hungry, naked, fatigued, and in constant jeopardy, are apt to be ill-tempered, especially when they arrive at camp, and instead of being allowed to throw themselves on the ground, and sleep, have hard duties of cooking, and keeping guard, and making breast-works assigned them. But the grand difficulty is the following. In a considerable company, half its numbers can catch as many beavers as all. But the half that keep guard, and cook, perform duties as necessary and important to the whole concern, as the others. It always happens too, in these expeditions, that there are some infinitely more dextrous and skilful in trapping and hunting than others. These capabilities are soon brought to light. The expert know each other, and feel a certain superiority over the inexpert. They know that three or four such, by themselves, will take as many beavers as a promiscuous company of thirty, and in fact, all that a stream affords. A perception of their own comparative importance, a keen sense of self interest, which sharpens in the desert, the mere love of roving in the wild license of the forest, and a capacity to become hardened by these scenes to a perfect callousness to all fear and sense of danger, until it actually comes; such passions are sufficient to thicken causes of separation among such companions in the events of every day.

Sad experience has made me acquainted with all these causes [135] of disunion and dissolution of such companies. I have learned them by wounds and sufferings, by toil and danger of every sort, by wandering about in the wild and desolate mountains, alone and half starved, merely because two or three bad men had divided our company, strong and sufficient to themselves in union, but miserable, and exposed to almost certain ruin in separation. Made painfully acquainted with all these facts by experience, my father adopted this expedient in the hope that it would be something like a remedy for them.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

But notwithstanding this, and the prudence and energy of my father's character, disunion soon began to spring up in our small party. Almost on the outset of our expedition, we began to suffer greatly for want of provisions. We were first compelled to kill and eat our dogs, and then six of our horses. This to me was the most cruel task of all. To think of waiting for the night to kill and eat the poor horse that had borne us over deserts and mountains, as hungry as ourselves, and strongly and faithfully attached to us, was no easy task to the heart of a Kentucky hunter. One evening, after a hard day's travel, my saddle horse was selected by lot to be killed. The poor animal stood saddled and bridled before us, and it fell to my lot to kill it. I loved this horse, and he seemed to have an equal attachment for me. He was remarkably kind to travel, and easy to ride, and spirited too. When he stood tied in camp among the rest, if I came any where near him, he would fall neighing for me. When I held up the bridle towards him, I could see consent and good will in his eye. As I raised my gun to my face, all these recollections rushed to my thoughts. My pulses throbbed, and my eyes grew dim. The animal was gazing me, with a look of steady kindness, in the face. My head whirled, and was dizzy, and my gun fell. After a moment for recovery, I offered a beaver skin to any one who would shoot him down. One was soon found at this price, and my horse fell! It so happened that this was the last horse we killed. Well was it for us that we had these surplus horses. Had it been otherwise, we should all have perished with hunger.

[136] It was now the 15th of November, and while the horse flesh lasted, we built a canoe, so that we could trap on both sides of the river; for it is here too broad and deep to be fordable on horseback. One of our number had already been drowned, man and horse, in attempting to swim the river. A canoe is a great advantage, where the beavers are wild; as the trapper can thus set his traps along the shore without leaving his scent upon the ground about it.

On the 17th, our canoe was finished, and another person and myself took some traps in it, and floated down the river by water, while the rest of the company followed along the banks by land. In this way, what with the additional supply which the canoe enabled our traps to furnish, and a chance deer or wolf that Providence sometimes threw in our way, with caution and economy we were tolerably supplied with provisions; and the company travelled on with a good degree of union and prosperity, until the 26th.

Here the greater part of the company expressed disinclination to following our contemplated route any longer. That is, they conceived the route to the mouth of the Helay, and up Red river of California too long and tedious, and too much exposed to numerous and hostile Indians. They, therefore, determined to quit the Helay, and strike over to Red river by a direct route across the country. My father reminded them of their article. They assured him they did not consider themselves bound by it, and that they were a majority, against which nothing could be said. My father and myself still persevered in following the original plan. Two of the men had been hired on my father's account. He told them he was ready to pay them up to that time, and dismiss them, to go where they chose. They observed, that now that the company had commenced separating, they believed that in a short time, there would be no stronger party together than ours; that they had as good a disposition to risk their lives with us, as with any division of our number, and that they would stay by us to the [137] death. After this speech four others of the company volunteered to remain with us, and we took them in as partners.

On the 27th, we divided the hunt, and all expressing the same regret at the separation, and hearti-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

ly wishing each other all manner of prosperity, we shook hands and parted! We were now reduced to eight in number. We made the most solemn pledges to stand by each other unto death, and adopted the severest caution, of which we had been too faithfully taught the necessity. We tied our horses every night, and encamped close by them, to prevent their being stolen by the Indians. Their foot-prints were thick and fresh in our course, and we could see their smokes at no great distance north of us. We were well aware that they were hostile, and watching their opportunity to pounce upon us, and we kept ourselves ready for action, equally day and night. We now took an ample abundance of beavers to supply us with meat, in consequence of our reduced numbers. Our horses also fared well, for we cut plenty of cotton-wood trees, the bark of which serves them for food nearly as well as corn. We thus travelled on prosperously, until we reached the junction of the Helay with Red river.—Here we found the tribe of Umeas, who had shown themselves very friendly to the company in which I had formerly passed them, which strongly inspired confidence in them at present. Some of them could speak the Spanish language. We made many inquiries of them, our object being to gain information of the distance of the Spanish settlements. We asked them where they obtained the cloth they wore around their loins? They answered, from the Christians on the coast of the California. We asked if there were any Christians living on Red river? They promptly answered, yes. This information afterwards proved a source of error and misfortune to us, though our motive for inquiry at this time was mere curiosity.

It was now the 1st of December; and at mid-day we began to see the imprudence of spending the remainder of the day and the ensuing night with such numbers of Indians, however friendly in appearance. We had a tolerable fund of experience, in [138] regard to the trust we might safely repose in the red skins; and knew that caution is the parent of security. So we packed up, and separated from them. Their town was on the opposite shore of Red river. At our encampment upwards of two hundred of them swam over the river and visited us, all apparently friendly. We allowed but a few of them to approach our camp at a time, and they were obliged to lay aside their arms. In the midst of these multitudes of fierce, naked, swarthy savages, eight of us seemed no more than a little patch of snow on the side of one of the black mountains. We were perfectly aware how critical was our position, and determined to intermit no prudence or caution.

To interpose as great a distance as possible between them and us, we marched that evening sixteen miles, and encamped on the banks of the river. The place of encampment was a prairie, and we drove stakes fast in the earth, to which we tied our horses in the midst of green grass, as high as a man's head, and within ten feet of our own fire. Unhappily we had arrived too late to make a pen for our horses, or a breast work for ourselves. The sky was gloomy. Night and storm were settling upon us, and it was too late to complete these important arrangements. In a short time the storm poured upon us, and the night became so dark that we could not see our hand before us. Apprehensive of an attempt to steal our horses, we posted two sentinels, and the remaining six lay down under our wet blankets, and the pelting of the sky, to such sleep as we might get, still preserving a little fire. We were scarcely asleep before we were aroused by the snorting of our horses and mules. We all sprang to our arms, and extinguished our little fire. We could not see a foot before us, and we groped about our camp feeling our way among the horses and mules. We could discover nothing; so concluding they might have been frightened by the approach of a bear or some other wild animal, some of us commenced rekindling our fires, and the rest went to sleep. But the Indians had crawled among our horses, and had cut or untied the rope by which

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

each one was [139] bound. The horses were then all loose. They then instantly raised in concert, their fiendish yell. As though heaven and earth were in concert against us, the rain began to pour again, accompanied with howling gusts of wind, and the fiercest gleams of lightning, and crashes of thunder. Terrified alike by the thunder and the Indians, our horses all took to flight, and the Indians repeating yell upon yell, were close at their heels. We sallied out after them, and fired at the noises, though we could see nothing. We pursued with the utmost of our speed to no purpose, for they soon reached the open prairie, where we concluded they were joined by other Indians on horseback, who pushed our horses still faster; and soon the clattering of their heels and the yells of their accursed pursuers began to fade, and become indistinct in our ears.

Our feelings and reflections as we returned to camp were of the gloomiest kind. We were one thousand miles from the point whence we started, and without a single beast to bear either our property or ourselves. The rain had past. We built us a large fire. As we stood round it we discussed our deplorable condition, and our future alternatives. Something was to be done. We all agreed to the proposition of my father, which was, early in the morning to pursue the trails of our beasts, and if we should overtake the thieves, to retake the horses, or die in the attempt; and that, failing in that, we should return, swim the river, attack their town, and kill as many of the inhabitants as we could; for that it was better to die by these Indians, after we had killed a good number of them, than to starve, or be killed by Indians who had not injured us, and when we could not defend ourselves.

Accordingly, early in the morning of the 2d, we started on the trail in pursuit of the thieves. We soon arrived at a point where the Indians, departing from the plain, had driven them up a chasm of the mountains. Here they had stopped, and caught them, divided them, and each taken a different route with his plundered horses. We saw in a moment that it was impossible to follow them farther to any purpose. We abandoned [140] the chase, and returned to our camp to execute the second part of our plan. When we arrived there, we stopped for a leisure meal of beaver meat. When we had bestowed ourselves to this dainty resort, a Dutchman with us broke the gloomy silence of our eating, by observing that we had better stuff ourselves to the utmost; for that it would probably, be the last chance we should have at beaver meat. We all acquiesced in this observation, which though made in jest, promised to be a sober truth, by eating as heartily as possible. When we had finished our meal, which looked so likely to be the last we should enjoy together, we made rafts to which we tied our guns, and pushing them onward before us, we thus swam the river. Having reached the opposite shore, we shouldered our rifles, and steered for the town at which we arrived about two in the afternoon. We marched up to the numerous assemblage of huts in a manner as reckless and undaunted as though we had nothing to apprehend. In fact, when we arrived at it, we found it to contain not a single living being, except one miserable, blind, deaf, and decrepid old man, not unlike one that I described in a hostile former visit to an Indian village. Our exasperation of despair inclined us to kill even him. My father forbade. He apparently heard nothing and cared for nothing, as he saw nothing. His head was white with age, and his eyes appeared to have been gouged out. He may have thought himself all the while in the midst of his own people. We discovered a plenty of their kind of food, which consisted chiefly of acorn mush. We then set fire to the village, burning every hut but that which contained the old man. Being built of flags and grass, they were not long in reducing to ashes. We then returned to our camp, re-swimming the river, and reaching the camp before dark.

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

We could with no certainty divine the cause of their having evacuated their town, though we attributed it to fear of us. The occurrences of the preceding day strengthened us in this impression. While they remained with us, one of our men happened to fire off his gun. As though they never had heard [141] such a noise before, they all fell prostrate on the earth, as though they had all been shot. When they arose, they would all have taken to flight, had we not detained them and quieted their fears.

Our conversation with these Indians of the day before, now recurred to our recollections, and we congratulated ourselves on having been so inquisitive as to obtain the now important information, that there were Spanish settlements on the river below us. Driven from the resource of our horses, we happily turned our thoughts to another. We had all the requisite tools to build canoes, and directly around us was suitable timber of which to make them. It was a pleasant scheme to soothe our dejection, and prevent our lying down to the sleep of despair. But this alternative determined upon, there remained another apprehension sufficient to prevent our enjoying quiet repose. Our fears were, that the unsheltered Indians, horse-stealers and all, would creep upon us in the night, and massacre us all. But the night passed without any disturbance from them.

On the morning of the 3d, the first business in which we engaged, was to build ourselves a little fort, sufficient for defence against the Indians. This finished, we cut down two trees suitable for canoes, and accomplished these important objects in one day. During this day we kept one man posted in the top of a tall tree, to descry if any Indians were approaching us in the distance. On the morning of the fourth we commenced digging out our canoes, and finished and launched two. These were found insufficient to carry our furs. We continued to prepare, and launch them, until we had eight in the water. By uniting them in pairs by a platform, we were able to embark with all our furs and traps, without any extra burden, except a man and the necessary traps for each canoe. We hid our saddles, hoping to purchase horses at the settlements, and return this way. We started on the 9th, floating with the current, which bore us downward at the rate of four miles an hour. In the evening we passed the burnt town, the ruins of which still threw up [142] smouldering smoke. We floated about 30 miles, and in the evening encamped in the midst of signs of beavers. We set 40 traps, and in the morning of the 10th caught 36 beavers, an excellent night's hunt. We concluded from this encouraging commencement, to travel slowly, and in hunters' phrase, trap the river clear; that is, take all that could be allured to come to the bait. The river, below its junction with the Helay, is from 2 to 300 yards wide, with high banks, that have dilapidated by falling in. Its course is west, and its timber chiefly cotton-wood, which in the bottoms is lofty and thick set. The bottoms are from six to ten miles wide. The soil is black, and mixed with sand, though the bottoms are subject to inundation in the flush waters of June. This inundation is occasioned by the melting of the snow on the mountains about its head waters. We now floated pleasantly downward at our leisure, having abundance of the meat of fat beavers. We began in this short prosperity, to forget the loss of our horses, and to consider ourselves quite secure from the Indians. But on the 12th, at mid-day, by mere accident, we happened, some way below us, to discover two Indians perched in a tree near the river bank, with their bows and arrows in readiness, waiting evidently until we should float close by them, to take off some of us with their arrows. We betrayed no signs of having seen them, but sat with our guns ready for a fair shot. When we had floated within a little short of a hundred yards, my father and another of the company gave them a salute, and brought them both tumbling down the branches, reminding us exactly of the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

fall of a bear or a turkey. They made the earth sound when they struck it. Fearful that they might be part of an ambush, we pulled our canoes to the opposite shore, and some of us climbed trees, from which we could command a view of both shores. We became satisfied that these two were alone, and we crossed over to their bodies. We discovered that they were of the number that had stolen our horses, by the fact, that they were bound round the waist with some of the hemp ropes with which our horses had been tied. We hung the bodies of the thieves [143] from a tree, with the product of their own thefts. Our thoughts were much relieved by the discovery of this fact, for though none of us felt any particular forbearance towards Indians under any circumstances, it certainly would have pained us to have killed Indians that had never disturbed us. But there could be no compunction for having slain these two thieves, precisely at the moment that they were exulting in the hope of getting a good shot at us. Beside they alarmed our false security, and learned us a lesson to keep nearer the middle of the river.

We continued to float slowly downwards, trapping beavers on our way almost as fast as we could wish. We sometimes brought in 60 in a morning. The river at this point is remarkably circuitous, and has a great number of islands, on which we took beavers. Such was the rapid increase of our furs, that our present crafts in a few days were insufficient to carry them, and we were compelled to stop and make another canoe. We have advanced between 60 and 70 miles from the point where we built the other canoes. We find the timber larger, and not so thick. There are but few wild animals that belong to the country farther up, but some deer, panthers, foxes and wild-cats. Of birds there are great numbers, and many varieties, most of which I have never before seen. We killed some wild geese and pelicans, and likewise an animal not unlike the African leopard, which came into our camp, while we were at work upon the canoe. It was the first we had ever seen. We finished our canoe on the 17th, and started on the 20th. This day we saw ten Indians on a sand bar, who fled into the woods at the sight of us. We knew them to be different people from those who had stolen our horses, both by their size and their different manner of wearing their hair. The heads of these were shaved close, except a tuft, which they wore on the top of their head, and which they raised erect, as straight as an arrow. The Umeas are of gigantic stature from six to seven feet high. These only average five feet and a half. They go perfectly naked, and have dark complexions, which I imagine [144] is caused by the burning heat of the sun. The weather is as hot here at this time, as I ever experienced. We were all very desirous to have a talk with these Indians, and enquire of them, how near we were to the Spanish settlements; and whether they were immediately on the bank, for we began to be fearful that we had passed them.

Three days passed without our having any opportunity of conversation with them. But early on the morning of the 24th, we found some families yet asleep in their wigwams, near the water's edge. Our approach to them was so imperceptible and sudden, that they had no chance to flee. They were apparently frightened to insanity. They surrendered without making any further effort to escape. While they stared at us in terrified astonishment; we made them comprehend that we had no design to kill, or injure them. We offered them meat, and made signs that we wished to smoke with them. They readily comprehended us, and the ghastliness of terror began to pass from their countenances. The women and children were yet screaming as if going into convulsions. We made signs to the men to have them stop this annoying noise. This we did by putting our hands to our mouths. They immediately uttered something to the women and children which made them still. The pipe was then lit, and smoking commenced. They puffed the smoke towards the sky,

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

pointed thither, and uttered some words, of course unintelligible to us. They then struck themselves on the breast, and afterwards on the forehead. We understood this to be a sort of religious appeal to the Supreme Being, and it showed more like reverence to him, than any thing we had yet seen among the Indians; though I have seen none but what admit that there is a master of life, whom they call by a name to that import, or that of Great Spirit.

When the smoking was finished, we began to enquire of them by signs, how far we were from the Spanish settlement? This we effected by drawing an image of a cow and sheep in the sand and then imitating the noise of each kind of domestic animals, that we supposed the Spaniards would have. They appeared [145] to understand us, for they pointed west, and then at our clothes, and then at our naked skin. From this we inferred that they wished to say that farther to the west lived white people, as we were. And this was all we could draw from them on that subject. We then asked them, if they had ever seen white people before? This we effected by stretching open our eyes with our fingers, and pointing to them, and then looking vehemently in that direction, while we pointed west with our fingers. They shook their heads in the negative. Then stretching their own ears, as we had our eyes, striking themselves on the breast, and pointing down the river, they pronounced the word wechapa. This we afterwards understood implied, that their chief lived lower down the river, and that they had heard from him, that he had seen these people.

We gave the women some old shirts, and intimated to them as well as we could, that it was the fashion of the women to cover themselves in our country, for these were in a state of the most entire nudity. But they did not seem rightly to comprehend our wish. Many of the women were not over sixteen, and the most perfect figures I have ever seen, perfectly straight and symmetrical, and the hair of some hanging nearly to their heels. The men are exceedingly active, and have bright countenances, and quick apprehension. We gave them more meat, and then started. They followed our course along the bank, until night. As soon as we landed, they were very officious in gathering wood, and performing other offices for us. They showed eager curiosity in examining our arms, and appeared to understand their use. When my father struck fire with his pistol, they gave a start, evidencing a mixture of astonishment and terror, and then re-examined the pistol, apparently solicitous to discover how the fire was made. My father bade me take my rifle, and shoot a wild goose, that was sitting about in the middle of the river. He then showed them the goose, and pointed at me, as I was creeping to a point where I might take a fair shot. They all gazed with intense curiosity, first at me, and then at the goose, until I fired. At the moment of the report, [146] some fell flat on the ground, and the rest ran for the bushes, as though Satan was behind them. As soon as the fallen had recovered from their amazement, they also fled. Some of our company stopped them, by seizing some, and holding them, and showing them that the goose was dead, and the manner in which it had been killed. They gradually regained confidence and composure, and called to their companions in the bushes. They also came forth, one by one, and when the nature of the report of the gun had been explained to them, they immediately swam into the river and brought out the goose. When they carried it round and showed it to their companions, carefully pointing out the ball hole in the goose, it is impossible to show more expressive gestures, cries and movements of countenances indicative of wonder and astonishment, than they exhibited. The night which we passed with them, passed away pleasantly, and to the satisfaction of all parties. In the morning their attention and curiosity were again highly excited, when we brought in our beavers, which amounted in number to thirty-six. After we had finished

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

skinning them, we left the ample supply of food furnished by the bodies of the beavers, in token of our friendship, to these Indians, and floated on. On the 27th, we arrived at the residence of the chief. We perceived that they had made ready for our reception. They had prepared a feast for us by killing a number of fatted dogs. As soon as we landed, the chief came to us, accompanied by two subordinate chiefs. When arrived dose to us, he exclaimed, wechapa, striking himself on the breast, pointing to our company, and repeating the same phrase. We understood from this, that he wished to know who was our captain? We all pointed to my father, to whom the chief immediately advanced, and affectionately embracing him, invited us to enter his wigwam. We shouldered our rifles, and all followed this venerable looking man to his abode. There he had prepared several earthen dishes, in which the flesh of young and fat dogs was served up, but without salt or bread. We all sat down. The pipe was lit, and we, and the thirty Indians present began to smoke. While we were smoking, they used many gesticulations and signs, the [147] purport of which we could not make out, though, as they pointed often at us, we supposed we were the subjects of their gestures. The pipe was then taken away, and the chief arose, and stood in the centre of the circle which we formed by the manner in which we all sat around the fire. He then made a long harangue, and as we understood not a word, to us rather a tedious one. We took care to make as many gestures indicative of understanding it, as though we had comprehended every word. The oration finished, a large dish of the choice dog's flesh was set before us, and signs were made to us to eat. Having learned not to be delicate or disobliging to our savage host, we fell to work upon the ribs of the domestic barkers. When we had eaten to satisfaction, the chief arose, and puffing out his naked belly, and striking it with his hand, very significantly inquired by this sign, if we had eaten enough? When we had answered in the affirmative, by our mode of making signs, he then began to enquire of us, as we understood it, who we were, and from whence we came, and what was our business in that country? All this we interpreted, and replied to by signs as significant as we could imagine. He continued to enquire of us by signs, if we had met with no misfortunes on our journey, calling over the names of several Indian tribes in that part of the country, among which we distinctly recognized the name of the Umeas? When he mentioned this name, it was with such a lowering brow and fierce countenance as indicated clearly that he was at war with them. We responded to these marks of dislike by an equal show of detestation by making the gesture of seeming desirous to shoot at them, and with the bitterest look of anger that we could assume; making him understand that they had stolen our horses. He made signs of intelligence that he comprehended us, and made us sensible of his deep hatred, by giving us to understand that they had killed many of his people, and taken many more prisoners; and that he had retaliated by killing and taking as many Umeas. He pointed at the same time to two small children, and exclaimed Umea! We [148] pointed at them with our guns, and gave him to understand, that we had killed two of them. Some of our people had brought their scalps along. We gave them to him, and he, looking first towards us, and then fiercely at them, seemed to ask if these were the scalps of his enemies? To which we replied, yes.—He then seized the hair of the scalps with his teeth, and shook them, precisely as I have seen a dog any small game that it had killed. He then gave such a yell of delight, as collected all his people round him in a moment, and such rejoicing, yelling, and dancing ensued from both men and women, as I shall forbear to attempt to describe. Their deportment on this occasion was in fact much nearer bestial than human. They would leave the dance round the scalps in turn, to come and caress us, and then return and resume their dance.

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

The remainder of this day and the ensuing night passed in being in some sense compelled to witness this spectacle. In the morning of the 28th, when we brought in the contents of our traps, we found we had taken twenty-eight beavers. When my father enquired this morning anew for the direction of the Spanish settlements, and how far they were distant, we could make out from the signs of the chief no information more exact than this. He still pointed to the west, and then back at us.—He then made a very tolerable imitation of the rolling and breaking of the surf on the sea shore. Below he drew a cow and a sheep. From this we were satisfied that there were Spanish settlements west of us; and our conclusion was, that they could not be very distant.

At mid-day we bade these friendly Indians farewell, and resumed our slow progress of floating slowly down the stream, still setting our traps, whenever we found any indications of beavers. We met with no striking incident, and experienced no molestation until January 1st, 1828. On this day we once more received a shower of arrows from about fifty Indians of a tribe called Pipi, of whom we were cautioned to beware by the friendly Indians we had last left. I forgot at the time to mention the name of that people, when speaking of them, and [149] repeat it now. It is Cocopa. When the Pipi fired upon us, we were floating near the middle of the river. We immediately commenced pulling for the opposite shore, and were soon out of the reach of their arrows, without any individual having been wounded. As soon as our crafts touched the shore, we sprang upon the bank, took fair aim, and showed them the difference between their weapons and ours, by levelling six of them. The remainder fell flat, and began to dodge and skulk on all fours, as though the heavens had been loaded with thunder and mill stones, which were about to rain on them from the clouds.

We re-loaded our guns, and rowed over to the opposite, and now deserted shore. The fallen lay on the sand beach, some of them not yet dead. We found twenty three bows and the complement of arrows, most of them belonging to the fugitives. The bows are six feet in length, and made of a very tough and elastic kind of wood, which the Spaniards call Tarnio. They polish them down by rubbing them on a rough rock. The arrows are formed of a reed grass, and of the same length with their bows, with a foot of hard wood stuck in the end of the cavity of the reed, and a flint spike fitted on the end of it.—They have very large and erect forms, and black skins. Their long black hair floats in tresses down their backs, and to the termination of each tress is fastened a snail shell. In other respects their dress consists of their birth-day suit; in other words, they are perfectly naked. The river seems here to run upon a high ridge; for we can see from our crafts a great distance back into the country, which is thickly covered with musquito and other low and scrubby trees. The land is exceedingly marshy, and is the resort of numerous flocks of swans, and blue cranes. The raccoons are in such numbers, that they cause us to lose a great many beavers, by getting into our traps and being taken instead of the true game. They annoy us too by their squalling when they are taken.

From the junction of the two rivers to this place, I judge to be about a hundred miles. We find the climate exceedingly warm, [150] and the beaver fur, in accommodation to the climate, is becoming short. We conclude, in consequence, that our trapping is becoming of less importance, and that it is our interest to push on faster to reach the settlements. A great many times every day we bring our crafts to shore, and go out to see if we cannot discover the tracks of horses and cattle. On the 18th, we first perceived that we had arrived on the back water of the tide; or rather we first attributed the deadness of the current to the entrance of some inundated river, swollen by the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

melting of the snow on the mountains. We puzzled our brains with some other theories, to account for the deadness of the current. This became so entirely still, that we began to rig our oars, concluding that instead of our hitherto easy progress of floating gently onward, we had henceforward to make our head-way down stream by dint of the machinery of our arms.

We soon were thoroughly enlightened in regard to the slackness of the water. It began to run down again, and with the rapidity of six miles an hour; that is, double the ordinary current of the stream. We were all much surprised, for though I had seen the water of the Pacific at Ymus, none of us had ever felt the influence of the tides, or been in a craft on the ocean waters before. People of the same tribe, upon which we had recently fired, stood upon the shore, and called loudly to us as we passed, to come to land, making signs to us, that the motion of the water would capsize our crafts. They showed a great desire that we might come to shore, we had no doubt, that they might rob and murder us. We preserved such a distance from them, as to be out of the reach of their arrows, and had no intention to fire upon them. Had we wished for a shot, they were quite within rifle distance. We floated on, having had a beautiful evening's run, and did not come to land, until late; we then pitched our camp on a low point of land, unconscious, from our inexperience of the fact, that the water would return, and run up stream again. We made our canoes fast to some small trees, and all lay down to sleep, except my father, who took the first watch. He soon aroused us, and called on us all [151] to prepare for a gust of wind, and a heavy rain, which he thought betokened by a rushing noise he heard.

We realized in a few moments, that it was the returning tide. Still, so strongly impressed were we, that a shower was approaching, that we made all the customary arrangements of preparation, by stretching our blankets to keep out the water from above. But our enemy assailed us from another quarter. Our camp was inundated from the river. We landsmen from the interior, and unaccustomed to such movements of the water, stood contemplating with astonishment the rush of the tide coming in from the sea, in conflict with the current of the river. At the point of conflict rose a high ridge of water, over which came the sea current, combing down like water over a mildam. We all sprang to our canoes, which the rush of the water had almost capsized, though we held the fasts with our hands. In twenty minutes the place where we lay asleep, and even our fire place was three feet under water, and our blankets were all afloat. We had some vague and general ideas of the nature of the tide, but its particular operations were as much unknown to us, as though we never had heard of it at all. In the consternation of our ignorance, we paddled our crafts, as well as we could, among the timber, not dreaming that in the course of a few hours, the water would fall again. As it was, we gathered up our floating blankets, got into our canoes, and held fast to the brushes, until the water fell again, leaving us and our canoes high and dry. We were now assailed by a new alarm, lest the Indians, taking advantage of this new position in which we were placed, would attack and murder us.

In such apprehensions we passed the night, until the morning shone upon us with a bright and beautiful sun, which enabled us to dry all our wet things, and re-animated us with the confidence which springs from the view of a bright firmament and a free and full survey of our case. When the tide returned we got into our crafts, and descended with it, still expecting to find Spanish settlements. We continued in this way to descend, when the tide ran out, until the 28th, when the surf came up the [152] river so strong that we saw in a moment, that our crafts could not live, if we floated them into this tumultuous commotion of the water.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

Here we were placed in a new position, not the least disheartening or trying, among the painful predicaments, in which fortune had placed us. The fierce billows shut us in from below, the river current from above, and murderous savages upon either hand on the shore. We had a rich cargo of furs, a little independence for each one of us, could we have disposed of them, as we had hoped, among the Spanish people, whom we expected to have found here. There were no such settlements.—Every side on which we looked offered an array of danger, famine and death. In this predicament, what were furs to us? Our first thought was to commit our furs to the waters, and attempt to escape with our lives. Our second resolve was to ascend the river as far as we could, bury our furs, and start on foot for some settlement. We saw that the chances were greatly against us, that we should perish in the attempt; for the country yielded little to subsist on, and was full of Indians who are to the last degree savage and murderous, and whom nothing can subdue to kindness and friendship. We had no idea of ever putting ourselves in their power, as long as one of us could fire a pistol, or draw a knife.

We now began to ascend with the tide, when it served us, and lay by when it ran down, until we arrived at the point where it ceased to flow. We then applied our oars, and with the help of setting-poles, and at times the aid of a cordelle, we stemmed the current at the rate of one, and sometimes two miles an hour, until the tenth of February, when we met a great rise of the river, and found the current so strong, that we had no power to stem it in any way. So we concluded to abandon our canoes, come to shore, bury our furs, and make our way across the peninsula to the coast of California, which we thought from the information of the Indians, could not be very distant.

On the 16th, we completed the burying of our furs, and started on foot with our packs on our backs. The contents of these [153] packs were two blankets for each man, a considerable quantity of dried beaver meat, and a rifle with the ammunition. Our first day's journey was through a country to the last degree trying to our strength and patience. It was through the river bottom, which was thick set with low, scrubby brush, interwoven with tall grass, vines and creepers. The making our way through these was excessively slavish and fatiguing. We had a single alleviation. There was plenty of fresh water to drink. We were so fatigued at night, that sleep was irresistible. The weather was warm, and we kindled no fire, through fear of the savages. We started on the morning of the 18th, all complaining much of stiffness and soreness of our limbs. We had been unused to walking for a great length of time; and this commencement was a rude experiment of resuming the habit. At two in the afternoon, we reached the edge of a large salt plain, which runs parallel with the river. Here we struck a north west course, and travelled the remainder of this hot and fatiguing day without finding any water. We began to suffer severely from thirst. The earth, also, was so loose and sandy, that at every step we sank up to our ankles, the sun beaming down a fierce radiance the while; which made it seem as if the heavens and the earth were on fire. Our tongues became so parched, that not a particle of moisture flowed into our mouths. In this miserable and forlorn condition, abandoned by strength, courage and hope, we found some little alleviation of our misery, when the blaze of the sun was gone, and the cool night enabled us to throw down our weary and exhausted bodies under its dewy shade.

We made an early start in the morning, and pushed on as men, as thirsty as we were, naturally would, in the hope of finding water, until two in the afternoon. What a sight of joy! I have no words to express our delight at the sight of a little lake before us. We sprang greedily to it. The

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

water was salt, too salt to be drank! Not the slightest indication of any other water course, or any omen of fresh water was any where in view. Far in the distance a snowcovered mountain glittered in the [154] sun, and on the opposite shore of this salt lake, and at a distance of three or four miles from it, rose some hills of considerable height. We thought that from the summit of these hills we might possibly discover some water. We gathered dry flags, of which there was a great abundance about us, and made a kind of raft, on which each one of us put his pack, and swam the lake, pushing the little rafts that carried our packs, before us. The lake is about two hundred yards wide, and contains a great variety of fish. In length the lake stretches north and south, bounded on each shore with high, level and well timbered land, though apparently affording no fresh water.

When we reached the west shore of the lake, we saw fresh Indian foot-prints in the sand. This assured us, that there was water at no great distance. One of our company and myself started and ascended the highest peak of the hills in our view. We were not long in descriing a smoke in the south, at the distance of about ten miles. This sight gave us great courage and hope; for we felt assured that there must be water between us and the Indian camp. In a moment we started back with a vigorous step, to inform our companions, who were resting themselves under the shade of a tree. The information re-animated them, as it had us. We all shouldered our packs with a degree of alacrity, and pushed on toward the smoke.—We arrived about three in the afternoon on a small mound, within a quarter of a mile of the Indians. We could distinctly number them, and found them between forty and fifty in number, and their women and children were with them.

Here again was anxious ground of debate, what course we should pursue? should we attempt the long and uncertain course of conciliation, before the accomplishment of which we might perish with thirst? or should we rush among them, and buy the delicious element which we had full in view, at the hazard of our lives? Men as thirsty as we were, would be likely to fix upon the latter alternative, and we did so. We examined our arms to see that we were prepared to attack, or repel, according to circumstances, determined to fire upon them, if they [155] showed either a disposition for fight, or to keep us from the water.

We were within a hundred and fifty yards of them before they perceived us. As soon as they saw us they all fled to the bushes, men, women and children, as though satan was behind them. We had no disposition to arrest them, but rushed forward to the water, and began to slake our burning thirst. My father immediately cautioned us against drinking too much, pointing out at the same time the hurtful consequences. But men have always proved themselves slow to resist their appetites at the command of their reason. Most of us overloaded our empty stomachs with water, and soon became as sick as death. After vomiting, however, we were relieved. My father told us that we had better stand to our arms; for that the Indians had probably only fled to hide their women and children, and prepare themselves to return and fight us.

Scarcely had he finished these remarks, when we discovered them bearing down upon us, painted as black as a thunder cloud, and yelling like so many fiends. Some of them were armed with clubs, some with bows and arrows. We all arranged ourselves to receive them, behind the top of a large fallen tree. When they were within rifle shot, we made signs to them to halt, or that otherwise we should fire upon them. They comprehended us, halted and ceased yelling, as though they wished to hear what we had to say. We made signs that we were friendly. At this they gazed in apparent confusion of thought, and seemed to be questioning each other, touching the meaning of our signs. These signs we continued to repeat. At length one of them called aloud in Spanish,

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

and asked us who we were? How delightful were these sounds! We answered Americans. They repeated the name, asking us if we were friendly and Christians? To these questions we made a ready affirmative. They then proposed a treaty with us. Nothing could be more agreeable to us. At the same time we perceived that only eight of their people came to us, and the remainder of their company kept back. These eight that seemed to be their chief [156] men, advanced to us, while the rest, with extreme anxiety painted upon their countenances, stood ready for action. We all sat down on the ground, and commenced talking. They enquired with great precision, who we were, whence we came, how we arrived here, what was our object, and whether we had met with any misfortunes? We answered these questions to their satisfaction; and soon the pipe was lit, and we commenced smoking. They then dug a hole in the ground, in which they buried their war axe, and professed to deposite all ill feelings with it. The Indian of their number, who spoke the Spanish language, was a fugitive from the Mission of St. Catherine.— Threatened with the punishment of some misdemeanor, he had fled from the establishment.

After we had finished smoking, they asked us if the remainder of their number might not come and converse with us. This we objected to, unless they would bring their women and children with them. To this order they expressed great reluctance. This reluctance by no means tended to allay our previous jealousy of their pretended friendship. We asked them their reasons for being unwilling to bring their women and children? They answered promptly that they did not feel it safe to put their women and children in our power, until they were more acquainted with us. There seemed reason in this. We observed, that their men might come, provided they would leave their arms behind. To this they readily assented, and called out to their men to come on, leaving their arms behind. A part of them seemingly much delighted, threw down their arms and came on. The remainder equally dissatisfied, wheeled about, and walked moodily away.

The new comers sat down in a circle round us. The pipe was again lit and circled round. Again the terms of the treaty were repeated, and they all expressed their satisfaction with them. They observed, that their head chief was absent, at the distance of two day's journey to the south, that in three or four days he would come and see us, desiring us to remain with them until he should come. Nothing could be more opportune for [157] us, for we were all excessively fatigued, and needed a few days rest. After this they went and brought their women and children, who, like the other Indians we had seen, were all stark naked. At first they were excessively shy of us. This shyness wore off, and in the course of the day changed to an eager curiosity to examine us, and an admiration of our red flannel shirts, and the white skin under them; for little show of whiteness was to be seen in our faces. They soon ventured close to us, and with their own hands opened our bosoms, uttering exclamations of curiosity and admiration, especially on feeling the softness of our skins, in comparison of theirs. They certainly seemed to prefer our complexion to theirs, notwithstanding it had not the stamp of their fashion.

At length they made up to one of our companions, who was of a singularly light complexion, fair soft skin, and blue eyes. They wanted him to strip himself naked that they might explore him thoroughly, for they seemed to be doubtful of his being alike white in every part of his body. This, but as mildly as possible, he refused to do. They went off and brought a quantity of dried fish of excellent quality, and presented him. We persuaded him to oblige these curious and good natured women, by giving them a full view of his body. He was persuaded to strip to his skin. This delighted them, and they conversed and laughed among themselves, and they came one by

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

one and stood beside him; so as to compare their bodies with his. After this, as long as we staid, they were constantly occupied in bringing us cooked fish and the vegetables and roots on which they are accustomed to feed. On the 25th, the head chief came. He was a venerable looking man, whom I judged to be about fifty years old. His countenance was thoughtful and serious, and his hair a little gray. At his return his people greeted him with an acclamation of yells, that made the wild desert echo. The pipe was lit, and we all sat down by him and smoked again. He was a man of but few words, but of sound judgment. After the smoking was finished, he asked us the same questions which had been asked us before. We [158] made him similar answers, adding, that we wanted to travel to the Spanish settlements and purchase horses, upon which we might ride home to our own country, and that we would pay him well if he would send some of his men to guide us to those settlements. He asked us in reply, what we had to give him? We showed him our blankets, and he expressed himself delighted with them, observing at the same time, that he would have preferred to have had red cloth. On this we pulled off our red shirts and stripped them into small pieces like ribbons, and distributed them among the people. They tied the strips round their legs, arms and heads, and seemed as much overjoyed with these small tatters of worn red flannel, as we should have been, to have brought our furs to a good market among our own people. In giving away our red shirts, we gave away, what in this warm climate was to us wholly unnecessary. To carry our blankets on our backs was a useless burden. We gave two of them to the chief. The two guides that he was to send with us we were to pay after our arrival at the Spanish settlements. These points of contract between us were settled to the mutual satisfaction of all.

We started on the 26th, with our two guides, neither of whom could speak Spanish, and of course we had nothing to do but follow them in silence. We struck off a south west course, which led in the direction of the snow covered mountain, which still loomed up in its brightness before us. Our guides made signs that we should arrive at the foot about midnight, though the distance appeared to us to be too great to be travelled over in so short a time. We were yet to learn, that we should find no water, until we drank that of the melted snow. We perceived, however, that their travelling gait, worn as we were, was more rapid than ours. We pushed on as fast as we could a league further, when we were impeded by a high hill in our way, which was about another league to the summit, and very precipitous and steep. When we reached the top of it we were much exhausted, and began to be thirsty. We could then see the arid salt plain stretching all the way from the foot of this hill to the snow covered mountains.

[159] We thought it inexpedient to enquire of our guides, if there was no water to be found between us and the mountain. It appeared but too probable, that such was the fact. To know it to a certainty, would only tend to unnerve and dishearten us. If there was any, we were aware that we should reach it by travelling no more distance than as if we knew the fact. We found it best to encourage the little hope that remained, and hurried on through the drifted sand, in which we sank up to our ankles at every step. The cloudless sun poured such a blaze upon it, that by the scorching of our feet, it might have seemed almost hot enough to roast eggs in. What with the fierce sun and the scorching sand, and our extreme fatigue, the air seemed soon to have extracted every particle of moisture from our bodies. In this condition we marched on until nearly the middle of the day, without descrying any indication of water in any quarter. A small shrubby tree stood in our way, affording a tolerable shade. We laid ourselves down to get a few minutes rest. The Indians sternly beckoned us to be up and onward, now for the first time clearly explaining to us, that there

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

was no water until we reached the mountains in view. This unseasonable and yet necessary information, extinguished the last remainder of our hope, and we openly expressed our fears that we should none of us ever reach it.

We attempted to chew tobacco. It would raise no moisture. We took our bullets in our mouths, and moved them round to create a moisture, to relieve our parched throats. We had travelled but a little farther before our tongues had become so dry and swollen, that we could scarcely speak so as to be understood. In this extremity of nature, we should, perhaps, have sunk voluntarily, had not the relief been still in view on the sides of the snow covered mountains. We resorted to one expedient to moisten our lips, tongue and throat, disgusting to relate, and still more disgusting to adopt. In such predicaments it has been found, that nature disburdens people of all conditions of ceremony and disgust. Every thing bends to the devouring thirst, and the love of life. The application of this [160] hot and salt liquid seemed rather to enrage than appease the torturing appetite. Though it offered such a semblance of what would satisfy thirst, that we economized every particle. Our amiable Dutchman was of a sweetness of temper, that was never ruffled, and a calmness and patience that appeared proof against all events. At another time, what laughter would have circulated through our camp, to hear him make merry of this expedient! As it was, even in this horrible condition, a faint smile circulated through our company, as he discussed his substitute for drink. 'Vell, mine poys, dis vater of mein ish more hotter as hell, und as dick as boudden, und more zalter as de zeas. I can't drink him. For Cod's sake, gif me some of yours, dat is more tinner.' Having availed ourselves to the utmost of this terrible expedient, we marched on in company a few miles further. Two of our companions here gave out, and lay down under the shade of a bush. Their tongues were so swollen, and their eyes so sunk in their heads, that they were a spectacle to behold. We were scarcely able, from the condition of our own mouths, to bid them an articulate farewell. We never expected to see them again, and none of us had much hope of ever reaching the mountain, which still raised its white summit at a great distance from us. It was with difficulty that we were enabled to advance one foot before the other. Our limbs, our powers, even our very resolutions seemed palsied. A circumstance that added to our distress, was the excessive and dazzling brightness of the sun's rays, so reflected in our eyes from the white sand that we were scarcely able to see our way before us, or in what direction to follow our guides. They, accustomed to go naked, and to traverse these burning deserts, and be unaffected by such trials, appeared to stand the heat and drought, like camels on the Arabian sands. They, however, tried by their looks and gestures to encourage us, and induce us to quicken our pace. But it was to no purpose. However, we still kept moving onward, and had gained a few miles more, when night brought us shelter at least from the insupportable radiance of the sun, and something of coolness and moisture.

[161] But it was so dark, that neither we or our guides could discover the course. We stopped, and made a large fire, that our companions, if yet living, and able to move, might see where we were, and how to direct their own course to reach us. We also fired some guns, which, to our great relief and pleasure, they answered by firing off theirs. We still repeated firing guns at intervals, until they came up with us. They supposed that we had found water, which invigorated their spirits to such a degree, that it aroused them to the effort they had made. When they had arrived, and found that we had reached no water, they appeared to be angry, and to complain that we had disturbed their repose with false hopes, and had hindered their dying in peace. One of them in the recklessness of despair, drew from his package a small phial, half full of laudanum, and drank it

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

off, I suppose in the hope of sleeping himself quietly to death. We all expected it would have that effect. On the contrary, in a few moments he was exhilarated, like a man in a state of intoxication. He was full of talk, and laughter, and gaiety of heart. He observed, that he had taken it in hopes that it would put him to sleep, never to wake again, but that in fact, it had made him as well, and as fresh, as in the morning when he started; but that if he had imagined that it would prove such a sovereign remedy for thirst, he would cheerfully have shared it with us. We scraped down beneath the burning surface of the sand, until we reached the earth that was a little cool. We then stripped off all our clothing and lay down. Our two Indians, also lay down beside us, covering themselves with their blankets. My father bade me lay on the edge of one of their blankets, so that they could not get up without awakening me. He was fearful that they would arise, and fly from us in the night. I implicitly conformed to my father's wish, for had this event happened, we should all undoubtedly have perished. But the Indians appear to have meditated no such expedient, at any rate, they lay quiet until morning.

As soon as there was light enough to enable us to travel we started, much refreshed by the coolness of the night, and the [162] sleep we had taken. We began our morning march with renewed alacrity. At about ten in the forenoon we arrived at the foot of a sand hill about a half a mile in height, and very steep. The side was composed of loose sand, which gave way under our feet, so that our advancing foot steps would slide back to their former places. This soon exhausted our little remaining strength; though we still made many an unavailing effort to ascend. The sun was now so high, as to beam upon us with the same insufferable radiance of yesterday. The air which we inhaled, seemed to scald our lungs. We at length concluded to travel towards the north, to reach, if we might, some point where the hill was not so steep to ascend. At two in the afternoon we found a place that was neither so steep nor so high, and we determined here to attempt to cross the hill. With great exertions and infinite difficulty, a part of us gained the summit of the hill; but my father and another of our company, somewhat advanced in years, gave out below, though they made the most persevering efforts to reach the summit of the hill with the rest. Age had stiffened their joints, and laid his palsy hand upon their once active limbs, and vigorous frames. They could endure this dreadful journey no longer. They had become so exhausted by fruitless efforts to climb the hill, that they could no longer drag one foot after the other. They had each so completely abandoned the hope of ever reaching the water, or even gaining the summit of the hill, that they threw themselves on the ground, apparently convinced of their fate, and resigned to die. I instantly determined to remain with my father, be it for life or death. To this determination he would by no means consent, as he remarked it would bring my destruction, without its availing him. On the contrary, he insisted, that I should go on with the rest, and if I found any water near at hand, that I should return with my powder horn full. In this way he assured me, I might be instrumental in saving my own life, and saving him at the same time. To this I consented, and with much fatigue gained the summit of the hill, where my companions were seated waiting for us. They seemed undetermined, [163] whether to advance onward, or wait for my father, until I related his determination. My purpose was to proceed onward only so far, as that, if the Almighty should enable us to reach water, I might be able to return with a powder horn full to him and Mr. Slover, (for that was the name of the elderly companion that remained with him.) This resolution was agreed to by all, as a proper one. Being satisfied by our consciences as well as by the reasoning of my father and his companion, that we could render them no service by

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

remaining with them, except to increase their sufferings by a view of ours; and aware, that every moment was precious, we pushed on once more for the mountain. Having descended this hill, we ascended another of the same wearying ascent, and sandy character with the former. We toiled on to the top of it. The Eternal Power, who hears the ravens when they cry, and provideth springs in the wilderness, had had mercy upon us! Imagine my joy at seeing a clear, beautiful running stream of water, just below us at the foot of the hill! Such a blissful sight I had never seen before, and never expect to see again. We all ran down to it, and fell to drinking. In a few moments nothing was to be heard among us, but vomiting and groaning. Notwithstanding our mutual charges to be cautious, we had overcharged our parched stomachs with this cold snow water.

Notwithstanding I was sick myself, I emptied my powder horn of its contents, filled it with water, and accompanied by one companion, who had also filled his powder horn, I returned towards my father and Mr. Slover, his exhausted companion, with a quick step. We found them in the same position in which we had left them, that is, stretched on the sand at full length, under the unclouded blaze of the sun, and both fast asleep; a sleep from which, but for our relief, I believe they would neither of them ever have awakened. Their lips were black, and their parched mouths wide open.

Their unmoving posture and their sunken eyes so resembled death, that I ran in a fright to my father, thinking him, for a moment, really dead. But he easily awakened, and drank the refreshing water. My companion [164] at the same time bestowed his horn of water upon Mr. Slover. In the course of an hour they were both able to climb the hill, and some time before dark we rejoined the remainder of our company. They had kindled a large fire, and all seemed in high spirits. As for our two Indians, they were singing, and dancing, as it seemed to us, in a sort of worship of thankfulness to the Great Spirit, who had led them through so much peril and toil to these refreshing waters. We roasted some of our beaver meat, and took food for the first time in forty-eight hours, that is to say, from the time we left our Indian friends, until we reached this water. Our Dutchman insisted that the plain over which we passed, should be named the devil's plain, for he insisted, that it was more hotter as hell, and that none but teyvils could live upon it. In fact, it seemed a more fitting abode for fiends, than any living thing that belongs to our world. During our passage across it, we saw not a single bird, nor the track of any quadruped, or in fact any thing that had life, not even a sprig, weed or grass blade, except a single shrubby tree, under which we found a little shade. This shrub, though of some height, resembled a prickly pear, and was covered thick with thorns. The prickly pears were in such abundance, that we were often, dazzled as our eyes were with the sun's brightness, puzzled to find a path so as neither to torment our feet or our bodies with the thorns of these hated natives of the burning sands. This very extensive plain, the Sahara of California, runs north and south, and is bounded on each side by high barren mountains, some of which are covered with perpetual snow.

On the 28th, we travelled up this creek about three miles, and killed a deer, which much delighted our two Indian guides. At this point we encamped for the night. Here are abundance of palm trees and live oaks and considerable of mascal. We remained until the 3d of March, when we marched up this creek, which heads to the south, forming a low gap in the mountain. On the 7th, we arrived at the point, and found some of the Christian Indians from the Mission of St. Catharine. They were roasting mascal and the tender inside heads of the [165] palm trees for food, which,

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

when prepared and cooked after their fashion, becomes a very agreeable food. From these Indians we learned that we were within four days' travel of the mission mentioned above.

Here we concluded to discharge our guides, and travel into the settlement with the Christian Indians. We gave them each a blanket, and they started back to their own people on the morning of the 8th. At the same time we commenced our journey with our new guides, and began to climb the mountain. This is so exceedingly lofty, as to require two days' travel and a half to gain its summit. During this ascent, I severely bruised my heel. We none of us wore any thing to shield our feet from the bare and sharp rocks, which composed almost the whole surface of this ascent, but thin deer skin moccasins. Obligated to walk on tip toe, and in extreme anguish, the severe fatigue of scrambling up sharp stones was any thing, rather than agreeable. But I summoned patience and courage to push on until the 12th. My leg then became so swollen and inflamed that it was out of my power to travel farther. The pain was so severe as to create fever. I lay myself down on the side of a sharp rock, resigning myself to my fate, and determined to make no effort to travel further, until I felt relieved. My companions all joined with my father, in encouraging me to rise, and make an effort to reach the mission, which they represented to be but three miles distant. It was out of the question for me to think of it, and they concluded to go to the settlement, and obtain a horse, and send out for me. I kindled me a fire, for I suffered severe chills. The Indians gave me the strictest caution against allowing myself to go to sleep in their absence. The reason they assigned for their caution was a substantial one. The grizzly bear, they said, was common on these mountains, and would attack and devour me, unless I kept on my guard. I paid little attention to their remarks at the time. But when they were gone, and I was left alone, I examined the priming, and picked the flints of my gun and pistol. I then lay down and slept, until sometime in the early part of the night, when [166] two Indians came out from the settlement, and informed me that the corporal of the guards at St. Catharines wished me to come in. Being feverish, stiff, sore and withal testy, I gave them and their corporal no very civil words. They said that the corporal only wanted me to come in, because he was afraid the grizzly bears would kill me. I asked them why they did not bring a horse for me? They informed me, that the Mission had none at disposal at that time, but that they would carry me on their backs. So I was obliged to avail myself of this strange conveyance, and mounted the back of one of them while the other carried my arms. In this way they carried me in, where I found my companions in a guard house. I was ordered to enter with them by a swarthy looking fellow, who resembled a negro, rather than a white.

I cannot describe the indignation I felt at this revolting breach of humanity to people in suffering, who had thrown themselves on the kindness and protection of these Spaniards. We related the reasons why we had come in after this manner. We showed them our passport, which certified to them, that we were neither robbers, murderers, nor spies. To all this their only reply was, how should they know whether we had come clandestinely, and with improper views, or not? Against this question, proposed by such people, all reasonings were thrown away.— The cowardly and worthless are naturally cruel. We were thrown completely in their power; and instead of that circumstance exciting any generous desires to console and relieve us, their only study seemed to be to vex, degrade, and torment us.

Here we remained a week, living on corn mush, which we received once a day; when a guard of soldiers came to conduct us from this place. This mission is situated in a valley, surrounded by high mountains, with beautiful streams of water flowing from them. The natives raise sufficient

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

corn and wheat to serve for the subsistence of the mission. The mission establishment is built in a quadrangular form; all the houses forming the quadrangle contiguous to each other; and one of the angles is a large church, adjoining which are the habitations of [167] the priests; though at this time there happened to be none belonging to this at home. The number of Indians belonging to the mission at this time, was about five hundred. They were destitute of stock, on account of its having been plundered from them by the free, wild Indians of the desert. The air is very cool and temperate, and hard frosts are not uncommon. This cool temperature of the atmosphere I suppose to be owing to the immediate proximity of the snowy mountains.

On the 18th, we started under the conduct of a file of soldiers, who led us two days' travel, over very high mountains, a south west course, to another mission, called St. Sebastian, situated near the sea coast, in a delightful valley, surrounded, like the other, by lofty mountains, the sides of which present magnificent views of the ocean. This mission contains six hundred souls. This mission establishment, though much richer and neater than the other, is, however, built on a precisely similar plan. Here they have rich vineyards, and raise a great variety of the fruits of almost all climates. They also raise their own supplies of grain, and have a tolerable abundance of stock, both of the larger and smaller kinds.

A serjeant has the whole military command. We found him of a dark and swarthy complexion, though a man of tolerable information. He seemed disposed to conduct towards us with some courtesy and kindness. He saluted us with politeness, conducted us to the guard house, and begged us to content ourselves, as well as we could, until he could make some more satisfactory arrangements for our comfort and convenience. To put him to the proof of his professed kindness, we told him that we were very hungry. They soon had a poor steer killed, that reeled as it walked, and seemed sinking by natural decay. A part of the blue flesh was put boiling in one pot, and a parcel of corn in the other. The whole process reminded me strongly of the arrangements which we make in Kentucky, to prepare a mess for a diseased cow. When this famous feast was cooked, we were marched forth into the yard, in great ceremony, to eat it. All the men, women and children clustered round us, and [168] stood staring at us while we were eating, as though they had been at a menagerie to see some wild and unknown animals.— When we were fairly seated to our pots, and began to discuss the contents, disgusted alike with the food, with them, and their behaviour, we could not forbear asking them whether they really took us to be human beings, or considered us as brutes? They looked at each other a moment, as if to reflect and frame an answer, and then replied coolly enough, that not being Christians, they considered us little superior to brutes. To this we replied, with a suitable mixture of indignation and scorn, that we considered ourselves better Christians than they were, and that if they did not give us something to eat more befitting men, we would take our guns, live where we pleased, and eat venison and other good things, where we chose. This was not mere bravado, for, to our astonishment, we were still in possession of our arms. We had made no resistance to their treating us as prisoners, as we considered them nothing more than petty and ignorant officers, whom we supposed to have conducted improperly, from being unacquainted with their duty. We were all confident, that as soon as intelligence of our arrival should reach the commanding officer of this station, and how we had been detained, and treated as prisoners, we should not only be released from prison, but recompensed for our detention.

This determination of ours appeared to alarm them. The information of our menaces, no doubt

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

with their own comments, soon reached the serjeant. He immediately came to see us, while we were yet at our pots, and enquired of us, what was our ground of complaint and dissatisfaction? We pointed to the pots, and asked him if he thought such food becoming the laws of hospitality to such people? He stepped up to the pots, and turning over the contents, and examining them with his fingers, enquired in an angry tone, who had served up such food to us? He added, that it was not fit to give a dog, and that he would punish those who had procured it. He comforted us, by assuring us that we should have something fit to eat cooked for us. We immediately returned quietly to the guard house. But a [169] short time ensued before he sent us a good dish of fat mutton, and some tortillas. This was precisely the thing our appetites craved, and we were not long in making a hearty meal. After we had fed to our satisfaction, he came to visit us, and interrogated us in what manner, and with what views we had visited the country? We went into clear, full and satisfactory details of information in regard to every thing that could have any interest to him, as an officer; and told him that our object was to purchase horses, on which we might return to our own country; and that we wished him to intercede in our behalf with the commander in chief, that we might have permission to purchase horses and mules among them, for this purpose. He promised to do this, and returned to his apartment.

The amount of his promise was, that he would reflect upon the subject, and in the course of four days write to his commander, from whom he might expect an answer in a fortnight.— When we sounded him as to the probability of such a request being granted, he answered with apparent conviction, that he had no doubt that it would be in our favor. As our hopes were intensely fixed upon this issue, we awaited this answer with great anxiety. The commander at this time was at the port of San Diego. During this period of our suspense, we had full liberty to hunt deer in the woods, and gather honey from the blossoms of the Mascal, which grows plentifully on the sea shore. Every thing in this strange and charming country being new, we were continually contemplating curiosities of every sort, which quieted our solicitude, and kept alive the interest of our attention.

We used to station ourselves on the high pinnacles of the cliffs, on which this vast sea pours its tides, and the retreating or advancing tide showed us the strange sea monsters of that ocean, such as seals, sea otters, sea elephants, whales, sharks, sword fish, and various other unshapely sea dwellers. Then we walked on the beach, and examined the infinite variety of sea shells, all new and strange to us.

Thus we amused ourselves, and strove to kill the time until the 20th, when the answer of the commander arrived, which [170] explained itself at once, by a guard of soldiers, with orders to conduct us to the port of San Diego, where he then resided. We were ordered to be in immediate readiness to start for that port. This gave us unmingled satisfaction, for we had an undoubting confidence, that when we should really have attained the presence of an officer whom we supposed a gentleman, and acting independently of the authority of others, he would make no difficulty in granting a request so reasonable as ours. We started on the 2d, guarded by sixteen soldiers and a corporal. They were all on horseback, and allowed us occasionally to ride, when they saw us much fatigued. Our first day's journey was a north course, over very rough mountains, and yet, notwithstanding this, we made twenty-five miles distance on our way.

At night we arrived at another mission, situated like the former, on a charming plain. The mission is called St. Thomas. These wise and holy men mean to make sure of the rich and pleasant things

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

of the earth, as well as the kingdom of heaven. They have large plantations, with splendid orchards and vineyards. The priest who presides over this establishment, told me that he had a thousand Indians under his care. During every week in the year, they kill thirty beeves for the subsistence of the mission. The hides and tallow they sell to vessels that visit their coast, in exchange for such goods as they need.

On the following morning, we started early down this valley, which led us to the sea shore, along which we travelled the remainder of the day. This beautiful plain skirts the sea shore, and extends back from it about four miles. This was literally covered with horses and cattle belonging to the mission. The eye was lost beyond this handsome plain in contemplating an immeasurable range of mountains, which we were told thronged with wild horses and cattle, which often descend from their mountains to the plains, and entice away the domesticated cattle with them. The wild oats and clover grow spontaneously, and in great luxuriance, and were now knee high. In the evening we arrived at the port of Todos Santos, and there passed the night. Early on the 23d, we marched on. This day we [171] travelled over some tracts that were very rough, and arrived at a mission situated immediately on the sea board, called St. Michael. Like the rest, it was surrounded with splendid orchards, vineyards and fields; and was, for soil, climate and position, all that could be wished. The old superintending priest of the establishment showed himself very friendly, and equally inquisitive. He invited us to sup with him, an invitation we should not be very likely to refuse. We sat down to a large table, elegantly furnished with various dishes of the country, all as usual highly seasoned. Above all, the supply of wines was various and abundant. The priest said grace at the close, when fire and cigars were brought in by the attendants, and we began to smoke. We sat and smoked, and drank wine, until 12 o'clock. The priest informed us that the population of his mission was twelve hundred souls, and the weekly consumption, fifty beeves, and a corresponding amount of grain. The mission possessed three thousand head of domesticated and tamed horses and mules. From the droves which I saw in the plains, I should not think this an extravagant estimation. In the morning he presented my father a saddle mule, which he accepted, and we started.

This day's travel still carried us directly along the verge of the sea shore, and over a plain equally rich and beautiful with that of the preceding day. We amused ourselves with noting the spouting of the huge whales, which seemed playing near the strand for our especial amusement. We saw other marine animals and curiosities to keep our interest in the journey alive. In the evening we arrived at a Ranch, called Buenos Aguos, or Good Water, where we encamped for the night. We started early on the 25th, purchasing a sheep of a shepherd, for which we paid him a knife. At this Ranch they kept thirty thousand head of sheep, belonging to the mission which we had left. We crossed a point of the mountain that made into the water's edge. On the opposite side of this mountain was another Ranch, where we staid the night. This Ranch is for the purposes of herding horses and cattle, of which [172] they have vast numbers. On the 26th, our plain lay outstretched before us as beautiful as ever. In the evening we came in sight of San Diego, the place where we were bound. In this port was one merchant vessel, which we were told was from the United States, the ship Franklin, of Boston. We had then arrived within about a league of the port. The corporal who had charge of us here, came and requested us to give up our arms, informing us, it was the customary request to all strangers; and that it was expected that our arms would be deposited in the guard house before we could speak with the commander, or general. We replied, that we

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

were both able and disposed to carry our arms to the guard house ourselves, and deposite them there if such was our pleasure, at our own choice. He replied that we could not be allowed to do this, for that we were considered as prisoners, and under his charge; and that he should become responsible in his own person, if he should allow us to appear before the general, bearing our own arms. This he spoke with a countenance of seriousness, which induced us to think that he desired no more in this request than the performance of his duty. We therefore gave him up our rifles, not thinking that this was the last time we should have the pleasure of shouldering these trusty friends. Having unburdened ourselves of our defence, we marched on again, and arrived, much fatigued, at the town at 3 o'clock in the evening. Our arms were stacked on the side of the guard house, and we threw our fatigued bodies as near them as we could, on the ground.

An officer was dispatched to the general to inform him of our arrival, and to know whether we could have an immediate audience or not? In a short time the officer returned with an answer for us, that we must remain where we were until morning, when the general would give us a hearing. We were still sanguine in seeing only omens of good. We forgot our past troubles, opened our bosom to hope, and resigned ourselves to profound sleep. It is true, innumerable droves of fleas performed their evolutions, and bit all their pleasure upon our bodies.—[173] But so entire was our repose, that we scarcely turned for the night. No dreams of what was in reserve for us the following day floated across our minds; though in the morning my body was as spotted as though I had the measles, and my shirt specked with innumerable stains of blood, let by the ingenious lancets of these same Spanish fleas.

On the 27th, at eight A. M., we were ushered into the general's office, with our hats in our hands, and he began his string of interrogations. The first question was, who we were? We answered, Americans. He proceeded to ask us, how we came on the coast, what was our object, and had we a passport? In answer to these questions we again went over the story of our misfortunes. We then gave him the passport which we had received from the governor of Santa Fe. He examined this instrument, and with a sinister and malicious smile, observed, that he believed nothing of all this, but considered us worse than thieves and murderers; in fact, that he held us to be spies for the old Spaniards, and that our business was to lurk about the country, that we might inspect the weak and defenceless points of the frontiers, and point them out to the Spaniards, in order that they might introduce their troops into the country; but that he would utterly detect us, and prevent our designs.— This last remark he uttered with a look of vengeance; and then reperused the passport, which he tore in pieces, saying, it was no passport, but a vile forgery of our own contrivance. Though amazed and confounded at such an unexpected charge, we firmly asserted our innocence in regard to any of the charges brought against us. We informed him that we were born and bred thorough and full blooded republicans; and that there was not a man of us who would not prefer to die, rather than to be the spies and instruments of the Spanish king, or any other king; and that but a few years since, we had all been engaged in fighting the forces of a king, allied with savages, and sent against the country of our home; and that on this very expedition we had been engaged in a great many battles with the Indians, hostile to his people, redeeming their captives, [174] and punishing their robberies and murders. In distress, and in want of every thing from the robbery of these hostile Indians, we had taken refuge in his country, and claimed its protection. We told him we considered it an unworthy return for such general deportment, and such particular services to their country, that we should be viewed as spies, and treated as prisoners. He stopped us

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

in the midst of our plea, apparently through fear that representations, which must have carried conviction to his prejudiced mind, might tend to soften his obdurate heart, and unnerve his purpose towards us. He told us he did not wish to hear any more of our long speeches, which he considered no better than lies; for that if we had been true and bona fide citizens of the United States, we should not have left our country without a passport, and the certificate of our chief magistrate. We replied that the laws of our country did not require that honest, common citizens, should carry passports; that it did not interfere with the individual business and pursuits of private individuals; that such persons went abroad and returned unnoted by the government; and in all well regulated states, sufficiently protected by the proof that they were citizens of the United States; but that there were in our country two classes of people, for whom passports were necessary, slaves and soldiers; that for the slave it was necessary to have one, to certify that he was travelling with the knowledge and permission of his master; and for the soldier, to show that he was on furlough, or otherwise abroad with the permission of his officer. As we spoke this with emphasis, and firmness, he told us that he had had enough of our falsehoods, and begged us to be quiet. He ordered us to be remanded to our prison, and was immediately obeyed.

As we were driven out of his office, my father, who was exceedingly exasperated, observed, 'my boys, as soon as we arrive in the guard house, let us seize our arms and redress ourselves, or die in the attempt; for it seems to me that these scoundrels mean to murder us.' We all unanimously agreed to this advice, and walked back with a willing mind, and an alert step. [175] But our last hope of redressing ourselves, and obtaining our liberty was soon extinguished. On entering the guard house, our arms had been removed we knew not where. They had even the impudence to search our persons and to take from us even our pocket knives. The orderly sergeant then told us, that he was under the necessity of placing us in separate apartments. This last declaration seemed the death stroke to us all. Affliction and mutual suffering and danger had endeared us to each other, and this separation seemed like rending our hearts. Overcome by the suddenness of the blow, I threw my arms round the neck of my father, burst into tears, and exclaimed, 'that I foresaw, that the parting would be forever.' Though my father seemed subdued, and absorbed in meditation, he reproved this expression of my feelings, as weak and unmanly. The sergeant having observed my grief, asked me, pointing to him, if that was my father? When he learned that it was, he showed himself in some degree affected, and remarked, that it seemed cruel to separate father and child, and that he would go and explain the relationship to the general, and see if he could not obtain permission for us to remain together. On this he set off for the general's office, leaving me in the agony of suspense, and the rest gazing at each other in mute consternation and astonishment. The sergeant returned, informing me, that instead of being softened, the general had only been exasperated, and had in nothing relaxed his orders, which were, that we must immediately be put in separate confinement. He accordingly ordered some soldiers to assist in locking us up. We embraced each other, and followed our conductors to our separate prisons. I can affirm, that I had only wished to live, to sustain the increasing age and infirmities of my father. When I shook hands with him, and we were torn in sunder, I will say nothing of my feelings, for words would have no power to describe them. As I entered my desolate apartment, the sergeant seemed really affected, and assured me, that neither my companions nor myself should suffer any want of food or drink, as far as he could prevent it, for that he did not consider us guilty, nor worthy of such treatment. [176] My prison was a cell eight or ten feet square, with walls and floor of stone. A door with iron

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

bars an inch square crossed over each other, like the bars of window sashes, and it grated on its iron hinges, as it opened to receive me. Over the external front of this prison was inscribed in capital letters *Destinacion de la Cattivo*. Our blankets were given us to lie upon. My father had a small package of medicines which he gave in charge to the sergeant, binding him on his word of honor not to part with it to any one. My door was locked, and I was left to reflect upon our position and my past misfortunes; and to survey the dreary walls of my prison. Here, I thought, was my everlasting abode. Liberty is dear to every one, but doubly dear to one, who had been from infancy accustomed to free range, and to be guided by his own Will. Put a man, who has ranged the prairies, and exulted in the wilderness, as I have for years, in a prison, to let him have a full taste of the blessings of freedom, and the horror of shackles and confinement! I passed the remainder of the day in fierce walking backwards and forwards over my stone floor, with no object to contemplate, but my swarthy sentinel, through the grate. He seemed to be true to his office, and fitly selected for his business, for I thought I saw him look at me through the grate with the natural exultation and joy of a bad and malicious heart in the view of misery.

When the darkness of night came to this dreary place, it was the darkness of the grave. Every ray of light was extinct. I spread my blankets on the stone floor, in hopes at least to find, for a few hours, in the oblivion of sleep, some repose from the agitation of my thoughts. But in this hope I was disappointed. With every other friend and solace, sleep too, fled from me. My active mind ranged every where, and returned only to unavailing efforts to imagine the condition and feelings of my father and what would be our ultimate fate. I shut my eyes by an effort, but nature would have her way, and the eyelids would not close.

At length a glimmer of daylight, through my grate, relieved this long and painful effort to sleep. I arose, went to my grate, [177] and took all possible survey of what I could see. Directly in front of it was the door of the general's office, and he was standing in it. I gazed on him awhile. Ah! that I had had but my trusty rifle well charged to my face! Could I but have had the pleasure of that single shot, I think I would have been willing to have purchased it by my life. But wishes are not rifle balls, and will not kill.

The church bell told eight in the morning. The drum rolled. A soldier came, and handed me in something to eat. It proved to be dried beans and corn cooked with rancid tallow! The contents were about a pint. I took it up, and brought it within the reach of my nostrils, and sat it down in unconquerable loathing. When the soldier returned in the evening to bring me more, I handed him my morning ration untasted and just as it was. He asked me in a gruff tone why I had not eaten it? I told him the smell of it was enough, and that I could not eat it. He threw the contents of the dish in my face, muttering something which amounted to saying, that it was good enough for such a brute as I was. To this I answered, that if being a brute gave claims upon that dish, I thought he had best eat it himself. On this he flung away in a passion, and returned no more that night, for which I was not sorry. Had the food even been fit to eat, my thoughts were too dark and my mind too much agitated to allow me appetite. In fact, I felt myself becoming sick.

At night I was visited by the serjeant, who asked me about my health and spirits in a tone and manner, that indicated real kindness of feeling. I trusted in the reality of his sympathy, and told him, I was not well. He then questioned me, if I had eaten any thing? I told him no, and explained to him the double reason, why I had eaten nothing. He answered that he would remove one of the causes, by sending me something good. I then asked him if he had seen my father? He said he

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

had, though he had been unable to hold any conversation with him, for want of his understanding Spanish. I thanked him for this manifestation of friendship, and he left me. In a [178] short time he returned with two well cooked and seasoned dishes. I begged him to take it first to my father, and when he had eaten what he wished, he might bring the remainder to me, and I would share it among my companions. He assured me that my father was served with the same kind of food, and that my companions should not be forgotten in the distribution. While I was eating, he remained with me, and asked me, if I had a mother, and brothers, and sisters in my own country? My heart was full, as I answered him. He proceeded to question me, how long it had been since I had seen them or heard from them, and in what I had been occupied, during my long absence from my country? My misfortunes appeared to affect him. When I had finished eating, he enquired how I had passed the preceding night? In all his questions, he displayed true humanity and tenderness of heart. When he left me, he affectionately wished me good night. This night passed as sleepless and uncomfortable as the preceding one. Next day the kind serjeant brought my dinner again, though from anxiety and growing indisposition I was unable to eat. At night he came again with my supper, and to my surprise accompanied by his sister, a young lady of great personal beauty. Her first enquiry was that of a kind and affectionate nature, and concerned my father. She enquired about my age, and all the circumstances that induced me to leave my country? I took leave to intimate in my answer, my extreme anxiety to see my relatives, and return to my country, and in particular, that it was like depriving me of life, in this strange land, and in prison, to separate me from my old and infirm father. She assured me that she would pray for our salvation, and attempt to intercede with the general in our behalf, and that while we remained in prison, she would allow us to suffer nothing, which her power, means or influence could supply. She then wished me a good night, and departed. I know not what is the influence of the ministration of a kind spirit, like hers, but this night my sleep was sound and dreamless.

She frequently repeated these kind visits, and redeemed to the letter all her pledges of kindness. For I suffered for nothing [179] in regard to food or drink. A bed was provided for me, and even a change of clothing. This undeviating kindness greatly endeared her to me. About this time, Captain John Bradshaw, of the ship Franklin, and Rufus Perkins, his supercargo, asked leave of the general, to come and visit us. The general denied them. But Captain Bradshaw, like a true hearted American, disregarded the little brief authority of this miserable republican despot, and fearless of danger and the consequences, came to see me without leave. When I spoke to him about our buried furs, he asked me about the chances and the means we had to bring them in? And whether we were disposed to make the effort, and if we succeeded, to sell them to him? The prisoners, as he separately applied to them, one and an assured him, that nothing would give them more pleasure. He assured us, that he would leave nothing in his power undone, in making efforts to deliver us from our confinement. We thanked him for this proffered friendship, and he departed.

His first efforts in our favor were directed to gaining the friendship of the general, in order to soften his feelings in regard to us. But in this he entirely failed. He then adopted an innocent stratagem, which was more successful. He informed the general that he had business with a Spanish merchant in port, which he could not transact for want of some one who could speak the language fluently, who would interpret for him, that he understood that one of the American prisoners could speak the language perfectly well, and that if he would allow that prisoner to come and interpret for him a few hours, he would bind himself in a bond to any amount, that the prisoner

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

at the expiration of his services, would return voluntarily to his prison. To this the general gave his consent. Captain Bradshaw came to my prison, and I was permitted by the general's order to leave my prison.

When I went abroad, Captain Bradshaw conducted me to the office of an old captain, who had charge of the arms. We begged him to intercede with the general to obtain his permission, that we might go out and bring in our furs. We informed [180] him, that Captain Bradshaw and the supercargo, Rufus Perkins, would be our security in any amount, that the general was disposed to name, that we would return, and surrender ourselves to him, at the close of the expedition. He was at once satisfied of our honor and integrity, and that we were by no means those spies, whom the general took us for, and he promised to use all his influence with the general, to persuade him to dispatch us for our furs. We assured him, that in addition to our other proofs, that we were bonafide Americans, and true republicans, we had documents under the proper signature of the President of the United States, which we hoped, would be sufficient to satisfy him, and every one, who we were. He asked to see those papers, of which I spoke. I told him they were my father's commission of first lieutenant in the ranging service, during the late war with England, and an honorable discharge at the close of the war. He promised to communicate this information to the general, and departed, proposing to return in half an hour. During this interval, we walked to my father's cell, and I had the satisfaction of speaking with him through the grates. He asked me if I had been visited by a beautiful young lady? When I assented, he replied, that this charming young woman, as a ministering angel, had also visited his cell with every sort of kindness and relief, which she had extended to each one of our companions. I had the satisfaction afterwards, of speaking with each one of our companions. I need not add, how much delighted we were to speak with one another once more. From these visits I returned to the office of the captain of arms. We found him waiting with the most painful intelligence. Nothing could move the general, to allow us to go out and bring in our furs. He expressed a wish, notwithstanding, to see the commission of which I had spoken, and that I should return to my cell. I gave the papers to Captain Bradshaw, requesting him to return them to my father, after the general should have examined them. This he promised, and I took my leave of him, returning to my dreary prison, less buoyant and more completely desponding of my liberty than ever.

[181] In a few moments Captain Bradshaw and Perkins came again to my cell, and said that the general had no faith in our papers, and could not be softened by any entreaty, to give us our liberty. As he said this, the sentinel came up, and stopped him short in his conversation, and ordered them off affirming, that it was the general's express command, that he should not be allowed to see or speak with me again. They however pledged their honor as they left me, that whenever an occasion offered, they would yield us all the assistance in their power, and wishing me better fortune, they departed.

A fortnight elapsed in this miserable prison, during which I had no other consolation, than the visits of the young lady, and even these, such was the strictness of the general's orders, were like all angel visits, few and far between. At length a note was presented me by the serjeant, from my father. What a note! I appeal to the heart of every good son to understand what passed within me. This note was written on a piece of paste board torn from his hat. The characters were almost illegible, for they were written with a stick, and the ink was blood, drawn from his aged veins! He informed me that he was very ill, and without any hope of recovery, that he had but one wish on

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

this side the grave, and that was, to see me once more before he died. He begged me to spare no entreaties, that the general would grant me permission to come and see him a last time; but, that if this permission could not be obtained, to be assured, that he loved me, and remembered me affectionately, in death.

This letter pierced me to the heart. O, could I have flown through my prison walls! Had I possessed the strength of the giants, how soon would I have levelled them, even had I drawn down destruction on my own head in doing it. But I could own nothing in my favour, but a fierce and self devouring will. In hopes that the heart of the general was not all adamant, I entreated the serjeant to go and inform him of my father's illness, and his desire to see me once more, and to try to gain permission that I might have leave to attend upon him, or if that might not be, to visit him once more, according to his wish. He went [182] in compliance with my entreaties, and in a few minutes returned with a dejected countenance, from which I at once inferred what was the fate of my application. His voice faltered as he related that the general absolutely refused this request. Oh God! of what stuff are some hearts made! and this was a republican officer! What nameless tortures and miseries do not Americans suffer in foreign climes from those miserable despots who first injure and oppress, and then hate the victims of their oppression, as judging their hearts by their own, and thinking that their victims must be full of purposes of revenge.

The honest and kind hearted serjeant hesitated not to express manly and natural indignation, in view of this inhuman brutality of the general, in refusing a favor, called for by the simplest dictates of humanity, a favor too, in the granting which there could be neither difficulty nor danger. All he could do in the case he promised to do, which was to see that my father should want no sort of nourishment, or aid which he could render him. I tried to thank him, but my case was not of a kind to be alleviated by this sort of consolation. When I thought of our expectations of relief, when we threw ourselves in the power of these vile people, when I took into view our innocence of even the suspicion of a charge that could be brought against us, when I thought of their duplicity of disarming us, and their infamous oppression as soon as we were in their power, and more than all, when I thought of this last brutal cruelty and insult, my whole heart and nature rose in one mingled feeling of rage, wounded affection, and the indignation of despair. The image of my venerable father, suffering and dying unsolaced and unrelieved, and with not a person, who spoke his language, to close his eyes, and I so near him, was before me wherever I turned my eyes.

What a horrible night ensued at the close of this day! As the light was fading, the excellent young lady presented herself at my grate. She repeated all that her brother had related to me, in regard to the cruel refusal of the general. While she discussed this subject, the tears fell from her eyes, and I had the consolation to know, that one person at least felt real sympathy [183] for my distress. She added, in faltering tones, that she was well aware that in a case like this words were of but little avail, but that I might be assured of the kindest attention to all the wants of my father, that she could relieve; and that if it was the will of God, to take him out of this world of sorrow and change, that he should be buried decently and as if he were her own father. Judge what I must have felt towards this noble minded and kind hearted young lady! As she withdrew, my prayers at this time were hearty, if never before, that God would reward her a thousand fold in all good things, for her sympathy with our sufferings.

Thus passed away these days of agony and suspense. The young lady visited me as often as it was understood the general's orders would permit, that is, once in two or three days., bringing

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

me food and drink, of which in the present state of my thoughts, I had little need. In fact, I had become so emaciated and feeble that I could hardly travel across my prison floor. But no grief arrests the flight of time, and the twenty-fourth of April came, in which the serjeant visited me and in a manner of mingled kindness and firmness told me that my father was no more. At these tidings, simple truth calls on me to declare, my heart felt relieved. I am a hunter, and not a person to analyze the feelings of poor human nature. My father now was gone, gone where the voice of the oppressor is no more heard. Since the death of my mother, I have reason to think, that life had been to him one long burden. He had been set free from it all, and set free too, from the cruelty of this vile people, and the still viler general. I felt weak, and exhausted myself, and I expected to rejoin him in a few days, never to be separated from him. Life was a burden of which I longed to be relieved.

After I had given vent to natural feelings on this occasion, the serjeant asked me touching the manner in which we bury our dead in our country? I informed him. He then observed that the reason why he asked that question was, that his sister wished, that my father's body might be interred in a manner conformable to my wishes. I could only thank him for all this [184] kindness and humanity to me, as he left me. I passed the remainder of this day in the indulgence of such reflections as I have no wish to describe, even had I the power.

At night the serjeant's sister again visited my prison. She seemed neither able nor disposed to enter upon the subject before us, and reluctant to call up the circumstance of my father's death to my thoughts. At length she presented me with a complete suit of black, and begged that I would wear it on the following day at my father's funeral. I observed, in astonishment, that she could not doubt what a melancholy satisfaction it would be to me to follow the remains of my father to the grave, but that between me and that satisfaction were the walls of my prison, through which I could not break. She remarked, that by dint of importunity, she had prevailed on the general to allow me to attend the funeral. The fair young lady then undertook the duties of minister and philosopher, counselling me not to grieve for that, for which there is no remedy, proving to me that it was the will of God, that he should thus obtain deliverance from prison, and all the evils of this transitory life, and abundance of common place language of this sort, very similar to what is held in my own country on like occasions. Having finished her kindly intended chapter of consolations, she wished me a good night and left me to my own thoughts. The night I spent in walking the floor of my prison.

At eight in the morning, a file of six soldiers appeared at the door of my prison. It was opened, and I once more breathed the fresh air! The earth and the sky seemed a new region.— The glare of light dazzled my eyes, and dizzied my head. I reeled as I walked. A lieutenant conducted the ceremonies: and when I arrived at the grave he ordered the crowd to give way, that I might see the coffin let down, and the grave filled. I advanced to the edge of the grave, and caught a glimpse of the coffin that contained the remains of the brave hunter and ranger. The coffin was covered with black. No prayers were said. I had scarce time to draw a second breath, before the grave was half filled with earth. I was led back to my prison, [185] the young lady walking by my side in tears. I would gladly have found relief for my own oppressed heart in tears, if they would have flowed. But the sources were dried, and tears would not come to my relief. When I arrived at the prison, such a horrid revulsion came over me at the thoughts of entering that dreary place again, that I am sure I should have preferred to have been shot, rather than enter it again. But I recovered my-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

self by reflecting that my health was rapidly declining, and that I should be able in a short time to escape from the oppressor and the prison walls, and rejoin my father, and be at rest.

This thought composed me, and I heard the key turn upon me with a calm and tranquilized mind. I lay down upon my bed, and passed many hours in the oblivion of sleep. The customary habit of sleep during the night returned to me; and my strength and appetite began to return with it. I felt an irresistible propensity to resume my former habit of smoking. I named my inclination to my friend the serjeant. He was kind enough to furnish me cigars. This was a new resource to aid me in killing the time. Apart from the soothing sensation of smoking, I amused myself for hours in watching the curling of my smoke from the cigar. Those who have always been free, cannot imagine the corroding torments of thoughts preying upon the bosom of the prisoner, who has neither friend to converse with, books to read, or occupation to fill his hours.

On the 27th of June, Captain Bradshaw's vessel was seized, on the charge of smuggling. There were other American vessels in this port at the same time, the names of the captains of which, as far as I can recollect, were Seth Rogers, Aaron W. Williams, and H. Cunningham. These gentlemen, jointly with their supercargoes, sent me five ounces of gold, advising me to keep this money secret from the knowledge of the Spaniards, and preserve it as a resource for my companions and myself, in case of emergencies.

About this time the general received several packages of letters in English, the contents of which, not understanding the [186] language, he could not make out. There was no regular translator at hand; and he sent orders to the serjeant to have me conducted to the office for that purpose. When I entered the office he asked me if I could read writing? When I told him yes, he procured a seat, and bade me sit down. He then presented me a letter in English, requesting me to translate it into Spanish. Though I put forth no claims on the score of scholarship, I perfectly comprehended the meaning of the words in both languages. I accomplished the translation in the best manner in my power; and he was pleased entirely to approve it. He proceeded to ask me a great many questions relative to my travels through the Mexican country; how long I had been absent from my own country, and what had been my occupation, during that absence? To all which questions I returned satisfactory answers. When he bade the guard return me to prison, he informed me that he should probably call for me again.

I returned to my prison somewhat cheered in spirits. I foresaw that he would often have occasion for my services as a translator, and if I showed an obliging disposition, and rendered myself useful, I hoped to obtain enlargement for myself and my companions. As I expected, I was summoned to his office for several days in succession. On my entering the office he began to assume the habit of saluting me kindly, giving me a seat, enquiring after my health, and showing me the other customary civilities. When I found him in his best humor, I generally took occasion remotely to hint at the case of our being detained as prisoners. I tried, gently and soothingly, to convince him of the oppression and injustice of treating the innocent citizens of a sister republic, as if they were spies. He generally showed a disposition to evade the subject; or alleged as a reason for what he had done, that he regretted exceedingly that circumstances on our part seemed so suspicious, that, obliged as he was, to execute the laws of his country, he felt himself compelled to act as he had done; that it was far from his disposition to desire to punish any one unjustly, and without cause; and that he would be glad if we could produce any substantial [187] evidence to acquit us

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

from the suspicion of being spies.

Though, as a true and honest man, I knew that every word he pronounced was a vile and deceitful lie, yet such is the power of the oppressor, I swallowed my rising words, and dissembled a sort of satisfaction. Waiving the further discussion of our imprisonment, I again recurred to the subject of permission to bring in our furs, persuading him, if he had any doubts about our good faith in returning to this place, to send soldiers to guard us; assuring him, that on obtaining our furs we would pay the soldiers, and indemnify him for any other expense he might incur on the occasion; and that, moreover, we would feel ourselves as grateful to him as if he had bestowed upon us the value of the furs in money. He heard me to the close, and listened with attention; and though he said he could not at present give his consent, he promised that he would deliberate upon the subject, and in the course of a week, let me know the result of his resolution. He then bade his soldiers remand me to prison. I begged him to allow me to communicate this conversation to my companions. This he refused, and I re-entered my prison.

From these repeated interviews, I began to acquaint myself with his interior character. I perceived, that, like most arbitrary and cruel men, he was fickle and infirm of purpose. I determined to take advantage of that weakness in his character by seeming submissive to his wishes, and striving to conform as far as I could to his capricious wishes; and more than all, to seize the right occasions to tease him with importunities for our liberty, and permission to bring in our furs. Four days elapsed before I had another opportunity of seeing him. During this time I had finished the translation of a number of letters, some of which were from Capt. Bradshaw, and related to the detention of his ship and cargo, and himself. When I had finished these translations, and was re-admitted to his presence, I asked him if he had come to any determination in regard to letting us go to bring in our furs? He answered in his surliest tone, no! How different were my reflections on returning to my prison from those with which I had left it! How earnestly I wished that [188] he and I had been together in the wild woods, and I armed with my rifle!

I formed a firm purpose to translate no more letters for him. I found that I had gained nothing by this sort of service; nor even by dissembling a general disposition to serve him. I was anxious for another request to translate, that I might have the pleasure of refusing him, and of telling him to his face that though I was his prisoner, I was not his slave. But it was three days before he sent for me again. At their expiration I was summoned to his office, and he offered me a seat, according to former custom. When I was seated, with a smiling countenance he handed me a packet of letters, and bade me translate them. I took one, opened it, and carelessly perused a few lines, and returning the packet back, rose from my seat, and told him I wished to return to my prison; and bowing, I moved towards the door. He darted a glance at me resembling that of an enraged wild beast; and in a voice, not unlike the growl of a wounded, grizzly bear, asked me why I did not put myself to the translation of the letters? Assuming a manner and tone as surly as his own, I told him my reasons were, that I did not choose to labor voluntarily for an oppressor and enemy; and that I had come to the determination to do it no longer. At this he struck me over the head such a blow with the flat of his sword, as well nigh dropped me on the floor; and ordered the soldiers to return me to prison, where he said I should lay and rot. The moment I recovered from the stunning effect of the blow I sprang toward him; but was immediately seized by the guards, and dragged to the door; he, the while, muttered abundance of the curses which his language supplies. In return, I begged him to consider how much it was like an officer and gentleman to beat an unarmed pris-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

oner in his power, but that if I only had a sword to meet him upon equal terms, I could easily kill as many such dastards as he was, as could come at me. He bade me be silent, and the soldiers to take me off. They shoved me violently on before them to prison. When it closed upon me I never expected to see the sun rise and set again.

[189] Here I remained a week without seeing even the young lady, who was justly so dear to my heart. She was debarred by the general's orders not only from visiting me, but even sending me provisions! I was again reduced to the fare of corn boiled in spoiled tallow, which was brought me twice a day. At this juncture came on Capt. Bradshaw's trial. The declaration of the Captain, supercargo and crew was to be taken, and all the parties separately interrogated by a Spaniard. Not an individual of them could speak a word of Spanish, except the Captain, and he was not allowed to translate in his own case. The general supposed that by interrogating the parties separately, he should be able to gain some advantage from the contradictions of the testimony, and some positive proof of smuggling. Capt. Bradshaw being denied the privilege of interpreting for his crew, requested the general to procure some one who might be allowed to perform that office for him. The general told him that I was capable of the office, if I could be gained to the humor; but that he would as willingly deal with a devil, as with me, when out of humor. Capt. Bradshaw asked him if he might be allowed to converse with me on the subject? He consented, and Capt. B. came to my prison. In reference to the above information, he asked me what had taken place between me and the general which had so exasperated him against me? I related all the circumstances of our last interview. He laughed heartily at my defiance of the general. I was ready, of course, to render any service by which I could oblige Capt. B. He returned to the general, and informed him that I was ready to undertake to translate or interpret in his case.

In a short time my door was opened, and I was once more conducted to the office of the general. Capt. B. was sitting there in waiting. The general asked me if I had so far changed my mind, as to be willing to translate and interpret again? I told him I was always ready to perform that office for a gentleman. I placed such an emphasis on the word gentleman, as I purposed, should inform him, that I intended that appellation for the [190] Captain, and not for him. Whether he really misunderstood me, or dissembled the appearance of misunderstanding me, I know not. He only named an hour, in which he should call on me for that service, cautioning me to act in the business with truth and good faith. I told him that my countrymen in that respect, had greatly the disadvantage of his people; for that it was our weakness, not to know how to say any thing but the truth. At this he smiled, ordering me back to prison, until I should be called for next day.

At eight the next morning, I was again summoned to his office, where he proceeded, through me, to question Captain B. touching the different ports at which he had traded, and what was his cargo, when he left the U. S.? He added a great many other questions in relation to the voyage, irrelevant to the purposes of this journal. The clerk on this occasion was an Indian, and a quick and elegant writer. Capt. B. produced his bill of lading, and the other usual documents of clearing out a ship; all which I was obliged to translate. They being matters out of the line of my pursuits, and I making no pretensions to accurate acquaintance with either language, the translation, of course, occupied no inconsiderable time. It was nearly twelve, when he bade us withdraw, with orders to meet him again at his office at two in the afternoon. Capt. B. accompanied me to prison, and as we went on, requested me to make the testimonies of his crew as nearly correspond, and substantiate each other, as possible; for that some of them were angry with him, and would strive to give

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

testimony calculated to condemn him. I assured him that I would do any thing to serve him, that I could in honor. I entered my prison, and slept soundly, until the bells struck two.

I was then reconducted to the general's office; where he continued to interrogate Capt. B., until three. The Supercargo, Mr. R. Perkins, was then called upon to produce his manifesto, and cautioned to declare the truth, in relation to the subject in question. This manifesto differed in no essential respect from the account of the Captain. At sunset they were [191] dismissed, and I remanded to my prison. Day after day the same task was imposed, and the same labors devolved upon me. I at length summoned courage to resume the old question of permission to go out and bring in our furs. To my surprise he remarked, that as soon as he had finished taking all the evidence in relation to Capt. Bradshaw's ship and cargo, he would not only allow us to go, but would send soldiers to prevent the Indians from molesting us. I informed him, that his intended kindness would be unavailing to us, if he did not allow us to depart before the month of August; for that in that month the melting of the snow on the mountains at the sources of Red river caused it to overflow, and that our furs were buried in the bottom, so that the river, in overflowing, would spoil them. He replied, that it was out of his power to grant the consent at this time, which was the 19th of July.

On the 28th he had finished taking all the depositions, and I again asked him for permission to go and bring in our furs. He still started delays, alleging that he had made no arrangements for that purpose yet. Capt. B. was present, and asked him to allow me to stay with him on board his vessel, promising that he would be accountable for me. To my astonishment the general consented. I repaired to the house of the young lady, who had been so kind to me. She received me with open arms, and manifested the most unequivocal delight. She congratulated me on being once more free from my dismal prison, and asked me a thousand questions. The Captain and myself spent the evening with her; and at its close, I repaired with him on board his beautiful ship, the first sea vessel I had ever been on board. It may be imagined what a spectacle of interest and eager curiosity the interior of this ship, the rigging, masts, awning, in short, every thing appertaining to it, would be to a person raised as I had been, and of a mind naturally inquisitive. What a new set of people were the sailors! How amusing and strange their dialect! They heartily shook me by the hand, and commenced describing the several punishments they would inflict upon the general, if they had him in their [192] power. Among the different inflictions purposed, none seemed to please them better, than the idea of tarring and feathering him, all which I would gladly have seen him endure, but the worst of it was, after all, the general was not in their power.

I spent the greater part of the night with the captain and supercargo, conversing about the oppressions and cruelties of the general, and the death of my father, for, during the time of his sickness, Captain Bradshaw had sailed to Monte el Rey, and had not returned, until after his death. He intended, he said, if his vessel was condemned, to slip his anchors, and run out of the harbor, at the risk of being sunk, as he passed the fort. He promised me, if I would take passage with him, that I should fare as he did, and that, when we should arrive at Boston, he would obtain me some situation, in which I could procure a subsistence. I thanked him for his very kind offer, but remarked, that my companions had suffered a great deal with me, that we had had many trials together, and had hazarded our lives for each other, and that now I would suffer any thing rather than desert them, and leave them in prison, probably, to have their sufferings enhanced, in consequence of my desertion.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

In the morning we all three went on shore together, and took breakfast at the house of my friend, the brother of the young lady. We passed from breakfast, to the office of the general. I asked leave of him to visit my companions in prison. His countenance became red with anger, and he ordered the guard to search me, and take me to prison. I perceived that he thought I had arms concealed about me, and assured him I had none. This did not hinder the guard from searching me, before they put me in prison.

I heard no more from him, and remained shut up in prison until the 28th of August. On that day the general ordered me again to be conducted to his office, where, according to his request, I translated some letters for him. When I had finished, he asked me if I still had an inclination to go for my furs? I replied, that I had reason to suppose that they had been covered [193] before this time, with the waters of Red river, and were all spoiled; but that nevertheless, I should be glad to be certain about it, and at least we should be able to bring in our traps. He asked me what adequate security I could give for our good behavior, and the certainty of our return, provided he should allow us the use of our arms for self defence? I replied, that I knew no one, who could give the security required, but that the soldiers he would send with us, would be his security for our return; but that it was out of the question to think of sending us on a trip, so dangerous under any circumstances, without allowing us to go armed. He remanded me to prison, saying, that he would reflect upon it, and let me know the result of his reflections in the morning. I reflected as I walked to prison, that I could have procured the security of Captain Bradshaw, merely for the asking. But I knew the character of my companions, and was so well aware, how they would feel when all should be once free again, and well armed, that I dared not bind any one in security for us. Such had been the extent of the injuries we had suffered, and so sweet is revenge, and so delightful liberty, when estimated by the bondage we had endured, that I was convinced that Mexico could not array force enough to bring us back alive. I foresaw that the general would send no more than ten or twelve soldiers with us. I knew that it would be no more than an amusement to rise upon them, take their horses for our own riding, flea some of them of their skins, to show them that we knew how to inflict torture, and send the rest back to the general on foot. Knowing that the temptation to some retaliation of this sort would be irresistible, I was determined that no one of my countrymen should be left amenable to the laws on our account. Such thoughts passed through my mind as I told the general, I could offer him no security.

Next morning, immediately after eight, I was allowed to walk to the general's office without being guarded. What a fond feeling came back to my heart with this small boon of liberty! How much I was exalted in my own thoughts, that I [194] could walk fifty yards entrusted with my own safe keeping! When I entered the general's office, he saluted me with ceremonious politeness. 'Buenas dias, don Santiago,' said he, and showed me to a seat. He proceeded to make known his pleasure, in respect to me and my companions. In the first place he told us, we were all to be allowed the use of our arms, in the next place, that he would send fifteen of his soldiers with us; and in the third place, that we should all be allowed a week, in which to exercise ourselves, before we set out on our expedition. All this good fortune delighted us, and was more almost, than we would have dared to wish. My companions, in an ecstasy of satisfaction, soon joined us from their prisons. We met with as much affection and gladness of heart, as if we had been brothers. They looked more like persons emancipated from the prison of the grave, than human beings; and I am perfectly aware, that my spectre like visage must have been equally a spectacle to them. We had the

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

privilege of walking in the vicinity of the port, accompanied by a guard of soldiers. Our only immediate restriction was the necessity of returning to our guard house to sleep at night. In this way our time passed pleasantly.

On the 3d of September, the general sent for me to his office. When I entered, he presented me a note, and bade me accompany a soldier to a mission at the distance of thirty miles, where he stated I was to deliver this note to a priest, and that he perhaps would be able to furnish us with horses and mules for our expedition to bring in our furs. I started with the soldier, each of us well mounted. The note was unsealed, and I read it of course. The contents were any thing, rather than encouraging. It contained no demand for the horses, as I had hoped. It simply stated to the priest, what sort of person the general supposed me to be, that we had furs buried on Red river, and wished horses on which to ride out and bring them in, and that if the priest felt disposed to hire his horses to us, he would send soldiers with us to bring us back.

[195] Discouraging as the note was, we pushed ahead with it, and arrived at the priest's mission some time before night. I handed the note to the old priest, who was a very grave looking personage. He read the note, and then asked me to come in and take some wine with him, of which they have great plenty. I followed him into a large parlor, richly adorned with paintings of saints, and several side boards, abundantly stored with wines, which I took it for granted, were not unacceptable to the holy man. The glass ware, the decorations of the parlor, and the arrangement of every thing showed me at a glance, that this priest was a man of taste and fashion. So I was on my guard not to let any of my hunting phrases and back-wood's dialect escape me. He asked me a great many questions about the circumstances of my passage across the continent, to all which I responded in as choice and studied words as I could command. He then asked me how many beasts we should want? I replied that there were seven of us, and that we should each need a pack mule, and a horse to ride upon, which would be fourteen in all. He then asked how many days it would require to go, and return? I answered, that this was a point upon which I could not pronounce with certainty, since I was unacquainted with the road, and accidents might change the issue. He then proposed to charge what was tantamount to 25 cents of our money a day for each mule, that carried a saddle, during the expedition, longer or shorter. To this I consented, and he drew an article of agreement to that effect. He then wrote a note to send by me to the general, in reply to his. By this time the sun was setting, and the church bells began to strike. On this he knelt, and commenced his prayers. He was repeating the Lord's prayer. According to the customs of his church, when he had commenced a member of a sentence, I finished it, by way of response. Such are their modes of repeating their prayers, when there are two or more in company. When we had finished, he turned to me, and asked me why I had prayed? I answered for the salvation of my soul. He said, that it had a christian appearance, but that he had been [196] informed, that the people of our country did not believe that man had a soul, or that there is a Saviour. I assured him, that he had been entirely misinformed, for that we had churches on every side through all the land, and that the people read the Scriptures, and believed all that was taught in the Gospel, according to their understanding of it. But he continued, 'your people do not believe in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.' I replied, that what the general faith of the people upon this point was, I could not say, and that for myself, I did not pretend to have sufficiently studied the Scriptures, to decide upon such points. My assumed modesty soothed him, and he told me, that it was evident, I had not studied the Scriptures, for that if I had, I could not be in

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

doubt about such obvious articles of faith. I acquiesced in his supposition, that I had not studied the Scriptures, remarking, that I was aware that they contained many mysteries, about which the people in my country entertained various opinions. He said that he was truly sorry, that I was not more conversant with the Scriptures, for that if I had been, I could not have been led astray by the Protestants. His time, however, he added was now too limited to enlighten me, but he laughed, as he said he hoped to have the pleasure of baptising me on my return. To this I replied with a smile, for the truth was, I was fearful of disgusting him, and breaking off the bargain. Glad was I, when he dismissed this subject, and began to chat about other matters. We had an excellent supper, and I was shown to my bed.

In the morning I took leave of the old father, and arrived on the following evening at San Diego. My companions were delighted with the apparent complete success of my mission. The general informed us, that we should have permission to start on the 6th, and that our beasts would be ready for an early start on that day. On the evening of the 5th, he called us to his office, and asked us, how many days we thought the expedition would require? We informed him, as near as we could conjecture. He then said, that he could not spare any soldiers to accompany us. We answered, that it was a point of [197] indifference to us, whether he did or not. 'To insure your return however,' he rejoined, 'I shall retain one of you as a hostage for the return of the rest,' and pointing to me, he informed me, 'that I was the selected hostage,' and that I must remain in prison, during their absence, and that if they did not return, it would convince him, that we were spies, and that in consequence he would cause me to be executed.'

At this horrible sentence, breaking upon us in the sanguine rapture of confidence, we all gazed at each other in the consternation of despair. Some of our company remarked, that they had better abandon the expedition altogether, than leave me behind. Others stood in mute indecision. We had all in truth confidently anticipated never to return to this place again. My indignation, meanwhile, had mounted to such a pitch, as wholly to absorb all sense of personal danger, or care about myself. It seemed as if Providence had put the unrelenting seal of disappointment to every plan I attempted to devise. I told them to go, and not allow my detention to dishearten, or detain them, for that I had no fear of any thing, the general could inflict, that I had little left, but life to relinquish, and that their refusal to go, as things now were, would be taken for ample proofs, that we were spies, and would ensure our condemnation and the conviction, that we never had intended to return.

On this they all agreed to go, and began to pledge their honor and every thing sacred, that they would return, if life was spared them. I told them to follow their own inclinations, as to returning, for that I would as willingly be buried by the side of my father, as any one else; that, however, I did not believe the laws of the country would bear the general out, in putting me to death. The general now bade us arrange every thing to start early in the morning. I was again locked up in my prison, though my companions spent the greater part of the night in conversing with me. In the morning, when they were ready to start, they came and shook hands with me. When the Dutchman, as good hearted a fellow as ever lived, took my hand he burst into tears, and said, 'goot py Jim, if I ever does come [198] back, I will bring an army mit me, and take yours and your daddy's bones from dis tammed country, for it is worse as hell.' I should have laughed heartily at him, had not his tears prevented me, for I knew, that they came from his heart. Mounting their mules they now set off. Their only arms were old Spanish muskets, which, when fired, I would almost as soon

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

have stood before as behind. Under such circumstances, knowing, that they would be obliged to pass through numbers of hostile tribes of Indians, I was very doubtful of their return.

On the 8th, Captain Bradshaw came to my prison, and asked me, why I was in prison, and my companions at liberty? I told him the whole story. When he had heard it, he expressed doubts in regard to their returning. I replied to him, that I was not at all in doubt of their return, if they lived. He then told me, that he intended to go to the general, and demand his papers on the 11th, and if they were not given up to him, he would cut cable, and run out in spite of any one, adding his advice to me, which was, that I should write to the consul at Wahu and inform him of my imprisonment. He seemed to think, I might thus obtain my release. Mr. R. Perkins would undertake, he said, to place it in the hands of the consul, as he was acquainted with him. I answered, that I had neither ink nor paper. He said I should have some in a few minutes, and took leave of me. A soldier soon entered with writing materials, and I wrote my letter to Mr. Jones, for that was the name of the consul, stating every circumstance relative to our imprisonment, and the death of my father, giving the names of all our party, and begging him, if it was not in his power to obtain our freedom, that he would inform our government of our situation. I supposed it was in his power to grant my first request, placed as he was, in the midst of a foreign nation.

On the 11th, at the request of the general, I was conducted to his office, to serve as interpreter for the captain and Mr. P. The papers were now demanded by them. The general refused to comply with the demand, and told them, that both the vessel and cargo were condemned, but that if they would discharge [199] the cargo, and deliver it to him, he would allow them to clear the vessel, to go and seek redress, wherever they pleased. The captain's answer to this was, that it was not in his power to do so, and that the laws of his country would hang him, if he thus gave up his ship and cargo at the request of an individual. The general now became enraged, and repeating the words, at the request of an individual, added, the ship and cargo have both been lawfully condemned, and if they are not given up peaceably, I have soldiers enough to take the ship, and every thing belonging to it. In reply the captain remarked, that he came to trade on the coast, and not to fight, that, if he was disposed to seize the vessel or cargo, he had nothing to say farther, than that he should not aid, or advance in any shape the unlading of the vessel himself, and taking up his hat walked away. I asked permission of the general to go to Miss. Peaks, to get a change of clothing, which was granted. He, however, told me to be in haste. My principal business there was to give my letter to Mr. P., for I knew that captain B., would set sail with the first breeze, of which he could avail himself. I found both the gentlemen in the house, when I entered. I was assured by M. P., that he would give the letter to the consul, and endeavor to interest him in my behalf. I thanked him, and was upon the point of taking leave, when captain B. asked me to take a note from him to the general, and to tell him that he would like to have an answer, and would wait an hour for it. I took the note and went to the general's office, gave him the note and told him what the captain had said. He bade me sit down, after he had read the note, for a few minutes. I obeyed, and he passed into the adjoining room, and ordered his porter to call the ensign Ramirez. The porter hastened to execute his commission, and in a few minutes the ensign entered. The general and ensign then began to converse, drawing near the door, behind which I was seated. I heard distinctly the former tell the latter, that captain B., and Mr. P., were both at Peak's awaiting an answer from him, and that he would send me to tell them that he was engaged at [200] present, but at the expiration of an hour and a half they should have their answer through me. Meantime he, the ensign,

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

was to provide a guard of soldiers, with which to take them prisoners, and then the vessel and cargo would be sure. All this, as I have said, I heard distinctly. He then came in, and told me to go and inform them, as he told the ensign, he should direct me. I hastened to captain B., and told him what I had heard from the general concerning him. I advised him to go to the vessel immediately, for that the ensign and guard would soon be upon the spot. Both he and Mr. P. went directly to the vessel, and I returned to the general, to inform him that I had delivered his message. He then ordered me to return to prison. It was now three o'clock.

In a few hours the ensign returned from the pursuit of captain B., and as he passed the prison on his way to the general's office he shook his sword at me with vengeance in his face, saying, 'Oh! you traitor!' I inferred from this, that he supposed I had informed the captain of the projected attempt to take him prisoner. My situation now seemed to me desperate. I thought more of my comrades than myself, for I could not expect to live. Concluding that I should soon be executed, I feared, that when they returned, they would be put to death also. In a few minutes I was summoned to the general's office. I expected to hear my sentence. When I entered the general bade me stand by the door, near a large table, at which several of his clerks were seated writing, and he then gravely asked me if I had overheard the conversation which took place between himself and the ensign, after he had read the note brought by me to him from captain B? I replied that I did not see the ensign at that time, and furthermore could not say positively, whether he had held any conversation with the ensign, since my arrival on the coast or not. The general proceeded to question me, as to the fact of my having advised the captain to go on board his ship, and if I knew the motives, which induced him to do so, after saying that he would wait for an answer to his note. [201] He tried to extort an answer from me such as he wished, threatening me with death if I did not relate the truth. I regarded all this as no more than the threats of an old woman, and went on to state what was most likely to be favorable to my cause. I was now remanded to prison with the assurance, that if found guilty, death would be my doom.

A few days only elapsed before, the breeze serving, the Captain slipped anchor, and ran out of the port. He was compelled to perform this under a heavy shower of cannon balls poured forth from the fort, within two hundred yards of which he was obliged to pass. When he came opposite it, he hove to, and gave them a broadside in return, which frightened the poor engineers from their guns. His escape from the port was made without suffering any serious injury on his part. Their shots entered the hull of the vessel, and the sails were considerably cut by the grape. I was greatly rejoiced when I heard of their escape from these thieves. The General pretended great disgust at the cowardly conduct of the engineers, but, I believe, had he been there, he would have run too. I have no faith in the courage of these people, except where they have greatly the advantage, or can kill in the dark, without danger to themselves. This in my view is the amount of a Spaniard's bravery.

But to return to myself, I remained in prison, until a sufficient time had elapsed, as I thought, for the return of my companions. I still did not entirely despair of seeing them; but the Spaniards came daily and hourly to my prison with delighted countenances to tell me that my companions had deserted me, and that the General would soon have me executed. Some consoled me with the information, that at such an hour or day, I was to be taken out, and burnt alive; and others, that I was to be stationed at a certain distance, and shot at, like a target, or hung. These unfeeling wretches thus harrassed and tormented me, until the arrival of my companions on the 30th Sept.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

put an end to their taunts, with regard to their desertion of me. They brought no fur however, it having been all spoiled [202] as I had expected, by an overflow of the river. Our traps which they did bring, were sold, and a part of the proceeds paid to the old priest for the hire of the mules. I have failed to remark, that my comrades had returned with the loss of two of their number, one of whom we learned, had married in New Mexico. When the party reached the river, these two concluded that rather than return to prison, they would run the risk of being killed by the Indians, or of being starved to death; and set forth on their perilous journey through the wilderness to New Mexico on foot. The probability of their reaching the point of their destination was very slight, it being a great distance and through great dangers. Happily for us, their not returning, did not appear to strengthen the General, in his opinion of our being spies. I had the pleasure of conversing with my companions an hour, or more, after which they were again disarmed, and all of us returned to our separate places of confinement. I had now no prospect before me, but that of lingering out a miserable and useless life in my present situation; as I was convinced, that the only inducement, which operated in the General's mind, to allow a part of us to go in search of our property was the hope of taking a quantity of furs and other valuables from us. I was thankful that he obtained nothing but the traps, which, as he knew no more how to use, than a blind horse, could be of no utility to him. This feeling may seem a poor gratification, but it was certainly a natural one.

In this condition we remained for months, never seeing the outside of our prison, deprived of the pleasure we had received from the visits of the charitable young lady, formerly allowed entrance to us, and the advantage we had derived from the generous nourishment she so kindly furnished us, and compelled by hunger to eat the food set before us by our jailors; and confined principally to dried beans, or corn boiled in water, and then fried in spoiled tallow.

At length the small pox began to rage on the upper part of the coast, carrying off the inhabitants by hundreds. Letters [203] from the distressed people were continually arriving, praying the general to devise some means to put a stop to the disease, which seemed to threaten the country with destruction. The general was thus beset by petitions for several weeks, before he could offer a shadow of relief for them. He was much alarmed, fearing that the disorder might extend its ravages to that part of the coast where he resided.

One day the soldiers, through mere inquisitiveness, asked the Dutchman if he knew any remedy for the complaint? He answered that he did; but that he had none of the article that constituted the remedy. He added, however, that he thought that my father had brought some of it with him, as he recollected his having vaccinated the people at the copper mines. This conversation was communicated to the general immediately, who sent a sergeant to me to inquire if I had any of the remedy spoken of by the Dutchman, as brought by my father? I answered in the affirmative; I then showed him where I had been vaccinated on the right arm, and assured him that it had effectually protected me from the small pox. Upon his demand whether I knew the method of applying it, I again answered in the affirmative; but when he asked me to show him the remedy, and let him have it to apply to his own arm, as he was fearful of losing his life from the spread of this dreadful disease, I told him I would not. This sergeant, who wished the matter, was my friend, and brother of the charitable young lady who had procured my father's burial, and for whom I would have sacrificed my life. But thinking this my only chance for regaining liberty, I refused it to him, saying, that I would neither show it to any one, nor apply it, unless my liberty and that

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

of my companions was rendered secure; and that in sustaining this resolution I would sacrifice my life. I also mentioned that I must be paid, over and above my liberty. My object in this, was to influence the fears of the general. If he acceded to my proposition, my friend and his sister would share the benefit in common with others. If I granted the request of the sergeant to inoculate him, I might lose my advantage; but my gratitude decided me [204] against allowing himself and his sister to be exposed to an imminent danger, which I could avert. I told him that if he would pledge himself, solemnly, for his own part, and that of his sister, that he would not communicate the matter to another individual, I would secretly vaccinate them. He replied that I need not fear his betraying me, as he would much rather aid me in my design, which he thought excellent, and likely to accomplish my wishes. He then left me to communicate the result of our conversation to the general.

This incident, so important in its influence upon my fortunes, occurred December 20th. The sergeant had not been absent more than a half hour, when he returned and told me that the general said he would give me a passport for a year, if I would vaccinate all the people on the coast; and furthermore, if I conducted properly during that period, that he would at the expiration of it, pay me for my services, and give me my liberty. His countenance was bright with delight, as he related this to me, not dreaming that I could refuse what seemed to him so good an offer. When I repeated, in reply, my resolution not to vaccinate any one, except on the conditions I had stated, and added that I would not agree to any terms without an audience from the general, his pleasure vanished, giving place to gloom as he told me he did not think the general would accede to the proposal to set my companions and myself at liberty upon parole for one year, for any consideration; but that, if I persisted in my refusal, he feared I should incur some violent punishment, and perhaps death. My answer was, that in my present situation I did not dread death. I then requested him to tell the general I wished to talk with him personally upon the subject.

He went, and in a few minutes returned with orders to conduct me to the General's office. Upon my arrival there, the General questioned me with regard to the efficacy of the remedy of which he had been much informed in the same manner as I have related in the conversation between the sergeant and myself; and he then repeated the same terms for the matter [205] and the application of it, that he had transmitted me through my friend, to which I replied as before. When I had finished, he asked me in a surly manner, what my own terms were? I told him, as I had done the sergeant, that I would vaccinate all the inhabitants on the coast, provided he would allow myself and companions to leave our prison on parole for one year, with liberty to travel up or down the coast, in order to find some occupation, by which we could obtain food and clothing. Upon hearing this his rage burst forth. He told me I was a devil; and that if I did not choose to take the offer he had made, he would compel me to perform its conditions, or put me to death. I replied, that he could take my life; but that it was beyond his power to compel me to execute his commands adding, that life or liberty would be no object to me, if my companions were denied the enjoyment of them with me. They had had the alternative in their power of leaving me in prison to suffer alone, or returning to share my captivity, and had chosen the latter; I concluded by saying, that rather than accept of liberty while they remained in prison, I would undergo all the torments his excellency could devise. He said he might as well let loose so many wolves to ravage his country, as give myself and companions the liberty I required; adding, that he gave me twenty-four hours to reflect on the alternative of his wrath, or my liberty upon the conditions he had proposed. I

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

was now remanded to prison. As I walked out, I remarked to the General, that my resolution was fixed beyond the possibility of change. He made no reply, and I proceeded to prison. The soldiers who accompanied me, tried to induce me to conform to the General's wishes, saying, that he was a terrible man when enraged. I made them no answer, and entered my prison, where I remained until 8 o'clock the next day; when I was again escorted to the office, and asked by the General, what security I would give for the good behaviour of myself and companions, if he let us out on parole for one year? I told him I would give none, for no one here knew me. He then ordered me back to prison, where he said I should lay and rot, calling me a carracho [206] picaro, and similar names, which I did not regard. I walked to my prison as undauntedly as I could. I now felt somewhat encouraged; for I perceived he was not inflexible in his resolutions, and by adhering firmly to mine, I hoped finally to conquer him.

In the course of the night he received a letter containing information of the death of one of his priests, and that great numbers were ill of the small pox. Early in the morning of the 23d I received a summons to attend him at the usual place. When I arrived, he said he wanted to see my papers, that is, those I had mentioned as being my father's commission and his discharge from the service of a ranger. I told him they were at Miss Peak's, which was the name of the young lady who had been so kind to me. He sent a soldier for them, who soon returned with them. I translated them to him. He said that was a sufficient proof of my being an American; and asked if my companions could produce proofs of their belonging to the same country? I replied that I did not know.

He sent orders for them to come to the office; and before their arrival, told me that all he now wanted, was proof that they were Americans, to let us go on a parole, as all Americans were tolerated in his country. My opinion with regard to his motive in the case was, that he was less unwilling to grant our liberty, as the payment for my services in spreading the vaccine disease, now that he knew we had no property for him to extort from us.

He talked, too, about rendering himself liable to suffer the rigor of the laws of his country, should he set us free, without our establishing the fact of our being Americans.

My companions entered: I was glad to see them. Their beards were long, and they were haggard and much reduced in flesh. I gave them to understand what was wanting, and they readily produced some old black papers, furnishing in themselves proof of any thing else, as much as of their owners being American citizens. I, however, so interpreted them, that they established the point with the General. I believe he [207] had as firmly credited this fact from the first hour he saw us, as now. He concluded to let us out a week upon trial, before he gave us freedom on parole, although he compelled me to engage to vaccinate all the people in the fort. He then directed us to endeavor to find some employment around the fort, which would procure us food, and to return every night to the guard house to sleep. The guard bell now tolled eight o'clock, and according to the permission given, we walked in the direction of our inclinations.

I went directly to Miss Peak's, who was much astonished, and apparently delighted to see me at liberty. She had expected, she said, every day to see me on my way to be shot, or hung. The manifestation of kindness and benevolence to us having been forbidden by our jailors, she now indemnified her humanity and good feeling by telling me how much she had regretted not being allowed to send me proper food, asking me if I was not hungry? and proceeding, before I could answer, to spread a table with every thing good, of which I partook plentifully; after which we had

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

a pleasant conversation together. My enjoyment of my fortunate change of situation was, however, mingled with uncertainty, as to the length of its duration. I felt that I was still in the lion's jaws, which might close upon me from the first impulse of petulance or anger.

I therefore, endeavoured to devise some way of availing myself of my momentary freedom, to place myself beyond the possibility of losing it again. That one which suggested itself to me, was to prevail upon the officer, who had our rifles in charge to allow us possession of them for a short time, to clean them. When we should once more have them in our hands, I hoped we would have resolution to retain them, until death rendered them useless to us. I went to my companions, and imparted my plan to them. They agreed with me upon all points. The only difficulty now was, to lay our hands upon our arms. I went directly to the apartment of the officer, in whose care they were, one of the best hearted Spaniards I have ever seen. I appealed to his goodness of heart in order to obtain my purpose, telling [208] him, that we only wanted the rifles a few minutes, in order to rub off the rust, and dirt, which must have accumulated upon them. I told him after this was done, they should be returned to him. He did not answer for some minutes; and then said, that if he complied with my request, and was discovered by the General to have done so, he should be punished. I replied that there was no danger of an act of this kind, a mere kindness of this sort being known by any, but those immediately concerned; concluding by slipping ten dollars in silver, which had been given me by Capt. B., into his hand. He then handed me the rifles, and all belonging to them, through a back door, cautioning me not to let my having them in possession be known. I answered, that I would be upon my guard. I was now joined by my companions. We found an old and unoccupied house, into which we entered, and soon put our guns in order, and charged them well, resolving never to give them into the hands of a Spaniard again. We had been so treacherously dealt with by these people, that we did not consider it any great breach of honour to fail in our promise of returning our arms, particularly as the officer had taken my money. We then concluded to conceal our rifles in a thicket near at hand, and to keep our pistols, which the officer had also given us as a part of our arms, concealed around our persons. At night we went to the guard house to sleep, as we had been commanded to do. The officer who gave me the rifles, came to me, and asked why I had not returned the arms according to promise? I told him that I had not finished cleaning them, and repeated, that the General should not know I had them. He charged me to fulfil my former promise of returning the arms on the succeeding morning. I satisfied him, thinking as before, that it made no great difference what is said to such persons, in a position like ours.

Early the next morning we met a countryman by the name of James Lang, who had come upon the coast to smuggle, and to kill sea otters for their skins, which are very valuable. He was now here secretly, to enquire if sea otters were to be found in [209] abundance higher up the coast; and to obtain information on some other points connected with his pursuits. He told us he had a boat distant eighty miles down the coast, with men in search of otters, and proposed that we should accompany him to it, offering to furnish every thing required for this species of hunting, and give us half of whatever we caught, adding, that when his brig returned from the Gallipagos islands, where it had gone in search of tortoise shell, he would give us a free passage to our own country. We all considered this an offer advantageous to us, as it held out the prospect of our being enabled to obtain something in the way of gain, after which a way would be open for our return to our homes, and we agreed to meet him on a certain day at Todos Santos, in English All Saints. This

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

took place on the 24th. Our new friend set off to rejoin his companions, and we fell to consultation upon the best method of conducting in our present circumstances. We did not wish to do any thing, that would render us amenable to the laws of the country, should we be detected in our attempt to escape. We were consequently precluded from relying on horses to aid us in hastening beyond the reach of pursuers. The night was chosen, as the time for our experiment; but in the course of an hour, after this determination was made, all my companions excepting one, receded from it, pronouncing the plan of running off without any cover for our intentions, not a good one. They proposed instead of it, that we should ask permission of the General to go a hunting, assigning as our reason for this request, that we were barefoot, and wanted to kill some deer in order to obtain their skins to dress, to make us moccasins. I consented to this plan, and to try its efficacy immediately, I went to the General's office. It was late, but I related my errand. He asked me, where I could get arms, to kill deer with? I replied, that if he would not allow us to use our own arms, we could borrow some. He refused the permission, I had asked of him.

On Christmas night, the one among my companions, whom I [210] have mentioned, as agreeing with me, in regard to the original plan for our escape, set off with me at 12 o'clock, while the people, who were all Catholics, were engaged in their devotions at church. We were obliged to leave our comrades, as they would not accompany us in our enterprise. We travelled entirely by night, and reached the before mentioned place of rendezvous on the 28th. We found Mr. Lang and his men in confinement, and his boat taken by the Spaniards. We gained this information in the night, without committing ourselves. We retreated to the woods, in which we remained concealed through the day. At night our necessities compelled us to enter a house, in order to obtain some food. It was occupied by a widow and her two daughters. They gave us bread, milk and cheese, treating us with great kindness. We spent a week passing the day in the woods, and going to this friendly house to get food in the night; in the hope of hearing of some vessel, by means of which we might escape from this hated coast. But no such good fortune awaited us.

We then concluded to return, and see our comrades, whom we supposed to be again in prison; although we were determined never again to be confined there ourselves alive, with our own consent. So we walked back to San Diego, killing some deer by the way, the skins of which we carried to the fort. To our great admiration and surprize, we found our companions at liberty. They informed us, that the General was exceedingly anxious for my return, and that our arms had not been demanded, although the officer, through whose means we obtained them, had been placed under guard.

I felt grieved by the latter part of this information, as I had deceived the unfortunate man, when he intended to do me a kindness, of the utmost importance to my interests, as I viewed it. He would probably, be severely punished. But I nevertheless was firm in my purpose to retain my arms. It was late in the day; but the companion of my flight and myself proceeded to present ourselves before the General, leaving our rifles concealed in a safe place. Our pistols we carried in our [211] bosoms, determined not to be taken to prison without offering resistance.

The General appeared much surprised to see us, and asked where we had been? I told him, that we had been out upon a hunting expedition; upon which he wished to know if we had killed any thing? We answered in the affirmative. He then looked serious, and demanded of me, if I was not aware that it was wrong to go off, without taking leave of him? My reply was, that I did; and that he refused it to me; and that then I concluded to go without permission, knowing it could not

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

be a crime. His next question was, how I obtained my arms? I told him the truth with regard to this point. The succeeding demand was, why I did not return them, according to my promise? To which I replied, that I did not intend to return them from the first; and I now declared that they should never be taken from me for the time to come, while I drew my breath. He smiled, and said he did not want them; but that I must begin to vaccinate the people of the garrison; for that he wished me to go up the coast soon to practice vaccination there.

On the 18th of January, 1829, I began to vaccinate; and by the 16th of February had vaccinated all the people belonging to the fort, and the Indian inhabitants of the mission of San Diego, three miles north of the former place. It is situated in a valley between two mountains. A stream runs through the valley, from which ships obtain fresh water. An abundance of grain is raised at this mission. Fruit of all kinds, growing in a temperate climate, is also plentiful. The climate is delightfully equal. The husbandman here does not think of his fields being moistened by the falling rain. He digs ditches around them, in which water is conveyed from a stream, sufficient to cover the ground, whenever the moisture is required. Rains seldom fall in the summer or autumn. The rainy season commences in October; and continues until the last of December, and sometimes even through January; by which time the grass, dover and wild oats are knee high. When the rain does come, it falls in torrents. The gullies made in the sides of the mountains by the rains are of an enormous size.

[212] But to return to my own affairs. Having completed my vaccinations in this quarter, and procured a sufficient quantity of the vaccine matter to answer my purpose, I declared myself in readiness to proceed further. I communicated the matter to one thousand Spaniards and Indians in San Diego.

February 28th, the General gave us each a legal form, granting us liberty on parole for one year, at the expiration of which period it was in his power to remand us to prison, if he did not incline to grant us our freedom. He likewise gave me a letter to the priests along the coast, containing the information that I was to vaccinate all the inhabitants upon the coast, and an order providing for me all necessary supplies of food and horses for my journey. These were to be furnished me by the people, among whom I found myself cast. They were, also, directed to treat me with respect, and indemnify me for my services, as far as they thought proper. The latter charge did not strike me agreeably; for I foresaw, that upon such conditions my services would not be worth one cent to me. However, the prospect of one whole year's liberty was so delightful, that I concluded to trust in Providence, and the generosity of the stranger, and think no more of the matter. With these feelings I set forth to the next mission, at which I had already been. It was called San Luis.

I reached it in the evening. I found an old priest, who seemed glad to see me. I gave him the General's letter. After he had read it, he said, with regard to that part of it which spoke of payment, that I had better take certificates from the priests of each mission, as I advanced up the coast, stating that I had vaccinated their inhabitants; and that when I arrived at the upper mission, where one of the high dignitaries of the church resided, I should receive my recompense for the whole. Seeing nothing at all singular in this advice, I concluded to adopt it.

In the morning I entered on the performance of my duty. My subjects were Indians, the missions being entirely composed of them, with the exception of the priests, who are the rulers. [213] The number of natives in this mission was three thousand, nine hundred and four. I took the old priest's certificate, as had been recommended by him, when I had completed my task. This is said

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

to be the largest, most flourishing, and every way the most important mission on the coast. For its consumption fifty beeves are killed weekly. The hides and tallow are sold to ships for goods, and other articles for the use of the Indians, who are better dressed in general, than the Spaniards. All the income of the mission is placed in the hands of the priests, who give out clothing and food, according as it is required. They are also self constituted guardians of the female part of the mission, shutting up under lock and key, one hour after supper, all those, whose husbands are absent, and all young women and girls above nine years of age. During the day, they are entrusted to the care of the matrons. Notwithstanding this, all the precautions taken by the vigilant fathers of the church are found insufficient. I saw women in irons for misconduct, and men in the stocks. The former are expected to remain a widow six months after the death of a husband, after which period they may marry again. The priests appoint officers to superintend the natives, while they are at work, from among themselves. They are called *alcaldes*, and are very rigid in exacting the performance of the allotted tasks, applying the rod to those who fall short of the portion of labor assigned them. They are taught in the different trades; some of them being blacksmiths, others carpenters and shoe-makers. Those, trained to the knowledge of music, both vocal and instrumental, are intended for the service of the church. The women and girls sew, knit, and spin wool upon a large wheel, which is woven into blankets by the men. The *alcaldes*, after finishing the business of the day, give an account of it to the priest, and then kiss his hand, before they withdraw to their wigwams, to pass the night. This mission is composed of parts of five different tribes, who speak different languages.

The greater part of these Indians were brought from their native mountains against their own inclinations, and by compulsion; [214] and then baptised; which act was as little voluntary on their part, as the former had been. After these preliminaries, they had been put to work, as converted Indians.

The next mission on my way was that, called St. John the Baptist. The mountains here approach so near the ocean, as to leave only room enough for the location of the mission. The waves dash upon the shore immediately in front of it. The priest, who presides over this mission, was in the habit of indulging his love of wine and stronger liquors to such a degree, as to be often intoxicated. The church had been shattered by an earthquake. Between twenty and thirty of the Indians, men, women and children, had been suddenly destroyed by the falling of the church bells upon them. After communicating the vaccine matter to 600 natives, I left this place, where mountains rose behind to shelter it; and the sea stretched out its boundless expanse before it.

Continuing my route I reached my next point of destination. This establishment was called the mission of St. Gabriel. Here I vaccinated 960 individuals. The course from the mission of St. John the Baptist to this place led me from the sea-shore, a distance of from eighteen to twenty miles. Those, who selected the position of this mission, followed the receding mountains. It extends from their foot, having in front a large tract of country showing small barren hills, and yet affording pasturage for herds of cattle so numerous, that their number is unknown even to the all surveying and systematic priests. In this species of riches St. Gabriel exceeds all the other establishments on the coast. The sides of the mountains here are covered with a growth of live oak and pine. The chain to which these mountains belong, extends along the whole length of the coast. The fort St. Peter stands on the sea coast, parallel to this mission.

My next advance was to a small town, inhabited by Spaniards, called the town of The Angels. The

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

houses have flat roofs, covered with bituminous pitch, brought from a place within four miles of the town, where this article boils up from the earth. As the liquid rises, hollow bubbles like a shell of a [215] large size, are formed. When they burst, the noise is heard distinctly in the town. The material is obtained by breaking off portions, that have become hard, with an axe, or something of the kind. The large pieces thus separated, are laid on the roof, previously covered with earth, through which the pitch cannot penetrate, when it is rendered liquid again by the heat of the sun. In this place I vaccinated 2,500 persons.

From this place I went to the mission of St. Ferdinand, where I communicated the matter to 967 subjects. St. Ferdinand is thirty miles east of the coast, and a fine place in point of position.

The mission of St. Buenaventura succeeded. Not long previous to my arrival here, two priests had eloped from the establishment, taking with them what gold and silver they could lay their hands upon. They chose an American vessel, in which to make their escape. I practised my new calling upon 1000 persons in this mission.

The next point I reached was the fort of St. Barbara. I found several vessels lying here. I went on board of them, and spent some pleasant evenings in company with the commanders. I enjoyed the contrast of such society with that of the priests and Indians, among whom I had lately been. This place has a garrison of fifty or sixty soldiers. The mission lies a half a mile N. W. of the fort. It is situated on the summit of a hill, and affords a fine view of the great deep. Many are the hours I passed during this long and lonely journey, through a country every way strange and foreign to me, in looking on the ceaseless motion of its waves. The great Leviathan too played therein. I have often watched him, as he threw spouts of water into the air, and moved his huge body through the liquid surface. My subjects here amounted to 2600. They were principally Indians.

The next mission on my route was that called St. Enos. I vaccinated 900 of its inhabitants, and proceeded to St. Cruz, where I operated upon 650. My next advance was to St. Luis Obispos. Here I found 800 subjects. The mission of St. Michael followed in order. In it I vaccinated 1850 persons. [216] My next theatre of operations was at St. John Bapistrano. 900 was the number that received vaccination here. Thence I went to La Solada, and vaccinated 1685, and then proceeded to St. Carlos, and communicated the matter to 800.

From the latter mission I passed on to the fort of Monte El Rey, where is a garrison of a hundred soldiers. I found here 500 persons to vaccinate. The name of this place in English signifies the King's mount or hill. Forests spread around Monte El Rey for miles in all directions, composed of thick clusters of pines and live oaks. Numberless grey bears find their home, and range in these deep woods. They are frequently known to attack men. The Spaniards take great numbers of them by stratagem, killing an old horse in the neighborhood of their places of resort. They erect a scaffold near the dead animal, upon which they place themselves during the night, armed with a gun or lance. When the bear approaches to eat, they either shoot it, or pierce it with the lance from their elevated position. Notwithstanding all their precautions, however, they are sometimes caught by the wounded animal; and after a man has once wrestled with a bear, he will not be likely to desire to make a second trial of the same gymnastic exercise. Such, at any rate, is the opinion I have heard those express, who have had the good fortune to come off alive from a contest of this kind. I do not speak for myself in this matter, as I never came so near as to take the close hug with one in my life; though to escape it, I once came near breaking my neck down a precipice.

From Monte El Rey I advanced to the mission of St. Anthony, which lies thirty miles E. from the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

coast. In it I found one thousand persons to inoculate. I had now reached the region of small pox, several cases of it having occurred in this mission. The ruling priest of this establishment informed me, that he did not consider it either necessary or advisable for me to proceed farther for the purpose of inoculating the inhabitants of the country, as the small pox had prevailed universally through its whole remaining extent. As I had heard, while in [217] San Diego, great numbers had been carried off by it. I then told him that I wished to see the church officer who had been described to me by the first priest whom I had seen on my way up the coast. He furnished me a horse, and I set off for the port of San Francisco, vaccinating those whom I found on the way who had not had the small pox.

I reached the above mentioned place, on the twentieth of June, 1829. Finding the person of whom I was in search, I presented him all the certificates of the priests of the missions in which I had vaccinated, and the letter of the General. I had inoculated in all twenty-two thousand persons. After he had finished the perusal of these papers, he asked me, what I thought my services were worth? I replied, that I should leave that point entirely in his judgment and decision. He then remarked, that he must have some time to reflect upon the subject, and that I must spend a week or two with him. I consented willingly to this proposal, as I was desirous of crossing the bay of San Francisco to the Russian settlement, called the Bodego.

I proceeded to carry my wish into execution on the 23rd, accompanied by two Coriac Indians, whose occupation was the killing of sea otters for the Russians, who hire them into their service. Those who pursue this employment, have water crafts made of the sea lions' skins, in the shape of a canoe. Over this spreads a top, completely covered in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of the entrance of any water. An opening is left at the bow and stern, over which the person who has entered draws a covering of the same material with that of the boat, which fastens firmly over the aperture in such a manner, as to make this part entirely water proof, as any other portion of the boat. Two persons generally occupy it. No position can be more secure than theirs, from all the dangers of the sea. The waves dash over them harmless. The occupants are stationed, one at the bow, and the other at the stern; the latter guides the boat, while the other is provided with a [218] spear, which he darts into the otter whenever he comes within its reach. Great numbers are thus taken.

But to return to myself: We crossed the bay, which is about three miles in width. It is made by the entrance of a considerable river, called by the Spaniards Rio de San Francisco. After we reached the north shore, we travelled through a beautiful country, with a rich soil, well watered and timbered, and reached the Russian settlement in the night, having come a distance of thirty miles. As our journey had been made on foot, and we had eaten nothing, I was exceedingly fatigued and hungry. I accompanied my fellow travellers, who belonged here, to their wigwams, where I obtained some food, and a seal skin to sleep upon. Early in the morning I arose, and learning from one of my late companions where was the dwelling of the commander of the place, I proceeded towards it. I had become acquainted with this person while I was vaccinating the inhabitants of San Diego. He came there in a brig, and insisted upon my promising him that I would come and communicate the remedy to the people of his establishments, offering to recompense me for my services. I agreed to do what he wished, should it be in my power. Accordingly, finding that the Spaniard did not intend to keep a strict guard over my movements, I availed myself of this opportunity of fulfilling the expressed wish of Don Seraldo, for so was he called. I reached the place

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

pointed out to me by the friendly Indian, and was received by the above mentioned gentleman with the warmest expressions of kindness and friendship. He said that so long a time had elapsed since he saw me, he was afraid I had forgotten our conversation together, and that circumstances had rendered my coming to him impossible. He had suffered greatly from the fear that the small pox would spread among his people, before he should be enabled to prevent danger from it, through the means of the kine pox.

After breakfast, he circulated an order among the people, for all who wished to be provided with a safe guard against the terrible malady that had approached them so near, to come to [219] his door. In a few hours I began my operations; and continued to be constantly occupied for three days, vaccinating during this period fifteen hundred individuals. I reminded them all that they must return on the fourth day, provided no signs of the complaint appeared; and that they were not to rub, or roughly touch the spot, should the vaccine matter have proper effect.

This done, Don Seraldo offered to accompany me through the fort and around the settlement, in order to show me the position, and every thing which might be new and interesting to me. Its situation is one of the most beautiful that I ever beheld, or that the imagination can conceive. The fort stands on the brow of a handsome hill, about two hundred feet above the level of the sea. This hill is surrounded on all sides for two miles with a charming plain. A lofty mountain whose sides present the noblest depth of forest, raises a summit, glittering with perpetual ice and snow on one hand, and on the other the level surface is lost in the waves of the sea. Clear cold streams pour down the mountain, unceasingly from different points, and glide through the plain, imparting moisture and verdure. The same multitudes of domestic animals, that are every where seen in this country, graze around in the pastures. They find abundant pasturage in the wild oats, which grow spontaneously upon this coast. Very little attention is paid to cultivation, where so many advantages are united to favor it. The amount of produce of any kind raised is small, and the inhabitants depend for bread entirely upon the Spaniards.

I remained in this delightful place one week. At the expiration of this time Don Seraldo gave me one hundred dollars, as payment for my services, and then mounted me upon a horse and conducted me back to the bay himself, and remained on the shore, until he saw me safe upon the other side.

I soon saw myself again in the presence of the Spanish priest, from whom I was to receive my recompense for the services performed on my long tour. He was not aware where I had been, until I informed him. When I had told him, he asked [220] me what Don Seraldo had paid me? I stated this matter as it was. He then demanded of me, how I liked the coast of California? I answered, that I very much admired the appearance of the country. His next question was, how I would like the idea of living in it? It would be agreeable to me, I returned, were it subject to any other form of government. He proceeded to question me upon the ground of my objections to the present form of government? I was careful not to satisfy him on this point.

He then handed me a written piece of paper, the translation of which is as follows:

I certify, that James O. Pattie has vaccinated all the Indians and whites on this coast, and to recompense him for the same, I give the said James O. Pattie my obligation for one thousand head of cattle, and land to pasture them; that is, 500 cows and 500 mules. This he is to receive after he becomes a Catholic, and a subject of this government. Given in the mission of St. Francisco on the 8th of July, in the year 1829.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

JOHN CABORTES

When I had read this, without making use of any figure of speech, I was struck dumb. My anger choked me. As I was well aware of the fact, that this man had it in his power to hang me if I insulted him, and that here there was no law to give me redress, and compel him to pay me justly for my services, I said nothing for some time, but stood looking him full in the face. I cannot judge whether he read my displeasure, and burning feelings in my countenance, as I thus eyed him, and would have sought to pacify me, or not; but before I made a movement of any kind, he spoke, saying, 'you look displeased, sir.' Prudential considerations were sufficient to withhold me no longer, and I answered in a short manner, that I felt at that moment as though I should rejoice to find myself once more in a country where I should be justly dealt by. He asked me, what I meant when I spoke of being justly dealt by? I told him [221] what my meaning was, and wished to be in my own country, where there are laws to compel a man to pay another what he justly owes him, without his having the power to attach to the debt, as a condition upon which the payment is to depend, the submission to, and gratification of, any of his whimsical desires. Upon this the priest's tone became loud and angry as he said, 'then you regard my proposing that you should become a Catholic, as the expression of an unjust and whimsical desire!' I told him 'yes, that I did; and that I would not change my present opinions for all the money his mission was worth; and moreover, that before I would consent to be adopted into the society and companionship of such a band of murderers and robbers, as I deemed were to be found along this coast, for the pitiful amount of one thousand head of cattle, I would suffer death.'

When I had thus given honest and plain utterance to the feelings, which swelled within me, the priest ordered me to leave his house. I walked out quickly, and possessed myself of my rifle, as I did not know, but some of his attendants at hand might be set upon me; for if the comparison be allowable the priests of this country have the people as much and entirely under their control and command, as the people of our own country have a good bidable dog. For fear they should come barking at me, I hastened away, and proceeded to a ranch, where I procured a horse for three dollars, which I mounted, and took the route for Monte El Rey. I did not stop, nor stay on my journey to this place. I found upon my arrival there, an American vessel in port, just ready to sail, and on the point of departure.

Meeting the Captain on shore, I made the necessary arrangements with him for accompanying him, and we went on board together. The anchor was now weighed, and we set sail. In the course of an hour, I was thoroughly sick, and so continued for one week. I do not know any word, that explains my feelings in this case so well as that of heart sickness. I ate nothing, or little all this time; but after I recovered, my appetite [222] returned in tenfold strength, and I never enjoyed better health in my life. We continued at sea for several months, sailing from one port to another, and finally returned to that of Monte El Rey, from which we had set sail.

It was now the 6th of January, 1830, and I felt anxious to hear something in relation to my companions, from whom I had so long been separated. I accordingly went on shore, where I met with a great number of acquaintances, both Americans and English. The latter informed me, that there was a revolution in the country, a part of the inhabitants having revolted against the constituted authorities. The revolted party seemed at present likely to gain the ascendancy. They had promised the English and Americans the same privileges, and liberty in regard to the trade on the coast, that belonged to the native citizens, upon the condition, that these people aided them in

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

their attempt to gain their freedom, by imparting advice and funds.

This information gladdened my very heart. I do not know, if the feeling be not wrong; but I instantly thought of the unspeakable pleasure I should enjoy at seeing the general, who had imprisoned me, and treated me so little like a man and a Christian, in fetters himself. Under the influence of these feelings, I readily and cheerfully appropriated a part of my little store to their use, I would fain have accompanied them in hopes to have one shot at the general with my rifle. But the persuasions of my countrymen to the contrary prevailed with me. They assigned, as reasons for their advice, that it was enough to give counsel and funds at first, and that the better plan would be, to see how they managed their own affairs, before we committed ourselves, by taking an active part in them, as they had been found to be a treacherous people to deal with.

On the 8th of the month, Gen. Joachim Solis placed himself at the head of one hundred and fifty soldiers well armed, and began his march from Monte El Rey to the fort of St. Francisco. He was accompanied by two cannon, which, he said, he should make thunder, if the fort was not quietly given up to him. Gen. Solis had been transferred from a command in the city of Mexico [223] to take command of the insurgents, as soon as they should have formed themselves into something like an organized party, and have come to a head. He had left Monte El Rey with such a force as circumstances enabled him to collect, recruiting upon his route, and inducing all to join him, whom he could influence by fair words and promises. As has been said, he threatened the fort of St. Francisco with a bloody contest, in case they resisted his wishes. He carried with him written addresses to the inhabitants, in which those, who would range themselves under his standard, were offered every thing that renders life desirable. They all flocked round him, giving in their adhesion. When he reached the fort, he sent in his propositions, which were acceded to, as soon as read by the majority. The minority were principally officers. They were all imprisoned by General Solis, as soon as he obtained possession of the place. He then proceeded to make laws, by which the inhabitants were to be governed, and placed the fort in the hands of those, upon whom, he thought he could depend.— These arrangements being all made, he began his return to Monte El Rey, highly delighted with his success.

There now seemed little doubt of his obtaining possession of the whole coast in the course of a few months. He remained at Monte El Rey increasing his force, and drilling the new recruits, until the 28th of March, when he again marched at the head of two hundred soldiers. The present object of attack was Santa Barbara, where the commander under the old regime was stationed. The latter was Gen. Echedio, my old acquaintance of San Diego, for whom I bore such good will. He was not in the least aware of the visit intended him by Gen. Solis; the latter having prevented any tidings upon the subject reaching him, by posting sentinels thickly for some distance upon the road, that lay between them, to intercept and stop any one passing up or down. The insurgent General had as yet succeeded in his plans; and was so elated with the prospect of surprising Gen. Echedio, and completely dispossessing him of his power, and consequently having all in his own hands, that he [224] did not consider it necessary any longer to conceal his real character. The professions of the kind purposes of the insurgent towards the English and Americans will be recollected; and also, that it was at a time when application was made by these Spaniards to them for aid. The tone was now changed. Threats were now made, with regard to the future treatment, which we, unfortunate foreigners, might expect, as soon as Gen. Solis became master of the coast. We learned this through a Mexican Spaniard, whose daughter Captain Cooper had married. This

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

old gentleman was told by the General, that he intended either to compel every American and Englishman to swear allegiance to the government, which should be established, or drive them from the country. This information was, however, not communicated to us, until the General had departed. We held a consultation upon the subject, to devise some means, which should render him incapable of carrying his good intentions towards us into effect. No other expedient suggested itself to us, but that of sending General Echedio information of the proposed attack, in time to enable him to be prepared for it. We agreed upon this, and a letter was written, stating what we deemed the points most necessary for him to know. The signatures of some of the principal men of the place were affixed to it; for those who think alike upon important points soon understand one another; and the character of Solis had not been unveiled to us alone. It was important, that General Echedio should attach consequence to our letter, and the information, it contained, would come upon him so entirely by surprize, that he might very naturally entertain doubts of its correctness. I added my name to those of the party to which I belonged. The object now was to have our document conveyed safely into the hands of Gen. Echedio. We sent a runner with two good horses and instructions, how to pass the army of Solis in the night undiscovered. All proceedings had been conducted with so much secrecy and caution, that the matter so far rested entirely with ourselves. We occasionally heard the citizens around [225] us express dislike towards the insurgent General; but as they did not seem inclined to carry their opinions into action, we concluded these were only remarks made to draw out our thoughts, and took no notice of them. From after circumstances I believe, that the number of his enemies exceeded that of his friends; and that the remarks, of which I have spoken, were made in truth and sincerity. Mean while we impatiently awaited some opportunity of operating to the disadvantage of the General, and to hear what had taken place between him and Gen. Echedio. A messenger arrived on the 12th of April with the information, that the commander of the insurgents had ranged his men for three days in succession before the fort upon the plain. A continual firing had been kept up on both sides, during the three days, at the expiration of which Gen. Solis, having expended his ammunition, and consumed his provisions, was compelled to withdraw, having sustained no loss, except that of one horse from a sustained action of three days! The spirit with which the contest was conducted may be inferred from a fact, related to me. The cannon balls discharged from the fort upon the enemy were discharged with so little force, that persons arrested them in their course, without sustaining any injury by so doing, at the point, where in the common order of things, they must have inflicted death.

Upon the reception of this news, we joined in the prevalent expression of opinion around us. The name and fame of Gen. Solis was exalted to the skies. All the florid comparisons, usual upon such occasions, were put in requisition, and all the changes were sung upon his various characteristics wit, honor and courage. The point was carried so far as to bring him within some degrees of relationship to a supernatural being. Then the unbounded skill he displayed in marshalling his force, and his extreme care to prevent the useless waste of his men's lives were expatiated upon, and placed in the strongest light. The climax of his excellence was his having retreated without the loss of a man. This was the burden of our theme to his friends, that is, the fifty soldiers, in whose charge he had left the command of the [226] fort. The Captain Cooper, of whom I have spoken, looked rather deeper into things, than those around him; and consequently knew the most effectual means of operating upon the inefficient machines, in the form of men, which it was

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

necessary for our present purpose, to remove out of the way for a time. Accordingly he rolled out a barrel of good old rum, inviting all the friends of the good and great Gen. Solis to come, and drink his health. The summons was readily obeyed by them. Being somewhat elevated in spirit by the proceedings of their noble general, previous to swallowing the genuine inspiration of joy, the feeling afterwards swelled to an extent, that burst all bounds, and finally left them prostrate and powerless. We, like good Christians, with the help of some of the inhabitants, conveyed them into some strong houses, which stood near, while they remained in their helpless condition, locking the doors safely, that no harm might come to them. In our pity and care for them, we proposed, that they should remain, until they felt that violent excitements are injurious, from the natural re-action of things. We now proceeded to circulate another set of views, and opinions among the inhabitants in the vicinity of the fort; and such was our success in the business of indoctrination, that we soon counted all their votes on our side.

General Solis was now pitched down the depths, as heartily as he had before been exalted to the heights. Huzza for Gen. Echedio and the Americans! was the prevailing cry.

The next movement was to make out a list of our names, and appoint officers. Our number including Scotch, Irish, English, Dutch and Americans, amounted to thirty-nine. The number of Americans, however, being the greatest, our party received the designation of American. Captain Cooper was our commanding officer. We now marched up to the castle, which is situated on the brink of a precipice, overlooking the sea, and found four brass field pieces, mounted on carriages. These we concluded to carry with us to the fort. The remainder placed so as to command a sweep of the surface of water below, and the surrounding ground, we spiked fearing, ff they fell into the [227] hands of Solis, that he might break down our walls with them. This done, we went to the magazine, and broke it open, taking what powder and ball we wanted. We then posted sentinels for miles along the road, to which we knew Solis was hastening in order to prevent news of our proceedings from reaching him, before it was convenient for us, that he should know them. We were aware of his intention to return here to recruit again, and it was our wish to surprize him by an unexpected reception, and thus obtain an advantage, which should counterbalance his superiority of numbers. In so doing, we only availed ourselves of the precedent, he had given us, in his management with regard to Gen. Echedio. He had not derived benefit from his plan, in consequence of his too great confidence of success, which led him to discover his real feelings towards our people.

We hoped to avail ourselves of what was wise in his plan, and profit by his mistakes. We shut up all the people, both men and women, in the fort at night, that it might be out of their power to attempt to make their way, under the cover of darkness, through our line of sentinels, to give information, should the inclination be felt. Our precautions were not taken through fear of him, should he even come upon us, prepared to encounter us as enemies: but from the wish to take both himself and army prisoners. Should they learn what we had done, we feared, they would pass on to St. Francisco, to recruit, and thus escape us.

Our designs were successful; for in a few days General Solis and his men appeared in sight of the first of our sentinels, who quickly transmitted this information to us. Our preparations for receiving him were soon made, with a proper regard to politeness. A regale of music from air instruments, called cannons, was in readiness to incline him to the right view of the scene before him, should he seem not likely to conform to our wish, which was, simply, that he should surrender to

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

us without making any difficulty.

Our fortification was in the form of a square, with only one entrance. From each side of this entrance a wall projected at [228] right angles from it fifty yards. The Spaniards call them wings; and it seems to me a significant and fitting name for them. We intended to allow the approaching party to advance between these walls, before we began our part. Our cannons were charged with grape and balls, and placed in a position to produce an effect between the walls. Every man was now at his post, and General Solis approaching within sight of the fort, a small cannon which accompanied him was discharged by way of salute. No answer was returned to him. The piece was reloaded, and his fife and drum began a lively air, and the whole body moved in a quick step towards the fort, entering the space between the wings, of which I have spoken. This was no sooner done than our matches were in readiness for instant operation. Captain Cooper commanded them to surrender. He was immediately obeyed by the soldiers, who threw down their arms, aware that death would be the penalty of their refusal. The General and six of his mounted officers fled, directing their course to St. Francisco. Six of our party were soon on horseback with our rifles, and in pursuit of them. I had been appointed orderly sergeant, and was one of the six. We carried orders from the principal Spanish civil officer, who was in the fort, and had taken an active part in all our proceedings, to bring the General back with us, either dead or alive. The commands of our military commander, Captain Cooper, spoke the same language.

I confess that I wanted to have a shot at the fugitive, and took pleasure in the pursuit. We went at full speed, for our horses were good and fresh. Those belonging to the party we were so desirous to overtake, would of course be somewhat weary, and jaded by their long journey. We had not galloped many miles, before we perceived them in advance of us. As soon as we were within hearing distance of each other, I called upon them to surrender. They replied by wheeling their horses and firing at us, and then striking their spurs into their horses' sides, to urge them onward. We followed, producing more effect with our spurs than they had done, and calling upon [229] them again to surrender, or we should fire, and give no quarter. They at length reined up, and six dismounted and laid down their arms. The seventh remained on horse back, and as we came up, fired, wounding one of our number slightly in the right arm. He then turned to resume his flight; but his horse had not made the second spring, before our guns brought the hero from his saddle. Four of our balls had passed through his body. The whole number being now assembled together, victors and vanquished, General Solis offered me his sword. I refused it, but told him, that himself and his officers must accompany me in my return to the fort. He consented to this with a countenance so expressive of dejection, that I pitied him, notwithstanding I knew him to be a bad man, and destitute of all principle.

The man who had lost his life through his obstinacy, was bound upon his horse, and the others having remounted theirs, we set out upon our return. Our captives were all disarmed except General Solis, who was allowed to retain his sword. We reached the fort three hours before sunset. The General and his men were dismounted, and irons put upon their legs, after which they were locked up with those who had forgotten themselves in their joy at the good fortune of their poor general.

These events occurred on the 18th of March. On the 20th the civil officer of whom I have before spoken, together with Captain Cooper, despatched a messenger to General Echedio, who was still in Santa Barbara with written intelligence of what we had accomplished. It was stated that the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

Americans were the originators of the whole matter, and that their flag was waving in the breeze over Monte El Rey, where it would remain, until his excellency came himself to take charge of the place; and he was requested to hasten his departure, as they who had obtained possession were anxious to be relieved from the care and responsibility they found imposed upon them.

We were very well aware that he would receive our information with unmingled pleasure, as he expected Solis would return in a short time to Santa Barbara, to give him another battle. [230] It was said, that upon the reception of the letter he was as much rejoiced as though he had been requested to come and take charge of a kingdom. As soon as he could make the necessary arrangements he came to Monte El Rey, where he arrived on the 29th. We gave the command of the place up to him; but before he would suffer our flag to be taken down, he had thirty guns discharged in honor of it. He then requested a list of our names, saying, that if we would accept it, he would give each one of us the right of citizenship in his country. A splendid dinner was made by him for our party. On the night of the 29th a vessel arrived in the port. In the morning it was found to be a brig belonging to the American consul at Macho, John W. Jones, esq., who was on board of it. This was the same person to whom I wrote when in prison at San Diego by Mr. Perkins. I met with him, and had the melancholy pleasure of relating to him in person my sufferings and imprisonment, and every thing, in short, that had happened to me during my stay in this country. This took place in my first interview with him. He advised me to make out a correct statement of the value of the furs I had lost by the General's detention of me, and also of the length of time I had been imprisoned, and to take it with me to the city of Mexico, where the American minister resided, and place it in his hands. It was probable, the consul continued, that he would be able to compel the Mexican government to indemnify me for the loss of property I had sustained, and for the injustice of my imprisonment.

The probability of my success was not slight, provided I could establish the truth of my statement, by obtaining the testimony of those who were eye witnesses of the facts. I informed the consul that I had not means to enable me to reach the city of Mexico. A gentleman who was present during this conversation, after hearing my last remark, mentioned that he was then on his way to that place, and that if I would accompany him he would pay my expenses; and if circumstances should happen to induce me to think of returning thence to the United States, I should do so free of expense. I expressed my thanks [231] for this offer, and said that if I succeeded in recovering only a portion of what I had lost I would repay the money thus kindly expended in my behalf; but the obligation of gratitude imposed by such an act, it would be impossible for me to repay.

In conformity to Mr. Jones' advice and instruction, I sat myself down to make out an account for the inspection of the American minister. When I had completed it, I obtained the signatures, of some of the first among the inhabitants of Monte El Rey, and that of the civil officer before mentioned, testifying as to the truth of what I said, so far as the circumstances narrated had come under their observation. The General having received the list of our names, which he had requested, he now desired, that we might all come to his office, and receive the right of citizenship from his hand, as a reward for what we had done. I put my paper in my pocket, and proceeded with my companions and Mr. Jones to the indicated place. The General had been much surprized to find my name in the list furnished him; but as I entered the room, he arose hastily from his seat and shook my hand in a friendly manner, after which I introduced him to the consul. He seemed surprized as he heard the name of this gentleman, but said nothing. After pointing us to seats, he

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

walked out of the room, saying he should return in a few moments. I concluded, that he thought, I had brought the consul, or that he had accompanied me for the purpose of questioning him on the subject of my imprisonment and that of my companions. He returned, as soon as he had promised, having some papers in his hand. After he had seated himself, he began to interrogate me with regard to what had happened to me, during the long time that had elapsed since he had last seen me, adding, that he did not expect ever to have met me again; but was happy to see me a citizen of his country. My answer in reply to the last part of his remarks was short. I told him, he had not yet enjoyed any thing from that source, and with my consent never should.

He looked very serious upon this manifestation of firmness, or [232] whatever it may be called on my part, and requested to know my objections to being a citizen of the country?

I replied that it was simply having been reared in a country where I could pass from one town to another, without the protection of a passport, which instead of affording real protection, subjected me to the examination of every petty officer, near whom I passed, and that I should not willingly remain, where such was the order of things. Besides, I added, I was liable to be thrown into prison like a criminal, at the caprice of one clothed with a little authority, if I failed to show a passport, which I might either lose accidentally, or in some way, for which I might not have been in the least in fault.

The General, in reply, asked me if in my country a foreigner was permitted to travel to and fro, without first presenting to the properly constituted authorities of our government, proof from those among the officers of his own government appointed for that purpose, of his being a person of good character, who might safely be allowed to traverse the country? I told him I had once attempted to satisfy him on that head, and he very abruptly and decidedly contradicted my account; and that now I did not feel in the least compelled, or inclined to enter upon the matter a second time. All which I desired of him, and that I did not earnestly desire, was, that he would give me a passport to travel into my own country by the way of the city of Mexico. If I could once more place my foot upon its free soil, and enjoy the priceless blessings of its liberty, which my unfortunate father, of whom I could never cease to think, and who had died in his prison, assisted in maintaining, I should be satisfied.

While I thus spoke, he gazed steadily in my face. His swarthy complexion grew pale. He read in my countenance a strong expression of deep feeling, awakened by the nature of the remembrances associated with him. He felt that there was something fearful in the harvest of bitterness which the oppressor reaps in return for his injuries and cruelties. I thought, he [233] feared, if he did not grant my request for a pass, that I might carry into execution the purposes of vengeance; to which I used to give utterance in my burning indignation at his conduct at the time of my father's death. Whenever I saw him pass my prison I seized the opportunity to tell him, that if my time for redress ever came, he would find me as unflinching in my vengeance as he had been in his injuries. I only expressed the truth with regard to my feelings at the time, and even now I owe it to candor and honesty to acknowledge, that I could have seen him at the moment of this conversation suffer any infliction without pity.

He did not hesitate to give the pass I desired; but asked me what business led me out of my way to the United States around by the city of Mexico? My direct course, he remarked, lay in a straight direction through New Mexico. For reply, I drew out of my pocket the paper I had written before coming to his office, and read it to him, telling him that was the business which led me to the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

city of Mexico. I then asked him if all the facts there stated were not true? His answer was in the affirmative; 'but,' added he, 'you will not be able to recover any thing, as I acted in conformity to the laws of my country. If you will remain in this country I will give you something handsome to begin with.' I assured him that I would not stay, but I wished him to show me the laws which allowed, or justified him in imprisoning myself and my companions for entering a country as we did, compelled by misfortunes such as ours. In return, he said he had no laws to show, but those which recommended him to take up and imprison those whom he deemed conspirators against his country. 'What marks of our being conspirators did you discover in us,' rejoined I, 'which warranted your imprisoning us? I am aware of none, unless it be the evidence furnished by our countenances and apparel, that we had undergone the extreme of misfortune and distress, which had come upon us without any agency on our part, and as inevitable evils to which every human being is liable. We were led by the hope of obtaining relief, to seek refuge in your protection. [234] In confirmation of our own relation, did not our papers prove that we were Americans, and that we had received legal permission from the very government under which we then were, to trade in the country? The printed declaration to this effect, given us by the governor of Santa Fe, which we showed you, you tore in pieces before us, declaring it was neither a license nor a passport.' The General replied, that he did tear up a paper given him by us, but that in fact it was neither a passport nor a license.

"Now sir," said I, "I am happy that it is in my power to prove, in the presence of the American consul, the truth of what I have said with regard to the license." I then produced another copy of the paper torn up by him, which had been given my father by the governor of Santa Fe, at the same time with the former. He looked at it, and said nothing more, except that I might go on, and try what I could do in the way of recovering what I had lost.

The consul and myself now left him, and returned to Capt. Cooper's. The consul laughed at me about my quarrel with the General. In a few moments the latter appeared among us, and the remainder of the day passed away cheerfully in drinking toasts. When the General rose to take leave of us, he requested the consul to call upon him at his office; as he wanted to converse with him upon business. The consul went, according to request, and the General contracted with him for the transportation of Gen. Solis, and sixteen other prisoners to San Blas, on board his vessel, whence they were to be carried to the city of Mexico. The 7th of May was fixed for the departure of the brig, as the General required some time for making necessary arrangements, and preparing documents to accompany the transmission of the prisoners. When I heard that this delay was unavoidable, I went to the General and returned my passport, telling him I should want another, when the vessel was ready to sail, as I intended to proceed in it as far as San Blas. He consented to give me one, and then joked with me about the [235] honor, I should enjoy, of accompanying Gen. Solis. I replied in the same strain, and left him.

Captain William H. Hinkley and myself went to the mission of San Carlos, where we spent three days. During the whole time, we did little beside express our astonishment at what we saw. We had fallen upon the festival days of some saint, and the services performed in his honor all passed under our eyes. They were not a few, nor wanting in variety, as this was a noted festival. Our admiration, however, was principally excited by the contest between grizzly bears and bulls, which constitutes one of the exhibitions of these people.

Five large grey bears had been caught, and fastened in a pen built for the purpose of confining the

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

bulls, during a bullbaiting. One of the latter animals, held by ropes, was brought to the spot by men on horseback, and thrown down. A bear was then drawn up to him, and they were fastened together by a rope about fifteen feet in length, in such a manner, that they could not separate from each other. One end of it is tied around one of the forefeet of the bull, and the other around one of the hind feet of the bear. The two were then left to spring upon their feet. As soon as this movement is made, the bull makes at the bear, very often deciding the fate of the ferocious animal in this first act. If the bull fails in goring the bear, the fierce animal seizes him and tears him to death. Fourteen of the latter lost their lives, before the five bears were destroyed. To Captain Hinkley this was a sight of novel and absorbing interest. It had less of novelty for me, as since I had been on the coast, I had often seen similar combats, and in fact worse, having been present when men entered the enclosure to encounter the powerful bull in his wild and untamed fierceness. These unfortunate persons are armed with a small sword, with which they sometimes succeed in saving their own lives at the expense of that of the animal.

I once saw the man fall in one of these horrible shows; they are conducted in the following manner: the man enters to the bull with the weapon, of which he avails himself, in the right [236] hand, and in the left a small red flag, fastened to a staff about three feet in length. He whistles, or makes some other noise, to attract the attention of the animal, upon hearing which the bull comes towards him with the speed of fury. The man stands firm, with the flag dangling before him, to receive this terrible onset. When the bull makes the last spring towards him, he dexterously evades it, by throwing his body from behind the flag to one side, at the same time thrusting his sword into the animal's side. If this blow is properly directed, blood gushes from the mouth and nostrils of the bull, and he falls dead. A second blow in this case is seldom required.

Another mode of killing these animals is by men on horseback, with a spear, which they dart into his neck, immediately behind the horns. The horse is often killed by the bull. When the animal chances to prefer running from the fight to engaging in it, he is killed by the horseman, by being thrown heels over head. This is accomplished by catching hold of the tail of the bull in the full speed of pursuit, and giving a turn around the head of the saddle, in such a manner, that they are enabled to throw the animal into any posture they choose.

After we returned to the fort, it took us some time to relate what we had seen, to the consul. Feeling it necessary to do something towards supporting myself, during the remaining time of my stay in this part of the country, I took my rifle, and joined a Portuguese in the attempt to kill otters along the coast. We hunted up and down the coast, a distance of forty miles, killing sixteen otters in ten days. We sold their skins, some as high as seventy-five dollars, and none under twenty-five. Three hundred dollars fell to my share from the avails of our trip. Captain Cooper was exceedingly desirous to purchase my rifle, now that I should not be likely to make use of it, as I was soon to proceed on my journey to the city of Mexico. I presented it to him, for I could not think of bartering for money, what I regarded, as a tried friend, that had afforded me the means of subsistence and protection for so long a time. My [237] conscience would have reproached me, as though I had been guilty of an act of ingratitude.

The period of my departure from this coast was now close at hand, and my thoughts naturally took a retrospect of the whole time, I had spent upon it. The misery and suffering of various kinds, that I had endured in some portions of it, had not been able to prevent me from feeling, and acknowledging, that this country is more calculated to charm the eye, than any one I have

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

ever seen. Those, who traverse it, if they have any capability whatever of perceiving, and admiring the beautiful and sublime in scenery, must be constantly excited to wonder and praise. It is no less remarkable for uniting the advantages of healthfulness, a good soil, a temperate climate, and yet one of exceeding mildness, a happy mixture of level and elevated ground, and vicinity to the sea. Its inhabitants are equally calculated to excite dislike, and even the stronger feelings of disgust and hatred. The priests are omnipotent, and all things are subject to their power. Two thirds of the population are native Indians under the immediate charge of these spiritual rulers in the numerous missions. It is a well known fact, that nothing is more entirely opposite to the nature of a savage, than labor. In order to keep them at their daily tasks, the most rigid and unremitting supervision is exercised. No bondage can be more complete, than that under which they live. The compulsion laid upon them has, however, led them at times to rebel, and endeavor to escape from their yoke. They have seized upon arms, murdered the priests, and destroyed the buildings of the missions, by pre-concerted stratagem, in several instances. When their work of destruction and retribution was accomplished, they fled to the mountains, and subsisted on the flesh of wild horses which are there found in innumerable droves. To prevent the recurrence of similar events, the priests have passed laws, prohibiting an Indian the use or possession of any weapon whatever, under the penalty of a severe punishment.

On the 25th I addressed the companions of my former journeyings and imprisonment in San Diego by letter. They had [238] remained in the town of Angels, during the months which had elapsed since my separation from them, after our receiving liberty upon parole. I had kept up a constant correspondence with them in this interval. My objects at present were to inform them of my proposed departure for my native country, and request them, if they should be called upon so to do, to state every thing relative to our imprisonment and loss of property, exactly as it took place. I closed, by telling them, they might expect a letter from me upon my arrival in the city of Mexico.

On the 8th of May I applied for my passport, which was readily given me, and taking leave of the General and my friends, I entered the vessel, in which I was to proceed to San Blas, at 8 o'clock in the morning. The sails of the brig, which was called the Volunteer, were soon set, and speeding us upon our way. The green water turned white, as it met the advance of our prow, and behind us we left a smooth belt of water, affording a singular contrast to the waves around. I watched the disappearance of this single smooth spot, as it was lost in the surrounding billows, when the influence of the movement of our vessel ceased, as a spectacle to be contemplated by a land's man with interest. But no feeling of gratification operated in the minds of the poor prisoners in the hold. They were ironed separately, and then all fastened to a long bar of iron. They were soon heard mingling prayers and groans, interrupted only by the violent vomiting produced by sea sickness. In addition to this misery, when fear found entrance into their thoughts during the intervals of the cessation of extreme sickness, it seemed to them, as if every surge the vessel made must be its last. In this miserable condition they remained, until the 19th, when we arrived at San Blas. The prisoners here were delivered into the charge of the commanding officer of the place. Captain Hinkley, his mate, Henry Vinal, and myself disembarked at this place, in order to commence our journey over land to Mexico. The necessary arrangements for our undertaking occupied us three days. We found the season warm on our arrival here. Watermelons were abundant, and also green [239] corn, and a great variety of ripe fruit. Two crops of corn and wheat are raised

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

in the year. A precipice was shown me, over which, I was told, the Mexicans threw three old priests at the commencement of the revolt against the king of Spain.— This port is the centre of considerable business in the seasons of spring and fall. During the summer, the inhabitants are compelled to leave it, as the air becomes infected by the exhalations, arising from the surrounding swamps. Myriads of musquitos and other small insects fill the air at the same time, uniting with the former cause to render the place uninhabitable.

Great quantities of salt are made upon the flats in the vicinity of San Blas. I did not inform myself accurately, with regard to the manner, in which it is made; but as I was passing by one day, where the preparation of it was carried on, I observed what struck me as being both curious and novel. The earth was laid off in square beds. Around their edges dirt was heaped up, as though the bed, which I have mentioned, was intended to be covered with water.

We began our journey well armed, as we had been informed that we should, in all probability, find abundant occasion to use our arms, as we advanced. Our progress was slow, as we conformed to the directions given us, and kept a constant look out for robbers, of whom there are said to be thousands upon this route.

On the 25th we reached a small town called Tipi, where we remained one day to rest from our fatigue, and then set off again for Guadalaxara, distant eight days' journey. Our path led us through a beautiful country, a great portion of which was under cultivation. Occasionally we passed through small villages. Beggars were to be seen standing at the corners of all the streets, and along the highways. They take a station by the road side, having a dog or child by them, to lead them into the road when they see a traveller approaching. They stand until the person reaches the spot upon which they are, when they ask alms for the sake of a saint, whose image is worn suspended around their neck, or tied around the wrist. [240] This circumstance of begging for the saint, and not for themselves, struck me as a new expedient in the art of begging. At first we gave a trifle to the poor saint. As we went on we found them so numerous that it became necessary for us to husband our alms, and we finally came to the conclusion that the large brotherhood of beggars could occasionally diversify their mode of life by a dexterous management of their fingers, and shut our purses to the demands of the saints. The country for some time before we drew near Guadalaxara, was rather barren, although its immediate vicinity is delightful.

We reached that city on the 2d of June, and spent three days in it. It is situated upon a fine plain, which is overspread by the same numbers of domestic animals that I had seen in New Mexico and California. The city is walled in, with gates at the different entrances. These gates are strongly guarded, and no one is allowed to enter them until they have been searched, in order to ascertain if they carry any smuggled goods about them. The same precaution is used when any one passes out of the city. A passport must be shown for the person, his horse, and arms, and a statement from the principal peace officer, of the number of trunks with which he set out upon his journey, and their contents. This caution is to prevent smuggling; but it does not effect the purpose, as there is more contraband trade here, than in any place I was ever in before. I was not able to ascertain the number of inhabitants of this city. The silver mines of Guanaxuato are near Guadalaxara. They are carried on at present by an English company. The evening before our departure we went to the theatre. The actresses appeared young and beautiful, and danced and sung charmingly.

The 5th day of June we resumed our journey to the city of Mexico. Again we travelled through a

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

charming country, tolerably thickly settled. On our way we fell in company with an officer belonging to the service of the country. He had ten soldiers with him. Upon his demanding to see our passports we showed them to him, though he had no authority to make [241] such a demand. After he had finished their perusal he returned them with such an indifferent air, that I could not resist an inclination to ask him some questions that might perhaps have seemed rude. I first asked him what post he filled in the army? He answered, with great civility, he was first lieutenant. I then requested to know, to what part of the country he was travelling? He said, still in a very civil manner, that he had had the command of some troops in Guanaxuato, but was now on his way to the city of Mexico, to take charge of the 6th regiment, which was ordered to the province of Texas, to find out among the Americans there, those who had refused obedience to the Mexican laws. He added, that when he succeeded in finding them, he would soon learn them to behave well. The last remark was made in rather a contemptuous tone of voice, and with something like an implied insult to me. This warmed my blood, and I replied in a tone not so gentle as prudence might have counselled a stranger in a foreign land to have adopted, that if himself and his men did not conduct themselves properly when they were among the Americans, the latter would soon despatch them to another country, which they had not yet seen; as the Americans were not Mexicans, to stand at the corner of a house, and hide their guns behind the side of it, while they looked another way, and pulled the trigger. At this he flew into a passion. I did not try to irritate him any further, and he rode on and left us. We pursued our way slowly, and stopped for the night at Aguabuena, a small town on the way. We put up at a house, a sort of posada, built for lodging travellers.— Twenty-five cents is the price for the use of a room for one night. It is seldom that any person is found about such an establishment to take charge of it but an old key bearer. Provisions must be sought elsewhere. It is not often necessary to go further than the street, where, at any hour in the day until ten o'clock at night, men and women are engaged in crying different kinds of eatables. We generally purchased our food of them. After we had finished our supper two English gentlemen entered, who were on their way to the city of Mexico. [242] We concluded to travel together, as our point of destination was the same, and we should be more able to resist any adversaries we might encounter; this country being, as I have before mentioned, infested with robbers and thieves, although we had not yet fallen in with any. These gentlemen informed us that the greatest catholic festival of the whole year was close at hand. If we could reach the city of Mexico before its celebration, we should see something that would repay us for hastening our journey. As we were desirous to lose the sight of nothing curious, we proceeded as fast as circumstances would permit, and reached the city on the 10th, late in the evening, and put up at an inn kept by an Englishman, although, as in the other towns in which we had been, we were obliged to seek food elsewhere, the only accommodation at the inn being beds to sleep in, and liquors to drink. We found supper in a coffee house. We were awakened early in the morning by the ringing of bells. As we stepped into the street we met three biers carried by some men guarded by soldiers. Blood was dropping from each bier. The bearers begged money to pay the expenses of burying the bodies. I afterwards learned that these persons were murdered on the night of our arrival, upon the Alameda, a promenade north of the city, in one of the suburbs. We visited this place, and found it covered with thousands of people, some walking, and others sitting on the seats placed around this public pleasure ground. Small parties are sheltered from view by thickets of a growth, like that in our country, used for

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

hedges. The open surface is surrounded by a hedge of the same shrub. These partially concealed parties are usually composed of men and women of the lowest orders, engaged in card playing. Such are to be seen at any hour of the day, occupied in a way which is most likely to terminate the meeting in an affray, and perhaps murder. Blood is frequently shed, and I judged from what I saw of the order of things, that the accounts of the numerous assassinations committed among this populace, were not exaggerated. One of the characteristics of this people [243] is jealousy. Notwithstanding the danger really to be apprehended from visiting this place after certain hours, my two companions and myself spent several evenings in it without being molested in the slightest degree. But one evening as we were returning to our lodgings, we were compelled to kneel with our white pantaloons upon the dirty street, while the host was passing. We took care afterwards to step into a house in time to avoid the troublesome necessity.

We attended a bull baiting, and some other exhibitions for the amusement of the people. Being one evening at the theatre, I had the misfortune to lose my watch from my pocket, without being aware when it was taken. It would have been useless for me to have thought of looking around for it, as I stood in the midst of such a crowd that it was almost an impossibility to move.

The accounts of this city which I had met with in books led me to expect to find it placed in the midst of a lake, or surrounded by a sheet of water. To satisfy myself with regard to the truth of this representation, I mounted a horse, and made the circuit of the city, visiting some villages that lay within a league of it. I found no lake; but the land is low and flat. A canal is cut through it, for the purpose of carrying off the water that descends from the mountains upon the level surface, which has the appearance of having been formerly covered with water. A mountain which is visible from the city, presents a circular summit, one part of which is covered with snow throughout the year: upon the other is the crater of a volcano, which is continually sending up proof of the existence of an unceasing fire within.

Early upon the first day of my arrival in this city, I waited upon Mr. Butler, the American charge d'affairs. After I had made myself known to him he showed me a communication from President Jackson to the President of this country, the purport of which was, to request the latter to set at liberty some Americans, imprisoned upon the coast of California. I then handed him the statement I had made according to the advice [244] of Mr. Jones. He asked me many questions relative to the losses I had sustained, which I answered, and then took my leave.

A number of coaches were to leave the city for Vera Cruz on the 18th of June. My companions and myself took places in one of them. On the 15th I again called upon Mr. Butler to obtain a passport to Vera Cruz, where I intended to embark for America. He took me to the palace of the President, in order that I might get my passport. This circumstance was agreeable to me, as I was desirous to see this person, of whom I had heard so much. Upon arriving at the palace I found it a splendid building, although much shattered by the balls discharged at it by the former President Guerero, who is now flying from one place to another with a few followers, spreading destruction to the extent of his power. A soldier led me into the presence of the President. He was walking to and fro when I entered the room, apparently in deep meditation. Several clerks were present, engaged in writing. He received me politely, bowing as I advanced, and bade me sit down. In answer to his inquiry what I wished of him? I told my errand. He then asked me from what direction I came? I replied, from California. California! said he, repeating the word with an air of interest. I answered again, that I left that part of the country when I began my present journey. You must

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

have been there then, rejoined he, when the late revolution took place, of which I have but a short time since received information. I remarked, that I was upon the spot where it occurred, and that I took my departure from the coast in the same vessel that brought sixteen of the captives taken in the course of its progress, and that I disembarked at St. Blas at the same time that they were taken from the vessel. He resumed the conversation by saying, you were probably one of the Americans who, I am told, assisted in subduing the revolted party. I told him, he was correct in his opinion; and by so doing I had had the good fortune to gain my liberty. His countenance expressed surprise at the conclusion of my remark; and he proceeded [245] to ask me, what meaning I had, in saying that I had thus regained my own liberty? I then related my story; upon which he said he had understood that General Echedio had acted contrary to the laws, in several instances, and that, in consequence, he had ordered him to Mexico to answer for his conduct. I was surprised at the condescension of the President in thus expressing to me any part of his intentions with regard to such a person. I accounted for it by supposing that he wished to have it generally understood, that he did not approve of the unjust and cruel treatment which the Americans had received. The president appeared to me to be a man of plain and gentlemanly manners, possessing great talent. In this I express no more than my individual opinion; to which I must add that I do not consider myself competent to judge of such points, only for myself. He gave me a passport, and I returned to Mr. Butler's office, who informed me that he wished me to take a very fine horse to Vera Cruz, for the American consul at that place. He said that I would find it pleasant to vary my mode of travelling, by occasionally riding the horse. I readily consented to his wish, requesting him to have the horse taken to the place from which the coach would set off, early in the morning, when I would take charge of it. I now took leave of Mr. Butler and proceeded to my lodgings.

I found both my companions busily engaged in packing, and arranging for departure. I immediately entered upon the same employment. I had two trunks; one I filled with such articles as I should require upon my journey; and in another I placed such as I should not be likely to use, and a great many curiosities which I had collected during my long wanderings. The latter trunk I did not calculate to open until I reached my native land.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of the 16th our coach left the city, in company with two others. We were eight in number, including the coachman. Three of the party were ladies. One was a Frenchwoman, a married lady travelling without her husband. Another was a Spanishwoman, who had married [246] a wealthy Irishman, and was accompanied by her husband. The third was the wife of a Mexican officer, also one of the eight. This gentleman was an inveterate enemy of the displaced President General Guero. We journeyed on very amicably together, without meeting with the slightest disturbance, until the second day, when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, we were met by a company of fifty men, all well mounted and armed. At first sight of them we had supposed them to be a party which had been sent from the city in search of some highwaymen who had committed murder and robbery upon the road on which we were travelling, a few days previous to our departure. A few minutes served to show us our mistake.— They surrounded the coaches, commanding the drivers to halt, and announcing themselves as followers of General Guero. They demanded money, of which they stated that they were in great need. The tone of this demand was, however, humble, such as beggars would use. While they addressed us in this manner, they contrived to place themselves among and around the persons of our party in such a way as to obtain entire command of us. The instant they had completed this purpose, they pre-

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

sented their spears and muskets, and demanded our arms. We resigned them without offering an objection, as we saw clearly, that opposition would be unavailing. They now proceeded to take from us what they thought proper. I was allowed to retain my trunk of clothing for my journey. The Mexican officer was sitting by his wife in the coach. Some of the soldiers seized him, and dragged him from his almost distracted wife out of the carriage. His fate was summarily decided, and he was hung upon a tree. When this dreadful business was terminated, we were ordered to drive on. We gladly hastened from such a scene of horror. But the agony of the unfortunate wife was an impressive memorial to remind us of the nature of the late occurrence, had we needed any other than our own remembrances. We left this afflicted lady at Xalapa, in the care of her relations. A great quantity of jalap, which is so much used in medicine, is obtained from this place. [247] After leaving Xalapa, we advanced through a beautiful country. We passed many small towns on this part of our route.

Our course had been a continued descent, after crossing the mountain sixteen miles from the city of Mexico. The road is excellent, being paved for the most part. It is cut through points of mountains in several places. This work must have been attended with immense labor and expense. We reached Vera Cruz on the 24th. On the 27th Captain Hinkley and his mate embarked for New York. I remained with the consul Mr. Stone, until the 18th of July. A vessel being in readiness to sail for New Orleans at this time, I was desirous to avail myself of the opportunity to return to the United States. Mr. Stone and some others presented me money sufficient to pay my passage to the point to which the vessel was bound. It was very painful to me to incur this debt of gratitude, as I could not even venture to hope that it would be in my power to repay it, either in money or benefits of any kind. The prospect, which the future offered me, was dark. It seemed as if misfortune had set her seal upon all that concerned my destiny. I accepted this offering of kindness and benevolence with thanks direct from my heart, and went on board the vessel.

It would be idle for me to attempt to describe the feelings that swelled my heart, as the sails filled to bear me from the shores of a country, where I had seen and suffered so much. My dreams of success in those points considered most important by my fellow men, were vanished forever. After all my endurance of toil, hunger, thirst and imprisonment, after encountering the fiercest wild beasts in their deserts, and fiercer men, after tracing streams before unmeasured and unvisited by any of my own race to their source, over rugged and pathless mountains, subject to every species of danger, want and misery for seven years, it seemed hard to be indebted to charity, however kind and considerate it might be, for the means of returning to my native land.

[248] As we sped on our way, I turned to look at the land I was leaving, and endeavored to withdraw my thoughts from the painful train into which they had fallen. Vera Cruz is the best fortified port I have ever seen. The town is walled in, and well guarded on every side with heavy cannon. The part of the wall extending along the water's edge, is surmounted by guns pointing so as completely to command the shipping in the harbour. A reef of rocks arises at the distance of half a mile from the shore opposite the city, and continues visible for several miles in a south direction, joining the main land seven or eight miles southwest of Vera Cruz. A fort stands upon that part of the reef which fronts the town. Ships in leaving or entering the harbour are obliged to pass between the fort and the town.

We reached New Orleans on the first of August, although the wind had not been entirely favorable. It blew a stiff breeze from a direction which compelled us to run within five points and a

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

half of the wind. As I approached the spot where my foot would again press its native soil, my imagination transported me over the long course of river which yet lay between me, and all I had left in the world to love. I cannot express the delight which thrilled and softened my heart, as I fancied myself entering my home; for it was the home I had known and loved when my mother lived, and we were happy that rose to my view. Fancy could not present another to me. There were my brothers and sisters, as I had been used to see them. The pleasant shade of the trees lay upon the turf before the door of our dwelling. The paths around were the same, over which I had so often bounded with the elastic step of childhood, enjoying a happy existence. Years and change have no place in such meditations. We landed, and I stood upon the shore. I was aroused by the approach of an Englishman, one of my fellow passengers, to a sense of my real position. He asked me if I had taken a passage in a steamboat for Louisville? I immediately answered in the negative. He then said he had bespoken one in the *Cora*; and as I had [249] not chosen any other, he would be glad if I would go on in the same one with him, and thus continue our companionship as long as possible. So saying he took me by the arm to lead me in the direction of the boat of which he spoke, that we might choose our births. As we advanced together, it occurred to me to ask the price of a passage to Louisville? I was answered, forty dollars. Upon hearing this I stopped, and told my companion I could not take a birth just then, at the same time putting my hand in my pocket to ascertain if the state of my funds would permit me to do so at all. The Englishman seeing my embarrassment, and conjecturing rightly its origin, instantly remarked, that the passage money was not to be paid until the boat arrived at Louisville. I was ashamed to own my poverty, and invented an excuse to hide it, telling him, that I had an engagement at that time, but would walk with him in the evening to see about the passage. He left me in consequence. I then discovered, that so far from being able to take a cabin passage I had not money enough to pay for one on the deck.

I re-entered the vessel in which I had arrived. As I approached the captain I saw him point me out to a person conversing with him, and heard him say, 'there is the young man I have been mentioning to you. He speaks Spanish, and will probably engage with you.' When I was near enough he introduced me to the stranger, whom he called Captain Vion. The latter addressed a few remarks to me, and then requested me to accompany him into his vessel.

I consented and followed him on board. He then told me, that he wished to engage a person to accompany him to Vera Cruz, and aid in disposing of his vessel and cargo; and asked if I was inclined to go with him for such a purpose? I said, in reply, that it would depend entirely upon the recompense he offered for the services to be performed. He remarked, that he would give a certain per cent upon the brig and cargo, in case it was sold. I partly agreed to his proposal, but told him that I could not decide finally upon it until I had considered the matter. He then requested [250] me to come to him the next day at 12 o'clock, when I would find him at dinner.

I left him, after promising to do so, and wandered about looking at the city until evening, when I met the Englishman from whom I had parted in the morning. He said he would now accompany me to the steam boat, that we might choose our births according to our engagement. I had no longer any excuse to offer, and was compelled to acknowledge that the contents of my purse were not sufficient to justify me in contracting a debt of forty dollars. I added, that I had an idea of returning to Vera Cruz. He replied, that in regard to the passage money I need have no uneasiness, nor hesitate to go on board, as he would defray my expenses as far as I chose to go. In respect to

---

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

my plan of returning to Vera Cruz, he said that it would be exceedingly unwise for me to carry it into execution; as the yellow fever would be raging by the time I reached the city, and that it was most likely I should fall a victim to it. I had, however, determined in my own mind that I would run the risk, rather than ask or receive aid from a person to whom I was comparatively unknown, and accordingly I refused his kindly proffered assistance, telling him at the same time, that I felt as grateful to him as though I had accepted his offered kindness, and that I would have availed myself of his benevolent intentions towards me, had he been a resident of my country; but as I knew him to be a traveller in a foreign land, who might need all his funds, he must excuse me. He then asked me if I had no acquaintance in New Orleans, of whom I could obtain the money as a loan? I replied, that I did not know an individual in the city; but if I carried my plan of returning to Vera Cruz into execution, I should probably be enabled to proceed to my friends without depending on any one. Upon this we separated, and each went to his lodging.

At ten the succeeding morning my English friend came to my boarding house, accompanied by Judge Johnston, who accosted me with a manner of paternal kindness, enquiring of me how long I had been absent from my country and relations? [151] I naturally enquired in turn, if he was in any way acquainted with them? He replied, that he was; and advised me to ascend the river, and visit them. I expressed to him how pleasant it would be to me to visit them, but assured him that it was out of my power to enjoy that pleasure at present. He enquired why? I avoided a direct answer, and remarked, that I proposed returning to Vera Cruz. He not only urged strong objections to this, but offered to pay my passage up the river. It may be easily imagined how I felt in view of such an offer from this generous and respectable stranger. I thankfully accepted it, only assuring him that I should repay him as soon as it was in my power. He replied that it was a matter of no consequence. He advised me to go on board the steam boat and choose my birth, alleging, that he had business in the city which would not allow him to accompany me on board.

My English friend seemed highly gratified by this good fortune of mine, and went with me on board the steam boat, where I chose a birth. The name of this gentleman was Perry, and he was one of the two whom I have already mentioned, who had travelled in company with me from the city of Guadalajara to Mexico. On the fourth, at nine in the morning, the starting bell rung on the steam boat, and Judge Johnston, Mr. Perry and myself went on board. This was the first steam boat on which I had ever been. Scarcely was the interior of the first ship I was ever on board at San Diego, a spectacle of more exciting interest. How much more delighted was I to see her stem the mighty current of the Mississippi.

As I remarked the plantations, bends and forests sinking in the distance behind me, I felt that I was rapidly nearing home; and at every advance my anxiety to see my relations once more, increased. To the many enquiries, made by Judge Johnston, touching the interior of the continent where I had been wandering, I am sure I must have given very unsatisfactory answers, much as I wished to oblige him. My thoughts dwelt with such constant and intense solicitude upon home, that I felt myself unable to frame answers to questions upon any other subjects. [252] Home did I say? I have none. My father and mother sleep — widely separated from each other. They left nine orphans without resources to breast this stormy and mutable world. I, who ought to supply the place of a parent to them, shall carry to them nothing but poverty, and the withering remembrances of an unhappy wanderer, upon whom misfortune seems to have stamped her inexorable seal.

PATTIE'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC AND IN MEXICO  
JUNE, 20, 1824 -- AUGUST 30, 1830

---

I parted with Judge Johnston at Cincinnati, who gave me a line of introduction to Mr. Flint, for which I felt under renewed obligations to him, hoping it would be of service to me. I left Cincinnati; and on the 30th of August arrived at the end of my journey. I have had too much of real incident and affliction to be a dealer in romance; and yet I should do injustice to my feelings, if I closed this journal without a record of my sensations on reaching home. I have still before me, unchanged by all, that I have seen, and suffered, the picture of the abode of my infant days and juvenile remembrances. But the present reality is all as much changed, as my heart. I meet my neighbors, and school fellows, as I approach the home of my grandfather.— They neither recognize me, nor I them. I look for the deep grove, so faithfully remaining in my memory, and the stream that murmured through it. The woods are levelled by the axe. The stream, no longer protected by the deep shade, has almost run dry. A storm has swept away the noble trees, that had been spared for shade. The fruit trees are decayed.

I was first met by my grandmother. She is tottering under the burden and decline of old age, and the sight of me only recalls the painful remembrance of my father, worn out by the torture of his oppressors, and buried in the distant land of strangers and enemies. I could hardly have remembered my grandfather, the once vigorous and undaunted hunter. With a feeble and tremulous voice, he repeats enquiry upon enquiry, touching the fate of my father? I look round for the dear band of brothers and sisters. But one of the numerous group remains, and he too young to know me; though I see enough to remind me, how much he has stood in need of an efficient protector.— I hastily enquire for the rest. One is here, and another is there, and my head is confused, in listening to the names of the places of their residence. I left one sister, a child. She is married to a person I never knew; one, who, from the laws of our nature, can only regard me with the eye of a stranger. We call each other brother, but the affectionate word will not act as a key, to unlock the fountains of fraternal feeling.

They, however, kindly invite me to their home. I am impelled alike by poverty and affection, to remain with them for a time, till I can forget what has been, and weave a new web of hopes, and form a new series of plans for some pursuit in life. Alas! disappointments, such as I have encountered, are not the motives to impart vigor and firmness for new projects. The freshness, the visions, the hopes of my youthful days are all vanished, and can never return. If any one of my years has felt, that the fashion of this world passeth away, and that all below the sun is vanity, it is I. If there is a lesson from my wanderings, it is one, that inculcates upon children, remaining at the paternal home in peace and privacy; one that counsels the young against wandering far away, to see the habitations, and endure the inhospitality of strangers.

END OF THE NARRATIVE

Daniel Potts Letter 1

[Addressed to Thomas Cochlen]

Rocky Mountains, July 7, 1824

Dear and respected friend,

I take this as the only opportunity to write to you and beg to be excused for my bad spelling and writing. I have more news than I am able to communicate whereas I will give you the most important.

After leaving you I arrived in Illinois in July the same year and tarried there until mid winter and from thence to Masuri where I tarried until spring from there I embarked for the Rocky Mountains and the Columbia for the purpose of hunting and trapping and trading with the Indians in a company of about one hundred men. We hoisted our Sails on the third day of April 1822 at Saint Lewis and arrived at Cedar fort about the middle of July when we were reduced to the sad necessity of eating any thing we could catch as our provision was exhausted and no game to be had, being advanced five hundred miles above the frontiers, we were glad to get a Dog to eat and I have seen some gather the skins of Dogs up through the Camp sing and roast them and eat hearty this so discouraged me that I was determined to turn tail up stream and bear my course down in company with eight others and by the way lost from the others without gun ammunition provision or even cloths to my back of account being four hundred miles from any white people or even knowing where to find Indians; now my dear friend how must I have felt young Birds, frogs, and Snakes were exceptable food with me and not means of fire I in the course of a few days fortunately fell in with a party of Indians who treated me with great humanity and tarried with them four days and then fell in with a trader who conducted me within 350 miles of the frontiers he being able to give me but little aid I tarried but three days when I started with provision consisting of only 3/4 of a pound of Buffaloe suet and arrived at the frontiers in six days were by eating too much and starvation I was taken with a severe spell of sickness which all but took my life.

I here met with a second Boat and ascended the Masuri the second time and arrived at the mouth of Mussel Shell on the latter end of November where I wintered with thirteen others here was a remarkable escape of my scalp as two large parties of Indians wintered within twenty miles of us and our better enemies the blackfeet this place is in latitude 48. the River froze to the immense thickness of four feet and did not break up until the fourth of April and we embarked in Canoes on the 6th and on the 11th I was severely wounded by a wiping stick being shot through both knees which brought me to the ground this disabled me for the springs hunt and almost for ever- I shall now bid farewell and desire you to remember my best respects to all my enquiring friends particular J. Taylor J. McCalla, C. Morris, and J. Mather inform them I am in good health and spirits I remain with high respect  
your most particular friend &c.

Daniel T. Potts

Daniel Potts Letter 2

Rocky Mountains, July 16, 1826

Dear and Respected Brother,

After I left Philadelphia, I was taken with a severe spell of rheumatism which continued with me for about two months. I arrived in Illinois on the 1st of July in the same year, where I remained

---

until March following, when I took my deparure for Missouri, from thence immediately entered on an expedition of Henry and Ashly, bound for the Rocky Mountain and Columbia River. In this enterprize I consider it unnecessary to give you all the particulars appertaining to my travell I left St. Louis on April 3d, 1822, under command of Andrew Henry with a boat and one hundred men and arrived at Council Bluffs on May 1st; from thence we ascended the river to Cedar Fort, about five hundred miles. Here our provisions being exhausted, and no prospect of game near at hand, I concluded to make the best of my way back in company with eight others, and unfortunately was separated from them. By being too accessory in this misfortune, I was left in the Prarie without arms or any means of making fire, and half starved to death. Now taking into consideration my situation, about three hundred and fifty miles from my frontier Post, this would make the most cruel heart sympathise for me. The same day I met with three Indians, whom I hailed, and on my advancing they prepared for action by presenting their arms, though I approached them without hesitation, and gave them my hand. They conducted me to their village, where I was treated with the greatest humanity imaginable. There I remained four days, during which time they had many religious ceremonies too tedious to insert, after which I met with some traders who conducted me as far down as the ? Village - this being two hundred miles from the Post. I departed alone as before, with only about 1/4 lb. suet, and in six days reached the Post where I met with Gen. Ashley, on a second expedition, with whom I entered for the second time, and arrived at the mouth of Yellow Stone about the middle of October. This is one of the most beautiful situations I ever saw; from this I immediately embarked for the mouth of Muscle Shell, in company with twenty one others and shortly after our arrival, eight men returned to the former place. Here the game being very scarce, the prospect was very discouraging, though after a short time the Buffaloes flocked in in great abundance; likewise the Mountain Goats; the like I have never seen since. Twenty six of the latter were slain in the compass of 100 yards square, in the space of two hours. During the winter the Buffaloes came into our camp, one of which I was induced to charge upon by our company without fire arms, at first with a tomahawk only. After approaching very close, the Bull prepared for action with the most dismal look and sprang at me. When within one leap of me, I let fly the tomahawk, which caused him to retreat. After returning to our cabin, I was induced to make the second attempt, armed with tomahawk, knife and spear, accompanied by five or six others armed. After traveling a short distance, we discovered the Beast, and in a concealed manner I approached him within fifty yards, when he discovered me, and made a rapid retreat, though, there being much falling timber, I soon overtook him - finding there was no escape he made battle. On the first onset, I put out one eye with the spear; the second failed in the other eye; on the third I pierced him to the heart, and immediately despatched him. The winter set in early, and the ice on the river froze to the immense thickness of four feet and the snow of an ordinary depth. The river did not discharge itself until the 4th of April; on the 5th we were visited by a party of Indians, and on the 6th we embarked in canoes for the river Judith.

In about one day's travel we discovered where a party of Indians had wintered who were our enemies, but fortunately had not discovered us. On the 11th, I was severely wounded through both knees by an accidental discharge of a rifle; whereby I was obliged to be conducted to our establishment at the mouth of Yellow Stone; here I remained until September. We were favored by the arrival of Major Henry from the Ariccarees who had departed from this place with a small brigade for the relief of Gen. Ashley, who was defeated by that nation, with the loss of sixteen killed

---

and fourteen wounded, out of forty men. After Major Henry joined them and the troops from Council Bluffs, under command of Col Levingworth, they gave them battle; the loss of our enemy was from sixty to seventy. The number of the wounded not known, as they evacuated their village in the night. On our part there was only two wounded, but on his return he was fired upon by night by a party of Mannans wherein two was killed and as many wounded. Only two of our guns were fired which dispatched an Indian and they retreated. Shortly after his arrival we embarked for the big Horn on the Yellow Stone in the Crow Indian country, here I made a small hunt for Beaver. From this place we crossed the first range of Rocky Mountain into a large and beautiful valley adorned with many flowers and interspersed with many useful herbs. At the upper end of this valley on the Horn is the most beautiful scene of nature I have ever seen. It is a boiling spring at the foot of a small burnt mountain about two rods in diameter and depth not ascertained, discharging sufficient water for an overshot mill, and spreading itself to a considerable width forming a great number of basins of various shapes and sizes, of incrustation of sediment, running in this manner for the space of 200 feet, there falling over a precipice of about 30 feet perpendicular into the head of the horn or confluence of Wind River. From thence across the 2d range of mountains to Wind River Valley. In crossing this mountain I unfortunately froze my feet and was unable to travel from the loss of two toes. Here I am obliged to remark the humanity of the natives (the Indians) towards me, who conducted me to their village, into the lodge of their Chief, who regularly twice a day divested himself of all his clothing except his breech clout, and dressed my wounds, until I left them. Wind River is a beautiful transparent stream, with hard gravel bottom about 70 or 80 yards wide, rising in the main range of Rocky Mountains, running E.N.E, finally north through a picturesque small mountain bearing the name of the stream: after it discharges through this mountain it loses its name. The valleys near the head of this river and its tributary streams are tolerably timbered with cotton wood, willow, &c. The grass and herbage are good and plenty, of all the varieties common to this country. In this valley the snow rarely falls more than three to four inches deep and never remains more than three or four days, although it is surrounded by stupendous mountains. Those on S. W. and N. are covered with eternal snow. The mildness of the winter in this valley may readily be imputed to the immense number of Hot Springs which rise near the head of the river. I visited but one of those which rise to the south of the river in a level plain of prairie, and occupies about two acres; this is not so hot as many others but I suppose to be boiling as the outer verge was nearly scalding hot. There is also an Oil Spring in this valley, which discharges 60 or 70 gallons of pure oil per day. The oil has very much the appearance, taste and smell of British Oil. From this valley we proceeded by S. W. direction over a tolerable route to the heads of Sweet Water, a small stream which takes an eastern course and falls into the north fork of the Great Platt, 70 or 80 miles below. This stream rises and runs on the highest ground in all this country. The winters are extremely, and even the summers are disagreeably cold.

We past here about the middle of July last, the ice froze near half an inch in a kettle. Notwithstanding the intense cold this country is well covered with grass herbage and numberless Alpine plants. After crossing the above mentioned stream, we took a more westerly direction over high rolling Prairies to a small branch of a considerable river, known to us by the name of Seet Kadu, and to Spaniard, by Green River, and is supposed to discharge itself into the Bay of California. This river has a bold running current, 80 or 90 yards wide, & bears a S. E. direction. It falls from

the Rocky Mountains in many small rivulets, on which were considerable beaver. This valley, like all others I have seen in this country, is surrounded by mountains, those to S. W. and N. are covered with eternal snow, near the tops. Columbia Mountain, lying N. is the highest I ever saw, and perhaps the highest in North America. It stands rather detached and majestic, beginning abruptly towards the E. and terminating toward N. W. Its tops are the repository of eternal winter. In clear weather its appearance is truly sublime and reflects the brilliancy of the diamond in its various colours. This mountain gives rise to many streams, the principal are the Yellow Stone and Wind River.

The southern branches of the Missouri are Seets Kadu and Lewis river, and others of smaller note. After passing from this valley, in a S. W. direction we had very good travelling over an inconsiderable ridge, we fell on a considerable river, called Bear River, which rises to the S. in the Utaw Mountains, bears N. 80 or 90 miles, when it turns short to the S. W. and S. and after passing two mountains, discharges itself into the Great Salt Lake. On this river and its tributary streams, and adjacent country, we have taken beaver with great success. Since the autumn of 1824, you have no doubt heard, and will hear by the public prints, of the furs brought in by Gen. Ashley, which were the product of our toils. The first valley as you approach from the head of the river, is a small sweet lake, about 120 miles in circumference, with beautiful clear water, and when the wind blows has a splendid appearance. There is also to be found in this valley a considerable sour spring near the most northerly swing of the river. The valley is scantily supplied with timber, as is the case with most of the low grounds of this country. The second, or Willow Valley, is better supplied on this point - this valley has been our chief place of rendezvous and wintering ground. Numerous streams fill in through this valley, which, like the others, is surrounded by stupendous mountains which are unrivalled for beauty and serenity of scenery. You here have a view of all the varieties, plenty of ripe fruit, an abundance of grass just springing up, and buds beginning to shoot, while the higher parts of the mountains are covered with snow, all within 12 or 15 miles of this valley. The river passes through a small range of mountains, and enters the valley that borders on the Great Salt Lake. The G. S. Lake lies in a circular form from N. E. to N. W. the larger circle being to S. it is about 400 miles in circumference, and has no discharge or outlet, it is generally shallow near the beach, and has several islands, which rise like pyramids from its surface. The western part of the lake is so saturated with salt, as not to dissolve any more when thrown into it. The country on S. W. and N. W. is very barren, bearing but little more than wild sage, and short grass. The S. E. and E are fertile, especially near the outlet of the Utaw Lake and Weber's river. The former is about 30 yards wide at its mouth, the later from 50 to 60, and very deep. This river rises to the E. in the Utaw Mountains, and in its course passes through three mountains, to where it enters the lake. We expect to start in a short time to explore the country lying S. W. of the Great Lake, where we shall probably winter. This country has never yet been visited by any white person - from thence to what place I cannot say, but expect the next letter will be dated at the mouth of Columbia. My long absence has created a desire to hear from you, as well as the rest of my people, also my associates. I have been on the very eve of returning this summer, but owing to this unexplored country, which I have a great curiosity to see, I have concluded to remain one or two years. We celebrated the 4th of July, by firing three rounds of small arms, and partook of a most excellent dinner, after which a number of political toasts were drunk.

D.T.P.

Daniel Potts Letter 3

Sweet Lake July 8th 1827

Respectid Brother

A few dass since our trader arived by whom I received two letters one from Dr. Lukens the other from yourself under date of January 1827 which gives me great congratulation to hear that you are both happy wilst I am unhappy also to hear from my friends

shortly after writing to you last year I took my departure for the Black-foot Country much against my will as I could not make a party for any other rout. We took a northerly direction about fifty miles where we cross Snake river or the South fork of Columbia at the forks of Henrys & Lewis's forks at this place we was dayly harrassed by the Black-feet from thence up Henrys or North fork which bears North of East thirty miles and crossed a large ruged Mountain which sepparates the two forks from thence East up the other fork to its source which heads on the top of the great chain of Rocky Mountains which sepparates the water of the Atlantic from that of the Pacific. At or near this place heads the Luchkadee or Callifon Stinking fork Yellow-stone South fork of Masure and Henrys fork all those head at an angular point

that of the Yellow-stone has a large fresh water lake near its head on the verry top of the Mountain which is about one Hundrid by fourty miles in diameter and as clear as crystal on the south borders of this lake is a number of hot and boiling springs, some of water and others of most beautiful fine clay and resembles that of a mush pot and throws its particles to the immense height of from twenty to thirty feet in height. The clay is white and of a pink and water appear fathomless as the it appears to be entirely hollow under neath. There is also a number of places where the pure suphor is sent forth in abundance one of our men Visited one of those wilst taking his recreation there at an instan the earth began a tremendous trembling and he with dificulty made his escape when an explosion took place resembling that of thunder. During our stay in that quarter I heard it every day

From this place by a circuitous rout to the Nourth west we returned two others and myself pushed on in the advance for the purpose of accumulating a few more Bever and in the act of passing through a narrow confine in the Mountain we where met plumb in face by a large party of Black-foot Indians who not knowing our number fled into the mountain in confusion and we to a small grove of willows here we made every prepparation for battle after which finding our enemy as much allarmed as ourselves we mounted our Hourses which where heavily loaded we took the back retreat. The Indian raised a tremendous Yell and showered down from the Mountain top who had almost cut off our retreat we here put whip to our Horses and they pursued us in close quarters until we reached the plains when we left them behind. On this trip one man was closely fired on by a party Black-feet several others where closely pursued. On this trip I have lost one Horse by accident and the last spring two by the Utaws who killed them them for the purpose eattng one of which was a favourite Buffaloe Horse this loss cannot be computed at less than four hundred and fifty Dollars by this you may conclude keeps my nose cllose to the grind stone A few Days previous to my arival at this place a party of about 120 Black feet approachid the Camp and killed a Snake and his squaw the alarm was immediately given and the Snakes Utaws and Whites sallied forth for battle the enemy fled to the Mountain to a small concavity thickly groon with small timber surrounded by open ground In this engagement the squaws where busily engaged in throwing up batterys an draging off the dead there was only six whites engaged in this battle who

---

immediately advanced within pistol shot and you may be assured that almost every shot counted one the loss of the Snakes was three killed and the same same wounded that of the Whites one wounded and two narrowly made their his escape that of the Utaws was none though who gained great applause for their bravery the loss of the enemy is not known six where found dead on the ground besides a great number where carried off on Horses. Tomorrow I depart for the west we are all in good health and expect hope that this letter will find you in the same situation I wish you to remember my best respects to all enquiring friends particularly your wife

Remain yours most affectionately Vc

Danl. T Potts

I inform you I wrote Dr Lukens under the same date and wish you to write me immediately on the receipt of this after the former direction giving me the price of Bever

Daniel Potts Letter 4

[Addressed to Dr. Lukens]

Sweet Water Lake, July 8th 1827

Shortly after our arrival last fall in winter quarters, we made preparations to explore the country lying south west of the Great Salt Lake. Having but little or no winter weather, six of us took our departure about the middle of February, and proceeded by forced marches into the country by way of the Utaw Lake - which lies about 80 miles south of the Sweet Water Lake, is thirty miles long and ten broad. It is plentifully supplied with fish, which form the principal subsistence of the Utaw tribe of Indians. We passed through a large swamp of bullrushes, when suddenly the lake presented itself to our view. On its banks were a number of buildings constructed of bullrushes, and resembling muskrat houses. These we soon discovered to be wigwams, in which the Indians remained during the stay of the ice. As there is not a tree within three miles, their principal fuel is bullrushes.

This is a most beautiful country. It is intersected by a number of transparent streams. The grass is at this time from six to twelve inches in height, and in full bloom. The snow that falls, seldom remains more than a week. It assists the grass in its growth, and appears adapted to the climate. The Utaw lake lies on the west side of a large snowy mountain, which divides it from the Leichadu. From thence we proceeded due south about thirty miles to a small river heading in said mountain, and running from S. E. to S. W. To this I have given the name of Rabbit river, on account of the great number of large black tail rabbits or hares found in its vicinity. We descended this river about fifty miles to where it discharges into a salt lake, the size of which I was not able to ascertain, owing to the marshes which surround it, and which are impassable for man and beast. This lake is bounded on the south and west by low Cedar Mountains, which separate it from the plains of the Great Salt lake. On the south and east also, it is bounded by great plains.

The Indians informed us that the country lying southwest, was impassable for the horses owing to the earth being full of holes.

As well as we could understand from their description, it is an ancient volcanic region. This river is inhabited by a numerous tribe of miserable Indians. Their clothing consists of a breech-cloth of goat or deer skin, and a robe of rabbit skins, cut in strips, sewed together after the manner of rag carpets, with the bark of milk weed twisted into twine for the chain. These wretched creatures go out barefoot in the coldest days of winter. Their diet consists of roots, grass seeds, and grass, so you may judge they are not gross in their habit. They call themselves Pie-Utaws, and I suppose are

derived from the same stock.

From this place we took an east course, struck the river near its head, and ascended it to its source. From thence we went east across the snowy mountain above mentioned, to a small river which discharges into the Leichadu. Here the natives paid us a visit and stole one of our horses. Two nights afterwards they stole another, and shot their arrows into four horses two of which belonged to myself. We then started on our return, the Indians followed us, and were in the act of approaching our horses in open daylight, whilst feeding, when the horses took fright and ran to the camp. It was this that first alarmed us. We sallied forth and fired on the Indians, but they made their escape across the river.

We then paid a visit to the Utaws, who are almost as numerous as the Buffaloe on the prarie, and an exception to all human kind, for their honesty...

There is a poor prospect of making much here, owing to the evil disposition of the Indians and the exorbitant price of goods. For example,

Powder	\$2 50 per lb.
Lead	1 50
Coffee	2 00
Sugar	2 00
Tobacco	2 00
Vermilion	6 00
Beads	5 00
Pepper	6 00
Blankets (three point)	15 00
cotton stripe, per yard	2 50
Calico	do.
scarlet Cloth (coarse) do	10 00
Blue Cloth (coarse) do	8 00
Ribband, per Yd	0 75
Brass nails, per dozen	0 50

Horses cost from 150 dollars to 300, and some as high as 500.

To-morrow I start for the west, and shall not return under a year, when expect to start for St. Louis.

Daniel Potts Letter 5

[Addressed to Robert Montgomery Potts]

St. Louis, October 13, 1828

Respected Brother

with congratulation and a heart overflowed with joy to think that I can write to you from a place incompassed within the bounds of civilation I arrived at this place about a week since after a long and fatiguing journey of about seventy days after which my mind has become more tranquil. Directly after my arrival at this place I hastened to see genl Ashly to receive some tidings from you but to my sad disappointment, there was none this was rather a strange circumstance as I had wrote to you last July was a year also to Dr Lukens at the same time At that time I received yours & his letters of the 23rd & 24th of January 1827 both much interesting and very entertaining in my leisure moments since my arrival for the want of language I am scarcely able to converse with

---

any one of talents which occasion verry disagreeable feelings.  
now to affairs more interesting My adventures and escapes for the last year in the mountains far exceede all the remainder part of my stay in the mountains as I had risked every thing to make or die in the attempt in this fortune froune though preservation smiled through the Indians on one part and the hard winter of the other has been my sad ruin and have lost not less than one thousand dollars the first snow fell on the third of September when it snowed for three days without intermission the snow remained on the ground upwards of knee deep and I think must have felt fully waist deep this had not the least effect on any kind of vegetation as it appears addapted to the climate the winter remained gentle untill the first of December when the power vengence was poured out on us the N. E. winds and more particularly South accompanied with a continued snow untill the first of march when it somewhat abated the snow remained upwards of four feet deep on the level the sweet lake was bridged over on the 8 of may for twenty days in succession the great spirrit the sun refused to visit us the like has been known by the oldest livers which I suppose is not less than one hundred or upwards the horses which the winter did not destroy the early vissits of the Blackfeet swept away with from twelve to fifteen scalps of our hunters A party of about one hundred Black feet mounted attacked thtry odd of our hunters with their familys this engagement lasted for upwards of three hours when a couple of our men mounted two of their swiftest horses dashed through the ranks of the horrid tribe where the balls flew like hail and arrived with express at our camp in less than one hour A distance of more than sixteen miles in this we had one man killed & two wounded one child lost. that of the enemy six or eight killed and wounded I shall now discontinue any further particulars as it is growing late In a few days I shall leave this place in steam boat for New Orleans where I shall remain during the winter and spring if successful any thing like to my expectations I shall return but you may rest assured if I am by no means successful you may dispense of ever seeing me there, though contentment I possess not West of the Alleghany I find this place somewhat sickly though for my part never enjoyed better health my weight is one hundred and eight nine pounds five pounds more than ever before I have A small capital which I flatter myself will do pretty good bussiness I shall furthermore dispense of giving you so minute particulars and beg leave to be excused for the past though I feel somewhat delicate in writing lean it should not be exceptable if not Remember my best respects to all my friends particularly your wife, who from the little acquaintance I respects on the highest terms Remain your most affectionat Brother

Dan' T Potts

Direct your letters to New Orleans where I shall remain until New years wheras it is necessary for you to write in haste previous to leaving that place I shall inform you where I go and my business Since writing this letter I have received your and Weirs letters which alters the case amazing those letters wher mislaid. To morrow I embark

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

member of the company of J. S. Smith

Merchandise taken by Jedediah S. Smith for the Southwest expedition, august 15th, 1826.

4 dozen B. knives      10 lbs. lead  
1 paper tax. 2 lbs. beads      55 lbs. powder  
1 1/2 dozen looking glasses      55 lbs. tobacco  
2, 3pt. Am. blanketts      6 Frenchen chisaels  
3 2 1/2 pt. Am. blanketts      1 fuzie  
1 road shawl

Merchandise presented to the Eutaw Indians, by J. S. Smith, august 22nd, 1826.

3 yards red ribbon      1 brass handle knife  
10 awls 40 balls, arrow points  
1 razor. 1 dirk knife      1/2 lb. tobacco  
August 27th, 1826. Indian presents.  
1 tin kettle      2 dozen rings  
3 yards red stranding      1 dozen combs  
4 razors, 2 durk knives      4 hawk bells  
2 butcher knives      2 stretch needles  
50 balls, 1 lb. powder      2 doz. awls, buttons  
3 looking glasses      1 large green handle knife

---

Broad, handsomely stripped, the cattle differ from ours; they have large horns, long legs, and slim bodies; the beef similar to ours. The face of the country changes hourly, handsome bottoms covered with grass similar to ours. Blue grass; the mou. goes lower and clear of rock to what they have been heretofore.

27TH. We got ready as early as possible and started a W. course, and traveled 14 m. and enc. for the day, we passed innumerable herds of cattle, horses and some hundred of sheep; we passed 4 or 5 Ind. lodges, that their Inds. acts as herdsmen. There came an old Ind. to us that speaks good Spanish, and took us with him to his mansion, which consisted of 2 rows of large and lengthy buildings, after the Spanish mode, they remind me of the British barracks. So soon as we enc. there was plenty prepared to eat, a fine young cow killed, and a plenty of corn meal given us; pretty soon after the 2 commandants of the missionary establishment come to us and had the appearance of gentlemen. Mr. S. went with them to the mansion and I stay with the company, there was great feasting among the men as they were pretty hungry not having any good meat for some time.

28TH. Mr. S. wrote me a note in the morning, stating that he was received as a gentleman and treated as such, and that he wished me to go back and look for a pistol that was lost, and send the company on to the missionary establishment. I complied with his request, went back, and found the pistol, and arrived late in the evening, was received very politely, and showed into a room and my arms taken from me. About 10 o'clock at night supper was served, and Mr. S. and myself sent for. I was introduced to the 2 priests over a glass of good old whiskey and found them to be very joval friendly gentlemen, the supper consisted of a number of different dishes, served different from any table I ever was at. Plenty of good wine during supper, before the cloth was removed

sigars was introduced. Mr. S. has wrote to the governor, and I expect we shall remain here some days.

29TH. Still at the mansion. We was sent for about sunrise to drink a cup of tea, and eat some bread and cheese. They all appear friendly and treat us well, although they are Catholicks by profession, they allow us the liberty of conscience, and treat us as they do their own countrymen, or brethren.

About 11 o'clock, dinner was ready, and the priest come after us to go and dine; we were invited into the office, and invited to take a glass of gin and water and eat some bread and cheese; directly after we were seated at dinner, and every thing went on in style, both the priests being pretty merry, the clerk and one other gentleman, who speaks some English. They all appear to be gentlemen of the first class, both in manners and habits. The mansion, or mission, consist of 4 rows of houses forming a complete square, where there is all kinds of macanicks at work; the church faces the east and the guard house the west; the N. and S. line comprises the work shops. They have large vineyards, apple and peach orchards, and some orrange and some fig trees. They manufacture blankets, and sundry other articles; they distill whiskey and grind their own grain, having a water mill, of a tolerable quality; they have upwards of 1,000 persons employed, men, women, and children, Inds. of different nations. The situation is very handsome, pretty streams of water running through from all quarters, some thousands of acres of rich and fertile land as level as a die in view, and a part under cultivation, surrounded on the N. with a high and lofty mou., handsomely timbered with pine, and cedar, and on the S. with low mou, covered with grass. Cattle — this mission has upwards of 30,000 head of cattle, and horses, sheep, hogs, etc. in proportion. I intend visiting the iner apartments to-morrow if life is spared. I am quite unwell to-day but have been engaged in writing letters for the men and drawing a map of my travels for the priests. Mr. Smith, as well as myself, have been engaged in the same business. They slaughter at this place from 2 to 3,000 head of cattle at a time; the mission lives on the profits. Saint Gabriel is in north latitude 34 degrees and 30 minutes. It still continues warm; the thermometer stands at 65 and 70 degrees.

30TH. Still at Saint Gabriel; everything goes on well; only the men is on a scanty allowance, as yet. There was a wedding in this place today, and Mr. S. and myself invited; the bell was rang a little before sun rise, and the morning service performed; then the musick commenced serranading, the soldiers firing, etc., about 7 o'clock tea and bread served, and about 11, dinner and musick. The ceremony and dinner was held at the priests; they had an ellegant dinner, consisting of a number of dishes, boiled and roast meat and fowl, wine and brandy or ogagent, grapes brought as a dessert after dinner. Mr. S. and myself acted quite independent, knot understanding there language, nor they ours; we endeavored to appoligise, being very dirty and not in a situation to shift our clothing, but no excuse would be taken, we must be present, as we have been served at there table ever since we arrived at this place; they treat [us] as gentlemen in every sense of the word, although our apparel is so indifferent, and we not being in circumstances at this time to help ourselves, being about 800 m. on a direct line from the place of our deposit. Mr. S. spoke to the commandant this evening respecting the rations of his men; they were immediately removed into another apartment, and furnished with cooking utensils and plenty of provisions, they say, for 3 or 4 days. Our 2 Ind. guides were imprisoned in the guard house the 2nd. day after we arrived at the missionary establishment and remain confined as yet. Mr. S. has wrote to the commandant of the province, and we do not know the result as yet, or where we shall go from this place, but I ex-

---

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

pect to the N.W. I intended visiting the inner apartments to-day, but have been engaged in assisting Mr. S. in making a map for the priest and attending the ceremonies of the wedding.

DECEMBER 1ST, 1826. We still remain at the mansion of St. Gabriel; things going on as usual; all friendship and peace. Mr. S. set his blacksmiths, James Reed and Silas Gobel, to work in the B.S. shop, to make a bear trap for the priest, agreeable to promise yesterday. Mr. S. and the interpreter went in the evening to the next mission, which is 9 m. distance from St. Gab. and called St. Pedro, a Spanish gentleman from that mission having sent his servant with horses for them. There came an Italian gentleman from Port Sandeago today by the name of John Battis Bonafast who speaks good English, and acts as interpreter for all the American and English vessels that arrives in ports on the coast, quite a smart and intelligent man. The men all appear satisfied since there was new regulations made about eating. Mr. S. informed me this morning that he had to give Read a little flogging yesterday evening, on account of some of his impertinence; he appeared more complasent to-day than usual. Our fare at table much the same as at first, a plenty of everything good to eat and drink.

2ND. Much the same to-day as yesterday, both being what the Catholicks call fast days; in the morning after sun rise, or about that time, you have tea, bread and cheese, at dinner fish and fowl, beans, peas, potatoes and other kinds of sauce, grapes as a desert, wine, gin and water plenty at dinner. I could see a great deal of satisfaction here if I could talk there language, but, as it is, I feel great diffidence in being among them knot knowing the topic of there conversation, still every attention is paid to me by all that is present, especially the old priest. I must say he is a very fine man and a very much of a gentleman. Mr. S. has not returned from the other mission as yet. This province is called the Province of New California; this mission ships to Europe annually from 20 to 25 thousand dollars worth of hides and tallow, and about 20 thousand dollars worth of soap. There vineyards are extensive; they make there own wine, and brandy; they have orranges and limes growing here. The Inds. appear to be much altered from the wild Indians in the mou. that we have passed. They are kept in great fear; for the least offense they are corrected; they are compleat slaves in every sense of the word. Mr. S. and Laplant returned late in the evening, and represents there treatment to be good at the other mission. Mr. S. tells me that Mr. Francisco, the Spanish gentleman that he went to visit, promises him as many horses and mules as he wants.

DECEMBER 3RD., SUNDAY. About 6 o'clock the bell rang for mass, and they poured into church from all quarters, men, women and children; there was none of us invited therefore we all remained at our lodgings. The fare to-day at table much as usual; there was an additional cup of tea in the afternoon. The Inds. play bandy with sticks, it being the only game I have seen as yet among them. They play before the priests door. I am told they dance, both Spanyards and Inds., in the course of the evening.

4TH. Still at St. Gabriel; things much as usual. The priest presented Mr. S. with two pieces of shirting containing 64 yards for to make the men shirts, all being nearly naked. Mr. Smith gives each man 3 1/2 yards and kept the same number for himself, each man getting enough to make a shirt. The weather still continues to be moderate, the thermometer stands at 60 and 63 in the day, and 50-53 in the night. The thermometer hangs within doors, etc.

5TH. We are still remaining at the mansion of St. Gabriel, waiting the result of the governor's answer to a letter that Mr. S. addressed him on the 27th of november. We expect the courier some time today with letters. It still continues moderate.

---

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

6TH. Early this morning I presented the old priest with my buffalo robe and he brought me a very large blanket and presented me, in return, about 10 o'clock. Nothing new. Things going on as they have been heretofore; no answer from the governor as yet; we are waiting with patience to hear from the governor.

11TH [7TH]. No answer as yet from the governor of the province. Mr. S. and all hands getting impatient. There was a Spanish gentleman arrived yesterday evening named Francis Martinnis, a very intelligent man, who speaks pretty good English, and appears very friendly; he advises Mr. S. to go and see the governor in case he does not receive an answer in a few days. He is a man of business and is well aware that men on expenses and business of importance should be presservering; he appears anxious as respects our well fare. Mr. S. has some idea of going in company with him to Sandiego, the residence of the governor.

8TH. Nothing of importance has taken place today. Mr. S. was sent for to go to Sandiego to see the governor. Capt. Cunningham, commanding the ship Courier, now lying in port at Sandiego, arrived here late this evening. The captain is a Bostonian, and has been trading on the coast for hides and tallow since June last; he informs me that he is rather under the impression that he shall be obliged to remain until some time in the succeeding summer in consequence of so much opposition, as there is a number of vessels on the coast trading for the same kind of articles. He says that money is very scarce, amongst the most of the people. Mr. Martins tells me that there is between 16 and 17,000 natives that is converted over to the Catholic faith and under the control of the different missions, the white population he estimates at 6,000, making 22 or 23,000 souls in the province of New California.

9TH. Mr. Smith and one of the men, in company with Capt. Cunningham, left San Gabriel, this morning for Sandiego, the governor's place of residence. I expect he will be absent for eight or ten days. The weather still keeps moderate, things much the same, friendship and peace as yet.

10TH. SUNDAY. There was five Inds. brought to the mission by two other Inds, who act as constables, or overseers, and sentenced to be whipped for not going to work when ordered.

Each received from 12 to 14 lashes on their bare posteriors; they were all old men, say from 50 to 60 years of age, the commandant standing by with his sword to see that the Ind. who flogged them done his duty. Things in other respects similar to the last sabbath.

11TH. Nothing of consequence has taken place today more than usual, only the band of musick consisting of two small violins, one bass violin, a trumpet and triangle was played for 2 hours in the evening before the priests door by Inds. They made tolerable good music, the most in imitation to whites that [I] ever heard. Directly after the musick would cease, there was several rounds of cannon fired by the soldiers in commemoration of some great saints day or feast day. They keep at this place 4 small field pieces, 2 6-pounders and 2 2-pounders to protect them from the Inds. in case they should rebel, and, from the best information I can get from the soldiers, they appear at times some what alarmed, for fear the Inds. will rise and destroy the mission.

12TH. About sun rise, the bell rang and mass called; men women and children attended church; they discharged a number of small arms and some cannon while the morning service were performing. There main church is upwards of 200 feet in length and about 140 in breadth made of stone and brick, a number of different apartments in it. They hold meeting in the large church every sunday; the Spaniards first attend and then the Inds. They have a room in the inner apartment of the mission to hold church on their feast days. Their religion appears to be a form more than

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

a reality. I am in hopes we shall be able to leave here in five or six days at most, as all hands appear to be anxious to move on to the north. Things in other respects much the same; the weather still continues to be good. In the evening there was kind of procession, amongst both Spaniards and Inds. I enquired the reason, I was told by a Mr. David Philips, an Englishman, that this day, a year ago, the Virgin Mary appeared to an Ind. and told him that the 12th day of december should always be kept as a feast day and likewise a holliday among them and both Spaniards and Inds. believe it.

13TH. I walked through the work shops; I saw some Inds. blacksmithing, some carpentering, others making the wood work of ploughs, others employed in making spinning wheels for the squaws to spin on. There is upwards 60 women employed in spinning yarn and others weaving. Things much the same, cloudy and some rain today. Our black smith[s] have been employed for several days making horse and nails for our own use when we leave here.

14TH. I was asked by the priest to let our black smiths make a large trap for him to set in his orange garden, to catch the Inds. in when they come up at night to rob his orchard. The weather clear and warm. Things in other respects much the same as they have been heretofore; friendship and peace prevail with us and the Spaniards. Our own men are contentious and quarrelsome amongst themselves and have been ever since we started the expedition. Last night at supper for the first time the priest questioned me as respected my religion. I very frankly informed him that I was brought up under the Calvinist doctrine, and did not believe that it was in the power of man to forgive sins. God only had that power, and when I was under the necessity of confessing my sins, I confessed them unto God in prayer and supplication, not to man; I further informed him that it was my opinion, that men ought to possess as well as profess religion to constitute the christian; he said that when he was in his church and his robe on, he then believed he was equal unto God, and had the power to forgive any sin, that man was guilty of, and openly confessed unto him, but when he was out of church and his common waring apparel on he was as other men, divested of all power of forgiving sins.

[DECEMBER] 15TH. I went out fowling with the commandant of the mission. I killed 7 brant and one duck, and the commandant killed 2 brants and a duck; the priest furnished me with shot. Two of our men went to work today, Arthur Black and John Gaiter; they are to get a horse a piece for 3 days work. Times much the same as they have been some time back; nothing new occurs.

16TH. Late this morning a Mr. Henry [Edwards?], owner of a brig now lying in port, arrived at the mission; he appears to be a very much of a gentleman, and quite intelligent. His business here is to buy hides, tallow and soap, from the priest. Nothing new has taken place. Things much the same about the mission; the priest administered the sacrament to a sick Indian today, and he thinks he will die.

17TH. The sick Indian that the priest administered the sacrament too yesterday, died last night, and was entered in there graveyard this evening; the proceedings in church similar to the last sabbath. Sunday appears to be the day that the most business is transacted at this mission; the priest plays at cards both sunday a[nd] weak a days, when he has company that can play pretty expert.

18TH. I received a letter from Mr. S. informing me that he rather was under the impression that he would be detained for some time yet, as the general did [not] like to take the responsibility on himself to let us pass until he received instructions from the general in Mexico; under those circumstances I am fearful we will have to remain here some time yet. Our men have been employed

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

fitting out a cargo of hides, tallow, and soap for a Mr. Henry Edwards, a German by birth, and the most intelligent man that I have met with since I arrived at this place; he is what they term here a Mexican trader.

Mr. S. also wrote to me for eight beaver skins, to present to the Spanish officers to face there cloaks with; I complied with his request, and selected eight of the best and sent to him.

19TH. Still remaining at San Gabriel; things much the same. I went out with my gun to amuse myself, killed some black birds and ducks. The express left here this morning for Sandiego. I sent the eight beaver skins to Mr. Smith to present to the Spanish officers to face their cloaks, by him. The old father continues his friendship to me; it does not appear to abate in the least. I still eat at his table. This mission, if properly managed, would be equal to [a] mine of silver or gold; there farms is extensive; they raise from 3 to 4000 bushels of wheat annually, and sell to shippers for \$3. per bushel. There annual income, situated as it is and managed so badly by the Inds., is worth in hides, tallow, soap, wine, ogadent, wheat, and corn from 55 to 60,000 dollars.

20TH. Nothing new has taken place; all peace and friendship. I expect an answer from Mr. Smith in six or eight days if he does not get permission to pass on. My situation is a very delicate one, as I have to be amongst the grandees of the country every day. My clothes are [illegible] the clothing of blanketts [illegible] pantaloons, two shirts and [illegible] read cap. I make a very grotesque appearance when seated at table amongst the dandys with there ruffles, silks, and broad clothes, and I am

---

New Years address by Harrison G. Rogers to the Reverend Father of San Gabriel mission January 1st. 1827

REVEREND FATHER, Standing on the threshold of a New Year, I salute you with the most cordial congratulations and good wishes.

While the sustaining providence of God has given us another year of probation, every thing seems to remind me that is for probation.

Many, very many, during the past year have, doubtless, been called throughout the different parts of the tractless globe, to weep over friends now sleeping in their graves, many others have personally felt the visitations of sickness, and probably many more, ere another year ushers in, will be called from time into eternity.

While revolving seasons, while sickness, disappointment, and death raise their minatory voice, remember, reverend sir, that this world is not our home. It is a world of trial. It is the dawn of an immortal existence.

Therefore my advice is, to all the human family, to be faithful, be devoted to God, be kind, be benevolent to their fellow sufferers, to act well their part, live for eternity; for the everlasting destinies of their souls is suspended upon their probation, and this may close the present year.

Our Savior, sir, after having spent his life in untrying [untiring] benevolence, and before he ascended to his native heavens, probably in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel, elected twelve apostles or missionaries.

To these, after having properly qualified and instructed them, he left a part of his legacy, a world to be converted.

He directed that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" - Agreeably to his command the first church was founded at

Jerusalem.

But, reverend father, remember the whole world was missionary ground. Before the days of Christ Jesus, our Saviour, we never heard of missionaries to the heathen with a solitary exception.

The exception to which I allude is the case of Jonah, who was sent to preach to the heathen at Nineveh about 800 years before Christ.

It was not till several years after the ascension of our Saviour that a single gentile was converted. But now the door was opened. The apostles hesitated, delayed no longer. It is said by ancient history that the world was divided among them by lot.

Be this as it may, it is certain that they soon separated and went from village to village.

To this little number of missionaries we are informed that Paul was soon added.

With the exception of this man, the missionaries were not learned in the arts and sciences; were ignorant of books and of men, yet they went forth unsupported by human aid, friendless and opposed by prejudices, princes, laws, learning, reasonings of philosophy, passions and persecutions. And what was the result of their labors? We know but a little; we can trace only a few of their first steps. Yet we know enough to astonish us. We know by the labors of those missionaries there are mentioned in the New Testament, sixty-seven different places in which christian churches were established by them, several of which places contained several churches.

Paul informs us that in his time the gospel had been preached to every [race] which is under heaven. Justin Martyr tells us that in the year 106, "There was not a nation either Greek or barbarian or of any other name even of those who wander in tribes and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe, by the name of the Crucified Jesus." We know, assuredly, that at this time that there were churches in Germany, Spain, France, and Brittain. Besides the apostles, there were at least eighty-seven evangelists in this age, so that the whole number of active missionaries in the Apostolic age, was ninety-nine or one hundred. Of the apostles we have reasons to believe, nine at least suffered martyrdom. On the whole, then, we have no reason to doubt, on the testimony of history and tradition, that the last command of Christ was so obeyed, that in the Apostolic age, the gospel was preached in every part of the globe which was then known.

---

MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST, 1827. This morning church was held before day; men, women and children attended as usual; after church, musick played by the Inds. as on sunday; wine and some other articles of clothing given out to the Inds. The priest keeps a memorandum of all articles issued to them. The fare at the table the same as other days, if any difference, not so good. Some rain last night and to-day; weather warm; showers alternate through the day like may showers in the states, and equally as pleasant; things in other respects much the same; no news from Mr. S. and I am at a loss how to act in his absence with the company, as he left no special instructions with me when he left here.

TUESDAY 2ND. Still at the mission of San Gabriel; nothing new has taken place to-day; the men commenced work again this morning for the old padre; no news from Mr. S; friendship and peace still prevail. Mr. Joseph Chapman, a Bostonian by birth, who is married in this country and brought over to the Catholic faith, came here about 10 o'clock A.M. to superintend the burning of a coal pitt for the priest. He is getting wealthy, being what we term a Yanky; he is jack of all trades, and naturally a very ingenious man; under those circumstances, he gets many favours from the

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

priest, by superintending the building of mills, black smithing, and many other branches of mechanicism.

W. 3RD. There was five or six Inds. brought to the mission and whiped, and one of them being stubborn and did not like to submit to the lash was knocked down by the commandant, tied and severely whiped, then chained by the leg to another Ind who had been guilty of a similar offence. I rec'd a letter from Mr. S. this morning informing me that he had got his passports signed by the governor, by the intercession of the gentlemen officers, and that he would join me in a few days; he intended embarking on board Capt. Cunningham's ship, and coming to St. Pedro, which is forty-five miles distant from San Gabriel.

THURS. 4TH. Still at the mission; nothing new; four of our men, Robert Evans, Manuel Lazarus, John Hannah, and John Wilson went with Mr. Joseph Chapman, to cut wood for the coal pitt, and assist him in erecting it, and burning the coal. Myself and Mr. McCoy went up in the mountains to see if we could find some deer; I saw two and wounded one, killed a wolf and two ducks; Mr. McCoy saw two deer, and got one shot but missed. We passed through a great abundance of oak timber, some trees heavy laden with acorns, the land, rich, and easy cultivated, some large springs, or lagoons, which offered a great quantity of water, which is brought in all directions through the mission farm as they have to water their orchards, gardens, and farms.

FRIDAY 5TH. Still remaining at the mission of San Gabriel, waiting the arrival of Mr. S. Five men went with Mr. Chapman, this morning, to cut cord wood for the coal pitt. I walked over the soap factory and find it more extensive than I had an idea; it consists of 4 large cisterns, or boilers, that will hold from 2000 to 2500 hundred gallons each; the cistern is built in the shape of an sugar loaf made of brick, stone, and lime; there is a large iron pott, or kittle, fixed in the bottom where the fire strikes them to set them boiling, lined around the mouth of the cisterns and the edge of the potts with sheat iron 8 or 10 inches wide; the potts, or kittles, will hold from 2 to 250 gallons each, and a great many small ones, fixed in like manner. Things in other respects much the same about the mission as usual, friendship and peace with us and the Spaniards.

6TH, SATURDAY. This being what is called Epiphany or old Christmas day, it is kept to celebrate the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles, or particularly the Magi or wise men from the East. Church held early as usual, men, women, and children attend; after church the ceremonies as on sundays. Wine issued abundantly to both Spaniards and Inds., musick played by the Ind. band. After the issue of the morning, our men, in company with some Spaniards, went and fired a salute, and the old padre give them wine, bread, and meat as a treat. Some of the men got drunk and two of them, James Reed and Daniel Ferguson, commenced fighting, and some of the Spaniards interfered and struck one of our men by the name of Black, which come very near terminating with bad consequence. So soon as I heard of the disturbance, I went among them, and passified our men by telling what trouble they were bringing upon themselves in case they did not desist, and the most of them, being men of reason, adheered to my advice.

Our black smith, James Reed, come very abruptly into the priests dining room while at dinner, and asked for argament; the priest ordered a plate of victuals to be handed to him; he eat a few mouthfuls, and set the plate on the table, and then took up the decanter of wine, and drank without invitation, and come very near braking the glass when he set it down; the padre, seeing he was in a state of inebriety, refrained from saying anything.

SUNDAY 7TH. Things carried on as on former sabbaths, since I have been at the mission, church

---

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

services morning and evening, issues to the Inds. of wine and clothing; the priest in the evening threw oranges among the young squaws to see them scuffle for them, the activest and strongest would get the greatest share. Mr. Smith has not joined us yet.

MONDAY 8TH. Last night there was a great fandago or dance among the Spaniards; they kept it up till nearly day light from the noise. The women here are very unchaste; all that I have seen and heard speak appear very vulgar in their conversation and manners. They think it an honnour to ask a white man to sleep with them; one came to my lodgings last night and asked me to make her a blanco Pickanina, which, being interpreted, is to get her a white child, and I must say for the first time, I was ashamed, and did not gratify her or comply with her request, seeing her so forward, I had no propensity to tech her. Things about the mission much the same. No news of Mr. S., and I am very impatient, waiting his arrival.

9TH, TUESDAY. Business going on about the mission as usual. About 8 or ten boys employed gathering orranges overseed by the commandant and the steward of the mission, old Antonio, a man of 65 years of age, who is intrusted with the keys of all the stores belonging to the mission; he generally is served at the priests table, and, from appearance, is very saving and trusty. I went out in company with Mr. McCoy this evening with our guns to amuse ourselves; I killed one brant and Mr. McCoy killed nothing. Mr. S. still absent from the company.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH. About noon Mr. S., Capt. Cunningham, Mr. Shaw, and Thos. Dodges come to the mission from the ship Courier, and I was much rejoiced to see them as I have been waiting with anxiety to see him. Nothing new has taken place to-day; things much the same, about the mission. Mr. S. intends going back in the morning to the ship.

THURSDAY, 11TH. Mr. S. in company with Capt. Cunningham, Mr. Shaw, and Chapman, left the mission this morning for the sea shore. About noon, Capt. Cunningham returned to the mission, and informed me that Mr. S. wished me to go to the parbalo to buy horses, which is 8 miles distance from San Gabriel.

I complied with his request went, and met Mr. S. there, and purchase two horses for our trap, and Mr. S. made an agreement for 10 more, for which he is to give merchandise at the ship in exchange.

FRIDAY, 12TH. I got the two horses we bought last evening, from Mr. Francis St. Abbiso, and returned to the mission about the middle of the day; just as I arrived the priest from San whan arrived on a visit with his carriage, and Indian servants. He is a man about 50 years of age, upwards of six feet high, and well made in proportion, and, from his conduct, he appears to be a very good man, and a very much of a gentleman. I had a branding iron made by our blacksmith so soon as I returned, and branded the two horses that we bought, with J.S.; things in other respects at the mission much the same.

SATURDAY, 13TH. This morning I set the men to work to put the traps in order for packing; one of the horses I bought yesterday got loose last night and ran off, and I have not got him yet or heard anything of him. Today at dinner I was asked a great many questions by the priest who came here yesterday, respecting our rout and travels; I give him all the satisfaction I could and informed him as respects the situation of the country I have traveled through, also the United States, and their laws. Things about the mission much as usual.

SUNDAY, 14TH. As agreeable to promise I sent Arthur Black, John Gaiter, and Peter Ranne to the parbalo to meet Mr. Smith to get horses, which he is purchasing at that place. Time is passing off

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

swiftly and we are not under way yet; but I am in hopes we shall be able to start in three or 4 days from here. Church as usual; wine issued, etc. In the evening, four Inds. who had been fighting and gambling was brought before the guard house door, and sentenced to be whipped; they received from 30 to 40 lashes each on their bare posteriors.

MONDAY [JANUARY] 15TH. About noon Capt. Cunningham and Mr. Chapman arrived at the mission from the ship. Mr. S. still remain in the parbalo, purchasing horses. Mr. Chapman informed me that there is a natural pitch mine north of the parbalo, 8 or 10 miles, where there is from 40 to 50 hogsheads of pitch throwed up from the bowels of the earth, daily; the citizens of the country make great use of it to pitch the roofs of their houses; he shew me a piece which have the smell of coal, more than any other thing I can describe. Business about the mission much the same as it has been heretofore. I went in their church to-day for the first time and saw their molten images; they have our Savior on the cross, his mother and Mary, the mother of James, and 4 of the apostles, all as large as life. They appropriate the room, where the images stand, to a sugar factory.

TUESDAY, 16TH. Mr. S. returned from the parbalo, with 41 head of horses, which he purchased at that place; he got 8 new saddles from the padra and set the men to work to fix them; nothing new has taken place about the mission; things much the same.

WEDNESDAY, 17TH. All hands are busily employed fixing their things ready to start tomorrow morning; the old father has given a great deal to Mr. Smith, and some of the men, and continues giving. I expect we shall be able to get off early in the morning. Things about the mission much the same.

THURSDAY, 18TH. All hands were up early this morning, and went to the farm, where we had our horses, 68 in number, and got them packed, and under way in pretty good season. After we got 1/2 mile off the mission, our unpacked horses, together with those that had packs on started to run 8 or 10 miles before we stoped them; one of the pack horses lossed 12 dressed skins, that Mr. Smith had got, from our old father of San Gabriel mission, Joseph Sances. We traveled a direct course N.E. about 4m. and we [arrived] at an Ind. farm house where we stayed on the 27th november, when we first reached the Spanish inhabitants. Mr. S. and myself intends returning to the mission, this evening.

FRIDAY, 19TH. Mr. S. and myself returned to the mission, late last evening and took supper with old Father Sancus, for the last time, and our farwell. The old father give each of us a blankett, and give me a cheese, and a gourd filled with ogadent. All hands being ready early in the morning, we started and travelled, and had an Ind. guide, a N.E. course about 25 m. and enc. at St. Ann, an Ind. farm house, for the night; our wild horses created us considerable trouble during the day.

SATURDAY, 20TH. Still at St. Ann; Mr. S. commands to lie by to-day, as there is five of our best horses missing, and hunt them, and brake some other horses; a number of the men are employed hunting horses and others haltering and brake more. The horse hunters returned without finding them; and he intends leaving them and proceeding on his journey early tomorrow morning.

SUNDAY, 21ST. All hands were up early and getting their horses packed; we were under way in pretty good season in the morning, and had an Ind. boy as a pilot; we started and travelled a N.E. and by east course, 25 or 30 m. and reached an Ind. farm house about 4 m. distant from San Bernardo, and enc. where we have an order from the governor, and our old Father Joseph Sanchus, at the mission of San Gabriel, for all the supplies we stand in need of. The country quite mountain-

JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

ous and stoney.

MONDAY, 22ND. Mr. S. and the interpreter started early this morning up to San Bernardano for to see the steward, and get supplys. We intend killing some beef here and drying meat. I expect we shall remain here two or three days. All hands get milk this morning. We have killed two beeves and cut the meat, and drying it. Mr. S. has got corn, peas, parched meal, and flour of wheat. Old Father Sanchus has been the greatest friend that I ever met with in all my travels, he is worthy of being called a christian, as he possesses charity in the highest degree, and a friend to the poor and distressed. I ever shall hold him as a man of God, taking us when in distress, feeding, and clothing us, and may God prosper him and all such men; when we left the mission he give Mr. S. an order to get everything he wanted for the use of his company, at San Bernardino. The steward complied with the order so soon as it was presented by Mr. S.

TUESDAY, 23RD. Still at the Ind. farm 3 m. from San Burnandeino; some of the men are employed in braking horses, and others makeing pack saddles and riggin them; Mr. S. sent a letter back this morning to old Father Sanchius concerning the horses, we lossed at Saint Ann, six in number; he will wait the result of his answer.

WEDNESDAY, 24TH. We are still remaining at the Ind. farm waiting the result of the priests answer, and drying meat, and repairing saddles for our journey. Some of the men are kept employed braking wild horses. Daniel Ferguson, one of our men, when leaving the mission on the 18th inst. hide himself, and we could not find him; the corporal who commands at the mission promised to find him, and send him on to us. But I expect we shall not see him again. The weather continues fine.

THURSDAY, 25TH. No answer from the priest this morning, and we are obliged to remain here another day. The men still keep at work, braking young horses. Mr. S. discharged one of the men, John Wilson, on the 17th inst., and he could not get permission to stay in the country, therefore we obliged to let him come back to us; he remains with the company but not under pay as yet; I expect he will go on with us. The weather still continues beautiful. Things about our camp much as usual. Inds. traveling back and forward from the mission steady. The Inds. here call themselves the Farrahoots.

FRIDAY, 26TH. Early this morning we collected our horses and counted them; and two was missing. Mr. S. sent a man in search of them; he returned with them about 10 o'clock. We are still at the Ind. farm house, waiting an answer from the priest at San Gabriel. I expected we shall remain here to-day, if the courier does not arrive. In the evening James Reed and myself concluded we would go into the cowpen and rope some cows and milk them, after the Ind. fashion, accordingly we made ready our rope, and haltered four cows, and tied their heads up to a steak, and made fast their hind feet and milked them, but did not get much milk on account of not letting their calves to them; so soon as we were done Capt. Smith and Silas Gobel followed our example. This country in many respects is the most desirable part of the world I ever was in, the climate so regular and beautiful; the thermomater stands daily from 65 to 70 degrees, and I am told it is about the same in summer.

Mr. S. swaped six of our old horses off for wild mares.

SATURDAY, 27TH. Still at the Ind. farm house waiting the answer from the priest. 20 of our horses missing this morning and four men sent in search of them. Mr. S., and Laplant is gone up to San Burnandeino to see the old steward on business.

---

THE SECOND JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

Men's names with J. S. Smith

J. S. Smith      Joseph Lapoint

H. G. Rogers    Abraham Laplant

Thos. Virgin    Thos. Daws

Arthur Black   Charles Swift

John Turner    Richard Layla [Leland]

John Gaiter    Martin McCoy

John Hanna    John Reubasco

Emmanuel Lazarus    Toussaint Marishall

Joseph Palmer John Peter Ranne

Peter Ranne    (a man of colour)

Many men of many minds, and many kinds of many,  
Kinderate of God's creation.

When young in life and forced to guess my road,  
And not one friend to shield my bark from harm,  
The world received me in its vast abode,  
And honest toil procured its plaudits warm.

---

SATURDAY, MAY 10TH, 1828. We made an early start this morning, steering N.W. about 5 miles, thence W. 7 miles and encamped, on a small creek, and built a pen for our horses, as we could not get to grass for them. The travelling very bad, several very steep, rocky and brushy points of mountains to go up and down, with our band of horses, and a great many of them so lame and worn out that we can scarce force them along; 15 lossed on the way, in the brush, 2 of them with loads; the most of the men as much fatigued as the horses; one of the men, lossed his gun, and could not find it. We have had more trouble getting our horses on to-day, than we have had since we entered the mount. We crossed a creek close by the mouth 15 or 20 yards wide heading south, and emptying into the river east at an course, the current quite swift, and about belly deep to our horses. Some beavers sign discovered by the men. The day clear and warm. But one Ind. seen to-day; he was seen by Capt. Smith as he generally goes ahead, and I stay with the rear to see that things are kept in order.

SUNDAY, MAY 11, 1828. As our horses was without food last night, we was up early, and dispatched four men after those that was left back yesterday, and had the others packed and under way a little after sun rise, directing our course up a steep point of mountain, very rocky and brushy about 3/4 of a mile. The course N.W. 2 miles and struck into an open point of mountain where there was good grass and encamped, as the most of our horses was nearly down. We had a great deal of trouble getting them up the mountain with there loads on; a number would fall with their packs, and roll 20 or 30 feet down among the sharp rocks, several badly cut to pieces with the rocks.

The four men that was sent back returned late in the evening. They had got 12 of the horses that were missing, and among them the 2 that had loads; the man that lost his gun could not find it. Three deer killed in the evening, the meat poor.

MONDAY, MAY 12TH. We concluded to remain here to-day and let the horses rest; 2 men sent back after the other horses that are still missing; one left yesterday that could not be got along, that had entirely given out. The two men returned late, found one of the lost horses, but could not drive him to camp, consequently we shall loose them as Capt. Smith intends moving camp early to-morrow. The day clear and warm.

TUESDAY, MAY 13TH, 1828. All hands called early and ready for a start, directing our course N.W. over high ranges of rocky and brushy points of mountains, as usual, and travelled 6 m. and encamped on the side of a grassy mou., where there was an abundance of good grass for the horses, but little water for them. We had a great deal of difficulty to drive them on account of brush and the steepness of the points of mountain; two left that could not travel and a great many more very lame; the weather good.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14TH. We made an early start, directing our course as yesterday N.W., and traveled 4 m. and enc. on the top of a high mountain, where there was but indifferent grass for our horses. The travelling amazing bad; we descended one point of brushy and rocky mountain, where it took us about 6 hours to get the horses down, some of them falling about 50 feet perpendicular down a steep place into a creek; one broke his neck; a number of packs left along the trail, as night was fast approaching, and we were obliged to leave them and get what horses we could collect at camp; a number more got badly hurt by the falls, but none killed but this one that broke his neck.

Saw some Inds. that crossed the river in a canoe and came to me; I give them some beads, as presents; they made signs that they wanted to trade for knives, but I told them that I had none; they give me a lamper eel dried, but I could not eat it.

They appear afraid of horses; they are very light coloured Inds., quite small and talkative. The weather still good.

THURSDAY, 15TH. MAY, 1828. The men was divided in parties this morning, some sent hunting, as we had no meat in camp, others sent back after horses and packs that was left back.

5 Inds. came to camp; I give them some beads; they appear quit friendly; shortly after fifteen or 20 came, and among them one squaw, a very good featured woman; she brought a dressed skin and 2 worked boles for sale; I bought them from her for beads. The hunters killed 5 deer. The balance of the horses and packs, was got to camp about 4 oc. in the evening; the men quit fatigued climbing up and down the hills. The weather still good. Some black bear seen by the hunters.

FRIDAY, MAY 16TH, 1828. We concluded that it was best to lie by today and send two men to look out a pass to travel, as the country looks awful a head, and let our poor horses rest, as there is pretty good grass about 1 mile off for them to feed on. 20 or 30 Inds. Visited our camp in the course of the day, bringing eels for trade and roots; the men bought the most of them giving awls and beads in exchange. Capt. Smith made them some small presents, and bought one B. skin from them; the women does the principal trading. Those Inds. are quite civil and friendly; the weather still good.

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH, 1828. The 2 men that were sent on discovery yesterday returned this morning and say that we are 15 or 20 miles of [f] the North Pacific ocean; they report game plenty, such as elk and deer; they report the traveling favourable to what it has been for 30 or 40 m. back. On there return, we concluded to remain here again to-day on account of our horses being so very lame and soar from the bruises they got on the 14th inst. The morning cloudy and rainy.

---

THE SECOND JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

The 2 men, Marishall and Turner, that were sent off yesterday, killed 3 deer, and Capt. Smith has dispatched 2 men after the meat, as the camp is almost destitute.

Mr. Virgin and Ransa quite unwell this morning. The day continues cloudy and rainy, and quite cold towards evening.

SUNDAY, MAY 18TH, 1828. As we intended moving camp, the horses were sent for early, and got to camp about 10 oc. A.M., packed and started, directing our course W. 3 miles and struck into a small hill pararie, where there was grass and water, and encamped, as the distance were too great to go to any other place of grass to-day for the horses, from what Turner and Marishall tell us about the route from here to the ocean. The morning being so thick with fogg, the men that was sent after the horses did not find them all; Capt. Smith took 2 men with him, and went back after those that could not be found in the morning, and I went on with the company, and encamped before he joined me with those that he went back after; he found nine that was left and brought eight to camp, one being so lame that he could not travel, and he was oblige to leave him; the weather clear and windy.

MONDAY, MAY 19TH, 1828. We made an early start this morning, steering our course as yesterday, 6 miles west, and encamped on the side of a mountain, where their was plenty of good grass and water for our horses. Just before we encamped, there was a small band of elk seen by Capt. Smith and those men that was in front with horses; they went after them and killed 6, two of which number were in good order. The travelling some better than it was back, although we have hills and brush to encounter yet; we encamped about 6 m. from the ocean, where we have a fair view of it.

4 Inds. came to camp in the evening and stay all night. Capt. Smith give them some small presents of beads and some elk meat; they eat a part and carried the balance off with them; they appear quit friendly as yet.

TUESDAY, MAY 20TH. As our horses was lame and tired, we concluded to remain here and let them rest, and kill and dry meat, as elk appeared to be plenty from the sign.

After breakfast, myself and Mr. Virgin started on horse back for the sea shore, following an Ind. trail that led immediately there; after proceeding about 5 m. west, we found we could not get any further on horse back along the Ind. trail, so we struck out from the creek that we had followed down, about 3 miles from where we first struck it; this creek being about 40 yards wide, heading into a mou. south and emptying into the ocean at a N.W. direction. After leaving the creek with considerable difficulty, we ascended a point of steep and brushy mountain, that runs along parallel with the sea shore, and followed that, until we could get no further for rocks and brush. We got within 80 or 100 yards of the beach, but, being pretty much fatigued and not able to ride down on account of rocks and brush, we did not proceed any further in that direction. Seeing that it was impossible to travel along where we had been with the company, we concluded to turn and travel across a point of mou. that run N.E., but we could not get along, the travelling so bad; we then concluded to stear for camp, as it was get[ting] on towards night. On our return we saw some elk; I went after them, and Mr. Virgin stay with the horses. I did not get to fire on them, and saw a black bare and made after him, and shot and wounded him very bad, and heard Mr. Virgin shoot and hollow in one minute after my gun were discharged, and tell me to come to him. I made all the haste I could in climbing the mou. to where Mr. Virgin was; he told me that some Inds. had attacked him in my absence, shoot a number of arrows at him and wounded the horses, and, he

---

supposed, killed them by that time, that he had shot one, and was waiting for me. I rested a few minutes and proceed on cautiously to the place where we had left our horses, and found an Ind. lying dead and his dog by him, and Mr. Virgin's horse with 2 or 3 arrows in him, and he laying down. We got him up and made camp a little before night, and there was 7 or 8 Inds. at camp when we got there, and I made signs to them that we were attacked by some of there band, shoot at, one of our horses wounded, and we had killed one; they packed up and put off very soon. The day very foggy at times; some little rain in the evening. Mr. Smith told me that he had sent two men back after the horses that were missing with instructions to stay and hunt them until tomorrow, if they did not find them to-day.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21ST. Still at the same camp; those two men that was sent after the lossed horses still absent. A considerable quantity of rain fell last night; the morning continues to be showery and foggy. The men that were sent back after horses yesterday returned, late in the evening, without finding but one; they say they suppose the Inds. to have killed the rest. The timber in this part of this country is principally hemlock, pine, and white ceadar, the most of the ceadar trees from 5 to 15 feet in diameter and tall in proportion to the thickness, the under brush, hazle, oak, briars, currents, goose berry, and Scotch cap bushes, together with aldar, and sundry other shrubs too tedious to mention; the soil of the country rich and black, but very mountainous, which renders the travelling almost impassable with so many horses as we have got.

THURSDAY, MAY 22ND, 1828. All hands up early and preparing for a move, had the horses drove to camp and caught ready for packing up, and it commenced raining so fast that we concluded to remain here again to-day, as we could [not] see how to direct our course for fog along the mountains. We have not seen or heard any Inds. since the 20th that Mr. Virgin killed the one that shoot at his horse.

Oh! God, may it please thee, in thy divine providence, to still guide and protect us through this wilderness of doubt and fear, as thou hast done heretofore, and be with us in the hour of danger and difficulty, as all praise is due to thee and not to man, oh! do not forsake us Lord, but be with us and direct us through.

FRIDAY, MAY 23RD, 1828. The morning being clear, we were ready for a start early, directing our course east, back on the trail we travelled on the 19th inst, and made the same camp and stopped, it being 6 miles, and concluded to remain the balance of the day and let our meat and other wet articles get dry. We had but little difficulty getting along, as we had a good trail that were made by our horses passing along before; the day clear and pleasant.

SATURDAY, MAY 24TH. All hands up early and ready for a move about 8 oc. A.M., directing our course N.E., 4 miles, and encamped within 100 yards of Indian Scalp river, on the side of the mountain where there was plenty of good grass for our horses.

Capt. Smith went down to the river, where there is a large Indian village on the opposite side, and called to the Inds., and there were 4 crossed over, 2 men, 1 woman and a boy about 12 or 14 years of age, and came to camp with him; he made them a present of a few beads. The day cloudy and misty. There being some horses missing when we encamped, 2 men were sent immediately back in search of them and found them and got back a little after sun set. One mule killed this morning by haltering him and throwing him.

SUNDAY, MAY 25TH. As is usual when travelling, we was up and made an early start, directing our course N.E. about 1 mile and struck Ind. Scalp river opposite to an Ind. village, and got the

THE SECOND JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

Inds., with there canoes, to cross our plunder and selves. We drove in our horses, and they swam across, where they had to swim from 250 to 300 yards. We give those Inds. that assisted in crossing our goods, beads and razors for there trouble; there was a number visited our camp in the course of the day, men, women, and children; some brought lamprey eels for sale; the men bought them, giving beads in exchange. Those Inds. live in lodges built similar to our cabbins, with round holes about 18 inches in diameter for doors; they appear friendly and say nothing about the Ind. that Mr. Virgin killed on the 20th inst. About 10 oc. A.M., it commenced raining and continued to rain on pretty fast during the day.

We cannot find out what those Inds. call themselves; the most of them have wampum and pieces of knives. Some have arrow points of iron; they also have some few beaver and otter skins. Mr. Smith purchases all the beaver fur he can from them. The foundation of there lodges are built of stone with stone floors; the[y] appear quit affraid when we first reached the river and called to them, but, after coakesing, one came across with his canoe, and, showing him by signs what we wanted, he soon complied, and called to others who came with canoes and comm. x our goods. Deer killed to-day; the meat all poor.

MONDAY, MAY 26TH, 1828. We made an early start this morning, directing our course N.E., and ascended a very long and steep point of grassy mountain, and reached the divide, and kept in about 6 miles, the travilling good, and encamped on the side of the mountain where there was pretty good grass for our horses. I killed one fat buck to-day, and Mr. Virgin killed a small doe, but poor fat. We counted our horses, and find that three got drowned yesterday in crossing the river, we saw one of them floating down the river this morning. The day clear and pleasant; 2 Inds. started with us this morning, as pilots, but soon got tired and left us.

TUESDAY, MAY 27TH. Capt. Smith and Mr. Virgin started early this morning ahead to look out a road to travel; I stay and had the horses caught and packed, and started following the blazes through the woods, a N.W. course, descending a very steep and brushy point of mountain, about 3 miles, and struck a creek 25 or 30 yards in width, heading east, and running west into Ind. Scalp river, and enc. (for the day), as there was some horses missing, and sent 3 men back on the trail to look after them. There was 8 or 10 Inds. came to camp, soon after we stoped; Capt. Smith give them a few beads; they have a fishing establishment on the creek. The day pleasant and clear; one horse left to-day.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28TH. We made an early start this morning, steering our course N.E. up a very steep and brushy point of the mountain, and got on the ridge, or divide, between the creek and river, and travelled about 7 miles on it, and enc. on the top of the mountain, where there was but little grass for horses. The day so foggy that we could scarce see how to get along on the ridge, at times; late in the evening, it cleared off, and we had a fair view of the ocean. It appeared to be about 15 or 20 miles distant.

THURSDAY, MAY 29TH. All hands up early and making ready for a move; about 10 oc A.M., our horses were collected together, and we got under way, following the trail that we came yesterday, about 2 miles, S.W., and found some water in a ravine and encamped, the day being so foggy that we could not see how to direct our course to the river, and sent 2 men to hunt a pass to travel; they returned in the evening without finding any route that we could get along with our band of horses. The timber of the country as usual pine and white ceadar.

FRIDAY, MAY 30TH, 1828. All hands up early this morning and out after horses, as they were

---

very much scattered, and got them collected about 10 o.c., and star[ted] down a steep and brushy ridge, a N.W. course, and travelled about 3 m., and struck a small creek, where there was a little bottom of good grass and clover, and encamped. The horses got so that it was almost impossible to drive them down the mou. amongst the brush; 8 or 10 left back in the brush, and six men sent back after them; they got them to camp just at dark; one lost entirely that the men could not find; the rear part of the compy, that stay with me, had a serious time running up and down the mountain after horses through the thickets of brush and briars. 2 elk killed to day by Mr. Virgin; the morning clear, and the evening foggy.

SATURDAY, MAY 31ST, 1828. Capt. Smith concluded we would stay here a part of the day and send 2 men to look out a pass to the river; they returned about 11 o.c.' and say that we will be obliged to climb the mountain again at this place, and go along the ridge for 2 or 3 miles, and then descend to the main river, as it is impossible to go along the creek with horses for cut rocks. As it had commenced raining when those men returned, we concluded to stay here to day, as there was plenty of good grass for our horses. Two Inds came to camp in the rain, and brought a few raspberries that are larger than any species of raspberries I ever saw; the bush also differ from those I have been acquainted with; the stock grow from 8 to 10 feet in height, covered with briars, and branches off with a great many boughs, the leaf is very similar to those vines I have been acquainted with heretofore. Capt. Smith give those Inds. some meat, and they say they will go with us from here to the ocean.

It rained fast from the time it commenced in the forenoon, untill night.

SUNDAY, JUNE 1ST, 1828. We got our horses about 10 o.c. A.M. and packed up and started in the rain, as it had not quit from the time it commenced yesterday, directing our course west, up a steep and brushy mountain, and travelled about 3 miles and enc. in a small bottom parairie, principally covered with ferns; the travelling amazing bad; we left several packs of fur on the road and lost several pack horses and some loose horses, the day being so rainy that it was almost impossible to get up and down the mountains; the road became quite mirery and slippery. Capt. Smith got kicked by a mule and hurt pretty bad. When I reached camp with the rear [rear], it was night, and all hands very wet and tired.

MONDAY, JUNE 2ND, 1828. Capt. Smith concluded to remain here and send some men back after the fur that was left, and to hunt horses; they returned about noon, bringing all the horses and packs that was left. Some men went hunting but killed nothing. Two Inds. came to camp and brought some raspberries; Mr. Smith give them a few beeds. The morning wet; about 1 o.c. P.M., it cleared off, and the balance of the day fair. Capt. Smith goes about although he was much hurt by the kick he received yesterday.

TUESDAY, MAY [JUNE] 3RD, 1828. We made an early start this morning, directing our course N.W. up a steep point of brushy mou., and travelled about 2 m., and enc. in the river bottom, where there was but little for our horses to eat; all hands working hard to get the horses on, as they have become so much worn out that it is almost impossible to drive through brush; we have two men every day that goes a head with axes to cut a road, and then it is with difficulty we can get along. The day clear and pleasant.

WEDNESDAY, MAY [JUNE] 4TH. As our horses were very much fatigued, we made an early start again, this morning, to get to grass, but, the road proving both brushy and mirery, we only made 1 1/2 miles, a N.W. course, during the day; the men almost as well as horses done out. We

were obliged to enc. again in the river bottom and build a pen for our horses, as there was no grass for them. 5 Inds. came to me and brought some raspberries, and give me; I give them a few beads and went on, and left a coloured man by the name of Ransa with them, and had not been absent but a few minutes before he called to me and said the Inds. wanted to rob him of his blanket, that they had rushed into the bushes and got there bows and arrows; he fired on them and they run off leaving 2 or 3 small fishes. The Inds. that have visited our camps some time back generally came without arms and appeared very friendly; those I left with Ransa had no arms at the time they came to me, which induced me to believe that he told me a lie, as I suppose he wanted to get some berries and fish without pay, and the Inds. wanted his knife and he made a false alarm, for which I give him a severe reprimand. The day clear and warm.

THURSDAY, JUNE 5TH, 1828. Our horses being without food again last night, we packed up and made an early start, sending some men a head to cut a road to where there was a small bottom of grass on a creek that comes into Ind. Scalp river, about 10 yards wide; the distance being about 2 miles, a N.W. course. We reached it about 11 o.c. A.M., and enc., one mule and 2 horses left to-day, that could not travel. No Inds. seen to-day; one man sent hunting but killed nothing, and we are entirely out of provision with the exception of a few pounds of flour and rice. Capt. Smith give each man a half pint a flour last night for their supper; we can find no game to kill although there is plenty of elk and bear sign. The day clear and pleasant. The most of the men went hunting after they had enc., but found nothing to kill; we killed the last dog we had along, and give out some more flour.

FRIDAY, JUNE 6TH, 1828. Myself and six men started early hunting, but killed nothing; 5 others started after we returned, as we intend staying at this camp for several days for the purpose of recruiting our horses. 8 Inds. ventured to camp and brought a few lamprey eels and some raspberries; they were soon purchased by Mr. Smith and the men for beads. The morning foggy and cloudy, the after part of the day clear and pleasant.

The hunters all returned without getting meat, and we were obliged to kill a horse for to eat.

SATURDAY, JUNE 7TH, 1828. At the same camp; some men pressing beaver fur, and 2 sent hunting, and 3 others sent back to look for loosed horses. The horses hunters returned without finding but one horse; they report 2 dead that was left back. 18 or 20 Inds. visited camp again to-day with berries, mussels, and lamprey eels for sale; those articles was soon purchased, with beads, by Capt. Smith and the men, and when the Inds. left camp, they stole a small kittle belonging to one of the men; they come with out arms and appear friendly but inclined to steal. The day clear and pleasant.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8TH, 1828. As we intend moving camp, we was up and ready for a start, early, steering our course N.W., about 3 1/2 miles over two small points of mou. and enc. on the sea shore, where there was a small bottom of grass for our horses. The travelling ruff, as we had several thickets to go through; it made it bad on account of driving horses, as they can scarce be forced through brush any more. There was several Ind. lodges on the beach and some Inds.; we got a few clams and some few dried fish from them. Some horses being left, I took four men with me and went back and stay all night in a small pararie.

MONDAY, JUNE 9TH. I was up early and started the men that stay with me all night after horses and to hunt at the same time for meat, as I had left the camp entirely destitute; we hunted hard until 9 or 10 o.c. A.M., but killed nothing. Gaiter wounded a black bear, but did not get him. 6

horses was found that was left, when all hands came in, we saddled up our horses and started for camp, and reached it about the middle of the day. All the men that was sent hunting in the morning from camp had come in without killing any thing. Some Inds. in camp with a few small fishes and clams; the men, being hungry, soon bought them and eat them. They also brought cakes made of sea grass and weeds and sold to the men for beads. Where we encamped, there was a small creek pulling into the ocean at a south direction. Capt. Smith started out again to try his luck and found a small band of elk and killed 3; he returned to camp and got some men and horses and brought all the meat in, which was a pleasing sight to a set of hungry men. The day clear and pleasant.

TUESDAY, JUNE 10TH. We concluded to stay here today, dry meat, make salt, and let our horses rest, as there is good grass and clover for them. A number of Inds. in camp with berrys, but do not find so good a market for them as they did yesterday. The morning cloudy and foggy, some rain towards evening. The men appear better satisfied than they do when in a state of starvation.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11TH. As we intended moving camp, the men was called early, and, preparing for a start, we were under way about 9 o.c. in the morning, directing our course N.W. up a steep point of mou. along the sea coast, and travelled about 2 m., and entered the timber and brush, and kept along a small divide between the sea shore and creek we left, and travelled 3 m. further and enc. in the woods, without grass for our horses, and built a pen and kept them in through the night. The travelling very bad on account of brush and fallen timber; several horses left with packs that got hid in the brush and was passed and not seen by the men. When we was ready for a start, our fellin axe and drawing knife was missing, and the Inds. had left the camp. Capt. Smith took 5 men with him and went to there lodges, and the Inds. fled to the mou. and rocks in the ocean; he caught one and tyed him, and we brought him on about 2 miles and released him. The axe was found where they had buryed it in the sand. The day cloudy and foggy.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12TH. All hands up early and ready for a start, directing our course W. about 2 miles and struck a small creek, where there was some grass on the mountain for our horses, and enc. for the day, the traveling very bad. The horses that was left yesterday, was found to-day, and brought to camp. The day clear; some fog in the morning.

FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, steering N.W., about 6 m., and struck the ocean and enc. on the beach. Plenty of grass on the mountain for our horses, but very steep for them to climb after it. The traveling very mountainous; some brush as yesterday. 2 mules left today that give out and could not travel; one young horse fell down a point of mou. and killed himself. The day clear and pleasant.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, directing our course along the sea shore N., about 1 mile, and struck a low neck of land running into the sea, where there was plenty of clover and grass for our horse, and enc. for the day. We travelled in the water of the ocean 3 or 4 hundred yards, when the swells some times would be as high as the horses backs. 2 men sent back after a load of fur that was lossed yesterday, and to look after horses. 2 hunters dispatched after elk as soon as we enc. One fat deer killed yesterday by J. Hanna. Seven or 8 Inds. came to camp; Capt. Smith give them some beads. The hunters returned without killing any game; saw plenty of elk sign. The day clear and windy.

SUNDAY, JUNE 15TH, 1828. Several men started hunting early, as we intended staying here to day and letting our horses rest. Joseph Lapoint killed a buck elk that weighed 695 lbs., neat

---

weight; the balance of the hunters came in without killing. A number of Inds. visited our camp again to day, bringing fish, clams, strawberrys, and a root that is well known by the traders west of the Rocky mountains by the name of commeser, for trade. All those articles was soon purchased. The day cloudy, windy, and foggy, some rain in the afternoon. Cap. Smith and Mr. Virgin went late in the evening to hunt a pass to travel and found a small band of elk and killed two.

MONDAY, JUNE 16TH. We made an early start this morning, directing our course N.N.W. across a neck of land projecting or running into the ocean, and travelled 4 m., and enc. in a pararie, where there was plenty of grass for our horses. We had considerable difficulty getting our horses across a small branch, that was a little mirery; we were obliged to make a pen on the bank to force them across, which detained us several hours. The day clear and warm.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17TH, 1828. We started early again this morning, steering our course, as yesterday, N.N.W., 2 miles, and found the travelling in the bottom so amazing brushy and mirery we concluded to go back a few hundred yards to the pararie and encamp, dry what meat we had on hand, and send some men to look out a pass to travel when we leave here. We also sent some hunters out. Joseph Lapoint killed a fine buck elk, and Mr. McCoy killed a fawn elk. The day clear and warm, plenty of muskeatoes, large horse flies, and small knats to bite us and pesterous early of mornings and late in the evenings. The timber along the bottom, ceador, hemlock of the largest size, under brush, hazle, briars, aldar, and sundry other srubs; the soil very rich and black.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18TH, 1828. We concluded to stay here to day, and dry meat, and do some work that could not well be dispensed with, and send some men off to hunt a road to travel to-morrow, as those that were sent yesterday did not reach the ocean. They say the traveling was tolerable as far as they went. Some more hunters sent out this morning; and men sent after the meat that was killed last evening. The day clear and very warm. Those men that was sent to hunt a road, returned late in the evening and say that we cannot travel along the bottom for swamps and lakes. The hunters returned without killing any game. A number of Inds. visited our camp with clams, fish, strawberrys, and some dressed skins for sale, also commerss roots, ready prepared for eating; they appear friendly but inclined to steal without watching; they differ from the Ind. Scalp river Inds. in speach a little.

THURSDAY, JUNE 19TH. As those men that was sent to hunt a road yesterday, returned without ascertaining what way we could travel from here, Capt. Smith concluded it was best for us to remain here again today, and that he would take two men with him and go to the N.E. across a ridge, and see what kind of travelling it would be in that direction. He started early in company with two of the men, and returned about 12 o.c., and says that he can pass on in a N.E. direction very well as far as he went; he discovered another small river heading in the mountain east of the ocean, and emptying into a bay west about 2 1/2 or 3 miles wide. 5 Inds. in camp today with strawberrys for sale; the day clear and warm.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20TH, 1828. Capt. Smith started early with one man to blaze the road and left me to bring on the compy. I was ready about 10 o.c. A.M., being detained collecting horses that was missing, and started and travelled along an Ind. trail, about 2 m. east, thence 1 mile N.E., on the blazed road, forded the river that Capt. Smith discovered yesterday, which was nearly swimming and from 60 to 70 yards wide, and enc. on the east side, in a bottom pararie that contained about 15 or 20 acres of good grass and clover. About 20 Inds. came to camp in their canoes, and brought lamprey eels for sale; the men bought a number from them for beeds. Several of us went hunting,

and I killed a fine black tail buck, that was fat. Marichall killed a small deer.

SATURDAY, JUNE 21ST, 1828. All hands up early and preparing for start. We was under way about 8 o.c. A.M., directing our course up a steep brushy point of mountain, about 1 1/2 m. E, and struck an open grassy ridge, or rather a small divide, and kept it about 4 1/2 miles N.E. and enc. The travelling along the divide pretty good and most of the way clear of brush; some rock. I saw an elk, while moving on, and approached it, and killed it; it happened to be a very large and fat buck, that would weight, I should say, nearly 600, from appearance, as I judge from one that we weighed that was killed by Lapoint. Several deer killed by the compy. The day clear and cold.

SUNDAY, JUNE 22. We made an early start again this morning, directing our course N.W., in towards the ocean, as the travilling over the hills E. began to grow very rocky and brushy, and travelled 5 m. and enc. in a bottom prairie on a small branch. The road, to-day, brushy and some what stoney. Timber, hemlock and cedar, of considerable size, and very thick on the ground; some trees from 10 to 15 feet in diamitar. The weather still remain good. We had some considerable trouble driving our horses through the brush.

MONDAY, JUNE 23RD. All hands up early and preparing for a start; we was under way about 9 o.c. A.M., directing our course as yesterday N.W., and traveled 8 m. and enc. 3 miles from camp we struck a creek 20 or 30 yards wide and crossed it, thence 5 M. further, keeping under the mountain along the bottom and sometimes along the beach of the ocean. When we enc., the hills come within 1/2 mile of the ocean prairie, covered with grass and brakes. A little before we enc., we discovered the mule that packed the amunition to be missing; four men was sent immediately back in search of it and found it, and brought to camp just at night. 1 mule that was lame give out and was left, and another run off from camp, and went back on the trail with a saddle and halter on. A number of Inds. visited our camp, bringing strawberrys and commass for sale; the men bought all they brought, giving beads in exchange. We passed a number of wigwams during the day. One fine doe elk killed. The day good.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24TH. We made an early start again this morning, directing our course N.N.W., and travelled 5 miles, and struck a creek about 60 or 70 yards wide, and, the tide being in, we could not cross, and were obliged to encamp on the beach of the ocean for the day. Sent two men back early after the mule that run off last night; they returned without finding it; and 2 more were immediately sent back in pursuit of it with orders to hunt all the afternoon and untill 10 or 11 o.c. tomorrow in case they could not find it this evening. The travelling pretty good yesterday and today; a great many little springs breaks out along under the mountain and makes it a little mirery in some of the branches. Enc. close by some Ind. lodges; they all had fled and left them; no visits from them as yet at this camp; 5 or six Inds. came to camp this morning, just before we started, and brought berries and fish for sale. Capt. Smith bought all they had and divided amongst the men. The day fair and pleasant.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25TH, 1828. On account of the tide being low, we were ready for a start a little after sun rise; started and crossed the creek with out difficulty, it being about belly deep to our horses, and directed our course again N.W., keeping along a cross the points of prairie near and on the beach of the ocean and travelled 12 m. and enc. on the N. side of a small branch at the mouth where it enters into the ocean, close by some Ind. lodges; they had run off as yesterday and left their lodges. The 2 men that was sent back to hunt the mule, returned to camp a little after night and say the Inds sallied out from their village with bows and arrows and made after

them, yelling and screaming, and tried to surround them; they retreated on horseback and swam a small creek, and the Inds. gave up the chase. When our horses was drove in this morning, we found 3 of them badly wounded with arrows, but could see no Inds. untill we started; we then discovered a canoe loaded with them some distance up the creek close by a thicket and did not pursue them, knowing it was in vain. One deer killed, and several more wounded, and one elk wounded to-day while travilling. Deer and elk quite plenty. 2 horses left to-day that give out and could not travel. The travelling tolerable when compared to former days when in the mou. among the brush; some steep ravines to cross, but not very mirery. The day clear cold and windy for the season.

THURSDAY, JUNE 26TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, steering, as yesterday, N.N.W. across several points of brushy and steep mou. and travelled 8 m. on a straight line, but to get to the place of enc., about 12 miles, and struck a creek about 30 yards wide at the entrance into the ocean, and, it being high water, we enc. for the day. 2 deer killed to-day. When we come to count our horses, we found one very valuable one missing that was killed, I suppose, by the Inds. on the 24 inst., when they wounded the other 3. We followed an Ind. trail from the time we started in the morning untill we enc.

FRIDAY, JUNE 27TH. All hands up early and under way a little after sun rise, and started along the beach of the ocean, crossed the creek at the mouth, where it was nearly belly deep to our horses, and purs[u]ed our route along the beach, it bearing N.N.W., and travelled about 7 miles and struck a river about 100 yards wide at the mouth and very deep, that makes a considerable bay and enc., and commenced getting timber for rafts. A number of Ind. lodges on both sides of the river; they had run off, as usual, and left their lodges and large baskets; we tore down one lodge to get the puncheons to make rafts, as timber was scarce along the beach. The weather clear and windy. The Inds. that run off raised smokes on the north side of the bay, I suppose, for signals to those that were absent, or some other villages, to let them know that we were close at hand. All the Inds. for several days past runs off and do not come to us any more.

SATURDAY, JUNE 28TH, 1828. All hands up early, some fixing the rafts for crossing the river and others sent after the horses. We had all our goods crossed by 9 o.c. A.M., and then proceeded to drive in the horses; there was 12 drowned in crossing, and I know not the reason without it was driving them in too much crowded one upon another. We have lossed 23 horses and mules within 3 days past. After crossing the river, we packed up and started along the sea shore, a N.N.W. course, and travelled about 6 miles and enc., sometimes on the beach and sometimes along the points of pararie hills that keeps in close to the ocean; the country back looks broken, and thickety, timbered with low scrubby pines and ceadars, the pararie hills covered with good grass and blue clover; the country has been similar as respects timber and soil for several days past, also grass and herbage. One deer killed to-day.

SUNDAY, JUNE 29TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, steering as yesterday N.N.W. along the beach and hills, and travelled 5M. and enc. on account of the water being high, which prevented us from getting along the shore, or we should have travelled a great deal further, as the point of the mou. was too ruff that come into the beach to get along. The travelling yesterday and to-day much alike. I killed one deer after we enc. The day clear and warm.

MONDAY, JUNE 30TH, 1828. We was up and under way in good season, directing our course N.N.W. along the beach 1 mile, then took a steep point of mountain, keeping the same course,

and travelled over it and along the beach 6 miles more, and encamped. Lossed one mule last night, that fell in a pitt that was made by Inds. for the purpose of catching elk, and smothered to death; one other fell down a point of mou. today and got killed by the fall. The day clear and pleasant.

TUESDAY, JULY 1ST, 1828. All hands up early and under way, steering as yesterday N. along the beach of the ocean and across the points of small hills and travelled 12 miles and enc. The day clear and warm; one Ind. in camp early this morning. The country for several days past well calculated for raising stock, both cattle and hogs, as it abounds in good grass and small lakes a little off from the beach where there is good roots grows for hogs. One horse killed again to-day by falling.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2ND, 1828. We made a pretty early start again this morning, steering N., and travelled 12 miles, and enc. No accident has happened in regard to horses to-day. We travelled pretty much along the beach and over small sand hills; the timber, small pine; the grass not so plenty nor so good as it has been some days past. The country, for 3 days past, appears to leave the effects of earth quakes at some period past, as it is quite cut to pieces in places and very broken, although it affords such an abundance of good grass and clover. The weather still good. As the most of the mens times expired this evening, Capt. Smith called all hands and give them up there articles, and engaged the following men to go on with him, at one dollar per day, untill he reaches the place of deposit, viz;

John Gaiter     Abraham Laplant

Arthur Black     Charles Swift

John Hanna     Thos. Daws

Emanuel Lazarus     Tousaint Marishall

Daws time to commence when he gets well enough for duty.

Also Peter Ranne and Joseph Palmer, at the above named price, one dollar per day, and Martin McCoy, 200 dollars, from the time he left the Spanish country, untill he reaches the deposit.

THURSDAY, JULY 3RD, 1828. We made a pretty early start, steering N. along the pine flats close by the beach of the ocean, and travelled 2 m., and struck a river about 2 hundred yards wide, and crossed it in an Ind. canoe. Capt. Smith, being a head, saw the Inds. in the canoe, and they tryed to get off but he pursued them so closely that they run and left it. They tryed to split the canoe to pieces with thir poles, but he screamed at them, and they fled, and left it, which saved us of a great deal of hard labour making rafts. After crossing our goods, we drove in our horses, and they all swam over, but one; he drowned pretty near the shore. We packed up and started again, after crossing along the beach N., and travelled 5 miles more, and encamped. Saw some Inds. on a point close by the ocean; Marishall caught a boy about 10 years old and brought him to camp. I give him some beads and dryed meat; he appears well and satisfied, and makes signs that the Inds. have all fled in their canoes and left him. I killed one deer to-day. The country similar to yesterday; the day warm and pleasant.

FRIDAY, JULY 4TH. We made a start early, steering N.N.W. 9 m., and enc. The travelling pretty bad, as we were obliged to cross the low hills, as they came in close to the beach, and the beach being so bad that we could not get along, thicketty and timbered, and some very bad ravenes to cross. We enc. on a long point, where there was but little grass for the horses. Good deal of elk signs, and several hunters out but killed nothing, the weather still good.

---

SATURDAY, JULY 5TH, 1828. We travelled 1 1/2 miles to-day N. and, finding good grass, enc. as our horses was pretty tired. Two Inds., who speak Chinook, came to our camp; they tell us we are ten days travell from Catapos on the wel Hamett, which is pleasing news to us. Plenty of elk signs, and several hunters out, but killed nothing.

SUNDAY, JULY 6TH. N. 2 miles to-day and enc., the travelling very bad, mirery and brushy; several horses snagged very bad passing over fallen hemlock; after encamping, two elk killed.

MONDAY, JULY 7TH, 1828. We concluded to stay here to-day for the purpose of resting our horses and getting meat and clearing a road to the mouth of a large river that is in sight, about 2 miles distant that we cannot get too without. About 100 Inds. in camp, with fish and mussels for sale; Capt. Smith bought a sea otter skin from the chief; one of them have a fuzill, all have knives and tomahawks. One a blanket cappon, and a number have pieces of cloth. The weather for several days past good.

TUESDAY, JULY 8TH, 1828. We made an early start, directing our course N. along the beach and low hills; the travelling very bad on account of ravenes, fallen timber, and brush. We made 2 miles and struck the river and enc. The river at the mouth is about 1 m. wide, the Inds. very numerous, they call themselves the Ka Koosh. They commenced trading shell and scale fish, raspberries, strawberries, and 2 other kinds of bury that I am unacquainted with, also some fur skins. In the evening, we found they had been shooting arrows into 8 of our horses and mules; 3 mules and one horse died shortly after they were shot. The Inds. all left camp, but the 2 that acts as interpreters; they tell us that one Ind. got mad on account of a trade he made and killed the mules and horses. The weather still good. One horse left today that was ma[i]m[ed].

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9TH. We made an early start again this morning, and crossed the 1st fork of the river, which is 400 or 500 yards wide, and got all our things safe across about 9 o.c. A.M., then packed up and started along the beach along the river N., and travelled about 2 miles, and struck another river and enc. We crossed in Ind. canoes; a great many Inds. live along the river bank; there houses built after the fashion of a shed. A great many Inds. in camp with fish and berris for sale; the men bought them as fast as they brought them. We talked with the chiefs about those Inds. shooting our horses, but could get but little satisfaction as they say that they were not accessary to it, and we, finding them so numerous and the travelling being so bad, we thought it advisable to let it pass at present without notice. We bought a number of beaver, land, and sea otter skins from them in the course of the day.

THURSDAY, JULY 10TH, 1828. We commenced crossing the river early, as we had engaged canoes last night; we drove in our horses and they swam across; they had to swim about 600 yards. Our goods was all crossed about 9 o.c. A.M. and 2 horses that was wounded, and one was much, remained, that Capt. Smith and 5 men stay to cross; the 2 horses dyed of there wounds, and Capt. Smith swam the mule along side of the canoe. He was some what of opinion the Inds. had a mind to attact him from there behaviour, and he crossed over where the swells was running pretty high, and, there being good grass, we enc. for the day; the Inds. pretty shy.

The river we crossed to-day unites with the one we crossed yesterday and makes an extensive bay that runs back into the hills; it runs N. and S., or rather heads N.E. and enters the ocean S.W., at the entrance into the ocean its about 1 1/2 miles wide.

FRIDAY, JULY 11, 1828. All hands up early and under way, had an Ind. who speaks Chinook along as a guide. Our course was N. along the beach of the ocean, 15 miles, and struck [anoth-

THE SECOND JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

---

er] river that is about 300 yards wide at the mouth and enc., as it was not fordable. We crossed a small creek, 3 yards wide, 10 miles from camp. To-day we enc. where there was some Inds. living; a number of them speak Chinook; 70 or 80 in camp; they bring us fish and berris and appear friendly; we buy those articles from them at a pretty dear rate. Those Inds call themselves the Omp quch.

The day windy and cold. Several of the men worn out. Peter Ranne has been sick for 6 weeks, with a swelling in his legs. The country about 1/2 mile back from the ocean sand hills covered with small pine and brush, the sand beach, quit.

SATURDAY, JULY 12TH. We commenced crossing the river early and had our goods and horses over by 8 o.c., then packed up and started a N.E. course up the river and travelled 3 M. and enc. Had several Inds. along; one of the Ind. stole an ax and we were obliged to seize him for the purpose of tying him before we could scare him to make him give it up. Capt. Smith and one of them caught him and put a cord round his neck, and the rest of us stood with our guns ready in case they made any resistance, there was about 50 Inds. present but did not pretend to resist tying the other. The river at this place is about 300 yards wide and make a large bay that extends 4 or 5 miles up in the pine hills. The country similar to yesterday. We traded some land and sea otter and beaver fur in the course of the day. Those Inds. bring Pacific raspberries and other berries.

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 1828. We made a pretty good start this morning, directing our course along the bay, east and travelled 4 miles and enc. 50 or 60 Inds in camp again to-day (we traded 15 or 20 beaver skins from them, some elk meat and tallow, also some lamprey eels). The traveling quit mirery in places; we got a number of our pack horses mired, and had to bridge several places. A considerable thunder shower this morning, and rain at intervals through the day. Those Inds. tell us after we get up the river 15 or 20 miles we will have good travelling to the Wel Hammett or Multinomah, where the Callipoo Inds. live.

---

Harrison G. Rogers' book continued from the 10th of may, 1828. Jedediah S. Smith capt. of the compy.

MAY 23RD. One thousand eight hundred and twenty eight.

I promise and oblige myself to pay unto John D. Daggett, one hundred pounds, good and lawful money of the United States, for value recd' of him, as witness my hand this 23rd day of may, one thousand eight hundred and twenty eight.

This book commences 10th may, 1828.

From Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, Vol. 14, p. 366 (Dec. 1913)

---

THE SECOND JOURNAL OF HARRISON G. ROGERS

Men's names with J. S. Smith

J. S. Smith      Joseph Lapoint

H. G. Rogers    Abraham Laplant

Thos. Virgin    Thos. Daws

Arthur Black   Charles Swift

John Turner    Richard Layla [Leland]

John Gaiter    Martin McCoy

John Hanna    John Reubasco

Emmanuel Lazarus    Toussaint Marishall

Joseph Palmer John Peter Ranne

Peter Ranne    (a man of colour)

Many men of many minds, and many kinds of many,  
Kinderate of God's creation.

When young in life and forced to guess my road,  
And not one friend to shield my bark from harm,  
The world received me in its vast abode,  
And honest toil procured its plaudits warm.

---

SATURDAY, MAY 10TH, 1828. We made an early start this morning, steering N.W. about 5 miles, thence W. 7 miles and encamped, on a small creek, and built a pen for our horses, as we could not get to grass for them. The travelling very bad, several very steep, rocky and brushy points of mountains to go up and down, with our band of horses, and a great many of them so lame and worn out that we can scarce force them along; 15 lossed on the way, in the brush, 2 of them with loads; the most of the men as much fatigued as the horses; one of the men, lossed his gun, and could not find it. We have had more trouble getting our horses on to-day, than we have had since we entered the mount. We crossed a creek close by the mouth 15 or 20 yards wide heading south, and emptying into the river east at an course, the current quite swift, and about belly deep to our horses. Some beavers sign discovered by the men. The day clear and warm. But one Ind. seen to-day; he was seen by Capt. Smith as he generally goes ahead, and I stay with the rear to see that things are kept in order.

SUNDAY, MAY 11, 1828. As our horses was without food last night, we was up early, and dispatched four men after those that was left back yesterday, and had the others packed and under way a little after sun rise, directing our course up a steep point of mountain, very rocky and brushy about 3/4 of a mile. The course N.W. 2 miles and struck into an open point of mountain where there was good grass and encamped, as the most of our horses was nearly down. We had a great deal of trouble getting them up the mountain with there loads on; a number would fall with their packs, and roll 20 or 30 feet down among the sharp rocks, several badly cut to pieces with the rocks.

The four men that was sent back returned late in the evening. They had got 12 of the horses that were missing, and among them the 2 that had loads; the man that lost his gun could not find it. Three deer killed in the evening, the meat poor.

MONDAY, MAY 12TH. We concluded to remain here to-day and let the horses rest; 2 men sent back after the other horses that are still missing; one left yesterday that could not be got along, that had entirely given out. The two men returned late, found one of the lost horses, but could not drive him to camp, consequently we shall loose them as Capt. Smith intends moving camp early to-morrow. The day clear and warm.

TUESDAY, MAY 13TH, 1828. All hands called early and ready for a start, directing our course N.W. over high ranges of rocky and brushy points of mountains, as usual, and travelled 6 m. and encamped on the side of a grassy mou., where there was an abundance of good grass for the horses, but little water for them. We had a great deal of difficulty to drive them on account of brush and the steepness of the points of mountain; two left that could not travel and a great many more very lame; the weather good.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14TH. We made an early start, directing our course as yesterday N.W., and traveled 4 m. and enc. on the top of a high mountain, where there was but indifferent grass for our horses. The travelling amazing bad; we descended one point of brushy and rocky mountain, where it took us about 6 hours to get the horses down, some of them falling about 50 feet perpendicular down a steep place into a creek; one broke his neck; a number of packs left along the trail, as night was fast approaching, and we were obliged to leave them and get what horses we could collect at camp; a number more got badly hurt by the falls, but none killed but this one that broke his neck.

Saw some Inds. that crossed the river in a canoe and came to me; I give them some beads, as presents; they made signs that they wanted to trade for knives, but I told them that I had none; they give me a lamper eel dried, but I could not eat it.

They appear afraid of horses; they are very light coloured Inds., quite small and talkative. The weather still good.

THURSDAY, 15TH. MAY, 1828. The men was divided in parties this morning, some sent hunting, as we had no meat in camp, others sent back after horses and packs that was left back.

5 Inds. came to camp; I give them some beads; they appear quit friendly; shortly after fifteen or 20 came, and among them one squaw, a very good featured woman; she brought a dressed skin and 2 worked boles for sale; I bought them from her for beads. The hunters killed 5 deer. The balance of the horses and packs, was got to camp about 4 oc. in the evening; the men quit fatigued climbing up and down the hills. The weather still good. Some black bear seen by the hunters.

FRIDAY, MAY 16TH, 1828. We concluded that it was best to lie by today and send two men to look out a pass to travel, as the country looks awful a head, and let our poor horses rest, as there is pretty good grass about 1 mile off for them to feed on. 20 or 30 Inds. Visited our camp in the course of the day, bringing eels for trade and roots; the men bought the most of them giving awls and beads in exchange. Capt. Smith made them some small presents, and bought one B. skin from them; the women does the principal trading. Those Inds. are quite civil and friendly; the weather still good.

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH, 1828. The 2 men that were sent on discovery yesterday returned this morning and say that we are 15 or 20 miles of [f] the North Pacific ocean; they report game plenty, such as elk and deer; they report the traveling favourable to what it has been for 30 or 40 m. back. On there return, we concluded to remain here again to-day on account of our horses being so very lame and soar from the bruises they got on the 14th inst. The morning cloudy and rainy.

---

The 2 men, Marishall and Turner, that were sent off yesterday, killed 3 deer, and Capt. Smith has dispatched 2 men after the meat, as the camp is almost destitute.

Mr. Virgin and Ransa quite unwell this morning. The day continues cloudy and rainy, and quite cold towards evening.

SUNDAY, MAY 18TH, 1828. As we intended moving camp, the horses were sent for early, and got to camp about 10 oc. A.M., packed and started, directing our course W. 3 miles and struck into a small hill pararie, where there was grass and water, and encamped, as the distance were too great to go to any other place of grass to-day for the horses, from what Turner and Marishall tell us about the route from here to the ocean. The morning being so thick with fogg, the men that was sent after the horses did not find them all; Capt. Smith took 2 men with him, and went back after those that could not be found in the morning, and I went on with the company, and encamped before he joined me with those that he went back after; he found nine that was left and brought eight to camp, one being so lame that he could not travel, and he was oblige to leave him; the weather clear and windy.

MONDAY, MAY 19TH, 1828. We made an early start this morning, steering our course as yesterday, 6 miles west, and encamped on the side of a mountain, where their was plenty of good grass and water for our horses. Just before we encamped, there was a small band of elk seen by Capt. Smith and those men that was in front with horses; they went after them and killed 6, two of which number were in good order. The travelling some better than it was back, although we have hills and brush to encounter yet; we encamped about 6 m. from the ocean, where we have a fair view of it.

4 Inds. came to camp in the evening and stay all night. Capt. Smith give them some small presents of beads and some elk meat; they eat a part and carried the balance off with them; they appear quit friendly as yet.

TUESDAY, MAY 20TH. As our horses was lame and tired, we concluded to remain here and let them rest, and kill and dry meat, as elk appeared to be plenty from the sign.

After breakfast, myself and Mr. Virgin started on horse back for the sea shore, following an Ind. trail that led immediately there; after proceeding about 5 m. west, we found we could not get any further on horse back along the Ind. trail, so we struck out from the creek that we had followed down, about 3 miles from where we first struck it; this creek being about 40 yards wide, heading into a mou. south and emptying into the ocean at a N.W. direction. After leaving the creek with considerable difficulty, we ascended a point of steep and brushy mountain, that runs along parallel with the sea shore, and followed that, until we could get no further for rocks and brush. We got within 80 or 100 yards of the beach, but, being pretty much fatigued and not able to ride down on account of rocks and brush, we did not proceed any further in that direction. Seeing that it was impossible to travel along where we had been with the company, we concluded to turn and travel across a point of mou. that run N.E., but we could not get along, the travelling so bad; we then concluded to stear for camp, as it was get[ting] on towards night. On our return we saw some elk; I went after them, and Mr. Virgin stay with the horses. I did not get to fire on them, and saw a black bare and made after him, and shot and wounded him very bad, and heard Mr. Virgin shoot and hollow in one minute after my gun were discharged, and tell me to come to him. I made all the haste I could in climbing the mou. to where Mr. Virgin was; he told me that some Inds. had attacked him in my absence, shoot a number of arrows at him and wounded the horses, and, he

---

supposed, killed them by that time, that he had shot one, and was waiting for me. I rested a few minutes and proceed on cautiously to the place where we had left our horses, and found an Ind. lying dead and his dog by him, and Mr. Virgin's horse with 2 or 3 arrows in him, and he laying down. We got him up and made camp a little before night, and there was 7 or 8 Inds. at camp when we got there, and I made signs to them that we were attacked by some of there band, shoot at, one of our horses wounded, and we had killed one; they packed up and put off very soon. The day very foggy at times; some little rain in the evening. Mr. Smith told me that he had sent two men back after the horses that were missing with instructions to stay and hunt them until tomorrow, if they did not find them to-day.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21ST. Still at the same camp; those two men that was sent after the lossed horses still absent. A considerable quantity of rain fell last night; the morning continues to be showery and foggy. The men that were sent back after horses yesterday returned, late in the evening, without finding but one; they say they suppose the Inds. to have killed the rest. The timber in this part of this country is principally hemlock, pine, and white ceadar, the most of the ceadar trees from 5 to 15 feet in diameter and tall in proportion to the thickness, the under brush, hazle, oak, briars, currents, goose berry, and Scotch cap bushes, together with aldar, and sundry other shrubs too tedious to mention; the soil of the country rich and black, but very mountainous, which renders the travelling almost impassable with so many horses as we have got.

THURSDAY, MAY 22ND, 1828. All hands up early and preparing for a move, had the horses drove to camp and caught ready for packing up, and it commenced raining so fast that we concluded to remain here again to-day, as we could [not] see how to direct our course for fog along the mountains. We have not seen or heard any Inds. since the 20th that Mr. Virgin killed the one that shoot at his horse.

Oh! God, may it please thee, in thy divine providence, to still guide and protect us through this wilderness of doubt and fear, as thou hast done heretofore, and be with us in the hour of danger and difficulty, as all praise is due to thee and not to man, oh! do not forsake us Lord, but be with us and direct us through.

FRIDAY, MAY 23RD, 1828. The morning being clear, we were ready for a start early, directing our course east, back on the trail we travelled on the 19th inst, and made the same camp and stopped, it being 6 miles, and concluded to remain the balance of the day and let our meat and other wet articles get dry. We had but little difficulty getting along, as we had a good trail that were made by our horses passing along before; the day clear and pleasant.

SATURDAY, MAY 24TH. All hands up early and ready for a move about 8 oc. A.M., directing our course N.E., 4 miles, and encamped within 100 yards of Indian Scalp river, on the side of the mountain where there was plenty of good grass for our horses.

Capt. Smith went down to the river, where there is a large Indian village on the opposite side, and called to the Inds., and there were 4 crossed over, 2 men, 1 woman and a boy about 12 or 14 years of age, and came to camp with him; he made them a present of a few beeds. The day cloudy and misty. There being some horses missing when we encamped, 2 men were sent immediately back in search of them and found them and got back a little after sun set. One mule killed this morning by haltering him and throwing him.

SUNDAY, MAY 25TH. As is usual when travelling, we was up and made an early start, directing our course N.E. about 1 mile and struck Ind. Scalp river opposite to an Ind. village, and got the

Inds., with there canoes, to cross our plunder and selves. We drove in our horses, and they swam across, where they had to swim from 250 to 300 yards. We give those Inds. that assisted in crossing our goods, beads and razors for there trouble; there was a number visited our camp in the course of the day, men, women, and children; some brought lamprey eels for sale; the men bought them, giving beads in exchange. Those Inds. live in lodges built similar to our cabbins, with round holes about 18 inches in diameter for doors; they appear friendly and say nothing about the Ind. that Mr. Virgin killed on the 20th inst. About 10 oc. A.M., it commenced raining and continued to rain on pretty fast during the day.

We cannot find out what those Inds. call themselves; the most of them have wampum and pieces of knives. Some have arrow points of iron; they also have some few beaver and otter skins. Mr. Smith purchases all the beaver fur he can from them. The foundation of there lodges are built of stone with stone floors; the[y] appear quit affraid when we first reached the river and called to them, but, after coakesing, one came across with his canoe, and, showing him by signs what we wanted, he soon complied, and called to others who came with canoes and comm. x our goods. Deer killed to-day; the meat all poor.

MONDAY, MAY 26TH, 1828. We made an early start this morning, directing our course N.E., and ascended a very long and steep point of grassy mountain, and reached the divide, and kept in about 6 miles, the travilling good, and encamped on the side of the mountain where there was pretty good grass for our horses. I killed one fat buck to-day, and Mr. Virgin killed a small doe, but poor fat. We counted our horses, and find that three got drowned yesterday in crossing the river, we saw one of them floating down the river this morning. The day clear and pleasant; 2 Inds. started with us this morning, as pilots, but soon got tired and left us.

TUESDAY, MAY 27TH. Capt. Smith and Mr. Virgin started early this morning ahead to look out a road to travel; I stay and had the horses caught and packed, and started following the blazes through the woods, a N.W. course, descending a very steep and brushy point of mountain, about 3 miles, and struck a creek 25 or 30 yards in width, heading east, and running west into Ind. Scalp river, and enc. (for the day), as there was some horses missing, and sent 3 men back on the trail to look after them. There was 8 or 10 Inds. came to camp, soon after we stoped; Capt. Smith give them a few beads; they have a fishing establishment on the creek. The day pleasant and clear; one horse left to-day.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28TH. We made an early start this morning, steering our course N.E. up a very steep and brushy point of the mountain, and got on the ridge, or divide, between the creek and river, and travelled about 7 miles on it, and enc. on the top of the mountain, where there was but little grass for horses. The day so foggy that we could scarce see how to get along on the ridge, at times; late in the evening, it cleared off, and we had a fair view of the ocean. It appeared to be about 15 or 20 miles distant.

THURSDAY, MAY 29TH. All hands up early and making ready for a move; about 10 oc A.M., our horses were collected together, and we got under way, following the trail that we came yesterday, about 2 miles, S.W., and found some water in a ravine and encamped, the day being so foggy that we could not see how to direct our course to the river, and sent 2 men to hunt a pass to travel; they returned in the evening without finding any route that we could get along with our band of horses. The timber of the country as usual pine and white ceadar.

FRIDAY, MAY 30TH, 1828. All hands up early this morning and out after horses, as they were

very much scattered, and got them collected about 10 o.c., and star[ted] down a steep and brushy ridge, a N.W. course, and travelled about 3 m., and struck a small creek, where there was a little bottom of good grass and clover, and encamped. The horses got so that it was almost impossible to drive them down the mou. amongst the brush; 8 or 10 left back in the brush, and six men sent back after them; they got them to camp just at dark; one lost entirely that the men could not find; the rear part of the compy, that stay with me, had a serious time running up and down the mountain after horses through the thickets of brush and briars. 2 elk killed to day by Mr. Virgin; the morning clear, and the evening foggy.

SATURDAY, MAY 31ST, 1828. Capt. Smith concluded we would stay here a part of the day and send 2 men to look out a pass to the river; they returned about 11 o.c.' and say that we will be obliged to climb the mountain again at this place, and go along the ridge for 2 or 3 miles, and then descend to the main river, as it is impossible to go along the creek with horses for cut rocks. As it had commenced raining when those men returned, we concluded to stay here to day, as there was plenty of good grass for our horses. Two Inds came to camp in the rain, and brought a few raspberries that are larger than any species of raspberries I ever saw; the bush also differ from those I have been acquainted with; the stock grow from 8 to 10 feet in height, covered with briars, and branches off with a great many boughs, the leaf is very similar to those vines I have been acquainted with heretofore. Capt. Smith give those Inds. some meat, and they say they will go with us from here to the ocean.

It rained fast from the time it commenced in the forenoon, untill night.

SUNDAY, JUNE 1ST, 1828. We got our horses about 10 o.c. A.M. and packed up and started in the rain, as it had not quit from the time it commenced yesterday, directing our course west, up a steep and brushy mountain, and travelled about 3 miles and enc. in a small bottom prairie, principally covered with ferns; the travelling amazing bad; we left several packs of fur on the road and lost several pack horses and some loose horses, the day being so rainy that it was almost impossible to get up and down the mountains; the road became quite miry and slippery. Capt. Smith got kicked by a mule and hurt pretty bad. When I reached camp with the rear [rear], it was night, and all hands very wet and tired.

MONDAY, JUNE 2ND, 1828. Capt. Smith concluded to remain here and send some men back after the fur that was left, and to hunt horses; they returned about noon, bringing all the horses and packs that was left. Some men went hunting but killed nothing. Two Inds. came to camp and brought some raspberries; Mr. Smith give them a few beeds. The morning wet; about 1 o.c. P.M., it cleared off, and the balance of the day fair. Capt. Smith goes about although he was much hurt by the kick he received yesterday.

TUESDAY, MAY [JUNE] 3RD, 1828. We made an early start this morning, directing our course N.W. up a steep point of brushy mou., and travelled about 2 m., and enc. in the river bottom, where there was but little for our horses to eat; all hands working hard to get the horses on, as they have become so much worn out that it is almost impossible to drive through brush; we have two men every day that goes a head with axes to cut a road, and then it is with difficulty we can get along. The day clear and pleasant.

WEDNESDAY, MAY [JUNE] 4TH. As our horses were very much fatigued, we made an early start again, this morning, to get to grass, but, the road proving both brushy and miry, we only made 1 1/2 miles, a N.W. course, during the day; the men almost as well as horses done out. We

were obliged to enc. again in the river bottom and build a pen for our horses, as there was no grass for them. 5 Inds. came to me and brought some raspberries, and give me; I give them a few beads and went on, and left a coloured man by the name of Ransa with them, and had not been absent but a few minutes before he called to me and said the Inds. wanted to rob him of his blanket, that they had rushed into the bushes and got there bows and arrows; he fired on them and they run off leaving 2 or 3 small fishes. The Inds. that have visited our camps some time back generally came without arms and appeared very friendly; those I left with Ransa had no arms at the time they came to me, which induced me to believe that he told me a lie, as I suppose he wanted to get some berries and fish without pay, and the Inds. wanted his knife and he made a false alarm, for which I give him a severe reprimand. The day clear and warm.

THURSDAY, JUNE 5TH, 1828. Our horses being without food again last night, we packed up and made an early start, sending some men a head to cut a road to where there was a small bottom of grass on a creek that comes into Ind. Scalp river, about 10 yards wide; the distance being about 2 miles, a N.W. course. We reached it about 11 o.c. A.M., and enc., one mule and 2 horses left to-day, that could not travel. No Inds. seen to-day; one man sent hunting but killed nothing, and we are entirely out of provision with the exception of a few pounds of flour and rice. Capt. Smith give each man a half pint a flour last night for their supper; we can find no game to kill although there is plenty of elk and bear sign. The day clear and pleasant. The most of the men went hunting after they had enc., but found nothing to kill; we killed the last dog we had along, and give out some more flour.

FRIDAY, JUNE 6TH, 1828. Myself and six men started early hunting, but killed nothing; 5 others started after we returned, as we intend staying at this camp for several days for the purpose of recruiting our horses. 8 Inds. ventured to camp and brought a few lamprey eels and some raspberries; they were soon purchased by Mr. Smith and the men for beads. The morning foggy and cloudy, the after part of the day clear and pleasant.

The hunters all returned without getting meat, and we were obliged to kill a horse for to eat.

SATURDAY, JUNE 7TH, 1828. At the same camp; some men pressing beaver fur, and 2 sent hunting, and 3 others sent back to look for loosed horses. The horses hunters returned without finding but one horse; they report 2 dead that was left back. 18 or 20 Inds. visited camp again to-day with berries, mussels, and lamprey eels for sale; those articles was soon purchased, with beads, by Capt. Smith and the men, and when the Inds. left camp, they stole a small kittle belonging to one of the men; they come with out arms and appear friendly but inclined to steal. The day clear and pleasant.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8TH, 1828. As we intend moving camp, we was up and ready for a start, early, steering our course N.W., about 3 1/2 miles over two small points of mou. and enc. on the sea shore, where there was a small bottom of grass for our horses. The travelling ruff, as we had several thickets to go through; it made it bad on account of driving horses, as they can scarce be forced through brush any more. There was several Ind. lodges on the beach and some Inds.; we got a few clams and some few dried fish from them. Some horses being left, I took four men with me and went back and stay all night in a small pararie.

MONDAY, JUNE 9TH. I was up early and started the men that stay with me all night after horses and to hunt at the same time for meat, as I had left the camp entirely destitute; we hunted hard until 9 or 10 o.c. A.M., but killed nothing. Gaiter wounded a black bear, but did not get him. 6

horses was found that was left, when all hands came in, we saddled up our horses and started for camp, and reached it about the middle of the day. All the men that was sent hunting in the morning from camp had come in without killing any thing. Some Inds. in camp with a few small fishes and clams; the men, being hungry, soon bought them and eat them. They also brought cakes made of sea grass and weeds and sold to the men for beads. Where we encamped, there was a small creek pulling into the ocean at a south direction. Capt. Smith started out again to try his luck and found a small band of elk and killed 3; he returned to camp and got some men and horses and brought all the meat in, which was a pleasing sight to a set of hungry men. The day clear and pleasant.

TUESDAY, JUNE 10TH. We concluded to stay here today, dry meat, make salt, and let our horses rest, as there is good grass and clover for them. A number of Inds. in camp with berrys, but do not find so good a market for them as they did yesterday. The morning cloudy and foggy, some rain towards evening. The men appear better satisfied than they do when in a state of starvation.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11TH. As we intended moving camp, the men was called early, and, preparing for a start, we were under way about 9 o.c. in the morning, directing our course N.W. up a steep point of mou. along the sea coast, and travelled about 2 m., and entered the timber and brush, and kept along a small divide between the sea shore and creek we left, and travelled 3 m. further and enc. in the woods, without grass for our horses, and built a pen and kept them in through the night. The travelling very bad on account of brush and fallen timber; several horses left with packs that got hid in the brush and was passed and not seen by the men. When we was ready for a start, our fellin axe and drawing knife was missing, and the Inds. had left the camp. Capt. Smith took 5 men with him and went to there lodges, and the Inds. fled to the mou. and rocks in the ocean; he caught one and tyed him, and we brought him on about 2 miles and released him. The axe was found where they had buryed it in the sand. The day cloudy and foggy.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12TH. All hands up early and ready for a start, directing our course W. about 2 miles and struck a small creek, where there was some grass on the mountain for our horses, and enc. for the day, the traveling very bad. The horses that was left yesterday, was found to-day, and brought to camp. The day clear; some fog in the morning.

FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, steering N.W., about 6 m., and struck the ocean and enc. on the beach. Plenty of grass on the mountain for our horses, but very steep for them to climb after it. The traveling very mountainous; some brush as yesterday. 2 mules left today that give out and could not travel; one young horse fell down a point of mou. and killed himself. The day clear and pleasant.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, directing our course along the sea shore N., about 1 mile, and struck a low neck of land running into the sea, where there was plenty of clover and grass for our horse, and enc. for the day. We travelled in the water of the ocean 3 or 4 hundred yards, when the swells some times would be as high as the horses backs. 2 men sent back after a load of fur that was lossed yesterday, and to look after horses. 2 hunters dispatched after elk as soon as we enc. One fat deer killed yesterday by J. Hanna. Seven or 8 Inds. came to camp; Capt. Smith give them some beads. The hunters returned without killing any game; saw plenty of elk sign. The day clear and windy.

SUNDAY, JUNE 15TH, 1828. Several men started hunting early, as we intended staying here to day and letting our horses rest. Joseph Lapoint killed a buck elk that weighed 695 lbs., neat

weight; the balance of the hunters came in without killing. A number of Inds. visited our camp again to day, bringing fish, clams, strawberrys, and a root that is well known by the traders west of the Rocky mountains by the name of commeser, for trade. All those articles was soon purchased. The day cloudy, windy, and foggy, some rain in the afternoon. Cap. Smith and Mr. Virgin went late in the evening to hunt a pass to travel and found a small band of elk and killed two.

MONDAY, JUNE 16TH. We made an early start this morning, directing our course N.N.W. across a neck of land projecting or running into the ocean, and travelled 4 m., and enc. in a pararie, where there was plenty of grass for our horses. We had considerable difficulty getting our horses across a small branch, that was a little mirery; we were obliged to make a pen on the bank to force them across, which detained us several hours. The day clear and warm.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17TH, 1828. We started early again this morning, steering our course, as yesterday, N.N.W., 2 miles, and found the travelling in the bottom so amazing brushy and mirery we concluded to go back a few hundred yards to the pararie and encamp, dry what meat we had on hand, and send some men to look out a pass to travel when we leave here. We also sent some hunters out. Joseph Lapoint killed a fine buck elk, and Mr. McCoy killed a fawn elk. The day clear and warm, plenty of muskeatoes, large horse flies, and small knats to bite us and pesterous early of mornings and late in the evenings. The timber along the bottom, ceador, hemlock of the largest size, under brush, hazle, briars, aldar, and sundry other srubs; the soil very rich and black.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18TH, 1828. We concluded to stay here to day, and dry meat, and do some work that could not well be dispensed with, and send some men off to hunt a road to travel to-morrow, as those that were sent yesterday did not reach the ocean. They say the traveling was tolerable as far as they went. Some more hunters sent out this morning; and men sent after the meat that was killed last evening. The day clear and very warm. Those men that was sent to hunt a road, returned late in the evening and say that we cannot travel along the bottom for swamps and lakes. The hunters returned without killing any game. A number of Inds. visited our camp with clams, fish, strawberrys, and some dressed skins for sale, also commerss roots, ready prepared for eating; they appear friendly but inclined to steal without watching; they differ from the Ind. Scalp river Inds. in speach a little.

THURSDAY, JUNE 19TH. As those men that was sent to hunt a road yesterday, returned without ascertaining what way we could travel from here, Capt. Smith concluded it was best for us to remain here again today, and that he would take two men with him and go to the N.E. across a ridge, and see what kind of travelling it would be in that direction. He started early in company with two of the men, and returned about 12 o.c., and says that he can pass on in a N.E. direction very well as far as he went; he discovered another small river heading in the mountain east of the ocean, and emptying into a bay west about 2 1/2 or 3 miles wide. 5 Inds. in camp today with strawberrys for sale; the day clear and warm.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20TH, 1828. Capt. Smith started early with one man to blaze the road and left me to bring on the compy. I was ready about 10 o.c. A.M., being detained collecting horses that was missing, and started and travelled along an Ind. trail, about 2 m. east, thence 1 mile N.E., on the blazed road, forded the river that Capt. Smith discovered yesterday, which was nearly swimming and from 60 to 70 yards wide, and enc. on the east side, in a bottom pararie that contained about 15 or 20 acres of good grass and clover. About 20 Inds. came to camp in their canoes, and brought lamprey eels for sale; the men bought a number from them for beeds. Several of us went hunting,

and I killed a fine black tail buck, that was fat. Marichall killed a small deer.

SATURDAY, JUNE 21ST, 1828. All hands up early and preparing for start. We was under way about 8 o.c. A.M., directing our course up a steep brushy point of mountain, about 1 1/2 m. E, and struck an open grassy ridge, or rather a small divide, and kept it about 4 1/2 miles N.E. and enc. The travelling along the divide pretty good and most of the way clear of brush; some rock. I saw an elk, while moving on, and approached it, and killed it; it happened to be a very large and fat buck, that would weight, I should say, nearly 600, from appearance, as I judge from one that we weighed that was killed by Lapoint. Several deer killed by the compy. The day clear and cold.

SUNDAY, JUNE 22. We made an early start again this morning, directing our course N.W., in towards the ocean, as the travilling over the hills E. began to grow very rocky and brushy, and travelled 5 m. and enc. in a bottom prairie on a small branch. The road, to-day, brushy and some what stoney. Timber, hemlock and cedar, of considerable size, and very thick on the ground; some trees from 10 to 15 feet in diamitar. The weather still remain good. We had some considerable trouble driving our horses through the brush.

MONDAY, JUNE 23RD. All hands up early and preparing for a start; we was under way about 9 o.c. A.M., directing our course as yesterday N.W., and traveled 8 m. and enc. 3 miles from camp we struck a creek 20 or 30 yards wide and crossed it, thence 5 M. further, keeping under the mountain along the bottom and sometimes along the beach of the ocean. When we enc., the hills come within 1/2 mile of the ocean prairie, covered with grass and brakes. A little before we enc., we discovered the mule that packed the amunition to be missing; four men was sent immediately back in search of it and found it, and brought to camp just at night. 1 mule that was lame give out and was left, and another run off from camp, and went back on the trail with a saddle and halter on. A number of Inds. visited our camp, bringing strawberrys and commass for sale; the men bought all they brought, giving beeds in exchange. We passed a number of wigwams during the day. One fine doe elk killed. The day good.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24TH. We made an early start again this morning, directing our course N.N.W., and travelled 5 miles, and struck a creek about 60 or 70 yards wide, and, the tide being in, we could not cross, and were obliged to encamp on the beach of the ocean for the day. Sent two men back early after the mule that run off last night; they returned without finding it; and 2 more were immediately sent back in pursuit of it with orders to hunt all the afternoon and untill 10 or 11 o.c. tomorrow in case they could not find it this evening. The travelling pretty good yesterday and today; a great many little springs breaks out along under the mountain and makes it a little mirery in some of the branches. Enc. close by some Ind. lodges; they all had fled and left them; no visits from them as yet at this camp; 5 or six Inds. came to camp this morning, just before we started, and brought berries and fish for sale. Capt. Smith bought all they had and divided amongst the men. The day fair and pleasant.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25TH, 1828. On account of the tide being low, we were ready for a start a little after sun rise; started and crossed the creek with out difficulty, it being about belly deep to our horses, and directed our course again N.W., keeping along a cross the points of prairie near and on the beach of the ocean and travelled 12 m. and enc. on the N. side of a small branch at the mouth where it enters into the ocean, close by some Ind. lodges; they had run off as yesterday and left their lodges. The 2 men that was sent back to hunt the mule, returned to camp a little after night and say the Inds sallied out from their village with bows and arrows and made after

them, yelling and screaming, and tried to surround them; they retreated on horseback and swam a small creek, and the Inds. gave up the chase. When our horses was drove in this morning, we found 3 of them badly wounded with arrows, but could see no Inds. untill we started; we then discovered a canoe loaded with them some distance up the creek close by a thicket and did not pursue them, knowing it was in vain. One deer killed, and several more wounded, and one elk wounded to-day while travilling. Deer and elk quite plenty. 2 horses left to-day that give out and could not travel. The travelling tolerable when compared to former days when in the mou. among the brush; some steep ravines to cross, but not very mirery. The day clear cold and windy for the season.

THURSDAY, JUNE 26TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, steering, as yesterday, N.N.W. across several points of brushy and steep mou. and travelled 8 m. on a straight line, but to get to the place of enc., about 12 miles, and struck a creek about 30 yards wide at the entrance into the ocean, and, it being high water, we enc. for the day. 2 deer killed to-day. When we come to count our horses, we found one very valuable one missing that was killed, I suppose, by the Inds. on the 24 inst., when they wounded the other 3. We followed an Ind. trail from the time we started in the morning untill we enc.

FRIDAY, JUNE 27TH. All hands up early and under way a little after sun rise, and started along the beach of the ocean, crossed the creek at the mouth, where it was nearly belly deep to our horses, and purs[u]ed our route along the beach, it bearing N.N.W., and travelled about 7 miles and struck a river about 100 yards wide at the mouth and very deep, that makes a considerable bay and enc., and commenced getting timber for rafts. A number of Ind. lodges on both sides of the river; they had run off, as usual, and left their lodges and large baskets; we tore down one lodge to get the puncheons to make rafts, as timber was scarce along the beach. The weather clear and windy. The Inds. that run off raised smokes on the north side of the bay, I suppose, for signals to those that were absent, or some other villages, to let them know that we were close at hand. All the Inds. for several days past runs off and do not come to us any more.

SATURDAY, JUNE 28TH, 1828. All hands up early, some fixing the rafts for crossing the river and others sent after the horses. We had all our goods crossed by 9 o.c. A.M., and then proceeded to drive in the horses; there was 12 drowned in crossing, and I know not the reason without it was driving them in too much crowded one upon another. We have lossed 23 horses and mules within 3 days past. After crossing the river, we packed up and started along the sea shore, a N.N.W. course, and travelled about 6 miles and enc., sometimes on the beach and sometimes along the points of pararie hills that keeps in close to the ocean; the country back looks broken, and thickety, timbered with low scrubby pines and ceadars, the pararie hills covered with good grass and blue clover; the country has been similar as respects timber and soil for several days past, also grass and herbage. One deer killed to-day.

SUNDAY, JUNE 29TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, steering as yesterday N.N.W. along the beach and hills, and travelled 5M. and enc. on account of the water being high, which prevented us from getting along the shore, or we should have travelled a great deal further, as the point of the mou. was too ruff that come into the beach to get along. The travelling yesterday and to-day much alike. I killed one deer after we enc. The day clear and warm.

MONDAY, JUNE 30TH, 1828. We was up and under way in good season, directing our course N.N.W. along the beach 1 mile, then took a steep point of mountain, keeping the same course,

and travelled over it and along the beach 6 miles more, and encamped. Lossed one mule last night, that fell in a pitt that was made by Inds. for the purpose of catching elk, and smothered to death; one other fell down a point of mou. today and got killed by the fall. The day clear and pleasant.

TUESDAY, JULY 1ST, 1828. All hands up early and under way, steering as yesterday N. along the beach of the ocean and across the points of small hills and travelled 12 miles and enc. The day clear and warm; one Ind. in camp early this morning. The country for several days past well calculated for raising stock, both cattle and hogs, as it abounds in good grass and small lakes a little off from the beach where there is good roots grows for hogs. One horse killed again to-day by falling.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2ND, 1828. We made a pretty early start again this morning, steering N., and travelled 12 miles, and enc. No accident has happened in regard to horses to-day. We travelled pretty much along the beach and over small sand hills; the timber, small pine; the grass not so plenty nor so good as it has been some days past. The country, for 3 days past, appears to leave the effects of earth quakes at some period past, as it is quite cut to pieces in places and very broken, although it affords such an abundance of good grass and clover. The weather still good. As the most of the mens times expired this evening, Capt. Smith called all hands and give them up there articles, and engaged the following men to go on with him, at one dollar per day, untill he reaches the place of deposit, viz;

John Gaiter     Abraham Laplant

Arthur Black     Charles Swift

John Hanna     Thos. Daws

Emanuel Lazarus     Tousaint Marishall

Daws time to commence when he gets well enough for duty.

Also Peter Ranne and Joseph Palmer, at the above named price, one dollar per day, and Martin McCoy, 200 dollars, from the time he left the Spanish country, untill he reaches the deposit.

THURSDAY, JULY 3RD, 1828. We made a pretty early start, steering N. along the pine flats close by the beach of the ocean, and travelled 2 m., and struck a river about 2 hundred yards wide, and crossed it in an Ind. canoe. Capt. Smith, being a head, saw the Inds. in the canoe, and they tryed to get off but he pursued them so closely that they run and left it. They tryed to split the canoe to pieces with thir poles, but he screamed at them, and they fled, and left it, which saved us of a great deal of hard labour making rafts. After crossing our goods, we drove in our horses, and they all swam over, but one; he drowned pretty near the shore. We packed up and started again, after crossing along the beach N., and travelled 5 miles more, and encamped. Saw some Inds. on a point close by the ocean; Marishall caught a boy about 10 years old and brought him to camp. I give him some beads and dryed meat; he appears well and satisfied, and makes signs that the Inds. have all fled in their canoes and left him. I killed one deer to-day. The country similar to yesterday; the day warm and pleasant.

FRIDAY, JULY 4TH. We made a start early, steering N.N.W. 9 m., and enc. The travelling pretty bad, as we were obliged to cross the low hills, as they came in close to the beach, and the beach being so bad that we could not get along, thicketty and timbered, and some very bad ravenes to cross. We enc. on a long point, where there was but little grass for the horses. Good deal of elk signs, and several hunters out but killed nothing, the weather still good.

---

SATURDAY, JULY 5TH, 1828. We travelled 1 1/2 miles to-day N. and, finding good grass, enc. as our horses was pretty tired. Two Inds., who speak Chinook, came to our camp; they tell us we are ten days travell from Catapos on the wel Hamett, which is pleasing news to us. Plenty of elk signs, and several hunters out, but killed nothing.

SUNDAY, JULY 6TH. N. 2 miles to-day and enc., the travelling very bad, mirery and brushy; several horses snagged very bad passing over fallen hemlock; after encamping, two elk killed.

MONDAY, JULY 7TH, 1828. We concluded to stay here to-day for the purpose of resting our horses and getting meat and clearing a road to the mouth of a large river that is in sight, about 2 miles distant that we cannot get too without. About 100 Inds. in camp, with fish and mussels for sale; Capt. Smith bought a sea otter skin from the chief; one of them have a fuzill, all have knives and tommahawks. One a blanket cappon, and a number have pieces of cloth. The weather for several days past good.

TUESDAY, JULY 8TH, 1828. We made an early start, directing our course N. along the beach and low hills; the travelling very bad on account of ravenes, fallen timber, and brush. We made 2 miles and struck the river and enc. The river at the mouth is about 1 m. wide, the Inds. very numerous, they call themselves the Ka Koosh. They commenced trading shell and scale fish, raspberries, strawberries, and 2 other kinds of bury that I am unacquainted with, also some fur skins. In the evening, we found they had been shooting arrows into 8 of our horses and mules; 3 mules and one horse died shortly after they were shot. The Inds. all left camp, but the 2 that acts as interpreters; they tell us that one Ind. got mad on account of a trade he made and killed the mules and horses. The weather still good. One horse left today that was ma[i]m[ed].

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9TH. We made an early start again this morning, and crossed the 1st fork of the river, which is 400 or 500 yards wide, and got all our things safe across about 9 o.c. A.M., then packed up and started along the beach along the river N., and travelled about 2 miles, and struck another river and enc. We crossed in Ind. canoes; a great many Inds. live along the river bank; there houses built after the fashion of a shed. A great many Inds. in camp with fish and berris for sale; the men bought them as fast as they brought them. We talked with the chiefs about those Inds. shooting our horses, but could get but little satisfaction as they say that they were not accessary to it, and we, finding them so numerous and the travelling being so bad, we thought it advisable to let it pass at present without notice. We bought a number of beaver, land, and sea otter skins from them in the course of the day.

THURSDAY, JULY 10TH, 1828. We commenced crossing the river early, as we had engaged canoes last night; we drove in our horses and they swam across; they had to swim about 600 yards. Our goods was all crossed about 9 o.c. A.M. and 2 horses that was wounded, and one was much, remained, that Capt. Smith and 5 men stay to cross; the 2 horses dyed of there wounds, and Capt. Smith swam the mule along side of the canoe. He was some what of opinion the Inds. had a mind to attact him from there behaviour, and he crossed over where the swells was running pretty high, and, there being good grass, we enc. for the day; the Inds. pretty shy.

The river we crossed to-day unites with the one we crossed yesterday and makes an extensive bay that runs back into the hills; it runs N. and S., or rather heads N.E. and enters the ocean S.W., at the entrance into the ocean its about 1 1/2 miles wide.

FRIDAY, JULY 11, 1828. All hands up early and under way, had an Ind. who speaks Chinook along as a guide. Our course was N. along the beach of the ocean, 15 miles, and struck [anoth-

er] river that is about 300 yards wide at the mouth and enc., as it was not fordable. We crossed a small creek, 3 yards wide, 10 miles from camp. To-day we enc. where there was some Inds. living; a number of them speak Chinook; 70 or 80 in camp; they bring us fish and berris and appear friendly; we buy those articles from them at a pretty dear rate. Those Inds call themselves the Omp quch.

The day windy and cold. Several of the men worn out. Peter Ranne has been sick for 6 weeks, with a swelling in his legs. The country about 1/2 mile back from the ocean sand hills covered with small pine and brush, the sand beach, quit.

SATURDAY, JULY 12TH. We commenced crossing the river early and had our goods and horses over by 8 o.c., then packed up and started a N.E. course up the river and travelled 3 M. and enc. Had several Inds. along; one of the Ind. stole an ax and we were obliged to seize him for the purpose of tying him before we could scare him to make him give it up. Capt. Smith and one of them caught him and put a cord round his neck, and the rest of us stood with our guns ready in case they made any resistance, there was about 50 Inds. present but did not pretend to resist tying the other. The river at this place is about 300 yards wide and make a large bay that extends 4 or 5 miles up in the pine hills. The country similar to yesterday. We traded some land and sea otter and beaver fur in the course of the day. Those Inds. bring Pacific raspberries and other berries.

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 1828. We made a pretty good start this morning, directing our course along the bay, east and travelled 4 miles and enc. 50 or 60 Inds in camp again to-day (we traded 15 or 20 beaver skins from them, some elk meat and tallow, also some lamprey eels). The traveling quit mirery in places; we got a number of our pack horses mired, and had to bridge several places. A considerable thunder shower this morning, and rain at intervals through the day. Those Inds. tell us after we get up the river 15 or 20 miles we will have good travelling to the Wel Hammett or Multinomah, where the Callipoo Inds. live.

---

Harrison G. Rogers' book continued from the 10th of may, 1828. Jedediah S. Smith capt. of the compy.

MAY 23RD. One thousand eight hundred and twenty eight.

I promise and oblige myself to pay unto John D. Daggett, one hundred pounds, good and lawful money of the United States, for value recd' of him, as witness my hand this 23rd day of may, one thousand eight hundred and twenty eight.

This book commences 10th may, 1828.

From Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, Vol. 14, p. 366 (Dec. 1913)

---

EDITORIAL NOTES By T. C. ELLIOTT

Alexander Ross, whose day-to-day experiences in 1824 appear in this journal, did service in many parts of the Old Oregon country. As a member of the Pacific Fur Company he arrived on the Columbia in March, 1811, and assisted in the building of Fort Astoria, and in the fall of the same year assisted in the building of the first Fort Okanogan., at which post he was stationed for several years; from there he made trips south to the Yakima country, west to the summit of the Cascades, north to Thompson river and beyond, and east to the Spokane country. Later, while staff clerk of the Northwest Company at Fort George, he ascended the Willamette, and in 1818 assisted Donald McKenzie in the building of Fort Nez Perce at the mouth of the Walla Walla river, of which fort he was in charge until 1823. That summer he started to cross the mountains and quit the service, the Hudson's Bay Company having succeeded the Northwest Company, but was stopped at Boat Encampment by a letter from Deputy Governor George Simpson, asking him to take charge of the Snake Country Expedition that fall. This appointment he accepted and returned to Spokane House and thence proceeded to the Flathead Post in what is now Montana, where this journal begins. Returning from this expedition he spent the winter at the Flathead Post and in April, 1825, joined Governor Simpson at the mouth of the Spokane river on the way east to the Red River settlements, where he resided until his death in 1856.

Mr. Ross is one of the four writers upon whom we depend for much that is known about the early exploration of and fur trade in this vast Columbia river basin. In 1849, more than twenty years after his active experiences here, he published a book entitled "Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River," and in 1855 he put out another book entitled, "Fur Hunters of the Far West." It is related that Mr. Ross first left his paternal home in Scotland in 1804, from which it may be estimated that he was more than sixty years of age when completing these books, which, from their context, evidently were based upon some journal or memoranda then at hand. There has been and probably always will be a question as to how closely he followed any such original memoranda and how much he drew from memory. The publication of this journal is therefore valuable to the extent that it assists in answering that question, and it should be read in immediate comparison with the first 160 pages of Vol. II. of "Fur Hunters of the Far West," Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1855. It may be noted also that the preface of Mr. Ross' first book was dated in 1846 and that pages 154-5 of Vol. II. of his "Fur Hunters," contains a footnote suggesting that at least a part of it had been written much earlier.

The original of this journal is to be found in the possession of the Hudson's Bay Company at their head office on Lime street, London, but this text has been carefully copied from an original copy belonging to the Ayers Collection in the Newberry Library at Chicago, Ill.; that original copy was made by Miss Agnes C. Laut in preparation for writing her "Conquest of the Great Northwest," and was by her transferred to the Newberry Library. To the writer of these notes, it seems possible that this is not the journal that Mr. Ross had when writing his books and that he had other papers than those formally turned over to the Hudson's Bay Company. This suggestion is based upon the

JOURNAL OF ALEXANDER ROSS - SNAKE COUNTRY EXPEDITION, 1824

---

fact that other personal journals have been found among the family archives of contemporaneous fur traders, also upon other deductions. The reader will regret that seemingly Miss Laut did not find it necessary to copy the entire text of the original in the H. B. Co. House at London.

Referring to the journal itself it will be found that from Eddy, in Montana, Mr. Ross' party followed very closely the present- route of the Northern Pacific Railway as far as Missoula, which is at the mouth of Hell Gate Canyon and River (Porte d'Infer, as the French half-breeds first named it) ; thence he proceeded south up the Bitter Root Valley, along the stream which is the original Clark's Fork of the Columbia named by Captain Lewis when at its source in 1805. On a small mountain prairie of the easterly fork of this stream he was snowbound for a month, and that prairie has very properly been known ever since as Ross' Hole. Finally he succeeded in forcing a way across the continental divide by what is now known as the Gibbon Pass (but which Olin D. Wheeler rightly says should be called Clark's Pass), over to Big Hole Prairie, where a monument now stands commemorating the battle between General Gibbon and Chief Joseph during that memorable Nez Perce retreat in 1877. Mr. Ross now crossed the various small source streams of the Big Hole or Wisdom river and passed over the low divide to the Beaverhead, which is another of the sources of Jefferson's Fork of the Missouri. Thence he again crossed the continental divide southwest into Idaho, using perhaps the same pass that Lewis and Clark had in 1805 and was upon the waters of the Lemhi river, and then spent the entire summer and early fall upon the mountain streams of central Idaho, including the Snake river from the Weiser southward a considerable distance. He returned by practically the same route and arrived at Flathead fort the last of November.

As the Lewis and Clark party in 1805-6 traveled over a part of this same route it is very interesting in this connection to compare with the careful and voluminous notes of Dr. Elliott Coues and Mr. Olin D. Wheeler, both of whom personally followed the path of those explorers through these mountains.

But the really beautiful as well as valuable portion of this journal is the brief and vivid picture of the grand assembly of the Indians at their customary council ground, Horse Plains, in December, 1824, and the ceremonial opening of the annual trading period at the Flathead Post, followed by the outfitting of the next Snake Expedition under Mr. Peter Skene Ogden, the brief mention of the holiday season at the fort, and of the closing up and departure of the trader in the spring. Here are facts and figures useful to the writers of poetry and romance, as well as to the historian.

JOURNAL OF ALEXANDER ROSS; SNAKE COUNTRY EXPEDITION, 1824

(As Copied By Miss Agnes Laut In 1905 From Original In Hudson's Bay Company House, London, England)

## JOURNAL OF ALEXANDER ROSS - SNAKE COUNTRY EXPEDITION, 1824

---

Tuesday, 10th of February.

Our party was as follows:

Thyery Goddin	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Joseph Vail	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Louis Paul	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	1 lodge
Francois Faniaint	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Antoine Sylvaille	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Laurent Quintal	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Joseph Annance	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Jean Bapt Gadaira	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Pierre Depot	1 gun	3 traps	2 horses	
Francois Rivet, interp	2 guns	6 traps	15 horses	1 lodge
Alexander Ross	1 gun	6 traps	16 horses	1 lodge

11 men	12	33 (?)	50 (?)	3
--------	----	--------	--------	---

1824, Feb. 10. Every preparation for the voyage being made, I left Flat Head House(1) in the afternoon in order to join the Free Men who were encamped at Prairie de Cheveaux.(2) Joined the Free Men and encamped. Snow 18 inches deep. Weather cold. General course east, 8 miles. Statement of Free Men Trappers, Snake Country.

	Men	Traps	Guns	Horses	On the Books
Mr. Montour	3	15	3	10	2
Vieux Pierre	3	15	4	11	3
Martine	4	14	5	20	3
Charles Gros Louis	3	16	4	10	2
	13	60	16	57 (?)	10
Jacques1	5	3	7	2	
Antoine Valles	1	7	1	8	2
Clements	2	8	2	22	2
Prudhomme	2	12	4	10	2
Cadiac	4	11	4	7	2
Creverss	3	8	3	8	2
Geo. Louis Gros	3	12	3	9	2
John Grey	2	7	2	7	2
Charles Loyers	2	6	2	5	2

## JOURNAL OF ALEXANDER ROSS - SNAKE COUNTRY EXPEDITION, 1824

---

Antoin Paget	2	12	2	7	2
Robas Cass	4	16	4	13	2
Francois	2	9	2	11	2
Indian 2	9	2	10	2	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	43	173 (?)	50	181	34 (?)
Engages	11	33	12	50	
Total 20 lodges		54	206	62	231

Many of these people are too old for a long voyage and very indifferent trappers. Iroquois, though good trappers, are very unfit for a Snake voyage, being always at variance with the whites,. too fond of trafficking away their goods with the natives. More harm than good to our expedition.

1824, February, Wednesday 11th. All hands being assembled together and provisions scarce, we lost no time leaving Prairie de Cheveaux. Proceeded till we reached Prairie de Camas(3) and put up for the night. Several deer seen. Weather cold. Snow 15 inches, wind east. General course east by south, distance 12 miles.

Thursday 12th. Remained in camp on chance of killing deer - people badly off for provisions. Murmuring among the Iroquois, but I could not learn the cause. High wind, heavy snow, wind east.

Friday, 13th. Early this a.m. the Iroquois asked to see their accounts. I showed them article by article and showed them their amounts wh. Seemed to surprise them not a little. Some time after leaving camp I was told that the worthy Iroquois had remained behind. I therefore went back, and true enough, the whole black squad, Martin excepted, had resolved to leave us, old Pierre at their head! On being asked the cause Pierre spoke at length. The others grumbled, saying the price allowed for their furs was so small in proportion to the exorbitant advance on goods sold them, they were never able to pay their debts much less make money and would not risk their lives any more in the Snake Country. Old Pierre held out that Mr. Ogden last fall promised there would be no more N. W. currency; this they construed to be paying half for their goods. I told them whatever had been promised would be performed. Although I had balanced their accounts, they could be altered if required. It was at headquarters accounts would be settled. They grumbled and talked, and talked and grumbled and at last consented to proceed. Thinks I to myself-this is the beginning. Having gained the blacks, we followed and camped at the Traverse(4) plain covered with but 10 inches of snow, weather fine, course S. E. Distance 10.

Saturday 14th. Early on our journey except four lodges hunting deer. Proceeded to fork called Riviere aux Marons,(5) where many wild horses are said to be. Our Horses are lean. Seeing the Iroquois apart from the whites I suspected plotting and sent for Pierre and Martin. Gave them a

memo. importing that N. W. currency was done away with and their accounts would be settled with Quebec currency or sterling. This pleased. All is quiet. S. E.

Sunday 15th. Remained in camp on account of bad weather and for hunters who brought in four wild horses and seven deer. These horses are claimed by the Flathead tribes; those who kill them have to pay four skins Indian currency. Wind high.

Monday 16th. On our journey early. Delayed by a pour, rain, sleet, snow. Passed the Forks, left main branch Flathead, River followed up Jacques Fork(6) till we made a small rivulet on the south side which our people named Riviere Maron. Country is pleasant, animals small and lean. Traps produced nothing. Course S. E., distance nine miles.

Tuesday 17th. Left camp early, the people grumbling to remain. Passed three lodges of Tete Pletes. Francois Rivet(7) caught a beaver; but the wolves devoured, it, skin and all. Course S. SE., distance twelve miles.

Wednesday 18th. Remained in camp to hunt and refresh horses before entering the mountains. I appointed Vieux Pierre to head the Iroquois, Mr. Montour(8) the Ft. de Prairie(9) Half Breeds, and myself the remainder so the sentiments of the camp may be known by a council: among so many unruly, ill-tongued villains. Four elk and twenty-five small deer brought to camp. Louis killed nine with ten shots.

Friday 20th.(10) Detained in camp by sleet and rain.

Saturday 21st. Antoine Valle's boy died.

Monday 23rd. Passed the defile(11) of the mountains between Jacques and Courtine forks. End of defile had a view of noted place called Hell's Gate, so named from being frequented by war parties of young Blackfeet and, Piegans. We were met by eight Piegans and a drove of dogs in train with, provisions and robes to trade at the Flathead post. At Courtine's Fork, the country opens finely to view clumps of trees and level plains alternately. The freemen in spite of all we could say like a band of wolves seized on the Piegan's load:, one a robe, another a piece of fat, a third a cord, a fourth an appichinon, till nothing remained and, for a few articles of trash paid in ammunition treble the value. These people put no value on property. It would be better to turn these vagabonds adrift with the Indians and treat them as Indians.

Tuesday 24th. Remained in camp to hunt. Traded seven beaver from the Piegans. As they were going off we saluted them with the brass gun to show them that it at least makes a noise.

Wednesday 25th. Passed Piegan River(12) the war road to this quarter. Here the road divides to the Snake country, one following the Piegan River, the other Courtine's Fork(13) both to the Snakes S. E. We followed the latter, a continuation of S. fork of Flathead River. Elk and small deer in great plenty. Flocks of swans flying about. Was informed that two Iroquois, Laurent and Lazard, had deserted. Assembling a small party, I went in pursuit of the villains. After sixteen

miles we came up with them, partly by persuasion, partly by force, brought them along after dark. Old Pierre behaved well. Lazard had disposed of his new rifle and ammunition for a horse. Lazard had sold his lodge. Though encamped in a most dangerous place, not a freeman would guard the horses.

Thursday 26th. The general cry was for remaining to hunt. I assented. It may be asked why I did not command. I answer to command when we have power of enforcing the command does very well; otherwise, to command is one thing; to obey, another.

Friday 27th. Hunt yesterday, twenty-seven elk, six deer.

Sunday 28th. All this day in camp to wait those laggard freemen who arrived in the evening and camped on the opposite side of the river to show contrary.

Tuesday March(14). There fell seven inches of snow; south wind soon dispelled the gloom. This being a good place for horses, we resolved to pass the day to prepare for passing the mountains between the headwaters of the Flathead and Missouri Rivers. Killed eleven elk, four sheep, seven deer. They're very fat here.

Thursday 11th. Proceeding over slippery stony road, at every bend a romantic scene opens. The river alone prevents the hills embracing. Our road following the river crossing and recrossing. Here a curiosity called the Ram's Horn"(15) - out of a large pine five feet from root projects a ram's head, the horns of which are transfixd to the middle. The natives cannot tell when this took place but tradition says when the first hunters passed this way, he shot an arrow at a mountain ram and wounded him; the animal turned on his assailant who jumped behind a tree. The animal missing its aim pierced the tree with his horns and killed himself. The horns are crooked and very large. The tree appears to have grown round the horns. Proceeded over zigzag road.

Monday 15th(16). Early this morning thirty men, ten boys, fifty horses set off to beat the road through five feet of snow for twelve miles. Late in the evening all hands arrived well pleased with day's work having made three miles. The horses had to be swum through it, their plunges frequently disappearing altogether. Geese and swan seen in passage north today.

Thursday 18th. This morning sent off forty men with shovels and fifty horses to beat the road. Weather bad with snow and drift, they returned to camp. The crust is eight ( ? ) inches thick lying under two feet of snow. Owing to crust the horses made no headway. There are now eight miles of the road made, oft the prospect is gloomy, people undecided whether to continue or turn back.

Friday 19th. We did not resume our labors today owing to the drift. This country abounds with mountain Sheep weighing about seventy pounds. Late today John Grey, a turbulent leader among the Iroquois, came to my lodge as spokesman to inform me he and ten others had resolved to

abandon the party and turn back. I asked him why? He said they would lose the spring hunt by remaining here, were tired of so large a band, and did not engage to dig snow and make roads. It told him I was surprised to hear a good quiet honest fellow utter such language, God forgive me for saying so. I said by going back they would lose the whole year's hunt, and here a sudden change in weather would allow us to begin hunting. Danger required us to keep together for safety. John answered he was neither a soldier nor a slave; he was under the control of no man. I told him he was a freeman of good character and to be careful not to stain it. In, my heart I thought otherwise. I saw John in his true colors, a turbulent blackguard, a damned rascal. He said fair words were very good but back he would go. "You are no stronger than other men" said I, "stopped you will be! I will stop you," and he said he would like to see the man who could stop him. I said I would stop him. If his party walked off the expedition would fail. Vieux Pierre interrupted by coming in. John went off cursing the large band, the Snake country and the day he came to it! So another day ends.

Saturday 20th. Stormy. John as he swore, did not turn back nor any of his gang. I suspect he is plotting to raise a rebellion. If he succeeds, it will injure our prospects if not stop us altogether. In the evening the cry of "enemies, enemies, Blackfeet! Piegans" was vociferated in the camp. All hands rushed out when the enemies proved to be six friendly Nez Perces separated from their camp on the buffalo ground and in snow shoes made way to us across the mountains. They have been five days on this journey. They told us the Blackfeet and Piegans had stolen horses out of the Flathead and Nez Perces' camp nine different times and they were preaching up (!) peace and good fellowship. The Blackfeet had made a war excursion against the Snakes, killed eight, taken some slaves and many horses. That the buffalo were in great plenty but the snow very deep. The Piegans were seen in seven bands. Cannot these outlandish devils disturbing the peace be annihilated or reduced?

Sunday 21st. Finding John at the head of a party, I sent for the intriguing scamp and agreed with him to hunt me animals, whenever I should want any, from which source his debt of 4,000 livres is to be reduced 400 livres or about twenty beaver. To this he agreed. All quiet once more. It is impossible to proceed without these hunters.

Tuesday 23rd. Early this a.m. thirty persons went on snow shoes across the mountains to the buffalo. I feel anxious, very anxious, at our long delay here. The people grumble much. The sly deep dog Laurent who once already deserted left camp today and turned back. He was off before I had any knowledge of it and told his comrades he was going to the Nez Perces' camp to trade meat, but would come again. Our camp abounds with meat. The dog has no thought of returning unless the Indians cast him out as he deserves. A more discordant, headstrong, ill-designing set of rascals than form this camp God never permitted together in the fur trade.

Wednesday 24th. All quiet in camp today.

Thursday 25th. All the women went off to collect berries.

Sunday 28th. The buffalo hunters came back today, buffalo in plenty; thirty killed, six of the men brought over 140 pounds of dried meat but becoming snow blind could not secure ( ? ) the meat left behind. Grass began to appear through the snow.

Tuesday 30th. A meeting today to decide whether to make the rest of the road or not. It was agreed to wait seven or eight days, another party to go buffalo hunting.

Friday 2nd (April) Today I was surprised by the return of Laurent. He says he went as far as Hell's Gate but finding no beaver came back. The truth is, he saw the Piegans, got a fright and came back.

Monday 5th. Were visited by fifty Nez Perces just arrived from buffalo country loaded with provisions. Our people commenced a trade with them so brisk that hardly a ball was left among the freemen nor a mouthful of provisions amongst the Indians. When these people meet Indians, a frenzy siezes them. What madness in them, and what folly in the company to be furnishing such people with means. It was now we learned the truth of Laurent's trip back. He was sent by the Iroquois to get these Indians to trade with us. This visit has left our people almost naked and cost 100 balls to send our visitors off pleased.

Wednesday 7th. Nez Perces went off.

Friday 9th. After a pause of twenty-six days we shifted quarters two miles ahead.

Saturday 10th. This morning none of the freemen would work on the road except old Pierre, who alone went and alone worked. A novel trick brought about a change. Old Cadiac dit, Grandreau having made a drum and John Grey a fiddle, the people were entertained with a concert of music(17) Taking advantage of the good humor, I got all to consent to go to the road tomorrow.

Wednesday 14th. This morning on going to my lodge in camp, I could muster only seven persons with twenty horses to finish the last mile of the road. In the evening we raised camp and moved to the foot of the mountain at the source of Flathead River, 345 miles from its joining the Columbia. The river is navigable for 250 miles.

Thursday 15th. This day we passed the defile(18) of the mountains after a most laborious journey both for man and beast. Long before daylight, we were on the road, in order to profit by the hardness of the crust. From the bottom to the top of the mountain is about one and a half miles. Here is a small creek, the source of the Missouri, in this direction between which and the source of the Flathead River is scarce a mile distant. The creek runs a course nearly S. SE. following, the road through the mountain till it joins a principal branch of the Missouri beyond the Grand Prairie(19). For twelve miles, the road had been made through five feet deep snow but the wind had filled it up again. The last eight miles we had to force our way through snow gullies. At 4 p.m. we encamped on the other side of the defile without loss or accident. Distance today, eighteen miles. This high land is a horn of the Rocky Mountains, called the Blue Mountains. It is the dividing

ridge(20) between the Nez Perces and Snake Nations and terminates near the Columbia. The delay has cost loss of one month and to the freemen 1,000 beaver. Two men should winter here and keep the road open at all seasons.

Friday 16th. Encamped here to make lodge poles for the voyage.

Saturday 17th. Proceeded to the main fork(21) of Missouri hobbled our horses and set watch. It was on this flat prairie 400 Piegans came up with Mr. McDonald(22) last fall and a freeman named Thomas Anderson from the east side of the mountains was killed.

Monday 19th. As we are on dangerous ground, I have drawn up the following rules:

- (1) All hands to raise camp together and by call.
- (2) The camp to march as close as possible.
- (3) No person to run ahead.
- (4) No persons to set traps till all hands camp.
- (5) No person to sleep out of camp.

These rules which all agreed to were broken before night.

Wednesday 21st. Thirty beaver today. The freemen will keep no watch on their horses but to tie them and sleep fast.

Thursday 22nd. Thirty-five beaver taken, six feet left in the trap. Twenty-five traps missing. Boisterous weather today. The freemen left their horses to chance, nor did they collect them during the storm at night.

Discordant people fill up the cup  
Indifference and folly will soon drink it up  
But loss and misfortune must be the lot  
When care and attention are wholly forgot.

Friday 23rd. Bad weather keeps us in camp. That scamp the Salteux and worthless fellow his nephew threaten to leave because I found fault with them for breaking the rules. If they attempt it, I am determined to strip them naked.

Saturday 24th. Crossed beyond the boiling fountain(23), snow knee deep. We encamp in the spot where the Flathead and Nez Perces fought a battle four years ago. Herds of buffalo grazing here: sixteen killed. The camp is now under guard. Half the people snow blind from the sun glare.

Monday 26th. Crossed to Middle Forks(24) of the Missouri, smaller than the first fork with which it unites ten miles from here. A large herd of buffalo here; upwards of twenty killed, two young calves brought to camp alive. This is a Piegan trail where three years ago, the freemen had battle with the Piegans and a Nez Perces lad was shot

last year.

Tuesday 27th. After camping, We mounted the brass gun and shot it three times for practice.

Wednesday 28th. Forty-four beaver to camp today.

Thursday 29th. Leaving the Missouri, crossed over to the Nez Perces River called the Salmon River(25). It is a branch of the river on which Lewis and Clarke fell in leaving the Missouri for the Pacific. Followed tip the middle fork of Missouri to its source, then ascending a hill fell on the waters of the Salmon. Passed a deserted Piegan camp of thirty-six lodges. This place is rendered immemorial as being the place where about ten Piegans, murderers of our people, were burnt to death. The road in the defile we passed from the Missouri to this river is a Piegan and Blackfoot pass of most dangerous, sort for a lurking enemy; and yet all the freemen dispersed by twos and twos. The rules are totally neglected. Here birds are singing and spring smiles. All traps out for the first time since we left the fort.

Friday 30th. Only forty-two beaver. Remain in camp today. Three people slept out in spite of rules and I had to threaten not to give single ball to them if they did not abide by the rifles. All promised fair and all is quiet.

May, Saturday 1st. Fifty-five beaver today.

Thursday 6th. On a rough calculation all the beaver in camp amount to 600 skins, one-tenth of our expected returns.

Monday 10th(26). This morning I proposed that a small party should go on a trip of discovery for beaver across the range of mountains which bounds this river on the west in the hope of finding the headwaters of Reid's River which enters the main Snake River below the fall, on which a post was begun by Mr. McKenzie in 1819. I might say begun by Mr. Reid in 1813. For this trip, I could get only three men.

Tuesday 11th. Took fifty beaver and shifted camp.

Wednesday 12th. Caught fifty beaver. Went up to headwaters of the river. This is the defile where in 1819 died John Day(27); a little farther on the three knobs so conspicuous for being seen.

Monday 17th.(28) Resolved to make a cache here. Hiding furs in places frequented by Indians is a risky business.

Wednesday 19th. Got a drum made for the use of the camp. It is beat every evening regularly at the watch over the horses and to rouse all hands in the morning.

Wednesday 26th.(29) Again at Canoe Point on Salmon River.

Saturday 29th. Crossed over height of land which divides the waters of the Salmon and the Snake descended to Goddin's River(30) named in 1820 by the discoverer Thyery Goddin. The main south branch of the Columbia, the Nez Perces, the main Snake River and Lewis River, are one and the same differently named. I have determined to change my course and steer for the source of the Great Snake River near the Three Pilot Knobs (Three Tetons) a place which abounds both in beaver and Blackfeet. I told the people danger, or no danger, beaver was our object and a hunt we would make.

Monday 31st. Left eight to trap Goddin's River and raised camp for head of the Salmon.

Sunday 6th (June). The two men ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) and Beauchamp who went off yesterday were robbed by the Piegans, had a narrow escape with their lives and got back to camp a little after dark having traveled on foot forty miles. On their way to the place to meet our people they discovered a smoke and taking it to be our people advanced within pistol shot when behold it proved to be a camp of Piegans. Wheeling, they had hardly time to take shelter among a few willows when they were surrounded, fifteen armed men on horseback. Placing their horses between themselves and the enemy, our people squatted down to conceal themselves. The Piegans advanced within five paces, when our people raising their guns made them fall back. The Indians kept capering and yelling around them cock sure of their prey. The women had also collected on a small eminence to act a willing part, having on their arrow finders and armed with lances. During this time, the two men had crept among, the bushes, mud and water a little out of the way and night approaching made their escape leaving behind horses, saddles, traps. They saw the tracks of our people near the Piegan camp and that is all we know of them. We fear they have been discovered but little hope of their escaping as they lead little ammunition.

Coison said the Piegans were the rear guard of a large war party, from the great quantity of baggage, the men not exceeding twenty-five.

I called the camp together and proposed to start with twenty men to find our people and pay the Piegans a visit, the camp to remain till my return. The general opinion over ruled my wishes, thinking it safer to move camp more distant, than go for the men.

Monday 7th. At an early hour saddled our horses. The road proved short to Goddin's River S.W. After letting our horses eat a little, I fitted out a party of twenty men well armed to go in quest of our people. They set off at sunset, old Pierre in command, with orders to find our people and observe peace unless attacked.

Tuesday 8th. All hands in camp; a park enclosed from horses. The big gun mounted and loaded.

Wednesday 9th. Five of the twenty men back tired out; no news.

June 10th Thursday.(31) All arrived safe this afternoon. The Blackfeet taking to flight. Since they

separated from us, the eight trappers had taken fifty-two beaver. The party lost my spyglass.

Friday 11th June. Twelve men fitted out for Henry's Fork to meet at the fork on 25th Sept., our party go up Goddin's River.

Wednesday 16th June. Took twenty-five beaver, the first of our second thousand, low indeed at this advanced season. The signs for beaver are very fine; in one place I counted 148 trees large and small cut down by beaver in the space of 100 yards. Last night eight feet and seven toes left in the traps. Fifteen traps missing, making loss of thirty beaver.

Saturday 19th. Had a fright from the Piegans. This morning when almost all hands were at their traps scattered by ones and twos only ten men left in camp, the Blackfeet to the number of forty all mounted descended at full speed. The trappers were so divided, they could render each other no assistance so they took to their heels among the bushes throwing beaver one way, traps another. Others leaving beaver, horses and traps, took to the rocks for refuge. Two, Jacques and John Grey, were pursued in the open plain. Seeing their horses could not save them, like two heroes wheeled about and rode up to the enemy, who immediately surrounded them. The Piegan chief asked them to exchange guns; but they refused. He then seized Jacques' rifle but Jacques held fast and after a little scuffle jerked it from them saying "If you wish to kill us, kill us at once; but our guns you shall never get while we are alive." The Piegans smiled, shook hands, asked where the camp was and desired to be conducted to it. With pulses beating as if any moment would be their last, Jacques and John advanced with their unwelcome guests to the camp eight miles distant. A little before arriving, Jacques at full speed came in ahead whooping, and yelling "the Blackfeet! the Blackfeet!" but did not tell us they were on speaking terms. In an instant the camp was in an uproar. Of the ten men in camp, eight went to drive in the horses. Myself and the others instantly pointed the big gun lighted the match and sent the women away. By this time the party hove in sight but seeing John with them restrained me from firing and I made signs to them to stop. Our horses were secured I then received them coldly well recollecting the circumstances of the two men on the 6th and not doubting it was the same party. All our people except two came in and the camp was in a state of defense. I invited them to a smoke. Their story was: We left our lands in spring as all embassy of peace to the Snakes, but while smoking with them on terms of friendships they treacherously shot our chief; we resented the insult and killed two of them. We are now on the way to meet our friends the Flatheads." They said the camp was not far off and the party 100 strong. They denied any knowledge of the 6th inst. After dark they entertained us to music and dancing all of which we could have dispensed with. Our people threw away thirty-two beaver; twenty were brought in. A strong guard for the horses. All slept armed.

Sunday 20th. Again invited the Piegans to smoke; gave them presents; and told them to set off and play no tricks for we would follow them to their own land to punish them. They saddled horses and sneaked off one by one along the bushes for 400 yards then took to the mountains. The big gun commanded respect.

Monday 21st. Decamped. Found a fresh scalp; sixty-five beaver today.

---

Thursday 24th. This is the spot where Mr. McKenzie and party fell on this river in spring of 1820 on the way to Ft. Nez Perces.

Saturday 3rd July.(32) We left River Malade and proceeded to the head of Reid's River.(33) In 1813 during the Pacific Fur Company, Mr. Reid with a party of ten men chiefly trappers, wintered here; in spring, they were all cut off by the natives. After Mr. Reid this river was named. At its mouth an establishment was begun by Donald McKenzie in 1819. It was burned and two men killed. In spring 1820, four men more were destroyed by the natives. This river has already cost the whites sixteen men.

August 24th. Number of miles traversed to date, 1,050; number of horses lost, 18.

Saturday, Sept. 18th.(34) While our people were crossing the height of land, I left the front and taking one man with me ascended the top of a lofty peak situated between the sources of River Malade and Salmon River, whence I had a very extensive view of the surrounding country. Both rivers were distinctly seen. The chain of mountains which for 150 miles separates the waters of the Salmon River from those which enter the Great Snake lie nearly E. W.

Wednesday 6th Oct.(35) Our cache of May is safe. Length of Salmon River covered this year, 100 miles.

Oct. 7th. Beaver taken out of cache, counted and packed and carried along with us.

Tuesday, 12th Oct. This morning after an illness of twenty days during which we carried him on a stretcher died Jean Bat Boucher, aged 65, an honest man.

Thursday, 14th Oct. Today Pierre arrived pilaged and destitute. This conduct has been blamable since they left us. They passed the time with the indians and neglected their hunts, quarrelled with the indians at last, were then robbed and left naked on the plains. The loss of twelve out of twenty trappers is no small consideration. With these vagabonds arrived twenty American trappers from the Big Horn River but whom I rather take to be spies than trappers. Regarding our deserters of 1822 accounts do not agree. It is evident part of them have reached the American posts on the Yellowstone and Big Hole with much fur. I suspect these Americans have been on the lookout to decoy more. The scalp furs and horses carried last year to Fort des Prairies by the Blackfeet belonged to, this establishment. The quarter is swarming with trappers who next season are to penetrate the Snake country with a Major Henry(36) at their head, the same gentleman who fifteen years ago wintered on Snake River. The report of these men on the price of beaver has a very great influence on our trappers. The seven trappers have in two different caches 900 beaver. I made them several propositions but they would not accept lower than \$3 a pound. I did not consider myself authorized to arrange at such prices. The men accompanied us to the Flatheads. There is a leading person with them. They intend following us to the fort.

Saturday 16th. Sent our express, to Mr. Ogden at Spokane house.

November 1st, Monday. Got across the divide.

FLATHEAD POST, 1825

Alex. Ross

1824. November, Friday 26.(37)- From Prairie de Cheveaux myself and party arrived at this place in the afternoon , where terminated our voyage of 10 months to the Snakes. Mr. Ogden(38) and Mr. Dears(39) with people and outfit from Spokane reached this place only a few hours before us. Statement of people both voyages ( ?)

Engaged party with their families, including gentlemen, and 43 men, 8 women, 16 children. Free-men and trappers with families, 34 men, 8 lads, 22 women and 5 children. Total, 176 souls.

To accommodate people and property we use a row of huts 6 in number, low, linked together under one cover, having the appearance of deserted booths.

Saturday 27. All hands building. Mr. Ogden handed me a letter from the Governor appointing me in charge of this place for the winter. Mr. Ogden takes my place as chief of the Snake expedition.

Monday 29. Kootenais joined Flatheads at Prairie de Cheveaux. Indians are now as follows there:

	Lodges	Men & Lads	Guns	Women	Children
Flatheads	42	168	180	70	68
Pend' Orielles	34	108	40	68	71
Kouttannais	36	114	62	50	48
Nez Perces	12	28	20	15	23
Spokanes	4	12	6	7	11
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	128	430	308	210	221

and 1,850 horses.

We sent word to the camp to come and begin trade as follows: First, Flat.; 2d P. etc., as in order above.

Tuesday 30. About 10 o'clock the Flatheads in a body mounted, arrived, chanting the song of peace. At a little distance they halted and saluted the fort with discharges from their guns. We

returned the compliment with our brass pounder. The reverberating sound had a fine effect. The head chief advanced and made a fine speech welcoming the white man to these lands, apologizing for having but few beaver. The cavalcade then moved up. The chiefs were invited to the house to smoke. All the women arrived on horseback loaded with provisions and a brisk trade began which lasted till dark. The result was, 324 beaver, 154 bales of meat, 159 buffalo tongues, etc.

December, Wednesday 1. The Pend' Orielles arrived in the manner of those of yesterday and traded as follows: 198 beaver, 8 muskrat, etc.

Received 2000 of the Snake Freeman's(40) beaver today and sent off canoe to Spokane House.

Thursday 2d. Employed with Freeman and Indians all day. At night we had received 2000 more of Snake beaver.

Friday 3d. The Kootenais accompanied by 10 Piegans came up, with the same ceremony and traded as follows: 494 beaver, 509 muskrat, 2 red foxes, 3 mink, etc. The Kootenais do not belong here but are driven from fear of the Piegans and Blackfeet.

The trouble of this part is now over till spring as the Indians have gone home. In all we have traded 1183 beaver, 14 otter, 529 muskrat, 8 fishers, 3 minks, 1 martin, 2 foxes, 11,072 pounds dried meat, etc. (Buffalo meat.)

The trade hardly averages 3 skins per Indian.

Sunday, December 5. Began to equip the Freeman today. Mr. Ogden settling their accounts. Mr. Dears in the Indian shop with Interpreter Rivett, and myself with Mr. McKay(41) in the equipment shop.

Saturday, December 11. Finished equipping the Snake hunters. Mr. Kittson(42) from the Kootenais arrived..

Monday, 20th. Statement of men under Mr. Ogden to go to the Snake Country: 25 lodges, 2 gentlemen, 2 interpreters, 71 men and lads, 80 guns, 364 beaver traps, 372 horses.

This is the most formidable party that has ever set out for the Snakes. Snake expedition took its departure. Each beaver trap last year in the Snake country averaged 26 beaver. It is expected this hunt will net 14,100 beaver. Mr. Dears goes as far as Prairie de Cheveaux.

Wednesday, 22d. Statement of people at this fort: 2 gentlemen, 14 laborers, 4 women, 7 children. Set the people squaring timber to keep them from plotting mischief.

Saturday 25th. Considerable indians; the peace pipe kept in motion. All the people a dram.

Sunday 26th. No work today. Ordered the men to dress and keep the Sabbath.

January 1, 1825. At daybreak the men saluted with guns. They were treated to rum and cake, each a pint of rum and a half pound of tobacco.

March 1. Tuesday. The winter trade from December 4 has amounted to 71 beaver, 2 otter, 15 muskrat, 3 foxes, etc.

Saturday, 12 March(43) After breakfast embarked 4 canoes in sight of 1000 natives for Spokane House. 1644 large beaver, 378 small beaver, 29 otter, 775 muskrats, 9 foxes, 12 fishers, 1 martin, 8 mink, also leather and provisions.

(At Spokane House) Friday, 25th March.- Of all situations(44) chosen in the Indian country. -Spokane House is the most singular: far from water, far from Indians and out of the way. Spokane (Forks) on the west, Kettle Falls on the north Coeur d' Alene on the south, Pend' Oreille on the east would be better.

1. Flathead House or Fort or Post was then located almost exactly at the present railroad station of Eddy (Northern Pacific Ry.), on north bank of Clark Fork River, in Sanders, Montana; this was about ten miles southeast and further up the river from the site of David Thompson's "Salish House," which was established in 1809 and used by the Northwest Company traders while that company continued in business.

2. Horse Plains, now designated by the single word "Plains." a famous council ground of the Salish or Flathead Indians; the freemen were probably camped near the railroad station of Weeksville.

3. Camas Prairie. to the eastward from the Horse Plains; the Indian trail went across the hills by way of this prairie, instead of around by the river as the railroad now runs. This trail is clearly shown on map in Stevens' Report, Pac. Ry. Report, Vol. 12, Part 1, also an engraving showing this prairie.

4. At Perma station of the No. Pac. Ry., where the trail again struck the Flat head River and crossed it: known later as Rivet's Ferry because a son of old Francois Rivet settled there.

5. A small stream entering the Flathead from the south near McDonald station of the No. Pac. Ry.

6. The Jocko, which flows into the Flathead at Dixon, Montana; this stream so named after Jacques Raphael Finlay, an intelligent half-breed and one of David Thompson's men, in 1809.

7. Afterward a settler on French Prairie in the Willamette Valley.

8. Mr. Ross' clerk: doubtful whether the Nicholas Montour of David Thompson's time.

9. A general term meaning the prairie forts of the company on the Saskatchewan River.

10. See page 11 of "Fur Hunters."

11. Coriakan Defile through which the No. Pac. Ry. now passes; the view of Missoula and the Bitter Root Valley is as fine now as it was in 1824.

12. The Hell Gate or Missoula River.

13. The Bitter Root River of today. Our Clark Fork River was then called the Flathead River clear to Lake Pend d'Oreille, and below that even.

14. Now seem to be near the forks of the Bitter Root, 0 above the town of Darby, Ravalli County, Montana.

15. See pages 18 and 19 of "Fur Hunters", they follow the trail through the gorge of Ross Fork of the Bitter Root. This Rams Horn tree was a common sight to pioneers who traveled that trail in the fifties and sixties. It is yet known as the Medicine Tree, because so revered by the Indians. The trunk still stands in Sec. 22. TP. 30 N., R. 20 E., B. M.
16. He is now in Ross' Hole, his "The Valley of Troubles," as described on page 20 of "Fur Trappers" Lewis and Clark were here September 4, 1805 ; also consult Pac. Ry. Report, Vol. 12, Part 1, page 169, for description and engraving.
17. The first vaudeville performance in Ravalli County, Montana, of which we have record.
18. Gibbons pass across the continental divide.
19. Big Hole Prairie, Beaverhead County, Montana, well described and illustrated in Stevens' Pac Ry. Report already cited.
20. Very nearly correct. The Blue Mountain Range of Eastern Oregon and Washington really is a continuation of the mountain range that crosses Idaho and joins the continental divide at the head of the Bitter Root Valley of Montana.
21. Meaning the Big Hole or Wisdom River.
22. Finan McDonald, who led the Snake Expedition in 1823.
23. The warm springs near Jackson P.O., Beaverhead County, Montana.
24. That is he crossed the low divide to Grasshopper Creek near Bannock: the Beaverhead would be his Middle Fork of the Missouri.
25. He has crossed over to the Lemhi River, a branch of the Salmon River, which flows into the Snake, and is in Idaho. See page 53 of "The Fur Hunters."
26. The party is now probably at the junction of the Salmon and the Pahsimari Rivers in Custer County, Idaho; see page 59 of "The Fur Hunters."
27. Evidently the John Day of the Astor party, who became a Northwest Company trapper under Donald McKenzie. See page 62 of "Fur Hunters."
28. Now about to start on a profitless trip across the ridge of Salmon River Range directly west. See page 62 of "Fur Hunters."
29. The party has returned from the trip to the westward; see page 67 of "Fur Hunters."
30. According to Arrowsmith's map this would be Big Lost river, on present day maps. Ross seems to have ascended Pahsamari River to source and crossed the divide to Birch Creek, where he left his main party and himself made four days trip to Snake River near St. Anthony's. He is back again on the 6th. See pages 68,69,70 of "Fur Hunters."
31. See page 72 of "Fur Hunters," where Mr. Ross misnames the three buttes in the desert south-east of Lost River by calling them the Trois Tetons. He now proceeds up Goddins or Big Lost River to its source and crosses to the source of the Malade or Big Wood River near Ketchum, Idaho, where the next Indian scare occurs. See pages 75-80 of "Fur Hunters."
32. Descending the Malade (Big Wood River) to the mouth of Camas Creek. the party turns west across Camas Prairie and the divide to the head of the Boise River; see pages 80-89 of "Fur Hunters."
33. Consult Irving's "Astoria" for account of the death of Mr. Reed of the Pacific Fur Company.
34. This journal omits entirely all mention of Mr. Ross from the time he reached the Boise until he returns on September to the rough mountain pass dividing Blaine and Custer Counties, Idaho; for this interim see pages 90-118 of "The Fur Hunters." His lofty peak now mentioned may be Boul-

der Peak of today, but he named it Mt. Simpson.

35. The party is now back at Canoe Point, see previous note on May 10th. The party sent off on June 11th joins them a little further along on their way to the headwaters of the Missouri.

36. Major Andrew Henry, the first American trader to cross the continental divide (in fall of 1810) and at this time partner of General Wm. Ashley in the fur business. The desertions of the H.B.C. freeman to the Americans mentioned in this text took place before General Ashley personally ever came to the Rocky Mountains; see page 356 of Vol. 11 of Or. Hist. Quart. for discussion of this.

37. From the heading it would appear that Mr. Ross now begins a new part of the journal, covering his residence at Flathead Post or Fort.

38. Peter Skene Ogden, well known to Oregon pioneers; see Oregon first. Quar., Vol. 11 pp. 247-8.

39. This was Mr. Thomas Dears, who was a clerk of the H. B. Co. on the Columbia at this time

40. That is, that the skins taken for the free hunters that were a part of the expedition in distinction from the engaged men or employees of the company.

41. Probably Mr. Thos. McKay, son of Alex McKay of the Pac Fur Co., whose widow became the wife of Dr. John McLoughlin.

42. William Kittson, who was in charge of the trading post among the Kootenais for many years; he died at Fort Vancouver about 1841. His brother, Norman, was one of the early millionaires of St. Paul, Minn.

43. The trading post is now left in charge of some half-breed or entirely abandoned until fall, as the Indians spent their summer hunting buffalo.

44. Mr. Ross indulges in his usual disgust as to the site of Spokane House which feeling he elaborated at length in his "Fur Hunters." And this post was abandoned the following year for the new one at Kettle Falls, called Fort Colvile.

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Journal of a Trapper

Or

Nine Years Residence among the

Rocky Mountains

Between the years of 1834 and 1843

Comprising

A general description of the Country, Climate,

Rivers, Lakes, Mountains, etc The nature and habits

of Animals, Manners and Customs of Indians and a Complete

view of the life led by a Hunter in those regions

By

Osborne Russell

I envy no man that knows more than myself

and pity them that know less: Sir T. Brown.

Preface

Reader, if you are in search of the travels of a Classical and Scientific tourist, please to lay this Volume down, and pass on, for this simply informs you what a Trapper has seen and experienced. But if you wish to peruse a Hunter's rambles among the wild regions of the Rocky Mountains, please to read this, and forgive the authors foibles and imperfections, considering as you pass along that he has been chiefly educated in Nature's School under that rigid tutor experience, and you will also bear in mind the author does not hold himself responsible for the correctness of statements made otherwise than from observation.

THE AUTHOR.

JOURNAL OF A TRAPPER

During the years 1834 to 1843

At the town of Independence Missouri on the 4th of April 1834 I joined an expedition fitted out for the Rocky Mountains and Mouth of the Columbia River, by a Company formed in Boston under the name and style of the Columbia River Fishing and trading Company. The same firm has fitted out a Brig of two hundred tons burthen, freighted with the nessesary assortment of merchandise for the Salmon and Fur Trade, with orders to sail to the mouth of the Columbia River, whilst the land party, under the direction of Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, should proceed across the Rocky Mountains and unite with the Brig's Company in establishing a Post on the Columbia near the Pacific. Our party consisted of forty men engaged in the service accompanied by Mess Nutall and Townsend, Botanists and Ornithologists with two attendants; likewise Rev's Jason and Daniel Lee Methodist Missionaries with four attendants on their way to establish a Mission in Oregon: which brot. our numbers (including six independent uppers) to fifty Eight men. From the 23 to the 27th of April we were engaged in arranging our packs and moving to a place about 4 Miles from Independence. On the morning of the 28th we were all equipped and mounted hunter like: about forty men leading two loaded horses each were marched out in double file with joyous hearts enlivened by anticipated prospects: led by Mr. Wyeth a persevering adventurer and lover of Enterprise whilst the remainder of the party with twenty head of extra horses and as many cattle to supply emergencies brot. up the rear under the direction of Capt. Joseph Thing an eminent navigator and fearless son of Neptune who had been employed by the Company in Boston to

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

accompany the party and measure the route across the Rocky Mountains by Astronomical observation.

We travelled slowly thru the beautiful verdant and widely extended prairie until about 2 o'clock P. M. and encamped at a small grove of timber near a spring. 29th We took up our march and travelled across a large and beautifully undulating prairie intersected by small streams skirted with timber intermingled with shrubbery until the 3rd of May when we arrived at the Kaw or Kansas River near the residence of the U S agent for those Indians.

The Kaw or Kansas Indians are the most filthy indolent and degraded set of human beings I ever saw. They live in small oval huts 4 or 5 feet high formed of willow branches and covered with Deer Elk or Buffalo skins. On the 4th of May we crossed the River and on the 5th resumed our march into the interior, travelling over beautiful rolling prairies and Encamping on small streams at night until the 10th when we arrived at the River Platte.

We followed up this River to the forks, then forded the South fork and travelled up the north until the 1st day of June when we arrived at Laramy's fork of Platte; where is the first perceptible commencement of the Rocky Mountains we crossed this fork and travelled up the main River until night and encamped. The next day we left the River and travelled across the Black hills nearly parallel with the general course of the Platte until the 9th of June when we came to the River again and crossed it at a place called the Red Buttes (high mountains of Red Rock from which the River issues). The next day we left the River on our left hand and traveled a northwest direction, and stopped at night on a small spring branch nearly destitute of wood or shrubbery. The next day we arrived at a stream running to the Platte called Sweet Water, this we ascended to a rocky mountainous country until the 15th of June then left it and crossed the divide between waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans: and encamped on Sandy Creek a branch running into Green River which flows into the Colorado of the West. The next day moved down Sandy WNW direction and arrived at Green river on the 18th of June. Here we found some white Hunters who informed us that the grand rendezvous of Whites and Indians would be on a small western branch of the River about 20 miles distant, in a South West direction. Next day June 20th we arrived at the destined place. Here we met with two companies of trappers and Traders: One is a branch of the "American Fur Company," under the direction of Mess Dripps and Fonanell: The other is called the "Rocky Mountain Fur Company" The names of the partners are Thomas Fitzpatrick, Milton Sublett and James Bridger. The two companies consist of about six hundred men, including men engaged in the service, White, Half Breed and Indian Fur Trappers. This stream is called Ham's fork of Green River. The face of the adjacent country is very mountaneous and broken except in the small alluvial bottoms along the streams, it abounds with Buffalo, Antelope, Elk and Bear, and some few Deer along the Rivers. Here Mr Wyeth disposed of a part of his loads to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and on the 2d of July we renewed our march towards the Columbia River. After leaving Ham's Fork we took across a high range of hills in a NW direction and fell on to a stream called Bear River which emptied to the Big Salt Lake. This is a beautiful country. the river which is about 20 yards wide runs through large fertile bottoms bordered by rolling ridges which gradually ascended on each side of the river to the high ranges of dark and lofty mountains upon whose tops the snow remains nearly the year round. We travelled down this river N West about 15 miles and camped opposite a Lake of fresh water about 60 miles in circumference which outlets into the river on the west side. Along the west border of this Lake the country is generally

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

smooth ascending gradually into the interior and terminates in a high range of mountains which nearly surrounds the Lake approaching close to the shore on the East. The next day (the 7th) we travelled down this river and on the 8th encamped at a place called the Sheep Rock so called from a point of the mountain terminating at the river bank in a perpendicular high rock: the river curves around the foot of this rock and forms a half circle which brings its course to the S. W from whence it runs in the same direction to the Salt Lake about 80 miles distant. The Sheep occupy this prominent elevation (which overlooks the surrounding country to a great extent) at all seasons of the year.

On the right hand or East side of the river about 2 miles above the rock is 5 or 8 mineral Springs some of which have precisely the taste of soda water when taken up and drank immediately others have a sour, sulphurous taste: none of them have any outlet but boil and bubble in small holes a few inches from the surface of the ground. This place which now looks so lonely, visited only by the rambling Trapper or solitary Savage will doubtless at no distant day be a resort for thousands of the gay and fashionable world, as well as Invalids and spectators. The country immediately adjacent seems to have all undergone volcanic action at some remote period the evidences of which, however still remains in the deep and frightful chasms which may be found in the rocks, throughout this portion of country which could only have been formed by some terrible convulsion of nature. The ground about these springs is very strongly impregnated with Sal Soda There is also large beds of clay in the vicinity of a snowy whiteness which is much used by the Indians for cleansing their clothes and skins, it not being any inferior to soap for cleansing woollens or skins dressed after the Indian fashion. On the 11th (July) we left Bear river and crossed low ridges of broken country for about 15 miles in a N East direction and fell on to a stream which runs into Snake river called Black Foot. Here we met with Capt. B. L. Bonnenvill with a party of 10 or 12 men He was on his way to the Columbia and was employed killing and drying Buffaloe meat for the journey. The next day we travelled in a west direction over a rough mountaneous country about 25 miles and the day following after travelling about 20 miles in the same direction we emerged from the mountain into the great valley of Snake River on the 16th - We crossed the valley and reached the river in about 25 miles travel West. Here Mr. Wyeth concluded to stop build a Fort & deposit the remainder of his merchandise: leaving a few men to protect them and trade with the Snake and Bonnack Indians. On the 18th we commenced the Fort which was a stockade 80 ft square built of Cotton wood trees set on end sunk 2 1/2 feet in the ground and standing about 15 feet above with two bastions 8 ft square at the opposite angles. On the 4th of August the Fort was completed; And on the 5th the "Stars and Stripes" were unfurled to the breeze at Sunrise in the center of a savage and uncivilized country over an American trading Post.

The next day Mr Wyeth departed for the mouth of the Columbia River with all the party excepting twelve men (myself included) 10 who were stationed at the Fort. I now began to experience the difficulties attending a mountaineer we being all raw hands excepting the man who had charge of the Fort and a Mullattoe: the two latter having but very little experience in hunting game with the Rifle: and altho the country abounded with game still it wanted experience to kill it. On the 12th of August myself and 9 others (the Mullattoe included) started from the Fort to hunt Buffaloe. We proceeded up the stream running into Snake River near the Fort called Ross's fork in an East direction about 25 miles, crossed a low mountain in the same direction about 5 miles and fell on to a stream called Portneuf: here we found several large bands of Buffaloe

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

we went to a small spring and encamped. I now prepared myself for the first time in my life to kill meat for my supper with a Rifle. I had an elegant one but had little experience in using it, I however approached the band of Buffaloe crawling on my hands and knees within about 80 yards of them then raised my body erect took aim and shot at a Bull: at the crack of the gun the Buffaloe all ran off excepting the Bull which I had wounded, I then reloaded and shot as fast as I could untill I had driven 25 bullets at, in and about him which was all that I had in my bullet pouch whilst the Bull still stood apparently riveted to the spot I watched him anxiously for half an hour in hopes of seeing him fall, but to no purpose, I was obliged to give it up as a bad job and retreat to our encampment without meat: but the Mullattoe had better luck he had killed a fat cow whilst shooting 15 bullets at the band. The next day we succeeded in killing another cow and two Bulls, we butchered them took the meat and returned to the Fort. On the 20th of August we started again to hunt meat: we left the Fort and travelled abot 6 miles when we discovered a Grizzly Bear digging and eating roots in a piece of marshy ground near a large bunch of willows. The Mullattoe approached within 100 yards and shot him thro. the left shoulder he gave a hideous growl and sprang into the thicket. The Mullattoe then said "let him go he is a dangerous varmint" but not being acquainted with the nature of these animals I determined on making another trial, and persuaded the Mullatto to assist me we walked round the bunch of willows where where the Bear lay keeping close together, with our Rifles ready cocked and presented towards the bushes untill near the place where he had entered, when we heard a sullen growl about 10 ft from us, which was instantly followed by a spring of the Bear toward us; his enormous jaws extended and eyes flashing fire. Oh Heavens! was ever anything so hideous? We could not retain sufficient presence of mind to shoot at him but took to our heels separating as we ran the Bear taking after me, finding I could out run him he left and turned to the other who wheeled about and discharged his Rifle covering the Bear with smoke and fire the ball however missing him he turned and bounding toward me - I could go no further without jumping into a large quagmire which hemmed me on three sides, I was obliged to turn about and face him he came within about 10 paces of me then suddenly stopped and raised his ponderous body erect, his mouth wide open, gazing at me with a beastly laugh at this moment I pulled trigger and I knew not what else to do and hardly knew that I did this but it accidentally happened that my Rifle was pointed towards the Bear when I pulled and the ball piercing his heart, he gave one bound from me uttered a deathly howl and fell dead: but I trembled as if I had an ague fit for half an hour after, we butchered him as he was very fat packed the meat and skin on our horses and returned to the Fort with the trophies of our bravery, but I secretly determined in my own mind never to molest another wounded Grizzly Bear in a marsh or thicket. On the 26th of Septr. our stock of provisions beginning to get short 4 men started again to hunt buffaloe; as I had been out several times in succession I concluded to stay in the Fort awhile and let others try it. This is the most lonely and dreary place I think I ever saw; not a human face to be seen excepting the men about the Fort. The country very smoky and the weather sultry and hot. On the 1st day of Octr. our hunters arrived with news which caused some little excitement among us. they had discovered a village of Indians on Blackfoot Creek about 25 miles from the Fort in a north East direction, consisting of about 60 Lodges. They had rode Green horn like into the village without any ceremony or knowledge of the friendly or hostile disposition of the Indians, neither could they inform us to what Nation they belonged. It happened however that they were Snake friendly to the Whites and treated our men in a hospitable manner - After

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

remaining all night with them three of the Indians accompanied our hunters to the Fort: From these we gathered (thro. the Mullatto who could speak a little of their language) much desired information. The next day myself and the Mullatto started to the Village where we arrived about sun half an hour high we were conducted to the chiefs Lodge where we dismounted and cheerfully saluted by the chief who was called by the Whites "Iron wristbands" and by the Indians "Pah-da-her-wak-un-dah", or the hiding bear. Our horses were taken to grass and we followed him into his Lodge when he soon ordered supper to be prepared for us. He seemed very much pleased when we told him the Whites had built a trading post on Snake River.

He said the Village would go to the Fort in three or four days to trade. We left them next morning loaded with as much fat dried Buffaloe meat as our horses could carry which had been given as a gratuity: we were accompanied on our return to the Fort by six of the men. On the 10th the Village arrived and pitched their Lodges within about 200 yards of the Fort. I now commenced learning the Snake Language and progressed so far in a short time that I was able to understand most of their words employed in matters of trade. Octr 20th a Village of Bonnaks consisting of 250 Lodges arrived at the Fort from these we traded a considerable quantity of furs, a large supply of dried meat, Deer, Elk and Sheep skins etc. - In the meantime we were employed building small log houses and making other nessary preparations for the approaching winter

Novr. 5th Some White hunters arrived at the Fort who had been defeated by the Blackfeet Indians on Ham's Fork of Green River. One of them had his arm broken by a fusee ball but by the salutary relief which he obtained from the Fort he was soon enabled to return to his avocations. 16th Two more White men arrived and reported that Capt. Bonneville had returned from the lower country and was passing within 90 miles of the Fort on his way to Green River. 20th four White more arrived and reported that a party of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company consisting of 60 men under the direction of one of the Partners (Mr. Bridger) were at the forks of Snake River about 60 miles above the Fort where they intended to pass the winter. We were also informed that the two Fur Companies had formed a coalition. Decr. 15th The ground still bare but frozen and the weather very cold. 24th Capt. Thing arrived from the Mouth of the Columbia with 10 men fetching supplies for the Fort. Times now began to have a different appearance. the Whites and Indians were very numerous in the valley all came to pass the winter on Snake River. On the 20th of Jany 12 of Mr Bridger's men left his camp and came to the Fort to get employment They immediately made an engagement with Capt. Thing to form a party for hunting and trapping On the 15 of March the party was fitted out consisting of 10 trappers and 7 Camp keepers (myself being one of the latter) under the direction of Mr. Joseph Gale a native of the City of Washington. Mch. 25th we left the Fort and travelled about 6 miles N. E. and encamped on a stream running into the river about 12 Miles below the Fort, called Port neuf. The next day we followed up this stream in an Easterly direction about 15 miles here we found the snow very deep from this we took a south course in the direction of Bear River our animals being so poor and the traveling so bad we had to make short marches and reached Bear River on the 1st day of April. The place where we struck the River is called Cache Valley so called from its having been formerly a place of deposit for the Fur Traders. The country on the north and west side of the river is somewhat broken uneven and covered with wild Sage. The snow had disappeared only upon the South sides of the hills. On the South and East sides of the river lay the valley but it appeared very white and the river nearly overflowing its banks insomuch that it was very difficult crossing: and should we have been able

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

to have crossed, the snow would have prevented us gaining the foot of the mountain on the East side of the valley. This place being entirely destitute of game we had to live chiefly upon roots for ten days. On the 11th of April we swam the river with our horses and baggage and pushed our way thru. the snow accross the Valley to the foot of the mountain: here we found the ground bare and dry. But we had to stay another night without supper. About 4 oclk the next day the meat of two fat Grizzly Bear was brought into Camp. Our Camp Kettles had not been greased for some time: as we were continually boiling thistle roots in them during the day: but now four of them containing about 9 gallons each were soon filled with fat bear meat cut in very small pieces and hung over a fire which all hands were employed in keeping up with the utmost impatience: An old experienced hand who stood six feet six and was never in a hurry about anything was selected by a unanimous vote to say when the stew (as we called it) was done but I thought with my comrades that it took a longer time to cook than any meal I ever saw prepared, and after repeated appeals to his long and hungry Stewardship by all hands he at length consented that it might be seasoned with salt and pepper and dished cut to cool. But it had not much time for cooling before we commenced operations: and all pronounced it the best meal they had ever eaten as a matter of course where men had been starving. The next morning I took a walk up a smooth spur of the mountain to look at the country. This valley commences about 90 miles below the Soda Springs the river running west of south enters the valley thro. a deep cut in the high hills: after winding its way thro. the North and West borders of the Valley: turns due West and runs thro. a deep Kanyon of perpendicular rocks on its way to the Salt Lake. The valley lies in a sort of semi circle or rather an oblong. On the South and East of about 20 miles in length by 5 in diameter and nearly surrounded by high and rugged mountains from which flow large numbers of small streams crossing the valley and emptying into the river. There are large quantities of Beaver and Otter living in these streams but the snow melting raises the water so high that our Trappers made but slow progress in catching them. We stopped in this valley until the 20th of April then moved to the South East extremity and made an attempt to cross the mountain. The next day we travelled up a stream called Rush Creek in an East direction thro. a deep gorge in the mountain for about 12 miles which then widened about a mile into a smooth and rolling country here we staid the following day we then took a N E course over the divide and travelled about 12 Miles thro. Snow two or three feet deep and in many places drifts to the depth of 6 or 8 ft. deep. At night we encamped on a small dry spot of ground on the South side of a steep mountain where there was little or no vegetation excepting wild sage. Sometime after we had stopped it was disclosed that one man was missing a young English Shoemaker from Bristol, we found he had been seen last dismounted and stopping to drink at a small branch at some distance before we entered snow. On the following morning I was ordered to go back in search of him. I started on the snow which was frozen hard enough to bear me and my horse. I went to the place where he was last seen and found his trail which I followed on to a high mountain when I lost it among the rocks. I then built a large fire shot my gun several times and after hunting till near sunset without hopes of finding him I gave it up and went to the edge of the snow and stopped for the night. The next morning I started at day light in a gallop on the snow traversing Mountain and Valley smoothed up with snow so hard frozen that a galloping horse scarcely left a foot print: About noon I arrived on a high ridge which over looked the Snake Lake and the Valley South West of it which had been apparently clear of snow for some length of time. At the Southern extremity of the Lake lay the

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Camp about 2 miles distant NE of me. I descended the Mountain and entered the Camp. On the 27th of April we travelled down the West side of the Lake to the outlet into Bear river. here we found about 300 Lodges of Snake Indians: we encamped at the village and staid 3 days, in the meantime our uppers were engaged hunting Beaver in the river and small streams We then crossed the river and ascended a branch called Thoma's Fork in a north direction about 10 Mls. the next day we started across the Mountain in a North direction and after travelling about 5 Mls. we discovered a large Grizzly Bear about 200 yards ahead of us: one of our hunters approached and shot him dead on the spot. We all rode up and dismounted to butcher him: he was an enormous animal a hideous brute a savage looking beast. On removing the skin we found the fat on his back measured six inches deep. He had probably not left his winter quarters more than 2 hours as we saw his tracks on the snow where he had just left the thick forest of pines on the side of the Mountain. We put the meat on our pack animals and travelled up the Mountain about 5 miles and encamped. The next morning we started about 2 hours before day and crossed the Mountain on the snow which was frozen hard enough to bear our animals and at 10 oclck AM we found ourselves travelling down a beautiful green vale which led us to the Valley on Salt River where we encamped about 2 oclck P.M

This river derives its name from the numerous salt springs found on its branches it runs thro. the middle of a smooth valley about 40 miles long and 10 wide emptying its waters into Lewis fork of Snake River its course being almost due North. This is a beautiful valley covered with green grass and herbage surrounded by towering mountains covered with snow spotted with groves of tall spruce pines which from their vast elevation resemble small twigs half imersed in the snow, whilst thousands of Buffaloe carelessly feeding feeding in the green vales contribut to the wild and romantic Splendor of the Surrounding Scenery. On the 10th of May we moved down the river about 12 miles to a stream running into it on the west side called Scotts Fork. Here are some fine Salt Springs the Salt forms on the pebbles by evaporation to the depth of 5 or 6 inch in a short time after the snow has dissappeared 11th May After gathering a Supply of Salt we travelled down the river about 15 miles and encamped near the mouth of a stream on the west side called Gardners Fork. Here we met with Mr. Bridger and his party who informed us that the country around and below was much infested with Blackfeet. they had had several skirmishes with them in which they had lost a number of horses and traps and one young man had been wounded in the shoulder by a ball from a fusee. Upon the receipt of this information our leader concluded to shape his course towards the Fort. On the 14th of May we ascended Gardners fork about 15 mls. thro. a deep gorge in the high craggy mountain May 15 travelled up this stream West abt. 10 Mls. when the country opened into a valley ten miles long and 2 wide. Here we left Gardners fork which turns almost due North into the high mountain with the bend of it just cutting the north end of this valley, we travelled South about 3 miles and encamped on Blackfoot which runs into Snake river after a course of about 100 mls. Here the snow was very deep over nearly the whole plain which was surrounded by high mountains. 16th we travelled down Blackfoot which runs South West accross the Valley then turns West and runs into a deep cut in the mountain upwards of a thousand feet above above the bed of the stream the entrance of which seems barely wide enough to admit its waters. We travelled thro this Kanyon for about 10 miles when it opened into a large plain extending to the Sheep Rock on Bear river which appeared to be about 40 mls distant to the South West. There Black foot makes a sweeping curve to the South West then gradually turning to

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the North enters a narrow gorge of basaltic rock thro. which it rushes with impetuosity for about 15 Mls. then emerges into the great plain of Snake River 17th we travelled down this stream about 15 Mls and stopped to kill and dry Buffaloe meat sufficient to load our loose horses. On the 22d We moved down 10 mls. where we found thousands of Buffaloe Bulls and killed a great number of them as the Cows were very poor at this season of the year. May 30th We travelled down to the Plains and on the day following arrived at the Fort after travelling about 30 Mls in a South W. direction. On arriving at the Fort we learned that Capt. Thing had started in April with 12 men for the purpose of establishing a trading post on a branch of Salmon River: but had been defeated by the Blackfeet with the total loss of his outfit excepting his men and horses.

On the 10th of June a small party belonging to the Hudsons Bay Company arrived from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River under the direction of Mr F. Ermatinger accompanied by Capt. Wm. Stewart an English half pay Officer who had passed the winter at Vancouver and was on a tour of pleasure in the Rocky Mountains. On the 12th they left Fort Hall and started for the grand rendezvous on Green River. We now began to make preparations for what the Trappers termed the "Fall Hunt" and all being ready on the 15th we started. Our party (under our former leader) consisted of 24 men 14 Trappers and 10 Camp Keepers It was the intention of our leader to proceed to the Yellow Stone Lake and hunt the country which lay in the vicinity of our route: from thence proceed to the head waters of the Missouri and Snake Rivers on our return back to Fort Hall where it was intended we should arrive about the middle of Octr. next We travelled to the mouth of Blackfoot Creek about 10 mls. 18th Up Blackfoot abt. 15 Mls. 17th Followed up this stream abt. 10 mls. farther then left it to our right and took a N E cours thro. the dry plains covered with wild sage and sand hills about 15 mls. to the foot of the mountain and encamped at a small spring which sinks in the plain soon after leaving the mountain. Here we Killed a couple of fine Bulls and took some of the best meat. 18th We crossed a low Mountain in an East direction about 12 mls. and encamped on a stream called Gray's Creek, which empties into Snake River abt. 40 mls. above Fort Hall 19th Travelled East over a rough broken Mountaneous country about 12 mls. and encamped on a small branch of the same stream. This country affords no timber excepting the quaking Asp which grows in small scrubby groves in the nooks and ravines among the hills 20th we left the waters of Gray's Creek and crossed a low place in the mountain in an East direction fell on to a small stream running into Lewis' fork - distance 10 mls. 21st travelled East following this stream to the mouth about 15 which was about 90 mls. below the mouth of Salt River. Here we were obliged to cross Lewis fork which is about 300 yds. wide and might be forded at a low stage of water, but at present was almost overflowing its banks and running at the rate of about 6 mls per hour. We commenced making a boat by sewing two raw Bulls hides together which we stretched over a frame formed of green willow branches and then dried it gradually over a slow fire during the night 22d Our boat being completed we commenced crossing our equipage and while 5 of us were employed at this a young man by the name of Abram Patterson attempted to cross on horse back in spite of all the advice and entreaty of those present his wild and rash temper got the better of his reason and after a desperate struggle to reach the opposite bank he abandoned his horse made a few springs and sunk to rise no more - he was a native of Penna. about 23 years of age. We succeeded in crossing our baggage and encamped on the East side for the night. Lewis' fork at this place is timbered with large Cotton wood trees along the banks on both sides On the East lies a valley about 28 miles long and 3 or 4 wide in an oblong

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

shape half enclosed by a range of towering mountains which approach the river at each extremity of the valley. 23d We crossed the North point of the valley and ascended a small stream about 15 mls. NE where we encamped among the mountains thickly covered with tall pines intermingled with fallen timber 24th Crossed the mountain 12 mls. East course and descended into the South W. extremity of a valley called Pierre's hole where we staid the next day. This valley lies north & South in an oblong form abt. 90 mls long and 10 wide surrounded except on the Nth. by wild and rugged Mountains: the East range resembles Mountains piled on Mountains and capped with three spiral peaks which pierce the cloud. These peaks bear the French name of Tetons or Teats - The Snake Indians call them the hoary headed Fathers. This is a beautiful valley consisting of a Smooth plain intersected by small streams and thickly clothed with grass and herbage and abounds with Buffaloe Elk Deer antelope etc 27th We travelled to the north end of the valley and encamped on one of the numerous branches which unite at the Northern extremity and forms a stream called Pierre's fork which discharges its waters into Henry's fork of Snake River. The stream on which we encamped Bows directly from the central Teton and is narrowly skirted with Cottonwood trees closely intermingled with underbrush, on both sides. We were encamped on the South Side in a place partially clear of brush under the shade of the large Cottonwoods 28th abt 9 oclk AM we were arouse by an alarm of "Indians" we ran to our horses, All was confusion - each one trying to catch his horses. We succeeded in driving them into Camp where we caught all but 6 which escaped into the prarie: in the meantime the Indians appeared before our camp to the number of 60 of which 15 or 20 were mounted on horse back & the remainder on foot - all being entirely naked armed with fusees, bows, arrows etc They immediately caught the horses which had escaped from us and commenced riding to and fro within gunshot of our Camp with all the speed their horses were capable of producing without shooting a single gun for about 20 minutes brandishing their war weapons and yelling at the top of their voices; Some had Scalps suspended on small poles which they waved in the air. Others had pieces of scarlet cloth with one end fastened round head while the other trailed after them. After Securing my horses I took my gun examined the priming set the breech on the ground and hand on the Muzzle with my arms folded gazing at the novelty of this scene for some minutes quite unconscious of danger until the whistling of balls about my ears gave me to understand that these were something more than mere pictures of imagination and gave me assurance that these living Centaurs were a little more dangerous than those I had been accustomed to see portrayed on canvass -

The first gun was fired by one of our party which was taken as a signal for attack on both sides but the well directed fire from our Rifles soon compelled them to retire from the front and take to the brush behind us: where they had the advantage until 7 or 8 of our men glided into the brush and concealing themselves until their left wing approached within about 30 ft of them before they shot a gun they then raised and attacked them in the flank the Indians did not stop to return the fire, but retreated thro. the brush as fast as possible dragging their wounded along with them and leaving their dead on the spot. In the meantime myself and the remainder of our party were closely engaged with the centre and right. I took the advantage of a large tree which stood near the edge of the brush between the Indians and our horses: They approached until the smoke of our guns met. I kept a large German horse pistol loaded by me in case they should make a charge when my gun was empty. When I first stationed myself at the tree I placed a hat on some twigs which grew at the foot of it and would put it in motion by Kicking the twig with my foot in order that

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

they might shoot at the hat and give me a better chance at their heads but I soon found this sport was no joke for the poor horses behind me were killed and wounded by the balls intended for me. The Indians stood the fight for about 2 hours then retreated thro the brush with a dismal lamentation. We then began to look about to find what damage they had done us: One of our comrades was found under the side of an old root wounded by balls in 3 places in the right and one in the left leg below the knee no bones having been broken. another had received a slight wound in the groin. We lost 3 horses killed on the spot and several more wounded but not so bad as to be unable to travel.

Towards night some of our men followed down the stream about a mile and found the place where they had stopped and laid their wounded comrades on the ground in a circle the blood was still standing congealed in 9 places where they had apparently been dressing the wounds. 29th Staid at the same place fearing no further attempt by the same party of Indians 30th Travelled up the main branch abt. 10 mls. July 1st Travelled to the SE extremity of the valley and encamped for the night Our wounded comrade suffered very much in riding altho. everything was done which lay in our power to ease his sufferings: A pallet was made upon the best gaited horse belonging to the party for him to ride on and one man appointed to lead the animal 2d Crossed the Teton mountain in an east direction- about 15 mls. the ascent was very steep and rugged covered with tall pines but the descent was somewhat smoother. Here we again fell on to Lewis' fork which runs in a Southern direction thro. a valley about 80 mls long then turning to the west thro. a narrow cut in the mountain to the mouth of Salt River about 30 miles. This Valley is called "Jackson Hole" it is generally from 5 to 15 mls wide: the Southern part where the river enters the mountain is hilly and uneven but the Northern portion is wide smooth and comparatively even the whole being covered with wild sage and Surrounded by high and rugged mountains upon whose summits the snow remains during the hottest months in Summer. The alluvial bottoms along the river and streams inter sect it thro. the valley produce a luxuriant growth of vegetation among which wild flax and a species of onion are abundant. The great altitude of this place however connected with the cold descending from the mountains at night I think would be a serious obstruction to growth of most Kinds of cultivated grains. This valley like all other parts of the country abounds with game.

Here we again attempted to cross Lewis' fork with a Bull skin boat July 4th Our boat being completed we loaded it with baggage and crossed to the other side but on returning we ran it into some brush when it instantly filled and sunk but without further accident than the loss of the boat we had already forded half the distance across the river upon horse back and were now upon a other shore We now commenced making a raft of logs that had drifted on the Island on this when completed we put the remainder of our equipments about 2 oclk PM and 10 of us started with it for the other side but we no sooner reached the rapid current than our raft (which was constructed of large timber) became unmanageable and all efforts to reach either side were vaine and fearing lest We should run on to the dreadful rapids to which we were fast approaching we abandoned the raft and committed ourselves to the mercy of the current. We being all tolerable good swimmers excepting myself, I would fain have called for help but at this critical period every one had to Shift for himself fortunately I scrambled to the shore among the last swimmers. We were now on the side from whence we started without a single article of bedding except an old cloth tent whilst the rain poured incessantly. Fortunately we had built a large fire previous to our

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

departure on the raft which was still burning

I now began to reflect on the miserable condition of myself and those around me, without clothing provisions or fire arms and drenched to the skin with the rain

I thought of those who were perhaps at this moment Celebrating the anniversary of our Independence in my Native Land or seated around tables loaded with the richest dainties that a rich independent and enlightened country could afford or perhaps collected in the gay Saloon relating the heroic deeds of our ancestors or joining in the nimble dance forgetful of cares and toils whilst here presented a group of human beings crouched round a fire which the rain was fast diminishing meditating on their deplorable condition not knowing at what moment we might be aroused by the shrill war cry of the hostile Savages with which the country was infested whilst not an article for defense excepting our butcher Knives remained in our possession -

The night at length came on and we lay down to await the events of the morrow day light appeared and we started down along the shore in hopes of finding something that might get loose from the raft and drift upon the beach - We had not gone a mile when we discovered the raft lodged on a gravel bar which projected from the Island where it had been driven by the current - we hastened thro. the water waist deep to the spot where to our great surprise and satisfaction we found everything safe upon the raft in the same manner we had left it. we also discovered that the river could with some difficulty be forded on horseback at this place. Accordingly we had our horses driven across to us packed them up mounted and crossed without further accident and the day being fair we spent the remainder of it in and the following day in drying our equipage

7th Left the river followed up a stream called the "Grosvent fork" in an East direction about 2 Mils this stream was very high and rapid in fording it we lost 2 Rifles 8th we followed the stream thro. the mountain east passing thro. narrow defiles over rocky precipices and deep gulches for 15 mls. 9th travelled up the stream about 10 Mls east then turned up a left hand fork about 8 Mls N E and encamped among the high rough mountains thickly covered with pine timber. There was not a man in the party who had ever been at this place or at the Yellow Stone Lake where we intended to go but our leader had received information respecting the route from some person at the Fort and had written the direction on a piece of paper which he carried with him They directed us to go from the place where now were due North but he said the directions must be wrong as he could discover no passage thro. the mountains to the North of us. 10th We took a narrow defile which led us in an East direction about 12 mls. on to a Stream running S. E. : This we followed down about six miles when the defile opened into a beautiful valley about 15 mls. in circumference thro. which the Stream ran in the direction above stated and entered the mountain on the East side. Here a dispute arose about the part of country we were in. Our Leader maintained that this was a branch of the Yellow Stone River but some of the Trappers had been in this valley before and knew it to be a branch of wind River pointed out their old encampments and the Beaver lodges where they had been trapping 2 years previous. But our man at the helm was inflexible, he commanded the party and had a right to call the streams by what names he pleased and as a matter of course this was called the Yellow Stone. Three of the party however called it Wind River and left us but not before one of them had given our Charge d'affairs a sound drubbing about some small matters of little importance to any one but themselves - 11th We left the stream and crossed the valley in a N E direction ascended a high point of mountain thickly covered with pines then descended over cliffs and crags crossing deep gulches among the dark

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

forests of pines and logs until about noon when we came into a smooth grassy spot about a mile in circumference watered by a small rivulet which fell from the rocks above thro. the valley and fell into a chasm on the SE side among the pines. On the North and West were towering rocks several thousand feet high which seem to overhang this little vale - Thousands of mountain Sheep were scattered up and down feeding on the short grass which grew among the cliffs and crevices: some so high that it required a telescope to see them. Our wounded companion suffered severely by this day's travel and our director concluded to remain at this place the next day. He now began to think that these were not the waters of the Yellow Stone as all the branches ran SE. Finally he gave it up and openly declared he could form no distinct idea what part of the country we were in. 12th Myself and another had orders to mount 2 of the best mules and ascend the mountain to see if we could discover any pass to the N West of us. We left the camp and travelled in a North direction about 2 Mls. then turning to our left around a high point of perpendicular rock entered a narrow glen which led N West up the Mountain thro. this we directed our course ascending over the loose fragments of rock which had fallen from the dark threatening precipices that seemed suspended in the air above us on either side for about 5 Mls. when the ascent became so steep that we were obliged to dismount and lead our Mules After climbing about a mile further we came to large banks of snow 8 or 10 ft. deep and so hard that we were compelled to cut steps with our butcher knives to place our feet in whilst our Mules followed in the same track. These places were from 60 to 200 yards accross and so steep that we had to use both hands and feet Dog like in climbing over them We succeeded in reaching what we at first supposed to be the Summit when another peak appeared in view completely shrouded with Snow dotted here and there with a few dwarfish weather beaten Cedars. We now seated ourselves for a few minutes to rest our wearied limbs and gaze on surrounding objects near us on either hand the large bands of Mountain Sheep carelessly feeding upon the short grass and herbage which grew among the Craggs and Cliffs whilst Crowds of little lambs were nimbly Skipping and playing upon the banks of snow. After resting ourselves a short time we resumed our march over the snow leaving the Mules behind. We reached the highest Summit in about a miles travel. On the top of this elevation is a flat place of about a quarter of a mile in circumference. On the West and North of us one vast pile of huge mountains crowned with snow but none appeared so high as the one on which we stood. On the South and East nothing could be seen in the distance but the dense blue atmosphere. We did not prolong our [stay] at this place for the north wind blew keen and cold as the month of January in a Northern Climate. We hurried down to where we had left the mules in order to descend to a more temperate climate before the night came on. Our next object was to find a place to descend with our Mules it being impossible to retrace our steps without the greatest danger. After hunting around Sometime we at length found a place on the NE side where we concluded to try it. We drove our mules on to the snow which being hard and slippery their feet tripped and after sliding about 300 they arrived in a smooth green spot at the foot of the declivity. We then let ourselves down by cutting steps with our butcher knives and the breeches of our guns. After travelling down out of the snow we encamped on a smooth green spot and turned our mules loose to feed At Sunset we built a large fire, eat supper and laid down to sleep. The next morning at daybreak I arose and kindled a fire and seeing the mules grazing at a short distance I filled my tobacco pipe and sat down to Smoke, presently I cast my eyes down the mountain and discovered 2 Indians approaching within 200 yards of us I immediately aroused my companion

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

who was still sleeping, we grasped our guns and presented them upon the intruders upon our Solitude, they quickly accosted us in the Snake tongue saying they were Shoshonies and friends to the whites, I invited them to approach and sit down then gave them some meat and tobacco, they seemed astonished to find us here with Mules saying they knew of but one place where they thought mules or horses could ascend the mountain and that was in a NE direction. The small stream which was formed by the melting of the snow above us after running past where we sat rushed down a fearful chasm and was lost in spray. After our visitors had eaten and smoked we began to question them concerning their families and the country around them. They said their families were some distance below in a North Direction and that there was a large lake beyond all the snowy peaks in sight to the N. W. they also pointed out the place where we could descend the mountain and told us that this stream ran down thro. the mountain and united with a larger stream - which after running a long distance North turned toward the rising of the sun into a large plain where there was plenty of Buffaloe and Crow Indians. After getting this desired information we left these two sons of the wilderness to hunt their sheep and we to hunt our camp as we could. We travelled over a high point of rocks chiefly composed of Granite and coars Sand Stone. In many places we saw large quantities of petrification, nearly whole trees broken in pieces from one to three feet long completely petrified. We also saw imense pieces of rock on the top of the mountain composed of coarse sand pebbles and Sea Shells of various kinds and sizes. After crossing the Summit we fell into a defile which led a winding course down the mountain. Near the foot of this defile we found a stone jar which would contain 9 gallons neatly cut from a piece of granite well shaped and smooth After travelling all day over broken rocks fallen timber and rough country we arrived at the camp about dark 14th We raised Camp and travelled N NE over rough craggy spurs about 15 Mls. and encamped in a narrow Glen between two enormous peaks of rocks. As we were passing along over a spur of the mountain we came to a place from which the earth had slide at some previous period and left the steep inclined ledge bare and difficult to cross: our horses were obliged to place their feet in the small holes and fissures in the rock to keep themselves from sliding off an unfortunate pack horse however missed his footing and slid down the declivity to near the brink of a deep and frightful kanyon thro. which the Cataract madly dashed some hundred feet below fortunately his foot caught in some roots which projected from a crevice in rock and arrested his terrible cours until we could attach ropes to him and drag him from his perilous situation. 15th We followed the windings of the Glen East as far as we could ride and then all dismounted and walked except the wounded man who rode until the mountain became so steep his horse could carry him no longer we then assisted him from his horse and carried or pushed him to the top of the divide over the snow -

In the meantime it commenced snowing very hard - After gaining the Summit we unloaded our animals and rushed them on to the Snow on the other side which being hard they went helter skelter down to a warmer climate and were arrested by a smooth grassy spot. We then lowered the wounded man down by cords and put our saddles and baggage together on the Snow jumped on the top and started slowly at first but the velocity soon increased until we brought up tumbling heels over head on a grassy bench in a more moderate climate. Now we were down; but whether we could get out was a question yet to be Solved. Tremendous towering mountains of rocks Surrounded us excepting on the SE - where a small stream ran from the snow into a dismal chasm below. But for my part I was well contented for an eye could scarcely be cast in any direction

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

around above or below without seeing the fat sheep gazing at us with anxious curiosity or lazily feeding among the rocks and scrubby pines. The bench where we encamped contained about 500 acres nearly level. 16th We staid at this place as our wounded comrade had suffered severely the day before. Some went down the stream to hunt a passage while others went to hunt Sheep. Being in Camp about 10 ock I heard the faint report of a rifle overhead I looked up and saw a sheep tumbling down the rocks which stopped close to where I stood but the man who shot it had to travel 3 or 4 miles before he could descend with safety to the Camp. The Sheep were all very fat so that this could be called no other than high living both as regarded altitude of position and rich provisions. 17th Travelled down the stream thro. difficult and dangerous passage about 10 mls. where we struck another branch on the left This we ascended due North about 8 mls and encamped on another green Spot near the Snow at the head of the Glen 18th We ascended the Mountain at the head of this branch and crossed the divide and descended another branch (which ran in a North direction) about 8 mls. and encamped in an enormous gorge 19th Travelled about 15 mls. down stream and encamped in the edge of a plain 20th Travelled down to the two forks of this stream about 5 mls. and stopped for the night. Here some of the trappers knew the country. This stream is called Stinking River a branch of the Bighorn which after running about 40 mls thro. the big plain enters the above river about 15 mls. above the lower Bighorn Mountain. It takes its name from several hot Springs about 5 miles below the forks producing a sulphurous stench which is often carried by the wind to the distance of 5 or 6 Mls. Here are also large quarries of gypsum almost transparent of the finest quality and also appearances of Lead with large rich beds of Iron and bituminous coal We stopped at this place and rested our animals until the 23d By this time our wounded comrade had recovered so far as to be able to hobble about on crutches. 24th We took up the right hand fork in a NW direction about 15 mls thro. a rugged defile in the mountain. 25th Travelled about 18 mls in the same direction still following the stream which ran very rapid down thro. the dense piles of mountains which are formed of Granite Slate and Sand Stone covered with pines where there is sufficient soil to support them 26th followed the stream almost due Nth. about 8 mls. and encamped where we staid the next day 28th We crossed the mountain in a West direction thro. the thick pines and fallen timber about 12 mls and encamped in a small prairie about a mile in circumference Thro. this valley ran a small stream in a North direction which all agreed in believing to be a branch of the Yellow Stone. 28th We descended the stream about 15 mls thro. the dense forest and at length came to a beautiful valley about 8 Mls. long and 3 or 4 wide surrounded by dark and lofty mountains. The stream after running thro. the center in a NW direction rushed down a tremendous canyon of basaltic rock apparently just wide enough to admit its waters. The banks of the stream in the valley were low and skirted in many places with beautiful Cottonwood groves

Here we found a few Snake Indians comprising 6 men 7 women and 8 or 10 children who were the only Inhabitants of this lonely and secluded spot. They were all neatly clothed in dressed deer and Sheep skins of the best quality and seemed to be perfectly contented and happy. They were rather surprised at our approach and retreated to the heights where they might have a view of us without apprehending any danger, but having persuaded them of our pacific intentions we then succeeded getting them to encamp with us. Their personal property consisted of one old butcher Knife nearly worn to the back two old shattered fusees which had long since become useless for want of ammunition a Small Stone pot and about 30 dogs on which they carried their skins,

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

clothing, provisions etc on their hunting excursions. They were well armed with bows and arrows pointed with obsidian The bows were beautifully wrought from Sheep, Buffalo and Elk horns secured with Deer and Elk sinews and ornamented with porcupine quills and generally about 3 feet long. We obtained a large number of Elk Deer and Sheep skins from them of the finest quality and three large neatly dressed Panther Skins in return for awls axes kettles tobacco ammunition etc. They would throw the skins at our feet and say "give us whatever you please for them and we are satisfied We can get plenty of Skins but we do not often see the Tibuboes" (or People of the Sun) They said there had been a great many beaver on the branches of this stream but they had killed nearly all of them and being ignorant of the value of fur had singed it off with fire in order to drip the meat more conveniently. They had seen some whites some years previous who had passed thro. the valley and left a horse behind but he had died during the first winter. They are never at a loss for fire which they produce by the friction of two pieces of wood which are rubbed together with a quick and steady motion One of them drew a map of the country around us on a white Elk Skin with a piece of Charcoal after which he explained the direction of the different passes, streams etc From them we discovered that it was about one days travel in a SW direction to the outlet or northern extremity of the Yellow Stone Lake, but the route from his description being difficult and Beaver comparatively scarce our leader gave out the idea of going to it this season as our horses were much jaded and their feet badly worn. Our Geographer also told us that this stream bed united with the Yellow Stone after leaving this Valley half a days travel in a west direction. The river then ran a long distance thro a tremendous cut in the mountain in the same direction and merged into a large plain the extent of which was beyond his geographical knowledge or conception 30th We stopped at this place and for my own part I almost wished I could spend the remainder of my days in a place like this where happiness and contentment seemed to reign in wild romantic splendor surrounded by majestic battlements which seemed to support the heavens and shut out all hostile intruders. 21st We left the valley and descended the stream by a narrow difficult path winding among the huge fragments of basaltic rock for about 12 Mls when the trail came to an end and the towering rocks seemed to overhang the river on either side forbidding further progress of man or beast and obliged us to halt for the night. About dark some of our trappers came to camp and reported one of their Comrades to be lost or met with some serious accident The next day we concluded to stop at this place for the lost man and four men went in search of him and returned at night without any tidings of him whatever It was then agreed that either his gun had bursted and killed him or his horse had fallen with him over some tremendous precipice. He was a man about 55 years of age and of 30 years experience as a hunter Our leader concluded that further search was useless in this rocky pathless and pine covered country Aug. 2d we forded the Yellow Stone with some difficulty to the South side. The river at this place is about 200 yds wide and nearly swimming to horses. a short distance below it rushes down a chasm with a dreadful roar echoing among the Mountains. After crossing we took up a steep and narrow defile in a South direction and on gaining the Summit in about 3 mls we found the country to open South and West of us into rolling prairie hills. We descended the mountain and encamped on a small stream running West 3d Travelled about 25 Mls. due West the route broken and uneven in the latter part of the day and some places thickly covered with pines. encamped at night in a valley called "Gardnr's hole" This Valley is about 40 mls in circumference surrounded except on the North and West by low piney Mountains On the West is a high narrow

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

range of mountains running North and South dividing the waters of the Yellow Stone from those of Gallatin fork of the Missouri. We stopped in this Valley until the 20th The Trappers being continually employed in hunting and trapping beaver. 21st we crossed the mountains thro. a defile in a west direction and fell on to a small branch of the Gallatin Here we encamped on a small clear spot and killed the fattest Elk I ever saw. It was a large Buck the fat on his rump measured seven inches thick he had 14 spikes or branches on the left horn and 12 on the right. 22d after we had started in the morning five of our party (4 Trappers and one Camp [Keeper]) secretly dropped behind with their pack and riding horses and took a different direction forming a party of their own, but they could not be much blamed for leaving - as our fractious leader was continually wrangling with the Trappers by endeavoring to exercise his authority tyrannically. we followed down this branch to the Gallatin about 10 mls. West encamped and staid the next day 24th Down the Gallatin N NW the river running between two high ranges of mountains skirted along its banks by a narrow valley. 25th left the defile and took up the Gallatin an East direction crossed the mountain and fell on to a stream running into the Yellow Stone and finding no beaver returned to the Gallatin the next day by the route we had come. 28th up the Gallatin to the place where we had struck it on the 22d 29th Took up the stream a South course about 10 mls. then left it to the left hand and proceeded about 4 mls South thro. a low pass and fell on to a branch of the Madison fork of the Missouri running south this we followed down about six miles further and encamped where we staid next day This pass is formed by the minor ranges of hills or spurs on the two high ranges of mountains on either side of us which approach towards each other and terminate in a low defile completely covered with pines except along the stream where small praries may be found thickly clothed with grass forming beautiful encampment 31st Travelled SW down the stream about 10 Mls. when we came to the "burnt hole" a prarie Valley about 80 mls in circumference surrounded by low spurs of pine covered mountains which are the sources of great number of streams which by uniting in this valley form the Madison fork Sepr 1st Travelled down the stream about 12 Mls NW and encamped during a heavy snow storm This stream after leaving the valley enters a gorge in the mountain in a NW direction. 2d We stopped in the entrance of this gorge until the 8th Travelled down about 15 mls. where the country opened into a large plain thro. which the stream turned in a sweeping curve due North 9th Crossed the Valley in a west direction travelled up a small branch and encamped about 3 miles from the river in a place with high bluffs on each side of us we had been encamped about an hour who fourteen white Trappers came to us in full gallop they were of Mr. Bridgers party who was encamped at Henry's Lake about 20 mls in a South direction and expected to arrive at the Madison the next day his party consisted of 60 white men and about 20 Flathead Indians. The trappers remained with us during the night telling Mountain "Yarns" and the news from the States. Early next morning 8 of them started down the stream to set Traps on the main Fork but returned in about an hour closely pursued by about 80 Blackfeet. We immediately secured our horses in a yard previously made for the purpose and prepared ourselves for battle. In the meantime the Indians had gained the bluffs and commenced shooting into the camp from both sides. The bluff on the East side was very steep and rocky covered with tall pines the foot approaching within 40 yds of us. On the west the bluffs were covered with thick groves of quaking asps: from these hights they poured fusee balls without mercy or even damage except killing our animals who were exposed to their fire. In the meantime we concealed ourselves in the thicket around the camp to await a

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

nearer approach, but they were too much afraid of our rifles to come near enough for us [to] use Ammunition - we lay almost silently about 3 hours when finding they could not arouse us to action by their long shots they commenced Setting fire to the dry grass and rubbish with which we were surrounded: the wind blowing brisk from the South in a few moments the fire was converted into one circle of flame and smoke which united over our heads. This was the most horrid position I was ever placed in death seemed almost inevitable but we did not despair but all hands began immediately to remove the rubbish around the encampment and setting fire to it to act against the flames that were hovering over our heads: this plan proved successful beyond our expectations Scarce half an hour had elapsed when the fire had passed around us and driven our enemies from their position. At length we saw an Indian whom we supposed to be the Chief standing on a high point of rock and give the signal for retiring which was done by taking hold of the opposite corners of his robe lifting it up and striking it 3 times on the ground. The cracking of guns then ceased and the party moved off in silence. They had killed two horses and one mule on the spot and five more were badly wounded. It was about 4 oclk in the afternoon when the firing ceased. We then saddled and packed our remaining animals and started for Mr. Bridger's camp, which we found on the Madison at the place where we had left it. Our party was now so disabled from the previous desertion of Men and loss of animals that our leader concluded to travel with Mr Bridger until we should arrive at the forks of Snake river where the latter intended to pass the winter. On the 11th Myself with 5 others returned to the battle ground to get some traps which had been set for beaver on the stream above our encampment whilst the main camp was to travel down the river about 5 mls. and stop the remainder of the day to await our return We went for the traps and returned to the camp about [8] oclk. P.M. 12th At sunrise an alarm of "Blackfeet!" echoed thro. the Camp. In a moment all were under arms and enquiring "where are they" when 'twas replied "On the hills to the West": I cast a glance along the high range of hills which projected toward the river from the mountain and discovered them standing on a line on a ridge in their center stood a small pole and from it waved an American flag displaying a wish to make peace about 30 of us walked up within about 300 yards of their line when they made a signal for us to halt and send two men to meet the same number of theirs and treat for peace. Two of the whites who could speak the Blackfoot language were appointed to negotiate while the respective lines sat upon the ground to await the event. After talking and smoking for half an hour the negotiators separated and returned to their respective parties Our reported them to be a party of Pagans a small tribe of Blackfeet who desired to make peace with the whites and for that purpose had procured the flag from an American trading post on the Missouri they were 45 [in] number well armed and equipped. We gave them a general invitation to our Camp which they accepted with a great deal of reluctance when they were informed of the battle on the 10th but arriving at the camp and receiving friendly treatment their fears in a manner subsided. After Smoking several rounds of the big pipe the Chief began to relate his adventures. He said he had been in several battles with the whites and some of the party were at the battle in "Pierre's hole" on the 28th of June last in which there was four Indians killed on the spot and eight died of their wounds on the way to the village but he denied having any knowledge of the late battle but said there was several parties of the Blood Indians lurking about the mountains around us They stopped with us until nearly night and all left except one who concluded to remain. 13th We left the Madison Fork with Mr Bridger's Camp and ascended a small branch in a West direction

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

through the mountains about 20 Mls. and encamped on the divide After we had encamped a Frenchman started down the mountain to set his traps for beaver contrary to the advice and persuasion of his companions he had gone but a few miles when he was fired upon by a party of Blackfeet killed and scalped. 14th Travelled down the mountain about 16 Mls NW. and encamped on a stream called "Stinking Creek" which runs into the Jefferson fork of the Missouri. After we had encamped some trappers ascended the stream but were driven back by the Blackfeet Others went below and shared the same fate from another party but escaped to the camp unhurt 15 Moved down this stream about 12 Mls Nth. This part of the country is comprised of high bald hills on either side of the stream which terminate in rough pine covered mountains. 16 Travelled down the stream NW about 8 Mls The Valley opened wider as we descended and large numbers of Buffaloe were scattered over the plains and among the hills 17th Down abt. 10 Mls NW. the mountain on the West descends to a sloping spur from thence to a plain 18 We did not raise camp and about noon some Flathead Indians arrived and told us their village was on a branch of the Jefferson called Beaver Head Creek about 30 mls in a west direction The next day we went to their village, which consisted of 180 lodges of Flatheads and Pend Oreilles (or hanging ears) Here we found a trading party belonging to the Hudsons Bay Co They were under the direction of Mr. Francis Ermatinger who was endeavoring to trade every Beaver skin as fast as they were taken from the water by the Indians. 20th the whole Cavalcade moved "en mass" up the stream about 12 Mls SW. and encamped with another Village of the same tribes consisting of 130 lodges. From this place is a large plain slightly undulating extending nearly to the junction of the three forks of the Missouri The Flatheads are a brave friendly generous and hospitable tribe strictly honest with a mixture of pride which exalts them far above the rude appellation of Savages when contrasted with the tribes around them. They boast of never injuring the whites and consider it a disgrace to their tribe if they are not treated like brothers whilst in company with them. Larceny, Fornication, and adultery are severely punished. Their Chiefs are obeyed with a reverence due to their station and rank. 23d We left the Village in company with Mr. Bridger and his party and travelled SE accross the plain about 8 Mls. to the foot of the hills and encamped at a spring. 24th Travelled about 18 mls SE over high rolling hills beautifully clothed with bunch grass - 25th Travelled in the same direction 12 Mls and encamped in a smooth valley about 80 Mls in circumference surrounded on the North & East by a high range of mountains at the NE extremity is a marshy lake about 12 Mls. in circumference from this flows the head stream of the Jefferson fork of the Missouri which curves to the SW thro. the valley and enters the low mountain on the west thro. a narrow cut still continuing the curve encircling a large portion of country previous to its arrival at the junction 26 Crossed the valley about 16 Mls. and encamped on the East side. This Valley as a Mountaineer would say was full of Buffaloe when we entered it and large numbers of which were killed by our hunters we repeatedly saw signs of Blackfeet about us to waylay the Trappers. 27th We stopped at this place to feast on fat Buffaloe 28th Crossed the Mountain SE about 12 Mls. and encamped on "Camas Creek" at the NW extremity of the great plain of Snake River Here the leader of our party desired me to go to Fort Hall and get some horses to assist them to the Fort as we were dependent on Mr Bridger for animals to move camp 30th After getting the nessary information from our leader I started contrary to the advice and remonstrances of Mr. Bridger and his men rather than be impeached of cowardice by our austocratical director. I travelled according to his directions South untill dark amid thousands of Buffaloe. The route was very

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

rocky and my horses feet (he not being shod) were worn nearly to the quick which caused him to limp very much. After travelling about 30 Mls. I lay down and slept soundly during the night. The next morning I arose and proceeded on my journey down the stream about 9 oclk I came to where it formed a lake where it sank in the dry sandy plain from this I took a SE course as directed towards a high Bute which stood in the almost barren plain by passing to the East of this Bute I was informed that it was about 25 Mls to Snake River

In this direction I travelled untill about two hours after dark my horse had been previously wounded by a ball in the loins and tho. nearly recovered before I started yet travelling over the rocks and gravel with tender feet and his wound together had nearly exhausted him. I turned him loose among the rocks and wild Sage and laid myself down to meditate on the follies of myself and others: In about two hours I fell asleep to dream of cool spring rich frosts and cool shades In the morning I arose and looked around me my horse was near by me picking the scanty blades of sunburned grass which grew among the sage. On surveying the place I found I could go no further in a South or East direction as there lay before me a range of broken basaltic rock which appeared to extend for 5 or 6 miles on either hand and 5 or 6 Mls wide thrown together promiscuously in such a manner that it was impossible for a horse to cross them. The Bute stood to the SW about 10 Mls. which I was informed was about half the distance from "Camas Lake" to Snake river. I now found that either from ignorance or some other motive less pure our Leader had given me directions entirely false and came to the conclusion to put no further confidence in what he had told me, but return to the Lake I had left as it was the nearest water I knew of this point being settled I saddled my horse and started on foot leading him by the bridle and travelled all day in the direction of the Lake over the hot sand and gravel. After daylight disappeared I took a star for my guide but it led me South of the Lake where I came on to several large bands of Buffalo who would start on my near approach and run in all directions It was near midnight when I laid down to rest I had plenty of provisions but could not eat Water! Water was the object of my wishes travelling for two long days in the hot burning sun without water is by no means a pleasant way of passing the time I soon fell asleep and dreamed again of bathing in the cool rivulets issuing from the snow topped Mountains. About an hour before day I was awakened by the howling of wolves who had formed a complete circle within 30 paces of me and my horse at the flashing of my pistol however they soon dispersed. At daylight I discovered some willows about 3 miles distant to the West where large numbers of Buffalo had assembled apparently for water In two hours I had dispersed the Brutes and lay by the water side. After drinking and bathing for half an hour I travelled up the stream about a mile and lay down among some willows to sleep in the shade whilst my horse was carelessly grazing among the bushes The next day being the 4th I lay all day and watched the Buffalo which were feeding in immense bands all about me 5th I arose in the morning at sunrise and looking to the SW I discovered the dust arising in a defile which led thro. the mountain about 4 Mls distant The Buffalo were carelessly feeding all over the plain as far as the eye could reach. I watched the motions of the dust for a few minutes when I saw a body of men on horse back pouring out of the defile among the Buffalo. In a few minutes the dust raised to the heavens The whole mass of became agitated producing a sound resembling distant thunder. At length an Indian pursued a Cow close to me alongside of her he let slip an arrow and she fell. I immediately recognized him to be a Bonnack with whom I was acquainted. On discovering myself he came to me and saluted me in Snake which I answered in the same tongue. He told me the

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Village would come and encamp where I was. In the meantime he pulled off some of his Clothing and hung it on a Stick as a signal for the place where his squaw should set his lodge he then said he had killed three fat cows but would kill one more and So saying he wheeled his foaming charger and the next moment disappeared in the cloud of dust. In about a half an hour the Old Chief came up with the village and invited me to stop with him which I accepted. While the squaws were putting up and stretching their lodges I walked out with the Chief on to a small hillock to the view the field of slaughter the cloud of dust had passed away and the prairie was covered with the slain upwards of a Thousand Cows were killed without burning one single grain of gunpowder. The Village consisted off 332 lodges and averaged six persons young and old to each lodge They were just returned from the salmon fishing to feast on fat Buffaloe. After the lodges were pitched I returned [to] the village This Chief is called "Aiken-lo-ruckkup" (or the tongue cut with a flint) he is the brother of the celebrated horn chief who was killed in a battle with the Blackfeet some years ago: and it is related by the Bonnaks without the least scruple that he was killed by a piece of Antelope [horn] the only manner in which he could [be] taken as he was protected by a Supernatural power from all other harm. My worthy host spared no pains to make my situation as comfortable as his circumstances would permit. The next morning I took a walk thro. the Village and found there was fifteen lodges of Snakes with whom I had formed an acquaintance the year before. On my first entering the Village I was informed that two white Trappers belonging to Mr. Wyeths party had been lately killed by the Bonnaks in the lower country and that the two Indians who had killed or caused them to be killed were then in this village. The Old Chief had pointed them out to me as we walked thro. the village and asked me what the white men would do about it I told him they would hang them if they caught them at the Fort He said it was good that they deserved death for said he "I believe they have murdered the two white men to get their property and lost it all in gambling" for continued he "ill gained wealth often flies away and does the owner no good". "But" said he "you need not be under any apprehensions of danger whilst you stop with the village." The squaws were employed cutting and drying meat for two days at the end of which the ground on which the village stood seemed covered with meat scaffolds bending beneath their rich loads of fat Buffaloe meat 13th My horse being somewhat recruited I left the Village with a good supply of boiled Buffaloe tongues prepared by my land lady and the necessary directions and precautions from the Old Chief. I travelled due east about 25 Mls which brot. me to the forks of Snake River when approaching to the waters I discovered fresh human footprints. I immediately turned my horse and rode out from the river about a quarter of a mile intending to travel parrallel with the river in order to avoid any stragglng party of Blackfeet which might be secreted in the timber growing along the banks

I had not gone far when I discovered three Indians on horse back running a Bull towards me: I jumped my horse into a ravine out of sight and crawled up among [the] high Sage to watch their movements as they approached nearer to me I saw they were Snakes and showed myself to them. They left the Bull and galloped up to me after the usual salutation I followed them to their Village which was on the East bank of the river. The village consisted of 15 lodges under the direction of a chief called "Comb Daughter" by the Snakes and by the whites the "Lame Chief." He welcomed me to this lodge in the utmost good humor and jocular manner [I] had ever experienced among Indians and I was sufficiently acquainted with the Snake language to repay his jokes in his own coin without hesitation. I passed the time very agreeably for six days among those simple but

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

well fed and good humored Savages. On the 19th learning that Bridger was approaching the forks and the party of hunters to which I had belonged had passed down the river towards the Fort I mounted my horse - started down the river and arrived at the Fort next day about noon the distance being about 60 Mls S. S. W. When I arrived the party had given up all hopes of ever seeing me again and had already fancied my lifeless body lying on the plains after having been scalped by the savages. The time for which myself and all of Mr. Wythe's men were engaged had recently expired so that now I was independent of the world and no longer to be termed a "Greenhorn" At least I determined not to be so green as to bind myself to an arbitrary Rocky Mountain Chieftain to be kicked over hill and dale at his pleasure. Novr. 16th Capt. Thing arrived from the Columbia with supplies for the Fort. In the meantime the men about the Fort were doing nothing and I was lending them a hand until Mr. Wyeth should arrive and give us our discharge. Decr. 20th Mr. Wyeth arrived when I bid adieu to the "Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company" and started in company with 15 of my old Messmates to pass the winter at a place called "Mutton Hill" on Port Neuf, about 40 Mls. SE from Fort Hall. Mr Wyeth had brot. a new recruit of Sailors and Sandwich Islanders to supply our places at the Fort. We lived on fat mutton until the snow drove us from the Mountain in Feby. Our party then dispersing I joined Mr. Bridgers Company who were passing the winter on Blackfoot Creek about 15 Mls. from the Fort where we staid until the latter part of March. Mr. Bridger's men lived very poor and it was their own fault for the valley was crowded with fat Cows when they arrived in Novr. but instead of approaching and killing their meat for the winter they began to Kill by running on horse back which had driven the Buffaloe all over the Mountain to the head of the Missouri and the snow falling deep they could not return during the winter They killed plenty of Bulls but they were so poor that their meat was perfectly blue yet this was their only article of food as bread or vegetables were out of the question in the Rocky Mountains except a few kinds of roots of spontaneous growth which the Indians dig and prepare for food. It would doubtless be amusing to a disinter[est]ed spectator to witness the process of cooking poor Bull meat as practiced by this camp during the winter of 1835-6 On going thro. the camp at any time in the day heaps of ashes might be seen with the fire burning on the summit and an independent looking individual who is termed a Camp Keeper sitting with a "two year old club" in his hand watching the pile with as much seeming impatience as Philoctete did the burning of Hercules at length poking over the ashes with his club he rolls out a ponderous mass of Bull beef and hitting it a rap with his club it bounds 5 or 8 feet from the ground like a huge ball of gum elastic: this operation frequently repeated divests [it] of the ashes adhering to it and prepares it for carving He then drops his club and draws his butcher knife calling to his comrades "Come Major, Judge, Squire, Dollar Pike, Cotton, and Gabe wont you take a lunch of Simon?" each of whom acts according to the dictates of his appetite in accepting or refusing the invitation. I have often witnessed these Philosophical and independent dignitaries collected round a Bulls ham just torn from a pile of embers good humoredly observing as they hacked the hugh slices from the lean mass that this was tough eating but that it was tougher where there was none and consoling themselves with a promise to make the fat cows suffer before the year rolled round. The camp remained on Blackfoot untill the latter part of March, when the Winter broke up and we commenced travelling and hunting Beaver. We left winter quarters on the 28th and travelled along the foot of the mountain in a north direction to Lewis' fork and ascended it SE to the mouth of Muddy Creek where we arrived on the 7th of

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

April. Here Mr. Bridger ordered a party of 12 Trappers to branch off to the right and hunt the head waters of Grays and Blackfoot creeks. I was included in the number and felt anxious to try my skill in Trapping 10th We set off leaving the main camp to proceed leisurely to Salt [River] Valley and from thence to the mouth of Thomo's fork of Bear river where we were instructed to meet them. We ascended Muddy and crossed the Mountain on to Grays creek here we found the snow disappearing very fast and the streams so much swollen that we made but slow progress in taking Beaver We traversed the numerous branches of this stream to and fro setting traps when the water would permit until the 25th of April when we left the waters of Grays creek and travelled about 40 Mls in a SW direction from where we had struck it, crossed a low mountain about 8 Mls and fell on to Blackfoot This we ascended two days and hunted until the 5th of May when three of our party were waylaid and fired upon by a party of Blackfeet whilst ascending the stream thro. a Kanyon one of them was slightly wounded in the side by a fusee ball and all escaped to the Camp and reported the Indians to be about 25 in number 7th of May we left Blackfoot and crossed the Mountain SW thro. deep snow and thick pines [and] at night fell into the valley on Bear river and encamped about 25 Mls above the Soda springs 8th Travelled up Bear river to Thomos fork where we found the main Camp likewise Mr. A Dripps and his party, consisting of about 60 whites and nearly as many half breeds who were encamped with 400 lodges of Snakes and Bonnaks and 100 lodges of Nez Perces and flatheads 9th We all camped together in the beautiful plain on Bear River above the mouth of Smith's fork 11th The whole company of Indians and whites left Bear river and travelled to Ham's fork, excepting Mr Dripps and a small party who went round to Blacks fork of Green river to get some furs and other articles deposited there in the ground After reaching Ham's fork the Indians concluded to separate in different directions as we were in too large a body and had too many horses to thrive long together They were instructed to be at the mouth of horse creek on Green River about the 1st of July as we expected supplies from the U S about that time. We laid about on the branches of Green river until the 28th of June when we arrived at the destined place of Rendezvous On the 1st of July Mr. Wyeth arrived from the mouth of the Columbia on his way to the U S with a small party of men 3d The outfit arrived from St. Louis consisting of 40 men having 20 horse carts drawn by mules and loaded with supplies for the ensuing year They were accompanied by Dr Marcus Whitman and lady Mr H H Spaulding and lady and Mr. W H Gray Presbyterian missionaries on their way to the Columbia to establish a mission among the Indians in that quarter. The two ladies were gazed upon with wonder and astonishment by the rude Savages they being the first white women ever seen by these Indians and the first that had ever penetrated into these wild and rocky regions. We remained at the rendezvous until the 16 of July and then began to branch off into parties for the fall hunt in different directions. Mr Bridgers party were destined as usual for the Blackfoot country it contained most of the American trappers and amounted to 60 men. I started with a party of 15 Trappers and 2 Camp Keepers ordered by Mr Bridger to proceed to the Yellow Stone lake and there await his arrival with the remainder of his party. July 24th we set off and travelled up Green river 26 [miles] in a North direction 25th Up Green river 15 Mls in the same direction, then left it to our right and took up a small branch still keeping a Nth. course. The course of the river where we left it turns abruptly to the East and heads in a high craggy mountain covered with snow about 30 Mls distant. This mountain is a spur of the Wind river range and is commonly called the "Sweetwater Mountain" as that stream heads in its southern termination -

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

After leaving the river we travelled about 4 Mls to the head of the branch and encamped in a smooth grassy plain on the divide between Green and Snake Rivers which head within 200 paces of each other at this place 26th Travelled North about 15 Mls. descending a small stream thro. a rough mountaneous country covered with pine trees and underbrush and encamped on the Gros vent fork. 27th We descended the Gros vent fork to "Jacksons hole" about 20 Mls. general course West. 28th We followed Lewis' fork thro. the Valley crossing several large streams coming in from the East we then left the valley and followed the river about 6 Mls. thro. a piece of rough piney country and came to Jacksons Lake which is formed by the river. We encamped at the outlet at a small prarie about a mile in circumference. This lake is about 25 Mls long and 3 wide lying Nth & South bordered on the east by pine swamps and marshes extending from 1 to 2 Mls from the Lake to the spurs of the Mountain On the SW. stands the 3 Tetons whose dark frightful forms rising abruptly from the Lake and towering above the clouds casts a gloomy shade upon the waters beneath whilst the water rushes in torrents down the awful precipices from the snow by which they are crowned The high range of Mountains on the west after leaving the Tetons slope gradually to the Nth and spread into low piney mountains. This place like all other marshes and swamps among the mountains is infested with innumerable swarms of horse flies and musketoos to the great annoyance of man and beast during the day but the cold air descending from the mountains at night compells them to seek shelter among the leaves and grass at an early hour. Game is plenty and the river and lake abounds with fish. After hunting the streams and marshes about this lake we left it, on the 7th of August and travelled down Lewis' fork about 4 Mls to the second stream running into it on the east side below the Lake. This we ascended about 12 Mls East and encamped among the pines close to where it emerged from a deep kanyon in the mountain 8th We took accross a high spur thickly covered with pines intermingled with brush and fallen timber in a NE direction for about 12 Mls where we fell into a small valley on a left hand branch of the stream we had left 9th We took up this branch due North about 10 Mls. when it turning short to the right we left it and ascended a narrow Glen keeping a Nth course sometimes travelling thro. thick pines and then crossing small green spots thro. which little streams were running from the remaining banks of snow lying among the pines in the shade of the mountains for about 6 Mls when we came to a smooth prarie about 2 Mls long and half a Ml. wide lying east and west surrounded by pines. On the South side about midway of the prarie stands a high snowy peak from whence issues a Stream of water which after entering the plain it divides equally one half running West and the other East thus bidding adieu to each other one bound for the Pacific and the other for the Atlantic ocean. Here a trout of 12 inches in length may cross the mountains in safety. Poets have sung of the "meeting of the waters" and fish climbing cataracts but the "parting of the waters and fish crossing mountains" I believe remains unsung as yet by all except the solitary trapper who sits under the shade of a spreading pine whistling blank-verse and beating time to the tune with a whip on his trap sack whilst musing on the parting advice of these waters. 10th We took down the East branch and followed it about 8 Mls to the Yellow Stone river which is about 80 yds wide and at the shallowest place nearly swimming to our horses. To this place it comes from a deep gorge in the mountains enters a valley lying Nth & South about 15 Ms. long and 3 wide thro. which it winds its way slowly to the Nth. thro swamps and marshes and calmly reposes in the bosom of the Yellow Stone Lake. The South extremity of this valley is smooth and thickly clothed with high meadow grass surrounded by high craggy mountains topped with snow. We stopped at

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

this place trapping until the 3d of August, when we travelled down the lake to the inlet or southern extremity. 16th Mr. Bridger came up with the remainder of the party 18th The whole camp moved down the East shore of the Lake thro. thick pines and fallen timber about 18 Mls. and encamped in a small prairie 19th continued down the shore to the Outlet about 20 Mls. and encamped in a beautiful plain which extends along the Northern extremity of the Lake. This valley is interspersed with scattering groves of tall pines forming shady retreats for the numerous Elk and Deer during the heat of the day. The Lake is about 100 Mls. in circumference bordered on the East by high ranges of Mountains whose spurs terminate at the shore and on the west by a low bed of piney mountains its greatest width is about 15 Mls lying in an oblong form south to north or rather in the shape of a crescent. Near where we encamped were several hot springs which boil perpetually. Near these was an opening in the ground about 8 inches in diameter from which hot steam issues continually with a noise similar to that made by the steam issuing from a safety valve of an engine and can be heard 5 or 6 Mls distant I should think the steam issued with sufficient force to work an engine of 30 horse power. We encamped about 3 ock. PM. and after resting our horses about an hour seven of us were ordered to go and hunt some streams running into the Yillow Stone some distance below the Lake. We startid from the Camp in an East direction crossed the plain and entered the pines and after travelling about an hour thro. dense forests we fell into a broken tract of country which seemed to be all on fire at some distance below the surface. It being very difficult to get around this place we concluded to follow an Elk Trail accross it for about half a mile the treading of our horses sounded like travelling on a plank platform covering an imense cavity in the earth whilst the hot water and steam were spouting and hissing around us in all directions. As we were walking and leading our horses accross this place the horse that was before me broke thro. the crust with one hind foot and the blue steam rushed forth from the hole. The whole place was covered with a crust of Limestone of a dazzling whiteness formed by the overflowing of the boiling water. Shortly after leaving this resemblance of the infernal regions we killed a fat buck Elk and camped at Sunset in a smooth grassy spot between two high shaggy ridges watered by a small stream which came tumbling down the gorge behind us. As we had passed the infernal regions we thought as a matter of course these must be a commencement of the Elysian fields and accordingly commenced preparing a feast. A large fire was soon blazing encircled with sides of Elk ribs and meat cut in slices supported on sticks down which the grease ran in torrents The repast being over the jovial tale goes round the circle the peals of loud laughter break upon the stillness of the night which after being mimicked in the echo from rock to rock it dies away in the solitary [gloom]. Every tale puts an auditor in mind of something similar to it but under different circumstances which being told the "laughing part" gives rise to increasing merriment and furnishes more subjects for good jokes and witty sayings such as Swift never dreamed of Thus the evening passed with eating drinking and stories enlivened with witty humor until near Midnight all being wrapped in their blankets lying around the fire gradually falling to sleep one by one until the last tale is "encored" by the snoring of the drowsy audience The Speaker takes the hint breaks off the sub- ject and wrapping his blanket more closely about him soon joins the snoring party - The light of the fire being superseded by that of the Moon just rising from behind the Eastern Mountain a sullen gloom is cast over the remaining fragments of the feast and all is silent except the occasional howling of the solitary wolf on the neighboring mountain whose senses are attracted by the flavors of roasted meat but fearing to

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

approach nearer he sits upon a rock and bewails his calamities in piteous moans which are re-echoed among the Mountains. Aug 20th Took over a high rugged mountain about 12 Mls NE and fell into the Secluded Valley of which I have described in my last years journal. Here we found some of those independent and happy Natives of whom I gave a description we traded some Beaver and dressed Skins from them and hunted the streams running into the valley for several days There is something in the wild romantic scenery of this valley which I cannot nor will I, attempt to describe but the impressions made upon my mind while gazing from a high eminence on the surrounding landscape one evening as the sun was gently gliding behind the western mountain and casting its gigantic shadows accross the vale were such as time can never efface from my memory but as I am neither Poet Painter or Romance writer I must content myself to be what I am a humble journalist and leave this beautiful Vale in obscurity until visited by some more skillful admirer of the beauties of nature who may chance to stroll this way at some future period 25th left the Valley and travelled down to the Yellow Stone and crossed it at the ford 26th Crossed the Mountain in a SW direction and fell on to Gardners fork. Here myself and another set some traps and stopped for the night whilst the remainder of the party went in different directions to hunt setting 27th Crossed the mountain SW to "Gardners hole" where we found the main camp. 28th Camp left "Gardners hole" and travelled North to the Yellow Stone about 20 Mls. 29th The whole party followed the river out of the mountain in to the great Yellow Stone plain distance about 12 Mls. The Trappers then scattered out in small parties of from 2 to 5 in number leaving Mr. Bridger with 25 Camp Keepers to travel slowly down the river. Myself and another travelled down the river about 40 Mls NE to a branch called "25 Yard river" This we ascended about 25 Mls in a Nth direction where we remained trapping several days The country lying on this stream is mostly comprised of high rolling ridges thickly clothed with grass and herbage and crowded with imense bands of Buffaloe intermingled with bands of antelope Sepr. 1st We returned to the Camp which we found at the mouth of this stream where we found also 10 Delaware Indians who had joined the camp in order to hunt Beaver with greater security. 2d Travelled down the Yellow Stone river about 20 Mls. This is a beautiful country the large plains widely extending on either side of the river intersected with streams and occasional low spurs of Mountains whilst thousands of Buffaloe may be seen in almost every direction and Deer Elk and Grizzly bear are abundant. The latter are more numerous than in any other part of the mountains. Owing to the vast quantities of cherries plums and other wild fruits which this section of country affords In going to visit my traps a distance of 3 or 4 mils early in the morning I have frequently seen 7 or 8 standing about the clumps of Cherry bushes on their hind legs gathering cherries with surprising dexterity not even deigning to turn their Grizzly heads to gaze at the passing trapper but merely casting a sidelong glance at him without altering their position 3d I left the camp on the Yellow Stone and started accross a low and somewhat broken tract of country in a SE direction to a stream called the Rosebud accompanied by another Trapper 5th The Camp came to us on the Rosebud and the next day passed on in the same direction. Whilst myself and comrade stopped behind to trap 7th We overtook the camp on a stream called Rocky fork, a branch of Clarks fork of the Yellow Stone when we arrived at camp we were told the sad news of the death of a french Trapper named Bodah, who had been waylaid and killed by a party of Blackfeet while setting his traps and one of the Delawares had been shot thro the hip by the rifle of one of his comrades going off accidentally and several war parties of Blackfeet had been seen scouting about

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the country. We had been in camp but a few minutes when two trappers rode up whom we called "Major Meek" and "Dave Crow" The former was riding a white Indian pony, a tall Virginian who had been in the mountains some 12 years on dismounting some blood was discovered which had apparently been running down his horses neck and dried on the hair. He was immediately asked where he had been and what was the news? "News! exclaimed he "I have been, me and Dave over on to Priors fork to set our traps and found old Benj Johnson's boys there just walking up and down them are streams with their hands on their hips gathering plums, they gave me a tilt and turned me a somerset or two shot my horse "Too Shebit" in the neck and sent us heels over head in a pile together but we raised arunnin Gabe do you know where Prior leaves the cut bluffs going up it? Yes, replied Bridger. Well after you get out of the hills on the right hand fork there is scrubby box elders about 3 miles along the Creek up to where a little right hand spring branch puts in with lots and slivers of Plum trees about the mouth of it and some old beaver dams at the mouth on the main Creek? Well sir we went up there and set yesterday morning I set two traps right below the mouth of that little branch and in them old dams and Dave set his down the creek apiece, so after we had got our traps set we cruised round and eat plums a while, the best plums I ever saw is there" the trees are loaded and breaking down to the ground with the finest kind as large as Pheasants eggs and sweet as sugar the'l almost melt in yo mouth no wonder them rascally Savages like that place so well- Well sir after we had eat what plums we wanted me and Dave took down the creek and staid all night on a little branch in the hills and this morning started to our traps we came up to Dave's traps and in the first there was a 4 year old "spade" the next was false lickt went to the next and it had cut a foot and none of the rest disturbed, we then went up to mine to the mouth of the branch I rode on 5 or 6 steps ahead of Dave and just as I got opposite the first trap I heard a rustling in the bushes within about 5 steps of me I looked round and pop pop pop went the guns covering me with smoke so close that I could see the blanket wads coming out of the muzzles Well sir I wheeled and a ball struck Too shebit in the neck and just touched the bone and we pitched heels overhead but too shebit raised runnin and I on his back and the savages jist squattin and grabbin at me but I raised a fog for about half a mile till I overtook Dave" The foregoing story was corroborated by "Dave" a small inoffensive man who had come to the Rocky Mountains with Gen. Ashley some 15 years ago and remained ever since: an excellent hunter and a good trapper The next day we moved down the stream to its junction with Clarks fork within about 3 Mls of the Yellowstone On the following morning two men went to set traps down on the river and as they were hunting along the brushy banks for places to set a party of sixty Blackfeet surrounded them drove them into the river and shot after them as they were swimming accross on their horses One by the name of Howell, was shot by two fusee balls thro. the chest the other escaped unhurt. Howell rode within half a mile of camp fell and was brought in on a litter he lived about 20 hours and expired in the greatest agony imaginable - about an hour after he was brought in 20 Whites and Delawares went to scour the brush along the river and fight the Blackfeet Having found them they drove them on to an Island and fought them till dark. The loss on our side during the battle was a Nez percey Indian killed and one White slightly wounded in the shoulder. The Blackfeet who were fortified on the Island drew off in the night secreting their dead and carrying off their wounded The next day we interred the remains of poor Howell at the foot of a large Cottonwood tree and called the place "Howells encampment" as a compliment to his memory 11th We travelled on to Priors Fork and struck it where the Majors traps were

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

setting distance 25 Mls Couse SE- 12th Stopped at this place and gathered plums 13th Travelled East 12 Mls to the left hand fork of Prior. 14th The snow fell all day and on the 15th it was 15 inches deep 16th We returned to the west fork of Prior and stopped the next day 18th The snow being gone we returned to Clarks Fork 19th Seven of us left the Camp and travelled to Rock fork near the mountain distance about 25 Mls course SW. We all kept together and set our traps on Rocky fork near the Mountain. We had been here five days when a party of Crow Indians came to us consisting of 49 warriors. They were on their way to the Blackfoot village to steal horses, they staid with us two nights and then went to the camp which had come on to this stream about 20 Mls below us. 28th Another party of Crows came to us consisting of 110 warriors. We went with them to the Camp which we found about 10 mls below. They remained with the camp the next day and then left for the Blackfoot village which they said was at the three forks of the Missouri. 30th We travelled with the Camp west on to the Rosebud Octr 1st The trappers scattered out in every direction to hunt Beaver on the branches of the "Rosebud" and continued to the 10th when we followed the Camp down the Yellow Stone where Mr. Bridger had concluded to pass the winter. The small streams being frozen trapping was suspended and all collected to winters quarters where were Thousands of fat Buffaloe feeding in the plains and we had nothing to do but slay and eat Octr. 25 The weather becoming fine and warm some of the trappers started again to hunt Beaver Myself and another started to Priors fork and set our traps on the East branch where we staid six days We then crossed a broken piece of country about 12 Mls NE and fell on to a stream running NE into the Big horn called "Bovy's fork" Here we set traps and staid 10 dys. This section of country is very uneven and broken but abounds with Buffaloe Elk Deer and Bear. Among other spontaneous productions of this country are hops which grow in great abundance and of a superior quality. Thousands of acres along the small branches the trees and shrubbery are completely entangled in the vines 11th The weather commenced cold the streams froze over again and we started for Camp which we found on Clarks fork about a mile above "Howells encampment" The Camp stopped at this place until Christmas then moved down about 4 Mls onto the Yellowstone. The bottoms along these rivers are heavily timbered with sweet cottonwood and our horses and mules are very fond of the bark which we strip from the limbs and give them every night as the Buffaloe have entirely destroyed the grass throughout this part of the country We passed away the time very agreeably our only employment being to feed our horses kill Buffaloe and eat that is to say the Trappers The camp keepers' business in winter quarters is to guard the horses cook and keep fires. We all had snug lodges made of dressed Buffaloe skins in the center of which we built a fire and generally comprised about six men to the lodge The long winter evenings were passed away by collecting in some of the most spacious lodges and entering into debates arguments or spinning long yarns until midnight in perfect good humour and I for one will cheerfully confess that I have derived no little benefit from the frequent arguments and debates held in what we termed The Rocky Mountain College and I doubt not but some of my comrades who considered themselves Classical Scholars have had some little added to their wisdom in these assemblies however rude they might appear On the 28th of Jany myself and six more trappers concluded to take a cruise of 5 or 6 days after Buffaloe The snow was about inches deep and the weather clear and cold we took seven loose animals to pack meat and travelled up Clarks fork about 12 Mls killed a cow and encamped The next morning we started across towards Rock fork and had gone about 3 Mls over the smooth plain gradually ascending to a range of hills

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

which divides Clarks fork from Rock We were riding carelessly along with our rifles lying carelessly before us on our saddles when we came to a deep narrow gulch made by the water running from the hills in the Spring Season when behold! the earth seemed teeming with naked Savages A quick volley of fuses a shower of balls and a cloud of smoke clearly bespoke their nation tribe manners and customs and mode of warfare: A ball broke the right arm of one man and he dropped his rifle which a savage immediately caught up and shot after us as we wheeled and scampered away out of the reach of their guns. There was about 80 Indians who had secreted themselves until we rode within 15 feet of them They got a rifle clear gain and we had one man wounded and lost a Rifle so they had so much the advantage and we were obliged to go to Camp and study out some plan to get even as by the two or three last skirmishes we had fell in this rebt. A few days afterwards a party of 20 were discovered crossing the plain to the river about 6 Mls below us 20 men immediately mounted, and set off and arrived at the place just as they had entered the timber - they ran into some old rotten Indian forts formed of small poles in a conical shape The whites immediately surrounded and opened fire upon them which was kept up until darkness and the severity of the weather compelled them to retire We had one man wounded slightly thro. the hip and one Delaware was shot by a poisoned ball in the leg which lodged under the knee cap he lived four days and expired. On examining the battle ground next day we found that three or four at least had been killed and put under the Ice in the river seven or 8 had been badly wounded which they dragged away on trains to their village. We found that the old forts were not bullet proof in any place our rifle balls had whistled thro. them nearly every shot and blood and brains lay scattered about inside on the shattered fragments of rotten wood. Feby. 22d Mr Bridger according to his usual custom took his telescope & mounted a high bluff near the encampment to look out for "squalls" as he termed it about 1 ock PM he returned appearing somewhat alarmed and on being asked the cause, He said the great plain below was alive with savages who were coming accross the hills to the timber about 10 Mls below us. From this place the river runs in a NE direction bearing E. On the Nth and West side is a plain from 6 to 10 Mls wide bordered by rough broken hills and clay bluffs on the S and E the river runs along the foot of a high range of steep bluffs intersected by deep ravines and gulches. Along the river are large bottoms covered with large cottonwood timber and clear of underbrush. All hands commenced to build a breast work round the camp, which was constructed of Logs and brush piled horizontally 6 feet high around the camp enclosing about 250 feet square This being completed at dark a double guard was mounted and all remained quiet but it was a bitter Cold night. I mounted guard from 9 till 12 oclk the weather was clear the stars shone with an unusual lustre and the trees cracked like pistols about 10 oclk the northern lights commenced streaming up darting flashing rushing to and fro like the movements of an army at length the shooting and flashing died away and gradually turned to a deep blood red spreading over one half of the sky. This awful and sublime phenomenon (if I may be allowed to mingle such terms) lasted near two hours then gradually disappeared - and being relieved by the morning guard I went to bed and slept soundly till Sunrise. The next day we were engaged Strengthening the fortress by cutting timber from 12 to 18 inches in diameter standing them inside on end leaning them on the breastwork close to gether. This was completed about noon. About 2 oclk. Mr. Bridger and six men mounted and went to reconnoiter the enemy but returned soon after with the intelligence of their being encamped about 9 Miles below on the river and there was a multitude of them on foot.

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

24th The night passed without any disturbance and we began to fear we should not have a fight after after all our trouble. About sunrise one solitary Savage crept up behind the trees and shot about 200 yds at Mr Bridger's Cook as he was gathering wood outside the fort Then scampered off without doing any damage

A Spaniard was ordered on to the bluff to look out and found an Indian in the observatory built on the top who waited until the Spaniard approached the Indian then raised and the Spaniard wheeled and took to his heels the Indian shot and the ball struck him in the heel as he made a 50 foot leap down the bluff and slid down the snow to the bottom. In about half an hour the word was passed that they were coming on the Ice and presently they appeared coming round a bend of the river in close columns within about 400 yards They then turned off to the right into the plain and called a halt. The Chief who wore a white blanket came forward a few steps and gave us the signal that he should not fight but return to his village They then turned and took a NW Course accross the Plain toward the 3 forks of the Missouri. We came to a conclusion after numerous conjectures that the wonderful appearance of the heavens a few nights previous connected with our strong fortification had caused them to abandon the ground without an attack which is very probable as all Indians are very superstitious We supposed on examining their Camp next day that numbers must have been about eleven hundred who had started from their village with the determination of rubbing us from the face of the earth but that the Great spirit had shown them that their side of the heavens was bloody whilst ours was Clear and Serene. 28th Feby we left our winter quarters on the Yellow Stone and Started for the Big horn the snow being 6 inches deep on an average we travelled slowly and reached it in eight days at the mouth of "Bovy fork" about 15 Mls below the lower Big horn mountain and then began to Slay and eat but we slayed so much faster than we eat that our meat scaffolds groand under the weight of fat buffaloe meat We remained here amusing ourselves with playing ball hoping wrestling running foot races etc until the 14th of March when we discovered the Crow village moving down the Big horn toward us immediately all sports were ended Some mounted horses to meet them others fortified camp ready for battle in case there should be a misunderstanding between us The scouting party soon returned with some of the Chiefs accompanied by an American who was trading with them in the employ of the American Fur Company. The Chiefs after smoking and looking about some time returned to their village which had encamped about 3 mls above on the river. The next morning they came and encamped within 300 yds of us. Their Village contained 200 lodges and about 200 warriors. The Crows are a proud haughty insolent Tribe whenever their party is the strongest but if the case is reversed they are equally cowardly and submissive. This Village is called "Long hair's band" after their chief whose hair is eleven feet six inches long done up in an enormous queue about 18 inches long and six inches thick hanging down his back he is about 80 years of age and seems to be afflicted with the Dropsy the only case of the kind I have ever known among the Mountain Indians. The village staid with us until the 25 of March and then moved down the river about 6 mls. We left the Big horn on the 1st of April and started on the Spring hunt. On the 3d up Bovy's fork 20 mls. 4th Up the same 10 mls. After we had encamped four Delawares who were cruising about in the hills hunting buffaloe fell in with a party of 10 or 12 Blackfeet killed one on the spot and wounded several more. The Blackfeet then took to their heels and left the victorious Delawares without loss except one horse being slightly wounded in the neck 10th We arrived at "Howells encampment" at the mouth of Rocky fork. The whole country here was filled with Buffaloe

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

driven this way by the Crow Village 11th We raised a Cache of Beaver and other articles which had been deposited in the ground in Novr. last. 14 A party of 12 trappers and two Camp Keepers started to trap the "Muscle Shell" river which heads in the mountain near "25 Yard river" and runs into the Missouri on the South side above the mouth of the Yellow Stone. Myself and three others travelled up Rocky fork about 20 mls but found so much Snow and ice that we could not set our traps for Beaver. We found a large cave on the SE side of a perpendicular rock. in this we encamped six days during which we made great havoc among the Buffaloe On the 23d the camp moved up to our Cave and the next day I went up the stream about 12 mls and set my traps and saw signs of several war parties of Blackfeet who were scouting about the country 26th I was cruising with another trapper thro. the timber and brush above where we had set our traps when on a sudden we came within 10 steps of two Blackfoot Forts and saw the smoke ascending from the tops as we saw no individuals we entered and found the Indians had been gone about half an hour. 28th The party arrived from the Muscle Shell having been defeated and lost one Trapper and nearly all their horses and traps by the Blackfeet May 1st All being collected we left Rocky fork close to the Mountain and took round the foot in an east direction and encamped at a spring where we staid the next day, the Blackfeet still continued dogging at our heels to steal now and then a horse which might get loose in the night. There is a proverb among Mountaineers "That It is better to count ribs than tracks" That is to say it is better to fasten a horse at night untill you can count his ribs with poverty than turn him loose to fatten and count his tracks after an Indian has stolen him 3d Travelled on to Clarks fork 12 Mls SE and the next day up the same 15 mls South 5th Travelled to a small branch running into Stinking river, South direction 15 mls 6th we encamped on Stinking river about 15 mls below the forks distance about 12 mls course SE. 7th We travelled from the river about 20 mls in a South direction and encamped at a Spring 8th to the "Gray Bull fork" of the Big horn 9th to the Medicine lodge fork 12 mls South 10th to the middle fork of the "Medicine lodge" 8 mls 11th to the South fork of the Medicine lodge 8 mls South. Here we staid two days 14th Travelled SE to a small spring at the foot of the upper Big horn mountain distance 13 mls The 15 travelled to the top of the Big horn mountain and encamped on the divide The country over which we have travelled since we left "Stinking" [is] much broken by spurs of Mountains and deep gullies entirely destitute of timber except along the banks of the streams 16th Travelled down the Mountain on the South side and encamped on a small branch of Wind river This river loses its name whilst passing thro. the upper Big horn mountain From thence it takes the name of the Big horn derived from the vast numbers of Mountain Sheep or Big horn inhabiting the mountains thro. which it passes. 17th Over broken country South about 15 mls 18th Encamped on the river after a march of 10 ms. South. 19th The camp intending to stop here several days I started with a raw Son of Erin to hunt Beaver on the head branches of the river. We travelled up west about 25 Mls to what is called the "red rock" Killed a sheep and encamped for the night where several branches of the river united 20th We took up a large branch about 15 ms NW and found the water overflowing the banks of all the branches so much that it was impossible to catch Beaver We then altered our Course NE accross the country in order to examine the small branches on our right but finding all our efforts to trap useless and discovering that a war party consisting of 80 Blackfeet were in pursuit of us we returned to the camp by a different route on the 23 24th Travelled with the Camp to the north fork of "Popo azia" or "[?] river" one of the principal branches of Wind river distance 12 mls course South 25 to the middle fork of the same

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

stream 8 mls distance 26th To the Oil Spring on the South fork of "Popo-azia" This spring produces about one Gallon per hour of pure Oil of Coal or rather Coal Tar the scent of which often carried on the wind 5 or 6 mls. The Oil issues from the ground within 30 feet of the stream and runs off slowly into the water Camp stopped here eight days We set fire to the spring when there was 2 or 3 Bbls. of oil on the ground about it, it burnt very quick and clear but produced a dense column of thick black smoke the oil above ground being consumed the fire soon went out. This is a beautiful country thickly clothed with grass intermingled with flowers of every hue. On the west rises the Wind River range of Mountains abruptly from the smooth rolling hills until crowned with Snow above the Clouds On the East stretches away the Great Wind River plain and terminates at a low range of Mountains rising between Wind and Powder Rivers

Buffaloe Elk and Sheep are abundant. Beds of Iron and Coal are frequently found in this part of the country June 5th We left the Oil Spring and took over a point of Mountain about 15 mls SW and encamped on a small spring branch 6th Crossed the Spurs of Mountains due west 12 mls and encamped on a branch of Sweet water 7th Travelled west about 15 mls and encamped on "little Sandy" a branch of Green River 8th Travelled North up the Valley about 18 mls. and encamped on a stream called the New fork of Green river where we staid the next day 10th Travelled west to the Main river about 25 mls and struck the river about 12 mls below the mouth of horse creek Here we found the hunting Parties all assembled waiting for the arrival of Supplies from the States. Here presented what might be termed a mixed multitude The whites were chiefly Americans and Canadian French with some Dutch, Scotch, Irish, English, halfbreed, and full blood Indians, of nearly every tribe in the Rocky Mountains. Some were gambling at Cards some playing the Indian game of hand and others horse racing while here and there could be seen small groups collected under shady trees relating the events of the past year all in good Spirits and health for Sickness is a Stranger seldom met with in these regions. Sheep Elk Deer Buffaloe and Bear Skins mostly supply the Mountaineers with clothing bedding and lodges while the meat of the same animals supplies them with food. They have not the misfortune to get any of the luxuries from the civilized world but once a year and then in such small quantities that they last but a few days. We had not remained in this quiet manner long before something new arose for our amusement The Bonnack Indians had for several years lived with the whites on terms partly hostile frequently stealing horses and traps and in one instance killed two White trappers. They had taken some horses and traps from a party of French trappers who were hunting Bear river in April last, and they were now impudent enough to come with the village of 60 lodges and encamp within 3 mls of us in order to trade with the whites as usual still having the stolen property in their possession and refusing to give it up On the 15 of June 4 or 5 whites and two Nez Percey Indians went to their Village and took the stolen horses (whilst the men were out hunting buffaloe) and returned with them to our camp. About 3 oclk PM of the same day 30 Bonnaks came riding at full gallop up to the Camp - armed with their war weapons. They rode into the midst and demanded the horses. which the Nez percey had taken, saying they did not wish to fight with the whites. But the Nez percey who were only Six in number gave the horses to the whites for protection which we were bound to do as they were numbered among our Trappers and far from their own tribe. Some of the Bonnacks on seeing this started to leave the Camp one of them as he passed me observed that he did not come to fight Whites but another a fierce looking Savage who still stopped behind called out to the others saying "we came to get horses or blood and let us do it" I was standing

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

near the Speaker and understood what he said I immediately gave the whites warning to be in readiness for an attack nearly all the men in camp were under arms Mr. Bridger was holding one of the stolen horses by the bridle when one of the Bonnaks rushed thro. the crowd seized the bridle and attempted to drag it from Mr Bridger by force without heeding the cocked rifles that surrounded him any more than if they had been so many reeds in the hands of Children. He was a brave Indian but his bravery proved fatal to himself, for the moment he seized the bridle two rifle balls whistled thro. his body. the others wheeled to run but 12 of them were shot from their horses before they were out of the reach of Rifles. We then mounted horses and pursued them destroyed and plundered their village and followed and fought them three days when they begged us to let them go and promised to be good Indians in future. We granted their request and returned to our Camp satisfied that the best way to negotiate and settle disputes with hostile Indians is with the rifle: for that is the only pen that can write a treaty which they will not forget Two days after we left them three white trappers ignorant of what had taken place went into their village and were treated in the most friendly manner The Indians said however they had been fighting with the Blackfeet. July 5th a party arrived from the States with supplies The cavalcade consisting of 45 men and 20 Carts drawn by Mules under the direction of Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick accompanied by Capt. Wm. Stewart on another tour to the Rocky Mountains. Joy now beamed in every countenance Some received letters from their friends and relations Some received the public papers and news of the day others consoled themselves with the idea of getting a blanket a Cotton Shirt or a few pints of Coffee and sugar to sweeten it just by way of a treat gratis that is to say by paying 2,000 percent on the first cost by way of accommodation for instance Sugar 2\$ pr pint Coffee the same Blankets 20\$ each Tobacco 2\$ pr pound alcohol 4\$ pr pint and Common Cotton Shirts 5\$ each etc And in return paid 4 or 5\$ pr pound for Beaver. In a few days the bustle began to subside. the furs were done up in packs ready for transportation to the States and parties were formed for hunting the ensuing year One party consisting of 110 men were destined for the Blackfoot Country under the direction of L B Fontanelle as commander and James Bridger Pilot I started with five others to hunt the head waters of the Yellowstone Missouri and Big horn rivers a portion of country I was particularly fond of hunting On the 20th of July we left the Rendezvous and travelled up Green River about 10 mls. 21st We travelled up green river till noon when we discovered a trail of 8 or 10 Blackfeet and a Buffaloe fresh killed and butchered with the meat tied up in small bundles on the ground which they had left on seeing us approach and run into the bushes, we supposing them to be a small scouting party tied their bundles of meat on to our saddles and still kept on our route but had not gone far before we discovered them secreted among some willows growing a long a branch which crossed our trail I was ahead leading the party when I discovered them we stopped and one of my comrades whose name was Allen began to arrange the load on his pack mule in the meantime I reined my horse to the left and rode onto a small hillock near by and casting a glance towards the bushes which were about 150 yds distant I saw two guns pointed at me I instantly wheeled my horse but to no purpose the two balls struck him one in the loins and the other in the shoulder which dropped him under me the Indians at the Sametime jumped out of the bushes 60 or 70 in number and ran toward us shooting and yelling I jumped on a horse behind one of My comrades and we scampered away towards the Rendezvous where we arrived at dark. 25th The parties started and we travelled with Mr Fontanelle's party up Green River 10 mls intending to keep in their company 5 or 6 days and then

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

branch off to our first intended route 26th We travelled 20 mls NW across a low range of hills and encamped in a valley lying on a branch of Lewis fork called "Jackson's little hole." 27th We travelled down this Stream 18 mls NW This stream runs thro. a tremendous mountain in a deep narrow Kanyon of rock." The trail runs along the Cliffs from 50 to 200 feet above its bed and is so narrow in many places that only one horse can pass at a time for several hundred yards and one false step would precipitate him into the Chasm into the Chasm below after leaving the Kanyon we encamped at a small spring in "Jacksons big hole" near the Southern extremity 28th travelled up the Valley North 15 mls. encamped killed some Buffaloe and Staid next day 30th I left the Camp in company with two trappers and one Camp Keeper we received instructions from Mr. Fontanele to meet the Camp at the mouth of Clarks fork of the Yellow Stone on the 15th of the ensuing Octr where they expected to pass the winter but he said if he should conclude to change his winter quarters he would cause a tree to be marked at Howells grave and bury a letter in the ground at the foot of it containing directions for finding the camp after bidding adieu to the Camp we travelled North till near sunset and encamped about 40 mls from the main party 31st We travelled to the fork 5 mls below Jacksons Lake and ascended it in the same direction I had done the year before and encamped about 15 mls from the Valley Aug. 1st we reached the dividing spring about 4 oclk P.M. and stopped for the night 2d We encamped at the inlet of the Yellowstone Lake 3d Travelled down the East Shore of the Lake and stopped for the night near the outlet at the steam spring 4th We took our course ENE and after travelling all day over rugged mountains thickly covered with pines and underbrush we encamped at night about 10 mls Nth of the secluded valley on the stream which runs thro it after we had encamped we Killed a Dear which came in good time as we had eaten the last of our provisions the night previous at the Yellowstone Lake and the flies and musketoos were so bad and the underbrush so thick that we had not killed anything during the day 5th We travelled up a left hand branch of this Stream NE 15 mls thro the thick pines and brush untill near the head where we encamped in a beautiful valley about 2 Mls in circumference almost encircled with huge Mountains whose tops were covered with snow from which small rivulets were issueing clear as Crystal and uniting in the smooth grassy vale formed the stream we had ascended. We concluded to spend the next day at this place as there was no flies or musktoos for tho warm and pleasant in the day the nights were too cold for them to survive. The next day after eating a light breakfast of roasted venison I shouldered my rifle and ascended the highest mountain on foot. I reached the snow in about an hour when seating myself upon a huge fragment of Granite and having full view of the country around Me in a few moments was almost lost in contemplation. This said I is not a place where heroes' deeds of Chivalry have been atchieved in days of yore neither is a place of which bards have sung until the world knows the precise posture of every tree rock and [?] or the winding turn of every streamlet. But on the contrary those stupendous rocks whose surface is formed into irregular benches rising one above another from the vale to the snow dotted here and there with low pines and covered with green herbage intermingled with flowers with the scattered flocks of Sheep and Elk carelessly feeding or thoughtlessly reposing beneath the shade having Providence for their founder and preserver and Nature for Shepherd Gardner and Historian. In viewing scenes like this the imagination of one unskilled in Science wanders to the days of the Patriarchs and after numerous conjecturings returns without any final decision wonder is put to the test but having no proof for its argument a doubt still remains but supposition steps forward and taking the place of Knowl-

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

edge in a few words solves the mysteries of ages Centuries and Eras after including in such a train of reflections for about two hours I descended to the camp where I found my companions had killed a fat Buck Elk during my absence and some of the choicest parts of it were supported on sticks around the fire. My ramble had sharpened my appetite and the delicious savor of roasted meat soon rid my brains of romantic ideas. My comrades were men who never troubled themselves about vain and frivolous notions as they called them with them every country was pretty when there was weather and as to beauty of nature or arts it was all a "humbug" as one of them (an Englishman) often expressed it. "Talk of a fine Country" said he "and beautiful places in these mountains if you want to see a beautiful place" said he "go to Hingland and see the Duke of Rutlands Castle" "Aye" says a son of Erin who sat opposite with an Elk rib in one hand and a butcher knife in the other while the sweat rolling from his face mingled in the channels of greas which ran from the corners of his mouth, "Aye an ye would see a pretty place gow to old Ireland and take a walk in Lord Farnhams domain" that is the place where ye can see "plisure" Arrah an I were upon that same ground this day Id fill my body wid good ould whisky "Yes" said the back woods hunter on my left, as he cast away his bone and smoothed down his long auburn hair with his greasy hand, "Yes you English and Irish are always talking about your fine Countries but if they are so mighty fine" (said he with an oath) "why do so many of you run off and leave them and come to America to get a living" from this the conversation turned to an argument in which the Hunter came off victorious driving his opponents from the field. 7th of Aug. we travelled up the mountain in a South direction and fell into a smooth grassy defile about 200 paces wide which led thro. between two high peaks of rocks. In this place we fell in with a large band of Sheep killed two Ewes packed the best meat on our horses and proceeded down the defile which led us on to the headwaters of "Stinking River" about 50 mls from where it enters the plain We travelled down this stream about 10 mls South and encamped where we saw some signs of Snake Indians who inhabited these wilds. The next morning I arose about day break and went in search of Our horses which had been turned loose to feed during the night I soon found all but 3 and after hunting sometime I discovered a trail made in the dew on the grass where an Indian had been crawling on his belly and soon found where he had caught the horses. Two of us then mounted mules and followed the trail in a west direction up a steep piney mountain until 10 ock when we lost the trail among the rocks and were obliged to give up the pursuit, we then returned to Camp. We then packed our remaining animals and travelled down the stream abot 10 miles 9th We left the main Stream and ascended a small branch in a SSW direction about 8 mls up a steep ascent and encamped in a smooth grassy spot near the head where we concluded to stop the next day and hunt Beaver Early the next morning a few of the "Mountain Snakes" came to our camp consisting of 3 men and 5 or 6 women and children One of them told me he Knew the Indians who had stolen our horses that they lived in the mountains between Stinking river and Clarks fork and said that he would go and try to get them After trading some Beaver and Sheep Skins from them talking smoking etc about an hour I mounted my Mule with 6 traps and my rifle and one of my comrades did the same and we started to hunt Beaver. We left the camp in a SW direction and travelled abot 8 mls over a high craggy mountain then desended into a small circular Valley about a mile in circumference which was completely covered with logs shattered fragments of trees and splinters 4 or 5 ft deep. There had been trees 2 and 3 feet in diameter broken off within 2 ft of the ground and shivered into pieces small enough for a kitchen fireplace This in all probability was the effect

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

of an avalanche About 2 years previous as the tall pines had been completely cleared for the space of 400 yds wide and more than 2 Mls up the steep side of the mountain. Finding no Beaver on the branches of this stream we returned to Camp at Sunset Our Camp Keeper had prepared an elegant supper of Grizzly Bear meat and Mutton nicely stewed and seasoned with pepper and salt which as the mountain phrase goes "is not bad to take" upon an empty Stomach after a hard days riding and climbing over mountains & rocks Aug 11th We returned to the river and travelled up about 4 Mls. Then left it and travelled up a branch in a due west direction about 6 Mls. Killed a couple of fat Doe Elk and encamped. 12th Myself and Allen (which was the name of the backwoodsman) started to hunt the small streams in the mountains to the West of us leaving the Englishman (who was the other trapper) to set traps about the camp we hunted the branches of this stream then crossed the divide to the waters of the Yellowstone Lake where we found the whole country swarming with Elk we killed a fat Buck for supper and encamped for the night the next day Allen shot a Grizzly Bear and bursted the percussion tube of his rifle which obliged us to return to our comrades on the 13th and make another tube. The next day we returned to Stinking river and travelled up about 10 Mls above where we first struck it 15th It rained and snowed all day and we stopped in camp 16th Took a NE course up the Mountain and reached the divide about noon then descended in a direction nearly East and encamped in a valley on the head of Clarks fork This valley is a prairie about 30 Mls in circumference completely surrounded by high mountains The Stream after passing SE falls into a tremendous kanyon just wide enough to admit its waters between rocks from 3 to 500 ft perpendicular height extending about 12 Mls to the great plain 18th we moved up the stream to the head of the valley and encamped. Here the stream is formed of two forks nearly equal in size The right hand fork falls into the left from off a bench upwards of 700 feet high nearly perpendicular. The view of it at the distance of 8 or 10 Mls resembles a bank of snow. 19th travelled up the left branch about 10 Mls NW thro. thick pines and fallen timber then leaving the stream to our right turned into a defile which led us on to the waters of the Yellowstone in about 8 Mls. where we stopped set traps for beaver and staid next day. 21st We travelled down this stream (which runs west thro. a high range of mountains) about 25 Mls 22d Travelled down the stream 15 Mls West and encamped in the Secluded Valley where we staid two days 25th Travelled down the Valley to the Nth and crossed a low spur about 4 Mls Nth and fell on to a stream running into the one we had left he[re] we set traps and staid until the 2d of Septr. 3d Travelled over a high rugged mountain about 20 Mls NW and encamped in a beautiful Valley on a small stream running into the one we had left in the morning 4th Travelled 15 Mls NW over a high piney mountain and encamped on a stream running South into the Yellowstone where we staid and trapped until the 13th We then travelled up the stream NE about 8 Mls 14 Travelled up the Stream 12 Mls in the same direction 15 We crossed the divide of the main range North towards the Big plains. We found the snow belly deep to our horses after leaving the snow we travelled about 8 Mls north and encamped on the head branch of the Cross Creek running North into the Yellowstone about 12 Mls below the Mouth of "25 Yard" river Here a circumstance occurred which furnished the subject for a good joke upon our green Irish camp keeper The Englishman had stopped for the night on the mountain to hunt Sheep whilst we descended to the stream and encamped in a prairie about 2 Mls in circumference. It was the commencement of the rutting season with the Elk when the Bucks frequently utter a loud cry resembling a shrill whistle especially when they see anything of a strange appearance. We had

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

made our beds at night on a little bench between two small dry gullies. The weather was clear and the moon shone brightly about 10 at night when I supposed my comrades fast asleep an Elk blew his shrill whistle within about 100 yards of us. I took my gun slipped silently into the gully and crept towards the place where I heard the sound but I soon found he had been frightened by the horses and ran off up the Mountain. On turning back I met Allen who hearing the Elk had started to get a shot at him in the same manner I had done without speaking a word. We went back to Camp but our Camp keeper was no where to be found. We searched the bushes high and low ever and anon calling for "Conn" but no "Conn" answered at length Allen cruising thro the brush tumbled over a pile of rubbish when lo! Conn was beneath nearly frightened out of his wits "Arrah! an is it you Allen" Said he trembling as if an ague fit was shaking him "but I thought the whole world was full of the spalpeens of savages And where are they gone?" - It was near an hour before we could Satisfy him of his mistake and I dare say his slumbers were by no means soft or smooth during the remainder of the night 16th The Englishman arrived and we travelled down this stream about 10 Mls when we staid the next day as it snowed very hard 18 Travelled down about 20 Mls and on the 19 came to the plains in about 10 Mls Travel where we encamped Here we found the country filled with buffaloe as usual 20th We shaped our Course NE and travelled about 25 Mls across the Spurs of the mountain fell onto the Nth. fork of the "Rosebud" where we staid the next day as it rained 22d We travelled South along the foot of the Mountain 20 Mls keeping among the low Spurs which project into the plain in order to prevent being discovered by any straggling parties of Blackfeet which might chance to be lurking about the country, the plains below us were crowded with Buffaloe which we were careful not to disturb for fear of being discovered We stopped and Set our traps on the small branches of the "Rosebud" until the 11th of Octr. then travelled to Rocky fork and went up it into the Mountain and encamped. On the 13th Myself and Allen started to hunt Mr. Fontanells party leaving our Comrades in the Mountain to await our return We travelled down Rocky fork all day amid crowds of Buffaloe and encamped after dark near the mouth. The next morning we went to "Howells encampment" but found no tree marked neither had the earth been disturbed since we had closed it upon the remains of the unfortunate Howell We now sat down and consulted upon the best course to pursue As Winter was approaching we could not think of stopping in this country where parties of Blackfeet were ranging at all seasons of the year. After a few moments deliberation we came to the conclusion and I wrote a note enclosed it in a Buffaloe horn buried it at the foot of the tree and then marked the tree with my hatchet This being done we mounted our Mules and started back to the mountain Travelled about 6 Mls stopped and killed a cow. As we were lying within about 60 paces of the band which contained about 300 cows Allen made an observation which I shall never forget Said he I have been watching these cows some time and I can see but one that is poor enough to Kill" for said he it is a shame to kill one of those large fat Cows merely for two mens suppers" So saying he leveled his rifle on the poorest and brot. her down. She was a heifer about 3 years old and but an inch of fat on the back. After cooking and eating we proceeded on our journey until sometime after dark when we found ourselves on a sudden in the midst of an immense band of Buffaloe who getting the scent of us ran helter skelter around us in every direction rushing to and fro like the waves of the ocean, approaching sometimes within 10 ft. of us We stood still for we dare not retreat or advance until this storm of brutes took a general course and rolled away with a noise like distant thunder and then we hurried on thro. egyptian darkness a few 100 paces when we

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

found a bunch of willows where we concluded to stop for the night rather than risk our lives any further among such whirlwinds of beef 15 We reached the Camp about 10 oclck AM. We staid on Rocky fork and its branches trapping until the 27th of Octr. when we concluded to go to a small fork running into Wind river on the east side above the upper Big horn mountain and there pass the winter, unless we should hear from the main party 28th we travelled to Clarks fork and the next day to Stinking river ESE direction 30th we crossed Stinking and travelled in the same direction over a broken barren tract of country about 25 Mls whilst the rain poured all day in torrents. About sun an hour high we stopped and the weather cleared up We encamped for the night in a small ravine where was some watter standing in a puddle but no wood but a lone green Cottonwood tree which had supported a Bald Eagles nest probably more than half a century 31st We travelled over ground similar to that of the day before shaping our course more Easterly until night Novr. 1st After travelling about 10 Mls we reached Bighorn river and stopped and commenced setting traps. The river at this place is bordered with heavy Cottonwood timber with little or no under brush beneath. Towards night a party of Crow Indians came to us on foot armed as if going to war after smoking and eating they told us they were on their way to the Snaks to Steal horses and intended to stay all night with us and leave the next morning. They told us the village to which they belonged was nearly a days travel below on the river and that "Long hair's" village was on Wind river above the mountain but could give us no information of Mr. Fontanell or his party They were very insolent and saucy saying that we had no right in their country and intimat-ed they could take everything from us if they wished. The next morning after eating breakfast they said if we would give them some tobacco and ammunition they would leave us so we divided our little stock with them They then persisted in having all and when we refused telling them we could not spare it one of them seized the sack which contained it while another grasped the Englishmans rifle we immediately wrenched them out of their hands and told them if they got more they should fight for it. During the Scuffle they had all presented their arms but when we gained possession of the rifle and the sack they put down their arms and told us with an envious Savage laugh they were only joking but we were too well acquainted with the Crows to relish such capers as mere jokes and wished to get out of their power the easiest way possible as their Villages were on either side of us. We then packed up our horses and forded the river and travelled up about 6 Mls and encamped at the same time the Indians were mounted on our pack horses and riding animals [trailing] us and the remainder on foot except one who returned towards the Village crying. After we had stopped they made a sort of Shelter as it looked likely for rain and at night ordered us to go into it and sleep but we bluntly refused and removed our baggage about 30 paces from them. Sitting down reclining against it one of them had taken the only Blanket I possessed off my riding Saddle and put an old worn out coat in its place with a hint that exchanging was not robbing They laid down in their shelter and continued to sing their noisy and uncouth war songs until near midnight when they ceased and all became Silent The night was dark with a sprinkling rain we lay without hearing any disturbance until daybreak when we began to look around but could find neither Indians or horses tho. we soon found their trail going down the river we then set about burning our saddles robes etc and cacheing our Beaver in the ground intending after making a few deposits and bon fires to Shoulder our rifles and travel to Fort William at the mouth of Laramays fork of the Platte Our Saddles Epishemores ropes etc were scarcely consumed when we saw 5 or 6 Indians on horseback coming towards us at full gallop and

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

presently 15 or 20 more appeared following them They rode up alighted from their horses and asked for tobacco to smoke we gave them some they formed a circle and sat down I was not acquainted with any of them except the Chief who was called the "Little Soldier" he spoke to me in the Snake language and said he wished me to smoke with them but the manner in which they had formed the ring and placed their war weapons excited Suspicion and Allen immediately declined as he had lived with the Crows two winters he said he knew that thieving and treachery were two of the greatest virtues the Nation could boast of and we quickly resolved to leave them at all hazards So we shouldered our rifles and those who had blankets took them and began to travel The Indians looked at us with pretended astonishment and asked what was the matter. Allen told them that he was aware that they wanted to rob us and were laying a plan to do it with out danger to themselves but said he "if you follow or molest us we will besmear the ground with blood and guts of Crow Indians' and do not speak to me more" said he for I despise the odious jargon of your Nation So saying he wheeled around and we marched away in a South direction towards the mountain. We had not gone far before two of them came after us we stopped and turned around when one of them stopped within 300 paces of us while the other (who was the chief) advanced slowly unarmed When he came up he addressed me in the Snake language for knowing the disposition of Allen he did not wish to trifle with his own life so much as to begin a conversation with him in his own language taking me by the hand as he spoke he said my friends you are very foolish you do not know how bad my heart feels to think you have been robbed by men belonging to my village but they are not men they are Dogs who took your animals. The first I knew of your being in this country about midnight a young man came to the village crying and told me of their intention. I immediately mounted my horse and hastened to your assistance, but arrived too late but if you will go with me I will get your animals and give you some Saddles and robes and fit you out as well as I can you can then stay with me until the Blanket Chief comes (the name they gave Mr Bridger) I interpreted what he had said to my comrades, but they said tell him we will not go to the Crow Village we will not trust our lives among them. When I told him this he replied I am very sorry, what shall I say to the Blanket Chief? how can I hold up my head when I shall meet him? and what shall I do with the things you have left behind? I told him to give them to give them to the Blanket Chief he then turned and left us slowly and sadly but I am well aware that a Crow Indian can express great sorrow for me and at the same time be laying a plan to rob me or secretly take my life. After he had left us we travelled on toward the Mountain about 10 Mls. stopped killed a Cow and eat supper and then travelled until about Midnight when it being dark and cloudy we stopped and kindled a fire with Sage and weeds which we gathered about us and sat down to wait for daylight. Sleep was far from us our minds were so absorbed in the reflections on the past that few were the words that passed among us during the night A Short time after we stopped it commenced snowing very fast and we were obliged to hover over our little fire to keep it from being extinguished. The day at length appeared and we proceeded on our journey toward the mountain while it still continued to snow as we began to ascend the Mountain the snow grew deeper and about noon was up to our knees. We travelled on until Sun about an hour high and stopped at some scrubby cedars and willows which grew around a Spring. After scraping away the snow we built a fire broke some cedar boughs spread them on the ground and laid down weary and hungry but we had meat nough with us for supper. Three of us Myself Allen and Greenberry had been more or less inured to the hardships of a hunters life but our camp keeper John Conn

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

could not relish the manner in which he was treated in a country that boasted so much its freedom and independence and often wished himself back on the Shamrock Shore. Myself and Allen had one blanket between us the others had a blanket each. The wind blew cold and the snow drifted along the brow of the mountain around us when we arose in the morning our fire had gone out the snow was 3 inches deep on our covering and it still kept snowing. Allen killed a black tailed Deer close by and we concluded to stop all day at this place Novr 6th Sun rose clear and we started up the mountain keeping on the ridges where the wind had driven off the snow and arrived at the top about 10 oclk a.m. From this elevation we could see the Wind river plains which were dry and dusty whilst we were in snow up to the Middle. We killed some sheep which were in large numbers about us Cooked some of the best meat over a slow fire packed it on our backs and proceeded down the mountain South and slept on bare ground that night Novr. 7th We arose and found ourselves much refreshed by our nights rest. We travelled nearly E all day ascending a gradual smooth slope of country which lies between Wind and Powder Rivers and stopped at night on the divide where we found the snow about 2 inches deep and hard and the weather cold and windy whilst not a stick of wood or a drop of water were to be found within 10 Mls of us. We found a place washed out by the water in the Spring of the year as the only shelter we could find from the wind and digging down the dry earth scattered some branches of Sage upon it to lie upon. I then went in search of rock in order to heat it and melt snow in my hat but I could not find so much as a pebble so we kindled a little fire of sage and sat down with a piece of Mutton in one hand and a piece of snow in the other eating meat and snow in this manner made out our suppers and laid down to shake tremble and suffer with the cold till day light when we started and travelled as fast as our wearied limbs would permit in the same direction we had travelled the day before descending a gradual slope towards the head of powder river until near night when finding some water standing in a puddle with large quantities of dry sage about it we killed a Bull near by taking his skin for a bed and some of the best meat for supper passed the night very comfortable We were now in sight of the red Buttes on the river Platte which appeared about 40 ms distant SE The next morning we found the weather foggy with sleet and snow falling I tried to persuade my comrades to stop until it should clear away urging the probability of our steering a wrong course as we could not see more than 200 paces but they concluded we could travel by the wind and after making several objections to travelling by Such an uncertain guide to no purpose I gave up the argument and we started and travelled about ESE for 3 hours as we supposed then stopped a short time and built a fire of Sage while it still continued to snow and rain alternately. and seeing no signs of the weather clearing we started again and went on till near Night when the Sun coming out we found that instead of travelling ESE our course had been NNE and we were as far from the Platte as we were in the Morning with the Country around us very broken intersected with deep ravines and gullies We saw some Bulls 3 or 4 MIs ahead and Started for them After the Sun had set it clouded up and began to rain. We reached the Bulls about an hour after dark Allen crawled close to them shot and killed one took off the skin and some of the meat whilst myself and the others were groping around in the dark hunting a few bits of Sage and weeds to make a fire and after repeated unsuccessful exertions we at last kindled a blaze. We had plenty of water under over and all around us but could not find a stick for fuel bigger than a mans thumb. We sat down round the fire with each holding a piece of beef over it on a stick with one hand while the other was employed in keeping up the blaze by feeding it with wet sage and

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

weeds until the meat was warmed thro. when it was devoured with an observation that "Bull Meat was dry eating when cooked too much." After supper (if I may be allowed to disgrace the term by applying it to such a Wolfish feast) we spread the Bull skin down in the mud in the dryest place we could find and laid down upon it. Our fire was immediately put out by the rain and all was Egyptian darkness. We lay tolerably comfortable whilst the skin retained its animal warmth and remained above the surface but the mud being soft the weight of our bodies sunk it by degrees below the water level which ran under us on the skin but we concluded it was best to lie still and keep the water warm that was about us for if we stirred we let in the cold water and if we removed our bed we were more likely to find a worse instead of a better place as it rained very hard all night. At daylight we arose bid adieu to our uncomfortable lodgings and left as fast as our legs would carry us thro. the mud and water and after travelling about 12 Mls South course we stopped killed a bull and took breakfast. After eating we travelled south until sunset The weather was clear and cold but we found plenty of dry sage to make a fire and dry weeds for a bed 11th the ground was frozen hard in the morning and the winds blew cold from the North. We travelled till about noon when we fell in with large bands of Buffalo and seeing the red Butes about 5 or 6 ms ahead we killed two fat cows and took as much of the Meat as we could conveniently carry and travelled to the Platte where we arrived about the middle of the afternoon weary and fatigued. Here we had plenty of wood water meat and dry grass to sleep on, and taking everything into consideration we thought ourselves comfortably situated - comfortably I say for mountaineers not for those who never repose on anything but a bed of down or sit or recline on anything harder than Silken cushions for such would spurn at the idea of a Hunter's talking about comfort and happiness but experience is the best Teacher hunger good Sauce and I really think to be acquainted with misery contributes to the enjoyment of happiness and to know ones self greatly facilitates the Knowledge of Mankind - One thing I often console myself with and that is the earth will lie as hard upon the Monarch as it will on a Hunter and I have no assurance that it will lie upon me at all, my bones may in a few years or perhaps days be bleaching on the plains in these regions like many of my occupation without a friend to turn even a turf upon them after a hungry wolf has finished his feast. 12th The sun rose clear and warm and we found ourselves much refreshed by our nights rest. We travelled down the river about 5 Mls waded across it and stopped the remainder of the day I had a severe attack of Rheumatism in my knees and ankles but this was no place to be sick so we jogged along over the Black hills having plenty of wood water and fresh Buffalo meat every night until the 18th when we reached fort William. When I entered this Fort I was met by two of my old messmates who invited me to their apartments. I now felt myself at home as Mr. Fontanell was one of the chief proprietors of the establishment and who had been partly and I may say wholly the cause of our misfortunes at night I lay down but the pains in my legs and feet drove sleep from me The next day I walked round the Fort as well as I could in order to get my joints limber. And on the 3d day after our arrival I felt quite recovered and at breakfast I asked my messmates where the man was who had charge of the Fort they replied in his house pointing across the square I inquired if he was sick for I had not seen him out [They] said he was unwell but not so as to confine him to his rooms I observed I must go and see him as I discover he was not coming to see me so saying myself and Allen started across the square and met him on his way from the Storehouse to his dwelling room. we bid him "good morning" which he coldly returned and was on the point of turning carelessly away when we told him we would like to get

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

some robes for bedding likewise a Shirt or two and some other nessary articles well said he as for Blankets shirts or coats I have none and Mr Fontanell has left no word when there will be any come up. If that is the case I replied you can let us have some Buffaloe robes and Epishemores yes said he I believe I can let you have an Epishemore or two. here John go up into yonder bastion and show these men those Epishemores that were put up there some time ago I dont think theres any there replied John but some old ones and them the rats have cut all to pieces - Oh I guess you can find some there that will do” he replied turning around and swinging a key on his thumb and forefinger as the insignia of his dignified station walked with a stiff stride to his apartments whilst we followed the Major Domo of this elevated quadruped to the bastion where I took the best Epishemore I could find which was composed of 9 pieces of Buffaloe skin sewed together but necessity compelled me to take it knowing at the same time there was more than 500 new robes in the warehouse which did not cost a pint of whisky each. But they were for people in the U S and not for trappers. This was the 21st day of Novr 1837 I never shall forget the time place nor circumstance but shall always pity the being who held the Imperial sway over a few sticks of wood with 5 or 6 men to guard them it was not his fault for how should he depart from the way in which he had been brought up? and what is more trappers have no right to meet with bad luck for it is nothing more or less than the result of bad management. This is the litteral reasoning of band box and counter hopping Philosophers consoling the unfortunate by enumerating and multiplying their faults which are always the occasions of their misfortunes and so clearly to be seen after the event has occurred. I would rather at any time take an emetic than to be compelled to listen to the advice of such predicting and [?] Counsellors. If I must be told of something I already know let it be that I have learned another lesson by experience and then give me advice for the future. I have often derived a good deal of information from a person who kept silent in the crowd - and it is well known that a certain class of individuals display the most wisdom when they say the least! On the 4th day after our arrival a large Sioux Indian arrayed in the costume of the whites with a Sword suspended by his side entered the lodging where I staid and looked around on the whites for some time without Speaking a word at length he gave me a signal to follow him and conducted me outside of the Fort to his lodge which I found had been prepared for the reception of a stranger. The Epishemores and robes had been arranged in the back part of the lodge I was invited to sit by my mute conductor who being the proprietor seated himself on my right The big pipe went round with the usual ceremonies and the necessary forms of Indian etiquette being complied with mine host commenced asking questions by signs without moving his lips and having acquired the knowledge of conversation by signs without uttering a word. It is impossible for a person not acquainted with the Customs of Indians to form a correct idea in which [way] a continuous conversation is held by hours between two individuals who cannot understand each others language but frequent practice renders it faultless and I have often seen two Americans conversing by signs by way of practice, but to return to my story my inquisitive host gathered in the course of an hour the minute details of my defeat by the Crows with my tedious journey to the Fort and in return gave me a brief history of his life and inter- course with the Whites since he had first seen them minutely describing the battles he had been in with the Crows the places where they were fought and their results particularly the rank of the Killed and wounded on both sides. After an hours dumb conversation a dish of roasted Buffaloe tongues was set before me accompanied by a large cake made of dried meat and fruit pounded together mixed up with

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Buffaloe marrow. It is considered an insult by an Indian for a Stranger whether White man or Indian to return any part of the food which is set before him to eat: If there is more than he wishes to eat at one time he must to avoid giving offense take the remainder with him when he leaves the lodge It is their general custom to set the Vituals their lodge affords before a stranger to eat. On the 22d Novr. a small trapping party arrived under the direction of Mr Thomas Biggs who intended to remain in the vicinity of the Fort until he receives further orders from Mr. Fontanell. On alighting from his horse he directed his course to our lodging Well boys said he on entering the door "The Crows found you did they?" and could not let you go without bestowing some of their National favors upon you?" Yes I observed and we have not mended the matter much by coming to this place and related what had passed between me and the Superintendent Well said he after I had done That is too ridiculous I thought before that Mr.----- had a soul but I am glad I have found you here I will see that you get such articles as you want if they can be had at this place and you must go with me. I shall go up about 15 Mls on the Plate and encamp - I have 200 lbs of lead and powder to shoot it and about 30 of the Company's horses which you well know were left after more than 200 were chosen out of the band to go into the Blackfoot country and I have not one which has not from one to three of his legs standing awry but such as they are you are welcome to them or anything there is in the Camp even to the half chew of tobacco. Nearly all of my Men are French and but little company for me and I want to see you slay the fat Cows and eat." So saying he turned and walked to the appartments of his wisdom, the overseer. Presently one of the Interpreters came and told us that Mr.----- wished us to come and get our things Oh said Allen he has got "things" has he? and has found out the Company is owing of us money? he is afraid of getting turned out of employment by his superior. Well let us go and get some of his things and yet inform Mr. Fontanell of his conduct" After getting our things we went to Mr. Bigg's camp as soon as possible. Then I felt a little more independent The rheumatism had left me and I felt as tho. I had rather walk than ride a poor horse. This section of Country which is called the "black hills" has always been celebrated for the game with which it abounds I passed most of my time hunting Black Tailed deer among the hills on foot, which has always been my favorite sport One day as myself and one of my fellow hunters were travelling thro. the hills coming toward us at full speed. [?] We stopped and they passed within 80 yds of us without making a halt we Shot the charges that were in our rifles loaded and Shot 2 more each before they had all passed by. As the hindmost were passing I could see the foremost passing over a ridge covered with snow more than 3 miles distant apparently at the same rate they had passed by us. They made a trail about 30 paces wide and went in as compact a body as they could consistently They consisted mostly of females. 20th Decr Mr Fontanell arrived at the Camp with 15 Men bringing the furs he had collected during the hunt for the purpose of depositing them at the Fort. he informed us he had left the main party on Powder river and expressed his sorrow that he had been the cause of our Misfortunes he had mistaken the day agreed on to meet at Clarks fork and sent two men to the place on the 18th of Novr. who found the Note I had left. But said he I have met with that Village of Crows and recovered all your property that could be identified. I told them when I heard the circumstance that if they did not produce your property forth with their heads would pay for it within 24 hours. On hearing this they immediately gave up as they repeatedly affirmed all except the Beaver skins which they had traded to a Portugese by the name of Antonio Montaro who had built some log cabins on Powder River for the purpose of trading with the Crows. I immediately

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

continued he went to the Cabins and asked Mr. Montaro what right he had to trade Beaver skins from Indians with white mens names marked upon them knowing them to be stolen or taken by force from the Whites?" and asked him to deliver them to me which he refused to do. I then ordered him to give me the key of his warehouse which he reluctantly did I then ordered my clerk to go in and take all the Beaver skins he could find with your names marked upon them and have them carried to my camp which was done without further ceremony. Here then was the sum and substance of the sorrows expressed by the Crow Chief whose feelings were so much hurt to think that we were robbed by men or dogs belonging to his village yet I have no doubt if we had gone to the Village with him we would have received our things and fared better than we did by the course we persued but we were like all Mortals of the present day destitute of foreknowledge On the 28th of Jany the party started for Powder river with supplies for the Main Camp leaving Mr. Fontanell at the Fort. The weather being cold we were compelled to travel on foot most of the time to keep ourselves from freezing. The snow was about 10 inches deep generally but driftet very much in many places. On the 7th of Feby we reached the encampment all in good health fine spirits and with full stomachs Here we found the Camp living on the fat of the land The bottoms along Powder river were crowded with Buffaloe insomuch that it was difficult keeping them from among the horses who were fed upon Sweet Cottonwood bark as the buffaloe had consumed everything in the shape of grass along the river We passed the remainder of the winter very agreeably until 25th of March when the winter began to break the Buffaloe to leave the stream and scatter among the hills and the trappers to prepare for the Spring hunt. After making the usual arrangements we started on the 29th down Powder river making short marches as our animals were very poor On the 3d of April we left the river and travelled accross the country which was generally comprised of rolling hills in a North Direction until the 18th when we reached the Little horn river and travelled down it to the forks This river empties into the Big horn about 40 Mls below the lower Mountain. April 21st we left the forks and travelled nearly west over a broken and uneven country about 18 Mls and encamped on a small spring branch After we had encamped the Trappers made preparations for starting the next day to hunt Beaver as we had set but few traps since we left winter quarters for the Crows had destroyed nearly all the Beaver in the part of country thro. which we had been travelling. Early next morning about 30 of us were armed equipped and mounted as circumstances required. A Trappers equipments in such cases is generally one Animal upon which is placed one or two Epishemores a riding Saddle and bridle a sack containing six Beaver traps a blanket with an extra pair of Mocasins his powder horn and bullet pouch with a belt to which is attached a butcher Knife a small wooden box containing bait for Beaver a Tobacco sack with a pipe and implements for making fire with sometimes a hatchet fastened to the Pommel of his saddle his personal dress is a flannel or cotton shirt (if he is fortunate enough to obtain one, if not Antelope skin answers the purpose of over and under shirt) a pair of leather breeches with Blanket or smoked Buffaloe skin, leggings, a coat made of Blanket or Buffaloe robe a hat or Cap of wool, Buffaloe or Otter skin his hose are pieces of Blanket lapped round his feet which are covered with a pair of Moccassins made of Dressed Deer Elk or Buffaloe skins with his long hair falling loosely over his shoulders complets his uniform. He then mounts and places his rifle before him on his Saddle. Such was the dress equipage of the party my- self included now ready to start. After getting the necessary information from Mr. Bridger concerning the route he intended to take with the Camp we all started in gallop in a West direction and

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

travelled to the Big horn and there commenced separating by two's and three's in different directions I crossed the river with the largest party still keeping a west course most of the time in a gallop until sun about an hour high at night when we Killed a Bull and each taking some of the meat for supper proceeded on our journey till Sunset when I found myself with only one Companion All had turned to the right or left without once hinting their intentions for it was not good policy for a Trapper to let too many know where he intends to set his traps particularly if his horse is not so fast as those of his companions. I am sure my remaining companion who was a Canadian Frenchman knew not where I intended to set until I stopped my horse at a Beaver dam between sunset and dark We set three traps each and went down the Stream 1/2 a Mile and encamped Sometime after dark. This day I travelled about 40 Mls with a poor horse over a rough and broken country intersected with deep ravines The next morning we set the remainder of our traps and started down the stream about a Mile where we found two more trappers we encamped with them hobbled our horses and turned them out to feed and before night our number had increased to 12 Men. The Camp came to us on the 26th of April and found us nearly all together we raised our traps and moved on with them to the west Fork of Priors River where we arrived on the 29th The next morning we made another start as formerly. My intentions were to set my traps on Rocky fork which we reached about 3 oclk P.M. our party having diminished to three men beside myself. In the meanwhile it began to rain and we Stopped to approach a band of Buffaloe and as myself and one of My comrades (a Canadian) were walking along half bent near some bushes secreting ourselves from the Buffaloe a large Grizzly Bear who probably had been awakened from his slum- bers by our approach sprang upon the Canadian who was 5 or 6 feet before me and placing one forepaw upon his head and the other on his left shoulder pushed him one side about 12 ft. with as little ceremony as if he had been a cat still keeping a direct course as tho. nothing had happened. I called to the Cannadian and soon found the fright exceeded the wound as he had received no injury except what this impudent stranger had done by tearing his coat but it was hard telling which was the most frightened the man or the Bear. We reached Rocky fork about Sunset and going along the edge of the timber saw another Bear lying with a Buffaloe Calf lying between his forepaws which he had already killed while the Mother was standing about 20 paces distant Moaning very pitifully for the loss of her young The bear on seeing us dropped the calf & took to his heels into the brush. The next day we travelled up Rocky fork till about 11 ock when I discovered there were trappers ahead of me I then altered my course leaving the stream at right Angles in a Westerly direction and travelled accross the Country paralell with the Mountain in company with a Cannadian for about 10 Mls set my traps on a stream called Bodairs fork (named after a Cannadian who was killed by the Blackfeet in 1836) after setting our traps travelled down the stream, encamped and before night our party consisted of 15 men who had set their traps and come to this place to spend the night without any previous arrangement whatever. But an old trapper can form some idea where his companions will encamp tho. they seldom tell before their traps are set. I stopped at this place until the 6th of May when learning that the Camp had arrived on Rocky fork below I left my traps setting and went to it to get a fresh horse On the 7th the Camp moved near to where my traps were set and the next day moved on to the right hand fork of "Rosebud" 9th I raised my traps and overtook them at the junction of the three forks of Rosebud. The next day I started with two more to trap the head streams of this river we travelled up the middle fork to the mountain where we found signs of 4 or 5 trappers being there

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

before us and to follow a fresh horse track in trapping time is neither wise nor profitable with such a number of trappers as our Camp contained on the 14th we started to the Camp which we found on the Yellowstone at the mouth of the Cross Creeks The next day the Camp crossed the Yellow Stone and moved up the Nth side to the Mouth of "25 yard river" There I stopped with the Camp till the 19th when I started again with 3 others Travelled up 25 yard river about 25 Mls in a North direction then left it and took over a low point of Mountain in a West direction and fell on to a branch of the Same river which forms a half circle from the north point of the mountain from where we first struck the river We found this part of the country had been recently trapped by the Blackfeet

The next morning May 20th 2 of my comrades returned to the Camp as it rained very hard. The other asked me which way I was going I replied to hunt Beaver and started off as I spoke he mounted his horse and followed me without further ceremony We left the stream and took up the mountain in a SW direction after travelling about 6 Mls. we fell into a defile running thro. the Mountains on to Cherry river a branch of the Gallatin. We travelled down this branch until near night and encamped The next day continued down the stream and reached the plains about 3 oclk PM within about 25 Mls. of the junction of the 3 forks of Missouri. We here left the stream we had descended and took up a small right hand fork of it in an East direction where we remained until the Camp arrived on the 25th. 27th We moved with the Camp to the Gallatin Fork the next day we crossed it with some difficulty but without accident except the loss of 3 Rifles the current ran so swift that several horses lost their footing and were washed down the stream which compelled their riders to abandon both horses and guns and swim ashore May 28th Travelled up this stream to the mountain about 15 Mls. and encamped. This Valley is the largest in the Rocky Mountains except the valley of the Snake River but far smoother than the latter and more fertile. May 30th Travelled up the Gallatin fork about 10 Mls into the mountain and encamped 31st We travelled up a small branch in a west direction about 25 Mls. June 1st We crossed the mountain in the same direction and camped in the Valley on the Madison fork which after leaving the valley runs thro. deep rocky kanyon into the plains below June 2 We crossed this fork and travelled up on the West side about 15 Mls on a trail made by a village of Blackfeet which had passed up 3 or 4 days previous. They were to all appearances occasionally dying of the Small Pox which has made terrible havoc among the Blackfeet during the last winter. To day we passed an Indian lodge standing in the prairie near the river which contained 9 dead bodies 3d Continued up the stream on their trail until 10 oclk a.m. when Mr. Bridger having Charge of the Camp tried to avoid them by taking into the mountain but the Majority of the men remonstrated so hard against trying to avoid a Village of Blackfeet which did not contain more than 3 times our numbers that he altered his course and turned back towards the Madison and encamped about two Ms from the river on a small spring branch This branch runs thro a ridge in a narrow passage in the rocks a hundred feet perpendicular on both sides about a quarter of a Ml. from the Madison. The next morning as we were passing over the ridge around this place we discovered the Village about 3 Mls above us on the river We immediately drove into this Kanyon with the Camp and prepared for battle Our leader was no military commander therefore no orders were given after the company property was secured about 15 men mounted horses and started for the Village in order to commence a skirmish. The Village was situated on the West bank of the river about 30 rods behind it arose a bench of land 100 ft high running parrallel with the river and gradually ascending to the west-

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

ward until it terminated in a high range of mountains about 2 Mls distant. While our men were approaching the Village I took a telescope and ascended the highest point of rock which overhung the camp to view the manoeuver. They rode within a short distance of the edge of the bench, then dismounted and crept to the edge and opened a fire on the Village which was the first the Indians knew of our being in the country. They fired 3 or 4 rounds each before the Indians had time to mount their horses and ascend the bluff one hundred and fifty yards above them. The whites then mounted their horses and retreated towards the Camp before about 5 times their numbers a running fire was kept up on both sides until our men reached the Camp when the Indians took possession of an elevated point formed of broken rocks about 300 paces distant on the South side of the Camp from which they kept shooting at intervals for about hours without doing any damage when one of them called to us in the flathead tongue and said that we were not men but women and had better dress ourselves as such for we had bantered them to fight and then crept into the rocks like women. An Old Iroquois trapper who had been an experienced warrior trained on the Shores of Lake Superior understanding this harangue turned to the Whites about him and made a speech in imperfect English nearly as follows My friend you see dat Ingun talk? He not talk good he talk berry bad He say you me all same like squaw, dat no good, spose you go wid me I make him no talk dat way” On saying this he stripped himself entirely naked throwing his powder horn and bullet pouch over his right shoulder and taking his rifle in his hand began to dance and utter the shrill war cry of his Nation. 20 of us who stood around and near him cheered the sound which had been the death warrant of so many whites during the old French war He started and we followed amid a shower of balls: the distance as I said before was about 300 yards up a smooth and gradual ascent to the rocks where the Blackfeet had secreted themselves to the number of 150. The object of our leader was to make an open charge and drive them from their position which we effected without loss under an incessant storm of fusee balls. When we reached the rocks we stopped to breath about half a minute not having as yet discharged a single gun. We then mounted over the piles of granite and attacked them muzzle to muzzle Altho 7 or 8 times our number they retreated from rock to rock like hunted rats among the ruins of an old building whilst we followed close at their heels loading and shooting until we drove them entirely into the plain where their horses were tied. They carried off their dead with the exception of two and threw them into the river They then placed their wounded on horses and started slowly towards their village with a mournful cry We then packed our animals and followed them with the Camp within a quarter of a Mile of their village where we stopped for the night. During the night they moved the Village up about 3 Mls further. Next morning we ascended the bench intending to pass with the camp by the Village we soon found however that they had formed a line of mounted warriors from the river to the thick pines which grew on the mountain about 30 of us concluded to try the bravery of those cavaliers on the field leaving the remainder of the camp to bring up the rear we rode into a thicket under cover of the Camp out of their sight and turned into a deep ravine which led us undiscovered within 20 or 30 paces of their line They in the meantime were watching the motions of the Camp intending to attack it while crossing this ravine we approached nearly to the top of the bank where we concluded to rest our horses a moment and then Charge their line in front near the left wing we were close enough to hear them talking as they pranced back and forward on the bench above us after tightening our girths and examining our arms we put each of us 4 or 5 bullets in our mouths and mounted without noise

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

- Our leader (the same old Iroquois) sallied forth with a horrid yell and we followed the Indians were so much surprised with such a sudden attack that they made no resistance whatever but wheeled and took toward the village as fast as their horses could carry them whilst we pursued close at their heels until within about 300 yards of their lodges where we made a halt and stopped until the Camp had passed then rode quietly away to our own party. After leaving them we travelled up the Madison about 8 Mls and encamped near the place where we had fought the Blackfeet in Sept. 1835. The Madison after leaving the mountains runs westerly to this place forms a curve and turning east of north in which direction it runs to the junction of the three forks. The next day (June 6th) we left the Madison and travelled in a South [direction over an] undulating plain about 15 Mls and encamped at Henry's Lake. This lake is about 30 Mls in circumference surrounded by forests of pine except on the SE side where there is a small prairie about one Mile wide and two long terminating almost to a point to the two extremities. Here we discovered another village of Blackfeet of about 15 lodges who were encamped on our route at the SE side of the Lake. The next morning we concluded to move camp to the village and smite it without leaving one to tell their fate - but when within about 2 miles of the village we met six of them coming to us unarmed who invited us in the most humble and submissive manner to their village to smoke and trade. This proceeding conquered the bravest in our camp. For we were ashamed to think of fighting a few poor Indians nearly dwindled to skeletons by the small Pox and approaching us without arms. We stopped however and traded with them for sometime and then started on our journey encamping at night in the edge of the pine woods June 8th We commenced our March thro. the pine woods by the lower track which runs South nearly parallel with the course of Henry's fork and on the 11th we emerged from the pine woods into the plains of Snake river where we stopped and trapped until the 14th From thence we went to Pierre's hole where we found a party of 10 Trappers who had left the Camp at the mouth of 25 yard river they had been defeated by the Blackfeet lost most of their horses and one man was wounded in the thigh by a fusee ball. June 18th we left Pierre's hole and crossed the mountain to Jackson's big hole. The next day myself and another trapper left the Camp crossed Lewis fork and travelled down the valley to the south end The next day we travelled in a SW direction over high and rugged spurs of Mountain and encamped on a small stream running into Gray's river which empties into Lewis fork above the mouth of Salt river 21st Travelled down the stream to Gray's river and set Traps We remained hunting the small streams which run into this river until the 28 of June then crossed the mountains in a SE direction and fell on to a stream running into Green River about 35 miles below the mouth of horse creek Called Lebares fork July 1st we travelled down this stream to the plains and steered our course towards "horse creek" where we expected to find the Rendezvous. The next day we arrived at the place but instead of finding the Camp we found a large band of buffaloe near the appointed place of meeting. We rode up to an old log building which was formerly used as a store house during the Rendezvous where I discovered a piece of paper fastened upon the wall which informed me that we should find the Whites at the forks of Wind river. This was unwelcome news to us as our animals were very much jaded. We then went down Green river crossed and encamped for the night The next day we travelled to Little Sandy 3d day - we camped on the point of the mountain on a branch of Sweetwater 4th We encamped at the Oil Spring on Po po azia and the next day we arrived at Camp. There we found Mr Dripps from St Louis with 20 horse carts loaded with Supplies and again met Capt. Stewart likewise several

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Missionaries with their families on their way to the Columbia river On the 8th Mr. F. Ermatinger arrived with a small party from the Columbia accompanied by the Rev. Jason Lee who was on his way to the U S On the 20th of July the meeting broke up and the parties again dispersed for the fall hunt. I started with about 30 trappers up Wind river expecting the Camp to follow in a few days During our Stay at the Rendezvous it was rumored among the men that the Company intended to bring no more supplies to the Rocky Mountains and discontinue all further operations. This caused great deal of discontent among the Trappers and numbers left the party 21st We travelled up Wind river about 30 Mls and encamped 22d Continued up the river till noon then left it to our right travelled over a high ridge covered with pines in a west direction about 15 Mls and fell on to the Gros vent fork Next day we travelled about 20 Mls down the Gros vent fork. 24th Myself and another crossed the Mountain in a NW direction fell on to a stream running into Lewis fork about 10 Mls below Jacksons lake, here we staid and trapped until the 29th Then we started back to the Gros vent fork where we found the Camp consisting of about 60 men under the direction of Mr. Dripps James Bridger Pilot.

The next day the Camp followed down the Grosvent fork to Jacksons hole In the meantime myself and Comrade returned to our traps which we raised and took over the Mountain in a SW direction and overtook the Camp on Lewis fork. The whole company were starving fortunately I had killed a Deer in crossing the Mountain which made supper for the whole camp Aug 1st We crossed Lewis fork and encamped and staid the next day 4th Camp crossed the Mountain to Pierres hole and the day following I started with my former comrade to hunt beaver on the streams which run from the Tetons. about the middle of the afternoon as we were winding down a steep declivity which overhung a precipice of rocks nearly 200 ft perpendicular my horse slipped fell headlong down and was dashed to pieces 6th I returned to camp in Pierre's valley. On the next day made another start with the same Comrade. After leaving Camp we travelled in a SW direction across the valley then took over low hills covered with pines until sun about an hour high when we stopped and set our traps. On the 8th we travelled down the stream about 3 Mls and then ascended a left hand branch in a NE direction After travelling about 10 Mls we fell into a Valley surrounded by high mountains except on the S.W. Side This Valley is about 4 Mls long and one wide whilst the huge piles of rocks reaching above the clouds seemed almost to overhang the place on the North and East sides. We stopped here on the 9th and on the 10th returned to hunt the Camp when leaving the Valley we took up the valley in a west direction and from thence travelled a NW course thro. dense forests of pine about 15 Mls. when we struck the trail of the Camp going North we followed the track which still led us thro. the forest about 12 Mls when we came to a prairie about 5 Mls in circumference in which the Camp had stopped the night previous We stopped here a few minutes then resumed our journey on the trail and after winding about among the fallen trees and rocks about 6 Mls we fell on to the middle branch of Henrys fork which is called by hunters "The falling fork" from the numerous Cascades it forms whilst meandering thro. the forest previous to its junction with the main river. At the place where we struck the fork is one of the most beautiful cascades I ever saw The stream is about 60 yds wide and falls over the rock in a straight line about 30 ft perpendicular It is very deep and still above where it breaks and gradually shallows to the depth of 3 ft on the brink it is also very deep below and almost dead except the motion caused by the waters falling into the deep pond like stream and boiling from the bottom rolls off into small ripples and dies away into a calm smooth surface. We ascended

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

this stream passing several beautiful cascades for about 12 Mls when the trail led us into a prairie seven or 8 miles in circumference in which we found the Camp just as the Sun was sitting.

The next morning Aug. 11th we bid adieu to the camp and started on the back track to trap the stream we had left the day previous We however took a nearer route and reached the little valley where we staid until the 25th This day we had a tremendous thunder storm which broke in peals against the towering rocks above us with such dreadful clashing that it seemed as if they would have been torn from their foundations and hurled into the Valley upon our heads Such storms are very frequent about these Mountains and often pass over without rain 27th We left the Valley and ascended the mountain S.W. and travelled about 15 Mls to a branch of Henry's fork. Here we staid until the 7th of Septr. and then started down Henry's fork SW. After travelling about 12 Mls we left the pines and travelled parrallele with the stream over rolling ridges among scattered groves of quaking aspens when we arrived at the edge of the plains in travelling about 8 Mls. Here we discovered a trail made by a war party of Blackfeet evidently the night previous. We then took a South course and travelled our horses in a trot all day and encamped an hour after dark on Lewis fork about 15 miles above the junction. The next day we Travelled to Blackfoot creek and the day following to Fort Hall we remained at the Fort until the 20th and then started down Snake River trapping with a party of 10 men besides ourselves 22d We arrived at a stream called Cozzu (or Raft River) This we ascended and hunted until the 5th of Octr. when finding the country had been recently hunted we returned to Fort Hall. From thence we started on the 18th with the Fort hunter and six men to kill and dry Buffaloe meat for winter We cruised about on Snake river and its waters until the 23d of Novr. when the weather becoming very cold and the snow about 15 inches deep we returned with our horses loaded with meat to Fort Hall where we stopped until the 1st of Jany 1839 when we began to be tired of dried meat and concluded to move up the river to where Lewis fork leaves the Mountain and there spend the remainder of the winter killing and eating Mountain Sheep We were Six in company and started on the 2d travelling slowly as the snow was deep and the weather cold and arrived at the destined place on the 20th Jany. We were followed by 7 lodges of Snake Indians. We found the snow shallow about the foot of the Mountain with a plenty of Sheep Elk and some few Bulls among the rocks and low Spurs 26th I started with two white men and several Indians thro the kanyon to hunt Elk after travelling about 4 Mls I left the party and took up the river on the north side whilst the remainder crossed the river on the Ice to follow the trail of some Bulls. I ascended the river travelling on the ice and land alternately about 4 Ms further and encamped for the night. This was a severe cold night but I was comfortably situated with one Blanket and two Epishemores and plenty of dry wood to make a fire, when I arose in the morning I discovered a band of Elk about half a mile up the mountain. I took my rifle and went to approach them thro the snow 3 ft deep and when within about 250 paces of them they took the wind of me and ran off leaving me to return to my encampment with the consolation that this was not the first time the wind had blown away my breakfast. When I arrived at my camp I found plenty of fresh Buffaloe meat hanging on the bushes near where I had slept. I immediately began to roast and eat as 24 hour's fasting would naturally dictate. Presently a Snake Indian arrived to whom the meat belonged. Near where I was encamped was a small stream which ran from a spring about a 100 paces distant and emptied into the river the water was a little more than blood warm. The Beaver had taken the advantage of the situation Damed it up at the Mouth and built a large lodge on the bank at sunrise I discovered three of them swimming and

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

playing in the water.

The next day I killed a Bull and returned thro. the kanyon to our Camp On the 30th I started with my old comrade (Elbridge) back with our traps to try the Beaver the snow was about 2 ft deep on the level plain and it took us till near night to reach the place we encamped in a cave at the foot of the Mountain nearby and I set 4 traps The weather was extremely cold but I felt very comfortable whilst walking about in the warm water but on coming out and running as fast as I could to the Camp 40 rods distant my feet were both frozen. I soon drew out the frost however by stripping them and holding them in the cold snow - next morning I found 4 large fat Beaver in my traps and on the 2d of Feby. we returned to Camp with 12 Beaver. Feby 10th Moved with the camp up the river to where we had caught the Beaver and encamped. Lewis fork comes thro. this kanyon for about 12 Mls. where the rock rises 2 or 300 feet forms a bench and ascends gradually to the Mountain which approaches very close on the Nth side and on the South is about 3 or 4 Mls distant and an occasional ravine running from the mountain to the river thro the rocks on the Nth side forms convenient places for encamping as the bench and low Spurs are well clothed with bunch grass. Here we found imense numbers of Mountain Sheep which the deep snows drive down to the low points of rocks facing the South near the river We could see them nearly every morning from our lodges standing on the points of rock jutting out so high in the air that they appeared no larger than Weasels. It is in this position that hunter delights to approach them from behind and shoot whilst their eyes are fixed on some object below. It is an exercise which gives vigor health and appetite to a hunter to shoulder his rifle at day break on a clear cold morning and wind his way up a rugged mountain over rocks and crags at length killing a fat old Ewe and taking the meat to Camp on his back: this kind of exercise gives him an appetite for his breakfast. But hunting sheep is attended with great danger in many places especially when the rocks are covered with sleet and ice. I have often passed over places where I have had to cut steps in the ice with my butcher Knife to place my feet in directly over the most frightful precipices, but being excited in the pursuit of game I would think but little of danger until I had laid down to sleep at night, then it would make my blood run cold to meditate upon the scenes I had passed thro. during the day and often have I resolved never to risk myself again in such places and as often broken the resolution. The sight of danger is less hidious than the thought of it. On the 18th of March the winter commenced breaking up with a heavy rain and 4 of us started up the river to commence the spring hunt whilst the remainder of the party returned to the Fort. After travelling thro. the kanyon we found the ground bare in many places whilst it still continued to rain. On the 30th of Mch we travelled to the mouth of `Muddy` this we ascended and crossed the mountain with some difficulty as the snow was very deep on to the head waters of "Gray's Creek." There two of our party (who were Canadians) left us and struck off for themselves. Our Camp then consisted of myself and my old comrade Elbridge, I say old comrade because we had been sometime together but he was a young man, from Beverly Mass and being bred a sailor he was not much of a landsman, woodsman or hunter but a great easy good natured fellow standing 5 feet 10 - and weighing 200 lbs On the 2d of april we crossed a high ridge in a Nth direction and encamped on a stream that sinks in the plain soon after leaving the Mountain here we set our traps for Beaver but their dams were nearly all covered with ice excepting some few holes which they had made for the purpose of obtaining fresh provisions we stopped on this stream until the 25th of April and then travelled out by the same way which we came 26th we travelled a South direction about 25 Mls

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Crossing several of the head branches of 'Grays Creek' On the 1st of May we travelled about 10 Mls East course and the next day went to the head of Grays Marsh about 20 Mls South course There we deposited the Furs we had taken and the next day [started] for Salt river to get a supply of salt we took an east direction about 6 Mls and fell on to Gardners fork which we descended to the Valley and on the 6th arrived at the Salt Springs on Scotts fork of Salt River Here we found 12 of our old Comrades who had come like our selves to gather salt We staid two nights together at this place when myself and Elbridge took leave of them and returned to Grays Marsh from there we started towards fort Hall travelling one day and laying by 5 or 6 to fatten our horses and arrived at the Fort on the 5th of June. This Post now belongs to the British Hudsons Bay Company who obtained it by purchase from Mr Wyeth in the year 1837 We stopped at the Fort until the 26th of June then made up a party of 4 for the purpose of trapping in the YellowStone and Wind river mountains and arrived at Salt river valley on the 28th 29 we crossed the Valley NE then left it ascending Grays river in an E. direction about 4 Mls into a narrow rugged pass encamped and killed a Sheep 30th We travelled up this stream 30 Mls East and encamped in a small Valley and Killed a bull and the next day we encamped in the South end of Jacksons big hole July 3d we travelled thro. the valley Nth. until night and the next day arrived at Jacksons Lake where we concluded to spend the 4th of July, at the outlet. July 4th I caught about 20 very fine salmon trout which together with fat mutton buffaloe beef and coffee and the manner in which it was served up constituted a dinner that ought to be considered independent even by Britons. July 5 we travelled north paralell with the Lake on the East side and the next day arrived at the inlet or northern extremity 7th We left the lake and followed up Lewis fork about 8 Mls in a NE direction and encamped. On the day following we travelled about 5 Mls when we came to the junction of two equal forks we took up the left hand, on the west sid thro the thick pines and in many places so much fallen timber that we frequently had to make circles of a quarter of a mile to gain a few rods ahead, but our general course was north and I suppose we travelled about 16 Mls in that direction at night we encamped at a lake about 15 Mls in circumference formed by the stream we had ascended July 9th we travelled round this lake to the inlet on the west Side and came to another lake about the same size This has a small prarie on the west side whilst the other is completely surrounded by thick pines. The next day we travelled along the border of the lake till we came to the NW. extremity and where we found about 50 springs of boiling hot water We stopped here some hours as one of my comrades had visited this spot the year previous he wished to show us some curiosities The first Spring we visited was about 10 feet in diameter which threw up mud with a noise similar to boiling soap close about this were numerous [others] similar to it throwing up the hot mud and water 5 or 6 feet high about 30 or 40 paces from these along the side of a small ridge the hot steam rushed forth from holes in the ground with a hissing noise which could be heard a mile distant. On a near approach we could hear the water bubbling under ground some distance from the surface. The sound of our footsteps over this place was like thumping over a hollow vessel of imense size in many places were peaks from 2 to 6 feet high formed of lime Stone, deposited by the boiling water, which appeared of snowy whiteness. The water when cold is perfectly sweet except having a fresh limestone taste. After surveying these natural wonders for sometime my comrade conducted me to what he called the "hour Spring" at that this spring the first thing that attracts the attention is a hole about 15 inches in diameter in which the water is boiling slowly about 4 inches below the surface at length it begins to boil and bubble violently and

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the water commences raising and shooting upwards until the column arises to the height of sixty feet from whence it falls to the ground in drops on a circle of about 30 feet in diameter being perfectly cold when it strikes the ground It continues shooting up in this manner five or 6 minutes and then sinks back to its former state of Slowly boiling for an hour and then shoots forth as before My Comrade Said he had watched the motions of this Spring for one whole day and part of the night the year previous and found no irregularity whatever in its movements After Surveying these wonders for a few hours we left the place and travelled north about 3 Mls over ascending ground then descended a steep and rugged mountain 4 mile in the same direction and fell on to the head branch of the Jefferson branch of the Missouri The whole country still thickly covered with pines except here and there a small prairie. We encamped and set some traps for Beaver and staid 4 dys. At this place there is also large numbers of hot Springs some of which have formed cones of limestone 20 feet high of a Snowy whiteness which make a splendid appearance standing among the ever green pines Some of the lower peaks are very serviceable to the hunter in preparing his dinner when hungry for here his kettle is always ready and boiling his meat being suspended in the water by a string is soon prepared for his meal without further trouble Some of these spiral cones are 20 ft in diameter at the base and not more than 12 inches at the top the whole being covered with small irregular semicircular ridges about the size of a mans finger having the appearance of carving in bass relieve formed I suppose by the waters running over it for ages unknown. I should think this place to be at least 3,000 ft lower than the Springs we left on the mountain Vast numbers of Black Tailed Deer are found in the vicinity of these springs and seem to be very familiar with hot waters and steam. The noise of which seems not to disturb their slumbers for a Buck may be found carelessly sleeping where the noise will exceed that of 3 or 4 engines in operation. Standing upon an eminence and superficially viewing these natural monuments one is half inclined to believe himself in the neighborhood of the ruins of some ancients City whose temples had been constructed of the whitest marble. July 15 we travelled down the stream NW. about 12 Mls passing on our route large numbers of hot Springs with their snow white monuments scattered among the groves of pines. At length we came to a boiling Lake about 300 ft in diameter forming nearly a complete circle as we approached on the South side The stream which arose from it was of three distinct Colors from the west side for one third of the diameter it was white, in the middle it was pale red, and the remaining third on the east light sky blue Whether it was something peculiar in the state of the atmosphere the day being cloudy or whether it was some Chemical properties contained in the water which produced this phenomenon I am unable to say and shall leave the explanation to some scientific tourist who may have the Curiosity to visit this place at some future period - The water was of deep indigo blue boiling like an immense cauldron running over the white rock which had formed [round] the edges to the height of 4 or 5 feet from the surface of the earth sloping gradually for 60 or 70 feet. What a field of speculation this presents for chemist and geologist. The next morning we crossed the stream travelled down the east side about 5 Mls then ascended another fork in an east direction about 10 mls. and encamped. From where we left the Main fork it runs in a NW direction about 40 Mls before reaching the Burnt hole July 17 we travelled to the head of this branch about 20 Mls East direction 18th After travelling in the same direction about 7 mls. over a low spur of mountain we came into a large plain on the Yellow Stone river about 8 Mls below the Lake we followed up the Yellow Stone to the outlet of the Lake and encamped and set our traps for beaver. We stopped

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

here trapping until the 28th and from thence we travelled to the "Secluded Valley" where we staid one day. From thence we travelled East to the head of Clarks fork where we stopped and hunted the small branches until the 4th of Aug. and then returned to the Valley On the 9th we left the Valley and travelled two days ovr the mountain NW and fell on to a stream running South into the Yellowstone where we staid until the 16th and then crossed the mountain in a NW direction over the snow and fell on to a stream running into the Yellowstone plains and entering that river about 40 Mls above the mouth of 25 yard river. 18th We descended this stream within about a mile of the plains and set our traps. The next day my comrades started for the plains to Kill some Buffaloe Cows I remonstrated very hard against their going into the plains and disturbing the buffaloe in such a dangerous part of the country when we had a plenty of fat deer and mutton but to no purpose off they Started and returned at night with their animals loaded with cow meat. They told me they had seen where a village of 3 or 400 lodges of Blackfeet had left the Yellowstone in a NW direction but 3 or 4 days previous. Aug 22 we left this Stream and travelled along the foot of the mountain at the edge of the plain about 20 Mls west cours and encamped at a spring. The next day we crossed the Yellowstone river and travelled up it on the west side to the mouth of Gardners fork where we staid the next day 25th We travelled to "Gardners hole" then altered our course SE crossing the eastern point of the valley and encamping on a small branch among the pines 26 We encamped on the Yellowstone in the big plain below the lake The next day we went to the lake and set our traps on a branch running into it near the outlet on the NE side 28th after visiting my traps I returned to the Camp where after stopping about an hour or two I took my rifle and sauntered down the shore of the Lake among the [scattered] groves of tall pines until tired of walking about (the day being very warm) I took a bath in the lake for probably half an hour and returned to camp about 4 ockk PM Two of my comrades observed "let us take a walk among the pines and kill an Elk" and started off whilst the other was laying asleep - Sometime after they were gone I went to a bale of dried meat which had been spread in the Sun 30 or 40 feet from the place where we slept here I pulled off my powder horn and bullet pouch laid them on a log drew my butcher knife and began to cut We were encamped about a half a mile from the Lake on a stream turning into it in a S.W. direction thro. a prarie bottom about a quarter of a mile wide On each side of this valley arose a bench of land about 20 ft high running paralell with the stream and covered with pines On this bench we were encamped on the SE side of the stream The pines immediately behind us was thickly intermingled with logs and fallen trees - After eating a few [minutes] I arose and kindled a fire filled my tobacco pipe and sat down to smoke My comrade whose name was White was still sleeping. Presently I cast my eyes towards the horses which were feeding in the Valley and discovered the heads of some Indians who were gliding round under the bench within 30 steps of me I jumped to my rifle and aroused White and looking towards my powder horn and bullet pouch it was already in the hands of an Indian and we were completely surrounded We cocked our rifles and started thro. their ranks into the woods which seemed to be completely filled with Blackfeet who rent the air with their horrid yells. on presenting our rifles they opened a space about 20 ft. wide thro. which we plunged about the fourth jump an arrow struck White on the right hip joint I hastily told him to pull it out and I spoke another arrow struck me in the same place but they did not retard our progress At length another arrow striking thro. my right leg above the knee benumbed the flesh so that I fell with my breast accross a log. The Indian who shot me was within 8 ft and made a Spring towards me with his uplifted battle

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

axe: I made a leap and avoided the blow and kept hopping from log to log thro. a shower of arrows which flew around us like hail, lodging in the pines and logs. After we had passed them about 10 paces we wheeled about and took [aim] at them They then began to dodge behind the trees and shoot their guns we then ran and hopped about 50 yards further in the logs and bushes and made a stand - I was very faint from the loss of blood and we set down among the logs determined to kill the two foremost when they came up and then die like men we rested our rifles accross a log White aiming at the foremost and Myself at the second I whispered to him that when they turned their eyes toward us to pull trigger. About 20 of them passed by us within 15 feet without casting a glance towards us another file came round on the [opposite] side within 20 or 30 paces closing with the first a few rods beyond us and all turning to the right the next minute were out of our sight among the bushes They were all well armed with fusees, bows & battle axes We sat still until the rustling among the bushes had died away then arose and after looking carefully around us White asked in a whisper how far it was to the lake I replied pointing to the SE about a quarter of a mile. I was nearly fainting from the loss of blood and the want of water We hobbled along 40 or 50 rods and I was obliged to sit down a few minutes then go a little further and rest again. we managed in this way until we reached the bank of the lake Our next object was to obtain some of the water as the bank was very steep and high. White had been perfectly calm and deliberate until now his conversation became wild hurried and despairing he observed "I cannot go down to that water for I am wounded all over I shall die" I told him to sit down while I crawled down and brought some in my hat. This I effected with a great deal of difficulty. We then hobbled along the border of the Lake for a mile and a half when it grew dark and we stopped. We could still hear the shouting of the Savages over their booty. We stopped under a large pine near the lake and I told White I could go no further "Oh said he let us go up into the pines and find a spring" I replied there was no spring within a Mile of us which I knew to be a fact. "Well said he if you stop here I shall make a fire" Make as much as you please I replied angrily This is a poor time now to undertake to frighten me into measurs. I then started to the water crawling on my hands and one knee and returned in about an hour with some in my hat. While I was at this he had kindled a small fire and taking a draught of water from the hat he exclaimed Oh dear we shall die here, we shall never get out of these mountains, Well said I if you presist in thinking so you will die but I can crawl from this place upon my hands and one knee and Kill 2 or 3 Elk and make a shelter of the skins dry the meat until we get able to travel. In this manner I persuaded him that we were not in half so bad a Situation as we might be altho. he was not in half so bad a situation as I expected for on examining I found only a slight wound from an arrow on his hip bone but he was not so much to blame as he was a young man who had been brot up in Missouri the pet of the family and had never done or learned much of anything but horseracing and gambling whilst under the care of his parents (if care it can be called). I pulled off an old piece of a coat made of Blanket (as he was entirely without clothing except his hat and shirt) Set myself in a leaning position against a tree ever and anon gathering such leaves and rubbish as I could reach without altering the position of My body to keep up a little fire in this manner miserably spent the night. The next morning Aug 29th I could not arise without assistance When White procured me a couple of sticks for crutches by the help of which I hobbled to a small grove of pines about 60 yds distant. We had scarcely entered the grove when we heard a dog barking and Indians singing and talking. The sound seemed to be approaching us. They at length came near to where we were to

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the number of 60 Then commenced shooting at a large bank of elk that was swimming in the lake killed 4 of them dragged them to shore and butchered them which occupied about 3 hours. They then packed the meat in small bundles on their backs and travelled up along the rocky shore about a mile and encamped. We then left our hiding place crept into the thick pines about 50 yds distant and started in the direction of our encampment in the hope of finding our comrades My leg was very much swelled and painful but I managed to get along slowly on my crutches by Whites carrying my rifle when we were within about 60 rods of the encampment we discovered the Canadian hunting round among the trees as tho he was looking for a trail we approached him within 30 ft before he saw us and he was so much agitated by fear that he knew not whether to run or stand still. On being asked where Elbridge was he said they came to the Camp the night before at sunset the Indians pursued them into the woods where they seperated and he saw him no more. At the encampment I found a sack of salt - everything else the Indians had carried away or cut to pieces They had built 7 large Conical forts near the spot from which we supposed their number to have been 70 or 80 part of whom had returned to their Village with the horses and plunder. We left the place heaping curses on the head of the Blackfoot nation which neither injured them or alleviated our distress We followed down the shores of the lake and stopped for the night My companions threw some logs and rubbish to gether forming a kind of shelter from the night breeze but in the night it took fire (the logs being pitch pine) the blaze ran to the tops of the trees we removed a short distance built another fire and laid by it until Morning We then made a raft of dry poles and crossed the outlet upon it. We then went to a small grove of pines nearby and made a fire where we stopped the remainder of the day in hopes that Elbridge would see our signals and come to us for we left directions on a tree at the encampment which route we would take. In the meantime the Cannadian went to hunt something to eat but without success. I had bathed my wounds in Salt water and made a salve of Beavers Oil and Castoreum which I applied to them This had eased the pain and drawn out the swelling in a great measure. The next morning I felt very stiff and sore but we were obliged to travel or starve as we had eaten nothing since our defeat and game was very scarce on the West side of the Lake and morover the Cannadian had got such a fright we could not prevail on him to go out of our sight to hunt So on we truged slowly and after getting warm I could bear half my weight on my lame leg but it was bent considerably and swelled so much that my Knee joint was stiff. About 10 oclk the Cannadian killed a couple of small Ducks which served us for breakfast. after eating them we pursued our journey. At 12 oclk it began to rain but we still kept on until the Sun was 2 hours high in the evening when the weather clearing away we encamped at some hot springs and killed a couple of geese. Whilst we were eating them a Deer came swimming along in the lake within about 100 yards of the shore we fired several shots at him but the water glancing the balls he remained unhurt and apparently unalarmed but still Kept swimming to and fro in the Lake in front of us for an hour and then started along up close to the shore. The hunter went to watch it in order to kill it when it should come ashore but as he was lying in wait for the Deer a Doe Elk came to the water to Drink and he killed her but the Deer was still out in the lake swimming to and fro till dark. Now we had a plenty of meat and drink but [were] almost destitute of clothing I had on a par of trowsers and a cotton shirt which were completely drenched with the rain. We made a sort of shelter from the wind of pine branches and built a large fire of pitch Knots in front of it, so that we were burning on one side and freezing on the other alternately all night. The next morning we cut

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

some of the Elk meat in thin slices and cooked it slowly over a fire then packed it in bundles strung them on our backs and started by this time I could carry my own rifle and limp along half as fast as a man could walk but when my foot touched against the logs or brush the pain in my leg was very severe We left the lake at the hot springs and travelled thro. the thick pines over a low ridge of land thro. the snow and rain together but we travelled by the wind about 8 Mls in a SW direction when we came to a Lake about 12 Mls in circumference which is the head spring of the right branch of Lewis fork. Here we found a dry spot near a number of hot springs under some thick pines our hunter had Killed a Deer on the way and I took the skin wrapped it around me and felt prouder of my Mantle than a Monarch with his imperial robes. This night I slept more than 4 hours which was more than I had slept at any one time since I was wounded and arose the next morning much refreshed These Springs are similar to those on the Madison and among these as well as those Sulphur is found in its purity in large quantities on the surface of the ground. We travelled along the Shore on the south side about 5 Mls in an East direction fell in with a large band of Elk killed two fat Does and took some of the meat. We then left the lake and travelled due South over a rough broken country covered with thick pines for about 12 Mls when we came to the fork again which ran thro. a narrow prairie bottom followed down it about six miles and encamped at the forks We had passed up the left hand fork on the 9th of July on horse back in good health and spirits and came down on the right on the 31st of Aug. on foot with weary limbs and sorrowful countenances. We built a fire and laid down to rest, but I could not sleep more than 15 or 20 minutes at a time the night was so very cold. We had plenty of Meat however and made Mocasins of raw Elk hide The next day we crossed the stream and travelled down near to Jacksons Lake on the West side then took up a small branch in a West direction to the head. We then had the Teton mountain to cross which looked like a laborious undertaking as it was steep and the top covered with snow. We arrived at the summit however with a great deal of difficulty before sunset and after resting a few moments travelled down about a mile on the other side and stopped for the night. After spending another cold and tedious night we were descending the Mountain thro. the pines at day light and the next night reached the forks of Henrys fork of Snake river. This day was very warm but the wind blew cold at night we made a fire and gathered some dry grass to sleep on and then sat down and eat the remainder of our provisions. It was now 90 Mls to Fort Hall and we expected to see little or no game on the route but we determined to travel it in 3 days we lay down and shivered with the cold till daylight then arose and again pursued our journey towards the fork of Snake river where we arrived sun about an hour high forded the river which was nearly swimming and encamped The weather being very cold and fording the river so late at night caused me much suffering during the night Sept 4th we were on our way at day break and travelled all day thro. the high Sage and sand down Snake river We stopped at dark nearly worn out with fatigue hunger and want of sleep as we had now travelled 65 Mls in two days without eating. We sat and hovered over a small fire until another day appeared then set out as usual and travelled to within about 10 Ms of the Fort when I was seized with a cramp in my wounded leg which compelled me to stop and sit down ever 30 or 40 rods at length we discovered a half breed encamped in the Valley who furnished us with horses and went with us to the fort where we arrived about sun an hour high being naked hungry wounded sleepy and fatigued. Here again I entered a trading post after being defeated by the Indians but the treatment was quite different from that which I had received at Larameys fork in 1837 when I had been defeated by

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the Crows

The Fort was in charge of Mr. Courtney M. Walker who had been lately employed by the Hudsons Bay Company for that purpose He invited us into a room and ordered supper to be prepared immediately. Likewise such articles of clothing and Blankets as we called for. After dressin ourselves and giving a brief history of our defeat and sufferings supper was brot. in consisting of tea Cakes butter milk dried meat etc I eat very sparingly as I had been three days fasting but drank so much strong tea that it kept me awake till after midnight. I continued to bathe my leg in warm salt water and applied a salve which healed it in a very short time so that in 10 days I was again setting traps for Beaver On the 13th of Sptr. Elbridge arrived safe at the Fort he had wandered about among the Mountains several days without having any correct knowledge, but at length accidentally falling onto the trail which we had made in the Summer it enabled him to reach the plains and from thence he had travelled to the Fort by his own Knowledge 20th of Octr. we started to hunt Buffaloe and make meat for the winter. The party consisted of 15 men. We travelled to the head of the Jefferson fork of the Missouri where we Killed and dried our meat from there we proceeded over the mountain thro. "Cammass prarie" to the forks of Snake river where most of the party concluded to spend the winter 4 of us however (who were the only Americans in the party) returned to Fort Hall on the 10th of Decr. We encamped near the Fort and turned our horses among the springs and timber to hunt their living during the winter whilst ourselves were snugly arranged in our Skin lodge which was pitched among the large Cotton wood trees and in it provisions to serve us till the Month of April. There were 4 of us in the mess One was from Missouri one from Mass. one from Vermont and myself from Maine We passed an agreeable winter We had nothing to do but to eat attend to the horses and procure fire wood We had some few Books to read such as Byrons Shakespeares and Scotts works the Bible and Clarks Commentary on it and other small works on Geology Chemistry and Philosophy - The winter was very mild and the ground was bare in the Valley until the 15 of Jany. when the snow fell about 8 inches deep but disappeared again in a few days. This was the deepest snow and of the longest duration of any we had during the winter On the 10th of March I started again with my old companion Elbridge We travelled from the Fort on to the Blackfoot near the foot of the Mountain where the ice being broke up we set some traps for Beaver On the 15th we tried to cross the mountain to Grays Valley but were compelled to turn back for the snow On the 20th made another trial and succeeded and encamped at the Forks of `Gray's creek' here the ground was bare along the stream and some [on] the South sides of the hills but very deep on the high plains I killed two Bulls which came in good time after living upon Dried meat all winter Mch 19 we travelled up Grays creek about 10 Mls. There we found the snow very deep and hard enough to bear our horses in the morning. On the 22d we travelled on the snow up this stream about 5 Mls and encamped on a bare spot of ground where we staid three days Then started on the snow as usual and went about 8 Mls to the Valley about Grays Marsh where we found a bare spot about 40 rods square on the South side of a ridge and encamped The snow in the Valley was about 3 feet deep on a level Mch 28th We started on foot in the morning on the snow to hunt Buffaloe after going about 2 Mls we found 11 Bulls aproached and killed 10 of them on the spot we then butchered some of them and took out the tongues of the others buried the meat about 3 ft. deep in a snow drift laid some stones on the snow over it and burned gun powder upon them to keep away the wolves. We then took meat enough for our suppers and started for the Camp by this time the snow was thawed so much that

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

we broke thro. nearly every step. Early next morning the snow being frozen we took two horses and went for our meat but when we reached the place where we had buried it we found the wolves had dug it up and taken the best of its notwithstanding our precautions. The Carcasses of the Bulls yet remained untouched by them and from these we loaded our horses and returned to camp. About noon the rays of the sun shining up on the Snow and reflecting upwards began to affect our eyes in somuch that towards night we could scarcely look abroad We lay down to sleep but it was useless for our eyes felt as if they were filled with coarse Sand after suffering 4 days severely with what the trappers call snow blindness we began to recover our eye sight by degrees altho we had not been at any time totally blind yet we had been the whole time very near it. We staid here until the 10th of April when finding the snow did not abate we returned to the forks of Grays Creek where we remained until the 20th We then travelled to the fork which sinks in the plain on Lewis fork where we set our traps and staid until the 1st of May On the 2d we arrived again at the Marsh on Grays creek where we found the ground mostly bare but the streams overflowing their banks. On the 5 crossed the mountain in an East direction fell on to a stream running into Lewis fork 10 Ms below the mouth of Salt River we travelled down this stream which runs thro a narrow cut in the mountain for about 15 Mls and then forms a small valley where we stopped and set our traps and staid until the 20th when Elbridge observed he thought we had better leave our traps setting turn and go to Salt river Valley spend a few days killing bulls and then return I remonstrated against the proposal as our horses were very poor the streams high and the ground very muddy but I told him if he wished to go to take his traps with him and not be at the trouble of coming back after them. The next morning he packed his horses and left me My two horses were now my only companions with the exception of some books which I brot from the Fort. I staid here trapping until the 28th Then travelled up a branch about 15 Mls. crossed the Mountain in a NW direction fell on to the head of Muddy Creek where I killed a Bull and stopped for the night. The next day I stopped at this place and dried some meat 30th went on to the Right fork of Muddy and set some traps, here I staid 6 days and then went to Gray's marsh intending to kill and dry some meat and go to the Fort but finding no Buffaloe here I crossed on to Salt River and finding no Buffaloe there I ascended Gardners fork crossed the Mountain and fell on to Blackfoot creek where I killed a fat Bull dried the meat and started for fort Hall where I arrived on the 10th of June. June 14th Mr. Ermatinger arrived at the fort with 80 horse loads of goods to supply the post the ensuing year. On the 15 Elbridge arrived having fallen in with a party of hunters soon after leaving me in the Mountains after having lost his traps in crossing Grays river. A few days after he arrived he expressed a wish that I would go with him and two others to make a hunt in the Yellow Stone mountains I replied I had seen enough of the Yellow Stone Mountains and moreover I intended to trap in future with a party who would not leave me in a 'pinch.' On the 22d of June I started with two horses six traps and some few books intending to hunt on the waters of Snake river in the vicinity of Fort Hall. I went to Grays hole set my traps and staid 5 days. From there I went on to Milk fork where I staid until the 15 of July From thence I took a north direction thro the Mountains and fell on to a stream running into Lewis Fork near the mouth of Salt River where I staid 12 days and then returned to Grays Marsh and staid until the 3d of August I then travelled thro. the mountains SE on to the head streams of Gardners fork where I spent the time hunting the small branches until the 15th - From there I started towards the Fort hunting the streams which were on the route and arrived on the 22d - After stopping

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

here a few days I started in Company with 3 trappers one of whom was 'Major Meek' and travelled to the forks of Snake river From there we ascended Henry's fork about 15 Mls and then took up a stream in a SW direction into the Mountain but finding no Beaver we crossed the mountain and struck Lewis fork in the kanyon where after trapping some days we went on to Grays creek where after staying some days we killed a fat Grizzly Bear and some antelope loaded the meat on our horses and started to the Fort where we arrived on the 22 of Septr. On the first of Octr. I again left the Fort with a Frenchman who had an Indian wife and two children and was going on to Green river to pass the winter there. We travelled up Portneuf about 15 Mls where we stopped the next day and hunted antelope and the day following we travelled up the stream about 20 Mls when after staying 10 dys we went to the Soda Springs on Bear river here we concluded to spend a month on Bar river travelling slowly hunting Beaver and Antelope as the latter is the only game in this part of the country. Beaver also were getting very scarce. On the 15th of Novr. the snow began to fall and my comrade started with his family accross the mountain to Green river and I returned towards the fort On my way down bear river I met thousands of antelope travelling towards their winter quarters which is generally in Green river Valley I followed Bear River down to Cache Valley where I found 20 lodges of Snake Indians and staid with them several days They had a considerable number of Beaver Skins but I had nothing to trade for them. They told me if I would go to the Fort and get some goods return and spend the winter with them they would trade their Furs with me. I started for the Fort with one of them whom I engaged to assist me with my horses. I arrived at the Fort on the 23rd of Novr. when after getting such articles for trade as I wished and my personal supplies for the winter I returned to Cache Valley accompanied by a halfbreed On arriving at the Village I found several Frenchmen and half breed trappers encamped with the Snakes One Frenchman having an Indian wife and child invited me to pass the winter in his lodge and as he had a small family and large lodge I accepted the invitation. And had my baggage taken into his lodge and neatly arranged by his wife who was a flathead but the neat manner in which her lodge and furniture was kept would have done honor to a large portion of the "pale faced" fair sex in the civilized world. We staid in this valley until the 15th of Decr. when it was unanimously agreed on to go to the Salt lake and there spend the remainder of the winter The next day we travelled accross the Valley in a SW direction Then took into a narrow defile which led us thro. the mountain in to the valley on the East borders of the lake. The day following we moved along the Valley in a South direction and encamped on a small branch close by the foot of the mountain. The ground was still bare and the Autumnal growth of grass was the best I ever saw at this season of the year 18th I arose about an hour before daylight took my rifle and ascended the Mountain on foot to hunt sheep The weather was clear and cold but the Mountain being steep and tugged and my rifle heavy the exercise Soon put me in a perspiration. After Climbing about half a mile I sat down on a rock to wait for daylight and when it came I discovered a band of about 100 rams within about 80 yds of me I shot and killed one the others ran about 50 yds further and stopped. Whilst I was reloading my rifle one of them ascended a high pinnacle of rock which jutted over a precipice there were others nearer to me but I wished to fetch this proud animal from his elevated position. I brought my rifle to my face the [ball] whistled thro. his heart and he fell headlong over the precipice I followed the band at some distance among the crags and killed two more butched them then returned and butchered the two I had first killed and returned to camp - and sent some men with horses to get the Meat. 20th Decr. we moved along the borders

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

of the Lake about 10 Mls. and encamped on a considerable stream running into it called "Weaver's river" At this place the Valley is about 10 Mls wide intersected with numerous Springs of salt and fresh hot and cold water which rise at the foot of the Mountain and run thro. the Valley into the river and Lake - Weavers river is well timbered along its banks principally with Cottonwood and box elder - there are also large groves of sugar maple pine and some oak growing in the ravines about the Mountain - We also found large numbers of Elk which had left the Mountain to winter among the thickets of wood and brush along the river. Decr. 25th It was agreed on by the party to prepare a Christmas dinner but I shall first endeavor to describe the party and then the dinner. I have already said the man who was the proprietor of the lodge in which I staid was a French man with a flat head wife and one child The inmates of the next lodge was a half breed Iowa a Nez percey wife and two children his wifes brother and another half breed next lodge was a half breed Cree his wife a Nez percey 2 children and a Snake Indian The inmates of the 3d lodge was a half breed Snake his wife (a Nez percey and two children). The remainder was 15 lodges of Snake Indians Three of the party spoke English but very broken therefore that language was made but little use of as I was familiar with the Canadian French and Indian tongue. About 1 oclk we sat down to dinner in the lodge where I staid which was the most spacious being about 36 ft. in circumference at the base with a fire built in the center around this sat on clean Epishemores all who claimed kin to the white man (or to use their own expression all that were gens d'esprit) with their legs crossed in true Turkish style - and now for the dinner The first dish that came on was a large tin pan 18 inches in diameter rounding full of Stewed Elk meat The next dish was similar to the first heaped up with boiled Deer meat (or as the whites would call it Venison a term not used in the Mountains) The 3d and 4th dishes were equal in size to the first containing a boiled flour pudding prepared with dried fruit accompanied by 4 quarts of sauce made of the juice of sour berries and sugar Then came the cakes followed by about six gallons of strong Coffee already sweetened with tin cups and pans to drink out of large chips or pieces of Bark Supplying the places of plates. on being ready the butcher knives were drawn and the eating commenced at the word given by the landlady as all dinners are accompanied with conversation this was not deficient in that respect The principal topic which was discussed was the political affairs of the Rocky Mountains The state of governments among the different tribes, the personal characters of the most distinguished warriors Chiefs etc One remarked that the Snake Chief Pah da-hewak um da was becoming very unpopular and it was the opinion of the Snakes in general that Moh woom hah his brother would be at the head of affairs before 12 mos as his village already amounted to more than 300 lodges and moreover he was supported by the bravest men in the Nation among whom were Ink a tush e poh Fibe bo un to wat su and Who sha kik who were the pillars of the Nation and at whose names the Blackfeet quaked with fear. In like manner were the characters of the principal Chiefs of the Bonnak Nez percey Flathead and Crow Nations and the policy of their respective governments commented upon by these descendants of Shem and Japhet with as much affected dignity as if they could have read their own names when written or distinguish the letter B from a Bulls foot. Dinner being over the tobacco pipes were filled and lighted while the Squaws and children cleared away the remains of the feast to one side of the lodge where they held a Sociable tite a tite over the fragments. After the pipes were extinguished all agreed to have a frolic shooting at a mark which occupied the remainder of the day. Jany. 1st The ground was still bare but the weather cold and the fresh water streams shut up with ice On the 3d we moved Camp up

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the stream to the foot of the mountain where the stream forks The right is called Weavers fork and the left Ogden's both coming thro. the mountain in a deep narrow cut The mountain is very high steep and rugged which rises abruptly from the plain about the foot of it are small rolling hills abounding with springs of fresh water. The land bordering on the river and along the Stream is a rich black alluvial deposit but the high land is gravelly and covered with wild sage with here and there a grove of scubby oaks and red cedars On the 10th I started to hunt Elk by myself intending to stop out 2 or 3 nights I travelled up Weavers fork in a SE direction thro the mountains The route was very difficult and in many places difficult travelling over high points of rocks and around huge precipices on a trail just wide enough for a single horse to walk in, in about 10 Mls I came into a smooth plain 5 or 6 Mls in circumference just as the Sun was setting here I stopped for the night the snow being about 5 inches deep and the weather cold I made a large fire - As I had not Killed any game during the day I had no supper at night but I had a blanket horse to ride and a good rifle with a plenty of Amunition I was not in much danger of Suffering by hunger cold or fatigue So I wrapped myself in my blanket and laid down on some dry grass I had collected before the fire. About an hour after dark it clouded up and began to snow but as I was under some large trees it did not trouble me much and I soon fell asleep at daylight it was still snowing very fast and had [?] about 8 inches during the night - I saddled my horse and started in a North direction over high rolling hills covered with Scrubby oaks quaking asp and maples for about 10 Mls where I came into a smooth valley about 20 Mls in circumference called "Ogdens hole" with the fork of the same name running thro. it. Here the snow was about 15 inches deep on a level. Towards night the weather cleared up and I discovered a band of about 100 Elk on the hill among the Shrubbery. I approached and killed a very fat old doe which I butcherd and packed the meat and skin on my horse to an open spring about a quarter of a mile distant where I found plenty of dry wood and stopped for the night. I had now a good appetite for supper which after eating I scraped away the Snow on one side of the fire spread down the raw Elk hide and laid down covering myself with my blanket. In the morning when I awoke it was still snowing and after eating breakfast I packed the Meat on my horse and started on foot leading him by the bridle Knowing it was impossible to follow down this Stream with a horse to the plains I kept along the foot of the Mountain in a Nth. direction for about 2 Mls then turning to the left into a steep ravine began to ascend winding my way up thro. the snow which grew deeper as I ascended I reached the Summit in about 3 hours in many places I was obliged to break a trail for my horse to walk in I descended the mountain West to the plains with comparative ease and reached the Camp about dark On arriving at the lodge I entered and sat down before a large blazing fire My landlady soon unloaded my horse and turned him loose and then prepared supper with a good dish of Coffee whilst I as a matter of course related the particulars of the hunt. We staid at this place during the remainder of January The weather was very cold and the snow about 12 inches deep but I passed the time very agreeably hunting Elk among the timber in fair weather and amusing myself with books in foul The 3d day of Feby. I took a trip up the mountain to hunt Sheep I ascended a spur with my horse sometimes riding and then walking until near the top where I found a level bench where the wind had blown the snow off. I fastened my horse with a long cord and took along the side of the mountain among the broken crags to see what the chance was for supper just as the sun was sinking below the dark green waters of the Salt Lake I had not rambled far before I discovered 3 rams about 300 ft perpendicular below me I shot and killed one

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

of them but it being so late and the precipice so bad I concluded to sleep without supper rather than to go after it I returned to my horse and built a large fire with fragments of dry sugar maple which I found scattered about on the Mountain having for a shelter from the wind a huge piece of Coarse Sandstone of which the mountain was composed the air was calm serene and cold and the stars shone with an uncommon brightness after sleeping till about Midnight I arose and renewed the fire My horse was continually walking backwards and forwards to keep from freezing I was upwards of 6,000 ft above the level of the lake, below me was a dark abyss silent as the night of Death I set and smoked my pipe for about an hour and then laid down and slept until near daylight - My Chief object in Sleeping at this place was to take a view of the lake when the Sun arose in the Morning. This range of mountains lies nearly Nth & South and approaches the Lake irregularly within from 3 to 10 Mls. About 8 Mls from the SE shore stands an Island about 25 Mls long and six wide having the appearance of a low Mountain extending Nth & South and rising 3 or 400 ft Above the water To the Nth [W] of this about 8 Mls. rises another Island apparently half the size of the first. Nth of these about six Mls. and about half way between rises another about 6 Mls. in circumference which appears to be a mass of basaltic rock with a few scrubby Cedars Standing about in the Cliffs the others appear to be clothed with grass and wild Sage but no wood except a few bushes near to the western horizon arose a small white peak just appearing above the water. which I supposed to be the mountain near the west Shore. On the Nth. side a high Promontory about Six Mls wide and 10 long projects into the lake covered with grass and scattering Cedars On the South Shore rises a vast pile of huge rough mountains; which I could faintly discern thro. the dense blue atmosphere The water of the lake is too much impregnated with Salt to freeze any even about the shores. About sun an hour high I commenced hunting among the rocks in search of Sheep but did not get a chance to shoot at any till middle of the afternoon when crawling cautiously over some shelving cliffs I discovered 10 or 12 Ewes feeding some distance below me I shot and wounded one reloaded my rifle and crept down to the place where I last saw her when I discovered two standing on the side of a precipice Shot one thro the head and she fell dead on the cliff where she stood. I then went above and fastened a cord (which I carried for the purpose) to some bushes which overhung the rocks by this means I descended and rolled her off the cliff where she had caught when she fell upwards of 100 ft. I then pulled myself up by the cord and went round the rock down to where she fell butcherd her hung the meat on a tree then pursued and killed the other After butchering the last I took some of the [meat] for my supper and started up the mountain and arrived at the place where I had slept about an hour after dark I soon had a fire blazing and a side of ribs roasting and procured water by heating Stones and melting snow in a piece of skin by the time supper was over it was late in the night And I lay down and slept till morning At sun rise I started on foot to get my meat and left my rifle about half way down the Mountain when I came to where the first sheep had been hung in a tree I discovered a large Wolverine sitting at the foot of it I then regretted leaving my rifle but it was too late he saw me and took to his heels as well he might for he had left nothing behind worth stopping for All the traces I could find of the sheep were some tufts of hair scattered about on the snow. I hunted around for sometime but to no purpose. In the meantime the cautious thief was sitting on the snow at some distance watching my movements as if he was confident I had no gun and could not find his meat. and wished to agravate me by his antic gestures he had made roads in every direction from the root of the tree dug holes in a 100 places in the snow apparently to decieve me but I

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

soon got over my ill humour and gave it up that a Wolverine had fooled a Yankee. I went to the other Sheep and found all safe carried the meat to my horse mounted and went to Camp. Feby 15 the weather began to moderate and rain and on the 23d the ground was bare about the Mountain Feby 24th I left the Camp with a determination to go to the Eutaw Village at the SE extremity of the Lake to trade furs I travelled along the foot of the Mountain about 10 Mls when I stopped and deposited in the ground such articles as I did not wish to take with me The next day I travelled along the foot of the Mountain South about 30 Mls and encamped on a small spring branch which runs in a distance of 4 Mls from the mountain to the lake. This is a beautiful and fertile Valley intersected by large numbers of fine springs which flow from the mountain to the Lake and could with little labour and expense [be] made to irrigate the whole Valley. The following day I travelled about 15 Mls along the lake when a valley opened to my view stretching to the SE about 40 Mls and upwards of 15 Mls wide At the farther extremity of this valley lies Trimpannah or Eutaw lake composed of fresh water about 60 Mls in circumference The outlet of it is a stream about 30 Yds wide which, after cutting this valley thro the middle empties into the Salt Lake. I left the Lake and travelled up this Valley over smooth ground which the snow had long since deserted and the green grass and herbage were fast supplying its place After crossing several small streams which intersected this vale I arrived at the Village rode up to a lodge and asked of a young Indian who met me where Want a Sheep's lodge was but before he could reply a tall Indian very dark complected with a thin visage and a keen piercing eye having his Buffaloe robe thrown carelessly over his left shoulder gathered in folds around his waist and loosely held by his left hand stepped forth and answered in the Snake tongue "I am Want a Sheep", follow me' at the same time turning round and directing his course to a large white lodge. I rode to the door dismounted and followed him in he immediately ordered my horses to be unsaddled and turned loose to feed whilst their loads were carefully arranged in the lodge After the big pipe had gone round several times in silence he then began the conversation - I was asked the news, where travelling for what whom and how I replied to these several inquiries in the Snake tongue which was understood by all in the lodge. He then gave me an extract of all he had seen heard and done for 10 years past He had two Sons and one daughter grown to man and womanhood and the same number of less size his oldest son was married to a Snake Squaw and his daughter to a man of the Same nation The others yet remained single. After supper was over the females retired from the lodge and the principal men assembled to smoke and hear the news which occupied the time till near midnight when the assembly broke up the men retiring to their respective lodges and the women returned. I passed the time as pleasantly at this place as ever I did among Indians in the daytime I rode about the Valley hunting water fowl who rend the air at this season of the year with their cries and at night the Old Chief would amuse me with traditionary tales mixed with the grossest superstition some of which were not unlike the manners of Ancient Israelites. There seems to be a happiness in ignorance which knowledge and Science destroys here is a nation of people contented and happy they have fine horses and lodges and are very partial to the rifles of the white man If a Eutaw has 8 or 10 good horses a rifle and ammunition he is contented if he fetches a deer at night from the hunt joy beams in the faces of his wife and children and if he returns empty a frown is not seen in the countenances of his companions. The Buffaloe have long since left the shores of these Lakes and the hostile blackfeet have not left a footprint here for many years. During my stay with these Indians I tried to gain some information respecting the southern limits of the Salt Lake

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

but all that I could learn was that it was a sterile barren mountainous Country inhabited by a race of depraved and hostile savages who poisoned their arrows and hindered the exploring of the country. The Chiefs son informed me he had come from the largest Island in the lake a few days previous having passed the winter upon it with his family which he had conveyed backwards and forth on a raft of bulrushes about 12 ft square. He said there was large numbers of antelope on the Island and as there was no wood he had used wild Sage for fuel. The Old Chief told me he could recollect the time when the Buffaloe passed from the main land to the island without swimming and that the depth of the waters was yearly increasing. After obtaining all the furs I could from the Eutaws I started towards Fort Hall on the 27th of March and travelled along the borders of the Lake about 25 Mls. The fire had run over this part of the country the previous autumn and consumed the dry grass The new had sprung up to the height of 6 inches intermingled with various kinds of flowers in full Bloom. The shore of the Lake was swarming with waterfowls of every species that inhabits inland lakes. The next day I went on to Weavers river April 1st I left Wavers river and travelled along the [shore] to the NE extremity of the lake about 25 Mls. The next day I went on to Bear river and struck it about 15 Mls below Cache Valley and twelve Mls from the mouth There I found my winter Comrades and staid one night and then pursued my journey towards Fort Hall where I arrived on the 7th of April I hunted Beaver round the country near the Fort until the 15 of June when the party arrived from the Columbia river accompanied by a Presbyterian Missionary with his wife and one child on their way to the States. I left the Fort with them and conducted them to Green river where we arrived on the 5th of July when learning that no party was going to the States they concluded to return to the Columbia River and we retraced our steps to Fort Hall where we arrived on the 8th dy of August. I remained at the Fort until the 15 Sepr. and then started with Elbridge and my old Comrade from Vermont to hunt a few more Beaver we went to the head waters of Blackfoot where we staid 10 dys. and then crossed the mountain in a SW direction on to Bear river which we struck about 25 Mls below the Snake Lake. We continued huntin Beaver and Antelope between this place and the Soda Springs until the 10th of Octr. We then travelled down Bear river to Cache valley where we stopped until the 21st thence we followed down the river near where it empties into the Salt Lake. Along the bank of this stream for about 10 Mls from the Lake extends a barren clay flat destitute of Vegetation excepting a few willows along the banks of the river and scattering spots of Salt grass and Sage in one place there was about 4 or 5 acres covered about 4 inches deep with the most beautiful salt I ever saw. two crusts had formed one at the bottom and the other on the top which had protected it from being the least soiled between those crusts the salt was Completely dry loose and composed of very small grains of a snowy whiteness. We stopped about this place until the 5 of Novr. and then returned to Fort Hall where after remaining a few days we concluded to go on to the head streams of Port Neuf and stop until the waters froze up. We travelled up about 40 Mls and arranged an encampment in a beautiful valley as the weather began to grow cold - In the year 1836 large bands of Buffaloe could be seen in almost every little Valley on the small branches of this Stream at this time the only traces which could be seen of them were the scattered bones of those that had been killed. Their trails which had been made in former years deeply indented in the earth were over grown with grass and weeds The trappers often remarked to each other as they rode over these lonely plains that it was time for the White man to leave the mountains as Beaver and game had nearly disappeared On the 15th of Novr I started up a high mountain in search of sheep after

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

hunting and scrambling over the rocks for half the day without seeing any traces of them I sat down upon a rock which overlooked the country below me at length casting a glance along the South side of the Mountain I discovered a large Grizzly bear sitting at the mouth of its den I approached within about 180 paces shot and missed it. he looked round and crept slowly into his den I reloaded my rifle went up to the hole and threw down a stone weighing 5 or 6 lbs which soon rattled to the bottom and I heard no more I then rolled a stone weighing 3 or 400 lbs into the den stepped back two or three steps and prepared myself for the out come. The Stone had scarcely reached the bottom when the Bear came rushing out with his mouth wide open and was on the point of making a spring at me when I pulled trigger and Shot him thro. the left shoulder which sent him rolling down the Mountain It being near night I butchered him and left the Meat lying and returned to Camp. The next day I took the meat to camp where we salted and smoked it ready for winters use. We stopped about on these streams untill the 15th Decr. then returned to Fort Hall where we staid until the 24th Mrch. The winter was unusually Severe. The snow was 15 inches deep over the valley after settling and becoming hard, we had no thawing weather until the 18th of Mrch. when it began to rain and continued 4 dys and nights which drove the snow nearly all from the plains. Mch. 25 I started in company with Alfred Shutes my old Comrade from Vermont to go to the Salt Lake and pass the Spring hunting water fowls eggs and Beaver. We left the Fort and travelled in a South direction to the mountain about 30 Mls. The next day we travelled South about 15 Mls thro. a low defile and the day following we crossed the divide and fell onto a stream called "Malade" or Sick river which empties into Bear river about 10 Mls from the mouth. This stream takes its name from the Beaver which inhabit it living on poison roots. Those who eat their meat in a few hours become sick at the stomach and the whole system is filled with cramps and severe pains but I have never known or heard of a persons dying with this disease We arrived at the mouth of Bear river on the 2d of April. Here we found the ground dry the grass green and myriads of Swans, Geese Brants and Ducks which kept up a continual hum day and night assisted by the uncouth notes of the Sand hill Cranes. The geese Ducks and Swans are very fat at this season of the year We caught some few Beaver and feasted on Fowls and Eggs, until the 20th May and returned to the Fort where we stopped until the 20th June when a small party arrived from the Mouth of the Columbia river on their way to the United States and my comrade made up his mind once more to visit his native Green Mountains after an absence of 16 years whilst I determined on going to the Mouth of the Columbia and settle myself in the Willamette or Multnoma Valley I accompanied my comrade up Ross's fork about 25 Mls on his journey and the next morning after taking an affectionate leave of each other. I started to the mountain for the purpose of killing Elk and drying meat for my journey to the Willamette Valley. I ascended to the top of Rosses mountain (on which the snows remain till the latter part of Aug.) Sat down under a pine and took a last farewell view of a country over which I had travelled so often under such a variety of circumstances The recollections of the past connected with the scenery now spread out before me put me somewhat in a Poetical humour and for the first time I attempted to frame my thoughts into rhyme but if Poets will forgive me for this intrusion I shall be cautious about trespassing on their grounds in future. In the evening I killed an Elk and on the following day cured the meat for packing from thence I returned to the fort where I staid till the 22d Aug In the meantime there arrived at the Fort a party of Emigrants from the States on their way to Oregon Territory among whom was Dr. E White U S sub agent for the Oregon Indians. 23d I started with

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

them and arrived at the Falls of the Willamette river on the 26 day of Septr. 1842. It would be natural for me to suppose that after escaping all the danger attendant for upon nearly nine years residence in a wild inhospitable region like the Rocky Mountains where I was daily and a great part of the time hourly anticipating danger from hostile Savages and other sources, I should on arriving in a civilized and enlightened community live in comparative security free from the harassing intrigues of Dames Fortunes Eldest daughter but I found it was all a delusion for danger is not always the greatest when most apparent as will appear in the sequel. On arriving at the Falls of the Willamette I found a number of Methodist Missionaries and American Farmers had formed themselves into a Company for the purpose of Erecting Mills and a Sawmill was then building on an Island standing on the brink of the Falls which went into operation in about 2 months after I arrived In the meantime Dr John McLoughlin a chief Factor of the Hudson Bay Co. who contemplated leaving the service of the Company and permanently settling with his family and Fortune in the Willamette Valley laid off a town (the present Oregon City) on the east side of the falls and began erecting a sawmill on a site he had prepared some years previous by cutting a race thro. the rock to let the water on to his works when they should be constructed. The following Spring the American Co commenced building a flour Mill and I was employed to assist in its construction. On the 6th day of June I was engaged with the contractor in blasting off some points of rock in order to sink the water sill to its proper place when a blast exploded accidentally by the concussion of small particles of rock near the Powder a piece of rock weighing about 60 lbs. struck me on the right side of the face and knocked me senseless 6 feet backwards

I recovered my senses in a few minutes and was assisted to walk to my lodgings. Nine particles of rock of the size of wild goose shot Each, had penetrated my right eye and destroyed it forever. the Contractor escaped with the loss of two fingers of his left hand

APPENDIX

It has been my design whilst Keeping a journal to note down the principal circumstances which came under my immediate observation as I passed along and I have mostly deferred giving a general description of Indians and animals that inhabit the Rocky Mountains until the latter end in order that I might be able to put the information I have collected in a more compact form. I have been very careful in gathering information from the most intelligent Indians and experienced White hunters but have excluded from this journal such parts (with few exceptions) as I have not proved true by experience. I am fully aware of the numerous statements which have been given to travellers in a jocular manner by the hunters and traders among the Rocky Mountains merely to hear themselves talk or accoring to the Mountaineers expression give them a long yarn or `Fish Story` to put in their journals. and I have frequently seen those `Fish Stories` published with the original very much enlarged which had not at first the slightest ground for truth to rest upon It is utterly impossible for a person who is merely travelling thro. or even residing one or two years in the Rock Mountains to give an accurate description of the Country or its Inhabitants

I have never known but one Rocky Mountain[eer] to keep a regular journal, and he could not have visited the Northern part of them as I am confident his Compiler (Mr. Flint) would not knowingly be led into such errors as occur in James O`Patties Journal, both in regard to the location of the country and Indians inhabiting the northern section of it. He says the `Flathead nation of Indians flattened their heads and lived between the Platte and Yellow Stone rivers` which is not nor ever was the case in either instance, he also says that Lewi`s river and the Arkansas head

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

near each other in Long's Peak. I never was at Long's Peak or the head of the Arkansas river but am fully confident can [not] be within 300 Mls. of the source of Lewi's river. These are among the numerous errors which I discovered in reading James O Pattie's Journal Embellished by Mr. Flint of Cincinnati These are among the reasons for which I offer this to public view hoping that it not only may be of interest to myself but the means of correcting some erroneous statements which have gone forth to the world unintentionally perhaps by their authors.

THE WOLVERINE, CARCAJOU OR GLUTTON

This Species of animals is very numerous in the Rocky Mountains and very mischievous and annoying to the Hunters They often get into the traps setting for Beaver or searching out the deposits of meat which the weary hunter has made during a toilsome days hunt among mountains too rugged and remote for him to bear the reward of his labors to the place of Encampment, and when finding these deposits the Carcajou carries off all or as much of the contents as he is able secreting it in different places among the snow rocks or bushes in such a manner that it is very difficult for man or beast to find it. The avaricious disposition of this animal has given rise to the name of Glutton by Naturalists who suppose that it devours so much at a time as to render it stupid and incapable of moving or running about but I have never seen an instance of this Kind on the contrary I have seen them quite expert and nimble immediately after having carreyd away 4 or 5 times their weight in meat. I have good reason to believe that the Carcajou's appetite is easily satisfied upon meat freshly killed but after it becomes putrid it may become more Voracious but I never saw one myself or a person who had seen one in a stupid dormant state caused by Gluttony altho I have often wished it were the case The body is thick and long the legs short, the feet and Claws are longer in proportion than those of the Black bear which it very much resembles. with the exception of its tail which is 12 inches long and bushy. Its body is about 3 ft long and stands fifteen inches high its colour is black except along the sides which are of a dirty white or light brown -

Its movements are somewhat quicker than those of the Bear and it climbs trees with ease. I have never known either by experience or information the Carcajou to prey upon animals of its own killing larger than very young fawns or lambs altho. it has been described by Naturalists and generally believed that it climbs trees and leaps down upon Elk Deer and other large animals and clings to their back till it kills them in spite of their efforts to get rid of it by speed or resistance but we need go no further than the formation of the animal to prove those statements erroneous. Its body legs feet and mouth are shaped similarly to the Black Bear as has been already stated but its claws are somewhat longer and straighter in proportion and like the Bear its claws are somewhat blunted at the points which would render it impossible for them to cling to the back of an Elk or Deer while running. I do not pretend to say however what may be its habits in other countries I only write from Experience. They do not den up like the Bear in winter but ramble about the streams among the high mountains where they find springs open - its hair is 3 inches long and in the Summer is coarse like the Bear but in winter it is near as fine as that of the Red Fox The female brings forth its young in April and generally brings two at a birth

THE WOLF

Of this Species of animals there are several kinds as the Buffaloe Wolf the Big Prarie Wolf and the small prarie or Medicine Wolf. The Buffaloe wolf is from 2 to 3 ft high and from 4 to 5 ft long from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail its hair is long coarse and shaggy Its color

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

varies from a dark gray to a snowy whiteness. They are not ferocious towards man and will run at sight of him. The big Prarie wolf is 2 ft high and 3 1/2 ft long; its hair is long and shaggy: its color is a dirty grey often inclining to a brown or brindle. The least kind is little Prarie or Medicine Wolf: its size is somewhat larger than the red fox: its color is brownish grey and its species something between the Big Wolf and the Fox. The Indians are very superstitious about this animal when it comes near a Village and barks they say there is people near Some pretend to distinguish between its warning the approach of friends and enemies and in the latter case I have often seen them secure their horses and prepare themselves to fight. I have often seen this prophecy tolerably accurately fulfilled and again I have as often seen it fail but a supperstitious Indian will always account for the failure The habits of these three kinds of wolves are similar Their rutting season is in March, the female brings forth from 2 to 6 at a birth

THE PANTHER

This animal is rarely seen in the plains but confines itself to the more woody and mountainous districts its color is light brown on the back and the belly is a sort of ash color: its length is 5 ft from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail which is about 1/2 the length of the body it is very destructive on Sheep and other animals that live on high mountains but will run at the sight of a man and has a great antipathy to fire -

THE MARMOT

This animal inhabits the rocks and precipices of the highest mountains its color is a dark brown its size less than the smallest rabbit: its ears are shaped like those of the rat and its cry resembles that of the bleating of the young lamb during the summer it collects large quantities of hay and moss with which it secures its habitation from the cold during the winter. On my first acquaintance with this animal I was led to suppose that the hay which they accumulated in Summer was calculated to supply them with food during the winter but this I found to be erroneous by visiting their habitation in the early part of Spring and finding their stock in nowise diminished. I have good reason to suppose that they lie dormant during the winter.

THE PORCUPINE

This species of animals are too well known to need a minute description in this place they are however very numerous and their flesh is much esteemed by some of the Indian tribes for food and their quills are held in the highest estimation by all for embroidering their dresses and other [furniture] which is done with peculiar elegance and uncommon skill it subsists chiefly on the bark of trees and other Vegetables.

THE BADGER

This species of animals are numerous in the Rocky Mountains their skins are much used by the Snake and Bonnak Indians for clothing as well as their flesh for food. They make their habitation in the ground in the most extensive plains and are found 10 Mls from water -

THE GROUND HOG

These animals are also very numerous and their skins much used by the Indians for clothing in sections of country where Deer and Buffaloe are not to be found they are not so large as the ground hog of the N States but are in all respects the same species. They live among the rocks near streams and feed upon grass and other vegetables. The shrill cry with which their sentinels give warning danger resembles that of the U States

THE GRIZZLY BEAR

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Much has been said by travellers in regard to this animal yet while giving a description of animals that inhabit the Rocky Mountains I do not feel justified in silently passing over in silence the most ferocious species without endeavoring to contribute some little information respecting it which altho it may not be important I hope some of it at least will be new It lives chiefly upon roots and berries being of too slow a nature to live much upon game of its own killing and from May to Septr. it never tastes flesh. The rutting season is in Novr. and the Female brings forth from 1 to 3 at a birth I have not been able to ascertain the precise time that the female goes with young but I suppose from experience and enquiry it is about 14 weeks. The young are untameable and manifest a savage ferocity when scarcely old enough to crawl Several experiments have been tried in the Rocky Mountains for taming them but to no effect. They are possessed with great muscular strength I have seen a female which was wounded by a rifle ball in the loins so as to disable her kill her young with one stroke of the fore paw as fast as they approached her. If a young Cub is wounded an commences making a noise the mother immediately springs upon it and kills it when grown they never make a noise except a fearful growl they get to be fatter than any other animals in the Rocky Mts. during the season when wild fruit is abundant. The flesh of the Grizzly Bear is preferable to Pork - It likes in winter in caves in the Rocks or holes dug in the ground on high Ridges It loses no flesh while confined to its den in the winter but is equally as fat in the Spring when it leaves the den as when it enters it at the beginning of the winter. There is seldom to be found more than one in a den excepting the female and her young. I have seen them measure seven feet from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail. It will generally run from the scent of a man but when it does not get the scent it will often let him approach close enough to spring upon him and when wounded it is a dangerous animal to trifle with. Its speed is comparatively slow down hill but much greater in ascending it never climbs trees as its claws are too straight for that purpose.

THE BLACK BEAR

The Black Bear of the Mountains are much the same species of those in the States. In comparison with the Grizzly it is entirely harmless. It is seldom found in the plains but inhabits the Timbered and mountainous districts They are not very numerous and their habits are too well known to need a detailed description here

THE MOUNTAIN SHEEP OR BIG HORN

These animals answer somewhat to the description given by Naturalists of the Musmon or wild sheep which are natives of Greece Corsica and Tartary. The male and female very much resemble the domestic ram and Ewe but are much larger The horns of the males are much larger in proportion to the body than the domestic rams but those of the females are about in the same proportion to the domestic Ewe. In the Month of May after they have shed their old coat and the new one appears their color is dark blue or mouse color except the extremity of the rump and hinder parts of the thighs which are white. As the season advances and the hair grows long it gradually turns or fades to a dirty brown In the Mo. of Decr its hair is about 3 inches long thickly matted together rendering it impenetrable to the cold. Its hair is similar in texture to that of the Deer and like the latter it is short and smooth upon its forehead and legs. They inhabit the highest and most craggy mountains and never descend to the plains unless compelled by necessity. In the winter season the snow drives them down to the low craggy mountains facing the South but in the spring as the snow begin to recede they follow it, keeping close to where the grass is short and

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

tender - Its speed on the smooth ground is slower than the Deer - but in climbing steep rocks or precipices it is almost incredible insomuch that the wolf lynx and panther give up the Chase when ever the sheep reach the rugged crags

The fearful height from which it jumps and the small points on which it alights without slipping or missing its footing is astonishing to its pursuers whether man or beast its hooves are very hard and pointed and it reposes upon the most bleak points of rocks both in summer & winter. The male is a noble looking animal as he stands upon an elevated point with his large horns curling around his ears like the coils of a serpent and his head held proudly erect disdaining the lower region and its inhabitants its flesh has a similar taste to Mutton but its flavor is more agreeable and the meat more juicy Their rutting season is in Novr. when the rams have furious battles with each other in the same manner as the domestic rams - The victor often Knocks his opponent over a high precipice when he is dashed to pieces in the fall. The sound of their heads coming in contact is often heard a mile distant - The Female produces from one to 3 at a birth the lambs are of a whitish color very innocent and playful. Hunting Sheep is often attended with great danger especially in the winter season when the rocks and precipices are covered with snow and ice but the excitement created by hunting them often enables the hunter to surmount obstacles which at other times would seem impossible The skins when dressed are finer softer and far superior to those of the Deer for clothing It is of them that the Squaws make their dresses which they embroider with beads and Porcupine quills dyed with various colors which are wrought into figures displaying a tolerable degree of taste and ingenuity

THE GAZELLE OR MOUNTAIN ANTELOPE

This animal for beauty and fleetness surpasses all the ruminating animals of the Rocky Mountains: its body is rather smaller than the common Deer: its color on the back and upper part of the sides is light brown the hinder part of the thighs and belly are white the latter having a yellowish east. The under part of the neck is white with several black stripes running across the throat down to the breast: its legs are very slim neat and small; its ears are black on the inside and around the edges with the remainder brown its horns are also black and flattened. the horns of the males are much longer than those of the females but formed in the same manner they project up about 8 inches on the males and then divide into 2 branches the one inclining backwards and the other forward with sometimes an additional branch coming out near the head inclining inward the two upper branches are 6 inches long the hindermost forming a kind of hook the nose is black and a strip of the same color runs round under the eyes and terminates under the ears: it runs remarkably smooth and in the summer season the fleetest horses but rarely overtake it. Its natural walk is stately and elegant but it is very timid and fearful and can see to a great distance but with all its timidity and swiftness of foot its curiosity often leads it to destruction if it discovers anything of a strange appearance (particularly anything red) it goes directly to it and will often approach within 30 paces they are very numerous in the plains but seldom found among timber, their flesh is similar to venison the female produces two at a birth and the young are suckled until a month old - They are easily domesticated

THE BLACK TAILED DEER

This animal is somewhat larger than the common Deer of the US: its ears are very long from which it has derived the appellation of Mule Deer: its color in summer is red but in the latter part of Aug. its hair turns to a deep blue ground with about half an inch of white on each hair

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

one fourth of an inch from the outer ends which presents a beautiful grey color: it lives among the mountains and seldom descends among the plains: its flesh is similar in every respect to the common Deer. the tail is about 6 inches long and the hair's upon it smooth except upon the end where there is a small tuft of black. The female goes six months with young and generally produces two at a birth the young is brot forth in April and remains in an almost helpless state for one month during its state of inability the mother secrets it in some secure Place in the long grass and weeds where it remains contented while she often wanders half a mile from it in search of food. The color of the fawn is red intermingled with white spots, and it is generally believed by Indians that so long as those spots remain (which is about 2 1/2 months) that no beast of prey can scent them - This I am inclined to believe as I have often seen wolves pass very near the place where fawns were laying without stopping or altering their course and were it not for some secret provision of nature the total anihilation of this species of animal would be inevitable in those countries invested by wolves and other beasts of prey as in the Rocky Mts - This safeguard is given by the Great Founder of nature not only to the Black Tailed Deer but all of the species including Elk and Antelope whose young are spotted at their birth I do not consider that the mere white spots are a remedy against the Scent of wild beasts. but they mark the period of inability for when those disappear the little animals are capable of eluding their pursuers by flight; the male like the common Deer drops its horns in Feby. it then cannot be distinguished from the female except by its larger size

#### THE RABBIT

This species of animals is very numerous and various in their sizes and colors. The large Hares of the plains are very numerous, the common sized rabbit are equally or more numerous than the others and there is also the small brown rabbit which does not change its color during the winter as do the others, but the most singular kind is the black rabbit it is a native of mountaneous forests its color is Coal black excepting two small white spots which are on the throat and lower part of the belly In winter its color is milk white: its body is about the size of the common rabbit with the exception of its ears which are much longer Another kind is the Black tailed Rabbit of the plains it is rather larger than the common rabbit and derives its name from the color of its tail which never changes its color

#### THE ELK

This animal is Eight feet long from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail and stands 4 1/2 ft. high its proportions are similar to those of the Deer except the tail which is 4 inches long and composed of a black gummy substance intermingled with fibres around the bone, the whole being clothed with skin and covered with hair like the body. Its color in summer is red but in winter is a browish grey except the throat and belly the former being dark brown and the latter white inclining to yellow extending to the hind part of the thighs as far as the insertion of the tail - They are very timid and harmless even when so disabled as to render escape impossible its speed is very swift when running single but when running in large bands they soon become wearied by continual collision with each other and if they are closely pursued by the hunter on horse back they soon commence dropping down flat on the ground to elude their pursuers and will suffer themselves to be killed with a knife in this position: when the band is first located the hunters keep at some distance behind to avoid dispersing them and to frighten them the more a continual noise is kept up by hallooging and shooting over them which causes immediate confusion and collision of

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the band and the weakest Elk soon begin to drop on the ground exhausted: their rutting time is in Sepr. when they collect in immense bands among the timber along the streams and among the Mts. It has been stated by Naturalists that the male is a very formidable and dangerous animal when pursued but I never saw it act on the offensive neither have I ever known one to offer resistance in defense of itself against man otherwise than by involuntary motions of its head or feet when too much disabled to raise from the ground. I have often seen the female come about the hunter who has found where her young is secreted uttering the most pitiful and persuasive moans and pleading in the most earnest manner that a dumb brute is capable of for the life of her young This mode of persuasion would I think excite in the sympathy breast of any human that was not entirely destitute of the passion - The fawn has a peculiar cry after it is able to run which resembles the faint scream of a child by which it answers the Dam who calls it by a note similar to the scream of a woman in distress

In the month of Sepr. the males have a peculiar shrill call which commences in a piercing whistle and ends in a coarse gurgling in the throat by this they call the females to assemble and each other to the combat in which by their long antlers they are rendered formidable to each other the hair stands erect and the head is lowered to give or receive the attack but the Victor seldom pursues the vanquished

#### THE BUFFALOE OR BISON

This animal has been so minutely described by travellers that I have considered it of little importance to enter into the details of its shape and size, and shall therefore omit those descriptions with which I suppose the public to be already acquainted, and try to convey some idea of its peculiarities which probably are not so well known. The vast numbers of these animals which once traversed such an extensive region in Nth. America are fast diminishing. The continual increasing demand for robes in the civilised world has already and is still contributing in no small degree to their destruction, whilst on the other hand the continual increase of wolves and other 4 footed enemies far exceeds that of the Buffaloe when these combined efforts for its destruction is taken into consideration, it will not be doubted for a moment that this noble race of animals, so useful in supplying the wants of man, will at no far distant period become extinct in North America. The Buffaloe is already a stranger, altho so numerous 10 years ago, in that part of the country which is drained by the sources of the Colorado, Bear and Snake Rivers and occupied by the Snake and Bonnack Indians. The flesh of the Buffaloe Cow is considered far superior to that of the domestic Beef and it is so much impregnated with salt that it requires but little seasoning when cooked. All the time, trouble and care bestowed by man upon improving the breed and food of meat cattle seems to be entirely thrown away when we compare those animals in their original state which are reared upon the food supplied them by Nature with the same species when domesticated and fed on cultivated grasses and grains and the fact seems to justify the opinion that Nature will not allow herself to be outdone by art for it is fairly proved to this enlightened age that the rude and untaught savage feasts on better beef and Mutton than the most learned and experienced Agriculturists now if every effect is produced by a cause perhaps I may stumble upon the cause which produces the effect in this instance at any rate I shall attempt it - In the first place, the rutting season of the Buffaloe is regular commencing about the 15th of July when the males and females are fat, and ends about the 15 of Aug. Consequently the females bring forth their young in the latter part of April and the first of May when the grass is most luxuriant and thereby en-

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

ables the cow to afford the most nourishment for her calf and enables the young to quit the natural nourishment of its dam and feed upon the tender herbage sooner than it would at any other season of the year. Another proof is that when the rutting season commences the strongest healthiest and most vigorous Bulls drive the weaker ones from the cows hence the calves are from the best breed which is thereby kept upon a regular basis. In summer season they generally go to water and drink once in 24 hours but in the winter they seldom get water at all. The cows are fattest in Octr and the Bulls in July The cows retain their flesh in a great measure throughout the winter until the Spring opens and they get at water from whence they become poor in a short time So much for the regularity of their habits and the next point is the food on which they subsist The grass on which the Buffaloe generally feeds is short, firm and of the most nutritious kind. The salts with which the mountain regions is much impregnated are imbibed in a great degree by the vegetation and as there is very little rain in Summer Autumn or winter the grass arrives at maturity and dries in the sun without being wet it is made like hay; in this state it remains throughout the winter and while the spring rains are divesting the old growth of its nutritious qualities they are in the meantime pushing forward the new - The Buffaloe are very particular in their choice of grass always preferring the short of the uplands to that of the luxuriant growth of the fertile alluvial bottoms. Thus they are taught by nature to choose such food as is most palatable and she has also provided that such as is most palatable is the best suited to their condition and that condition the best calculated to supply the wants and necessities of her rude untutored children for whom they were prepared. Thus nature looks with a smile of derision upon the magnified efforts of art to excel her works by a continual breach of her laws The most general mode practiced by the Indians for killing Buffaloe is running upon horseback and shooting them with arrows but it requires a degree of experience for both man and horse to kill them in this manner with any degree of safety particularly in places where the ground is rocky and uneven. The horse that is well trained for this purpose not only watches the ground over which he is running and avoids the holes ditches and rocks by shortening or extending his leaps but also the animal which he is pursuing in order to prevent being `horned' when tis brot suddenly to bay which is done instantaneously and if the Buffaloe wheel to the right the horse passes as quick as thought to the left behind it and thereby avoids its horns but if the horse in close pursuit wheels on the same side with the Buffaloe he comes directly in contact with its horns and with one stroke the horses entrails are often torn out and his rider thrown headlong to the ground After the Buffaloe is brought to bay the trained horse will immediately commence describing a circle about 10 paces from the animal in which he moves continually in a slow gallop or trot which prevents the raging animal from making a direct bound at him by keeping it continually turning round until it is killed by the rider with arrows or bullets. If a hunter discovers a band of Buffaloe in a place too rough and broken for his horse to run with safety and there is smooth ground nearby he secretly rides on the leward side as near as he can without being discovered he then starts up suddenly without apparently noticing the Buffaloe and gallops in the direction he wishes the band to run the Buffaloe on seeing him run to the plain start in the same direction in order to prevent themselves from being headed and kept from the smooth ground The same course would be pursued if he wished to take them to any particular place in the mountains - One of the hunters first instructions to an inexperienced hand is "run towards the place where you wish the Buffaloe to run but do not close on them behind until they get to that place" for instance if the hunter is to the right

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

the leading Buffalo keep inclining to the right and if he should fall in behind and crowd upon the rear they would separate in different directions and it would be a mere chance if any took the direction he wished them - When he gets to the plain he gives his horse the rein and darts thro the band selects his victim reins his horse up along side and shoots and if he considers the wound mortal he pulls up the rein the horse knowing his business keeps along galloping with the band until the rider has reloaded when he darts forward upon another Buffalo as at first A Cow seldom stops at bay before she is wounded and therefore is not so dangerous as a Bull who wheels soon after he is pushed from the band and becomes fatigued whether he is wounded or not. When running over ground where there is rocks holes or gullies the horse must be reined up gradually if he is reined at all there is more accidents happens in running Buffaloes by the riders getting frightened and suddenly checking their horses than any other way. If they come upon a Gully over which the horse can leap by an extra exertion the best plan is to give him the rein and the whip or spur at the same time and fear not for any ditch that a Buffalo can leap can be cleared with safety by a horse and one too wide for a Buffalo to clear an experienced rider will generally see in time to check his horse gradually before he gets to it - And now as I have finished my description of the Buffalo and the manner of killing them I will put a simple question for the reader's solution -

If Kings Princes Nobles and Gentlemen can derive so much sport and Pleasure as they boast of in chasing a fox or simple hare all day? which when they have caught is of little or no benefit to them what pleasure can the Rocky Mountain hunter be expected to derive in running with a well trained horse such a noble and stately animal as the Bison? which when killed is of some service to him. There are men of noble birth noble Estate and noble minds who have attained to a tolerable degree of perfection in fox hunting in Europe and Buffalo hunting in the Rocky Mountains, and I have heard some of them decide that the points would not bear a comparison if the word Fashion could be stricken from the English language It also requires a considerable degree of practice to approach on foot and kill Buffalo with a Rifle A person must be well acquainted with the shape and make of the animal and the manner which it is standing in order to direct his aim with certainty - And it also requires experience to enable him choose a fat animal the best looking Buffalo is not always the fattest and a hunter by constant practice may lay down rules for selecting the fattest when on foot which would be no guide to him when running upon horseback for he is then placed in a different position and one which requires different rules for choosing.

#### THE SNAKE INDIANS

The appellation by which this nation is distinguished is derived from the Crows but from what reason I have never been able to determine They call themselves Sho-sho-nies but during an acquaintance of nine years during which time I made further progress in their language than any white man had done before me I never saw one of the nation who could give me either the derivation or definition of the word Sho sho nie - Their country comprises all the regions drained by the head branches of Green and Bear rivers and the East and Southern head branches of Snake River They are kind and hospitable to whites thankful for favors indignant at injuries and but little addicted to theft in their large villages I have seldom heard them accused of inhospitality on the contrary I have found it to be a general feature of their character to divide the last morsel of food with the hungry stranger let their means be what it might for obtaining the next meal The Snakes and in fact most of the Rocky Mountain Indians believe in a supreme Deity who resides

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

in the Sun and in infernal Deities residing in the Moon and Stars but all subject to the Supreme control of the one residing in the Sun - They believe that the Spirits of the departed are permitted to watch over the actions of the living and every warrior is protected by a peculiar guardian Angel in all his actions so long as he obeys his rules a violation of which subjects the offender to misfortunes and disasters during the displeasure of the offended Deity. Their Prophets Jugglers or Medicine Men are supposed to be guided by Dieties differing from the others insomuch as he is continually attended upon the devotee from birth gradually instilling into his mind the mysteries of his profession which cannot be transmitted from one mortal to another. The prophet or juggler converses freely with his supernatural director who guides him up from childhood in his manner of eating drinking and smoking particularly the latter for every Prophet has a different mode of handling filling lighting and smoking the big Pipe - Such as profound silence in the circle whilst the pipe is lighting the pipe turned round three times in the direction of the sun by the next person on the right previous to giving it to him or smoking with the feet uncovered Some cannot smoke in the presence of a female or a dog and a hundred other movements equally vague and superstitious which would be too tedious to mention here. A plurality of wives is very common among the Snakes and the marriage contract is dissolved only by the consent of the husband after which the wife is at liberty to marry again Prostitution among the women is very rare and fornication whilst living with the husband is punished with the utmost severity The women perform all the labor about the lodge except the care of the horses. They are cheerful and affectionate to their husbands remarkably fond and careful of their children

The Government is a Democracy deeds of valor promotes the Chief to the highest points attainable from which he is at any time liable to fall for misdemeanor in office: their population amts. to between 5 and 6,000 about half of which live in large Villages and range among the Buffaloe: the remainder live in small detached companies comprising of from 2 to 10 families who subsist upon roots fish seeds and berries They have but few horses and are much addicted to thieving from their manner of living they have received the appellation of "Root Diggers -they rove about in the mountains in order to seclude themselves from their warlike enemies the Blackfeet - their arrows are pointed with quartz or obsideon which they dip in poison extracted from the fangs of the rattle snake and prepared with antelopes liver these they use in hunting and war and however slight the wound may be that is inflicted by one of them - death is almost inevitable but the flesh of animals killed by these arrows is not injured for eating - The Snakes who live upon Buffaloe and live in large villages seldom use poison upon their arrows either in hunting or war - They are well armed with fusees and well supplied with horses they seldom stop more than 8 or 10 dys in one place which prevents the accumulation of filth which is so common among Indians that are Stationary. their lodges are spacious neatly made of dressed Buffaloe skins, sewed to gether and set upon 11 or 13 long smooth poles to each lodge which are dragged along for that purpose. In the winter of 1842 the principal Chief of the Snakes died in an appoplectic fit and on the following year his brother died but from what disease I could not learn. These being the two principal pillars that upheld the nation the loss of them was and is to this day deeply deplored - immediately after the death of the latter the tribe scattered in smaller villages over the country in consequence of having no chief who could control and keep them together - their ancient warlike spirit seemed to be buried with their leaders and they are fast falling into degradation, without a head the body is of little use

### THE CROW INDIANS

This once formidable tribe once lived on the North side of the Missouri East of the mouth of the Yellow Stone about the year 1790 they crossed the Missouri and took the region of country which they now inhabit, by conquest from the Snakes It is bounded on the East and South by a low range of Mountains called the "Black Hills" on the West by the Wind river Mountains and on the North by the Yellow Stone river The face of the country presents a diversity of rolling hills and Valleys and includes several plains admirably adapted for grazing. the whole country abounds with Coal and Iron in great abundance and signs of Lead and Copper are not infrequently seen and gypsum exists in immense quarries. timber is scarce except along the streams and on the mountains wild fruit such as cherries service berries currants gooseberries and plums resembling the pomgranate are abundant - The latter grow on small trees generally 6 or 8 feet high varying in color and flavor from the most acute acid to the mildest sweetness - Hops grow spontaneously and in great abundance along the streams. When the Crows first conquered this country their numbers amounted to about 8,000 persons but the ravages of war and small pox combined has reduced their numbers to about 2,000. of which upwards of 1200 are females They are proud treacherous thievish insolent and brave when they are possessed with a superior advantage but when placed in the opposite situation they are equally humble submissive and cowardly Like the other tribes of Indians residing in the Rocky Mts. they believe in a Supreme Deity who resides in the Sun and lesser deities residing in the Moon and Stars. Their government is a kind of Democracy The Chief who can enumerate the greatest number of valiant exploits is unanimously considered the Supreme ruler All the greatest warriors below him and above a certain grade are Counsellors and take their seats in the council according to their respective ranks. the voice of the lowest rank having but little weight in discussing matters of importance. When a measure is adopted by the council and approved by the head Chief it is immediately put in force by the order of the military commander who is appointed by the Council to serve for an indefinite period A standing Company of soldiers is kept up continually for the purpose of maintaining order in the Village. The Captain can order any young man in the Village to serve as a soldier in turn and the council only can increase or diminish the number of soldiers at pleasure. The greatest Chiefs cannot violate the orders which the Capt. receives from the Council - No office or station is hereditary neither does wealth constitute dignity. The greatest Chief may fall below the meanest citizen for misdemeanor in office and the lowest citizen may rise to the most exalted station by the performance of valiant deeds - The Crows both male and female are tall well proportioned handsomely featured with very light copper coloured skins. Prostitution of their wives is very common but sexual intercourse between near relatives is [strictly] prohibited - when a young man is married he never after speaks to his mother in law nor the wife to the father in law altho they may all live in the same lodge If the husband wishes to say anything to the mother in law he speaks to the wife who conveys it to the mother and in the same way communication is conveyed between the wife and father in law - This custom is peculiar to the Crows They never intermarry with other nations but a stranger if he wishes can always be accommodated with a wife while he stops with the Village but cannot take her from it when he leaves - Their laws for killing Buffalo are most rigidly enforced. No person is allowed to hunt Buffalo in the vicinity where the village is stationed without first obtaining leave of the council - for the first offense the offenders hunting apparatus are broken and destroyed for second his horses are killed his property destroyed and he beaten with rods the third is punished by death

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

by shooting - When a decree is given by the council it is published by the head Chief who rides to and fro thro. the village like a herald and proclaims it aloud to all - They generally kill their meat by surrounding a band of Buffalo and when once enclosed but few escape - The first persons who arrive at a dead Buffalo is entitled to one third of the meat and if the person who killed it is the fourth one on the spot he only gets the hide and tongue but in no wise can he get more than one third of the meat if a second and third person appears before It is placed on the horses designed for packing. A person whether male or female poor or rich gets the 2d or 3d division according to the time of arrival each one knowing what parts they are allowed - This is also a custom peculiar to the Crows which has been handed down from time immemorial - Their language is clear distinct and not intermingled with guttural sounds which renders it remarkably easy for a stranger to learn It is a high crime for a father or mother to inflict corporeal punishment on their male children and if a Warrior is struck by a stranger he is irretrievably disgraced unless he can kill the offender immediately Taking prisoners of war is never practiced with the exception of subjecting them to servile employments - Adult males are never retained as prisoners but generally killed on the spot but young Males are taken to the Village and trained up in their mode of warfare until they imbibe the Crow Customs and language when they are eligible to the highest station their deeds of valor will permit. The Crows are remarkably fond of gaudy and glittering ornaments. The Eye teeth of the Elk are used in connexion with [?] are used as a circulating medium and are valued according to their size - There exists among them many customs similar to those of the ancient Israelites A woman after being delivered of a male child cannot approach the lodge of her husband under 40 dys and for a female 50 is required - and 7 dys seperation for every natural menses. The distinction between clean and unclean beasts bears a great degree of similarity to the Jewish law. They are remarkable for their cleanliness and variety of cookery which exceeds that of any other tribe in the Rocky Mts. They seldom use salt but often season their cookery with herbs of various kinds and flavors.

Sickness is seldom found amongst them and they naturally live to a great age. There is no possibility of ascertaining the precise age of any Mountain Indians but an inference may be drawn with tolerable correctness from their outward appearance and such indefinite information from their own faint recollections of dates as may be collected by an intimate acquaintance with their habits customs traditions and manner of living I have never known a Mountain [Indian] to be troubled with the tooth ache or decayed teeth nither have I ever known a case of insanity except from known and direct causes. I was upon one particular occasion invited to smoke in a circle comprising thirteen aged Crow warriors the youngest of whom appeared to have seen upwards of 100 winters and yet they were all in good health and fine spirits - they had long since left the battle ground and council room to young aspirants of 60 and under it is really diverting to hear those hoary headed veterans when they are collected together conversing upon the good old times of their forefathers and condemning the fashions of the present age - They have a tradition among them that their most powerful Chief (who died sometime since) commanded the Sun and Moon to stand still two days and nights in the valley of Wind River whilst they conquered the Snakes and that they obeyed him. They point out the place where the same chief changed the wild sage of the prairie into a band of Antelope when the Village was in starving condition I have also been shown a spring on the west side of the Big horn river below the upper Mountain which they say was once bitter but thro. the medicine of this great Chief the waters were made sweet. They have

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

a great aversion to distilled spirits of any kind terming it the 'White mans fool water' and say if a Crow drink it he ceases to be a Crow and becomes a foolish animal so long as he senses are absorbed by its influence

THE BEAVER

The Beaver as almost every one knows is an amphibious animal but the instinct with which it is possessed surpasses the reason of a no small portion of the human race. Its average size is about 2 1/2 feet long from the point of the nose to the insertion of the tail, which is from 10 to 15 inches long and from 5 to 9 broad flat in the shape of a spade rounded at the corners covered with a thick rough skin resembling scales. the tail serves the double purpose of steering and assisting it thro. the water by a quick up and down motion The hind feet are webbed and the toe next the outside on each has a double nail which serves the purpose of a toothpick to extract the splinters of wood from their teeth as they are the only animals that cut large trees for subsistence they are also the only animals known to be furnished with nails so peculiarly adapted to the purpose for which they are used. Its color is of a light brown generally but I have seen them of a jet black frequently and in one instance I saw one of a light cream color having the feet and tail white The hair is of two sorts the one longer and coarser the other fine short and silky Their teeth are like those of the rat but are longer and stronger in proportion to the size of the animals. To a superficial observer they have but one vent for their excrements and urine but upon a closer examination without dissection seperate openings will be seen likewise 4 glands opening forward of the arms two containing oil with which they oil their coats the others containing the castorum a collection of gummy substance of a yellow color which is extracted from the food of the animal and conveyed thro. small vessels into the glands. it is this deposit which causes the destruction of the Beaver by the hunters - When a Beaver Male or female leaves the lodge to swim about their pond they go to the bottom and fetch up some mud between their forepaws and breast carry it on to the bank and emit upon it a small quantity of castorum - another Beaver passing the place does the same and should a hundred Beaver pass within the scent of the place they would each throw up mud covering up the old castorum and emit new upon that which they had thrown up. The Trapper extracts this substance from the gland and carries it in a wooden box he sets his trap in the water near the bank about 6 inches below the Surface throws a handful of mud on the bank about one foot from it and puts a small portion of the castorum thereon after night the Beaver comes out of his lodge smells the fatal bait 2 or 300 yds. distant and steers his course directly for it he hastens to ascend the bank but the traps grasps his foot and soon drowns him in the struggle to escape for the Beaver though termed an amphibious animal cannot respire beneath the water. The female brings forth her young in April and produces from 2 to 6 at a birth but what is most singular she seldom raises but 2 a male and a female. This peculiarity of the Beaver has often been a matter of discussion among the most experienced hunters whether the dam or father kills the young but I have come to the conclusion that it is the mother for the following reasons 1st The Male is seldom found about the lodge for 10 or 15 days after the female brings forth. 2dly there is always a male and female saved alive 3dly I have seen the dead kittens floating in the ponds freshly killed and at the same times have caught the male where he was living more than 1/2 a mile from the Lodge. I have found where beaver are confined to a limited space they kill nearly all the kittens which is supposed to be done to keep them from becoming too numerous and destroying the timber and undergrowth too fast - I have caught 50 full grown Beaver in a valley surrounded by mountains

---

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

and cascades where they had not been disturbed for 4 yrs and with this number there were but 5 or 8 kittens and yearlings. The young ones pair off generally at 3 yrs. of age to set up for themselves and proceed up or down a stream as instinct may suggest until they find the best place for wood and undergrowth connected with the most convenient place for building a dam which is constructed by cutting small trees and brush dragging them into the water on both sides of the stream and attaching one end to each bank while the other extends into the stream inclining upwards against the current then mud small stones and rubbish are dragged or pushed on to it to sink it to the bottom they proceed in this manner until the two ends meet in the middle of the stream the whole forming a sort of curved line across but the water raising often forces the dam down the stream until it becomes nearly strait - In the meantime they have selected a spot for the lodge either upon the bank or upon a small Island formed by the rising water - but it is generally constructed on an island in the middle of the pond with sticks and mud in such a manner that when the water is raised sufficiently high which is generally from 4 to 7 ft. it has the appearance of a potash kettle turned on the surface bottom upwards standing from 4 to 6 ft above the water there is no opening above the water but generally two below. The floor on which they sleep and have their beds of straw or grass is about 12 inches above the water level the room is arched over and kept neat and clean When the leaves begin to fall the Beavers commence laying in their winter store. They often cut down trees from 12 to 18 inches in diameter and cut off the branches covered with smooth bark into pieces from two to six feet long these they drag into the water float them to the lodge sink them to the bottom of the pond and there fasten them in this manner they proceed till they have procured about 1/2 a cord of wood solid measure for each Beavers winters supply - by this time the dam freezes over and all is shut up with ice. The Beaver has nothing to do but leap into the water thro. the subterranean passage and bring up a stick of wood which is to furnish him his meal this he drags by one end into the lodge eats off the bark to a certain distance then cuts off the part he has stripped and throws it into the water thro. another passage and so proceeds until he has finished his meal. When the Ice and snow disappears in the spring they clear their pond of the stripped wood and stop the leaks which the frosts have occasioned in their dam. Their manner of enlarging their lodge is by cutting out the inside and adding more to the out - the covering of the lodge is generally about 18 inches thick formed by sticks and mud intermingled in such a manner that it is very difficult for Man beast or cold to penetrate through it

THE HUNTER'S FAREWELL

Adieu ye hoary icy mantled towers  
That oftentimes pierce the onward fleeting mists  
Whose feet are washed by gentle summer showers  
While Phoebus' rays play on your sparkling crests  
The smooth green vales you seem prepared to guard  
Beset with groves of ever verdant pine  
Would furnish themes for Albions noble bards  
Far 'bove a hunters rude unvarnish'd rhymes  
Adieu ye flocks that skirt the mountains brow  
And sport on banks of everliving snow  
Ye timid lambs and simple harmless Ewes  
Who fearless view the dread abyss below-

Journal of a Trapper

By Osborne Russell

---

Oft have I watched your seeming mad career  
While lightly tripping o'er those dismal heights  
Or cliffs o'erhanging yawning caverns drear  
Where none else treads save fowls of airy flight  
Oft have I climbed those rough stupendous rocks  
In search of food 'mong Nature's well fed herds  
Untill I've gained the rugged mountain's top  
Where Boreas reigned or feathered Monarchs soar'd  
On some rude cragg projecting from the ground  
I've sat a while my wearied limbs to rest  
And scann'd the unsuspecting flock around  
With anxious care selecting out the best  
The prize obtained with slow and heavy step  
Pac'd down the steep and narrow winding path  
To some smooth vale where chrystal streamlets met  
And skillful hands prepared a rich repast  
Then hunters jokes and merry humor'd sport  
Beguiled the time enlivened every face  
The hours flew fast and seemed like moments short  
'Til twinkling planets told of midnights pace  
But now those scenes of cheerful mirth are done  
The horned [herds] are dwindling very fast  
The numerous trails so deep by Bisons worn  
Now teem with weeds or over grown with grass  
A few gaunt Wolves now scattered or the place  
Where herds since time unknown to man have fed  
With lonely howls and sluggish onward pace  
Tell their sad fate and where their bones are laid  
Ye rugged mounts ye vales ye streams and trees  
To you a hunter bids his last farewell  
I'm bound for shores of distant western seas  
To view far famed Multnomahs fertile vale  
I'll leave these regions once famed hunting grounds  
Which I perhaps again shall see no more  
And follow down led by the setting sun  
Or distant sound of proud Columbia's roar

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Bibliographical Information

This work is a portion of a book originally published as:

Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains by George F. Ruxton, Esq. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street. 1847. Reprinted in 1849, 1861.

The book was published in the United States, under the same title, by Harper & Brothers, New York, 1848. It was reprinted in 1849, 1855, 1858, 1860.

Early in the 20th century, the Macmillan Company republished this book as two volumes in its "Outing Adventure Library" series, ed. by Horace Kephart. The first volume consisting of the initial chapters of the original book, was titled *Adventures in Mexico*, and was published in 1915. A second volume, titled *Wild Life in the Rocky Mountains*, included the remaining chapters covering Ruxton's travels in the Rocky Mountains, and was published in 1916. This volume was reprinted at least twice, in 1924 and 1937.

This digital edition is based on the latter volume:

Ruxton, George F. *Wild Life in the Rocky Mountains*. New York: The MacMillan Company, copyright 1916.

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

CHAPTER I

OUT OF OLD MEXICO

ON the 10th of November [1846] I left Chihuahua, bound for the capital of New Mexico. Passing the Rancho del Sacramento, where a few months after the Missourians slaughtered a host of Mexicans, we entered a large plain well covered with grass, on which were immense flocks of sheep. A coyote lazily crossed the road, and, stopping within a few yards, sat down upon its haunches, and coolly regarded us as we passed. Panchito had had a four days' rest, and was in fine condition and spirits, and I determined to try the mettle of the wolf; the level plain, with its springy turf, offering a fine field for a course.

Cantering gently at first, the coyote allowed me to approach within a hundred yards before he loped lazily away; but finding I was on his traces, he looked round, and, gathering himself up, bowled away at full speed. Then I gave Panchito the spur, and, answering it with a bound, we were soon at the stern of the wolf. Then, for the first time, the animal saw we were in earnest, and, with a sweep of his bushy tail, pushed for his life across the plain.

At the distance of two or three miles a rocky ridge was in sight, where he evidently thought to secure a retreat, but Panchito bounded along like the wind itself, and soon proved to the wolf that his race was run. After trying in vain to double, he made one desperate rush, upon which, lifting Panchito with rein and leg, came up and passed the panting beast, when, seeing that escape was impossible, he lay down, and with sullen and cowardly resignation, curled up for the expected blow, as, pistol in hand, I reined up Panchito at his side. However, I was merciful, and allowed the animal to escape.

At ten at night I arrived at the hacienda of El Sauz, belonging to the Governor of Chihuahua, Don Angel Trias. It was enclosed with a high wall, as a protection from the Indians, who, a short time before, had destroyed the cattle of the hacienda, filling a well in the middle of the corral with the carcasses of slaughtered sheep and oxen. It was still bricked up.

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

The next day we proceeded to another hacienda, likewise called after the willows, Los Sauzillos. Passing a large plain, in the midst of which stood a lone poplar, wolves were continually crossing the road, both the coyote and the large grey variety. I was this day mounted upon the alazan [roan] which I had purchased, at Guajoquilla. We were within sight of our halting-place for the night, when the horse, which had carried me all day without my having had recourse to whip or spur, suddenly began to flag, and I noticed that a profuse perspiration had broken out on its ears and neck. I instantly dismounted, and perceived a quivering in the flank and a swelling of the belly. Before I could remove the saddle the poor beast fell down, and, although I opened a vein and made every attempt to relieve it, it once more rose to its legs, and, spinning round in the greatest apparent agony, fell dead to the ground.

The cause of its death was, that my servant, contrary to my orders, had given the animals young corn the night before, which food is often fatal to horses not accustomed to feed on grain.

This rancho is situated on the margin of a lake of brackish water, and we found the people actual prisoners within its walls, the gates being closed, and a man stationed on the azotea with a large wall-piece, looking out for Indians. At night a large fire was kindled on the roof, the blaze of which illuminated the country far and near. Not a soul would venture after sunset outside the gate, which the majordomo, a Gachupin, refused to open to allow my servant to procure some wood for a fire to cook my supper, and we had to content ourselves with one of corncobs, which lay scattered about the corral.

On the 12th, passing Encinillas, a large hacienda belonging to Don Angel Trias, we encamped on the banks of an arroyo, running through the middle of a plain, walled by sierras, where the Apaches had several villages. This being very dangerous ground, we put out the fire at sunset, and took all precautions against surprise. The animals fared badly, the grass being thin and burned up by the sun, and what little there was being of bad quality.

The next day we reached the small village of El Carmen, and, camping by a little thread of a rivulet outside of the town, were surrounded by all the loafers of the village. The night was very cold, and our fire, the fuel for which we purchased, was completely surrounded by these idle vagabonds. At last, my temper being frozen out of me, I went up to the fire, and said, "Senores, allow me to present you with three rials, which will enable you to purchase wood for two fires; this fire I will be obliged to you if you will allow myself and fellow-travellers to warm ourselves by, as we are very cold; and also, with your kind permission, wish to cook our suppers by it." This was enough for them: a Mexican, like a Spaniard, is very sensitive, and the hint went through them. They immediately dispersed, and I saw no more of them the remainder of the evening.

Near El Carmen is a pretty little stream, fringed with alamos, which runs through a wild and broken country of sierras. The plains, generally about ten to twenty miles in length, are divided from each other by an elevated ridge, but there is no perceptible difference in the elevation of them from Chihuahua to El Paso. The road is level excepting in crossing these ridges, and hard everywhere except on the marshy plain of Encinillas, which is often inundated. This lake has no outlet, and is fed by numerous small streams from the sierras; its length is ten miles, by three in breadth. The marshy ground around the lake is covered with an alkaline efflorescence called tezquite, a substance of considerable value. The water, impregnated with salts, is brackish and unpleasant to the taste, but in the rainy season loses its disagreeable properties.

On the 14th we travelled sixty miles, and camped on a bare plain without wood or water, the

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

night being so dark that we were unable to reach Carrizal, although it was but a few miles distant from our encampment. The next morning we reached the village, where I stopped the whole day, during an extraordinary hurricane of wind, which rendered travelling impossible. We had been on short commons for two days, as the hungry escort had devoured my provisions, but here I resolved to have a feast, and, setting all hands to forage, on return we found our combined efforts had produced an imposing pile of several yards of beef (for here the meat is cut into long strips and dried), onions, chiles, frijoles, sweet corn, eggs, &c. An enormous olla [earthen pot] was procured, and everything was bundled pell-mell into it, seasoned with pepper and salt and chile. To protect the fire from the hurricane that was blowing, all the packs and saddles were piled round it, and my servant and the soldiers relieved each other in their vigilant watch of the precious compound, myself superintending the process of cooking. Our appetites, ravenous with a fast of twenty-four hours, were in first-rate order, but we determined that the pot should be left on the fire until the savory mess was perfectly cooked. It was within an hour or two of sunset, and we had not yet broken our fast. The olla simmered, and a savory steam pervaded the air. The dragoons licked their lips, and their eyes watered-never had they had such a feast in perspective; for myself, I never removed my eyes from the pot, and had just resolved that, when the puro in my mouth was smoked out, the puchero would have attained perfection. At length the moment arrived: my mozo, with a blazing smile, approached the fire, and with guarded hands seized the top of the olla, and lifted it from the ashes.

“Ave Maria Purissima! Santissima Virgen!” broke from the lips of the dragoons; “Mil carajos!” burst from the heart of the mozo; and I sank almost senseless to the ground. On lifting the pot the bottom fell out, and splash went everything into the blazing fire. Valgame Dios! what a moment was that! Stupefied, and hardly crediting our senses, we gazed at the burning, frizzling, hissing remnants, as they were consuming before our eyes. Nothing was rescued, and our elaborate feast was simplified into a supper of frijoles and chile colorado, which, after some difficulty, we procured from the village.

The next morning we started before daylight, and at sunrise watered our animals at the little lake called Laguna de Patos, from the ducks which frequent it; and at midday we halted at another spring, the Ojo de la Estrella -star spring-where we again watered them, as we should be obliged to camp that night without water. We chose a camping-ground in a large plain covered with mezquit, which afforded us a little fuel-now become very necessary, as the nights were piercingly cold. As we had been unable to procure provisions in Carrizal, we went to bed supperless, which was now a very usual occurrence. My animals suffered from the cold, which, coming as they did from the tierra caliente, they felt excessively, particularly a little blood horse with an exceedingly fine coat. I was obliged to share my blankets with this poor animal, or I believe it would have died in the night.

Just at daybreak the next morning I was riding in advance of the party, when I met a cavalcade of horsemen whose wild costume, painted faces, and arms consisting of bows and arrows, made me think at first that they were Indians. On their part, they evidently did not know what to make of me, and halted while two of them rode forward to reconnoitre. I quickly slipped the cover off my rifle, and advanced. Seeing my escort following, they saw we were amigos; but the nearer they approached me, the more certain was I that they were Apaches for they were all in Indian dress, and frightfully painted. I was as nearly as possible shooting the foremost, when he exclaimed in

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Spanish, "Adios, amigo! que novedades hay?" and I then saw a number of mules, packed with bales and barrels, behind him. They were Pasefios, on their way to Chihuahua, with aguardiente, raisins, and fruit; and shortly after passing them, I found on the road a large bag of pazas or raisins, which I pounced upon as a great prize, and, waiting until the escort came up, we dismounted, and, sitting at the roadside, devoured the fruit with great gusto, as this was our second day of banyan. This bag lasted for many days. I found the raisins a great improvement to stews, &c., and we popped a handful or two into every dish.

At ten o'clock we reached a muddy hole of water, entirely frozen - my animals refusing to drink, being afraid of the ice after we had broken it. The water was as thick as pea-soup; nevertheless we filled our huages with it, as we should probably meet with none so good that day. Towards sunset we passed a most extraordinary mountain of loose shifting sand, three miles in breadth, and, according to the Pasenos, sixty in length. The huge rolling mass of sand, is nearly destitute of vegetation, save here and there a bunch of greasewood half-buried in the sand. Road there is none, but a track across is marked by the skeletons and dead bodies of oxen, and of mules and horses, which everywhere meet the eye. On one ridge the upper half of a human skeleton protruded from the sand, and bones of animals and carcasses in every stage of decay. The sand is knee-deep, and constantly shifting, and pack-animals have great difficulty in passing.

After sunset we reached a dirty, stagnant Pool, known as the Ojo de Malayuca; but, as there was not a blade of grass in the vicinity, we were compelled to turn out of the road and search over the arid plain for a patch to camp in. At last we succeeded in finding a spot and encamped, without wood, water, or supper being the second day's fast. The next day, passing a broken country, perfectly barren, we struck into the valley of El Paso, and for the first time I saw the well-timbered bottom of the Rio Bravo del Norte. Descending a ridge covered with greasewood and mezquit, we entered the little village Of El Paso, with its vineyards and orchards and well-cultivated gardens lying along the right bank of the river. On entering the plaza I was immediately surrounded by a crowd, for my escort had ridden before me and mystified them with wonderful accounts of my importance. However, as I did not choose to enlighten them as to my destination or the object of my journey, they were fain to rest satisfied with the egregious lies of the dragones. In the plaza was a little guardhouse, where a ferocious captain was in command of a dirty dozen or two of soldados. This worthy, to show his importance, sent a sergeant to order my instant attendance at the guard-room. In as many words I told the astonished messenger to tell his officer "to go to the devil;" to his horror, and the delight of the surrounding crowd. The answer was delivered word for word, but I heard no more from the military hero. My next visitor was the prefecto, who is an important personage in a small place. That worthy, with a dignified air, asked in a determined tone, as much as to say to the crowd "See how soon I will learn his business"

"Por onde pasa usted, caballero?-Where are you bound?"

"Por Santa Fe y Nuevo Mejico," I answered.

"No, senor," he immediately rejoined, "this cannot be permitted: by the order of the Governor no one is allowed to go to the north; and I must request, moreover, that you exhibit your passport and other documentos."

"Hi lo tiene usted -here you have it"-I answered, producing a credential which at once caused the hat to fly from his head, and an offer of himself, "su casa, y todo lo que tiene, a mi disposicion - his house, and all in it, at my disposal." However, all his munificent offers were declined, as I had

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

letters to the cura, a young priest named Ortiz, whose unbounded hospitality I enjoyed during my stay.

CHAPTER II

THE JOURNEY OF THE DEAD

EL PASO DEL NORTE, so called from the ford of that river, which is here first struck and crossed on the way to New Mexico, is the oldest settlement in Northern Mexico, a mission having been established there by el Padre Fray Augustine Ruiz, one of the Franciscan monks who first visited New Mexico, as early as the close of the sixteenth century (about the year 1585). Fray Ruiz, in company with two others, named Venabides and Marcos, discovering in the natives a laudable disposition to receive the word of God and embrace "la santa fe Catolica," remained here a considerable time, preaching by signs to the Indians, and making many miraculous conversions. Eventually, Venabides having returned to Spain and given a glowing account of the riches of the country, and the Muy buen indoles - the very proper disposition of the aborigines - Don Juan Offate was despatched to conquer, take possession of, and govern the remote colony, and on his way to Santa Fe established a permanent settlement at El Paso. Twelve families from Old Castile accompanied Offate to Nuevo Mejico to form a colony, and their descendants still remain scattered over the province.

Several years after, when the Spanish colonists were driven out of New Mexico, they retreated to El Paso, where they erected a fortification, and maintained themselves until the arrival of reinforcements from Mexico. The present settlement is scattered for about fifteen miles along the right bank of the Del Norte, and contains five or six thousand inhabitants. The plaza, or village, of El Paso, is situated at the head of the valley, and at the other extremity is the presidio of San Eleazario. Between the two is a continued line of adobe houses, with their plots of garden and vineyard.

The farms seldom contain more than twenty acres, each family having a separate house and plot of land.

The Del Norte is dammed about a mile above the ford, and water is conveyed by an acequia madre - main canal - to irrigate the valley. From this acequia, other smaller ones branch out in every direction, until the land is intersected in every part with dykes, and is thus rendered fertile and productive.

The soil produces wheat, maize, and other grains, and is admirably adapted to the growth of the vine, which is cultivated here, and yields abundantly; and a wine of excellent flavor is made from the grapes. Brandy of a tolerable quality is also manufactured, and, under the name of aguardiente del Paso, is highly esteemed in Durango and Chihuahua. Under proper management wine-making here might become a very profitable branch of trade, as the interior of Mexico is now supplied with French wines, the cost of which, owing to the long land-carriage from the seaports, is enormous, and wine might be made from the Paso grape equal to the best growths of France or Spain. Fruits of all kinds, common to temperate regions, and vegetables, are abundant and of good quality.

The river bottom is timbered with cottonwoods, which extend a few hundred yards on each side the banks. The river itself is here a small turbid stream, with water of a muddy red, but in the season of the rains it is swollen to six times its present breadth, and frequently overflows the banks. It is of fordable depth in almost any part; but, from the constantly shifting quicksands and bars, is

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

always difficult, and often dangerous, to cross with loaded wagons. It abounds with fish and eels of large size. The houses of the Pasenos are built of the adobe, and are small but clean and neatly kept. Here, as everywhere else in Northern Mexico, the people are in constant fear of Indian attacks, and, from the frequent devastations of the Apaches, the valley has been almost swept of horses, mules, and cattle. The New Mexicans too, disguised as Indians, often plunder these settlements (as occurred during my visit, when two were captured), and frequently accompany the Apaches in their raids on the state of Chihuahua. - Cosas de Mejico!

At this time the Pasenos had enrolled themselves into a body of troops termed auxiliares, 700 strong; but in spite of them the Apaches attacked a mulada at the outskirts of the town, and, but for the bravery of two negroes, runaway slaves from the Cherokee nation, would have succeeded in carrying off the whole herd; this was during my stay in this part of the country. One of the herders was killed, but the negroes, when the animals were already in the hands of the Indians, seized their rifles and came to the rescue, succeeding in recapturing the mulada.

At El Paso I found four Americans, prisoners at large. They had arrived here on their way to California, with a mountain trapper as their guide, who, from some disagreement respecting the amount of pay he was to receive, thought proper to revenge himself by denouncing them as spies, and they were consequently thrown into prison. It being subsequently discovered that the informer had committed the most barefaced perjury, these men were released, and the denouncer confined in their stead--quite an un-Mexican act of justice. However, as they had arrived unprovided with passports, they were detained as prisoners, although permitted to go at large about the place, living, or rather existing, on charity. Their baggage had been taken from them, their animals sold, and they were left to shift for themselves. I endeavored to procure their liberty, by offering to take them with me, and guarantee their good conduct while in the country, and also that they would not take up arms against the Mexicans; but this having no effect, and as the poor fellows were in a wretched condition, I advised them to run for it, promising to pick them up on the road and supply them with the necessary provision, and cautioning them at the same time to conceal themselves in the daytime, travelling at night, and on no account to enter the settlements. They disappeared from El Paso the same night, and what became of them will be presently shown. On the 19th I left the Paso with an escort of fifteen auxiliares, a ragged troop, with whom to have marched through Coventry would have broken the heart of Sir John Falstaff. Armed with bows and arrows, lances, and old rusty escopetas [muskets] and mounted on miserable horses, their appearance was anything but warlike, and far from formidable. I did my best to escape the honor, knowing that they would only be in my way, and of not the slightest use in case of Indian attack; but all my protestations were attributed to modesty, and were overruled, and I was fain to put myself at the head of the band of valiant Pasenos, who were to escort me to the borders of the state of Chihuahua. One of them, a very old man, with a long lance which he carried across his saddlebow, and an old rusty bell-mouthed escopeta, attached himself particularly to me, riding by my side, and pointing out the bad points--the mal puntos--whence the Apaches usually made their attacks. He had, he told me, served all through the War of Independence, "y por el Rey - for the king" -he added, reverently doffing his hat at the mention of the king. He was a loyalist heart and soul. "Ojala por los dias felices del reyno!-alas for the happy time when Mexico was ruled by a king!"-was his constant sighing exclamation. A doblon, with the head of Carlos Tercero, hung round his neck, and was ever in his hand, being reverently kissed every few miles. He was, he said,

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

“medio tonto -half-crazy” -and made verses, very sorry ones, but he would repeat them to me when we arrived in camp.

Leaving El Paso, we travelled along the rugged precipitous bank of the river, crossing it about three miles above the village, and, striking into a wild barren-looking country, again made the river about sunset, and encamped in the bottom, under some very large cottonwoods, at a point called Los Alamitos - the little poplars - although they are enormous trees. We had here a very picturesque camp. Several fires gleamed under the trees, and round them lay the savage-looking Pasenos, whilst the animals were picketed round about. Several deer jumped out of the bottom when we entered, and on the banks of the river I saw some fresh beaver “sign.”

The next day, halting an hour at the Brazitos, an encamping-ground so called, and a short time afterwards passing the battle-ground where Doniphan’s Missourians routed the Mexicans, we saw Indian sign on the banks of the river, where a considerable body had just crossed. A little farther on we met a party of seven soldiers returning from a successful hunt after the Americans who had escaped from the Paso. These unfortunates were sitting quietly behind their captors, who had overtaken them at the little settlement of Donana, which they foolishly entered to obtain provisions.

Donana is a very recent settlement of ten or fifteen families, who, tempted by the richness of the soil, abandoned their farms in the valley of El Paso, and have here attempted to cultivate a small tract in the very midst of the Apaches, who have already paid them several visits and carried off or destroyed their stock of cattle. The huts are built of logs and mud, and situated on the top of a tabular bluff which looks down upon the river-bottom.

The soil along this bottom, from El Paso to the settlements of New Mexico, is amazingly rich, and admirably adapted for the growth of all kinds of grain. The timber upon it is cottonwood, dwarf oak, and mezquit, under which is a thick undergrowth of bushes. Several attempts have been made to settle this productive tract, but have all of them failed from the hostility of the Apaches. Should this department fall into the hands of the Americans, it will soon become, a thriving settlement; for the hardy backwoodsman, with his axe on one shoulder and rifle on the other, will not be deterred by the savage, like the present pusillanimous owners of the soil, from turning it to account.

The next day we encamped at San Diego, the point where the traveller leaves the river and enters upon the dreaded Jornada del Muerto - the journey of the dead man. All the camping and watering places on the river are named, but there are no settlements, with the exception of Donana, between El Paso and Socorro, the first settlement, in New Mexico, a distance of 250 miles.

At San Diego we saw more Indian signs, the consequence of which was, that my escort reported their horses to be exhausted and unable to proceed; so, nothing loth, I gave them their conge, and the next morning they retraced their steps to El Paso, leaving me with my two servants to pass the jornada. I was now at the edge of this formidable desert, where along the road the bleaching bones of mules and horses testify to the dangers to be apprehended from the want of water and pasture, and many human bones likewise tell their tale of Indian slaughter and assault.

I remained in camp until noon, when for the last time we led the animals to the water and allowed them to drink their fill: we then mounted, and at a sharp pace struck at once into the jornada. The road is perfectly level and hard, and over plains bounded by sierras. Palmillas and bushes of sage (artemisia) are scattered here and there, but the mezquit is now becoming scarce, the tornilla or

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

screwwood taking its place; farther on this wood ceases, and there is then no fuel to be met with of any description. Large herds of antelope bounded past, and coyotes skulked along on their trail, and prairie-dog towns were met every few miles, but their inmates were snug in their winter-quarters, and only made their appearance to bask in the meridian sun.

Shortly after leaving San Diego we found water in a little hole called El Perillo (the little dog), but our animals, having so lately drunk, would not profit by the discovery, and we hurried on, keeping the pack-animals in a sharp trot. Near the Perillo is a point of rocks which abuts upon the road, and from which a large body of Apaches a few years since pounced upon a band of American trappers and entirely defeated them, killing several and carrying off all their animals. Behind these rocks they frequently lie in ambush, shooting down the unwary traveller, whose first intimation of their presence is the puff of smoke from the rocks, or the whiz of an arrow through the air. One of my mozos, who was a New Mexican and knew the country well, warned me of the dangers of this spot, and before passing it, I halted the mules and rode on to reconnoitre; but no Apache lurked behind it, and we passed unmolested.

About midnight we stopped at the Laguna del Muerto - the dead man's lake-a depression in the plain, which in the rainy season is covered with water, but was now hard and dry. We rested the animals here for half an hour, and, collecting a few armfuls of artemisia, attempted to make a fire, for we were all benumbed with cold; but the dry twigs blazed brightly for a minute, and were instantly consumed. By the temporary light it afforded us we discovered that a large party of Indians had passed the very spot but a few hours, and were probably not far off at that moment, and, if so, they would certainly be attracted by our fire, so we desisted in our attempts. The mules and horses, which had travelled at a very quick pace, were suffering, even thus early, from want of water, and my horse bit off the neck of a huage, or gourd, which I had placed on the ground, and which the poor beast by his nose knew to contain water. However, as there was not a vestige of grass on the spot, after a halt of half an hour, we again mounted and proceeded on our journey, continuing at a rapid pace all night. At sunrise we halted for a couple of hours on a patch of grass which afforded a bite to the tired animals, and about three in the afternoon had the satisfaction of reaching the river at the watering-place called Fray Cristoval, having performed the whole distance of the jornada, of ninety-five, or, as some say, one hundred miles, in little more than twenty hours. The plain through which the dead man's journey passes is one of a system, or series, which stretch along the table-land between the Sierra Madre, or main chain of the Cordillera, on the West, and the small mountain-chain of the Sierra Blanca and the Organos, which form the dividing ridge between the waters of the Del Norte and the Rio Pecos. Through this valley, fed by but few streams, runs the Del Norte. Its water, from the constant abrasion of the banks of alluvial soil, is very muddy and discolored, but nevertheless of excellent quality, and has the reputation at El Paso of possessing chemical properties which prevent diseases of the kidneys, stone, &c. &c.

The White Mountain and the Organos are singularly destitute of streams, but on the latter is said to be a small lake, in the waters of which may be seen the phenomenon of a daily rise and fall similar to a tide. They are also reported to abound in minerals, but, from the fact of these sierras being the hiding-places of Apaches, they are never visited excepting during a hostile expedition against these Indians, and consequently in these excursions but little opportunity is afforded for an examination of the country. The sierras are also celebrated for medicinal herbs of great value, which the Apaches, when at peace with the Pasenos, sometimes bring in for sale.

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Indeed, from the accounts which I received from the people of these mountains, I should judge them to be well worthy of a visit, which however would be extremely hazardous on account of the hostility of the Indians and the scarcity of water. Their formation is apparently volcanic, and, judging from the nature of the plains, which in many places are strewn with volcanic substances, and exhibit the bluffs of tabular form, composed of basaltic lava, known by the name of mesas (tables), the valley must at one time have been subjected to volcanic agency.

Staying at Fray Cristoval but one night, I pushed on to the ruins of Valverde, a long-deserted rancheria, a few miles beyond which was the advanced post of the American troops. Here, encamped on the banks of the river in the heavy timber, I found a great portion of the caravan which I have before mentioned as being en route to Chihuahua, and also a surveying party under the command of Lieut. Abert, of the United States Topographical Engineers.

Being entirely out of provisions, and my camp hungry, the next morning I mounted my hunting-mule, and crossed the river, which was partially frozen, to look for deer in the bottom. Thanks to my mule, as I was passing through a thicket I saw her prick her ears and look on one side, and, following her gaze, descried three deer standing under a tree with their heads turned towards me. My rifle was quickly up to my shoulder, and a fine large doe dropped to the report, shot through the heart. Being in a hurry, I did not wait to cut it up, but threw it on to my mule, which I drove before me to the river. Large blocks of ice were floating down, which rendered the passage difficult, but mounted behind the deer and pushed the mule into the stream. Just as we had got into the middle of the current a large piece of ice struck her, and, to prevent herself being carried down the stream, she threw herself on her haunches, and I slipped over the tail, and head over ears into the water. Rid of the extra load, the mule carried the deer safely over and trotted off to camp, where she quietly stood to be unpacked, leaving me, drenched to the skin, to follow after her.

The traders had been lying here many weeks, and the bottom where they were encamped presented quite a picturesque appearance. The timber extends half a mile from the river, and the cottonwood trees are of large size, without any undergrowth of bushes. Amongst the trees, in open spaces, were drawn up the wagons, formed into a corral or square, and close together, so that the whole made a most formidable fort, and, when filled with some hundred rifles, could defy the attacks of Indians or Mexicans. Scattered about were tents and shanties of logs and branches of every conceivable form, round which lounged wild-looking Missourians, some cooking at the camp-fires, some cleaning their rifles or firing at targets-blazes cut in the trees, with a bull's-eye made with wet powder on the white bark. From morning till night the camp resounded with the popping of rifles, firing at marks for prizes of tobacco, or at any living creature which presented itself.

The oxen, horses, and mules were sent out at daylight to pasture on the grass of the prairie, and at sunset made their appearance, driven in by the Mexican herders, and were secured for the night in the corrals. My own animals roamed at will, but every evening came to the river to drink, and made their way to my camp, where they would frequently stay round the fire all night. They never required herding, for they made their appearance as regularly as the day closed, and would come to my whistle whenever I required my hunting-mule. The poor beasts were getting very poor, not having had corn since leaving El Paso, and having subsisted during the journey from that place on very little of the coarsest kind of grass. They felt it the more as they were all accustomed to be

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

fed on grain; and the severe cold was very trying to them, coming, as they did, from a tropical climate. My favorite horse, Panchito, had lost all his good looks; his once full and arched neck was now a perfect "ewe," and his ribs and hipbones were almost protruding through the skin; but he was as game as ever, and had never once flinched in his work.

Provisions of all kinds were very scarce in the camp, and the game, being constantly hunted, soon disappeared. Having been invited to join the hospitable mess of the officers of the Engineers, I fortunately did not suffer, although even they were living on their rations, and on the produce of our guns. The traders, mostly young men from the eastern cities, were fine hearty fellows, who employ their capital in this trade because it combines pleasure with profit, and the excitement and danger of the journey through the Indian country are more agreeable than the monotonous life of a city merchant. The volunteers' camp was some three miles up the river on the other side. Colonel Doniphan, who commanded, had just returned from an expedition into the Navajo country for the purpose of making a treaty with the chiefs of that nation, who have hitherto been bitter enemies of the New Mexicans. From appearances no one would have imagined this to be a military encampment. The tents were in a line, but there all uniformity ceased. There were no regulations in force with regard to cleanliness. The camp was strewn with the bones and offal of the cattle slaughtered for its supply, and not the slightest attention was paid to keeping it clear from other accumulations of filth.

The men, unwashed and unshaven, were ragged and dirty, without uniforms, and dressed as, and how, they pleased. They wandered about, listless and sickly-looking, or were sitting in groups playing at cards, and swearing and cursing, even at the officers if they interfered to stop it (as I witnessed). The greatest irregularities constantly took place. Sentries, or a guard, although in an enemy's country, were voted unnecessary; and one fine day, during the time I was here, three Navajo Indians ran off with a flock of eight hundred sheep belonging to the camp, killing the two volunteers in charge of them, and reaching the mountains in safety with their booty. Their mules and horses were straying over the country; in fact, the most total want of discipline was apparent in everything. These very men, however, were as full of fight as game cocks, and shortly after defeated four times their number of Mexicans at Sacramento, near Chihuahua.

The American can never be made a soldier; his constitution will not bear the restraint of discipline, neither will his very mistaken notions about liberty allow him to subject himself to its necessary control. In a country abounding with all the necessaries of life, and where any one of physical ability is at no loss for profitable employment—moreover, where, from the nature of the country, the lower classes lead a life free from all the restraint of society, and almost its conventional laws - it is easy to conceive that it would require great inducements for a man to enter the army and subject himself to discipline for the sake of the trifling remuneration, when so many other sources of profitable employment are open to him. For these reasons the service is unpopular, and only resorted to by men who are either too indolent to work, or whose bad characters prevent them seeking other employment.

The volunteering service on the other hand is eagerly sought, on occasions such as the present war with Mexico affords, by young men even of the most respectable classes, as, in this, discipline exists but in name, and they have privileges and rights, such as electing their own officers, &c., which they consider to be more consonant to their ideas of liberty and equality. The system is palpably bad, as they have sufficiently proved in this war. The election of officers is made entirely

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

a political question, and quite irrespective of their military qualities, and, knowing the footing on which they stand with the men, they, if even they know how, are afraid to exact of them either order or discipline. Of drill or maneuvering the volunteers have little or no idea. "Every man on his own hook" is their system in action; and trusting to, and confident in, their undeniable bravery, they "go ahead," and overcome all obstacles. No people know better the advantages of discipline than do the officers of the regular service; and it is greatly to their credit that they can keep the standing army in the state it is. As it is mostly composed of foreigners - Germans, English, and Irish, and deserters from the British army - they might be brought to as perfect a state of discipline as any of the armies of Europe; but the feeling of the people will not permit it; the public would at once cry out against it as contrary to republican notions and the liberty of the citizen. There is a vast disparity between the officers of the regular army and the men they command. Receiving at West Point (an admirable institution) a military education by which they acquire a practical as well as theoretical knowledge of the science of war, as a class they are probably more distinguished for military knowledge than the officers of any European army. Uniting with this a high chivalrous feeling and most conspicuous gallantry, they have all the essentials of the officer and soldier. Notwithstanding this, they have been hitherto an unpopular class in the United States, being accused of having a tendency to aristocratic feeling; but rather, I do believe, from the marked distinction in education and character which divides them from the mass, than any other reason. However, the late operations in Mexico have sufficiently proved that to their regular officers alone, and more particularly to those who have been educated at the much-decried West Point, are to be attributed the successes which have everywhere attended the American arms; and it is notorious that on more than one occasion the steadiness of the small regular force, and particularly of the artillery, under their command, has saved the army from most serious disasters. I remained at Valverde encampment several days in order to recruit my animals before proceeding farther to the north, passing the time in hunting; game, although driven from the vicinity of the camp, being still plentiful at a little distance. Besides deer and antelope, turkeys were very abundant in the river bottom; and, of lesser game, hares, rabbits, and quail were met with on the plain, and geese and ducks in the river.

One day I got a shot at a panther (painter), but did not kill it, as my old mule was so disturbed at the sight of the beast, that she refused to remain quiet. The prairie between the Del Norte and the mountain, a distance of twelve or fourteen miles, is broken into gulleys and ravines, which intersect it in every direction. At the bottom of these is a thick growth of coarse grass and grease-bushes, where the deer love to resort in the middle of the day. I was riding slowly up one of these cañons, with my rifle across the saddle-bow, and the reins thrown on the mule's neck, being at that moment engaged in lighting my pipe, when the mule pricked her ears and turned her head to one side very suddenly, giving a cant round at the same time. I looked to the right, and saw a large panther, with his tail sweeping the ground, trotting leisurely up the side of the ravine, which rose abruptly from the dry bed of a watercourse, up which I was proceeding. The animal, when it had reached the top, turned round and looked at me, its tiger-like ears erect, and its tail quivering with anger. The mule snorted and backed, but, fearing to dismount, lest the animal should run off, I raised my rifle and fired both barrels at the beast, which, giving a hissing growl, bounded away unhurt.

It was, however, dangerous to go far from the camp, as Apaches and Navajos were continually

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

prowling round, and, as I have mentioned, had killed two of the volunteers, and stolen 800 sheep. One day, while hunting, I came upon a fire which they had just left, and, as several oxen were lost that night, this party, which, from the tracks, consisted of a man, woman, and boy, had doubtless run them off. I was that day hunting in company with a French Canadian and an American, both trappers and old mountain-men, when, at sundown, just as we had built a fire and were cooking our suppers under some trees near the river, we heard the gobble-gobble of an old turkey-cock, as he called his flock to roost. Lying motionless on the ground, we watched the whole flock, one after another, fly up to the trees over our heads, to the number of upwards of thirty. There was still light enough to shoot, and the whole flock was within reach of our rifles, but, as we judged that we could not hope for more than one shot apiece, which would only give three birds, we agreed to wait until the moon rose, when we might bag the whole family.

Hardly daring to move, we remained quiet for several hours, as the moon rose late, consoling ourselves with our anticipations of a triumphal entry into camp, on the morrow, with twenty or thirty fine turkeys for a Christmas feast.

At length the moon rose, but unfortunately clouded: nevertheless we thought there was sufficient light for our purpose, and, rifle in hand, approached the trees where the unconscious birds were roosting. Creeping close along the ground, we stopped under the first tree we came to, and, looking up, on one of the topmost naked limbs was a round black object. The pas was given to me, and, raising my rifle, I endeavored to obtain a sight, but the light was too obscure to draw "a bead," although there appeared no difficulty in getting a level. I fired, expecting to hear the crash of the falling bird follow the report, but the black object on the tree never moved. My companions chuckled, and I fired my second barrel with similar result, the bird still remaining perfectly quiet. The Canadian then stepped forth, and, taking a deliberate aim, bang he went.

"Sacre enfant de Garce!" he exclaimed, finding he too had missed the bird;" I aim straight, mais light tres bad, sacre!"

Bang went the other's rifle, and bang-bang went my two barrels immediately after, cutting the branch in two on which the bird was sitting, who, thinking this a hint to be off, and that he had sufficiently amused us, flew screaming away. The same compliments were paid to every individual, one bird standing nine shots before it flew off: and, to end the story, we fired away every ball in our pouches without as much as touching a feather; the fact of the matter that the light was not sufficient to see an through the fine sight of the rifles.

At Valverde my Mexican servant deserted, why or wherefore I could not understand, as he did not even wait for his pay, and carried off no equivalent. I also left here the Mexico-Irishman who had accompanied me from Mapimi. He was already suffering from the severities of the climate, and, being very delicate, I did not think him able to stand a winter journey over the Rocky Mountains. He therefore returned to Chihuahua with one of the traders. From this point to my winter quarters in the mountains I was entirely on my own resources, being unable to hire a servant in whom I could place the least confidence, and preferring to shift for myself, rather than be harassed with being always on the watch to prevent my fidus Achates from robbing or murdering me. My animals gave me little or no trouble, and I had now reduced my requa to five, having left at El Paso the tierra caliente [lowland] horse, another having died on the road, and a mule having been lost or strayed on the Del Norte. In travelling I had no difficulty with the pack and loose mules. I rode in front on Panchito, and the mules followed like dogs, never giving me occasion even to

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

turn round to see if they were there; for if, by any accident, they lost sight of the horse, and other animals were near, they would gallop about smelling at each, and often, starting off to horses or mules feeding at a distance, would return at full gallop, crying with terror until they found their old friend. Panchito, on his part, showed equal signs of perturbation if they remained too far behind, as sometimes they would stop for a mouthful of grass, and, turning his head, would recall them by a loud neigh, which invariably had the effect of bringing them up at a hand-gallop.

The greatest difficulty I experienced was in packing the mules, which operation, when on an aparejo, or Mexican pack-saddle, is the work of two men, and I may as well describe the process.

The equipment of a pack-mule--mula de carga -consists first and foremost of the aparejo, which is a square pad of stuffed leather. An idea of the shape may be formed by taking a book and placing it saddle-fashion on any object, the leaves being equally divided, and each half forming a flap of the saddle. This is placed on the mule's back on a xerga, or saddlecloth, which had under it a salea, raw sheepskin softened by the hand, which prevents the saddle chafing the back. The aparejo is then secured by a broad grass-band, which is drawn so tight, that the animal appears cut in two, and groans and grunts most awfully under the operation, which to a greenhorn seems most unnecessary and cruel. It is in this, however, that the secret of packing a mule consists; the firmer the pack-saddle, the more comfortably the mule travels, and with less risk of being "matada," literally killed, but meaning chafed and cut.

The carga is then placed on the top, if a single pack; or if two of equal size and weight one on each side, being coupled together by a rope, which balances them on the mule's back: a stout pack-rope is then thrown over all, drawn as tight as possible under the belly, and laced round the packs, securing the load firmly in its place. A square piece of matting - petate - is then thrown over the pack to protect it from rain, the tapojos is removed from the mule's eyes, and the operation is complete. The tapojos - blinker - is a piece of thin embroidered leather, which is placed over the mule's eyes before being packed, and, thus blinded, the animal remains perfectly quiet. The cargador [packer] stands on the near side of the pack, his assistant on the other, hauling on the slack of the rope, with his knee against the side of the mule for a purchase; when the rope is taut, he cries "Adios!" and the packer, rejoining "Vaya!" makes fast the rope on the top of the carga, sings out "Anda!" and the mule trots off to her companions, who feed round until all the mules of the atajo are packed.

Muleteering is the natural occupation of the Mexican. He is in all his glory when travelling as one of the mozos of a large atajo--a caravan of pack mules; but the height of his ambition is to attain the rank of mayor-domo or capitán -(the brigadero of Castile). The atajos, numbering from fifty to two hundred Mules, travel a daily distance--jornada -- of twelve or fifteen miles, each mule carrying a pack weighing from two to four hundred pounds. To a large atajo eight or ten muleteers are attached, and the dexterity and quickness with which they will saddle and pack an atajo of a hundred mules is surprising. The animals being driven to the spot, the lasso, whirled round the head of the muleteer, and falls over the head of a particular mule. The tapojos is placed over the eyes, the heavy aparejo adjusted, and the pack secured, in three minutes. On reaching the place where they purpose to encamp, the pack saddles are all ranged in regular order, with the packs between, and covered with the petates, a trench being cut round them in wet weather to carry off the rain. One mule is always packed with the metate-the stone block upon which the maize is ground to make tortillas, and the office of cook is undertaken in turn by each of the muleteers.

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Frijoles and chile colorado comprise their daily bill of fare, with a drink of pulque when passing through the land of the maguey.

CHAPTER III

TRAVELLING WITH THE ENGINEERS

ON the 14th of December the camp was broken up, the traders proceeding to Fray Cristoval, at the entrance of the jornada, to wait the arrival of the troops, which, were about to advance on Chihuahua; and myself, in company with Lieutenant Abert's party, en route to Santa Fe. Crossing the Del Norte, we proceeded on its right bank ten or twelve miles, encamping in the bottom near the new settlement of San Antonio, a little hamlet of ten or twelve log-huts, inhabited by pastores and vaqueros-shepherds and cattleherders. The river is but thinly timbered here, the soil being and and sterile; on the bluffs, however, the grass is very good, being the gramma or feather-grass, and numerous flocks of sheep are sent hither to pasture from the settlements higher up the stream.

The next day we passed through Socorro, a small, wretched place, the first settlement of New Mexico on the river. The houses are all of adobe, inside and out, one story high, and with the usual azotea or flat roof. They have generally a small window, with thin sheets of tale (which here abounds) as a substitute for glass. They are, however, kept clean inside, the mud-floors being watered and swept many times during the day. The faces of the women were all stained with the fiery red juice of a plant called alegria, from the forehead to the chin. This is for the purpose of protecting their skin from the effects of the sun, and preserving them in untanned beauty to be exposed in the fandangos. Of all people in the world the Mexicans have the greatest antipathy to water, hot or cold, for ablutionary purposes. The men never touch their faces with that element, except in their bi-monthly shave; and the women besmear themselves with fresh coats of alegria when their faces become dirty: thus their countenances are covered with alternate strata of paint and dirt, caked, and cracked in fissures. My first impressions of New Mexico were anything but favorable, either to the country or the people. The population of Socorro was wretched looking, and every countenance seemed marked by vice and debauchery. The men appear to have no other employment than smoking and basking in the sun, wrapped in their sarapes; the women in dancing and intrigue. The appearance of Socorro is that of a dilapidated brick-kiln, or a prairie-dog town; indeed, from these animals the New Mexicans appear to have derived their style of architecture. In every village we entered, the women flocked round us begging for tobacco or money, the men loafing about, pilfering everything they could lay their hands on. As in other parts of Mexico, the women wore the enagua, or red petticoat, and reboso, and were all bare-legged. The men were some of them clad in buckskin shirts, made by the Indians. Near Socorro is a mining sierra, where gold and silver have been extracted in small quantities. All along the road we met straggling parties of the volunteers, on horse or mule-back, and on foot. In every camp they usually lost some of their animals, one or two of which our party secured. The five hundred men who were on the march covered an extent of road of more than a hundred miles - the ammunition and provision wagons travelling through an enemy's country without escort!

On the 16th we passed through Limitar, another wretched village, and a sandy, desert country, quite uninhabited, camping again on the Del Norte; and next day, stopping an hour or two at Sabanal, we reached Bosque Redondo, the hacienda of one of the Chaves family, and one of the ricos (rich) of New Mexico.

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

The churches in the villages of New Mexico are quaint little buildings, looking, with their adobe-walls, like turf-stacks. At each corner of the facade half a dozen bricks are erected in the form of a tower, and a centre ornament of the same kind supports a wooden cross. They are really the most extraordinary and primitive specimens of architecture I ever met with, and the decorations of the interior are equal to the promises held out by the imposing outside.

The houses are entered by doors which barely admit a full-grown man; and the largest of New Mexican windows is but little bigger than the ventilator of a summer hat. However, in his rabbit-burrow, and with his tortillas and his chile, his ponche and cigar of hoja, the New Mexican is content; and with an occasional traveller to pilfer, or the excitement of a stray Texan or two to massacre now and then, is tolerably happy; his only care being, that the river rise high enough to fill his acequia, or irrigating ditch, that sufficient maize may grow to furnish him tortillas for the winter, and shucks for his half-starved horse or mule, which the Navajos have left, out of charity, after killing half his sons and daughters, and bearing into captivity the wife of his bosom.

We encamped behind the house at Bosque Redondo, for which privilege I asked permission of the proprietor; who doled us out six-penny worth of wood for our fires, never inviting us into his house, or offering the slightest civility. Cosas de Mejico!

On the 17th we reached Albuquerque, next to Santa Fe the most important town in the province, and the residence of the ex-Governor Armijo. We found here a squadron of the 1st United States dragoons, the remainder of the regiment having accompanied General Kearney to California. We encamped near a large building where the men were quartered; and in the evening a number of them came round the fire, asking the news from the lower country. I saw that some of them had once worn a different colored uniform from the sky-blue of the United States army; and in the evening, as I was walking with some of the officers of the regiment, I was accosted by one, whom I immediately recognized as a man named Herbert, a deserter from the regiment to which I had once belonged. He had imagined that, as several years had elapsed since I had seen him, his face would not have been familiar to me, and inquired for a brother of his who was still in the regiment, denying at first that he had been in the British service.

The settled portion of the province of New Mexico is divided into two sections, which, from their being situated on the Rio del Norte, are designated Rio Arriba and Rio Abajo, or up the river and down the river. Albuquerque is the chief town of the latter, as Santa Fe is of the former as well as the capital of the province.

The town and the estates in the neighbourhood belong to the Armijo family; and the General of that name and ex-Governor, has here a palacio; and has also built a barrack, in which to accommodate the numerous escort which always attends him in his progresses to and from his country-seat.

The families of Armijo, Chaves, Perea, and Ortiz are par excellence the ricos of New Mexico -indeed, all the wealth of the province is concentrated in their hands; and a more grasping set of people, and more hard-hearted oppressors of the poor, it would be difficult to find in any other part of Mexico, where the rights or condition of the lower classes are no more considered, than in civilized countries is the welfare of dogs and pigs.

I had letters to the Senora Armijo, the wife of the runaway Governor; but, as it was late at night when we arrived, and as I intended to leave the next morning, I did not think it worth while to present them, merely delivering to the mayor-domo some private letters which had been intrust-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ed to my care from Chihuahua. However, as I passed the windows of the sala, I had a good view of the lady, who was once celebrated as the belle of New Mexico. She is now a fat, comely dame of forty, with the remains of considerable beauty, but quite passee.

Our halting-place next day was at Bernalillo, a more miserable place than usual; but as I had brought letters to a wealthy haciendado, one Julian Perea, I anticipated an unusual degree of hospitality. On presenting the letter, everything Don Julian possessed was instantly thrown at my feet; but out of the magnificent gift, I only selected an armful of wood, from a large yardful, for our fire, and for which he charged me three rials, as well as three more for the use of an empty corral for the animals; we ourselves encamping outside his gate on the damp thawing snow, without receiving the ghost of an invitation to enter his house.

We this day got a first glimpse of one of the spurs of the Rocky Mountains, appearing, far in the distance, white with snow.

On the 20th we encamped in a pretty valley on the Rio Grande, under a high tabular bluff which overhangs the river on the western bank; and on the summit of which are the ruins of an old Indian village. About two miles from our camp was the Pueblo of San Felipe, a village of the tribe of Indians known as Pueblos, or Indios Manzos - half-civilized Indians.

During the night our mulada, which was grazing at large in the prairie, was stampeded by the Indians. I was lying out some distance from the fire, when the noise of their thundering tread roused me, and, as they passed the fire at full gallop, I at once divined the cause.

Luckily for me, Panchito, my horse, wheeled out of the crowd, and, followed by his mules, galloped up to the fire, and came to me when I whistled; the remainder of the mulada continuing their flight. The next morning, two fine horses and three mules were missing, and, of course, were not recovered.

The next day we encamped on Galisteo, a small stream coming from the mountains. We had now entered a wild broken country, covered with pine and cedar. A curious ridge runs from east to west, broken here and there by abrupt chasms, which exhibit its formation in alternate strata of shale and old red sandstone. There are here indications of coal, which are met along the whole of this ridge. We encamped on a bleak bluff, without timber or grass, which overlooked the stream. Late in the evening we heard the creaking of a wagon's wheels, and the "wo-ha" of the driver, as he urged his oxen up the sandy bluff. A wagon drawn by six yoke of oxen soon made its appearance, under the charge of a tall rawboned Yankee. As soon as he had unyoked his cattle, he approached our fire, and, seating himself almost in the blaze, stretching his long legs at the same time into the ashes, he broke out with, "Cuss sich a darned country, I say! Wall, strangers, an ugly camp this, I swar; and what my cattle ull do I don't know, for they have not eat since we put out of Santa Fe, and are darned near giv out, that's a fact; and thar's nothin' here for 'em to eat, surely. Wall, they must just hold on till to-morrow, for I have only got a pint of corn apiece for 'em to-night anyhow, so there's no two ways about that. Strangers, I guess now you'll have a skillet among ye; if yer a mind to trade, I'll just have it right off; anyhow, I'll just borrow it to-night to bake my bread, and, if yer wish to trade, name your price. Cuss sich a darned country, say I! Jist look at them oxen, wull ye!-they've nigh upon two hundred miles to go; for I'm bound to catch up the sogers afore they reach the Pass, and there's not a go in 'em."

"Well, "I ventured to put in, feeling for the poor beasts, which were still yoked and standing in the river completely done up, "would it not be as well for you to feed them at once and let them rest?"

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

“Wall, I guess if you’ll some of you lend me a hand, I’ll fix ‘em right off; tho’, darn em’ they’ve giv me a pretty darned lot of trouble, they have, darn em! but the critters will have to eat, I b’lieve.” I willingly lent him the aid he required, and also added to their rations some corn which my animals, already full, were turning up their noses at, and which the oxen greedily devoured. This done he returned to the fire and baked his cake, fried his bacon, and made his coffee, his tongue all the while keeping up an incessant clack. This man was by himself, having a journey of two hundred miles before him, and twelve oxen and his wagon to look after: but dollars, dollars, dollars was all he thought of. Everything he saw lying about he instantly seized, wondered what it cost, what it was worth, offered to trade for it or anything else by which he might turn a penny, never waiting for an answer, and rattling on, eating, drinking, and talking without intermission; and at last, gathering himself up, said, ‘Wall, I guess I’ll turn into my wagon now, and some of you will, may be, give a look round at the cattle every now and then, and I’ll thank you:’ and saying this, with a hop, step, and a jump, was inside his wagon and snoring in a couple of minutes. We broke up our camp at daybreak, leaving our friend “wo-ha-ing” his cattle through the sandy bottom, and “cussing the darned country” at every step. We crossed several ridges clothed with cedars, but destitute of grass or other vegetation; and passing over a dismal plain descended into a hollow, where lay, at the bottom of a pine-covered mountain, the miserable mud-built Santa Fe; and shortly after, way-worn and travel-stained, and my poor animals in a condition which plainly showed that they had seen some hard service, we entered the city, after a journey of not much less than two thousand miles.

CHAPTER IV

LAND OF THE PUEBLOS

SANTA FE, the capital of the province of Nuevo Mejico, contains about three thousand inhabitants, and is situated about fourteen miles from the left bank of the Del Norte, at the foot of a mountain forming one of the eastern chain of the Rocky Mountains. The town is a wretched collection of mud-houses, without a single building of stone, although it boasts a palacio - as the adobe residence of the Governor is called - a long low building, taking up the greater part of one side of the plaza or public square, round which runs a portal or colonnade supported by pillars of rough pine. The appearance of the town defies description, and I can compare it to nothing but a dilapidated brick-kiln or a prairie-dog town. The inhabitants are worthy of their city, and a more miserable, vicious-looking population it would be impossible to imagine. Neither was the town improved, at the time of my visit, by the addition to the population of some three thousand Americans, the dirtiest, rowdiest crew I have ever seen collected together.

Crowds of drunken volunteers filled the streets, brawling and boasting, but never fighting; Mexicans, wrapped in sarape, scowled upon them as they passed; donkey-loads of hoja -corn-shucks-were hawking about for sale; and Pueblo Indians and priests jostled the rude crowds of brawlers at every step. Under the portales were numerous monte-tables, surrounded by Mexicans and Americans. Every other house was a grocery, as they call a gin or whisky shop, continually disgorging reeling drunken men, and everywhere filth and dirt reigned triumphant.

The extent of the province of New Mexico is difficult to define, as the survey of the northern sections of the republic has never been undertaken, (Lieutenant Abert, of the U. S. T. Engineers, surveyed the greater portion of New Mexico in 1846.) and a great portion of the country is still in the hands of the aborigines, who are at constant war with the Mexicans. It has been roughly estimated

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

at 6,000 square miles, with a population of 70,000, including the three castes of descendants of the original settlers, Mestizos, and Indios, Manzanos or Pueblos; the Mestizos, as is the case throughout the country, bearing a large proportion to the Mexico-Spanish portion of the population-in this case as 50 to 1.

The Pueblos, who are the original inhabitants of New Mexico, and, living in villages, are partially civilized, are the most industrious portion of the population, and cultivate the soil in a higher degree than the New Mexicans themselves. In these Indians, in their dwellings, their manners, customs, and physical character, may be traced a striking analogy to the Aztecs or ancient Mexicans. Their houses and villages are constructed in the same manner as, from existing ruins, we may infer that the Aztecs constructed theirs. These buildings are of two, three, and even five stories, without doors or any external communication, the entrance being at the top by means of ladders through a trapdoor in the azotea or flat roof. The population of the different Pueblos scattered along the Del Norte and to the westward of it is estimated at 12,000, without including the Moquis, who have preserved their independence since the year 1680.

The general character of the department is extreme aridity of soil, and the consequent deficiency of water, which must ever prevent its being thickly settled. The valley of the Del Norte is fertile, but of very limited extent; and other portions of the province are utterly valueless in an agricultural point of view, and their metallic wealth is greatly exaggerated. From association with the hardy trappers and Pioneers of the far west, the New Mexicans have in some degree imbibed a portion of their enterprise and hardihood; for settlements have been pushed far into the Rocky Mountains, whose inhabitants are many of them expert buffalo-hunters and successful trappers of beaver. The most northern of these is on the Rio Colorado, or Red River Creek, an affluent of the Del Norte, rising in the eastern chain of the Rocky Mountains, one hundred miles north of Santa Fe.

Of the many so-called gold-mines in New Mexico there is but one which has in any degree repaid the labor of working. This is El Real de Dolores, more commonly known as El Placer, situated eight leagues from Santa Fe, on the ridge of the Sierra Obscura. The gold is mostly found in what is technically called "dust," in very small quantities and with considerable labor. It has perhaps produced, since its discovery in 1828, 200,000 dollars, but it is very doubtful if any of these placers would repay the working on a large scale.

It is a favorite idea with the New Mexicans that the Pueblo Indians are acquainted with the existence and localities of some prodigiously rich mines, which in the early times of the conquest were worked by the Spaniards, at the expense of infinite toil and slavery on the part of the Indians; and that, fearing that such tyranny would be repeated if they were to disclose their secret, they have ever since steadily refused to point them out.

It is remarkable that, although existing, from the earliest times of the colonization of New Mexico, a period of two centuries, in a state of continual hostility with the numerous savage tribes of Indians who surround their territory, and in constant insecurity of life and property from their attacks-being also far removed from the enervating influences of large cities, and, in their isolated situation, entirely dependent upon their own resources-the inhabitants are totally destitute of those qualities which, for the above reasons, we might naturally have expected to distinguish them, and are as deficient in energy of character and physical courage, as they are in all the moral and intellectual qualities. In their social state but one degree removed from the veriest savag-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

es, they might take a lesson even from these in morality and the conventional decencies of life. Imposing no restraint on their passions, a shameless and universal concubinage exists, and a total disregard of moral laws, to which it would be impossible to find a parallel in any country calling itself civilized. A want of honorable principle, and consummate duplicity and treachery, characterize all their dealings. Liars by nature, they are treacherous and faithless to their friends, cowardly and cringing to their enemies; cruel as all cowards are, they unite savage ferocity with their want of animal courage; as an example of which, their recent massacre of Governor Bent and other Americans may be given - one of a hundred instances.

I have before observed that a portion of the population of New Mexico consists of Indians, called Pueblos, from the fact of their living in towns, who are in a semi-civilized state, and in whose condition may be traced an analogy to the much exaggerated. civilization of the ancient Mexicans. It is well known that, in the traditions of that people, the Aztecs migrated from the north, from regions beyond the Gila, where they made the first of their three great halts; but it is generally supposed that no traces of their course, or former habitation, existed to the northward of this river. In the country of the Navajos, as well as in the territories of the independent Moqui, are still discoverable traces of their residence, and, as I have before remarked, the Pueblo Indians construct and inhabit houses and villages of the same form and material as the *casas grandes* [great houses] of the ancient Mexicans; retain many of their customs and domestic arts, as they have been handed down to us, and numerous traces of a common origin.

Amongst many of the religious forms still retained by these people, perhaps the most interesting is the perpetuation of the holy fire, by the side of which the Aztecs kept a continual watch for the return to earth of Quetzalcoatl - the god of air--who, according to their tradition, visited the earth, and instructed the inhabitants in agriculture and other useful arts. During his sojourn he caused the earth to yield tenfold productions, without the necessity of human labor: everywhere corn, fruit and flowers delighted the eye; the cotton-plant produced its woof already dyed by nature with various hues; aromatic odors pervaded the air; and on all sides resounded the melodious notes of singing-birds. The lazy Mexican naturally looks back to this period as the "golden age"; and as this popular and beneficent deity, on his departure from earth, promised faithfully to return and revisit the people he loved so well, this event is confidently expected to the present day. Quetzalcoatl embarked, in his boat of rattlesnake-skins, on the Gulf of Mexico; and as he was seen to steer to the eastward, his arrival is consequently looked for from that quarter, When the Spaniards arrived from the east, as they resembled the god in the color of their skin, they were at first generally supposed to be messengers from, or descendants of, the god of air.

This tradition is common to the nations even of the far-off north, and in New Mexico the belief is still clung to by the Pueblo Indians, who in a solitary cave of the mountains have for centuries continued their patient vigils by the undying fire; and its dim light may still be seen by the wandering hunter glimmering from the recesses of a cave, when, led by the chase, he passes in the vicinity of this humble and lonely temple.

Far to the north, in the country of the Moquis, the hunters have passed, wonderingly, ruins of large cities, and towns inhabited by Indians, of the same construction as those of the Pueblos, and identical with the *casas grandes* on the Gila and elsewhere.

In the absence of any evidence, traditionary or otherwise, on which to found an hypothesis as to the probable cause of the migration of the Mexicans from the north, I have surmised that it is just

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

possible that they may have abandoned that region on account of the violent volcanic convulsions which, from the testimony of people who have visited these regions, I have no doubt have at a comparatively recent period agitated that portion of the country; and from my own knowledge the volcanic formations become gradually more recent as they advance to the north along the whole table-land from Mexico to Santa Fe. These disturbances may have led to their frequent changes of residence, and ultimate arrival in the south. If their object was to fly from such constantly recurring commotions, their course would naturally be to the south, where they might expect a genial soil and climate, in a direction in which they might also avoid the numerous and warlike nations who inhabited the regions south of their abandoned country. Thus we find the remains of the towns built in the course of their migration, generally in insulated spots of fertility, oases in the vast and barren tracts they were obliged to traverse, which spread from the shores of the great salt-lake of the north towards the valley of the Gila, and still southward along the ridges of the Cordillera, which, a continuation of the Andes chain, stretch far away to the southern portion of the country.

The Indians of Northern Mexico, including the Pueblos, belong to the same family—the Apache; from which branch the Navajos, Apaches, Coyoters, Mescaleros, Moquis, Yubipias, Maricopas, Chiricauis, Chemeguabas, Yumayas (the last two tribes of the Moqui), and the Nijoras, a small tribe on the Gila. All these speak dialects of the same language, more or less approximating to the Apache, and of all of which the idiomatic structure is the same. They likewise all understand each other's tongue. What relation this language bears to the Mexican is unknown, but my impression is that it will be found to assimilate greatly, if not to be identical.

The Pueblo Indians of Taos, Pecuris, and Acoma speak a language of which a dialect is used by those of the Rio Abajo, including the Pueblos of San Felipe, Sandia, Ysleta, and Xemez. They are eminently distinguished from the New Mexicans in their social and moral character, being industrious, sober, honest, brave, and at the same time peaceably inclined if their rights are not infringed. Although the Pueblos are nominally Cristianos, and have embraced the outward forms of la santa fe Catolica, they yet, in fact, still cling to the belief of their fathers, and celebrate in secret the ancient rites of their religion. The aged and devout of both sexes may still be often seen on their flat house-tops; with their faces turned to the rising sun, and their gaze fixed in that direction from whence they expect, sooner or later, the god of air will make his appearance. They are careful, however, not to practise any of their rites before strangers, and ostensibly conform to the ceremonies of the Roman Church.

In the country of the Moquis are the remains of five cities of considerable extent, the foundations and some of the walls of which (of stone) are still standing, and on the sites of some they still inhabit villages, the houses of which are frequently built of the materials found amongst the ruins. A great quantity of broken pottery is found wherever these remains exist, the same in form and material as the relics of the same kind preserved in the city of Mexico. The ruins on the Gila, in particular, abound in these remains, and I have been assured that for many miles the plain is strewn with them. There are also remains of acequias, or irrigating canals, of great length and depth.

The five pueblos in the Moqui are Orayxa, Masanais, Jongoapi, Gualpi, and another, the name of which is not known. This tribe is, curiously enough, known to the trappers and hunters of the mountains as the Welsh Indians. They are, they say, much fairer in complexion than other tribes,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

and have several individuals amongst them perfectly white, with light hair. The latter circumstance is accounted for by the frequent occurrence amongst the Navajos, and probably the Moquis also, of albinos, with the Indian feature, but light complexions, eyes, and hair.

In connection with this, I may mention a curious circumstance which happened to me, and tends to show that there is some little foundation for the belief of the trappers, that the Moqui Indians are descendants of the followers of Prince Madoc.

I happened on my arrival at the frontier of the United States (at Fort Leavenworth) to enter the log hut of an old negro woman, being at the time in my mountain attire of buckskins, over which was thrown a Moqui or Navajo blanket, as it was wet weather. The old dame's attention was called to it by its varied and gaudy colors, and, examining it carefully for some time, she exclaimed, "That's a Welsh blanket; I know it by the woof!" She had, she told me, in her youth, lived for many years in a Welsh family and in a Welsh settlement in Virginia, or one of the southern States, and had learned their method of working, which was the same as that displayed in my blanket. The blankets and tilmas manufactured by the Navajos, Moquis, and the Pueblos are of excellent quality, and dyed in durable and bright colors: the warp is of cotton filled with wool, the texture close and impervious to rain. Their pottery is, as I have before remarked, the same as that manufactured by the Aztecs, painted in bright patterns by colored earths and the juice of several plants. The dress of the Pueblos is a mixture of their ancient costume with that introduced by the Spaniards. A tilma, or small blanket without sleeves, is worn over the shoulder, and their legs and feet are protected by moccasins and leggings of deerskin or woollen stuff. Their heads are uncovered, and their hair long and unconfined, save the centre or scalp lock, which is usually bound with gay-colored ribbon. The women's dress is the same as that of the squaws of the wild Indians of the prairies, generally covered with a bright-colored blanket, or a mantle of cloth.

The Pueblo Indians have been more than once the chief actors in the many insurrections which have disturbed this remote province. In 1837 they overturned the government, killing the incapable man at the head of it, as they had done his predecessor, and placing one of their own party at the head of affairs. Recently they rose upon the Americans, who have taken possession of the country, and, in conjunction with the Mexicans, massacred Governor Bent and many others. They were defeated by the American troops in a pitched battle at La Canada, but defended most gallantly their chief pueblo (of Taos), which was taken and destroyed after a desperate resistance. Although I had determined to remain some time in Santa Fe to recruit my animals, I was so disgusted with the filth of the town, and the disreputable society a stranger was forced into, that in a very few days I once more packed my mules, and proceeded to the north, through the valley of Taos.

It was a cold, snowy day on which I left Santa Fe and the mountain, although here of inconsiderable elevation, was difficult to cross on account of the drifts. My mules, too, were for the first time introduced to snow on a large scale, and, by their careful, mincing steps and cautious movements, testified their doubts as to the security of such a road. The mountain is covered with pine and cedar, and the road winds through the bed of an arroyo, between high banks now buried in the snow. Not a living thing was visible, but once a large grey wolf was surprised on our turning a corner of rock, and in his hurry to escape plunged into a snowdrift, where I could easily have despatched the animal with a pistol, but Panchito was in such a state of affright that nothing would induce him to stand still or approach the spot.

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Over ridges and through mountain-gorges we passed into a small valley, where the pueblo of Ohuaqui afforded me shelter for the night, and a warm stable with plenty of corn for my animals, a luxury they had long been unaccustomed to.

I was here made welcome by the Indian family, who prepared my supper of frijoles and atole, the last the dish of New Mexico. It is made of the Indian meal, mixed with water into a thick gruel, and thus eaten-an insipid compound. Far more agreeable is the pinole of the tierra afuera [countryside], which is the meal of parched maize, mixed with sugar and spices, and of which a handful in a pint of water makes a most cooling and agreeable drink, and is the great standby of the arrieros and road-travellers in that starving country.

The patrona of the family seemed rather shy of me at first, until, in the course of conversation, she discovered that I was an Englishman. "Gracias a Dios," she exclaimed, "a Christian will sleep with us to-night, and not an American!"

I found over all New Mexico that the most bitter feeling and most determined hostility existed against the Americans, who certainly in Santa Fe and elsewhere have not been very anxious to conciliate the people, but by their bullying and overbearing demeanor towards them, have in a great measure been the cause of this hatred, which shortly after broke out in an organized rising of the northern part of the province, and occasioned great loss of life to both parties.

After supper the women of the family spread the floor with blankets, and every one, myself included, cigar in mouth, lay down-to the number of fifteen-in a space of less than that number of square feet; men, women, and children, all smoking and chattering. Just over my head were roosting several fowls; and one venerable cock every five minutes saluted us with a shrill crow, to the infinite satisfaction of the old Indian, who at every fresh one exclaimed, "Ay, como canta mi gallo, tan claro! - how clear sings my cock, the fine fellow!" "Valgame Dios! que paxarito tan hermoso - what a lovely little bird is this!"

The next day, passing the miserable village of La Canada, and the Indian pueblo of San Juan, both situated in a wretched, sterile-looking country, we reached El Embudo-the funnel-where I put up in the house of an old Canadian trapper, who had taken to himself a Mexican wife, and was ending his days as a quiet ranchero. He appeared to have forgotten the plenty of the mountains, for his pretty daughter set before us for supper a plate containing six small pieces of fat pork, like dice, floating in a sea of grease, hot and red with chile colorado.

We crossed, next day, a range of mountains covered with pine and cedar: on the latter grew great quantities of mistletoe, and the contrast of its bright green and the sombre hue of the cedars was very striking. The snow was melting on the ascent, which was exposed to the sun, and made the road exceedingly slippery and tiring to the animals. On reaching the summit a fine prospect presented itself: The Rocky Mountains, stretching away on each side of me, here divided into several branches, whose isolated peaks stood out in bold relief against the clear, cold sky. Valleys and plains lay between them, through which the river wound its way in deep cañons. In the distance was the snowy summit of the Sierra Nevada, bright with the rays of the setting sun, and at my feet lay the smiling vale of Taos, with its numerous villages and the curiously constructed pueblos of the Indians. Snow-covered mountains surrounded it, whose ridges were flooded with light, while the valley was almost shrouded in gloom and darkness.

On descending I was obliged to dismount and lead my horse, whose feet, balled with snow, were continually slipping from under him. After sunset the cold was intense, and, wading through

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

the snow, my moccasins became frozen, so that I was obliged to travel quickly to prevent my feet from being frost-bitten. it was quite dark when I reached the plain, and the night was so obscure that the track was perfectly hidden, and my only guide was the distant lights of the villages. Coming to a frozen brook, the mules refused to cross the ice, and I spent an hour in fruitless attempts to induce them. I could find nothing at hand with which to break the ice, and at length, half frozen, was obliged to turn back and retrace my steps to a rancho, which the Indian boy who was my guide said was about a mile distant. This I at length reached, though not before one of my feet was frost-bitten, and my hands so completely numbed by the excessive cold that I was unable to unpack the mules when I got in. To protect the poor animals from the cold, as there was no stable to place them in, I devoted the whole of my bedding to cover them, reserving to myself only a sarape, which, however, by the side of a blazing wood fire, was sufficient to keep me warm. The good lady of the house sent me a huge bowl of atole as I was engaged in clothing the animals, which I offered to Panchito as soon as the messenger's back was turned, and he swallowed it, boiling hot as it was, with great gusto.

The next morning, with the assistance of some rancheros, I crossed the stream, and arrived at Fernandez, which is the most considerable village in the valley.

CHAPTER V

MEXICAN GRATITUDE

EL VALLE DE TAOS is situated about eighty miles to the northward of Santa Fe on the eastern side of the Del Norte. It contains several villages or rancherias, the largest of which are Fernandez and El Rancho. The population of the valley may be estimated at eight thousand, including the Pueblo Indians. The soil is exceedingly fertile, and produces excellent wheat and other grain. The climate being rigorous, and the summers short, fruit does not ripen to perfection, but vegetables of all kinds are good and abundant, onions in particular growing to great size and of excellent flavor. The climate is colder than at Santa Fe the thermometer sometimes falling to zero in winter, and seldom rising above 75 in summer; the nights in summer being delightfully cool, but in winter piercingly cold. Although generally healthy, infectious disorders are sometimes prevalent and fatal; and periodical epidemics have on several occasions nearly decimated the inhabitants.

In all maps the valley of Taos is confounded with a city which under that name appears in them, but which does not exist, Fernandez being the chief town of the valley, and no such town as Taos to be found. The valley derives its name from the Taoses, a tribe of Indians who once inhabited it, and the remains of which inhabit a pueblo under the mountain about seven miles from Fernandez. Humboldt mentions Taos as a city containing 8,900 inhabitants. Its latitude is about 36 30', longitude between 105 30' and 106' west of Greenwich, but its exact position has never been accurately determined. The extent of the valley from El Rancho to Arroyo Hondo is seventeen miles, the breadth from the Del Norte to the mountains about the same.

Several distilleries are worked both at Fernandez and El Rancho, the latter better known to Americans as The Ranch. Most of them belong to Americans, who are generally trappers and hunters, who having married Taos women have settled here. The Taos whisky, a raw fiery spirit which they manufacture, has a ready market in the mountains amongst the trappers and hunters, and the Indian traders, who find the "fire-water" the most profitable article of trade with the aborigines, who exchange for it their buffalo robes and other peltries at a "tremendous sacrifice."

In Fernandez I was hospitably entertained in the house of an American named Lee, who had for

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

many years traded and trapped in the mountains, but who now, having married a Mexican woman, had set up a distillery and was amassing a considerable fortune. He gave me a pressing invitation to stop the winter with him, which I was well inclined to accept, if I could have obtained good pasture for my animals; that, however, was not to be had, and I continued my journey. A few days after my departure, Lee's house was attacked by the Mexicans, at the time when they massacred Governor Bent in the same village, and himself killed, with every foreigner in the place excepting the brother of Lee, who was protected by the priest and saved by him from the savage fury of the mob.

Bent, as well as Lee, had resided many years in New Mexico, both having wives and children in the country, and were supposed to have been much esteemed by the people. The former was an old trader amongst the Indians, and the owner of Bent's Fort, or Fort William, a trading-post on the Arkansa, well known for its hospitality to travellers in the far west. From his knowledge of the country and the Mexican character, Mr. Bent had been appointed Governor of New Mexico by General Kearney, and it was during a temporary visit to his family at Fernandez that he was killed in their presence, and scalped and mutilated, by a mob of Pueblos and the people of Taos.

William Bent was one of those hardy sons of enterprise with whom America abounds, who from love of dangerous adventure, forsake the quiet monotonous life of the civilized world for the excitement of a sojourn in the far west. For many years he traded with Indians on the Platte and Arkansa, winning golden opinions from the poor Indians for his honesty and fair dealing, and the greatest popularity from the hardy trappers and mountaineers for his firmness of character and personal bravery.

Notwithstanding the advice I received not to attempt such a journey at this season, I determined to cross the mountains and winter on the other side, either at the head of Arkansa or Platte, or in some of the mountain valleys, which are the wintering places of many of the trappers and mountain-men. I therefore hired a half-breed Pueblo as a guide, who, by the by, was one of the most rascally-looking of rascally Mexicans, and on the 1st of January was once more on my way.

I left Fernandez late in the day, as I intended to proceed only twelve miles to Arroyo Hondo, and there remain for the night. After proceeding a mile or two we came to a stream about thirty feet in breadth and completely frozen. Here the mules came to a stop, and nothing would induce them to attempt to cross. Even the last resource, that of crossing myself on Panchito, and pretending to ride away with their favorite, entirely failed, although they ran up and down the bank bellowing with affright, smelling the ice, feeling it with their fore feet and, throwing up their heads, would gallop to another point, and up and down, in great commotion. At length I had to take a pole, which was opportunely lying near, and break the ice away, having to remove the broken blocks entirely before they would attempt it. With all this, however, my old hunting-mule still refused; but, as I knew she would not be left behind, I proceeded on with the rest. At this she became frantic, galloped away from the river, returned, bellowed and cried, and at last, driven to desperation, she made a jump right into the air, but not near the broken place, and came down like a lump of lead on the top of the ice, which, of course, smashed under her weight, and down she went into a deep hole, her head just appearing out of the water, which was "mush" with ice. In this "fix" she remained perfectly still, apparently conscious that her own exertions would be unavailing; and I therefore had to return, and, up to my middle in water, break her out of the ice, expecting every moment to see her drop frozen to death. At last, and with great labor, I extricated her, when she at

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

once ran up to the horse and whinnied her delight at the meeting.

By this time it was pitchy dark, and the cold had become intense; my moccasins and deerskin leggings were frozen hard and stiff, and my feet and legs in a fair way of becoming in the same state. There was no road or track, the snow everywhere covering the country, and my guide bad evidently lost his way. However, I asked him in which direction he thought Arroyo Hondo to be, and pushed straight on for it, floundering through the snow, and falling into holes and ravines, and at length was brought to a dead halt, my horse throwing himself on his haunches, and just saving his master and himself a fall down a precipice some 500 feet in depth, which formed one side of the Arroyo Hondo.

The lights of the rancho to which we were bound twinkled at the bottom, but to attempt to reach it, without knowing the road down the ravine, was like jumping from the top of the Monument. However, as I felt I was on the point of freezing to death, I became desperate and charged the precipice, intending to roll down with Panchito, if we could not do better; but the horse refused to move, and presently, starting to one side as I spurred him, fell headlong into a snow-drift some twenty feet in depth, where I lay under him; and, satisfied in my mind that I was "in extremis," wished myself further from Arroyo Hondo and deplored my evil destiny. Panchito, however, managed to kick himself out; and I, half smothered and with one of my ribs disabled, soon followed his example, and again mounted. We presently came to a little adobe house, and a man, hearing our cries to each other in the dark, came out with a light. To my request, for a night's lodging he replied, "No se puede, no habia mas que un quartito"-that there was no room, but one little chamber, but that at the rancho I would be well accommodated. With this hint I moved on, freezing in my saddle, and again attempted to descend, but the darkness was pitchy, and the road a wall. Whilst attempting the descent once more, a light appeared on the bank above us, and a female voice cried out, "Veulvase amigo, por Dios! que no se baja - return, friend, for God's sake! and don't attempt to go down." "Que vengan, pobrecitos, para calentarse - come, poor fellows, and warm yourselves." "Por hi se sube, por hi-this way, this is the way up"-she cried to us, holding up the light to direct our steps. "Ay de mi, como suffren los pobres viajeros! -alas, what poor travelers suffer!"-she exclaimed, eyeing our frozen appearance, and clothes white with snow; and, still holding up the light, she led the way to her house, where now, lectured by his wife for his inhospitality, the man who had sent us away from his door bestirred himself to unpack the mules, which, with our numbed hands, it was impossible for us to do.

A little shed full of corn-shucks (the leaf of the maize, of which animals are very fond) provided a warm shelter for the shivering beasts; and having attended to their wants, and piled before them enough hoja for a regiment of cavalry, I entered the house, where half a dozen women were soon rubbing life into my hands and feet, which were badly frost-bitten, whilst others were busy preparing atole and chile, and making tortillas on the hearth.

A white stone marks this day of my journey, when, for the first time, I met with native hospitality on Arroyo Hondo. In this family, which consisted of about fifteen souls, six were on their beds, suffering from sarampion-the measles-which was at the time of my journey carrying off many victims in Santa Fe and Taos Valley. An old crone was busy decocting simples in a large olla over the fire. She asked me to taste it, giving it the name of aceite de vivoras--rattlesnake-oil; and as I expressed my disgust by word and deed at the intimation, which just saved my taking a gulp, the old lady was convulsed with laughter, giving me to understand that it was not really viper-oil, but

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

was so called-no mas. This pot, when cooked, was set on one side, and all the patients, one after the other, crawled from their blankets and imbibed the decoction from a gourd. One of the sick was the mother of the family, who had run after us to bring us back when her husband had told her of our situation-one instance of the many which I have met of the kindness of heart of Mexican women.

The next morning we descended into the Arroyo. Even in daylight the track down was exceedingly dangerous, and to have attempted it in the dark would have been an act of no little temerity. On the other bank of the stream was situated a mill and distillery belonging to an American by the name of Turley, who had quite a thriving establishment. Sheep and goats, and innumerable hogs, ran about the corral; his barns were filled with grain of all kinds, his mill with flour, and his cellars with whisky "in galore." Everything about the place betokened prosperity. Rosy children, uniting the fair, complexions of the Anglo-Saxon with the dark tint of the Mexican, gambolled before the door. The Mexicans and Indians at work in the yard were stout, well-fed fellows, looking happy and contented; as well they might, for no one in the country paid so well, and fed so well, as Turley, who bore the reputation, far and near, of being as generous and kind-hearted as he was reported to be rich. In times of scarcity no Mexican ever besought his assistance and went away empty-handed. His granaries were always open to the hungry, and his purse to the poor.

Three days after I was there they attacked his house, burned his mill, destroyed his grain and his live stock, and inhumanly butchered himself and the foreigners with him, after a gallant defence of twenty-four hours - nine men against five hundred. Such is Mexican gratitude.

I here laid in a small supply of provisions, flour and dried buffalo-meat, and got besides a good breakfast-rather a memorable occurrence. Just as I arrived, a party of Mormons, who had left Colonel Cooke's command on their way to California, and were now about to cross the mountains to join a large body of their people who were wintering on the Arkansa, intending to proceed to California in the ensuing spring, were on the point of starting. There were some twelve or fifteen of them, raw-boned fanatics, with four or five pack-mules carrying their provisions, themselves on foot. They started several hours before me; but I overtook them before they crossed the mountain, straggling along, some seated on the top of the mules' packs, some sitting down every few hundred yards, and all looking tired and miserable. One of the party was an Englishman, from Biddenden, in Kent, and an old Peninsular soldier. I asked what could have induced him to have undertaken such an expedition. He looked at me, and, without answering the question, said, "Dang it, if I only once get hoam I"

Arroyo Hondo runs along the base of a ridge of mountain of moderate elevation, which divides the valley of Taos from that of Rio Colorado, or Red River, both running into the Del Norte. The trail from one to the other runs through and over the mountain, a distance of about twelve miles. It is covered with pine and cedar and a species of dwarf oak; and numerous small streamlets run through the cañons and gorges. Near these grows plentifully a shrub which produces a fruit called by the mountaineers service-berry, of a dark blue, the size of a small grape, and of very pleasant flavor.

My animals, unused to mountain travelling, proceeded very slowly. Every little stream of frozen water was the cause of delay. The mules, on reaching the brink, always held a council of war, smelt and tried it with their fore feet, and bellowed forth their dislike of the slippery bridge. Coronela, my hunting-mule, since her mishap at Fernandez, was always the first to cross, but I had first to

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

strew the ice with branches, or throw a blanket over it, before I could induce them to pass; and at last, tired of the delays thus occasioned, I passed with the horse, and left the mules to use their own discretion, although not unfrequently half an hour or more would elapse before they overtook me.

All this day I marched on foot through the snow, as Panchito made sad work of ascending and descending the mountain, and it was several hours after sunset when I arrived at Rio Colorado, with one of my feet badly frozen. In the settlement, which boasted about twenty houses, on inquiry as to where I could procure a corral and hoja for the animals, I was directed to the house of a French Canadian-an old trapper named Laforey-one of the many who are found in these remote settlements, with Mexican wives, and passing the close of their adventurous lives in what to them is a state of ease and plenty; that is, they grow sufficient maize to support them, their faithful and well-tried rifles furnishing them with meat in abundance, to be had in all the mountains for the labor of hunting.

I was obliged to remain here two days, for my foot was so badly frozen that I was quite unable to put it to the ground. In this place I found that the Americans were in bad odor; and as I was equipped as a mountaineer, I came in for a tolerable share of abuse whenever I limped through the village. As my lameness prevented me from pursuing my tormentors, they were unusually daring, saluting me, every time I passed to the shed where my animals were corralled, with cries of "Burro, burro, vena comer hoja - Jackass, jackass, come here and eat shucks ... .. Anda coxo, a ver los burros, sus hermanos - Hallo, game-leg, go and see your brothers, the donkeys;" and at last, words not being found heavy enough, pieces of adobe rattled at my ears. This, however, was a joke rather too practical to be pleasant; so, the next time I limped to the stable, I carried my rifle on my shoulder, which was a hint never to be mistaken by a Mexican, and hereafter I passed with impunity. However, I was obliged to watch my animals day and night, for, as soon as I fed them, either the corn was bodily stolen, or a herd of hogs was driven in to feed at my expense. The latter aggression I put a stop to by administering to one persevering porker a pill from my rifle, and promised the threatening crowd that I would have as little compunction in letting the same amount of daylight into them if I caught them thieving the provender; and they seemed to think me in earnest, for I missed no more corn or shucks. I saw plainly enough, however, that my remaining here, with such a perfectly lawless and ruffianly crew, was likely to lead me into some trouble, if, indeed, my life was not in absolute danger, which, from what occurred shortly after, I have now no doubt it was; and therefore I only waited until my foot was sufficiently recovered to enable me to resume my journey across the mountains.

The fare in Laforey's house was what might be expected in a hunter's establishment: venison, antelope, and the meat of the carnero cimarron - the Rocky Mountain sheep - furnished his larder; and such meat (poor and tough at this season of the year), with cakes of Indian meal, either tortillas or gorditas, (The tortilla is a round flat pancake, made of the Indian cornmeal; the gordita is of the same material, but thicker) furnished the daily bill of fare. The absence of coffee he made the theme of regret at every meal, bewailing his misfortune in not having at that particular moment a supply of this article, which he never before was without, and which I may here observe, amongst the hunters and trappers, when in camp or rendezvous, is considered as an indispensable necessary. Coffee, being very cheap in the States, is the universal beverage of the western people, and finds its way to the mountains in the packs of the Indian traders, who retail it to the moun-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

tain-men at the moderate price of from two to six dollars the half-pint cup. However, my friend Laforey was never known to possess any, and his lamentations were only intended to soften my heart, as he thought (erroneously) that I must certainly carry a supply with me.

“Sacre enfant de Garce,” he would exclaim, mixing English, French, and Spanish into a puchero-like jumble, “voyez-vous dat I vas nevere tan pauvre as dis time; mais before I vas siempre avec plenty cafe, plenty sucre; mais now, God dam, I not go a Santa Fe” God dam, and mountain-men dey come aqui from autre cote, drink all my cafe. Sacre enfant de Garce, nevere I vas tan pauvre as dis time, God dam. I not care comer meat, ni frijole, ni corn, mais widout cafe I no live. I hunt may be two, three day, may be one week, mais I eat notin’; mais sin cafe, enfant de Garce, I no live, parce-que me not sacre Espagnol, mais one Frenchman.”

Rio Colorado is the last and most northern settlement of Mexico, and is distant from Vera Cruz 2000 miles. It contains perhaps fifteen families, or a population of fifty souls, including one or two Yuta Indians, by sufferance of whom the New Mexicans have settled this valley, thus ensuring to the politic savages a supply of corn or cattle without the necessity of undertaking a raid on Taos or Santa Fe whenever they require a remount. This was the reason given me by a Yuta for allowing the encroachment on their territory.

The soil of the valley is fertile, the little strip of land which comprises it yielding grain in abundance, and being easily irrigated from the stream, the banks of which are low. The plain abounds with alegria, the plant from which the juice is extracted with which the belles of Nuevo Mejico, cosmetically preserve their complexions. The neighboring mountains afford plenty of large game-deer, bears, mountain-sheep, and elk; and the plains are covered with countless herds of antelope, which, in the winter, hang about the foot of the sierras, which shield them from the icy winds.

No state of society can be more wretched or degrading than the social and moral condition of the inhabitants of New Mexico: but in this remote settlement, anything I had formerly imagined to be the ne plus ultra of misery, fell far short of the reality --such is the degradation of the people of the Rio Colorado. Growing a bare sufficiency for their own support, they hold the little land they cultivate, and their wretched hovels on sufferance from the barbarous Yutas, who actually tolerate their presence in their country for the sole purpose of having at their command a stock of grain and a herd of mules and horses, which they make no scruple of helping themselves to, whenever they require a remount or a supply of farinaceous food. Moreover, when a war expedition against a hostile tribe has failed, and no scalps have been secured to ensure the returning warriors a welcome to their village, the Rio Colorado is a kind of game-preserve, where the Yutas have a certainty of filling their bag if their other covers draw blank. Here they can always depend upon procuring a few brace of Mexican, scalps, when such trophies are required for a war-dance or other festivity, without danger to themselves, and merely for the trouble of fetching them.

Thus, half the year, the settlers fear to leave their houses, and their corn and grain often remain uncut, the Indians being near: thus the valiant Mexicans refuse to leave the shelter of their burrows even to secure their only food. At these times their sufferings are extreme, they being reduced to the verge of starvation; and the old Canadian hunter told me that he and his son entirely supported the people on several occasions by the produce of their rifles, while the maize was lying rotting in the fields. There are sufficient men in the settlement to exterminate the Yutas, were they not entirely devoid of courage; but, as it is, they allow themselves to be bullied and ill-treated with the most perfect impunity.

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Against these same Indians a party of a dozen Shawnee and Delaware trappers waged a long and most destructive war, until at last the Yutas were fain to beg for peace, after losing many, of their most famous warriors and chiefs. The cowardly Mexicans, however, have seldom summoned courage to strike a blow in their own defence, and their savage enemies so thoroughly despise them that they never scruple to attack them, however large the party, or in spite of the greatest disparity in numbers between them.

On the third day, the inflammation in my frost-bitten foot having in some measure subsided, I again packed my mules, and, under a fusillade of very hard names from the pelados, turned my back on Mexico and the Mexicans.

Laforey escorted me out of the settlement to point out the trail (for roads now had long ceased), and bemoaning his hard fate in not having "plenty cafe, avec Sucre, God dam," with a concluding enfant de Garce, he bid me good bye, and recommended me to mind my hair - in other words, look out for my scalp. Cresting a bluff which rose from the valley, I turned in my saddle, took a last look of the adobes, and, without one regret, cried "Adios, Mejico!"

I had now turned my back on the last settlement, and felt a thrill of pleasure as I looked at the wild expanse of snow which lay before me, and the towering mountains which frowned on all sides, and knew that now I had seen the last (for some time at least) of civilized man under the garb of a Mexican sarape.

CHAPTER VI

INTO THE MOUNTAINS

OUR course on leaving Red River was due north, my object being to strike the Arkansa near its head-waters on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, and follow as near as possible the Yuta trail, which these Indians use in passing from the Del Norte to the Bayou Salado, on their annual buffalo-hunts to that elevated valley.

Skirting a low range of mountains, the trail passes a valley upwards of fifty miles in length, intersected by numerous streams (called creeks by the mountain-men), which rise in the neighboring highlands, and fall into the Del Norte, near its upper waters. Our first day's journey, of about twenty-five miles, led through the uplands at the southern extremity of the valley. These are covered with pine and cedar, and the more open plains with bushes of wild sage, which is the characteristic plant in all the elevated plains of the Rocky Mountains. On emerging from the uplands, we entered a level prairie, covered with innumerable herds of antelope.

These graceful animals, in bands containing several thousands, trotted up to us, and, with pointed ears and their beautiful eyes staring with eager curiosity, accompanied us for miles, running parallel to our trail within fifty or sixty yards.

The cold of these regions is more intense than I ever remember to have experienced, not excepting even in Lower Canada; and when a northerly wind sweeps over the bleak and barren plains, charged as it is with its icy reinforcements from the snow-clad mountains, it assails the unfortunate traveller, exposed to all its violence, with blood-freezing blasts, piercing to his very heart and bones.

Such was the state of congelation I was in, on this day, that even the shot-tempting antelope bounded past unscathed. My hands, with fingers of stone, refused even to hold the reins of my horse, who travelled as he pleased, sometimes slueing round his stern to wind, which was "dead ahead." Mattias, the half-breed who was my guide, enveloped from head to foot in blanket, occa-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

sionally cast a longing glance from out its folds at the provoking venison as it galloped past, muttering at intervals, "Jesus, Jesus, que carne - what meat we're losing!" At length, as a band of some three thousand almost ran over us, human nature, although at freezing-point, could no longer stand it. I jumped off Panchito, and, kneeling down, sent a ball from my rifle right into the "thick" of the band. At the report two antelopes sprang into the air, their forms being distinct against the horizon above the backs of the rest; and when the herd had passed, they were lying kicking in the dust, one shot in the neck, through which the ball had passed into the body of another.

We packed a mule with the choice pieces of the meat, which was a great addition to our slender stock of dried provisions. As I was butchering the antelope, half a dozen wolves hung round the spot, attracted by the smell of blood; they were so tame, and hungry at the same time, that I thought they would actually have torn the meat from under my knife. Two of them loped round and round, gradually decreasing their distance, occasionally squatting on their haunches and licking their impatient lips, in anxious expectation of a coming feast. I threw a large piece of meat towards them, when the whole gang jumped upon it, fighting and growling, and tearing each other in the furious melee. I am sure I might have approached near enough to have seized one by the tail, so entirely regardless of my vicinity did they appear. They were doubtless rendered more ravenous than usual by the uncommon severity of the weather, and, from the fact of the antelope congregating in large bands, were unable to prey upon these animals, which are their favorite food. Although rarely attacking a man, yet in such seasons as the present I have no doubt that they would not hesitate to charge upon a solitary traveller in the night, particularly as in winter they congregate in troops of from ten to fifty. They are so abundant in the mountains, that the hunter takes no notice of them, and seldom throws away upon the skulking beasts a charge of powder and lead.

This night we camped on Rib Creek, the Costilla of the New-Mexican hunters, where there was no grass for our poor animals, and the creek was frozen to such a depth, that, after the greatest exertions in breaking a hole through the ice, which was nearly a foot thick, they were unable to reach the water.

It is a singular fact that during intense cold horses and mules suffer more from want of water than in the hottest weather, and often perish in the mountains when unable to procure it for two or three days in the frozen creeks. Although they made every attempt to drink, the mules actually kneeling in their endeavors to reach the water, I was obliged to give it them, one after the other, from a small tin cup which held half a pint, and from which the thirsty animals greedily drank. This tedious process occupied me more than an hour, after which there was another hour's work in hunting for wood, and packing it on our backs into camp. Before we had a fire going it was late in the night, and almost midnight before we had found a little grass and picketed the animals; all of which duties at last being effected, We cooked our collops of antelope-meat, smoked a pipe, and rolled ourselves in our blankets before the fire. All night long the camp was surrounded by wolves, which approached within a few feet of the fire, and their eyes shone like coals as they hovered in the bushes, attracted by the savory smell of the roasting venison.

The next day we struck La Culebra, or Snake Creek, where we saw that the party of Mormons had encamped, and apparently halted a day, for more than ordinary pains had been taken to make their camp comfortable, and several piles of twigs, of the sage-bush and rushes, remained, of which they had made beds. However, we were obliged to go farther down the creek, as there was

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

no firewood near the point where the trail crosses it, and there found a sheltered place with tolerable grass, and near an air-hole in the ice where the animals could drink. I remarked that in the vicinity of the Mormon camp no watering-place had been made for their animals, and, as we had seen no holes broken in the ice of the creeks we had passed, I concluded that these people had allowed their animals to shift for themselves, the consequences of which negligence were soon apparent in our farther advance.

The cold was so intense that I blanketed all my animals, and even then expected that some of the mules would have perished; for it snowed heavily during the night, and the storm ended in a watery sleet, which froze as soon as it fell, and in the morning the animals were covered with a sheet of ice. We ourselves suffered extremely, turning constantly, and rolling almost into the embers of the scanty fire; and towards daybreak I really thought I should have frozen bodily. My bedding consisted of two blankets -one of them a very thin one, which was all I had between my body and the snow; and the other, first soaked with the sleet and afterwards frozen stiff and hard, was more like a board than a blanket, and was in that state no protection against the cold. It is well known that the coldest period of the twenty-four hours is that immediately preceding the dawn of day. At this time one is generally awakened by the sensation of death-like chill, which penetrates into the very bones; and as the fire is by this time usually extinguished, or merely smouldering in the ashes, the duty of replenishing is a very trying process. To creep out of the blanket and face the cutting blast requires no little resolution; and, if there be more than one person in the camp, the horrible moment is put off by the first roused, in hopes that someone else will awaken and perform the duty. However, should the coughs and hems succeed in rousing all, it is ten to one but that all, with a blank look at the cheerless prospect, cover their heads with the blanket, and with a groan, cuddling into a ball, resettle themselves to sleep, leaving the most chilly victim to perform the office.

The half-frozen animals, standing over their picket-pins and collapsed with cold, seem almost drawn within themselves, and occasionally approach the fire as close as their lariats will allow, bending down their noses to the feeble warmth, the breath in steaming volumes of cloud issuing from their nostrils, whilst their bodies are thickly clad with a coat of frozen snow or sleet.

Our next camp was on La Trinchera, or Bowl Creek. The country was barren and desolate, covered with sage, and with here and there a prairie with tolerable pasture. Antelope were abundant, and deer and turkeys were to be seen on the creeks. The trail passed, to the westward, a lofty peak, resembling in outline that one known as James's or Pike's Peak, which is some two hundred and fifty miles to the north. The former is not laid down in any of the maps, although it is a well-known landmark to the Indians.

The creeks are timbered with cottonwoods, quaking-asp, dwarf-oak, cedar, and wild cherry, all of small growth and stunted, while the uplands are covered with a dwarfish growth of pines. From Rio Colorado we had been constantly followed by a large grey wolf. Every evening, as soon as we got into camp, he made his appearance, squatting quietly down at a little distance, and after we had turned in for the night helping himself to anything lying about. Our first acquaintance commenced on the prairie where I had killed the two antelope, and the excellent dinner he then made, on the remains of the two carcasses, had evidently attached him to our society. In the morning, as soon as we left the camp, he took possession, and quickly ate up the remnants of our supper and some little extras I always took care to leave for him. Shortly after he would trot after us, and, if we

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

halted for a short time to adjust the mule-packs or water the animals, he sat down quietly until we resumed our march. But when I killed an antelope, and was in the act of butchering it, he gravely looked on, or loped round and round, licking his jaws, and in a state of evident self-gratulation. I had him twenty times a day within reach of my rifle, but he became such an old friend that I never dreamed of molesting him.

Our day's travel was usually from twenty to thirty miles, for the days were very short, and we were obliged to be in camp an hour before sunset, in order to procure wood, and water the animals before dark. Before arriving at the creek where we purposed to camp, I rode ahead, and selected a spot where was good grass and convenient water. We then unpacked the mules and horses, and immediately watered them, after which we allowed them to feed at large until dark. In the mean time we hunted for fire-wood, having sometimes to go half a mile from camp, packing it on our shoulders to the spot we intended for our fire, the mule-packs and saddles, &c., being placed to windward of it as a protection from the cold blasts. We then cooked supper, and at dark picketed the animals round the camp, their lariats (or skin-ropes) being attached to pegs driven in the ground. After a smoke, we spread our blankets before the fire and turned in, rising once or twice in the night to see that all was safe, and remove the animals to fresh grass when they had cleared the circle round their pickets. Guard or watch we kept none, for after a long day's travel it was too much for two of us to take alternate sentry, thus having but half the night for sleep.

We were now approaching a part of the journey much dreaded by the Indians and New Mexican buffalo-hunters, and which is quite another "Jornada del Muerto," or dead man's journey. A creek called Sangre Cristo - blood of Christ - winds through a deep cañon, which opens out at one point into a small circular basin called El Vallecito-the little valley. It is quite embosomed in the mountains; and down their rugged sides, and through the deep gorges, the wind rushes with tremendous fury, filling the valley with drifted snow, and depositing it in the numerous hollows with which it is intersected. This renders the passage of the Vallecito exceedingly difficult and dangerous, as animals are frequently buried in the snow, which is sometimes fifteen or twenty feet deep in the hollows, and four or five on the level.

This valley is also called by the mountaineers the "Wind-trap;" a very appropriate name, as the wind seems to be caught and pent up here the year round, and, mad with the confinement, blows round and round, seeking for an escape.

Wishing to have my animals fresh for the passage of this dreaded spot, I this day made a short journey of fifteen miles, and camped in the cañon about three miles from the mouth of the Wind-trap. The cañon was so precipitous that the only place I could find for our camp was on the side of the mountain, where was tolerably good gramma-grass, but a wretched place for ourselves; and we had to burrow out a level spot in the snow before we could place the pack in a position where they would not roll down the hill. The cedars were few and far between, and the snow covered everything in the shape of wood; and as in our last camp my tomahawk had been lost in the snow, I was unable to procure a log, and was fain to set fire to a cedar near which we had laid our packs. The flame, licking the stringy and dry bark, quickly ran up the tree, blazed along the branches in a roar of fire, illuminating the rugged mountain, and throwing its light upon the thread of timber skirting the creek which wound along the bottom far beneath.

All night long the wind roared through the cañon, and at times swept the blankets from our chilled bodies with the force of a giant. The mules and horses after dark refused to feed, and, as

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

there was no spot near where we could picket them, the poor beasts sought shelter from the cruel blasts in the belt of dwarf oak which fringed the creek.

We passed a miserable night, perched upon the mountain-side in our lonely camp, and without a fire, for the tree was soon consumed. Our old friend the wolf, however, was still a companion, and sat all night within sight of the fire, howling piteously from cold and hunger. The next morning I allowed the animals a couple of hours after sunrise to feed and fill themselves; and then, descending from our camp, we entered at once the pass into the dreaded Vallecito. A few hundred yards from the entrance lay a frozen mule, half-buried in the snow; and a little farther on another, close to the creek where the Mormons had evidently encamped not two days before.

The Vallecito was covered with snow to the depth of three feet, to all appearance perfectly level, but in fact full of hollows, with fifteen or twenty feet of snow in them. With the greatest difficulty and labor we succeeded in crossing, having to dismount and beat a path through the drifts with our bodies. The pack-mules were continually falling, and were always obliged to be unpacked before they could rise. As this happened every score yards, more than half the day was consumed in traversing the valley, which cannot exceed four miles in length.

The mountain rises directly from the north end of the Vallecito, and is the dividing ridge between the waters of the Del Norte and the Arkansa or Rio Napeste of the Mexicans. The ascent to the summit, from the western side, is short, but very steep; and the snow was of such a depth that the mules could hardly make their way to the top. Leading my horse by the bridle, I led the way, and at length, numbed with cold, I reached the summit, where is a level plateau of about a hundred square yards. Attaining this, and exposed to the full sweep of the wind, a blast struck me, carrying with it a perfect avalanche of snow and sleet, full in my front, and knocked me as clean off my legs as I could have been floored by a twenty-four pound shot.

The view from this point was wild and dismal in the extreme. Looking back, the whole country was covered with a thick carpet of snow, but eastward it was seen in patches only here and there. Before me lay the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, Pike's Peak lifting its snowy head far above the rest; and to the southeast the Spanish Peaks (Cumbres Espanolas) towered like twin giants over the plains. Beneath the mountain on which I stood was a narrow valley, through which ran a streamlet bordered with dwarf oak and pine, and looking like a thread of silver as it wound through the plain. Rugged peaks and ridges, snow-clad and covered with pine, and deep gorges filled with broken rocks, everywhere met the eye. To the eastward the mountains gradually smoothed away into detached spurs and broken ground, until they met the vast prairies, which stretched far as the eye could reach, and hundreds of miles beyond—a sea of seeming barrenness, vast and dismal. A hurricane of wind was blowing at the time, and clouds of dust swept along the sandy prairies, like the smoke of a million bonfires. On the mountain-top it roared and raved through the pines, filling the air with snow and broken branches, and piling it in huge drifts against the trees.

The perfect solitude of this vast wildness was almost appalling. From my position on the summit of the dividing ridge I had a bird's-eye view, as it were, over the rugged and chaotic masses of the stupendous chain of the Rocky Mountains, and the vast deserts which stretched away from their eastern bases; while, on all sides of me, broken ridges, and chasms and ravines, with masses of piled-up rocks and uprooted trees, with clouds of drifting snow flying through the air, and the hurricane's roar battling through the forest at my feet, added to the wildness of the scene, which

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

was unrelieved by the slightest vestige of animal or human life. Not a sound either of bird or beast was heard -- indeed, the hoarse and stunning rattle of the wind would have drowned them, so loud it roared and raved through the trees.

The animals strove in vain to face the storm, and, turning their sterns to the wind, shrank into themselves, trembling with cold. Panchito, whom I was leading by the bridle, followed me to the edge of the plateau, but drew back, trembling, from the dismal scene which lay stretched below. With a neigh of fear he laid his cold nose against my cheek, seeming to say, "Come back, master: what can take you to such a wretched place as that, where not even a blade of grass meets the eye?"

The descent on the eastern side is steep and sudden, and through a thick forest of pines, to the valley beneath. Trail there was none to direct us, and my half-breed knew nothing of the road, having passed but once before, and many years ago, but said it went somewhere down the pines. The evening was fast closing round us, and to remain where we were was certain death to our animals, if not to ourselves: I therefore determined to push for the valley, and accordingly struck at once down the pines.

Once amongst the trees there was nothing to do but reach the bottom as fast as possible, as it was nearly dark, and nothing was to be seen at the distance of a dozen yards, so dense was the forest. Before we had proceeded as many paces from the edge of the plateau, and almost before I knew where I was, horses, mules, &c., were rolling down the mountain all together, and were at last brought up in a snow-drift some twelve feet deep. There they all lay in a heap, the half-breed under one of the pack-mules, and his swarthy face just peering out of the snow. Before a mule would stir every pack had to be removed; and this, with a temperature some ten degrees below zero, was trying to the fingers, as may be imagined. As it was impossible to reach the bottom from this point, we struggled once more to the top through six feet of snow and an almost perpendicular ascent. I had to beat a road for the animals, by throwing myself bodily on the snow, and pounding it down with all my weight. We were nearly frozen by this time, and my hands were perfectly useless--so much so that, when a large bird of the grouse species (called by the hunters *le coq des bois*. It resembles the Scotch capercaillie.) flew up into a pine above my head, I was unable to cock my rifle to shoot at it. The mules were plunging into the snow at every step, and their packs were hanging under their bellies, but to attempt to adjust them was out of the question. It was nearly dark too, which made our situation anything but pleasant, and the mules were quite exhausted. At last, however, we reached the top and struck down the mountain at another point, but it was with the greatest toil and difficulty that we reached the bottom long after dark, and camped shortly after near the creek which wound through the valley, or rather in its very bed. One of the mules had slipped its pack completely under the belly, and, the girth pinching her, she started off just before reaching the creek at full gallop, kicking everything the pack contained to the four winds of heaven. This pack happened to contain all the provisions, and, as the search for them in the dark would have been useless, we this night had no supper. To shelter ourselves from the wind we camped in the bed of the creek, which was without water, but the wind howled down it as if it were a funnel, scattering our fire in every direction as soon as it was lighted, and tearing the blankets from our very bodies. The animals never moved from the spot where they had been unpacked; even if there had been grass, they were too exhausted to feed, but stood shivering in the wind, collapsed with cold, and almost dead. Such a night I never passed, and hope never to pass

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

again. The hurricane never lulled for a single instant; all our efforts to build a fire were unavailing; and it was with no small delight that I hailed the break of day, when we immediately packed the mules and started on our journey.

The trail now led along the creek and through small broken prairies, with bluffs exhibiting a very curious formation of shale and sandstone. At one point the cañon opens out into a pretty open glade or park, in the middle of which is a large rock resembling a ruined castle: the little prairie is covered with fine grass, and a large herd of black-tailed deer were feeding in it. A little farther on we descried the timber on the Huerfano or Orphan Creek, so called from a remarkable isolated rock of sandstone which stands in a small prairie on its left bank, and is a well-known landmark to the Indians. We camped on the Huerfano under some high cottonwoods, the wind blowing with unabated violence. The next morning all the animals were missing, and, following their trail, we found them on the other side of the creek, five or six miles from the camp, in a little prairie full of buffalo-grass. As it was late in the day when we returned to camp, we did not leave till next morning, when we crossed on to the Cuernaverde or Greenhorn Creek.

On a bluff overlooking the stream I had the satisfaction of seeing two or three Indian lodges and one adobe hovel of a more aspiring order. As we crossed the creek, a mountaineer on an active horse galloped up to us, his rifle over the horn of the saddle, and clad in hunting-shirt and pantaloons of deer-skin, with long fringes hanging down the arms and legs. As this was the first soul we had met since leaving Red River, we were as delighted to meet a white man (and him an American) as he was to learn the news from the Mexican settlements. We found here two or three hunters, French Canadians with their Assiniboin and Sioux squaws, who have made the Greenhorn their head-quarters; and game being abundant and the rich soil of the valley affording them a sufficiency of Indian corn, they lead a tolerably easy life, and certainly a lazy one, with no cares whatever to annoy them. This valley will, I have no doubt, become one day a thriving settlement, the soil being exceedingly rich and admirably adapted to the growth of all kinds of grain. The prairies afford abundant pasture of excellent quality, and stock might be raised upon them in any numbers.

The depreciation in the value of beaver-skins has thrown the great body of trappers out of employment, and there is a general tendency amongst the mountain-men to settle in the fruitful valleys of the Rocky Mountains. Already the plough has turned up the soil within sight of Pike's Peak, and a hardy pioneer, an Englishman, has led the way to the Great Salt Lake, where a settlement of mountaineers has even now been formed, a thousand miles from the frontier of the United States.

From the Greenhorn an easy day's travel brought us to the banks of the San Carlos, which, receiving the former creek, falls into the Arkansa about two hundred and fifty miles from its source. The San Carlos is well timbered with cottonwood, cherry, quaking-asp, box-alder, and many varieties of shrubs, and many spots in the valley are admirably adapted for cultivation, with a rich loamy soil, and so situated as to be irrigated with great facility from the creek. Irrigation is indispensable over the whole of this region, rain seldom falling in the spring and summer, which is one of the greatest drawbacks to the settlement of this country, the labor of irrigation being very great. The San Carlos heads in a lofty range of mountains about forty miles from its junction with the Arkansa. Near its upper waters is a circular valley enclosed by rugged highlands, through which the stream forces its way in a cañon whose precipitous sides overhang it to the height of three

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

hundred feet. The face of the rock (of a dark limestone) is in many places perfectly vertical, and rises from the water's edge to a great elevation, pinons and small cedars growing out of crevices in the sides.

After leaving this creek we passed a barren rolling prairie with scanty herbage and covered with the palmilla or soap-plant. (The palmilla or soap-plant is a species of cactus, the fibrous root of which the New Mexicans use as a substitute for soap. An abundant lather is obtained from it.) A few antelope were its only tenants, and these so shy that I was unable to approach them. Fourteen miles from the San Carlos we struck the Arkansa at the little Indian trading-fort of the "Pueblo," which is situated on the left bank, a few hundred yards above the mouth of the Fontaine-qui-bouille, or Boiling Spring River, so called from two springs of mineral water near its headwaters under Pike's Peak, about sixty miles from its mouth. Here I was hospitably entertained in the lodge of one John Hawkens, an ex-trapper and well-known mountaineer. I turned my animals loose, and allowed them to seek for themselves the best pastures, as in the vicinity of the fort the prairies were perfectly bare of grass, and it was only near the mountain that any of a good quality was to be found.

CHAPTER VII

BLIZZARD IN SOUTH PARK

THE Arkansa is here a clear, rapid river about a hundred yards in width. The bottom, which is enclosed on each side by high bluffs, is about a quarter of a mile across, and timbered with a heavy growth of cottonwood, some of the trees being of great size. On each side vast rolling prairies stretch away for hundreds of miles, gradually ascending on the side towards the mountains, and the highlands are there sparsely covered with pinon and cedar. The high banks through which the river occasionally passes are of shale and sandstone, and rise precipitously from the water. Ascending the river the country is wild and broken until it enters the mountains, when the scenery is grand and imposing; but the prairies around it are arid and sterile, producing but little vegetation, and the grass, though of good quality, is thin and scarce.

The Pueblo is a small square fort of adobe with circular bastions at the corners, no part of the walls being more than eight feet high, and round the inside of the yard or corral are built some half-dozen little rooms inhabited by as many Indian traders, coureurs des bois, and mountain-men. They live entirely upon game, and the greater part of the year without even bread, since but little maize is cultivated. As soon as their supply of meat is exhausted they start to the mountains with two or three pack-animals, and bring them back in two or three days loaded with buffalo or venison. In the immediate vicinity of the fort game is very scarce, and the buffalo have within a few years deserted the neighboring prairies, but they are always found in the mountain-valleys, particularly in one called Bayou Salado, which abounds in every species of game, including elk, bears, deer, bighorn or Rocky Mountain sheep, buffalo, antelope, &c.

Hunting in the mountains round the head of Fontaine-qui-bouille and Bayou Salado, I remained for the rest of the winter, which was unusually severe - so much so, that the hunters were not unfrequently afraid to venture with their animals into the mountains. Shortly after my arrival on Arkansa, and during a spell of fine sunny weather, I started with a Pueblo hunter for a load or two of buffalo-meat, intending to hunt on the waters of the Platte and the Bayou, where bulls remain in good condition during the winter months, feeding on the rich grass of the mountain valleys. I took with me my horse and three pack-mules, as it was our intention to return with a good supply

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

of meat.

Our course lay up the Fontaine-qui-bouille, and on the third day we entered the pine-covered uplands at the foot of the mountain. Here we found deer so abundant that we determined to hunt here, rather than proceed across the ridge on to the waters of the Platte. We camped on a little mountain stream running into the creek an hour or two before sunset, and, as we had no provisions, we sallied out to hunt as soon as we had unpacked the mules. We killed two deer almost immediately, and, returning to camp, made a good supper off some of the tidbits.

The next morning at daybreak, as soon as I had risen from my blanket, I saw a herd of deer feeding within a few hundred yards of camp, and seizing my rifle I immediately took advantage of some broken ground to approach them. Before, however, I could get within shot they ascended the bluffs and moved across a prairie, feeding as they went. I took a long circuit to get the wind of them, and, following a ravine, at length brought my rifle to bear, and knocked over a fine buck, the others running two or three hundred yards and then stopping to look round for their missing comrade. As I ran up to the dead one, and took out my knife to cut the throat, another deer, ran past and stopped between me and the herd, and, taking a long shot, I dropped the animal, which, however, rose again and limped slowly away. Leaving the dead one and my ramrod on its body, I followed the wounded deer, and, about half a mile from where I fired, found it lying dead. The process of butchering occupied about twenty minutes, and, packing the hams and shoulders on my back, I trudged back to my first victim. As I was crossing a ravine and ascending the opposite bluff, I saw the figure of a man crawling along the bottom, evidently with the intention of approaching me. A close inspection assured me that it was an Indian; and as none but Arapahos were likely to be in the vicinity, and as these are the Indians most hostile to the white hunters, killing them whenever an opportunity offers, I made up my mind that a war-party was about, and that I and my companion stood a very good chance of "losing our hair." As the Indian cautiously advanced, I perceived another was running round the prairie to cut me off from camp, and consequently I determined to make good my ground where I was, throwing down the meat and getting my rifle in readiness for work.

The only tribes of Indians who frequent this part of the mountains are the Yutas (or Utahs) and the Arapahos, who are hereditary enemies, and constantly at deadly war with each other. A large band of the Yutas had been wintering in the Bayou Salado, to which one trail leads by the Boiling Spring River (where I was hunting), and another by the Arkansa. The former is the trail followed by the Arapaho war-parties when on an expedition against the Yutas in the Bayou, and therefore I felt certain that none but the former Indians would be met with in this vicinity. However, as the Yutas are a very friendly tribe, I was loth to be the first to commence hostilities in case my antagonist might prove to belong to that nation, and therefore I awaited his approach, which he made stealthily, until he saw that I had discovered him, when, throwing himself erect, and gun in hand, he made directly towards me. With rifle cocked I watched his eye until he came within fifty yards, when suddenly, seeing my hostile appearance, he stopped, and, striking his hand thrice on his brawny chest, exclaimed, in a loud voice "Arapaho, Arapaho!" and stood erect and still. This announcement was very near being fatal to him, for, on hearing him proclaim himself one of that hostile nation, my rifle was up to my shoulder in an instant, and covering his heart. As my finger was on the trigger, it flashed across my mind that I had heard that two Arapahos were amongst the hunters on the Arkansas their sister being married to a mountaineer, and that probably the

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

dusky gentleman at the end of my rifle was one of these, as indeed he proved to be. I accordingly made signals of peace, and he approached and shook me by the hand. That his intentions were not altogether honest I have no doubt, but, finding me prepared, he thought it more advisable to remain en paz - at peace. What strengthened me in this belief was the fact, which I shortly after discovered, that a war-party of his nation were at that moment camped within a few hundred yards of us, whose vicinity he never apprised me of, and who, if they had seen us, would not have hesitated an instant to secure our scalps and animals.

When I returned to the spot where I had, left the first deer, not a particle was visible except some hair scattered on the ground, but a few hundred yards from the spot a dozen wolves were engaged in dining off a lump of something, which, on approach, I found to be the remains of my deer, leaving behind them, when dispersed, a handful of hair.

The sagacity of wolves is almost incredible. They will remain round a hunting-camp and follow the hunters the whole day, in bands of three and four, at less than a hundred yards distance, stopping when they stop, and sitting down quietly when game is killed, rushing to devour the offal when the hunter retires, and then following until another feed is offered them. If a deer or antelope is wounded, they immediately pursue it, and not unfrequently pull the animal down in time for the hunter to come up and secure it from their ravenous clutches. However, they appear to know at once the nature of the wound, for if but slightly touched they never exert themselves to follow a deer, chasing those only which have received a mortal blow.

I one day killed an old buck which was so poor that I left the carcass on the ground untouched. Six coyotes, or small prairie wolves, were my attendants that day, and of course, before I had left the deer twenty paces, had commenced their work of destruction. Certainly not ten minutes after I looked back and saw the same six loping after me, one of them not twenty yards behind me, with his nose and face all besmeared with blood, and his belly swelled almost to bursting. Thinking it scarcely possible that they could have devoured the whole deer in so short a space, I had the curiosity to return, and, to my astonishment, found actually nothing left but a pile of bones and hair, the flesh being stripped from them as clean as if scraped with a knife. Half an hour after I killed a large black-tail deer, and, as it was also in miserable condition, I took merely the fleeces (as the meat on the back and ribs is called), leaving four-fifths of the animal untouched. I then retired a short distance, and, sitting down on a rock, lighted my pipe, and watched the operations of the wolves. They sat perfectly still until I had withdrawn some three-score yards, when they scampered, with a flourish of their tails, straight to the deer. Then commenced such a tugging and snarling and biting, all squeaking and swallowing at the same moment. A skirmish of tails and flying hair was seen for five minutes, when the last of them, with slouching tail and evidently ashamed of himself, withdrew, and nothing remained on the ground but a well-picked skeleton. By sunset, when I returned to camp, they had swallowed as much as three entire deer.

We remained hunting in the mountains some days, and left the Boiling Spring River with our mules loaded with meat, having, almost by a miracle, been unmolested by the Arapaho war-party, some of whom I saw hunting nearly every day, without being myself discovered. Nothing occurred on our return until the night of the second day, when we camped on the creek in a spot destitute of grass, and our animals took themselves off in search of food during the night, where we knew not.

The next morning my companion, thinking to find them close at hand, left me in camp cooking

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

the breakfast while he went to bring in the animals, but presently returned, saying that he could find neither them nor their track, but had discovered fresh Indian sign in the bottom, where several Indians had been but a few hours before, and that, doubtless, they had made "a raise." I instantly seized my rifle, and, taking a circuit round the camp, came presently upon the track of horses and mules, and struck at once after them, thinking that, of course, they were those made by our animals, as they tallied with the number, being two horses and three mules. I had followed up the track for ten miles, when, in crossing a piece of hard prairie which scarcely yielded to the impression of the hoofs, I, for the first time, observed that not one of the animals I was following was shod, and, knowing that most of my own were so, I began to think, and soon satisfied myself of the fact, that they were not those I was in search of. As soon as I had made up my mind to this I retraced my steps to camp, and immediately started again with my companion in another direction. This time we came upon the right track, and found that it took an easterly direction and that the animals were not in the possession of the Indians, as their ropes still dragged along the ground, making abroad trail. Finding this, we returned to camp and "cached" our meat and packs in the forks of a cottonwood tree, out of reach of wolves; and without thinking of cooking anything, so anxious were we to find our animals, we started off at once in pursuit, carrying a lariat and saddle-blanket to ride back on in case we found the mules.

We followed the trail until midnight, by which time I felt not a little tired, as I had been on my legs since daybreak, and had not broken my fast since the preceding day. We therefore turned into the bottom, floundering through the bushes, and impaling ourselves at every step on the prickly pears which covered the ground, and made a fire near the stream, in a thicket which in some degree sheltered us from the cold. We had scarcely however lighted the fire when a gale of wind burst upon us, and, scattering the burning brands in every direction, quickly set fire to the dry grass and bushes to leeward of the fire. All our efforts to prevent this were unavailing, and we were necessitated to put out our fire to prevent the whole bottom from being burned. As the cold was intense, and I had no covering but a paltry saddle-blanket about four feet square, sleep was out of the question if I wished to keep unfrozen, so that, after an hour or two's rest and a good smoke, we again turned out, and by the light of the moon pursued the trail. As it passed over prairies entirely destitute of grass, the animals had never once stopped, but continued a straight course, without turning to the right or left, in search of pasture. We travelled on all night, and, halting for an hour's rest in the morning, about noon, looking ahead, I descried four-objects feeding in the plain. I called out to my companion, who was a little in rear, that there they were. "Elk," he answered, after a long look, "or Injuns. They're no mules, I'll lay a dollar: Arapahos, or I never see a redskin."

However, at that distance I recognized my mules, and, pushing on, I found them quietly feeding with Panchito, my companion's horse being alone missing, and they suffered me to catch them without difficulty. As we were now within twenty miles of the fort, Morgan, who had had enough of it, determined to return, and I agreed to go back with the animals to the cache, and bring in the meat and packs. I accordingly tied the blanket on a mule's back, and, leading the horse, trotted back at once to the grove of cottonwoods where we had before encamped. The sky had been gradually overcast with leaden-colored clouds, until, when near sunset, it was one huge inky mass or rolling darkness: the wind had suddenly lulled and an unnatural calm, which so surely heralds a storm in these tempestuous regions, succeeded. The ravens were winging their way towards the

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

shelter of the timber, and the coyote was seen trotting quickly to cover, conscious of the coming storm.

The black threatening clouds seemed gradually to descend until they kissed the earth, and already the distant mountains were bidden to their very bases. A hollow murmuring swept through the bottom, but as yet not a branch was stirred by wind; and the huge cottonwoods, with their leafless limbs, loomed like a line of ghosts through the heavy gloom. Knowing but too well what was coming, I turned my animals towards the timber, which was about two miles distant. With pointed ears, and actually trembling with fright, they were as eager as myself to reach the shelter; but, before we had proceeded a third of the distance, with a deafening roar the tempest broke upon us. The clouds opened and drove right in our faces a storm of freezing sleet, which froze upon us as it fell. The first squall of wind carried away my cap, and the enormous hailstones, beating on my unprotected head and face, almost stunned me. In an instant my hunting-shirt was soaked, and as instantly frozen hard; and my horse was a mass of icicles. Jumping off my mule-for to ride was impossible - I tore off the saddle-blanket and covered my head. The animals, blinded with the sleet, and their eyes actually coated with ice, turned their sterns to the storm, and, blown before it, made for the open prairie. All my exertions to drive them to the shelter of the timber was useless. It was impossible to face the hurricane, which now brought with it clouds of driving snow; and perfect darkness soon set in.

Still the animals kept on, and I determined not to leave them, following, or rather being blown after them. My blanket, frozen stiff like a board, required all the strength of my numbed fingers to prevent it being blown away, and, although it was no protection against the intense cold, I knew it would in some degree shelter me at night from the snow. In half an hour the ground was covered on the bare prairie to the depth of two feet, and through this I floundered for a long time before the animals stopped. The prairie was as bare as a lake; but one little tuft of greasewood bushes presented itself, and here, turning from the storm, they suddenly stopped and remained perfectly still. In vain I again attempted to turn them towards the direction of the timber; huddled together, they would not move an inch; and, exhausted myself, and seeing nothing before me but, as I thought, certain death, I sank down immediately behind them, and, covering my head with the blanket, crouched like a ball in the snow.

I would have started myself for the timber, but it was pitchy dark, the wind drove clouds of frozen snow into my face, and the animals had so turned about in the prairie that it was impossible to know the direction to take; and although I had a compass with me, my hands were so frozen that I was perfectly unable, after repeated attempts, to unscrew the box and consult it. Even had I reached the timber, my situation would have been scarcely improved, for the trees were scattered wide about over a narrow space, and, consequently, afforded but little shelter; and if even I had succeeded in getting firewood-by no means an easy matter at any time, and still more difficult now that the ground was covered with three feet of snow -I was utterly unable to use my flint and steel to procure a light, since my fingers were like pieces of stone, and entirely without feeling. The way the wind roared over the prairie that night-how the snow drove before it, covering me and the poor animals partly-and how I lay there, feeling the very blood freezing in my veins, and my bones petrifying with the icy blasts which seemed to penetrate them-how for hours I remained with my head on my knees, and the snow pressing it down like a weight of lead, expecting every instant to drop into a sleep from which I knew it was impossible I should ever awake--how

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

every now and then the mules would groan aloud and fall down upon the snow, and then again struggle on their legs-how all night long the piercing howl of wolves was borne upon the wind, which never for an instant abated its violence during the night,-I would not attempt to describe. I have passed many nights alone in the wilderness, and in a solitary camp have listened to the roarings of the wind and the howling of wolves, and felt the rain or snow beating upon me, with perfect unconcern: but this night threw all my former experiences into the shade, and is marked with the blackest of stones in the memoranda of my journeyings.

Once, late in the night, by keeping my hands buried in the breast of my hunting-shirt, I succeeded in restoring sufficient feeling into them to enable me to strike a light. Luckily my pipe, which was made out of a huge piece of cottonwood bark, and capable of containing at least twelve ordinary pipefuls, was filled with tobacco to the brim; and this I do believe kept me alive during the night, for I smoked and smoked until the pipe itself caught fire, and burned completely to the stem.

I was just sinking into a dreamy stupor, when the mules began to shake themselves, and sneeze and snort; which hailing as a good sign, and that they were still alive, I attempted to lift my head and take a view of the weather. When with great difficulty I raised my head, all appeared dark as pitch, and it did not at first occur to me that I was buried deep in snow; but when I thrust my arm above me, a hole was thus made, through which I saw the stars shining in the sky and the clouds fast clearing away. Making a sudden attempt to straighten my almost petrified back and limbs, I rose, but, unable to stand, fell forward in the snow, frightening the animals, which immediately started away. When I gained my legs I found that day was just breaking, a long grey line of light appearing over the belt of timber on the creek, and the clouds gradually rising from the east, and allowing the stars to peep from patches of blue sky. Following the animals as soon as I gained the use of my limbs, and taking a last look at the perfect cave from which I had just risen, I found them in the timber, and, singular enough, under the very tree where we had cached our meat. However, I was unable to ascend the tree in my present state, and my frost-bitten fingers refused to perform their offices; so that I jumped upon my horse, and, followed by the mules, galloped back to the Arkansa, which I reached in the evening, half dead with hunger and cold.

The hunters had given me up for lost, as such a night even the "oldest inhabitant" had never witnessed. My late companion had reached the Arkansa, and was safely housed before it broke, blessing his lucky stars that he had not gone back with me. The next morning he returned and brought in the meat; while I spent two days in nursing my frozen fingers and feet, and making up, in feasting mountain fashion, for the banyans I had suffered.

The morning after my arrival on Arkansa, two men, named Harwood and Markhead - the latter one of the most daring and successful trappers that ever followed this adventurous mountain life, and whom I had intended to have hired as a guide to the valley of the Columbia the ensuing spring-started off to the settlement of New Mexico, with some packs of peltries, intending to bring back Taos whisky (a very profitable article of trade amongst the mountain-men) and some bags of flour and Indian meal.

I found on returning from my hunt that a man named John Albert had brought intelligence that the New Mexicans and Pueblo Indians had risen in the Valley of Taos, and, as I have before mentioned, massacred Governor Bent and other Americans, and had also attacked and destroyed Turley's ranch on the Arroyo Hondo, killing him and most of his men. Albert had escaped from the house, and, charging through the assailants, made for the mountains, and, travelling night and

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

day, and without food, had reached the Greenhorn with the news, and after recruiting for a couple of days had come on to the Arkansa with the intelligence, which threw the fierce mountaineers into a perfect frenzy.

As Markhead and Harwood would have arrived in the settlements about the time of the rising, little doubt remained as to their fate, but it was not until nearly two months after that any intelligence was brought concerning them. It seemed that they arrived at the Rio Colorado, the first New Mexican settlement, on the seventh or eighth day, when the people had just received news of the massacre in Taos. These savages, after stripping them of their goods, and securing, by treachery, their arms, made them mount their mules under the pretence of conducting them to Taos, there to be given up to the chief of the insurrection. They had hardly, however, left the village when a Mexican, riding behind Harwood, discharged his gun into his back: Harwood, calling to Markhead that he was "finished," fell dead to the ground. Markhead, seeing that his own fate was sealed, made no struggle, and was likewise shot in the back by several balls. They were then stripped and scalped and shockingly mutilated, and their bodies thrown into the bush by the side of the creek to be devoured by the wolves. They were both remarkably fine young men.

Markhead was celebrated in the mountains for his courage and reckless daring, having had many almost miraculous escapes when in the very hands of hostile Indians. He had a few years ago accompanied Sir W. Drummond Stewart in one of his expeditions across the mountains. It happened that a half-breed of the company absconded one night with some animals belonging to Sir William, who, being annoyed at the circumstance, said hastily, and never dreaming that his offer would be taken up, that he would give five hundred dollars for the scalp of the thief. The next day Markhead rode into camp with the scalp of the unfortunate horse-thief hanging at the end of his rifle, and I believe received the reward, at least so he himself declared to me, for this act of mountain law. On one occasion, whilst trapping on the waters of the Yellowstone, in the midst of the Blackfoot country, he came suddenly upon two or three lodges, from which the Indians happened to be absent. There was no doubt, from signs which he had previously discovered, that they were lying in wait for him somewhere on the stream to attack him when examining his traps, the Blackfeet, moreover, being most bitterly hostile to the white trappers, and killing them without mercy whenever an occasion offered. Notwithstanding the almost certainty that some of the Indians were close at hand, probably gone out for a supply of wood and would very soon return, Markhead resolved to visit the lodges and help himself to anything worth taking that he might find there. The fire was burning, and meat was actually cooking in a pot over it. To this he did ample justice, emptying the pot in a very satisfactory manner, after which he tied all the blankets, dressed skins, moccasins, &c., into a bundle, and, mounting his horse, got safely off with his prize. It was not always, however, that he escaped scatheless, for his body was riddled with balls received in many a bloody affray with Blackfeet and other Indians.

Laforey, the old Canadian trapper, with whom I stayed at Red River, was accused of having possessed himself of the property found on the two mountaineers, and afterwards of having instigated the Mexicans to the barbarous murder. The hunters on Arkansa vowed vengeance against him, and swore to have his hair some day, as well as similar love-locks from the people of Red River. A war-expedition was also talked of to that settlement, to avenge the murder of their comrades, and ease the Mexicans of their mules and horses.

The massacre of Turley and his people, and the destruction of his mill, were not consummated

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

without considerable loss to the barbarous and cowardly assailants. There were in the house, at the time of the attack, eight white men, including Americans, French Canadians, and one or two Englishmen, with plenty of arms and ammunition. Turley had been warned of the intended insurrection, but had treated the report with indifference and neglect, until one morning a man named Otterbees, in the employ of Turley, and who had been despatched to Sante Fe with several mule-loads of whisky a few days before, made his appearance at the gate on horseback, and, hastily informing the inmates of the mill that the New Mexicans had risen and massacred Governor Bent and other Americans, galloped off. Even then, Turley felt assured that he would not be molested, but, at the solicitations of his men, agreed to close the gate of the yard round which were the buildings of a mill and distillery, and make preparations for defence.

A few hours after a large crowd of Mexicans and Pueblo Indians made their appearance, all armed with guns and bows and arrows, and, advancing with a white flag, summoned Turley to surrender his house and the Americans in it, guaranteeing that his own life should be saved, but that every other American in the valley of Taos had to be destroyed; that the Governor and all the Americans at Fernandez and the rancho had been killed, and that not one was to be left alive in all New Mexico.

To this summons Turley answered that he would never surrender his house nor his men, and that, if they wanted it or them, "they must take them."

The enemy then drew off, and, after a short consultation commenced the attack. The first day they numbered about five hundred, but the crowd was hourly augmented by the arrival of parties of Indians from the more distant pueblos, and of New Mexicans from Fernandez, La Canada, and other places.

The building, lay at the foot of a gradual slope in the sierra, which was covered with cedar-bushes. In front ran the stream of the Arroyo Hondo, about twenty yards from one side of the square, and on the other side was broken ground, which rose abruptly and formed the bank of the ravine. In rear, and behind the still-house, was some garden-ground enclosed by a small fence, and into which a small wicket-gate opened from the corral.

As soon as the attack was determined upon, the assailants broke, and, scattering, concealed themselves under the cover of the rocks and bushes which surrounded the house.

From these they kept up an incessant fire upon every exposed portion of the building where they saw the Americans preparing for defence.

They, on their part, were not idle; not a man but was an old mountaineer, and each had his trusty rifle, with good store of ammunition. Wherever one of the assailants exposed a hand's-breadth of his person, there whistled a ball from an unerring barrel. The windows had been blockaded, loopholes being left to fire through, and through these a lively fire was maintained. Already several of the enemy had bitten the dust, and parties were constantly seen bearing off the wounded up the banks of the Canada. Darkness came on, and during the night a continual fire was kept up on the mill, whilst its defenders, reserving their ammunition, kept their posts with stern and silent determination. The night was spent in running balls, cutting patches, and completing the defences of the building. In the morning the fight was renewed, and it was found that the Mexicans had effected a lodgment in a part of the stables, which were separated from the other portions of the building, and between which was an open space of a few feet. The assailants, during the night, had sought to break down the wall, and thus enter the main building, but the strength of the adobes

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

and logs of which it was composed resisted effectually all their attempts.

Those in the stable seemed anxious to regain the outside, for their position was unavailable as a means of annoyance to the besieged, and several had darted across the narrow space which divided it from the other part of the building, and which slightly projected, and behind which they were out of the line of fire. As soon, however, as the attention of the defenders was called to this point, the first man who attempted to cross, and who happened to be a Pueblo chief, was dropped on the instant, and fell dead in the centre of the intervening space. It appeared an object to recover the body, for an Indian immediately dashed out to the fallen chief, and attempted to drag him within the cover of the wall. The rifle which covered the spot again poured forth its deadly contents, and the Indian springing into the air, fell over the body of his chief, struck to the heart. Another and another met with a similar fate, and at last three rushed at once to the spot, and, seizing the body by the legs and head, had already lifted it from the ground, when three puffs of smoke blew from the barricaded window, followed by the sharp cracks of as many rifles, and the three daring Indians added their number to the pile of corpses which now covered the body of the dead chief.

As yet the besieged had met with no casualties; but after the fall of the seven Indians, in the manner above described, the whole body of assailants, with a shout of rage, poured in a rattling volley, and two of the defenders of the mill fell mortally wounded. One, shot through the loins, suffered great agony, and was removed to the still-house, where he was laid upon a large pile of grain, as being the softest bed to be found.

In the middle of the day the assailants renewed the attack more fiercely than before, their baffled attempts adding to their furious rage. The little garrison bravely stood to the defence of the mill, never throwing away a shot, but firing coolly, and only when a fair mark was presented to their unerring aim. Their ammunition, however, was fast failing, and, to add to the danger of their situation, the enemy set fire to the mill, which blazed fiercely, and threatened destruction to the whole building. Twice they succeeded in overcoming the flames, and, taking advantage of their being thus occupied, the Mexicans and Indians charged into the corral, which was full of hogs and sheep, and vented their cowardly rage upon the animals, spearing and shooting all that came in their way. No sooner, however, were the flames extinguished in one place, than they broke out more fiercely in another; and as a successful defence was perfectly hopeless, and the numbers of the assailants increased every moment, a council of war was held by the survivors of the little garrison, when it was determined, as soon as night approached, that every one should attempt to escape as best he might, and in the mean time the defence of the mill was to be continued.

Just at dusk, Albert and another man ran to the wicket-gate which opened into a kind of enclosed space, and in which was a number of armed Mexicans. They both rushed out at the same moment, discharging their rifles full in the faces of the crowd. Albert, in the confusion, threw himself under the fence, whence he saw his companion shot down immediately, and heard his cries for mercy, mingled with shrieks of pain and anguish, as the cowards pierced him with knives and lances. Lying without motion under the fence, as soon as it was quite dark he crept over the logs and ran up the mountain, travelled day and night, and, scarcely stopping or resting, reached the Greenhorn, almost dead with hunger and fatigue. Turley himself succeeded in escaping from the mill and in reaching the mountain unseen. Here he met a Mexican, mounted on a horse, who had been a most intimate friend of the unfortunate man for many years. To this man Turley offered

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

his watch (which was treble the value) for the use of his horse, but was refused. The inhuman wretch, however, affected pity and commiseration for the fugitive, and advised him to go to a certain place, where he would bring or send him assistance; but on reaching the mill, which was now a mass of fire, he immediately informed the Mexicans of his place of concealment, whither a large party instantly proceeded and shot him to death.

Two others escaped and reached Santa Fe in safety. The mill and Turley's house were sacked and gutted, and all his hard-earned savings, which were considerable, and concealed in gold about the house, were discovered, and of course seized upon, by the victorious Mexicans.

The Indians, however, met a few days after with a severe retribution. The troops marched out of Santa Fe attacked their pueblo, and levelled it to the ground, killing many hundreds of its defenders, and taking many prisoners, most of whom were hanged.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEAVER AND HIS TRAPPER

BEAVER has so depreciated in value within the last few years, that trapping has been almost abandoned; the price paid for the skin of this valuable animal having fallen from six and eight dollars per pound to one dollar, which hardly pays the expenses of traps, animals, and equipment for the hunt, and is certainly no adequate remuneration for the incredible hardships, toil, and danger, which are undergone by the hardy trappers in the course of their adventurous expeditions. The cause of the great decrease in value of beaver fur is the substitute which has been found for it in the skins of the fur-seal and nutria - the improved preparation of other skins of little value, such as the hare and rabbit - and, more than all, in the use of silk in the manufacture of hats, which has in a great measure superseded that of beaver. Thus the curse of the trapper is levelled against all the new-fashioned materials of Paris hats; and the light and (h)airy gossamer of twelve-and-six is anathematized in the mountains in a way which would be highly distressing to the feelings of Messrs. Jupp and Johnson, and other artists in the ventilating-gossamer line. Thanks to the innovation, however, a little breathing-time has been allowed the persecuted castor; and this valuable fur-bearing animal, which otherwise would, in the course of a few years, have become extinct, has now a chance of multiplying, and will in a short time again become abundant; for, although not a very prolific animal, the beaver has perhaps fewer natural enemies than any other of the feroe naturae, and being at the same time a wise and careful one, provides against all contingencies of cold and hunger, which in northern climates carry off so large a proportion of his brother beasts.

The beaver was once found in every part of North America from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, but has now gradually retired from the encroachments and the persecutions of civilized man, and is met with only in the far, far west, on the tributaries of the great rivers, and the streams which water the mountain valleys in the great chain of the Rocky Mountains. On the waters of the Platte and Arkansa they are still numerous, and within the last two years have increased considerably in numbers; but the best trapping-ground now is on the streams running through the Bayou Salado, and the Old and New Parks, all of which are elevated mountain valleys.

The habits of the beaver present quite a study to the naturalist, and they are certainly the most sagaciously instinctive of all quadrupeds. Their dams afford a lesson to the engineer, their houses a study to the architect of comfortable abodes, while their unremitting labor and indefatigable industry are models to be followed by the working-man. The lodge of the beaver is generally exca-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

vated in the bank of the stream, the entrance being invariably under water; but not unfrequently, where the banks are flat, the animals construct lodges in the stream itself, of a conical form, of limbs and branches of trees woven together and cemented with mud. For the purpose of forming dams, for the necessary timber for their lodges, or for the bark which they store for their winter's supply of food, the beaver often fells a tree eight or ten inches in diameter, throwing it, with the skill of an expert woodsman, in any direction he pleases, always selecting a tree above the stream, in order that the logs may be carried down with it to their destination. The log is then chopped into small lengths, and, pushing them into the water, the beaver steers them to the lodge or dam. These trees are as cleanly cut as they could be by a sharp axe, the gouging furrows made by the animal's strong teeth cutting into the very centre of the trunk, the notch being smooth as sawed wood.

With his broad tail, which is twelve or fourteen inches long, and about four in breadth, and covered with a thick scaly skin, the beaver plasters his lodge, thus making it perform all the offices of a hand. They say that, when the beaver's tail becomes dry, the animal dies, but, whether this is the case or not, I have myself seen the beaver when at work return to the water and plunge his tail into the stream, and then resume his labor with renewed vigor; and I have also seen them, with their bodies on the bank, thumping the water with their tails with a most comical perseverance. The female seldom produces more than three kittens at a birth, but I know an instance where one was killed with young, having no less than eleven in her. They live to a considerable age, and I once ate the tail of an old "man" beaver whose head was perfectly grey with age, and his beard was of the same venerable hue, notwithstanding which his tail was tender as a young raccoon. The kittens are as playful as their namesakes of the feline race, and it is highly amusing to see an old one with grotesque gravity inciting her young to gambol about her, whilst she herself is engaged about some household work.

The nutrias of Mexico are identical with the beavers of the more northern parts of America; but in South America, and on some parts of the western coast of North America, a species of seal, or, as I have heard it described, a hybrid between the seal and the beaver, is called nutria - quite a distinct animal, however, from the Mexican nutria.

The trappers of the Rocky Mountains belong to a "genus" more approximating to the primitive savage than perhaps any other class of civilized man. Their lives being spent in the remote wilderness of the mountains, with no other companion than Nature herself, their habits and character assume a most singular cast of simplicity mingled with ferocity, appearing to take their coloring from the scenes and objects which surround them. Knowing no wants save those of nature, their sole care is to procure sufficient food to support life, and the necessary clothing to protect them from the rigorous climate. This with the assistance of their trusty rifles, they are generally able to effect, but sometimes at the expense of great peril and hardship. When engaged in their avocation, the natural instinct of primitive man is ever alive, for the purpose of guarding against danger and the provision of necessary food.

Keen observers of nature, they rival the beasts of prey in discovering the haunts and habits of game, and in their skill and cunning in capturing it. Constantly exposed to perils of all kinds, they become callous to any feeling of danger, and destroy human as well as animal life with as little scruple and as freely as they expose their own. Of laws, human or divine, they neither know nor care to know. Their wish is their law, and to attain it they do not scruple as to ways and means.

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Firm friends and bitter enemies, with them it is "a word and a blow," and the blow often first. They may have good qualities, but they are those of the animal; and people fond of giving hard names call them revengeful, bloodthirsty, drunkards (when the wherewithal is to be had), gamblers, regardless of the laws of meum and tuum - in fact, "White Indians."

However, there are exceptions, and I have met honest mountain men. Their animal qualities, however, are undeniable. Strong, active, hardy as bears, daring, expert in the use of their weapons, they are just what uncivilized white man might be supposed to be in a brute state, depending upon his instinct for the support of life. Not a hole or corner in the vast wilderness of the "Far West" but has been ransacked by these hardy men. From the Mississippi to the mouth of the Colorado of the West, from the frozen regions of the North to the Gila in Mexico, the beaver-hunter has set his traps in every creek and stream. All this vast country, but for the daring enterprise of these men, would be even now a terra incognita to geographers, as indeed a great portion still is; but there is not an acre that has not been passed and repassed by the trappers in their perilous excursions. The mountains and streams still retain the names assigned to them by the rude hunters; and these alone are the hardy pioneers who have paved the way for the settlement of the western country.

Trappers are of two kinds, the "hired hand" and the "free trapper:" the former hired for the hunt by the fur companies; the latter, supplied with animals and traps by the company, is paid a certain price for his furs and peltries.

There is also the trapper "on his own hook;" but this class is very small. He has his own animals and traps, hunts where he chooses, and sells his peltries to whom he pleases.

On starting for a hunt, the trapper fits himself out with the necessary equipment, either from the Indian trading-forts, or from some of the petty traders -- *coureurs des bois* -- who frequent the western country. This equipment consists usually of two or three horses or mules - one for saddle, the others for packs - and six traps, which are carried in a bag of leather called a trap-sack. Ammunition, a few pounds of tobacco, dressed deer-skins for moccasins, &c., are carried in a wallet of dressed buffalo-skin called a possible-sack. His "possibles" and "trap-sack" are generally carried on the saddle-mule when hunting, the others being packed with the furs. The costume of the trapper is a hunting-shirt of dressed buckskin, ornamented with long fringes; pantaloons of the same material, and decorated with porcupine-quills and long fringes down the outside of the leg, a flexible felt hat and moccasins clothe his extremities. Over his left shoulder and under his right arm hang his powder-horn and bullet-pouch, in which he carries his balls, flint and steel, and odds and ends of all kinds. Round the waist is a belt, in which is stuck a large butcher-knife in a sheath of buffalo-hide, made fast to the belt by a chain or guard of steel; which also supports a little buckskin case containing a whetstone. A tomahawk is also often added; and, of course, a long heavy rifle is part and parcel of his equipment. I had nearly forgotten the pipe-holder, which hangs round his neck, and is generally a gage d'amour, and a triumph of squaw workmanship, in shape of a heart, garnished with beads and porcupine-quills. Thus provided, and having determined the locality of his trapping-ground, he starts to the mountains, sometimes alone, sometimes with three or four in company, as soon as the breaking up of the ice allows him to commence operations. Arrived on his hunting-grounds, he follows the creeks and streams, keeping a sharp look-out for "sign." If he sees a prostrate cottonwood tree, he examines it to discover if it be the work of beaver-whether "thrown" for the purpose of food, or to dam the stream. The track of

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

the beaver on the mud or sand under the bank is also examined; and if the "sign" be fresh, he sets his trap in the run of the animal, hiding it under water, and attaching it by a stout chain to a pick-et driven in the bank, or to a bush or tree. A "float-stick" is made fast to the trap by a cord a few feet long, which, if the animal carry away the trap, floats on the water and points out its position. The trap is baited with the "medicine," an oily substance obtained from a gland in the scrotum of the beaver, but distinct from the testes. A stick is dipped into this and planted over the trap; and the beaver, attracted by the smell, and wishing a close inspection, very foolishly, puts his leg into the trap, and is a "gone beaver."

When a lodge is discovered, the trap is set at the edge of the dam, at the point where the animal passes from deep to shoal water, and always under water. Early in the morning the hunter mounts his mule and examines the traps. The captured animals are skinned, and the tails, which are a great dainty, carefully packed into camp. The skin is then stretched over a hoop or framework of osier-twigs, and is allowed to dry, the flesh and fatty substance being carefully scraped (grained). When dry, it is folded into a square sheet, the fur turned inwards, and the bundle, containing about ten to twenty skins, tightly pressed and corded, and is ready for transportation.

During the hunt, regardless of Indian vicinity, the fearless trapper wanders far and near in search of "sign." His nerves must ever be in a state of tension, and his mind ever present at his call. His eagle eye sweeps round the country, and in an instant detects any foreign appearance. A turned leaf, a blade of grass pressed down, the uneasiness of the wild animals, the flight of birds, are all paragraphs to him written in nature's legible hand and plainest language. All the wits of the subtle savage are called into play to gain an advantage over the wily woodsman; but with the natural instinct of primitive man, the white hunter has the advantages of a civilized mind, and, thus provided, seldom fails to outwit, under equal advantages, the cunning savage.

Sometimes, following on his trail, the Indian watches him set his traps on a shrub-belted stream, and, passing up the bed, like Bruce of Old, so that he may leave no track, he lies in wait in the bushes until the hunter comes to examine his carefully-set traps. Then, waiting until he approaches his ambushment within a few feet, whiz flies the home-drawn arrow, never failing at such close quarters to bring the victim to the ground. For one white scalp, however, that dangles in the smoke of an Indian's lodge, a dozen red ones, at the end of the hunt, ornament the camp-fires of the rendezvous.

At a certain time, when the hunt is over, or they have loaded their pack-animals, the trappers proceed to the "rendezvous," the locality of which has been previously agreed upon; and here the traders and agents of the fur companies await them, with such assortment of goods as their hardy customers may require, including generally a fair supply of alcohol. The trappers drop in singly and in small bands, bringing their packs of beaver to this mountain market, not unfrequently to the value of a thousand dollars each, the produce of one hunt. The dissipation of the rendezvous, however, soon turns the trapper's pocket inside out. The goods brought by the traders, although of the most inferior quality, are sold at enormous prices.-Coffee, twenty and thirty shillings a pint-cup, which is the usual measure; tobacco fetches ten and fifteen shillings a plug; alcohol, from twenty to fifty shillings a pint; gunpowder, sixteen shillings a pint-cup; and all other articles at proportionally exorbitant prices.

The "beaver" is purchased at from two to eight dollars per pound; the Hudson's Bay Company alone buying it by the pluie, or "plew," that is, the whole skin, giving a certain price for skins,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

whether of old beaver or “kittens.”

The rendezvous is one continued scene of drunkenness, gambling, and brawling and fighting, as long as the money and credit of the trappers last. Seated, Indian fashion, round the fires, with a blanket spread before them, groups are seen with their decks of cards, playing at euchre, poker, and seven-up, the regular mountain-games. The stakes are “beaver,” which here is current coin; and when the fur is gone, their horses, mules, rifles, and shirts, hunting-packs, and breeches, are staked.

Daring gamblers make the rounds of the camp, challenging each other to play for the trapper’s highest stake, - his horse, his squaw, (if he have one) and, as once happened, his scalp. “There goes hoss and beaver!” is the mountain expression when any great loss is sustained; and, sooner or later, “hoss and beaver” invariably find their way into the insatiable pockets of the traders. A trapper often squanders the produce of his hunt, amounting to hundreds of dollars, in a couple of hours; and, supplied on credit with another equipment, leaves the rendezvous for another expedition, which has the same result time after time; although one tolerably successful hunt would enable him to return to the settlements and civilized life, with an ample sum to purchase and stock a farm, and enjoy himself in ease and comfort the remainder of his days.

An old trapper, a French Canadian, assured me that he had received fifteen thousand dollars for beaver during a sojourn of twenty years in the mountains. Every year he resolved in his mind to return to Canada, and, with this object, always converted his fur into cash; but a fortnight at the “rendezvous” always cleaned him out, and, at the end of twenty years, he had not even credit sufficient to buy a pound of powder.

These annual gatherings are often the scene of bloody duels, for over their cups and cards no men are more quarrelsome than your mountaineers. Rifles, at twenty paces, settle all differences, and, as may be imagined, the fall of one or other of the combatants is certain, or, as sometimes happens, both fall to the word “fire.”

A day or two after my return from the mountain, I was out in search of my animals along the river-bottom, when I met a war-party of Arapahos loping along on foot in Indian file. It was the same party who had been in the vicinity of our camp on Fontaine-qui-bouille, and was led by a chief called Coxo, “the Game Leg.” They were all painted and armed for war, carrying bows and well-filled quivers, war-clubs and lances, and some had guns in deerskin covers. They were all naked to the waist, a single buffalo robe being thrown over them, and from his belt each one had a lariat or rope of hide to secure the animals stolen in the expedition. They were returning without a scalp, having found the Yutas “not at home;” and this was considered a sign by the hunters that they would not be scrupulous in “raising some hair,” if they caught a straggler far from camp. However their present visit was for the purpose of procuring some meat, of which they stood in need, as to reach their village they had to cross a country destitute of game. They were all remarkably fine young men, and perfectly cleanly in their persons; indeed, when on the war-path, more than ordinary care is taken to adorn the body, and the process of painting occupies considerable time and attention. The Arapahos do not shave their heads, as do the Pawnees, Caws, and Osages, merely braiding the center or scalp lock, and decorating it with a gay ribbon or feather of the war-eagle.

This war-party was twenty-one in number, the oldest, with the exception of the chief, being under thirty, and not one of them was less than five feet eight inches in height. In this they differ from

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

their neighbors the Yutas and Comanches, who are of small stature; the latter especially, when off their horses, presenting small ungainly figures, with legs crooked by constant riding, and limbs exhibiting but little muscular development. Not one of this Arapaho band but could have sat as a model for an Apollo. During their stay the animals were all collected and corralled, as their penchant for horse-flesh, it was thought likely, might lead some of the young men to appropriate a horse or mule.

Each tribe of Prairie Indians has a different method of making moccasins, so that any one, acquainted with the various fashions, is at no loss to know the nation to which any particular one belongs whom he may happen to meet. The Arapahos and Cheyennes use a "shoe" moccasin, that is, one which reaches no higher than the instep, and wants the upper sideflaps which moccasins usually have. I always used Chippewa moccasins, which differ from those of the Prairie make, by the seam being made up the center of the foot to the leg, and puckered into plaits. This, which is the true fashion of the "Forest Indian," (who, by the by, is as distinct in character and appearance from him of the "plains" as a bear from a blue-bottle) attracted the attention of the Arapaho warriors, and caused a lively discussion amongst themselves, owing to the novelty of the manufacture. They all surrounded me, and each examined and felt carefully the unusual chaussure.

Ti-yah! was the universal exclamation of astonishment. The old chief was the last to approach, and, after a minute examination, he drew himself up, and explained to them, as I perfectly understood by his gestures, that the people who made those moccasins lived far, far away from the sun, where the snow lay deep on the ground, and where the night was illuminated by the mystery fire (the aurora borealis), which he had seen, years ago, far to the north.

The vicinity of the "pueblo" affording no pasture, my cavallada had undertaken a voyage of discovery in search of grass, and had found a small valley up the bed of a dry creek, in which grew an abundance of bunch-grass. As, however, the river was fast frozen, they were unable to find a watering-place themselves, and one day made their appearance in camp, evidently for the purpose of being conducted to water; I therefore led them to the river and broke a large hole, which they invariably resorted to every morning and evening at the same hour, although it was three or four miles from their feeding-place. This enabled me to catch them whenever I required, for at a certain time I had only to go to this hole, and I never failed to see them approaching leisurely, the mules following the horse in Indian file, and always along the same trail which they had made in the snow.

The grass, although to all appearance perfectly withered, still retained considerable nourishment, and the mules improved fast in flesh. Panchito, however, fell off in condition as the others improved, more, I think, from the severity of the winter than the scarcity of grass. When they had cleared the valley they sought a pasture still farther off, and, after losing sight of them for fifteen days, I found them fifteen miles from the river, at the foot of the mountain, in a prairie in which was a pool of water (which prevented their having recourse to the waterhole I had made for them), and where was plenty of buffalo-grass.

It was now always a day's work for me to catch my hunting-mule, and the animals were becoming so wild that I often returned without effecting the capture at all, my only chance being to chase them on horseback and lasso the horse, when they all followed as quiet as lambs, never caring to forsake their old companion.

The weather in January, February, and March [1847] was exceedingly severe. Storms of sleet and

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

snow, invariably accompanied by hurricanes of wind, were of daily occurrence, but the snow rarely remained more than thirty hours on the ground, an hour or two of the meridian sun being sufficient to cause it to disappear. On the 17th of March the ice in the Arkansa "moved" for the first time, and the next day it was entirely broken up, and the arrival of spring-weather was confidently expected. However, it froze once more in a few days as firm as ever, and the weather became colder than before, with heavy snow-storms and hard gales of wind. After this succeeded a spell of fine weather, and about the 24th the ice moved bodily away, and the river was clear from that date, the edges of the water only being frozen in the morning. Geese now made their appearance in considerable numbers, and afforded an agreeable variety to our perpetual venison and tough bull-meat, as well as good sport in shooting them with rifles. The "blue bird" followed the goose; and when the first robin was seen, the hunters pronounced the winter at an end.

When the river was clear of ice I tried my luck with the fish, and in ten minutes pulled out as many trout, hickory shad, and suckers, but from that time never succeeded in getting a nibble.

The hunters accounted for this by saying that the fish migrate up the stream as soon as the ice breaks, seeking the deep holes and bends of its upper waters, and that my first piscatory attempt was in the very nick of time, when a shoal was passing up for the first time after the thaw.

Towards the latter end of March I removed my animals from their pasture, which was getting dry and rotten, and took them up Fontaine-qui-bouille into the mountains, where the grass is of better quality and more abundant. On the Arkansa and the neighboring prairies not a vestige of spring vegetation yet presented itself, but nearer the mountains the grass was beginning to shoot. It is a curious fact that the young blade of the buffalo and bunch grass pierces its way through the old one, which completely envelops and protects the tender blade from the nipping frosts of spring, and thus also the weakening effects of feeding on the young grass are rendered less injurious to horses and mules, since they are obliged to eat the old together with the young shoots.

The farther I advanced up the creek, and the nearer the mountains, the more forward was the vegetation, although even here in its earliest stage. The bunch-grass was getting green at the roots, and the absinthe and greasewood were throwing out their buds. As yet, however, the cottonwoods and the larger trees in the bottom showed no signs of leaf, and the currant and cherry bushes still looked dry and sapless. The thickets, however, were filled with birds, and resounded with their songs, and the plains were alive with the prairie-dogs, busy in repairing their houses and barking lustily as I rode through their towns. Turkeys, too, were calling in the timber, and the boom of the prairie-fowl, at rise and set of sun, was heard on every side. The snow had entirely disappeared from the plains, but Pike's Peak and the mountains were still clad in white; the latter, being sometimes clear of snow and looking dark and sombre, would for an hour or two be hidden by a curtain of clouds, which rising displayed the mountains, before black and furrowed, now white and smooth with their snowy mantle.

On my way I met a band of hunters who had been driven in by a war-party of Arapahos, who were encamped on the eastern fork of the Fontaine-qui-bouille. They strongly urged me to return, as, being alone, I could not fail to be robbed of my animals, if not killed myself. However, in pursuance of my fixed rule, never to stop on account of Indians, I proceeded up the river, and about fifty miles from the mouth encamped on the first fork, where was an abundance of deer and antelope. In the timber on the banks of the creek I erected a little shanty, covering it with the bark of the prostrate trees which strewed the ground, and picketing my animals at night in a little

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

prairie within sight, where they luxuriated on plenty of buffalo-grass. Here I remained for a day or two hunting in the mountain, leaving my cavallada to take care of themselves, and at the mercy of the Arapahos should they discover them. At night I returned to camp, made a fire, and cooked an appola of antelope-meat, and enjoyed my solitary pipe after supper with as much relish as if I was in a divan, and lay down on my blanket, serenaded by packs of hungry wolves, and sleeping as soundly as if there were no such people in existence as Arapahoes, merely waking now and then and raising my hand to the top of my head, to assure myself that my top-knot was in its place.

The next day I moved up the main fork, on which I had been directed by the hunters to proceed, in order to visit the far-famed springs from which the creek takes its name. The valley of the upper waters is very picturesque: many mountain-streams course through it, a narrow line of timber skirting their banks. On the western side the rugged mountains frown overhead, and rugged canons filled with pine and cedar gape into the plain. At the head of the valley, the ground is much broken up into gullies and ravines where it enters the mountain-spurs, with topes [groves] of pine and cedar scattered here and there, and masses of rock tossed about in wild confusion. On entering the broken ground the creek turns more to the westward, and passes by two remarkable buttes of a red conglomerate, which appear at a distance like tablets cut in the mountain-side. The eastern fork skirts the base of the range, coming from the ridge called "The Divide," which separates the waters of the Platte and Arkansa; and between the main stream and this branch, running north and south, is a limestone ledge which forms the western wall of the lateral valley running at right angles from that of the Fontaine-qui-bouille. The uplands are clothed with cedar and dwarf oak, the bottoms of the river with cottonwood, quaking-asp, oak, ash, and box-alder, and a thick undergrowth of cherry and currant bushes.

I followed a very good lodge pole-trail, which struck the creek before entering the broken ground, being that used by the Yutas and Arapahos on their way to the Bayou Salado. Here the valley narrowed considerably, and, turning an angle with the creek, I was at once shut in by mountains and elevated ridges, which rose on each side the stream. This was now a rapid torrent, tumbling over rocks and stones, and fringed with oak and a shrubbery of brush. A few miles on, the cañon opened out into a little shelving glade; and on the right bank of the stream, and raised several feet above it, was a flat white rock in which was a round hole, where one of the celebrated springs hissed and bubbled with its escaping gas. I had been cautioned against drinking this, being directed to follow the stream a few yards to another, which is the true soda-spring.

Before doing this, however, I unpacked the mule and took the saddle from Panchito, piling my saddle and meat on the rock. The animals, as soon as I left them free, smelt the white rock, and instantly commenced licking and scraping with their teeth with the greatest eagerness. At last the horse approached the spring, and, burying his nose deep in the clear water, drank greedily. The mules appeared at first to fear the bubbling of the gas, and smelt and retreated two or three times before they mustered courage to take a draught; but when they had once tasted the water I thought they would have burst themselves. For hours they paid no attention to the grass, continuing to lick the rock and constantly returning to the spring to drink. For myself, I had not only abstained from drinking that day, but, with the aid of a handful of salt which I had brought with me for the purpose, had so highly seasoned my breakfast of venison, that I was in a most satisfactory state of thirst. I therefore at once proceeded to the other spring, and found it about forty yards from the first, but immediately above the river, issuing from a little basin in the flat white rock,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

and trickling over the edge into the stream. The escape of gas in this was much stronger than in the other, and was similar to water boiling smartly.

I had provided myself with a tin cup holding about a pint; but, before dipping it in, I divested myself of my pouch and belt, and sat down in order to enjoy the draught at my leisure. I was half dead with thirst; and, tucking up the sleeves of my hunting-shirt, I dipped the cup into the midst of the bubbles, and raised it hissing and sparkling to my lips. Such a draught! Three times, without drawing a breath, was it replenished and emptied, almost blowing up the roof of my mouth with its effervescence. It was equal to the very best soda-water, but possesses that fresh, natural flavor, which manufactured water cannot impart.

CHAPTER IX

AMONG THE SPRINGS

THE Indians regard with awe the "medicine" waters of these fountains, as being the abode of a spirit who breathes through the transparent water, and thus, by his exhalations, causes the perturbation of its surface. The Arapahos, especially, attribute to this water-god the power of ordaining the success or miscarriage of their war-expeditions; and as their braves pass often by the mysterious springs, when in search of their hereditary enemies the Yutas, in the "Valley of Salt," they never fail to bestow their votive offerings upon the water-sprite, in order to propitiate the "Manitou" of the fountain, and ensure a fortunate issue to their "path of war."

Thus at the time of my visit the basin of the spring was filled with beads and wampum, and pieces of red cloth and knives, whilst the surrounding trees were hung with strips of deerskin, cloth, and mocassins, to which, had they been serviceable, I would most sacrilegiously have helped myself. The "sign," too, round the spring, plainly showed that here a war-dance had been executed by the braves; and I was not a little pleased to find that they had already been here, and were not likely to return the same way; but in this supposition I was quite astray.

This country was once possessed by the Shos-shone or Snake Indians, of whom the Comanches of the plains are a branch; and although many hundred miles now divide their hunting-grounds, they were once, if not the same people, tribes of the same grand nation. They still, however, retain a common language; and there is great analogy in many of their religious rites and legendary tales, which proves that at least a very close alliance must at one period have bound the two tribes together. They are even now the two most powerful nations, in point of numbers, of all the tribes of western Indians; the Comanche ruling supreme on the eastern plains, as the Shos-shones are the dominant power in the country west of the Rocky Mountains, and in the mountains themselves. A branch of the latter is the tribe of Tlamath Indians, the most warlike of the western tribes; as also the Yutas, who may be said to connect them with the nation of Comanche.

Numerically, the Snakes are supposed to be the most powerful of any Indian nation in existence. The Snakes, who, in common with all Indians, possess hereditary legends to account for all natural phenomena, or any extraordinary occurrences which are beyond their ken or comprehension, have of course their legendary version of the causes which created, in the midst of their hunting-grounds, these two springs of sweet and bitter water; which are also intimately connected with the cause of separation between the tribes of "Comanche" and the "Snake." Thus runs the legend.

Many hundreds of winters ago, when the cottonwoods on the Big River were no higher than an arrow, and the red men, who hunted the buffalo on the plains, all spoke the same language, and

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

the pipe of peace breathed its social cloud of kinnik-kinnek whenever two parties of hunters met on the boundless plains, when, with hunting-grounds and game of every kind in the greatest abundance, no nation dug up the hatchet with another because one of its hunters followed the game into their bounds, but, on the contrary, loaded for him his back with choice and fattest meat, and ever proffered the soothing pipe before the stranger, with well-filled belly, left the village, - it happened that two hunters of different nations met one day on a small rivulet, where both had repaired to quench their thirst. A little stream of water, rising from a spring on a rock within a few feet of the bank, trickled over it, and fell splashing into the river. To this the hunters repaired; and whilst one sought the spring itself, where the water, cold and clear, reflected on its surface the image of the surrounding scenery, the other, tired by his exertions in the chase, threw himself at once to the ground, and plunged his face into the running stream.

The latter had been unsuccessful in the chase, and perhaps his bad fortune, and the sight of the fat deer which the other hunter threw from his back before he drank at the crystal spring, caused a feeling of jealousy and ill-humor to take possession of his mind. The other, on the contrary, before he satisfied his thirst, raised in the hollow of his hand a portion of the water, and, lifting it towards the sun, reversed his hand, and allowed it to fall upon the ground,-a libation to the Great Spirit who had vouchsafed him a successful hunt, and the blessing of the refreshing water with which he was about to quench his thirst.

Seeing this, and being reminded that he had neglected the usual offering, only increased the feeling of envy and annoyance which the unsuccessful hunter permitted to get the mastery of his heart; and the Evil Spirit at that moment entering his body, his temper fairly flew away, and he sought some pretence by which to provoke a quarrel with the stranger Indian at the spring.

"Why does a stranger," he asked, rising from the stream at the same time, "drink at the spring-head, when one to whom the fountain belongs contents himself with the water that runs from it?"

"The Great Spirit places the cool water at the spring," answered the other hunter, "that his children may drink it pure and undefiled. The running water is for the beasts which scour the plains. Au-sa-qua is a chief of the Shos-shone: he drinks at the head-water."

"The Shos-shone is but a tribe of the Comanche," returned the other: "Waco-mish leads the grand nation. Why does a Shos-shone dare to drink above him?"

"He has said it. The Shos-shone drinks at the spring-head; other nations of the stream which runs into the fields. Au-sa-qua is chief of his nation. The Comanche are brothers. Let them both drink of the same water."

"The Shos-shone pays tribute to the Comanche. Waco-mish leads that nation to war. Waco-mish is chief of the Shos-shone, as he is of his own people."

"Waco-mish lies; his tongue is forked like the rattlesnake's; his heart is black as the Misho-tunga (bad spirit). When the Manitou made his children, whether Shos-shone or Comanche, Arapaho, Shi-an, or Pa-ne, he gave them buffalo to eat, and the pure water of the fountain to quench their thirst. He said not to one, Drink here, and to another, Drink there; but gave the crystal spring to all, that all might drink."

Waco-mish almost burst with rage as the other spoke; but his coward heart alone prevented him from provoking an encounter with the calm Shos-shone. He, made thirsty by the words he had spoken-for the red man is ever sparing of his tongue-again stooped down to the spring to quench his thirst, when the subtle warrior of the Comanche suddenly threw himself upon the kneeling

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

hunter, and, forcing his head into the bubbling water, held him down with all his strength, until his victim no longer struggled, his stiffened limbs relaxed, and he fell forward over the spring, drowned and dead.

Over the body stood the murderer, and no sooner was the deed of blood consummated than bitter remorse took possession of his mind, where before had reigned the fiercest passion and vindictive hate. With hands clasped to his forehead, he stood transfixed with horror, intently gazing on his victim, whose head still remained immersed in the fountain. Mechanically he dragged the body a few paces from the water, which, as soon as the head of the dead Indian was withdrawn, the Comanche saw suddenly and strangely disturbed. Bubbles sprang up from the bottom, and, rising to the surface, escaped in hissing gas. A thin vapory cloud arose, and, gradually dissolving, displayed to the eyes of the trembling murderer the figure of an aged Indian, whose long snowy hair and venerable beard, blown aside by a gentle air from his breast, discovered the well-known totem of the great Wan-kan-aga, the father of the Comanche and Sho-shone nation, whom the tradition of the tribe, handed down by skilfull hieroglyphics, almost deified for the good actions and deeds of bravery this famous warrior had performed when on earth.

Stretching out a war-club towards the affrighted murderer, the figure thus addressed him: "Accursed of my tribe! this day thou hast severed the link between the mightiest nations of the world, while the blood of the brave Shos-shone cries to the Manitou for vengeance. May the water of thy tribe be rank and bitter in their throats!" Thus saying, and swinging his ponderous war-club (made from the elk's horn) round his head, he dashed out the brains of the Comanche, who fell headlong into the spring, which, from that day to the present moment, remains rank and nauseous, so that not even when half dead with thirst, can one drink the foul water of that spring. The good Wan-kan-aga, however, to perpetuate the memory of the Shos-shone warrior, who was renowned in his tribe for valor and nobleness of heart, struck with the same avenging club a hard flat rock, which overhung the rivulet, just out of sight of this scene of blood; and forthwith the rock opened into a round clear basin, which instantly filled with bubbling sparkling water, than which no thirsty hunter ever drank a sweeter or a cooler draught.

Thus the two springs remain, an everlasting memento of the foul murder of the brave Shos-shone, and the stern justice of the good Wan-kan-aga; and from that day the two mighty tribes of the Shos-shone and Comanche have remained severed and apart; although a long and bloody war followed the treacherous murder of the Shos-shone chief, and many a scalp torn from the head of the Comanche paid the penalty of his death.

The American and Canadian trappers assert that the numerous springs which, under the head of Beer, Soda, Steam-boat springs, &c., abound in the Rocky Mountains, are the spots where his satanic majesty comes up from his kitchen to breathe the sweet fresh air, which must doubtless be refreshing to his worship after a few hours spent in superintending the culinary process going on below.

Never was there such a paradise for hunters as this lone and solitary spot. The shelving prairie, at the bottom of which the springs are situated, is entirely surrounded by rugged mountains, and, containing perhaps two or three acres of excellent grass, affords a safe pasture to their animals, which would hardly care to wander from such feeding and the salitrose rocks they love so well to lick. Immediately overhead Pike's Peak, at an elevation of 12,000 feet above the level of the sea, towers high into the clouds; whilst from the fountain, like a granitic amphitheatre, ridge after

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ridge, clothed with pine and cedar, rises and meets the stupendous mass of mountains, well called "Rocky," which stretches far away north and southward, their gigantic peaks being visible above the strata of clouds which hide their rugged bases.

This first day the sun shone out bright and warm, and not a breath of wind ruffled the evergreen foliage of the cedar-groves. Gay-plumaged birds were twittering in the shrubs, and ravens and magpies were chattering overhead, attracted by the meat I had hung upon a tree; the mules, having quickly filled themselves, were lying round the spring, basking lazily in the sun; and myself, seated on a pack, and pipe in mouth, with rifle ready at my side, indolently enjoyed the rays which, reflected from the white rock on which I was lying, were deliciously warm and soothing. A piece of rock, detached from the mountain-side and tumbling noisily down, caused me to look up in the direction whence it came. Half a dozen big-horns, or Rocky Mountain sheep, perched on the pinnacle of a rock, were gazing wonderingly upon the prairie, where the mules were rolling enveloped in clouds of dust. The enormous horns of the mountain sheep appeared so disproportionately heavy, that I every moment expected to see them lose their balance and topple over the giddy height. My motions frightened them, and, jumping from rock to rock, they quickly disappeared up the steepest part of the mountain. At the same moment a herd of black-tail deer crossed the corner of the glade within rifle-shot of me, but, fearing the vicinity of Indians, I refrained from firing before I had reconnoitred the vicinity for signs of their recent presence. Immediately over me, on the left bank of the stream, and high above the springs, was a small plateau, one of many which are seen on the mountain-sides. Three buffalo-bulls were here quietly feeding, and remained the whole afternoon undisturbed. I saw from the sign that they had very recently drunk at the springs, and that the little prairie where my animals were feeding was a frequent resort of solitary bulls.

Perceiving that the game, which was in sight on every side of me, was unwarily tame, I judged from this fact that no Indians were in the immediate vicinity, and therefore I resolved to camp where I was. Ascending a bluff where had been an old Indian camp, I found a number of old lodge-poles, and packed them down to the springs, near which I made my fire, but out of arrow-shot of the shrubbery which lines the stream. Instead of permitting the animals to run loose, I picketed them close to and round the camp, in order that they might act as sentinels during the night, for no man or dog can so soon discover the presence or approach of an Indian as a mule. The organ and sense of smelling in these animals are so acute that they at once detect the scent peculiar to the natives, and, snorting loud with fear, and by turning their heads with ears pointed to the spot whence the danger is approaching, wake, and warn at the same moment, their sleeping masters of the impending peril.

However, this night I was undisturbed, and slept soundly until the chattering of a magpie overhead awoke me, just as Pike's Peak was being tinged with the first grey streak of dawn.

Daybreak in this wild spot was beautiful in the extreme. While the deep gorge in which I lay was still buried in perfect gloom, the mountain-tops loomed grey and indistinct from out the morning mist. A faint glow of light broke over the ridge which shut out the valley from the east, and, spreading over the sky, first displayed the snow-covered peak, a wreath of vapory mist encircling it, which gradually rose and disappeared. Suddenly the dull white of its summit glowed with light like burnished silver; and at the same moment the whole eastern sky blazed, as it were, in gold, and ridge and peak, catching the refulgence, glittered with the beams of the rising sun, which at

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

length, peeping over the crest, flooded at once the valley with its dazzling light.

Blowing the ashes of the slumbering fire, I placed upon it the little pot containing a piece of venison for my breakfast, and, relieving my four-footed sentries from their picket-guard, sallied down to the stream, the edges of which were still thickly crusted with ice, for the purpose of taking a luxuriously cold bath; and cold enough it was in all conscience. After my frugal- breakfast, unseasoned by bread or salt, or by any other beverage than the refreshing soda-water, I took my rifle and sallied up the mountain to hunt, consigning my faithful animals to the protection of the Dryad of the fountain, offering to that potent sprite the never-failing "medicine" of the first whiff of my pipe before starting from the spot.

Climbing up the mountain-side, I reached a level plateau, interspersed with clumps of pine and cedar. where a herd of black-tail deer were quietly feeding. As I had the "wind" I approached under cover of a cedar whose branches feathered to the ground, and, resting my rifle in a forked limb, I selected the plumpest-looking of the band, a young buck, and "let him have it," as the hunters say. Struck through the heart, the deer for an instant stretched out its limbs convulsively, and then bounded away with the band, but in a zig-zag course; and unlike the rest, whose tails were lifted high, his black tufted appendage was fast "shut up." Whilst I, certain of his speedy fall, reloaded my rifle, the band, seeing their comrade staggering behind, suddenly stopped. The wounded animal with outstretched neck ran round and round for a few seconds in a giddy circle, and dropped dead within sixty yards of where I stood. The others, like sheep, walked slowly up to the dead animal, and again my rifle gave out its sharp crack from the screen of branches, and another of the band, jumping high in air, bit the dust. They were both miserably poor, so much so that I left all but the hind quarters and fleece, and hanging them upon a tree I returned to camp for a mule to pack in the meat.

The mountains are full of grizzly bears, but, whether they had not yet left their winter-quarters thus early in the season, I saw but one or two tracks, one of which I followed unsuccessfully for many miles over the wildest part of the mountains, into the Bayou Salado. Whilst intent upon the trail, a clattering as of a regiment of cavalry immediately behind me made me bring my rifle to the ready, thinking that a whole nation of mounted Indians were upon me; but, looking back, a band of upwards of a hundred elk were dashing past, looking like a herd of mules, and in their passage down the mountain carrying with them a perfect avalanche of rocks and stones. I killed another deer on my return close to camp, which I reached, packing in the meat on my back, long after dark, and found the animals, which received me with loud neighs of recognition and welcome, with well-filled bellies, taking their evening drink at the springs.

I spent here a very pleasant time, and my animals began soon to improve upon the mountain-grass. Game was very abundant; indeed, I had far more meat than I possibly required; but the surplus I hung up to jerk, as now the sun was getting powerful enough for that process.

I explored all the valleys and cañons of the mountains, and even meditated an expedition to the summit of Pike's Peak, where mortal foot has never yet trod. No dread of Indians crossed my mind, probably because I had remained so long unmolested; and I was so perfectly contented that I had even selected a camping-ground where I intended to remain two or three months, and probably should be at the present moment, if I had not got into a "scrape."

The bears latterly began to move, and their tracks became more frequent. One day I was hunting just at the foot of the Peak, when a large she-bear jumped out of a patch of cedars where she had

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

been lying, and with a loud grunt charged up the mountain, and, dodging amongst the rocks, prevented my getting a crack at her. She was very old, and the grizzliest of the grizzly. She was within a few feet of me when I first saw her. It was unluckily nearly dark, or I should have followed and probably killed her, for they seldom run far, particularly at this season, when they are lank and weak.

One day as I was following a band of deer over the broken ground to the eastward of the mountain, I came suddenly upon an Indian camp, with the fire still smouldering, and dried meat hanging on the trees. Robinson Crusoe could not have been more thoroughly disgusted at the sight of the "footprint in the sand," than was I at this inopportune discovery. I had anticipated a month or two's undisturbed hunting in this remote spot, and now it was out of the question to imagine that the Indians would leave me unmolested. I presently saw two Indians, carrying a deer between them, emerge from the timber bordering the creek, whom I knew at once by their dress to be Arapahos. As, however, my camp was several miles distant, I still hoped that they had not yet discovered its locality, and continued my hunt that day, returning late in the evening to my solitary encampment.

The next morning I removed the animals and packs to a prairie a little lower down the stream, which, although nearer the Indian camp, was almost hidden from view, being enclosed by pine-ridges and ragged buttes, and entered by a narrow gap filled with a dense growth of brush. When I had placed them in security, and taken the precaution to fasten them all to strong picket-pins, with a sufficient length of rope to enable them to feed at ease, and at the same time prevent them straying back to the springs, I again sallied out to hunt.

A little before sunrise I descended the mountain to the springs, and, being very tired, after taking a refreshing draught of the cold water I lay down on the rock by the side of the water and fell fast asleep. When I awoke the sun had already set; but although darkness was fast gathering over the mountain, I was surprised to see a bright light flickering against its sides. A glance assured me that the mountain was on fire, and, starting up, I saw at once the danger of my position. The bottom had been fired about a mile below the springs, and but a short distance from where I had secured my animals. A dense cloud of smoke was hanging over the gorge, and presently, a light air springing up from the east, a mass of flame shot up into the sky and rolled fiercely up the stream, the belt of dry brush on its banks catching fire and burning like tinder. The mountain was already invaded by the devouring element, and two wings of flame spread out from the main stream, which roaring along the bottom with the speed of a racehorse, licked the mountain-side, extending its long line as it advanced. The dry pines and cedars hissed and cracked, as the flame, reaching them, ran up their trunks, and spread amongst the limbs, whilst the long waving grass underneath was a sea of fire. From the rapidity with which the fire advanced I feared that it would already have reached my animals, and hurried at once to the spot as fast as I could run. The prairie itself was as yet untouched, but the surrounding, ridges were clothed in fire, and the mules, with stretched ropes, were trembling with fear. Throwing the saddle on my horse, and the pack on the steadiest mule, I quickly mounted, leaving on the ground a pile of meat, which I had not time to carry with me.

The fire had already gained the prairie, and its long, dry grass was soon a sheet of flame, but, worse than all, the gap through which I had to retreat was burning. Setting spurs into Panchito's sides, I dashed him at the burning bush, and, though his mane and tail were singed in the attempt,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

he gallantly charged through it. Looking back, I saw the mules huddled together on the other side, and evidently fearing to pass the blazing barrier. As, however, to stop would have been fatal, I dashed on, but before I had proceeded twenty yards my old hunting mule, singed and smoking, was at my side, and the others close behind her.

On all sides I was surrounded by fire. The whole scenery was illuminated, the peaks and distant ridges being as plainly visible as at noonday. The bottom was a roaring mass of flame, but on the other side, the prairie being more bare of cedar-bushes, the fire was less fierce and presented the only way of escape. To reach it, however, the creek had to be crossed, and the bushes on the banks were burning fiercely, which rendered it no easy matter; moreover, the edges were coated above the water with thick ice, which rendered it still more difficult. I succeeded in pushing Panchito into the stream, but, in attempting to climb the opposite bank, a blaze of fire was puffed into his face, which caused him to rear on end, and, his hind feet flying away from him at the same moment on the ice, he fell backwards into the middle of the stream, and rolled over me in the deepest water. Panchito rose on his legs and stood trembling with affright in the middle of the stream, whilst I dived and groped for my rifle, which had slipped from my hands, and of course had sunk to the bottom. After a search of some minutes I found it, and, again mounting, made another attempt to cross a little farther down, in which I succeeded, and, followed by the mules, dashed through the fire and got safely through the line of blazing brush.

Once in safety, I turned in my saddle and had leisure to survey the magnificent spectacle. The fire had extended at least three miles on each side the stream, and the mountain was one sheet of flame. A comparatively thin line marked the progress of the devouring element, which, as there was no wind to direct its course, burned on all sides, actually roaring as it went.

I had from the first no doubt but that the fire was caused by the Indians, who had probably discovered my animals, but, thinking that a large party of hunters might be out, had taken advantage of a favorable wind to set fire to the bottom, hoping to secure the horse and mules in the confusion, without the risk of attacking the camp. Once or twice I felt sure that I saw dark figures running about near where I had seen the Indian camp the previous day, and just as I had charged through the gap I heard a loud yell, which was answered by another at a little distance.

Singularly enough, just as I had got through the blazing line, a breeze sprang up from the westward and drove the fire after me, and I had again to beat a hasty retreat before it. (This fire extended into the prairie, towards the waters of the Platte, upwards of forty miles, and for fourteen days its glare was visible on the Arkansa, fifty miles distant.)

I encamped six or seven miles from the springs, and, whilst proceeding down the creek, deer and antelope continually crossed and re-crossed the trail, some in their affright running back into the very jaws of the fire. As soon as I had secured the animals, I endeavored to get my rifle into shooting order, but the water had so thoroughly penetrated and swelled the patching round the balls, that it was a long time before I succeeded in cleaning one barrel, the other defying all my attempts. This was a serious accident, as I could not but anticipate a visit from the Indians if they discovered the camp.

All this time the fire was spreading out into the prairies, and, creeping up the "divide," was already advancing upon me. It extended at least five miles on the left bank of the creek, and on the right was more slowly creeping up the mountain-side; while the brush and timber in the bottom was one body of flame. Besides the long sweeping line of the advancing flame, the plateaus on the

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

mountain-side, and within the line, were burning in every direction, as the squalls and eddies down the gullies drove the fire to all points.

The mountains themselves being invisible, the air, from the low ground where I then was, appeared a mass of fire, and huge crescents of flame danced as it were in the very sky, until a mass of timber blazing at once exhibited the sombre background of the stupendous mountains.

I had scarcely slept an hour when huge clouds of smoke rolling down the bottom frightened the animals, whose loud whinnying awoke me, and, half suffocated by the dense smoke which hung heavily in the atmosphere, I again retreated before the fire, which was rapidly advancing: and this time I did not stop until I had placed thirty or forty miles between me and the enemy. I then encamped in a thickly-timbered bottom on the Fontaine-qui-bouille, where the ground, which had been burned by the hunters in the winter, was studded like a wheat-field with green grass. On this the animals fared sumptuously for several days - better, indeed, than I did myself, for game was very scarce, and in such poor condition as to be almost uneatable. While encamped on this stream, the wolves infested the camp to that degree, that I could scarcely leave my saddles for a few minutes on the ground without finding the straps of rawhide gnawed to pieces; and one night the hungry brutes ate up all the ropes which were tied on the necks of the animals and trailed along the ground: they were actually devoured to within a yard of the mules' throats.

One evening a wolf came into camp as I was engaged cleaning my rifle, one barrel of which was still unserviceable, and a long hickory wiping-stick in it at the time. As I was hidden by a tree, the wolf approached the fire within a few feet, and was soon tugging away at an apishamore or saddle-cloth of buffalo calfskin which lay on the ground. Without dreaming that the rifle would go off, I put a cap on the useless barrel, and, holding it out across my knee in a line with the wolf, snap-ph-i-zz-bang went the charge of damp powder, much to my astonishment, igniting the stick which remained in the barrel, and driving it like a fiery comet against the ribs of the beast, who, yelling with pain, darted into the prairie at the top of his speed, his singed hair smoking as he ran.

CHAPTER X

PASSING OF THE BUFFALO

IT is a singular fact that within the last two years the prairies, extending from the mountains to a hundred miles or more down the Arkansa, have been entirely abandoned by the buffalo. Indeed, in crossing from the settlements of New Mexico, the boundary of their former range is marked by skulls and bones, which appear fresher as the traveller advances westward and towards the waters of the Platte. As the skulls are said to last only three years on the surface of the ground, that period has consequently seen the gradual disappearance of the buffalo from their former haunts.

With the exception of the Bayou Salado, one of their favorite pastures, they are now rarely met with in large bands on the upper waters of the Arkansa; but straggling bulls pass occasionally the foot of the mountain, seeking wintering-places on the elevated plateaus, which are generally more free from snow than the lowland prairies, by reason of the high winds. The bulls separate from the cows about the month of September, and scatter over the prairies and into the mountains, where they recruit themselves during the winter. A few males, however, always accompany the cows, to act as guides and defenders of the herd, on the outskirts of which they are always stationed. The countless bands which are seen together at all seasons are generally composed of cows alone; the bulls congregating in smaller herds, and on the flanks of the main body.

The meat of the cow is infinitely preferable to that of the male buffalo; but that of the bull, partic-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ularly if killed in the mountains, is in better condition during the winter months. From the end of June to September bull-meat is rank and tough, and almost uneatable; while the cows are in perfection, and as fat as stall-fed oxen, the depouille, or fleece, exhibiting frequently four inches and more of solid fat.

Whether it is that the meat itself (which, by the way, is certainly the most delicious of flesh) is most easy of digestion, or whether the digestive organs of hunters are "ostrichified" by the severity of exercise, and the bracing, wholesome climate of the mountains and plains, it is a fact that most prodigious quantities of "fat cow" may be swallowed with the greatest impunity, and not the slightest inconvenience ever follows the mammoth feasts of the gourmands of the far west. The powers of the Canadian voyageurs and hunters in the consumption of meat strike the greenhorn with wonder and astonishment; and are only equalled by the gastronomical capabilities exhibited by Indian dogs, both following the same plan in their epicurean gorgings.

On slaughtering a fat cow, the hunter carefully lays by, as a tit-bit for himself, the boudins and medullary intestine, which are prepared by being inverted and partially cleaned (this, however, is not thought indispensable). The depouille or fleece, the short and delicious hump-rib and tenderloin, are then carefully stowed away, and with these the rough edge of the appetite is removed. But the course is, par excellence, the sundry yards of boudin, which, lightly browned over the embers of the fire, slide down the well-lubricated throat of the hungry mountaineer, yard after yard disappearing in quick succession.

No animal requires so much killing as a buffalo. Unless shot through the lungs or spine, they invariably escape; and, even when thus mortally wounded, or even struck through the very heart, they will frequently run a considerable distance before falling to the ground, particularly if they see the hunter after the wound is given. If, however, he keeps himself concealed after firing, the animal will remain still, if it does not immediately fall. It is a most painful sight to witness the dying struggles of the huge beast. The buffalo invariably evinces the greatest repugnance to lie down when mortally wounded, apparently conscious that, when once touching mother earth, there is no hope left him. A bull, shot through the heart or lungs, with blood streaming from his mouth, and protruding tongue, his eyes rolling, bloodshot, and glazed with death, braces himself on his legs, swaying from side to side, stamps impatiently at his growing weakness, or lifts his rugged and matted head and helplessly bellows out his conscious impotence. To the last, however, he endeavors to stand upright, and plants his limbs farther apart, but to no purpose. As the body rolls like a ship at sea, his head slowly turns from side to side, looking about, as it were, for the unseen and treacherous enemy who has brought him, the lord of the plains, to such a pass. Gouts of purple blood spurt from his mouth and nostrils, and gradually the failing limbs refuse longer to support the ponderous carcass; more heavily rolls the body from side to side, until suddenly, for a brief instant, it becomes rigid and still; a convulsive tremor seizes it, and, with a low sobbing gasp, the huge animal falls over on his side, the limbs extended stark and stiff, and the mountain of flesh without life or motion.

The first attempts of a "greenhorn" to kill a buffalo are invariably unsuccessful. He sees before him a mass of flesh, nearly five feet in depth from the top of the hump to the brisket, and consequently imagines that, by planting his ball midway between these points, it must surely reach the vitals. Nothing, however, is more erroneous than the impression; for to "throw a buffalo in his tracks," which is the phrase for making a clean shot, he must be struck but a few inches above the brisket.,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

behind the shoulder, where alone, unless the spine be divided, a death-shot will reach the vitals. I once shot a bull, the ball passing, directly through the very centre of the heart and tearing a hole sufficiently large to insert the finger, which ran upwards of half a mile before it fell, and yet the ball had passed completely through the animal, cutting its heart almost in two. I also saw eighteen shots, the half of them muskets, deliberately fired into an old bull, at six paces, and some of them passing through the body, the poor animal standing the whole time, and making feeble attempts to charge. The nineteenth shot, with the muzzle touching his body, brought him to the ground. The head of the buffalo-bull is so thickly covered with coarse matted hair, that a ball fired at half a dozen paces will not penetrate the skull through the shaggy frontlock. I have frequently attempted this with a rifle carrying twenty-five balls to the pound, but never once succeeded.

Notwithstanding the great and wanton destruction of the buffalo, many years must elapse before this lordly animal becomes extinct. In spite of their numerous enemies, they still exist in countless numbers, and, could any steps be taken to protect them, as is done in respect of other game, they would ever remain the life and ornament of the boundless prairies, and afford ample and never-failing provision to the travellers over these otherwise desert plains. Some idea of the prodigious slaughter of these animals may be formed, by mentioning the fact that upwards of one hundred thousand buffalo robes find their way annually into the United States and Canada; and these are the skins of cows alone, the bull's hide being so thick that it is never dressed. Besides this, the Indians kill a certain number for their own use, exclusive of those whose meat they require; and the reckless slaughter of buffalo by parties of white men, emigrants to the Columbia, California, and elsewhere, leaving, as they proceed on their journey, thousands of untouched carcasses on the trail, swells the aggregate of this wholesale destruction to an enormous amount.

CHAPTER XI

BIG GAME OF THE MOUNTAINS

THE grizzly bear is the fiercest of the *ferae naturae* of the mountains. His great strength and wonderful tenacity of life render an encounter with him anything but desirable, and therefore it is a rule with the Indians and white hunters never to attack him unless backed by a strong party. Although, like every other wild animal, he usually flees from man, yet at certain seasons, when maddened by love or hunger, he not unfrequently charges at first sight of a foe; when, unless killed dead, a hug at close quarters is anything but a pleasant embrace, his strong hooked claws stripping the flesh from the bones as easily as a cook peels an onion. Many are the tales of bloody encounters with these animals which the trappers delight to recount to the "greenhorn," to enforce their caution as to the fool-hardiness of ever attacking the grizzly bear.

Some years ago a trapping party was on their way to the mountains, led, I believe, by old Sublette, a well-known captain of the West. Amongst the band was one John Glass, a trapper who had been all his life in the mountains, and had seen, probably, more exciting adventures, and had had more wonderful and hairbreadth escapes, than any of the rough and hardy fellows who make the West their home, and whose lives are spent in a succession of perils and privations. On one of the streams running from the "Black Hills," a range of mountains northward of the Platte, Glass and a companion were one day setting their traps, when, on passing through a cherry-thicket which skirted the stream, the former, who was in advance, descried a large grizzly bear quietly turning up the turf with his nose, searching for yampa-roots or pig-nuts, which there abounded. Glass immediately called his companion, and both, proceeding cautiously, crept to the skirt of the thick-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

et, and, taking steady aim at the animal, whose broadside was fairly exposed at the distance of twenty yards, discharged their rifles at the same instant, both balls taking effect, but not inflicting a mortal wound. The bear, giving a groan of pain, jumped with all four legs from the ground, and, seeing the wreaths of smoke hanging at the edge of the brush, charged at once in that direction, snorting with pain and fury.

“Hurraw, Bill!” roared out Glass, as he saw the animal rushing towards them, “we’ll be made ‘meat’ of as sure as shootin’!” and, leaving the tree behind which he had concealed himself, he bolted through the thicket, followed closely by his companion. The brush was so thick, that they could scarcely make their way through, whereas the weight and strength of the bear carried him through all obstructions, and he was soon close upon them.

About a hundred yards from the thicket was a steep bluff, and between these points was a level piece of prairie; Glass saw that his only chance was to reach this bluff, and, shouting to his companion to make for it, they both broke from the cover and flew like lightning across the open space. When more than half way across, the bear being about fifty yards behind them, Glass, who was leading, tripped over a stone, and fell to the ground, and just as he rose to his feet, the beast, rising on his hind feet, confronted him. As he closed, Glass, never losing his presence of mind, cried to his companion to load up quickly, and discharged his pistol full into the body of the animal, at the same moment that the bear, with blood streaming from its nose and mouth, knocked the pistol from his hand with one blow of its paw, and, fixing its claws deep into his flesh, rolled with him to the ground.

The hunter, notwithstanding his hopeless situation, struggled manfully, drawing his knife and plunging it several times into the body of the beast, which, furious with pain, tore with tooth and claw the body of the wretched victim, actually baring the ribs of flesh, and exposing the very bones. Weak with loss of blood, and with eyes blinded with the blood which streamed from his lacerated scalp, the knife at length fell from his hand, and Glass sank down insensible, and to all appearance dead.

His companion, who, up to this moment, had watched the conflict, which, however, lasted but a few seconds, thinking that his turn would come next, and not having had presence of mind even to load his rifle, fled with might and main back to camp, where he narrated the miserable fate of poor Glass. The captain of the band of trappers, however, despatched the man with a companion back to the spot where he lay, with instructions to remain by him if still alive, or to bury him if, as all supposed he was, defunct, promising them at the same time a sum of money for so doing.

On reaching the spot, which was red with blood, they found Glass still breathing, and the bear, dead and stiff, actually lying upon his body. Poor Glass presented a horrifying spectacle: the flesh was torn in strips from his chest and limbs, and large flaps strewed the ground; his scalp hung bleeding over his face, which was also lacerated in a shocking manner.

The bear, besides the three bullets which had pierced its body, bore the marks of the fierce nature of Glass’s final struggle, no less than twenty gaping wounds in the breast and belly testifying to the gallant defence of the mountaineer.

Imagining that, if not already dead, the poor fellow could not possibly survive more than a few moments, the men collected his arms, stripped him even of his hunting-shirt and moccasins, and, merely putting the dead bear off the body, mounted their horses, and slowly followed the remainder of the party, saying, when they reached it, that Glass was dead, as probably they thought, and

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

that they had buried him.

In a few days the gloom which pervaded the trappers' camp, occasioned by the loss of a favorite companion, disappeared, and Glass's misfortune, although frequently mentioned over the camp-fire, at length was almost entirely forgotten in the excitement of the hunt and Indian perils which surrounded them.

Months elapsed, the hunt was over, and the party of trappers were on their way to the trading-fort with their packs of beaver. It was nearly sundown, and the round adobe bastions of the mud-built fort were just in sight, when a horseman was seen slowly approaching them along the banks of the river. When near enough to discern his figure, they saw a lank cadaverous form with a face so scarred and disfigured that scarcely a feature was discernible. Approaching the leading horsemen, one of whom happened to be the companion of the defunct Glass in his memorable bear scrape, the stranger, in a hollow voice, reining in his horse before them, exclaimed, "Hurraw, Bill, my boy! you thought I was 'gone under' that time, did you? but hand me over my horse and gun, my lad; I ain't dead yet by a dam sight!"

What was the astonishment of the whole party, and the genuine horror of Bill and his worthy companion in the burial story, to hear the well-known, though now much altered, voice of John Glass, who had been killed by a grizzly bear months before, and comfortably interred, as the two men had reported, and all had believed!

There he was, however, and no mistake about it; and all crowded round to hear from his lips, how, after the lapse of he knew not how long, he had gradually recovered, and being without arms, or even a butcher-knife, he had fed upon the almost putrid carcase of the bear for several days, until he had regained sufficient strength to crawl, when, tearing off as much of the bear's meat as he could carry in his enfeebled state, he crept down the river; and suffering excessive torture from his wounds and hunger, and cold, he made the best of his way to the fort, which was some eighty or ninety miles from the place of his encounter with the bear, and, living the greater part of the way upon roots and berries, he after many, many days, arrived in a pitiable state, from which he had now recovered, and was, to use his own expression, "as slick as a peeled onion."

A trapper on Arkansa, named Valentine Herring, but better known as "Old Rube," told me that once, when visiting his traps one morning on a stream beyond the mountains, he found one missing, at the same time that he discovered fresh bear "sign" about the banks. Proceeding down the river in search of the lost trap, he heard the noise of some large body breaking through the thicket of plum bushes which belted the stream. Ensnouncing himself behind a rock, he presently observed a huge grizzly bear emerge from the bush and limp on three legs to a flat rock, which he mounted, and then, quietly seating himself, he raised one of his fore paws, on which Rube, to his amazement, discovered his trap tight and fast.

The bear, lifting his iron-gloved foot close to his face, gravely examined it, turning his paw round and round, and quaintly bending his head from side to side, looking at the trap from the comers of his eyes, and with an air of mystery and puzzled curiosity, for he evidently could not make out what the novel and painful appendage could be; and every now and then smelt it and tapped it lightly on the rock. This, however, only paining the animal the more, he would lick the trap, as if deprecating its anger, and wishing to conciliate it.

After watching these curious antics for some time, as the bear seemed inclined to resume his travels, Rube, to regain his trap, was necessitated to bring the bear's cogitations to a close, and, level-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ling his rifle, shot him dead, cutting off his paw and returning with it to camp, where the trappers were highly amused at the idea of "trapping a bar."

Near the same spot where Glass encountered his "scrape," some score of Sioux squaws were one day engaged in gathering cherries in a thicket near their village, and had already nearly filled their baskets, when a bear suddenly appeared in the midst, and, with a savage growl, charged amongst them. Away ran the terrified squaws, yelling and shrieking, out of the shrubbery, nor stopped until safely ensconced within their lodges. Bruin, however, preferring fruit to meat, albeit of tender squaws, after routing the petticoats, betook himself to the baskets, which he quickly emptied, and then quietly retired.

Bears are exceedingly fond of plums and cherries, and a thicket of this fruit in the vicinity of the mountains is, at the season when they are ripe, a sure "find" for Mr. Bruin. When they can get fruit they prefer such food to meat, but are, nevertheless, carnivorous animals.

The game, par excellence of the Rocky Mountains, and that which takes precedence in a comestible point of view, is the carnero cimmaron of the Mexicans, the Bighorn or Mountain sheep of the Canadian hunters. This animal, which partakes of the nature of both the deer and the goat, resembles the latter more particularly in its habits, and its characteristic liking for lofty, inaccessible points of the mountains, whence it seldom descends to the upland valleys excepting in very severe weather. In size the mountain-sheep is between the domestic animal and the common red deer of America, but more strongly made than the latter. Its color is a brownish dun (the hair being tipped with a darker tinge as the animal's age increases), with a whitish streak on the hind quarters, the tail being shorter than a deer's, and tipped with black. The horns of the male are enormous, curved backwards, and often three feet in length with a circumference of twenty inches near the head. The hunters assert that, in descending the precipitous sides of the mountains, the sheep frequently leap from a height of twenty or thirty feet, invariably alighting on their horns, and thereby saving their bones from certain dislocation.

They are even more acute in the organs of sight and smell than the deer; and as they love to resort to the highest and most inaccessible spots, whence a view can readily be had of approaching danger, and particularly as one of the band is always stationed on the most commanding pinnacle of rock as sentinel, whilst the others are feeding, it is no easy matter to get within rifle-shot of the cautious animals. When alarmed they ascend still higher up the mountain: halting now and then on some overhanging crag, and looking down at the object which may have frightened them, they again commence their ascent, leaping from point to point, and throwing down an avalanche of rocks and stones as they bound up the steep sides of the mountain. They are generally very abundant in all parts of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, but particularly so in the vicinity of the "Parks" and the Bayou Salado, as well as in the range between the upper waters of the Del Norte and Arkansa, called the "Wet Mountain" by the trappers. On the Sierra Madre, or Cordillera of New Mexico and Chihuahua, they are also numerous.

The first mountain-sheep I killed, I got within shot of in rather a curious manner. I had undertaken several unsuccessful hunts for the purpose of procuring a pair of horns of this animal, as well as some skins, which are of excellent quality when dressed, but had almost given up any hope of approaching them, when one day, having killed and butchered a blacktail deer in the mountains, I sat down with my back to a small rock and fell asleep. On awakening, feeling inclined for a smoke, I drew from my pouch a pipe, and flint and steel, and began leisurely to cut a charge of tobacco.

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Whilst thus engaged I became sensible of a peculiar odor which was wafted right into my face by the breeze, and which, on snuffing it once or twice, I immediately recognized as that which emanates from sheep and goats. Still I never thought that one of the former animal could be in the neighborhood, for my mule was picketed on the little plateau where I sat, and was leisurely cropping the buffalo-grass which thickly covered it.

Looking up carelessly from my work, as a whiff stronger than before reached my nose, what was my astonishment at seeing five mountain-sheep within ten paces, and regarding me with a curious and astonished gaze! Without drawing a breath, I put out my hand and grasped the rifle, which was lying within reach; but the motion, slight as it was, sufficed to alarm them, and with a loud bleat the old ram bounded up the mountain, followed by the band and at so rapid a pace that all my attempts to "draw a bead" upon them were ineffectual. When, however, they reached a little plateau about one hundred and fifty yards from where I stood, they suddenly stopped, and, approaching the edge, looked down at me, shaking their heads, and bleating their displeasure at the intrusion. No sooner did I see them stop than my rifle was at my shoulder, and covering the broad side of the one nearest to me. An instant after and I pulled the trigger, and at the report the sheep jumped convulsively from the rock, and made one attempt to follow its flying companions; but its strength failed, and, circling round once or twice at the edge of the plateau, it fell over on its side, and, rolling down the steep rock, tumbled dead very near me. My prize proved a very fine young male, but had not a large pair of horns. It was, however, "seal" fat, and afforded me a choice supply of meat, which was certainly the best I had eaten in the mountains, being fat and juicy, and in flavor somewhat partaking both of the domestic sheep and buffalo.

Several attempts have been made to secure the young of these animals and transport them to the States; and, for this purpose, an old mountaineer, one Billy Williams, took with him a troop of milch-goats, by which to bring up the young sheep; but although he managed to take several fine lambs, I believe that he did not succeed in reaching the frontier with one living specimen out of some half-score. The hunters frequently rear them in the mountains; and they become greatly attached to their masters, enlivening the camp with their merry gambols.

The elk, in point of size, ranks next to the buffalo. It is found in all parts of the mountains, and descends not unfrequently far down into the plains in the vicinity of the larger streams. A full-grown elk is as large as a mule, with rather a heavy neck and body, and stout limbs, its feet leaving a track as large as that of a two-year-old steer. They are dull, sluggish animals, at least in comparison with others of the deer tribe, and are easily approached and killed. In winter they congregate in large herds, often numbering several hundreds; and at that season are fond of travelling, their track through the snow having the appearance of a broad beaten road. The elk requires less killing than any other of the deer tribe (whose tenacity of life is remarkable); a shot anywhere in the fore-part of the animal brings it to the ground. On one occasion I killed two with one ball, which passed through the neck of the first, and struck the second, which was standing a few paces distant, through the heart: both fell dead. A deer, on the contrary, often runs a considerable distance, strike it where you will. The meat of the elk is strong flavored, and more like "poor bull" than venison: it is only eatable when the animal is fat and in good condition; at other times it is strong tasted and stringy.

The antelope, the smallest of the deer tribe, affords the hunter a sweet and nutritious meat, when that of nearly every other description of game, from the poorness and scarcity of the grass during

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

the winter, is barely eatable. They are seldom seen now in very large bands on the grand prairies, having been driven from their old pastures by the Indians and white hunters. The former, by means of "surrounds," an enclosed space formed in one of the passes used by these animals, very often drive into the toils an entire band of antelope of several hundreds, when not one escapes slaughter.

I have seen them on the western sides of the mountains, and in the mountain valleys, in herds of several thousands. They are exceedingly timid animals, but at the same time wonderfully curious; and their curiosity very often proves their death, for the hunter, taking advantage of this weakness, plants his wiping-stick in the ground, with a cap or red handkerchief on the point, and, concealing himself in the long grass, waits, rifle in hand, the approach of the inquisitive antelope, who, seeing an unusual object in the plain, trots up to it, and, coming within range of the deadly tube, pays dearly for his temerity. An antelope, when alone, is one of the stupidest of beasts, and becomes so confused and frightened at sight of a travelling party, that it frequently runs right into the midst of the danger it seeks to avoid.

I had heard most wonderful accounts from the trappers of an animal, the existence of which was beyond all doubt, which, although exceedingly rare, was occasionally met with in the mountains, but, from its supposed dangerous ferocity, and the fact of its being a cross between the devil and a bear, was never molested by the Indians or white hunters, and a wide berth given whenever the animal made its dreaded appearance. Most wonderful stories were told of its audacity and fearlessness; how it sometimes jumps from an overhanging rock on a deer or buffalo, and, fastening on its neck, soon brings it to the ground; how it has been known to leap upon a hunter when passing near its place of concealment, and devour him in a twinkling -- often charging furiously into a camp and playing all sorts of pranks on the goods and chattels of the mountaineers. The general belief was that the animal owes its paternity to the Old Gentleman himself; but the most reasonable declare it to be a cross between the bear and wolf.

Hunting one day with an old Canadian trapper, he told me that, in a part of the mountains which we were about to visit on the morrow, he once had a battle with a "carcagieu", which lasted upwards of two hours, during which he fired a pouchful of balls into the animal's body, which spat them out as fast as they were shot in. To the truth of this probable story he called all the saints to bear witness.

Two days after, as we were toiling up a steep ridge after a band of mountain-sheep, my companion, who was in advance, suddenly threw himself flat behind a rock, and exclaimed in a smothered tone, signalling me with his hand to keep down and conceal myself, "Sacre' enfant de Garce, mais here's von dam carcagieu!"

I immediately cocked my rifle, and, advancing to the rock, and peeping over it, saw an animal, about the size of a large badger, engaged in scraping up the earth about a dozen paces from where we were concealed. Its color was dark, almost black; its body long, and apparently tailless; and I at once recognized the mysterious beast to be a "glutton." After I had sufficiently examined the animal, I raised my rifle to shoot, when a louder than common "Enfant de Garce" from my companion alarmed the animal, and it immediately ran off, when I stood up and fired both barrels after it, but without effect; the attempt exciting a derisive laugh from the Canadian, who exclaimed, "Pe gar, may be you got fifty balls; vel, shoot 'em, all at de dam carcagieu, and he not care a dam!"

The skins of these animals are considered "great medicine" by the Indians, and will fetch almost

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

any price. They are very rarely met with on the plains, preferring the upland valleys and broken ground of the mountains, which afford them a better field for their method of securing game, which is by lying in wait behind a rock, or on the steep bank of a ravine, concealed by a tree or shrub, until a deer or antelope passes underneath, when they spring upon the animal's back, and, holding on with their strong and sharp claws, which they bury in the flesh, soon bring it bleeding to the ground. The Indians say they are purely carnivorous; but I imagine that, like the bear, they not unfrequently eat fruit and roots, when animal food is not to be had.

I have said that the mountain wolves, and, still more so, the coyote of the plains, are less frightened at the sight of man than any other beast. One night, when encamped on an affluent of the Platte, a heavy snow-storm falling at the time, I lay down in my blanket, after first heaping on the fire a vast pile of wood, to burn till morning. In the middle of the night I was awakened by the excessive cold, and, turning towards the fire, which was burning bright and cheerfully, what was my astonishment to see a large grey wolf sitting quietly before it, his eyes closed, and his head nodding in sheer drowsiness! Although I had frequently seen wolves evince their disregard to fires, by coming within a few feet of them to seize upon any scraps of meat which might be left exposed, I had never seen or heard of one approaching so close as to warm his body, and for that purpose alone. However, I looked at him for some moments without disturbing the beast, and closed my eyes and went to sleep, leaving him to the quiet enjoyment of the blaze. This is not very wonderful when I mention that it is a very common thing for these animals to gnaw the straps of a saddle on which your head is reposing for a pillow.

When I turned my horse's head from Pike's Peak I quite regretted the abandonment of my mountain life, solitary as it was, and more than once thought of again taking the trail to the Bayou Salado, where I had enjoyed such good sport.

Apart from the feeling of loneliness which any one in my situation must naturally have experienced, surrounded by stupendous works of nature, which in all their solitary grandeur frowned upon me, and sinking into utter insignificance the miserable mortal who crept beneath their shadow; still there was something inexpressibly exhilarating in the sensation of positive freedom from all worldly care, and a consequent expansion of the sinews, as it were, of mind and body, which made me feel elastic as a ball of Indian rubber, and in a state of such perfect insouciance that no more dread of scalping Indians entered my mind than if I had been sitting in Broadway, in one of the windows of Astor House. A citizen of the world, I never found any difficulty in investing my resting-place, wherever it might be, with all the attributes of a home; and hailed, with delight equal to that which the artificial comforts of a civilized home would have caused, the, to me, domestic appearance of my hobbled animals, as they grazed around the camp, when I returned after a hard day's hunt. By the way, I may here remark that my sporting feelings underwent a great change when I was necessitated to follow and kill game for the support of life, and as a means of subsistence; and the slaughter of deer and buffalo no longer became sport when the object was to fill the larder, and the excitement of the hunt was occasioned by the alternative of a plentiful feast or a banyan; and, although ranking under the head of the most red-hot of sportsmen, I can safely acquit myself of ever wantonly destroying a deer or buffalo unless I was in need of meat; and such consideration for the *ferae naturae* is common to all the mountaineers who look to game alone for their support.

Although liable to an accusation of barbarism, I must confess that the very happiest moments

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

of my life have been spent in the wilderness of the Far West; and I never recall but with pleasure the remembrance of my solitary camp in the Bayou Salado, with no friend near me more faithful than my rifle, and no companions more sociable than my good horse and mules, or the attendant coyote which nightly serenaded us. With a plentiful supply of dry pine-logs on the fire, and its cheerful blaze streaming fax up into the sky, illuminating the valley far and near, and exhibiting the animals, with well-filled bellies, standing contentedly at rest over their picket-pins, I would sit cross-legged enjoying the genial warmth, and, pipe in mouth, watch the blue smoke as it curled upwards, building castles in its vapory wreaths, and, in the fantastic shapes it assumed, peopling the solitude with figures of those far away. Scarcely however, did I ever wish to change such hours of freedom for all the luxuries of civilized life, and, unnatural and extraordinary as it may appear, yet such is the fascination of the life of the mountain hunter, that I believe not one instance could be adduced of even the most polished and civilized of men, who had once tasted the sweets of its attendant liberty and freedom from every worldly care, not regretting the moment when he exchanged it for the monotonous life of the settlements, nor sighing, and sighing again, once more to partake of its pleasures and allurements.

Nothing can be more social and cheering than the welcome blaze of the camp fire on a cold winter's night, and nothing more amusing or entertaining, if not instructive, than the rough conversation of the single-minded mountaineers, whose simple daily talk is all of exciting adventure, since their whole existence is spent in scenes of peril and privation; and consequently the narration of their every-day life is a tale of thrilling accidents and hair-breadth 'scapes, which, though simple matter-of-fact to them, appear a startling romance to those who are not acquainted with the nature of the lives led by these men, who, with the sky for a roof and their rifles to supply them with food and clothing, call no man lord or master, and are free as the game they follow.

A hunter's camp in the Rocky Mountains is quite a picture. He does not always take the trouble to build any shelter unless it is in the snow season, when a couple of deerskins stretched over a willow frame shelter him from the storm. At other seasons he is content with a mere breakwind. Near at hand are two upright poles, with another supported on the top of these, on which is displayed, out of reach of hungry wolf or coyote, meat of every variety the mountains afford. Buffalo depouilles, hams of deer and mountain-sheep, beaver-tails, &c., stock the larder. Under the shelter of the skins hang his powder-horn and bullet-pouch; while his rifle, carefully defended from the damp, is always within reach of his arm. Round the blazing fire the hunters congregate at night, and whilst cleaning their rifles, making or mending mocassins, or running bullets, spin long yams of their hunting exploits, &c.

Some hunters, who have married Indian squaws, carry about with them the Indian lodge of buffalo-skins, which are stretched in a conical form round a frame of poles. Near the camp is always seen the "graining-block," a log of wood with the bark stripped and perfectly smooth, which is planted obliquely in the ground, and on which the hair is removed from the skins to prepare them for being dressed. There are also "stretching-frames," on which the skins are placed to undergo the process of dubbing, which is the removal of the flesh and fatty particles adhering to the skin, by means of the "dubber," an instrument made of the stock of an elk's horn. The last process is the "smoking," which is effected by digging a round hole in the ground and lighting in it an armful of rotten wood or punk. Three sticks are then planted round the hole, and their tops brought together and tied. The skin is then placed on this frame, and all the holes by which the smoke might

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

escape carefully stopped: in ten or twelve hours the skin is thoroughly smoked and ready for immediate use.

The camp is invariably made in a picturesque locality, for like the Indian, the white hunter has ever an eye to the beautiful. The broken ground of the mountains, with their numerous tumbling and babbling rivulets, and groves and thickets of shrubs and timber, always afford shelter from the boisterous winds of winter, and abundance of fuel and water. Facing the rising sun the hunter invariably erects his shanty, with a wall of precipitous rock in rear to defend it from the gusts which often sweep down the gorges of the mountains. Round the camp his animals, well hobbled at night, feed within sight, for nothing does a hunter dread more than a visit from the horse-stealing Indians; and to be "afoot" is the acme of his misery.

CHAPTER XII

BIRDS OF PASSAGE AT BENT'S FORT

WHEN I returned to the Arkansa I found a small party were making preparations to cross the grand prairie to the United States, intending to start on the 1st of May, before which time there would not be a sufficiency of grass to support the animals on the way. With these men I determined to travel, and in the mean time employed myself in hunting on the "Wet Mountain," and Fisher's Hole, a valley at the head of St. Charles, as well as up the Arkansa itself. I observed in these excursions that vegetation was in a much more forward state in the mountain valleys and the prairies contiguous to their bases than on the open plains, and that in the vicinity of the "pueblo" it was still more backward than in any other spot; on the 15th of April not a blade of green grass having as yet made its appearance round the fort. This was not from the effects of drought, for several refreshing showers had fallen since the disappearance of the snow; neither was there any apparent difference in the soil, which is a rich loam, and in the river-bottom, an equally rich vegetable mould. At this time, when the young grass had not yet appeared here, it was several inches high on the mountains and upland prairies, and the cherry and currant bushes on the creeks were bursting into leaf.

Amongst the wives of the mountaineers in the fort was one Mexican woman from the state of Durango, who had been carried off by the Comanches in one of their raids into that department. Remaining with them several years, she eventually accompanied a party of Kioways (allies of the Comanche) to Bent's Fort on the Arkansa. Here she was purchased from them and became the wife of Hawkens, who afterwards removed from Bent's and took up his abode at the "pueblo," and was my hospitable host while on the Arkansa. It appeared that her Mexican husband, by some means or another, heard that she had reached Bent's Fort, and, impelled by affection, undertook the long journey of upwards of fifteen hundred miles to recover his lost wife. In the meantime, however, she had borne her American husband a daughter, and when her first spouse claimed her as his own, and wished her to accompany him back to her own country, she only consented on condition that she might carry with her the child, from which she steadily refused to be separated. The father, however, turned a deaf ear to this request, and eventually the poor Durangueno returned to his home alone, his spouse preferring to share the buffalo-rib and venison with her mountaineer before the frijole and chile colorado of the bereaved ranchero.

Three or four Taos women, and as many squaws of every nation, comprised the "female society" on the Upper Arkansa, giving good promise of peopling the river with a sturdy race of half-breeds, if all the little dusky buffalo-fed urchins who played about the corral of the fort arrived

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

scathless at maturity.

Amongst the hunters on the Upper Arkansa were four Delaware Indians, the remnant of a band who had been trapping for several years in the mountains, and many of whom had been killed by hostile Indians, or in warfare with the Apaches while in the employ of the states of New Mexico and Chihuahua. Their names were Jim Dicky, Jim Swannick, Little Beaver, and Big Nigger. The last had married a squaw from the Taos pueblo, and, happening to be in New Mexico with his spouse at the time of the late rising against the Americans, he very naturally took part with the people by whom he had been adopted.

In the attack on the Indian pueblo it was said that Big Nigger particularly distinguished himself, calling by name to several of the mountain-men who were amongst the attacking party, and inviting them to come near enough for him, the Big Nigger, to "throw them in their tracks." And this feat he effected more than once, to the cost of the assailants, for it was said that the Delaware killed nearly all who fell on the side of the Americans, his squaw loading his rifle and encouraging him in the fight.

By some means or another he escaped after the capture of the pueblo, and made his way to the mountains on the Arkansa; but as it was reported that a price was put upon his head, he retired in company with the other Delawares to the mountains, where they all lay perdu for a time; and it was pretty well understood that any one feeling inclined to reap the reward by the capture of Big Nigger, would be under the necessity of "taking him," and with every probability of catching a Tartar at the same time, the three other Delawares having taken the delinquent under the protection of their rifles. Although companions of the American and Canadian hunters for many years, anything but an entente cordiale existed towards their white confreres on the part of the Delawares, who knew very well that anything in the shape of Indian blood is looked upon with distrust and contempt by the white hunters.

Tharpe, an Indian trader, who had just returned from the Cheyenne village at the "Big Timber" on the Arkansa, had purchased from some Kioways two prisoners, a Mexican and an American negro. The former had been carried off by the Comanches from Durango when about seven years old, had almost entirely forgotten his own tongue, and neither knew his own age nor what length of time he had been a captive amongst the Indians. The degraded and miserable existence led by this poor creature had almost obliterated all traces of humanity from his character and appearance. Probably not more than twenty-five years of age, he was already wrinkled and haggard in his face, which was that of a man of threescore years. Wrapped in a dirty blanket, with his long hair streaming over his shoulders, he skulked, like some savage animal, in holes and corners of the fort, seeming to shun his fellow-men, in a consciousness of his abject and degraded condition. At night he would be seen with his face close to the rough doors of the rooms, peering through the cracks, and envying the (to him) unusual luxury within. When he observed anyone approach the door, he instantly withdrew and concealed himself in the darkness until he passed. A present of tobacco, now and then, won for me the confidence of the poor fellow, and I gathered from him, in broken Spanish mixed with Indian, an account of his miseries.

I sat with him one night on a log in the corral, as he strove to make me understand that once, long, long ago, he had been "muy rico - very rich"; that he lived in a house where was always a fire like that burning within, and where he used to sit on his mother's lap; and this fact he repeated over and over again, thinking that to show that once affectionate regard had been bestowed

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

upon him, was to prove that he had been at one time an important personage. "Me quiso mucho, mucho," he said, speaking of his mother-"she loved me very, very much; and I had good clothes and plenty to eat; but that was many, many moons ago."

"Mire," he continued, "from this size," putting his hand out about three feet from the ground-"ni padre, ni madre, ni amigos he tenido yo,"-neither father, mother, nor friends have I had; "pero patadas, bastante - but plenty of kicks," y poca carne - and very little meat."

I asked him if he had no wish to return to his own country. His haggard face lighted up for an instant, as the dim memory of his childhood's home returned to his callous mind. "Ay, Dios mio!" he exclaimed, "si fuera posible -Ali., my God, if it were possible!" "But no," he continued after a pause, "estoy ahora muy bruto, y asi no me quadrara a ver mi madre - I am now no more than a brute, and in this state would not like to see my mother. Y de mas - and moreover - my compadre," as he called the man who had purchased him, "is going to give me a shirt and a sombrero; what can I want more? Vaya, es mejor asi - it is better as it is." One night he accosted me in the corral in an unusual degree of excitement.

"Mire!" he exclaimed, seizing me by the arm, "look here! estoy boracho - I am drunk! Me dio mi compadre un pedazo de aguardiente - my godfather has given me a bit of brandy. Y estoy tan feliz, y ligero! como paxaro, Como pa-x-ar-o" -he hiccuped-"and I am as happy and as light as a bird. Me vuelo -I am flying. Me dicen que estoy boracho: ay que palabra bonita! -they tell me I am drunk: drunk - what a beautiful word is this! En mi vida, nunca he sentido como ahora -never in my life have I felt as I do now." And the poor wretch covered his head with a blanket, and laughed long and loud at the trick he had played his old friend misery.

The negro, on the contrary, was a characteristic specimen of his race, always laughing, singing, and dancing, and cutting uncouth capers. He had been a slave in the semi-civilized Cherokee nation, and had been captured by the Comanches, as he himself declared, but most probably had run away from his master, and joined them voluntarily. He was a musician, and of course could play the fiddle; and having discovered an old weather-beaten instrument in the fort, Lucy Neal, Old Dan Tucker, and Buffalo Gals, were heard at all hours of the day and night; and he was, moreover, installed into the Weippert of the fandangos which frequently took place in the fort, when the hunters with their squaws were at the rendezvous.

Towards the latter end of April green grass began to show itself in the bottoms, and -myself and two others, who had been wintering in the mountains for the benefit of their health, made preparations for our departure to the United States. Pack-saddles were inspected and repaired, apishamores made, lariats and lassos greased and stretched, mules and horses collected from their feeding-grounds, and their fore feet shod. A small supply of meat was "made" (i. e. cut into thin flaps and dried in the sun), to last until we reached the buffalo-range; rifles put in order, and balls run; hobbles cut out of rawhide, parfleche moccasins cobbled up, deerskin hunting-shirts and pantaloons patched, and all our very primitive "kit" overhauled to render it serviceable for the journey across the grand prairies, while the "possible-sack" was lightened of all superfluities -- an easy task by the way. When everything was ready I was delayed several days in hunting up my animals. The Indian traders having arrived, bringing with them large herds of mules and horses, my mules had become separated from the horse and from one another, and it was with no small difficulty that I succeeded in finding and securing them. Having once tasted the green grass, they became so wild, that, at my appearance, lasso in hand, the cunning animals, knowing full well

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

what was in store for them, threw up their heels and scampered away, defying for a long time all my efforts to catch them.

My two companions had left the United States the preceding year, having been recommended to try the effect of change of climate on a severe pulmonary disease under which both labored. Indeed, they were both apparently in a rapid consumption, and their medical advisers had given up any hope of seeing them restored to health. They had remained in the mountains during one of the severest winters ever known, had lived upon game, and frequently suffered the privations attendant upon a mountain life, and now were returning perfectly restored, and in robust health and spirits.

It is an extraordinary fact that the air of the mountains has a wonderfully restorative effect upon constitutions enfeebled by pulmonary disease; and of my own knowledge I could mention a hundred instances where persons, whose cases have been pronounced by eminent practitioners as perfectly hopeless, have been restored to comparatively sound health by a sojourn in the pure and bracing air of the Rocky Mountains, and are now alive to testify to the effects of the revigorating climate.

That the lungs are most powerfully acted upon by the rarified air of these elevated regions, I myself, in common with the acclimated, hunters, who experience the same effects, can bear witness, as it is almost impossible to take violent exercise on foot, the lungs feeling as if they were bursting in the act of breathing, and consequently the hunters invariably follow game on horseback, although, from being inured to the climate, they might be supposed to experience these symptoms in a lesser degree.

Whatever may be urged against such a climate, the fact nevertheless remains, that the lungs are thus powerfully affected and that the violent action has a most beneficial effect upon these organs when in a highly diseased state.

The elevation above the level of the sea, of the plains at the foot of the mountains, is about four thousand feet, while the mountain valley of the Bayou Salado must reach an elevation of at least eight or nine thousand, and Pike's Peak has been estimated to exceed twelve thousand.

CHAPTER XIII

HEADING FOR HOME

ON the 30th of April [1847], having the day before succeeded in collecting my truant mulada, I proceeded alone to the forks of the Arkansa and St. Charles, where I had observed, when hunting, that the grass was in better condition than near the pueblo, and here I remained two or three days, the animals faring well on the young grass, waiting for my two companions, who were to proceed with me across the grand prairies. As, however, the trail was infested by the Pawnees and Comanche, who had attacked every party which had attempted to cross from Santa Fe during the last six months, and carried off all their animals, it was deemed prudent to wait for the escort of Tharpe, the Indian trader, who was about to proceed to St. Louis with the peltries, the produce of his winter trade; and as he would be accompanied by a large escort of mountain-men, we resolved to remain and accompany his party for the security it afforded.

The night I encamped on the St. Charles the rain poured down in torrents, accompanied by a storm of thunder and lightning, and the next morning I was comfortably lying in a pool of water, having been exposed to the full force of the storm. This was, however, merely a breaking in for a continuation of wet weather, which lasted fifteen days without intermission, and at short inter-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

vals followed us to the Missouri, during which time I had the pleasure of diurnal and nocturnal shower-baths, and was for thirty days undergoing a natural hydropathic course of wet clothes and blankets, my bed being the bare prairie, and nothing between me and the reservoir above but a single sarape.

On the 2nd of May my two fellow-travellers arrived with the intelligence that Tharpe could not leave until a trading-party from the north fork of the Platte came in to Arkansa, and consequently we started the next day alone. I may here mention that Tharpe started two days after us, and was killed on Walnut Creek by the Pawnees, while hunting buffalo at a little distance from camp. He was scalped and horribly mutilated.

The night before our departure the wolves ate up all the riatas by which our mules and horses were picketed; and in the morning all the animals had disappeared but one. We saw by the tracks that they had been stampeded; and, as a very suspicious moccasin-track was discovered near the river, we feared that the Arapahos had paid a visit to the mulada. One of my mules, however, was picketed very near the camp, and was safe; and, mounting her, I followed the track of the others across the river, and had the good fortune to find them all quietly feeding in the prairie, with the ropes eaten off to their very throats. This day we proceeded about twenty-five miles down the river, camping in the bottom in a tope of cottonwoods, the rain pouring upon us all night.

The next day we still followed the stream, and encamped about four miles above Bent's Fort, which we reached the next morning, and most opportunely, as a company of wagons belonging to the United States commissariat were at the very moment getting under way for the Missouri. They had brought out provisions for the troops forming the Santa Fe division of the army of invasion, and were now on their return, empty, to Fort Leavenworth, under the charge of Captain -, of the Quartermaster-General's department, who at once gave us permission to join his company, which consisted of twenty wagons, and as many teamsters, well armed. A government train of wagons had been attacked, on their way to Santa Fe, the preceding winter, by the Pawnees, and the whole party -- men, mules, and wagons -- captured; the men, however, being allowed to continue their journey, without wagons or animals. They had likewise lately attacked a party under Kit Carson, the celebrated mountaineer who was carrying despatches from Colonel Fremont, in California, to the government of the United States, and in fact every party who had passed the plains; therefore, as a large number of loose stock was also to be carried in with the wagons, an attack was more than probable during the journey to the frontier.

Bent's Fort is a square building of adobe, flanked by circular bastions loopholed for musketry, and entered by a large gateway leading into the corral or yard. Round this are the rooms inhabited by the people engaged in the Indian trade; but at this time the Messrs. Bent themselves were absent in Santa Fe, the eldest brother, as I have before mentioned, having been killed in Taos during the insurrection of the Pueblo Indians. We here procured a small supply of dried buffalo-meat, which would suffice until we came to the buffalo-range, when sufficient meat might be procured to carry us into the States.

We started about noon, proceeding the first day about ten miles, and camped at sundown opposite the mouth of the Purgatoire -- the Pickatwaire of the mountaineers, and Las Animas of the New Mexicans -- an affluent of the Arkansa, rising in the mountains in the vicinity of the Spanish Peaks. The timber on the Arkansa becomes scarcer as we proceed down the river, the cottonwood groves being scattered wide apart at some distance from each other; and the stream itself wid-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ens out into sandy shallows, dotted with small islands covered with brush. At this camp we were joined by six or seven of Fremont's men, who had accompanied Kit Carson from California; but, their animals "giving out" here, they had remained behind to recruit them. They were all fine, hardy-looking young fellows, with their faces browned by two years constant exposure to the sun and wind, and were fine specimens of mountaineers. They were accompanied by a Californian Indian, a young centaur, who handled his lasso with a dexterity which threw all the Mexican exploits I had previously seen into the shade, and was the means of bereaving several cows of their calves when we were in the buffalo-range.

Our next camping-place was the "Big Timber," a large grove of cottonwoods on the left bank of the river, and a favorite wintering-place of the Cheyennes. Their camp was now broken up, and the village had removed to the Platte for their summer hunt. The debris of their fires and lodges were plentifully scattered about, and some stray horses were running about the bottom. On the 5th and 6th we moved leisurely down the river, camping at Sandy Creek, and in the "Salt Bottom," a large plain covered with salitrose efflorescences. Here we proceeded more cautiously, as we were now in the outskirts of the Pawnee and Comanche country. The wagons at night were drawn up into a square, and the mules enclosed after sunset within the corral. Mine, however, took their chance outside, being always picketed near my sleeping-place, which I invariably selected in the middle of a good patch of grass, in order that they might feed well during the night. A guard was also placed over the corral, and everyone slept with his rifle at his side.

Near the Salt Bottom, but on the opposite side of the river, I this day saw seven bulls, the advance party of the innumerable bands of buffalo we shortly passed through.

On the 7th, as I rode two or three miles in advance of the party, followed by my mules, I came upon fresh Indian sign, where a village had just passed, with their lodge-poles trailing on the ground; and presently, in a level bottom on the river, the white conical lodges of the village presented themselves a short distance on the right of the trail. I at once struck off and entered it, and was soon surrounded by the idlers of the place. It was a Cheyenne village; and the young men were out, an old chief informed me, after buffalo, and that they would return an hour before sunset, measuring the hour with his hand on the western horizon. He also pointed out a place a little below for the wagons to encamp, where he said was plenty of wood and grass. The lodges, about fifty in number, were all regularly planted in rows of ten; the chief's lodge being in the centre, and the skins of it being dyed a conspicuous red. Before the lodges of each of the principal chiefs and warriors was a stack of spears, from which hung his shield and arms; whilst the skins of the lodge itself were covered with devices and hieroglyphics, describing his warlike achievements. Before one was a painted pole supporting several smoke-dried scalps, which dangled in the wind, rattling against the pole like bags of peas.

The language of signs is so perfectly understood in the western country, and the Indians themselves are such admirable pantomimists, that, after a little use, no difficulty whatever exists in carrying on a conversation by such a channel; and there are few mountain-men who are at a loss in thoroughly understanding and making themselves intelligible by signs alone, although they neither speak nor understand a word of the Indian tongue.

The wagons shortly after coming up, we proceeded to the spot indicated by the chief, which is a camping-place well known to the Santa Fe traders by the name of the Pretty Encampment. Here we were soon surrounded by men, women, and children from the village, who arrived in horse-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

loads of five or six mounted on the same animal, and, begging and stealing everything they could lay their hands upon, soon became a perfect nuisance. An hour before sundown the hunting party came in, their animals tottering under heavy loads of buffalo-meat. Twenty-one had gone out, and in the chase had killed twenty-one bulls, which were portioned out, half the animal to each lodge. During the night a huge cottonwood, which had been thoughtlessly set on fire, fell, a towering mass of flame, to the ground, and nearly into the midst of my animals, who, frightened by the thundering crash, and the showers of sparks and fire, broke their ropes and ran off. In the morning, however, they returned to camp at daybreak, and allowed me to catch them without difficulty. The next night we encamped on a bare prairie without wood, having recourse to the bois de vaches, or buffalo-chips, which strewed the ground, to make a fire. This fuel was so wet, that nothing but a stifling smoke rewarded our attempts. During the day an invalid died in one of the wagons, in which upwards of twenty poor wretches were being conveyed, all suffering from most malignant scurvy. The first wagon which arrived in camp sent a man to dig a hole in the prairie; and on the wagon containing the dead man coming up, it stopped a minute to throw the body into the hole, where, lightly covered with earth, it was left, without a prayer, to the mercies of the wolves and birds of prey.

Bent's Fort had been made a depot of provisions for the supply of the government trains passing the grand prairies on their way to New Mexico, and the wagons now returning were filled with sick men suffering from attacks of scurvy (called "Black Leg" in Missouri.) The want of fresh provisions and neglect of personal cleanliness, together with the effects of the rigorous climate, and the intemperate and indolent habits of the men, rendered them proper subjects for this horrible scourge. In Santa Fe, and wherever the volunteer troops were congregated, the disease made rapid progress, and proved fatal in an extraordinary number of cases.

As I was riding with some of the Californians in advance of the train, a large white wolf limped out of the bottom, and, giving chase, we soon came up to the beast, which on our approach crouched to the ground and awaited its death-stroke with cowardly sullenness. It was miserably poor, with its bones a most protruding from the skin, and one of its forelegs had been broken, probably by a buffalo, and trailed along the ground as it ran snarling and chopping its jaws with its sharp teeth.

On the 9th, as I rode along ahead, I perceived some dark objects in the prairie, which, refracted by the sun striking the sandy ground, appeared enormous masses, without form, moving slowly along. Riding towards them on my mule, I soon made them out to be buffalo, seventeen bulls, which were coming towards me. Jumping off the mule, I thrust the picket at the end of her lariat into the ground, and, advancing cautiously a few paces, as the prairie was entirely bare, and afforded not even the cover of a prairie-dog mound to approach under, I lay down on the ground to await their coming. As they drew near, the huge beasts, unconscious of danger, picked a bunch of grass here and there, sometimes kicking up the dust with their fore feet, and, moving at the slowest walk, seemed in no hurry to offer me a shot. Just however as they were within a hundred paces, and I was already squinting along the barrel of my rifle, a greenhorn from the wagons, who had caught a glimpse of the game, galloped headlong down the bluff, and before the wind. He was a quarter of a mile off when the leading bull, raising his head, snuffed the tainted air, and with tail erect scampered off with his companions, leaving me showering imprecations on the head of the "muff" who had spoiled my sport, and supper.

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

Whilst I was lying on the ground three wolves, which were following the buffalo, caught sight of me, and seemed instantly to divine my intentions, for they drew near, and, sitting within a few yards of me, anxiously gazed upon me and the approaching bulls, thinking, no doubt, that their persevering attendance upon them was now about to be rewarded. They were doubtless disgusted when, as soon as I perceived the bulls disappear, I turned my rifle upon one cur which sat licking his chops, and knocked him over, giving the others the benefit of the remaining barrel as they scampered away from their fallen comrade. I now rode on far ahead, determined not to be disturbed; and by the time the wagons came into camp I had already arrived there with the choice portions of two bulls which I killed near the river. We encamped on the 9th at Chouteau's Island, called after an Indian trader named Chouteau, who was here beleaguered by the Pawnees for several weeks, but eventually made his escape in safety. Every mile we advanced the buffalo became more plentiful, and the camp was soon overflowing with fresh meat.

The country was literally black with immense herds, and they were continually crossing and re-crossing the trail during the day, giving us great trouble to prevent the loose animals from breaking away and following the bands.

On the 12th a man was found dead in one of the wagons on arriving in camp, and was buried in the same unceremonious style as the other.

In the evening I left the camp for a load of meat, and approached an immense herd of buffalo under cover of a prairie-dog town, much to the indignation of the villagers, who resented the intrusion with an incessant chattering. The buffalo passed right through the town, and at one time I am sure that I could have touched many with the end of my rifle, and thousands were passing almost over me; but, as I lay perfectly still, they only looked at me from under their shaggy brows, and passed on. One huge bull, and the most ferocious-looking animal I ever encountered, came to a dead stop within a yard of my head, and steadily examined me with his glaring eyes, snorting loudly his ignorance of what the curious object could be which riveted his attention. Once he approached so close that I actually felt his breath on my face, and, smelling me, he retreated a pace or two, and dashed up the sand furiously with his feet, lashing his tail at the same time about his dun sides with the noise of a carter's whip, throwing down his ponderous head, and shaking his horns angrily at me. This old fellow was shedding his hair, and his sleek skin, now bare as one's hand in many parts, was here and there dotted with tufts of his long winter-coat. From the shoulder backwards the body was, with these exceptions, perfectly smooth, but his head, neck, and breast were covered with long shaggy hair, his glowing eyes being almost hidden in a matted mass, while his coal-black beard swept his knees. His whole appearance reminded me strongly of a lion, and the motion of the buffalo when running exactly resembles the canter of the king of beasts. At last my friend began to work himself up into such a fury that I began to feel rather uncomfortable at my position, and, as he backed himself and bent his head for a rush, I cocked my rifle, and rose partly from the ground to take a surer aim, when the cowardly old rascal, with a roar of affright, took to his heels, followed by the whole band; but as one sleek, well-conditioned bull passed me within half a dozen yards, I took a flying shot, and rolled him over and over in a cloud of dust, levelling to the ground, as he fell, a well-built dog-house.

No animals in these western regions interested me so much as the prairie dogs. These lively little fellows select for the site of their towns a level piece of prairie with a sandy or gravelly soil, out of which they can excavate their dwellings with great facility. Being of a merry, sociable disposition,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

they, unlike the bear or wolf, choose to live in a large community, where laws exist for the public good, and there is less danger to be apprehended from the attacks of their numerous and crafty enemies. Their towns equal in extent and population the largest cities of Europe, some extending many miles in length, with considerable regularity in their streets, and the houses of a uniform style of architecture. Although their form of government may be styled republican, yet great respect is paid to their chief magistrate, who, generally a dog of large dimensions and imposing appearance, resides in a house conspicuous for size in the centre of the town, where he may always be seen on his housetop, regarding with dignified complacency the various occupations of the busy population—some industriously bearing to the granaries the winter supply of roots, others building or repairing their houses; while many, their work being over, sit chatting on their housetops, watching the gambols of the juveniles as they play around them. Their hospitality to strangers is unbounded. The owl, who on the bare prairie is unable to find a tree or rock in which to build her nest, is provided with a comfortable lodging, where she may in security rear her round-eyed progeny; and the rattlesnake, in spite of his bad character, is likewise entertained with similar hospitality although it is very doubtful if it is not sometimes grossly abused; and many a childless dog may perhaps justly attribute his calamity to the partiality of the epicurean snake for the tender meat of the delicate prairie-pup. However, it is certain that the snake is a constant guest; and, whether admitted into the domestic circle of the dog family, or living in separate apartments, or in co-partnership with the owl is an acknowledged member of the community at large.

The prairie-dog (a species of marmot) is somewhat longer than a guinea-pig, of a light brown or sandy color, and with a head resembling that of a young terrier pup. It is also furnished with a little stumpy tail, which, when its owner is excited, is in a perpetual jerk and flutter. Frequently, when hunting, I have amused myself for hours in watching their frolicsome motions, lying concealed behind one of their conical houses. These are raised in the form of a cone, two or three feet above the ground, and at the apex is a hole, vertical to the depth of three feet, and then descending obliquely into the interior. Of course, on the first approach of such a monster as man, all the dogs which have been scattered over the town scamper to their holes as fast as their little legs will admit, and, concealing all but their heads and tails, bark lustily their displeasure at the intrusion. When they have sufficiently exhibited their daring, every dog dives into his burrow, but two or three who remain as sentinels, chattering in high dudgeon, until the enemy is within a few paces of them, when they take the usual somersault, and the town is silent and deserted. Lying perfectly still for several minutes, I could observe an old fellow raise his head cautiously above his hole, and reconnoitre; and if satisfied that the coast was clear, he would commence a short bark. This bark, by the way, from its resemblance to that of a dog, has given that name to this little animal, but it is more like that of a wooden toy-dog, which is made to bark by raising and depressing the bellows under the figure. When this warning has been given, others are soon seen to emerge from their houses, and, assured of their security, play and frisk about.

After a longer delay, rattlesnakes issue from the holes, and coil themselves on the sunny side of the hillock, erecting their treacherous heads, and rattling an angry note of warning if, in his play, a thoughtless pup approaches too near; and, lastly, a sober owl appears, and, if the sun be low, hops through the town, picking up the lizards and chameleons which everywhere abound. At the first intimation of danger given by the sentinels, all the stragglers hasten to their holes, tumbling over

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

owls and rattlesnakes, who hiss and rattle angrily at being disturbed. Everyone scrambles off to his own domicile, and if, in his hurry, he should mistake his dwelling, or rush for safety into any other than his own, he is quickly made sensible of his error, and, without ceremony, ejected. Then, every house occupied, commences such a volley of barking, and such a twinkling of little heads and tails, which alone appear above the holes, as to defy description. The lazy snakes, regardless of danger, remain coiled up, and only evince their consciousness by an occasional rattle; while the owls, in the hurry and confusion, betake themselves, with sluggish wing to wherever a bush of sage or grease wood affords them temporary concealment.

The prairie-dog leads a life of constant alarm, and numerous enemies are ever on the watch to surprise him. The hawk and the eagle, hovering high in air, watch their towns, and pounce suddenly upon them, never failing to carry off in their cruel talons some unhappy member of the community. The coyote, too, an hereditary foe, lurks behind a hillock, watching patiently for hours until an unlucky straggler approaches within reach of his murderous spring. In the winter, when the prairie-dog, snug in his subterranean abode, and with granaries well filled, never cares to expose his little nose to the icy blasts which sweep across the plains, but, between eating and sleeping, passes merrily the long, frozen winter, he is often roused from his warm bed, and almost congealed with terror, by hearing the snorting yelp of the half-famished wolf, who, mad with hunger, assaults, with tooth and claw, the frost-bound roof of his house, and, with almost super-lupine strength, hurls down the well-cemented walls, tears up the passages, plunges his cold nose into the very chambers, snorting into them with his earth-stuffed nose, in ravenous anxiety, and drives the poor little trembling inmate into the most remote corners, too often to be dragged forth, and unhesitatingly devoured. The rattlesnake, too, I fear, is not the welcome guest he reports himself to be; for often I have slain the wily serpent, with a belly too much protuberant to be either healthy or natural, and bearing, in its outline, a very strong resemblance to the figure of a prairie-dog.

A few miles beyond a point on the river known as the caches, and so called from the fact that a party of traders, having lost their animals, had here cached, or concealed, their packs, we passed a little log fort, built by the government employees, for the purpose of erecting here a forge to repair the commissariat wagons on their way to Santa Fe. We found the fort beleaguered by the Pawnees, who killed every one who showed his nose outside the gate. They had carried off all their stock of mules and oxen, and in the vicinity had, two or three days before, attacked a company under an officer of the United States Engineers, running off with all the mules belonging to it. We were now, day after day, passing through countless herds of buffalo. I could scarcely form an estimate of the numbers within the range of sight at the same instant, but some idea may be formed of them by mentioning, that one day, passing along a ridge of upland prairie at least thirty miles in length, and from which a view extended about eight miles on each side of a slightly rolling plain, not a patch of grass ten yards square - could be seen, so dense was the living mass that covered the country in every direction.

On leaving the Caches, the trail, to avoid a bend in the Arkansa, strikes to the north-east over a tract of rolling prairie, intersected by many ravines, full of water at certain seasons, known as the Coon Creeks. On this route there is no other fuel than bois de vaches, and the camps are made on naked bluffs, exposed, without the slightest shelter, to the chilling winds that sweep continually over the bare plains. I scarcely remember to have suffered more from cold than in passing these

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

abominable Coon Creeks. With hunting-shirt saturated with the rain, the icy blast penetrated to my very bones, and, night after night, lying on the wet ground and in wet clothes, after successive days of pouring rain I felt my very blood running cold in my veins, and as if I never could again imbibe heat sufficient to warm me thoroughly.

One night, while standing guard round the camp, which was about two miles from the river, I heard an inexplicable noise, like distant thunder, but too continuous to proceed from that source, which gradually increased, and drew nearer to the camp. Placing my ear to the ground, I distinguished the roaring tramp of buffalo thundering on the plain; and as the moon for a moment burst from a cloud, I saw the prairie was covered by a dark mass, which undulated, in the uncertain light, like the waves of the sea. I at once became sensible of the imminent danger we were in; for when thousands and hundreds of thousands of these animals are pouring in a resistless torrent over the plains, it is almost impossible to change their course, particularly at night, the myriads in the rear pushing on those in front, who, spite of themselves, continue on their course, trampling down all opposition to their advance. Even if we ourselves were not crushed by the mass of beasts, our animals would most certainly be borne away bodily with the herd, and irrecoverably lost. I at once alarmed the camp, and all bands turned out, and, advancing towards the buffalo, which were coming straight upon us, by shouting and continued firing of guns we succeeded in turning them, the wind being, luckily, in our favor; and the main body branching in two, one division made off into the prairie, while the other crossed the river, where for hours we heard their splashing, sounding like the noise of a thousand cataracts. In the daytime even our cavallada was in continual danger, for immense bands of buffalo dashed repeatedly through the wagons, scarcely giving us time to secure the animals before they were upon us; and on one occasion, when I very foolishly dismounted from Panchito to fire at a band passing within a few yards, the horse, becoming alarmed, started off into the herd, and, followed by the mules, was soon lost to sight amongst the buffalo, and it was some time before I succeeded in recovering them.

As might be inferred, such gigantic sporting soon degenerates into mere butchery. Indeed, setting aside the excitement of a chase on horseback, buffalo-hunting is too wholesale a business to afford much sport—that is, on the prairies; but in the mountains, where they are met with in small bands, and require no little trouble and expertness to find and kill, and where one may hunt for days without discovering more than one band of half a dozen, it is then an exciting and noble sport. There are two methods of hunting buffalo -- one on horseback, by chasing them at full speed and shooting when alongside; the other by “still hunting,” that is, approaching, or stalking, by taking advantage of the wind and any cover the ground affords, and crawling to within distance of the feeding herd. The latter method exhibits in a higher degree the qualities of the hunter, the former those of the horseman. The buffalo’s head is so thickly thatched with long shaggy hair that the animal is almost precluded from seeing an object directly in its front; and if the wind be against the hunter he can approach, with a little caution, a buffalo feeding on a prairie as level and bare as a billiard-table. Their sense of smelling, however, is so acute, that it is impossible to get within shot when to windward, as, at the distance of nearly half a mile, the animal will be seen to snuff the tainted air, and quickly satisfy himself of the vicinity of danger. At any other than the season of gallantry, when the males are, like all other animals, disposed to be pugnacious, the buffalo is a quiet, harmless animal, and will never attack unless goaded to madness by wounds, or, if a cow, in sometimes defending its calf when pursued by a horseman; but even then it is seldom that they

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

make any strong effort to protect their young.

When gorged with water, after a long fast, they become so lethargic that they sometimes are too careless to run and avoid danger. One evening, just before camping, I was, as usual, in advance of the train, when I saw three bulls come out of the river and walk leisurely across the trail, stopping occasionally, and one, more indolent than the rest, lying down whenever the others halted. Being on my hunting-mule, I rode slowly after them, the lazy one stopping behind the others, and allowing me to ride within a dozen paces, when he would slowly follow the rest. Wishing to see how near I could get, I dismounted, and, rifle in hand, approached the bull, who at last stopped short, and never even looked round, so that I walked up to the animal and placed my hand on his quarter. Taking no notice of me, the huge beast lay down, and while on the ground I shot him dead.

On butchering the carcass I found the stomach so greatly distended, that (it seemed) another pint would have burst it. In other respects the animal was perfectly healthy and in good condition.

One of the greatest enemies to the buffalo is the white wolf. These persevering brutes follow the herds from pasture to pasture, preying upon the bulls enfeebled by wounds, the cows when weak at the time of calving, and the young calves whenever they straggle from the mothers. In bands of twenty and thirty they attack a wounded bull, separate him from the herd, and worry the poor animal until, weak with loss of blood and the ceaseless assaults of his active foes, he falls hamstrung, a victim to their ravenous hunger.

On one of the Coon Creeks I was witness to an attack of this kind by three wolves on a cow and calf, or rather on the latter alone, which by some accident had got separated from the herd. My attention was first called to the extraordinary motions of the cow (for I could neither see the calf nor the wolves on account of the high grass), which was running here and there, jumping high in air and bellowing lustily. On approaching the spot I saw that she was accompanied by a calf about a month old, and all the efforts of three wolves were directed to get between it and the cow, who, on her part, used all her generalship to prevent it. Whilst one executed a diversion in the shape of a false attack on the cow, the others ran at the calf, which sought shelter under the very belly of its mother. She, poor animal! regardless of the wounds inflicted on herself, sought only to face the more open attack; and the wolf in rear, taking advantage of this, made a bolder onslaught, and fastened upon her hams, getting however for his pains such a well-delivered kick in his stomach as threw him a somersault in the air. The poor cow was getting the worst of it; and the calf would certainly have fallen a victim to the ravenous beasts, if I had not most opportunely come to the rescue; and, waiting until the battle rolled near the place of my concealment, I took advantage of a temporary pause in the combat, when two of the wolves were sitting in a line, with their tongues out and panting for breath, to level my rifle at them, knocking over one dead as a stone, and giving the other a pill to be carried with him to the day of his death, which, if I am any judge of gunshot wounds, would not be very distant. The third took the hint and scampered off, a ball from my second barrel whistling after him as he ran; and I had the satisfaction of seeing the cow cross the river with her calf, and join in safety the herd, which was feeding on the other side.

CHAPTER XIV

A BUFFALO LANDSCAPE

WE reached Pawnee Fork of the Arkansa without any novedad [accident], but found this creek so swollen with the rains that we feared we should experience no little trouble in crossing. We here met a train of wagons detained by the above cause on their way to Santa Fé and we learned from

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

them that a party of Mexican traders had been attacked by the Pawnees at this very spot a few days before, losing one hundred and fifty mules, one Indian having been killed in the fight, whose well-picked skeleton lay a few yards from our camp. Pawnee Fork being considered the most dangerous spot on the trail, extraordinary precautions were taken in guarding against surprise, and the animals belonging to the train were safely corralled before sundown, and a strong guard posted round them. Mine, however, were picketed as usual round my sleeping-place, which was on a bare prairie at some distance from the timber of the creek.

Such a storm as poured upon our devoted heads that night I have seldom had the misfortune to be exposed to. The rain, in bucketsful, Niagara'd down as if a twenty-years' supply was being emptied from the heavens on that one night; vivid forked lightning, in continuous flashes, lit up the flooded prairie with its glare; and the thunder, which on these plains is thunder indeed, kept up an incessant and mammoth cannonade. My frightened mules crept as near my bed as their lariats would allow them, and, with water streaming from every extremity, trembled with the chilling rain.

In the early part of the night, when the storm was at its height, I was attracted to a fire at the edge of the encampment by the sound of a man's voice perpetrating a song. Drawing near, I found a fire, or rather a few embers and an extinguished log, over which cowered a man sitting cross-legged in Indian fashion, holding his attenuated hands over the expiring ashes. His features, pinched with the cold, and lank and thin with disease, wore a comically serious expression, as the lightning lit them up, the rain streaming off his nose and prominent chin, and his hunting-shirt hanging about him in a flabby and soaking embrace. He was quite alone, and sat watching a little pot, doubtless containing his supper, which refused to boil on the miserable fire. Spite of such a situation, which could be termed anything but cheering, he, like Mark Tapley, evidently thought that now was the very moment to be jolly, and was rapping out at the top of his voice a ditty, the chorus of which was, - and which he gave with peculiar emphasis,

“How happy am I!  
From care I'm free:  
Oh, why are not all  
Contented like me?”

not for an instant intending it as a satire upon himself, but singing away with perfect seriousness, raising his voice at the third line, “Oh, why are not all,” particularly at the “Oh,” in a most serio-comical manner. During the night I occasionally shook the water out of my blanket, and raised my head to assure myself that the animals were safe, lying down to sleep again, perfectly satisfied that not even a Pawnee would face such a storm, even to steal horses. But I did that celebrated thieving nation gross injustice; for they, on that very night, carried off several mules belonging to the other train of wagons, notwithstanding that a strict guard was kept up all the night. The next day, as there was no probability of the creek subsiding, it was determined to cross the wagons at any risk; and they were accordingly, one after the other, let down the steep bank of the stream, and, several yokes of oxen (which had first been swum over) being attached were hauled bodily through the water, some swimming, and others, if heavily laden, diving across. I myself crossed on Panchito, whose natatory attempt, probably his first, was anything but first-rate; for on plunging in, and at once, into deep water, instead of settling himself down to a quiet swim, he jumped up into the air, and, sinking to the bottom, and thus gaining a fresh impetus, away he

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

went again, carrying me, rifle, and ammunition under water at every plunge, as I held on by his neck like grim death. All my kit was contained in a pair of mule-packs, which I had had made of waterproof material. Unfortunately one had a hole in the top, which had escaped my notice. This admitted the water, which remained in the pack, several inches deep, for a fortnight. This pack contained all my papers, notes, and several manuscripts and documents relative to the history of New Mexico and its Indian tribes, which I had collected with considerable trouble and expense. On opening the trunk, I found all the papers completely destroyed, and the old manuscripts, written on bad paper, and with worse ink, reduced to a pulpy mass; every scrap of writing being perfectly illegible.

At length, all the wagons were got safely over, with the exception of having everything well soaked; and as the process had occupied the whole day, we camped on the other side of the creek. Every day we found greater difficulty in procuring fuel; for, as we were now on the regular Santa Fé trail, the creeks had been almost entirely stripped of firewood, and it was the work of hours to collect a sufficiency of brush to make a small fire to boil a pot of water. On arriving at camp, and having unpacked the mules, the first thing was to sally forth in quest of wood; an expedition of no little danger, for it was always more than probable that Indians were lurking in the neighborhood, and therefore the rifle always accompanied the fuel-hunter.

Between Pawnee Fork and Cow Creek all our former experiences of buffalo-seeing were thrown into the shade, for here they literally formed the whole scenery, and nothing but dense masses of these animals was to be seen in every direction, covering valley and bluff, and actually blocking up the trail. Nothing was heard along the line of march but pop-bang-pop-bang every minute; and the Californian Indian lassoed the calves and brought them in in such numbers, that many were again set free. I had hitherto refrained from "chasing," in order to save my poor horse; but this day, a fine band of cows crossing the trail on a splendid piece of level prairie, I determined to try Panchito's mettle. Cantering up to the herd, I singled out a wiry-looking cow (which sex is the fleetest), and, dashing at her, soon succeeded in separating her from the rest. As I steered Panchito right into the midst of a thousand of these animals, he became half mad with terror, plunging and snorting and kicking right and left; but he soon became tamer and more reconciled when the chase was a trial of speed between him and the flying cow, and he then was as much excited as his rider. The cow held her ground wonderfully well, and for a quarter of a mile kept us a couple of lengths astern, which distance my horse seemed hardly to wish to decrease. As he became warm, however, I pushed him up to her just as she entered a large band, where she doubtless thought to have found refuge; but, running through it, she again made for the open prairie and here, after a burst of a few hundred yards, I again came up with her; but Panchito refused to lay me alongside, darting wildly on one side if I attempted to pass the animal. At last, pushing him with spur and leg, I brought him to the top of his speed, and, shooting past the flying cow in his stride, and with too much headway on him to swerve, I brushed the ribs of the buffalo with my moccasin, and, edging off a little to avoid her horns, discharged my rifle into her side, behind the shoulder. Carried forward a few paces in her onward course, she fell headlong to the ground, burying her horns deep into the soil, and, turning over on her side, was dead. She was so poor that I contented myself with the tongue, leaving the remainder of the carcass to the wolves and ravens.

We continued to find the buffalo in similar abundance as far as Cow Creek; a little beyond which we saw the last band; and on Turkey Creek the last straggler, an old grizzly bull, which I killed for

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

a last supply of meat.

After passing the Little Arkansa, the prairie began to change its character; the surface became more broken, the streams more frequent, and fringed with better timber, and of a greater variety; the eternal cottonwood now giving place to aspen, walnut, and hickory, and the short curly buffalo-grass to a more luxuriant growth of a coarser quality, interspersed with numerous plants and gay flowers. The dog-towns, too, disappeared; and, in lieu of these little animals, the prairie-hen boomed at rise and set of sun, and, running through the high grass, furnished ample work for the rifle. Large game was becoming scarcer; and but few antelope were now to be seen, and still fewer deer.

No scenery in nature is more dreary and monotonous than the aspect of the "grand prairies" through which we had been passing. Nothing meets the eye but a vast undulating expanse of and waste; for the buffalo-grass, although excellent in quality, never grows higher than two or three inches, and is seldom green in color; and, being but thinly planted, the prairie never looks green and turf-like. Not a tree or shrub is to be seen, except on the creeks, where a narrow strip of unpicturesque cottonwood only occasionally relieves the eye with its verdant foliage. The sky, too, is generally overcast, and storms sweep incessantly over the bare plains during all seasons of the year; boisterous winds prevailing at all times, carrying with them a chilling sleet or clouds of driving snow. It was therefore a great relief to look upon the long green waving grass, and the pretty groves on the streams; although our animals soon exhibited the consequences of the change of diet, between the rich and fattening buffalo-grass, and the rank, although more luxuriant, herbage they now fed upon.

On approaching Council Grove the scenery became very picturesque; the prairie lost its flat and monotonous character, and was broken into hills and valleys, with well-timbered knolls scattered here and there, intersected by clear and babbling streams, and covered with gaudy flowers, whose bright colors contrasted with the vivid green of the luxuriant grass. My eye, so long accustomed to the burnt and withered vegetation of the mountains, revelled in this refreshing scenery, and never tired of gazing upon the novel view. Council Grove is one of the most beautiful spots in the western country. A clear rapid stream runs through the valley, bordered by a broad belt of timber, which embraces all the varieties of forest-trees common to the west. Oak, beech, elm, maple, hickory, ash, walnut, &c., here presented themselves like old friends; squirrels jumped from branch to branch, the hum of the honeybee sounded sweet and homelike, the well-known chatter of the blue jay and catbird resounded through the grove; and in the evening the whip-poor-will serenaded us with its familiar tongue, and the drumming of the ruffed grouse boomed through the grove. The delight of the teamsters on first hearing these well-known sounds knew no bounds whatever. They danced, and sang, and hurraed, as, one after the other, some familiar note caught their ear. Poor fellows! they had been suffering a severe time of it, and many hardships and privations, and doubtless snuffed in the air the johnny-cakes and hominy of their Missouri homes.

"Wagh!" exclaimed one raw-boned young giant, as a bee flew past; "this feels like the old 'ooman, and mush and molasses at that! If it don't, I'll be dog-gone!"

"Hurroo for old Missouri!" roared another; "h'yar's a hoss as will knock the hind sights off the corn-doin's. Darn my old heart if thar arn't a reg'lar-built hickory -- makes my eyes sweat to look at it! This child will have no more 'mountains;' hurroo for old Missouri! Wagh!"

A trader amongst the Caw Indians had erected himself a log house at the grove, which appeared

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

to us a magnificent palace. Himself, his cows and horses, looked so fat and sleek, that we really thought them unnaturally so; and so long had I been used to see the rawboned animals of Mexico and the mountains, that I gravely asked him what he gave them, and why he made them so unwieldy. When he told me that his stock were all very poor, and nothing to what they were when they left the States' a month before, I thought the man was taking a "rise" out of me; and when I showed him my travel-worn animals, and bragged of their, to me, plump condition, he told me that where he came from it would be thought cruel to work such starved-looking beasts. There was one lodge of Caw Indians at the grove, the big village being out on the prairie, hunting buffalo. On the opposite side of the stream was a party of Americans from Louisiana, who had been out for the purpose of catching calves; and round their camp some thirty were feeding, all they had been able to keep alive out of upwards of a hundred.

From Council Grove to Caw, or Kansas, River, the country increases in beauty, and presents many most admirable spots for a settlement; but as it is guaranteed by treaty to the Caw and Osage Indians, no white man is allowed by the United States government to settle on their lands.

The night before reaching Caw River we encamped on a bare prairie, through which ran a small creek, fringed with timber. At sundown the wind, which had blown smartly the whole day, suddenly fell, and one of those unnatural calms succeeded, which so surely herald a storm in these regions. The sky became overcast with heavy inky clouds, and an intolerably sultry and oppressive heat pervaded the atmosphere. Myriads of fire-flies darted about, and legions of bugs and beetles, and invading hosts of sand-flies and mosquitos droned and hummed in the air, swooping like charging Cossacks on my unfortunate body. Beetles and bugs of easy squeezability, brobdignag proportions, and intolerable odor, darted into my mouth as I gasped for breath; while sand-flies with their atomic stings probed my nose and ears, and mosquitoes thrust their poisoned lances into every part of my body.

Hoping for the coming storm, I lay without covering, exposed to all their attacks; but the agony of this merciless persecution was nothing to the thrill of horror which pervaded my very bones when a cold clammy rattlesnake crawled over my naked ankles; a flash of lightning at the moment revealing to me the reptile, as with raised head it dragged its scaly belly across my skin, during which time, to me an age, I feared to draw breath lest the snake should strike me. Presently the storm broke upon us; a hurricane of wind squalled over the prairie, a flash of vivid lightning, followed by a clap of deafening thunder, and then down came the rain in torrents. I actually revelled in the shower-bath; for away on the instant were washed bugs and beetles; mosquitos were drowned in millions; and the rattlesnakes I knew would now retire to their holes, and leave me in peace and quiet for the remainder of the night.

We now passed through a fine country, partially cultivated by the Caw Indians, whose log shanties were seen scattered amongst the timbered knolls. Caw River itself is the headquarters of the nation, and we halted that night in the village, where, in the house of a white farmer, I ate the first civilized meal I had tasted for many months, and enjoyed the unusual luxury of eating at a table with knife and fork; moreover sitting on a chair, which however I would gladly have dispensed with, for I had so long been accustomed to sit Indian fashion on the ground that a chair was at first both unpleasant and awkward. The meal consisted of hot cakes and honey, delicious butter, and lettuce and radishes. My animals fared well too, on Indian corn, and oats in the straw; and the whole expense, eleven horses and mules having been fed the better part of a day and one night,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

amounted to one dollar and a half, or six shillings sterling.

A troop of dragoons from St. Louis to Fort Leavenworth met us on the road on their way to the latter station, from whence they were about to escort a train of wagons, containing specie, to Santa Fé. They were superbly mounted: the horses, uniting plenty of blood with bone, so great a desideratum for cavalry, were about fifteen hands high, and in excellent condition. The dragoons themselves were all recruits, and soldierlike neither in dress or appearance.

CHAPTER XV

AT THE END OF THE TRAIL

WE passed the Kansas or Caw River by a ferry worked by Indians, and, striking into a most picturesque country of hill and dale, well timbered and watered, entered the valley of the great Missouri. A short distance from the river, on the left of the trail, is a tabular bluff of most extraordinary formation, being the exact and accurately outlined figure of a large fortification, with escarpments, counterscarps, glacis, and all details, perfectly delineated.

A little farther on we came in sight of the garrison of Fort Leavenworth, the most western military station of the United States, and situated on the right bank of the Missouri in the Indian territory. The fort is built on an eminence overhanging the river, but, although called a fort, has no pretensions to be a military work, the only defence to the garrison being four wooden block-houses, loopholed for musketry, placed at each corner of the square of buildings. The barracks, stables, and officers' quarters surrounded this square, which is planted with trees and covered with luxuriant grass. The accommodation for the men and officers is excellent; the houses of the latter being large and commodious, and quite unlike the dirty pigsties which are thought good enough for the accommodation of British officers. The soldiers' barrack-rooms are large and airy, but no attention appears to be paid to cleanliness, and the floors, walls, and windows were dirty in the extreme. The beds are all double, or rather the bedsteads, for the bedding is separate, but in close contact. What struck me more than anything was the admirable condition of the horses, and their serviceable appearance: I did not see a single troop-horse in the squadron which would not have sold in England for eighty guineas; the price paid for them here, that is, the government contract price, being from fifty to eighty dollars, or from ten to sixteen pounds.

The garrison constitutes the whole population of the place. With the exception of the sutler's store for the use of the soldiers, there are neither shops, taverns, nor private buildings of any description; and I should have fared but badly if it had not been for the hospitality of Captain Enos, of the quartermaster-general's department, who most kindly assigned to me a room in his own quarters in the garrison, and made me a member of his mess.

The officers of the dragoons, who may be said to be buried for life in this wilderness, are mostly married, and their families constitute the only society the place affords. I remember to have been not a little struck at the first sight of many very pretty well-dressed ladies, who, after my long sojourn amongst the dusky squaws, appeared to me like the hours of paradise; and I have no doubt that I myself came in for a share of staring, for I was dressed in complete mountain costume, with my mahogany-colored face shaded by a crimson turban a la Indien, and in all the pride of fringed deerskin and porcupine-quills; and I was paid the compliment of being more than once mistaken for an Indian chief; and on one occasion I was appealed to by two of the dragoons to decide a bet as to whether I was a white man or a redskin. One day I was passing through the dragoons' stables when the men were cleaning their horses, and my appearance created no little difference of opin-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ion amongst the troopers as to what tribe of Indians I belonged to.

“That’s a Pottowatomie,” said one, “by his red turban.”

“How long have you been in the west,” cried another, “not to know a Kickapoo when you see him?”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed a third; “that’s a white trapper from the mountains. A regular mountain-boy that, I’ll bet a dollar!”

One smart-looking dragoon, however, looked into my face, and, turning round to his comrades, said, “Well, boys, I’ll just bet you a dollar all round that that Injun’s no other than a British officer. Wagh! And what’s more, I can tell you his name.” - And, sure enough, my acquaintance proved to be one of the many deserters from the British army belonging to the dragoons, and one who had known me when in the service myself.

After a few day’s stay at Fort Leavenworth, I made preparations for my departure to St. Louis, getting rid of my mountain-traps, and, what caused me no little sorrow, parting with my faithful animals, who had been my companions in a long and wearisome journey of more than three thousand miles, during the greater part of which they had been almost my only friends and companions. I had, however, the satisfaction of knowing that whilst with me they had never experienced a blow or an angry word from me, and had always fared of the very best - when procurable; and many a mile I had trudged on foot to save them the labor of carrying me. For Panchito I found a kind master, exacting, in return for the present, a promise that he should not be worked for the next three months; and, before leaving, I had the satisfaction of knowing that, in company with three old acquaintances who had pastured with him in the mountains, he was enjoying himself in veritable “clover,” and corn unlimited, where, I doubt not, he soon regained his quondam beauty and condition.

The disposal of the mules gave me greater anxiety, as there was such a demand for these animals at the moment to send with the government trains to New Mexico, that I knew to give them away would only be to put their value in the pocket of a stranger, and the animals themselves into the first wagon which crossed the plains. I therefore sold them to the commissary at the fort, and paid them daily visits in the government stables, where they revelled in the good things of this life, and had, moreover, a kind-hearted master in the shape of the Missourian teamster who had the charge of them, and who, on my giving him a history of their adventures, and a good and true account of their dispositions and qualities, promised to take every care of the poor beasts; and, indeed, was quite proud of having under his charge such a travelled team. The parting between Panchito and the mules was heartrending, and for two or three days they all refused to eat and be comforted; but at the end of that time their violent grief softened down into a chastened melancholy, which gradually merged into a steady appetite for the “corn-doin’s” of the liberal master of the mules; and before leaving I felt assured, from their sleek and well-filled appearance, that they were quite able to start on another expedition across the plains.

A steamboat touching at the fort, bound for the Mississippi and St. Louis, I availed myself of the opportunity, and secured myself a berth for the latter city. After running upon sandbars every half-hour, about thirty miles below Independence we at last stuck hard and fast, and, spite of the panting efforts of the engine, there we remained during the night, and until noon the next day. A steamboat then made its appearance, bound, like ourselves, down the river, and, coming up alongside, the two captains held a consultation, which ended in our’s recommending his passen-

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

gers to "make tracks" into the other boat, as he did not expect to get off; which interchange being effected, and our fares paid to the other boat, a hawser was attached to the one aground, and she was readily hauled off—we, the passengers, having been done pretty considerably brown in the transaction. However, such rascalities as these, on the western waters, are considered no more than "smart," and are taken quite as a matter of course by the free and enlightened citizens of the model republic.

I must say that since a former visit to the States, made three years ago, I perceived a decided improvement, thanks to the Trollope and Boz castigations, in the manners and conduct of steam-boat travellers, and in the accommodations of the boats themselves. With the exception of the expectorating nuisance, which still flourishes in all its disgusting "monstrosity," a stranger's sense of decency and decorum is not more shocked than it would be in travelling down the Thames in a Gravesend or Herne Bay steamer. There is even quite an arbitrary censorship established on the subject of dress and dirty linen, which is, since it is passively submitted to by the citizens, an unmistakable sign of the times. As a proof Of this, one evening, as I sat outside the cabin, reading, a young man, slightly "corned," or overtaken in his drink, accosted me abruptly - "Stranger, you haven't ary clean shirt to part with, have you? The darned [hiccup] capen says I must go ashore bekase my 'tarnal shirt ain't clean."

And this I found to be the fact, for the man was actually ejected from the saloon at dinnertime, on his attempting to take his seat at the table in a shirt which bore the stains of julep and cocktail. The miserable scenery of the muddy Missouri has been too often described to require any additional remarks. The steamboat touched occasionally at a wood-pile, to take in fuel; and sallow, aguish faces peered from the log shanties as we passed. We had the usual amount of groundings on sand-bars, and thumping against snags and sawyers; passed the muddy line of demarcation between the waters of the Missouri and the "Father of Streams," and, in due course, on the fourth day ran alongside the outer edge of three tiers of huge steamboats which lined the wharf at St. Louis.

We had but one exciting episode during the voyage, in the shape of a combat between one of the "hands" of the boat (a diabolical-looking Mexican) and the mate. The latter, at a wooding station, thinking that the man was not sufficiently "spry," administered a palthogue, which not meeting the approbation of the Mejicano, that worthy immediately drew his knife and challenged the aggressor. The mate, seizing a log from the pile, advanced towards him, and the Mexican, likewise, dropping his knife, took up a similar weapon, and rushed to the attack. After a return of blows they came to close quarters, hugged, and fell, the Yankee uppermost, whose every energy was now directed to gouge out the eye of his prostrate foe, while he on his part, seizing the eye-scooper by his long hair, tugged, with might and main, to pull him to the ground. With a commendable spirit of fair play, the other "hands" danced round the combatants, administering well-directed kicks on the unfortunate Mexican's head and body, in all the excitement of unrestrainable valor. The captain, however, interfered, and secured a fair field for the gallant pair; but at length, tired of the bungling attempts of his mate to screw his antagonist's eye out of its socket, pulled him off, and, giving the Mexican a friendly kick in the ribs, desired him to get up. That worthy rose undismayed, and, ramming the end of his thumb into his eye, to drive that organ into its proper place, exclaimed, "Que carajo es este, qui no sabe pelear!-what a cur is this, who does not know how to fight!" and, shaking himself, sat upon a log, and proceeded coolly to make himself a shuck-cigar.

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

A negro came up to me at Fort Leavenworth, and asked me to allow him to accompany me down to St. Louis. On my saying that I did not require a servant for so short a distance, he told me that, although himself a free negro, yet no black was allowed to travel without a master, and that if he attempted it he would, in all probability, be seized and imprisoned as a runaway slave.

This reminded me that I was in that transcendently free country, ever boasting of its liberty and equality, which possesses, in a population of some eighteen millions, upwards of three millions of fellow-men in most abject yet lawful slavery;--a foul blot upon humanity, which has every appearance of being perpetuated until the evil grows to such a height as will end in curing itself.

This subject, which necessarily forces itself upon the mind of all travellers in the Slave States, is one which, having received the attention of the most enlightened philanthropists of both hemispheres, it would scarcely become me to dilate upon, or even notice, did I not feel that every one, however humble, should raise his voice in condemnation of that disgraceful and inhuman INSTITUTION, which, in a civilized country and an enlightened age, condemns to a social death, and degrades (by law) to the level of the beasts of the field, our fellow-men; subjecting them to a moral as well as physical slavery, and removing from them every possible advantage of intellectual culture or education, by which they might attain any position a grade higher than they now possess--the human beasts of burden of inhuman masters.

It is adduced as an argument against the abolition of slavery--of course by those whose interest it is to uphold the evil -- that the emancipation of the slaves would, in the present state of feeling against the negro race, be productive of effects which would convulse the whole social state of the country, or, in other words, that the whites would never rest until the whole race was exterminated in the United States. That there is a physical impossibility to any amalgamation in the southern States is as certain as that, year by year, the difficulty of removing the evil is surely increasing; and its very magnitude and the moral cowardice of the American people prevent this evil being grappled with at once, and some steps taken to oppose its perpetuation.

The three arguments brought forward by those who endeavor to palliate or uphold slavery, in feeble sophistry, plainly exhibit the weakness of the cause. First, they say, We admit the evil, but the cure will be worse than the disease. We have inherited it: the blame rests not upon us, but our fathers. If the negroes are emancipated, what is to become of them? They cannot, and shall not, remain in our community, on an equality with us and our children, and enjoying the privileges of white men. This cannot be. Moreover, the burden of supporting them will fall upon us, for they will not work unless compelled.

Secondly: We deny the sinfulness of the institution. Negroes are not men, but were sent into the world to be slaves to the white man. To support this they are ready with quotations from Scripture, and I blush to say that I have heard well-educated and liberal-minded men take no other ground than this to support the cause.

And, thirdly, they say no legislation can reach the evil. Law cannot deprive a citizen of his property: if so, away with liberty at once, if one act confirms rights and another removes them.

The abolitionist of the North raves at the slave-owner of the South; but let a foreigner converse with the former, and he will at once turn round and take the part of the slaveowner. It is like a third person interfering in quarrels of man and wife. "No, no, my good sir," they say, "let us settle this question amongst ourselves; this is a family affair." No one could deny the justice of this, if they really made a bona fide attempt to grapple the evil; but I must confess that abolitionism in

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

the United States appears to me to be anything but genuine and honest, and that, if left to themselves, the question is very, very far from any chance of settlement, unless, as I believe will be the result, the slaves themselves cut the Gordian knot.

The great difficulty to be combated in America, in freeing the country from the curse of slavery, is prejudice. The negro is not recognized (startling as this assertion may be) as a fellow-creature-I mean by the mass of the people. This anomaly, in a country where the very first principle of their social organism is the axiom, the incontrovertible truth, that "all men are born equal," is the more palpable, since the popular and universal outcry is, and ever has been, the same sentiment which animated the Fathers of the Revolution, when they offered to the world, as a palliation for the crime of rebellion, the same watchword which is now so prodigally used by every American tongue, and so basely and universally prostituted. "All men are born equal. Liberty, therefore, and equal rights to all"-except to those whose skins are black!

I have heard clergymen of the American church affirm their belief that the negro was placed on earth by God to be the white man's slave. I have heard many educated, and in every other respect moral and conscientious, Americans assert that negroes were not made in God's image, but were created as a link between man and the beast, to minister to the former's wants, and to support him by the toil of their hands and the sweat of their brows.

And when I add that by law it is felony to teach a negro to read or write, what argument can be offered to combat such unnatural prejudices? I believe that slaves are generally well treated in the United States, although many instances could be adduced where the very reverse is the fact, particularly on the western frontier. But this good treatment is on the same grounds that we take care of our horses and cows and pigs, because it is the owner's interest to do so; and the well-being -- that is, the physical healthiness--of slaves is attended to in the same degree that we feed and clothe our horses, in order that they may be in condition to work for us, and thereby bring in a return for the care we have bestowed upon them.

That this question will one day shake to its very centre, if it does not completely annihilate, the union of the American States, is as palpable as the result is certain. This belief is very generally entertained by both parties, and yet in spite of it the evil is allowed to increase, although its removal or cure thereby becomes hourly more difficult.

Hundreds of plans have been suggested for the abolition of slavery, but all have been found to be impracticable, if not impossible to be carried out. Perhaps the most feasible and practicable was that proposed by the late Mr. King many years ago, and which at the time met with the fate of every other suggestion on the same subject. Mr. King, as sound and practical a statesman as the country ever produced, proposed that a certain yearly sum should be laid aside out of the revenue derived from the sale of the public lands, to be devoted to the emancipation of slaves by the purchase their freedom. This process, however slow, at the same time that it would effect the gradual abolition of slavery, and at all events effectually prevent its increase and perpetuation, and offer a final, although distant termination to the evil, was at the same time less calculated to alarm the interested minds of the slave-owners; since, as the emancipation would be gradual, and the compensation proportional to the loss sustained, their interests were not so materially affected as they would be by the entire removal, at one swoop, of their vested rights of property and possession. As it is, however, there is no evidence of any positive action being taken by the legislature to effect the removal of this disgraceful stain on the national character. So rabid and intolerant is the tem-

---

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

per of the southern people when this question is mooted, and so fraught with danger to the union is the agitation even of the subject, that all discussion is shunned and avoided, and the evil hour protracted and put off, which will, as surely as that the sun shines in the heavens, one day plunge the country into a convulsion dreadful to think of or anticipate. Meanwhile the plague-spot remains: the foul cancer is eating its way; and only by its extirpation can the body it disfigures regain its healthfulness and beauty, and take its place in the scale of humanity and civilization, from which the loathsome pestilence has out-paled it.

As I have said, I notice the subject merely to add my humble voice to the cry for humanity's sake, which should never cease to stun the ears of the unholy men who, in spite of every law both human and divine, use their talents, and the intellect which God has given them, to uphold and perpetuate the curse of slavery.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MEXICAN WAR

PROCEEDING, on my arrival at St. Louis, to an excellent hotel called the Planter's House I that night, for the first time in nearly ten months, slept upon a bed, much to the astonishment of my limbs and body, which long accustomed to no softer mattress than mother earth, tossed about all night, unable to appreciate the unusual luxury. I found chairs a positive nuisance, and in my own room caught myself in the act more than once of squatting cross-legged on the floor. The greatest treat to me was bread: I thought it the best part of the profuse dinners of the Planter's House, and consumed prodigious quantities of the staff of life, to the astonishment of the waiters. Forks too I thought were most useless superfluities, and more than once I found myself on the point of grabbing a tempting leg of mutton mountain fashion, and butchering off a hunter's mouthful. But what words can describe the agony of squeezing my feet into boots, after nearly a year of moccasins, or discarding my turban for a great boardy hat, which seemed to crush my temples? The miseries of getting into a horrible coat-of-braces, waistcoats, gloves, and all such implements of torture-were too acute to be described and therefore I draw a veil over them.

Apart from the bustle attendant upon loading and unloading thousands and thousands of barrels of grain upon the wharf, St. Louis appeared to me one of the dullest and most commonplace cities of the Union. A great proportion of the population consists of French and Germans; the former congregating in a suburb called Vide Poche, where they retain a few of the characteristics of their lighthearted nation, and the sounds of the fiddle and tambourine may be nightly heard, making the old fashioned, tumble-down tenements shake with the tread of the merry dancers. The Dutch and Germans have their beer-gardens, where they imbibe huge quantities of malt and honeydew tobacco; and the Irish their shebeen-shops, where Monongahela is quaffed in lieu of the "rale crather."

The town was full of returned volunteers from the wars. The twelve-month's campaign they had been engaged in, and the brilliant victories achieved by them, which, according to the American newspapers, are unparalleled in the annals of the world's history, have converted these rowdy and vermin-covered veterans into perfect heroes; and every batch on arriving is feasted by the public, addresses are offered to them, the officers presented with swords and snuff-boxes, and honors of all kinds lavished upon them in every direction.

The intense glorifications at St. Louis, and in every other part of the United States, on the recent successes of their troops over the miserable Mexicans, which were so absurd as to cause a broad

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

grin on the face of an unexcited neutral, make me recur to the subject of this war, which hitherto I have avoided mentioning in the body of this little narrative.

It is scarcely necessary to trace the causes of the war at present raging between the two republics of North America. The fable of the wolf and lamb drinking at the same stream may be quoted, to explain to the world the reason why the soi-disant champion of liberty has quarrelled with its sister state "for muddying the water" which the model republic uses to quench its thirst.

A lesson has been read to the citizens of the United States which ought to open their eyes to the palpable dishonesty of their government, their unblushing selfishness, and total disregard to the interests of the country, when those of themselves or of their party are at stake; and although in the present instance President Polk has overreached himself, and raised a storm which he would be only too glad to lay at any cost, yet, in the whole history of the Mexican war, the violence of party and political feeling is evident, from the 9th of May, 1846, when the first shot was fired at Palo Alto, to the date of the last half-score despatches which inform the world that General Scott "still remained at Puebla," waiting reinforcements.

It is enough to observe that the immediate cause of hostilities was the unjustifiable invasion of Mexican territory by the army of the United States to take possession of a tract of country of which the boundary-line had been disputed between the Mexican government and one of its revolted states, which had been annexed to the American Union before its recognition as an independent state by the country from which it had seceded.

There can be no question but that the United States had deep cause of complaint against Mexico, in the total disregard evinced by the latter to the spirit of international treaties, and the injuries inflicted upon the persons and property of American citizens; all redress of which grievances was either totally refused, or procrastinated until the parties gave up every hope of ultimate compensation. The acquisition of Texas, however, was in any case a balancing injustice, and should have wiped out all old grievances, at least those of a pecuniary nature; while, if a proper spirit of conciliation had been evinced on the part of the Americans, at the period when the question of annexation was being mooted, all danger of a rupture would have been removed; and Mexico would have yielded her claims to Texas with a better grace, if taken as a receipt in full for all obligations, than in suffering a large portion of her territory to be torn from her, against all laws held sacred by civilized nations.

It is certain that such consequences, as have resulted from the advance of the American troops from the Nueces to the Rio Grande, were never anticipated by the President of the United States, whose policy in bringing on a quasi crisis of the state affairs on the Mexican frontier, and provoking the Mexicans to overt acts which could at any moment be converted into a casus belli, was not for the sake of territorial aggrandizement, but for a purpose which, it is known to those in the secret of his policy, had an object more remote, and infinitely more important, than a rupture with the Mexican government.

At that time the position taken up by Mr. Polk and his party with regard to the Oregon question involved, as a natural consequence, the probability of a war with England; nay, more, if such position were persisted in, the certainty of a war with that power. That a majority of the people, and all the right-thinking and influential classes, were opposed to such measures as would hazard or produce such a rupture, was so palpable that the government was conscious that any proposal for making preparations for a war with England (which they knew a perseverance in their policy

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

would assuredly bring about) would not be favorably received, or even tolerated, and therefore they looked about them for a means of attaining their object, by blinding the eyes of the people as to their ulterior designs. Mexico was made the scapegoat. A war with that powerless state would be popular, since its duration, it was supposed, could be but for a very brief period, the government having no resources whatever, and being sadly deficient in any of the sinews of war; and, moreover, such a war would be likely to flatter the national pride and conceit of the American people.

TO bring, therefore, affairs to such a critical position on the Texan frontier, that a state of war could at any moment be assumed, and its imminence be actually very apparent, was the stroke of policy by which Polk and his party hoped to blind the people, and, profiting by it, make such preparations as would enable them to carry out their plans in connection with the Oregon question and the probable war with England. They thought that, even if hostilities broke out with Mexico, that power would at once succumb; and, in the meantime, that the war-fever in the United States would spread, and that the people would sanction an increase in the army and navy in such a case, which could at any time be made available for another purpose.

The first shot fired on the Rio Grande changed their views. Until then the Americans were in utter ignorance of the state of Mexico and the Mexicans. They never anticipated such resistance as they have met with; but, judging from the moral and physical inferiority of the people, at once concluded that all they had to do was *venire, videre, et vincere*. Children in the art of war, they imagined that personal bravery and physical strength were the only requisites for a military people; and that, possessing these qualities in as great a degree as the Mexicans were deficient in them, the operations in Mexico would amount to nothing more arduous than a promenade through the table-lands of Anahuac -the "Halls of Montezuma," in which it was the popular belief that they were destined "to revel," being the goal of their military paseo of six weeks.

As soon, however, as the list of killed and wounded on the fields of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma reached Washington, President Polk saw the error into which he had fallen. It became evident to him that all the resources of the country would be required to carry on the war with one of the most feeble powers in the world, and that the sooner he pulled his foot out of the hot water, which at the temperature of 54deg 40, was likely to scald him, the better for him and his country; for it naturally occurred to him that, if such a scrimmage as the Mexican war gave him considerable trouble, an affair with such a respectable enemy as England was likely to prove anything but an agreeable pastime: and hence the very speedy acceptance of Lord Aberdeen's ultimatum, and the sudden settlement of the Oregon question.

As affairs now stand, and unless the United States very materially modify the conditions under which they signify their willingness to withdraw from the Mexican territory, and notwithstanding the avowedly pacific proposals of Commissioner Trist, it is difficult to assign any probable period for the termination of the war; and it is certain that, as the Mexican armies, one after the other, dissolve before the American attacks, the farther the latter penetrate into the country, the greater are the difficulties which they will have to surmount. Harassed by hordes of guerrillas, with a long line of country in their rear admirably adapted by nature for the system of warfare pursued by irregular troops, and through which all supplies have to pass, to defeat an army is but to increase the conqueror's difficulties, since, while before they had one tangible enemy in their front, now they are surrounded by swarms of hornets, who never run the risk of defeat by standing the brunt

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

of a regular engagement.

Neither have the invariable and signal defeats the Mexicans have met with the same moral effect which such reverses have amongst more civilized nations. They take them as matters of course, and are not dispirited; while, on the other hand, the slightest success instils new life and energy into their hearts. Until the whole country is occupied by American troops, the war, unless immediately concluded, will be carried on, and will eventually become one of conquest. But, in the meantime, the expenses it entails upon the treasury of the United States are enormous, and hourly increasing; and it would seem that the amount of compensation for the expenses of the war, which, in money or territory, is a sine qua non in the peace proposals of the American commissioner, is consequently increasing *pari passu*, and therefore the settlement of the question becomes more difficult and uncertain.

It is extremely doubtful if the Mexican people will consent to a surrender of nearly one-third of their territory, which will most probably be required as compensation for the expenses of the war, or, what is the same thing, be demanded as a security for the payment of a certain sum of money; and whether they will not rather prefer war to the knife to the alternative of losing their nationality. In reality, this war does them little harm. They were in such a state of misery and anarchy before it commenced, and have been for so long a period tyrannized over by the republican despots who have respectively held the reins of power, that no change could possibly make their condition more degraded; and the state of confusion and misrule attendant upon the war in such a country as Mexico is so congenial to the people, that, from my own observations, I believe them to be adverse, even on this account alone, to the termination of hostilities. Moreover, the feeling against the Americans, which was at first mere apathy, has increased to the bitterest hatred and animosity, and is sufficient in itself to secure the popular support to the energetic prosecution of the war: and the consciousness of the justice of their cause, and the injustice of the unprovoked aggression on the part of the United States, ought, and I have no doubt will, keep alive one spark of that honor which prompts a people to resent and oppose a wilful and wanton attack on their liberties and nationality.

CHAPTER XVII

MEN AND MANNERS

AFTER a stay of a few days in St. Louis, in order to rig myself out in civilized attire, I went on board a steamboat bound for the Illinois River and Peoria, intending to cross the prairies of Illinois to Chicago, and thence down the Canadian lakes to New York.

This river is more picturesque than the Missouri or Mississippi; the banks higher, the water clearer, and the channel dotted with pretty islands between which the steamboat passes, almost brushing the timber on the banks. At Peoria we were transferred to stagecoaches, and, suffering a martyrdom of shaking and bad living on the road-if road it can be called-we arrived at last at Chicago--the city, that is to be, of the Lakes, and which may be termed the City of Magnificent Intentions.

Chigago, or Chicago, is situated at the southwestern corner of Lake Michigan, and on the lake-shore. In spite of the pasteboard appearance of its houses, churches, and public edifices, all of wood, it is a remarkably pretty town, its streets wide and well laid out; and it will, doubtless, after it has been burned down once or twice, and rebuilt of stone or brick, be one of the finest of the western cities. It has several excellent hotels, some of which are of gigantic dimensions: a theatre,

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

court-house, and an artificial harbor, constructed at the expense of the city.

An American stage-coach has often been described: it is a huge lumbering affair with leathern springs, and it creaks and groans over the corduroy roads and unmacadamized causeways, thumping, bumping, and dislocating the limbs of its "insides," whose smothered shrieks and exclamations of despair often cause the woodsman to pause from his work, and, leaning upon his axe, listen with astonishment to the din which proceeds from its convulsed interior.

The coach contains three seats, each of which accommodates three passengers; those on the centre, and the three with their backs to the horses, face each other, and, from the confined space, the arrangement and mutual convenience of leg-placing not infrequently leads to fierce outbreaks of ire. A fat old lady got into the coach at Peoria, whose uncompromising rotundity and snappishness of temper, combined with a most unaccommodating pair of "limbs" (legs, on this side the Atlantic), rendered her the most undesirable vis-a-vis a traveler could possibly be inflicted with. The victim happened to be an exceedingly mild Hoosier, whose modest bashfulness prevented his remonstrating against the injustice of the proceeding: but, after unmitigated sufferings for fifty miles, borne with Christian resignation, he disappeared from the scene of his martyrdom, and his place was occupied by a hard-featured New Yorker, the captain of one of the Lake steamboats, whose sternness of feature and apparent determination of purpose assured us that he had been warned of the purgatory in store for him, and was resolved to grapple gallantly with the difficulty. As he took his seat, and bent his head to the right and left over his knees, looking, as it were, for some place to bestow his legs, an ominous silence prevailed in the rocking coach, and we all anxiously awaited the result of the attack which this bold man was evidently meditating; the speculations being as to whether the assault would be made in the shape of a mild rebuke, or a softly-spoken remonstrance and request for a change of posture.

Our skipper evidently imagined that his pantomimic indications of discomfort would have had a slight effect, but when the contrary was the result, and the uncompromising knees wedged him into the corner, his face turned purple with emotion, and, bending towards his tormentor, he solemnly exclaimed—"I guess, marm, it's got to be done anyhow sooner or later, so you and I, marm, must jist 'dovetail.' "

The lady bounded from her seat, aghast at the mysterious proposal.

"Must what, sir-r?"

"Dovetail, marm; you and I have got to dovetail, and no two ways about it."

"Dovetail me, you inhuman savage" she roared out, shaking her fist in the face of the skipper, who shrank, alarmed, into his corner; "dovetail a lone woman in a Christian country! if thar's law on airth, sir-r, and in the state of Illinoy, I'll have you hanged!

"Driver, stop the coach," she shrieked from the window; "I go no farther with this man. I believe I ar' a free 'ooman, and my name is Peck. Young man," she pathetically exclaimed to the driver, who sought to explain matters, whilst we, inside, were literally convulsed with laughter, "my husband shall larn of this, as shiure as shiooting. Open the door, I say, and let me out!" And, spite of all our expostulations, she actually left the coach and sought shelter in a house at the road-side; and we heard her, as we drove off, muttering "Dovetail me, will they? the Injine savages if ther's law in Illinoy, I'll have him hanged!"

It is unnecessary to say that "dovetailing" is the process of mutually accommodating each other's legs followed by stage-coach and omnibus passengers; but the term—certainly the first time I had

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ever heard it used in that sense--shocked and alarmed the modesty of the worthy Mrs. Peck of Illinois.

A canal is in course of construction in the State of Illinois, to connect the waters of the lakes with the Mississippi-a gigantic undertaking, but one which will be of the greatest benefit to the western country. When this canal is completed, the waters of Lake Superior will, therefore, communicate with the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Mississippi, as they do already with the North Atlantic by means of the Welland and Rideau canals, which pass through Canada; and, even already, vessels have been spoken in mid-ocean, built on Lakes Michigan and Huron, cleared from Chicago, and bound for England, passing an inland navigation of upwards of three thousand miles.

Leaving Chicago, I crossed the lake to Kalamazoo, whence I "railed" across the Michigan peninsula to Detroit, the chief city of the State of Michigan. This railroad was a very primitive affair, with but one line of rails, which, in very many places, were entirely divested of the iron, and in these spots the passengers were requested to "assist" the locomotive over the "bad places." However, after killing several hogs and cows, we arrived safe enough at Detroit.

I remarked that, since a former visit to the United States, three or four years ago, there had been a very palpable increase in the feeling of jealousy and dislike to England and everything British which has very generally characterized the free and enlightened citizens from the affair of Lexington to the present time. I must, however, do them the justice to declare, that in no one instance have I ever perceived that feeling evinced towards an individual; but it exists most assuredly as a national feeling, and is exhibited in the bitterest and most uncompromising spirit in all their journals, and the sayings and doings of their public men. Thus, in travelling through the United States, an Englishman is perpetually hearing his country and its institutions abused. Everything he admires is at once seized upon, to be tortured into a comparison with the same thing in England. But what is more amusing is, that it is a very general belief that, from the Queen down to the gruel-stirrer in Marylebone workhouse, everybody's time is occupied with the affairs of the United States, and all their pleasures turned to gall and wormwood by the bitter envy they feel at her well-being and prosperity.

In passing down the lakes, I took a passage from Detroit to Buffalo in a Canadian steamer, which, by-the-by, was the most tastefully decorated and best-managed boat on the lake. As we passed through the Detroit River, which connects Lakes Erie and St. Clair, we had a fine view of the Canadian as well as the American shore; and the contrast between the flourishing settlements and busy cities of the latter, and the quaint, old-fashioned villages of the French Canadians, was certainly sufficiently striking. As the boat passed Malden, celebrated as being the scene of stirring events in the Indian wars, and the more recent one of 1812, I ascended, spite of the burning sun, to the upper deck, in order to obtain a view of the shore, which at this point, where the river enters the lake, is very picturesque and beautiful. I found a solitary passenger seated on the roof, which was red hot with the burning rays of the sun, squirting his tobacco-juice fast and furiously, and with his eyes bent on the shore,, and a facetious and self-satisfied grin on his lank, sallow countenance. His broad-brimmed brown beaver hat, with dishevelled nap, -suit of glossy black, including a shining black satin waistcoat, of course proclaimed him to be a citizen. Waving his hand towards the Canada shore, he asked me in a severe tone,

"What do you call this, sir? Is this the land of the Queen of England, sir?"

"Well, I guess it ain't nothin' else," answered, for me, the pilot of the boat. "But," he continued, "it

WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

by George Frederick Ruxton

---

ain't a going to be so much longer.

"Longer, sir!" quoth my severe interrogator; "too long by half has that unfortunate country been oppressed by British tyrants. Look thar, sir," waving his arm towards the opposite shore; "thar's a sight, sir, where a man can look up to G ---- A'mighty's heavens, and bless him for having made him a citizen of the United States!"

"A fine country," I observed; "there's no doubt of it."

"A fine country, sir! the first country in the world, sir; and feeds the starving English with what it can't consume itself, sir. The philanthropy of our country" (he took me for a citizen) "flies on the wings of the wind, sir, and bears to the hungry slaves of the Queen of England, corn, sir, and bread-doin's of every description. Yes, sir! and to show them, sir, that we can feed 'em with one hand and whip 'em with the other, we send it over in a ship of war, which once carried their flag, until it was lowered to the flag of freedom. I allude, sir" (turning to me), "to the frigate Macedonian, and the stars and stripes of our national banner."

This speech, delivered in the most pompous manner, and with exuberant gesture, was too much for my gravity, and I exploded in an immoderate fit of laughter.

"Laugh, sir," he resumed, "pray laugh. I perceive you are not a native, and your countrymen had ort to laugh without loss of time; for soon, sir, will their smile of triumph be turned to a howl of despair, when Liberty treads to the earth your aristocracy-your titled lords, and the star-spangled banner waves over Windsor Palace." Saying which, and squirting over the deck a shower of tobacco-spray, he turned magnificently away.

"A smart man that, stranger," said the pilot to me, giving the wheel a spoke to port -- "one of the smartest men in these parts." This I easily believed.

We had the misfortune to damage a part of the machinery just after entering Lake Erie, and were compelled to wait until another steamboat made her appearance, and towed us back to Detroit, where it took twenty-four hours to repair damages.

From Buffalo I travelled by railroad to Albany, on the Hudson, and, descending that magnificent river, reached New York early in July, in eight travelling days from St. Louis, a distance of - I am afraid to say how many thousand miles.

From New York the good ship New World carried me and a dozen fellow-passengers, spite of contrary winds, in thirty days to Liverpool, where I arrived, sin novedad, some time in the middle of August, 1847.

LIFE in THE FAR WEST  
by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

LIFE in THE FAR WEST  
by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN MEXICO," &c.  
WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.  
M.DCCC.XLIX.  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.  
JOHN HUGHES, PRINTER, EDINBURGH.

---

[Pg iii]

THE LATE

GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON.

THE London newspapers of October 1848 contained the mournful tidings of the death, at St Louis on the Mississippi, and at the early age of twenty-eight, of Lieutenant George Frederick Ruxton, formerly of her Majesty's 89th regiment, the author of the following sketches.

Many men, even in the most enterprising periods of our history, have been made the subjects of elaborate biography, with far less title to the honour than this lamented young officer. Time was not granted him to embody in a permanent shape a tithe of his personal experiences and strange adventures in three quarters of the globe. Considering, indeed, the amount of physical labour he underwent, and the extent of the fields over which his wanderings spread, it is almost surprising he found leisure to write so much. At the early age [Pg iv] of seventeen, Mr Ruxton quitted Sandhurst, to learn the practical part of a soldier's profession in the civil wars of Spain. He obtained a commission in a squadron of lancers then attached to the division of General Diego Leon, and was actively engaged in several of the most important combats of the campaign. For his marked gallantry on these occasions, he received from Queen Isabell the cross of the first class of the order of St Fernando, an honour which has seldom been awarded to one so young. On his return from Spain he found himself gazetted to a commission in the 89th regiment; and it was whilst serving with that distinguished corps in Canada that he first became acquainted with the stirring scenes of Indian life, which he has since so graphically portrayed. His eager and enthusiastic spirit soon became wearied with the monotony of the barrack-room; and, yielding to that impulse which in him was irresistibly developed, he resigned his commission, and directed his steps towards the stupendous wilds, tenanted only by the red Indian, or by the solitary American trapper. Those familiar with Mr Ruxton's writings cannot fail to have remarked the singular delight with [Pg v] which he dwells upon the recollections of this portion of his career, and the longing which he carried with him, to the hour of his death, for a return to those scenes of primitive freedom. "Although liable to an accusation of barbarism," he writes, "I must confess that the very happiest moments of my life have been spent in the wilderness of the Far West; and I never recall, but with pleasure, the remembrance of my solitary camp in the Bayou Salade, with no friend near me more faithful than my rifle, and no companions more sociable than my good horse and mules, or the attendant cayute which nightly serenaded us. With a plentiful supply of dry pine-logs on the fire, and its cheerful blaze streaming far up into the sky, illuminating the valley far and near, and exhibiting the animals, with well-filled bellies, standing contentedly at rest over their picket-fire, I

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

would sit cross-legged, enjoying the genial warmth, and, pipe in mouth, watch the blue smoke as it curled upwards, building castles in its vapoury wreaths, and, in the fantastic shapes it assumed, peopling the solitude with figures of those far away. Scarcely, however, did I ever wish to change such hours of freedom for all the luxuries of civilised life; and, unnatural and [Pg vi]extraordinary as it may appear, yet such is the fascination of the life of the mountain hunter, that I believe not one instance could be adduced of even the most polished and civilised of men, who had once tasted the sweets of its attendant liberty, and freedom from every worldly care, not regretting the moment when he exchanged it for the monotonous life of the settlements, nor sighing and sighing again once more to partake of its pleasures and allurements.”

On his return to Europe from the Far West, Mr Ruxton, animated with a spirit as enterprising and fearless as that of Raleigh, planned a scheme for the exploration of Central Africa, which was thus characterised by the president of the Royal Geographical Society, in his anniversary address for 1845:—“To my great surprise, I recently conversed with an ardent and accomplished youth, Lieutenant Ruxton, late of the 89th regiment, who had formed the daring project of traversing Africa in the parallel of the southern tropic, and has actually started for this purpose. Preparing himself by previous excursions on foot, in North Africa and Algeria, he sailed from Liverpool early in December last, in the *Royalist*, for Ichaboe. From that spot he was to [Pg vii]repair to Walvish Bay, where we have already mercantile establishments. The intrepid traveller had received from the agents of these establishments such favourable accounts of the nations towards the interior, as also of the nature of the climate, that he has the most sanguine hopes of being able to penetrate to the central region, if not of traversing it to the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique. If this be accomplished, then indeed will Lieutenant Ruxton have acquired for himself a permanent name among British travellers, by making us acquainted with the nature of the axis of the great continent of which we possess the southern extremity.”

In pursuance of this hazardous scheme, Ruxton, with a single companion, landed on the coast of Africa, a little to the south of Ichaboe, and commenced his journey of exploration. But it seemed as if both nature and man had combined to baffle the execution of his design. The course of their travel lay along a desert of moving sand, where no water was to be found, and little herbage, save a coarse tufted grass, and twigs of the resinous myrrh. The immediate place of their destination was Angra Peguena, on the coast, described as a frequented station, but which in reality was deserted. One [Pg viii]ship only was in the offing when the travellers arrived, and, to their inexpressible mortification, they discovered that she was outward bound. No trace was visible of the river or streams laid down in the maps as falling into the sea at this point, and no resource was left to the travellers save that of retracing their steps—a labour for which their strength was hardly adequate. But for the opportune assistance of a body of natives, who encountered them at the very moment when they were sinking from fatigue and thirst, Ruxton and his companion would have been added to the long catalogue of those whose lives have been sacrificed in the attempt to explore the interior of that fatal country.

The jealousy of the traders, and of the missionaries settled on the African coast, who constantly withheld or perverted that information which was absolutely necessary for the successful prosecution of the journey, induced Ruxton to abandon the attempt for the present. He made, however, several interesting excursions towards the interior, and more especially in the country of the Bosjesmans.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

Finding his own resources inadequate for the accomplishment of his favourite project, Mr Ruxton, [Pg ix] on his return to England, made application for Government assistance. But though this demand was not altogether refused, it having been referred to the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, and favourably reported upon by that body, so many delays interposed that Ruxton, in disgust, resolved to withdraw from the scheme, and to abandon that field of African research which he had already contemplated from its borders. He next bent his steps to Mexico; and, fortunately, has presented to the world his reminiscences of that country, in one of the most fascinating volumes which, of late years, has issued from the press. It would, however, appear that the African scheme, the darling project of his life, had again recurred to him at a later period; for, in the course of the present spring, before setting out on that journey which was destined to be his last, the following expressions occur in one of his letters:—

“My movements are uncertain, for I am trying to get up a yacht voyage to Borneo and the Indian Archipelago; have volunteered to Government to explore Central Africa; and the Aborigines Protection Society wish me to go out to Canada to organise [Pg x] the Indian tribes; whilst, for my own part and inclination, I wish to go to all parts of the world at once.”

---

As regards the volume to which this notice serves as Preface, the editor does not hesitate to express very high opinion of its merits. Written by a man untrained to literature, and whose life, from boy-hood upwards, was passed in the field and on the road, in military adventure and travel, its style is yet often as remarkable for graphic terseness and vigour, as its substance every where is for great novelty and originality. The narrative of “Life in the Far West” was first offered for insertion in Blackwood’s Magazine in the spring of 1848, when the greater portion of the manuscript was sent, and the remainder shortly followed. During its publication in that periodical, the wildness of the adventures related excited suspicions in certain quarters as to their actual truth and fidelity. It may interest the reader to know that the scenes described are pictures from life, the results of the author’s personal experience. The following are extracts from letters addressed by him, in the course of last [Pg xi] a summer, to the conductors of the Magazine above named:—

“I have brought out a few more softening traits in the characters of the mountaineers—but not at the sacrifice of truth—for some of them have their good points; which, as they are rarely allowed to rise to the surface, must be laid hold of at once before they sink again. Killbuck—that ‘old hos’ par exemple, was really pretty much of a gentleman, as was La Bonté. Bill Williams, another ‘hard case,’ and Rube Herring, were ‘some’ too.

“The scene where La Bonté joins the Chase family is so far true, that he did make a sudden appearance; but, in reality, a day before the Indian attack. The Chases (and I wish I had not given the proper name [1]) did start for the Platte alone, and were stampeded upon the waters of the Platte.

“The Mexican fandango is true to the letter. [Pg xii] It does seem difficult to understand how they contrived to keep their knives out of the hump-ribs of the mountaineers; but how can you account for the fact, that, the other day, 4000 Mexicans, with 13 pieces of artillery, behind strong entrenchments and two lines of parapets, were routed by 900 raw Missourians; 300 killed, as many more wounded, all their artillery captured, as well as several hundred prisoners; and that not one American was killed in the affair? This is positive fact.

“I myself, with three trappers, cleared a fandango at Taos, armed only with bowie-knives—some

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

score Mexicans, at least, being in the room.

“With regard to the incidents of Indian attacks, starvation, cannibalism, &c., I have invented not one out of my own head. They are all matters of history in the mountains; but I have, no doubt, jumbled the dramatis personæ one with another, and may have committed anachronisms in the order of their occurrence.”

Again he wrote as follows:—

“I think it would be as well to correct a misapprehension as to the truth or fiction of the paper. It is no fiction. There is no incident in it which [Pg xiii]has not actually occurred, nor one character who is not well known in the Rocky Mountains, with the exception of two whose names are changed—the originals of these being, however, equally well known with the others.”

His last letter, written just before his departure from England, a few weeks previously to his death, will hardly be read by any one who ever knew the writer, without a tear of sympathy for the sad fate of this fine young man, dying miserably in a strange land, before he had well commenced the hazardous journey whose excitement and dangers he so joyously anticipated:—

“As you say, human nature can’t go on feeding on civilised fixings in this ‘big village;’ and this child has felt like going West for many a month, being half froze for buffler meat and mountain doins. My route takes me viâ New York, the Lakes, and St Louis, to Fort Leavenworth, or Independence on the Indian frontier. Thence packing my ‘possibles’ on a mule, and mounting a buffalo horse (Panchito, if he is alive), I strike the [Pg xiv]Santa Fé trail to the Arkansa, away up that river to the mountains, winter in the Bayou Salade, where Killbuck and La Bonté joined the Yutes, cross the mountains next spring to Great Salt Lake—and that’s far enough to look forward to—always supposing my hair is not lifted by Comanche or Pawnee on the scalping route of the Coon Creeks and Pawnee Fork.”

Poor fellow! he spoke lightly, in the buoyancy of youth and a confident spirit, of the fate he little thought to meet, but which too surely overtook him—not indeed by Indian blade, but by the no less deadly stroke of disease. Another motive, besides that love of rambling and adventure, which, once conceived and indulged, is so difficult to eradicate, impelled him across the Atlantic. He had for some time been out of health at intervals, and he thought the air of his beloved prairies would be efficacious to work a cure. In a letter to a friend, in the month of May last, he thus referred to the probable origin of the evil:—

“I have been confined to my room for many days, from the effects of an accident I met with in [Pg xv]the Rocky Mountains, having been spilt from the bare back of a mule, and falling on the sharp picket of an Indian lodge on the small of my back. I fear I injured my spine, for I have never felt altogether the thing since, and shortly after I saw you, the symptoms became rather ugly. However, I am now getting round again.”

His medical advisers shared his opinion that he had sustained internal injury from this ugly fall; and it is not improbable that it was the remote, but real cause of his dissolution. From whatsoever this ensued, it will be a source of deep and lasting regret to all who ever enjoyed opportunities of appreciating the high and sterling qualities of George Frederick Ruxton. Few men, so prepossessing on first acquaintance, gained so much by being better known. With great natural abilities and the most dauntless bravery, he united a modesty and gentleness peculiarly pleasing. Had he lived, and resisted his friends’ repeated solicitations to abandon a roving life, and settle down in England, there can be little doubt that he would have made his name eminent on the list of those

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

daring and persevering men, whose travels in distant and dangerous [Pg xvi]lands have accumulated for England, and for the world, so rich a store of scientific and general information. And, although the few words it has been thought right and becoming here to devote to his memory, will doubtless be more particularly welcome to his personal friends, we are persuaded that none will peruse without interest this brief tribute to the merits of a gallant soldier, and accomplished English gentleman.

---

[Pg 1]

LIFE IN THE FAR WEST.

## CHAPTER I.

AWAY to the head waters of the Platte, where several small streams run into the south fork of that river, and head in the broken ridges of the "Divide" which separates the valleys of the Platte and Arkansa, were camped a band of trappers on a creek called Bijou. It was the month of October, when the early frosts of the coming winter had crisped and dyed with sober brown the leaves of the cherry and quaking ash belting the brooks; and the ridges and peaks of the Rocky Mountains were already covered with a glittering mantle of snow, sparkling in the still powerful rays of the autumn sun.

The camp had all the appearance of permanency; for not only did it comprise one or two unusually comfortable shanties, but the numerous stages on which huge stripes of buffalo meat were hanging in [Pg 2]process of cure, showed that the party had settled themselves here in order to lay in a store of provisions, or, as it is termed in the language of the mountains, "to make meat." Round the camp fed twelve or fifteen mules and horses, their fore-legs confined by hobbles of raw hide; and, guarding these animals, two men paced backwards and forwards, driving in the stragglers, ascending ever and anon the bluffs which overhung the river, and leaning on their long rifles, whilst they swept with their eyes the surrounding prairie. Three or four fires burned in the encampment, at some of which Indian women carefully tended sundry steaming pots; whilst round one, which was in the centre of it, four or five stalwart hunters, clad in buckskin, sat cross-legged, pipe in mouth.

They were a trapping party from the north fork of Platte, on their way to wintering-ground in the more southern valley of the Arkansa; some, indeed, meditating a more extended trip, even to the distant settlements of New Mexico, the paradise of mountaineers. The elder of the company was a tall gaunt man, with a face browned by twenty years' exposure to the extreme climate of the mountains; his long black hair, as yet scarcely tinged with grey, hanging almost to his shoulders, but his cheeks and chin clean shaven, after the fashion of the mountain men. His dress was the usual hunting-frock of buckskin, with long fringes down the seams, with pantaloons similarly ornamented, and [Pg 3]moccasins of Indian make. Whilst his companions puffed their pipes in silence, he narrated a few of his former experiences of western life; and whilst the buffalo "hump-ribs" and "tender loin" are singing away in the pot, preparing for the hunters' supper, we will note down the yarn as it spins from his lips, giving it in the language spoken in the "far west:"—  
"Twas about 'calf-time,' maybe a little later, and not a hunderd year ago, by a long chalk, that the biggest kind of rendezvous was held 'to' Independence, a mighty handsome little location away up on old Missoura. A pretty smart lot of boys was camp'd thar, about a quarter from the town, and the way the whisky flowed that time was 'some' now, I can tell you. Thar was old Sam Owins—

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

him as got 'rubbed out' [2] by the Spaniards at Sacramenty, or Chihuahuy, this hos doesn't know which, but he 'went under' [3] any how. Well, Sam had his train along, ready to hitch up for the Mexican country—twenty thunderin big Pittsburg waggons; and the way his Santa Fé boys took in the liquor beat all—eh, Bill?"

"Well, it did."

"Bill Bent—his boys camped the other side the trail, and they was all mountain men, wagh!—and Bill Williams, and Bill Tharpe (the Pawnees took his hair on Pawnee Fork last spring): three Bills, [Pg 4]and them three's all 'gone under.' Surely Hatcher went out that time; and wasn't Bill Garey along, too? Didn't him and Chabonard sit in camp for twenty hours at a deck of Euker? Them was Bent's Indian traders up on Arkansa. Poor Bill Bent! them Spaniards made meat of him. He lost his topknot to Taos. A 'clever' man was Bill Bent as I ever know'd trade a robe or 'throw' a bufler in his tracks. Old St Vrain could knock the hind-sight off him though, when it came to shootin, and old silver heels spoke true, she did: 'plum-center' she was, eh?"

"Well, she wasn't nothin else."

"The Greasers [4] payed for Bent's scalp, they tell me. Old St Vrain went out of Santa Fé with a company of mountain men, and the way they made 'em sing out was 'slick as shootin'. He 'counted a coup,' did St Vrain. He throwed a Pueblo as had on poor Bent's shirt. I guess he tickled that nigger's hump-ribs. Fort William [5] aint the lodge it was, an' never will be agin, now he's gone under; but St Vrain's 'pretty much of a gentleman,' too; if he aint, I'll be dog-gone, eh, Bill?"

"He is so-o."

"Chavez had his waggons along. He was only a Spaniard any how, and some of his teamsters [Pg 5]put a ball into him his next trip, and made a raise of his dollars, wagh! Uncle Sam hung 'em for it, I heard, but can't b'lieve it, nohow. If them Spaniards wasn't born for shootin', why was beaver made? You was with us that spree, Jemmy?"

"No sirre-e; I went out when Spiers lost his animals on Cimmaron: a hunderd and forty mules and oxen was froze that night, wagh!"

"Surely Black Harris was thar; and the darndest liar was Black Harris—for lies tumbled out of his mouth like boudins out of a bufler's stomach. He was the child as saw the putrefied forest in the Black Hills. Black Harris come in from Laramie; he'd been trapping three year an' more on Platte and the 'other side;' and, when he got into Liberty, he fixed himself right off like a Saint Louiy dandy. Well, he sat to dinner one day in the tavern, and a lady says to him:—

"Well, Mister Harris, I hear you're a great travler."

"Travler, marm,' says Black Harris, 'this nigger's no travler; I ar' a trapper, marm, a mountain-man, wagh!"

"Well, Mister Harris, trappers are great travlers, and you goes over a sight of ground in your perishinations, I'll be bound to say."

"A sight, marm, this coon's gone over, if that's the way your 'stick floats.' [6] I've trapped beaver [Pg 6]on Platte and Arkansa, and away up on Missoura and Yaller Stone; I've trapped on Columbia, on Lewis Fork, and Green River; I've trapped, marm, on Grand River and the Heely (Gila). I've fout the 'Blackfoot' (and d—d bad Injuns they ar); I've 'raised the hair' [7] of more than one Apach, and made a Rapaho 'come' afore now; I've trapped in heav'n, in airth, and h—; and scalp my old head, marm, but I've seen a putrefied forest."

"La, Mister Harris, a what?"

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

“A putrefied forest, marm, as sure as my rifle’s got hind-sights, and she shoots center. I was out on the Black Hills, Bill Sublette knows the time—the year it rained fire—and every body knows when that was. If thar wasn’t cold doins about that time, this child wouldn’t say so. The snow was about fifty foot deep, and the bufler lay dead on the ground like bees after a beein’; not whar we was tho’, for thar was no bufler, and no meat, and me and my band had been livin’ on our mocassins (leastwise the parflesh [8]), for six weeks; and poor doins that feedin’ is, marm, as you’ll never know. One day we crossed a ‘cañon’ and over a ‘divide,’ and got into a peraira, whar was green grass, and green trees, and green leaves on the trees, and birds singing in the green leaves, and [Pg 7]this in Febrary, wagh! Our animals was like to die when they see the green grass, and we all sung out, ‘hurraw for summer doins.’

“‘Hyar goes for meat,’ says I, and I jest ups old Ginger at one of them singing birds, and down come the crittur elegant; its darned head spinning away from the body, but never stops singing, and when I takes up the meat, I finds it stone, wagh! ‘Hyar’s damp powder and no fire to dry it,’ I says, quite skeared.

“‘Fire be dogged,’ says old Rube. ‘Hyar’s a hos as ‘ll make fire come;’ and with that he takes his axe and lets drive at a cotton wood. Schr-u-k—goes the axe agin the tree, and out comes a bit of the blade as big as my hand. We looks at the animals, and thar they stood shaking over the g which I’m dog-gone if it wasn’t stone, too. Young Sublette comes up, and he’d been clerking down to the fort on Platte, so he know’d something. He looks and looks, and scrapes the trees with his butcher knife, and snaps the grass like pipe stems, and breaks the leaves a-snappin’ like Californy shells.’

“‘What’s all this, boy?’ I asks.

“‘Putrefactions,’ says he, looking smart, ‘putrefactions, or I’m a niggur.’

“‘La, Mister Harris,’ says the lady, ‘putrefactions! why, did the leaves, and the trees, and the grass smell badly?’

“‘Smell badly, marm!’ says Black Harris, ‘would [Pg 8]rass, a skunk stink if he was froze to stone? No, marm, this child didn’t know what putrefaction was, and young Sublette’s varsion wouldn’t ‘shine’ nohow, so I chips a piece out of a tree and puts it in my trap-sack, and carries it in safe to Laramie. Well, old Captain Stewart, (a clever man was that, though he was an Englishman), he comes along next spring, and a Dutch doctor chap was along too. I shows him the piece I chipped out of the tree, and he called it a putrefaction too; and so, marm, if that wasn’t a putrefied peraira, what was it? For this hos doesn’t know, and he knows ‘fat cow’ from ‘poor bull,’ anyhow.’

“‘Well, old Black Harris is gone under too, I believe. He went to the ‘Parks’ trapping with a Vide Poche Frenchman, who shot him for his bacca and traps. Darn them Frenchmen, they’re no account any way you lays your sight. (Any bacca in your bag, Bill? this beaver feels like chawing.)

“‘Well, any how, thar was the camp, and they was goin to put out the next morning; and the last as come out of Independence was that ar Englishman. He’d a nor-west [9] capote on, and a two-shoot gun rifled. Well, them English are darned fools; they can’t fix a rifle any ways; but that one did shoot ‘some;’ leastwise he made it throw plum-center. [Pg 9]He made the bufler ‘come,’ he did, and fout well at Pawnee Fork too. What was his name? All the boys called him Cap’en, and he got his fixings from old Choteau; but what he wanted out thar in the mountains, I never jest rightly know’d. He was no trader, nor a trapper, and flung about his dollars right smart. Thar was old grit in him, too, and a hair of the black b’ar at that. [10] They say he took the bark off the Shians when he cleared out of the village with old Beaver Tail’s squaw. He’d been on Yaller Stone afore that: Le-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

clerc know'd him in the Blackfoot, and up in the Chippeway country; and he had the best powder as ever I flashed through life, and his gun was handsome, that's a fact. Them thar locks was grand; and old Jake Hawken's nephey, (him as trapped on Heeley that time), told me, the other day, as he saw an English gun on Arkansa last winter as beat all off hand.

"Nigh upon two hundred dollars I had in my possibles, when I went to that camp to see the boys afore they put out; and you know, Bill, as I sat to 'Euker' and 'seven up' [11] till every cent was gone.

"Take back twenty, old coon,' says Big John.

"H—'s full of such takes back,' says I; and I puts back to town and fetches the rifle and the old mule, puts my traps into the sack, gets credit for a [Pg 10]couple of pounds of powder at Owin's store, and hyar I ar on Bijou, with half a pack of beaver, and running meat yet, old hos: so put a log on, and let's have a smoke.

"Hurraw, Jake, old coon, bear a hand, and let the squaw put them tails in the pot; for sun's down, and we'll have to put out pretty early to reach 'Black Tail' by this time to-morrow. Who's fust guard, boys? them cussed 'Rapahos' will be after the animals to-night, or I'm no judge of Injun sign. How many did you see, Maurice?"

"Enfant de Gârce, me see bout honderd, when I pass Squirrel Creek, one dam war-party, parce-que, they no hosses, and have de lariats for steal des animaux. May be de Yutas in Bayou Salade." "We'll be having trouble to-night, I'm thinking, if the devils are about. Whose band was it, Maurice?"

"Slim-Face—I see him ver close—is out; mais I think it White Wolf's."

"White Wolf, maybe, will lose his hair if he and his band knock round here too often. That Injun put me afoot when we was out on 'Sandy' that fall. This niggur owes him one, any how?"

"H—'s full of White Wolves: go ahead, and roll out some of your doins across the plains that time."

"You seed sights that spree, eh, boy?"

"Well, we did. Some of em got their flints fixed this side of Pawnee Fork, and a heap of mule-meat [Pg 11]went wolfing. Just by Little Arkansa we saw the first Injun. Me and young Somes was ahead for meat, and I had hobbled the old mule and was 'approaching' some goats, [12] when I see the critturs turn back their heads and jump right away for me. 'Hurraw, Dick!' I shouts, 'hyars brown-skin acomin,' and off I makes for the mule. The young greenhorn sees the goats runnin up to him, and not being up to Injun ways, blazes at the first and knocks him over. Jest then seven darned red heads top the bluff, and seven Pawnees com a-screechin upon us. I cuts the hobbles and jumps on the mule, and, when I looks back, there was Dick Somes ramming a ball down his gun like mad, and the Injuns flinging their arrows at him pretty smart, I tell you. 'Hurraw, Dick, mind your hair,' and I ups old Greaser and let one Injun 'have it,' as was going plum into the boy with his lance. He turned on his back handsome, and Dick gets the ball down at last, blazes away, and drops another. Then we charged on em, and they clears off like runnin cows; and I takes the hair off the heads of the two we made meat of; and I do b'lieve thar's some of them scalps on my old leggings yet.

"Well, Dick was as full of arrows as a porky-pine: one was sticking right through his cheek, one in his meat-bag, and two more 'bout his hump-ribs. I tuk 'em all out slick, and away we go to [Pg 12] e camp, (for they was jost a-campin' when we went ahead) and carryin' the goat too. Thar' was a

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

hurroo when we rode in with the scalps at the end of our guns. 'Injuns! Injuns!' was the cry from the greenhorns; 'we'll be 'tacked to-night, that's certain.'

"'Tacked be ——' says old Bill; 'aint we men too, and white at that? Look to your guns, boys; send out a strong hos'-guard with the animals, and keep your eyes skinned.'

"Well, as soon as the animals were unhitched from the waggons, the guvner sends out a strong guard, seven boys, and old hands at that. It was pretty nigh upon sundown, and Bill had just sung out to 'corral.' The boys were drivin' in the animals, and we were all standin' round to get 'em in slick, when, 'howgh-owgh-owgh-owgh,' we hears right behind the bluff, and 'bout a minute and a perfect crowd of Injuns gallops down upon the animals. Wagh! war'nt thar hoopin'! We jump for the guns, but before we get to the fires, the Injuns were among the cavayard. I saw Ned Collyer and his brother, who were in the hos'-guard, let drive at 'em; but twenty Pawnees were round 'em before the smoke cleared from their rifles, and when the crowd broke the two boys were on the ground, and their hair gone. Well, that ar Englishman just saved the cavayard. He had his horse, a regular buffalo-runner, picketed round the fire quite handy, and as soon as he sees [Pg 13]the fix, he jumps upon her and rides right into the thick of the mules, and passes through 'em, firing his two-shoot gun at the Injuns, and, by Gor, he made two come. The mules, which was a snortin' with funk and running before the Injuns, as soon as they see the Englisman's mare (mules 'ill go to h— after a horse, you all know), followed her right into the corral, and thar they was safe. Fifty Pawnees come screechin' after 'em, but we was ready that time, and the way we throw'd 'em was something handsome, I tell you. But three of the hos'-guard got skeared—leastwise their mules did, and carried 'em off into the peraira, and the Injuns having enough of us, dashed after 'em right away. Them poor devils looked back miserable now, with about a hundred red varmints tearin' after their hair, and whooping like mad. Young Jem Bulcher was the last; and when he seed it was no use, and his time was nigh, he throw'd himself off the mule, and standing as upright as a hickory wiping stick, he waves his hand to us, and blazes away at the first Injun as come up, and dropped him slick; but the moment after, you may guess, he died.

"We could do nothin', for, before our guns were loaded, all three were dead and their scalps gone. Five of our boys got rubbed out that time, and seven Injuns lay wolf's meat, while a many more went away gut-shot, I'll lay. How'sever, five of us went under, and the Pawnees made a raise of a dozen mules, wagh!"

[Pg 14]

Thus far, in his own words, we have accompanied the old hunter in his tale; and probably he would have taken us, by the time that the Squaw Chilipat had pronounced the beaver tails cooked, safely across the grand prairies—fording Cotton Wood, Turkey Creek, Little Arkansa, Walnut Creek, and Pawnee Fork—passed the fireless route of the Coon Creeks, through a sea of fat buffalo meat, without fuel to cook it; have struck the big river, and, leaving at the "Crossing" the waggons destined for Santa Fé, have trailed us up the Arkansa to Bent's Fort; thence up Boiling Spring, across the divide over to the southern fork of the Platte, away up to the Black Hills, and finally camped us, with hair still preserved, in the beaver-abounding valleys of the Sweet Water, and C ache la Poudre, under the rugged shadow of the Wind River mountains; if it had not so happened, at this juncture, as all our mountaineers sat cross-legged round the fire, pipe in mouth, and with Indian gravity listened to the yarn of the old trapper, interrupting him only with an occasional wagh! or with the exclamations of some participator in the events then under narra-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

tion, who would every now and then put in a corroborative,—“This child remembers that fix,” or, “hyar’s a niggur lifted hair that spree,” &c.—that a whizzing noise was heard in the air, followed by a sharp but suppressed cry from one of the hunters.

In an instant the mountaineers had sprung from [Pg 15]their seats, and, seizing the ever-ready rifle, each one had thrown himself on the ground a few paces beyond the light of the fire (for it was now night-fall;) but not a word escaped them, as, lying close, with their keen eyes directed towards the gloom of the thicket, near which the camp was placed, with rifles cocked, they waited a renewal of the attack. Presently the leader of the band, no other than Killbuck, who had so lately been recounting some of his experiences across the plains, and than whom no more crafty woodsman or more expert trapper ever tracked a deer or grained a beaverskin, raised his tall, leather-clad form, and, placing his hand over his mouth, made the prairie ring with the wild protracted note of an Indian war-whoop. This was instantly repeated from the direction where the animals belonging to the camp were grazing, under the charge of the horse-guard. Three shrill whoops answered the warning of the leader, and showed that the guard was on the alert, and understood the signal. However, with the manifestation of their presence, the Indians appeared to be satisfied; or, what is more probable, the act of aggression had been committed by some daring young warrior, who, being out on his first expedition, desired to strike the first coup, and thus signalise himself at the outset of the campaign. After waiting some few minutes, expecting a renewal of the attack, the mountaineers in a body rose from the ground and made towards the animals, with which they presently [Pg 16]returned to the camp; and, after carefully hobbling and securing them to pickets firmly driven into the ground, mounting an additional guard, and examining the neighbouring thicket, they once more assembled round the fire, relit their pipes, and puffed away the cheering weed as composedly as if no such being as a Redskin, thirsting for their lives, was within a thousand miles of their perilous encampment.

“If ever thar was bad Injuns on these plains,” at last growled Killbuck, biting hard the pipe-stem between his teeth, “it’s these Rapahos, and the meanest kind at that.”

“Can’t beat the Blackfeet, any how,” chimed in one La Bonté, from the Yellow Stone country, a fine handsome specimen of a mountaineer. “However, one of you quit this arrow out of my hump,” he continued, bending forwards to the fire, and exhibiting an arrow sticking out under his right shoulder-blade, and a stream of blood trickling down his buckskin coat from the wound.

This his nearest neighbour essayed to do; but finding, after a tug, that it “would not come,” expressed his opinion that the offending weapon would have to be “butchered” out. This was accordingly effected with the ready blade of a scalp-knife; and a handful of beaver-fur being placed on the wound, and secured by a strap of buckskin round the body, the wounded man donned his hunting-shirt once more, and coolly set about lighting [Pg 17]his pipe, his rifle lying across his lap, cocked and ready for use.

It was now near midnight—dark and misty; and the clouds, rolling away to the eastward from the lofty ridges of the Rocky Mountains, were gradually obscuring the dim starlight. As the lighter vapours faded from the mountains, a thick black cloud succeeded them, and settled over the loftier peaks of the chain, faintly visible through the gloom of night, whilst a mass of fleecy scud soon overspread the whole sky. A hollow moaning sound crept through the valley, and the upper branches of the cotton woods, with their withered leaves, began to rustle with the first breath of the coming storm. Huge drops of rain fell at intervals, hissing as they dropped into the blazing

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

fires, and pattering on the skins with which the hunters hurriedly covered the exposed baggage. The mules near the camp cropped the grass with quick and greedy bites round the circuit of their pickets, as if conscious that the storm would soon prevent their feeding, and already humped their backs as the chilling rain fell upon their flanks. The prairie wolves crept closer to the camp, and in the confusion that ensued from the hurry of the trappers to cover the perishable portions of their equipment, contrived more than once to dart off with a piece of meat, when their peculiar and mournful chiding would be heard as they fought for the possession of the ravished morsel.

[Pg 18]

When every thing was duly protected, the men set to work to spread their beds, those who had not troubled themselves to erect a shelter getting under the lee of the piles of packs and saddles; whilst Killbuck, disdaining even such care of his carcass, threw his buffalo robe on the bare ground, declaring his intention to “take” what was coming at all hazards, and “any how.” Selecting a high spot, he drew his knife and proceeded to cut drains round it, to prevent the water running into him as he lay; then taking a single robe he carefully spread it, placing under the end farthest from the fire a large stone brought from the creek. Having satisfactorily adjusted this pillow, he added another robe to the one already laid, and placed over all a Navajo blanket, supposed to be impervious to rain. Then he divested himself of his pouch and powder-horn, which, with his rifle, he placed inside his bed, and quickly covered up lest the wet should reach them. Having performed these operations to his satisfaction, he lighted his pipe by the hissing embers of the half-extinguished fire (for by this time the rain poured in torrents), and went the rounds of the picketed animals, cautioning the guard round the camp to keep their “eyes skinned, for there would be ‘powder burned’ before morning.” Then returning to the fire, and kicking with his moccasined foot the slumbering ashes, he squatted down before it, and thus soliloquised:—

“Thirty year have I been knocking about these [Pg 19]mountains from Missoura’s head as far sothe as the starving Gila. I’ve trapped a ‘heap,’ [13] and many a hundred pack of beaver I’ve traded in my time, wagh! What has come of it, and whar’s the dollars as ought to be in my possibles? Whar’s the ind of this, I say? Is a man to be hunted by Injuns all his days? Many’s the time I’ve said I’d strike for Taos, and trap a squaw, for this child’s getting old, and feels like wanting a woman’s face about his lodge for the balance of his days; but when it comes to caching of the old traps, I’ve the smallest kind of heart, I have. Certain, the old-state comes across my mind now and again, but who’s thar to remember my old body? But them diggings gets too over crowded now-a-days, and its hard to fetch breath amongst them big bands of corncrackers to Missoura. Beside, it goes against natur to leave bufler meat and feed on hog; and them white gals are too much like picturs, and a deal too ‘fofarraw’ (fanfaron). No; darn the settlements, I say. It won’t shine, and whar’s the dollars? Howsever, beaver’s ‘bound to rise;’ human natur can’t go on selling beaver a dollar a pound; no, no, that arn’t a going to shine much longer, I know. Them was the times when this child first went to the mountains: six dollars the plew—old ‘un or kitten. Wagh! but its bound to rise, I says agin; and hyar’s a coon knows whar [Pg 20]to lay his hand on a dozen pack right handy, and then he’ll take the Taos trail, wagh!”

Thus soliloquising, Killbuck knocked the ashes from his pipe, and placed it in the gaily ornamented case that hung round his neck, drew his knife-belt a couple of holes tighter, resumed his pouch and powder-horn, took his rifle, which he carefully covered with the folds of his Navajo blanket, and striding into the darkness, cautiously reconnoitred the vicinity of the camp. When he

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

returned to the fire he sat himself down as before, but this time with his rifle across his lap; and at intervals his keen gray eye glanced piercingly around, particularly towards an old, weather-beaten, and grizzled mule, who now, old stager as she was, having filled her belly, stood lazily over her picket pin, with her head bent down and her long ears flapping over her face, her limbs gathered under her, and her back arched to throw off the rain, tottering from side to side as she rested and slept.

“Yep, old gal!” cried Killbuck to the animal, at the same time picking a piece of burnt wood from the fire and throwing it at her, at which the mule gathered itself up and cocked her ears as she recognised her master’s voice. “Yep, old gal! and keep your nose open; thar’s brown skin about, I’m thinkin’, and maybe you’ll get ‘roped’ (lasso’d) by a Rapaho afore mornin.” Again the old trapper settled himself before the fire; and soon his head began to nod, as drowsiness stole over him. Already [Pg 21]he was in the land of dreams; revelling amongst bands of “fat cow,” or hunting along a stream well peopled with beaver; with no Indian “sign” to disturb him, and the merry rendezvous in close perspective, and his peltry selling briskly at six dollars the plew, and galore of alcohol to ratify the trade. Or, perhaps, threading the back trail of his memory, he passed rapidly through the perilous vicissitudes of his hard, hard life—starving one day, revelling in abundance the next; now beset by whooping savages thirsting for his blood, baying his enemies like the hunted deer, but with the unflinching courage of a man; now, all care thrown aside, secure and forgetful of the past, a welcome guest in the hospitable trading fort; or back, as the trail gets fainter, to his childhood’s home in the brown forests of old Kentuck, tended and cared for—his only thought to enjoy the homminy and johnny cakes of his thrifty mother. Once more, in warm and well remembered homespun, he sits on the snake fence round the old clearing, and munching his hoe-cake at set of sun, listens to the mournful note of the whip-poor-will, or the harsh cry of the noisy catbird, or watches the agile gambols of the squirrels as they chase each other, chattering the while, from branch to branch of the lofty tamarisks, wondering how long it will be before he will be able to lift his father’s heavy rifle, and use it against the tempting game. Sleep, however, sat lightly on the eyes of the wary mountaineer, and a [Pg 22]snort from the old mule in an instant stretched his every nerve. Without a movement of his body, his keen eye fixed itself upon the mule, which now stood with head bent round, and eyes and ears pointed in one direction, snuffing the night air and snorting with apparent fear. A low sound from the wakeful hunter roused the others from their sleep; and raising their bodies from their well-soaked beds, a single word apprised them of their danger.

“Injuns!”

Scarcely was the word out of Killbuck’s lips, when, above the howling of the furious wind, and the pattering of the rain, a hundred savage yells broke suddenly upon their ears from all directions round the camp; a score of rifle-shots rattled from the thicket, and a cloud of arrows whistled through the air, whilst a crowd of Indians charged upon the picketed animals. “Owgh, owgh—owgh—owgh—g-h-h.” “A foot, by gor!” shouted Killbuck, “and the old mule gone at that. On ‘em, boys, for old Kentuck!” And he rushed towards his mule, which jumped and snorted mad with fright, as a naked Indian strove to fasten a lariat round her nose, having already cut the rope which fastened her to the picket-pin.

“Quit that, you cussed devil!” roared the trapper, as he jumped upon the savage, and without raising his rifle to his shoulder, made a deliberate thrust with the muzzle at his naked breast, striking

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

him full, and at the same time pulling the trigger, [Pg 23] actually driving the Indian two paces backwards with the shock, when he fell in a heap, and dead. But at the same moment, an Indian, sweeping his club round his head, brought it with fatal force down upon Killbuck; for a moment the hunter staggered, threw out his arms wildly into the air, and fell headlong to the ground. "Owgh! owgh, owgh-h-h!" cried the Rapaho, and, striding over the prostrate body, he seized with his left hand the middle lock of the trapper's long hair, and drew his knife round the head to separate the scalp from the skull. As he bent over to his work, the trapper named La Bonté saw his companion's peril, rushed quick as thought at the Indian, and buried his knife to the hilt between his shoulders. With a gasping shudder the Rapaho fell dead upon the prostrate body of his foe. The attack, however, lasted but a few seconds. The dash at the animals had been entirely successful, and, driving them before them, with loud cries, the Indians disappeared quickly in the darkness. Without waiting for daylight, two of the three trappers who alone were to be seen, and who had been within the shanties at the time of attack, without a moment's delay commenced packing two horses, which having been fastened to the shanties had escaped the Indians, and placing their squaws upon them, showering curses and imprecations on their enemies, left the camp, fearful of another onset, and resolved to retreat and c ache themselves until the [Pg 24] danger was over. Not so La Bont e, who, stout and true, had done his best in the fight, and now sought the body of his old comrade, from which, before he could examine the wounds, he had first to remove the corpse of the Indian he had slain. Killbuck still breathed. He had been stunned; but, revived by the cold rain beating upon his face, he soon opened his eyes, and recognised his trusty friend, who, sitting down, lifted his head into his lap, and wiped away the blood that streamed from the wounded scalp.

"Is the top-knot gone, boy?" asked Killbuck; "for my head feels queersome, I tell you."

"Thar's the Injun as felt like lifting it," answered the other, kicking the dead body with his foot.

"Wagh! boy, you've struck a coup; so scalp the nigger right off, and then fetch me a drink."

The morning broke clear and cold. With the exception of a light cloud which hung over Pike's Peak, the sky was spotless; and a perfect calm had succeeded the boisterous storm of the previous night. The creek was swollen and turbid with the rains; and as La Bont e proceeded a little distance down the bank to find a passage to the water, he suddenly stopped short, and an involuntary cry escaped him. Within a few feet of the bank lay the body of one of his companions, who had formed the guard at the time of the Indians' attack. It was lying on the face, pierced through the chest [Pg 25] with an arrow which was buried to the very feathers, and the scalp torn from the bloody skull. Beyond, but all within a hundred yards, lay the three others, dead, and similarly mutilated. So certain had been the aim, and so close the enemy, that each had died without a struggle, and consequently had been unable to alarm the camp. La Bont e, with a glance at the bank, saw at once that the wily Indians had crept along the creek, the noise of the storm facilitating their approach undiscovered, and crawling up the bank, had watched their opportunity to shoot simultaneously the four hunters on guard.

Returning to Killbuck, he apprised him of the melancholy fate of their companions, and held a council of war as to their proceedings. The old hunter's mind was soon made up. "First," said he, "I get back my old mule; she's carried me and my traps these twelve years, and I aint a goin' to lose her yet. Second, I feel like taking hair, and some Rapahos has to 'go under' for this night's work. Third, We have got to c ache the beaver. Fourth, We take the Injun trail, wherever it leads."

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

No more daring mountaineer than La Bonté ever trapped a beaver, and no counsel could have more exactly tallied with his own inclination than the law laid down by old Killbuck.

“Agreed,” was his answer, and forthwith he set about forming a *câche*. In this instance they had [Pg 26]not sufficient time to construct a regular one, so they contented themselves with securing their packs of beaver in buffalo robes, and tying them in the forks of several cotton-woods, under which the camp had been made. This done, they lit a fire, and cooked some buffalo meat; and, whilst smoking a pipe, carefully cleaned their rifles, and filled their horns and pouches with good store of ammunition.

A prominent feature in the character of the hunters of the far west is their quick determination and resolve in cases of extreme difficulty and peril, and their fixedness of purpose, when any plan of operations has been laid requiring bold and instant action in carrying out. It is here that they so infinitely surpass the savage Indian, in bringing to a successful issue their numerous hostile expeditions against the natural foe of the white man in the wild and barbarous regions of the west. Ready to resolve as they are prompt to execute, and combining far greater dash and daring with equal subtlety and caution, they possess great advantage over the vacillating Indian, whose superstitious mind in a great degree paralyses the physical energy of his active body; and who, by waiting for propitious signs and seasons before he undertakes an enterprise, often loses the opportunity by which his white and more civilised enemy knows so well how to profit.

Killbuck and La Bonté were no exceptions to this characteristic rule; and before the sun was a hand's-breadth above the eastern horizon, the two hunters [Pg 27]were running on the trail of the victorious Indians. Striking from the creek where the night attack was made, they crossed to another known as Kioway, running parallel to Bijou, a few hours' journey westward, and likewise heading in the “divide.” Following this to its forks, they struck into the upland prairies lying at the foot of the mountains; and crossing to the numerous water-courses which feed the creek called “Vermilion” or “Cherry,” they pursued the trail over the mountain-spurs until it reached a fork of the Boiling Spring. Here the war-party had halted and held a consultation, for from this point the trail turned at a tangent to the westward, and entered the rugged gorges of the mountains. It was now evident to the two trappers that their destination was the Bayou Salade,—a mountain valley which is a favourite resort of the buffalo in the winter season, and which, and for this reason, is often frequented by the Yuta Indians as their wintering ground. That the Rapahos were on a war expedition against the Yutas, there was little doubt; and Killbuck, who knew every inch of the ground, saw at once, by the direction the trail had taken, that they were making for the Bayou in order to surprise their enemies, and, therefore, were not following the usual Indian trail up the cañon of the Boiling Spring River. Having made up his mind to this, he at once struck across the broken ground lying at the foot of the mountains, steering a course a little to the eastward of north, or almost in the [Pg 28]direction whence he had come: and then, pointing westward, about noon he crossed a mountain chain, and descending into a ravine through which a little rivulet tumbled over its rocky bed, he at once proved the correctness of his judgment by striking the Indian trail, now quite fresh, as it wound through the cañon along the bank of the stream. The route he had followed, impracticable to pack-animals, had saved at least half-a-day's journey, and brought them within a short distance of the object of their pursuit; for, at the head of the gorge, a lofty bluff presenting itself, the hunters ascended to the summit, and, looking down, descried at their very feet the Indian camp, with their own stolen cavallada feeding quietly round.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

“Wagh!” exclaimed both the hunters in a breath. “And thar’s the old ga’l at that,” chuckled Killbuck, as he recognised his old grizzled mule making good play at the rich buffalo grass with which these mountain valleys abound.

“If we don’t make ‘a raise’ afore long, I wouldn’t say so. Thar plans is plain to this child as beaver sign. They’re after Yuta hair, as certain as this gun has got hind-sights; but they ar’nt agoin’ to pack them animals after ‘em, and have crawled like ‘rattlers’ along this bottom to c ache ‘em till they come back from the Bayou,—and maybe they’ll leave half a dozen ‘soldiers’ [14] with ‘em.”

[Pg 29]

How right the wily trapper was in his conjectures will be shortly proved. Meanwhile, with his companion, he descended the bluff, and pushing his way into a thicket of dwarf pine and cedar, sat down on a log, and drew from an end of the blanket, strapped on his shoulder, a portion of a buffalo’s liver, which they both discussed, raw, with infinite relish; eating in lieu of bread (an unknown luxury in these parts) sundry strips of dried fat. To have kindled a fire would have been dangerous, since it was not impossible that some of the Indians might leave their camp to hunt, when the smoke would at once have betrayed the presence of enemies. A light was struck, however for their pipes, and after enjoying this true consolation for some time, they laid a blanket on the ground, and, side by side, soon fell asleep.

If Killbuck had been a prophet, or the most prescient of “medicine men,” he could not have more exactly predicted the movements in the Indian camp. About three hours before “sundown,” he rose and shook himself, which movement was sufficient to awaken his companion. Telling La Bont e to lie down again and rest, he gave him to understand that he was about to reconnoitre the enemy’s camp; and after carefully examining his rifle, and drawing his knife-belt a hole or two tighter, he proceeded on his dangerous errand. Ascending the same bluff whence he had first discovered the Indian camp, he glanced rapidly around, and made himself master of [Pg 30]the features of the ground—choosing a ravine by which he might approach the camp more closely, and without danger of being discovered. This was soon effected; and in half an hour the trapper was lying on his belly on the summit of a pine-covered bluff, which overlooked the Indians within easy rifle-shot, and so perfectly concealed by the low spreading branches of the cedar and arbor-vit e, that not a particle of his person could be detected; unless, indeed, his sharp twinkling gray eye contrasted too strongly with the green boughs that covered the rest of his face. Moreover, there was no danger of their hitting upon his trail, for he had been careful to pick his steps on the rock-covered ground, so that not a track of his moccasin was visible. Here he lay, still as a carcagien in wait for a deer, only now and then shaking the boughs as his body quivered with a suppressed chuckle, when any movement in the Indian camp caused him to laugh inwardly at his (if they had known it) unwelcome propinquity. He was not a little surprised, however, to discover that the party was much smaller than he had imagined, counting only forty warriors; and this assured him that the band had divided, one half taking the Yuta trail by the Boiling Spring, the other (the one before him) taking a longer circuit in order to reach the Bayou, and make the attack on the Yutas in a different direction.

At this moment the Indians were in deliberation. Seated in a large circle round a very small [Pg 31]fire, [15] the smoke from which ascended in a thin straight column, they each in turn puffed a huge cloud of smoke from three or four long cherry-stemmed pipes, which went the round of the party; each warrior touching the ground with the heel of the pipe-bowl, and turning the stem up-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

wards and away from him as “medicine” to the Great Spirit, before he himself inhaled the fragrant kinnik-kinnik. The council, however, was not general, for only fifteen of the older warriors took part in it, the others sitting outside and at some little distance from the circle. Behind each were his arms—bow and quiver, and shield hanging from a spear stuck in the ground, and a few guns in ornamented covers of buckskin were added to some of the equipments.

Near the fire, and in the centre of the inner circle, a spear was fixed upright in the ground, and on this dangled the four scalps of the trappers killed the preceding night; and underneath them, affixed to the same spear, was the mystic “medicine bag,” by which Killbuck knew that the band before him was under the command of the chief of the tribe.

Towards the grim trophies on the spear, the warriors, who in turn addressed the council, frequently [Pg 32]pointed—more than one, as he did so, making the gyratory motion of the right hand and arm, which the Indians use in describing that they have gained an advantage by skill or cunning. Then pointing westward, the speaker would thrust out his arm, extending his fingers at the same time, and closing and reopening them repeatedly, meaning, that although four scalps already ornamented the “medicine” pole, they were as nothing compared to the numerous trophies they would bring from the Salt Valley, where they expected to find their hereditary enemies the Yutas. “That now was not the time to count their coups,” (for at this moment one of the warriors rose from his seat, and, swelling with pride, advanced towards the spear, pointing to one of the scalps, and then striking his open hand on his naked breast, jumped into the air, as if about to go through the ceremony). “That before many suns all their spears together would not hold the scalps they had taken, and that they would return to their village and spend a moon relating their achievements, and counting coups.”

All this Killbuck learned: thanks to his knowledge of the language of signs—a master of which, if even he have no ears or tongue, never fails to understand, and be understood by, any of the hundred tribes whose languages are perfectly distinct and different. He learned, moreover, that at sundown the greater part of the band would resume the trail, in order to reach the Bayou by the earliest dawn; and also, that no more than four or five [Pg 33]of the younger warriors would remain with the captured animals. Still the hunter remained in his position until the sun had disappeared behind the ridge; when, taking up their arms, and throwing their buffalo robes on their shoulders, the war party of Rapahos, one behind the other, with noiseless step, and silent as the dumb, moved away from the camp. When the last dusky form had disappeared behind a point of rocks which shut in the northern end of the little valley or ravine, Killbuck withdrew his head from its screen, crawled backwards on his stomach from the edge of the bluff, and, rising from the ground, shook and stretched himself; then gave one cautious look around, and immediately proceeded to rejoin his companion.

“Lave (get up), boy,” said Killbuck, as soon as he reached him. “Hyar’s grainin’ to do afore long—and sun’s about down, I’m thinking.”

“Ready, old hos,” answered La Bonté, giving himself a shake. “What’s the sign like, and how many’s the lodge?”

“Fresh, and five, boy. How do you feel?”

“Half froze for hair. Wagh!”

“We’ll have moon to-night, and as soon as she gets up, we’ll make ‘em ‘come.’”

Killbuck then described to his companion what he had seen, and detailed his plan. This was sim-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ply to wait until the moon afforded sufficient light, then to approach the Indian camp and charge into it, "lift" as much "hair" as they could, recover their animals, [Pg 34]and start at once to the Bayou and join the friendly Yutas, warning them of the coming danger. The risk of falling in with either of the Rapaho bands was hardly considered; to avoid this, they trusted to their own foresight, and the legs of their mules, should they encounter them.

Between sundown and the rising of the moon, they had leisure to eat their supper, which, as before, consisted of raw buffalo-liver; after discussing which, Killbuck pronounced himself "a 'heap better," and ready for "huggin."

In the short interval of almost perfect darkness which preceded the moonlight, and taking advantage of one of the frequent squalls of wind which howl down the narrow gorges of the mountains, these two determined men, with footsteps noiseless as the panther's, crawled to the edge of the little plateau of some hundred yards' square, where the five Indians in charge of the animals were seated round the fire, perfectly unconscious of the vicinity of danger. Several clumps of cedar bushes dotted the small prairie, and amongst these the well-hobbled mules and horses were feeding. These animals, accustomed to the presence of whites, would not notice the two hunters as they crept from clump to clump nearer to the fire, and also served, even if the Indians should be on the watch, to conceal their movements from them.

This the two men at once perceived; but old Killbuck knew that if he passed within sight or smell [Pg 35]of his mule, he would be received with a hinny of recognition, which would at once alarm the enemy. He therefore first ascertained where his own animal was feeding, which luckily was at the farther side of the prairie, and would not interfere with his proceedings.

Threading their way amongst the feeding mules, they approached a clump of bushes about forty yards from the spot where the unconscious savages were seated smoking round the fire; and here they awaited, scarcely drawing breath the while, the moment when the moon rose above the mountain into the clear cold sky, and gave them light sufficient to make sure their work of bloody retribution. Not a pulsation in the hearts of these stern determined men beat higher than its wont; not the tremour of a nerve disturbed their frame. They stood with lips compressed and rifles ready, their pistols loosened in their belts, their scalp-knives handy to their gripe. The lurid glow of the coming moon already shot into the sky above the ridge, which stood out in bold relief against the light; and the luminary herself just peered over the mountain, illuminating its pine-clad summit, and throwing her beams on an opposite peak, when Killbuck touched his companion's arm, and whispered, "Wait for the full light, boy."

At this moment, however, unseen by the trapper, the old grizzled mule had gradually approached, as she fed along the plateau; and, when within a few [Pg 36]paces of their retreat, a gleam of moonshine revealed to the animal the erect forms of the two whites. Suddenly she stood still and pricked her ears, and stretching out her neck and nose, snuffed the air. Well she knew her old master.

Killbuck, with eyes fixed upon the Indians, was on the point of giving the signal of attack to his comrade, when the shrill hinny of his mule reverberated through the gorge. The Indians jumped to their feet and seized their arms, when Killbuck, with a loud shout of "At 'em boy; give the niggurs h—!" rushed from his concealment, and with La Bonté by his side, yelling a fierce war-whoop, sprung upon the startled savages.

Panic-struck with the suddenness of the attack, the Indians scarcely knew where to run, and for a

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

moment stood huddled together like sheep. Down dropped Killbuck on his knee, and stretching out his wiping-stick, planted it on the ground at the extreme length of his arm. As methodically and as coolly as if about to aim at a deer, he raised his rifle to this rest and pulled the trigger. At the report an Indian fell forward on his face, at the same moment that La Bonté, with equal certainty of aim and like effect, discharged his own rifle.

The three surviving Indians, seeing that their assailants were but two, and knowing that their guns were empty, came on with loud yells. With the left hand grasping a bunch of arrows, and holding the bow already bent and arrow fixed, they [Pg 37]steadily advanced, bending low to the ground to get their objects between them and the light, and thus render their aim more certain. The trappers, however, did not care to wait for them. Drawing their pistols, they charged at once; and although the bows twanged, and the three arrows struck their mark, on they rushed, discharging their pistols at close quarters. La Bonté threw his empty one at the head of an Indian who was pulling his second arrow to its head at a yard's distance, drew his knife at the same moment, and made at him.

But the Indian broke and ran, followed by his surviving companion; and as soon as Killbuck could ram home another ball, he sent a shot flying after them as they scrambled up the mountain side, leaving in their fright and hurry their bows and shields on the ground.

The fight was over, and the two trappers confronted each other:—"We've given 'em h—!" laughed Killbuck.

"Well, we have," answered the other, pulling an arrow out of his arm.—"Wagh!"

"We'll lift the hair, any how," continued the first, "afore the scalp's cold."

Taking his whetstone from the little sheath on his knife-belt, the trapper proceeded to "edge" his knife, and then stepping to the first prostrate body, he turned it over to examine if any symptom of vitality remained. "Thrown cold!" he exclaimed, as he dropped the lifeless arm he had lifted. [Pg 38]"I sighted him about the long ribs, but the light was bad, and I couldn't get a 'bead' 'off hand' any how."

Seizing with his left hand the long and braided lock on the centre of the Indian's head, he passed the point edge of his keen butcher-knife round the parting, turning it at the same time under the skin to separate the scalp from the skull; then, with a quick and sudden jerk of his hand, he removed it entirely from the head, and giving the reeking trophy a wring upon the grass to free it from the blood, he coolly hitched it under his belt, and proceeded to the next; but seeing La Bonté operating upon this, he sought the third, who lay some little distance from the others. This one was still alive, a pistol-ball having passed through his body, without touching a vital spot.

"Gut-shot is this niggur," exclaimed the trapper; "them pistols never throws 'em in their tracks;" and thrusting his knife, for mercy's sake, into the bosom of the Indian, he likewise tore the scalp-lock from his head, and placed it with the other.

La Bonté had received two trivial wounds, and Killbuck till now had been walking about with an arrow sticking through the fleshy part of his thigh, the point being perceptible near the surface of the other side. To free his leg from the painful encumbrance, he thrust the weapon completely through, and then, cutting off the arrow-head below the [Pg 39]barb, he drew it out, the blood flowing freely from the wound. A tourniquet of buckskin soon stopped this, and, heedless of the pain, the hardy mountaineer sought for his old mule, and quickly brought it to the fire (which La Bonté had rekindled), lavishing many a caress, and most comical terms of endearment, upon the

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

faithful companion of his wanderings. They found all the animals safe and well; and after eating heartily of some venison which the Indians had been cooking at the moment of the attack, made instant preparations to quit the scene of their exploit, not wishing to trust to the chance of the Rapahos being too frightened to again molest them.

Having no saddles, they secured buffalo robes on the backs of two mules—Killbuck, of course, riding his own—and lost no time in proceeding on their way. They followed the course of the Indians up the stream, and found that it kept the cañons and gorges of the mountains, where the road was better; but it was with no little difficulty that they made their way, the ground being much broken, and covered with rocks. Killbuck's wound became very painful, and his leg stiffened and swelled distressingly, but he still pushed on all night, and, at daybreak, recognising their position, he left the Indian trail, and followed a little creek which rose in a mountain chain of moderate elevation, and above which, and to the south, Pike's Peak towered high into the clouds. With great difficulty they crossed [Pg 40]this ridge, and ascending and descending several smaller ones, which gradually smoothed away as they met the valley, about three hours after sunrise they found themselves in the south-east corner of the Bayou Salade.

The Bayou Salade, or Salt Valley, is the most southern of three very extensive valleys, forming a series of table-lands in the very centre of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, known to the trappers by the name of the "Parks." The numerous streams by which they are watered abound in the valuable fur-bearing beaver, whilst every species of game common to the west is found here in great abundance. The Bayou Salade especially, owing to the salitrose nature of the soil and springs, is the favourite resort of all the larger animals common to the mountains; and, in the sheltered prairies of the Bayou, the buffalo, forsaking the barren and inclement regions of the exposed plains, frequent these upland valleys, in the winter months; and feeding upon the rich and nutritious buffalo grass which, on the bare prairies, at that season, is either dry and rotten, or entirely exhausted, not only sustain life, but retain a great portion of the "condition" that the abundant fall and summer pasture of the lowlands has laid upon their bones. Therefore is this valley sought by the Indians as a wintering ground. Its occupancy has been disputed by most of the mountain tribes, and long and bloody wars have been waged to make good the claims set [Pg 41]forth by Yuta, Rapaho, Sioux, and Shians. However, to the first of these it may be said now to belong, since their "big village" has wintered there for many successive years; whilst the Rapahos seldom visit it unless on war expeditions against the Yutas.

Judging, from the direction the Rapahos were taking, that the friendly tribe of Yutas were there already, the trappers had resolved to join them as soon as possible; and therefore, without resting, pushed on through the uplands, and, towards the middle of the day, had the satisfaction of descrying the conical lodges of the village, situated on a large level plateau, through which ran a mountain stream. A numerous band of mules and horses were scattered over the pasture, and round them several mounted Indians kept guard. As the trappers descended the bluffs into the plain, some straggling Indians caught sight of them; and instantly one of them, lassoing a horse from the herd, mounted it, bare-backed, and flew like wind to the village to spread the news. Soon the lodges disgorged their inmates; first the women and children rushed to the side of the strangers' approach; then the younger Indians, unable to restrain their curiosity, mounted their horses, and galloped forth to meet them. The old chiefs, enveloped in buffalo robes (softly and delicately dressed as the Yutas alone know how), and with tomahawk held in one hand and resting in the

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

hollow of the other arm, [Pg 42] sallied last of all from their lodges, and, squatting in a row on a sunny bank outside the village, awaited, with dignified composure, the arrival of the whites. Killbuck was well known to most of them, having trapped in their country and traded with them years before at Roubideau's fort at the head waters of the Rio Grande. After shaking hands with all who presented themselves, he at once gave them to understand that their enemies, the Rapahos, were at hand, with a hundred warriors at least, elated by the coup they had just struck against the whites, bringing, moreover, four white scalps to incite them to brave deeds.

At this news the whole village was speedily in commotion: the war-shout was taken up from lodge to lodge; the squaws began to lament and tear their hair; the warriors to paint and arm themselves. The elder chiefs immediately met in council, and, over the medicine-pipe, debated as to the best course to pursue,—whether to wait the attack, or sally out and meet the enemy. In the mean time, the braves were collected together by the chiefs of their respective bands, and scouts, mounted on the fastest horses, despatched in every direction to procure intelligence of the enemy. The two whites, after watering their mules and picketing them in some good grass near the village, drew near the council fire, without, however, joining in the “talk,” until they were invited to take their seats by the eldest chief. Then Killbuck was [Pg 43] called upon to give his opinion as to the direction in which he judged the Rapahos to be approaching, which he delivered in their own language, with which he was well acquainted. In a short time the council broke up, and, without noise or confusion, a band of one hundred chosen warriors left the village, immediately after one of the scouts had galloped in and communicated some intelligence to the chiefs. Killbuck and La Bonté volunteered to accompany the war-party, weak and exhausted as they were; but this was negatived by the chiefs, who left their white brothers to the care of the women, who tended their wounds, now stiff and painful: and spreading their buffalo robes in a warm and roomy lodge, left them to the repose they so much needed.

---

[Pg 44]

## CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, Killbuck's leg was greatly inflamed, and he was unable to leave the lodge; but he made his companion bring the old mule to the door, that he might give her a couple of ears of Indian corn, the last remains of the slender store brought by the Indians from the Navajo country. The day passed, and sundown brought no tidings of the war-party. This caused no little wailing on the part of the squaws, but was interpreted by the whites as a favourable augury. A little after sunrise, on the second morning, the long line of the returning warriors was discerned winding over the prairie, and a scout having galloped in to bring the news of a great victory, the whole village was soon in a ferment of paint and drumming. A short distance from the lodges, the warriors halted to await the approach of the people. Old men, children, and squaws sitting astride their horses, sallied out to escort the victorious party in triumph to the village. With loud shouts and songs, and drums beating the monotonous Indian time, they advanced and encircled the returning braves, one of whom, his face covered with black paint, carried a pole on which dangled [Pg 45] thirteen scalps, the trophies of the expedition. As he lifted these on high, they were saluted with deafening whoops and cries of exultation and savage joy. In this manner they entered the village, almost before the friends of those fallen in the fight had ascertained their losses. Then the shouts of delight were converted into yells of grief; the mothers and wives of those braves

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

who had been killed (and seven had “gone under”) presently returned with their faces, necks, and hands blackened, and danced and howled round the scalp-pole, which had been deposited in the centre of the village, in front of the lodge of the great chief.

Killbuck now learned that a scout having brought intelligence that the two bands of Rapahos were hastening to form a junction, as soon as they learned that their approach was discovered, the Yutas had successfully prevented it; and attacking one party, had entirely defeated it, killing thirteen of the Rapaho braves. The other party had fled on seeing the issue of the fight, and a few of the Yuta warriors were now pursuing them.

To celebrate so signal a victory, great preparations sounded their notes through the village. Paints,—vermilion and ochres—red and yellow,—were in great request; whilst the scrapings of charred wood, mixed with gunpowder, were used as substitute for black, the medicine colour. The lodges of the village, numbering some two [Pg 46]hundred or more, were erected in parallel lines, and covered a large space of the level prairie in shape of a parallelogram. In the centre, however, the space which half a dozen lodges in length would have taken up was left unoccupied, save by one large one, of red-painted buffalo skins, tattooed with the mystic totems of the “medicine” peculiar to the nation. In front of this stood the grim scalp-pole, like a decayed tree trunk, its bloody fruit tossing in the wind; and on another pole, at a few feet distance, was hung the “bag” with its mysterious contents. Before each lodge a tripod of spears supported the arms and shields of the Yuta chivalry, and on many of them, smoke-dried scalps rattled in the wind, former trophies of the dusky knights who were arming themselves within. Heraldic devices were not wanting,—not, however, graved upon the shield, but hanging from the spear-head, the actual “totem” of the warrior it distinguished. The rattlesnake, the otter, the carcagien, the mountain badger, the war-eagle, the kon-qua-kish, the porcupine, the fox, &c., dangled their well-stuffed skins, displaying the guardian “medicine” of the warriors they pertained to, and representing the mental and corporeal qualities which were supposed to characterise the braves to whom they belonged. From the centre lodge, two or three “medicine men,” fantastically attired in the skins of wolves and bears, and bearing long peeled wands of cherry in [Pg 47]their hands, occasionally emerged to tend a very small fire which they had kindled in the centre of the open space; and, when a thin column of smoke arose, one of them planted the scalp-pole obliquely across the fire. Squaws in robes of white dressed buckskin, garnished with beads and porcupines’ quills, and their faces painted bright red and black, then appeared. These ranged themselves round the outside of the square, the boys and children of all ages, mounted on bare-backed horses, galloping round and round, and screaming with eagerness, excitement, and curiosity.

Presently the braves and warriors made their appearance, and squatted round the fire in two circles, those who had been engaged on the expedition being in the first or smaller one. One medicine man sat under the scalp-pole, having a drum between his knees, which he tapped at intervals with his hand, eliciting from the instrument a hollow monotonous sound. A bevy of women, shoulder to shoulder, then advanced from the four sides of the square, and some, shaking a rattle-drum in time with their steps, commenced a jumping jerking dance, now lifting one foot from the ground, and now rising with both, accompanying the dance with a chant, which swelled from a low whisper to the utmost extent of their voices—now dying away, and again bursting into vociferous measure. Thus they advanced to the centre and retreated to their former positions; when six squaws, with their faces painted a dead [Pg 48]black, made their appearance from the

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

crowd, chanting, in soft and sweet measure, a lament for the braves the nation had lost in the late battle: but soon as they drew near the scalp-pole, their melancholy note changed to the music (to them) of gratified revenge. In a succession of jumps, raising the feet alternately but a little distance from the ground, they made their way, through an interval left in the circle of warriors, to the grim pole, and encircling it, danced in perfect silence round it for a few moments. Then they burst forth with an extempore song, laudatory of the achievements of their victorious braves. They addressed the scalps as "sisters" (to be called a squaw is the greatest insult that can be offered to an Indian), and, spitting at them, upbraided them with their rashness in leaving their lodges to seek for Yuta husbands; "that the Yuta warriors and young men despised them, and chastised them for their forwardness and presumption, bringing back their scalps to their own women."

After sufficiently proving that they had any thing but lost the use of their tongues, but possessed, on the contrary, as fair a length of that formidable weapon as any of their sex, they withdrew, and left the field in undisputed possession of the men: who, accompanied by tap of drum, and by the noise of many rattles, broke out into a war-song, in which their own valour was by no means hidden in a bushel, or modestly refused the light of day. After [Pg 49]this came the more interesting ceremony of a warrior "counting his coups."

A young brave, with his face painted black, mounted on a white horse mysteriously marked with red clay, and naked to the breech-clout, holding in his hand a long taper lance, rode into the circle, and paced slowly round it; then, flourishing his spear on high, he darted to the scalp-pole, round which the warriors were now seated in a semicircle; and in a loud voice, and with furious gesticulations, related his exploits, the drums tapping at the conclusion of each. On his spear hung seven scalps, and holding it vertically above his head, and commencing with the top one, he told the feats in which he had raised the trophy hair. When he had run through these, the drums tapped loudly, and several of the old chiefs shook their rattles, in corroboration of the truth of his achievements. The brave, swelling with pride, then pointed to the fresh and bloody scalps hanging on the pole. Two of these had been torn from the heads of Rapahos struck by his own hand, and this feat, the exploit of the day, had entitled him to the honour of counting his coups. Then, sticking his spear into the ground by the side of the pole, he struck his hand twice on his brawny and naked chest, turned short round, and, swift as the antelope, galloped into the plain: as if overcome by the shock his modesty had received in being obliged to recount his own high-sounding deeds. "Wagh!" exclaimed old Killbuck, as he left the [Pg 50]circle, pointing his pipe-stem towards the fast-fading figure of the brave, "that Injun's heart's about as big as ever it will be, I'm thinking."

With the Yutas, Killbuck and La Bonté remained during the winter; and when the spring sun had opened the ice-bound creeks, and melted the snow on the mountains, and its genial warmth had expanded the earth and permitted the roots of the grass to "live" once more, and throw out green and tender shoots, the two trappers bade adieu to the hospitable Indians, who broke up their village in order to start for the valleys of the Del Norte. As they followed the trail from the bayou, at sundown, just as they thought of camping, they observed ahead of them a solitary horseman riding along, followed by three mules. His hunting-frock of fringed buckskin, and the rifle resting across the horn of his saddle, at once proclaimed him white; but as he saw the mountaineers winding through the cañon, driving before them half a dozen horses, he judged they might possibly be Indians and enemies, the more so as their dress was not the usual costume of the whites. The trappers, therefore, saw the stranger raise the rifle in the hollow of his arm, and, gathering

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

up his horse, ride steadily to meet them, as soon as he observed they were but two; two to one in mountain calculation being scarcely considered odds, if red skin to white.

However, on nearing them, the stranger discovered his mistake; and, throwing his rifle across [Pg 51]the saddle once more, reined in his horse and waited their approach; for the spot where he then stood presented an excellent camping-ground, with abundance of dry wood and convenient water.

“Where from, stranger?”

“The divide, and to the bayou for meat; and you are from there, I see. Any buffalo come in yet?”

“Heap, and seal-fat at that. What’s the sign out on the plains?”

“War-party of Rapahos passed Squirrel at sundown yesterday, and nearly raised my animals. Sign, too, of more on left fork of Boiling Spring. No buffalo between this and Bijou. Do you feel like camping?”

“Well, we do. But whar’s your companyeros?”

“I’m alone.”

“Alone! Wagh! how do you get your animals along?”

“I go ahead, and they follow the horse.”

“Well, that beats all! That’s a smart-looking hos now; and runs some, I’m thinking.”

“Well, it does.”

“Whar’s them mules from? They look like Californy.”

“Mexican country—away down south.”

“H—! Whar’s yourself from?”

“There away, too.”

“What’s beaver worth in Taos?”

“Dollar.”

[Pg 52]

“In Saint Louiy?”

“Same.”

“H—! Any call for buckskin?”

“A heap! The soldiers in Santa Fé are half froze for leather; and moccasins fetch two dollars, easy.”

“Wagh! How’s trade on Arkansa, and what’s doin to the Fort?”

“Shians at Big Timber, and Bent’s people trading smart. On North Fork, Jim Waters got a hundred pack right off, and Sioux making more.”

“Whar’s Bill Williams?”

“Gone under, they say: the Diggers took his hair.”

“How’s powder goin?”

“Two dollars a pint.”

“Bacca?”

“A plew a plug.”

“Got any about you?”

“Have so.”

“Give us a chaw; and now let’s camp.”

Whilst unpacking their own animals, the two trappers could not refrain from glancing, every now and then, with no little astonishment, at the solitary stranger they had so unexpectedly encoun-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

tered. If truth be told, his appearance not a little perplexed them. His hunting-frock of buckskin, shining with grease, and fringed pantaloons, over which the well-greased butcher-knife had evidently been often wiped after cutting his food, or butchering [Pg 53]the carcass of deer and buffalo, were of genuine mountain make. His face, clean shaved, exhibited in its well-tanned and weather-beaten complexion, the effects of such natural cosmetics as sun and wind; and under the mountain hat of felt which covered his head, long uncut hair hung in Indian fashion on his shoulders. All this would have passed muster, had it not been for the most extraordinary equipment of a double-barrelled rifle; which, when it had attracted the eyes of the mountaineers, elicited no little astonishment, not to say derision. But, perhaps, nothing excited their admiration so much as the perfect docility of the stranger's animals; which, almost like dogs, obeyed his voice and call; and albeit that one, in a small sharp head and pointed ears, expanded nostrils, and eye twinkling and malicious, exhibited the personification of a "lurking devil," yet they could not but admire the perfect ease with which even this one, in common with the rest, permitted herself to be handled. Dismounting, and unhitching from the horn of his saddle the coil of skin rope, one end of which was secured round the neck of the horse, he proceeded to unsaddle; and whilst so engaged, the three mules, two of which were packed, one with the unbutchered carcass of a deer, the other with a pack of skins, &c., followed leisurely into the space chosen for the camp, and, cropping the grass at [Pg 54]their ease, waited until a whistle called them to be unpacked.

The horse was a strong square-built bay; and, although the severities of a prolonged winter, with scanty pasture and long and trying travel, had robbed his bones of fat and flesh, tucked up his flank, and "ewed" his neck; still his clean and well-set legs, oblique shoulder, and withers fine as a deer's, in spite of his gaunt half-starved appearance, bore ample testimony as to what he had been; while his clear cheerful eye, and the hearty appetite with which he fell to work on the coarse grass of the bottom, proved that he had something in him still, and was game as ever. His tail, gnawed by the mules in days of strait, attracted the observant mountaineers.

"Hard doins when it come to that," remarked La Bonté.

Between the horse and two of the mules a mutual and great affection appeared to subsist, which was no more than natural, when their master observed to his companions that they had travelled together upwards of two thousand miles.

One of these mules was a short, thick-set, stumpy animal, with an enormous head surmounted by proportionable ears, and a pair of unusually large eyes, beaming the most perfect good temper and docility (most uncommon qualities in a mule.) Her neck was thick, and rendered more so in appearance by [Pg 55]reason of her mane not being roached, (or, in English, hogged), which privilege she alone enjoyed of the trio; and her short, strong legs, ending in small, round, cat-like hoofs, were feathered with a profusion of dark brown hair.

As she stood stock-still, whilst the stranger removed the awkwardly packed deer from her back, she flapped her huge ears backward and forward, occasionally turning her head, and laying her cold nose against her master's cheek. When the pack was removed, he advanced to her head, and resting it on his shoulder, rubbed her broad and grizzled cheeks with both his hands for several minutes, the old mule laying her ears, like a rabbit, back upon her neck, and with half-closed eyes enjoyed mightily the manipulation. Then, giving her a smack upon the haunch, and a "hep-a" well known to the mule kind, the old favourite threw up her heels and cantered off to the horse, who was busily cropping the buffalo grass on the bluff above the stream.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

Great was the contrast between the one just described and the next which came up to be divested of her pack. She, a tall beautifully shaped Mexican mule, of a light mouse colour, with a head like a deer's, and long springy legs, trotted up obedient to the call, but with ears bent back and curled up nose, and tail compressed between her legs. As her pack was being removed, she groaned and whined like a dog, as a thong or loosened strap touched her ticklish body, lifting her hind-quarters [Pg 56] in a succession of jumps or preparatory kicks, and looking wicked as a panther. When nothing but the fore pack-saddle remained, she had worked herself into the last stage; and as the stranger cast loose the girth of buffalo hide, and was about to lift the saddle and draw the crupper from the tail, she drew her hind legs under her, more tightly compressed her tail, and almost shrieked with rage.

"Stand clear," he roared (knowing what was coming), and raised the saddle, when out went her hind legs, up went the pack into the air, and, with it dangling at her heels, away she tore, kicking the offending saddle as she ran. Her master, however, took this as matter of course, followed her and brought back the saddle, which he piled on the others to windward of the fire one of the trappers was kindling. Fire-making is a simple process with the mountaineers. Their bullet-pouches always contain a flint and steel, and sundry pieces of "punk" [16] or tinder; and pulling a handful of dry grass, which they screw into a nest, they place the lighted punk in this, and, closing the grass over it, wave it in the air, when it soon ignites, and readily kindles the dry sticks forming the foundation of the fire.

The tit-bits of the deer the stranger had brought in were soon roasting over the fire; whilst, as soon as the burning logs had deposited a sufficiency of ashes, a hole was raked in them, and the head of [Pg 57] the deer, skin, hair, and all, placed in this primitive oven, and carefully covered with the hot ashes.

A "heap" of "fat meat" in perspective, our mountaineers enjoyed their ante-prandial pipes, recounting the news of the respective regions whence they came; and so well did they like each other's company, so sweet was the "honey-dew" tobacco of which the strange hunter had good store, so plentiful the game about the creek, and so abundant the pasture for their winter-starved animals, that before the carcass of the "two-year" buck had been more than four-fifths consumed; and, although rib after rib had been picked and chucked over their shoulders to the wolves, and one fore leg and the "bit" of all, the head, were still cooked before them,—the three had come to the resolution to join company, and hunt in their present locality for a few days at least—the owner of the "two-shoot" gun volunteering to fill their horns with powder, and find tobacco for their pipes.

Here, on plenty of meat, of venison, bear, and antelope, they merrily luxuriated; returning after their daily hunts to the brightly burning camp-fire, where one always remained to guard the animals, and unloading their packs of meat, (all choicest portions), ate late into the night, and, smoking, wiled away the time in narrating scenes in their hard-spent lives, and fighting their battles o'er again.

The younger of the trappers, he who has figured under the name of La Bonté, had excited, by scraps [Pg 58] and patches from his history, no little curiosity in the stranger's mind to learn the ups and downs of his career; and one night, when they assembled earlier than usual at the fire, he prevailed upon the modest trapper to "unpack" some passages in his wild adventurous life.

"Maybe," commenced the mountaineer, "you both remember when old Ashley went out with the

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

biggest kind of band to trap the Columbia, and head-waters of Missoura and Yellow Stone. Well, that was the time this niggur first felt like taking to the mountains.”

This brings us back to the year of our Lord 1825; and perhaps it will be as well, in order to render La Bonté's mountain language intelligible, to translate it at once into tolerable English, and to tell in the third person, but from his own lips, the scrapes which befell him in a sojourn of more than twenty years in the Far West, and the causes that impelled him to quit the comfort and civilisation of his home, to seek the perilous but engaging life of a trapper of the Rocky Mountains.

La Bonté was raised in the state of Mississippi, not far from Memphis, on the left bank of that huge and snag-filled river. His father was a Saint Louis Frenchman, his mother a native of Tennessee. When a boy, our trapper was “some,” he said, with the rifle, and always had a hankering for the west; particularly when, on accompanying his father to Saint Louis every spring, he saw the different [Pg 59]bands of traders and hunters start upon their annual expeditions to the mountains. Greatly did he envy the independent, insouciant trappers, as, in all the glory of beads and buckskin, they shouldered their rifles at Jake Hawkin's door (the rifle-maker of St Louis), and bade adieu to the cares and trammels of civilised life.

However, like a thoughtless beaver-kitten, he put his foot into a trap one fine day, set by Mary Brand, a neighbour's daughter, and esteemed “some punkins,” or in other words toasted as the beauty of Memphis County, by the susceptible Mississippians. From that moment he was “gone beaver;” “he felt queer,” he said, “all over, like a buffalo shot in the lights; he had no relish for mush and molasses; homminy and johnny cakes failed to excite his appetite. Deer and turkeys ran by him unscathed; he didn't know, he said, whether his rifle had hind-sights or not. He felt bad, that was a fact; but what ailed him he didn't know.”

Mary Brand—Mary Brand—Mary Brand! the old Dutch clock ticked it. Mary Brand! his head throbbed it when he lay down to sleep. Mary Brand! his rifle-lock spoke it plainly when he cocked it, to raise a shaking sight at a deer. Mary Brand, Mary Brand! the whip-poor-will sung it, instead of her own well-known note; the bull-frogs croaked it in the swamp, and mosquitoes droned it in his ear as he tossed about his bed at [Pg 60]night, wakeful, and striving to think what ailed him. Who could that strapping young fellow, who passed the door just now, be going to see? Mary Brand: Mary Brand. And who can Big Pete Herring be dressing that silver fox-skin so carefully for? For whom but Mary Brand? And who is it that jokes, and laughs, and dances, with all the “boys” but him; and why?

Who but Mary Brand: and because the love-sick booby carefully avoids her.

“And Mary Brand herself—what is she like?”

“She's ‘some’ now; that is a fact, and the biggest kind of punkin at that,” would have been the answer from any man, woman, or child in Memphis County, and truly spoken, too; always understanding that the pumpkin is the fruit by which the ne-plus-ultra of female perfection is expressed amongst the figuratively-speaking westerns.

Being an American woman, of course she was tall, and straight and slim as a hickory sapling, well formed withal, with rounded bust, and neck white and slender as the swan's. Her features were small, but finely chiselled; and in this, it may be remarked, the lower orders of the American women differ from, and far surpass the same class in England, or elsewhere, where the features, although far prettier, are more vulgar and commonplace. Mary Brand had the bright blue [Pg 61] eye, thin nose, and small but sweetly-formed mouth, the too fair complexion and dark brown

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

hair, which characterise the beauty of the Anglo-American, the heavy masses (hardly curls), that fell over her face and neck, contrasting with their polished whiteness. Such was Mary Brand: and when to her good looks are added a sweet disposition, and all the best qualities of a thrifty housewife, it must be allowed that she fully justified the eulogiums of the good people of Memphis. Well, to cut a love-story short, in doing which not a little moral courage is shown, young La Bonté fell desperately in love with the pretty Mary, and she with him; and small blame to her, for he was a proper lad of twenty—six feet in his moccasins—the best hunter and rifle-shot in the country, with many other advantages too numerous to mention. But when did the course, &c. éer run smooth? When the affair had become a recognised “courting” (and Americans alone know the horrors of such prolonged purgatory), they became, to use La Bonté’s words, “awful fond,” and consequently about once a-week had their tiffs and makes-up.

However, on one occasion, at a “husking,” and during one of these tiffs, Mary, every inch a woman, to gratify some indescribable feeling, brought to her aid jealousy—that old serpent who has caused such mischief in this world; and by a flirtation over the corn-cobs with Big Pete, La Bonté’s former and only rival, struck so hard a blow at the [Pg 62]latter’s heart, that on the moment his brain caught fire, blood danced before his eyes, and he became like one possessed. Pete observed and enjoyed his struggling emotion—better for him had he minded his corn-shelling alone;—and the more to annoy his rival, paid the most sedulous attention to pretty Mary.

Young La Bonté stood it as long as human nature, at boiling heat, could endure; but when Pete, in the exultation of his apparent triumph, crowned his success by encircling the slender waist of the girl with his arm, and snatching a sudden kiss, he jumped upright from his seat, and seizing a small whisky-keg which stood in the centre of the corn-shellers, he hurled it at his rival, and crying to him, hoarse with passion, “to follow if he was a man,” he left the house.

At that time, and even now, in the remoter states of the western country, rifles settled even the most trivial differences between the hot-blooded youths; and of such frequent occurrence and invariably bloody termination did these encounters become, that they scarcely produced sufficient excitement to draw together half-a-dozen spectators.

In the present case, however, so public was the quarrel, and so well known the parties concerned, that not only the people who had witnessed the affair, but all the neighbourhood, thronged to the scene of action, in a large field in front of the house, where the preliminaries of a duel between [Pg 63]Pete and La Bonté were being arranged by their respective friends.

Mary, when she discovered the mischief her thoughtlessness was likely to occasion, was almost beside herself with grief, but she knew how vain it would be to attempt to interfere. The poor girl, who was most ardently attached to La Bonté, was carried, swooning, into the house, where all the women congregated, and were locked in by old Brand, who, himself an old pioneer, thought but little of bloodshed, but refused to let the “women folk” witness the affray.

Preliminaries arranged, the combatants took up their respective positions at either end of a space marked for the purpose, at forty paces from each other. They were both armed with heavy rifles, and had the usual hunting-pouches, containing ammunition, hanging over the shoulder. Standing with the butts of their rifles on the ground, they confronted each other, and the crowd drawing away a few paces only on each side, left one man to give the word. This was the single word “fire;” and, after this signal was given, the combatants were at liberty to fire away until one or the other dropped.

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

At the word, both the men quickly raised their rifles to the shoulder, and, whilst the sharp cracks instantaneously rang, they were seen to flinch, as either felt the pinging sensation of a bullet entering his flesh. Regarding each other steadily for a few [Pg 64]moments, the blood running down La Bonté's neck from a wound under the left jaw, whilst his opponent was seen to place his hand once to his right breast, as if to feel the position of his wound, they commenced reloading their rifles. But, as Pete was in the act of forcing down the ball with his long hickory wiping-stick, he suddenly dropped his right arm—the rifle slipped from his grasp—and, reeling for a moment like a drunken man—he fell dead to the ground.

Even here, however, there was law of some kind or another, and the consequences of the duel were, that the constables were soon on the trail of La Bonté to arrest him. He easily avoided them, and taking to the woods, lived for several days in as wild a state as the beasts he hunted and killed for his support.

Tired of this, he at last resolved to quit the country, and betake himself to the mountains, for which life he had ever felt an inclination.

When, therefore, he thought the officers of justice had grown slack in their search of him, and that the coast was comparatively clear, he determined to start on his distant expedition to the Far West.

Once more, before he carried his project into execution, he sought and obtained a last interview with Mary Brand.

“Mary,” said he, “I’m about to break. They’re hunting me like a fall buck, and I’m bound to quit. [Pg 65]Don’t think any more about me, for I shall never come back.”

Poor Mary burst into tears, and bent her head on the table near which she sat. When she again raised it, she saw La Bonté, his long rifle upon his shoulder, striding with rapid steps from the house. Year after year rolled on, and he did not return.

---

[Pg 66]

## CHAPTER III.

A few days after his departure, La Bonté found himself at St Louis, the emporium of the fur trade, and the fast-rising metropolis of the precocious settlements of the west. Here, a prey to the agony of mind which jealousy, remorse, and blighted love mix into a very puchero of misery, he got into the company of certain “rowdies,” a class that every western city particularly abounds in; and, anxious to drown his sorrows in any way, and quite unscrupulous as to the means, he plunged into all the vicious excitements of drinking, gambling, and fighting, which form the every-day amusements of the rising generation of St Louis.

Perhaps in no other part of the United States, where indeed humanity is frequently to be seen in many curious and unusual phases, is there a population so marked in its general character, and at the same time divided into such distinct classes, as in the above-named city. Dating, as it does, its foundation from yesterday—for what are thirty years in the growth of a metropolis?—its founders are now scarcely passed middle life, regarding with astonishment the growing works of their hands; [Pg 67]and whilst gazing upon its busy quays, piled with grain and other produce of the west, its fleets of huge steamboats lying tier upon tier alongside the wharves, its well-stored warehouses, and all the bustling concomitants of a great commercial depôt, they can scarcely realise the memory of a few short years, when on the same spot nothing was to be seen but the miserable

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

hovels of a French village—the only sign of commerce being the unwieldy bateaux of the Indian traders, laden with peltries from the distant regions of the Platte and Upper Missouri. Where now intelligent and wealthy merchants walk erect, in conscious substantiality of purse and credit, and direct the commerce of a vast and well-peopled region, there stalked but the other day, in dress of buckskin, the Indian trader of the west; and all the evidences of life, mayhap, consisted of the eccentric vagaries of the different bands of trappers and hardy mountaineers, who accompanied, some for pleasure and some as escort, the periodically arriving bateaux, laden with the beaver skins and buffalo robes collected during the season at the different trading posts in the Far West. These, nevertheless, were the men whose hardy enterprise opened to commerce and the plough the vast and fertile regions of the West. Rough and savage though they were, they were the true pioneers of that extraordinary tide of civilisation which has poured its resistless current through tracts large [Pg 68]enough for kings to govern, over a country now teeming with cultivation, where, a few short years ago, countless herds of buffalo roamed unmolested, where the bear and deer abounded, and the savage Indian skulked through the woods and prairies, lord of the unappreciated soil that now yields its prolific treasures to the spade and plough of civilised man. To the wild and half-savage trapper, who may be said to exemplify the energy, enterprise, and hardihood characteristic of the American people, divested of all the false and vicious glare with which a high state of civilisation, too rapidly attained, has obscured their real and genuine character, in which the above traits are eminently prominent—to these men alone is due the empire of the West—destined in a few short years to become the most important of those confederate states composing the mighty union of North America.

Sprung, then, out of the wild and adventurous fur trade, St Louis, still the emporium of that species of commerce, preserves even now, in the character of its population, many of the marked peculiarities distinguishing its early founders, who were identified with the primitive Indian in hardihood and instinctive wisdom. Whilst the French portion of the population retain the thoughtless levity and frivolous disposition of their original source, the Americans of St Louis, who may lay claim to be native, as it were, are as strongly distinguished for determination and energy of character as they are for physical [Pg 69]strength and animal courage; and are remarkable, at the same time, for a singular aptitude in carrying out commercial enterprises to successful terminations, apparently incompatible with the thirst of adventure and excitement which forms so prominent a feature in their character. In St Louis and with her merchants have originated many commercial enterprises of gigantic speculation, not confined to the immediate locality or to the distant Indian fur trade, but embracing all parts of the continent, and even a portion of the Old World. And here it must be remembered that St Louis is situated inland, at a distance of upwards of one thousand miles from the sea, and three thousand from the capital of the United States. Besides her merchants and upper class, who form a little aristocracy even here, a large portion of her population, still connected with the Indian and fur trade, preserve all their original characteristics, unacted upon by the influence of advancing civilisation. There is, moreover, a large floating population of foreigners of all nations, who must possess no little amount of enterprise to be tempted to this spot, whence they spread over the remote western tracts, still infested by the savage; so that, if any of their blood is infused into the native population, the characteristic energy and enterprise is increased, and not tempered down by the foreign cross.

But perhaps the most singular of the casual population are the mountaineers, who, after several

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

seasons [Pg 70] spent in trapping, and with good store of dollars, arrive from the scene of their adventures, wild as savages, determined to enjoy themselves, for a time, in all the gaiety and dissipation of the western city. In one of the back streets of the town is a tavern well known as the "Rocky-Mountain House," and hither the trappers resort, drinking and fighting as long as their money lasts, which, as they are generous and lavish as Jack Tars, is for a few days only. Such scenes, both tragic and comic, as are enacted in the Rocky-Mountain House, are beyond the powers of pen to describe; and when a fandango is in progress, to which congregate the coquettish belles from "Vide Poche," as the French portion of the suburb is nicknamed,—the grotesque endeavours of the bear-like mountaineers to sport a figure on the light fantastic toe, and their insertions into the dance of the mystic jumps of Terpsichorean Indians when engaged in the "medicine" dances in honour of bear, of buffalo, or ravished scalp,—are such startling innovations on the choreographic art as would make the shade of Gallini quake and gibber in his pumps. Passing the open doors and windows of the Mountain House, the stranger stops short as the sounds of violin and banjo twang upon his ears, accompanied by extraordinary noises—sounding unearthly to the greenhorn listener, but recognised by the initiated as an Indian song roared out of the stentorian lungs of a mountaineer, who patting his stomach with [Pg 71] open hands, to improve the necessary shake, choruses the well-known Indian chant:—

Hi—Hi—Hi—Hi,

Hi-i—Hi-i—Hi-i—Hi-i

Hi-ya—hi-ya—hi-ya—hi-ya

Hi-ya—hi-ya—hi-ya—hi-ya

Hi-ya—hi-ya—hi—hi,

&c. &c. &c.

and polishes off the high notes with a whoop which makes the old wooden houses shake again, as it rattles and echoes down the street.

Here, over fiery "monaghahela," Jean Batiste, the sallow half-breed voyageur from the north—and who, deserting the service of the "North West" (the Hudson's Bay Company), has come down the Mississippi, from the "Falls," to try the sweets and liberty of "free" trapping—hobnobs with a stalwart leather-clad "boy," just returned from trapping on the waters of Grand River, on the western side the mountains, who interlards his mountain jargon with Spanish words picked up in Taos and California. In one corner a trapper, lean and gaunt from the starving regions of the Yellow Stone, has just recognised an old companyero, with whom he hunted years before in the perilous country of the Blackfeet.

"Why, John, old hos, how do you come on?"

"What! Meek, old 'coon! I thought you were under?"

One from Arkansa stalks into the centre of the [Pg 72] room, with a pack of cards in his hand, and a handful of dollars in his hat. Squatting cross-legged on a buffalo robe, he smacks down the money, and cries out—"Ho, boys, hyar's a deck, and hyar's the beaver (rattling the coin), who dar set his hos? Wagh!"

Tough are the yarns of wondrous hunts and Indian perils, of hairbreadth 'scapes and curious "fixes." Transcendant are the qualities of sundry rifles, which call these hunters masters; "plum" is the "centre" each vaunted barrel shoots; sufficing for a hundred wigs is the "hair" each hunter has "lifted" from Indians' scalps; multitudinous the "coups" he has "struck." As they drink so do they

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

brag, first of their guns, their horses, and their squaws, and lastly of themselves:—and when it comes to that, “ware steel.”

La Bonté, on his arrival at St Louis, found himself one day in no less a place than this; and here he made acquaintance with an old trapper about to start for the mountains in a few days, to hunt on the head waters of Platte and Green River. With this man he resolved to start, and, having still some hundred dollars in cash, he immediately set about equipping himself for the expedition. To effect this, he first of all visited the gun-store of Hawken, whose rifles are renowned in the mountains, and exchanged his own piece, which was of very small bore, for a regular mountain rifle. This was of very heavy metal, carrying about thirty-two balls [Pg 73] to the pound, stocked to the muzzle, and mounted with brass, its only ornament being a buffalo bull, looking exceedingly ferocious, which was not very artistically engraved upon the trap in the stock. Here, too, he laid in a few pounds of powder and lead, and all the necessaries for a long hunt.

His next visit was to a smith's store, which smith was black by trade and black by nature, for he was a nigger, and, moreover, celebrated as being the best maker of beaver-traps in St Louis, and of him he purchased six new traps, paying for the same twenty dollars—procuring, at the same time, an old trap-sack, made of stout buffalo skin, in which to carry them.

We next find La Bonté and his companion—one Luke, better known as Grey-Eye, one of his eyes having been “gouged” in a mountain fray—at Independence, a little town situated on the Missouri, several hundred miles above St Louis, and within a short distance of the Indian frontier. Independence may be termed the “prairie port” of the western country. Here the caravans destined for Santa Fé, and the interior of Mexico, assemble to complete their necessary equipment. Mules and oxen are purchased, teamsters hired, and all stores and outfit laid in here for the long journey over the wide expanse of prairie ocean. Here, too, the Indian traders and the Rocky-Mountain trappers rendezvous, collecting in sufficient force to ensure their safe passage through the [Pg 74] Indian country. At the seasons of departure and arrival of these bands, the little town presents a lively scene of bustle and confusion. The wild and dissipated mountaineers get rid of their last dollars in furious orgies, treating all comers to galore of drink, and pledging each other, in horns of potent whisky, to successful hunts and “heaps of beaver.” When every cent has disappeared from their pouches, the free trapper often makes away with rifle, traps, and animals, to gratify his “dry” (for your mountaineer is never “thirsty”); and then, “hos and beaver” gone, is necessitated to hire himself to one of the leaders of big bands, and hypothecate his services for an equipment of traps and animals. Thus La Bonté picked up three excellent mules for a mere song, with their accompanying pack-saddles, apishamores, [17] and lariats, and the next day, with Luke, “put out” for Platte.

As they passed through the rendezvous, which was encamped on a little stream beyond the town, even our young Mississippian was struck with the novelty of the scene. Upwards of forty huge waggons, of Conostoga and Pittsburg build, and covered with snow-white tilts, were ranged in a semicircle, or rather a horse-shoe form, on the flat open prairie, their long “tongues” (poles) pointing outwards; with the necessary harness for four [Pg 75] pairs of mules, or eight yoke of oxen, lying on the ground beside them, spread in ready order for “hitching up.” Round the waggons groups of teamsters, tall stalwart young Missourians, were engaged in busy preparation for the start, greasing the wheels, fitting or repairing harness, smoothing ox-bows, or overhauling their own moderate kits or “possibles.” They were all dressed in the same fashion: a pair of

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

“homespun” pantaloons, tucked into thick boots reaching nearly to the knee, and confined round the waist by a broad leathern belt, which supported a strong butcher-knife in a sheath. A coarse checked shirt was their only other covering, with a fur cap on the head.

Numerous camp-fires surrounded the waggons, and near them lounged wild-looking mountaineers, easily distinguished from the “greenhorn” teamsters by their dresses of buckskin, and their weather-beaten faces. Without an exception, these were under the influence of the rosy god; and one, who sat, the picture of misery, at a fire by himself—staring into the blaze with vacant countenance, his long matted hair hanging in unkempt masses over his face, begrimed with the dirt of a week, and pallid with the effects of ardent drink—was suffering from the usual consequences of having “kept it up” beyond the usual point, paying the penalty in a fit of “horrors”—as delirium tremens is most aptly termed by sailors and the unprofessional.

[Pg 76]

In another part, the merchants of the caravan and the Indian traders superintended the lading of the waggons, or mule packs. They were dressed in civilised attire, and some were even bedizened in St Louis or Eastern City dandyism, to the infinite disgust of the mountain men, who look upon a bourge-way (bourgeois) with most undisguised contempt, despising the very simplest forms of civilisation. The picturesque appearance of the encampment was not a little heightened by the addition of several Indians from the neighbouring Shawnee settlement, who, mounted on their small active horses, on which they reclined, rather than sat, in negligent attitudes, quietly looked on at the novel scene, indifferent to the “chaff” in which the thoughtless teamsters indulged at their expense. Numbers of mules and horses were picketed at hand, whilst a large herd of noble oxen were being driven towards the camp—the wo-ha of the teamsters sounding far and near, as they collected the scattered beasts in order to yoke up.

As most of the mountain men were utterly unable to move from camp, Luke and La Bonté, with three or four of the most sober, started in company, intending to wait on “Blue,” a stream which runs into the Caw or Kansas River, until the “balance” of the band came up. Mounting their mules, and leading the loose animals, they struck at once into the park-like prairie, and were speedily out of sight of civilisation.

[Pg 77]

It was the latter end of May, towards the close of the season of heavy rains, which in early spring render the climate of this country almost intolerable, at the same time that they fertilise and thaw the soil, so long bound up by the winter’s frosts. The grass was every where luxuriantly green, and gaudy flowers dotted the surface of the prairie. This term, however, should hardly be applied to the beautiful undulating scenery of this park-like country. Unlike the flat monotony of the Grand Plains, here well wooded uplands, clothed with forest trees of every species, and picturesque dells, through which run clear bubbling streams belted with gay-blossomed shrubs, every where present themselves; whilst on the level meadow-land, topes of trees with spreading foliage afford a shelter to the game and cattle, and well-timbered knolls rise at intervals from the plain.

Many clear streams dashing over their pebbly beds intersect the country, from which, in the noon-day’s heat, the red-deer jump, shaking their wet sides, as the noise of approaching man disturbs them; and booming grouse rise from the tall luxuriant herbage at every step. Where the deep escarpments of the river banks exhibit the section of the earth, a rich alluvial soil of surpassing depth courts the cultivation of civilised man; and in every feature it is evident that here nature

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

has worked with kindest and most bountiful hand.

For hundreds of miles along the western or right [Pg 78]bank of the Missouri does a country extend, with which, for fertility and natural resources, no part of Europe can stand comparison. Sufficiently large to contain an enormous population, it has, besides, every advantage of position, and all the natural capabilities which should make it the happy abode of civilised man. Through this unpeopled country the United States pours her greedy thousands, to seize upon the barren territories of her feeble neighbour.

Camping the first night on "Black Jack," our mountaineers here cut each man a spare hickory wip-  
ing-stick for his rifle; and La Bonté, who was the only greenhorn of the party, witnessed a savage ebullition of rage on the part of one of his companions, exhibiting the perfect unrestraint which these men impose upon their passions, and the barbarous anger which the slightest opposition to their will excites. One of the trappers, on arriving at the camping-place, dismounted from his horse, and, after divesting it of the saddle, endeavoured to lead his mule by the rope up to the spot where he wished to deposit his pack. Mule-like, however, the more he pulled the more stubbornly she remained in her tracks, planting her fore-legs firmly, and stretching out her neck with provoking obstinacy. Truth to tell, it does require the temper of a thousand Jobs to manage a mule; and in no case does the wilful mulishness of the animal stir up one's choler more than in the very [Pg 79]trick this one played, and which is a daily occurrence. After tugging ineffectually for several minutes, winding the rope round his body, and throwing himself suddenly forward with all his strength, the trapper actually foamed with passion; and although he might have subdued the animal at once by fastening the rope with a half-hitch round its nose, this, with an obstinacy equal to that of the mule itself, he refused to attempt, preferring to vanquish her by main strength. Failing so to do, the mountaineer, with a volley of blasphemous imprecations, suddenly seized his rifle, and levelling it at the mule's head, shot her dead.

Passing the Wa-ka-rasha, a well-timbered stream, they met a band of Osages going "to buffalo." These Indians, in common with some tribes of the Pawnees, shave the head, with the exception of a ridge from the forehead to the centre of the scalp, which is "roached" or hogged like the mane of a mule, and stands erect, plastered with unguents, and ornamented with feathers of the hawk and turkey. The naked scalp is often painted in mosaic with black and red, the face with shining vermilion. This band were all naked to the breech-clout, the warmth of the sun having made them throw their dirty blankets from their shoulders. These Indians not unfrequently levy contributions on the strangers they accidentally meet; but they easily distinguish the determined mountaineer [Pg 80]from the incautious greenhorn, and think it better to let the former alone.

Crossing Vermilion, the trappers arrived on the fifth day at "Blue," where they encamped in the broad timber belting the creek, and there awaited the arrival of the remainder of the party.

It was two days before they came up; but the following day they started for the mountains, fourteen in number, striking a trail which follows the "Big Blue" in its course through the prairies, which, as they advanced to the westward, gradually smoothed away into a vast unbroken expanse of rolling plain. Herds of antelope began to show themselves, and some of the hunters, leaving the trail, soon returned with plenty of their tender meat. The luxuriant but coarse grass they had hitherto seen now changed into the nutritious and curly buffalo grass, and their animals soon improved in appearance on the excellent pasture. In a few days, without any adventure, they struck the Platte River, its shallow waters (from which it derives its name) spreading over a wide and

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

sandy bed, numerous sand bars obstructing the sluggish current, nowhere sufficiently deep to wet the forder's knee.

By this time, but few antelope having been seen, the party ran entirely out of meat; and, one whole day and part of another having passed without so much as a stray rabbit presenting itself, not a few [Pg 81]objurgations on the buffalo grumbled from the lips of the hunters, who expected ere this to have reached the land of plenty. La Bonté killed a fine deer, however, in the river bottom, after they had encamped, not one particle of which remained after supper that night, but which hardly took the rough edge off their keen appetites. Although already in the buffalo range, no traces of these animals had yet been seen; and as the country afforded but little game, and the party did not care to halt and lose time in hunting for it, they moved along hungry and sulky, the theme of conversation being the well remembered merits of good buffalo meat,—of “fat fleece,” “hump rib,” and “tender loin;” of delicious “boudins,” and marrow bones too good to think of. La Bonté had never seen the lordly animal, and consequently but half believed the accounts of the mountaineers, who described their countless bands as covering the prairie far as the eye could reach, and requiring days of travel to pass through; but the visions of such dainty and abundant feeding as they descanted on set his mouth watering, and danced before his eyes as he slept supperless, night after night, on the banks of the hungry Platte.

One morning he had packed his animals before the rest, and was riding a mile in advance of the party, when he saw on one side the trail, looming in the refracted glare which mirages the plains, three large dark objects without shape or form, which rose and fell in the exaggerated light like [Pg 82]ships at sea. Doubting what it could be, he approached the strange objects; and as the refraction disappeared before him, the dark masses assumed a more distinct form, and clearly moved with life. A little nearer, and he made them out—they were buffalo. Thinking to distinguish himself, the greenhorn dismounted from his mule, and quickly hobbled her, throwing his lasso on the ground to trail behind when he wished to catch her. Then, rifle in hand, he approached the huge animals, and, being a good hunter, knew well to take advantage of the inequalities of the ground and face the wind; by which means he crawled at length to within forty yards of the buffalo, which quietly cropped the grass, unconscious of danger. Now, for the first time, he gazed upon the noble beast he had so often heard of, and longed to see. With coal-black beard sweeping the ground as he fed, an enormous bull was in advance of the others, his wild brilliant eyes peering from an immense mass of shaggy hair, which covered his neck and shoulder. From this point his skin was smooth as one's hand, a sleek and shining dun, and his ribs were well covered with shaking flesh. Whilst leisurely cropping the short curly grass he occasionally lifted his tail into the air, and stamped his foot as a fly or mosquito annoyed him—flapping the intruder with his tail, or snatching at the itching part with his ponderous head.

When La Bonté had sufficiently admired the buffalo, he lifted his rifle, and, taking steady aim, [Pg 83]and certain of his mark, pulled the trigger, expecting to see the huge beast fall over at the report. What was his surprise and consternation, however, to see the animal only flinch when the ball struck him, and then gallop off, followed by the others, apparently unhurt. As is generally the case with greenhorns, he had fired too high, ignorant that the only certain spot to strike a buffalo is but a few inches above the brisket, and that a higher shot is rarely fatal. When he rose from the ground, he saw all the party halting in full view of his discomfiture; and when he joined them, loud were the laughs, and deep the regrets of the hungry at his first attempt.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

However, they now knew that they were in the country of meat; and a few miles farther, another band of stragglers presenting themselves, three of the hunters went in pursuit, La Bonté taking a mule to pack in the meat. He soon saw them crawling towards the band, and shortly two puffs of smoke, and the sharp cracks of their rifles, showed that they had got within shot; and when he rode up, two fine buffaloes were stretched upon the ground. Now, for the first time, he was initiated in the mysteries of “butchering.” He watched the hunters as they turned the carcass on the belly, stretching out the legs to support it on each side. A transverse cut was then made at the nape of the neck, and, gathering the long hair of the boss in one hand, the skin was separated from the shoulder. It was then laid [Pg 84] open from this point to the tail, along the spine, and then, freed from the sides and pulled down to the brisket, but still attached to it, was stretched upon the ground to receive the dissected portions. Then the shoulder was severed, the fleece removed from along the backbone, and the hump-ribs cut off with a tomahawk. All this was placed upon the skin; and after the “boudins” had been withdrawn from the stomach, and the tongue—a great dainty—taken from the head, the meat was packed upon the mule, and the whole party hurried to camp rejoicing.

There was merry-making in the camp that night, and the way they indulged their appetites—or, in their own language, “throw’d” the meat “cold”—would have made the heart of a dyspeptic leap for joy or burst with envy. Far into the “still watches of the tranquil night” the fat-clad “depouille” saw its fleshy mass grow small by degrees and beautifully less, before the trenchant blades of the hungry mountaineers; appetising yards of well-browned “boudin” slipped glibly down their throats; rib after rib of tender hump was picked and flung to the wolves; and when human nature, with helpless gratitude, and confident that nothing of superexcellent comestibility remained, was lazily wiping the greasy knife that had done such good service,—a skilful hunter was seen to chuckle to himself as he raked the deep ashes of the fire, and drew therefrom a pair of tongues so admirably baked, so soft, so sweet, and of such exquisite flavour, that a veil is [Pg 85] considerably drawn over the effects their discussion produced in the mind of our greenhorn La Bonté, and the raptures they excited in the bosom of that, as yet, most ignorant mountaineer. Still, as he ate he wondered, and wondering admired, that nature, in giving him such profound gastronomic powers, and such transcendent capabilities of digestion, had yet bountifully provided an edible so peculiarly adapted to his ostrich-like appetite, that after consuming nearly his own weight in rich and fat buffalo meat, he felt as easy and as little incommoded as if he had lightly supped on strawberries and cream.

Sweet was the digestive pipe after such a feast; soft was the sleep and deep, which sealed the eyes of the contented trappers that night. It felt like the old thing, they said, to be once more amongst the “meat;” and, as they were drawing near the dangerous portion of the trail, they felt at home; although they now could never be confident, when they lay down at night upon their buffalo robes, of awaking again in this life, knowing, as they did, full well, that savage men lurked near, thirsting for their blood.

However, no enemies showed themselves as yet, and they proceeded quietly up the river, vast herds of buffaloes darkening the plains around them, affording them more than abundance of the choicest meat; but, to their credit be it spoken, no more was killed than was absolutely required,—unlike the cruel slaughter made by most of the white travellers across [Pg 86] the plains, who wantonly destroy these noble animals, not even for the excitement of sport, but in cold-blooded

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

and insane butchery. La Bonté had practice enough to perfect him in the art, and, before the buffalo range was passed, he was ranked as a first-rate hunter. One evening he had left the camp for meat, and was approaching a band of cows for that purpose, crawling towards them along the bed of a dry hollow in the prairie, when he observed them suddenly jump towards him, and immediately afterwards a score of mounted Indians appeared, whom, by their dress, he at once knew to be Pawnees and enemies. Thinking they might not discover him, he crouched down in the ravine; but a noise behind caused him to turn his head, and he saw some five or six advancing up the bed of the dry creek, whilst several more were riding on the bluffs. The cunning savages had cut off his retreat to his mule, which he saw in the possession of one of them. His presence of mind, however, did not desert him; and seeing at once that to remain where he was would be like being caught in a trap (as the Indians could advance to the edge of the bluff and shoot him from above), he made for the open prairie, determined at least to sell his scalp dearly, and make "a good fight." With a yell the Indians charged, but halted when they saw the sturdy trapper deliberately kneel, and, resting his rifle on the wiping-stick, take a steady aim as they advanced. Full well the Pawnees know, to their cost, that a [Pg 87] mountaineer seldom pulls his trigger without sending a bullet to the mark; and, certain that one at least must fall, they hesitated to make the onslaught. Steadily the white retreated with his face to the foe, bringing the rifle to his shoulder the instant that one advanced within shot, the Indians galloping round, firing the few guns they had amongst them at long distances, but without effect. One young "brave," more daring than the rest, rode out of the crowd, and dashed at the hunter, throwing himself, as he passed within a few yards, from the saddle, and hanging over the opposite side of his horse, thus presenting no other mark than his left foot. As he crossed La Bonté, he discharged his bow from under his horse's neck, and with such good aim, that the arrow, whizzing through the air, struck the stock of the hunter's rifle, which was at his shoulder, and, glancing off, pierced his arm, inflicting, luckily, but a slight wound. Again the Indian turned in his course, the others encouraging him with loud war-whoops, and, once more passing at still less distance, he drew his arrow to the head. This time, however, the eagle eye of the white detected the action, and suddenly rising from his knee as the Indian approached (hanging by his foot alone over the opposite side of the horse), he jumped towards the animal with outstretched arms and a loud yell, causing it to start suddenly, and swerve from its course. The Indian lost his foot-hold, and, after a fruitless struggle to regain his position, fell to the [Pg 88]ground; but instantly rose upon his feet and gallantly confronted the mountaineer, striking his hand upon his brawny chest and shouting a loud whoop of defiance. In another instant the rifle of La Bonté had poured forth its contents; and the brave savage, springing into the air, fell dead to the ground, just as the other trappers, who had heard the firing, galloped up to the spot. At sight of them the Pawnees, with yells of disappointed vengeance, hastily retreated.

That night La Bonté first lifted hair!

A few days later the mountaineers reached the point where the Platte divides into two great forks: the northern one, stretching to the north-west, skirts the eastern base of the Black Hills, and sweeping round to the south rises in the vicinity of the mountain valley called the New Park, receiving the Laramie, Medicine Bow, and Sweet-Water creeks. The other, or "South Fork," strikes towards the mountains in a south-westerly direction, hugging the base of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains; and, fed by several small creeks, rises in the uplands of the Bayou Salade, near which is also the source of the Arkansa. To the forks of the Platte the valley of that river extends

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

from three to five miles on each side, enclosed by steep sandy bluffs, from the summits of which the prairies stretch away in broad undulating expanse to the north and south. The “bottom,” as it is termed, is but thinly covered with timber, the cotton-woods [Pg 89]being scattered only here and there; but some of the islands in the broad bed of the stream are well wooded, leading to the inference that the trees on the banks have been felled by Indians who formerly frequented the neighbourhood of this river as a chosen hunting-ground. As, during the long winters, the pasture in the vicinity is scarce and withered, the Indians feed their horses on the bark of the sweet cotton-wood, upon which they subsist, and even fatten. Thus, wherever a village has encamped, the trunks of these trees strew the ground, their upper limbs and smaller branches peeled of their bark, and looking as white and smooth as if scraped with a knife.

On the forks, however, the timber is heavier and of greater variety, some of the creeks being well wooded with ash and cherry, which break the monotony of the everlasting cotton-wood.

Dense masses of buffalo still continued to darken the plains, and numerous bands of wolves hovered round the outskirts of the vast herds, singling out the sick and wounded animals, and preying upon such calves as the rifles and arrows of the hunters had bereaved of their mothers. The white wolf is the invariable attendant upon the buffalo; and when one of these persevering animals is seen, it is certain sign that buffalo are not far distant. Besides the buffalo wolf, there are four distinct varieties common to the plains, and all more or less attendant upon the buffalo. These are, the black, the [Pg 90]gray, the brown, and last and least the coyote, or cayeute of the mountaineers, the “wach-unka-mănet,” or “medicine wolf” of the Indians, who hold the latter animal in reverential awe. This little wolf, whose fur is of great thickness and beauty, is of diminutive size, but wonderfully sagacious, making up by cunning what it wants in physical strength. In bands of from three to thirty they not unfrequently station themselves along the “runs” of the deer and the antelope, extending their line for many miles—and the quarry being started, each wolf follows in pursuit until tired, when it relinquishes the chase to another relay, following slowly after until the animal is fairly run down, when all hurry to the spot and speedily consume the carcass. The cayeute, however, is often made a tool of by his larger brethren, unless, indeed, he acts from motives of spontaneous charity. When a hunter has slaughtered game, and is in the act of butchering it, these little wolves sit patiently at a short distance from the scene of operations, while at a more respectful one the larger wolves (the white or gray) lope hungrily around, licking their chops in hungry expectation. Not unfrequently the hunter throws a piece of meat towards the smaller one, who seizes it immediately, and runs off with the morsel in his mouth. Before he gets many yards with his prize, the large wolf pounces with a growl upon him, and the cayeute, dropping the meat, returns to his former position, and will [Pg 91]continue his charitable act as long as the hunter pleases to supply him.

Wolves are so common on the plains and in the mountains, that the hunter never cares to throw away a charge of ammunition upon them, although the ravenous animals are a constant source of annoyance to him, creeping to the camp-fire at night, and gnawing his saddles and apishamores, eating the skin ropes which secure the horses and mules to their pickets, and even their very hobbles, and not unfrequently killing or entirely disabling the animals themselves.

Round the camp, during the night, the cayeute keeps unremitting watch, and the traveller not unfrequently starts from his bed with affright, as the mournful and unearthly chiding of the wolf breaks suddenly upon his ear: the long-drawn howl being taken up by others of the band, until it

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

dies away in the distance, or some straggler passing within hearing answers to the note, and howls as he lopes away.

Our party crossed the south fork about ten miles from its juncture with the main stream, and then, passing the prairie, struck the north fork a day's travel from the other. At the mouth of an ash-timbered creek they came upon Indian "sign," and, as now they were in the vicinity of the treacherous Sioux, they moved along with additional caution, Frapp and Gonneville, two experienced mountaineers, always heading the advance.

[Pg 92]

About noon they had crossed over to the left bank of the fork, intending to camp on a large creek where some fresh beaver "sign" had attracted the attention of some of the trappers; and as, on further examination, it appeared that two or three lodges of that animal were not far distant, it was determined to remain here a day or two, and set their traps.

Gonneville, old Luke, and La Bonté, had started up the creek, and were carefully examining the banks for "sign," when the former, who was in front, suddenly paused, and looking intently up the stream, held up his hand to his companions to signal them to stop.

Luke and La Bonté both followed the direction of the trapper's intent and fixed gaze. The former uttered in a suppressed tone the expressive exclamation, Wagh!—the latter saw nothing but a wood-duck swimming swiftly down the stream, followed by her downy progeny.

Gonneville turned his head, and extending his arm twice with a forward motion up the creek, whispered—"Les sauvages."

"Injuns, sure, and Sioux at that," answered Luke.

Still La Bonté looked, but nothing met his view but the duck with her brood, now rapidly approaching; and as he gazed, the bird suddenly took wing, and, flapping on the water, flew a short distance down the stream and once more settled on it.

[Pg 93]

"Injuns?" he asked; "where are they?"

"Whar?" repeated old Luke, striking the flint of his rifle, and opening the pan to examine the priming. "What brings a duck a-streakin it down stream, if humans aint behint her? and who's thar in these diggins but Injuns, and the worst kind? and we'd better push to camp, I'm thinking, if we mean to save our hair."

"Sign" sufficient, indeed, it was to all the trappers, who, on being apprised of it, instantly drove in their animals, and picketed them; and hardly had they done so when a band of Indians made their appearance on the banks of the creek, from whence they galloped to the bluff which overlooked the camp at the distance of about six hundred yards; and crowning this, in number some forty or more, commenced brandishing their spears and guns, and whooping loud yells of defiance. The trappers had formed a little breast-work of their packs, forming a semicircle, the chord of which was made by the animals standing in a line, side by side, closely picketed and hobbled. Behind this defence stood the mountaineers, rifle in hand, and silent and determined. The Indians presently descended the bluff on foot, leaving their animals in charge of a few of the party, and, scattering, advanced under cover of the sage bushes which dotted the bottom, to about two hundred yards of the whites. Then a chief advanced before the rest, and made the sign for a talk with the Long-knives, [Pg 94] which led to a consultation amongst the latter, as to the policy of acceding to it. They were in doubts as to the nation these Indians belonged to, some bands of the Sioux being

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

friendly, and others bitterly hostile to the whites.

Gonneville, who spoke the Sioux language, and was well acquainted with the nation, affirmed they belonged to a band called the Yanka-taus, well known to be the most evil-disposed of that treacherous nation; another of the party maintained they were Brulés, and that the chief advancing towards them was the well-known Tah-sha-tunga or Bull Tail, a most friendly chief of that tribe. The majority, however, trusted to Gonneville, and he volunteered to go out to meet the Indian, and hear what he had to say. Divesting himself of all arms save his butcher-knife, he advanced towards the savage, who awaited his approach, enveloped in the folds of his blanket. At a glance he knew him to be a Yanka-tau, from the peculiar make of his moccasins, and the way in which his face was daubed with paint.

“Howgh!” exclaimed both as they met; and, after a silence of a few moments, the Indian spoke, asking—“Why the Long-knives hid behind their packs, when his band approached? Were they afraid, or were they preparing a dog-feast to entertain their friends?” The whites were passing through his country, burning his wood, drinking his water, and killing his game; but he knew they had now [Pg 95] come to pay for the mischief they had done, and that the mules and horses they had brought with them were intended as a present to their red friends.

“He was Mah-to-ga-shane,” he said, “the Brave Bear: his tongue was short, but his arm long; and he loved rather to speak with his bow and his lance than with the weapon of a squaw. He had said it: the Long-knives had horses with them and mules; and these were for him, he knew, and for his ‘braves.’ Let the White-face go back to his people and return with the animals, or he, the ‘Brave Bear,’ would have to come and take them; and his young men would get mad and would feel blood in their eyes; and then he would have no power over them; and the whites would have to ‘go under.’”

The trapper answered shortly.—“The Long-knives,” he said, “had brought the horses for themselves—their hearts were big, but not towards the Yanka-taus: and if they had to give up their animals, it would be to men and not squaws. They were not ‘wah-keitcha,’ [18] (French engagés), but Long-knives; and, however short were the tongues of the Yanka-taus, theirs were still shorter, and their rifles longer. The Yanka-taus were dogs and squaws, and the Long-knives spat upon them.” Saying this, the trapper turned his back and [Pg 96] rejoined his companions; whilst the Indian slowly proceeded to his people, who, on learning the contemptuous way in which their threats had been treated, testified their anger with loud yells; and, seeking whatever cover was afforded, commenced a scattering volley upon the camp of the mountaineers. The latter reserved their fire, treating with cool indifference the balls which began to rattle about them; but as the Indians, emboldened by this apparent inaction, rushed for a closer position, and exposed their bodies within a long range, half-a-dozen rifles rang from the assailed, and two Indians fell dead, one or two more being wounded. As yet, not one of the whites had been touched, but several of the animals had received wounds from the enemy’s fire of balls and arrows. Indeed, the Indians remained at too great a distance to render the volleys from their crazy fusees any thing like effectual, and had to raise their pieces considerably to make their bullets reach as far as the camp. After three of their band had been killed outright, and many more wounded, their fire began to slacken, and they drew off to a greater distance, evidently resolved to beat a retreat. Retiring to the bluff, they discharged their pieces in a last volley, mounted their horses and galloped off, carrying their wounded with them. This last volley, however, although intended as a mere bravado, unfortunate-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ly proved fatal to one of the whites. Gonnevillle, at the moment, was standing on a pack, to get an uninterrupted [Pg 97]sight for a last shot, when one of the random bullets struck him in the breast. La Bonté caught him in his arms as he was about to fall, and laying the wounded trapper gently on the ground, stripped him of his buckskin hunting-frock, to examine the wound. A glance was sufficient to convince his companions that the blow was mortal. The ball had passed through the lungs; and in a few moments the throat of the wounded man swelled and turned to a livid blue colour, as the choking blood ascended. Only a few drops of purple blood trickled from the wound,—a fatal sign,—and the eyes of the mountaineer were already glazing with death's icy touch. His hand still grasped the barrel of his rifle, which had done good service in the fray. Anon he essayed to speak, but, choked with blood, only a few inarticulate words reached the ears of his companions, as they bent over him.

“Rubbed—out—at—last,” they heard him say, the words gurgling in his blood-filled throat; and opening his eyes once more, and turning them upwards for a last look at the bright sun, the trapper turned gently on his side and breathed his last sigh.

With no other tools than their scalp-knives, the hunters dug a grave on the banks of the creek; and whilst some were engaged in this work, others sought the bodies of the Indians they had slain in the attack, and presently returned with three reeking scalps, the trophies of the fight. The body of [Pg 98]the mountaineer was wrapped in a buffalo robe, the scalps being placed on his breast, and the dead man was then laid in the shallow grave, and quickly covered—without a word of prayer, or sigh of grief; for, however much his companions may have felt, not a word escaped them. The bitten lip and frowning brow told of anger rather than of sorrow, as they vowed—what they thought would better please the spirit of the dead man than vain regrets—bloody and lasting revenge.

Trampling down the earth which filled the grave, they raised upon it a pile of heavy stones; and packing their mules once more, and taking a last look at their comrade's lonely resting-place, they turned their backs upon the stream, which has ever since been known as “Gonneville's Creek.” If the reader casts his eye over any of the recent maps of the western country, which detail the features of the regions embracing the Rocky Mountains, and the vast prairies at their bases, he will not fail to observe that many of the creeks or smaller streams which feed the larger rivers,—as the Missouri, Platte, and Arkansa,—are called by familiar proper names, both English and French. These are invariably christened after some unfortunate trapper, killed there in Indian fight; or treacherously slaughtered by the lurking savages, while engaged in trapping beaver on the stream. Thus alone is the memory of these hardy men perpetuated, at least of those whose fate is ascertained: [Pg 99]for many, in every season, never return from their hunting expeditions, but meet a sudden death from Indians, or a more lingering fate from accident or disease in some lonely gorge of the mountains where no footfall save their own, or the heavy tread of grizzly bear, disturbs the unbroken silence of the awful solitude. Then, as many winters pass without some old familiar faces making their appearance at the merry rendezvous, their long protracted absence may perhaps elicit a remark, as to where such and such a mountain worthy can have betaken himself, to which the casual rejoinder of “Gone under, maybe,” too often gives a short but certain answer.

In all the philosophy of hardened hearts, our hunters turned from the spot where the unmourned trapper met his death. La Bonté, however, not yet entirely steeled by mountain life to a perfect indifference to human feeling, drew his hard hand across his eye, as the unbidden tear rose from his

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

rough but kindly heart. He could not forget so soon the comrade he had lost, the companion in the hunt or over the cheerful camp-fire, the narrator of many a tale of dangers past, of sufferings from hunger, cold, thirst, and untended wounds, of Indian perils, and other vicissitudes. One tear dropped from the young hunter's eye, and rolled down his cheek—the last for many a long year. In the forks of the northern branch of the Platte, [Pg 100]formed by the junction of the Laramie, they found a big village of the Sioux encamped near the station of one of the fur companies. Here the party broke up; many, finding the alcohol of the traders an impediment to their further progress, remained some time in the vicinity, while La Bonté, Luke, and a trapper named Marcelline, started in a few days to the mountains, to trap on Sweet Water and Medicine Bow. They had leisure, however, to observe all the rascalities connected with the Indian trade, although at this season (August) hardly commenced. However, a band of Indians having come in with several packs of last year's robes, and being anxious to start speedily on their return, a trader from one of the forts had erected his lodge in the village.

Here he set to work immediately, to induce the Indians to trade. First, a chief appoints three "soldiers" to guard the trader's lodge from intrusion; and these sentries amongst the thieving fraternity can be invariably trusted. Then the Indians are invited to have a drink—a taste of the fire-water being given to all to incite them to trade. As the crowd presses upon the entrance to the lodge, and those in rear become impatient, some large-mouthed savage who has received a portion of the spirit, makes his way, with his mouth full of the liquor and cheeks distended, through the throng, and is instantly surrounded by his particular friends. Drawing the face of each, by turns, near his own, [Pg 101]he squirts a small quantity into his open mouth, until the supply is exhausted, when he returns for more, and repeats the generous distribution.

When paying for the robes, the traders, in measuring out the liquor in a tin half-pint cup, thrust their thumbs or the four fingers of the hand into the measure, in order that it may contain the less, or not unfrequently fill the bottom with melted buffalo fat, with the same object. So greedy are the Indians, that they never discover the cheat, and, once under the influence of the liquor, cannot distinguish between the first cup of comparatively strong spirit, and the following ones diluted five hundred per cent, and poisonously drugged to boot.

Scenes of drunkenness, riot, and bloodshed last until the trade is over. In the winter it occupies several weeks, during which period the Indians present the appearance, under the demoralising influence of the liquor, of demons rather than of men.

---

[Pg 102]

## CHAPTER IV.

LA BONTÉ and his companions proceeded up the river, the Black Hills on their left hand, from which several small creeks or feeders swell the waters of the North Fork. Along these they hunted unsuccessfully for beaver "sign," and it was evident the spring hunt had almost exterminated the animal in this vicinity. Following Deer Creek to the ridge of the Black Hills, they crossed the mountain on to the waters of the Medicine Bow, and here they discovered a few lodges, and La Bonté set his first trap. He and old Luke finding "cuttings" near the camp, followed the "sign" along the bank until the practised eye of the latter discovered a "slide," where the beaver had ascended the bank to chop the trunk of a cotton wood, and convey the bark to its lodge. Taking a trap from "sack," the old hunter, after setting the trigger, placed it carefully under the water,

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

where the “slide” entered the stream, securing the chain to the stem of a sappling on the bank; while a stick, also attached to the trap by a thong, floated down the stream, to mark the position of the trap, should the animal carry it away. [Pg 103] A little farther on, and near another “run,” three traps were set; and over these Luke placed a little stick, which he first dipped into a mysterious-looking phial containing his “medicine.” [19]

The next morning they visited the traps, and had the satisfaction of finding three fine beaver secured in the first three they visited, and the fourth, which had been carried away, they discovered by the float-stick, a little distance down the stream, with a large drowned beaver between its teeth. The animals being carefully skinned, they returned to camp with the choicest portions of the meat, and the tails, on which they most luxuriously supped; and La Bonté was fain to confess that all his ideas of the superexcellence of buffalo were thrown in the shade by the delicious beaver tail, the rich meat of which he was compelled to allow was “great eating,” unsurpassed by “tender loin” or “boudin,” or other meat of whatever kind he had eaten of before.

The country where La Bonté and his companions were trapping, is very curiously situated in the extensive bend of the Platte which encloses the Black Hill range on the north, and which bounds the large expanse of broken tract known as the Laramie Plains, their southern limit being the base of the Medicine Bow Mountains. From the north-western corner of the bend, an inconsiderable range [Pg 104] extends to the westward, gradually decreasing in height until it reaches an elevated plain, which forms a break in the stupendous chain of the Rocky Mountains, and affords the easy passage now known as the Great, or South Pass. So gradual is the ascent of this portion of the mountain, that the traveller can scarcely believe he is crossing the dividing ridge between the waters which flow into the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and that in a few minutes he can fling two sticks into two neighbouring streams, one to be carried thousands of miles, traversed by the eastern waters in their course to the Gulf of Mexico, the other to be borne a lesser distance to the Gulf of California.

The country is frequented by the Crows and Snakes, who are at perpetual war with the Shians and Sioux, following them often far down the Platte, where many bloody battles have taken place. The Crows are esteemed friendly to the whites; but when on war expeditions, and “hair” their object, it is always dangerous to fall in with Indian war-parties, and particularly in the remote regions of the mountains, where they do not anticipate retaliation.

Trapping with tolerable success in this vicinity, the hunters crossed over, as soon as the premonitory storms of approaching winter warned them to leave the mountains, to the waters of Green River, one of the affluents of the Colorado, intending to winter at a rendezvous to be held in “Brown’s [Pg 105] Hole”—an enclosed valley so called—which, abounding in game, and sheltered on every side by lofty mountains, is a favourite wintering-ground of the mountaineers. Here they found several trapping bands already arrived; and a trader from the Uintah country, with store of powder, lead, and tobacco, prepared to ease them of their hardly-earned peltries.

Singly, and in bands numbering from two to ten, the trappers dropped into the rendezvous; some with many pack-loads of beaver, others with greater or less quantity, and more than one on foot, having lost his animals and peltry by Indian thieving. Here were soon congregated many mountaineers, whose names are famous in the history of the Far West. Fitzpatrick and Hatcher, and old Bill Williams, well known leaders of trapping parties, soon arrived with their bands. Sublette came in with his men from Yellow Stone, and many of Wyeth’s New Englanders were there.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

Chabonard with his half-breeds, Wah-keitchas all, brought his peltries from the lower country; and half-a-dozen Shawanee and Delaware Indians, with a Mexican from Taos, one Marcelline, a fine strapping fellow, the best trapper and hunter in the mountains, and ever first in the fight. Here, too, arrived the "Bourgeois" traders of the "North West" [20] Company, with their superior equipments, ready [Pg 106] to meet their trappers, and purchase the beaver at an equitable value; and soon the trade opened, and the encampment assumed a busy appearance.

A curious assemblage did the rendezvous present, and representatives of many a land met there. A son of La belle France here lit his pipe from one proffered by a native of New Mexico. An Englishman and a Sandwich Islander cut a quid from the same plug of tobacco. A Swede and an "old Virginian" puffed together. A Shawanee blew a peaceful cloud with a scion of the "Six Nations." One from the Land of Cakes—a canny chiel—sought to "get round" (in trade) a right "smart" Yankee, but couldn't "shine."

The beaver went briskly, six dollars being the price paid per lb. in goods—for money is seldom given in the mountain market, where "beaver" is cash, for which the articles supplied by the traders are bartered. In a very short time peltries of every description had changed hands, either by trade, or by gambling with cards and betting. With the mountain men bets decide every question that is raised, even the most trivial; and if the Editor of Bell's Life were to pay one of these rendezvous a winter visit, he would find the broad sheet of his paper hardly capacious enough to answer all the questions which would be referred to his decision.

Before the winter was over, La Bonté had lost [Pg 107] all traces of civilised humanity, and might justly claim to be considered as "hard a case" as any of the mountaineers then present. Long before the spring opened, he had lost all the produce of his hunt and both his animals, which, however, by a stroke of luck, he recovered, and wisely "held on to" for the future. Right glad when spring appeared, he started from Brown's Hole, with four companions, to hunt the Uintah or Snake country, and the affluents of the larger streams which rise in that region and fall into the Gulf of California.

In the valley of the Bear River they found beaver abundant, and trapped their way westward until they came upon the famed locality of the Beer and Soda Springs—natural fountains of mineral water, renowned amongst the trappers as being "medicine" of the first order.

Arriving one evening, about sundown, at the Bear Spring, they found a solitary trapper sitting over the rocky basin, intently regarding, with no little awe, the curious phenomenon of the bubbling gas. Behind him were piled his saddles and a pack of skins, and at a little distance a hobbled Indian pony fed amongst the cedars which formed a grove round the spring. As the three hunters dismounted from their animals, the lone trapper scarcely noticed their arrival, his eyes being still intently fixed upon the water. Looking round at last, he was instantly recognised by one of La Bonté's companions, and saluted as "Old Rube." Dressed from head to foot [Pg 108] in buckskin, his face, neck, and hands appeared to be of the same leathery texture, so nearly did they assimilate in colour to the materials of his dress. He was at least six feet two or three in his moccasins, straight-limbed and wiry, with long arms ending in hands of tremendous grasp, and a quantity of straight black hair hanging on his shoulders. His features, which were undeniably good, wore an expression of comical gravity, never relaxing into a smile, which a broad good-humoured mouth could have grinned from ear to ear.

"What, boys," he said, "will you be simple enough to camp here, alongside these springs? Noth-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ing good ever came of sleeping here, I tell you, and the worst kind of devils are in those dancing waters.”

“Why, old hos,” cried La Bonté, “what brings you hyar then, and camp at that?”

“This niggur,” answered Rube solemnly, “has been down’d upon a sight too often to be skeared by what can come out from them waters; and thar arn’t a devil as hisses thar, as can ‘shine’ with this child, I tell you. I’ve tried him onest, an’ fout him to clawin’ away to Eustis, [21] and if I draws my knife again on such varmint, I’ll raise his hair, as sure as shootin’.”

Spite of the reputed dangers of the locality, the trappers camped on the spot, and many a draught of the delicious sparkling water they quaffed in [Pg 109]honour of the “medicine” of the fount. Rube, however, sat sulky and silent, his huge form bending over his legs, which were crossed, Indian fashion, under him, and his long bony fingers spread over the fire, which had been made handy to the spring. At last they elicited from him that he had sought this spot for the purpose of “making medicine,” having been persecuted by extraordinary ill luck, even at this early period of his hunt—the Indians having stolen two out of his three animals, and three of his half-dozen traps. He had, therefore, sought the springs for the purpose of invoking the fountain spirits, which, a perfect Indian in his simple heart, he implicitly believed to inhabit their mysterious waters. When the others had, as he thought, fallen asleep, La Bonté observed the ill-starred trapper take from his pouch a curiously carved red stone pipe, which he carefully charged with tobacco and kinnik-kinnik. Then approaching the spring, he walked three times round it, and gravely sat himself down. Striking fire with his flint and steel, he lit his pipe, and, bending the stem three several times towards the water, he inhaled a vast quantity of smoke, and bending back his neck and looking upwards, puffed it into the air. He then blew another puff towards the four points of the compass, and emptying the pipe into his hand, cast the consecrated contents into the spring, saying a few Indian “medicine” words of cabalistic import. Having performed the ceremony to his satisfaction, [Pg 110]he returned to the fire, smoked a pipe on his own hook, and turned into his buffalo robe, conscious of having done a most important duty.

In the course of their trapping expedition, and accompanied by Rube, who knew the country well, they passed near the Great Salt Lake, a vast inland sea, whose salitrose waters cover an extent of upwards of one hundred and forty miles in length, by eighty in breadth. Fed by several streams, of which the Big Bear River is the most considerable, this lake presents the curious phenomenon of a vast body of water without any known outlet. According to the trappers, an island, from which rises a chain of lofty mountains, nearly divides the north-western portion of the lake, whilst a smaller one, within twelve miles of the northern shore, rises six hundred feet from the level of the water. Rube declared to his companions that the larger island was known by the Indians to be inhabited by a race of giants, with whom no communication had ever been held by mortal man; and but for the casual wafting to the shores of the lake of logs of gigantic trees, cut by axes of extraordinary size, the world would never have known that such a people existed. They were, moreover, white as themselves, and lived upon corn and fruits, and rode on elephants, &c.

Whilst following a small creek at the south-west extremity of the lake, they came upon a band of miserable Indians, who, from the fact of their subsisting [Pg 111]chiefly on roots, are called the Diggers. At first sight of the whites they immediately fled from their wretched huts, and made towards the mountain; but one of the trappers, galloping up on his horse, cut off their retreat, and drove them like sheep before him back to their village. A few of these wretched creatures came

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

into camp at sundown, and were regaled with such meat as the larder afforded. They appeared to have no other food in their village but bags of dried ants and their larvæ, and a few roots of the yampah. Their huts were constructed of a few bushes of grease-wood, piled up as a sort of break-wind, in which they huddled in their filthy skins. During the night, they crawled up to the camp and stole two of the horses, and the next morning not a sign of them was visible. Now La Bonté witnessed a case of mountain law, and the practical effects of the “lex talionis” of the Far West. The trail of the runaway Diggers bore to the north-west, or along the skirt of a barren waterless desert, which stretches far away from the southern shores of the Salt Lake to the borders of Upper California. La Bonté, with three others, determined to follow the thieves, recover their animals, and then rejoin the other two (Luke and Rube) on a creek two days’ journey from their present camp. Starting at sunrise, they rode on at a rapid pace all day, closely following the trail, which led directly to the north-west, through a wretched sandy country, [Pg 112]without game or water. From the appearance of the track, the Indians must still have been several hours ahead of them, when the fatigue of their horses, suffering from want of grass and water, compelled them to camp near the head of a small water-course, where they luckily found a hole containing a little water, and whence a broad Indian trail passed, apparently frequently used. Long before daylight they were again in the saddle, and, after proceeding a few miles, saw the lights of several fires a short distance ahead of them. Halting here, one of the party advanced on foot to reconnoitre, and presently returned with the intelligence that the party they were in pursuit of had joined a village numbering thirty or forty huts.

Loosening their girths, they permitted their tired animals to feed on the scanty herbage which presented itself, whilst they refreshed themselves with a pipe of tobacco—for they had no meat of any description with them, and the country afforded no game. As the first streak of dawn appeared in the east, they mounted their horses, after first examining their rifles, and moved cautiously towards the Indian village. As it was scarcely light enough for their operations, they waited behind a sandhill in the vicinity, until objects became more distinct, and then, emerging from their cover with loud war-whoops, they charged abreast into the midst of the village.

As the frightened Indians were scarcely risen [Pg 113]from their beds, no opposition was given to the daring mountaineers, who, rushing upon the flying crowd, discharged their rifles at close quarters, and then, springing from their horses, attacked them knife in hand, and only ceased the work of butchery when nine Indians lay dead upon the ground. All this time the women, half dead with fright, were huddled together on the ground, howling piteously; and the mountaineers advancing to them, whirled their lassos round their heads, and throwing the open nooses into the midst, hauled out three of them, and securing their arms in the rope, bound them to a tree, and then proceeded to scalp the dead bodies. Whilst they were engaged in this work, an old Indian, withered and grisly, and hardly bigger than an ape, suddenly emerged from a rock, holding in his left hand a bow and a handful of arrows, whilst one was already drawn to the head. Running towards them, and almost before the hunters were aware of his presence, he discharged an arrow at a few yards’ distance, which buried itself in the ground not a foot from La Bonté’s head as he bent over the body of the Indian he was scalping; and hardly had the whiz ceased, when whirr flew another, striking him in his right shoulder. Before the Indian could fit a third arrow to his bow, La Bonté sprang upon him, seized him by the middle, and spinning his pigmy form round his head, as easily as he would have twirled a tomahawk, he threw him with tremendous force on the

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ground at [Pg 114]the feet of one of his companions, who, stooping down, coolly thrust his knife into the Indian's breast, and quickly tore off his scalp.

The slaughter over, without casting an eye to the captive squaws, the trappers proceeded to search the village for food, of which they stood much in need. Nothing, however, was found but a few bags of dried ants, which, after eating voraciously of, but with wry mouths, they threw aside, saying the food was worse than "poor bull." They found, however, the animals they had been robbed of, and two more besides,—wretched half-starved creatures; and on these mounting their captives, they hurried away on their journey back to their companions, the distance being computed at three days' travel from their present position. However, they thought, by taking a more direct course, they might find better pasture for their animals, and water, besides saving at least half a day by the short cut. To their cost, they proved the old saying, that "a short cut is always a long road," as will be presently shown.

It has been said that from the south-western extremity of the Great Salt Lake a vast desert extends for hundreds of miles, unbroken by the slightest vegetation, destitute of game and water, and presenting a cheerless expanse of sandy plain, or rugged mountain, thinly covered with dwarf pine or cedar, the only evidence of vegetable life. Into this desert, ignorant of the country, the trappers [Pg 115]struck, intending to make their short cut; and, travelling on all day, were compelled to camp at night, without water or pasture for their exhausted animals, and themselves ravenous with hunger and parched with thirst. The next day three of their animals "gave out," and they were fain to leave them behind; but imagining that they must soon strike a creek, they pushed on until noon, but still no water presented itself, nor a sign of game of any description. The animals were nearly exhausted, and a horse which could scarcely keep up with the slow pace of the others was killed, and its blood greedily drunk; a portion of the flesh being eaten raw, and a supply carried with them for future emergencies.

The next morning two of the horses lay dead at their pickets, and one only remained, and this in such a miserable state that it could not possibly have travelled six miles further. It was, therefore, killed, and its blood drunk, of which, however, the captive squaws refused to partake. The men began to feel the effects of their consuming thirst, which the hot horse's blood only served to increase; their lips became parched and swollen, their eyes blood-shot, and a giddy sickness seized them at intervals. About mid-day they came in sight of a mountain on their right hand, which appeared to be more thickly clothed with vegetation; and arguing from this that water would be found there, they left their course and made towards it, although some eight or ten [Pg 116]miles distant. On arriving at the base, the most minute search failed to discover the slightest traces of water, and the vegetation merely consisted of dwarf piñon and cedar. With their sufferings increased by the exertions they had used in reaching the mountain, they once more sought the trail, but every step told on their exhausted frames. The sun was very powerful, the sand over which they floundered was deep and heavy, and, to complete their sufferings a high wind blew it in their faces, filling their mouths and noses with its searching particles.

Still they struggled onwards manfully, and not a murmur was heard until their hunger had entered the second stage upon the road to starvation. They had now been three days without food or water; under which privation nature can hardly sustain herself for a much longer period. On the fourth morning, the men looked wolfish, their captives following behind in sullen and perfect indifference, occasionally stooping down to catch a beetle if one presented itself, and greedily

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

devouring it. A man named Forey, a Canadian half-breed, was the first to complain. "If this lasted another sundown," he said, "some of them would 'be rubbed out;' that meat had to be 'raised' anyhow; and for his part, he knew where to look for a feed, if no game was seen before they put out of camp on the morrow; and meat was meat, anyhow they fixed it."

No answer was made to this, though his companions [Pg 117] well understood him: their natures as yet revolted against the last expedient. As for the three squaws, all of them young girls, they followed behind their captors without a word of complaint, and with the stoical indifference to pain and suffering, which alike characterises the haughty Delaware of the north and the miserable stunted Digger of the deserts of the Far West. On the morning of the fifth day, the party were seated round a small fire of piñon, hardly able to rise and commence their journey, the squaws squatting over another at a little distance, when Forey commenced again to suggest that, if nothing offered, they must either take the alternative of starving to death, for they could not hope to last another day, or have recourse to the revolting extremity of sacrificing one of the party to save the lives of all. To this, however, there was a murmur of dissent, and it was finally resolved that all should sally out and hunt; for a deer-track had been discovered near the camp, which, although it was not a fresh one, proved that there must be game in the vicinity. Weak and exhausted as they were, they took their rifles and started for the neighbouring uplands, each taking a different direction.

It was nearly sunset when La Bonté returned to the camp, where he already espied one of his companions engaged in cooking something over the fire. Hurrying to the spot, overjoyed with the anticipations of a feast, he observed that the squaws were [Pg 118] gone; but, at the same time, thought it was not improbable they had escaped during their absence. Approaching the fire, he observed Forey broiling some meat on the embers, whilst at a little distance lay what he fancied was the carcass of a deer.

"Hurrah, boy!" he exclaimed, as he drew near the fire. "You've 'made' a 'raise,' I see."

"Well, I have," rejoined the other, turning his meat with the point of his butcher knife. "There's the meat, hos—help yourself."

La Bonté drew the knife from his scabbard, and approached the spot his companion was pointing to; but what was his horror to see the yet quivering body of one of the Indian squaws, with a large portion of the flesh butchered from it, part of which Forey was already greedily devouring. The knife dropped from his hand, and his heart rose to his throat.

The next day he and his companion struck the creek where Rube and the other trapper had agreed to await them, and found them in camp with plenty of meat, and about to start again on their hunt, having given up the others for lost. From the day they parted, nothing was ever heard of La Bonté's other two companions, who doubtless fell a prey to utter exhaustion, and were unable to return to the camp. And thus ended the Digger expedition.

It may appear almost incredible that men having civilised blood in their veins could perpetrate such wanton and cold-blooded acts of aggression on the [Pg 119] wretched Indians, as that detailed above; but it is fact that the mountaineers never lose an opportunity of slaughtering these miserable Diggers, and attacking their villages, often for the purpose of capturing women, whom they carry off, and not unfrequently sell to other tribes, or to each other. In these attacks neither sex nor age is spared; and your mountaineer has as little compunction in taking the life of an Indian woman, as he would have in sending his rifle-ball through the brain of a Crow or Blackfoot

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

warrior.

La Bonté now found himself without animals, and fairly “afoot;” consequently nothing remained for him but to seek some of the trapping bands, and hire himself for the hunt. Luckily for him, he soon fell in with Roubideau, on his way to Uintah, and was supplied by him with a couple of animals; and thus equipped, he started again with a large band of trappers, who were going to hunt on the waters of Grand River and the Gila. Here they fell in with another nation of Indians, from which branch out the innumerable tribes inhabiting Northern Mexico and part of California.

They were in general friendly, but lost no opportunity of stealing horses or any articles left lying about the camp. On one occasion, the trappers being camped on a northern affluent of the Gila, a volley of arrows was discharged amongst them, severely wounding one or two of the party, as they sat round the camp fires. The attack, however, was not renewed, [Pg 120]and the next day the camp was moved further down the stream, where beaver was tolerably abundant. Before sundown a number of Indians made their appearance, and making signs of peace, were admitted into the camp.

The trappers were all sitting at their suppers over the fires, the Indians looking gravely on, when it was remarked that now would be a good opportunity to retaliate upon them for the trouble their incessant attacks had entailed upon the camp. The suggestion was highly approved of, and instantly acted upon. Springing to their feet, the trappers seized their rifles, and commenced the slaughter. The Indians, panic-struck, fled without resistance, and numbers fell before the death-dealing rifles of the mountaineers. A chief, who had been sitting on a rock near the fire where the leader of the trappers sat, had been singled out by the latter as the first mark for his rifle.

Placing the muzzle to his heart, he pulled the trigger, but the Indian, with extraordinary tenacity of life, rose and grappled with his assailant. The white was a tall powerful man, but, notwithstanding the deadly wound the Indian had received, he had his equal in strength to contend against. The naked form of the Indian twisted and writhed in his grasp, as he sought to avoid the trapper’s uplifted knife. Many of the latter’s companions advanced to administer the coup de grâce to the savage, but the trapper cried to them to keep off: [Pg 121]“If he couldn’t whip the Injun,” he said, “he’d go under.”

At length he succeeded in throwing him, and, plunging his knife no less than seven times into his body, he tore off his scalp, and went in pursuit of the flying savages. In the course of an hour or two, all the party returned, and sitting by the fires, resumed their suppers, which had been interrupted in the manner just described. Walker, the captain of the band, sat down by the fire where he had been engaged in the struggle with the Indian chief, whose body was lying within a few paces of it. He was in the act of fighting the battle over again to one of his companions, and was saying that the Indian had as much life in him as a buffalo bull, when, to the horror of all present, the savage, who had received wounds sufficient for twenty deaths, suddenly rose to a sitting posture, the fire shedding a glowing light upon the horrid spectacle. The face was a mass of clotted blood, which flowed from the lacerated scalp, whilst gouts of blood streamed from eight gaping wounds in the naked breast.

Slowly this frightful figure rose to a sitting posture, and, bending slowly forward to the fire, the mouth was seen to open wide, and a hollow gurgling—owg-h-h—broke from it.

“H—!” exclaimed the trapper—and jumping up, he placed a pistol to the ghastly head, the eyes

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

of which sternly fixed themselves on his, and pulling [Pg 122]the trigger, blew the poor wretch's skull to atoms.

The Gila passes through a barren, sandy country, with but little game, and sparsely inhabited by several different tribes of the great nation of the Apache. Unlike the rivers of this western region, this stream is, in most parts of its course, particularly towards its upper waters, entirely bare of timber, and the bottom, through which it runs, affords but little of the coarsest grass. Whilst on this stream, the trapping party lost several animals for want of pasture, and many more from the predatory attacks of the cunning Indians. These losses, however, they invariably made good whenever they encountered a native village—taking care, moreover, to repay themselves with interest whenever occasion offered.

Notwithstanding the sterile nature of the country, the trappers, during their passage up the Gila, saw with astonishment that the arid and barren valley had once been peopled by a race of men far superior to the present nomade tribes who roam over it. With no little awe they gazed upon the ruined walls of large cities, and the remains of houses, with their ponderous beams and joists, still testifying to the skill and industry with which they were constructed: huge ditches and irrigating canals, now filled with rank vegetation, furrowed the plains in the vicinity, marking the spot where once green waving maize and smiling gardens [Pg 123]covered what now is a bare and sandy desert. Pieces of broken pottery, of domestic utensils, stained with bright colours, every where strewn the ground; and spear and arrow-heads of stone, and quaintly carved idols, and women's ornaments of agate and obsidian, were picked up often by the wondering trappers, examined with child-like curiosity, and thrown carelessly aside. [22]

A Taos Indian, who was amongst the band, was evidently impressed with a melancholy awe, as he regarded these ancient monuments of his fallen people. At midnight he rose from his blanket and left the camp, which was in the vicinity of the ruined city, stealthily picking his way through the line of slumbering forms which lay around; and the watchful sentinel observed him approach the ruins with a slow and reverential gait. Entering the mouldering walls, he gazed silently around, where in ages past his ancestors trod proudly, a civilised race, the tradition of which, well known to his people, served but to make their present degraded position more galling and apparent. Cowering under the shadow of a crumbling wall, the Indian drew his blanket over his head, and conjured to his mind's eye the former power and grandeur of his race—that warlike people who, forsaking their own [Pg 124]country for causes of which no tradition, however dim, now exists, sought in the fruitful and teeming valleys of the south a soil and climate which their own lands did not afford; and, displacing the wild and barbarous hordes inhabiting the land, raised there a mighty empire, great in riches and civilisation.

The Indian bowed his head, and mourned the fallen greatness of his tribe. Rising, he slowly drew his tattered blanket round his body, and prepared to leave the spot, when the shadow of a moving figure, creeping past a gap in the ruined wall, through which the moonbeams played, suddenly arrested his attention. Rigid as a statue, he stood transfixed to the spot, thinking a former inhabitant of the city was visiting, in a ghostly form, the scenes his body once knew so well. The bow in his right hand shook with fear as he saw the shadow approach, but was as tightly and steadily grasped when, on the figure emerging from the shade of the wall, he distinguished the form of a naked Apache, armed with bow and arrow, crawling stealthily through the gloomy ruins.

Standing undiscovered within the shadow of the wall, the Taos raised his bow, and drew an ar-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

row to the head, until the other, who was bending low to keep under cover of the wall, and thus approach the sentinel standing at a short distance, seeing suddenly the well-defined shadow on the ground, [Pg 125]rose upright on his legs, and, knowing escape was impossible, threw his arms down his sides, and, drawing himself erect, exclaimed, in a suppressed tone, "Wa-g-h!"

"Wagh!" exclaimed the Taos likewise, but quickly dropped his arrow point, and eased the bow. "What does my brother want," he asked, "that he lopes like a wolf round the fires of the white hunters?"

"Is my brother's skin not red?" returned the Apache, "and yet he asks a question that needs no answer. Why does the 'medicine wolf' follow the buffalo and deer? For blood—and for blood the Indian follows the treacherous white from camp to camp, to strike blow for blow, until the deaths of those so basely killed are fully avenged."

"My brother speaks with a big heart, and his words are true; and though the Taos and Pimo (Apache) black their faces towards each other (are at war), here, on the graves of their common fathers, there is peace between them. Let my brother go."

The Apache moved quickly away, and the Taos once more sought the camp-fires of his white companions.

Following the course of the Gila to the eastward, they crossed a range of the Sierra Madre, which is a continuation of the Rocky Mountains, and struck the waters of the Rio del Norte, below the settlements [Pg 126]of New Mexico. On this stream they fared well; besides trapping a great quantity of beaver, game of all kinds abounded, and the bluffs near the well-timbered banks of the river were covered with rich gramma grass, on which their half-starved animals speedily improved in condition.

They remained for some weeks encamped on the right bank of the stream, during which period they lost one of their number, shot with an arrow whilst lying asleep within a few feet of the camp-fire.

The Navajos continually prowl along that portion of the river which runs through the settlements of New Mexico, preying upon the cowardly inhabitants, and running off with their cattle whenever they are exposed in sufficient numbers to tempt them. Whilst ascending the river, the trappers met a party of these Indians returning to their mountain homes with a large band of mules and horses which they had taken from one of the Mexican towns, besides several women and children, whom they had captured, as slaves. The main body of the trappers halting, ten of the band followed and charged upon the Indians, who numbered at least sixty, killed seven of them, and retook the prisoners and the whole cavallada of horses and mules. Great were the rejoicings when they entered Socorro, the town whence the women and children had been taken, and as loud the remonstrances, when, handing them over to their families, the trappers rode on, driving fifty of the best of the rescued animals before them, [Pg 127]which they retained as payment for their services. Messengers were sent on to Albuquerque with intelligence of the proceeding; and as troops were stationed there, the commandant was applied to, to chastise the insolent whites. That warrior, on learning that the trappers numbered less than fifteen, became alarmingly brave, and ordering out the whole of his disposable force, some two hundred dragoons, sallied out to intercept the audacious mountaineers. About noon one day, just as the latter had emerged from a little town between Socorro and Albuquerque, they descried the imposing force of the dragoons winding along a plain ahead. As the trappers advanced, the officer in command halted his men,

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

and sent out a trumpeter to order the former to await his coming. Treating the herald to a roar of laughter, on they went, and, as they approached the soldiers, broke into a trot, ten of the number forming line in front of the packed and loose animals, and, rifle in hand, charging with loud whoops. This was enough for the New Mexicans. Before the enemy were within shooting distance, the gallant fellows turned tail, and splashed into the river, dragging themselves up the opposite bank like half-drowned rats, and saluted with loud peels of laughter by the victorious mountaineers, who, firing a volley into the air, in token of supreme contempt, quietly continued their route up the stream.

Before reaching the capital of the province, they [Pg 128] struck again to the westward, and following a small creek to its junction with the Green River, ascended that stream, trapping en route to the Uintah or Snake Fork, and arrived at Roubideau's rendezvous early in the fall, where they quickly disposed of their peltries, and were once more on "the loose."

Here La Bonté married a Snake squaw, with whom he crossed the mountains and proceeded to the Platte through the Bayou Salade, where he purchased of the Yutas a commodious lodge, with the necessary poles, &c.; and being now "rich" in mules and horses, and in all things necessary for otium cum dignitate, he took unto himself another wife, as by mountain law allowed; and thus equipped, with both his better halves attired in all the glory of fofarraw, he went his way rejoicing. In a snug little valley lying under the shadow of the mountains, watered by Vermilion Creek, and in which abundance of buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope fed and fattened on the rich grass, La Bonté raised his lodge, employing himself in hunting, and fully occupying his wives' time in dressing the skins of the many animals he killed. Here he enjoyed himself amazingly until the commencement of winter, when he determined to cross to the North Fork and trade his skins, of which he had now as many packs as his animals could carry. It happened that he one day left his camp, to spend a couple of days hunting buffalo in the mountains, whither the bulls [Pg 129] were now resorting, intending to "put out" for Platte on his return. His hunt, however, led him farther into the mountains than he anticipated, and it was only on the third day that sundown saw him enter the little valley where his camp was situated.

Crossing the creek, he was not a little disturbed at seeing fresh Indian sign on the opposite side, which led in the direction of his lodge; and his worst fears were realised when, on coming within sight of the little plateau where the conical top of his white lodge had always before met his view, he saw nothing but a blackened mass strewing the ground, and the burnt ends of the poles which had once supported it.

Squaws, animals, and peltry, all were gone—an Arapaho moccasin lying on the ground told him where. He neither fumed nor fretted, but, throwing the meat off his pack animal, and the saddle from his horse, he collected the blackened ends of the lodge poles and made a fire—led his beasts to water and hobbled them, threw a piece of buffalo meat upon the coals, squatted down before the fire, and lit his pipe. La Bonté was a true philosopher. Notwithstanding that his house, his squaws, his peltries, were gone "at one fell swoop," the loss scarcely disturbed his equanimity; and before the tobacco in his pipe was half smoked out, he had ceased to think of his misfortune. Certes, as he turned his apolla of tender loin, he sighed as he thought of the delicate manipulations with which his Shoshone squaw, [Pg 130] Sah-qua-manish, was wont to beat to tenderness the toughest bull meat—and missed the tending care of Yute Chil-co-thē, or the "reed that bends," in patching the holes worn in his neatly fitting moccasins, the work of her nimble fingers. How-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ever, he ate and smoked, and smoked and ate, and slept none the worse for his mishap; thought, before he closed his eyes, a little of his lost wives, and more perhaps of the “Bending Reed” than of Sah-qua-manish, or “she who runs with the stream,” drew his blanket tightly round him, felt his rifle handy to his grasp, and was speedily asleep.

Whilst the tired mountaineer breathes heavily in his dream, careless and unconscious that a living soul is near, his mule on a sudden pricks her ears and stares into the gloom, whence a figure soon emerges, and with noiseless steps draws near the sleeping hunter. Taking one look at the slumbering form, the same figure approaches the fire and adds a log to the pile; which done, it quietly seats itself at the feet of the sleeper, and remains motionless as a statue. Towards morning the hunter awoke, and, rubbing his eyes, was astonished to feel the glowing warmth of the fire striking on his naked feet, which, in Indian fashion, were stretched towards it; as by this time, he knew, the fire he left burning must long since have expired. Lazily raising himself on his elbow, he saw a figure sitting near it with the back turned to him, which, although his exclamatory wagh was loud enough in all conscience, [Pg 131] remained perfectly motionless, until the trapper, rising, placed his hand upon the shoulder: then, turning up its face, the features displayed to his wondering eye were those of Chil-co-thē], his Yuta wife. Yes, indeed, the “reed that bends” had escaped from her Arapaho captors, and made her way back to her white husband, fasting and alone.

The Indian women who follow the fortunes of the white hunters are remarkable for their affection and fidelity to their husbands, the which virtues, it must be remarked, are all on their own side; for, with very few exceptions, the mountaineers seldom scruple to abandon their Indian wives, whenever the fancy takes them to change their harems; and on such occasions the squaws, thus cast aside, wild with jealousy and despair, have been not unfrequently known to take signal vengeance both on their faithless husbands and on the successful beauties who have supplanted them in their affections. There are some honourable exceptions, however, to such cruelty, and many of the mountaineers stick to their red-skinned wives for better and for worse, often suffering them to gain the upper hand in the domestic economy of the lodges, and being ruled by their better halves in all things pertaining to family affairs; and it may be remarked, that, when once the lady dons the unmentionables, she becomes the veriest termagant that ever henpecked an unfortunate husband.

Your refined trappers, however, who, after many [Pg 132] years of bachelor life, incline to take to themselves a better half, often undertake an expedition into the settlements of New Mexico, where not unfrequently they adopt a very “Young Lochinvar” system in procuring the required rib; and have been known to carry off, *vi et armis*, from the midst of a fandango in Fernandez, or El Rancho of Taos, some dark-skinned beauty—with or without her own consent is a matter of unconcern—and bear the ravished fair one across the mountains, where she soon becomes inured to the free and roving life fate has assigned her.

American women are valued at a low figure in the mountains. They are too fine and “fofarraw.” Neither can they make moccasins, or dress skins; nor are they so schooled to perfect obedience to their lords and masters as to stand a “lodge-pole-ing,” which the western lords of the creation not unfrequently deem it their bounden duty to inflict upon their squaws for some dereliction of domestic duty.

To return, however, to La Bonté. That worthy thought himself a lucky man to have lost but one of his wives, and she the worst of the two. “Here’s the beauty,” he philosophised, “of having two

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

‘wiping-sticks’ to your rifle; if one breaks whilst ramming down a ball, there’s still hickory left to supply its place.” Although, with animals and peltry, he had lost several hundred dollars’ worth of “possibles,” he never groaned or grumbled. [Pg 133] “There’s redskin will pay for this,” he once muttered, and was done.

Packing all that was left on the mule, and mounting Chil-co-thē on his buffalo horse, he shouldered his rifle and struck the Indian trail for Platte. On Horse Creek they came upon a party of French [23] trappers and hunters, who were encamped with their lodges and Indian squaws, and formed quite a village. Several old companions were amongst them; and, to celebrate the arrival of a “camarade,” a splendid dog-feast was prepared in honour of the event. To effect this, the squaws sallied out of their lodges to seize upon sundry of the younger and plumper of the pack, to fill the kettles for the approaching feast. With a presentiment of the fate in store for them, the curs slunk away with tails between their legs, and declined the pressing invitations of the anxious squaws. These shouldered their tomahawks and gave chase; but the cunning pups outstripped them, and would have fairly beaten the kettles, if some of the mountaineers had not stepped out with their rifles and quickly laid half-a-dozen ready to the knife. A cayoute, attracted by the scent of blood, drew near, unwitting of the canine feast in progress, and was likewise soon made dog of, and thrust into the boiling kettle with the rest.

The feast that night was long protracted; and [Pg 134] so savoury was the stew, and so agreeable to the palates of the hungry hunters, that at the moment the last morsel was drawn from the pot, when all were regretting that a few more dogs had not been slaughtered, a wolfish-looking cur, who incautiously poked his long nose and head under the lodge skin, was pounced upon by the nearest hunter, who in a moment drew his knife across the animal’s throat, and threw it to a squaw to skin and prepare for the pot. The wolf had long since been vigorously discussed, and voted by all hands to be “good as dog.”

“Meat’s meat,” is a common saying in the mountains, and from the buffalo down to the rattle-snake, including every quadruped that runs, every fowl that flies, and every reptile that creeps, nothing comes amiss to the mountaineer. Throwing aside all the qualms and conscientious scruples of a fastidious stomach, it must be confessed that dog-meat takes a high rank in the wonderful variety of cuisine afforded to the gourmand and the gourmet by the prolific “mountains.” Now, when the bill of fare offers such tempting viands as buffalo beef, venison, mountain mutton, turkey, grouse, wildfowl, hares, rabbits, beaver and their tails, &c. &c., the station assigned to “dog” as No. 2 in the list can be well appreciated—No. 1, in delicacy of flavour, richness of meat, and other good qualities, being the flesh of panthers, which surpasses every other, and all put together. “Painter meat can’t ‘shine’ with this,” says a [Pg 135] hunter, to express the delicious flavour of an extraordinary cut of “tender loin,” or delicate fleece.

La Bonté started with his squaw for the North Fork early in November, and arrived at the Laramie at the moment that the big village of the Sioux came up for their winter trade. Two other villages were encamped lower down the Platte, including the Brulés and the Yanka-taus, who were now on more friendly terms with the whites. The first band numbered several hundred lodges, and presented quite an imposing appearance, the village being laid out in parallel lines, the lodge of each chief being marked with his particular totem. The traders had a particular portion of the village allotted to them, and a line was marked out which was strictly kept by the soldiers appointed for the protection of the whites. As there were many rival traders, and numerous coureurs des

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

bois, or peddling ones, the market promised to be brisk, the more so as a large quantity of ardent spirits was in their possession, which would be dealt with no unsparing hand to put down the opposition of so many competing traders.

In opening a trade a quantity of liquor is first given "on the prairie," [24] as the Indians express it in words, or by signs in rubbing the palm of one hand quickly across the other, holding both flat. Having once tasted the pernicious liquid, there is [Pg 136]no fear but they will quickly come to terms; and not unfrequently the spirit is drugged, to render the unfortunate Indians still more helpless. Sometimes, maddened and infuriated by drink, they commit the most horrid atrocities on each other, murdering and mutilating in a barbarous manner, and often attempting the lives of the traders themselves. On one occasion a band of Sioux, whilst under the influence of liquor, attacked and took possession of a trading fort of the American Fur Company, stripping it of every thing it contained, and roasting the trader himself over his own fire.

The principle on which the nefarious trade is conducted is this, that the Indians, possessing a certain quantity of buffalo robes, have to be cheated out of them, and the sooner the better. Although it is explicitly prohibited by the laws of the United States to convey spirits across the Indian frontier, and its introduction amongst the Indian tribes subjects the offender to a heavy penalty; yet the infraction of this law is of daily occurrence, perpetrated almost in the very presence of the government officers, who are stationed along the frontier for the purpose of enforcing the laws for the protection of the Indians.

The misery entailed upon these unhappy people by the illicit traffic must be seen to be fully appreciated. Before the effects of the poisonous "fire-water," they disappear from the earth like "snow before the sun." Although aware of the destruction [Pg 137]it entails upon them, the poor wretches have not moral courage to shun the fatal allurements it holds out to them, of wild excitement and a temporary oblivion of their many sufferings and privations. With such palpable effects, it appears only likely that the illegal trade is connived at by those whose policy it has ever been, gradually but surely, to exterminate the Indians, and by any means to extinguish their title to the few lands they now own on the outskirts of civilisation. Certain it is that large quantities of liquor find their way annually into the Indian country, and as certain are the fatal results of the pernicious system, and that the American government takes no steps to prevent it. There are some tribes who have as yet withstood the great temptation, and have resolutely refused to permit liquor to be brought into their villages. The marked difference between the improved condition of these, and the moral and physical abasement of those which give way to the fatal passion for drinking, sufficiently proves the pernicious effects of the liquor trade on the unfortunate and abused aborigines; and it is matter of regret that no philanthropist has sprung up in the United States to do battle for the rights of the Red men, and call attention to the wrongs they endure at the hands of their supplanters in the lands of their fathers.

Robbed of their homes and hunting-grounds, and driven by the encroachments of the whites to distant [Pg 138]regions, which hardly support existence, the Indians, day by day, gradually decrease before the accumulating evils, of body and soul, which their civilised persecutors entail upon them. With every man's hand against them, they drag on to their final destiny; and the day is not far distant when the American Indian will exist only in the traditions of his pale-faced conquerors.

The Indians trading at this time on the Platte were mostly of the Sioux nation, including the tribes

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

of Burnt-woods, Yanka-taus, Pian-Kashas, Assinaboins, Oglallahs, Broken Arrows, all of which belong to the great Sioux nation, or La-cotahs, as they call themselves, and which means cut-throats There were also some Cheyennes allied to the Sioux, as well as a small band of Republican Pawnees.

Horse-racing, gambling, and ball-play, served to pass away the time until the trade commenced, and many packs of dressed robes changed hands amongst themselves. When playing at the usual game of "hand," the stakes, comprising all the valuables the players possess, are piled in two heaps close at hand, the winner at the conclusion of the game sweeping the goods towards him, and often returning a small portion "on the prairie," with which the loser may again commence operations with another player.

The game of "hand" is played by two persons. One, who commences, places a plum or cherry-stone [Pg 139]. in the hollow formed by joining the concaved palms of the hands together, then shaking the stone for a few moments, the hands are suddenly separated, and the other player must guess which hand now contains the stone.

Large bets are often wagered on the result of this favourite game, which is also often played by the squaws, the men standing round encouraging them to bet, and laughing loudly at their grotesque excitement.

A Burnt-wood Sioux, Tah-tunganisha, one of the bravest chiefs of his tribe, was out, when a young man, on a solitary war expedition against the Crows. One evening he drew near a certain "medicine" spring, where, to his astonishment, he encountered a Crow warrior in the act of quenching his thirst. He was on the point of drawing his bow upon him, when he remembered the sacred nature of the spot, and making the sign of peace, he fearlessly drew near his foe, and proceeded likewise to slake his thirst. A pipe of kinnik-kinnik being produced, it was proposed to pass away the early part of the night in a game of "hand." They accordingly sat down beside the spring, and commenced the game.

Fortune favoured the Crow. He won arrow after arrow from the Burnt-wood brave; then his bow, his club, his knife, his robe, all followed, and the Sioux sat naked on the plain. Still he proposed another stake against the other's winnings—his [Pg 140]scalp. He played, and lost; and bending forward his head, the Crow warrior drew his knife and quickly removed the bleeding prize. Without a murmur the luckless Sioux rose to depart, but first exacted a promise from his antagonist that he would meet him once more at the same spot, and engage in another trial of skill.

On the day appointed, the Burnt-wood sought the spot, with a new equipment, and again the Crow made his appearance, and they sat down to play. This time fortune changed sides; the Sioux won back his former losses, and in his turn the Crow was stripped to his skin.

Scalp against scalp was now the stake, and this time the Crow submitted his head to the victorious Burnt-wood's knife; and both the warriors stood scalpless on the plain.

And now the Crow had but one single stake of value to offer, and the offer of it he did not hesitate to make. He staked his life against the other's winnings. They played; and fortune still being adverse, he lost. He offered his breast to his adversary. The Burnt-wood plunged his knife into his heart to the very hilt; and, laden with his spoils, returned to his village, and to this day wears suspended from his ears his own and enemy's scalp.

The village presented the usual scene of confusion as long as the trade lasted. Fighting, brawling, yelling, dancing, and all the concomitants of [Pg 141]intoxication, continued to the last

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

drop of the liquor-keg, when the reaction after such excitement was almost worse than the evil itself. During this time, all the work devolved upon the squaws, who, in tending the horses, and in packing wood and water from a long distance, had their time sufficiently occupied. As there was little or no grass in the vicinity, the animals were supported entirely on the bark of the cotton-wood; and to procure this, the women were daily engaged in felling huge trees, or climbing them fearlessly, chopping off the upper limbs—springing like squirrels from branch to branch, which, in their confined costume, appeared matter of considerable difficulty.

The most laughter-provoking scenes, however, were, when a number of squaws sallied out to the grove, with their long-nosed, wolfish-looking dogs harnessed to their travées or trabogans, on which loads of cotton-wood were piled. The dogs, knowing full well the duty required of them, refuse to approach the coaxing squaws, and, at the same time, are fearful of provoking their anger by escaping and running off. They, therefore, squat on their haunches, with tongues hanging out of their long mouths, the picture of indecision, removing a short distance as the irate squaw approaches. When once harnessed to the travée, however, which is simply a couple of lodge-poles lashed on either side of the dog, with a couple of [Pg 142]cross-bars near the ends to support the freight, they follow quietly enough, urged by bebies of children, who invariably accompany the women. Once arrived at the scene of their labours, the reluctance of the curs to draw near the piles of cotton-wood is most comical. They will lie down stubbornly at a little distance, whining their uneasiness, or sometimes scamper off bodily, with their long poles trailing after them, pursued by the yelling and half frantic squaws.

When the travées are laden, the squaws, bent double under loads of wood sufficient to break a porter's back, and calling to the dogs, which are urged on by the buffalo-fed urchins in rear, lead the line of march. The curs, taking advantage of the helpless state of their mistresses, turn a deaf ear to their coaxings, lying down every few yards to rest, growling and fighting with each other, in which encounters every cur joins the mêlée, charging pell-mell into the yelping throng, upsetting the squalling children, and making confusion worse confounded. Then, armed with lodge-poles, the squaws, throwing down their loads, rush to the rescue, dealing stalwart blows on the pugnacious curs, and finally restoring something like order to the march.

“Tszoo—tszoo!” they cry, “wah, kashne, ceit-cha—get on, you devilish beasts—tszoo—tszoo!” and belabouring them without mercy, they start them into a gallop, which, once commenced, is [Pg 143]generally continued till they reach their destination.

The Indian dogs are, however, invariably well treated by the squaws, since they assist materially the every-day labours of these patient over-worked creatures, in hauling firewood to the lodge, and, on the line of march, carrying many of the household goods and chattels, which otherwise the squaw herself would have to carry on her back. Every lodge possesses from half-a-dozen to a score—some for draught and others for eating—for dog meat forms part and parcel of an Indian feast. The former are stout, wiry animals, half wolf half sheep-dog, and are regularly trained to draught; the latter are of a smaller kind, more inclined to fat, and embrace every variety of the genus cur. Many of the southern tribes possess a breed of dogs entirely divested of hair, which evidently have come from South America, and are highly esteemed for the kettle. Their meat, in appearance and flavour, resembles young pork, but far surpasses it in richness and delicacy.

The Sioux are very expert in making their lodges comfortable, taking more pains in their construction than most Indians. They are all of conical form: a framework of straight slender poles,

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

resembling hop-poles, and from twenty to twenty-five feet long, is first erected, round which is stretched a sheeting of buffalo robes, softly dressed, and smoked to render them water-tight. The apex, through which [Pg 144]the ends of the poles protrude, is left open to allow the smoke to escape. A small opening, sufficient to permit the entrance of a man, is made on one side, over which is hung a door of buffalo hide. A lodge of the common size contains about twelve or fourteen skins, and contains comfortably a family of twelve in number. The fire is made in the centre immediately under the aperture in the roof, and a flap of the upper skins is closed or extended at pleasure, serving as a cowl or chimney-top to regulate the draught and permit the smoke to escape freely. Round the fire, with their feet towards it, the inmates sleep on skins and buffalo rugs, which are rolled up during the day, and stowed at the back of the lodge.

In travelling, the lodge-poles are secured half on each side a horse, and the skins placed on transversal bars near the ends, which trail along the ground,—two or three squaws or children mounted on the same horse, or the smallest of the latter borne in the dog travées. A set of lodge-poles will last from three to seven years, unless the village is constantly on the move, when they are soon worn out in trailing over the gravelly prairie. They are usually of ash, which grows on many of the mountain creeks, and regular expeditions are undertaken when a supply is required, either for their own lodges, or for trading with those tribes who inhabit the prairies at a great distance from the locality where the poles are procured.

[Pg 145]

There are also certain creeks where the Indians resort to lay in a store of kinnik-kinnik (the inner bark of the red willow), which they use as a substitute for tobacco, and which has an aromatic and very pungent flavour. It is prepared for smoking by being scraped in thin curly flakes from the slender saplings, and crisped before the fire, after which it is rubbed between the hands into a form resembling leaf-tobacco, and stored in skin bags for use. It has a highly narcotic effect on those not habituated to its use, and produces a heaviness sometimes approaching stupefaction, altogether different from the soothing effects of tobacco.

Every year, owing to the disappearance of the buffalo from their former haunts, the Indians are compelled to encroach upon each other's hunting-grounds, which is a fruitful cause of war between the different tribes. It is a curious fact, that the buffalo retire before the whites, whilst the presence of Indians in their pastures appears in no degree to disturb them. Wherever a few white hunters are congregated in a trading port, or elsewhere, so sure it is that, if they remain in the same locality, the buffalo will desert the vicinity, and seek pasture elsewhere. In this, the Indians affirm, the wah-keitcha, or "bad medicine," of the pale-faces is very apparent; and they ground upon it their well-founded complaints of the encroachments made upon their hunting-grounds by the white hunters.

In the winter, many of the tribes are reduced to [Pg 146]the very verge of starvation—the buffalo having passed from their country into that of their enemies, when no other alternative is offered them, but to remain where they are and starve, or to follow the game into a hostile region, a move entailing war and all its horrors.

Reckless, moreover, of the future, in order to prepare robes for the traders, and to procure the pernicious fire-water, they wantonly slaughter, every year, vast numbers of buffalo cows (the skins of which sex only are dressed), and thus add to the evils in store for them. When questioned on this subject, and reproached with such want of foresight, they answer, that however quickly the

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

buffalo disappears, the Red man “goes under” more quickly still; and that the Great Spirit has ordained that both shall be “rubbed out” from the face of nature at one and the same time,—“that arrows and bullets are not more fatal to the buffalo than the small-pox and fire-water to them, and that before many winters’ snows have disappeared, the buffalo and the Red man will only be remembered by their bones, which will strew the plains.”—“They look forward, however, to a future state, when, after a long journey, they will reach the happy hunting-grounds, where buffalo will once more blacken the prairies; where the pale-faces dare not come to disturb them; where no winter snows cover the ground, and the buffalo are always plentiful and fat.”

[Pg 147]

As soon as the streams opened, La Bonté, now reduced to two animals and four traps, sallied forth again, this time seeking the dangerous country of the Blackfeet, on the head waters of the Yellow Stone and Upper Missouri. He was accompanied by three others, a man named Wheeler, and one Cross-Eagle, a Swede, who had been many years in the western country. Reaching the forks of a small creek, on both of which appeared plenty of beaver sign, La Bonté followed the left-hand one alone, whilst the others trapped the right in company, the former leaving his squaw in the company of a Sioux woman, who followed the fortunes of Cross-Eagle, the party agreeing to rendezvous at the junction of the two forks as soon as they had trapped to their heads and again descended them. The larger party were the first to reach the rendezvous, and camped on the banks of the main stream to await the arrival of La Bonté.

The morning after their return, they had just risen from their blankets, and were lazily stretching themselves before the fire, when a volley of firearms rattled from the bank of the creek, and two of their number fell dead to the ground, whilst at the same moment the deafening yells of Indians broke upon the ears of the frightened squaws. Cross-Eagle seized his rifle, and, though severely wounded, rushed to the cover of a hollow tree which stood near, and crawling into it, defended himself the whole day with the greatest obstinacy, killing [Pg 148] five Indians outright, and wounding several more. Unable to drive the gallant trapper from his retreat, the savages took advantage of a favourable wind which suddenly sprang up, and fired the long dry grass surrounding the tree. The rotten log catching fire, at length compelled the hunter to leave his retreat. Clubbing his rifle, he charged amongst the Indians, and fell at last, pierced through and through with wounds, but not until two more of his assailants had fallen by his hand.

The two squaws were carried off, and one was sold shortly afterwards to some white men at the trading ports on the Platte; but La Bonté never recovered the “Bending Reed,” nor even heard of her existence from that day. So once more was the mountaineer bereft of his better half; and when he returned to the rendezvous, a troop of wolves were feasting on the bodies of his late companions, and of the Indians killed in the affray, of which he only heard the particulars a long time after from a trapper, who had been present when one of the squaws was offered at the trading post for sale, and had heard her recount the miserable fate of her husband and his companions on the forks of the creek, which, from the fact of La Bonté being the leader of the party, has since borne his name.

Undaunted by this misfortune, the trapper continued his solitary hunt, passing through the midst of the Crow and Blackfeet country; encountering many perils, often hunted by the Indians, but always [Pg 149] escaping. He had soon loaded both his animals with beaver, and then thought of bending his steps to some of the trading rendezvous on the other side of the mountains, where

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

employés of the Great North-west Fur Company meet the trappers with the produce of their hunts, on Lewis's fork of the Columbia, or one of its numerous affluents. His intention was to pass the winter at some of the company's trading posts in Oregon, into which country he had never yet penetrated.

---

[Pg 150]

## CHAPTER V.

WE have said that La Bonté was a philosopher: he took the streaks of ill luck which checkered his mountain life with perfect carelessness, if not with stoical indifference. Nothing ruffled his danger-steeled equanimity of temper; no sudden emotion disturbed his mind. We have seen how wives were torn from him without eliciting a groan or grumble, (but such contretemps, it may be said, can scarcely find a place in the category of ills); how the loss of mules and mustangs, harried by horse-stealing Indians, left him in the ne-plus-ultra of mountain misery—"afoot;" how packs and peltries, the hard-earned "beaver" of his perilous hunts, were "raised" at one fell swoop by free-booting bands of savages. Hunger and thirst, we know, were commonplace sensations to the mountaineer. His storm-hardened flesh scarce felt the pinging wounds of arrow-point or bullet; and when in the midst of Indian fight, it is not probable that any tender qualms of feeling would allay the itching of his fingers for his enemy's scalp-lock, nor would any remains of civilised fastidiousness prevent [Pg 151]his burying his knife again and again in the life-blood of an Indian savage.

Still, in one dark corner of his heart, there shone at intervals a faint spark of what was once a fiercely-burning fire. Neither time, that corroder of all things, nor change, that ready abettor of oblivion, nor scenes of peril and excitement, which act as dampers to more quiet memories, could smother this little smouldering spark, which now and again—when rarely-coming calm succeeded some stirring passage in the hunter's life, and left him, for a brief time, devoid of care, and victim to his thoughts—would flicker suddenly, and light up all the nooks and corners of his rugged breast, and discover to his mind's eye that one deep-rooted memory clung there still, though long neglected; proving that, spite of time and change, of life and fortune, "On revient toujours à ses premiers amours."

Often and often as La Bonté sat cross-legged before his solitary camp-fire, and, pipe in mouth, watched the blue smoke curling upwards in the clear cold sky, a well-remembered form appeared to gaze upon him from the vapoury wreaths. Then would old recollections crowd before him, and old emotions, long a stranger to his breast, shape themselves, as it were, into long-forgotten but now familiar pulsations. Again he felt the soft subduing influence which once, in days gone by, a certain passion exercised over his mind and body; and often a trembling seized him, the same he used to [Pg 152]experience at the sudden sight of one Mary Brand, whose dim and dreamy apparition so often watched his lonely bed, or, unconsciously conjured up, cheered him in the dreary watches of the long and stormy winter nights.

At first he only knew that one face haunted his dreams by night, and the few moments by day when he thought of any thing, and this face smiled lovingly upon him, and cheered him mightily. Name he had quite forgotten, or recalled it vaguely, and, setting small store by it, had thought of it no more.

For many years after he had deserted his home, La Bonté had cherished the idea of again return-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ing to his country. During this period he had never forgotten his old flame, and many a choice fur he had carefully laid by, intended as a present for Mary Brand; and many a gâge d'amour of cunning shape and device, worked in stained quills of porcupine and bright-coloured beads—the handiwork of nimble-fingered squaws—he had packed in his possible sack for the same destination, hoping a time would come when he might lay them at her feet.

Year after year wore on, however, and still found him, with traps and rifle, following his perilous avocation; and each succeeding one saw him more and more wedded to the wild mountain-life. He was conscious how unfitted he had become again to enter the galling harness of conventionality and civilisation. He thought, too, how changed in [Pg 153]manners and appearance he now must be, and could not believe that he would again find favour in the eyes of his quondam love, who, he judged, had long since forgotten him; and inexperienced as he was in such matters, yet he knew enough of womankind to feel assured that time and absence had long since done the work, if even the natural fickleness of woman's nature had lain dormant. Thus it was that he came to forget Mary Brand, but still remembered the all-absorbing feeling she had once created in his breast, the shadow of which still remained, and often took form and feature in the smoke-wreaths of his solitary camp-fire.

If truth be told, La Bonté had his failings as a mountaineer, and—sin unpardonable in hunter law—still possessed, in holes and corners of his breast seldom explored by his inward eye, much of the leaven of kindly human nature, which now and again involuntarily peeped out, as greatly to the contempt of his comrade trappers as it was blushing repressed by the mountaineer himself. Thus, in his various matrimonial episodes, he treated his dusky sposas with all the consideration the sex could possibly demand from hand of man. No squaw of his ever humped shoulder to receive a castigatory and marital “lodge-poling” for offence domestic; but often has his helpmate blushed to see her pale-face lord and master devote himself to the feminine labour of packing huge piles of fire-wood [Pg 154]on his back, felling trees, butchering unwieldy buffalo—all which are included in the Indian category of female duties. Thus he was esteemed an excellent parti by all the marriageable young squaws of Blackfoot, Crow, and Shoshone, of Yutah, Shian, and Arapaho; but after his last connubial catastrophe, he steeled his heart against all the charms and coquetry of Indian belles, and persevered in unblest widowhood for many a long day.

From the point where we left him on his way to the waters of the Columbia, we must jump with him over a space of nearly two years, during which time he had a most uninterrupted run of good luck; trapping with great success on the head streams of the Columbia and Yellow Stone—the most dangerous of trapping ground—and finding good market for his peltries at the “North-west” posts—beaver fetching as high a price as five and six dollars a “plew”—the “golden age” of trappers, now, alas, never to return, and existing only in the fond memory of the mountaineers. This glorious time, however, was too good to last. In mountain language, “such heap of fat meat was not going to ‘shine’ much longer.”

La Bonté was at this time one of a band of eight trappers, whose hunting ground was about the head waters of the Yellow Stone, which we have before said is in the country of the Blackfeet. With him were Killbuck, Meek, Marcellin, and three others; and the leader of the party was Bill [Pg 155]Williams, that old “hard case” who had spent forty years and more in the mountains, until he had become as tough as the parflêche soles of his moccasins. They were all good men and true, expert hunters, and well-trained mountaineers. After having trapped all the streams they were

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

acquainted with, it was determined to strike into the mountains, at a point where old Williams affirmed, from the “run” of the hills, there must be plenty of water, although not one of the party had before explored the country, or knew any thing of its nature, or of the likelihood of its affording game for themselves or pasture for their animals. However, they packed their peltry, and put out for the land in view—a lofty peak, dimly seen above the more regular summit of the chain, being their landmark.

For the first day or two their route lay between two ridges of mountains, and by following the little valley which skirted a creek, they kept on level ground, and saved their animals considerable labour and fatigue. Williams always rode ahead, his body bent over his saddle-horn, across which rested a long heavy rifle, his keen gray eyes peering from under the slouched brim of a flexible felt-hat, black and shining with grease. His buckskin hunting-shirt, bedaubed until it had the appearance of polished leather, hung in folds over his bony carcass; his nether extremities being clothed in pantaloons of the same material (with scattered fringes down the outside of the leg—which ornaments, [Pg 156]however, had been pretty well thinned to supply “whangs” for mending moccasins or pack-saddles), which, shrunk with wet, clung tightly to his long, spare, sinewy legs. His feet were thrust into a pair of Mexican stirrups made of wood, and as big as coal-scuttles; and iron spurs of incredible proportions, with tinkling drops attached to the rowels, were fastened to his heel—a bead-worked strap, four inches broad, securing them over the instep. In the shoulder-belt which sustained his powder-horn and bullet-pouch, were fastened the various instruments essential to one pursuing his mode of life. An awl, with deer-horn handle, and the point defended by a case of cherry-wood carved by his own hand, hung at the back of the belt, side by side with a worm for cleaning the rifle; and under this was a squat and quaint-looking bullet-mould, the handles guarded by strips of buckskin to save his fingers from burning when running balls, having for its companion a little bottle made from the point of an antelope’s horn, scraped transparent, which contained the “medicine” used in baiting the traps. The old coon’s face was sharp and thin, a long nose and chin hob-nobbing each other; and his head was always bent forward giving him the appearance of being hump-backed. He appeared to look neither to the right nor left, but, in fact, his little twinkling eye was everywhere. He looked at no one he was addressing, always seeming to be thinking of something else than the subject of his [Pg 157] discourse, speaking in a whining, thin, cracked voice, and in a tone that left the hearer in doubt whether he was laughing or crying. On the present occasion he had joined this band, and naturally assumed the leadership (for Bill ever refused to go in harness), in opposition to his usual practice, which was to hunt alone. His character was well known. Acquainted with every inch of the Far West, and with all the Indian tribes who inhabited it, he never failed to outwit his Red enemies, and generally made his appearance at the rendezvous, from his solitary expeditions, with galore of beaver, when numerous bands of trappers dropped in on foot, having been despoiled of their packs and animals by the very Indians through the midst of whom old Williams had contrived to pass unseen and unmolested. On occasions when he had been in company with others, and attacked by Indians, Bill invariably fought manfully, and with all the coolness that perfect indifference to death or danger could give, but always “on his own hook.” His rifle cracked away merrily, and never spoke in vain; and in a charge—if ever it came to that—his keen-edged butcher-knife tickled the fleece of many a Blackfoot. But at the same time, if he saw that discretion was the better part of valour, and affairs wore so cloudy an aspect as to render retreat advisable, he

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

would first express his opinion in curt terms, and decisively, and, charging up his rifle, would take himself off and “câche” [25] so [Pg 158]effectually that to search for him was utterly useless. Thus, when with a large party of trappers, when any thing occurred which gave him a hint that trouble was coming, or more Indians were about than he considered good for his animals, Bill was wont to exclaim—

“Do ‘ee hyar now, boys, thar’s sign about? this hos feels like caching;” and, without more words, and stoically deaf to all remonstrances, he would forthwith proceed to pack his animals, talking the while to an old, crop-eared, raw-boned Nez-percé pony, his own particular saddle-horse, who in dogged temper and iron hardiness, was a worthy companion of his self-willed master. This beast, as Bill seized his apishamore to lay upon its galled back, would express displeasure by humping its back and shaking its withers with a wincing motion, that always excited the ire of the old trapper; and no sooner had he laid the apishamore smoothly on the chafed skin, than a wriggle of the animal shook it off.

“Do ‘ee hyar now, you darned crittur?” he would whine out, “can’t ‘ee keep quiet your old fleece now? Isn’t this old coon putting out to save ‘ee from the darned Injuns now, do ‘ee hyar?” And then, continuing his work and taking no notice of his comrades, who stood by bantering the eccentric old trapper, he would soliloquise—“Do ‘ee hyar, now? This niggur sees sign ahead—he does; he’ll be afoot afore long, if he don’t keep his eye skinned,—he [Pg 159]will. Injuns is all about, they ar’: Blackfoot at that. Can’t come round this child—they can’t, wagh!” And at last, his pack animals securely tied to the tail of his horse, he would mount, and throwing the rifle across the horn of his saddle, and without noticing his companions, would drive the jingling spurs into his horse’s gaunt sides, and muttering, “Can’t come round this child—they can’t!” would ride away; and nothing more would be seen or heard of him perhaps for months, when they would not unfrequently, themselves bereft of animals in the scrape he had foreseen, find him located in some solitary valley, in his lonely camp, with his animals securely picketed around, and his peltries safe. However, if he took it into his head to keep company with a party, all felt perfectly secure under his charge. His iron frame defied fatigue, and, at night, his love for himself and his own animals was sufficient guarantee that the camp would be well guarded. As he rode ahead, his spurs jingling, and thumping the sides of his old horse at every step, he managed, with admirable dexterity, to take advantage of the best line of country to follow—avoiding the gullies and cañons and broken ground, which would otherwise have impeded his advance. This tact appeared instinctive, for he looked neither right nor left, whilst continuing a course as straight as possible at the foot of the mountains. In selecting a camping site, he displayed equal skill: wood, water, and grass began to fill his thoughts towards [Pg 160]sundown, and when these three requisites for a camping ground presented themselves, old Bill sprang from his saddle, unpacked his animals in a twinkling, and hobbled them, struck fire and ignited a few chips (leaving the rest to pack in the wood), lit his pipe, and enjoyed himself. On one occasion, when passing through the valley, they had come upon a band of fine buffalo cows, and, shortly after camping, two of the party rode in with a good supply of fat fleece. One of the party was a “greenhorn” on his first hunt, fresh from a fort on Platte, and as yet uninitiated in the mysteries of mountain cooking. Bill, lazily smoking his pipe, called to him, as he happened to be nearest, to butcher off a piece of meat and put it in his pot. Markhead seized the fleece, and commenced innocently carving off a huge ration, when a gasping roar from the old trapper caused him to drop his knife.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

“Ti-ya,” growled Bill, “do ‘ee hyar, now, you darned greenhorn, do ‘ee spile fat cow like that whar you was raised? Them doins wont shine in this crowd, boy, do ‘ee hyar, darned you? What! butcher meat across the grain! why, whar’ll the blood be goin’ to, you precious Spaniard? Down the grain, I say,” he continued in a severe tone of rebuke, “and let your flaps be long, or out the juice’ll run slick—do ‘ee hyar, now?” But this heretical error nearly cost the old trapper his appetite, and all night long he grumbled his horror at seeing “fat cow spiled in that fashion.”

[Pg 161]

When two or three days’ journey brought them to the end of the valley, and they commenced the passage of the mountain, their march was obstructed by all kinds of obstacles; although they had chosen what appeared to be a gap in the chain, and what was in fact the only practicable passage in that vicinity. They followed the cañon of a branch of the Yellow Stone, where it entered the mountain; but from this point it became a torrent, and it was only by dint of incredible exertions that they reached the summit of the ridge. Game was exceedingly scarce in the vicinity, and they suffered extremely from hunger, having, on more than one occasion, recourse to the parflèche soles of their moccasins to allay its pangs. Old Bill, however, never grumbled; he chewed away at his shoes with relish even, and as long as he had a pipeful of tobacco in his pouch, was a happy man. Starvation was as yet far off, for all their animals were in existence; but as they were in a country where it was difficult to procure a remount, each trapper hesitated to sacrifice one of his horses to his appetite.

From the summit of the ridge, Bill recognised the country on the opposite side to that whence they had just ascended as familiar to him, and pronounced it to be full of beaver, as well as abounding in the less desirable commodity of Indians. This was the valley lying about the lakes now called Eustis and Biddle, in which are many thermal and mineral springs, well known to the trappers by the names [Pg 162]of the Soda, Beer, and Brimstone Springs, and regarded by them with no little awe and curiosity, as being the breathing-places of his Satanic majesty—considered, moreover, to be the “biggest kind” of “medicine” to be found in the mountains. If truth be told, old Bill hardly relished the idea of entering this country, which he pronounced to be of “bad medicine” notoriety, but nevertheless agreed to guide them to the best trapping ground.

One day they reached a creek full of beaver sign, and determined to halt here and establish their headquarters, while they trapped in the neighbourhood. We must here observe, that at this period—which was one of considerable rivalry amongst the various trading companies in the Indian territory—the Indians, having become possessed of arms and ammunition in great quantities, had grown unusually daring and persevering in their attacks on the white hunters who passed through their country, and consequently the trappers were compelled to roam about in larger bands for mutual protection, which, although it made them less liable to open attack, yet rendered it more difficult for them to pursue their calling without being discovered; for, where one or two men might pass unseen, the broad trail of a large party, with its animals, was not likely to escape the sharp eyes of the cunning savages.

They had scarcely encamped when the old leader, who had sallied out a short distance from camp to [Pg 163]reconnoitre the neighbourhood, returned with an Indian moccasin in his hand, and informed his companions that its late owner and others were about.

“Do ‘ee hyar now, boys, thar’s Injuns knocking round, and Blackfoot at that; but thar’s plenty of beaver too, and this child means trapping any how.”

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

His companions were anxious to leave such dangerous vicinity; but the old fellow, contrary to his usual caution, determined to remain where he was—saying that there were Indians all over the country for that matter; and as they had determined to hunt here, he had made up his mind too—which was conclusive, and all agreed to stop where they were, in spite of the Indians. La Bonté killed a couple of mountain sheep close to camp, and they feasted rarely on the fat mutton that night, and were unmolested by marauding Blackfeet.

The next morning, leaving two of their number in camp, they started in parties of two, to hunt for beaver sign and set their traps. Markhead paired with one Batiste, Killbuck and La Bonté formed another couple, Meek and Marcellin another; two Canadians trapped together, and Bill Williams and another remained to guard the camp: but this last, leaving Bill mending his moccasins, started off to kill a mountain sheep, a band of which animals was visible.

Markhead and his companion, the first couple on the list, followed a creek, which entered that on [Pg 164] which they had encamped, about ten miles distant. Beaver sign was abundant, and they had set eight traps, when Markhead came suddenly upon fresh Indian sign, where squaws had passed through the shrubbery on the banks of the stream to procure water, as he knew from observing a large stone placed by them in the stream, on which to stand to enable them to dip their kettles in the deepest water. Beckoning to his companion to follow, and cocking his rifle, he carefully pushed aside the bushes, and noiselessly proceeded up the bank, when, creeping on hands and knees, he gained the top, and, looking from his hiding-place, descried three Indian huts standing on a little plateau near the creek. Smoke curled from the roofs of branches, but the skin doors were carefully closed, so that he was unable to distinguish the number of the inmates. At a little distance, however, he observed two or three squaws gathering wood, with the usual attendance of curs, whose acuteness in detecting the scent of strangers was much to be dreaded. Markhead was a rash and daring young fellow, caring no more for Indians than he did for prairie dogs, and acting ever on the spur of the moment, and as his inclination dictated, regardless of consequences. He at once determined to enter the lodges, and attack the enemy, should any be there; and the other trapper was fain to join him in the enterprise. The lodges proved empty, but the fires were still burning, and meat cooking upon them, to which [Pg 165] the hungry hunters did ample justice, besides helping themselves to whatever goods and chattels, in the shape of leather and moccasins, took their fancy.

Gathering their spoil into a bundle, they sought their horses, which they had left tied under cover of the timber on the banks of the creek; and, mounting, took the back trail, to pick up their traps and remove from so dangerous a neighbourhood. They were approaching the spot where the first trap was set, a thick growth of ash and quaking-ash concealing the stream, when Markhead, who was riding ahead, observed the bushes agitated, as if some animal was making its way through them. He instantly stopped his horse, and his companion rode to his side, to inquire the cause of this abrupt halt. They were within a few yards of the belt of shrubs which skirted the stream; and before Markhead had time to reply, a dozen swarthy heads and shoulders suddenly protruded from the leafy screen, and as many rifle-barrels and arrows were pointing at their breasts. Before the trappers had time to turn their horses and fly, a cloud of smoke burst from the thicket almost in their faces. Batiste, pierced with several balls, fell dead, and Markhead felt himself severely wounded. However, he struck the spurs into his horse; and as some half-score Blackfeet jumped with loud cries from their cover, he discharged his rifle amongst them, and galloped off, a volley

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

of balls and arrows [Pg 166]whistling after him. He drew no bit until he reined up at the camp-fire, where he found Bill quietly dressing a deer-skin. That worthy looked up from his work; and seeing Markhead's face streaming with blood, and the very unequivocal evidence of an Indian rencontre in the shape of an arrow sticking in his back, he asked,—“Do 'ee feel bad now, boy? Whar away you see them darned Blackfoot?”

“Well, pull this arrow out of my back, and may be I'll feel like telling,” answered Markhead.

“Do 'ee hyar now! hold on till I've grained this cussed skin, will 'ee! Did 'ee ever see sich a darned pelt, now? it won't take the smoke any how I fix it.” And Markhead was fain to wait the leisure of the imperturbable old trapper, before he was eased of his annoying companion.

Old Bill expressed no surprise or grief when informed of the fate of poor Batiste. He said it was “just like greenhorns, runnin' into them cussed Blackfoot;” and observed that the defunct trapper, being only a Vide-pôche, was “no account anyhow.” Presently Killbuck and La Bonté galloped into camp, with another alarm of Indians. They had also been attacked suddenly by a band of Blackfeet, but, being in a more open country, had got clear off, after killing two of their assailants, whose scalps hung at the horns of their saddles. They had been in a different direction to that in which Markhead and his companion had proceeded, and, from the signs they had observed, expressed their belief that the [Pg 167]country was alive with Indians. Neither of these men had been wounded. Presently the two Canadians made their appearance on the bluff, galloping with might and main to camp, and shouting “Indians, Indians,” as they came. All being assembled, and a council held, it was determined to abandon the camp and neighbourhood immediately. Old Bill was already packing his animals, and as he pounded the saddle down on the withers of his old Rosinante, he muttered,—“Do 'ee hyar, now! this coon 'ull câche, he will.” So mounting his horse, and leading his pack mule by a lariat, he bent over his saddle-horn, dug his ponderous rowels into the lank sides of his beast, and, without a word, struck up the bluff and disappeared.

The others, hastily gathering up their packs, and most of them having lost their traps, quickly followed his example, and “put out.” On cresting the high ground which rose from the creek, they observed thin columns of smoke mounting into the air from many different points, the meaning of which they were at no loss to guess. However they were careful not to show themselves on elevated ground, keeping as much as possible under the banks of the creek, when such a course was practicable; but, the bluffs sometimes rising precipitously from the water, they were more than once compelled to ascend the banks, and continue their course along the uplands, whence they might easily be discovered by the Indians. It was nearly sundown [Pg 168]when they left their camp, but they proceeded during the greater part of the night at as rapid a rate as possible; their progress, however, being greatly retarded as they advanced into the mountain, their route lying up stream. Towards morning they halted for a brief space, but started again as soon as daylight permitted them to see their way over the broken ground.

The creek now forced its way through a narrow cañon, the banks being thickly clothed with a shrubbery of cottonwood and quaking-ash. The mountain rose on each side, but not abruptly, being here and there broken into plateaus and shelving prairies. In a very thick bottom, sprinkled with coarse grass, they halted about noon, and removed the saddles and packs from their wearied animals, picketing them in the best spots of grass.

La Bonté and Killbuck, after securing their animals, left the camp to hunt, for they had no provisions of any kind; and a short distance beyond it, the former came suddenly upon a recent moc-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

casin track in the timber. After examining it for a moment, he raised his head with a broad grin, and, turning to his companion, pointed into the cover, where, in the thickest part, they discerned the well-known figure of old Bill's horse, browsing upon the cherry bushes. Pushing through the thicket in search of the brute's master, La Bonté suddenly stopped short as the muzzle of a rifle-barrel gaped [Pg 169]before his eyes at the distance of a few inches, whilst the thin voice of Bill muttered—

“Do ‘ee hyar now, I was nigh giving ‘ee h——: I was now. If I didn't think ‘ee was Blackfoot, I'm dogged now.” And not a little indignant was the old fellow that his c ache had been so easily, though accidentally, discovered. However, he presently made his appearance in camp, leading his animals, and once more joined his late companions, not deigning to give any explanation as to why or wherefore he had deserted them the day before, merely muttering, “do ‘ee hyar now, thar's trouble comin.”

The two hunters returned after sundown with a black-tailed deer; and after eating the better part of the meat, and setting a guard, the party were glad to roll in their blankets and enjoy the rest they so much needed. They were undisturbed during the night; but at dawn of day the sleepers were roused by a hundred fierce yells, from the mountains enclosing the creek on which they had encamped. The yells were instantly followed by a ringing volley, the bullets thudding into the trees, and cutting the branches near them, but without causing any mischief. Old Bill rose from his blanket and shook himself, and exclaimed “Wagh!” as at that moment a ball plumped into the fire over which he was standing, and knocked the ashes about in a cloud. All the mountaineers seized their [Pg 170]rifles and sprang to cover; but as yet it was not sufficiently light to show them their enemy, the bright flashes from the guns alone indicating their position. As morning dawned, however, they saw that both sides of the ca on were occupied by the Indians; and, from the firing, judged there must be at least a hundred warriors engaged in the attack. Not a shot had yet been fired by the trappers, but as the light increased, they eagerly watched for an Indian to expose himself, and offer a mark to their trusty rifles. La Bont , Killbuck, and old Bill, lay a few yards distant from each other, flat on their faces, near the edge of the thicket, their rifles raised before them, and the barrels resting in the forks of convenient bushes. From their place of concealment to the position of the Indians—who, however, were scattered here and there, wherever a rock afforded them cover—was a distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, or within fair rifle-shot. The trappers were obliged to divide their force, since both sides of the creek were occupied; but, such was the nature of the ground, and the excellent cover afforded by the rocks and boulders, and clumps of dwarf pine and hemlock, that not a hand's-breadth of an Indian's body had yet been seen. Nearly opposite La Bont , a shelving glade in the mountain side ended in an abrupt precipice, and at the very edge, and almost toppling over it, were several boulders, just of sufficient size to afford cover to a man's body. As [Pg 171]this bluff overlooked the trappers' position, it was occupied by the Indians, and every rock covered an assailant. At one point, just over where La Bont  and Killbuck were lying, two boulders lay together, with just sufficient interval to admit a rifle-barrel between them, and from this breas-twork an Indian kept up a most annoying fire. All his shots fell in dangerous propinquity to one or other of the trappers, and already Killbuck had been grazed by one better directed than the others. La Bont  watched for some time in vain for a chance to answer this persevering marksman, and at length an opportunity offered, by which he was not long in profiting.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

The Indian, as the light increased, was better able to discern his mark, and fired, and yelled every time he did so, with redoubled vigour. In his eagerness, and probably whilst in the act of taking aim, he leaned too heavily against the rock which covered him, and, detaching it from its position, down it rolled into the cañon, exposing his body by its fall. At the same instant, a wreath of smoke puffed from the bushes which concealed the trappers, and the crack of La Bonté's rifle spoke the first word of reply to the Indian challenge. A few feet behind the rock, fell the dead body of the Indian, rolling down the steep sides of the cañon, and only stopped by a bush at the very bottom, within a few yards of the spot where Markhead lay concealed in some high grass.

[Pg 172]

That daring fellow instantly jumped from his cover, and drawing his knife, rushed to the body, and in another moment held aloft the Indian's scalp, giving, at the same time, a triumphant whoop. A score of rifles were levelled and discharged at the intrepid mountaineer; but in the act many Indians incautiously exposed themselves, every rifle in the timber cracked simultaneously, and for each report an Indian bit the dust.

Now, however, they changed their tactics. Finding they were unable to drive the trappers from their position, they retired from the mountain, and the firing suddenly ceased. In their retreat they were forced to expose themselves, and again the whites dealt destruction amongst them. As the Indians retired, yelling loudly, the hunters thought they had given up the contest; but presently a cloud of smoke rising from the bottom immediately below them, at once discovered the nature of their plans. A brisk wind was blowing up the cañon; and, favoured by it, they fired the brush on the banks of the stream, knowing that before this the hunters must speedily retreat. Against such a result, but for the gale of wind which drove the fire roaring before it, they could have provided—for your mountaineer never fails to find resources on a pinch. They would have fired the brush to leeward of their position, and also carefully ignited that to windward, or between them and the advancing flame, extinguishing it [Pg 173]immediately when a sufficient space had thus been cleared, over which the flame could not leap, and thus cutting themselves off from it both above and below their position. In the present instance they could not profit by such a course, as the wind was so strong that, if once the bottom caught fire, they would not be able to extinguish it; besides which, in the attempt, they would so expose themselves that they would be picked off by the Indians without difficulty. As it was, the fire came roaring before the wind with the speed of a race-horse, and, spreading from the bottom, licked the mountain sides, the dry grass burning like tinder. Huge volumes of stifling smoke rolled before it, and, in a very few minutes, the trappers were hastily mounting their animals, driving the packed ones before them. The dense clouds of smoke concealed every thing from their view, and, to avoid this, they broke from the creek and galloped up the sides of the cañon on to the more level plateau. As they attained this, a band of mounted Indians charged them. One, waving a red blanket, dashed through the cañallada, and was instantly followed by all the loose animals of the trappers, the rest of the Indians pursuing with loud shouts. So sudden was the charge, that the whites had not power to prevent the stampede. Old Bill, as usual, led his pack mules by the lariat; but the animals, mad with terror at the shouts of the Indians, broke from him, nearly pulling him out of his seat at the same time.

[Pg 174]

To cover the retreat of the others with their prey, a band of mounted Indians now appeared, threatening an attack in front, whilst their first assailants, rushing from the bottom, at least a

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

hundred strong, assaulted in rear. "Do 'ee hyar, boys!" shouted old Bill, "break, or you'll go under. This child's goin' to c ache!" and saying the word, off he went. *Sauve-qui-peut* was the order of the day, and not a moment too soon, for overwhelming numbers were charging upon them, and the mountain resounded with savage yells. La Bont  and Killbuck stuck together: they saw old Bill, bending over his saddle, dive right into the cloud of smoke, and apparently make for the creek bottom—their other companions scattering each on his own hook, and saw no more of them for many a month; and thus was one of the most daring and successful bands broken up that ever trapped in the mountains of the Far West.

It is painful to follow the steps of the poor fellows who, thus despoiled of the hardly-earned produce of their hunt, saw all their wealth torn from them at one swoop. The two Canadians were killed upon the night succeeding that of the attack. Worn with fatigue, hungry and cold, they had built a fire in what they thought was a secure retreat, and, rolled in their blankets, were soon buried in a sleep from which they never awoke. An Indian boy tracked them, and watched their camp. Burning with the idea of signalling himself thus early, he awaited his [Pg 175] opportunity, and noiselessly approaching their resting-place, shot them both with arrows, and returned in triumph to his people with their horses and scalps.

La Bont  and Killbuck sought a passage in the mountain by which to cross over to the head waters of the Columbia, and there fall in with some of the traders or trappers of the North-west. They became involved in the mountains, in a part where was no game of any description, and no pasture for their miserable animals. One of these they killed for food; the other, a bag of bones, died from sheer starvation. They had very little ammunition, their moccasins were worn out, and they were unable to procure skins to supply themselves with fresh ones. Winter was fast approaching; the snow already covered the mountains; and storms of sleet and hail poured incessantly through the valleys, benumbing their exhausted limbs, hardly protected by scanty and ragged covering. To add to their miseries, poor Killbuck was taken ill. He had been wounded in the groin by a bullet some time before, and the ball still remained. The wound, aggravated by walking and the excessive cold, assumed an ugly appearance, and soon rendered him incapable of sustained exertion, all motion even being attended with intolerable pain. La Bont  had made a shanty for his suffering companion, and spread a soft bed of pine branches for him, by the side of a small creek at the point where it came out of the mountain [Pg 176] and followed its course through a little prairie. They had been three days without other food than a piece of *parfl che*, which had formed the back of La Bont 's bullet-pouch, and which, after soaking in the creek, they eagerly devoured. Killbuck was unable to move, and sinking fast from exhaustion. His companion had hunted from morning till night, as well as his failing strength would allow him, but had not seen the traces of any kind of game, with the exception of some old buffalo tracks, made apparently months before by a band of bulls crossing the mountain.

The morning of the fourth day La Bont , as usual, rose at daybreak from his blanket, and was proceeding to collect wood for the fire during his absence while hunting, when Killbuck called to him, and in an almost inarticulate voice desired him to seat himself by his side.

"Boy," he said, "this old hos feels like goin' under, and that afore long. You're stout yet, and if thar was meat handy, you'd come round slick. Now, boy, I'll be under, as I said, afore many hours, and if you don't raise meat you'll be in the same fix. I never eat dead meat [26] myself, and wouldn't ask no one to do it neither; but meat fair killed is meat any way; so, boy, put your knife in this old

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

niggur's lights, and help yourself. It's 'poor bull,' I know, but maybe it'll do to keep life in; and [Pg 177]along the fleece thar's meat yet, and maybe my old hump ribs has picking on 'em."

"You're a good old hos," answered La Bonté, "but this child ain't turned niggur yet."

Killbuck then begged his companion to leave him to his fate, and strive himself to reach game; but this alternative La Bonté likewise generously refused, and faintly endeavouring to cheer the sick man, left him once again to look for game. He was so weak that he felt difficulty in supporting himself, and knowing how futile would be his attempts to hunt, he sallied from the camp convinced that a few hours more would see the last of him.

He had scarcely raised his eyes, when, hardly crediting his senses, he saw within a few hundred yards of him an old bull, worn with age, lying on the prairie. Two wolves were seated on their haunches before him, their tongues lolling from their mouths, whilst the buffalo was impotently rolling his ponderous head from side to side, his blood-shot eyes glaring fiercely at his tormentors, and flakes of foam, mixed with blood, dropping from his mouth over his long shaggy beard. La Bonté was transfixed; he scarcely dared to breathe, lest the animal should be alarmed and escape. Weak as it was, he could hardly have followed it, and, knowing that his own and companion's life hung upon the success of his shot, he scarcely had strength to raise his rifle. By dint of extraordinary exertions and precautions, which were totally unnecessary, for the poor old [Pg 178] bull had not a move in him, the hunter approached within shot. Lying upon the ground, he took a long steady aim, and fired. The buffalo raised its matted head, tossed it wildly for an instant, and, stretching out its limbs convulsively, turned over on its side and was dead.

Killbuck heard the shot, and crawling from under the little shanty which covered his bed, saw, to his astonishment, La Bonté in the act of butchering a buffalo within two hundred yards of camp. "Hurraw for you!" he faintly exclaimed; and exhausted by the exertion he had used, and perhaps by the excitement of an anticipated feast, fell back and fainted.

However, the killing was the easiest matter, for when the huge carcass lay dead upon the ground, our hunter had hardly strength to drive the blade of his knife through the tough hide of the old patriarch. Then having cut off as much of the meat as he could carry, eating the while sundry portions of the liver, which he dipped in the gall-bladder by way of relish, La Bonté cast a wistful look upon the half-starved wolves, who now loped round and round, licking their chops, only waiting until his back was turned to fall to with appetite equal to his own, and capabilities of swallowing and digesting far superior. La Bonté looked at the buffalo and then at the wolves, levelled his rifle and shot one dead, at which the survivor scampered off without delay.

Arrived at camp, packing in a tolerable load of [Pg 179]the best part of the animal—for hunger lent him strength—he found poor Killbuck lying on his back, deaf to time, and to all appearance gone under. Having no salvolatile or vinaigrette at hand, La Bonté flapped a lump of raw fleece into his patient's face, and this instantly revived him. Then taking the sick man's shoulder, he raised him tenderly into a sitting posture, and invited, in kindly accents, "the old hos to feed," thrusting at the same time a tolerable slice of liver into his hand, which the patient looked at wistfully and vaguely for a few short moments, and then greedily devoured. It was nightfall by the time that La Bonté, assisted by many intervals of hard eating, packed in the last of the meat, which formed a goodly pile around the fire.

"Poor bull" it was in all conscience: the labour of chewing a mouthful of the "tender loin" was equal to a hard day's hunt; but to them, poor starved fellows, it appeared the richest of meat. They

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

still preserved a small tin pot, and in this, by stress of eternal boiling, La Bonté contrived to make some strong soup, which soon restored his sick companion to marching order. For himself, as soon as a good meal had filled him, he was strong as ever, and employed himself in drying the remainder of the meat for future use. Even the wolf, bony as he was, was converted into meat, and rationed them several days. Winter, however, had set in with such severity, and Killbuck was still so weak, that [Pg 180]La Bonté determined to remain in his present position until spring, as he now found that buffalo frequently visited the valley, as it was more bare of snow than the lowlands, and afforded them better pasture; and one morning he had the satisfaction of seeing a band of seventeen bulls within long rifle-shot of the camp, out of which four of the fattest were soon laid low by his rifle.

They still had hard times before them, for towards spring the buffalo again disappeared; the greater part of their meat had been spoiled, owing to there not being sufficient sun to dry it thoroughly; and when they resumed their journey they had nothing to carry with them, and had a desert before them without game of any kind. We pass over what they suffered. Hunger and thirst were their portion, and Indians assaulted them at times, and many miraculous and hair-breadth escapes they had from these enemies.

---

[Pg 181]

## CHAPTER VI.

THE trail to Oregon, followed by traders and emigrants, crosses the Rocky Mountains at a point known as the South Pass, where a break in the chain occurs of such moderate and gradual elevation, as to permit the passage of waggons with tolerable facility. The Sweet Water Valley runs nearly to the point where the dividing ridge of the Pacific and Atlantic waters throws off its streams to their respective oceans. At one end of this valley, and situated on the right bank of the Sweet Water, a huge isolated mass of granitic rock rises to the height of three hundred feet, abruptly from the plain. On the smooth and scarped surface presented by one of its sides, are rudely carved the names and initials of traders, trappers, travellers, and emigrants, who have here recorded the memorial of their sojourn in the remote wilderness of the Far West. The face of the rock is covered with names familiar to the mountaineers as those of the most renowned of their hardy brotherhood; while others again occur, better known to the science and literature of the Old World than to the unlearned trappers of the Rocky Mountains. The huge mass [Pg 182]is a well-known landmark to the Indians and mountaineers; and travellers and emigrants hail it as the half-way beacon between the frontiers of the United States and the still distant goal of their long and perilous journey.

It was a hot sultry day in July. Not a breath of air relieved the intense and oppressive heat of the atmosphere, unusual here, where pleasant summer breezes, and sometimes stronger gales, blow over the elevated plains with the regularity of trade-winds. The sun, at its meridian height, struck the dry sandy plain and parched the drooping buffalo-grass on its surface, and its rays, refracted and reverberating from the heated ground, distorted every object seen through its lurid medium. Straggling antelope, leisurely crossing the adjoining prairie, appeared to be gracefully moving in mid-air; whilst a scattered band of buffalo bulls loomed huge and indistinct in the vapoury distance. In the timbered valley of the river, deer and elk were standing motionless in the water, under the shade of the overhanging cottonwoods, seeking a respite from the persevering attacks

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

of swarms of horse-flies and musquitos; and now and then a heavy splash was heard, as they tossed their antlered heads into the stream, to free them from the venomous insects that buzzed incessantly about them. In the sandy prairie, beetles of an enormous size were rolling in every direction huge balls of earth, pushing them with their hind legs with comical perseverance; [Pg 183]cameleons darted about, assimilating the hue of their grotesque bodies with the colour of the sand: groups of prairie-dog houses were seen, each with its inmate barking lustily on the roof; whilst under cover of nearly every bush of sage or cactus a rattlesnake lay glittering in lazy coil. Tantalising the parched sight, the neighbouring peaks of the lofty Wind River Mountains glittered in a mantle of sparkling snow, whilst Sweet Water Mountain, capped in cloud, looked gray and cool, in striking contrast to the burned up plains which lay basking at its foot.

Resting their backs against the rock (on which, we have said, are now carved the names of many travellers), and defended from the powerful rays of the sun by its precipitous sides, two white men quietly slept. They were gaunt and lantern-jawed, and clothed in tattered buckskin. Each held a rifle across his knees, but—strange sight in this country—one had its pan thrown open, which was rust-eaten and contained no priming; the other's hammer was without a flint. Their faces were as if covered with mahogany-coloured parchment; their eyes were sunken; and as their jaws fell listlessly on their breasts, their cheeks were hollow, with the bones nearly protruding from the skin. One was in the prime of manhood, with handsome features; the other, considerably past middle age, was stark and stern. Months of dire privation had brought them to this pass. The elder of the two [Pg 184]was Killbuck, of mountain fame; the other was hight La Bonté.

The former opened his eyes, and saw the buffalo feeding on the plain. "Ho, boy," he said, touching his companion, "thar's meat a-runnin'."

La Bonté looked in the direction the other pointed, stood up, and hitching round his pouch and powder-horn, drew the stopper from the latter with his teeth, and placing the mouth in the palm of his left hand, turned the horn up and shook it.

"Not a grain," he said—"not a grain, old hos."

"Wagh!" exclaimed the other, "we'll have to eat afore long," and rising, walked into the prairie. He had hardly stepped two paces, when, passing close to a sage bush, a rattlesnake whizzed a note of warning with its tail. Killbuck grinned, and taking the wiping-stick from his rifle-barrel, tapped the snake on the head, and, taking it by the tail, threw it to La Bonté, saying, "hyar's meat, any how." The old fellow followed up his success by slaying half-a-dozen more, and brought them in skewered through the head on his wiping-stick. A fire was soon kindled, and the snakes roasting before it; when La Bonté, who sat looking at the buffalo which fed close to the rock, suddenly saw them raise their heads, snuff the air, and scamper towards him. A few minutes afterwards a huge shapeless body loomed in the refracted air, approaching the spot where the buffalo had been grazing [Pg 185]The hunters looked at it and then at each other, and ejaculated "Wagh!" Presently a long white mass showed more distinctly, followed by another, and before each was a string of animals.

"Waggons, by hos and beaver! Hurrah for Conostoga!" exclaimed the trappers in a breath, as they now observed two white-tilted waggons, drawn by several pairs of mules, approaching the very spot where they sat. Several mounted men were riding about the waggons, and two on horseback, in advance of all, were approaching the rock, when they observed the smoke curling from the hunters' fire. They halted at sight of this, and one of the two, drawing a long instrument from a

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

case, which Killbuck voted a rifle, directed it towards them for a moment, and then, lowering it, again moved forward.

As they drew near, the two poor trappers, although half-dead with joy, still retained their seats with Indian gravity and immobility of feature, turning now and then the crackling snakes which lay on the embers of the fire. The two strangers approached. One, a man of some fifty years of age, of middle height and stoutly built, was clad in a white shooting-jacket, of cut unknown in mountain tailoring, and a pair of trousers of the well-known material called "shepherd's plaid;" a broad-brimmed Panama shaded his face, which was ruddy with health and exercise; a belt round the waist supported a handsome bowie-knife, and a double-barrelled [Pg 186]fowling-piece was slung across his shoulder.

His companion was likewise dressed in a light shooting-jacket, of many pockets and dandy cut, rode on an English saddle and in boots, and was armed with a superb double rifle, glossy from the case, and bearing few marks of use or service. He was a tall, fine-looking fellow of thirty, with light hair and complexion; a scrupulous beard and mustache; a wide-awake hat, with a short pipe stuck in the band, not very black with smoke; an elaborate powder-horn over his shoulder, with a Cairngorm in the butt as large as a plate; a blue handkerchief tied round his throat in a sailor's knot, and the collar of his shirt turned carefully over it. He had, moreover, a tolerable idea of his very correct appearance, and wore Woodstock gloves.

The trappers looked at them from head to foot, and the more they looked, the less could they make them out.

"H—!" exclaimed La Bonté emphatically.

"This beats grainin' bull-hide slick," broke from Killbuck as the strangers reined up at the fire, the younger dismounting, and staring with wonder at the weather-beaten trappers.

"Well, my men, how are you?" he rattled out. "Any game here? By Jove!" he suddenly exclaimed, seizing his rifle, as at that moment a large buzzard, the most unclean of birds, flew into the top-most branch of a cottonwood, and sat, a tempting [Pg 187]shot. "By Jove, there's a chance!" cried the mighty hunter; and, bending low, started off to approach the unwary bird in the most approved fashion of northern deer-stalkers. The buzzard sat quietly, and now and then stretched its neck to gaze upon the advancing sportsman, who on such occasions threw himself flat on the ground, and remained motionless, in dread of alarming the bird. It was worth while to look at the countenance of old Killbuck, as he watched the antics of the "bourgeois" hunter. He thought at first that the dandy rifleman had really discovered game in the bottom, and was nothing loth that there was a chance of his seeing meat; but when he understood the object of such manœuvres, and saw the quarry the hunter was so carefully approaching, his mouth grinned from ear to ear, and, turning to La Bonté, he said, "Wagh! he's some—he is!"

Nothing doubting, however, the stranger approached the tree on which the bird was sitting, and, getting well under it, raised his rifle and fired. Down tumbled the bird; and the successful hunter, with a loud shout, rushed frantically towards it, and bore it in triumph to the camp, earning the most sovereign contempt from the two trappers by the achievement.

The other stranger was a quieter character. He, too, smiled as he witnessed the exultation of his younger companion, (whose horse, by the way, was [Pg 188]scampering about the plain), and spoke kindly to the mountaineers, whose appearance was clear evidence of the sufferings they had endured. The snakes by this time were cooked, and the trappers gave their new acquaintances

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

the never-failing invitation to “sit and eat.” When the latter, however, understood what the viands were, their looks expressed the horror and disgust they felt.

“Good God!” exclaimed the elder, “you surely cannot eat such disgusting food?”

“This niggur doesn’t savy what disgustin is,” gruffly answered Killbuck; “but them as carries empty paunch three days an’ more, is glad to get ‘snake-meat,’ I’m thinkin.”

“What! you’ve no ammunition, then?”

“Well, we haven’t.”

“Wait till the waggons come up, and throw away that abominable stuff, and you shall have something better, I promise,” said the elder of the strangers.

“Yes,” continued the younger, “some hot preserved soup, hotch-potch, and a glass of porter, will do you good.”

The trappers looked at the speaker, who was talking Greek (to them). They thought the bourgeois were making fun, and did not half like it, so answered simply, “Wagh! h—’s full of hosh-posh and porter.”

Two large waggons presently came up, escorted by some eight or ten stout Missourians. Sublette was amongst the number, well known as a mountain [Pg 189]trader, and under whose guidance the present party, which formed a pleasure expedition at the expense of a Scotch sportsman, was leisurely making its way across the mountains to the Columbia. As several mountaineers were in company, Killbuck and La Bonté recognised more than one friend, and the former and Sublette were old compañeros. As soon as the animals were unhitched, and camp formed on the banks of the creek, a black cook set about preparing a meal. Our two trapping friends looked on with astonishment as the sable functionary drew from the waggon the different articles he required to furnish forth a feed. Hams, tongues, tins of preserved meats, bottles of pickles, of porter, brandy, coffee, sugar, flour, were tumbled promiscuously on the prairie; whilst pots and pans, knives, forks, spoons, plates, &c. &c., displayed their unfamiliar faces to the mountaineers. “Hosh-posh and porter” did not now appear such Utopian articles as they had first imagined; but no one but those who have fared for years on simple meat and water, can understand the relish with which they accepted the invitation of the Capen (as they called the Scotchman) to “take a horn of liquor.” Killbuck and La Bonté sat in the same position as when we first surprised them asleep under the shadow of Independence Rock, regarding the profuse display of comestibles with scarce-believing eyes, and childishly helpless from the novelty of the scene. Each took the proffered half-pint cup, filled to the brim [Pg 190]with excellent brandy—(no tee-totallers they!)—looked once at the amber-coloured surface, and with the usual mountain pledge of “here’s luck!” tossed off the grateful liquour at a breath. This prepared them in some measure for what was yet in store for them. The Scotchman bestirred the cook in his work, and soon sundry steaming pots were lifted from the fire, and the skillet emptied of their bread—the contents of the former poured in large flat pans, while panikins were filled with smoking coffee. The two trappers needed no second invitation, but, seizing each a panful of steaming stew, drew the butcher-knives from their belts, and fell to lustily—the hospitable Scotchman plying them with more and more, and administering corrective noggins of brandy the while; until at last they were fain to cry enough, wiped their knives on the grass, and placed them in their sheaths—a sign that human nature could no more. How can pen describe the luxury of the smoke that followed, to lips which had not kissed pipe for many months, and how the fragrant honey-dew from Old Virginia was relishingly puffed.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

But the Scotchman's bounty did not stop here. He soon elicited from the lips of the hunters the narrative of their losses and privations, and learned that they now, without ammunition and scarcely clothed, were on their way to Platte Fort, to hire themselves to the Indian traders in order to earn another outfit, wherewith once more to betake themselves [Pg 191] to their perilous employment of trapping. What was their astonishment to see their entertainer presently lay out upon the ground two piles of goods, each consisting of a four-point Mackinaw, two tin canisters of powder, with corresponding lead and flints, a pair of moccasins, a shirt, and sufficient buckskin to make a pair of pantaloons; and how much the more was the wonder increased when two excellent Indian horses were presently lassoed from the cavallada, and with mountain saddle, bridle, and lariats complete, together with the two piles of goods described, presented to them "on the prairie" or "gift-free," by the kind-hearted stranger, who would not even listen to thanks for the most timely and invaluable present.

Once more equipped, our two hunters, filled with good brandy and fat buffalo meat, again wended on their way; their late entertainers continuing their pleasure trip across the gap of the South Pass, intending to visit the Great Salt Lake, or Timponogos, of the West. The former were bound for the North Fork of the Platte, with the intention of joining one of the numerous trapping parties which rendezvous at the American Fur Company's post on that branch of the river. On a fork of Sweet Water, however, not two days after the meeting with the Scotchman's waggons, they encountered a band of a dozen mountaineers, mounted on fine horses, and well armed and equipped, travelling along without the usual accompaniment [Pg 192] of a mulada of pack-animals, two or three mules alone being packed with meat and spare ammunition. The band was proceeding at a smart rate, the horses moving with the gait peculiar to American animals, known as "pacing" or "racking," in Indian file—each of the mountaineers with a long heavy rifle resting across the horn of his saddle. Amongst them our two friends recognised Markhead, who had been of the party dispersed months before by the Blackfeet on one of the head streams of the Yellow Stone, which event had been the origin of the dire sufferings of Killbuck and La Bonté. Markhead, after running the gauntlet of numerous Indians, through the midst of whose country he passed with his usual temerity and utter disregard to danger, suffering hunger, thirst, and cold—those every-day experiences of mountain life—riddled with balls, but with three scalps hanging from his belt, made his way to a rendezvous on Bear River, whence he struck out for the Platte in early spring, in time to join the band he now accompanied, who were on a horse-stealing expedition to the Missions of Upper California. Little persuasion did either Killbuck or La Bonté require to join the sturdy freebooters. In five minutes they had gone "files-about," and at sundown were camping on the well-timbered bottom of "Little Sandy," feasting once more on delicate hump-rib and tender loin.

For California, ho!

Fourteen good rifles in the hands of fourteen [Pg 193] mountain men, stout and true, on fourteen strong horses, of true Indian blood and training—fourteen cool heads, with fourteen pairs of keen eyes in them, each head crafty as an Indian's, directing a right arm strong as steel, and a heart as brave as grizzly bear's. Before them a thousand miles of dreary desert or wilderness, overrun by hostile savages, thirsting for the white man's blood; famine and drought, the arrows of wily hordes of Indians—and, these dangers past, the invasion of the civilised settlements of whites, the least numerous of which contained ten times their number of armed and bitter enemies,—the sudden

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

swoop upon their countless herds of mules and horses, the fierce attack and bloody slaughter;—such were the consequences of the expedition these bold mountaineers were now engaged in. Fourteen lives of any fourteen enemies who would be rash enough to stay them, were, any day you will, carried in the rifle barrels of these stout fellows; who, in all the proud consciousness of their physical qualities, neither thought, nor cared to think, of future perils; and rode merrily on their way, rejoicing in the dangers they must necessarily meet. Never a more daring band crossed the mountains; a more than ordinary want of caution characterised their march, and dangers were recklessly and needlessly invited, which even the older and more cold-blooded mountaineers seemed not to care to avoid. They had, each and all, many a debt to pay the marauding Indians. Grudges for [Pg 194]many privations, for wounds and loss of comrades, rankled in their breasts; and not one but had suffered more or less in property and person at the hands of the savages, within a few short months. Threats of vengeance on every Redskin they met were loud and deep; and the wild war-songs round their nightly camp-fires, and grotesque scalp-dances, borrowed from the Indians, proved to the initiated that they were, one and all, “half-froze for hair.” Soon after Killbuck and La Bonté joined them, they one day suddenly surprised a band of twenty Sioux, scattered on a small prairie and butchering some buffalo they had just killed. Before they could escape, the whites were upon them with loud shouts, and in three minutes the scalps of eleven were dangling from their saddle-horns.

Struggling up mountains, slipping down precipices, dashing over prairies which resounded with their Indian songs, charging the Indians wherever they met them, and without regard to their numbers; frightening with their lusty war-whoops the miserable Diggers, who were not unfrequently surprised while gathering roots in the mountain plains, and who, scrambling up the rocks and concealing themselves, like sage rabbits, in holes and corners, peered, chattering with fear, as the wild and noisy troop rode by:—scarce drawing rein, they passed rapidly the heads of Green and Grand Rivers, through a country abounding in game and in excellent pasture; encountering in the upland valleys, [Pg 195]through which meandered the well-timbered creeks on which they made their daily camps, many a band of Yutas, through whom they dashed at random, caring not whether they were friends or foes. Passing many other heads of streams, they struck at last the edge of the desert, lying along the south-eastern base of the Great Salt Lake, and which extends in almost unbroken sterility to the foot of the range of the Sierra Nevada—a mountain chain, capped with perpetual snow, that bounds the northern extremity of a singular tract of country, walled by mountains and utterly desert, whose salt lagoons and lakes, although fed by many streams, find no outlet to the ocean, but are absorbed in the spongy soil or thirsty sand, which characterise the different portions of this deserted tract. In the “Grand Basin,” it is reported, neither human nor animal life can be supported. No oases cheer the wanderer in the unbroken solitude of the vast wilderness. More than once the lone trapper has penetrated, with hardy enterprise, into the salt plains of the basin; but no signs of beaver or fur-bearing animal rewarded the attempt. The ground is scantily covered with coarse unwholesome grass that mules and horses refuse to eat; and the water of the springs, impregnated with the impurities of the soil through which it percolates, affords but nauseating draughts to the thirsty traveller.

In passing from the more fertile uplands to the lower plains, as they descended the streams, the [Pg 196]timber on their banks became scarcer, and the groves more scattered. The rich buffalo or grama grass was exchanged for a coarser species, on which the hard-worked animals soon

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

grew poor and weak. The thickets of plum and cherry, of boxalder and quaking ash, which had hitherto fringed the creeks, and where the deer and bear loved to resort—the former to browse on the leaves and tender shoots, the latter to devour the fruit—now entirely disappeared, and the only shrub seen was the eternal sage-bush, which flourishes every where in the western regions in uncongenial soils where other vegetation refuses to grow. The visible change in the scenery had also a sensible effect on the spirits of the mountaineers. They travelled on in silence through the deserted plains; the hi-hi-hiya of their Indian chants was no longer heard enlivening the line of march. More than once a Digger of the Piyutah tribe took himself and hair, in safety, from their path, and almost unnoticed; but as they advanced they became more cautious in their movements, and testified, by the vigilant watch they kept, that they anticipated hostile attacks even in these arid wastes. They had passed without molestation through the country infested by the bolder Indians. The mountain Yutas, not relishing the appearance of the hunters, had left them unmolested; but they were now entering a country inhabited by the most degraded and abject of the western tribes; who, nevertheless, ever suffering from the [Pg 197]extremities of hunger, have their brutish wits sharpened by the necessity of procuring food, and rarely fail to levy a contribution of rations, of horse or mule flesh, on the passenger in their inhospitable country. The brutish cunning and animal instinct of these wretches is such, that although arrant cowards, their attacks are more feared than those of bolder Indians. These people-called the Yamparicas or Root-Diggers—are, nevertheless, the degenerate descendants of those tribes which once overran that portion of the continent of North America now comprehended within the boundaries of Mexico, and who have left such startling evidences in their track of a comparatively superior state of civilisation. They now form an outcast tribe of the great nation of the Apache, which extends under various names from the Great Salt Lake along the table-lands on each side the Sierra Madre to the tropic of Cancer, where they merge into what are called the Mexican Indians. The whole of this nation is characterised by most abject cowardice; and they even refuse to meet the helpless Mexicans in open fight—unlike the Yuta or Camanche, who carry bold and open warfare into the territories of their civilised enemy, and never shrink from hand to hand encounter. The Apaches and the degenerate Diggers pursue a cowardly warfare, hiding in ambush, and shooting the passer-by with arrows; or, dashing upon him at night when steeped in sleep, they bury their arrow to the feather in his heaving [Pg 198]breast. As the Mexicans say, “Sin ventaja, no salen;” they never attack without odds. But they are not the less dangerous enemies on this account; and by the small bands of trappers who visit their country, they are the more dreaded by reason of this cowardly and wolfish system of warfare.

To provide against surprise, therefore, as the hunters rode along, flankers were extended en guerilla on each side, mounting the high points to reconnoitre the country, and keeping a sharp look-out for Indian sign. At night the animals were securely hobbled, and a horse-guard posted round them—a service of great danger, as the stealthy cat-like Diggers are often known to steal up silently, under cover of the darkness, towards the sentinel, shoot him with their arrows, and approaching the animals, cut the hobbles and drive them away unseen.

One night they encamped on a creek where was but little of the coarsest pasture, and that little scattered here and there; so that they were compelled to allow their animals to roam farther than usual from camp in search of food. Four of the hunters, however, accompanied them to guard against surprise; whilst but half of those in camp lay down to sleep, the others, with rifles in their

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

hands, remaining prepared for any emergency. This day they had killed one of their two pack-mules for food, game not having been met with for several days; but the animal was so poor, that it [Pg 199]scarcely afforded more than one tolerable meal to the whole party.

A short time before the dawn of day an alarm was given; the animals were heard to snort violently; a loud shout was heard, followed by the sharp crack of a rifle, and the tramp of galloping horses plainly showed that a stampede had been effected. The whites instantly sprang to their arms, and rushed in the direction of the sounds. The body of the cavallada, however, had luckily turned, and, being headed by the mountaineers, were surrounded and secured, with the loss of only three, which had probably been mounted by the Indians.

Day breaking soon after, one of their band was discovered to be missing; and it was then found that a man who had been standing horse-guard at the time of the attack, had not come into camp with his companions. At that moment a thin spiral column of smoke was seen to rise from the banks of the creek, telling but too surely the fate of the missing mountaineer. It was the signal of the Indians to their people that a "coup" had been struck, and that an enemy's scalp remained in their triumphant hands.

"H—!" exclaimed the trappers in a breath; and soon imprecations and threats of revenge, loud and deep, were showered upon the heads of the treacherous Indians. Some of the party rushed to the spot where the guard had stood, and there lay [Pg 200]the body of their comrade, pierced with lance and arrow, the scalp gone, and the body otherwise mutilated in a barbarous manner. Five were quickly in the saddle, mounted upon the strongest horses, and flying along the track of the Indians, who had made off towards the mountains with their prize and booty. We will not follow them in their work of bloody vengeance, save by saying that they followed the savages to their village, into which they charged headlong, recovered their stolen horses, and returned to camp at sundown with thirteen scalps dangling from their rifles, in payment for the loss of their unfortunate companion. [27]

In their further advance, hunger and thirst were their daily companions; they were compelled to kill several of their animals for food, but were fortunate enough to replace them by a stroke of good luck in meeting a party of Indians returning from an excursion against one of the Californian settlements with a tolerably large band of horses. Our hunters met this band one fine morning, and dashed into the midst at once; half a dozen Indians bit the dust, and twenty horses were turned over from red [Pg 201]to white masters in as many seconds, which remounted those whose animals had been eaten, and enabled the others to exchange their worn-out steeds for fresh ones. This fortunate event was considered a coup, and the event was celebrated by the slaughter of a fat young horse, which furnished an excellent supper that night—a memorable event in these starveling regions.

They were now devouring their horses and mules at the rate of one every alternate day; for, so poor were the animals, that one scarcely furnished an ample meal for the thirteen hungry hunters. They were once more reduced to the animals they rode on; and after a fast of twenty-four hours' duration, were debating on the propriety of drawing lots as to whose Rosinante should fill the kettle, when some Indians suddenly appeared making signs of peace upon the bluff, and indicating a disposition to enter the camp for the purpose of trading. Being invited to approach, they offered to trade a few dressed elk-skins; but being asked for meat, they said that their village was a long way off, and they had nothing with them but a small portion of some game they had lately killed.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

When requested to produce this, they hesitated, but the trappers looking hungry and angry at the same moment, an old Indian drew from under his blanket several flaps of portable dried meat, which he declared was bear's. It was but a small ration amongst so many; but, being divided, was quickly laid upon the fire [Pg 202]to broil. The meat was stringy, and of whitish colour, altogether unlike any flesh the trappers had before eaten. Killbuck was the first to discover this. He had been quietly masticating the last mouthful of his portion, the stringiness of which required more than usual dental exertion, when the novelty of the flavour struck him as something singular. Suddenly his jaws ceased their work, he thought a moment, took the morsel from his mouth, looked at it intently, and dashed it into the fire.

"Man-meat, by G—!" he cried out; and at the words every jaw stopped work: the trappers looked at the meat and each other.

"I'm dog-gone if it ain't!" cried old Walker, looking at his piece, "and white meat at that, wagh!" (and report said it was not the first time he had tasted such viands;) and the conviction seizing each mind, every mouthful was quickly spat into the fire, and the ire of the deceived whites was instantly turned upon the luckless providers of the feast. They saw the storm that was brewing, and without more ado turned tail from the camp, and scuttled up the bluffs, where, turning round, they fired a volley of arrows at the tricked mountaineers, and instantly disappeared. However, the desert and its nomade pilferers were at length passed; the sandy plains became grass-covered prairies; the monstrous cottonwood on the creeks was replaced by oak and ash; the [Pg 203]surface of the country grew more undulating, and less broken up into cañons and ravines; elk and deer leaped in the bottoms, and bands of antelope dotted the plains, with occasional troops of wild horses, too wary to allow the approach of man. On the banks of a picturesque stream called the San Joaquin, the party halted a few days to recruit themselves and animals, feasting the while on the fattest of venison and other game. They then struck to the south-east for two days, until they reached a branch of the "Las Animas," a clear stream running through a pretty valley, well timbered and abounding in game. Here, as they wound along the river-banks, a horseman suddenly appeared upon the bluff above them, galloping at a furious rate along the edge. His dress approached in some degree to civilised attire. A broad-brimmed sombrero surmounted his swarthy face; a coloured blanket, through a slit in which his head was thrust, floated in the air from his shoulders; leathern leggings encased his lower limbs; and huge spurs jingled on his heels. He rode in a high-peaked Mexican saddle, his feet thrust in ponderous stirrups, and in his hand swung a coil of ready lasso, his only offensive arm. One of the trappers knew a little Spanish, and instantly hailed him.

"Compadre," he shouted, "por onde va?" The Californian reined in suddenly, throwing the horse he rode on its very haunches, and darting down the [Pg 204]bluff, galloped unhesitatingly into the midst of the hunters.

"Americanos!" he exclaimed, glancing at them; and continued, smiling—"Y caballos quieren, por eso vienen tan lejitos. Jesus, que mala gente!"—"It's horses you want, and for this you come all this way. Ah, what rogues you are!"

He was an Indian, employed at the mission of San Fernando, distant three days' journey from their present position, and was now searching for a band of horses and mules which had strayed. San Fernando, it appeared, had once before been visited by a party of mountain free-booters, and the Indian therefore divined the object of the present one. He was, he told them, "un Indio, pero

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

mansito:" an Indian, but a tame one; [28] "de mas, Christiano:" a Christian moreover (exhibiting a small cross which hung round his neck). There were many people about the mission, he said, who knew how to fight, and had plenty of arms; and there were enough to "eat up" the "Americanos, sin frijoles," without beans, as he facetiously observed. For his part, however, he was very friendly to the Americanos; he had once met a man of that nation who was a good sort of fellow, and had made him a present of tobacco, of which he was particularly fond. Finding this hint did not take, he said that the horses and mules belonging to the mission were innumerable—"like [Pg 205]that," he added, sweeping his hand to all points of the compass over the plain, to intimate that they would cover that extent; and he could point out a large herd grazing nearer at hand than the mission, and guarded but by three vaqueros. Regaled with venison, and with a smoke of his coveted tobacco, he rode off, and made his way to the mission without delay, conveying the startling intelligence that a thousand Americans were upon them.

The next morning the thirteen doughty mountaineers quietly resumed their journey, moving leisurely along towards the object of their expedition.

It will not be out of place here to digress a little, in order to describe the singular features of the establishments formed in those remote regions by the Catholic church, as nuclei round which to concentrate the wandering tribes that inhabit the country, with a view to give them the benefit of civilised example, and to wean them from their restless nomadic habits.

The establishment of missions in Upper California is coeval with the first settlement of Southern Mexico. No sooner had Spanish rule taken a firm foot-hold in the Aztec empire, than the avowed primary object of the military expedition began to be carried into effect. "To save the souls" of the savage and barbarous subjects of their most Catholic majesties was ever inculcated upon the governors of the conquered country as the grand object to be sought [Pg 206]after, as soon as tranquillity was partially restored by the submission of the Mexicans; and the Cross, the sacred emblem of the Catholic faith, was to be upraised in the remotest corners of the country, and the natives instructed and compelled to worship it, in lieu of the grotesque images of their own idolatrous religion.

To carry into effect these orthodox instructions, troops of pious priests, of friars and monks of every order, and even of saintly nuns, followed in the wake of the victorious armies of Cortez; and, girding up their loins with zealous fervour and enthusiasm, and with an enterprise and hardihood worthy of buccaneers, they pushed their adventurous way far into the bowels of the land, preaching devoutly and with commendable perseverance to savages who did not understand a syllable of what they so eloquently discoursed; and returning, after the lapse of many months passed in this first attempt, with glowing accounts of the "muy buen indole," the very ductile disposition of the savages, and of the thousands they had converted to "la santa fé catolica."

Ferdinand and Isabel, of glorious memory, at once beat up for volunteers. Crowds of Franciscan monks, greasy Capuchinos, and nuns of orthodox odour, joined the band; and saints even of the feminine gender, long since canonised and up aloft amongst the goodly muster of saints and martyrs, put foot once more on terra firma, and, rosary in hand, crossed the seas to participate in the good [Pg 207]work. As proof of this latter fact, one Venabides, a Franciscan, whose veracity is beyond impeachment, declared that, while preaching in the regions now known as New Mexico, one million Indians from the "rumbo" known as Cibolo, a mighty nation, approached his temporary pulpit on the Rio Grande, and requested in a body the favour of being baptised. Struck with

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

the singularity of this request from Indians with whom he had as yet held no communication, and with conscientious scruple as to whether he would be justified in performing such ceremony without their having received previous instruction, he hesitated a few moments before making an answer. At this juncture the Indians espied a medallion which hung around his neck, bearing the effigy of a certain saint of extraordinary virtue. At sight of this they fell on their knees before it; and it was some time before they found words (in what language does not appear) to explain to the holy father that the original of that effigy, which hung pendant from his neck, had been long amongst them instructing them in the elements of the Christian religion, and had only lately disappeared; informing them that certain reverend men would shortly appear in the land, who would finish the good work she had devoutly commenced, and clench the business by baptising the one million miserable sinners who now knelt before El Padre Venabides.

“Valgame Dios!” reverently exclaimed that worthy man, “qui milagro es este;” [what a miracle [Pg 208]. is this I hear;] and casting up his eyes, and speaking slowly, as if he weighed every word, and taxing his memory of the historical calendar of saints, continued,—

“Se murió—aquella—santissima—muger—en el año 175—es decir—ya hacen—mil—quatro—cientos—años.” [That most holy woman died in the year 175, that is to say, one thousand four hundred years ago.]

“Oh, what a strange thing is this!” the padre continues devoutly. “After so many ages spent in heaven in company of the angels, of most holy men, and of virgins the most pure; and, perhaps, also in the company of my worthy and esteemed friend and patron, Don Vincente Carvajal y Calvo, who died a few years ago in San Lucar of Xeres (bequeathing me certain arrobas of dry wine, of a class I greatly esteem—for which act he deserved to be canonised, and, I have no doubt, is), the said Don Vincente Carvajal y Calvo being, moreover, a man of the purest and holiest thoughts (Dios mio! what a puchero that man always had on his table!) this holy woman comes here—to these wild and remote regions; this holy woman (who died fifteen hundred years ago), abandoning the company of angels, of holy men, and sanctified women and virgins, and also of Don Vincente Carvajal y Calvo (that worthy man!)—comes here, I say, where there are neither pucheros, nor garbanzos, nor dry wine, nor sweet wine, neither of Xeres, nor of Val de Peñas, nor of [Pg 209]Peralta; where” (sobbed the padre, and bellowed the last word) “there is—nothing either to eat or to drink. Valgame Purissima Maria! And what is the name of this holy woman? the world will ask,” continues Venabides. “Santa Clara of Carmona is her name, one well known in my native country, who leaves heaven and all its joys, wends her way to the distant wilds of New Spain, and spends years in inducting the savage people to the holy faith. Truly a pious work, and pleasing to God!” [29]

Thus spoke Venabides the Franciscan, and no doubt he believed what he said; and many others in Old Spain were fools enough to believe it too, for the shaven heads flocked over in greater numbers, and the cry was ever “still they come.”

Along the whole extent of the table-lands, not an Indian tribe but was speedily visited by the preaching friars and monks; and, in less than a century after the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, these hardy and enthusiastic frayles had pushed their way into the inhospitable regions of New Mexico, nearly two thousand miles distant from the valley of Anahuac. How they succeeded in surmounting the natural obstacles presented by the wild and barren deserts they traversed; how they escaped the infinite peril they encountered at every step, at the hands of the savage

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

inhabitants of the [Pg 210]country, with whose language they were totally unacquainted, is sufficient puzzle to those who, in the present day, have attempted a journey in the same regions.

However, it is impossible not to admire the hardihood of these holy pioneers of civilisation, who, totally unfitted by their former mode of life for undergoing such hardships as they must have anticipated, threw themselves into the wilderness with fearless and stubborn zeal.

For the most part, however, they found the Indians exceedingly hospitable and well disposed; and it was not until some time after—when, receiving from the missionary monks glowing, and not always very truthful accounts of the riches of the country in which they had located themselves, the governors of Mexico despatched armed expeditions under adventurous desperadoes to take and retain possession of the said country, with orders to compel the submission of the native tribes, and enforce their obedience to the authority of the whites—that the simple and confiding Indians began to see the folly they had committed in permitting the residence amongst them of these superior beings, whom they had first looked upon as more than mortal, but who, when strong enough to do so, were not long in throwing off the mask, and proving to the simple savages that they were much “more human than divine.”

Thus, in the province of New Mexico, Fray [Pg 211]Augustin Ruiz, with his co-preachers, Marcos and Venabides, were kindly received by the native inhabitants, and we have seen how one million (?) Indians came from the “rumbo” of the Cibolo, ready and willing to receive the baptismal sacrament. This Cibolo, or Sivulo, as it is written in some old MSS., is, by the way, mysteriously alluded to by the monkish historians who have written on this region, as being a kingdom inhabited by a very superior class of Indians to any met with between Anahuac and the Vale of Taos—in the enjoyment of a high state of civilisation, inhabiting a well-built city, the houses of which were three stories high, and having attained considerable perfection in the domestic arts. This, notwithstanding the authority of Don Francisco Vasquez Coronado, who visited Cibolo, and of Solis and Venegas, who have guaranteed the assertion, must be received cum grano salis; but, at all events, the civilisation of the mysterious Cibolo may be compared to that of the Aztec empire, under Montezuma, at the time of the Spanish Conquest, both being egregiously exaggerated by the historians of the day. Cibolo was situated on a river called Tegue. At this day, neither name is known to the inhabitants of New Mexico. If pate-shaven Venabides had held his tongue, New Mexico might now be in the peaceful possession of the Catholic Missions, and the property of the Church of Mexico pretty considerably enhanced by the valuable placeres, or gold washings, [Pg 212]which abound in that province. Full, however, of the wonderful miracle of Santa Clara of Carmona, which had been brought to light through the agency of the medallion at the end of his rosario, Fray Venabides must needs return to Spain, and humbug poor old Fernando, and even the more sensible Isabel, with wonderful accounts of the riches of the country he had been instrumental in exploring, and of the excellent disposition of the natives to receive the word of God. Don Juan Oñate was, therefore, quickly despatched to take possession; and in his train followed twelve Castilian families of sangre azul, to colonise the newly-acquired territory. The names of these still remain, disgraced by the degenerate wretches who now bear them, but in whom scarce a drop of blood remains which ever filtered from the veins of the paladins of Old Castile.

Then commenced the troublous times. The missions were upheld by dint of steel alone; and frequently the Indians rose, and often massacred their white persecutors. The colonists were more than once driven bodily from New Mexico, and were only reinstated by the aid of large bodies of

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

armed men.

In California, however, they managed these things better. The wily monks took care to keep all interlopers from the country, established themselves in snug quarters, instructed the Indians in agriculture, and soon gained such an ascendancy [Pg 213] over them, that no difficulty was experienced in keeping them under proper and wholesome restraint. Strong and commodious missions were built and fortified, well stored with arms and ammunition, and containing sufficient defenders to defy attack. Luxuriant gardens and thriving vineyards soon surrounded these isolated stations: the plains waved with golden corn; whilst domestic cattle, thriving on the rich pasture, and roaming far and near, multiplied and increased a hundred-fold.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the appearance of one of these missions, to the traveller who has lately passed the arid and barren wilderness of the North-west. The adobe walls of the convent-looking building, surmounted by cross and belfry, are generally hidden in a mass of luxuriant vegetation. Fig-trees, bananas, cherry, and apple, leaf-spreading platanos, and groves of olives, form umbrageous vistas, under which the sleek monks delight to wander; gardens, cultivated by their own hands, testify to the horticultural skill of the worthy padres; whilst vineyards yield their grateful produce to gladden the hearts of the holy exiles in these western solitudes. Vast herds of cattle roam half-wild on the plains, and bands of mules and horses, whose fame has even reached the distant table-lands of the Rocky Mountains, and excited the covetousness of the hunters—and thousands of which, from the day they are foaled to that of their death, never feel a saddle on their backs—cover [Pg 214] the country. Indians (Mansitos) idle round the skirts of these vast herds (whose very numbers keep them together), living, at their own choice, upon the flesh of mule, or ox, or horse.

---

[Pg 215]

## CHAPTER VII.

THE Mission of San Fernando is situated on a small river called Las Animas, a branch of the Los Martires. The convent is built at the neck of a large plain, at the point of influx of the stream from the broken spurs of the sierra. The savana is covered with luxuriant grass, kept down, however, by the countless herds of cattle which pasture on it. The banks of the creek are covered with a lofty growth of oak and poplar, which near the Mission have been considerably thinned for the purpose of affording fuel and building materials for the increasing settlement. The convent stands in the midst of a grove of fruit-trees, its rude tower and cross peeping above them, and contrasting picturesquely with the wildness of the surrounding scenery. Gardens and orchards lie immediately in front of the building, and a vineyard stretches away to the upland ridge of the valley. The huts of the Indians are scattered here and there, built of stone and adobe, sometimes thatched with flags and boughs, but comfortable enough. The convent itself is a substantial building, of the style of architecture characterising monastic edifices in most parts of the [Pg 216] world. Loop-holes peer from its plastered walls, and on a flat portion of the roof a comically mounted gingall or wall-piece, carrying a two-pound ball, threatens the assailant in time of war. At one end of the oblong building, a rough irregular arch of sun-burned bricks is surmounted by a rude cross, under which hangs a small but deep-toned bell—the wonder of the Indian peones, and highly venerated by the frayles themselves, who received it as a present from a certain venerable archbishop of Old Spain, and who, whilst guarding it with reverential awe, tell wondrous tales of its adventures

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

on the road to its present abiding place.

Of late years the number of the canonical inmates of the convent has been much reduced—there being but four priests now to do the duties of the eleven who formerly inhabited it: Fray Augustin, a Capuchin of due capacity of paunch, being at the head of the holy quartette. Augustin is the conventual name of the reverend father, who fails not to impress upon such casual visitants to that ultima Thule as he deems likely to appreciate the information, that, but for his humility, he might add the sonorous appellations of Ignacio Sabanal-Morales-y Fuentes—his family being of the best blood of Old Castile, and known there since the days of Ruy Gomez—el Campéador—possessing, moreover, half the “vega” of the Ebro, &c., where, had fate been propitious, he would now have been the sleek superior of a rich [Pg 217]capuchin convent, instead of vegetating, a leather-clad frayle, in the wilds of California Alta.

Nevertheless, his lot is no bad one. With plenty of the best and fattest meat to eat, whether of beef or venison, of bear or mountain mutton; with good wine and brandy of home make, and plenty of it; fruit of all climes in great abundance; wheaten or corn bread to suit his palate; a tractable flock of natives to guide, and assisted in the task by three brother shepherds; far from the strife of politics or party—secure from hostile attack (not quite, by-the-by), and eating, drinking, and sleeping away his time, one would think that Fray Augustin Ignacio Sabanal-Morales-y Fuentes had little to trouble him, and had no cause to regret even the vega of Castilian Ebro, held by his family since the days of el Campéador.

One evening Fray Augustin sat upon an adobe bench, under the fig-tree shadowing the porch of the Mission. He was dressed in a goat-skin jerkin, softly and beautifully dressed, and descending to his hips, under which his only covering—tell it not in Gath!—was a long linen shirt, reaching to his knees, and lately procured from Puebla de los Angeles, as a sacerdotal garment. Boots, stockings, or unmentionables, he had none. A cigarito, of tobacco rolled in corn shuck, was occasionally placed between his lips; whereupon huge clouds of smoke rushed in columns from his mouth and nostrils. [Pg 218]His face was of a golden yellow colour, relieved by arched and very black eyebrows; his shaven chin was of most respectable duplicity—his corporation of orthodox dimensions. Several Indians and half-bred Mexican women were pounding Indian corn on metates near at hand; whilst sundry beef-fed urchins of whitey-brown complexion sported before the door, exhibiting, as they passed Fray Augustin, a curious resemblance to the strongly marked features of that worthy padre. They were probably his nieces and nephews—a class of relations often possessed in numbers by priests and monks.

The three remaining brothers were absent from the Mission; Fray Bernardo, hunting elk in the sierra; Fray José, gallivanting at Puebla de los Angeles, ten days’ journey distant; Fray Cristoval, lassoing colts upon the plain. Augustin, thus left to his own resources, had just eaten his vespertine frijolititos and chile colorado, and was enjoying a post-coenal smoke of fragrant pouche under the shadow of his own fig-tree.

Whilst thus employed, an Indian dressed in Mexican attire approached him hat in hand, and, making a reverential bow, asked his directions concerning domestic business of the Mission. “Hola! friend José,” cried Fray Augustin in a thick guttural voice, “pensaba yo—I was thinking that it was very nearly this time three years ago when those ‘malditos Americanos’ came by here and ran off with so many of our cavallada.”

[Pg 219]

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

“True, reverend father,” answered the administrador, “just three years ago, all but fifteen days: I remember it well. Malditos sean—curse them!”

“How many did we kill, José?”

“Quizas mōochos—a great many, I dare say. But they did not fight fairly—charged right upon us, and gave us no time to do any thing. They don’t know how to fight, these Mericanos; come right at you, before you can swing a lasso, hallooing like Indios Bravos.”

“But, José, how many did they leave dead on the field?”

“Not one.”

“And we?”

“Valgame Dios! thirteen dead, and many more wounded.”

“That’s it! Now if these savages come again (and the Chemeguaba, who came in yesterday, says he saw a large trail), we must fight adentro—within—outside is no go; for as you very properly say, José, these Americans don’t know how to fight, and kill us before—before we can kill them! Vaya!” At this moment there issued from the door of the Mission Don Antonio Velez Trueba, a Gachupin—that is, a native of Old Spain—a wizened old hidalgo refugee, who had left the mother country on account of his political opinions, which were staunchly Carlist, and had found his way—how, he himself scarcely knew—from Mexico to San Francisco in Upper California, [Pg 220]where, having a most perfect contempt for every thing Mexican, and hearing that in the Mission of San Fernando, far away, were a couple of Spanish padres of “sangre regular,” he had started into the wilderness to ferret them out; and having escaped all dangers on the route (which, however, were hardly dangers to the Don, who could not realise the idea of scalp-taking savages), had arrived with a whole skin at the Mission. There he was received with open arms by his countryman Fray Augustin, who made him welcome to all the place afforded, and there he harmlessly smoked away his time; his heart far away on the banks of the Genil and in the grape-bearing vegas of his beloved Andalusia, his withered cuerpo in the sierras of Upper California. Don Antonio was the walking essence of a Spaniard of the ancien régime. His family dated from the Flood, and with the exception of sundry refreshing jets of Moorish blood, injected into the Truebas during the Moorish epoch, no strange shoot was ever engrafted on their genealogical tree. The marriages of the family were ever confined to the family itself—never looking to fresh blood in a station immediately below it, which was not hidalgueno; nor above, since any thing higher in rank than the Trueba y Trueba family, no habia, there was not.

Thus, in the male and female scions of the house, were plainly visible the ill effects of breeding “in and in.” The male Truebas were sadly degenerate [Pg 221]Dons, in body as in mind—compared to their ancestors of Boabdil’s day; and the señoritas of the name were all eyes, and eyes alone, and hardly of such stamp as would have tempted that amorous monarch to bestow a kingdom for a kiss, as ancient ballads tell.

“Dueña de la negra toca,  
Por un beso de tu boca,  
Diera un reyno, Boabdil;  
Y yo por ello, Cristiana,  
Te diera de buena gana  
Mil cielos, si fueran mil.”

Come of such poor stock, and reared on tobacco smoke and “gazpacho,” Don Antonio would not

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

have shone, even amongst pigmy Mexicans, for physical beauty. Five feet high, a framework of bones covered with a skin of Andalusian tint, the Trueba stood erect and stiff in all the consciousness of his “sangre regular.” His features were handsome, but entirely devoid of flesh, his upper lip was covered with a jet-black mustache mixed with gray, his chin was bearded “like the pard.” Every one around him clad in deer and goat skin, our Don walked conspicuous in shining suit of black—much the worse for wear, it must be confessed—with beaver hat sadly battered, and round his body and over his shoulder an unexceptionable “capa” of the amplest dimensions. Asking, as he stepped over him, the pardon of an Indian urchin who blocked the door, and bowing with punctilious politeness to the [Pg 222]sturdy mozas who were grinding corn, Don Antonio approached our friend Augustin, who was discussing warlike matters with his administrador.

“Hola! Don Antonio, how do you find yourself, sir?”

“Perfectly well, and your very humble servant, reverend father; and your worship also, I trust you are in good health?”

“Sin novedad—without novelty;” which, since it was one hour and a half since our friends had separated to take their siestas, was not impossible.

“Myself and the worthy José,” continued Fray Augustin, “were speaking of the vile invasion of a band of North American robbers, who three years since fiercely assaulted this peaceful Mission, killing many of its inoffensive inhabitants, wounding many more, and carrying off several of our finest colts and most promising mules to their dens and caves in the Rocky Mountains. Not with impunity, however, did they effect this atrocity. José informs me that many of the assailants were killed by my brave Indians. How many said you, José?”

“Quizas mo-o-ochos,” answered the Indian.

“Yes, probably a great multitude,” continued the padre; “but, unwarned by such well-merited castigation, it has been reported to me by a Chemeguaba mansito, that a band of these audacious marauders are now on the road to repeat the offence, numbering many thousands, well mounted and armed; [Pg 223]and to oppose these white barbarians it behoves us to make every preparation of defence.” [30]

“There is no cause for alarm,” answered the Andaluz. “I (tapping his breast) have served in three wars: in that glorious one ‘de la Independencia,’ when our glorious patriots drove the French like sheep across the Pyrenees; in that equally glorious one of 1821; and in the late magnanimous struggle for the legitimate rights of his majesty Charles V., king of Spain (doffing his hat), whom God preserve. With that right arm,” cried the spirited Don, extending his shrivelled member, “I have supported the throne of my kings—have fought for my country, mowing down its enemies before me; and with it,” vehemently exclaimed the Gachupin, working himself into a perfect frenzy, “I will slay these Norte Americanos, should they dare to show their faces in my front. Adios, Don Augustin Ignacio Sabanal-Morales-y Fuentes,” he cried, doffing his hat with an earth-sweeping bow; “I go to grind my sword. Till then adieu.”

“A countryman of mine!” said the frayle, admiringly, to the administrador. “With him by our side we need not to fear: neither Norte Americanos, nor the devil himself, can harm us when he is by.” [Pg 224]

Whilst the Trueba sharpens his Tizona, and the priest puffs volumes of smoke from his nose and mouth, let us introduce to the reader one of the muchachitas, who knelt grinding corn on the metate, to make tortillas for the evening meal. Juanita was a stout wench from Sonora, of Mexican

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

blood, hardly as dark as the other women who surrounded her, and with a drop or two of the Old Spanish blood struggling with the darker Indian tint to colour her plump cheeks. An enagua (a short petticoat) of red serge was confined round her waist by a gay band ornamented with beads, and a chemisette covered the upper part of the body, permitting, however, a prodigal display of her charms. Whilst pounding sturdily at the corn, she laughed and joked with her fellow-labourers upon the anticipated American attack, which appeared to have but few terrors for her. "Que vengan," she exclaimed—"let them come; they are only men, and will not molest us women. Besides, I have seen these white men before—in my own country, and they are fine fellows, very tall, and as white as the snow on the sierras. Let them come, say I!"

"Only hear the girl!" cried another: "if these savages come, then will they kill Pedrillo, and what will Juanita say to lose her sweetheart?"

"Pedrillo!" sneered the latter; "what care I for Pedrillo? Soy Mejicana, yo—a Mexican girl am I, I'd have you know, and don't demean me to look at a wild Indian. Not I, indeed, by my salvation! [Pg 225]What I say is, let the Norte Americanos come."

At this juncture Fray Augustin called for a glass of aguardiente, which Juanita was despatched to bring, and, on presenting it, the churchman facetiously inquired why she wished for the Americans, adding, "Don't think they'll come here—no, no: here we are brave men, and have Don Antonio with us, a noble fellow, well used to arms." As the words were on his lips, the clattering of a horse's hoofs was heard rattling across the loose stones and pebbles in the bed of the river, and presently an Indian herder galloped up to the door of the Mission, his horse covered with foam, and its sides bleeding from spur-wounds.

"Oh, padre mio!" he cried, as soon as he caught sight of his reverence, "vienen los Americanos—the Americans, the Americans are upon us. Ave Maria purissima!—more than ten thousand are at my heels!"

Up started the priest and shouted for the Don.

That hidalgo presently appeared, armed with the sword that had graced his thigh in so many glorious encounters—the sword with which he had mowed down the enemies of his country, and by whose aid he now proposed to annihilate the American savages, should they dare to appear before him.

The alarm was instantly given; peones, vagueros hurried from the plains; and milpas, warned by the deep-toned bell, which soon rung out its sonorous [Pg 226]alarum. A score of mounted Indians, armed with gun and lasso, dashed off to bring intelligence of the enemy. The old gingall on the roof was crammed with powder and bullets to the very muzzle, by the frayle's own hand. Arms were brought and piled in the sala, ready for use. The padre exhorted, the women screamed, the men grew pale and nervous, and thronged within the walls. Don Antonio, the fiery Andaluz, alone remained outside, flourishing his whetted sabre, and roaring to the padre, who stood on the roof with lighted match, by the side of his formidable cannon, not to be affrighted. "That he, the Trueba, was there, with his Tizona, ready to defeat the devil himself should he come on."

He was deaf to the entreaties of the priest to enter.

"Siempre en el frente—Ever in the van," he said, "was the war-cry of the Truebas."

But now a cloud of dust was seen approaching from the plain, and presently a score of horsemen dashed headlong towards the Mission. "El enemigo," shouted Fray Augustin; and, without waiting to aim, he clapped his match to the touch-hole of the gun, harmlessly pointed to the sky, and

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

crying out “in el nombre de Dios”—in God’s name—as he did so, was instantly knocked over and over by the recoil of the piece, then was as instantly seized by some of the Indian garrison, and forced through the trap-door into the building; whilst the horsemen [Pg 227] (who were his own scouts) galloped up with the intelligence that the enemy was at hand, and in overwhelming force. Thereupon the men were all mounted, and formed in a body before the building, to the amount of more than fifty, well armed with guns or bows and arrows. Here the gallant Don harangued them, and infusing into their hearts a little of his own courage, they eagerly demanded to be led against the enemy. Fray Augustin re-appeared on the roof, gave them his blessing, advised them to give no quarter, and, with slight misgivings, saw them ride off to the conflict.

About a mile from the Mission, the plain gradually ascended to a ridge of moderate elevation, on which was a growth of dwarf oak and ilex. To this point the eyes of the remaining inmates of the convent were earnestly directed, as here the enemy was first expected to make his appearance. Presently a few figures were seen to crown the ridge, clearly defined against the clear evening sky. Not more than a dozen mounted men composed this party, which all imagined must be doubtless the vanguard of the thousand invaders. On the summit of the ridge they halted a few minutes, as if to reconnoitre; and by this time the Californian horsemen were halted in the plain, midway between the Mission and the ridge, and distant from the former less than half-a-mile, so that all the operations were clearly visible to the lookers-on.

The enemy wound slowly, in Indian file, down [Pg 228] the broken ground of the descent; but when the plain was reached, they formed into something like a line, and trotted fearlessly towards the Californians. These began to sit uneasily in their saddles; nevertheless they made a forward movement, and even broke into a gallop, but soon halted, and again huddled together. Then the mountaineers quickened their pace, and their loud shout was heard as they dashed into the middle of the faltering troop. The sharp cracks of the rifles followed, and the duller reports of the smooth-bored pieces of the Californians; a cloud of smoke and dust arose from the plain, and immediately half-a-dozen horses, with empty saddles, broke from it, followed quickly by the Californians, flying like mad across the level. The little steady line of the mountaineers advanced, and puffs of smoke arose, as they loaded and discharged their rifles at the flying horsemen. As the Americans came on, however, one was seen to totter in his saddle, the rifle fell from his grasp, and he tumbled headlong to the ground. For an instant his companions surrounded the fallen man, but again forming, dashed towards the Mission, shouting fierce war-whoops, and brandishing aloft their long and heavy rifles. Of the defeated Californians some jumped off their horses at the door of the Mission, and sought shelter within; others galloped off towards the sierra in panic-stricken plight. Before the gate, however, still paced valiantly the proud hidalgo, encumbered with his cloak, and waving [Pg 229] with difficulty his sword above his head. To the priest and women, who implored him to enter, he replied with cries of defiance, “Viva Carlos Quinto,” and “Death or glory.” He shouted in vain to the flying crowd to halt; but, seeing their panic was beyond hope, he clutched his weapon more firmly as the Americans dashed at him, closed his teeth and his eyes, thought once of the vega of his beloved Genil, and of Granada la Florida, and gave himself up for lost. Those inside the Mission, when they observed the flight of their cavalry, gave up the defence as hopeless; and already the charging mountaineers were almost under the walls, when they observed the curious figure of the little Don making demonstrations of hostility. “Wagh!” exclaimed the leading hunter (no other than our friend La Bonté), “here’s a little crittur

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

as means to do all the fighting;" and seizing his rifle by the barrel, he poked at the Don with the butt-end, who parried the blow, and with such a sturdy stroke, as nearly severed the stock in two. Another mountaineer rode up, and, swinging his lasso overhead, threw the noose dexterously over the Spaniard's head, and as it fell over his shoulders, drew it taut, thus securing the arms of the pugnacious Don as in a vice.

"Quartel!" cried the latter; "por Dios, quartel!"

"Quarter be d——!" exclaimed one of the whites, who understood Spanish; "who's agoin' to hurt you, you little crittur?"

[Pg 230]

By this time Fray Augustin was waving a white flag from the roof, in token of surrender; and soon after he appeared trembling at the door, beseeching the victors to be merciful and to spare the lives of the vanquished, when all and every thing in the Mission would be freely placed at their disposal.

"What does the niggur say!" asked old Walker, the leader of the mountaineers, of the interpreter.

"Well, he talks so queer, this hos can't rightly make it out."

"Tell the old coon then to quit that, and make them darned greasers clear out of the lodge, and pock some corn and shucks here for the animals, for they're nigh give out."

This being conveyed to him in mountain Spanish, which fear alone made him understand, the padre gave orders to the men to leave the Mission, advising them, moreover, not to recommence hostilities, as himself was kept as hostage, and if a finger was lifted against the mountaineers, he would be killed at once, and the Mission burned to the ground. Once inside, the hunters had no fear of attack, they could have kept the building against all California; so, leaving a guard of two outside the gate, and first seeing their worn-out animals supplied with piles of corn and shucks, they made themselves at home, and soon were paying attention to the hot tortillas, meat, and chile colorado which were quickly placed before them, washing down the hot-spiced viands with deep draughts of wine and brandy. It [Pg 231] would have been amusing to have seen the faces of these rough fellows as they gravely pledged each other in the grateful liquor, and looked askance at the piles of fruit served by the attendant Hebes. These came in for no little share of attention, it may be imagined; but the utmost respect was paid to them, for your mountaineer, rough and bear-like though he be, never, by word or deed, offends the modesty of a woman, although sometimes obliged to use a compulsory wooing, when time is not allowed for regular courtship, and not unfrequently known to jerk a New Mexican or Californian beauty behind his saddle, should the obdurate parents refuse consent to their immediate union. It tickled the Americans not a little to have all their wants supplied, and to be thus waited upon, by what they considered the houris of paradise; and after their long journey, and the many hardships and privations they had suffered, their present luxurious situation seemed scarcely real.

The hidalgo, released from the durance vile of the lasso, assisted at the entertainment; his sense of what was due to the "sangre regular" which ran in his veins being appeased by the fact, that he sat above the wild uncouth mountaineers, these preferring to squat cross-legged on the floor in their own fashion, to the uncomfortable and novel luxury of a chair. Killbuck, indeed, seemed to have quite forgotten the use of such pieces of furniture. On Fray Augustin offering him one, and begging him, [Pg 232] with many protestations, to be seated, that old mountain worthy looked at it, and then at the padre, turned it round, and at length comprehending the intention, essayed to

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

sit. This he effected at last, and sat grimly for some moments, when, seizing the chair by the back, he hurled it out of the open door, exclaiming,—“Wagh! this coon aint hamshot anyhow, and don’t want such fixins, he don’t;” and gathering his legs under his body, reclined in the manner customary to him. There was a prodigious quantity of liquor consumed that night, the hunters making up for their many banyans; but as it was the pure juice of the grape, it had little or no effect upon their hard heads. They had not much to fear from attacks on the part of the Californians; but, to provide against all emergencies, the padre and the Gachupin were “hobbled,” and confined in an inner room, to which there was no ingress nor egress save through the door which opened into the apartment where the mountaineers lay sleeping, two of the number keeping watch. A fandango with the Indian girls had been proposed by some of them, but Walker placed a decided veto on this. He said “they had need of sleep now, for there was no knowing what to-morrow might bring forth; that they had a long journey before them, and winter was coming on; they would have to ‘streak’ it night and day, and sleep when their journey was over, which would not be until Pike’s Peak was left behind them. It was now [Pg 233]October, and the way they’d have to hump it back to the mountains would take the gristle off a painter’s tail.”

Young Ned Wooton was not to the fore when the roll was called. He was courting the Sonora wench Juanita, and to some purpose, for we may at once observe, that the maiden accompanied the mountaineer to his distant home, and at the present moment is sharing his lodge on Hard-scrabble creek of the upper Arkansa, having been duly and legally married by Fray Augustin before their departure.

But now the snow on the ridge of the Sierra Madre, and the nightly frosts; the angular flights of geese and ducks constantly passing overhead; the sober tints of the foliage, and the dead leaves that strew the ground; the withering grass on the plain, and the cold gusts, sometimes laden with snow and sleet, that sweep from the distant snow-clad mountains;—all these signs warn us to linger no longer in the tempting valley of San Fernando, but at once to pack our mules to cross the dreary and desert plains and inhospitable sierras; and to seek with our booty one of the sheltered bayous of the Rocky Mountains.

On the third day after their arrival, behold our mountaineers again upon the march, driving before them—with the assistance of half-a-dozen Indians, impressed for the first few days of the journey until the cavallada get accustomed to travel without confusion—a [Pg 234]band of four hundred head of mules and horses, themselves mounted on the strongest and fleetest they could select from at least a thousand.

Fray Augustin and the Hidalgo, from the house-top, watched them depart: the former glad to get rid of such unscrupulous guests at any cost, the latter rather loath to part with his boon companions, with whom he had quaffed many a quartillo of Californian wine. Great was the grief, and violent the sobbing, when all the girls in the Mission surrounded Juanita to bid her adieu; as she, seated en cavalier on an easy pacing mule, bequeathed her late companions to the keeping of every saint in the calendar, and particularly to the great St Ferdinand himself, under whose especial tutelage all those in the Mission were supposed to live. Pedrillo, poor forsaken Pedrillo, a sullen sulky half-breed, was overcome, not with grief, but with anger at the slight put upon him, and vowed revenge. He of the “sangre regular,” having not a particle of enmity in his heart, waved his arm—that arm with which he had mowed down the enemies of Carlos Quinto—and requested the mountaineers, if ever fate should carry them to Spain, not to fail to visit his quinta in the vega

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

of Genil, which, with all in it, he placed at their worships' disposal—con muchissima franqueza. Fat Fray Augustin likewise waved his arm, but groaned in spirit as he beheld the noble band of mules and horses, throwing back clouds of dust on the plain where they had been bred. One noble [Pg 235]roan stallion seemed averse to leave his accustomed pasture, and again and again broke away from the band. Luckily old Walker had taken the precaution to secure the “bell-mare” of the herd, and mounted on her rode ahead, the animals all following their well-known leader. As the roan galloped back, the padre was in ecstasy. It was a favourite steed, and one he would have gladly ransomed at any price.

“Ya viene, ya viene!” he cried out, “now, now it's coming! hurra for the roan!” but, under the rifle of a mountaineer, one of the Californians dashed at it, a lasso whirling round his head, and turning and twisting like a doubling hare, as the horse tried to avoid him, at last threw the open coil over the animal's head, and led him back in triumph to the band.

“Maldito sea aquel Indio—curse that Indian!” quoth the padre, and turned away.

And now our sturdy band—less two who had gone under—were fairly on their way. They passed the body of their comrade who had been killed in the fight before the Mission; the wolves, or Indian dogs, had picked it to the bones; but a mound near by, surrounded by a rude cross, showed where the Californians (seven of whom were killed) had been interred—the pile of stones at the foot of the cross testifying that many an ave maria had already been said by the poor Indians, to save the souls of [Pg 236]their slaughtered companions from the pangs of purgatory.

For the first few days progress was slow and tedious. The confusion attendant upon driving so large a number of animals over a country without trail or track of any description, was sufficient to prevent speedy travelling; and the mountaineers, desirous of improving the pace, resolved to pursue a course more easterly, and to endeavour to strike the great SPANISH TRAIL, which is the route followed by the New Mexicans in their journeys to and from the towns of Puebla de los Angeles and Santa Fé. This road, however, crosses a long stretch of desert country, destitute alike of grass and water, save at a few points, the regular halting-places of the caravans; and as but little pasture is to be found at these places at any time, there was great reason to doubt, if the Santa Fé traders had passed this season, that there would not be sufficient grass to support the numerous cavallada, after the herbage had been laid under contribution by the traders' animals. However, a great saving of time would be effected by taking this trail, although it wound a considerable distance out of the way to avoid the impassable chain of the Sierra Nevada—the gap in those mountains through which the Americans had come being far to the southward, and at this late season probably obstructed by the snow.

Urged by threats and bribes, one of the Indians [Pg 237]agreed to guide the cavallada to the trail, which he declared was not more than five days' distant. As they advanced, the country became wilder and more sterile,—the valleys, through which several small streams coursed, alone being capable of supporting so large a number of animals. No time was lost in hunting for game; the poorest of the mules and horses were killed for provisions, and the diet was improved by a little venison when a deer casually presented itself near the camping ground. Of Indians they had seen not one; but they now approached the country of the Diggers, who infest the district through which the Spanish trail passes, laying contributions on the caravans of traders, and who have been, not inaptly, termed the “Arabs of the American desert.” The Californian guide now earnestly entreated permission to retrace his steps, saying, that he should lose his life if he attempted to pass

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

the Digger country alone on his return. He pointed to a snow-covered peak, at the foot of which the trail passed; and leave being accorded, he turned his horse's head towards the Mission of San Fernando.

Although the cavallada travelled, by this time, with much less confusion than at first, still, from the want of a track to follow, great trouble and exertion were required to keep the proper direction. The bell-mare led the van, carrying Walker, who was better acquainted with the country than the others; another hunter, of considerable distinction [Pg 238] in the band, on a large mule, rode by his side. Then followed the cavallada, jumping and frisking with each other, stopping whenever a blade of grass showed, and constantly endeavouring to break away to green patches which sometimes presented themselves in the plains. Behind the troop, urging them on by dint of loud cries and objurgations, rode six mountaineers, keeping as much as possible in a line. Two others were on each flank to repress all attempts to wander, and keep the herd in a compact body. In this order the caravan had been crossing a broken country, up and down ridges, all day, the animals giving infinite trouble to their drivers, when a loud shout from the advanced guard put them all upon the qui-vive. Old Walker was seen to brandish the rifle over his head and point before him, and presently the cry of "The trail! the trail!" gladdened all hearts with the anticipation of a respite from the harassing labour of mule-driving. Descending a broken ridge, they at once struck into a distinct and tolerably well-worn track, into which the cavallada turned as easily and instinctively as if they had all their lives been accustomed to travel on beaten roads. Along this they travelled merrily—their delight being, however, alloyed by frequent indications that hunger and thirst had done their work on the mules and horses of the caravans which had preceded them on the trail. They happened to strike it in the centre of a long stretch of desert, extending sixty miles without [Pg 239] either water or pasture; and many animals had perished here, leaving their bones to bleach upon the plain. The soil was sandy, but rocks and stones covered the surface, disabling the feet of many of the young horses and mules; several of which, at this early stage of the journey, were already abandoned. Traces of the wretched Diggers became very frequent; these abject creatures resorting to the sandy plains for the purpose of feeding upon the lizards which there abound. As yet they did not show; only at night they prowled around the camp, waiting a favourable opportunity to run the animals. In the present instance, however, many of the horses having been left on the road, the Diggers found so plentiful a supply of meat as to render unnecessary any attack upon the formidable mountaineers.

One evening the Americans had encamped, earlier than usual, on a creek well-timbered with willow and quaking-ash, and affording tolerable pasture; and although it was still rather early, they determined to stop here, and give the animals an opportunity to fill themselves. Several deer had jumped out of the bottom as they entered it; and La Bonté and Killbuck had sallied from the camp with their rifles, to hunt and endeavour to procure some venison for supper. Along the river banks, herds of deer were feeding in every direction, within shot of the belt of timber; and the two hunters had no difficulty in approaching and knocking over [Pg 240] two fine bucks within a few paces of the thicket. They were engaged in butchering the animals, when La Bonté, looking up from his work, saw half-a-dozen Indians dodging among the trees, within a few yards of himself and Killbuck. At the same instant two arrows thudded into the carcass of the deer over which he knelt, passing but a few inches from his head. Hollowing to his companion, La Bonté immediately seized the deer, and, lifting it with main strength, held it as a shield before him, but not before an

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

arrow had struck him in the shoulder. Rising from the ground he retreated behind cover, yelling loudly to alarm the camp, which was not five hundred yards' distant on the other side of the stream. Killbuck, when apprised of the danger, ran bodily into the plain, and, keeping out of shot of the timber, joined La Bonté, who now, out of arrow-shot, threw down his shield of venison and fired his rifle at the assailants. The Indians appeared at first afraid to leave the cover; but three or four more joining them, one a chief, they advanced into the plain, with drawn bows, scattering wide apart, and running swiftly towards the whites, in a zigzag course, in order not to present a steady mark to their unerring rifles. The latter were too cautious to discharge their pieces, but kept a steady front, with rifle at shoulder. The Indians evidently disliked to approach nearer; but the chief, an old grizzled man, incited them by word and gesture—running in [Pg 241]advance, and calling upon the others to follow him.

“Ho, boy!” exclaimed Killbuck to his companion, “that old coon must go under, or we'll get rubbed out by these darned critturs.”

La Bonté understood him. Squatting on the ground, he planted his wiping-stick firmly at the extent of his left arm, and resting the long barrel of his rifle on his left hand, which was supported by the stick, he took a steady aim and fired. The Indian, throwing out his arms, staggered and let fall his bow—tried hard to recover himself, and then fell forward on his face. The others, seeing the death of their chief, turned and made again for the cover. “You darned critturs,” roared Killbuck, “take that!” and fired his rifle at the last one, tumbling him over as dead as a stone. The camp had also been alarmed. Five of them waded across the creek and took the Indians in rear; their rifles cracked within the timber, several more Indians fell, and the rest quickly beat a retreat. The venison, however, was not forgotten; the two deer were packed into camp, and did the duty of mule-meat that night.

This lesson had a seasonable effect upon the Diggers, who made no attempt on the cavallada that night or the next; for the camp remained two days to recruit the animals.

We will not follow the party through all the difficulties and perils of the desert route, nor detail [Pg 242]the various devilries of the Diggers, who constantly sought opportunities to stampede the animals, or, approaching them in the night as they grazed, fired their arrows indiscriminately at the herd, trusting that dead or disabled ones would be left behind, and afford them a good supply of meat. In the month of December the mountaineers crossed the great dividing ridge of the Rocky Mountains, making their way through the snowy barrier with the utmost difficulty, and losing many mules and horses in the attempt. On passing the ridge, they at once struck the head-springs of the Arkansa river, and turned into the Bayou Salade. Here they found a village of Arapahos, and were in no little fear of leaving their cavallada with these dexterous horse-thieves. Fortunately, the chief in command was friendly to the whites, and restrained his young men; and a present of three horses insured his good offices. Still, the near neighbourhood of these Indians being hardly desirable, after a few days' halt, the Americans were again on their way, and halted finally at the juncture of the Fontaine-qui-bout with the Arkansa, where they determined to construct a winter camp. They now considered themselves at home, and at once set about building a log-shanty capable of containing them all, and a large corral for securing the animals at night, or in case of Indian alarms. This they effected by felling several large cottonwoods, and throwing them in the form of a horse-shoe: the entrance, however, [Pg 243]being narrower than in that figure, and secured by upright logs, between which poles were fixed to be withdrawn at pleasure.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

The house, or “fort”—as any thing in the shape of a house is called in these parts, where, indeed, every man must make his house a castle—was loopholed on all sides, and boasted a turf chimney of rather primitive construction; but which answered the purpose of drawing the smoke from the interior. Game was plentiful all around;—bands of buffalo were constantly passing the Arkansa; and there were always deer and antelope within sight of the fort. The pasture, too, was good and abundant—being the rich grama or buffalo grass, which, although rather dry at this season, still retains its fattening qualities; and the animals soon began to improve wonderfully in condition and strength.

Of the four hundred head of mules and horses with which they had started from California, but one-half reached the Arkansa. Many had been killed for food (indeed they had furnished the only provisions during the journey), many had been stolen by the Indians, or shot by them at night; and many had strayed off and not been recovered. We have omitted to mention that the Sonora girl, Juanita, and her spouse, Ned Wooton, remained behind at Roubideau’s fort and rendezvous on the Uintah, which our band had passed on the other side of the mountains, whence they proceeded with a party to Taos in New Mexico, and resided there [Pg 244]for some years, blessed with a fine family, &c. &c. &c., as the novels end.

As soon as the animals were fat and strong, they were taken down the Arkansa to Bent’s Indian trading fort, about sixty miles below the mouth of Fontaine-qui-bout. Here a ready sale was found for them, mules being at that time in great demand on the frontier of the United States, and every season the Bents carried across the plains to Independence a considerable number collected in the Indian country, and in the upper settlements of New Mexico. While the mountaineers were descending the Arkansa, a little incident occurred, and some of the party very unexpectedly encountered an old friend. Killbuck and La Bonté, who were generally compañeros, were riding some distance ahead of the cavallada, passing at the time the mouth of the Huerfano or Orphan Creek, when, at a long distance before them, they saw the figure of a horseman, followed by two loose animals, descending the bluff into the timbered bottom of the river. Judging the stranger to be Indian, they spurred their horses and galloped in pursuit, but the figure ahead suddenly disappeared. However, they quickly followed the track, which was plain enough in the sandy bottom, that of a horse and two mules. Killbuck scrutinised the “sign,” and puzzled over it a considerable time; and at last exclaimed—“Wagh! this sign’s as plain as mon beaver to me; look at that hos-track, boy; did ye ever see that afore?”

[Pg 245]

“Well, I have!” answered La Bonté, peering down at it: “that ar shuffle-toe seems handy to me now, I tellyou.”

“The man as used to ride that hos is long gone under, but the hos, darn the old crittur, is old Bill Williams’s, I’ll swar by hook.”

“Well, it aint nothin else,” continued La Bonté, satisfying himself by a long look; “it’s the old boy’s hos as shure as shootin: and them Rapahos has rubbed him out at last, and raised his animals. Ho, boy! let’s lift their hair.”

“Agreed,” answered Killbuck; and away they started in pursuit, determined to avenge the death of their old comrade.

They followed the track through the bottom and into the stream, which it crossed, and, passing a few yards up the bank, entered the water again, when they could see nothing more of it. Puz-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

zled at this, they sought on each side the river, but in vain; and, not wishing to lose more time in the search, they proceeded through the timber on the banks to find a good camping-place for the night, which had been their object in riding in advance of the cavallada. On the left bank, a short distance before them, was a heavy growth of timber, and the river ran in one place close to a high bluff, between which and the water was an almost impervious thicket of plum and cherry trees. The grove of timber ended before it reached this point, and but few scattered trees grew in the little glade which intervened, and [Pg 246]which was covered with tolerable grass. This being fixed upon as an excellent camp, the two mountaineers rode into the glade, and dismounted close to the plum and cherry thicket, which formed almost a wall before them, and an excellent shelter from the wind. Jumping off their horses, they were in the act of removing the saddles from their backs, when a shrill neigh burst from the thicket not two yards behind them; a rustling in the bushes followed, and presently a man dressed in buckskin, and rifle in hand, burst out of the tangled brush, exclaiming in an angry voice—

“Doëe hy’ar now? I was nigh upon gut-shootin some of e’e—I was now; thought e’e was darned Rapahos, I did, and câched right off.”

“Ho, Bill! what, old hos! not gone under yet?” cried both the hunters. “Give us your paw.”

“Doëe now, if hy’ar ar’nt them boys as was rubbed out on Lodge Pole (creek) a time ago. Doëe hyar? if this aint ‘some’ now, I would’nt say so.”

Leaving old Bill Williams and our two friends to exchange their rough but hearty greetings, we will glance at that old worthy’s history since the time when we left him caching in the fire and smoke on the Indian battle-ground in the Rocky Mountains. He had escaped fire and smoke, or he would not have been here on Arkansa with his old grizzled Nez-percé steed. On that occasion, the veteran mountaineer had lost his two pack-animals and all [Pg 247]his beaver. He was not the man, however, to want a horse or mule as long as an Indian village was near at hand. Skulking, therefore, by day in cañons and deep gorges of the mountains, and travelling by night, he followed closely on the trail of the victorious savages, bided his time, struck his “coup,” and recovered a pair of pack-horses, which was all he required. Ever since, he had been trapping alone in all parts of the mountains; had visited the rendezvous but twice for short periods, and then with full packs of beaver; and was now on his way to Bent’s Fort, to dispose of his present loads of peltry, enjoy one good carouse on Taos whisky, and then return to some hole or corner in the mountains which he knew of, to follow in the spring his solitary avocation. He too had had his share of troubles, and had many Indian scrapes, but passed safely through all, and scarcely cared to talk of what he had done, so matter-of-fact to him were the most extraordinary of his perilous adventures.

Arrived at Bent’s Fort, the party disposed of their cavallada, and then—respect for the pardonable weaknesses of our mountain friends prompts us to draw a veil over the furious orgies that ensued. A number of hunters and trappers were “in” from their hunting-grounds, and a village of Shians and some lodges of Kioways were camped round the fort. As long as the liquor lasted, and there was good store of alcohol as well as of Taos whisky, the Arkansa resounded with furious mirth—not unmixed [Pg 248]with graver scenes; for your mountaineer, ever quarrelsome in his cups, is quick to give and take offence, when rifles alone can settle the difference, and much blood is spilt upon the prairie in his wild and frequent quarrels.

Bent’s Fort is situated on the left or northern bank of the river Arkansa, about one hundred miles from the foot of the Rocky Mountains—on a low and level bluff of the prairie which here slopes

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

gradually to the water's-edge. The walls are built entirely of adobes—or sun-burned bricks—in the form of a hollow square, at two corners of which are circular flanking towers of the same material. The entrance is by a large gateway into the square, round which are the rooms occupied by the traders and employés of the host. These are small in size, with walls coloured by a white-wash made of clay found in the prairie. Their flat roofs are defended along the exterior by parapets of adobe, to serve as a cover to marksmen firing from the top; and along the coping grow plants of cactus of all the varieties common in the plains. In the centre of the square is the press for packing the furs; and there are three large rooms, one used as a store and magazine, another as a council-room, where the Indians assemble for their “talks,” whilst the third is the common dining-hall, where the traders, trappers, and hunters, and all employés, feast upon the best provender the game-covered country affords. Over the culinary department presided of late years a [Pg 249] fair lady of colour, Charlotte by name, who was, as she loved to say, “de onlee lady in de dam Injun country,” and who moreover was celebrated from Long's Peak to the Cumbres Espanolás for slap-jacks and pumpkin pies.

Here congregate at certain seasons the merchants of the plains and mountains, with their stocks of peltry. Chiefs of the Shian, the Kioway, and Arapaho, sit in solemn conclave with the head traders, and smoke the “calumet” over their real and imaginary grievances. Now O-cun-no-whurst, the Yellow Wolf, grand chief of the Shian, complains of certain grave offences against the dignity of his nation! A trader from the “big lodge” (the fort) has been in his village, and before the trade was opened, in laying the customary chief's gift “on the prairie” [31] has not “opened his hand,” but “squeezed out his present between his fingers,” grudgingly, and with too sparing measure. This was hard to bear, but the Yellow Wolf would say no more!

Tah-kai-buhl, or, “he who jumps,” is deputed from the Kioway to warn the white traders not to proceed to the Canadian to trade with the Comanche. That nation is mad—a “heap mad” with the whites, and has “dug up the hatchet” to “rub out” all who enter its country. The Kioway loves the paleface, and gives him warning (and “he who jumps” [Pg 250] looks as if he deserves something “on the prairie” for his information).

Shawh-noh-qua-mish, “the peeled lodge-pole,” is there to excuse his Arapaho braves, who lately made free with a band of horses belonging to the fort. He promises the like shall never happen again, and he, Shawh-noh-qua-mish, speaks with a “single tongue.” Over clouds of tobacco and kinnik-kinnik, these grave affairs are settled and terms arranged.

In the corral, groups of leather-clad mountaineers, with “decks” of “euker” and “seven up,” gamble away their hard-earned peltries. The employés—mostly St Louis Frenchmen and Canadian voyageurs—are pressing packs of buffalo skins, beating robes, or engaged in other duties of a trading fort. Indian squaws, the wives of mountaineers, strut about in all the pride of beads and fofarrow, jingling with bells and bugles, and happy as paint can make them. Hunters drop in with animals packed with deer or buffalo meat to supply the fort; Indian dogs look anxiously in at the gateway, fearing to enter and encounter their natural enemies, the whites: and outside the fort, at any hour of the day or night, one may safely wager to see a dozen cayettes or prairie wolves loping round, or seated on their haunches, and looking gravely on, waiting patiently for some chance offal to be cast outside. Against the walls, groups of [Pg 251] Indians, too proud to enter without an invitation, lean, wrapped in their buffalo robes, sulky and evidently ill at ease to be so near the whites without a chance of fingering their scalp-locks; their white lodges shining in the sun, at a little

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

distance from the river-banks; their horses feeding in the plain beyond.

The appearance of the fort is very striking, standing as it does hundreds of miles from any settlement, on the vast and lifeless prairie, surrounded by hordes of hostile Indians, and far out of reach of intercourse with civilised man; its mud-built walls inclosing a little garrison of a dozen hardy men, sufficient to hold in check the numerous tribes of savages ever thirsting for their blood. Yet the solitary stranger passing this lone fort, feels proudly secure when he comes within sight of the “stars and stripes” which float above the walls.

---

[Pg 252]

## CHAPTER VIII.

AGAIN we must take a jump with La Bonté over a space of several months; when we find him, in company of half a dozen trappers, amongst them his inseparable compañero Killbuck, camped on the Greenhorn creek, en route to the settlements of New Mexico. They have a few mules packed with beaver for the Taos market: but this expedition has been planned more for pleasure than profit—a journey to Taos valley being the only civilised relaxation coveted by the mountaineers. Not a few of the present band are bound thither with matrimonial intentions; the belles of Nuevo Mejico being to them the ne plus ultra of female perfection, uniting most conspicuous personal charms (although coated with cosmetic alegría—an herb, with the juice of which the women of Mexico hideously bedaub their faces), with all the hard-working industry of Indian squaws. The ladies, on their part, do not hesitate to leave the paternal abodes, and eternal tortilla-making, to share the perils and privations of the American mountaineers in the distant wilderness. Utterly despising their own countrymen, whom they are used to contrast with the [Pg 253]dashing white hunters who swagger in all the pride of fringe and leather through their towns—they, as is but natural, gladly accept husbands from the latter class; preferring the stranger, who possesses the heart and strong right arm to defend them, to the miserable cowardly “peládos,” who hold what little they have on sufferance of savage Indians, but one degree superior to themselves.

Certainly no band of hunters that ever appeared in the vale of Taos, numbered in its ranks a properer lot of lads than those now camped on Greenhorn, intent on matrimonial foray into the settlements of New Mexico. There was young Dick Wooton, who was “some” for his inches, being six feet six, and as straight and strong as the barrel of his long rifle. Shoulder to shoulder with this “boy,” stood Rube Herring, and not a hair’s-breadth difference in height or size was there between them. Killbuck, though mountain winters had sprinkled a few snow-flakes on his head, looked up to neither; and La Bonté held his own with any mountaineer who ever set a trap in sight of Long’s Peak or the Snowy Range. Marcellin—who, though a Mexican, despised his people and abjured his blood, having been all his life in the mountains with the white hunters—looked down easily upon six feet and odd inches. In form a Hercules, he had the symmetry of an Apollo; with strikingly handsome features, and masses of long black hair hanging from his slouching beaver over the shoulders of his buckskin [Pg 254]hunting shirt. He, as he was wont to say, was “no dam Spaniard, but ‘mountainee man,’ wagh!” Chabonard, a half-breed, was not lost in the crowd;—and, the last in height, but the first in every quality which constitutes excellence in a mountaineer, whether of indomitable courage, or perfect indifference to death or danger; with an iron frame capable of withstanding hunger, thirst, heat, cold, fatigue, and hardships of every kind; of wonderful presence of mind, and endless resources in times of peril; with the instinct of an animal,

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

and the moral courage of a man—who was “taller” for his inches than KIT CARSON, paragon of mountaineers? [32] Small in stature, and slenderly limbed, but with muscles of wire, with a fair complexion and quiet intelligent features, to look at Kit none would suppose that the mild-looking being before him was an incarnate devil in Indian fight, and had raised more hair from head of Redskins than any two men in the western country; and yet, thirty winters had scarcely planted a line or furrow on his clean-shaven face. No name, however, was better known in the mountains—from Yellow Stone to Spanish Peaks, [Pg 255] from Missouri to Columbia River—than that of Kit Carson, “raised” in Boonlick, county of Missouri State, and a credit to the diggings that gave him birth.

On Huerfano or Orphan Creek, so called from an isolated hutte which stands on a prairie near the stream, our party fell in with a village of Yuta Indians, at that time hostile to the whites. Both parties were preparing for battle, when Killbuck, who spoke the language, went forward with signs of peace, and after a talk with several chiefs, entered into an armistice, each party agreeing not to molest the other. After trading for a few deer-skins, which the Yutas are celebrated for dressing delicately fine, the trappers moved hastily on out of such dangerous company, and camped under the mountain on Oak Creek, where they fortified in a strong position, and constructed a corral in which to secure their animals at night. At this point is a tolerable pass through the mountains, where a break occurs in a range, whence they gradually decrease in magnitude until they meet the sierras of Mexico, which connect the two mighty chains of the Andes and the Rocky Mountains. From the summit of the dividing ridge, to the eastward, a view is had of the vast sea of prairie which stretches away from the base of the mountains, in dreary barrenness, for nearly a thousand miles, until it meets the fertile valley of the great Missouri. Over this boundless expanse, nothing breaks the uninterrupted solitude of the view. Not a tree or atom of foliage relieves [Pg 256] the eye; for the lines of scattered timber which belt the streams running from the mountains, are lost in the shadow of their stupendous height, and beyond this nothing is seen but the bare surface of the rolling prairie. In no other part of the chain are the grand characteristics of the Far West more strikingly displayed than from this pass. The mountains here rise, on the eastern side, abruptly from the plain, and the view over the great prairies is not therefore obstructed by intervening ridges. To the westward the eye sweeps over the broken spurs which stretch from the main range in every direction; whilst distant peaks, for the most part snow-covered, are seen at intervals rising isolated above the range. On all sides the scene is wild and dismal.

Crossing by this pass, the trappers followed the Yuta trail over a plain, skirting a pine-covered ridge, in which countless herds of antelope, tame as sheep, were pasturing. Numerous creeks intersect it, well timbered with oak, pine, and cedar, and well stocked with game of all kinds. On the eleventh day from leaving the Huerfano, they struck the Taos valley settlement on Arroyo Hondo, and pushed on at once to the village of Fernandez—sometimes, but improperly, called Taos. As the dashing band clattered through the village, the dark eyes of the reboso-wrapped muchachos peered from the doors of the adobe houses, each mouth armed with cigarito, which was at intervals removed to [Pg 257] allow utterance to the salutation to each hunter as he trotted past of *Adios Americanos*,—“Welcome to Fernandez!” and then they hurried off to prepare for the fandango, which invariably followed the advent of the mountaineers. The men, however, seemed scarcely so well pleased; but leaned sulkily against the walls, their sarapes turned over the left shoulder, and concealing the lower part of the face, the hand appearing from its upper folds only to remove the

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

eternal cigarro from their lips. They, from under their broad-brimmed sombreros, scowled with little affection upon the stalwart hunters, who clattered past them, scarcely deigning to glance at the sullen Peládos, but paying incomprehensible compliments to the buxom wenches who smiled at them from the doors. Thus exchanging salutations, they rode up to the house of an old mountaineer, who had long been settled here with a New Mexican wife, and who was the recognised entertainer of the hunters when they visited Taos valley, receiving in exchange such peltry as they brought with them.

No sooner was it known that Los Americanos had arrived, than nearly all the householders of Fernandez presented themselves to offer the use of their “salas” for the fandango which invariably celebrated their arrival. This was always a profitable event; for as the mountaineers were generally pretty well “flush” of cash when on their “spree,” and as open-handed as an Indian could wish, the [Pg 258]sale of whisky, with which they regaled all comers, produced a handsome return to the fortunate individual whose room was selected for the fandango. On this occasion the sala of the Alcalde Don Cornelio Vegil was selected and put in order; a general invitation was distributed; and all the dusky beauties of Fernandez were soon engaged in arraying themselves for the fête. Off came the coats of dirt and “alegnía” which had bedaubed their faces since the last “funcion,” leaving their cheeks clear and clean. Water was profusely used, and their cuerpos were doubtless astonished by the unusual lavation. Their long black hair was washed and combed, plastered behind their ears, and plaited into a long queue, which hung down their backs. Enaguas of gaudy colour (red most affected) were donned, fastened round the waist with ornamented belts, and above this a snow-white camisita of fine linen was the only covering, allowing a prodigal display of their charms. Gold and silver ornaments, of antiquated pattern, decorate their ears and necks; and massive crosses of the precious metals, wrought from the gold or silver of their own placeres, hang pendant on their breasts. The enagua or petticoat, reaching about halfway between the knee and ankle, displays their well-turned limbs, destitute of stockings, and their tiny feet, thrust into quaint little shoes (zapatitos) of Cinderellan dimensions. Thus equipped, with the reboso drawn over their heads and faces, out of the folds of which their brilliant [Pg 259]eyes flash like lightning, and each pretty mouth armed with its cigarito, they coquettishly enter the fandango. [33] Here, at one end of a long room, are seated the musicians, their instruments being generally a species of guitar, called heaca, a bandolin, and an Indian drum, called tombé—one of each. Round the room groups of New Mexicans lounge, wrapped in the eternal sarape, and smoking of course, scowling with jealous eyes at the more favoured mountaineers. These, divested of their hunting-coats of buckskins, appear in their bran-new shirts of gaudy calico, and close fitting buckskin pantaloons, with long fringes down the outside seam from the hip to the ankle; with moccasins, ornamented with bright beads and porcupine quills. Each, round his waist, wears his mountain-belt and scalp-knife, ominous of the company he is in, and some have pistols sticking in their belt.

The dances—save the mark!—are without form or figure, at least those in which the white hunters sport the “fantastic toe.” Seizing his partner round the waist with the gripe of a grisly bear, each mountaineer whirls and twirls, jumps and stamps; introduces Indian steps used in the “scalp” or “buffalo” dances, whooping occasionally with unearthly cry, and then subsiding into the jerking step, raising each foot alternately from the ground, so [Pg 260]much in vogue in Indian ballets. The hunters have the floor all to themselves. The Mexicans have no chance in such physical force

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

dancing; and if a dancing Peládo [34] steps into the ring, a lead-like thump from a galloping mountaineer quickly sends him sprawling, with the considerate remark—"Quit, you darned Spaniard! you can't 'shine' in this crowd."

During a lull, guagés [35] filled with whisky go the rounds—offered to and seldom refused by the ladies—sturdily quaffed by the mountaineers, and freely swallowed by the Peládos, who drown their jealousy and envious hate of their entertainers in potent aguardiente. Now, as the guagés are oft refilled and as often drained, and as night advances, so do the spirits of the mountaineers become more boisterous, while their attentions to their partners become warmer—the jealousy of the natives waxes hotter thereat—and they begin to show symptoms of resenting the endearments which the mountaineers bestow upon their wives and sweethearts. And now, when the room is filled to crowding,—with two hundred people, swearing, drinking, dancing, and shouting—the half-dozen Americans monopolising the fair, to the evident disadvantage of at least threescore scowling Peládos, it happens that one of these, maddened by whisky and the green-eyed [Pg 261] monster, suddenly seizes a fair one from the waist-encircling arm of a mountaineer, and pulls her from her partner. Wagh!—La Bonté—it is he—stands erect as a pillar for a moment, then raises his hand to his mouth, and gives a ringing war-whoop—jumps upon the rash Peládo, seizes him by the body as if he were a child, lifts him over his head, and dashes him with the force of a giant against the wall.

The war, long threatened, has commenced; twenty Mexicans draw their knives and rush upon La Bonté, who stands his ground, and sweeps them down with his ponderous fist, one after another, as they throng around him. "Howgh-owgh-owgh-owgh-h!" the well-known warhoop, bursts from the throats of his companions, and on they rush to the rescue. The women scream, and block the door in their eagerness to escape; and thus the Mexicans are compelled to stand their ground and fight. Knives glitter in the light, and quick thrusts are given and parried. In the centre of the room the whites stand shoulder to shoulder—covering the floor with Mexicans by their stalwart blows; but the odds are fearful against them, and other assailants crowd up to supply the place of those who fall.

The alarm being given by the shrieking women, reinforcements of Peládos rushed to the scene of action, but could not enter the room, which was already full. The odds began to tell against the mountaineers, [Pg 262]when Kit Carson's quick eye caught sight of a high stool or stone, supported by three long heavy legs. In a moment he had cleared his way to this, and in another the three legs were broken off and in the hands of himself, Dick Wooton, and La Bonté. Sweeping them round their heads, down came the heavy weapons amongst the Mexicans with wonderful effect—each blow, dealt by the nervous arms of Wooton and La Bonté, mowing down a good half-dozen of the assailants. At this the mountaineers gave a hearty whoop, and charged the wavering enemy with such resistless vigour, that they gave way and bolted through the door, leaving the floor strewn with wounded, many most dangerously; for, as may be imagined, a thrust from the keen scalp-knife by the nervous arm of a mountaineer was no baby blow, and seldom failed to strike home—up to the "Green River" [36] on the blade.

The field being won, the whites, too, beat a quick retreat to the house where they were domiciled, and where they had left their rifles. Without their trusty weapons they felt, indeed, unarmed; and not knowing how the affair just over would be followed up, lost no time in making preparations for defence. However, after great blustering on the part of the [Pg 263]prefecto, who, accompa-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

nied by a posse comitatus of “Greasers,” proceeded to the house, and demanded the surrender of all concerned in the affair—which proposition was received with a yell of derision—the business was compounded by the mountaineers promising to give sundry dollars to the friends of two of the Mexicans, who died during the night of their wounds, and to pay for a certain amount of masses to be sung for the repose of their souls in purgatory. Thus the affair blew over; but for several days the mountaineers never showed themselves in the streets of Fernandez without their rifles on their shoulders, and refrained from attending fandangos for the present, and until the excitement had cooled down.

A bitter feeling, however, existed on the part of the men; and one or two offers of a matrimonial nature were rejected by the papas of certain ladies who had been wooed by some of the white hunters, and their hands formally demanded from the respective padres.

La Bonté had been rather smitten with the charms of one Dolores Salazar—a buxom lass, more than three parts Indian in her blood, but confessedly the “beauty” of the Vale of Taos. She, by dint of eye, and of nameless acts of elaborate coquetry, with which the sex so universally bait their traps, whether in the salons of Belgravia, or the rancherias of New Mexico, contrived to make considerable havoc in the heart of our mountaineer; and when once [Pg 264]Dolores saw she had made an impression, she followed up her advantage with all the arts the most civilised of her sex could use when fishing for a husband.

La Bonté, however, was too old a hunter to be easily caught; and before committing himself, he sought the advice of his tried companion Killbuck. Taking him to a retired spot without the village, he drew out his pipe and charged it—seated himself cross-legged on the ground, and, with Indian gravity, composed himself for a “talk.”

“Ho, Killbuck!” he began, touching the ground with the bowl of his pipe, and then turning the stem upwards for “medicine”—“Hyar’s a child feels squamptious like, and nigh upon ‘gone beaver,’ he is—Wagh!”

“Wagh!” exclaimed Killbuck, all attention.

“Old hos,” continued the other, “thar’s no use câching anyhow what a niggur feels—so hyar’s to ‘put out.’ You’re good for beaver I know; at deer or buffler, or darned red Injun either, you’re ‘some.’ Now that’s a fact. ‘Off-hand,’ or ‘with a rest,’ you make ‘em ‘come.’ You knows the ‘sign’ of Injuns slick—Blackfoot or Sioux, Pawnee or Burnt-wood, Zeton, Rapaho, Shian, or Shoshonée, Yutah, Piyutah, or Yamhareek—their trail’s a plain as writin’, old hos, to you.”

“Wagh!” grunted Killbuck, blushing bronze at all these compliments.

“Your sight ain’t bad. Elks is elk; black-tail [Pg 265]deer ain’t white-tails; and b’ar is b’ar to you, and nothin’ else, a long mile off and more.”

“Wa-agh!”

“Thar ain’t a track as leaves its mark upon the plains or mountains but you can read off-hand; that I’ve seed myself. But tell me, old hos, can you make understand the ‘sign’ as shows itself in a woman’s breast?”

Killbuck removed the pipe from his mouth, raised his head, and puffed a rolling cloud of smoke into the air,—knocked the ashes from the bowl, likewise made his “medicine”—and answered thus:—

“From Red River, away up north amongst the Britishers, to Heely (Gila) in the Spanish country—from old Missoura to the Sea of Californy, I’ve trapped and hunted. I knows the Injuns and thar

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

‘sign,’ and they knows me, I’m thinkin. Thirty winters has snowed on me in these hyar mountains, and a niggur or a Spaniard [37] would larn ‘some’ in that time. This old tool” (tapping his rifle) “shoots ‘center’ she does; and if thar’s game afoot, this child knows ‘bull’ from ‘cow,’ and ought to could. That deer is deer, and goats is goats, is plain as paint to any but a greenhorn. Beaver’s a cunning crittur, but I’ve trapped a ‘heap;’ and at killing meat when meat’s a-running, I’ll ‘shine’ in the biggest kind of crowd. For twenty year I packed a squaw along. Not one, but a many. First I had a [Pg 266]Blackfoot—the darndest slut as ever cried for fofarrow. I lodge-poled her on Colter’s Creek, and made her quit. My buffler hos, and as good as four packs of beaver, I gave for old Bull-tail’s daughter. He was head chief of the Ricaree, and ‘came’ nicely ‘round’ me. Thar was’nt enough scarlet cloth, nor beads, nor vermilion in Sublette’s packs for her. Traps wouldn’t buy her all the fofarrow she wanted; and in two years I’d sold her to Cross-Eagle for one of Jake Hawkin’s guns—this very one I hold in my hands. Then I tried the Sioux, the Shian, and a Digger from the other side, who made the best moccasin as ever I wore. She was the best of all, and was rubbed out by the Yutas in the Bayou Salade. Bad was the best; and after she was gone under I tried no more. “Afore I left the settlements I know’d a white gal, and she was some punkins. I have never seed nothing as ‘ould beat her. Red blood won’t ‘shine’ any ways you fix it; and though I’m h— for ‘sign,’ a woman’s breast is the hardest kind of rock to me, and leaves no trail that I can see of. I’ve hearn you talk of a gal in Memphis county; Mary Brand you called her oncest. The gal I said I know’d, her name I disremember, but she stands before me as plain as Chimley Rock on Platte, and thirty year and more har’nt changed a feature in her face, to me.

“If you ask this child, he’ll tell you to leave the Spanish slut to her Greasers, and hold on till you [Pg 267]take the trail to old Missoura, whar white and Christian gals are to be had for axing. Wagh!”

La Bonté rose to his feet. The mention of Mary Brand’s name decided him; and he said—  
“Darn the Spaniard! she can’t shine with me; come, old hos! let’s move.”

And, shouldering their rifles, the two *compañeros* returned to the Ranch. More than one of the mountaineers had fulfilled the object of their journey, and had taken to themselves a partner from amongst the belles of Taos, and now they were preparing for their return to the mountains. Dick Wooton was the only unfortunate one. He had wooed a damsel whose parents peremptorily forbade their daughter to wed the hunter, and he therefore made ready for his departure with considerable regret.

The day came, however. The band of mountaineers were already mounted, and those with wives in charge were some hours on the road, leaving the remainder quaffing many a stirrup-cup before they left. Dick Wooton was as melancholy as a buffalo bull in spring; and as he rode down the village, and approached the house of his lady-love, who stood wrapped in reboso, and cigarito in mouth, on the sill of the door, he turned away his head as if dreading to say adios. La Bonté rode beside him, and a thought struck him.

“Ho, Dick!” he said, “thar’s the gal, and thar’s the mountains: shoot sharp’s the word.”

[Pg 268]

Dick instantly understood him, and was “himself again.” He rode up to the girl as if to bid her adieu, and she came to meet him. Whispering one word, she put her foot upon his, was instantly seized round the waist, and placed upon the horn of his saddle. He struck spurs into his horse, and in a minute was out of sight, his three companions covering his retreat, and menacing with

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

their rifles the crowd which was soon drawn to the spot by the cries of the girl's parents, who had been astonished spectators of the daring rape.

The trapper and his bride, however, escaped scatheless, and the whole party effected a safe passage of the mountains, and reached the Arkansa, where the band was broken up,—some proceeding to Bent's Fort, and others to the Platte, amongst whom were Killbuck and La Bonté, still in company. These two once more betook themselves to trapping, the Yellow Stone being their chief hunting-ground. But we must again leap over months and years, rather than conduct the reader through all their perilous wanderings, and at last bring him back to the camp on Bijou, where we first introduced him to our mountaineers; and as we have already followed them on the Arapaho trail, which they pursued to recover their stolen animals from a band of that nation, we will once again seat ourselves at the camp on Boiling Spring, where they had met a strange hunter on a solitary expedition to the Bayou Salade, [Pg 269] whose double-barrelled rifle had excited their wonder and curiosity.

From him they learned also that a large band of Mormons were wintering on the Arkansa, en route to the Great Salt Lake and Upper California; and as our hunters had before fallen in with the advanced guard of these fanatic emigrants, and felt no little wonder that such helpless people should undertake so long a journey through the wilderness, the stranger narrated to them the history of the sect, which we shall shortly transcribe for the benefit of the reader.

---

[Pg 270]

## CHAPTER IX.

THE Mormons were originally of the sect known as "Latter-day Saints," which sect flourishes wherever Anglo-Saxon gulls are found in sufficient numbers to swallow the egregious nonsense of fanatic humbugs who fatten upon their credulity. In the United States they especially abounded; but, the creed becoming "slow," one Joe Smith, a smart man, arose from its ranks, and instilled a little life into the decaying sect.

Joe, better known as the "Prophet Joe," was taking his siesta one fine day, upon hill in one of the New England States, when an angel suddenly appeared to him, and made known the locality of a new Bible or Testament, which contained the history of the lost tribes of Israel; that these tribes were no other than the Indian nations which possessed the continent of America at the time of its discovery, and the remains of which still existed in their savage state; that, through the agency of Joe, these were to be reclaimed, collected into the bosom of a church to be there established, according to principles which would be found in the wonderful [Pg 271] book—and which church was gradually to receive into its bosom all other churches, sects, and persuasions, with "unanimity of belief and perfect brotherhood."

After a certain probation, Joe was led in body and spirit to the mountain; by the angel who first appeared to him, was pointed out the position of the wonderful book, which was covered by a flat stone, on which would be found two round pebbles, called Urim and Thummim, and through the agency of which the mystic characters inscribed on the pages of the book were to be deciphered and translated. Joe found the spot indicated without any difficulty, cleared away the earth, and discovered a hollow place formed by four flat stones; on removing the topmost one of which sundry plates of brass presented themselves, covered with quaint and antique carving; on the top lay Urim and Thummim (commonly known to the Mormons as Mummum and Thummum, the

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

pebbles of wonderful virtue), through which the miracle of reading the plates of brass was to be performed.

Joe Smith, on whom the mantle of Moses had so suddenly fallen, carefully removed the plates and hid them, burying himself in woods and mountains whilst engaged in the work of translation. However, he made no secret of the important task imposed upon him, nor of the great work to which he had been called. Numbers at once believed him, but not a few were deaf to belief, and openly [Pg 272]derided him. Being persecuted (as the sect declares, at the instigation of the authorities), and many attempts being made to steal his precious treasure, Joe, one fine night, packed his plates in a sack of beans, bundled them into a Jersey waggon, and made tracks for the West. Here he completed the great work of translation, and not long after gave to the world the “Book of Mormon,” a work as bulky as the Bible, and called “of Mormon,” for so was the prophet named by whose hand the history of the lost tribes had been handed down in the plates of brass thus miraculously preserved for thousands of years, and brought to light through the agency of Joseph Smith.

The fame of the Book of Mormon spread over all America, and even to Great Britain and Ireland. Hundreds of proselytes flocked to Joe, to hear from his lips the doctrine of Mormonism; and in a very brief period the Mormons became a numerous and recognised sect, and Joe was at once, and by universal acclamation, installed as the head of the Mormon church, and was ever after known by the name of the “Prophet Joseph.”

However, from certain peculiarities in their social system, the Mormons became rather unpopular in the settled States, and at length moved bodily into Missouri, where they purchased several tracts of land in the neighbourhood of Independence. Here they erected a large building, which they called the Lord’s Store, where goods were collected on the [Pg 273]common account, and retailed to members of the church at moderate prices. All this time their numbers increased in a wonderful manner, and immigrants from all parts of the States, as well as Europe, continually joined them. As they became stronger, they grew bolder and more arrogant in their projects. They had hitherto been considered as bad neighbours, on account of their pilfering propensities, and their utter disregard of the conventional decencies of society—exhibiting the greatest immorality, and endeavouring to establish amongst their society an indiscriminate concubinage. This was sufficient to produce an ill feeling against them on the part of their neighbours, the honest Missourians; but they still tolerated their presence amongst them, until the Saints openly proclaimed their intention of seizing upon the country, and expelling by force the present occupants—giving, as their reason, that it had been revealed to their prophets that the “Land of Zion” was to be possessed by themselves alone.

The sturdy Missourians began to think this was a little too strong, and that, if they permitted such aggressions any longer, they would be in a fair way of being despoiled of their lands by the Mormon interlopers. At length matters came to a crisis, and the Saints, emboldened by the impunity with which they had hitherto carried out their plans, issued a proclamation to the effect that all in that part of the country, who did not belong to the [Pg 274]Mormon persuasion, must “clear out,” and give up possession of their lands and houses. The Missourians collected in a body, burned the printing-press from which the proclamation had emanated, seized several of the Mormon leaders, and, after inflicting a summary chastisement, “tared and feathered” them, and let them go.

To revenge this insult, the Mormons marshalled an army of Saints, and marched upon Indepen-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

dence, threatening vengeance against the town and people. Here they met, however, a band of sturdy backwoodsmen, armed with rifles, determined to defend the town against the fanatic mob, who, not relishing their appearance, refused the encounter, and surrendered their leaders at the first demand. The prisoners were afterwards released, on condition that the Mormons left that part of the country without delay.

Accordingly, they once more “took up their beds and walked,” crossing the Missouri to Clay County, where they established themselves, and would finally have formed a thriving settlement but for their own acts of wilful dishonesty. At this time their blasphemous mummery knew no bounds. Joe Smith, and other prophets who had lately arisen, were declared to be chosen of God; and it was the general creed that, on the day of judgment, the former would take his stand on the right hand of the judgment-seat, and that none would pass into the kingdom of heaven without his seal and touch. [Pg 275] One of their tenets was the faith in “spiritual matrimony.” No woman, it appeared, would be admitted into heaven unless “passed” by a saint. To qualify them for this, it was necessary that the woman should first be received by the guaranteeing Mormon as an “earthly wife,” in order that he did not pass in any of whom he had no knowledge. The consequence of this state of things may be imagined. The most debasing immorality was a precept of the order, and an almost universal concubinage existed amongst the sect, which at this time numbered at least forty thousand. Their disregard to the laws of decency and morality was such as could not be tolerated in any class of civilised society.

Again did the honest Missourians set their faces against this pernicious example, and when the county to which the Mormons had removed became more thickly settled, they rose to a man against the modern Gomorrah. The Mormons, by this time, having on their part gained considerable accession to their strength, thought to set the laws at defiance, organised and armed large bodies of men, in order to maintain the ascendancy over the legitimate settlers, and bid fair to constitute an “imperium in imperio” in the State, and become the sole possessors of the public lands. This, of course, could not be tolerated. Governor Boggs at once ordered out a large force of State militia to put down this formidable demonstration, marched [Pg 276] against the Mormons, and suppressed the insurrectionary movement without bloodshed.

From Clay County they moved still farther into the wilds, and settled at last in Caldwell County, where they built the town of “Far West,” and here they remained for the space of three years. During this time they were continually receiving converts to the faith, and many of the more ignorant country people were disposed to join them, being only deterred by the fear of incurring ridicule from the stronger-minded. The body of the Mormons seeing this, called upon their prophet, Joe Smith, to perform a miracle in public before all comers, which was to prove to those of their own people who still doubted the doctrine, the truth of what it advanced—(the power of performing miracles was steadfastly declared to be in their hands by the prophets)—and to enlist those who wavered in the Mormon cause.

The prophet instantly agreed, and declared that, upon a certain day, he would walk across the broad waters of the Missouri without wetting the soles of his feet. On the appointed day, the river banks were thronged by an expectant crowd. The Mormons sang hymns of praise in honour of their prophet, and were proud of the forthcoming miracle, which was to set finally at rest all doubt as to his power and sanctity.

This power of performing miracles and effecting [Pg 277] miraculous cures of the sick, was so

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

generally believed by the Mormons, that physic was never used amongst them. The prophets visited the beds of the sick, and laid hands upon them, and if, as of course was almost invariably the case, the patient died, it was attributed to his or her want of faith; but if, on the contrary, the patient recovered, there was universal glorification on the miraculous cure.

Joe Smith was a tall, fine-looking man, of most plausible address, and possessed the gift of the gab in great perfection. At the time appointed for the performance of the walking-water miracle, he duly attended on the river banks, and descended barefoot to the edge of the water.

“My brethren!” he exclaimed in a loud voice, “this day is a happy one to me, to us all, who venerate the great and only faith. The truth of our great and blessed doctrine will now be proved before the thousands I see around me. You have asked me to prove by a miracle that the power of the prophets of old has been given to me. I say unto you, not only to me, but to all who have faith. I have faith, and can perform miracles—that faith empowers me to walk across the broad surface of that mighty river without wetting the soles of my unworthy feet; but if ye are to see this miracle performed, it is necessary that ye have faith also, not only in yourselves, but in me. Have ye this faith in yourselves?”

[Pg 278]

“We have, we have!” roared the crowd.

“Have ye the faith in me, that ye believe I can perform this miracle?”

“We have, we have!” roared the crowd.

“Then,” said Joe Smith, coolly walking away, “with such faith do ye know well that I could, but it boots not that I should, do it; therefore, my brethren, doubt no more”—and Joe put on his boots and disappeared.

Being again compelled to emigrate, the Mormons proceeded into the state of Illinois, where, in a beautiful situation, they founded the new Jerusalem, which, it had been declared by the prophet Mormon, should rise out of the wilderness of the west, and where the chosen people should be collected under one church, and governed by the elders after a “spiritual fashion.”

The city of Nauvoo soon became a large and imposing settlement. An enormous building, called the Temple of Zion, was erected, half church half hôtel, in which Joe Smith and the other prophets resided—and large storehouses were connected with it, in which the goods and chattels belonging to the community were kept for the common good.

However, here, as every where else, they were continually quarrelling with their neighbours; and as their numbers increased, so did their audacity. A regular Mormon militia was again organised and armed, under the command of experienced officers, who had joined the sect; and now the authority of [Pg 279]the state government was openly defied. In consequence, the executive took measures to put down the nuisance, and a regular war commenced, and was carried on for some time, with no little bloodshed on both sides; and this armed movement is known in the United States as the Mormon war. The Mormons, however, who, it seemed, were much better skilled in the use of the tongue than the rifle, succumbed: the city of Nauvoo was taken, Joe Smith and other ringleading prophets captured; and the former, in an attempt to escape from his place of confinement, was seized and shot. The Mormons declare he had long foretold his own fate, and that when the rifles of the firing party who were his executioners were levelled at the prophet’s breast, a flash of lightning struck the weapons from their hands, and blinded for a time the eyes of the sacrilegious soldiers.

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

With the death of Joe Smith the prestige of the Mormon cause declined; but still thousands of proselytes joined them annually, and at last the state took measures to remove them altogether, as a body, from the country.

Once again they fled, as they themselves term it, before the persecutions of the ungodly! But this time their migration was far beyond the reach of their enemies, and their intention was to place between them the impassable barrier of the Rocky Mountains, and to seek a home and resting-place in the remote regions of the Far West.

[Pg 280]

This, the most extraordinary migration of modern times, commenced in the year 1845; but it was not till the following year that the great body of the Mormons turned their backs upon the settlements of the United States, and launched boldly out into the vast and barren prairies, without any fixed destination as a goal to their endless journey. For many months, long strings of Pittsburg and Conostaga waggons, with herds of horses and domestic cattle, wound their way towards the Indian frontier, with the intention of rendezvousing at Council Bluffs on the Upper Missouri. Here thousands of waggons were congregated, with their tens of thousands of men, women, and children, anxiously waiting the route from the elders of the church, who on their parts scarcely knew whither to direct the steps of the vast crowd they had set in motion. At length the indefinite destination of Oregon and California was proclaimed, and the long train of emigrants took up the line of march. It was believed the Indian tribes would immediately fraternise with the Mormons, on their approaching their country; but the Pawnees quickly undeceived them by running off with their stock on every opportunity. Besides these losses, at every camp, horses, sheep, and oxen strayed away and were not recovered, and numbers died from fatigue and want of provender; so that, before they had been many weeks on their journey, nearly all their cattle, which they had brought to stock their new country, [Pg 281] were dead or missing, and those that were left were in most miserable condition.

They had started so late in the season, that the greater part were compelled to winter on the Platte, on Grand Island, and in the vicinity, where they endured the greatest privations and suffering from cold and hunger. Many who had lost their stock lived upon roots and pig-nuts; and scurvy, in a most malignant form, and other disorders, carried off numbers of the wretched fanatics.

Amongst them were many substantial farmers from all parts of the United States, who had given up their valuable farms, sold off all their property, and were dragging their irresponsible and unfortunate families into the wilderness—carried away by their blind and fanatic zeal in this absurd and incredible faith. There were also many poor wretches from different parts of England, mostly of the farm-labouring class, with wives and families, crawling along with helpless and almost idiotic despair, but urged forward by the fanatic leaders of the movement, who promised them a land flowing with milk and honey to reward them for all their hardships and privations.

Their numbers were soon reduced by want and disease. When too late, they often wished themselves back in the old country, and sighed many a time for the beer and bacon of former days, now preferable to the dry buffalo meat (but seldom obtainable) of the Far West.

[Pg 282]

Evil fortune pursued the Mormons, and dogged their steps. The year following, some struggled on towards the promised land, and of these a few reached Oregon and California. Many were killed by hostile Indians; many perished of hunger, cold, and thirst, in passing the great wilderness;

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

and many returned to the States, penniless and crestfallen, and heartily cursing the moment in which they had listened to the counsels of the Mormon prophet. The numbers who reached their destination of Oregon, California, and the Great Salt Lake, are computed at 20,000, of whom the United States had an unregretted riddance.

One party had followed the troops of the American government intended for the conquest of New Mexico and the Californias. Of these a battalion was formed, and part of it proceeded to Upper California; but the way being impracticable for waggons, some seventy families proceeded up the Arkansa, and wintered near the mountains, intending to cross to the Platte the ensuing spring, and join the main body of emigrants on their way by the south pass of the Rocky Mountains.

In the wide and well-timbered bottom of the Arkansa, the Mormons had erected a street of log shanties, in which to pass the inclement winter. These were built of rough logs of cottonwood, laid one above the other, the interstices filled with mud, and rendered impervious to wind or wet. At one end of the row of shanties was built the “church” [Pg 283] or temple—a long building of huge logs, in which the prayer-meetings and holdings-forth took place. The band wintering on the Arkansa were a far better class than the generality of Mormons, and comprised many wealthy and respectable farmers from the western states, most of whom were accustomed to the life of woodmen, and were good hunters. Thus they were enabled to support their families upon the produce of their rifles, frequently sallying out to the nearest point of the mountains with a waggon, which they would bring back loaded with buffalo, deer, and elk meat, thereby saving the necessity of killing any of their stock of cattle, of which but few remained.

The mountain hunters found this camp a profitable market for their meat and deer-skins, with which the Mormons were now compelled to clothe themselves, and resorted there for that purpose—to say nothing of the attraction of the many really beautiful Missourian girls who sported their tall graceful figures at the frequent fandangoes. Dancing and preaching go hand in hand in Mormon doctrine, and the “temple” was generally cleared for a hop two or three times during the week, a couple of fiddles doing the duty of orchestra. A party of mountaineers came in one day, bringing some buffalo meat and dressed deer-skins, and were invited to be present at one of these festivals.

Arrived at the temple, they were rather taken [Pg 284] aback by finding themselves in for a sermon, which one of the elders delivered preparatory to the “physical exercises.” The preacher was one Brown—called, by reason of his commanding a company of Mormon volunteers, “Cap’n Brown”—a hard-featured, black-coated man of five-and-forty, correctly got up in black continuations, and white handkerchief round his neck, a costume seldom seen at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The Cap’n, rising, cleared his voice, and thus commenced, first turning to an elder (with whom there was a little rivalry in the way of preaching):—“Brother Dowdle!”—(brother Dowdle blushed and nodded: he was a long tallow-faced man, with black hair combed over his face)—“I feel like holding forth a little this afternoon, before we glorify the Lord,—a—a—in the—a—holy dance. As there are a many strange gentlemen now—a—present, it’s about right to tell ‘em—a—what our doctrine just is, and so I tells ‘em right off what the Mormons is. They are the chosen of the Lord; they are the children of glory, persecuted by the hand of man: they flies here to the wilderness, and, amongst the Injine and the buffler, they lifts up their heads, and cries with a loud voice, Susannah, and hurray for the promised land! Do you believe it? I know it.

[Pg 285]

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

“They wants to know whar we’re going. Whar the church goes—thar we goes. Yes, to hell, and pull the devil off his throne—that’s what we’ll do. Do you believe it? I know it.

“Thar’s milk and honey in that land as we’re goin’ to, and the lost tribes of Israel is thar, and will jine us. They say as we’ll starve on the road, bekase thar’s no game and no water; but thar’s manna up in heaven, and it ‘ll rain on us, and thar’s prophets among us can make the water ‘come.’ Can’t they, brother Dowdle?”

“Well, they can.”

“And now, what have the Gentiles and the Philistines to say against us Mormons? They says we’re thieves, and steal hogs; yes, d—— ‘em! they say we has as many wives as we like. So we have. I’ve twenty—forty, myself, and mean to have as many more as I can get. But it’s to pass unfortunate females into heaven that I has ‘em—yes, to prevent ‘em going to roaring flames and damnation that I does it.

“Brother Dowdle,” he continued, in a hoarse, low voice, “I’ve ‘give out,’ and think we’d better begin the exercises grettful to the Lord.”

Brother Dowdle rose, and, after saying that “he didn’t feel like saying much, begged to remind all hands, that dancing was solemn like, to be done with proper devotion, and not with laughing and talking, of which he hoped to hear little or none; that joy was to be in their hearts, and not on their lips; that they danced for the glory of the Lord, and not their own amusement, as did the Gentiles.” After saying thus, he called upon brother [Pg 286]Ezra to “strike up:” sundry couples stood forth, and the ball commenced.

Ezra of the violin was a tall, shambling Missourian, with a pair of “homespun” pantaloons thrust into the legs of his heavy boots. Nodding his head in time with the music, he occasionally gave instructions to such of the dancers as were at fault, singing them to the tune he was playing, in a dismal nasal tone,—

“Down the centre—hands across,”

“You, Jake Herring—thump it,”

“Now, you all go right ahead—

Every one of you hump it.

Every one of you—hump it.”

The last words being the signal that all should clap the steam on, which they did con amore, and with comical seriousness.

A mountaineer, Rube Herring, whom we have more than once met in the course of this narrative, became a convert to the Mormon creed, and held forth its wonderful doctrines to such of the incredulous trappers as he could induce to listen to him. Old Rube stood nearly six feet six in height, and was spare and bony in make. He had picked up a most extraordinary cloth coat amongst the Mormons, which had belonged to some one his equal in stature. This coat, which was of a snuff-brown colour, had its waist about a hand’s span from the nape of Rube’s neck, or about a yard above its [Pg 287]proper position, and the skirts reached to his ancles. A slouching felt-hat covered his head, from which long black hair escaped, hanging in flakes over his lantern-jaws. His pantaloons of buckskin were shrunk with wet, and reached midway between his knees and ancles, and his huge feet were encased in moccasins of buffalo-cow skin.

Rube was never without the book of Mormon in his hand, and his sonorous voice might be heard, at all hours of the day and night, reading passages from its wonderful pages. He stood the badger-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ing of the hunters with most perfect good humour, and said there never was such a book as that ever before printed; that the Mormons were the “biggest kind” of prophets, and theirs the best faith ever man believed in.

Rube had let out one day that he was to be hired as guide by this party of Mormons to the Great Salt Lake; but their destination being changed, and his services not required, a wonderful change came over his mind. He was, as usual, book of Mormon in hand, when brother Brown announced the change in their plans; at which the book was cast into the Arkansa, and Rube exclaimed—“Cuss your darned Mummum and Thummum! thar’s not one among you knows ‘fat cow’ from ‘poor bull,’ and you may go h—— for me.” And turning away, old Rube spat out a quid of tobacco and his Mormonism together.

[Pg 288]

Amongst the Mormons was an old man, named Brand, from Memphis county, state of Tennessee, with a family of a daughter and two sons, the latter with their wives and children. Brand was a wiry old fellow, nearly seventy years of age, but still stout and strong, and wielded axe or rifle better than many a younger man. If truth be told, he was not a very red-hot Mormon, and had joined them as much for the sake of company to California, whither he had long resolved to emigrate, as from any implicit credence in the faith. His sons were strapping fellows, of the sterling stuff that the Western pioneers are made of; his daughter Mary, a fine woman of thirty, for whose state of single blessedness there must doubtless have been sufficient reason; for she was not only remarkably handsome, but was well known in Memphis to be the best-tempered and most industrious young woman in those diggings. She was known to have received several advantageous offers, all of which she had refused; and report said, that it was from having been disappointed in very early life in an *affaire du cœur*, at an age when such wounds sometimes strike strong and deep, leaving a scar difficult to heal. Neither his daughter, nor any of his family, had been converted to the Mormon doctrine, but had ever kept themselves aloof, and refused to join or associate with them; and, for this reason, the family had been very unpopular with the Mormon families on the Arkansa; and hence, probably, [Pg 289]one great reason why they now started alone on their journey. Spring had arrived, and it was time the Mormons should proceed on their march; but whether already tired of the sample they had had of life in the wilderness, or fearful of encountering the perils of the Indian country, not one amongst them, with the exception of old Brand, seemed inclined to pursue the journey farther. That old backwoodsman, however, was not to be deterred, but declared his intention of setting out alone, with his family, and risking all the dangers to be anticipated.

One fine sunny evening in April of 1847, when the cottonwoods on the banks of the Arkansa began to put forth their buds, and robins and blue-birds—harbingers of spring—were hopping, with gaudy plumage, through the thickets, three white-tilted Conostoga waggons emerged from the timbered bottom of the river, and rumbled slowly over the prairie, in the direction of the Platte’s waters. Each waggon was drawn by eight oxen, and contained a portion of the farming implements and household utensils of the Brand family. The teams were driven by the young boys, the men following in rear with shouldered rifles—Old Brand himself mounted on an Indian horse, leading the advance. The women were safely housed under the shelter of the waggon tilts, and out of the first the mild face of Mary Brand smiled adieu to many of her old [Pg 290]companions who had accompanied them thus far, and now wished them “God-speed” on their long journey. Some

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

mountaineers, too, galloped up, dressed in buckskin, and gave them rough greeting—warning the men to keep their “eyes skinned,” and look out for the Arapahos, who were out on the waters of the Platte. Presently all retired, and then the huge waggons and the little company were rolling on their solitary way through the deserted prairies—passing the first of the many thousand miles which lay between them and the “setting sun,” as the Indians style the distant regions of the Far West. And on, without casting a look behind him, doggedly and boldly marched old Brand, followed by his sturdy family.

They made but a few miles that evening, for the first day the start is all that is effected; and nearly the whole morning is taken up in getting fairly under weigh. The loose stock had been sent off earlier, for they had been collected and corralled the previous night; and, after a twelve hours’ fast, it was necessary they should reach the end of the day’s journey betimes. They found the herd grazing in the bottom of the Arkansa, at a point previously fixed upon for their first camp. Here the oxen were unyoked, and the waggons drawn up so as to form the three sides of a small square. The women then descended from their seats, and prepared the evening meal. A huge fire was kindled before the waggons, and round this the whole party collected; [Pg 291] whilst large kettles of coffee boiled on it, and hoe-cakes baked upon the embers.

The women were sadly downhearted, as well they might be, with the dreary prospect before them; and poor Mary, when she saw the Mormon encampment shut out from her sight by the rolling bluffs, and nothing before her but the bleak, barren prairie, could not divest herself of the idea that she had looked for the last time on civilised fellow-creatures, and fairly burst into tears.

In the morning the heavy waggons rolled on again across the upland prairies, to strike the trail used by the traders in passing from the south fork of the Platte to the Arkansa. They had for guide a Canadian voyageur, who had been in the service of the Indian traders, and knew the route well, and who had agreed to pilot them to Fort Lancaster, on the north fork of the Platte. Their course led for about thirty miles up the Boiling Spring River, whence they pursued a north-easterly course to the dividing ridge which separates the waters of the Platte and Arkansa. Their progress was slow, for the ground was saturated with wet, and exceedingly heavy for the cattle, and they scarcely advanced more than ten miles a-day.

At the camp-fire at night, Antoine, the Canadian guide, amused them with tales of the wild life and perilous adventures of the hunters and trappers who make the mountains their home; often extorting a scream from the women by the description of some [Pg 292] scene of Indian fight and slaughter, or beguiling them of a commiserating tear by the narrative of the sufferings and privations endured by those hardy hunters in their arduous life.

Mary listened with the greater interest, since she remembered that such was the life which had been led by one very dear to her—by one, long supposed to be dead, of whom she had never but once, since his departure, nearly fifteen years before, heard a syllable. Her imagination pictured him as the bravest and most daring of these adventurous hunters, and conjured up his figure charging through the midst of whooping savages, or stretched on the ground perishing from wounds, or cold, or famine.

Amongst the characters who figured in Antoine’s stories, a hunter named La Bonté was made conspicuous for deeds of hardiness and daring. The first mention of the name caused the blood to rush to Mary’s face: not that she for a moment imagined it was her La Bonté, for she knew the name was a common one; but, associated with feelings which she had never got the better of, it

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

recalled a sad epoch in her former life, to which she could not look back without mingled pain and pleasure.

Once only, and about two years after his departure, had she ever received tidings of her former lover. A mountaineer had returned from the Far West to settle in his native State, and had found his way to the neighbourhood of old Brand's farm. [Pg 293] Meeting him by accident, Mary, hearing him speak of the mountain hunters, had inquired, tremblingly, after La Bonté. Her informant knew him well—had trapped in company with him—and had heard at the trading fort, whence he had taken his departure for the settlements, that La Bonté had been killed on the Yellow Stone by Blackfeet; which report was confirmed by some Indians of that nation. This was all she had ever learned of the lover of her youth.

Now, upon hearing the name of La Bonté so often mentioned by Antoine, a vague hope was raised in her breast that he was still alive, and she took an opportunity of questioning the Canadian closely on the subject.

“Who was this La Bonté, Antoine, who you say was so brave a mountaineer?” she asked one day.

“J'ne sais pas; he vas un beau garçon, and strong comme le diable—enfant de garce, mais he pas not care a dam for les sauvages, pe gar. He shoot de centare avec his carabine; and ride de cheval comme one Comanche. He trap heap castor, (what you call beevare,) and get plenty dollare—mais he open hand vare wide—and got none too. Den, he hont vid de Blackfoot and avec de Cheyenne, and all round de montaignes he hont dam sight.”

“But, Antoine, what became of him at last? and why did he not come home, when he made so many dollars?” asked poor Mary.

[Pg 294]

“Enfant de garce, mais pourquoi he com home? Pe gar, de montaigne-man, he love de montaigne and de prairie more better dan he love de grandes villes—même de Saint Louis ou de Montreal. Wagh! La Bonté, well, he one montaigne-man, wagh! He love de buffaloe and de chevreaux plus que de bœuf and de mouton, may be. Mais on-dit dat he have autre raison—dat de gal he lofe in Missouri not lofe him, and for dis he not go back. Mais now he go ondare, m' on dit. He vas go to de Californe, may be to steal de hos and de mule—pe gar, and de Espagnols rub him out, and take his hair, so he mort.”

“But are you sure of this?” she asked, trembling with grief.

“Ah, now, j'ne suis pas sûr, mais I tink you know dis La Bonté. Enfant de garce, maybe you de gal in Missouri he lofe, and not lofe him. Pe gar! 'fant de garce! fort beau garçon dis La Bonté, pourquoi you ne l'aimez pas? Maybe he not gone ondare. Maybe he turn op, autrefois. De trappares, dey go ondare tree, four, ten times, mais dey turn op twenty time. De sauvage not able for kill La Bonté, ni de dam Espagnols. Ah, non! ne craignez pas; pe gar, he not gone ondare encore.”

Spite of the good-natured attempts of the Canadian, poor Mary burst into a flood of tears: not that the information took her unawares, for she long had believed him dead; but because the very mention of his name awoke the strongest feelings [Pg 295] within her breast, and taught her how deep was the affection she had felt for him whose loss and violent fate she now bewailed.

As the waggons of the lone caravan roll on towards the Platte, we return to the camp where La Bonté, Killbuck, and the stranger, were sitting before the fire when last we saw them:—Killbuck loquitur:—

“The doins of them Mormon fools can't be beat by Spaniards, stranger. Their mummums and

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

thummums you speak of won't 'shine' whar Injuns are about; nor pint out a trail, whar nothin crossed but rattler-snakes since fust it snow'd on old Pike's Peak. If they pack along them profits, as you tell of, who can make it rain hump-ribs and marrow-guts when the crowd gets out of the buffler range, they are 'some,' now, that's a fact. But this child don't believe it. I'd laugh to get a sight on these darned Mormonites, I would. They're 'no account,' I guess; and it's the 'meanest' kind of action to haul their women critters and their young 'uns to sech a starving country as the Californys."

"They are not all Mormons in the crowd," said the strange hunter; "and there's one family amongst them with some smartish boys and girls, I tell you. Their name's Brand."

La Bonté looked up from the lock of his rifle, which he was cleaning—but either didn't hear, or, hearing, didn't heed, for he continued his work.

"And they are going to part company," continued [Pg 296]the stranger, "and put out alone for Platte and the South Pass."

"They'll lose their hair, I'm thinking," said Killbuck, "if the Rapahos are out thar."

"I hope not," continued the other, "for there's a girl amongst them worth more than that."

"Poor beaver!" said La Bonté, looking up from his work. "I'd hate to see any white gal in the hands of Injuns, and of Rapahos worse than all. Where does she come from, stranger?"

"Down below St Louis, from Tennessee, I've heard them say."

"Tennessee," cried La Bonté,—"hurrah for the old State! What's her name, stran——" At this moment Killbuck's old mule pricked her ears and snuffed the air, which action catching La Bonté's eye, he rose abruptly, without waiting a reply to his question, and exclaimed, "The old mule smells Injuns, or I'm a Spaniard!"

The hunter did the old mule justice, and she well maintained her reputation as the best "guard" in the mountains; for in two minutes an Indian stalked into the camp, dressed in a cloth capote, and in odds and ends of civilised attire.

"Rapaho," cried Killbuck, as soon as he saw him; and the Indian catching the word, struck his hand upon his breast, and exclaimed, in broken Spanish and English mixed, "Si, si, me Arapaho, white man amigo. Come to camp—eat heap carne—me amigo white man. Come from Pueblo—hunt [Pg 297]cibola—me gun break—no puedo matar nada: mucha hambre (very hungry),—heap eat."

Killbuck offered his pipe to the Indian, and spoke to him in his own language, which both he and La Bonté well understood. They learned that he was married to a Mexican woman, and lived with some hunters at the Pueblo fort on the Arkansa. He volunteered the information that a war party of his people were out on the Platte trail to intercept the Indian traders on their return from the North Fork; and as some "Mormones" had just started with three waggons in that direction, he said his people would make a "roise." Being muy amigo himself to the whites, he cautioned his present companions from crossing to the "divide," as the "braves," he said, were a "heap" mad, and their hearts were "big," and nothing in the shape of white skin would live before them.

"Wagh!" exclaimed Killbuck, "the Rapahos know me, I'm thinking; and small gain they've made against this child. I've knowed the time when my gun-cover couldn't hold more of their scalps."

The Indian was provided with some powder, of which he stood in need; and, after gorging as much meat as his capacious stomach would hold, he left the camp, and started into the mountain.

The next day our hunters started on their journey down the river, travelling leisurely, and stop-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

ping wherever good grass presented itself. One [Pg 298] morning they suddenly struck a wheel trail, which left the creek banks and pursued a course at right angles to it, in the direction of the "divide." Killbuck pronounced it but a few hours old, and that of three waggons drawn by oxen. "Wagh!" he exclaimed, "if them poor devils of Mormonites ain't going head first into the Rapaho trap. They'll be 'gone beaver' afore long."

"Ay," said the strange hunter, "these are the waggons belonging to old Brand, and he has started alone for Laramie. I hope nothing will happen to them."

"Brand!" muttered La Bonté. "I knowed that name mighty well once, years agone; and should hate the worst kind that mischief happened to any one who bore it. This trail's as fresh as paint; and it goes against me to let these simple critters help the Rapahos to their own hair. This child feels like helping 'em out of the scrape. What do you say, old hos?"

"I thinks with you, boy," answered Killbuck, "and go in for following this waggon trail, and telling the poor critters that thar's danger ahead of them. What's your talk, stranger?"

"I go with you," shortly answered the latter; and both followed quickly after La Bonté, who was already trotting smartly on the trail.

Meanwhile the three waggons, containing the household gods of the Brand family, rumbled slowly over the rolling prairie, and towards the upland [Pg 299] ridge of the "divide," which, studded with dwarf pine and cedar thicket, rose gradually before them. They travelled with considerable caution, for already the quick eye of Antoine had discovered recent Indian sign upon the trail, and, with mountain quickness, had at once made it out to be that of a war party; for there were no horses with them, and, after one or two of the moccasin tracks, the mark of a rope which trailed upon the ground was sufficient to show him that the Indians were provided with the usual lasso of skin, with which to secure the horses stolen in the expedition. The men of the party were consequently all mounted and thoroughly armed, the waggons moved in a line abreast, and a sharp look-out was kept on all sides. The women and children were all consigned to the interior of the waggons; and the latter had also guns in readiness, to take their part in the defence, should an attack be made.

However, they had seen no Indians, and no fresh sign, for two days after they left the Boiling Spring River, and they began to think they were well out of their neighbourhood. One evening they camped on a creek called Black Horse, and, as usual, had corralled the waggons, and forted as well as circumstances would permit, when three or four Indians suddenly appeared on a bluff at a little distance, and, making signals of peaceable intentions, approached the camp. Most of the men were absent at the time, attending to the cattle or collecting [Pg 300] fuel, and only old Brand and one of his young grandchildren, about fourteen years old, remained in camp. The Indians were hospitably received, and regaled with a smoke, after which they began to evince their curiosity by examining every article lying about, and signifying their wishes that it should be given to them. Finding their hints were not taken, they laid hold of several things which took their fancies, and, amongst others, of the pot which was boiling on the fire, and with which one of them was about very coolly to walk off, when old Brand, who up to this moment had retained possession of his temper, seized it out of the Indian's hand, and knocked him down. One of the others instantly began to draw the buckskin cover from his gun, and would no doubt have taken summary vengeance for the insult offered to his companion, when Mary Brand courageously stepped up to him, and, placing her left hand upon the gun which he was in the act of uncovering, with the

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

other pointed a pistol at his breast.

Whether daunted by the bold act of the girl, or admiring her devotion to her father, the Indian drew himself back, exclaimed "Howgh!" and drew the cover again on his piece, went up to old Brand, who all this time looked him sternly in the face, and, shaking him by the hand, motioned at the same time to the others to be peaceable.

The other whites presently coming into camp, the Indians sat quietly down by the fire, and, when the [Pg 301]supper was ready, joined in the repast, after which they gathered their buffalo robes about them, and quietly withdrew. Meanwhile Antoine, knowing the treacherous character of the savages, advised that the greatest precaution should be taken to secure the stock; and before dark, therefore, all the mules and horses were hobbled and secured within the corral, the oxen being allowed to feed at liberty—for the Indians scarcely care to trouble themselves with such cattle. A guard was also set round the camp, and relieved every two hours; the fire was extinguished, lest the savages should aim, by its light, at any of the party, and all slept with rifles ready at their sides. However, the night passed quietly, and nothing disturbed the tranquillity of the camp. The prairie wolves loped hungrily around, and their mournful cry was borne upon the wind as they chased deer and antelope on the neighbouring plain; but not a sign of lurking Indians was seen or heard. In the morning, shortly after sunrise, they were in the act of yoking the oxen to the waggons, and driving in the loose animals which had been turned out to feed at daybreak, when some Indians again appeared upon the bluff, and, descending it, confidently approached the camp. Antoine strongly advised their not being allowed to enter; but Brand, ignorant of Indian treachery, replied that, so long as they came as friends, they could not be deemed enemies, and allowed no obstruction to be offered to [Pg 302]their approach. It was now observed that they were all painted, armed with bows and arrows, and divested of their buffalo robes, appearing naked to the breech-clout, their legs only being protected by deerskin leggings, reaching to the middle of the thigh. Six or seven first arrived, and others quickly followed, dropping in one after the other, until a score or more were collected round the waggons. Their demeanour, at first friendly, soon changed as their numbers increased, and they now became urgent in their demands for powder and lead, and bullying in their manner. A chief accosted Brand, and, through Antoine, informed him "that, unless the demands of his braves were acceded to, he could not be responsible for the consequences; that they were out on the 'war-trail,' and their eyes were red with blood, so that they could not distinguish between white and Yuta scalps; that the party, with all their women and waggons, were in the power of the Indian 'braves,' and therefore the white chief's best plan was to make the best terms he could; that all they required was that they should give up their guns and ammunition 'on the prairie,' and all their mules and horses—retaining the 'medicine' buffaloes (the oxen) to draw their waggons."

By this time the oxen were yoked, and the teamsters, whip in hand, only waited the word to start. Old Brand foamed whilst the Indian stated his demands, but, hearing him to the end, exclaimed, "Darn the red devil! I wouldn't give him a [Pg 303]grain of powder to save my life. Put out, boys!"—and, turning to his horse, which stood ready saddled, was about to mount, when the Indians sprang at once upon the waggons, and commenced their attack, yelling like fiends. One jumped upon old Brand, pulled him back as he was rising in the stirrup, and drew his bow upon him at the same moment. In an instant the old backwoodsman pulled a pistol from his belt, and, putting the muzzle to the Indian's heart, shot him dead. Another Indian, flourishing his war-

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

club, laid the old man at his feet; whilst some dragged the women from the waggons, and others rushed upon the men, who made brave fight in their defence.

Mary, when she saw her father struck to the ground, sprang with a shrill cry to his assistance; for at that moment a savage, frightful as red paint could make him, was standing over his prostrate body, brandishing a glittering knife in the air, preparatory to thrusting it into the old man's breast. For the rest, all was confusion: in vain the small party of whites struggled against overpowering numbers. Their rifles cracked but once, and they were quickly disarmed; whilst the shrieks of the women and children, and the loud yells of the Indians, added to the scene of horror and confusion. As Mary flew to her father's side, an Indian threw his lasso at her, the noose falling over her shoulders, and, jerking it tight, he uttered a delighted yell as [Pg 304]the poor girl was thrown back violently to the ground. As she fell, another deliberately shot an arrow at her body, whilst the one who had thrown the lasso rushed forward, his scalp-knife flashing in his hand, to seize the bloody trophy of his savage deed. The girl rose to her knees, and looked wildly towards the spot where her father lay bathed in blood; but the Indian pulled the rope violently, dragged her some yards upon the ground, and then rushed with a yell of vengeance upon his victim. He paused, however, as at that moment a shout as fierce as his own sounded at his very ear; and, looking up, he saw La Bonté galloping madly down the bluff, his long hair and the fringes of his hunting-shirt and leggins flying in the wind, his right arm supporting his trusty rifle, whilst close behind him came Killbuck and the stranger. Dashing with loud hurrahs to the scene of action, La Bonté, as he charged down the bluff, caught sight of the girl struggling in the hands of the ferocious Indian. Loud was the war-shout of the mountaineer, as he struck his heavy spurs to the rows in his horse's side, and bounded like lightning to the rescue. In a single stride he was upon the Indian, and, thrusting the muzzle of his rifle into his very breast, he pulled the trigger, driving the savage backward by the blow itself, at the same moment that the bullet passed through his heart, and tumbled him over stone-dead. Throwing down his rifle, La Bonté wheeled his obedient horse, and, [Pg 305]drawing a pistol from his belt, again charged the enemy, among whom Killbuck and the stranger were dealing death-giving blows. Yelling for victory, the mountaineers rushed at the Indians; and they, panic-struck at the sudden attack, and thinking this was but the advanced guard of a large band, fairly turned and fled, leaving five of their number dead upon the field. Mary, shutting her eyes to the expected death-stroke, heard the loud shout La Bonté gave in charging down the bluff, and, again looking up, saw the wild-looking mountaineer rush to her rescue, and save her from the savage by his timely blow. Her arms were still pinned by the lasso, which prevented her from rising to her feet; and La Bonté was the first to run to aid her, as soon as the fight was fairly over. He jumped from his horse, cut the skin rope which bound her, raised her from the ground, and, upon her turning up her face to thank him, beheld his never-to-be-forgotten Mary Brand; whilst she, hardly believing her senses, recognised in her deliverer her former lover, and still well-beloved La Bonté.

"What, Mary! can it be you?" he asked, looking intently upon the trembling woman.

"La Bonté, you don't forget me!" she answered, and threw herself sobbing into the arms of the sturdy mountaineer.

There we will leave her for the present, and help Killbuck and his companions to examine the killed [Pg 306]and wounded. Of the former, five Indians and two whites lay dead, grandchildren of old Brand, fine lads of fourteen or fifteen, who had fought with the greatest bravery, and lay

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

pierced with arrows and lance wounds. Old Brand had received a sore buffet, but a hatful of cold water from the creek sprinkled over his face soon restored him. His sons had not escaped scot-free, and Antoine was shot through the neck, and, falling, had actually been half scalped by an Indian, whom the timely arrival of La Bonté had caused to leave his work unfinished.

Silently, and with sad hearts, the survivors of the family saw the bodies of the two boys buried on the river bank, and the spot marked with a pile of loose stones, procured from the rocky bed of the creek. The carcasses of the treacherous Indians were left to be devoured by wolves, and their bones to bleach in the sun and wind—a warning to their tribe, that such foul treachery as they had meditated had met with a merited retribution.

The next day the party continued their course to the Platte. Antoine and the stranger returned to the Arkansa, starting in the night to avoid the Indians; but Killbuck and La Bonté lent the aid of their rifles to the solitary caravan, and, under their experienced guidance, no more Indian perils were encountered. Mary no longer sat perched up in her father's Conostoga, but rode a quiet mustang by La Bonté's side; and no doubt they found a theme with which to while away the monotonous journey [Pg 307]over the dreary plains. South Fork was passed, and Laramie was reached. The Sweet Water mountains, which hang over the "pass" to California, were long since in sight; but when the waters of the North Fork of Platte lay before their horses' feet, and the broad trail was pointed out which led to the great valley of Columbia and their promised land, the heads of the oxen were turned down the stream where the shallow waters flow on to join the great Missouri—and not up, towards the mountains where they leave their spring-heads, from which springs flow several waters—some coursing their way to the eastward, fertilising, in their route to the Atlantic, the lands of civilised man; others westward, forcing a passage through rocky cañons, and flowing through a barren wilderness, inhabited by fierce and barbarous tribes.

These were the routes to choose from: and, what ever was the cause, the oxen turned their yoked heads away from the rugged mountains; the teamsters joyfully cracked their ponderous whips, as the waggons rolled lightly down the Platte; and men, women, and children, waved their hats and bonnets in the air, and cried out lustily, "Hurrah for home!"

La Bonté looked at the dark sombre mountains ere he turned his back upon them for the last time. He thought of the many years he had spent beneath their rugged shadow, of the many hardships he had suffered, of all his pains and perils in those wild regions. [Pg 308]The most exciting episodes of his adventurous career, his tried companions in scenes of fierce fight and bloodshed, passed in review before him. A feeling of regret was creeping over him, when Mary laid her hand gently on his shoulder. One single tear rolled unbidden down his cheek, and he answered her inquiring eyes: "I'm not sorry to leave it, Mary," he said; "but it's hard to turn one's back upon old friends."

They had a hard battle with Killbuck, in endeavouring to persuade him to accompany them to the settlements. The old mountaineer shook his head. "The time," he said "was gone by for that. He had often thought of it, but, when the day arrived, he hadn't heart to leave the mountains. Trapping now was of no account, he knew; but beaver was bound to rise, and then the good times would come again. What could he do in the settlements, where there wasn't room to move, and where it was hard to breathe—there were so many people?"

He accompanied them a considerable distance down the river, ever and anon looking cautiously back, to ascertain that he had not gone out of sight of the mountains. Before reaching the forks,

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

however, he finally bade them adieu; and, turning the head of his old grizzled mule westward, he heartily wrung the hand of his comrade La Bonté; and, crying Yep! to his well-trying animal, disappeared behind a roll of the prairie, and was seen no more—a [Pg 309]thousand good wishes for the welfare of the sturdy trapper speeding him on his solitary way.

Four months from the day when La Bonté so opportunely appeared to rescue Brand's family from the Indians on Black Horse Creek, that worthy and the faithful Mary were duly and lawfully united in the township church of Brandville, Memphis county, State of Tennessee. We cannot say, in the concluding words of nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand novels, that "numerous pledges of mutual love surrounded and cheered them in their declining years," &c. &c.; because it was only on the 24th of July, in the year of our Lord 1847, that La Bonté and Mary Brand were finally made one, after fifteen long years of separation.

---

The fate of one of the humble characters who have figured in these pages, we must yet tarry a little longer to describe.

During the past winter, a party of mountaineers, flying from overpowering numbers of hostile Sioux, found themselves, one stormy evening, in a wild and dismal cañon near the elevated mountain valley called the "New Park."

The rocky bed of a dry mountain torrent, whose waters were now locked up at their spring-heads by icy fetters, was the only road up which they could [Pg 310]make their difficult way: for the rugged sides of the gorge rose precipitously from the creek, scarcely affording a foot-hold to even the active bighorn, which occasionally looked down upon the travellers from the lofty summit. Logs of pine, uprooted by the hurricanes which sweep incessantly through the mountain defiles, and tossed headlong from the surrounding ridges, continually obstructed their way; and huge rocks and boulders, fallen from the heights and blocking up the bed of the stream, added to the difficulty, and threatened them every instant with destruction.

Towards sundown they reached a point where the cañon opened out into a little shelving glade or prairie, a few hundred yards in extent, the entrance to which was almost hidden by a thicket of dwarf pine and cedar. Here they determined to encamp for the night, in a spot secure from Indians, and, as they imagined, untrodden by the foot of man.

What, however, was their astonishment, on breaking through the cedar-covered entrance, to perceive a solitary horse standing motionless in the centre of the prairie. Drawing near, they found it to be an old grizzled mustang, or Indian pony, with cropped ears and ragged tail, (well picked by hungry mules), standing doubled up with cold, and at the very last gasp from extreme old age and weakness. Its bones were nearly through the stiffened skin, the legs of the animal were gathered under it; whilst its forlorn-looking head and stretched-out neck hung [Pg 311]listlessly downwards, almost overbalancing its tottering body. The glazed and sunken eye—the protruding and froth-covered tongue—the heaving flank and quivering tail—declared its race was run; and the driving sleet and snow, and penetrating winter blast, scarce made impression upon its callous and worn-out frame.

One of the band of mountaineers was Marcellin, and a single look at the miserable beast was sufficient for him to recognise the once renowned Nez-percé steed of old Bill Williams. That the owner himself was not far distant he felt certain; and, searching carefully around, the hunters presently came upon an old camp, before which lay, protruding from the snow, the blackened remains of

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

pine logs. Before these, which had been the fire, and leaning with his back against a pine trunk, and his legs crossed under him, half covered with snow, reclined the figure of the old mountaineer, his snow-capped head bent over his breast. His well-known hunting-coat of fringed elk-skin hung stiff and weather-stained about him; and his rifle, packs, and traps, were strewed around. Awe-struck, the trappers approached the body, and found it frozen hard as stone, in which state it had probably lain there for many days or weeks. A jagged rent in the breast of his leather coat, and dark stains about it, showed he had received a wound before his death; but it was impossible to say, whether to his hurt, or to sickness, or to the natural [Pg 312]decay of age, was to be attributed the wretched and solitary end of poor Bill Williams.

A friendly bullet cut short the few remaining hours of the trapper's faithful steed; and burying, as well as they were able, the body of the old mountaineer, the hunters next day left him in his lonely grave, in a spot so wild and remote, that it was doubtful whether even hungry wolves would discover and disinter his attenuated corpse.

THE END.

PRINTED BY JOHN HUGHES, 3 THISTLE STREET, EDINBURGH.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1]In accordance with this suggestion, the name was changed to Brand. The mountaineers, it seems, are more sensitive to type than to tomahawks; and poor Ruxton, who always contemplated another expedition among them, would sometimes jestingly speculate upon his reception, should they learn that he had shown them up in print.

[2]Killed, or died. Both terms adapted from the Indian figurative language.

[3]Killed, or died. Both terms adapted from the Indian figurative language.

[4]The Mexicans are called "Spaniards" or "Greasers" (from their greasy appearance) by the Western people.

[5]Bent's Indian trading fort on the Arkansa.

[6]Meaning—if that's what you mean. The "stick" is tied to the beaver trap by a string; and, floating on the water, points out its position, should a beaver have carried it away.

[7]Scalped.

[8]Soles made of buffalo hide.

[9]The Hudson Bay Company having amalgamated with the American North West Company, is known by the name 'North West' to the southern trappers. Their employés usually wear Canadian capotes.

[10]A spice of the devil.

[11]"Euker," "poker," and "seven up," are the fashionable games of cards.

[12]Antelope are frequently called "goats" by the mountaineers.

[13]An Indian is always a "heap" hungry or thirsty—loves a "heap"—is a "heap" brave—in fact, "heap" is tantamount to very much.

[14]The young untried warriors of the Indians are thus called.

[15]There is a great difference between an Indian's fire and a white's. The former places the ends of logs to burn gradually; the latter, the centre, besides making such a bonfire that the Indians truly say, "The white makes a fire so hot that he cannot approach to warm himself by it."

[16]A pithy substance found in dead pine-trees.

[17]Saddle-blanket made of buffalo-calf skin.

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

[18]The French Canadians are called wah-keitcha—"bad medicine"—by the Indians, who account them treacherous and vindictive, and at the same time less daring than the American hunters.

[19]A substance obtained from a gland in the scrotum of the beaver, and used to attract that animal to the trap.

[20]The Hudson's Bay Company is so called by the American trappers.

[21]A small lake near the head waters of the Yellow Stone, near which are some curious thermal springs of ink-black water.

[22]The Aztecs are supposed to have built this city during their migration to the south; there is little doubt, however, but that the region extending from the Gila to the Great Salt Lake, and embracing the province of New Mexico, was the locality from which they emigrated.

[23]Creoles of St Louis, and French Canadians.

[24]"On the prairie," is the Indian term for a free gift.

[25]Hide—from cacher.

[26]Carrion.

[27]In Frémont's expedition to California, on a somewhat similar occasion, two mountaineers, one the celebrated Kit Carson, the other a St Louis Frenchman named Godey, and both old trappers, performed a feat surpassing the one described above, inasmuch as they were but two. They charged into an Indian village to rescue some stolen horses, and avenge the slaughter of two New Mexicans who had been butchered by the Indians; both which objects they effected, returning to camp with the lost animals and a couple of propitiatory scalps.

[28]The Mexicans call the Indians living near the missions and engaged in agriculture, mansos, or mansitos, tame.

[29]From a manuscript obtained in Santa Fé of New Mexico, describing the labours of the missionaries Fray Augustin Ruiz, Venabides, and Marcos, in the year 1585.

[30]From the report to the Governor of California by the Head of the Mission, in reference to the attacks by the American mountaineers.

[31]Indian expression for a free gift.

[32]Since the time of which we speak, Kit Carson has distinguished himself in guiding the several U. S. exploring expeditions, under Frémont, across the Rocky Mountains, and to all parts of Oregon and California; and for his services, the President of the United States presented the gallant Mountaineer with the commission of lieutenant in a newly raised regiment of mounted riflemen, of which his old leader Frémont is appointed colonel.

[33]The word fandango, in New Mexico, is not applied to the peculiar dance known in Spain by that name, but designates a ball or dancing meeting.

[34]A nickname for the idle fellows hanging about a Mexican town, translated into "Greasers" by the Americans.

[35]Cask-shaped gourds.

[36]The knives used by the hunters and trappers are manufactured at the "Green River" works, and have that name stamped upon the blade. Hence the mountain term for doing any thing effectually is "up to Green River."

[37]Always alluding to Mexicans, who are invariably called Spaniards by the Western Americans.

Transcriber's Note:

- The original spelling, hyphenation, and punctuation have been retained, with the excep-

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

tion of apparent typographical errors which have been corrected.

- Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.
- Punctuation and spelling were made consistent when a predominant form was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.
- Footnotes were moved to the end of the book and numbered in one sequence.

---

\*\*\*END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LIFE IN THE FAR WEST\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* This file should be named 55093-h.htm or 55093-h.zip \*\*\*\*\*

This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/5/5/0/9/55093>

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for the eBooks, unless you receive specific permission. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the rules is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. They may be modified and printed and given away--you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

#### THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

##### PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg-tm License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

##### Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you’ll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this ebook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, non-proprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and The Project Gutenberg

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

Trademark LLC, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

## 1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS,' WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability,

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

#### Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

#### Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is in Fairbanks, Alaska, with the mailing address: PO Box 750175, Fairbanks, AK 99775, but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby

Chief Executive and Director

[gbnewby@pglaf.org](mailto:gbnewby@pglaf.org)

#### Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

---

## LIFE in THE FAR WEST

by GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

---

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE  
BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE  
OR,  
STARTLING SCENES  
AND  
PERILOUS ADVENTURES  
IN THE  
FAR WEST  
DURING AN EXPEDITION OF THREE YEARS.

BY RUFUS B. SAGE.

PREFACE.

The following work was written immediately after the author had returned from the perilous and eventful expedition which is here narrated. The intense interest which every citizen of the Union feels in relation to that vast region of our country lying between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean, will, it is believed, render the publication of a volume like this of more than usual importance at the present time. The lofty cliffs of the Rocky Mountains are soon to echo to the tread of advancing civilization, as symbolized in the Pacific railway, which will, in a few years, speed the iron horse and his living freight from Boston to San Francisco, forming a bond of social and commercial intercourse across the continent.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Objects of a proposed excursion. Primary plans and movements. A Digression. Rendezvous for Oregon emigrants and Santa Fe traders. Sensations on a first visit to the border Prairies. Frontier Indians.

MY purpose in visiting the Rocky Mountains, and countries adjacent, having hitherto proved a fruitful source of inquiry to the many persons I meet, when aware of my having devoted three years to travel in those remote regions, and I am so plying with almost numberless other questions, I know of no better way to dispose of them satisfactorily, than by doing what I had thought of at the outset, to wit: writing a book.

But, says one, more books have been already written upon subjects of a kindred nature, than will ever find readers. True, indeed; yet I must venture one more; and this much I promise at the start: it shall be different, in most respects, from all that have preceded it; and if I fail to produce an agreeable variety of adventures, interwoven with a large fund of valuable information, then I shall not have accomplished my purpose.

Yet, why did I go? —what was my object? Let me explain: Dame Nature bestowed upon me lavishly that innate curiosity, and fondness for things strange and new, of which every one is more or less possessed. Phrenologists would declare my organ of Inquisitiveness to be largely developed; and, certain it is, I have a great liking to tread upon unfrequented ground, and mingle

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

among scenes at once novel and romantic. Love of adventure, then, was the great prompter, while an enfeebled state of health sensibly admonished me to seek in other parts that invigorating air and climate denied by the diseased atmosphere of a populous country. I also wished to acquaint myself with the geography of those comparatively unexplored regions, —their geological character, curiosities, resources, and natural advantages, together with their real condition, present inhabitants, inducements to emigrants, and most favorable localities for settlements, to enable me to speak from personal knowledge upon subjects so interesting to the public mind, at the present time, as are the above. Here, then, were objects every way worthy of attention, and vested with an importance that would render my excursion not a mere idle jaunt for the gratification of selfish curiosity. This much by way of prelude, —now to the task in hand.

While yet undecided as to the most advisable mode of prosecuting my intended enterprise, on learning that a party of adventurers were rendezvoused at Westport, Mo., preparatory to their long and arduous journey to the new-formed settlements of the Columbia river, I hastened to that place, where I arrived in the month of May, 1841, with the design of becoming one of their number. In this, however, I was doomed to disappointment by being too late. A few weeks subsequent marked the return of several fur companies, from their annual excursions to the Indian tribes inhabiting the regions adjacent to the head-waters of the Platte and Arkansas rivers, whose outward trips are performed in the fall months. Impatient at delay and despairing of a more eligible opportunity, for at least some time to come, I made prompt arrangements with one of them, to accompany it, en route, as far as the Rocky Mountains, intending to proceed thereafter as circumstances or inclination might suggest. This plan of travelling was adhered to, notwithstanding the detention of some three months, which retarded its prosecution.

I would here beg indulgence of the reader to a seeming digression. The peculiar locality of the places to whose vicinity he is now introduced, owing to the deep interest cherished in the public mind relative to the Oregon country, will doubtless call for more than a mere passing notice: I allude to the towns of Independence and Westport. Situated as they are, at the utmost verge of civilization, and upon the direct route to Oregon and regions adjacent, they must retain and command, as the great starting points for emigrants and traders, that importance already assumed by general consent. Their facilities of access from all parts of the Union, both by land and water, are nowhere exceeded. The proud Missouri rolls its turbid waves within six miles of either place, opening the highway of steam communication, while numberless prime roads that converge from every direction, point to them as their common focus. Thus, the staid New Englander may exchange his native hills for the frontier prairies in the short interval of two weeks; and in half that time the citizen of the sunny South may reach the appointed rendezvous; and, nearer by, the hardy emigrant may commence his long overland journey, from his own door, fully supplied with all the necessaries for its successful termination.

Independence is the seat of justice for Jackson county, Mo., about four hundred miles west by north of St. Louis, and contains a population of nearly two thousand. Westport is a small town in the same county, near the mouth of the Kansas river, —three miles from the Indian territory, and thirty below the U.S. Dragoon station at Fort Leavenworth. The regular routes to Santa Fe and Oregon date their commencement at these places. The country in this vicinity is beginning to be generally settled by thrifty farmers, from whom all the articles necessary for travellers and traders, may be procured upon reasonable terms. Starting from either of the above points, a short ride

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

bears the adventurer across the state line, and affords him the opportunity of taking his initiatory lessons amid the realities of prairie life. Here, most of the trading and emigrant companies remain encamped for several weeks, to recruit their animals and complete the needful arrangements, prior to undertaking the toilsome and dangerous journey before them.

The scenery of this neighborhood is truly delightful. It seems indeed like one Nature's favored spots, where Flora presides in all her regal splendor, and with the fragrance of wild flowers, perfumes the breath of spring and lades the summer breeze with willing incense;— now, sporting beside her fountains and revelling in her dales, —then, smiling from her hill-tops, or luxurating beneath her groves.

I shall never forget the pleasing sensations produced by my first visit to the border-prairies. It was in the month of June, soon after my arrival at Westport. The day was clear and beautiful. A gentle shower the preceding night had purified the atmosphere, and the laughing flowerets, newly invigorated from the nectarine draught, seemed to vie with each other in the exhalation of their sweetest odors. The blushing strawberry, scarce yet divested of its rich burden of fruit, kissed my every step. The butter-cup, tulip, pink, violet, and daisy, with a variety of other beauties, unknown to the choicest collections of civilized life, on every side captivated the eye and delighted the fancy.

The ground was clothed with luxuriant herbage. The grass, where left uncropped by grazing herds of cattle and horses, had attained a surprising growth. The landscape brought within the scope of vision a most magnificent prospect. The groves, clad in their gayest foliage and nodding to the wind, ever and anon, crowned the gentle acclivities or reared their heads from the valleys, as if planted by the hand of art to point the way farer to Elysian retreats. The gushing fountains, softly breathing their untaught melody, before and on either hand, at short intervals, greeted the ear and tempted the taste. The lark, linnet, and martin, uniting with other feathered songsters, poured forth their sweetest strains in one grand concert, and made the air vocal with their warblings; and the brown-plumed grouse, witless of the approach of man, till dangerously near, would here and there emerge well-nigh from under foot, and whiz through the air with almost lightning speed, leaving me half frightened at her unlooked for presence and sudden exit. Hither and yon, truant bands of horses and cattle, from the less inviting pastures of the settlements, were seen in the distance, cropping the choice herbage before them, or gambolling in all the pride of native freedom. Amid such scenes I delight to wander, and often, at this late day, will my thoughts return, unbidden, to converse with them anew. There is a charm in the loneliness—an enchantment in the solitude—a witching variety in the sameness, that must ever impress the traveller, when, for the first time, he enters within the confines of the great western prairies.

One thing further and I will have done with this digression. Connected with the foregoing, it may not be deemed amiss to say something in relation to the Indian tribes inhabiting the territory adjacent to this common camping-place. The nearest native settlement is some twelve miles distant, and belongs to the Shawnees. This nation numbers in all fourteen or fifteen hundred men, women and children. Their immediate neighbors are the Delawares and Wyandotts, —the former claiming a population of eleven hundred, and the latter, three or four hundred. Many connected with these tribes outstrip the nearer whites, in point of civilization and refinement, —excelling them both in honesty and morality, and all that elevates and ennobles the human character. Their wild habits have become in a great measure subdued by the restraining influences of Christianity, and they themselves transformed into industrious cultivators of the soil, —occupying neat mansions

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

with smiling fields around them.

Nor are they altogether neglectful of the means of education. The mission schools are generally well attended by ready pupils, in no respect less backward than the more favored ones of other lands. It is not rare even, considering the smallness of their number, to meet among them with persons of liberal education and accomplishments. Their mode of dress assimilates that of the whites, though, as yet, fashion has made comparatively but small inroads. The unsophisticated eye would find prolific source for amusement in the uncouth appearance of their females on public occasions. Perchance a gay Indian maiden comes flaunting past, with a huge fur-hat awkwardly placed upon her head, —embanded by broad strips of figured tin, instead of ribbons, —and ears distended with large flattened rings of silver, reaching to her shoulders; and here another, solely habited in a long woolen under-dress, obtrudes to view, and skips along in all the pride and pomposity of a regular city belle! Such are sights by no means uncommon.

These tribes have a regular civil government of their own, and all laws instituted for the general welfare are duly respected. They are, also, becoming more temperate in their habits, fully convinced that ardent spirits have hitherto proved the greatest enemy to the red man. The churches of various Christian denominations, established among them, are in a flourishing condition, and include with their members many whose lives of exemplary piety adorn their professions.

Taken as a whole, the several Indian tribes, occupying this beautiful and fertile section of country, are living witnesses to the softening and benign influences of enlightened Christian effort, and furnish indubitable evidence of the susceptibility of the Aborigine for civilization and improvement.

CHAPTER II.

Preparations for leaving. Scenes at Camp. Things as they appeared. Simplicity of mountaineers. Sleep in the open air. Character, habits, and costume of mountaineers. Heterogeneous ingredients of Company. The commandant. En route. Comical exhibition and adventure with a Spanish company. Grouse. Elm Grove. A storm. Santa Fe traders. Indian battle.

AFTER many vexatious delays and disappointments, the time was at length fixed for our departure, and leaving Independence on the 2d of September, I proceeded to join the encampment without the state line. It was nearly night before I reached my destination, and the camp-fires were already lighted, in front of which the officiating cook was busily engaged in preparing the evening repast. To the windward were the dusky forms of ten or fifteen men, —some standing, others sitting a la Turk, and others half-reclining or quietly extended at full length upon the ground, —watching the operative of the culinary department with great seeming interest.

Enchairing myself upon a small log, I began to survey the surrounding objects. In the back ground stood four large Connestoga waggons, with ample canvass tops, and one dearborn, all tastefully drawn up in crescent form. To the right a small pyramid-shaped tent, with its snow-white covering, disclosed itself to the eye, and presented an air of comfort. To the left the caravan animals, securely picketed, at regular distances of some fifteen yards apart, occupied an area of several acres. Close at hand a crystal streamlet traced its course, murmuring adown the valley; and still beyond, a lovely grove waved its branches in the breeze, and contributed its willing mite to enliven and beautify the scene. The camp-fires in front, formed a kind of gateway to a small

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

enclosure, shut in as above described. Here were congregated the company, or at least, that portion of it yet arrived. Some had already spread their easily adjusted couches upon the ground, in readiness for the coming night, and seemed only awaiting supper to forget their cares and troubles in the sweet embrace of sleep.

Every thing presented such an air of primitive simplicity not altogether estranged to comfort, I began to think it nowise marvellous that this mode of life should afford such strong attractions to those inured to it.

Supper disposed of, the area within camp soon became tenanted by the devotees of slumber, — some snoring away most melodiously, and others conversing in an animated tone, now jovial, now grave, and at intervals, causing the night-air to resound with merry peals of laughter. At length the sleep-god began to assert his wonted supremacy, and silence in some measure reigned throughout camp.

The bed of a mountaineer is an article neither complex in its nature nor difficult in its adjustment. A single buffalo robe folded double and spread upon the ground, with a rock, or knoll, or some like substitute for a pillow, furnishes the sole base-work upon which the sleeper reclines, and, enveloped in an additional blanket or robe, contentedly enjoys his rest. Wishing to initiate myself to the new mode of life before me, I was not slow to imitate the example of the promiscuous throng, and the lapse of a few moments found me in a fair way to pass quite pleasantly my first night's repose in the open air.

With the first gray of morning I arose refreshed and invigorated, nor even suffered the slightest ill effect from my unusual exposure to a humid and unwholesome night-air. The whole camp, soon after, began to disclose a scene of cheerfulness and animation. The cattle and horses, unloosed from their fastenings, and accompanied by keepers, were again permitted to roam at large, and in a short time were most industriously engaged in administering to the calls of appetite.

After breakfast I improved the opportunity to look about and scan more closely the appearance of my compagnons de voyage. This opened to view a new field for the study of men and manners. A mountain company generally comprises some quaint specimens of human nature, and, perhaps, few more so than the one to which I here introduce the reader. To particularize would exceed my limits, nor could I do full justice to the subject in hand by dealing in generalities;— however, I yield to the latter. There are many crude originals mixed with the prime ingredients of these companies. A genuine mountaineer is a problem hard to solve. He seems a kind of sui genus, an oddity, both in dress, language, and appearance, from the rest of mankind. Associated with nature in her most simple forms by habit and manner of life, he gradually learns to despise the restraints of civilization, and assimilates himself to the rude and unpolished character of the scenes with which he is most conversant. Frank and open in his manners and generous in his disposition, he is, at the same time, cautious and reserved. In his frankness he will allow no one to acquire an undue advantage of him, though in his generosity, he will oftentimes expend the last cent to assist a fellow in need. Implacable in his hatred, he is also steadfast in his friendship, and knows no sacrifice too great for the benefit of those he esteems. Free as the pure air he breathes, and proudly conscious of his own independence, he will neither tyrannize over others, nor submit to be trampled upon, —and is always prepared to meet the perils he may chance to encounter, with an undaunted front. Inured to hardship and deprivation, his wants are few, and he is the last to repine at the misfortunes which so often befall him. Patience becomes as it were interwoven

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

with his very nature, and he submits to the greatest disasters without a murmur. His powers of endurance, from frequent exercise, attain a strength and capacity almost incredible, such as are altogether unknown to the more delicately nurtured. His is a trade, to become master of which requires a long and faithful apprenticeship. Of this none seems more conscious than himself, and woe to the “greenhorn” who too prematurely assumes to be “journeyman.” His ideas, his arguments, his illustrations, all partake of the unpolished simplicity of his associations; though abounding often in the most vivid imagery, pointed inferences, and luminous expositions, they need a key to make them intelligible to the novice.

His dress and appearance are equally singular. His skin, from constant exposure, assumes a hue almost as dark as that of the Aborigine, and his features and physical structure attain a rough and hardy cast. His hair, through inattention, becomes long, coarse, and bushy, and loosely dangles upon his shoulders. His head is surmounted by a low crowned wool-hat, or a rude substitute of his own manufacture. His clothes are of buckskin, gaily fringed at the seams with strings of the same material, cut and made in a fashion peculiar to himself and associates. The deer and buffalo furnish him the required covering for his feet, which he fabricates at the impulse of want. His waist is encircled with a belt of leather, holding encased his butcher-knife and pistols—while from his neck is suspended a bullet-pouch securely fastened to the belt in front, and beneath the right arm hangs a powder-horn transversely from his shoulder, behind which, upon the strap attached to it, are affixed his bullet-mould, ball-screw, wiper, awl, &c. With a gun-stick made of some hard wood, and a good rifle placed in his hands, carrying from thirty to thirty-five balls to the pound, the reader will have before him a correct likeness of a genuine mountaineer, when fully equipped. This costume prevails not only in the mountains proper, but also in the less settled portions of Oregon and California. The mountaineer is his own manufacturer, tailor, shoemaker, and butcher; and, fully accoutered and supplied with ammunition in a good game country, he can always feed and clothe himself, and enjoy all the comforts his situation affords. No wonder, then, his proud spirit, expanding with the intuitive knowledge of noble independence, becomes devotedly attached to those regions and habits that permit him to stalk forth, a sovereign amid nature’s loveliest works.

Our company, however, were not all mountaineers; some were only “entered apprentices,” and others mere “greenhorns”—taking every thing into consideration, perhaps, it was quite as agreeably composed as circumstances would well admit of. In glancing over the crowd, I remarked several countenances sinister and malign, but consented to suspend judgment till the character of each should be proven by his conduct. Hence, in the succeeding pages, I shall only speak of characters as I have occasion to speak of men. As a whole, the party before me presented a choice collection of local varieties, —here was the native of France, of Canada, of England, of Hudson Bay, of Connecticut, of Pennsylvania, of New York, of Kentucky, of Illinois, of Missouri, and of the Rocky Mountain all congregated to act in unison for a specified purpose. It might well require the pencil of Hogarth to picture such a motley group.

Our company had not as yet attained its full numerical strength; a small division of it was some distance in advance, another behind, and at least two days would be necessary to complete the arrangements prior to leaving. The idea of spending two days in camp, notwithstanding the beauty of its location, was by no means agreeable; but as the case was beyond remedy, I quietly submitted, and managed to while away the tedious interval as best I could.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

A brief acquaintance with our commandant, found him a man of small stature and gentlemanly deportment, though savoring somewhat of arrogance and self-sufficiency, — faults, by the way, not uncommon in little men. He had been engaged in the Indian trade for several years past, and had seen many “ups and downs” in former life. Graduating from West Point in his younger days, he soon after received the commission of Lieutenant of Dragoons, in the U.S. Army, and served in that capacity for some six or eight years, on the frontier and at Forts Gibson and Leavenworth. Possessed of the confidence of his men, his subsequent resignation was the occasion of much regret with those he had been accustomed to command. The private soldier loved him for his generous frankness and readiness to overlook minor offences, even upon the first show of penitence. Such unbounded popularity at length excited the jealousy of his brother officers, and gave birth to a combination against him, which nothing could appease short of his removal from the army. Aware of his ardent temperament and strong party notions as a politician, and equally violent upon the opposite side, they managed to inveigle him into a discussion of the measures and plans of the then administration of national affairs. Arguing in the excitement of feeling, he made use of an unguarded expression, denouncing the Chief Magistrate. This was immediately noted down, and charges were promptly preferred against him, for “abuse of a superior officer!” The whole affair was then referred to a Court Martial, composed exclusively of political opponents. The evidence was so strong he had little to expect from their hands, and consequently threw up his commission, to avert the disgrace of being cashiered, since which he has been engaged in his present business.

He appeared to be a man of general information, and well versed in science and literature. Indeed, I felt highly gratified in making an acquaintance so far congenial to my own taste.

An accession of two waggons and four men having completed our number, the morning of September 4th was ushered in with the din of preparations for an immediate start. The lading of the waggons was then severally overhauled and more compactly adjusted, and our arms were deposited with other freight until such time as circumstances should call for them. All was hurry and confusion, and oft-times the sharp tone of angry dispute arose above the jargon of the tumultuous throng.

At length the word was given to advance, and in an instant the whole caravan was in motion; those disconnected with the waggons, mounted upon horseback, led the van, followed by the teams and their attendants in Indian file, as the loose cattle and horses brought up the rear. The scene to me portrayed a novelty quite amusing. I began to think a more comical-looking set could scarcely be found any where; but the events of the day soon convinced me of my mistake.

Travelling leisurely along for some six or eight miles, strange objects were seen in the distance, which, on nearer approach, proved a company of Mexican traders, on their way to Independence for an equipment of goods. As they filed past us, I had full scope for the exercise of my risibilities. If a mountaineer and a mountain company are laughable objects, a Mexican and a Mexican company are triply so. The first thing that excites attention upon meeting one of this mongrel race, is his ludicrous apology for pantaloons. This is generally made of deer or buffalo skin, similar to our present fashion, except the legs, which are left unsewed from the thigh downwards; a loose pair of cotton drawers, cut and made in like manner, and worn beneath, imparts to his every movements a most grotesque appearance, leaving at each step of the wearer his denuded leg, with that of his pantaloons on one side, and drawers on the other fluttering in the breeze! The next thing

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

that meets the gaze, is his black, slouching, broad-brimmed hat, (sombbrero) though little darker than the features it obscures, and far less so than the coarse, jet-colored hair that protrudes from beneath it, and falls confusedly upon his shoulders. Next, if the weather tolerates the habit, a coarse parti-colored blanket (charape) envelopes the body, from his shoulders downwards, fixed to its place by an aperture in the centre through which the head is thrust, and securely girted at pleasure by a waist-band of leather. His arms, if arms he has, consist of a rude bow and arrows slung to his back, or an old fusee, not unfrequently without flint, lock, or ammunition; but doubly armed, and proudly, too, is he who can carry a good rifle with powder and lead—even if he be ignorant of their use.

Thus appearing, these creatures, some mounted upon mules, with heavy spurs attached to their heels, (bearing gaffs an inch and a half in length, jingling in response to the rolling motions of the wearer,) ensconced in bungling Spanish saddles, (finished with such ample leather skirts as almost hid the diminutive animal that bore them, and large wooden stirrups, some three inches broad,) were riding at their ease; while others, half naked, were trudging along on foot, driving their teams, or following the erratic mules of the caravan, to heap upon them the ready maledictions of their prolific vocabulary. Passing on, we were accosted:

“Como lo pasa, cabelleros?”

The salutation was returned by a simple nod.

Habla la lengua Espanola, senors?”

A shake of the head was the only response.

“Es esta el camino de Independencia ?”

No reply.

“Carraho! Que quantos jornadas tenemos en la camino de Independencia?”

Still no one answered.

“Scha! Maldijo tualmas! Los Americanos esta dijabelo!”

By this time the crowd had passed and left us no longer annoyed by its presence. The conclusion irresistibly forced itself upon my mind,” if these are true specimens of Mexicans, it is no wonder they incite both the pity and contempt of the rest of the world.” Subsequent intercourse with them, however, has served to convince me that first impressions, in this case, instead of exceeding the reality, fell far short of the true mark!

Continuing our course, we saw large numbers of prairie-hens, and succeeded in killing several. These birds assimilate the English grouse in appearance, and are of a dusky-brown color, — with short tails, and narrow-peaked wings, —and little less in size than the domestic fowl. Their flesh is tender and of superior flavor. When alarmed, they start with a cackling noise, and whiz through the air not unlike the partridge. They are very numerous on the frontier prairies, and extend to the Rocky Mountains, Oregon, California and New Mexico.

About sundown we reached a small creek known as Elm Grove, and encamped for the night, with every indication of an approaching storm. Strict orders were accordingly given for securing the animals, and the process of “picketing” was speedily under way. This consisted in driving small stakes (“pickets”) firmly into the ground, at proper distances apart, to which the animals were severally tied by strong cords, —a plan that should find nightly practice among all travellers of the grand prairies, to prevent those losses which, despite the utmost precaution, will not unfrequently occur.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Timber proved quite scarce in this vicinity, and it was with great difficulty we procured sufficient for cooking purposes. The men now began to prepare for the coming storm. Some disposed of themselves in, and others under, the waggons, making barricades to the windward; others erected shantees, by means of slender sticks, planted in parallel rows five or six feet apart, and interwoven at the tops, so as to form an arch of suitable height, over which was spread a roofage of robes or blankets, while others, snugly ensconced beneath the ready pitched tent, bade defiance to wind and weather.

Being one of those selecting a place under the waggons, I retired at an early hour to snooze away the night; and despite the anticipations of an unpleasant time, I soon lost myself in a sweet slumber, utterly unconscious of every thing around me. In thoughts I wandered back to the home of my childhood, to converse with friends whose names and features fond memory has chained to my heart, while imagination roamed with delight amid those scenes endeared to me by earliest and most cherished recollections. But all the sweet pencillings of fancy were at once spoiled by the uncivil intrusion of a full torrent of water, that came pouring from the hill-side and forced its impetuous way into the valley below, —deluging me from head to foot in its descent. My condition, as the reader may well suppose, was far from being enviable. However, resolved to make the best of a bad thing, after wringing the water from my drenched bedding, I selected another spot and again adjusted myself to pass the dreary interval till morning; this I succeeded in doing, —how or in what manner, it is unnecessary to say. Sleep was utterly out of the question, and I am quite sure I never hailed the welcome morn with greater delight than on this occasion.

Others of the company fared almost as bad as myself, and there was scarcely a dry bed in camp. But the little concern evinced by the mountaineers for their mishap, surprised me most. They crawled from their beds, reeking with wet, as good humoredly as though their nocturnal bath had in no wise disturbed their equanimity, or impaired their comfort.

The morning proved so disagreeable two of our party, who were accompanying us for the purpose of adventure, concluding this a kind of adventure they were unwilling to meet, wisely resolved to take the back track, and accordingly left for home. Towards night the rain ceased, and, the clouds having dispersed, we were again en route. Travelling on till late, we encamped in the open prairie, and early the next morning resumed our course. Having reached a small creek, about 10 o'clock, we halted for breakfast, where another Santa Fe company came up. This proved a party of Americans, with some six or eight waggons and a large number of horses and mules, on their homeward journey. They had also in their possession an elk nearly full grown, two black-tailed deer,[1] an antelope and a white-tailed fawn.

Through them we received intelligence of a battle recently fought between the Pawnee and Arapaho Indians, at the lower Cimarone Springs, south of the Arkansas. The former had been defeated with great slaughter, —losing their horses and seventy-two of their bravest warriors, to increase the trophies and enliven the scalp-dances of their enemies. This action occurred directly upon the Santa Fe trail, and the dead yet bestrewed the prairie, as our informants passed, half devoured by wolves, and filling the air with noisome stench as they wasted beneath the influence of a scorching sun.

An approving murmur ran through the crowd while listening to the recital, and all united to denounce the Pawnees as a dangerous and villainous set, and wished for their utter extermination.

CHAPTER III.

The Pottowatomies. Crossing the Wakarousha. Adventure at the Springs. The Caw chief. Kansas river and Indians. Pleading for whiskey. Hickory timber. Prairie tea. Scenes at the N. Fork of Blue. Wild honey. Return party. Mountaineers in California. Adventure with a buffalo. Indian atrocities. Liquor and the Fur Trade. Strict guard. High prices.

CONTINUING our course, we bore to the right, and struck the northern or Platte trail, and, after travelling eight or ten miles, made camp upon a small creek skirted with heavy timber, called Black Jack. An early start the next morning brought us to the Wakarousha, a considerable tributary of the Kansas, where a junction was formed with our advance party. The territory lying upon this stream as far south as Council Grove, (a noted place on the Mexican trail, 144 miles west from Independence,) belongs to the Pottowatomies. These Indians are very wealthy and are partially civilized, —the most of them being tillers of the ground. Their dwellings are of very simple construction, —large strips of bark firmly tied to a frame-work of poles with small apertures to admit light, furnishing the exterior, while the interior is finished by the suspension of two or three blankets between the apartments, as partitions, and erecting a few scaffolds for bedsteads. The fire-place in warm weather is out of doors, but in the winter it occupies the centre of the building, from which the smoke — unaided by jamb or chimney—is left to find its way through an opening in the roof. Some, however, are beginning to improve in their style of architecture, and now and then we find a tolerably spacious and comfortable house among them.

The Catholics have several missionaries with this tribe, and are using great exertions, if not to ameliorate their condition, at least, to proselyte them to their own peculiar faith. The missionaries of other christian denominations are also devoting themselves for their benefit, and not unfrequently with gratifying success.

The remainder of the day was occupied in crossing the creek—a task by no means easy, —its banks being so precipitous we were compelled to lower our waggons by means of ropes. In so doing it required the utmost caution to prevent them from oversetting or becoming broken in the abrupt descent.

The night following was passed upon the opposite bank. After travelling some twelve miles the next day, we encamped a short distance to the right of the trail at a place known as the Springs. Scarcely had we halted when two footmen appeared from an opposite direction—one of them leading a horse—whom a nearer advance proved to be a white man and an Indian. The former was immediately recognized by our engagés as an old acquaintance, by the name of Brown, who had been their recent *compagnon de voyage* from the mountains. His story was soon told. A few days subsequent to his arrival in the States. a difficulty had occurred between him and another person, who received a severe wound from a knife by the hand of Brown during the affray, when the latter was necessitated to consult his own safety by a hurried flight. He accordingly bade farewell both to enemies and law, and left for the Indian country — travelling most of the way by night. Two weeks afterwards he arrived in the Kansas nation, and remained with the Indian now accompanying him, to await our return.

Having listened to his story, I began to survey his strange companion. He was a village chief of the Kansas (Caw) tribe, and the first of his race I had ever seen so nearly dressed in his native costume. In person he was tall and stout-built, — with broad shoulders and chest, brawny arms

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

and legs, and features evincing the uncontaminated blood of the Aborigine. His hair was closely shaved to the scalp, with the exception of a narrow tuft centrewise from forehead to crown, so trimmed it stood on end like the bristles of a warring hog; then his whole head and face were so lavishly bedaubed with vermilion, our experienced city belles would doubtless have considered it an unpardonable waste of that useful material!

A string of bears' claws, tastefully arranged, encircled his neck, while ample folds of brass wire above the wrists and elbows furnished his armillary, and from his ears hung rude ornaments, — some of silver, others of brass or iron — cruelly distending the flexible members that bore them. A dirty white blanket drawn closely around the shoulders enveloped the body, which, with a breech-cloth and leggins, formed his sole covering. A bow and arrows, slung to his back by a strap passing over the left shoulder and under the right arm, were his only weapons. A belt, begirding the waist, sustained his tobacco-pouch and butcher-knife, and completed his attire and armament. Thus habited appeared before us the Caw chief, holding in one hand the lead-rope of his horse, and in the other the wing of a wild turkey, with a long-stemmed pipe, carved from a hard red stone, handsomely wrought and finely polished. Taken altogether, he presented an amusing spectacle — a real curiosity.

Having shaken hands with the company and turned his horse to graze, in a few moments his pipe was subjected to its destined use, and, as the inhaled fumes merrily curved from his mouth and nostrils, he ever and anon presented it for the indulgence of the bystanders. His knowledge of English was limited to the simple monosyllable "good," which he took occasion to pronounce at intervals as he thought proper.

Sept. 8th. Continuing on, we encamped towards night at a small creek within six miles of the crossing of the Kansas river. Here a bevy of our chief's villagers, rigged in their rude fashion, came flocking up, apparently to gratify their curiosity in gazing at us, but really in expectation of some trilling presents, or in quest of a favorable opportunity for indulging their innate propensities for theft. However, they found little encouragement, as the vigilance of our guards more than equalled the cunning of our visitors. During their stay we were frequently solicited for donations of tobacco and ammunition, (as they expressed it,) in payment for passing through their country. This was individually demanded with all the assurance of government revenue officers, or the keepers of regular toll-bridges, strongly reminding one of the petty nations upon the borders of Canaan that required tribute of the Israelites passing through them to possess the land of their forefathers.

Sept. 9th. Early in the forenoon we came to the Kansas, and were employed till nearly night in effecting a ford. This proved rather difficult, as the water was deep and the bottom sandy;— the course, bearing directly across, till near midway of the river, follows the current for six or eight hundred yards, and then turns abruptly to the opposite shore. The Kansas, at the crossing, was not far from six hundred yards wide, with steep banks of clay and sand. The fording accomplished, we travelled some six miles, and encamped for the night. Our visitors yet honored us with their presence; some, under pretence of trading horses; others, of bartering for tobacco, whiskey, coffee, and ammunition; but most of them for the real purpose of begging and stealing.

The Caw Indians are a branch of the Osage tribe—speaking the same language, and identified by the same manners and customs. They number a population of sixteen hundred, and claim all the territory west of the Delaware, Shawnee, and Pottowatomie line, to the head waters of the Kansas.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Their main village is on the left bank of the river, a few miles above the crossing. Their houses are built Pawnee fashion, being coniform and covered with a thick coat of dirt, presenting a hole at the apex to emit the smoke, and another at the side to serve the double purpose of a door and window. The whole building describes a complete circle, in whose centre is placed the hearth-fire, and at the circumference the couches of its inmates. Its floor is the bare ground, and its ceiling the grass, brush, and poles which uphold the superincumbent earth forming the roof and sides.

The Caws are generally a lazy and slovenly people, raising but little corn, and scarcely any vegetables. For a living they depend mostly upon the chase. Their regular hunts are in the summer, fall, and winter, at which time they all leave for the buffalo range, and return laden with a full supply of choice provisions. The robes and skins thus obtained, furnish their clothing and articles for traffic.

As yet, civilization has made but small advances among them. Some, however, are tolerably well educated, and a Protestant mission established with them, is beginning its slow but successful operations for their good, while two or three families of half-breeds, near by, occupy neat houses, and have splendid farms and improvements, thus affording a wholesome contrast to the poverty and misery of their rude neighbors.

The distance from Independence to this place, by the mountain trail, is some eighty miles, over a beautiful and fertile country, which I shall hereafter take occasion to notice more fully. Before leaving, we were further increased by the accession of two Canadian voyageurs—French of course. Our force now numbered some twenty-four—one sufficiently formidable for all the dangers of the route.

Sept. 10th. Resuming our way, we proceeded till late at night, still attended by our Indian friends; (not the originals, but a “few more of the same sort,” who kindly supplied their places, —seeking to levy fresh drafts upon patience and generosity.) These were more importunate for liquor than any preceding them—though, in fact, the whole nation is nowise remiss in their devotion to King Alcohol. One fellow, in particular, exhausted all his ingenuity to obtain the wherewith to “wet his whistle.” He was a shrivel-faced old man, and occasioned much sport, from his supplications in broken English, which ran pretty much as follows:

“Big man, me. Chief, —Black Warrior. Me, American soldier! Love Americans, heap. Big man, me! Love whiskey, heap. White man good. Whiskey good. Love whiskey, me, —drink heap whiskey. No give me whiskey drink? Me, Chief. Me, American. Me, Black Warrior. Heap big man, me! Love Americans. Take him hand, shake. White man good. Whiskey good. Me love whiskey! Love him heap! No give Black Warrior whiskey? No?—one leetle drink? Whiskey good. Me love him. Make Black Warrior strong. Big man, me, Chief. American soldier. Me love American. Shake him hand. Fight him, bad Indian, no love white man. Kill him. White man good. Me love white man. Whiskey good. Me love whiskey. No give Black Warrior whiskey, —one leetle drink? Me, Chief. Big man, me.” Etc.

In this strain the old fellow continued so long as he found listeners, but without success, although, as I afterwards learned, two waggons were freighted with the noxious article; none of it was suffered to find its way down the throats of our thirsty guests.

Pursuing a westerly course, nearly parallel with the Kansas, for three successive days, we passed the 14th encamped at Big Vermilion, for the purpose of procuring a quantity of hickory for gun-sticks and bow-timber. Hickory is unknown to the Rocky Mountains, and this being the last place

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

on the route affording it, each of our company took care to provide himself with an extra gun-stick. Small pieces, suitable for bows, find market among the mountain Indians, ranging at the price of a robe each, while gun-sticks command one dollar apiece, from the hunters and trappers. We were also careful to provide an extra quantity of ox-bows, axle-trees, &c., as a resource in case of accidents or breakage. These are articles with which every caravan should be furnished on a journey across the grand prairies.

In this vicinity a species of shrub, which I had before noticed in various places, (designated as "red-root" by our voyageurs,) became quite abundant. The red-root is highly esteemed as a substitute for tea, and my own experience attests its superiority of flavor to any article of that kind imported from China. In appearance it is very similar to the tea of commerce, and it affords at all times a most excellent beverage. It is found only upon the prairies between the frontiers and Big Blue, and in some portions of the Rocky Mountains.

Leaving Big Vermilion, we travelled rapidly the two days subsequent, and arrived at the North Fork of Blue, —a large and deep stream, tributary to the Kansas. We were here detained till the 24th—the creek being impassable on account of high water.

However, the beauty of the place and variety of its landscape scenery, served in a great measure to alleviate the weariness of delay. The country was most agreeably interspersed with hills, uplands, and dales—amply watered and variegated with woods and prairies, attired in all the gaudy loveliness of wild-flowers. The busy bee, afraid of the cruel persecutions of man had here sought a secure retreat to pursue, unmolested, her melliferous employ, and fill the dark chambers of her oaken palaces year by year with honeyed stores. The air was almost vocal with the music of her wings, and the flowerets were enlivened by the gentle touches of her embrace. The odor of honey filled the breeze, which, wafting the mingled melody of birds and insects with the incense of flowers, o'er the smiling prairie till lost in space, seemed more like the breath of Eden than the exhalations of earth.

As might be supposed, we were not slow in levying upon the delicious stores, which the industrious insects, claiming this as their dominion, had laid away for themselves. During our stay no less than four bee-trees were levelled, and every pan, kettle, pail, keg, or empty dish in the whole camp was filled to overflowing, and every stomach to repletion, with honey of almost crystalline transparency. The great abundance of deer, turkey and other game in the vicinity, also contributed their share of amusement, and enlivened the interval of detention.

At length, by a partial subsidence of the water, we were enabled to effect a crossing and renew our journey. Pursuing a course W. N. W., on the 27th we met a small party of whites on their return from the mountains, and, yielding to the temptation presented by a luxuriant and well-wooded valley, with a pretty streamlet, the two parties made common camp. Our new acquaintances were taking a large drove of horses, and several domesticated buffalo, with them to the States. Their horses had been mostly obtained from Upper California, the year previous, by a band of mountaineers, under the lead of one Thompson. This band, numbering twenty-two in all, had made a descent upon the Mexican ranchos and captured between two and three thousand head of horses and mules. A corps of some sixty Mexican cavalry pursued and attacked them, but were defeated and pursued in turn, with the loss of several mules and their entire camp equipage: after which the adventurers were permitted to regain their mountain homes, without further molestation; but, in passing the cheerless desert, between the Sierra Nevada and Colorado, the heat, dust, and thirst

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

were so intolerably oppressive, that full one half of their animals died. The remainder, however, were brought to rendezvous, and variously disposed of, to suit the wants and wishes of their captors.

The buffalo, in possession of our wayfaring friends, had been caught while calves, and reared by domestic cows. They appeared as tame and easily managed as other cattle. One of them, a two-year-old heifer, was rather vicious in its habits, having been spoiled, while a calf, by the too great familiarity of its keeper. After listening to a full exposition of its bad qualities, our commandant offered to bet he could handle, or even ride, the unruly beast at pleasure.

“Can you?” said the owner. “Do it, and my best horse is yours!”

“I take all such offers!” returned the commandant. “A horse could not be easier earned!” he continued, stepping towards the ill-tutored animal. “Come, boss!—Poor boss!—bossy, bossy!” addressing the buffalo, which commenced advancing, —at first slowly, then, with a sudden bound, ran full tilt against the admirer, leaving him prostrate upon the ground, as it turned away, dancing and throwing its heels exultingly at the exploit.

“Bless my stars!” he exclaimed, on recovering himself; “I’d no idea ‘twould serve me so!”

“Ha, ha, ha!” retorted the owner. “You seem to pick upon a strange place for a snooze! What in the world were you doing before that skittish beast?”

The roar of laughter which followed, told how well the joke was relished by the crowd.

Reports from the mountains brought intelligence of recent difficulties between the whites and Sioux, —the latter having murdered several trappers. A battle had also been fought in the Snake country, in which the Sioux were defeated with a loss of twenty killed and wounded, —the whites suffered in the loss of their leader (Frapp) and four others. Another affair had come off, at Fort Platte, between two factions of that tribe, while on a drunken spree, resulting in the death of Schena-Chischille, their chief, and several of his party.

The most acceptable item of intelligence was the probability of our reaching the buffalo range in ten days, at least, where we should find vast quantities of those animals. This led our voyageurs to expatiate anew upon the choice varieties of the feast of good things we might expect on that occasion.

Bidding adieu to our transient camp-mates, we were soon again en route. The day following, being unfit for travel, was devoted to overhauling and re-adjusting the freight of the waggons.

Here, for the first time, I ascertained the fact, that a portion of the above consisted of no less than twenty-four barrels of alcohol, designed for the Indian trade!

This announcement may occasion surprise to many, when aware that the laws of Congress prohibit, under severe penalties, the introduction of liquor among the Indians, as an article of traffic, —subjecting the offender to a heavy fine and confiscation of effects. Trading companies, however, find ways and means to smuggle it through, by the waggon-load, under the very noses of government officers, stationed along the frontiers to enforce the observance of laws.

I am irresistibly led to the conclusion, that these gentry are willfully negligent of their duty; and, no doubt, there are often weighty inducements presented to them to shut their eyes, close their ears, and avert their faces, to let the guilty pass unmolested. It seems almost impossible that a blind man, retaining the senses of smell, taste and hearing, could remain ignorant of a thing so palpably plain. The alcohol is put into waggons, at Westport or Independence, in open day-light, and taken into the territory, in open day light, where it remains a week or more awaiting the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

arrival of its owners. Two Government agents reside at Westport, while six or eight companies of Dragoons are stationed at Fort Leavenworth, ostensibly for the purpose of protecting the Indians and suppressing this infamous traffic, —and yet it suffers no diminution from their vigilance!

What faithful public officers! How prompt in the discharge of their whole duty!

These gentlemen cannot plead ignorance as an excuse. They well know that alcohol is one of the principal articles in Indian trade—this fact is notorious—no one pretends to deny it; not even the traders themselves — and yet, because no one takes the trouble to produce a specimen of the kind of freight taken, more or less, by all mountain companies, and FORCE them to see, taste, touch, and smell, they affect ignorance! It is thus the benevolent designs of our Government are consummated by these pensioners upon the public treasury!

Had they the will so to do, it would be no difficult matter to put a stop to all such exportations. The departure of any one of these companies for the mountains, is a thing too difficult to be effected unknown and stealthily. It becomes public talk for days and even weeks previous. Scarcely anything would be easier than for those whose business it is, to keep on the look out, and enforce the law to its full extent upon each offender. A few examples of this kind would interpose an insuperable barrier to the further prosecution of an illicit traffic in the manner it is at present carried on. A few faithful public officers, and attentive to their duty, regardless of fear or favor, would soon accomplish an object so desirable.

In subsequent pages of this work I shall have occasion to notice a few of the many evils resulting from this criminal neglect, —but at present forbear further remarks.

Our arms were now put in order for immediate use, —each individual apportioning to himself a good supply of ammunition, to be ready at all times in case of attack. Guards were ordered to be constantly on the alert. The company was divided into two parties, — one for day and the other for night guard, and these again were subdivided for alternate relieves, —thus, one of each subdivision serving a day and a night, and the reserve the day and night succeeding. The day-guard consisted of only two persons, upon duty every other day, but the night-guard numbered ten, — two being on duty for two hours were then relieved by the two next in succession, and they by the next, and so on.

Strict orders were also given to prevent any from leaving camp, or parting from the caravan while travelling. In fact, every thing began to assume a warlike aspect, as if we were really in danger and apprehensive of an immediate reencounter.

Several boxes of clothing, &c., were also opened for such as wished to purchase. But every article disposed of was sold at an enormous rate: tobacco bringing from one to three dollars per lb., according to quality; butcher-knives, from one dollar to one fifty each; hose, one dollar per pair; shirts, from three to five dollars each, according to quality; blankets, from twelve to sixteen dollars; coats, from fifteen to forty dollars; coarse shoes, four dollars per pair; six-penny calicoes, fifty cts. per yd.; beads, one dollar per bunch, etc. These were of an indifferent quality, and afforded the vender some three or four hundred per cent advance upon purchase-price. In fact, with regard to prices, conscience had nothing to do with the matter.

CHAPTER IV.

Country from the frontiers to Big Blue; its geological character, &c. Novel cure for fever and ague.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

— Indian trails. — Game. — Large rabbits. — Antelope, and their peculiarities. — Beaver cuttings. — Big Blue and its vicinity. — Dangerous country. — Pawnee bravery. — Night-alarm, (Prairies on fire.) — Platte river. — Predominant characteristics of the Grand Prairies, and theory explanative of their phenomenon. — Something to laugh at. — "Big Jim" and the antelope.

Sept. 26th. WE are now camped upon a small creek, nearly destitute of timbers within two miles of Big Blue, or the N. W. branch of the Kansas river. The geography of this part of the country is incorrectly described upon all the published maps I have yet seen. The Republican Fork, which is the principal branch of the Kansas, is uniformly represented as the most northwesterly branch of that river, forming a junction with it at or below the usual crossing. This is not the case.

The two forks of Blue, from the northwest, united, form a large and important stream, which, according to my impression, discharges its waters into the Kansas itself, and not into the Republican. Of this, however, I am not quite positive. But be that as it may, admitting the Republican to be the main stream, Big Blue must be, as a matter of course, the most northwesterly branch of the Kansas river.

Proceeding up the Blue, the geological character of the country under goes an entire and radical change, and the traveller is introduced to a different order of things from that previously observed.

Perhaps, therefore, it is not out of place to present a general review of the territory thus far.

The interval from the frontier of Missouri to Big Blue, a distance up wards of two hundred miles, affords great uniformity in all its more prominent characteristics. It generally comprises beautifully undulating prairies, of a moist argillaceous soil, rich in sedimentary deposits and vegetable matter. It is somewhat rocky in places, but well watered by the almost innumerable streams that find their way into the Kansas, Platte and Arkansas rivers. The creeks, with but few exceptions, are heavily timbered with oak, hickory, walnut, maple, cottonwood, and other varieties found in more eastern forests. The hills too, in some parts, are more than usually abundant in springs, and covered with stately groves, as tastefully arranged as if planted by the hand of man, while luxuriant grass and fragrant flowers usurp the place of underbrush. The prairies, hemmed in on every side by the woodlands skirting the water-courses, present to the eye proud oceans of flowery verdure, tossing their wavelets to the breeze and perfuming the air with the breath of spring.

The streams are clear, with rocky or pebbly bottoms and high, steep banks — abounding in choice specimens of the finny tribes and varieties of the testaceous order, of the genus muscula. The valley of the Kansas is wide and of a deep brown vegetable mould, susceptible of a high state of cultivation. The whole country is well adapted to the double purpose of agriculture and the growth of stock.

The prevailing rock is sandstone of various shades and compactness, with siliceous and fossiliferous limestone. These specifications are generally exhibited in a detached and fragmentary form, but rarely in strata as disclosed upon the surface.

Taken as a whole, the territory holds out many inducements to emigrants, and, whenever brought into market, will no doubt become speedily and thickly populated.[2]

Sept. 30th. We are again under headway. A French engagé, who had been suffering for several days past from a severe attack of the fever and ague, experienced a sudden and novel cure. Unable to travel, quarters were prepared for him in one of the whiskey waggons, where he was comfortably disposed of as we continued our course. In passing a rough place the waggon overset, when

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

out came the invalid head foremost, and out came the whiskey barrels showering full upon him! The suddenness of the fall, with the surprise and excitement of the occasion, —one, or both, or all, or some other cause unknown, effected a complete cure, —for certain it is, he did not suffer another attack of the fever and ague during the whole journey, and the next day was able to discharge his duties as well as ever.

On striking the Big Blue, the mountain road bears a north-northwest course to the head of that stream, and from thence over an interval of highlands to the Platte river. The distance travelled up the Blue requires some eight days, for heavy waggons. Continuing our way, about noon we passed several Indian trails, in addition to one ten or twelve or fifteen miles back. These consist of a number of well-beaten, parallel foot-paths, bearing a northwest and southwest direction. They are formed by the passing and re-passing of the Otoes, Iowas, and Foxes, to and from their hunting grounds, towards the head-waters of the Kansas.

On the 3d of October we reached the antelope range, and saw four or five of these animals scouring the boundless expanse, or ascending some favorable eminence to gaze upon us. Slight signs of buffalo also appeared, and everything seemed to indicate the approach to a game country.

Parting a short distance from the trail, a large sage rabbit bounded up before me, —the first of his species I ever saw. This animal is nearly three times the size of the common rabbit, and of a white color, slightly tinged with grey. It derives its name from being found principally in countries abounding with absinthe or wild sage. In the regions adjacent to the mountains, these animals occur more frequently, —and even among the mountains, where their tails and ears are tipped with jetty black. Their fur is soft and fine, — equalling if not surpassing that of the Russia rabbit. Their flesh is also of a superior flavor, as I have had opportunities of testing.

Towards night, three antelope appearing near the trail, our hunter made an unsuccessful attempt to approach them, which afforded me a first inkling of the nature and character of these animals. The antelope of the grand prairie differs but little in size and shape from the common sheep, and is coated with long, brittle hair, —of a ruddy brown color, except at the tail and head, where it is short and white. The female is hornless, except an occasional blunt corneous excrescence, some two or three inches long protruding from the head. The male, however, is equipped with hook-shaped antlers, ebony colored, and six or eight inches in length, which he sheds annually in the months of November and December.

This is the fleetest inhabitant of the prairie. No horse can compete with it in speed. Quick of sight, keen of scent, and acute of ear, it seems ever on the alert at the approach of real or supposed danger, —now swiftly advancing towards the object of its alarm or curiosity, —then circling before you with the fleetness of the storm-wind, to mount some eminence far away beyond reach, and gaze in security. Then, again, ere you have time to catch breath for admiration, it repeats its semi-gyration from an opposite direction, still nearer and swifter, till past, —as if indeed borne on the wings of lightning—and yet again surveys you in the distance. Now, running from point, to point it examines you upon all sides, as it cautiously passes round, —then, snuffing the breeze, it again calls to aid its fleetness of limb, and with the velocity of thought is lost to view in the vast expanse.

Possessed of an inordinate share of inquisitiveness, it not unfrequently falls a victim to its own curiosity. The hunter, turbaned with a red handkerchief and half concealed behind some object, first raising, then depressing his head, then withdrawing it entirely from view, then again disclosing it

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

to the curious animal, is almost certain to allure his game within gunshot.

I have seen numbers killed in this manner. In the spring season they appear more sensitive than at any other time, and are easily lured to their fate.

With the exhibition of this strange propensity, I have time and again been minded of its more fully developed moral prototype in man. How frequently do we see persons around us who indulge their appetites and passions, as often for mere curiosity as fancied pleasure, —venturing nearer and still nearer towards the objects that command their attention and lure them into the vortex of ruin, till, with sure and deadly aim, the shafts of the tempter pierce the waning vitals of morality, and plunge the victims headlong into a yawning abyss, where they are lost to themselves, to society, and to the world—lost forever!

Here, then, is furnished for us a moral:- Beware how you indulge a vain curiosity that lures to evil;— never parley with temptation.

These animals are found from the Big Blue to the mountains—in Oregon, California, Santa Fe, and N. W. Texas. Their flesh is tender and sweet, —quite equal to venison, though seldom fat, owing, as is supposed, to their almost incessant mobility.

Near our night-camp I noticed fresh beaver “cuttings,” some of which consisted of trees, six inches in diameter, levelled by these sagacious animals.

The vicinity disclosed frequent boulders of red and dark ferruginous sandstone, with a soil somewhat arenose, reclining upon a changeable deposit of sand and gravel, succeeded by a substratum of parti-colored and friable sandstone. The valley of the Blue is bordered by hills of graceful slope, both green and beautiful.

I here remarked for the first time the appearance of cacti, which here from becomes quite common, and proves the pest of many places adjacent to the mountains.

The Blue is a deep, narrow stream, with a swift current, over a bed of gravel and pebbles, and is fringed by groves of oak, cotton-wood, and willow. Its valley is between one and two miles in width, with a superfiice of variable fertility, but generally consisting of good arable land.

This section of country is considered very dangerous in the summer and fall months, on account of the strolling bands of Pawnees which infest it. The voyageur holds the latter in great dread, unless he chances to be accompanied by a sufficient force to bid defiance to their approach. A party, numerically weak and indifferently armed, meets with rough treatment at their hands while on the open prairies. Persons and property are rarely respected, and the unfortunate traveller is not only plundered, but often whipt or murdered without mercy.

This, however, may not be said of all—it is only the young warriors, when beyond the restraint of their chiefs and seniors, who perpetrate such outrages; though, to their praise be it said, instances of this kind are quite seldom, at present, compared with former years.

The courage of these Indians is held in little repute by mountaineers; and, that this opinion is not unfounded, the following incident will prove. It was related to me by an actor in the scene:

A small party of whites on their cruise down the Platte with a cargo of furs, “lay by” to make meat, near the forks of that stream. Buffalo being at some distance from camp, our adventurers were compelled to perform the duties of pack-horses in conveying the proceeds of their hunting excursions. One day, four of them left for this object, and having proceeded some six or eight miles, a war-party of Pawnees suddenly emerged from behind an eminence, directly fronting them. Alarmed at the unwelcome apparition, and imagining the whole country to be alive with

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Indians, they immediately ran, and were pursued towards camp. One of the number, a big, lazy fellow, and rather "green" withal, soon became tired. and sung out to his companions:

"Don't let's run so fast. Blast me, if I can keep up!"

"Come on, —come on!" cried they. "A thousand 'shaved heads' are upon us, half frozen for hair!"

"Pooh! I'll bet five dollars there aint thirty!"

Done! But, who'll count the bloody varmints?"

"Why, I'll do it, just for my own satisfaction." So saying, he wheeled and advanced towards the Pawnees, as his wondering companions halted a little distance of, to learn the result of his fool-daring.

Surprised at this strange movement, the enemy also came to a stand, affording a fine opportunity to ascertain their number, which only amounted to nineteen!

"I've won!" exclaimed our hero. "Let's charge, and give'em the very devil!"

The word went for command, and the four hunters dashed boldly towards the terrified savages, who in turn fled, with greater velocity than they had called into exercise at any time during their advance, —illustrating the truth of the saying, "tyrants are always cowards." Legs proved quite convenient articles for the Pawnee braves! They were out of sight in a few minutes, and were very careful not to stop until they had left their pursuers far in the rear.

A Pawnee with a defenceless enemy in his power, like some examples among the whites, is unrivalled in courage and daring; but where there is resistance offered, and fighting to be done, he, as well as the Irishman's chickens, "comes up missing!" He is always bravest when farthest from danger.

We were careful to observe the strictest vigilance at night, to prevent the loss of horses from lurking bands of Indians. The animals of the caravan were uniformly picketed in compact order, and sentinels, posted at suitable distances, continued to pace their rounds, from dark till daylight; while each of the company slept by his arms, in readiness at any moment to repel an attack.

Having travelled for seven successive days, we made camp late in the afternoon at the head of the right fork of Blue.

During the day we had noticed a dense smoke some distance in the rear, but, with the wind in an opposite direction, no uneasiness was felt on that account. The sentries were soon at their posts and everything was snugly disposed of for the night. Those not on duty improved the opportunity to gain respite from the fatigues of the day, and, in a brief interval, were snoring away at an admirable rate.

The polar-star by its "pointers" had just told the hour of midnight, when these hurried words rang through the camp:

"Lave, ho! Lave! Prairies on fire! Quick—catch up! catch up!"[3]

This startling announcement instantly brought every man to his feet; — and such a scene as now met the eye! How awful, and how grand! The wind, new changed and freshened, to the right and rear, was tossing the flames towards us, rapidly—lighting the heavens with their lurid glare, and transforming the darkness of night into a more than noon-day splendor!

Here was, indeed, an "ocean of flame!" far as the eye could reach — dancing with fiery wavelets in the wind, or rolling its burning surges, in mad fury, eager to lick up every vestige of vegetation or semblance of combustible that appeared in its way! — now shooting its glowing missiles far, far ahead, like meteors athwart the sky, or towering aloft from the weeds and tall grass, describing

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

most hideous and fantastic forms, that, moving with the wind, more resembled a cotillion of demons among their native flames than aught terrestrial!—then driving whole sheets of the raging element into the withered herbage in front, like the advance scouts of an invading army, swept onward its desolating course, leaving in its track naught save a blackened waste of smoking ruins! Altogether, it was a sublime spectacle, a stupendous scene, grand and imposing beyond description, and terrible in its beauty! Commingled with sensations of wonder and admiration, it tended to impress the beholder with feelings of painful melancholy. The broad expanse, but a few moments since arrayed in all the mourning grandeur of fading autumn, was now a naked desert, and every vestige of loveliness in an instant snatched from view!

How sudden, how awful, how marked the change! and yet, how magnificent in its career, though doleful its sequel!

We were speedily under way, with as much earnestness of advance as that of righteous Lot, in his escape from burning Sodom.[4] For a while the pursuing enemy kept even pace, and threatened to overtake us, till, headed by the strong wind, which meanwhile had changed its course, it began to slacken its speed and abate its greediness.

About sunrise we crossed the regular Pawnee trails, (leading to and from their hunting grounds, which bore the appearance of being much frequented,) and at 10 o'clock, A. M., reached the Platte river, having travelled a distance of thirty miles—without halting.

The mountain road strikes the above stream at lat. 40° 41' 06" north, long. 99° 17' 47" west from Greenwich, some twenty miles below the head of Grand Island. This island is densely wooded and broad, and extends for fifty or sixty miles in length. The river banks are very sparsely timbered, a deficiency we had occasion to remark during the remainder of our journey.

The valley of the Platte at this place is six or seven miles wide, and the river itself between one and two miles from bank to bank. Its waters are very shallow, and are scattered over their broad bed in almost innumerable channels, nearly obscured by the naked sand-bars that bechequer its entire course through the grand prairie. Its peculiarity in this respect gave birth to the name of Platte, (shallow,) which it received from the French, and Chartre, (surface,) from the Mexicans, —the Indians, according to Washington Irving, calling it Nebraska,[5] a term synonymous with that of the French and Americans, —however, I am ignorant in reference to the latter.

The bottom upon the south bank is between three and four miles broad and of a light, deep, and, rich soil, occasionally sandy, but covered with thick and lusty vegetation. Back from the valley, ranges of broken sand-hills mark the transition to the high arid prairies in the rear, where vegetation becomes more dwarfish and stunted in its growth, and is intermingled with frequent cacti. These immense plains are generally clad with a short, curly grass, (the buffalo grass,) very fine and nutritious, and well adapted to the sustenance of the countless herds of buffalo and other wild animals that feed upon it. Their soil is generally of a thin vegetable mould, upon a substratum of indurated sand and gravel.

In many places it is quite sterile, producing little other than sand-burrs and a specimen of thin, coarse grass, that sadly fail to conceal its forbidding surface; in others, it is but little better than a desert waste of sand-hills or white sun-baked clay, so hard and impervious that neither herb nor grass can take root to grow upon it; and in others, it presents a light superface, both rich and productive, beclad with all that can beautify and adorn a wilderness of verdure.

The springs and streams of water are "few and far between,"—an evil, however, slightly atoned for

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

by the occasional pools formed in favoring depressions during the rainy season, which are retained in their places by the extreme hardness of the soil. Were it not for these it would be almost impossible, in many directions, to travel the vast prairies lying between the Arkansas and Missouri, from long. 22° 30' west from Washington to the Rocky Mountains. That this section of country should ever become inhabited by civilized man, to any extent, except in the vicinity of large water-courses, is an idea too preposterous to be entertained for a single moment.

As the reader is now inducted to the grand prairie as it is, it may not be amiss to say something relative to this phenomenon, before dismissing the subject in hand.

The steppes of Asia, the pampas of South America, and the prairies of the great West, so far as my information extends, are possessed of one general and uniform character. There is something deeply mysterious associated with them, that puzzles the philosopher and cosmogonist to explain. Why is it neither timber nor shrubs, as a general thing, are found within their confines? Why have not the same causes operated here which produced the stately forests of other regions?

The above questions are often asked, and as often answered; but never satisfactorily.

Some respond by a reference to their frequent burnings, —others to some chemical defect in their soil, —others, to the disgeniality of their climate, —others, to their infecund aridity, —and yet, others, to the supposition that some operation of nature or art has effected the destruction of quondam forests, and reduced them to their present condition.

Each of these answers, though, doubtless, partially true in many respects, fails to solve the problem before us.

Here we have, in many places, almost measureless extents of fertile soil, moist and abundantly watered, by rains, springs, and ever-flowing streams, with all the desiderata for the producing of trees, —and what withholds them? Other sections of country, under less favorable circumstances, are not wanting in this respect.

Why is it? Timber of every kind adapted to the zone and climate will gross as thriftily when planted here, as elsewhere. The frontier forests of our Western States have been observed for years past to make slow but constant encroachment upon contiguous prairies, from all sides, where, as yet, they have a foothold;— and why? Partly, because their enlargement is not circumvented by those annual burnings that formerly devoured every tender shoot daring to raise its head above ground; and, partly, through the operation of other causes, sure and gradual in their effect, which have planted the groves of other lands and taught their branches to wave in the breeze. Doubtless the same causes would produce the same results, all over these vast regions, as elsewhere.

But, why have they not?—why are the prairies timberless? Simply, because a sufficiency of time has not yet elapsed for the operation of these causes, —timber has hitherto had no possible chance for generation. The phenomenon, if rightly viewed, will thus explain itself. Geology points to the time when these vast solitudes were the bed of old Ocean and the home of waves, —but, gradually emerging or suddenly elevated from the watery abyss, they now present some of the more recent formations of dry land.

Herbage and grass, being more easily propagated than trees, —sown as are their seeds by the birds and scattered by the winds of heaven, —in a brief interval, beswathed the new-born earth with smiling green. Thus clothed with verdancy, they soon became the favorite pastures of the countless herds that thronged them. With game, appeared the red man to hunt it, and with him the yearly conflagrations that now repel the intruding woodlands and confirm the unbroken sway of

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

solitude amid her far extending domains.

Here, then, we have spread before us the prairies as we find them, —the problem of their existence needs no further solution.

Oct. 12th. Still continuing up the Platte by its south bank, we made camp at night near the head of Grand Island. During our progress we saw large quantities of wild geese and cranes in the river bottoms, that presented tempting marks for our voyageurs. One of the latter, —a tall raw-boned, half-crazed, and self-confident Missouri “Ned,” —good natured and inane, —sporting, the familiar soubriquet of “Big Jim,” —wishing to prove the truth of the Dogberry axiom, that “some things may be done as well others,” started to approach a large flock of sand-hill cranes, parading half obscured in a plat of grass near the road side.

The wary birds, however, caught glimpse of the approaching Nimrod and flew. Still our hero advanced, crawling upon all-fours, to within sixty or seventy yards of their recent position, when, raising up, he espied an object which his excited imagination portrayed a crane, and promptly yielded to it the contents of his rifle.

Of course the obstinate creature remained in status quo.

Re-loading with all possible speed, he again fired! But the second shot proved futile as the first. Determined the next should count whether or no, he advanced still nearer, and had raised for his third discharge, before the naked truth burst upon his astonished vision, —he had been shooting at a bunch of dead grass. Shouldering his rifle he now rejoined the caravan, and was received by the wags who had witnessed his exploit, as follows:

“Ho, Jim! I say, Jim! Did you kill it?”

“Hang me, but it stood fire well, —didn’t it?”

“Reckon you wanted a bigger charge.”

“Strange you couldn’t knock it cold at that distance!”

“May be your gun’s out of order?”

“Yes. I’ll bet a stewed crane of it. Have you noticed the “sights” lately?”

“Why, Jim. Really you’ve had bad luck! What, within sixty yards and not kill? I can beat that, all day!”

“Ha, ha, Jim! Shoot him grass!”

This rally was received, by our hero, in good part, who joined in the sport with as much gusto as though some one else were the victim.

The day, however, was not permitted to pass without another display of the prowess of “Big Jim.” A doe antelope, attracted by the strange appearance of the moving caravan, and impelled by its innate curiosity, had ventured to a tempting proximity. Mounted upon a fleet horse and supposing he could easily ride down the antelope, our hero started in pursuit.

Intently surveying the passing scene, the agile animal permitted him to advance within a few yards of her before she took the alarm. Now was a novel race. Away went antelope and away went Jim, in full chase. The former was soon far ahead, and stopped to gaze upon her pursuer.

Supposing she had become tired and was about to yield, our hero came dashing on, impetuously, under whip and spur, fully intent upon her capture. But, again, away went antelope, and away went Jim, whose steed, ambitious as its rider, and proud in its own fleetness, strained every nerve for the crisis. Even the antelope seemed to have found a champion to contest her unrivalled and universally acknowledged superiority. With distended mouth and protruding tongue, panting in

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the excitement of fear, and foaming in the vehemency of effort, she gained but slowly upon the bounding charger, as both swept over the prairie almost with speed of the storm-wind!

Now, again, she stops to gaze upon her pursuer. By this time all began to feel an interest in the result of the strange race. The word resounded:

“Go it, Jim! you’ll beat the beater, yet!”

Once more, the antelope shoots from before both horse and rider, like the swift-winged arrow twanged from a giant’s bow!

A broad ravine intercepting her course was cleared at a bound, and left the flying animal far upon the other side. At a bound the steed also cleared the barrier, but, in striking upon the opposite bank, it plunged headlong upon the yielding ground, tossing its rider far away in advance, all safely sprawling in a sand heap.

The luckless wight, on recovering, found his noble beast so sprained by the fall it could scarcely stand, and its every nerve vibrating with frightful tremors. Of course here was the finale of the race, as both returned to the caravan, —the recent rider, on foot, leading his jaded steed, — the ridden slowly limping behind, —presenting a marked contrast between the opening and closing scene.

The ill-fated horse was too much disabled for further service during the journey.

As our hero joined the company, the joke-loving wags again broke loose:

“Well, Jim. I say, —ahem! did you catch the tarnal critter?”

“Pooh! Why didn’t you hold on, and not let her slide through your fingers in that way!”

“Why, man! You wasn’t spry enough, when you jumped off your horse, or you might have caught her—just as easy!”

“I’d like to know what you was diving after in that sand-bank!—the antelope wasn’t there!”

“Oh, Jim! Shoot him grass, kill horse. Me look next time he run antelope.”

The passive recipient of these sallies had little peace from henceforth, and soon began to wish he had never seen an antelope or heard of a crane.

## CHAPTER V.

Deserted camp. Big Jim’s third attempt as a hunter. Buffalo and other particulars. Big Jim lying guard. Butchering. Strange selections. Extraordinary eating, and excellence of buffalo meat. Brady’s Island. The murderer’s fate. Substitute for wood. A storm. Game in camp. Strange infatuation. Tenacity of buffalo to life, and how to hunt them. Cross S. Fork of Platte. Big Jim’s fourth adventure.

NEAR camp was the site recently occupied by the Pawnee village, whose occupants had evidently deserted it with the utmost precipitancy, leaving lodge-skins, mortars, bowls, pans, and a variety of other articles strown confusedly upon all sides. They had doubtless become alarmed at the approach of some real or supposed enemy, and consulted their own safety in flight.

Having started early the next day, our hunter soon brought in two fine antelope, the sight of which again raised the ambition of Big Jim, who would fain do deeds of equal wonder; and he accordingly strolled off into the hills with that intent. After shooting at several of the wary animals without, success, he began to get tired of the sport, and concluding the “poverty-stricken” creatures not worth the powder and lead, set his face for the caravan.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Plodding leisurely along, he espied a prairie snake, and, o'erjoyed at the thought of counting a "coup," gathered his rifle by the small, and brought it down with such force, he not only killed the snake, but broke his gunstock short off at the breech. With the pieces, one in each hand, he made his appearance before his comrades, who hailed him:

"Hallo, Jim. What's that you've killed?"

"Gun broke. Why, you must have overloaded it!"

"When'll you go hunting again? —'case I want to go too!"

"Poor Jim! Shoot grass, kill horse, break gun! Wat in do wor does him mean!"

"Never mind, Jim. Don't be skeered at these fellows. It takes you to play the devil and break things!"

Towards night, several buffalo bulls having made their appearance, our hunter, mounting a horse, started for the chase, and in a brief interval, returned laden with a supply of meat. Camp had already been struck, and preparations for the new item of fare were under speedy headway.

The beef proved miserably poor; but when cooked, indifferent as it was, I imagined it the best I had ever tasted. So keen was my relish, it seemed impossible to get enough. Each of us devoured an enormous quantity for supper, —and not content with that, several forsook their beds during the night to renew the feast, —as though they had been actually starving for a month.

The greediness of the "greenhorns," was the prolific source of amusement to our voyageurs, who made the night-air resound with laughter at the avidity with which the unsophisticated ones "walked into the affections of the old bull," as they expressed it. "Keep on your belts till we get among cows," said they, "then let out a notch or two, and take a full meal."

It was equally amusing to me, and rather disgusting withal, to see the "old birds," as they called themselves, dispose of the only liver brought in camp. Instead of boiling, frying, or roasting it, they laid hold of it raw, and, sopping it mouthful by mouthful in gall, swallowed it with surprising gusto.

This strange proceeding was at first altogether incomprehensible, but, ere the reader shall have followed me through all my adventures in the wilds of the great West, he will find me to have obtained a full knowledge of its several merits.

The beef of the male buffalo at this season of the year, is poorer than at any other. From April till the first of June, it attains its prime, in point of excellence. In July and August, these animals prosecute their knight-errant campaign, and, between running, fighting and gallantry, find little time to graze, finally emerging from the contested field, with hides well gored, and scarcely flesh enough upon their bones to make a decent shadow.

It is nowise marvellous, then, that our lavish appropriation of bullmeat at this time, when it is unprecedentedly tough, strong-tasted, and poor, should excite the mirth of our better-informed beholders.

The night was a cold one, and claimed for it Big Jim as second guard. When called for "relieve," with a borrowed gun, he commenced his rounds, —but the cold soon drove him to the camp-fire. Here, weariness and the somnific effects of a generous heat, speedily found him stretched at full length towards the fire, snoring away at a sound rate, the subject of their combined influence.

The guard time had already expired, and his partner on duty, perceiving the pleasant situation of the indomitable Jim, called the next "relieve," and retired.

These paced their rounds, and the fourth guard succeeded, but still our hero occupied the same

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

place in which he had lain his "tour." The sentinels were about to take their posts, as a loud sharp voice resounded through camp.

"Quit, there! What d'ye mean?" Hastening to the spot from which the cry proceeded, who should be seen but Big Jim, in great agony, rubbing his foot with most pitiable grimace:

His slumbers had been disturbed by a falling log, of the camp-fire, which had planted its glowing weight full against one of his feet, —becrissing the sole of his shoe and severely scorching its tenant, before awakening him. Dreaming some one had hold of his foot, and started by a sudden acuteness of pain, he exclaimed as above quoted.

The sentinels laughed at his mishap, and turning to pace their rounds, drawled out:

"What d'ye mean? Sure enough, what d'ye mean! Shoot grass, kill horse, break gun, lay guard, burn shoe, and scorch foot;— all in two days and two nights! Poor devil, —why ye no born wid better luck!"

With the morning, the subject of his recent adventures called forth fresh scintillations of wag-gish wit, —while the unrivalled capacity of our hero, as a gormandizer, gave cue to the cuts that followed:

"Well, my head for a foot-ball, if that aint the greatest idea yet What!—roast foot, basted with leather, —and his own at that! Such a meal none but Jim would ever have thought of!"

"Why, man! What put you in the notion of that dish?" "Strange, indeed, if you can't find the wherewith to stuff your devil, without cooking your feet! Souse, to be sure! Here, you can take my hat!"

The luckless wight had now enough to engagé his attention during the remainder of the journey, and began to wish he had never seen a mountain company, or left his sweet home in Missouri to cross the great prairies with such a crowd, —but all to no purpose; he was too late to retrace his steps alone.

Oct, 13th. Starting at early day, we travelled till about 11 o'clock, A. M., and halted for breakfast. The teams were scarcely turned to graze, when a dense band of buffalo cows made their appearance, from the back prairie, wending their way towards the river.

Expectation was on tip-toe, and all appetites doubly sharpened for an anticipated feast, as our hunter and his assistant started to intercept the witless animals at the river bank.

The two placed themselves in a chosen position and awaited the heavily moving throng, which soon advanced to within shooting distance. The sharp crack of a rifle now stopped their headway, and caused them to recoil a few paces, leaving one of their number struggling in death. An other discharge followed, and the affrighted herd were seen flying from their concealed enemy, with all the energy that innate dread of danger and death lent to their ready feet, —but not until another victim had dank the sod with the unsought libation of its heart's blood.

It pained me, as I came up, to witness the noble beasts as they lay extended upon the gore-dyed ground. But the present was no time for regret; we were to feed upon their carcasses.

The process of butchering was a new development of that most useful science. The carcase was first turned upon the belly, and braced to a position by its distended legs. The operator then commenced his labors by gathering the long hair of the "boss," and severing a piece obliquely at the junction of the neck and shoulders, —then parting the hide from neck to rump, a few passes of his ready knife laid bare the sides, —next paring away the loose skin and preparing a hold, with one hand he pulled the shoulder towards him and with the other severed it from the body;—

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

cutting aslant the uprights of the spina dorsi and "hump ribs," along the lateral to the curve, and parting the "fleece" from the tough flesh at that point he deposited it upon a clean grass-spot.

The same process being described upon the opposite side, the carcass was then slightly inclined, and, by aid of the leg-bone bisected at the kneejoint, the "hump-ribs" were parted from the vertebra; after which, passing his knife aside the ninth rib and around the ends at the midriff, he laid hold of the dissevered side, and, with two or three well directed jerks, removed it to be laid upon his choicely assorted pile; a few other brief minutia then completed the task.

Meanwhile, divers of the company had joined the butcher, and, while some were greedily feeding upon liver and gall, others helped themselves to marrow-bones, "boudins," and intestinum medullæ, (choice selections with mountaineers,) and others, laden with rich spoils, hastened their return to commence the more agreeable task of cooking and eating.

The remaining animal was butchered in a trice, and select portions of each were then placed upon a pack-horse and conveyed to the waggons.

The assortment was, indeed, a splendid one. The "depouille" (fleecefat) was full two inches thick upon the animal's back, and the other dainties were enough to charm the eyes and excite the voracity of an epicure.

The camp-fires soon presented a busy and amusing spectacle. Each one was ornamented with delicious roasts, en appolas, on sticks planted aslope around it, attentively watched by the longing voyageurs, who awaited the slow process of cooking. Some were seen with thin slices from the larder, barely heated through by the agency of a few coals, retreating from the admiring throng to enjoy solo their half-cooked morsels, —others, paring off bit by bit from the fresh-turned hissing roasts, while their opposite received the finishing operation of the fire, —and others, tossing their everted boudins into the flames, and in a few seconds withdrawing for the repast, each seizing his ample share, bemouthed the end in quick succession to sever the chosen esculent, which, while yielding to the eager teeth, coursed miniature rivulets of oily exuberance from the extremities of the active orifice, bedaubing both face and chin, and leaving its delighted eater in all the glories of grease!

Every man had now become his own cook, and, not to be backward, I closed in with the overture. Seizing a frying-pan replete with tempting levies from the "fleece," I twice subjected it to its duty, and as often its delicious contents found ample store-house; and even yet my longing appetite seemed loth to cry "hold, enough!"

The agreeable odor exhaled from the drippings of the frying flesh, contained in the pan, invited the taste, —a temptation claiming me for its subject. Catching up the vessel, a testing sip made way for the whole of its contents, at a single draught, —full six gills! Strange as it may seem, I did not experience the least unpleasant feeling as the result of my extraordinary potation.

The stomach never rebels against buffalo-fat. Persons, subsisting entirely upon the flesh of these animals, prefer an assortment of at least one third solid depouille.

The voyageur is never more satisfied than when he has a good supply of buffalo-beef at his command. It is then his greasy visage bespeaks content, and his jocund voice and merry laugh evince the deep-felt pleasure and gratification that reign within.

Talk not to him of the delicacies of civilized life, —of pies, puddings, soups, fricasees, roast-beef, pound-cake, and desert, —he cares for none of these things, and will laugh at your verdancy!

He knows his own preference, and will tell you your boasted excellencies are not to be compared

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

with it. If you object to the sameness of his simple fare, he will recount the several varieties of its parts, and descant upon each of their peculiar merits. He will illustrate the numerous and dissimilar modes of so preparing them, that they cannot fail to excite by their presence and appease by their taste the appetite of the most fastidious. And then, in point of health, there is nothing equal to buffalo-meat. It, alone, will cure dyspepsy, prevent consumption, amend a broken constitution, put flesh upon the bones of a skeleton, and restore a dead man again to life! — if you will give credence to one half of the manifold virtues he carefully names in your hearing.

Oct. 14th. We were early en route, and made some twenty miles. Our hunter, during the day, rejoined the caravan, laden with the best portions of three other fat cows, to add to the fund of life and good humor enjoyed by each.

Late in the afternoon, we made camp opposite a heavily wooded island, called Brady's Island, in memory of a man, so named, who was murdered upon it by his companion some eight years ago. The two were connected with a boat, laden with furs, on its passage to the States. They had frequently quarrelled, and were generally upon otherwise bad terms. On the day of the fatal occurrence, they were left alone in camp by the rest of the boat's crew, who went in quest of buffalo. At their return, Brady was found lying in his blood, — killed, as his companion affirmed, by the accidental discharge of his own rifle.

The tale was received quite doubtingly, and its listeners were only deterred from the execution of summary vengeance upon the murderer by thought of the bare possibility of its truth.

The body of the unfortunate man was buried near the spot, — but being subsequently disinterred by the wolves, his bones were left to bleach and moulder in the sun and rains of heaven. Some of them were lying scattered near by, upon our arrival, which were collected by the sympathizing voyageurs, who bestowed upon them those rites of sepulture they had been so long and cruelly denied.

The reader will naturally enquire, what became of the supposed murderer? His was a fearful retribution, — a mournful tale of suffering, worse than death, till death itself in pity came to his relief. Soon after the melancholy incident previously related, the shallowness of the Platte river compelled the company to abandon their boat, and make the best of their way to the States on foot, — a distance of two hundred and fifty miles to the nearest inhabitants, either Indian or white. Their provisions running short, and no game at hand, a separation was had about midway of their journey, and each one hurried to its termination as rapidly as possible. The murderer, being but an indifferent walker, was soon left far in the rear.

His comrades, on their arrival at the Pawnee village, sent two Indians to bring him in, and continued their course to Council Bluffs.

Nothing further was known of the subject of our sketch, till some eight or nine days subsequent, when a small party of engagés in the employ of the American Fur Company, on passing the Pawnee village, were met by the head-chief, who requested them to visit a white man lying sick at his lodge.

They went. He was the murderer, at the point of death. His story was briefly told.

The night succeeding the departure of his companions, in an attempt to light a fire with his pistol, to disperse by its smoke the myriads of musquitoes that swarmed around and nearly devoured him, an unknown charge it contained was lodged in his thigh-bone — severing it to a thousand pieces. In this condition he lay helpless. To walk was impossible;— he could scarcely move, far less

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

dress his wounds in a proper manner. He managed, however, to affix a piece of red flannel to an upright stick, to tell the transient traveller the site of his supposed last resting place, then, crawling with difficulty to the river-side, he remained six days and nights—tormented by mosquitoes, reduced by pain, and wasted by continued hunger, till scarcely the wreck of manhood was left him. It was then he longed for death to terminate his agony. Still he could not endure the thoughts of dying.

Early in the morning of the seventh day, his ear caught the indistinct murmur of sounds. Were they human voices? — No, he must be dreaming. He hears them again, It is no dream; — they are human voices!

They approach. Is it to his assistance?

O'erjoyed he beholds two Pawnees bending over him, with compassion pictured expressively upon their countenances. They gave him meat, they dressed his wounds, and did everything in their power to alleviate his misery.

Oh, say not there is no pity in the bosom of the red man!

Having constructed a rude litter of poles, and using their own robes for his bed, they carefully conveyed him upon their shoulders to the place he yet occupied. But the care of sympathizing attendants failed to atone for previous neglect. Mortification had already taken place, and death claimed him for a victim. He expired in the presence of those whom the good chief had called to his bed-side;—but, before his tongue refused to speak, he confessed the murder of Brady, and owned the justice of his punishment in all the untold miseries he had been compelled to endure. “Vengeance is mine, and I will REPAY IT, saith the Lord!”

On resuming our journey the road gradually bore towards the hills upon the left, (which presented an outline of conical eminences, rising, as the traveller advances, to an elevation of four or five hundred feet,) and finally crossed them at the point of an angle formed near the confluence of the two great forks of the Platte, upon the east side; from thence, descending to the opposite bottom, we reached a timberless spring and made camp soon after nightfall.

The lack of wood at this place was readily met by the great abundance of bois de vache, (buffalo-chips,) the common substitute of the prairies; and, in a brief interval, the camp-fires were merrily blazing, with all the appliances of cookery about them.

Early the next morning, our hunter rejoined the caravan, bringing with him the spoils of two more cows. He had passed the night upon the prairie alone, without coat or blanket, or anything to screen him from the bleak autumn winds, that swept over the naked plains, dancing their dirges to the dying year.

The sky gave evidence of an approaching storm, and we hastily started in quest of some more sheltered spot in which to weather it. A few miles brought us to the river, and, availing ourselves of a small supply of drift wood, we made halt.

The combustibles the vicinity afforded were soon collected, and the campfires imparted their generous warmth despite the falling rain. Nor were they permitted to remain long unembellished by the numerous kettles, frying-pans, and roasting-sticks at command.

I here enjoyed full test of some of the many varieties of mountain fare hitherto so freely enlarged upon by our voyageurs, —which, as they now asserted, would make a man “shed rain like an otter, and stand cold like a polar bear!”—quaintly adding, “if he could always live upon such ‘didins,’ he need never die!”

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

I must in justice confess that the real merits of our present "bill of fare," by far exceeded my previous expectations.

The rain continued till near night; but little did we care. The choicest the prairie afforded, was now before us, and, rain or shine, we were contented. Sound in health and buoyant in spirits, we fully enjoyed ourselves, despite the frowning elements.

A little before sundown, the rain subsided into a thick fog, and an old bull, in the consequent obscurity, straggled close upon camp.

The abrupt passage of a rifle-ball through his lights, was his first feeling sense of the presence of danger. The affrighted customer then retreated a few steps, and, falling, surrendered himself to the resistless power of cold lead.

A large band of cows also made their appearance, in the same manner and our hunter struck out to waylay them.

Permitting the unwitting animals to advance within good shooting distance, a discharge from his rifle brought down one of their number. The band then recoiled slightly; but, snuffing the odor of blood, they returned immediately to their prostrate companion.

This was enough, —a charm now riveted them to the spot, —a strange infatuation had seized upon them. They began by spurning the ground with their feet, —then, bellowing, gored the fallen beast, as if forcing her to rise, —then, rolling upon the grass, in demonstrative sympathy, —and, now that she had ceased to struggle and lay yet quivering in death, they licked her bleeding wounds and seemed to exercise a kind of mournful rivalry in the bestowment of their testimonials of affection.

She is encircled by her companions. An effort to approach from without is resisted by those within. A fight ensues, and all becomes confusion. Each turns against her neighbor, and continues the strife till the space around the carcass is again vacated; whereupon a general rush once more centers to the spot, and all unite to react the former scene.

In this manner they persisted in their frenzied devotion to the fallen one, as if determined to restore her to life and action, or perish by her side.

Meanwhile the hunter's rifle had been busily employed. But they heeded it not. Four more of their number lay gasping in death upon the ensanguined ground; and still they seemed no more disposed to leave the scene of slaughter than at first. Sixteen successive shots were fired, each bearing blood, wounds and death, and yet the spell was no nearer broken.

It was a spectacle vested with melancholy animation. The pawing, goring, bellowing, licking of wounds, and struggles of rival affection, remained the same, with no visible abatement of their vehemency.

The sun had set, and the sable hue of twilight empalled the blood-dank slaughter-ground. The death-dealing rifle had ceased its sharp crack, and the gore-scenting wolves, half starved and eager for their supposed prey, came flocking upon every side, mingling their wobegone howlings with the piteous moans of the spell-bound herd, and the loud whistlings of the prairie winds, — and yet, they lingered.

At last the impatient hunter advanced. More affrighted at the presence of man than the companionship of death, they now gave way, and reluctantly left the field to him, who had so unfeelingly occasioned their burthen of mourning and woe;—still, ever and anon stopping to gaze, as if longing to return and die with those they loved!

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

All hands were now summoned to aid at the work of butchery; but the fast-enshrouding darkness soon drove us back to camp, leaving the task not half completed.

Our withdrawal from the premises was the signal for possession by the eager wolves, whose ceaseless yelpings the livelong night, made the gloomy interval doubly dismal. By morning, nothing but bones and thick pieces of skin marked the scene of their recent revellings!

Thus early, I had learned, that to approach buffalo with success, the hunter should carefully maintain the leeward, such being their remarkable sensitiveness, they will sooner flee from the smell than the sight of a man. Their sense of smell, with the wind, in fact, far exceeds their scope of vision. It is so extremely acute, that even the fresh footsteps of a man, crossing their path, are to them a sure cause of alarm and flight.

Of all the diversities of game indigenous to the mountains and prairies of the great West, with the exception, perhaps, of the grizzly bear, no animal is more tenacious of life than the buffalo. To shoot it in the head, is an inane effort. No rifle can project a ball with sufficient force to perforate the thick hair and hide to its brain, through the double scull-bone that protects it. A paunch shot is equally vain. The only sure points for the marksman are, the heart, lights, kidneys, or vertebra; and even then the unyielding victim not unfrequently escapes.

Buffalo, wounded in the skirts of the lights, have been known to live for several days afterwards. I have witnessed their escape, even after the reception of fifteen bullet-wounds, and most of them at such points as would have proved fatal to almost any other animal.

In the summer of '43, I myself killed one of them, that had been shot through the pussy surface at the butt of the heart, apparently four or five days previous, which doubtless would have recovered had it remained unmolested.

A gun, suitable for killing this kind of game, should never carry to exceed forty balls to the pound — a lesser bore would be almost entirely useless. The distance generally required for a shot, the smallness of the ball, its liability to variation from the wind, with its failure to "hold up" and retain its force, contribute to render the use of such a piece little else than idle waste of ammunition.

Oct. 17th. The sun arose bright and clear, and with its first appearance the caravan was in motion. Proceeding up the South Fork some ten miles we halted for breakfast, and made arrangements for fording the stream.

Near us lay the carcasse of one of the cows wounded on the previous evening, and as yet scarcely dead. She had travelled thus far after being shot in the lights.

Our crossing was effected with little difficulty, but occupied till late in the afternoon. The river was full a mile wide and very shallow, with a soft sandy bed, requiring the strength of all the united teams to each waggon. The day proved cold, and the water was like an application of ice to the naked skin. Our teamsters, who were compelled to cross and recross, some dozen times, felt in not the best humor, and were better pleased than any one else at the termination of their unpleasant task.

Having safely gained the opposite bank, we travelled up the river five or six miles, and halted for the night.

During our course the bottoms upon either side presented one dense, interminable band of buffalo, far as the eye could reach. The whole prairie pictured a living mass, moved by impulsive dread, as the breeze heralded our approach, and the countless multitude made way before and on either hand.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Ever and anon, an old bull would linger, as if to intimidate, and not unfrequently venture within gun-shot. One fellow, in particular, passed sidelong, for a mile or more, stopping at intervals to gaze upon us, shaking his shaggy head in defiance, as much as to say, "you dare not come near!" Big Jim saw this, and his pride was wounded. The bull, in his opinion, had challenged the whole party, and there was no one stout-hearted enough to accept it.

Here was a chance for a full display of his bravery and skill. Ever since we had reached the buffalo range, his proud spirit had yearned to become the death of some one of these terrible monsters, that he might relate the deed of perilous exploit to wondering posterity, and incite the rising generation to emulate his noble achievement.

But, alas, for the fadeless laurels he might otherwise have won, in an evil hour his rifle had been sacrificed for the extermination of a huge, venomous serpent. He did the deed at one fell blow; — brave, but unfortunate! Yet he had one consolation amid his troubles, — no victory is ever gained without some loss to the conquerors.

Still, he needed his gun, for without it how was he to avenge the foul insult the savage beast of the prairie was even now hurling in the very face of the shrinking crowd? Something must be done. With these cogitations, an idea struck him, —he could borrow a rifle; so, advancing to a comrade, he exclaimed:

"Do lend me your rifle one minute!"

"Yes, Jim," was the ready reply. "But see you don't break it over the first paltry little snake you come across!"

"That's a lie. 'Twas a big rattle-snake I broke mine over. 'Twasn't a paltry little snake!"

Thus, vindicating his assaulted reputation, he took the gun and hastened to prostrate the impudent barbarian inviting attack.

Jim looked at the bull, and the bull looked at Jim, — shaking his head, and throwing the loose sand from beneath him high into the air with his feet, and goring the ground with his horns of burnished ebony. If the creature had looked terrible before, he now looked fourfold more so, in Jim's estimation.

Thinking caution the parent of safety, our hero was unwilling to venture further, and so, prostrating himself at full length behind a clustre of absinthe, (sage,) he planted his battery, having his high-crowned hat for a rest, and blazed away at the bull's head.

The hardened wretch stood the shot without flinching. Looking for a moment at the spot from whence the strange salute had proceeded, and again shaking his head and snorting with scorn, he wheeled and slowly trotted off.

Eager to get a second trial to finish the work so nobly begun, our hero commenced pursuit. Seeing him advancing, the bull thought it time to show his heels, and in a few minutes was lost in the distance.

The courageous Nimrod now, for the first time, bethought him of his hat, which, in the ardor of his bold charge, he had left at the spot chosen as his stand to hurl death and destruction to the naughty bull. He hastened to regain it — but no hat could be found; — the winds had borne it far away over the prairie, to be worn out in search of a wearer, and the unlucky bravo, hatless, re-joined the caravan.

Here the truth at once flashed upon the minds of the waggish clique, that had hitherto proved his sore annoyance, and they began anew:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“Now that beats me, clear out! How came you to give the bull your hat and leave yourself bare-headed? That’s another wrinkle!”

“It’s no such thing,” said Jim. “The wind took it away; — and it’s none of your business neither. I paid for it!”

“True. But what did the wind want with your hat? Sure, if it needed a foot-ball, to toss over the prairies, it would have taken your head, the lightest of the two!”

“You’re a fool!” retorted Jim, indignantly.

“There, now. That’s the time you cotcht it, my boy. Why, fellow, Mr. Jeems took off his hat, out of pure politeness, — to win the good opinion of the bull. He were right. Didn’t you see how the gentleman cow bowed and scraped in turn. Why, he throw’d the dirt clean over his back, not to be outdone in good breeding! Ah, but the pesky wind! While Mr. Jeems were showing his brotten up, what had it to do, but to snatch his hat and run off with it! Mr. Jeems are no fool! and the feller what says he am, — (I want you all to understand me; Mr. Jeems have been most shamefully abused and misused, and I can whip the chaps what’s done it — provided they’ll let me; — I say, then, I want you all to understand me!) Mr. Jeems are NO fool, and the man what says he am — is, — (I can’t think of words bad enough,) — is — is, as near the mark as though he’d drove centre!”

“Aye. Jim’s right. You are all a pack of dough-heads to make fun of him in the way you do. Suppose you’d be struck comical! Then what’d ye think of yourselves!”

“Poor Jim. Shoot grass, kill horse, break gun, burn shoe, scorch foot, and go bare-headed! Wat him mean?”

“I say, Jim. When’re going a hunting again? — ’case I want to go ‘long too!”

CHAPTER VI.

Ash Creek. Pawnee and Sioux battle-ground. Bread-root. The Eagle’s Nest. Mad wolf. Number and variety of prairie wolves, — their sagacity. Mad bull. Making and curing meat. Big Jim still unfortunate. Johnson’s creek. McFarlan’s Castle. Deceptiveness of distances. Express from the Fort. Brave Bear. Bull Tail. Talk with the Indians. Speech of Marto-cogershne. Reply. Tahtungah-sana’s address.

Oct 18th. BEARING to the right, over a high undulating prairie, we struck the North Fork of the Platte, after a drive of about twelve miles, and continuing up its left bank a short distance, camped for the night at the mouth of Ash Creek.

The stream at this place is a broad bed of sand, entirely dry, except in the spring months. Higher up, however, it affords a generous supply of pure running water, sustained by the numerous feeders that force their way into it, from the high grounds dividing the two rivers.

The valley is of variable width, and well timbered with beautiful ash groves, from which the creek derives its name. Here are also found several varieties of wild fruit indigenous to the mountains. As a whole, it presents to the eye a pretty flower-garden, walled in by huge piles of argillaceous rock, and watered by murmuring streamlets whose banks are ornamented with shade trees and shrubbery.

Near camp had been the scene of a fierce and bloody battle between the Pawnees and Sioux, in the winter of 1835. The affray commenced early in the morning, and continued till near night. A trader, who was present with the Sioux, on the occasion, describes it as having been remarkably

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

close. Every inch of ground was disputed — now the Pawnees advancing upon the retreating Sioux; and now the Sioux, while the Pawnees gave way; but, returning to the charge with redoubled fury, the former once more recoiled. The arrows flew in full showers, —the bullets whistled the death-song of many a warrior, —the yells of combating savages filled the air, and drowned the lesser din of arms.

At length arrows and balls were exhausted upon both sides, —but still the battle raged fiercer than before.

War-club, tomahawk and butcher-knife were bandied with terrific force, as the hostile parties engaged hand to hand, and the clash of resounding blows, commingling with the clamor of unearthly voices which rent the very heavens, seemed more to prefigure the contest of fiends than aught else.

Finally the Pawnees abandoned the field to their victorious enemies, leaving sixty of their warriors upon the ensanguined battle-ground. But the Sioux had paid dearly for their advantage; — forty-five of their bravest men lay mingled with the slain. The defeated party were pursued only a short distance, and then permitted to return without further molestation to their village, at the Forks of the Platte.

This disaster so completely disheartened the Pawnees, they immediately abandoned their station and moved down the river some four hundred miles, —nor have they again ventured so high up, unless in strong warparties.

About the same time the village on Republican fork of Kansas was also abandoned, and its inhabitants united with the Loups.

The evidences of this cruel death-harvest were yet scattered over the prairie, whose bones and skulls looked sad, indeed. One of the latter was noticed, near camp, with a huge wasp's nest occupying the vacuum once filled by the subtle organs of intellect. Strange tenant, truly, of a human skull, —but, perhaps, not an unfit antitype of the fierce passions that whilom claimed it as their dwelling place.

A specimen of the bread-root, (*psoralea esculenta*,) was procured from the creek-bank by one of the voyageurs. This is very common in the vicinity of the mountains, and attains a size from twenty to thirty inches in circumference. It is taprooted, and generally prefers the rich sandy soil of bottoms and ravines, —not unfrequently penetrating to the depth of five or six feet. In shape, it is much like the common beet. Its exterior is covered with a thick ligument of tough fibres, curiously interwoven, enveloping a white pulpy substance, which is very sweet and pleasantly tasted. The day following we proceeded some twenty miles, and camped at a place called the Eagle's Nest. A few scattering trees at the right of the bottom, here mark the transition to the high prairie. One of these was the war-eagle's eyry, upon which she rears her annual brood, and teaches it to soar far away, or levy tribute from the surrounding wilderness.

The proud bird of Jove was yet sailing aloft, in silent majesty, almost lost to vision in the long space of intervening blue that told the grandeur of her flight; and, tinged with the purple and gold of the setting sun, she seemed looking down with a jealous eye upon the unwonted invaders of her earthly home. A few light clouds, garnished with day's departing glory danced athwart the western sky, as the full moon arose, hastening to reenter her nightly pathway, and course amid the array of glittering worlds, and smile upon the wide realms of Solitude; —while countless herds of grazing buffalo covered the prairies on either side of the broad and silent river; and naught met

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the listening ear, save the dolesome hooting of the midnight owl, as she resumed her nocturnal ditty, to enhance the deep melancholy of loneliness; or the shrill whistlings of the prairie-winds, as they sported in mirth and chanted their requiems to the dying year; or the terrific bellowings of the hoarse-toned bison, the softening cadence of whose voices sounded trebly mournful as it swept far along and became lost in the distance; or yet, the dismal howlings of the half-starved wolves, that gathered by scores upon every hill-top and renewed, in more piteous accents, their ceaseless concert; —all these united to invest the scene, so magnificent in itself, with a savage wildness, at once incitive of terror and admiration.

In our progress during the day I remarked, at frequent intervals, bare places coated with saline efflorescences, and occasional plats of fine bluish grass, (*herba salée*,) —appearances quite common from this onward.

Our night slumbers were disturbed by the quick discharge of firearms, which instantly brought every man to his feet, rifle in hand. The cause of this alarm was the appearance of a mad wolf among the caravan animals, and several shots were fired before the guard could despatch him. He proved one of the largest of his species, and looked fearful as his blood-red eyeballs and foaming mouth were exposed by the camp-fire.

In the morning it was ascertained he had bitten nine head of horses and cattle.

The buffalo range affords every variety of wolves, common to the mountains and regions still further west. Of these there are five distinct classifications, viz: The big white, or buffalo wolf; the shaggy brown; the black; the gray, or prairie wolf; and the cayeute, (*wa-chunka-monet*,) or medicine-wolf of the Indians.

The white and brown wolves are the most numerous, and follow the buffalo in bands of hundreds, subsisting upon the carcasses of such as die of themselves or are slaughtered as their necessities demand.

These wolves behave with great sagacity in their predatory operations, and appear to exercise a perfect understanding and concert of action with each other on such occasions. First, stationing themselves by files at given distances along the course their intended victim is expected to run, two or more of them enter the herd of unconscious buffalo, and, singling out the fittest one, drive it to the track at which their companions await to take part in the grand race. This done, the victim is made to run the gauntlet between two rows of wolves. As it advances, others join their fresh numbers to the chase, till at length, tired down and exhausted in strength, the ill-fated animal falls ready prey to their greediness. The poor creature is first hamstrung to prevent its escape, and then literally devoured alive!

The black wolf is seldom met with in these parts. It nearly equals the white and brown in size, and is fully as large as the common cur-dog.

The prairie wolf is not more than half the size of the above mentioned, and much less ferocious. Its color is of a dark gray, and its fur quite soft and fine.

The cayeute or medicine-wolf compares with the common feist, and is of a grayish color, much like that of the wild rabbit of the States. Its fur is fine and thick, and might be turned to good account for the manufacture of caps, muffs, &c.

The Indians cherish many superstitious notions in regard to this animal, and hold it in great veneration. They consider it as the messenger employed by the Great Spirit, on special occasions, to herald the approach of events interesting to the welfare of his red children, and for that reason

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

they are never known to harm or molest it.

Just at daylight, a large band of buffalo crossed the river nearly opposite to camp. It was headed by an old bull, that led the way, grunting and bellowing as he advanced, as if in mock personation of the bugleman of a corps of cavalry. Some three or four hundred cows and calves followed, side by side, with marked and regular tread, like platoons of infantry marching in set step to music, presenting a truly comical exhibition.

A voyageur seized his rifle and saluted with its contents the musicmaster and captain-general of the advancing army, as he was about to ascend the river bank. In an instant the whole detachment to "right about face," and retreat precipitately to the rearward shore, with no other music than the clatter of hoofs and the splashing of water, or order than the confused rivalry for speedy escape from the unexpected presence of danger.

Oct. 20th. Resuming our course, during the forenoon, the strange deportment of a buffalo bull near the trail arrested attention. He was running in a circle, at the height of his speed, and narrowing its sphere at each gyration. Several of us rode out to him, — but he still, continued, (with frothing mouth and protruding tongue, swollen to the utmost distention of his jaws, rolling eyeballs, like globes of clotted gore; and bellowing for pain,) following the last-decreasing limits of his strange course, regardless of our presence.

He soon commenced whirling round and round, with faltering, half stumbling steps, and finally fell prostrate before us, apparently in the last aroxysm of mortal agony. In vain he struggled to rise, while his tongue bled from between his jaws, chafed in fruitless effort to close them, and his head, keeping time with the convulsive throes of his fast-waning strength, tore up the prairie-sod and lashed the ground in the mad fury of effort.

The spectacle was one of the most striking exhibitions of excruciating pain I ever witnessed. Even the rough mountaineers were excited to pity, and gladly alleviated his miseries by hastening his end. A friendly bullet put a period to his sufferings, and placed him far beyond the reach of summer's heat and winter's cold, mad wolves and all the inexpressible horrors of hydrophobia.

At our noon encampment we commenced the process of "making meat," preparatory to passing a long distance devoid of game; and, as the reader may be anxious to know what kind of an operation this is, I will explain. It consists simply in cutting into thin slices the boneless parts of buffalo, or other meat, and drying them in the wind or sun. Meat thus cured may be preserved for years without salt. Ropes of raw hide were stretched around the waggons, upon which the results of our labor were left to the finishing effects of the wind and sun as we proceeded, — thus making an important saving in the item of time.

It is astonishing how long a time fresh meat may be kept without injury, upon the grand prairies, in dry weather, when it receives the free access of air. Some of that killed on our first arrival among buffalo was yet hanging to the waggons, as sweet and sound as ever. I have known it to be preserved, in this way, for ten or twelve days in the heart of summer. Meat, packed in snow, while in a frozen state, may be retained fresh for months without injury. I have known an instance of its being thus kept from January till June. The air is so pure and dry, it requires but little effort to preserve meat, for any requisite length of time, almost at any season of the year.

Our hunter, having proceeded in advance of the waggons during the afternoon, was overtaken about sundown at a place selected for nightcamp, which he had ornamented with the carcasses of three cows, —and there again, was soon witnessed another display of rare feasting, such as moun-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

taineers alone know how to appreciate and enjoy.

The night proved cold and uncomfortable, and the bright-glowing campfires presented most captivating inducements to the shivering sentinels, as they paced their dreary rounds, to step within its cheering influence. Big Jim, who was on the third "relieve," thought it too bad he should be compelled to suffer so much from cold, while a nice warm fire was permitted to waste its kind heat upon the bleak air of night, without so much as one to enjoy its beneficence.

No, it would not do. "Why mayn't I just as well stand guard at the fire, as elsewhere? I can, I'm sure. I'll stand this time, and not lay as I did before, and then there'll be no danger of falling asleep and burning one's self; nor'll they have the chance to twit me about lying guard and burning shins. I'll head'em this time, and they wont know the difference."

So saying, he approached the fire, and, giving it a kick, extended his hands towards its blaze, —ever and anon rubbing them together and then again spreading them to receive its pleasing warmth; then turning his back to partake alike of its comforting influences and obviate the jealousy that might otherwise be engendered between front and rear.

Now, he stands attent, —he hears something move. He stretches himself to his full height, on tip-toe, and gazes in the black envelope of surrounding night, made doubly obscure in contrast with the refulgence of the camp-fire.

"How dark it has grown!" said Jim. "What can it be? Wonder if it's Indians. Pooh! it's nothing but the wind. Bless me, I can't see the use of a poor devil's standing guard on such a dark night as this! (stepping backward still nearer the fire,) he can't see nothing, if he does. Feugh, —what is it smells so? (turning round.) Good gracious, how hot my back is!"

The mystery of Jim's present predicament is easily explained. The skirts of his jeans coat, having come in contact with the wind-tossed flames, caught fire, and were burned to the shoulders before he was aware of the accident. The garment was rendered entirely useless, and even his pantaloons were burnt to his skin, in several places.

Jim began to think it as bad to stand as to lay guard, and concluded that, of the two, fire was more dangerous than Indians;—for, one thing was certain, the Indians had never yet injured him, but he could not say as much of fire!

In the morning, as may be supposed, our hero's last mishap was the prolific subject of' comment, and the wags were promptly on the alert to amuse themselves still further at his expense:

"Say, would you believe it! —That's the way Jim's hit upon to shine in this crowd, —he burns up his old coat to make a light!"

"Ah, ha! So he means to shine by the light of his old clothes, and come it over us in an underhand manner! Jim, that'll never do I tell you, once for all."

"Wonder if he wont burn up himself next?"

"He? No. He's too green and sappy to burn himself, and so he takes his old clothes!"

"Poor Jim. Shoot grass, kill horse, break gun, burn shoe, scorch foot, lose hat, stick coat in him fire! Poor fellow. No can do without Jim, no how."

The third day succeeding the last mentioned adventure, we passed a stream, called by the traders Johnson's creek, in memory of a man by that name who was murdered in its vicinity, several years since, by the Indians.

He was a missionary, and on his way to Oregon, with a party headed by one John Gray. As they were about to raise camp, one morning, a band of Yanktau-Sioux came charging over the hills,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

and preparations were made to resist them. Such a course Mr. Johnson felt scrupulous of acceding to, and stoutly protested against it, —affirming it to be wrong.

As the savages approached, the ill-fated man stepped forward to meet them unarmed, despite the remonstrances of his comrades, —imagining the Indians would not kill him, as he was a missionary and had come to do them good.

They, however, proved regardless of him or his intended good, and he fell the victim of his own foolish credulity. Three Indians fell in the conflict that ensued, and he and they tilled the same grave.

Oct. 24th. About noon we crossed Gonnevillè's creek, a large easterly affluent of the Platte. This stream also derives its name from a trapper, killed near it in an Indian fight, some eight years since.

Upon the south bank of Gonnevillè's creek, ten or twelve miles from the river, is a singular natural formation, known as the Court House, or McFarlan's Castle, on account of its fancied resemblance to such a structure. It rises in an abrupt quadrangular form, to a height of three or four hundred feet, and covers an area of two hundred yards in length by one hundred and fifty broad. Occupying a perfectly level site in an open prairie, it stands as the proud palace of Solitude, amid her boundless domains.

Its position commands a view of the country for forty miles around, and meets the eye of the traveller for several successive days, in journeying up the Platte. We have been in sight of it for three days, and even now seem no nearer than at first, notwithstanding our course, meanwhile, has borne not far from a direct line towards it.

Here, for the first time, I remarked the deceptiveness of distances, on the high prairies and in regions adjacent to the mountains. Sometimes an object will appear as if within a mile, at most, which cannot be reached short of fifteen or twenty miles; then, again, objects will seem to be much further off than they really are.

I attribute this, in part, to three several causes:—First, the variable state of the atmosphere, in regard to density. Second, the absence or plenitude of humid exhalations and effluviæ in the air of different regions. Third, the peculiar locality of some places in regard to the reception of the sun's rays.

In passing from Gonnevillè's creek to Fort Platte, we encountered no more buffalo, —these animals having been driven back into the high prairies by bands of strolling Indians.

If the prospect had hitherto been lonesome, it now seemed threefold lonely. The hard-beaten footpaths that had furrowed the bottoms and plains, in all directions, ever since our first entrance to the buffalo range, were still seen; but, unhonored by the presence and unmarked by the footprints of their whilom travellers, they looked like the once oft-trodden streets of some deserted city.

Late in the afternoon we were joined by two engagés from Fort Platte, whose object it was to hasten our advance. Soon after, we entered upon a stretch of burnt prairie, and were compelled to travel till daylight the next morning, before a sufficiency of grass could be found for a camping place.

Oct. 25th. Resuming our course about midday, we had proceeded only a few miles, when a mounted Indian appeared upon the opposite bank of the river, and accosted us:

“Chay, cullo! Hanno chaum-pa-monet ha Mena-huska tour?” (Tell me, friend!—Are those the Long-knife's wagons?)[6]

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

On being answered in the affirmative, he commenced crossing to join us.

Plunging into the river with his horse, he had proceeded about midway of the stream, when the panting beast suddenly sank into the quicksand, throwing its rider head foremost into the water. At length, having effected a ford, he hurried up to us, profusely dripping with wet, as evidence of the thoroughness of his recent drenching.

First shaking hands with the company, he began to inquire about liquor, affirming the waggons contained that article, and adding, it was "right the Long-knife should bring the fire-water to give to the red man," as did the Bad-medicine, —but it was wrong to sell it. For his part he would not buy the fire-water. He would buy blankets, knives, beads, and ammunition, not the fire-water; but the Long-knife should give it to him.

The personage thus introduced was one of the chiefs of the Brulé Sioux, and sported the name of Marto-cogershne, or Brave Bear. He was a turbulent fellow, that proved the pest of his village traders. Slim and spare-made in person, he was somewhat pale and sickly looking, and seemed about thirty years of age. His arms were a short fusee, with a bow and arrows slung to his shoulders, and a butcher-knife affixed to his belt. His hair was long, parted in front, and turned backwards; that upon the occiput, being bound in a cluster with panther's skin, hung in a plated cue and almost trailed the ground, while a lone eagle's plume completed his headdress. A robe enveloped his body, which, with moccasins, leggins, and breech-cloth, constituted his full costume, —a description of dress responding to that almost universally common among mountain tribes.

We were soon joined by others of his people, who eagerly enquired respecting the amount of liquor brought with us.

Among these were several individuals recognized by our voyageurs as old acquaintances; particularly one, an old chief called Bull Tail, (Tah-tunga-sana,) who was distinguished in attire from all his fellows by the addition of a hair-seal cap and a frock-coat, which he had received as presents from the whites.

One of our party gave a favorable account of the old fellow, and related a story much to his credit. The narrator, during the previous winter, while searching for stray horses among the hills, had become so bewildered he was unable to find his way back to camp. He thus wandered for four successive days, unarmed, with out food, and with but a single robe for covering. His destiny would, doubtless, have been to perish, had not the kind hearted Tah-tunga-sana discovered him, and, pitying his forlorn condition, taken him to the village, upon his own horse, some twenty miles off, going himself on foot the entire distance. Here, the lost one was treated to the best the lodge of his deliverer afforded, and, when sufficiently recovered, he was escorted to the nearest station of the whites.

I turned for another look at the worthy chieftain, who now rode up and greeted his protégé with much cordiality.

He appeared to be about eighty years of age, and was gray-headed, spare-visaged, and much wrinkled. His coat, buttoned close around him, served for a robe, while his matted ear-locks disclosed upon the one side a raven's and upon the other a hawk's feather, for ornaments. His face, like those of his companions, was liberally bedaubed with vermilion, and each cheek embellished with alternate spots of white and black, by way of variety. His only weapons were a bow, arrows, and a tomahawk-pipe.

As a whole, he presented rather a shabby and ludicrous appearance, that, were it not for the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

recollection of his worthy conduct, would have excited, in the mind of the beholder, far more of contempt than interest.

A Sioux squaw, the wife of a French engagé, accompanying us on her return from the States, now received the marked attention of our visitors. It is rare that an Indian will shake hands with a woman; but now, they might break through the restraints of custom; this was a special case; she had visited the white man's lodge, and could tell them many interesting things, —she was something more than a common squaw, —they might shake hands with her. She was accordingly greeted in a most flattering manner, and found tedious employment in answering the numerous questions with which she was plied.

Continuing for a few miles further, we made camp just at nightfall, and were promptly joined by a new recruit of inquisitive visitors, from an adjoining village.

The whole throng of Indians now numbered some thirty, and demanded a "talk" with the Long-knife. Upon this a circle was formed, with the whites upon one side and Indians upon the other, when Marto-cogershe opened the harangue in behalf of his people.

He commenced in a low, distinct tone of voice. His robe, drawn loosely around him, was held to its place by the left hand, exposing his right arm and shoulder. As he proceeded he became more animated, and seemed to enter into the full spirit of his discourse. The modulations of his voice, its deep intonations and expressive cadences, coupled with a corresponding appropriateness of every look and gesture, presented one of the most perfect specimens of delivery I ever witnessed.

His speech, as imperfectly translated upon the occasion, ran as follows:

"Long-knife: We are glad to see you — we are glad to see your people, and shake you all by the hand, that we may smoke together and be friends.

"Long-knife: We are glad the Great Spirit has put it into your heart to return with the road-travelers, (waggons,) and the white buffalo, (oxen,) and the medicine-dogs, (horses,) bearing fire-water, (whiskey,) blankets, and many other good things, ere yet the chill winds and snows have compelled His children to light the lodge-fires of winter. The Long-knife brings choice things to the red man, and it is good that we trade. (Applause.)

"The Great Spirit is good to His children. To us He has given the buffalo, the elk, the deer, and the antelope, that we may be fed and clothed, and furnished with lodges to shelter us from the storms and cold. To us He has given the mountains and prairies, for hunting grounds. For us He has taught the streams to flow, and planted trees upon their banks, to give us food and drink, that we may meet around our lodge-fires with comfort and rejoice in His goodness, even while he spreads his white robe upon the hills, and lays the couch of winter upon the plains.

"All these—all this country—everything that the Long-knife beholds are ours. The Yellow-hair[7] said truly, —all, all belong to us; —we have them —the Great Spirit has given them to us, —they are ours! (Great applause.)

"Long-knife: You have come to trade with us:—it is good. Your people are wise, and make many things;—you bring them to us, and we take them; but we give you robes and horses in their stead;—we pay you for them all. Yet, the Long-knife pays not for all he takes from us.

"Do I say the Long-knife steals? No. The Long-knife will not steal. He says, none but bad men steal, and the Long-knife is not bad. But yet he takes our property without paying for it! He kills our game, he eats our meat, he burns our wood, he drinks our water, and he travels our country, and what does he give the red man in exchange for all this? (Unbounded applause.)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“Long-knife and friend: My people are generous, —they are brave, they are all soldiers. The Long-knife bears the fire-water in his roadtravellers, (waggon;)—we have heard of it and are glad.

“My people would drink of the fire-water that their strong hearts may become stronger. It is good that they should drink it, —it is good that the Long-knife should give it to them; that we be twice glad to see him, and bless him in our hearts while we drink around our lodge-fires. (Applause.)

“Long-knife: Would you be our friend? Then give us the fire-water. My people are generous, but they are brave. The Long-knife has taken our property, let him refuse not the fire-water, lest they be angry and rise like the mountain bear, nerved for conflict. Then will they take it of themselves and avenge the wrongs of the red man!” (Great applause.)

Upon this, the Brave Bear resumed his seat, and the commandant began his reply, which was rendered into the Sioux language, by their interpreter. The purport of it was:

“It is true, the Great Spirit is good to His children. He made all things of which the Brave Bear speaks, and He has given them to his children. The white and the red man are alike his children; the buffalo, the elk, the deer, and the antelope, with the wood, the water, and the whole country around, equally belong to both.

“I and many people have come as friends, to trade with you. We have smoked with you before. The Long-knife takes nothing from you he pays not for. He buys the things he bears to you in a far distant country, and throws for them the white-iron[8]. He brings them to you and swaps them for robes and horses.

“He takes nothing without paying for it, unless it be that which the Great Spirit has given equally to his children, —the white and the red man.

“Would the Brave Bear and his people be friends to us? We are friendly— we are generous. We will give tobacco to the Brave Bear, that he and his people may smoke and be our friends. But the Long-knife will not here give him the fire-water. Let him come to the Long-knife’s lodge, then shall he have of it a little, that he may bless the Long-knife in his heart. The Brave Bear can have none now.

“The Brave Bear says, his people are generous, but they are brave, —they are all soldiers. Be it so. My people are generous, —they are brave they are all soldiers! Does the Brave Bear wish for fight? My people are ready to either smoke or fight! The Brave Bear says, unless I give him the fire-water for his people, they will nerve their arms for conflict, and take it! Will they? Let them try! The Long-knife says, let them try!”

The conclusion of this reply was received with a bad grace by those to whom it was addressed, and created great excitement among them. Several left for the village, obviously for the purpose of arming and returning with increased numbers to the meditated attack.

Meanwhile our arms were put in a proper condition for resistance, and all needful arrangements made to give the assailants a warm reception should they commence upon us. This done, our commandant brought a few plugs of tobacco, and, laying them before the Brave Bear, said:

“It is good that the Brave Bear and his people should smoke. Here is tobacco, —let him take it to his warriors that we and they be friends; —or would he rather fight?”

Bull Tail, (Tah-tunga-sana,) who had had hitherto remained silent, now arose and addressed his companions:

“Tah-tunga-sana is grieved at the words of the Brave Bear. Would my brothers fight the Long-knife, and rob him of what he has brought to us, that they may become fools by drinking the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

fire-water?

“Who shall then bring us medicine-irons (guns) to kill our meat; or knives to butcher it; or blankets and beads for our squaws; or the red-earth (vermilion) to paint our faces when we arm for war? And, who shall bring us all the other things so needful for us?

“The Long-knife will not do it. You rob him. No one will bring them to us. We shall be without them! We shall be poor indeed!

“Brothers: Why would you drink the fire-water, and become fools? Would it not be better that the Long-knife no more bring it to us? We give for it our robes and our horses;—it does us no good. It makes us poor. We fight our own brothers, and kill those we love, because the firewater is in us and makes our hearts bad! The fire-water is the red man’s enemy!

“Brothers: Tah-tunga-sana is old;—will you listen to him. He has been always the friend of the pale-face. When first the Yellow-hair (Gen. Clarke) came to the red man’s lodge, Tah-tunga-sana took him by the hand. He will always take the pale-face by the hand. He loves the pale-face. The pale-face is his brother, —he is our brother! —He brings us many good things.

“Brothers: The Long-knife has spoken well. It is good that we smoke, —that we, and the Long-knife, and his people may be friends. Let us accept his present, and go to our lodges, and there tell to our children how kind the Long-knife is to the red man.”

The speech was received in silence, —no one expressing either approbation or dissent, as the old man resumed his seat. The Brave Bear hung his head sullenly, but said nothing. The talk had evidently come to a close. At last, Bull Tail arose, and, shaking hands with the commandant and each of the company, took the tobacco and left for the village. The others soon after, one by one, followed his example, and we were finally rid of their unwelcome presence; not, however, until they had stolen an axe and several other articles, despite the strictness of our vigilance.

CHAPTER VII.

The Chimney. A bet. Spur of the Rocky Mountains. Scott’s Bluff. Romantic scenery. Mimic city. A pyramid. A monument. An elevated garden. Mountain sheep. An Eden. Death in camp. The wanderer’s grave. Horse creek and gold. Goche’s hole. Arrival at Fort Platte. Remarks by the way. Prairie travel. Locality and description of the Fort. Indian lodges. Migratory habits of mountain and prairie tribes. Scenes at Fort. Drunken Indians. Tragical event. Indian funeral. Speech of Etespa-huska on the death of his father.

Oct. 26th. RAISING camp at daylight we resumed our way, and soon afterwards arrived opposite the “Chimney,” an extraordinary natural curiosity that had continued in view and excited our admiration for some four days past.

This singular formation surmounts a conical eminence which rises, isolated and lonely, in the open prairie, reaching a height of three hundred feet. It is composed of terrene limestone and marl, quadrangularly shaped, like the spire of some church, six feet by ten at its base, with an altitude of more than two hundred feet, —making, together with the mound, an elevation of five hundred feet.[9] A grand and imposing spectacle, truly;—a wonderful display of the eccentricity of Nature!

How came such an immense pile so singularly situated? What causes united their aid to throw up this lone column, so majestic in its solitude, to overlook the vast and unbroken plains that sur-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

round it?

The "Chimney" is situated about three miles to the left of the mountain trail, though it seems no more than eight hundred yards distant. Upon this question our party entertained no small diversity of opinion. Some of the less knowing were confident it could not exceed a half mile; and one fellow offered to bet five dollars he could run to it in fifteen minutes.

The banter was promptly accepted, and the "greenhorn," doffing his coat and hat, started in full expectation of winning the wager. But, instead of fifteen, it took him forty-five minutes to reach the spot!

The day after passing the "Chimney," we entered a broad defile of lofty ridges, and made camp. This locality is known as Scott's Bluff, which is, properly speaking, a wing of the Rocky Mountains.

From Ash creek to this place, an almost precipitous wall of arenaceous rock, limestone, and marl, shuts the high prairie from the river bottoms. As the traveller proceeds, this wall or ledge gradually increases in height, and recedes from the river, sometimes to a distance of thirty or forty miles, till it unites in a chain of hills, many of which are covered with sturdy pines, and others are mere heaps of naked sand or indurated earth. The ridge then continues its course until it at length becomes united with the lateral chain of the Rocky Mountains, which bounds the "Plains of Laramie" upon the southeast.

At Scott's Bluff these hills crowd themselves abruptly towards the Platte, where they present a most romantic and picturesque scenery.

Our camp was in a rich opening, or valley, two miles wide, and walled in upon the right and left by perpendicular masses of earth and rock, that tower to a height of from three to eight hundred feet. In reaching it, the trail bore leftward from the river, about seven miles, through a level prairie, by which we were inducted to the valley, without any perceptible variation of its general surface.

Near the entrance, upon our left, the spectacle was grand and imposing beyond description. It seemed as if Nature, in mere sportiveness, had thought to excel the noblest works of art, and rear up a mimic city as the grand metropolis of her empire.

There stood the representations of palaces, with their domes and balustrades; churches, with their spires and cupolas; and streets, with their gigantic dwellings, stores, work-shops, and warehouses. And there, also, were parks, pleasure-grounds, and public squares, all so admirably defined by the agency of the winds and rains of ages, that the traveller might readily imagine himself to have arrived within the precincts of the deserted city of some peopleless country, whose splendor and magnificence once more than vied with the far-famed Palmyra of the desert, even in its best days. To the right arose a pile of sand-rock and marl in pyramidal form, three hundred feet high, that occupied its prairie site detached from hill or other eminence.

Near this stood a more singular natural formation than any previously noticed. It described a complete circle, of one thousand feet in circumference, and attained an altitude of not far from four hundred feet. Its sides were of great regularity, and represented masses of solid masonry, rising abruptly till within sixty or seventy feet of the summit, where they decline in a blunt, cone-like manner, reducing the periphery to one third that of its base. At this point is reposed a semi-spherical form, regularly jutting with a gradual swell upon all sides—then tapering to an oval shape till near the apex, at which the whole mass is surmounted by a rude imitation of sculp-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

tered flame, pointing upwards to the sun, as if this strange monument of nature had been erected in honor of the great source of light and heat!

Still further to the right, upon the river bank, is another immense pile, exceeding either of the before described in altitude. It is an oblong square, and presents erect lateral walls upon three sides, leaving upon the fourth a gradual acclivity which faces the river. Its summit expands into a beautiful terrace containing an area of several acres, which at the proper season is adorned with herbs, flowers, shrubbery, and grass, like a pleasure garden upon some house-top, and commands a view of the whole country, lending enchantment to the neighboring scenes. Its base is about one mile long by twelve hundred yards wide, and points endwise from the river towards the valley.

Then comes the continuous wall which bounds the locality upon the right. This likewise presents a level summit, varying from fifteen yards to a half mile in breadth, for a distance of ten miles, when, slowly sinking in its course, it finally becomes lost in the prairie.

Covered with grass and shrubs, it is the favorite home of the mountain sheep, where she breeds and rears her young, secure in her inaccessible fastnesses; and oftentimes from its precipitous edge, at elevations of six or eight hundred feet above the adjacent prairie, will her head and mammoth horns be seen, peering in wonder upon the rare traveller, as he passes adown the valley.

The interval between the two mural ridges is of uniform width for about ten miles, and is watered by a beautiful stream nearly the whole distance, when it inducts the traveller to the open prairie, —leaving the immense wall which bounded it upon the leftward, at his entrance, transformed to high conical hills, covered with pines, and almost lost to view in the growing space; while that upon his right, diminishing in size, gradually disappears and unites with the far-spreading plain. Most of the varieties of wild fruits indigenous to the mountains are found in this vicinity, and also numerous bands of buffalo, elk, deer, sheep, and antelope, with the grizzly bear.

In the summer months the prospect is most delightful, and affords to the admiring beholder an Eden of fruits and flowers. No higher encomium could be passed upon it than by employing the homely phrase of one of our voyageurs. In speaking of the varied enchantments of its scenery at that season, he said: "I could die here, then, —certain of being not far from heaven!"

Before leaving this romantic spot, feelings of gloom and melancholy usurped those of pleasing admiration, by the death of one of our number.

The deceased was on his way to the mountains for the recovery of his health, with a frame fearfully reduced by the ravages of that fell destroyer consumption. For several days past he had declined rapidly, owing to the weather and the unavoidable exposure incident to our mode of travelling.

To-day the cold was more than usually severe, and an uncomfortable rain and sleet commenced soon after camping. In an attempt to pass from the waggons to the fire, he staggered and fell; —before any one of us could arrive to his assistance, he had breathed his last.

We buried him upon the bank of the stream that wends its course through the valley. Darkness, with its sable pall, had enveloped the scene as we covered him from view, and left the winds and the wolves to howl his requiem, until the voice of spring shall bid the wild-flowers grow and bloom upon his grave.

This lovely valley had before this witnessed the death-scene of one who left his bones to bleach within its limits. His name was Scott, from whom the neighboring eminences derive their present appellation.

Attracted by the enchanting beauty of the place and the great abundance of game the vicinity

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

afforded, he wandered hither alone and made it his temporary residence. While thus enjoying the varied sweets of solitude, he became the prey of sickness and gasped his life away; —and none were there to watch over him, but the sun by day and the stars by night! or fan his fevered brow, save the kindly breezes; or bemoan his hapless fate, other than the gurgling stream that sighed its passing sympathy beside the couch of death!

There is a mournful interest and a touching melancholy associated with this simple story, that must thrill with emotion the finer feelings of our nature. The incident, which had so recently transpired, contributed to enhance these gloomy sensations to an extent I never before experienced. I felt — I cannot tell how. I felt like giving vent to my feelings in verse. Yet, I cannot write poetry. I made the attempt, however, and here is the result before the reader:

THE WANDERER'S GRAVE.

Away from friends, away from home  
And all the heart holds dear,  
A weary wand'rer laid him down,  
Nor kindly aid was near.

And sickness prey'd upon his frame  
And told its tale of woe,  
While sorrow mark'd his pallid cheeks  
And sank his spirit low.

Nor waiting friends stood round his couch  
A healing to impart, —  
Nor human voice spoke sympathy,  
To sooth his aching heart.

The stars of night his watchers were,  
His fan the rude winds' breath,  
And while they sigh'd their hollow moans,  
He closed his eyes in death.

Upon the prairie's vast expanse  
This weary wand'rer lay;  
And far from friends, and far from home,  
He breath'd his life away!

A lovely valley marks the spot  
That claims his lowly bed;  
But o'er the wand'rer's hapless fate  
No friendly tear was shed.

No willing grave received the corpse

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE  
BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Of this poor lonely one;  
His bones, alas, were left to bleach  
And moulder 'neath the sun!

The night-wolf howl'd his requiem,  
The rude winds danced his dirge;  
And e'er anon, in mournful chime,  
Sigh'd forth the mellow surge!

The Spring shall teach the rising grass  
To twine for him a tomb;  
And, o'er the spot where he doth lie,  
Shall bid the wild flowers bloom.

But, far from friends, and far from home,  
Ah, dismal thought, to die!  
Oh, let me 'mid my friends expire,  
And with my fathers lie.

Oct. 27th. The day being clear and pleasant, we travelled rapidly, and in the course of the afternoon reached Horse creek. This stream is a large affluent of the Platte, heading in the Black Hills, and, tracing its way in a northeasterly direction, through a timberless country, (in many places mere barren wastes,) makes its debouchment nearly fifteen miles above Scott's Bluff.

The region adjacent to its head is represented as being rich in minerals, among which is gold; and from my limited information respecting its geological character, I am inclined to accredit the rumor. The story runs thus:

Six or eight years since, Du Shay, an old French hunter, while ranging in the parts above alluded to, on crossing one of the two principal forks that unite to form the main stream, observed a singular looking something in the creek bed, which he picked up. It was apparently a fragment of rock, very heavy, and contained numerous yellow specks.

Having deposited it in his bullet-pouch for preservation, subsequently, in approaching a band of buffalo, its weight became so annoying he thoughtlessly threw it away. The year following he visited Santa Fe, at which place his pouch was accidentally emptied, and, among its contents, several bright particles, that had become parted from the rock, attracted the attention of the Mexicans. These were carefully gathered up, and, upon due examination, proved to be virgin gold.

The old man, on his return, searched diligently for the spot that afforded the treasure he had so foolishly thrown away, —but (not being intellectually one of the brightest gems of nature's casket, and feeble and childish withal) he was unable to find it, or even to decide upon which of the two streams it belonged.

Upon one of the affluents of Horse creek, thirty or forty miles south of the Platte, is a beautiful valley, shut in by two ridges of precipitous hills, known as Goche's hole.

This locality, in wildness and picturesque beauty, claims affinity to the neighborhood of Scott's Bluff. Its area is broad and of several miles extent, —inaccessible except at two or three points. The

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

surrounding hills are generally composed of marl and earthy limestone. Towering in vertical walls to the height of many hundred feet, they present the appearance of a strongly fortified place. The soil is remarkably rich, well watered, and timbered, —strikingly contrasting with the nude sterility and desolation of the circumjacent country.

A heavy fall of snow during the night prevented our leaving camp until the fourth day subsequent, when we were again en route. Having passed the night of Nov. 1st at Morain's Point, the next day we arrived at Fort Platte. This latter place is situated a short distance above the mouth of Laramie river, and is our point of present destination.

From Horse creek to the Laramie river, the bottoms, in many places, afforded dense groves of heavy timber—the more agreeable as we had been so long accustomed to open and woodless prairies.

The geological character of the country is nearly the same with that previously described—though possessed of greater humidity of soil. The formations, noticed in the vicinity of Scott's Bluff and Goche's hole, have merged into strata of limestone of various shades and compactness, with occasional layers of primitive sandstone.

The prairies were beautifully undulating, and covered with lusty growths of dried vegetation. The hills, now and then, were ornamented with a few scattering pines and cedars, which stood like lonely sentinels to watch the progress of changing seasons.

As some of my readers may entertain the design of visiting these remote regions, or passing beyond them to the more distant shores of the Pacific, it may not be deemed a digression for me to present a few hints as to the most advisable mode of travelling upon this long and wearisome journey.

A caravan of waggons should make only two camps per day. Travellers should adopt the rule to start at daylight and continue until ten o'clock, A. M., —then, having halted some six hours, (if it be summer, if spring or fall, four only,) again resume their way till after sundown.

Fifteen miles, upon an average, are as far as an ox team should travel per day, —mules or horses might keep on for twenty miles.

Caravans ought always to lay by in rainy Weather, as the wet and irritation consequent upon draught, gall the neck and shoulders of their animals and soon render them unfit for service;—every precaution should be taken to preserve their strength and soundness, as upon them rests the sole dependence of a travelling company.

A mounted party ought, as a general thing, to observe the same rules, and not think of averaging over twenty-five miles per day. They might travel later; but in such cases, they should always proportionally lengthen their noon halt.

In the above manner the entire journey from Independence to the Pacific may be performed without injury to animals, or the expenses attendant upon a relay.

Fort Platte, being next to Fort Hall, the most important point on the route to Oregon, calls for a brief description. This post occupies the left bank of the North Fork of Platte river, three-fourths of a mile above the mouth of Laramie, in lat. 42° 12' 10" north, long. 105° 20' 13" west from Greenwich[10], and stands upon the direct waggon road to Oregon, via South Pass.

It is situated in the immediate vicinity of the Oglallia and Brulé divisions of the Sioux nation, and but little remote from the Chyennes and Arapaho tribes. Its structure is a fair specimen of most of the establishments employed in the Indian trade. Its walls are "adobies," (sun-baked brick,)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

four feet thick, by twenty high — enclosing an area of two hundred and fifty feet in length, by two hundred broad. At the northwest and southwest corners are bastions which command its approaches in all directions.

Within the walls are some twelve buildings in all, consisting as follows: Office, store, warehouse, meat-house, smith's shop, carpenter's shop, kitchen, and five dwellings, —so arranged as to form a yard and cores, sufficiently large for the accommodation and security of more than two hundred head of animals. The number of men usually employed about the establishment is some thirty, whose chief duty it is to promote the interests of the trade, and otherwise act as circumstances require.

The Fort is located in a level plain, fertile and interesting, bounded upon all sides by hills, many of which present to view the nodding forms of pines and cedars, that bespatter their surface, —while the river bottoms, at various points, are thickly studded with proud growths of cottonwood, ash, willow, and box-elder, thus affording its needful supplies of timber and fuel.

One mile south of it, upon the Laramie, is Fort John, a station of the American Fur Company. Between these two posts a strong opposition is maintained in regard to the business of the country, little to the credit of either.

At the time of our arrival at the Fort, two villages of Indians were encamped near by. Their lodges, being the first I ever saw, proved objects of great interest to me.

The lodge of a mountain Indian consists of a frame work of light poles, some twenty-five feet long, bound together at the small ends, and raised by planting the opposite extremities aslope, at given distances apart, so as to describe a circle, at the base, converging to a triangular apex, for roof and sides; —over this is spread a covering of buffalo robes, so nicely dressed and seamed, it readily sheds rain and excludes the fierce winds to which the country is subject. A small aperture at the top, affords passage for the smoke emitted from the fire occupying the centre ground work. The entrance is at the side, where a large piece of undressed buffalo skin (hung from the top and so placed as to be opened or closed, at pleasure, upon the ingress or egress of the inmate) furnishes the simple substitute for a door.

These lodges (some of them containing quantities of roofage to the amount of ten or fifteen buffalo skins) are large and commodious; and, even comfortable, in the severest weather; the heat from the centre fire, being refracted on striking the sloping sides, communicates an agreeable warmth to every part.

An Indian lodge, in the summer, is admirably adapted to the pleasure of its occupants, —by raising the lower extremities of the envelope and securing them at a proper elevation, a free passage of air is obtained, which greatly contributes to increase the merits of the delightful shade afforded by the superstructure.

A lodge of the largest size may easily be made to accommodate fifteen persons. The interior is arranged by placing the fixtures for sleeping at the circumference of the circle, which afford seats to the inmates, and thus a sufficient space is left vacant between them and the centre fire.

This kind of dwelling is the one almost universally adopted by the mountain and prairie Indians, and is, perhaps, better suited to their condition and mode of life than any other that could be devised.

Dependent solely upon the chase for a subsistence, the various Indian tribes inhabiting the mountains and countries adjacent can occupy no fixed residences. Contrary to the habits of more

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

eastern nations, among whom agriculture commands attention to a greater or less extent, they are continually necessitated to rove from place to place in pursuit of game.

Give to one of them a bow, arrows, knife, lodge, and running horse, and he is rich, happy and contented. When the erratic propensities of the buffalo (upon which is his almost exclusive dependence) compel him to change his location, he has only to pull down his lodge, saddle his horse, and away.

So accustomed are they to this incessant rambling, they regard it more as a pleasure than an inconvenience. I have frequently seen hundreds of families moving together, —presenting to the unsophisticated beholder a novel and amusing spectacle, —with their horses, mules, dogs, men, squaws, children, and all the paraphernalia of savage domestic economy, and the rude accoutrements of peace and war, commingled indiscriminately.

The Sioux tribe, to whose country we have now introduced the reader, is, perhaps, the largest Indian nation upon the continent of North America, with the exception of the ancient Mexicans, if indeed they may be called Indians. This tribe occupies a territory extending from the St. Peters, of the Mississippi, to the Missouri, and from thence to the forks of the Platte, and up that river to its head-waters. They are supposed to number not far from eighty thousand men, women, and children, and are divided into many fractional parts, each bearing its own name, yet speaking the same language and claiming a common nationality.

Of these divisions are the Brulés, Oglallas, Yanktaus, Piankshaws, Minecosias, Blackfeet, Broken-arrows, and Assenaboins, with many others whose names have escaped my recollection.

The only perceptible difference in language, is, in the pronunciation of words like the following, meallo, appello and Lacota, —those upon the Mississippi, and some in the vicinity of the Missouri, pronouncing them meaddo, appeddo, and Dacota.

The members of this nation, so far as my observation extends, are a cowardly, treacherous, thieving set, taken as a body — and are well deserving the appellation of mean and contemptible; though there are some honorable exceptions to the remark.

Any effort to civilize them must necessarily prove tedious, if not altogether impracticable, while they adhere to their present roving habits; though three several missionary stations have been recently established among them, with slight success; viz: at St. Peters, Lac qui Parle, and Traverse des Sioux. But the Indians of those sections, being under the more direct influence of the U. S. Government, have begun to abandon their former wandering habits, and betake themselves to agricultural pursuits.

The term Sioux, as applied to this nation, is of Franco-Canadian origin — being a corruption of the word sued, and means drunk or drunken, —in allusion to their excessive fondness for liquor and predilection to inebriacy. The name by which they call themselves, and are known among other tribes, is Lacota, or Cut-throats, —for such is the literal meaning of the term; and rarely, indeed, were ever a pack of scoundrels more justly entitled to the appellation.

The night of our arrival at Fort Platte was the signal for a grand jollification to all hands, (with two or three exceptions,) who soon got most gloriously drunk, and such an illustration of the beauties of harmony as was then perpetrated, would have rivalled Bedlam itself, or even the famous council chamber beyond the Styx.

Yelling, screeching, firing, shouting, fighting, swearing, drinking, and such like interesting performances, were kept up without intermission, — and woe to the poor fellow who looked for repose

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

that night, —he might as well have thought of sleeping with a thousand cannon bellowing at his ears.

The scene was prolonged till near sundown the next day, and several made their egress from this beastly carousal, minus shirts and coats, —with swollen eyes, bloody noses, and empty pockets, —the latter circumstance will be easily understood upon the mere mention of the fact, that liquor, in this country, is sold for four dollars per pint.

The day following was ushered in by the enactment of another scene of comico-tragical character. The Indians encamped in the vicinity, being extremely solicitous to imitate the example of their “illustrious predecessors,” soon as the first tints of morning began to paint the east, commenced their demands for firewater; and, ere the sun had told an hour of his course, they were pretty well advanced in the state of “how came ye so,” and seemed to exercise their musical powers in wonderful rivalry with their white brethren.

Men, women, and children were seen running from lodge to lodge with vessels of liquor, inviting their friends and relatives to drink; while whooping, singing, drunkenness, and trading for fresh supplies to administer to the demands of intoxication, had evidently become the order of the day. Soon, individuals were noticed passing from one to another, with mouths full of the coveted fire-water, drawing the lips of favored friends in close contact, as if to kiss, and ejecting the contents of their own into the eager mouths of others, —thus affording the delighted recipients tests of their fervent esteem in the heat and strength of the strange draught.

At this stage of the game the American Fur Company, as is charged, commenced dealing out to them, gratuitously, strong drugged liquor, for the double purpose of preventing a sale of the article by its competitor in trade, and of creating sickness, or inciting contention among the Indians, while under the influence of sudden intoxication, —hoping thereby to induce the latter to charge its ill effects upon an opposite source, and thus, by destroying the credit of its rival, monopolize for itself the whole trade.

It is hard to predict, with certainty, what would have been the result of this reckless policy, had it been continued through the day. Already its effects became apparent, and small knots of drunken Indians were seen in various directions, quarrelling, preparing to fight, or fighting, —while others lay stretched upon the ground in helpless impotency, or staggered from place to place with all the revolting attendencies of intoxication.

The drama, however, was here brought to a temporary close by an incident which made a strange contrast in its immediate results.

One of the head chiefs of the Brulé village, in riding at full speed from Fort John to Fort Platte, being a little too drunk to navigate, plunged headlong from his horse and broke his neck when within a few rods of his destination. Then was a touching display of confusion and excitement. Men and squaws commenced bawling like children; —the whites were bad, very bad, said they, in their grief, to give Susu-ceicha the fire-water that caused his death. But the height of their censure was directed against the American Fur Company, as its liquor had done the deed.

The body of the deceased chief was brought to the Fort, by his relatives, with a request that the whites should assist at its burial; but they were in a sorry plight for such a service. There, however, were found sufficiently sober for the task, and accordingly commenced operations.

A scaffold was soon erected for the reception of the body, which, in the mean time, had been fitted for its last airy tenement. This duty was performed by the relatives of the deceased in the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

following manner: it was first washed, then arrayed in the habiliments last worn by Susuceicha during life, and sewed in several envelopes of lodge-skin, with the bow, arrows, and pipe once claiming him as their owner. This done, all things were ready for the proposed burial.

The corpse was then borne to its final resting place, followed by a throng of relatives and friends. While moving onward with the dead, the train of mourners filled the air with their lamentations and rehearsals of the virtues and meritorious deeds of their late chief.

Arrived at the scaffold, the corpse was carefully reposed upon it facing the east, while beneath its head was placed a small sack of meat, tobacco and vermilion, with a comb, looking-glass, and knife, and at its feet, a small banner that had been carried in the procession. A covering of scarlet cloth was then spread over it, and the body firmly lashed to its place by long strips of raw hide. This done, the horse of the chieftain was produced as a sacrifice for the benefit of his master in his long journey to the celestial hunting ground.

The above mode of sepulture is that commonly practised by the mountain tribes. It is seldom indeed they ever dispose of their dead in any other way than by placing them either upon scaffolds, branches of trees, or in some elevated position, not unfrequently covered by lodges, where they are left to moulder and waste in the winds and rain, till the bones falling one by one upon the prairie, are gathered up by surviving friends, and finally entombed in mother earth.

The corpse of the ill-fated man being thus securely fixed in the airy couch assigned it, to await the speedy process of dissolution, and mingle with its kindred earth, that its bones might find their proper places beneath the prairie sod, the village once acknowledging him as its head now met round the scaffold, men, women, children, and little ones, to bewail the sad fate that had bereaved them of their loved chieftain.

First, encircling it at a respectful distance, were seated the old men, next the young men and warriors, and next the squaws and children. Etespa-huska, (Long Bow,) eldest son of the deceased, thereupon commenced speaking, while the weeping throng ceased its tumult to listen to his words:

“Oh, Susu-ceicha! thy son bemourns thee, even as was wont the fledgelings of the war-eagle to cry for the one that nourished them, ere yet thy swift arrow had laid him in dust. Sorrow fills the heart of Etespa-huska; sadness crushes it to the ground and sinks it beneath the sod upon which he treads.

“Thou hast gone, oh Susu-ceicha! Death hath conquered thee, whom none but death could conquer; and who shall now teach thy son to be brave as thou was brave; to be good as thou wast good; to fight the foe of thy people and acquaint thy chosen ones with the war-song of triumph! to deck his lodge with the scalps of the slain, and bid the feet of the young move swiftly in the dance? And who shall teach Etespa-huska to follow the chase and plunge his arrows into the yielding sides of the tired bull? Who shall teach him to call for his prey from the deer, the elk, and the antelope, as thou hast done, or win honors from the slaughtered bear!

“None. Etespa-huska has no teacher. He is alone. Susu-ceicha is dead!

“But thou wilt soon gain the happy country. Thy journey is short. There wilt thou bestride the fleet horses that never tire, and roam amid the fruits and flowers, the sweet waters and pleasure-groves of that lovely clime; for thou art worthy.

“And, oh, Wakantunga! (Great Spirit,) do thou pity Etespa-huska. Do thou teach him to be brave and good like his father, for who is there to pity or teach him now he is left alone!”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Then, turning to the audience he continued:

“Brothers: Strong was the arm of Susu-ceicha, and fleet was the arrow shot from his bow. Thirty and five of the enemy hath he slain in battle, whose waving locks were the trophies that oft-times measured the quick step of the scalp-dance. Fourscore and ten were the medicine-dogs he brought from the land of the foeman, that their shrill neighings might greet the ears, and their strong backs carry the people he loved; for brave was the heart of Susu-ceicha!

“What warrior ever came to his lodge and went hungry, or naked, or needy away. What widow or orphan of his people blessed not their chief, when he returned from the chase and apportioned to them their wonted dues from the choice spoils of the buffalo! for generous was the soul of Susu-ceicha.

“Brothers: Susu-ceicha is dead. No more shall his voice be heard in your councils, or his courage lead you to victory, or his generosity rejoice the hearts of the needy, the widow, and the orphan. Etespahuska laments a father and a teacher. The Burnt-thighs[11] a mighty chieftain; and the nation its bravest warrior! We all mourn him; sorrow fills the hearts, and tears wash the cheeks of his people. It is good that we bemoan him, and mingle with the winds the voices of our lamentation, for who shall now stand in the place of Susu-ceicha.

“Brothers: Let us stamp his memory upon our hearts and imitate his virtues, that our acts may rear to him a living monument, which may endure till time itself shall die!”

No sooner had the orator ceased, than a tremendous howl of grief burst from the whole assemblage, men, women, and children, which was renewed in quick succession for several hours, when finally the bewailing multitude retired to their lodges.

CHAPTER VIII.

Coast clear, and Trade opened. More visitors. Smoking out the natives. Incident illustrative of Indian character. Expeditions for trade. Black Hills Rawhide. An Indian and a buffalo chase. Deep snow, extreme cold, and painful journey. Léau-qui-court. Remarks. Lost. White river; its valley, fruits, and game. Building site. The Devil's Tea-pot. Troubles with Indians. Theft and its punishment. Indian soldiers. Christmas extras. Outrageous conduct. Rascality of traders. “That Old Serpent.” Indian superstition, religious tenets and practices. Notions upon general morality. THE events of the day had for the present put an effectual stop to dissipation among the Indians, and not long afterwards they began to pull down their lodges and remove to the neighborhood of buffalo, for the purpose of selecting winter-quarters.

The disgusting scenes connected with our arrival at the Fort had pretty much ceased on the evening of the second day, and everything, with a few exceptions, began to assume its wonted aspect. The winter trade was now considered fully opened. Parties were sent with goods from the Fort to different villages, for the purpose of barter, and affairs began to show a business-like appearance. Some two weeks subsequently, a band of Brulés arrived in the vicinity. They had come for a drunken spree, and soon opened a brisk trade in liquor.

Our visitors crowded the Fort houses in quest of articles of plunder, and became an incessant source of annoyance to the engagés. One room, in particular, was thronged almost to the exclusion of its regular occupants. The latter, losing all patience, at length hit upon a plan to rid themselves of the intruders.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

After closely covering the chimney funnel, by aid of some half rotten chips a smoke was raised; the doors and windows being closed to prevent its egress. In an instant the apartment became filled to suffocation, —quite too much so for the endurance of the wondering savages, who gladly withdrew to gain the pure air of the exterior. On being told it was the Longknife's medicine[12], they replied:

“Ugh! Wakea sutiello ha Mena-huska tour!” (Ugh! The Long-knife's medicine is strong!)

During their stay at the Fort, an incident occurred which will serve to illustrate a singular trait in the character of these Indians.

A brave, named Bello-tunga, (Big Eagle,) received a blow over the head from a half crazed drunken trader, which came very near terminating in serious consequences. What would have been the result, it is hard to tell, had not the whites promptly interfered, and, with much effort, succeeded in pacifying the enraged savage by presenting him a horse.

At first he would admit of no compromise short of the offender's blood — he had been struck by the pale-face, and blood must atone for the aggression, —unless that should wipe out the disgrace, he could never again lift up his head among his people, —they would call him a coward, and say the white man struck Bello-tunga and he dared not to resent it.

The services of his father, hereupon, were secured in behalf of the offending party, which, after great ado, finally effected an adjustment of the difficulty.

An Indian considers it the greatest indignity to receive a blow from any one, even from his own brother; —and, unless the affair is settled by the bestowment of a trespass offering on the part of the aggressor, he is almost sure to seek revenge, either through blood or the destruction of property. This is a more especial characteristic of the Sioux than of any other nation. In fact, the Snakes, Crows, Arapahos, Chyennes, and most other tribes are far less nice in its observance, —though all regard the like an insult that justly calls for revenge.

Soon after, an expedition was detached to Fort Lancaster, on the South Fork Platte, and another to White river, an affluent of the Missouri, some eighty miles northwest of the main trading post. The latter party includes myself with its number.

Our purpose was to build houses in the vicinity of White river, and thus secure the trade of several villages of Brulés that had selected their winter quarters in the neighborhood, and were anxiously awaiting our arrival.

On the last of November we were under way with two carts freighted with goods and liquor, accompanied by only six whites, one negro, and an Indian.

Crossing the Platte opposite the Fort, we continued our course, west by north, over a broken and tumultuous prairie, occasionally diversified by thick clusters of pines and furrowed by deep ravines, and abounding in diminutive valleys, whose tall, withered grass gave evidence of the rich soil producing it. To our left the high, frowning summits of the Black Hills began to show themselves in the long distance, like dark clouds, and planted their dense pine forests upon the broken ridges whose irregular courses invaded the cheerless prairie far eastward.

A ride of twenty miles brought us to Rawhide, where we passed the following night and day.

This creek traces its course over a broad sandy bed, through a wide valley of rich clayey loam, slightly timbered and luxuriant in grasses. Towards its head, it is shut in upon both sides by high pine hills; but, in passing on, these mural confines are exchanged for the prairies, and the creek finally debouches into the Platte.

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

An abundance of *prelée* and rushes afforded fine pasturage to our animals, and a kindly grove of dry cottonwood gave us requisite fuel for camp-fire.

Before leaving, we were joined by another Indian mounted upon a dark bay horse, the noblest animal of its kind I remember to have seen among the mountain tribes. It had been stolen from the Snakes during the past summer, as its present owner informed us, and he seemed not a little proud of the admiration we bestowed upon it.

The new comer proved *Arketcheta-waka*, (*Medicine Soldier*), a brother of *Bello-tunga*, the brave referred to on a former occasion. Seating him self by the fire, he looked dejected and melancholy, and his face bore in dubitable evidence of a personal encounter with some one.

On enquiring the cause of this, we learned that he had left his father's lodge by reason of a quarrel he had had with his eldest brother, —the latter having struck him with a fire-brand and burnt his body in several places during a drunken spree, —he was now on his way to White river, there to await the suitable time for revenge, when he should kill his brother.

We told him this would not be right; —it was liquor that had done him the wrong, and not his brother; —liquor was bad!

He seemed to acknowledge the truth of our suggestions, and asked “why the pale-faces brought the fire-water to do the red man so much harm?” Our trader replied, “The whites want robes, and can get them for liquor when nothing else will do it.”

The answer evidently perplexed him, while he sat gazing silently into the fire, with his arms akimbo upon his knees, and palms supporting his chin, as if striving to work out to his own satisfaction this strange problem in morality.

The third day we resumed our course, and, after a drive of six or eight miles, came upon a large band of buffalo. Here, at our request, the *Medicine Soldier* doffed his robe, slung his arrow-case over his naked shoulders, mounted his horse bow in hand, and started for the chase.

At first he rode slowly, as if reserving the speed of his charger till the proper time. The buffalo permitted him to approach within a few hundred yards before they commenced flight. Then was a magnificent spectacle.

The affrighted beasts flew over the ground with all the speed that extreme terror lent to their straightened nerves, and plied their nimble feet with a velocity almost incredible—but they were no match for the noble steed the Indian bestrode. He was among them in a trice, and horse, Indian, and buffalo were lost in identity, as they swept over a snow-clad prairie, in one thick, black mass like the career of a fierce tornado, — tossing the loose drifts upwards in small particles, that, in their descent, pictured white clouds falling to the earth, ever and anon enshrouding the whole band from view.

Now their course is turned and makes directly towards us. They pass, all foaming with sweat—with lolling tongues and panting breath—but they still seem loath to abate from the energy of their wild terror.

Soon the Indian and his gallant steed part from them. He has selected the choicest of the band and pursues her singly. Side by side both cow and horse keep even pace, while the ready archer pours in his arrows, some of them, forcing their entire way through the bleeding beast, fall loosely to the ground upon the opposite side.

At length, spent by the toilsome flight, exhausted by loss of blood, and pierced through her vitals by the practised marksman that follows her, she halts for fight.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Now, she plunges with mad fury at the horse, — the well-trained steed clears the force of her charge at a bound. Again, she halts, — the blood spouts from her nostrils and mouth — she staggers. Again, she musters her expiring energies for one more desperate onset at her enemy, as if determined, if die she must, not to die unavenged. Her charge proves futile as the former. A death-sickness comes over her. Her life is fast ebbing from within her. She reels, — she totters — she falls, — and breathes her life away upon the blood-dyed snow.

A few moments' delay put us in possession of an ample supply of fresh meat, — the Indian reserving the robe only as his share. The cow proved a most excellent selection, and did honor to the judgment of the hunter.

As we travelled on, the snow, which scarcely an hour since had first attracted our attention, became deeper and deeper, and our progress more tedious and difficult.

From bare ground and comparatively moderate climate, we were fully inducted to the region of snow, ice, and winter. The prairie was high and undulating. To our left an immense wall of secondary rock surmounted a ridge of naked hills, that described in its course the curve of a rainbow, enclosing upon three sides a large valley facing the east, — thence, stretching westward and raising higher and higher, hastened to mingle its heads among the cloud-capped summits and snows of the neighboring mountains.

From a light coating of loose snow our course soon became obstructed by still deepening layers, covered with a thick crust, scarcely strong enough to bear our weight, but quite sufficient to wrench and jar us at every step, and make our advance threefold tiresome.

The cold was so intense, we were forced to walk to keep from freezing. Our difficulties thickened the farther we progressed. Night closed in upon us, and we could no longer distinguish our course. Yet we kept on, in hopes of reaching some creek or spring where we might await the coming day.

Slowly, onward, — plunge, plunge, at every step; — now prostrate at full length upon the hard crust, and then again staggering in resistless mimicry of drunken men.

The chill winds sweeping over the dreary expanse pierced us through at each whiff, and seemed to penetrate every nerve, and joint, and muscle, as if to transform our hearts' blood into icicles. But still it was plunge, plunge along; onward, plunge, fall; but yet onward! There is no stopping place here, — 'tis push on or die!

Thus, travelling for three or four hours, not knowing whither, we came finally to the leeward of a high hill. The agreeable change produced by the absence of wind, called forth a hearty response.

"Camp, ho," was echoed upon all sides. But here was no water for ourselves or our animals. We must yet go on. Still we lingered — loath to leave the favored spot. The Indian, who had been absent for a brief space, now came up, shouting:

"Mine, washtasta!" (Water, very good!)

"Tarkoo mine?" asked the trader. (What water?)

"Mine-loosa. Tunga warkpollo." (Running-water. A large creek.)

It proved *L'eau-qui-court*, the stream upon which we had intended to pass the night.

Pushing on, a few moments brought us to its banks, in a deep valley covered with snow. A fire was then promptly built from a small quantity of wood we had the precaution to take with us from Rawhide, and all hands were soon as comfortably conditioned as circumstances would admit.

A hearty supper served to appease the appetites so keenly sharpened by a toilsome journey of

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

thirty miles, occupying from sunrise till ten o'clock at night. This over, each one cleared for himself a place upon the frozen ground, and, spreading down his bed, quickly forgot his cares and sufferings in the welcome embrace of sleep.

L'eau-qui-court, or Running-water, heads in a small lake under the base of the first range of Black Hills, and, following an easterly course, empties into the Missouri, about one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles above Council Bluff. It derives its name from the rapidity of its current, which rolls over a pebbly bed with great velocity.

At this place it is narrow and deep, with steep banks, and not a stick of timber is to be found on it, above or below, for twenty miles. At the lake where it heads, there is an abundance of timber; large groves of cottonwood are also found at some distance below our present camp.

The intermediate country, from Rawhide, is a cold and cheerless expanse almost at all seasons of the year. From the commencement of fall to the very close of spring, it is subject to frost and snow; —for what cause, it is hard to conjecture. Its surface, though quite elevated, is not sufficiently so to make such marked difference in climate between it and adjoining sections.

The next day proved cloudy; we, however, resumed our course which led over a rough, tumulous country, covered with snow and darkened by occasional clusters of pines.

Early in the morning our Indians left us and took a nearer route to the village. Soon after we became bewildered in the obscurity of the atmosphere, and travelled till night unconscious whether right or wrong. Finally, coming to a deep ravine that obstructed further progress, we turned to a neighboring grove of pines, at the point of an eminence, and made camp. It was a bleak airy place, but by aid of a huge fire of dry pine we were quite comfortable, despite a heavy fall of snow during the night.

With the morning our perplexities were renewed. Directly in front lay a broad and impassable ravine, beyond which a high mountain range arose to view. Should we go up or down? After much debate we decided upon the latter, and, bearing northward during the day, struck the head of a stream which subsequently proved White river.

This stream traces its way through a broad valley, enclosed upon either side by high pine hills. Its banks are studded with thick groves of cottonwood, elm, ash, box-elder, and willow, —with nearly all the varieties of fruit-bearing shrubs and trees indigenous to the mountains. In the item of plums and cherries, it gave evidence of exuberant fecundity. The bushes, in many instances, yet bore the dried relics of their burthen, as if to tempt the beholder's taste, —while the tall grass and rosebuds,[13] every where attested the summer-verdure and beauty of the valley in which they grew.

The snow that had hitherto impeded our progress, now gradually became less as we advanced down the valley, and soon gave place to bare ground. Game appeared in great numbers, attracted from the adjoining hills to pass the winter in this inviting locality.

A journey of two days brought us to the site selected for houses, and, consequently to a halt, for the present.

The place was surrounded by wild and romantic scenery. Directly in front, upon the opposite side of the creek, arose a perpendicular wall of marl and half formed sandstone, towering, stratum above stratum, to a height of three or four hundred feet, and overlooking the valley above and below, — while further on, a steep hill-side, covered with tall, straight, and almost branchless pines, burst upon the view.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Rearward a gradual acclivity led to a high plateau, some two miles broad, coated with long, tall grass, when a ridge of abrupt pine hills introduced the more distant mountains, with their rugged sides and frowning summits, —and, higher up, an immense pile of earthy limestone, surmounting a wing of hills as it approached the river, presented a medley of curious and fantastic shapes, —objects alike of amusement and wonder.

One of the latter, denominated the “Devil’s Tea-pot,” exhibited externally an almost perfect facsimile of that kind of vessel. It was of gigantic proportions, —being one hundred feet high, and, occupying a conspicuous position, may be seen for a distance of many miles.

The Indians from a near village, immediately upon our arrival, came flocking around for the threefold purpose of begging, trading and stealing; and, from this forward, we rarely experienced an interval free from their annoyance.

Prompt arrangements were here commenced for building a store room and trading house; —but meanwhile, we were forced to keep strict guard both night and day.

Two braves were secured to “act soldier,” and assist in keeping the thieving propensities of their people in check. Yet, notwithstanding the united vigilance of all hands, the latter would frequently perpetrate their petit larcenies under our very eyes, without being detected in the act, — so adroit were they at the business. An instance of this kind happening to myself is perhaps worth relating.

Previously to the erection of houses, we were necessitated to sleep in the open air. Wearied by the lateness of the hour, one night I spread down my couch by the camp-fire, with the intention of retiring. The weather being very cold, I had scarcely turned to warm myself, when a backward glance revealed the sudden disappearance of my sleeping appendages — robes blankets and all! Informing the trader of my mishap, and catching a glimpse of the thief as he dodged past a knot of Indians at the further extremity of the camp, gun in hand, I started after the nimble lark; but the thick bushes and darkness soon shut him from view and left me in fruitless pursuit.

At length, relinquishing the hope of ever regaining the stolen articles, and vexed at the impious savage, who, instead of obeying the Scripture injunction of “take up thy bed and walk,” had snatched MY bed and RUN! I returned to camp. Here I was shown a robe, by the trader, that had been brought in scarcely a minute before and offered in barter for liquor; —it was one of the two I had lost.

The bearer was now promptly charged as being accessory to the theft. This he stoutly denied, alleging that the robe had been given him by an other Indian for the purpose he had offered it. Upon this the affair was referred to our soldiers, who, after much parleying and no little threatening, succeeded in causing him to return the missing articles. The fellow then demanded of me a cup of liquor as pay for bringing them back. Mustering to my aid a few words of Sioux, I replied: “Mea warche yau wechacha ceicha, opata-ne ha warktach-ne coga! —I neither like bad men, nor will I pay for doing bad.”

Marto-nazher, (Standing Bear,) one of our soldiers, on hearing my answer, arose and addressed the crowd in an earnest and impressive manner. He was grieved on account of the many depredations continually committed by his people upon the property of the whites. It is wrong—very wrong, said he, to conduct in this manner — if such wickedness is allowed, the whites will abandon the country. Whites do not steal from us. Something must be done — an example must be had — the perpetrators of these outrages must be punished.

“You, Schena-sarpah,” he continued, throwing his piercing glance full upon the chop-fallen

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

culprit, who hung his head for shame at being caught in a manner so little to his credit, "Aye, you Scena-sarpah do carry a bow and arrows; you call yourself a brave; and yet you steal from our friends, the pale-faces!

"Do brave men steal from their friends? No! Scena-sarpah should alone steal from his enemies, if he be a brave man and a soldier.

"Who are they that steal from their friends? Squaws and children, as Scena-sarpah well knows. Then he is no better than they! Why should he carry a bow? Why go to war, or follow the chase? Squaws and children do neither. None but brave men go to war — none but they should follow the chase.

"Scena-sarpa needs no bow. Let him go to his lodge. There let him make robes and moccasins for braves, and take care of children with squaws, — for such should be his occupation, and only such should be his companions!"

So saying, he approached the unresisting thief, and, taking from him his bow, arrows, and panther-skin quiver, resumed his seat. Then, breaking the arrows and shooting them away, one by one, among the trees, he snapped the bow across his knee and threw it into the fire. The bright flame from the burning bow had barely died away, when the quiver was consigned to the same fate. As the last fragments of the effeminate's weapons mouldered to ashes, a smile of satisfaction played upon the countenance of the Standing Bear, at the thought of having avenged the wrongs of the white man.

And truly, this was an infliction of summary punishment. The amount of property destroyed exceeded the value of a horse, and, in the estimation of an Indian, constitutes a man's chief wealth. The offender was thus not only left disarmed by the operation, but made poor, and reduced to a level with the squaws and children to whom he was set apart. He bemoaned his loss most piteously, and started for his lodge, bellowing like a motherless calf.

Another instance of theft occurred soon after, almost as remarkable. A robe was stolen from off one of our party, while he was asleep, and bartered for whiskey, without his knowing it!

Our Indian soldiers were of great service in conducting the trade. If any difficulty occurred, they were always at hand to assist in its adjustment, and preserve order and quiet so far as lay in their power. If any visitor became troublesome, they at once ordered him to his lodge, and enforced their commands in case of resistance.

Every trader is necessitated to employ one or more braves to assist him in his business at the villages. An Indian considers it a great honor thus to receive the confidence of a white man and "act soldier" for him, as he denominates it. Some of them have not unfrequently gone so far as to kill those of their people who proved guilty of misusing the traders by whom they were employed. They exercise a kind of supervisory office in the management of affairs which could not well be dispensed with, — and very often have the lives of traders been preserved by the judgment and discretion of these men.

Dec. 25th. Christmas finds us in our new residence, which, with the exception of a chimney; is now completed.

This great annual festival is observed with all the exhilarating hilarity and good cheer that circumstances will allow. Several little extras for the occasion have been procured from the Indians, which prove quite wholesome and pleasant-tasted. One of these, called washena, consists of dried meat pulverized and mixed with marrow; another is a preparation of cherries, preserved when

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

first picked by pounding and sun-drying them, (they are served by mixing them with bouillie, or the liquor of fresh-boiled meat, thus giving to it an agreeable winish taste;) a third is marrow-fat, an article in many respects superior to butter; and, lastly, we obtained a kind of flour made from the pomme blanc, (white apple,) answering very well as a substitute for that of grain.

The above assortment, with a small supply of sugar and coffee, as well as several other dainties variously prepared, affords an excellent dinner, — and, though different in kind, by no means inferior in quality to the generality of dinners for which the day is noted in more civilized communities.

The day following our turbulent neighbors were augmented in number by the accession of another village of Brulés, and Marto-cogershne, of whom I have spoken upon a former occasion, became with his family our constant annoyance.

Visiting us at one time, squaws and all — as was his daily custom — to beg liquor, (which, some way or other, he always obtained,) the brother of our tormentor demanded a quantity of that article to take with him to his lodge. This, after many sharp words, was offered; but, having no vessel for its conveyance, he extended his demands to a kettle, — which, of course, was refused; whereupon he threatened vengeance unless both were forthcoming upon the mocosco,[14] (prairie,) and required still farther the gift of a pair of moccasins

Our trader replied, “The liquor is for you, and here are the moccasins, (pulling off his own and passing them to him,) but the kettle you cannot have.”

The affair thus ended for the present, and the modest beggar retired to his lodge. The next morning, however, two of our horses were found pierced with arrows, and so badly, that they died soon after.

At another time, Marto-cogershne became so enraged at being refused a whole keg of liquor “on the prairie,” he rushed upon the trader with his butcher-knife to kill him. What would have been the result, it is hard to tell, had I not stayed the descending weapon by seizing the fellow’s arm. Here our soldiers interfered and put him out of the house, —closing the door upon him. The exasperated savage then commenced shooting upon us through the door; —two Indian boys passing in the interval also furnished marks for his gun, and not long subsequently a mule and an ox belonging to us fell to appease his insulted dignity.

However, the chef d’ouvre of his rascality was exhibited in stealing our whole cavallard,[15] consisting of ten head of horses and mules, which he drove into the mountains. We were compelled to give a quantity of liquor and ammunition, two blankets, and several other articles before we could secure their return.

From the movement of things, he was evidently instigated by the American Fur Company traders to do us all the mischief in his power. Certain it is, he was their regular “soldier,” and received from them numerous presents in consideration of his good conduct.

The employees of this company are frequently guilty of such disgraceful conduct. In connection with this conclusion I might cite instance upon instance, and string out a volume of proof, were it necessary.

Soon after Christmas we commenced erecting our chimney. The materials for it were procured from an adjoining bank. While engaged in quarrying them, the operator came to a crevice filled with a strange fleshy substance, coiled together like the folds of a huge rope. “Hallo!” cried he, with astonishment, “here’s the Devil, himself!”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The extraordinary announcement brought all hands to the spot to get a peep at “Old Nick,” and the Indians, also, witnessing—the unusual commotion, came hurrying up to learn its cause. The result proved, that, if not the Devil, it was his great prototype, —it was that “Old Serpent,” with all his progeny.

By means of a stick, thirty-six large snakes were exposed to view, some of them six feet in length. They were in a torpid state, the result of the severe cold of winter.

Having drawn them out, one by one, it was proposed to treat them to a warm bath. Accordingly, after placing them in a hole for the purpose, a kettle of scalding water was thrown upon them. The vivifying effects of this unwonted application restored them to a sudden animation, when, wriggling and twisting for a few moments in all the contortions of agony, they at last tacitly curled up and expired.

The Indians were much shocked on seeing this, and expressed their astonishment at our reckless presumption by their deeply accented “tula,” —turning away from the spot with evident emotions of terror.

On inquiring the cause, I learned in answer, that the various Indian tribes in the vicinity of the mountains are accustomed to regard the snake with a kind of superstitious veneration, and consider the act of killing it a sure harbinger of calamity. In the observance of this singular notion, they are scrupulously exact; —but, in despite of repeated inquiries, I have been unable to obtain the reasons upon which the whim is based.

These tribes cherish many religious tenets, rites, and customs, —some general and others peculiar only to individuals.

An Indian will never pronounce the name of the Big Medicine, or Great Spirit, other than in a reverential manner, nor upon trivial occasions.

This being is considered the Great Superintendent of all things, whose power sustains the universe, —causing day and night with the varying seasons, —making the grass to grow, the water to run, and the rains to fall, for the good of man and beast.

Some imagine He lives in the sun; others, in the air; others, in the ground; and others in the immensity of His works.

The animal or thing possessed of wonderful or extraordinary powers, such as their ignorance ascribes to be the attributes of the Supreme Being, they look upon as endowed with a greater or less share of His presence, and venerate it accordingly. Thus, the sun, fire, lightning, thunder, fountains of peculiar medicinal qualities, extraordinary localities, and various other things are alike objects of religious regard.

Although their theological sentiments are generally the same, the manner of showing their respect for this Overruling Providence differs with different tribes, families, and even persons. For instance, —some tribes shave their heads in token of their submission to Him. Others mark themselves for His own by some peculiar manner of cutting their ears for the reception of ornaments; —while others burn their thighs, tattoo their breasts, scar their arms, or flatten the heads of infants, for a like purpose.

The instrument, with which such ceremonies are performed, is invariably thrown away. In case of cutting the ears of an infant, the gift bestowed upon the operator is regarded as indicative of its success during life; parents have been known to give as high as ten horses on like occasions.

Some make indelible marks of a blue color upon their chins and foreheads, —or the figures of

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

lizards, snakes, arrows, or other objects upon their arms.

Some show their reverence in the peculiar manner of receiving the pipe and passing it to another; —others by certain ceremonies before smoking, — thus, pointing the pipe-stem to the zenith, then towards the ground, then horizontally upon either side, as if saying, “Oh thou, whose habitation is immensity, accept this as the willing tribute of homage from thy child.”

They will never allow a bone of any kind to be broken within their lodges, and express great consternation and alarm at such an occurrence. Some will not permit a stick of wood to be struck with a knife or other edged tool while burning, and others exhibit their devotion by some peculiarity in the structure of their lodges, or the mode of placing their medicine-bags, the length and shape of their arrows, their fashion of hairdressing, and various minutia of like character.

Others again will never eat unless they bestow the first mouthful as an offering to the prairie, — believing that, as the prairie affords water, grass, and game, for the good of the red man, it is the fullest embodiment of the Essence of Good; therefore, in the observance of this practice, they not only acknowledge their faith in the existence of the Great Spirit, but set apart the first of their substance as test of their piety.

Their ideas of the existence of a principle, or being, who is the author and prompter of evil, are crude and indefinite.

They are ready to acknowledge its reality, but seem to consider its person more manifest in man himself than any other creature or thing.

Their enemies they esteem as the more special incarnation of this principle, and next to them they regard a worthless, mean, and cowardly individual of their own people. They also look upon creatures of an injurious and hurtful nature, as the greater or less impersonation of evil.

Their notions of right and wrong are equally simple.

It is right to be brave, to do good to friends, to relieve the needy, to feed the hungry, and to worship the Great Spirit, —these are acts of general morality. There are various other duties taught by their code relative to intercourse with each other, —to children and parents, husbands and wives deference to age, chastity etc., the performance of which is essential to virtue.

The line of demarkation between virtue and vice is yet more simple and comprehensive; —every thing derelict of right is wrong.

I shall recur to several points, connected with the foregoing subjects, in another place.

CHAPTER IX.

Dangers connected with the liquor trade. Difficulty with Bull Eagle. Scenes of bloodshed and horror. Cheating in the fur trade. How the red man becomes tutored in vice. A chief's daughter offered in exchange for liquor. Indian mode of courtship and marriage. Squaws an article of traffic. Divorce. Plurality of wives.

THE difficulty and danger, not to say crime and bloodshed, connected with the illicit trade in alcohol, as conducted among our western Indians, is great and imminent. To illustrate this point, I need only to place before the reader a summary of facts which occurred, many of them under my own observation, during the winter of 1842.

Soon after our arrival at White river a man was sent to a neighboring village with a keg of diluted alcohol, for the purpose of barter. The Indians, feeling more disposed to drink than pay for it, de-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

manded the keg as a gift “on the prairie.” This was refused. They threatened —a fight ensued, (the soldiers and trader defending the keg and the Indians trying to take it.) Weapons were used, and the result was, both soldiers and trader were beaten off, —the latter, after being dragged through the lodgefire three or four times, narrowly escaped with his life.

A party of Indians under the excitement of strong drink, attacked and took a trading house of the American Fur Company, near by, —robbing it of both liquor and goods.

Two parties in the Fur Company’s employ, from different posts, met at a neighboring village, —one having goods and the other alcohol. The Indians, as usual, got drunk, and commenced a fight among themselves; because the goods-trader happened to be in the lodge of one of the weaker party, they attacked him. He was compelled to flee, and barely escaped with his life through the friendly interference of the squaws. His goods were all stolen; —while one of the Indians who defended him was brutally murdered, and several others wounded.

Not long afterwards, our trader was shot at, three or four times, while engaged in this dangerous traffic, and one of his soldiers severely wounded. About the same time, the trader of another company received a deep stab, while dealing out the vile trash, and would have been killed but for the energetic efforts of his soldiers.

Previously to the above, the Indians seized upon a trader and compelled him to stand over a hot fire until he was nearly roasted alive, —meanwhile, helping themselves to his stock in hand.

Soon after, two warriors came to trade for a blanket at our post, —one of whom was drunk. While being waited upon, the latter drew his knife and was in the very act of stabbing the unsuspecting clerk, as I caught his wrist and arrested the blow.

At another time, as our trader was standing surrounded by us all, he was shot at by a drunken Indian, who, by the merest accident, missed his object.

Again, one night a party of drunken Indians undertook to fire the house in order to consume us alive, but were providentially prevented, owing to its being constructed of green pine logs.

The most dangerous time I experienced during the winter was near the close of it. An Indian employed as our soldier, became crazed upon the drugged liquor of the American Fur Company, and made his appearance before us in a high state of excitement. This fellow had been denominated by his people the Bull Eagle, (Tahtunga-mobellu,) and was a chief, highly esteemed as a medicine-man, and regarded as the greatest brave in the Sioux nation. He was a tall, well-made, noble-looking person —and, —such eyes! I never saw the like planted beneath the brows of any other mortal. They glared like lightning, and, as they fell upon the individual to whom directed, seemed to penetrate the very soul and read the embryo thoughts of his heart.

Through the misrepresentations of those in the interest of the Fur Company, he fancied himself misused by our trader, and came determined on revenge. Arms in hand and stripped for the contest, accompanied by his wife and two or three friends, he confronted us, —his strange appearance told for what. In the fury of passion his every look gave evidence of the raging demon within.

Here, lest he should be misunderstood, he premised by a full statement of his grievances. They were many, but the chief of them was, that our trader had employed another to “act soldier” in his stead, while he was too drunk to perform the duties of that appointment. “I have been dressed[16] as a soldier,” said he, “to be laughed at, and now Peazeezet[17] must die!”

The room was full of Indians, and one of them, an old man, exclaimed “When Peazeezee dies, let

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

me go under[18], —I must live no longer!”

“Is this your love for the pale-face?” returned the infuriated chieftain. Then die you first!”

Upon this, seizing the defenceless old man, he drew his knife and made a heart-thrust. The intended victim, however, grasped the descending blade in his bare hand and arrested its course — but his fingers were nearly severed in so doing. Here the wife of Bull Eagle rushed up to her husband and seized him by both arms, while others interfered, and the scene of conflict was removed from the apartment to the space in front.

Now was a general fight. The women and children, crying for terror, ran about in the utmost confusion and dismay, —while raving combatants yelled and whooped, as knives, clubs, and tomahawks were busily dealing wounds and scattering blood.

Soon after, the parties retired to their village, and the melee ended with only six wounded.

In a brief interval the Bull Eagle again returned, accompanied by his wife, —the latter earnestly endeavoring to dissuade him from his purpose.

A shot was his first salute, on entering the door, which a timely thrust from the squaw averted from its object. The kind-hearted creature then grasped the bow. Relinquishing it in her hands, the madman made a pass at the trader with his tomahawk, —this blow was dodged, and the heroine, rushing between the two, prevented its repetition. Dropping his tomahawk, he then fell upon the object of his hatred, butcher-knife in hand.

But here he found himself in the firm grasp of several friendly Indians, by whom he was borne from the room.

This state of affairs was the signal for another engagement between Bull Eagle, at the head of his partisans, and the friends of the whites, more desperate and bloody than the former. With great difficulty we retained our arms from the forcible grasp of the contending factions. This, to us, was a moment fraught with extreme peril — not knowing friend from foe, and instantly apprehensive of the knives and arrows of the avengeful throng. It was, indeed, a moment when the agony of suspense quivered with thrilling intensity upon every nerve, and vibrated in every sinew. To fight, would have been a relief. But, whom should we fight? It might have been our best friends — for who could discriminate? The death of one connected with either party, at our hands, would have proved the signal for our instant slaughter. Both would have united to exterminate us, —and, beset as we were, upon all sides, prudence dictated a strict neutrality. Sometimes fifteen or twenty would be struggling for our arms at once, a strong temptation, as the reader may rest assured, for us to use them in self-defence.

Meanwhile the conflict continued with unabated fury. Several attempts were made upon the life of Bull Eagle, but without success. Two were killed and others wounded, when a final stop was put to the further effusion of blood by the withdrawal of the chieftains to his lodge.

In about an hour subsequent, he returned for the second time, —but reason had now resumed her sway, and he came to apologize for his bad conduct. Calling our trader his “very good, his best friend,” he cried for grief that he had attempted to kill him. He averred that liquor had made him a fool, and said he should never cease to regret the great wickedness he had thought of doing to his “best friend.” Ever after this affair, he remained our steadfast friend, and presented our trader with six superfine robes, in evidence of the sincerity of his repentance.

The foregoing results of this infamous traffic, are only a few of the many instances of like nature I might cite, in proof of its imminent danger to those engaged in its prosecution; —but this is not

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the darkest part of the picture. There are yet scenes in reserve, more bloody and dreadful than those above recited, though not, perhaps, quite as perilous to the whites themselves. They all occurred in the winter of 1842, during the brief period of two months, and resulted immediately from the sale of liquor.

I shall not enter into details, but content myself by laying before the reader a mere synopsis of facts.

In November, the American Fur Company, from Fort John, sent a quantity of their drugged liquor to an Indian village, on Chugwater, as a gift, for the purpose of preventing the sale of that article by their competitors in trade. The consequence was, the poor creatures all got drunk, and a fight ensued, which ended in the death of two head chiefs, Bull Bear and Yellow Lodge, and six of their friends, —besides the wounding of fourteen others, who took part in the affray.

Soon after, an affair occurred from the same cause, resulting in the death of three.

About the same time, another of like nature took place in the Chyenne village, and three more were killed.

Several were also killed, in the interval, in the vicinity of the Chyenne and Missouri rivers, by their friends and companions, while under the maddening influence of intoxicating drink, —the precise number is not known.

The very last trade at the close of the season, produced its usual deeds of bloodshed and murder. Two Indians were killed, and the person who sold to them the vile article narrowly escaped with his life.

I might go on still further with the sickening sketch; but, as enough has already been said to shock the sensibilities of the reader, in endeavoring to afford him some idea of the enormities and untold horrors connected with this criminal traffic, I must forbear.

The liquor used in this business, is generally third or fourth proof whiskey, which, after being diluted by a mixture of three parts water, is sold to the Indians at the exorbitant rate of three cups per robe, —the cups usually holding about three gills each.

But, notwithstanding the above unconscionable price, a large share of the profits result from the ingenious roguery of those conducting the trade.

Sometimes the measuring-cup is not more than half full;—then, again the act of measuring is little other than mere feint, (the purchaser receiving not one fourth the quantity paid for.)

When he becomes so intoxicated as to be unable to distinguish the difference between water and liquor, (a thing not rare,) the former is passed off upon him as the genuine article.

Another mode of cheating is, by holding the cup in such a manner that the two front fingers occupy a place upon the inside, and thus save to the trader nearly a gill at each filling.

Some have two cups, (one of the usual size, and the other less,) which are so exchanged as to induce the purchaser to believe he is obtaining a third more than he actually receives; and others, yet more cunning, fill the measure half full of tallow and deal out the liquor from off it, —the witless dupe, not thinking to examine the bottom, supposes he receives the requisite quantity.

No wonder the Indian, with such examples before him, learns to hate the white man, and despise and abhor his boasted civilization. No wonder he looks with an eye of suspicion, alike upon his religion and his learning, and revolts at the thought of either, as the ingenious devices of scientific roguery. He is taught all the white man's vices before he learns any of his virtues. The emissaries of Satan, by their untiring efforts, effectually stop his ears, blind his eyes, and harden his heart, ere

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

yet the heralds of the Gospel set foot upon his soil, to tell him of the blessings of Christianity, and the way to happiness and to heaven.

If the Indian is bad, it is because the white man has made him so. Uncontaminated by intercourse with the offscourings of civilization, who come to cheat and despoil him of his property, and deprive him of his comforts, you find him quite a different being. You find him brave, generous, and hospitable, as well as possessed of many exemplary moral qualities. If he is a savage, he might, in many respects, prove a safe and worthy teacher to those who pride themselves upon a more enlightened education.

He has a heart instinctive of more genuine good feeling than his white neighbor—a soul of more firm integrity—a spirit of more unyielding independence. Place the white man in his condition, divested of all the restraints of law, and unacquainted with the learning and arts of civilized life—surrounded by all the associations of the savage state—and the Indian, by comparison, will then exhibit, in a more striking light, that innate superiority he in reality possesses.

No: The Indian should not be despised. He holds weighty claims upon our pity, our compassion, and our respect, but never should he be despised.

Old Bull Tail, of whom I had occasion to speak in a former chapter having forgotten the wholesome sentiments he advanced at the time referred to, took it into his head to have a spree. But, as he was not possessed of the means to obtain the wherewith, he adopted a somewhat novel substitute.

He had an only daughter,—and she was handsome—the pride of her family and the boast of her village. She was lovely, and all the high qualities of a princess were exhibited in her deportment. But, Bull Tail must drink; why not give his daughter to the Yellow-hair and receive from him a keg of liquor as a marriage present?

This thought was acted out, and one morning the old chief came to us, followed by his daughter, who, aware of her father's designs, gave vent to her grief in a flood of tears.

As he entered the door, our trader addressed him:

Trader. Bull Tail is welcome to the lodge of the Long-knife;—but, why is his daughter, the pride of his heart, bathed in tears? It pains me that one so beautiful should weep.

Bull Tail. Chintzille is a foolish girl. Her father loves her, and therefore she cries.

Trader. The contrary should prove a greater cause for grief!

Bull Tail. The Yellow-hair speaks well, and truth only falls from his lips.

Trader. How, then, can she sorrow? Bid her speak and tell me, that I may whisper in her ear words of comfort.

Bull Tail. Nay, pale-face; but I will tell thee. Bull Tail loves his daughter much—very much; he loves the Yellow-hair much!—he loves them both, very much. The Great Spirit has put the thought into his mind that both might be alike his children; then would his heart leap for joy at the twice-spoken name of father!

Trader. What do I hear? I know not the meaning of thy words.

Bull Tail. Sure, pale-face, thou art slow to understand! Bull Tail would give his daughter to the Yellow-hair,—for who like him is so worthy to take her to his lodge? Bull Tail has for a long time called the pale face his brother, and now he would claim the Yellow-hair as his son. Loves he not Chintzille?

Trader. Were I to deny my joy at the words of Bull Tail, my tongue would lie! The Yellow-hair has

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

no wife, and who, like the lovely Chintzille, is so worthy that he should take her to his bosom? How could he ever show his gratitude to her noble father!

Bull Tail. The gift is free, and Bull Tail will be honored in its acceptance, —his friends will all be glad with him. But, that they may bless the Yellow-hair, let him fill up the hollow-wood[19] with fire-water, and Bull Tail will take it to his lodge; —then the maiden shall be thine.

Trader. But, Chintzille grieves, —she loves not the Yellow-hair!

Bull Tail. Chintzille is foolish. Let the Yellow-hair measure the fire-water and she shall be thine!

Trader. Nay, but the Yellow-hair may not do this. Chintzille should never be the wife of him she loves not!

The old man continued to plead for some time, in order to bring to a successful issue the negotiation by which he hoped to “wet his whistle” and gain a son-in-law, —but all to no purpose. Our trader could not be persuaded to form an alliance so entangling upon any such terms, and the chieftain left with all the lineaments of disappointment and chagrin depicted upon his countenance.

The mode of marriage prevalent among the mountain and prairie tribes would seem rather strange and somewhat unfair to the better informed of civilized communities.

The lady has little to say or do in the business. When an Indian takes it into his head to get married and meets with the squaw suiting his fancy, he wastes no time in useless courtship, but hastens to her father and demands of him to know how much he loves his daughter and what gift of horses will make his heart rejoice in a son-in-law?

The father, after consulting with his daughter and her mother, states the terms. If these prove agreeable to the suitor, he immediately accepts them, and the twain “become one flesh” without further ceremony.

In case the woman has no father, her eldest brother fills his place, —and if she have neither father nor brother, her next nearest relative assumes the responsibility of bestowing her in marriage.

If she be the eldest daughter, and has unmarried sisters, the bridegroom becomes equally entitled to them, and is looked upon as their common husband.

The first year succeeding this new relation, the bride’s family consider all the horses and other valuables of the new-made husband as their own; the second year he is permitted to retain his personal property for the use of himself and wife; —but the third year he enjoys an equal right with his relatives to everything in their possession.

The decision of parents in the bestowment of a daughter in marriage is generally controlled by the largeness of the amount offered; thus showing that civilized life is not the only condition in which individuals are sometimes governed by sordid motives in pronouncing upon questions of such vital importance to the welfare of others.

The female is the only party upon whom the marriage contract is considered binding.

The man may sunder it at any time suiting his convenience or caprice. He has the power, even, to dispose of his wife to another, or, at a mere word, to absolve himself from all obligation to her. In case of the latter, the discarded one returns to her father’s lodge, —ready again to test the realities of this uncertain relationship, whenever an opportunity presents itself meeting with the approval of those who assume to make barter of her affections and person.

A woman, to be happy in this state of society, should never indulge in that fancied passion, pictured in such glowing colors by crack-brained poets and novel-writers, called love; —or, if she

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

has the assurance to do otherwise, it should be of that more versatile and accommodating order, so often exhibited in more refined circles, which may be reclaimed and transferred as interest or circumstances suggest. Her affections are not at her own disposal, and, to render life tolerable, she must learn to love only as she is loved, and to love herself above all others.

Next to horses, women constitute an Indian's chief wealth. This circumstance not unfrequently results in one individual appropriating to himself six or eight.

The squaw is compelled to dress robes and skins, make moccasins, cure and take care of meat, attend to the horses, procure fire-wood, and perform sundry other little drudgeries that an Indian will not do. Through her he becomes possessed of the means of procuring from the whites such articles as his necessities or fancy may require. A plurality of wives with him, therefore, is more a matter of economy than other wise.

CHAPTER X.

Tahtunga-egoniska. High gaming. Weur-sena Warkpollo, a strange story. The Death Song, a tale of love. Medicine-men. Extraordinary performance of Tahtunga-mobellu. Wonderful feats of jugglery.

AMONG our daily visitors was Tahtunga-egoniska, a head chief of the Brulé village.

Years had bleached his locks with their taming frosts and taught him self-government. Well disposed as a man, he never became a participant in those disgusting scenes of intoxication that almost continually transpired around us. He was a mere looker on — a moralizer; and, as he witnessed the blameworthy conduct of his people, an ill-suppressed sigh was frequently audible, and the inward workings of regret were plainly defined upon his countenance. Melancholy too had left her traces upon him, and, as he sat day by day in gloomy silence, he seemed the very impersonation of grief.

Whenever the throng dispersed for a few moments, he would improve the opportunity for conversation with us; for in the benevolence of his heart he loved the whites, and was greatly pained at the injuries and injustice it was so often their lot to endure.

But he had a story of his own to tell; it was a tale of affliction — a stab at the best feelings of a father's heart! And, by whom? By the very whites he loved! Aye, by the very men whose business it was to degrade his people and ruin them by the contaminating effects of an unhallowed intercourse!

Six months had scarcely yet passed since the old chief had been called to mourn his youthful hope, and the pride and joy of his declining years — his first-born son! And that son had fallen by the hand of the white man!

Still, the sorrow-stricken father harbored no thought of revenge; he sought nothing for himself save the locks of that son, that he might hang them within his lodge, and gaze upon them and weep!

His simple tale was so touching in its nature it served to enlist the deep sympathies of our hearts. We began to regard him with much deference, and felt quite at home in his company. He would frequently entertain us with his anecdotes as occasions suggested, and at such times he invariably proved both agreeable and communicative.

The history of his own life, too, was far from uninteresting. He was the only one of the Brulé

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

chiefs, then living, who had signed the first treaty with the whites, since which he had ever observed its stipulations with scrupulous exactness, and still carefully retained a silver medal bestowed upon him by the Government agent at that time.

Some of his stories were garbed with a strange romance, and though they may appear foreign to truth in many respects, I cannot resist the temptation of presenting a few of them to the reader. One day, several Indians had betted largely upon a "game of hand;"[20] this called forth from the old man the following story:

"When a young man I delighted in war, and seldom did a party of our people visit the enemy that included me not with its number. These scars tell where I stood when arrows flew thick—hastening to spill the blood of the brave.

"Rarely did we return empty-handed from the foeman's land—without horses to ride or scalps to dance. Yet, at times we came back like fools, and were ashamed to appear at the soldiers' feasts.

"One of these times I well recollect, and I will tell of it to my white children, that they also may remember it.

"We were proceeding against the Crows, and, like experienced warriors, had sent our spy in advance to look for the enemy. Hurrying on, in momentary expectation of a conflict, the stout hearts of our braves were appalled by his return without robe or arms, and scalpless—and with a face suffused in blood.

"This was his story: The enemy, aware of our approach, were awaiting us in great numbers. Encountering their scouts, he had been robbed and scalped, and left for dead. In this situation he lay till darkness shut down upon the mountain and the night-breeze gave him strength to meet us and advise our speedy return.

"Believing the strange tale, we hastened to revisit our lodges, and be laughed at.

"Three moons sped, and we again penetrated the land of the foemen. The scalpless warrior, far in advance of the main party, once more discharged the duties of a spy.

"This time a whoop of triumph announced the result of his mission, as he made his appearance with the scalps of two, waving from his spear.

"He tarried not to relate his adventure, but urged us instantly onward. Following him, we were led to the enemy; —we fought and were victorious.

"Among the slain was one whose scalp was wanting. Who has done this? asked the wondering braves. But none answered. Our spy, smiling, at length broke silence:

" 'Behind yon hill,' said he, 'a fountain chants melody fit for warriors' ears, —let's to it, that we may drink.'

"Following his direction, he led to a silvery spring overhung by crags and shaded by cottonwoods.

" 'Drink, warriors,' he exclaimed; when, withdrawing abruptly, he soon returned, and with the arms and robe which were his own in other days.

" 'Warriors,' resumed the spy: 'you wondered at my mishap, and amented my hard lot when last we visited the Crowman's country; —you wondered at the condition of one among the recent slain, and asked for a reason;—and, doubtless, you wonder still more that I now stand before you bearing the store of which I was deprived!—and fain you would know in what manner I obtained the hair of two.

" 'Three times has the night-queen turned her full face to smile upon the prowess of Lacota arms, since at this very spot I met an enemy. We rushed towards each other for the attack. 'Twas then he

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

cried:

“‘Are we not both braves? why should we fight? When our people meet in the fray, then may we join arms, —till then, a truce.’

“‘To this I replied,

“‘Says Crowman peace? — then, be there peace.’

“‘Thus said, we shook hands and sat down by the fountain.

“‘Willing to amuse the foe, I gathered a pebble and proposed a game of hand. The challenge was accepted, and we played, —first, arrow against arrow, then bow against bow, robe against robe, and scalp against scalp.

“‘I was unsuccessful and lost all, —arrow, bow, robe, and scalp. I gave up all, but with the extorted promise that we should here meet again for another trial of skill.

“‘True to the word, we did meet again. We played, and this time, the Good Spirit showed me kindness.

“‘Winning back arrows, bow and robe, I staked them all against the lost scalp. The game was a close one; but again the Good Spirit favored me, and I won.

“‘Crowman,’ said I, ‘scalp against scalp.’

“‘The banter was accepted, and the play continued. He lost, and I, with my winnings, arose to leave.

“‘Warrior,’ exclaimed the luckless player, ‘meet me in the fight, that we may try the game of arms.’

“‘Thy words please me,’ I answered. ‘Will the Crowman name the place?’

“‘A valley lies beyond this hill, —there my people await their enemies, and there let me hope to see you with them.’

“‘To that place I led you. We fought and conquered. My opponent at play was among the slain. Need I tell you who took his scalp?’ “

The old man seemed to take pleasure in acquainting us with the manners and customs of his people, and was ever ready to assign a reason for any of them, whenever such existed. He repeated to us the names of all the streams, mountains, and prominent localities of the country, and explained the causes of their several christenings.

Some thirty miles to the westward of us, flowed a large creek, called by the Indians, “ Weur-sena Warkpollo,” or Old Woman’s creek. This stream is an affluent of the Chyenne river, and takes its rise at the base of a mountain bearing the same name.

The mountain is an object of great veneration with the Sioux, who rarely enter into its neighborhood without bestowing upon it a present of meat. The old man entertained us with the following explanation of a custom so singular:

“My grandfather told me a tale he had received from the old men before him, and it is a strange one.

“Many ages past bring us back to the time when the Lacotas lived in a country far above the sun of winter.[21]

“Here, then, the Shoshone reared his white lodge, and scoured the prairies in pursuit of game; while, as yet, the whole country abounded with lakes and ponds of water, and only the highlands and mountains were left for the buffalo and deer.

“But years passed on, —the mountains and highlands continued to prey upon the waters, and the creeks and rivers gradually reduced the limits of their possessions.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“Years again fled. The Shoshones, attracted by some better region, far away, or driven from their homes by the hostile encroachments of other tribes, gave place to the Scarred-arms.[22]

“In the course of generations, the Lacotas and the Scarred-arms war red with each other; they fought with varied success for many years.

“Once a party of the Lacotas penetrated into the heart of the enemy’s country; on their return, they fell into an ambuscade, and only six of them were left to tell the fate of their companions.

“Hotly pursued by the Scarred-arms, they sought refuge in a mountain. There an obscure passage led to a recess in the mountain’s side, which they entered, and were pleased to find within it a gravelly floor, and a pure fountain of sweet water.

“Tempted by the conveniences and security of the place, they thought to remain for a few days that they might recover their strength. A small fire was built accordingly, and the six braves seated themselves around it recounting to each other their perils and dangerous exploits, and planning some mode of extrication from their present difficulties.

“Thus busied, a rustling noise from a dark corner of the apartment startled them, —but still more were they aroused by the half-disclosed form of a person moving in the distance. Words gave place to silence, as the warriors, seizing their arms, awaited the feared assault. But the figure, on advancing nearer, proved that of a feeble old woman, who addressed the wondering group in their own language.

“ ‘Children,’ said she, ‘you have been against the Scarred-arms, —you have fought them, —and of a strong party, you alone survive. I know it all.

“ ‘You seek in my lodge a refuge from your pursuers, —and the sound of your voices with the heat of your council-fire has disturbed my rest and awoke me from a long, long trance.

“ ‘Your looks enquire my story.

“ ‘Many ages have gone, (for days, moons, seasons, and ages are painted before me as they pass,) since the Shoshones, who lived where now live the Scarred-arms, visited the lodges of the Lacotas, and bade the prairie drink the blood of slaughtered braves. I was their captive, and with the scalps of the slain I was taken from the graves of my people, many days travel.

“ ‘The Shoshone brought me to this country, when yet the buffalo grazed upon the hills and mountains, only; for the valleys and plains were the home of waters.

“ ‘Living with the Shoshone, I was not happy. I thought of my people, with all those dear to me, and prayed the Good Spirit that I might again behold them ere my passage to the death-land.

“ ‘I fled, hoping, to reach the home of my birth;—but age had enfeebled me, and being pursued, I sought refuge in this cave. — Here, having passed a night and a day in earnest communion with the Big Medicine, —a strange feeling came upon me. I slumbered, in a dreamy state of consciousness, from then till now.

“ ‘But your looks again ask, who are the Shoshones?—what became of them? And from whence were the Scarred-arms?’

“ ‘The Lacotas will soon know the Shoshones, and bring from their I lodges many scalps and medicine-dogs. Divided into two tribes, that nation long since sought home in other lands. One crossed the snowhills towards the sun-setting; —the Lacotas shall visit them, and avenge the blood and wrongs of ages. The other journeyed far away towards the sun of winter, and now live to the leftward of the places where the Hispanola builds his earth-lodge.[23]

“ ‘Then came the Scarred-arms from a far off country, a land of much snow and cold. Pleased with

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the thickly tenanted hunting grounds that here met them, they stopped for the chase, and, by a possession through successive generations, have learned to consider these grounds as their own. But they are not theirs.

“The Great Spirit gives them to the Lacotas, and they shall inhabit the land of their daughter’s captivity.

“Why wait ye here? Go and avenge the blood of your comrades upon the Scarred-arms. They even now light their camp-fire by the stream at the mountain’s base. Fear not, —their scalps are yours! Then return ye to my people, that ye may come and receive your inheritance.

“‘Haste ye, that I may die. And, oh Warkantunga! inasmuch as thou hast answered the prayer of thine handmaid, and shown to me the faces of my people, take me from hence.’

“The awe-struck warriors withdrew. They found the enemy encamped at the foot of the mountain. They attacked him and were victorious; thirty-five scalps were the trophies of their success.

“On reaching their homes the strange adventure excited the astonishment of the whole nation. The Scarred-arms were attacked by our warriors, thus nerved with the hope of triumph, and were eventually driven from the country now possessed by the Locotas as their own.

“The grateful braves soon sought out the mountain, to do reverence to the medicine-woman who had told them so many good things. A niche in the mountain-side, from whence issued a sparkling streamlet, told their place of refuge; but the cave and the woman alike had disappeared.

‘Each successive season do our warriors visit the Shoshones for scalps and medicine-dogs —and each of our braves, as he passes the Old Woman’s mountain, fails not to bestow upon it his tribute of veneration, or quench his thirst from the creek that bears her name.’

A place on White river—where the stream pours its full force against the base of a lofty peak, and the powerful attrition of its waters has formed a rocky precipice of several hundred feet in height—is known as “The Death Song.” The singularity of this name led me to enquire the reasons which prompted its bestowment. Ever ready to answer questions of this nature, the old chief related the following story:

“Once, on a time, the Oglallas and Burnt-thighs held their encampment upon the river, opposite to the high point of which my son enquires. While there, a dog-soldier<sup>[24]</sup> of the Burnt-thighs received the offer of six horses from an Oglalla brave, for his only daughter —a sweet flower— such an one as oft pierces the warrior’s heart with her charms, when the arrows of enemies fall harmless at his feet. The offer was quickly accepted —for the dog-soldier was poor.

“When Chischille (for that was the name of the fair one) heard she was to become the wife of the Oglalla, she cried for grief, —and so costinate was her resistance, the marriage was deferred for several days on that account.

“But, why did Chischille grieve? She had looked upon a handsome warrior of her own village, and she loved him. She forgot her duty, as a daughter, to love only at her father’s bidding. Her heart had been playing truant and had lost itself in the labyrinths of girlish fancy. Bitter were the fruits of that presumption.

“Chischille, in the interval, contrived to meet the one of her choice, and the two fled towards a distant village, there to live in the undisturbed enjoyment of their youthful loves.

“But, alas, for them! They were pursued, and overtaken. The life of the young warrior atoned for his temerity, —while Chischille was cruelly beaten and brought back to her father’s lodge.

“The Oglalla had already paid the purchase price, and, ere the morrow’s sunset, was to receive his

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

fair prize at the hand of the dog-soldier.

“Chischille, arising with the dawn, fresh-plaited her hair, and arraying herself in her proudest attire, left the lodge. No one thought strange at seeing her thus gaily dressed for her wedding day, and, as she tripped along, many a warrior’s heart beat high and loud at the thought that a creature so lovely was to become the bride of another.

“Directing her course to the river, she crossed it and ascended the high peak upon the opposite side. There, seating herself upon the utmost verge of the precipice, she gazed calmly from its dizzy height.

“In her lofty station, with her raven locks streaming in the winds, and the matchless beauty of her person so enchantingly exposed to view she seemed more like a being of the Spirit-Land than aught human. The sweetest prairie-flower was ne’er halt’ so lovely.

“Her strange attitude arrested the eyes of all.

“‘Why sits she there? —she will fall and be dashed to pieces!’ was the general cry.’ But listen—she sings!’

“‘Why should I stay, —he is gone. Light of my eyes, —joy of my soul, —show me thy dwelling!—

‘Tis not here, —’tis far away in the Spirit Land. Thither he is gone. Why should I stay? Let me go!’

“‘Hear you that?’ said one.’ She sings her death song. She will throw herself from the cliff!’

“At this, a dozen warriors, headed by him who claimed her hand, started to rescue the sweet singer from intended self-destruction.

“Again she chants:

“‘Spirit of Death, set me free! Dreary is earth. Joyless is time. Heart, thou art desolate! Wed thee another? Nay. Death is thy husband! Farewell, oh sun! Vain is your light. Farewell, oh earth! Vain are your plains, your flowers, your grassy dales, your purling streams, and shady groves! I loved you once, —but now no longer love! Tasteless are your sweets, —cheerless your pleasures! Thee I woo, kind Death! Wahuspa calls me hence. In life we were one. We’ll bask together in the Spirit Land. Who shall sunder there? Short is my pass to thee. Wahuspa, I come!’

“Upon this she threw herself forward, as the warriors grasped at her; but, leaving her robe in their hands, she plunged headlong and was dashed to pieces among the rocks below![25]

“E’er since, the young warrior sighs as he beholds this peak, and thinks of the maiden’s death song.

“Conversing upon the subject of medicine-men, he was asked, why those individuals are so highly esteemed by his people? To this he replied:

“These men are regarded as the peculiar favorites of the Great Spirit, to whom is imparted a more than ordinary share of His power and wisdom. We respect them, therefore, in proportion to the abilities they receive, even as we reverence the Great Spirit.”

Here the question was proposed, how are their abilities above those of others?

“The Yellow-hair counts as his soldier Tahtunga-mobellu, — man of strong medicine. To him the Great Spirit has imparted the power of healing, by imbibing, at pleasure, the diseases of the sick, and discharging them from his eyes and nose in the form of live snakes.[26]

“On a time, years past, our young men went to the Pawnees and came back crying; for sixteen slain of their number were left to grace an enemy’s triumph.

“It was winter, and the moans of men and maidens mingled with the howling winds. Sorrow beclouded every brow, and brave looked upon brave as if to enquire, ‘Who shall wipe out this disgrace?’ Then it was a medicine-chief stood up, and his words were:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“Be it for me to consult the Good Spirit.’

“So saying, he entered his lodge alone, nor suffered any to come near during the long fast that followed. Darkness had closed four times upon the prairie, and the sun again hastened to hide behind the mountain peaks, when, calling the young men to him, the medicine-man said:

“Fetch me now meat and water, with a new robe, and bid my people come near, that they may know the words that I would speak.’

“The obedient braves made haste and did as bidden. Folding the robe, he sat upon it and partook of the refreshments placed before him. After eating he arose, and six large snakes, crawling from the robe one after another, sprang to his shoulder, and, whispering in his ear, vanished from sight. The last snake had just told his message when the chief began:

“‘The Good Spirit wills it, that we remove from hence. Three moons being dead, let three hundred warriors return, and their hearts shall be made glad with medicine-dogs and the scalps of enemies.’

“The village left, and, at the time appointed, the warriors returned. They met the enemy, —fought, and were victorious. Sixty-three scalps and one hundred medicine-dogs were the fruits of their success.”

Before dismissing the subject, many other particulars were cited in proof of the extraordinary abilities of different medicine-men, but the above being the most remarkable, I have thought proper to pass over the remainder in silence.

NOTE.— An account, still more wonderful than either of the foregoing, was subsequently narrated in my hearing, while among the Arapaho Indians; and, without vouching for the truth of all its particulars, I am unwilling to withhold it from the reader.

The performance alluded to is said to have occurred, some three years since, in the presence of the whole Arapaho village, incredible as it may seem. The actor was a Riccaree by nation, and is well known to the mountain traders.

In the centre of a large circle of men, women, and children, stood the subject of the appended sketch, stripped to the waist, as the gunner’s mark. A shot perforated his body with a bullet, which entered at the chest and emerged from the opposite side. He instantly fell, and the blood flowing in streams dyed the grass where he lay, and everything seemed to prefigure the reality of death.

While in this condition, his wife approached and besprinkled his face with water; soon after which he arose, as from a slumber —the blood still pouring from him. Bepastering his wound with mud before and behind, the blood ceased to flow, when he commenced yawning and stretching; in a few minutes the plaster was removed by a pass of the hand, and neither blood, nor wound, nor the sign of a scratch or scar appeared! There stood the self-restored medicine-man, before the wondering throng, alive and well, and in all the pride of his strength!

He then brought his naked son into the ring, a lad of some eight years, and, standing at a distance of several yards, bow in hand, he pierced him through and through, from diaphragm to vertebra, at three successive shots.

The boy fell dead, to every appearance, and the thick blood freely coursed from his wounds. The performer then clasped the body in his arms and bore it around the ring for the inspection of all, three times in succession. Upon this he breathed into his mouth and nostrils, and, after suffusing his face with water and covering his wounds with a mud plaster, he commenced brief manipulations upon his stomach, which soon ended in a complete recovery, nor left a single trace of injury

about him. Both of these feats, if performed as said, can scarcely admit the possibility of trick or slight of hand, and must stand as the most astonishing instances of jugglery on record.

CHAPTER XI.

Food for horses. Squaws and their performances. Dogs and dog-meat. Return to Fort. Starvation. Travel by guess. Death from drinking. Medicine-making. A Burial. Little Lodge and the French trader. A speech in council. Journey to White river. High winds and snow. Intense sufferings and painful results.

A LARGE grove of cottonwood near us, day after day was graced by groups of village squaws, armed with axes, for the procurement of horse food.

The bark of this tree is eaten freely by both horses and mules, and answers well as a substitute for corn or oats. Animals will thrive upon it in a remarkable manner, and even in the summer months they prefer it to grass. The bark of red elm is also used for the same purpose.

The operations of the squaws at such times contributed greatly to our amusement. Climbing fearlessly to the topmost branch of the highest tree, they would there lop off the surrounding boughs, with as much apparent ease as though footed upon terra firma.

And then, the enormous loads they would carry, lashed together with cords and slung to their backs, were enough to make a giant stagger. Dogs, harnessed to travées had their part to perform, and oftentimes were they a source of vexation to their mistresses.

A squaw, trudging along under a full donkey-load of cottonwood, and followed by a squad of half-naked children, presented a spectacle quite interesting; but this was rendered rather comical, withal, when two or three draught dogs with their heavy-laden travées reluctantly brought up the rear—every now and then lying down for weariness, or squatting to loll and gaze at their companions.

Now, she coaxes and caresses to urge them forward—they still delay. Then she turns briskly towards them with a stick—get out, dogs! — “Yierh! Warktashne ceicha,” cries the squaw, accompanying her denunciation with blows, and away go the yelping troop as fast as legs can carry them. Dogs are the necessary appendage of every Indian lodge, and generally form an equal portion of the village population. They present almost all the different varieties of the canine species, from the wolf to the spaniel, and from the spaniel to the hairless dog of Africa. The wolf, however, is predominant, and, taken together, they more assimilate a gang of wolves than anything else. Indeed, the different varieties of prairie wolves hold familiar intercourse with the village dogs, and associate with them on friendly terms.

The species used for draught, is a large, stout-built, wolfish-looking creature, of the Exquimaux breed. Trained to his duties in early life, he is generally both submissive and tractable. The drudgery of a squaw, which is at all times onerous, without his ready aid would prove past endurance. But these dogs are also useful in another respect. Their flesh furnishes an article highly esteemed for food, and which almost invariably graces the soldiers' feast and every other scene of conviviality. However much the squamishness of the reader may revolt at the suggestion, justice impels me to say, the flesh of a fat Indian dog, suitably cooked, is not inferior to fresh pork; and, by placing side by side select parts of the two, it would be no easy task even for a good judge to tell the difference, either by looks or taste, unless he were previously informed.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Towards the last of January, buffalo having left the vicinity, the Indians, as a necessary consequence, were compelled to move. A great scarcity of provisions prevailed among them, and we ourselves were scarcely better off than they.

Our stock in hand was nearly exhausted, and an abandonment of the post became absolutely necessary, — a thing, however, which could not be performed without a fresh supply of horses and cattle from Fort Platte. For this purpose, I volunteered my services, and, accompanied by two engagés, was promptly under way.

A few hours' ride brought us to the head of White river, where, consuming at a meal our scanty eatables, from that onward we were left entirely destitute.

This was the first occasion subjecting me to the pains of hunger for so long a time. The second day I experienced the greatest annoyance, and then it was I felt some of the realities of starvation. The third day, however, I awoke in the morning scarcely thinking of breakfast. In fact, my appetite seemed quite passive, and the only sensation I felt was a kind of weakness and lassitude, evincing the lack of proper nourishment.

The morning was cloudy and threatening. Soon after leaving camp, snow began to fall, thick and fast. The day proved so dark, objects were indiscernible at the distance of a hundred yards in advance. Travelling, as we were, over a trackless prairie, with nothing to guide us but the wind and the position of the grass, it was by the merest accident we reached our destination a few minutes before nightfall.

Our sudden appearance was the occasion of general surprise to the Fort hands, and, after a brief explanation, we began to make amends for previous abstinence.

At first, a few mouthfuls sufficed, — but soon I again felt hungry and could be satisfied only with a double quantity, — in an equally short time my stomach demanded a still further supply, and, by the next day, hunger became so keen it seemed almost insatiable. An interval of three or four weeks was requisite before it assumed its wonted tone.

During our stay here, an Indian family, occupying one of the Fort rooms, indulged themselves in a drunken spree.

Having procured a quantity of the American Fur Company's liquor, the effects of their lavish potations soon became manifest to all within hearing distance. But the din of drunken revelry ere long assumed the wail of mourning and sorrow.

Hearing the strange commotion, I entered the room to ascertain the cause. There lay, helpless upon the floor, and apparently at the point of death, a squaw of some eighteen years;— she, in her eagerness, had swallowed nearly a pint of the vile stuff, undiluted, and now experienced its dreadful consequences.

But most conspicuous in the throng was a large, obese, cross-eyed Indian, earnestly engaged in his medicine-performances for her recovery.

A breech-cloth was his sole garb, as, with eyes half strained from their sockets and volving in a strange unearthly manner, he stood, first upon one foot and then upon the other, alternately—then, stamping the floor as if to crush it through, and meanwhile, grunting, screeching, and bellowing, and beating his breast or the wall with his clenched fists, — then, with inhaled breath, swelling like a puff-ball, he would bend over his patient and apply sugescents to her mouth, throat and breast.

This done, sundry ejections of saliva prepared his mouth for the reception of an ample draught of

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

water, with which he bespatted her face and forehead.

But yet, all these extraordinary efforts failed to produce their designed effect. The poor squaw grew weaker, and her breathing became fainter and more difficult.

Some powerful restorative must be adopted, or she will soon be beyond the reach of medicine, —so thought the officiating doctor; or, at least, his succeeding antics indicated that such were the cogitations of his mind. Standing for a minute or two in the attitude of reflection, an idea stuck him. Ah, he has it now! This cannot fail.

Snatching a butcher-knife and hastening with it to the fire, he heats the point to redness upon the coals, —then balancing it between his teeth, at a toss he flings it vaulting above his head and backward upon the floor, then, re-catching it, he goes through the performance a second and a third time.

Thus premised, he addresses himself with threefold energy to the grotesque and uncouth manoeuvres before described. If he had stamped his feet, he now stamps them with a determination hitherto unknown;—if he had thumped his breast and beat the walls, he now thumps and beats as if each blow were intended to prostrate the object against which it was directed, — if he had grunted, screeched, and bellowed, he now grunts, screeches, bellows, and yells, till the very room quakes with the reverberations of demoniac noise;— if he had gagged, puffed, and swelled, he now gags, puffs, and swells, as if he would explode from the potency of his extraordinary inflations.

Then, with an air of confidence, he hies to his patient and commences a process of manipulation from her breast downwards, and reverse, —and then again he repeats his previous operations, with scrupulous exactness and unsparing effort, in all their varied minutiae.

But, alas for the medicine-man!—the squaw died, despite the omnipotence of his skill!

Then was enacted another such a scene of piteous wailing, as Indians alone have in requisition, as vent for their grief.

After the usual preliminaries, the corpse of the deceased was placed upon a scaffold beside that of Susu-ceicha, the old chief of whom I have spoken of in a former chapter. Each member of the bereaved family deposited a tuft of hair in the sack containing the meat and trinkets placed beneath her head. A smooth piece of cottonwood slab was then affixed to the scaffold, upon which were traced, in vermilion, certain quadrangular characters of unknown meaning, —answering well to the idea of an inscription of name and age.

A difficulty occurred about this time between a trader of the American Fur Company and an Oglalla chief, known as Little Lodge.

The latter had become crazed by liquor, and, being rather turbulent, was put out of the Fort. But, effecting a re-entrance, he again proved equally annoying. The trader then commenced quarrelling with him, and undertook to seize his arms. This the Indian resisted, when the trader discharged a pistol at him, but missed his object. Here was a deadly affront, that blood alone could wipe away.

With great difficulty, the Indian was finally disarmed and bound. He was thus secured till the next day, when he was liberated;—still, however, he muttered threats of revenge.

Two or three weeks subsequently, Little Lodge was present at a soldiers' feast, and the question of war with the Americans was a prominent subject of consideration.

Several speeches were made, both for and against it; and, though the prevailing sentiment seemed

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

to be of an adverse kind, it scarcely required a half dozen words to turn the scale upon either side. Little Lodge arose to address the council, and the friends of the whites, knowing the vengeful spirit that yet rankled in his bosom at the remembrance of his recent injuries, began to fear for the continuance of peace.

Contrary to the universal expectation, he contended for its maintenance. "But," said he, "Little Lodge has grievances of his own, and they call for redress.

"There is one among the pale-faces whose blood must wash away the foul blot that rests upon the name of Little Lodge. I know him well. He is not a Long-knife. The Long-knives are all the friends of Little Lodge. Let the Lacota take them by the hand whenever he meets them upon the prairie. It is good that he do so. They are very many and exceedingly rich. Their country is a large one, and far away towards the sunrising. They, too, are strong for war. They have big hearts and strong, and they are very good to the red man. They bring to him many good things; why, then, should the Lacota hate the Long-knife?

"Do my brothers ask who it is of the pale-faces the Little Lodge would remove from the light of day? Know, then, he is not of the Long-knives, — he is of the Warceichas, (Frenchmen.) The Warceichas are not Longknives!

"And, do my brothers ask, who are the Warceichas?

"Aye, who are they? Little Lodge cannot tell; — who of all the Lacotas can? Who ever heard of the country of these men? No one. They have no country, — they are no people. They are as the wandering dogs[27] that infest our hunting grounds and prey upon the game formed by the Good Spirit for the red man's sustenance. They steal into the land of the red man, and sneak around from place to place; — for they have no home; they have no country; they are no people!

"One of these it was who bade the medicine-iron speak its death-word to Little Lodge, and sought to spill the blood of a Lacota brave, after that he had made him a fool by means of his thickened[28] fire-water!

"Should Little Lodge fall by the hand of the Warceicha? He might fall by the hand of a Long-knife, and the nation would honor his memory, — but never, should the Warceicha bring him low!

"Then, is it not good that Little Lodge should be avenged upon this lost dog — this outcast of the world — that the whelps of a motherless breed may cease to insult and wrong the Lacotas? Which of all my brothers will say nay?"

The address was received in silence, — no one presuming to oppose an answer to its sentiments. Whether the speaker executed his threats of vengeance against the offending trader, I am yet unadvised.

Having remained two nights and a day at Fort Platte, we again started for White river, taking with us three yoke of oxen and several horses, one of which was laden with dried meat.

The snow greatly retarded our progress from the first, and so obscured the trail we were compelled to travel mostly by guess. The sun, too, was shut out by a tenebrous atmosphere, and we could judge of our proper course only by observing the movements of the clouds,[29] with the general range of the hills and ravines, or inclination of the grass.

The broad expanse of unbroken snow lying from Rawhide to Leau-qui court, brought a chill tremor with the thought of crossing it. Yet, go we must! It was no time to falter when the fate of others, perhaps, depended upon our prompt advance.

But the effort was no child's play. If we had experienced a tedious time during a former journey,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

what could we expect now? The whole interval of thirty miles was covered with snow, that grew deeper and deeper as we proceeded. Every hollow and ravine was filled, and the route otherwise seriously impeded by huge drifts and embankments.

We were frequently compelled to break foot-paths for our animals, and ever and anon pull them by main strength from the deep pitfalls into which they would plunge and become almost lost to view. In this manner our progress was slow, —the average depth through which we waded being but little less than two feet.

The rising of a fierce head wind, piercing as the blasts of Nova Zembla, drove the snow into our faces with mad fury and added immeasurably to our sufferings.

In this manner night shut down upon us, while yet far distant from any camping-place. And, such a night! Oh, storms and deadly winter, foul and fierce! how swept ye “through the darkened sky,” and with your awful howlings rendered “the savage wilderness more wild!”

The creeping cold on every nerve played freely, in haste to sting our vitals, and lay us each “along the snows a stiffen’d corse, Stretch’d out and bleaching in the northern blast!”

The impress of this event can never be effaced from my mind. It was midnight ere we arrived at the timberless *L'eau-qui-court* and struck camp. Our animals needed water, but we had neither axe or tomahawk to cut through the thick ice with which the creek was coated. As a remedy for this lack, all three of us advanced upon it, and, by our united efforts at jumping, caused a lengthy fissure with gentle escarpments towards each shore, that left midway an ample pool.

Having driven the cattle to this, in their clumsy movements upon the ice, two of them fell, and, sliding down the inclined plain, lay struggling in the freezing water, unable to rise. Our only resort was to drag them to the shore by main strength; for, left in their then condition, they must have frozen to death in a very short time.

Here commenced a series of pulling and wrenching, that, in our chilled and exhausted state, we were ill-prepared to endure.

For awhile our efforts proved vain. A backward-slide succeeded each headway-pull, and vexed us with useless toil. Thus we worried for nearly three hours in water knee-deep!

At length, having procured a rope and fastened one end to their horns and the other around a pointed rock upon the shore, and gathering the slack at each successive thrust, we finally succeeded in placing them both, one after the other, upon dry land.

But, now we were in a thrice sorry plight. Not a stick of wood could be raised, far or near, of which to build a fire, and *bois de vache*, the great substitute of the prairies, was too deeply covered with snow for procurement. Our clothes, wet to the waist, were frozen upon us, and the merciless wind, with stinging keenness, pierced us through at every breath, and stood us forth as living monuments of ice!

Could men of iron endure such incomprehensible hardships, —such inexpressible sufferings? Yet we survived them all!

Spreading a few robes upon the snow, we lay down for sleep, dinnerless and supperless. I was now seized with a chill, which lasted for two hours or more; and so violent were its actions I could scarcely keep the covering upon me.

My companions, however, though not similarly afflicted, were worse off than myself. One had his hands and ears frozen, and the other his hands and feet, —the painful consequences of which, as the frost began to yield to the influence of generated warmth, were too apparent in their groans

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

and writhings.

Morning at length came, and the sun arose bright and clear. The winds had ceased their ragings, and a clement atmosphere seemed pouring upon us the balm of sympathy for miseries so recently endured.

But their direful effects were not thus easily eradicated. The feet of one poor fellow were so badly frozen, it was three months before he entirely recovered; while another lost a portion of one of his ears. As for myself, a severe cold settled in my teeth, producing an intensely painful ache and swollen face, that continued for eight or ten days.

It seems almost miraculous that we should have escaped so easily, and often, even after so long an interval, I shudder at the recollection of this anguishing scene.

Two days subsequently we reached our destination, and found all things pretty much in statu quo.

CHAPTER XII.

Another drunken spree. Horses devoured by wolves. An upset. A blowing up. Daring feat of wolves. A girl offered for liquor. Winter on the Platte. Boat building. Hunting expedition. Journey up the Platte. Island camp. Narrow escape. Snow storm. Warm Spring. Pass of the Platte into the prairies. A valley. Bitter Cottonwood. Indian forts. Wild fruit. Root-digging. Cherry tea and its uses. Geology of the country. Soils, grasses, herbs, plants, and purity of atmosphere. Horse-shoe creek. A panther. Prairie dogs and their peculiarities.

OUR intended evacuation of the post was postponed till the week following, and, meanwhile, the few customers, that still hung on, were careful to improve the passing opportunity of steeping their senses in liquor.

Another general drunken frolic was the consequence, ending as usual in a fight and still further attempts upon the life of our trader.

Soon after this, our catalogue of disasters was increased by the death of two horses, which fell a prey to wolves.

The case was an aggravated one, and provoking in the extreme. Both of them were "buffalo horses," and the fleetest and most valuable in our possession, —in fact, they were the only ones of which we ventured to boast. We had others of little worth, so poor and feeble they could oppose none resistance to magpies,[30] and much less to the rapacity of wolves.

But, no. These blood-thirsty depredators, desirous of a feast on fat things, were determined to have it, reckless of cost, —and, the encrimsoned tracks, coursing the snowy plain in every direction where passed the swift chargers ill vain effort to escape, proved that they won their supper at an enormous expense of leg-wear.

Feb. 4th. All things being in readiness, we bade farewell to winter quarters, and commenced our journey.

Crossing the river soon after, on ascending the opposite bank, a cart upset and deposited its contents in the water. The load, consisting of robes and powder, became thoroughly saturated, and we were employed a full hour in fishing it out. The stream being waist-deep and filled with floating ice, amid which we were forced to plunge, our task was far from a pleasant one.

The freight needed drying and we were detained two days for that purpose. Meanwhile the drenched powder was subjected to the experiments of one of our engagés. Having spread it to dry,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

he was carelessly bending over it, when a spark from the camp-fire struck the ready ignitable; a sprightly flash, enveloping the luckless wight in a sheet of flame, told the instant result. Springing to his feet, he exclaimed:

“Bless my stars! That’s what I call regular blowing up!”

“Ave, aye, my lad,” says one. “You was always a bright youth, —but never before did you appear half so brilliant. ‘Tis a fact, or I’m a liar!”

Resuming our course, the second night following was passed at a pool of water between Leauqui-court and Rawhide. Here, having placed my shoes under my head for better security, I slept soundly till morning. Rising at an early hour, I turned for them, but one was missing, and, after searching far and near, it could not be found.

The mystery of its disappearance, however, was fully solved by the numerous wolf tracks that appeared on all sides;—some straggling marauder had stolen it during the night, and quietly deposited it in his empty stomach as the substitute for an early breakfast.

Our camp at Rawhide was beset with a throng of Indians from an adjoining village, who, as usual, were loudly clamorous and importunate for liquor. A beautiful young squaw was brought in, to exchange for that article. However, their solicitations were of no avail and their vitiated appetites went unappeased.

On the 12th of February we reached the Fort, and thus ended our disastrous and eventful expedition.

Winter in the neighborhood of the Platte had been remarkably mild, and at no time during the season had the snow remained upon the ground to exceed a day. Vegetation, even thus early, was beginning to put forth, and bring to view the beauty and loveliness of spring.

Preparations were already on foot for building a boat for the transportation of furs to the States by way of the river, and, at the solicitation of the company’s agent, I reluctantly consented to take charge of it during the voyage, —thus deferring, for the present, my design of visiting Oregon.

The timber used in its construction was procured from the neighboring pine hills, and prepared by a laborious process of hand, with the aid of a pit-saw. The ribs and other timber were obtained from an ash grove, a few miles above the Fort, and three men were busily engaged in putting all things in readiness for the expected spring rise—an event which seldom occurs before the 15th of May.

The winter’s trade having closed, an interval of nearly three months’ leisure followed, which resulted in a hunting expedition that included my self with six others.

Anxious to explore the mountains, we set our faces westward; but, owing to the reported closeness of game en route, very little provisions were taken with other necessaries.

Keeping the river bottom by a rocky ridge for some ten miles, our course led through several beautiful groves and broad stretches of rich alluvial soil, that presented an encouraging prospect to agriculturists. After a few hours’ ride we came to a point at which the stream sweeps round the ridge’s base, causing a vertical wall of lias and sandstone nearly one hundred and fifty feet high. Abandoning the river bottom at this place, we ascended to the high prairie on the left, where an interesting plateau greeted us, extending far away to the south and west, till it became lost in the neighboring mountains. Continuing on a short distance, we again struck the river, at a small opening between two hills, and made camp in a grove of willows.

Opposite this place is a large heavily wooded island, of a blueish loam, upon a substratum of fos-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

siliferous limestone.

Above and below are lofty walls of limestone and ferruginous rock, that, in many places, overhang the sweeping waters at their base, and form roofage beneath which swarms of prairie swallows are wont to raise their annual broods.

Consuming our scanty supply of provisions at a single meal, each soon disposed of himself for the night. A mild atmosphere invited to repose; and, enwrapped in a single robe, my troubles were speedily forgotten in a quiet slumber.

But during the succeeding interval, a change came over the spirit of my dream. I was suddenly aroused by the crash of a huge tree, that fell across my bed, and only a providential curve arching upwards, had saved me from instant death!

“Hurra, for me!” I exclaimed, as my startled campmates came clustering around, —” It’s better to be born lucky than RICH!”

The wind was now blowing a perfect hurricane, and the trees tottered around us, threatening every moment to fall. In an hour or so, however, the gale abating, we again addressed ourselves to sleep.

Towards morning, feeling a disagreeable warmth and superincumbent pressure, I was induced to uncover, and, looking out, the cause was explained by the presence of a dense snow that covered the ground to the depth of several inches. The fallen snow was melting fast, and that yet descending soon merged into rain.

A pretty-looking set of fellows were we, in a comparatively short time! —blankets, robes, clothes, and every article about us were wet—soaking wet—and covered with mud. It required an effort of several hours to kindle a fire, so thoroughly saturated was everything with water; —this done, we all gathered around it, and—such a group! —Oh, the beauties of mud and water! A painter might describe it, —I cannot.

If the reader imagines we felt in a superlative good humor while standing there, breakfastless, shivering, and wet, he has conjured up a strange illusion.

It having ceased raining about mid-day, in the course of the afternoon we enjoyed a beautiful sunshine for a couple of hours, which enabled us to assume a better travelling plight; and, favored by a mild atmosphere and clear sky, on the following morning, we again resumed our course.

Striking upon an Indian trail, we bore leftward from the river, and, in a short ride, came to a sand creek shut in by precipitous embankments of limestone, through which our road led by a narrow defile. A transparent spring gushes from the right bank with considerable noise, furnishing a beautiful streamlet to its hitherto high bed, which is known as the “Warm Spring.”

A short distance above the mouth of this creek, the Platte makes its final egress from the Black Hills through a tunnel-like pass, walled in upon either side by precipitous cliffs of red-sandstone and siliceous limestone, sometimes overhanging the stream at their base, and towering to a height of from three to five hundred feet. The high table lands constituting these immense walls, are surmounted with shrubs and occasional pines and cedars, that unite to present a wild romantic scenery.

Continuing on, and bearing still further leftward, we passed a beautiful valley, graced with several springs and a small grove of cottonwood, with cherry and plum bushes, near which rose a conical hill abundant in fossiliferous limestone of a snowy whiteness. A diminutive pond in the vicinity afforded several varieties of the testaceous order, both bivalves and univalves—a circumstance

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

quite rare among mountain waters. The soil of this locality appeared to be a compound of clay, sand, and marl, and well adapted to agriculture.

Passing this, our course led over a gently undulating prairie, bounded on either side by pine hills. The soil was generally of a reddish, sandy loam, intermixed with clay; and, judging from the long dry grass of the preceding year, it was both rich and productive.

Towards night we arrived at a large creek, bearing the name of Bitter Cottonwood, —so called from the abundance of that species of poplar in its valley.

These trees generally grow very tall and straight with expansive tops, — averaging from twenty-five to one hundred and fifty feet in height.

The creek occupies a wide, sandy bed, over which the water is dispersed in several shallow streams. The valley is broad and of a jetty, vegetable mould, variegated, at intervals, with layers of gravel deposited by aqueous currents, and is bounded on both sides by abrupt acclivities leading to the beautiful plateaux and lofty pine hills so abundant in the neighborhood.

The remains of three or four Indian forts were situated adjoining the place selected for our encampment. These were built of logs, arranged in a circular form, and enclosing an area, sufficient for the accommodation of twenty or thirty warriors. The walls were generally about six feet high, with single entrances, and apertures in various places for the use of their defenders in case of attack.

All Indian forts, meeting my observation in subsequent travels, with one or two exceptions, were of the same general description. Some, however are almost entirely roofed in by an arched covering, presenting a coniform appearance. The only exception to this mode of fortification was of a quadrangular form, and in a solitary instance the materials were of rock. The latter structure I shall take occasion to describe in due course.

The valley gave abundant indication of wild fruit at the proper season, such as plums, cherries, currants, goose and buffalo berries, (*shepherdia argentea*.) The signs of game were very plentiful, particularly elk; after camp two or three of us sallied out with our rifles in quest of these wary animals, while others were busily employed in digging for roots to appease the gnawing of appetite, which began to make itself most sensibly felt by all.

About sundown both parties came in, —the hunters quite dispirited, not having seen any thing in the shape of elk or other game, —but the root diggers had been more lucky and brought with them a small supply of nutritious aliments, which were divided equally among the company, and, through scarcely a half dozen mouthfuls were apportioned to each, they answered, to some extent, the designed object.

These roots consisted of two varieties, viz: pomme blanc, and commote.

The pomme blanc, or white apple, is a native of the prairies and mountains, oval shaped and about three and a half inches in circumference. It is encased in a thin fibrous tegument, which, when removed, exposes an interior of white pulpy substance, much like a turnip in taste. It generally grows at a depth of three or four inches, in the soil of hill-sides and plateaux, where is found a reddish clay loam abundant in fragmentary rocks and gravel. The stalk attains a height of about three inches, and in general description is quite like a well known article, common to the States, called "sheep-sorrel." At the proper season it bears a handsome white blossom, that would suffer no disparagement when placed in juxtaposition with many of the choicer specimens of our gardens.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The commote[31] is a root much like the common radish in size and shape, while a brownish skin envelopes a substance of milky whiteness, soft and nutritious, and of an agreeable taste. It is found most abundant in river bottoms, and requires a rich alluvial soil, well mixed with sedimentary deposits and vegetable matter. It generally penetrates to a depth of about four inches. Its leaves resemble those of the carrot in shape and color, and seldom grow to exceed two inches from the ground, while a stalk equally unpretending, bears a blueish blossom, not without some just claim to beauty.

The pomme blanc and commote are equally good whether boiled or raw and are uniformly harmless, even with those unaccustomed to their use as an article of food.

Making way with our scanty supply, a fire was struck and a kettle of tea prepared from wild cherry bark, which proved quite wholesome.

This, as I ascertained, is a drink quite common among mountaineers and Indians in the spring season, and is used for purifying the blood and reducing it to suitable consistency for the temperature of summer. As the successful performer of the task assigned, I most cordially attest to its virtues, and recommend it as the most innocent and effective medicine, if medicine it may be called, that can be employed for a result so necessary to general health.

Early on the succeeding day we resumed our journey.

I now for the first time noticed a gradual change in the geological character of the country. The soil in many places appears to be sterile, and is generally of a red clayish nature, mixed with sand and fragmentary rock, and strongly impregnated with mineral salts, among which nitre forms a prominent component. Some spots, for a considerable extent, are entirely destitute of vegetation, and present a surface whitened by saline efflorescences, among which nitre and sulphate of soda form a predominant part.

The character of the various moulds (with the exception of the alluvion in the vicinity of the rivers and creeks) is almost entirely primitive, like numerous strata of rocks upon which they repose.

The grass, from the dry specimens of the previous summer's growth, appeared to be of a longer and a coarser kind, and more sparse and isolated. The short buffalo-grass of the grand prairie had almost entirely disappeared, — in some places a blueish salt grass (*herba salee*) showed itself in plats uncropped by game. *Artemisia*,[32] or rather greasewood of the mountaineers, became quite abundant, as did absinthe, or wild sage, together with several specimens of the cacti family, which are the common pest of the mountain prairies.

The purifying effects of saline exhalations, with the odor of the grease. wood and absinthe of the prairies, plateaux and table lands, and the balsam and cedar of the adjacent mountains, afforded an atmosphere, even at this unfavorable season, as aromatic as the air of Eden and as wholesome as the deathless clime of Elysium.

Eastward lay a broad expanse of prairie, bounded only by the horizon, while westward and upon either hand, the high summits of the Black Hills, with their pines and snows, told our ingress to other and wilder scenes.

Our course for some twenty or twenty-five miles led through a broad valley, though occasionally winding among rugged hills of red-sandstone and primitive rock, with denuded sides and level summits, covered with shrubs and dwarfish pines.

Towards night, on reaching a small stream, called Horse-shoe creek, we struck camp. One of the party having killed a buck deer, we were promptly on hand, and not at all backward in obeying

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the calls of appetite, sharpened by a continuous abstinence of three days.

Deer-meat at this season of the year is very poor eating, —especially that of the buck, —it being both lean and tough; but, indifferent as it was, we were too hungry to be nice.

Previous to reaching camp I rode along the base of a small mountain, some distance to the right of the main party, in quest of game; there I caught glimpse of the first panther I had yet met with. Jumping from my horse, I thought to give him a passing shot, —but he, neither liking my looks nor the smell of gunpowder, made hasty retreat to his mountain home.

Passing leisurely on, my course led through a large village of prairiedogs, which reminds me of having heretofore neglected a description of these singular animals.

I am at a loss to imagine what it is in the habits or looks of the prairiedog that entitles him to that appellation.

In appearance and size he more approximates a large species of the sciurus family, commonly called the fox-squirrel, than anything I can name. His tail, however, is but an inch and a half long, while his ears and legs are also short;—as a whole, perhaps, he is a trifle larger and more corpulent than the fox-squirrel. His “bark” is precisely like the occasional chatterings of that animal, and his color is of a brownish red.

His habits are quite inoffensive and lead him to procure his food from roots and grass. Clumsy in his motions, he seldom ventures far from home — fearful of the numerous enemies that beset him on all sides, both from birds and beasts of prey.

These animals congregate together in large villages, and dig their burrows adjoining each other;—the dirt thrown from them often forming cone-like elevations three or four feet high, in whose tops are the entrances. The latter are nearly of a perpendicular descent for two feet, and then slope away to a great distance under ground.

These villagers locate without regard to the vicinity of water, and it is gravely doubted, by many persons, whether they make the same use of that fluid as other animals;—I have seen large settlements of them in high arid prairies, at a distance of fifteen or twenty miles from either stream or pool of water, and in regions subject to neither rain nor dews.

They are keen of sight and scent, and seemed governed by some code of federative regulations for mutual safety. Their guards are regularly posed at the suburbs of every village, whose duty it is to be continually on the alert and give timely warning of the approach of danger.

This the cautious sentinels discharge by standing erect at the slightest tainture of the air, or startling noise, or strange appearance; and, having ascertained by careful observations its nature and cause, they sound the sharp yelp and chatter of alarm, in a hurried manner, —then, betaking themselves to the watch-towers that protect the entrances to their burrows, from the verge of the steep parapets they again renew their warning notes, when the whilom busy populace, bescattered at brief distances for amusement or food, return with all possible despatch to their ready holes and disappear from view.

The faithful sentinels are last to retreat from their posts, and not unfrequently maintain their ground at the hazard of individual safety.

On the disappearance of the cause of alarm, they are the first to communicate the pleasing intelligence, and soon the reassured community again betake themselves to their business and sports.

The prairie-owl and rattlesnake maintain friendly relations with these inoffensive villagers, and not unfrequently the three heterogeneous associates occupy the same subterranean apart-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ments;—a strange companionship of birds, beasts, and reptiles! The prairie dog is extremely tenacious of life, and can seldom be killed with a rifle, unless by a brain-shot; and then, even, it is difficult to secure him, as his companions will immediately convey the carcass into their holes beyond reach.

The flesh of these animals is tender and quite palatable, and their oil superior in fineness, and absence from all grosser ingredients, to that of any other known animals; it is highly valued as a medicine in certain cases.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Creek valley. The Platte as a mountain stream. Cañon. Romantic prospect. Comical bear story. Perilous encounter with a wounded bull. Geological remarks. Division of party. Safety of spring travel. La Bonté's creek. Remarks by the way. Service-berry. Deer Creek. General observations. Moccasin making. Box-elder. Bear killed. Excellence of its flesh. Different kinds of bears in Oregon and the mountains. The grizzly bear, his nature and habits.

HORSE-SHOE creek is a stream of considerable size, that traces its way through a broad valley of rich alluvion, well timbered with cottonwood and box-elder, and affording all the usual varieties of mountain fruit. The grass of the preceding year's growth was quite rank and stout, giving evidence of a fertile soil.

Resuming our course, we again bore towards the river with the design of crossing, and, after a few hours' ride came to its banks, through a broad opening between two ridges of hills that communicated with it from the high prairies and table lands upon the left.

Here, however, fording was impracticable, the stream being too high and the current swift. The Platte of the mountains retains scarcely one characteristic of the river with which the reader has hitherto become so familiarized. It is now confined to a bed of rock and gravel, not exceeding two hundred yards in width, and is of unwonted clearness and transparency. Its banks are steep, and the attrition of high waters discloses a deep vegetable mould in their vicinity, favorable to the growth of grain or other produce. A small bottom of rich sandy loam upon the opposite side lay at the base of a high ridge of table lands, which presented its rugged sides of red sandstone, almost vertical in their position, and ornamented with an occasional stunted pine, or cedar, or shrub of the buffalo-berry, (*shepherdia argentsa*,) while at their base reposed, in huge masses, a profuse medley of fallen fragments, strown around in all the wild confusion of savage scenery.

A few hundred yards to the left, the Platte forces its way through a barrier of table lands, forming one of those striking peculiarities incident to mountain streams, called a "Cañon"[33].

Improving the opportunity afforded by a short stay, I ascended an eminence to enjoy a full view of the grand spectacle. The mountain through which the river finds passage, at this place, is from five to eight hundred feet high, opposing perpendicular walls upon each side, that at many points overhang the narrow stream which sweeps with its foaming waters among the rocks below.

This cañon is nearly two miles in length. About midway of the distance the whole stream is precipitated in an unbroken volume from a ledge of rocks, causing a cataract of some twenty or twenty-five feet descent.

Standing upon the dizzy verge of this frightful chasm, and gazing adown its dark abyss, the aspect is one of terrific sublimity, and such an one as will cause the beholder to shrink back with instinc-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

tive dread!

These walls are principally of red-sandstone, and ferruginous rock, the precise character of which I was unable to determine. Upon the summit noticed an abundance of silex, with some elegant specimens of crystalline quartz, that, reflecting the sun's rays, shone like gems in the crown of a mountain-god; a number of singular ligneous petrifications also met my observation, principally consisting of pine and cedar.

The surrounding country brought within the scope of vision an interesting and romantic scene. The lofty table land in front (with diversified surfaces of granitic rock and vegetable earth, affording a scanty nourishment for herbage and foothold for dwarfish cedars and pines) spread far away to the snow-clad mountains of the north, —while rearward at its base lay the broad valley through which passes the Oregon trail, shut in upon two sides by rugged hills; and farther on arise the snowy sides of the Laramie chain, with their cloud-capped summits. To the left, peak towering above peak, in gradual succession, point to the ridge dividing the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific; and, to the right, the lessening eminences, vallons, and plateaux, guide the eye to where the boundless prairie revels in wild beauty and owns itself the realm of eternal Solitude! How magnificent must be the scene when spring arrays the surrounding landscape in her own loveliness, and bedecks the wilderness with gaudy verdure!

Bearing again to the left, we continued— our course by a winding buffalo-path which soon brought us to a broad valley bordering upon the Platte.

Riding on, we soon came to a large sand creek; and, observing several bulls in the vicinity, we accepted the advantage offered by a small grove of cottonwoods and willows, with a clear spring, and struck camp.

During the day, the oddity of an old Franco-Canadian, who accompanied us, afforded me considerable amusement. Observing that he had carried his gun uncharged for several days past, a circumstance so singular in this country led me to enquire the cause. The old fellow, with the most laughable sang froid, answered as follows:

“Me carry fusee load? No, no! monsieur. No good, carry fusee load sur le printems. Certes, much bear come out—him dangereux. Me live long en le montagnes; oui, no remarque—duo, tree, great many year! Sacre dem bear, —vat you call him en la American?”

“Grizzly bear, I suppose you mean,” said I.

“Oui, oui, monsieur; much graces, monsieur! Oui, gizzle bear; me parler bon American, que no remarque gizzle bear! éntonner! Sacre dom gizzle bear, him come out une day, kill me de près.”

“Well,” continued I; “what has that to do with carrying your gun unloaded?”

“Oui, oui; pardonner, monsieur. Me parler tel une bon Amerian! Me reciter, sacre dem bear, —vat you call him, monsieur? Oh, gizzle bear! Sacre dem gizzle bear, me see him une day, en le printems; big, grand felleu. Shoot him fusee; make him much blood; no kill him. Sacre dem bear, gizzle bear, him jump for me. ‘Wa-r-r-h!’ he say, (imitating the bear.) Bon Dieu! me no stay dare; me bein fast run; me abandonner la fusee; me climb une leetil pine. Sacre dem bear—vat you call him? Ah, oui, gizzle bear. Certes, monsieur, me parler bon American, tel une naturel! Sacre dem bear, him come to tree; no climb him, —he too leetil. Look him all round, den; sacre dem bear, gizzle bear did. See fusee lie; pick him up; cock him fusee, sacre dem bear, gizzle bear did. Take him aim at me; snap him fusee tree time. Oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu! Suppose him fusee been load! Tonnerre de bateme! Him shoot me; him kill me dead! sacre dem bear, dem gizzle bear

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

vould! Certes, monsieur; por le assuré, sacre dem gizzle bear, him kill me! en le vérité, monsieur, him kill me dead!”

“So,” resumed I, “your reason for not carrying your gun loaded is, you are fearful that a bear might chance to get hold of it and shoot you!”

“Certes, monsieur; en le verite! No carry gun load, sur le printermes. Sacre dem bear get ‘old of him, he shoot!”

Towards night, two of our party, who had gone in pursuit of buffalo, returned laden with meat, which, though poor, was far preferable to the lean venison we had fed upon for the last twenty-four hours.

The male buffalo, at this season of the year, is generally fatter than the female, unless it be one of the few barren cows that sometimes are found in large bands; but, neither is worth boasting of. After our long fasting and indifferent fare for six entire days, it is not marvellous that we improved, with quickened zest, the present opportunity of feasting.

The day following, two parties started in quest of game, —one of which killed three bulls, at as many shots, within half an hour after leaving camp.

The other party also killed two, but, in securing one of them, they met with an exciting adventure. Both animals were extended upon the ground, one entirely and the other apparently dead—the hunters, having butchered one of them, proceeded to the other, and were in the act of raising him to the right position for the commencement of operation. The old fellow, not relishing the like familiarity from new acquaintances, sprang to his feet, and made a plunge at the afrighted hunters, who only escaped the fatal charge by one of those admirable feats of quick dodging so often in requisition among mountaineers.

The bull, passing between them, fell head foremost against the ground, two or three feet beyond the spot they had occupied scarcely a second previous; —then rising, with glaring eyes and distended nostrils, and mouth foaming with blood and rage, he pursued one of them in hot chase, for a distance of several hundred yards. So close was the bull in a few leaps, that with a sweep of his horns he gored the hunter’s back, tearing away his pantaloons and coat, and prostrating him upon all-fours at the edge of a deep ravine, down which he tumbled;—the enraged beast followed, but the force of an unbroken headway landed him, with a tremendous shock, against the opposite bank, far beyond the hunter. Improving the advantage thus gained, the latter escaped through the windings of the ravine, and ascended the bank, without the reach of his pursuer.

Having procured his rifle, after nine more shots had riddled the lights of the bull’s carcase, the business of butchering was again commenced and terminated without further mishap.

Our stay at this camp was prolonged for three or four days.

The geological character of the vicinity corresponds very much with that previously remarked, and to describe it in full would seem too much like a repetition. I have, perhaps, said sufficient to give the reader a correct idea of the prominent characteristics of these parts, and hence, for the sake of brevity, shall hereafter forbear further notes upon this subject, unless some uniform change or striking peculiarity should call for a passing observation.

Prior to resuming our journey, a disagreement occurred between us relative to the proposed route.

Some were desirous of proceeding southward into the Plains of Laramie; thence, bearing eastward to Laramie river, following its valley to Fort Platte; —others were anxious to continue up the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Platte to Sweet Water, or further, and from thence proceed as circumstances or inclination might suggest.

This difference finally resulted in a division of the party — four in favor of the western, and three of the southern route, —myself being included with the former.

Selecting two pack-mules for the conveyance of provisions and camp equipage, the day following we mounted our horses and were under way. With the exception of myself, the present party consisted of old and experienced mountaineers, well acquainted with the country and the nature of Indians. Though, in regard to the latter, little danger was apprehended at this season of the year, as the Sioux had not yet left their winter quarters, and they rarely traverse the vicinity of Sweet Water before the middle of May. Other tribes we might look upon as friendly. We, therefore, anticipated a safe and pleasant excursion.

During the day our course led over a rough undulating prairie, bounded on the right mostly by the river, and on the left by the mountains.

In the heads of valleys and ravines I noticed numerous withered stalks of the bread-root, (*psoralea esculenta*,) indicating its great abundance, and also an increased quantity of absinthe.

At night we encamped at the forks of a small stream called La Bonte's creek. Near the confluence of its waters with the Platte are the remains of a log cabin, occupied by a trading party several years since.

The creek is tolerably well timbered, and the valley, through which it winds its way, affords many beautiful bottoms of rich soil. The rock in the vicinity disclosed a furruginous character, especially the sandstone.

Among the usual fruit-bearing shrubs and bushes, I here noticed the "service berry."

This kind of fruit is very abundant in the mountainous parts of Oregon, where it attains a size but little inferior to the common plum, and is highly esteemed for its superior flavor.

Leaving La Bonte's creek, we travelled by easy stages, for three successive days, and struck camp at the mouth of Deer creek.

Our course led over several beautiful streams, most of them well timbered with cottonwood and box-elder, and occasionally skirted by rich bottoms. Previous to reaching this point we followed along the Platte valley, for a distance of some twenty or thirty miles, which presented several fine bottoms of rich sandy soil upon either bank, together with numerous groves of cottonwood.

The face of the country is generally a succession of ridges and hollows, intersected by ravines and small streams of water.

At Deer creek, and for some distance before reaching it, the mountain chain to our left approaches within four or five miles of the river rising abruptly to a height of from eight to fifteen hundred feet, with frowning brows and pine-clad summits.

Deer creek is one of the largest affluents of the Platte, from the south, between Sweet Water and Laramie. At this place it is about eight yards broad, with a smooth and transparent current that sweeps over a bed of rock and gravel. Its banks are well timbered with large cottonwoods, and present rich bottoms of alluvial soil, very luxuriant in grass.

Even this early in the season, the fresh grass of the vicinity affords tempting nourishment for our animals, and wishing to favor them as much as possible, we have concluded to remain a short time.

During the succeeding interval we were variously occupied in hunting, root-digging, and moc-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

casin-making. The latter is a business in which every mountaineer is necessarily a proficient, and rarely will he venture upon a long journey without the appurtenances of his profession.

The process of shoe-making with him is reduced to its most simple form. He merely takes two pieces of buffalo (or any other suitable) skin, each being a little longer and wider than his foot, particularly towards the heel; these he folds separately, and lays them together parallel with the turned edges; then, rounding and trimming the sides, to render them foot-shaped, with an awl and the sinew of buffalo or other animal, or small strips of thin deer-skin, ("whang,") he sews the vamps from end to end, —then after cutting a tongue-like appendage in the upper side, midway from heel to toe, and stitching together the posterior parts, his task is done.

Having obtained a quantity of sap from a grove of box-elders near camp, we found it a sweet and pleasant liquid, and not inferior to that of maple. Sugar might be manufactured from it, with little trouble.

The leaves of this tree, as well as the general appearance of its wood, greatly assimilate those of maple, and, independent of its bushy tops and stunted, winding growth, it would be hard to tell the difference at a first glance.

Game was plenty on every side, both buffalo, deer, and elk, with some few bear.

The second day after our arrival, one of the latter, attracted by the scent of fresh buffalo meat, ventured within gun-shot of camp. Instantly the balls of four rifles were buried in his carcase. Aroused by this feeling salute, he rushed towards us at the top of his speed, when our horses, affrighted at the strange appearance, broke snorting away over the neighboring hills, and we ourselves took to trees as fast as possible.

In the midst of this general consternation a pistol ball, fired by one of the party, buried itself in the brains of our troublesome visitor and laid him prostrate.

He was one of a species common to the mountains, called the red bear, and must have weighed four or five hundred pounds. The fat upon his back was full three inches thick His skin when stretched would have compared in size to that of a buffalo, and the claws of his feet were full three inches long.

At this season of the year, when these animals first leave their dens, they are much the fattest, —a singular circumstance, if we remember the fact of their remaining holed up for the entire winter, without eating!

After butchering the greasy victim, and bringing our erratic horses back to camp, we regaled ourselves with an ample feast of bear's liver, heart, and kidneys, basted with fat, —a dish that epicures might well covet. Then, filling a large camp-kettle with portions of the "fleece" and ribs, we allowed it to boil till the next morning, and thus prepared another delicious entertainment, such as is rarely met with in any country other than this.

Bear meat, to be tender and good, should be boiled at least ten hours. This is probably the most preferable mode of cooking it, though a roast of the article is far from bad.

There are four several varieties of bear found in the Rocky Mountains and countries adjacent, viz.: The grizzly bear, the black, the red, and the white.

Of these, the grizzly bear stands pre-eminent in ferocity and strength. He will almost invariably flee at the sight or scent of a man, and seldom attacks any one unless wounded. When shot, he generally runs at full speed towards the sound, and woe to the unfortunate hunter who then comes in his way, unless fully prepared for a deadly encounter!

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

This animal reigns prince of the mountains, and every other beast within his wide realm acknowledges his supremacy.

Wolves and panthers dare not approach him, or disturb aught savoring of his ownership. Even the carcase of his prey, covered with the earth and rock his cautious instinct teaches him to heap upon it for preservation, is unmolested, though hundreds of wolves and panthers might be starving around.

Buffalo dread his presence far more than the dangerous approach of the hunter, and will sooner bring into requisition their swiftest powers of flight on such occasions. With great difficulty a horse can be persuaded to go within any near distance of one of them, even when led, and then he will quail and tremble in every joint, from extreme terror.

In short, the grizzly bear stalks forth at pleasure, in his majesty and strength, lord of the wild solitudes in which he dwells, and none dares oppose him.

Some writers assert that bears will not prey upon dead carcasses, —this is contrary to fact. I have often known them take possession of the carcasses of animals, even when nearly putrid, and remain until they were devoured.

They frequently kill buffalo, horses, and cattle to gratify their taste for animal food, and, in such cases, always drag their prey to some convenient spot, and perform the task of burial by heaping upon it piles of rock or earth, to a depth of several feet, for protection against the voracity of other beasts of prey. It is not uncommon, even, that they drag the entire carcase of a full-grown bull a distance of several hundred yards, by the horns, for this purpose, so great is their strength and so acute their sagacity.

CHAPTER XIV.

Desperate encounter with a grizzly bear, and extraordinary instance of suffering. Close contest. A comical incident. Cross Platte. Cañon camp. Sage trees. Mountain sheep, and all about them. Independence Rock; why so called, and description of it. Devil's Gate. Landscape scenery.

THE adventure recorded in the preceding chapter called forth the rehearsal of many thrilling stories of frightful encounter with that proud monarch of the mountains, the grizzly bear. Two or three of these it may not be uninteresting to transcribe.

Several years since, an old trapper by the name of Glass, with his companion, while on an excursion, came upon a large grizzly bear.

Bruin, having received the salute of two rifles, as usual, rushed towards his uncivil assailants, who broke from him with all possible despatch. But Glass, stumbling, fell prostrate in his flight, and before he could recover his feet the infuriated beast was upon him.

Now commenced a death-struggle. The pistols of the hunter were both discharged in quick succession, —the ball of one entering the breast of his antagonist, and that of the other grazing his back.

Smarting and maddened by the pain of additional wounds, the bleeding monster continued the conflict with the fury of desperation, —tearing from the limbs and body of the unfortunate man large pieces of trembling flesh, and lacerating him with the deep thrusts of his teeth and claws. Meanwhile the sufferer maintained, with his butcher-knife, an obstinate defence, though with fast waning effort and strength. Finally, enfeebled by the loss of blood, and exhausted from the ex-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

traordinary exertions of a desperate and unequal contest, he was unable to oppose further resistance, and quietly resigned himself to his fate.

The bear, too, with the thick blood oozing from his numerous wounds, and faint from the many stabs among his veins and sinews, seemed equally in favor of a suspension of hostilities; and, extending himself across the hunter's back, he remained motionless for two hours or more.

But now another enemy commences an assault upon his vitals—that enemy is death. In vain is defensive effort. In vain are all his struggles. He falls by the hunter's side a lifeless corpse.

The setting sun had cast his lurid glare upon the ensanguined spot, as the comrade of the miserable Glass ventured near to ascertain the result of the fierce encounter.

There lay the body of his deserted friend, stretched out, apparently lifeless and half-torn to pieces; and, by its side, lay the carcase of that enemy, which had waged with it such murderous war, cold and stiffened in death!

Now, doubly terrified at his loneliness, but still governed by sordid motives, he stripped the former of his arms and every other valuable, then no longer needed (as he supposed) by their owner, and, mounting his horse, started immediately for the nearest trading post.

On his arrival he recounted the particulars of the fatal occurrence, carefully concealing, however, his own criminal conduct. The story was accredited, and the name of Glass found place upon the long catalogue of those who had fallen a prey to wild beasts and savage men.

Six weeks elapsed and no one thought of the subject of our sketch as among the living. The general surprise, therefore, may be readily imagined, on opening the fort-gates one morning, at finding before them the poor, emaciated form of a man, half-naked, and covered with wounds and running sores, and so torn the fleshless bones of his legs and thighs were exposed to view in places! and how this astonishment was heightened on recognizing the person of Glass in the illy-defined lineaments of his countenance—the very man so long regarded as the inhabitant of another world! A veritable ghost suddenly appearing upon the spot could not have occasioned greater wonder!

But, sensations of pity and commiseration quickly succeeded those of surprise, and the unhappy sufferer was conveyed within doors and received from the hands of friends that careful attention his situation so much required.

The story of his misfortunes was thrillingly interesting. When left by his companion for dead, he was in a state of unconsciousness, with scarcely the breath of life retained in his mangled body. But, the soft nightwind stanchd his wounds, and a slight sleep partially revived him from his death-like stupor.

With the morning, the slight sensations of hunger he began to experience were appeased from the raw flesh of the carcase at his side; and, thus strengthened, by a slow and tedious effort he was enabled to reach a near stream and quench his thirst. Still further revived, he again crawled to the carcase at the demands of appetite.

In this manner he continued for three days, when the putrescent corpse compelled him to abandon it.

Then it was he commenced his tedious return to the fort, (some seventy miles distant,) which he performed during an interval of forty successive days! The whole of this long stretch he crawled upon his hands and knees, —subsisting, for the meanwhile, only upon insects, such as chance threw in his way, but passing most of the time without one morsel with which to appease the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

gnawings of hunger or renew his wasted strength.

Yet, great as were his sufferings and intolerable as they may seem, he survived them all, and, by the kind attention of friends, soon recovered.

He still lives in the town of Taos, New Mexico, and frequently repeats to wondering listeners the particulars of this terrific and painful adventure.

One of our party, whose right hand was much disabled from the effects of a wound, now told his story.

For several years succeeding his first arrival in the Rocky Mountains, he had permitted no opportunity of killing any one of the various species of bear, common to these regions, to pass unimproved. Never did he think of fearing them, and was always the last to retreat in case of a charge. When a bear appeared within any reasonable shooting distance of our hunter, it almost invariably fell a victim to his unerring aim. But, ere long, this spirit of bold-daring proved the source of lasting regret to its possessor.

On the occasion alluded to, having shot at one of these animals, contrary to his usual good luck, he only wounded it.

The bear in turn now became the assailant, but received the contents of two pistols before it had time to advance far. Our hunter at this crisis sprang to a neighboring pine, which he commenced climbing. His pursuer, gaining the tree almost as soon, likewise began its ascent.

Here occurred a struggle between them — the man to force his way upwards, and the bear to prevent him. The former, drawing his butcher-knife, thrust it at the eyes and nose of his antagonist. Not fancying such pointed hints upon a delicate subject, Mr. Bruin caught hold of the hunter's hard, and, as an earnest of deep sensitiveness, crushed it between his teeth, — nor even then relinquished the gripe. Transferred to the left hand, the knife continued its work, till the sickening beast commenced sliding downward—dragging the poor hunter also to the ground. Both struck at the same time; but, at that instant, the knife of the latter pierced the heart of his antagonist, and laid him dead at his feet.

The unfortunate man, however, lost two of his fingers in the affray, and his hand was otherwise so much injured he has never since recovered its use.

Another story related at the same time, though not possessing the deep and thrilling interest of the preceding ones, partakes a little of the ludicrous, and will doubtless amuse the reader.

The narrator a while since formed one of a trapping party, with which he proceeded to the Utah country. While there, on a certain occasion, having set his traps over night, he returned to examine them the next morning, in quest of beaver, and, to his surprise, one of them was missing. After cautiously examining the premises, under the impression that some lurking Indians had stolen his trap with its contents, he noticed the tracks of bears, near by, which served at once to unravel the whilom mystery of its disappearance.

He new began to muse upon his loss, as, without the missing trap, his set would be rendered incomplete, and, under present circumstances, the want of the thing was more than the worth of it. While thus ruminating, a slight noise, among neighboring cherry-bushes and cottonwood, caught his ear, which sounded like some one beating with two sticks.

This induced him to approach for the purpose of ascertaining the cause, when an opening revealed to view Mr. Bruin seated upon a log and holding to his face the missing trap, tightly clasped to his fore-paw.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The bear appeared to be regarding the strange instrument with close attention, as if to study into the principles of its construction;—now gazing at it endwise, then bringing its side in close proximity to his eyes; then turning it over to examine the opposite one;—now, he would essay its strength, and lightly taps it upon the log. But this is a painful operation, he relinquishes it, and resumes his former grotesque movements.

Watching this curious performance, the trapper could scarcely retain his gravity, or master his fondness for the ludicrous sufficiently for the intended shot. He did, however, and the comedy was suddenly transformed to a tragedy, by leaving its actor struggling in death.

A light fall of snow during the last of our stay at Deer creek, rendered the ground quite muddy and soft; notwithstanding which we resumed our course early in the morning of the fourth day. Continuing on, a ride of thirty miles brought us to the place where the Oregon trail crosses the Platte; and, after fording the river, we encamped upon the opposite side.

The stream, at this point, is about three hundred yards from bank to bank, and, at the time of our crossing it, swimming deep for a small portion of the way.

In ordinary stages, the water is but little over three feet deep, and the ford perfectly safe and practicable. The partial melting of the mountain snows had increased the size and velocity of its current, and rendered our passage slightly dangerous and difficult. The bed appeared to be rocky, and in some places rough, —requiring much caution in crossing waggons, to prevent them from overturning.

On the third day following, we arrived at another remarkable cañon, after travelling a distance of thirty-five or forty miles. Here, finding large numbers of mountain sheep, we were induced to remain a short time.

Our course for most of this distance was confined to the valley of the Platte, on account of the greater supply of wood found upon its banks.

Towards noon of the first day, we passed a point, called the “Red Buttes,” at which the river cuts its way through a lofty ridge of hills. This passage left a considerable bank upon both sides, shut in by abrupt walls of red argillaceous sandstone, towering to the height of several hundred feet.

The soil was generally a mixture of clay and sand, and, in some places, afforded a reddish loam which appeared to be very rich.

A short ride from the “Red Buttes” took us across a beautiful stream, with a broad bottom, well timbered with cottonwood.

Large herds of buffalo were continually in sight upon the whole route.

Several miles previous to reaching the cañon, my notice was first attracted to the extraordinary size attained by the wild sage; it having merged its shrub-like appearance into that of trees varying from five to ten feet in height and from twenty to twenty-five inches in circumference at the root. The magnificent dimensions of this herb are retained for a large extent of territory to the south and west of this vicinity. It is frequently made use of for fire-wood, and the prairies, in many places, are covered with beautiful groves of it, —perfuming the atmosphere and revelling in perennial verdure.

The cañon before referred to, is caused by the river passing through a chain of hills, for a reach of nearly half a mile.

The current is here shut in by banks of perpendicular rock, four or five hundred feet high, which sometimes overhang it, and leave a narrow space of scarcely two hundred feet for its bed. These

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

consist principally of white cretaceous sandstone, soft and friable, and frequently present to view the appearance of regular mason-work.

During our stay we succeeded in killing five mountain sheep. Some of these were very large and quite fat.

The flesh of this animal is equal in flavor to that of buffalo. It is generally in good order, tender and sweet, and slightly assimilates our common mutton in taste.

The habits and appearance of mountain sheep resemble those of no other animal.

They select for their favorite habitation the rugged fastnesses of wild and inaccessible mountains. In the cold of winter, they descend to some of the numerous valleys that so beautifully diversify the scenery of these regions, where the verdure of spring so rarely fades; and, as the warm season advances, they commence their return towards the lofty snow-peaks, keeping even progress with spring and fresh flowers along the mountain-sides.

Theirs is a life of unbroken spring-beauty and grandeur are their dwelling place, —and, 'mid the awe-inspiring sublimity of nature's works, is their home. They gambol upon the fearful verge of the steep cliff, or climb its perpendicular sides, bidding defiance to all pursuers. There, secure from enemies, they rear their young, and teach them to leap from crag to crag in mirthful gaiety, or traverse the dizzy heights in quest of the varied sweets of changeful spring.

These animals are remarkably acute of sight, and quick of scent and hearing. The least noise or tainture of the air excites their attention and places them instantly upon the alert. Mounting upon some high rock, they will stand for hour's in the same posture, gazing in the direction of the fancied danger. If fully satisfied of its reality, they abandon their position for another and a safer one, high among more rugged peaks, and often beyond the possibility of offensive approach. Their hue is so akin to that of the rocks which grace their range, they are with difficulty identified when standing motionless, and the hunter is constantly liable to mistake the one for the other.

In size the mountain sheep is larger than the domestic animal of that name, and its general appearance is in every respect dissimilar—excepting the head and horns. The latter appendage, however, alike belongs to the male and female. The horns of the female are about six inches long, small, pointed, and somewhat flat, —but those of the male grow to an enormous size. I have frequently killed them having horns that measured two feet and a half or three feet in length, and from eighteen to nineteen inches in circumference at the base.

These ponderous members are of great service to their owner in descending the abrupt precipices, which his habits so often render necessary. In leaping from an elevation he uniformly strikes upon the curve of his horns and this saves himself from the shock of a sudden and violent concussion. The color of these animals varies from a yellowish white, to a dark brown, or even black. A strip of snowy whiteness extends from ham to ham, including the tail, which is short and tipped with black.

Instead of wool, they are covered with hair, which is shed annually. Their cry is much like that of domestic sheep, and the same natural odor is common to both.

It is extremely difficult to capture any of them alive, even while young, —and it is next to impossible to make them live and thrive in any other climate than their own. Hence, the mountain sheep has never yet found a place in our most extensive zoological collections.

Remaining three days at this place, we were again en route, and, bearing to the right, passed over a ridge of rough, rocky summits, and struck the valley of the Sweet Water. Continuing up the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

latter, a short ride brought us to the vicinity of a noted landmark of the country, known as Independence Rock, where we encamped.

The soil of the river bottoms is good, but the adjoining prairies are sandy and somewhat sterile. The distance from this to the cañon is not far from twenty-three miles.

Independence Rock is a solid and isolated mass of naked granite, situated about three hundred yards from the right bank of the Sweet Water. It covers an area of four or five acres, and rises to a height of nearly three hundred feet. The general shape is oval, with the exception of a slight depression in its summit where a scanty soil supports a few shrubs and a solitary dwarf-pine.

It derives its name from a party of Americans on their way to Oregon, under the lead of one Tharp, who celebrated the fourth of July at this place, —they being the first company of whites that ever made the journey from the States, via South Pass.

The surface is covered with the names of travellers, traders, trappers, and emigrants, engraven upon it in almost every practicable part, for the distance of many feet above its base, —but most prominent among them all is the word “Independence,” inscribed by the patriotic band who first christened this lonely monument of nature in honor of Liberty’s birthday.

I went to the rock for the purpose of recording my name with the swollen catalogue of others traced upon its sides; but, having glanced over the strange medley, I became disgusted, and, turning away, resolved, “If there remains no other mode of immortalizing myself, I will be content to descend to the grave ‘unhonored and unsung.’”

The day following, a heavy fall of snow and sleet forced us to remain in camp, and the consequent muddiness of the route prolonged our stay still further.

The vicinity afforded an abundance of game and a sufficiency of dry fuel; it would, therefore, have been folly in us to care for wind or weather, detracting as did either so little from our comfort.

During this interval I rode into the prairie a short distance, in quest of game, and struck the river a few miles above camp, at a place where the stream cuts its way through a high ridge of hills, forming another cañon of three or four hundred yards in length and about forty broad, called the Devil’s Gate, as I afterwards ascertained.

Its walls arose perpendicularly to a height of between four and five hundred feet, and consisted of trap rock, sandstone, and granite.

Dismounting, I ascended to the summit, where a grand and picturesque scenery burst upon the view.

Above, the broad valley of the Sweet Water stretched far away to the westward, bounded—on either side by frowning mountains, that, towering to the height of fifteen hundred or two thousand feet, present their snowy summits in proud defiance of wind or storm, and laugh at the impotency of a summer’s sun;—on the south, shaking their piny tops in scornful derision; and, on the north, with denuded crests of broken granite, challenging the lightnings of heaven and wooing its loudest thunders;—while further along, the clouds played in humble sportiveness around the base of the great chain dividing the waters of two oceans, nor dared ascend its dizzy heights to range amid eternal snow.

Below, in silent grandeur, arose to view the granitic mass that responds to the day-dawn of a nation’s existence, surmounted by its lone pine, and bearing upon its broad register the sculptured names of the audacious disturbers of its solitude; and further yet, the parti-colored peaks of the Black Hills, now white with fresh-fallen snow, now darkened with clustering pines, seemed

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

musings in modest retirement; while far around, in every spot accessible to discriminating vision, dense herds of grazing buffalo covered the prairie with their pall-like mantle of countless numbers.

It was indeed a magnificent prospect, and needed only the garnishing hand of spring to render it as enchanting in loveliness as it was impressive in wild sublimity.

CHAPTER XV.

Return route. Oregon trail from Independence Rock through the South Pass. Cross the Sweet Water and Platte. Mountain Fowl. Journey up Medicine Bow. Dangerous country. A fight with the Sioux. The "Carcague." A surprise. Visit to the Crow village. Number and character of the Crow nation. Selling a prisoner for tobacco. Description of Laramie Plains.

PREVIOUSLY to leaving this place, considerable discussion arose relative to our future course. The proposition was to continue up the Sweet Water valley to the dividing ridge at the head of Green river, and return by the same route; — versus the suggestion to cross the Sweet Water and proceed up the Platte to the confluence of a large tributary from the south; thence, keeping by the valley of the latter stream as far as the Medicine Bow Mountains, return to the Fort by the way of Laramie river.

The fast melting of the snow, and anticipated difficulties, not to say dangers, consequent upon high water in the passage of creeks and rivers, influenced us to adopt the latter as the most advisable course.

Such was the final decision, and, the men with me being familiarly acquainted with every nook and corner of the adjacent country, I improved the opportunity to elicit from them all possible information relative to the Oregon route from this onward; and, never having personally travelled from Independence Rock to the head of Green river, it may not be out of place to lay before the reader a succinct statement of some of the items thus gleaned.

The distance from this point to the famous South Pass is but little over one hundred miles. The trail follows the Sweet Water to its source, keeping the river valley for most of the distance. This valley consists of an undulating prairie, (at intervals rough,) varying in width from the narrow limits of a few yards to the more ample dimensions of four or five miles.

Sometimes, the adjoining hills close in upon the river banks and force the trail among their rugged windings. In one place the road leads over a high stretch of table land for nearly a day's travel, when it again descends to the valley.

The stream, in places, is tolerably well timbered with cottonwood, oak, and aspen, and rolls over a rocky bed, with a clear and swift current.

The distance through the pass is about fifteen miles, and the ascent and descent are so gradual the traveller would scarcely notice the transition from the head of the Sweet Water to that of the Colorado. The hills at this point are low, and the face of the country rolling—but not rough, affording at all times a most excellent waggon road.

On the morning of the fourth day, we accordingly retraced our course, and, having traversed a rugged and hilly country for some ten or twelve miles, we camped in a small open prairie at the mouth of the Sweet Water.

During our ride we noticed several large bands of wild sheep, at intervals, gazing upon us from

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

huge masses of granite that towered with isolated summits to a frequent altitude of sixty or one hundred feet.

The next morning, we crossed the Sweet Water a little above its mouth.

The ford was quite feasible, the stream being some ten yards wide and three or four feet deep, with a bed of sand and pebbles.

From this point, travelling up the Platte for about ten miles or more, we arrived opposite the creek previously alluded to, and, crossing at a shoal place a short distance above, camped in a grove of cottonwood and willows, at the delta formed by the confluence of the two streams.

There are several bottoms of very rich soil in this vicinity; but back from the river the country is rough and hilly.

Westward the Sweet Water mountains, distant some ten miles, showed their craggy peaks, and to the north and east the piny crests of the Black Hills burst upon the sight; while southward, a succession of high, rolling prairies opened to view a variety of romantic and beautiful scenery.

We remained at this place the two following days, for the purpose of hunting. Game of all kinds appeared in great abundance, particularly elk. At several points among the willows near the river were noticed fresh signs of beaver, and among the hills the recent marks of bear in digging for roots.

A large bird called the mountain fowl, quite common to these parts, was the occasion of some little curiosity, being the first of its species I ever saw. This bird is rather larger than our domestic hen, and of a grayish brown color. Little accustomed to the presence of man, it easily falls a prey to the hunter. Its flesh is tender and most excellent in flavor.

Having obtained a fresh supply of meat, we resumed our course.

Continuing up the right bank of the creek (which I have named Medicine Bow, for lack of a better term) and travelling by easy stages four successive days, we arrived at its head, —a distance of more than fifty miles above its junction with the Platte.

Many beautiful bottoms skirted the banks of this stream, which were well timbered with cottonwood, aspen, birch, willow, box-elder, and some few pines. The soil is generally of a reddish loam, and the luxuriant size of the dead grass, together with the rank verdure of the present season, gave evidence of its richness and fecundity.

I was pleased to observe not a few wild flowers, of rare beauty, in full bloom, lending their fragrance to the breath of spring, and blushing at the admiration challenged by their loveliness.

On the right lay a broad expanse of undulating prairie, covered with stately clusters of absinthe, and disclosing every variety of soil, from the rude sterility of an African desert to the rich productiveness of a garden; — on the left, the mountains, increasing in altitude, jutted their craggy sides in close proximity to the creek—now disclosing immense piles of granite, with red argillaceous, grayish micaceous, dark ferruginous, and white calcareous sandstone, limestone, and coarse-grained conglomerates, naked and variegated with almost every diversity of color, —and now, surmounted by stunted pines and cedars, or towering balsam, hemlock and pinion; and in front, the lofty peaks of Medicine Bow, rearing their snowy heads beyond the clouds, opposed an eternal barrier to further prospect.

As we passed along, I noticed three or four small branches that emptied into the creek from the opposite side, and, just before reaching our present encampment, we crossed three others from the right, all of them well timbered and graced by rich valleys and prairillons.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

This section of country, being the great war-ground between the Sioux and Chyennes on the one side, and the Snakes and Crows on the other, is considered dangerous, particularly from May till November of each year. During that time it is extremely unsafe for a white man to venture within its confines, unless protected by a strong force.

A small creek at our right, became the scene of a bloody tragedy two months subsequent to our visit.

Three trappers, with whom I became acquainted upon my return to the Fort, tempted by the abundance of fur-bearing game common to the vicinity, came here for the purpose of making a summer hunt. While successfully pursuing their occupation, unsuspecting of immediate danger, they were suddenly surrounded, early one morning, by a war-party of Sioux, whose first salute was a discharge of fire-arms, accompanied by a shower of arrows and the sharp thunder of deafening yells.

Two of them fell dead. The remaining one retreated to a hollow tree, close at hand, into which he crawled; and, though severely wounded, maintained from it an obstinate resistance till near sundown, —keeping at bay the whole host of savage assailants, and thinning their numbers, one by one, with the deadly discharge of his unerring rifle.

Six warriors lay stiffened in death, and as many more had felt the burning smart of wounds, —one of the latter having had his tongue shot out, close to its roots! — and still he continued the unequal contest.

His triumph would have been complete had not the remorseless crew, as a last resort, set fire to the woods and burned him from the shell-like fortress from which they could not drive him. He fell with his companions, mingling his own blood with that of their murderers; and the scalps of the three were treasured among the horrid trophies of savage victory.

Of these unfortunate men, one, named Wheeler, was a Pennsylvanian; another, named Cross Eagle, was a Swede; and the third, name not remembered, was a native of France. They were men of noble hearts and much esteemed by all who knew them.

In the neighborhood I noticed many indications of coal, of which there appeared to be extensive beds, as well as iron and mineral salts.

Continuing on, a short ride brought us to the pass-trail, following which, after travelling a few miles by a road intercepted by frequent ravines between a defile of mountains, we were finally ushered into the broad prairie, opening eastward, known as the Plains of Laramie.

The mountains upon both sides were heavily coated with snow, which intruded to the trail, while groves of pine and aspen relieved the eye in scanning their rough escarpments.

The prevailing rock appeared to be a compact red granite, with occasional strata of sandstone.

While winding among the ravines and aspen groves, we obtained an indistinct view of a strange-looking, dark-colored animal, that my companions pronounced a “carcague.”

Of the character, or even the existence of such a creature, I cannot speak from positive knowledge—this, if one, not being sufficiently near for a scrutinizing observation, and no other of its kind ever came in my way; but, in answer to inquiries, I am enabled to give the following description, for the correctness of which, however, I will not vouch, though, for my own part, inclined to accredit it.

The “carcague” is a native of the Rocky Mountains, and of a family and species found in no other part of the world as yet known. He seems a distinct genus, partaking the mixed nature of the wolf

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

and bear, but is far more ferocious than either.

His color is a jet black, hair long and coarse, and body trim and slender. His head and neck are like those of a wolf, but his tail and feet assimilate the bear, and his body presents the marked qualities and appearance of both.

In size, he is considerably larger than the common cur-dog, and is more agile in his movements. Unlike the bear, he will not run from the presence or scent of man, and regards the "lord of creation" with neither fear nor favor. Hence he is looked upon as a creature much to be dreaded by all who are anywise conversant with his character and existence.

The representatives of his family are seldom met with, which affords the principal reason why so little, comparatively, is known of his nature and habits.

If the information contained in the above description, is correct, (aid that it is so, I have not the least doubt,) the "carcague" presents, either the extraordinary phenomenon of the creation of a new race of wild beasts, or, the living relics of an order now almost extinct; and, whether he be the one or the other, his existence is vested with deep interest to all lovers of the marvellous.

An old trapper related the following story, soon after the incident above noticed, which will serve to give some idea of this ferocious animal:

A party of hunters, at their night camp, were seated around a large fire, at whose side were fixed several pieces of meat, en appolas, for the purpose of roasting. All were waiting patiently the kind office of the fire in the preparation of their longed-for suppers, when, attracted by the fumes of the cooking viands, a "carcague" came bounding from the mountain-side, directly over their heads, and made for the roasts, with which he disappeared before even a shot could be fired in their defence.

Thus bold and daring is their nature, and so little is their regard for the presence of man.

Bearing southward, in the course of a few miles we came to a large creek, and camped early in the afternoon, near the base of a lofty mountain of the Medicine Bow range.

In this vicinity were the relics of three Indians forts. On the banks of the stream was an abundance of timber of various kinds; the bottoms were broad and of a rich soil, shut in by abrupt acclivities that lead to the arid plains through which the creek traces its way.

Game appeared in great abundance in all directions, and seemed more than usually tame and accessible.

Soon after camping, three of us went in quest of a fresh supply of eatables, and, towards night, returned with the choice portions of a buffalo and a black-tailed deer.

The valley also afforded large quantities of wild onions, which were shooting forth with singular luxuriance.

We passed the night in quiet slumber, neither of us dreaming of the possible existence of human beings, other than ourselves, within a less distance than one hundred miles.

In the morning, however, we were awakened by the wild yell of savages, and, on looking to ascertain the cause, saw a dense throng of painted monsters surrounding us, who were whooping, screeching, and dancing in a most terrific and fantastic manner. Seizing our guns, we levelled at the foremost of them, who immediately sheathed their bows and made the sign of friendship and their nation.

They were Crows, and, having discovered us the afternoon before, now came for a morning call. The chief of the band bore the name of Little Robber, and was a large, portly, well-made man, as,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

in fact, were all his party. He was recognized by one of us as an old acquaintance, and was greeted as such, when several of his people came forward to shake hands, and we were soon on most friendly terms.

They informed us, by means of signs, that they were advancing against the Sioux and their village was encamped upon a neighboring creek, a little to the right, —after which they insisted upon our accompanying them to it.

Not waiting for further ceremony, they drove up our horses and commenced saddling them. Supposing it useless to resist, we yielded compliance to their wishes, and, in about an hour's ride, came to the village. Here we were inducted to the chief's lodge, where commenced a series of feastings peculiar to Indians on occasions like this.

The Crows are a nation living upon the waters of the Yellow-stone, at a distance of about four hundred miles west-northwest of Fort Platte. Their number embraces not far from four hundred and fifty or five hundred lodges, being something near four thousand men, women, and children. Ten or twelve years since they were enemies to the whites, but, more recently, have been on friendly terms.

They never kill or injure the white man who comes within their power, and rarely take from him anything without returning for it an equivalent. For instance, —they may take his robe, horse, or gun; but, in that case, they will return another robe, horse, or gun; acting upon the principle that “exchange is no robbery,” even though it be compulsory.

Less contaminated by intercourse with the whites than most mountain tribes, they will tolerate the importation of liquor among them upon no consideration, not even by traders for their own individual use. Whenever it is ascertained that any one in their vicinity, whether white man or Indian, is in possession of that article, they take it from him, if necessary, by force and pour it upon the ground.

Their bitter hatred of this vile stuff, is said to have resulted in the following strange manner:

The whites, as usual, came first among them bringing alcohol; and, at a feast given to the chiefs, soon after, several of the latter became intoxicated from too lavish potations of the new and curious drink.

In common with inebriates of civilized society, they acted very foolishly, and, on appearing before their people, the drunken chiefs became the subject of ridicule. This so shamed them, that, upon the return of sobriety, they could not be persuaded to taste another drop, and thereafter made use of their united influence to prevent its introduction and sale.

Ever since the above occurrence, alcohol has received, from the Crows, the appellation of “Fool's Water,” a term at once attesting their nice moral discernment and good sense.

Several years since, a missionary, on visiting them, began through an interpreter to rehearse the story how sin first came into the world, and how all men had become bad—whether white or red. Thus premised, he proceeded to explain the great truths of Christianity, and averred that he had come to do them good, and to tell them how to be happy; asserting that, unless they listened to him and worshipped the Good Spirit in the manner he pointed out, they could never, at death, reach that happy country into which good people alone find Admittance.

One of the chiefs upon this arose and made the following reply:

“My white brother is a stranger to us. He talks bad of us, and he talks bad of his own people.

“He does this because he is ignorant. He thinks my people, like his, are wicked. Thus far he is

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

wrong!

“Who were they that killed the very good man of whom he tells us? None of them were red men!

“The red man will die for good men, who are his friends;—he will not kill them!

“Let my pale-face brother talk to the white man—his own people—they are very bad. He says, he would do us good! He does no good to chide us and say we are very bad.

“True we are bad; and were we bad as the pale-faces it would become us to listen to him!

“Would my brother do as good? Then, let him tell us how to make powder and we will believe in the sincerity of his professions;—but let him not belie us by saying we are bad like the pale-faces!”

These Indians rarely kill the women and children of an enemy when in their power, and, in this particular, they show themselves unlike most of the wild tribes found on the American continent. They are a brave and noble people, prosecuting their endless hostilities against the Sioux and Blackfeet, (the only nations with whom they are at variance,) not so much to gratify an innate love for war, as from a just hatred of the meanness of those they war against.

In the summer of 1842, a war-party of some two hundred Crows invaded the Sioux country by way of Laramie pass, and penetrated as far as Fort Platte, and beyond, in pursuit of their enemy. A few miles above the Fort, having met with a lone French engagé, who was rather green in all that pertains to Indians as well as some other things, they began by signs to enquire of him the whereabouts of the Lacotas, (the sign for them being a transverse pass of the right front-finger cross the throat.)

The poor Frenchman, mistaking this for the avowed intention of cutting his throat, commenced bellowing a la calf, accompanying the music by an industrious appliance of crosses in double-quick time—not forgetting to make use of sundry most earnest invocations of the blessed Virgin to graciously vouchsafe to him deliverance from impending danger.

The Indians, perceiving his strange conduct to be the result of fear, felt disposed to have a little fun at his expense; so, mounting him upon a horse, they bound his hands and feet and guarded him to a post of the American Fur Company as a prisoner.

The Fort gates being closed against them, they demanded admittance on the plea of wishing to trade.

“What would you buy?” asked the commandant.

“Tobacco.”

“What have you brought to pay for it?”

“A white man.”

“A white man?” exclaimed the former; “at what price?”

“Oh, he is not worth much. A plug of tobacco is his full value!” continued the warriors.

The commandant now began to understand the joke; and, on recognizing the prisoner as an employee of the other Fort, he told them they might possibly find a market for him at the next post, but for his own part he was not disposed to purchase.

The Indians then paraded around the Fort, and, after saluting its in-mates with three deafening whoops, proceeded at full charge towards Fort Platte.

When arrived, having prostrated two scaffolds of dead Sioux by the way, they informed the person in charge, that they had brought back one of his men, and claimed from him a plug of tobacco for their trouble. The circumstances attending this request were of so comical a nature, the commandant felt disposed to humor the joke, and gave the tobacco, upon which they immediate-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ly left in pursuit of their enemies.

Having remained prisoners to the hospitality of these Indians for two days and a half, we were at length permitted again to resume our journey.

Following the creek downwards for the two days next succeeding, and then bearing to the left, after a ride of some twelve miles, we struck Laramie river at a point which presented broad bottoms upon each side with an abundance of timber; here we remained encamped till the subsequent day. In journeying thus far, we passed over a sufficient extent of this broad expanse to give a general description of it, from personal observation coupled with information derived from others more experienced.

The Plains of Laramie are bounded north and east by the Black Hills, south by a ridge of naked elevations, (composed of soft, arenaceous rock and terrene limestone, embedded in marl and white clay, sterile and almost entirely destitute of vegetation,) and west by the Medicine Bow Mountains.

This section includes an area one hundred and sixty miles long by seventy broad.

The northern portion of it is a high plateau, almost destitute of springs or streams of water, having a mixed soil of clay and sand, producing the grass and other peculiarities incident to the grand prairies. Westerly, it is composed of red sand and gravel, tolerably fertile and abundant in rocky fragments. The southern portion is watered by a number of streams that rise in the Medicine Bow Mountains and flow eastward; some of them pouring their waters into Laramie river, and others losing themselves in the sand.

Towards the southwestern extremity, at the base of a lofty, isolated mountain, is a salt lake of considerable dimensions. Several other lakes are also found adjacent to the Medicine Bow Mountains, whose waters are strongly impregnated with mineral salts.

In numerous places the surface, for small distances, is entirely naked and whitened with saline efflorescences, that vie in their appearance with the unspotted purity of fresh-fallen snow.

The Laramie river<sup>[34]</sup> traces its way through the whole extent, —rising in the southern extremity of the Medicine Bow Mountains and in the desolate highlands that form the dividing ridge between its own and the waters of Cache a la Poudre, and, after flowing a distance of some three hundred miles, discharges itself into the Platte.

Upon this river and its branches are many beautiful bottoms of rich alluvial soil, well adapted to cultivation, varying from five to ten miles in length, and from two to five in breadth. These bottoms are to some extent well supplied with timber, consisting of ash, elm, cottonwood, box elder, and willow, while the adjacent mountains and hills afford pine, cedar, and balsam.

Of the various kinds of wild fruits and berries are found cherries, plums, currants, gooseberries, service-berries, buffalo-berries, and some few grapes; among its vegetables and roots are the bread-root, pomme blanc, onions, and commote.

Its prevailing rock is sandstone, (gray micaceous, brown argillaceous, red granitic, and ferruginous,) limestone, (siliceous, testaceous, fossiliferous, and terrene,) and red granite, with various conglomerates and heavy boulders of fragmentary and transition rock.

Among the mineral productions incident to this region are salt, sulphur, soda, magnesia, nitre, alum, coal, iron, copper, and gold, (the latter only in small quantities.) Among its game is embraced nearly every variety found in countries adjacent to the mountains.

The high prairies skirting the tributaries of the Laramie, though favored with many valleys of fer-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

tile soil, are fit only for grazing purposes, on account of their general aridity and scarcity of water; a fault, by the way, too common with a large proportion of that vast extent of territory from the neighborhood of our western frontiers almost to the very shores of the Pacific.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sibille's-hole. Novel bitters. Chugwater. Gold. Curiosity. Affairs at the Fort. Amusements. Gambling among squaws, and games played. Squaw dresses, and riding fashion. Items of interest to the curious, proving the intercourse of the ancient Romans with the people of this continent.

ON resuming our course, we soon after struck into a lodge-trail leading to the Platte by way of Sibille's creek; —following this we travelled over an undulating and sandy prairie for about ten miles, and came to a chain of rugged mountains, bearing from north to south, through which we passed, by a tedious and circuitous route, for a considerable distance, winding among rocks and narrow defiles of naked hills, till we were finally ushered into a beautiful opening facing the east, known as Sibille's-hole.

This valley is situated at the confluence of two small streams, heading in the adjoining mountains, that unite to form Sibille's creek.

It is shut in upon three sides by lofty ridges, many hundred feet high, consisting of immense piles of earthy limestone and marl, whose rough, naked sides, ornamented with occasional dwarf-pines, cedars, or fruit-bearing shrubs, present a wild and romantic scenery.

The valley is four or five miles in length and of variable width, with a strong, black soil, affording a goodly supply of timber.

The season was further advanced in this than in any other place we had yet visited. Several specimens of wild flowers were in full bloom, belading the soft air with their sweetest odors. The grass too had attained a height of some three inches, and furnished a most sumptuous entertainment for our jaded animals, which they were nowise backward to accept.

Wishing to afford them an opportunity to recruit their strength, we remained encamped the two following days.

During the interval we were successful in killing two very fat bulls, and were thus enabled to renew the series of feasting which had graced the greater part of our journey.

I here became for the first time acquainted with a kind of beverage very common among mountaineers. The article alluded to may with much propriety be termed "bitters," as the reader will readily acknowledge on learning the nature of its principal ingredient.

It is prepared by the following simple process, viz: with one pint of water mix one-fourth gill of buffalo-gall; and you will then have before you a wholesome and exhilarating drink.

To a stomach unaccustomed to its use it may at first create a slightly noisome sensation, like the inceptive effects of an emetic; and, to one strongly bilious, it might cause vomiting;— but, on the second or third trial, the stomach attains a taste for it, and receives it with no inconsiderable relish.

Upon the whole system its effects are beneficial. As a stimulant, it braces the nerves without producing a corresponding relaxation on the cessation of its influence; it also tends to restore an impaired appetite and invigorate the digestive powers.

As a sanative, it tends to make sound an irritated and ulcerated stomach, reclaiming it to a health-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ful and lively tone, and thus striking an effective blow at that most prolific source of so large a majority of the diseases common to civilized life.

From what I have seen of its results, I consider it one of the most innocent and useful medicines in cases of dyspepsy, and will hazard the further opinion, that, were those laboring under the wasting influences of this disease to drink gall-bitters and confine themselves exclusively to the use of some one kind of diet, (animal food always preferable,) thousands who are now pining away by piecemeal, would be restored to perfect soundness, and snatched from the very threshold of a certain grave which yawns to receive them!

Resuming our course, we continued down Sibillis creek to its junction with the Laramie; then, following the course of that river, in the afternoon of the third day we arrived at Fort Platte, after an absence of nearly two months, —having travelled, in the interval, a distance of more than five hundred miles.

To give a general description of the country passed over during the concluding part of our journey, would seem too much like a recapitulation of previous remarks.

Our observations in reference to the river and creek bottoms, may be again correctly applied; as may, also, those relative to the timber, and the geological character of the adjoining prairies.

Several miles above the Fort we crossed the Chugwater, a large affluent of the Laramie, from the right. This creek takes its rise in a wild and desolate section of the Black Hills, near the head of Horse creek.

Thirty miles or more of its way is traced through a dreary wilderness of rock, sand, and clay, almost entirely devoid of vegetation.

This region, it is said, affords gold; and, indeed, I have received frequent assurances that that valuable metal has been procured, in small particles, from among the sand of the creek-bed.

This region also claims many natural curiosities, of which I may take occasion to speak more particularly hereafter; —one, however, situated upon Chugwater, here seems more appropriately to demand a passing notice.

It consists of a columnar elevation of sandstone and marl, towering aloft to the height of several hundred feet, like the lone chimney of some razed mansion, —standing as the melancholy monument of the ruins that surround it.

This singular pile of rock and earth is nearly of a quadrangular form, quite regular in its structure, and compares very nearly with the “Chimney” below Scot’s Bluff, in its general outlines. It stands within a short distance of the east bank of the Chugwater, and gives the creek its present name.

[35]

Our arrival at the Fort dated the 26th of April. The boat being completed, all things, save the spring rise, were in readiness for the intended voyage.

This craft was put together in regular ship-shape, and finished in a workman-like manner. She measured fifty feet keel by thirteen beam, and, without her lading, drew but an inch and a half of water. Her intended burthen was between two and three tons. While admiring her beauty and symmetry, little did I think of the sufferings in store for me with her hardy crew.

Several important changes had taken place during our absence. The Fort with its fixtures now claimed different owners, and was occupied by the men of two companies besides our own. This swelled the present number to some forty or fifty, and afforded quite a lively scene.

Now was an interval of leisure to all hands, and the time, unemployed in eating and sleeping, was

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

passed in story-telling, ball-playing, foot-racing, target-shooting, or other like amusements. Several, forming themselves into a club for forensic debate, secured a prolific source of entertainment, for the time being. A partner in one of the trading firms, whose men were now stationed at the Fort, made himself quite conspicuous as a participator in these discussions.

He was very self-important and conceited, and not a little ignorant withal, and with regard to temperance, being uniformly about "three sheets in the wind," and the other fluttering, his spoutings were an exhaustless fund of laughter.

At his request, in order to render the exercises more spirited, the merits of the arguments presented were decided upon by a committee of three, and the speakers decided against, sentenced to liquorize the club.

The treating, however, was always on one side; for, as the whole business was an affair of sport, the committee of arbitration generally had this primary object in view while pronouncing their decisions. When these were averse to our orator, he of course paid the forfeit as an affair of debt; and when favorable to him, he was equally prompt in proffering a common treat, exultatory upon his fancied success.

My own part in this performance was that of a mere looker-on, but it required of one more than my usual self-mastery, to retain his gravity under the potent influences of so ludicrous an exhibition.

Other matters of interest, however, occurred at this time, and, as they tend to throw some light upon Indian habits and customs, perhaps the reader will not look upon it as altogether out of place for me to notice them.

At the two Forts in this neighborhood were some ten or twelve squaws, married to the traders and engagés of the different fur companies. These ladies were in the habit of meeting, occasionally, for gambling purposes. In this they acted as systematically as the most experienced black legs of a Mississippi steamboat; if they failed to play as high, it was only for the lack of means.

Ball-playing was one of the games upon which heavy bets were made. The instrument used in this amusement consisted of two globular forms, about two inches each in diameter, which were attached by a short string. The play-ground was the open prairie in front of the Fort, and embraced an area of nearly a mile in extent.

As the initiatory step, each party, composed of equal numbers, selected an equal amount of valuables, consisting of beads, scarlet, vermilion, rings, awls, shells, &c., which were placed in two piles about half a mile apart, and equidistant between them was placed the ball. Each gamestress, armed with her club, then repaired to the spot, and the opposing parties arrayed themselves, the one facing the other with the ball between them. At a given signal they all strike — the one party striving to propel it towards its own valuables, and the other to force it in a contrary direction.

The party propelling it to its own pile, wins, and becomes entitled to both.

As success in this game depends more upon fleetness of foot than skill in striking, a large party of squaws, thus engaged, opens to the beholder a rich scene of amusement.

Another game is still more extensively practised among them. This is somewhat upon the principle of dice, though different in its details.

Six plum-stones, smoothly polished, and marked with various parallel, triangular, and transverse lines, are thrown loosely into a small, plate-like basket, around which the players are seated with their stores of trinkets. The leader then receives the basket in one hand, and, briskly moving it to

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

change the position of the dice, suddenly strikes it upon the ground, tossing the plum-stones from their places and catching them in their descent.

The amount won depends upon the number of triangular and transverse lines left uppermost. The loser, having paid the forfeit, next takes the basket and describes the same movements, receives her winnings in like manner, and returns it to her opponent, —and so on alternately. Much cheating and trickery are practised in this game.

The game of hand, for a description of which the reader is referred to a previous marginal note, is also a favorite play with squaws as well as men. Large parties of both sexes not unfrequently engage in this amusement, and many a poor Indian loses his all by the operation.

Speaking of squaws reminds me of not having previously described their dress and appearance. The dress of a squaw is scarcely less simple than that of an Indian. Two pieces of skin, sewed together in a bag-like form, (of sufficient size to envelope the body from neck to knee, leaving an aperture for the former with the arms,) constitute her gown, which is completed by two other pieces of skin sewed from neck to waist so as to fall loosely upon the arms as far as the elbow; then, with leggins of thin deer or antelope skin, garnished moccasins, and a painted robe, you have before you the full rig of a mountain squaw.

Some of the younger ones, however, flaunt dresses quite tastefully ornamented, with full capes and fringe-works, garnished with beads and porcupine-quills, that present a wild, fantastic appearance, not altogether estranged to beauty.

A squaw prides herself much upon the number of rings in her ears and upon her fingers, as well as the taste displayed in plaiting her hair and beautifying her face.

Women, in savage alike with civilized life, are vested with a good supply of pride and vanity in their composition, —all, fond of show and gaudy equipage. But the mountain squaw, next to ornaments, displays the most vanity in the gay caparison of her riding horse, and the splendid trappings of his saddle. Both of them are fancifully garnished with beads and paint, and bestrung with various trinkets, that impart a tinkling sound, as they strike each other at every movement, and fill the rider's ears with that wild and simple music so consonant to her feelings and thoughts. Men and women practise the same mode of riding, (astride,) and a squaw is as much at home on horseback as the most experienced cavalier.

This fashion is, properly considered unbecoming for ladies of civilized countries; yet, improper as it may seem, it is quite common with the ladies of New Mexico.

As my subsequent travels in the countries bordering upon the Rocky Mountains preclude the opportunity of speaking connectedly of the Sioux nation, I cannot forego the present occasion for presenting to the curious, some few items relative to the language of these Indians, that tend to shed no small amount of light upon the ancient history of the American continent.

There are several remarkable peculiarities in the Sioux language, that cannot fail to prove interesting and satisfactory, so far as they go, to all lovers of antiquarian research.

The first of these consists in the striking similarity observable in its general structure to that of the ancient Romans, when the two are carefully compared with each other.

In regard to the arrangement of words and the construction of sentences, they are both governed by the same fixed laws of euphony, irrespective of the relative position otherwise maintained by the different parts of speech. It will be observed that the leading purpose of the speaker of either language is, to avoid a harsh and inharmonious intermingling of words, such as would grate upon

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the ear when pronounced in an abrupt connection; and, by so doing, to give a smooth and musical turn to the expression of his ideas.

The few brief sentences, hereto subjoined in the same order as they occur in the original, accompanied by the translation of each word as it appears, will serve to illustrate this matter more fully:

LATIN SIOUX

Invictum animi robur ostensit.

Invincible of mind strength he displayed.      Tepe nea tour toocta?

Lodge your own where is it?

Omnia deliciarum instrumenta e

All of delicacies the instruments from Mea warchee muzarka nea tour.

I want gun your own.

castris ejecit.

camp he cast.      Kokepa warneche wecharcha ha,

Afraid nothing the man is.

Non amo nimium diligentes.

Not I love overmuch the careful.      Minewarka appello warktashne ha

Medicine water I say not good is.

A mere glance at the foregoing will at once show the constructional similarity between the two; and, to illustrate the proposition still farther, I here subjoin yet other proofs of a more important relationship:

LATIN SIOUX

Appello, (pres. ind., 1st per. sing.; inf. appellare,) I declare, I proclaim.      Appello, I declare, I proclaim, I tell, I make known

Bestia, a wild beast.      Beta, a buffalo.

Coca, uncertain, ambiguous, confused, rash.      Ceicha, bad, disorderly, unsound.

Cogor, one who collects, brings together, compels, forces, or heaps up.      Cogor, a maker of anything, a manufacturer, one who produces a thing by an ingenious arrangement of materials.

Mea, (meus, a, urn,) of or belonging to me.      Mea, I, myself, me.

Mena, a narrow sharp fish.      Mena, a knife.

Ne, (this when affixed to a word or a sentence gives it a negative signification,) no, not.      Ne, (this word is used precisely the same as in Latin, and has a similar meaning,) not.

Papa, rare, excellent, wonderful.      Papa, meat, flesh used for food.

Pater, father.      Pater, fire.

Pes, the foot.      Pea, the foot.

Taurus, a bull.      Tau, (or tah,) a bull.

Tepor, warmth.      Tepe, a lodge.

Tuor, (tui, tutus sum,) to look, to see.      Tula, (astonishment,) look! see there!

I might pursue this comparison to a yet greater extent, were my knowledge of Sioux sufficiently full and critical for the task, (for I have a firm confidence that many other similarities might be pointed out, quite as glaring in their character as any of the above;) but, enough, I trust, has already been said to fortify the position so largely warranted by the premises, to wit: that in former ages the Romans maintained a foothold upon the American continent, and had intercourse with this nation, either by arms or by commerce.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The argument drawn from the foregoing is still further strengthened, when we take into consideration the fact, that language is constantly varying in its form, and changing the meaning and pronunciation of its words, as time progresses. To exemplify this more clearly and forcibly, let the reader compare the works of standard English authors of the present day with those of the like not more than five hundred years since, and he will readily acknowledge the palpable indications of progressive change.

If so short an interval has produced a transformation so bold in a written language, what might we look for in one spoken only?

But, an interval of three times five hundred years has passed since the Romans and the Sioux held intercourse with each other, and we yet find the general structure of the two languages strikingly similar, and several of their words identical in meaning and pronunciation! And, though the latter observation fails in some cases, even this, so far from proving anything averse to the position before assumed, serves to strengthen it.

The word *pater*, for instance, pronounced alike in both languages, differs in signification; being used in the one to imply father, in the other fire. This apparent discrepancy of meaning may be explained in a few words. The Sioux are accustomed to venerate the sun as one of the more especial manifestations of the Divine Essence, who is regarded as the FATHER or creator of all things; and it, being the great source of light and heat, is naturally looked upon as an immense body of fire. Thus, in the course of ages, the term became perverted in its meaning and application, and, instead of being used to express the sun, or Great Spirit, the father of all, it now only implies the simple element of fire, an emanation from the sun.

So in relation to the Latin word *tepor*, warmth, and the Sioux word *tepe*, a lodge. The lodge is employed in winter to retain the heat within itself, and exclude the cold air; nor is it wonderful that, in the progress of years, the term *tepor*, or *tepe*, should become the only one by which a lodge is known.

The word *mena*, is also pronounced the same in both, though different in its signification; meaning, in Latin, a narrow sharp fish, and, in Sioux, a knife. In explanation of this, I would barely refer to the similarity of shape between a knife and a narrow sharp fish.

The relationship disclosed between these two languages is seemingly too close and significant to be attributed to mere chance or accident, and can be in no other way satisfactorily accounted for, than by admitting the correctness of the premises before quoted.

But this position, curious as it may seem to some readers, and impregnable as it must doubtless prove, has other weapons to protect it at command; and, ere dismissing the subject, I will briefly notice some of them.

It is by no means a conjecture of recent origin, that the ancient Romans did actually colonize portions of the American continent. The industrious researches of antiquarians have long since brought to light many items which prove and strengthen it, though none of them so tangible and obvious as those previously noticed.

Several obscure hints of the existence of extensive Roman colonies planted westward of the Pillars of Hercules, (doubtless alluding to the American continent,) have been detected in the writings of ancient authors yet extant; but still further proof is afforded in the relics of temples, cities, roads, and fortified camps, long since discovered in Peru, Mexico, and the United States, which strongly savor of Roman origin.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The ancient works at Marietta, Ohio, have been regarded, by not a few, as the offspring of Roman industry and military science, —and various other remains, that signalize the Mississippi valley, point quite plainly to this nation for a parentage. But a proof; still more conclusive than any yet adduced, is afforded by the discovery of a genuine Roman coin, in the State of Missouri, several years since. Taking all these corroborative circumstances in connection, the fact that Roman colonies did exist, to some extent, upon this continent in past ages, must be regarded as placed beyond successful controversy.

CHAPTER XVII.

Singular exhibition of natural affection. Embark for the States. Scarcity of provisions and consequent hardship and suffering. Extraordinary daring of wolves. Difficulties of navigation. Novel diet. Fishing. A fish story, and another to match it. A bull story. Hard aground and dismal situation. Extreme exposure. Cold, hungry, and wet. Again afloat. Re-supply of provisions. Camp on fire. A picture of Platte navigation. Country north of river. Adventure with a bull. Indian benevolence. Summary of hardships and deprivations. Abandon voyage.

SOON after our return, one of the hunters came in from a short excursion followed by a buffalo calf, which appeared as tame and docile as if always accustomed to the presence of man.

This incident first brought to my knowledge a remarkable peculiarity in the nature of these animals, —viz: the strength of affection existing between the mother and her offspring.

The buffalo will never desert her calf, except in cases of imminent danger, and then, never for a long time;—she is certain to return promptly in search of it, even at the hazard of her own life.

The calf, on the other hand, exhibits an equal, or rather superior, love for its mother.

If she, to whom he owes his birth, falls a prey to the relentless hunter, he deserts her not, but lingers near her lifeless carcase, till the butcher-knife performs its office, and the reeking flesh belades the pack-horse;—nor then, even, does he leave her.

As the honored relics are borne away, he not unfrequently follows on, mournfully, regardless of aught else, as if saying, “Where thou goest let me go, and now thou art dead, I would live no longer.” There is something touchingly beautiful in such exhibitions of natural affection on the part of dumb brutes.

May 7th. Availing ourselves of a slight rise of water, we embarked on our meditated voyage to the States.

The boat was freighted with some sixty packs[36] of robes, and provisions for four weeks. A barge belonging to another company, also in readiness, started with us, and we all flattered ourselves with the hope of a speedy and pleasant trip.

The two boats numbered a united crew of eleven men, —mine consisting of five, and that of our consort counted six.

Slipping cable, we glided midway of the stream, and gave a parting salute to the friends who lined the shore, accompanied by a loud hurra and waving of hats, deeply responded to by them, —and even tears coursed their way a down the dusky visages of our voyageurs, when mindful of the fate separating them—perhaps forever!

The crews now struck up a merry song, while the dripping oars, as they spurned the crystal waters, responded their time in measured strokes.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

As we passed swiftly along and were fast receding from within hailing distance of the Fort, an old mountaineer, who stood gazing upon us, exclaimed, "Ah, boys; you can sing now, but your tune will be altered ere-long!"

This strange announcement, though a riddle at the time of its utterance, soon began to more than verify itself; and often did we repeat the remark, "Well, sure enough, our tune has changed."

Moving along prettily during the day—sometimes floating with the current then again plying oars, —we reached the mouth of Horse creek; and, passing on a short distance, lay to for the night.

The day following we again pushed off; but, after proceeding ten or twelve miles, the water became so shallow, we were compelled to lay by to await a further rise, and struck camp in a small grove of cottonwood upon the right bank of the Platte, a short distance above Scott's Bluff. Here we remained for some two weeks.

The crew of our consort being poorly supplied with provisions, we divided our own with them, and, at the expiration of a few days, were left entirely destitute.

From this on, we were dependent solely upon such game as chance threw in our way, —sometimes starving for two or three days, and then feasting for a like interval, upon the products of successful hunting.

To us was a tedious lot, —there being no game in the country, save perchance a few straggling bulls, and they rarely within less distance than ten or twelve miles. Our hunting excursions often led further than that, and when we were so fortunate as to kill, the proceeds were borne upon our backs to camp. We became so accustomed to packing, in this manner, it was thought no extra burthen for an individual to carry upwards of a hundred pounds of fresh meat at a single load, some ten or twelve successive miles, over an open, sandy prairie, and beneath the scorching rays of an almost vertical sun.

So far from regarding it a task, we esteemed it a pleasure, and were glad to appease the cravings of appetite even at so small a sacrifice of comfort and convenience.

The reason for the scarcity of all kinds of game in the vicinity of the river at this time, was the recent burning of the prairie upon both sides, for many miles back, leaving not even the vestige of vegetation for the subsistence of any graminivorous animals.

This we found to be the case nearly the entire distance to the forks.

During the latter part of our stay at this camp, it rained almost incessantly; we also encountered a severe snow storm.

The winds were usually high, and frequently blew with hurricane-violence.

A pack of hungry wolves, attracted by the scent of camp, were our regular nocturnal visitors, and proved a constant source of annoyance. On one occasion they carried off a bake-kettle to a distance of several hundred yards;—at another time, they took away a tin-pan, which we never afterwards recovered;—and, stranger yet, one night these piratical pests stole a fur cap from off my head while I was sleeping, and in the morning, after a diligent search, no trace of it could be found.

The river having slightly risen, we again loosed cable, and, after toiling all day, and tugging with might and main, by hand-spikes and levers, — twisting, screwing, and lifting, now in water up to our necks, and now on dry sand-bars, we succeeded in dragging, or rather carrying, our craft for a distance of about five miles, and again lay by for four succeeding days to await a still further rise.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Upon the opposite side of the river was a bald-eagle's nest, with two half-grown fledglings. One of our party, ascending the tree, captured the young ones, and we had a fine meal from their carcasses. A wood-duck's nest, containing some twelve eggs, near by, afforded a seasonable repast, and, in hunting for game, we came upon the nest of a wild goose, as well as those of numerous ravens among the neighboring cottonwoods and willows, which we subjected to such forced contributions as appetite demanded.

A portion of the interval was employed in fishing, but with poor success, the fish of the Platte being nearly all of them small, and not very plentiful even, at that.

An old Franco-Canadian, of our crew, here favored us with, perhaps, a little the biggest fish story of any told at the present day.

He had been down the Missouri on several occasions in boats connected with the fur trade.

On one of these voyages, while in the act of reaching over the boat-side for a drink of water, he dropped his cup, which immediately sank to the bottom of the river and was lost.

Three years afterwards he again passed the same place, with hooks and lines attached to the boat-stern for the purpose of catching fish as he glided along.

A large cat-fish, attracted by the tempting bait borne upon the hook, greedily swallowed it, and, in a trice, found himself translated to a new and strange element.

The creature was so heavy, it took two men to pull him into the boat, while his gigantic proportions astonished all beholders.

But the most surprising thing was revealed on opening him; — there, snugly stowed away in one corner of the monster's capacious maw, reposed the identical cup our voyageur had lost, three years before, with his name and the date marked upon it!

"Pooh! Gumbo," said an old sailor, "I can beat such stories as that, all day."

"Why, fellow, on my last trip from Liverpool to New York, a shark followed the ship for a long time, picking up such bits of bread and meat as were thrown into the sea.

"Our steward was a very careless fellow, and, in shaking the tablecloth, he would frequently drop overboard the knives and forks and spoons, and received from the captain several floggings on that account. He was even accused of stealing them, but strongly protested his innocence of the latter charge.

"Among our passengers was an old whaleman, who, being very expert in the use of the harpoon, took it into his head one day to victimize the shark. After several ineffectual attempts, he finally succeeded in forcing his instrument through the monster's vitals, and drew the lifeless carcass alongside.

"The piratical cruiser was so thundering big, it took eight men with tackles to raise it on board; — it must have weighed at least sixteen hundred pounds! The body of the greedy creature was then laid upon deck, and on opening it all were astonished! What do you think was found, Gumbo?"

"Sacre sharp! Certes me tink dey fine de spoon, de fork an de knife Him shark no follow de ship for nottin."

"Well, boys, what do you all suppose was found?"

"Indeed, we couldn't say."

"Guess,"

"The knives and spoons, of course."

"You are wrong, to a man."

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“What, in the name of reason, could it have been? Do tell—we give it up.”

“Hang me, if you aint a bright set of fellows!—Can’t guess a thing so easy? Why, if I must tell you—’twas guts, —only guts— nothing in the world but guts!”

“Look here, Jack,” said one of the listeners, advancing towards him hat in hand, “you can take this. We’ll be quite likely to remember hereafter that fish generally carry their guts inside!”

The old Frenchman looked rather crest-fallen at the curious manner in which his extraordinary fish story had been matched, —but felt little disposed to yield his laurels without an effort to retrieve them, —so, calling to aid his recollections of the marvellous, he again commenced.

Several years ago, while in the employ of the American Fur Company, our hero and another man were sent expresses to a distant post. It was winter; and they travelled on foot, depending for daily subsistence upon such game as chance brought in their way. Their course lay through an open and cheerless prairie, covered with snow, and the journey occupied nearly a month.

Having been en route some five or six days, their ammunition began to fail in the item of lead, —and only two bullets were left. Their condition now became extremely desperate, as there was no way of procuring a re-supply, —and anticipated starvation stared them in the face.

Determined to eat as long as the means of subsistence remained, their last balls were shot away in killing a buffalo bull. After furnishing themselves from his carcase with a large supply of meat for present and future use, our hero proceeded to cut a few locks of hair from off the creature’s head, for the purpose of stuffing his moccasins.

“Bon Dieu! Vat you tink me fine? You no can tell all day! Me no ask you guess. Bon Dieu! c’être admirable. Me fine forty ballas, in he head. Me get’em out. Sacre tonnerre! den me had him sufficient la poudre and la ballas for de route! No go hungry une leetil bit!”

On the fifth day subsequent, we again launched forth into the stream, and after a series of most extraordinary exertions, (being obliged to lighten our boat several times, by carrying its loading on shore, and reloading as often, thus to enable us to lift it over sand-bars,) we succeeded in getting it some three miles, and finally became safely moored in the middle of the river, from which it was impossible to extricate ourselves either by going backwards, forwards, or sidewise—with or without a cargo.

Here we remained for three days, and experienced, during the interval, a continuous fall of rain and sleet, which rendered the weather dismal and our own situation disagreeable in the extreme. A cache of liquor having been made, fifteen or twenty miles distant, by a trader connected with our consort, a month or two previous, unforbidding as was the weather, the crew could not rest content until the hidden treasure was among them.

Improving the opportunity presented by a slight suspension of the storm, one morning two of them started to procure it. Soon after it commenced snowing and raining, accompanied by a fierce, cutting wind and all the withering bleakness of a winter’s blast.

Still keeping on, however, they obtained the cache, and returned with it towards the boat.

But night shut in upon them by the way, and a thrice dreary night it was. Being too drunk to navigate, they lost their course and were forced to camp in the open prairie, without wood or aught else of which to build a fire, or even a robe to cover or a rock to shelter them from the chill wind and peltings of the pitiless storm.

Half-frozen with cold and wet to the skin, they lay upon the muddy ground and passed the interval, not in sleep, but in a state of drunken stupor, produced by inordinate draughts upon the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

contents of their keg.

On the next morning they reached the boat, —a beautiful looking couple, as might well be supposed! Covered with mud from head to foot, their clothes were wringing wet, and their faces bloated and swollen almost to twice their natural size. So complete was the transformation, they were scarcely recognizable as the same persons.

But, regardless of hardship and suffering, they stuck to the liquor-keg and brought it with them as proof of their triumph.

And now commenced a scene of drunken revelry, which, despite my efforts to prevent it, soon communicated itself to both crews, and continued without intermission till the stock on hand was exhausted.

The lack of a fire by which to warm ourselves, contributed materially to the misery of our present condition; there being no wood procurable for that purpose within five or six mikes of either shores and having none on board, we were compelled to endure the dreary interval as best we could.

But another evil came pressing upon our already heavy load through the entire exhaustion of provisions, and the last of our stay was made twice forlorn by cold and fasting.

The gloomy reality of this situation may be thus briefly summed up; We were fast aground in the middle of a river, three-fourths of a mile from either shore, confined to the narrow limits of a few feet, exposed to the merciless peltings of a chill storm of rain and sleet, with only a thin lodge skin to shelter us, without fire to warm or dry ourselves by, and, worse than all, destitute of the means of appeasing the gnawings of hunger.

But, forbidding as the picture may seem, it proved only the commencement of a long series of suffering and deprivation, more intensely dreadful in its nature, that was yet held in reserve for us. On the forenoon of the fourth day the storm abated, and, favored with a slight rise of water, by dint of extraordinary effort we finally succeeded in getting afloat, and gained the right shore after pulling our craft over sandbars for a distance of two miles.

All hands now turned out in search of game, one of whom returned, towards night with an antelope, providing us with a needful supply of food for the time being.

The next day, forcing our craft onward for six or eight miles, we brought to upon the left shore, where, after a short excursion among the hills, two other antelope were brought in, which furnished us with a further supply of provisions.

The day following we continued our voyage till towards noon, when a high wind compelled us again to lay by under the lee of a small island.

Here, towards night, having spread our robes near the camp fire, while all hands were busy at the boat, a sudden gust of wind bore the sparks among the dry grass, and in an instant the whole island was one sheet of flame! robes, blankets, and all, were almost entirely destroyed, notwithstanding our prompt efforts to save them.

Continuing on, the next morning we forced our boat, or rather carried it, down stream for about fifteen miles, —wading the river for nearly the whole distance.

Our mode of voyaging was pretty much the same, each day of its continuance. Sailing was out of the question.

Not unfrequently we were obliged to unload five or six times in the course of a few hours, in order to lift the boat over high sand-bars, carrying its cargo upon our backs through the water a half-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

mile or more, to some dry place of deposit for the mean time; then returning it in the like tire-some manner, —now in water up to our arm-pits, —then scarcely enough to cover the sand of the river bed.

As for a channel there was none, or rather, there were so many we were at a continual loss which to choose.

Now, gliding along merrily for a mile or two, we are brought to a halt by the water scattering over a broad bed, and find ourselves snugly “pocketed,” with no other means of extrication than by backing out; then, wading against a swift current, we retrace our steps for a like distance, and try another chute, perhaps with no better success; —then, again, conveying our landing to the nearest point of land, by means of hand-spikes and levers (requiring an exercise of the utmost strength,) we force our empty craft over the shoals, and again load it, perhaps, to re-act the same scene in a brief interval.

Sometimes we were obliged to travel (for such navigation as this was tenfold worse than traveling) four or five miles to make one mile headway. By crossing and re-crossing a river varying in width from one to two miles — first advancing, then retreating; now taking to the right, then to the left; now transverse, and then oblique, we wasted our time, strength, and patience, in labor to little or no purpose. No one, unless practically experienced, can have a correct idea of the beauties of such a voyage.

Towards night, attracted by the appearance of a couple of bulls among the sand-hills, we brought to upon the left shore, and succeeded in killing one of them.

A high wind the day following kept us encamped and afforded another opportunity for hunting. Improving the occasion to explore the country northward, and obtain, if possible, some correct conception of its general character, a jaunt of four or five miles, over the bottom of rich alluvial soil skirting the river, ushered me into a high rolling prairie, partaking of the mixed nature of the garden and desert.

The hills, in many places, were piles of sand or sun-baked clay, with scarcely a shrub or spire of grass to hide their nude deformity, while the space between them sported a rich soil and luxuriant vegetation, and was clothed in the verdure and loveliness of spring, and adorned with blushing wild-flowers in full bloom.

Further on were yet higher summits, surmounted by pines and cedars, raising their heads in stately grandeur far above the sweet valleys at their feet.

Taken together, the scenery was not only romantic and picturesque, but bewitching in its beauty and repulsive in its deformity.

The prevailing rock was a dark, ferruginous sandstone, and argillaceous limestone, interspersed with conglomerates of various kinds.

Proceeding to a distance of about fifteen miles from the river, in hopes of finding game, I encountered nothing save a solitary band of wild horses, that fled across the sand-hills with the fleetness of the wind on my appearance, after which I returned to the boat much fatigued from the excursion.

Our other hunters had also returned; but neither of them with better success than myself.

The subsequent morning we again renewed our voyage. Soon after, an old bull presenting himself upon the river bank, we landed, and one of the crew approached him from the water-edge.

The old fellow, unconscious of the danger which threatened, permitted the hunter to advance till

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

within three or four yards of him. The sharp crack of a rifle-shot first awoke him to a sense of his situation, when, reeling, he plunged headlong from the steep bank into the river. Our marksman, in an effort to dodge the falling beast, tumbled backwards into swimming water —lost his gun, and came very near being drowned.

The bull made halt at a sand-bar, near by, and received nineteen shots in his carcase before he could be dispatched.

When killed, his hams were found half eaten by wolves, and his whole body otherwise so badly mangled we left it unbutchered.

In the afternoon, having pursued our way eight or ten miles, we lay by for the night.

A high wind and rain during the three succeeding days prevented further progress, and in the interval our provisions became again exhausted.

While here, observing two Indians in the distance, running buffalo, I took three men and started to meet them. On coming up, we found an old Indian with his son engaged in butchering. Announcing the object of my visit to be the procurement of meat, they listened without a reply, but continued their operations, —laying the selections in two separate heaps.

When finished, the old man led up his horse, and, pointing to an assorted pile, told me it was mine, and the animal also should be at my service to convey it to camp.

His village, he remarked, was a long distance over the hills, on the watch for Pawnees, and though in a directly opposite course from us, he loved the white man and would give him meat and a horse to carry it.

Accepting the offer of the generous-hearted savage, I took the heavy-laden horse and returned to the boat, —the owner following to regain his beast. When arrived, he hinted at no remuneration for his kindness, and mounting his horse, would have left for his village.

Where will you find among civilized people men thus generous and obliging? Such cases are indeed rare. The savage here proved himself of more noble principles than nineteen-twentieths of his enlightened and Christianized brethren, whose religion teaches them to love their neighbor as themselves, and do to others as they would like to be done unto!

Unwilling that such disinterested kindness should go unrewarded, I made the old man some trifling presents, which he accepted with great pleasure, and, pressing his hand to his breast, exclaimed: "Chanta-ma warstaello!" (my heart is good!) and, shaking hands with the company, put whip to his horse and was soon out of sight.

It is useless to notice the particular progress of each day, or to state how many times we unloaded in the interim — how often we crossed the river, or how far we carried our boat by main strength; these things have been already laid before the reader sufficiently to give him some faint idea of the intolerable hardships and sufferings we were compelled to undergo. Each day was but a repetition of the toils and struggles of the preceding one.

Neither would it be interesting to state the especial half-day, day, or successive days we went without eating, meanwhile; suffice it to say, the morning of the 10th of June found us at the mouth of a small creek upon the right shore, about two hundred miles below the Fort, —having been thirty-five days en barquette, and without eating for full one third of that time! The expected spring rise had failed, and the river was very low and still falling, so that there was no possible chance of conveying our cargo to the States, as the most difficult part of the voyage lay yet before us. I accordingly abandoned all thoughts of the latter, and adopted such other arrangements as my

judgment suggested upon the premises.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hunting excursion. Thirst more painful than hunger. Geological observations. Mournful casualty. Sad scene of sepulture. Melancholy night. Voyage in an empty boat. Ruins of a Pawnee village at Cedar Bluff. Plover creek. Cache Grove. Thousand Islands. Abandon boat. Exploring company. A horrible situation. Agony to torment. Pawnee village. Exemplary benevolence of an Indian chief. Miserable fourth of July. Four days' starvation. Arrival at Council Bluff. Proceed to Independence. FOR two days preceding we had been without eating, and our first effort was to procure a re-supply of provisions. Both crews started out with their rifles in pursuit of game, though not the footprint of any living creature appeared to excite even the faintest hope of success.

Still, however, we kept on, determined not to despair so long as the use of legs remained to us. Having travelled some fifteen miles, chance threw in our way a doe-elk with her fawn, which the unerring aim of a rifle speedily laid dead before us. Soon as opened, the liver disappeared at the demands of voracious appetites, and next to it the marrow bones and kidneys.

The process of cooking was then commenced over a fire of bois de vache, which was continued till each stomach was abundantly satisfied. But, here another enemy assumed the place of hunger, and one far more painful in its nature. There was not a drop of water to allay our thirst short of the river, fifteen miles distant, —over an open sand-prairie and beneath the scorching rays of a vertical sun.

I can endure hunger for many days in succession without experiencing any very painful sensations, —I can lie down and forget it in the sweet unconsciousness of sleep, or feast my imagination upon the rich-spread tables of dreams; — but not so with thirst. It cannot be forgotten, sleeping or waking, while existence is retained. It will make itself known and felt! It will parch your tongue and burn your throat, despite your utmost endeavors to thrust it from memory! Each one shouldering his burden from the carcase, we took up our line of march for the boat, where, arriving in four or five hours subsequently, we quenched our burning thirst in the water of the thrice welcome stream.

The country travelled over during this excursion, for the first ten or twelve miles, was a level plain, presenting a thin vegetable mould with a luxuriant growth of grass and herbage, upon a substratum of sand and gravel.

The remainder of our route led through a ridge of hills, many of them naked, others clothed with grass and ornamented with pines; — between the tumuli were many beautiful vallons, gorgeously decked with wild-flowers in full bloom, and arrayed in mantles of living green; while thick clusters of fruit-bearing trees and shrubs attested the general fecundity and lent their enchantment to the scene.

Beyond this a gentle acclivity, that led to the high prairies, spread before the beholder a wilderness of verdure, without one moving object to relieve its cheerless monotony.

The boats were unloaded on our return and their contents placed in a compact pile upon shore, over which were spread two thicknesses of lodgeskin, to protect it from the weather. Other necessary arrangements were soon completed. Two men being selected to remain with the robes, two were dispatched to the Fort, while the remainder with myself were to make our way to the States,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

if possible, in an empty boat.

Everything was put in order for departure the next morning, and a gloomy feeling pervaded each mind as the hour approached that was to separate a band so closely united by mutual sufferings, toil, and deprivation.

Those selected to accompany me were congratulating themselves on the prospect of soon reaching the termination of their arduous and eventful expedition, among the friends and acquaintances of other days; and none were more happy in the anticipation of this hoped for finale, than was a lively French youth, named Prudom.

Notwithstanding the general tendency of circumstances was to produce feelings of melancholy, his voice rang loud in announcing the varied plans of amusement and pleasure, that were to be realized upon his arrival at home.

For this day, so far at least, he had been the petit garçon of the company; and, it was frequently remarked, as his quaint expressions and sallies of wit burst upon the ear, "What in the world is the matter with Prudom?"

His good nature and kindness of disposition had won the esteem of all acquainted with him, while his cheerfulness and fortitude at all times contributed much to render tolerable the dreariness of our forlorn condition.

A little before night, the company indulged in a general cleansing, accompanied by a shave and change of clothes. Prudom was among the number, for whom an intimate friend officiated as barber; — the operation finished, he jokingly remarked:

"Well, Tom, I suppose this is the last time you'll ever shave me!"

Little did the poor fellow think how soon his words were to be verified. Seizing his rifle he stepped on board the boat, and, stooping to lay it by, exclaimed, "Here's the game!"

The words were scarcely uttered, when the gun-lock, coming in sudden contact with the boat-side, discharged the piece and shot him through the heart! He staggered, faltering forth "Mon Dieu!" and fell dead at my feet!"

A thrill of horror struck every nerve on witnessing this tragical event. If we had previously felt melancholy, we now felt dismal and woe-begone. He, who five minutes since was the very soul of cheerfulness and mirth, now lay a lifeless corpse! How true it is, we "know not what a day or an hour may bring forth."

The sun was just setting as we commenced digging a grave in which to deposite all that remained of our friend and companion.

The task was a sad one, and as tedious as it was sorrowful. We had neither shovel nor pick-axe, and were compelled to dig it with our butcher knives and hands.

The pale-moon, new-risen, shed her sombre light over the dismal realms of Solitude, and an intervening cloud cast its pall-like shadow upon the scene of sepulture, as we laid low the corpse in mother dust. No shroud covered — no useless coffin enclosed it, — a grave was the only gift within the power of friendship to bestow! A thin coating of earth succeeded by a layer of stones and drift-wood, and that again by another earth-coat, was its covering, — then, the mournful task was done, a tear dropt to the memory of poor Prudom, and his body left to slumber in its narrow prison-house, till the sound of the last trump shall wake the dead to judgment.[37]

That night to us was a more painful one than any we had passed. A feeling of superstitious awe, mingled with thrilling sensations of grief and thoughts of our own miserable condition, occupied

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

each mind and usurped the soothing powers of sleep. The dolesome howlings of the prairie-wolf, and hootings of the midnight owl, borne upon the listening air, kept sad condolence with our musings, and gave increased momentum to the pressure that crushed our spirits. Who could sleep, amid such scenes and surrounded by such circumstances?

The rising sun of the morrow brought the hour of separation, and exhibited upon every face the same downcast look, prefiguring the inward-workings of a mind absorbed in the melancholy of its own thoughts.

My party consisted of six, some of whom were selected from the crew of our consort. We all embarked in one boat, taking with us a small quantity of robes, (our own individual property,) and a portion of the provisions at camp.

Our voyage for a few days succeeding, was performed without much difficulty, except in the article of food — for, from this onward, till we finally reached the settlements, (an interval of twenty-eight days,) we were without eating full one half of the time!

Proceeding some thirty miles, we overtook the American Fur Company's barges, three in number, the crews of which were struggling on in vain effort to reach the States. We glided past them with a loud huzza, and rallied the poor, toiling voyageurs, upon the futility of their exertions.

Five or six days subsequently, we were, in turn, overtaken by them; they, like ourselves, abandoning all hope of accomplishing the objects of their voyage, had left their freight at Ash creek, under guard — and, from that on, became our *compagnons de voyage*.

The only game previous to reaching the forks of the Platte — a distance some two hundred miles — was now and then an antelope, with a few straggling deer. Our subsistence, meanwhile, was principally upon "greens," and such roots as we had time and opportunity to gather.

The country was pretty much of a uniform character, with that previously described. The rich alluvion of the river bottom reposed upon varied substratum of sand, marl, gravel, and clay.

I noticed several varieties of clays in the river banks exposed by the attrition of the water—of these were the white, red, black, yellow, blue, and green.

The white clay is much used by the Indians in cleaning skins and robes; an operation performed by mixing it with water till the compound assumes the color and about four times the consistency of milk, when it is applied to the surface of the article in hand; the robe or skin thus washed, after being thoroughly dried in the sun, is rubbed until it becomes soft and pliable from friction, and the grosser particles of the preparation are loosened and removed.

By this simple process skins assume a milky whiteness, and every spot of grease or dirt is made to disappear.

All kinds of skin may be thus cleansed, and will readily attain an unsoiled purity, surpassing that originally possessed. Red, yellow, black, blue, or any other kind of clay, may be used for like purposes, and will readily impart to the cleansed articles their own color.

In case a single application is insufficient, repeat the process for two or three times, and there can be no possible failure in the result, provided the clay is pure and good.

Some twenty miles above the Forks, we passed a ridge of rocky hills exhibiting layers of limestone and sandstone in bold escarpments, that jutting into the river from the right, formed a high embankment covered with pines and cedars, known as Cedar Bluff.

At the upper side of this point stood the remains of an old Pawnee village, which had been deserted by its inhabitants immediately after the bloody battle between that nation and the Sioux, at the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

mouth of Ash creek.

The bottom, for several miles above, is rarely excelled in fertility. The islands are generally timbered, but the river banks upon both sides are almost entirely destitute of trees of any kind. From Cedar Bluff, in about eight miles, we came to the mouth of a large and beautiful creek, forcing its way, with a clear and rapid current, from the high rolling prairies to the north. This presented the appearance of being skirted with broad and fertile bottoms, well supplied with timber among the hills. Though vested with some importance on account of its size and locality, it is as yet nameless — the abundance of plovers in its vicinity at the time of my passing, suggested the term “Plover creek” as a proper appellation.

Five or six miles further on, we came to a large grove of cottonwood upon the right shore. Here, some five years since, a company of traders, while descending the Platte in boats loaded with furs, made cache of one hundred and sixty packs of robes, which they were compelled to leave on account of the low stage of the water. The luckless party, after enduring great hardships, arrived in the States; but their cache was subsequently plundered by Pawnees.

The confluence of the North and South Forks made but little perceptible difference in the size of the river. From the junction, in five days' time we reached the vicinity of Grand Island, about two hundred and twenty miles from the nearest white settlements.

The high prairie upon the north shore, between the above points, is generally sandy. The river presents numerous clusters of islands, most of which are heavily timbered and clothed with luxuriant growths of vegetation. The soil is of a deep, sandy loam, and well adapted to cultivation, I noticed upon them several choice wild flowers of rare beauty.

We experienced great difficulty in forcing our boats through a large group, called the “Thousand Islands,” that thickly studded the river for some ten miles, and, before clearing them, found our passage completely blockaded.

Having consumed an entire day in vain effort to proceed, we were at length compelled to abandon the idea. The water was constantly falling, and our condition hourly becoming worse. This forced upon us the dernier resort of performing the remainder of our arduous journey on foot.

Accordingly, making cache of the personal property with us, we sunk our barges in a deep hole near by, threw all extra clothing into the river, and, each selecting a robe with as much meat as he could carry, we commenced our weary tramp.

The property thus disposed of was of the value of several hundred dollars. Among other articles left in cache, were arms and tools of various kinds.

No one would now carry a gun, — as we were to pass through a section of country destitute of game, and, being obliged to travel with all possible despatch to avoid starvation, good policy prompted us to dispense with every unnecessary encumbrance. For myself, however, I was unwilling to relinquish my rifle, and determined to take it with me.

There were fourteen of us, including the coups de barquette of the American Fur Company; and, as we trudged along at a pace enfeebled by a series of cruel hardships, fatigue, and starvation, —with provisions and beds bound in close bundles and strapped to our backs, —half-naked, long-bearded, careworn, and haggard, —we looked like the last remnants of hard times!

The 28th of June dated the commencement of this last stage of our tiresome pilgrimage.

Having travelled some ten or twelve miles, we espied a camp of whites a short distance in advance, and were observed by them almost at the same time. Our appearance created an evident

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

consternation, —their horses were driven in with great speed, and their guns stripped ready for action, while our or five men, mounted upon fleet chargers, rode out to reconnoitre.

On ascertaining the cause of their alarm to be only a handful of unarmed men, they ventured up, and were saluted with the cordiality of old acquaintances, so rejoiced were we at the sight of anything savoring of the endearments of home and civilization.

The company proved one in the employ of the United States Government, under the command Lieut. J. C. Fremont, of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, on an expedition for the exploration and survey of the country lying between the Missouri river and the mountains.

The commandant seemed a gentleman of urbanity and intelligence, and politely furnished us with all the passing news of the day preceding his departure from the States.

Our smokers and tobacco-chewers, who had been for sometime without the *sina qua non* of the mountaineer, now procured a re-supply for the indulgence of their filthy and unnatural taste.

Leaving our new-found friends, we continued on for a few miles, and halted a brief interval under the shade of a cottonwood grove. While thus reclining upon the green grass, what was our surprise at seeing three Indians, who appeared suddenly in our midst extending their hands to greet us!

They belonged to a war-party of Chyennes, —had been to the Pawnees, and were now on their return, with three horses captured from the enemy.

Continuing our course, towards sundown I began to find my rifle rather cumbersome, and, yielding to the advice of all hands, threw it away.

Having travelled till late at night, we laid ourselves down in the trail for repose;—the musquitoes, however, together with the heat, were so annoying, sleep was impossible.

I never in my life before was so tortured by these relentless persecutors. Their sting was far more tolerable to me than the unending hum of their music. To exterminate them was a hopeless task, for, at the death of one, fifty would come to its funeral, —and to submit quietly to their rapacity and be eaten up alive by such loving friends, was more than human flesh and blood could endure. For three hours I lay, sweltered by the heat and pierced by the hungry myriads that swarmed around, until my agony became so great it obtained the mastery of reason, and I was scarcely self-conscious whether a being of earth or an inhabitant of the realms of woe.

In the height of my phrenzy I fancied four demons had hold of the extremities of my robe, and were fiercely dragging me over a prairie of sharp rocks, that tore my flesh at every bound. The remainder of the party suffered equally with myself, and none of them were permitted to close their eyes that night.

June 29th. We started at early day, and pursued our journey till ten o'clock, which brought us to the foot of Grand Island, —a distance of sixty miles from the place of our adventure with the Indians during the previous afternoon. Here we indulged in a slight repast, and, reclining upon the grass, enjoyed a few hours' sleep, despite the continued annoyance of musquitoes.

On arousing to resume the painful march, our legs were found in a very unenviable plight, and almost refused to sustain the accustomed burthen. Our feet, also, (softened and made tender by the mollifying effects of the water, to which they had been so long familiar, and, unused to the offices now newly forced upon them,) were sore and swollen to a frightful size. From this on, our journey was most intensely painful.

But, notwithstanding all, we were compelled to keep moving, though our progress seemed more

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

like the passage of Mahomet's "bridge of swords" than aught else imaginable.

July 2d. This morning our stock of provisions was entirely exhausted, and yet a long distance intervened between us and the settlements.

Towards night, however, chance brought us in the way of a plentiful supper, by our encountering the Pawnee village on its way to the buffalo range. We were entertained by the head chief in a hospitable manner, who furnished us bountifully with boiled corn and mush; and we were also invited into several shantees with the same kind intention.

The Pawnee chief (Red Eagle, if my recollection serves me right) was a generous old fellow, aged some sixty years. His benevolence was truly exemplary, as his conduct well attested. My moccasins, being much worn by long usage, exposed to the ground the bottoms of my feet. This was no sooner discovered by the noble-hearted old man, than he pulled off his own (a pair of new ones) and gave them to me!

What white man would have done the like? And this was done by the poor Indian, not from the expectation of reward, but through the promptings of an innate benevolence! A small tin-cup, taken with me thus far, was the only return in my power to make.

Leaving the village a little before sundown, we encamped for the night near the houses recently occupied by these Indians, after having travelled seven or eight miles. Their buildings are coniform, and constructed of earth and timber, very similar to those of the Kansas tribe, described in a previous chapter.

Several years ago, the Pawnees were a numerous and powerful nation, possessing an extensive territory, and occupying five large towns, viz: one upon the Republican branch of the Kansas river, one at the forks of the Platte, one south of the Arkansas near the Cumanche country, one on Loup creek, and one some ninety miles above the mouth of the Platte. These several divisions were known by the terms of Pic, Mahah, Republican, Loup, and Grand Pawnees. The Riccarees, speaking the same language, may also be reckoned a fraction of this tribe. The five villages before named are now reduced to two, i.e. on Loup creek and above the mouth of the Platte.

The whole number of the Pawnee nation, exclusive of the Riccarees, probably does not exceed six thousand souls. All of the western tribes being at war with them, their numerical strength is continually diminishing.

Slight advances have been made towards improving the condition of this nation, but, as yet, with little apparent success. A farmer, blacksmith, and schoolmaster are provided them under the patronage of the U. S. Government, and a missionary is also stationed among them by the American Board of Foreign Missions.

They raise corn[38] and other vegetables, but their principal dependence for subsistence is upon the proceeds of hunting. Their general character is stamped with indolence, treachery and cowardice, for which they have become famous, not only among the whites, but also among their rude neighbors, —having thus attained the hatred of both.

July 3d. This morning we parted company, and each of us undertook to make his way to Council Bluff according to the best of his ability. Being entirely destitute of food, it became us to urge our course with all possible dispatch.

July 4th. Accompanied by two others, in an equally forlorn condition, the "glorious fourth" finds me plodding along, over an open prairie, beneath the scorching rays of a summer's sun, unarmed, halt-naked, with a shouldered pack, and not having had a morsel to eat for the past two days.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

It is now I think of the festal boards and scenes of good cheer so omni-present upon Freedom's birth-day in the land of my nativity! Mine is a mode of celebrating Independence, that I care not ever again to observe.

On the 6th we reached the Ottoe mission and obtained food, after an abstinence of four successive days.

Early in the morning of the 7th we arrived at Council Bluff on the Missouri, eight miles above the mouth of the Platte, and nearly four hundred above Fort Leavenworth. In the course of the day following our whole party came in, one after another — some of whom had become so weakened by hardship and deprivation they could scarcely move a dozen yards without stumbling!

Having remained a few days at Council Bluff to recruit our strength, we procured canoes and descended the Missouri. The 21st inst. found me at Independence, Mo., after an absence of nearly nine months, —having consumed seventy-five days upon my return voyage, and, in the meantime, experienced a series of suffering and misfortunes seldom equalled and rarely surpassed.

CHAPTER XIX.

The country between the Pawnee village and Bellevue, and from that to Fort Leavenworth. Leave Independence for the Mountains. Meet Pawnees. Indian hospitality. Journey up the South Fork Platte. Fort Grove. Beaver creek. Bijou. Chabonard's camp. Country described. Medicine Lodge. The Chyennes; their character and history. Arrive at Fort Lancaster. Different localities in its neighborhood. Fatal Duel. Ruins.

THE country travelled over from the Pawnee village to Council Bluff (or Bellevue, as more recently called) is generally possessed of a rich, clayey soil, which is well adapted to cultivation. Large quantities of timber skirt the streams, that include all the varieties found in the States. The landscape is beautifully undulating, and, at the time of our passing it, was covered with a luxuriant growth of vegetation, (the grass being frequently waist high,) and ornamented by rare specimens of wild flowers.

The Pawnees, Ottoes, and Omahas possess the whole extent of this territory, which embraces much valuable land within its limits. That north of the river and adjacent to Bellevue is owned by the Pottowatomies, who also claim to the boundary between Iowa and Missouri.

The Kickapoos, Iowas, Sacs, and Foxes occupy the country south of the Missouri, from the mouth of the Platte to Fort Leavenworth.

All of this interval possesses a fertile soil, is well watered and passably well timbered. A more particular description of it, however, does not properly come within the limits of this work.

Upon my arrival at Independence, affairs were in a rather confused state. Times were hard and all kinds of business at their lowest ebb. The company for which I had acted had become bankrupt, and left me a loser to no inconsiderable amount. But, notwithstanding this unfavorable aspect of things, I decided upon returning to the Mountains for the purpose of visiting the different regions adjacent to them.

Acting upon this resolution, I expended the means at my immediate command for the procurement of an outfit; — and the beginning of August saw me again en route, accompanied by two experienced mountaineers — all of us mounted upon hardy mules and well provided for the journey before us.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The first four or five days subsequent, our progress was much impeded by successive rains, that rendered the road muddy and ourselves uncomfortable. We were necessitated to raft the Wakarousha, and the Kansas was so swollen it was forded with great difficulty, — the water frequently covering the backs of our animals.

From that onward we enjoyed pleasant weather and journeyed without further interruption; — nothing occurred worth note, till we reached the Pawnee range, near the head of Big Blue.

One morning, while travelling along unconcernedly and at our leisure, having as yet observed nothing to excite our apprehensions, a Pawnee suddenly made his appearance directly in front of us.

Such a customer had we been aware of his proximity, would have been most carefully avoided, in a place so dangerous as this; but, as he had first discovered us, it was now too late to give him the slip, and we accordingly permitted his approach, greeting him in a friendly manner.

He immediately informed us that the whole country was full of his people returning from their summer-hunt, and he invited us to accompany him to the village. This we declined, being unwilling to trust either him or his people.

Observing several other “shaved heads” hurrying towards us from over the adjoining hills, we struck camp and prepared for the expected rencounter. Upon coming near, however, they appeared friendly and were most of them unarmed. Again we were urged to visit the village.

After waiting an hour or more, we resumed our course, still followed by the unwelcome visitors. A ride of scarcely a half mile brought us to the top of a hill, and, to our surprise, placed us in the immediate precincts of the village, — too far advanced for a retreat.

The entire population was instantly in motion, and came crowding towards us upon every side. Pushing boldly forward, we were received by the same kind-hearted old chief of whom I had occasion to speak in the receding chapter. On recognizing me, I was welcomed with great cordiality, and we were forthwith conducted to his shantee and sumptuously entertained upon the choicest in his possession.

Our camp-equipage and other articles were all safely disposed of, and nothing conducive to our pleasure or comfort was left unattended to. During our entire stay, we were beset with invitations to feasts which were prepared expressly for us by these hospitable villagers, who appeared displeased whenever we declined their acceptance.

The old chief brought forward his little grandson to shake hands with us — remarking, that he would teach his children like himself to love the Americans.

A small sack filled with papers was then laid before me for perusal. They consisted of recommendations, speaking in very flattering terms of the bearer, Red Eagle, and belauding his kindness and liberality. Most willingly would I have complied with his request, and made “the paper talk” for him, but the means were not at hand.

The kind-hearted old man presented us each a pair of moccasins and urged our stay till the next morning, — adding: “Some of my men are bad, and my heart is sick for them. Should you go before sleep, they might follow and rob you. When the morrow’s sun has newly risen above the prairie, they will have left their foot-prints in the homeward trail, and my white brothers may pass unmolested. But, if you will not rest beneath the shade of the Red Eagle, wait till the day-king is low, then ride fast till the night is old, and thus may you avoid the evil ones who would injure you.”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

This advice seemed so reasonable, we consented to remain till late in the afternoon, when, driving up our animals, we made preparations to start.

Every article belonging to us was faithfully returned by the old man, who ordered for us a present of buffalo meat. Several large pieces were accordingly brought by different individuals, of excellent quality, and in quantity more than we could well carry.

This was all a free gift, —no one even hinted at a compensation. Where will you find among civilized man generosity and hospitality equal to this?

Willing to reward such exemplary conduct, we presented the liberal donors with a small supply of sugar, coffee, and tobacco; and, to our host, we gave a knife and some other trifling articles, all of which he received with evident gratification.

Bidding the noble chieftain adieu, we pursued our course in accordance with his direction, —travelling nearly all night.

Early the next morning we struck the Platte, and, in the afternoon, reached the point at which myself and others had abandoned our boats.

On visiting the cache made at that time, not a thing remained;—it had been robbed by the Pawnees, in all probability, as the island was covered with the tracks of men and horses. But what afforded still more conclusive evidence, was the site of a recent Pawnee encampment within some four hundred yards of the place.

The next morning brought us to the buffalo range, and our fare was one of continued feasting from that onward.

Three days subsequently we came to the forks of the Platte, and continued up the south branch, with the design of proceeding to New Mexico by way of Fort Lancaster.

Here we entered a stretch of territory not as yet brought before the reader's notice.

Passing on, a ride of between fifty and sixty miles brought us to a large grove of willows at the mouth of a sand-creek, where we remained the day following.

The vicinity contained the relics of three or four Indian forts, constructed of logs, —one or two of which were in an almost entire state of preservation, and afforded a correct illustration of Indian military genius. Their forms were oval, and the roofage so complete, we were amply sheltered in one of them from a heavy shower which fell during our stay.

From this point (properly denominated Fort Grove) to the forks, the country is rather sterile and rolling, with the exception of the river bottoms, which, as usual, are possessed of a rich soil and vary in width from one to five miles. There is scarcely a tree, worth naming, upon either bank of the river for the whole extent.

The expanse lying to the northward is quite broken and hilly, with some few pines and cedars at the heads of ravines.

Previous to leaving Fort Grove I experienced an attack of the fever and ague, which recurred, at intervals of once in two days, until we reached Fort Lancaster.

Resuming our journey, a ride of some ten miles brought us to the mouth of Pole creek, a large affluent of the right shore. This is a clear and handsome stream, running through a rich valley of considerable width. Its entire course affords but very little timber, and the prairie upon either side is generally sandy and barren.

Journeying on about seventy-five miles further, we came to a large stream called la Fouchett aux Castors, or Beaver Fork.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

This creek heads in the highlands between the Platte and Arkansas, and traces its course through a sandy country, varied by diminutive hills of clayey soil, for a distance of nearly two hundred miles. — It presents many beautiful bottoms of a rich vegetable mould, with here and there small clusters of timber.

Some forty or fifty miles above Beaver creek, we crossed Bijou, another large affluent of the left shore. The water at the mouth of this stream was shallow, dispersing itself in several small channels, over a bed of gravel and quicksand, about four hundred yards wide, and enclosed by abrupt banks of clay and sand.

For several miles above its junction with the Platte no timber appears; but further on, many large groves relieve the eye, and invite the traveller to their shade, while broad meadows and rich bottoms, clothed with grass and flowers, cheer the beholder and delight his fancy.

Aug. 30th. A ride of ten or fifteen miles, from this point, brought us to a camp of whites, in the employ of Bent and St. Vrain, occupying a small island in the Platte. They were guarding a quantity of robes with which they had attempted to descend the river, but were unable to proceed further on account of low water.

I was much gratified at here meeting an old acquaintance, with whom I had passed a portion of the previous winter upon White river.

The camp was under the direction of a half-breed, named Chabonard, who proved to be a gentleman of superior information. He had acquired a classic education and could converse quite fluently in German, Spanish, French, and English, as well as several Indian languages. His mind, also, was well stored with choice reading, and enriched by extensive travel and observation. Having visited most of the important places, both in England, France, and Germany, he knew how to turn his experience to good advantage.

There was a quaint humor and shrewdness in his conversation, so garbed with intelligence and perspicuity, that he at once insinuated himself into the good graces of listeners, and commanded their admiration and respect.

The country, between Fort Grove and Cabonard's camp, with the exception of the river bottoms, (which were quite fertile and occupied an area, upon both banks, varying in width from one hundred yards to five miles,) is slightly undulating, and presents two uniform characteristics, —one, a thin clayish loam upon a substratum of sand and gravel, and the other a sandy surface, often entirely destitute of vegetation, save, perchance, a few scattering spires of coarse grass and a species of prickly burr.

Various specimens of cacti are found in every direction, and prove a frequent source of vexation to the traveller. The landscape discloses a scene of dreary sterility, —more to be accounted for by the dryness of the climate than any natural defect in the soil.

The river upon both sides is nearly destitute of timber, and we were frequently compelled to use bois de vache for cooking purposes. There is also a scarcity of rock, —though, in the neighborhood of Bijou, I observed a kind of grayish sandstone, exposed to view in the beds of ravines; and, directly opposite Chabonard's camp, the action of the waters had formed a steep wall, some thirty or forty feet high, which disclosed a large bed of sandstone and slate, with earthy limestone.

A few miles above Beaver Fork, we obtained a distinct view of the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains with the snowy summit of Long's Peak, distant some sixty or sixty-five miles. They appeared like a pile of dark clouds just rising from the verge of the horizon, and could be identified only by

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

their uniform and stationary position.

From the time of first entering the buffalo range till we reached Bijou creek, our entire course was beset with dense masses of those animals, which covered the river bottoms and prairies in all directions, far as the eye could reach. Our usual practice was to kill one every day, and select from its carcase the choice portions so well known and highly appreciated by mountaineers; and, calling to aid the varied modes of cooking peculiar to hunters, surely never did epicures fare better than we.

A few miles above Beaver creek we passed the site of a recent Indian encampment, where was yet standing the frame-work of a medicine lodge, erected by the Chyennes and Arapahos for the performance of their religious rites and ceremonies. This was made of light poles, describing an amphitheatre with a diameter of some fifty feet. In form it was much like the pavilion of a circus, and of sufficient dimensions to contain several hundred individuals.

I shall take occasion in subsequent pages to speak of medicine-making, and would refer the reader to that part for an explanation of the peculiar purposes for which the medicine lodge is constructed.

The river at Chabonard's camp is reduced fully one half in width, compared with its size at the forks. The current is also clearer and more rapid. Its banks and islands are much better timbered, and its general appearance indicates an approach to the mountains.

About noon we bade farewell to our new friends, by whom we had been kindly entertained, and resumed our journey, accompanied by my whilom companion and two others, —increasing our number to six.

Towards sundown, coming to a small village of Chyennes, we passed the night in the lodge of a chief, called the Tall Soldier. Our host treated us with much civility, but in this he appeared actuated only by selfish motives, and with the sole view of extorting a more than fourfold equivalent by way of presents.

We were also continually harassed by beggars from all quarters, and gladly availed ourselves of the first dawn of the ensuing morning to pass on, and thus escape their importunities.

The Chyennes at this time occupy a portion of the Arapaho lands, bordering upon the South Fork and its affluents.

Some six or eight years since, they inhabited the country in the vicinity of the Chvenne and White rivers and the North Fork of Platte, from whence they were driven by the hostile incursions of the Sioux, who now hold in quiet possession the whole of that territory.

This tribe, in general appearance, dress, and habits, assimilates most of the mountain and prairie Indians, with the single exception, perhaps, of being meaner than any other. They are certainly more saucy as beggars and impudent and daring as thieves, than any other I ever became acquainted with.

Formerly they were a much better people, but the contaminating effects of intercourse with the whites have made a disposition, naturally bad, immeasurably worse. Contrary to Indian character in general, they are treacherous and unworthy of trust, at all times and in all places.

Their history contains a small speck of romance, which may not prove altogether uninteresting to the curious.

The Chyennes, at the present time, number about four hundred lodges, and claim some eight hundred warriors. The tribe is composed of two divisions, viz: the Chyennes and Gros Ventres,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

—both speaking the same language and practising the same designation of nationality, shown in sundry transverse scars upon the left arm.

Neither of these divisions know their origin, but tell the following curious story of their first intercourse with each other.

Many years since, the Chyennes, while travelling from a north country, discovered the Gros Ventres, who were also upon a journey. As usual among strange tribes, both parties rushed to the attack, and a bloody battle would undoubtedly have been the result, had it not been stayed by the mutual discovery of an identity of language. Upon this, hostility at once gave place to friendship, and the two parties negotiated an immediate union. Since then they have been considered as one nation.

What is most singular in this occurrence, neither the Gros Ventres nor Chyennes could trace any previous connection or intercourse with each other, or knowledge of their individual existence. This tribe has made no advances in civilization, and most probably will make none for many years to come. Their roving and unsettled habits prove an obstacle, almost insuperable, to any efforts that may be undertaken for their improvement.

They are generally accounted friendly to the whites, but friendship like this is essentially of a dangerous character.

Continuing our journey, the evening of Sept. 2d brought us to Fort Lancaster, after an interval of twenty-six days, during which we had travelled not far from seven hundred and twenty miles.

Our route from Chabonard's camp to this point, for the most part, led along the valley of the Platte, which resembled a garden in the splendor of its fields and the variety of its flowers.

A ride of four or five miles took us across the dry bed of a large sand-creek, four or five hundred yards wide, known as the Kuyawa. The banks of this arroyo are very steep and high, disclosing, now and then, spreads of beautiful bottom lands with occasional groves of cottonwood. At this season of the year its waters are lost in the quicksand and gravel.

We also passed the mouths of three large affluents of the right bank of Platte, severally known as Crow creek, Cache a la Poudre, and Thompson's Fork.

These creeks rise in the adjoining mountains, and, with the exception of Crow creek, trace their way with clear and rapid currents, from two to three feet deep and sixty feet wide, over beds of sand and pebbles. Their valleys are broad, rich, and for the most part well timbered.

Timber increases in quantity, upon the Platte and its affluents, as the traveller approaches the mountains, and the soil gradually loses that withering aridity so characteristic of the grand prairie.

Twelve miles below Fort Lancaster we passed Fort George, a large trading post kept up by Bent and St. Vrain. Its size rather exceeds that of Fort Platte, previously described; it is built, however, after the same fashion, —as, in fact, are all the regular trading posts in the country. At this time, fifteen or twenty men were stationed there, under the command of Mr. Marsalina St. Vrain.

Six miles further on, we came to a recently deserted post, which had been occupied the previous winter and summer by Messrs Lock and Randolph.

One of our party, a whilom engagé of this company, informed me of its principals' becoming bankrupt, through mismanagement and losses of various kinds;—he stated, that, in May last, their entire "cavalliard," consisting of forty-five head of horses and mules, had been stolen by the Sioux Indians; this, in connection with other bad luck — together with the depreciated value of furs and

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

peltries, the failure of a boat-load of robes to reach the states, the urgent demands of creditors, &c., had caused them to evacuate their post and quit the country.

A short distance above this, at a point of timber occupying a large bottom, had been the scene of a fatal duel the previous winter, between two whites by the names of Herring and Beer. On my first arrival in the country I had become acquainted with both of the actors, and felt much interested in the details of the bloody affair as related by one present at the time of its unfortunate occurrence. The difficulty between them related to a Mexican woman from Taos, —the wife of Herring. Backed by a number of personal friends, and anxious to obtain the lady from her husband, the former had provoked a quarrel and used very insulting language to his antagonist. This was received with little or no reply, but soon, however, resulted in a challenge which was promptly accepted.

The preliminaries were arranged in confident expectation of killing Herring, who was considered a poor marksman, especially at an off-hand shot. The weapons selected by Beer were rifles, the distance fifty yards, the manner off-hand, and the time of shooting between the word fire and three. The two met, attended by their friends, at the time and place agreed upon, at the word “fire,” the ball of Beer’s rifle was buried in a cottonwood a few inches above the head of his antagonist, —at the word “three” the contents of Herring’s rifle found lodgement in the body of Beer, who fell and expired in a few minutes.

Between this point and Fort Lancaster, I noticed the ruins of another trading post, much dilapidated in appearance, and nearly levelled with the ground.

Passing along, I could not refrain from musing upon the frequent deeds of mischief and iniquity that had originated within them, in connection with the infamous liquor traffic. Ah, thought I, were those bricks possessed of tongues; full many a tale of horror and guilt would they unfold, to stand the listener’s “hair on end,” and make his blood run cold! But, lost in silent unconsciousness, they refuse to speak the white man’s shame!

CHAPTER XX.

Old acquaintances. Indian murders. Mode of travelling in a dangerous country. Mexican traders. Summary way of teaching manners. Fort Lancaster and surrounding country. Resume journey. Cherry creek and connecting observations. Sketch of the Arapahos, their country, character, &c. Camp of free traders. Blackfoot camp. Daugherty’s creek. Observations relative to the Divide. Mexican cupidity. Strange visitors. The lone travellers. Arrive at the Arkansas. General remarks. Curious specimens of cacti. Fontaine qui Bouit, or Natural Soda fountain. Indian superstition. Enchanting scenery. Extraordinary wall of sandstone.

AT Fort Lancaster I was gratified by meeting with several acquaintances of the previous winter, two of whom had been comrades during a part of my unfortunate and adventurous voyage down the Platte.

My appearance created no little surprise and pleasure, on all sides. Queries of various kinds were industriously plied, relative to the latest news from the States, and also in reference to the miseries and hardships undergone during the interval of my absence. The dangers of our mode of travelling were freely expatiated upon, and numerous instances of recent Indian hostilities cited to prove our “fool daring.”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Among the latter was an outrage perpetrated by the Chyennes, only two weeks previous, in the murder of three white men, —one of whom was the oldest trapper in the mountains, and had been for some time engaged in the fur trade.

The murderers had the impudence to ask a scalp-feast from the commandant of the Fort, according to custom in case of overcoming their enemies in battle! The hair, however, being recognized as that of a white man, no feast was given. When accused of the murder, they apologized by saying the poor fellow was suffering greatly at the time from recent wounds, and they had killed him out of pity!

In our mode of travelling, we always used due precaution to avoid surprise and attack. This is easily done, while among buffalo, by noticing their movements, —as these animals invariably flee across the wind upon the approach of man, and neither Indians nor whites can traverse their range without setting the whole country in motion.

We observed another plan of caution by frequently ascending some eminence, and scanning the wide expanse, far and near.

Our general practice was to travel till night, and camp without fire in the open prairie, thus precluding the possibility of being discovered, even though in the immediate vicinity of Indians. A party of three or four men can pass through a dangerous country and avoid coming in contact with enemies, provided they exercise a needful vigilance much more easily than one of larger numbers. With a large company too much dependence is reposed in each other, which soon results in individual carelessness and neglect. Added to this, they are apt to rely upon their numerical strength, and, forgetting this simple truism, that “caution is the parent of safety,” rush into danger when they are least aware of it. It thus occurs that large parties are more liable to surprise than smaller ones, and more frequently suffer losses from the depredations of prowling enemies. On the contrary, where but three or four individuals are travelling together, they trust exclusively to their own personal vigilance. Keenly alive to every suspicious appearance, they seldom fail to discover the presence of danger without exposing themselves, and may avoid it by a timely retreat or change of course. There is little risk in an open prairie, in case an enemy is first seen by the party wishing to shun his presence;—they have only to manoeuvre in such a manner as to elude observation, (a thing not often difficult,) and all is safe. In subsequent travels through dangerous countries I have always acted upon these suggestions, and never yet found them to fail.

Some twelve or fifteen Mexicans were at this time present at the Fort. They constituted a trading party from Taos, escorting a caravan of packhorses and mules, laden with flour, corn, bread, beans, onions, dried pumpkin, salt, and pepper, to barter for robes, skins, furs, meat, moccasins, bows and arrows, ammunition, guns, coffee, calico, cloth, tobacco, and old clothes, which were to compose their return freight.

A worse looking set was here presented than that previously described in the second chapter of this volume. Some of them were as black as veritable negroes, and needed only the curly hair, thick lips, and flattened nose, to define the genuine Congo in appearance. A more miserable looking gang of filthy half-naked, ragamuffins, I never before witnessed.

Their cargoes had already been disposed of at various prices, according to circumstances. Flour and meal were sold at from four to six dollars per fanega, (one hundred and twenty pounds,) and other articles at like prices. Their first asking price was at the rate of twenty dollars per fanega; but an affray which occurred with a small party of Americans, immediately upon their arrival, had

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

made these produce merchants much more reasonable in their demands.

The particulars of the affair were rather disgraceful to both parties. The Americans, anxious to purchase a quantity of flour, offered to take it at the asking price, provided the Mexicans would receive their pay in robes of a rather indifferent quality. This the latter refused and a dispute arose, when insulting language was used on both sides, coupled with threats of mutual injury.

The Mexicans retired a short distance and camped, —soon after the Americans, four in number, rushed among them and drove off their entire cavallard, containing twenty head of horses and mules. The Mexicans seized their arms for resistance, and the commandante advancing demanded of the nearest assailant:

“Que quiere, caballero?” (what do you want, sir?)

“Yo tenga lo caballardo, —porque dicirme esta?” (I have your horses, why do you ask?)

“Carraho, American.!” said the Mexican, levelling his gun at the speaker. In an instant a pistol-shot from the latter laid him prostrate, — the ball entering his chest near the heart. No further resistance was offered, and the assailants retired with their booty.

The next morning, however, they returned, and the two parties compromised the matter by certain conciliatory arrangements, which resulted in the Americans giving up the captured animals, on condition that the Mexicans should in future be less insolent and conduct their trade on more reasonable terms.

The wounded man recovered in three or four weeks, and was now ready to accompany his party on their homeward-bound journey.

A large number of Mexicans are employed at the different trading posts in this vicinity. They prove quite useful as horse-guards, and also in taking care of cattle and doing the drudgery connected with these establishments.

Their wages vary from four to ten dollars per month, which they receive in articles of traffic at an exorbitant price;—viz: calicoes, (indifferent quality,) from fifty cents to one dollar per yard; blue cloth, from five to ten dollars per do.; powder, two dollars per lb.; lead, one do. do.; coffee, one do. do.; tobacco, from two to three do. do.; second hand robes, two dollars apiece, —and everything else in proportion.

Their wages for a whole year, in actual value, bring them but a trifling and almost nameless consideration. Notwithstanding, these miserable creatures prefer travelling four hundred miles to hire for such diminutive wages, rather than to remain in their own country and work for less. They know of no better way to get a living, and are, therefore, happy in their ignorance, and contentedly drag out a wretched existence as best they may.

After a period of service they generally return home laden with the paltry proceeds of their toil, and, yielding to the impulses of custom, a single fandango is sufficient to leave them penniless like the squalid crowd with whom they mingle.

A week's stay at the Fort restored me to health and soundness from the debilitating effects of the fever and ague, without a resort to medicine. This disease (the first and only attack of which I ever experienced) had made fearful inroads upon my strength during the short interval of its continuance, and rendered me unfit for travelling;—but, a change of climate and the inhalation of the pure mountain air effected a permanent and speedy cure, in a much less time than I had reason to expect.

Fort Lancaster occupies a pleasant site upon the south bank of the Platte river, about nine hun-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

dred miles from its mouth, and seven hundred and twenty from Independence, in lat. 40° 12' 25" north, long. 105° 53' 11" west from Greenwich. The distance from this point to the dividing ridge of the Rocky Mountains is about thirty-five miles, and from Taos, in New Mexico, between three and four hundred miles.

Long's Peak with its eternal snow appears in distinct view to the westward, and imparts to the sunset scenery a beauty and grandeur rarely witnessed in any country. This peak is one of the highest of the mountain range, being upwards of 13,500 feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico, and issues from its eastern side the waters of the Atlantic, and from its western the tributaries of the Pacific.

Between the mountains and the Fort, the prairie is generally level, though slightly undulating in places; — it is possessed of a tolerable soil, composed of clay and gravel, ever and anon spreading before the traveller rich valleys, decked with sweet flowers and lusty herbage.

The country eastward is rolling, sandy, and sterile; and, with few exceptions, presents little to attract the eye or please the fancy.

The Platte bottoms, above and below, are quite heavily timbered and afford an abundance of grass of various kinds. The soil is of a black, deep loam, very rich and well adapted to cultivation.

The business transacted at this post is chiefly with the Chyennes, but the Arapahos, Mexicans, and Soux also come in for a large share, and contribute to render it one of the most profitable trading establishments in the country.

Sept. 10th. Arrangements being completed for resuming my journeys I left Fort Lancaster in company with four others, intending to proceed as far as Taos in New Mexico. We were all mounted upon stout horses, and provided with two pack-mules for the conveyance of baggage and provisions.

Following the trail leading from the Platte to the Arkansas, or Rio Napeste, we continued our way some thirty-five miles, and halted with a camp of free traders and hunters, on Cherry creek.

This stream is an affluent of the Platte, from the southeast, heading in a broad ridge of pine hills and rocks, known as the "Divide." It pursues its course for nearly sixty miles, through a broad valley of rich soil, tolerably well timbered, and shut in for the most part by high plats of table land, — at intervals thickly studded with lateral pines, cedars, oaks, and shrubs of various kinds, — gradually expanding its banks as it proceeds, and exchanging a bed of rock and pebbles for one of quicksand and gravel, till it finally attains a width of nearly two hundred yards, and in places is almost lost in the sand. The stream derives its name from the abundance of cherry found upon it. The country passed over from the Fort to this place, is generally sandy, but yields quite a generous growth of grass. We passed, in our course, the dry beds of two transient creeks, one eight, and the other fifteen miles from the Fort.

Our route bore nearly due south for twenty miles, following the Platte bottom to the mouth of Cherry creek, thence southeast, continuing up the valley of the latter. The Platte presented heavy groves of timber upon both banks, as did also its islands, while its bottoms appeared fertile.

The mountains, some fifteen miles to our right, towering aloft with their snow-capped summits and dark frowning sides, looked like vast piles of clouds, big with storm and heaped upon the lap of earth; while the vapor scuds that flitted around them, seemed as the ministers of pent up wrath, in readiness to pour forth their torrents and deluge the surrounding plains, or let loose the fierce tornado and strew its path with desolation.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Three or four miles before reaching our present camp, we passed a village of the Arapahos on its way to the mountains, in pursuit of game. With this the reader is introduced to that nation for the first time, which affords me occasion to speak of them more particularly.

The Arapahos are a tribe of prairie Indians, inhabiting the country bordering upon the South Fork of the Platte and Arkansas rivers.

Their territory embraces an extent of about forty-five thousand square miles, a portion of which is well watered and interspersed with numerous fertile spots. Timber is rarely found, except in the creek bottoms and among the mountains. A large section of it, however, is dry, sandy, and sterile, and almost entirely timberless and destitute of water. The game of these regions includes all the varieties common to the mountains, which are quite abundant. The territory also possesses large mineral resources, and includes among its stores of hidden wealth, gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, coal, soda, nitre, salt, and sulphur, with vast beds of gypsum.

This nation boasts some five hundred and twenty-five lodges, numbering not far from four thousand souls. In appearance, as well as manners and customs, they assimilate the Sioux and Chyennes. Their insignia of nationality is a tattooed breast, by which they are distinguished from neighboring tribes. They afford to the observer the rare instance of increasing numbers in an Indian population.

The Arapahos since their first treaty with the whites, some fifteen years ago, have maintained terms of the strictest friendship on their part. They have never been known to kill or even injure a white man in the interval, and rarely to steal from him any article of value. They seem to take pleasure in the bestowment of kindness and hospitality upon such whenever in their power, but commonly in expectation of reward, and are exceedingly annoying as beggars.

These Indians, though brave, are less warlike than contiguous tribes, being at variance only with the Utahs and Pawnees, whose countries are severally invaded as occasion serves, and often with success.

They possess considerable taste for trafficking, and regularly meet the Sioux, Chyennes, Cumanches, and Kuyawas for that purpose, and many of them know how to drive as good a bargain as the most expert Yankee.

Notwithstanding the many good qualities possessed by them, they are inferior to their neighbors in morality. The Sioux and Chyennes are far more chaste, and never indulge in the low practices common with the Arapahos. Virtue with the former is guarded by the strictest vigilance and jealousy, while with the latter it is made the minister of lust and is prostituted for a paltry bribe.

As yet no effort has been made for their improvement, though I regard them as more susceptible of civilization than any other of the prairie tribes. They appear to be great admirers of the manners, customs, arts, and mode of living prevalent among the whites, and only lack the requisite instruction to become their successful imitators.

The camp at which we are at present located consists of four lodges, three of whites, and one of Blackfoot Indians.

Each of the whites has his squaw wife, and the usual accompaniment of ruddy faced children. In regard to the latter, I must say they were more beautiful, interesting, and intelligent than the same number of full-bloods, either of whites or Indians.

These men were living after the fashion of their new-found relatives, and seemed to enjoy themselves as well as circumstances would admit. They had a number of horses, with the requisite

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

supply of arms and ammunition, — the sure sources of wealth and comfort in a country abounding with game.

The Indian family were relatives by marriage, and were one of some fifteen lodges of Blackfeet among the Arapahos, who forsook their own nation, on account of its uncompromising hostility to the whites. Quite a number of these Indians have also joined the Sioux and Nesperces, for a like reason.

We were entertained very kindly by our new friends who spared no effort to render our stay agreeable. Among the delicacies set before us, was one deserving of notice, —it consisted of the fruit of prickly pears (cacti) boiled in water for some ten or twelve hours till it became perfectly soft, when it was compressed through a thin cloth into the fluid in which it had been boiled. This forms a delicious variety in mountain fare, and one highly stimulating and nutritious.

The immense quantities of cacti fruit found near the mountains, at the proper season, render the above an entertainment not uncommon.

Sept. 13th. Again under way; after a ride of fifteen miles, night finds us at Blackfoot-camp, snugly chambered in a spacious cave, to avoid the disagreeable effects of a snow-storm that comes upon the reluctant prairie with all the withering keenness of winter.

The cave affording us shelter is formed in an abrupt embankment of limestone, that marks the eastern limits of a beautiful valley through which a small affluent of Cherry creek traces its way. The floor is of dry gravel and rock, about fifty feet long by fifteen wide, while upon one side a crystal spring presents its tempting draughts. Thus chambered, a small fire soon rendered us comfortable and happy, notwithstanding the dreary weather without.

Our course during the day bore southward, and led from the valley of Cherry creek to an interesting plateau, furrowed at intervals by deep cañons, enclosing broad bottoms of rich alluvion, and ridged upon either hand by high hills of pine and ledges of naked rock.

The streams are generally timberless, —the soil of the highlands is of a red, clayey mould, and quite fertile. Instead of the aridity incident to the neighboring prairies, it is usually humid.

The country hereabouts, for an extent of upwards one thousand square miles, is much subject to storms of rain, hail, snow, and wind, —and it is rarely a person can pass through it without being caught by a storm of some kind. I can account for this in no other way than by supposing it has some connection with the vast quantities of minerals lying embedded in its hills and valleys.

Sept. 14th. Morning was ushered in with a pleasant sunshine, that soon caused the snow of the past night to yield beneath its melting influences.

When on the point of raising camp, an old grizzly bear made her appearance with three cubs. An effort to approach her proved futile, — she, having snuffed the closeness of danger with the breeze, made a hasty retreat with her offspring.

I allude to the above incident for this reason, that it is generally supposed the bear produces but two at a birth.

Continuing our journey till late at night, we reached an affluent of Fontaine qui Bouit, called Daugherty's creek, after travelling a distance of some thirty miles. Here we remained for three or four days, to procure a further supply of provisions.

The route from Blackfoot-camp, for the most part, led over a rough country, interspersed with high piny ridges and beautiful valleys, sustaining a luxuriant growth of vegetation, which is known as the Divide.

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

This romantic region gives rise to several large tributaries both of the Platte and Arkansas, and furnishes the main branches of the Kansas. Its geological classifications consist of sandstone, limestone, granite, and cretaceous rock. Large quantities of silex are also found, together with many interesting specimens of petrification that principally consist of pine wood; these, in many cases, exhibit the tree in its perfect shape, with all the grains and pores that marked its growth.

A ride of three hours took us past the heads of Bijou and Kuyawa, whose clear and swift currents, confined to narrow beds, here presented a striking contrast to those remarked at their confluence with the Platte.

Continuing on a few miles, we reached Black Squirrel creek, an affluent of the Arkansas; and from thence, after a brisk trot for some fourteen miles over a nearly level prairie, we came to our present camp.

Our place of stay was in sweet little valley enclosed by piny ridges. The entrance leading to it is through a defile of hills from whose rugged sides protrude vast piles of rock, that afford a pass of only fifty or a hundred yards in width. An abundance of grass greets the eye, arrayed in the loveliness of summer's verdancy, and blooming wild-flowers nod to the breeze as enchantingly as when the fostering hand of spring first awoke them to life and to beauty.

The creek derives its name from Daugherty, a trader who was murdered upon it several years since. At the time he was on his way to the Arkansas with a quantity of goods, accompanied by a Mexican. The latter, anxious to procure a few yards of calico that constituted a part of the freight, shot him in cold blood, and hastened to Taos with his ill-gotten gains, where he unblushingly boasted of his inhuman achievement.

My excursions among the hills brought before me many interesting geological specimens, mostly such as characterize the Divide. I noticed two or three extensive beds of stone coal in the vicinity of the creek, with an abundance of nitre and other mineral salts.

Having killed three fine cows during the five days we remained at this place, the scent of fresh meat attracted an old bear and her cub, which, in the expectation of a choice repast, were induced to pay us a night visit.

We were quietly reposing at the time, nor dreamed of the ungainly monsters within camp, till their harsh growls grated upon our ears and raised us each to a speedy consciousness. Instantly every rifle was clenched and levelled at the unwelcome intruders, and two discharges bespoke their warm reception. The bears, not fancying this new test of friendship, quickly withdrew and permitted us to resume our slumbers.

Fitzpatrick and Van Dusen, two old mountaineers, passed our encampment, in the interim, on their way to the States. Having devoted a number of years to the business of trapping, few possess a more intimate knowledge of this country than they. The former of these gentlemen was on his return from Oregon with dispatches for the U. S. Government, and had acted as pilot for a party of emigrants to that territory during the previous summer. After conducting his charge to their place of destination, he and his companion had travelled thus far alone,[39]—a distance of more than one thousand miles.

Sept. 19th. Leaving Daugherty's creek we resumed our course, and reached the Arkansas the next day, about noon. Here we encamped in a small grove of cottonwood upon the right bank, a few miles above the mouth of Fontaine qui Bouit.

In gaining this point we travelled some forty-five miles, mostly over a sandy prairie, slightly un-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

dulating to the leftward, but, to the right, describing the waves of a tempest-tossed ocean. Its general character is sterility; the grass growing thinly and being of a coarse kind, with the exception of that of the creek bottoms, which affords several varieties of a lusty size, mingled with occasional spreads of *préle* — a choice article for the subsistence of horses and mules.

In passing along, I observed a new species of the cacti family, that grew in a shrub-like form to a height of five or six feet. Its stalk was round and fully an inch in diameter.

This made the fourth variety of cactus noticed during the past few days. Of these, two resemble the common “prickly pear” in their appearance. Another species, however, was egg-shaped, bearing a fruit much like the cranberry in color and form. At the proper season, it also produces a beautiful red flower, that emits a most agreeable perfume, in some measure atoning for its dreaded intrusion upon the path of the wayfarer.

Fontaine qui Bouit, or the Boiling Fountain, is the name bestowed upon a considerable stream that heads under Pike’s Peak, in lat. 38° 52’ 10” north, long. 105° 22’ 45” west from Greenwich, and pursues a southerly course till it unites with the Arkansas.

This name is derived from two singular springs, situated within a few yards of each other at the creek’s head, both of which emit water in the form of vapor, accompanied with a hissing noise—the one strongly impregnated with sulphur and the other with soda.[40]

The soda water is fully as good as any manufactured for especial use and sparkles and foams with equal effervescence. This spring, though at present cool, is said to have been formerly quite the reverse. Some twenty years since, the heat was sufficient to cook flesh in an half hour’s time, if submerged in its waters.

The Arapahos regard this phenomenon with awe, and venerate it as the manifestation of the immediate presence of the Great Spirit. They call it the Medicine Fountain, and seldom neglect to bestow their gifts upon it whenever an opportunity is presented.

These offerings generally consist of robes, blankets, arrows, bows, knives, beads, moccasins, &c., which they either throw into the water or hang upon the surrounding trees. Sometimes a whole village will visit the place for the purpose of paying their united regard to this sacred fountain.

The scenery of the vicinity is truly magnificent. A valley several yards in width heads at the springs, overlooking which from the west in almost perpendicular ascent tower the lofty summits of Pike’s Peak, piercing the clouds and revelling in eternal snow, at an altitude of 12,500 feet above the level of the sea.

This valley opens eastward, and is walled in upon the right and left, at the mountains’ base, by a stretch of high table land, surmounted by oaks and stately pines, with now and then an interval displaying a luxuriant coating of grass. The soil is a reddish loam, and very rich. The trees which skirt the creek as it traces its way from the fountain are generally free from under-brush, and show almost as much regularity of position as if planted by the hand of art. A lusty growth of vegetation is sustained among them to their very trunks, which is garnished by wild flowers, that, during the summer months, invest the whole scene with an enchantment peculiar to itself.

The climate too is far milder in this than in adjoining regions, even of a more southern latitude. ‘Tis here “summer first unfolds her robes, and here the longest tarries.” The grass, continuing green the entire winter, here first feels the genial touch of spring. Snow seldom remains upon the ground to exceed a single day, even in the severest weather, while the neighboring hills and prairies present their white mantlings for weeks in succession.

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

As the creek emerges from the mountains, it increases in size by the accession of several tributaries, and the valley also expands to a width of three or four miles, retaining for a considerable distance the distinguishing traits before described.

The vicinity affords an abundance of game, among which are deer, sheep, bear, antelope, elk, and buffalo, together with turkeys, geese, ducks, grouse, mountain-fowls, and rabbits.

Affording, as it does, such magnificent and delightful scenery; such rich stores for the supply of human wants, both to please the taste and enrapture the heart; so heaven-like in its appearance and character, it is no wonder the untaught savage reveres it as the place wherein the Good Spirit delights to dwell, and hastens with his free-will offerings to the strange fountain, in the full belief that its bubbling waters are the more immediate impersonation of Him whom he adores.

But, there are other scenes adjoining this, that demand a passing notice. A few miles above Fontaine qui Bouit, and running parallel with the eastern base of the mountain range, several hundred yards removed from it, a wall of coarse, red granite (quite friable and constantly abrading) towers to a varied height of from fifty to three hundred feet.

This wall is formed of immense strata, planted vertically and not exceeding eight feet in thickness, with frequent openings — so arranged as to describe a complete line.

The soil in which they appear is of a reddish loam, almost entirely destitute of other rock, even to their very base.

This mural tier is isolated, and occupies its prairie site in silent majesty, as if to guard the approaches to the stupendous monuments of nature's handiwork that form the back-ground, disclosing itself to the beholder for a distance of more than thirty miles.

CHAPTER XXI.

Vicinity of the Arkansas. Settlement. The Pueblo. Rio San Carlos, its valleys and scenery. Shooting by moonlight. Taos. Review of the country travelled over. Taos; its vicinity, scenery, and mines. Ranchos and Rancheros. Mexican houses; their domestic economy, and filth. Abject poverty and deplorable condition of the lower classes of Mexicans, with a general review of their character, and some of the causes contributing to their present degradation. The Pueblo Indians and their strange notions. Ancient temple. Character of the Pueblos. Journey to the Uintah river, and observations by the way. Taos Utahs, Pa-utahs, Uintah and Lake Utahs. The Diggers; misery of their situation, strange mode of lying, with a sketch of their character. The Navijos; their civilization, hostility to Spaniards, ludicrous barbarity, bravery, &c., with a sketch of their country, and why they are less favorable to the whites than formerly.

THE Arkansas at this point is a clear and beautiful stream, about one hundred and fifty yards wide. It flows over a bed of rock and pebbles, with a rapid current, averaging two feet in depth. Its southern bank is steep and inducts to a high sandy prairie, which present a somewhat sterile and denuded appearance. The northern shore affords a wide bottom of black loam, generally fertile, and timbered with occasional groves of cottonwood. Beyond this a high undulating prairie, presenting now and then a cluster of pines and cedars, leads off to the neighboring mountains.

The river above, for a distance of some forty miles, possesses many beautiful valleys, well timbered, and a rich soil, until the traveller arrives at the place where it makes its entree from the lofty mountain chain in which it heads.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The land indicates a fitness for agricultural purposes, and holds out strong inducements to emigrants. A small settlement of whites and half-breeds, numbering fifteen or twenty families, has already been commenced about thirty miles above the mouth of Fontaine qui Bouit under quite favorable auspices. The only fears entertained for its success, are on account of the Indians. Many other localities in this vicinity are equally inviting were it not for the character and habits of the surrounding natives.

At the delta, formed by the junction of Fontaine qui Bouit with the Arkansas, a trading fort, called the Pueblo, was built during the summer of 1842. This post is owned by a company of independent traders, on the common property system; and, from its situation, can command a profitable trade with both Mexicans and Indians. Its occupants number ten or twelve Americans, most of whom are married to Mexican women, while everything about the establishment wears the aspect of neatness and comfort.

Sept. 22d. Crossing the Arkansas, I for the first time set foot upon Mexican soil.

Taking the Taos trail, we continued our way for ten or twelve miles and came to the Rio San Carlos. Here the abundance of deer and turkeys was too great a temptation to be resisted, and we remained several days to bestow upon them that attention our appetites demanded.

The country adjacent is very romantic and beautiful. The hills, enclosing the valley of the San Carlos upon both sides, are high and precipitous, —affording numerous groves of pine, pinion,[41] and cedar. Interspersed among them are frequent openings and prairillons of rich soil and luxuriant vegetation. The valley is narrow, but fertile and well timbered.

Near the head of the river is a broad area, known as Fisher's-hole, bounded upon all sides by rugged hills and mountains, inaccessible except by a circuitous pass leading into it from the south. The stream forces its egress through a ledge of dark-colored rock, several hundred feet in altitude, leaving vertical walls upon each side for a long distance, that frequently overhang the gurgling waters sweeping at their base.

This valley contains more than a thousand acres of choice land, well supplied with timber from the heavy pine forests surrounding it.

The prevailing rock is granite, sandstone, limestone, and lias, with occasional conglomerates of various kinds. I noticed strong indications of copper and other minerals; and the general appearance of the country led me to conclude it to be one possessed of vast stores of hidden wealth.

While here, we were quite successful in replenishing our stock of provisions.

My experiments in turkey-hunting made me a proficient shot by moonlight, a feat which adds materially to the sport. This is done by manoeuvring so as to have the turkey in a direct line between the marksman and the moon, causing its shadow to fall upon his face, —then, raising his rifle to a level from the ground upwards, the instant the sight becomes darkened he fires, and, if his piece be true, seldom fails to make a centre shot.

The most feasible mode of hunting turkeys is to watch their roosting places at night; and, after the moon attains the required position, they may be killed by dozens in the above manner. They rarely leave their roosts on account of the firing; but remain, half stupefied with affright, while they are picked off one after another by the practised hunter.

Sept. 25th. Again resuming our journey, we reached Taos on the 1st of October.

Our stay at this place was prolonged for several days, during which time we took boarding with a Mexican lady, the widow of an American trader.

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The country travelled over en route, from the San Carlos to Taos is very rough and mountainous, but variegated by many fertile valleys skirting the numerous tributaries of the Arkansas and del Norte.

The trail crosses several of the latter streams, for the most part bearing an easterly course; among which are the Cornua Virda, Huaquetore, Timpa, Apache, and Pischepa.

These creeks frequently pass through deep cañons of sandstone and limestone for a distance of several miles together, —disclosing upon all sides a wild and romantic scenery. The great fault with the valleys is a lack of timber; the hills, however, are generally supplied with pine, pinion, and cedar, which, in a measure, atones for the above deficiency.

On leaving the Pischepa, a reach of little more than one jornada (day's travel) leads over the mountain range, separating the waters of the Arkansas and del Norte, at a point bearing a short distance to the left of two famous landmarks, called the Spanish Peaks.

Here the traveller is at once ushered into the valley of Taos; and, continuing on, in a brief interval finds himself surrounded by a clan of half-naked Mexicans.

Taos proper embraces several fertile lateral valleys bordering upon the del Norte, and three small affluents from the east and is supposed to contain a population of some ten thousand, including Indians, Moors, Half-breeds, Mulattoes, and Spaniards. It is divided into several precincts, or neighborhoods, within short distances of each other, among which Arroyo Hondo is the principal.

This section of country is very romantic, and affords many scenes to excite the admiration of beholders. It is shut in by lofty mountains, upon three sides, that tower to an altitude of several thousand feet, now presenting their pine-clad summits among the clouds, now with denuded crests defying the tempest; and then peering skyward to hold converse with the scathing blasts of unending winter.

The mountains are rich in minerals of various kinds. Gold is found in considerable quantities in their vicinity, and would doubtless yield a large profit to diggers, were they possessed of the requisite enterprise and capital. At present these valuable mines are almost entirely neglected, —the common people being too ignorant and poor to work them, and the rich too indolent and fond of ease.

The Mexicans possess large ranchos of sheep, horses, mules, and cattle among the mountains, which are kept there the entire year, by a degraded set of beings, following no business but that of herdsmen, or rancheros.

This class of people have no loftier aspirations than to throw the lasso with dexterity, and break wild mules and horses.

They have scarcely an idea of any other place than the little circle in which they move, nor dream of a more happy state of existence than their own. Half-naked and scantily fed, they are contented with the miserable pittance doled out to them by the proud lordlings they serve, while their wild songs merrily echo through the hills as they pursue their ceaseless vocations till death drops his dark curtain o'er the scene.

There are no people on the continent of America, whether civilized or uncivilized, with one or two exceptions, more miserable in condition or despicable in morals than the mongrel race inhabiting New Mexico. In saying this, I deal in generalities; but were I to particularize the observation would hold good in a large majority of cases.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Next to the squalid appearance of its inhabitants, the first thing that arrests the attention of the traveller on entering an Mexican settlement, is the uninviting mud walls that form the rude hovels which constitute its dwellings.

These are one story high and built of adobies, with small windows, (like the port-holes of a fortification,) generally without glass. The entrance is by an opening in the side, very low, and frequently unprotected by a door. The roof is a terrace of sod, reposing upon a layer of small logs, affording but poor protection from the weather.

The interior presents an aspect quite as forbidding;—the floors are simply the naked ground, —chairs and tables are articles rarely met with. In case of an extra room, it is partitioned off by a thin wall of mud, communicating with its neighbor through a small window-shaped aperture, and serves the double purpose of a chamber and store-house.

A few rags, tattered blankets, or old robes, furnish beds for its inmates, who, at nightfall, stow themselves away promiscuously upon the ground or in narrow bins, and snooze their rounds despite the swarms of noxious vermin that infest them, (companions from which they are seldom free, whether sleeping or waking, —and afford them, perhaps, in greater number and variety of species than any other known people.)

But before the picture is complete, we must be indulged in a brief sketch of their kitchen economy.

Knives, forks, spoons, and plates, seldom grace the board of a Mexican in common circumstances. A single pot of earth, a knife, two or three trenchers, and as many water-gourds, constitute almost the entire kitchen furniture of the lower classes;—a kind of gruel (*tolle*) made by stirring a few handfuls of flour into boiling water or milk, is their principal subsistence.

Meat finds no place upon their larder, —it being an article too costly for ordinary food, as the sheep and cattle of the country are owned by the wealthy, and by their exorbitant demands placed beyond the means of the commoner. Wood too, being two rials (25 cents) per mule-load, is seldom used in the large towns for other than culinary purposes.

During the winter months, these filthy wretches are seen, day after day, basking at the sunny side of their huts, and bestowing upon each other certain friendly offices connected with the head, wherein the swarming populace of the pericranium are had in alternate requisition. The entire business of the country is in the hands of the rich, upon whom the laboring classes are mainly dependant for support; and, as a natural consequence, the rich know no end to their treasures, nor the poor to their poverty.

The common laborer obtains only from four to six dollars per month, out of which he must feed and clothe himself. In case he runs in debt beyond his means, he is necessitated by law to serve for the required amount, at two dollars per month; —thus, once in debt, it is almost impossible ever to extricate himself.

But a thing adding still further to his load of misfortunes is the high price set upon the necessaries and comforts of life. This ranges as follows: coffee, from 37 1/2 to 50 cts. per lb.; sugar, from 18 to 25 cts. per do.; calico, from 25 cts. to \$1 per yd.; domestic, 25 to 50 cts.; broadcloths, from \$10 to \$20, and every thing else in proportion.

Under such circumstances, it is scarcely marvellous that we find the Mexican in his present low state of degradation.

Having faintly depicted the real condition of a large majority of the degenerate inhabitants of New

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Mexico, it will be expected of me to say something of their intelligence and morality; and here a still more revolting task awaits my effort.

Intelligence is confined almost exclusively to the higher classes, and the poor "palavro" comes in for a very diminutive share.

Education is entirely controlled by the priests, who make use of their utmost endeavors to entangle the minds of their pupils in the meshes of superstition and bigotry. The result of this may be plainly stated in a few words:

Superstition and bigotry are universal,— all, both old and young, being tied down to the disgusting formalities of a religion that manifests itself in little else than senseless parade and unmeaning ceremony, —while a large majority can neither read nor write.

These conservators of intelligence and morals are often as sadly deficient in either as those they assume to teach. Gambling, swearing, drinking, Sabbath-breaking, and sundry other vices, are the too frequent concomitants of their practice;— under such instructors, who can fail to foresee the attendant train of evils? The abject condition of the people favors the impress of unsound instruction and deteriorating example, reducing public morals to a very low ebb.

Property and life are alike unsafe, and a large proportion of the whole community are little other than thieves and robbers. Profanity is their common language. In their honesty, integrity, and good faith, as a general thing, no reliance should be placed. They are at all times ready to betray their trust whenever a sufficient inducement is presented.

With the present of a few dollars, witnesses may be readily obtained to swear to anything; and a like bonus placed in the hands of the Alcaldi will generally secure the required judgment, however much at variance with the true merits of the cause.

Thus, justice becomes a mere mockery, and crime stalks forth at noonday, unawed by fear of punishment, and unrebuked by public opinion and practice.

But fear, in most cases, exercises a far more controlling influence over them than either gratitude or favor. They may be ranked with the few exceptions in the family of man who cannot endure good treatment. To manage them successfully, they must needs be held in continual restraint, and kept in their place by force, if necessary, —else they will become haughty and insolent.

As servants, they are excellent, when properly trained, but are worse than useless if left to themselves.

In regard to the Mexican women, it would be unfair to include them in the preceding summary. The ladies present a striking contrast to their countryman in general character, other than morals. They are kind and affectionate in their disposition, mild and affable in their deportment, and ever ready to administer to the necessities of others. But, on the score of virtue and common chastity, they are sadly deficient; while ignorance and superstition are equally predominant.

One of the prime causes in producing this deplorable state of things may be attributed to that government policy which confines the circulating medium of the country within too narrow limits, and thus throws the entire business of the country into the hands of the capitalist.

A policy like this must ever give to the rich the moneyed power, while it drains from the pockets of the poor man and places him at the mercy of haughty lordlings, who, taking advantage of his necessity, grant him but the scanty pittance for his services they in tender compassion see fit to bestow.

The higher classes have thus attained the supreme control, and the commoners must continue

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

to cringe and bow to their will. In this manner the latter have, by degrees, lost all ambition and self-respect, —and, in degradation, are only equalled by their effeminacy.

Possessed of little moral restraint, and interested in nothing but the demands of present want, they abandon themselves to vice, and prey upon one another and those around them.

Acting upon the principle, that “necessity knows no law,” they know no law for necessity, and help themselves without compunction to whatever chance throws in their way.

To this we may also look for a reason why the entire country is so infested with banded robbers, that scour it continually in quest of plunder. Mankind are naturally vicious; and, when necessity drives them to wrong for the procurement of a bare subsistence, they are not slow to become adepts in the practice of evil.

A few miles to the southeast of Taos, is a large village of Pueblos, or civilized Indians. These are far superior to their neighbors in circumstances, morals, civil regulations, character, and all the other distinguishing traits of civilization.

This race are of the genuine Mexican stock, and retain many of their ancient customs, though nominally Catholic in their religion.

Cherishing a deep-rooted animosity towards their conquerors, they only wait a favorable opportunity to re-assert their liberty.

They live in houses built of stone and earth, and cultivate the ground for subsistence, —own large herds of cattle, horses, and sheep, —while their women spin and weave, with no small pretensions to skill.

Among their peculiarities is the belief, still entertained by many of them, that Montezuma, their former emperor, will yet return from the Spirit Land, and, placing himself at the head of his people, enable them to overcome the despoilers of his ancient dominions.

In this strange faith a fire was kept burning without intermission, from the death of Montezuma till within ten years past, (a period of nearly three centuries,) as a beacon-light to mark the place for his appearing.

This fire was sustained by an ancient order of priests ministering at a temple of unknown age, the ruins of which, it is said, are yet to be seen two miles back from St. Miguel, in a very good state of preservation. By verbal descriptions received from those who have visited them, I am led to infer that they afford many curious and interesting evidences of Mexican grandeur and tend to shed much light upon their former history and religion.

The sculpture is said to represent men and animals of different kinds, in many strange varieties of shape and posture; among them are beasts, birds, and reptiles, some of which are of unknown species.

The workmanship is rather rude and without much regard to uniformity or proportion of parts, yet possessing a wild beauty and harmony peculiar to itself alone, that at once strikes the beholder with feelings of pleasing wonder.

I had cherished the intention of visiting personally these strange relics of the past, but was induced to defer it for a more convenient opportunity than the present; and, finally, from my subsequent connection with the Texans, I abandoned it altogether.

The Pueblos number a population of several thousand, and are scattered over a considerable extent of territory. They bestow much attention to the inculcation of good morals in the minds of their children; and, in portraying the pernicious effects of evil-doing, frequently admonish them

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

in a quaint and expressive manner, —” If you do thus and so, you will become as bad as a Spaniard!”—This seems to constitute, in their opinion, the grand climax of everything vile and degrading.

They are represented as humane and brave, and strictly honest and upright in their dealings. Their women too are chaste and virtuous, and in this respect present a very favorable contrast to their fairer and more beautiful sisters of Spanish extraction.

A small party from a trading establishment on the waters of Green river, who had visited Taos for the procurement of a fresh supply of goods, were about to return, and I availed myself of the occasion to make one of their number.

On the 7th of October we were under way. Our party consisted of three Frenchmen and five Spaniards, under the direction of a man named Roubideau, formerly from St. Louis, Mo. Some eight pack-mules, laden at the rate of two hundred and fifty pounds each, conveyed a quantity of goods; these headed by a guide followed in Indian file, and the remainder of the company mounted on horseback brought up the rear.

Crossing the del Norte, we soon after struck into a large trail bearing a westerly course; following which, on the 13th inst. we crossed the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains by a feasible pass at the southern extremity of the Sierra de Anahuac range, and found ourselves upon the waters of the Pacific.

Six days subsequent, we reached Roubideau's Fort, at the forks of the Uintah, having passed several large streams in our course, as well as the two principal branches which unite to form the Colorado. This being the point of destination, our journey here came to a temporary close.

The intermediate country, from Taos to the Uintah, is generally very rough and diversified with rich valleys, beautiful plateaux, (tierras templadas,) arid prairies, sterile plains, (llanos,) and denuded mountains.

We usually found a sufficiency of timber upon the streams, as well as among the hills, where frequent groves of pinion, cedar, and pine lent an agreeable diversity to the scene. Game appeared in great abundance nearly the whole route, — especially antelope and deer.

The prevailing rock consisted of several specimens of sandstone, puddingstone, and granite, with limestone, (fossiliferous, bituminous and argillaceous,) and basalt.

This territory is owned by the Utahs and Navijo Indians.

The former of these tribes includes four or five divisions, and inhabits the country laying between the Rio del Norte, the Great Salt Lake, and the vast desert to the southward of it. These different fractions are known as the Taos, Pa-utah, Digger, and Lake Utahs, numbering in all a population of fifteen thousand or more, and exhibiting many peculiarities of character and habits distinct from each other.

The Taos Utahs are a brave and warlike people, located upon the del Norte a short distance to the northwest of Taos. These subsist principally by hunting, but raise large numbers of horses. They are generally treacherous and ill-disposed, making alike troublesome neighbors to the Spaniards and dangerous opponents to the whites, whenever an opportunity is presented.

The Pa-utahs and Lake Utahs occupy the territory lying south of the Snakes, and upon the waters of the Colorado of the west, and south of the Great Salt Lake.

These Indians are less warlike in their nature, and more friendly in their disposition, than the Taos Utahs. The persons and property of whites, visiting them for trade or other purposes, are

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

seldom molested; and all having dealings with them, so far as my information extends, unite to give them a good character.

They rarely go to war, and seem content to enjoy the blessings of peace, and follow the chase within the limits of their own hunting grounds.

The Diggers or rather a small portion of them, are a division of the Utah nation, inhabiting a considerable extent of the barren country directly southwest of the Great Salt Lake. They are represented as the most deplorably situated, perhaps, of the whole family of man, in all that pertains to the means of subsistence and the ordinary comforts of life.

The largest (and in fact, almost the only) game found within their territory, is a very small species of rabbit, whose skins sewed together constitute their entire clothing. The soil is too barren for cultivation, sparsely timbered, and but illy supplied with water. The consequence of these accumulated disadvantages is, that its unfortunate inhabitants are left to gather a miserable substitute for food from insects, roots, and the seeds of grass and herbs.

In the summer months they lay in large supplies against the approach of winter, —ants furnishing an important item in the strange collection.

These insects abound in great numbers, and are caught by spreading a dampened skin, or fresh-peeled bark, over their hills, which immediately attracts the inquisitive denizens to its surface; when filled, the lure is carefully removed and its adherents shaken into a tight sack, where they are confined till dead, —they are then thoroughly sun-dried, and laid away for use.

In this manner they are cured by the bushel. The common way of eating them is in an uncooked state. These degraded beings live in holes dug in the sand near some watercourse, or in rudely constructed lodges of absinthe, where they remain in a semi-dormant, inactive state the entire winter, —leaving their lowly retreats only, now and then, at the urgent calls of nature, or to warm their burrows by burning some of the few scanty combustibles which chance may afford around them.

In the spring they creep from their holes, not like bear-fattened from a long repose—but poor and emaciated, with barely flesh enough to hide their bones, and so enervated, from hard fare and frequent abstinence, that they can scarcely move.

So habituated are they to this mode of life from constant inurement, they appear to have no conception of a better one.

Their ideas and aspirations are as simple as their fare. Give them an occasional rabbit, with an abundance of ants, seeds, and roots, and they are content to abide in their desert home and burrow like the diminutive animal they hunt.

They entertain great dread of the whites, whose power to do them harm they have learned on several occasions by bitter experience. These painful lessons have generally been inculcated as follows: impelled by hunger, these miserable creatures have sometimes attempted to kill the animals of trapping parties; and the trappers, in order to prevent a repetition of such occurrences, have been accustomed to shoot down their rude assailants without mercy.

Since the practice of this summary mode of chastisement has obtained, those able to run will flee with the utmost consternation on the approach of a party of whites, —leaving the feeble and infirm in the rear, who employ their most piteous supplications and moving entreaties for mercy. These Indians possess a capacity for improvement, whenever circumstances favor them. I have seen several, both of men and women, taken from among them while young, who, under proper

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

instruction, had made rapid progress, and even disclosed a superiority of intellect, compared with like examples from other nations, — a fact contributing much to prove that mankind need only to be placed in like conditions by birth and education to stand upon the same common level.

Most of them are represented as inoffensive in their habits and character, — never going to war, and rarely molesting any one that passes through their country.

Their arms are clubs, with small bows and arrows made of reeds — affording but a poor show of resistance to rifles, and a dozen mountaineers are rendered equal to a full army of such soldiers.

The Navijos occupy the country between the del Norte and the Sierra Anahuac, situated upon the Rio Chama and Puerco, — from thence extending along the Sierra de los Mimbros, into the province of Sonora.

They are a division of the ancient Mexicans that have never yet fully succumbed to Spanish domination, and still maintain against the conquerors of their country an obstinate and uncompromising warfare.

Like their ancestors, they possess a civilization of their own. Most of them live in houses built of stone, and cultivate the ground, — raising vegetables and grain for a subsistence. They also grow large quantities of horses, cattle, and sheep — make butter and cheese, and spin and weave

The blankets manufactured by these Indians are superior in beauty of color, texture, and durability, to the fabrics of their Spanish neighbors. I have frequently seen them so closely woven as to be impervious to water, and even serve for its transportation.

The internal regulations of this tribe are represented, by those more intimately acquainted with them, as in strict accordance with the welfare of the whole community. Lewdness is punished by a public exposure of the culprit; dishonesty is held in check by suitable regulations; industry is encouraged by general consent, and hospitality by common practice.

In their warfare with the Spaniards, they frequently exhibit a strange mixture of humanity and ludicrous barbarity.

They never kill women or children when in their power, but retain them as prisoners. The men, however, are invariably dispatched.

But in the latter, a comedy not unfrequently precedes the tragedy which closes the scene. Taking their cue from the passionate fondness of the Spaniards for dancing, at times, when any one of these unfortunate wretches falls into their power, they form a ring around him, and provided with switches, compel him to dance until from exhaustion he can do so no longer, after which he is unfeelingly butchered. His cruel tormentors continue singing, as they force him to dance his own death dirge, and laugh at his faltering steps.

As warriors they are brave and daring, and make frequent and bold excursions into the Spanish settlements, driving off vast herds of cattle, horses, and sheep, and spreading terror and dismay on every side. As diplomatists, in imitation of their neighbors, they make and break treaties whenever interest or inclination prompts them.

The Navijo country is shut in by high mountains, inaccessible from without, except by limited passes, through narrow defiles well situated for defence on the approach of an invading foe.

Availing themselves of these natural advantages, they have continued to maintain their ground against fearful odds, nor have they ever suffered the Spaniards to set foot within their territory as permanent conquerors.

The valleys of the Chama and its tributaries are said to be unrivalled in beauty, and possessed of a

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

delightful climate, as well as an exuberant fertility of soil. In these valleys winter is comparatively unknown and vegetation attains an extraordinary size. The mountains abound with game, and are rich in all kinds of minerals. Some of the most valuable gold mines in Mexico are supposed to be held by the Navijos. I have conversed with several Americans who have travelled to considerable extent in the territory of these Indians, and all unite to speak of it in most flattering terms.

The Catholics maintain numerous missions among them, and have succeeded in propagating their peculiar religious notions to some extent, notwithstanding their continued hostilities with the Spaniards.

The Navijos are generally friendly to the Americans visiting them; but were formerly much more so than at present. This partial estrangement may be attributed to the depredations of a party of Americans, under the lead of one Kirker, who were employed by the governments of Santa Fe and Chihuahua, to oppose their incursions. This was done with great success — the mercenaries despoiling their property, butchering their warriors, and bearing off men, women, and children, as captives to be sold into slavery.

CHAPTER XXII.

Uintah trade. Snake Indians; their country and character. Description of Upper California. The Eastern Section. Great Salt Lake and circumjacent country. Desert. Digger country, and regions south. Fertility of soil. Prevailing rock and minerals. Abundance of wild fruit, grain, and game. Valley of the Colorado. Magnificent scenery. Valleys of the Uintah and other rivers. Vicinity of the Gila. Face of the country, soil &c. Sweet spots. Mildness of climate, and its healthiness. The natives. Sparsity of inhabitants. No government. All about the Colorado and Gila rivers. Abundance of fish. Trade in pearl oyster-shells. Practicable routes from the United States.

IN preceding remarks relative to regions coming under present observation, I have confined myself to generalities, for the reason, that less interest is felt by the American public, in a minute description of the rivers, mountains, valleys, etc., so far within the limits of Mexico, than in one connected with U. S. Territories; consequently the reader must rest contented with greater conciseness in subsequent pages, until he is again introduced to the interesting localities of his own country.

Roubideau's Fort is situated on the right bank of the Uintah, in lat. 40° 27' 45" north, long. 109° 56' 42" west. The trade of this post is conducted principally with the trapping parties frequenting the Big Bear, Green, Grand, and the Colorado rivers, with their numerous tributaries, in search of fur-bearing game.

A small business is also carried on with the Snake and Utah Indians, living in the neighborhood of this establishment. The common articles of dealing are horses, with beaver, otter, deer, sheep, and elk skins, in barter for ammunition, fire-arms, knives, tobacco, beads, awls, &c.

The Utahs and Snakes afford some of the largest and best finished sheep and deer skins I ever beheld — a single skin sometimes being amply sufficient for common sized pantaloons. These skins are dressed so neatly as frequently to attain a snowy whiteness, and possess the softness of velvet. They may be purchased for the trifling consideration of eight or ten charges of ammunition each, or two or three awls, or any other thing of proportional value. Skins are very abundant in these parts, as the natives, owing to the scarcity of buffalo, subsist entirely upon small game, which is

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

found in immense quantities. This trade is quite profitable. The articles procured so cheaply, when taken to Santa Fe and the neighboring towns, find a ready cash market at prices ranging from one to two dollars each.

The Snakes, or Shoshones, live in the eastern part of Oregon and in Upper California, upon the waters of the Great Snake and Bear rivers, and the two streams which unite to form the Colorado. They are friendly to the whites, and less disposed to appropriate to their own use everything they can lay hands on, than some other tribes. They seldom go to war, though by no means deficient in bravery, —frequently resisting with signal success the hostile encroachments of the Sioux and Chyennes. Rich in horses and game, they likewise include within their territory many interesting and beautiful localities, as well as some extraordinary natural curiosities.

One division of this tribe is identified with the Diggers in habits and mode of living, —the same causes operating in each case to produce the same results. Another division is identified with the Crows, and yet a third one with the Utahs, —numbering in all not far from twelve thousand. Being less migratory in their habits, and more tractable in their disposition than those of their eastern brethren demontés, they are far more susceptible of civilization and improvement; though, as yet, nothing has been done for their benefit. The missionary might here find an encouraging field for his philanthropic exertions.

With the passage of the mountain chain, noticed in the preceding chapter, the reader is inducted to the northeastern extremity of California. My intention of visiting the interior of this interesting province of the Mexican Republic was frustrated through the lack of a convenient opportunity for its prosecution; but, as the public mind, during the past few years, has been so much occupied with subjects connected with this country, I am unwilling to pass on without presenting a brief description of it, obtained from sources upon which full reliance may be placed.

The following sketch, coupled with my own observations, is carefully arranged from information derived from individuals encountered during my stay in this country, some of whom had travelled over most of it, and others had resided for years within its confines.

On referring to the map, a large extent of country will be noticed, bounded upon the north by Oregon, east by the Rocky Mountains, south by the Lower Province and Gulf of California, together with the Rio Gila which separates it from Sonora, and west by the Pacific, situated between parallels 32° and 42° north latitude, which is now known as Upper California.

This embraces an extent of nearly 450,000 square miles, and is walled in for the most part upon the north and east by lofty mountains, impassable except at certain points; while upon the west and south its vast stretch of seacoast, navigable rivers, and commodious harbors open it to the commercial intercourse of all nations.

The entire country is more or less broken by hills and mountains, many of them towering to a height of several thousand feet above the level of the sea, whose summits, clothed with eternal snow, overlook the valleys of perennial verdure that so frequently lie around them. The most noted of these is the California, or Cascade range, which, by intersecting the province from north to south, separates it into two grand natural divisions, properly denominated Eastern and Western California.

The above range, though higher than the principal chain of the Rocky Mountains, is passable at various points. It is situated inland from the Pacific at distances varying from one hundred and fifty to four hundred miles, tracing its way with diminished altitude adown the isthmus that forms

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the Lower Province.

Owing to its locality, a description of the Eastern Division seems to come naturally the first in order.

This section is watered principally by the Colorado, Gila, and Bear rivers, with their numerous tributaries, and has also several lakes in various parts of it, prominent among which is the Great Salt Lake near the northern boundary.

This large body of water is nearly one hundred and fifty miles long by eighty broad; and, though the receptacle of several large rivers, has no visible outlet, and hence is supposed by many persons to hold subterranean connection with the Ocean. Its waters are so strongly impregnated with salt, incrustations of that mineral are frequently found upon its shores.

Towards the northern extremity an island makes its appearance, from whose centre a solitary mountain rises in proud majesty for nearly a thousand feet above the circumfluent waters; its craggy sides, naked and desolate, with whitened surface, now inspire the beholder with feelings of awe, while its bounding streamlets, skirted with verdant openings and diminutive trees, strike the eye pleasantly, as the sheen of their waters falls upon the vision and engenders commingled sensations of delight and admiration.

Viewed from the northern shore, this island seems not more than twelve miles distant; a deception caused by the extraordinary purity of the atmosphere. Several attempts to reach it, however, by means of canoes, have proved futile, owing to its great distance the dangerous state of navigation.

It is thought by many persons that still other islands of larger dimensions occupy the centre of the lake, and not without some show of reason; there is ample room for them, and, although this vast body of water has been circum-traversed per shore, it has never yet been otherwise explored by man.[42]

The largest of the rivers that find their discharge in this vast saline reservoir is the Big Bear, a stream which rises near the South Pass, and, following its meanderings, is about two hundred and fifty or three hundred miles in length. It rolls leisurely on with its deep sluggish volume of waters, measuring some two hundred yards wide at its mouth, and deposits its willing tribute into the bosom of this miniature ocean, while four or five other fresh water affluents from the east and south make a like debouche without increasing its size or diminishing its saltiness.

The valleys of these streams possess a very rich soil and are well timbered. The landscape adjacent to the lake is diversified with marshes, plains, highlands, and mountains, affording every variety of scenery. The soil is generally fertile and prolific in all kinds of vegetation as well as fruits indigenous to the country.

Timber also abounds in sufficient quantity for all necessary purposes Game too is found in great abundance, particularly deer and elk; and, taken as a whole, the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake holds out strong inducements to settlers, and is capable of sustaining, as it will no doubt ultimately possess, a dense population.

Forty or fifty miles west and south from this the traveller is inducted to the vast expanse of sand and gravel, lying between lat. 35° and 40° north, which is almost entirely destitute of both wood and water.

This reach is upwards of three hundred miles in length and nearly two hundred broad. It is impassable at all seasons of the year on account of its extreme dryness and lack of suitable nourish-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ment for animals; and even a trip from Santa Fe to Western California, by the regular trail, is rarely undertaken except in the fall and spring months, at which time the ground is rendered moist by annual rains and the transient streams venture to emerge from their sandy hiding places.

The Digger country, of which I have taken occasion to speak in connection with its unfortunate inhabitants, lies upon the eastern and southern extremities of this desolate waste, and presents an aspect little less forbidding.

As a general thing the landscape is highly undulating and varied with conical hills, some of which are mere heaps of naked sand or sun-baked clay of a whitish hue; others, vast piles of granitic rock, alike destitute of vegetation or timber; while yet others are clothed with a scanty herbage and occasional clusters of stunted pines and cedars.

Now and then a diminutive vega intervenes in favorable contrast to the surrounding desolation, greeting the beholder with its rank grasses, mingled with blushing prairie-flowers. But such beauty-spots are by no means frequent.

The watercourses are mere beds of sand, skirted with sterile bottoms of stiff clay and gravel, and afford streams only at their heads, while, for nearly the entire year, both dew and rain are unknown. Vegetation, consequently, is sparse and unpromising, and the whole section of necessity remains depopulated of game.

It is needless to say such a country can never become inhabited by civilized man.

Between the Colorado river and the California mountains, south of the cheerless desert above described, the prospect is far more flattering. The hills are of varied altitude and are usually clothed with grass and timber; while comparatively few of them are denuded to any great extent. The landscape is highly picturesque and pleasingly diversified with mountains, hills, plains, and valleys, which afford every variety of climate and soil.

This section is principally watered by the Rio Virgen and lateral streams; and, though little or no rain falls in the summer months, the copiousness of nightly dews in some measure make up for this defect.

The superfiice of the valleys ranges from one to three feet in depth, and generally consists of sedimentary deposits and the debris of rocks, borne from the neighboring hills by aqueous attrition, which, mingled with a dark-colored loam compounded of clay and sand, and various organic and vegetable remains, unite to form a soil of admirable fecundity, rarely equal led by that of any other country.

The hills, however, are unfit for cultivation to any great extent, owing to their common sterility as well as the abundance of rock in many parts; yet they might serve a good purpose for grazing lands.

The prevailing rock is said to be sandstone, limestone, mica slate, trap, and basalt; the minerals, copper, iron, coal, salt, and sulphur.

Game exists in great abundance, among which are included antelope, deer, (black and white-tailed,) elk, bear, and immense quantities of waterfowls; large herds of wild horses and cattle, also, are not unfrequently met with.

Timber is usually a scarce article, which constitutes one grand fault in the entire section of Eastern California. This evil, however, is partially remedied by a mild climate, and only a comparatively small amount of wood is required for building, fencing, and fuel.

Fruits of all kinds indigenous to the country, particularly grapes, are found in great profusion, and

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

those native only to the torrid and temperate zones may also be successfully cultivated.

Among the grasses, grains, and vegetables growing spontaneously in some parts, are red-clover and oats, (which attain a most luxuriant bulk,) flax and onions; the latter not unfrequently equaling in size the proudest products of the far-farmed gardens of Wethersfield.

We are now naturally led back to the Colorado, and the country lying between it and the Sierra de los Mimbros range, on the east. This division embraces much choice land in its valleys, but the high grounds and hills present much of the dryness and sterility incident to the grand prairies. The valley of the Colorado averages from five to fifteen miles broad, for a distance of nearly two hundred miles above its mouth.

Further on, the passage of the river through high mountains and *tierras templadas* (table lands) presents an almost continuous gorge of vertical and overhanging rocks, that, closing in upon the subfluent stream at a varied height of from fifteen to six hundred or even a thousand feet, afford only an occasional diminutive opening to its waters.

This vast cañon is said to extend for five or six hundred miles, interrupting the river with numerous cataracts, cascades and rapids, and opposing to its swift current the sharp fragments of severed rocks thrown from the dizzy eminences, as breakers, by which to lash the gurgling waters and depict the more than tempest-tossed foam and maddened fury of old ocean!

In some places the impending rocks approach so near to each other from above, a person may almost step across the vast chasm opening to view the foaming river, half obscured in perpendicular distance and dimmed by the eternal shadows of thrice vertical walls.

This superbly magnificent scene continues nearly the entire extent, from the head of the Colorado valley to the boundary between Oregon and California.

The table lands and mountains on both sides, as a whole, disclose a dreary prospect. Now, the traveller meets with a wide reach of naked rock paving the surface to the exclusion of grass, shrubs, or tree, — now, a narrow fissure, filled with detritus and earth, sustains a few stunted pines, now, a spread of hard sun-baked clay refuses root to aught earth-growing, now, a small space of saline efflorescences obtrudes upon the vision its snowy incrustations, alike repulsive to vegetable life — then, comes a broad area clothed with thin coarse grass; an opening vallon next greets the eye in the generous growth of its herbage and the fertility of its soil; a beautiful grove of stately pines, cedars, and pinions, rises in the back ground; a still larger, more expansive, and thrice lovely valley, skirts the banks of some bounding stream, and delights the fancy with its smiling flowers and luxuriant verdure.

Here, a huge mountain rears itself in majesty—now, piling heaps upon heaps of naked granite, limestone, sandstone, and basalt, variegated and parti-colored, —now, thickly studded with lateral pines, cedars, pinions, and hemlocks, —then, again denuded, till at last its sharpened peaks pierce the clouds while storms and tempests in their wild orgies haste to do it reverence: There, a lesser, coniform elevation of the continuous chain, is mantled in living green; while perhaps by its side, another pains the eye with the well defined lineaments of desolation.

A country of this description occupies nearly the whole interval from the two main branches of the Colorado to the dividing ridge of mountains.

The valleys of the Uintah, and several other affluents within its limits, however, are broad, fertile and tolerably well timbered. Grass continues green nearly the entire winter, and game of all kinds common to the mountains, excepting buffalo, is abundant. The valley soils are well adapted to cul-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

tivation, and might sustain a large population.

We come now to the southeastern extremity of the province, bordering upon the Rio Gila which separates it from Sonora, and lying between the Colorado and the Sierra de los Mimbros range. This stretch, though less fertile as a general thing, partakes of much the same characteristics as that upon the opposite side of the Colorado, and upon Rio Virgen, south of the Digger country, which was so fully described upon a former page. The soil, however, is not generally so sandy, and the landscape is far more rough and broken. The bottoms of the Colorado and Gila, with their tributaries, are broad, rich, and well timbered. Everything in the shape of vegetation attains a lusty size, amply evincing the exuberant fecundity of the soil producing it.

There are many sweet spots in the vicinity of both these streams, well deserving the name of earthly Edens. Man here might fare sumptuously, with one continued feast spread before him by the spontaneous products of the earth, and revel in perennial spring or luxuriate amid unfading summer.

Yet, notwithstanding the other attractions held out, game is much less plentiful in this than in other parts, —probably owing to the warmth of the climate.

Winter is unknown, and the only thing that marks its presence from that of other seasons, is a continuation of rainy and damp weather for some two or three months. All the wild fruits and grains indigenous to the country are found here in profuse abundance.

The entire Eastern Division of Upper California possesses a uniformly salubrious and healthful atmosphere. Sickness, so far as my knowledge extends, is rarely known.

The natives, for the most part, may be considered friendly, or at least, not dangerous. Some of them, in the neighborhood of the Gila and the Gulf of California are partially advanced in civilization, and cultivate the ground, raising corn, melons, pumpkins, beans, potatoes, &c.

These live in fixed habitations, constructed of wood, and coated with earth, in a conical form, much like Pawnee huts.

The condition and character of these tribes present most flattering inducements for missionary enterprise; and, should efforts for their amelioration be put forth by zealous and devoted men, (and meet with no counteracting opposition from the united influence of the Mexican Government and the narrow minded bigotry of an intolerant clergy and priest-ridden people,) a glorious fruition of their most sanguine hopes might soon be expected.

There are no settlements of either whites or Mexicans, to my knowledge, throughout the whole extent of this territory. Indians may, therefore, be considered its only inhabitants, other than the strolling parties of trappers and traders that now and then travel it, or temporarily establish themselves within its limits. Of course then the Eastern Division of Upper California must be considered without a people or a government.

The Rio Colorado rises in the U. S. territory about lat. 42° 30' north, interlocking with the head waters of the Columbia, Missouri, Platte, and Arkansas, and empties into the Gulf of California near lat. 32° north. Following its windings it is some twelve or fifteen hundred miles in length. This stream with its numerous tributaries is the only river worth naming in Eastern California, and, to a great extent, serves to water that country. Owing to the rapidity of its current and its frequent falls and cascades, the navigation is entirely destroyed, till within about one hundred miles of its mouth, at the head of tide water; from this on no further interruption occurs, and the depth is sufficient for vessels bearing several hundred tons burthen.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The Gila is properly a river of Sonora, though commonly regarded as the northern boundary of that province. It rises in the Sierra de los Mimbro, near lat.  $33^{\circ} 25'$  north, long.  $106^{\circ} 15'$  west from Greenwich, and pursues a west-southwesterly course till it discharges itself into the Bay of the Colorado, at lat.  $32^{\circ} 15'$  north, long.  $114^{\circ} 27'$  west.

Its whole length is about eight hundred miles, for most of which distance navigation is impracticable, with the exception of some forty miles or more at its mouth.

These two rivers are said to afford immense quantities of fish, especially near their confluence with the Gulf of California.

The Gulf also contains a large variety and exhaustless supplies of the finny tribe, together with several species of the crustaceous and testaceous order. Among the last named are lobsters, crabs, clams, and oysters.

Oysters are very numerous and of an excellent quality, including in variety the genuine mother pearl. A small trade in the shells of the pearl oyster is carried on with the Arapahos, Chyennes, and Sioux, by the Spaniards, which yields a very large profit, —a single shell frequently bringing from six to eight robes. These Indians make use of them for ear-ornaments, and exhibit no little taste in their shape and finish.

The eastern section of Upper California is accessible by land as well as sea from several feasible passes. through the mountain ranges forming its eastern boundary.

The best land routes for waggons from the United States is through the South Pass, —hence, to the Great Salt Lake by Bear river valley, —thence the emigrant can direct his course to any part of the country, as interest or inclination may suggest.

Another pass is afforded by way of the Santa Fe trail near lat.  $37^{\circ}$  north; this, however, is a very difficult one for waggons, and should only be travelled on horseback.

There are said to be one or two other passes further south, in reference to which I cannot speak with certainty, but am inclined to accredit their reported existence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Minerals. Western California. The Sacramento and contiguous regions. Principal rivers. Fish. Commercial advantages. Bay of San Francisco. Other Bays and Harbors. Description of the country; territory northwest of the Sacramento; Tlamath Mountains; California range and its vicinity; southern parts; timber, river-bottoms; Valleys of Sacramento, del Plumas, and Tulare; their extent, fertility, timber, and fruit; wild grain and clover, spontaneous; wonderful fecundity of soil, and its products; the productions, climate, rains, and dews; geological and mineralogical character; face of the country; its water; its healthiness; game; superabundance of cattle, horses, and sheep, their prices, &c.; beasts of prey; the inhabitants, who; Indians, their character and condition; Capital of the Province, with other towns; advantages of San Francisco; inland settlements; foreigners and Mexicans; Government; its full military strength. Remarks.

IN the preceding chapter the reader must have acquired some tangible idea of the true condition of Eastern California, with all its varied beauties and deformities; its Edens and wastes of desolation; its enchantments, and scenes of awe and terrific grandeur.

To have treated the subject more in extenso, would have trespassed upon prescribed brevity; yet, doubtless, many will regret my having said so little relative to the mineralogical character and

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

resources of that country. The truth is, comparatively little is known upon this important matter. Were I to give ear to common report, I would say there are both gold and silver, with copper, lead, and iron. But such stories are not always to be credited unless they come in a credible shape. However, it is very probable these metals do exist in various parts; and certain it is that immense beds of coal and rock-salt are afforded, with large quantities of gypsum, the truth of which is placed beyond doubt by an accumulation of testimony. With these few remarks I turn from the subject, and bring before the reader another and more interesting topic.

Following the only practicable waggon route from the U. S. to Western California, via South Pass, —thence, after bearing northwest some forty miles, by a long sweep southward around the Sierra Nevada to the Rio Sacramento, —the emigrant is taken through a succession of mountains, hills, plains, and valleys, furrowed by frequent affluents from the north; — now, sterile wastes of intervening sand; now, pleasant spreads of arable prairies; now, rugged superficies of naked rock; then, beautiful valleys arrayed in all the loveliness of perennial verdure, and profuse in vegetation of extraordinary growth, intermixed with wild-flowers of unrivalled hues and lavish fragrance, till he finally reaches his destination.

The Sacramento and its tributaries water the greater part of Western California.

This river is formed by the confluence of two large streams which rise in the Cascade Mountains, properly termed the North and South Forks the former heading near lat. 41° 43' north, long. 114° 51' west. (The South Fork is the stream defining the waggon route from the U. States, via South Pass.)

The Sacramento, measured by its windings, is about eight hundred and fifty miles in length. It receives many important auxiliaries above the junction of its two forks, which greatly increase the volume and depth of its waters. From its mouth it is said to afford a good stage of navigation for crafts of tolerable burthen, as high up as three hundred miles, —tide water setting back for one hundred and fifty miles.

Three other rivers, flowing from the southeast, have their discharge in the Bay of San Francisco. These streams are severally called the Rio del Plumas, American Fork, and Tulare.

The former derives its name from the great abundance of water-fowls which congregate upon it at all seasons of the year, so numerous and tame that the natives not unfrequently kill large quantities of them with clubs or stones as they fly through the air.

The del Plumas is said to be navigable, for boats of a light draught, till within a hundred miles of its head, —its whole length is about two hundred and fifty miles. The American Fork, or the Rio de los Americanos, is a clear and beautiful stream about one hundred and fifty miles long, emptying into the Sacramento Bay below the del Plumas, and between it and the Tulare. Owing to frequent rapids, however, its navigation is destroyed.

The Tulare is said to be four hundred miles long, and navigable for one half that distance. It is represented as watering one of the most interesting sections of Western California, and hence is considered next in importance to the Sacramento. This stream affords some of the finest localities for settlements found in the whole country.

Below the Bay of San Francisco several other small streams find their way into the Pacific, but none of them are navigable to any great extent. The principal of these empty as follows: into the Bay of Monterey, into the Ocean near Point del Esteros, Point Arguello, St. Barbara Channel, San Pedro Bay, and opposite the island of St. Clement.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Above the Bay of San Francisco, Russian river is discharged into Bodega Bay; further on, Smith's river empties into Trinidad Bay; and two other small streams find their discharge near Point St. George, a few miles below the boundary line between Oregon and California.

Smith's river is the largest stream either above or below the Bay of San Francisco, and is about two hundred miles in length, though unnavigable.

All these various rivers and their affluents are stored with innumerable supplies of delicious fish, the principal of which are salmon and salmon-trout. The Ocean too affords an exhaustless quantity of the piscatorial family, including whales, cod, and haddock, with oysters, clams, lobsters, &c. So great is the abundance of fish at certain seasons, that, with a rude seine, the natives frequently take fifteen or twenty barrels full at a single draught; fish constituting their principal subsistence. There are few, if any, countries in the world possessed of superior commercial advantages to the western section of Upper California.

True, its inland navigation is limited; yet, with an extent of nearly eight hundred miles of sea-coast, accessible at almost any point, it includes some of the finest bays and harbors ever known. Of these, for commodiousness and safety at all times, the Bay of San Francisco stands pre-eminently conspicuous.

This bay is an arm of the sea extending some forty miles or more inland, shut in, for the most part, upon each side by precipitous banks of basalt and trap, that skirt a very broken and hilly country contiguous to it. The entrance from the ocean is by an opening, a mile or more in width, through rock-formed walls, between one and two hundred feet high. A recent traveller,[43] in describing this bay, says:

"From the points forming the entrance, the sea gradually expands to some eight or ten miles in extent, from north to south, and twelve from east to west. At the extreme eastern part of the vast basin thus formed, its shores again close in abruptly, contracting so as to leave a pass of about two miles in width, which forms the entrance to a second bay of still larger dimensions. From this gorge their high rocky banks again diverge for some ten miles, when they still again contract to the narrow space of one mile, and form the passage to a third. The latter is more spacious than either before mentioned, and, formed in like manner, extends twelve miles from east to west and fifteen from north to south, affording the safest and most commodious anchorage."

There is ample water at all times for the entrance of ships of the largest class, and it is asserted confidently, that these three united bays would afford perfect safety, secure anchorage, and ample room for the fleets and navies of all nations.

Several other bays and harbors are situated along the coast, all of which, to a greater or less extent, are favorably spoken of for general safety and good anchorage.

Among the above are mentioned the Bay of Monterey, San Pedro, St. Diego, Bodega, and Trinidad. Bodega, however, is represented as being, at times, very unsafe and even dangerous.

With such extraordinary facilities for commerce, it needs no prophetic eye to foresee the position Western California is destined to assume, before many years have passed, and, from her position and natural resources, will be enabled successfully to maintain among the foremost nations of the earth-provided, always, that some other people more enterprising and enlightened than the present inert, ignorant, stupid, and mongrel race infesting it with their presence, take possession of the country, develop its energies and bring to light the full beauty of its natural loveliness.

We are now led to speak of the peculiarities of soil, landscape, scenery, climate, productions, and

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

mineral resources of this interesting country, and in so doing, I would first draw a succinct view of the territory lying between the Rio Sacramento and Oregon.

Here we find the most forbidding aspect, with one exception, of any in Western California. The soil is generally very dry and barren, and the face of the country broken and hilly. The streams of water (as in the Eastern Division) frequently sink and become lost in the sand, or force themselves into the Ocean and parent streams by percolation or subterranean passages.

In many places is presented a surface of white sun-baked clay, entirely destitute of vegetation; and in others, wide spreads of sand, alike denuded; and yet again iron-bound superficies of igneous rock.

Now and then groves of pines or firs spread their broad branches as it were to cover the nakedness of nature; while here and there a valley of greater or less extent smiles amid the surrounding desolation.

All the various streams are skirted with bottoms of arable soil, oftentimes not only large but very fertile, though perhaps unadapted to cultivation, on account of their dryness, without a resort to irrigation.

Smith's river pursues its way, for forty or fifty miles, through a wide bottom of rich soil, most admirably suited for agricultural purposes were it not for its innate aridity;—however, during the summer season, it is, to a limited extent, watered from nightly dews, which enable it to sustain a luxuriant vegetation.

Not one fourth part of the northwestern portion of this section is fit for tillage. That part contiguous to the sea-coast is sandy and far less broken than those sections less interior.

The Tlameth Mountains, pursuing a west-southwest course from Oregon, strike the coast near lat. 41° north. This range has several lofty peaks covered with perpetual snow, and shoots its collateral eminences far into the adjacent prairies.

There is one feasible pass through this chain a few miles inland from the coast, that serves well for the purpose of intercommunication with Oregon.

The less elevated parts of these mountains are frequently covered with groves of small timber and openings of grass suitable for pasturage, while intermingled with them are occasional valleys and prairillons of diminutive space, favorable to the growth of grain and vegetables. The same may be said in reference to the California chain for its whole extent, especially in the vicinity of the prairie.

Following the course of this latter ridge from north to south, we find upon both sides a reach of very broken and highly tumulous landscape, some twenty or thirty miles broad.

Near the head-waters of the Sacramento, these lands are well watered and possess a general character for fertility, producing a variety of grass, with shrubs and a few scattering trees. Below, however, they are more sterile, owing to the deficiency of water; but yet they afford numerous inviting spots. A considerable extent of country, south of the South Fork of the river above named, is arid and sterile, and has but few streams of water. It sustains, however, among its hills and in its valleys, a sparse vegetation that might be turned to a favorable account for grazing purposes. Only about one fourth of this country is adapted to other uses than stock-raising.

Further south from the head-waters of the Tulare and del Plumas, ranging between the coast and the high rolling lands skirting the base of the California Mountains to the boundary of the Lower Province, a section of gently undulating prairie, now and then varied with high hills and some

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

times mountains, affords a rich soil, generally consisting of dark, sandy loam, between the hills and in the valleys; the highlands present a superface of clay and gravel, fertilized by decomposed vegetable matter, well adapted to grazing, and about one half of it susceptible of cultivation. Timber is rather scarce, except at intervals along the watercourses and occasional groves among the hills; but along the coast dense forests are frequently found claiming trees of an enormous size.

But, one grand defect exists in its general aridity, which renders necessary a resort to frequent irrigation in the raising of other than grain products. In some parts, the abundance of small streams would cause this task to become comparatively an easy one; and the profuseness of dews in sections contiguous to the rivers in some measure answers as a substitute for rain.

The bottoms are broad and extensive, yielding not only the most extraordinary crops of clover and other grasses, but incalculable quantities of wild oats and flax of spontaneous growth, with all the wild fruits natural to the climate.

In returning to the Sacramento and the rivers which find their discharges in the Bay of San Francisco, we have before us the most interesting and lovely part of Upper California.

The largest valley in the whole country is that skirting the Sacramento and lateral streams. This beautiful expanse leads inland from the Bay of San Francisco for nearly four hundred miles, almost to the base of the California Mountains, and averages between sixty and sixty-five miles in width.

The valleys of the del Plumas and American Fork are also very large, and that of the Tulare gives an area of two hundred and fifty miles long by thirty-five broad.

These valleys are comparatively well timbered with several varieties of wood, consisting principally of white-oak, live-oak, ash, cottonwood, cherry, and willow, while the adjacent hills afford occasional forests of pine, cedar, fir, pinion, and spruce.

The soil as well as the climate is well adapted to the cultivation of all kinds of grain and vegetables produced in the United States, and many of the varied fruits of the torrid and temperate zones can be successfully reared in one and the same latitude.

Among the grains, grasses, and fruits indigenous to the country are wheat, rye, oats, flax, and clover, (white and red,) with a great variety of grapes, all of which are said to grow spontaneously. Wild oats frequently cover immense spreads of bottom and prairie land, sometimes to an extent of several thousand acres, which resemble in appearance the species common to the United States. They usually grow to a height of between two and three feet, though they often reach a height of seven feet.

The wild clover of these valleys is much like the common red, and, in some places, is afforded in great abundance. It attains a usual height of two feet and a half, though it often measures twice that height—standing as thick as it can well grow.

Forty bushels per acre is said to be the average wheat crop, but sixty and even one hundred bushels have been grown upon a like spot of ground. This grain generally reaches its maturity in three or four months from the time of sowing.

Corn yields well, and affords an average of from fifty to sixty bushels per acre, without farther attention from the time of planting till picking. Potatoes, onions, beets, carrots, &c., may be produced in any quantity with very little trouble. Tobacco has also been raised by some of the inhabitants with most flattering success.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Perhaps, no country in the world is possessed of a richer or more fruitful soil, or one capable of yielding a greater variety of productions, than the valleys of the Sacramento and its tributaries. The articles previously noticed are more or less common to the bottoms and valleys of other sections. Grapes abound in the vicinity of most of the creeks, which afford generous wines and delicious raisins in immense quantities.

The climate is so mild that fires are needed at no season of the year for other than cooking purposes. By aid of irrigation, many kinds of vegetables are fresh-grown at any time, while two crops of some species of grain may be produced annually.

Flowers are not unfrequently in full bloom in mid winter, and all nature bears a like smiling aspect. In this, however, we of course refer only to the low-lands and valleys.

The traveller at any season of the year may visit at his option the frosts and snows of eternal winter, or feast his eyes upon the verdure and beauty of perennial spring, or glut his taste amid the luxuriant abundance and rich maturity of unending summer, or indulge his changeful fancy in the enjoyment of a magnificent variety of scenery as well as of climate, soil, and productions.

The only rains incident to this country fall during the months of December, January, February, and March, which constitute the winter; at other times rain is very rarely known to fall. Perhaps, for one third of the four months before named, the clouds pour down their torrents without intermission; the remaining two thirds afford clear and delightful weather.

During the wet season the ground in many parts becomes so thoroughly saturated with moisture, particularly in the valley of the Sacramento, that, by the aid of copious dews to which the country is subject, crops may be raised without the trouble of irrigation; though its general aridity constitutes the greatest objection to California.

Of its geological and mineralogical character little is yet known. The prevailing rock is said to be sandstone, mica slate, granite, trap, basalt, puddingstone, and limestone, with occasional beds of gypsum. Among its minerals as commonly reported, are found gold, silver, iron, coal, and a variety of salts. The mineral resources of the country have not been as yet fully investigated to any great extent, but the mountains in different parts, are supposed to be rich in hidden stores.

To speak of Western California as a whole, it may be pronounced hilly, if not mountainous, and about two thirds of it is probably fit for agricultural purposes.

The creeks are frequently immured by precipitous walls of several hundred feet in altitude, that, expanding here and there, give place to beautiful valleys of variable width, while most of the low-lands upon their banks are skirted by continuous and abrupt acclivities leading to the high prairies, table lands, and mountains contiguous to them. Their currents are generally clear and rapid, flowing over beds of sand, pebbles, and rock, and afford wholesome and delicious water.

The air is almost invariably pure and free from the noxious exhalations common to many countries, which contributes greatly to render the climate uniformly healthy—a character which it has hitherto sustained by common report.

Some travellers, however, speak of large Indian villages in different parts, deserted and in ruins, whose sites are bestrown with human bones and skulls, as if the entire population had been swept off by the frightful ravages of deadly pestilence, and so suddenly that not a soul was left to bury their dead; and hence they suppose the country occasionally subject to devastating sicknesses.

The above, however, may with equal propriety be charged to the account of war.

Game is quite plentiful in the Western Division of Upper California, and in many places extreme-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ly abundant, especially in the mountains near the head-waters of the Tulare and Sacramento rivers.

Among the different varieties are enumerated deer, (black-tailed and white-tailed,) elk, antelope, goats, bear, (black, red, and grizzly,) beaver, geese, brants, ducks, and grouse, with wild horses and cattle; buffalo are unknown to the Province.

Never was a country better adapted to stock-raising than is this, and perhaps none, according to the number of its inhabitants, so abundantly supplied with horses, cattle, and sheep. The former of these abound in countless numbers, whenever a white man or a Spanio-Mexican makes it his residence. A single individual frequently owns from eight to ten thousand head of horses and mules; and, not rarely, even as high as fifteen or twenty thousand.

These animals are very hardy and trim-built, and only a trifle smaller than those common to the United States. I have seen many of them equally as large as the American breed, and, as a general thing, they are more durable under fatigue and hardship.

The choicest animals from a band of several thousand may be purchased for ten dollars, and the ordinary price for prime selections ranges from three to five dollars, while mares may be procured for two dollars per head.

Cattle are equally plenty, at prices varying from two to four dollars per head.

Stock is raised without trouble, as the abundance of grass affords pasturage the entire season, nor is necessary a resort to either hay or house. In fact, both cattle and horses not only thrive best but are fattest in the winter season, owing to the absence of flies and insects, as well as the partial freshness of vegetation.

The common method of stock-raising is by turning them loose into the bottoms and prairies, accompanied by a herdsman, or two, or more, a la Mexican, (according to the size of the band,) where they are left to increase, and no further care is bestowed upon them.

Sheep too are raised in vast numbers after the above manner. They increase with astonishing rapidity, and usually produce their young twice a year. Their wool, however, is much coarser than that grown in the United States. This latter fact is accounted for by their inferiority of breed, though their flesh is sweeter and better than the American mutton.

Wolves are said to be numerous and troublesome, and not unfrequently prove a source of great annoyance to the inhabitants by destroying their sheep, calves, colts, and even full-grown cattle and horses.

Among them are included the black, gray, and prairie wolf. The black wolf is the largest and most ferocious, equalling the size of our common cur-dog.

Foxes are also said to be numerous, but are of a diminutive size. The above are the only beasts of prey worth naming.

The foregoing summary leads us to notice the present state of the country, its inhabitants, government, and military strength.

Upper California at the present time is in the united possession of the Indians, Mexicans, English, and French; not as rulers, but as land-holders and inhabitants.

The Indians are supposed to number some thirty or forty thousand souls, and are scattered over the entire Province. Excepting the Diggers, the Utahs, the Snakes, and those residing in the vicinity of the Sierra Nevada and the Tlameth Mountains, they are quite similar in character and condition to those noticed as being residents of the Gila and adjacent regions.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

They are mild and timorous, and incapable of opposing any very serious impediment to the progress of settlements. Fifteen Americans, armed with good rifles, are equal to one or two hundred of such enemies in ordinary cases.

The Catholics have twenty or more missions among them, the effect of which has been not so much to advance their civilization, or convert them to the truths of Christianity, as to render them the slaves of a corrupt and vicious priesthood.

Monterey is the present capital of Upper California. It is beautifully situated upon a gently undulating plain, in full view of the Ocean and harbor, and contains about one thousand inhabitants. Its houses are constructed of adobies, after the Mexican fashion.

South of this town are several other places of considerable importance along the coast, viz: San Diego, San Gabriel, and San Barbara; all of which are well located for commercial purposes.

A town called the Pueblo is situated upon a small river that debouches between San Diego and San Gabriel. This town is a few miles removed from the coast, and is said to be the largest one in California. It contains a population of about fifteen hundred, and is the grand centripot of overland intercourse with New Mexico.

Above Monterey are two other towns, bearing the names of Sonoma and San Francisco.

The latter is situated upon the bay of that name, and, from its superior commercial advantages, is destined to become one of the largest and most important business cities upon the western coast of the American continent. Possessed of one of the finest and most commodious harbors in the world, (emphatically the harbor of harbors,) and located at the mouth of a large navigable river, that waters a vast expanse of country unsurpassed in fertility, what should hinder it from assuming that commanding position designed for it by nature?

It is built after the English manner, and its inhabitants, numbering about two hundred, are principally American, English, and French, with a few Mexicans and Indians.

There are also several settlements upon the Sacramento and other rivers, consisting mostly of foreigners.

The Catholic missions are generally the nucleus of small Mexican and Indian villages, and derive their support from agricultural pursuits.

Aside from these, the country is entirely devoid of population other than wild beasts and uncultivated savages. The white inhabitants are computed at one thousand or more, and are generally Americans; while between ten and twelve thousand Mexicans curse the country with their presence, and disgrace the Edens they possess.

The government of California has been, like all Mexican governments, very lax and inefficient. It was but little other than a despotism, or, rather, a complicated machine for the oppression of the people and the perversion of justice! and infinitely worse than none.

Whether the late revolution has produced a better order of things remains to be determined; but, one fact is worthy of notice — no permanent reformation can be effected so long as Mexicans exercise any controlling influence in the administration of the laws; and, to speak plainly, not until the government is placed in other and better hands.

The Mexicans occupy eight military stations at different points along the coast, garrisoned by about three hundred and fifty soldiers, and mounting some fifty pieces of artillery. The largest of these fortifications is at Monterey. This post is garrisoned by two hundred soldiers, and twelve pieces of canon — while the fort at New Helvetia, held by the Americans, mounts an equal num-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ber.

In case of an emergency, it is supposed the whole Mexican force might possibly amount to between ten and eleven hundred men — in efficiency nearly equal to a party of one hundred and fifty well-armed Americans.

It will be seen at a mere glance, that Mexico cannot maintain her hold upon California for many years to come. Emigrants from the United States and other countries, attracted by its fertile soil and healthful climate, will continue to pour into it with increased ratio, until, by outnumbering the degraded race that at present bears sway, this delightful portion of the globe shall of necessity become either the dependency of some foreign power or assume a separate and distinct existence as an independent nation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Visitors at Uintah — Adventures of a trapping party. The Munchies, or white Indians; some account of them. Amusements at rendezvous. Mysterious city, and attempts at its exploration, — speculation relative to its inhabitants. Leave for Fort Hall. Camp at Bear river. Boundary between the U. States and Mexico. Green valleys, &c. Country en route. Brown's-hole. Geological observations. Soda, Beer, and Steamboat springs; their peculiarities. Minerals. Valley of Bear river; its fertility, timber, and abundance of wild fruit. Buffalo berries. Superior advantages of this section. Mineral tar.

OUR stay at the Uintah was prolonged for some ten days. The gentleman in charge at this post spared no pains to render my visit agreeable, and, in answer to enquiries, cheerfully imparted all the information in his possession relative to the localities, geography, and condition of the surrounding country.

A trapping party from the Gila came in soon after our arrival, bringing with them a rich quantity of beaver, which they had caught during the preceding winter, spring, and summer upon the affluents of that river and the adjacent mountain streams. They had made a successful hunt, and gave a glowing description of the country visited, and the general friendliness of its inhabitants. The natives, in some parts of their range, had never before seen a white man, and, after the first surprise had subsided, treated them with great deference and respect. These simple and hospitable people supplied them with corn, beans, and melons, and seemed at all times well disposed.

The only difficulty encountered with them took place upon one of the northern tributaries of the Gila. Two or three butcher-knives and other little articles being missing from camp, the trappers at once accused the Indians of stealing, and demanded their prompt restoration. The latter they were either unable or unwilling to do, and thereupon a volley of riflery was discharged among the promiscuous throng, with fatal effect. Several were killed and others wounded, and the whole troop of timorous savages immediately took to their heels, nor dared to return again.

In narrating the events of their long excursion, an account was given of visiting the Munchies, a tribe of white Indians.

What added much to the interest I felt in this part of their story, was the recollection of an article which went the newspaper rounds several years since, stating the existence of such a tribe. I had disbelieved it at the time; but this, and subsequent corroborative evidence, has effectually removed from my mind all doubts upon the subject.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Our trappers had remained with the Munchies for four weeks, and spoke of them in high terms. In reference to their color they were represented as being of a much fairer complexion than Europeans generally, a thing easily explained if we remember this one fact, i.e., my informants must have spoken comparatively, taking themselves as the true representatives of that race, when in reality their own color, by constant exposure to the weather, had acquired a much darker hue than ordinary; then drawing their conclusions from a false standard, they were led to pronounce the fair natives much fairer, as a body, than the whites.

By information derived from various sources, I am enabled to present the following statement relative to this interesting people:

The Munchies are a nation of white aborigines, actually existing in a valley among the Sierra de los Mimbros chain, upon one of the affluents of the Gila, in the extreme northwestern part of the Province of Sonora.

Their number about eight hundred in all. Their country is surrounded by lofty mountains at nearly every point, and is well watered and very fertile, though of limited extent. Their dwellings are spacious apartments nicely excavated in the hill-sides, and are frequently cut in the solid rock. They subsist by agriculture, and raise cattle, horses, and sheep. Their features correspond with those of Europeans, though with a complexion, perhaps, somewhat fairer, and a form equally if not more graceful.

Among them are many of the arts and comforts of civilized life. They spin and weave, and manufacture butter and cheese, with many of the luxuries known to more enlightened nations.

Their political economy, though much after the patriarchal order, is purely republican in its character. The old men exercise the supreme control in the enactment and execution of laws. These laws are usually of the most simple form, and tend to promote the general welfare of the community. They are made by a concurrent majority of the seniors in council, —each male individual, over a specified age, being allowed a voice and a vote.

Questions of right and wrong are heard and adjudged by a committee selected from the council of seniors, who are likewise empowered to redress the injured and pass sentence upon the criminal. In morals they are represented as honest and virtuous. In religion they differ but little from other Indians.

They are strictly men of peace, and never go to war, nor even, as a common thing, oppose resistance to the hostile incursions of surrounding nations. On the appearance of an enemy, they immediately retreat, with their cattle, horses, sheep, and other valuables, to mountain caverns, fitted at all times for their reception, —where, by barricading the entrances, they are at once secure without a resort to arms.

In regard to their origin they have lost all knowledge or even tradition, (a thing not likely to have happened had they been the progeny of Europeans at any late period, —that is, since the time of Columbus;) neither do their characters, manners, customs, arts, or government savor of modern Europe.

Could a colony or party of Europeans in the short period of three centuries and a half lose all trace of their origin, religion, habits, arts, civilization, and government? Who, for a moment, would entertain an idea so estranged to probability?

And yet the Munchies cannot be real Indians, —they must be of European descent, though circumstances other than complexion afford no evidence of identity with either race. Where, then,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

shall we place them? — from whence is there origin?

We are forced to admit the weight of circumstantial testimony as to their having settled upon this continent prior to its discovery by Columbus. Here we are led to inquire, are they not the remote descendants of some colony of ancient Romans?

That such colonies did here exist in former ages, there is good reason for believing. The great lapse of time and other operative causes combined, may have transformed the Munchies from the habits, customs, character, religion, arts, civilization, and language of the Romans, to the condition in which they are at present found.

Among the visitors at the Fort were several old trappers who had passed fifteen or twenty years in the Rocky Mountains and neighboring countries. They were what might, with propriety, be termed “hard cases.”

The interval of their stay was occupied in gambling, horse-racing, and other like amusements.

Bets were freely made upon everything involving the least doubt, —sometimes to the amount of five hundred or a thousand dollars — the stakes consisting of beaver, horses, traps, &c.

Not unfrequently the proceeds of months of toil, suffering, deprivation, and danger, were dissipated in a few hours, and the unfortunate gamester left without beaver, horse, trap, or even a gun. In such cases they bore their reverses without grumbling, and relinquished all to the winner, as unconcernedly as though these were affairs of every-day occurrence.

These veterans of the mountains were very communicative, and fond of relating their adventures, many of which were so vested with the marvelous as to involve in doubt their credibility.

Were it not for extending the limits of this work too far, I should be tempted to transcribe the choicest of them for the reader’s amusement; but, as it is, I cannot refuse place to one (here for the first time related in my hearing, which has subsequently reached me from other sources) relative to a subject deeply interesting to the curious.

Stevens, in his “Incidents of Travel in Yucatan,” admits it to be quite possible that cities like those in ruins at Uxmal and Palenque, may yet exist in the unexplored parts of the Mexican Republic, and be inhabited by a people in all respects similar to that once occupying the before named.

Those acquainted with the nature of the country embraced in the mountainous portions of Mexico, must admit the possibility of such a thing. With this premise I give, the story as I heard it.

Five or six years since, a party of trappers, in search for beaver, penetrated into an unfrequented part of the mountains forming the eastern boundary of Sonora.

During their excursion they ascended a lofty peak that overlooked an extensive valley, apparently enclosed upon all sides by impassable mountains. At a long distance down the valley, by aid of a spy-glass, they could plainly distinguish houses and people, with every indication of a populous city.

At the point from whence this discovery was made, the mountain-side facing the valley was a precipitous wall of vertical rock, several hundred feet to its base, rendering a descent impossible. After trying at other places, with like ill-success, they were at length compelled to relinquish the design of further investigation for the time being.

Subsequently, on visiting Arispie, a town of Sonora, several foreigners were induced to join them in a return expedition, and a company of some twenty or twenty-five repaired to the place for the purpose of prosecuting a research so interesting.

On arriving at the mountain from whence the object of their curiosity had been first seen, there

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

lay before them the valley and city with its domes and palaces, amid which a swarming population was distinctly observed, apparently engaged in the prosecution of their various avocations. There could be no doubt of its reality, but how to reach it was the next question.

A number of days were occupied in vain search for a pass into the valley. The creek upon which it lay was found to emerge from the vast enclosure, through the mountain, by a frightful chasm formed of vertical rocks upon each side, for hundreds and even thousands of feet in altitude. The current was rapid, and interrupted by frequent falls that precluded the possibility of a passage up its bed. They crossed it, and, finding a convenient slope, again ascended the mountain.

On reaching the summit, a counterscarp was observed, where, by dint of great exertion, a descent could be effected; but not with horses.

Arrangements were made accordingly, and one half of the party remained with the animals and baggage, while the others, continuing the exploration, finally succeeded in entering the valley. Meanwhile, the movements of the advancing party were viewed with great anxiety by those in reserve. In the course of the succeeding day they were seen to enter the city and mingle among its inhabitants; but, after that, they were never again seen or heard of.

Three weeks elapsed and no sign of them appeared. At length their companions were forced by hunger to leave the spot and abandon them to their fate.

Another attempt to explore this mysterious locality is reported to have been made by a company of Spaniards, some of whom penetrated the valley, but never returned.

The site of this city, if the story of its existence be true, is undoubtedly the bed of an ancient lake, whose waters have become gradually drained by a forced passage through the mountain, thus forming the chasm and creek above noticed.

The people inhabiting it are probably from the stock of original Mexicans[44], who sought this as a secure retreat from the terror of Spanish oppression in the time of Cortez; since which their posterity have lived here unknown to the rest of the world.

Taught by the bitter experience of past ages to hate and distrust the white man, and still cherishing their traditional animosity, they permit none of that race to return who visit them, and, from the peculiarity of their position and jealous caution, have successfully maintained an uninterrupted in cog.

Several trappers rendezvoused at the Uintah being about to leave for Fort Hall, on the head waters of the Columbia river, I improved the opportunity of bearing them company.

My necessary arrangements were completed simply by exchanging horses; and, on the morning of Oct. 29th, I bade farewell to my new acquaintances at the Fort, and joined the party en route, which, including myself and compagnons de voyage from Fort Lancaster, numbered eleven in all, well mounted and armed.

The weather proved delightful considering the lateness of the season, and our journey was rapid and uninterrupted.

On leaving the Uintah we continued northward, over a rough country, for some twenty-five miles, and passed the night at Ashley's Fork,[45] with a small village of Snake Indians.

Resuming our course through a mountainous region, diversified by beautiful little valleys, late in the afternoon of the third day we camped in the vicinity of Brown's-hole.

Bearing from thence a southwesterly course, two days afterwards we arrived at Bear river, and obtained, from an adjoining eminence, a distant view of the Great Salt Lake.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Continuing down the river a few miles, we struck camp, and remained some three days for the purpose of hunting.

Being unwilling to leave the vicinity without a more perfect observation of this vast inland sea, I improved the interval for that purpose, and, in a few hours' ride, came to a point which overlooked its briny waters and spread out before me an object of so much interest to all beholders. Its whilom waves now lay slumbering upon its bosom, for not a breath of air stirred to awake them from their transient repose, save that caused by the flutterings of countless water-fowls which beskimmed the crystal blue or rode upon its surface.

No sound disturbed the stillness of its solitude, save that of my own footsteps commingling with the incessant chatter of aquatic birds. In solemn grandeur it lay before the eye a desert of waters, bounded upon three sides by the curving horizon, while from the fourth a beautiful expanse of verdancy smiled upon its solitude.

The island with its lone mountain, of which I have spoken in a former chapter, arose in full view, apparently a short distance to the southwest. It was a grand and imposing spectacle, and I much regretted the impossibility of reaching it. Its giant piles of naked rock and sun-baked clay, seemed scanning the surrounding waves, to smile upon their soft blandishments or frown at their rudeness.

But the Island, the Lake, and the country contiguous, have been fully described in former pages, which of right precludes a further notice at this time.

On resuming our course we continued up Bear river to the famous mineral springs, — thence bearing a northwesterly direction, we arrived at Fort Hall late in the afternoon of Nov. 9th.

The route from Uintah to this point presents many interesting localities some of which call for more than a mere passing notice. That situate upon Green river, known as Brown's-hole,[46] coming first in order, seems to assert a merited precedence.

Descending by a steep, difficult pass from the west, fifty miles north of Ashley's Fork, the traveller is ushered into a beautiful valley, some fifteen miles long by ten broad, shut in upon all sides by impassable mountains that guard it from the world without.

The only feasible entrance is upon the east side through a remarkable cañon sixty yards wide, formed by craggy rocks six or eight hundred feet in altitude, succeeded by a still narrower and more precipitous one, towering to a height of twelve or fifteen hundred feet.

This valley is intersected by Green river, which, emerging from the lofty ridges above, and tracing its way through the narrow and frightful cañons below, here presents a broad, smooth stream, fifty or sixty yards wide, with sloping banks, and passably well timbered.

Here all the various wild fruits indigenous to the country are found in great abundance, with countless multitudes of deer, elk, and sheep.

The soil is of a dark loam, very fertile and admirably adapted to cultivation. Vegetation attains a rank growth and continues green the entire year.

Spring wedded to summer seems to have chosen this sequestered spot for her fixed habitation, where, when dying autumn woos the sere frost and snow, of winter she may withdraw to her flower-garnished retreat and smile and bloom forever.

The surrounding mountains are from fifteen hundred to two thousand feet high, and present several peaks where snow claims an unyielding dominion year after year, in awful contrast with the beauty and loveliness that lies below.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Few localities in the mountains are equal to this, in point of beautiful and romantic scenery. Every thing embraced in its confines tends to inspire the beholder with commingled feelings of awe and admiration.

Its long, narrow gate-way, walled in by huge impending rocks, for hundreds of feet in altitude, — the lofty peaks that surround it, clothed in eternal snow, — the bold stream traversing it, whose heaving bosom pours sweet music into the ears of listening solitude, — the verdant lawn, spreading far and wide, garnished with blushing wild-flowers and arrayed in the habiliments of perennial spring, — all, all combine to invest it with an enchantment as soul-expanding in its sublimity as it is fascinating in its loveliness.

The country contiguous to Bear river, back from the valleys, is generally rugged and sterile. Sometimes the surface for a considerable extent is entirely destitute of vegetation, and presents a dreary waste of rocks, or clay hardened to a stone-like consistency by the sun's rays. Now and then a few dwarfish pines and cedars meet the eye amid the surrounding desolation, and occasional clusters of coarse grass intervene at favoring depressions among the rocks.

The landscape, as a whole, possesses a savage wildness peculiar to itself, and bears strong indications of volcanic action. The mountains are not so high as those of other parts, but are far more forbidding in their aspect. The prevailing rock is lava, scoriated basalt, trap, bituminous limestone, and calcareous tufa.

The valley of Bear river affords a number of springs strongly impregnated with various mineral properties, which cannot fail to excite the curiosity and interest of the traveller. They are found upon the left bank of the stream, a short distance below a small affluent from the north.

Two of them are situated in a small grove of cedars, within a short distance of each other.

In passing their vicinity the attention of the traveller is at once arrested by the hissing noise they emit; and on approaching to ascertain the cause, he finds two circular-shaped openings in the surface, several feet in diameter, and filled with transparent fluid in a state of incessant effervescence, caused by the action of subterranean gases.

The water of the one he finds on tasting to be excellent natural soda, and that of the other, slightly acid and beer-like; — the draught will prove delicious and somewhat stimulating, but, if repeated too freely, it is said to produce a kind of giddiness like intoxication. These singular natural curiosities are known among the trappers as the Beer and Soda springs, names not altogether inappropriate.

A few hundred yards below these, is another remarkable curiosity, called the Steamboat spring.

This discharges a column of mineral water from a rock-formed orifice, accompanied with subterranean sounds like those produced by a high-pressure steamboat.

Besides the above-described, there are a number of others in this vicinity of equally mineral character, as well as several hot springs, varying in temperature from blood to that of extreme boiling heat.

Bear river valley contains many wide spreads of most excellent land, susceptible of a high state of cultivation. In fertility it is unsurpassed, and varies in width from one and a half to three miles.

The stream is not heavily timbered, but the scattering groves of pine and cedar among the adjoining mountains partially atone for any apparent deficiency.

Towards its head, the hills upon either side are less rugged and barren, and present more frequent intervals of verdancy.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

I noticed a large number of fruit-bearing shrubs and bushes, including cherry, service, goose, and buffalo-berries, (two kinds,) with currants.

The bushes of the buffalo-berry were not as yet entirely divested of their delicious burthen, and afforded a new variety of that fruit hitherto not having come under my observation.

This berry is about the size of and similar in shape to the common currant. There are three kinds, —the white, yellow, and red, (*shepherdia argentea*.)

The red is of a slightly tartish taste, but not unpleasant; the yellow is somewhat less acid, but otherwise similar to the red; the white, however, is most excellent tasted, and possesses a delicious sweetness which causes it to be highly relished.

This fruit has several small seeds in it, like those of the whortleberry, and grows upon a bush in shape and size quite like the common shrub-oak. It produces in such immense quantities, that the parent bush is not unfrequently flattened with its superincumbent weight.

The grizzly bear delights to revel among the thickets of this his favorite berry, and is almost certain to make from it his last autumn meal ere he retires to winter quarters and commences the long fast that follows.

The valley of Bear river presents to emigrants many advantages. Possessed not only of a rich soil, well adapted to cultivation, and vast mineral resources, with natural curiosities that must ever make it a central point of attraction, but situated in the immediate vicinity of the prospective population of the Great Salt Lake and upon the direct line of over-land intercourse between the United States, California, and Oregon, it must command for its future inhabitants a sure source of prosperity and wealth.

There is little doubt of its eventually becoming the most important section of Southeastern Oregon.

In descending upon the natural curiosities of this valley, the trappers accompanying me spoke of a spring further to the northward, which constantly emits a small stream of mineral tar, from the mountain-side, in no respect inferior to the manufactured article. However, I am not certain in regard to the locality of this interesting phenomenon.

CHAPTER XXV.

Fort Hall; its history, and locality. Information relative to Oregon. Boundaries and extent of the territory. Its rivers and lakes, with a concise description of them severally. Abundance and variety of fish and waterfowl. Harbors and islands. Oregon as a whole; its mountains and geographical divisions. Eastern Division; its wild scenery, valleys, soil, and timber; volcanic ravages; country between Clarke's river and the Columbia. North of the Columbia; its general character. Middle Division; its valleys, prairies, highlands, and forests. Western Division; a beautiful country; extensive valleys of extraordinary fertility; productive plains; abundance of timber, its astonishing size and variety. A brief summary of facts.

OUR journey from the Uintah to Fort Hall occupied twelve days, and took us a distance of about two hundred miles. Most of this time the weather continued mild and pleasant; the only interval of inclemency was a single bleak and cloudy day, succeeded by a slight fall of snow during the night, which the bright sunshine of the ensuing morning dissipated in a few moments.

Along the entire route we found an abundance of green grass at sheltered places in the valleys,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

and also large quantities of game, especially blacktailed deer, bear, and elk. Bear are more numerous in this section than in any other I am acquainted with.

Fort Hall is located upon the left bank of Snake river, or Lewis' Fork of the Columbia, in a rich bottom near the delta formed by the confluence of the Portneuf with that stream, in lat. 43° 10' 30" north, long. 112° 20' 64" west.

In general structure it corresponds with most of the other trading establishments in the country. It was built by Capt. Wythe of Boston, in 1832, for the purpose of furnishing trappers with their needful supplies in exchange for beaver and other peltries, and also to command the trade with the Snakes. Subsequently it was transferred to the Hudson Bay Company in whose possession it has since remained.

Mr. Grant, a gentleman distinguished for his kindness and urbanity, is at present in charge, and has some sixty Canadians and half-breeds in his employ.

This post is in the immediate vicinity of the old war-ground between the Blackfoot, Snake, and Crow Indians, and was formerly considered a very dangerous locality on that account. Its early occupants were subject to frequent losses from the hostile incursions of the former of these tribes, and on two or three occasions came very near being burnt out[47] by their unsparing enemies. The country in the neighborhood of Fort Hall affords several extensive valleys upon the Snake river and its tributaries, which are rich, well timbered, and admirably adapted to the growth of grain and vegetables.

The adjoining prairies also, to some extent, possess a tolerable soil, and abound in a choice variety of grasses. Back from the valleys and plains, the landscape is extremely rugged and mountainous, poorly timbered, and bears the character of general sterility.

My stay at the Fort brought me in contact with gentlemen from various parts of Oregon; who kindly imparted to me all the information in their possession relative to the nature and true condition of this interesting and highly important section of our national domain. With the data thus obtained, assisted by subsequent personal observation and intelligence derived from other sources, I am enabled to arrange the following brief outlines of its geography, geology, climate, and soil, including a description of its productions, inhabitants, natural advantages, inducements to emigrants, &c., which the reader may rely upon as strictly correct in every essential particular.

With the northern extremity of Bear river valley, the traveller enters the southeastern limits of Oregon Territory. By referring to the map it will be seen that this country is bounded upon the north[48] by the British and Russian possessions, east by the Rocky Mountains, south by Upper California, and west by the Pacific. It is not my present purpose to argue, or endeavor to sustain, the claims of our Government to the whole area embraced in the above; but conceiving the matter now settled, I shall proceed to the task in hand without further preliminary.

Oregon, like California, is possessed of many important rivers and harbors, that, considering their intimate relation to the general interest of commerce, seem to demand our first attention. The Columbia and its branches water almost the entire territory, and open a highway from the ocean to the lofty mountain ranges which form its eastern boundary. This river heads in lat. 52° north, long. 119° west from Greenwich, and, after pursuing a serpentine course for fifteen hundred or two thousand miles, finds its discharge in the Pacific, at lat. 46° north.

One hundred and twenty miles of this distance are navigable for ships of the largest class, but the remainder of its course is interrupted by occasional rapids and falls, that render frequent portages

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

necessary.

The upper and lower "dalls" and "cascades," present the most serious impediments to navigation. The former of these, situated above Clarke's Fork, are caused by the passage of the Columbia through immense ledges, that leave huge vertical walls of basaltic rock upon either side, and compress its waters to a narrow, chasm-like channel. There, dashing and foaming in wild fury, the torrent rushes past its lateral dikes with frightful velocity.

The distance between these two "dalls" is some thirty miles.

The "cascades" lie at the base of a mountain range of the same name, one hundred and fifty miles from the Ocean. Near this place the whole stream is plunged over a precipice of fifty feet descent, forming a sublime and magnificent spectacle.

Between the dalls and cascades, a reach of high-lands, formed almost entirely of naked basalt, presents another barrier, through which the river forces itself by a tunnel-like pass for ten or fifteen miles, leaving vast mural piles upon the right and left, that attain an altitude of three hundred and fifty or four hundred feet.

A few miles above the junction of the southern and middle forks of the Columbia, two considerable lakes have been formed by the compressure of its waters among the adjoining mountains. The first of these is about twenty miles long and six broad, shut in by high, towering hills, covered with stately pine forests.

Emerging from this, the river urges its way through lofty embankments of volcanic rock for some five miles or more, when a second lake is formed in a similar manner, which is about twenty-five miles in length and six in width.

NOTE.— Capt. Fremont, in speaking of the Columbia, makes use of the following just observations:

"The Columbia is the only river which traverses the whole breadth of the country, breaking through all the ranges, and entering into the sea. Drawing its waters from a section of ten degrees of latitude in the Rocky Mountains, which are collected into one stream by three main forks (Lewis', Clarke's, and the North Fork) near the centre of the Oregon valley, this great river thence proceeds by a single channel into the sea, while its three forks lead each to a pass in the mountains, which opens the way into the interior of the continent.

"This fact, in reference to the rivers of this region, gives an immense value to the Columbia. Its mouth is the only inlet and outlet to and from the sea; its three forks lead to passes in the mountains; it is, therefore, the only line of communication between the Pacific and the interior of North America; and all operations of war or commerce, of national or social intercourse, must be conducted upon it."

There are also several other lakes, of greater or less extent, at different points along its course. Perhaps no river in the world, of the same length, affords such varied and picturesque scenery as does the Columbia.

Its lakes, tunnels, cascades, falls, mountains, rocky embankments, prairies, plains, bottoms, meadows, and islands, disclose an agreeable medley of wild romance, solemn grandeur, and pleasing beauty, far surpassing that of ally other country.

During its course it receives numerous tributaries, the most important of which are the Clarke, Flat-bow, Spokane, Okanagan, Snake, Yakama, Piscous, Entyatecoom, Umatilla, Quisnel, John Day, D'Chute, Cathlatates, Walla-walla, Wallammette, and Cawlitiz.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The Clarke, Snake, and Wallamette rivers, seem to call for more than a bare allusion.

The former of these rises in the Rocky Mountains, near lat. 46° north, and following its windings, is about five hundred and fifty miles in length. A lake, some thirty miles long and eight broad, is also formed in its course, about one hundred miles above its mouth. During its windings it receives a large number of affluents, which unite to swell the volume of its waters to the full size of its parent stream.

The Snake, or Lewis' Fork, is equally important. It rises in lat. 42° north, and, pursuing a north-westerly direction for five hundred miles, is discharged into the Columbia, at lat. 46° north. This river also receives several tributaries, the largest of which are the Kooskooskie and Salmon.

The Wallamette heads in the Cascade Mountains, in Upper California, near lat. 41° north, and bears a northerly course for nearly three hundred and fifty miles. One hundred and twenty-five miles of this distance are navigable for boats of a light draught.

Several tributaries, both from the east and west, unite to increase its magnitude and enhance its importance.

The Umpqua, which is the next river worthy of notice below the Columbia, has its source in the Cascade Mountains, near lat. 43° north, and running westerly for almost three hundred miles, is finally discharged into the Pacific. Some forty or fifty miles of this distance are said to be navigable.

South of the Umpqua a stream of nearly equal size empties into the Pacific, called Rogue's river. This also rises in the Cascade Mountains, at lat. 42° north, and is said to be navigable for boats of a light draught, some seventy miles or more.

The Chilkeelis is the first river north of the Columbia, and rises in the mountains, near lat. 48° north. Pursuing a westerly course, it discharges itself into the Pacific at Gray's Harbor, after flowing a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles.

Fraser's river is the extreme northern one of Oregon. It heads in the Rocky Mountains, near lat. 54° north, and empties into the Gulf of Georgia, at lat. 49° north. In its course it receives several large tributaries, and pursues its way for a distance of about four hundred miles, eighty of which are navigable.

Besides those above named, there are several other streams, of less magnitude, emptying into the Pacific at various points along its coast, all of which, as the country becomes settled, will contribute to the facilities of commerce and manufactures.

The rivers of Oregon, in the abundance and quality of their fish, are unparalleled. At certain seasons of the year, their waters are completely alive with the countless myriads that swarm them to their very sources.

Even the small streams are not exempt from this thronging population. So great is their number they are frequently taken by the hand; and, with the aid of a net, several barrels may be caught at a single haul. It requires but little effort to obtain them, and large quantities are annually shipped to the Sandwich Islands and various other points.

Fish are undoubtedly destined to furnish an important item in the future commerce of Oregon. At the present time they supply the principal food of its inhabitants, both Indians and whites. Among the different varieties abounding in these streams, salmon and salmon trout claim the precedence, both in numbers and qualities.

These delicious fish attain a size seldom surpassed, and are found in every accessible river and

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

creek. The bays, harbors, and mouths of rivers are also thronged with cod, herring, sturgeon, and occasionally whales, while vast quantities of oysters, clams, lobsters, &c., may be obtained along the coast.

Next to fish, in connection with the rivers, the extraordinary number of aquatic birds arrests the attention. These consist of geese, brants, ducks (of three or four varieties,) swans, pelicans, and gulls.

At certain seasons, they throng the rivers, creeks, lakes, and ponds, at different parts, in innumerable multitudes, and not only keep the waters in constant turmoil from their nautic exercises and sports, but fill the air with the wild clamor of their incessant quackings. An expert sportsman may kill hundreds of them in a few hours.

So abundant are they that their feathers may be obtained of the Indians in any requisite quantity, for a trifling consideration—in all respects equal, for bedding, to those procured from domesticated geese and ducks.

In regard to harbors, the natural advantages of Oregon are not equal to those of California; though, as the country becomes settled, the ingenuity of man will speedily atone for these apparent deficiencies; and if she has not the matchless basin of the Bay of San Francisco, she has other localities upon her sea-board that, with a small expenditure of money and effort, may be made secure and adapted to all her commercial requirements.

It is much to be regretted, however, that the Columbia affords not an easy and secure entrance for ships from the Ocean, as this will undoubtedly become the most important point of the whole coast.

At present, the mouth of this river, between Points Adams and Hancock is partially blocked up by large sand-bars, deposited by the current, and maintained in their places through the repulsive action of the sea-waves.

How far these impediments may operate to the future detriment of commerce, remains to be seen. Unless some remedy should be adopted, the harbor of this great embryo depot of Western trade will continue to oppose a difficult entrance.

The estuaries of the Umpqua and Rogue rivers are more difficult of access than the Columbia. It is even said, that there is not a good harbor on the coast of Oregon below lat. 46° north. Above this parallel there are several, not only easy of access but secure of anchorage; the principal of which are those of the Straits of Juan de Fuca and the Gulf of Georgia. The islands of Vancouvre and Queen Charlotte[49] also possess a number of excellent harbors.

These islands are large, well timbered, and generally fertile. Though, like the mainland, quite broken and hilly, they embrace many beautiful plains and lovely valleys, abounding with game, and coursed by ample streams of fresh water. Vancouvre's Island is two hundred and sixty miles long by fifty in width, and Queen Charlotte's one hundred and forty by twenty-eight. In addition to the above named, there are a number of small islands near the Straits of Juan de Fuca — more important on account of their fisheries than the quality of their soil.

The whole extent of the sea-coast, connected with the territory, (i.e. from California to the Russian possessions,) is about one thousand miles, besides that of its various islands. Reckoning from the above data, the area included within its limits is not far from nine hundred and two thousand, two hundred and fifty square miles.

To speak of this vast country in toto, we could give no general character other in regard to its cli-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

mate, soil, or productions, possessed, as it is, of very diversity, from the piercing frosts of perpetual winter, to the smiling verdancy of unfading spring — from the dwarfish herbage of the arctic regions, to the generous fruits of warmer zones—and from the barren sterility of a Lybian desert, to the exuberant fecundity of earth's choicest garden-spots.

However, from the numerous peaks that rear their cloud-capped heads in almost every direction, and the continuous ridges intersecting it from side to side and from end to end, we might with safety pronounce it mountainous.

The Rocky Mountains, forming its eastern boundary, branch off westerly and northwesterly at various points, and, in connection with other ridges, beline the whole country. It is my present purpose merely to classify some of the more extensive of these ranges, and note their locality, as auxiliary to more accurate and comprehensive disposal of the leading subject before the reader. The Blue Mountain chain commences not far from 45° 30' north latitude, and bears a southerly course, till it passes into California and unites with the intersecting ridges of that province. It runs nearly parallel with the Rocky Mountains, at an interval varying from one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles, forming the Eastern Division of Oregon.

The Cascade chain (before noticed, in connection with California) commences in the Russian possessions, and pursues a southerly course through both countries, till it finally becomes lost in the sea-girt isthmus of the Lower province. It runs parallel with the coast, at a distance varying from one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles, and defines the Western and Middle Divisions of Oregon.

The country north of the Columbia is also traversed by numerous branches and spurs of the Rocky and Cascade Mountains, many of them presenting lofty peaks, covered with never-melting snow and ice.

The mountain ranges before described, have many summits towering far above the snow-line. They are generally less sterile than the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, and, amid their snow-clad tops and denuded eminences, present alternate spreads of high table land and rolling prairie, clothed with vegetation, and dense forests of pine, cedar, fir, and oak, or opening valleys arrayed in all the enchantment of vernal loveliness.

The Eastern, or Southeasterly Division of Oregon, partakes of a greater variety of wild and savage scenery, intermixed with beauty and desolation, than any other section in the whole territory. The valleys of Bear river and those parts contiguous to Fort Hall, have already been described on a preceding page, and all their varied attractions fully descanted upon. Besides these, there are other valleys in the neighborhood of the South Pass, upon Little and Big Sandy, and the New Forks of Green river, that claim a passing notice.

The valleys last referred to are of variable width and possess a fertile soil, adapted to either grazing or agricultural purposes, and assume an additional importance from their situation in reference to the grand routes from the United States to Oregon and California. They are capable of sustaining a small population with peculiar advantage, were it not for the troubles that might be anticipated from the hostile incursions of the Blackfeet and Sioux.

Below Fort Hall, the valleys of Snake, or Lewis' river, are somewhat limited, but very fertile, though enclosed for the most part by denuded and sterile mountains. In the vicinity of Fort Boise, on the bank of Lewis' Fork, are several rich and extensive plains and valleys, more or less adapted to cultivation.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The Kooskooskie and Salmon rivers, also, present some fine bottoms. Another beautiful valley is situated upon Powder river, a considerable creek, about forty miles below Fort Boise. It is large and very fertile, but lacks a sufficiency of timber without a resort to the dense pine forests of the neighboring hills.

The next section that attracts the traveller's attention as he proceeds towards the Columbia, is a favored spot known as le Grand Rond, bounded on all sides by mountains, in the vicinity of the Blue range. This locality is nearly circular, and about one hundred and fifty miles in circumference, well watered and possesses a soil of matchless fertility.[50]

Timber of the best kind may be procured, in any quantity, from the adjoining mountains, and, to a limited extent, from the valley.

Trappers speak of the Grand Rond with an enthusiasm which is cordially responded to by all who have hitherto visited it. So far as soil and climate are concerned, a better section of country than this is rarely found.

Southeast from the place last described, sixty miles or more, lies a long stretch of desolate country which bears a strikingly volcanic appearance.

This region is thickly paved with vast piles of lava and igneous rock, strown about in confused fragments, as if the mountains had been rent asunder and dashed in horrid medley upon the adjoining plains, and earth, itself, had undergone all the indescribable contortions of more than agony, —now opening in frightful chasms, —now vibrating with unheard of violence, oversetting hills and rooting them from their foundations by the impetuosity of its motion, or elevating half vertically, the immense layers of subterranean rock forming the valves of distorted fissures, and depressing the opposing ones in frightful contrast, — in haste to complete the picture of destruction by an imposing array of wild and savage scenery.

Numerous boiling springs are also found among these wide-spread heaps of ruined nature whose waters are frequently so hot that meat may be cooked in a very few minutes by submersion in them.

Several streams trace their way through this region, affording occasional bottoms of fertile soil and luxuriant vegetation, that smile with bewitching enchantment upon the relentless havoc surrounding them.

Upon Clarke's river and its tributaries, as well as the numerous lakes adjacent to them, there are large quantities of excellent land, well adapted to agricultural and grazing purposes. The hills, too, are generally studded with dense forests of pine and fir, some of them of gigantic growth, while the intervening plateaux and high prairies present frequent intervals of lusty grasses.

The same may be said, though in a more restricted sense, of most of the country lying between Clarke's river and the Columbia.

The streams of water and lakes are most of them skirted with bottoms and valleys of greater or less extent, tolerably well timbered, while the neighboring hills afford frequent groves of heavy pines, diversified with openings of grass-clad prairies or of denuded barrenness.

Many interesting localities lie along the Columbia, above the confluence of Clarke's river, as well as upon the several tributaries finding their way into it. A tract of country circumjacent to the Lower Lake possesses a rich soil, with other advantages, which in due time will command the attention of emigrants.

The section lying still north of this is but little better than a barren waste of frost and snow, with

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

now and then choice spots of rank vegetation and rich floral beauty, shut up in their stern recesses, in wonderful contrast with the savage sublimity and wild disorder of the masses of naked rock that surround them.

Frasier's river has an extensive valley of excellent and well timbered land, skirting it in variable width, from mouth to source. The same may be said of many of its tributaries. The Chilkeelis, also, possesses many choice spots.

But, as a general thing, that portion of country north of the Columbia is the most worthless part of Oregon.

A vast share of it is mere naked rock or deserts of ice and snow, with now and then dense forests of pine, cedar, and fir. There are, comparatively, few arable prairies; and not more than one half of the whole extent can be turned to any useful purpose. Perhaps one sixth of it is susceptible of cultivation. In fact, the only localities worthy of mention are the valleys scattered among the Claset and Cascade Mountains, and along the different rivers and creeks.

The cause of this general sterility is more to be attributed to the severity of the climate, consequent upon a high northern latitude, combined with the broken and mountainous character of the country, than to any great natural deficiency of soil. Of course it can never become thickly populated.

Its timber, fisheries, and facilities for manufactures, stock-raising, and the growth of wool, embrace its greatest inducements to emigrants; though, in a commercial point of view, its extensive fur trade and commodious harbors, with other kindred advantages, should not be overlooked.

We now come to the Middle Division, or that section south of the Columbia, between the Blue and Cascade Mountains.

In this division of Oregon the face of the country is very much diversified. As a whole, it presents a continued series of conical hills, huge masses of rock, and undulating prairies, intermixed with lofty, cloud-capped peaks, shooting transversely from the ridges that form its eastern and western boundaries. These mountains are usually clothed with rank vegetation, and frequently present stately forests of valuable timber, particularly the Blue range.

It also contains many extensive valleys of great fertility, situated among its mountains and upon the John Day, Quisnell, Umatilla, D'Chute, and Wallawalla rivers, and their numerous affluents. The southern extremity likewise affords many fertile and extensive valleys, but it is rather sparsely timbered. In the immediate vicinity of the Columbia, the land is sandy and barren, though back from the river, the hills are tolerably rich and coated with heavy pine forests.

Nearly the whole of this section may be considered available for agriculture and stock-raising.

The Western Division next commands our attention. Below the Cascades, the country contiguous to the Columbia presents a vast extent of thickly timbered and extremely fertile bottom land, one hundred and twenty miles wide, interspersed with frequent openings of lusty vegetation.

The forests of this section afford some of the largest and most beautiful pine and fir trees in the world. Its valleys, plains, and hills are likewise possessed of a most excellent soil, adapted to every practicable use.

Above this, and bordering upon the Straits of Juan de Fuca are also large tracts of fine land, well watered, timbered, and fertile.

Southward, towards the confines of California, the Umpqua and Rogue rivers claim several very extensive and fertile valleys and bottom lands. Upon the former of these are said to be two, one of

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

which is forty miles in length by ten in width, and the other seventy by fifteen;—upon the latter, is one eighty miles long, and varying from fifteen to fifty in width.

Besides the above mentioned, there are numerous other valleys, all of which are well timbered and of unparalleled fertility.

No country in the world affords a better soil, or a more romantic scenery. The mountains bounding them rise in stately grandeur, oftentimes far above the clouds, to converse with the relentless snows of successive ages, now presenting their nude sides, paved with dark masses of frowning rocks, or proud forests of evergreen, verdant lawns, flowery dales, and sterile wastes, to overlook the perennial beauty and matchless fecundity at their feet, —while the lesser eminences with their deep ravines, o'ershanging cliffs, and shadowy recesses, tell the place where the storm-winds recruit their forces and the zephyrs creep in to die.

There are also large valleys, of equally fertile soil, upon the head waters of the Tlameth river, near the southern boundary, well worth the attention of emigrants.

The most interesting portion of the Western Division, however, is that bordering upon the Wallammette and its affluents. The valley of this river is one hundred and fifty miles long by thirty-five broad. The soil is a deep alluvion, of extraordinary fertility.

It is not only well watered, but well timbered, and produces all the vegetables, fruits, and grasses indigenous to the country, with astonishing profuseness. No region was ever better adapted to agricultural or grazing purposes.

The Fualitine Plains, adjoining this beautiful expanse of fertility upon the left, towards the Columbia, embrace an area of forty-five miles in length by fifteen in breadth, well watered and amply timbered, with a soil in all respects equal.

The Klackamus, Putin, Fualitine, Yamhill, and other rivers, are all of them skirted by beautiful and fertile valleys of greater or less extent, while the adjacent hills and prairies afford not only frequent forests of excellent timber, but generally a very good soil.

The landscape of this vicinity, though not, strictly speaking, hilly, is highly indulating, but quite productive in grass and herbage.

The Cawlitz river, which empties into the Columbia a short distance below the Wallammette, has several rich bottoms, and waters a large extent of country, admirably adapted to stock-raising and agriculture.

At the mouth of the Wallammette river is an island some fifteen miles in length by nearly the same distance in breadth, called Wappato; it is of a deep alluvial soil, formed from sedimentary deposits and decayed vegetable substances, and is very rich and densely timbered.

The country at the mouth of the Columbia and for some ten or fifteen miles interior, is sandy and sterile, —a fact much to be regretted, as from its peculiar locality this point must necessarily become the site of a vastly important commercial emporium, vying in population, splendor, and opulence, the time-grown cities of more eastern climes.

The stately forests of pine and fir, in the Western Division of Oregon, have for a long time challenged the admiration of the world, and it is strongly doubted whether the chosen veterans of foreign woods can produce a rival to some few specimens of the proud giants of its soil.

These not unfrequently tower to a height of two hundred feet, and even more, —leaving from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy-five feet clear of limb, with scarcely a curve in the

entire length.

One of them, standing near Fort George on the Columbia river, is said to measure forty-seven feet in circumference, three hundred and fifty feet in altitude, and two hundred and sixty-five feet clear of limb; another, upon the Umpqua river, is reported even larger, and yet another, in the same vicinity, very nearly equals it in size.

Timber of this kind affords the choicest article for lumber, which bears a very high price at the Sandwich Islands and in various parts of Mexico, and will no doubt become a staple commodity in the commerce of Oregon; while the immense forests of pine, fir, and oak, rearing their stately heads in thick array, must prove a sure source of wealth to its future inhabitants.

The principal kinds of wood indigenous to the country are white-oak, live-oak, maple, ash, pine, fir, cedar, hemlock, spruce, cottonwood, aspen, and cherry.

Live-oak is found chiefly in the southern part, and, in quality, stands foremost among the denizens of the forest for ship-building. Several other species of oak are more or less abundant in various parts.

In review of the subjects occupying the preceding pages, we may present the following summary: Nearly one-fifth of the entire territory is timbered; three-eighths of it may be successfully cultivated, (embracing the richest lands in the Federal Domain.) and two-thirds of it may afford pasture for cattle, horses, and sheep.

It is generally better watered and much better timbered than California; and, though its harbors are inferior in regard to safety and ease of access, Oregon possesses other advantages, aside from soil and climate, compensating, in some measure, for these obvious deficiencies, and which combine to render it a most eligible point of emigration.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

Climate of Oregon; its variableness; its rains; a southern climate in a northern latitude. Productiveness; grain, fruits, and flowers, wild and cultivated. Geological characteristics. Soils and prevailing rock. Minerals, &c. Variety of game. Wolves. Horses, and other domestic animals. Population, white and native; Indian tribes, their character and condition. Missionary stations, and their improvements. Present trade of Oregon. Posts of the Hudson Bay Company. Settlements. Oregon City, its situation and advantages; about Linnton; about Wallamette valley, Fualatine plains and Umpqua river; Vancouvre, and its superior advantages. Kindness of Hudson Bay Company to settlers.

THE next which seems to demand our notice, in due order, is the climate of this interesting country.

We need only bear in mind the geographical position and diversified character of Oregon, to satisfy ourselves of the true merits of the subject now before us. A mountainous country like this must necessarily embrace every variety of climate, from that of the ice-bound coasts and ever-scathing frosts of the polar regions, to the burning heat of the equator, from the mild atmosphere of Italian skies, to the genial temperature which paints the wild-flowers in their primeval beauty, while month succeeding month doles out the year, nor feels nor knows the chill-breath of winter.

A short jaunt at any time translates the traveller, at his own option, to regions of winter, spring,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

summer, or fall, and spreads before him all the varied beauties and deformities of either.

As a general thing, however, the winters of Oregon are much more temperate than those of countries in the same latitude bordering upon the Atlantic—a fact which may be attributed to the usual prevalence of westerly winds at that season.

These winds, on passing the mountains and traversing the vast extent of snowy prairie and open land in their course, become vested with a chilling severity unknown to its incipiency, when, from the warm bosom of the broad Pacific, they first waft themselves o'er the blooming valleys, smiling plains, grass-clad hills, and mountains garbed in stately forests, commingled with stern desolation, to lavish upon all these varied scenes the soft blandishments of the Indies, and engender the interesting phenomenon of a southern climate in a high northern latitude.

The country contiguous to Frasier's river, and even below it for some distance, is usually visited with long and severe winters, and enjoys comparatively but a short interval of genial weather during the spring and summer months.

The valleys, however, not unfrequently afford exceptions to this remark, when favorably located in regard to the wind and sun. In this section it seldom rains, a circumstance causing an unproductive and arid soil.

The Eastern Division is, perhaps, more variable in regard to temperature than any other portion of Oregon. Its valleys are usually possessed of a mild and delightful climate, so much so that stock will subsist the entire winter without being fed or housed.

The plains and high prairies present a longer interval of inclement weather, and the snow continues on the ground for a much greater length of time, than in the low-lands.

Some particular localities are subject to very sudden changes, and not unfrequently experience the warm breath of summer with the chill blasts of fresh-born winter during the short lapse of a single day and night.

In reference to the high mountains, it is sufficient to remark, that with them winter is a season too congenial not to be felt in all its rigors, to the entire extent of its duration. The diversity of temperature in these parts depends mostly upon the altitude. The lower benches experiencing a mild atmosphere even in the severest weather, permit the snow to remain only for a short interval succeeding its fall, and woo the willing spring; while the higher ones treasure up each descending flake to nourish the scathing blasts that leap from the mountain-tops, fresh-cradled in the lap of winter.

Notwithstanding these apparent disadvantages, the Eastern Division may be regarded as universally healthy. The purity of the atmosphere, and its absence from noxious exhalations and disease-engendering effluvia, undoubtedly contribute the prime cause in producing a result so favorable.

Rains are not usual to this part in the summer months, nor even in the winter and spring are they common to any great extent. The snows of winter, together with the rains of that season and autumn, and the occasional dews of summer, in most cases, afford a sufficient moisture to the low-lands for agricultural purposes.

That section situated between the Blue and Cascade Mountains, known as the Middle Division, is said to possess, comparatively, a much milder and less variable climate.

The winters are usually open and of short duration, snow lying upon the ground, in the valleys, rarely exceeding four days in succession, and vegetation, in some instances, remains green the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

entire season. The prairies, too, are generally covered only for a short time.

The heat of summer lacks that oppressiveness so common to most countries. In regard to the health of this section, we may correctly apply the observations made relative to the Eastern Division. A country situated like the one now forming the subject of our remarks, cannot be otherwise than healthy, as a general thing.

The snow of winter and the rains of spring and autumn, coupled with the light dews of summer, furnish all the moisture usual to the soil, which the moderate heat of the latter season renders sufficient for the growth of vegetation and the production of grain and other crops.

The Western Division possesses not only a soil but a climate more favorable to vegetation than any other portion of Oregon. In the southern part it seldom snows, and the weather is so mild, that the grass continues green and flourishing the entire year. Water never freezes, unless it be in some elevated pool or lake.

The absence of sufficient rains and dews, however, during the summer months at some points, renders an occasional resort to irrigation necessary for the production of corn, potatoes, and articles of a like nature.

Two crops of some kinds of produce may be raised with success in a single year.

In the vicinity of the Wallamette, the winters are only a trifle colder. Running water seldom freezes. Snow never falls to exceed the depth of a few inches, and disappears in a very short time succeeding.

Vegetation in the valleys, and even upon the plains, to some extent, remains green year in and year out. Of course no better climate could be selected for stock-raising.

These remarks may be applied with equal propriety to the other portions of the Western Division south of the Columbia and in its immediate vicinity. The country further north, for a considerable distance, possesses a climate almost as favorable. The snows of winter, however, are usually more frequent and less transitory in their continuance.

The cold season is confined almost exclusively to the three winter months. The heat of summer is moderate and agreeable, generally ranging at 62° Fahrenheit, above zero, in its mean temperature. The wet season of the Western Division usually occurs from October to March of each year, inclusive; at other times rain seldom falls. During this season it descends in gentle showers, or in the shape of mist, at intervals, for about one half of the time. The moisture received into the earth meanwhile; together with the nightly dews and other favorable agencies during the summer months, renders the soil adapted to cultivation.

Back from the valleys and bottoms, the atmosphere is quite wholesome and salubrious. Fevers are seldom known, and pulmonary complaints are equally rare.

In the vicinity of the Columbia, intermittent fevers are not uncommon, though by no means as bad as in some parts of our frontier States.

Next in the order before us come the various productions which may be, and are, successfully cultivated in the different sections of this part of our national domain.

The soil and climate of the Eastern Division have been sufficiently tested to know their capacity for producing nearly, if not quite, all the various grains, vegetables, and fruits usually grown in our Northern and Middle states. A great variety of wild fruits and vegetables grow spontaneously, in different parts, and in great abundance.

The soil and climate, as a whole, seem better adapted to the culture of fruits and grains, than

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

vegetables; and perhaps we might add, for the raising of cattle, horses, and sheep, than agriculture; though the latter observation is not to be so construed as to affirm that farming may not be successfully and profitably prosecuted in many parts.

The Northern Division, or that portion of Oregon lying on the headwaters of the Columbia, in the vicinity and south of Frasier's river, and upon the Chilkeelis, being much colder and more sterile, must necessarily be regarded in a less favorable light than the country referred to in the preceding paragraph. But, little is known as to its products or the capacities of its soil and climate; yet, it is said that some particular kinds of fruit are indigenous to this region, and it is generally supposed that wheat, barley, oats, buckwheat, flax, and other articles of like nature, might be raised within it. Of course, these remarks apply only to the valleys.

The Middle Division affords a finer soil and a more favorable climate than the Eastern; but, in regard to productions, it is much the same. All the northern fruits, grains, and vegetables, may be produced in great abundance, with the exception of corn — the land being generally too dry and too much subject to unseasonable frosts; corn, however, has been successfully cultivated on the Wallawalla.

There are several varieties of wild fruits found here, among which are included cherries, with larb, bufal, goose, and service berries, and currants, plums, and grapes, together with several other species not recollected, as well as vegetables and roots.

The Western Division not only maintains its pre-eminence in relation to soil and climate, but stands equally conspicuous in the variety and abundance of its productions. It is thought, and not without reason, that cotton, sugar-cane, and various other productions of a warm and even tropical climate might here be raised without difficulty.

When the ground is in a suitable condition, the average crop of wheat is from twenty to twenty-five bushels to the acre. Vast quantities of it are annually produced by settlers in different parts of the country. A surplus of one hundred thousand bushels is reported to have been grown, in the region adjoining the Wallamette, during the summer of 1844.

The Hudson Bay Company, at Fort Vancouver, have several very extensive farms under improvement, upon which they raise nearly every variety of grain and vegetables, with flattering success. In the garden of McLaughlin, the chief factor of this company, are found almost every species of fruits and flowers indigenous to this country and to foreign soils of the same latitude, with several varieties produced only in warm climates.

We barely allude to the above facts, in order to prove the adaptation of Western Oregon to agricultural pursuits. The data relative to its extraordinary facilities for rearing countless herds of cattle, horses, and sheep, have already been placed before the reader, and need not here a repetition. The components of the soils of Oregon are equally varied in character, according to their situation. The bottoms are usually of a deep, sandy alluvion, intermixed with vegetable and organic matter. The valleys are of a heavy loam, enriched by the debris and other fertilizing properties borne from the high grounds by the annual rains, together with the constant accumulation of decayed herbage and grass so lavishly bestowed at each returning season.

The prairies are possessed of either a light sandy surface, or a mixture of gravel and stiff clay. The superstratum of the hills and mountains varies from wastes of naked sand, sun-baked clay, and spreads of denuded rock, to a thin vegetable mould, and a light marly loam of greater or less fecundity.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The rock of this territory also presents many different specimens; the prominent classifications, however, are volcanic, viz: basalt, (columnar and scoriated,) trap, lava, pumicestone, limestone (fossiliferous, bituminous, and earthy,) and mica slate, with sandstone, puddingstone, granular quartz, calcareous tufa, and agglomerated boulders of various kinds, particularly in the Eastern Division. The varieties of some parts present strong characteristics of the oolite formation. The hills contain many excellent quarries for the structure of buildings or other useful purposes. Hitherto but little investigation has been had relative to the mineral resources of Oregon; though sufficient is known to warrant the statement, that copper, lead, iron, coal, salt, soda, sulphur, nitre, and alum, are abundant in some parts; and, from the nature of the country, we may safely infer that yet more valuable metals are waiting to reward with their hidden treasures the researches of man.

Game, in the Eastern and Middle Divisions, is not generally plentiful; yet, in places, there are an abundance of deer, elk, antelope, bear, wolves, and foxes;— buffalo are also found occasionally in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. In the Northern Division, moose, deer, elk, bear, foxes, and wolves, are the varieties most common. Game is more abundant in the Western than in the other Divisions, and is nearly of the same kind.

Ducks, geese, brants, pheasants, partridges, &c., are common throughout the whole territory.

Wolves are very numerous in the neighborhood of the settlements, and prove a great source of annoyance to the inhabitants by preying upon their cattle and other stock. These wolves consist of three kinds, —the black, gray, and prairie wolf, of which, as in California, the black wolf is the largest and most ferocious.

As a grazing country, the available lands of the three divisions of Oregon, south of the Columbia and the one immediately north of that river, are little inferior, if, indeed, not fully equal, to the far-famed meadows and lawns of California.

Horses are reared in vast numbers by the Indians, among whom it is not uncommon to find a single individual owning three or four hundred head. Select horses may be bought at prices ranging from twelve to twenty dollars each.

These animals are generally stout and hardy, capable of enduring a vast amount of fatigue, and are but little inferior in point of size to our American nags.

Large herds of horses are also raised by the settlers, and at the Hudson Bay Company's establishments.

Latterly, cattle, hogs, and sheep, are beginning to receive the attention of the farming community, and, without doubt, soon will become immensely numerous. It needs only the operation of time to render Oregon as famous for its countless herds, as for the abundance and variety of its productions.

The entire population of the territory at this time, may be estimated at thirty-five thousand, of which about seven thousand are whites and half-breeds, and the balance Indians.

The Indians principally consist of the following tribes: the Snakes, Blackfeet, Flatheads, Nesperces, Bonarks, Cyuses, Wallawallas, Chinooks, Shatchets, Chalams, Killamucs, Squamishes, Clasets, Tonandos, Klackamus, Clatsup, Umpquas, Klackatats, Kallapuyas, Tlamaths, and Chilkeelis.

The Blackfeet, though included among the Oregon tribes, properly belong to that portion of the Rocky Mountains contiguous to the head waters of the Missouri. They make occasional irruptions into the country occupied by the Flatheads, Snakes, and Nesperces, and for this reason are includ-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ed in the above list.

The Tlameths and two or three other inferior tribes in the neighborhood of California and north of the Columbia river may be considered troublesome and rather ill-disposed; but not dangerous, unless it be in cases where they have a very decided advantage.

The Indians of this country are less warlike than those east of the Rocky Mountains, and far less dangerous, even as enemies. They may be considered, on the whole, as friendly to the whites, and quite susceptible of civilization. They are tolerably industrious, and ready at all times to work for the settlers at a trifling compensation.

Many of them cultivate the ground and raise corn, potatoes, beans, and melons, —but fish, horses, and game, as a general thing, furnish their principal food. As an evidence of their quiet disposition, they rarely go to war, and are usually found at or near the several places claimed and occupied by them individually.

The Nesperces are, perhaps, farther advanced in civilization than any other tribe. Many of them (and some of other tribes) are beginning to live after the manner of the whites, and the philanthropic efforts of Christian missionaries in their behalf have been attended with great success. There are eight or more missionary stations in Oregon, belonging as follows: to the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Roman Catholics.

Four of these are situated between the Blue and Cascade Mountains, viz: one near the Dalls, one at Waiilatpu on the Wallawalla, one at Tshimakain, and one at Clear Water.

The mission at Waiilatpu is under the direction of Dr. Whitman, and has a flouring mill and a very considerable farm connected with it, upon which large quantities of grain and vegetables are annually raised, and also numerous herds of cattle and horses. The station near the Dalls, with the exception of a mill, is said to be but little behind that of Waiilatpu in point of prosperity.

The remaining four are in the Western Division.

The most important of these are situated as follows: one at the Wallammette Falls, about twenty-five miles below the Columbia, and the other in the Wallammette valley, some forty or fifty miles farther south.

Both of the above belong to the Methodists, and may be considered rich.

There are two large farms and a store connected with the station in the Wallammette valley, and also large herds of cattle, horses, and hogs;— it is said to drive quite a profitable trade with the Indians and settlers in the line of dry goods and groceries.

The station at the Wallammette Falls has also a store, and carries on a small business by way of merchandize.

The two other stations are south and west of the last named, but have, as yet, no very extensive improvements in connection with them.

The Methodists have a press at one of their stations in Oregon, which is employed in printing religious books for the benefit of the Indians.

In addition to the different stations above alluded to, the Catholics have several agents and teachers in this territory, who labor with great zeal and earnestness to make proselytes to their own peculiar notions. The number and locality of these agents I have not the necessary information to state. They were, not long since, under the superintendance of one Father De Smit, a Jesuit priest, and have exerted considerable influence among the Indian tribes.

Nearly the entire trade of Oregon, at the present time, is in the hands of the Hudson Bay Com-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

pany, from whom dry goods and groceries may be obtained by the settlers at less than the common price in the United States; this, as a necessary consequence, precludes all opposition. The principal exports (raised at the stations or received by way of barter) are flour, fish, butter, cheese, lumber, masts, spars, furs, and skins.

The Forts, or trading establishments, are eighteen in all, and have a large number of hands employed about them, in conducting the fur trade and laboring upon the farms and in the workshops and mills.

Each of these posts presents a miniature town by itself, whose busy populace pursue most of the varied avocations incident to the more densely inhabited localities of civilized countries.

We will not occupy the reader's time in an extended description of them severally, but rest content by simply giving their names. The first post belonging to this company, upon the route to the mouth of the Columbia, is Fort Hall; the next, Fort Wallawalla; then, Fort Vancouver, and Fort George.

The others are situated at different points, and are known as follows: Colville, Okanagan, Alexandria, Barbine, Klamloops, St. James, Chilcothin, Simpson, McLaughlin, Langley, Nisqually, Cawlit, and Umpqua; of which eight are located in or above lat. 49° north.

The principal settlements, disconnected from the trading establishments and different missionary stations, at present, are upon the Umpqua and Wallamette rivers, on the Fualitine Plains, and near Fort Vancouver. These settlements are represented as being in a very flourishing condition, and rapidly increasing in population and wealth.

At the Wallamette Falls, a town has been regularly laid out called Oregon City, which, in the year 1844, numbered a hundred or more houses; among them was a church, with several stores and mills.

At this place the temporary legislature, already instituted by the settlers for mutual benefit in the absence of all other legitimate jurisdiction, holds its regular sessions. A mayor was elected in the spring of 1845; and recently a printing press and materials have been procured from New York for the purpose of publishing the territorial laws, with such other documents and papers as the interests of the community may require.

This embryo city, situated as it is in a place so admirable in regard to agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, possesses many superior advantages in point of locality.

The falls of the Wallamette are thirty feet perpendicular, and afford abundant water privileges for mills and factories, — two important rivers, the Klackamus and Fualitine, find their discharge near it, while below is presented an uninterrupted navigation to the Ocean, and above it boats may ascend for a distance of one hundred miles or more. The country contiguous is unsurpassed in fertility, and will undoubtedly soon acquire a dense population.

Another town, called Linnton, has recently been commenced upon the south bank of the Columbia, near the mouth of the Wallamette river, and bids fair to become of some importance.

The settlements in the valley above, and at the Fualitine Plains, are scattered like those of the farming sections of our Western States;— the same observation may also be applied in reference to those upon the Umpqua river.

The settlement at Vancouver is more compact, and assumes the air of a flourishing village. It is near the falls of the Columbia, at the head of ship navigation, and is made the great commercial depot of the Hudson Bay Company for the articles required in their trade.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Connected with the Fort is an extensive flouring mill, and also a saw mill, which is said to do a very active and lucrative business.

The number of buildings at Vancouvre is not far from sixty. The site is a most admirable one for some future emporium of trade and manufactures. Its water privileges are almost without limits, while its other advantages are equally inviting.

The geographical condition of the country is such that, as it becomes settled, an enormous amount of commercial interest must necessarily concentrate here; and, doubtless, a more favorable locality for a city could not be selected upon the Columbia. It is destined to command almost the entire trade of Eastern and Middle Oregon.

The agents of the Hudson Bay Company at present are of great advantage to emigrants. They extend to them every reasonable assistance by selling goods and necessaries on credit at very low prices, and receiving their various products in payment upon most favorable terms. They furnish seed-corn, wheat, potatoes, and other articles of like nature, to the settlers, to be returned in kind at the end of the year, with a small additional amount by way of interest.

This company is equally accommodating in other respects. It affords employment to numbers at a fair compensation, and supplies them with cattle, hogs, horses, and implements of agriculture for their farms. Its agents and factors seem much disposed to encourage the influx of emigrants, and are never backward in evincing a friendly disposition by their acts.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The manufacturing facilities of Oregon. Commercial and agricultural advantages reviewed. Rail Road to the Pacific. Route, mode of travelling, and requisite equipment for emigrants. Importance of Oregon to the United States. Incident in the early history of Fort Hall. Why the Blackfeet are hostile, and bright spots in their character. Mild weather. Leave for the Platte. Journey to the Yampah, and sketch of the intermediate country. New Park. Head of Grand river. The landscape. Different routes to Fort Lancaster. Old Park.

PERHAPS no country is possessed of greater manufacturing facilities than Oregon. Its numberless watercourses, with their frequent falls and rapids, upon every side, point out the sites for mills and factories, while the adjoining forests and hills produce the timber for their construction, and the metal for their machinery; and the plains and valleys, the food for their operatives, and raw materials for their fabrics. The ships of all nations await as their carriers, and render accessible the best markets of the world.

A large portion of the sterile and otherwise valueless lands of the territory might be turned to good account in the growth of wool, and the valleys and bottoms would easily yield exhaustless supplies of flax and hemp. The southwest displays her cotton fields, and the plains and hills hold out their rich stores of timber and minerals; the busy operatives and thrice effective machinery of the flourishing establishments, as yet scarcely hidden from view by the thin veil of futurity, would achieve the transformation of these varied products into broadcloths, linens, calicoes, and other auxiliaries of comfort and utility; while California, with the other provinces of Mexico, the western Republics of South America, the islands of the Pacific, the Northwestern Coast, and the numerous Indian tribes of the interior, impatient to gaze upon the evidences of creative skill, even now stand their willing purchasers.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

With such advantages before her, who might not augur well for the future pre-eminence of Oregon.

But, in other respects, the prospect is still more flattering. Her extensive plains, valleys, and bottoms, need no long lapse of time to transform them into smiling fields; her prairies and hills will then become thronged with countless herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and the beef, pork, and wool of the stock-grower, the butter and cheese of the dairyman, with all the surplus of the farmer, will find an inviting market at the populous manufacturing towns and commercial cities that will have sprung up close around him, nor need he look elsewhere for a more lucrative disposal. An interchange of commodities with China, Japan, South America, the East Indies, and the Polynesian and Australian islands, will pour the wealth of nations into her lap, and swell the opulence of her citizens.

A continuous rail-road, from the Mississippi and the great lakes across the Rocky Mountains to the falls of the Columbia, (a project quite practicable, and even now seriously contemplated,) will open a new channel for commerce, and then our merchantmen and whalers, instead of performing a dangerous homeward-bound voyage of twelve thousand miles, by doubling the southern extremity of Africa, or that of the American continent, will discharge their cargoes at the ports of Oregon for a re-shipment to every part of the Union, and thus unite their aid in the magic work of up-building the Great West.

It is then that the mighty resources of our national confederacy will begin more fully to develop themselves, and exhibit to an admiring world the giant strides of civilization and improvement, when liberty is their birthright, and freemen are their nursing fathers. It needs no prophetic eye to foresee all this, nor the effort of centuries to transform this rough sketch of fancy into a more than sober reality.

The over-land route, from Independence, Mo., to Fort Hall, affords a good waggon-road; but that from Fort Hall to Vancouvre is generally considered impassable for other than pack-animals. It is said, however, that a new route has recently been discovered, by which waggons may be taken, without much difficulty, the entire distance. Should this report prove true, the emigrant may convey everything needed for his comfort during the long journey before him.

Emigrants should never go in companies exceeding one hundred and fifty or two hundred persons. The reason for this is obvious, — they will proceed more harmoniously; there will be less difficulty in obtaining food for their animals; less delays en route; a better opportunity for the procurement of provisions by hunting, and the number is amply sufficient for mutual defence. From my own experience and observation, I would advise the use of pack-mules or horses altogether, instead of waggons. One pack-horse, suitably laden, would convey an ample supply of provisions and other necessaries for two individuals, if recruited by occasional levies upon the game that, in many cases, throng their course.

A company thus equipped, can travel with far greater expedition and even more comfortably. In case of sickness, a litter might easily be constructed for the conveyance of the invalid by affixing to a horse two light poles, some twelve or fifteen feet in length, like the shafts of a wagon, the smaller extremities being fastened to the saddle and the larger ones left to drag upon the ground, while two short pieces placed transversely upon them, astern the horse, present the framework for a bed in which the sufferer may repose or lie at his ease, with as much quiet as the tender object of a mother's care in its infantile cradle.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

A company acting upon the above suggestions (numbering say two hundred) should employ an efficient pilot, with a commandant and sixteen skilful hunters.

Strict regulations for its government must also be adopted and enforced. Each individual should be furnished with a good riding horse or a mule, a good percussion rifle, (bore thirty or thirty-five balls per lb.) ammunition sufficient for five hundred rounds, and a butcher-knife, with pistols and the requisites for procuring fire.

The company should be divided into messes of six each, and one hunter and his assistant should be assigned to every two messes. Each mess should be provided with three pack-mules, exclusively for the transportation of its baggage and provision, and at least one loose animal for extra service.

It should be further furnished with two camp-kettles, a tomahawk, a large tin mess-pan, and a tin-cup and plate for each of its number.

A light tent might also be taken if deemed necessary; though such an article is of little use. A robe and a blanket for bedding, four shirts and a single change of clothes are as much baggage as any individual should think of taking for his own use. By these means his movements will be free and unincumbered, while the whole company pursues its way with ease and rapidity.

On reaching his destination the emigrant may procure everything in the line of dry goods, groceries, and the implements of husbandry, at less prices than in the States; hence the folly of burthening himself with extra baggage for a long and tiresome journey.

The immense importance of Oregon to the United States is doubtless apparent to every one. The facts upon which this inference is based, may be briefly presented as follows:

First. By the occupation of this country we shall secure to our own citizens the best trade of the whole world.

Second. We shall preclude the dangerous supremacy of foreign powers upon our western frontier, and place our relations with the intermediate Indian tribes upon a safer and more permanent footing.

Third. We shall retain to the Union a vast territory, unexcelled in climate, rich in soil, and exhaustless in its various resources; and thus lay open for the general welfare new channels for commerce and fresh fields for enterprise.

Fourth. We shall (in the event of the proposed rail road) greatly enhance the prosperity and wealth of the Western States.

Fifth. We shall prevent the annual sacrifice of an immense amount of life and property in the navigation of a dangerous sea, for a distance of some twelve thousand miles.

Sixth. We shall afford to our whalers and ships engaged in the China and East India trade ports for supplies and repairs, and thus save to ourselves the yearly amounts now paid to foreign nations.

Seventh. We stand in actual need of some point upon the coast of the Pacific as a rendezvous for our navy.

There are many other weighty reasons that might be adduced in support of this inference, but why should we further review the subject? A candid perusal of the preceding pages will have suggested them to the reader's mind without greater amplification on our part.

In conclusion we need only to add, time will usher forth the embryo greatness and glory of Oregon; but whether that greatness shall increase the strength, or that glory commingle with the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

glowing lustre of our Federal Union, while she figures as one in the proud family of States, or whether they, discarded by the fostering hand of maternal care, shall assume the energy of a giant's power and shine with the brightness of innate effulgence as a distinct nation, depends much on the prompt and judicious action of our government upon this momentous subject.

During our stay at Fort Hall an incident connected with its early history was narrated to me, which, as it tends much to illustrate the bold daring and spirit of inbred republicanism possessed by the mass of trapping parties frequenting the mountains, I am tempted to transcribe.

Soon after this post came into the possession of its present owners, several squads, on returning from their regular hunts, rendezvoused in its vicinity.

According to the custom of the Hudson Bay Company on such occasions, the British flag was hoisted in honor of the event. Thereupon the proud mountaineers took umbrage, and forthwith sent a deputation to solicit of the commandant its removal; and, in case he should prove unwilling to comply, politely requesting that, at least, the American flag might be permitted a place by its side. Both of which propositions were peremptorily refused.

Another deputation was then sent announcing that, unless the British flag should be taken down and the stars and stripes raised in its place within two hours, they would take it down by force, if necessary. To this was returned an answer of surly defiance.

At the expiration of the time named the resolute trappers, mustering en masse, appeared before the Fort, under arms, and demanded its immediate surrender.

The gates had already been closed, and the summons was answered by a shot from the bastion. Several shots were forthwith exchanged, but without much damage upon either side; the trappers directing their aim principally at the British flag, while the garrison, feeling ill-disposed to shoot down their own friends in honor of a few yards of parti-colored bunting, elevated their pieces and discharged them into the air.

The result was that the assailants soon forced an entrance, took down and tore in pieces the hated flag, and mounted that of their own country in its stead, amid deafening huzzas and successive rounds of riflery.

The commandant and his sub-cronies, retreating to a room, barricaded the entrance, when the trappers promptly demanded their surrender upon the following terms:

- 1st. The American flag shall occupy its proper place hereafter.
- 2d. The commandant shall treat his captors to the best liquors in his possession.
- 3d. Unless the offenders comply with these conditions, the captors will consider Fort Hall and its contents as lawful plunder and act accordingly.

After a short parley the besieged agreed to a capitulation. In compliance with the second article of the terms, a barrel of whiskey, with sugar to match, was rolled into the yard, where the head was knocked out, and the short but bloodless campaign ended in wild frolicking, as toast after toast was drunk in fancied honor of the American flag, and round after round of responsive cheers told who were they that stood ever ready to proudly hail it and rally beneath its broad folds.

At the time of our visit, there were some sixty men connected with this establishment. These consisted principally of half-breeds and Canadian French, among whom were several who had seen service in the unrelenting war between the whites and Blackfeet that had been so long prosecuted. Many a thrilling story was narrated in connection with the history of this war, none of which more interested me than the following explanation of its origin:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The Blackfeet at first were friendly to the whites, and a very considerable trade in guns and ammunition was carried on with them by the latter. Like most savages, they became great admirers of the potency and use of gunpowder, and were quite curious to ascertain the process by which it could be had independent of the whites. In answer to inquiries, they were informed it was the seed of a species of grain, and might be multiplied in like manner to any extent by cultivation. Accrediting the story and captivated with the idea of raising their own powder, a large quantity was purchased for that purpose, which was carefully planted, in full expectation of an abundant harvest.

Their disappointment at the result will be readily supposed. Denouncing the whites as liars and cheats, they were not slow to avow their meditated revenge.

It needed, however, yet another act of perfidy to work the more perfect transformation of friends into foes. This soon after was consummated as follows:

The Blackfeet and Flatheads met, at an appointed place, for the purpose of trade and the maintenance of friendly relations, as was their annual custom.

During this conference, the head chiefs of the two nations commenced descanting upon the merits and fleetness of their respective horses, which resulted in a banter, a bet, and a race.

The Flatheads, producing two of their fastest chargers, were backed by the Blackfeet in a like number; and, upon the success of the particular favorites, not only the honor of the two nations was staked, but a large amount of other valuables. The race was run, and, the result proving close, both parties claimed the wager.

Upon this a dispute ensued, and finally the whole matter was referred to three white men, by whose decision they agreed to abide. The arbitrators, through mere personal predilection, instead of pronouncing it a tie, as they should have done, awarded the palm to the Flatheads.

The Blackfeet gave in to the decision and relinquished the stakes, but from that day forth avowed themselves the eternal enemies of both whites and Flatheads. This occurrence dated the commencement of an unrelenting war of extermination on their part, nor have they permitted any suitable opportunity of wreaking their vengeance upon the offenders to pass unimproved.

Notwithstanding the bad character generally ascribed to the Blackfeet, they possess traits worthy of admiration. As enemies, they make no disguise of their hostile designs; and though they have been known to meet with parties of whites without coming in collision, and even to smoke with them; yet, on such occasions, they have uniformly declared the armistice a temporary one, and in force only for the time being.

Instances have been known of trappers penetrating into their villages unawares, who received the treatment of guests during their stay, and were allowed to depart unmolested upon expressing their wishes to that effect.

The bright spots in the character of these Indians are more fully developed in the following example:

Several years ago, two trappers, in their excursions for beaver, discovered a Blackfoot engaged in butchering. Thinking the present a favorable opportunity to reduce the number of their enemies, they cautiously approached the unsuspecting operator with the design of affording him a speedy transition to the Spirit Land.

Having advanced within gun-shot, they were almost in the very act of firing, when a casual glance revealed the dusky forms of savages who surrounded them at no great distance, and in such a

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

manner as to preclude all possibility of escape; but as yet, however, the intended victim was ignorant of their presence.

On observing the danger of their situation, they rushed up to him, and, seizing his hands, claimed his protection. The excitement of the moment having subsided, he replied:

“Your lives belong to me, — you might have taken mine; it must not be said that the Blackfoot is ungrateful. Come with me and you are safe.”

Upon this he led the way to the village near by, and made them the guests of his own family.

Everything that generous hospitality could devise for comfort and pleasure, was placed at their disposal. The villagers seemed to vie with each other in their attestation of friendship and good will, and repeatedly solicited them to remain and join the tribe.

However, on expressing a wish to leave, they were escorted for some distance en route, and left to choose their own course of travel, with the parting monition: “We are now friends. — When next we meet it will be as enemies!” [51]

Nov. 20th. Yielding to the solicitations of my comrades demontés, I am again journeying for the Platte. During the brief period of our stay at Fort Hall, we enjoyed mild and agreeable weather, as a general thing; only one inconsiderable fall of snow having occurred meanwhile, and the grass, even yet, in many places, is green and fresh.

Notwithstanding the lateness of the season, we anticipate but little difficulty in crossing the mountains, via New Park and Grand river pass, as the journey has been performed on several occasions in the dead of winter. But, a further stimulant to our hopes is the possession of good mules and horses, which are every way competent to the task before them; my two companions are, also, intimately acquainted with the mountains, and well know how to shape our course to advantage. For the first few days our progress was rapid and uninterrupted. Following the regular trail by way of Bear river, on the 24th we struck Black's fork, a considerable tributary of Green river, and one of several in its neighborhood, down which we continued to its confluence with the main stream; thence, crossing to the east bank, we kept its general course, sometimes by its valley, then again by long detours among the hills, owing to the rugged nature of the country, and in three days subsequent, reached the Yampah, or Little Snake, an affluent from the left.

The intermediate country from Fort Hall to the Yampah has been partially noticed in connection with Oregon and California, and for that reason it will not be expected of me to waste time in repetition.

I need only add, that among the hills we noticed much nude sterility, intermingled with frequent clusters of absinthe, aretmisia (or greasewood, as it is familiarly called,) and bunch-grass, with occasional groves of pine, cedar, and balsam.

In the valleys the grass was yet green, and indicated the presence of winter only by its withered tops. Snow was seen only upon the hills and mountains, and even there in no great quantity.

Game appeared plentiful for most of the distance, particularly black-tailed deer and sheep.

The section of country hereabouts is inhabited by the Snake Indians, from whom the river above referred to derives its name.

This stream heads in the New Park Mountains, and pursues a southwest course for about one hundred miles, receiving in that distance several large tributaries from the east, when it finally discharges itself into Green river, near lat. 41° North.

Crossing the Yampah, we soon struck the Elk Head, or Little Bear, a principal affluent from the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

right, and continuing our course up its valley. After passing a small ridge, on the 30th Nov., we found ourselves upon the head waters of the Platte.

Proceeding by the valley of a creek tributary to the above river. the day following we came to a considerable branch from the south, and camped near its mouth, for the purpose of killing buffalo of which vast numbers thronged the vicinity.

The valleys of the Yampah and Little Bear were broad, in places, with a deep soil of dark, sandy loam, and tolerably well timbered.

The country contiguous to them was rugged and generally sterile; the soil, with the exception of the creek bottoms, being shallow and sandy, and infested with extensive fields of absinthe.

By the way we passed a fort, formerly occupied by a company of trappers under the command of Frapp, near which himself and four other whites were killed in an engagement with the Sioux some two years since. The Indians lost fifteen or twenty of their warriors in killed and wounded, but succeeded in driving off eighty head of horses as their booty.

Among the rocks of the hills I noticed frequent clusters of larb, richly laden with its deep red berry,[52] both tempting to the eye and pleasing to the taste.

On reaching the Platte we were ushered into a large and beautiful circular valley, known as the New Park.

This valley is thirty-five miles in width by thirty in breadth, and is shut in upon all sides by lofty mountains, whose summits tower far above the snow-line and sport their white-caps through each returning year. It is well watered by numerous streams that trace their course from the neighboring heights to commingle with the Platte.

The river makes its exit from this place by a forced passage through narrow defiles, between the Medicine Bow and New Park Mountains, forming a cañon several miles in length, defined by precipitous walls, varying in height from fifty to six hundred feet.

The New Park valley affords considerable timber of various kinds, and fertile soil, well adapted to cultivation. The superface is usually a thick mould, compounded of clay, sand, and gravel, with decomposed vegetable matter; while the bottoms disclose a rich alluvion of two or three feet depth. The entire country was crowded with game, in countless numbers, both of buffalo, elk, and deer. It seemed as though a general ingathering from mountain, hill, and plain, had taken place to winter in this chosen spot.

It is said the great abundance of game first suggested the christening of the locality as the New Park.

We remained in our encampment till the 5th of December, and improved the interval in procuring a choice supply of meat, and feasting upon those delicious viands which mountaineers so well know how to acquire and dispose of.

The day preceding our departure, a fall of snow covered the ground for several inches, but the lapse of a few hours served to disclose the bare vegetation of the valleys, and denuded spots upon the mountain sides.

Again en route, we continued up a large stream from the south and struck into a broad trail, which led through large openings and forests of aspen across the main mountain chain, to the waters of Grand river, into a beautiful valley known as the Old Park, where we remained encamped the two days subsequent.

Our nearest route to Fort Lancaster would have been by C ache a la Poudre, or Long's Peak; but,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

accumulating snows admonished us to abandon the Atlantic side of the mountains for a more southern latitude.

The country in the vicinity of the Old Park is highly interesting. It embraces a large tract of fertile territory, well watered and timbered, but more or less undulating, and is hemmed in by high mountains, which are clothed with lateral forests of pine, cedar, and aspen.

This valley ranges from east to west; and, heading at the base of Long's Peak, finds its opposite extremity at the cañon by which Grand river merges through the opposing barriers of mountain spurs.

The Old Park also, like the New, receives its appellation from the great abundance of game for which it is celebrated.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

From Grand river to Bayou Salâde. Observations by the way. Description of the Bayou. Voracity of magpies. Journey to Cherry creek. Country en route. Crystal creek. Abundance of game. Antelope hunting. Remarkable sagacity of wolves. Snow storms and amusement. Ravens. Move camp. — Comfortable winter quarters. Animal food conducive to general health and longevity. A laughable instance of sound sleeping. Astonishing wolfine rapacity. Beaver lodges and all about beaver. Hunting excursion. Vasques' creek, its valleys, table lands, mountains, and prairies. Camp. Left alone. Sensations, and care to avoid danger. A nocturnal visitor. Thrilling adventure and narrow escape. A lofty specimen of "gettin down stairs." Geological statistics.

WHILE camped at the Old Park, I improved the opportunity for ranging among the adjacent mountains, whose stern recesses disclosed many smiling beauty-spots. The weather continued pleasant, though somewhat colder than usual; and, notwithstanding the snow in places lay quite deep, it had acquired great solidity and compactness.

On the 10th of December we were again under way.

Crossing Grand river and continuing up a southern tributary, through a narrow defile of mountains, to a large valley formed at the junction of three principal branches, known as La Bonté's hole, and choosing the middle one, we proceeded to its head, —thence, passing the dividing ridge by a well-beaten buffalo trail, to the right of Long's Peak, on the 16th we reached Bayou Salâde, another extensive valley at the head of the South Fork of the Platte. Here, selecting a good camping place in a beautiful grove of aspen, we remained till the 19th inst.

This last stage of our journey proved difficult and tedious. Although the passing throngs of buffalo had afforded a well-marked trail, our horses frequently became so mired in snow we were compelled to extricate them by main strength, —two or three storms, in the mean time, having increased the quantity to an average depth of twelve or fourteen inches.

The valleys and sunny hill-sides, however, were generally bare, and afforded some agreeable respites to the toil of travelling.

The prevailing rock appeared to be granite, mica slate, and sandstone. The soil of the valleys gave evidence of fertility, as did occasional spots upon the hill-sides.

The streams were most of them skirted with cottonwood, aspen, and box elder, while the hills and mountains presented frequent groves of pine and cedar.

Game, in all the different varieties common to the country, was seen in great abundance the entire

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

route.

Bayou Salâde is a valley some thirty-five miles long by fifteen wide, bounded upon all sides by lofty mountain chains, with the exception of the south, where a broad stretch of high, rugged hills and rolling prairies separates it from the Arkansas.

The Platte, on emerging from this place, makes its final entrance into the grand prairie by a narrow gorge in the mountain chain that extends to a distance of several miles. Upon the southeast, the frowning summits of Pike's Peak tower to a height of 12,500 feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico, and upon the west the continuous chain of the Green Mountains, clothed in eternal snow, point skyward in solemn grandeur.

The numerous streams that find their sources in the neighborhood are well timbered, and present many interesting bottoms of rich alluvial soil.

The valley is densely thronged with buffalo, while vast quantities of deer, elk, and antelope unite to increase the number and variety of its game.

The weather at this time proved uncomfortably cold. Snow lying upon the ground to the depth of several inches, we were necessitated to feed our horses upon cottonwood bark during the interim. Bayou Salâde bears the name of being subject to severe winters, but whether correctly or not, I am unable to say. It is undoubtedly well adapted to stock-raising, and, were it not for unseasonable frosts, might be turned to good account for agricultural purposes.

The magpies were more troublesome and audacious in their depredations hereabouts, than in any place we had yet visited. Two mules, whose backs had become sore from continued service under the saddle, were severely annoyed by these relentless persecutors, which, despite opposing effort, would pierce the skinless flesh with their beaks and feast upon their agonizing victims.

To save the poor sufferers from being devoured alive, we were compelled to envelope them with thick coverings of buffalo robes, and even then the rapacious cormorants could scarcely be prevented from renewing their cruel repast.

Dec. 19th. Again resuming our journey, we continued in a southeast direction, over a low ridge of hills, and found ourselves in a very rough country, interspersed with frequent valleys which head several well timbered affluents of the Arkansas;—thence, passing around the southern extremity of a lofty mountain range, we struck *Fontaine qui Bouit* a few miles below the Soda spring.

Crossing this stream, we travelled north by west, following the mountain ridge at its base for some forty miles, which brought us to the Platte;—thence, keeping the river bottom, on the 28th we made camp at Cherry creek, a short distance above its mouth.

The interesting and romantic country in the vicinity of Pike's Peak and *Fontaine qui Bouit* has already been described in full, and needs but one passing remark in attestation of the mildness of its climate, viz: the ground was free from snow, and afforded occasional spots of green grass. Near this place we encountered a small hunting party of Arapaho Indians, and obtained from them a choice supply of fresh meat.

The interval from the Soda spring to the Platte, after passing the high, towering and isolated walls of red granitic sandstone to the northward, betrays a mixed character of wildness and beauty. The vast forests of stately pines, surmounting the long rolling hills to the right, which are relieved as the traveller advances by high table lands and quadrangular-shaped eminences that disclose their bare sides, ever and anon graced with lateral cedars and dwarf oaks; and then the heaven-scaling summits that, in continuous chain, oppose an impregnable wall upon the left, unite to define a

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

broad-spread of undulating prairie, some eight or ten miles wide, well watered and possessed of a good soil.

The prevailing rock of this section appeared to be sandstone and limestone, intermixed with conglomerates of various kinds.

I noticed two or three small ridges, several miles long, running parallel with the mountains at regular distances, in an uninterrupted course, presenting continued lines of thin strata planted vertically in their sharp crests, and reaching to an elevation of thirty or forty feet, that, with broken fragments encumbering their sides, looked like the half-fallen walls of some ancient fortification. Among several affluents of the Platte from the right, we crossed Crystal creek, a stream which derives its name from the existence of crystal in its sandy bed. This creek is tolerably well timbered and possesses a rich bottom of variable width, producing at the proper season a luxuriant growth of vegetation.

Our horses being quite enfeebled from the fatigue of travel, we gladly availed ourselves of the presence of buffalo to prolong our stay at Cherry creek some ten days, and meanwhile found no difficulty in procuring a continued feast of good things from the dense herds that thronged the country upon every side.

The severe weather and frequent snows of the past two months, had driven these animals from the open prairie into the creek bottoms and mountains, whose vicinities were completely blackened with their countless thousands.

The antelope, too, seemed to have congregated from all parts, and covered the country in one almost unbroken band. Their numbers exceeded any thing of the kind I ever witnessed before or since. We amused ourselves at times in shooting them merely for their skins, the latter being superior to those of deer or even sheep in its nicety of texture and silky softness.

One day, as was my custom, I left camp for the above purpose, and had proceeded but a short distance, when, happening upon a large band of antelope, a discharge from my piece brought down one of its number.

Before reaching it, however, my supposed victim had rejoined his companions, and the whole throng were lost to view almost with the speed of thought.

The profuseness of blood that marked its trail through the snow, induced me to follow it in expectation of soon obtaining the object of my pursuit; but in vain.

At length, after travelling four or five miles, I began to despair of success, and, feeling weary, sat down upon the point of a small hill that commanded a view of the surrounding prairie. While here an unusual stir among the wolves attracted my attention, and I amused myself by watching their movements.

Upon a neighboring eminence some fifty or a hundred of these insatiate marauders were congregated, as if for consultation. Adjoining this, two parallel lines of low hills led out from the river bottom into the prairie, for five or six miles, defining a narrow valley, at the extremity of which a large band of antelope were quietly grazing.

The chief topic of the wolfine conference seemed to have particular reference to this circumstance; for, in a very short time, the council dispersed, and its members betook to the hills skirting the valley before described, and, stationing themselves upon both lines at regular intervals, two of them commenced the attack by leisurely approaching their destined prey from opposite directions, in such a manner as to drive the whole band between the defile of hungry expectants.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

This done, the chase began without further preliminary.

Each wolf performed his part by pursuing the terrified antelope till relieved by his next companion, and he by the succeeding one; and so on, alternately; taking care to reverse their course at either extremity of the defile — again and again to run the death-race, until, exhausted by the incessant effort and crazed with terror, the agile animals, that were wont to bid defiance to the swiftest steed, and rival the storm-wind in fleetness, fell easy victims to the sagacity of their enemies. I watched the operation until several of them yielded their lifeless carcasses to appease the appetite of their rapacious pursuers, when I returned to camp with far more exalted ideas of the instinctive intelligence of wolves (savoring so strongly of reason and calculation) than I had previously entertained.

Two or three severe snow-storms occurred shortly after our arrival; but having constructed commodious shantees in regular mountain style, with large fires in front, we were both dry and comfortable.

These occasions, too, afforded their own amusement. Snugly stowed away in bed, with our rifles at hand, whenever a straggling wolf ventured within gun-shot, in fond hopes of a deserted camp, he was almost sure to fall a victim to his own temerity.

Bands of five or ten would frequently approach almost to the camp-fire, totally unsuspecting of danger till the sharp crack of a rifle told the fall of some one of their number.

A swarm of ravens, allured by the carcasses of these animals, peopled the grove near by. Having devoured the timely feast, still the poor birds remained, making the day dismal with their tireless croakings, as if in importunate supplication for a further boon.

Three of them soon became quite domesticated, and would approach fearlessly to the very verge of the camp-fire in quest of the offals of our culinary department.

One, however, by far exceeded his two companions in boldness, and would venture within a few feet of us at any time. So audacious was his conduct, and so insatiate his appetite, his comrades took occasion to bestow upon him frequent chastisements; but all to no purpose. At length, abandoning all hope of effecting the desired reformation, they set upon the offending bird, nor relinquished their purpose till the life of the luckless gormandizer had expiated the crime of his unravenlike conduct, and his executioners were left to enjoy their daily repasts without the annoyance of his presence.

Jan. 16th, 1843. Having received an accession of three men to our number, from Fort Lancaster, we removed some six or eight miles further down the Platte, and camped in a large grove of cottonwood upon the right bank.

At this place it was our daily practice to fell two or three small trees for our horses, as we now considered ourselves fully established in winter quarters. Game was plenty, and wood abundant; nothing, therefore, remained for us to do but to recruit our horses, eat of the best the prairie afforded, drink of the crystal waters that rolled by our side, and enjoy life in true mountain style; nor did we neglect the opportunity of so doing. In fact, had the world been searched over, it would have been hard to find a jollier set of fellows than we.

The effort of a few hours was sufficient to procure a month's supply of the choicest delicacies, nor is it marvelous that, to use a cant phrase of the country, we soon became "fat, ragged, and saucy." Perhaps nothing is more conducive to good health than animal food. In proof of this I need only to refer to the uniform good health of those subsisting entirely upon it.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Sickness of any kind is rarely known to the various Indian tribes confined exclusively to its use. These people almost invariably live to an extraordinary age, unless cut off by the ravages of war or some unforeseen event. Consumption, dyspepsy, colds, and fevers, are alike strangers to them. The same observation holds good in regard to the whites who reside in this country and subsist in a similar manner.

I have known confirmed cases both of consumption and dyspepsy cured by visiting these regions and submitting exclusively to this mode of living.

For my own part, I felt not the least indisposed during the entire period of my stay, nor did I even hear of an instance of death from natural causes in the mean time, and but rarely of a case of sickness, however slight. The same also has been repeatedly remarked in my hearing by persons who have resided here for ten or twelve years, and whose united experience corroborates my own.

A further fact, relative to the teeth, is worthy of note in connection with this subject. These never suffer by decay or aches, when employed only in the mastication of flesh; or, at least, I have never seen or heard of an instance of the kind.

I am, therefore, led to conclude from the foregoing facts, that animal food is in every respect the most wholesome and innocent diet which can be adopted.

A person in the enjoyment of good health and a quiet mind, generally sleeps sound. In proof that such was the case — with our party, I need only advert to a circumstance which here occurred.

Having awoke one moonshiny night, and observing an unusual number of wolves in the vicinity of camp, I seized my rifle and shot one of them; soon after I improved the opportunity to lay another prostrate, and in a few minutes subsequent a third fell in like manner; all at three several shots.

A continuation of the sport seemed likely to detract too much from the hours of sleep, and so, placing the victims in front of the camp-fire, I addressed myself to repose.

A light snow fell in the interval, and sunrise found us all in bed, patiently waiting to see who would have the courage to rise first. At length, one man jumped up and turned to renew the fire. On noticing the wolves before it he wheeled for his rifle, in his eagerness to secure which he fell sprawling at full length.

“Hello!” says one; “what’s the matter, my boy. Is that are a sample of the ups and downs of life?”

“Matter?” exclaimed our hero, gathering himself up in double-quick time, and rushing for his gun; “matter enough! The cursed wolves have grown so bold and saucy, that they come to the fire to warm themselves! Only look! A dozen or more of ‘em are there now, in broad day-light! Get up, quick! and let’s kill ‘em!”

Aroused by this extraordinary announcement, the whole posse were instantly on their feet to repel the audacious invaders; when, lo! the cause of alarm proved three dead carcasses.

But, where did they come from? When were they killed? Who placed them there? These were questions none were able to solve, and in regard to which all were profoundly ignorant. Finally, the circumstance occasioned quite an animated discussion, which was soon merged into angry dispute; and, after amusing myself awhile at their expense, I unravelled the mystery, to the surprise of all.

“Can it be possible!” was the general exclamation, — “can it be possible that we should have slept so sound as not to hear the report of a rifle fired three times in succession, and under our very ears, at that!”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“This reminds me,” said one, “of dreaming that somebody fired during the night. But it seemed so much like other dreams I had forgotten it till now.”

“Well,” retorted a second, “we are a pretty set of customers to live in a dangerous country! Why, a single Indian might have come into camp and killed the whole of us, one after another, with all the ease imaginable!”

The above incident induced the narration of a circumstance, happening to an individual of my acquaintance two or three weeks previous.

He had been into the mountains after deer, and was on his return to the Fort for a fresh supply of ammunition, and, having occasion to camp out at night, like a genuine mountaineer, he took his saddle for a pillow. This, being covered with raw hide, excited the cupidity of a marauding wolf. The hungry beast felt ill-disposed to let slip an opportunity thus favorable for appeasing his appetite with a dry morsel, and so, gently drawing it from beneath the head of the unconscious sleeper, he bore off his prize to devour it at his leisure.

In the morning our hero awoke minus saddle, and nothing save a number of wolf-tracks at his bead furnished clue to the mystery of its disappearance; and, after spending several hours in fruitless search, neither hide or hair of it could be found.

In the river bank near camp were two lodges of beaver, whose sagacious occupants gave frequent indications of their industrious habits by the magnitude of their performances. Several trees, ten or twelve inches in diameter, had been freshly felled by them to furnish their families with food. In such operations they exhibit an instinctive intelligence well-nigh approaching to reason. They uniformly select trees that stand above their lodges, in order to avail themselves of the current in conveying their timber to the destined place of deposit.

When a tree is thus chosen, the cautious little animal first carefully notices the point towards which its top inclines, and then sets himself to work at the opposite side. As his task approaches its completion, he frequently retires a short distance to observe the direction in which the tree is likely to fall, by watching its motions, and renews his labors with great caution. Upon the first indication of the finale, like an experienced woodsman, he instantly withdraws beyond the reach of danger, and leaves the tottering forest-monarch to announce his fallen greatness in the awful crash by which he is bespread upon the ground.

The process of chopping is then performed by severing the trunk into blocks, some three feet in length, suitable for transportation, which are severally taken to the “slide” and rolled into the stream, by the cunning animal — using his tail as a substitute for hands. As they fall one after another, he plunges in and guides them to their destination, where they are safely moored for future use.

The beaver possesses great strength in his tail, which is twelve or fifteen inches long, four broad, and a half inch thick. This part of the animal is highly esteemed by trappers, and assimilates a fish in taste, though it is far superior to any of the finny tribe.

His teeth are very sharp, (incisors,) two inches or more in length, perfectly round and of a uniform size, with the exception of the cutting extremities, which are gouge-like, about the eighth of an inch in diameter, and nearly in the shape of a semicircle.

Beaver lodges are commonly constructed in holes carefully excavated in the banks of streams, in such a manner that the entrances are entirely covered by water. It is very rarely they build in any other manner, notwithstanding most writers upon this subject assert the contrary.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The female usually produces two, and sometimes three, at a birth, but seldom rears more than one; — first destroying the least likely, she bestows much attention upon her favorite offspring, and nurses it with great tenderness.

The character and habits of this curious animal, in other respects, have probably met the reader's eye through other sources, so that a more extended notice under this head would be unnecessary. Having procured a fresh supply of ammunition from Fort Lancaster, some two weeks succeeding our arrival at this place I visited the mountains on a hunting excursion, in company with a single voyageur.

Our course lead up Vasque's creek for fifteen or twenty miles, to a ridge of high table land, through which we passed, by a circuitous route, and were ushered into a broad and beautiful valley, bounded upon the east by the ridge before named, and on the west by a lofty mountain chain. Vasque's creek is well timbered, and has a rich bottom, averaging one mile in breadth, and is skirted by a slightly undulating prairie, quite productive in various kinds of grasses.

This creek is from eight to ten yards wide, and affords a body of water more than a foot in depth. It heads in the main chain of the mountains, where it claims a valley of considerable extent, enclosed upon all sides by lofty ridges that preclude the possibility of approach, except a two points marking an Indian pass to the waters of Grand river.

From thence it winds its way between long defiles of mountains, that close in abruptly upon its very water's edge, till it finally intersects the valley first spoken of, and forces itself through the high ridge of table land into the open prairie.

Finding an abundance of deer in the vicinity, we struck camp and made it our hunting-ground for the time being. Our efforts were very successful, and seldom a favorable day passed without giving us the skins and choice parts of two or more deer.

Nothing occurred to mar our enjoyment for the first two or three weeks, at which time my comrade, having unfortunately broken his gun-lock, was compelled to return to the Fort for repairs. I resolved, however, to remain solo, despite his entreaties to the contrary.

This was the first trial I ever made of hermit-life, and I must confess, that after the first sensations of repulsive loneliness had been overcome, I felt much attached to it, as subsequent pages will prove.

Yet there was something so forbidding in the idea of my real situation, I seldom reverted to it without experiencing feelings of gloomy apprehension. Nor need it be wondered at, removed as I was far away from friendly aid, and in a dangerous country, with a thousand terrific scenes awaiting me at every step.

Still, in a little time I learned to forget all this, and roamed as freely by day, and slept as soundly by night, as though surrounded by friends and guarded by hosts of armed men.

But the reader must not infer from these remarks that I had settled down in a state of careless security, for I took especial care at all times to avoid surprise, by close attention to certain indications which my own observation had taught me to regard as the general precursors of danger from a savage foe, in order, by a timely movement, to escape a contact so fraught with peril.

For several nights I had a constant visitor in the shape of a prairie-fox, a creature about twice the size of a large red squirrel. He came to appease his hunger from the small scraps of esculents that lay scattered about camp, — devouring them while seated composedly by the fire.

My stock of provisions was usually secured, at night, by substituting it for a pillow; but Mr. Rey-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

nard soon became so emboldened that he repeatedly took occasion to help himself, even at the risk of sundry cuffs it was my wont to bestow upon him whenever his eagerness led him to deal too roughly with my hair.

Two incidents of perilous adventure occurred during this interval, which are perhaps not unworthy of narration.

One day, having proceeded farther from camp than was my custom without finding game, towards night I came to the broad escarp of a mountain, covered with scattering pines, and ascended to its summit in hopes of encountering deer or sheep, as the place gave indications of both. Here I stood at the very verge of a vast precipice, some four or five hundred feet high, overlooking a narrow valley, counter-scarped by a rough mountain chain, where a large band of elk were quietly grazing. The sight appeared so tempting I was unwilling to forego the opportunity of giving them a passing shot.

But how to get at them was the question. To go around the hill would require a detour of some six miles, and consume too much time, as the day was fast closing. Unless some means could be found enabling me to descend the wall, it was evident I must abandon my design.

Accordingly, after a short search, having found a ravine-like pass, worn by the rains and falling rock, that apparently led to the valley below, I attempted a descent.

The breakage was steep and narrow, and the loose fragments and detritus from the crags above, rendered a foot-hold quite insecure. Yet I progressed without much difficulty, and began to congratulate myself on an anticipated speedy exit from seeming danger, when, coming suddenly to an abrupt precipice, of sixty or seventy feet perpendicular descent, and paved far around its base with sharp rocks presenting their keen edges like so many hatchets set on end, I was thrown all aback at the appalling spectacle.

In vain I tried to retrace my steps. The sides refused to sustain my weight, and the yielding surface, to which I clung with a death-like tenacity, threatened every moment to plunge me headlong from the frightful steep, to be dashed in pieces among the rocks below.

That moment was an awful one! Retreat was impossible, — advance was certain death, — the time for reflection was fast waning, for every instant brought me nearer and still nearer to the fatal verge!

It was then I bestowed a fleeting thought upon loved and absent friends, — one fleeting thought upon a far distant home and all the cherished endearments of childhood, — and, commending my soul to the Great Author of its existence in a brief prayer, I turned to gaze calmly upon the yawning jaws of fate that awaited my speedy destruction.

But here a ray of hope burst from the thick cloud which till now seemed just ready to merge the sun of existence into the density of its own darkness.

A tall pine grew at the base of the precipice, some fifty yards distant, two narrow shelves of protruding rock, six or seven feet apart, led towards the tree, affording a sufficient hold for hands and feet to a person standing at full length.

My decision was instantly formed. Carefully dropping my rifle from the steep, by dint of great exertion I gained the shelves, that seemed as if made expressly for an occasion like the present; — then, by moving laterally, inch by inch, along the dizzy side, in a short time I had progressed to the tree, whose topmost branch lay just within my reach. Grasping this firmly in one hand, and disengaging the other to be used as the emergency might require, I threw myself backward among

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the surrounding boughs, and, lodging in safety, was left to descend at leisure the remaining distance.

Once more upon a sure footing, the occurrences of the day had proved a sufficient gorge to present ambition; so, seizing my rifle, (which had luckily fallen uninjured.) I bade farewell to the unconscious elk and returned to camp. There, with early night I found myself transported to the land of dreams in the drowsy car of sleep.

But, instead of wild beasts and prowling savages thirsting for blood, such as the danger of my lonely situation would naturally inspire, my mind was filled with visions of deep chasms, frightful precipices, and yawning steeps, that seemed to meet me at every turn, affording no possible way of escape; and thrice glad was I when wakeful morning chased these horrid phantoms far away, and revealed to me the welcome reality of conscious safety.

Soon after the adventure above related, another transpired of a somewhat similar nature.

The rugged mountain chain forming the western boundary of the valley, afforded numerous black-tailed deer and sheep. The skills of these animals being much larger than those of the common deer and antelope, I was induced to scour the vicinity, occasionally, in pursuit of them.

One day, having gone to a considerable distance on this errand, I was passing along upon the crest of a sharp peak, of great height and steep sides.

The ridge ranged from northwest to southeast, leaving upon its right side a vast spread of smooth snow, encrusting it from summit to base, and upon its left, a lateral vallon, entirely bare and graced with frequent spots of grass, as yet green and flourishing.

One of these niches was occupied by a band of wild sheep, which were so situated they could not be successfully approached, unless from the opposite side of the peak. Attempting this, I was proceeding slowly along, by means of steps implanted in the thick crust with the breech of my rifle, and had almost attained the point designed, when, losing foot-hold, I fell prostrate, and, after gliding the distance of a full mile, almost with the speed of thought, found myself immersed in a huge bank of loose snow, at the foot of the mountain.

It is all nonsense to talk of steam-boats and rail-road cars, in comparison with the velocity of such a lofty specimen of "gettin down stairs!" Few mortals, I may venture to say, ever got along in the world half so fast as did myself in this grand avalanche from the mountain-top.

The country contiguous to this valley is generally possessed of a very good soil, both in the prairies, table lands, and mountains. Bordering upon the watercourses, the surface discloses a deep mould of sand and gravel, exceedingly fertile, reposed upon a substratum of granite and micaceous sandstone; the prairies presented a mixed superface of sand, clay, and gravel, rather thin and light, and strongly impregnated with various salts, and the table lands, a compound of stiff clay, stone, and gravel, partially enriched by the fertilizing properties of vegetable and animal matter and the genial auxiliaries of disintegrated rock, with now and then a diminutive spot destitute of grass or herb and whitened by a thin coating of saline efflorescence.

The prevailing rock is sandstone, granite, gneiss, limestone, and large boulders of the primitive formation.

The only indication of minerals, so far as my observation extended, was that of iron, though doubtless due research would bring to light a rich supply of other valuable ores.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

CHAPTER XXIX.

Return to the Fort. Texan recruiting officer. New plans. Volunteer. The Chance Shot; or Special Providence. Texan camp. Country contiguous to the Arkansas, from Fontaine qui Bouit to the Rio de las Animas. Things at rendezvous. A glance at the company. Disposal of force. March up the de las Animas. The country; Timpa valley, and its adjoining hills, to the de las Animas. The latter stream; its cañon, valley and enchanting scenery. Tedious egress. Unparalleled suffering from hunger, toil, and cold. Wolf flesh and buffalo hide. Painful consequences of eating cacti. A feast of mule meat after seven days' starvation. Camp at the Taos trail. The adjacent country. Strict guard. A chase. The meet reward for treason.

ON the 16th of Feb., my stock of ammunition having failed, I proceeded to Fort Lancaster for a fresh supply, where I encountered a Texan recruiting officer, sporting a Colonel's commission, that bore the signature of "Sam Houston," President of the Republic.

The object of this personage was to raise a company of volunteer riflemen, to act in conjunction with a large force said to be then on its way for the invasion of Santa Fe. The main design of the expedition was to annoy the Mexican frontier, intercept their trade, and force them, if possible, to some terms by which a peace might be secured between the two countries.

The proposed rifle-company was to be vested with discretionary powers, and perform the duties of a scouting party to the main army. Each of its members was to be regularly enlisted for the term of nine months, — armed with a good rifle and pistols, and mounted upon a stout, serviceable horse.

Great inducements, by way of promises, were also held out, to secure a prompt and ready enlistment; and, in fact, the whole affair was represented in a light so favorable, few possessed of the necessary means for equipping themselves refused to enter their names upon the muster-roll, and rally beneath the banner of the Lone Star.

One thing, however, served to awaken in the bosom of each the genuine martial spirit, more than all the eloquence of the fluent Colonel;— this was the unfurlment of the identical flag, bullet-pierced and tattered, that had stood as the genius of victory at the sanguinary battle of Corpus Christi, in the early days of the Texan revolution.

Who could refuse to respond favorably to a call backed by arguments so potent? — not I.

Soon after Colonel Warfield, for such was the officer's name, set out on his return to the scene of intended operations, accompanied by some twelve or fifteen men, having named for his rendezvous a point within the Mexican territory, near the confluence of the Rio de las Animas and the waters of the Arkansas. Circumstances were such at the time it was inconvenient for me to leave, and eight or ten days intervened before my departure to join the expedition.

Meanwhile, it stormed almost incessantly, and the prairies presented naught save one vast expanse of gloomy desolation covered with deep and trackless snow.

The distance to be travelled was not far from two hundred miles, through a country inhabited only by wild beasts and strolling savages. Yet, nothing daunted by the cheerless aspect of affairs, having completed my arrangements, I improved the first fair day to launch forth upon the drear waste.

Relying upon the great abundance of game usually encountered en route, I took but a small supply of provisions, as, fully equipped, with rifle, pistols, butcher-knife, and other requisites, I mounted my horse, and, solitary and alone, commenced the long journey before me.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Hurrying on as fast as the nature of the case would admit, in the afternoon of the second day, an object, several miles in advance, arrested my attention. Suspicious of danger, but anxious to know its character and extent, I cautiously approached and was gratified to find it, instead of the lurking savage my imagination had depicted, a white man, hastening with eagerness to greet me.

He was on foot, and looked way-worn and weary to a deplorable extent. His story was soon told. He was the bearer of dispatches from the Arkansas to Colonel Warfield, — and being compelled to abandon his mule by the way, on account of the depth of snow, had proceeded thus far on foot, and, for the last three days had been without eating, in the tedious performance of the duty committed to his trust.

Hearing this, I invited him to a creek near by, where I immediately struck camp, and laid before him my small stock of eatables, with the assurance it was at his disposal. The speedy disappearance of the scanty supply, attested the keenness of his appetite, and left us both in a state of utter want.

On learning that Colonel W. had left for the Arkansas several days since, and now most probably had reached his destination, my new acquaintance concluded to retrace his steps and bear me company.

The next morning we arose breakfastless and resumed our journey, trusting to a kind Providence and our rifles to meet the demands of nature. But the snow became deeper the farther we advanced, and prospect more and more gloomy at every step.

Not a living creature presented itself to view, nor even the least vestige of any thing possessing the breath of life. Before and around lay a vast spread of winter-bleached desolation, bounded upon our right by the distant mountains, whose towering summits pierced the blue heavens and laughed at the clouds and storms below, while in front, and rear, and on our left, the curving horizon alone gave limit to vision.

Still hope bade us advance, although difficulties continued to multiply in threefold ratio. The second and third day our progress did not exceed twelve miles, and yet we had gone so far retreat or advance seemed alike hopeless.

Starvation stared us in the face, and continued travel through snow oftentimes waist deep, reduced our strength and wasted our spirits.

On the fourth day, however, the weather having become more favorable, we were enabled to make further headway than the preceding one. We also saw a few ravens, but they, as if conscious of our desperate condition, cautiously avoided coming within gun-shot;— a big rabbit likewise showed itself in the distance, but; being at the top of its speed, disappeared almost as soon as seen;— thus we were again doomed to go supperless to bed and feast upon the well-furnished tables of dreams, which, though they please the fancy during their continuance, serve only to increase the appetite and stimulate its cravings.

On the morning, of the fifth day, as we arose to continue our journey, determined to hold out as long as possible, the haggard looks of my comrade excited my compassion, and wishing to cheer him, I observed,

“Well, what would you think were I to predict for us a good supper tonight?”

“Really,” said he, “I don’t know. But there’s a poor show for its fulfillment, any how.”

“We shall have one, I know it.”

“God send we may. But, pray, where is it to come from.”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“I am quite confident we shall find game. If so, as my rifle bears the name of Old Straightener, and it has never been known to fail in a case of emergency, I know she will maintain her ancient honor.”

“What if we don’t find game? Then how?”

“Why, here’s my horse. It will be of no service to me if I am to die from starvation. In case we find nothing, its carcase shall save our lives.”

“Horse meat or any thing else wouldn’t go bad, just at this time.”

Thus resolved, we continued our way, plodding along in gloomy silence, brooding over the sad realities of our deplorable situation, —ever and anon, scanning the vacant expanse, in the fast-waning hope of looked-for relief, — but as yet looked for in vain.

The day was fast verging to a close, and I was summoning a sufficiency of fortitude to submit to the sacrifice of my favorite beast, and ruminating upon the many difficulties and inconveniences that must result from such a step, volving and revolving all the pros and cons the case admitted of, when I was roused from my reverie by the shrill voice of my comrade, who joyfully exclaimed, “Look!—look! A buffalo!”—at the same time pointing in the direction it appeared.

I looked, and sure enough a venerable old bull presented himself a few hundred yards to the right. “Aye, aye, my hearty! There’s a chance for Old Straightener!” said I, as, lowering my rifle, I started towards the intended victim.

“ Don’t forget,” cried my comrade, “that all my hopes of salvation are centred in your rifle-ball.”

The animal was feeding quietly, and I was enabled to approach within some sixty yards of him, when levelling, I pulled trigger, —but the cap, being damp, burst without a discharge. The noise caught the quick ear of the buffalo, and caused him to look round;— however, seeing nothing to excite his alarm, he soon resumed an employment more agreeable to his taste than needless vigilance.

Having put fresh powder into the tube, and supplied it with another cap I was again raising to take aim, and had brought my piece nearly half shoulderward, when it unceremoniously discharged itself, burying its ball in the lights of the buffalo —the very spot I should have selected had it been optional with myself. The old fellow staggered a few steps and fell dead!

My companion coming up, we soon completed the process of butchering, and, after furnishing ourselves with an ample supply of choice beef, proceeded to a neighboring creek, where, finding a few sticks of drift-wood, a fire was quickly kindled, and we ended our fast of five successive days and nights with feasting and glad hearts.

I have always regarded this event as a special Providence, and ever revert to it with no ordinary feelings of gratitude. Had the ball, thus accidentally discharged, missed the animal, or had it only wounded him, in all human probability, becoming alarmed at the presence of danger, and prompted by the instinct common to the species, he would soon have been beyond the reach of pursuit, leaving me to the dernier resort of slaughtering my horse or perishing among the snows and chill blasts of the prairie.

Enfeebled as we were from continued toil and suffering, we could have scarcely held out a day longer, and even the partial relief afforded by a poor supply of horse flesh, left, as we would have been, to travel on foot and carry our beds, guns, and provisions, must have served only to prolong our miseries a brief space, finally to meet the inevitable fate that threatened us! as this solitary buffalo was the only living creature that met our view during the entire journey.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

I have never consented to dispose of the rough-looking piece long previously christened "Old Straightener," and, when asked the reason, have uniformly replied, "It is the only gun I ever saw or heard of that has killed game of its own accord!

The second day succeeding this occurrence, my companion left me to obtain his mule, and I completed the remainder of my journey alone, —arriving the appointed rendezvous late in the afternoon of the 20th of March.

The country travelled over, from the Platte to the Arkansas, near the mouth of Fontaine qui Bouit, has been fully described in former pages.

My route, from the mouth of this stream, followed the Arkansas for some forty miles. The landscape, back from the river-bottoms, was quite undulating, presenting upon the left a superface of gravel, clay, and sand, mixed with vegetable matter; and, upon the right, a light, sandy soil, somewhat sterile and unproductive.

Many rich spots of a deep bluish loam meet the eye of the traveller, interspersed with spreads of naked sand, or clay whitened by exuding salts, or clothed in dwarfish grass; among which numerous clusters of absinthe, frequently five or six feet high, are seen in almost every direction.

The country, as a general thing, is evidently ill-adapted to other than grazing purposes.

Two broad beds of sand-creeks are passed upon the left, a few miles below Fontaine qui Bouit, one of which is Black Squirrel creek, and the other is known as the Wolf's Den. Upon the right, the Rio San Carlos. Cornua Virida, Apache, and Huaquetorie, after tracing their serpentine courses from the Taos Mountains, commingle with the Arkansas.

Some six miles below the mouth of Fontaine qui Bouit are the ruins of an old fort, occupied several years since by one Capt. Grant as a trading post.

The last of my course, being upon the side of the river, was much impeded by mud; and, although the surface was generally bare, travelling was even more tedious than it had been at any time hitherto.

After a series of suffering and deprivation so continued and severe, right gladly did I hail the Lone Star banner upon the opposite shore, as their point of present termination.

Fording the Arkansas about a mile above the Texan encampment, I found it nearly swimming deep, with a swift and muddy current over a bed of quicksand and gravel.

My appearance created no little surprise among all present, as they had several days since numbered me with those who had volunteered with great readiness, so far as promises were concerned; but, when PERFORMANCES were required, "came up missing."

I must confess, however, to great disappointment in the diminutive force that here met my view, which consisted of only twenty-four men, including officers — all told. But several accessions were expected, sufficient to swell the number to fifty-five or sixty. A party of eighty volunteers from the States were to meet us at the "Crossing " of the Arkansas, on the Santa Fe trail, together with a detachment of two hundred and fifty from Texas; and, with these reinforcements, it was confidently asserted we would be equal to the combined force of all New Mexico.

I immediately reported myself to the commanding officer, and was kindly welcomed, with the remark,

"Well, sir, you are just in time. Another day and you would have been too late. We move camp to-morrow morning."

(A pity it was I had not been too late!)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Withdrawing from the conference, the lapse of a few moments gave me an opportunity to look around and see among whom I had fallen.

It would have been hard to scare up a more motley group of humanity in any place this side of Mexico. Each individual presented a uniform as varied as the imagination could depict, though tallying well with the general appearance of the whole company—it was a uniform of rags!

Still from beneath the dusky visages, half obscured by beards to which the kindly operations of their razors had been for weeks and even months a stranger, I detected the frank expression indicating the generous-hearted mountaineer, and began to feel at home, notwithstanding the fast-rising feelings of regret that fortune had thrown me in their way.

Early in the morning of the following day we were drawn up in line and divided into two detachments, —one consisting of ten, and the other of fourteen men. The first of these, under the command of Colonel Warfield, were to proceed to the Crossing of the Arkansas, and await the arrival of the main army, or otherwise act as circumstances suggested, while the second, headed by a lieutenant, marched up the Rio de las Animas to the Taos trail, to perform the duties of a corps of observation until further orders.

It was my lot to accompany the latter, and we promptly commenced movement.

After riding a few miles we struck the Timpa, a small affluent of the Arkansas, up which we travelled till the next day about noon, when, coming to an Indian trail leading south-southwest to the de las Animas, we followed it and reached the latter stream on the 27th of March; continuing up the de las Animas, three days subsequently we arrived at our destination.

The country passed over at the commencement of our journey, for fifteen or twenty miles, was a slightly undulating prairie, of a sandy soil, with few indications of productiveness.

The Timpa is entirely destitute of timber, and its valley, though plentiful in absinthe, is scarcely superior to the surrounding prairie. Several miles previous to leaving it, our course lay between two ridges of forbidding and sterile hills, nearly destitute of vegetation, and affording only now and then a few scraggy cedars and shrubs. Indeed, but very little good land is found in this vicinity.

On diverging from the Timpa the trail crossed a high, arid prairie, which was furrowed by deep ravines, and ridged by long rolling hills, that were occasionally surmounted by cedars and pinions, until it struck the de las Animas.

The watercourses through this section are rare, and sparsely timbered, being for the most part shut in by high banks of earth or lofty walls of precipitous rock, varying in altitude, and presenting vast chasms, passable only at certain points. Their valleys are narrow, but possess a fertile soil which is to some extent susceptible of cultivation, while many parts of the adjacent prairies might answer for grazing purposes.

The prevailing rock, so far as my observation extended, was coarse-grained granite and limestone. I noticed at places along the creek valleys occasional spots of calcareous earth; and, in fact, their soils generally indicated the presence of calcium in their compound, to no inconsiderable extent. The valley of the Rio de las Animas was by far the most interesting and romantic section of country we had as yet entered upon in the Mexican, or, as it is now claimed, Texan territory. This stream, in English, bears the name of Purgatory creek; in French, it is known as the Piquet l'eau, or Water of Suffering; in Indian, it is called the Wild River, and in Spanish, it is christened by the term above used, which means the River of Souls.

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

It rises in the Taos Mountains by two separate heads, a little south of the Spanish Peaks, and emerges from its rugged birth-place into the plains, where the two branches trace their way for some fifty miles and then unite to form one stream. These forks are passably well timbered, and are skirted at intervals with rich bottoms; but the circumjacent country is dry rolling, and generally barren.

A short distance below their confluence the river cuts its way through an expanse of high, barren table lands, for sixty or sixty-five miles, leaving abrupt walls of rock and earth on both sides, piled to a varied height of from fifty to three or four hundred feet, surmounted by groves of cedar and pinion, interspersed with broad pavements of naked rock, nude wastes of stiff sun-baked clay, and occasional clusters of coarse grass.

These walls are often perpendicular, though they generally accline somewhat, and are ornamented with scattering shrubs and cedars, which in vain seek to hide the forbidding deformity of nature. They frequently intrude to the very water's edge, and pile at their feet and in the foaming current huge masses of rock, strown about in all the wild disorder of savage scenery; then, expanding at brief intervals, they picture many sweet, enchanting spots, that smile and bloom in unfading loveliness, where angels might recline, and, listening to the chime of their own voices, echoed from rock to rock and reverberated with unheard-of melody, might fancy themselves in heaven; then again closing, to open in like manner at some favored point, till they finally give place to a broad and beautiful valley, from one to three miles in width, of unsurpassed fertility, and abounding at the proper season in every variety of fruit and flower known to the country, which, mingling amid the scattering cottonwoods, (free from under-brush and mimicking in their arrangement the regularity of art,) seem to portray the fabled fields of Elysian bliss.

This valley extends from the mouth of the cañon to the junction of the de las Animas with the Arkansas — a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles; for ten or fifteen of which it is skirted with receding hills, that maintain their stern sublimity till they at length become swallowed up in the far-spreading prairie.

This is a favorite resort for deer, antelope, and turkey, which are found in great numbers, gambling amid its varied beauties, or winding along its narrow defiles and forbidden recesses.

We entered the cañon through a narrow and steep declivity, formed by a small stream, which was shut in by continuous cliffs, that increased in height as they approached their lofty counterparts immuring the angry river.

After winding a day and a half among the crags and confused masses, which constantly intervened to impede our way, in vain searching for an egress, we found it impossible to proceed further, and were forced to climb the almost vertical bank, at an ascent of five or six hundred feet, — frequently lifting our horses over the rocks by means of ropes attached to their bodies and drawn from the impending summit; — this tedious process occupied nearly a day in its completion, and left us upon the lateral table land exhausted in strength and worn down with fatigue.

We were eleven days en route, during which time we suffered greatly from the severity of the weather, hunger, toil, and watching.

The air was bleak, the winds cold and piercing, and the sky almost continually over-cast with clouds, while two or three snow storms contributed their mite to swell the catalogue of comfortless hours.

Our horses, too, had become so exhausted from hard fare and previous service, we were necessi-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

tated to travel on foot for most of the distance. But the grand climax of miseries was experienced through lack of food.

A scanty supply of buffalo meat, taken with us at the outset, was consumed at the next meal, and we were left without one morsel to appease the gnawings of appetite for the two days and three nights succeeding. A straggling wolf that chance threw in our way, at the expiration of this time, most luckily furnished us with a breakfast, though nothing further entered our mouths till the morning of the third day from this, when, coming to the site of a recent Indian encampment, we succeeded in gathering a few pieces of dry buffalo hide, that lay scattered about —so hard and tough the wolves had tried in vain to gnaw them; these, after being boiled some twelve or fourteen hours, afforded us a paltry substitute for something better, but of so glutinous a nature it almost cemented the teeth employed in its mastication.

The two days following we were again doomed to go hungry and began to talk seriously of the imminent danger of starving to death.

This interval had brought us into the cañon of de las Aminas, where, having struck camp, several of the men sought a temporary respite from the torments of hunger by eating roasted cacti;—the article at first tasted well, and from the recommendation of the essayists, several were induced to partake of it quite heartily.

But the lapse of a brief hour or two brought with it the “tug of war,” when the inherent properties of the cacti began to have their effect upon the enervated systems of the participants. The painful consequences of this strange diet at first were a weakness in the joints, succeeded by a severe trembling and a desire to vomit, accompanied with an almost insufferable pain in the stomach and bowels.

Three or four of the unfortunate sufferers were in such extreme pain they rolled upon the ground for agony, with countenances writhing in every imaginable shape of frightful distortion.

Hereupon it was decided to sacrifice one of our animals as a last resort, which was promptly done, and we ended our fast of nearly seven days' continuance with a feast of mule meat.

I had heretofore cherished a decided repugnance to this kind of food, but am in justice bound to say, it proved both sweet and tender, and scarcely inferior to beef. The supply thus obtained lasted till we came among buffalo, when ample amends were made for previous abstinence.

The only game encountered during the march was an occasional band of antelope or wild horses, whose extreme vigilance and caution set at defiance all attempts to approach them, and sported at the phrensy of our desperate efforts.

Our camp, at the termination of this arduous and eventful journey, was in a small grove of cottonwood, about eight hundred yards below the point at which the trail, from Bent's Fort to Taos, crosses the right hand fork of the de las Animas.

It was faced on the north by a broad sandy prairie, gently undulating, that, at intervals, disclosed a good soil, and led to a distant ridge of pine-clad hills; while from the west, at a distance of some twenty or thirty miles, the proud and isolated summits of the Spanish Peaks, or Huaquetories, arose to view, and from the southwest, the lofty and noble tierras templadas that skirt the heads of the Cimarrone and Colorado, whose broad tops showed themselves in beautiful contrast with the sharp, snow-clad mountain forming the eastern boundary to the valley of Taos; then, upon the south and east, a steep bank, twenty-five or thirty feet high, shut us from the contiguous plain.

While here, we kept strict and constant guard, in view of anticipated movements of the enemy, as,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

from certain information previously obtained, we knew him to be quartered in full force at the nearest settlements.

Our daily and hourly expectation was to meet a detachment of the Mexican army, then out for the purpose of reconnoitering; and, weak as we were in point of numbers, we felt quite equal to a hundred such soldiers, and were anxious for a trial of arms.

Our stay was prolonged for three or four weeks, and the abundance of choice buffalo meat that continued to grace our larder, with the rank growth of fresh grass for the sustenance of our animals, imparted an air of cheerfulness and thrift both to man and beast.

Nothing occurred worthy of note during the interval, save the following incident. One day, late in the afternoon, our sentinels announced the appearance of a small party of Mexicans at the crossing, and immediate preparations were made for an attack. Before these could be completed, however, our expected enemy was reported as having raised camp and being likely to escape by a precipitate retreat towards the Arkansas. Six men, mounted upon fleet horses, were immediately detached in pursuit, —of whom I was one.

The chase continued for several miles, and terminated in our overhauling three persons, —but, instead of Mexicans, two of them were Americans, and the other an Englishman, on their way to the United States with two pack mules heavily laden with gold and silver.

On receiving from them information of the disposition and probable whereabouts of the Mexican forces, they were permitted to depart unmolested, —a circumstance not likely to have happened had we been the gang of “lawless desperadoes,” so hideously depicted in several of the public prints of the day, as I have since learned.

An item of the intelligence received through them, gave us mingled sensations of pain and pleasure.

An European Spaniard, —who had made one of the Texan army in its unfortunate expedition against Santa Fe, in the fall of 1842, and had been retained a prisoner of war for a number of months subsequent, having effected his escape to the Indian country, — on hearing of the recent movements of the Texans under Col. Warfield, had come and reported himself ready again to enlist.

On the strength of this assurance he was partially admitted to confidence, — a thing rarely to be reposed in any one of Spanish extraction. The result was, that, after gleaning all the information circumstances would admit of, he proceeded, post haste to Santa Fe, and laid the whole affair before Gen. Armijo, the Mexican Governor, in hopes of a handsome reward.

The old Governor, however, had received more exact intelligence, with the names and number of volunteers composing the party under Col. W., (furnished him through the medium of certain Americans, base enough in principle and sordid enough in motive, to act as his spies, for a paltry bribe in the shape of stipulated remissions of tariff duties on imported goods, etc.) and treated the traitor to his cause quite cavalierly, — not hesitating to tell him he lied, and even accuse him of being a Texan spy — threatening to try and execute him as such! Were this ever the reward of treason, how few would be TRAITORS!

CHAPTER XXX.

March down the Cimaron. Junction of the two divisions. Country between the de las Animas

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

and the Cimaron. Perilous descent. Cañon of the Cimaron. Soil and prevailing rock. A fort. Grandeur and sublimity of scenery. Beauty of rocks. Cimaron of the pain. Fruits and game. Wide spread desolation. A dreary country. Summer on the Desert. Remarks. Encounter with Indians. Nature's nobleman. Wild horses and different modes of catching them. Failure of expected reinforcements. March into the enemy's country. Ancient engravings upon a rock. Boy in the wolf's den. A man lost. Forced march. Torment of thirst. Remarks. The lost found. Expulsion for cowardice, —its effect.

SOON after the incident related at the close of the preceding chapter, an express arrived from the Col. commandant, with dispatches ordering our division to join him at a small creek near the Pilot Buttes, or "Rabbit Ears," two noted landmarks situated some forty miles above the Santa Fe trail, and nearly equidistant between the Arkansas and Cimaron.

We accordingly took up our line of march and proceeded nearly due south for two days and a half, to the Cimaron; thence, down the valley of the latter, five days' travel to the Santa Fe trail, and thence, west-north west, one day and a half to the place of rendezvous, which we found without difficulty after a journey of one hundred and seventy miles.

Between the de las Animas and Cimaron, we crossed a long reach of arid prairie, slightly undulating and generally barren, with the exception of small fertile spots among the hills, here and there, clothed with rank grasses.

In some parts, the cacti so completely covered the ground that it was impossible to step, for miles in succession, without treading upon their sharp thorns; in others, the thick clusters of absinthemonopolized the vicinity of creeks, nearly to the exclusion of all dissimilar vegetation; and yet in others, though of more brief space, naked sterility refused foot to aught save gravel and stiff clay, or saline efflorescences.

The water of most of the streams was so highly impregnated with mineral salts, it was often unfit to drink. The creeks afforded very little timber, and frequently none at all.

The section immediately at the base of the high table lands to the right, exposed some beautiful spreads of fertile prairie, well watered and suitably timbered. The soil, as a whole, presented all the prominent characteristics of like portions of country previously described.

The prevailing rock was limestone and sandstone, with various conglomerates, and extensive beds of gypsum. I noticed some very large specimens of mica, of great beauty and transparency, —one, in particular, was nearly a foot square, and two inches thick.

The only indication of minerals coming under my notice, was iron and salts; though gold has been found in the immediate vicinity of the Huaquetories, and silver in the neighborhood of the de las Animas, —some very rich specimens of the latter ore, said to have been procured in this region having met my observation.

Near the Cimaron the country is very rugged and mountainous. Upon the right a lofty expanse of table land, some eight hundred or a thousand feet high, leads far off till it becomes lost in the distance; while, upon the left, the more elevated *tierras templadas* of the Colorado, gently curving from south to east, mark the division between the Cimaron and the latter stream.

Every watercourse is immured by cañons of craggy rocks that often preclude all access to it for many successive miles. The side-hills and prairie ridges, to some extent, are clothed with pines, piñon and cedars; and the creeks, whenever the narrow space of their prison-walls will permit it, afford beautiful groves of cottonwood and thick clusters of fruit-bearing shrubs and underbrush.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Our course for a number of miles, previous to descending to the valley of the Cimaron, lay at the base of the table mountain on the right.

The entrance to this valley was by a narrow buffalo trail, leading down a perpendicular wall of clay and rock, sidelong in a shelf-like path, barely wide enough for a single horse or man to advance carefully, as the least misstep might plunge him down the abyss to be dashed in pieces upon the sharp fragments detached from the overhanging cliffs.

The wall thus descended was from eight hundred to a thousand feet in altitude, and faced by another of equal height at a distance of twenty-five or thirty yards.

The spectacle was grand and awful beyond description. A rock, that broke loose about midway as we descended the pass, fell thundering down the frightful steep with a tremendous crash, and made the welkin ring as it reverberated along the vast enclosure with almost deafening clamor. I have witnessed many romantic and picturesque scenes, but never one so magnificently grand, so awe-inspiring in its sublimity, as that faintly delineated in the preceding sketch.

Entering the cañon at this point, after wandering a short distance among the huge masses of broken rock thrown from its towering sides, the traveller is ushered into a valley nearly a mile broad, shut in by mural mountains that rise to a varied height of from eight to fifteen hundred or two thousand feet, gradually expanding as he proceeds till it attains a width of from two to four miles. This valley generally possesses a very rich soil, sometimes of a deep, gravelly mould, and almost of vermilion-like color, assimilating the famous redlands of Texas, and, in appearance, equally fertile, —then, a dark brown loam obtrudes to view, sustaining a dense vegetation of lusty growth, and, yet again, a light sandy superstratum, affording but small indications of productiveness; or diminutive spreads of stiff clay, frowning in their own nudity; or barren wastes, of less extent, that, in deep penitence for their utter worthlessness, exude their briny tears in unremitting succession, which, as the solar rays strike on them with kind intent to wipe away, spread o'er their parent surfaces bleached shrouds of shining salt.

The latter part of this description, so far as my observation has extended, will apply to nearly the entire valley of the Cimaron after it emerges from the cañon.

The place at which this romantic valley first attains its full width, is the confluence of a small tributary to the main creek, near an isolated summit, that protrudes far out from the mountain range and commands the approaches from either direction.

This peak is five or eight hundred feet high, and inaccessible, except from the back ground by a gradual acclivity scarcely wide enough for two persons to ascend abreast. The top presents a small area of level surface, securely defended by an enclosing wall of rock, five or six feet in height, raised at its brow evidently by the hand of art. A better position, in a military point of view, for a fortification, is rarely found. Fifty men, suitably provisioned and equipped, might successfully defend it against an army of thousands.

The rocks of this vicinity exhibit a more striking variety of color than any I ever before witnessed. Their predominant classification enumerates granite, sandstone (generally ferruginous,) limestone, and slate. These were disclosed in abrupt escarpments of several hundred feet altitude, or in isolated, quadrangular masses with vertical sides, assuming the appearance of gigantic fortifications, temples and palaces;— or in a more multiform aspect, now portraying vast walls with narrow basements, that, diverging from the mountains, intersect the valley at intervals from side to side, except, perchance, at a well-formed gateway, — now, towering monuments, spires, and

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

pyramids, and again sculptured statues of men and beasts.

All these magnificent representations are gorgeously decked with parti-colored strata lying tier above tier, in regular order, some white, others black, blue, brown, green, gray, yellow, red, purple, or orange, and so strangely intermingled that they cannot fail to excite the admiration of every beholder.

The Cimaronne rises in the range of table lands thirty-five or forty miles east-southeast of Taos, and, after following a serpentine course for nearly six hundred miles, empties into the Arkansas some distance above Fort Gibson. As it emerges from the mountains, (where it is a stream of considerable depth and a rapid current, confined to a narrow space between high clayey banks, with a bed of rock and pebbles,) it expands to a great width, and, in a short distance, its waters become brackish and unfit for use, till they finally disappear among the quicksands, and leave a dreary waste of worse than emptiness, to mark the course of the transient volumes produced by the melting snows of spring and the annual rains of autumn.

During its course through the Great American Desert, not a tree or shrub graces its banks. Its mountain valley, however, is ornamented with numerous and beautiful groves of cottonwood, that present among their underbrush a profuse abundance of plum, cherry, gooseberry, and currant bushes, with grape vines; while the adjoining hills afford oak, pine, pinion, and cedar.

Here also game abounds in great quantities, including, buffalo, wild horses, deer, antelope, elk, and turkeys.

We frequently encountered four or five hundred head of wild horses in a single band, and turkeys showed themselves in every direction.

The pleasant moonlight nights, that favored our journey through this delightful valley, were the source of great success in turkey-hunting, and afforded us no small sport. Nearly every large cottonwood tree was occupied as a roost, and the season as yet had not far enough advanced to hide its tenants amid the growing foliage. Each night, as the moon reached a suitable position, my practice was to seek out these perching-trees, from which I rarely failed to return heavily laden. One night myself and companion killed ten of these fowls — some of them having an inch thickness of pure fat upon the back. It is unnecessary to say that with such abundance, strown so lavishly on every side, the fare upon our march adown this thrice-enchanting valley was one continued scene of sumptuous entertainment.

But, loveliness gives place to arid sterility, and verdure to dreary desolation, as the traveller makes his exit from the mountains.

Almost the entire expanse, from the Arkansas nearly to the Gulf of Mexico, an interval ranging south-southeast, from fifty to two hundred miles in width, between longitudes 100° and 104° west from Greenwich, is said to be little else than a vast desert of barrenness, destitute of tree or shrub, or spire of grass relieve the aching eye, nor favoring stream with kindly flow to quench the fevered thirst.

The whole country is subject to high winds, that sweep over it at brief intervals in maddened fury, bearing in their course immense clouds of dust, and engendering amid the waste landscape a scene of frequent change. To-day the wayfarer may find his progress impeded by no inconsiderable hills of loose sand, and to-morrow he may pass in the same direction and find a level prairie, — a fact not unaptly expressed in the words of the Psalmist, “the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs!”

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Between the Cimaron and the Arkansas, back from the watercourses, the prospect is but little better.

In the vicinity of the former are numerous spreads of rolling sand prairie, if not entirely naked, but scantily clothed with coarse, scattering grass, growing upon a surface so loose that a horse or mule will sink to his fetlocks at every step in passing over it; then come broad reaches of slightly undulating plains, mantled with sickly, dwarf vegetation, and sustained by a thin clayey soil, so baked and indurated by the sun as to become almost impervious to water.

The snows of spring and the rains of autumn, as before hinted, afford the only moisture ever known to these arid regions. Here dews, alike with transient showers, are entire strangers to the summer months, and eave the scorching heat of a vertical sun to snatch the fading beauties of spring and turn their loveliness into stubble.

The following lines, written upon the spot, as our little party were about to withdraw from this dreary solitude, but poorly portray some of the dismal realities then presented:

SUMMER ON THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT.

Ye dreary plains, that round me lie,  
So parch'd with summer's heat,  
No more ye please my wand'ring eye,  
Or woo my weary feet.

Why hath the spring your beauty borne  
Into his hiding place,  
And left the widow'd winds to mourn  
The charms they would embrace?

Why should those flowers, whose honey'd breath  
With incense filled the breeze,  
Drooping and wither'd, lie in death,  
And now no longer please?

That grassy carpet, green and wide,  
Why turn'd to stubble now?  
Save 'chance along some streamlet's side,  
Where less'ning waters flow!

And why those gently murm'ring rills,  
Whose soft melodious strains  
Were wont to echo 'mong the hills,  
No longer reach the plains?

The lark no longer meets the morn,  
Nor linnet pours his throat,  
Nor feather'd warbler hails the dawn

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE  
BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

With his sweet, mellow note;

Nor even insect cheers the scene,  
Where Solitude alone,  
In wither'd garb, as Desert Queen,  
Rears her eternal throne!

These thirsty plains, with open mouth,  
Implore the gentle shower;  
But vainly plead, while summer's drouth  
In scorching heat doth pour!

Nor grateful shade, of spreading tree,  
Invites my feet to rest;  
Nor cooling stream, in melody,  
Attempts my quicken'd zest.

So dismal all! why should I stay  
And sicken by their view?  
Thrice gladly will I turn away,  
And bid these scenes adieu!

The only inhabitants of this vast region are strolling bands of buffalo and wild horses, with wolves, prairie dogs, and a few scattering antelope. The only human beings that visit it are Mexican traders and occasional war-parties of Pawnee, Apache, Kuyawa, Cumanche, and Arapaho Indians, and they only for the brief interval required in its hurried passage.

Who, then, so wild as to suppose for a moment that such a country can ever become inhabited by civilized man?— unless the time should literally be ushered in, when, to use the language of Scripture, “the desert shall bud and blossom as the rose!”

Late in the afternoon, towards the close of our journey, a little below the point at which the Santa Fe trail crosses the Cimarrone, we came upon two horses that appeared to have recently strayed from some travelling party. According to the custom of the country anything encountered in this manner is good and lawful prize to the finder, and we forthwith set about taking possession.

One of them, however, a two-year-old colt, proved so unmanageable we were obliged to kill it in order to secure the other. Being rather scantily supplied with provisions, the fresh-slaughtered animal (fine and fat as it was) presented an opportunity too tempting not to be improved in replenishing our stock, which induced us to encamp for that purpose.

Soon after a large party of horsemen made their appearance from over the neighboring hills, and, having devoted a few minutes to reconnoitering, advanced upon us at full charge. In an instant our little force was drawn up in readiness to repel the expected attack. But, instead of enemies, the objects of our apprehension proved a squad of Arapahos, and they were accordingly allowed to come into camp.

One of our visitors happened to be the owner of the two horses we had found, which, as he stated,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

(having described them minutely,) had strayed from his village, some six miles distant; he then enquired of us if we had seen them. Here was a dilemma; should we deny the fact, and run the risk of being caught in a falsehood? or should we confess and abide the consequences? Our commandant decided upon the latter course; but, in so doing, had resort to an artful duplicity to bear upon the finer feelings of the Indian, and replied:

“My warriors had suffered long for lack of food. Three suns had sunk behind the mountain, and not one morsel had entered their mouths to give them strength for travel. In their distress they enquired of the Great Spirit, and He showed them the lost animals of my brother.

“My warriors were not slow to receive the welcome gift. The flesh of the younger one hath caused us to bless the Good Spirit; the other is with our own medicine-dogs, that my brother may search for it no longer.”

The owner, on hearing this, looked very sorrowful. The colt had been a favorite of his squaw and children. In a moment, however, he arose, and, extending his hand to the commandant, exclaimed:

“My heart is good. My white brother did well to receive the gift of the Good Spirit, that his warriors might eat.”

Commandant. But the young medicine-dog of my brother was the beloved of his wife and little ones. What will he that I give him so they sorrow not?

Indian. Now, my heart blesses the pale face. If he would bestow his gifts, what better could I receive at his hand than a small present of tobacco, that my pipe may be filled to the undying friendship of him and his people.

A few pieces of tobacco were accordingly given, and the good-hearted Indian, after shaking hands with each one of our party, took his horse and departed to his village.

Where, let me ask, do we find, in civilized countries an instance of noble generosity equal to that of the poor savage?

The Arapaho village, as we learned from our visitors, had been camped in the vicinity several days, for the twofold purpose of awaiting the Cumanches and catching wild horses. This, by the way, reminds me of not having as yet described the manner of performing the latter feat.

In taking wild horses, two methods are resorted to, alike displaying considerable tact and ingenuity. Of these the following is the most common:

A large party of Indians, mounted on their fleetest chargers, having discovered a band of these animals, carefully approach from the leeward, scattering themselves to a distance of eight or ten miles along the course their intended captives are expected to run. This done, the chase is started at a given signal, by the nearest Indian, who is relieved by the next in succession, and he by the next, and so on (taking their cue from the strategy of wolves in their capture of the antelope) until these proud rangers of the prairie, exhausted by their long-continued and vain efforts to escape, cease to assert their native liberty, and fall easy prey to the lasso of their pursuers.

Another plan frequently adopted is, to erect a stout fence from side to side, between two impassable walls of rock. The unsuspecting band are then so started as necessarily to be driven within the enclosure, when their ready pursuers, closing in upon the rear, take them without the trouble of a long chase.

Great numbers of wild horses are annually captured by these means, which become domesticated in a very short time. But, as a general thing, they are less adapted to hard service than those

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

reared in the ordinary way, and are far more disposed to re-assert their birthright of freedom at the first opportunity that occurs.

Our visitors communicated the important intelligence that a detachment of four hundred Mexicans had passed their village only two days previous, on its way to Arkansas; which statement was further corroborated by certain indications noticed in the trail. The enemy was evidently in pursuit of us, and, weak as we were numerically, none expressed any other feeling than that of a willingness to meet him.

From this camp, our course bore west-northwest for thirty or forty miles, during which distance we found no water, and suffered greatly from the agonizing effects of thirst. One of our pack-horses, also, took the "stampede," and ran off with his entire load, consisting principally of ammunition, and all our efforts to retake him proved abortive.

About noon the succeeding day, we reached our destination, where a junction was formed, not with the army we had hoped to find, but with the mere handful who had parted from us a few weeks since at the Arkansas.

Discouragement and discontent were depicted upon the countenance of every one, as the lateness of the season admonished us of the extreme uncertainty of the arrival of expected reinforcements. The dreaded approach of the Cumanches, those unsparing enemies of the Texans, of whom we had received reliable intelligence, far more than the proximity of four hundred Mexican troops, gave us just cause for apprehension. A council was held forthwith, to decide upon the course proper to be pursued. Prudence seemed to dictate an abandonment of our present position, — while the enemy were looking for us in another quarter, we might steal a march upon him in his own country.

These suggestions gave tone to subsequent movements, and early in the morning of the day following we were under way. For ten or fifteen miles, our course continued up the dry sand-creek that had marked our place of rendezvous, and the night following was passed with a few lodges of Arapahos, who were encamped at a small pool of water near a bluff bank of sandstone.

This rock exhibited many rude engravings upon its smooth side, representing men, women, and children, dogs, snakes, and lizards, with various other devices, — evidently the work of ancient artists in commemoration of some remarkable occurrence connected with the former history of the country.

I examined the sketch with deep interest, and felt as if glancing at the obscure records of the greatness and glory of some extinct nation, written in a language, like itself, now no longer known.

Our hunters, having accompanied the Indians to the chase, soon after returned with a choice supply of fresh meat, and four wolf pups. The latter had been taken by an Indian boy, three or four years old, who fearlessly entered the den, during the absence of the dam, and bore away her defenceless family in triumph.

The next day saw us again en route. One of our men, having obtained permission of the commanding officer, proceeded a short distance in advance of the main party for the purpose of hunting. Not paying strict attention to the course proposed, he mistook his way, and, despite our continued efforts to set him aright, could no longer be seen or heard of, and we were at length reluctantly forced to give him up.

Continuing up the creek some two days, we found it very difficult to procure water, and were

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

often compelled to dig for it in the sand to a depth of three or four feet.

From this point, we bore south-southwest, and after more than a day and night's hard travelling, over an arid sand-prairie, favored by neither tree, shrub, nor watercourse, we arrived at the head of a small affluent of the Cimaron, inducting us to the bewitching scenery of the thrice lovely valley that lay immured within its giant walls.

The fatigue of a forced march, combined with the sweltering heat of an almost torrid sun by day and scorching winds by night, in addition to the indescribable torments of burning thirst for nearly thirty hours, had rendered us almost frantic with agony.

What tongue can tell the sweetness of the draught that first greeted our parched lips, at the termination of this painful interval? What mind can conceive the inestimable value of water, until destitution unfolds its real merits?

Hunger, one may forget in the sweet unconsciousness of sleep, or glut his appetite, meanwhile, upon the tasteless feasts of fancy, —but thirst, withering thirst, can never be forgotten while it continues, —it will burn as it to scorch the vitals and dry up the heart's blood!

Before leaving the sand-creek above alluded to, we passed several diminutive bottoms and vallons that assumed an air of fertility. In these, I noticed an abundance of the bread-root, and in the creek banks, two or three places gave indication of coal. The prevailing rock was sandstone and limestone. The country adjacent, with the exception of its being more tumulous, is much like the llanos peculiar to this region.

On striking the Cimaron we continued our march up its valley for some three days, and camped for a short time, to make a cache of our surplus baggage for the purpose of travelling with greater expedition.

The day preceding, however, afforded two incidents worthy of note. One was the re-appearance of our lost man, who, having found his way to this point, and knowing we must necessarily make it in our line of march, had been awaiting us for the past two days. He was hailed as one risen from the dead, and welcomed back to our midst.

But the expulsion of three for cowardice almost immediately followed the re-accession of one.

Considerable dissatisfaction had existed for some time, in reference to our plan of operations. Several of the company had openly talked of desertion, and were using their earnest endeavors to persuade others to this course. As we approached the enemy's country, the spirit of insubordination showed itself with increased violence. The time and place, even, were pitched upon for raising the standard of rebellion against all orders and those who gave them. Affairs at length reached a crisis that loudly demanded a resort to some prompt measures to restore them to their proper equilibrium — an example must be had.

Accordingly the company was drawn up in line, when the articles subscribed to by each of its members were read. This done, the commanding officer addressed the male-contents in a few brief words, demanding which of those articles he had violated, — if neither, they were equally binding as at first;— then, alluding to the rumors that had reached his ears from various sources, he stated his readiness to release any one requesting it from further obligation, — but the discharge should be a dishonorable one, —a discharge for cowardice!

“Yes,” said he, “COWARDICE! We are on the eve of entering the enemy's country, and the hearts of some doubtless begin to fail them. Texas wants no cowards to fight her battles! None but brave men and true, are worthy of that honor! Now, I repeat it. if any timorous spirit, —any pusillani-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

mous heart, —any despicable poltroon, wishes his discharge, I stand ready to give it; let him step one pace in advance from the ranks and acknowledge himself a coward! His name shall be erased from the muster-roll.”

At this announcement, three men stepped forward, and their names were severally repeated, as they received their discharge, accompanied by the cutting words, — “reason-cowardice!”

After this the commanding officer again addressed them: “ You are now dishonorably discharged, and, as sentenced, before high heaven, I pronounce you cowards. If either of you considers this sentence unjust, let him shoulder his rifle and choose his own distance. I stand ready to give him any satisfaction he may demand in reparation of his wounded honor. But, you shall pocket the disgrace. To-night you may stay with us. — to-morrow you must and shall leave.

“And you, my brave comrades, who have chosen to abide by that flag which has graced the triumphs of by-gone days, may you never desert it in the hour of danger. Look up with hope, and as you gaze upon its bright star of lonely grandeur, consider it the harbinger of success, —the genius of victory.”

The next morning, the three faint-hearted volunteers accordingly left camp, reducing our little number to twenty-one;— a lean force, truly, for an expedition so hazardous. Yet none flinched at the thick array of anticipated dangers. All were ready and anxious for the encounter.

The above summary proceeding completely effected its designed object, at least for the present, and reduced the turbulent spirits to the wholesome restraints of discipline.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Mexican camp. Pursuit. Advance upon Mora. Enemy discovered. Country between the Rio de las Animas and Mora; its picturesque beauty. Admirable point of observation. Fortified position. Battle of the pass; order of attack, passage of the river, storming the enemy’s camp, and number of killed, wounded and prisoners. Council of war. Prisoners released. Message to Amijo. Return march. Mexican army. Attacked, and results of action. Mexican bravery. Retreat. Cross the Table Mountain. New species of wild onions. March down the de las Animas. Discouragements accumulate. Disband. Sketch of factions. Texan prisoners. Arrival of reinforcements. Battle of the Arroyo: killed, wounded, and prisoners. Retreat of Amijo. “Stampede.” Frightful encounter with the Cumanches and Kuyawas. Discharge of troops. Affair with Capt. Cook. Surrender to U. S. Dragoons, and failure of expedition. Return to Texas. Journey to the Platte. Country between the Arkansas and Beaver creek. Feasting at camp. Crows’ eggs. Lateness of season. Snow-storm in June. An Indian fort. Serio-comico adventure with a wolf. Indians. Song of the night-bird.

FROM C ache Camp we resumed our march, and, on the fourth day sub. sequent, struck the Taos trail at the crossing of the de las Animas; thence, continuing up the river about forty miles, we came to a place recently occupied by a detachment of Mexicans. After a careful examination, we became satisfied that it had been some sixty cavalry, who were then doubtless awaiting our advance at no great distance; and, from appearances, not more than three days had elapsed since its evacuation. Feeling ill-disposed to try the patience of our enemy by keeping him in too long a suspense, we immediately started in pursuit.

The route led by a rough pass over a spur of the Taos Mountains which heads the tierras templadas southwest of the Cimaron, into a prairie ranging from east to west, forty-five or fifty miles

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

long and thirty or more broad, and skirting the three principal streams that unite to form the Colorado. From this point it continued over another spur of the mountain chain into a valley some ten miles broad, ranging from north to south and intersected by the trail from Taos to the Santa Fe road, striking the latter near the Waggon Mound,[53] —thence, for about twenty-five miles, across a spread of high prairie, (quite rough and undulating, with frequent hills assuming a mountainous character,) to a considerable creek, four or five miles southeast of the town of Mora. At this point our scouts reported the enemy as occupying a fortified camp, which commanded the only feasible pass leading to the adjoining settlements. Upon the reception of this intelligence we withdrew to a deserted ranche and encamped for the night, in order to obtain, if possible, more certain information relative to his position and force.

The country between the de las Animas and this place, as a general thing, gave indications of a good soil, but was quite arid, particularly the prairie skirting the head branches of the Colorado. The hills and mountains were less sterile than those farther east. They also afforded an abundance of timber, consisting of pine, oak, cedar, and pinion. The creek bottoms embraced considerable quantities of excellent land, though but sparsely timbered.

The mountains to the right towered majestically to an altitude of ten or twelve thousand feet, opposing their snowy crests in stern defiance to the heat of a summer's sun.

Toward the close of our march, the landscape disclosed a scene of romantic beauty and grandeur. Mingled among the pleasing diversity of mountain, hill, dale, and lawn, vegas and llanos, forests and prairies, here and there a small lake mirrored forth its bright waters, swarming with innumerable water-fowl, decorated by broad flowery banks, and shut in by rugged highlands and rocky cliffs, that seemed like some fairy's home, where enchantment held Nature's self in spell-bound admiration. The creeks and valleys of this section were also enclosed by abrupt banks, that sometimes protruded their precipitous walls to the very water's edge, and then again expanded to give place to the grass, fruits, and flowers of mimic Edens.

The prevailing rock appeared to be gray granite, ferruginous sandstone, and limestone. Game was rather scarce, and consisted principally of buffalo, deer, and bear.

As a whole, this entire region may be considered as admirably adapted to grazing purposes, and, were it not for its aridity, might be cultivated to a considerable extent.

The men sent to reconnoitre returned about midnight, but had succeeded in obtaining no satisfactory information of the enemy's position, owing to the darkness and their ignorance of the topography of the country. However, they reported having discovered a point overlooking his camp, from which our whole force might watch his movements, screened from his observation by a dense thicket of pines, and recommended it for our occupancy the ensuing day. Accordingly, in the morning orders were given to that effect; and, after a march of four or five miles, covered by an unbroken forest of pine and cedar, we arrived at the place designated, and encamped almost within speaking distance of the enemy.

No point could be more admirably situated for our purpose. The gradual acclivity by which we had advanced, studded with pine, hemlock, and pinion, led to the summit of a high ridge, bounding a broad valley upon its opposite side with vast piles of perpendicular rock, several hundred feet in altitude. Through this valley a large creek traced its way, graced by occasional groves of cottonwood and willow. In one of these, appeared the Mexican encampment.

So matchless was our position, by aid of a spy-glass we could observe his every movement with-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

out incurring the risk of being ourselves discovered.

A mere glance revealed the true state of affairs. The hostile force, consisting of some sixty strong, completely commanded the only entrance into the valley from the east, and was otherwise so advantageously posted as to render an immediate attack extremely hazardous. We accordingly awaited the cover of night for further operations, and contented ourselves meanwhile with watching the unsuspecting foe.

Our plan was to storm the Mexican camp and force a passage into the adjoining town, where we expected to encounter another detachment, and, after defeating it, make good our retreat before a sufficient reinforcement could be rallied to oppose us.

Soon after sundown, arrangements being completed, we commenced our march. A detour of four or five miles led us to the head of a narrow and circuitous defile, marking the entrance to the valley; winding our way through which silently, in a few moments we were in the immediate vicinity of the enemy.

Here dismounting, the company was drawn into line, and the plan of attack communicated to each, as follows: three men, mounted upon fleet horses, were to dispose of themselves, if possible, in such a manner as to prevent an escape, while the remainder, in two divisions, (the one headed by the Col. commandant and the other by the first lieutenant,) commenced a simultaneous attack at different points. Orders were given to scale the enemy's breastwork, seize his arms, and demand his surrender, —but not to fire a shot, unless in case of resistance or an attempt to escape; and, even then, to avoid all unnecessary effusion of blood.

Thus disposed. we advanced to the charge;— but a new difficulty here arose. The creek which, from our high point of observation during the day, had appeared only a diminutive stream, now presented its broad surface, with a current of swift and deep water, while a steep bank upon the other side showed the enemy at its very verge. Nothing daunted we plunged in, and, almost as soon, gained the opposite shore. Ascending the bank we attracted the notice of the sentinels, and received the challenge:

Quienes veniren?" — who comes?

Que dijo? "— what do you say?

"Quienes veniren, carraho?"

At this a rush was made upon the challengers, who were almost instantly disarmed, and our whole party, leaping into camp, gave to the enemy the first intimation of its presence.

"Munchos Tajanos! " — exclaimed one, as the astonished Mexicans snatched their arms.

"Si, muchos Tajanos. —Quieron los scoupetas!"— was the reply, as we sprang to prevent them.

Here a smart struggle ensued, which resulted in the defeat of the enemy with a loss of five killed, four wounded, and eighteen prisoners, —the remainder having escaped despite our efforts to prevent it, — but all the camp equipage fell into our hands, with seventy-two head of horses and mules. Among the arms taken were two or three pieces that had belonged to the Texan Santa Fe expedition of the fall of '41.

A council was now held to decide upon the expediency of proceeding immediately to the neighboring town. A majority at first were favorable to the proposition;— but some objected, and urged the imprudence of weakening our force by a division, as we should either be necessitated to do, in that event, or relinquish the advantages already gained, — and, further, the enemy, being aware of our approach, was doubtless prepared to oppose a dangerous resistance, such as would be attend-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

ed with great risk of life on our part, without securing any possible benefit in its result. The latter reasons influenced the decision, and orders were accordingly given to withdraw from the scene of action.

In the interim the wounded had been carefully attended to, and, as we were about to leave, the prisoners were all set at liberty, with these words:

“You are now free. Bury your dead, and remember in future how vain it is to resist the arms of Texas. Tell Amijo, your General, the Texans are men, and not wild beasts. They never kill an unresisting enemy, they never kill a prisoner of war. He has done both, —but let him beware how he does it again, for the lives of ten Mexicans shall be the forfeit for each offence.”

All things being arranged for a retrograde movement, we were promptly under way upon our return march to the Cimarrone. The route led within ten or twelve miles of the Waggon Mound, at which point a large number of dark-looking objects appeared, but so indistinctly we were unable to determine their nature;—these, as we subsequently learned, were a body of Mexican troops, numbering seven hundred and fifty men.

Continuing our course, about noon we made camp at a gap in the mountain ridge, facing from the west the head branches of the Colorado.

The sentinels were cautiously posted, two upon the summit in the rear, and two with the horses in front, and express orders given to them not to leave their stations until relieved, and to give immediate notice of the appearance of any suspicious object. The remainder of the party were soon busily occupied, some in preparations for dinner, and others in making amends for a night of wakefulness.

In fact, each one conducted himself apparently with as little concern as though it were in, possible that a Mexican could be found this side of the halls of Montezuma. Participating in this general feeling of security, and anxious to enjoy the relaxations of camp, in a brief interval the sentinels deserted their posts and mingled among the loungers.

This remissness was first noticed by a private, who hurriedly enquired, “Where is the guard?” Scarcely were the words spoken, when another exclaimed, “There go our horses!”

The latter announcement aroused all hands — but only in time to witness our whole cavallard under full headway before a small party of Mexican cavalry, while at the same instant a brisk fire was opened upon us from the rear, and the dusky forms of the enemy appeared both right and left; thus we had the mortification to find our little band surrounded by a superior force.

Orders were given to dislodge the foe, and occupy his position in the rear. At the word “charge,” our dauntless partizans, with a shout, rushed up the steep hill-side and drove the panic-stricken Mexicans before them, who fled with the utmost precipitancy in all directions, throwing away their blankets, robes, arms, and even clothes, to aid them in their hurried escape. So great was their consternation, in less than fifteen minutes not one remained in sight, either far or near.

On examining the premises, we found fifteen or twenty saddles, with a mule, which they had likewise abandoned, —but only two half-jaded animals told the remnants of the noble cavallard of more than eighty head that had grazed around us scarcely thirty minutes before; a thing of itself equivalent of a defeat.

What could twenty-one footmen do in an open prairie opposed by hundreds of cavalry, able at any time to choose their own place and mode of attack? The issue was quite apparent, — we must

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

retreat. In an advantageous position, surrounded by game, and acquainted with the topography of the country, we might hold out against a force of thousands; but it would be presumption to think of either maintaining our present ground or advancing upon the foe.

Preparations were therefore immediately commenced for acting upon the only prudent alternative now left. Each man selected for himself a blanket, or robe, which, with such other necessaries as he could conveniently carry, was bound in the form of a knapsack and strapped to his shoulders; our animals were then heavily laden with provisions, and the remaining luggage (consisting of arms taken from the enemy, saddles, robes, blankets, knives, &c.) committed to the flames; the value of property thus destroyed, amounted to several thousand dollars. It was a melancholy thing to witness this wanton waste; yet such is the custom of war under like circumstances.

Toward sundown we took up our line of march, each one on foot with his shouldered pack, in every appearance illustrating the soldier's return "from the war!"

In the above manner we trudged along, bearing a course due east, till the evening of the third day, which brought us to the base of the table mountain at the head of the Cimaron, —having discovered the enemy's scouts hovering in the distance on two or three occasions during the interval.

The day following we crossed the mountain, upon whose summit was a beautiful plateau, some ten miles in width and of unknown length.

The soil gave every evidence of fertility, and was well watered. I noticed a number of strawberry vines—the first I had seen in the country, as well as a profuse array of floral loveliness. A considerable lake also appeared, whose banks were of perpendicular rock measuring a descent of fifteen or twenty feet; while on its shady side a pile of snow bade defiance to the heat of summer, and looked pleasingly strange amid the surrounding verdure.

After a lengthy search, we finally found a place of descent upon the opposite side of the mountain, which led us into the valley of the extreme left hand fork of the Rio de las Animas.

The bottom of this stream, as it emerged from the mountains, disclosed a soil of extraordinary fertility. Among its indigenous productions I noticed a spread of fifty acres or more, so densely covered with onions that hundreds of bushels might be gathered in a short time. This plant was of a different kind from any I ever before saw. Its color was white, size about equal to a pigeon's egg, and appearance much like that of the common onion; but it had flag-shaped stalks, and was much less offensive in taste and smell than is natural to this species of roots.

Continuing down the valley of this creek, we struck the de las Animas on the third day subsequent, and on the seventh, arrived at the egress of that stream from its frightful cañon, nearly opposite Bent's Fort on the Arkansas. From this place an express was sent to the latter point to obtain, if possible, some information relative to the expected reinforcement from Texas, and, also, in regard to the movements of the enemy.

The next day, however, the messenger returned with a report so far from encouraging, that it served still more to depress our fast-sinking hopes. A general despondency seemed to weigh like an incubus upon the minds of both officers and men. Our inability to hold out under existing circumstances was too apparent, as the sphere of operations embraced a circuit of five hundred miles or more, over deserts and mountains, that would waste us away with fatigue, watchings, hunger and thirst, by long and dreary marches to be performed on foot, through a country swarming with savage and half-civilized foes. A council was accordingly held, which resulted in the almost unanimous decision to disband.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Discharges previously made out, bearing date May 24th, were now presented to each one, absolving him from all further connection with the Texan army, and, on the morning of the 29th inst., our little band separated in three parties; one of these, consisting of four men, left for the cañon of the Cimarone; another, headed by Col. Warfield, started for Texas; and the remainder commenced their return journey toward the Platte river.

The story of the former of these fractions, so far as relates to the difficulties between Mexico and Texas, is briefly told. Our adventurers bearing for the Cimarone reached their hoped-for Elysium; but, soon after, having fallen into an ambuscade of one hundred and thirty Mexican troops, were taken prisoners, and, in a few days subsequent, found themselves in irons and snugly stowed away in the calaboose at Santa Fe; while there, one of them died from bad treatment, and the others would have been shot had not the dread of Texan vengeance prevented the deed. Succeeding events, however, effected their liberation.

The party accompanying Col. W. fell in with the expected reinforcements from Texas, near the Crossing of the Arkansas, and again submitted itself to the fortune of war. This force consisted of one hundred and eighty volunteers, under the command of Col. Snively, an old veteran of the Texas revolution.

Soon after, a detachment of forty Texans, headed by Col. Warfield, encountered the advance guard of the enemy, numbering one hundred picked men. The approach of the latter had been observed from an eminence, when the Texans were drawn up under cover of a small sand-bank, near a creek, (arroyo,) awaiting to intercept him. Ignorant of the presence of danger, the Mexicans were pressing on at a rapid rate, till brought to a sudden halt by an opposing force within half rifle-shot. "Quienes?" demanded the Texan officer.

"Mexicanas. Quienes sons uste?" replied the commandante.

"Tajanos," returned the Texan, through his interpreter. "We have come to fight, and shall fight unless you surrender. But, that you may know with whom you have to deal, we give you thirty minutes to decide whether to fight or surrender. If you choose the former, a signal from your sword will announce the answer."

A brief discussion ensued among them upon this summons. The Mexicans were disposed to surrender, but the Pueblo Indians, of whom fifty or more were included in the party, scornfully refused to accede to any such proposition, declaring that they had come to fight, and not to surrender like women upon the first appearance of an inferior enemy. At length, a chief ended the dispute by advancing to the front line and giving the prescribed signal.

The onset of the Texans was terrific beyond description. The enemy's line was instantly broken, and the cry of "misericordia!" (mercy) sounded upon all sides. The conflict lasted scarcely five minutes; but, though short, it was decisive and bloody.

Twenty-two of the enemy were killed, thirty wounded, and the remainder taken prisoners, with the exception of one who succeeded in affecting his escape. Not a Texan was hurt.

General Amijo, who at this time lay encamped at the Cimarone, forty or fifty miles distant, with an army of seven hundred Mexicans, on receiving intelligence of the defeat of the flower of his invincibles, like other examples equally illustrious, felt his courage "ooze out at his fingers' ends," and, not being disposed to encounter such dangerous enemies, ordered an immediate retreat and fell back on Santa Fe.

Col. Snively was on the point of marching in pursuit, when an incident occurred which altered

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

the whole aspect of affairs, and finally frustrated all the purposes of the expedition. This was effected by a war-party of eighty Kuyawa and Cumanche Indians, who succeeded in stampeding a large band of the army horses.

They were followed by eleven men under the command of Col. Warfield, and, after a running fight of two or three miles, an action was brought about. As they halted, Col. W. ordered his men to dismount and form a breastwork with their horses, which was promptly done; meanwhile the Indians, numbering sixty or more, had closed around, with whoops and yells, and other demonstrations of their expected triumph.

A discharge from the Texans brought four of their warriors to the ground, and wounded six more. This broadside was returned through a shower of arrows, and repeated by the intrepid eleven in a pistol-round, when three more of the assailants fell, and twice that number felt the effects of an unerring aim. Hereupon the Indians hastily retreated with their wounded, leaving seven of their number to grace the scene of action. Not one of the Texans was injured, and only one of their horses killed and three wounded. Further pursuit, however, was abandoned, and the captive horses were left to honor the service of their new masters.

A loss so inopportune caused the postponement of further operations for the present, and, in connection with other difficulties, created so much discontent in the minds of some, that one entire company declared its intention of returning to Texas, and requested its immediate discharge. An emergency of this kind, not having been provided for in the terms of enlistment, left the commanding officer no other alternative than to accede to a measure he had no power to prevent, and the demands of the disaffected were accordingly complied with.

The army was thus reduced to eighty effective men, which made it necessary to release the prisoners as yet retained in custody. These during their detention had been treated with great kindness, and their wounded carefully attended to by the company's surgeon; on their release twelve horses were allowed for their conveyance, while the other prisoners were furnished with four rifles and a quantity of ammunition, two running horses, and enough provisions to serve for several days. Thus provided, they were set at liberty with the pithy message: "Bid your countrymen learn, from this example, how to treat prisoners of war!"

Soon after the events above related, the army took up a position on the Arkansas river, a few miles below the Santa Fe road, for the purpose of procuring a supply of provisions from the vast quantities of buffalo afforded by that vicinity. While encamped here, hunting parties were allowed to cross into the United States territory in quest of game, —not in a national capacity, but as mere private individuals.

On one of these occasions the hunters were discovered and pursued by two companies of United States Dragoons, under Capt. Cook, on their way to escort the Santa Fe traders as far as the Crossing of the Arkansas.

The chase was continued to the river bank opposite the Texan camp. when a conference was requested, and the commanding officers of both armies met, as was supposed, for an interchange of mutual civilities; but such proved not to be the case.

Captain Cook, on the part of the Americans, contended that the Texans had invaded the United States territory, and that they even now occupied a position within its limits;— his duty was plain. He must demand, and, if necessary, enforce their immediate surrender. Thirty minutes only would be allowed for a decision.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Cols. Snively and Warfield urged many arguments to prove the injustice of his demand and the fallacy of the premises upon which it was based, but all to no purpose. The Captain was inflexible. Meanwhile, the American troops had crossed the river, and were drawn up in front of the Texans ready for action. It was vain for a force of eighty men to attempt holding out against one hundred and sixty United States Dragoons, backed by two field-pieces. Retreat, too, was impracticable, and they accordingly surrendered their arms, upon Texan territory, in compliance with the unjust demands of the American commander.

Forty of the prisoners were escorted to Fort Leavenworth, and the remainder set at liberty, and left with only twelve rifles to fight their way back to Texas, through the heart of the Cumanche country. They had, however, previously managed to secrete a quantity of arms and ammunition, and, in a few minutes subsequent to their release, were fully equipped and ready to meet a Mexican force of eight times their number.

Col. Warfield was elected commander of the newly organized company, who immediately set out in quest of the enemy.

But here a new obstacle presented itself;— the whole country was swarming with Cumanche and Kuyawa Indians; so much so that a further prosecution of the campaign must inevitably prove most disastrous. This circumstance led to the abandonment of the purposes of the expedition, and the scanty remnants of the army engaged in it took up their line of march for Texas, where they arrived during the month of July following, wasted by toil and suffering, as well as by repeated conflicts with a relentless savage foe.

Thus ended the second attempt to subjugate the province of Santa Fe to the government of the new-born Republic of Texas.

A few days preceding this grand finale, a small party, including myself, commenced its journey to the mountains adjoining the head waters of the Platte river. We were all on foot, and suffered greatly from fatigue and thirst during our dreary march over the plains of burning sand and withered stubble that impeded our progress for some distance.

Crossing the Arkansas at a point several miles below Bent's Fort, we proceeded up one of the numerous dry creeks finding their discharge into that stream from the north, and, on the fifth day subsequent, arrived at a grove of cottonwood, upon a watercourse near the eastern extremity of the "Divide," and in the immediate vicinity of several tributaries of both the Platte and Kansas rivers. Here the abundance of buffalo induced four of us to remain for a short time, while the others continued their course.

The intermediate country from the Arkansas to this place, presents an uninviting aspect, and, though not naturally sterile, is rendered repulsive from its extreme aridity. The creeks are most of them mere beds of sand, entirely destitute of water, except at brief intervals when their percolated currents are shown in brackish pools, soon again to insume themselves in the willing earth.

There is rarely a tree in the whole distance, which circumstance adds much to the cheerlessness of its solitude. A general scarcity of rock also prevails, and the only specimens I noticed were exhibited in the banks of watercourses, and consisted of slate and fossiliferous limestone (formed of an extinct species of shell-fish, principally bivalves.) The soil in many places might be called fertile, and, were it not for lack of moisture, could be turned to good account for agricultural purposes. The landscape is generally undulating, disclosing at the north and northeast broken ridges of hills, which were now and then surmounted by scattering pines.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The buffalo having left the vicinity soon after our arrival, we again moved camp eight or ten miles, to Beaver creek, an affluent of the Platte, where we remained for fifteen or twenty days.

Our stay at this place was one continued series of feasting, as we lacked nothing of all the varied delicacies procurable in a country abounding with game. But one item in our entertainment was indeed a novelty, —viz. crows' eggs. Almost every tree and bush, skirting the creek at intervals for miles above and below, had been appropriated to the use of the countless swarms of crows that populated the surrounding prairie. Sometimes four or five nests of these birds might be seen upon a single tree. On two or three occasions I obtained from six to ten dozen of eggs in the course of an hour. These, whether boiled, roasted, or fried, were found quite an acceptable addition to our bill of daily fare.

The climate of this region is evidently less mild, and its warm season much shorter, than is common to other places in the same latitude.

It was now the middle of June, and yet the wild fruits, currants, cherries, and plums, were only in blossom, and all other kinds of vegetation assumed the appearance of recent spring. Indeed, the day succeeding our arrival, snow fell to a depth of three or four inches, and remained upon the ground for several hours. Whether such occurrences are common, I have not the necessary information to decide.

In our excursions after game, the remains of an Indian fort had been discovered in a small grove, a short distance below camp, which received the honor of our subsequent occupancy. A few hours devoted to repairs rendered it a complete shelter from either wind or rain; and, still farther to enhance its conveniences, we succeeded in digging a small well adjoining the entrance, thus securing a most welcome supply of cool water. Here revelling in the midst of plenty, with nothing to think of or care for but our own personal comforts, we had no mind to exchange our situation for the fatigues of war and the drudgery of camp-duty.

Several incidents also occurred in the interim to enliven the scene and relieve its otherwise dull monotony. On one occasion a strolling wolf, venturing too near camp, received the contents of my rifle and instantly fell. Supposing the shot to be a fatal one, I advanced and seized him by the tail with the design of taking his skin.

But the creature, having been only stunned by a neck wound, now revived in full strength, and, enraged at his rough treatment, called into exercise the utmost tension of his energies to afford a bitter sample of the fierceness of wolfine vengeance. Here was a quandary—to relinquish the hold would have been to invite a doubtful collision — to allow him an instant's time for turning upon me, must have proved equally perilous; the only resource was to retain my grasp with twofold energy, and run backwards as fast as possible, which I did, pulling the struggling beast after me, — now twisting this way, now that way, in vain effort to attack, and growling and snapping his teeth with all the ferocity of his savage nature.

What would have been the result of this strange adventure, it is hard to tell, were it not that one of my camp-mates hastened to the rescue, and with a club despatched his wolfship. At any rate I had no curiosity to submit the question to a further test.

With us the practice of early rising was remembered only as the whim of visionary theorists, and this important item in the routine of daily duties, was often postponed to an unreasonable hour. Once we came very near paying dearly for the indulgence. The sun had told more than two hours of his daily round, and only one of our number had doffed the drowsiness of sleep and betaken

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

himself to an eminence to scan the surrounding solitude. Here the first object that met his gaze was a war-party of mounted savages, advancing upon him at full charge.

He had scarcely time to reach camp and give the alarm, when the whole troop came pouring in upon all sides with the rapidity of a torrent, making the air resound with their terrific yells. Seizing my arms I was the first to meet the assailants, and, levelling at them, made signs that an advance would be at their peril. Upon this they recoiled, and shouted at the top of their voices, "Amigos! Arapahos!" accompanied with the signs of friendship and their nation.

Satisfied of the truth of these declarations, we permitted them to come up, and, in a few minutes, all were quietly seated, and the "pipe" performing its tireless rounds.

Our boldness in daring to offer a resistance greatly excited their surprise, and the more so, as we had only four rifles, while they had many arrows, and were more than ten times our number. An old chief, after listening to their remarks, replied:

"My people must not deceive themselves. The pale faces are brave and kill their enemies a long way off. Those" said he, pointing to a brace of pistols, "would have laid many of my warriors low, after the medicine-irons had spoken their death-words. The Great Spirit has taught the pale-face how to fight."

Our visitors had at first supposed us a war-party of Pawnees, and came with the full design of securing a scalp-dance. Had they caught us napping, without doubt our own lives would have been substituted for those of their enemies.

In a few hours the motley crew again resumed their course, and left us to the undisturbed enjoyment of our sequestered retreat, thankful indeed to be free from their presence.

In addition to the howling of wild beasts and the hooting of prairie-owls by night, the locality afforded other music to sooth the hours of slumber. A bird of unknown species had built her nest in the boughs of a cottonwood that expanded directly over our heads, and devoted her maternal care to the sustenance of her fledglings. But her unwearied industry by day less commanded our admiration than the sweet melody of her nocturnal warblings.

Soon as the "pointers" told the "noon of night," her song commenced in all its variations, like the soft breathings of an angel's lute, nor ceased till the gray of morning broke from the empurpled east. Often have I listened half dreamingly to the bewitching notes that mingled with the harsh discord of the wilderness around me, and fancied myself guarded by celestial spirits against the assaults of harm.

With such kindly thoughts, who might not mount in his slumbers on the wings of imagination, and step from star, as 'mid the changeless realms of bliss.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Lost. Night on the Prairie. Head of the Kansas river. Mineral Country. Gold. Wonderful incident relative to a wounded bull. Indians. Join the Arapahos. Moving village. Country between Beaver creek and the Platte. Cañon. Reach Fort Lancaster. Fortune bettered. News from the States. Murder. Extraordinary instances of human tenacity to life. Arrival of Indians. Theft. Chyenne outrage. Return of Oregon emigrants. "Old Bob," and his adventures. A "Protracted Meeting," or Indian Medicine-making. Indian oath. Jaunt to the mountains. Mountain scenery. Camp on Thompson's creek. Wild fruits. Concentration of valleys. Romantic view. A gem in the mountains. Grand river

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

pass. Salt lakes. Astonishing scope of vision. The black-tailed deer. Peculiarity in horses. Remarkable natural fortification. Return. Travelling by guess.

ONE day, on leaving camp in quest of game, I carelessly travelled till near sundown, without success. The hills, hollows, and ravines which intersected my way and continually changed its bearings, so completely bewildered me, that, as night shut down upon the cheerless expanse, I found myself far away from any suitable camping-place, and alone amid the realms of loneliness. Thus conditioned, I was forced to submit to circumstances, and accordingly accepted of such lodgings as nature afforded.

My lonely and dangerous situation, with the thrilling sensations experienced during the interval, gave birth to the following lines, which, by aid of a rude pencil formed from a bullet, were next morning traced upon a small scrap of paper. I submit them to the reader, not that they possess any intrinsic merit, but because they will enable him to derive some faint idea of the terrific wildness and beauty of the surrounding scenes.

NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE.

I.

The sable garb of darkness clothes the land,  
And twilight's sickly hue bids day farewell;  
The prairie's vast expanse on either hand  
Marks solitude's domain. O'er hill and dell,  
And wide-extended plain, I cast my eyes,  
To view, perchance, some grove or fav'ring stream,  
And hie me thitherward while yet the gleam  
Of day's fast-failing light bepaints the skies  
With tints scarce seen, —for there I'd seek repose,  
But for them look in vain; so here, alone,  
Wearied and worn, I sit me down and close  
My tiresome wanderings, —nor bate to own  
The chilling thrill of terror o'er me creeps,  
And from my mind all thoughts of slumber keeps!

II.

Oh, Solitude! First-born of Night! 'Tis here  
Thy reign is undisputed! Here no noise  
Of human feet doth greet thy list'ning ear,  
Save chance as mine, or savage want enjoys  
His arms at chase or rage at bloody war!  
Here haunts the beast of prey. The starved wolfs howl  
In ceaseless concert swells! The midnight owl  
Joins in his dolesome lay;—the raven's caw  
Loud mingles with the panther's yell, —and then  
The hoarse-toned bison grunts his bass, and makes  
Thy dismal realm more drear to lonely men.  
Æolus here his fresh-form'd wind awakes,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

And marks its speed unchecked; whose whistling moan  
O'er thy domain makes loneliness more lone!

III.

My thoughts, now kindred to the scene, arise  
In hurried flight, whose hideous aspects wake,  
Full quick, imagination's sleepless eyes,  
That conjure up such frightful forms as shake  
The boldest hearts with dread. In every herb  
Of prouder growth, —whose prongs the sweeping blast  
Hath taught to move, —some foe of savage cast  
Appears and threatens ill, as if to curb  
The onward progress of the god of sleep:  
(For here man sees his fellow man, unknown,  
As foe; and, arm'd for fight, he minds to keep  
The strictest watch, lest, from advantage shown,  
He tempt unlucky war.) So hurriedly  
I snatch my arms to fight each form I see!

IV.

But, why thus fear? Give place, ye visions dread!  
Ye thoughts of boding danger, drearisome,  
Cease to oppress! Is not the path I tread  
So by Omniscience mark'd, that perils come  
Not near, to even hurt a single hair,  
Without His wise permit? Are not my days  
Securely meted out, and all my ways  
So guarded, too, that thronging dangers share  
No part in harm's advance or death's progress  
Till all are told? And can my vigilance,  
Father'd by childish fear, make more or less  
The given sum? Cheerly, draw courage thence,  
My cowering heart; feel safety here. Give room  
To other thoughts, and chase these clouds of gloom!

V.

Thus, banished fear, at reason's bid, I cast  
My willing gaze toward heaven. In every star  
That forms the sparkling crown of night, though fast  
In regions of unbounded space, so far  
As scarcely seen by mortal ken, —appears  
Some guardian angel, robed in light, to keep  
His ceaseless vigils o'er my couch of sleep,

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Lest in my slumbering moments danger near  
To cut the thread of life, and thus undo  
The purposes of God. The silver moon  
Sheds forth her radiance unconfined, and through  
The desert wild to flower and herb gives boon,  
And decks each blade with dewy pearls, and pours  
Them on the earth, to cheer my waking hours.

VI.

Nature's vast caravansera, above,  
Below, around, on either side, begirt  
With midnight's varied splendors, scenes I love,  
Becomes enchantment's self, while zephyrs sport  
The fragrance of the wild-flowers multiform,  
And greet my nostrils with their rich perfume,  
To please my senses. Thus my thoughts resume  
Their wonted course, and hush the passing storm  
Of fear. Alone! Not lonely I. For here  
E'en loneliness companion proves to me,  
And solitude is company.  
My ear Drinks music from these savage sounds; I see  
Amusements in these forms; my heart's as strong,  
And easy beats, as 'mid a city's throng!

VII.

To me thrice welcome then, ye prairies wild!  
Midnight, and gloom, and solitude, ye please  
My restless fancy! Welcome then your child!  
For here's my home. And so, with mind at ease,  
I will embrace my mother earth, and court  
The soothing power of sleep. The clear blue sky  
My canopy, the ground my bed, I lie  
Encurtain'd by the pale moon-beams, which sport  
Beside my lowly couch, and light the dew  
With mimic diamonds' glow—while flowers around  
My pillow'd head their willing incense strew,  
And the sweet dreaming bird anon doth sound  
Some isolated note of melody!  
Thus chamber'd here, may not kings envy me?

My return to camp the next day served to quiet the apprehensions that had been experienced on my account during the interim.

This excursion took me some fifteen miles eastward, to the head waters of the Kansas river. The

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

country in that neighborhood wore a barren aspect, and was generally sandy and undulating. I noticed a kind of mineral substance, of a jetty lustrous appearance, which I took to be black-lead. I also remarked certain indications of gold, but whether this metal actually exists here I am unable to say; yet true it is, the surface affords large quantities of "gold blossom," and it is said also, that gold has been found in these parts.

The region lying upon the head branches of the Kansas river is considered very dangerous, —it being the war-ground of the Pawnees, Caws, Chyennes, Sioux, and Arapahos, —and hence comparatively little is known of its character and resources. It is represented as quite sandy and sterile back from the watercourses, and in many other places but little better than a desert waste. The gold story alluded to in the preceding paragraph came to me from various sources, in the following shape:

Some twenty years since, while the Arapahos were at hostilities with the whites, a war-party of that tribe advanced against the Pawnees, led on by a noted chief, called "Whirlwind." Three only of them had guns, and they soon expended their stock of bullets in shooting small game, there being no buffalo upon the route. Finally, left without any thing to eat, they became discouraged, and a council was held to discuss the expediency of relinquishing the expedition.

Having seated themselves upon a small eminence, the question of return was debated with great earnestness, —a majority being in the affirmative. But the head chief, "Whirlwind," bringing all his eloquence to bear upon the opposite side, at last obtained their consent to proceed.

During the conference, several small pieces of a glittering yellow substance were discovered upon the surface, which proved soft and easily worked into any shape. From these a supply of bullets was procured, and, resuming their course, they soon after met the Pawnees, with whom they fought, and were victorious, —every bullet discharged killing an enemy.

This victory was so signal and complete, that the superstitious warriors attributed it solely to the medicine-doings of the yellow balls, —three or four of which were finally buried with the chief at his death. The only white man permitted to see them, describes them as having been precisely the color of brass, —very soft and heavy. Admitting that the story is true,[54] there are doubtless very rich mines of gold in this vicinity, that being the only metal assimilating brass in color.

Previous to our leaving Beaver creek, an incident occurred showing the remarkable tenacity of life peculiar to buffalo.

An old bull appeared in the distance, travelling at a rapid rate almost directly towards camp.

Being in want of a re-supply of fresh meat, I seized my rifle and advanced to intercept him. Owing to the unfavorable state of the wind, I was forced to make so long a shot that the ball fell some two feet below the mark, and struck near the knee-joint of the fore leg, shivering it to pieces.

Still, however, the animal kept on, with scarcely diminished speed, and held me a chase of three miles or more before I could overtake him to finish the work. At length he was dispatched; but, on butchering him, I was surprised to find a third bullet-wound, apparently three or four days old.

The ball was full one-half the size of my own, and, incredible as it may seem, had penetrated the butt of the buffalo's heart.

I could scarcely believe my own eyes, —yet such was the fact. The creature had survived a heart-shot for days, and then, with a broken leg, had held me a chase of three miles.

Our final adventure at this camp, was with a party of Indians. Having discovered the latter, early one morning, and supposing them Pawnees, we prepared for an encounter. The objects of our ap-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

prehension, mistaking us for the same, continued maneuvering upon the adjoining hills the entire day, in such a manner as to lead us to conclude the whole country was filled with Indians.

Toward sundown, after vainly endeavoring to procure an attendant, I armed myself and proceeded alone to the spot where they had been last seen, determined to discover, if possible, the nature and extent of the danger that awaited us. Here, a single warrior advanced to meet me, giving signs of friendship and of his nation. In answer to the inquiry, why his party had acted so strangely, he said they had thought us enemies, and were afraid.

He accompanied me to camp, and, soon after his companions came up, but, instead of the powerful war-party of Pawnees awaiting to slaughter us by night, as our imaginations had depicted, and their cunning movements led us to infer, they proved but three Arapaho warriors, three squaws and two children. Our surprise at this laughable denouement was only equalled by their own. They announced themselves in search of the Arapaho village, and expressed much pleasure at meeting with the whites. Our visitors having passed the night with us, the next morning we yielded to their solicitations, and set out with them to the village, some eighteen miles distant, in a northwest direction.

About noon we arrived at the place, and found six or seven hundred lodges of Arapahos, Chyennes, and Sioux, encamped in a large valley skirting a small affluent of Beaver creek.

The village, being prepared to move, in a few moments succeeding our arrival, was en route for the Platte river. The spectacle was novel and imposing. Lodge followed lodge in successive order, —forming vast processions for miles in length. Squaws, children, horses, and dogs, mingling in promiscuous throng, covered the landscape in every direction, and gave it the aspect of one dense mass of life and animation.

Here a troop of gorgeously dressed and gaily painted damsels, all radiant with smiles and flaunting in conscious beauty, bestriding richly caparisoned horses, excited the admiration and commanded the homage of gallantry; there a cavalcade of young warriors, bedaubed with fantastic colors — black, red, white, blue, or yellow, in strict accordance with savage taste — habited in their nicest attire, swept proudly along, chanting their war-deeds in measured accents to the deep-toned drum; and then another band of pompous horsemen scoured the spreading plain, in eager race to test the speed of their foaming chargers; and, yet again, a vast army of mounted squaws, armed with the implements for root-digging, spread far and wide in search of the varied products of the prairie; then, among the moving mass, passed slowly along the travées, conveying the aged, infirm, and helpless, screened from the heat of a summer's sun by awnings of skins, that beshaded their cradled occupants, —while immense trains of pack-animals, heavily laden with provisions and camp equipage, as they crowded amid the jogging multitudes, united to complete the picture of a travelling Indian village.

Yielding to the request of our new friends, we proceeded with them ten or twelve miles further and passed the night in their lodge.

Our route from Beaver creek led over a tumulous country, interspersed with valleys of a rich soil, and prolific in rank vegetation. The side-hills afforded large quantities of pomme blanc, and the prairies and bottoms a splendid array of choice floral beauties.

The creeks disclosed wide, sandy beds, often dry and skirted by broad valleys which were passably well timbered. The principal ridges were not high, but surmounted by dense pine forests, with pleasant openings, smiling in all the loveliness of spring.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Notwithstanding the scanty volumes of the streams, the country presents to the traveller the appearance of being well watered by frequent rains, while ever and anon a gurgling fountain strikes upon his ear with its soft music.

Stratified rock is usually rare; the only species noticed were limestone and sandstone. I remarked a great abundance of silex and hornblend, with some curious specimens of ligneous petrifications. The only indication of minerals observable, was that of iron and coal.

The entire section from Beaver to Cherry creek possesses nearly the same geological and mineralogical character. Its indigenous productions are such as are common to the mountain prairies, and are found in equal abundance;— a remark which will also apply to its game.

As a whole, perhaps two-thirds of it might be cultivated, to some extent, were it not for unseasonable frosts; and all of it might be turned to good account for stock-raising.

The next day we bade farewell to our Indian friends, (leaving behind us one of our number, who chose to accompany them to the Fort,) and again launched forth upon the broad expanse. Bearing a course west-northwest, about noon of the second day we struck Cherry creek, some thirty-five or forty miles above its mouth;— thence, crossing the lofty plateaux, on the west, with two or three intervening creeks, toward evening of the third day we reached the Platte river at its exit from the mountains.

Our intention was to enter the mountains and spend a few weeks in deer-hunting; but, the river proving impassable, on account of high water, we were compelled to forego that purpose for the present, and accordingly started for Fort Lancaster to procure a re-supply of ammunition.

Continuing down the Platte, on the third day we reached our destination, and were kindly received, though humorously rallied upon our way-worn and forlorn appearance. Nor were we backward to join the laugh, occasionally retorting, when the jocos current set too strong against us, "Well, what do you know about war?— You've never been to Texas!"

The 6th of July dated our arrival, —the glorious fourth having been spent in plodding over a broad prairie, on foot, with rifles upon our shoulders and packs upon our backs. By comparison, I concluded my fortune had slightly improved since July 4th of the preceding year, which found me in a cheerless prairie, on foot, packing my bed, almost naked, without knife or gun, or having had a mouthful to eat for two days previous.

Capt. Fremont, elsewhere spoken of, had just arrived from the States on an expedition to Oregon, ordered by the United States Government, and brought intelligence of an existing armistice between Mexico and Texas. Accompanying his party was one whom I recognized as an old acquaintance of other lands, the first and only one I had the pleasure of meeting with during my long sojourn in the country.

July 11th, witnessed the death of an old mountaineer at Fort Lancaster, who came to his end from the effects of a pistol wound received in a drunken frolic on the 4th. The ball entered the back about two inches below the heart, severely fracturing the vertebrae and nearly severing the spinal marrow. He lived just one week succeeding the occurrence, but meanwhile suffered more than the agonies of death. His body below the wound was entirely devoid of feeling or use from the first, and, as death preyed upon him by piecemeal, he would often implore us with most piteous and heart-melting appeals kindly to ease his miseries by hastening his end. The murderer was left at large, and in two or three weeks subsequent accompanied Capt. Fremont to Oregon.

The above is the most remarkable exhibition of human tenacity to life that ever came under my

---

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

personal observation; I have, however, heard of instances far more extraordinary. The case of Ex-Governor Boggs, of Mo., in '41, who recovered from the effects of a wound, that not only fractured his skull, but actually emitted particles of the brain, is doubtless well known; yet another of like nature, still more wonderful in its details, occurred to an old French trapper, named Augustine Clermont, with whom I am well acquainted.

Clermont, in an affray with a Spaniard, had been prostrated by a blow that fractured his skull in the occiput. His antagonist then fell upon him and thrust the point of a knife into the brain repeatedly, and finally left him for dead.

Soon after, he was found by his friends in this deplorable situation, who, on perceiving he yet breathed, kindly dressed his wounds, and bestowed upon him the attention his situation demanded, and in a short time he became perfectly sound and hearty.

July 13th. The Indian village before spoken of, on its way in quest of buffalo, visited the Fort, and, as is customary on such occasions, the squaws and children made themselves busy in appropriating to their own use such little articles as came within their reach. I was minus a blanket through their artfulness, and several other individuals suffered equally with myself.

Some six weeks afterward they returned, and again called at the Fort, when, recognizing my stolen blanket in the possession of a young warrior, I immediately took it from him. At first he stoutly resisted, and the more so as several hundred of his tribe were present, —but, all to no purpose; and he at length yielded, as he saw me on the point of enforcing my claims to it in a more feeling way, such as would doubtless have endangered his own personal safety.

I remained at Fort Lancaster for two months or more; and the several incidents which occurred in the interim may be thus briefly summed up:

The first in order was an outrage of the Chyennes, in cruelly murdering the young man with whom I had passed a portion of the preceding winter upon Vasques' creek

The next was the appearance of a small party of emigrants, on their return to the States, —having become displeased with the management of the company then en route for Oregon.

A third was the arrival of one of the four men who had left for the Cimaron at the first disbanding of the Texan volunteers, and were subsequently taken prisoners by the Mexicans.

After being incarcerated at Santa Fe for two or three weeks, they were finally liberated, with the exception of one, who had died in the interval. Toward the last of their imprisonment, they were treated kindly, owing to the exemplary conduct of the Texans, as spoken of elsewhere.

The fellow thus introduced, responding to the name of "Old Bob," made himself quite conspicuous by his subsequent conduct. The gentleman in charge at Fort Lancaster, pitying his deplorable condition, kindly afforded him employment at a liberal compensation, and Old Bob set to work faithfully. In the course of twelve or fifteen days, however, he improved the opportunity of stealing a rifle and ammunition, with which he absconded and set his face for the mountains.

All that he now lacked to complete his equipment was a good horse, which deficiency seemed luckily made up by the discovery of one recently strayed from the Indians. "I must have him," said Bob. So, carelessly dropping his rifle and pack, he commenced a fruitless effort to capture the erratic steed.

For a while his success seemed almost certain; but, after a tedious trial for several hours, he was finally obliged to relinquish the attempt, and turned to recover his rifle and pack. Alas, for Old Bob! here an unlooked-for calamity presented itself—they were not to be found!

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Vainly it was that he searched diligently for four successive days, enduring in the mean time all the pangs of hunger and the goadings of a guilty conscience — his scrutiny gave not the slightest indication of their whereabouts. “Truly, the way of transgressors is hard!” thought Bob, as with reluctance he abandoned all,[55] and despairingly set his face to go — he knew not whither! — half-starved and half-naked, with neither pistol, gun, nor butcher-knife, for his defence in a dangerous country; nor one morsel to renew his strength by day, nor even a solitary rag to screen him from the chill air of night!

The next place at which Old Bob showed himself was at an Indian lodge, thither driven by the impulse of hunger—having starved for more than five successive days. Here he procured a temporary supply from the compassionate inmates, who also kindly gave him a robe.

Nothing further was heard of him for eight or ten days, and the generally conceded opinion was, that he had either starved to death or had been killed by savages, when an express from the Arkansas brought intelligence of having encountered him by the way.

The luckless wight, after being without eating for five or six more days, had been robbed by the Apache Indians of everything about him except a pair of ragged pantaloons, and barely escaped from them with his life! The express furnished him with a quantity of provisions, a pistol, robe, and ammunition, when, bidding him farewell, the two resumed their respective courses.

From this date, his story is briefly told. Pursuing his way toward the Arkansas, he soon after met a small party of Mexican traders, and, creeping upon their encampment at night, helped himself to a couple of horses. “It’s a straight road that has no turns,” muttered Old Bob, as he mounted one of them and returned to the Platte, where he bartered the other for a rifle and ammunition.

For a brief interval he seemed to prosper in his iniquity, but ere long the tables were again turned upon him, and he experienced the literal fulfillment of that other declaration of holy writ which says, “The wicked shall not go unpunished.”

Elated by his recent success, he again started for the Arkansas, with the intent of renewing his depredations, accompanied by two other adventurers whom he had persuaded to become the partners of his criminal enterprise; but, before proceeding far, he fell in with the same company of Mexican traders from whom he had stolen the horses. They immediately recognized him and the animal he rode, and took possession of the latter. As for Old Bob, notwithstanding his protestations of innocence and stout resistance, they stripped him of gun, pistol, and ammunition —gave him a severe flogging, and again turned him adrift upon the prairie, destitute of everything except the baseness of his own heart!

“Well, Bob,” said one of his comrades; “this business appears not so profitable, after all; though you, doubtless, have become quite warmed in its pursuit. For my own part I shall quit it before I begin, and return to the States.”

“And I, too;” chimed in the other.

“The fact is,” replied Bob, “this country is getting rather too hot for me, and I’ll bear you company! What d’ye say to that?” “Just as you like,” responded his two companions; “that is, provided you wont attempt the grab game on us.”

“Come, boys; now that’s too bad! Oh, you may rest assured I will never repay a kindness with ingratitude, neither will I abuse the confidence of friends.”

Thus arranged, the three started on their way. Coming upon a camp of hunters, a few miles below Bent’s Fort, they concluded to remain a short time in order to procure a supply of meat for their

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

journey. Here our slippery customer borrowed a horse and rifle of his comrade, pretendedly for a buffalo hunt, and under a most solemn pledge of returning them; however, on finding himself again armed and mounted, he was not slow to improve the opportunity of bidding an abrupt farewell to the unsuspecting dupe, and resumed his course toward the States.

How he eventually succeeded through this last shift, I am unable to say; yet, the brief story of his adventures thus far is sufficient to prove, that iniquity sometimes, even in this life, receives a severe reward.

Toward the last of August the Arapahos and Chyennes held a grand convocation, in the vicinity of Fort Lancaster, for the purpose of medicine-making; or, in other words, paying their united devotions to the Great Spirit. The gathering might with propriety have been termed a "Protracted Meeting," as it continued for three successive days and nights, exclusive of the time occupied in preliminary arrangements.

Besides the two tribes above named, a large number of Sioux, Cumanches, Blackfeet, and Riccarees, were present, swelling the concourse to nearly a thousand lodges.

The regular participants in the ceremonies of the occasion had previously prepared themselves by a fast of three days, attended with frequent washings and purifications. A large lodge had been erected in the form of an amphitheatre, as described upon a former page, with a pole in its centre pointing to the zenith, near the top of which was affixed the head of a buffalo. Here the throng assembled, with up-turned eyes, encircling it around in solemn dance, accompanied by a low musical chant, as they addressed the "Big Medicine". This strange worship was maintained day and night, without intermission, —the devotees meanwhile neither eating nor drinking. So exhausted were they, that at times, they fell from effects of weakness and fatigue.

Some of their performances savored much of Hindoo origin. Those wishing to be thought particularly good, attested their piety by cutting themselves in various places, —and, yet others, by drawing after them the heads of buffalo fastened upon hooks inserted in their own flesh, As the exercises were about to close, an offering of blankets, robes, beads, tobacco, &c., was made to the Good Spirit, after which the crowd dispersed.

Their object appeared to be a threefold one, viz: to do penance for sin, to thank the Author of Good for past favors, and to implore a continuance of His beneficence for the future.

The head around which they danced was evidently not the object of their veneration, but was placed there simply to remind them that, as the buffalo constituted their principal sustenance, the Good Being should be more especially adored on its account.

A number of articles having disappeared from the Fort rather mysteriously, suspicion was fastened upon an Indian for appropriating them in the usual way. He was accordingly charged with the theft, but strongly affirmed his innocence, and, to place the matter beyond doubt, took an oath in attestation of his words. The ceremony observed was as follows:

Taking his bow, he selected the stoutest of his arrows, and, holding it in his right hand, pointed successively to the sky, the ground, and his own heart; then, kissing the bow, he again protested his innocence. This being considered satisfactory, he was honorably acquitted of the charge.

An Indian is rarely known either to violate his oath or to swear falsely, as in such a case he would be looked upon as being irrecoverably exposed to the immediate wrath of heaven and the vengeance of man. The import of this ceremony may be expressed in these words: "Thou who dwellest in the air and earth, receive from me this arrow, and with this bow plunge it to my heart, if I

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

do not speak the truth!" I leave the reader to judge in regard to the binding nature of its obligations.

Sept. 25th. Having purchased a horse for the purpose, I proceeded to the mountains on a hunting excursion, where, unattended by any one, I had a further opportunity of testing the varied sweets of solitude.

My course lay directly west some eight miles to Soublet's creek, a considerable affluent of the Platte, heading at the base of Long's Peak, thence continuing up its right hand branch, I penetrated into the mountains, on the second day, a distance of several miles and camped. One of the passes to Grand river, which is generally thought much the nearest route, leads up this branch. The interval from the 27th to the 30th was devoted to exploration, and I ascended the main chain of the mountains left of Long's Peak. The usual height of this ridge is about ten thousand feet, upon which the stern chambers of deathless winter are repeatedly exposed to the eye.

The mountains and creeks were well timbered, —the former with pine, cedar, and balsam, and the latter with cottonwood, aspen, and box-elder. Along the watercourses and intermingled with the rude array of hills and rocks, were many beautiful valleys, prairillons, and plateaux, all clothed with rank vegetation; and, indeed, the soil of the entire section appeared tolerably fertile.

The prevailing rock of this region is feldspathic granite, gneiss, micaceous sandstone, and slate. These different classifications (here strown about in confused piles, and there again towering in massive walls of immense altitude) presented an impressively grand appearance, and united to render the scenery one of varied sublimity and magnificence.

Sept. 30th. In the afternoon I raised camp and proceeded for ten or twelve miles, through a broad opening between two mountain ridges, bearing a northwesterly direction, to a large valley skirting a tributary of Thompson's creek, where, finding an abundance of deer, I passed the interval till my return to the Fort.

Upon all the principal streams were large quantities of cherries and plums, which proved quite acceptable. The cherry (*cerasus virginiana*) indigenous to this country is quite similar in appearance to our common wild cherry, though it is generally larger and more pleasantly tasted. It grows upon a small bush, and yields in lavish profusion.

Three different varieties of plums are common to these parts, but are so similar in most respects to the wild species of that fruit found in our Southern and Western States, that I shall not take the trouble to describe them.

The locality of my encampment presented numerous and varied attractions. It seemed, indeed, like a concentration of beautiful lateral valleys, intersected by meandering watercourses, ridged by lofty ledges of precipitous rock, and hemmed in upon the west by vast piles of mountains climbing beyond the clouds, and upon the north, south, and east, by sharp lines of hills that skirted the prairie; while occasional openings, like gateways, pointed to the far-spreading domains of silence and loneliness.

Easterly a wall of red sandstone and slate extended for miles northward and southward, whose counterscarp spread to view a broad and gentle declivity, decked with pines and luxuriant herbage, at the foot of which a lake of several miles in circumference occupies the centre of a basin-like valley, bounded in every direction by verdant hills, that smile upon the bright gem embosomed among them.

This valley is five or six miles in diameter, and possesses a soil well adapted to cultivation. It also

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

affords every variety of game, while the lake is completely crowded with geese, brants, ducks, and gulls, to an extent seldom witnessed. What a charming retreat for some one of the world-hating literati! He might here hold daily converse with himself, Nature, and his God, far removed from the annoyance of man.

Four miles further north the traveller is brought to one of the main branches of Thompson's creek, up which is another pass to the waters of Grand river.

This stream traces its way through a fertile valley, two or three miles broad, stretching from the prairie almost to the base of Long's Peak, —a distance of nearly thirty miles. The valley is well timbered and admirably adapted to stock-raising.

The hills and mountains, enclosing it upon each side are also studded with forests of pine and cedar, while the entire section is stored with all of the usual varieties of game known to contiguous regions, in addition to its rich treasures of fruits, flowers and grasses.

In surveying, from a commanding summit, the vast prairie skirting the mountain range upon the east, several small lakes are discernible at different points. The water of these is usually brackish, and their shores, whitened by constant saline efflorescence, glisten in the sun's rays, and present a striking contrast with the surrounding verdure.

The mind is perfectly astounded at the immense expanse thus brought within the scope of vision. In a clear day, objects favorably situated no larger than an ox or a horse, may be seen at a distance of twenty miles, and the timber of creeks even for sixty or seventy miles. Here the beholder may scale beyond the clouds far heavenward, and gaze upon a world at his feet!

My hunting was confined principally to black-tailed deer. These animals are much larger than others of the genus cervi, and their flesh is of a superior flavor. Their habits are similar to those of the wild sheep, leading them constantly to seek the regions of spring; in the winter, descending to the valleys, and in the summer, keeping pace with the melting snows upon the mountain-sides.

The extremity of their vertebræ is shorter than that of other species of the deer family, and has upon it a small cluster of coarse, jetty hair, from which the animal derives its name. Their hair is usually of a dark brown color, coarse and brittle, with the exception of a strip of dirty white upon the hams. Their ears are very large and long, —quite similar to those of a mule; in other respects, however, they conform to the peculiarities of the common deer.

I was quite successful with my rifle, and, by degrees, became much attached to the versatile life of lordly independence consociate with the loneliness of my situation. My horse, too, seemed to have forgotten all the allurements of former scenes, and presumed at no time to wander many yards from camp, —a peculiarity in this noble animal I have frequently had occasion to remark. When thus alone, a horse will substitute the society of man for that of his own species, and, as if conscious of surrounding danger, will seldom leave the vicinity of a camp for a long distance.

Oct. 29th, I started for the Fort. It had been my intention to visit a remarkable natural fortification upon one of the affluents of Crow creek, but, ammunition failing, I was reluctantly compelled to abandon it.

This fortress is said to be complete in nearly all its parts, and capable of garrisoning a thousand men, yet even one or two hundred might defend it from the repeated assaults of vast armies, and, with a small amount of labor, might render it impregnable.

Its walls are huge masses of solid rock, one or two hundred feet in height, —apparently strata planted on end, —enclosing an area of several acres, unenterable except at limited openings.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

According to the glowing descriptions of it given by hunters, it must be an object well worthy the attention of the curious.

At night, I encamped at the base of the mountains, upon the right hand fork of Soublet's creek, and the next day reached the Fort.

The last ten or twelve miles of the route (leading over an unbroken prairie) were travelled during a heavy fall of snow, which rendered the air so dark it was impossible to see a dozen yards in advance. But what added still more to the uncertainty of my course was the frequent variance of the wind, changing the position of the grass, and otherwise increasing the constant liability to misjudge. Notwithstanding these accumulated difficulties, I struck the Platte river only half a mile below the intended point.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Newspapers. False reports. Singular grasses. Sale of skins at Fort Lancaster. An excursion. An incident. Camp. Huge horns. Leopard. Panther. Slaughter of eagles. Dressing skins. The hunter's camp. Vasques' creek. The weather. Return of comrade to Fort. Sweets of solitude. Exposure in a snow-storm. The cañon of S. Fork Platte. A ridge. A valley. Beautiful locality. Choice site for a settlement. Flowers in February. A hunting incident. Fate of the premature flowers. Adventure with a sheep. Discovered by Indians. A pleasant meeting. Camp at Crystal creek. Thoughts of home. Resolve on going. Commence journey. The caravan. "Big Timber." Country to the "Crossing." Big Salt Bottom. Flowers. A stranger of other lands. Difficulty with Indians. "Friday." Tedious travelling. No timber. Detention. Country. Pawnee Fork. Mountain and Spanish companies, Spy Buck, the Shawnee war-chief. Pawnee Fork.—Cure for a rattlesnake's bite. Further detention. Sketch of adjacent country. Pawnee Rocks. En route with Friday. Musquitoes. Observations. Friday as a hunter.

THE different trading companies had just arrived from the States, bringing their winter stock of goods, and, what was still more acceptable to me, a bundle of newspapers. Every item of intelligence contained in the latter was greedily devoured, but what afforded me no little amusement was the palpable falsity and ignorance their editors exhibited in relation to matters of this country. For instance, in giving the particulars of the murder of Charvis, a Mexican trader, which occurred in March, 1843, the crime was represented as having been committed near the Little Arkansas, by a party of Texans on their way to join Col. Warfield, who was then encamped in that vicinity with forty men! whereas, at that time Col. Warfield had only nine men with him, and was at least three hundred miles from the Little Arkansas; and further, the murderers of Charvis were not Texans! Subsequently, an article in another paper came under my observation referring to a statement made to the National Institute, by an officer of the United States Dragoons, purporting to give a description of the buffalo grass common to the grand prairie. This grass was represented as growing six or eight inches high, and as being abundant in the mountains, particularly of New Mexico, where (if I rightly remember) it was said it remained green the entire winter. The truth of the matter is, buffalo grass very rarely exceeds two and never attains four inches in height, —is not found in the mountains at all, so far as my observation has extended, and is green only about one month in the year!

By the way, speaking of grass reminds me of a remarkable characteristic in some varieties indig-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

enous to this country, and which will afford matter of speculation to the inquiring mind. The blade, killed by the frost of winter, is resuscitated in the spring and gradually becomes green from the root up, without casting its stubble or emitting new shoots!

The skins obtained during my hunt found a ready sale, at prices ranging from one to three dollars each, according their to quality and condition. These articles were in great demand for the manufacture of clothing among the Fort hands, and are considered far preferable to cloth.

Nov. 10th. I again returned to the mountains, heading a small party that insisted upon bearing me company. Late in the afternoon of the second day we made camp in a valley, behind the first ridge of hills, upon the right hand fork of Soublet's creek.

An incident en route afforded some little amusement at the time. We had left the Fort without provisions, and I accordingly proceeded a short distance in advance for the purpose of killing antelope. Riding slowly on, I noticed a badger not far ahead, and dismounted to shoot him. But the creature becoming alarmed sprang for his hole, and I hastened to stop him. This I effected by tightly grasping his tail as he was in the very act of entering his burrow. In the chase my rifle had accidentally discharged itself, and here commenced a struggle between me and the badger, —I to retain my hold while I unbelted my pistol to dispatch him, and he to enforce his liberty. At length I succeeded, and a choice supper was made from his carcase, which, to all intents, was the fattest thing I ever saw.

We remained encamped at the place above named for some six weeks, and devoted the interval principally to hunting sheep, of which there were vast numbers in the neighborhood. In attestation of the monstrous horns borne by some of them, I need only mention the simple fact of my having killed three sheep while here whose horns measured nineteen inches in circumference, and nearly three feet in length.

One of our party encountered a strange looking animal in his excursions, which, from his description, must have been of the leopard family. This circumstance is the more remarkable, as leopards are rarely found except in southern latitudes. However, they are not unfrequently met with in some parts of the Cumanche country, and their skins furnish to the natives a favorite material for arrow-cases.

The only beast of prey other than wolves, encountered during the entire winter, was a solitary panther, whose extreme shyness defied all attempts to approach within shooting distance. My more lengthy rambles brought me to a large valley immured by lateral hills, that had been occupied a short time previous by a party of Indians, for the purpose of eagle-catching. As proof of their success, I counted the bodies of thirty-six eagles, lying in piles at their recent camp. These consisted of the only two varieties found in the mountains, viz: the American and bald eagle. The wing-feathers of these birds command a ready sale among the Indians, by whom they are highly prized for the empluming of arrows.

The usual mode of dressing skins, prevalent in this country among both Indians and whites, is very simple in its details and is easily practised.

It consists in removing all the fleshy particles from the pelt, and divesting it of a thin viscid substance upon the exterior, known as the "grain;" then, after permitting it to dry, it is thoroughly soaked in a liquid decoction formed from the brains of the animal and water, when it is stoutly rubbed with the hands in order to open its pores and admit the mollient properties of the fluid, —this done, the task is completed by alternate rubbings and distensions until it is completely dry

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

and soft.

In this manner a skin may be dressed in a very short time, and, on application of smoke, will not become hardened from any subsequent contact with water.

The winter-camp of a hunter of the Rocky Mountains would doubtless prove an object of interest to the unsophisticated. It is usually located in some spot sheltered by hills or rocks, for the double purpose of securing the full warmth of the sun's rays, and screening it from the notice of strolling Indians that may happen in its vicinity. Within a convenient proximity to it stands some grove, from which an abundance of dry fuel is procurable when needed; and equally close the ripplings of a watercourse salute the ear with their music.

His shantee faces a huge fire, and is formed of skins carefully extended over an arched frame-work of slender poles, which are bent in the form of a semicircle and kept to their places by inserting their extremities in the ground. Near this is his "graining block," planted aslope, for the ease of the operative in preparing his skins for the finishing process in the art of dressing; and not far removed is a stout frame, contrived from four pieces of timber, so tied together as to leave a square of sufficient dimensions for the required purpose, in which, perchance, a skin is stretched to its fullest extension, and the hardy mountaineer is busily engaged in rubbing it with a rough stone or "scraper," to fit it for the manufacture of clothing.

Facing his shantee upon the opposite side of the fire, a pole is reared upon crotches five or six feet high, across which reposes a choice selection of the dainties of his range, to wit: the "side ribs," shoulders, heads, and "rump-cuts" of deer and sheep, or the "dépouille" and "fleeces" of buffalo. The camp-fire finds busy employ in fitting for the demands of appetite such dainty bits of hissing roasts as en appolas may grace its sides, while, at brief intervals, the hearty attendant, enchaired upon the head of a mountain sheep, (whose huge horns furnish legs and arms for the convenience of sitting,) partakes of his tempting lunch.

Carefully hung in some fitting place, are seen his "riding" and "pack saddles," with his halters, "cavraces," "larrietts," "apishamores," and all the needful materiel for camp and travelling service; and, adjoining him at no great distance, his animals are allowed to graze, or, if suitable nourishment of other kind be lacking, are fed from the bark of cottonwood trees levelled for that propose; and, leaning close at hand, his rifle awaits his use, and by it his powder-horn, bullet-pouch, and tomahawk.

Thus conditioned are these lordly rangers in their mountain home, nor own that any creature of human kind can possibly enjoy life better than they.

The events of each day varied so little in their nature, that a minute notice of them would prove uninteresting to the general reader. Suffice it to say, we remained here till Jan. 1st, 1844, and then removed to Vasques creek, some thirty-five miles further south, where we encamped in the valley that formed my hunting ground of the previous winter.

The weather continued cold, and several falls of snow had occurred, covering the prairies to the depth of six or seven inches, and the mountains to the depth of many feet, though it rarely remained in the warm valleys and upon the sunny side-hills to exceed three successive hours.

Our camp, as a general thing, was quite favorably situated in regard to temperature; the day time frequently affording a spring-like warmth, though the nights were usually cold.

A peculiar species of grass among the hills retained its verdancy the entire season, as did also another variety in the valleys. Our horses and mules continued to thrive and even fatten upon the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

nourishing herbage thus afforded by these secret chambers of spring.

Soon after our removal to Vasques' creek, three Indians, from a neighboring village, paid us a visit, who brought vague information of the proximity of the Sioux, which so excited the apprehension of my campmates relative to their own safety and that of their animals, that they were not satisfied to remain here any longer, and accordingly left for the Fort. Wishing to ascertain the true situation and locality of such suspicious neighbors, I proceeded to the Indian village for that purpose. The report proved unfounded; but yet my extra-prudential comrades were unwilling to compromise their own safety by a further hunt, and argued stoutly to persuade me to accompany them beyond the reach of danger.

In the morning, however, as all were ready to resume their journey, I mounted my horse, and, bidding them adieu, with my lead pack-animal returned to the mountains, resolved on a further test of the sweets of loneliness.

Remaining at our former camp for a week or more, I enjoying full scope for my trusty rifle among the vast quantities of deer which showed themselves in every direction; and, in one of my many excursions, penetrated to the head valley of Vasques' creek;— being belated on my return by killing a very fat deer, I was forced to pass the night among the mountains, without even a robe or a blanket to screen me from the severities of a pitiless snow-storm that fell in the mean time. Strange as it may seem, I experienced not the slightest ill effect in consequence.

On removing from my old hunting grounds, I halted at two or three different points still further south, upon small affluents of the Platte, and in the course of twenty-five days encamped a few miles below the exit of the main stream from the mountains, in an opening made by the forced passage of a large creek into the prairie through a sharp line of hills.

The scenery in the vicinity of this camp was romantic, wild, and beautiful. The ridge thus bisected was about four hundred feet in height, and opposed to the creek vast mural cliffs of limestone and sandstone that formed a gateway nearly three hundred yards wide. It ranged parallel with the mountains, two miles or more removed from them, presenting to the prairie a gentle escarpment ornamented with scattering pines and clothed at intervals with rank grasses of the preceding year's growth.

On ascending to its summit you stand at the verge of a steep precipice, two hundred or more feet in descent, —as if the earth, opened by internal convulsions, had forced the right valve of its fissure to an unnatural position, and thus formed the elevation beneath you.

This ridge extends for many miles, and overlooks a beautiful valley of remarkable fertility, fifteen miles in length by three in breadth, and intersected by numerous streams, more or less timbered, that find their way from the mountain side. The valley is divided by a continuous ridge that runs parallel with its length, which is much the same in character with, though more diminutive in size than the one previously described.

The huge masses of red granitic sandstone that tower to a surprising altitude, isolated and in almost every conceivable form and shape, add vastly to the wildness of the place. The rock is quite friable and constantly yielding to the action of the weather, while the soil of the valley is of a ruddy color and gravelly nature as will be readily inferred from the above fact.

This superface is fertilized, not only from the debris of its rocks, but by the immense beds of gypsum contained in its hill-sides, which are incessantly decomposing to enhance the general fecundity. Vegetation, of course, must attain a rank growth in such a soil, and, in favored spots, it

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

remains green the entire year.

All the different varieties of wild fruits and game indigenous to the mountains are found here in great abundance. Among the timber of the creek bottom, I noticed hazel-bushes, old acquaintances of the States, which looked like messengers from a far off country, and reminded me of other scenes.

There are few localities in the vicinity of the mountains better situated for a small settlement, or possessed of greater agricultural advantages than this.

The prairie at the base of the first range of hills is quite saline in its character; and several small lakes of brackish water, and well stocked with almost numberless water-fowl, are seen at different points, the incrustations upon whose shores assume a snowy whiteness. Notwithstanding this, it possesses a good soil and is admirably adapted to the growth of stock.

Feb. 26th. The fresh grass upon the hill-sides has assumed a thrifty appearance. Insects have begun to quit their winter retreats, and, commingling their shrill notes with the music of birds, hail the approaching spring. I was delighted to find in my rambles a cluster of wild-flowers in full bloom, shedding their fragrance to the breeze from a sweet, sunny spot among the hills, and I sat for a time to admire its new-born loveliness.

One of my horses, having been for some time wasting under the effects of a disease peculiar to those animals, died this afternoon, — a loss which subjects me to no little inconvenience. It was a noble beast, and cost me sixty dollars only four months since.

Feb. 28th. A light snow which fell yesterday night prevented me from leaving camp, but having shouldered my rifle early this morning, I ranged along the valley. The snow had entirely disappeared. Three buffalo bulls, alarmed at my approach, rushed down a steep hill-side, quartering towards me, at the height of their speed. Running to intercept them, I shot as they passed, prostrating one at the instant. So great was the impetuosity of his headway, the carcass was thrown to the very base of the descent, a distance of about three hundred yards!

The interest awakened by the picture of loveliness that greeted me two days previous, led again to the sweet spot among the rough hill-sides, — but, how changed! The cruel frost had done his death-work — the “flowers had withered and the beauty thereof had fallen away.” A tear to their memory, despite my efforts to restrain it, stole its way to the ground. Such was the fate of the first flower of spring! What a prolific theme for a melancholy fancy to brood upon, and, in its musings, catch the inspirations of poesy!

March 4th. The dull monotony of four days past has afforded nothing worthy of note. Spring is making rapid advances. To-day, however, an incident occurred, which, with suitable forethought, might have been turned to good account. Soon after leaving camp I encountered a band of sheep, and, despairing of a near approach, shot one of its number at a distance of nearly three hundred and fifty yards. The animal immediately fell, having been stunned by a neck wound, (“creased,”) but recovered as I reached it, barely affording me time to grasp one of its legs.

Here commenced a struggle, — the sheep to get free, and I to retain my hold. In the energy of its efforts I was dragged over the rocks for some two hundred yards, when, having caught its fore-leg, I succeeded in throwing it, and unthinkingly despatched it with my butcher-knife. I might have preserved it alive, as a rare and valuable addition to some zoological collection. My not having done so, I regretted the more, as it was a female and would have soon produced another of its species.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

March 7th. Having discovered a large band of deer in the prairie towards the Platte, early this morning I started to approach them. Being within the required distance, I was preparing to shoot, when, on glancing to the left, a party of horsemen met my view, advancing at full gallop. Their bare heads and fluttering robes at once announced them Indians.

Here was a dilemma! My first thought was to retire to the creek and there await them, under cover of the trees, —but this would convey an impression of cowardice, a thing which uniformly receives ill treatment at the hands of Indians, while bravery commands their respect. I therefore resolved to stand my ground and fight it out, if necessary, let the consequences be what they would. So, after examining the condition of my firearms and making the suitable arrangements for an expected reencounter, I calmly awaited their approach. My design was to shoot the foremost when within proper distance, (first forbidding their advance,) then, having discharged my pistols at the two next, if not previously killed, to close in with the remainder, butcher-knife in hand. From hostile savages I expected no quarter, and was therefore determined to sell my life as dearly as possible.

A nearer approach, however, changed my gloomy apprehensions into a transport of pleasure, as I recognized two old hunters from Fort Lancaster at their head, —the first of human beings, white or Indian, that I had seen for two months. Their gratification scarcely surpassed my own, they having long since supposed me murdered by prowling savages.

Having camped the day previous about three miles distant with the party accompanying them, they were now in quest of buffalo. However, as it threatened to be unpleasant weather, an invitation to my camp was gladly accepted, where the choice stores my larder afforded, were discussed with epicurean gusto.

Yielding to their persuasions, in the afternoon I bid adieu to my lovely retreat and proceeded with them to their encampment upon the opposite side of the Platte, near the mouth of Crystal creek. Here a small party of whites from the Fort were occupied in building a boat, with which to descend the river. A Mexican woman, from Taos, the wife of an engagé, honored the scene with her presence, as did also three squaws and two Indians. Commodious shantees had been erected for the accommodation of the men, which, together with a huge fire and a proportionate pile of meat, imparted an air of comfort to everything.

Remaining here for a week or two, I then proceeded to the Fort, a distance of about forty miles. The different trading companies were already en route for the States, having left several days previous. The thoughts of other lands, and more congenial associations, were now revived in all their vividness. They filled my mind by day, and crowded my dreams by night. Eight years had already intervened since the view of a distant home and much-loved childhood scenes had last greeted me, nearly three of which had been passed amid the dangers and vicissitudes of prairie and mountain life. Yet, I was at a loss to decide what to do. The object of my excursion had not been satisfactorily accomplished. I wished to visit the Pacific and familiarize myself more perfectly with several parts of Oregon and California; this would yet require a year, or even more.

However, the subject now uppermost in my thoughts influenced the decision, and, bidding a present adieu to other plans, I made prompt arrangements for returning to the States. These were soon completed, and on the 17th of March I commenced my journey.

With the intermediate country from the Platte to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas the reader is already familiar; and, as few incidents worthy of note occurred between these two points, I shall content

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

myself with a mere passing notice and hasten with becoming brevity to a conclusion of the task in hand.

The fourth day succeeding my departure I overtook a division of the caravan of mountain traders, numbering ten men and three waggons, with which I proceeded to the Big Timber of the Arkansas, distant about two hundred miles southeast from Fort Lancaster.

The country at this place, in the immediate vicinity of the river, is fertile and well timbered, but the prairies are slightly undulating, arid, and generally unproductive. The prevailing rock is exhibited in abrupt cliffs and bold escarpments from the hill-sides and banks of watercourses, and consists of various conglomerates, with limestone and sandstone; the latter being very fine-grained and admirably suited to the preparing of edge tools. I noticed indications of coal in some parts, and the usual quantity of saline efflorescences, particularly upon the south side of the river.

On the 10th of April, the caravan being augmented by an accession of three other waggons and several men, we again resumed our journey, and, on the 28th inst., struck the Santa Fe trail near the Crossing of the Arkansas, one hundred and ten miles below the Big Timber.

The geological character of the prairie and the river bottoms is much the same as that previously described, with the exception of a general scarcity of rock; though to the southward it is very sterile in appearance, and a continuous chain of hills, that in some places are mere knobs of naked sand entirely destitute of every semblance of vegetation, plainly points out the cheerless llanos of the Great American Desert.

Below the Big Timber the rank growths of absinthe, which have been heretofore so prevalent, almost entirely disappear.

The river gradually expands to the width of nearly two miles, forming several small islands, and scatters its waters in numerous channels, over beds of quicksand, so shallow and variable as to preclude the possibility of successful navigation.

Timber becomes very scarce, —so much so, that in many places it is difficult to obtain a sufficiency even for the camp-fires of travellers. The bottoms are usually broad and fertile, but possess a highly saline character.

One of the above, known as the Big Salt Bottom, is some forty miles in length and four or five miles broad. It contains frequent streams and pools of brackish water, with spots in which vegetation entirely gives place to thick coatings of mineral salts.

Among the prairie hills I occasionally noticed extensive spreads completely covered with a singular species of blue flower in full bloom, which imparted to the otherwise forbidding prospect an air of loveliness and beauty; but, in glancing over the far-reaching landscape, I looked in vain for the floral attractions peculiar to mountain regions.

A few miles above the Crossing, an incident occurred which renewedly aroused my recollection of other lards. This was the appearance of a fine-looking coon, the first I had seen since leaving the States. These animals are strangers to the mountains, and were never before known to penetrate thus far westward.

In passing a village of Arapahos, near the Salt Bottom, we had considerable difficulty with them on account of ten or fifteen domesticated buffalo connected with the caravan. The Indians were highly exasperated, and accused the whites of stealing their buffalo. They even armed themselves to fight us, and were deterred from their purpose only by a large present of tobacco, but still threatened vengeance in case of a renewal of the offence.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Soon after this we were joined by a young Arapaho Indian, named Friday, who was desirous of visiting the States. He had formerly lived in St. Louis, where he had acquired a knowledge of the English language, and still maintains a reputation for honesty, intelligence, and sobriety. Hereafter I will have occasion to speak of him more particularly, in connection with his previous history. Resuming our course, we bore leftward from the river and struck into the high prairie. Late rains had rendered the ground muddy, and traveling consequently became slow and tedious.

The weather continued wet and disagreeable, in addition to which the unprecedented size and velocity of the streams caused us frequent detention.

The trail, for four or five days, led over a number of timberless water courses, known as "the coon creeks," which subjected us to great inconvenience in the item of fuel, as neither tree nor stick could be procured for cooking purposes, and bois de bache, the substitute of buffalo countries had become so thoroughly saturated with water it was almost impossible to ignite it.

On the 23d of April, having arrived at Pawnee Fork, we were obliged to remain some four weeks before a ford could be effected, —but the dense bands of buffalo that thronged the vicinity abated somewhat the annoyance of delay.

The country, between the "Crossing" and Pawnee Fork, varies but little in its general character from that previously described, and exhibits a favorable contrast to the forbidding wastes of naked sand upon the opposite side of the Arkansas. Although not absolutely sterile, it is not rich and suffers more from lack of moisture than any actual defect of soil. Its entire destitution of timber will prevent it from ever becoming inhabited to any great extent.

Rock of all kinds is very scarce, and almost the only specimens prevalent are found in the pebbles and diminutive fragments which lie scattered over the prairie.

During our stay we were joined by Messrs. Bent and St. Vrain, and three or four Spanish companies, which increased our caravan to fifty or more waggons and nearly one hundred men.

With the former of the companies was a Chyenne chief, (Slim Face,) on his way to Washington to solicit the U.S. Government to adopt some effectual means for the suppression of the sale of ardent spirits among his people. (A very laudable object, indeed.)

Three or four Mexican ladies and several children (being the family of one of the Spanish traders, from Chihuahua) were also included with the new accession; but the most noted personage among the whole was Old Spy Buck, the famous Shawnee war-chief, who had distinguished himself as the leader of a small band of his countrymen in connection with Kirker and the Americans employed by the governments of Santa Fe and Chihuahua to fight the Apache and Navijo Indians. The old chieftain was on his return home, venerable in age and covered with scars, which gave indubitable evidence of the place he had occupied in the hour of danger. The history of his exploits would fill a volume far more interesting in its details than those of the proudest heroes of fiction. Pawnee Fork afforded an inexhaustible supply of cat-fish, which were caught in great numbers by our party. I know of no other stream near, upon the Atlantic side of the mountains, where fish are found in any quantity or size worth naming.

This creek heads at the eastern extremity of the "Divide," in the vicinity of the Smoky Hill branch of the Kansas, and by pursuing a southern course for about one hundred and fifty miles, finds its discharge in the Arkansas. It is heavily timbered, and is known among the Indians as Otter creek, on account of the great number of those animals found upon it. The valley which skirts it is several miles broad, and very fertile, presenting a large extent of excellent land, well adapted to

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

cultivation.

While here, I became acquainted with the salutary properties of gunpowder in an interesting case. My horse, having been bitten by a rattlesnake, was cured by the following simple process: The wound being slightly creased immediately above and below, a small portion of powder was burnt upon it for four or five times in succession, which completely destroyed the effects of the poison. I am informed by those who have repeatedly tried this remedy, that it has never been known to fail when promptly applied.

On the 21st of May, we finally effected a crossing, and by the 24th had reached Walnut creek, twenty miles distant, where high water again opposed a present barrier to further progress. The bottoms were so completely flooded that we were forced to occupy an adjoining eminence for a camp.

This stream is heavily timbered, and derives its name from the abundance of black walnut found along its banks. Its valley is very similar to that of Pawnee Fork as regards size and fertility, while the country between the two is evidently possessed of a good soil.

About twelve miles below Walnut creek, near the trail, is a huge and isolated mass of coarse sandstone, known as the Pawnee Rocks. This is a noted landmark, and, like Independence Rock elsewhere spoken of, is covered with the names of passers by, en route to and from the mountains and Mexican States.

Here was a confused medley of cognomens, —English, French, Spanish, German, Irish, and Scotch, —all entered upon the register of fancied immortality; and here, too, as I glanced over the strange catalogue, a number of our company were busily engaged in carving their own; but remembering a former resolution, I declined the honor of imitating their example.

June 16th. More than three weeks have intervened since our arrival at Walnut creek, and still there is no present possibility of proceeding with the waggons. This continued delay is becoming extremely irksome, notwithstanding the countless thousands of buffalo which afford us an inexhaustible feast of “fat things.” Time is precious and I must go on; and there are several who would do likewise, but hesitate, —while frightful visions of Pawnees and Osages disturb their midnight dreams and fluster their waking thoughts. Friday, the Arapaho, asks to accompany me; our arrangements are completed, and to-morrow we leave.

June 17th. About noon, bidding adieu to vexatious hindrances, we started, and, after a short ride, forded the Arkansas above the mouth of Walnut creek, —thence, following the course of that river upon its opposite bank, we halted for the night in a broad sandy bottom, four or five miles below. The musquitoes here proved so troublesome to ourselves and animals, we were compelled to defend the former by means of a dense smoke and protect the latter with a close envelope of robes. The next morning we re-crossed the Arkansas, and, striking the waggon road soon after near Plum Butte, continued our way to Cow creek.

A few miles above this point the regular trail leaves the Arkansas upon the right, and, following a northwesterly course for about three hundred and fifty miles, strikes the States at Independence, Mo.

The interval between Walnut and Cow creeks is generally sandy and somewhat tumulous, but is different in many respects from any other section previously noticed. The hills, adjacent to the river and near the trail, are coniform and not unfrequently naked piles of dry sand, while the hollows and depressions among them afford a humid soil, coated with rank vegetation.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

Cow creek is a small stream with very steep, clayey banks, and is sparsely timbered. Its bottom is about four miles broad and of variable fertility, —doubtless susceptible of cultivation.

On resuming our course we leave the buffalo region, a transition for which we are now fully prepared. Aware that this must shortly occur, I had sent Friday in advance with my rifle, who very soon prostrated three fine bulls, affording us a stock of most excellent beef from which to make our selections.

Few Indians or whites can compete with Friday as a buffalo-hunter either in the use of the bow or rifle. I have seen him kill five of these animals at a single chase, and am informed that he has not unfrequently exceeded that number. Conscious skill, in this respect, is the occasion of some little pride to its possessor.

But it is not in hunting exploits alone that he excels; his deeds of war equally command the respect and admiration of his tribe, among whom he is known as the "Arapaho American." A brief sketch of his early life I have reserved for the succeeding chapter, which the reader may rely upon as strictly true.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Arapaho American, a sketch of real life. Tenets of the mountain Indians in reference to a future state of rewards and punishment. The "water bull." Country between Cow creek and Council Grove. Inviting locality for settlement. Sudden rise of water. Separate routes. Dangerous travelling. Osage village. Osages, and all about them. Arrival at Van Buren, Arkansas. Concluding remarks

EARLY in the year 1828, ere peace had been established between the whites and the Arapahos, a large village of that tribe made its temporary encampment upon the waters of the Cimarone, in the vicinity of the Santa Fe trail.

An opportunity so favorable for amusement was not suffered long to pass unimproved by the younger ones, and group after group of merry boys and girls were soon bescattered over the adjoining prairie, engaged in their innocent sports, —for of play all children possess an intuitive fondness, be they white, red, or black.

Each successive day yielded its tribute to the routine of pleasure, as, true to the teachings of childish philosophy, they seized the enjoyments of the present, nor thought or cared for the future, — and thus far, it may be said, some men are but overgrown boys.

Impelled by the restless spirit of their years, on an occasion, several frolicksome lads had wandered to an unusual distance from camp, and passed most of the day in a fruitless effort to catch prairie-dogs.

At length, wearied with a bootless task, they set their faces homeward. Scarcely had they started, however, when the village made its appearance, bearing directly towards them; whereupon the happy band, seating themselves at the point of an eminence, awaited its approach, and soon mingled with their relatives, one after another, as they were disclosed by the passing throng.

In a short time a little boy, some six years old, alone remained — watching with eager impatience the appearance of his father's lodge; but still it came not. The crowd had passed and a solitary old man brought up the rear. On seeing the lone stripling, he enquired the cause of his delay.

"My parents come not, and I await them," said the little fellow.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

“Haste you,” replied the man; “they have gone towards the sun-rising for a day’s travel. Run quick, that you may join them.”

The lad promptly followed the old man’s direction, and set off in pursuit. His route led over a long reach of dry sand-prairie, eastward of the Cimarone, which was entirely destitute of water, and soon after crossing the creek a heavy wind obscured the trail, in addition to which the thick clouds of dust, with fast-closing night and insufferable thirst, compelled him to turn again to the Cimarone.

Another attempt to reach the village the day following was unsuccessful, and each repeated effort proved equally unavailing.

At length, weakened by hunger and suffering, he laid himself down to die, in a grass plat by the creek side.

Seven days of continued fasting which followed, left him so debilitated he could scarcely stand. His mind began to wander; he thought himself a dweller of the Spirit Land and a ranger of the hunting ground of happy souls.

His bewildered vision pictured the joyous chase, bounding along the celestial plains. Strange voices greeted his ear, and sounds broke upon the stillness of solitude. He gazes around, and sights still stranger close in upon him, —not visionary, but real.

“It must be so,” said he. “Here are the horses for me to ride, and there is the game for me to chase. But, what singular buffalo! How long their horns, and how white!— What strange colors, too!— white, red, black, and mixed! And, who are they?— Ah! the pale-faces! They approach! What do they here?— I cannot escape them!” Thereupon he found himself in the firm grasp of two white men, who cut short his soliloquy by bearing him to their camp.

His fancy, though illusive in its inception, had ended in sober reality. The strange voices greeting his ear were those of his captors, who had just encamped near him; the horses and singular buffalo exciting his wonder, were the horses and cattle of a caravan of Santa Fe traders; and the pale-faces were two of the company, by the names of Fitzpatrick and Soublet, by whom he was taken.

They were on their return to the States, and, noticing a strange object in the vicinity of camp soon after their noon halt, approached to learn its character and found the little sufferer as above related.

He had never before seen the whites, and, knowing them only from the representations of his people, they were associated in his boyish fancy with all that was hateful and wicked. But, instead of the cruel death he had supposed would be his certain allotment at their hands, they administered to his wants and plied him with kindnesses. Everything about him was so strange, he could scarcely be convinced it was not a picture of the imagination — that he was not yet dreaming of the happy country, or actually initiated into its delightful mysteries.

From the date of this event he was ushered into a new state of existence, and soon acquired the language and habits of the whites. Taken to St. Louis, he remained there for some five years, and received a partial education during the interval. So complete was the transformation, he even forgot the name and language of his nation, and became an adept in the customs of civilized life. About the year 1832, Capt. Grant succeeded in effecting a treaty with the Arapahos, and pending its negotiation mention was made of a boy, said to have been lost upon the Cimarone several years previous, who was supposed to have fallen into the hands of a trading company, and for

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

whose ransom a large number of horses was offered.

It is needless to say our hero was the subject of this request, and, in order to conciliate their good will and place the new-formed treaty upon a permanent basis, word was forwarded to his benefactor, Fitzpatrick, informing him of the circumstance.

Friday, for this was the name by which the Indian youth had now become known, on hearing the proposal of his relatives, steadily refused compliance, declaring the whites to be his only relatives, and that with them he would live and die.

Subsequently, however, he was persuaded to accompany his guardian to the mountains, expecting shortly to revisit the States. Here his father and mother came forward to claim him as their long-lost son.

But the lapse of seven years had served to efface all the recollections of early childhood. Parents and friends were alike strangers to him; he refused to own them, and recoiled from their advances. Their language grated upon his ear in a confused jargon of unknown sounds. His mother wept from mingled emotions of grief and joy, while his father and brothers pressed their mouths in unfeigned astonishment. Still his obstinacy was unyielding, and the united entreaties of relatives failed to exert upon him the least influence.

At length, the arguments and advice of the fur traders induced him to visit the Arapahos village, where he was received with distinguished honor by his relatives and nation. Every one hastened to pay him respect, — while feast succeeded feast, and council succeeded council, to welcome his return, and the little boy, who, seven years before — lost amid the cheerless sands of the American Desert, and weakened by hunger and suffering had lain down to die upon the bank of the Cimarrone, now found himself suddenly made famous as the “Little Chief” of his tribe, — the “Arapaho American.”

Honor, whose potent spell exerts its influence upon older heads and more enlightened minds, gradually reconciled him to the rude mode of life his destiny seemed to mark out, and he again became identified with the associations of former years.

Still, however, he retains an undiminished attachment to the whites, and continues to merit and command their esteem. His character, for honesty, integrity, and sobriety, has as yet stood unimpeached. A chief by birth, he might assert a more prominent station among his people; but he declines it, with the noble resolve:— “ Until by my own achievements I have earned that honor, I shall never consent to become a chief; for certainly, then my people will listen to me!”

The hero of the above sketch is now on his way to visit his friends in St Louis for the second time, and is at present my only travelling companion. As such I find him agreeable and interesting. I am indebted to him for much valuable information relative to the habits and peculiarities of his own and various other Indian tribes, while his vast fund of ready anecdotes and amusing stories serves to beguile the weariness of camp hours.

The religious peculiarities of the mountain tribes furnished us a theme for frequent conversation, inasmuch as their sentiments with regard to a future existence are strangely interesting in detail. Most of them are firm believers in the immortality of the soul, as well as the condition of rewards and punishments after death — though some accredit the Hindoo notions of metamorphosis or metempsychosis, while yet a very few look for annihilation.

The majority, however, aver that the good, at death, after a long and tedious journey, reach a happy country, abundant in everything the heart can desire, or thought conceive of; where, free from

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

pain and sickness, and removed from every ill, they shall bask forever in the sunshine of perfect beatitude.

To aid in this long journey, horses are occasionally sacrificed for the feeble and decrepit, (more generally squaws and aged warriors,) that, by mounting their disembodied chargers, the spirits of the deceased may gain a speedy entrance within its confines and taste the joys of their eternal home.

Of those adhering to different opinions, some believe in the transmission of souls from body to body through successive ages; and others, that they become the spirits of either men or animals, according to the virtues or demerits of the departed.

With regard to the final allotment of the wicked, their general theology consigns them to an interminable wandering over a desert waste, without purpose or rest, or even one moment's respite from their miseries, and subject to all the bitter pangs of hunger, thirst, and nakedness; and tormented with the sudden and intolerable extremities of heat and cold. The Scripturian here will not fail to recognize an obscure delineation of the world of woe, as portrayed in the sacred writings.

The ideas of some few, on the other hand, transform these condemned spirits into wild beasts or reptiles, but more frequently into prairie-dogs, that, by penance and suffering through a long succession of years, they may atone for previous misdeeds.

Many incidents of adventure related by Friday would doubtless interest the general reader, but space precludes their insertion. However, I cannot refuse place to the following, as affording to the curious a more special matter of speculation.

“On my return from an expedition against the Utahs,” said he, “in crossing the mountain chain south of Long’s Peak, I went in advance of the main party.

“My course led over one of the highest points of the range, whose summit disclosed a level surface of considerable extent. While passing leisurely along, the crowing of a mountain fowl, a short distance to the right, caught my ear. (There are fowls in some parts of the mountains similar to those raised by the whites, —but they are very wild and shy.) Following the sound, I was led to the verge of a small lake, with steep banks of rock, and sat down by it, in hopes of discovering the object of my curiosity.

“While here, my attention was directed to a strange movement in the lake-waters, accompanied by a loud noise and turmoil; soon after which a large creature arose from the middle and swam to the shore, where he stood upon a rock in full view. His looks frightened me. In size he was equal to the largest buffalo, and much like one of those animals in form; he was black, with a singularly shaped head, and had tusks instead of horns, which curved downward.

“He looked so terrible I hurried away as quick as possible, and related my adventure on rejoining the party. The old men laughed at my expressions of wonder — asserting that they had before seen such creatures in the high mountain-lakes, and called them “water bulls.”

Resuming our course, we travelled by easy stages for five succeeding days, which brought us to Council Grove, a noted place of rendezvous for Santa Fe companies.

The intervening country from Cow creek exhibits an entire change in its geological character. The landscape is gently undulating, and furrowed by frequent watercourses. Timber is becoming more abundant. The soil appears humid, and presents an air of general fertility. The grasses also differ in their species and assume a lusty growth.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

The sand-hills which had before skirted the Arkansas, as the traveller advances, lose their naked deformity amid dense groves of timber, and finally disappear in the distance.

There is throughout a marked scarcity of game common to the grand prairies, and everything denotes an approach to the frontiers of civilization.

Council Grove is a stream of considerable magnitude, tributary to the Osage river, and, by the Santa Fe trail, is one hundred and forty-four miles west of Independence. Its bottoms are broad, fertile, and well timbered with heavy forests of oak, walnut maple, and most other varieties of wood indigenous to the States.

The country in its vicinity is highly interesting to the agriculturist, and presents a soil remarkable for its fertility, inviting the hand of industry to a rich reward.

Here, too, all the varied products of the farmer might find a ready cash market, from the numerous mountain and Spanish companies that constantly pass and re-pass, and, doubtlessly, at commanding prices. This locality, in fact, being situated upon the very verge of the grand prairie, affords a most eligible point for a settlement, and will doubtless soon acquire a merited importance as the place of general out-fit and supply for the western and southwestern trade.

Through the agency of Friday I became acquainted with the existence of a vegetable found in these parts, which is known as the prairie-potato. This attains a size almost equalling our common potato. It is of a rough, knotty appearance, somewhat oviform, and when cooked is dry and sweet tasted. It is found generally in the banks of watercourses, and produces a low ground-vine, not dissimilar to a species of that vegetable usual to warm climates.

We were detained here for five or six days, by a continuous rain which raised the creek to an extraordinary height, —overflowing its banks and completely flooding its extensive bottoms. So sudden was the rise that we were compelled to move camp three times in the course of an hour, and were finally driven to an adjoining hill.

Improving the first interval of fair weather presenting itself, I bade adieu to my Indian companion and renewed my journey alone, as our routes led in different directions, his for Independence, Mo., and mine for Van Buren, Ark. Following the course of the creek by its right bank for some twenty miles, I then struck over to the Neosho, and, continuing on the fourth day subsequent I reached the Osage village.

The country passed in travelling this distance, presented much excellent land. The creek valleys were broad and heavily timbered, and the adjoining prairies undulating and clothed with luxuriant vegetation. The streams were so swollen I was forced to swim most of them, which rendered my progress one continued scene of toilsome and perilous adventure.

My stay at the Osage village was prolonged for two days, during which time I was kindly entertained by a chief who served as my host.

The Osages number between four and five thousand souls, and inhabit the section of country bordering upon the Neosho river. Their territory is well timbered, abundantly watered, and remarkably fertile.

In dress and appearance these Indians assimilate the Pawnees and Caws; but their dwellings are neater and more spacious, being constructed of water-flags fastened to frame-works of poles, so ingeniously thatched and tightly interwoven as to prevent the ingress of either wind or rain.

This tribe are beginning to make advances in civilization, and devote some little attention to agriculture. A farmer and blacksmith are furnished them by the U.S. Government, while the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

philanthropic efforts of the American Board of Missions are directed to their amelioration with considerable success.

On resuming my course, a branch of the Neosho which intercepted it proved unfordable, and its passage was otherwise rendered particularly dangerous on account of the swiftness of its current. However, my landlord, on seeing my determination to cross at all hazards, procured two large pieces of raw hide, which were firmly sewn together in boat shape and held to their proper position by slender boughs; these he conveyed to the stream, and desired me to put my baggage into them, remarking that there was "plenty room" for myself, too. Following his directions, the frail bark was soon launched and towed to the opposite shore by a son of the old man, who swam across for that purpose, while his brother, leading my mule after him, plunged into the current, and in a few moments everything was safely landed.

To reward this generous act I presented the old chief with a blanket, and bade him remember that "Good acts pay a sure tribute to a good heart, for they nourish its possessor with happy thoughts; very often, too, they yield a twofold return by the gratitude of the one upon whom such acts are bestowed; and then, again, sometimes the practiser is more than blessed by the acceptance of such presents as the grateful one may chance to offer. So, let my brother always do good, and the Good Spirit will own him as a subject well worthy of his special blessing."

Bidding the friendly natives adieu, I mounted my mule and hurried onward. My course led through the territory occupied by a division of the Shawnees, and that settled by the Quapaws and Cherokees. These tribes are partially civilized; but the Cherokees are farther advanced in refinement than any other Indian nation I am acquainted with. In fact, they are better educated, better livers, and a better people than their immediate white neighbors upon the frontiers of Arkansas and Missouri.

Late in the afternoon of July 4th I reached Van Buren, my point of destination, happy again to mingle amid scenes and associations from which I had been so long separated; and here I would take leave of the reader, provided I have been so honored as to command his interest and attention thus far. If the preceding pages have added aught to his stock of useful information, or served to while away a leisure hour agreeably, the object which primarily influenced their publication will have been accomplished, if contrariwise, it remains for me to beg pardon for the trespass I have undesignedly committed upon his time and patience.

---

[1] The black-tailed deer are larger than the common deer, and are found only in the snow-mountains. For a description of them the reader is referred to subsequent pages.

[2] By a recent treaty with the Kansas Indians, our government has become possessed of nearly the whole of this beautiful section.

[3] "Lave" appears to be a corruption of the Spanish word *levar*, to get up, or arouse, as from sleep. It is in common use among mountaineers.

[4] The great peril of our situation, and the pressing necessity of a hurried flight, may be readily inferred from the fact, that one waggon was freighted with a large quantity of gunpowder. None of us were quite so brave or present-minded as several Mexicans, in the employ of Messrs. Bent & St. Vrain, on an occasion somewhat similar. While journeying across the grand prairies, the pow-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

der-waggon accidentally caught fire, which was noticed immediately by the Mexican attendants, who hurriedly clasped it upon all sides, to prevent the vehicle from being blown to pieces while one of them proceeded deliberately to extinguish the flames! Neither could we stand comparison with a lieutenant of the Mexican army, at Santa Fe, who, on opening a keg of powder, made use of a RED-HOT IRON in lieu of an auger, for that purpose. It is needless to say, a tremendous explosion followed. Several of the bystanders were killed, but the lieutenant miraculously escaped. He soon after received a Captain's commission from the Commander-in-chief, in consideration of his indomitable COURAGE!

[5] The Sioux have bestowed the appellation of Duck river upon the North Fork of Platte.

[6] This term seems to call for a word of explanation. Our company was designated by the Indians as the Long-knife, or American company,-a term by which all Americans are known among them. The American Fur Company, employing almost exclusively Frenchmen, or individuals speaking the French language, receives the appellation of Wah-ceicha, or the Bad-medicine company, — a phrase universally applied to the French among the mountain tribes.

[7] This is the name applied, by the Indians, to Gen. Clarke, one of the leaders of the first party of whites that ever crossed the mountains. An allusion is here had to an expression made use of in his talk to the Sioux on that occasion.

[8] Silver. This phrase is the Sioux mode of expressing the act of paying money for any article.

[9] Formerly the "Chimney" was much higher than at present, and could be distinctly seen in a clear day as far as Ash creek. The wind and the rain are continually reducing it; and it is said to be full fifty feet less than it was nine years ago. Calculating from this datum, what must have been its altitude no longer remote than a couple of centuries!

[10] Obs. Lt. Fremont, in 1842. 96

[11] This is the interpretation of the Indian name which the French have supplied by the word Brulé.

[12] This word, in Indian signification, means any person or thing possessed of extraordinary or supernatural powers, as well as any act for conciliating the favor and obtaining the assistance of the Great Spirit. That medicine is the strongest which is the most efficient for its intended purposes.

[13] Rosebuds are found in great quantities in many places, throughout the mountains, during the winter, and attain a large size. They are highly esteemed by many as an article of food, and have not unfrequently been the means of preserving life in case of extreme hunger and lack of other eatables.

[14] This expression implies the bestowment of anything as a free gift. It is also used to denote a random way of speaking with regard to truth.

[15] This is a mountain phrase of Spanish origin, (cavellardo,) and means a band of horses or mules.

[16] Previously, he had been presented with a citizen's dress to secure him for the company's interest.

[17] Yellow-hair. The Indian name for our trader.

[18] This term implies death, or the act of dying.

[19] keg

[20] This is a common game with the mountain Indians. It is commenced by one of the players

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

who encloses a gravel-stone or a bullet in the curve of his two hands by placing the palms together, then, after sundry tosts and evolutions, suddenly parting them. If the opposing party is shrewd enough to guess in which hand the stone is obtained, he wins; if not not, he loses. Large amounts are often wagered upon the result of this play.

[21] The north

[22] Chyennes. The name owes its origin to the practice of scarring the left arm crosswise yet adhered to by the males of that nation.

[23] It is a singular fact, that the Cumanches and Snakes, (Shoshones,) though living - nearly a thousand miles distant from each other, with hostile tribes intervening, speak precisely the same language, and call themselves by the same general name They have lost all tradition, however, of having formed one nation, in any previous age.

[24] This is the title of those selected to superintend the civil affairs of a village.

[25] A tale which went the rounds of the public prints, several years since, entitled the "Maiden's Leap," affords a seeming coincidence in the mode of suicide; but, by comparing the two, the reader will observe a broad dissimilarity of detail. In penning the above I was guided solely by the leading incidents as related in my hearing.

[26] Tahttinga-mobellu receives the averment of all his villagers in proof of this strange feat.

[27] Chunka-monet, or travelling dogs, is the name applied by these Indians to wolves

[28] Allusion is here made to the drugged liquor supposed to have been palmed upon him by the trader.

[29] The idea of directing our course by the movements of the clouds is doubtless a novel suggestion to most readers; but its philosophy will be readily comprehended by a bare mention of the fact, that the winds of these regions almost invariably blow from a west-southwest point; and, as they are usually high, it is no very extraordinary performance to calculate the bearing of north or south, even in the most obscure weather.

[30] The magpie of the mountains is the torment of all sore-backed horses, particularly during the winter season. Despite opposition it will feed upon their skinless flesh, often to the very bone.

[31] I am ignorant of the meaning or derivation of this name.

[32] Lt. Fremont, in his report relative to the proceedings of the expedition of 1842, '3, and '4, has designated some three varieties of shrubs by the general term artemisie, among which are greasewood and prairie sage. Although the latter are of the same family, the difference in their appearance is so marked, I have thought it proper to observe a nominal distinction, and for that reason, they are called in subsequent pages by terms familiar to the mountaineers.

[33] The Spanish word "cañon" implies a narrow, tunnel-like passage between high and precipitous banks, formed by mountains or table lands. It is pronounced KANYON and is a familiar term in the vocabulary of a mountaineer.

[34] This river received its present name from one Joseph Laramie, a French trapper, who was killed near its mouth, several years since, by the Indians.

[35] The word "Chug" implies chimney; of the derivation of the term, however, I am ignorant.

[36] A pack of robes generally embraces ten skins, and weighs about eighty pounds.

[37] On my return the ensuing fall, I learned that the body of the unfortunate young -- had been disinterred by wolves and devoured.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

[38] I noticed one cornfield, near the village, that contained sixty acres or mores and in appearance savored much of civilized agriculture.

[39] Before reaching the States, however, he was robbed of everything in his possession by a war-party of Pawnees, whom he had imprudently suffered to obtain the advantage. He would, doubtless, have been killed had it not been for the determined courage of Van Dusen. The latter, seizing his rifle, levelled it at the foremost and thus deterred a further advance; then, by an adroit movement, breaking from them, set pursuit at defiance through his fleetness of foot. The Pawnees, now well aware that further outrages would be made known and become a subject of investigation by the U. S. Government, forbore their designs, and returned to Fitzpatrick his gun and one mule, with which he accomplished the remainder of his journey alone. Van Dusen, having succeeded in reaching Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, reported his companion as killed by them.

[40] Capt. Fremont, who visited Fontaine qui Bouit in the summer of '43, has furnish ad the following analysis of an incrustation with which the water of this spring has covered a piece of wood; and, though probably not a fair test, it will afford the reader some idea of its mineral properties:

Carbonate of lime - - -	92,25
Carbonate of magnesia -	1,21
Sulphate of lime	
Chloride of calcium - - -	
Chloride of magnesia	,23
Silica - -	1,50
Vegetable matter -	,26
Moisture end loss.. - -	4,61
100,00	

[41] This tree is a species of pine, quite common in New Mexico, California, and some parts of the mountains. It yields a kind of nut similar to that of the beech, which is esteemed as an article of food. Wild turkeys delight to frequent groves of this timber, and will thrive in an extraordinary manner upon pinion-nuts.

[42] Recently, however, Capt. Fremont reports his having succeeded in reaching the island nearest to the northern shore, but he was unfortunately prevented a further exploration. In his account of this he makes no mention of trees or streams of water upon the mountain. I have described it only as it appears when viewed from the main land.

[43] Hastings.

[44] \* Baron Humboldt and some other travellers speak of quite extensive ruins in the vicinity of the Gila, which are attributed to a different race of people from those now inhabiting that country, or even the ancient Mexicans. Some of them are represented as being in a tolerable state of preservation, particularly one, which is known as the "cassa grand." No reasonable conjecture as to their origin has yet been adduced. If they are not the ruined fabrics of ancient Mexican grandeur, to whom are we to look for their parentage?

The diversity of character between them and those of Uxmal, Paleiue, and other ruined cities of Central America, puzzles us still more; and, as the feeble ray of conjecture is the only source from whence light may be thrown upon this mysterious subject, we would prefer the suggestion, that the progenitors of the Munchies, or white Indians, might have been their builders; or, if the reported existence of the city of the mountains as stated in the text be true, might not the ances-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

tors of the people now inhabiting it have had some hand in their original construction? But, if the latter be the case, and these relics are not the product of Mexican civilization, the question yet remains unanswered, viz: who are the residents of that city and whence is their origin?

[45] This stream is named in memory of Gen. Ashley, of Mo., who, while engaged in the fur trade, attempted to descend the Colorado in boats, thinking thus to reach St. Louis by a direct water communication! However, he was compelled to relinquish his strange enterprise at the mouth of this creek, on account of the difficulty and danger attendant upon a further progress.

[46] This locality has received the soubriquet of Brown's-hole from the following circumstance: Some six or seven years since, a trapper, by the name of Brown, came to it in the fall season for the purpose of hunting in its vicinity. During his stay a fall of snow closed the passes so effectually, he was forced to remain till the succeeding spring before he could escape from his lonely prison.

It was formerly a favorite resort for the Snake Indians, on account of its exhaustless stores of game and wild fruits, as well as its security from the approach of enemies.

NOTE.... —Taking latitude 42 ° north as the northern boundary between Oregon and California, these interesting regions of country are embraced within the limits of the latter; but taking the head-waters of the Arkansas as the true point, and thence, by a line running due west to the Pacific, nearly the whole of it will be found within the United States.

The treaty with Spain in 1819, defining this boundary, which was subsequently confirmed by Mexico, after noting Red river as the northern boundary of its eastern provinces, to longitude 100 ° west from Greenwich, and thence north to the Arkansas, uses the following words:

“Thence, following the course of the south bank of the Arkansas TO ITS SOURCE in latitude 42 ° north, thence by that parallel of latitude to the South Sea.”

If the source of the Arkansas, by its south bank, is in lat. 42 ° north, then the matter of boundary admits of no question; but if it is not in that parallel of latitude, should the latter be regarded as the true boundary, when it is evident, from the words of the treaty that the source of the Arkansas by its south bank, was the intended FARTHEST northern extremity of Mexico, where the line between the two countries shall commence, and thence run due west to the Pacific?

But, instead of being in lat. 42 ° north, the source of the Arkansas is in lat. 39 ° north, as indisputably ascertained from recent explorations, and thus an interval of three degrees occurs between the two points named in the above treaty!

If the United States are obligated by this treaty to receive the 42d degree as their southern boundary, Mexico is equally obligated to receive the parallel from the source of the Arkansas due west to the Pacific, as her true northern limits; thus, a territory of eleven hundred and twenty-five miles from east to west, and nearly one hundred and forty from north to south, is left unowned by either party!

[47] A portion of the Fort was formerly constructed of wood;-it is now built of “adobies” like other trading establishments of the country.

[48] The treaty now in process of negotiation with Great Britain, relinquishes to that government all above the 49th deg., and consequently admits its claims to the entire northern boundary, to wit: from 49° to the Russian possessions.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

[49] By the terms of the proposed treaty, the islands of Vancouvre and Queen Charlotte are transferred to Great Britain, leaving only a few diminutive and comparatively valueless ports in the Straits of Juan de Fuca and in islets south of Vaneouvre, within the limits of the U. S. territory.

[50] The following analysis of the soil of this valley, as furnished by Col. Fremont, will attest its superior quality:

Silicia	70,81
Alumnia	10,97
Lime and magnesia.	1,38
Oxade of iron	2,21
Vegetable matter partly decomposed	8,16
Water and looss	5,46
Phosphate of lime.	1,01
100, 00	

[51] The Blackfeet are generally accounted brave, though instances have been known of three or four whites defeating a large party of them. On one occasion, three trappers fell into an ambuscade of these Indians, and two of them were instantly shot from their horses, but the third was left untouched, and spurring his animal to the height of its speed, broke through the whole throng and was soon out of reach.

Four mounted Indians immediately started in pursuit, and gained rapidly upon him till they came within shooting distance, when the lone trapper turned upon them, and with his double-barreled rifle picked off two of their number, and again fled.

Confident of securing their intended victim, now that they supposed his fire-arms were uncharged, the remaining two hurried after him, and in a few moments were within range of pistol-shot. The trapper then again halted, and the discharge of a pistol brought the third to the ground.

Drawing forth a second from his belt, the work of slaughter would have been complete, had not the terrified savage, in his turn, fled with the utmost precipitancy. The trapper pursued, but was far in the rear when the Blackfoot regained his comrades, and hurriedly exclaimed:

“Haste, ye! flee! It was the Big Medicine we pursued, and at his word three of our warriors breathe not, and of our I only have escaped! His single medicine iron twice spoke the death-word, and at the same time; then with his pipe-stem he bade a third one go to the Spirit Land; and, as he drew forth his butcher-knife to shoot me, I had fled beyond reach, that I might tell you how to escape! Haste, ye! flee! It is the Big Medicine that comes from yon! Flee, lest he kill us all!”

Following his advice, the astonished savages immediately fled with the greatest consternation, fully persuaded it was their only mode of escaping from certain destruction at the hands of the BIG MEDICINE!

[52] The larb-berry is of a deep red color, and somewhat larger than the common currant. It is of a sweet spicy taste, and very pleasant. It grows upon a small ground vine of evergreen, with a leaf assimilating the winter-clover in shape, and is found only in mountainous regions.

[53] This mound is a singular natural elevation in the form of a covered waggon, near the road from the United States to Santa Fe, —about fifty miles south of Taos.

[54] The country adjacent to the head branches of the Kansas river is but little known to the whites, who seldom visit it on account of its dangerous nature. That valuable minerals are con-

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE

BY RUFUS B. SAGE

---

tained in its soil is quite probable, and no doubt they will be brought to light upon due research. [55] Two weeks subsequently, while on a hunting excursion, the person to whom the stolen rifle belonged found it, with all the property of the thief;- a most remarkable circumstance, as the country had been filled with strolling Indians during the interval

Extract from Diary of Mrs. Eliza Spalding, June 15 - July 6, 1836

Covering the first crossing of the Rocky Mountains by white women

June 15th Fort Wm. We are camped near the Fort, and shall probably remain here several days, as the Co. are to leave their waggons at this post and make arrangements to transport their goods the remainder of the journey, on mules. It is very pleasant to fix my eyes, once more, upon a few buildings, several weeks have passed, since we have seen a building.

June 19th 1836 Fort Wm. Today is the sabbath, and the first we have spent in quietness and rest, since the 8th of May. This morning an elderly man (an Englishman) came to our camp, wishing to obtain a testament. Said he had seen but one, for four years-had once indulged a hope that he was a christian; but for several years had not enjoyed religious privileges - had been associated with ungodly men - neglected religious duties, and now feared he had no interest in the Saviour. I gave him a bible, which he received with great joy and thankfulness. Mr. S. in compliance with the request of the chief men of this expedition, met with the people under the shade of a few trees near our camp for religious service. A large assembly met, and were very attentive while Mr. S. made a few remarks upon the parable of the prodigal son.

Ft.Wm. June 21st This day we are to leave this post, and have no resting place in view till we reach Rendezvous 400 miles distant. We are now 2,800 miles from my dear parents dwelling, expecting in a few days to commence ascending the Rocky Mts. Only He who knows all things, knows whether this debilitated frame will survive the undertaking. His will, not mine, be done.

June 25 On the 22nd we left the platte. Our route since that time has been through a rugged barren region. Today we came to the Platte but do not find those beautiful plains we found before we came into the region of the Mts.

June 26 Sabbath noon. Camped on the Platte, and have the privilege of spending the remainder of this holy day in rest, but not in quiet, for the Co are busy in making preparation to cross on the morrow. They are under the necessity of constructing a boat, as the river is not fordable.

July 4th Crossed a ridge of land, today called the divide, which separates the waters that flow into the Atlantic from those that flow into the Pacific, and camped for the night on the head waters of the Colorado. A number of Nez Perce who have been waiting our arrival at the Rendezvous several days, on learning we were near came out to meet us, and have camped with us tonight. They appear to be gratified to see us actually on our way to their country. Mr. Spalding Doct W. & Mr G. are to have a talk with the chiefs this evening.

July 6th Arrived at the Rendezvous this evening. Were met by a large party of Nez Perces men women and children. The women were not satisfied, short of saluting Mrs. W and myself with a kiss. All appear happy to see us. If permitted to reach their country and locate among them, may our labors be blessed to their temporal and spiritual good.

From: The National Intelligencer, October 26, 1836

Also printed in: New York Evangelist, October 22, 1836

A Letter By Henry H. Spalding From The Rocky Mountains, 1836

Rendezvous, head quarters [sic] of Colorado,

Rocky Mountains, July 11, 1836.

Dear brother Leavitt — The readers of your valuable paper would doubtless be gratified to learn something of the expedition fitted out last spring for the Rocky Mountains. I will endeavor to give a brief history of our journey to this place, and the prospects before us:

Myself and wife left our friends in Oneida co., N. Y., the first day of Feb. last, traveled by land to Pittsburgh, 500 miles, which we reached first of March. We were joined at Cincinnati by Doct. Whitman and wife, from Ontario co., N. Y., and reached Liberty, Mo., the most western town on the Missouri river, 7th of April, where we were joined in a few days by brother Gray, of Utica, N. Y. From Pittsburgh to this place, 1500 miles, we came by water; had a pleasant journey; received many favors from kind friends — were especially favored by Captains Forsyth, Juden and Littleton, of the steam boats Arabian, Junius and Chariton, who treated us with great kindness and gave us nearly half our passage. From Liberty some of us started 27th of April, and the rest 1st of May, with two wagons, 17 head of cattle, and 19 horses and mules. At Cantonment Leavenworth, 30 miles from Liberty, we entered upon the great prairie, which ends only with the Pacific ocean, west, and extends north and south thousands of miles, and commenced our camps — since which time the ground has been our table, our chairs, and, with a few blankets, our bed. By the blessing of God, however, we have been comfortably sheltered from the cold and wet. We reached the Otoe village, mouth of the Platte river, 300 miles from Fort Leavenworth, 19th of May. Here Rev. Mr. Merrill, a Baptist missionary, and Mr. Case, are located, in whose family we were very kindly treated while we were crossing our effects. The Platte, as its name indicates, is very broad and shallow, about a mile in width. We crossed in skin canoes. When we left this place, the American Fur Company, under whose protection we expected to cross the mountains, were five days ahead of us. Their animals were fresh, as they started from Council Bluff, near this place; ours had already traveled 300 miles, by forced marches. But their being ahead was to our advantage. They made bridges and prepared roads; and by the blessing of God we overtook the company in four and a half days. We passed up the north side of the Platte to Fort William, foot of Black Hills, 600 miles from the mouth of the Platte, which we reached 13th of June. At Fort William we remained eight days. Started the 21st, traveled up the south side of the Platte 140 miles, crossed to the north again, and passed up its waters till we struck the water of the Colorado, 2d of July.

The waters of the Platte, Colorado, Columbia and Yellow Stone rise within a few miles of each other; those of the two former interlock, some 20 or 30 miles. When we left the waters of the Atlantic we struck those of the Pacific in six or seven miles, without passing any mountain. Our route from Fort William at the foot of the mountains, has been rough, of course, but nothing to what might be expected in crossing the Rocky Mountains. We frequently crossed hills in cutting off bends of rivers, or in passing from one river to another, but we seemed to descend as much as we ascended, till, 1st and 2d of July, we came to spots of snow, which convinced us we were very high. Since the 11th of June we have not been out of sight of snow, on the tops of the mountains around. We have succeeded in getting a wagon thus far, and hope we shall be able to get it through.

---

To Fort William our rout[e] lay through a dead level prairie, and plenty of grass. Since we left the Fort we have found but little grass — our animals have suffered much, and are now very poor. From this on we expect to find fuel and grass sufficient. Several days before we reached the Fort we saw nothing in the shape of timber; our fuel consisted of buffalo manure, which, when dry, makes a hot fire. Our bread, meat, and potatoes, since the 1st of June, have been nothing but buffalo flesh, and most of the time very poor.

We have all, however, by the blessing of God, enjoyed good health and endured the fare very well, except Mrs. Spalding [sic], whose health, which was better than usual when we came to Buffalo, has suffered some, either from the living or the toils of the journey. Our journey on will be still more difficult, on account of food. In a few days from this place, buffalo cease entirely, and no game is to be found in the country. To remedy the evil we have to dry and pack meat here for the journey. The waters on this side of the mountains are much better than those on the east, the sweetest and purest I ever drank.

The company with which we Journeyed consisted of about 90 men, and 260 animals, mostly mules, heavy loaded. At this camp we found about 300 men, and three times the number of animals, employed by the Fur Company in taking furs, and about 2000 Indians, Snakes, Bonnaks, Flatheads, and Nez Perces. Captain Steward, an English gentleman of great fortune, and Mr. Seileim, a German, traveled with us for discovery and pleasure, — The order of the camp was as follows: rise at half past 3, A. M. and turn out animals, march at 6, stop at 11, catch up and start at 1, P. M., camp at 6, catch up and picket animals at 8; a constant guard night and day. The intervals were completely taken up in taking care of animals, getting meals and seeing to our effects, so that we had no time for rest from the time we left one post till we reached another. When we reached this place, not only our animals but ourselves were nearly exhausted. Our females endured the fatigues of the march remarkably well. Your ladies who ride on horseback 10 or 12 miles over your smooth roads, and rest the remainder of the day and week, know nothing of the fatigues of riding on horseback from morning till night day after day for 15 or 20 days, at the rate of 25 and 30 miles a day, and at night have nothing to lie on but the hard ground. Truly we have reason to bless our God that our females are alive and enjoying comparatively good health. The Fur Company showed us the greatest kindness throughout the whole journey. We have wanted nothing which was in their power to furnish us.

We reached this place 6th of July, 16 days from Fort Green. We expect to start in four or five days, and by the blessing of our kind heavenly Father, reach Fort Wallawalla on the Columbia, 1st Sept. We shall either accompany the Nez Perces alone, or fall into Capt. McLeod's camp, a British fur trader, whom it would seem the Lord has sent up from Vancouver, on purpose to convey us down. From information received both from Indians and whites, we shall probably locate about 2 days east of Wallawalla, the nearest Nez Perces village. At Wallawalla, we learn from good authority that we can procure all the necessaries of life on reasonable terms. — Many cattle and some grain are raised at this place. At Vancouver, five days from Wallawalla, for boats down the river, and ten up, is a large establishment — a mill and several mechanical shops. They have 6 or 700 head of cattle and raise thousands of bushels of grain every year. Near this place the Lees, our Methodist brethren, are located and are doing well. We have now accomplished 820 miles of our journey, and have about 700 yet to make. No hand but that which has so wonderfully sustained and led us on thus far, can lead us through. Oh, may not our wicked hearts cause Him, who rules all things,

to withdraw that hand. Two days before we reached this camp, 12 or 15 Nez Perces met us and received us gladly. At night we had a talk with them, told them we had left our friends and home, and come many hundred miles to live with them, to teach them how good white men live, to teach them about God and to do them good. We spoke through four languages, English, Iroquois, Flat Head, and Nez Perces. They replied that they were happy that we had come. They knew now that Dr. Whitman spoke straight, as he had come according to promise. One brought a letter and some paper from Mr. Parker, and said that he accompanied Mr. Parker from this place last year to Wallawalla, from thence to Vancouver, where they wintered, that they returned in the spring to Wallawalla, tried to get an escort of Indians to this place to meet us, but failed, that Mr. Parker got down from his horse, wrote the letter, told him to fetch it to Dr. Whitman and conduct him to that place, about a day from Wallawalla, and that Mr. Parker was going home by sea. An old chief replied, that he did not hear Mr. Parker and Dr. Whitman last year, but was glad to hear our voices now, that he was old and had but few days to live, but was glad that we had come to instruct his children. As we approached the camp the Nez Perces met us in great numbers. When we arrived, we learned from all sources that when the Nez Perces camp heard that we were actually coming with the Fur Company, it was filled with rejoicing. As we came into camp they flocked around us by the hundreds. Our females found it quite difficult to get along for the multitudes that pressed around to shake them by the hand, both men and women. Some of their women would not be satisfied till they had saluted our's [sic] with a kiss, but they were very orderly. — Our females, of course, being the first that ever penetrated these wild regions, excited great curiosity. Our cattle, also, are much admired by the Indians.

Soon after we arrived we had another talk with the Indians. They replied, they had come for no other reason than to conduct us to their country, and they thanked God they saw our faces. The other day an old chief came to our camp and said, he was not in the habit of crowding people's houses, but stood off and looked on. He rejoiced we were coming to live in in [sic] his country, and said he would give us a horse as a present. At night he brought a fine horse. The Indians say, the place selected by Mr. Parker is not good for us, no timber, but about two days east from Wallawalla there is plenty of good timber and grass, but little snow, horses winter well. The Indians take great pains to teach us their language; many of them can speak English quite plain. They are truly a very interesting, pleasant race of Indians.

It is said they observe prayers night and morning, and keep the Sabbath, will not move camp on the Sabbath unless they are with white men, and are obliged to. They are styled by the northern men, Christian Indians. I hope we shall find these reports true, but we must not flatter ourselves, we must not forget that they are Indians. — I have just returned from a scene that convinces me that we shall have savages to deal with. However, one thing looks favorable, their anxiety for instruction, which commenced when they, in connection with the Flatheads, sent to St. Louis to get some information about our religion, still continues, though they have met with one or two disappointments that must necessarily operate against us for a time. The field indeed appears to be a promising one, but we must recollect that the heart of man in all ages, and among all people is desperately wicked, fully set against God and his government, that nothing but the grace of God can subdue, that our only hope of success is by faith, prayer, patience, and constant persevering labor. We may see such days as the missionaries of the South Sea Islands — but we hope our Christian brethren in our beloved land will remember us in their daily prayers, though we are

---

separated by thousands of miles.

Yours in the gospel of Christ,

H. H. SPALDING.

July 16th — We are now comfortably situated in the camp of Messrs. McLeod &c McCoy — find them very friendly, interesting gentlemen, disposed to favor us as far as in their power- will alter their route several days that we may pass with our wagon; will furnish us with all kinds of grain, fruit, farming utensils, clothing, &c. at Wallawalla or Vancouver, on very reasonable terms. Our friend[s] may rest assured that we shall want for nothing if God spares our lives to get through.

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

Journal of E. Willard Smith while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

Author(s): J. Neilson Barry

Source: The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Sep., 1913), pp. 250- 279

Published by: Oregon Historical Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20609937>

Accessed: 04-01-2019 03:25 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>

Oregon Historical Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH WHILE WITH THE FUR TRADERS, VASQUEZ AND  
SUBLETTE, IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION, 1839-1840

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTE

Mr. E. Willard Smith was an architect and civil engineer. He was born at Albany, N. Y., in 1814, and died at Washington, D. C. He married Miss Charlotte Lansing, of Lansing, Mich. This interesting account of his expedition to the Rocky Mountain region was copied from a manuscript belonging to his daughter Margaret, who married Edwin Forest Norveil, son of Senator John Norvell of Michigan, and was obtained through the courtesy of her daughter, Mrs. E. Oliver Belt,

of Washington, D. C.

J. NEILSON BARRY, Barrycrest, Spokane.

INTRODUCTION

The journal printed below throws new light on the fur trading situation in the Rocky Mountains in its waning stages. It touches on the human, or possibly better designated in human, rather than on the economic aspects of the operations of those engaged in the business. Specifically it is a realistic account of the incidents experienced on one of the later expeditions setting out from St. Louis to the Rocky Mountain posts and rendezvous. Some eleven months were used in

making the trip out and back, from early August, 1839, to July 3, 1840.

The expedition was probably capitalized by one of the most distinguished of the Rocky Mountain fur traders, William L. Sublette. He was one of the young men in the employ of William H. Ashley when the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was organized in 1822. Among those who began their careers with Sublette were Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, Rob

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 251

---

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

ert Campbell, James Bridger and Thomas Fitzpatrick. William L. and his brother, Milton G. soon rose to prominence and took charge of independent enterprises. William's partner in this undertaking was Vasquez, who seems to have been more active in personally conducting the expedition which Sublette had probably the larger share in fitting out.

Their post was located on the upper South Fork of the Platte. Its site was about fifty miles north of that of the present city of Denver.

In the immediate neighborhood there were three other fur trading forts. Lupton's was above and St. Vrain's and the other were below. All were within a day's journey of Long's Peak.

Colonel H. M. Chittenden seems to have had no data at hand bearing upon the operations in this vicinity, while writing his "American Fur Trade in the Far West." He is aware only of the bare fact of the existence of these posts.

The expedition which E. Willard Smith, the author of this journal, accompanied had probably proceeded up the Missouri

River from St. Louis by boat to Independence. From that point it set out equipped, as the journal describes, following the Santa Fe Trail for some four hundred miles to the ford of the Arkansas, the Cimarron crossing; thence its route was along the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail, on the north bank of the Arkansas, to Bent's Fort. They of the Sublette and Vasquez party overtake and pass Lupton's company of a character similar to their own and having a destination separated only four or five miles from theirs. But Lupton's oxen were not as fleet as Vasquez's mules.

Bent's Fort marked a turning point in their course. They had traveled westward some 530 miles from Independence. A ten days' march northward was still ahead of them to reach their fort on the South Fork. Bent's Fort which they were passing was so situated as to be in touch both with the Santa Fe trade and with that of the mountains. Chittenden speaks of this post as "the great cross roads station of the South west. The north and south route between the Platte River

#### 252 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

country and Santa Fe, and the east and west route up the Arkansas and into the mountains, found this their most natural trading point."

Bent and St. Vrain, the firm owning Bent's Fort and St.

Vrain's to the north, is mentioned by Chittenden as the chief competitor of the American Fur Company at this time. But of Vasquez and Sublette's operations his sources seem to have afforded him no information as he is certain only of the mere fact of the existence of their fort.

Turning now to the contents of the journal, we are given a very clear picture of the face of the country traversed on this northward stretch and of the Indians encountered and game found. After tarrying only three days near the middle of September at the Vasquez and Sublette

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

fort the expedition

was on its way westward across the Rocky Mountains. Its route crossed the Cache a la Poudre and the upper North Fork of the Platte and traversed the new or North Park of the northwestern portion of the present state of Colorado and the

northeastern corner of Utah. The pass used is some two hundred miles southeast of South Pass.

The ultimate destination of the expedition and proposed winter quarters was Brown's Hole. This is an amphitheater

shaped basin where the Green River emerges from the Wind River Mountains. The "Snake River" mentioned is a small

tributary of the Green.

The narrative indicates that horse-stealing by both renegade

whites and by the Sioux Indians, and the retaliations, developed a veritable reign of terror in the early winter of 1839-40 in this Rocky Mountain fastness. At any rate the fear of attempted retaliation by the whole force of the Sioux nation caused a change of plans and the Vasquez-Sublette

party instead of remaining at Brown's Hole all winter essayed a mid-winter return across the mountains to its fort on the South Fork of the

Platte. After all but two of their horses had perished and they had been compelled to scaffold their collection of beaver skins, they reached the upper North Fork of the Platte, still

one hundred and fifty miles from the shelter of their fort and a

#### JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 253

new outfit of horses. From this encampment Smith and two companions venture to penetrate the wintry wilderness ahead

to secure from the fort the necessary horses with which to convey the party and its collection of furs to the fort. In superable difficulties of travel and signs of proximity of large bands of Indians ahead of them bring dismay. They return to the encampment and a more successful venture is made by their leading trader, Biggs. Resupplied with horses, and their packs of beaver brought up, they were on their way to the South Fork about the middle of April. From their fort the trip to St. Louis was made in a "Mackinaw" boat.

There are interesting references to the I. R. Walker, who as assistant to Captain Bonneville had in 1833 penetrated from the Great Salt Lake to California. Smith mentions him as

commissioned to guide another party to California. It is said of him that he "requested the epitaph on his tombstone record

the fact that he discovered the Yosemite wonderland."

There are also interesting references to the natural won

ders that have since been included in the Yellowstone National Park.

#### JOURNAL

August 6th, 1839. Left Independence. The party at starting consisted of thirty-two persons under the command of Messrs. Vasquez and Sublette. There were four wagons loaded

with goods, to be used in the Indian trade, drawn by six mules each. The drivers accompanied the wagons, the rest of the party riding on mules. These men were French, American, Spanish and half breeds.

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

After leaving the boundary line of Missouri State we lost all traces of civilization. The soil appeared to be very fertile for about one hundred miles, being well watered by streams running south into the Arkansas. On the banks of these streams were many dense groves, while the intervening country consisted of prairies. The grove on the last stream we met with was called Council Grove, one hundred miles from the state

254 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

line, which place we reached on the 15th of August. It had formerly been a favorite place for the Indian council fires.

On the night of the 15th we had a very severe rain, which was a pleasant introduction to a life on the prairies. Our food consisted of bacon and bread baked in a frying pan. The two gentlemen who had command of the party were old Indian traders, having followed this mode of life for more than ten years, there were also with us Mr. Thompson who had a trading post on the western side of the mountains, and two half breeds employed as hunters. One of them was a son of Captain Clarke, the great Western traveler and companion of Lewis. He had received an education in Europe during seven years.

16th August. Today we saw several antelopes.

17th August. We came in sight of the Arkansas River, quite a large stream about two hundred yards wide. The banks were low and sandy, with a few scattered trees. We continued to travel along its banks for several days at a short distance from the stream. There were a large species of spider whose bite was mortal. We had several moonlight nights to cheer the guard.

21st. Some of the party killed two antelope, an old and a young one, which were prepared for dinner. We found them not very palatable, but still acceptable after having lived so long on bacon alone, our stock of flour being exhausted some days previous. The meat resembles venison somewhat, though not equal to it in flavor. This animal is smaller than the common deer, which it very much resembles in color and quality of hair, but its horns are different, being smaller and less branching. It is very fleet, even more so than a deer, and requires a very swift horse to overtake it. Their great watchfulness renders it difficult to approach them.

On this same day we saw seven buffaloes as we were preparing dinner. The sight of them quite enlivened the party, who were most of them strangers to a life in the prairies. Mr. Sublette gave chase to one of them, being mounted on a horse trained for the purpose, and fired several times without effect.

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 255

22nd. At noon we saw a large herd of two or three hundred buffalo cows. Some of the hunters

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

gave chase, but returned unsuccessful. Several of them were thrown from their horses, and severely injured, as they were riding over a village of prairie dogs, the horses' feet sinking into the holes. We suffered much today from want of water. Saw also the first village of prairie dogs, which was quite a curiosity. One of the dogs was killed and eaten. They look somewhat like a squirrel, being nearly the same size. Sometimes the same hole is occupied by an owl, rattlesnake and prairie dog.

Today

the grass begins to be short, and there is little dew. Before the dew has been so heavy as to wet us thoroughly during the night. No buffalo meat today. At evening two of the party went out to hunt and shot a bull, being much pleased with their success. They thought they heard the Indians whoop,

but it was nothing more than the howling of wolves. Bulls at this season are poor and unfit to eat. They are therefore rarely

killed when cows are to be obtained.

August 23rd. Today all the hunters started after buffalo,

and we anxiously awaited their return. Took breakfast this morning at day break, somewhat out of the usual course. We generally arose at break of day, traveled till ten or eleven, then encamped and cooked our breakfast. We then continued our journey till within an hour of sunset, when we encamp;ed

for the night, prepared our supper and picketed the horses. This is done by tying a rope, eighteen or twenty feet long, to a horse's neck, and attaching to it a stake driven into the ground, which allows them to feed, without permitting them to wander

off. We stand guard by turns at night, each one being on duty three hours. After the night arrangements were made

we spread our blankets and courted sleep which speedily came after the fatigues of the day. The canopy of heaven was our only covering. There was a severe storm during the night.

At noon of the 23rd the hunters returned with meat, having, killed three cows. All turned cooks, and ate! voraciously of the first buffalo meat we had tasted. I think with most others who have eaten it, that it is preferable to any other meat. We saw

#### 256 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

several thousand buffalo today, two or three herds containing about three hundred. All feel in good spirits although the water is extremely bad, indeed we have had good water but twice since we started. Towards evening we passed a great number of buffaloes, the prairie being actually alive with them. They extended probably about four miles, and numbered nearly two hundred thousand. We were amazed with a scene so new to us, so strange to one accustomed to cities and civilization.

24th. Today we saw nearly as many buffaloes as yesterday. So many are not generally met at this season so far East. We are now about three hundred miles from Independence. We had grown weary with the monotony of traveling till we met buffalo, but the excitement of hunting soon revived us.

26th. We have met with nothing very interesting today, but have seen a great many buffaloes, and at evening en camped on the banks of the Arkansas. The river here is pretty

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

wide, but not more than two or three feet deep. We shall now continue to travel along the Arkansas for ten or twelve days.

The river here is the boundary between Mexico and Missouri Territory.

26th. A pleasant day, but the evenings are becoming cool. We are not as much troubled with mosquitoes as for several

nights previously. This has been a long day's journey. We now live on buffalo meat altogether, which requires very little salt. Our party now consists of thirty-six persons, having been joined by four on the sixteenth.

27th. Another pleasant day. We are getting along rapidly, traveling about twenty-five miles a day. Our hunters go out again today for meat. There are two ways of hunting buffaloes.

One called approaching, the other running. When a hunter approaches he puts on a white blanket coat and a white cap, so as to resemble a white wolf as much as possible, and crawls on his hands and knees towards the buffalo, until he gets within one hundred and fifty yards, then sinks his knife in the ground,

lies prostrate, rests his gun on his knife, and fires at the animal. It generally requires more than one shot to kill a buffalo, even if he should be shot through the heart. The way of hunting

#### JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 257

by running is on horseback. The man mounts a fleet horse trained for the purpose, rides full speed toward the herd, and fires a light fowling piece, which he carries in one hand, while he guides the horse with the other. The moment the hunter fires his piece, the horse springs out of the reach of the buffalo to escape injury from the infuriated animal. This is the most exciting method of hunting, but it is attended with considerable danger, the horse being liable to stumble over the rough

ground. The Indians prefer this mode of hunting, substituting the bow and arrow for the gun. This weapon they use with such dexterity as to shoot an arrow entirely through the animal, piercing the ground on the opposite side. It is very difficult for a bullet, at the regular shooting distance to pass

through the body. We saw ten antelopes today. Every night we have a grand concert of wolves, relieved occasionally by the bellowing of buffalo bulls.

During the last week we passed several places where men belonging to former parties had been killed by the Indians. The other day we passed a place where Mr. Vasquez had a narrow escape. He and one of his men started for his fort in advance of the party. The man being taken sick, he left him on an

island in the Arkansas. He then went back for medicine, having to travel a day and a half. While returning he was chased

by a party of Indians on foot, who overtook him while he stopped to drink, and were at his side before he could mount

his horse. He presented the muzzle of his gun, and the Indians stepped back, allowing him time to mount his horse, which taking fright, ran away with him. The Indians gave up the

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

pursuit. They were a party of Pawnees. The part of the road we are now traveling runs through the general war ground of the different tribes of Indians.

28th. Nothing very remarkable today. The weather still continues pleasant.

29th. Nothing interesting today. Buffalo have been very scarce for several days. The hunters went out this afternoon

and could get nothing but antelope meat, which afforded us a good meal as we were hungry.

258 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

30th. We still travel as usual. We had been expecting to overtake Mr. Lupton every day. He is a mountain trader, on his way to the trading post on the river Platte. We overtook him today about noon. His party had stopped to eat dinner and allow their animals to feed. He had six wagons drawn by oxen. They had started about twelve days before us. He mistook us for Indians as we approached, and was somewhat alarmed. We saw three deer today on an island, one of them a buck was very large.

31st. This is the last day of August and of summer. We saw six elk today, one of them being an old one, was quite large. Mr. Lupton encamped with us today as well as last night. He is trying to keep in company with us, but probably will not succeed, as our mules can travel much faster than his

oxen. We had a buffalo hunt today. Our men killed one. Mr. Lupton's men another. It is a fine sight to see them running a large herd. This is Saturday. It is difficult to mark the Sabbath as there are no church bells to remind us of it.

September 1st. Today we came in sight of what is called Big Timber, sixty miles from Bent's Fort on the Arkansas.

We had no fresh buffalo meat today, and there are no buffalo to be seen.

2nd. Today we left Big Timber at noon. The prairie here is more rolling and sandy than we have seen it before. We had a view of the mountains this afternoon, but they are still one hundred and fifty miles distant. We are enabled to see

this great distance on account of the clearness of the atmosphere. There is no dew at night, the atmosphere being very dry and clear. The weather is very warm. No fresh meat today. Buffalo is very scarce.

3rd. Today we passed Bent's Fort which looks quite like a military fortification. It is constructed of mud bricks after the Spanish fashion, and is quite durable. Mr. Bent had seventy horses stolen from the fort this summer by a party of the Comanche Indians, nine in number. There was a party of these Indians, consisting of three thousand lodges, a few miles distant.

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 259

4th. Today we passed a Spanish fort about two miles from Bent's. It is also built of mud, and inhabited by a few Spanish

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

and French. They procure flour from Towse [Taos], a town in Mexico, eight days' travel from this place. They raise a small quantity of corn for their own use. We still continue along the Arkansas River. Last night we saw the northern lights very plainly. Three of our party have now left to go in advance to the fort on the Platte.

5th. Today we came in sight of Pike's Peak, which can be seen at a very great distance. It has snow on its summit at present. We have had no fresh meat today. The soil along the river is very sandy. We still continue on its banks. The ground here is covered with prickly pears. There is a shrub growing here called grease wood. It is peculiar to this country. The Indians use it for making arrows. It is very heavy and stiff, and burns quickly. There is also here a plant called Spanish, soap plant. The Mexicans use the root as a substitute

for soap. We have been obliged to eat bacon today as the stock of buffalo meat is exhausted.

6th. Today our hunters killed two buck deer. They tasted very well. We still keep approaching the mountains, which have a very fine appearance. The Peak is very high, it was discovered by General Pike when in company with Major Long on his expedition to the mountains. Pike and his party were

taken prisoners at this mountain by the Mexicans. One of his companions was kept four years in prison.

7th. We have been going uphill all day and have reached some high ground, which gives us a splendid view of the plain below. We can see at least eighty miles in either direction except where the mountains bound our view at the distance of forty miles. We ate our dinner beside a stream called Fontaine qui bouille, boiling spring, called so on account of the manner in which it boils from the mountains. We found a great quantity of wild plums on the banks of this stream and saw signs of grizzly bears in this vicinity. This is a famous resort in the winter for the Arapahoos and Shian Indians. The traders have houses here for trading with them in the winter.

#### 260 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

8th. Today we saw a few scattering buffaloes, we had not seen any in some time, and, with the exception of a little venison, had been living on bacon. Towards evening the hunters came in with some bull's meat, which made our supper, although rather unpalatable. We had a very severe storm of wind and rain last night. The wind is always strong on these plains, like a gale at sea. It is almost impossible to travel here in winter.

9th. Today we met several large herds of buffalo, and the hunters succeeded in getting some good meat, which was quite an agreeable change. We all ate voraciously. It would astonish the inhabitants of the city to drop in upon us at some of our meals, after we had been on short allowance for two or three days. It is incredible what a large quantity of buffalo meat a man can eat without injury.

10th. Today and yesterday we passed through some strips of pine timber, the first I have seen in this part of the country. It is quite a relief after seeing noth-

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

ing but cottonwood along the prairie streams. As we were about encamping for the night we saw some Indians, who proved to be Arapahoos. One of them immediately galloped off to their village, as their large encampments are called which was about five miles distant, and informed the others that we were in the vicinity. At dusk twenty-two, most of them chiefs, came out to see us. They were all fine looking fellows, rather lighter colored than our Eastern Indians. Two or three squaws accompanied them, pretty good looking. The chiefs seated themselves around the fire, forming a ring with Mr. Vasquez, and commenced smoking their long pipes, which they passed around several times, every one smoking out of the same pipe. They were all well acquainted with Mr. Vasquez, and remained with him two or three hours. Before leaving we presented them with some tobacco and knives. Among their number was one Shi-an and one Blackfoot.

11th. Nothing new today. We expect to reach the fort soon. We are still eating bull's meat.

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 261

12th. Living nearly the same as yesterday and traveling pretty fast. Almost out of provisions. In the evening we arrived at the Platte river and encamped.

13th. Today about four o'clock we passed Mr. Lupton's Fort. A little after five we reached the fort of Messrs. Sub

lette and Vasquez, the place of our destination. Our arrival caused considerable stir among the inmates. A great many free trappers are here at present. The fort is quite a nice place, situated on the South Fork of the River Platte. It is built of adobies, or Spanish bricks, made of clay baked in the sun. This is the Mexican plan of building houses, and, as the atmosphere is very dry, and there is little rain, the buildings are quite durable. This fort is opposite Long's Peak, and about twenty miles distant. We slept all night at the fort

and supped on some very good meat. This is the first time I have slept under cover for thirty-seven days.

14th. Today I moved my quarters to Mr. Thompson's camp, a mile and a half from the fort, and shall remain with him till we start to cross the mountains, which will be in a few days.

There are a few lodges of the Shian Indians near us. We have smoked with and embraced two today.

15th. We are still at the camp. Nothing remarkable has happened. The men at the fort have been carousing, etc., having got drunk on alcohol. There are about twelve lodges of Shians encamped at the fort who have been trading with the whites. They had a scalp dance in the fort today, dancing by the music of an instrument resembling the tambourine. They were armed with short bows, about three feet long.

16th. Today we left our encampment, and started to cross

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

the mountains. Our party consisted of eight men, two squaws and three children. One of the squaws belonged to Mr. Thompson, the other to Mr. Craig. They are partners, and have a trading fort at Brown's Hole, a valley on the west of the mountains.

17th. One of our mules was nearly drowned today in crossing the stream, a branch of the River Platte. It was with great

262 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

difficulty that he was extricated from his perilous situation. The middle of the day is quite warm now, but the mornings and the evenings are cool.

18th. We encamped last night on a small stream cache la Poudre, called so because powder was hidden there some time since. Our camp was just at the foot of the mountain, in a very pleasant place. During the day we passed several pools and creeks, the water of which were impregnated with salt petre.

19th. Today we began to travel among the hills at the foot of the mountains. The change is very pleasant after the prairies in hot weather. One soon becomes tired of traveling over a prairie, all is so monotonous. The road we are traveling now is surrounded by hills piled on hills, with mountains in the back ground. The water in all the small streams is very good and cold.

20th. Today the road became more rough. We had some very high and steep hills to climb. One would scarcely think from their appearance that a horse could ascend them, but we crossed without any great difficulty. Messrs. Thompson and Craig went before us and killed three buffaloes. Before this we had plenty of fat venison. In the afternoon they killed three deer. At night it was quite cold and frosty.

21st. Today it is quite cold. We have been climbing more hills. At noon the hunters came to us, having killed six buffaloes and a calf. We saw a great many buffalo today. We are encamped in a beautiful valley. It is probably more than sixty miles long, as far as the eye can reach. The view from the surrounding mountains is grand. The valley is surrounded by high hills, with mountains in the back ground. Large herds of buffalo are scattered over it. There is a large stream flowing through it, called Laramie's Fork, tributary to the North Fork of the Platte. It has several small streams flowing into it. The timber on all these hills and mountains is yellow pine, some of it being quite large. In this plain there is a very large rock, composed of red sandstone and resembling a chimney. It is situated on a fork of the Laramie called Chimney Fork.

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 263

22nd. Nothing remarkable today except beautiful scenery. We travel more than twenty miles a

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

day. The weather is very pleasant, quite warm at noon while it freezes hard at night. 23d. This morning the road was very rough. At noon we entered a very large valley, called the Park, at the entrance of which we crossed the North Fork of the River Platte, a very fine stream. We saw a great number of buffalo today, probably about two thousand.

24th. Today we are still traveling in the park and surrounded by herds of buffalo. The weather is still pleasant and we have moonlight nights. It is so cold at night that the water freezes. A beaver was caught this morning in a trap set last night by one of the party.

25th. Today we have had a very rough road to travel over, and at evening encamped on a ridge called The Divide. It divides the water of the Atlantic from the Pacific, and extends a great distance north and south. On the west side of it are the head waters of the Columbia and the Colorado of the West, the former emptying into the Pacific, and the latter into the Gulf of California. On the east side are the head waters of the Missouri and its tributaries, and also the Arkansas. We had a slight shower in the evening. We have seen no buffalo today.

26th. Today we have traveled only fifteen miles. The scenery is very rough. We saw only a few bulls and no cows.

Nearly all the hills and valleys, since we came among the mountains, are covered with wild sage or wormwood, which grows in stiff bushes, seven or eight feet high. The stalks are as large as a man's arm. There are a great many black currants among the mountains, also plums and serviceberries and hawthorn berries.

27th. Today we have traveled about twenty miles. The weather still continues very pleasant. At evening just before we encamped for the night we passed a place where the Whites had encamped a few days previous, for the purpose of killing buffalo and drying the meat. From the signs around us, we thought they must have had a fight with the Indians, probably

#### 264 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

ably Sioux. We saw the skeletons of four horses killed in the fight. The Whites had thrown up a breastwork of logs for a defence. Tonight we put our horses in an old horse pen we found at our camping place, which is on Snake River, a tributary of the Colorado of the West.

28th. Today we had a good road and got along well. We are still on Snake River. No buffalo have been seen, but the hunters killed an elk out of a herd of about twelve. The meat resembles venison very much in taste, though not quite so tender.

29th. Today we left Snake River and about noon found Indian signs. We supposed there must have been about forty Indians, probably a war party of Sioux, that had passed but two or three hours previous to our coming. If they had seen us we must have had a fight.

30th. Yesterday afternoon my horse gave out and I was

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

obliged to lead him three miles. The day was quite warm and we suffered very much from want of water. We encamped at some sulphur springs. The hunters shot an old buffalo.

Today I was obliged to walk and let my horse run loose. I was afraid that he would be unable to travel all day, even in

this way. My boots were torn to pieces and I could procure no moccasins. I traveled forty miles in this way over a very rough road, covered with prickly pears. My feet were very much blistered. The day was very warm. After traveling

forty miles without water I lost sight of the party who were

in advance of me. As it was growing dark and my feet pained me very much, I concluded to stop for the night and encamp by myself on a stream called the Vermilion that we had just reached. I did so and remained there all night alone. I

have never suffered so much from thirst as I did this day. October 1st. I left my lonely camp early and walked rapid

ly over the gravel and prickly pears that lay in my path, not expecting to see my companions until I arrived at Brown's Hole, but after traveling two miles I discovered them encamped

by a small lake in a valley. My pleasure can be easily imagined. They were just eating breakfast of which I partook with de

#### JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 265

light, having eaten nothing the day before. At evening we arrived at Brown's Hole, our place of destination. This is a valley on Green River in which is a fort.

October 2nd. Today I heard from Kit Carson the particulars of the fight at the breastworks at Snake River, referred to a few days since. It appears that the party was composed of seven whites and two squaws who had come there from Brown's Hole for the purpose of killing buffalo and drying

the meat. They had been there several days and had dried a large quantity of meat when they were attacked by a party of Sioux, about twenty in number. The attack was made toward morning while it was yet dark. The Indians fired principally

at one man, named Spillers, as he lay asleep outside of the horse-pen, and they pierced him with five balls without wounding anyone else. This awakened the rest of the men, and they began to strengthen a horse-pen they had made of logs, to form it into a breastwork. They dug some holes in the ground for the men to stand in, so as to protect them as much as possible. As soon as it became light, they commenced firing at the Indians, of whom they killed and wounded several.

After exchanging several shots the principal Indian chief rode up toward them and made offers of peace. One of the white men went out, and induced him with several others to come toward, them, when they were within shooting distance, he fell back behind some trees, and gave the signal to his companions, who fired and killed the head chief. The Indians kept up a firing for a short time and then retreated. When the chief was shot he jumped up and fell down, the others were very much excited, and raved and tore around. He was a distinguished chief.

October 3rd. Still at the fort which is situated in a small valley surrounded by mountains, on Green River, a tributary of the Colorado. This is quite a stream, about three hundred yards wide.

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

It runs through a narrow passage or canyon in the mountains, the rocks forming a perpendicular wall on each side five hundred feet high.

266 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

October 6th. We had a snow storm today. It fell about six inches deep. I had intended to go to Fort Hall, a fort belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, situated at the head waters of the Columbia, but the party disappointed me.

10th. I have been at the fort since my first arrival, nothing of importance has occurred. The weather is still very pleasant. Today we started for a buffalo hunt, to make dried meat. There were about thirty in the party, about half of them being squaws, wives of the white trappers. We had sixty horses with us. We were ten days in reaching the buffalo herds, although we met a few scattered animals the second day. We made our first camp for drying meat on Snake River, at the mouth of a creek called Muddy. We had stormy weather for several days, and after remaining at this encampment for three days, we moved farther down the river where we remained several days. During the whole time we were out we killed one hundred buffalo and dried their meat. Some of the party had also killed six grizzly bears quite near the camp. The hunters gave me one of the skins of a beautiful grizzly brown color, and some of the meat very much like pork.

November 1st. We arrived at the fort the first of November, and remained there until the eighth. On the evening of the first there were one hundred and fifty head of horses stolen from the vicinity of the fort by a party of Sioux, as we afterwards learned. This was very unexpected as the trappers and Snake Indians had been in the habit of letting their horses run loose in this vicinity, unattended by a guard, as the place was unknown to any of the hostile Indians. This event caused considerable commotion at the fort, and they determined to fit out a war party to go in search of the stolen horses, but next morning this project was abandoned. A party of twelve men went over to Fort Hall, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, and stole several horses from that company, notwithstanding they had been very well treated by the man who had charge of the fort. On their return they stopped at a small encampment of Snake Indians, consisting of three lodges. One of them belonged to a very old man who invited them to

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 267

eat with him and treated them with great hospitality. At evening the whites proceeded on their journey taking with them all the old Indian's horses. On returning to Green River, the trappers remaining at the fort expressed their displeasure so strongly at this act of unparalleled meanness that they were obliged to leave the party and go to a trading post of the Eutaw Indians. The whites in the valley, fearing that the Snake Indians might retaliate upon them for the loss of their horses pursued the thieves and compelled them to restore the stolen property.

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

8th. We moved up the river a short distance to a log cabin, built by some young men, who had come to the mountains last spring, intending to remain there until the following spring.

December 17th. There are here now, and have been! for some time, about twenty lodges of Indians of the Snake tribe. They call themselves Shoshonies. We obtained a few skins from them in exchange for trinkets. They are very good looking Indians. The men are generally tall and slightly made, the women short and stout. There is a large salt lake in the mountains about four days travel from Brown's Hole. This lake is a hundred miles long from north to south and thirty

miles wide. There are islands in the midst of it which have never been explored. These islands have high hills and are well wooded. The water of the lake is very strongly impregnated with salt. Salt of the best quality is found crystallized along the shores in great abundance. There are several fresh water streams running into this lake, one of which is Great Bear River. The surrounding country is rocky and gravelly, and there is considerable timber around the lake.

There is also a salt creek near it, the water of which is very similar, where the Indians find beautiful salt. There are a great many salt springs in this vicinity.

Near the headwaters of the Missouri is a valley filled with mounds, emitting smoke and vapor, the ground composing this valley is very soft, so much so that a horse will sink to his girths in the ground.

#### 268 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

On the west side of the mountains, are streams that seem to ebb and flow like the tide. In the mornings their banks are overflowing, at noon they are perfectly dry, the next morning flowing again.

The country around the headwaters of the Yellowstone, a tributary of the Missouri, abounds in natural curiosities. There are volcanoes, volcanic productions and carbonated springs.

Mr. Vasquez told me that he went to the top of one of these volcanoes, the crater of which was filled with pure water, forming quite a large lake.

There is a story told by an Arapahoo chief of a petrified buffalo standing in the lake on the east side of the mountains. It was in a perfect state of preservation, and they worship it as a great medicine or charm. There are also moccasin and buffalo tracks in the solid rock along the shore of the lake.

Nothing would induce this Indian to tell where this sacred buffalo is to be found. Great presents were offered to him in vain.

There is a party, going in boats from this valley in the spring down Grand River, on the Colorado of the West, to California. They will be led by Mr. Walker who was with Bonnevill in the mountains. They intend trapping for beaver on the way.

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

The weather in this valley is extremely pleasant this winter, with scarcely any snow. It is as warm in the middle of the day as in June in New York, the latitude of the place is supposed to be forty-two degrees.

We intended to spend the winter in the valley of Brown's Hole, but soon had reason to fear an attack from the Sioux. The party before mentioned, who had lost their chief in an encounter with some whites had returned to their principal tribe and intended coming in numbers to attack us in the spring.

We therefore thought it unsafe to remain until then, but were fearful of crossing the mountains during the winter, a thing never before attempted. But some men arrived at our encampment from the fort on the South Fork and assured us that there was no snow in the mountain passes. Then we con

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 269

cluded to leave the valley immediately, and to re-cross the mountains, preferring the probability of the danger thus before us to the almost certain contest with the Indians.

We left the valley of Brown's Hole on the twenty-fourth of January, 1840, to return to the trading post on the South Fork of the Platte. The weather when we started, as for some time previous, was warm and pleasant. Our party consisted of

twenty persons, fourteen men, four squaws, wives of the trappers, and two children. There were two traders in the company, one, Mr. Biggs, who was a trader for Sublette and Vasques, the other, Mr. Baker, a trader for Bent and St. Vrain [St. Vrain]. There were also three free trappers. The

others were men hired to the two; traders.

On the 26th of January we met a party of Eutaw Indians who had been out hunting buffalo. These Indians are the best marksmen in the mountains, and are armed with good rifles.

On the 27th of January we arrived at Snake River and remained there four days. While there the snow fell two feet deep. We had three Indian lodges with us, in which we slept at night.

On the 2nd of February we encamped at a creek called Muddy. We found considerable difficulty in traveling through the snow during the day. Our hunters killed some buffalo today and provided us with fresh meat.

On the 4th the snow became very deep, and in a few days we found ourselves surrounded by snow six feet deep, and no

buffalo to be seen, our stock of provisions was nearly exhausted.

On the 17th of February we encamped on a high hill, and one of the horses gave out, being unable to carry the load any

farther. Here we encountered one of the most severe storms

I ever witnessed. Considerable snow fell, and the wind blew for two nights and a day. During the night one of the lodges blew down, and its occupants were obliged to remove to one

of the others to prevent being frozen. We started with thirty nine horses and mules, all in good order. Some of them were now dying daily for want of food and water. We traveled

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

270 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

but three or four miles a day, on account of the depth of snow. By this time many of us were on foot and were obliged to go before and break the way for the horses.

Our provisions were being exhausted, we were obliged to eat the horses as they died. In this way we lived fifteen days, eating a few dogs in the meantime. In a few days we were all on foot. We suffered greatly from want of wood. There was no timber to be seen on our route. We were obliged to burn a shrub, called sage, a species of wormwood, which one could only obtain in quantities sufficient to keep up a fire for an hour

in the evening. We obtained no water except by melting snow.

During this time we had some very severe storms of wind and snow. Often one or two of the lodges were thrown down

in the night. We were now obliged to make a scaffold of some trees which we found, and leave our beaver skins on it, with all the furs we had collected. It was made sufficiently

high to prevent the bears from reaching it. We were unable to carry them farther, as so few horses remained. All had died except two, and they were so weak as to be almost unable to drag the tents.

On the 23rd our hunters killed a buffalo which was very poor, the meat, however, was very pleasant to us, after having lived so long on poor horse meat.

On the 24th the hunters killed three fat buffalo, which was the first fat meat we had seen for twenty days. All ate a large quantity of the raw tallow, having been rendered voracious by our wretched food and near approach to starvation. On the afternoon of this day we encamped on the North Fork of the,

River Platte, which here runs through a small valley surrounded by mountains. At this place there was scarcely any snow to be seen, and the weather is quite warm. We were still one hundred and fifty miles from the trading fort. This valley was filled with herds of buffalo.

After remaining here four days, three of us started on the 29th of February to go to the fort for horses. We traveled until noon the first day without finding any snow. In the

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 271

afternoon we met pretty deep snow, and towards night it was two feet deep, covered with a very hard crust. We found it very

difficult traveling, but went, notwithstanding, fifteen miles that day. About dark we stopped on the summit of a hill which

was bare, the wind having blown the snow off. At this place we could find nothing with which to build a fire to warm our

selves. We were very wet, having traveled through the snow all day. We were obliged to lie down on the bare ground, with only a blanket apiece to cover us, and were unable to sleep from the

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

severe cold. Next morning we started by daylight and found the snow deeper than the day before, the crust

was hard but not sufficiently so to bear one, which made walking very fatiguing. Notwithstanding the difficulty we traveled fifteen miles that day. At sundown we came in sight of a stream, the banks of which were covered with timber. We

hoped to spend a comfortable night beside a large fire but were again disappointed. Before we had proceeded many steps we saw Indian tracks in the snow, which could have been made but a few hours previous. We judged from the number of

these tracks that there must have been a large party of Indians. One of my companions had traveled this same route before

with two others, and at this same place had been attacked by a large party of Sioux. One of his companions was killed, while the others were robbed of everything and obliged to walk a hundred and fifty miles to reach a trading post.

My companions being both afraid to proceed, we were

obliged to return to our party on the North Fork of the Platte. We concluded to return that same night, although very much

fatigued. We were near what was called Medicine Bow Butte, which takes its name from a stream running at its base, called Medicine Bow Creek. We traveled all night and stopped just

as daylight was appearing, made a fire and rested half an hour. The next night we found ourselves quite near the encampment

on the Platte.

Our party was very much disappointed to see us return.

Four days afterwards Mr. Biggs and a half breed started for the fort by another route, where there was very little snow, and

#### 272 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

no danger of meeting Indians. They took a horse with them to carry their blankets and provisions. In the meantime the party on the Platte were hunting daily, and supplied themselves abundantly with provisions.

After waiting thirty days for the return of Mr. Biggs with horses, we began to be fearful that he had been murdered by

the Indians, but on the forty-second day from the time of his starting, just as we had given up all hope of seeing him, he and Mr. Vasquez arrived, bringing with them horses sufficient to carry the furs, but not enough to furnish saddle-horses for all the party, consequently some were obliged to walk. They also brought some men with them, increasing our number to twenty-two.

Mr. Biggs immediately started to return for the beaver that had been left some distance back, and was absent five days.

When Mr. Biggs started for the fort in search of horses we built a fort of logs on the Platte to protect us from Indians.

We now left this fort on the 14th of April on our way to the fort on the South Fork.

On the 16th we ate dinner at the Medicine Bow Creek, and on the 19th arrived at Laramie Fork, a tributary of the Platte. At the junction of this stream with the North Fork of the

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

River Platte the American Fur Company have a large trading fort, called Fort Laramie. We saw a great many buffalo

every day as we passed along.

On the 22nd we met a small party of Arapahoo Indians

coming to visit their friends the Shoshonies, or Snake Indians. On the 24th of April, in the afternoon, we crossed the South Fork of the Platte with considerable difficulty, as the water was very high. After traveling six miles we arrived at the

Fort of Sublette and Vasquez. We remained at the fort nearly two days.

April 26th we started in a mackinaw boat, which had been made at the fort at the foot of the mountains. This boat was

thirty-six feet long and eight feet wide. We had seven hundred buffalo robes on board and four hundred buffalo tongues. There were seven of us in company. The water of this river,

#### JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 273

the South Fork of the Platte, was very shallow and we proceeded with difficulty, getting on sand bars every few minutes.

We were obliged to wade and push the boat along most of the way for about three hundred miles, which we were forty

nine days traveling. We had to unload the boat several times a day when it was aground, which was very hard work.

May 8th. We saw the body of a Shoshonie squaw which had been placed on a scaffold in the top of a large tree on the bank of the river. This is the usual manner of disposing of the dead among these Indians.

On the 9th, 10th and 11th the wind blew violently, accom

panied with heavy rain. We were unable to proceed. On the eleventh three Shian Indians came to us. They belonged to a

party which had been out catching wild horses. They had succeeded in taking two hundred. One hundred of them had died

in a very severe storm a few days previous. The method adopt

ed by the Indians for catching them is as follows: An Indian mounts a fleet horse, having a rope twenty feet long, with a noose at the end, fastened to his saddle. He rides close to the animal he wishes to catch, and throws the noose, or lasso,

over its head. The horse finding the noose over his head, jumps, which chokes him and causes him to stop. As we found no buffalo, we had eaten all of the four hundred tongues

we had brought.

On the 12th we killed the first buffalo we had seen since we

left the fort.

On the 13th we arrived at the camp of the Shian Indians,

the party mentioned before. They consisted of twenty-five men and boys and one squaw. They were headed by a chief called the Yellow Wolf. His brother was of the party having a name which signified in the Indian language Many Crows. We gave them some spirits, in exchange for a little

meat, on

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

which they became very much intoxicated.

On the 14th and for many days after we saw a great many dead buffalo calves strewed along the banks of the river. They were about a week old and must have been killed by some dis

274 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

ease raging among them, as the wolves would not touch them, although here in great numbers. There were probably two thousands of these calves.

On the 18th it stormed all day and night. Toward evening we saw about three hundred wild horses, who came quite

near us. We have seen several large herds of buffalo for several days past.

June 12th. We arrived at the fork of the Platte. The water in the North Fork of the Platte was pretty high, and we were able to proceed quite rapidly. We sometimes traveled fifty miles a day. The main Platte is very wide, and has many

islands in it, which were covered with roses as we passed them. In one place this river is four miles wide. One of its islands is one hundred miles long. The country from the forks of the Platte to the Missouri is claimed principally by the Pawnee Indians.

June 14th. We met five buffalo, the last we saw, as we left the country in which they range.

18th. In the morning we arrived at a Pawnee village. It consists of a hundred and fifty lodges, made of poles covered

with mud. Each lodge contains three or four families. This village is situated on the south bank of the river. These Indians raise excellent corn. The squaws perform all the labor in the fields. We gave them some dried meat in exchange for corn. This was the first vegetable food we had eaten in eleven months.

19th. We were obliged to lay by on account of a violent wind. At night we were much annoyed by mosquitoes.

20th. We passed the Loup Fork and also Shell Creek. 21st. We passed Horse Creek, a large stream coming in

from the north, also Saline, a large stream from the south. The scenery here is very different from that farther up the

river. The banks of the Platte from the foot of the mountains to this place have been low and sandy, with scarcely any trees on the banks, but here the river has bluff banks thickly covered with timber. There is a village of Pawnees, called the Pawnee Loups, on the Loup Fork. The Pawnees have their heads

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 275

shaved closely, with the exception of the scalping tuft in the middle, which gives them a very savage appearance. The river

below the Loup Fork is much narrower than above. We are now in the country of the Otoe Indians.

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

On the evening of the 21st we arrived at a missionary station, about fifteen miles from the mouth of the River Platte. There are about twenty Otoe lodges near the missionary station.

These lodges are built of mud, in the same manner as the Pawnees. We went up to the missionary houses, expecting to find some whites, and were much disappointed at finding them deserted, the missionaries having removed to another place.

June 22nd. This morning we arrived at the mouth of the river Platte. The Missouri, where we entered it, is rather narrow. This is about eleven hundred miles from St. Louis.

In the afternoon we stopped at a log house on the bank of the river. Here we saw the first whites who had gladdened our eyes since leaving the mountains. They were at first afraid of us. At this place was a small encampment of Pottawattamie Indians. They had been drunk a few days before, and several

were killed in a fight. This is the part of the country to which they had been removed. The banks of the Missouri here are

quite hilly. Some of the shores are composed of limestone. 23rd. In the evening we arrived at a settlement, where we

procured some fresh meat, bread and coffee. This place was in the Iowa country and we saw several Indians of that tribe.

24th. We stopped at another settlement in the State of Missouri, in Buchanan county. On the south side of the river

is Missouri Territory, and on the north the state of Missouri. We saw some Sacks and Fox Indians today. We now traveled

rapidly, sometimes eighty miles a day.

July 3rd. We arrived at St. Louis, having come two thousand miles from the mountains in sixty-nine days.

When traveling down the River Platte in our mackinaw boat, as before stated, we often ran aground on sand bars,

and were obliged to unload the boat to lighten, push it off the bar, and then reload. This occurred several times in the course of each day, and of course kept us wading in the water most

#### 276 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

of the time. We seldom found it more than waist deep. One afternoon we tied up our boat about four o'clock, as was our custom, to hunt buffaloes, as we were in want of provisions.

This would give us time to kill, and get the meat to the boat before dark. It was usual for one of the party to remain with

the boat while the rest went to hunt. This afternoon it was my turn to remain, which I accordingly did, and the rest of

the party went off about three miles from the boat in search of game. This was rather a dangerous practice, as we were

in the Pawnee country, and very much exposed. The day was quite pleasant with a strong breeze, and I was lounging on

the piles of furs in the boat, with my coat off. Alongside of me lay a fine buffalo robe, that was

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

damp, exposed to the sun to dry. The wind blew it off into the river. I jumped off the boat into the stream, ran down some distance so as to get beyond the floating robe, which was rapidly going down the stream, and jumped into the river, which I supposed was not more than waist deep, but very much to my surprise, I found the water over my head. This was an awkward predicament, for I could not swim, but my presence of mind did not for sake me, I knew sufficient of the theory of swimming to keep perfectly still, conscious that if I did so, I would float, and the result proved that I was right. As I before stated, the current was quite swift, and I was carried down stream rapidly. Finding that I floated, I paddled with my hands, keeping them under water, and found that I could swim quite readily, I paddled out toward the robe, and secured it with some difficulty, as it had become partly soaked with water and was quite heavy. At last I succeeded in dragging it on shore, and crawled out of the water well saturated, and feeling most grateful for my deliverance. It was rather a lonely adventure, as all my companions were several miles distant. On their return they congratulated me on my narrow escape. As we were coming down the River Platte, and had nearly gotten out of the range of buffaloes, which they frequent, it occurred to me that, as I had not yet killed any, I should try what I could do. On my journey out across the plains, I had

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 277

broken my rifle, and had substituted a fusee, or short gun, from which we fire balls. This was a very rude specimen of fire arm, and of very little use for hunting, but useful in case of an attack from Indians.

This afternoon we had, as usual, tied up our boat and the hunter, Mr. Shabena, went out a short distance from the river bank to shoot a buffalo for his meat. At the time there were several large buffalo bulls near us. After killing one we assisted the hunters in butchering it, and in carrying portions of the meat to the boat. It was at this time that I concluded to try my luck, so taking up my gun, which was loaded, and slinging my powder horn and pouch on my shoulder, I started off toward the range of low hills running parallel to the shore and about a quarter of a mile distant. Several bulls were grazing quietly at the foot of these hills. I intended to walk up stealthily to within five hundred yards of one of the largest and then crawl up to within one hundred and twenty yards of him before I fired. For unless you approach as near as that to them your ball takes no effect. I had reached to within five hundred yards of him when he noticed me and becoming alarmed started, off up the hill on a run. It was a damper on my prospects, for they run quite fast, generally as fast as a horse can trot, but as he had to run up hill, I thought I would give chase, and I accordingly did so, and after running a short time I found that I gained upon him and felt, quite encouraged. After running him about a mile and a half I came to a valley where I found; several buffaloes grazing. The bull I

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

was chasing finding these buffaloes quietly grazing, stopped also and began to eat grass. Finding him so quiet I also stopped to rest for a minute. I examined my gun and found the priming all right. I then approached cautiously to within fifty feet' of him, which I could not have done if he had not been very tired from the long chase up hill. I then kneeled down and resting my ramrod upon the ground to support the gun took deliberate aim at his heart and fired. He jumped

278 JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH

at me with great ferocity, but I sprang on one side and avoided him. The ball had evidently taken effect.

I loaded the second time and approached somewhat nearer, to within about forty feet of him and took deliberate aim in the same manner and fired. The second ball also took effect and seemed to weaken him. He jumped at me again with the same ferocity, and I avoided him in the same way. After loading my piece the third time I found that my powder was exhausted and that this must be my last shot.

I approached to within the same distance and took aim and fired in the same manner as before. Again he jumped at me ferociously and then laid down panting and apparently in great pain. Having no powder my gun was now useless. I did not like the idea of losing my game after all the trouble

I had had with him, I therefore determined to try my knife, which was a butcher knife six inches long, I crawled up

cautiously toward his hind legs and attempted to cut his ham strings with my knife thereby disabling him so that I could stab him. I had no sooner cut through the thick skin of his leg when smarting with pain the infuriated animal arose and

plunged at me and would probably have killed me if it had not been for the miraculous arrival of our bull dog Turk. I had left him at the boat asleep, but finding that I had gone he followed me and arrived at the spot just in time to take the bull by the nose and prevent his injuring me. I now despaired of being able to secure my game. I took my powder horn and shook it in desperation and succeeded in obtaining enough powder from it for half a charge, with this I loaded my gun, using grass for wadding around my bullet instead of patches,

as these as well as my stock of powder had become exhausted. The bull was now lying down with his head erect, and panting

violently. I walked up to him, and putting the muzzle of my gun to his mouth, I fired down his throat. This was too much for him and he rolled over in his last struggle. I jumped upon him and stabbed him several times in the heart.

It had now grown dark. A large circle of white wolves had formed around and were yelling iin a most hideous

JOURNAL OF E. WILLARD SMITH 279

manner, old Turk keeping them at bay. I cut out the tongue of the bull, and part of his meat and prepared to return to the boat, but on looking about I was at a loss which way to go, in the confusion and excitement I had forgotten from

Journal of E. Willard Smith

while with the Fur Traders, Vasquez and Sublette, in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1839-1840

---

which direction I had come. I chose my direction and after a walk of about twenty minutes came to the river, much to my relief. I was again at a loss which way to go to find the boat, but finally walked down the stream, and in half an hour reached the boat, at which I was very much rejoiced. My companions had become very much alarmed at my absence, but knew not where I had gone. We were in the Pawnee country and I was liable to meet some of them at any time and I was without ammunition or any means of defending myself. Old Turk after fighting the wolves off until he could eat some of the bull, returned, and was ever after considered the Lion of the party. Thus ended my first and my last buffalo hunt.

Jedediah Smith's Journal - First Expedition to California

7 Aug 1826 - 3 Jul 1827

August 7th 1826 at our rendezvous at a place known as the bend of Bear River. My Partners Messrs Jackson & Sublette and myself came to the conclusion that in order to Prosecute our Business advantageously it was necessary that our company Should be divided. We had at that time in all \_ men. It was decided that Messrs Jackson & Sublette should go north on to the waters of Lewis River and the Missouri with \_ men and that I should take the remainder of the men and go to the South. Of the Country to the S & S W we knew comparatively little our travels having not extended more than 100 miles to the S and about the same distance to the South west. What that great and unexplored country might contain we knew not but hoped to find parts of the country as well stocked with Beaver as some the waters of the Missouri which was perhaps as much as we could reasonably expect. In taking the charge of our S western Expedition I followed the bent of my strong inclination to visit this unexplored country and unfold those hidden resources of wealth and bring to light those wonders which I readily imagined a country so extensive might contain. I must confess that I had at that time a full share of that ambition (and perhaps foolish ambition) which is common in a greater or less degree to all the active world. I wanted to be the first to view a country on which the eyes of a white man had never gazed and to follow the course of rivers that run through a new land.

Our arrangements being completed Messrs J & S moved on to the north and I struck of passing the Soda Spring and along the pumice stone valley to a small fork of the Port Neuff River Here I encamped for the purpose of drying meat as the Buffalo were quite plenty and in fine order. I was well aware that to the south as far as my acquaintance extended there was but little game and experience had learned me in many a severe lesson the necessity of providing a supply of provision for traveling in a gameless country. My Party consisted of 18 persons besides myself. Their names are as follows

Robeseau      half breed U Canada  
Nipisang      of Nipisang Ind & B America  
Marion        Umpquah Ind a slave  
John      a slave  
Manuel        native Mexican  
Harrison G. Rogers      a Virginian  
Martin McCoy      Kentuckian  
Peter Ranney      E Frenchman  
Arthur Black      Scotchman  
John Gaither      Kentucky  
John Hanna      Missouri  
Abraham Laplant      Indianna  
Emmanuel Lazarus      German  
Robert Evans      ould Ireland  
Silas Goble      Ohio  
John Wilson      Scotland  
Daniel Ferguson      Unknown  
James Reed      New York

I had 28 horses exclusive of those belonging to the free men. I remained on Portneuff three days during which time the Party had dried three horse loads of most excellent meat. I then started for cache or willow valley to which place I was under the necessity of going to procure some things from our cache and to make some repairs on our Guns for at that place we had a sett of Black smith tools. crossing Bear River and making several days at quick traveling I arrived at the Cache on the 15th of August. found every thing safe at the Cache had some coal Burned a forge erected and my work underway as fast a possible. took such things as I wanted from the Cache and on the 18th of August I struck over west on to the Big Salt Lake then south crossing webers fork to the outlet of the Uta Lake then up the outlet to the Lake.\* (\*No buffalo ever visit the Uta Lake in the vicinity are some Elk and deer.) On a creek in the vicinity found some Beaver Sign and near by some Indians of the Uta nation. Understanding by them that the principal Chief with his band was not far off I sent an Indian for him. I was anxious to see him and if possible persuade him to make a treaty with the snake Indians for they had been constantly at war. I likewise wished to procure some information as to the Country to the South. In two days the Indian returned. But the Chief could not be persuaded to come. He was afraid to leave his Band on account of the snakes who he was apprehensive might take the opportunity of his absence to make an attack. He sent word that if Beaver hunting was my object I had better pass his village as there were a good many beaver a short distance beyond where he then was. This I concluded to do and after three days travel from the Lake I arrived at his village on the 23d of August. The country through which we travelled was quite rough and mountainous. I found at that place about 35 lodges some of Skins and some of Brush. Each family has 4 or 5 horses. These Indians are constantly moving about like the snakes and at this time live almost entirely on Service Berries which are now ripe. I remained at this place Two days and concluded a treaty with these Indians by which the americans are allowed to hunt & trap in and pass through their country unmolested and the chief after mature deliberation declared he would go thus far towards making peace with the snakes that hostilities on his part should cease. I then told him that the Snakes had consented to an armistice until a meeting could be had between the two nations which on my return from my fall hunt I engaged to forward by every means in my power. I found these Indians more honest than any I had ever been with in the country. They appear to have verry little disposition to steal and ask for nothing unless it may be a little meat. As stealing and Begging are the most degrading features in the Indian character and as their prevalence is almost universal so to be exempt from then is no ordinary merit. The Uta's are cleanly quiet and active and make a nearer approach to civilized life than any Indians I have seen in the Interior. Their leggings and shirts which are made of the skins of the Deer Mt Sheep or Antelope are kept quite clean. As they sometimes visit the Buffalo Country they have robes. Their arms are like those of the Mountain Snakes Elk and Sheep horn Bows. Having some communication with the Spanish villages of Taos and Santa fee they have more guns than the snakes. At this place I saw a display of that savage disposition too prevalent among Indians. In camp were two Snake women just taken. One of them was brought by a party which came in with me. She was not more than 13 or fourteen years of age. Light complexion and tolerable good features. She was obliged to sleep with her master every night and carry his pack by day and as there was no game in the country she had to dig roots for his food. This barbarous treatment would have passed perhaps unnoticed (for it is common to all Barbarians) had it not been for the result which had the effect to fix it on my mind. As soon as we arrived at the village she was

---

delivered to the squaws in company with one brought in from another direction. I made them a handsome present having been directed to do so by Genl. Ashley who acted in the capacity of a sub agent. I purchased 3 horses for which I paid a high price. Of the country to the South no satisfactory information could be obtained But 20 or 30 miles to the East they told me there were some Beaver. I determined to move on E having been at this place 2 days The Indians moved on in the same direction and encamped with me the first night. The country extremely rough until ascending a considerable Mt we kept on the top of a ridge running Eastwardly. The next day I left the indians and proceeding onwards a few miles came to a valley and a Creek about 20 yds wide running North East. At that place were some Beaver, so I remained there trapping 2 or 3 days. At this place I saw some verry old Buffalo skulls and from their appearance I would suppose that it is many years since the Buffalo left this country. they are not found beyond this place. I then moved on South having a high range of Mountains on the West and crossing a good many small streams running East into a large valley the valley of the Colorado. But having learned that the valley was verry barren and Rocky I did not venture into it. The country is here extremely rough little appearance of Indians and game quite scarce a few Mt Sheep and Antelope. after traveling in this direction 2 days the country looked so unpromising that I determined to strike westward to a low place in the Mountain and cross over. In crossing this mountain just as we were encamping I found an old squaw. (there had been several families at the place but they had run off at our approach). I prevailed on her to come to camp and one of the men gave her a Badger which I supposed she would take home to cook and eat. But the moment it was presented she caught it in her hands and exclaimed we are all friends\* (\*These indians speak a language similar to the Uta's and as I had men in my party that spoke the Uta I was enabled to hold some conversation with them. They call themselves Sanpach.) and immediately tore it in pieces and laid it on the coals. When it was about half cooked she commenced eating making no nice distinction between hair pelts entrails and meet. When she had finished her meal I made her some trifling presents and told her to go and tell her people that we were all friends and that I should be glad to see some of them. She left us and in the evening some men came to the camp. I gave them some presents and by enquiry heard of a river to the west and engaged one of them as a guide. After traveling three days from the place where I turned westward I came to the River of which the indian had spoken it was about 60 yds wide muddy water and runs N W. This river I named Ashleys river in compliment to my friend the enterprising Genl. W H Ashley. Here I found some Beaver sign. The Indians at this place are rather above the midling size but in the mental scale lower than any I have yet seen. Their dress of Leggings and shirts is made of the skins of Deer Antelope and Mountain Sheep. In appearance and action they are strongly contrasted with the cleanliness of the Uta's. The inhabitants of this river are the two tribes of Pa-utch and Sam-pach. They appear to subsist entirely on Roots. The principal one is about the size of a parsnip with a leaf somewhat like the beat it grows on the richest upland. They prepare them by laying them on heated Stones and covering them first with grass and then with earth where they remain until they are sufficiently steamed. They are then mashed fine and made into small cakes. For their winter provision they are dried. The language of the Uta's Sampach and Pa utch is similar.

I had not as good Luck in taking beaver at this place as I had expected from the sign. After remaining a day or two I moved on two short days travel up the River nearly N W the valley being 6 or 8 miles wide and covered with Sedge and But little grass except along the river. A few ante-

---

lope but verry wild. Here I first saw the Black tailed hare. Darker colored and not quite as large as the common hare. The Indians of this river are not numerous and may well be called wild for we seldom get sight of them. They have a peculiar method of conveying intelligence of the approach of danger. Each family or set of families has a quantity of dry Sedge Bark and Brush piled up near the habitation and immediately on the approach of a Stranger they set fire to the pile and this being seen by their neighbor he does the same and the next the same so that the alarm flies over the hills in every direction with the greatest rapidity. As soon as they have apprised their neighbor of the approaching danger they take every thing they possess (which by the by is not much their provision being secreted) and throw it into a large Basket shaped like a sugar Loaf with a strap attached to the top which comes across the forehead and with the Basket on their back away they run to the hills for security --- As the Beaver were scarce and wild I determined to move on south again. Just above where I left the river a range of high hills cross the valley. I ascended a small creek coming in on the west side and at its head crossed a range of Mts and 3d short days travel Brought me into a low country on the west side of the Mt. some small streams flowing from the Mt which I had crossed and running West I followed down and was not a little surprised to find that they all sunk in the sand. As it was useless for me to look for Beaver where there was no water I retraced my steps to where there was water and grass and encamped. On the following morning I started early and as the country look lowest to the S W we moved in that direction about 20 miles and to my great Surprise instead of a River an immense sand plain was before me where the utmost view with my Glass could not embrace any appearance of water. The only exception to this interminable waste of sand was a few detached rocky hills that rose from the surrounding plain and the stunted sedge that was thinly scattered over its surface. As it would not be advisable for me to push into a country of this description I retraced my steps and at a late hour at night found water near where I had encamped the night before. Several of my horses gave out before encamping and were left. The next day I sent back for the horses that were left the party remaining in the same camp I started early on a good horse to take a view of the country travelling South. The range of mt which I had crossed in coming from Ashleys R extended South becoming in that direction somewhat higher. They may be considered the verge of the desert on the East other boundaries remaining as yet undefined. I went about 15 miles and from a high hill with my Glass could discover trees where I supposed there must be a stream running from the Mt W so I returned to camp. The horses had been brought in in the course of the day and two or three Antelope had been killed. The next day made an early start and after a long days travel arrived at the place where I had seen the timber. Here I found a creek 20 yds wide running West with some little Beaver sign. The smoke telegraph was seen on the hills during the day as usual. There had it appeared been a good many families in the vicinity but they had fled not desiring to become acquainted with us. Two Indians had remained behind to gratify their curiosity trusting to their speed perhaps for safety. But the poor fellows were quick undeceived when two men on swift horses pursued them. The probability is they had never seen or heard of horses before and of course were much frightened when they saw the men as it seemed to them sailing through the air. when overtaken nothing could be learned from them. They wanted no conversation with us personal safety was their only object. They feared they were about to pay for their curiosity with their lives but did not attempt to defend themselves and endeavored to express by a continued gabering and signs their desire that my men 'should go one way and they would go the other. finding it

impossible to persuade them to come to camp I gave them some small presents and granted what appeared to be their greatest and only desire permission to leave us. I trapped on this stream 2 or 3 days and moved down it some distance. But as there was no Beaver and the water began to fail and was apparently soon lost in the sand I ascended it again to the foot of the mountain and struck south again. The stream I had left I called Lost Creek. Leaving lost Creek I traveled over some verry rocky hills for ten miles I then entered a valley which run a little west of south varying from 3 to 7 miles in width and followed down this about 20 miles before we found water. It was late before the party all got up. Robeseau and Nipasang with their women and Boys left us today as they were anxious to go more East which I would not consent to do. At night Manuel one of my men ran off taking with him a horse Rifle and ammunition belonging to the Comp. The two snake women that I had purchased from the Utas to save them from the torture also ran off with him. This was undoubtedly by his instigation as he could talk with them which neither of my men could do he probably told them he would take them to their own country. A range of low mts still keeps on the E and on the W the country has the same unwelcome appearance the detached hills are somewhat higher. In the plains are a few antelope and in the Mt some Ibex our dried meat was now gone. In continuing South for 2 days a similar country to the last described. Small streams of water coming out of the Mt on the E are soon lost in the Plain on these creeks there is some grass and Brush. 2 or 3 antelopes killed. Came to a small Creek running S followed it a part of a day but the country becoming verry Rock and hilly I was obliged to turn off to the right where after traveling 8 or 10 miles through a rough country I came to a stream about 60 yds wide running S W and coming from the N E : consequently it must head with Ashleys River. This river I call Adam's River in honor of the present President. I proceded on down this river and as we found no game or Beaver we had nothing to eat. The grass of the river at this place was of those coarse tough kinds which we call Salt and Cane grass. On the day after I struck the river I passed a small spot of ground where corn had been raised 3 or 4 years since. Some of my men could hardly believe it possible that corn had ever been planted in this lonely country although the remains of the stalks were found. The hills being irregular convinced me that it was the work of Indians. The course of the River which is wide sandy and shallow continues S W and the country off from the River Rough Rocky & Red hills no timber or game. On the evening of the second day I had advanced a little ahead of the company to look for a place to encamp. near a small Creek coming in from the west and at the distance of 200 yards I observed an Indian on a hill and made signs for him to come to me but he presented his bow and arrows and in a moment I saw 15 or 20 appear. not considering it safe to remain here I hastened back to the party and then proceded on to the selected encampment. By this time 20 or 30 were seen skulking around among the Rocks. I therefore had every thing prepared for the worst and advancing alone before the camp by making signs and speaking in a friendly tone of voice I finally succeeded in persuading one of them to come to me. The poor fellow the bravest in the band advanced with evident signs of fear his limbs trembling and his voice faltering. holding out in his hand a hare or rabbit to offer as a token of friendship. I took it and carrassed him and he immediately set down. When the others saw that he was not hurt 10 or 12 of them came bringing in their hands an ear of corn as an emblem of peace - (a pleasing sight to starving men) they set down Began to talk and make signs. As provisions was our greatest present desire we were much pleased to hear that they had corn and pumpkins close at hand. I gave them some small presents among which I found that pieces of Iron were verry

---

acceptable and started some of them off for corn & pumpkins. they soon returned well loaded and indiferent as this may seem to him who never made his pillow of the sand of the plain or him who would consider it a hardship to go without his dinner yet to us weary and hungry in the solitary desert it was a feast a treat that made my party in their sudden hilarity and Glee present a lively contrast to the moody desponding silence of the night before. As both men and horses required rest I thought it advisable to remain here 2 or three days during which time I sent some men down to the river to see what the prospect was ahead and 2 men back on the trail for 2 horses that had been left behind. In the mean time I was trading for Corn in order to have a small stock of provision when I started again. My men from below returned and told me that the river about 10 m below entered the mountain which we could see from camp and that we could not follow the River through the Mt unless we traveled in the water as the Rocks rise from the water perpendicularly on both sides. The river being wide and shallow there is no chance for Beaver but there being a great many willows cut on the banks it appeared that they came here in high water and the Indians by signals told me that there were plenty below. The two men returned on the third day with the tired horses. The weather while here was verry warm the Mercury rising above blood heat. I visited some indian lodges a mile above our camp on the creek for the purpose of seeing how they farm. Their little corn patch is close on the bank of the creek for the convenience of water. The Creek is damed about and the water is conducted in a trunk to a place where it can be spread over the surface. For a hoe they use a piece of wood 3 in Broad and 4 feet Long. The pumpkins and Corn were not quite ripe. Their small Lodges are covered with weeds and cane grass the fires being on the out side. They kept their women and children secreted so that I did not see one while with them. They have some Crockery which is thiner than common Brown earthen colored yellow lead Color and like stone ware. I saw no Iron among them so that any piece that could be converted into a knife or an arrow point was a great acquisition. They have pipes made of fine clouded marble and a kind of Tobacco of their own like that which we in the Mountains call snake Tobacco. Each man smokes for himself not passing the pipe around the circle as is the custom among the Mt Indians. They care verry little about our Tobacco. A good many of these Indians were the scalp of an antelope or Mt sheep with the ears on for a hat. In actions and language these indians are like the Pa utch.\* (\* From the place where I struck Adams River to Corn Creek there was but a few places where there was any timber. What I saw was cotton wood and in places willows The grasses were Cane salt and wire grass. On Corn Creek was a considerable Cotton wood & willows. The country on the Adams River above where I struck it had a peculiarly wild and rugged appearance. I found two or three shrubs that were new to me. On growing in bundles like a currant bush with a bright red and polished bark. Another about three feet high green bark prickly surface and when striped of the bark is perforated it is hollow like a reed.) Having somewhat recruited both men and horses I moved on down the River to the foot of the Mt and then turned off to the right the course of the river still S W winding about among the rocks and ravines. I succeeded in gaining the Summit of the Mt composed of Ridges of Rock and gravel. But although I was so high that I could see the low ground beyond the mountain yet there was a deep ravine before me which I was obliged to cross the descent was extremely steep and as we had had no water since morning I was obliged to follow down the Ravine to the River & as it was then nearly night encamped without any grass for my horses. I killed an Ibex in good order and one of the men killed another. These relished verry well with men who had been for several days de-

prived of their accustomed rations of meat. Early the next morning we started down in the bed of the general shallowness of the water. By the meanderings of the stream it was about 12 m through the rocks rising perpendicularly from the waters edge in most places to the height of 3 or 400 feet. A good many hot springs but not as hot as some I have seen at the Salt Lake and on the Big horn. Some appearance of Iron ore. At one place I was obliged to unload and swim the horses. Moved about 3 miles after getting through the mountain to the bed of a stream coming in from the west on which there was some good sized cotton wood trees. There is very little appearance of Indians in this vicinity. The country is not so rough as on the other side of the mountain but extremely barren and the river continues wide and shoal. At this place I saw a new kind of quail some smaller than the atlantic quail. The male has three or four feathers an inch long rising from the top of the head. For four days traveling down the River nothing new or material occurred. After passing the Mt the River turns more south keeping nearly parallel with the mountain and at the distance of 5 miles. The grass has been somewhat plentier along the river, and in two or three places a few small cotton wood trees. No game since we left the Mt. On the evening of the fourth day from the Mt I saw an Indian at a distance called to him and after a little hesitation he came to me and understanding by his signals that there was some lodges near by we went on to the mouth of a creek from the SW small but apparently unfailing on the bank of which was several Lodges of Indians like those on corn Creek. They had corn (which was gathered) Pumpkins squashes and some small green Water Melons. I soon purchased some pumpkins and squashes and encamped. As I was weary of traveling in this barren country I of course made many enquiries of the Indians as to the country ahead. They told me there was a large river not far off and of course plenty of Beaver for it is a general characteristic of indians to answer your questions in the manner that they think will please you but without any regard to the truth. There are however some individuals of different tribes in the Mts on whose word you may depend. These Indians are Pa utch but not as wild as those above the Mt. their women and children did not run off. I saw at their Lodges a large cake of rock salt weighting 12 or 15 lbs and on enquiry found that they procured it a cave not far distant. I engaged an indian and sent one of my men to ascertain the truth. The men reported it as true. I saw Ochre among these Indians which was procured from the N E about 30 m. I thought I had some reason to believe these indians in relation to the beaver as they had mocasins made of the skins. It happened that there were two indians here from another tribe apparently for the purpose of trading for salt and ochre. They told me that a days travel below here this river entered another large River coming from the North East and several days journey Below the mouth of this river they resided where there is plenty of beaver and the indians have horses. I saw on these indians some blue yarn and a small piece or two of Iron from which I judged they had some intercourse with the Spanish provinces. I engaged these indians as guides for I might as well go on as undertake to return. Some of my horses had given out and were left and others were so poor as not to be able to carry a load. The prospect ahead was if the indians told me the truth that I might in this moderate Climate trap all winter and also purchase some horses. these considerations induced me to abandon the idea of returning to the mountains until I should have gone somewhat further in exploring the secrets of this thus far unpromising country. Having stayed at the mouth of \_\_ creek 2 days I started on down the river accompanied by my two guides when I was opposite the cave I turned off to the right across a level piece of ground about 1/2 mile to the foot of a hill which appears to be two or three mile long and 100 or 150 feet

high its course being about parallel with the River which is here running S E or E S E. Ascending from the foot of the hill 80 or 90 feet I arrived at the entrance of the cave which is about 15 feet high and the same width gradually close as I advanced to 4 feet in width and 10 feet in height where it was quite difficult of descent for a short distance perhaps ten feet where you arrive on a floor the room then opens to about 15 or 18 feet in width 25 or 30 feet in length and 20 feet in height. The Roof sides and floor of solid rock salt. I had brought an axe for the purpose of examining it and on breaking it found it generally pure But in places a few dark veins. after satisfying my curiosity I proceeded onwards a few miles and encamped.

The next day S E 15 m to the large river of which my guides had spoken. It was about 200 yards wide 73 deep and a strong current. Coming from the N N E and from this place running south it could be no other but the Colorado of the west which in the Mountains we call seetes-kee-der. Up the River the country presents a hilly Barren appearance and below and all around Barren Stony hills. In some places are a few small trees along the bank of the Colorado. The guides said it would be necessary to cross the river at this place. I there formed a raft of drift wood on which to carry over my goods. The horses were driven in and crossed over after crossing all over moved down the River a mile and enc. Where we crossed the river an Indian and his family were living. They had pumpkins squashes and Beans growing on a small spot of alluvial soil on the River bank. I purchased of the different kinds and he showed me where he had wheat sown or rather planted in the hills 20 or 30 grains in the hill. The River entering a low but rugged mountain below I found it would be necessary to turn off from it to the left and as my guides informed me that it was more than a days travel to the next accessible point on the river between which place and this no water could be found I determined to wait until the heat of the day was over and travel as much as possible in the night. At the proper time we moved on keeping a south East course up a wide gravelly ravine the course of which was nearly parallel with the obstructing range of Mt. At 11 or 12 o'clock at night we unpacked and hobbled our horses and slept until the first appearance of light when we prepared and moved on for three hours in the direction of yesterday the Mt. then becoming lower we turned through a low place S S W and after traveling 2 hours more over terrible rocks we arrived at the river where although we found water which we very much needed yet there was nothing for the hungry and weary horses to eat. The Indians had carried water in the bladder of an antelope which they divided with us yet it was nothing among so many. Just below camp the river again enters the rocks.

The next morning we started early leaving the river and traveling S E 4 or 5 miles up a ravine we got where the hills are fewer and more detached. The country of that same Barren and rough kind I have so often described. My guides had left me in the morning but I had been able to follow their tracks in the sand. The trail turning in toward the river through a range of rough hills by a narrow and deep ravin frequently obstructed by rocks I was apprehensive I would not be able to pass with my horses. As I was some distance ahead of the party and on foot I pushed on briskly to see the worst. I found some very difficulty places but seeing no other chance for proceeding after taking a drink from the River I returned to meet the company. They had been clamberring and winding among the rocks and were now about three miles from the river. Being now night and a place before us that would require some hours to pass I had the horses unpacked and left them as they could not go back on account of the steep places we had come down.

One of the men who was so lame that he could not walk was obliged to remain while the party

moved on to the river on foot. As soon as light the next day we returned and with cords lowered our goods down the precipice, where a mistep would have been in its consequences inevitable destruction.\* (\* It was at this place a party from Taos saw my trail.) But fortunately we passed in safety and packing up pushed on to the river where there was a little grass for our horses. The next day I moved 10 miles down the river the hills not so bad as they had been heretofore. In the course of the day some indians met us having some dried pumpkins, finding tolerable grass I remained two days. I killed a Mt sheep and we caught some pretty good fish with the hook and line. One of my men found a singular substance Some hard and transparent pieces of stone about twice as large as a large pea were firmly fixed in the side of a flat stone. Appearance of an abundance of Iron ore are seen here, and most certainly if a country produces minerals in proportion to its barrenness this must be rich in mineral productions.

I had lost a good many horses and some of those remaining were not able to carry any thing. I got the Indians to assist me in moving down to where there was several lodges. These Indians are quite a different nation from the Pa utch. They call themselves A-muc-ha-ba's and appeared quite friendly bringing me corn beans dried pumpkins &c which I paid them for in Beeds Rings vermilion &c. At this place there is considerable timber on the river and the soil might admit of making small farms. There was but 3 or 4 horses among them but I did not succeed in purchasing them, verry little beaver sign on the river. By enquiry I found that the principal part of this tribe were 30 or 40 miles down the river. I remained at this place 2 days during which time a number of Indians came up from the village below. Among these were one or two that could talk spanish and as I had a man that was able to speak the spanish I could hold some conversation with them. I then moved on down the River accompanied by the Indians who had come up from the settlements below. The distance was upwards of thirty miles and the country barren. On my arrival at the settlement I was treated with great kindness. Melons and roasted pumpkins were presented in great abundance - At this time it was low water yet the Colorado was 200 yards and in the shallowest place I could find 10 feet deep with a smooth current. The timber in this vicinity consisting of the Cottonwood and a small species of Honey Locust with some willow extends entirely along the river varying in width from 1/2 to 2 1/2 miles in width the river winding through woodland from one side to the other alternately. Leaving the woodland which has a tolerable soil the sandy region commences producing nothing but sedge and prickly pear. On the East and West at the distance of ten miles a chain of Rocky hills run parallel with the river and about thirty miles south the Rocky hills close in to the River. This settlement of the Amuchaba's extending about 30 miles along the River appeared quite numerous and paying some considerable attention to agriculture they do not live in villages but are rather scattered over the country generally wherever they find the most favorable situations. In person these Indians are tall and well formed complexion not dark. In abilities perhaps second to the Utas. They do not appear much inclined to steal but are quite fond of gambling. Their principal Game is conducted as follows. A piece of ground 30 or 40 feet long and 8 feet wide is made level and smooth. Each man has a pole ten feet long and one of them a hoop 4 inches in diameter. The hoop is set rolling from one end of the floor and at the instant both start and sliding their poles endeavor to intersect the hoop. The one that pierces the hoop or when hoop and poles stop is the nearest to the spot is the winner. The women also gamble by tossing small colored sticks in a dish somewhat like throwing dice. The women are generally very fleshy with tolerable features. The man when dressed at all have a Spanish Blanket thrown

over the left shoulder and passing under the right arm it is pinned on the breast with a wooden pin. They wear no head dress mocasins or leggings. The dress of the women is a peticoat made of a material like flax just Broken which is Banded with a plat on the upper edge like corn husks. It is fastened around the waist extending down to the knee and constitutes with whole of their clothing. They are in general much more cleanly than the Pautch.

They make a kind of earthen ware and in large crocks of this they boil their beans corn pumpkins &c. The men appear to work as much in the field as the women which is quite an unusual sight among Indians. But few of them have bows and arrows. The bows are 5 feet long and the arrows verry long and made of cane grass with a wooden splice 6 inches long for a head. It is fashion with these indians to fill the hair full of mud and wind it around the head until the top resembles in shap a tin pan. Their summer Lodges about 3 feet high are made of forks and poles covered with grass weeds and dirt flat on the top. The winter Lodges generally small are made in the woods but fronting to the south and where the trees are not sufficiently high to keep out the sun. As the rainy season approaches they throw dirt on the roof to give it a slope to carry off the water and also secure the sides with dirt leaving only a small aperture for a door. As they have not much clothing when the weather requires it they build a great many small fires sleeping in the intervals between them. When they become cold they draw the sand out from under fires and spread it where they sleep. In their Lodges I observed an abundance of Crocks and demijohns. Goards and small bins made of willow in which they put their corn, beans, wheat, garden seeds, and melons. The Honey Locust of this country bears a pod somewhat longer than a bean. The Indians gather these and pound both the pod and the bean it contains until it forms a coarse flour. they work it into loaves and Let it dry it is then fit for use. When they use it they rinse it with water to which it imparts a sweet and yet tartish taste by no means unpleasant. I frequently observed at a distance from their houses willow bins that would hold 20 to 100 Bushels filled with the Locust pods from which circumstances I judged them not much inclined to steal from each other. Their method of grinding their wheat is somewhat tedious. On a large flat stone a little concave it is pounded or rather rolled with another stone in the shape of a bakers rolling pin until it is sufficiently fine. The stone on which the grinding is done being placed in a sloping position gradually as the meal becomes fine it is permitted to slide off into a dish at the lower end. The bread which they form of this meal is baked in the sand or ashes under the fire without the covering of Bark or grass used by the Pawnees. When they would roast their Pumpkins or Squashes which is common method of cooking them, they take a plug from the side extract the seeds from the hole and replace the Plug by which means they may roast them as neatly as if they were entire.

I found in this vicinity no beaver worth trapping for but remained here for the purposes of recruiting my men and horses. From the Indians I ascertained that below the rocky hills that came into the river and nearly down to the mouth of the Gila the country was barren and not inhabited. they also told me that it was about ten days travel to the spanish settlements in California. I swaped my poorest horses with the indians and endeavored to purchase others but without success.\* (\* One morning an Indian came to me and said the Indians had killed one of my horses which on examination I found to be true. They had killed the horse to eat and took away every thing but the entrails. from this time I had my horses so carefully guarded that they had no chance to continue their depredations.) Believing it impossible to return to the deposit at this season and in my present situation I determined to prepare myself as well possible and push for-

---

ward to California where I supposed I might procure such supplies as would enable me to move on north. In that direction I expected to find beaver and in all probability some considerable river heading up in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake By this route I could return to the deposite. In pursuance of my plan I endeavored by all means in my power to procure a guide but could not succeed. I therefore got the best instruction I could in regard to the route and collected a supply of Corn, Beans, Locust Bread, and a little Indian flour.

Having remained at this place about 8 days I made a raft and crossed the river and for the first day traveled nearly west passing through the Rocky hills by a deep ravine which brought me through to the plain then a little north of west 15 miles to another range of hills where I found water and cane grass and encamped. At night the most valuable horse I had was stolen for although I had a guard yet it was so dark that the horse was led out unperceived. The next day I travelled west through the range of hills to the plain where the trail could not be followed and where I was obliged to encamp without water. I had supposed that I should be able to follow the trail from the directions given by the indians which being found impracticable and a great scarcity of water becoming more apparent I rode and sent others to the high hills and deep ravines in every direction to Look for water and as none could be found the Idea came forcibly to mind that it was the policy of the Indians to send me into the desert to perish. In this situation I saw no alternative but to retrace my steps. on my way back I found an Indian and a boy following our trail for some purpose unknown to me. They had water with them which would convey the Idea that the country where I turned back was for some distance destitute of it. On seeing us one of them ran off I did not pursue him but kept the other with me until I got to the spring where I had before encamped. It will be readily imagined that by this time we were much in want of water. During the night the Indians ran off. The next day I moved to the river and found that the Indians had all gone from their Loges leaving everything the could not carry off.

It was now prudent to prepare for the worst which I did by making a pen for my horses and encamping under a bank of the River which would answer as a breastwork in the emergency which the singular conduct of the indians led me to expect. However the little renegade Francisco (that spoke spanish) came to the opposite bank of the river in the morning and after hallowing plunged in and swam over. I asked the reason of the singular behaviour of the Indians. He said the Indians that got away from me told them I was coming back to kill them all for stealing my horse. To this I answered that it was all folly to tell them to return and be friendly as usual. It was true I must have my horse but I would not think of punishing the whole of them for the fault of the single scoundrel that stole him. I also told him to tell the chiefs that they must get the horse and bring him to me in which event all would be well. Francisco left me and in the evening the Indians returned to their Lodges. The chiefs came to see me and said that the Indian that stole my horse had gone off some distance but that they would have him back as soon as possible and oblige him to deliver the horse. They wished me to recross the river and as the grass was poor at that place I complied with their request and after crossing moved down the river about ten miles where the settlement is also considerable and the country like that above with the exceptions that there are some small prairaes of tolerable good sandy soil producing Melons and corn and some ponds and slous in which portions of the river run in high water. The grass at this place was much better than at any place above and the productions the same as those mentioned before though perhaps in greater abundance than in the upper part of the settlement. Their wheat is planted in hills. As

---

they have no fences what few horses they have are kept constantly tied by a long halter and at this season are fed on Pumpkins and melons of which they appear verry fond. They ride without saddle or Bridle but by the help of a wide Circingle under which the slip their feet they are enabled to sit firmly. Melons were supplied in such numbers that I had frequently 3 or 400 piled up before my tent. A great many women and children were generally about us. Among the Amuchabas I did not find any verry influential chiefs.

He that has the most wives and consequently the most numerous connexion is the greatest man. There was one chief which we called Red Shirt from the circumstance of his wearing a shirt made out of a piece of red cloth which I had given him. He was about 40 years of age and appeared to be a great favorite among the women. He frequently stayed at my tent and slept with any of the women he chose. No indians I have seen pay so much deference to the women as these. Among indians in general they have not the privilege of speaking on a subject of any moment but here they harangue the Multitude the same as the men. While here Francisco came to me and requested I would go and see a man who was verry sick. I told him I was no Physician but these indians thinking a white man could do anything I was obliged to go to satisfy them. When I arrived at the spot 3 or 400 people were assembled but the man was dead. Seeing a large pile of wood I enquired of the interpreter the meaning he informed they were about to burn the corpse which was soon brought and laid on the pile, and also a small bag of net work containing his property. It appeared the man had died from the swelled neck a disorder I think quite common here as I observe many with their necks much scarified a remedy which appeared to have been applied to the case of the deceased as there was a good deal of Blood on his neck. Two or three women were crying and screaming and came to the pile apparently in the greatest agony embracing the corpse. They were pulled off and fire was put to the pile which was soon in flames. The mourners took some strips of Red cloth and whatever they thought most valuable and threw them in the flames. I left them but Francisco told me the deceased had two horses which were already killed and on them the people would now feast. It being a great object with me to procure a guide no means were left untried and finally I succeeded in engaging two Indians that lived in the vicinity of the Spanish Settlements. The stolen horse having been returned I moved to the proper point and crossed over the River for the purpose of making another attempt to cross the plain to California. Having remained at the Amuchabas several days. The first day I traveled the same course as on the preceding attempt and encamped at the same spring.

The next day on the same route till I came to the place where I had before lost the trail then traveling a little north of west and passing some detached hills on the right and left just before night we came to a hill of rocks and at its foot a small spring where I encamped.

In the vicinity was some gravelly hills on which there was a little grass where I turned my horses. The next day started early steering W N W crossing some ridges and passing some hills on our left. Just before night at the foot of a small hill we found a little spring or rather hole of water furnishing a verry inadequate supply for after taking out some to cook with I let the horses to it and they drank it all. As there was no grass I was under the necessity of tying my horses to keep them from running away. The next morning starting early a N W course about 1 O Clock I came to a little ravine in which was some grass and a spring here I encamped. The country since leaving the Colorado has been a dry rocky sandy Barren desert. As my guides informed me that we had a hard days travel to make I moved off early keeping west down the ravine 5 miles Then S W and W

---

S W till one O Clock when I came to border of a salt plain and at this place found some holes of Brackish water. After crossing the Salt Plain I found a place where there was water and some grass and encamped. The water was in holes dug about two feet deep and quite brackish making some new holes I found the water some better The Salt Plain I had passed during the day was about 15 miles long and from four to six miles wide, entirely Level and destitute of vegetation. Presenting a surface of sand the most beautiful Salt was found in many places and within two or three inches of the surface. I ascertained that although the salt was found in a Layer it did not extend throughout the plain. In passing the plain pieces of the salt were frequently throw out by the feet of the horses. The Layer was about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick and when the sand was removed from it I found the salt pure white with a grain as fine as table salt.

The next day W S W 8 or 10 miles across a plain and entered the dry Bed of a River on each side high hills. Pursuing my course along the valley of this river 8 or 9 miles I encamped. In the channel of the river I occasionally found water. It runs from west to east alternately running on the surface and disappearing entirely in the sands of its bed leaving them for miles entirely dry. near the place where I entered its Bed it seemed to finally lose itself in the plain.\* (\* It is perhaps reasonable to suppose that the Salt Plain has been formed by the waters of this river overflowing the level country in its freshets and in the dry season sinking in the sand and Leaving a deposit of salt on the surface. The waters of the River at this place are sufficiently salt to justify this conclusion.) At this time my provision was nearly exhausted although I thought I had provided enough to last me 10 or 12 days. But men accustomed to living on meat and at the same time travelling hard will Eat a surprising quantity of corn and Beans which at this time constituted our principal subsistence. One of my guides said he knew where his people had a cache of some provision and the next day as I traveled on he went with one of the men to procure some at night they returned bringing something that resembled in appearance loaves of bread weighing each 8 or 10 pounds. It was so hard that an ax was required to break it and in taste resembled Sugar Candy. It was no doubt sugar but in that imperfect form in which it is found among nations to which the art of granulation is unknown. On enquiry I found it was made from the cane grass which I have before spoken of on adams River and the same of which the Amuchabas make their arrows. For three days nothing material occurred Our course was up the River which sometimes run in sight and then for miles disappeared in the sands. In places I found grass and the Sugar Cane and in some places small Cotton wood. I also saw the tracks of horses that had been here during the summer. My guides Belonged to a tribe of indians residing in the vicinity called the wanyumas. not numerous for this barren country could not support them. At this place was some sign of Antelope and Mt sheep Mr. Rogers killed an Antelope which tasted quite strong of wormwood. On the 4th night from the salt plain an Amuchaba indian that had come this far with me disappeared. I suppose he had become tired of the journey and returned. My guides had expected to find their families here but were disappointed.

The next day still following the course of the River which had a strong current in places 20 yds in width and in others entirely disappeared in the sands. After a long days travel I arrived late at a wan yu ma Lodge. close by were 2 or three families of the same tribe. Here I remained the following day and in the mean time was well treated by these indians. They gave us such food as they had consisting of a kind of mush made of acrons and pine nuts bread made of a small berry. This bread in appearance was like corn bread but in taste much sweeter. As there were in the neighbor-

hood a plenty of hares the Indians said they must give us a feast. Several went out for this purpose with a net 80 or 100 yards long. Arriving at a place where they knew them to be plenty the net was extended among the wormwood. then divided on each wing they moved in such direction as to force the frightened game to the net where they were taken while entangled in its meshes. Being out but a short time they brought in 2 or three doz a part of which they gave me. seeing some tracks of antelope Mr. Rogers and myself went out and killed 2. In this vicinity there are some groves of Cotton wood and in places Sugar Cane and grass. On the following day after making the indians some presents I moved on keeping a right hand fork my course nearly S W passing out at the head of this creek and over a ridge I entered a ravin running S W I proceeded down it nearly to where it entered some high hills which were apparently covered with pine. At this place I encamped. In the course of the days I passed hills covered with a scattering growth of Bastard Cedar and bushy Oak. Some antelopes were seen in the course of the day and the tracks of Bear and Black tailed Deer.

The next day following the valley of a creek alternately sinking and rising and passing through a range of Mt for 8 miles where I was obliged to travel in the bed of the creek as the hills on both sides which were thick covered with cedar came in close and rugged to the creek. About ten miles from camp I came out into a large valley having no timber except what was on the creeks coming from the Mountains. Here we found a plenty of grass and what was still more pleasing we began to see track of Horses and Cattle and shortly after saw some fine herds of Cattle in many directions. As those sure evidences of Civilization passed in sight they awakened many emotions in my mind and some of them not the most pleasant. It would perhaps be supposed that after numerous hardships endured in a savage and inhospitable desert I should hail the herds that were passing before me in the valley as harbingers of better times. But they reminded me that I was approaching a country inhabited by Spaniards. A people whose distinguishing characteristic has ever been jealousy a people of different religion from mine and possessing a full share of that bigotry and disregard of the rights of a Protestant that has at times stained the Catholic Religion.

They might perhaps consider me a spy imprison me persecute me for the sake of religion or detain me in prison to the ruin of my business I knew such things had been and might be again. Yet confiding in the rectitude of my intentions I endeavored to convince myself that I should be able to make it appear to them that I had come to their country as the only means by which I could extricate myself from my own embarrassing situation and that so far from being a spy my only wish was to procure such supplies as would enable me to proceed to my own country.

When we left the Mts our course was W S W Close on the right was a range of Mts out of which poured several beautiful streams watering a fertile valley extending many miles on the left. Having traveled about 18 miles I encamped. We had nothing to eat and knowing that it would take two days to reach the settlements I determined to help myself to one of the hundreds of fine cattle in view. In endeavoring to kill one I had to use all the precaution necessary in approaching Buffalo. Having succeeded I found the animal branded on the hip I therefore saved the skin to carry in to the owner. At this place I remained during the following day.

Again moving onward in two days travel I arrived at a farm house. The country through which we passed was strikingly contrasted with the Rocky and Sandy deserts through which we had so long been traveling. There we had passed many high mountains rocky and Barren Many plains whose sands drank up the waters of the river and spring where our need was the greatest. There

sometimes a solitary Antelope Bounded by to vex our hunger and the stunted useless sedge grew as in mockery of the surrounding sterility. There for many days we had traveled weary hungry and thirsty drinking from springs that increased our thirst and looking in vain for a boundary of the interminable waste of sands. But now the scene was changed and whether it was its own real Beauty or the contrast with what we had seen it certainly seemed to us enchantment. Our path was through a fertile and well watered valley and the herds of Cattle and the bands of wild horses as they sniffed the wind and rushed wildly across our way reminded me of the Plains of the Buffalo East of the mountains that seemed to me as a home or of the cattle of the more distant prairies of Missouri and Illinois.

Even in the Idea that we were approaching the abode of comparative civilization there was a pleasure not however entirely unmixed with dread for we knew not how we might be received. As we advanced the white Brant and Mallard were seen in great numbers it being now their season. and we passed a farm on a creek where a number of indians were at work. They gazed and gazed again considering us no doubt as strange objects in which they were not much in error. When it is considered that they were not accustomed to see white men walking with horses packed as mine were with Furs Traps Saddlebags Guns and Blankets and every thing so different from any thing they had ever seen and add to this our ragged and miserable appearance I should not have been surprised if they had run off at first sight for I have often been treated in that manner by savages. Arrived at the farm houses I was kindly received by an elderly man an indian who spoke spanish and immediately asked me if I would have a Bullock killed. I answered that I would and away rode two young Indians in a moment It being the custom in this country as I have since learned to keep a horse or horses constantly tied at the door Saddled and Bridled and of course ready to mount at a moments warning. In a short time the indians returned bringing a cow as fast as she could gallop. She was held between the two horsemen by ropes thrown over her horns and having the other end fast to the Pomel of the spanish Saddle one riding before and the other behind she was forced along without the power of resistance. They were anxious that I should shoot the cow which I did. Novel as the scenery of this country was to me It seemed that we ourselves were a still greater wonder to our semi-civilized friends. As I afterwards learned they wondered how indians could be so white having no Idea that civilized people lived in the direction from which we came. It was also a great wonder to them that we had guns and other articles and more than all that there should be with us one of the people of Reason this being the name by which they were learned to distinguish Spaniards from indians and which they readily applied to one of my men who spoke spanish.

The farm house consisted of Two Buildings each about 100 feet long 20 feet wide and 12 feet high placed so as to form two sides of a square. The walls are of unburnt brick about 2 feet thick and at intervals of 15 feet Loop holes are left for the admission of light. The roofs were Thatched. It should be premised that I had at this time but a vague idea of the peculiarities of the country in which my fortune had placed me. I therefore was in the dark as to the manner in which I should conduct myself and determined to be guided by circumstances as they should transpire. In pursuance of this plan when the old overseer asked me if I was not going to write to Father I told him I was and immediately set down and wrote a few lines briefly stating where I was from and the reason of my being there an Indian mounting one of the horses that are always in readiness took my note and was off in an instant. In about an hour the answer was returned by a man who

the overseer told me was the commandant but in fact a Corporal. He asked me how I did and congratulated me that I had escaped the Gentiles and got into a christian country and offering me some Segars made with paper according to the common custom of the country when I would take one he insisted that I should take the bunch. He then presented the note from the Father written in Latin and as I could not read his Latin nor he my english it seemed that we were not likely to become general correspondents. I however ascertained that he wished me to ride to the Mission so giving Mr. Rogers instructions how to proceed in my absence I took my interpreter and in Company with the corporal and a soldier moved on at the gate that appears quite common in this country a gallop passing large fields laid out on both sides of the road and fenced with Posts set in the ground with rails tied to them by means of strong pieces of raw hide there being also thousands of Cattle skulls in rows on each side of the road conveying the Idea that we were approaching an immense slaughter yard. Arrived in view of a Building of ancient and Castle-like appearance and not knowing why I was brought there or who I was to see the current of my thoughts ran so rapidly through my mind as to deprive me of the power of coming to any conclusion so that when we passed in front of the Building and the Corporal after pointing to an old man sitting in the portico and observing that there was the father immediately rode off I was left quite embarrassed hardly knowing how to introduce myself. Observing this I presume the father took me by hand and quite familiarly asked me to walk in making at the same time many enquiries. Soon some bread and cheese were brought in and some rum of which I drank to please the Father but much against my own taste. I then related to him as well as in my power the course of my being in that country but it was being to him a thing so entirely new and my interpreter perhaps not giving a correct translation of my words he was not able to comprehend the subject and told me there was an American residing in the vicinity for whom he would send as he spoke good Spanish and on his arrival we might have a good understanding. In the mean time he told me to make myself as contented as possible and consider myself at home. He ordered the steward to show me to a room about 20 feet square in which there was a bed taking possession of it I was left alone to reflect on my singular situation for about two hours when the bell ringing for Supper a boy came and invited me in. The Old Father invited me to pass up next to him. We were seated on a long bench with a back to it one of these occupying each side of the table. On The opposite side of the table sat a Spanish Gentlemen and a father from the neighboring village of the Angels and the steward of the mission. at my side sat my interpreter. As soon as we were seated the Father said Benediction and each one in the most hurried manner asked the blessing of heaven - and even while the last words were pronouncing the fathers were reaching for the different dishes. About a doz Indian boys were in attendance who passing the different dishes to the fathers they helping themselves and passing them to the next. Our knives and forks according to the common custom of the country were rolled up in a napkin and laid by the side of the plates. The supper consisted principally of meats. and an abundance of wine. Before the cloth was removed Cigars were passed around. I may be excused for being this particular in this table scene when it is recollected that It was a long time sinc I had had the pleasure of sitting at a table and never before in such company. November 28th 1826 My party arrived and I had my things put into the room which I occupied. The Corporal who was called Commandant came to me and after a few preparatory compliments observed that the best thing I could do with my guns would be to put them in his charge where they would be safe for said he strangers visiting you will be constantly handling them they being

a kind with which they are unacquainted. I thanked him for his kindness and gave him the arms though I knew he was influenced by a motive very different from the one assigned.

29th Just at sunrise Mr Rogers and myself were sent for showed forward to the table and served with tea Bread and Cheese. The father was not present for at that time he was at his devotions. It may perhaps be well for me in this place to give a view of some facts that were in part learned after this time anticipating my story that my ideas may be the more readily understood. California was first settled by missionaries of the order of St. Francis about 60 years since. These missions are scattered over the country and include in their several jurisdictions nearly all the natives of the country. The number of indians attached to each mission varies from 400 to 2000. These establishments with their dependencies include about 3/4ths of the Inhabitants of California. The place at which I was for the time located was the mission of St Gabriel. The situation of St. Gabriel is pleasant the prospect to the North embracing a considerable range of Mts at the distance of 12 miles on the south low hills and on the East and west a smooth country covered with grass. The soil in the vicinity of the mission has the appearance of great fertility presenting a gentle slope to the south East. The hills produce Pine of different kinds and at their feet Groves of Low Oak and small walnuts. The Streams are skirted with Cotton wood Ash willow small Buck Eye and wild Grape vines. Two thousand acres of land fenced in the manner I have before described and so situated as to be easily watered by a small creek that runs through it producing an abundance of Wheat Beans Peas and some Corn. An extensive vineyard and orchards of Apples Peach Pear and Olive trees some figs and a Beautiful grove of about 400 Orange trees render the Mission of St Gabriel a scene on which the eye cannot fail to rest with pleasure. On the beautiful lands of the neighborhood are grazing immense herds of Cattle and large bands of Horses. The buildings of the mission form a Hollow square. The Church on the S E and the Guard House on the S W corner the several sides being occupied by the Fathers Rooms office dinning Room apartments for Strangers. Store Houses Granaries Soap Factory Distillery Black Smith Carpenters and Cooper Shops The Shops for the Manufacture of Blankets and Lodging rooms for the unmarried women. at a short distance from the square the intermediate space being unfenced there is a street lined with small buildings on both sides these are occupied by the Indians of the Mission who have families. At 11 O Clock the Father came and invited us to dinner. We accompanied him to the office adjoining the dining room and after taking a glass of Gin and some bread and cheese we seated ourselves at the table which was furnished with Mutton Beef Chickens Potatoes Beans and Peas cooked in different ways. Wine in abundance made our reverend fathers appeared to me quite merry. an express had been forwarded by the Commandant to the Governor at San Diego.\* (\*My two indian guides were put in prison immediately on my arrival charged with being run-aways from the Mission. They were about 16 years of age and from what I saw of them I thought them fine honest and well disposed boys.)

30th November Sunday A wedding at church but I did not attend being a protestant. I thought it might not be agreeable to the Catholics. the new married couple dined with us the bride and her sister being the only females present two or three young men attended with the groom. Mr Rogers and myself in our unfashionable dress would have very willingly absented ourselves but no excuses would be received. Our dinner consisted of more than the usual number of dishes. Dried Grapes were served as a desert a Dozen Indians were playing on violins and the soldiers were firing their Musquets at the door. After dinner I spoke to the Commandant for another room for

my men which was readily provided. I also proposed that instead of furnishing my men with their provision ready cooked as had been the case heretofore they should receive the material and cook them to their own taste to this he assented but observed that they might as well as not have an Indian to assist them. Flour Meat Beans &c were provided in abundance.

From this time nothing material occurred for several days. Mr Chapman the american spoken of by the Father came from the village of the angels accompanied by Capt Anderson of the Brig Olive Branch and the supercargo Mr. Scott. Mr Scott being a good translator I was enabled to make my situation fully known. I soon ascertained that nothing could be done until the arrival of an answer from the Governor at San Diego. Besides the above named Gentlemen there came to St Gabriel at different times two others who spoke good English John Baptiste Bonnifacio a Portuguese residing at St Francisco and on his way to St. Diego the other Senor Martinas a native of S America and formerly in good circumstances. But being a Royalist lost his property and sought a retreat among the Fathers in California who are geny. secret friends of Ferdinand. Senor Martinas had lately been called to Mexico and was then on his way he appeared to be a man of science and business "You will find (says he.) it verry difficult to make the Governor Comprehend your business. He has been raised without knowing the hand that fed him as a Gentlemen and those Mexican Gentlemen know verry little of business of any kind and much less of yours. He may perhaps detain you here a long time he will not consider the expense of the wages of your men nor your anxiety to join your partners.

Improving the opportunity offered by my presence I learned from Father Sanchez that at the different farms belonging to the Mission (St Gabriel) there were 40,000 head of Cattle 2,000 horses 3 or 400 head of Sheep and a great many hogs of these last the make little use. There are but few white men at this place neither could it be expected there would be many in California for father Sanchez told me that no white woman had ever come there to live. There are attached to the Mission of St Gabriel about Indian Inhabitants who are kept in the strictest order being punished severly for the most trifling offence or neglect.

They are whipped like slaves the whip being used by an indian a soldier standing by with a sword to see that it is faithfully done. Having passed the age of puberty the two sexes if unmarried are kept separate being at night shut up in different apartments the work of the day having their tasks the ringing of the Bells in the morning which is quite early all the indians go to church and after prayers the overseers of the various branches of work receive their orders from the Principal Overseer and move off immediately to their several employments. An old man from the Angel village being at the mission invited me to visit him at his house and two or three days after sent his son with horses. I went taking with me my interpreter and was verry kindly received by my friend Francisco Abela. The Angel village in which my friend resided contained 70 or 80 Houses The walls of mud or unburnt Brick and the roofs of thatch or tile. They were general small and few of them cleaner than they should be. This village is about ten miles S W from St. Gabriel the inhabitants cultivate but little ground depending on their Cattle for subsistance. They are generally poor but a few families are rich in Cattle horses and Mules and among these Senor Francisco Abela and his Brother Don Ignatio are perhaps the richest. In California as in Spain the Siesta after dinner is fashionable. they generally sleep 2 or three hours. The Californians are excellent horsemen when on a swift horse they catch a wild steer or horse with the greatest ease. They are seldom seen on foot but mount a horse to go even 200 yards and always carry with them

---

a strong rope made from pieces of Ox hide braided which is called a Larse. It is 7 or 8 fathoms in Length with a Loop at the end for the purpose of forming a noose. The Spaniard mounted on a swift horse with his Larse in hand holding it so as to form the noose about 4 feet in diameter and swinging it around his head to keep it connected pursues the wild Cattle and horses of that country and arriving at the proper distance while both pursued and pursuer are at utmost speed throws his noose with such precision as to generally succeed in fastening it to the animal in the intended place while at the same time with his left hand he takes a turn around the Pomel of the saddle which is made high for that purpose with the end of the rope remaining in his hand. If the animal pursued is a horse he is caught around the neck and is soon choaked down. If a steer he is caught by the horns and generally by two persons one riding before the animal and one behind holding him between them by their respective Larses with the power of resistance. If it is the object to throw the animal down they throw for the feet and having caught and fastened the rope to the saddle giving the horse a start the animals feet are taken from under him at once. In this manner they can take almost any animal in the country without excepting even the Elk but the principal use of this daring and active exercise is the catching of the wild horse and wild Cattle that range the country in great numbers. I am also informed that when a Bear can be found in the open country they are taken in this manner. But they do not attempt this adventure singly. Of the truth of this I have some doubts. The only Bear found in this country are the Grizly Bear smaller than those of the Mountains yet notwithstanding a formidable animal and possessing sufficient strength as I think to take hold of the Larse when noosed around the neck and tear it from the Saddle or break it in an instant.

8th December 1826 At this time the Mercury ranges from 50 to 70. Today the Corporal received orders to forward me to San Diego to pay a visit to his excellency Hosea Maria De Acheondia. Capt Cunningham of the Ship Courier of Boston arrived about the same time from San Diego.

9th December 1826 Capt Cunningham had been trading on this coast since the preceding July exchanging Dry goods Groceries and hardware for hide and Specie. The population not admitting of a wholesale business the sales are made in Retail while passing along the coast from Acapulco to St Francisco. At that time he expected to be on the coast about a year longer. He spoke Spanish and manifested the most friendly disposition and a willingness to render me all the assistance in his power. It was therefore with great pleasure that I learned he was about to return to San Diego and that we could travel in Company. At 11 O Clock all preparations being made we started. My horses were furnished by government some being driven along for the purpose of having a change. A soldier was sent by the Commandant for a guide to take charge of the Loose horses and catch one if necessary. Just before starting the Comdt took care to tell me that he was instructed to send a good and careful Soldier. In this country horses are so plenty and cheap and the people have so little feeling for these noble animals (as I shall soon show) that they indulge freely in the common disposition for fast riding secure that when a horse is no longer able to travel another may be cheaply and easily procured. We therefore fell in with the spirit of the time and people and moved off at a gallop over a fine level country. Four miles from St Gabriel we crossed a stream 50 yards wide and shallow and sandy. On the right a country gently undulating extended to the Ocean a distance of 20 or 30 miles and on the left a range of high and rough hills. About 18 miles from the first mentioned creek we crossed another 80 yards wide in appearance like the first and

---

three miles further came to a farm. In this distance we had passed many herds of cattle belonging to the residents of the Angel village and some thousands of wild horses. The wild horses become so abundant at times as to eat the grass quite clean. My guide informed me that the inhabitants of the village and of the vicinity collect whenever they consider the country overstocked and build a large and strong pen with a small entrance and two wings extending from the entrance some distance to the right and left. Then mounting their swiftest horses they scour the country and surrounding large bands they drive them into the enclosure by hundreds. They will there perhaps Larse a few of the handsomest and take them out of the pack. A horse selected in this manner is immediately thrown down and altered blindfolded saddled and haltered (for the Californians always commenc with the halter). The horse is then allowed to get up and a man is mounted. when he is firmly fixed in his seat and the halter in his hand an assistant takes off the blind the several men on horseback with handkerchiefs to frighten and some with whips to whip raise the yell and away they go. The poor horse having been so severely punished and frightened does not think of flouncing but dashes off at no slow rate for a trial of his speed. After running until he is exhausted and finding he cannot get rid of his enemies he gives up. He is then kept tied for 2 or 3 days saddled and rode occasionally and if he proves docile he is tied by the neck to a tame horse until he becomes attached to the company and then turned Loose. But if a horse from the moment he is taken from the pen proves refractory they do not trouble themselves with him long but release him from his bondage by thrusting a knife to his heart. Cruel as this fate may seem it is a mercy compared to that of the hundreds left in the pack for they are shut up to die a death most lingering and most horrible, enclosed within a narrow space without the possibility of escape and without a morsel to eat they gradually loose their strength and sink to the ground making at time vain efforts to regain their feet and when at last all powerful hunger has left them but the strength to raise their heads from the dust with which they are soon to mingle their eyes that are becoming dim with the approach of death may catch a glimpse of green and wide spread pastures and winding streams while they are perishing from want. one by one they die and at length the last and most powerful sinks down among his companions to the plain. No man of feeling can think of such a scene without surprise indignation and pity. Pity for the noblest of animals dying from want in the midst of fertile fields. Indignation and surprise that men are so barbarous and unfeeling. A fact so disgraceful to the Californians was not credited from a single narrator but has since been corroborated.

But to return to this digression the farm of which I have before spoken belonged to Don Thomas (the remainder of his name I have forgotten). he was not at home but his wife invited us into a house of 2 or three rooms and informed us that her husband was soon expected. we therefore concluded to wait his arrival. I observed some sugar cane growing in the garden which appeared quite thrifty. It was not long before we were called to eat the attention of these people being in that respect truly proverbial. we sat down to a table where the Table cloth Napkins and plates were clean and the spoons of Silver but neither knives or forks were there for the common people of this country seldom have these articles. Our repast consisted of a hash highly seasoned with pepper. Tortioes (pan cakes) and wine. The blessing was asked by a boy 8 or 9 years old standing at the end of the table with his hands raised. not being pronounced in the usual hurried manner it had much more the appearance of devotion I then thought as now that some of the learned fathers might learn the air of devotion if not the substance from this little boy. Soon after we had finished

---

eating Don Thomas arrived having ascertained our wants he said as his horses were some distance off we could have to remain all night or if we were in a great hurry we could start at one or two O Clock in the morning by which time he could have the horses. At two O Clock we started on our journey and at 8 O Clock arrived at the Mission of San Juan a distance of about 25 miles. The first part of this distance being traveled in the night I could not so well form an Idea of its appearance. but it seemed much like that we had passed and judging from the noise the wild horses made in running when scared off by our approach or when taking the wind I would think them as numerous as in the country before described. As we approached the Ocean the country became much more hilly. The Mission of San Juan is about a mile from the Ocean in a country hilly and barren. The buildings are similar in construction and arrangement to those at St Gabriel. In the year 1811 the church of this mission was nearly destroyed by an earthquake since which time service has been performed in one of the smaller buildings. The number of Indians is not great at this Mission nor is it more than half as rich as that of St Gabriel. On our arrival at San Juan the people were at church as soon as service was over the Steward invited us to take a cup of Chocolate which is a beverage of which the Spaniards are very fond and of which the higher class make great use particularly in the morning. To Americans they generally offer tea as they have an idea that we are very fond of it. I have seen them grind tea as they would coffee which is an evidence that they do not make much use of it. My soldier presented his instructions to the Corporal at the Mission who soon supplied us with fresh horses and a new Soldier. we then pushed on: our way leading us for some miles directly along the beach of the Ocean. The country back rough and hilly. To an old and nearly deserted Mission there being but an overseer and a few Indians to occupy it. From this place our course was S E through hills covered with Bastard cedar till just at night when we arrived at the handsome Mission of San Louis Rey a distance from St Juan I think about 50 miles. This Mission is beautifully situated on a rising piece of ground between two small creeks. The buildings were similar to those at San Gabriel but appeared better from having been lately whitewashed. On the East Side a Portico extended the whole Length of the buildings. Remaining there during the night and in the morning making an exchange of soldiers and horses we proceeded on through a hilly country about 30 miles to San Diego. When we arrived at the Presidio I was taken to the office of the Lieutenant and on the arrival of an interpreter procured by Capt Cunningham I was informed that I could not see the Gov until the next day. Presently Capt Dana of the Ship Waverly from the Sandwich Islands came and invited me to his quarters. Having ascertained that I would be at Liberty to choose my residence I accompanied him to a private house about 1/4 of a mile from the Presidio where Capt Cunningham and himself always put up when on shore. Capt Dana was a Bostonian and a very friendly man. The following day I went to see the Gov or Genl (as he is known here by both of those titles although when at Mexico I am told he ranked as a Major). When I let him know my situation and my wants he told me it would be some days before he could give me an answer as it would be necessary to call a Council of officers &c. In the mean time he observed I should be furnished with a Room and every necessary with such clothing as I wanted for as I had on my leather Hunting shirt he readily supposed a change would be desirable. I thanked him for his kindness but told him as Capt Cunningham was my Countryman I would prefer remaining with him and being under obligations to him for any supplies I might want. He acquiesced and I accompanied Capt Cunningham on board his Ship Courier and was told to consider it my home. I there became ac-

quainted with Mr Shaw the super cargo Mr Theodore Cunningham 1st mate a brother of the Capt and Mr Blackder 2d Mate.

The Precidio \* (\* Precidio is a name applied to a town which is the residence of the Governor.) of San Diego is about three miles from the harbor in Latitude The buildings are in a square somewhat like the Missions but lower and much decayed. they are on a side hill sloping toward the Ocean. The residence of the Governor is on the East and his portico commands a fine view of the harbor and the Ocean. San Diego contains about 200 inhabitants exclusive of the Mission of the same name which is about 6 miles North East on a small stream which flows into the harbor. The general aspect of the country is hilly and barren with some Scrubby Oak and Pine on the hills but verry little grass.

The harbor of San Diego is formed by two Peninsula's one of which projects into the Ocean directly oposite the Precidio. The entrance is quite narrow but having a great depth of water and being entirely protected from winds this harbor is considered very safe. A Block house or fort on the Peninsula commands the entrance of the harbor.

Several days having passed I called again on his Excellency but could get no answer. He told me he did not know what to do he must see my journal and he likewise took a copy of my chart and License. He even asked me what business I had to make maps of their country. I told him my maps were made merely to assist me in traveling and must of necessity be verry incorrect as I was destitute of the means for making celestial observations - from this time I was detained day after day and week after week. Sometimes he told me I must wait until he could receive orders from Mexico and at other times he thought it desirable that I should go to Mexico and would then come to the conclusion that it was necessary to send myself and party to Mexico. Whilst my fate depended on the caprice of a man who appeared not to be certain of any thing or of the course his duty required him to pursue and only governed by the changing whims of the hour my feelings can only be duly appreciated by those who have been in the same situation. I knew the eager expectations with which my party at St Gabriel Looked for my return. I felt the ruinous effect which my detention had on my business and the gloomy apprehensions which my protracted absenc would cause to my partners in the distant Mountains. But these considerations never came within the sphere of his Excellency's comprehension and I was harrassed by numerous and contradictory expedient and ruinous delays until about the first of January when his Excellency informed me that if the Americans who were in the harbor of San Diego Masters of Vessels officers and Super-cargo would sign a paper certifying that what I gave as the reason of my coming to that country they believed to be substantially correct I might then have permission to trade for such things as I wanted and to return the same route which I had come in. I had applied for permission to travel directly north that I might arrive as soon as possible on the territory of the United States but this he would not grant Insisting that I should travel the same route by which I had come. The certificate was made out and signed by Capt Wm H. Cunningham Theodore Cunningham and Mr Shaw of the Ship Courier Capt Dana and Mr Robbins of the Waverly Capt Henderson and Mr. Scottie of the Brig \_\_\_ belonging to Bags & Company of Lima. The Governor then gave me a passport and License to purchase such supplies as I wanted. I was allowed the privilege of staying but 4 days after my arrival at St Gabriel and strictly forbid to make any more maps for said the Gov even our own Citizens can not make maps unless permission is obtained from Mexico. Although the Governor had obliged me to go to San Diego yet he would not furnish me with horses for my return.

---

But I felt this injustice the less as Capt Cunningham offered me a passage on board of his ship which would sail in a few days for point Pedro the nearest Anchorage to St Gabriel. I accepted this offer the more readily as it would enable me to have my supplies prepared during the passage for they were to be procured from Capt Cunningham. I had found the Governor to more than sustain the character given of him by Senor Martinas and it will be readily supposed that I left him without any other regret than what I felt for the time lost in doing business that might have been done in a few hours or might as well have been left undone. Every thing being ready we sailed and on the third day came to anchor on the East side of the Island of St Catalina. The Island of Santa Catalina is about 20 W S W from St Pedro. It is about 18 miles long and 8 broad having high hills covered with grass wild onions and some small timber. Capt Cunningham had a house on the Island for the purpose of salting hides. He was about to take some Cows Hogs and fowls for the use of the men there employed. after remaining at the Island 2 nights we sailed for St Pedro which is merely a good anchorage or road stead. several Cannon were fired as a Signal to a farmer that lived 8 or 10 Miles off who usually made it his business to come with horses to take people up to the Pueblo or to St Gabriel. As the expected horses did not come we started on foot and continued until we procured horses to take us to the Pueblo los Angelos or the Angels Village. We remained all night at the village and in the morning I called on my friend Sector Abella and made arrangements for the purchase of horses and then in Company with the Capt Mr. Chapman and Mr. Shaw I moved on to the Mission of St. Gabriel where I found my party all well. I must not omit the cordial welcome with which I was received by father Jose Sanches. He seemed to rejoice in my good fortune and well sustained the favorable opinion I had formed of him. You are now (says he) to pass again that miserable country and if you do not prepare yourself well for it it is your own fault. if there is any thing that you want and that I have let me know and it shall be at your service. I thanked him for his kindness and made every exertion to start as soon as possible. I called on the Commandant to ascertain whether I could stay longer than the 4 days allowed in my passport he told me a day or two would not make any difference. During my absence one of my Indian guides who had been imprisoned was released by death and the other was kept in the guard house at night and at hard labor during the day having the menial service of the guard house to perform. I took a convenient opportunity to speak to the Father in his behalf he told me he would do all in his power for his release. From his expression I took the idea that government had ordered their imprisonment. the fathers had given me some Iron and my Smith had made in the shop of the Mission as many horse shoes as I wanted. He had also given me some saddles and the leather for rigging them. It was on the 10th of January 1827 that I returned from St Diego. The next day I went down to the Courier got my supplies and returned to the Pueblo Los Angelos and put up with my friend F Abella commenced buying horses and in a short time had as many as I wanted. When I left the Courier I took leave of my friend Capt Cunningham. Should chance ever throw this in his way he will perhaps be gratified to find that I have not forgotten his name or his friendship. That I recollect with the most grateful feelings his kind offices in times that made them doubly valuable and in a country to which he had traveled by the unmarked and perilous paths of the Ocean while my way had been through an unknown Land over mountains and parched inhospitable plains. Meeting in a distant country by routes so different gave an instance of that restless enterprise that has lead and is now leading our countrymen to all parts of the world that has made them travellers on every ocean until it can now be said there is not a breeze of heaven

but spreads an american flag.

In this place I will give some Ideas in relation to this country of a general nature which may perhaps be interesting. California as I have before observed was settled by Missionaries of the order of St Francis about sixty years since. They established missions in various parts of the country and in civilizing the indians and in imparting to them the benefits of religion they found the opportunity to establish over them the most absolute power. The number of indians under the control of each mission varies from 300 to 2000, which are under the care and direction of a priest who is stiled the father and who sometimes has a subordinate or two. The indian has no individual right of Property although he is told that he has an interest in his labors and in the proceeds of the farms and herds of the Mission. He has not the right or at least the power to marry without the consent of the father. for the sexes are not allowed to Labor together during the day and at night they are shut up in separate apartments. And although since the revolution they are by express provision declared free and the fathers were ordered to inform them of the fact yet it does not appear that it has made any material change in their situation. It is not uncharitable perhaps to suppose that the fathers in making known to them their right to freedom have done it in such a way that it appeared to them from their ignorance a change not to be desired. They said to them - I am told - You live in a good country you have plenty to eat to drink and to wear your father takes care of you and will pray for you and show you the way to heaven. On the other hand if you go away from the Missions where will you find so good a country who will give you cloths or where will you find a father to feed you to take care of you and to pray for you. Such arguments as these coming from a source long respected and venerated and acting on the minds of ignorant and superstitious beings has had the effect to keep the indians in their real slavery without the desire of freedom. whatever the causes may be the fact is certain that verry few have availed themselves of the privilege of the revolution. The Missions setting aside their religious professions are in fact Large farming and grazing establishment conducted at the will of the father who is in a certain degree responsible to the President of his order residing in the Province. The immediate supervision of the different kinds of business is confided to Overseers who are generally half Breeds raised in a manner somewhat better than the common mass under the eye of the father from whom they sometimes receive a limited education and to whom in some instances they might with strict propriety apply the name of father -The indians are employed in the different kinds of work attendant uppon farming and herding of stock the manufacturing of Blankets of coarse wool which form their principle clothing the making of soap of Brick and in distilling. Their labor does not appear to be unreasonably hard. They are required to attend church regularly every morning after which they immediately move off under the direction of their respective overseers to the business of the day.

Left St Gabriel and moved on toward St Bernardino the most distant farm house belonging to the Mission being about 60 miles from St Gabriel and a few miles south of the route by which I had come in. In three days I arrived at St. Bernardino where I remained several days drying Beef and breaking my young horses as well as looking for some that had strayed away. On leaving father Sanches he directed me to kill Beef and as much as I could dry and to take meal Peas corn wheat or any thing I wanted and such quantities as I chose, in this case as in many others evincing the most benevolent regard for my welfare. Occupied in these preparations for continuing my journey I remained until the 1st day of february 1827 when I left Bernardino accompanied by 2 or

three Indians and moved on to the place where I had passed through the Mt and first came in sight of Cattle as I came in to the Beautiful valley of St Gabriel and there I encamped. the indians that came with me thus far killed a Beef. During the night it snowed and in the morning I again moved on nearly north crossing my old track and on the 3d day from Bernardino I had got on the E side of the Mt where there was no snow.\* (\* It was in this place I first saw a tree I have named the dirk Pear tree. It grows from 15 to 30 feet high 12 inches in diameter wood porous bark rough like the walnut. The leaf like the blade of a dirk is about 8 or ten inches long the point resembling that of a porcupine quill.) I was then obliged to turn my course N W for want of water having the low range of Mts on my left and the barren desert on my right. I encamped without water or grass my horses scattered over the country. I was then forced to look for water and grass and was three days employed in collecting my horses. In this country I had observed some track of the Grizzly Bear and the Black tailed deer but they were not numerous.

My horses being once more collected I resumed my N W course for Two short days travel the low Mt still on my left and Barren plains on my right when I fell in with some indians who I suppose were runaways from some mission as they had some horses. I ascertained by enquiry of them that there were some streams and lakes ahead. I engaged a guide to conduct me to them and after two days travel still continuing my N W direction I arrived at a Lake called by the Spaniards Too Larree or flag Lake. I arrived at the Lake quite late and found the bank so muddy that it was impossible for my horses to get any water yet I was obliged to encamp. From what I could learn of the Indians the Spaniards had named it from report but be that as it may the name was quite appropriate. Too Larre Lake is about 12 miles in circumference and is in a fine Large valley which commences about 12 miles South of it. Coming into the valley from the South East I had passed over a range of hills which in their cours a little East of North appeared to increase in height. On the declivity of these hills there was some Oak timber. I observed the trees had many holes made in their trunks in which an acorn was pressed so tight that it was difficult to get it out. By watching I found this to be the work of a bird of the woodpecker kind who takes this method to lay up his stock of provision for the winter. The bird is of a seal color and somewhat larger than the red head woodpecker. I called this bird the Provident woodpecker. The following day in moving along the bank of the Lake I surprised some indians who immediately pushed out into the lake in canoes or rather rafts made of flag. My guide succeeded in getting them to return to the shore. One of them could talk some Spanish and I engaged him for a guide. I watered my horses and got some fish from the indians (who I observed had some horses stolen no doubt from the Spaniards) and moved on about 3 miles along the Lake and then up an inlet about 10 miles crossed over and encamped. On this inlet was some timber Cotton wood and willow. where I crossed it was 8 or 10 yard wide rapid current a feet deep and comes from the East. Several Indians some of them having horses visited the encampment. The principal characters brought with them each a small sack of down and sprinkled me from head to foot. To this I submitted knowing it was a custom among them and wishing to avoid giving offence. They told me of a river to the north that had an animal which I supposed from their description to be the Beaver although they had no name for the animal by which it was known to me. These indians call themselves Wa-ya-la-ma. The indian that spoke spanish and the same I engaged at the flag Lake told me he would go on with me and my other guide returned. On the following day I moved Northwardly 15 miles across low hills which were spurs of the mountain on the East. This mountain had been gradually increas-

ing in elevation and had now attained a considerable height. The next day I moved nearly North West 30 miles over a level country the ground being so completely undermined by the paths of an animal like the Lizard that the horses were continually sinking in the Earth frequently up to the knees. I encamped on the bank of a Lake. Since leaving the wa ya la ma the country has been dry and destitute of water and grass. I found water in but one place in the bed of a stream which was nearly dry. East of my route at the foot of the Mt there was some timber and plenty of grass and water. The Lake on which I encamped was apparently large extending to the N W so far that the shore was not visible. But as I supposed it not more than 80 miles to the Ocean I did not think it of very great extent. It appeared shallow from the number of Boggy Islands seen in many parts of it.

Near where I encamped was an Indian village of two or three hundred inhabitants. Their Lodges were built of willows and Mats. the willows were placed in the ground in rows at the distance of ten feet apart and bent over and joined together at the top and then covered with the mats forming a Lodge in exterior appearance like a line of barracks and about 100 yards in length with a door at proper intervals for each family. My provision being nearly exhausted I visited the village for the purpose of trading for some provision. My interpreter having gone before to inform them of my approach when I arrived some mats were spread in front of the Lodges and I was invited to sit down. Grass seed was then brought and poured on my head until I was nearly covered. This seed which was gathered during the summer formed at this time the principal subsistence of these Indians. I gave them some presents and after some conversation with the chiefs made arrangement to have my grass seed formed into meal. At night I was invited to attend a dance and went to the Lodge at 8 O Clock and found a seat prepared for me. I was immediately treated with some roasted fish and a mush made of the grass seed. After supper the dancers came in 10 or 12 in number and seated themselves in a cluster. they were painted and some of them had head dresses made of feathers and a skin around the waist.

Having remained at this encampment two days I moved north along the beach of the Lake and again encamped, on a low spot of ground on the beach. during the night a high north west wind raised the water of the Lake and drove it into my encampment so that I was obliged to remove to higher ground. East of this encampment a level country with but little vegetation extends to the foot of the mountain a distance of about 20 miles. On the following day I left the Beach of the Lake as my guide said there was a stream putting in which I could not cross near its mouth I therefore traveled North Eastwardly and at 18 miles encamped on a small River 20 yds wide deep and Muddy with low Oak timber along its banks. During the day I saw several antelops and some Elk sign and passed a country like the last described\* (\*One of my men (John Willson) again manifesting that seditious disposition of which I had before had reason to complain and which could not be suffered consistently with the subordination necessary to the safety of my party I was forced to discharge him. I found two Indians who spoke spanish and engaged them to conduct him to the upper settlement of California which they said they could reach in 3 days.) The next day I crossed the stream carrying my goods over on a Log and swimming my horses and traveled North Eastwardly 12 miles crossing several small streams having oak timber and a plenty of grass on their banks. The soil was very fine and although somewhat wet yet it produced most excellent grass. The prairie and woodland was mingled in pleasing variety and my encampment was on a small stream in a fine little grove of timber. My guide informed me that in the neighborhood was

---

a plenty of Elk. I therefore sent some men hunting they killed 2 antelope and found Elk but killed none.

In company with my guide I visited some Indians that were up near the foot of the Mt and at the distance of about 15 miles. Their Lodges were built like those before described at the Chin-to-che Lake. The country appeared populous but the soil gravelly and not as rich as at the encampment. near the Mt there is a good deal of Oak timber the trees having large trunks but Low and spreading tops so that it is not of the most valuable kind for building or fencing. My guide saying he was unacquainted with the country further north I engaged another who told me that in one day I could travel to where I could find Beaver - Having remained two days at the last mentioned encampment I moved on N Westwardly 25 miles crossing in the course of the day 2 small streams and encamping near a large indian village on the bank of a river 80 yds wide where I found some Beaver sign. These Indians called themselves Wim-mil-che and this name I applied to the river which comes from E N E. In the vicinity was considerable timber (Oak) and a plenty of grass. The game of the country was principally Elk and Antelope. On the 28th of February I commenced trapping on the Wimmilche and during 10 days I moved up the river 25 or 30 miles. I was then near the foot of the Mt and finding no further inducement for trapping and the indians telling me of a river they called the Peticutry in which there was beaver I traveled north along near the foot of the Mt about 15 miles and encamped on the bank of the Peticutry \* (\* at the place where I first struck the Peticutry were a great number of small artificial mounds.) running at this place west and not quite as large as the Wim mil che. In this vicinity the plains are generally clothed with grass and were at that time covered with Blossoms. Along the river there is some timber. At the foot of the Mt the timber is Oak and far up the Mt Pine.

The Peticutry runs west 10 miles and then turns N N W. I continued trapping down this river about 35 miles after it turned N W. It there received a stream from the East 60 yards wide called the Noto. The Peticutry had received some small streams from the East above the bend the banks were high and the current rapid but below the river had ben divided into many small Slous and channels the banks low and the current sluggish. In many places Flags rushes and mud a mile in width made it impassible for horses. On the Noto was a good deal of timber Oak and some Ash. After passing the Noto ten miles Otter river comes in from the E. It is about 60 yds wide and much resembles the Noto. From the Wim-mil-che a range of hills has extended nearly parallel with my course. Leaving the valley from the foot of the Mt measureing west about 40 miles in width. Six miles beyond Otter river comes in another of the same size from the East which I called the Appelaminy. Since passing the Wimmilch there had been an abundance of Elk and some Antelope and on the West side of the Peticutry plenty of wild horses. Birds of the larger kinds were numerous and particularly birds of passage as this was their season. I saw wild Geese White and Grey Brant Blue and White Heron Cormorant many kinds of Ducks and common Buzzard. Hawks of all Colors. Magpyes. A kind of Pigeon resembling the tame Blue Pigeon 2 or Three kinds of Eagles and a verry larg Bird which I supposed to be the Vulture or the Condor. Small birds were quite scarce and I saw verry few snakes. The Peticutry would be navigable for large boats as far up as the bend near the Mt. The country Generally is a most excellent grazing country. On the Peticutry noto Otter and Appelaminy Rivers the soil is such as to admit of many fine farms. There might be in places a want of timber but the neighboring Mountain would afford an ample supply which could be easily floated down the streams almost to any desired

point Since I struck the Peticutry I had seen but few indians. The greater part of those that once resided here having (as I have sinc been told) gone in to the Missions of St Joseph and Santa Clara.

The Mountain on the East which I called St Joseph in honor of one of the best of men father Joseph Sances of St Gabriel had been gradually increasing in heighth from the place where I crossed its southern extremity near the Too Larree Lake and running north and nearly parallel with the General course of my travel had for some distance attained a most tremendous heighth. The summits could hardly ever be seen as they rose far into the region of perpetual snow and were generally enveloped in clouds. But when the clouds for a while passed away and brought the Peaks to view rising from their dark base covered with snow and gleaming in the sun they possessed an unsurpassed grandeur and Sublimity.

On leaving my partners in the Mountains to go into an unknown country It had been my intention to return at the expiration of my falls hunt or if this was found impracticable by the 1st of July of the following year 1827. Circumstances already related having rendered it impossible for me to join them at the first mentioned time and the second being rapidly approaching It became necessary that I should begin making arrangements for marching Eastward toward the Rendezvous in the Mountains which I then looked on as a home. I had several packs of Beaver and the month of April was nearly gone. Mt St Joseph on the East and between me and the rendezvous presented in its appearance an impassible Barrier. I determined I would leave the Peticutry and ascend the appelaminy to the Mountain and then proceed north along its base and endeavor to find a pass. Accordingly I ascended the appelaminy to the foot of the Mt a distance of about 35 miles and the course generally East. The country like the last described. I then traveled north at the base or among the spurs of the Mt about 20 miles where I struck a river about 30 yds wide rapid current and running N W. On this river which I called the Macal-lum-bry indians appeared quite numerous amounting to several hundred Lodges and residing in several different villages. their Lodges were small and built of dirt.

On the Appelaminy I had engaged a guide to come with thus far who spoke some spanish. I had a consultation with the chiefs and made them some presents and procured another guide who was like the most of those I had had befor a runaway from some Mission. I then moved down the Macallumbry 12 miles and turning from it to the North East in 15 miles I struck a stream 30 yds wide rocky and rapid running west. This stream I called Rock River. In crossing it I had a good deal of difficulty. One of my horses was swept down by its rapid current and the load consisting of 12 traps was lost. I was detained a day in searching for my traps but without sucess, and my guide ran away taking with him two of my horses. In the course of the day 8 or 10 Indians showed themselves on a high hill. They were apparently strangers and knew not what to think of us as I supposed by their actions. They were naked and had their Bows and arrows in their hands. I went to them alone and gave them some presents and they went off. The country since leaving the Appelaminy has been rough my course having been over the spurs of the Mt the timber Oak and rather scrubby plenty of grass and water a fine grazing country. Leaving Rock River I traveled N W down into the plain and passed several indian villages. Each village consisting of 30 or 40 small dirt Lodges the indians verry wild ran screaming into the woods.\* (\*These indians as well as some others may be called Grass eaters. they subsist to a certain extent on clover wild Pea vines and some other herbs which are prepared for eating by wilting them on hot stones.) The first six

---

miles of the days travel was in the spurs of the Mt. I then descended into the plain and traveled 9 miles alternately through groves of Oak Prairies and Meadows of Blue Clover watered by small streams. The game of this vicinity in the Mts is Blk tailed Deer and in the plains Antelope. In the course of the day when I saw the indians so wild I took a man with me and pursued a couple of females and overtook them my object being to convince them of our friendship. I gave them some awls and beads at the same time endeavoring to convince them that I did not wish to hurt them but our parley was broken off by a party of indians who rushed from their concealment close at hand and with intentions apparently not the most friendly made it necessary for us to rejoin the party without delay. At another time during this day I rode a short distance ahead of the Party and was waiting in a small grove for them to come up. At a small distance I saw an indian and beckoned to him to come to me. He advanced slowly chatting and making many signs to divert my attention. I was somewhat suspicious and kept a good look out and in a moment I found myself nearly surrounded by a considerable party I immediately gave my horse the spur and left my sociable friend to converse with those that could better understand him. On the following day I moved N W 12 miles across a prairie and encamped on a river 40 yds wide running S W. Some Oak timber and a considerable Beaver sign. My men went out to set traps and soon I heard the cry of the indians the men from below coming in at full speed and saying that two of them had been attack by the indians and narrowly escaped. Some men were above setting their traps. I immediately sent Arthur Black for them but before they got in they were closely pressed. I had the horses tied up and each man his saddle horse ready for mounting and a double guard. But the indians gave us no opportunity to punish them as they were all soon on the other side of the river which was not fordable. The next morning early I took six men and went for the traps that had been set before the alarm. I found some of them but a good many had been taken by the indians who showed themselves on the opposite side of the river. and one venturing within long shot was fired at by a Rifleman and killed. I moved up the River which I called indian River 3 miles and finding a ford crossed over and leaving the river traveled north about 12 miles when I struck another River Running W S W 100 yds wide rapid current and stony bottom. A considerable body of Oak timber along its banks Indians by hundreds but wilder than antelopes running and screaming in every direction. It appeared to me that the farther I traveled north the indians became more numerous. The River on which I encamped I called wild River. I determined to change my course and make a trail towards passing the mountain. I supposed that the snow had become sufficiently hard by that time to bear my horses. I therefore turned East and at first traveled up wild River and then took the divide between wild and Indian Rivers. for the first two days I found no snow the traveling not worse than might be expected. The timber thus far principally Oak and on the second day some very large cedar. Indians were numerous and I was frequently passing their little villages of 10 or 12 little circular Lodges made of old trees and bark. During these two days the indians collected in great numbers around me at two different times. I endeavored to convince them of my disposition to be friendly by every means in my power but to no purpose. They considered all my friendly signs caused by my own weakness. Of our guns they had never seen the effects and supposed them solid sticks which we could only use in close contest. Whatever may have been their views they pressed so closely and in such numbers on my party that I was obliged to look for an advantageous piece of ground on which to make a stand against the threatened danger. Having found a favorable position I again tried to convince them of my friendly

disposition but to no purpose. Their preparations were still going forward and their parties were occupying favorable points around me. Seeing what must be the inevitable consequence I determined to anticipate them in the commencement and wishing to them as little harm as possible and yet consistent with my own safety I ordered a men to fire (of course not the most uncertain marksmen). I preferred long shots that it might give them the idea that we could kill at any distance. At the report of the guns both men firing at once two indians fell. For a moment the indians stood still and silent as if a thunder bolt had fallen among them then a few words passed from party to party and in a moment they ran like Deer. The other fray was similar to the above described except that more guns were fired and more Indians were killed. I had been gradually rising as I advanced in the Mt and on the 3d day left the Oak timber and arrived among the Pine some of which was very large the hemlock and the snow. I found the snow so solid that my horses did not sink in it more than a foot. In the ascent of the mountain among the oak timber there was some Black Tailed deer but in the region of the snow no living animal was seen unless it might be the Mt Pheasant which made a lonely sound like that of Striking on a muffled drum at intervals of 2 seconds. My encampment of the third night was where the snow was about 3 feet deep. On the 4th I started early directly on the Divide and turning S E. Snow increasing in depth as we advanced and becoming less compact timber had disappeared except a little hemlock that grew in the deep ravine. Still in advancing the snow became deeper and less compact and when I had got about 12 miles from my encampment the horses began to sink so deep as to render the prospect of proceeding very doubtful. we were not yet at the highest part of the Mt and the distances across was unknown. This was our situation when news came up from the rear that some of the horses had given out being able to proceed no further. It was at once apparent that If I proceeded farther I should be obliged to leave my horses or at least the greater part of them and as we knew not how far the Mountain extended to the East it was more than probable that in attempting to cross it we might ourselves be lost. On the other hand should I retrace my steps I would be obliged to pass among indians highly exasperated against us who if not warlike were sufficiently numerous if acting in concert to surround our little party and kill us with clubs and should I be so fortunate as to return to the foot of the Mountain in safety what could I do. To travel north seemed useless for far as I could see with my glass the Mt seemed to increase in height offering no probability of a pass. To return around the Mountain South by the way of St Gabriel would take so much time that I could not possibly arrive at the Depo in season to meet my partners. These reflections were passing rapidly through my mind as I stood on a high Peak a mile in advance of my party having called a halt for the purpose of viewing the prospect before me. Far as the eye could see on every side high rugged Peaks arose covered with Eternal snow turning to the East the frozen waste extending rough and desolate beyond the boundaries of vision warned me to return. Below the deep Rocky ravines resounded with immense Cascades and waterfalls where the melting snow and ice was fast hastening to the fertile Plain. The sight in its extended range embraced no living being except it caught a transient glimpse of my little party awaiting my return in the snows below. It was indeed a freezing desolation and one which I thought should keep a man from wandering. I thought of home and all its neglected enjoyments of the cheerful fireside of my father house of the Plenteous harvest of my native land and visions of flowing fields of green and wide spread Prairies of joyous bustle and of busy life thronged in my mind to make me feel more strongly the utter desolateness of my situation. And is it possible

---

thought I that we are creatures of choice and that we follow fortune through such paths as these. Home with contented industry could give us all that is attainable and fortune could do no more. Surely of all lives the hunters is the most precarious, we endure all the extremes of heat and cold hunger and thirst our lives and property are always at hazard. when we lay down our guards must be placed our Rifles by our sides and our Pistols under our heads ready to spring up at once from our wakeful sleep. I did not indulge in these reflections longer than I have been employed in writing them and they are here as they existed in that hour of trying fortune and will be remembered as long as I live. But the recollection that my party were entirely depending on my movements broke my reverie and convinced me of the necessity of immediate and powerful exertion to extricate myself and party from surrounding difficulties. I suddenly came to the resolution that I would retrace my steps Back in to the valley and to the Appelamminy. by this time as the season was advancing the snow would become more compact\* (\*There may be some who are not aware of the fact that the snow on those mountains that are continually covered with it in mid summer becomes more solid and compact than in the depth of winter It is for this reason principally that the summer is the most favorable time to cross snowy mountains.) but as time would not allow me to go on with my whole party I would take 2 men and light horses leaving my property and the remainder of my party on the Appelamminy and make another attempt to cross the Mt and go to the Depo. Should I be so fortunate as to go through I would take a new supply of Men and Goods and return again to the Appelamminy and endeavor to learn something of this new and unfortunate country. This conclusion was quickly formed and I immediately descended from the Peak and returned to my party. I told my men of the dismal prospect ahead and of the necessity of turning back. We then immediately commenced our retrograde movement and encamped somewhat west of the place on which we had encamped the night before. On the north at a short distance was a considerable branch of wild river running in a tremendous gulph and beyond was a Peak that seemed to rise far above any other part of the Mt. Among many lofty Peaks it seemed the Giant of the scene. To this summit I had the vanity to attach my name. If an honor it was dearly won as those will admit whose fortune it may be hereafter to follow my steps. On the following day we continued back on the trail until we came to a place where there was some grass and there encamped. Having no provision we killed a horse to eat. remaining at this place two days for the purpose of recruiting my fatigued and starved horses I then moved on towards the plain but instead of keeping the route by which I had come up I turned south and traveled along indian River and in two days arrived in the valley. In the course of this time as I was riding ahead of the party I rose to the top of a small hill. An indian was carelessly walking at a short distance. he heard the sound of my horses feet. turning his head he saw me. he sprang ran a few steps. his bow and arrows flew from his hands he staggered and fell on his face. I went to him turned him over he was apparently lifeless but presently recovered so far as to open his eyes. I put a piece of Tobacco in his hand and left him without being able to make him stand or even sit up. After I had encamped several Indians and this one among the rest came and sit down on an adjoining hill. I went to them gave them some small and endeavored to make them understand that it was my wish to be friendly. They slept near camp all night but I would not allow them to come in although they appeared quite willing to do so. Shortly after this riding along close by the river in turning a short bend I came suddenly on a lodge of indians and took them by surprise some of them plunged into the river and swam away. two or three women more thoughtful than the rest concluded they

might save themselves and some of their property by the following expedient. they sent an old man to detain us by chat while they took such things as they could handily get hold off and slipped under cover of the Lodge to the river and swam over to a little island holding the dishes under the water. Without attempting to disturb them I let the old man know that I saw what was going on and also that we were hungry. He brought us some acorn mush \* (\*This is a common dish of this country. The acorns are hulled pounded into meal and made into mush. It is Boiled in dishes by the help of hot stones. If they have no dishes they make a hole in the ground and line its sides with clay. In many parts of this country acorns appear to be the principal subsistence. In my tour into the mountains I saw in places where there was not more than 5 or 6 Lodges 3 or 4 hundred Bushels cribed ready for use.) I gave him something in return and went to the Lodge. Those that had not yet ran off were skulking about like children playing hide and seek. After endeavoring to quiet their fears I left them & have no doubt but the departure was more pleasant to them than the arrival. On our arrival in the valley we were much fatigued and hungry having for six days had but little to eat except the colt and one Beaver. At night however we got some trap set. In my Promenade into the Mountain I had gone about 60 miles from the base lost 6 horses and learned one thing which I did not know before that I must be sometime turned back. In the morning we had caught several Beaver and of course had something good to eat much better than the flesh of the poor colt. Continuing to march down Indian River I crossed it in the place where I had before crossed as I traveled north in doing which the horse on which my ammuniton was packed stepping in the middle of the River and breaking loose from the leader was washed down below the ford drowned and sunk in the deep water. This was indeed a terrible blow for if our ammuniton was lost with it went our means of subsistence and we were at once deprived of what enabled us to travel among hostile bands feared and respected. But my thoughts I kept to myself knowing that a few words from me would discourage my men. I immediately set 2 men on the bank of the river to watch knowing this fact without knowing the reason that a horse unless kept down by a heavy load will rise to the surface in from 10 to 30 minutes. By the time the party had crossed over the men on the bank told me they thought they could see one of the horses feet the load keeping the animal from floating off. One of the men who was a good swimmer went in and fastening a cord the whole was pulled out together. Besides Lead there was 25 or 30 lbs of powder in the pack but as it was in a good leather sack but a part of it was damaged. Although this happened within three miles of the place where the indians had manifested their hostility by attacking my trappers and stealing my traps yet there was not an indian to be seen - On the following day I traveled South and encamped a short distance North of Rock River in the course of the day I killed an Elk. At Rock River I was detained a day having to make a raft and meeting with some difficulty in crossing. The next south to the McKalumbry and the following day to the Appelaminy passing a good many Elk and killing one fine fat doe. I then moved up the Appelaminy a few miles to a place where I found a suitable place and encamped with the intention of remaining several days in order to make the necessary preparations for my journey across the Mt to the Depo. The time was employed in pressing and cacheing my furs killing Game and drying meat shoeing some horses and making some hay to feed them in the Mt \* (\*while at this place the Mackalumbry chief brought one of the horses stolen from me on Rock River. I gave him some presents and he engaged to bring the other.)

I gave Mr Rodgers instructions to remain in the vicinity leaving a note at the cache with direc-

---

tions that would enable me to find him whenever I should return. If the 20th of September should arrive without my return he might then consider me dead. In that case he was to proceed to Bodega and get supplies and if possible make his way to the Depo. If this was found impracticable he was then to dispose of his property wait an opportunity to ship to the sandwich Islands and from thence to the United States. On the 20th of May 1827 my preparations being finished I took leave of my small but faithful party and started on an enterprise involved in great uncertainty. I took but two men with me Robert Evans and Silas Goble. I had six horses and two mules. I had about 60 lbs of meat and a part of my horses were packed with hay to feed them during the passage of the Mountains.\* (\*three men accompanied me with some extra horses.) Traveling east 12 miles I stoped at the foot of the Mt for dinner and then continued on N N E 13 miles through very rough traveling and encamped on the North side of the Appelminy. Some friendly indians were seen in the course of the day.

21st N E 30 miles following the river the traveling rough rugged and mountainous.

22nd 12 miles N E In the morning the three men that had come with me thus far returned and I struck out from the River. Saw no indians although we heard the yell of some on the opposite side of the river when we left camp.

23rd 20 miles N N E passed several indian lodges but as is the custom here the indians ran off yelling and shouting. I encamped on the divide between Rock River and the Appelaminy.

24th 15 miles N E following the divide at 8 miles from Camp I came to the snow which soon increased to 4 feet in debth but so solid that the horses did not sink in it more than 6 or 8 inches. at night I found a place where the ground was bare and a little grass growing on a southern slope of a Mt there I encamped.

25th 18 miles N E Keeping the divide and over the snow which soon increased to the debth of 8 feet at 3 O Clock it turned cold and commenced snowing. I was obliged to encamp found a few pines for shelter tied up my horses to keep them from running away and gave them some of the hay I had packed from the valley. During the night the storm increased in violence and the weather became extremely cold.

26th The Storm still continued with unabated violence. I was obliged to remain in camp. It was one of the most disagreeable days I ever passed. We were uncertain how far the Mountain extended to the East. The wind was continually changing and the snow drifting and flying in every direction. It was with great difficulty that we could get wood and we were but just able to keep our fire. Our poor animals felt a full share of the vengeanc of the storm and 2 horses and one mule froze to death before our eyes. Still the storm continued with unabated violence and it required an utmost exertion to avoid the fate of the poor animals that lay near but almost covered with the drifting snow. Night came and shut out the bleak desolation from our view but it did not still the howling winds that yet bellowed through the mountains bearing before them clouds of snow and beating against us cold and furious. It seemed that we were marked out for destruction and that the sun of another day might never rise to us. But He that rules the Storms willed it otherwise and the sun of the 27th rose clear uppon the gleaming peaks of the Mt St Joseph. I shall never forget the 26th of May 1827. Its incidents are engraven on my mind as well as the grateful feeling with which my heart was expanded when the storm was stilled.

On the 27th we resumed our journey N E 12 miles over the snow. The last fall of 15 inches in addition to what the horses sank in the old snow made the traveling verry fatiguing. Passing across

a deep ravine and ascending a high point I could discover the plain. Thence N 13 miles the snow decreasing gradually until going down a high and steep hill it entirely disappeared and I came into a valley where there was some good grass. A valuable horse gave out and was left in the snow. I also lost my Pistol.

28th As my horses were much fatigued I lay by. The general range of the Mountain at this place was about N W & S E. My encampment was about 100 yards from a high and steep bluff on the top of which at about 12 O Clock 10 or 12 indians showed themselves and raised the accustomed yell but not succeeding in scaring us off they collected a great many large rocks and being all ready at once sent them down the hill at the same time raising the yell. Finding that even this would not drive us away they went off.

29th N E 18 miles I left the water course on which I was encamped running N W & passing over some rocky hills came to and crossed a Creek coming from the South East about 50 yards and running N W and uniting about 6 miles below with the one on which I had encamped. I surprised two squaws and was so close to one of them that she could not well escape such an expression of fear I had never before seen exhibited. She ran towards me screaming and raising the stick with which she had been digging roots in her whole appearance realizing the Idea I had formed of a frantic mother rushing to scare away some beast that would devour her child. wishing not to hurt her I avoided her formidable weapon and endeavored to pacify her but all in vain for when she went off her screams were still heard until lost in the distance. In the course of the day I saw some Antelope sign.

30th 15 Miles East crossed some high hills and came to a Stream 50 yds wide running N E. Crossed over and encamped on the East side. In this vicinity I saw some horse sign. On the N N E & E were ranges of high hills.

31st 16 miles East and encamped on a shallow creek 30 yds wide\* (\* in the course of this days travel I saw Salt of beautiful appearance that had lost its savor and was entirely tasteless.) running north. Some Antelopes were seen but verry wild.

June 1st 22 Miles E S E crossing a high range of hills running north & south I came to a lake extending from S E to N W supposed about 20 miles although its northerly limit was unknown and apparently about 8 miles broad. As I was near the southern extremity of the Lake I went around in that direction in doing which I saw a considerable horse sign and seeing some indians at a Lodge I got close to them before they discovered that we were not indians they then immediately ran off. I took some fish that I found at the lodge and left some small presents in their rooms. I went on a little further where there was several families encamped. they were fishing with nets verry neatly made with fine meshes. I gave them some small presents they appeared verry friendly. I went 2 miles further and encamped near where three indians were fishing. I turned out my horses as usual and went to sleep. About ten O Clock at night I was awakened by the sound of horses feet. I started up and 20 or 30 horsemen rode by at full speed to where the fishermen were encamped. I awakened the men we collected our things together and made of them as good a breast work as we could and prepared ourselves for extremities. Presently 2 indians came as if to see if we were asleep. But finding we were awake they came close and sit down. I offered them some Tobacco but they would not take it. They returned to their companions and soon all came and surrounded us with their Bows strung and their arrows in their hands. They sat down and consulted with each other talking loud and harsh and frequently changing places some times all being on one side

---

and then on the other. To the one that seemed the principal character I offered some presents but he would take nothing turning from me with disdain. If my horses had been tied I should most certainly have fired on them but as they were loose and as there was a possibility that they might not commence I thought it prudent not to be the aggressor but to hold ourselves in readiness to beat them off or sell our lives as dear as possible. After about two hours they became peaceable and made a fire. I then offered them some tobacco they took it smoked and remained all night. It will be readily conjectured that I kept a very close watch during the remainder of the night. I do not know how to account for the singular conduct of the indians. They did not appear unanimous for the massacre and perhaps saw our intention of making our scalps bear a good price. we should not have fallen without some of them in company .

June 2d        In the morning they appeared friendly and told me that there was water to the East in the direction I wished to travel. I observed these indians had some Buffalo Robes knives and Spanish Blankets from which it appears they have some communication with the indians on Lewis's River and with the spanish indians. I moved on East about 20 miles and was obliged to encamp without water. The indians no doubt well knew there was no water and intended to deceive me and send me where I might perish for the want of it.

3d        28 miles E N E Having in that direction seen a snowy hill the day before I steered for it and just after night found water and encamped. In the course of the day a light shower of rain. Some Antelopes were seen but very wild. One of my horses gave out and was left three miles back on the trail.

4th I sent back for the tired horse and had him brought up and then moved on N E 3 miles to a range of high hills running N and S & encamped.

5th        N E 15 miles over high ranges of hills bearing N & S.

6th        E 12 miles then N E 6 miles and encamp on a creek running East.

7th        E 15 miles crossing a plain and at the foot of a hill found water where I stopped for dinner. then crossing the range of hills and following an indian trail N 10 miles found water and good grass and encamped. saw an indian to day.

8th        As my horses were much fatigued and the grass was tolerable good I concluded to rest. The general Character and appearance of the country I have passed is extremely Barren. High Rocky hills afford the only relief to the desolate waste for at the feet of these are found water and some vegetation While the intervals between are sand barren Plains.

9th        S S E 12 miles and finding it necessary to change my course to E N E I traveled 12 miles Leaving a high hill on the North and found a little spring in the plain by which I encamped. In the course of the day saw fresh sign of indians.

10th       28 miles E        at 10 O Clock found the water and grass in the plain & stopped for the horses to eat. I there found an Indian and 2 squaws who had no opportunity of running away. I endeavored to talk a little with them by signs but found them too stupid or wilful. They had a piece of a Buffalo robe and a Beaver skin which last I bought of them - at 11 O Clock I continued my course E. Our remaining horses had now become so weak that we were general obliged to walk. At 3 O Clock one of them gave out and was left in the plain. Having crossed two Ranges of hills just after dark I discovered a fire and steered towards it. and found an Indian Squaw and 2 children who were of course much frightened. They appeared to be travelers having with them some water which they divided with us. I then for the first time saw scorpions prepared to eat. I

went a short distance and encamped without water. During the night it rained which of course refreshed the horses.

11th E 20 miles across a valley. Soon after starting I found a little water in some holes collected from the last rain. I encamped in a range of high hills where I found water. At that time we were on allowance of 4 ounces of dried meat per day and hardly the possibility of killing anything.

12th 25 miles East Crossed over the range of hills on the top of which I found some Aspin and service Bushes. then crossing a valley I found a little water and encamped but without grass. In the course of the day I killed a hare. I mention this for in this country game is so scarce and wild that it is a most hopeless task to kill anything. An Antelope or Black tailed deer may sometimes be seen solitary and wild as the wind.

13th E 15 miles crossed a plain and another range of hills high and Rocky finding no water and observing a smoke to the North I traveled in that direction 15 miles and found water and grass and encamped. In the course of the day I saw several Antelopes but could not get a shot and in the evening an Indian but he ran off.

14th North 8 miles along a wet piece of ground on the E side of which I encamped. My horses were so much reduced that it was necessary to give them rest and for this reason I made a short days travel.

15th N E 10 miles and encamped at the head of the springs which forms the wet ravine on which I had made my last two encampments.

16th I lay by to rest. for 12 days I have been with my two men on an allowance of ounces of dried meat per day and the last of it was eat for supper last night. No possibility of killing any game. My horses extremely poor and one so lame in his hind feet as to be unable to travel. He was shod before but his hind feet were worn to the quick. As a last resource for provision I determined to kill this horse and dry some of the best of his meat. Accordingly in the morning I had him killed. It was bad eating but we were hungry enough to eat almost any thing.

17th E N E 30 miles crossing 2 ranges of Rocky hills and the intervening valleys and encamp in a 3d range of hills without water having seen none since morning.

18th E 10 miles starting early I crossed the chain on which I was encamped but seeing no prospect of water Eastwardly I turned N E and after traveling 10 miles I fell in with some indians 14 in number. we were then close to water which happened verry well for one of my men had stoped a short distance back being able to proceed no further. The Indians went with me to the spring and I sent one of them with a little kettle of water to the man that was left behind. After drinking he was sufficiently refreshed to come up. The Indians gave me two small ground squirrels which we found somewhat better than the horse meat. They likewise showed me a kind of water rush which they ate. I tasted of it and found it pleasant I had three horns for the purpose of carrying water. In these sandy plains we filled them at every opportunity But I seldom drank more than half a pint before they were exhausted for neither of my men could do as well without water as myself.

19th 15 miles N E as a high range of hills lay on the East I was obliged to travel N E to a low gape in the chain and then crossing over encamped on the East side we there found some onions which made the horse meat relish much better.

20th N E 20 miles along a valley sandy as usual and just at night found water. In this part of the plain almost all the high hills have snow on their tops. But for these snowy Peaks the country would be utterly impassible as they furnish almost the only grass or water of this un hospitable

land. They are to this plain like the islands of the Ocean. Rising but a short distance from the sandy base the snowy region commences which is an evidence of the great elevation of this plain. The re after encamping some Indians came to me. They appeared verry friendly. These as well as those last mentioned I supposed were somewhat acquainted with whites as I saw among them some Iron arrow points and some Beads. They gave me some squirrels and in return I gave them presents of such little things as I had after which they went to their camp and we our rest.

21st 25 miles North. Early this morning the Indians that were at the camp last night returned and with them several others. They seemed to have come out of mere curiosity and as I was ready for starting they accompanied me a short distance. Some of them I presume had never before seen a white man and as they were handling and examining almost every thing I fired off my gun as one of them was fingering about the double triggers. At the sound some fell flat on the ground and some sought safety in flight. The indian who had hold of the gun alone stood still although he appeared at first thunder struck yet on finding that he was not hurt he called out to his companions to return. I endeavored to learn from those indians by signs something in relation to the distance and course to the Salt Lake But from them I could get no satisfaction whatever for instead of answering my signs they would imitate them as nearly as possible. After vexing myself for some time with those children of nature I left them and continued on my way. All the indians I had seen since leaving the Lake had been the same unintelligent kind of beings. Nearly naked having at most a scanty robe formed from the skin of the hare peculiar to this plain which is cut into narrow strips and interwover with a kind of twine or cord made apparently from wild flax or hemp. They form a connecting link between the animal and intelectual creation and quite in keeping with the country in which they are located. In the course of the day I passed water several times. It came out from a range of hills on the west on the top of which was some snow. I encamp- ed on the bank of a Salt Lake. The water was verry salt and a good deal of salt was formed along the beach. In crossing a mirey place just before encamping one of my horses was mired. After some considerable exertion I found it impossible to get him out I therefore killed him and took a quarter of his flesh which was a seasonable replenishment for our stock of provision as the little I took of the horse I killed last was at that time exhausted.

North 25 Miles. My course was nearly parallel with a chain of hills in the west, on the tops of which was some snow and from which ran a creek to the north east. On this creek I encamped. The Country in the vicinity so much resembled that on the south side of the Salt Lake that for a while I was induced to believe that I was near that place. During the day I saw a good many Ante-lope, but could not kill any. I however, killed 2 hares which, when cooked at night we found much better than horse meat.

June 23d N E 35 Miles. Moving on in the morning I kept down the creek on which we had en- camped until it was lost in a small Lake. We then filled our horns and continued on our course, passing some brackish as well as some verry salt springs, and leaving on the north of the latter part of the days travel a considerable Salt Plain. Just before night I found water that was drink- able, but continued on in hopes of finding better and was obliged to encamp without any.

June 24th N E 40 Miles. I started verry early in hopes of soon finding water. But ascending a high point of a hill I could discover nothing but sandy plains or dry Rocky hills with the exception of a snowy mountain off to the N E at the distance of 50 or 60 Miles. When I came down I durst not tell my men of the desolate prospect ahead, but framed my story so as to discourage them as little

as possible. I told them I saw something black at a distance, near which no doubt we would find water.

While I had been up on the hill one of the horses gave out and had been left a short distance behind. I sent the men back to take the best of his flesh, for our supply was again nearly exhausted, whilst I would push forward in search of water.

I went on a shorter distance and waited until they came up. They were much discouraged with the gloomy prospect, but I said all I could to enliven their hopes and told them in all probability we would soon find water. But the view ahead was almost hopeless.

With our best exertion we pushed forward, walking as we had been for a long time, over the soft sand. That kind of traveling is very tiresome to men in good health who can eat when and what they choose, and drink as often as they desire, and to us, worn down with hunger and fatigue and burning with thirst increased by the blazing sands, it was almost insupportable.

At about 4 O Clock we were obliged to stop on the side of a sand hill under the shade of a small Cedar. We dug holes in the sand and laid down in them for the purpose of cooling our heated bodies. After resting about an hour we resumed our weary journey, and traveled until 10 O Clock at night, when we laid down to take a little repose. Previous to this and a short time after sun down, I saw several turtle doves, and as I did not recollect of ever having seen them more than 2 or 3 miles from water I spent more than an hour looking for water, but it was in vain. Our sleep was not repose, for tormented nature made us dream of things we had not and for the want of which it then seemed possible, and even probable, that we might perish in the desert unheard of and unpitied.

In those moments how trifling were all those things that hold such an absolute sway over the busy and the prosperous world. My dreams were not of Gold or ambitious honors, but of my distant, quiet home, of murmuring brooks, of Cooling Cascades. After a short rest we continued our march and traveled all night. The murmur of falling waters still sounding in our ears and the apprehension that we might never live to hear that sound in reality weighed heavily upon us.

June 25th.

When morning came it saw us in the same unhappy situation, pursuing our journey over the desolate waste, now gleaming in the sun and more insupportably tormenting than it had been during the night. at 10 O Clock Robert Evans laid down in the plain under the shade of a small cedar, being able to proceed no further.

The Mountain of which I have before spoken was apparently not far off, and we left him and proceeded onward in the hope of finding water in time to return with some in season to save his life. After traveling about three Miles we came to the foot of the Mt and there, to our inexpressible joy, we found water. Goble plunged into it at once, and I could hardly wait to bath my burning forehead before I was pouring it down regardless of the consequences.

Just before we arrived at the spring I saw two indians traveling in the direction in which Evans was left, and soon after the report of two guns was heard in quick succession. This considerably increased our apprehension for his safety, but shortly after a smoke was seen back on the trail and I took a small kettle of water and some meat and going back, found him safe. He had not seen the indians and had discharged his gun to direct me where he lay, and for the same purpose had raised a smoke.

He was indeed far gone, being scarcely able to speak. When I came the first question he asked me

was, have you any water? I told him I had plenty and handed him the kettle, which would hold 6 or 7 quarts, in which there was some meat mixed with the water. O says he, why did you bring the meat and putting the kettle to his mouth he did not take it away until he had drank all the water, of which there was at least 4 or 5 quarts, and then asked me why I had not brought more. This, however, revived him so much that he was able to go on to the spring.

I cut the horse meat and spread it out to dry, and determined to remain for the rest of the day that we might repose our wearied and emaciated bodies. I have at different times suffered the extremes of hunger and thirst. Hard as it is to bear for successive days the knawings of hunger, yet it is light in comparison to the agony of burning thirst and, on the other hand, I have observed that a man reduced by hunger is some days in recovering his strength. A man equally reduced by thirst seems renovated almost instantaneously. Hunger can be endured more than twice as long as thirst. To some it may appear surprising that a man who has been for several days without eating has a most incessant desire to drink, and although he can drink but little at a time, yet he wants it much oftener than in ordinary circumstances.

In the course of the day several indians showed themselves on the high points of the hills, but would not come to my camp.

26th June N 10 miles along a valley and encamped at some brackish water, having passed during the day several salt springs and one Indian lodge. The lodge was occupied by 2 indians, one squaw and 2 children. They were somewhat alarmed, but friendly, and when we made signs to them of being hungry they cheerfully divided with us some antelope meat. They spoke like the Snake Indians and by enquiry I found that they were Pahnakkee's from Lewis's River. They had some pieces of Buffalo Robes and told me that after a few days travel to the North East Buffalo were plenty. Although they knew the Shoshones I could not learn any thing from them in relation to the Salt Lake. In the evening I discovered from a high piece of ground what appeared to be a large body of water.

June 27th North 10 Miles along a valley in which were many salt springs. Coming to the point of the ridge which formed the eastern boundary of the valley I saw an expanse of water Extending far to the North and East. The Salt Lake, a joyful sight, was spread before us. Is it possible, said the companions of my sufferings, that we are so near the end of our troubles. For myself I durst scarcely believe that it was really the Big Salt Lake that I saw. It was indeed a most cheering view, for although we were some distance from the depo, yet we knew we would soon be in a country where we would find game and water, which were to us objects of the greatest importance and those which would contribute more than any others to our comfort and happiness.

Those who may chance to read this at a distance from the scene may perhaps be surprised that the sight of this lake surrounded by a wilderness of More than 2000 Miles diameter excited in me those feelings known to the traveler, who, after long and perilous journeying, comes again in view of his home. But so it was with me for I had traveled so much in the vicinity of the Salt Lake that it had become my home of the wilderness.

After coming in view of the lake I traveled East, keeping nearly paralel with the shore of the lake. At about 25 Miles from my last encampment I found a spring of fresh water and encamped. The water during the day had been generally Salt. I saw several antelope, but could not get a shot at them.

28th East 20 Miles, traveling nearly parallel with the shore of the Lake. When I got within a mile

of the outlet of the Uta Lake, which comes in from the south East, I found the ground, which is thick covered with flags and Bulrushes, overflowed to a considerable distance from the channel, and before I got to the current the water had increased to between 2 & 3 feet and the cain grass and Bulrushes were extremely thick.

The channel was deep and as the river was high was of course rapid and about 60 yards wide. As I would have to wade a long distance should I attempt to return before I would find dry land, I determined to make a raft, and for this purpose cut a quantity of Cain Grass, for of this material there was no want. The grass I tied into Bundles, and, attaching them together, soon formed a raft sufficiently strong to bear my things.

In the first place I swam and lead my horse over, the mule following, to the opposite bank, which was also overflowed. I then returned and, attaching a cord to the raft and holding the end in my mouth, I swam before the raft while the two men swam behind. Unfortunately neither of my men were good swimmers, and the current being strong, we were swept down a considerable distance, and it was with great difficulty that I was enabled to reach the shore, as I was verry much strangled.

When I got to the shore I put my things on the mule and horse and endeavored to go out to dry land, but the animals mired and I was obliged to leave my things in the water for the night and wade out to the dry land. We made a fire of sedge, and after eating a little horse flesh, we laid down to rest.

29th 15 Miles North Early in the morning I brought my things out from the water and spread them out to dry. We were verry weak and worn down with suffering and fatigue, but we thought ourselves near the termination of our troubles, for it was not more than four days travel to the place where we expected to find my partners.

At 10 O Clock we moved onward and after traveling 15 Miles encamped. Just before encamping I got a shot at a Bear and wounded him badly, but did not kill him. At supper we ate the last of our horse meat and talked a little of the probability of our suffering being soon at an end. I say we talked a little, for men suffering from hunger never talk much, but rather bear their sorrows in moody silence, which is much preferable to fruitless complaints.

30th North 15 Miles I started early and as Deer were tolerably plenty I went on ahead and about 8 O Clock got a shot at a Deer he ran off I followed him and found a good deal of blood and told the men to stop while I should look for him.

I soon found him laying in a thicket. As he appeared nearly dead, I went up to him, took hold of his horns, when he sprang up and ran off. I was vexed at myself for not shooting him again when it was in my power, and my men were quite discouraged. However, I followed on and in a short time found him again. I then made sure of him by cutting his ham strings. It was a fine, fat Buck, and it was not long before we struck up a fire and had some of his meat cooking. We then employed ourselves most pleasantly in eating for about two hours and for the time being forgot that we were not the happiest people in the world, or at least thought but of our feast that was eaten with a relish unknown to a palace.

So much do we make our estimation of happiness by a contrast with our situation that we were as much pleased with our fat venison on the bank of the Salt Lake as we would have been in the possession of all the Luxuries and enjoyments of a civilised life in other circumstances. These things may perhaps appear trifling to most readers, but let any one of them travel over the sand plain as

I did and they will consider the killing of a buck a great achievement and certainly a verry useful one. After finishing our repast the meat of the Deer was cut and dried over the fire.

July 1st 25 Miles North along the shore of the Lake. Nothing material occurred.

2nd 20 Miles North East Made our way to the Cache. But Just before arriving there I saw some indians on the opposite side of a creek. It was hardly worth while as I thought, to be any wise careful, so I went directly to them and found as near as I could judge by what I knew of the language to be a band of the Snakes. I learned from them that the Whites, as they term our parties, were all assembled at the little Lake, a distance of about 25 Miles. There was in this camp about 200 Lodges of indians and as they were on their way to the rendezvous I encamped with them.

3d I hired a horse and a guide and at three O Clock arrived at the rendezvous. My arrival caused a considerable bustle in camp, for myself and party had been given up as lost. A small Cannon brought up from St. Louis was loaded and fired for a salute.

Jedediah Smith's Journal - Second Expedition to California

13 Jul 1827 – 3 Jul 1828

My preparations being made I left the Depo on the 13th July 1827 with eighteen men and such supplies as I needed. My object was to relieve my party on the Appelaminy and then proceed further in examination of the country beyond Mt. St. Joseph and along the sea coast. I of course expected to find Beaver, which with us hunters is a primary object, but I was also led on by the love of novelty common to all, which is much increased by the pursuit of its gratification.

I had learned enough of the Sand Plain in my late journey across it to know that it would be impossible for a party with loaded horses and encumbered with baggage to ever cross it. Of the [nine] animals with which I left the Appelaminy but two got through to the Depo, and they were, like ourselves, mere skeletons. I therefore was obliged to take the More circuitous route down the Colorado, which, although much better than that across the [] Plain, was yet a journey presenting many serious obstacles.

Leaving the head of the Little Lake I moved in a South Eastern direction to Bear River, which, where I struck it, was about        yards wide. From Bear River I struck S W to Webers River and up the River Nearly South until I came to where it turned too much S E. I then turned S W across a divide and struck a small stream which ran S W. I followed it down to its mouth in the Uta Lake. Near the Lake I found a large Band of the Uta's encamped.

I[n] coming from the rendezvous to the Uta Lake I was employed about six days. The Uta Lake is....

I traded with the indians for the such things as I wanted, among which was two horses, and leaving the Lake I moved on south to Ashley's River and got on to my old track to Lost River. The Utas had told me of some men that came from this direction last Spring and passed through their country on their way to Taos. They said they were nearly starved to death. On Ashley's River I saw tracks of horses and mules which appeared to have passed in the spring when the ground was soft. These tracks were no doubt made by the party the indians spoke of.

In this time nothing worth relating occurred. At Lost River the indians who were so wild when I passed the year before came to me by dozens. Every little party told me by Signs and words so that I could understand them, of the party of White Men that had passed there the year before, having left a knife and other articles at the encampment when the indians had ran away. I made them some small Presents and; moved on to Adams River and down to Pauch Creek and to the indian Lodges on Corn Creek, where I first found corn; and pumpkins on my route of last year.

Not an indian was to be seen, neither was there any appearance of their having been there in the course of the summer their little Lodges were burned down. From this place, instead of taking the route I had before traveled through the Mountain by following in the channel of the river, I followed up Corn Creek about 25 Miles and then turning SW I crossed the Mountain without any difficulty, and crossing some low Ridges, struck a Ravine which I followed down to the bed of the dry River which I call Pautch Creek, which I followed down to [] Adam's River about 10 miles below the Moutn.

Since I struck Adams River I had seen but one Indian, and he kept as close to Rock as a Mountain Sheep. I could not account for the indians being so wild. I passed one place where there was a little corn, but it was just in the tassel. Along the Creek I saw several works for making making the sugar or Candy of which I have before spoken.

From the Mouth of Pautch Creek nothing material occurred until my arrival at [Bitter] Creek. I stoped at the Salt Cave and took some salt. On the left hand side of the Creek [] about three Miles below my camp and 1/4 of a mile from the Creek I happened to observe a perpendicular bluff of Salt facing the Creek and like the salt of the cave with the exception, perhaps, that it is not quite as pure. The indians still continued as wild as on Pautch Creek.

From [Bitter] Creek I moved on to the Mouth of Adams River, where I found the old Pautch farmer still on the east side of the Colorado. From this place to the first Amuchaba village my route was the same as when I passed before, with the exception that instead of taking the ravine in which I had so much difficulty I took another further south and passed in to the river without difficulty.

As there had been no indians to carry news of our approach, on our arrival at the village the indians all ran off, but finding an opportunity to talk with one of them, the[y] soon returned and seemed as friendly as when I was there before.

I remained a day to rest my fatigued animals and then moved down to the next settlement. The indians had heard of my approach and met me some distance above their village.

I went to the place where I intended to cross the Colorado and encamped in a situation where I found good grass, with the intention of giving my horses some rest. I exchanged some horses, Bought some Corn and Beans and made a present to the Chiefs. My interpreter, Francisco, who was still there, told me that since I had left there the last summer a party of Spaniards & Americans from the Province of Sonora, by the way of the Gila, had been there. He showed me some things they had got from them. He said the[y] had quarreled and separated, one party going up the Colorado and the other in another direction. This accounted for the tracks of horses and Mules I had seen on Ashley river and for the starved party which the Utas said had passed through their country.

[missing pages]

After weighing all the circumstances of my situation as calmly as possible, I concluded to again try the hospitality of the Californians. I had left with my party on the Appelaminy a quantity of Beaver furs, and if the Governor would permit me to trade, and I could find any person acquainted with the value of furs, I might procure such supplies as would enable me to continue my journey to the North.

But to return from this anticipation, I was yet on the sand bar in sight of My dead companions and not far off were some hundreds of indians who might in all probability close in upon us and with an Arrow or Club terminate all my measures for futurity. Such articles as would sink I threw in to the river and spread the rest out on the sand bar. I told the men what kind of Country we had to pass through and gave them permission to take such things as they chose from the bar. After making their selection, the rest was scattered over the ground, knowing that whilst the indians were quarreling about the division of the spoils we would be gaining time for our escape. We then moved on in the almost hopeless endeavor to travel over the desert Plain, where there was not the least probability of finding game for our subsistence. Our provision was all lost in the affray, with the exception of about 15 lbs of dried Meat.

We had not gone more than 1/2 Mile before the indians closed around us, apparently watching the proper moment to fall on us. I thought it most prudent to go in to the bank of the river while we had it in our power, and if the indians allowed us time, select the spot on which we might sell

---

our lives at the dearest rate. We were not molested and on arriving on the bank of the river we took our position in a cluster of small Cotton Wood trees, which were generally 2 or 3 inches in diameter and standing very close.

With our knives we lopped down the small trees in such a manner as to clear a place in which to stand, while the fallen poles formed a slight breast work. We then fastened our Butcher knives with cords to the end of light poles so as to form a tolerable lance, and thus poorly prepared we waited the approach of our unmerciful enemies.

On one side the river prevented them from approaching us, but in every other direction the indians were closing in upon us, and the time seemed fast approaching in which we were to come to that contest which must, in spite of courage, conduct and all that man could do, terminate in our destruction.

It was a fearful time. Eight men with but 5 guns were awaiting behind a defence made of brush the charge of four or five hundred indians whose hands were yet stained with the blood of their companions.

Some of the men asked me if I thought we would be able to defend ourselves. I told them I thought we would. But that was not my opinion. I directed that not more than three guns should be fired at a time and those only when the Shot would be certain of killing. Gradually the enemy was drawing near, but kept themselves covered from our fire.

Seeing a few indians who ventured out from their covering within long shot I directed two good marksmen to fire they did so and two indians fell and another was wounded. Upon this the indians ran off like frightened sheep and we were released from the apprehension of immediate death.

The indians did not press on us again, and just before dark we commenced our journey and traveled all night and the next morning got to the first spring. As we had no way of carrying water and the weather was very warm I remained at the spring during the heat of the day and in the evening moved on, traveling all night. In a low plain and in the night when I could not see the distant and detached hills I had no guide by which to travel and therefore lost my way. In the morning I ascended a hill, but could not ascertain on which side the trail lay.

Observing a high hill nearly in the direction in which I wished to travel I told the men which way to travel in case we did not come back soon, and taking a man with me who was a good walker, I pushed on in search of water and fortunately found some. I sent the man back to the other men and in the mean [time] laid down to take a little sleep, which from my incessant anxiety and fatigue had become quite necessary.

When the party arrived I left them at the little spring and mounting the highest hill I could see I was enabled to determine that we were about five miles on the right of the trail and nearly opposite a place where I had found water when I passed before. We remained at the spring until nearly night, and then bearing the spring on the trail to the left, I struck directly for the next spring on the old route, traveling and resting by intervals during the night and the following morning until ten O Clock, when we got to the spring.

We there remained during the remainder of the day and the following night, and in the morning early we started, but instead of following the old trail I turned to the left and struck directly for the Salt Plain. My guides had told me of that route when I was there before, but it was considered too stoney for horses.

The day was extremely warm and consequently we suffered much from thirst, my men more than myself, for they had not been accustomed to doing without water as much as I had. We found some relief from chewing slips of the Cabbage Pear, a singular plant which I think I have before described; very juicy although frequently found growing on the most parched and Barren ground. My men were much discouraged, but I cheered and urged them forward as much as possible and it seemed a happy providence that lead us to the little spring in the edge of the Salt Plain, for there was nothing to denote its place and the old trail was filled up with the drifting sand. Two of the men had been obliged to stop two or three miles before we got to the spring, and although it was just night two of the men took a small kettle of water and went back, found and brought them up. After dark we proceed[ed] on across the Salt Plain and stopt at the holes I had dug when I passed before and there remained for the rest of the night.

On the following day I moved on to Inconstant River. It was still dryer than when I passed the year before. I think it reasonable to suppose that the Salt of the Plain has been formed by a deposit at different times from the overflowing of Inconstant River. The water of the river is sufficiently brackish and the country near the place where it is finally lost in the sand is sufficiently level to justify the conclusion that in some seasons of the year, when the water is most abundant, it spreads over the Plain, and as the dry season approaches the water disappears and leaves a deposit of salt which has in the course of years produced the beautiful encrustation found in the Salt Plain.

About 8 miles up the river I found 2 horses and soon after 2 indian Lodges. I determined at once to secure the horses. And as the indians did not discover me until I had got close to them they had no chance to run off. I found them to be Pauch. With some cloth, knives, Beads &c., which we had brought along, I purchased their horses, some cane grass candy and some demi jons for carrying water.

I then proceeded on, nothing material occuring until I got near the head of Inconstant River there I fell in with a few lodges of the Wan-uma's indians. They had two horses which I purchased, and in continuing my journey, instead of traveling south East around the bend of the stream I struck directly across the Plain Nearly SSW to the Gape of the Mountain.

So soon as I had passed through the Mountain and near the place where I encamped the first night after leaving St. Bernardino on my first journey, I saw numbers of cattle. I immediately determined to kill some cattle and dry the meat to support us in our journey through the Barren country Between Bernardino and the Appelaminy. I therefore had three cows shot and the meat cut and dried.

As the distance to the Mission was considerable I would not go in, but send word to Bernardino of what I had done, but the overseer came out bringing with him such little Luxuries as he had, and as he appeared anxious that I should go in and stay with him a night at the farm house I did so and was verry well treated.

When the overseer came out, among other things he had brought a horse for me to ride in. On the following day he came with me and brought with him some horses which were purchased with things we had brought on our backs from the Amuchabas, which, with those we had before, made each of us a horse.

Two of my men I left at Bernardino, Thomas Virgin, who had been wounded by a club at the Amuchaba affray, and Isaac Galbraith, a free trapper who belonged to my party and preferred

remaining, to which I did not object.

The overseer told me that some of the Amuchaba chiefs had been in to the settlement and brought the news of their having defeated a party of Americans, which was no doubt the same of which Francisco spoke. But instead of quarreling among themselves the probability is that they were defeated by the indians, separated in two parties in the affray, and traveled different ways. In coming from the Amuchabas I had been 9 1/2 days. And remained at the camp 5 days. In the mean time among other things I procured some paper and wrote to father Sanches giving the reasons of my coming to the country and also the reasons that induced me to leave Mr. Virgin. It was my intention that Father Sanchez should advise the Governor of what I had communicated to him.

After having remained [] five days at the camp near Bernardino I moved off towards my party on the Appelaminy, directing Mr. Virgin, as soon as his health would permit, to come on directly to St. Francisco, for which purpose he was furnished with a good horse. With some small exception I traveled the same route I had passed before and arrived on the Appelaminy and found my party on the 18th of [] September.

They were becoming somewhat anxious for my return, as it was within two days of the latest time fixed for my return. I was there by the time appointed, but instead of Bringing [] them the expected supplies I brought them intelligence of my misfortunes and the consequent disappointment. I found them all well. They had passed what hunters call a pleasant Summer, not in the least interrupted by indians. The game consisted of some deer and Elk and Antelopes in abundance. They spoke in high terms of the climate. The air was extremely pleasant from the effect of a gentle North Western Breeze that rose and sank with the rising and setting of the sun.

The indians appeared to be very honest, having at no time manifested a disposition to steal, and entirely friendly. The old Macalumbry Chief (Te-mi), of whom I have before spoken, frequently visited them, bringing them grass seed meal, currents and raspberries &c, and they in return loaded him with meat, which appeared to the indians of this country a most acceptable present. Among other incidents It may not be amiss to mention that Te-Mi brought the stolen horse, as he had promised, a few days after I started for the Depo. He had also brought 7 or 8 of the traps lost in Rock River that had been broken in pieces by the indians, but the men had repaired them. A party of Spaniards had visited them in the summer, having received intelligence of their being in the country from some indians who had gone in to the Missions. They appeared satisfied with the reasons Mr. Rodgers gave for his being in the country.

I stayed two days with my party, arranged them for trapping, and taking 3 Men with me I started to go in to the Mission of St. Joseph, a distance of about 70 Miles S W. I took some indians with me for guides & on the 3d day arrived at St. Joseph.

I rode up in front of the Mission, dismounted and walked in. I was met by two reverend fathers. One father [Narciso Duran] belonging to the Mission of St. Joseph and the other father [Jose Viader] of the Mission of Santa Clara. The reverend fathers appeared somewhat confused by my sudden appearance and could not or would not understand me when I endeavored to explain the cause of my being in the country.

They did not appear disposed to hear me, and told me I could go no further and soon showed me the way to the guard house. My horses were [taken] away and for two days I could get no satisfaction whatever. They would neither put me in close confinement nor set me at liberty. No provision

---

whatever was made for my subsistence and I should have suffered much had it not been for the kindness of the old overseer, who invited me at each meal to partake with him. My men likewise ate at the same place.

After 2 days hearing of a man, an American by the name of [William] Welch, I sent for him. He had the kindness to come immediately. I then endeavored to have an interview with the Reverend father [Duran]. He condescended to let me know that an officer would soon be up from St. Francisco to enquire what business I had in their country. He asked me if I had anything to eat, thinking I suppose that two or three days was nothing for a heretic to go without eating, as this was the first time he had mentioned the subject, perhaps presuming that I lived on faith instead of food.

I lived in the same way for several days. Finally Lieut. Martinos came up from St. Francisco.

After a little conversation with him I found I was to be tried for an intruder and for claiming the country on the Peticutsy. I hardly knew what to say to this charge, but by enquiry I found that an indian had been over on the Peticutsy and returned with his own story of the views of my party.

In the presence of the father, the indian and my self were confronted, Lieut. Martinos sitting as judge. I put a few questions to him by which I ascertained that he had seen me just before my departure for the Depo and had once been with my party during my absence. But no circumstances could be proved against me and Lieut. Martinos instead of punishing me as the father desired Sentenced the indian to a severe flogging, which perhaps he did not deserve.

The father seemed much interested against me for what reason I know not unless perhaps It might be that he was apprehensive of danger to the true faith, for which reason he was anxious to stop my fishing around the country (for so he termed my traveling in their country).

I gave the Lieut to understand my situation and my wants and hinted at my desire to go directly to Monterrey, the present residence of the Governor, for I considered this the most expeditious way to get through with my business. He told me I would be obliged to remain at the Mission until an express could go to and return from Monterrey.

Endeavoring to impress him with an Idea of the importance of despatch I urged him to expedite the business as much as possible. He prevailed on the father to furnish me with a room.

After this my meals were sometimes brought to me in my room and sometimes I ate with the overseer as before.

Capt. [John Rogers ] Cooper, a Bostonian who had married and resided in Monterrey & Mr. [Thomas B. Park], supercargo of the Brig Harbinger from Boston, came up in company from Monterrey and remaining at St. Joseph a days much relieved the anxiety of mind attendant on the uncertainty of my situation. Capt. Cooper in particular seemed willing to afford me any assistance in his power.

I was detained at St. Joseph 12 or 14 days before I received a letter from the Gov. and at the same time a guard to accompany me to Monterey. During this interval I . . . .

[missing text]

On the receipt of the Governors letter I made all haste and started immediately for Monterey. The journey employed us [] three days until 11 O Clock at night before we arrived at the Presidio, where I was immediately introduced to the Guard house and closely watched until the next day. In the mean time Capt. Cooper came to see me, bringing some brekfast with him and endeavoring to console me in my unhappy situation.

At 11 O Clock I was informed that the Governor was ready to see me. He met me at the door,

shook hands with me and passed a few compliments in Spanish. We then walked through a hall into a Portico, and sit down.

He then commenced talking in Spanish when I immediately told him it would be necessary to have an interpreter. He assented and proposed having Mr. Hartwell, who he said was the only good interpreter in Monterey but who was absent and would not be at home until the evening. He asked me if I would have some breakfast and said he would have a room prepared for me. I thanked him and told him that if he had no objection after breakfast [] I would go to Capt. Coopers, to which he assented.

At Capt. Coopers I was received with a hearty and sincere well come and introduced to Mr. Hartwell. In the Evening I had an interview with the Governor and found him in Monterrey distinguished by the same traits as those that Marked his character when I saw him at San Diego: Nothing further could be concluded on than this. That I should be allowed the privilege of the town, Presidio and harbor. His Excellency appointed an afternoon for an interview at the house of Mr. Hartwell.

I saw at Monterrey Ferguson, the man who ran away from me at St. Gabriel, and Wilson, the man I had discharged at the Chintache lake. At the appointed time I went to Mr. Hartwells and met the Governor. He comenced the business of the interview by observing that what I had stated with regard to my business might be true but he could not believe it for said he, when you came to San Diego you represented the route by which you had come in to California as being a dry barren desert almost impassible, and now you have come by the same route again. It is a verry circuitous route and if, as you say, your only object was to strengthen and supply your Appelaminy party why did you not come directly across to them? And further, when you was defeated and came in so near St. Gabriel why did you not notify me of your arrival?

In answering him I told him it was verry true that when at San Diego I had represented the route by which I had come in as being verry bad, which was a fact, but that on trial I had found the direct route much worse in fact I considered it entirely impassible for a party with loaded horses at that season and perhaps at any other. Of two evils it was natural and politic to choose the least, in doing which I had taken my old route down the Colorado. In regard to the notification of which he spoke, I had made a communication to Father Sanches under the impression that it would be forwarded to him immediately.

He did not appear satisfied with my explanation, said it was altogether a misterious business, and that he must have time to consider the subject. From this time I called on him at intervals of a day or two, and after several days he came to the conclusion that I must go to Mexico.

I told him I was ready to go and the sooner he would send me the better. He told me I should go by the first opportunity. A few days after Capt [William G.] Dana of Monterrey, Master of an English Whaler, was ready to sail for Acapulco, the place of debarking for Mexico. I informed the Governor of the opportunity. And he merely said I might go. I soon found that he was not disposed to put himself to any trouble about it. I asked him if he intended that I should go to Mexico as a prisoner and at my own expense. He said most certainly, if I had the privilege of going in a foreign vessel, but if I would wait two or three months a Mexican Vessel would be going to Acapulco when he might perhaps as a favor from the Capt get a passage for me.

I [t] seemed that this man was placed in power to perplex me and those over whom he was called to govern. That a man should seriously talk of making a man take himself at his own expense to

---

prison. That he should talk to me of waiting 2 or 3 months for a passage to Acapulco. I plainly told him that on such conditions I would not go. Capt Cooper, knowing that I had no money, supposed that to be the reason why I refused to go and told me the want of money should not hinder me from going. I thanked him, but I told him I would not see Mexico on the terms proposed by his honor the Governor.

At another interview a few days afterwards Mr. Hartwell, who always appeared quite willing to assist me and whose opinion seemed to pass with the Governor for law, told him he had thought of a way by which I might be let off without his bringing the responsibility on himself. He said "the English Law allowed 4 Masters of vessels in a foreign port in cases of emergency to appoint an agent for the time being who would act as consular agent [for] until the government could be apprised of their proceeding, and perhaps said he the Americans have such a Law."

This seemed to please the governor and he said he would see what could be done. No sooner was the conference ended than I told Capt Cooper of what had passed and also the Masters of the several vessels in port. They were not perfectly satisfied of the legality of the proposition, but thought the urgency of the case would justify the proceeding.

Capt Cooper was appointed agent by the different Masters in port [... Having lost my journal of that date I am unable to give the names of but two of them, Capt. [Joseph] Steele of the Brig Harbinger and Capt. [Allen] Tilton of the Ship Omega.

Previous to this the Genl had requested me to write to my party to come in. I told him they were nearer St. Francisco than that place and he remarked that they might go in there.

I therefore wrote to Mr. Rodgers that it was the Governor [s] request that they should come in, and at the same time hinted at the treatment I had received. This I knew was sufficient for Mr. Rodgers, who from what had [] passed between us would go in to [] Bodega.

I carried the letter to the Genl unsealed. He had it translated and took a day or two to consider its contents, then sent for me and said he was afraid to [] send such a letter for I had not ordered Mr. Rodgers positively to come in and that I had discouraged him from coming in from the manner in which I had spoken of [] the usage I had received at the same time he observed he would be very sorry [] that his soldiers should have any difficulty with my party.

I told him I thought what I had written very reasonable but that if he would give me a copy I would write again. He said he could not do that. After getting the promise of the Governor that they should not be imprisoned and should be furnished with provision I wrote to Mr. Rodgers directing him to come in to San Francisco. The soldiers who carried the letter went by way of St. Joseph and one of my men accompanied them.

Notwithstanding what the Genl had said about his soldiers and the smallness of my party I think he did not wish to have my party try their rifles on his soldiers, for there was some terrible stories in circulation about the shooting of my men. It was said they were sure of their mark at any distance.

In the mean time news came in from the South that another party of Americans were near Too Larra Lake. I told him I was well convin[c]ed there were no Americans there, but as it was his request I would write to them.

After Capt Cooper was appointed agent the Genl wished him not only to become responsible for my good conduct until I left California but also to insure that I should [not] return again to the country on any pretense whatever. I would not agree to such a restriction and after a short contest

the Genl consented to drop it.

I received a letter from Mr. Rogers informing me of his arrival at St. Francisco. I got permission to write to Mr. Virgin and the Genl agreed to forward it to him.

November 7th 1827 I called on the Governor in company with Capt. Cooper who gave the Genl a written certificate stating the reasons which he thought had brought me to the country, which nearly accorded with what I had stated to the Governor. It also stated what I was in want of, in the mean time offering to become responsible for my conduct.

The Genl said on those conditions I could take my choice of three things either to wait until he could receive orders from Mexico. Or I might go there as an opportunity would offer in 8 or 12 days or I might go away with what men I had in the same direction by which I had come in. He insisted that I should travel the same route by which I arrived and in preventing me from hiring more men he calculated I would be afraid to travel with the number of men I had and consequently he would retain me in the country until he could receive orders from Mexico. But I told his excellency I would go if I had but 2 men. The Genl said he would make a memorandum of what Capt. Cooper must become responsible for and would then call on us.

The Ship Omega, Capt Tilton, departed and in the evening I received a letter from Mr. Rodgers stating that by the help of Capt Richardson of St. Francisco he had got permission to remove to a spring not far distant from the Precidio. This letter came by the hand of Charles Swift and further informed me that the party were well supplied with Beef Corn Beans &c.

9th November & 10th The Genl was sick so that no business could be done. A ship being in the harbor from Boston, [John] Bradshaw Capt, and [Rufus] Perkins Supercargo, I made a contract with the Capt selling him all my furs at \$2.50 per lb. On the 10th the Genl gave Capt. Cooper a Copy or pattern for a Bond which he with some little alterations agreed to sign. In the first place the Genl wished to obligate me to remain North of the 42nd parallel of Latitude. But he finally satisfied himself to [] make Capt Cooper [] guarantee that I should not hunt on the sea coast south of the 42nd parallel of latitude but within Land wherever my Government might permit. Before the Bond was signed the Genl again proposed sending me to Mexico but I told him as I had sold my furs and made arrangements for traveling homewards I could not well do otherwise, and he with some little hesitation assented. We were to have three [] copies of the original bond, one to send to Mexico one to be left with the Genl [] one for Capt Cooper and one for myself.

12th November The Bonds were all made and signed. The Genl then requested a list of such things as I wished to purchase which I gave him. He objected to none of the articles except Horses and Mules but after some difficulty he allowed me permission to purchase 100 Mules & 50 horses. 15th having got my passport I went on board of the Franklin, Capt. Bradshaws Vessel, and at 2 O Clock we sailed for St. Francisco. I was soon sea sick and a gale of wind that came on at 5 O Clock Made me much worse. At tea time a sudden lurch of the vessel threw the whole apparatus of the table into one of the lower births and Capt Bradshaw received the whole of the Tea but no other damage was done save the breaking of some dishes.

16th At night we were off the Bay of St. Francisco but the wind being contrary we stood off and on until the next day. 17th At 12 O Clock the wind being fair we entered the harbor there were 7 Sail in at the time. I called on Don Lewis the Commandant he seemed satisfied with my passports. I found my men all well but they had not been well supplied with provisions - Mr Viermont (a German) trading under the Mexican flag had been very Kind to them.

---

18th I had my furs taken on board the Franklin amounting to 1568 lbs of Beaver & 10 Otter Skins. Rainy weather. I was engaged until the

22nd in preparing my good [s] & going back and forth from the ship and party to the Precidio. I made arrangement to have some of my things sent in the Launch to St. Joseph and some put on shore at that place. In company with Capt Bradshaw I received an invitation to dine on Board the Sloop of War Blossom. But was detained so long by my business with Don Lewis that I could not attend.

23d My things were all ready to go on shore and I received an invitation to dine. The Company consisted of Capt. John Bradshaw of the Ship Franklin from Boston. Capt. Reuben Cresy of the Sophia from New Bedford, Capt. [John] Fo[r]ster of the Brig Tullum from Mexico, Capt Moses Harris of the Weymouth from Nantucket, Capt [Obed Swain] of the Enterprize from Nantucket, Capt [Benjamin A. Coleman] of the Eagle from Nantucket, and Mr. [Henry D. ] Fitch, supercargo of the Brig Tullum. After dinner the wind arose so that I could not go on shore, so we remained and supped and contrary to my wish sat up untill 3 O Clock to drink wine, after which we took a little sleep.

24th Early in the morning I went on shore and as I could not get my work done at St. Francisco I got permission from Don Lewis to remove to St. Joseph as that place would not be out of my way.

26th Since the party had been at St. Francisco the horses had been nearly starved but I got them up and moved off in the direction of St. Jose, about 20 miles, and put them up at the farm of Don Lewis, where I was politely treated at his expense.

27th I went ahead of the company as far as the Pueblo with Mr. Garnier, a man I had engaged to go to Monterrey with two men and two horse loads of Merchandize to pay for some horses I had purchased at that place. At the Pueblo I made application at the house of Mr. Welch for the payment of [a] draft of 200 Dollars on him from Mr. Perkins. But I was disappointed he was not at home and had [] left orders for me to send to the Mission of Santa Cruz. I hired a man, sent him there but got no money.

28th I continued on my way to St. Jose, Mr. Garnier being with me for an interpreter. I mad [e] an arrangement with the Priest by which I was to have the use of the Smith Shop for one week for the purpose of repairing my guns and a room for myself and two small rooms for my men. The party arrived at 5 O Clock having left some of their horses behind which had given out.

29th I sent two men down to the Pueblo to bring up any horses which Mr. Garnier might purchase there.

30th My two men returned with 3 horses and 3 Mules sent by Mr. Garnier. I spoke to Capt Bradshaw who had come up with some things for the Priest and for myself of the disappointment I had received in relation to the money from Welch. He told me if I would go down to the Ship he would pay it.

Dec. 1st I started to go down on the north side of the bay in Company with Capt Bradshaw having procured a guide from the Father and a horse from the Overseer. At 4 O Clock I arrived at the Farm of St. Pablo and procuring a Boat and men at 10 O Clock I embarked, leaving Capt Bradshaw. At this time it was flood tide and the wind being being verry high shortly after starting we was obliged to come to under the shelter of a small island for a short time when were enabled to proceed on again and at about 3 O Clock arrived on board the ship.

I procured some such things as I wanted and remained all day waiting for the arrival of Capt.

Bradshaw who did not arrive until 3 O Clock at night. In the morning I got my money and was ready to sta [r] t back, but the wind blew so hard I was obliged to remain until the following morning when I started early and immediately on my arrival at the farm of St. Pablo I mounted my horse and rode up to the Mission. In my absence Mr. Rodgers had driven up the horses to brand and found that five of them were lost.

December 5th My men were Busily engaged in Baleing up my goods for the journey.

6th Dec My men engaged as before. on having my horses driven up I found 6 of them were missing.

Isaac Galbraith, the man who had stayed at St. Bernardino with Mr. Virgin came but brought no news from him. I received Letters from Capt. Bradshaw, Capt. Cooper, Mr. Garnier and Mr. Perkins. But Mr. Perkins said not a word about the money I was to receive from Mr. Welch. I also recd one from father Louis of Santa Cruz stating that on the receipt of my letter he had sent me \$150, being all the Money he had at the Mission at the time, but that just after the Messenger started on his return to me he had received a letter from Mr. Welch which caused him to send after the Courier and detain the Money.

7th Palmer & Reed were at work on the Guns and the rest of the party employed as the day before. My horses were all found but 3. I wrote to Don Lewis and to Capt. Bradshaw.

8th Was a Saints day and of course little could be done.

9th Was Sunday. I attended Mass. The Music consisted of 12 or 15 violins 5 Base vials and one flute. The father spoke in Latin and in Spanish and a part of his discourse was then translated for the indians into their own tongue. Not only on Sunday but every day of the week the indians are called to prayers at an early hour in the church.

10th 11th & 12th My men were employed in the several kinds of preparation for the journey. As yet no word received from Mr. Garnier.

13th I had some of my men engaged in drying Meat and others at work in the Shop. In the course of the day Mr. Virgin arrived. He had been imprisoned for some time and frequently without anything to eat and strictly forbidden to speak to any one, [] and abused in almost every way. On the 5th the Genl on his way to St. Barbara saw him, released him and instructed the fathers to forward him on to St. Joseph. He was much rejoiced to see us and I am sure I was quite glad to see the old man again.

I am informed by good authority that my young indian of whom I spoke the first time I was in California and who was in prison when I went away was tried for his life charged with having piloted me into the country and sentenced to be shot. But father Sanches, influenced by his own good feelings and his promise to me, wrote to Mexico and procured his pardon. And further I have good reason to believe that the Amuchabas were instructed to kill all Americans coming in in that direction; but let that be as it may the fact that they punished an indian for being friendly to me would readily convey the idea that they would reward them if they were enemies.

15th Some of my men were engaged in cutting meat to dry, others at Blacksmithing and some Loo[k]ing for lost horses. I had spoken to Cap` [W. A.] Richardson of St. Francisco when on his way to Monterrey to speak to Mr. [Paul Shelikof] the Russian agent at Bodega who was at that time at Monterrey of the probability of my passing by Bodega on my way north and that I might want to repair my things or procure some supplies. I received a letter from Mr. [Shelikof] informing me that he should soon pass to the North himself and would give instructions to the agent at

Ross the Precidio of the Russian Settlement to provide me with whatever I stood in need of.

16th Sunday. I again attended Mass.

17th I had several of my men out hunting horses and one was found. No news as yet from Garnier. My preparations for a start are nearly complete.

18th Arthur Black came from Garnier with the intelligence that he [ ] had purchased 180 horses and mules and was in want of money. He was at Castros farm 20 Leagues from St. Joseph and from what Black told me I considered it absolutely necessary that I should be on the spot. I soon fixed for starting with 4 men and as my horses were inconvenient I bought some for the trip it rained and snowed considerably but that did not stop me and at 12 O Clock at night I arrived at Castros farm. Since Black had left there the horses had broken out of the pen and several I knew not how many were lost.

19th rainy but I had men out hunting for the lost horses and some of them were found and put in with the band at night carefully guarded for I find that notwithstanding the small value of horses they are frequently stolen.

20th I started with 2 Spaniards and 5 of my own men to drive the band of horses in to St. Jose in the mean time Mr. Garnier and one Spaniard remained behind to look for lost horses. I went on with the Band of horses about half way to St. Jose when I stopped them and pushed on ahead. On my way I hired a young man an Englishman who had been in [the] country about 2 years and was an excellent horseman, his name was Richard Leland.

21st I had my horses which were near St. Jose driven in and started to meet the band, in the mean time intending to [buy] some things of Mr. [John] Burton... in the Pueblo and some Blankets of Father Joseph at Santa Clara. I met the Band, did some of my business and returned to St. Jose. In the evening I went again to the Pueblo and as the rain increased I staid all night at Capt Burtons.

22nd I returned to St. Jose and got permission from the father to remove my Company to a sheep farm belonging to the Mission called St. Lorenzo, where there was a plenty of grass and a pen in which I could shut up my horses & Mules.

23d As it was rainy I did not move.

24th I started the Party off to the farm & taking Laplant with me I went as far as Lieut. Martinos on my way to St. Francisco. It was late when we arrived at that place and we remained all night.

25 After taking some of the Lieut's Honey we proceeded on and arriving at St. Francisco I found that nothing could be done on that day, one of Don Lewis's Children having died the night before. All my preparations being completed for moving of [f] to the North I was anxious to be off as soon as possible.

26th I had 2 interviews with Don Lewis. It was the instruction of the Genl to Don Lewis that I should cross the Buenaventura River near its entrance into the Bay of St. Francisco. Don Lewis was further ordered to send 10 Soldiers to see me safe out of their territories. The time which the Genl had given me to remain was nearly expired but I found it entirely impossible to procure a Launch to take me across the river without which it was impassible. The only Launch in the neighborhood belonging to Capt Richardson was unfit for service.

In this situation I made no doubt that Don Lewis would consent that I should go up the River until I could find a place where I could swim my horses and carry my goods over on a raft which could not be done at the mouth. But he would hear nothing of this proposition but insisted that I should cross at the particular place directed by the Genl. I then told him to furnish the boat and

I was ready to cross. This he could not do but said I must wait until the Genl could be advised of the situation of things and give further instructions. I apparently acquiesced but left him with a determination fixed to take my own course without waiting for their tardy Movements which the situation of my finances would not permit.

By riding until 12 at night I arrived at the Pueblo where I found Mr. Gamier. He had got but one of the lost horses. I settled with him and found that in the time he had been employed in Purchasing for me he had lost 19 horses and Mules. I sold them to him for 25 Dollars.

27 I went home to my company and as I am about ready to leave the Settlements of California It may perhaps be appropriate to insert in this place the remarks I have made on the country in the vicinity of the Bay of St. Francisco. The Bay of St. Francisco having been well described by Vancouver I will merely observe that it is universally considered the most safe harbor on the Western Coast of America. It is spacious and has sufficient depth of water for the largest vessels. The entrance is safe and about [2]miles wide and the surface of the Bay is protected from the violence of Western winds by a chain of hills that run through the two projecting points of land that form the neck of the Bay. The form of the Bay is somewhat triangular, one of the arms running to the S E and one to the NorthEast. That to the South East is the longest, extending for some considerable distance, perhaps 20 miles, into the rich valley of the Missions of St. Jose and Santa Clara. The N Eastern and shorter arm is that which Receives the Buenaventura River.

The Precidio of St. Francisco is on the narrow Point of land that forms the S Western Boundary of the Bay and about 1/2 miles from its entrance & immediately on the shore. There is but little good land in the vicinity of St. Francisco a chain of hills that run parallel with the coast of the Ocean and shore of the Bay come in Close to the Precidio leaving but a narrow strip of fertile soil along the Bay. The Buildings of the Precidio are according to the common custom of the Country built of unburnt brick. They are like Barracks and built in a square and were once capable of accommodating 20 families and 100 Soldiers but are now much decayed.

The entrance of the harbor is defended by a fort placed on the point about 1/2 mile from the Precidio in a situation admirably adapted for the purpose for which it was intended. It mounts 15 or 20 pieces of cannon but I am told is somewhat decayed. About 3 miles from the Precidio is the Mission of St. Francisco which is not as rich as some others in the vicinity.

Leaving St. Francisco [] and proceeding S. E. along the Shore of the Bay the Chain of hills on the S West on which are fine forest of cedar gradually retire and leave a fine country pleasingly varied by prairie and woodland. In this delightful country is the Mission of Santa Clara. Not far from the Southern extremity of the Bay and nearly opposite is the Mission of St. Jose.

There is a considerable Stream that enters the South Eastern Extremity of the Bay after winding through the fertile valley Laying Between two Chains of hills one of which ranges nearly North and South and terminates near the Mouth of the Buenaventura and the other of which I have before spoken ranging in a South Western direction from St. Francisco.

[] From the S. E. extremity of the bay extends a considerable Salt Marsh from which great quantities of salt are annually collected and the quantity might perhaps be much increased. It belongs to the Mission of St. Jose.

About one Mile from Santa Clara is the Pueblo which consists of about 100 houses built of the common material. Unburnt Brick. But few of these are any wise respectable in appearance - the remainder are merely huts. Along the east side of the Bay a fine country extends to the Mouth of

the Buenaventura River including several fine farms and among the rest that of Santa Ana near the Mouth of the River. On the North Side of the Bay a fine country is spread nearly to the Ocean where there is a chain of Rocky hills nearly on the coast.

The Mission of St. Raphael is about Two miles from the Bay and nearly opposite the Mouth of the river. It is a fine country which extends indefinitely from the Chain of hills near the coast along the shore of the Bay and up the Buenaventura River. The farm of Santa Anna extends along the shore of the Bay about three miles and back into the country about the same distance. There is very little land in cultivation and the amount of stock is small for that country, but the soil is excellent and the situation combining many advantages is at the same time Most delightful and pleasant.

The Best farming establishments in California are the Missions. At Each of these there are fine orchards and gardens. Individuals of this country are generally too indolent to make good farms they rather prefer the less laborious task of raising horses and cattle and in this business they are so forcibly assisted by the peculiar advantages of the country that the herds of Cattle have accumulated untill they are nearly as numerous as the Buffalo of the plains of the Missouri and the horses are in many places so plenty as to lead to that barbarous custom of which I have before spoken of shutting them up by hundreds in Parks to Starve. Because they eat the grass from the tame Bands.

I coul [d] not say much of the enterprize of these people. I have heard them speak of the chalk mountain of the east which is no other than Mt. St. Joseph they having never been sufficiently near to [] determine that what they thought to be [] Chalk was in reality nothing more nor less than Snow.

They have frequently spoken of a party of discovery that went out three or four years since under the direction of Don Lewis. They say they went a long distance up the principal Branch of the Buenaventura or Piscadore and that there was a man in company well acquainted with the Columbia who told them that this river was a Branch or rather Bayou of the Columbia & that [left it something like 600 Miles from the Bay of St. Francisco] they were in a short distance of that River.

This proves to me their enterprize for I well know that it is not over 250 m from San Francisco to the place where the river leaves the Mount St. Joseph. Among other things they described a singular hill in the plain which was near the place where they turned back. By the help of this I was enabled to fix the limits of this Memorable voyage of Discovery that left it doubtful whether the summits of Mt. St. Joseph were chalk or snow.

28th & 29th I had my men engaged in breaking mules for the loads. I wrote to the Genl and to Don Lewis informing them of what I intended to do and in the mean time settled off with the father under pretence of moving to better grass.

30th Rainy but I started and made 8 Miles N E and at night had my horses guarded by men on horseback. On the 31st it was Rainy and consequently Muddy but I moved 10 Miles North East. January 1st 1828 20 Miles East and encamped on Buenaventura River which sometimes is called by the Spaniards the Piscadore. One of my best mules which was tied broke loose and ran away and was lost.

2nd 4 Miles S E and encamped again on the bank of the river which I suppose to be the Peticutsy. I made rafts for crossing of poles and flags.

3d I made a pen on the bank of the river and driving my horses in by small bands into the pen and from the pen into the river I crossed them over without the loss of any, contrary to my expectations.

4th Some of my men were out hunting for Beaver sign and as the water was high the weather rainy and the banks of the river Low I thought it advisable to build some Skin Canoes which would assist us in trapping and in crossing streams in our course.

Having been so long absent from the business of trapping and so much perplexed and harrassed by the folly of men in power I returned again to the woods, the river, the prairie, the Camp & the Game with a feeling somewhat like that of a prisoner escaped from his dungeon and his chains.

7th Some of my men are engaged in hunting Elk for the sake of the skins to make canoes and a few were trapping but I could not do much at trapping for I had but 47 traps. 9 men were attending the traps and the rest of the party not hunting were taking care of the horses and camp keeping. In the course of the day I moved 8 miles down the river and encamped on a creek not far from the river. Nearly all the Lowlands along the river were inundated. At the camp from which I moved I left 4 men to finish two canoes which were nearly done and start down the river trapping. They were to join me again in a week.

10th It had been raining almost every day since I came to the river, and finding that very little could be done by horses when the rivers were so high I concluded to make another Skin Boat.

11th & 12th Good Weather. I had at that time taken 45 Beaver. I had the skins dried and started 2 men with another canoe. Some of the Appalamminy indians visited me; they were as usual friendly. My horses had eaten the grass so much at make it necessary for me to move my camp.

13th N Westerly 4 Miles and encamp on a creek which was dry when I was in the country the last summer but now had plenty of water. In the vicinity and at this season of the year it was impossible to go [to] the river with a horse for several miles above and below my camp in consequence of the low flaggy ground which was covered with water. Some of the Ponds have Beaver along their flaggy banks and three of my men who trap by land succeed [ed ] in taking some of them. My number of Beaver had increased to 61. The weather good.

14th I sent Mr. Rodgers with 2 men to hunt for Elk with instructions to remain out one or two nights as circumstances might require. My 4 Men who went with the first 2 Canoes came in at night bringing with them 33 Beaver. My Men in camp were engaged, some in stretching Beaver skins, one in saddle making and some in breaking Mules. Weather still pleasant.

16th Mr. Rodgers and the 2 men returned having killed 4 Elk. With them came 2 indians. One of them was the principal chief of the Machyma Band of indians that reside on the head of the Mackalumbry River. I was at his village the last spring. I made them some presents and told them I was going to Bodega and they agreed to go with me.

17th Reed & Pompare the 2 Trappers that went in a Canoe by themselves returned having caught 22 Beaver. The two chiefs left camp and said they would join me on Rock River in five days. 2 of the 4 Canoe trappers came in they had put ashore 6 Miles below the river at that place had overflowed its banks so that there was no chance for trapping. As there was now opportunity for trapping by water I directed the men to take horses, go on by land and join me at Rock River.

18th I started for Rock River. Reed & Pompare started in the canoe to join me in 8 days [] on Rock River. In 4 miles I came to the Mackalumbry River and in attempting to cross it I got my horses nearly all mired and was obliged to relinquish the idea of crossing at that place. After some

difficulty I got my horses out of the mire and encamped.

19th N E 10 Miles I moved on up the Machallumbry endeavoring to find a suitable [place] to cross. The traveling was verry miry and I continued on ten miles before I found a place that would answer the purpose. I then encamped. In the morning I saw a Grizzly Bear and shot at him but did not kill him

20th I [ t] took me all day to get my goods and property over the river. I fell trees across the water and carried the goods over. We then undertook to cross the horses by swimming them, but could not get them into the water until I had made a pen on the Bank for that purpose. Before they were all over the place where they came out on the opposite bank became so miry that I had to Bridge it. One of the men shot several times at a Bear but did not kill it.

21st 10 Miles North to Rock River Although the ground was rolling the horses sank at every step nearly to the nees. In the morning the 4 Canoe trappers joined me. They had follow ed up the Buenaventura to the mouth of Rock River and up it several miles but not finding me they struck across to the Mackalumbry and fell in with me just as I was starting. They had seen a great many indians but found them friendly. In the evening a good many indians were seen near our camp, but they all ran off.

22d I sent some men out early to hunt for deer as there was sign in the vicinity and we were destitute of provision. Several indians came to camp and I gave them some tobacco. They brought with them some fine salmon some of which would weigh 15 or 20 lbs. I bought three of them and one of the men killed a deer. In the mean time some of the men were up and some down the river searching for Beaver sign. They found but little and set but few traps. One of the Chiefs that had promised to meet me at this place and accompany me to Bodega came and told me that the other was sick which would prevent their going with me. It rained most of the day and all night.

23 It had been my intention to ford the river and go down on the other side. But the late rains had raised the river so much as to render this impracticable. I therefore remained in camp and although the rain continued the river commenced falling. Many indians visited the camp among the rest some of them who were so hostile to me the last spring. They were quite friendly and I gave them some Tobacco and Sugar. An indian which came the day before pretended he would go with me 2 or 3 days and as he was quite naked I lent him a Blanket. At night he ran off taking with him the borrowed Blanket. There was in camp several indians of the same band and among the rest one who called himself a Chief. I told him of the theft of the Blanket by signs which he understood. He remained at camp and after sending out twice brought in the Blanket. These indians are nearly naked and have less modesty than any I have ever been with.

24th I went down the River 2 Miles, found a ford and crossed over and went 7 Miles further down course nearly W N W. found some Beaver sign set traps and encamped.

25th As I had some Beaver skins which need drying I did not move camp. But took 4 men with me and went down the river as this was the day I was to meet Reed & Pompare. I went about 12 miles and supposed I was near the Main River. But could get no further on account of the miry Bottoms. I therefore left two notes for them. One on the bank of the River and one on the trail and returned in doing which I saw several indians who ran off.

26th I crossed over the river at an indian village of 50 lodges they made a flag canoe to assist me in crossing. I then got an indian who could speak a few words of Spanish and taking him and Laplant with me I went down Rock River 3 Miles further than I had gone the day before and in

view of the flags of the Buenaventura. But Rock River turning N W I supposed from the instructions I had given Reed & Pompare that they had passed above its mouth and were then on the main river. As the indian said I could not go up that way on account of the Mire I concluded to return again to the village and send some indians after the 2 men. So I returned and remained all night at the village where I was treated with great Kindness. In the morning I hired six Indians to go [in] search of the lost men & sent them off. I invited the Chief to visit me & returned to Camp. 27th I returned to my camp and soon after the chief with 20 or 30 indians came to see me and I gave them some small presents. These indians called themselves Machalunbrys. I saw among them a good many Spanish Blankets & Shirts. They did not manifest a disposition to steal which as I have before remarked is no small merit for an indian. The[y] have a kind of preparation resembling the Persimmon bread made by the indians on the Lower Mississippi but their principal living seems to be Acorn Mush. Their Lodges are stationary and made of grass and Mats. When the indians came to my camp they Brought a large Basket filled with Mush and asked me for some meat which they ate with their Mush.

28th The Indians I had sent for my 2 men returned without finding them. They said they had seen their tracks where they had been traveling towards Rock River. My horses caused me a considerable trouble and one of my horse guard in looking for horses not far from camp lost himself, Mired his horse and left him. I was absent and Mr. Rodgers sent some men to look for the horse but the[y] returned without finding him.

29th N W 9 Miles down Rock River. Some horses were missing but I did not wait for them. As soon as it was light I took 4 Men and started on the trail made by the Man who lost [his] horse when he went out. Traveling every point of the compass through Mud and for 7 or 8 Miles I found the horse not more than 3 Miles from camp. By ten O Clock I was back again to camp. 4 Men sent for lost horses returned they had found them but could not get them to camp.

30th I sent three men back after the lost horses. It rain [ed] considerably, but I had my packs put upon the horses & moved down the river & encamped where 4 of my men sent down to trap had encamped last night. In the evening the men sent for the horses returned with part of them, some were still left.

31st I sent two men over to the river to look for Reed and Pompare and I with one man went again down on the North side of Rock River for the same purpose. 2 men were sent for horses. At night all came in. The men from the Buenaventura saw no sign of the lost men. I went with difficulty as far as the Mouth of a stream coming in from the North which I supposed to be indian River. The country miry and the River high. No sign of the lost men. The [men] who went up the River found no horse.

Feb 1st 1828 I took 3 Men and went in search of the horse but did not find him. Two Men were sent down on the oposite side of the river in search of Reed and Pompare with instructions to go if possible to the mouth of Rock River. Four indians visited the camp and one who had been with us several days ran away taking with him a Blanket. My trappers took a few Beaver each day.

2d 3d & 4th remained at the same camp. The indians brought me word that they had seen my two men some distance above on the Buenaventura. I immediately started two men off in Company with some indians to see if they could be found.

5th I crossed over the River carrying my goods in two skin canoes I had lately made and swimming the horses and then went down the River 4 Miles and encamped.

6th I had another Skin Canoe made. In the course of the [day] 50 or 60 indians visited the Camp. They were from Elk Creek and Indian River and seemed to want nothing but meat which our luck in hunting enabled us to give them as Mr. Rodgers had killed 4 Elk and myself 5. The two men sent to look for Reed & Pompare returned. The indians had taken them in towards the Buenaventura but as it was constant wading they were obliged to return. I sent 6 Men in 3 Skin Canoes down Rock River for the purpose of trapping.

7th A good many indians stayed in camp the last night. The trappers sent down the river returned in consequence of hearing a good deal of shooting and observing some movements of the indians which the[y] did not like. I went down with them again and encamped with them.

8th I went down the River a few miles from the camp of the trappers to see if I could cross the River when ready to move on North, I found a suitable place and returned.

9th I went hunting for Elk but did not kill any. When I returned I found about 60 indians at camp. Ten indians who I had sent two days before in search of Reed and Pompare returned without hearing any thing from them. I then gave up all hopes of seeing them again. On examination I found they had taken nearly all their things with them, from which circumstance I Judged their absence was voluntary and that when they went away they had no intention to return.

10th I moved down the river to the place where I intended to cross. My men thought I could go no further but the indians said I could go on. There were at my camp several of the neighboring indians and I made them some small presents.

11th I went with one man across the river to examine the country on the opposite side. Considering it passible I sent a note back to Mr. Rodgers [] directing him to cross over and I continued out into the prairie pursuing Elk but did not kill any.

12th I moved N W 10 Miles across a flat muddy country sometimes in mud and water 2 or 3 feet deep and encamped on the East bank of the Buenaventura River. At that place the River was about 300 yards wide, a gentle current and apparently deep, the water somewhat muddy. The Banks generally low are timbered with Ash Cottonwood Elk Sycamore Willow and where the ground is sufficiently dry some Oak. The Timber on each side of the river is narrow and the boundary between the upland and river bottom is not marked by steep Bluffs, the inclination of the face of the country being on both sides gently sloping towards the river. In the bottoms are Lakes and flags which frequently extend 2 miles from the river. The soil of the country is generally good being frequently a rich chocolate colored loam.

The winter in this valley is the best season for grass and at the time of which I am now speaking the whole face of the country is a most beautiful green, resembling a flourishing wheat field. I have frequently had occasion to speak of the miry muddy traveling which so much obstructed my progress. This is much owing to the superabundance of rain during the winter which in addition to the vast volumes of water poured out of Mt. Joseph fills the streams to overflowing and completely saturates the light rich soil of the valley. I had by means of the residence of my party in the valley during the summer and by my own observation an opportunity to determine that the country was generally sufficiently dry for cultivation except during the rainy season. On [arriving at] the river I found verry little Beaver but plenty of Otter sign. On my first arrival at the river I was under the impression that it was Wild River But soon after I was undeceived.

13th N 12 Miles Some of the [Indians] which came with me as guides from Rock River continued on with me. The Country like the last described. Encamped just below a creek on which was con-

siderable beaver sign and the traps were set.

In the course of the day I passed an Indian village of 20 or 30 lodges made of flag mats and straw. The men were there themselves but had taken the precaution to send off their wives, children and goods. Our arrival caused a good deal of uneasiness but when my guide, the old chief, came up and spoke to them all was well again.

14th Only 6 Beaver were taken the last night. Some Raccoon and 2 Deer were killed but the deer were poor which is always the case in this valley although the grass is good.

15th Was rainy. I had my things all carried over the slou on a log and my horses swam over. The old chief, my guide, left me making signs that he would return. 2 Beaver taken.

16th A circuitous route of 10 Miles following a bend of the river to the west and then North, making a direct line of six Miles. Country dry along the river and flag Ponds back a short distance. Opposite camp the river was much smaller and as I could see about 2 miles below camp an arm of timber extending off North West I concluded that the main river ran in that direction. South East from camp the timber extended farther from the river and the land became dryer. In the course of the day I passed several indian villages built of flag Mats and straw. But the inhabitants had taken the alarm and fled. Much more Beaver sign than Below. The day was tolerably pleasant.

17th Remained at camp. After 9 O Clock it was Rainy. 14 Beaver taken.

18th Remain[ed] at same Camp. The rain that commenced the day before continued without intermission for 24 hours. This may be well termed the rainy season for we scarcely had more than one pleasant day at a time, 12 Beaver taken.

19th The rise of water interfered so much with trapping that but 6 Beaver were taken. One of my men, E. Lazarus, had a trap stolen by the indians and a number of them had him surrounded but he was relieved by some trappers coming from above who drove the indians off and would have punished them had it not been for some miry ground over which they retreated.

20th I went with the Trappers within a mile of the place where I struck the river on the last Apl. Above that there was no Beaver sign but considerable from the camp up to that place.

I saw some indians on the opposite side of the river but they ran off. The river was quite rapid and the rushing of the water brought fresh to my remembrance the cascades of Mt. Joseph and the unpleasant times I had passed there when surrounded by the snow which continued falling. My horses freezing, my men discouraged and our utmost exertion necessary to keep from freezing to death. I then thought of the vanity of riches and of all those objects that lead men in the perilous paths of adventure. It seems that in times like those men return to reason and make the true estimate of things. they throw by the gaudy baubles of ambition and embrace the solid comforts of domestic life. But a few days of rest makes the sailor forget the storm and embark again on the perilous Ocean and I suppose that like him I would soon become weary of rest.

21st Nothing material occurred the weather rainy. 9 Beaver were taken.

22nd I moved across the River. My goods were ferried over in a skin canoe, and the horses swam. The Skins of my 3 Canoes had been carried along for several days and were ready for us at any time by making a frame. After crossing the River I moved 3/4 of a mile and encamped on a slou of the River my camp being on an island. It was so late when I encamped that but few traps were set. The afternoon was rainy. One trap was lost, another broken and 11 taken by Reed & Pompare, leaving me but 32.

23d I took all the trappers and went down to the forks and up the Main River but soon found slous so deep as to be swimming. I then turned back and endeavored to head them but found it so Muddy that the horses could not travel. Found some indian Lodges deserted but on searching found two squaws, one too old to run away and the other blind. They were trembling with fear and made signs for us to go away. I gave them an awl and some pieces of flannel that I had in my Shot Bag at the same time I gave them some fish that the men found in one of the Lodges. This seemed to satisfy them and they altered their tone so much as to invite me to sit down.

All appearances for progress were unfavorable for as far as I could see up the Main River The flag Ponds & Lakes extended. I hardly knew what course to pursue, for it was impossible to travel North and useless to travel up Wild River on which I was encamped for there was no Beaver in that direction. At 1 O Clock the weather became clear with a north wind. I crossed over the slou by the means of my skin Canoes and a raft made of logs. My raft was formed of some logs that appeared to have been hewn many years since and used for the same purpose to which I applied them. In none of the indian lodges of the vicinity could I see any thing like axes.

24th I concluded I would move up Wild River. But did not go far as I was obliged to raft two slous in 40 yards.

25th E 3 miles up Wild River. Mr. Rodgers and myself went hunting and killed an antelope. We could go no distance from the River on account of the Mud which made the country quite impassable for horses. This was the more surprising as the country was timbered and the soil gravelly. In the evening some of the men found setting for their traps.

26th I went hunting and killed a goose and an Antelope. Two of my trappers, [Toussaint] Marshall and [John] Turner were up 3 or 4 miles from camp and seeing some Indians around their traps who would not come to them but attempted to run off they fired at them and Turner killed one and Mareshall wounded another. I was extremely sorry for the occurrence and reprimanded them severely for their impolitic conduct. To prevent the recurrence of such an act the only remedy in my power was to forbid them the privilege of setting traps, for I could not always have the trappers under my eye.

27th fine weather but still so muddy that I was afraid to try the country North. I went down the river a few miles in doing which I fell in with an indian who could not handily get away and coaxed him to camp. I made him a few presents and sent him off.

28th remained at the same camp.

29th As the only chance was to go down the river I moved down to my old camp and endeavored to go further but found it useless.

March 1st 1828 I went in company with the trappers down to the confluence of Wild River and the Buenaventura which was about 2 Miles from camp. The Buenaventura still continued about 300 yards wide and came from the North maintaining the appearance of which I have before spoken. The Mountain on each side about 30 Miles distant. In going down Wild River we came suddenly on an indian lodge. Its inhabitants immediately fl[e]d. Some plunged into the river and some took a raft while some squaws ran down the bank of the stream.

We galloped after them and overtook one who appered very much frightened and pacified her in the usual manner by making her some presents. I then went on to the place where I had seen one fall down. She was still laying there and apparently lifeless. She was 10 or 11 years old. I got down from my horse and found that she was in fact dead. Could it be possible, thought I, that we who

called ourselves Christians were such frightful objects as to scare poor savages to death. But I had little time for meditation for it was necessary that I should provide for the wants of my party and endeavor to extricate myself from the embarrassing situation in which I was placed. I therefore to convince the friends of the poor girl of my regret for what had been done covered her Body with a Blanket and left some trifles near by and in commemoration of the singular wildness of those indians and the novel occurrence that made it appear so forcibly I named the River on which it happened Wild River. To this River I had before that time applied a different name.

I found so many Ponds Lakes and Slous along the Buenaventura immediately above the mouth of Wild River that I thought the country impassible. On our return towards Camp in crossing a Slou which was swimming deep 2 horses were drowned. On one was six traps and on the other four. The stream was not more than 20 yards in width but a strong current and filled with trees. We went home with the intention of fixing one of the Skin Canoes and coming down the next day to search for them.

March 2nd I sent some of the men to look for the drowned horses and went myself to see if it was possible to kill a Deer. I killed one and wounded two others and on coming in the men let me know that they could [] find but one of the drowned horse which luckily was that on which was the six traps. I then went in search myself but was unsuccessful. The loss of traps in that country and in those times was much regreted as I had but verry few and there was no chance to procure more. During our stay at this encampment the trappers brought in 3 or 4 Beaver each day. But one meal of meat ahead.

March 3d N 12 Miles finding that the water had somewhat dried out of the ground I determined to make one more attempt to proceed. I found the mud verry deep but not as bad as I had expected. There was an indian trail leading through the most difficult part of the way which served as a guide. We passed 30 or 40 indian lodges but the indians as usual all ran off. I encamped at the head of a flag Lake and at some lodges which the owners left for our accomodation. After encg I saw a band of elk and taking with me 3 Men we killed two Barren does which were in good order for the season. The weather fine and warm. Muskitoes troublesome.

March 4th N 11 Miles and encamp on a creek 20 yards wide running SW. As it was verry Brushy I called it Brush Creek. found some Beaver sign and had traps set. Saw a good many Elk and passed on the bank of the Main river which continues to run North and South several indian lodges thatched with grass.

March 5th Mr. Rodgers went hunting and I went with the trappers. We crossed over the creek on a tree which had been felled for that purpose and went to the River but found that the main river had turned to the left some miles below. On this fork bearing NNE found some Beaver sign and had my traps all set. Mr. Rodgers saw a good many Elk but as the country was not favorable for approaching them he did not kill any.

March 6th I sent my trappers over to their traps and I moved on up the creek to find a place to cross. I threw a tree across but it would not answer the purpose and finding the banks high and some Slous I abandoned the idea of crossing at that place and returning to camp I had a skin canoe made with the intention of going down the creek to cross. My men who were off trapping came and encamped opposite.

7th March I moved down a mile and crossed by the help of the Skin Canoe the horses swimming. All got over safe but it was too late to move. I went down to where the trappers were and carried

them some Blankets. They had killed a large Brown Bear which was in good order and were of course feasting. Yes, I repeat it, feasting, for the hunter of the Buenaventura Valley at the distance of 2000 miles from his home may enjoy and be thankful for such Blessings as heaven may throw in his way.

8th N N E 7 Miles I was under the necessity of travelling verry crooked to avoid the mud encamped on the smaller River to which I had not at that time applied a name. Opposite to my camp was an indian village and not far below one or two more. Their Lodges were built like those of the Pawnees. After we had encamped several of them came and sat on the bank opposite talking but in a language which I did not understand. On this river I found a plenty of Beaver sign. 13 were caught the first setting. Mr. Rodgers killed a Brown Bear and wounded another.

March 9th Early in the Morning Mr. Rodgers went after the wounded Bear in company with John Hanna. In a short time Hanna came running in and said that they had found the Bear in a verry bad thicket. That he suddenly rose from his bed and rushed on them. Mr. Rodgers fired a moment before the Bear caught him. After biting him in several places he went off, but Hanna shot him again, when he returned, caught Mr. Rodgers and gave him several additional wounds. I went out with a horse to bring him in and found him verry badly wounded being severely cut in [ ] 10 or 12 different places. I washed his wounds and dressed them with plasters of soap and sugar.

The indians came as they had done the day before and sat on the bank of the River. I prevailed on several of them to come over and made them presents of Beads, pieces of Flannel and some Meat. They were entirely naked. The game of the Country was Bear Elk Black tailed Deer Antelope Large and small Wolves Beaver Otter and Raccoon. The Birds were Swan Geese Crane Heron Loons Brant Many kinds of Ducks Indian Hens. Some small birds but they were not plenty. The birds of Prey were Buzzards Crows Ravens Magpies &c. The trappers took 9 Beaver.

10th March Mr. Rodgers wounds were verry painful. I dressed them frequently with cold water and salve of Sugar and Soap. The indians came across the river again bringing me presents of several Bunches of feathers worn on the head. 11 Beaver were taken.

11th March. The indians came to the opposite bank of the River as they had before done. I invited them over and made them some presents. As I was intending to remain at that place for some time I concluded to go to their village. With this intention I took some small presents and was ferried over the river by the indians on their log rafts.

Arrived at the village I was seated on a mat in a vacancy apparently left for Public use and commenced business by giving my presents. The principal characters took them for distribution in doing which they were verry exact giving to some one and to others two or three Beads as their respective merits might claim. In making their division they did not speak loud but whispered among themselves.

After this business was finished they I suppose felt under obligation to make some presents in return and commenced bringing me fishing nets and dishes but I returned them expressing by signs my satisfaction and my desire to return. When I came away they endeavored to cry as a demonstration of their sorrow for my departure. The village consisted of about 50 Lodges. I saw nothing among them which had any appearance of having come from a civilized country. They were generally naked but a few of them had feather robes and dresses made of net work. The dress of the women consisted of a belt around the waist to which was attached two bunches of bark or flags one hanging down before and the other behind in the form of a fringe.

---

These indians smoke in wooden pipes and in common with the most of the indians of this valley they wear their hair not more than 5 or 6 inches in length. The entrance to their houses is by a low passage covered with dirt through which they are obliged to creep on their hands and knees. 20 Beaver were taken and as I had but 28 traps I considered it great trapping.

12th March The men were trapping several miles above camp towards the mountain. they told me that the river forked about a mile above camp and that the fork on which they were trapping was clear and had some rapids. In the course of the day some indians came to camp for meat as usual. 8 Beaver taken.

13th March Remained at the same camp. In the vicinity were a good many Black tailed Deer and I improved every opportunity to dry the best of the meat. I sent men up the river to the Mountain but they found verry little Beaver sign higher up than where the trappers had been setting. 13 Beaver taken.

14th March I made my calculations for crossing the fork which came from the East on the Morrow. To this river I gave the Indian name Hen-neet. The weather still continued fine and Mr. Rodgers wounds in such a situation as to make it impossible that I should move any great distance in the day.

15th March I went with the trappers across the Hen-neet and directed them to encamp near where the[y] would [] set their traps. I recrossed to camp. A considerable number of indians crossed the River a short distance below. 14 Beaver taken.

16th March Moved N E about 1 mile up the river and crossed over above the forks without any difficulty by the help of my skin canoe in which my goods were carried over, the horses swimming. The indians near my camp still continue friendly and were singing when I left them. 12 Beaver taken.

17th March I went with the trappers 8 or 10 Miles up the River which came from the North and united with the Hen-neet near my camp. To this River I gave the name Ya-loo which was the name I applied to the indians of the village last visited. We found but little Beaver sign as far as we went up the river. I passed two indian villages of 20 or 25 dirt lodges each the inhabitants were much alarmed at our approach but after some time I prevailed on them to come to me and take some presents.

During my absence there was a considerable alarm in camp by the appearance of several hundred indians on the opposite bank of the River but the alarm subsided when they passed on up the river and in a short time returned loaded with Acorns from some caches they had in that direction. 9 Beaver taken.

18th March I sent the trappers to remove their traps from the Yaloo to a branch of the Hen-neet on which they had found some Beaver sign. 9 Beaver taken.

19th March As there was no chance for trapping on the Yaloo and some little on the Henneet I moved N E 5 miles towards the foot of the Mountain. I was induced to do this more especially as Mr. Rodgers was not in a situation to make a great days travel which would be necessary in traveling up the Yaloo for it was in all probability some distance to Beaver in that direction. After encamping I went [] North 5 or 6 miles to a Creek 20 yards wide running west called from the Color of its bank Red Bank Creek. It was fordable but I found verry little beaver sign in it. The country generally as the dry season advanced became dry and firm and apparently fit for cultivation, presenting a verry different appearance from that of a month back when it was almost impossible to

---

travel in any direction.

In the course of the days travel I saw some Antelope and the sign of Elk and fell in with 2 indians and a squaw on the plain. I found they were attending [ ] some nets set for the purpose of catching Brant. From where they stood cords extended 2 or 300 yards to the nets and there we observed several Brant.

While I was making the indians presents of some Beads the men said they would creep up and kill some. They made several shots without success when I told them I thought they were deceived. They said not for they had seen them move and one said his gun must be crooked but that he would try them again. He did so and I was convinced that I was right in the supposition that they were decoys and on examination found them so complete that the deception could not be detected except in verry near approach. The nets were about 20 feet long and 6 feet wide and arranged much like the common pigeon net. There was three of them all to be sprung at once by the same line. 9 Beaver taken.

10th March On account of the wounds of Mr. Rodgers I was obliged to remain in the same camp. The weather still continued fine, 9 Beaver taken. Some indians came near camp I went to them and gave them some presents of Beads and some Meat with which they appeared much pleased.

21st March N W 7 Miles crossing the several channels of Red Bank Creek and encamp within 3 Miles of the Yaloo. After encamping I went with the trappers down to the river where they set their traps. The indians were numerous and in one place I came upon them before they had an opportunity to run off and gave them some Beads according to my common custom. The squaws had their baskets filled with young Pea vine and from what I could observe I think their principal supports consi[s]ts of Acorns, Grass, Pea vines, Roots and what few fish and water fowl they are able to take.

If Missionaries could be useful in Civilizing and Christianizing any indians in the World their efforts should be turned towards this valley. The indians are numerous honest and peaceable in their dispositions. They live in a country where the soil is good and the climate pleasant with the exception of 2 or 3 months in the winter when there is too much rain. There is seldom any frost and I have seen snow but once in the valley of the Buenaventura.

A great many of these indians appear to be the lowest intermediate link between man and the Brute creation. In the construction of houses they are either from indolence or from a deficiency of genius inferior to the Beaver and many of them live without any thing in the shape of a house and rise from their bed of earth in the morning like the animals around them and rove about in search of food. If they find it it is well if not they go hungry. But hunger does not teach them providence. Each day is left to take care of itself. ... degraded ignorant as these indians must be and miserable as the life appears which they lead it is made more apparent by a contrast with the country in which they are placed a country one would think rather calculated to expand than restrain the energies of man a country where the creator has scattered a more than ordinary Share of his bounties. [ ]

22nd March Lay by on account of the wounds of Mr. Rodgers. Some rain during the night. Nothing material occured. 12 Beaver taken.

23d N W 6 Miles and encamp on the Yaloo River. At 12 O Clock it commenced raining and continued until 3 when it cleared off with a west wind. The trappers who came directly up the River passed 3 indian villages. They found the river somewhat rapid and but little appearance of Beaver.

24th March The party remained in camp. I went with several of the men a North East course to the foot of the Mountain. Betwe[e] camp and the Mountain on the North side of the river were two indian villages and some Beaver. Some Indians visited camp in my absence and Mr. Rodgers gave them some Beads and some Meat. 17 Beaver taken.

25th March W N W 3 Miles to the place I had selected for crossing the river. 17 Beaver taken.

26th March The Ya loo at that place was about 100 yards wide and strong current but as I found good bars on both sides of the river I had no difficulty in swimming my horses and my goods were carried over in a Skin Canoe made for the purpose. The indians were close to camp on both sides of the river but I did not allow them to camp this being with me a general rule.

I went to them and gave them some presents and one of them was so bold as to venture into camp but soon left it at my request. But few traps were set. 10 Beaver taken.

27th March I had my horses caught early but one of them ran off and swam the river. I got an Indn raft which was a mile above and went over after him and drove him back. At 12 O Clock we moved off W N W 12 Miles over a level Prairae crossing some small muddy Creeks and encamp on a Creek 30 yds wide running SW Deep and Muddy with some timber on its banks but very little Beaver sign. I had a tree thrown across at a narrow place to form a foot Bridge that I might be in readiness to cross early in the morning as I was desirous of proceeding to the Buenaventura River which appeared about six Miles distant.

28th March 7 Miles W N W and encamp on the Buenaventura. In the course of the day I crossed two muddy Slous of the River. The Buenaventura at that place was about 200 yards wide Deep and forcible current. Its general course South and its banks fringed with timber principally Cotton wood and Sycamore and when the banks were somewhat higher Oak. Far off to the north verry high Peaks of the Mountain were seen covered with snow. The valley at that place was apparently about 50 Miles in width. The Mountain to the west on towards the coast not high but rugged and some snow. On the East the Mountain was high timbered and its upper region covered with snow. In the course of the day I saw some Elk and the trappers killed two they were in good order. There was not much Beaver sign about the river its banks were too sandy, But a short distance back were Lakes and ponds in which were found some Beaver.

29th March N 6 Miles and encamp on the river. I was obliged to cross many Slous of the River that were verry miry and passed great numbers of indians who were engaged in digging Roots. I succeeded in giving to them some presents. they were small in size and apparently verry poor and miserable. The most of them had little Rabit Skin Robes. 11 Beaver taken.

30th March The Party remained in camp and I went up the river with one man to examine the country. About 1 Mile above camp a creek came in 20 yards called Pen-min wide deep and Muddy. Along its banks were many dirt Lodges having the entrance at the top. As we passed along the little children reminded me of young wolves or Prairae dogs. They would sit and gaze at us until we approached near to them when they would drop down into their holes. Some of the indians appeared much frightened as we came in sight while others scarcely quit their Work (digging roots) to look at us.

At that place I saw a few indians who wore their hair long [] The women dressed like the last described except perhaps that the scanty apron was there sometimes made of Deer Skin instead of bark or flags. I came to one place where there was several lodges together the women cried and the men harranged me on my approach but I soon pacified them. On my return to camp I

got my horse mired and we were obliged to draw him through the mud for two hundred yards 3 of the indians assisting us. On my arrival at camp I found the indians had been there all day or as near as I allow them to come. The indians of this vicinity were all pleased to get the least morsel of meat.

31st March North 8 Miles. To make this distance my route was quite circuitous being obliged to travel much out of my way in order to find a suitable place to cross Pen-min Creek and the mud beyond. We passed many indians and some of them went with us to the place of encamping. Just before encamping I discovered 2 Bear and 3 of us approached them and killed both. They were neither large nor fat. 4 of the trappers did not come in to camp. 14 Beaver taken.

April 1st The trappers all came in one trap lost by Beaver.

In the evening several of us went out hunting for there was considerable sign of Bear Deer Elk and Antelope in the neighborhood. Mr. [ Martin ] McCoy and J [ oseph ] Palmer killed a large Grizzly Bear in tolerable order and on opening him found nearly in the center of the lights a stone Arrow head together with about 3 inches of the Shaft attached to it. The men brought that part of the lights containing the arrow into camp. The wound appeared perfectly healed and closed around the arrow. 3 indians who came with us to camp were busily employed on the share of Meat allotted to them and on the entrails of the Bear. They filled themselves so completely that they were puffed up like Bladders. One of those indians had a spear with a stone head like that of an Arrow but 5 or 6 times as large. The handle was about 6 feet Long.

2nd April At the same camp. Several indians visited me to whom I gave some small presents and some meat for these indians were well pleased whenever they could [get] the least morsel of meat. Two of the indians who came with us to camp still remained. 17 Beaver taken. For 4 Days past the Cranes and Brant had been on their passage North in great numbers. The Geese had principally gone before.

3d April Remained at the same camp. The weather warm and at night the Musquitoes troublesome. My two indians still with me. 13 Beaver taken.

4th April The trappers had been 4 or 5 miles up the river. Beaver plenty but the numerous Slous interfere much with trapping. The indians were verry numerous and friendly. 18 Beaver taken.

5th April W N W 7 Miles Turned out from the river and 5 miles from camp crossed a Creek 20 yards wide running West. Rapid but fordable. I called it Black Sand Creek. My encampment was on the River bank. Many indians came as near the camp as I would permit and sat down. I gave them some presents. They were naked but had not the miserable appearance of those below. They were under the impression that the horses could understand them and when they were passing they talked to them and made signs as to the men.

6th Remained at the same camp. At 8 O Clock about 100 indians visited us they were generally naked but a few of them had rabbit Skin Robes. They were about 5 feet 10 inches in heighth rather light complexion round featured, wide mouths, and short hair. They brought with them no weapons but had genly in their hands a bush of green leaves. I met them according to my usual custom about 80 yards from camp and invited them to sit down. One who seemed tolerably intelligent showed me the principal men. I gave them some cotton shirting Beads Awls, and Tobacco. They were apparently fond of smoking. Their pipes were long strait and made of wood. Those indians were frequently where my men were setting their traps But did no further damage than springing a few of them. A river about 70 yards in width entered the Buenaventura on the west side 12 Miles

---

below Camp. Its water had a verry Clay appearance. I called it Pom-che-le-ne. Beaver taken. 7th April W N W 8 Miles. At 2 Miles from camp crossed a creek 30 yards wide rapid and stoney Bottom running SW and having some Beaver sign. 3 Miles farther struck a creek same size and running S. W but so deep that I was obliged to follow it up 3 Miles to find a ford at which place I encamped. In the vicinity was considerable appearance of game and particularly bear. In the evening we shot several Bear and they ran into thickets that were convenient. Several of us followed one that was Badly wounded into a thicket. We went on foot because the thicket was too close to admit a Man on horse back.

As we advanced I saw one and shot him in the head when he immediately [] fell-Apparently dead. I went in to bring him out without loading my gun and when I arrived within 4 yards of the place where the Bear lay the man that was following me close behind spoke and said "He is alive". I told him in answer that he was certainly dead and was observing the one I had shot so intently that I did not see one that lay close by his side which was the one the man behind me had reference to. At that moment the Bear sprang towards us with open mouth and making no pleasant noise.

Fortunately the thicket was close on the bank of the creek and the second spring I plunged head foremost into the water. The Bear ran over the man next to me and made a furious rush on the third man Joseph Lapoint. But Lapoint had by good fortune a Bayonet fixed on his gun and as the Bear came in he gave him a severe wound in the neck which induced him to change his course and run into another thicket close at hand. We followed him there and found another in company with him. One of them we killed and the other went off Badly wounded.

I then went on horse Back with two men to look for another that was wounded. I rode up close to the thicket in which I supposed him to be and rode round it several times halloeing but without making any discovery. I rode up for a last look when the Bear sprang for the horse. He was so close that the horse could not be got underway before he caught him by the tail. The Horse being strong and much frightened exetered himself so powerfully that he gave the Bear no opportunity to close upon him and actually drew him 40 or 50 yards before he relinquished his hold.

The Bear did not continue the pursuit but went off and [I] was quite glad to get rid of his company on any terms and returned to camp to feast on the spoils and talk of the incidents of our eventful hunt. 16 Beaver taken.

8th April The party remained at the same camp. I [] went up the Creek which I called Grizly Bear Creek to the foot of the first small range of Mountain. The distance was but 1 1/2 Mile and the creek for that distance had a rapid current and stoney bottom. From the top of the mountain which appeared to be a spur of the main range breaking off from it a few miles south of my position I took a view of the country around. On the East Mt. Joseph appeared lower than it had before been having but little snow on such of its summits as were in view. The Main Mountain still ranged nearly North & South and a stream joined the Grizly Bear Creek on the north side. One Bear killed and ten Beaver taken.

9th April At the same camp. Rainy with a south wind. 10th April N W 6 miles. I moved on with the intention of traveling up the Buenaventura but soon found the rocky hills coming in so close to the river as to make it impossible to travel. I went on in advance of the party and ascending a high point took a view of the country and found the river coming from the N E and running apparently for 20 or 30 Miles through ragged rocky hills. The mountain beyond appeared too high

to cross at that season of the year or perhaps at any other.

Believing it impossible to travel up the river I turned Back into the valley and encamped on the river with the intention of crossing. For this purpose I set some men at work to make a skin canoe. My Camp seemed in a curve of the Mountain. Mt. Joseph gradually bending to the west appeared in conjunction with the low range on the west side of the river which in its course north joined it to encircle the sources of the Buenaventura. The distance from camp to the main range of Mt. Joseph on the East was about 20 Miles on the N E 30 on the N 25 and the low range on the West about 20 miles. The country East N East and North was hilly rocky and timbered with small Oak and Pine. 10 Beaver taken.

11th April The Canoe being finished I crossed my things over in it and swam the horses. All got over safe with the exception of a colt which was drowned. The trappers found setting for a few traps. 12 Beaver taken.

12th April at the same camp. I went with the trappers down the river to look for Beaver sign but found so little that I did not think it worth setting for. On my way I came suddenly on about 20 indians. The moment they saw me they sprang to their feet and commenced dancing in which they appeared to exert their best energies throwing their bodies into every imaginable position. I was much surprised at this singular reception and knew not how to consider it. Perhaps it was meant as a charm or a Medicine according to the meaning of the term when applied to indians or it may have been a mark of respect or the accustomed manner of saluting strangers. Be that as it may I soon made them quit and gave them some presents after which they accompanied me as near the camp as I would allow them to go and received some meat which they as well as all the indians of the valley appeared to eat with great relish. 5 Beaver taken.

13th April N W 8 Verry hilly and rough traveling the timber generally scrubby Oak. Some indians came to us on the route we gave them a part of an Antelope which Mr. Rodgers had killed and they left us. My route was in the direction of a Gap of the Mountain through which I intended to pass. I encamped about 12 O Clock to dry my things which were wet by the last rain and stretch some Beaver skins which I had on hand. One of the indians which came to me had some wampum and Beads. They were procured as I supposed from some trapping party of the Hudsons Bay Company which came in that direction from their establishment on the Columbia.

14th April W N W 6 Miles and encamped on a creek 20 yards wide running N E. Some indians who had encamped near me traveled in company. The hill country and some unbroke mules which I had packed prevented my travelling far.

15th April W N W 12 Miles. At 1 1/2 Mile from camp crossed a Creek 15 yards wide running N E. The country verry rough and hilly but fortunately a ridge or divide ran nearly in the direction in which I wished to travel on the top of which I was enabled to move on without much difficulty until nearly night when I turned a little N E and went down into a deep ravine to encamp on the bank of a rapid stream 20 yards wide running S E. I drove the horses under a steep bank next the Creek that I might have a convenient place to catch them.

While catching them I observed an arrow in the neck of a horse and immediately called to the men to tie the horses they had in their hands and spring to their Guns. This was quickly done and several men mounting their horses rode quickly to a point where 10 or 12 indians were throwing their arrows into camp. They ran off and were fired at and two fell but afterwards crawled off. I got a shot at one soon after but he went off leaving much blood behind. The indians were shouting

about until night but did not come again within gun shot. In the affray they wounded 9 horses and [] mules Some Badly and some slightly and in all probability paid for the damage they had done me by the sacrifice of two or three of their lives. In taking out the arrows [] some of the points were left in. The Creek on which we had encamped had some appearance of Beaver.

16th April West 12 Miles. On account of the roughness of the country I was obliged to turn West. The traveling was exceedingly bad and through a country timbered with some Oak and an abundance of Bastard Cedar. One of the mules and one of the horses both wounded were left behind being unable to travel. I encamped at the foot of the Mountain which was on the West and North West.

The indians had been following us all day and yelling from the high points and after encamping they came quite close to camp. I took several men with me and went within gun shot endeavoring by signs to persuade the indians to come to me being desirous to convince them of my disposition to be friendly. But they had their bows strung and their arrows in their hands and by the violence of their gestures, their constant yelling and their refusal [] to come to me left no doubt on my mind of their inclination to be hostile. I therefore in order to intimidate them and prevent them from doing me further injury fired on them. One fell at once and another shortly after and the indians ran off leaving some of their property on the ground. Lest they should return and shoot some of my horses I had a pen made to put them in and had them guarded as I had done the night before.

17th April W N W 10 Miles and then N W 6 Miles. At 1/2 Miles from camp I crossed a creek 15 yards wide running East. From that place the ascent of the Mountain for 10 Miles was in some places quite steep and timbered with Oak & Pine. Then crossing the ridge of the Mountain where there was some snow and high peaks on the right and left I came to waters that ran to the North West and in a few Miles came to a creek 15 yards wide on which I encamped after travelling down it a short distance. I was apprehensive from the appearance of the country that the stream on which I encamped turned back again into the valley of the Buenaventura.

18th April N 3 Miles. Whilst preparing my horses for starting I sent two men down the creek to see what chance there would be for passing in that direction. It was eleven O Clock before they returned and reported the pass practicable but verry rough. When I moved on I found it necessary to wind among high and steep hills and making but 3 miles encamped on the creek below the mouth of a small creek coming in from the East where there was good grass.

19th April North 6 Miles and West 4 Miles following down the river. The mountain came in close to the river but leaving a tolerable pass along its banks. I encamped where there was a small valley and a creek coming in from the south. At camp the River ran North West. A short distance above camp I saw an Indian lodge and went to it and found an old man a woman and child. The woman and child ran off but the old man staid and I gave him some Beads and tobacco. Soon after encamping some indians showed themselves on the opposite bank of the river and appeared to be creeping up to get a shot at the horses. I went close to them with Arthur Black made friendly signs and invited them to come to me. But they answered by prancing about and making preparations to throw their arrows. I therefore told Black to fire. He did so but without killing any and the indians ran off letting fly their arrows as they went. I shot as they ran but did not kill. 12 or 15 indians soon collected on the other side of the river at the distance of 400 yards and made a fire. Soon after some of them came close enough to throw some arrows near the horses. Some of my

---

men fired at them but without success. About sunset 6 or 8 came and made another fire a short distance from camp. I had 4 horses caught and 3 men and myself gave them a chase. 2 of them were killed and the rest escaped. After this they troubled us no more.

20th April. N N W 8 Miles following down the river I had to cross some high points of the mountain and travel along the side of the hills through thickets of Brush and over steep and [] rough masses of rock. The traveling extremely bad was made much more difficult and dangerous by the great number of horses which I had along. In a bad pass the horses all endeavored to avoid being crowded off themselves and therefore rushed against whatever opposed them.

In a struggle of this kind two of my horses were pushed from a precipice into the river and drowned. 5 traps and some of the mens things were lost. I was obliged to encamp where there was but verry little for my horses to eat.

21st April W N W 12 Miles Traveling same as yesterday. I found some grass on the side of the Mountain about 1 mile from the river and encamped. There appeared to be a small valley on the river which turned in its course nearly North and [] received a branch from the South. Several Smokes were in sight during the day and several of my horses were verry lame from the roughness of the traveling.

22d N W 3 Miles and encamped where there was good grass in a small valley on the ... Passed several indian Lodges the indians themselves were yelling on the hills and some appeared in sight of camp, but when I attempted to go to them they ran off. The river to which I had given the name Smiths river had been gradually increasing in size and at my camp was about 40 yards wide with a strong current and wide sand bars. Its course was N N W. The Mountains of the vicinity were covered with Pine timber and the summit covered with snow.

Just before sunset one of my horse guard came in and told me that there were some indians on the opposite side of the river close at hand. I went with one man to see what they wanted but before I got down they were throwing their arrows at the guard. They were at a distance of 150 yards but their arrows scarcely reached us. I called for some men and went down to the bank of the river and fired several guns wounding one or two of them but killed none dead on the ground. They then ran off yelling and troubled us no more that night. Among those troublesome indians I was obliged to put my horses in a pen every night and have them guarded the fore part of the night but as those indians had but little clothing and the weather in those mountains was cold there was no necessity for continuing the guard during the latter part of the night. Several of my horses were verry lame.

23d April I got under way quite early and went down the river about two miles but the mountain came in close to the river so that I was obliged to order the party back to camp as there was no possibility of proceeding without crossing the river. I went with two men to look for a pass. On examination I soon found the best course would be to cross the river and for that purpose found a ford and returned to camp. No indians were about in sight.

24th North 7 Miles. Early in the morning crossed the river without any material accident and continued down the river the mountain coming in quite close to the river with Brushy thickets and deep ravines. One point of the Mountain over which I was obliged to pass was so exceedingly Rocky and rough that I was four hours in moving one mile. The Rocky hills over which we had to clamber mangled the feet of the horses most terribly. At my camp [] the steep side hills were covered with Oak and Pine timber and the grass was tolerably good. I observed a kind of tree with

which I was before unacquainted. The largest were 1 1/2 feet in diameter and 60 feet high. The limbs smooth and the bark snuff colored. It was at that time in Bloom. Some Europeans who were of my party called it the Red Laurel.

25th My horses were so much fatigued that I remained in camp. Several of us went out to hunt and killed 3 Deer []. Some of the men found some nooses set to catch Deer. They make a fence of Brush leaving a small aperture over which a cord is extended with a noose sufficiently long to admit the head of a deer. It is of course set in some of the common passes.

26th 5 Miles N W About two Miles down the river and immediately below the mouth of a creek coming in from the West the Mountain closed in to the river which ran in a channel of cleft rocks. I therefore turned up the creek and encamped on the north side where it was 30 yards wide rapid and difficult fording. The traveling rough and rocky being along the abrupt sides of the mountain on which were some Oak Pine and Hemlock timber and tolerable grass. More of my horses and Mules were wounded by the rocks during the days march.

Any persons apprised of the character of the country through which I was traveling might form something of an Idea of the difficulty of traveling with a Band of three hundred horses. After encamping I sent two men to look for the best pass over the mountain which lay on the North. They returned at dark and told me it would not be difficult to ascend to the top of the Mountain but that they could not see far enough to judge of the traveling beyond.

27th As I was not satisfied as to the best route by which to continue my [] journey and as the grass about my camp was tolerably good I did not move the party but sent 3 men back for a horse that had been left and went myself with one man to view the country. The best traveling I could discover was to steer NW and keep on a range of hills [] the divide between the River and the creek which had its rise apparently nearly in the direction to which the river ran. The hunters killed 4 Deer and 2 Grizzly Bear. The men from horse hunting returned having found 2 instead of one.

28th N W 3 Miles ascending the steep side of the mountain and arrived at the top and turning N N W the ground a little descending for three fourths of a mile the snow was three or four feet deep. Leaving in that distance the snow and continuing the same course for 5 Miles over high ridges and through Deep ravines along the sides of abrupt hills and through dense thickets after working hard all day we made but 8 Miles and encamped where I was obliged to make a pen for the horses to keep them from s[t]rag[g]ling off as there was no grass for them. At night it was found that 5 were missing, two of that number being packed one with fur and one with some clothing belonging to the Men. By the help of a good Moon light two of them were found before I went to bed.

29th North 3 Miles As soon [as it was] light I sent the [company] forward and went myself with 3 Men to look for the lost horses. Found them in different places and safe the packs on the Mules having remained on during the night without turning. I got to camp about sunset and found good grass.

30th N [] 1 1/2 mile with the intention of going to the river but I found the deep ravines impassable and the river yet washing the base of high hills. I there [fore] retraced my steps to a place where I had seen good grass and encamped sending men off at the same time to see if there was any possibility of passing back from the river. When the[y] returned they told me they thought it passible although the traveling would be bad.

May 1st 1828 North West 3 Miles I went but little beyond where the men had gone the day before when I found the traveling so bad that I was obliged to encamp and send on again to search for a pass. At my camp there was very little grass. The men returned and reported the traveling extremely bad for about three Miles after which there was plenty of good grass. I went hunting with several men we killed [] one Deer which was quite in time for our dried meat was nearly exhausted. Rain with some snow during Most of the day and following night.

May 2nd North 2 Miles. The road most terrible down steep hills which were extremely Rocky and Brushy. On the side of the mountain were some remarkably handsome hemlocks, the largest I had ever seen. Beside Hemlock was Pine and some Oak. On the point of a ridge on which I encamped was some good grass. 4 Deer were killed.

May 3d 1 Mile North. I first made an attempt to move down towards the river but found it impracticable. I therefore returned to camp and moved north 1 Mile over traveling like that to which I had now become accustomed. I encamped a mile from the river on a ridge which produced plenty of grass and Oak timber. Opposite my camp a large stream entered Smiths River from the East. It appeared even larger than the stream on which I had been traveling. One Mule lost. After encamping the hunters went out and killed two deer.

May 4 I was obliged to lay by in consequence of the lameness of my horses. I had my Beaver skins dried and sent men back on the trail to look for horses. The hunters killed 8 Deer and the Meat was cut and dried.

5th May At the same camp, some of my horses being unable to travel. I had my horses brought up and counted and found that there was ten or twelve not to be accounted for. I therefore took one man and went back on the trail intending to go [] to the 4th encampment directing Mr. Rodgers that in case [] I did not return to start early on the following morning. I found two horses and got two miles on my way back.

May 6th When I got to the party in the morning they were 3 Miles on their way traveling north. For that distance the road was tolerable being near the river. The Mountain came in near the river but was not so abrupt as it had been nor so high, particularly on the west side of the river. Passed several indian lodges and encamped opposite to one. Their Lodges were built differently from any I had before seen. They were 10 or 12 feet square, the sides 3 feet high and the roof shaped like a house. They were [] built of split pine plank with 2 or 3 small holes to creep in at. About 1/2 Mile above camp a creek entered on the west side 20 yards wide. Rapid current.

After camping a canoe came down the river with a good many Deer skins on board. I made signs for them to come to [me] but they would not. 2 or 3 indians passed down on the opposite side of the river. I endeavored to persuade them to come over but did not succeed.

May 7th North 4 Miles then North West 5 Miles following the river as close as the traveling would permit. Passed through thickets and over two very high rocky hills from the last of which the country had a much more promising appearance. Lost several Mules and horses in the course of the day but found them all again. Several indians came to camp in my absence.

They appeared friendly and made signs that they wished to trade Deer Skins for Axes & knives. Indian trails were becoming large and lodges of the kind mentioned more plenty than in the country through which we had for some time been traveling. I saw several places in the course of the day where there had been axes used. Judging from the size of the river and the appearance of the country I suppose the river had in the course of the days travel received a tributary from the

---

East as large or larger than itself.

8th 2 Miles N W In the morning several indians came to camp different from the indians I had before seen in the country, particularly in their dress and in the length of their hair which was long while nearly all the indians of the Buenaventura valley and the country generally I have distinguished by the appellation of short haired indians. These indians were clothed in [ ] Deer Skins Dressed with the hair on. The lower part of the body was left naked. Some of them had Mockasins. Their lodges were tolerably numerous and they had a few good canoes.

Soon after starting a horse ran off and detained me so long that I did travel but two miles before encamping. Two of my horses were found dead when we caught up to move on, poisoned as I supposed by eating some poisonous weed.

9th N W 6 Miles Following the river 3 Miles but it turning more to the North and the indians informing me by signs that it was Rocky along the bank of the river. I turned N W following a ridge which was in that direction and encamped 2 or 3 Miles from the river on a creek. 3 horses lost. An abundance of Elk and some deer sign. One fine Elk killed.

10th N W 5 Miles. To make this distance I traveled as much as ten Miles first attempting to move in towards the River with the intention of traveling along its bank but this I found impracticable and turned back on to the ridge and moved N West untill night over hills rocky and steep and through thickets and deep ravines to a small creek where I encamped without any grass for my horses and was therefore obliged to make a pen for them. On examination I found several were missing, among the rest two that were packed.

May 11th N W 1 Mile. I went up a verry steep hill and finding grass encamped and sent 4 Men back to look for the lost horses and a gun which had been lost at the same time. The men returned in the evening having found 13 horses. There was three yet missing and the gun was not found. The hunters killed three Deer.

12th May I remained at the same camp and sent back two men to look for the lost horses. They found one but could not drive it to camp, therefore they were abandoned.

13th 4 Miles N W I had flattered myself that I was nearly over the bad traveling But I found this day of the old kind. The course of the river was N N W and I made an attempt to go down and travel along its banks but did not succeed and was obliged to wind about among the hills and mountains.

May 14th 2 Miles north. I made another attempt to get in to the river but the rocks obliged me to take to the hills again. Crossing a deep rocky ravine I found greater obstacles than I had before encountered in that rough country. I worked with all my men hard during the day and at night had made but two miles. Two of my horses were dashed in pieces from the precipices and many others terribly mangled. Some of my packs I was forced to leave in the ravine all night with two men to watch them.

May 15th I went back with several men to fetch in the packs and horses left in the ravine and worked hard until 3 O Clock before we got them all to camp. Some men out hunting killed 5 Deer.

May 16th My horses being verry lame I thought it most prudent to remain in camp for a time. I sent two men to examine the country ahead. Some indians came to visit us at camp bringing with them some Lamprey Eels and Roots for trade. I gave them some presents purchased their fish and a Beaver skin which one of them had. They had Beads Wampum & knives. I endeavored to make

them understand by signs the direction in which I wished to travel and to ascertain something of the character of the country but they could not understand me. They appeared very friendly and allowed them the privilege of camp. Some of their squaws was with them.

May 17th Remaining in camp at 9 O Clock the 2 Men sent out to reconnoiter returned. They told me that the country to the West was tolerable [and] that the Ocean was not more than 15 or 18 Miles distant. I determined therefore as traveling along the river was so bad to move towards the coast.

May 18th West 3 Miles along a ridge somewhat thickety and encamped in a small prairie of good grass. In the course of this short days travel two horses gave out. My men were almost as weak as the horses for the poor venison of the country contained verry little nourishment.

19th May West 6 Miles principally along a ridge brushy and timbered with Hemlock Pine & Cedar. Some of the Cedar's were the noblest trees I had ever seen being 12 or 15 feet in diameter tall [] straight & handsome. I encamped in a prairie with the Ocean in sight. 6 Elk were killed two of them in tolerable order. Counting my horses I found that three were missing. 4 indians that followed us on the trail came up and encamped with us.

May 20th I remained in camp to give my lame horses an opportunity to recruit and dry meat. I sent two men to look for lost horses and Mr. Rodgers & Mr. Virgin to examine the country towards the Coast. Several indians visited the camp in the course of the day. At night Mr. Rodgers and Mr. Virgin returned. They had found the traveling along the coast verry bad. The hills heavily timbered and brushy coming in close to a rocky shore. In their excursion Mr. Rodgers had left Mr. Virgin a short distance with the horses to get a shot at some Elk. Shortly after he was gone some indians raised the yell and at the same time let fly their arrows at Mr. Virgin and the horses. In return he shot one of them down and calling for Mr. Rodgers at the same time they ran off having wounded one of the horses verry badly but not to prevent bringing him in to camp. The two men horse hunting did not return.

21st May Rainy with a verry heavy fog. The horse hunters returned with one horse. No indians visited camp.

May 22d I had my horses caught up early but just as I was ready for starting it commenced raining and made it impossible to travel for the dense fogs quite common to this coast would prevent me from avoiding the deep ravines and precipices that everywhere came across my way. Among the animals I observed in the country was Elk, Black tailed Deer & Black Bear all of them plenty. Some Raccoons, Large and small wolves, Foxes, Wild Cats, Grey & striped squirrels. The Birds are Large & small Buzards, Crows, Ducks, Ravens, several kinds of hawks, Eagles and a few small birds among which are Robbins & Humming Birds.

23d May From the information I had obtained of the nature of the country on the coast I was convinced of the necessity of retracing my steps and making the attempt to cross Smiths River where I left it. I previously made another unsuccessful attempt to find a pasage along or near the coast and early in the morning taking a man with me I endeavored to find a ridge by which I might pass to the river without following the trail by which I had come out but my efforts were unavailing and I returned to the party and moved back on the trail and encamped at the same place as when I came out. during the past night a north wind cleared the sky from clouds and left the weather fine.

24th May Back to the river and down it [] 1 mile below my old encampment. Finding [] no grass

on the river I encamped about 1/4 of a mile from the west bank. A little below my camp and on the opposite side of the River was an indian village where there was some Canoes. I went down to the River and calling to the indians some of them came over and went with me to camp. I gave them some Beads and made them understand that it was my intention to cross the river the next day. One horse lost and two men sent back to find it. During most of the day a heavy fog. The men returned with the lost horse.

May [2] 5th I packed up early & went down to the river. The indians appeared suspicious that I had some evil intentions and made signs for me to go off. However after a long time I prevailed on one of them to come over with a Canoe. I soon convinced him that I only wished to cross the river and promised to pay him if he would bring 3 or 4 canoes and carry my things over. No sooner were the indians satisfied as to my designs than they brought over their canoes and soon my things were all taken across.

In swimming my horses some of them fell too far down and had hard work to get out and others returned and went out on the same side. I went across with some indians and two men although it was raining and soon found 12 horses & mules huddled together on the bank. We drove them in and they swam over. At the same time we found one horse drowned. When we were all over I sent two men down the river to view the country. during the afternoon the indians visited camp in considerable numbers. They brought with them a few Lamprey Eels & I got of them a piece of salmon, 2 Beaver & an Otter skin. They stole a trap. The explorers returned at night telling me that the country down the river was tolerably rough.

May 26th. North 6 Miles. I moved down the river 2 Miles and then struck east on to high range of hills winding along their summit for several miles and then turning west again in consequence of a creek that made a deep ravine. I encamped about 2 miles from the river having traveled about ten miles to make the six above mentioned. 3 Deer Killed 5 having been killed the day before.

27th May W N W 3 miles and encamped on a creek 30 yards wide running west. My camp was in a small bottom of grass just above the confluence of the Creek and river. The descent to the creek was down a hill long & steep & thick with brush. One horse left and five or 6 lost. I sent two men back for them. Several indians inoffensive in appearance and without arms visited camp.

May 28th North East 7 Miles In consequence of the hills which came in close and precipitous to the river I was obliged to ascend on to a range of hills and follow along their summits which was very difficult particularly as a dense fog rendered it almost impossible to select the best route. I encamped where there was very little grass and near where the Mountain made a rapid descent to the north rough & ragged with rocks. I went to the brink of the hill and when the fog cleared away for a moment I could see the country to the North extremely Mountainous along the shore of the Ocean those Mountains somewhat lower. From all appearances I came to the conclusion that I must move in again towards the coast.

May 29th. 1 Mile back on the trail. I attempted to move towards the river but the fog closed around me so thick that I could not see how to travel and finding myself among thickets & Deep ravines I was obliged to stop and send off men to search for a pass. About 2 O Clock it cleared off and I was enabled to see the country around me. The general course of the river was West as far as its entrance. In places are small prairies along the bank and in others the Mountain closes in to the water.

May 30th 2 1/2 Miles N. W. In the morning it was quite clear on the mountain while the river the

---

deep ravine and the Ocean were hid from view by a dense white Cloud. My route was down a steep hill in [to] the valley of a creek where I encamped in a small prairie of good grass 1/2 mile from the river. I [went] back with some men to look for some horses and one load that was lost in the descent of the hill and found 7 horses and the load with the exception of one trap. 2 Elk were killed. In the evening it became again foggy.

May 31st In the morning it commenced raining and continued during the day. I therefore did not move camp. In the vicinity I saw a bush resembling a common brier in appearance only somewhat larger. Its fruit was like a raspberry in taste and shape but larger. They were ripe at that time and some were yellow and others red. 2 indians came to camp remained all night and the rain still continued.

June 1st 1828 West 3 Miles and encamped 1/4 of a Mile from the river in a small prairie where there was some grass. In the course of the day we traveled through dense thickets and timber and up and down two steep hills made verry bad by the rain of the past day and night and its continuation during the day. Several horses with their loads were lost.

June 2nd Remained at the same camp. At 10 O Clock the sky became [clear?]. Several men sent off for the lost horses returned having found all that I had missed. Two harmless and inoffensive indians visited camp without any arms.

June 3d West 2 Miles. Moving along a ridge passing through a close thicket and down the point of the ridge into the river bottom. I encamped where I was stoped by swamps and muddy ground at the distance of half a mile from the river and where there was hardly any grass for my horses. The tide came up in the river opposite my encampment.

June 4th North 1 Mile. Whilst the party were preparing I went ahead looking [for] a route to pass around the swamp and found one passible by the assistance of axe men to clear the way along a side hill. In passing along my horses were so much fatigued that they would not drive well and many of them turned down into the swamp from which we extricated the most of them with considerable difficulty. Where I encamped there was no grass for my horses. I was therefore obliged to build a pen for them to keep them from strolling off. Some men sent in the morning for horses returned having found a part of them.

June 5th 1 1/2 Mile North West crossing 2 or 3 small creeks and encamped on a creek 20 yard wide running south west. 2 horses & one mule gave out and were left behind. We had no meat in camp since the morning of the day before and at night I gave out a ration of 1/2 pint of flour to each man. During the day we hunted hard but saw nothing to kill although there was some Bear & a little fresh Elk sign. At night therefore as we were quite hungry I gave another ration of 1/2 pint of flower per man and killed a dog the only one we had in camp. For a long time I had been traveling in [] a country where our utmost exertions would not enable us to travel more than 3 or miles per day at most where my horses were mangled by the craggy rocks of the mountains over which they passed and suffered so much from hunger that I found myself under the necessity of stopping a while to rest them or run the risk of losing many of them if I should proceed.

This situation was verry unpleasant because while my men were suffering from hunger and in a country where there was verry little game they were laying in camp and apparently without the power of supplying their wants the only alternative being patient endurance with a prospect ahead not verry flattering for although near the Ocean yet our intended route appeared equally rough with that over which we had passed. In the vicinity I saw some Beaver sign but the tide

setting up interfered with the design of trapping. An affray which happened the day before between one of my men and 2 indians and which I neglected to mention in the proper place was as [follows]:

Two indians following in the rear of our party in company with one of my men offered him some berries which he took and ate and made signs to them to come on to camp. But they did not understand him and insisted on being paid for the berries he had nothing to give them and they attempted to take some of his clothing by force on which he presented his gun and they ran off he firing as they ran. As he was not a good marksman I presume he did them no hurt. His account of the affair was somewhat different from this but I presume mine is near the truth.

June 6th Remained at the same camp and had some of my men engaged in pressing fur and others hunting. But the hunters after every exertion returned without killing anything. Two of them traveling North West found a pass to the Ocean. Saw some Elk and got a shot at a Bear. As no game could be killed I was obliged to kill a young horse which gave us quite a feast.

June 7th Remaining at the same camp I sent 2 men forward to hunt directing them to encamp where it was my intention to stay the first night after leaving that place. Others of my men were employed in pressing fur and looking for lost horses. 10 or 15 indians visited camp bringing with them a few Muscles & Lamprey Eels and some raspberries of the kind I have before mentioned. In the evening when they left us they stole a small Kettle.

June 8th North West 5 Miles and encamped on the shore of the Ocean at the mouth of a small creek where there was tolerable good grass. The high hills which came in close to the beach of the Ocean presenting a front nearly destitute of timber with bushes breaks and grass in some places. Verry little game for the hunters after the greatest exertion returned at night without having killed or even seen any thing to shoot at. Some of the hunters remained out all night.

June 9th There were several indian Lodges near my camp of whom I purchased a few muscles & small fish. At 11 O Clock the hunters all came in. For three or four days [] as many of us as considered ourselves good hunters had [] been employed [] in hunting. During that time nothing had been killed and but three animals had been shot at 2 Black Bear and one Deer which we wounded. This was what hunters call bad luck and what we felt to be hard times for we were weary and verry hungry.

Among other trifling things which the indians brought us to eat was some dried sea grass mixed with weeds and a few muscles. They were great speculators and never sold their things without dividing them into several small parcels asking more for each than the whole were worth. They also brought some Blubber not bad tasted but dear as gold dust. But all these things served but to agravate our hunger for we were constantly encountering the greatest fatigue and having been long accustomed to living on meat and eating it in no [] moderate quantities nothing else could satisfy our appeties.

In the afternoon I took my horse and rode out to make another effort to kill something to alleviate the sufferings of my faithful party and thanks to the great Benefactor I found a small band of Elk & killed three in a short time which were in good order. I returned to camp and directed several men to go with me with some pack horses without telling them what they had to do. When they came to the spot where the Elk lay their surprise and joy were tumultuous and in a short time their horses were loaded and they returned to camp to change it from the moody silence of hunger to the busy bustle of preparation for cooking and feasting. Little preparation however

was necessary when men could be seen in ev'ry part of the camp with meat raw and half roasted in their hands devouring it with the greatest alacrity while from their preparations and remarks you would suppose that nothing less than twenty four hours constant eating would satisfy their appetites.

June 10th Remained at the same camp. My men were employed in making salt and in cutting & drying Meat. Early in the morning the indians came offering to give the Beads I had before traded to them for Meat. I soon made them to understand that what I had to spare which was verry little would be freely given to them.

June 11th North 4 Miles. I packed up early and moved on but missing an ax and drawing knife I stoped the party and searched for them. Not finding them I concluded the indians had stolen them & went back to some indian lodges close at hand. They were all gone but an old man who pretended to know nothing about them. I then went to some Lodges above and when the indians saw us coming they all ran off. But after a while one of them came to me and I told him that I should keep him until the tools were found and at the same time sent the old man found at the other Lodges to tell the indians the reason why their friend was detained.

By searching we found the ax covered in the sand under their fire. The drawing knife could not be found and I took the hostage along tied. After keeping him several hours no indians appearing to relieve him I let him go. The traveling was verry bad and at 4 miles I came to a deep impassible ravine and encamped having to build a pen for my horses lost in the course of the day.

June 12th West 1 Mile. Early in the morning I packed up and moved down a ridge with considerable difficulty to the beach of the ocean where I encamped. I drove the horses across a small creek where there was some grass. The horses lost the day before were found and brought up. 3 of my men quite sick.

June 13th North N West along a ridge in places rough with thickets and rocks. At night descending to and encamping on the shore where there was but little grass. In the course of the day 3 Mules gave out and were left one load was lost and one [] horse was disabled by falling down a ledge of rocks.

June 14th North 1 Mile. It being low tide by passing around a point in the water I was enabled to travel along the shore and encamped in a prairie of about 100 acres of tolerable grass. In the vicinity was a plenty of Elk sign. The prospect ahead was somewhat flattering and I was in hope that we had passed all the mountains. Some men sent back for the purpose found the lost load and brought up the fatigued mules.

June 15th I lay by to recruit my horses. Several of us went hunting and Joseph Lapoint in the morning killed one of the largest [] Elk I had ever seen. He was not verry fat but [] tolerable [] good meat. His size induced me to weigh the meat which I found to weigh 695 lbs neat weight exclusive of the tongue and some other small pieces which would have made it above 700 lbs. In the evenings hunt Mr. Virgin and myself each killed an Elk not as large as the one before mentioned but one of them was good meat. In the course of the day several indians visited camp bringing some Clams small fish Raspberries strawberries and a Root which on the Columbia is called Commass. These indians traded like those last mentioned.

June 16th North 5 Miles. One mile along the beach north & then turning to the right I traveled 4 Miles across a prairie leaving a range of hills on the East running North not far distant and thickly covered with Hemlock & Cedar. The prairie was covered with brakes bushes & grass & had

many springs some of which were miry.

June 17th 1 Mile north at the end of which I came to the termination of the [ ] prairie. Then commenced thick timber and brush and swamps which so much obstructed my progress that I was obliged to retrace my steps and encamp. I then went with one man on the ridge and traveled north 4 or 5 miles when I found it impracticable to move in that direction on account of the thick brush. I returned to camp and sent two men towards the Ocean. When they came in they reported That there would no difficulty in moving to a prairie not more than a Mile distant. Its extent they had not time to ascertain. In their excursion they had killed an Elk dressed & hung it up. Other hunters out killed nothing.

June 18th Remained at the same camp. Sent some men to hunt and others to see which way it would be advisable to travel. The hunters were unsuccessful and [the men] that were looking for a road found it impracticable to travel near the Ocean. They observed a Lake of several Miles in extent along the shore of which it was impassible on account Thick brush and mire.

June 19th Remained at the same camp because I did not wish to move until I knew whether I could find grass for my horses. I took two men and struck East across the ridge following an indian trail 2 1/2 Miles when I struck a river 80 yards wide coming from ESE. I crossed Leaving the Men on the bank and found the river so rapid that my horse fell and, it was with great difficulty that I got him out. I went 1/2 Mile up the river & recrossed having the same difficulty as before. The bottoms along the river were brushy but there were some small prairies and the hills beyond were bare. On the river was some beaver sign. From the high ground I could easily see that what the men had taken for a Lake was a bay of the Ocean. From the breaking of the water without I supposed its entrance to be shallow.

June 20th East 2 1/2 Miles & encamped on the North bank of the river which I had discovered the day before. It was deep fording. My camp was in a small prairie of good grass. Several men sent hunting.

June 21st North N E 6 Miles. Leaving the river on account of the brush and traveling along a ridge stony and covered with small brush but verry little timber. As I advanced the country became rough and the high ridge on which I was traveling extremely rocky. I saw that it would not answer to move longer and therefore encamped. 3 Deer and a fine Buck Elk killed. Deer verry plenty in the vicinity.

June 22 N North West 5 Miles Being obliged to move again towards the coast I followed a descending ridge for 5 Miles and encamped in a prairie. The country was generally timbered during the days travel but from my camp towards the coast the prospect was generally prairie.

June 23d North West 8 Miles At 3 Miles I arrived on the shore and from thence I traveled along the shore and sometimes immediately on the beach for 5 miles and encamped after crossing a creek 20 yards wide. The hills came within 1/2 mile or a mile of the sea, and were generally bare of timber. The Low land along the shore and in the valleys covered with high breaks and has some Miry springs. Many indians visited camp in the evening bringing berries small fish and Roots for trade. [ ] In the course of the day one Mule gave out and another ran back on the trail.

June 24th West North West 3 miles and encamped at the mouth of a river 50 yards wide rapid at the mouth but as it was high tide I could not cross. The hills about the same distance from the coast as the day before and the low land thick covered with brakes scotch caps and grass. When starting in the morning I sent two men back for the Mules that had been left the day before. They

came in the evening without the mules and I immediately sent two men back but they soon returned as the indians at a village close at hand did not appear friendly.

Near my camp was a village of 10 or 12 Lodges but the indians had all ran off. Among the indians of this country I have seen a small kind of Tobacco which is pretty generally cultivated. These indians Catch Elk in Pits dug in places much frequented. They are 10 or 12 feet deep and much Larger at the [] bottom than [] top. They are completely covered over and some of my hunters with their horses fell into one and got out with considerable difficulty.

June 25th North N West Early in the morning as it was low tide I packed up and forded the river. During the principal part of the days travel the hill came in close to the rocky shore. I was therefore obliged to turn out into the hills which were nearly bare of timber but brushy and cut by some dark ravines. In the morning when my horses were brought up I found two of them wounded with arrows and in the evening one was missing which I supposed to have been killed. This day I traveled 12 Miles which was much the best march I had made for a long time. Deer plenty and some Elk.

June 26th N N West 8 miles. On leaving camp I struck out from the Ocean following a ridge on a circuitous route [] until It came into the Ocean again at the mouth of a creek 20 yds wide where I encamped. The place from which I started [] in the morning was covered with brakes & brush when I got out among the hills I found some timber & good grass & where I struck the [] a sandy soil short grass low Pines Sand Cherries and strawberries.

June 27th North 7 Miles. With the exception of two or three steep points which I was obliged to pass over I was able during the day to travel along the beach. I encamped on the south side of a bay and close to its entrance which was 150 yards wide. The Bay itself was 3 Miles long and 1 Mile wide. At low water I found it quite fresh, from which circumstance I infered that it received a considerable river. After encamping I made rafts that I might be ready to cross the bay early on the following morning. On each side of the Bay were several indian villages but the indians had all run off. On a creek which I crossed 3 miles back was some beaver sign and also some in the bay.

June 28th N N West 6 Miles. Early in the morning as it was low water I commenced crossing. And when I had finished I had lost 12 or 15 drowned in the middle of the water. I know not the reason of their drowning unless it might perhaps be ascribed to driving them to much in a body. In three days I had lost by various accidents 23 horses & mules.

June 29th N N West 5 Miles. The traveling for the last two days much alike alternately on the beach and over the hills which generally closed in to the shore near which the country was generally prairie with some thickets. Farther back from the coast the hills were high rough and covered with thickets & timber. This day I could have traveled farther had it not been high tide which prevented me from traveling on the beach and the hills were too rough to allow me to leave the shore. In the vicinity of my camp the country was clothed with fine grass and other herbage, a good grazing country though somewhat rough.

June 30th North 5 Miles. After traveling 2 Miles I was obliged to leave the coast and travel over the hills to my encampment which was a short distance from the shore where there was good grass. From a high hill I had an opportunity to view the country which Eastward was high rough hills and mountains generally timbered & north along the coast apparently Low with some prairie. In climbing a precipice on leaving the shore one of my pack Mules fell off and was killed.

July 1st 1828 North 9 Miles. At 5 Miles from camp crossed a creek the outlet of a small Lake on

which was some Beaver sign. At this place the hills recede from the shore leaving a bluff from 30 to 100 feet in height. Immediately on this bank is a narrow skirt of prairie and further back low Pine & brush. The soil thin and loose. Encamped on a river 60 yards wide on which was some beaver sign. I found the tide too high to cross. For the three past days but one deer had been killed but as we had dried meat we did not suffer from hunger. We saw appearances of Elk have been abundant in the vicinity when the grass was tender. For many days we had hardly got sight of an indian and but one had visited camp since my horses were killed. In the course of the days travel one of my horses was crowded off from a cliff and killed.

July 2nd 12 Miles North principally along the shore at 6 Miles from camp passing a small Lake. During the days travel the hills were generally 3 or 4 Miles from the shore the intermediate space being interspersed with grassy prairie brush, sand hills & low Pines.

July 3d 5 Miles N N West. At 2 Miles from camp I came to a river 200 yards wide which although the tide was low was deep and apparently a considerable River. On first arriving in sight I discovered [] some indians moving as fast as possible up the river in a canoe. I ran my horse to get above them in order to stop them. When I got opposite to them & they discovered they could not make their escape they put ashore and drawing their canoe up the bank they fell to work with all their might to split it in pieces.

Jedediah Smith Letter to Wm. Clark

---

Jedediah Smith Letter to Wm. Clark

July 12th, 1827

This letter is found in the Letterbook of the Superintendent at Indian Affairs for St. Louis, vol. 4, pg. 46-49. This letterbook is now held by the Kansas State Historical Society. The letter was reprinted in the Missouri Republican on October 11, 1827. It was also reprinted in:

- Dale, Harrison Clifford, The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822-1829, 1918, The Authur H. Clark Company, Cleveland
- Morgan, Dale, Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West, Bobbs-Merrill, New York, 1953

Little Lake Of Bear River,

July 12th, 1827.

Genl. Wm. Clark,

Supt. of Indian affairs

Sir,

My situation in this country has enabled me to collect information respecting a section of the country which has hitherto been measurably veiled in obscurity to the citizens of the United States. I allude to the country S.W. of the Great Salt Lake west of the Rocky mountains.

I started about the 22d of August 1826, from the Great Salt Lake, with a party of fifteen men, for the purpose of exploring the country S.W. which was entirely unknown to me, and of which I could collect no satisfactory information from the Indians who inhabit this country on its N.E. borders.

My general course on leaving the Salt Lake was S.W. and W. Passing the Little Uta Lake and ascending Ashley's river, which empties into the Little Uta Lake. From this lake I found no more signs of buffalo; there are a few antelope and mountain sheep, and an abundance of black tailed hares. On Ashley's river, I found a nation of Indians who call themselves Sampatch they were friendly disposed towards us. I passed over a range of mountains running S.E. and N.W. and struck a river running S.W. which I called Adams River, in compliment to our president. The water is of a muddy cast, and is a little brackish. The country is mountainous to east; towards the west there are sandy plains and detached rocky hills.

Passing down this river some distance, I fell in with a nation of Indians who call themselves Pa-Ulches (those Indians as well as those last mentioned, wear rabbit skin robes) who raise some little corn and pumpkins. The country is nearly destitute of game of any description, except a few hares. Here (about ten days march down it) the river turns to the south east. On the S.W. side of the river there is a cave, the entrance of which is about 10 or 15 feet high, and 5 or 6 feet in width;— after descending about 15 feet, a room opens out from 25 to 30 in length and 15 to 20 feet in width; the roof, sides and floor are solid rock salt, a sample of which I send you, with some other articles which will be hereafter described. I here found a kind of plant of the prickly pear kind, which I called the cabbage pear, the largest of which grows about two feet and a half high and 1 ½ feet in diameter; upon examination I found it to be nearly of the substance of a turnip, altho' by no means palatable; its form was similar to that of an egg, being smaller at the ground and top than in the middle; it is covered with pricks similar to the prickly pear with which you are acquainted.

There are here also a number of shrubs and small trees with which I was not acquainted previous

to my route there, and which I cannot at present describe satisfactorily, as it would take more space than I can here allot.

The Pa Ulches have a number of marble pipes, one of which I obtained and send you, altho' it has been broken since I have had it in my possession; they told me there was a quantity of the same material in their country. I also obtained of them a knife of flint, which I send you, but it has likewise been broken by accident.

I followed Adams river two days further to where it empties into the Seedskeeder a south east course. I crossed the Seedskeeder, and went down it four days a south east course; I here found the country remarkably barren, rocky, and mountainous; there are a good many rapids in the river, but at this place a valley opens out about 5 to 15 miles in width, which on the river banks is timbered and fertile. I here found a nation of Indians who call themselves Ammuchabas they cultivate the soil, and raise corn, beans, pumpkins, watermelons and muskmelons in abundance, and also a little wheat and cotton. I was now nearly destitute of horses, and had learned what it was to do without food; I therefore remained there fifteen days and recruited my men, and I was enabled also to exchange my horses and purchase a few more of a few runaway Indians who stole some horses of the Spaniards. I here got information of the Spanish country (the Californias) and obtained two guides, recrossed the Seedskadeer, which I afterwards found emptied into the Gulf of California about 80 miles from this place by the name of the Collarado; many render the river Gild from the East.

I travelled a west course fifteen days over a country of complete barrens, generally travelling from morning until night without water. I crossed a salt plain about 20 miles long and 8 wide; on the surface was a crust of beautiful white salt, quite thin. Under this surface there is a layer of salt from a half to one and a half inches in depth; between this and the upper layer there is about four inches of yellowish sand.

On my arrival in the province of Upper California, I was looked upon with suspicion, and was compelled to appear in presence of the governor of the Californias residing at San Diego, where, by the assistance of some American gentlemen (especially Capt. W. H. Cunningham, of the ship Courier from Boston) I was enabled to obtain permission to return with my men the route I came, and purchased such supplies as I stood in want of. The governor would not allow me to trade up the sea coast towards Bodaga. I returned to my party and purchased such articles as were necessary, and went eastward of the Spanish settlements on the route I had come in. I then steered my course N.W. keeping from 150 miles to 200 miles from the sea coast. A very high range of mountains lay on the east. After travelling 300 miles in that direction through a country somewhat fertile, in which there was a great many Indians, mostly naked and destitute of arms, with the exception of a few bows and arrows and what is very singular amongst Indians, they cut their hair to the length of three inches; they proved to be friendly; their manner of living is on fish, roots, acorns and grass.

On my arrival at the river which I named the Wim-mul-che (named after a tribe of Indians which resides on it, of that name) I found a few beaver, and elk, deer, and antelope in abundance. I here made a small hunt, and attempted to take my party across- the mountains which I before mentioned, and which I called Mount Joseph, to come on and join my partners at the Great Salt Lake. I found the snow so deep on Mount Joseph that I could not cross my horses, five of which starved to death; I was compelled therefore to return to the valley which I had left, and there, leaving my

Jedediah Smith Letter to Wm. Clark

---

party, I started with two men, seven horses and two mules, which I loaded with hay for the horses and provisions for ourselves, and started on the 20th of May, and succeeded in crossing it in eight days, having lost only two horses and one mule. I found the snow on the top of this mountain from 4 to 8 feet deep, but it was so consolidated by the heat of the sun that my horses only sunk from half a foot to one foot deep.

After travelling twenty days from the east side of Mount Joseph, I struck the S.W. corner of the Great Salt Lake, travelling over a country completely barren and destitute of game. We frequently travelled without water sometimes for two days over sandy deserts, where there was no sign of vegetation and when we found water in some of the rocky hills, we most generally found some Indians who appeared the most miserable of the human race having nothing to subsist on (nor any clothing) except grass seed, grass-hoppers, &c. When we arrived at the Salt Lake, we had but one horse and one mule remaining, which were so feeble and poor that they could scarce carry the little camp equipage which I had along; the balance of my horses I was compelled to eat as they gave out.

The company are now starting, therefore must close my close my communication.

Yours respectfully,

(signed) JEDEDIAH S. SMITH

of the firm of

Smith, Jackson and Sublette.

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party

---

JOURNAL

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village, undertaken by the St. Louis Missouri Fur company, for the purpose of conducting Sheheken, the Mandan Chief to his nation, and to establish trading houses on the head waters of the Missouri;  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party.

On the 17th of May last, we set out from St. Louis with 10 barges and 160 men, well equipped, amongst whom were a few Delawares and Shawnese employed for hunting. On the next day we passed the beautiful village of St. Charles, being 18 miles by land, and about 30 by water from St. Louis; ascending to the river Gasconade, the country is very thick settled, particularly in the spots called Boon's settlement, and near the little village called Charrette. I am informed that the territory of Louisiana is apportioned out to six districts; St. Charles is the uppermost, comprehending that immense tract of country, west of the Mississippi and north of the Missouri; the tide of emigration appears to direct itself to this highly favored spot, and indeed we are not surprised that the farmers of the United States bend their attention this way, as every advantage both of soil and climate, render it far preferable to Kentucky or Ohio.

From the Charrette village to the Osage river we experienced nothing extraordinary: having agreed to wait here for the party, we took advantage of the delay, to saunter over the country; this place is said to be about 40 miles from the frontiers, although there is a small village opposite its mouth, on the north side of the Missouri, in a beautiful rich prairie; the inhabitants consist of emigrants from below, principally French; these people raise a sufficiency of grain for the consumption of the settlement, and employ the rest of their time in hunting and trading with the surrounding Indians. The Osage river, situate on the south side, from its magnitude at the mouth forms an important appendage to this country; I was informed that boats ascended to the old Indian villages, about 100 miles up; its waters are pure, gentle, and well tasted; its banks discover to the naked eye the riches it possesses; iron ore of the best kind cover a great portion of its surface. Here the botanists could enjoy a feast; Savannas are filled with innumerable plants pregnant with all the sweets florists could desire; the lovers of hunting could not fail of finding on this river plenty of amusement, for I am sure no place I have yet seen, can equal it for fish and wild fowl.

Mine river empties itself into the Missouri, a few leagues above, is navigable for small crafts up to the salt works; there are two establishments here, I am informed that 200 kettles are continually employed in making salt; a gentleman who rode over the country where these salt licks abound, says that 10,000 kettles might be employed as strong water springs are numerous in every direction. On the 3rd of June we were visited by a hail storm, and to render the scene more disagreeable, one of the hunters, John Stout, had this thumb blown off and his hand much lacerated by the bursting of my gun.

On the 28th, all the boats having arrived we set out, and on the 8th of July arrived at Fort Osage, which we saluted by a discharge of several guns from our ordinance barges, and were politely answered by an equal number from the fort; here we experienced many civilities from the gentlemen of the garrison. This place appears to be the general rendezvous of all the Missouri Indians, whose continual jars keep the commandant on the alert. Osages, Ottas, Mahas, Ponnis, Cansas, Missouri, Souex, Sac, Fox, Ioway, all mingle together here, and serve to render this quarter a most discordant portion of the continent.

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party

---

July 11th, we got all ready for embarkation, having laid on vegetables, &c. and bidding adieu to the face of civilized life pushed on our way. The face of the country on each side of the river, is so monotonous up the river Flat, that one day's journey would nearly give the history of every thing, worthy of notice. The banks in general are low, and an extreme rich dark brown loam covers the face of all its borders, except where the cliffs approach the water; in several places they put in on both sides, so as to compress the river to the breadth of 25 or 30 yards; to these bluffs vegetation is denied; having ascended many without being gratified with the sight of a plant; however our toils were often repaid by the discovery of various petrifications; the bones of the buffaloe, elk, goat, with the various kind of wood which grow in the neighbourhood, are found on the tops of these cliffs, completely petrified, yet few are to be found in the low land.

The Cansas river on the south side, so called from a nation of that name, who reside about 150 miles up this river, is about 40 miles from the garrison; this river is considerable, affording navigation for trading boats, up to the village. The Cansas have long been the terror of the neighbouring Indians, their temerity is hardly credible; a few weeks since a band of 100 warriors entered Paunie village, or what is more generally called the Paunies Republic, and killed the principal chief and his family consisting of 15 souls; they were immediately pursued and upwards of 40 of them cut to pieces; these people cannot be at peace with the white or red people; they rob, murder and destroy when opportunity offers; fortunately for their neighbours, they are few in number, and their daily outrages serve to lessen their number still more, their country abounds with game, particularly beaver, deer, buffaloe, elk, black bear, &c. &c. and afford the Cansas (hardly less savage) an abundance of food and raiment.

On the 29th of July, we arrived at Messrs. Cooks and M'Clelland's old hunting camp, we lodged in their house, these gentlemen had constructed comfortable quarters, the house having three rooms, when they occupied it, the Ottas and Paunies resorted to them in great numbers.

August 1st, arrived at the river Platte on the south side, met with Mr. M'Clelland, waiting for the Ottas, whom he expected in great numbers to trade.

Mr. M'Celland has weathered many storms in his life, and it appears that each day seems to throw something bitter in his cup; brave, generous and kind, he meets the untutored Indian with the smile of complacency; or if the temerity of the savage should exceed the bounds of honesty, or approach to menace, then M'Celland discovers exalted courage, surrounded with Indians, with his rifle, pistols, and sword, he bids defiance to whole nations; threatening or executing extermination to all who attempt to plunder him.

The river Platte is about half a mile wide at its mouth, it has almost as many mouths as the Mississippi, having numerous sand bars at its Junction with the Missouri; its waters have the muddy hue of the Missouri; its extreme rapidity and shoal water, prevent the traders ascending it; the Otta villages are about 40 miles from the mouth; the Paunies reside a considerable distance above, and extend to near the head waters of the Arkansa; these people living in the neighbourhood of the Spanish villages, near St. Fee, trade alternately with them and the American traders. These Parthians of the west ought to be cherished, as through them we may obtain an extensive trade with that portion of Mexico, most adjacent to the mines.

On leaving the Platte we take leave of the exuberance of vegetation; a broken country, a sandy soil, coarse short grass, a dirth of timber, and in fact nothing to console the view but what Providence has kindly given man, viz. Buffaloe, and Deer whose abundance feed and clothe the wretched

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party

---

wanderers of these sterile regions.

From the river Platte to the Maha Village, about 250 miles, we experienced good weather; and on our way we passed the Ioway village, now deserted, and had a view of the Council Bluff. Here Lewis and Clark had a talk with the Paunies on their ascending the river. This hill or bluff is on the south side, about 50 feet high, without stone to support it from the daily washings, and undermining from the current below; from its top the river and surrounding country can be viewed as far as the eye can reach. A few miles from the bluff the river takes a northerly direction for several miles, and meanders abruptly to the south. Although we ascended twenty miles that day we were not more than 500 yards from the spot we had encamped the evening before. At the commencement of this bend, near the river, on the south side, we observed the hill on which the great Maha chief lies interred: the Mahas frequently visit his grave and pay him those honours only due to the Diety. His tomb is constantly covered with presents, believing his spirit to rest on the summit of the hill, empowered with the means of dispensing good to his people.

On the 11th of August we arrived at the Village of the last mentioned people. It is situate on a prairie on the south side, 4 miles from the river, resembling at a distance, the stack yard of an extensive farmer, having their huts in the form of a cone, about 15 feet high. Their council house is built in the centre, large enough to contain 300 men; the materials consists of split sticks and pieces of timber; covered with earth. Here we were served with the first dish of dog meat, it is esteemed delicate, and none partake of it but those they wish to honour. These people are very filthy in their dress and food: the former consists of skins, and the latter of the flesh of the animals of that country, with corn, pompions, &c. They had a skirmish with the Souex a few days before we arrived, in which they lost several of their warriors; this nation contains only 4 or 500 men able to bear arms, and are in danger of being exterminated by the Souex, who boast they are able to muster 15,000 men; and these latter people reside on the north side of the Missouri, extending from the neighbourhood of the Richarees to the Mississippi and the North Western Lakes. On our arrival, Shehekeh expressed a wish to visit the village, being invited by the principal chiefs. Having put on an elegant full dress suit of regimentals, with his horse covered with the most showey ornaments, he set out accompanied by thirty Maha chiefs on horse back, in their best dress. The whole nation were lost in astonishment at the plended figure of the Mandan, so much superior to any thing their chiefs could display. Before dinner a council was held with Mr. Chouteau for the purpose of requesting a trader to reside among them, and to beg presents, in which the Mandan preserved the dignity of the superior; indeed Shehekeh's manners would grace any circle; he took great pains to copy the manners of the first characters of the United States whom he was acquainted with.

On the 13th we left the village and a few miles up we met with 3 Souex, who informed us that a party of their nation were waiting for us about 80 miles up the river. Twelve miles further we passed Floyd's river, called after one of the followers of Lewis and Clark, who was buried on an eminence in its neighbourhood; the Indians had mounted a flag over his grave: on our way we passed several banks of coal with chalk.

On the 18th, we arrived at the Yantans, a branch of the Souex, contained 300 lodges. Their huts were placed on the north bank, and we were saluted in the following manner: 50 warriors arranged themselves on the shore, and discharged their pieces loaded with ball into the water at the

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party

---

bows of our barges. Having brought to near the shore, the officers landed and were carried to the council, by six Indians in Buffaloe robes; in the council their demands were similar to the Ma-ha's. They were given to understand that no trader could be left with them, and they could have no presents. Menace took the place of supplication; the principal chief addressed the gentlemen in nearly the following words. "The Missouri has always ran muddy water, which occasions the white people's refusing our demands, but if it was made to run blood they would be adhered to." The commander of the expedition informed them that the goods did not belong to their great father; they were the sole property of those individuals who were present; that were as able to protect themselves as willing to cultivate the friendship of the Souex. The gentlemen conceiving it their interest, established a trading house here. During our stay the chiefs had stationed 6 men to guard the barges from pillage. These people subsist entirely on the Buffaloe, except sometimes a dog. They resemble the Arabs, having no place of residence, following the buffaloe as the seasons change, without any wish or desire to raise corn, or vegetables. They hunt on horse back, armed with bows and short guns. They have their nation parcelled out into tribes, viz. Yantans, Titons, Chians, Punkas, &c.. Whether they acknowledge these appellations I am not positive, but rather think they received them from those traders who have been in the habit of visiting them. They are the terror and in fact lordly masters of all their neighbours, claiming tribute (presents) from all other tribes. Their dress consists of the skins of the deer, elk, buffaloe and beaver, handsomely decorated with porcupine quills. As they remain but a short period in one place, they have very little baggage: a few kettles, their arms and clothing, are prepared in small bundles sufficiently large for a dog to drag along by a sled. These animals are of wolf breed, and know by instinct when the band is in motion: on stripping the huts which are covered with skins, they set up a most piteous howl, and endeavour to escape their intended labour by hiding from their owners. On the 20th we set out, and - the next day passed the Panka river on the north side. A band of the Souex called the Punkas, resort to this river to hunt. A few miles above, the Lukakon, or running water, puts in with the greatest velocity. This river is about 150 yards wide at its mouth, being navigable a considerable distance for small trading boats. Here we met with several bluffs of coal, chalk, pigments, slate, &c. and for the first time observed the goat, prairie dogs, and a number of magpies.

On the 26th we arrived at a camp of the Titons, another band of the Souex, amounting to 100 lodges, where the same transactions took place as at the Yantas, and we promised them a trader, who was left at fort, Loisel, on Cedar Island, a few days journey from the village, near White River, a gentle stream which puts in on the south side, about 150 yards wide at its confluence with the Missouri. A few miles farther we got into the Great Bend, which performs a circuit of 40 or 50 miles, and approaches within two miles of the commencement of the circle it forms. From this place to the Richaree villages we had a brisk wind from the right quarter, which enabled us to use the sails every day. We passed several rivers and brooks, which to us were nameless, except the Chien on the south side, on which a branch of the Souex called Chiens reside: it is upwards of 200 yards wide at the mouth.

On the 12th of Sept. we arrived at the villages of the Richarees, who appeared much alarmed, and refused to come to council on that day, or at all, unless hostages were exchanged.

Having agreed with the Rees for an exchange of hostages, their fears were somewhat allayed, and a friendly intercourse took place. In the council they were asked why they had attacked the

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party

---

party on the former expedition under Lieut. Prior: they replied that they were informed by a Frenchman, who resides among them, that the goods and barges were sent to them by their great father the President of the U. States as presents; that Lieut. Prior only gave medals, which they at first accepted, but on discovering that the goods were retained, they stamped on the medals, and attacked the boats; these circumstances together with the solicitations of the aforesaid Frenchman to fire upon the white people, was the cause of the unhappy misunderstanding.

The commander of the expedition, Mr. Pierre Chouteau, demanded the Frenchman; he was informed that he lived with a tribe of their nation called Scions, about 50 miles south; that he was married, and had a family.

On Mr. Chouteau's insisting to have him delivered up, they agreed to send a party of their young men to accompany Mr. C's. detachment to the village: however, when the party was prepared to set out, they refused to send the escorts so the affair was abandoned for the present.

We found that the Richarees and Mandans were at peace. A party of the latter were on a visit at the village, and were much pleased to see their countryman (Sheheken) returned safe. In the council the Ree's demands were similar to the Souex. They expressed extreme sorrow at the recollection of their own differences with Lieut. Prior; and their profuse hospitality in given corn and meat, evinced their satisfaction at the return of friendly intercourse. Two of principal Souex chiefs, having accompanied us to the village, also made peace with the Rees. However the latter expressed their sentiments very freely of the Souex: they said they only came to beg presents and smoke for horses; that they would pay little attention to their engagements; that they would break the treaty when opportunity offered. Sheheken appeared perfectly at home. He handed the calumet round the council room with all the gravity of an aginal statesman and warrior.

The Richaree towns are built on a handsome prairie, on the south side, about 500 yards apart, having a small river between, which puts into the Missouri. Their lodges are built somewhat similar to the Mahas, with the addition of having a covered entrance of 8, 10, or 15 yards. They appear to live much more comfortable than any of the other tribes, having their huts divided into chambers, with a neatness in their construction, which we had not witnessed before. Their corn fields, which border the Missouri, are well fenced, and better cultivated than many farms on the frontiers of the United States. Corn, pumions, simlins, beans, peas, melons, and a variety of other vegetables, are raised in abundance. Tobacco is not forgotten. This plant is much attended to; so much so as to form a considerable article of their trade.

The Rees believe in the existence of a Supreme Being. They also believe in an evil spirit, whom they worship in order to be on good terms with him, as they conceive he has power to spoil their hunts, and destroy their corn and vegetables. Among the multitude of domestic deities shall mention two kinds. A number of buffaloe heads are fixed on poles, in close and regular order, fantastically painted and decorated with feathers. The other consists of a box filled with small bones, buttons, beads, burnt feathers, and a variety of other trash, which is generally in the possession of their conjuror and doctor. He visits the sick, performs a number of fantasies, such as swallowing knives and arrows, blowing on and rubbing the patient. While this is performing, the miraculous box is hung over the sick. Should these efforts fail in restoring the sick, he is carried to the margin of the river, in view of the Buffaloe heads, where stones are heated, and a place erected over them to lay the patient: he is then covered with buffaloe skins or blankets, and a steam is created by throwing water on the hot stones. A violent perspiration is soon produced, in which state he is

---

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party

---

thrown into the river. This is the last trial, which if not efficacious, the tormenters cease, and the wretched being is left to his fate.

The women are rather handsome than otherwise. They are treated in the same manner as among the other tribes. All the labours of the field, preparing food, dressing skins and fur, and making clothes for their brutal masters, fall to their lot. The men buy their wives, and consider them as beasts of burden. The men occupy their time in hunting, smoking, and the care of their horses. The company left a small boat with goods to exchange for horses with these people.

On the 14th of September we left the Rees for the Mandan villages. Having a succession of charming weather, I went on shore in several places. The only appearance of fertility is confined to the low grounds along the banks of the river. 'On the hills, which in many places approach the shore, I observed in several places the remains of volcanic matter.' Pumice is found in abundance, generally of a purple and brown colour. About half way between the Rees and Mandans, the white bear is first seen. From information which I received of the hunters, he is double the size of the black bear, and extremely ferocious, being the despotic tyrant of the plains and forests.

On the 21st we arrived at the first Mandan Village. This tribe had separated from the nation, and had removed 30 miles down the river. Sheheken prevailed on them to return and become friends. Here we discovered that he was the only chief of the one village, were we next day arrived. On our approach a salute was fired from the barges, and answered by the village. On raising the American flag, the barges was soon crowded with natives and mutual congratulations took place.

The gentlemen being invited to dine by Sheheken's brother, we found a plentiful supply of provisions. The ladies had prepared a large stew of meat, corn, and vegetables, and our feast was seasoned by genuine hospitality. In the afternoon we prepared to visit the upper towns. An elegant horse was presented to their travelled chief, who had put on his full dress of uniform suit. His horse was not forgot: he displayed considerable taste in dressing him in scarlet and gold laced housings, with a highly mounted bridle and saddle. Thus equipped, we set out accompanied by 30 or 40 of the natives on horseback. The singularity of our reception is worthy of notice. Having rode to the centre of the village, we remained some time before we were invited to enter the house of the chief. I was informed it was the custom on all occasions to stand in the most public place, and wait the invitation of some of the chiefs; otherwise it would be considered a gross violation of etiquette to enter the dwelling house of any one of these people without a formal invitation.

Sheheken's conduct amused us very much. His splendid uniform and horse furniture, his fine figure, his anxiety to appear to advantage, with the contrast when compared with his brother chiefs, who appeared impatient for the presents which they expected to receive from him, were very striking objects. 'These articles Sheheken received from the American government, and they had rendered him, in his opinion, the greatest man in his country. It was expected by his people that he would be pretty liberal in the distribution of some of his valuables. However, their hopes were vain: Sheheken was as anxious to retain his property, as they were to receive it. Murmurs took the place of mirth, and on our departure from the village, his popularity was on the decline.

A few miles above the upper villages the principal trading house was built; and the hunting parties amounting in all to about 100 men, set out for the three forks of the Missouri.

Information was received here, that the Blackfoot Indians, who reside at the foot of the mountains, were hostile; that the British had factories all over the country, and had impelled them to cut off Mr. Manuel Lisa's party. One of the survivors, of the name of Coulter, who had accompa-

Of a voyage from St. Louis, Louisiana, to the Mandan Village  
by Dr. Thomas, Surgeon to the party

---

nied Lewis and Clark, says, that he, in company with another was fired on by these Indians; that his companion, who made resistance, was killed; that his canoe, cloathing, furs, traps and arms were taken from him, and when expecting to receive the same fate of his comrade, he was ordered to run off as fast as possible; which he coldly complied with. Observing one of their young men following at full speed, armed with a spear, he pushed on to some distance, endeavouring to save his life. In a few minutes the savage was near enough to pitch his spear, which he poisoned, and threw with such violence as to break the handle and miss the object. Coulter became the assailant, turned on the Indian and put him to death with the broken spear. Naked and tired he crept to the river, where he hid in a beaver dam from the band who had followed to revenge the death of their companion. Having observed the departure of the enemy, he left the river and came to the Gros Ventres, a tribe of the Mandans, a journey of nine days, without even mowkasons to protect him from the prickly pear, which covered the country, subsisting on such berries as providence threw in his way.

On our return to the Rees villages we found that the Souex had killed some of their people, which they unaccountably blamed us for; and being privately informed they intended us mischief, we set out in the night, ordering the men to sleep on board. Unfortunately two of the hands, one of the name of Aaron Whitney, a native of Massachusetts, went into the village, contrary to orders, and were left behind. We arrived at St. Louis in 40 days from the Company's trading-house above the Gros Ventres, without any other accident.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

CHAPTER I

Arrival at St. Louis - Preparations for the journey - Saque Indians - Their appearance, dress, and manners - Squaws - Commencement of a pedestrian tour - Sandhill cranes - Prairie settlers - Their hospitality - Wild pigeons, golden plovers and prairie hens - Mr. P. and his daughters - An abundant repast - Simplicity of the prairie maidens - A deer and turkey hunt - Loutre Lick hotel - Unwelcome bed-fellows - A colored Charon - Comfortable quarters - Young men of the west - Reflections on leaving home - Loquacity of the inhabitants - Gray squirrels - Boonville - Parroquets - Embarkation in a steamboat - Large catfish - Accident on board the boat - Arrival at Independence - Description of the town - Procure a supply of horses - Encampment of the Rocky Mountain company - Character of the men - Preparation for departure - Requisites of a leader - Backwoods familiarity - Milton Sublette and his band - Rev. Jason Lee, the missionary - A letter from home - Mormonites - Military discipline and its consequences.

On the evening of the 24th of March, 1834, Mr. NUTTALL and myself arrived at St. Louis, in the steamboat Boston, from Pittsburg.

On landing, we had the satisfaction to learn that Captain WYETH was already there, and on the afternoon of the next day we called upon him, and consulted him in reference to the outfit which it would be necessary to purchase for the journey. He accompanied us to a store in the town, and selected a number of articles for us, among which were several pairs of leathern pantaloons, enormous over-coats, made of green blankets, and white wool hats, with round crowns, fitting tightly to the head, brims five inches wide, and almost hard enough to resist a rifle ball.

The day following we saw about one hundred Indians of the Saque tribe, who had left their native forests for the purpose of treating for the sale of some land at the Jefferson barracks. They were dressed and decorated in the true primitive style; their heads shaved closely, and painted with alternate stripes of fiery red and deep black, leaving only the long scalping tuft, in which was interwoven a quantity of elk hair and eagle's feathers. Each man was furnished with a good blanket, and some had an under dress of calico, but the greater number were entirely naked to the waist. The faces and bodies of the men were, almost without an exception, fantastically painted, the predominant color being deep red, with occasionally a few stripes of dull clay white around the eyes and mouth. I observed one whose body was smeared with light colored clay, interspersed with black streaks. They were unarmed, with the exception of tomahawks and knives. The chief of the band, (who is said to be Black Hawk's father-in-law) was a large dignified looking man, of perhaps fifty-five years of age, distinguished from the rest, by his richer habiliments, a more profuse display of trinkets in his ears, (which were cut and gashed in a frightful manner to receive them,) and above all, by a huge necklace made of the claws of the grizzly bear. The squaws, of whom there were about twenty, were dressed very much like the men, and at a little distance could scarcely be distinguished from them. Among them was an old, superannuated crone, who, soon after her arrival, had been presented with a broken umbrella. The only use that she made of it was to wrench the plated ends from the whalebones, string them on a piece of wire, take her knife from her belt, with which she deliberately cut a slit of an inch in length along the upper rim of her ear, and insert them in it. I saw her soon after this operation had been performed; her cheeks were covered with blood, and she was standing with a vast deal of assumed dignity among her tawny sisters, who evidently envied her the possession of the worthless baubles.

---

28th.- Mr. N. and myself propose starting to-morrow on foot towards the upper settlements, a distance of about three hundred miles. We intend to pursue our journey leisurely, as we have plenty of time before us, and if we become tired, we can enter the stage which will probably overtake us.

29th.- This morning our Indians returned from the barracks, where I understand they transacted their business satisfactorily. I went on board the boat again to see them. I feel very much interested in them, as they are the first Indians I have ever seen who appear to be in a state of uncultivated nature, and who retain the savage garb and manners of their people. They had engaged the entire covered deck for their especial use, and were lolling about in groups, wrapped in their blankets. Some were occupied in conversation, others seemed more contemplative, and appeared to be thinking deeply, probably of the business which brought them amongst us. Here and there two might be seen playing a Spanish game with cards, and some were busily employed in rendering themselves more hideous with paint. To perform this operation, the dry paint is folded in a thin muslin or gauze cloth, tied tightly and beaten against the face, and a small looking-glass is held in the other hand to direct them where to apply it. Two middle aged squaws were frying beef, which they distributed around to the company in wooden bowls, and several half loaves of bread were circulating rapidly amongst them, by being tossed from one to another, each taking a huge bite of it. There were among the company, several younger females, but they were all so hard favored that I could not feel much sympathy with them, and was therefore not anxious to cultivate their acquaintance. There was another circumstance, too, that was not a very attractive one; I allude to the custom so universal amongst Indians, of seeking for vermin in each other's heads, and then eating them. The fair damsels were engaged in this way during most of the time that I remained on board, only suspending their delectable occupation to take their bites of bread as it passed them in rotation. The effect upon my person was what an Irishman would call the attraction of repulsion, as I found myself almost unconsciously edging away until I halted at a most respectable distance from the scene of slaughter.

At noon, Mr. N. and myself started on our pedestrian tour, Captain Wyeth offering to accompany us a few miles on the way. I was glad to get clear of St. Louis, as I felt uncomfortable in many respects while there, and the bustle and restraint of a town was any thing but agreeable to me. We proceeded over a road generally good, a low dry prairie, mostly heavily timbered, the soil underlaid with horizontal strata of limestone, abounding in organic remains, shells, corallines, &c., and arrived in the evening at Florissant, where we spent the night. The next day Captain Wyeth left us for St. Louis, and my companion and myself proceeded on our route. We observed great numbers of the brown, or sandhill crane, (*Grus canadensis*,) flying over us; some flocks were so high as to be entirely beyond the reach of vision, while their harsh, grating voices were very distinctly heard. We saw several flocks of the same cranes while ascending the Mississippi, several days since. At about noon, we crossed the river on a boat worked by horses, and stopped at a little town called St. Charles.

We find it necessary, both for our comfort and convenience, to travel very slowly, as our feet are already becoming tender, and that we may have an opportunity of observing the country, and collecting interesting specimens. Unfortunately for the pursuits of my companion, the plants (of which he finds a number that are rare and curious) are not yet in flower, and therefore of little use to him. The birds are in considerable numbers, among the principal of which is the large pileated

---

woodpecker, (*Picus pileatus*.)

Mr. N. and myself are both in high spirits. We travel slowly, and without much fatigue, and when we arrive at a house, stop and rest, take a drink of milk, and chat with those we see. We have been uniformly well treated; the living is good, and very cheap, and at any house at which we stop the inhabitants are sure to welcome us to their hospitality and good cheer. They live comfortably, and without much labor; possess a fruitful and easily tilled soil, for which they pay the trifling sum of one dollar and a quarter per acre; they raise an abundance of good Indian corn, potatoes, and other vegetables; have excellent beef and pork, and, in short, every thing necessary for good, wholesome living.

31st. The road to-day was muddy and slippery, rendered so by a heavy rain which fell last night. This morning, we observed large flocks of wild pigeons passing over, and on the bare prairies were thousands of golden plovers; the ground was often literally covered with them for acres. I killed a considerable number. They were very fat, and we made an excellent meal of them in the evening. The prairie hen, or pinnated grouse, is also very numerous, but in these situations is shy, and difficult to be procured.

Towards evening we were overtaken by a bluff, jolly looking man, on horseback, who, as is usual, stopped, and entered into conversation with us. I saw immediately that he was superior to those we had been accustomed to meet. He did not ply us with questions so eagerly as most, and when he heard that we were naturalists, and were travelling in that capacity, he seemed to take considerable interest in us. He invited us to stop at his house, which was only a mile beyond, and as night was almost upon us, we accepted the invitation with cheerfulness. Upon arriving at his mansion, our good host threw wide his hospitable doors, and then with a formal, and rather ultra-dignified politeness, making us a low bow, said, "Gentlemen, my name is P., and I am very happy of your company." We seated ourselves in a large, and well-furnished parlor. Mr. P. excused himself for a few minutes, and soon returned, bringing in three fine looking girls, whom he introduced as his daughters. I took a particular fancy to one of them from a strong resemblance which she bore to one of my female friends at home. These girls were certainly very superior to most that I had seen in Missouri, although somewhat touched with the awkward bashfulness and prudery which generally characterizes the prairie maidens. They had lost their mother when young, and having no companions out of the domestic circle, and consequently no opportunity of aping the manners of the world, were perfect children of nature. Their father, however, had given them a good, plain education, and they had made some proficiency in needle work, as was evinced by numerous neatly worked samplers hanging in wooden frames around the room. Anon, supper was brought in. It consisted of pork chops, ham, eggs, Indian bread and butter, tea, coffee, milk, potatoes, preserved ginger, and though last, certainly not least in value, an enormous tin dish of plovers, (the contents of my game-bag,) fricasseed. Here was certainly a most abundant repast, and we did ample justice to it.

I endeavored to do the agreeable to the fair ones in the evening, and Mr. N. was monopolized by the father, who took a great interest in plants, and was evidently much gratified by the information my companion gave him on the subject.

The next morning when we rose, it was raining, and much had evidently fallen during the night, making the roads wet and muddy, and therefore unpleasant for pedestrians. I confess I was not sorry for this, for I felt myself very comfortably situated, and had no wish to take to the road. Mr.

P. urged the propriety of our stopping at least another day, and the motion being seconded by his fair daughter, (my favorite,) it was irresistible. On the following morning the sun was shining brightly, the air was fresh and elastic, and the roads tolerably dry, so that there was no longer any excuse for tarrying, and we prepared for our departure. Our good host, grasping our hands, said that he had been much pleased with our visit, and hoped to see us again, and when I bid good bye to the pretty Miss P., I told her that if I ever visited Missouri again, I would go many miles out of my way to see her and her sisters. Her reply was unsophisticated enough. "Do come again, and come in May or June, for then there are plenty of prairie hens, and you can shoot as many as you want, and you must stay a long while with us, and we'll have nice times; good bye; I'm so sorry you're going."

April 4th. I rose this morning at daybreak, and left Mr. N. dreaming of weeds, in a little house at which we stopped last night, and in company with a long, lanky boy, (a son of the poor widow, our hostess,) set to moulding bullets in an old iron spoon, and preparing for deer hunting. The boy shouldered a rusty rifle, that looked almost antediluvian, and off we plodded to a thicket, two miles from the house. We soon saw about a dozen fine deer, and the boy, clapping his old firelock to his shoulder, brought down a beautiful doe at the distance of a full hundred yards. Away sprang the rest of the herd, and I crept round the thicket to meet them. They soon came up, and I fired my piece at a large buck, and wounded the poor creature in the leg; he went limping away, unable to overtake his companions; I felt very sorry, but consoled myself with the reflection that he would soon get well again.

We then gave up the pursuit, and turned our attention to the turkies, which were rather numerous in the thicket. They were shy, as usual, and, when started from their lurking places, ran away like deer, and hid themselves in the underwood. Occasionally, however, they would perch on the high limbs of the trees, and then we had some shots at them. In the course of an hour we killed four, and returned to the house, where, as I expected, Mr. N. was in a fever at my absence, and after a late, and very good breakfast, proceeded on our journey.

We find in this part of the country less timber in the same space than we have yet seen, and when a small belt appears, it is a great relief, as the monotony of a bare prairie becomes tiresome. Towards evening we arrived at Loutre Lick. Here there is a place called a Hotel. A Hotel, forsooth! a pig-stye would be a more appropriate name. Every thing about it was most exceedingly filthy and disagreeable, but no better lodging was to be had, for it might not be proper to apply for accommodation at a private house in the immediate vicinity of a public one. They gave us a wretched supper, not half so good as we had been accustomed to, and we were fain to spend the evening in a comfortless, unfurnished, nasty barroom, that smelt intolerably of rum and whiskey, to listen to the profane conversation of three or four uncouth individuals, (among whom were the host and his brother,) and to hear long and disagreeably minute discussions upon horse-racing, gambling, and other vices equally unpleasant to us.

The host's brother had been to the Rocky Mountains, and soon learning our destination, gave us much unsought for advice regarding our method of journeying; painted in strong colors the many dangers and difficulties which we must encounter, and concluded by advising us to give up the expedition. My fast ebbing patience was completely exhausted. I told him that nothing that he could say would discourage us, -- that we went to that house in order to seek repose, and it was unfair to intrude conversation upon us unasked. The ruffian made some grumbling reply, and

---

left us in quiet and undisturbed possession of our bench. We had a miserable time that night. The only spare bed in the house was so intolerably filthy that we dared not undress, and we had hardly closed our eyes before we were assailed by swarms of a vile insect, (the very name of which is offensive,) whose effluvia we had plainly perceived immediately as we entered the room. It is almost needless to say, that very early on the following morning, after paying our reckoning, and refusing the landlord's polite invitation to "liquorize," we marched from the house, shook the dust from our feet, and went elsewhere to seek a breakfast.

Soon after leaving, we came to a deep and wide creek, and strained our lungs for half an hour in vain endeavors to waken a negro boy who lived in a hut on the opposite bank, and who, we were told, would ferry us over. He came out of his den at last, half naked and rubbing his eyes to see who had disturbed his slumbers so early in the mornning. We told him to hurry over, or we'd endeavor to assist him, and he came at last, with a miserable leaky little skiff that wet our feet completely. We gave him a pickayune for his trouble, and went on. We soon came to a neat little secluded cottage in the very heart of a thick forest, where we found a fine looking young man, with an interesting wife, and a very pretty child about six months old. Upon being told that we wanted some breakfast, the woman tucked up her sleeves, gave the child to her husband, and went to work in good earnest. In a very short time a capital meal was smoking on the board, and while we were partaking of the good cheer, we found our vexation rapidly evaporating. We complimented the handsome young hostess, patted the chubby cheeks of the child, and were in a good humor with every body.

6th. Soon after we started this morning, we were overtaken by a stage which was going to Fulton, seven miles distant, and as the roads were somewhat heavy, we concluded to make use of this convenience. The only passengers were three young men from the far west, who had been to the eastward purchasing goods, and were then travelling homeward. Two of them evidently possessed a large share of what is called mother wit, and so we had jokes without number. Some of them were not very refined, and perhaps did not suit the day very well, (it being the Sabbath,) yet none of them were really offensive, but seemed to proceed entirely from an exuberance of animal spirits. In about an hour and a half we arrived at Fulton, a pretty little town, and saw the villagers in their holiday clothes parading along to church. The bell at that moment sounded, and the peal gave rise to many reflections. It might be long ere I should hear the sound of the "church-going bell" again. I was on to a far far country, and I did not know that I should ever be permitted to revisit my own. I felt that I was leaving the scenes of my childhood; the spot which had witnessed all the happiness I ever knew, the home where all my affections were centered. I was entering a land of strangers, and would be compelled hereafter to mingle with those who might look upon me with indifference, or treat me with neglect.

These reflections were soon checked, however. We took a light lunch at the tavern where we stopped. I shouldered my gun, Mr. N. his stick and bundle, and off we trudged again, westward, ho! We soon lost sight of the prairie entirely, and our way lay through a country thickly covered with heavy timber, the roads very rough and stony, and we had frequently to ford the creeks on our route, the late freshets having carried away the bridges.

Our accommodation at the farm houses has generally been good and comfortable, and the inhabitants obliging, and anxious to please. They are, however, exceedingly inquisitive, propounding question after question, in such quick succession as scarcely to allow you breathing time between

them. This kind of catechising was at first very annoying to us, but we have now become accustomed to it, and have hit upon an expedient to avoid it in a measure. The first question generally asked, is, "where do you come from, gentlemen?" We frame our answer somewhat in the style of Dr. Franklin. "We come from Pennsylvania; our names, Nuttall and Townsend; we are travelling to Independence on foot, for the purpose of seeing the country to advantage, and we intend to proceed from thence across the mountains to the Pacific. Have you any mules to sell?" The last clause generally changes the conversation, and saves us trouble. To a stranger, and one not accustomed to the manners of the western people, this kind of interrogating seems to imply a lack of modesty and common decency, but it is certainly not so intended, each one appearing to think himself entitled to gain as much intelligence regarding the private affairs of a stranger, as a very free use of his lingual organ can procure for him.

We found the common gray squirrel very abundant in some places, particularly in the low bottoms along water courses; in some situations we saw them skipping on almost every tree. On last Christmas day, at a squirrel hunt in this neighborhood, about thirty persons killed the astonishing number of twelve hundred, between the rising and setting of the sun.

This may seem like useless barbarity, but it is justified by the consideration that all the crops of corn in the country are frequently destroyed by these animals. This extensive extermination is carried on every year, and yet it is said that their numbers do not appear to be much diminished. About mid-day on the 7th, we passed through a small town called Columbia, and stopped in the evening at Rocheport, a little village on the Missouri river. We were anxious to find a steam-boat bound for Independence, as we feared we might linger too long upon the road to make the necessary preparations for our contemplated journey.

On the following day, we crossed the Missouri, opposite Rocheport, in a small skiff. The road here, for several miles, winds along the bank of the river, amid fine groves of sycamore and Athenian poplars, then stretches off for about three miles, and does not again approach it until you arrive at Boonville. It is by far the most hilly road that we have seen, and I was frequently reminded, while travelling on it, of our Chester county. We entered the town of Boonville early in the afternoon, and took lodgings in a very clean, and respectably kept hotel. I was much pleased with Boonville. It is the prettiest town I have seen in Missouri; situated on the bank of the river, on an elevated and beautiful spot, and overlooks a large extent of lovely country. The town contains two good hotels, (but no grog shops, properly so called,) several well-furnished stores, and five hundred inhabitants. It was laid out thirty years ago by the celebrated western pioneer, whose name it bears.

We saw here vast numbers of the beautiful parrot of this country, (the *Psittacus carolinensis*.) They flew around us in flocks, keeping a constant and loud screaming, as though they would chide us for invading their territory; and the splendid green and red of their plumage glancing in the sunshine, as they whirled and circled within a few feet of us, had a most magnificent appearance. They seem entirely unsuspecting of danger, and after being fired at, only huddle closer together, as if to obtain protection from each other, and as their companions are falling around them, they curve down their necks, and look at them fluttering upon the ground, as though perfectly at a loss to account for so unusual an occurrence. It is a most inglorious sort of shooting; down right, cold-blooded murder.

On the afternoon of the 9th, a steamboat arrived, on board of which we were surprised and

pleased to find Captain Wyeth, and our "plunder." We embarked immediately, and soon after, were puffing along the Missouri, at the rate of seven miles an hour. When we stopped in the afternoon to "wood," we were gratified by a sight of one of the enormous catfish of this river and the Mississippi, weighing full sixty pounds. It is said, however, that they are sometimes caught of at least double this weight. They are excellent eating, coarser, but quite as good as the common small catfish of our rivers. There is nothing in the scenery of the river banks to interest the traveler particularly. The country is generally level and sandy, relieved only by an occasional hill, and some small rocky acclivities.

A shocking accident happened on board during this trip. A fine looking black boy (a slave of one of the deck passengers) was standing on the platform near the fly-wheel. The steam had just been stopped off, and the wheel was moving slowly by the impetus it had acquired. The poor boy unwittingly thrust his head between the spokes; a portion of the steam was at that moment let on, and his head and shoulders were torn to fragments. We buried him on shore the same day; the poor woman, his mistress, weeping and lamenting over him as for her own child. She told me she had brought him up from an infant; he had been as an affectionate son to her, and for years her only support.

March 20th. - On the morning of the 14th, we arrived at Independence landing, and shortly afterwards, Mr. N. and myself walked to the town, three miles distant. The country here is very hilly and rocky, thickly covered with timber, and no prairie within several miles. The site of the town is beautiful, and very well selected, standing on a high point of land, and overlooking the surrounding country, but the town itself is very indifferent; the houses, (about fifty,) are very much scattered, composed of logs and clay, and are low and inconvenient. There are six or eight stores here, two taverns, and a few tipling houses. As we did not fancy the town, nor the society that we saw there, we concluded to take up our residence at the house on the landing until the time of starting on our journey. We were very much disappointed in not being able to purchase any mules here, all the salable ones having been bought by the Santa Fee traders, several weeks since. Horses, also, are rather scarce, and are sold at higher prices than we had been taught to expect, the demand for them at this time being greater than usual. Mr. N. and myself have, however, been so fortunate as to find five excellent animals amongst the hundreds of wretched ones offered for sale, and have also engaged a man to attend to packing our loads, and perform the various duties of our camp. The men of the party, to the number of about fifty, are encamped on the bank of the river, and their tents whiten the plain for the distance of half a mile. I have often enjoyed the view on a fine moonlight evening from the door of the house, or perched upon a high hill immediately over the spot. The beautiful white tents, with a light gleaming from each, the smouldering fires around them, the incessant hum of the men, and occasionally the lively notes of a bacchanalian song, softened and rendered sweeter by distance. I probably contemplate these and similar scenes with the more interest, as they exhibit the manner in which the next five months of my life are to be spent.

We have amongst our men, a great variety of dispositions. Some who have not been accustomed to the kind of life they are to lead in future, look forward to it with eager delight, and talk of stirring incidents and hair-breadth 'scapes. Others who are more experienced seem to be as easy and unconcerned about it as a citizen would be in contemplating a drive of a few miles into the country. Some have evidently been reared in the shade, and not accustomed to hardships, but the

majority are strong, able-bodied men, and many are almost as rough as the grizzly bears, of their feats upon which they are fond of boasting.

During the day the captain keeps all his men employed in arranging and packing a vast variety of goods for carriage. In addition to the necessary clothing for the company, arms, ammunition, &c., there are thousands of trinkets of various kinds, beads, paint, bells, rings, and such trumpery, intended as presents for the Indians, as well as objects of trade with them. The bales are usually made to weigh about eighty pounds, of which a horse carries two.

I am very much pleased with the manner in which Captain W. manages his men. He appears admirably calculated to gain the good will, and ensure the obedience of such a company, and adopts the only possible mode of accomplishing his end. They are men who have been accustomed to act independently; they possess a strong and indomitable spirit which will never succumb to authority, and will only be conciliated by kindness and familiarity. I confess I admire this spirit. It is noble; it is free and characteristic, but for myself, I have not been accustomed to seeing it exercised, and when a rough fellow comes up without warning, and slaps me on the shoulder, with, "stranger what for a gun is that you carry?" I start, and am on the point of making an angry reply, but I remember where I am, check the feeling instantly, and submit the weapon to his inspection. Captain W. may frequently be seen sitting on the ground, surrounded by a knot of his independents, consulting them as to his present arrangements and future movements, and paying the utmost deference to the opinion of the least among them.

We were joined here by Mr. Milton Sublette, a trader and trapper of some ten or twelve years' standing. It is his intention to travel with us to the mountains, and we are very glad of his company, both on account of his intimate acquaintance with the country, and the accession to our band of about twenty trained hunters, "true as the steel of their tried blades," who have more than once followed their brave and sagacious leader over the very track which we intend to pursue. He appears to be a man of strong sense and courteous manners, and his men are enthusiastically attached to him.

Five missionaries, who intend to travel under our escort, have also just arrived. The principal of these is a Mr. Jason Lee, (a tall and powerful man, who looks as though he were well calculated to buffet difficulties in a wild country,) his nephew, Mr. Daniel Lee, and three younger men of respectable standing in society, who have arrayed themselves under the missionary banner, chiefly for the gratification of seeing a new country, and participating in strange adventures.

My favorites, the birds, are very numerous in this vicinity, and I am therefore in my element. Parroquets are plentiful in the bottom lands, the two species of squirrel are abundant, and rabbits, turkies, and deer are often killed by our people.

I was truly rejoiced to receive yesterday a letter from my family. I went to the office immediately on my arrival here, confidently expecting to find one lying there for me; I was told there was none, and I could not believe it, or would not; I took all the letters in my hand, and examined each of them myself, and I suppose that during the process my expressions of disappointment were "loud and deep," as I observed the eyes of a number of persons in the store directed towards me with manifest curiosity and surprise. The obtuse creatures could not appreciate my feelings. I was most anxious to receive intelligence from home, as some of the members of the family were indisposed when I left, and in a few days more I should be traversing the uncultivated prairie and the dark forest, and perhaps, never hear from my home again. The letter came at last, however,

---

and was an inexpressible consolation to me.

The little town of Independence has within a few weeks been the scene of a brawl, which at one time threatened to be attended with serious consequences, but which was happily settled without bloodshed. It had been for a considerable time the stronghold of a sect of fanatics, called Mormons, or Mormonites, who, as their numbers increased, and they obtained power, showed an inclination to lord it over the less assuming inhabitants of the town. This was a source of irritation which they determined to rid themselves of in a summary manner, and accordingly the whole town rose, en masse, and the poor followers of the prophet were forcibly ejected from the community. They took refuge in the little town of Liberty, on the opposite side of the river, and the villagers here are now in a constant state of feverish alarm. Reports have been circulated that the Mormons are preparing to attack the town, and put the inhabitants to the sword, and they have therefore stationed sentries along the river for several miles, to prevent the landing of the enemy. The troops parade and study military tactics every day, and seem determined to repel, with spirit, the threatened invasion. The probability is, that the report respecting the attack, is, as John Bull says, "all humbug," and this training and marching has already been a source of no little annoyance to us, as the miserable little skeleton of a saddler who is engaged to work for our party, has neglected his business, and must go a soldiering in stead. A day or two ago, I tried to convince the little man that he was of no use to the army, for if a Mormon were to say pooh at him, it would blow him away beyond the reach of danger or of glory; but he thought not, and no doubt concluded that he was a "marvelous proper man," so we were put to great inconvenience waiting for our saddles.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

## CHAPTER II

Departure of the caravan - A storm on the prairie - Arrangement of the camp - The cook's desertion - Kansas Indians - Kansas river - Indian lodges - Passage of the river - Buffalo canoes - Kansas chief - Costume of the Indians - Upper Kaw village - Their wigwams - Catfish and ravens - Return of Mr. Sublette - Pawnee trace - Desertion of three men - Difficulties occasioned by losing the trail - Intelligence of Mr. Sublette's party - Escape of the band of horses - Visit of three Otto Indians - Anecdote of Richardson, the chief hunter - His appearance and character - White wolves and antelopes - Buffalo bones - Sublette's deserted camp - Lurking wolves.

On the 28th of April, at 10 o'clock in the morning, our caravan, consisting of seventy men, and two hundred and fifty horses, began its march; Captain Wyeth and Milton Sublette took the lead, Mr. N. and myself rode beside them; then the men in double file, each leading, with a line, two horses heavily laden, and Captain Thing (Captain W.'s assistant) brought up the rear. The band of missionaries, with their horned cattle, rode along the flanks.

I frequently sallied out from my station to look at and admire the appearance of the cavalcade, and as we rode out from the encampment, our horses prancing, and neighing, and pawing the ground, it was altogether so exciting that I could scarcely contain myself. Every man in the company seemed to feel a portion of the same kind of enthusiasm; uproarious bursts of merriment, and gay and lively songs, were constantly echoing along the line. We were certainly a most merry and happy company. What cared we for the future? We had reason to expect that ere long difficulties and dangers, in various shapes, would assail us, but no anticipation of reverses could check

the happy exuberance of our spirits.

Our road lay over a vast rolling prairie, with occasional small spots of timber at the distance of several miles apart, and this will no doubt be the complexion of the track for some weeks.

In the afternoon we crossed the Big Blue river at a shallow ford. Here we saw a number of beautiful yellow-headed troopials, (*Icterus zanthrocephalus*,) feeding upon the prairie in company with large flocks of black birds, and like these, they often alight upon the backs of our horses.

29th. A heavy rain fell all the morning, which had the effect of calming our transports in a great measure, and in the afternoon it was succeeded by a tremendous hail storm. During the rain, our party left the road, and proceeded about a hundred yards from it to a range of bushes, near a stream of water, for the purpose of encamping. We had just arrived here, and had not yet dismounted, when the hail storm commenced. It came on very suddenly, and the stones, as large as musket balls, dashing upon our horses, created such a panic among them, that they plunged, and kicked, and many of them threw their loads, and fled wildly over the plain. They were all overtaken, however, and as the storm was not of long duration, they were soon appeased, and staked for the night.

To stake or fasten a horse for the night, he is provided with a strong leathern halter, with an iron ring attached to the chin strap. To this ring, a rope of hemp or plaited leather, twenty-two feet in length, is attached, and the opposite end of the line made fast with several clove hitches around an oak or hickory pin, two and a half feet long. The top of this pin or stake is ringed with iron to prevent its being bruised, and it is then driven to the head in the ground.

For greater security, hobbles made of stout leather are buckled around the fore legs; and then, if the tackling is good, it is almost impossible for a horse to escape. Care is always taken to stake him in a spot where he may eat grass all night. The animals are placed sufficiently far apart to prevent them interfering with each other.

Camping out to-night is not so agreeable as it might be, in consequence of the ground being very wet and muddy, and our blankets (our only bedding) thoroughly soaked; but we expect to encounter greater difficulties than these ere long, and we do not murmur.

A description of the formation of our camp may, perhaps, not be amiss here. The party is divided into messes of eight men, and each mess is allowed a separate tent. The captain of a mess, (who is generally an "old hand," i.e. an experienced forester, hunter, or trapper,) receives each morning the rations of pork, flour, &c. for his people, and they choose one of their body as cook for the whole. Our camp now consists of nine messes, of which Captain W.'s forms one, although it only contains four persons besides the cook.

When we arrive in the evening at a suitable spot for an encampment, Captain W. rides round a space which he considers large enough to accommodate it, and directs where each mess shall pitch its tent. The men immediately unload their horses, and place their bales of goods in the direction indicated, and in such manner, as in case of need, to form a sort of fortification and defence. When all the messes are arranged in this way, the camp forms a hollow square, in the centre of which the horses are placed and staked firmly to the ground. The guard consists of from six to eight men, and is relieved three times each night, and so arranged that each gang may serve alternate nights. The captain of a guard (who is generally also the captain of a mess) collects his people at the appointed hour, and posts them around outside the camp in such situations that they may command a view of the environs, and be ready to give the alarm in case of danger.

The captain cries the hour regularly by a watch, and all's well, every fifteen minutes, and each man of the guard is required to repeat this call in rotation, which if any one should fail to do, it is fair to conclude that he is asleep, and he is then immediately visited and stirred up. In case of defecation of this kind, our laws adjudge to the delinquent the hard sentence of walking three days. As yet none of our poor fellows have incurred this penalty, and the probability is, that it would not at this time be enforced, as we are yet in a country where little molestation is to be apprehended; but in the course of another week's travel, when thieving and ill-designing Indians will be outlying on our trail, it will be necessary that the strictest watch be kept, and, for the preservation of our persons and property, that our laws shall be rigidly enforced.

May 1st. On rising this morning, and inquiring about our prospects of a breakfast, we discovered that the cook of our mess (a little, low-browed, ill-conditioned Yankee) had decamped in the night, and left our service to seek for a better. He probably thought the duties too hard for him, but as he was a miserable cook, we should not have much regretted his departure, had he not thought proper to take with him an excellent rifle, powder-horn, shot-pouch, and other matters that did not belong to him. It is only surprising that he did not select one of our best horses to carry him; but as he had the grace to take his departure on foot, and we have enough men without him, we can wish him God speed, and a fair run to the settlements.

We encamped this evening on a small branch of the Kansas river. As we approached our stopping place, we were joined by a band of Kansas Indians, (commonly called KawIndians.) They are encamped in a neighboring copse, where they have six lodges. This party is a small division of a portion of this tribe, who are constantly wandering; but although their journeys are sometimes pretty extensive, they seldom approach nearer to the settlements than they are at present. They are very friendly, are not so tawdrily decorated as those we saw below, and use little or no paint. This may, however, be accounted for by their not having the customary ornaments, &c., as their ears are filled with trinkets of various kinds, and are horribly gashed in the usual manner. The dress of most that we have seen, has consisted of ordinary woollen pantaloons received from the whites, and their only covering, from the waist up, is a blanket or buffalo robe. The head is shaved somewhat in the manner of the Sâques and Foxes, leaving the well known scalping tuft; but unlike the Indians just mentioned, the hair is allowed to grow upon the middle of the head, and extends backwards in a longitudinal ridge to the occiput. It is here gathered into a kind of queue, plaited, and suffered to hang down the back. There were amongst them several squaws, with young children tied to their backs, and a number of larger urchins ran about our camp wholly naked.

The whole of the following day we remained in camp, trading buffalo robes, apishemeaus, &c., of the Indians. These people became at length somewhat troublesome to us who were not traders, by a very free exercise of their begging propensities. They appear to be exceedingly poor and needy, and take the liberty of asking unhesitatingly, and without apparent fear of refusal, for any articles that happen to take their fancy.

I have observed, that among the Indians now with us, none but the chief uses the pipe. He smokes the article called *kanikanik*,-- a mixture of tobacco and the dried leaves of the poke plant, (*Phytolacca decandra*.) I was amused last evening by the old chief asking me in his impressive manner, (first by pointing with his finger towards the sunset, and then raising his hands high over his head,) if I was going to the mountains. On answering him in the affirmative, he depressed his hands, and passed them around his head in both directions, then turned quickly away from me,

with a very solemn and significant sigh! He meant, doubtless, that my brain was turned; in plain language, that I was a fool. This may be attributed to his horror of the Blackfoot Indians, with whom a portion of his tribe was formerly at war. The poor Kaws are said to have suffered dreadfully in these savage conflicts, and were finally forced to abandon the country to their hereditary foes.

We were on the move early the next morning, and at noon arrived at the Kansas river, a branch of the Missouri. This is a broad and not very deep stream, with the water dark and turbid, like that of the former. As we approached it, we saw a number of Indian lodges, made of saplings driven into the ground, bent over and tied at top, and covered with bark and buffalo skins. These lodges, or wigwams, are numerous on both sides of the river. As we passed them, the inhabitants, men, women, and children, flocked out to see us, and almost prevented our progress by their eager greetings. Our party stopped on the bank of the river, and the horses were unloaded and driven into the water. They swam beautifully, and with great regularity, and arrived safely on the opposite shore, where they were confined in a large lot, enclosed with a fence. After some difficulty, and considerable detention, we succeeded in procuring a large flat bottomed boat, embarked ourselves and goods in it, and landed on the opposite side near our horse pen, where we encamped. The lodges are numerous here, and there are also some good frame houses inhabited by a few white men and women, who subsist chiefly by raising cattle, which they drive to the settlements below. They, as well as the Indians, raise an abundance of good corn; potatoes and other vegetables are also plentiful, and they can therefore live sufficiently well.

The canoes used by the Indians are mostly made of buffalo skins, stretched, while recent, over a light frame work of wood, the seams sewed with sinews, and so closely, as to be wholly impervious to water. These light vessels are remarkably buoyant, and capable of sustaining very heavy burthens.

In the evening the principal Kansas chief paid us a visit in our tent. He is a young man about twenty-five years of age, straight as a poplar, and with a noble countenance and bearing, but he appeared to me to be marvelously deficient in most of the requisites which go to make the character of a real Indian chief, at least of such Indian chiefs as we read of in our popular books. I begin to suspect, in truth, that these lofty and dignified attributes are more apt to exist in the fertile brain of the novelist, than in reality. Be this as it may, our chief is a very lively, laughing, and rather playful personage; perhaps he may put on his dignity, like a glove, when it suits his convenience.

We remained in camp the whole of next day, and traded with the Indians for a considerable number of robes, apishemeaus, and halter ropes of hide. Our fat bacon and tobacco were in great demand for these useful commodities.

The Kaws living here appear to be much more wealthy than those who joined our camp on the prairie below. They are in better condition, more richly dressed, cleaner, and more comfortable than their wandering brothers. The men have generally fine countenances, but all the women that I have seen are homely. I cannot admire them. Their dress consists, universally of deer skin leggings, belted around the loins, and over the upper part of the body a buffalo robe or blanket.

On the 20th in the morning, we packed our horses and rode out of the Kaw settlement, leaving the river immediately, and making a N. W. by W. course and the next day came to another village of the same tribe, consisting of about thirty lodges, and situated in the midst of a beautiful level

---

prairie.

The Indians stopped our caravan almost by force, and evinced so much anxiety to trade with us, that we could not well avoid gratifying them. We remained with them about two hours, and bought corn, moccasins and leggings in abundance. The lodges here are constructed very differently from those of the lower village. They are made of large and strong timbers, a ridge pole runs along the top, and the different pieces are fastened together by leathern thongs. The roofs, -which are single, making but one angle, -are of stout poplar bark, and form an excellent defence, both against rain and the rays of the sun, which must be intense during midsummer in this region. These prairies are often visited by heavy gales of wind, which would probably demolish the huts, were they built of frail materials like those below. We encamped in the evening on a small stream called Little Vermillion creek, where we found an abundance of excellent catfish, exactly similar to those of the Schuylkill river. Our people caught them in great numbers. Here we first saw the large ravens, (*Corvus corax*.) They hopped about the ground all around our camp; and as we left it, they came in, pell-mell, croaking, fighting, and scrambling for the few fragments that remained. 8th.-This morning Mr. Sublette left us to return to the settlements. He has been suffering for a considerable time with a fungus in one of his legs, and it has become so much worse since we started, in consequence of irritation caused by riding, that he finds it impossible to proceed. His departure has thrown a gloom over the whole camp. We all admired him for his amiable qualities, and his kind and obliging disposition. For myself, I had become so much attached to him, that I feel quite melancholy about his leaving us.

The weather is now very warm, and there has been a dead calm all day, which renders travelling most uncomfortable. We have frequently been favored with fresh breezes, which make it very agreeable, but the moment these fail us we are almost suffocated with intense heat. Our rate of travelling is about twenty miles per day, which, in this warm weather, and with heavily packed horses, is as much as we can accomplish with comfort to ourselves and animals.

On the afternoon of the next day, we crossed a broad Indian trail, bearing northerly, supposed to be about five days old, and to have been made by a war party of Pawnees. We are now in the country traversed by these Indians, and are daily expecting to see them, but Captain W. seems very desirous to avoid them, on account of their well known thieving propensities and quarrelsome disposition. These Indians go every year to the plains of the Platte, where they spend some weeks in hunting the buffalo, jerking their meat, and preparing their skins for robes; they then push on to the Black Hills, and look out for the parties of Blackfeet, which are also bound to the Platte river plains. When the opposing parties come in collision, (which frequently happens,) the most cruel and sanguinary conflicts ensue. In the evening, three of our men deserted. Like our quondam cook, they all took rifles, &c., that did not belong to them, and one of these happened to be a favorite piece of Captain W's, which had done him good service in his journey across this country two years ago. He was very much attached to the gun, and in spite of his calm and cool philosophy in all vexatious matters, he cannot altogether conceal his chagrin.

The little streams of this part of the country are fringed with a thick growth of pretty trees and bushes, and the buds are now swelling, and the leaves expanding, to "welcome back the spring." The birds, too, sing joyously amongst them, grosbeaks, thrushes, and buntings, a merry and musical band. I am particularly fond of sallying out early in the morning, and strolling around the camp. The light breeze just bends the tall tops of the grass on the boundless prairie, the birds

are commencing their matin carollings, and all nature looks fresh and beautiful. The horses of the camp are lying comfortably on their sides, and seem, by the glances which they give me in passing, to know that their hour of toil is approaching, and the patient kine are ruminating in happy unconsciousness.

11th.-We encountered some rather serious difficulties today in fording several wide and deep creeks, having muddy and miry bottoms. Many of our horses, (and particularly those that were packed,) fell into the water, and it was with the greatest difficulty and labor that they were extricated. Some of the scenes presented were rather ludicrous to those who were not actors in them. The floundering, kicking, and falling of horses in the heavy slough, man and beast rolling over together, and squattering amongst the black mud, and the woebegone looks of horse, rider, and horse-furniture, often excited a smile, even while we pitied their begrimed and miserable plight. All these troubles are owing to our having lost the trail yesterday, and we have been travelling today as nearly in the proper course as our compass indicated, and hope soon to find it.

12th. - Our scouts came in this morning with the intelligence that they had found a large trail of white men, bearing N. W. We have no doubt that this is Wm. Sublette's party, and that it passed us last evening. They must have travelled very rapidly to overtake us so soon, and no doubt had men ahead watching our motions. It seems rather unfriendly, perhaps, to run by us in this furtive way, without even stopping to say good morning, but Sublette is attached to a rival company, and all stratagems are deemed allowable when interest is concerned. It is a matter of some moment to be the first at the mountain rendezvous, in order to obtain the furs brought every summer by the trappers.

Last night, while I was serving on guard, I observed an unusual commotion among our band of horses, a wild neighing, snorting, and plunging, for which I was unable to account. I directed several of my men to go in and appease them, and endeavor to ascertain the cause. They had scarcely started, however, when about half of the band broke their fastenings, snapped the hobbles on their legs, and went dashing right through the midst of the camp. Down went several of the tents, the rampart of goods was cleared in gallant style, and away went the frightened animals at full speed over the plain. The whole camp was instantly aroused. The horses that remained, were bridled as quickly as possible; we mounted them without saddles, and set off in hard pursuit after the fugitives. The night was pitch dark, but we needed no light to point out the way, as the clattering of hoofs ahead on the hard ground of the prairie, sounded like thunder. After riding half an hour, we overtook about forty of them, and surrounding them with difficulty, succeeded in driving them back, and securing them as before. Twenty men were then immediately despatched to scour the country, and bring in the remainder. This party was headed by Mr. Lee, our missionary, (who, with his usual promptitude, volunteered his services,) and they returned early this morning, bringing nearly sixty more. We find, however, upon counting the horses in our possession, that there are yet three missing.

While we were at breakfast, three Indians of the Otto tribe, came to our camp to see, and smoke with us. These were men of rather short stature, but strong and firmly built. Their countenances resemble in general expression those of the Kansas, and their dresses are very similar. We are all of opinion, that it is to these Indians we owe our difficulties of last night, and we have no doubt that the three missing horses are now in their possession, but as we cannot prove it upon them, and cannot even converse with them, (having no interpreters,) we are compelled to submit to our

---

loss in silence. Perhaps we should even be thankful that we have not lost more.

While these people were smoking the pipe of peace with us, after breakfast I observed that Richardson, our chief hunter, (an experienced man in this country, of a tall and iron frame, and almost child-like simplicity of character, in fact an exact counterpart of Hawk-eye in his younger days,) stood aloof, and refused to sit in the circle, in which it was always the custom of the old hands to join.

Feeling some curiosity to ascertain the cause of this unusual diffidence, I occasionally allowed my eyes to wander to the spot where our sturdy hunter stood looking moodily upon us, as the calumet passed from hand to hand around the circle, and I thought I perceived him now and then cast a furtive glance at one of the Indians who sat opposite to me, and sometimes his countenance would assume an expression almost demoniacal, as though the most fierce and deadly passions were raging in his bosom. I felt certain that hereby hung a tale, and I watched for a corresponding expression, or at least a look of consciousness, in the face of my opposite neighbor, but expression there was none. His large features were settled in a tranquillity which nothing could disturb, and as he puffed the smoke in huge volumes from his mouth, and the fragrant vapor wreathed and curled around his head, he seemed the embodied spirit of meekness and taciturnity. The camp moved soon after, and I lost no time in overhauling Richardson, and asking an explanation of his singular conduct.

"Why," said he, "that Injen that sat opposite to you, is my bitterest enemy. I was once going down alone from the rendezvous with letters for St. Louis, and when I arrived on the lower part of the Platte river, (just a short distance beyond us here,) I fell in with about a dozen Ottos. They were known to be a friendly tribe, and I therefore felt no fear of them. I dismounted from my horse and sat with them upon the ground. It was in the depth of winter; the ground was covered with snow, and the river was frozen solid. While I was thinking of nothing but my dinner, which I was then about preparing, four or five of the cowards jumped on me, mastered my rifle, and held my arms fast, while they took from me my knife and tomahawk, my flint and steel, and all my ammunition. They then loosed me, and told me to be off. I begged them, for the love of God, to give me my rifle and a few loads of ammunition, or I should starve before I could reach the settlements. No - I should have nothing, and if I did not start off immediately, they would throw me under the ice of the river. And," continued the excited hunter, - while he ground his teeth with bitter, and uncontrollable rage, - "that man that sat opposite to you was the chief of them. He recognised me, and knew very well the reason why I would not smoke with him. I tell you, sir, if ever I meet that man in any other situation than that in which I saw him this morning, I'll shoot him with as little hesitation as I would shoot a deer. Several years have passed since the perpetration of this outrage, but it is still as fresh in my memory as ever, and I again declare, that if ever an opportunity offers, I will kill that man." "But, Richardson, did they take your horse also?" "To be sure they did, and my blankets, and every thing I had, except my clothes." "But how did you subsist until you reached the settlements? You had a long journey before you." "Why, set to trappin' prairie squirrels with little nooses made out of the hairs of my head." I should remark that his hair was so long, that it fell in heavy masses on his shoulders. "But squirrels in winter, Richardson, I never heard of squirrels in winter." "Well but there was plenty of them, though; little white ones, that lived among the snow." "Well, really, this was an unpleasant sort of adventure enough, but let me suggest that you do very wrong to remember it with such blood-thirsty feelings." He shook his head with a dogged

---

and determined air, and rode off as if anxious to escape a lecture.

A little sketch of our hunter may perhaps not be uninteresting, as he will figure somewhat in the following pages, being one of the principal persons of the party, the chief hunter, and a man upon whose sagacity and knowledge of the country we all in a great measure depended.

In height he is several inches over six feet, of a spare but remarkably strong and vigorous frame, and a countenance of almost infantile simplicity and openness. In disposition he is mild and affable, but when roused to indignation, his keen eyes glitter and flash, the muscles of his large mouth work convulsively, and he looks the very impersonation of the spirit of evil. He is implacable in anger, and bitter in revenge; never forgetting a kindness, but remembering an injury with equal tenacity. Such is the character of our hunter, and none who have known him as I have, will accuse me of delineating from fancy. His native place is Connecticut, which he left about twelve years ago, and has ever since been engaged in roaming through the boundless plains and rugged mountains of the west, often enduring the extremity of famine and fatigue, exposed to dangers and vicissitudes of every kind, all for the paltry, and often uncertain pittance of a Rocky Mountain hunter. He says he is now tired of this wandering and precarious life, and when he shall be enabled to save enough from his earnings to buy a farm in Connecticut, he intends to settle down a quiet tiller of the soil, and enjoy the sweets of domestic felicity. But this day will probably never arrive. Even should he succeed in realizing a little fortune, and the farm should be taken, the monotony and tameness of the scene will weary his free spirit; he will often sigh for a habitation on the broad prairie, or a ramble over the dreary mountains where his lot has so long been cast.

15th. -- We saw to-day several large white wolves, and two herds of antelopes. The latter is one of the most beautiful animals I ever saw. When full grown, it is nearly as large as a deer. The horns are rather short, with a single prong near the top, and an abrupt backward curve at the summit like a hook. The ears are very delicate, almost as thin as paper, and hooked at the tip like the horns. The legs are remarkably light and beautifully formed, and as it bounds over the plain, it seems scarcely to touch the ground, so exceedingly light and agile are its motions. This animal is the *Antelope furcifer* of zoologists, and inhabits the western prairies of North America exclusively. The ground here is strewn with great quantities of buffalo bones; the skulls of many of them in great perfection. I often thought of my friend Doctor M. and his golgotha, while we were kicking these fine specimens about the ground. We are now travelling along the banks of the Blue river, a small fork of the Kansas. The grass is very luxuriant and good, and we have excellent and beautiful camps every night.

This morning a man was sent ahead to see W. Sublette's camp, and bear a message to him, who returned in the evening with the information that the company is only one day's journey beyond, and consists of about thirty-five men. We see his deserted camps every day, and, in some cases, the fires are not yet extinguished. It is sometimes amusing to see the wolves lurking like guilty things around these camps seeking for the fragments that may be left; as our party approaches, they sneak away with a mean, hang-dog air which often coaxes a whistling bullet out of the rifle of the wayfarer.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

### CHAPTER III

Arrival at the Platte river-Wolves and antelopes-Saline efflorescences - Anxiety of the men to

---

see buffalo - Visit of two spies from the Grand Pawnees - Forced march - A herd of buffalo - Elk - Singular conduct of the horses - Killing a buffalo - Indian mode of procuring buffalo - Great herd - Intention of the men to desert - Adventure with an Indian in the tent - Circumspection necessary - Indian feat with bow and arrow - Notice of the Pawnee tribes - Disappearance of the buffalo from the plains of the Platte - A hunting adventure - Killing a buffalo - Butchering of a bull - Shameful destruction of the game - Hunters' mode of quenching thirst.

On the 18th of May we arrived at the Platte river. It is from one and a half to two miles in width, very shoal; large sand flats, and small, verdant islands appearing in every part. Wolves and antelopes were in great abundance here, and the latter were frequently killed by our men. We saw, also, the sandhill crane, great heron, (*Ardea herodias*), and the longbilled curlew, stalking about through the shallow water, and searching for their aquatic food.

The prairie is here as level as a race course, not the slightest undulation appearing throughout the whole extent of vision, in a north and westerly direction; but to the eastward of the river, and about eight miles from it, is seen a range of high bluffs or sand banks, stretching away to the south-east until they are lost in the far distance.

The ground here is in many places encrusted with an impure salt, which by the taste appears to be a combination of the sulphate and muriate of soda; there are also a number of little pools, of only a few inches in depth, scattered over the plain, the water of which is so bitter and pungent, that it seems to penetrate into the tongue, and almost to produce decortication of the mouth.

We are now within about three days' journey of the usual haunts of the buffalo, and our men (particularly the uninitiated) look forward to our arrival amongst them with considerable anxiety. They have listened to the garrulous hunter's details of "approaching," and "running," and "quartering," until they fancy themselves the very actors in the scenes related, and are fretting and fuming with impatience to draw their maiden triggers upon the unoffending rangers of the plain.

The next morning, we perceived two men on horseback, at a great distance; and upon looking at them with our telescope, discovered them to be Indians, and that they were approaching us. When they arrived within three or four hundred yards, they halted, and appeared to wish to communicate with us, but feared to approach too nearly. Captain W. rode out alone and joined them, while the party proceeded slowly on its way. In about fifteen minutes he returned with the information that they were of the tribe called Grand Pawnees. They told him that a war party of their people, consisting of fifteen hundred warriors, was encamped about thirty miles below; and the captain inferred that these men had been sent to watch our motions, and ascertain our place of encampment; he was therefore careful to impress upon them that we intended to go but a few miles further, and pitch our tents upon a little stream near the main river. When we were satisfied that the messengers were out of sight of us, on their return to their camp, our whole caravan was urged into a brisk trot, and we determined to steal a march upon our neighbors. The little stream was soon passed, and we went on, and on, without slackening our pace, until 12 o'clock at night. We then called a halt on the bank of the river, made a hasty meal, threw ourselves down in our blankets, without pitching the tents, and slept soundly for three hours. We were then aroused, and off we went again, travelling steadily the whole day, making about thirty-five miles, and so got quite clear of the Grand Pawnees.

The antelopes are very numerous here. There is not half an hour during the day in which they are not seen, and they frequently permit the party to approach very near them. This afternoon, two

---

beautiful does came bounding after us, bleating precisely like sheep. The men imitated the call, and they came up to within fifty yards of us, and stood still; two of the hunters fired, and both the poor creatures fell dead. We can now procure as many of these animals as we wish, but their flesh is not equal to common venison, and is frequently rejected by our people. A number are, however, slaughtered every day, from mere wantonness and love of killing, the greenhorns glorying in the sport, like our striplings of the city, in their annual murdering of robins and sparrows.

20th.-This afternoon, we came in sight of a large gang of the long-coveted buffalo. They were grazing on the opposite side of the Platte, quietly as domestic cattle, but as we neared them, the foremost winded us, and started back, and the whole herd followed in the wildest confusion, and were soon out of sight. There must have been many thousands of them. Towards evening, a large band of elk came towards us at full gallop, and passed very near the party. The appearance of these animals produced a singular effect upon our horses, all of which became restive, and about half the loose ones broke away, and scoured over the plain in full chase after the elk. Captain W. and several of his men went immediately in pursuit of them, and returned late at night, bringing the greater number. Two have, however, been lost irrecoverably. Our observed latitude, yesterday, was 40 deg 31', and our computed distance from the Missouri settlements, about 360 miles.

The day following, we saw several small herds of buffalo on our side of the river. Two of our hunters started out after a huge bull that had separated himself from his companions, and gave him chase on fleet horses.

Away went the buffalo, and away went the men, hard as they could dash; now the hunters gained upon him, and pressed him hard; again the enormous creature had the advantage, plunging with all his might, his terrific horns often ploughing up the earth as he spurned it under him. Sometimes he would double, and rush so near the horses as almost to gore them with his horns, and in an instant would be off in a tangent, and throw his pursuers from the track. At length the poor animal came to bay, and made some unequivocal demonstrations of combat; raising and tossing his head furiously, and tearing up the ground with his feet. At this moment a shot was fired. The victim trembled like an aspen, and fell to his knees, but recovering himself in an instant, started again as fast as before. Again the determined hunters dashed after him, but the poor bull was nearly exhausted, he proceeded but a short distance and stopped again. The hunters approached, rode slowly by him, and shot two balls through his body with the most perfect coolness and precision. During the race, the whole of which occurred in full view of the party, the men seemed wild with the excitement which it occasioned; and when the animal fell, a shout rent the air, which startled the antelopes by dozens from the bluffs, and sent the wolves howling like demons from their lairs.

This is the most common mode of killing the buffalo, and is practised very generally by the travelling hunters; many are also destroyed by approaching them on foot, when, if the bushes are sufficiently dense, or the grass high enough to afford concealment, the hunter, by keeping carefully to leeward of his game, may sometimes approach so near as almost to touch the animal. If on a plain, without grass or bushes, it is necessary to be very circumspect; to approach so slowly as not to excite alarm, and, when observed by the animal, to imitate dexterously, the clumsy motions of a young bear, or assume the sneaking, prowling attitude of a wolf, in order to lull suspicion.

The Indians resort to another stratagem, which is, perhaps, even more successful. The skin of a calf is properly dressed, with the head and legs left attached to it. The Indian envelopes himself in

---

this, and with his short bow and a brace of arrows, ambles off into the very midst of a herd. When he has selected such an animal as suits his fancy, he comes close alongside of it, and without noise, passes an arrow through its heart. One arrow is always sufficient, and it is generally delivered with such force, that at least half the shaft appears through the opposite side. The creature totters, and is about to fall, when the Indian glides around, and draws the arrow from the wound lest it should be broken. A single Indian is said to kill a great number of buffaloes in this way, before any alarm is communicated to the herd.

Towards evening, on rising a hill, we were suddenly greeted by a sight which seemed to astonish even the oldest amongst us. The whole plain, as far as the eye could discern, was covered by one enormous mass of buffalo. Our vision, at the very least computation, would certainly extend ten miles, and in the whole of this great space, including about eight miles in width from the bluffs to the river bank, there was apparently no vista in the incalculable multitude. It was truly a sight that would have excited even the dullest mind to enthusiasm. Our party rode up to within a few hundred yards of the edge of the herd, before any alarm was communicated; then the bulls,-- which are always stationed around as sentinels,-- began pawing the ground, and throwing the earth over their heads; in a few moments they started in a slow, clumsy canter; but as we neared them, they quickened their pace to an astonishingly rapid gallop, and in a few minutes were entirely beyond the reach of our guns, but were still so near that their enormous horns, and long shaggy beards, were very distinctly seen. Shortly after we encamped, our hunters brought in the choice parts of five that they had killed. For the space of several days past, we have observed an inclination in five or six of our men to leave our service. Immediately as we encamp, we see them draw together in some secluded spot, and engage in close and earnest conversation. This has occurred several times, and as we are determined, if possible, to keep our horses, &c., for our own use, we have stationed a sentry near their tent, whose orders are peremptory to stop them at any hazard in case of an attempt on their part, to appropriate our horses. The men we are willing to lose, as they are of very little service, and we can do without them; but horses here are valuable, and we cannot afford to part with them without a sufficient compensation.

22d. On walking into our tent last night at eleven o'clock, after the expiration of the first watch, (in which I had served as supernumerary, to prevent the desertion of the men,) and stooping to lay my gun in its usual situation near the head of my pallet, I was startled by seeing a pair of eyes, wild and bright as those of a tiger, gleaming from a dark corner of the lodge, and evidently directed upon me. My first impression, was that a wolf had been lurking around the camp, and had entered the tent in the prospect of finding meat. My gun was at my shoulder instinctively, my aim was directed between the eyes, and my finger pressed the trigger. At that moment a tall Indian sprang before me with a loud wah! seized the gun, and elevated the muzzle above my head; in another instant, a second Indian was by my side, and I saw his keen knife glitter as it left the scabbard. I had not time for thought, and was struggling with all my might with the first savage for the recovery of my weapon, when Captain W., and the other inmates of the tent were aroused, and the whole matter was explained, and set at rest in a moment. The Indians were chiefs of the tribe of Pawnee Loups, who had come with their young men to shoot buffalo: they had paid an evening visit to the captain, and as an act of courtesy had been invited to sleep in the tent. I had not known of their arrival, nor did I even suspect that Indians were in our neighborhood, so could not control the alarm which their sudden appearance occasioned me.

---

As I laid myself down, and drew my blanket around me, Captain W. touched me lightly, with his finger, and pointed significantly to his own person, which I perceived by the fire light at the mouth of the tent, to be garnished with his knife and pistols; I observed also that the muzzle of his rifle laid across his breast, and that the breech was firmly grasped by one of his legs. I took the hint; tightened my belt, drew my gun closely to my side, and composed myself to sleep. But the excitement of the scene through which I had just passed, effectually banished repose. I frequently directed my eyes towards the dark corner, and in the midst of the shapeless mass which occupied it, I could occasionally see the glittering orbs of our guest shining amidst the surrounding obscurity. At length fatigue conquered watchfulness, and I sank to sleep, dreaming of Indians, guns, daggers, and buffalo.

Upon rising the next morning, all had left the tent: the men were busied in cooking their morning meal; kettles were hanging on the rude cranes, great ribs of meat were roasting before the fires, and loading the air with fragrance, and my dreams and midnight reveries, and apprehensions of evil, fled upon the wings of the bright morning, and nought remained but a feeling of surprise that the untoward events of the night should have disturbed my equanimity.

While these thoughts were passing in my mind, my eye suddenly encountered the two Indians. They were squatting upon the ground near one of the fires, and appeared to be surveying, with the keenness of morning appetite, the fine "hump ribs" which were roasting before them. The moment they perceived me, I received from them a quick glance of recognition: the taller one, my opponent of the previous night,--rose to his feet, walked towards me, and gave me his hand with great cordiality; then pointed into the tent, made the motions of raising a gun to his shoulder, taking aim, and in short repeated the entire pantomime with great fidelity, and no little humor, laughing the whole time as though he thought it a capital joke. Poor fellow! it was near proving a dear joke for him, and I almost trembled as I recollected the eager haste with which I sought to take the life of a fellow creature. The Indian evidently felt no ill will towards me, and as a proof of it, proposed an exchange of knives, to which I willingly acceded. He deposited mine,--which had my name engraved upon the handle, in the sheath at his side, and walked away to his hump ribs with the air of a man who is conscious of having done a good action. As he left me, one of our old trappers took occasion to say, that in consequence of this little act of savage courtesy, the Indian became my firm friend; and that if I ever met him again, I should be entitled to share his hospitality, or claim his protection.

While the men were packing the horses, after breakfast, I was again engaged with my Indian friend. I took his bow and arrows in my hand, and remarked that the latter were smeared with blood throughout: upon my expressing surprise at this he told me, by signs, that they had passed through the body of the buffalo. I assumed a look of incredulity; the countenance of the savage brightened, and his peculiar and strange eyes actually flashed with eagerness, as he pointed to a dead antelope lying upon the ground about forty feet from us, and which one of the guard had shot near the camp in the morning. The animal lay upon its side with the breast towards us: the bow was drawn slightly, without any apparent effort, and the arrow flew through the body of the antelope, and skimmed to a great distance over the plain.

These Indians were the finest looking of any I have seen. Their persons were tall, straight, and finely formed; their noses slightly aquiline, and the whole countenance expressive of high and daring intrepidity. The face of the taller one was particularly admirable; and Gall or Spurzheim, at

---

a single glance at his magnificent head, would have invested him with all the noblest qualities of the species. I know not what a physiognomist would have said of his eyes, but they were certainly the most wonderful eyes I ever looked into; glittering and scintillating constantly, like the mirror glasses in a lamp frame, and rolling and dancing in their orbits as though possessed of abstract volition.

The tribe to which these Indians belong, is a division of the great Pawnee nation. There are four of these divisions or tribes, known by the names of Grand Pawnees, Pawnee Loups, Pawnee Republicans, and Pawnee Picts. They are all independent of each other, governed exclusively by chiefs chosen from among their own people, and although they have always been on terms of intimacy and friendship, never intermarry, nor have other intercourse than that of trade, or a conjunction of their forces to attack the common enemy. In their dealings with the whites, they are arbitrary and overbearing, chaffering about the price of a horse, or a beaver skin, with true huckster-like eagerness and mendacity, and seizing with avidity every unfair advantage, which circumstances or their own craft may put in their power.

The buffalo still continue immensely numerous in every direction around, and our men kill great numbers, so that we are in truth living upon the fat of the land, and better feeding need no man wish. The savory buffalo hump has suffered no depreciation since the "man without a cross" vaunted of its good qualities to "the stranger;" and in this, as in many other particulars, we have realized the truth and fidelity of Cooper's admirable descriptions.

23d. When we rose this morning, not a single buffalo, of the many thousands that yesterday strewed the plain, was to be seen. It seemed like magic. Where could they have gone? I asked myself this question again and again, but in vain. At length I applied to Richardson, who stated that they had gone to the bluffs, but for what reason he could not tell; he, however, had observed their tracks bearing towards the bluffs, and was certain that they would be found there. He and Sandbury (another hunter) were then about starting on a hunt to supply the camp, and I concluded to accompany them; Mr. Lee, the missionary, also joined us, and we all rode off together. The party got under way about the same time, and proceeded along the bank of the river, while we struck off south to look for the buffalo. About one hour's brisk trotting carried us to the bluffs, and we entered amongst large conical hills of yellow clay, intermixed with strata of limestone, but without the slightest vegetation of any kind.

On the plains which we had left, the grass was in great luxuriance, but here not a blade of it was to be seen, and yet, as Richardson had predicted, here were the buffalo. We had not ridden a mile before we entered upon a plain of sand of great extent, and observed ahead vast clouds of dust rising and circling in the air as though a tornado or a whirlwind were sweeping over the earth. "Ha!" said Richardson, "there they are; now let us take the wind of them, and you shall see some sport." We accordingly went around to leeward, and, upon approaching nearer, saw the huge animals rolling over and over in the sand with astonishing agility enveloping themselves by the exercise in a perfect atmosphere of dust; occasionally two of the bulls would spring from the ground and attack each other with amazing address and fury, retreating for ten or twelve feet, and then rushing suddenly forward, and dashing their enormous fronts together with a shock that seemed annihilating. In these rencontres, one of the combatants was often thrown back upon his haunches, and tumbled sprawling upon the ground; in which case, the victor, with true prize-fighting generosity, refrained from persecuting his fallen adversary, contenting himself with

---

a hearty resumption of his rolling fit, and kicking up the dust with more than his former vigor, as if to celebrate his victory.

This appeared to be a good situation to approach and kill the buffalo, as, by reason of the plentiful distribution of the little clay hills, an opportunity would be afforded of successful concealment; we separated, therefore, each taking his own course. In a very few minutes I heard the crack of a rifle in the direction in which Richardson had gone, and immediately after saw the frightened animals flying from the spot. The sound reverberated among the hills, and as it died away the herd halted to watch and listen for its repetition. For myself, I strolled on for nearly an hour, leading my horse, and peering over every hill, in the hope of finding a buffalo within range, but not one could I see that was sufficiently near; and when I attempted the stealthy approach which I had seen Richardson practise with so much success, I felt compelled to acknowledge my utter insufficiency. I had determined to kill a buffalo, and as I had seen it several times done with so much apparent ease, I considered it a mere moonshine matter, and thought I could compass it without difficulty; but now I had attempted it, and was grievously mistaken in my estimate of the required skill. I had several times heard the guns of the hunters, and felt satisfied that we should not go to camp without meat, and was on the point of altering my course to join them, when, as I wound around the base of a little hill, I saw about twenty buffalo lying quietly on the ground within thirty yards of me. Now was my time. I took my picket from my saddle, and fastened my horse to the ground as quietly as possible, but with hands that almost failed to do their office, from my excessive eagerness and trembling anxiety. When this was completed, I crawled around the hill again, almost suspending my breath from fear of alarming my intended victims, until I came again in full view of the unsuspecting herd. There were so many fine animals that I was at a loss which to select; those nearest me appeared small and poor, and I therefore settled my aim upon a huge bull on the outside. Just then I was attacked with the "bull fever" so dreadfully, that for several minutes I could not shoot. At length, however, I became firm and steady, and pulled my trigger at exactly the right instant. Up sprang the herd like lightning, and away they scoured, and my bull with them. I was vexed, angry, and discontented; I concluded that I could never kill a buffalo, and was about to mount my horse and ride off in despair, when I observed that one of the animals had stopped in the midst of his career. I rode towards him, and sure enough, there was my great bull trembling and swaying from side to side, and the clotted gore hanging like icicles from his nostrils. In a few minutes after, he fell heavily upon his side, and I dismounted and surveyed the unwieldy brute, as he panted and struggled in the death agony.

When the first ebullition of my triumph had subsided, I perceived that my prize was so excessively lean as to be worth nothing, and while I was exerting my whole strength in a vain endeavor to raise the head from the ground for the purpose of removing the tongue, the two hunters joined me, and laughed heartily at my achievement. Like all inexperienced hunters, I had been particular to select the largest bull in the gang, supposing it to be the best, (and it proved, as usual, the poorest,) while more than a dozen fat cows were nearer me, either of which I might have killed with as little trouble.

As I had supposed, my companions had killed several animals, but they had taken the meat of only one, and we had, therefore, to be diligent, or the camp might suffer for provisions. It was now past mid-day; the weather was very warm, and the atmosphere was charged with minute particles of sand, which produced a dryness and stiffness of the mouth and tongue, that was exceedingly

---

painful and distressing. Water was now the desideratum, but where was it to be found? The and country in which we then were, produced none, and the Platte was twelve or fourteen miles from us, and no buffalo in that direction, so that we could not afford time for so trifling a matter. I found that Mr. Lee was suffering as much as myself, although he had not spoken of it, and I perceived that Richardson was masticating a leaden bullet, to excite the salivary glands. Soon afterwards, a bull was killed, and we all assembled around the carcass to assist in the manipulations. The animal was first raised from his side where he had lain, and supported upon his knees, with his hoofs turned under him; a longitudinal incision was then made from the nape, or anterior base of the hump, and continued backward to the loins, and a large portion of the skin from each side removed; these pieces of skin were placed upon the ground, with the under surface uppermost, and the fleeces, or masses of meat, taken from along the back, were laid upon them. These fleeces, from a large animal, will weigh, perhaps, a hundred pounds each, and comprise the whole of the hump on each side of the vertical processes, (commonly called the hump ribs,) which are attached to the vertebra. The fleeces are considered the choice parts of the buffalo, and here, where the game is so abundant, nothing else is taken, if we except the tongue, and an occasional marrow bone.

This; it must be confessed, appears like a useless and unwarrantable waste of the goods of Providence; but when are men economical, unless compelled to be so by necessity? Here are more than a thousand pounds of delicious and savory flesh, which would delight the eyes and gladden the heart of any epicure in Christendom, left neglected where it fell, to feed the ravenous maw of the wild prairie wolf, and minister to the excesses of the unclean birds of the wilderness. But I have seen worse waste and havoc than this, and I feel my indignation rise at the recollection. I have seen dozens of buffalo slaughtered merely for the tongues, or for practice with the rifle; and I have also lived to see the very perpetrators of these deeds, lean and lank with famine, when the meanest and most worthless parts of the poor animals they had so inhumanly slaughtered, would have been received and eaten with humble thankfulness.

But to return to ourselves. We were all suffering from excessive thirst, and so intolerable had it at length become, that Mr. Lee and myself proposed a gallop over to the Platte river, in order to appease it; but Richardson advised us not to go, as he had just thought of a means of relieving us, which he immediately proceeded to put in practice. He tumbled our mangled buffalo over upon his side, and with his knife opened the body, so as to expose to view the great stomach, and still crawling and twisting entrails. The good missionary and myself stood gaping with astonishment, and no little loathing, as we saw our hunter plunge his knife into the distended paunch, from which gushed the green and gelatinous juices, and then insinuate his tin pan into the opening, and by depressing its edge, strain off the water which was mingled with its contents.

Richardson always valued himself upon his politeness, and the cup was therefore first offered to Mr. Lee and myself, but it is almost needless to say that we declined the proffer, and our features probably expressed the strong disgust which we felt, for our companion laughed heartily before he applied the cup to his own mouth. He then drank it to the dregs, smacking his lips, and drawing a long breath after it, with the satisfaction of a man taking his wine after dinner. Sansbury, the other hunter, was not slow in following the example set before him, and we, the audience, turned our backs upon the actors.

Before we left the spot, however, Richardson induced me to taste the blood which was still fluid

in the heart, and immediately as it touched my lips, my burning thirst, aggravated by hunger, (for I had eaten nothing that day,) got the better of my abhorrence; I plunged my head into the reeking ventricles, and drank until forced to stop for breath. I felt somewhat ashamed of assimilating myself so nearly to the brutes, and turned my ensanguined countenance towards the missionary who stood by, but I saw no approval there: the good man was evidently attempting to control his risibility, and so I smiled to put him in countenance; the roar could no longer be restrained, and the missionary laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks. I did not think, until afterwards, of the horrible ghastliness which must have characterized my smile at that particular moment. When we arrived at the camp in the evening, and I enjoyed the luxury of a hearty draft of water, the effect upon my stomach was that of a powerful emetic: the blood was violently ejected without nausea, and I felt heartily glad to be rid of the disgusting encumbrance. I never drank blood from that day.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER IV

Change in the face of the country - Unpleasant visitation - its effects - North fork of the Platte - A day's journey over the hills - Wormwood bushes, and poor pasture - Marmots - Rattlesnake and gopher - Naturalist's success and sacrifices - A sand storm - Wild horses - Killing of a doe antelope - Bluffs of the Platte - The chimney - "Zip Koon," the young antelope - Birds - Feelings and cogitations of a naturalist - Arrival at Laramie's fork - Departure of two "free trappers" on a summer "hunt" - Black Hills - Rough travelling - Red butes - Sweet-water river, and Rock Independence - Avocets - Wind river mountains - Rocky Mountain sheep - Adventure of one of the men with a grizzly bear - Rattlesnakes - Toilsome march, and arrival at Sandy river - Suffering of the horses - Anticipated delights of the rendezvous.

On the morning of the 24th of May we forded the Platte river, or rather its south fork, along which we had been travelling during the previous week. On the northern side, we found the country totally different in its aspect. Instead of the extensive and apparently interminable green plains, the monotony of which had become so wearisome to the eye, here was a great sandy waste, without a single green thing to vary and enliven the dreary scene. It was a change, however, and we were therefore enjoying it, and remarking to each other how particularly agreeable it was, when we were suddenly assailed by vast swarms of most ferocious little black gnats; the whole atmosphere seemed crowded with them, and they dashed into our faces, assaulted our eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouths, as though they were determined to bar our passage through their territory. These little creatures were so exceedingly minute that, singly, they were scarcely visible; and yet their sting caused such excessive pain, that for the rest of the day our men and horses were rendered almost frantic, the former bitterly imprecating, and the latter stamping, and kicking, and rolling in the sand, in tremendous, yet vain, efforts to rid themselves of their pertinacious little foes. It was rather amusing to see the whole company with their handkerchiefs, shirts, and coats, thrown over their heads, stemming the animated torrent, and to hear the greenhorns cursing their tormenters, the country, and themselves, for their foolhardiness in venturing on the journey. When we encamped in the evening, we built fires at the mouths of the tents, the smoke from which kept our enemies at a distance, and we passed a night of tolerable comfort, after a day of most peculiar misery.

The next morning I observed that the faces of all the men were more or less swollen, some of

them very severely, and poor Captain W. was totally blind for two days afterwards.

25th.- We made a noon camp to-day on the north branch or fork of the river, and in the afternoon travelled along the bank of the stream. In about an hour's march, we came to rocks, precipices, and cedar trees, and although we anticipated some difficulty and toil in the passage of the heights, we felt glad to exchange them for the vast and wearisome prairies we had left behind. Soon after we commenced the ascent, we struck into an Indian path very much worn, occasionally mounting over rugged masses of rock, and leaping wide fissures in the soil, and sometimes picking our way over the jutting crags, directly above the river. On the top of one of the stunted and broad spreading cedars, a bald eagle had built its enormous nest; and as we descended the mountain, we saw the callow young lying within it, while the anxious parents hovered over our heads, screaming their alarm.

In the evening we arrived upon the plain again; it was thickly covered with ragged and gnarled bushes of a species of wormwood, (*Artemisia*) which perfumed the air, and at first was rather agreeable. The soil was poor and sandy, and the straggling blades of grass which found their way to the surface were brown and withered. Here was a poor prospect for our horses; a sad contrast indeed to the rich and luxuriant prairies we had left. On the edges of the little streams, however, we found some tolerable pasture, and we frequently stopped during the day to bait our poor animals in these pleasant places.

We observed here several species of small marmots, (*Arctomys*) which burrowed in the sand, and were constantly skipping about the ground in front of our party. The short rattlesnake of the prairies was also abundant, and no doubt derived its chief subsistence from foraging among its playful little neighbors. Shortly before we halted this evening, being a considerable distance in advance of the caravan, I observed a dead gopher, (*Diplostoma*) - a small animal about the size of a rat, with large external cheek pouches, lying upon the ground; and near it a full grown rattlesnake, also dead. The gopher was yet warm and pliant, and had evidently been killed but a few minutes previously; the snake also gave evidence of very recent death, by a muscular twitching of the tail, which occurs in most serpents, soon after life is extinct. It was a matter of interest to me to ascertain the mode by which these animals were deprived of life. I therefore dismounted from my horse, and examined them carefully, but could perceive nothing to furnish even a clue. Neither of them had any external or perceptible wound. The snake had doubtless killed the quadruped, but what had killed the snake? There being no wound upon its body was sufficient proof that the gopher had not used his teeth, and in no other way could he cause death.

I was unable to solve the problem to my satisfaction, so I pocketed the animal to prepare its skin, and rode on to the camp.

The birds thus far have been very abundant. There is a considerable variety, and many of them have not before been seen by naturalists. As to the plants, there seems to be no end to them, and Mr. N. is finding dozens of new species daily. In the other branches of science, our success has not been so great, partly on account of the rapidity and steadiness with which we travel, but chiefly from the difficulty, and almost impossibility, of carrying the subjects. Already we have cast away all our useless and superfluous clothing, and have been content to mortify our natural pride, to make room for our specimens. Such things as spare waistcoats, shaving boxes, soap, and stockings, have been ejected from our trunks, and we are content to dress, as we live, in a style of primitive simplicity. In fact, the whole appearance of our party is sufficiently primitive; many of

---

the men are dressed entirely in deerskins, without a single article of civilized manufacture about them; the old trappers and hunters wear their hair flowing on their shoulders, and their large grizzled beards would scarcely disgrace a Bedouin of the desert.

The next morning the whole camp was suddenly aroused by the falling of all the tents. A tremendous blast swept as from a funnel over the sandy plain, and in an instant precipitated our frail habitations like webs of gossamer. The men crawled out from under the ruins, rubbing their eyes, and, as usual, muttering imprecations against the country and all that therein was; it was unusually early for a start, but we did not choose to pitch the tents again, and to sleep without them here was next to impossible; so we took our breakfast in the open air, devouring our well sanded provisions as quickly as possible, and immediately took to the road.

During the whole day a most terrific gale was blowing directly in our faces, clouds of sand were driving and hurtling by us, often with such violence as nearly to stop our progress; and when we halted in the evening, we could scarcely recognise each other's faces beneath their odious mask of dust and dirt.

There have been no buffalo upon the plain today, all the game that we have seen, being a few elk and antelopes; but these of course we did not attempt to kill, as our whole and undivided attention was required to assist our progress.

28th.-We fell in with a new species of game today; -a large band of wild horses. They were very shy, scarcely permitting us to approach within rifle distance, and yet they kept within sight of us for some hours. Several of us gave them chase, in the hope of at least being able to approach sufficiently near to examine them closely, but we might as well have pursued the wind; they scoured away from us with astonishing velocity, their long manes and tails standing out almost horizontally, as they sprang along before us. Occasionally they would pause in their career, turn and look at us as we approached them, and then, with a neigh that rang loud and high above the clattering of the hoofs, dart their light heels into the air, and fly from us as before. We soon abandoned this wild chase, and contented ourselves with admiring their sleek beauty at a distance.

In the afternoon, I committed an act of cruelty and wantonness, which distressed and troubled me beyond measure, and which I have ever since recollected with sorrow and compunction. A beautiful doe antelope came running and bleating after us, as though she wished to overtake the party; she continued following us for nearly an hour, at times approaching within thirty or forty yards, and standing to gaze at us as we moved slowly on our way. I several times raised my gun to fire at her, but my better nature as often gained the ascendancy, and I at last rode into the midst of the party to escape the temptation. Still the doe followed us, and I finally fell into the rear, but without intending it, and again looked at her as she trotted behind us. At that moment, my evil genius and love of sport triumphed; I slid down from my horse, aimed at the poor antelope, and shot a ball through her side. Under other circumstances, there would have been no cruelty in this; but here, where better meat was so abundant, and the camp was so plentifully supplied, it was unfeeling, heartless murder. It was under the influence of this too late impression, that I approached my poor victim. She was writhing in agony upon the ground, and exerting herself in vain efforts to draw her mangled body farther from her destroyer; and as I stood over her, and saw her cast her large, soft, black eyes upon me with an expression of the most touching sadness, while the great tears rolled over her face, I felt myself the meanest and most abhorrent thing in creation. But now a finishing blow would be mercy to her, and I threw my arm around her neck, averted my

---

face, and drove my long knife through her bosom to the heart. I did not trust myself to look upon her afterwards, but mounted my horse, and galloped off to the party, with feelings such as I hope never to experience again. For several days the poor antelope haunted me, and I shall never forget its last look of pain and upbraiding.

The bluffs on the southern shore of the Platte, are, at this point, exceedingly rugged, and often quite picturesque; the formation appears to be simple clay, intermixed, occasionally, with a stratum of limestone, and one part of the bluff bears a striking and almost startling resemblance to a dilapidated feudal castle. There is also a kind of obelisk, standing at a considerable distance from the bluffs, on a wide plain, towering to the height of about two hundred feet, and tapering to a small point at the top. This pillar is known to the hunters and trappers who traverse these regions, by the name of the "chimney." Here we diverged from the usual course, leaving the bank of the river, and entered a large and deep ravine between the enormous bluffs (These are Scott's Bluffs, so named after an unfortunate trader, who perished here from disease and hunger, many years ago. He was deserted by his companions; and the year following, his crumbling bones were found in this spot).

The road was very uneven and difficult, winding from amongst innumerable mounds six to eight feet in height, the space between them frequently so narrow as scarcely to admit our horses, and some of the men rode for upwards of a mile kneeling upon their saddles. These mounds were of hard yellow clay, without a particle of rock of any kind, and along their bases, and in the narrow passages, flowers of every hue were growing. It was a most enchanting sight; even the men noticed it, and more than one of our matter-of-fact people exclaimed, beautiful, beautiful!. Mr. N. was here in his glory. He rode on ahead of the company, and cleared the passages with a trembling and eager hand, looking anxiously back at the approaching party, as though he feared it would come ere he had finished, and tread his lovely prizes under foot.

The distance through the ravine is about three miles. We then crossed several beautiful grassy knolls, and descending to the plain, struck the Platte again, and travelled along its bank. Here one of our men caught a young antelope, which he brought to the camp upon his saddle. It was a beautiful and most delicate little creature, and in a few days became so tame as to remain with the camp without being tied, and to drink, from a tin cup, the milk which our good missionaries spared from their own scanty meals. The men christened it "Zip Coon," and it soon became familiar with its name, running to them when called, and exhibiting many evidences of affection and attachment. It became a great favorite with every one. A little pannier of willows was made for it, which was packed on the back of a mule, and when the camp moved in the mornings, little Zip ran to his station beside his long-eared hack, bleating with impatience until some one came to assist him in mounting.

On the afternoon of the 31st, we came to green trees and bushes again, and the sight of them was more cheering than can be conceived, except by persons who have travelled for weeks without beholding a green thing, save the grass under their feet. We encamped in the evening in a beautiful grove of cottonwood trees, along the edge of which ran the Platte, dotted as usual with numerous islands.

In the morning, Mr. N. and myself were up before the dawn, strolling through the umbrageous forest, inhaling the fresh, bracing air, and making the echoes ring with the report of our gun, as the lovely tenants of the grove flew by dozens before us. I think I never before saw so great a vari-

ety of birds within the same space. All were beautiful, and many of them quite new to me; and after we had spent an hour amongst them, and my game bag was teeming with its precious freight, I was still loath to leave the place, lest I should not have procured specimens of the whole.

None but a naturalist can appreciate a naturalist's feelings his delight amounting to ecstasy when a specimen such as he has never before seen, meets his eye, and the sorrow and grief which he feels when he is compelled to tear himself from a spot abounding with all that he has anxiously and unremittingly sought for.

This was peculiarly my case upon this occasion. We had been long travelling over a sterile and barren tract, where the lovely denizens of the forest could not exist, and I had been daily scanning the great "tent of the desert", for some little oasis such as I had now found; here was my wish at length gratified, and yet the caravan would not halt for me; I must turn my back upon the El Dorado of my fond anticipations, and hurry forward over the dreary wilderness which lay beyond.

What valuable and highly interesting accessions to science might not be made by a party, composed exclusively of naturalists, on a journey through this rich and unexplored region! The botanist, the geologist, the mamalogist, the ornithologist, and the entomologist, would find a rich and almost inexhaustible field for the prosecution of their inquiries, and the result of such an expedition would be to add most materially to our knowledge of the wealth and resources of our country, to furnish us with new and important facts relative to its structure, organization, and natural productions, and to complete the fine native collections in our already extensive museums.

On the 1st of June, we arrived at Laramie's fork of the Platte, and crossed it without much difficulty.

Here two of our "free trappers" left us for a summer "hunt" in the rugged Black Hills. These men joined our party at Independence, and have been travelling to this point with us for the benefit of our escort. Trading companies usually encourage these free trappers to join them, both for the strength which they add to the band, and that they may have the benefit of their generally good hunting qualities. Thus are both parties accommodated, and no obligation is felt on either side. I confess I felt somewhat sad when I reflected upon the possible fate of the two adventurous men who had left us in the midst of a savage wilderness, to depend entirely upon their unassisted strength and hardihood, to procure the means of subsistence and repel the aggression of the Indian.

Their expedition will be fraught with stirring scenes, with peril and with strange adventure; but they think not of this, and they care not for it. They are only two of the many scores who annually subject themselves to the same difficulties and dangers; they see their friends return unscathed, and laden with rich and valuable furs, and if one or two should have perished by Indian rapacity, or fallen victims to their own daring and fool-hardy spirit, they mourn the loss of their brethren who have not returned, and are only the more anxious to pursue the same track in order to avenge them.

On the 2d, we struck a range of high and stony mountains, called the Black Hills. The general aspect here, was dreary and forbidding; the soil was intersected by deep and craggy fissures; rock juttet over rock, and precipice frowned over precipice in frightful, and apparently endless, succession. Soon after we commenced the ascent, we experienced a change in the temperature of the air; and towards mid-day, when we had arrived near the summit, our large blanket capeaus, which in the morning had been discarded as uncomfortable, were drawn tightly around us, and every

man was shivering in his saddle as though he had an ague fit. The soil here is of a deep reddish or ferruginous hue, intermixed with green sand; and on the heights, pebbles of chalcedony and agate are abundant. We crossed, in the afternoon, the last and steepest spur of this chain, winding around rough and stony precipices, and along the extreme verges of tremendous ravines, so dangerous looking that we were compelled to dismount and lead our horses.

On descending to the plain, we saw again the north fork of the Platte, and were glad of an opportunity of encamping. Our march to-day has been an unusually wearisome one, and many of our loose horses are bruised and lame.

7th. -The country has now become more level, but the prairie is barren and inhospitable looking to the last degree. The twisted, aromatic wormwood covers and extracts the strength from the burnt and soil. The grass is dry and brown, and our horses are suffering extremely for want of food. Occasionally, however, a spot of lovely green appears, and here we allow our poor jaded friends to halt, and roam without their riders, and their satisfaction and pleasure is expressed by many a joyous neigh, and many a heart-felt roll upon the verdant sward.

In the afternoon, we arrived at the "Red Butes," two or three brown-red cliffs, about two thousand feet in height." This is a remarkable point in the mountain route. One of these cliffs terminates a long, lofty, wooded ridge, which has bounded our southern view for the past two days. The summits of the cliffs are covered with patches of snow, and the contrast of the dazzling white and brick-red produces a very pretty effect.

The next day, we left the Platte river, and crossed a wide, sandy desert, dry and desolate; and on the 9th, encamped at noon on the banks of the Sweet-water. Here we found a large rounded mass of granite, about fifty feet high, called Rock Independence. Like the Red Butes, this rock is also a rather remarkable point in the route. On its smooth, perpendicular sides, we see carved the names of most of the mountain bourgeois, with the dates of their arrival. We observed those of the two Sublette's, Captains Bonneville, Serre, Fontinelle, &c., and after leaving our own, and taking a hearty, but hasty lunch in the shade of a rock, and a draught from the pure and limpid stream at its base, we pursued our journey.

The river is here very narrow, often only twelve or fifteen feet wide, shallow, and winding so much, that during our march, to-day, we crossed it several times, in order to pursue a straight course. The banks of the stream are clothed with the most luxuriant pasture, and our invaluable dumb friends appear perfectly happy.

We saw here great numbers of a beautiful brown and white avocet, (the *Recurvirostra americana* of ornithologists.) These fine birds were so tame as to allow a very near approach, running slowly before our party, and scarcely taking wing at the report of a gun. They frequent the marshy plains in the neighborhood of the river, and breed here.

On the 10th, about ninety miles to the west, we had a striking view of the Wind-river mountains. They are almost wholly of a dazzling whiteness, being covered thickly with snow, and the lofty peaks seem to blend themselves with the dark clouds which hang over them. This chain gives rise to the sources of the Missouri, the Colorado of the west, and Lewis' river of the Columbia, and is the highest land on the continent of North America.

We saw, to-day, a small flock of the hairy sheep of the Rocky Mountains, the big horn of the hunters, (*Ovis montana*.) We exerted ourselves in vain to shoot them. They darted from us, and hid themselves amongst the inaccessible cliffs, so that none but a chamois hunter might pretend to

reach them. Richardson says that he has frequently killed them, but he admits that it is dangerous and wearisome sport; and when good beef is to be found upon the plains, men are not anxious to risk their necks for a meal of mutton.

In the afternoon, one of our men had a somewhat perilous adventure with a grizzly bear. He saw the animal crouching his huge frame in some willows which skirted the river, and approaching on horseback to within twenty yards, fired upon him. The bear was only slightly wounded by the shot, and with a fierce growl of angry malignity, rushed from his cover, and gave chase. The horse happened to be a slow one, and for the distance of half a mile, the race was hard contested; the bear frequently approaching so near the terrified animal as to snap at his heels, while the equally terrified rider, who had lost his hat at the start, used whip and spur with the most frantic diligence, frequently looking behind, from an influence which he could not resist, at his rugged and determined foe, and shrieking in an agony of fear, "shoot him, shoot him!" The man, who was one of the greenhorns, happened to be about a mile behind the main body, either from the indolence of his horse, or his own carelessness; but as he approached the party in his desperate flight, and his lugubrious cries reached the ears of the men in front, about a dozen of them rode to his assistance, and soon succeeded in diverting the attention of his pertinacious foe. After he had received the contents of all the guns, he fell, and was soon dispatched. The man rode in among his fellows, pale and haggard from overwrought feelings, and was probably effectually cured of a propensity for meddling with grizzly bears.

A small striped rattlesnake is abundant on these plains: - it is a different species from our common one at home, but is equally malignant and venomous. The horses are often startled by them, and dart aside with intuitive fear when their note of warning is sounded in the path.

12th.- The plains of the Sweet-water at this point,-- latitude 43 deg 6 min, longitude 110 deg 30 min, -- are covered with little salt pools, the edges of which are encrusted with alkaline efflorescences, looking like borders of snow. The rocks in the vicinity are a loose, fine-grained sandstone, the strata nearly horizontal, and no organic remains have been discovered. We have still a view of the lofty Wind-river mountains on our right hand, and they have for some days served as a guide to determine our course. On the plain, we passed several huge rhomboidal masses of rock, standing alone, and looking, at a little distance, like houses with chimneys. The freaks of nature, as they are called, have often astonished us since we have been journeying in the wilderness. We have seen, modeled without art, representations of almost all the most stupendous works of man; and how do the loftiest and most perfect creations of his wisdom and ingenuity sink into insignificance by the comparison. Noble castles, with turrets, embrasures, and loop holes, with the drawbridge in front, and the moat surrounding it: behind, the humble cottages of the subservient peasantry, and all the varied concomitants of such a scene, are so strikingly evident to the view, that it requires but little stretch of fancy to imagine that a race of antediluvian giants may here have swayed their iron sceptre, and left behind the crumbling palace and the tower, to tell of their departed glory.

On the 14th, we left the Sweet-water, and proceeded in a south-westerly direction to Sandy river, a branch of the Colorado of the west. We arrived here at about 9 o'clock in the evening, after a hard and most toilsome march for both man and beast. We found no water on the route, and not a single blade of grass for our horses. Many of the poor animals stopped before night, and resolutely refused to proceed; and others with the remarkable sagacity, peculiar to them, left the track

in defiance of those who drove and guided them, sought and found water, and spent the night in its vicinity. The band of missionaries, with their horses and horned cattle, halted by the way, and only about half the men of the party accompanied us to our encampment on Sandy. We were thus scattered along the route for several miles; and if a predatory band of Indians had then found us, we should have fallen an easy prey.

The next morning by about 10 o'clock all our men and horses had joined us, and, in spite of the fatigues of the previous day, we were all tolerably refreshed, and in good spirits. Towards noon we got under way, and proceeded seven or eight miles down the river to a spot where we found a little poor pasture for our horses. Here we remained until the next morning, to recruit. I found here a beautiful new species of mocking bird (This is a mountain mocking bird, (*Orpheus montanus*)), which I shot and prepared. Birds are, however, generally scarce, and there is here very little of interest in any department of natural history. We are also beginning to suffer somewhat for food: buffalo are rarely seen, the antelopes are unusually shy, and the life of our little favorite, "Zip," has been several times menaced. I believe, however, that his keeper, from sheer fondness, would witness much greater suffering in the camp, ere he would consent to the sacrifice of his playful little friend.

16th. -We observed a hoar frost and some thin ice, this morning at sunrise; but at mid-day, the thermometer stood at 82 deg. We halted at noon, after making about fifteen miles, and dined. Saw large herds of buffalo on the plains of Sandy river, grazing in every direction on the short and dry grass. Domestic cattle would certainly starve here, and yet the bison exists, and even becomes fat; a striking instance of the wonderful adaptation of Providence.

17th. -We had yesterday a cold rain, the first which has fallen in our track for several weeks. Our vicinity to the high mountains of Wind river will perhaps account for it. To-day at noon, the mercury stood at 92 deg in the shade, but there being a strong breeze, we did not suffer from heat. Our course was still down the Sandy river, and we are now looking forward with no little pleasure to a rest of two or more weeks at the mountain rendezvous on the Colorado. Here we expect to meet all the mountain companies who left the States last spring, and also the trappers who come in from various parts, with the furs collected by them during the previous year. All will be mirth and jollity, no doubt, but the grand desideratum with some of us, is to allow our horses to rest their tired limbs and exhausted strength on the rich and verdant plains of the Siskadee. At our camp this evening, our poor horses were compelled to fast as heretofore, there being absolutely nothing for them to eat. Some of the famished animals attempted to allay their insatiable cravings, by cropping the dry and bitter tops of the wormwood with which the plain is strewed. We look forward to brighter days for them ere long; soon shall they sport in the green pastures, and rest and plenty shall compensate for their toils and privations.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER V

Arrival at the Colorado - The author in difficulty - Loss of a journal, and advice to travelling tyros - The rendezvous - Motley groups infesting it - Rum drinking, swearing, and other accomplishments in vogue - Description of the camp - Trout and grayling - Abundance of game - Cock of the plains - Departure from the rendezvous - An accession to the band - A renegado Blackfoot chief - Captain Stewart and Mr. Ashworth - Muddy creek - More carousing - Abundance of trout

---

- Bear river - A hard day's march - Volcanic country - White clay pits and "Beer spring" - Rare birds and common birds - Mr. Thomas McKay - Rough and arid country - Meeting with Captain Bonneville's party - Captains Stewart and Wyeth's visit to the lodge of the "bald chief" - Blackfoot river - Adventure with a grizzly bear - Death of "Zip Koon" - Young grizzly bears and buffalo calves - A Blackfoot Indian - Dangerous experiment of McKay - the three "Tetons" - Large trout - Departure of our Indian companions - Shoshone river - Site of "Fort Hall" - Preparations for a buffalo hunt.

June 19th. We arrived to-day on the Green river, Siskadee or Colorado of the west, a beautiful, clear, deep, and rapid stream, which receives the waters of Sandy, and encamped upon its eastern bank. After making a hasty meal, as it was yet early in the day, I sallied forth with my gun, and roamed about the neighborhood for several hours in quest of birds. On returning, towards evening, I found that the whole company had left the spot, the place being occupied only by a few hungry wolves, ravens, and magpies, the invariable gleaners of a forsaken camp.

I could not at first understand the meaning of all I saw. I thought the desertion strange, and was preparing to make the best of it, when a quick and joyful neigh sounded in the bushes near me, and I recognized the voice of my favorite horse. I found him carefully tied, with the saddle, &c., lying near him. I had not the least idea where the company had gone, but I knew that on the rich, alluvial banks of the river, the trail of the horses would be distinct enough, and I determined to place my dependence, in a great measure, upon the sagacity of my excellent dumb friend, satisfied that he would take me the right course. I accordingly mounted, and off we went at a speed which I found some difficulty in restraining. About half an hour's hard riding brought us to the edge of a large branch of the stream, and I observed that the horses had here entered. I noticed other tracks lower down, but supposed them to have been made by the wanderings of the loose animals. Here then seemed the proper fording place, and with some little hesitation, I allowed my nag to enter the water; we had proceeded but a few yards, however, when down he went off a steep bank, far beyond his depth. This was somewhat disconcerting; but there was but one thing to be done, so I turned my horse's head against the swift current, and we went snorting and blowing for the opposite shore. We arrived at length, though in a sadly wet and damaged state, and in a few minutes after, came in view of the new camp.

Captain W. explained to me that he had heard of good pasture here, and had concluded to move immediately, on account of the horses; he informed me, also, that he had crossed the stream about fifty yards below the point where I had entered, and had found an excellent ford. I did not regret my adventure, however, and was congratulating myself upon my good fortune in arriving so seasonably, when, upon looking to my saddle, I discovered that my coat was missing. I had felt uncomfortably warm when I mounted, and had removed the coat and attached it carelessly to the saddle; the rapidity of the current had disengaged it, and it was lost forever. The coat itself was not of much consequence after the hard service it had seen, but it contained the second volume of my journal, a pocket compass, and other articles of essential value to me. I would gladly have relinquished every thing the garment held, if I could have recovered the book; and although I returned to the river, and searched assiduously until night, and offered large rewards to the men, it could not be found.

The journal commenced with our arrival at the Black Hills, and contained some observations upon the natural productions of the country, which to me, at least, were of some importance; as

---

well as descriptions of several new species of birds, and notes regarding their habits, &c., which cannot be replaced.

I would advise all tourists, who journey by land, never to carry their itineraries upon their persons; or if they do, let them be attached by a cord to the neck, and worn under the clothing. A convenient and safe plan would probably be, to have the book deposited in a close pocket of leather, made on the inner side of the saddle-wing; it would thus be always at hand, and if a deep stream were to be passed the trouble of drying the leaves would not be a very serious matter.

In consequence of remaining several hours in wet clothes, after being heated by exercise, I rose the next morning with so much pain, and stiffness of the joints, that I could scarcely move. But notwithstanding this, I was compelled to mount my horse with the others, and to ride steadily and rapidly for eight hours. I suffered intensely during this ride; every step of my horse seemed to increase it, and induced constant-sickness and retching.

When we halted, I was so completely exhausted, as to require assistance in dismounting, and shortly after, sank into a state of insensibility from which I did not recover for several hours. Then a violent fever commenced, alternating for two whole days, with sickness and pain. I think I never was more unwell in my life; and if I had been at home, lying on a feather bed instead of the cold ground, I should probably have fancied myself an invalid for weeks. (I am indebted to the kindness of my companion and friend, Professor Nuttall, for supplying, in great measure, the deficiency occasioned by the loss of my journal.)

22d. -- We are now lying at the rendezvous. W. Sublette, Captains Serre, Fitzpatrick, and other leaders, with their companies, are encamped about a mile from us, on the same plain, and our own camp is crowded with a heterogeneous assemblage of visitors. The principal of these are Indians, of the Nez Perce, Banneck and Shoshone tribes, who come with the furs and peltries which they have been collecting at the risk of their lives during the past winter and spring, to trade for ammunition, trinkets, and "fire water." There is, in addition to these, a great variety of personages amongst us; most of them calling themselves white men, French-Canadians, half-breeds, &c., their color nearly as dark, and their manners wholly as wild, as the Indians with whom they constantly associate. These people, with their obstreperous mirth, their whooping, and howling, and quarrelling, added to the mounted Indians, who are constantly dashing into and through our camp, yelling like fiends, the barking and baying of savage wolf-dogs, and the incessant cracking of rifles and carbines, render our camp a perfect bedlam. A more unpleasant situation for an invalid could scarcely be conceived. I am confined closely to the tent with illness, and am compelled all day to listen to the hiccoughing jargon of drunken traders, the sacré and foutre of Frenchmen run wild, and the swearing and screaming of our own men, who are scarcely less savage than the rest, being heated by the detestable liquor which circulates freely among them.

It is very much to be regretted that at times like the present, there should be a positive necessity to allow the men as much rum as they can drink, but this course has been sanctioned and practised by all leaders of parties who have hitherto visited these regions, and reform cannot be thought of now. The principal liquor in use here is alcohol diluted with water. It is sold to the men at three dollars the pint! Tobacco, of very inferior quality, such as could be purchased in Philadelphia at about ten cents per pound, here brings two dollars! and everything else in proportion. There is no coin in circulation, and these articles are therefore paid for by the independent mountain-men, in beaver skins, buffalo robes, &c.; and those who are hired to the companies, have them charged

against their wages.

I was somewhat amused to-day by observing one of our newly hired men enter the tent, and order, with the air of a man who knew he would not be refused, twenty dollars' worth of rum, and ten dollars worth of sugar, to treat two of his companions who were about leaving the rendezvous! 30th. Our camp here is a most lovely one in every respect, and as several days have elapsed since we came, and I am convalescent, I can roam about the country a little and enjoy it. The pasture is rich and very abundant, and it does our hearts good to witness the satisfaction and comfort of our poor jaded horses. Our tents are pitched in a pretty little valley or indentation in the plain, surrounded on all sides by low bluffs of yellow clay. Near us flows the clear deep water of the Siskadee, and beyond, on every side, is a wide and level prairie, interrupted only by some gigantic peaks of mountains and conical butes in the distance. The river, here, contains a great number of large trout, some grayling, and a small narrow-mouthed white fish, resembling a herring. They are all frequently taken with the hook, and, the trout particularly, afford excellent sport to the lovers of angling. Old Izaak Walton would be in his glory here, and the precautionary measures which he so strongly recommends in approaching a trout stream, he would not need to practise, as the fish is not shy, and bites quickly and eagerly at a grasshopper or minnow.

Buffalo, antelopes, and elk are abundant in the vicinity, and we are therefore living well. We have seen also another kind of game, a beautiful bird, the size of a half grown turkey, called the cock of the plains, (*Tetrao urophasianus*.) We first met with this noble bird on the plains, about two days' journey east of Green river, in flocks, or packs, of fifteen or twenty, and so exceedingly tame as to allow an approach to within a few feet, running before our horses like domestic fowls, and not unfrequently hopping under their bellies, while the men amused themselves by striking out their feathers with their riding whips. When we first saw them, the temptation to shoot was irresistible; the guns were cracking all around us, and the poor grouse falling in every direction; but what was our disappointment, when, upon roasting them nicely before the fire, we found them so strong and bitter as not to be eatable. From this time the cock of the plains was allowed to roam free and unmolested, and as he has failed to please our palates, we are content to admire the beauty of his plumage, and the grace and spirit of his attitudes.

July 2d.-We bade adieu to the rendezvous this morning; packed up our moveables, and journed along the bank of the river. Our horses are very much recruited by the long rest and good pasture which they have enjoyed, and, like their masters, are in excellent spirits.

During our stay at the rendezvous, many of us looked anxiously for letters from our families, which we expected by the later caravans, but we were all disappointed. For myself, I have received but one since I left my home, but this has been my solace through many a long and dreary journey. Many a time, while pacing my solitary round as night-guard in the wilderness, have I sat myself down, and stirring up the dying embers of the camp fire, taken the precious little memento from my bosom, undrawn the string of the leathern sack which contained it, and poured over the dear characters, till my eyes would swim with sweet, but sad recollections, then kissing the inanimate paper, return it to its sanctuary, tighten up my pistol belt, shoulder my gun, and with a quivering voice, swelling the "all's well" upon the night breeze, resume my slow and noiseless tramp around my sleeping companions.

Many of our men have left us, and joined the returning companies, but we have had an accession to our party of about thirty Indians; Flat-heads, Nez Percés, &c., with their wives, children, and

dogs. Without these our camp would be small; they will probably travel with us until we arrive on Snake river, and pass over the country where the most danger is to be apprehended from their enemies, the Black-feet.

Some of the women in this party, particularly those of the Nez Percé nation, are rather handsome, and their persons are decked off in truly savage taste. Their dresses of deer skin are profusely ornamented with beads and porcupine quills; huge strings of beads are hung around their necks, and their saddles are garnished with dozens of little hawk's bells, which jingle and make music for them as they travel along. Several of these women have little children tied to their backs, sewed up papoose fashion, only the head being seen; as they jolt along the road, we not unfrequently hear their voices ringing loud and shrill above the music of the bells. Other little fellows who have ceased to require the maternal contributions, are tied securely on other horses, and all their care seems to be to sleep, which they do most pertinaciously in spite of jolting, noise, and clamor. There is among this party, a Blackfoot chief; a renegado from his tribe, who sometime since killed the principal chief of his nation, and was in consequence under the necessity of absconding. He has now joined the party of his hereditary foes, and is prepared to fight against his own people and kindred. He is a fine, warlike looking fellow, and although he takes part in all the war-songs, and sham-battles of his adopted brothers, and whoops, and howls as loud as the best of them, yet it is plain to perceive that he is distrusted and disliked. All men, whether, civilized or savage, honorable, or otherwise, detest and scorn a traitor!

We were joined at the rendezvous by a Captain Stewart, an English gentleman of noble family, who is travelling for amusement, and in search of adventure. He has already been a year in the mountains, and is now desirous of visiting the lower country, from which he may probably take passage to England by sea. Another Englishman, a young man, named Ashworth, also attached himself to our party, for the same purpose.

Our course lay along the bank of Ham's fork, through a hilly and stony, but not a rocky country; the willow flourished on the margin of the stream, and occasionally the eye was relieved, on scanning the plain, by a pretty clump of cottonwood or poplar trees. The cock of the plains is very abundant here, and our pretty little summer yellow bird, (*Sylvia oestiva*,) one of our most common birds at home, is our constant companion. How natural sounds his little monotonous stave, and how it seems to carry us back to the dear scenes which we have exchanged for the wild and pathless wilderness!

4th. We left Ham's fork this morning, now diminished to a little purling brook, and passed across the hills in a north-westerly direction for about twenty miles, when we struck Muddy creek. This is a branch of Bear river, which empties into the Salt lake, or "lake Bonneville," as it has been lately named, for what reason I know not. Our camp here, is a beautiful and most delightful one. A large plain, like a meadow, of rich, waving grass, with a lovely little stream running through the midst, high hills, capped with shapely cedars on two sides, and on the others an immense plain, with snow clad mountains in the distance. This being a memorable day, the liquor kegs were opened, and the men allowed an abundance. We, therefore, soon had a renewal of the coarse and brutal scenes of the rendezvous. Some of the bacchanals called for a volley in honor of the day, and in obedience to the order, some twenty or thirty "happy" ones reeled into line with their muzzles directed to every point of the compass, and when the word "fire" was given, we who were not "happy" had to lie flat upon the ground to avoid the bullets which were careering through the

camp.

In this little stream, the trout are more abundant than we have yet seen them. One of our sober men took, this afternoon, upwards of thirty pounds. These fish would probably average fifteen or sixteen inches in length, and weigh three-quarters of a pound; occasionally, however, a much larger one is seen.

5th. -We travelled about twenty miles this day, over a country abounding in lofty hills, and early in the afternoon arrived on Bear river, and encamped. This is a fine stream of about one hundred and fifty feet in width, with a moveable sandy bottom. The grass is dry and poor, the willow abounds along the banks, and at a distance marks the course of the stream, which meanders through an alluvial plain of four to six miles in width. At the distance of about one hundred miles from this point, the Bear river enters the Salt lake, a large body of salt water, without outlet, in which there is so large an island as to afford streams of fresh water for goats and other animals living upon it.

On the next day we crossed the river, which we immediately left, to avoid a great bend, and passed over some lofty ranges of hills and through rugged and stony valleys between them; the wind was blowing a gale right ahead, and clouds of dust were flying in our faces, so that at the end of the day, our countenances were disguised as they were on the plains of the Platte. The march today has been a most laborious and fatiguing one both for man and beast; we have travelled steadily from morning till night, not stopping at noon; our poor horses' feet are becoming very much worn and sore, and when at length we struck Bear river again and encamped, the wearied animals refused to eat, stretching themselves upon the ground and falling asleep from very exhaustion. Trout, grayling, and a kind of char are very abundant here the first very large. The next day we travelled but twelve miles, it being impossible to urge our worn-out horses farther. Near our camp this evening we found some large gooseberries and currants, and made a hearty meal upon them. They were to us peculiarly delicious. We have lately been living entirely upon dried buffalo, without vegetables or bread; even this is now failing us, and we are upon short allowance. Game is very scarce, our hunters cannot find any, and our Indians have killed but two buffalo for several days. Of this small stock they would not spare us a mouthful, so it is probable we shall soon be hungry.

The alluvial plain here presents many unequivocal evidences of volcanic action, being thickly covered with masses of lava, and high walls and regular columns of basalt appear in many places. The surrounding country is composed, as usual, of high hills and narrow, stony valleys between them; the hills are thickly covered with a growth of small cedars, but on the plain, nothing flourishes but the everlasting wormwood, or sage as it is here called.

Our encampment on the 8th, was near what are called the "White-clay pits," still on Bear river. The soil is soft chalk, white and tenacious; and in the vicinity are several springs of strong supercarbonated water, which bubble up with all the activity of artificial fountains. The taste was very agreeable and refreshing, resembling Saratoga water, but not so saline. The whole plain to the hills, is covered with little mounds formed of calcareous sinter, having depressions on their summits, from which once issued streams of water. The extent of these eruptions, at some former period, must have been very great. At about half a mile distant, is an eruptive thermal spring of the temperature of 90 deg., and near this is an opening in the earth from which a stream of gas issues without water.

---

In a thicket of common red cedars, near our camp, I found, and procured several specimens of two beautiful and rare birds which I had never before seen -- the Lewis' woodpecker and Clark's crow, (*Picus torquatus* and *Corvus columbianus*.)

We remained the whole of the following day in camp to recruit our horses, and a good opportunity was thus afforded me of inspecting all the curiosities of this wonderful region, and of procuring some rare and valuable specimens of birds. Three of our hunters sallied forth in pursuit of several buffalo whose tracks had been observed by some of the men, and we were overjoyed to see them return in the evening loaded with the meat and marrow bones of two animals which they had killed.

We saw here the whooping crane, and white pelican, numerous; and in the small streams near the bases of the hills, the common canvass-back duck, shoveller, and black duck, (*Anas obscura*,) were feeding their young.

We were this evening visited by Mr. Thomas McKay, an Indian trader of some note in the mountains. (This is the son of Alexander McKay, who was massacred by the Indians of the N. W. Coast on board the ship "Tonquin", an account of which is given in Irving's "Astoria". I have often heard McKay speak of the tragic fate of his parent, and with the bitter animosity and love of revenge inherited from his Indian mother, I have heard him declare that he will yet be known on the coast as the avenger of blood.) He is a step-son of Dr. McLaughlin, the chief factor at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia, and the leader of a party of Canadians and Indians, now on a hunt in the vicinity. This party is at present in our rear, and Mr. McKay has come ahead in order to join us, and keep us company until we reach Portneuf river, where we intend building a fort.

10th. We were moving early this morning: our horses were very much recruited, and seemed as eager as their masters to travel on. It is astonishing how soon a horse revives, and overcomes the lassitude consequent upon fatigue, when he is allowed a day's rest upon tolerable pasture. Towards noon, however, after encountering the rough lava-strewn plain for a few hours, they became sufficiently sobered to desist from all unnecessary curvetting and prancing, and settled down into a very matter-of-fact trudge, better suited to the country and to the work which they have yet to do. Soon after we left, we crossed one of the high and stony hills by which our late camp is surrounded; then making a gentle descent, we came to a beautiful and very fertile plain. This is, however, very different from the general face of the country; in a short time, after passing over the rich prairie, the same dry aridity and depauperation prevailed, which is almost universal west of the mountains. On the wide plain, we observed large sunken spots, some of them of great extent, surrounded by walls of lava, indicating the existence, at some very ancient date, of active craters. These eruptions have probably been antediluvian or have existed at a period long anterior to the present order of creation. On the side of the hills are high walls of lava and basaltic dykes, and many large and dark caves are formed by the juxtaposition of the enormous masses.

Early in the afternoon we passed a large party of white men, encamped on the lava plain near one of the small streams. Horses were tethered all around, and men were lolling about playing games of cards, and loitering through the camp, as though at a loss for employment. We soon ascertained it to be Captain Bonneville's company resting after the fatigues of a long march. Mr. Wyeth and Captain Stewart visited the lodge of the "bald chief," and our party proceeded on its march. The difficulties of the route seemed to increase as we progressed, until at length we found ourselves wedged in among huge blocks of lava and columns of basalt, and were forced, most reluc-

tantly, to retrace our steps for several miles, over the impediments which we had hoped we were leaving forever behind us. We had nearly reached Bonneville's camp again, when Captains Wyeth and Stewart joined us, and we struck into another path which proved more tolerable. Wyeth gave us a rather amusing account of his visit to the worthy captain. He and Captain Stewart were received very kindly by the veteran, and every delicacy that the lodge afforded was brought forth to do them honor. Among the rest, was some metheglen or diluted alcohol sweetened with honey, which the good host had concocted; this dainty beverage was set before them, and the thirsty guests were not slow in taking advantage of the invitation so obligingly given. Draught after draught of the precious liquor disappeared down the throats of the visitors, until the anxious, but still complaisant captain, began to grow uneasy.

"I beg you will help yourselves, gentlemen," said the host, with a smile which he intended to express the utmost urbanity, but which, in spite of himself, had a certain ghastliness about it.

"Thank you, sir, we will do so freely," replied the two worthies, and away went the metheglen as before.

Cup after cup was drained, until the hollow sound of the keg indicated that its contents were nearly exhausted, when the company rose, and thanking the kind host for his noble entertainment, were bowed out of the tent with all the polite formality which the accomplished captain knows so well how to assume.

Towards evening, we struck Blackfoot river, a small, sluggish, stagnant stream, heading with the waters of a rapid rivulet passed yesterday, which empties into the Bear river. This stream passes in a north-westerly direction through a valley of about six miles in width, covered with quagmires, through which we had great difficulty in making our way. As we approached our encampment, near a small grove of willows, on the margin of the river, a tremendous grizzly bear rushed out upon us. Our horses ran wildly in every direction, snorting with terror, and became nearly unmanageable. Several balls were instantly fired into him, but they only seemed to increase his fury. After spending a moment in rending each wound, (their invariable practice,) he selected the person who happened to be nearest, and darted after him, but before he proceeded far, he was sure to be stopped again by a ball from another quarter. In this way he was driven about amongst us for perhaps fifteen minutes, at times so near some of the horses, that he received several severe kicks from them. One of the pack horses was fairly fastened upon by the terrific claws of the brute, and in the terrified animal's efforts to escape the dreaded gripe, the pack and saddle were broken to pieces and disengaged. One of our mules also lent him a kick in the head while pursuing it up an adjacent hill, which sent him rolling to the bottom. Here he was finally brought to a stand.

The poor animal was so completely surrounded by enemies that he became bewildered. He raised himself upon his hind feet, standing almost erect, his mouth partly open, and from his protruding tongue the blood fell fast in drops. While in this position, he received about six more balls, each of which made him reel. At last, as in complete desperation, he dashed into the water, and swam several yards with astonishing strength and agility, the guns cracking at him constantly; but he was not to proceed far. Just then, Richardson, who had been absent, rode up, and fixing his deadly aim upon him, fired a ball into the back of his head, which killed him instantly. The strength of four men was required to drag the ferocious brute from the water, and upon examining his body, he was found completely riddled; there did not appear to be four inches of his shaggy person, from the hips upward, that had not received a ball. There must have been at least thirty

---

shots made at him, and probably few missed him; yet such was his tenacity of life, that I have no doubt he would have succeeded in crossing the river, but for the last shot in the brain. He would probably weigh, at the least, six hundred pounds, and was about the height of an ordinary steer. The spread of the foot, laterally, was ten inches, and the claws measured seven inches in length. This animal was remarkably lean; when in good condition, he would, doubtless, much exceed in weight the estimate I have given. Richardson, and two other hunters, in company, killed two in the course of the afternoon, and saw several others.

This evening, our pet antelope, poor little "Zip Koon," met with a serious accident. The mule on which he rode, got her feet fastened in some lava blocks, and, in the struggle to extricate herself, fell violently on the pointed fragments. One of the delicate legs of our favorite was broken, and he was otherwise so bruised and hurt, that, from sheer mercy, we ordered him killed. We had hoped to be able to take him to the fort which we intend building on the Portneuf river, where he could have been comfortably cared for. This is the only pet we have had in the camp, which continued with us for more than a few days. We have sometimes taken young grizzly bears, but these little fellows, even when not larger than puppies, are so cross and snappish, that it is dangerous to handle them, and we could never become attached to any animal so ungentle, and therefore young "Ephraim," (to give him his mountain cognomen,) generally meets with but little mercy from us when his evil genius throws him in our way. The young buffalo calf is also very often taken, and if removed from the mother, and out of sight of the herd, he will follow the camp as steadily as a dog; but his propensity for keeping close to the horse's heels often gets him into trouble, as he meets with more kicks than caresses from them. He is considered an interloper, and treated accordingly. The bull calf of a month or two old, is sometimes rather difficult to manage; he shows no inclination to follow the camp like the younger ones, and requires to be dragged along by main force. At such times, he watches for a good opportunity, and before his captor is aware of what is going on, he receives a butt from the clumsy head of the intractable little brute, which, in most cases, lays him sprawling upon the ground.

I had, an adventure of this sort a few days before we arrived at the rendezvous. I captured a large bull calf, and with considerable difficulty, managed to drag him into the camp, by means of a rope noosed around his neck, and made fast to the high pommel of my saddle. Here I attached him firmly by a cord to a stake driven into the ground, and considered him secure. In a few minutes, however, he succeeded in breaking his fastenings, and away he scoured out of the camp. I lost no time in giving chase, and although I fell flat into a ditch, and afforded no little amusement to our people thereby, I soon overtook him, and was about seizing the stranded rope, which was still around his neck, when, to my surprise, the little animal showed fight; he came at me with all his force, and dashing his head into my breast, bore me to the ground in a twinkling. I, however, finally succeeded in recapturing him, and led and pushed him back into the camp; but I could make nothing of him; his stubbornness would neither yield to severity or kindness, and the next morning I loosed him and let him go.

11th. On ascending a hill this morning, Captain Wyeth, who was at the head of the company, suddenly espied an Indian stealing cautiously along the summit, and evidently endeavoring to conceal himself. Captain W. directed the attention of McKay to the crouching figure, who, the moment he caught a glimpse of him, exclaimed, in tones of joyful astonishment, " a Blackfoot, by --- !" and clapping spurs to his horse, tore up the hill with the most frantic eagerness, with his rifle

---

poised in his hand ready for a shot. The Indian disappeared over the hill like a lightning flash, and in another second, McKay was also out of sight, and we could hear the rapid clatter of his horse's hoofs, in hot pursuit after the fugitive. Several of the men, with myself, followed after at a rapid gait, with, however, a very different object. Mine was simply curiosity, mingled with some anxiety, lest the wily Indian should lead our impetuous friend into an ambushment, and his life thus fall a sacrifice to his temerity. When we arrived at the hill-top, McKay was gone, but we saw the track of his horse passing down the side of it, and we traced him into a dense thicket about a quarter of a mile distant. Several of our hardy fellows entered this thicket, and beat about for some time in various directions, but nothing could they see either of McKay or the Indian. In the mean time, the party passed on, and my apprehensions were fast settling into a certainty that our bold companion had found the death he had so rashly courted, when I was inexpressibly relieved by hearing the crackling of the bushes near, which was immediately followed by the appearance of the missing man himself.

He was in an excessively bad humor, and grumbled audibly about the "Blackfoot rascal getting off in that cowardly fashion," without at all heeding the congratulations which I was showering upon him for his almost miraculous escape. He was evidently not aware of having been peculiarly exposed, and was regretting, like the hunter who loses his game by a sudden shift of wind, that his human prey had escaped him.

The appearance of this Indian is a proof that others are lurking near; and if the party happens to be large, they may give us some trouble. We are now in a part of the country which is almost constantly infested by the Blackfeet; we have seen for several mornings past, the tracks of moccasins around our camp, and not unfrequently the prints of unshod horses, so that we know we are narrowly watched; and the slumbering of one of the guard, or the slightest appearance of carelessness in the conduct of the camp, may bring the savages whooping upon us like demons.

Our encampment this evening is on one of the head branches of the Blackfoot river, from which we can see the three remarkable conic summits known by the name of the "Three Buttes" or "Tetons." Near these flows the Portneuf, or south branch of Snake or Lewis' river. Here is to be another place of rest, and we look forward to it with pleasure both on our own account and on that of our wearied horses.

12th. In the afternoon we made a camp on Ross's creek, a small branch of Snake river. The pasture is better than we have had for two weeks, and the stream contains an abundance of excellent trout. Some of these are enormous, and very fine eating. They bite eagerly at a grasshopper or minnow, but the largest fish are shy, and the sportsman requires to be carefully concealed in order to take them. We have here none of the fine tackle, jointed rods, reels, and silkworm gut of the accomplished city sportsman; we have only a piece of common cord, and a hook seized on with half-hitches, with a willow rod cut on the banks of the stream; but with this rough equipment we take as many trout as we wish, and who could do more, even with all the curious contrivances of old Izaak Walton or Christopher North?

The band of Indians which kept company with us from the rendezvous, left us yesterday, and fell back to join Captain Bonneville's party, which is travelling on behind. We do not regret their absence; for although they added strength to our band, and would have been useful in case of an attack from Blackfeet, yet they added very materially to our cares, and gave us some trouble by their noise, confusion, and singing at night.

On the 14th, we travelled but about six miles, when a halt was called, and we pitched our tents upon the banks of the noble Shoshone or Snake river. It seems now, as though we were really nearing the western extremity of our vast continent. We are now on a stream which pours its waters directly into the Columbia, and we can form some idea of the great Oregon river by the beauty and magnitude of its tributary. Soon after we stopped, Captain W., Richardson, and two others left us to seek for a suitable spot for building a fort, and in the evening they returned with the information that an excellent and convenient place had been pitched upon, about five miles from our present encampment. On their route, they killed a buffalo, which they left at the site of the fort, suitably protected from wolves, &c. This is very pleasing intelligence to us, as our stock of dried meat is almost exhausted, and for several days past we have been depending almost exclusively upon fish.

The next morning we moved early, and soon arrived at our destined camp. This is a fine large plain on the south side of the Portneuf, with an abundance of excellent grass and rich soil. The opposite side of the river is thickly covered with large timber of the cottonwood and willow, with a dense undergrowth of the same, intermixed with service-berry and currant bushes.

Most of the men were immediately put to work, felling trees, making horse-pens, and preparing the various requisite materials for the building, while others were ordered to get themselves in readiness for a start on the back track, in order to make a hunt, and procure meat for the camp. To this party I have attached myself, and all my leisure time to-day is employed in preparing for it. Our number will be twelve, and each man will lead a mule with a pack-saddle, in order to bring in the meat that we may kill. Richardson is the principal of this party, and Mr. Ashworth has also consented to join us, so that I hope we shall have an agreeable trip. There will be but little hard work to perform; our men are mostly of the best, and no rum or cards are allowed.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER VI

Departure of the hunting camp - A false alarm - Blackfeet Indians - their ferocity - Requisites of a mountain-man - Good fare, and good appetites - An experiment - Grizzly bears - Visit of a Nez Perce Indian - Adventure with a grizzly bear - Hunter's anecdotes - Homeward bound - Accident from gunpowder - Arrival at "Fort Hall" - A salute - Emaciation of some of the party from low diet - Mr. McKay's company - Buffalo lodges - Progress of the building - Effects of judicious training - Indian worship - A "Camp Meeting" - Mr. Jason Lee, a favorite - A fatal accident and a burial.

July 16th.- Our little hunting party of twelve men, rode out of the encampment this morning, at a brisk trot, which gait was continued until we arrived at our late encampment on Ross' creek, having gone about thirty miles, Here we came to a halt, and made a hearty meal on a buffalo which we had just killed. While we were eating, a little Welshman, whom we had stationed outside our camp to watch the horses, came running to us out of breath, crying in a terrified falsetto, "Indians, Indians!" In a moment every man was on his feet, and his gun in his hand; the horses were instantly surrounded, by Richardson's direction, and driven into the bushes, and we were preparing ourselves for the coming struggle, when our hunter, peering out of the thick copse to mark the approach of the enemy, burst at once into a loud laugh, and muttering something about a Welsh coward, stepped boldly from his place of concealment, and told us to follow him. When we had done so, we perceived the band approaching steadily, and it seemed warily, along the path

---

directly in our front. Richardson said something to them in an unknown tongue, which immediately brought several of the strangers towards us at full gallop. One of these was a Canadian, as his peculiar physiognomy, scarlet sash, and hat ribbons of gaudy colors, clearly proved, and the two who accompanied him, were Indians. These people greeted us with great cordiality, the more so, perhaps, as they had supposed, on seeing the smoke from our fire, that we were a band of Blackfeet, and that, therefore, there was no alternative for them but to fight. While we were conversing, the whole party, of about thirty, came up, and it needed but a glance at the motley group of tawdrily dressed hybrid boys, and blanketed Indians, to convince us that this was McKay's company travelling on to join him at Fort Hall.

They inquired anxiously about their leader, and seemed pleased on being informed that he was so near; the prospect of a few days' rest at the fort, and the regale by which their arrival was sure to be commemorated, acted upon the spirits of the mercurial young half-breeds, like the potent liquor which they expected soon to quaff in company with the kindred souls who were waiting to receive them.

They all seemed hungry, and none required a second invitation to join us at our half finished meal. The huge masses of savoury fleece meat, hump-ribs, and side-ribs disappeared, and were polished with wonderful dispatch; the Canadians ate like half famished wolves, and the sombre Indians, although slower and more sedate in their movements, were very little behind their companions in the agreeable process of mastication.

The next day we rode thirty-four miles, and encamped on a pretty little stream, fringed with willows, running through the midst of a large plain. Within a few miles, we saw a small herd of buffalo, and six of our company left the camp for a hunt. In an hour two of them returned, bringing the meat of one animal. We all commenced work immediately, cutting it in thin slices, and hanging it on the bushes to dry. By sundown, our work was finished, and soon after dark, the remaining hunters came in, bringing the best parts of three more. This will give us abundance of work for to-morrow, when the hunters will go out again.

Richardson and Sansbury mention having seen several Blackfeet Indians to-day, who, on observing them, ran rapidly away, and, as usual, concealed themselves in the bushes. We are now certain that our worst enemies are around us, and that they are only waiting for a favorable time and opportunity to make an attack. They are not here for nothing, and have probably been dogging us, and reconnoitering our outposts, so that the greatest caution and watchfulness will be required to prevent a surprise. We are but a small company, and there may be at this very moment hundreds within hearing of our voices.

The Blackfoot is a sworn and determined foe to all white men, and he has often been heard to declare that he would rather hang the scalp of a "pale face" to his girdle, than kill a buffalo to prevent his starving. The hostility of this dreaded tribe is, and has for years been, proverbial. They are, perhaps, the only Indians who do not fear the power, and who refuse to acknowledge the superiority of the white man; and though so often beaten in conflicts with them, even by their own mode of warfare, and generally with numbers vastly inferior, their indomitable courage and perseverance still urges them on to renewed attempts; and if a single scalp is taken, it is considered equal to a great victory, and is hailed as a presage of future and more extensive triumphs. It must be acknowledged, however, that this determined hostility does not originate solely in savage malignity, or an abstract thirst for the blood of white men; it is formented and kept alive

---

from year to year by incessant provocatives on the part of white hunters, trappers, and traders, who are at best but intruders on the rightful domains of the red man of the wilderness. Many a night have I sat at the camp-fire, and listened to the recital of bloody and ferocious scenes, in which the narrators were the actors, and the poor Indians the victims, and I have felt my blood tingle with shame, and boil with indignation, to hear the diabolical acts applauded by those for whose amusement they were related. Many a precious villain, and merciless marauder, was made by these midnight tales of rapine, murder, and robbery; many a stripling, in whose tender mind the seeds of virtue and honesty had never germinated, burned for an opportunity of loading his packhorse with the beaver skins of some solitary Blackfoot trapper, who was to be murdered and despoiled of the property he had acquired by weeks, and perhaps months, of toil and danger. Acts of this kind are by no means unfrequent, and the subjects of this sort of atrocity are not always the poor and despised Indians: white men themselves often fall by the hands of their companions, when by good fortune and industry they have succeeded in loading their horses with fur. The fortunate trapper is treacherously murdered by one who has eaten from the same dish and drank from the same cup, and the homicide returns triumphantly to his camp with his ill gotten property. If his companion be inquired for, the answer is that some days ago they parted company, and he will probably soon join them.

The poor man never returns - no one goes to search for him - he is soon forgotten, or is only remembered by one more steadfast than the rest, who seizes with avidity the first opportunity which is afforded, of murdering an unoffending Indian in revenge for the death of his friend. On the 20th, we moved our camp to a spot about twelve miles distant, where Richardson, with two other hunters, stopped yesterday and spent the night. They had killed several buffalo here, and were busily engaged in preparing the meat when we joined them. They gave us a meal of excellent cow's flesh, and I thought I never had eaten anything so delicious. Hitherto we have had only the bulls which are at this season poor and rather unsavory, but now we are feasting upon the best food in the world.

It is true we have nothing but meat and good cold water, but this is all we desire: we have excellent appetites, no dyspepsia, clear heads, sharp ears, and high spirits, and what more does a man require to make him happy?

We rise in the morning with the sun, stir up our fires, and roast our breakfast, eating usually from one to two pounds of meat at a morning meal. At ten o'clock we lunch, dine at two, sup at five, and lunch at eight, and during the night-watch commonly provide ourselves with two or three "hump-ribs" and a marrow bone, to furnish employment and keep the drowsy god at a distance. Our present camp is a beautiful one. A rich and open plain of luxuriant grass, dotted with buffalo in all directions, a high picturesque hill in front, and a lovely stream of cold mountain water flowing at our feet. On the borders of this stream, as usual, is a dense belt of willows, and under the shade of these we sit and work by day, and sleep soundly at night. Our meat is now dried upon scaffolds constructed of old timber which we find in great abundance upon the neighboring hill. We keep a fire going constantly, and when the meat is sufficiently dried, it is piled on the ground, preparatory to being baled.

21st. The buffalo appear even more numerous than when we came, and much less suspicious than common. The bulls frequently pass slowly along within a hundred yards of us, and toss their shaggy and frightful looking heads as though to warn us against attacking or approaching them.

Towards evening, to-day, I walked out with my gun, in the direction of one of these prowling monsters, and the ground in his vicinity being covered densely with bushes, I determined to approach as near him as possible, in order to try the efficacy of a ball planted directly in the centre of the forehead. I had heard of this experiment having been tried without success and I wished to ascertain the truth for myself.

“Taking the wind “ of the animal, as it is called, (that is, keeping to leeward, so that my approach could not be perceived by communicating a taint to the air,) I crawled on my hands and knees with the utmost caution towards my victim. The unwieldy brute was quietly and unsuspectingly cropping the herbage, and I had arrived to within feet of him, when a sudden flashing of the eye, and an impatient motion, told me that I was observed. He raised his enormous head, and looked around him, and so truly terrible and grand did he appear, that I must confess, (in your ear,) I felt awed, almost frightened, at the task I had undertaken. But I had gone too far to retreat; so, raising my gun, I took deliberate aim at the bushy centre of the forehead, and fired. The monster shook his head, pawed up the earth with his hoofs, and making a sudden spring, accompanied by a terrific roar, turned to make his escape. At that instant, the ball from the second barrel penetrated his vitals, and he measured his huge length upon the ground. In a few seconds he was dead. Upon examining the head, and cutting away the enormous mass of matted hair and skin which enveloped the skull, my large bullet of twenty to the pound, was found completely flattened against the bone, having carried with it, through the interposing integument, a considerable portion of the coarse hair, but without producing the smallest fracture. I was satisfied; and taking the tongue, (the hunter's perquisite,) I returned to my companions.

This evening the roaring of the bulls in the gang near us is terrific, and these sounds are mingled with the howling of large packs of wolves, which regularly attend upon them, and the hoarse screaming of hundreds of ravens flying over head. The dreaded grizzly bear is also quite common in this neighborhood; two have just been seen in some bushes near, and they visit our camp almost every night, attracted by the piles of meat which are heaped all around us. The first intimation we have of his approach is a great grunt or snort, unlike any sound I ever heard, but much more querulous than fierce; then we hear the scraping and tramping of his huge feet, and the snuffing of his nostrils, as the savory scent of the meat is wafted to them. He approaches nearer and nearer, with a stealthy and fearful pace, but just as he is about to accomplish the object of his visit, he suddenly stops short; the snuffing is repeated at long and trembling intervals, and if the slightest motion is then made by one of the party, away goes “Ephraim,” like a cowardly burglar as he is, and we hear no more of him that night.

On the 23d a Nez Perce Indian, belonging to Mr. McKay's company visited us. He is one of several hundred who have been sent from the fort on the same errand as ourselves. This was a middle aged man, with a countenance in which shrewdness or cunning, and complaisance, appeared singularly blended. But his person was a perfect wonder, and would have served admirably for the study of a sculptor. The form was perfection itself. The lower limbs were entirely naked, and the upper part of the person was only covered by a short checked shirt. His blanket lay by his side as he sat with us, and was used only while moving. I could not but admire the ease with which the man squatted on his haunches immediately as he alighted, and the position both of body and limbs was one that, probably, no white man unaccustomed to it, could have endured for many minutes together. The attitude, and indeed the whole figure was graceful and easy in the extreme;

---

and on criticising his person, one was forcibly reminded of the Apollo Belvidere of Canova. His only weapons were a short bow and half a dozen arrows, a scalping knife and tomahawk; with these, however, weak and inefficient as they seemed, he had done good service, every arrow being smeared with blood to the feathers. He told Richardson that he and his three or four companions had killed about sixty buffalo, and that now, having meat enough, they intended to return to their camp to-morrow.

This afternoon I observed a large flock of wild geese passing over; and upon watching them, perceived that they alighted about a mile and a half from us, where I knew there was a lake. Concluding that a little change of diet might be agreeable, I sallied forth with my gun across the plain in quest of the birds. I soon arrived at a thick copse of willow and currant bushes, which skirted the water, and was about entering, when I heard a sort of angry growl or grunt directly before me and instantly after, saw a grizzly bear of the largest kind erect himself upon his hind feet within a dozen yards of me, his savage eyes glaring with horrible malignity, his mouth wide open, and his tremendous paws raised as though ready to descend upon me. For a moment, I thought my hour had come, and that I was fated to die an inglorious death away from my friends and my kindred; but after waiting a moment in agonizing suspense, and the bear showing no inclination to advance, my lagging courage returned, and cocking both barrels of my gun, and presenting it as steadily as my nerves would allow, full at the shaggy breast of the creature, I retreated slowly backwards. Bruin evidently had no notion of braving gunpowder, but I did not know whether, like a dog, if the enemy retreated he would not yet give me a chase; so when I had placed about a hundred yards between us, I wheeled about and flew, rather than ran, across the plain towards the camp. Several times during this run for life, (as I considered it,) did I fancy that I heard the bear at my heels; and not daring to look over my shoulder to ascertain the fact, I only increased my speed, until the camp was nearly gained, when, from sheer exhaustion I relaxed my efforts, fell flat upon the ground, and looked behind me. The whole space between me and the copse was untenanted, and I was forced to acknowledge, with a feeling strongly allied to shame, that my fears alone had represented the bear in chase of me.

When I arrived in camp, and told my break-neck adventure to the men, our young companion, Mr. Ashworth, expressed a wish to go and kill the bear, and requested the loan of my double-barrelled gun for this purpose. This I at first peremptorily refused, and the men, several of whom were experienced hunters, joined me in urging him not to attempt the rash adventure. At length, however, finding him determined on going, and that rather than remain, he would trust to his own single gun, I was finally induced to offer him mine, with a request, (which I had hoped would check his daring spirit,) that he would leave the weapon in a situation where I could readily find it; for after he had made one shot, he would never use a gun again.

He seemed to heed our caution and advice but little, and, with a dogged and determined air, took the way across the plain to the bushes, which we could see in the distance. I watched him for some time, until I saw him enter them, and then, with a sigh that one so young and talented should be lost from amongst us, and a regret that we did not forcibly prevent his going, I sat myself down, distressed and melancholy. We all listened anxiously to hear the report of the gun; but no sound reaching our ears, we began to hope that he had failed in finding the animal, and in about fifteen minutes, to my inexpressible relief, we saw him emerge from the copse, and bend his steps slowly towards us. When he came in, he seemed disappointed, and somewhat angry. He

said he had searched the bushes in every direction, and although he had found numerous foot-prints, no bear was to be seen. It is probable that when I commenced my retreat in one direction, bruin made off in the other, and that although he was willing to dispute the ground with me, and prevent my passing his lair, he was equally willing to back out of an engagement in which his fears suggested that he might come off the loser.

This evening, as we sat around the camp fire, cozily wrapped in our blankets, some of our old hunters became garrulous, and we had several good "yarns," as a sailor would say. One told of his having been shot by a Blackfoot Indian, who was disguised in the skin of an elk, and exhibited, with some little pride, a great cicatrix which disfigured his neck. Another gave us an interesting account of an attack made by the Comanche Indians upon a party of Santa-Fee traders, to which he had been attached. The white men, as is usual in general engagements with Indians, gained a signal victory, not, however, without the loss of several of their best hunters; and the old man who told the story, "uncle John," as he was usually called, shed tears at the recollection of the death of his friends; and during that part of his narrative, was several times so much affected as to be unable to speak. [I have repeatedly observed these exhibitions of feeling in some of our people upon particular occasions, and I have been pleased with them, as they seemed to furnish an evidence, that amid all the mental sterility, and absence of moral rectitude, which is so deplorably prevalent, there yet lingers some kindness of heart, some sentiments which are not wholly depraved.]

The best story, however, was one told by Richardson, of a meeting he once had with three Black-foot Indians. He had been out alone hunting buffalo, and towards the end of the day was returning to the camp with his meat, when he heard the clattering of hoofs in the rear, and, upon looking back, observed three Indians in hot pursuit of him. He immediately discharged his cargo of meat to lighten his horse, and then urged the animal to his utmost speed, in an attempt to distance his pursuers. He soon discovered, however, that the enemy was rapidly gaining upon him, and that in a few minutes more, he would be completely at their mercy, when he hit upon an expedient, as singular as it was bold and courageous. Drawing his long scalping knife from the sheath at his side, he plunged the keen weapon through his horse's neck, and severed the spine. The animal dropped instantly dead, and the determined hunter, throwing himself behind the fallen carcass, waited calmly the approach of his sanguinary pursuers. In a few moments, one Indian was within range of the fatal rifle, and at its report, his horse galloped riderless over the plain. The remaining two then thought to take him at advantage by approaching simultaneously on both sides of his rampart; but one of them, happening to venture too near in order to be sure of his aim, was shot to the heart by the long pistol of the white man, at the very instant that the ball from the Indian's gun whistled harmlessly by. The third savage, being wearied of the dangerous game, applied the whip vigorously to the flanks of his horse, and was soon out of sight, while Richardson set about collecting the trophies of his singular victory.

He caught the two Indians' horses; mounted one, and loaded the other with the meat which he had discarded, and returned to his camp with two spare rifles, and a good stock of ammunition. On the morning of the 25th, we commenced baling up our meat in buffalo skins dried for the purpose. Each bale contains about a hundred pounds, of which a mule carries two; and when we had finished, our twelve longeared friends were loaded. Our limited term of absence is now nearly expired, and we are anxious to return to the fort in order to prepare for the journey to the lower country.

---

At about 10 o'clock, we left our pleasant encampment, and bade adieu to the cold spring, the fat buffalo, and grizzly bears, and urging our mules into their fastest walk, we jolted along with our provant towards the fort.

In about an hour after, an unpleasant accident happened to one of our men, named McCarey. He had been running a buffalo, and was about reloading the gun, which he had just discharged, when the powder in his horn was ignited by a burning wad remaining in the barrel; the horn was burst to fragments, the poor man dashed from his horse, and his face, neck, and hands, burnt in a shocking manner. We applied, immediately, the simple remedies which our situation and the place afforded, and in the course of an hour he was somewhat relieved, and travelled on with us, though in considerable suffering. His eyes were entirely closed, the lids very much swollen, and his long, flowing hair, patriarchal beard and eye-brows, had all vanished in smoke. It will be long ere he gets another such crop.

The weather here is generally uncomfortably warm, so much so, that we discard, while travelling, all such encumbrances as coats, neckcloths, &c., but the nights are excessively cold, ice often forming in the camp kettles, of the thickness of half an inch, or more. My custom has generally been to roll myself in my blanket at night, and use my large coat as a pillow; but here the coat must be worn, and my saddle has to serve the purpose to which the coat is usually applied.

We travelled, this day, thirty miles, and the next afternoon, at 4 o'clock, arrived at the fort. On the route we met three hunters, whom Captain W. had sent to kill game for the camp. They informed us that all hands have been for several days on short allowance, and were very anxious for our return.

When we came in sight of the fort, we gave them a mountain salute, each man firing his gun in quick succession. They did not expect us until to-morrow, and the firing aroused them instantly. In a very few minutes, a score of men were armed and mounted, and dashing out to give battle to the advancing Indians, as they thought us. The general supposition was, that their little hunting party had been attacked by a band of roving Blackfeet, and they made themselves ready for the rescue in a space of time that did them great credit.

It was perhaps "bad medicine," (to use the mountain phrase,) to fire a salute at all, inasmuch as it excited some unnecessary alarm, but it had the good effect to remind them that danger might be near when they least expected it, and afforded them an opportunity of showing the promptness and alacrity with which they could meet and brave it.

Our people were all delighted to see us arrive, and I could perceive many a longing and eager gaze cast upon the well filled bales, as our mules swung their little bodies through the camp. My companion, Mr. N., had become so exceedingly thin that I should scarcely have known him; and upon my expressing surprise at the great change in his appearance, he heaved a sigh of inanity, and remarked that I "would have been as thin as he if I had lived on old Ephraim for two weeks, and short allowance of that." I found, in truth, that the whole camp had been subsisting, during our absence, on little else than two or three grizzly bears which had been killed in the neighborhood; and with a complacent glance at my own rotund and cow-fed person, I wished my poor friend better luck for the future.

We found Mr. McKay's company encamped on the bank of the river within a few hundred yards of our tents. It consists of thirty men, thirteen of whom are Indians, Nez Perces, Chinooks and Kayouses with a few squaws. The remainder are French-Canadians, and half-breeds. Their lodg-

es, of which there are several, are of a conical form, composed of ten long poles, the lower ends of which are pointed and driven into the ground; the upper blunt, and drawn together at the top by thongs. Around these poles, several dressed buffalo skins, sewed together, are stretched, a hole being left on one side for entrance.

These are the kind of lodges universally used by the mountain Indians while travelling: they are very comfortable and commodious, and a squaw accustomed to it, will erect and prepare one for the reception of her husband, while he is removing the trapping from his horse. I have seen an expert Indian woman stretch a lodge in half the time that was required by four white men to perform the same operation with another in the neighborhood.

At the fort, affairs look prosperous: the stockade is finished; two bastions have been erected, and the work is singularly good, considering the scarcity of proper building tools. The house will now soon be habitable, and the structure can then be completed at leisure by men who will be left here in charge, while the party travels on to its destination, the Columbia.

On the evening of the 26th, Captain W., Mr. Nuttall and myself supped with Mr. McKay in his lodge. I am much pleased with this gentleman: he unites the free, frank and open manners of the mountain man, with the grace and affability of the Frenchman. But above all, I admire the order, decorum, and strict subordination which exists among his men, so different from what I have been accustomed to see in parties composed of Americans. Mr. McKay assures me that he had considerable difficulty in bringing his men to the state in which they now are. The free and fearless Indian was particularly difficult to subdue; but steady, determined perseverance, and bold measures, aided by a rigid self-example, made them as clay in his hand, and has finally reduced them to their present admirable condition. If they misbehaved, a commensurate punishment is sure to follow: in extreme cases, flagellation is resorted to, but it is inflicted only by the hand of the Captain; were any other appointed to perform this office on an Indian, the indignity would be deemed so great, that nothing less than the blood of the individual could appease the wounded feelings of the savage.

After supper was concluded, we sat ourselves down on a buffalo robe at the entrance of the lodge, to see the Indians at their devotions. The whole thirteen were soon collected at the call of one whom they had chosen for their chief, and seated with sober, sedate countenances around a large fire. After remaining in perfect silence for perhaps fifteen minutes, the chief commenced an harangue in a solemn and impressive tone; reminding them of the object for which they were thus assembled, that of worshipping the "Great Spirit who made the light and the darkness, the fire and the water," and assured them that if they offered up their prayers to him with but "one tongue," they would certainly be accepted. He then rose from his squatting position to his knees, and his example was followed by all the others. In this situation he commenced a prayer, consisting of short sentences uttered rapidly but with great apparent fervor, his hands clasped upon his breast, and his eyes cast upwards with a beseeching look towards heaven. At the conclusion of each sentence, a choral response of a few words was made, accompanied frequently by low moaning. The prayer lasted about twenty minutes. After its conclusion, the chief, still maintaining the same position of his body and hands, but with his head bent to his breast, commenced a kind of psalm or sacred song, in which the whole company presently joined. The song was a simple expression of a few sounds, no intelligible words being uttered. It resembled the words, Ho-ha-ho-ha-ho-ha-ha-a, commencing in a low tone, and gradually swelling to a full, round, and beautifully modu-

---

lated chorus. During the song, the clasped hands of the worshippers were moved rapidly across the breast, and their bodies swung with great energy to the time of the music. The chief ended the song that he had commenced, by a kind of swelling groan, which was echoed in chorus. It was then taken up by another, and the same routine was gone through. The whole ceremony occupied perhaps one and a half hours; a short silence then succeeded, after which each Indian rose from the ground, and disappeared in the darkness with a step noiseless as that of a spectre.

I think I never was more gratified by any exhibition in my life. The humble, subdued, and beseeching looks of the poor untutored beings who were calling upon their heavenly father to forgive their sins, and continue his mercies to them, and the evident and heart-felt sincerity which characterized the whole scene, was truly affecting, and very impressive.

The next day being the Sabbath, our good missionary, Mr. Jason Lee, was requested to hold a meeting, with which he obligingly complied. A convenient, shady spot was selected in the forest adjacent, and the greater part of our men, as well as the whole of Mr. McKay's company, including the Indians, attended. The usual forms of the Methodist service, (to which Mr. L. is attached,) were gone through, and were followed by a brief, but excellent and appropriate exhortation by that gentleman, The people were remarkably quiet and attentive, and the Indians sat upon the ground like statues. Although not one of them could understand a word that was said, they nevertheless maintained the most strict and decorous silence, kneeling when the preacher kneeled, and rising when he rose, evidently with a view of paying him and us a suitable respect, however much their own notions as to the proper and most acceptable forms of worship, might have been opposed to ours.

A meeting for worship in the Rocky mountains is almost as unusual as the appearance of a herd of buffalo in the settlements. A sermon was perhaps never preached here before; but for myself, I really enjoyed the whole scene; it possessed the charm of novelty, to say nothing of the salutary effect which I sincerely hope it may produce.

Mr. Lee is a great favorite with the men, deservedly so, and there are probably few persons to whose preaching they would have listened with so much complaisance. I have often been amused and pleased by Mr. L.'s manner of reproofing them for the coarseness and profanity of expression which is so universal amongst them. The reproof, although decided, clear, and strong, is always characterized by the mildness and affectionate manner peculiar to the man; and although the good effect of the advice may not be discernible, yet it is always treated with respect, and its utility acknowledged.

In the evening, a fatal accident happened to a Canadian belonging to Mr. McKay's party. He was running his horse, in company with another, when the animals were met in full career by a third rider, and horses and men were thrown with great force to the ground. The Canadian was taken up completely senseless, and brought to Mr. McKay's lodge, where we were all taking supper. I perceived at once that there was little chance of his life being saved. He had received an injury of the head which had evidently caused concussion of the brain. He was bled copiously, and various local remedies were applied, but without success; the poor man died early next morning.

He was about forty years of age, healthy, active, and shrewd, and very much valued by Mr. McKay as a leader in his absence, and as an interpreter among the Indians of the Columbia.

At noon the body was interred. It was wrapped in a piece of coarse linen, over which was sewed a buffalo robe. The spot selected, was about a hundred yards south of the fort, and the funeral was

attended by the greater part of the men of both camps. Mr. Lee officiate in performing the ordinary church ceremony, after which a hymn for the repose of the soul of the departed, was sung by the Canadians present. The grave is surrounded by a neat palisade of willows, with a black cross erected at the head, on which is carved the name "Casseau."

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

## CHAPTER VII

Departure of Mr. McKay's party, Captain Stewart, and the missionaries - Debauch at the fort - Departure of the company - Poor provision - Blackfeet hunting ground - A toilsome journey, and sufferings from thirst - Goddin's creek - Antoine Goddin, the trapper - Scarcity of game - A buffalo - Rugged mountains - Comforting reflections of the traveller - More game - Unusual economy - Habits of the white wolf - "Thornburg's pass" - Difficult travelling - The captain in jeopardy among the snow - A countermarch - Deserted Banneck camp - Toilsome and dangerous passage of the mountain - Mallade river - Beaver dams, and beaver - A party of Snake Indians - Scarcity of pasture - Another Banneck camp - "Kamas prairie" - Indian mode of preparing the kamas - Racine blanc, or biscuit root - Travelling over the hills - Loss of horses by fatigue - Boisee or Bigwood river - Salmon - Choke-cherries, &c.

On the 30th of July, Mr. McKay and his party left us for Fort Vancouver, Captain Stewart and our band of missionaries accompanying them. The object of the latter in leaving us, is, that they may have an opportunity of travelling more slowly than we should do, on account, and for the benefit of the horned cattle which they are driving to the lower country. We feel quite sad in the prospect of parting from those with whom we have endured some toil and danger, and who have been to some of us as brothers, throughout our tedious journey; but, if no unforeseen accident occurs, we hope to meet them all again at Walla-Walla, the upper fort on the Columbia. As the party rode off, we fired three rounds, which were promptly answered, and three times three cheers wished the travellers success.

August 5th. At sunrise this morning, the "star-spangled banner" was raised on the flag-staff at the fort, and a salute fired by the men, who, according to orders, assembled around it. All in camp were then allowed the free and uncontrolled use of liquor, and, as usual, the consequence was a scene of rioting, noise, and fighting, during the whole day; some became so drunk that their senses fled them entirely, and they were therefore harmless; but by far the greater number were just sufficiently under the influence of the vile trash, to render them in their conduct disgusting and tiger-like. We had "gouging," biting, fisticuffing, and "stamping" in the most "scientific" perfection; some even fired guns and pistols at each other, but these weapons were mostly harmless in the unsteady hands which employed them. Such scenes I hope never to witness again; they are absolutely sickening, and cause us to look upon our species with abhorrence and loathing. Night at last came, and cast her mantle over our besotted camp; the revel was over, and the men retired to their pallets peaceably, but not a few of them will bear palpable evidence of the debauch of the 5th of August.

The next morning we commenced packing, and at 11 o'clock bade adieu to "Fort Hall." Our company now consists of but thirty men, several Indian women, and one hundred and sixteen horses. We crossed the main Snake or Shoshone river, at a point about three miles from the fort. It is here as wide as the Missouri at Independence, but, beyond comparison, clearer and more beautiful.

---

Immediately on crossing the river, we entered upon a wide, sandy plain, thickly covered with wormwood, and early in the afternoon, encamped at the head of a delightful spring, about ten miles from our starting place.

On the route, our hunters killed a young grizzly bear, which, with a few grouse, made us an excellent dinner. Fresh meat is now very grateful to our palates, as we have been living for weeks past on nothing but poor, dried buffalo, the better, and far the larger part, having been deposited in the fort for the subsistence of the men who remain. We have no flour, nor vegetables of any kind, and our meat may be aptly compared to dry chips, breaking short off in our fingers; and when boiled to soften it a little, and render it fit for mastication, not a star appears in the pot. It seems astonishing that life can be sustained upon such miserable fare, and yet our men (except when under the influence of liquor) have never murmured, but have always eaten their crusty meal, and drunk their cold water with light and excellent spirits. We hope soon to fall in with the buffalo, and we shall then endeavor to prepare some good provision to serve until we reach the salmon region. We shall now, for about ten days, be travelling through the most dangerous country west of the mountains, the regular hunting ground of the Blackfeet Indians, who are said to be often seen here in parties of hundreds, or even thousands, scouring the plains in pursuit of the buffalo. Traders, therefore, seldom travel this route without meeting them, and being compelled to prove their valor upon them; the white men are, however, generally the victors, although their numbers are always vastly inferior.

7th. We were moving this morning with the dawn, and travelled steadily the whole day, over one of the most arid plains we have seen, covered thickly with jagged masses of lava, and twisted wormwood bushes. Both horses and men were jaded to the last degree; the former from the rough, and at times almost impassable nature of the track, and the latter from excessive heat and parching thirst. We saw not a drop of water during the day, and our only food was the dried meat before spoken of, which we carried and chewed like biscuits as we travelled. There are two reasons by which the extreme thirst which the way-farer suffers in these regions, may be accounted for; first, the intense heat of the sun upon the open and exposed plains; and secondly, the desiccation to which every thing here is subject. The air feels like the breath of a sirocco, the tongue becomes parched and horny, and the mouth, nose, and eyes are incessantly assailed by the fine pulverized lava, which rises from the ground with the least breath of air. Bullets, pebbles of chalcedony, and pieces of smooth obsidian, were in great requisition to-day; almost every man was mumbling some of these substances, in an endeavor to assuage his burning thirst. The camp trailed along in a lagging and desponding line over the plain for a mile or more, the poor horses' heads hanging low, their tongues protruding to their utmost extent, and their riders scarcely less drooping and spiritless. We were a sad and most forlorn looking company, certainly; not a man of us had any thing to say, and none cared to be interrupted in his blissful dream of cool rivers and streams. Occasionally we would pass a ravine or gorge in the hills, by which one side of the plain was bounded, and up this some of the men would steer, leaping over blocks of lava, and breaking a path through the dense bushes; but the poor searcher soon returned, disheartened and woebegone, and those who had waited anxiously to hear his cheering call, announcing success, passed onward without a word. One of our men, a mulatto, after failing in a forage of this sort, cast himself resolutely from his horse to the ground, and declared that he would lie there till he died; "there was no water in the cursed country and he might as well die here as go farther." Some of us tried to infuse

---

a little courage into him, but it proved of no avail, and each was too much occupied with his own particular grief to use his tongue much in persuasion; so we left him to his fate.

Soon after nightfall, some signs of water were seen in a small valley to our left, and, upon ascending it, the foremost of the party found a delightful little cold spring; but they soon exhausted it, and then commenced, with axes and knives, to dig it out and enlarge it. By the time that Mr. N., and myself arrived, they had excavated a large space which was filled to overflowing with muddy water. We did not wait for it to settle, however, but throwing ourselves flat upon the ground, drank until we were ready to burst. The tales which I had read of suffering travellers in the Arabian deserts, then recurred with some force to my recollection, and I thought I could, though in a very small measure, appreciate their sufferings by deprivation, and their unmingled delight and satisfaction in the opportunity of assuaging them.

Poor Jim, the mulatto man, was found by one of the people, who went back in search of him, lying where he had first fallen, and either in a real or pretended swoon, still obstinate about dying, and scarcely heeding the assurances of the other that water was within a mile of him. He was, however, at length dragged and carried into camp, and soused head foremost into the mud puddle, where he guzzled and guzzled until his eyes seemed ready to burst from his head, and he was lifted out and laid dripping and flaccid upon the ground.

The next morning we made an early start towards a range of willows which we could distinctly see, at the distance of fifteen or twenty miles, and which we knew indicated Goddin's creek, so called from a Canadian of that name who was killed in this vicinity by the Blackfeet. Goddin's son, a half-breed, is now with us as a trapper; he is a fine sturdy fellow, and of such strength of limb and wind, that he is said to be able to run down a buffalo on foot, and kill him with arrows. Goddin's creek was at length gained, and after travelling a few miles along its bank we encamped in some excellent pasture. Our poor horses seemed inclined to make up for lost time here, as yesterday their only food was the straggling blades of a little dry and parched grass growing among the wormwood on the hills.

We have been considerably disappointed in not seeing any buffalo to-day, and their absence here has occasioned some fear that we may not meet with them on our route. Should this be the case, we shall have to depend upon such small game, hares, grouse, &c., as may happen to lie in our path. In a short time, however, even this resource will fail; and if we do not happen to see Indians on the upper waters of the Columbia, from whom we can purchase dried salmon, we shall be under the necessity of killing our horses for food.

We perhaps derive one advantage, however, from the absence of game here, that of there being less probability of lurking Blackfeet in the vicinity; but this circumstance, convenient as it is, does not compensate for empty stomachs, and I believe the men would rather fight for the privilege of obtaining food, than live without it.

The next morning we left Goddin's creek, and travelled for ten miles over a plain, covered as usual with wormwood bushes and lava. Early in the day, the welcome cry of "a buffalo! a buffalo!" was heard from the head of the company, and was echoed joyfully along the whole line. At the moment, a fine large bull was seen to bound from the bushes in our front, and tear off with all his speed over the plain. Several hunters gave him chase immediately, and in a few minutes we heard the guns that proclaimed his death. The killing of this animal is a most fortunate circumstance for us: his meat will probably sustain us for three or four days, and by that time we are sanguine of

---

procuring other provision. The appearance of this buffalo is not considered indicative of the vicinity of others: he is probably a straggler from a travelling band, and has been unable to proceed with it, in consequence of sickness or wounds.

On leaving the plain this morning, we struck into a defile between some of the highest mountains we have yet seen. In a short time we commenced ascending, and continued passing over them, until late in the afternoon, when we reached a plain about a mile in width, covered with excellent grass, and a delightful cool stream flowing through the middle of it. Here we encamped, having travelled twenty-seven miles.

Our journey, to-day, has been particularly laborious. We were engaged for several hours, constantly in ascending and descending enormous rocky hills, with scarcely the sign of a valley between them; and some of them so steep, that our horses were frequently in great danger of falling, by making a mis-step on the loose, rolling stones. I thought the Black Hills, on the Platte, rugged and difficult of passage, but they sink into insignificance when compared with these.

We observed, on these mountains, large masses of greenstone, and beautiful pebbles of chalcedony and fine agate; the summits of the highest are covered with snow. In the mountain passes, we found an abundance of large, yellow currants, rather acid, but exceedingly palatable to men who have been long living on animal food exclusively. We all ate heartily of them; indeed, some of our people became so much attached to the bushes, that we had considerable difficulty to induce them to travel again.

10th. We commenced our march at seven this morning, proceeding up a narrow valley, bordering our encampment in a north-easterly direction. The ravine soon widened, until it became a broad, level plain, covered by the eternal "sage" bushes, but was much less stony than usual. About mid-day, we left the plain, and shaped our course over a spur of one of the large mountains; then taking a ravine, in about an hour we came to the level land, and struck Goddin's creek again, late in the afternoon.

Our provision was exhausted at breakfast, this morning, (most of our bull meat having been given to a band of ten trappers, who left us yesterday,) we had seen no game on our route, and we were therefore preparing ourselves to retire supperless to our pallets, when Richardson and Sansbury were descried approaching the camp and, to our great comfort, we observed that they had meat on their saddles. When they arrived, however, we were somewhat disappointed to find that they had only killed a calf, but they had brought the entire little animal with them, the time for picking and choosing of choice pieces having passed with us; and after making a hearty meal, we wrapped ourselves in our blankets and slept soundly. Although but a scant breakfast was left for us in the morning, and we knew not if any dinner would fall in our way, yet "none of these things moved us;" we lived altogether upon the present, and heeded not the future. We had always been provided for; often, when we had despaired of procuring sustenance, and when the pangs of hunger had soured our temper, and made us quarrelsome, when we thought there was no prospect before us but to sacrifice our valuable horses, or die of starvation, have the means been provided for our relief. A buffalo, an elk, or an antelope, has appeared like the goat provided for the faithful Abraham, to save a more valuable life, and I hope that some of us have been willing, reverently to acknowledge from whom these benefits and blessings have been received.

On the day following, Richardson killed two buffalo, and brought his horse heavily laden with meat to the camp. Our good hunter walked himself, that the animal might be able to bear the

greater burthen. After depositing the meat in the camp, he took a fresh horse, and accompanied by three men, returned to the spot where the game had been killed, (about four miles distant,) and in the evening, brought in every pound of it, leaving only the heavier bones. The wolves will be disappointed this evening; they are accustomed to dainty picking when they glean after the hunters, but we have now abandoned the "wasty ways" which so disgraced us when game was abundant; the despised leg bone, which was wont to be thrown aside with such contempt, is now polished of every tendon of its covering, and the savory hump is used as a kind of dessert after a meal of coarser meat.

Speaking of wolves, I have often been surprised at the perseverance and tenacity with which these animals will sometimes follow the hunter for a whole day, to feed upon the carcass he may leave behind him. When an animal is killed, they seem to mark the operation, and stand still at a most respectful distance, with drooping tail and ears, as though perfectly indifferent to the matter in progress. Thus will they stand until the game is butchered, the meat placed upon the saddle, and the hunter is mounted and on his way; then, if he glances behind him, he will see the wily forager stealthily crawling and prowling along towards the smoking remains, and pouncing upon it, and tearing it with tooth and nail, immediately as he gets out of reach.

During the day, the wolves are shy, and rarely permit an approach to within gun-shot; but at night, (where game is abundant,) they are so fearless as to come quite within the purlieu of the camp, and there sit, a dozen together, and howl hideously for hours. This kind of serenading, it may be supposed, is not the most agreeable; and many a time when on guard, have I observed the unquiet tossing of the bundles of blankets near me, and heard issue from them, the low, husky voice of some disturbed sleeper, denouncing heavy anathemas on the unseasonable music.

12th. We shaped our course, this morning, towards what appeared to us a gap in a high and rugged mountain, about twenty miles ahead. After proceeding eight or ten miles, the character of the country underwent a remarkable and sudden change. Instead of the luxuriant sage bushes, by which the whole plains have hitherto been covered, and the compact and dense growth of willows which has uniformly fringed every stream and rivulet, the ground was completely denuded; not a single shrub was to be seen, nor the smallest appearance of vegetation, except in small patches near the water. The mountains, also, which had generally been rocky, and covered with low, tangled bushes, here abound in beautiful and shapely pine trees. Some of the higher peaks are, however, completely bare, and capped with enormous masses of snow.

After we had travelled about twelve miles, we entered a defile between the mountains, about five hundred yards wide, covered, like the surrounding country, with pines; and, as we proceeded, the timber grew so closely, added to a thick undergrowth of bushes, that it appeared almost impossible to proceed with our horses. The farther we advanced, the more our difficulties seemed to increase; obstacles of various kinds impeded our progress; fallen trees, their branches tangled and matted together, large rocks and deep ravines, holes in the ground, into which our animals would be precipitated without the possibility of avoiding them, and an hundred other difficulties which beggar description.

We travelled for six miles through such a region as I have attempted to describe, and at 2 o'clock encamped in a clear spot of ground, where we found excellent grass, and a cold, rapid stream. Soon after we stopped, Captain W. and Richardson left us, to look for a pass through the mountains, or for a spot where it would be possible to cross them. Strange as it may appear, yet in this

desolate and almost impassable region we have observed, to-day, the tracks of a buffalo which must have passed here last night, or this morning; at least so our hunters say, and they are rarely deceived in such matters.

Captain W. and Richardson returned early next morning, with the mortifying intelligence that no practicable pass through the mountain could be found. They ascended to the very summit of one of the highest peaks, above the snow and the reach of vegetation, and the only prospect which they had beyond, was a confused mass of huge angular rocks, over which even a wild goat could scarcely have made his way. Although they utterly failed in the object of their exploration, yet they were so fortunate as to kill a buffalo, (the buffalo,) the meat of which they brought on their horses. Wyeth told us of a narrow escape he had while travelling on foot near the summit of one of the peaks. He was walking on a ridge which sloped from the top at an angle of about forty degrees, and terminated, at its lower part, in a perpendicular precipice of a thousand or twelve hundred feet. He was moving along in the snow cautiously, near the lower edge, in order to attain a more level spot beyond, when his feet slipped and he fell. Before he could attempt to fix himself firmly, he slid down the declivity till within a few feet of the frightful precipice. At the instant of his fall, he had the presence of mind to plant the rifle which he held in one hand, and his knife which he drew from the scabbard with the other, into the snow, and as he almost tottered on the verge, he succeeded in checking himself, and holding his body perfectly still. He then gradually moved, first the rifle and then the knife, backward up the slanting hill behind him, and fixing them firmly, drew up his body parallel to them. In this way he moved slowly and surely until he had gained his former station, when, without further difficulty, he succeeded in reaching the more level land.

After a good breakfast, we packed our horses, and struck back on our trail of yesterday, in order to try another valley which we observed bearing parallel with this, at about three miles distant, and which we conclude must of course furnish a path through the mountain. Although our difficulties in returning by the same wretched route were very considerable, yet they were somewhat diminished by the road having been partially broken, and we were enabled also to avoid many of the sloughs and pitfalls which had before so much incommoded us. We have named this rugged valley, "Thornburg's pass," after one of our men of this name, (a tailor,) whom we have to thank for leading us into all these troubles. Thornburg crossed this mountain two years ago, and might therefore be expected to know something of the route, and as he was the only man in the company who had been here, Captain W. acted by his advice, in opposition to his own judgment, which had suggested the other valley as affording a more probable chance of success. As we are probably the only white men who have ever penetrated into this most vile and abominable region, we conclude that the name we have given it must stand, from priority.

In the bushes, along the stream in this valley, the blacktailed deer (*Cervus macrourus*) is abundant. The beautiful creatures frequently bounded from their cover within a few yards of us, and trotted on before us like domestic animals; "they are so unacquainted with man" and his cruel arts, that they seem not to fear him.

We at length arrived on the open plain again, and in our route towards the other valley, we came to a large, recent Indian encampment, probably of Bannecks, who are travelling down to the fisheries on Snake river. [We afterwards learned, that only three days before our arrival, a hard contested, and most sanguinary battle, had been fought on this spot, between the Bannecks and Blackfeet, in which the former gained a signal and most complete victory, killing upwards of forty

of their adversaries, and taking about three dozen scalps. The Blackfeet, although the much larger party, were on foot, but the Bannecks, being all well mounted, had a very decided advantage; and the contest occurred on an open plain, where there was no chance of cover, the Blackfeet were run down with horses, and, without being able to load their guns, were trampled to death, or killed with salmon spears and axes. This was not the first time that we narrowly escaped a contest with this savage and most dreaded tribe. If we had passed there but a few days earlier, there is every probability to suppose that we should have been attacked, as our party at that time consisted of but twenty-six men.] We here took their trail which led up the valley to which we had been steering. The entrance was very similar in appearance to that of Thornburg's pass, and it is therefore not very surprising that our guide should have been deceived. We travelled rapidly along the level land at the base of the mountain, for about three miles; we then began to ascend, and our progress was necessarily slow and tedious. The commencement of the Alpine path was, however, far better than we had expected, and we entertained the hope that the passage could be made without difficulty or much toil, but the farther we progressed, the more laborious the travelling became. Sometimes we mounted steep banks of intermingled flinty rock, and friable slate, where our horses could scarcely obtain a footing, frequently sliding down several feet on the looser broken stones: again we passed along the extreme verge of tremendous precipices at a giddy height, whereat almost every step the stones and earth would roll from under our horses' feet, and we could hear them strike with a dull, leaden sound on the craggy rocks below. The whole journey, to-day, from the time we arrived at the heights, until we had crossed the mountain, has been a most fearful one. For myself, I might have diminished the danger very considerably, by adopting the plan pursued by the rest of the company, that of walking, and leading my horse over the most dangerous places, but I have been suffering for several days with a lame foot, and am wholly incapable of such exertion. I soon discovered that an attempt to guide my horse over the most rugged and steepest ranges was worse than useless, so I dropped the rein upon the animal's neck, and allowed him to take his own course, closing my eyes and keeping as quiet as possible in the saddle. But I could not forbear starting occasionally, when the feet of my horse would slip on a stone, and one side of him would slide rapidly towards the edge of the precipice, but I always recovered myself by a desperate effort, and it was fortunate for me that I did so.

Late in the afternoon, we completed the passage across the mountain, and with thankful hearts, again trod the level land. We entered here a fine rich valley or plain, of about half a mile in width, between two ranges of the mountain. It was profusely covered with willow, and through the middle of it, ran a rapid and turbulent mountain torrent, called Mallade river. It contains a great abundance of beaver, their recent dams being seen in great numbers, and in the night, when all was quiet, we could hear the playful animals at their gambols, diving from the shore into the water, and striking the surface with their broad tails. The sound, altogether, was not unlike that of children at play, and the animated description of a somewhat similar scene, in the "Mohicans," recurred to my recollection, where the single-minded Gamut is contemplating with feelings of strong reprobation, the wayward freaks of what he supposes to be a bevy of young savages.

14th. - We travelled down the Mallade river, and followed the Indian trail through the valley. The path frequently passed along near the base of the mountain, and then wound its way a considerable distance up it, to avoid rocky impediments and thick tangled bushes below, so that we had some climbing to do; but the difficulties and perils of the route of yesterday are still so fresh in our

memory, that all minor things are disregarded, at least by us. Our poor horses, however, no doubt feel differently, as they are very tired and foot sore.

The next day we came to a close and almost impenetrable thicket of tangled willows, through which we had great difficulty in urging our horses. The breadth of the thicket was about one hundred yards, and a full hour was consumed in passing through it. We then entered immediately a rich and beautiful valley, covered profusely with a splendid blue Lupin. The mountains on either side are of much less height than those we have passed, and entirely bare, the pine trees which generally cover and ornament them, having disappeared. During the morning, we ascended and descended several high and stony hills, and early in the afternoon, emerged upon a large, level prairie, and struck a branch of Mallade river, where we encamped.

While we were unloading, we observed a number of Indians ahead, and not being aware of their character, stood with our horses saddled, while Captain W. and Richardson rode out to reconnoitre. In about half an hour they returned, and informed us that they were Snakes who were returning from the fisheries, and travelling towards the buffalo on the "big river," (Shoshone.) We therefore unsaddled our poor jaded horses and turned them out to feed upon the luxuriant pasture around the camp, while we, almost equally jaded, threw ourselves down in our blankets to seek a little repose and quiet after the toils and fatigues of a long day's march.

Soon after we encamped, the Snake chief and two of his young men visited us. We formed a circle around our lodge and smoked the pipe of peace with them, after which we made them each a present of a yard of scarlet cloth for leggings, some balls and powder, a knife, and a looking glass. Captain W. then asked them a number of questions, through an interpreter, relative to the route, the fishery, &c. &c., and finally bought of them a small quantity of dried salmon, and a little fermented kamas or quamash root. The Indians remained with us until dark, and then left us quietly for their own camp. There are two lodges of them, in all about twenty persons, but none of them presumed to come near us, with the exception of the three men, two squaws, and a few children. The chief is a man about fifty years of age, tall, and dignified looking, with large, strong aqualine features. His manners were cordial and agreeable, perhaps remarkably so, and he exhibited very little of that stoical indifference to surrounding objects which is so characteristic of an Indian. His dress consisted of plain leggings of deer skin, fringed at the sides, unembroidered moccasins, and a marro or waist-covering of antelope skin dressed without removing the hair. The upper part of his person was simply covered with a small blanket, and his ears were profusely ornamented with brass rings and beads. The men and squaws who accompanied him, were entirely naked, except that the latter had marro's of deer skin covering the loins.

The next morning we steered west across the wide prairie, crossing within every mile or two, a branch of the tortuous Mallade, near each of which good pasture was seen; but on the main prairie scarcely a blade of grass could be found, it having lately been fired by the Indians to improve the crops of next year. We have seen to-day some lava and basalt again on the sides of the hills, and on the mounds in the plain, but the level land was entirely free from it.

At noon on the 17th, we passed a deserted Indian camp, probably of the same people whose trail we have been following. There were many evident signs of the Indians having but recently left it, among which was that of several white wolves lurking around in the hope of finding remnants of meat, but, as a Scotchman would say, "I doubt they were mistaken," for meat is scarce here, and the frugal Indians rarely leave enough behind them to excite even the famished stomach of the

lank and hungry wolf. The encampment here has been but a temporary one, occupying a little valley densely overgrown with willows, the tops of which have been bent over, and tied so as to form a sort of lodge; over these, they have probably stretched deer skins or blankets, to exclude the rays of the sun. Of these lodges there are about forty in the valley, so that the party must have been a large one.

In the afternoon we arrived at "Kamas prairie," so called from a vast abundance of this esculent root which it produces, (the *Kamassa esculenta*, of Nuttall.) The plain is a beautiful level one of about a mile over, hemmed in by low, rocky hills, and in spring, the pretty blue flowers of the Kamas are said to give it a peculiar, and very pleasing appearance. At this season, the flowers do not appear, the vegetable being indicated only by little dry stems which protrude all over the ground among the grass.

We encamped here, near a small branch of Mallade river; and soon after, all hands took their kettles and scattered over the prairie to dig a mess of kamas. We were, of course, eminently successful, and were furnished thereby with an excellent and wholesome meal. When boiled, this little root is palatable, and somewhat resembles the taste of the common potato; the Indian mode of preparing it, is, however, the best that of fermenting it in pits under ground, into which hot stones have been placed. It is suffered to remain in these pits for several days; and when removed, is of a dark brown color, about the consistence of softened glue, and sweet, like molasses. It is then often made into large cakes, by being mashed, and pressed together, and slightly baked in the sun. There are several other kinds of bulbous and tuberous roots, growing in these plains, which are eaten by the Indians, after undergoing a certain process of fermentation or baking. Among these, that which is most esteemed, is the white or biscuit root, the *Racine blanc* of the Canadians, (*Eulophus ambiguus*, of Nuttall.) This is dried, pulverized with stones, and after being moistened with water, is made into cakes and baked in the sun. The taste is not unlike that of a stale biscuit, and to a hungry man, or one who has long subsisted without vegetables of any kind, is rather palatable. On the morning of the 18th, we commenced ascending the hills again, and had a laborious and toilsome day's march. One of our poor wearied horses gave up, and stopped; kicking, and cuffing, and beating had no effect to make him move; the poor animal laid himself down with his load, and after this was detached and shifted to the back of another, we left him where he fell, to recruit, and fall into the hands of the Indians, or die among the and hills. This is the first horse we have lost in this manner; but we have great fears that many others will soon fail, as their riders and drivers are compelled to use the whip constantly, to make them walk at the slowest gait. We comfort ourselves, however, by supposing that we have now nearly passed the most rugged country on the route, and hope, before many days, to reach the valley of the Shoshone, where the country will be level, and the pasture good. We are anxious, also, to fall in with the Snake Indians, in order to get a supply of salmon, as we have been living for several days on a short allowance of wretched, dry meat, and this poor pittance is now almost exhausted.

19th.-This morning was cold, the thermometer stood at 28 deg, and a thick skim of ice was in the camp kettles at sunrise. Another hard day's travel over the hills, during which we lost two of our largest and stoutest horses. Towards evening, we descended to a fine large plain, and struck Boisee, or Big Wood river, on the borders of which we encamped. This is a beautiful stream, about one hundred yards in width, clear as crystal, and, in some parts, probably twenty feet deep. It is literally crowded with salmon, which are springing from the water almost constantly. Our mouths

---

are watering most abundantly for some of them, but we are not provided with suitable implements for taking any, and must therefore depend for a supply on the Indians, whom we hope soon to meet.

We found, in the mountain passes, to-day, a considerable quantity of a small fruit called the choke-cherry, a species of prunus, growing on low bushes. When ripe, they are tolerable eating, somewhat astringent, however, producing upon the mouth the same effect, though in a less degree, as the unripe persimmon. They are now generally green, or we should feast luxuriantly upon them, and render more tolerable our miserable provision. We have seen, also, large patches of service bushes, but no fruit. It seems to have failed this year, although ordinarily so abundant that it constitutes a large portion of the vegetable food of both Indians and white trappers who visit these regions.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER VIII

A substitute for game, and a luxurious breakfast - Expectations of a repast, and a disappointment - Visit of a Snake chief - his abhorrence of horse meat - A band of Snake Indians - their chief - Trade with Indians for salmon - Mr. Ashworth's adventure - An Indian horse-thief - Visit to the Snake camp - its filthiness - A Banneck camp - Supercilious conduct of the Indians - Arrival at Snake river - Equipment of a trapping party - Indian mode of catching salmon - Loss of a favorite horse - Powder river - Cut rocks - Recovery of the lost trail - Grand Ronde - Captain Bonneville - his fondness for a roving life - Kayouse and Nez Perce Indians - their appearance - An Indian Beauty - Blue mountains - A feline visit.

August 20th.- At about daylight this morning, having charge of the last guard of the night, I observed a beautiful, sleek little colt, of about four months old, trot into the camp, whinnying with great apparent pleasure, and dancing and curvetting gaily amongst our sober and sedate band. I had no doubt that he had strayed from Indians, who were probably in the neighborhood; but as here, every animal that comes near us is fair game, and as we were hungry, not having eaten any thing of consequence since yesterday morning, I thought the little stranger would make a good breakfast for us. Concluding, however, that it would be best to act advisedly in the matter, I put my head into Captain W's tent, and telling him the news, made the proposition which had occurred to me. The captain's reply was encouraging enough, - "Down with him, if you please, Mr. T., it is the Lord's doing; let us have him for breakfast." In five minutes afterwards, a bullet sealed the fate of the unfortunate visitor, and my men were set to work making fires, and rummaging out the long-neglected stew-pans, while I engaged myself in flaying the little animal, and cutting up his body in readiness for the pots.

When the camp was aroused, about an hour after, the savory steam of the cookery was rising and saluting the nostrils of our hungry people with its fragrance, who, rubbing their hands with delight, sat themselves down upon the ground, waiting with what patience they might, for the unexpected repast which was preparing for them.

It was to me almost equal to a good breakfast, to witness the pleasure and satisfaction which I had been the means of diffusing through the camp.

The repast was ready at length, and we did full justice to it; every man ate until he was filled, and all pronounced it one of the most delicious meals they had ever assisted in demolishing. When our breakfast was concluded, but little of the colt remained; that little was, however, carefully

packed up, and deposited on one of the horses, to furnish, at least, a portion of another meal. The route, this morning, lay along Boisee. For an hour, the travelling was toilsome and difficult, the Indian trail, leading along the high bank of the river, steep and rocky, making our progress very slow and laborious. We then came to a wide plain, interrupted only by occasional high banks of earth, some of them of considerable extent, across which ran the path. Towards mid-day, we lost sight of these banks, the whole country appearing level, with the exception of some distant hills in the south-west, which we suppose indicate the vicinity of some part of Snake river. We have all been disappointed in the distance to this river, and the length of time required to reach it. Not a man in our camp has ever travelled this route before, and all we have known about it has been the general course.

In the afternoon, we observed a number of Indians on the opposite side of the river, engaged in fishing for salmon. Captain W. and two men immediately crossed over to them, carrying with them a few small articles to exchange for fish. We congratulated ourselves upon our good fortune in seeing these Indians, and were anticipating a plentiful meal, when Captain W. and his companions returned, bringing only three small salmon. The Indians had been unsuccessful in fishing, not having caught enough for themselves, and even the offer of exorbitant sums was not sufficient to induce them to part with more.

In the afternoon, a grouse and a beaver were killed, which, added to the remains of the colt, and our three little salmon, made us a tolerable supper. While we were eating, we were visited by a Snake chief, a large and powerful man, of a peculiarly dignified aspect and manner. He was naked, with the exception of a small blanket which covered his shoulders, and descended to the middle of the back, being fastened around the neck with a silver skewer. As it was pudding time with us, our visitor was of course invited to sit and eat; and he, nothing loath, deposited himself at once upon the ground, and made a remarkably vigorous assault upon the mixed contents of the dish. He had not eaten long, however, before we perceived a sudden and inexplicable change in his countenance, which was instantly followed by a violent ejection of a huge mouthful of our luxurious fare. The man rose slowly, and with great dignity, to his feet, and pronouncing the single word "shehum," (horse,) in a tone of mingled anger and disgust, stalked rapidly out of the camp, not even wishing us a good evening. It struck me as a singular instance of accuracy and discrimination in the organs of taste. We had been eating of the multifarious compound without being able to recognize, by the taste, a single ingredient which it contained; a stranger came amongst us, who did not know, when he commenced eating, that the dish was formed of more than one item and yet in less than five minutes he discovered one of the very least of its component parts.

It would seem from this circumstance that the Indians, or it may be the particular tribe to which this man belongs, are opposed to the eating of horse flesh, and yet, the natural supposition would be, that in the gameless country inhabited by them they would often be reduced to such shifts, and thus readily conquer any natural reluctance which they might feel to partake of such food. I did not think until after he left us, that if the chief knew how the horse meat he so much detested was procured, and where, he might probably have expressed even more indignation, for it is not at all unlikely that the colt had strayed from his own band.

21st. - The timber along the river banks is plentiful, and often attains a large size. It is chiefly of the species called balsam poplar, (*Populus balsamifera*.)

Towards noon to-day, we observed ahead several groups of Indians, perhaps twenty in each, and

---

on the appearance of our cavalcade, they manifested their joy at seeing us, by the most extravagant and grotesque gestures, dancing and capering most ludicrously. Every individual of them was perfectly naked, with the exception of a small thong around the waist, to which was attached a square piece of flannel, skin, or canvass, depending half way to the knees. Their stature was rather below the middle height, but they were strongly built and very muscular. Each man carried his salmon spear, and these, with the knives stuck in their girdles, appeared to be their only weapons, not one of them having a gun. As we neared them, the first group ran towards us, crying "Shoshone, Shoshone," and caused some delay by their eagerness to grasp our hands and examine our garments. After one group had become satisfied with fingering us, we rode on and suffered the same process by the next, and so on until we had passed the whole, every Indian crying with a loud voice, "Tabiboo sant, tabiboo sant!" (white man is good, white man is good.)

In a short time the chief joined us, and our party stopped for an hour, and had a "talk" with him. He told us, in answer to our questions, that his people had fish, and would give them for our goods if we would sleep one night near their camp, and smoke with them. No trade, of consequence, can ever be effected with Indians, unless the pipe be first smoked, and the matter calmly and seriously deliberated upon. An Indian chief would think his dignity seriously compromised if he were expected to do any thing in a hurry, much less so serious a matter as a salmon or beaver trade; and if we had refused his offered terms, he would probably have allowed us to pass on, and denied himself the darling rings, bells, and paint, rather than infringe a custom so long religiously practiced by his people. We were therefore inclined to humor our Snake friend, and accordingly came to a halt, on the bank of the river.

The chief and several of his favored young braves sat with us on the bank, and we smoked with them, the other Indians forming a large circle around.

The chief is a man rather above the ordinary height, with a fine, noble countenance, and remarkably large, prominent eyes. His person, instead of being naked, as is usual, is clothed in a robe made of the skin of the mountain sheep; a broad band made of large blue beads, is fastened to the top of his head, and hangs over on his cheeks, and around his neck is suspended the foot of a huge grizzly bear. The possession of this uncouth ornament is considered among them, a great honor, since none but those whose prowess has enabled them to kill the animal, are allowed to wear it, and with their weak and inefficient weapons, the destruction of so fierce and terrible a brute, is a feat that may well entitle them to some distinction.

We remained two hours at the spot where we halted, and then passed on about four miles, accompanied by the chief and his people, to their camp, where we pitched our tents for the night. In a short time the Indians came to us in great numbers, with bundles of dried salmon in their arms, and a few recent ones. We commenced our trading immediately, giving them in exchange, fish-hooks, beads, knives, paint, &c., and before evening, had procured sufficient provision for the consumption of our party until we arrive at the falls of Snake river, where we are told we shall meet the Bannecks, from whom we can doubtless trade a supply, which will serve us until we reach Walla-walla.

While we were pursuing our trade, Richardson and Mr. Ashworth rode into the camp, and I observed by the countenance of the latter, that something unusual had occurred. I felt very certain that no ordinary matter would be capable of ruffling this calm, intrepid, and almost fool-hardy young man; so it was with no little interest that I drew near, to listen to the tale which he told

Captain W. with a face flushed with unusual anger, while his whole person seemed to swell with pride and disdain.

He said that while riding about five miles behind the party, (not being able to keep up with it on account of his having a worn out horse,) he was attacked by about fifty of the Indians whom we passed earlier in the day, dragged forcibly from his horse and thrown upon the ground. Here, some held their knives to his throat to prevent his rising, and others robbed him of his saddle bags, and all that they contained. While he was yet in this unpleasant situation, Richardson came suddenly upon them, and the cowardly Indians released their captive instantly, throwing the saddle bags and every thing else upon the ground and flying like frightened antelopes over the plain. The only real damage that Mr. Ashworth sustained, was the total loss of his saddle bags, which were cut to pieces by the knives of the Indians, in order to abstract the contents. These, however, we think he deserves to lose, inasmuch, as with all our persuasion, we have never been able to induce him to carry a gun since we left the country infested by the Blackfeet; and to-day, the very show of such a weapon would undoubtedly have prevented the attack of which he complains. Richardson gives an amusing account of the deportment of our young English friend while he was lying under the knives of his captors. The heavy whip of buffalo hide, which was his only weapon, was applied with great energy to the naked backs and shoulders of the Indians, who winced and stamped under the infliction, but still feared to use their knives, except to prevent his rising. Richardson, says, that until he approached closely, the blows were descending in rapid succession, and our hunter was in some danger of losing his characteristic dignity in his efforts to repress a loud and hearty laugh at the extreme ludicrousness of the whole scene.

Captain W., when the circumstances of the assault were stated to him, gave an immediate order for the suspension of business, and calling the chief to him, told him seriously, that if an attempt were again made to interrupt any of his party on their march, the offenders should be tied to a tree and whipped severely. He enforced his language by gestures so expressive that none could misunderstand him, and he was answered by a low groan from the Indians present, and a submissive bowing of their heads. The chief appeared very much troubled, and harangued his people for considerable time on the subject, repeating what the captain had said, with some additional remarks of his own, implying that even a worse fate than whipping would be the lot of future delinquents.

22nd.-Last night during the second guard, while on my walk around the camp, I observed one of my men squatted on the ground, intently surveying some object which appeared to be moving among the horses. At his request, I stooped also, and could distinctly perceive something near us which was certainly not a horse, and yet was as certainly a living object. I supposed it to be either a bear or a wolf, and at the earnest solicitation of the man, I gave the word "fire." The trigger was instantly pulled, the sparks flew from the flint, but the rifle was not exploded. At the sound, an Indian sprang from the grass where he had been crouching, and darted away towards the Snake camp. His object certainly was to appropriate one of our horses, and very fortunate for him was it that the gun missed fire, for the man was an unerring marksman. This little warning will probably check other similar attempts by these people.

Early in the morning I strolled into the Snake camp. It consists of about thirty lodges or wigwams, formed generally of branches of trees tied together in a conic summit, and covered with buffalo, deer, or elk skins. Men and little children were lolling about the ground all around the wigwams,

together with a heterogeneous assemblance of dogs, cats, some tamed prairie wolves, and other "varmints." The dogs growled and snapped when I approached, the wolves cowered and looked cross, and the cats ran away and hid themselves in dark corners. They had not been accustomed to the face of a white man, and all the quadrupeds seemed to regard me as some monstrous production, more to be feared than loved or courted. This dislike, however, did not appear to extend to the bipeds, for many of every age and sex gathered around me, and seemed to be examining me critically in all directions. The men looked complacently at me, the women, the dear creatures, smiled upon me, and the little naked, pot-bellied children crawled around my feet, examining the fashion of my hard shoes, and playing with the long fringes of my leathern inexpressibles. But I scarcely know how to commence a description of the tout en semble of the camp, or to frame a sentence which will give an adequate idea of the extreme filth, and most horrific nastiness of the whole vicinity. I shall therefore but transiently glance at it, omitting many of the most disgusting and abominable features.

Immediately as I entered the village, my olfactories were assailed by the most vile and mephitic odors, which I found to proceed chiefly from great piles of salmon entrails and garbage which were lying festering and rotting in the sun, around the very doors of the habitations. Fish, recent and half dried, were scattered all over the ground, under the feet of the dogs, wolves and Indian children; and others which had been split, were hanging on rude platforms erected within the precincts of the camp. Some of the women were making their breakfast of the great red salmon eggs as large as peas, and using a wooden spoon to convey them to their mouths. Occasionally, also, by way of varying the repast, they would take a huge pinch of a drying fish which was lying on the ground near them. Many of the children were similarly employed, and the little imps would also have hard contests with the dogs for a favorite morsel, the former roaring and blubbering, the latter yelping and snarling, and both rolling over and over together upon the savory soil. The whole economy of the lodges, and the inside and outside appearance, was of a piece with every thing else about them - filthy beyond description - the very skins which covered the wigwams were black and stiff with rancid salmon fat, and the dresses (if dresses they may be called) of the women, were of the same color and consistence, from the same cause. These dresses are little square pieces of deer skin, fastened with a thong around the loins, and reaching about half way to the knees; the rest of the person is entirely naked. Some of the women had little children clinging like bullfrogs to their backs, without being fastened, and in that situation extracting their lactiferous sustenance from the breast, which was thrown over the shoulders.

It is almost needless to say, that I did not remain long in the Snake camp; for although I had been a considerable time estranged from the abodes of luxury, and had become somewhat accustomed to, at least, a partial assimilation to a state of nature, yet I was not prepared for what I saw here. I never had fancied any thing so utterly abominable, and was glad to escape to a purer and more wholesome atmosphere.

When I returned to our camp, the trading was going on as briskly as yesterday. A large number of Indians were assembled around, all of whom had bundles of fish, which they were anxious to dispose of. The price of a dried salmon is a straight awl, and a small fish hook, value about one cent; ten fish are given for a common butcher knife that costs eight cents. Some, however, will prefer beads, paint, &c., and of these articles, about an equal amount in value is given. A beaver skin can be had for a variety of little matters, which cost about twelve and a half cents; value, in Boston,

from eight to ten dollars!

Early in the afternoon, we repacked our bales of goods and rode out of the encampment, the Indians yelling an adieu to us as we passed them. We observed that one had wrapped a buffalo robe around him, taken a bow and arrows in his hand, and joined us as we went off. Although we travelled rapidly during the afternoon, the man kept with us without apparent over-exertion or fatigue, trotting along constantly for miles together. He is probably on a visit to a village of his people who are encamped on the "Big river."

23d.-Towards noon, to-day, we fell in with a village, consisting of thirty willow lodges of Ban-necks. The Indians flocked out to us by hundreds, leaving their fishing, and every other employment, to visit the strangers. The chief soon made himself known to us, and gave us a pressing invitation to stop a short time with them, for the purpose of trade. Although we had a good supply of fish on hand, and did not expect soon to suffer from want, yet we knew not but we might be disappointed in procuring provision lower in the country, and concluded, therefore, to halt for half an hour, and make a small increase to our stock. We were in some haste, and anxious to travel on as quickly as possible, to Snake river. Captain W., therefore, urged the chief to have the fish brought immediately, as he intended soon to leave them. The only reply he could obtain to this request, was "te sant," (it is good,) accompanied by signs, that he wished to smoke. A pipe was provided, and he, with about a dozen of his young men, formed a circle near, and continued smoking, with great tranquillity, for half an hour.

Our patience became almost exhausted, and they were told that if their fish were not soon produced, we should leave them empty as we came; to this, the only answer of the chief was a sign to us to remain still, while he deliberated yet farther upon the subject.

We sat a short time longer in silent expectation, and were then preparing to mount our horses and be off, when several squaws were despatched to one of the lodges. They returned in a few minutes, bringing about a dozen dried fish. These were laid in small piles on the ground, and when the usual price was offered for them, they refused it scornfully, making the most exorbitant demands. As our articles of trade were running low, and we were not in immediate want, we purchased only a sufficiency for one day, and prepared for our departure, leaving the ground strewn with the neglected salmon. The Indians were evidently very much irritated, as we could perceive by their angry countenances, and loud words of menace. Some loosed the bows from their shoulders, and shook them at us with violent gestures of rage, and a boy, of seventeen or eighteen years of age, who stood near me, struck my horse on the head with a stick, which he held in his hand. This provoked me not a little; and spurring the animal a few steps forward, I brought my heavy whip several times over his naked shoulders, and sent him screeching into the midst of his people. Several bows were drawn at me for this act, and glad would the savages have been to have had me for a short time at their mercy, but as it was, they feared to let slip their arrows, and soon dropped their points, contenting themselves with vapping away in all the impotence of childish rage. As we rode off, they greeted us, not with the usual gay yell, but with a scornful, taunting laugh, that sounded like the rejoicings of an infernal jubilee. Had these people been provided with efficient arms, and the requisite amount of courage to use them, they might have given us some inconvenience.

Towards evening, we arrived on Snake river, crossed it at a ford, and encamped near a number of lodges along the shore. Shortly afterwards, Captain W., with three men, visited the Indians, carry-

ing with them some small articles, to trade for fish. In about half an hour they returned, bringing only about ten salmon. They observed, among the Indians, the same disinclination to traffic that the others had manifested; or rather, like the first, they placed a higher value than usual upon the commodity, and wanted, in exchange, articles which we were not willing to spare them. They treated Captain W. with the same insolence and contempt which was so irritating from those of the other village.

This kind of conduct is said to be unusual among this tribe, but it is probably now occasioned by their having recently purchased a supply of small articles from Captain Bonneville, who, they inform us, has visited them within a few days.

Being desirous to escape from the immediate vicinity of the village, we moved our camp about four miles further, and stopped for the night.

24th.-The sudden and entire change from flesh exclusively, to fish, ditto, has affected us all more or less, with diarrhoea and pain in the abdomen; several of the men have been so extremely sick, as scarcely to be able to travel; we shall, however, no doubt, become accustomed to it in a few days.

We passed, this morning, over a flat country, very similar to that along the Platte, abounding in wormwood bushes, the pulpy-leaved thorn, and others, and deep with sand, and at noon stopped on a small stream called Malheur's creek.

Here a party of nine men was equipped, and despatched up the river, and across the country, on a trapping expedition, with orders to join us early in the ensuing winter, at the fort on the Columbia. Richardson was the chief of this party, and when I grasped the hand of our worthy hunter, and bade him farewell, I felt as though I were taking leave of a friend. I had become particularly attached to him, from the great simplicity and kindness of his heart, and his universally correct and proper deportment. I had been accustomed to depend upon his knowledge and sagacity in every thing connected with the wild and roving life which I had led for some months past, and I felt that his absence would be a real loss, as well to myself, as to the whole camp, which had profited so much by his dexterity and skill.

Our party will now consist of only seventeen men, but the number is amply sufficient, as we have passed over the country where danger is to be apprehended from Indians. We followed the course of the creek during the afternoon, and in the evening encamped on Snake river, into which Malheur empties. The river is here nearly a mile wide, but deep and clear, and for a considerable distance, perfectly navigable for steamboats, or even larger craft, and it would seem not improbable, that at some distant day, these facilities, added to the excellence of the alluvial soil, should induce the stout and hardy adventurers of our country to make permanent settlements here.

I have not observed that the Indians often attempt fishing in the "big river," where it is wide and deep; they generally prefer the slues, creeks, &c. Across these, a net of closely woven willows is stretched, placed vertically, and extending from the bottom to several feet above the surface. A number of Indians enter the water about a hundred yards above the net, and, walking closely, drive the fish in a body against the wicker work. Here they frequently become entangled, and are always checked; the spear is then used dexterously, and they are thrown out, one by one, upon the shore. With industry, a vast number of salmon might be taken in this manner; but the Indians are generally so indolent and careless of the future, that it is rare to find an individual with provision enough to supply his lodge for a week.

---

25th.-Early in the day the country assumed a more hilly aspect. The rich plains were gone. Instead of a dense growth of willow and the balsam poplar, low bushes of wormwood, &c., predominated, intermixed with the tall, rank prairie grass.

Towards noon, we fell in with about ten lodges of Indians, (Snakes and Bannecks,) from whom we purchased eighty salmon. This has put us in excellent spirits. We feared that we had lost sight of the natives, and as we had not reserved half the requisite quantity of provisions for our support to the Columbia, (most of our stock having been given to Richardson's trapping party,) the prospect of several days abstinence seemed very clear before us.

In the afternoon, we deviated a little from our general course, to cut off a bend in the river, and crossed a short, high hill, a part of an extensive range which we have seen for two days ahead, and which we suppose to be in the vicinity of Powder river, and in the evening encamped in a narrow valley, on the borders of the Shoshone.

26th.-Last night I had the misfortune to lose my favorite, and latterly my only riding horse, the other having been left at Fort Hall, in consequence of a sudden lameness, with which he became afflicted only the night before our departure. [ I afterwards ascertained that this lameness of my "buffalo horse," was intentionally caused by one of the hopeful gentry left in charge of the fort, for the purpose of rendering the animal unable to travel, and as a consequence, confining him to the fort at the time of our departure. The good qualities of the horse as a buffalo racer, were universally known and appreciated, and I had repeatedly refused large sums for him, from those who desired him for this purpose.] The animal was turned out as usual, with the others, in the evening, and as I have never known him to stray in a single instance, I conclude that some lurking Indian has stolen him. It was the fattest and handsomest horse in the band, and was no doubt carefully selected, as there was probably but a single Indian, who was unable to take more, for fear of alarming the guard. This is the most serious loss I have met with. The animal was particularly valuable to me, and no consideration would have induced me to part with it here. It is, however, a kind of accident that we are always more or less liable to in this country, and as a search would certainly be fruitless, must be submitted to with as good a grace as possible. Captain W. has kindly offered me the use of horses until we arrive at Columbia.

We commenced our march early, travelling up a broad, rich valley, in which we encamped last night, and at the head of it, on a creek called Brule, we found one family, consisting of five Snake Indians, one man, two women, and two children. They had evidently but very recently arrived, probably only last night, and as they must certainly have passed our camp, we feel little hesitation in believing that my lost horse is in their possession. It is, however, impossible to prove the theft upon them in any way, and time is not allowed us to search the premises. We cannot even question them concerning it, as our interpreter, McCarey, left us with the trapping party.

We bought, of this family, a considerable quantity of dried choke-cherries, these being the only article of commerce which they possessed. This fruit they prepare by pounding it with stones, and drying it in masses in the sun. It is then good tasted, and somewhat nutritive, and it loses, by the process, the whole of the astringency which is so disagreeable in the recent fruit.

Leaving the valley, we proceeded over some high and stony hills, keeping pretty nearly the course of the creek. The travelling was, as usual in such places, difficult and laborious, and our progress necessarily slow and tedious. Throughout the day, there was no change in the character of the country, and the consequence was, that three of our poor horses gave up and stopped.

27th.-This morning, two men were left at the camp, for the purpose of collecting and bringing on, moderately, the horses left yesterday, and others that may hereafter fail. We were obliged to leave with them a stock of provision greater in proportion than our own rather limited allowance, and have thus somewhat diminished our chance of performing the remainder of the journey with satisfied appetites, but there is some small game to be found on the route, grouse, ducks, &c., and occasionally a beaver may be taken, if our necessities are pressing. We made a noon camp on Brule, and stopped at night in a narrow valley, between the hills.

28th.-Towards noon to-day, we lost the trail among the hills, and although considerable search was made, we were not able to find it again. We then directed our course due north, and at 2 o'clock struck Powder river, a narrow and shallow stream, plentifully fringed with willows. We passed down this river for about five miles and encamped. Captain W. immediately left us to look for the lost trail, and returned in about two hours, with the information that no trace of it could be found. He therefore concludes that it is up stream, and to-morrow we travel back to search for it in that direction. Our men killed, in the afternoon, an antelope and a deer fawn, which were particularly acceptable to us; we had been on an allowance of one dried salmon per day, and we had begun to fear that even this poor pittance would fail before we could obtain other provision. Game has been exceedingly scarce, with the exception of a few grouse, pigeons, &c. We have not seen a deer, antelope, or any other quadruped larger than a hare, since we left the confines of the buffalo country. Early this morning, one of our men, named Hubbard, left us to hunt, and as he has not joined us this evening, we fear he is lost, and feel some anxiety about him, as he has not been accustomed to finding his way through the pathless wilds. He is a good marksman, however, and will not suffer much for food; and as he knows the general course, he will probably join us at Wallawalla, if we should not see him earlier.

29th.-We commenced our march early this morning, following the river to a point about six miles above where we struck it yesterday. We then took to the hills, steering N. N. W.,-it being impossible, from the broken state of the country, to keep the river bank.

Soon after we commenced the ascent, we met with difficulties in the shape of high, steep, banks, and deep ravines, the ground being thickly strewed with sharp, angular masses of lava and basalt. As we proceeded, these difficulties increased to such a degree, as to occasion a fear that our horses could never proceed. The hills at length became like a consolidated mass of irregular rock, and the small strips of earthy matter that occasionally appeared, were burst into wide fissures by the desiccation to which the country at this season is subject. Sometimes, as we approached the verges of the cliffs, we could see the river winding its devious course many hundred feet below, rushing and foaming in eddies and whirlpools, and fretting against the steep sides of the rocks, which hemmed it in. These are what are called the cut-rocks, the sides of which are in many places as smooth and regular as though they had been worked with the chisel, and the opening between them, through which the river flows, is frequently so narrow that a biscuit might be thrown across it.

We travelled over these rocks until 1 o'clock in the day, when we stopped to rest in a small ravine, where we found a little water, and pasture for our horses. At 3, we were again on the move, making across the hills towards the river, and after a long, circuitous march, we arrived on its banks, considerably wearied, and every horse in our band lamed and completely exhausted. We have not yet found any clue to the trail for which we have been searching so anxiously; indeed it would be

impossible for a distinguishable trace to be left over these rugged, stony hills, and the difficulty of finding it, or determining its direction is not a little increased by a dense fog which constantly envelopes these regions, obscuring the sun, and rendering it impossible to see an object many hundred yards in advance.

The next day we were still travelling over the high and steep hills, which, fortunately for our poor horses, were far less stony than hitherto. At about noon we descended to the plain, and struck the river in the midst of a large level prairie. We proceeded up stream for an hour, and to our great joy suddenly came in sight of a broad, open trail stretching away to the S. W. We felt, in some degree, the pleasure of a sailor who has found the port of which he has been long and anxiously in search. We made a noon camp here, at which we remained two hours, and then travelled on in fine spirits over a beautiful, level, and unobstructed country. Our horses seemed to participate in our feelings, and trotted on briskly, as though they too rejoiced in the opportunity of escaping the dreaded hills and rocks. Towards evening we crossed a single range of low hills and came to a small round prairie, with good water and excellent pasture. Here we found a family of Kayouse Indians, and encamped within sight of them. Two squaws from this family, visited us soon after, bringing some large kamas cakes and fermented roots, which we purchased of them.

31st.-Our route this morning, was over a country generally level and free from rocks; we crossed, however, one short, and very steep mountain range, thickly covered with tall and heavy pine trees, and came to a large and beautiful prairie, called the Grand ronde. Here we found Captain Bonneville's company, which has been lying here several days, waiting the arrival of its trapping parties. We made a noon camp near it, and were visited by Captain Bonneville. This was the first time I had seen this gentleman. His manners were affable and pleasing, and he seemed possessed of a large share of bold, adventurous, and to a certain extent, romantic spirit, without which no man can expect to thrive as a mountain leader. He stated that he preferred the "free and easy" life of a mountain hunter and trapper, to the comfortable and luxurious indolence of a dweller in civilized lands, and would not exchange his homely, but wholesome mountain fare, and his buffalo lodge, for the most piquant dishes of the French artiste, and the finest palace in the land. This came well from him, and I was pleased with it, although I could not altogether agree with him in sentiment, for I confess I had become somewhat weary of rough travelling and rough fare, and looked forward with no little pleasure to a long rest under a Christian roof, and a general participation in Christian living.

With the captain, came a whole troop of Indians, Kayouse, Nez Perces, &c. They were very friendly towards us, each of the chiefs taking us by the hand with great cordiality, appearing pleased to see us, and anxious to point out to us the easiest and most expeditious route to the lower country. These Indians are, almost universally, fine looking, robust men, with strong aqualine features, and a much more cheerful cast of countenance than is usual amongst the race. Some of the women might almost be called beautiful, and none that I have seen are homely. Their dresses are generally of thin deer or antelope skin, with occasionally a bodice of some linen stuffs, purchased from the whites, and their whole appearance is neat and cleanly, forming a very striking contrast to the greasy, filthy, and disgusting Snake females. I observed one young and very pretty looking woman, dressed in a great superabundance of finery, glittering with rings and beads, and flaunting in broad bands of scarlet cloth. She was mounted astride, -Indian fashion, -upon a fine bay horse, whose head and tail were decorated with scarlet and blue ribbons, and the saddle, upon which

---

the fair one sat, was ornamented all over with beads and little hawk's bells. This damsel did not do us the honor to dismount, but seemed to keep warily aloof, as though she feared that some of us might be inordinately fascinated by her fine person and splendid equipments, and her whole deportment proved to us, pretty satisfactorily, that she was no common beauty, but the favored companion of one high in office, who was jealous of her slightest movement.

After making a hasty meal, and bidding adieu to the captain, and our friendly Indian visitors, we mounted our horses, and rode off. About half an hour's brisk trotting brought us to the foot of a steep and high mountain, called the Blue. This is said to be the most extensive chain west of the dividing ridge, and, with one exception perhaps the most difficult of passage. The whole mountain is densely covered with tall pine trees, with an undergrowth of service bushes and other shrubs, and the path is strewn, to a very inconvenient degree, with volcanic rocks. In some of the ravines we find small springs of water; they are, however, rather rare, and the grass has been lately consumed, and many of the trees blasted by the ravaging fires of the Indians. These fires are yet smouldering, and the smoke from them effectually prevents our viewing the surrounding country, and completely obscures the beams of the sun. We travelled this evening until after dark, and encamped on a small stream in a gorge, where we found a plot of grass that had escaped the burning.

September 1st.-Last evening, as we were about retiring to our beds, we heard, distinctly, as we thought, a loud halloo, several times repeated, and in a tone like that of a man in great distress. Supposing it to be a person who had lost his way in the darkness, and was searching for us, we fired several guns at regular intervals, but as they elicited no reply, after waiting a considerable time, we built a large fire, as a guide, and lay down to sleep.

Early this morning, a large panther was seen prowling around our camp, and the hallooing of last night was explained. It was the dismal, distressing yell by which this animal entices its prey, until pity or curiosity induces it to approach to its destruction. The panther is said to inhabit these forests in considerable numbers, and has not unfrequently been known to kill the horses of a camp. He has seldom the temerity to attack a man, unless sorely pressed by hunger, or infuriated by wounds.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER IX

Passage of the Blue Mountains - Sufferings from thirst - Utalla river - A transformation - A novel meal - Walla-walla river - Columbia river and Fort Walla-walla - A dinner with the missionaries - Anecdote of Mr. Lee - A noble repast - Brief notice of the Fort - Departure of the missionaries - Notice of the Walla-walla Indians - Departure for Fort Vancouver - Wild ducks - Indian graves - Indian horses - Visits from Indians - Ophthalmia, a prevalent disease - Rough travelling - A company of Chinook Indians - The Dalles - The party joined by Captain Wyeth - Embarkation in canoes - A heavy gale - Dangerous navigation - Pusillanimous conduct of an Indian helmsman - A zealous botanist - Departure of Captain Wyeth with five men - Cascades - A portage - Meeting with the missionaries - Loss of a canoe - A toilsome duty - Arrival at Fort Vancouver - reflections suggested by it - Dr. John McLoughlin, the chief factor - Domiciliation of the travellers at Fort Vancouver.

September 1st. The path through the valley, in which we encamped last night, was level and

---

smooth for about a mile; we then mounted a short, steep hill, and began immediately to descend. The road down the mountain wound constantly, and we travelled in short, zig-zag lines, in order to avoid the extremely abrupt declivities; but occasionally, we were compelled to descend in places that made us pause before making the attempt: they were, some of them, almost perpendicular, and our horses would frequently slide several yards, before they could recover. To this must be added enormous jagged masses of rock, obstructing the road in many places, and pine trees projecting their horizontal branches across the path.

The road continued, as I have described it, to the valley in the plain, and a full hour was consumed before we reached it. The country then became comparatively level again to the next range, where a mountain was to be ascended of the same height as the last. Here we dismounted and led our horses, it being impracticable, in their present state, to ride them. It was the most toilsome march I ever made, and we were all so much fatigued, when we arrived at the summit, that rest was as indispensable to us as to our poor jaded horses. Here we made a noon camp, with a handful of grass and no water. This last article appears very scarce, the ravines affording none, and our dried salmon and kamas bread were eaten unmoistened. The route, in the afternoon, was over the top of the mountain, the road tolerably level, but crowded with stones. Towards evening, we commenced descending again, and in every ravine and gulley we cast our anxious eyes in search of water; we even explored several of them, where there appeared to exist any probability of success, but not one drop did we find. Night at length came on, dark and pitchy, without a moon or a single star to give us a ray of light; but still we proceeded, depending solely upon the vision and sagacity of our horses to keep the track. We travelled steadily until 9 o'clock, when we saw ahead the dark outline of a high mountain, and soon after heard the men who rode in front, cry out, joyously, at the top of their voices, "water! water!" It was truly a cheering sound, and the words were echoed loudly by every man in the company. We had not tasted water since morning, and both horses and men have been suffering considerably for the want of it.

2d. - Captain W. and two men, left us early this morning for Walla-walla, where they expect to arrive this evening, and send us some provision, of which we shall be in need, to-morrow.

Our camp moved soon after, under the direction of Captain Thing, and in about four miles reached Utalla river, where it stopped, and remained until 12 o'clock.

As we were approaching so near the abode of those in whose eyes we wished to appear like fellow Christians, we concluded that there would be a propriety in attempting to remove at least one of the heathenish badges which we had worn throughout the journey; so Mr. N.'s razor was fished out from its hiding place in the bottom of his trunk, and in a few minutes our encumbered chins lost their long cherished ornaments; we performed our ablutions in the river, arrayed ourselves in clean linen, trimmed our long hair, and then arranged our toilet before a mirror, with great self-complacence and satisfaction. I admired my own appearance considerably, (and this is, probably, an acknowledgement that few would make,) but I could not refrain from laughing at the strange, party-colored appearance of my physiognomy, the lower portion being fair, like a woman's, and the upper, brown and swarthy as an Indian.

Having nothing prepared for dinner to-day, I strolled along the stream above the camp, and made a meal on rose buds, of which I collected an abundance; and on returning, I was surprised to find Mr. N. and Captain T. picking the last bones of a bird which they had cooked. Upon inquiry, I ascertained that the subject was an unfortunate owl which I had killed in the morning, and had

intended to preserve, as a specimen. The temptation was too great to be resisted by the hungry Captain and naturalist, and the bird of wisdom lost the immortality which he might otherwise have acquired.

In the afternoon, soon after leaving the Utalla, we ascended a high and very steep hill, and came immediately in view of a beautiful, and regularly undulating country of great extent. We have now probably done with high, rugged mountains; the sun shines clear, the air is bracing and elastic, and we are all in fine spirits.

The next day, the road being generally level, and tolerably free from stones, we were enabled to keep our horses at the swiftest gait to which we dare urge them. We have been somewhat disappointed in not receiving the expected supplies from Walla-walla, but have not suffered for provision, as the grouse and hares are very abundant here, and we have shot as many as we wished. At about noon we struck the Walla-walla river, a very pretty stream of fifty or sixty yards in width, fringed with tall willows, and containing a number of salmon, which we can see frequently leaping from the water. The pasture here, being good, we allowed our horses an hour's rest to feed, and then travelled on over the plain, until near dark, when, on rising a sandy hill, the noble Columbia burst at once upon our view. I could scarcely repress a loud exclamation of delight and pleasure, as I gazed upon the magnificent river, flowing silently and majestically on, and reflected that I had actually crossed the vast American continent, and now stood upon a stream that poured its waters directly into the Pacific. This, then, was the great Oregon, the first appearance of which gave Lewis and Clark so many emotions of joy and pleasure, and on this stream our indefatigable countrymen wintered, after the toils and privations of a long, and protracted journey through the wilderness. My reverie was suddenly interrupted by one of the men exclaiming from his position in advance, "there is the fort" We had, in truth approached very near, without being conscious of it. There stood the fort on the bank of the river; horses and horned cattle were roaming about the vicinity, and on the borders of the little Walla-walla, we recognized the white tent of our long lost missionaries. These we soon joined, and were met and received by them like brethren. Mr. N. and myself were invited to sup with them upon a dish of stewed hares which they had just prepared, and it is almost needless to say that we did full justice to the good men's cookery. They told us that they had travelled comfortably from Fort Hall, without any unusual fatigue, and like ourselves, had no particularly stirring adventures. Their route, although somewhat longer, was a much less toilsome and difficult one, and they suffered but little for food, being well provided with dried buffalo meat, which had been prepared near Fort Hall.

Mr. Walker, (a young gentleman attached to the band,) related an anecdote of Mr. Lee, the principal, which I thought eminently characteristic. The missionaries were, on one occasion, at a considerable distance behind the main body, and had stopped for a few moments to regale themselves on a cup of milk from a cow which they were driving. Mr. L. had unstrapped the tin pan from his saddle, and was about applying himself to the task, when a band of a dozen Indians was descried at a distance, approaching the little party at full gallop. There was but little time for consideration. The rifles were looked to, the horses were mounted in eager haste, and all were ready for a long run, except Mr. Lee himself, who declared that nothing should deprive him of his cup of milk, and that he meant to "lighten the old cow before he moved." He accordingly proceeded coolly to fill his tin pan, and, after a hearty drink, grasped his rifle, and mounted his horse, at the very moment that the Indians had arrived to within speaking distance. To the great relief of most

of the party, these proved to be of the friendly Nez Perce tribe, and after a cordial greeting, they travelled on together.

The missionaries informed us that they had engaged a large barge to convey themselves and baggage to Fort Vancouver, and that Captain Stewart and Mr. Ashworth were to be of the party. Mr. N. and myself were very anxious to take a seat with them, but to our disappointment, were told that the boat would scarcely accommodate those already engaged. We had therefore to relinquish it, and prepare for a journey on horseback to the Dalles, about eighty miles below, to which place Captain W. would precede us in the barge, and engage canoes to convey us to the lower fort.

This evening, we purchased a large bag of Indian meal, of which we made a kettle of mush, and mixed with it a considerable quantity of horse tallow and salt. This was, I think, one of the best meals I ever made. We all ate heartily of it, and pronounced it princely food. We had been long without bread stuff of any kind, and the coarsest farinaceous substance, with a proper allowance of grease, would have been highly prized.

The next morning, we visited Walla-walla Fort, and were introduced, by Captain W., to Lieutenant Pierre S. Pambrun, the superintendent. Wyeth and Mr. Pambrun had met before, and were well acquainted; they had, therefore, many reminiscences of by-gone days to recount, and long conversations, relative to the variety of incidents which had occurred to each, since last they parted.

The fort is built of drift logs, and surrounded by a stoccade of the same, with two bastions, and a gallery around the inside. It stands about a hundred yards from the river, on the south bank, in a bleak and unprotected situation, surrounded on every side by a great, sandy plain, which supports little vegetation, except the wormwood and thorn-bushes. On the banks of the little river, however, there are narrow strips of rich soil, and here Mr. Pambrun raises the few garden vegetables necessary for the support of his family. Potatoes, turnips, carrots, &c., thrive well, and Indian corn produces eighty bushels to the acre.

At about 10 o'clock, the barge got under way, and soon after, our company with its baggage, crossed the river in canoes, and encamped on the opposite shore.

There is a considerable number of Indians resident here, Kayouse's and a collateral band of the same tribe, called Walla-wallas. They live along the bank of the river, in shantys or wigwams of drift wood, covered with buffalo or deer skins. They are a miserable, squalid looking people, are constantly lolling around and in the fort, and annoy visitors by the importunate manner in which they endeavor to force them into some petty trade for a pipe, a hare, or a grouse. All the industrious and enterprising men of this tribe are away trading salmon, kamas root, &c. to the mountain companies.

Notwithstanding the truly wretched plight in which these poor people live, and the privations which they must necessarily have to suffer, they are said to be remarkably honest and upright in their dealings, and generally correct in their moral deportment. Although they doubtless have the acquisitive qualities so characteristic of the race, they are rarely known to violate the principles of common honesty. A man may leave his tent unguarded, and richly stored with every thing which ordinarily excites the cupidity of the Indian, yet, on returning after a long absence, he may find all safe. What a commentary is this on the habits and conduct of our Christian communities!

The river is here about three-fourths of a mile in width, a clear, deep, and rapid stream, the current being generally from three to four miles an hour. It is the noblest looking river I have seen since leaving our Delaware. The banks are in many places high and rocky, occasionally inter-

rupted by broad, level sandy beaches. The only vegetation along the margin, is the wormwood, and other low, arid plants, but some of the bottoms are covered with heavy, rank grass, affording excellent pasture for horses.

5th. This morning we commenced our march down the Columbia. We have no provision with us except flour and horse tallow, but we have little doubt of meeting Indians daily, with whom we can trade for fish. Our road will now be a rather monotonous one along the bank of the river, tolerably level, but often rocky, so that very rapid travelling is inadmissible. The mallard duck, the widgeon, and the green-winged teal are tolerably abundant in the little estuaries of the river. Our men have killed several, but they are poor, and not good.

6th. We have observed to-day several high, conical stacks of drift-wood near the river. These are the graves of the Indians. Some of these cemeteries are of considerable extent, and probably contain a great number of bodies. I had the curiosity to peep into several of them, and even to remove some of the coverings, but found nothing to compensate for the trouble.

We bought some salmon from Indians whom we met to-day, which, with our flour and tallow, enable us to live very comfortably.

7th. We frequently fall in with large bands of Indian horses. There are among them some very beautiful animals, but they are generally almost as wild as deer, seldom permitting an approach to within a hundred yards or more. They generally have owners, as we observe upon many of them strange hieroglyphic looking characters, but there are no doubt some that have never known the bit, and will probably always roam the prairie uncontrolled. When the Indians wish to catch a horse from one of these bands, they adopt the same plan pursued by the South Americans for taking the wild animal.

8th. Our road to-day has been less monotonous, and much more hilly than hitherto. Along the bank of the river, are high mountains, composed of basaltic rock and sand, and along their bases enormous drifts of the latter material. Large, rocky promontories connected with these mountains extend into the river to considerable distances, and numerous islands of the same dot its surface. We are visited frequently as we travel along, by Indians of the Walla-walla and other tribes, whose wigwams we see on the opposite side of the river. As we approach these rude huts, the inhabitants are seen to come forth in a body; a canoe is immediately launched, the light bark skims the water like a bird, and in an incredibly short time its inmates are with us. Sometimes a few salmon are brought to barter for our tobacco, paint, &c., but more frequently they seem impelled to the visit by mere curiosity. To-day a considerable number have visited us, and among them some very handsome young girls. I could not but admire the gaiety and cheerfulness which seemed to animate them. They were in high spirits, and evidently very much pleased with the unusual privilege which they were enjoying.

At our camp in the evening, eight Walla-walla's came to see us. The chief was a remarkably fine looking man, but he, as well as several of his party, was suffering from a severe purulent ophthalmia which had almost deprived him of sight. He pointed to his eyes, and contorting his features to indicate the pain he suffered, asked me by signs to give him medicine to cure him. I was very sorry that my small stock of simples did not contain anything suited to his complaint, and I endeavored to tell him so. I have observed that this disease is rather prevalent among the Indians residing on the river, and I understood from the chief's signs that most of the Indians towards the lower country were similarly affected.

9th. The character of the country has changed considerably since we left Walla-walla. The river has become gradually more narrow, until it is now but about two hundred yards in width, and completely hemmed in by enormous rocks on both sides. Many of these extend for considerable distances into the stream in perpendicular columns, and the water dashes and breaks against them until all around is foam. The current is here very swift, probably six or seven miles to the hour; and the Indian canoes in passing down, seem literally to fly along its surface. The road to-day has been rugged to the very last degree. We have passed over continuous masses of sharp rock for hours together, sometimes picking our way along the very edge of the river, several hundred feet above it; again, gaining the back land, by passing through any casual chasm or opening in the rocks, where we were compelled to dismount, and lead our horses.

This evening, we are surrounded by a large company of Chinook Indians, of both sexes, whose temporary wigwams are on the bank of the river. Many of the squaws have young children sewed up in the usual Indian fashion, wrapped in a skin, and tied firmly to a board, so that nothing but the head of the little individual is seen.

These Indians are very peaceable and friendly. They have no weapons except bows, and these are used more for amusement and exercise, than as a means of procuring them sustenance, their sole dependence being fish and beaver, with perhaps a few hares and grouse, which are taken in traps. We traded with these people for a few fish and beaver skins, and some roots, and before we retired for the night, arranged the men in a circle, and gave them a smoke in token of our friendship.

10th. This afternoon we reached the Dalles. The entire water of the river here flows through channels of about fifteen feet in width, and between high, perpendicular rocks; there are several of these channels at distances of from half a mile to a mile apart, and the water foams and boils through them like an enormous cauldron.

On the opposite side of the river there is a large Indian village, belonging to a chief named Tilki, and containing probably five hundred wigwams. As we approached, the natives swarmed like bees to the shore, launched their canoes, and joined us in a few minutes. We were disappointed in not seeing Captain W. here, as this was the spot where we expected to meet him; the chief, however, told us that we should find him about twelve miles below, at the next village. We were accordingly soon on the move again, and urging our horses to their fastest gait, we arrived about sunset. The captain, the chief of the village, and several other Indians, came out to meet us and make us welcome. Captain W. has been here two days, and we were pleased to learn that he had completed all the necessary arrangements for transporting ourselves and baggage to Vancouver in canoes. The route by land is said to be a very tedious and difficult one, and, in some places, almost impassable, but even were it otherwise, I believe we should all much prefer the water conveyance, as we have become very tired of riding.

Since leaving the upper village this afternoon, we have been followed by scores of Indians on foot and on horseback; some of the animals carrying three at a time; and although we travelled rapidly, the pedestrians were seldom far behind us.

We have concluded to leave our horses here, in charge of the chief of the village, who has promised to attend to them during the winter, and deliver them to our order in the spring. Captain W. having been acquainted with this man before, is willing to trust him.

11th. Early this morning, we launched our three canoes, and each being provided with an Indian, as helmsman, we applied ourselves to our paddles, and were soon moving briskly down the river.

In about an hour after, the wind came out dead ahead, and although the current was in favor, our progress was sensibly checked. As we proceeded, the wind rose to a heavy gale, and the waves ran to a prodigious height. At one moment our frail bark danced upon the crest of a wave, and at the next, fell with a surge into the trough of the sea, and as we looked at the swell before us, it seemed that in an instant we must inevitably be engulfed. At such times, the canoe ahead of us was entirely hidden from view, but she was observed to rise again like a seagull, and hurry on into the same danger. The Indian in my canoe soon became completely frightened; he frequently hid his face with his hands, and sang, in a low melancholy voice, a prayer which we had often heard from his people, while at their evening devotions. As our dangers were every moment increasing, the man became at length absolutely childish, and with all our persuasion and threats, we could not induce him to lay his paddle into the water. We were all soon compelled to put in shore, which we did without sustaining any damage; the boats were hauled up high and dry, and we concluded to remain in our quarters until to-morrow, or until there was a cessation of wind. In about an hour it lulled a little, and Captain W. ordered the boats to be again launched, in the hope of being able to weather a point about five miles below, before the gale again commenced, where we could lie by until it should be safe to proceed. The calm proved, as some of us had suspected, a treacherous one; in a very few minutes after we got under way, we were contending with the same difficulties as before, and again our cowardly helmsman laid by his paddle and began mumbling his prayer. It was too irritating to be borne. Our canoe had swung round broad side to the surge, and was shipping gallons of water at every dash.

At this time it was absolutely necessary that every man on board should exert himself to the utmost to head up the canoe and make the shore as soon as possible. Our Indian, however, still sat with his eyes covered, the most abject and contemptible looking thing I ever saw. We took him by the shoulders and threatened to throw him overboard, if he did not immediately lend his assistance: we might as well have spoken to a stone. He was finally aroused, however, by our presenting a loaded gun at his breast; he dashed the muzzle away, seized his paddle again, and worked with a kind of desperate and wild energy, until he sank back in the canoe completely exhausted. In the mean time the boat had become half full of water, shipping a part of every surf that struck her, and as we gained the shallows every man sprang overboard, breast deep, and began hauling the canoe to shore. This was even a more difficult task than that of propelling her with the oars; the water still broke over her, and the bottom was a deep kind of quicksand, in which we sank almost to the knees at every step, the surf at the same time dashing against us with such violence as to throw us repeatedly upon our faces. We at length reached the shore, and hauled the canoe up out of reach of the breakers. She was then unloaded as soon as possible, and turned bottom upwards. The goods had suffered considerably by the wetting; they were all unbaled and dried by a large fire, which we built on the shore.

We were soon visited by several men from the other boats, which were ahead, and learned that their situation had been almost precisely similar to our own, except that their Indians had not evinced, to so great a degree, the same unmanly terror which had rendered ours so inefficient and useless. They were, however, considerably frightened, much more so than the white men. It would seem strange that Indians, who have been born, and have lived during their whole lives, upon the edge of the water, who have been accustomed, from infancy, to the management of a canoe, and in whose childish sports and manly pastimes these frail barks have always been employed, should

exhibit, on occasions like this, such craven and womanly fears; but the probability is, as their business is seldom of a very urgent nature, that they refrain from making excursions of any considerable extent in situations known to be dangerous, except during calm weather; it is possible, also, that such gales may be rare, and they have not been accustomed to them. Immediately after we landed, our redoubtable helmsman broke away from us, and ran at full speed back towards the village. We have doubtless lost him entirely, but we do not much regret his departure, as he proved himself so entirely unequal to the task he had undertaken.

12th. The gale continues with the same violence as yesterday, and we do not therefore think it expedient to leave our camp. Mr. N.'s large and beautiful collection of new and rare plants was considerably injured by the wetting it received; he has been constantly engaged since we landed yesterday, in opening and drying them. In this task he exhibits a degree of patience and perseverance which is truly astonishing; sitting on the ground, and steaming over the enormous fire, for hours together, drying the papers, and re-arranging the whole collection, specimen by specimen, while the great drops of perspiration roll unheeded from his brow. Throughout the whole of our long journey, I have had constantly to admire the ardor and perfect indefatigability with which he has devoted himself to the grand object of his tour. No difficulty, no danger, no fatigue has ever daunted him, and he finds his rich reward in the addition of nearly a thousand new species of American plants, which he has been enabled to make to the already teeming flora of our vast continent. My bale of birds, which was equally exposed to the action of the water, escaped without any material injury.

In the afternoon, the gale not having abated, Captain W. became impatient to proceed, as he feared his business at Vancouver would suffer by delay; he accordingly proposed taking one canoe, and braving the fury of the elements, saying that he wished five men, who were not afraid of water, to accompany him. A dozen of our fearless fellows volunteered in a moment, and the captain selecting such as he thought would best suit his purpose, lost no time in launching his canoe, and away she went over the foaming waters, dashing the spray from her bows, and laboring through the heavy swells until she was lost to our view. The more sedate amongst us did not much approve of this somewhat hasty measure of our principal; it appeared like a useless and daring exposure of human life, not warranted by the exigencies of the case. Mr. N. remarked that he would rather lose all his plants than venture his life in that canoe.

On the 13th the wind shifted to due north, and was blowing somewhat less furiously than on the previous day. At about noon we loaded our canoes, and embarked; our progress, however, during the afternoon, was slow; the current was not rapid, and the wind was setting up stream so strongly that we could not make much headway against it; we had, also, as before, to contend with turbulent waves, but we found we could weather them with much less difficulty, since the change of the wind.

14th. Before sunrise, a light rain commenced, which increased towards mid-day to a heavy shower, and continued steadily during the afternoon and night. There was, in the morning, a dead calm, the water was perfectly smooth, and disturbed only by the light rain pattering upon its surface. We made an early start, and proceeded on very expeditiously until about noon, when we arrived at the "cascades," and came to a halt above them, near a small Indian village. These cascades, or cataracts are formed by a collection of large rocks, in the bed of the river, which extend, for perhaps half a mile. The current for a short distance above them, is exceedingly rapid, and there is

said to be a gradual fall, or declivity of the river, of about twenty feet in the mile. Over these rocks, and across the whole river, the water dashes and foams most furiously, and with a roar which we heard distinctly at the distance of several miles.

It is wholly impossible for any craft to make its way through these difficulties, and our light canoes would not live an instant in them. It is, therefore, necessary to make a portage, either by carrying the canoes over land to the opposite side of the cataracts, or by wading in the water near the shore, where the surges are lightest, and dragging the unloaded boat through them by a cable. Our people chose the latter method, as the canoes felt very heavy and cumbersome, being saturated with the rain which was still falling rapidly. They were accordingly immediately unloaded, the baggage placed on the shore, and the men entered the water to their necks, headed by Captain Thing, and addressed themselves to the troublesome and laborious task. In the meantime, Mr. N., and myself were sent ahead to take the best care of ourselves that our situation and the surrounding circumstances permitted. We found a small Indian trail on the river bank, which we followed in all its devious windings, up and down hills, over enormous piles of rough flinty rocks, through brier bushes, and pools of water, &c. &c., for about a mile, and descending near the edge of the river, we observed a number of white men who had just succeeded in forcing a large barge through the torrent, and were then warping her into still water near the shore.

Upon approaching them more closely, we recognised, to our astonishment, our old friend Captain Stewart, with the good missionaries, and all the rest who left us at Walla-walla on the 4th. Poor fellows! Every man of them had been over breast deep in water, and the rain, which was still falling in torrents, was more than sufficient to drench what the waves did not cover, so that they were most abundantly soaked and bedraggled. I felt sadly inclined to laugh heartily at them, but a single glance at the sorry appearance of myself and my companion was sufficient to check the feeling. We joined them, and aided in kindling a fire to warm and dry ourselves a little, as there was not a dry rag on us, and we were all in an ague with cold. After a very considerable time, we succeeded in igniting the wet timber, and had a tolerably large fire. We all seated ourselves on the ground around it, and related our adventures. They had, like ourselves, suffered somewhat from the head-wind and heavy swells, but unlike us they had a craft that would weather it easily; even they, however, shipped some water, and made very little progress for the last two days. They informed us that Captain W's canoe had been dashed to pieces on the rocks above, and that he and all his crew were thrown into the water, and forced to swim for their lives. They all escaped, and proceeded down the river, this morning, in a canoe, hired of the Indians here, one of whom accompanied them, as pilot.

After a hasty meal of fish, purchased on the spot, our friends reloaded their boat and got under way, hoping to reach Vancouver by next morning. Mr. N. and myself remained some time longer here, expecting intelligence from our people behind; we had begun to feel a little uneasy about them, and thought of returning to look into their situation, when Captain T. came in haste towards us, with the mortifying intelligence that one canoe had been stove upon the rocks, and the other so badly split, that he feared she would not float; the latter was, however, brought on by the men, and moored where we had stopped. A man was then despatched to an Indian village, about five miles below, to endeavor to procure one or two canoes and a pilot. In the mean time, we had all to walk back along the circuitous and almost impassable Indian trail, and carry our wet and heavy baggage from the spot where the boats had been unloaded. The distance, as I have stated,

---

was a full mile, and the road so rough and encumbered as to be scarcely passable. In walking over many of the large and steep rocks, it was often necessary that the hands should be used to raise and support the body; this, with a load, was inconvenient. Again, in ascending and descending the steep and slippery hills, a single mis-step was certain to throw us in the mud, and bruise us upon the sharp rocks which were planted all around. This accident occurred several times with us all.

Over this most miserable of all roads, with the cold rain dashing and pelting upon us during the whole time, until we felt as though we were frozen to the very marrow, did we all have to travel and return four separate times, before our baggage was properly deposited. It was by far the most fatiguing, cheerless, and uncomfortable business in which I was ever engaged, and truly glad was I to lie down at night on the cold, wet ground, wrapped in my blankets, out of which I had just wrung the water, and I think I never slept more soundly or comfortably than that night. [ I could not but recollect at that time, the last injunction of my dear old grandmother, not to sleep in damp beds!]

I arose the next morning rested and refreshed, though somewhat sore from sundry bruises received on the hills to which I have alluded.

15th. The rain still continued falling, but lightly, the weather calm and cool. The water immediately below the cascades foams and boils in a thousand eddies, forming little whirlpools, which, however insignificant they may appear, are exceedingly dangerous for light canoes, whirling their bows around to the current, and capsizing them in an instant. Near the shore, at the foot of the cataract, there is a strong backward tow, through which it is necessary to drag the canoe, by a line, for the distance of a hundred yards; here it feels the force of the opposite current, and is carried on at the rate of seven or eight miles to the hour.

The man whom we sent yesterday to the village, returned this morning; he stated that one canoe only could be had, but that three Indians, accustomed to the navigation, would accompany us; that they would soon be with us, and endeavor to repair our damaged boat. In an hour they came, and after the necessary clamping and caulking of our leaky vessel, we loaded, and were soon moving rapidly down the river. The rain ceased about noon, but the sun did not appear during the day.

16th. The day was a delightful one; the sky was robed in a large flaky cumulus, the glorious sun occasionally bursting through among the clouds, with dazzling splendor. We rose in the morning in fine spirits, our Indians assuring us that " King George," as they called the fort, was but a short distance from us. At about 11 o'clock, we arrived, and stepped on shore at the end of our journey. It is now three days over six months since I left my beloved home. I, as well as the rest, have been in some situations of danger, of trial, and of difficulty, but I have passed through them all unharmed, with a constitution strengthened, and invigorated by healthful exercise, and a heart which I trust can feel deeply, sincerely thankful to that kind and overruling Providence who has watched over and protected me.

We have passed for months through a country swarming with Indians who thirsted for our blood, and whose greatest pride and glory consisted in securing the scalp of a white man. Enemies, sworn, determined enemies to all, both white and red, who intrude upon his hunting grounds, the Blackfoot roams the prairie like a wolf seeking his prey, and springing upon it when unprepared, and at the moment when it supposes itself most secure. To those who have always enjoyed the comforts and security of civilized life, it may seem strange that persons who know themselves

---

to be constantly exposed to such dangers who never lie down at night without the weapons of death firmly grasped in their hands, and who are in hourly expectation of hearing the terrific war whoop of the savage, should yet sleep soundly and refreshingly, and feel themselves at ease; such however is the fact. I never in my life enjoyed rest more than when travelling through the country of which I speak. I had become accustomed to it: I felt constant apprehension certainly, but not to such an extent as to deprive me of any of the few comforts which I could command in such an uncomfortable country. The guard might pass our tent, and cry "all's well," in his loudest key, without disturbing my slumbers: but if the slightest unusual noise occurred, I was awake in an instant, and listening painfully for a repetition of it.

On the beach in front of the fort, we were met by Mr. Lee, the missionary, and Dr. John McLoughlin, the chief factor, and Governor of the Hudson's Bay posts in this vicinity. The Dr. is a large, dignified and very noble looking man, with a fine expressive countenance, and remarkably bland and pleasing manners. The missionary introduced Mr. N. and myself in due form, and we were greeted and received with a frank and unassuming politeness which was most peculiarly grateful to our feelings. He requested us to consider his house our home, provided a separate room for our use, a servant to wait upon us, and furnished us with every convenience which we could possibly wish for. I shall never cease to feel grateful to him for his disinterested kindness to the poor houseless and travel-worn strangers.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER X

Fort Vancouver - Agricultural and other improvements - Vancouver "camp" - Approach of the rainy season - Expedition to the Wallamet - The falls - A village of Klikatat Indians - Manner of flattening the head - A Flathead infant - Brig "May Dacre" - Preparations for a settlement - Success of the naturalists - Chinook Indians - their appearance and costume - Ague and fever - Superstitious dread of the Indians - Desertion of the Sandwich Islanders from Captain Wyeth's party - Embarkation for a trip to the Islands - George, the Indian pilot - Mount Coffin - A visit to the tombs - Superstition - Visit to an Indian house - Fort George - Site of Astoria - A blind Indian boy - Cruel and unfeeling conduct of the savages - their moral character - Baker's Bay - Cape Disappointment - Dangerous bar at the entrance of the river - The sea beach - Visit of Mr. Ogden - Passage across the bar.

FORT VANCOUVER is situated on the north bank of the Columbia on a large level plain, about a quarter of a mile from the shore. The space comprised within the stoccade is an oblong square, of about one hundred, by two hundred and fifty feet. The houses built of logs and frame-work, to the number of ten or twelve, are ranged around in a quadrangular form, the one occupied by the doctor being in the middle. In front, and enclosed on three sides by the buildings, is a large open space, where all the in-door work of the establishment is done. Here the Indians assemble with their multifarious articles of trade, beaver, otter, venison, and various other game, and here, once a week, several scores of Canadians are employed, beating the furs which have been collected, in order to free them from dust and vermin.

Mr. N. and myself walked over the farm with the doctor, to inspect the various improvements which he has made. He has already several hundred acres fenced in, and under cultivation, and like our own western prairie land, it produces abundant crops, particularly of grain, without

---

requiring any manure. Wheat thrives astonishingly; I never saw better in any country, and the various culinary vegetables, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, &c., are in great profusion, and of the first quality. Indian corn does not flourish so well as at Walla-walla, the soil not being so well adapted to it; melons are well flavored but small; the greatest curiosity, however, is the apples, which grow on small trees, the branches of which would be broken without the support of props. So profuse is the quantity of fruit that the limbs are covered with it and it is actually packed together precisely in the same manner that onions are attached to ropes when they are exposed for sale in our markets.

On the farm is a grist mill, a threshing mill, and a saw mill, the two first, by horse, and the last, by water power; besides many minor improvements in agricultural and other matters, which cannot but astonish the stranger from a civilized land, and which reflect great credit upon the liberal and enlightened chief factor.

In the propagation of domestic cattle, the doctor has been particularly successful. Ten years ago a few head of neat cattle were brought to the fort by some fur traders from California; these have now increased to near seven hundred. They are a large framed, long horned breed, inferior in their milch qualities to those of the United States, but the beef is excellent, and in consequence of the mildness of the climate, it is never necessary to provide them with fodder during the winter, an abundant supply of excellent pasture being always found.

On the farm, in the vicinity of the fort, are thirty or forty log huts, which are occupied by the Canadians, and others attached to the establishment. These huts are placed in rows, with broad lanes or streets between them, and the whole looks like a very neat and beautiful village. The most fastidious cleanliness appears to be observed; the women may be seen sweeping the streets and scrubbing the door-sills as regularly as in our own proverbially cleanly city. [I have given this notice of the suburbs of the fort, as I find it in my journal written at the time; I had reason, subsequently, to change my opinion with regard to the scrupulous cleanliness of the Canadians' Indian wives, and particularly after inspecting the internal economy of the dwellings. What at first struck me as neat and clean, by an involuntary comparison of it with the extreme filthiness to which I had been accustomed amongst the Indians, soon revealed itself in its proper light, and I can freely confess that my first estimate was too high.]

Sunday, September 25th. - Divine service was performed in the fort this morning by Mr. Jason Lee. This gentleman and his nephew had been absent some days in search of a suitable place to establish themselves, in order to fulfil the object of their mission. They returned yesterday, and intend leaving us to-morrow with their suite for the station selected, which is upon the Wallamet river, about sixty miles south of the fort.

In the evening we were gratified by the arrival of Captain Wyeth from below, who informed us that the brig from Boston, which was sent out by the company to which Wyeth is attached, had entered the river, and was anchored about twenty miles below, at a spot called Warrior's point, near the western entrance of the Wallamet.

Captain W. mentioned his intention to visit the Wallamet country, and seek out a convenient location for a fort which he wishes to establish without delay, and Mr. N. and myself accepted an invitation to accompany him in the morning. He has brought with him one of the brig's boats, and eight oarsmen, five of whom are Sandwich Islanders.

We have experienced for several days past, gloomy, lowering, and showery weather; indeed the

---

sun has scarcely been seen for a week past. This is said to indicate the near approach of the rainy season, which usually sets in about the middle of October, or even earlier. After this time, until December, there is very little clear weather, showers or heavy clouds almost constantly prevailing. On the 29th, Captain Wyeth, Mr. N., and myself, embarked in the ship's boat for our exploring excursion. We had a good crew of fine robust sailors, and the copper-colored islanders, - or Kanakas, as they are called, - did their duty with great alacrity and good will.

At about five miles below the fort, we entered the upper mouth of the Wallamet. This river is here about half the width of the Columbia, a clear and beautiful stream, and navigable for large vessels to the distance of twenty-five miles. It is covered with numerous islands, the largest of which is that called Wappatoo Island, about twenty miles in length. The vegetation on the main land is good, the timber generally pine and post oak, and the river is margined in many places with a beautiful species of willow with large ob-lanceolate leaves like those of the peach, and white on their under surface. The timber on the islands is chiefly oak, no pine growing there. At about 10 o'clock we overtook three men whom Captain W. had sent ahead in a canoe and we all landed soon after on the beach and dined on a mess of salmon and peas which we had provided. We were under way again in the afternoon, and encamped at about sunset. We have as yet seen no suitable place for an establishment, and to-morrow we proceed to the falls of the river, about fifteen miles further. Almost all the land in the vicinity is excellent and well calculated for cultivation, and several spots which we have visited, would be admirably adapted to the captain's views, but that there is not a sufficient extent unincumbered, or which could be fitted for the purposes of tillage in a space of time short enough to be serviceable; others are at some seasons inundated, which is an insurmountable objection.

We embarked early the next morning, and at 11 o'clock arrived at the falls, after encountering some difficulties from rapids, through which we had to warp our boat. There are here three falls on a line of rocks extending across the river, which forms the bed of the upper channel. The water is precipitated through deep abraded gorges, and falls perhaps forty feet at an angle of about twenty degrees. It was a beautiful sight when viewed from a distance, but it became grand and almost sublime as we approached it nearer. I mounted the rocks and stood over the highest fall, and although the roar of the cataract was almost deafening, and the rays of the bright sun reflected from the white and glittering foam threatened to deprive me of sight, yet I became so absorbed in the contemplation of the scene, and the reflections which were involuntarily excited, as to forget every thing else for the time, and was only aroused by Captain W. tapping me on the shoulder, and telling me that every thing was arranged for our return. While I visited the falls, the captain and his men had found what they sought for; and the object of our voyage being accomplished, we got on board immediately and shaped our course down the river with a fair wind, and the current in favor.

About two miles below the cataract is a small village of Klikatat Indians. Their situation does not appear different from what we have been accustomed to see in the neighborhood of the fort. They live in the same sort of miserable loose hovels, and are the same wretched, squalid looking people. Although enjoying far more advantages, and having in a much greater degree the means of rendering themselves comfortable, yet their mode of living, their garments, their wigwams, and every thing connected with them, is not much better than the Snakes and Bannecks, and very far inferior to that fine, noble-looking race, the Kayouse, whom we met on the Grand ronde.

---

A custom prevalent, and almost universal amongst these Indians, is that of flattening, or mashing in the whole front of the skull, from the superciliary ridge to the crown. The appearance produced by this unnatural operation is almost hideous, and one would suppose that the intellect would be materially affected by it. This, however, does not appear to be the case, as I have never seen, (with a single exception, the Kayouse,) a race of people who appeared more shrewd and intelligent. I had a conversation on this subject, a few days since, with a chief who speaks the English language. He said that he had exerted himself to abolish the practice in his own tribe, but although his people would listen patiently to his talk on most subjects, their ears were firmly closed when this was mentioned; "they would leave the council fire, one by one, until none but a few squaws and children were left to drink in the words of the chief." It is even considered among them a degradation to possess a round head, and one whose caput has happened to be neglected in his infancy, can never become even a subordinate chief in his tribe, and is treated with indifference and disdain, as one who is unworthy a place amongst them.

The flattening of the head is practiced by at least ten or twelve distinct tribes of the lower country, the Klikatats, Kalapooyahs, and Multnomahs, of the Wallammet, and its vicinity; the Chinooks, Klatsaps, Klatstonis, Kowalitsks, Katlammets, Killemooks, and Chekalis of the lower Columbia and its tributaries, and probably by others both north and south. The tribe called Flatheads, or Salish, who reside near the sources of the Oregon, have long since abolished this custom.

The mode by which the flattening is effected, varies considerably with the different tribes. The Wallammet Indians place the infant, soon after birth, upon a board, to the edges of which are attached little loops of hempen cord or leather, and other similar cords are passed across and back, in a zig-zag manner, through these loops, enclosing the child, and binding it firmly down. To the upper edge of this board, in which is a depression to receive the back part of the head, another smaller one is attached by hinges of leather, and made to lie obliquely upon the forehead, the force of the pressure being regulated by several strings attached to its edge, which are passed through holes in the board upon which the infant is lying, and secured there.

The mode of the Chinooks, and others near the sea, differs widely from that of the upper Indians, and appears somewhat less barbarous and cruel. A sort of cradle is formed by excavating a pine log to the depth of eight or ten inches. The child is placed in it on a bed of little grass mats, and bound down in the manner above described. A little boss of tightly plaited and woven grass is then applied to the forehead, and secured by a cord to the loops at the side. The infant is thus suffered to remain from four to eight months, or until the sutures of the skull have in some measure united, and the bone become solid and firm. It is seldom or never taken from the cradle, except in case of severe illness, until the flattening process is completed.

I saw, to-day, a young child from whose head the board had just been removed. It was, without exception, the most frightful and disgusting looking object that I ever beheld. The whole front of the head was completely flattened, and the mass of brain being forced back, caused an enormous projection there. The poor little creature's eyes protruded to the distance of half an inch, and looked inflamed and discolored, as did all the surrounding parts. Although I felt a kind of chill creep over me from the contemplation of such dire deformity, yet there was something so stark-staring, and absolutely queer in the physiognomy, that I could not repress a smile; and when the mother amused the little object and made it laugh, it looked so irresistibly, so terribly ludicrous, that I and those who were with me, burst into a simultaneous roar, which frightened it and

---

made it cry, in which predicament it looked much less horrible than before.

On the 1st of November we arrived at the brig. She was moored, head and stern, to a large rock near the lower mouth of the Wallamet. Captain Lambert with his ship's company, and our own mountain men, were all actively engaged at various employments; carpenters, smiths, coopers, and other artisans were busy in their several vocations; domestic animals, pigs, sheep, goats, poultry, &c., were roaming about as if perfectly at home, and the whole scene looked so like the entrance to a country village, that it was difficult to fancy oneself in a howling wilderness inhabited only by the wild and improvident Indian, and his scarcely more free and fearless neighbors, the bear and the wolf. An excellent temporary storehouse of twigs, thatched with grass, has been erected, in which has been deposited the extensive assortment of goods necessary for the settlement, as well as a number of smaller ones, in which the men reside. It is intended as soon as practicable, to build a large and permanent dwelling of logs, which will also include the store and trading establishment, and form the groundwork for an American fort on the river Columbia.

5th. - Mr. N. and myself are now residing on board the brig, and pursuing with considerable success our scientific researches through the neighborhood. I have shot and prepared here several new species of birds, and two or three undescribed quadrupeds, besides procuring a considerable number, which, though known to naturalists, are rare, and therefore valuable. My companion is of course in his element; the forest, the plain, the rocky hill, and the mossy bank yield him a rich and most abundant supply.

We are visited daily by considerable numbers of Chinook and Klikatat Indians, many of whom bring us provisions of various kinds, salmon, deer, ducks, &c., and receive in return, powder and shot, knives, paint, and Indian rum, i. e. rum and water in the proportion of one part of the former to two of the latter. Some of these Indians would be handsome were it not for the abominable practice, which, as I have said, is almost universal amongst them, of destroying the form of the head. The features of many are regular though often devoid of expression, and the persons of the men generally are rather symmetrical; their stature is low, with light sinewy limbs, and remarkably small delicate hands. The women are usually more rotund, and, in some instances, even approach obesity. The principal clothing worn by them is a sort of short petticoat made of strands of pine bark or twisted hempen strings, tied around the loins like a marro. This article they call a kalaquarte; and is often their only dress; some, however, cover the shoulders with a blanket, or robe made of muskrat or hare skins sewed together.

A disease of a very fatal character is prevalent among these Indians; many of them have died of it; even some of those in the neighborhood of the fort, where medical assistance was always at hand. The symptoms are a general coldness, soreness and stiffness of the limbs and body, with violent tertian ague. Its fatal termination is attributable to its tendency to attack the liver, which is generally affected in a few days after the first symptoms are developed. Several of the white people attached to the fort have been ill with it, but no deaths have occurred amongst them, the disease in their case having yielded to the simple tonic remedies usually employed at home. This I have no doubt would be equally the case with the Indians, were they willing to submit to proper restrictions during the time of administering medicine.

Captain Lambert informs me that on his first landing here the Indians studiously avoided his vessel, and all kind of intercourse with his crew, from the supposition, (which they have since acknowledged) that the malady which they dread so much was thus conveyed. As in a short time it

became desirable, on account of procuring supplies of provision, to remove this impression, some pains were taken to convince the Indians of their error, and they soon visited the ship without fear.

Mr. N. and myself have been anxious to escape the wet and disagreeable winter of this region, and visit some other portion of the country, where the inclemency of the season will not interfere with the prosecution of our respective pursuits. After some reflection and consultation, we concluded to take passage in the brig, which will sail in a few weeks for the Sandwich Islands. We shall remain there about three months, and return to the river in time to commence our peregrinations in the spring.

23d. - At Fort Vancouver. A letter was received yesterday by Dr. McLoughlin, from Captain Wyeth, dated Walla-walla, stating that the twelve Sandwich Islanders whom he took with him a week since for a journey to Fort Hall, had deserted, each taking a horse. They had no doubt heard from some of their countrymen, whom they met at the fort, of the difficulties of the route before them, which were probably very much exaggerated. Captain W. is on the alert to find them, and is sending men on their trail in every direction, but it is more than probable that they will not be overtaken, and the consequence will then be, that the expedition must be abandoned, and the captain return to the fort to spend the winter.

December 3d. - Yesterday Mr. N. and myself went down the river to the brig, and this morning early the vessel left her moorings, and with her sails unloosed stood out into the channel way. The weather was overcast, and we had but little wind, so that our progress during the morning was necessarily slow. In the afternoon we ran aground in one and a half fathoms water, but as the tide was low, we were enabled to get her clear in the evening. The navigation of this river is particularly difficult in consequence of numerous shoals and sand bars, and good pilots are scarce, the Indians alone officiating in that capacity. Towards noon the next day, a Kowalitsk Indian with but one eye, who said his name was George, boarded us, and showed a letter which he carried, written by Captain McNeill, in the Hudson's Bay service, recommending said George as a capable and experienced pilot. We accepted his services gladly, and made a bargain with him to take us into Baker's bay near the cape, for four bottles of rum; with the understanding, however, that every time the brig ran aground, one bottle of the precious liquor was to be forfeited. George agreed to the terms, and taking his station at the bow, gave his orders to the man at the wheel like one having authority, pointing with his finger when he wished a deviation from the common course, and pronouncing in a loud voice the single word ookook, (here.)

On the afternoon of the 4th, we passed along a bold precipitous shore, near which we observed a large isolated rock, and on it a great number of canoes, deposited above the reach of the tides. This spot is called Mount Coffin, and the canoes contain the dead bodies of Indians. They are carefully wrapped in blankets, and all the personal property of the deceased, bows and arrows, guns, salmon spears, ornaments, &c., are placed within, and around his canoe. The vicinity of this, and all other cemeteries, is held so sacred by the Indians, that they never approach it, except to make similar deposits; they will often even travel a considerable distance out of their course, in order to avoid intruding upon the sanctuary of their dead.

We came to anchor near this rock in the evening, and Captain Lambert Mr. N. and myself visited the tombs. We were especially careful not to touch or disarrange any of the fabrics, and it was well we were so, for as we turned to leave the place, we found that we had been narrowly watched by

---

about twenty Indians, whom we had not seen when we landed from our boat. After we embarked, we observed an old withered crone with a long stick or wand in her hand, who approached, and walked over the ground which we had defiled with our sacrilegious tread, waving her enchanted rod over the mouldering bones, as if to purify the atmosphere around, and exorcise the evil spirits which we had called up.

I have been very anxious to procure the skulls of some of these Indians, and should have been willing, so far as I alone was concerned, to encounter some risk to effect my object, but I have refrained on account of the difficulty in which the ship and crew would be involved, if the sacrilege should be discovered; a prejudice might thus be excited against our little colony which would not soon be overcome, and might prove a serious injury.

6th. - The weather is almost constantly rainy and squally, making it unpleasant to be on deck; we are therefore confined closely to the cabin, and are anxious to get out to sea as soon as possible, if only to escape this.

In the afternoon, the captain and myself went ashore in the long-boat, and visited several Indian houses upon the beach. These are built of roughly hewn boards and logs, usually covered with pine bark, or matting of their own manufacture, and open at the top, to allow the smoke to escape. In one of these houses we found men, women, and children, to the number of fifty-two, seated as usual, upon the ground, around numerous fires, the smoke from which filled every cranny of the building, and to us was almost stifling, although the Indians did not appear to suffer any inconvenience from it. Although living in a state of the most abject poverty, deprived of most of the absolute necessaries of life, and frequently enduring the pangs of protracted starvation, yet these poor people appear happy and contented. They are scarcely qualified to enjoy the common comforts of life, even if their indolence did not prevent the attempt to procure them.

On the afternoon of the 8th, we anchored off Fort George, as it is called, although perhaps it scarcely deserves the name of a fort, being composed of but one principal house of hewn boards, and a number of small Indian huts surrounding it, presenting the appearance, from a distance, of an ordinary small farm house with its appropriate outbuildings. There is but one white man residing here, the superintendent of the fort; but there is probably no necessity for more, as the business done is not very considerable, most of the furs being taken by the Indians to Vancouver. The establishment is, however, of importance, independent of its utility as a trading post, as it is situated within view of the dangerous cape, and intelligence of the arrival of vessels can be communicated to the authorities at Vancouver in time for them to render adequate assistance to such vessels by supplying them with pilots, &c. This is the spot where once stood the fort established by the direction of our honored countryman, John Jacob Astor. One of the chimneys of old Fort Astoria is still standing, a melancholy monument of American enterprise and domestic misrule. The spot where once the fine parterre overlooked the river, and the bold stoccade enclosed the neat and substantial fort, is now overgrown with weeds and bushes, and can scarce be distinguished from the primeval forest which surrounds it on every side.

Captain Lambert, Mr. N. and myself visited the Indian houses in the neighborhood. In one of them we saw a poor little boy about three years of age who had been blind from his birth. He was sitting on the ground near the fire, surrounded by a quantity of fish bones which he had been picking. Our sympathy was very much excited for the poor little unfortunate, particularly as he was made a subject for the taunting jibes and laughter of a number of men and women, squatting

around, and his mother sat by with the most cruel apathy and unconcern, and only smiled at the commiseration which we expressed for her innocent and peculiarly unhappy offspring. It seems difficult to believe that those who possess the form and countenance of human creatures, should so debase the natural good feelings which God has implanted in them: but these ignorant and gross wretches seemed to take credit to themselves in rendering this afflicted being unhappy, and smiled and looked at each other when we endeavored to infuse a little pity into them. The child had evidently been very much neglected, and almost starved, and the little articles which we presented it, (in the hope, that the Indians on seeing us manifest an interest in it, would treat it more tenderly,) it put to its mouth eagerly, but finding them not eatable, threw them aside in disgust. Oh! how I wished at that moment for a morsel of bread to give this little famished and neglected creature. We soon left the place, and returned to the brig, but I could think of nothing during the remainder of the evening but the little blind child, and at night I dreamed I saw it, and it raised its dim and sightless orbs, and stretched out its little emaciated arms towards me, as if begging for a crumb to prevent its starving.

These people, as I have already said, do not appear to possess a particle of natural good feeling, and in their moral character, they are little better than brutes. In the case of the blind boy, they seemed to take pride in tormenting it, and rendering it miserable, and vied with each other in the skill and dexterity with which they applied to it the most degrading and insulting epithets. These circumstances, with others, in regard to their moral character, which I shall not even mention, have tended very considerably to lower the estimation in which I have always held the red man of the forest, and serve to strengthen the opinion which I had long since formed, that nothing but the introduction of civilization, with its good and wholesome laws, can ever render the Indian of service to himself, or raise him from the state of wretchedness which has so long characterized his expiring race.

The next morning, we ran down into Baker's bay, and anchored within gunshot of the cape, when Captain Lambert and myself went on shore in the boat, to examine the channel, and decide upon the prospect of getting out to sea. This passage is a very dangerous one, and is with reason dreaded by mariners. A wide bar of sand extends from Cape Disappointment to the opposite shore, - called Point Adams, - and with the exception of a space, comprehending about half a mile, the sea at all times breaks furiously, the surges dashing to the height of the mast head of a ship, and with the most terrific roaring. Sometimes the water in the channel is agitated equally with that which covers the whole length of the bar, and it is then a matter of imminent risk to attempt a passage. Vessels have occasionally been compelled to lie in under the cape for several weeks, in momentary expectation of the subsidence of the dangerous breakers, and they have not unfrequently been required to stand off shore, from without, until the crews have suffered extremely for food and water. This circumstance must ever form a barrier to a permanent settlement here; the sands, which compose the bar, are constantly shifting, and changing the course and depth of the channel, so that none but the small coasting vessels in the service of the company can, with much safety, pass back and forth.

Mr. N. and myself visited the sea beach, outside the cape, in the hope of finding peculiar marine shells, but although we searched assiduously during the morning, we had but little success. We saw several deer in the thick forest on the side of the cape, and a great number of black shags, or cormorants, flying over the breakers, and resting upon the surf-washed rocks.

On the morning of the 11th, Mr. Hanson, the mate, returned from the shore, and reported that the channel was smooth; it was therefore deemed safe to attempt the passage immediately. While we were weighing our anchor, we descried a brig steering towards us, which soon crossed the bar, and ran up to within speaking distance. It was one of the Hudson's Bay Company's coasters, and, as we were getting under way, a boat put off from her, and we were boarded by Mr. Ogden, a chief factor from one of the Company's forts on the coast. He informed us that the brig left Naas about the first of October, but had been delayed by contrary winds, and rough, boisterous weather. Thus the voyage which usually requires but about eight days for its performance, occupied upwards of two months. They had been on an allowance of a pint of water per day, and had suffered considerably for fresh provision. Mr. Ogden remained with us but a short time, and we stood out past the cape.

When we entered the channel, the water which had before been so smooth, became suddenly very much agitated, swelling, and roaring, and foaming around us, as if the surges were upheaved from the very bottom, and as [if] our vessel would fall in the trough of the sea, pitching down like a huge leviathan seeking its native depths, I could not but feel positive, that the enormous wave, which hung like a judgment over our heads, would inevitably engulf us; but the good ship, like a creature instinct with life, as though she knew her danger, gallantly rose upon it, and but dipped her bows into its crest, as if in scorn of its mighty and irresistible power. This is my first sea voyage, and every thing upon the great deep is of course novel and interesting to me. During the scene which I have just described, although I was aware of our imminent peril, and the tales that I had frequently heard of vessels perishing in this very spot, and in precisely such a sea, recurred to my mind with some force, yet I could not but feel a kind of secret and wild joy at finding myself in a situation of such awful and magnificent grandeur. I thought of the lines of Shelley, and repeated them to myself in a kind of ecstasy.

“And see'st thou, and hear'st thou,  
And fear'st thou, and fear'st thou,  
And ride we not free  
O'er the terrible sea,  
I and thou ?”

In about twenty minutes we had escaped all the danger, and found ourselves riding easily in a beautiful placid sea. We set the sails, which had been shortened on the bar, and the gallant vessel feeling the impulse of the wind, rushed ahead as if exulting in the victory she had achieved.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

Chapter XI and part of XII omitted - they deal with voyage to Sandwich Islands. Resume narrative on April 15, 1835.

---

## CHAPTER XII

. . . Arrival at the Columbia.

On the 15th, the wind, which had for several days been light, began steadily to increase, until we were running ten knots by the log. In the afternoon, the atmosphere became thick and hazy, indicating our approach to the shores of the continent. In a short time, a number of the small Auks, - of which we saw a few immediately after leaving the Columbia, - were observed sporting in the

---

waves, close under our bows; then several gulls of the species common on the river, and soon after large flocks of geese and canvass-back ducks.

The sea gradually lost its legitimate deep blue color, and assumed a dirty, green appearance, indicating soundings. Upon heaving the lead here, we got only eleven fathoms, and found that we had approached nearer than was prudent, having been misled by the haze. Wore ship immediately, and soon saw land, bearing east, which we ascertained to be south of Cape Disappointment. Stood off during the night, and the next morning at 4 o'clock, the wind favoring us, we bore up for the cape, and at 7 crossed the dangerous bar safely, a Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

### CHAPTER XIII

Passage up the Columbia - Birds - A trip to the Wallammet - Methodist missionaries - their prospects - Fort William - Band-tail pigeons - Wretched condition of the Indians at the falls - A Kallapooyah village - Indian cemetery - Superstitions - Treatment of diseases - Method of steaming - "Making medicine" - Indian sorcerers - An interruption of festivities - Death of Thornburg - An inquest - Verdict of the jury - Inordinate appetite for ardent spirits - Misfortunes of the American Company - Eight men drowned - Murder of two trappers by the Banneck Indians - Arrival of Captain Thing - His meeting and skirmish with the Blackfeet Indians - Massacre - A narrow escape.

On the 16th, we anchored abreast of Oak point. Our decks were almost immediately crowded with Indians to welcome us, and among them we recognised many faces with which we were familiar. Chinamus, the Chinook chief, was the principal of these, who, with his wife, Aillapust, or Sally, as she is called at the fort, paid us an early visit, and brought us red deer and sturgeon to regale upon after our voyage.

On the afternoon of the next day, we ran up to Warrior's Point. the brig's old mooring ground. The people here had been anxious to see us; extensive preparations had been made to prosecute the salmon fishery, and the coopers have been engaged the whole winter in making barrels to accommodate them. Mr. Walker, the missionaries' quondam associate, was in charge of the post, and he informed us that Captain Wyeth had returned only a few weeks since from the upper country, where he had been spending the winter, engaged in the arduous business of trapping, in the prosecution of which he had endured great and various hardships.

May 12th. ' The rainy season is not yet over; we have had almost constant showers since we arrived, but now the weather appears settled. Birds are numerous, particularly the warblers, (*Sylvia*.) Many of these are migratory, remaining but a few weeks: others breed here, and reside during the greater part of the summer. I have already procured several new species.

20th. ' Mr. Wyeth, came down from Walla-walla yesterday, and this morning I embarked with him in a large canoe, manned by Kanakas, for a trip to the Wallammet falls in order to procure salmon. We visited fort William, (Wyeth's new settlement upon Wappatoo island,) which is about fifteen miles from the lower mouth of the Wallammet. We found here the missionaries, Messrs. Lee and Edwards, who arrived to-day from their station, sixty miles above. They give flattering accounts of their prospects here; they are surrounded by a considerable number of Indians who are friendly to the introduction of civilization and religious light, and who treat them with the greatest hospitality and kindness. They have built several comfortable log houses, and the soil in their

---

vicinity they represent as unusually rich and productive. They have, I think, a good prospect of being serviceable to this miserable and degraded people; and if they commence their operations judiciously and pursue a steady, unwavering course, the Indians in this section of country may yet be redeemed from the thralldom of vice, superstition, and indolence, to which they have so long submitted, and above which their energies have not enabled them to rise.

The spot chosen by Captain W. for his fort is on a high piece of land, which will probably not be overflowed by the periodical freshets, and the soil is the rich black loam so plentifully distributed through this section of country. The men now live in tents and temporary huts, but several log houses are constructing which, when finished, will vie in durability and comfort with Vancouver itself.

21st. The large band-tail pigeon (*Colomba fasciata*) is very abundant near the river, found in flocks of from fifty to sixty, and perching upon the dead trees along the margin of the stream. They are feeding upon the buds of the balsam poplar; are very fat, and excellent eating. In the course of the morning, and without leaving the canoe, I killed enough to supply our people with provision for two days.

24th. We visited the falls to-day, and while Captain W. was inspecting the vicinity to decide upon the practicability of drawing his seine here, I strolled into the Indian lodges on the bank of the river. The poor creatures were all living miserably, and some appeared to be suffering absolute want. Those who were the best supplied, had nothing more than the fragments of a few sturgeons and lamprey eels, kamas bread, &c. To the roofs of the lodges were hung a number of crooked bladders, filled with rancid seal oil, used as a sort of condiment with the dry and unsavory sturgeon.

On the Klakamas river, about a mile below, we found a few lodges belonging to Indians of the Kalapooyah tribe. We addressed them in Chinook, (the language spoken by all those inhabiting the Columbia below the cascades,) but they evidently did not comprehend a word, answering in a peculiarly harsh and guttural language, with which we were entirely unacquainted. However, we easily made them understand by signs that we wanted salmon, and being assured in the same significant manner that they had none to sell, we decamped as soon as possible, to escape the fleas and other vermin with which the interior of their wretched habitations were plentifully supplied. We saw here a large Indian cemetery. The bodies had been buried under the ground, and each tomb had a board at its head, upon which was rudely painted some strange, uncouth figure. The pans, kettles, clothing, &c., of the deceased, were all suspended upon sticks, driven into the ground near the head board.

June 6th. The Indians frequently bring us salmon, and we observe that, invariably, before they part with them, they are careful to remove the hearts. This superstition, is religiously adhered to by all the Chinook tribe. Before the fish is split and prepared for eating, a small hole is made in the breast, the heart taken out, roasted, and eaten in silence, and with great gravity. This practice is continued only during the first month in which the salmon make their appearance, and is intended as a kind of propitiation to the particular deity or spirit who presides over the finny tribes. Superstition in all its absurd and most revolting aspects is rife among this people. They believe in "black spirits, and white, blue spirits, and grey," and to each grizzly monster some peculiar virtue or ghastly terror is attributed. When a chief goes on a hunting or fishing excursion, he puts himself under the care of one of these good spirits, and if his expedition is unsuccessful,

he affirms that the antagonist evil principle has gained the victory; but this belief does not prevent his making another, and another attempt, in the hope, each time, that his guardian genius will have the ascendancy.

In their treatment of diseases, they employ but few remedies, and these are generally simple and inefficacious. Wounds are treated with an application of green leaves, and bound with strips of pine bark, and in some febrile cases, a sweat is administered. This is effected by digging a hole two or three feet deep in the ground, and placing within it some hemlock or spruce boughs moistened with water; hot stones are then thrown in, and a frame work of twigs is erected over the opening, and covered closely with blankets to prevent the escape of the steam. Under this contrivance, the patient is placed; and after remaining fifteen or twenty minutes, he is removed, and plunged into cold water.

Their mode of "making medicine," to use their own term, is, however, very different from this. The sick man is laid upon a bed of mats and blankets, elevated from the ground, and surrounded by a raised frame work of hewn boards. Upon this frame two "medicine men" (sorcerers) place themselves, and commence chaunting, in a low voice, a kind of long drawn, sighing song. Each holds a stout stick, of about four feet long, in his hand, with which he beats upon the frame work, and keeps accurate time with the music. After a few minutes, the song begins to increase in loudness and quickness, (a corresponding force and celerity being given to the stick,) until in a short time the noise becomes almost deafening, and may well serve, in many instances, to accelerate the exit of him whom it is their intention to benefit.

During the administration of the medicine, the relations and friends of the patient are often employed in their usual avocations in the same house with him, and by his bedside; the women making mats, moccasins, baskets, &c., and the men lolling around, smoking or conversing upon general subjects. No appearance of sorrow or concern is manifested for the brother, husband, or father, expiring beside them, and but for the presence and ear-astounding din of the medicine men, you would not know that anything unusual had occurred to disturb the tranquillity of the family circle.

These medicine men are, of course, all impostors, their object being simply the acquisition of property; and in case of the recovery of the patient, they make the most exorbitant demands of his relations; but when the sick man dies, they are often compelled to fly, in order to escape the vengeance of the survivors, who generally attribute the fatal termination to the evil influence of the practitioner.

July 4th. ' This morning was ushered in by the firing of cannon on board our brig, and we had made preparations for spending the day in festivity, when, at about 9 o'clock, a letter was received from Mr. Walker, who has charge of the fort on Wappatoo island, stating that the tailor, Thornburg, had been killed this morning by Hubbard, the gunsmith, and requesting our presence immediately, to investigate the case, and direct him how to act.

Our boat was manned without loss of time, and Captain L. and myself repaired to the fort, where we found every thing in confusion. Poor Thornburg, whom I had seen but two days previously, full of health and vigor, was now a lifeless corpse; and Hubbard, who was more to be pitied, was walking up and down the beach, with a countenance pale and haggard, from the feelings at war within.

We held an inquest over the body, and examined all the men of the fort severally, for the purpose

---

of eliciting the facts of the case, and, if warranted by the evidence, to exculpate Hubbard from blame in the commission of the act. It appeared that, several weeks since, a dispute arose between Hubbard and Thornburg, and the latter menaced the life of the former, and had since been frequently heard to declare that he would carry the threat into effect on the first favorable opportunity. This morning, before daylight, he entered the apartment of Hubbard, armed with a loaded gun, and a large knife, and after making the most deliberate preparations for an instant departure from the room, as soon as the deed should be committed, cocked his gun, and prepared to shoot at his victim. Hubbard, who was awakened by the noise of Thornburg's entrance, and was therefore on the alert, waited quietly until this crisis, when cocking his pistol, without noise, he took deliberate aim at the assassin, and fired. Thornburg staggered back, his gun fell from his grasp, and the two combatants struggled hand to hand. The tailor, being wounded, was easily overcome, and was thrown violently out of the house, when he fell to the ground, and died in a few minutes. Upon examining the body, we found that the two balls from the pistol had entered the arm below the shoulder, and escaping the bone, had passed into the cavity of the chest. The verdict of the jury was "justifiable homicide," and a properly attested certificate, containing a full account of the proceedings, was given to Hubbard, as well for his satisfaction, as to prevent future difficulty, if the subject should ever be investigated by a judicial tribunal.

This Thornburg was an unusually bold and determined man, fruitful in inventing mischief, as he was reckless and daring in its prosecution. His appetite for ardent spirits was of the most inordinate kind. During the journey across the country, I constantly carried a large two-gallon bottle of whiskey, in which I deposited various kinds of lizards and serpents and when we arrived at the Columbia the vessel was almost full of these crawling creatures. I left the bottle on board the brig when I paid my first visit to the Wallamet falls, and on my return found that Thornburg had decanted the liquor from the precious reptiles which I had destined for immortality, and he and one of his pot companions had been "happy" upon it for a whole day. This appeared to me almost as bad as the "tapping of the Admiral," practiced with such success by the British seamen; but unlike their commander, I did not discover the theft until too late to save my specimens, which were in consequence all destroyed.

11th. ' Mr. Nuttall, who has just returned from the dalles, where he has been spending some weeks, brings distressing intelligence from above. It really seems that the "Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company" is devoted to destruction; disasters meet them at every turn, and as yet none of their schemes have prospered. This has not been for want of energy or exertion. Captain W. has pursued the plans which seemed to him best adapted for insuring success, with the most indefatigable perseverance and industry, and has endured hardships without murmuring, which would have prostrated many a more robust man; nevertheless, he has not succeeded in making the business of fishing and trapping productive, and as we cannot divine the cause, we must attribute it to the Providence that rules the destinies of men and controls all human enterprises.

Two evenings since, eight Sandwich Islanders, a white man and an Indian woman, left the cascades in a large canoe laden with salmon, for the brig. The river was as usual rough and tempestuous, the wind blew a heavy gale, the canoe was capsized, and eight out of the ten sank to rise no more. The two who escaped, islanders, have taken refuge among the Indians at the village below, and will probably join us in a few days.

Intelligence has also been received of the murder of one of Wyeth's principal trappers, named

Abbot, and another white man who accompanied him, by the Banneck Indians. The two men were on their way to the Columbia with a large load of beaver, and had stopped at the lodge of the Banneck chief, by whom they had been hospitably entertained. After they left, the chief, with several of his young men, concealed themselves in a thicket, near which the unsuspecting trappers passed, and shot and scalped them both.

These Indians have been heretofore harmless, and have always appeared to wish to cultivate the friendship of the white people. The only reason that can be conceived for this change in their sentiments, is that some of their number may lately have received injury from the white traders, and, with true Indian animosity, they determined to wreak their vengeance upon the whole race. Thus it is always unsafe to travel among Indians, as no one knows at what moment a tribe which has always been friendly, may receive ill treatment from thoughtless, or evil-designing men, and the innocent suffer for the deeds of the guilty.

August 19th. ' This morning, Captain Thing (Wyeth's partner) arrived from the interior. Poor man! he looks very much worn by fatigue and hardships, and seven years older than when I last saw him. He passed through the Snake country from Fort Hall, without knowing of the hostile disposition of the Bannecks, but, luckily for him, only met small parties of them, who feared to attack his camp. He remarked symptoms of distrust and coolness in their manner, for which he was, at the time, unable to account. As I have yet been only an hour in his company, and as a large portion of this time was consumed in his business affairs, I have not been able to obtain a very particular account of his meeting and skirmish with the Blackfeet last spring, a rumor of which we heard several weeks since. From what I have been enabled to gather, amid the hurry and bustle consequent upon his arrival, the circumstances appear to be briefly these. He had made a camp on Salmon river, and, as usual, piled up his goods in front of it, and put his horses in a pen erected temporarily for the purpose, when, at about daybreak, one of his sentries heard a gun discharged near. He went immediately to Captain T.'s tent to inform him of it, and at that instant a yell sounded from an adjacent thicket, and about five hundred Indians, ' three hundred horse and two hundred foot, ' rushed out into the open space in front. The mounted savages were dashing to and fro across the line of the camp, discharging their pieces with frightful rapidity, while those who had not horses, crawled around to take them in the rear.

Notwithstanding the galling fire which the Indians were constantly pouring into them, Captain T. succeeded in driving his horses into the thicket behind, and securing them there, placing over them a guard of three men as a check to the savages who were approaching from that quarter. He then threw himself with the remainder of his little band, behind the bales of goods, and returned the fire of the enemy. He states that occasionally he was gratified by the sight of an Indian tumbling from his horse, and at such times a dismal, savage yell was uttered by the rest, who then always fell back a little, but returned immediately to the charge with more than their former fury. At length the Indians, apparently wearied by their unsuccessful attempts to dislodge the white men, changed their mode of attack and rode upon the slight fortification, rapidly and steadily. Although they lost a man or two by this (for them) unusually bold proceeding, yet they succeeded in driving the brave little band of whites to the cover of the bushes. They then took possession of the goods, &c., which had been used as a defence, and retired to a considerable distance, where they were soon joined by their comrades on foot, who had utterly failed in their attempt to obtain the horses. In a short time, a man was seen advancing from the main body of Indians towards

---

the scene of combat, holding up his hand as a sign of amity, and an intimation of the suspension of hostilities, and requested a "talk" with the white people. Captain T., with difficulty repressing his inclination to shoot the savage herald down, was induced, in consideration of the safety of his party, to dispatch an interpreter towards him. The only information that the Blackfeet wished to communicate was, that having obtained all the goods of the white people, they were now willing that they should continue their journey in peace, and that they should not again be molested. The Indians then departed, and the white men struck back on their trail, towards Fort Hall. Captain Thing lost every thing he had with him, all his clothing, papers, journals, &c. But he should probably be thankful that he escaped with his life, for it is known to be very unusual for these hostile Indians to spare the lives of white men, when in their power, the acquisition of property being generally with them only a secondary consideration.

Captain T. had two men severely, but not mortally, wounded. The Indians had seven killed, and a considerable number wounded.

20th. 'Several days since a poor man came here in a most deplorable condition, having been gashed, stabbed, and bruised in a manner truly frightful. He had been travelling on foot constantly for fifteen days, exposed to the broiling sun, with nothing to eat during the whole of this time, except the very few roots which he had been able to find. He was immediately put in the hospital here, and furnished with every thing necessary for his comfort, as well as surgical attendance. He states that he left Monterey, in California, in the spring, in company with seven men, for the purpose of coming to the Wallammet to join Mr. Young, an American, who is now settled in that country. They met with no accident until they arrived at a village of Potameos Indians [Called by the inhabitants of this country, the "rascally Indians," from their uniformly evil disposition, and hostility to white people], about ten days journey south of this. Not knowing the character of these Indians, they were not on their guard, allowing them to enter their camp, and finally to obtain possession of their weapons. The Indians then fell upon the defenceless little band with their tomahawks and knives, (having no fire arms themselves, and not knowing the use of those they had taken,) and, ere the white men had recovered from the panic which the sudden and unexpected attack occasioned killed four of them. The remaining four fought with their knives as long as they were able, but were finally overpowered, and this poor fellow left upon the ground, covered with wounds, and in a state of insensibility. How long he remained in this situation, he has no means of ascertaining; but upon recovering, the place was vacated by all the actors in the bloody scene, except his three dead companions, who were lying stark and stiff where they fell. By considerable exertion, he was enabled to drag himself into a thicket near, for the purpose of concealment, as he rightly conjectured that their captors would soon return to secure the trophies of their treacherous victory, and bury the corpses. This happened almost immediately after; the scalps were torn from the heads of the slain, and the mangled bodies removed for interment. After the most dreadful and excruciating sufferings, as we can well believe, the poor man arrived here, and is doing well under the excellent and skilful care of Doctor Gairdner. I examined most of his wounds yesterday. He is literally covered with them, but one upon the lower part of his face is the most frightful. It was made by a single blow of a tomahawk, the point of which entered the upper lip, just below the nose, cutting entirely through both the upper and lower jaws and chin, and passing deep into the side of the neck, narrowly missing the large jugular vein. He says he perfectly recollects receiving this wound. It was inflicted by a powerful savage, who at the same

---

time tripped him with his foot, accelerating his fall. He also remembers distinctly feeling the Indian's long knife pass five separate times into his body; of what occurred after this he knows nothing. This is certainly by far the most horrible looking wound I ever saw, rendered so, however, by injudicious treatment and entire want of care in the proper apposition of the sundered parts; he simply bound it up as well as he could with his handkerchief, and his extreme anguish caused him to forget the necessity of accuracy in this respect. The consequence is, that the lower part of his face is dreadfully contorted, one side being considerably lower than the other. A union by the first intention has been formed, and the ill-arranged parts are uniting.

This case has produced considerable excitement in our little circle. The Potameos have more than once been guilty of acts of this kind, and some of the gentlemen of the fort have proposed fitting out an expedition to destroy the whole nation, but this scheme will probably not be carried into effect.

and ran direct for the river.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER XIV

Indians of the Columbia - their melancholy condition - Departure of Mr. Nuttall and Dr. Gairdner - A new vocation - Arrival of the Rev. Samuel Parker - his object - Departure of the American brig - Swans - Indian mode of taking them - A large wolf - An Indian mummy - A night adventure - A discovery, and restoration of stolen property - Fraternal tenderness of an Indian - Indian vengeance - Death of Waskema, the Indian girl - "Busybody," the little chief - A village of Kowalitsk Indians - Ceremony of "making medicine" - Exposure of an impostor - Success of legitimate medicines - Departure from Fort Vancouver for a visit to the interior - Arrival of a stranger - "Cape Horn" - Tilki, the Indian chief - Indian villages - Arrival at Fort Walla-walla - Sharptailed grouse - Commencement of a journey to the Blue mountains.

The Indians of the Columbia were once a numerous and powerful people; the shore of the river, for scores of miles, was lined with their villages; the council fire was frequently lighted, the pipe passed round, and the destinies of the nation deliberated upon. War was declared against neighboring tribes; the deadly tomahawk was lifted, and not buried until it was red with the blood of the savage; the bounding deer was hunted, killed, and his antlers ornamented the wigwam of the red man; the scalps of his enemies hung drying in the smoke of his lodge, and the Indian was happy. Now, alas! where is he? - gone; - gathered to his fathers and to his happy hunting grounds; his place knows him no more. The spot where once stood the thickly peopled village, the smoke curling and wreathing above the closely packed lodges, the lively children playing in the front, and their indolent parents lounging on their mats, is now only indicated by a heap of undistinguishable ruins. The depopulation here has been truly fearful. A gentleman told me, that only four years ago, as he wandered near what had formerly been a thickly peopled village, he counted no less than sixteen dead, men and women, lying unburied and festering in the sun in front of their habitations. Within the houses all were sick; not one had escaped the contagion; upwards of a hundred individuals, men, women, and children, were writhing in agony on the floors of the houses, with no one to render them any assistance. Some were in the dying struggle, and clenching with the convulsive grasp of death their disease-worn companions, shrieked and howled in the last sharp agony.

---

Probably there does not now exist one, where, five years ago, there were a hundred Indians; and in sailing up the river, from the cape to the cascades, the only evidence of the existence of the Indian, is an occasional miserable wigwam, with a few wretched, half-starved occupants. In some other places they are rather more numerous; but the thoughtful observer cannot avoid perceiving that in a very few years the race must, in the nature of things, become extinct; and the time is probably not far distant, when the little trinkets and toys of this people will be picked up by the curious, and valued as mementoes of a nation passed away for ever from the face of the earth. The aspect of things is very melancholy. It seems as if the fiat of the Creator had gone forth, that these poor denizens of the forest and the stream should go hence, and be seen of men no more.

In former years, when the Indians were numerous, long after the establishment of this fort, it was not safe for the white men attached to it to venture beyond the protection of its guns without being fully armed. Such was the jealousy of the natives towards them, that various deep laid schemes were practiced to obtain possession of the post, and massacre all whom it had harbored; now, however, they are as submissive as children. Some have even entered into the services of the whites, and when once the natural and persevering indolence of the man is worn off, he will work well and make himself useful.

About two hundred miles southward, the Indians are said to be in a much more flourishing condition, and their hostility to the white people to be most deadly. They believe that we brought with us the fatal fever which has ravaged this portion of the country, and the consequence is, that they kill without mercy every white man who trusts himself amongst them.

October 1st. - Doctor Gairdner, the surgeon of Fort Vancouver, took passage a few days ago to the Sandwich Islands, in one of the Company's vessels. He has been suffering for several months, with a pulmonary affection, and is anxious to escape to a milder and more salubrious climate. In his absence, the charge of the hospital will devolve on me, and my time will thus be employed through the coming winter. There are at present but few cases of sickness, mostly ague and fever, so prevalent at this season. My companion, Mr. Nuttall, was also a passenger in the same vessel. From the islands, he will probably visit California, and either return to the Columbia by the next ship, and take the route across the mountains, or double Cape Horn to reach his home.

16th. Several days since, the Rev. Samuel Parker, of Ithaca, N. York, arrived at the fort. He left his home last May, travelled to the rendezvous on the Colorado, with the fur company of Mr. Fontinelle, and performed the remainder of the journey with the Nez Perce or Cheaptin Indians. His object is to examine the country in respect to its agricultural and other facilities, with a view to the establishment of missions among the Indians. He will probably return to the States next spring, and report the result of his observations to the board of commissioners, by whose advice his pioneer journey has been undertaken. [Mr. Parker has since published an account of this tour, to which the reader is referred, for much valuable information, relative to the condition of the Indians on our western frontier. - TOWNSEND.]

On the 17th, I embarked with this gentleman in a canoe, for a visit to the lower part of the river. We arrived at the American brig in the afternoon, on board of which we quartered for the night, and the next morning early, the vessel cast off from the shore. She has her cargo of furs and salmon on board, and is bound to Boston, via the Sandwich and Society Islands. Mr. Parker took passage in her to Fort George, and in the afternoon I returned in my canoe to Vancouver.

December 1st. - The weather is now unusually fine. Instead of the drenching rains which general-

---

ly prevail during the winter months, it has been for some weeks clear and cool, the thermometer ranging from 35deg to 45deg.

The ducks and geese, which have swarmed throughout the country during the latter part of the autumn, are leaving us, and the swans are arriving in great numbers. These are here, as in all other places, very shy; it is difficult to approach them without cover; but the Indians have adopted a mode of killing them which is very successful; that of drifting upon the flocks at night, in a canoe, in the bow of which a large fire of pitch pine has been kindled. The swans are dazzled, and apparently stupefied by the bright light, and fall easy victims to the craft of the sportsman.

20th. 'Yesterday one of the Canadians took an enormous wolf in a beaver-trap. It is probably a distinct species from the common one, (lupus,) much larger and stronger, and of a yellowish cinereous color. The man states that he found considerable difficulty in capturing him, even after the trap had been fastened on his foot. Unlike the lupus, (which is cowardly and cringing when made prisoner,) he showed fight, and seizing the pole in his teeth, with which the man attempted to despatch him, with one backward jerk, threw his assailant to the ground, and darted at him, until checked by the trap chain. He was finally shot, and I obtained his skin, which I have preserved. I have just had a visit from an old and intelligent Indian chief, who lives near. It is now almost midnight, but for the last hour I have heard the old man wandering about like an unquiet spirit, in the neighborhood of my little mansion, and singing snatches of the wild, but sweetly musical songs of his tribe. It is a bitter night, and supposing the old man might be cold, I invited him to a seat by my comfortable fire.

He says, "eighty snows have chilled the earth since Maniquon was born." Maniquon has been a great warrior; he has himself taken twenty scalps between the rising and setting of the sun. Like most old people, he is garrulous, and, like all Indians, fond of boasting of his warlike deeds. I can sit for hours and hear old Maniquon relate the particulars of his numerous campaigns, his ambushes, and his "scrimmages," as old Hawk-eye would say. When he once gets into the spirit of it, he springs upon his feet, his old, sunken eyes sparkle like diamonds set in bronze, and he whirls his shrunken and naked arm around his head, as though it still held the deadly tomahawk. But in the midst of his excitement, seeming suddenly to recollect his fallen state, he sinks into his chair. "Maniquon is not a warrior now - he will never raise his axe again - his young men have deserted his lodge - his sons will go down to their graves, and the squaws will not sing of their great deeds." I have several times heard him speak the substance of these words in his own language, and in one instance he concluded thus:

"And who made my people what they are?" This question was put in a low voice, almost a whisper, and was accompanied by a look so savage and malignant, that I almost quailed before the imbecile old creature. I, however, answered quickly, without giving him time to reply to his own question.

"The Great Spirit, Maniquon," pointing with my finger impressively upwards.

"Yes, yes ' it was the Great Spirit; it was not the white man," I could have been almost angry with the old Indian for the look of deadly hostility with which he uttered these last words, but that I sympathized with his wounded pride, and pitied his sorrows too much to harbor any other feeling than commiseration for his manifold wrongs.

February 3d, 1836. ' During a visit to Fort William, last week, I saw, as I wandered through the forest, about three miles from the house, a canoe, deposited, as is usual, in the branches of a tree,

some fourteen feet from the ground. Knowing that it contained the body of an Indian, I ascended to it for the purpose of abstracting the skull; but upon examination, what was my surprise to find a perfect, embalmed body of a young female, in a state of preservation equal to any which I had seen from the catacombs of Thebes. I determined to obtain possession of it, but as this was not the proper time to carry it away, I returned to the fort, and said nothing of the discovery which I had made.

That night, at the witching hour of twelve, I furnished myself with a rope, and launched a small canoe, which I paddled up against the current to a point opposite the mummy tree. Here I ran my canoe ashore, and removing my shoes and stockings, proceeded to the tree, which was about a hundred yards from the river. I ascended, and making the rope fast around the body, lowered it gently to the ground; then arranging the fabric which had been displaced, as neatly as the darkness allowed, I descended, and taking the body upon my shoulders, bore it to my canoe, and pushed off into the stream. On arriving at the fort, I deposited my prize in the store house, and sewed around it a large Indian mat, to give it the appearance of a bale of guns. Being on a visit to the fort, with Indians whom I had engaged to paddle my canoe, I thought it unsafe to take the mummy on board when I returned to Vancouver the next day, but left directions with Mr. Walker to stow it away under the hatches of a little schooner, which was running twice a week between the two forts.

On the arrival of this vessel, several days after, I received, instead of the body, a note from Mr. Walker, stating that an Indian had called at the fort, and demanded the corpse. He was the brother of the deceased, and had been in the habit of visiting the tomb of his sister every year. He had now come for that purpose, from his residence near the "tum-water," (cascades,) and his keen eye had detected the intrusion of a stranger on the spot hallowed to him by many successive pilgrimages. The canoe of his sister was tenantless, and he knew the spoiler to have been a white man, by the tracks upon the beach, which did not incline inward like those of an Indian.

The case was so clearly made out, that Mr. W. could not deny the fact of the body being in the house, and it was accordingly delivered to him, with a present of several blankets, to prevent the circumstance from operating upon his mind to the prejudice of the white people. The poor Indian took the body of his sister upon his shoulders, and as he walked away, grief got the better of his stoicism, and the sound of his weeping was heard long after he had entered the forest.

25th. Several weeks ago the only son of Ke-ez-a-no, the principal chief of the Chinooks, died. The father was almost distracted with grief, and during the first paroxysm attempted to take the life of the boy's mother, supposing that she had exerted an evil influence over him which had caused his death. She was compelled to fly in consequence, and put herself under the protection of Dr. McLoughlin, who found means to send her to her people below. Disappointed in this scheme of vengeance, the chief determined to sacrifice all whom he thought had ever wronged his son, or treated him with indignity; and the first victim whom he selected was a very pretty and accomplished Chinook girl, named Waskema, who was remarkable for the exceeding beauty of her long black hair. Waskema had been solicited by the boy in marriage, but had refused him, and the matter had been long forgotten, until it was revived in the recollection of the father by the death of his son. Ke-ez-a-no despatched two of his slaves to Fort William, (where the girl was at that time engaged in making moccasins for Mr. W. and where I had seen her a short time previously,) who hid themselves in the neighborhood until the poor creature had embarked in her canoe alone to

---

return to her people, when they suddenly rushed upon her from the forest which skirted the river, and shot two balls through her bosom. The body was then thrown into the water, and the canoe broken to pieces on the beach.

Tapeo the brother of Waskema delivered to me a letter from Mr. W. detailing these circumstances, and amid an abundance of tears which he shed for the loss of his only and beloved sister, he denounced the heaviest vengeance upon her murderer. These threats, however, I did not regard, as I knew the man would never dare to raise his hand against his chief, but as expression relieves the overcharged heart, I did not check his bursts of grief and indignation.

A few days after this, Ke-ez-a-no himself stalked into my room. After sitting a short time in silence, he asked if I believed him guilty of the murder of Waskema. I replied that I did, and that if the deed had been committed in my country, he would be hanged. He denied all agency in the matter, and placing one hand upon his bosom, and pointing upwards with the other, called God to witness that he was innocent. For the moment I almost believed his asseverations; but calling to mind the strong and undeniable evidence against him, with a feeling of horror and repugnance, I opened the door and bowed him out of the house.

March 1st. - There is an amusing little Indian living in this neighborhood, who calls himself "tanas tie," (little chief,) and he is so probably in every sense of the term. In person, he stands about four feet six, in his moccasins; but no exquisite in the fashionable world, no tinselled dandy in high life, can strut and stamp, and fume with more dignity and self consequence. His name, he says, is Qualaskin; but in the fort, he is known by the cognomen of "busy body," from his restless anxiety to pry into every body's business, and his curiosity to know the English name of every article he sees; ikata ookook? ikata ookook? (what is this? what is this?) kahtah pasiooks yahhalle? (what is its English name?) are expressions which he is dinning in your ears, whenever he enters a room in the fort. If you answer him, he attempts the pronunciation after you, and it is often not a little ludicrous. He is evidently proud of the name the white people have given him, not understanding its import, but supposing it to be a title of great honor and dignity. If he is asked his Indian name, he answers very modestly, Qualaskin, (muddy river,) but if his pasiooks yahhalle is required, he puffs up his little person to its utmost dimensions, and tells you with a simper of pride and self complacency, that it is "mizzy moddy."

16th. ' Doctor W. F. Tolmie, one of the surgeons of the Hudson's Bay Company, has just arrived from Fort Langley, on the coast, and has relieved me of the charge of the hospital, which will afford me the opportunity of peregrinating again in pursuit of specimens. The spring is just opening, the birds are arriving, the plants are starting from the ground, and in a few weeks, the wide prairies of the Columbia will appear like the richest flower gardens.

May 13th. ' Two days ago I left the fort, and am now encamped on a plain below Warrior's point. Near me are several large lodges of Kowalitsk Indians; in all probably one hundred persons. As usual, they give me some trouble by coming around and lolling about my tent, and importuning me for the various little articles that they see. My camp-keeper, however, (a Klikatat,) is an excellent fellow, and has no great love for Kowalitsk Indians, so that the moment he sees them becoming troublesome, he clears the coast, sans ceremonie. There is in one of the lodges a very pretty little girl, sick with intermittent fever; and to-day the "medicine man" has been exercising his functions upon the poor little patient; pressing upon its stomach with his brawny hands until it shrieked with the pain, singing and muttering his incantations, whispering in its ears, and ex-

---

horting the evil spirit to pass out by the door, &c. These exhibitions would be laughable did they not involve such serious consequences, and for myself I always feel so much indignation against the unfeeling impostor who operates, and pity for the deluded creatures who submit to it, that any emotions but those of risibility are excited.

I had a serious conversation with the father of this child, in which I attempted to prove to him, and to some twenty or thirty Indians who were squatted about the ground near, that the "medicine man" was a vile impostor, that he was a fool and a liar, and that his manipulations were calculated to increase the sufferings of the patient instead of relieving them. They all listened in silence, and with great attention to my remarks, and the wily conjurer himself had the full benefit of them: he stood by during the whole time, assuming an expression of callous indifference which not even my warmest vituperations could affect. Finally I offered to exhibit the strongest proof of the truth of what I had been saying, by pledging myself to cure the child in three days, provided the "medicine man" was dismissed without delay. This, the father told me, required some consideration and consultation with his people, and I immediately left the lodge and took the way to my camp, to allow them an opportunity of discussing the matter alone.

Early next morning the Indian visited me, with the information that the "medicine man" had departed, and he was now anxious that I should make trial of my skill. I immediately administered to the child an active cathartic, followed by sulphate of quinine, which checked the disease, and in two days the patient was perfectly restored.

In consequence of my success in this case, I had an application to administer medicine to two other children similarly affected. My stock of quinine being exhausted, I determined to substitute an extract of the bark of the dogwood, (*Corpus Nuttalli*.) and taking one of the parents into the wood with his blanket, I soon chipped off a plentiful supply, returned, boiled it in his own kettle, and completed the preparation in his lodge, with most of the Indians standing by, and staring at me, to comprehend the process.

This was exactly what I wished; and as I proceeded, I took some pains to explain the whole matter to them, in order that they might at a future time be enabled to make use of a really valuable medicine, which grows abundantly every where throughout the country. I have often thought it strange that the sagacity of the Indians should not long ago have made them acquainted with this remedy; and I believe, if they had used it, they would not have had to mourn the loss of hundreds, or even thousands of their people who have been swept away by the demon of ague and fever.

I administered to each of the children about a scruple of the extract per day. The second day they escaped the paroxysm, and on the third were entirely well.

June 26th. 'I left Vancouver yesterday, with the summer brigade, for a visit to Walla-walla, and its vicinity. The gentlemen of the party are, Peter Ogden, Esq., chief factor, bound to New Caledonia, Archibald McDonald, Esq., for Colville, and Samuel Black, Esq., for Thompson's river, and the brigade consists of sixty men, with nine boats.

27th. 'We arrived yesterday at the upper cascades, and made in the course of the day three portages. As is usual in this place, it rained almost constantly, and the poor men engaged in carrying the goods, were completely drenched. A considerable number of Indians are employed here in fishing, and they supply us with an abundance of salmon. Among them I recognise many of my old friends from below.

28th. 'This morning the Indian wife of one of the men gave birth to a little girl. The tent in which

she was lying was within a few feet of the one which I occupied, and we had no intimation of the matter being in progress until we heard the crying of the infant. It is truly astonishing with what ease the parturition of these women is performed; they generally require no assistance in delivery, being fully competent to manage the whole paraphernalia themselves. In about half an hour after this event we got under way, and the woman walked to the boat, carrying her new born infant on her back, embarked, laughed, and talked as usual, and appeared in every respect as well as if nothing had happened.

This woman is a most noble specimen of bone and muscle, and so masculine in appearance, that were she to cast the petticoat, and don the breeches, the cheat would never be discovered, and but few of the lords of the creation would be willing to face the Amazon. She is particularly useful to her husband. As he is becoming rather infirm, she can protect him most admirably. If he wishes to cross a stream in travelling without horses or boats, she plunges in without hesitation, takes him upon her back, and lands him safely and expeditiously upon the opposite bank. She can also kill and dress an elk, run down and shoot a buffalo, or spear a salmon for her husband's breakfast in the morning, as well as any man-servant he could employ. Added to all this, she has, in several instances, saved his life in skirmishes with Indians, at the imminent risk of her own, so that he has some reason to be proud of her.

In the afternoon, we passed the bold, basaltic point, known to the voyageurs by the name of "Cape Horn." The wind here blew a perfect hurricane, and but for the consummate skill of those who managed our boats, we must have had no little difficulty.

30th.' We were engaged almost the whole of this day in making portages, and I had, in consequence, some opportunity of prosecuting my researches on the land. We have now passed the range of vegetation; there are no trees or even shrubs; nothing but huge, jagged rocks of basalt, and interminable sand heaps. I found here a large and beautiful species of marmot, (the *Arctomys Richardsonii*,) several of which I shot. Encamped in the evening at the village of the Indian chief, Tilki. I had often heard of this man, but I now saw him for the first time. His person is rather below the middle size, but his features are good, with a Roman cast, and his eye is deep black, and unusually fine. He appears to be remarkably intelligent, and half a century before the generality of his people in civilization.

July 3d.' This morning we came to the open prairies, covered with wormwood bushes. The appearance, and strong odor of these, forcibly remind me of my journey across the mountains, when we frequently saw no vegetation for weeks, except this dry and barren looking shrub.

The Indians here are numerous, and are now engaged in catching salmon, lamprey eels, &c. They take thousands of the latter, and they are seen hanging in great numbers in their lodges to dry in the smoke. As soon as the Indians see us approach, they leave their wigwams, and run out towards us, frequently wading to their breasts in the water, to get near the boats. Their constant cry is pi-pi, pi-pi, (tobacco, tobacco,) and they bring a great variety of matters to trade for this desirable article; fish, living birds of various kinds, young wolves, foxes, minks, &c.

On the evening of the 6th, we arrived at Walla-walla or Nez Perces fort, where I was kindly received by Mr. Pambrun, the superintendent.

The next day the brigade left us for the interior, and I shouldered my gun for an excursion through the neighborhood. On the west side of the little Walla-walla river, I saw, during a walk of two miles, at least thirty rattlesnakes, and killed five that would not get out of my way; They

all seemed willing to dispute the ground with me, shaking their rattles, coiling and darting at me with great fury. I returned to the fort in the afternoon with twenty-two sharp-tailed grouse, (*Tetrao phasianellus*,) the product of my day's shooting.

25th. I mounted my horse this morning for a journey to the Blue mountains. I am accompanied by a young half breed named Baptiste Dorion, [This is the son of old Pierre Dorion, who makes such a conspicuous figure in Irving's "Astoria." ' TOWNSEND.] who acts as guide, groom, interpreter, &c., and I have a pack horse to carry my little nick-nackeries. We shaped our course about N. E. over the sandy prairie, and in the evening encamped on the Morro river, having made about thirty miles.

On our way, we met two Walla-walla Indians driving down a large band of horses. They inform us that the Snakes have crossed the mountain to commence their annual thieving of horses, and they are taking them away to have them secure. I shall need to keep a good look out to my own small caravan, or I shall be under the necessity of turning pedestrian.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER XV

A village of Kayouse Indians - their occupation - appearance and dresses of the women - family worship - its good effects - Visit to the Blue mountains - Dusky grouse - Return to Walla-walla - Arrival of Mr. McLeod, and the missionaries - Letters from home - Death of Antoine Goddin, the trapper - A renegado white man - Assault by the Walla-walla Indians - Missionary duties - Passage down the Columbia - Rapids - A dog for supper - Prairies on fire - A nocturnal visit - Fishing Indians - Their romantic appearance - Salmon huts - The shoots - Dangerous navigation - Death of Tilki - Seals - Indian stoicism and contempt of pain - Skookoom, the strong chief - his death - Maiming, an evidence of grief - Arrival at Fort Vancouver - A visit to Fort George - Indian cemeteries - Lewis and Clarke's house - A medal - Visit to Chinook - Hospitality of the Indians - Chinamus' house - The idol - Canine inmates.

July 26th.- At noon, to-day, we arrived at the Utalla, or Emmitilly river, where we found a large village of Kayouse Indians, engaged in preparing kamas. Large quantities of this root were strewed about on mats and buffalo robes; some in a crude state, and a vast quantity pounded, to be made into cakes for winter store. There are of the Indians, about twelve or fifteen lodges. A very large one, about sixty feet long by fifteen broad, is occupied by the chief, and his immediate family. This man I saw when I arrived at Walla-walla, and I have accepted an invitation to make my home in his lodge while I remain here. The house is really a very comfortable one; the rays of the sun are completely excluded, and the ground is covered with buffalo robes. There are in the chief's lodge about twenty women, all busy as usual; some pounding kamas, others making leathern dresses, moccasins, &c. Several of the younger of these are very good looking, I might almost say handsome. Their heads are of the natural form, not flattened and contorted in the horrible manner of the Chinooks; their faces are inclining to oval, and their eyes have a peculiarly sleepy and languishing appearance. They seem as if naturally inclined to lasciviousness, but if this feeling exists, it is effectually checked by their self-enacted laws, which are very severe in this respect, and in every instance rigidly enforced. The dresses of the women, (unlike the Chinooks, they all have dresses,) are of deer or antelope skin, more or less ornamented with beads and hyquas. [A long white shell, of the genus *Dentalium*, found on the coast. ' TOWNSEND.] It consists of one piece, but the part covering the bust, projects over the lower portion of the garment, and its edges are

---

cut into strings, to which a quantity of blue beads are generally attached.

In the evening all the Indians belonging to the village assembled in our lodge, and, with the chief for minister, performed divine service, or family worship. This, I learn, is their invariable practice twice every twenty-four hours, at sunrise in the morning, and after supper in the evening. When all the people had gathered, our large lodge was filled. On entering, every person squatted on the ground, and the clerk (a sort of sub-chief) gave notice that the Deity would now be addressed. Immediately the whole audience rose to their knees, and the chief supplicated for about ten minutes in a very solemn, but low tone of voice, at the conclusion of which an amen was pronounced by the whole company, in a loud, swelling sort of groan. Three hymns were then sung, several of the individuals present leading in rotation, and at the conclusion of each, another amen. The chief then pronounced a short exhortation, occupying about fifteen minutes, which was repeated by the clerk at his elbow in a voice loud enough to be heard by the whole assembly. At the conclusion of this, each person rose, and walked to one of the doors of the lodge, where, making a low inclination of his body, and pronouncing the words "tots sekan," (good night,) to the chief, he departed to his home.

I shall hear this ceremony every night and morning while I remain, and so far from being irksome, it is agreeable to me. It is pleasant to see these poor degraded creatures performing a religious service; for to say nothing of the good influence which it will exert in improving their present condition, it will probably soften and harmonize their feelings, and render them fitter subjects for the properly qualified religious instruction which it is desirable they may some day receive.

The next morning, my friend the chief furnished me with fresh horses, and I and my attendant, with two Indian guides, started for a trip to the mountain. We passed up one of the narrow valleys or gorges which here run at right angles from the alpine land, and as we ascended, the scenery became more and more wild, and the ground rough and difficult of passage, but I had under me one of the finest horses I ever rode; he seemed perfectly acquainted with the country; I had but to give him his head, and not attempt to direct him, and he carried me triumphantly through every difficulty. Immediately as we reached the upper land, and the pine trees, we saw large flocks of the dusky grouse, (*Tetrao obscurus*,) a number of which we killed. Other birds were, however, very scarce. I am at least two months too late, and I cannot too much regret the circumstance. Here is a rich field for the ornithologist at the proper season. We returned to our lodge in the evening loaded with grouse, but with very few specimens to increase my collection.

29th. Early this morning our Indians struck their lodges, and commenced making all their numerous movables into bales for packing on the horses. I admired the facility and despatch with which this was done; the women alone worked at it, the men lolling around, smoking and talking, and not even once directing their fair partners in their task. The whole camp travelled with me to Walla-walla, where we arrived the next day.

Sept. 1st. - Mr. John M'Leod, a chief trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, arrived this morning from the rendezvous, with a small trading party. I had been anxiously expecting this gentleman for several weeks, as I intended to return with him to Vancouver. He is accompanied by several Presbyterian missionaries, the Rev. Mr. Spalding and Doctor Whitman, with their wives, and Mr. Gray, teacher. Doctor Whitman presented me with a large packet of letters from my beloved friends at home. I need not speak of the emotions excited by their reception, nor of the trembling anxiety with which I tore open the envelope and devoured the contents. This is the first intelli-

---

gence which I have received from them since I left the state of Missouri, and was as unexpected as it was delightful.

Mr. M'Leod informed me of the murder of Antoine Goddin, the half-breed trapper, by the Black-foot Indians, at Fort Hall. - A band of these Indians appeared on the shore of the Portneuf river, opposite the fort, headed by a white man named Bird. - This man requested Goddin, whom he saw on the opposite side of the river, to cross to him with a canoe, as he had beaver which he wished to trade. The poor man accordingly embarked alone, and landing near the Indians, joined the circle which they had made, and smoked the pipe of peace with them. While Goddin was smoking in his turn, Bird gave a sign to the Indians, and a volley was fired into his back. While he was yet living, Bird himself tore the scalp from the poor fellow's head, and deliberately cut Captain Wyeth's initials, N. J. W. in large letters upon his forehead. He then hallooed to the fort people, telling them to bury the carcass if they wished, and immediately went off with his party. This Bird was formerly attached to the Hudson's Bay Company, and was made prisoner by the Blackfeet, in a skirmish several years ago. He has since remained with them, and has become a great chief, and leader of their war parties. He is said to be a man of good education, and to possess the most unbounded influence over the savage people among whom he dwells. He was known to be a personal enemy of Goddin, whom he had sworn to destroy on the first opportunity.

We also hear, that three of Captain Wyeth's men who lately visited us, had been assaulted on their way to Fort Hall, by a band of Walla-walla Indians, who, after beating them severely, took from them all their horses, traps, ammunition, and clothing. They were, however, finally induced to return them each a horse and gun, in order that they might proceed to the interior, to get fresh supplies. This was a matter of policy on the part of the Indians, for if the white men had been compelled to travel on foot, they would have come immediately here to procure fresh horses, &c., and thus exposed the plunderers. Mr. Pambrun is acquainted with the ringleader of this band of marauders, and intends to take the first opportunity of inflicting upon him due punishment, as well as to compel him to make ample restitution for the stolen property, and broken heads of the unoffending trappers.

I have had this evening, some interesting conversation with our guests, the missionaries. They appear admirably qualified for the arduous duty to which they have devoted themselves, their minds being fully alive to the mortifications and trials incident to a residence among wild Indians; but they do not shrink from the task, believing it to be their religious duty to engage in this work. The ladies have borne the journey astonishingly; they look robust and healthy.

3d. Mr. M'Leod and myself embarked in a large batteau, with six men, and bidding farewell to Mr. Pambrun and the missionaries, were soon gliding down the river. We ran, to-day, several rapids, and in the evening encamped about fifteen miles below the mouth of the Utalla river.

This running of rapids appears rather a dangerous business to those unaccustomed to it, and it is in reality sufficiently hazardous, except when performed by old and skilful hands. Every thing depends upon the men who manage the bow and stern of the boat. The moment she enters the rapid, the two guides lay aside their oars taking in their stead paddles, such as are used in the management of a canoe. The middle-men ply their oars; the guides brace themselves against the gunwale of the boat, placing their paddles edge-wise down her sides, and away she goes over the curling, foaming, and hissing waters, like a race horse.

---

We passed to-day several large lodges of Indians, from whom we wished to have purchased fish, but they had none, or were not willing to spare any, so that we were compelled to purchase a dog for supper. I have said we, but I beg leave to correct myself, as I was utterly averse to the proceeding; not, however, from any particular dislike to the quality of the food, (I have eaten it repeatedly, and relished it,) but I am always unwilling, unless when suffering absolute want, to take the life of so noble and faithful an animal. Our hungry oarsmen, however, appeared to have no such scruples. The Indian called his dog, and he came to him, wagging his tail! He sold his companion for ten balls and powder! One of our men approached the poor animal with an axe. I turned away my head to avoid the sight, but I heard the dull, sodden sound of the blow. The tried friend and faithful companion lay quivering in the agonies of death at its master's feet.

We are enjoying a most magnificent sight at our camp this evening. On the opposite side of the river, the Indians have fired the prairie, and the whole country for miles around is most brilliantly illuminated. Here am I sitting crosslegged on the ground, scribbling by the light of the vast conflagration with as much ease as if I had a ton of oil burning by my side; but my eyes are every moment involuntarily wandering from the paper before me, to contemplate and admire the grandeur of the distant scene. The very heavens themselves appear ignited, and the fragments of ashes and burning grass-blades, ascending and careering about through the glowing firmament, look like brilliant and glorious birds let loose to roam and revel amid this splendid scene. It is past midnight: every one in the camp is asleep, and I am this moment visited by half a dozen Indian fishermen, who are peering over my shoulders, and soliciting a smoke, so that I shall have to stop, and fill my calamet.

5th. The Indians are numerous along the river, and all engaged in fishing; as we pass along, we frequently see them posted upon the rocks overhanging the water, surveying the boiling and roaring flood below, for the passing salmon. In most instances, an Indian is seen entirely alone in these situations, often standing for half an hour perfectly still, his eyes rivetted upon the torrent, and his long fish spear poised above his head. The appearance of a solitary and naked savage thus perched like an eagle upon a cliff, is sometimes, 'when taken in connexion with the wild and rugged river scenery,' very picturesque. The spear is a pole about twelve feet in length, at the end of which a long wooden fork is made fast, and between the tines is fixed a barbed iron point. They also, in some situations, use a hand scoopnet, and stand upon scaffolds ingeniously constructed over the rapid water. Their winter store of dried fish is stowed away in little huts of mats and branches, closely interlaced, and also in caches under ground. It is often amusing to see the hungry ravens tearing and tugging at the strong twigs of the houses, in a vain attempt to reach the savory food within.

In the afternoon, we passed John Day's river, and encamped about sunset at the "shoots." Here is a very large village of Indians, (the same that I noticed in my journal, on the passage down,) and we are this evening surrounded by some scores of them.

6th. We made the portage of the shoots this morning by carrying our boat and baggage across the land, and in half an hour, arrived at one of the upper dalles. Here Mr. M'Leod and myself debarked, and the men ran the dall. We walked on ahead to the most dangerous part, and stood upon the rocks about a hundred feet above to observe them. It really seemed exceedingly dangerous to see the boat dashing ahead like lightning through the foaming and roaring waters, sometimes raised high above the enormous swells, and dashed down again as if she were seeking the

bottom with her bows, and at others whirled around and nearly sucked under by the whirlpools constantly forming around her. But she stemmed every thing gallantly, under the direction of our experienced guides, and we soon embarked again, and proceeded to the lower dalles. Here it is utterly impossible, in the present state of the water, to pass, so that the boat and baggage had to be carried across the whole portage. This occupied the remainder of the day, and we encamped in the evening at a short distance from the lower villages. The Indians told us with sorrowful faces of the recent death of their principal chief, Tilki. Well, thought I, the white man has lost a friend, and long will it be before we see his like again! The poor fellow was unwell when I last saw him, with a complaint of his breast, which I suspected to be pulmonary. I gave him a few simple medicines, and told him I should soon see him again. Well do I remember the look of despondency with which he bade me farewell, and begged me to return soon and give him more medicine. About two weeks since he ruptured a blood vessel, and died in a short time.

We see great numbers of seals as we pass along. Immediately below the Dalles they are particularly abundant, being attracted thither by the vast shoals of salmon which seek the turbulent water of the river. We occasionally shoot one of them as he raises his dog-like head above the surface, but we make no use of them; they are only valuable for the large quantity of oil which they yield.

We observe on the breasts and bellies of many of the Indians here, a number of large red marks, mostly of an oval form, sometimes twenty or thirty grouped together. These are wounds made by their own hands, to display to their people the unwavering and stoical resolution with which they can endure pain. A large fold of the skin is taken up with the fingers, and sliced off with a knife; the surrounding fibre then retreats, and a large and ghastly looking wound remains. Many that I saw to-day are yet scarcely cicatrized. There is a chief here who obtained the dignity which he now enjoys, solely by his numerous and hardy feats of this kind. He was originally a common man, and possessed but one wife; he has now six, and any of the tribe would think themselves honored by his alliance. He is a most gigantic fellow, about six feet four inches in height, and remarkably stout and powerful. The whole front of his person is covered with the red marks of which I have spoken, and he displays with considerable pride the two scars of a bullet, which entered the left breast, and passed out below the shoulder blade. This wound he also made with his own hand, by placing the muzzle of his gun against his breast, and pressing the trigger with his toe; and by this last, and most daring act, he was raised to the chief command of all the Indians on the north side of the river. Now that Tilki is no more, he will probably be chosen chief of all the country from the cascades to Walla-walla. I asked him if he felt no fear of death from the wound in his chest, at the time it was inflicted. He said, no; that his heart was strong, and that a bullet could never kill him. He told me that he was entirely well in a week after this occurrence, but that for two days he vomited blood constantly. He is named by the Indians "Skookoom," (the strong.)

About six weeks after, Mr. M'Leod, who again returned from a visit to Walla-walla, informed me that the strong chief was dead. A bullet, (or rather two of them,) killed him at last, in spite of his supposed invulnerability. He was shot by one of his people in a fit of jealousy. Skookoom had assisted Mr. M'Leod with his boats across the portage, and, being a chief, he of course received more for the service than a common man. This wretch, who was but a serf in the tribe, chose to be offended by it, and vented his rage by murdering his superior. He fired a ball from his own gun into his breast, which brought him to the ground, and then despatched him with a second, which he seized from another. So poor Skookoom has passed away, and such is the frail tenure

---

upon which an Indian chief holds his authority and his life. The murderer will no doubt soon die by the hand of some friend or relative of the deceased; he in his turn will be killed by another, and as usual, the bloody business will go on indefinitely, and may even tend to produce an open war between the rival parties.

I saw an old man here, apparently eighty years of age, who had given himself three enormous longitudinal gashes in his leg, to evince his grief for the loss of Tilki. From the sluggishness of the circulation in the body of the poor old creature, combined with a morbid habit, these wounds show no disposition to heal. I dressed his limb, and gave him a strict charge to have it kept clean, but knowing the universal carelessness of Indians in this respect, I fear my directions will not be attended to, and the consequence will probably be, that the old man will die miserably. I spoke to him of the folly of such inflictions, and took this opportunity of delivering a short lecture upon the same subject to the others assembled in his lodge.

At 11 o'clock next day we arrived at the cascades, where we made the long portage, and at nine in the evening encamped in an ash grove, six miles above Prairie de The.

On the 8th, reached Vancouver, where we found two vessels which had just arrived from England. On the 24th, I embarked in a canoe with Indians for Fort George, and arrived in two days. Here I was kindly received by the superintendent, Mr. James Birnie, and promised every assistance in forwarding my views.

30th. I visited to-day some cemeteries in the neighborhood of the fort, and obtained the skulls of four Indians. Some of the bodies were simply deposited in canoes, raised five or six feet from the ground, either in the forks of trees, or supported on stakes driven into the earth. In these instances it was not difficult to procure the skulls without disarranging the fabric; but more frequently, they were nailed in boxes, or covered by a small canoe, which was turned bottom upwards, and placed in a larger one, and the whole covered by strips of bark, carefully arranged over them. It was then necessary to use the utmost caution in removing the covering, and also to be careful to leave every thing in the same state in which it was found. I thought several times to-day, as I have often done in similar situations before: 'Now suppose an Indian were to step in here, and see me groping among the bones of his fathers, and laying unhallowed hands upon the mouldering remains of his people, what should I say?' I know well what the Indian would do. He would instantly shoot me, unless I took the most effectual measures to prevent it; but could I have time allowed me to temporize a little, I could easily disarm his hostility and ensure his silence, by the offer of a shirt or a blanket; but the difficulty in most cases would be, that in a paroxysm of rage he would put a bullet through your head, and then good bye to temporizing. Luckily for my pursuits in this way, there are at present but few Indians here, and I do not therefore incur much risk; were it otherwise, there would be no little danger in these aggressions.

The corpses of the several different tribes which are buried here, are known by the difference in the structure of their canoes; and the sarcophagi of the chiefs from those of the common people, by the greater care which has been manifested in the arrangement of the tomb.

October 14th. I walked to-day around the beach to the foot of Young's bay, a distance of about ten miles, to see the remains of the house in which Lewis and Clark's party resided during the winter which they spent here. The logs of which it is composed, are still perfect, but the roof of bark has disappeared, and the whole vicinity is overgrown with thorn and wild currant bushes.

One of Mr. Birnie's children found, a few days since, a large silver medal, which had been brought

here by Lewis and Clark, and had probably been presented to some chief, who lost it. On one side was a head, with the name "Th. Jefferson, President of the United States, 1801.," On the other, two hands interlocked, surmounted by a pipe and tomahawk; and above the words, "Peace and Friendship."

15th. ' This afternoon I embarked in a canoe with Chinamus, and went with him to his residence at Chinook. The chief welcomed me to his house in a style which would do no discredit to a more civilized person. His two wives were ordered to make a bed for me, which they did by piling up about a dozen of their soft mats, and placing my blankets upon them, and a better bed I should never wish for. I was regaled, before I retired, with sturgeon, salmon, wappatoos, cranberries, and every thing else that the mansion afforded, and was requested to ask for any thing I wanted, and it should be furnished me. Whatever may be said derogatory to these people, I can testify that inhospitality is not among the number of their failings. I never went into the house of an Indian in my life, in any part of the country, without being most cordially received and welcomed.

The chief's house is built in the usual way, of logs and hewn boards, with a roof of cedar bark, and lined inside with mats. The floor is boarded and matted, and there is a depression in the ground about a foot in depth and four feet in width, extending the whole length of the building in the middle, where the fires are made.

In this, as in almost every house, there is a large figure, or idol, rudely carved and painted upon a board, and occupying a conspicuous place. To this figure many of the Indians ascribe supernatural powers. Chinamus says that if he is in any kind of danger, and particularly, if he is under the influence of an evil spell, he has only to place himself against the image, and the difficulty, of whatever kind, vanishes at once. This certainly savors of idolatry, although I believe they never address the uncouth figure as a deity. Like all other Indians, they acknowledge a great and invisible spirit, who governs and controls, and to whom all adoration is due.

Attached to this establishment, are three other houses, similarly constructed, inhabited by about thirty Indians, and at least that number of dogs. These, although very useful animals in their place, are here a great nuisance. They are of no possible service to the Indians, except to eat their provisions, and fill their houses with fleas, and a stranger approaching the lodges, is in constant danger of being throttled by a legion of fierce brutes, who are not half as hospitable as their masters.

I remained here several days, making excursions through the neighborhood, and each time when I returned to the lodge, the dogs growled and darted at me. I had no notion of being bitten, so I gave the Indians warning, that unless the snarling beasts were tied up when I came near, I would shoot every one of them. The threat had the effect desired, and after this, whenever I approached the lodges, there was a universal stir among the people, and the words, "iskam kahmooks, iskam kahmooks, kalak'alah tie chahko," (take up your dogs, take up your dogs, the bird chief is coming,) echoed through the little village, and was followed by the yelping and snarling of dozens of wolf-dogs, and "curs of low degree," all of which were gathered in haste to the cover and protection of one of the houses.

Townsend's Across the Rockies to the Columbia

---

#### CHAPTER XVI

Northern excursion - Large shoals of salmon - Indian mode of catching them - House near the beach - Flathead children - A storm on the bay - Loss of provision - Pintail ducks - Simple mode

---

of killing salmon - Return to Chinook - Indian garrulity - Return to Fort George - Preparations for a second trip to the Sandwich Islands - Detention within the cape.

October 17th.- I left Chinook this morning in a canoe with Chinamus, his two wives, and a slave, to procure shell-fish, which are said to be found in great abundance towards the north. We passed through a number of narrow slues which connect the numerous bays in this part of the country, and at noon debarked, left our canoe, took our blankets on our shoulders and struck through the midst of a deep pine forest. After walking about two miles, we came to another branch, where we found a canoe which had been left there for us yesterday, and embarking in this, we arrived in the evening at an Indian house, near the seaside, where we spent the night.

In our passage through some of the narrow channels today, we saw vast shoals of salmon, which were leaping and curvetting about in every direction, and not unfrequently dashing their noses against our canoe, in their headlong course. We met here a number of Indians engaged in fishing. Their mode of taking the salmon is a very simple one. The whole of the tackle consists of a pole about twelve feet long, with a large iron hook attached to the end. This machine they keep constantly trailing in the water, and when the fish approaches the surface, by a quick and dexterous jerk, they fasten the iron into his side, and shake him off into the canoe. They say they take so many fish that it is necessary for them to land about three times a day to deposit them.

The house in which we sleep to-night is not near so comfortable as the one we have left. It stinks intolerably of salmon, which are hanging by scores to the roof, to dry in the smoke, and our bed being on the dead level, we shall probably suffer somewhat from fleas, not to mention another unmentionable insect which is apt to inhabit these dormitories in considerable profusion. There are here several young children; beautiful, flat-headed, broad-faced, little individuals. One of the little dears has taken something of a fancy to me, and is now hanging over me, and staring at my book with its great goggle eyes. It is somewhat strange, perhaps, but I have become so accustomed to this universal deformity, that I now scarcely notice it. I have often been evilly disposed enough to wish, that if in the course of events one of these little beings should die, I could get possession of it. I should like to plump the small carcass into a keg of spirits, and send it home for the observation of the curious.

18th. ' Last night the wind rose to a gale, and this morning it is blowing most furiously, making the usually calm water of these bays so turbulent as to be dangerous for our light craft. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, the Indians were in favor of starting for the sea, which we accordingly did at an early hour. Soon after we left, in crossing one of the bays, about three-quarters of a mile in width, the water suddenly became so agitated as at first nearly to upset our canoe. A perfect hurricane was blowing right ahead, cold as ice, and the water was dashing over us, and into our little bark, in a manner to frighten even the experienced chief who was acting as helmsman. In a few minutes we were sitting nearly up to our waistbands in water, although one of the women and myself were constantly bailing it out, employing for the purpose the only two hats belonging to the party, my own and that of the chief. We arrived at the shore at length in safety, although there was scarcely a dry thread on us, and built a tremendous fire with the drift-wood which we found on the beach. We then dried our clothes and blankets as well as we could, cooked some ducks that we killed yesterday, and made a hearty breakfast. My stock of bread, sugar, and tea, is completely spoiled by the salt water, so that until I return to Fort George, I must live simply; but I think this no hardship: what has been done once can be done again.

In the afternoon the women collected for me a considerable number of shells, several species of *Cardium*, *Citherea*, *Ostrea*, &c., all edible, and the last very good, though small.

The common pintail duck, (*Anas acuta*,) is found here in vast flocks. The chief and myself killed twenty-six to-day, by a simultaneous discharge of our guns. They are exceedingly fat and most excellent eating; indeed all the game of this lower country is far superior to that found in the neighborhood of Vancouver. The ducks feed upon a small submerged vegetable which grows in great abundance upon the reedy islands in this vicinity.

The next day we embarked early, to return to Chinook. The wind was still blowing a gale, but by running along close to the shore of the stormy bay, we were enabled, by adding greatly to our distance, to escape the difficulties against which we contended yesterday, and regained the slues with tolerably dry garments.

At about 10 o'clock, we arrived at the portage, and struck into the wood, shouldering our baggage as before. We soon came to a beautiful little stream of fresh water, where we halted, and prepared our breakfast. In this stream, (not exceeding nine feet at the widest part,) I was surprised to observe a great number of large salmon. Beautiful fellows, of from fifteen to twenty-five pounds weight, darting and playing about in the crystal water, and often exposing three-fourths of their bodies in making their way through the shallows. I had before no idea that these noble fish were ever found in such insignificant streams, but the Indians say that they always come into the rivulets at this season, and return to the sea on the approach of winter. Our slave killed seven of these beautiful fish, while we made our hasty breakfast, his only weapon being a light cedar paddle.

We reached Chinook in the evening, and as we sat around the fires in the lodge, I was amused by the vivid description given to the attentive inhabitants by Chinamus and his wives, of the perils of our passage across the stormy bay. They all spoke at once, and described most minutely every circumstance that occurred, the auditors continually evincing their attention to the relation by a pithy and sympathizing hugh. They often appealed to me for the truth of what they were saying, and, as in duty bound, I gave an assenting nod, although at times I fancied they were yielding to a propensity, not uncommon among those of Christian lands, and which is known by the phrase, "drawing a long bow."

21st. 'The wind yesterday was so high, that I did not consider it safe to attempt the passage to Fort George. This morning it was more calm, and we put off in a large canoe at sunrise. When we had reached the middle of Young's bay, the wind again rose, and the water was dashing over us in fine style, so that we were compelled to make for the shore and wait until it subsided. We lay by about an hour, when, the water becoming more smooth, we again got under way, and arrived at Fort George about noon.

On the 5th of November, I returned to Vancouver, and immediately commenced packing my baggage, collection, &c., for a passage to the Sandwich Islands, in the barque *Columbia*, which is now preparing to sail for England. This is a fine vessel, of three hundred tons, commanded by Captain Royal; we shall have eight passengers in the cabin; Captain Darby, formerly of this vessel, R. Cowie, chief trader, and others.

On the 21st, we dropped down the river, and in two days anchored off the cape. We have but little prospect of being able to cross the bar; the sea breaks over the channel with a roar like thunder, and the surf dashes and frets against the rocky cape and drives its foam far up into the bay.

I long to see blue water again. I am fond of the sea; it suits both my disposition and constitution;

and then the reflection, that now every foot I advance will carry me nearer to my beloved home, is in itself a most powerful inducement to urge me on. But much as I desire again to see home, much as I long to embrace those to whom I am attached by the strongest ties, I have nevertheless felt something very like regret at leaving Vancouver and its kind and agreeable residents. I took leave of Doctor McLoughlin with feelings akin to those with which I should bid adieu to an affectionate parent; and to his fervent, "God bless you, sir, and may you have a happy meeting with your friends," I could only reply by a look of the sincerest gratitude. Words are inadequate to express my deep sense of the obligations which I feel under to this truly generous and excellent man, and I fear I can only repay them by the sincerity with which I shall always cherish the recollection of his kindness, and the ardent prayers I shall breathe for his prosperity and happiness.

30th.' At daylight this morning, the wind being fair, and the bar more smooth, we weighed anchor and stood out. At about 9 o'clock we crossed the bar, and in a few minutes were hurrying along on the open sea before a six-knot breeze. We are now out, and so good bye to Cape Disappointment and the Columbia, and now for home, dear home again!

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

The River of the West

---

The River of the West

Life and Adventure

in the

Rocky Mountains and Oregon;

embracing events in the life-time of a  
Mountain-Man and Pioneer

with the

Early History of the North-Western Slope

including

An Account of the Fur Traders, the Indian Tribes, The Overland Immigration,  
the Oregon Missions, and the Tragic Fate of  
Rev. Dr. Whitman and Family.

Also, A Description of the Country,  
Its Conditions, Prospects, and Resources; Its Soil, Climate, and Scenery,  
Its Mountains, Rivers, Valleys, Deserts, and Plains; Its  
Inland Waters, and Natural Wonders.

With Numerous Engravings.

By Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor.

Published by Subscription Only.

Hartford, Conn., and Toledo, Ohio:

R. W. Bliss & Company.

Bliss & Company, Newark, N. J.

R. J. Trumbell & Co., San Francisco, CAL.

1870

---

## INTRODUCTION.

When the author of this book has been absorbed in the elegant narratives of Washington Irving, reading and musing over Astoria and Bonneville, in the cozy quiet of a New York study, no prescient motion of the mind ever gave prophetic indication of that personal acquaintance which has since been formed with the scenes, and even with some of the characters which figure in the works just referred to. Yet so have events shaped themselves that to me Astoria is familiar ground; Forts Vancouver and Walla-Walla pictured forever in my memory; while such journeys as I have been enabled to make into the country east of the last named fort, have given me a fair insight into the characteristic features of its mountains and its plains.

To-day, a railroad traverses the level stretch between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, along which, thirty years ago, the fur-traders had worn a trail by their annual excursions with men, pack-horses, and sometimes wagons, destined to the Rocky Mountains. Then, they had to guard against the attacks of the Savages; and in this respect civilization is behind the railroad, for now, as then, it is not safe to travel without a sufficient escort. To-day, also, we have new Territories called by several names cut out of the identical hunting-grounds of the fur-traders of thirty years ago; and steamboats plying the rivers where the mountain-men came to set their traps for beaver; or cities growing up like mushrooms from a soil made quick by gold, where the hardy mountain-hunter pursued the buffalo herds in search of his winter's supply of food.

The wonderful romance which once gave enchantment to stories of hardship and of daring deeds, suffered and done in these then distant wilds, is fast being dissipated by the rapid settlement of the new Territories, and by the familiarity of the public mind with tales of stirring adventure encountered in the search for glittering ores. It was, then, not without an emotion of pleased surprise that I first encountered in the fertile plains of Western Oregon the subject of this biography, a man fifty-eight years of age, of fine appearance and buoyant temper, full of anecdote, and with a memory well stored with personal recollections of all the men of note who have formerly visited the old Oregon Territory, when it comprised the whole country west of the Rocky Mountains lying north of California and south of the forty-ninth parallel. This man is Joseph L. Meek, to whose stories of mountain-life I have listened for days together; and who, after having figured conspicuously, and not without considerable fame, in the early history of Oregon, still prides himself most of all on having been a "mountain-man."

Most persons are familiar with the popular, celebrated Indian pictures of the artist Stanley; and it cannot fail to interest the reader to learn that in one of these Meek is represented as firing his last shot at the pursuing Savages. He was also the hero of another picture, painted by an English artist. The latter picture represents him in a contest with a grizzly bear, and has been copied in wax for the benefit of a St. Louis Museum, where it has been repeatedly recognized by Western men.

It has frequently been suggested to Mr. Meek, who has now come to be known by the familiar title of "Uncle Joe" to all Oregon, that a history of his varied adventures would make a readable book, and some of his neighbors have even undertaken to become his historian, yet with so little well-directed efforts that the task after all has fallen to a comparative stranger. I confess to having taken hold of it with some doubts as to my claims to the office; and the best recommendation I can give my work is the interest I myself felt in the subject of it; and the only apology I can offer for anything incredible in the narrative which it may contain, is that I "tell the tale as 'twas told to me," and that I have no occasion to doubt the truth of it.

Mr. Meek has not attempted to disguise the fact that he, as a mountain-man, "did those things which he ought not to have done, and left undone those things which he ought to have done." It will be seen, by referring to Mr. Irving's account of this class of men, as given him by Capt. Bonnevillle, that he in no wise differed from the majority of them in his practical rendering of the moral code, and his indifference to some of the commandments. Yet, no one seeing Uncle Joe in

his present aspect of a good-humored, quiet, and not undignified citizen of the "Plains," would be likely to attribute to him any very bad or dangerous qualities. It is only when recalling the scenes of his early exploits in mountain life, that the smouldering fire of his still fine eyes brightens up with something suggestive of the dare-devil spirit which characterized those exploits, and made him famous even among his compeers, when they were such men as Kit Carson, Peg-Leg Smith, and others of that doughty band of bear-fighters.

Seeing that the incidents I had to record embraced a period of a score and a half of years, and that they extended over those years most interesting in Oregon history, as well as of the history of the Fur Trade in the West, I have concluded to preface Mr. Meek's adventures with a sketch of the latter, believing that the information thus conveyed to the reader will give an additional degree of interest to their narration. The impression made upon my own mind as I gained a knowledge of the facts which I shall record in this book relating to the early occupation of Oregon, was that they were not only profoundly romantic, but decidedly unique.

In giving Mr. Meek's personal adventures I should have preferred always to have clothed them in his own peculiar language could my memory have served me, and above all I should have wished to convey to the reader some impression of the tones of his voice, both rich and soft, and deep, too; or suddenly changing, with a versatile power quite remarkable, as he gave with natural dramatic ability the perfect imitation of another's voice and manner. But these fine touches of narrative are beyond the author's skill, and the reader must perforce be content with words, aided only by his own powers of imagination in conjuring up such tones and subtle inflexions of voice as seem to him to suit the subject.

Mr. Meek's pronunciation is Southern. He says "thar," and "whar," and "bar," like a true Virginian as he is, being a blood relation of one of our Presidents from that State, as well as cousin to other one-time inmates of the White House. Like the children of many other slave-holding planters he received little attention, and was allowed to frequent the negro quarters, while the alphabet was neglected. At the age of sixteen he could not read. He had been sent to a school in the neighborhood, where he had the alphabet set for him on a wooden "Paddle;" but not liking this method of instruction he one day "hit the teacher over the head with it, and ran home," where he was suffered to disport himself among his black associates, clad like themselves in a tow frock, and guiltless of shoes and stockings. This sort of training was not without its advantages to the physical man; on the contrary, it produced, in this instance, as in many others, a tall, broad-shouldered, powerful and handsome man, with plenty of animal courage and spirit, though somewhat at the expense of the inner furnishing which is supposed to be necessary to a perfect development. In this instance, however, Nature had been more than usually kind, and distinguished her favorite with a sort of inborn grace and courtesy which, in some phases of his eventful life, served him well.

Mr. Meek was born in Washington Co., Virginia, in 1810, one year before the settlement of Astoria, and at a period when Congress was much interested in the question of our Western possessions and their boundary. "Manifest destiny" seemed to have raised him up, together with many

others, bold, hardy, and fearless men, to become sentinels on the outposts of civilization, securing to the United States with comparative ease a vast extent of territory, for which, without them, a long struggle with England would have taken place, delaying the settlement of the Pacific Coast for many years, if not losing it to us altogether. It is not without a feeling of genuine self-congratulation, that I am able to bear testimony to the services, hitherto hardly recognized, of the "mountain-men" who have settled in Oregon. Whenever there shall arise a studious and faithful historian, their names shall not be excluded from honorable mention, nor least illustrious will appear that of Joseph L. Meek, the Rocky Mountain Hunter and Trapper.

---

#### Prefatory Chapter

An account of the Hudson's Bay Company's intercourse with the Indians of the North-west coast; with a sketch of the different American Fur Companies, and their Dealings with the tribes of the Rocky Mountains.

In the year 1818, Mr. Prevost acting for the United States, received Astoria back from the British, who had taken possession, as narrated by Mr. Irving, four years previous. The restoration took place in conformity with the treaty of Ghent, by which those places captured during the war were restored to their original possessors. Mr. Astor stood ready at that time to renew his enterprise on the Columbia River, had Congress been disposed to grant him the necessary protection which the undertaking required. Failing to secure this, when the United States sloop of war Ontario sailed away from Astoria, after having taken formal possession of that place for our Government, the country was left to the occupancy, (scarcely a joint-occupancy, since then were then no Americans here) of the British traders. After the war, and while negotiations going on between Great Britain and the United States, the fort at Astoria remained in possession of the North-West Company, as their principal establishment west of the mountains. It had been considerably enlarged since it had come into their possession, and was furnished with artillery enough to have frightened into friendship a much more warlike people than the subjects of old king Comcomly; who, it will be remembered, was not at first very well disposed towards the "King George men" having learned to look upon the "Boston men" as his friends in his earliest intercourse with the whites. At this time Astoria, or Fort George, as the British traders called it, contained sixty-five inmates, twenty-three of whom were whites, and the remainder Canadian halfbreeds and Sandwich Islanders. Besides this number of men, there were a few women, the native wives of the men, and their halfbreed offspring. The situation of Astoria, however, was not favorable, being near the sea coast, and not surrounded with good farming lands such as were required for the furnishing of provisions to the fort. Therefore, when in 1821 it was destroyed by fire, it was only in part rebuilt, but a better and more convenient location for the headquarters of the North-West Company was sought for in the interior.

About this time a quarrel of long standing between the Hudson's Bay, and North-West Companies culminated in a battle between their men in the Red River country, resulting in a considerable

---

loss of life and property. This affair drew the attention of the Government at home; the rights of the rival companies were examined into, the mediation of the Ministry secured, and a compromise effected, by which the North-West Company, which had succeeded in dispossessing the Pacific Fur Company under Mr. Astor, was merged into the Hudson's Bay Company, whose name and fame are so familiar to all the early settlers of Oregon.

At the same time, Parliament passed an act by which the hands of the consolidated company were much strengthened, and the peace and security of all persons greatly insured; but which became subsequently, in the joint occupancy of the country, a cause of offence to the American citizens, as we shall see hereafter. This act allowed the commissioning of Justices of the Peace in all the territories not belonging to the United States, nor already subject to grant. These justices were to execute and enforce the laws and decisions of the courts of Upper Canada; to take evidence, and commit and send to Canada for trial the guilty; and even in some cases, to hold courts themselves for the trial of criminal offenses and misdemeanors not punishable with death, or of civil causes in which the amount at issue should not exceed two hundred pounds.

Thus in 1824, the North-West Company, whose perfidy had occasioned such loss and mortification to the enterprising New York merchant became itself a thing of the past and a new rule began in the region west of the Rocky Mountains. The old fort at Astoria having been only so far rebuilt as to answer the needs of the hour, after due consideration, a site for head-quarters was selected about one hundred miles from the sea, near the mouth of the Wallamet River, though opposite to it. Three considerations went to make up the eligibility of the point selected. First, it was desirable, even necessary, to settle upon good agricultural lands, where the Company's provisions could be raised by the Company's servants. Second, it was important that the spot chosen should be upon waters navigable for the Company's vessels, or upon tide-water. Lastly, and not leastly, the Company had an eye to the boundary question between Great Britain and the United States; and believing that the end of the controversy would probably be to make the Columbia River the northern limit of the United states territory, a spot on the northern bank of that river was considered a good point for their fort and possible future city.

The site chosen by the North-West Company in 1821, for their new fort, combined all these advantages, and the further one of having been already commenced and named. Fort Vancouver became at once on the accession of the Hudson's Bay Company, the metropolis of the northwest coast, the center Of the fur trade, and the seat of government for that immense territory, over which roamed the hunters and trappers in the employ of that powerful corporation. This post was situated on the edge of a beautiful sloping plain on the northern bank of the Columbia, about six miles above the upper mouth of the Wallamet. At this point the Columbia spreads to a great width, and is divided on the south side into bayous by long sandy islands, covered with oak, ash and cotton-wood trees, making the noble river more attractive still by adding the charm of curiosity concerning its actual breadth to its natural and ordinary magnificence. Back of the fort the land rose gently, covered with forests of fir; and away to the east swelled the foot-hills of the Cascade range, then the mountains themselves, draped in filmy azure, and overtopped five thousand feet by the snowy cone of Mt. Hood.

The River of the West

---

In this lonely situation grew up, with the dispatch which characterized the acts of the Company, a fort in most respects similar to the original one at Astoria. It was not, however, thought necessary to make so great a display of artillery as had served to keep in order the subjects of Comcomly. A stockade enclosed a space about eight hundred feet long by five hundred broad, having a bastion at one corner, where were mounted three guns, while two eighteen pounders and two swivels were planted in front of the residence of the Governor and chief factors. These commanded the main entrance to the fort, besides which there were two other gates in front, and another in the rear. Military precision was observed in the precautions taken against surprises, as well as in all the rules of the place. The gates were opened and closed at certain hours, and were always guarded. No large number of Indians were permitted within the enclosure at the same time, and every employee at the fort knew and performed his duty with punctuality.

The buildings within the stockade were the Governor's and chief factors' residences, stores, offices, work-shops, magazines, warehouses, &c.

Year by year, up to 1835 or '40, improvements continued to go on in and about the fort the chief of which was the cultivation of the large farm and garden outside the enclosure, and the erection of a hospital building, large barns, servants houses, and a boat-house, all outside of the fort; so that at the period when the Columbia River was a romance and a mystery to the people of the United States, quite a flourishing and beautiful village adorned its northern shore, and that too erected and sustained by the enemies of American enterprise on soil commonly believed to belong to the United States: fair foes the author firmly believes them to have been in those days, yet foes nevertheless.

The system on which the Hudson's Bay Company conducted its business was the result of long experience, and was admirable for its method and its justice also. When a young man entered its service as a clerk, his wages were small for several years increasing only as his ability and good conduct entitled him to advancement. When his salary had reached one hundred pounds sterling he became eligible to a chief-tradership as a partner in the concern, from which position he was promoted to the rank of a chief factor. No important business was ever intrusted to an inexperienced person, a policy which almost certainly prevented any serious errors. A regular tariff was established on the Company's goods, comprising all the articles used in their trade with the Indians; nor was the quality of their goods ever allowed to deteriorate. A price was also fixed upon furs according to their market value, and an Indian knowing this, knew exactly what he could purchase. No bartering was allowed. When skins were offered for sale at the fort they were handed to the clerk through a window like a post-office delivery-window, and their value in the article desired, returned through the same aperture. All these regulations were of the highest importance to the good order, safety, and profit of the Company. The confidence of the Indians was sure to be gained by the constancy and good faith always observed toward them and the Company obtained thereby numerous and powerful allies in nearly all the tribes.

As soon as it was possible to make the change, the Indians were denied the use of intoxicating

drinks, the appetite for which had early been introduced among them by coasting vessels, and even continued by the Pacific Fur Company at Astoria. It would have been dangerous to have suddenly deprived them of the coveted stimulus; therefore the practice must be discontinued by many wise arts and devices. A public notice was given that the sale of it would be stopped, and the reasons for this prohibition explained to the Indians. Still, not to come into direct conflict with their appetites, a little was sold to the chiefs, now and then, by the clerks, who affected to be running the greatest risks in violating the order of the company. The strictest secrecy was enjoined on the lucky chief who, by the friendship of some under-clerk, was enabled to smuggle off a bottle under his blanket. But the cunning clerk had generally managed to get his "good friend" into a state so cleverly between drunk and sober before he entrusted him with the precious bottles that he was sure to betray himself. Leaving the shop with a mein even more erect than usual, with a gait affected in its majesty, and his blanket tightened around him to conceal his secret treasure, the chuckling chief would start to cross the grounds within the fort. If he was a new customer he was once or twice permitted to play his little game with the obliging clerk whose particular friend he was, and to escape detection.

But by-and-by, when the officers had seen the offence repeated more than once from their purposely contrived posts of observation, one of them would skillfully chance to intercept the guilty chief at whose comical endeavors to appear sober he was inwardly laughing, and change him with being intoxicated. Wrestling away the tightened blanket, the bottle appeared as evidence that could not be controverted, of the duplicity of the Indian and the unfaithfulness of the clerk whose name was instantly demanded that he might be properly punished. When the chief again visited the fort, his particular friend met him with a sorrowful countenance, reproaching him for having been the cause of his disgrace and loss. This reproach was the surest means of preventing another demand for rum, the Indian being too magnanimous, probably, to wish to get his friend into trouble; while the clerk affected to fear the consequences too much to be induced to take the risk another time. Thus by kind and careful means the traffic in liquors was at length broken up, which otherwise would have ruined both Indian and trader.

To the company's servants liquor was sold or allowed at certain times: to those on the sea-board, one half-pint two or three times a year, to be used as medicine,-- not that it was always needed or used for this purpose, but too strict inquiry into its use was wisely avoided, -- and for this the company demanded pay. To their servants in the interior no liquor was sold but they were furnished as a gratuity with one pint on leaving rendezvous, and another on arriving at winter quarters. By this management it became impossible for them to dispose of drink to the Indians; their small allowance being always immediately consumed in a meeting or parting carouse.

The arrival of men from the interior at Fort Vancouver usually took place in the month of June, when the Columbia was high, and a stirring scene it was. The chief traders generally contrived their march through the upper country, their camps, and their rendezvous, so as to meet the Express which annually came to Vancouver from Canada and the Red River settlements. They then descended the Columbia together, and arrived in force at the Fort. This annual fleet went by the name of Brigade - a name which suggested a military spirit in the crews that their appear-

The River of the West

---

ance failed to vindicate. Yet, though there was nothing warlike in the scene, there was much that was exciting, picturesque, and even brilliant; for these couriers de bois, or wood-rangers, and the voyageurs, or boatmen, were the most foppish of mortals when they came to rendezvous. Then, too, there was an exaltation of spirits on their safe arrival at headquarters, after their year's toil and danger in wildernesses, among Indians and wild beasts, exposed to famine and accident, that almost deprived them of what is called "common sense" and compelled them to the most fantastic excesses.

Their well-understood peculiarities did not make them the less welcome at Vancouver. When the cry was given - "the Brigade! the Brigade!" - there was a general rush to the river's bank to witness the spectacle. In advance came the chief-trader's barge, with the company's flag at the bow, and the cross of St. George at the stem: the fleet as many abreast as the turnings of the river allowed. With strong and skillful strokes the boatmen governed their richly laden boats, keeping them in line, and at the same time singing in chorus loud and not unmusical hunting or boating song. The gay ribbons and feathers with which the singers were bedecked took nothing from the picturesque-ness of their appearance. The broad, fall river, sparkling in the sunlight, gemmed with emerald islands, and bordered with a rich growth of flowering shrubbery; the smiling plain surrounding the Fort; the distant mountains, where glittered the sentinel Mt. Hood, all came gracefully into the picture, and seemed to furnish a fitting back-ground and middle distance for the bright bit of coloring given by the moving life in the scene. As with a skillful sweep the brigade touched the bank, and the traders and men sprang on shore, the first cheer which had welcomed their appearance was heartily repeated, while a gay clamor of questions and answers followed.

After the business immediately incident to their arrival had been dispatched, then took place the regale of pork, flour, and spirits, which was sure to end in a carouse, during which blackened eyes and broken noses were not at all un-common; but though blood was made to flow, life was never put seriously in peril, and the belligerent parties were the beat of friends when the fracas was ended.

The business of exchange being completed in three or four weeks -- the rich stores of peltries consigned to their places in the warehouse, and the boats reladen with goods for the next year's trade with the Indians in the upper country, a parting carouse took place, and with another parade of feathers, ribbons and other finery, the brigade departed with songs and cheers as it had come, but with probably heavier hearts.

It would be a stern morality indeed which could look upon the excesses of this peculiar class as it would upon the same excesses committed by men in the enjoyment of all the comforts and pleasures of civilized life. For them, during most of the year, was only an out-door life of toil, watchfulness, peril, and isolation. When they arrived at the rendezvous, for the brief period of their stay they were allowed perfect license because nothing else would content them. Although at head-quarters they were still in the wilderness, thousands of miles from civilization, with no chance of such recreations as men in the continual enjoyment of life's sweetest pleasures would naturally seek. For them there was only one method of seeking and finding temporary oblivion of

the accustomed hardship; and whatever may be the strict rendering of man's duty as an immortal being, we cannot help being somewhat lenient at times to his errors as a mortal.

After the departure of the boats, there was another arrival at the Fort, of trappers from the Snake River county. Previous to 1832, such were the dangers of the fur trade in this region, that only the most experienced traders were suffered to conduct a party through it; and even they were frequently attacked, and sometimes sustained serious losses of men and animals. Subsequently, however, the Hudson's Bay Company obtained such an influence over even these hostile tribes as to make it safe for a party of no more than two of their men to travel through this much dreaded region.

There was another important arrival at Fort Vancouver, usually in midsummer. This was the Company's supply ship from London. In the possible event of a vessel being lost, one cargo was always kept on store at Vancouver; but for which wise regulation much trouble and disaster might have resulted, especially in the early days of the establishment. Occasionally a vessel foundered at sea or was lost on the bar of the Columbia; but these losses did not interrupt the regular transaction of business. The arrival of a ship from London was the occasion of great bustle and excitement also. She brought not only goods for the posts throughout the district of the Columbia, but letters, papers, private parcels, and all that seemed of so much value to the little isolated world at the Fort.

A company conducting its business with such method and regularity as has been described, was certain of success. Yet some credit also must attach to certain individuals in its service, whose faithfulness, zeal and ability in carrying out its designs, contributed largely to its welfare. Such a man was at the head of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs in the large and important district west of the Rocky Mountains. The Company never had in its service a more efficient man than Gov. John McLaughlin, more commonly called Dr. McLaughlin.

To the discipline, at once severe and just, which Dr. McLaughlin maintained in his district, was due the safety and prosperity of the company he served, and the servants of that company generally; as well as, at a later period, of the emigration which followed the hunter and trapper into the wilds of Oregon. Careful as were all the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, they could not always avoid conflicts with the Indians; nor was their kindness and justice always sufficiently appreciated to prevent the outbreak of savage instincts. Fort Vancouver had been threatened in an early day; a vessel or two had been lost in which the Indians were suspected to have been implicated; at long intervals a trader was murdered in the interior; or more frequently, Indian insolence put to the test both the wisdom and courage of the officers to prevent an outbreak.

When murders and robberies were committed, it was the custom at Fort Vancouver to send a strong party to demand the offenders from their tribe; Such was the well known power and influence of the Company, and such the wholesome fear of the "King George men," that this demand was never resisted, and if the murderer could be found he was given up to be hung according to "King George" laws. They were almost equally impelled to good conduct by the state of depen-

dence on the company into which they had been brought. Once they had subsisted and clothed themselves from the spoils of the rivers and forest; since they had tasted of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they could no more return to skins for raiment, nor to game alone for food. Blankets and flour, beads, guns, and ammunition had become dear to their hearts: for all these things they must love and obey the Hudson's Bay Company. Another fine stroke of policy in the Company was to destroy the chieftain-ships in the various tribes; thus weakening them by dividing them and preventing dangerous coalitions of the leading spirits : for in savage as well as civilized life, the many are governed by the few.

It may not be uninteresting in this place to give a few anecdotes of the manner in which conflicts with the Indians were prevented, or offences punished by the Hudson's Bay Company. In the year 1828 the ship William and Ann was cast away just inside the bar of the Columbia, under circumstances which seemed to direct suspicion to the Indians in that vicinity. Whether or not they had attacked the ship, not a soul was saved from the wreck to tell how she was lost. On hearing that the ship had gone to pieces, and that the Indians had appropriated a portion of her cargo, Dr. McLaughlin sent a message to the chiefs, demanding restitution of the stolen goods. Nothing was returned by the messenger except one or two worthless articles. Immediately an armed force was sent to the scene of the robbery with a fresh demand for the goods, which the chiefs, in view of their spoils, thought proper to resist by firing upon the reclaiming party. But they were not unprepared; and a swivel was discharged to let the savages know what they might expect in the way of firearms. The argument was conclusive, the Indians fleeing into the woods. While making search for the goods, a portion of which were found, a chief was observed skulking near, and cocking his gun; on which motion one of the men fired, and he fell. This prompt action, the justice of which the Indians well understood, and the intimidating power of the swivel, put an end to the incipient war. Care was then taken to impress upon their minds that they must not expect to profit by the disasters of vessels, nor be tempted to murder white men for the sake of plunder. The William and Ann was supposed to have got aground, when the savages seeing her situation, boarded her and murdered the crew for the cargo which they know her to contain. Yet as there were no positive proof only such measures were taken as would deter them from a similar attempt in future. That the lesson was not lost was proven two years later, when the Isabella, from London, struck on the bar, her crew deserting her. In this instance no attempt was made to meddle with the vessel's cargo; and as the crew made their way to Vancouver, the goods were nearly all saved. In a former voyage of the William and Ann to the Columbia River, she had been sent on an exploring expedition to the Gulf of Georgia to discover the mouth of Frazier's River, having on board a crew of forty men. Whenever the ship came to anchor, two sentries were kept constantly on deck to guard against any surprise or misconduct on the part of the Indians; so adroit, however, were they in the light-fingered art, that every one of the eight cannon with which the ship was armed was robbed of its ammunition, as was discovered on leaving the river! Such incidents as these served to impress the minds of the Company's officers and servants with the necessity of vigilance in their dealings with the savages.

Not all their vigilance could at all times avail to prevent mischief. When Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, was on a visit to Vancouver in 1829, he was made aware

---

of this truism. The Governor was on his return to Canada by way of the Red River Settlement, and had reached the Dalles of the Columbia with his party. In making the portage at this place, all the party except Dr. Tod gave their guns into the charge of two men to prevent their being stolen by the Indians, who crowded about, and whose well-known bad character made great care needful. All went well, no attempt to seize either guns or other property being made until at the end of the portage the boats had been reloaded. As the party were about to re-embark, a simultaneous rush was made by the Indians who had dogged their steps, to get possession of the boats. Dr. Tod raised his gun immediately, aiming at the head chief, who, not liking the prospect of so speedy dissolution, ordered his followers to desist, and the party were suffered to escape. It was soon after discovered that every gun belonging to the party in the boat had been wet, excepting the one carried by Dr. Tod; and to the fact that the Doctor did carry his gun, all the others owed their lives.

The great desire of the Indians for guns and ammunition led to many stratagems which were dangerous to the possessors of the coveted articles. Much more dangerous would it have been to have allowed them a free supply of these things; nor could an Indian purchase from the Company more than a stated supply, which was to be used, not for the purposes of war, but to keep himself in game. Dr. McLaughlin was himself once quite near falling into a trap of the Indians, so cunningly laid as to puzzle even him. This was a report brought to him by a deputation of Columbia River Indians, stating the startling fact that the fort at Nesqually had been attacked, and every inmate slaughtered. To this horrible story, told with every appearance of truth, the Doctor listened with incredulity mingled with apprehension. The Indians were closely questioned and cross-questioned, but did not conflict in their testimony. The matter assumed a very painful aspect. Not to be deceived, the Doctor had the unwelcome messengers committed to custody while he could bring other witnesses from their tribe. But they were prepared for this, and the whole tribe was as positive as those who brought the tale. Confounded by this cloud of witnesses, Dr. McLaughlin had almost determined upon sending an armed force to Nesqually to inquire into the matter, and if necessary, punish the Indians, when a detachment of men arrived from that post, and the plot was exposed! The design of the Indians had been simply to cause a division of the force at Vancouver, after which they believed they might succeed in capturing and plundering the fort. Had they truly been successful in this undertaking, every other trading-post in the country would have been destroyed. But so long as the head-quarters of the Company remained secure and powerful, the other stations were comparatively safe.

An incident which has been several times related, occurred at fort Walla Walla, and shows how narrow escapes the interior traders sometimes made. The hero of this anecdote was Mr. McKinlay, one of the most estimable of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, in charge of the fort just named. An Indian was one day lounging about the fort, and seeing some timbers lying in a heap had been squared for pack saddles, helped himself to one and commenced cutting it down into a whip handle for his own use. To this procedure Mr. McKinlay's clerk demurred, first telling the Indian its use, and then ordering him to resign the piece of timber. The Indian insolently replied that the timber was his, and he should take it. At this the clerk, with more temper than prudence, struck the offender, knocking him over, soon after which the savage left the fort with sullen looks boding vengeance. The next day, Mr. McKinlay, not being informed of what had taken place, was

in a room of the fort with his clerk when a considerable party of Indians began dropping quietly in until there were fifteen or twenty of them inside the building. The first intimation of anything wrong McKinlay received was when he observed the clerk pointed out in a particular manner by one of the party. He instantly comprehended the purpose of his visitors, and with that quickness of thought which is habitual to student of savage nature, he rushed into the store room and returned with a powder keg, flint and steel. By this time the unlucky clerk was struggling for his life with his vindictive foes. Putting down the powder in their midst and knocking out the head of the keg with a blow, McKinlay stood over it to strike fire with his flint and steel. The savages paused aghast. They knew the nature of the "perilous stuff," and also understood the trader's purpose. "Come," said he with a clear, determined voice, "you are twenty against us two: now touch him if you dare, and see who dies first". In a moment the fort was cleared, and McKinlay was left to inquire the cause of what had so nearly been a tragedy. It is hardly a subject of doubt whether or not his clerk got a scolding. Soon after, such was the powerful influence exerted by these gentlemen, the chief of the tribe dogged the pilfering Indian for the offence, and McKinlay became a great brave, a "big heart" for his courage.

It was indeed necessary to have courage, patience, and prudence in dealing with the Indians. These the Hudson's Bay officers generally possessed. Perhaps the most irascible of them all in the Columbia District, was their chief, Dr. McLaughlin; but such was his goodness and justice that even the savages recognized it, and he was hyas tyee, or great chief, in all respects to them. Being on one occasion very much annoyed by the pertinacity of an Indian who was continually demanding pay for some stones with which the Doctor was having a vessel ballasted, he seized one of some size, and thrusting it in the Indian's mouth, cried out in a furious manner, "pay, pay ! if the stones are yours, take them and eat them, you rascal ! Pay, pay ! the devil ! the devil !" upon which explosion of wrath, the native owner of the soil thought it prudent to withdraw his immediate claims.

There was more, however, in the Doctor's, action than mere indulgence of wrath. He understood perfectly that the savage values only what he can eat and wear, and that as he could not put the stones to either of these uses, his demand for pay was an impudent one.

Enough has been said to give the reader an insight into Indian character, to prepare his mind for events which are to follow, to convey an idea of the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, and to show on what it was founded. The American Fur Companies will now be sketched, and their mode of dealing with the Indians contrasted with that of the British Company. The comparison will not be favorable; but should any unfairness be suspected, a reference to Mr. Irving's Bonneville, will show that the worthy Captain was forced to witness against his own countrymen in his narrative of his hunting and trading adventures in the Rocky Mountains.

The dissolution of the Pacific Fur Company, the refusal of the United States Government to protect Mr. Astor in a second attempt to carry on a commerce with the Indians west of the Rocky Mountains, and the occupation of that country by British traders, had the effect to deter individual enterprise from again attempting to establish commerce on the Pacific coast. The people waited

---

for the Government to take some steps toward the encouragement of a trans-continental trade; the Government beholding the lion (British) in the way, waited for the expiration of the convention of 1818, in the Macabre-like hope that something would "turn up" to settle the question of territorial sovereignty. The war of 1812 had been begun on the part of Great Britain, to secure the great western territories to herself for the profits of the fur trade, almost solely. Failing in this, she had been compelled, by the treaty of Ghent, to restore to the United States all the places and forts captured during that war. Yet the forts and trading posts in the west remained practically in the possession of Great Britain; for her traders and fur companies still roamed the country, excluding American trade, and inciting (so the frontiers-men believed), the Indians to acts of blood and horror.

Congress being importuned by the people of the West, finally, in 1815, passed an act expelling British traders from American territory east of the Rocky Mountains. Following the passage of this act the hunters and trappers of the old North American Company, at the head of which Mr. Astor still remained, began to range the country about the head waters of the Mississippi and the upper Missouri. Also a few American traders had ventured into the northern provinces of Mexico, previous to the overthrow of the Spanish Government; and after that event, a thriving trade grew up between St. Louis and Santa Fe. At length, in 1823, Mr. W. H. Ashley, of St. Louis, a merchant for a long time engaged in the fur trade on the Missouri and its tributaries, determined to push a trading party up to or beyond the Rocky Mountains. Following up the Platte River, Mr. Ashley proceeded at the head of a large party with horses and merchandise, as far as the northern branch of the Platte, called the Sweetwater. This he explored to its source, situated in that remarkable depression in the Rocky Mountains, known as the South Pass -- the same which Fremont discovered twenty years later, during which twenty years it was annually traveled by trading parties, and just prior to Fremont's discovery, by missionaries and emigrants destined to Oregon. To Mr. Ashley also belongs the credit of having first explored the head-waters of the Colorado, called the Green River, afterwards a favorite rendezvous of the American Fur Companies. The country about the South Pass proved to be an entirely new hunting ground, and very rich in furs, as here many rivers take their rise, whose head-waters furnished abundant beaver. Here Mr. Ashley spent the summer, returning to St. Louis in the fall with a valuable collection of skins.

In 1824, Mr. Ashley repeated the expedition, extending it this time beyond Green River as far as Great Salt Lake, near which to the South he discovered another smaller lake, which he named Lake Ashley, after himself. On the shores of this lake he built a fort for trading with the Indians, and leaving in it about one hundred men, returned to St. Louis the second time with a large amount of furs. During the time the fort was occupied by Mr. Ashley's men, a period of three years, more than one hundred and eighty thousand dollars worth of furs were collected and sent to St. Louis. In 1827, the fort, and all Mr. Ashley's interest in the business, was sold to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, at the head of which were Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, and David Jackson, Sublette being the leading spirit in the Company.

The custom of these enterprising traders, who had been in the mountains since 1824, was to divide their force, each taking his command to a good hunting ground, and returning at stat-

The River of the West

---

ed times to rendezvous, generally appointed on the head-waters of Green River. Frequently the other fur companies, (for there were other companies formed on the heels of Ashley's enterprise,) learning of the place appointed for the yearly rendezvous, brought their goods to the same resort, when an intense rivalry was exhibited by the several traders as to which company should soonest dispose of its goods, getting, of course, the largest amount of furs from the trappers and Indians. So great was the competition in the years between 1826 and 1829, when there were about six hundred American trappers in and about the Rocky Mountains, besides those of the Hudson's Bay Company, that it was death for a man of one company to dispose of his furs to a rival association. Even a "free trapper" - that is, one not indentured, but hunting upon certain terms of agreement concerning the price of his furs and the cost of his outfit, only, dared not sell to any other company than the one he had agreed with.

Jedediah Smith, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, during their first year in the mountains, took a party of five trappers into Oregon, being the first American, trader or other, to cross into that country since the breaking up of Mr. Astor's establishment. He trapped on the head-waters of the Snake River until autumn, when he fell in with a party of Hudson's Bay trappers, and going with them to their post in the Flathead country, wintered there.

Again, in 1826, Smith, Sublette, and Jackson, brought out a large number of men to trap in the Snake River country, and entered into direct competition with the Hudson's Bay Company, whom they opposed with hardly a degree more of zeal than they competed with rival American traders: this one extra degree being inspired by a "spirit of '76" toward anything British.

After the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had extended its business by the purchase of Mr. Ashley's interest, the partners determined to push their enterprise to the Pacific coast, regardless of the opposition they were likely to encounter from the Hudson's Bay traders. Accordingly, in the spring of 1827, the Company was divided up into three parts, to be led separately, by different routes, into the Indian Territory, nearer the ocean.

Smith's route was from the Platte River, southwards to Santa Fe, thence to the bay of San Francisco, and thence along the coast to the Columbia River. His party were successful, and had arrived in the autumn of the following year at the Umpqua River, about two hundred miles South of the Columbia, in safety. Here one of those sudden reverses to which the "mountain-man" is liable at any moment, overtook him. His party at this time consisted of thirteen men, with their horses, and a collection of furs valued at twenty thousand dollars. Arrived at the Umpqua, they encamped for the night on its southern bank, unaware that the natives in this vicinity (the Shastas) were more fierce and treacherous than the indolent tribes of California, for whom, probably, they had a great contempt. All went well until the following morning, the Indians hanging about the camp, but apparently friendly. Smith had just breakfasted, and was occupied in looking for a ford-ing-place for the animals, being on a raft, and having with him a little Englishman and one Indian. When they were in the middle of the river the Indian snatched Smith's gun and jumped into the water. At the same instant a yell from the camp, which was in sight, proclaimed that it was attacked. Quick as thought Smith snatched the Englishman's gun, and shot dead the Indian in the

river.

To return to the camp was certain death. Ahead, several of his men had fallen; overpowered by numbers he could not hope that any would escape, and nothing was left him but flight. He succeeded in getting to the opposite shore with his raft before he could be intercepted, and fled with his companion, on foot and with only one gun, and no provisions, to the mountains that border the river. With great good fortune they were enabled to pass through the remaining two hundred miles of their journey without accident, though not without suffering, and reach Fort Vancouver in a destitute condition, where they were kindly cared for.

Of the men left in camp, only two escaped. One man named Black defended himself until he saw an opportunity for flight, when he escaped to the cover of the woods, and finally to a friendly tribe farther north, near the coast, who piloted him to Vancouver. The remaining man was one Turner, of a very powerful frame, who was doing camp duty as cook on this eventful morning. When the Indians rushed upon him he defended himself with a huge firebrand, or half-burnt poplar stick, with which he laid about him like Sampson, killing four red-skins before he saw a chance of escape. Singularly, for one in his extremity, he did escape, and also arrived at Vancouver that winter.

Dr. McLaughlin received the unlucky trader and his three surviving men with every mark and expression of kindness, and entertained them through the winter. Not only this, but he dispatched a strong, armed party to the scene of the disaster to punish the Indians and recover the stolen goods; all of which was done at his own expense, both as an act of friendship toward his American rivals, and as necessary to the discipline which they everywhere maintained among the Indians. Should this offence go unpunished, the next attack might be upon one of his own parties going annually down into California. Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, chanced to be spending the winter at Vancouver. He offered to send Smith to London the following summer, in the Company's vessel, where he might dispose of his furs to advantage; but Smith declined this offer, and finally sold his furs to Dr. McLaughlin, and returned in the spring to the Rocky Mountains.

On Sublette's return from St. Louis, in the summer of 1829, with men and merchandise for the year's trade, he became uneasy on account of Smith's protracted absence. According to a previous plan, he took a large party into the Snake River country to hunt. Among the recruits from St. Louis was Joseph L. Meek, the subject of the narrative following this chapter. Sublette not meeting with Smith's party on its way from the Columbia, as he still hoped, at length detailed a party to look for him on the head-waters of the Snake. Meek was one of the men sent to look for the missing partner, whom he discovered at length in Pierre's Hole, a deep valley in the mountains, from which issues the Snake River in many living streams. Smith returned with the men to camp, where the tale of his disasters was received after the manner of mountain-men, simply declaring with a momentarily sobered countenance, that their comrade has not been "in luck;" with which brief and equivocal expression of sympathy the subject is dismissed. To dwell on the dangers incident to their calling would be to half disarm themselves of their necessary courage; and it is

The River of the West

---

only when they are gathered about the fire in their winter camp, that they indulge in tales of wild adventure and "hair-breadth 'scapes," or make sorrowful reference to a comrade lost.

Influenced by the hospitable treatment which Smith had received at the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, the partners now determined to withdraw from competition with them in the Snake country, and to trap upon the waters of the Colorado, in the neighborhood of their fort. But "luck," the mountain-man's Providence, seemed to have deserted Smith. In crossing the Colorado River with a considerable collection of skins, he was again attacked by Indians, and only escaped by losing all his property. He then went to St. Louis for a supply of merchandise, and fitted out a trading party for Santa Fe; but on his way to that place was killed in an encounter with the savages.

Turner, the man who so valiantly wielded the firebrand on the Umpqua River, several years later met with a similar adventure on the Rogue River, in Southern Oregon, and was the means of saving the lives of his party by his courage, strength, and alertness. He finally, when trapping had become unprofitable, retired upon a farm in the Wallamet Valley, as did many other mountain-men who survived the dangers of their perilous trade.

After the death of Smith, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company continued its operations under the command of Bridger, Fitzpatrick, and Milton Sublette, brother of William. In the spring of 1830 they received about two hundred recruits, and with little variation kept up their number of three or four hundred men for a period of eight or ten years longer, or until the beaver were hunted out of every nook and corner of the Rocky Mountains.

Previous to 1835, there were in and about the Rocky Mountains, beside the "American" and "Rocky Mountain" companies, the St. Louis Company, and eight or ten "lone traders." Among these latter were William Sublette, Robert Campbell, J. O. Pattie, Mr. Pilcher, Col. Charles Bent, St. Vrain, William Bent, Mr. Gant, and Mr. Blackwell. All these companies and traders more or less frequently penetrated into the countries of New Mexico, Old Mexico, Sonora, and California; returning sometimes through the mountain regions of the latter State, by the Humboldt River to the head-waters of the Colorado. Seldom, in all their journeys, did they intrude on that portion of the Indian Territory lying within three hundred miles of Fort Vancouver, or which forms the area of the present State of Oregon.

Up to 1832, the fur trade in the West had been chiefly conducted by merchants from the frontier cities, especially by those of St. Louis. The old "North American" was the only exception. But in the spring of this year, Captain Bonneville, an United States officer on furlough, led a company of a hundred men, with a train of wagons, horses and mules, with merchandise, into the trapping grounds of the Rocky Mountains. His wagons were the first that had ever crossed the summit of these mountains, though William Sublette had, two or three years previous, brought wagons as far as the valley of the Wind River, on the east side of the range. Captain Bonneville remained nearly three years in the hunting and trapping grounds, taking parties of men into the Colorado, Humboldt and Sacramento valleys; but he realized no profits from his expedition, being opposed and

competed with by both British and American traders of larger experience.

But Captain Bonneville's venture was a fortunate one compared with that of Mr. Nathaniel Wyeth of Massachusetts, who also crossed the continent in 1832, with the view of establishing a trade on the Columbia River. Mr. Wyeth brought with him a small party of men, all inexperienced in frontier or mountain life, and destined for a salmon fishery on the Columbia. He had reached Independence, Missouri, the last station before plunging into the wilderness, and found himself somewhat at a loss how to proceed, until, at this juncture, he was overtaken by the party of William Sublette, from St. Louis to the Rocky Mountains, with whom he travelled in company to the rendezvous at Pierre's Hole.

When Wyeth arrived at the Columbia River, after tarrying until he had acquired some mountain experiences, he found that his vessel, which was loaded with merchandise for the Columbia River trade, had not arrived. He remained at Vancouver through the winter, the guest of the Hudson's Bay Company, and either having learned or surmised that his vessel was wrecked, returned to the United States in the following year. Not discouraged, however, he made another venture in 1834, despatching the ship *May Dacre*, Captain Lambert, for the Columbia River, with another cargo of Indian goods, traveling himself overland with a party of two hundred men, and a considerable quantity of merchandise which he expected to sell to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. In this expectation he was defeated by William Sublette, who had also brought out a large assortment of goods for the Indian trade, and had sold out, supplying the market, before Mr. Wyeth arrived.

Wyeth then built a post, named Fort Hall, on Snake River, at the junction of the Portneuf, where he stored his goods and having detached most of his men in trapping parties, proceeded to the Columbia River to meet the *May Dacre*. He reached the Columbia about the same time with his vessel, and proceeded at once to erect a salmon fishery. To forward this purpose he built a post, called Fort William, on the lower end of Wappatoo (now known as Sauvie's) Island, near where the Lower Wallamet falls into the Columbia. But for various reasons he found the business on which he had entered unprofitable. He had much trouble with the Indians, his men were killed or drowned, so that by the time he had half a cargo of fish, he was ready to abandon the effort to establish a commerce with the Oregon Indians, and was satisfied that no enterprise less stupendous and powerful than that of the Hudson's Bay Company could be long sustained in that country.

Much complaint was subsequently made by Americans, chiefly Missionaries, of the conduct of that company in not allowing Mr. Wyeth to purchase beaver skins of the Indians, but Mr. Wyeth himself made no such complaint. Personally, he was treated with unvarying kindness, courtesy, and hospitality. As a trader, they would not permit him to undersell them. In truth, they no doubt wished him away; because competition would soon ruin the business of either, and they liked not to have the Indians taught to expect more than their furs were worth, nor to have the Indians' confidence in themselves destroyed or tampered with.

The Hudson's Bay Company were hardly so unfriendly to him as the American companies; since to the former he was enabled to sell his goods and fort on the Snake River, before he returned to

the United States, which he did in 1835.

The sale of Fort Hall to the Hudson's Bay Company was a finishing blow at the American fur trade in the Rocky Mountains, which after two or three years of constantly declining profits, was entirely abandoned.

Something of the dangers incident to the life of the hunter and trapper may be gathered from the following statements, made by various parties who have been engaged in it. In 1808, a Missouri Company engaged in fur hunting on the three forks of the river Missouri, were attacked by Blackfeet, losing twenty seven men, and being compelled to abandon the country. In 1823, Mr. Ashley was attacked on the same river by the Arickaras, and had twenty-six men killed. About the same time the Missouri company lost seven men, and fifteen thousand dollars worth of merchandise on the Yellowstone River. A few years previous, Major Henry lost, on the Missouri River, six men and fifty horses. In the sketch given of Smith's trading adventures is shown how uncertain were life and property at a later period. Of the two hundred men whom Wyeth led into the Indian country, only about forty were alive at the end of three years. There was, indeed, a constant state of warfare between the Indians and the whites, wherever the American Companies hunted, in which great numbers of both lost their lives. Add to this cause of decimation the perils from wild beasts, famine, cold, and all manner of accidents, and the trapper's chance of life was about one in three.

Of the causes which have produced the enmity of the Indians, there are, about as many. It was found to be the case almost universally, that on the first visit of the whites the natives were friendly, after their natural fears had been allayed. But by degrees their cupidity was excited to possess themselves of the much coveted dress, arms, and goods of their visitors. As they had little or nothing to offer in exchange, which the white man considered an equivalent, they took the only method remaining of gratifying their desire of possession, and stole the coveted articles which they could not purchase. When they learned that the white men punished theft, they murdered to prevent the punishment. Often, also, they had wrongs of their own to avenge. White men did not always regard their property-rights. They were guilty of infamous conduct toward Indian women. What one party of whites told them was true, another plainly contradicted, leaving the lie between them. They were overbearing toward the Indians on their own soil, exciting to irrepressible hostility the natural jealousy of the inferior toward the superior race, where both are free, which characterizes all people. In short, the Indians were not without their grievances; and from barbarous ignorance and wrong on one side, and intelligent wrong-doing on the other, together with the misunderstandings likely to arise between two entirely distinct races, grew constantly a thousand abuses, which resulted in a deadly enmity between the two.

For several reasons this evil existed to a greater degree among the American traders and trappers than among the British. The American trapper was not, like the Hudson's Bay employees, bred to the business. Oftener than any other way he was some wild youth who, after an escapade in the society of his native place, sought safety from reproach or punishment in the wilderness. Or he was some disappointed man who, with feelings embittered towards his fellows, preferred the seclusion of the forest and mountain. Many were of a clan disreputable everywhere, who gladly

embraced a life not subject to social laws. A few were brave, independent and hardy spirits, who delighted in the hardships and wild adventures their calling made necessary. All these men, the best with the worst, were subject to no will but their own; and all experience goes to prove that a life of perfect liberty is apt to degenerate into a life of license. Even their own lives, and those of their companions, when it depended upon their own prudence, were but lightly considered. The constant presence of danger made them reckless. It is easy to conceive how, under these circumstances, the natives and the foreigners grew to hate each other, in the Indian country; especially after the Americans came to the determination to "shoot an Indian at sight," unless he belonged to some tribe with whom they had intermarried, after the manner of the trappers.

On the other hand, the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company were many of them half-breeds or full-blooded Indians of the Iroquois nation, towards whom nearly all the tribes were kindly disposed. Even the Frenchmen who trapped for this company were well liked by the Indians on account of their suavity of manner, and the ease with which they adapted themselves to savage life. Besides most of them had native wives and half-breed children, and, were regarded as relatives. They were trained to the life of a trapper, were subject to the will of the Company, and were generally just and equitable in their dealings with the Indians, according, to that company's will, and the dictates of prudence. Here was a wide difference.

Notwithstanding this, there were many dangers to be encountered. The hostility of some of the tribes could never be overcome; nor has it ever abated. Such were the Crows, the Blackfeet, the Cheyennes, the Apaches, the Camanches. Only a superior force could compel the friendly offices of these tribes for any white man, and then their treachery was as dangerous as their open hostility.

It happened, therefore, that although the Hudson's Bay Company lost comparatively few men by the hands of the Indians, they sometimes found them implacable foes in common with the American trappers; and frequently one party was very glad of the others' assistance. Altogether, as has before been stated, the loss of life was immense in proportion to the number employed.

Very few of those who had spent years in the Rocky Mountains ever returned to the United States. With their Indian wives and half-breed children, they scattered themselves throughout Oregon, until when, a number of years after the abandonment of the fur trade, Congress donated large tracts of land to actual settlers, they laid claim, each to his selected portion, and became active citizens of their adopted state.

As has been stated in the Introduction, Joseph L. Meek was a native of Washington Co., Va. Born in the early part of the present century, and brought up on a plantation where the utmost liberty was accorded to the "young massa;" preferring out-door sports with the youthful bondsmen of

his father, to study with the bald-headed schoolmaster who furnished him the alphabet on a paddle; possessing an exhaustless fund of waggish humor, united to a spirit of adventure and remarkable personal strength, he unwittingly furnished in himself the very material of which the heroes of the wilderness were made. Virginia, "the mother of Presidents," has furnished many such men, who, in the early days of the now populous Western States, became the hardy frontiers-men, or the fearless Indian fighters who were the bone and sinew of the land.

When young Joe was about eighteen years of age, he wearied of the monotony of plantation life, and jumping into the wagon of a neighbor who was going to Louisville, Ky., started out in life for himself. He "reckoned they did not grieve for him at home;" at which conclusion others besides Joe naturally arrive on hearing of his heedless disposition, and utter contempt for the ordinary and useful employments to which other men apply themselves. This truly Virginian and chivalric contempt for "honest labor" has continued to distinguish him throughout his eventful career, even while performing the most arduous duties of the life he had chosen.

Joe probably believed that should his father grieve for him, his step-mother would be able to console him; this step-mother, though a pious and good woman, not being one of the lad's favorites, as might easily be conjectured. It was such thoughts as these that kept up his resolution to seek the far west. In the autumn of 1828 he arrived in St. Louis, and the following spring he fell in with Mr. Wm. Sublette, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, who was making his annual visit to that frontier town to purchase merchandise for the Indian country, and pick up recruits for the fur-hunting service. To this experienced leader he offered himself.

"How old are you?" asked Sublette.

"A little past eighteen."

"And you want to go to the Rocky Mountains?"

"Yes."

"You don't know what you are talking about, boy. You'll be killed before you get half way there."

"If I do, I reckon I can die!" said Joe, with a flash of his full dark eyes, and throwing back his shoulders to show their breadth.

"Come," exclaimed the trader, eyeing the youthful candidate with admiration, and perhaps a touch of pity also; "that is the game spirit. I think you'll do, after all. Only be prudent, and keep your wits about you."

"Where else should they be?" laughed Joe, as he marched off, feeling an inch or two taller than before.

Then commenced the business of preparing for the journey--making acquaintance with the other recruits enjoying the novelty of owning an outfit, being initiated into the mysteries of camp duty by the few old hunters who were to accompany the expedition, and learning some thing of their swagger and disregard of civilized observances.

On the 17th of March, 1829, the company, numbering about sixty men, left St. Louis, and proceeded on horses and mules, with pack-horses for the goods, up through the state of Missouri. Camp-life commenced at the start; and this being the season of the year when the weather is most disagreeable, its romance rapidly melted away with the snow and sleet which varied the sharp

The River of the West

---

spring wind and the frequent cold rains. The recruits went through all the little mishaps incident to the business and to their inexperience, such as involuntary somersaults over the heads of their mules, bloody noses, bruises, dusty faces, bad colds, accidents in fording streams,--yet withal no very serious hurts or hindrances. Rough weather and severe exercise gave them wolfish appetites, which sweetened the coarse camp-fare and amateur cooking.

Getting up at four o'clock of a March morning to kindle fires and attend to the animals was not the most delectable duty that our labor-despising young recruit could have chosen; but if he repented of the venture he had made nobody was the wiser. Sleeping of stormy nights in corn-cribs or under sheds, could not be by any stretch of imagination converted into a highly romantic or heroic mode of lodging one's self. The squalid manner of living of the few inhabitants of Missouri at this period, gave a forlorn aspect to the country which is lacking in the wilderness itself;--a thought which sometimes occurred to Joe like a hope for the future. Mountain-fare he began to think must be better than the boiled corn and pork of the Missourians. Antelope and buffalo meat were more suitable viands for a hunter than coon and opossum. Thus those very duties which seemed undignified, and those hardships without danger or glory, which marked the beginning of his career made him ambitious of a more free and hazardous life on the plains and in the mountains.

Among the recruits was a young man not far from Joe's own age, named Robert Newell, from Ohio. One morning, when the company was encamped near Boonville, the two young men were out looking for their mules, when they encountered an elderly woman returning from the milking yard with a gourd of milk. Newell made some remark on the style of vessel she carried, when she broke out in a sharp voice,--

"Young chap, I'll bet you run off from your mother ! Who'll mend them holes in the elbow of your coat? You're a purty looking chap to go to the mountains, among them Injuns! They'll kill you. You'd better go back home !"

Considering that these frontier people knew what Indian fighting was, this was no doubt sound and disinterested advice, notwithstanding it was given somewhat sharply. And so the young men felt it to be; but it was not in the nature of either of them to turn back from a course because there was danger in it. The thought of home, and somebody to mend their coats, was, however, for the time strongly presented. But the company moved on, with undiminished numbers, stared at by the few inhabitants, and having their own little adventures, until they came to Independence, the last station before committing themselves to the wilderness.

At this place, which contained a dwelling-house, cottongin, and grocery, the camp tarried for a few days to adjust the packs, and prepare for a final start across the plains. On Sunday the settlers got together for a shooting-match, in which some of the travelers joined, without winning many laurels. coon-skins, deer-skins, and bees-wax changed hands freely among the settlers, whose skill with the rifle was greater than their hoard of silver dollars. This was the last vestige of civilization which the company could hope to behold for years; and rude as it was, yet won from them many a

parting look as they finally took their way across the plains toward the Arkansas River.

Often on this part of the march a dead silence fell upon the party, which remained unbroken for miles of the way. Many no doubt were regretting homes by them abandoned, or wondering dreamily how many and whom of that company would ever see the Missouri country again. Many indeed went the way the woman of the gourd had prophesied; but not the hero of this story, nor his comrade Newell.

The route of Captain Sublette led across the country from near the mouth of the Kansas River to the River Arkansas; thence to the South Fork of the Platte; thence on to the North Fork of that River, to where Ft. Laramie now stands; thence up the North Fork to the Sweetwater, and thence across in a still northwesterly direction to the head of Wind River.

The manner of camp-travel is now so well known through the writings of Irving, and still more from the great numbers which have crossed the plains since Astoria and Bonneville were written, that it would be superfluous here to enter upon a particular description of a train on that journey. A strict half-military discipline had to be maintained, regular duties assigned to each person, precautions taken against the loss of animals either by straying or Indian stampeding, etc. Some of the men were appointed as camp-keepers, who had all these things to look after, besides standing guard. A few were selected as hunters, and these were free to come and go, as their calling required. None but the most experienced were chosen for hunters, on a march; therefore our recruit could not aspire to that dignity yet.

The first adventure the company met with worthy of mention after leaving Independence, was in crossing the country between the Arkansas and the Platte. Here the camp was surprised one morning by a band of Indians a thousand strong, that came sweeping down upon them in such warlike style that even Captain Sublette was fain to believe it his last battle. Upon the open prairie there is no such thing as flight, nor any cover under which to conceal a party even for a few moments. It is always fight or die, if the assailants are in the humor for war.

Happily on this occasion the band proved to be more peaceably disposed than their appearance indicated, being the warriors of several tribes--the Sioux, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Cheyennes, who had been holding a council to consider probably what mischief they could do to some other tribes. The spectacle they presented as they came at full speed on horseback, armed, painted, brandishing their weapons, and yelling in first rate Indian style, was one which might well strike with a palsy the stoutest heart and arm. What were a band of sixty men against a thousand armed warriors in full fighting trim, with spears, shields, bows, battle-axes, and not a few guns?

But it is the rule of the mountain-men to fight - and that there is a chance for life until the breath is out of the body; therefore Captain Sublette had his little force drawn up in line of battle. On came the savages, whooping and swinging their weapons above their heads. Sublette turned to his men. "When you hear my shot, then fire." Still they came on, until within about fifty paces of the line of waiting men. Sublette turned his head, and saw his command with their guns all up to

The River of the West

---

their faces ready to fire, then raised his own gun. Just at this moment the principal chief sprang off his horse and laid his weapon on the ground, making signs of peace. Then followed a talk, and after the giving of a considerable present, Sublette was allowed to depart. This he did with all dispatch, the company putting as much distance as possible between themselves and their visitors before making their next camp. Considering the warlike character of these tribes and their superior numbers, it was as narrow an escape on the part of the company as it was an exceptional freak of generosity on the part of the savages to allow it. But Indians have all a great respect for a man who shows no fear; and it was most probably the warlike movement of Captain Sublette and his party which inspired a willingness on the part of the chief to accept a present, when he had the power to have taken the whole train. Besides, according to Indian logic, the present cost him nothing, and it might cost him many warriors to capture the train. Had there been the least wavering on Sublette's part, or fear in the countenances of his men, the end of the affair would have been different. This adventure was a grand initiation of the raw recruits, giving them both an insight into savage modes of attack, and an opportunity to test their own nerve.

The company proceeded without accident, and arrived, about the first of July, at the rendezvous, which was appointed for this year on the Popo Agie, one of the streams which form the headwaters of Bighorn River.

Now, indeed, young Joe had an opportunity of seeing something of the life upon which he had entered. As customary, when the traveling partner arrived at rendezvous with the year's merchandise, there was a meeting of all the partners, if they were within reach of the appointed place. On this occasion Smith was absent on his tour through California and Western Oregon, as has been related in the prefatory chapter. Jackson, the resident partner, and commander for the previous year, was not yet in; and Sublette had just arrived with the goods from St. Louis.

All the different hunting and trapping parties and Indian allies were gathered together, so that the camp contained several hundred men, with their riding and packhorses. Nor were Indian women and children wanting to give variety and an appearance of domesticity to the scene.

The Summer rendezvous was always chosen in some valley where there was grass for the animals, and game for the camp. The plains along the Popo Agie, besides furnishing these necessary bounties, were bordered by picturesque mountain ranges, whose naked bluffs of red sandstone glowed in the morning and evening sun with a mellowness of coloring charming to the eye of the Virginia recruit. The waving grass of the plain, variegated with wild flowers; the clear summer heavens flecked with white clouds that threw soft shadows in passing; the grazing animals scattered about the meadows; the lodges of the Booshways,<sup>(1)</sup> around which clustered the camp in motley garb and brilliant coloring; gay laughter, and the murmur of soft Indian voices, all made up a most spirited and enchanting picture, in which the eye of an artist could not fail to delight.

But as the goods were opened the scene grew livelier. All were eager to purchase, most of the trappers to the full amount of their year's wages; and some of them, generally free trappers, went in debt to the company to a very considerable amount, after spending the value of a year's labor, privation, and danger, at the rate of several hundred dollars in a single day.

The difference between a hired and a free trapper was greatly in favor of the latter. The hired trapper was regularly indentured, and bound not only to hunt and trap for his employers, but also to perform any duty required of him in camp. The Boosway, or the trader, or the partisan, (leader of the detachment,) had him under his command, to make him take charge of, load and unload the horses, stand guard, cook, hunt fuel, or, in short, do any and every duty. In return for this toilsome service he received an outfit of traps, arms and ammunition, horses, and whatever his service required. Besides his outfit, he received no more than three or four hundred dollars a year as wages.

There was also a class of free trappers, who were furnished with their outfit by the company they trapped for, and who were obliged to agree to a certain stipulated price for their furs before the hunt commenced. But the genuine free trapper regarded himself as greatly the superior of either of the foregoing classes. He had his own horses and accoutrements, arms and ammunition. He took what route he thought fit, hunted and trapped when and where he chose; traded with the Indians; sold his furs to whoever offered highest for them; dressed flauntingly, and generally had an Indian wife and half-breed children. They prided themselves on their hardihood and courage; even on their recklessness and profligacy. Each claimed to own the best horse; to have had the wildest adventures; to have made the most narrow escapes; to have killed the greatest number of bears and Indians; to be the greatest favorite with the Indian belles, the greatest consumer of alcohol, and to have the most money to spend, i.e. the largest credit on the books of the company. If his hearers did not believe him, he was ready to run a race with him, to beat him at "old sledge," or to fight, if fighting was preferred,--ready to prove what he affirmed in any manner the company pleased.

If the free trapper had a wife, she moved with the camp to which he attached himself, being furnished with a fine horse, caparisoned in the gayest and costliest manner. Her dress was of the finest goods the market afforded, and was suitably ornamented with beads, ribbons, fringes, and feathers. Her rank, too, as a free trapper's wife, gave her consequence not only in her own eyes, but in those of her tribe, and protected her from that slavish drudgery to which as the wife of an Indian hunter or warrior she would have been subject. The only authority which the free trapper acknowledged was that of his Indian spouse, who generally ruled in the lodge, however her lord blustered outside.

One of the free trapper's special delights was to take in hand the raw recruits, to gorge their wonder with his boastful tales, and to amuse himself with shocking his pupil's civilized notions of propriety. Joe Meek did not escape this sort of "breaking in;" and if it should appear in the course of this narrative that he proved an apt scholar, it will but illustrate a truth--that high spirits and fine talents tempt the tempter to win them over to his ranks. But Joe was not won over all at once. He beheld the beautiful spectacle of the encampment as it has been described, giving life and enchantment to the summer landscape, changed into a scene of the wildest carousal, going from bad to worse, until from harmless noise and bluster it came to fighting and loss of life. At this first rendezvous he was shocked to behold the revolting exhibition of four trappers playing at a game

The River of the West

---

of cards with the dead body of a comrade for a card-table! Such was the indifference to all the natural and ordinary emotions which these veterans of the wilderness cultivated in themselves, and inculcated in those who came under their influence. Scenes like this at first had the effect to bring feelings of home-sickness, while it inspired by contrast a sort of penitential and religious feeling also. According to Meek's account of those early days in the mountains, he said some secret prayers, and shed some secret tears. But this did not last long. The force of example, and especially the force of ridicule, is very potent with the young; nor are we quite free from their influence later in life.

If the gambling, swearing, drinking, and fighting at first astonished and alarmed the unsophisticated Joe, he found at the same time something to admire, and that he felt to be congenial with his own disposition, in the fearlessness, the contempt of sordid gain, the hearty merriment and frolicsome abandon of the better portion of the men about him. A spirit of emulation arose in him to become as brave as the bravest, as hardy as the hardiest, and as gay as the gayest, even while his feelings still revolted at many things which his heroic models wore openly guilty of. If at any time in the future course of this narrative, Joe is discovered to have taken leave of his early scruples, the reader will considerably remember the associations by which he was surrounded for years, until the memory of the pious teachings of his childhood was nearly, if not quite, obliterated. To "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice," should be the frame of mind in which both the writer and reader of Joe's adventures should strive to maintain himself.

Before our hero is ushered upon the active scenes of a trapper's life, it may be well to present to the reader a sort of guide to camp life, in order that he may be able to understand some of its technicalities, as they may be casually mentioned hereafter.

When the large camp is on the march, it has a leader, generally one of the Booshways, who rides in advance, or at the head of the column. Near him is a led mule, chosen for its qualities of speed and trustworthiness, on which are packed two small trunks that balance each other like panniers, and which contain the company's books, papers, and articles of agreement with the men. Then follow the pack animals, each one bearing three packs--one on each side, and one on top--so nicely adjusted as not to slip in traveling. These are in charge of certain men called camp-keepers, who have each three of these to look after. The trappers and hunters have two horses, or mules, one to ride, and one to pack their traps. If there are women and children in the train, all are mounted. Where the country is safe, the caravan moves in single file, often stretching out for half or three-quarters of a mile. At the end of the column rides the second man, or "little Booshway," as the men call him; usually a hired officer, whose business it is to look after the order and condition of the whole camp.

On arriving at a suitable spot to make the night camp, the leader stops, dismounts in the particular space which is to be devoted to himself in its midst. The others, as they come up, form a circle; the "second man" bringing up the rear, to be sure all are there. He then proceeds to appoint every man a place in the circle, and to examine the horses backs to see if any are sore. The horses are then turned out, under a guard, to graze; but before darkness comes on are placed inside the ring, and picketed by a stake driven in the earth, or with two feet so tied together as to prevent easy or

The River of the West

---

free locomotion. The men are divided into messes: so many trappers and so many camp-keepers to a mess. The business of eating is not a very elaborate one, where the sole article of diet is meat, either dried or roasted. By a certain hour all is quiet in camp, and only the guard is awake. At times during the night, the leader, or the officer of the guard, gives the guard a challenge "all's well!" which is answered by "all's well!"

In the morning at daylight, or sometimes not till sunrise, according to the safe or dangerous locality, the second man comes forth from his lodge and cries in French, "leve, leve, leve, leve, leve!" fifteen or twenty times, which is the command to rise. In about five minutes more he cries out again, in French, "leche lego, leche lego!" or turn out, turn out; at which command all come out from the lodges, and the horses are turned loose to feed; but not before a horseman has galloped all round the camp at some distance, and discovered every thing to be safe in the neighborhood. Again, when the horses have been sufficiently fed, under the eye of a guard, they are driven up, the packs replaced, the train mounted, and once more it moves off, in the order before mentioned.

In a settled camp, as in winter, there are other regulations. The leader and the second man occupy the same relative positions; but other minor regulations are observed. The duty of a trapper, for instance, in the trapping season, is only to trap, and take care of his own horses. When he comes in at night, he takes his beaver to the clerk, and the number is counted off, and placed to his credit. Not he, but the camp-keepers, take off the skins and dry them. In the winter camp there are six persons to a lodge: four trappers and two camp-keepers; therefore the trappers are well waited upon, their only duty being to hunt, in turns, for the camp. When a piece of game is brought in,--a deer, an antelope, or buffalo meat,--it is thrown down on the heap which accumulates in front of the Boosway's lodge; and the second man stands by and cuts it up, or has it cut up for him. The first man who chances to come along, is ordered to stand still and turn his back to the pile of game, while the "little Boosway" lays hold of a piece that has been cut off, and asks in a loud voice--"who will have this?"--and the man answering for him, says, "the Boosway," or perhaps "number six," or "number twenty"--meaning certain messes; and the number is called to come and take their meat. In this blind way the meat is portioned off; strongly reminding one of the game of "button, button, who has the button?" In this chance game of the meat, the Boosway fares no better than his men; unless, in rare instances, the little Boosway should indicate to the man who calls off, that a certain choice piece is designed for the mess of the leader or the second man.

A gun is never allowed to be fired in camp under any provocation, short of an Indian raid; but the guns are frequently inspected, to see if they are in order; and woe to the careless camp-keeper who neglects this or any other duty. When the second man comes around, and finds a piece of work imperfectly done, whether it be cleaning the firearms, making a hair rope, or a skin lodge, or washing a horse's back, he does not threaten the offender with personal chastisement, but calls up another man and asks him,

"Can you do this properly?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will give you ten dollars to do it;" and the ten dollars is set down to the account of the inefficient campkeeper. But he does not risk forfeiting another ten dollars in the same manner.

In the spring, when the camp breaks up, the skins which have been used all winter for lodges are cut up to make moccasins: because from their having been thoroughly smoked by the lodge fires they do not shrink in wetting, like raw skins. This is an important quality in a moccasin, as a trapper is almost constantly in the water, and should not his moccasins be smoked they will close upon his feet, in drying, like a vice. Sometimes after trapping all day, the tired and soaked trapper lies down in his blankets at night, still wet. But by-and-by he is wakened by the pinching of his moccasins, and is obliged to rise and seek the water again to relieve himself of the pain. For the same reason, when spring comes, the trapper is forced to cut off the lower half of his buckskin breeches, and piece them down with blanket legging, which he wears all through the trapping season.

Such were a few of the peculiarities, and the hardships also, of a life in the Rocky Mountains. If the camp discipline, and the dangers and hardships to which a raw recruit was exposed, failed to harden him to the service in one year, he was rejected as a "trifling fellow," and sent back to the settlement the next year. It was not probable, therefore, that the mountain-man often was detected in complaining at his lot. If he was miserable, he was laughed at; and he soon learned to laugh at his own miseries, as well as to laugh back at his comrades.

1. Leaders or chiefs--corrupted from the French of Bourgeois, and borrowed from the Canadians.

---

The River of the West  
Chapter II.

The business of the rendezvous occupied about a month. In this period the men, Indian allies, and other Indian parties who usually visited the camp at this time, were all supplied with goods. The remaining merchandise was adjusted for the convenience of the different traders who should be sent out through all the country traversed by the company. Sublette then decided upon their routes, dividing up his forces into camps, which took each its appointed course, detaching as it proceeded small parties of trappers to all the hunting grounds in the neighborhood. These smaller camps were ordered to meet at certain times and places, to report progress, collect and cache their furs, and "count noses." If certain parties failed to arrive, others were sent out in search for them.

This year, in the absence of Smith and Jackson, a considerable party was dispatched, under Milton Sublette, brother of the Captain, and two other free trappers and traders, Frapp and Jervais, to traverse the country down along the Bighorn River. Captain Sublette took a large party, among whom was Joe Meek, across the mountains to trap on the Snake River, in opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company had hitherto avoided this country, except when Smith had once crossed to the head-waters of the Snake with a small party of five trappers. But Smith and Sublette had determined to oppose themselves to the British traders who occupied so large an extent of territory presumed to be American; and it had been agreed between them to

---

The River of the West

---

meet this year on Snake River on Sublette's return from St. Louis, and Smith's from his California tour. What befel Smith's party before reaching the Columbia, has already been related; also his reception by the Hudson's Bay Company, and his departure from Vancouver.

Sublette led his company up the valley of the Wind River, across the mountains, and on to the very head-waters of the Lewis or Snake River. Here he fell in with Jackson, in the valley of Lewis Lake, called Jackson's Hole, and remained on the borders of this lake for some time, waiting for Smith, whose non-appearance began to create a good deal of uneasiness. At length runners were dispatched in all directions looking for the lost Booshway.

The detachment to which Meek was assigned had the pleasure and honor of discovering the hiding place of the missing partner, which was in Pierre's Hole, a mountain valley about thirty miles long and of half that width, which subsequently. was much frequented by the camps of the various fur companies. He was found trapping and exploring, in company with four men only, one of whom was Black, who with him escaped from the Umpqua Indians, as before related.

Notwithstanding the excitement and elation attendant upon the success of his party, Meek found time to admire the magnificent scenery of the valley, which is bounded on two sides by broken and picturesque ranges, and overlooked by that magnificent group of mountains, called the Three Tetons, towering to a height of fourteen thousand feet. This emerald cup set in its rim of amethystine mountains, was so pleasant a sight to the mountain-men that camp was moved to it without delay, where it remained until some time in September, recruiting its animals and preparing for the fall hunt.

Here again the trappers indulged in their noisy sports and rejoicing, ostensibly on account of the return of the long-absent Booshway. There was little said of the men who had perished in that unfortunate expedition. "Poor fellow! out of luck; " was the usual burial rite which the memory of a dead comrade received. So much and no more. They could indulge in noisy rejoicings over a lost comrade restored; but the dead one was not mentioned. Nor was this apparently heartless and heedless manner so irrational or unfeeling as it seemed. Everybody understood one thing in the mountains -- that he must keep his life by his own courage and valor, or at the least by his own prudence. Unseen dangers always lay in wait for him. The arrow or tomahawk of the Indian, the blow of the grizzly bear, the mix-step on the dizzy or slippery height, the rush of boiling and foaming floods, freezing cold, famine--these were the most common forms of peril, yet did not embrace even then all the forms in which Death sought his victims in the wilderness. The avoidance of painful reminders, such as the loss of a party of men, was a natural instinct, involving also a principle of self defence--since to have weak hearts would be the surest road to defeat in the next dangerous encounter. To keep their hearts "big," they must be gay, they must not remember the miserable fate of many of their one-time comrades. Think of that, stern moralist and martinet in propriety! Your fur collar hangs in the gas-lighted hall. In your luxurious dressing gown and slippers, by the warmth of a glowing grate, you muse upon the depravity of your fellow men. But imagine yourself, if you can, in the heart of an interminable wilderness. Let the snow be three or four feet deep, game scarce, Indians on your track: escaped from these dangers, once more be-

The River of the West

---

side a camp fire, with a roast of buffalo meat on a stick before it, and several of your companions similarly escaped, and destined for the same chances to-morrow, around you. Do you fancy you should give much time to lamenting the less lucky fellows who were left behind frozen, starved, or scalped? Not you. You would be fortifying yourself against to-morrow, when the same terrors might lay in wait for you. Jedediah Smith was a pious man; one of the few that ever resided in the Rocky Mountains, and led a band of reckless trappers; but he did not turn back to his camp when he saw it attacked on the Umpqua, nor stop to lament his murdered men. The law of self preservation is strong in the wilderness. "Keep up your heart to-day, for to-morrow you may die," is the motto of the trapper.

In the conference which took place between Smith and Sublette, the former insisted that on account of the kind services of the Hudson's Bay Company toward himself and the three other survivors of his party, they should withdraw their trappers and traders from the western side of the mountains for the present, so as not to have them come in conflict with those of that company. To this proposition Sublette reluctantly consented, and orders were issued for moving once more to the east, before going into winter camp, which was appointed for the Wind River Valley.

In the meantime Joe Meek was sent out with a party to take his first hunt for beaver as a hired trapper. The detachment to which he belonged traveled down Pierre's fork, the stream which watered the valley of Pierre's Hole, to its junction with Lewis' and Henry's forks where they unite to form the great Snake River. While trapping in this locality the party became aware of the vicinity of a roving band of Blackfeet, and in consequence, redoubled their usual precautions while on the march.

The Blackfeet were the tribe most dreaded in the Rocky Mountains, and went by the name of "Bugs Boys," which rendered into good English, meant "the devil's own." They are now so well known that to mention their characteristics seems like repeating a "twice-told tale; " but as they will appear so often in this narrative, Irving's account of them as he had it from Bonneville when he was fresh from the mountains, will, after all, not be out of place. "These savages," he says, "are the most dangerous banditti of the mountains, and the inveterate foe of the trapper. They are Ishmaelites of the first order, always with weapon in hand, ready for action. The young braves of the tribe, who are destitute of property, go to war for booty; to gain horses, and acquire the means of setting up a lodge, supporting a family, and entitling themselves to a seat in the public councils. The veteran warriors fight merely for the love of the thing, and the consequence which success gives them among their people. They are capital horsemen, and are generally well mounted on short, stout horses, similar to the prairie ponies, to be met with in St. Louis. When on a war party, however, they go on foot, to enable them to skulk through the country with greater secrecy; to keep in thickets and ravines, and use more adroit subterfuges and stratagems. Their mode of warfare is entirely by ambush, surprise, and sudden assaults in the night time. If they succeed in causing a panic, they dash forward with headlong fury; if the enemy is on the alert, and shows no signs of fear, they become wary and deliberate in their movements.

Some of them are armed in the primitive style, with bows and arrows; the greater part have American fuseses, made after the fashion of those of the Hudson's Bay Company. These they procure at

The River of the West

---

the trading post of the American Fur Company, on Maria's River, where they traffic their peltries for arms, ammunition, clothing, and trinkets. They are extremely fond of spirituous liquors and tobacco, for which nuisances they are ready to exchange, not merely their guns and horses, but even their wives and daughters. As they are a treacherous race, and have cherished a lurking hostility to the whites, ever since one of their tribe was killed by Mr. Lewis, the associate of General Clarke, in his exploring expedition across the Rocky Mountains, the American Fur Company is obliged constantly to keep at their post a garrison of sixty or seventy men."

"Under the general name of Blackfeet are comprehended several tribes, such as the Surcies, the Peagans, the Blood Indians, and the Gros Ventres of the Prairies, who roam about the Southern branches of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, together with some other tribes further north. The bands infesting the Wind River Mountains, and the country adjacent, at the time of which we are treating, were Gros Ventres of the Prairies, which are not to be confounded with the Gros Ventres of the Missouri, who keep about the lower part of that river, and are friendly to the white men."

"This hostile band keeps about the head-waters of the Missouri, and numbers about nine hundred fighting men. Once in the course of two or three years they abandon their usual abodes and make a visit to the Arapahoes of the Arkansas. Their route lies either through the Crow country, and the Black Hills, or through the lands of the Nez Perces, Flatheads, Bannacks, and Shoshonies. As they enjoy their favorite state of hostility with all these tribes, their expeditions are prone to be conducted in the most lawless and predatory style; nor do they hesitate to extend their maraudings to any party of white men they meet with, following their trail, hovering about their camps, waylaying and dogging the caravans of the free traders. and murdering the solitary trapper. The consequences are frequent and desperate fights between them and the mountaineers, in the wild defiles and fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains." Such were the Blackfeet at the period of which we are writing; nor has their character changed at this day, as many of the Montana miners know to their cost.

---

The River of the West  
Chapter III.

1830. Sublette's camp commenced moving back to the east side of the Rocky Mountains in October. Its course was up Henry's fork of the Snake River, through the North Pass to Missouri Lake, in which rises the Madison fork of the Missouri River. The beaver were very plenty on Henry's fork, and our young trapper had great success in making up his packs; having learned the art of setting his traps very readily. The manner in which the trapper takes his game is as follows:--

He has an ordinary steel trap weighing five pounds, attached to a chain five feet long, with a swivel and ring at the end, which plays round what is called the float, a dry stick of wood, about six feet long. The trapper wades out into the stream, which is shallow, and cuts with his knife a

The River of the West

---

bed for the trap, five or six inches under water. He then takes the float out the whole length of the chain in the direction of the centre of the stream, and drives it into the mud, so fast that the beaver cannot draw it out; at the same time tying the other end by a thong to the bank. A small stick or twig, dipped in musk or castor, serves for bait, and is placed so as to hang directly above the trap, which is now set. The trapper then throws water plentifully over the adjacent bank to conceal any foot prints or scent by which the beaver would be alarmed, and going to some distance wades out of the stream.

In setting a trap, several things are to be observed with care:--first, that the trap is firmly fixed, and the proper distance from the bank--for if the beaver can get on shore with the trap, he will cut off his foot to escape: secondly, that the float is of dry wood, for should it not be, the little animal will cut it off at a stroke, and swimming with the trap to the middle of the dam, be drowned by its weight. In the latter case, when the hunter visits his traps in the morning, he is under the necessity of plunging into the water and swimming out to dive for the missing trap, and his game. Should the morning be frosty and chill, as it very frequently is in the mountains, diving for traps is not the pleasantest exercise. In placing the bait, care must be taken to fix it just where the beaver in reaching it will spring the trap. If the bait-stick be placed high, the hind foot of the beaver will be caught: if low, his fore foot.

The manner in which the beavers make their dam, and construct their lodge, has long been reckoned among the wonders of the animal creation; and while some observers have claimed for the little creature more sagacity than it really possesses, its instinct is still sufficiently wonderful. It is certainly true that it knows how to keep the water of a stream to a certain level, by means of an obstruction; and that it cuts down trees for the purpose of backing up the water by a dam. It is not true, however, that it can always fell a tree in the direction required for this purpose. The timber about a beaver dam is felled in all directions; but as trees that grow near the water, generally lean towards it, the tree, when cut, takes the proper direction by gravitation alone. The beaver then proceeds to cut up the fallen timber into lengths of about three feet, and to convey them to the spot where the dam is to be situated, securing them in their places by means of mud and stones. The work is commenced when the water is low, and carried on as it rises, until it has attained the desired height. And not only is it made of the requisite height and strength, but its shape is suited exactly to the nature of the stream in which it is built. If the water is sluggish the dam is straight; if rapid and turbulent, the barrier is constructed of a convex form, the better to resist the action of the water.

When the beavers have once commenced a dam, its extent and thickness are continually augmented, not only by their labors, but by accidental accumulations; thus accommodating itself to the size of the growing community. At length after a lapse of many years, the water being spread over a considerable tract, and filled up by yearly accumulations of drift-wood and earth, seeds take root in the new made ground, and the old beaver-dams become green meadows, or thickets of cotton-wood and willow.

The food on which the beaver subsists, is the bark of the young trees in its neighborhood; and when laying up a winter store, the whole community join in the labor of selecting, cutting up, and

carrying the strips to their store houses under water. They do not, as some writers have affirmed, when cutting wood for a dam strip off the bark and store it in their lodges for winter consumption; but only carry under water the stick with the bark on.

“ The beaver has two incisors and eight molars in each jaw; and empty hollows where the canine teeth might be. The upper pair of cutting teeth extend far into the jaw, with a curve of rather more than a semicircle; and the lower pair of incisors form rather less than a semicircle. Sometimes, one of these teeth gets broken and then the opposite tooth continues growing until it forms a nearly complete circle. The chewing muscle of the beaver is strengthened by tendons in such a way as to give it great power. But more is needed to enable the beaver to eat wood. The insalivation of the dry food is provided for by the extraordinary size of the salivary glands.

“ Now, every part of these instruments is of vital importance to the beavers. The loss of an incisor involves the formation of an obstructive circular tooth; deficiency of saliva renders the food indigestible; and when old age comes and the enamel is worn down faster than it is renewed, the beaver is not longer able to cut branches for its support. Old, feeble and poor, unable to borrow, and ashamed to beg, he steals cuttings, and subjects himself to the penalty assigned to theft. Aged beavers are often found dead with gashes in their bodies, showing that they have been killed by their mates. In the fall of 1864, a very aged beaver was caught in one of the dams of the Esconawba River, and this was the reflection of a great authority on the occasion, one Ah-she-goes, an Ojibwa trapper: ‘Had he escaped the trap he would have been killed before the winter was over, by other beavers, for stealing cuttings.’

When the beavers are about two or three years old, their teeth are in their best condition for cutting. On the Upper Missouri, they cut the cotton tree and the willow bush; around Hudson’s Bay and Lake Superior, in addition to the willow they cut the poplar and maple, hemlock, spruce and pine. The cutting is round and round, and deepest upon the side on which they wish the tree to fall. Indians and trappers have seen beavers cutting trees. The felling of a tree is a family affair. No more than a single pair with two or three young ones are engaged at a time. The adults take the cutting in turns, one gnawing and the other watching; and occasionally a youngster trying his incisors. The beaver whilst gnawing sits on his plantigrade hind legs, which keep him conveniently upright. When the tree begins to crackle the beavers work cautiously, and when it crashes down they plunge into the pond, fearful lest the noise should attract an enemy to the spot. After the tree-fall, comes the lopping of the branches. A single tree may be winter provision for a family. Branches five or six inches thick have to be cut into proper lengths for transport, and are then taken home.”

The lodge of a beaver is generally about six feet in diameter, on the inside, and about half as high. They are rounded or dome-shaped on the outside, with very thick walls, and communicate with the land by subterranean passages, below the depth at which the water freezes in winter. Each lodge is made to accommodate several inmates, who have their beds ranged round the walls, much as the Indian does in his tent. They are very cleanly, too, and after eating, carry out the sticks that have been stripped, and either use them in repairing their dam, or throw them into the

stream below.

During the summer months the beavers abandon their lodges, and disport themselves about the streams, sometimes going on long journeys; or if any remain at home, they are the mothers of young families. About the last of August the community returns to its home, and begins preparations for the domestic cares of the long winter months.

An exception to this rule is that of certain individuals who have no families, make no dam, and never live in lodges, but burrow in subterranean tunnels. They are always found to be males, whom the French trappers call "les parasiteux," or idlers; and the American trappers "bachelors." Several of them are sometimes found in one abode, which the trappers facetiously denominate "bachelor's hall." Being taken with less difficulty than the more domestic beaver, the trapper is always glad to come upon their habitations.

The trapping season is usually in the spring and autumn. But should the hunters find it necessary to continue their work in winter, they capture the beaver by sounding on the ice until an aperture is discovered, when the ice is cut away and the opening closed up. Returning to the bank, they search for the subterranean passage, tracing its connection with the lodge; and by patient watching succeed in catching the beaver on some of its journeys between the water and the land. This, however, is not often resorted to when the hunt in the fall has been successful; or when not urged by famine to take the beaver for food.

"Occasionally it happens," says Captain Bonneville, "that several members of a beaver family are trapped in succession. The survivors then become extremely shy, and can scarcely be "brought to medicine," to use the trappers' phrase for "taking the bait." In such case, the trapper gives up the use of the bait, and conceals his traps in the usual paths and crossing places of the household. The beaver being now completely "up to trap," approaches them cautiously, and springs them, ingeniously, with a stick. At other times, he turns the traps bottom upwards, by the same means, and occasionally even drags them to the barrier, and conceals them in the mud. The trapper now gives up the contest of ingenuity, and shouldering his traps, marches off, admitting that he is not yet "up to beaver."

Before the camp moved from the forks of the Snake River, the haunting Blackfeet made their appearance openly. It was here that Meek had his first battle with that nation, with whom he subsequently had many a savage contest. They attacked the camp early in the morning, just as the call to turn out had sounded. But they had miscalculated their opportunity: the design having evidently been to stampede the horses and mules, at the hour and moment of their being turned loose to graze. They had been too hasty by a few minutes, so that when they charged on the camp pell-mell, firing a hundred guns at once, to frighten both horses and men, it happened that only a few of the animals had been turned out, and they had not yet got far off. The noise of the charge only turned them back to camp.

In an instant's time, Fitzpatrick was mounted, and commanding the men to follow, he galloped at headlong speed round and round the camp, to drive back such of the horses as were straying,

The River of the West

---

or had been frightened from their pickets. In this race, two horses were shot under him; but he escaped and the camp-horses were saved. The battle now was to punish the thieves. They took their position, as usual with Indian fighters, in a narrow ravine; from whence the camp was forced to dislodge them, at a great disadvantage. This they did do, at last, after six hours of hard fighting, in which a few men were wounded, but none killed. The thieves skulked off, through the canyon, when they found themselves defeated, and were seen no more until the camp came to the woods which cover the western slope of the Rocky Mountains.

But as the camp moved eastward, or rather in a northeasterly direction, through the pine forests between Pierre's Hole and the head-waters of the Missouri, it was continually harrassed by Black-Foot, and required a strong guard at night, when these marauders delighted to make an attack. The weather by this time was very cold in the mountains, and chilled the marrow of our young Virginian. The travel was hard, too, and the recruits pretty well worn out.

One cold night, Meek was put on guard on the further side of the camp, with a veteran named Reese. But neither the veteran nor the youngster could resist the approaches of "tired Nature's sweet restorer," and went to sleep at their post of duty. When, during the night, Sublette came out of his tent and gave the challenge-- "All's well!" there was no reply. To quote Meek's own language, "Sublette came round the horse-pen swearing and snorting. He was powerful mad. Before he got to where Reese was, he made so much noise that he waked him; and Reese, in a loud whisper, called to him, 'Down, Billy! Indians!' Sublette got down on his belly mighty quick. 'Whar? whar?' he asked.

"They were right there when you hollered so," said Reese.

"Where is Meek?" whispered Sublette.

"He is trying to shoot one," answered Reese, still in a whisper.

"Reese then crawled over to whar I war, and told me what had been said, and informed me what to do. In a few minutes I crept cautiously over to Reese's post, when Sublette asked me how many Indians had been thar, and I told him I couldn't make out their number. In the morning a pair of Indian moccasins war found whar Reese saw the Indians, which I had taken care to leave there; and thus confirmed, our story got us the credit of vigilance, instead of our receiving our just dues for neglect of duty."

It was sometime during the fall hunt in the Pine Woods, on the west side of the Rocky Mountains, that Meek had one of his earliest adventures with a bear. Two comrades, Craig and Nelson, and himself, while out trapping, left their horses, and traveled up a creek on foot, in search of beaver. They had not proceeded any great distance, before they came suddenly face to face with a red bear; so suddenly, indeed, that the men made a spring for the nearest trees. Craig and Meek ascended a large pine, which chanced to be nearest, and having many limbs, was easy to climb. Nelson happened to take to one of two small trees that grew close together; and the bear, fixing upon

The River of the West

---

him for a victim, undertook to climb after him. With his back against one of these small trees, and his feet against the other, his bearship succeeded in reaching a point not far below Nelson's perch, when the trees opened with his weight, and down he went, with a shock that fairly shook the ground. But this bad luck only seemed to infuriate the beast, and up he went again, with the same result, each time almost reaching his enemy. With the second tumble he was not the least discouraged; but started up the third time, only to be dashed once more to the ground when he had attained a certain height. At the third fall, however, he became thoroughly disgusted with his want of success, and turned and ran at full speed into the woods.

“ Then,” says Meek, “ Craig began to sing, and I began to laugh; but Nelson took to swearing. ‘O yes, you can laugh and sing now,’ says Nelson; ‘but you war quiet enough when the bear was around.’ ‘ Why, Nelson,’ I answered, ‘you wouldn’t have us noisy before that distinguished guest of yours?’ But Nelson damned the wild beast; and Craig and I laughed, and said he didn’t seem wild a bit. That’s the way we hector each other in the mountains. If a man gets into trouble he is only laughed at: ‘let him keep out; let him have better luck.’ is what we say.”

The country traversed by Sublette in the fall of 1829, was unknown at that period, even to the fur companies, they having kept either farther to the south or to the north. Few, if any, white men had passed through it since Lewis and Clarke discovered the head-waters of the Missouri and the Snake Rivers, which flow from the opposite sides of the same mountain peaks. Even the toils and hardships of passing over mountains at this season of the year, did not deprive the trapper of the enjoyment of the magnificent scenery the region afforded. Splendid views, however, could not long beguile men who had little to eat, and who had yet a long journey to accomplish in cold, and surrounded by dangers, before reaching the wintering ground.

In November the camp left Missouri Lake on the east side of the mountains, and crossed over, still northeasterly, on to the Gallatin fork of the Missouri River, passing over a very rough and broken country. They were, in fact, still in the midst of mountains, being spurs of the great Rocky range, and equally high and rugged. A particularly high mountain lay between them and the main Yellowstone River. This they had just crossed, with great fatigue and difficulty, and were resting the camp and horses for a few days on the river's bank, when the Blackfeet once more attacked them in considerable numbers. Two men were killed in this fight, and the camp thrown into confusion by the suddenness of the alarm. Capt. Sublette, however, got off, with most of his men, still pursued by the Indians.

Not so our Joe, who this time was not in luck, but was cut off from camp, alone, and had to flee to the high mountains overlooking the Yellowstone. Here was a situation for a nineteen-year-old raw recruit! Knowing that the Blackfeet were on the trail of the camp, it was death to proceed in that direction. Some other route must be taken to come up with them; the country was entirely unknown to him; the cold severe; his mule, blanket, and gun, his only earthly possessions. On the latter he depended for food, but game was scarce; and besides, he thought the sound of his gun would frighten himself, so alone in the wilderness, swarming with stealthy foes.

The River of the West

---

Hiding his mule in a thicket, he ascended to the mountain top to take a view of the country, and decide upon his course. And what a scene was that for the miserable boy, whose chance of meeting with his comrades again was small indeed! At his feet rolled the Yellowstone River, coursing away through the great plain to the eastward. To the north his eye follows the windings of the Missouri, as upon a map, but playing at hide-and-seek in amongst the mountains. Looking back, he saw the River Snake stretching its serpentine length through lava plains, far away, to its junction with the Columbia. To the north, and to the south, one white mountain rose above another as far as the eye could reach. What a mighty and magnificent world it seemed, to be alone in! Poor Joe succumbed to the influence of the thought, and wept.

Having indulged in this sole remaining luxury of life, Joe picked up his resolution, and decided upon his course. To the southeast lay the Crow country, a land of plenty --as the mountain-man regards plenty,--and there he could at least live; provided the Crows permitted him to do so. Besides, he had some hopes of falling in with one of the camps, by taking that course.

Descending the mountain to the hiding-place of his mule, by which time it was dark night, hungry and freezing, Joe still could not light a fire, for fear of revealing his whereabouts to the Indians; nor could he remain to perish with cold. Travel he must, and travel he did, going he scarcely knew whither. Looking back upon the terrors and discomforts of that night, the veteran mountaineer yet regards it as about the most miserable one of his life. When day at length broke, he had made, as well as he could estimate the distance, about thirty miles. Traveling on toward the southeast, he had crossed the Yellowstone River, and still among the mountains, was obliged to abandon his mule and accoutrements, retaining only one blanket and his gun. Neither the mule nor himself had broken fast in the last two days. Keeping a southerly course for twenty miles more, over a rough and elevated country, he came, on the evening of the third day, upon a band of mountain sheep. With what eagerness did he hasten to kill, cook, and eat ! Three days of fasting was, for a novice, quite sufficient to provide him with an appetite.

Having eaten voraciously, and being quite overcome with fatigue, Joe fell asleep in his blanket, and slumbered quite deeply until morning. With the morning came biting blasts from the north, that made motion necessary if not pleasant. Refreshed by sleep and food, our traveler hastened on upon his solitary way, taking with him what sheep-meat he could carry, traversing the same rough and mountainous country as before. No incidents nor alarms varied the horrible and monotonous solitude of the wilderness. The very absence of anything to alarm was awful; for the bravest man is wretchedly nervous in the solitary presence of sublime Nature. Even the veteran hunter of the mountains can never entirely divest himself of this feeling of awe, when his single soul comes face to face with God's wonderful and beautiful handiwork.

At the close of the fourth day, Joe made his lonely camp in a deep defile of the mountains, where a little fire and some roasted mutton again comforted his inner and outer man, and another night's sleep still farther refreshed his wearied frame. On the following morning, a very bleak and windy one, having breakfasted on his remaining piece of mutton, being desirous to learn something of the progress he had made, he ascended a low mountain in the neighborhood of his camp--and

The River of the West

---

behold! the whole country beyond was smoking with the vapor from boiling springs, and burning with gasses, issuing from small craters, each of which was emitting a sharp whistling sound.

When the first surprise of this astonishing scene had passed, Joe began to admire its effect in an artistic point of view. The morning being clear, with a sharp frost, he thought himself reminded of the city of Pittsburg, as he had beheld it on a winter morning, a couple of years before. This, however, related only to the rising smoke and vapor; for the extent of the volcanic region was immense, reaching far out of sight. The general face of the country was smooth and rolling, being a level plain, dotted with cone-shaped mounds. On the summits of these mounds were small craters from four to eight feet in diameter. Interspersed among these, on the level plain, were larger craters, some of them from four to six miles across. Out of these craters issued blue flames and molten brimstone.

For some minutes Joe gazed and wondered. Curious thoughts came into his head, about hell and the day of doom. With that natural tendency to reckless gayety and humorous absurdities which some temperaments are sensible of in times of great excitement, he began to soliloquize. Said he, to himself, "I have been told the sun would be blown out, and the earth burnt up. If this infernal wind keeps up, I shouldn't be surprised if the sun war blown out. If the earth is not burning up over thar, then it is that place the old Methodist preacher used to threaten me with. Any way it suits me to go and see what it's like."

On descending to the plain described, the earth was found to have a hollow sound, and seemed threatening to break through. But Joe found the warmth of the place most delightful, after the freezing cold of the mountains, and remarked to himself again, that "if it war hell, it war a more agreeable climate than he had been in for some time."

He had thought the country entirely desolate, as not a living creature had been seen in the vicinity; but while he stood gazing about him in curious amazement, he was startled by the report of two guns, followed by the Indian yell. While making rapid preparations for defence and flight, if either or both should be necessary, a familiar voice greeted him with the exclamation, "It's old Joe!" When the adjective "old" is applied to one of Meek's age at that time, it is generally understood to be a term of endearment. "My feelings you may imagine," says the "old Uncle Joe" of the present time, in recalling the adventure.

Being joined by these two associates, who had been looking for him, our traveler, no longer simply a raw recruit, but a hero of wonderful adventures, as well as the rest of the men, proceeded with them to camp, which they overtook the third day, attempting to cross the high mountains between the Yellowstone and the Bighorn Rivers. If Meek had seen hard times in the mountains alone, he did not find them much improved in camp. The snow was so deep that the men had to keep in advance, and break the road for the animals; and to make their condition still more trying, there were no provisions in camp, nor any prospect of plenty, for men or animals, until they should reach the buffalo country beyond the mountains.

The River of the West

---

During this scarcity of provisions, some of those amusing incidents took place with which the mountaineer will contrive to lighten his own and his comrades' spirits, even in periods of the greatest suffering. One which we have permission to relate, has reference to what Joe Meek calls the "meanest act of his life."

While the men were starving, a negro boy, belonging to Jedediah Smith, by some means was so fortunate as to have caught a porcupine, which he was roasting before the fire. Happening to turn his back for a moment, to observe something in camp, Meek and Reese snatched the tempting vi- and and made off with it, before the darkey discovered his loss. But when it was discovered, what a wail went up for the embezzled porcupine! Suspicion fixed upon the guilty parties, but as no one would 'peach on white men to save a "nigger's" rights, the poor, disappointed boy could do nothing but lament in vain, to the great amusement of the men, who upon the principle that "misery loves company," rather chuckled over than condemned Meek's "mean act."

There was a sequel, however, to this little story. So much did the negro dwell upon the event, and the heartlessness of the men towards him, that in the following summer, when Smith was in St. Louis, he gave the boy his freedom and two hundred dollars, and left him in that city; so that it became a saying in the mountains, that "the nigger got his freedom for a porcupine."

During this same march, a similar joke was played upon one of the men named Craig. He had caught a rabbit and put it up to roast before the fire--a tempting looking morsel to starving mountaineers. Some of his associates determined to see how it tasted, and Craig was told that the Booshways wished to speak with him at their lodge. While he obeyed this supposed command, the rabbit was spirited away, never more to be seen by mortal man. When Craig returned to the camp-fire, and beheld the place vacant where a rabbit so late was nicely roasting, his passion knew no bounds, and he declared his intention of cutting it out of the stomach that contained it. But as finding the identical stomach which contained it involved the cutting open of many that probably did not, in the search, he was fain to relinquish that mode of vengeance, together with his hopes of a supper. As Craig is still living, and is tormented by the belief that he knows the man who stole his rabbit, Mr. Meek takes this opportunity of assuring him, upon the word of a gentleman, that he is not the man.

While on the march over these mountains, owing to the depth of the snow, the company lost a hundred head of horses and mules, which sank in the yet unfrozen drifts, and could not be extricated. In despair at their situation, Jedediah Smith one day sent a man named Harris to the top of a high peak to take a view of the country, and ascertain their position. After a toilsome scramble the scout returned.

"Well, what did you see, Harris?" asked Smith anxiously.

"I saw the city of St. Louis, and one fellow taking a drink!" replied Harris; prefacing the assertion with a shocking oath.

Smith asked no more questions. He understood by the man's answer that he had made no pleas-

ing discoveries; and knew that they had still a weary way before them to reach the plains below. Besides, Smith was a religious man, and the coarse profanity of the mountaineers was very distasteful to him. "A very mild man, and a christian; and there were very few of them in the mountains," is the account given of him by the mountaineers themselves.

The camp finally arrived without loss of life, except to the animals, on the plains of the Bighorn River, and came upon the waters of the Stinking Fork, a branch of this river, which derives its unfortunate appellation from the fact that it flows through a volcanic tract similar to the one discovered by Meek on the Yellowstone plains. This place afforded as much food for wonder to the whole camp, as the former one had to Joe; and the men unanimously pronounced it the "back door to that country which divines preach about." As this volcanic district had previously been seen by one of Lewis and Clarke's men, named Colter, while on a solitary hunt, and by him also denominated "hell," there must certainly have been something very suggestive in its appearance. If the mountains had proven barren, and inhospitably cold, this hot and sulphurous country offered no greater hospitality. In fact, the fumes which pervaded the air rendered it exceedingly noxious to every living thing, and the camp was fain to push on to the main stream of the Bighorn River. Here signs of trappers became apparent, and spies having been sent out discovered a camp of about forty men, under Milton Sublette, brother of Captain William Sublette, the same that had been detached the previous summer to hunt in that country. Smith and Sublette then cached their furs, and moving up the river joined the camp of M. Sublette.

The manner of caching furs is this: A pit is dug to a depth of five or six feet in which to stand. The men then drift from this under a bank of solid earth, and excavate a room of considerable dimensions, in which the furs are deposited, and the apartment closed up. The pit is then filled up with earth, and the traces of digging obliterated or concealed. These caches are the only storehouses of the wilderness.

While the men were recruiting themselves in the joint camp, the alarm of "Indians!" was given, and hurried cries of "shoot! shoot!" were uttered on the instant. Captain Sublette, however, checked this precipitation, and ordering the men to hold, allowed the Indians to approach, making signs of peace. They proved to be a war party of Crows, who after smoking the pipe of peace with the Captain, received from him a present of some tobacco, and departed.

As soon as the camp was sufficiently recruited for traveling, the united companies set out again toward the south, and crossed the Horn mountains once more into Wind River Valley; having had altogether, a successful fall hunt, and made some important explorations, notwithstanding the severity of the weather and the difficulty of mountain traveling. It was about Christmas when the camp arrived on Wind River, and the cold intense. While the men celebrated Christmas, as best they might under the circumstances, Capt. Sublette started to St. Louis with one man, Harris, called among mountain-men Black Harris, on snowshoes, with a train of pack-dogs. Such was the indomitable energy and courage of this famous leader!

Chapter IV.

1830. The furs collected by Jackson's company were cached on the Wind River; and the cold still being very severe, and game scarce, the two remaining leaders, Smith and Jackson, set out on the first of January with the whole camp, for the buffalo country, on the Powder River, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles. "Times were hard in camp," when mountains had to be crossed in the depth of winter.

The animals had to be subsisted on the bark of the sweet cotton-wood, which grows along the streams and in the valleys on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, but is nowhere to be found west of that range. This way of providing for his horses and mules involved no trifling amount of labor, when each man had to furnish food for several of them. To collect this bark, the men carried the smooth limbs of the cotton-wood to camp, where, beside the camp-fire, they shaved off the sweet, green bark with a hunting-knife transformed into a drawing-knife by fastening a piece of wood to its point; or, in case the cotton-wood was not convenient, the bark was peeled off, and carried to camp in a blanket. So nutritious is it, that animals fatten upon it quite as well as upon oats.

In the large cotton-wood bottoms on the Yellowstone River, it sometimes became necessary to station a double guard to keep the buffalo out of camp, so numerous were they, when the severity of the cold drove them from the prairies to these cotton-wood thickets for subsistence. It was, therefore, of double importance to make the winter camp where the cotton-wood was plenty; since not only did it furnish the animals of the camp with food, but by attracting buffalo, made game plenty for the men. To such a hunter's paradise on Powder River, the camp was now traveling, and arrived, after a hard, cold march, about the middle of January, when the whole encampment went into winter quarters, to remain until the opening of spring.

This was the occasion when the mountain-man "lived fat" and enjoyed life: a season of plenty, of relaxation, of amusement, of acquaintanceship with all the company, of gayety, and of "busy idleness." Through the day, hunting parties were coming and going, men were cooking, drying meat, making moccasins, cleaning their arms, wrestling, playing games, and, in short, everything that an isolated community of hardy men could resort to for occupation, was resorted to by these mountaineers. Nor was there wanting, in the appearance of the camp, the variety, and that picturesque air imparted by a mingling of the native element; for what with their Indian allies, their native wives, and numerous children, the mountaineers camp was a motley assemblage; and the trappers themselves, with their affectation of Indian coxcombry, not the least picturesque individuals.

The change wrought in a wilderness landscape by the arrival of the grand camp was wonderful indeed. Instead of Nature's superb silence and majestic loneliness, there was the sound of men's voices in boisterous laughter, or the busy hum of conversation; the loud-resounding stroke of the axe; the sharp report of the rifle; the neighing of horses, and braying of mules; the Indian whoop and yell; and all that not unpleasing confusion of sound which accompanies the movements of the creature man. Over the plain, only dotted until now with shadows of clouds, or the transitory passage of the deer, the antelope, or the bear, were scattered hundreds of lodges and immense herds of grazing animals. Even the atmosphere itself seemed changed from its original purity, and

became clouded with the smoke from many camp-fires. And all this change might go as quickly as it came. The tent struck and the march resumed, solitude reigned once more, and only the cloud dotted the silent landscape.

If the day was busy and gleesome, the night had its charms as well. Gathered about the shining fires, groups of men in fantastic costumes told tales of marvelous adventures, or sung some old-remembered song, or were absorbed in games of chance. Some of the better educated men, who had once known and loved books, but whom some mishap in life had banished to the wilderness, recalled their favorite authors, and recited passages once treasured, now growing unfamiliar; or whispered to some chosen confrere the saddened history of his earlier years, and charged him thus and thus, should ever-ready death surprise himself in the next spring's hunt. It will not be thought discreditable to our young trapper, Joe, that he learned to read by the light of the campfire. Becoming sensible, even in the wilderness, of the deficiencies of his early education, he found a teacher in a comrade, named Green, and soon acquired sufficient knowledge to enjoy an old copy of Shakspeare, which, with a Bible, was carried about with the property of the camp.

In this life of careless gayety and plenty, the whole company was allowed to remain without interruption, until the first of April, when it was divided, and once more started on the march. Jackson, or "Davey," as he was called by the men, with about half the company, left for the Snake country. The remainder, among whom was Meek, started north, with Smith for commander, and James Bridger as pilot.

Crossing the mountains, ranges of which divide the tributary streams of the Yellowstone from each other, the first halt was made on Tongue River. From thence the camp proceeded to the Bighorn River. Through all this country game was in abundance,--buffalo, elk, and bear, and beaver also plenty. In mountain phrase, "times were good on this hunt: " beaver packs increased in number, and both men and animals were in excellent condition.

A large party usually hunted out the beaver and frightened away the game in a few weeks, or days, from any one locality. When this happened the camp moved on; or, should not game be plenty, it kept constantly on the move, the hunters and trappers seldom remaining out more than a day or two. Should the country be considered dangerous on account of Indians, it was the habit of the men to return every night to the encampment.

It was the design of Smith to take his command into the Blackfoot country, a region abounding in the riches which he sought, could they only be secured without coming into too frequent conflict with the natives: always a doubtful question concerning these savages. He had proceeded in this direction as far as Bovey's Fork of the Bighorn, when the camp was overtaken by a heavy fall of snow, which made traveling extremely difficult, and which, when melted, caused a sudden great rise in the mountain streams. In attempting to cross Bovey's Fork during the high water, he had thirty horses swept away, with three hundred traps: a serious loss in the business of hunting beaver.

In the manner described, pushing on through an unknown country, hunting and trapping as they moved, the company proceeded, passing another low chain of mountains, through a pass called Pryor's Gap, to Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone, thence to Rose-Bud River, and finally to the main Yellowstone River, where it makes a great bend to the east, enclosing a large plain covered with grass, and having also extensive cotton-wood bottoms, which subsequently became a favorite

wintering ground of the fur companies.

It was while trapping up in this country, on the RoseBud River, that an amusing adventure befel our trapper Joe. Being out with two other trappers, at some distance from the great camp, they had killed and supped off a fat buffalo cow. The night was snowy, and their camp was made in a grove of young aspens. Having feasted themselves, the remaining store of choice pieces was divided between, and placed, hunter fashion, under the heads of the party, on their betaking themselves to their blanket couches for the night. Neither Indian nor wild beast disturbed their repose, as they slept, with their guns beside them, filled with comfort and plenty. But who ever dreams of the presence of a foe under such circumstances? Certainly not our young trapper, who was only awakened about day-break by something very large and heavy walking over him, and snuffing about him with a most insulting freedom. It did not need Yankee powers of guessing to make out who the intruder in camp might be: in truth, it was only too disagreeably certain that it was a full sized grizzly bear, whose keenness of smell had revealed to him the presence of fat cow-meat in that neighborhood.

“ You may be sure,” says Joe, “ that I kept very quiet, while that bar helped himself to some of my buffalo meat, and went a little way off to eat it. But Mark Head, one of the men, raised up, and back came the bar. Down went our heads under the blankets, and I kept mine covered pretty snug, while the beast took another walk over the bed, but finally went off again to a little distance. Mitchel then wanted to shoot; but I said, ‘no, no; hold on, or the brute will kill us, sure.’ When the bar heard our voices, back he run again, and jumped on the bed as before. I’d have been happy to have felt myself sinking ten feet under ground, while that bar promenade over and around us! However, he couldn’t quite make out our style, and finally took fright, and ran off down the mountain. Wanting to be revenged for his impudence, I went after him, and seeing a good chance, shot him dead. Then I took my turn at running over him awhile! “

Such are the not infrequent incidents of the trapper’s life, which furnish him with material, needing little embellishment to convert it into those wild tales with which the nights are whiled away around the winter camp-fire.

Arrived at the Yellowstone with his company, Smith found it necessary, on account of the high water, to construct Bull-boats for the crossing. These are made by stitching together buffalo hides, stretching them over light frames, and paying the seams with elk tallow and ashes. In these light wherries the goods and people were ferried over, while the horses and mules were crossed by swimming.

The mode usually adopted in crossing large rivers, was to spread the lodges on the ground, throwing on them the light articles, saddles, etc. A rope was then run through the pin-holes around the edge of each, when it could be drawn up like a reticule. It was then filled with the heavier camp goods, and being tightly drawn up, formed a perfect ball. A rope being tied to it, it was launched on the water, the children of the camp on top, and the women swimming after and clinging to it, while a man, who had the rope in his hand, swam ahead holding on to his horse’s mane. In this way, dancing like a cork on the waves, the lodge was piloted across; and passengers as well as freight consigned, undamaged, to the opposite shore. A large camp of three hundred men, and one hundred women and children were frequently thus crossed in one hour’s time.

The camp was now in the excellent but inhospitable country of the Blackfeet, and the commander redoubled his precautions, moving on all the while to the Mussel Shell, and thence to the Judith

---

The River of the West

---

River. Beaver were plenty and game abundant; but the vicinity of the large village of the Blackfeet made trapping impracticable. Their war upon the trappers was ceaseless; their thefts of traps and horses ever recurring: and Smith, finding that to remain was to be involved in incessant warfare, without hope of victory or gain, at length gave the command to turn back, which was cheerfully obeyed: for the trappers had been very successful on the spring hunt, and thinking discretion some part at least of valor, were glad to get safe out of the Blackfoot country with their rich harvest of beaver skins.

The return march was by the way of Pryor's Gap, and up the Bighorn, to Wind River, where the cache was made in the previous December. The furs were now taken out and pressed, ready for transportation across the plains. A party was also dispatched, under Mr. Tullock, to raise the cache on the Bighorn River. Among this party was Meek, and a Frenchman named Ponto. While digging to come at the fur, the bank above caved in, falling upon Meek and Ponto, killing the latter almost instantly. Meek, though severely hurt, was taken out alive: while poor Ponto was "rolled in a blanket, and pitched into the river." So rude were the burial services of the trapper of the Rocky Mountains.

Meek was packed back to camp, along with the furs, where he soon recovered. Sublette arrived from St. Louis with fourteen wagons loaded with merchandise, and two hundred additional men for the service. Jackson also arrived from the Snake country with plenty of beaver, and the business of the yearly rendezvous began. Then the scenes previously described were re-enacted. Beaver, the currency of the mountains, was plenty that year, and goods were high accordingly. A thousand dollars a day was not too much for some of the most reckless to spend on their squaws, horses, alcohol, and themselves. For "alcohol" was the beverage of the mountaineers. Liquors could not be furnished to the men in that country. Pure alcohol was what they "got tight on;" and a desperate tight it was, to be sure!

An important change took place in the affairs of the Rocky Mountain Company at this rendezvous. The three partners, Smith, Sublette, and Jackson, sold out to a new firm, consisting of Milton Sublette, James Bridger, Fitzpatrick, Frapp, and Jervais; the new company retaining the same name and style as the old.

The old partners left for St. Louis, with a company of seventy men, to convoy the furs. Two of them never returned to the Rocky Mountains; one of them, Smith, being killed the following year, as will hereafter be related; and Jackson remaining in St. Louis, where, like a true mountain-man, he dissipated his large and hard-earned fortune in a few years. Captain Sublette, however, continued to make his annual trips to and from the mountains for a number of years; and until the consolidation of another wealthy company with the Rocky Mountain Company, continued to furnish goods to the latter, at a profit on St. Louis prices; his capital and experience enabling him to keep the new firm under his control to a large degree.

The River of the West

Chapter V

1830. The whole country lying upon the Yellowstone and its tributaries, and about the headwaters of the Missouri, at the time of which we are writing, abounded not only in beaver, but in buffalo, bear, elk, antelope, and many smaller kinds of game. Indeed the buffalo used then to cross

---

The River of the West

---

the mountains into the valleys about the head-waters of the Snake and Colorado Rivers, in such numbers that at certain seasons of the year, the plains and river bottoms swarmed with them. Since that day they have quite disappeared from the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, and are no longer seen in the same numbers on the eastern side.

Bear, although they did not go in herds, were rather uncomfortably numerous, and sometimes put the trapper to considerable trouble, and fright also; for very few were brave enough to willingly encounter the formidable grizzly, one blow of whose terrible paw, aimed generally at the hunter's head, if not arrested, lays him senseless and torn, an easy victim to the wrathful monster. A gunshot wound, if not directed with certainty to some vulnerable point, has only the effect to infuriate the beast, and make him trebly dangerous. From the fact that the bear always bites his wound, and commences to run with his head thus brought in the direction from which the ball comes, he is pretty likely to make a straight wake towards his enemy, whether voluntarily or not; and woe be to the hunter who is not prepared for him, with a shot for his eye, or the spot just behind the ear, where certain death enters.

In the frequent encounters of the mountain-men with these huge beasts, many acts of wonderful bravery were performed, while some tragedies, and not a few comedies were enacted.

From something humorous in Joe Meek's organization, or some wonderful "luck" to which he was born, or both, the greater part of his adventures with bears, as with men, were of a humorous complexion; enabling him not only to have a story to tell, but one at which his companions were bound to laugh. One of these which happened during the fall hunt of 1830, we will let him tell for himself:

"The first fall on the Yellowstone, Hawkins and myself were coming up the river in search of camp, when we discovered a very large bar on the opposite bank. We shot across, and thought we had killed him, for he laid quite still. As we wanted to take some trophy of our victory to camp, we tied our mules and left our guns, clothes, and everything except our knives and belts, and swam over to whar the bar war. But instead of being dead, as we expected, he sprung up as we come near him, and took after us. Then you ought to have seen two naked men run! It war a race for life, and a close one, too. But we made the river first. The bank war about fifteen feet high above the water, and the river ten or twelve feet deep; but we didn't halt. Overboard we went, the bar after us, and in the stream about as quick as we war. The current war very strong, and the bar war about half way between Hawkins and me. Hawkins was trying to swim down stream faster than the current war carrying the bar, and I war a trying to hold back. You can reckon that I swam! Every moment I felt myself being washed into the yawning jaws of the mighty beast, whose head war up the stream, and his eyes on me. But the current war too strong for him, and swept him along as fast as it did me. All this time, not a long one, we war looking for some place to land where the bar could not overtake us. Hawkins war the first to make the shore, unknown to the bar, whose head war still up stream; and he set up such a whooping and yelling that the bar landed too, but on the opposite side. I made haste to follow Hawkins, who had landed on the side

The River of the West

---

of the river we started from, either by design or good luck, and then we traveled back a mile and more to whar our mules war left--a bar on one side of the river, and too bares on the other! “

Notwithstanding that a necessary discipline was observed and maintained in the fur traders' camp, there was at the same time a freedom of manner between the Booshways and the men, both hired and free, which could not obtain in a purely military organization, nor even in the higher walks of civilized life in cities. In the mountain community, motley as it was, as in other communities more refined, were some men who enjoyed almost unlimited freedom of speech and action, and others who were the butt of everybody's ridicule or censure. The leaders themselves did not escape the critical judgment of the men; and the estimation in which they were held could be inferred from the manner in which they designated them. Captain Sublette, whose energy, courage, and kindness entitled him to the admiration of the mountaineers, went by the name of Billy; his partner Jackson, was called Davey; Bridger, old Gabe, and so on. In the same manner the men distinguished favorites or oddities amongst themselves, and to have the adjective old prefixed to a man's name signified nothing concerning his age, but rather that he was an object of distinction; though it did not always indicate, except by the tone in which it was pronounced, whether that distinction were an enviable one or not.

Whenever a trapper could get hold of any sort of story reflecting on the courage of a leader, he was sure at some time to make him aware of it, and these anecdotes were sometimes sharp answers in the mouths of careless campkeepers. Bridger was once waylaid by Blackfeet, who shot at him, hitting his horse in several places. The wounds caused the animal to rear and pitch, by reason of which violent movements Bridger dropped his gun, and the Indians snatched it up; after which there was nothing to do except to run, which Bridger accordingly did. Not long after this, as was customary, the leader was making a circuit of the camp examining the camp-keeper's guns, to see if they were in order, and found that of one Maloney, an Irishman, in a very dirty condition.

“ What would you do,” asked Bridger, “with a gun like that, if the Indians were to charge on the camp ? “

“ Be Jasus, I would throw it to them, and run the way ye did,” answered Maloney, quickly. It was sometime after this incident before Bridger again examined Maloney's gun.

A laughable story in this way went the rounds of the camp in this fall of 1830. Milton Sublette was out on a hunt with Meek after buffalo, and they were just approaching the band on foot, at a distance apart of about fifty yards, when a large grizzly bear came out of a thicket and made after Sublette, who, when he perceived the creature, ran for the nearest cotton-wood tree. Meek in the meantime, seeing that Sublette was not likely to escape, had taken sure aim, and fired at the bear, fortunately killing him. On running up to the spot where it laid, Sublette was discovered sitting at the foot of a cotton-wood, with his legs and arms clasped tightly around it.

“Do you always climb a tree in that way ? “ asked Meek.

"I reckon you took the wrong end of it, that time, Milton!"

"I'll be d--d, Meek, if I didn't think I was twenty feet up that tree when you shot; " answered the frightened Boosway; and from that time the men never tired of alluding to Milton's manner of climbing a tree.

These were some of the mirthful incidents which gave occasion for a gayety which had to be substituted for happiness, in the checkered life of the trapper; and there were like to be many such, where there were two hundred men, each almost daily in the way of adventures by flood or field.

On the change in the management of the Company which occurred at the rendezvous this year, three of the new partners, Fitzpatrick, Sublette, and Bridger, conducted a large party, numbering over two hundred, from the Wind River to the Yellowstone; crossing thence to Smith's River, the Falls of the Missouri, three forks of the Missouri, and to the Big Blackfoot River. The hunt proved very successful; beaver were plentiful; and the Blackfeet shy of so large a traveling party. Although so long in their country, there were only four men killed out of the whole company during this autumn.

From the Blackfoot River the company proceeded down the west side of the mountains to the forks of the Snake River, and after trapping for a short time in this locality, continued their march southward as far as Ogden's Hole, a small valley among the Bear River Mountains.

At this place they fell in with a trading and trapping party, under Mr. Peter Skeen Ogden, of the Hudson's Bay Company. And now commenced that irritating and reprehensible style of rivalry with which the different companies were accustomed to annoy one another. Accompanying Mr. Ogden's trading party were a party of Rockway Indians, who were from the North, and who were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, as the Iroquois and Crows were, to trap for them. Fitzpatrick and associates camped in the neighborhood of Ogden's company, and immediately set about endeavoring to purchase from the Rockways and others, the furs collected for Mr. Ogden. Not succeeding by fair means, if the means to such an end could be called fair,--they opened a keg of whiskey, which, when the Indians had got a taste, soon drew them away from the Hudson's Bay trader, the regulations of whose company forbade the selling or giving of liquors to the Indians. Under its influence, the furs were disposed of to the Rocky Mountain Company, who in this manner obtained nearly the whole product of their year's hunt. This course of conduct was naturally exceedingly disagreeable to Mr. Ogden, as well as unprofitable also; and a feeling of hostility grew up and increased between the two camps.

While matters were in this position, a stampede one day occurred among the horses in Ogden's camp, and two or three of the animals ran away, and ran into the camp of the rival company. Among them was the horse of Mr. Ogden's Indian wife, which had escaped, with her babe hanging to the saddle.

Not many minutes elapsed, before the mother, following her child and horse, entered the camp,

The River of the West

---

passing right through it, and catching the now halting steed by the bridle. At the same moment she espied one of her company's pack-horses, loaded with beaver, which had also run into the enemy's camp. The men had already begun to exult over the circumstance, considering this chance load of beaver as theirs, by the laws of war. But not so the Indian woman. Mounting her own horse, she fearlessly seized the pack-horse by the halter, and led it out of camp with its costly burden.

At this undaunted action, some of the baser sort of men cried out "shoot her, shoot her!" but a majority interfered with opposing cries of "let her go; let her alone; she's a brave woman: I glory in her pluck;" and other like admiring expressions. While the clamor continued, the wife of Ogden had galloped away, with her baby and her pack-horse.

As the season advanced, Fitzpatrick, with his other partners, returned to the east side of the mountains, and went into winter quarters on Powder river. In this trapper's "land of Canaan" they remained between two and three months. The other two partners, Frapp and Jervais, who were trapping far to the south, did not return until the following year.

While wintering it became necessary to send a dispatch to St. Louis on the company's business. Meek and a Frenchman named Legarde, were chosen for this service which was one of trust and peril also. They proceeded without accident, however, until the Pawnee villages were reached, when Legarde was taken prisoner. Meek, more cautious, escaped, and proceeded alone a few days' travel beyond, when he fell in with an express on its way to St. Louis, to whom he delivered his dispatches, and returned to camp, accompanied only by a Frenchman named Cabeneau; thus proving, himself an efficient mountaineer at twenty years of age.

1831. As soon as the spring opened, sometime in March, the whole company started north again, for the Blackfoot country. But on the night of the third day out, they fell unawares into the neighborhood of a party of Crow Indians, whose spies discovered the company's horses feeding on the dry grass of a little bottom, and succeeded in driving off about three hundred head. Here was a dilemma to be in, in the heart of an enemy's country! To send the remaining horses after these, might be "sending the axe after the helve;" besides most of them belonged to the free trappers, and could not be pressed into the service.

The only course remaining was to select the best men and dispatch them on foot, to overtake and retake the stolen horses. Accordingly one hundred trappers were ordered on this expedition, among whom were Meek, Newell, and Antoine Godin, a half-breed and brave fellow, who was to lead the party. Following the trail of the Crows for two hundred miles, traveling day and night, on the third day they came up with them on a branch of the Bighorn river. The trappers advanced cautiously, and being on the opposite side of the stream, on a wooded bluff, were enabled to approach close enough to look into their fort, and count the unsuspecting thieves. There were sixty of them, fine young braves, who believed that now they had made a start in life. Alas, for the vanity of human, and especially of Crow expectations! Even then, while they were grouped around their fires, congratulating themselves on the sudden wealth which had descended upon them, as it

The River of the West

---

were from the skies, an envious fate, in the shape of several roguish white trappers, was laughing at them and their hopes, from the overhanging bluff opposite them. And by and by, when they were wrapped in a satisfied slumber, two of these laughing rogues, Robert Newell, and Antoine Godin, stole under the very walls of their fort, and setting the horses free, drove them across the creek.

The Indians were awakened by the noise of the trampling horses, and sprang to arms. But Meek and his fellow trappers on the bluff fired into the fort with such effect that the Crows were appalled. Having delivered their first volley, they did not wait for the savages to recover from their recoil. Mounting in hot haste, the cavalcade of bare-back riders, and their drove of horses, were soon far away from the Crow fort, leaving the ambitious braves to finish their excursion on foot. It was afterwards ascertained that the Crows lost seven men by that one volley of the trappers.

Flushed with success, the trappers yet found the backward journey more toilsome than the outward; for what with sleeplessness and fatigue, and bad traveling in melted snow, they were pretty well exhausted when they reached camp. Fearing, however, another raid from the thieving Crows, the camp got in motion again with as little delay as possible. They had not gone far, when Fitzpatrick turned back, with only one man, to go to St. Louis for supplies.

After the departure of Fitzpatrick, Bridger and Sublette completed their spring and summer campaign without any material loss in men or animals, and with considerable gain in beaver skins. Having once more visited the Yellowstone, they turned to the south again, crossing the mountains into Pierre's Hole, on to Snake river; thence to Salt river; thence to Bear river; and thence to Green river to rendezvous.

It was expected that Fitzpatrick would have arrived from St. Louis with the usual annual recruits and supplies of merchandise, in time for the summer rendezvous; but after waiting for some time in vain, Bridger and Sublette determined to send out a small party to look for him. The large number of men now employed, had exhausted the stock of goods on hand. The camp was without blankets and without ammunition; knives were not to be had; traps were scarce; but worse than all, the tobacco had given out, and alcohol was not! In such a case as this, what could a mountain-man do?

To seek the missing Boosway became not only a duty, but a necessity; and not only a necessity of the physical man, but in an equal degree a need of the moral and spiritual man, which was rusting with the tedium of waiting. In the state of uncertainty in which the minds of the company were involved, it occurred to that of Frapp to consult a great "medicine-man" of the Crows, one of those recruits filched from Mr. Ogden's party by whiskey the previous year.

Like all eminent professional men, the Crow chief required a generous fee, of the value of a horse or two, before he would begin to make "medicine." This peculiar ceremony is pretty much alike among all the different tribes. It is observed first in the making of a medicine man, i. e., qualifying him for his profession; and afterwards is practiced to enable him to heal the sick, to prophecy,

and to dream dreams, or even to give victory to his people. To a medicine-man was imputed great power, not only to cure, but to kill; and if, as it sometimes happened, the relatives of a sick man suspected the medicine-man of having caused his death, by the exercise of evil powers, one of them, or all of them, pursued him to the death. Therefore, although it might be honorable, it was not always safe to be a great "medicine."

The Indians placed a sort of religious value upon the practice of fasting; a somewhat curious fact, when it is remembered how many compulsory fasts they are obliged to endure, which must train them to think lightly of the deprivation of food. Those, however, who could endure voluntary abstinence long enough, were enabled to become very wise and very brave. The manner of making a "medicine" among some of the interior tribes, is in certain respects similar to the practice gone through with by some preachers, in making a convert. A sort of camp meeting is held, for several nights, generally about five, during which various dances are performed, with cries, and incantations, bodily exercises, singing, and nervous excitement; enough to make many patients, instead of one doctor. But the native's constitution is a strong one, and he holds out well. At last, however, one or more are overcome with the mysterious power which enters into them at that time; making, instead of a saint, only a superstitious Indian doctor.

The same sort of exercises which had made the Cree man a doctor were now resorted to, in order that he might obtain a more than natural sight, enabling him to see visions of the air, or at the least to endow him with prophetic dreams. After several nights of singing, dancing, hopping, screeching, beating of drums, and other more violent exercises and contortions, the exhausted medicine man fell off to sleep, and when he awoke he announced to Frapp that Fitzpatrick was not dead. He was on the road; some road; but not the right one; etc., etc.

Thus encouraged, Frapp determined to take a party, and go in search of him. Accordingly Meek, Reese, Ebarts, and Nelson, volunteered to accompany him. This party set out, first in the direction of Wind River; but not discovering any signs of the lost Booshoway in that quarter, crossed over to the Sweetwater, and kept along down to the North Fork of the Platte, and thence to the Black Hills, where they found a beautiful country full of game; but not the hoped-for train, with supplies. After waiting for a short time at the Black Hills, Frapp's party returned to the North Fork of the Platte, and were rejoiced to meet at last, the long absent partner, with his pack train. Urged by Frapp, Fitzpatrick hastened forward, and came into camp on Powder River after winter had set in.

Fitzpatrick had a tale to tell the other partners, in explanation of his unexpected delay. When he had started for St. Louis in the month of March previous, he had hoped to have met the old partners, Capt. Sublette and Jedediah Smith, and to have obtained the necessary supplies from them, to furnish the Summer rendezvous with plenty. But these gentlemen, when he fell in with them, used certain arguments which induced him to turn back, and accompany them to Santa Fe, where they promised to furnish him goods, as he desired, and to procure for him an escort at that place. The journey had proven tedious, and unfortunate. They had several times been attacked by Indians, and Smith had been killed. While they were camped on a small tributary of the Simmaron River, Smith had gone a short distance from camp to procure water, and while at the stream was

The River of the West

---

surprised by an ambush, and murdered on the spot, his murderers escaping unpunished. Sublette, now left alone in the business, finally furnished him; and he had at last made his way back to his Rocky Mountain camp.

But Fitzpatrick's content at being once more with his company was poisoned by the disagreeable proximity of a rival company. If he had annoyed Mr. Ogden of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the previous autumn, Major Vanderburg and Mr. Dripps, of the American Company, in their turn annoyed him. This company had been on their heels, from the Platte River, and now were camped in the same neighborhood, using the Rocky Mountain Company as pilots to show them the country. As this was just what it was not for their interest to do, the Rocky Mountain Company raised camp, and fairly ran away from them; crossing the mountains to the Forks of the Snake River, where they wintered among the Nez Perces and Flathead Indians.

Some time during this winter, Meek and Legarde, who had escaped from the Pawnees, made another expedition together; traveling three hundred miles on snowshoes, to the Bitter Root River, to look for a party of free trappers, whose beaver the company wished to secure. They were absent two months and a half, on this errand, and were entirely successful, passing a Blackfoot village in the night, but having no adventures worth recounting.

The River of the West

Chapter VI

1832. In the following spring, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company commenced its march, first up Lewis' Fork, then on to Salt River, thence to Gray's River, and thence to Bear River. They fell in with the North American Fur Company on the latter river, with a large lot of goods, but no beaver. The American Company's resident partners were ignorant of the country, and were greatly at a loss where to look for the good trapping grounds. These gentlemen, Vanderburg and Dripps, were therefore inclined to keep an eye on the movements of the Rocky Mountain Company, whose leaders were acquainted with the whole region lying along the mountains, from the head-waters of the Colorado to the northern branches of the Missouri. On the other hand, the Rocky Mountain Company were anxious to "shake the dust from off their feet," which was trodden by the American Company, and to avoid the evils of competition in an Indian country. But they found the effort quite useless; the rival company had a habit of turning up in the most unexpected places, and taking advantage of the hard-earned experience of the Rocky Mountain Company's leaders. They tampered with the trappers, and ferreted out the secret of their next rendezvous; they followed on their trail, making them pilots to the trapping grounds; they sold goods to the Indians, and what was worse, to the hired trappers. In this way grew up that fierce conflict of interests, which made it "as much as his life was worth" for a trapper to suffer himself to be inveigled into the service of a rival company, which about this time or a little later, was at its highest, and which finally ruined the fur-trade for the American companies in the Rocky Mountains.

Finding their rivals in possession of the ground, Bridger and Milton Sublette resolved to spend

---

The River of the West

---

but a few days in that country. But so far as Sublette was concerned, circumstances ordered differently. A Rockway Chief, named Gray, and seven of his people, had accompanied the camp from Ogden's Hole, in the capacity of trappers. But during the sojourn on Bear River, there was a quarrel in camp on account of some indignity, real or fancied, which had been offered to the chief's daughter, and in the affray Gray stabbed Sublette so severely that it was thought he must die.

It thus fell out that Sublette had to be left behind; and Meek who was his favorite, was left to take care of him while he lived, and bury him if he died; which trouble Sublette saved him, however, by getting well. But they had forty lonesome days to themselves after the camps had moved off,--one on the heels of the other, to the great vexation of Bridger. Time passed slowly in Sublette's lodge, while waiting for his wound to heal. Day passed after day, so entirely like each other that the monotony alone seemed sufficient to invite death to an easy conquest. But the mountain-man's blood, like the Indians, is strong and pure, and his flesh heals readily, therefore, since death would not have him, the wounded man was forced to accept of life in just this monotonous form. To him Joe Meek was everything,--hands, feet, physician, guard, caterer, hunter, cook, companion, friend. What long talks they had, when Sublette grew better: what stories they told; what little glimpses of a secret chamber in their hearts, and a better than the every-day spirit, in their bosoms, was revealed,--as men will reveal such things in the isolation of sea-voyages, or the solitary presence of majestic Nature.

To the veteran mountaineer there must have been something soothing in the care and friendship of the youth of twenty-two, with his daring disposition, his frankness, his cheerful humor, and his good looks;--for our Joe was growing to be a maturely handsome man--tall, broad shouldered, straight, with plenty of dash, and none too much of it; a Southerner's olive complexion; frank, dark eyes, and a classical nose and chin. What though in the matter of dress he was ignorant of the latest styles?-- grace imparts elegance even to the trapper's beaver-skin cap and blanket capote.

At the end of forty days, as many as it took to drown a world, Sublette found himself well enough to ride; and the two set out on their search for camp. But now other adventures awaited them. On a fork of Green River, they came suddenly upon a band of Snake Indians feeding their horses. As soon as the Snakes discovered the white men, they set up a yell, and made an instinctive rush for their horses. Now was the critical moment. One word passed between the travelers, and they made a dash past the savages, right into the village, and never slacked rein until they threw themselves from their horses at the door of the Medicine lodge. This is a large and fancifully decorated lodge, which stands in the centre of a village, and like the churches of Christians, is sacred. Once inside of this, the strangers were safe for the present; their blood could not be shed there.

The warriors of the village soon followed Sublette and Meek into their strange house of refuge. In half an hour it was filled. Not a word was addressed to the strangers; nor by them to the Indians, who talked among themselves with a solemn eagerness, while they smoked the medicine pipe, as inspiration in their councils. Great was the excitement in the minds of the listeners, who understood the Snake tongue, as the question of their life or death was gravely discussed; yet in their countenances appeared only the utmost serenity. To show fear, is to whet an Indian's appetite for

blood: coolness confounds and awes him when anything will.

If Sublette had longed for excitement, while an invalid in his lonely lodge on Bear River, he longed equally now for that blissful seclusion. Listening for, and hearing one's death-warrant from a band of blood-thirsty savages, could only prove with bitter sharpness how sweet was life, even the most uneventful. For hours the council continued, and the majority favored the death-sentence. But one old chief, called the good Gotia, argued long for an acquittal: he did not see the necessity of murdering two harmless travelers of the white race. Nothing availed, however, and just at sunset their doom was fixed.

The only hope of escape was, that, favored by darkness, they might elude the vigilance of their jailers; and night, although so near, seemed ages away, even at sundown. Death being decreed, the warriors left the lodge one by one to attend to the preparation of the preliminary ceremonies. Gotia, the good, was the last to depart. As he left the Medicine lodge he made signs to the captives to remain quiet until he should return; pointing upwards to signify that there was a chance of life; and downwards to show that possibly they must die.

What an age of anxiety was that hour of waiting! Not a word had been exchanged between the prisoners since the Indians entered the lodge, until now; and now very little was said, for speech would draw upon them the vigilance of their enemy, by whom they desired most ardently to be forgotten.

About dusk there was a great noise, and confusion, and clouds of dust, in the south end of the village. Something was going wrong among the Indian horses. Immediately all the village ran to the scene of the disorder, and at the same moment Gotia, the good, appeared at the door of the Medicine lodge, beckoning the prisoners to follow him. With alacrity they sprang up and after him, and were led across the stream, to a thicket on the opposite side, where their horses stood, ready to mount, in the charge of a young Indian girl. They did not stop for compliments, though had time been less precious, they might well have bestowed some moments of it in admiration of Umentucken Tukutsey Undewatsey, the Mountain Lamb. Soon after, the beautiful Snake girl became the wife of Milton Sublette; and after his return to the States, of the subject of this narrative; from which circumstance the incident above related takes on something of the rosy hue of romance.

As each released captive received his bridle from the delicate hand of the Mountain Lamb, he sprang to the saddle. By this time the chief had discovered that the strangers understood the Snake dialect. "Ride, if you wish to live," said he: "ride without stopping, all night: and to-morrow linger not." With hurried thanks our mountain-men replied to this advice, and striking into a gallop, were soon far away from the Snake village. The next day at noon found them a hundred and fifty miles on their way to camp. Proceeding without further accident, they crossed the Teton Mountains, and joined the company at Pierre's Hole, after an absence of nearly four months.

Here they found the ubiquitous if not omnipresent American Fur Company encamped at the rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Company. The partners being anxious to be freed from this sort of espionage, and obstinate competition on their own ground, made a proposition to Van-

derburg and Dripps to divide the country with them, each company to keep on its own territory. This proposition was refused by the American Company; perhaps because they feared having the poorer portion set off to themselves by their more experienced rivals. On this refusal, the Rocky Mountain Company determined to send an express to meet Capt. William Sublette, who was on his way out with a heavy stock of merchandise, and hurry him forward, lest the American Company should have the opportunity of disposing of its goods, when the usual gathering to rendezvous began. On this decision being formed, Fitzpatrick determined to go on this errand himself; which he accordingly did, falling in with Sublette, and Campbell, his associate, somewhere near the Black Hills. To them he imparted his wishes and designs, and receiving the assurance of an early arrival at rendezvous, parted from them at the Sweetwater, and hastened back, alone, as he came, to prepare for business.

Captain Sublette hurried forward with his train, which consisted of sixty men with pack-horses, three to a man. In company with him, was Mr. Nathaniel Wyeth, a history of whose fur-trading and salmon-fishing adventures has already been given. Captain Sublette had fallen in with Mr. Wyeth at Independence, Missouri; and finding him ignorant of the undertaking on which he was launched, offered to become pilot and traveling companion, an offer which was gratefully accepted.

The caravan had reached the foot-hills of the Wind River Mountains, when the raw recruits belonging to both these parties were treated to a slight foretaste of what Indian fighting would be, should they ever have to encounter it. Their camp was suddenly aroused at midnight by the simultaneous discharge of guns and arrows, and the frightful whoops and yells with which the savages make an attack. Nobody was wounded, however; but on springing to arms, the Indians fled, taking with them a few horses which their yells had frightened from their pickets. These marauders were Blackfeet, as Captain Sublette explained to Mr. Wyeth, their moccasin tracks having betrayed them; for as each tribe has a peculiar way of making or shaping the moccasin, the expert in Indian habits can detect the nationality of an Indian thief by his foot-print. After this episode of the night assault, the leaders redoubled their watchfulness, and reached their destination in Pierre's hole about the first of July.

When Sublette arrived in camp, it was found that Fitzpatrick was missing. If the other partners had believed him to be with the Captain, the Captain expected to find him with them; but since neither could account to the other for his non-appearance, much anxiety was felt, and Sublette remembered with apprehension the visit he had received from Blackfeet. However, before anything had been determined upon with regard to him, he made his appearance in camp, in company with two Iroquois half-breeds, belonging to the camp, who had been out on a hunt.

Fitzpatrick had met with an adventure, as had been conjectured. While coming up the Green river valley, he descried a small party of mounted men, whom he mistook for a company of trappers, and stopped to reconnoiter; but almost at the same moment the supposed trappers, perceiving him, set up a yell that quickly undeceived him, and compelled him to flight. Abandoning his pack-horse, he put the other to its topmost speed, and succeeded in gaining the mountains, where

The River of the West

---

in a deep and dark defile he secreted himself until he judged the Indians had left that part of the valley. In this he was deceived, for no sooner did he emerge again into the open country, than he was once more pursued, and had to abandon his horse, to take refuge among the cliffs of the mountains. Here he remained for several days, without blankets or provisions, and with only one charge of ammunition, which was in his rifle, and kept for self-defense. At length, however, by frequent reconnoitering, he managed to elude his enemies, traveling by night, until he fortunately met with the two hunters from camp, and was conveyed by them to the rendezvous.

All the parties were now safely in. The lonely mountain valley was populous with the different camps. The Rocky Mountain and American companies had their separate camps; Wyeth had his; a company of free trappers, fifteen in number, led by a man named Sinclair, from Arkansas, had the fourth; the Nez Perces and Flatheads, the allies of the Rocky Mountain company, and the friends of the whites, had their lodges along all the streams; so that altogether there could not have been less than one thousand souls, and two or three thousand horses and mules gathered in this place.

“When the pie was opened then the birds began to sing.” When Captain Sublette’s goods were opened and distributed among the trappers and Indians, then began the usual gay carousel; and the “fast young men” of the mountains outvied each other in all manner of mad pranks. In the beginning of their spree many feats of horsemanship and personal strength were exhibited, which were regarded with admiring wonder by the sober and inexperienced New Englanders under Mr. Wyeth’s command. And as nothing stimulated the vanity of the mountainmen like an audience of this sort, the feats they performed were apt to astonish themselves. In exhibitions of the kind, the free trappers took the lead, and usually carried off the palm, like the privileged class that they were.

But the horse-racing, fine riding, wrestling, and all the manlier sports, soon degenerated into the baser exhibitions of a “crazy drunk” condition. The vessel in which the trapper received and carried about his supply of alcohol was one of the small camp kettles. “Passing round” this clumsy goblet very freely, it was not long before a goodly number were in the condition just named, and ready for any mad freak whatever. It is reported by several of the mountain-men that on the occasion of one of these “frolics,” one of their number seized a kettle of alcohol, and poured it over the head of a tall, lank, redheaded fellow, repeating as he did so the baptismal ceremony. No sooner had he concluded, than another man with a lighted stick, touched him with the blaze, when in an instant he was enveloped in flames. Luckily some of the company had sense enough left to perceive his danger, and began beating him with pack-saddles to put out the blaze. But between the burning and the beating, the unhappy wretch nearly lost his life, and never recovered from the effects of his baptism by fire.

Beaver being plenty in camp, business was correspondingly lively, there being a great demand for goods. When this demand was supplied, as it was in the course of about three weeks, the different brigades were set in motion. One of the earliest to move was a small party under Milton Sublette, including his constant companion, Meek. With this company, no more than thirty in number,

The River of the West

---

Sublette intended to explore the country to the south-west, then unknown to the fur companies, and to proceed as far as the Humboldt river in that direction.

On the 17th of July they set out toward the south end of the valley, and having made but about eight miles the first day, camped that night near a pass in the mountains. Wyeth's party of raw New Englanders, and Sinclair's free trappers, had joined themselves to the company of Milton Sublette, and swelled the number in camp to about sixty men, many of them new to the business of mountain life.

Just as the men were raising camp for a start the next morning, a caravan was observed moving down the mountain pass into the valley. No alarm was at first felt, as an arrival was daily expected of one of the American company's partisans, Mr. Fontenelle, and his company. But on reconnoitering with a glass, Sublette discovered them to be a large party of Blackfeet, consisting of a few mounted men, and many more, men, women, and children, on foot. At the instant they were discovered, they set up the usual yell of defiance, and rushed down like a mountain torrent into the valley, flourishing their weapons, and fluttering their gay blankets and feathers in the wind. There was no doubt as to the warlike intentions of the Blackfeet in general, nor was it for a moment to be supposed that any peaceable overture on their part meant anything more than that they were not prepared to fight at that particular juncture; therefore let not the reader judge too harshly of an act which under ordinary circumstances would have been infamous. In Indian fighting, every man is his own leader, and the bravest take the front rank. On this occasion there were two of Sublette's men, one a half-breed Iroquois, the other a Flathead Indian, who had wrongs of their own to avenge, and they never let slip a chance of killing a Blackfoot. These two men rode forth alone to meet the enemy, as if to hold a "talk" with the principal chief, who advanced to meet them, bearing the pipe of peace. When the chief extended his hand, Antonio Godin, the half-breed, took it, but at the same moment he ordered the Flathead to fire, and the chief fell dead. The two trappers galloped back to camp, Antoine bearing for a trophy the scarlet blanket of his enemy.

This action made it impossible to postpone the battle, as the dead chief had meant to do by peaceful overtures, until the warriors of his nation came up. The Blackfeet immediately betook themselves to a swamp formed by an old beaver dam, and thickly overgrown with cotton-wood and willow, matted together with tough vines. On the edge of this dismal covert the warriors skulked, and shot with their guns and arrows, while in its very midst the women employed themselves in digging a trench and throwing up a breastwork of logs, and whatever came to hand. Such a defence as the thicket afforded was one not easy to attack; its unseen but certain dangers being sufficient to appal the stoutest heart.

Meantime, an express had been sent off to inform Captain Sublette of the battle, and summon assistance. Sinclair and his free trappers, with Milton Sublette's small company, were the only fighting men at hand. Mr. Wyeth, knowing the inefficiency of his men in an Indian fight, had them entrenched behind their packs, and there left them to take care of themselves, but charged them not to appear in open field. As for the fighting men, they stationed themselves in a ravine, where they could occasionally pick off a Blackfoot, and waited for reinforcements.

---

Great was the astonishment of the Blackfeet, who believed they had only Milton Sublette's camp to fight, when they beheld first one party of white men and then another; and not only whites, but Nez Perces and Flatheads came galloping up the valley. If before it had been a battle to destroy the whites, it was now a battle to defend themselves. Previous to the arrival of Captain Sublette, the opposing forces had kept up only a scattering fire, in which nobody on the side of the trappers had been either killed or wounded. But when the impetuous captain arrived on the battle-field, he prepared for less guarded warfare. Stripped as if for the prize-ring, and armed cap-a-pie, he hastened to the scene of action, accompanied by his intimate friend and associate in business, Robert Campbell.

At sight of the reinforcements, and their vigorous movements, the Indians at the edge of the swamp fell back within their fort. To dislodge them was a dangerous undertaking, but Captain Sublette was determined to make the effort. Finding the trappers generally disinclined to enter the thicket, he set the example, together with Campbell, and thus induced some of the free trappers, with their leader, Sinclair, to emulate his action. However, the others took courage at this, and advanced near the swamp, firing at random at their invisible foe, who, having the advantage of being able to see them, inflicted some wounds on the party.

The few white "braves" who had resolved to enter the swamp, made their wills as they went, feeling that they were upon perilous business. Sublette, Campbell, and Sinclair succeeded in penetrating the thicket without alarming the enemy, and came at length to a more open space from whence they could get a view of the fort. From this they learned that the women and children had retired to the mountains, and that the fort was a slight affair, covered with buffalo robes and blankets to keep out prying eyes. Moving slowly on, some slight accident betrayed their vicinity, and the next moment a shot struck Sinclair, wounding him mortally. He spoke to Campbell, requesting to be taken to his brother. By this time some of the men had come up, and he was given in charge to

be taken back to camp. Sublette then pressed forward, and seeing an Indian looking through an aperture, aimed at him with fatal effect. No sooner had he done so, and pointed out the opening to Campbell, than he was struck with a ball in the shoulder, which nearly prostrated him, and turned him so faint that Campbell took him in his arms and carried him, assisted by Meek, out of the swamp. At the same time one of the men received a wound in the head. The battle was now carried on with spirit, although from the difficulty of approaching the fort, the firing was very irregular.

The mountaineers who followed Sublette, took up their station in the woods on one side of the fort, and the Nez Perces, under Wyeth, on the opposite side, which accidental arrangement, though it was fatal to many of the Blackfeet in the fort, was also the occasion of loss to themselves by the cross-fire. The whites being constantly reinforced by fresh arrivals from the rendezvous, were soon able to silence the guns of the enemy, but they were not able to drive them from their fort, where they remained silent and sullen after their ammunition was exhausted.

The River of the West

---

Seeing that the women of the Nez Perces and Flatheads were gathering up sticks to set fire to their breastwork of logs, an old chief proclaimed in a loud voice from within, the startling intelligence that there were four hundred lodges of his people close at hand, who would soon be there to avenge their deaths, should the whites choose to reduce them to ashes. This harangue, delivered in the usual high-flown style of Indian oratory, either was not clearly understood, or was wrongly interpreted, and the impression got abroad that an attack was being made on the great encampment. This intelligence occasioned a diversion, and a division of forces; for while a small party was left to watch the fort, the rest galloped in hot haste to the rescue of the main camp. When they arrived, they found it had been a false alarm, but it was too late to return that night, and the several camps remained where they were until the next day.

Meantime the trappers left to guard the fort remained stationed within the wood all night, firmly believing they had their enemy "corraled," as the horsemen of the plains would say. On the return, in the morning, of their comrades from the main camp, they advanced cautiously up to the breastwork of logs, and behold! not a buffalo skin nor red blanket was to be seen! Through the crevices among the logs was seen an empty fort. On making this discovery there was much chagrin among the white trappers, and much lamentation among the Indian allies, who had abandoned the burning of the fort expressly to save for themselves the fine blankets and other goods of their hereditary foes.

From the reluctance displayed by the trappers, in the beginning of the battle, to engage with the Indians while under cover of the woods, it must not be inferred that they were lacking in courage. They were too well informed in Indian modes of warfare to venture recklessly into the den of death, which a savage ambush was quite sure to be. The very result which attended the impetuosity of their leaders, in the death of Sinclair and the wounding of Captain Sublette, proved them not over cautious.

On entering the fort, the dead bodies of ten Blackfeet were found, besides others dead outside the fort, and over thirty horses, some of which were recognized as those stolen from Sublette's night camp on the other side of the mountains, besides those abandoned by Fitzpatrick. Doubtless the rascals had followed his trail to Pierre's

Hole, not thinking, however, to come upon so large a camp as they found at last. The savage garrison which had so cunningly contrived to elude the guard set upon them, carried off some of their wounded, and, perhaps, also some of their dead; for they acknowledged afterwards a much larger loss than appeared at the time. Besides Sinclair, there were five other white men killed, one half-breed, and seven Nez Perces. About the same number of whites and their Indian allies were wounded.

An instance of female devotion is recorded by Bonneville's historian as having occurred at this battle. On the morning following it, as the whites were exploring the thickets about the fort, they discovered a Blackfoot woman leaning silent and motionless against a tree. According to Mr. Irving, whose fine feeling for the sex would incline him to put faith in this bit of romance, "their surprise at her lingering here alone, to fall into the hands of her enemies, was dispelled when they saw the corpse of a warrior at her feet. Either she was so lost in grief as not to perceive their

The River of the West

---

approach, or a proud spirit kept her silent and motionless. The Indians set up a yell on discovering her, and before the trappers could interfere, her mangled body fell upon the corpse which she had refused to abandon." This version is true in the main incidents, but untrue in the sentiment. The woman's leg had been broken by a ball, and she was unable to move from the spot where she leaned. When the trappers approached her, she stretched out her hands supplicatingly, crying out in a wailing voice, "kill me! kill me! O white men, kill me! "--but this the trappers had no disposition to do. While she was entreating them, and they refusing, a ball from some vengeful Nez Perce or Flathead put an end to her sufferings.

Still remembering the threats of the Blackfoot chief, that four hundred lodges of his brethren were advancing on the valley, all the companies returned to rendezvous, and remained for several days, to see whether an attack should take place. But if there had ever been any such intention on the part of the Blackfoot nation, the timely lesson bestowed on their advance guard had warned them to quit the neighborhood of the whites.

Captain Sublette's wound was dressed by Mr. Wyeth's physician, and although it hindered his departure for St. Louis for some time, it did not prevent his making his usual journey later in the season. It was as well, perhaps, that he did not set out earlier, for of a party of seven who started for St. Louis a few days after the battle, three were killed in Jackson's Hole, where they fell in with the four hundred warriors with whom the Blackfoot chief threatened the whites at the battle of Pierre's Hole. From the story of the four survivors who escaped and returned to camp, there could no longer be any doubt that the big village of the Blackfeet had actually been upon the trail of Capt. Sublette, expecting an easy victory when they should overtake him. How they were disappointed by the reception met with by the advance camp, has already been related.

The River of the West

Chapter VII

1832. On the 23d of July, Milton Sublette's brigade and the company of Mr. Wyeth again set out for the southwest, and met no more serious interruptions while they traveled in company. On the head-waters of the Humboldt River they separated, Wyeth proceeding north to the Columbia, and Sublette continuing on into a country hitherto untraversed by American trappers.

It was the custom of a camp on the move to depend chiefly on the men employed as hunters to supply them with game, the sole support of the mountaineers. When this failed, the stock on hand was soon exhausted, and the men reduced to famine. This was what happened to Sublette's company in the country where they now found themselves, between the Owyhee and Humboldt Rivers. Owing to the arid and barren nature of these plains, the largest game to be found was the beaver, whose flesh proved to be poisonous, from the creature having eaten of the wild parsnip in the absence of its favorite food. The men were made ill by eating of beaver flesh, and the horses were greatly reduced from the scarcity of grass and the entire absence of the cotton-wood.

The River of the West

---

In this plight Sublette found himself, and finally resolved to turn north, in the hope of coming upon some better and more hospitable country. The sufferings of the men now became terrible, both from hunger and thirst. In the effort to appease the former, everything was eaten that could be eaten, and many things at which the well-fed man would sicken with disgust. "I have," says Joe Meek, "held my hands in an ant-hill until they were covered with the ants, then greedily licked them off. I have taken the soles off my moccasins, crisped them in the fire, and eaten them. In our extremity, the large black crickets which are found in this country were considered game. We used to take a kettle of hot water, catch the crickets and throw them in, and when they stopped kicking, eat them. That was not what we called cant tickup ko hanch, (good meat, my friend), but it kept us alive."

Equally abhorrent expedients were resorted to in order to quench thirst, some of which would not bear mention. In this condition, and exposed to the burning suns and the dry air of the desert, the men now so nearly exhausted began to prey upon their almost equally exhausted animals. At night when they made their camp, by mutual consent a mule was bled, and a soup made from its blood. About a pint was usually taken, when two or three would mess together upon this reviving, but scanty and not very palatable dish. But this mode of subsistence could not be long depended on, as the poor mules could ill afford to lose blood in their famishing state; nor could the men afford to lose their mules where there was a chance of life: therefore hungry as they were, the men were cautious in this matter; and it generally caused a quarrel when a man's mule was selected for bleeding by the others.

A few times a mule had been sacrificed to obtain meat; and in this case the poorest one was always selected, so as to economise the chances for life for the whole band. In this extremity, after four days of almost total abstinence and several weeks of famine, the company reached the Snake River, about fifty miles above the fishing falls, where it boils and dashes over the rocks, forming very strong rapids. Here the company camped, rejoiced at the sight of the pure mountain water, but still in want of food. During the march a horse's back had become sore from some cause; probably, his rider thought, because the saddle did not set well; and, although that particular animal was selected to be sacrificed on the morrow, as one that could best be spared, he set about taking the stuffing out of his saddle and re-arranging the padding. While engaged in this considerate labor, he uttered a cry of delight and held up to view a large brass pin, which had accidentally got into the stuffing, when the saddle was made, and had been the cause of all the mischief to his horse.

The same thought struck all who saw the pin: it was soon converted into a fish-hook, a line was spun from horsehair, and in a short time there were trout enough caught to furnish them a hearty and a most delicious repast. "In the morning," says Meek, "we went on our way rejoicing;" each man with the "five fishes" tied to his saddle, if without any "loaves." This was the end of their severest suffering, as they had now reached a country where absolute starvation was not the normal condition of the inhabitants; and which was growing more and more bountiful, as they neared the Rocky Mountains, where they at length joined camp, not having made a very profitable expedition.

The River of the West

---

It may seem incredible to the reader that any country so poor as that in which our trappers starved could have native inhabitants. Yet such was the fact; and the people who lived in and who still inhabit this barren waste, were called Diggers, from their mode of obtaining their food--a few edible roots growing in low grounds, or marshy places. When these fail them they subsist as did our trappers, by hunting crickets and field mice.

Nothing can be more abject than the appearance of the Digger Indian, in the fall, as he roams about, without food and without weapons, save perhaps a bow and arrows, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, looking for crickets! So despicable is he, that he has neither enemies nor friends; and the neighboring tribes do not condescend to notice his existence, unless indeed he should come in their way, when they would not think it more than a mirthful act to put an end to his miserable existence. And so it must be confessed the trappers regarded him. When Sublette's party first struck the Humboldt, Wyeth's being still with them, Joe Meek one day shot a Digger who was prowling about a stream where his traps were set.

"Why did you shoot him?" asked Wyeth.

"To keep him from stealing traps."

"Had he stolen any?"

"No: but he looked as if he was going to!"

This recklessness of life very properly distressed the just minded New Englander. Yet it was hard for the trappers to draw lines of distinction so nice as his. If a tribe was not known to be friendly, it was a rule of necessity to consider it unfriendly. The abjectness and cowardice of the Diggers was the fruit of their own helpless condition. That they had the savage instinct, held in check only by circumstances, was demonstrated about the same time that Meek shot one, by his being pursued by four of them when out trapping alone, and only escaping at last by the assistance of one of his comrades who came to the rescue. They could not fight, like the Crows and Blackfeet, but they could steal and murder, when they had a safe opportunity.

It would be an interesting study, no doubt, to the philanthropist, to ascertain in how great a degree the habits, manners, and morals of a people are governed by their resources, especially by the quality and quantity of their diet. But when diet and climate are both taken into consideration, the result is striking.

The character of the Blackfeet who inhabited the good hunting grounds on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, is already pretty well given. They were tall sinewy, well-made fellows; good horsemen, and good fighters, though inclined to marauding and murdering. They dressed comfortably and even handsomely, as dress goes amongst savages, and altogether were more to be feared than despised.

The Crows resembled the Blackfeet, whose enemies they were, in all the before-mentioned traits, but were if possible, even more predatory in their habits. Unlike the Blackfeet, however, they were not the enemies of all mankind; and even were disposed to cultivate some friendliness with the white traders and trappers, in order, as they acknowledged, to strengthen their own hands against

The River of the West

---

the Blackfeet. They too inhabited a good country, full of game, and had horses in abundance. These were the mountain tribes.

Comparing these with the coast tribes, there was a striking difference. The natives of the Columbia were not a tall and robust people, like those east of the Rocky Mountains, who lived by hunting. Their height rarely exceeded five feet six inches; their forms were good, rather inclining to fatness, their faces round, features coarse, but complexion light, and their eyes large and intelligent. The custom of flattening their heads in infancy gave them a grotesque and unnatural appearance, otherwise they could not be called ill-looking. On the first advent of white men among them, they were accustomed to go entirely naked, except in winter, when a panther skin, or a mantle of other skins sewed together, served to protect them from the cold: or if the weather was rainy, as it generally was in that milder climate, a long mantle of rush mats, like the toga of the ancient Romans, took the place of that made of skins. To this was added a conical hat woven of fibrous roots, and gaily painted.

For defensive armor they were provided with a tunic of elk skin double, descending to the ankles, with holes in it for the arms, and quite impenetrable to arrows. A helmet of similar material covered the head, rendering them like Achilles, invulnerable except in the heels. In this secure dress they went to battle in their canoes, notice being first given to the enemy of the intended attack. Their battles might therefore be termed compound duels, in which each party observed great punctiliousness and decorum. Painted and armor-encased, the warriors in two flotillas of canoes were rowed to the battle ground by their women, when the battle raged furiously for some time; not, however, doing any great harm to either side. If any one chanced to be killed, that side considered itself beaten, and retired from the conflict to mourn over and bury the estimable and departed brave. If the case was a stubborn one, requiring several days fighting, the opponents encamped near each other, keeping up a confusion of cries, taunts, menaces, and raillery, during the whole night; after which they resumed the conflict, and continued it until one was beaten. If a village was to be attacked, notice being received, the women and children were removed; and if the village was beaten they made presents to their conquerors. Such were the decorous habits of the warriors of the lower Columbia.

These were the people who lived almost exclusively by fishing, and whose climate was a mild and moist one. Fishing, in which both sexes engaged about equally, was an important accomplishment, since it was by fish they lived in this world; and by being good fishermen that they had hopes of the next one.

The houses in which they lived, instead of being lodges made of buffalo skins, were of a large size and very well constructed, being made out of cedar planks. An excavation was first made in the earth two or three feet deep, probably to secure greater warmth in winter. A double row of cedar posts was then planted firmly all round the excavation, and between these the planks were laid, or, sometimes cedar bark, so overlapped as to exclude the rain and wind. The ridge-pole of the roof was supported on a row of taller posts, passing through the centre of the building, and notched to receive it. The rafters were then covered with planks or bark, fastened down with ropes made of

The River of the West

---

the fibre of the cedar bark. A house made in this manner, and often a hundred feet long by thirty or forty wide, accommodated several families, who each had their separate entrance and fireplace; the entrance being by a low oval-shaped door, and a flight of steps.

The canoes of these people were each cut out of a single log of cedar; and were often thirty feet long and five wide at midships. They were gaily painted, and their shape was handsome, with a very long bow so constructed as to cut the surf in landing with the greatest ease, or the more readily to go through a rough sea. The oars were about five feet long, and bent in the shape of a crescent; which shape enabled them to draw them edgewise through the water with little or no noise--this noiselessness being an important quality in hunting the sea otter, which is always caught sleeping on the rocks.

The single instrument which sufficed to build canoes and houses was the chisel; generally being a piece of old iron obtained from some vessel and fixed in a wooden handle. A stone mallet aided them in using the chisel; and with this simple "kit" of tools they contrived to manufacture plates, bowls, carved oars, and many ornamental things. Like the men of all savage nations, they made slaves of their captives, and their women. The dress of the latter consisted merely of a short petticoat, manufactured from the fibre of the cedar bark, previously soaked and prepared. This material was worked into a fringe, attached to a girdle, and only long enough to reach the middle of the thigh. When the season required it, they added a mantle of skins. Their bodies were anointed with fish-oil, and sometimes painted with red ochre in imitation of the men. For ornaments they wore strings of glass beads and also of a white shell found on the northern coast, called haiqua. Such were the Chinooks, who lived upon the coast.

Farther up the river, on the eastern side of the Cascade range of mountains, a people lived, the same, yet different from the Chinooks. They resembled them in form, features, and manner of getting a living. But they were more warlike and more enterprising: they even had some notions of commerce, being traders between the coast Indians and those to the east of them. They too were great fishermen, but used the net instead of fishing in boats. Great scaffoldings were erected every year at the narrows of the Columbia, known as the Dalles, where, as the salmon passed up the river in the spring, in incredible numbers, they were caught and dried. After drying, the fish were then pounded fine between two stones, pressed tightly into packages or bales of about a hundred pounds, covered with matting, and corded up for transportation. The bales were then placed in storehouses built to receive them, where they awaited customers.

By and by there came from the coast other Indians, with different varieties of fish, to exchange for the salmon in the Wish-ram warehouses. And by and by there came from the plains to the eastward, others who had horses, camas-root, bear-grass, fur robes, and whatever constituted the wealth of the mountains and plains, to exchange for the rich and nutritious salmon of the Columbia. These Wish-ram Indians were sharp traders, and usually made something by their exchanges; so that they grew rich and insolent, and it was dangerous for the unwary stranger to pass their way. Of all the tribes of the Columbia, they perpetrated the most outrages upon their neighbors, the passing traveler, and the stranger within their gates.

---

The River of the West

---

Still farther to the east, on the great grassy plains, watered by beautiful streams, coming down from the mountains, lived the Cayuses, Yakimas, Nez Perces, Wallah Wallahs, and Flatheads; as different in their appearance and habits as their different modes of living would naturally make them. Instead of having many canoes, they had many horses; and in place of drawing the fishing net, or trolling lazily along with hook and line, or spearing fish from a canoe, they rode pell-mell to the chase, or sallied out to battle with the hostile Blackfeet, whose country lay between them and the good hunting-grounds, where the great herds of buffalo were. Being Nimrods by nature, they were dressed in complete suits of skins, instead of going naked, like their brethren in the lower country. Being wandering and pastoral in their habits, they lived in lodges, which could be planted every night and raised every morning.

Their women, too, were good riders, and comfortably clad in dressed skins, kept white with chalk. So wealthy were some of the chiefs that they could count their fifteen hundred head of horses grazing on their grassy uplands. Horse-racing was their delight, and betting on them their besetting vice. For bridles they used horse-hair cords, attached around the animal's mouth. This was sufficient to check him, and by laying a hand on this side or that of the horse's neck, the rider could wheel him in either direction. The simple and easy-fitting saddle was a stuffed deer-skin, with stirrups of wood, resembling in shape those used by the Mexicans, and covered with deer-skin sewed on wet, so as to tighten in drying. The saddles of the women were furnished with a pair of deer's antlers for the pommel.

In many things their customs and accoutrements resembled those of the Mexicans, from whom, no doubt, they were borrowed. Like the Mexican, they threw the lasso to catch the wild horse. Their horses, too, were of Mexican stock, and many of them bore the brand of that country, having been obtained in some of their not infrequent journeys into California and New Mexico.

As all the wild horses of America are said to have sprung from a small band, turned loose upon the plains by Cortez, it would be interesting to know at what time they came to be used by the northern Indians, or whether the horse and the Indian did not emigrate together. If the horse came to the Indian, great must have been the change effected by the advent of this new element in the savage's life. It is impossible to conceive, however, that the Indian ever could have lived on these immense plains, barren of everything but wild grass, without his horse. With him he does well enough, for he not only "lives on horseback," by which means he can quickly reach a country abounding in game, but he literally lives on horse-flesh, when other game is scarce. Curious as the fact may seem, the Indians at the mouth of the Columbia and those of New Mexico speak languages similar in construction to that of the Aztecs; and from this fact, and the others before mentioned, it may be very fairly inferred that difference of circumstances and localities have made of the different tribes what they are.

As to the Indian's moral nature, that is pretty much alike everywhere; and with some rare exceptions, the rarest of which is, perhaps, the Flathead and Nez Perces nations, all are cruel, thieving, and treacherous. The Indian gospel is literally the "gospel of blood"; an "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Vengeance is as much a commandment to him as any part of the decalogue is to the

Christian. But we have digressed far from our narrative; and as it will be necessary to refer to the subject of the moral code of savages further on in our narrative, we leave it for the present.

After the incident of the pin and the fishes, Sublette's party kept on to the north, coursing along up Payette's River to Payette Lake, where he camped, and the men went out trapping. A party of four, consisting of Meek, Antoine Godin, Louis Leaugar, and Small, proceeded to the north as far as the Salmon river and beyond, to the head of one of its tributaries, where the present city of Florence is located. While camped in this region, three of the men went out one day to look for their horses, which had strayed away, or been stolen by the Indians. During their absence, Meek, who remained in camp, had killed a fine fat deer, and was cooking a portion of it, when he saw a band of about a hundred Indians approaching, and so near were they that flight was almost certainly useless; yet as a hundred against one was very great odds, and running away from them would not increase their number, while it gave him something to do in his own defence, he took to his heels and ran as only a mountain-man can run. Instead, however, of pursuing him, the practical-minded braves set about finishing his cooking for him, and soon had the whole deer roasting before the fire.

This procedure provoked the gastronomic ire of our trapper, and after watching them for some time from his hiding-place, he determined to return and share the feast. On reaching camp again, and introducing himself to his not over-scrupulous visitors, he found they were from the Nez Perces tribe inhabiting that region, who, having been so rude as to devour his stock of provisions, invited him to accompany them to their village, not a great way off, where they would make some return for his involuntary hospitality. This he did, and there found his three comrades and all their horses. While still visiting at the Nez Perces village, they were joined by the remaining portion of Sublette's command, when the whole company started south again. Passing Payette's lake to the east, traversing the Boise Basin, going to the head-waters of that river, thence to the Malade, thence to Godin's river, and finally to the forks of the Salmon, where they found the main camp. Captain Bonneville, of whose three years wanderings in the wilderness Mr. Irving has given a full and interesting account, was encamped in the same neighborhood, and had built there a small fort or trading-house, and finally wintered in the neighborhood.

An exchange of men now took place, and Meek went east of the mountains under Fitzpatrick and Bridger. When these famous leaders had first set out for the summer hunt, after the battle of Pierre's Hole, their course had been to the head-waters of the Missouri, to the Yellowstone lake, and the forks of the Missouri, some of the best beaver grounds known to them. But finding their steps dogged by the American Fur Company, and not wishing to be made use of as pilots by their rivals, they had flitted about for a time like an Arab camp, in the endeavor to blind them, and finally returned to the west side of the mountains, where Meek fell in with them.

Exasperated by the perseverance of the American Company, they had come to the determination of leading them a march which should tire them of the practice of keeping at their heels. They therefore planned an expedition, from which they expected no other profit than that of shaking off their rivals. Taking no pains to conceal their expedition, they rather held out the bait to the

American Company, who, unsuspecting of their purpose, took it readily enough. They led them along across the mountains, and on to the head-waters of the Missouri. Here, packing up their traps, they tarried not for beaver, nor even tried to avoid the Blackfeet, but pushed right ahead, into the very heart of their country, keeping away from any part of it where beaver might be found, and going away on beyond, to the elevated plains, quite destitute of that small but desirable game, but followed through it by their rivals.

However justifiable on the part of trade this movement of the Rocky Mountain Company might have been, it was a cruel device as concerned the inexperienced leaders of the other company, one of whom lost his life in consequence. Not knowing of their danger, they only discovered their situation in the midst of Blackfeet, after discovering the ruse that had been played upon them. They then halted, and being determined to find beaver, divided their forces and set out in opposite directions for that purpose. Unhappily, Major Vanderburg took the worst possible direction for a small party to take, and had not traveled far when his scouts came upon the still smoking campfires of a band of Indians who were returning from a buffalo hunt. From the "signs" left behind them, the scout judged that they had become aware of the near neighborhood of white men, and from their having stolen off, he judged that they were only gone for others of their nation, or to prepare for war.

But Vanderburg, with the fool-hardiness of one not "up to Blackfeet," determined to ascertain for himself what there was to fear; and taking with him half a score of his followers, put himself upon their trail, galloping hard after them, until, in his rashness, he found himself being led through a dark and deep defile, rendered darker and gloomier by overhanging trees. In the midst of this dismal place, just where an ambush might have been expected, he was attacked by a horde of savages, who rushed upon his little party with whoops and frantic gestures, intended not only to appal the riders, but to frighten their horses, and thus make surer their bloody butchery. It was but the work of a few minutes to consummate their demoniac purpose. Vanderburg's horse was shot down at once, falling on his rider, whom the Indians quickly dispatched. One or two of the men were instantly tomahawked, and the others wounded while making their escape to camp. The remainder of Vanderburg's company, on learning the fate of their leader, whose place there was no one to fill, immediately raised camp and fled with all haste to the encampment of the Pends Oreille Indians for assistance. Here they waited, while those Indians, a friendly tribe, made an effort to recover the body of their unfortunate leader; but the remains were never recovered probably having first been fiendishly mutilated, and then left to the wolves.

Fitzpatrick and Bridger, finding they were no longer pursued by their rivals, as the season advanced began to retrace their steps toward the good trapping grounds. Being used to Indian wiles and Blackfeet maraudings and ambushes, they traveled in close columns, and never camped or turned out their horses to feed, without the greatest caution. Morning and evening scouts were sent out to beat up every thicket or ravine that seemed to offer concealment to a foe, and the horizon was searched

in every direction for signs of an Indian attack. The complete safety of the camp being settled almost beyond a peradventure, the horses were turned loose, though never left unguarded.

It was not likely, however, that the camp should pass through the Blackfoot country without any encounters with that nation. When it had reached the head-waters of the Missouri, on the return march, a party of trappers, including Meek, discovered a small band of Indians in a bend of the lake, and thinking the opportunity for sport a good one, commenced firing on them. The Indians, who were without guns, took to the lake for refuge, while the trappers entertained themselves with the rare amusement of keeping them in the water, by shooting at them occasionally. But it chanced that these were only a few stragglers from the main Blackfoot camp, which soon came up and put an end to the sport by putting the trappers to flight in their turn. The trappers fled to camp, the Indians pursuing, until the latter discovered that they had been led almost into the large camp of the whites. This occasioned a halt, the Blackfeet not caring to engage with superior numbers.

In the pause which ensued, one of the chiefs came out into the open space, bearing the peace pipe, and Bridger also advanced to meet him, but carrying his gun across the pommel of his saddle. He was accompanied by a young Blackfoot woman, wife of a Mexican in his service, as interpreter. The chief extended his hand in token of amity; but at that moment Bridger saw a movement of the chiefs, which he took to mean treachery, and cocked his rifle. But the lock had no sooner clicked than the chief, a large and powerful man, seized the gun and turned the muzzle downward, when the contents were discharged into the earth. With another dexterous movement he wrested it from Bridger's hand, and struck him with it, felling him to the ground. In an instant all was confusion. The noise of whoops, yells, of fire-arms, and of running hither and thither, gathered like a tempest. At the first burst of this demoniac blast, the horse of the interpreter became frightened, and by a sudden movement, unhorsed her, wheeling and running back to camp. In the melee which now ensued, the woman was carried off by the Blackfeet, and Bridger was wounded twice in the back with arrows. A chance medley fight now ensued, continuing until night put a period to the contest. So well matched were the opposing forces, that each fought with caution firing from the cover of thickets and from behind rocks, neither side doing much execution. The loss on the part of the Blackfeet was nine warriors, and on that of the whites, three men and six horses.

As for the young Blackfoot woman, whose people retained her a prisoner, her lamentations and struggles to escape and return to her husband and child so wrought upon the young Mexican, who was the pained witness of her grief, that he took the babe in his arms, and galloped with it into the heart of the Blackfoot camp, to place it in the arms of the distracted mother. This daring act, which all who witnessed believed would cause his death, so excited the admiration of the Blackfoot chief, that he gave him permission to return, unharmed, to his own camp. Encouraged by this clemency, Loretta begged to have his wife restored to him, relating how he had rescued her, a prisoner, from the Crows, who would certainly have tortured her to death. The wife added her entreaties to his, but the chief sternly bade him depart, and as sternly reminded the Blackfoot girl that she belonged to his tribe, and could not go with his enemies. Loretta was therefore compelled to abandon his wife and child, and return to camp. It is, however, gratifying to know that so true an instance of affection in savage life was finally rewarded; and that when the two rival fur companies united, as they did in the following year, Loretta was permitted to go to the American

The River of the West

---

Company's fort on the Missouri, in the Blackfoot country, where he was employed as interpreter, assisted by his Blackfoot wife.

Such were some of the incidents that signaled this campaign in the wilderness, where two equally persistent rivals were trying to outwit one another. Subsequently, when several years of rivalry had somewhat exhausted both, the Rocky Mountain and American companies consolidated, using all their strategy thereafter against the Hudson's Bay Company, and any new rival that chanced to enter their hunting grounds.

After the fight above described, the Blackfeet drew off in the night, showing no disposition to try their skill next day against such experienced Indian fighters as Bridger's brigade had shown themselves. The company continued in the Missouri country, trapping and taking many beaver, until it reached the Beaver Head Valley, on the headwaters of the Jefferson fork of the Missouri. Here the lateness of the season compelled a return to winter-quarters, and by Christmas all the wanderers were gathered into camp at the forks of the Snake River.

1833. In the latter part of January it became necessary to move to the junction of the Portneuf to subsist the animals. The main body of the camp had gone on in advance, while some few, with pack horses, or women with children, were scattered along the trail. Meek, with five others, had been left behind to gather up some horses that had strayed. When about a half day's journey from camp, he overtook Umentucken, the Mountain Lamb, now the wife of Milton Sublette, with her child, on horseback. The weather was terribly cold, and seeming to grow colder. The naked plains afforded no shelter from the piercing winds, and the air fairly glittered with frost. Poor Umentucken was freezing, but more troubled about her babe than herself. The camp was far ahead, with all the extra blankets, and the prospect was imminent that they would perish. Our gallant trapper had thought himself very cold until this moment, but what were his sufferings compared to those of the Mountain Lamb and her little Lambkin? Without an instant's hesitation, he divested himself of his blanket capote, which he wrapped round the mother and child, and urged her to hasten to camp. For himself, he could not hasten, as he had the horses in charge, but all that fearful afternoon rode naked above the waist, exposed to the wind, and the fine, dry, icy hail, which filled the air as with diamond needles, to pierce the skin; and, probably, to the fact that the hail was so stinging, was owing the fact that his blood did not congeal.

"O what a day was that!" said Meek to the writer

"why, the air was thick with fine, sharp hail, and the sun shining, too! not one sun only, but three suns--there were three suns! And when night came on, the northern lights blazed up the sky! It was the most beautiful sight I ever saw. That is the country for northern lights!"

When some surprise was expressed that he should have been obliged to expose his naked skin to the weather, in order to save Umentucken--"In the mountains," he answered, "we do not have many garments. Buckskin breeches, a blanket capote, and a beaver skin cap makes up our rig.

"You do not need a laundress, then? But with such clothing how could you keep free of vermin?"

“

“We didn’t always do that. Do you want to know how we got rid of lice in the mountains? We just took off our clothes and laid them on an ant-hill, and you ought to see how the ants would carry off the lice! “

But to return to our hero, frozen, or nearly so. When he reached camp at night, so desperate was his condition that the men had to roll him and rub him in the snow for some time before allowing him to approach the fire. But Umentucken was saved, and he became heroic in her eyes. Whether it was the glory acquired by the gallant act just recorded, or whether our hero had now arrived at an age when the tender passion has strongest sway, the writer is unprepared to affirm: for your mountain-man is shy of revealing his past gallantries; but from this time on, there are evidences of considerable susceptibility to the charms of the dusky beauties of the mountains and the plains.

The cold of this winter was very severe, insomuch that men and mules were frozen to death. “The frost” says Meek, “used to hang from the roofs of our lodges in the morning, on first waking, in skeins two feet long, and our blankets and whiskers were white with it. But we trappers laid still, and called the camp-keepers to make a fire, and in our close lodges it was soon warm enough.

“The Indians suffered very much. Fuel was scarce on the Snake River, and but little fire could be afforded-- just sufficient for the children and their mothers to get warm by, for the fire was fed only with buffalo fat torn in strips, which blazed up quickly and did not last long. Many a time I have stood off, looking at the fire, but not venturing to approach, when a chief would say, ‘Are you cold, my friend? come to the fire’--so kind are these Nez Perces and Flatheads.”

The cold was not the only enemy in camp that winter, but famine threatened them. The buffalo had been early driven east of the mountains, and other game was scarce. Sometimes a party of hunters were absent for days, even weeks, without finding more game than would subsist themselves. As the trappers were all hunters in the winter, it frequently happened that Meek and one or more of his associates went on a hunt in company, for the benefit of the camp, which was very hungry at times.

On one of these hunting expeditions that winter, the party consisting of Meek, Hawkins, Doughty, and Antoine Claymore, they had been out nearly a fortnight without killing anything of consequence, and had clambered up the side of the mountains on the frozen snow, in hopes of finding some mountain sheep. As they traveled along under a projecting ledge of rocks, they came to a place where there were the impressions in the snow of enormous grizzly bear feet. Close by was an opening in the rocks, revealing a cavern, and to this the tracks in the snow conducted. Evidently the creature had come out of its winter den, and made just one circuit back again. At these signs of game the hunters hesitated--certain it was there, but doubtful how to obtain it.

At length Doughty proposed to get up on the rocks above the mouth of the cavern and shoot the bear as he came out, if somebody would go in and dislodge him.

"I'm your man," answered Meek.

"And I too," said Claymore.

"I'll be d\_d if we are not as brave as you are," said Hawkins, as he prepared to follow.

On entering the cave, which was sixteen or twenty feet square, and high enough to stand erect in, instead of one, three bears were discovered. They were standing, the largest one in the middle, with their eyes staring at the entrance, but quite quiet, greeting the hunters only with a low growl. Finding that there was a bear apiece to be disposed of, the hunters kept close to the wall, and out of the stream of light from the entrance, while they advanced a little way, cautiously, towards their game, which, however, seemed to take no notice of them. After maneuvering a few minutes to get nearer, Meek finally struck the large bear on the head with his wiping-stick, when it immediately moved off and ran out of the cave. As it came out, Doughty shot, but only wounded it, and it came rushing back, snorting, and running around in a circle, till the well directed shots from all three killed it on the spot. Two more bears now remained to be disposed of!

The successful shot put Hawkins in high spirits. He began to hello and laugh, dancing around, and with the others striking the next largest bear to make him run out, which he soon did, and was shot by Doughty. By this time their guns were reloaded, the men growing more and more elated, and Hawkins declaring they were "all Daniels in the lions' den, and no mistake." This, and similar expressions, he constantly vociferated, while they drove out the third and smallest bear. As it reached the cave's mouth, three simultaneous shots put an end to the last one, when Hawkins' excitement knew no bounds. "Daniel was a humbug," said he. "Daniel in the lions' den! Of course it was winter, and the lions were sucking their paws! Tell me no more of Daniel's exploits. We are as good Daniels as he ever dared to be. Hurrah for these Daniels! " With these expressions, and playing many antics by way of rejoicing, the delighted Hawkins finally danced himself out of his "lion's den," and set to work with the others to prepare for a return to camp.

Sleds were soon constructed out of the branches of the mountain willow, and on these light vehicles the fortunate find of bear meat was soon conveyed to the hungry camp in the plain below. And ever after this singular exploit of the party, Hawkins continued to aver, in language more strong than elegant, that the Scripture Daniel was a humbug compared to himself, and Meek, and Claymore.

The River of the West

Chapter VIII

1833. In the spring the camp was visited by a party of twenty Blackfeet, who drove off most of the horses; and among the stolen ones, Bridger's favorite race-horse, Grohean, a Camanche steed of great speed and endurance. To retake the horses, and if possible punish the thieves, a company of the gamest trappers, thirty in number, including Meek, and Kit Carson, who not long before had joined the Rocky Mountain Company, was dispatched on their trail. They had not traveled long before they came up with the Blackfeet, but the horses were nowhere to be seen, having been

The River of the West

---

secreted, after the manner of these thieves, in some defile of the mountains, until the skirmish was over which they knew well enough to anticipate. Accordingly when the trappers came up, the wily savages were prepared for them. Their numbers were inferior to that of the whites; accordingly they assumed an innocent and peace-desiring air, while their head man advanced with the inevitable peace-pipe, to have a "talk." But as their talk was a tissue of lies, the trappers soon lost patience, and a quarrel quickly arose. The Indians betook themselves to the defences which were selected beforehand, and a fight began, which without giving to either party the victory of arms, ended in the killing of two or three of the Blackfeet, and the wounding very severely of Kit Carson. The firing ceased with nightfall; and when morning came, as usual the Blackfeet were gone, and the trappers returned to camp without their horses.

The lost animals were soon replaced by purchase from the Nez Percés, and the company divided up into brigades, some destined for the country east of the mountains, and others for the south and west. In this year Meek rose a grade above the hired trapper, and became one of the order denominated skin trappers. These, like the hired trappers, depend upon the company to furnish them an outfit; but do not receive regular wages, as do the others. They trap for themselves, only agreeing to sell their beaver to the company which furnishes the outfit, and to no other. In this capacity, our Joe, and a few associates, hunted this spring, in the Snake River and Salt Lake countries; returning as usual to the annual rendezvous, which was appointed this summer to meet on Green River. Here were the Rocky Mountain and American Companies; the St. Louis Company, under Capt. Wm. Sublette and his friend Campbell; the usual camp of Indian allies; and, a few miles distant, that of Captain Bonneville. In addition to all these, was a small company belonging to Capt. Stuart, an Englishman of noble family, who was traveling in the far west only to gratify his own love of wild adventure, and admiration of all that is grand and magnificent in nature. With him was an artist named Miller, and several servants; but he usually traveled in company with one or another of the fur companies; thus enjoying their protection, and at the same time gaining a knowledge of the habits of mountain life.

The rendezvous, at this time, furnished him a striking example of some of the ways of mountain-men, least to their honorable fame; and we fear we must confess that our friend Joe Meek, who had been gathering laurels as a valiant hunter and trapper during the three or four years of his apprenticeship, was also becoming fitted, by frequent practice, to graduate in some of the vices of camp life, especially the one of conviviality during rendezvous. Had he not given his permission, we should not perhaps have said what he says of himself, that he was at such times often very "powerful drunk."

During the indulgence of these excesses, while at this rendezvous, there occurred one of those incidents of wilderness life which make the blood creep with horror. Twelve of the men were bitten by a mad wolf, which hung about the camp for two or three nights. Two of these were seized with madness in camp, sometime afterwards, and ran off into the mountains, where they perished. One was attacked by the paroxysm while on a hunt; when, throwing himself off his horse, he struggled and foamed at the mouth, gnashing his teeth, and barking like a wolf. Yet he retained

The River of the West

---

consciousness enough to warn away his companions, who hastened in search of assistance; but when they returned he was nowhere to be found. It was thought that he was seen a day or two afterwards, but no one could come up with him, and of course, he too, perished. Another died on his journey to St. Louis; and several died at different times within the next two years.

At the time, however, immediately following the visit of the wolf to camp, Captain Stuart was admonishing Meek on the folly of his ways, telling him that the wolf might easily have bitten him, he was so drunk.

“It would have killed him,--sure, if it hadn't cured him! “ said Meek,--alluding to the belief that alcohol is a remedy for the poison of hydrophobia.

When sobriety returned, and work was once more to be resumed, Meek returned with three or four associates to the Salt Lake country, to trap on the numerous streams that flow down from the mountains to the east of Salt Lake. He had not been long in this region when he fell in on Bear River with a company of Bonneville's men, one hundred and eighteen in number, under Jo Walker, who had been sent to explore the Great Salt Lake, and the adjacent country; to make charts, keep a journal, and, in short, make a thorough discovery of all that region. Great expectations were cherished by the Captain concerning this favorite expedition, which were, however, utterly blighted, as his historian has recorded. The disappointment and loss which Bonneville suffered from it, gave a tinge of prejudice to his delineations of the trapper's character. It was true that they did not explore Salt Lake; and that they made a long and expensive journey, collecting but few peltries. It is true also, that they caroused in true mountain style, while among the Californians: but that the expedition was unprofitable was due chiefly to the difficulties attending the exploration of a new country, a large portion of which was desert and mountain.

But let us not anticipate. When Meek and his companions fell in with Jo Walker and his company, they resolved to accompany the expedition; for it was “a feather in a man's cap,” and made his services doubly valuable to have become acquainted with a new country, and fitted himself for a pilot.

On leaving Bear River, where the hunters took the precaution to lay in a store of dried meat, the company passed down on the west side of Salt Lake, and found themselves in the Salt Lake desert, where their store, insufficiently large, soon became reduced to almost nothing. Here was experienced again the sufferings to which Meek had once before been subjected in the Digger country, which, in fact, bounded this desert on the northwest. “There was,” says Bonneville, “neither tree, nor herbage, nor spring, nor pool, nor running stream; nothing but parched wastes of sand, where horse and rider were in danger of perishing.” Many an emigrant has since confirmed the truth of this account.

It could not be expected that men would continue on in such a country, in that direction which offered no change for the better. Discerning at last a snowy range to the northwest, they traveled in that direction; pinched with famine, and with tongues swollen out of their mouths with thirst.

The River of the West

---

They came at last to a small stream, into which both men and animals plunged to quench their raging thirst.

The instinct of a mule on these desert journeys is something wonderful. We have heard it related by others besides the mountain-men, that they will detect the neighborhood of water long before their riders have discovered a sign; and setting up a gallop, when before they could hardly walk, will dash into the water up to their necks, drinking in the life-saving moisture through every pore of the skin, while they prudently refrain from swallowing much of it. If one of a company has been off on a hunt for water, and on finding it has let his mule drink, when he returns to camp, the other animals will gather about it, and snuff its breath, and even its body, betraying the liveliest interest and envy. It is easy to imagine that in the case of Jo Walker's company, not only the animals but the men were eager to steep themselves in the reviving waters of the first stream which they found on the border of this weary desert.

It proved to be a tributary of Mary's or Ogden's River, along which the company pursued their way, trapping as they went, and living upon the flesh of the beaver. They had now entered upon the same country inhabited by Digger Indians, in which Milton Sublette's brigade had so nearly perished with famine the previous year. It was unexplored, and the natives were as curious about the movements of their white visitors, as Indians always are on the first appearance of civilized men.

They hung about the camps, offering no offences by day, but contriving to do a great deal of thieving during the night-time. Each day, for several days, their numbers increased, until the army which dogged the trappers by day, and filched from them at night, numbered nearly a thousand. They had no guns; but carried clubs, and some bows and arrows. The trappers at length became uneasy at this accumulation of force, even though they had no fire-arms, for was it not this very style of people, armed with clubs, that attacked Smith's party on the Umpqua, and killed all but four ?

"We must kill a lot of them, boys," said Jo Walker. " It will never do to let that crowd get into camp." Accordingly, as the Indians crowded round at a ford of Mary's River, always a favorite time of attack with the savages, Walker gave the order to fire, and the whole company poured a volley into the jostling crowd. The effect was terrible. Seventy-five Diggers bit the dust; while the others, seized with terror and horror at this new and instantaneous mode of death, fled howling away, the trappers pursuing them until satisfied that they were too much frightened to return. This seemed to Captain Bonneville, when he came to hear of it, like an unnecessary and ferocious act. But Bonneville was not an experienced Indian fighter. His views of their character were much governed by his knowledge of the Flatheads and Nez Perces; and also by the immunity from harm he enjoyed among the Shoshonies on the Snake River, where the Hudson's Bay Company had brought them into subjection, and where even two men might travel in safety at the time of his residence in that country.

Walker's company continued on down to the main or Humboldt River, trapping as they went,

---

The River of the West

---

both for the furs, and for something to eat; and expecting to find that the river whose course they were following through these barren plains, would lead them to some more important river, or to some large lake or inland sea. This was a country entirely unknown, even to the adventurous traders and trappers of the fur companies, who avoided it because it was out of the buffalo range; and because the borders of it, along which they sometimes skirted, were found to be wanting in water-courses in which beaver might be looked for. Walker's company therefore, now determined to prosecute their explorations until they came to some new and profitable beaver grounds.

But after a long march through an inhospitable country they came at last to where the Humboldt sinks itself in a great swampy lake, in the midst of deserts of sage-brush. Here was the end of their great expectations. To the west of them, however, and not far off, rose the lofty summits of the Sierra Nevada range, some of whose peaks were covered with eternal snows. Since they had already made an unprofitable business of their expedition, and failed in its principal aim, that of exploring Salt Lake, they resolved upon crossing the mountains into California, and seeking new fields of adventure on the western side of the Nevada mountains.

Accordingly, although it was already late in the autumn, the party pushed on toward the west, until they came to Pyramid Lake, another of those swampy lakes which are frequently met with near the eastern base of these Sierras. Into this flowed a stream similar to the Humboldt, which came from the south, and, they believed, had its rise in the mountains. As it was important to find a good pass, they took their course along this stream, which they named Trucker's River, and continued along it to its head-waters in the Sierras.

And now began the arduous labor of crossing an unknown range of lofty mountains. Mountaineers as they were, they found it a difficult undertaking, and one attended with considerable peril. For a period of more than three weeks they were struggling with these dangers; hunting paths for their mules and horses, traveling around canyons thousands of feet deep; sometimes sinking in new fallen snow; always hungry, and often in peril from starvation. Sometimes they scrambled up almost smooth declivities of granite, that offered no foothold save the occasional seams in the rock; at others they traveled through pine forests made nearly impassable by snow; and at other times on a ridge which wind and sun made bare for them. All around rose rocky peaks and pinnacles fretted by ages of denudation to very spears and needles of a burnt looking, red colored rock. Below, were spread out immense fields, or rather oceans, of granite that seemed once to have been a molten sea, whose waves were suddenly congealed. From the fissures between these billows grew stunted pines, which had found a scanty soil far down in the crevices of the rock for their hardy roots. Following the course of any stream flowing in the right direction for their purpose, they came not infrequently to some small fertile valley, set in amidst the rocks like a cup, and often containing in its depth a bright little lake. These are the oases in the mountain deserts. But the lateness of the season made it necessary to avoid the high valleys on account of the snow, which in winter accumulates to a depth of twenty feet.

Great was the exultation of the mountaineers when they emerged from the toils and dangers, safe

---

into the bright and sunny plains of California; having explored almost the identical route since fixed upon for the Union Pacific Railroad.

They proceeded down the Sacramento valley, toward the coast, after recruiting their horses on the ripe wild oats, and the freshly springing grass which the December rains had started into life, and themselves on the plentiful game of the foot-hills. Something of the stimulus of the Californian climate seemed to be imparted to the ever buoyant blood of these hardy and danger-despising men. They were mad with delight on finding themselves, after crossing the stern Sierras, in a land of sunshine and plenty; of verdant hills and tawny plains; of streams winding between rows of alder and willow, and valleys dotted with picturesque groves of the evergreen oak. Instead of the wild blasts which they were used to encounter in December, they experienced here only those dainty and wooing airs which poets have ascribed to spring, but which seldom come even with the last May days in an eastern climate.

In the San Jose valley they encountered a party of one hundred soldiers, which the Spanish government at Monterey had sent out to take a party of Indians accused of stealing cattle. The soldiers were native Californians, descendants of the mixed blood of Spain and Mexico, a wild, jaunty looking set of fellows, who at first were inclined to take Walker's party for a band of cattle thieves, and to march them off to Monterey. But the Rocky Mountain trapper was not likely to be taken prisoner by any such brigade as the dashing cabelleros of Monterey.

After astonishing them with a series of whoops and yells, and trying to astonish them with feats of horsemanship, they began to discover that when it came to the latter accomplishment, even mountain-men could learn something from a native Californian. In this latter frame of mind they consented to be conducted to Monterey as prisoners or not, just as the Spanish government should hereafter be pleased to decree; and they had confidence in themselves that they should be able to bend that high and mighty authority to their own purposes thereafter.

Nor were they mistaken in their calculations. Their fearless, free and easy style, united to their complete furnishing of arms, their numbers, and their superior ability to stand up under the demoralizing effect of the favorite aguadiente, soon so far influenced the soldiery at least, that the trappers were allowed perfect freedom under the very eyes of the jealous Spanish government, and were treated with all hospitality.

The month which the trappers spent at Monterey was their "red letter day" for a long time after. The habits of the Californians accorded with their own, with just difference enough to furnish them with novelties and excitements such as gave a zest to their intercourse. The Californian, and the mountain-men, were alike centaurs. Horses were their necessity, and their delight; and the plains swarmed with them, as also with wild cattle, descendants of those imported by the Jesuit Fathers in the early days of the Missions. These horses and cattle were placed at the will and pleasure of the trappers. They feasted on one, and bestrode the other as it suited them. They attended bull-fights, ran races, threw the lasso, and played monte, with a relish that delighted the inhabitants of Monterey.

The partial civilization of the Californians accorded with every feeling to which the mountain-men could be brought to confess. To them the refinements of cities would have been oppressive. The adobe houses of Monterey were not so restraining in their elegance as to trouble the sensations of men used to the heavens for a roof in summer, and a skin lodge for shelter in winter. Some fruits and vegetables, articles not tasted for years, they obtained at the missions, where the priests received them courteously and hospitably, as they had done Jedediah Smith and his company, five years before, when on their long and disastrous journey they found themselves almost destitute of the necessaries of life, upon their arrival in California. There was something too, in the dress of the people, both men and women, which agreed with, while differing from, the dress of the mountaineers and their now absent Indian dulcineas.

The men wore garments of many colors, consisting of blue velveteen breeches and jacket, the jacket having a scarlet collar and cuffs, and the breeches being open at the knee to display the stocking of white. Beneath these were displayed high buskins made of deer skin, fringed down the outside of the ankle, and laced with a cord and tassels. On the head was worn a broad brimmed sombrero; and over the shoulders the jaunty Mexican sarape. When they rode, the Californians wore enormous spurs, fastened on by jingling chains. Their saddles were so shaped that it was difficult to dislodge the rider, being high before and behind; and the indispensable lasso hung coiled from the pommel. Their stirrups were of wood, broad on the bottom, with a guard of leather that protected the fancy buskin of the horseman from injury. Thus accoutred, and mounted on a wild horse, the Californian was a suitable comrade, in appearance, at least, for the buckskin clad trapper, with his high beaver-skin cap, his gay scarf, and moccasins, and profusion of arms.

The dress of the women was a gown of gaudy calico or silk, and a bright colored shawl, which served for mantilla and bonnet together. They were well formed, with languishing eyes and soft voices; and doubtless appeared charming in the eyes of our band of trappers, with whom they associated freely at fandangoes, bull-fights, or bearbaitings. In such company, what wonder that Bonneville's men lingered for a whole month! What wonder that the California expedition was a favorite theme by camp-fires, for a long time subsequent ?

1834. In February the trappers bethought themselves of returning to the mountains. The route fixed upon was one which should take them through Southern California, and New Mexico, along the course of all the principal rivers. Crossing the coast mountains, into the valley of the San Joaquin, they followed its windings until they came to its rise in the Lulare Lake. Thence turning in a southeasterly course, they came to the Colorado, at the Mohave villages, where they traded with the natives, whom they found friendly. Keeping on down the Colorado, to the mouth of the Gila, they turned back from that river, and ascended the Colorado once more, to Williams' Fork, and up the latter stream to some distance, when they fell in with a company of sixty men under Frapp and Jervais, two of the partners in the Rocky Mountain Company. The meeting was joyful on all sides; but particularly so between Meek and some of his old comrades, with whom he had fought Indians and grizzly bears, or set beaver traps on some lonely stream in the Blackfoot country. A lively exchange of questions and answers took place, while gaiety and good feeling reigned.

---

Frapp had been out quite as long as the Monterey party. It was seldom that the brigade which traversed the southern country, on the Colorado, and its large tributaries, returned to winter quarters; for in the region where they trapped winter was unknown, and the journey to the northern country a long and hazardous one. But the reunited trappers had each their own experiences to relate.

The two companies united made a party nearly two hundred strong. Keeping with Frapp, they crossed over from Williams' Fork to the Colorado Chiquito river, at the Moquis village, where some of the men disgraced themselves far more than did Jo Walker's party at the crossing of Mary's River. For the Moquis were a half-civilized nation, who had houses and gardens, and conducted themselves kindly, or at the worst peaceably, toward properly behaved strangers. These trappers, instead of approaching them with offers of purchase, lawlessly entered their gardens, rifling them of whatever fruit or melons were ripe, and not hesitating to destroy that which was not ripe. To this, as might be expected, the Moquises objected; and were shot down for so doing. In this truly infamous affair fifteen or twenty of them were killed.

"I didn't belong to that crowd," says Joe Meek, "I sat on the fence and saw it, though. It was a shameful thing."

From the Moquis village, the joint companies crossed the country in a northeasterly direction, crossing several branches of the Colorado at their head-waters, which course finally brought them to the head-waters of the Rio Grande. The journey from the mouth of the Gila, though long, extended over a country comparatively safe. Either farther to the south or east, the caravan would have been in danger of a raid from the most dangerous tribes on the continent.

The River of the West

Chapter IX

1834. But Joe Meek was not destined to return to the Rocky Mountains without having had an Indian fight. If adventures did not come in his way he was the man to put himself in the way of adventures.

While the camp was on its way from the neighborhood of Grande River to the New Park, Meek, Kit Carson, and Mitchell, with three Delaware Indians, named Tom Hill, Manhead, and Jonas, went on a hunt across to the east of Grande River, in the country lying between the Arkansas and Cimarron, where numerous small branches of these rivers head together, or within a small extent of country.

They were about one hundred and fifty miles from camp, and traveling across the open plain between the streams, one beautiful May morning, when about five miles off they descried a large band of Indians mounted, and galloping toward them. As they were in the Camanche country,

The River of the West

---

they knew what to expect if they allowed themselves to be taken prisoners. They gave but a moment to the observation of their foes, but that one moment revealed a spirited scene. Fully two hundred Camanches, their warriors in front, large and well formed men, mounted on fleet and powerful horses, armed with spears and battle axes, racing like the wind over the prairie, their feather head-dresses bending to the breeze, that swept past them in the race with double force; all distinctly seen in the clear air of the prairie, and giving the beholder a thrill of fear mingled with admiration.

The first moment given to this spectacle, the second one was employed to devise some means of escape. To run was useless. The swift Camanche steeds would soon overtake them; and then their horrible doom was fixed. No covert was at hand, neither thicket nor ravine, as in the mountains there might have been. Carson and Meek exchanged two or three sentences. At last, "we must kill our mules!" said they.

That seems a strange device to the uninitiated reader, who no doubt believes that in such a case their mules must be their salvation. And so they were intended to be. In this plight a dead mule was far more useful than a live one. To the ground sprang every man; and placing their mules, seven in number, in a ring, they in an instant cut their throats with their hunting knives, and held on to the bridles until each animal fell dead in its appointed place. Then hastily scooping up what earth they could with knives, they made themselves a fort--a hole to stand in for each man, and a dead mule for a breastwork.

In less than half an hour the Camanches charged on them; the medicine-man in advance shouting, gesticulating, and making a desperate clatter with a rattle which he carried and shook violently. The yelling, the whooping, the rattling, the force of the charge were appalling. But the little garrison in the mule fort did not waver. The Camanche horses did. They could not be made to charge upon the bloody carcasses of the mules, nor near enough for their riders to throw a spear into the fort.

This was what the trappers had relied upon. They were cool and determined, while terribly excited and wrought up by their situation. It was agreed that no more than three should fire at a time, the other three reserving their fire while the empty guns could be reloaded. They were to pick their men, and kill one at every shot.

They acted up to their regulations. At the charge the Camanche horses recoiled and could not be urged upon the fort of slaughtered mules. The three whites fired first, and the medicine-man and two other Camanches fell. When a medicine-man is killed, the others retire to hold a council and appoint another, for without their "medicine" they could not expect success in battle. This was time gained. The warriors retired, while their women came up and carried off the dead.

After devoting a little time to bewailing the departed, another chief was appointed to the head place, and another furious charge was made with the same results as before. Three more warriors bit the dust; while the spears of their brethren, attached to long hair ropes by which they could be withdrawn, fell short of reaching the men in the fort. Again and again the Camanches made a

The River of the West

---

fruitless charge, losing, as often as they repeated it, three warriors, either dead or wounded. Three times that day the head chief or medicine-man was killed; and when that happened, the heroes in the fort got a little time to breathe. While the warriors held a council, the women took care of the wounded and slain.

As the women approached the fort to carry off the fallen warriors, they mocked and reviled the little band of trappers, calling them "women," for fighting in a fort, and resorting to the usual Indian ridicule and gasconade. Occasionally, also, a warrior raced at full speed past the fort apparently to take observations. Thus the battle continued through the entire day.

It was terrible work for the trappers. The burning sun of the plains shone on them, scorching them to faintness. Their faces were begrimed with powder and dust; their throats parched, and tongues swollen with thirst, and their whole frames aching from their cramped positions, as well as the excitement and fatigue of the battle. But they dared not relax their vigilance for a moment. They were fighting for their lives, and they meant to win.

At length the sun set on that bloody and wearisome day. Forty-two Camanches were killed, and several more wounded, for the charge had been repeated fifteen or twenty times. The Indians drew off at nightfall to mourn over their dead, and hold a council. Probably they had lost faith in their medicines, or believed that the trappers possessed one far greater than any of theirs. Under the friendly cover of the night, the six heroes who had fought successfully more than a hundred Camanches took each his blanket and his gun, and bidding a brief adieu to dead mules and beaver packs, set out to return to camp.

When a mountain-man had a journey to perform on foot, to travel express, or to escape from an enemy, he fell into what is called a dog trot, and ran in that manner, sometimes, all day. On the present occasion, the six, escaping for life, ran all night, and found no water for seventy-five mile. When they did at last come to a clear running stream, their thankfulness was equal to their necessity, "for," says Meek, "thirst is the greatest suffering I ever experienced. It is far worse than hunger or pain."

Having rested and refreshed themselves at the stream, they kept on without much delay until they reached camp in that beautiful valley of the Rocky Mountains called the New, or the South Park.

While they remained in the South Park, Mr. Guthrie, one of the Rocky Mountain Company's traders, was killed by lightning. A number of persons were collected in the lodge of the Boosh-way, Frapp, to avoid the rising tempest, when Guthrie, who was leaning against the lodge pole, was struck by a flash of the electric current, and fell dead instantly. Frapp rushed out of the lodge, partly bewildered himself by the shock, and under the impression that Guthrie had been shot. Frapp was a German, and spoke English somewhat imperfectly. In the excitement of the moment he shouted out, "Py Gott, who did shoot Guttery!"

"G--a' mighty, I expect: He's a firing into camp;" drawled out Hawkins, whose ready wit was very

disregardful of sacred names and subjects.

The mountaineers were familiar with the most awful aspects of nature; and if their familiarity had not bred contempt, it had at least hardened them to those solemn impressions which other men would have felt under their influence.

From New Park, Meek traveled north with the main camp, passing first to the Old Park; thence to the Little Snake, a branch of Bear River; thence to Pilot Butte; and finally to Green River to rendezvous; having traveled in the past year about three thousand miles, on horseback, through new and often dangerous countries. It is easy to believe that the Monterey expedition was the popular theme in camp during rendezvous. It had been difficult to get volunteers for Bonneville's Salt Lake Exploration: but such was the wild adventure to which it led, that volunteering for a trip to Monterey would have been exceedingly popular immediately thereafter.

On Bear River, Bonneville's men fell in with their commander, Captain Bonneville, whose disappointment and indignation at the failure of his plans was exceedingly great. In this indignation there was considerable justice; yet much of his disappointment was owing to causes which a more experienced trader would have avoided. The only conclusion which can be arrived at by an impartial observer of the events of 1832-35, is, that none but certain men of long experience and liberal means, could succeed in the business of the fur-trade. There were too many chances of loss; too many wild elements to be mingled in amity; and too powerful opposition from the old established companies. Captain Bonneville's experience was no different from Mr. Wyeth's. In both cases there was much effort, outlay, and loss. Nor was their failure owing to any action of the Hudson's Bay Company, different from, or more tyrannical, than the action of the American companies, as has frequently been represented. It was the American companies in the Rocky Mountains that drove both Bonneville and Wyeth out of the field. Their inexperience could not cope with the thorough knowledge of the business, and the country, which their older rivals possessed. Raw recruits were no match, in trapping or fighting, for old mountaineers: and those veterans who had served long under certain leaders could not be inveigled from their service except upon the most extravagant offers; and these extravagant wages, which if one paid, the other must, would not allow a profit to either of the rivals.

"How much does your company pay you?" asked Bonneville of Meek, to whom he was complaining of the conduct of his men on the Monterey expedition.

"Fifteen hundred dollars," answered Meek.

"Yes: and I will give it to you," said Bonneville with bitterness.

It was quite true. Such was the competition aroused by the Captain's efforts to secure good men and pilots, that rather than lose them to a rival company, the Rocky Mountain Company paid a few of their best men the wages above named.

Chapter X

1834. The gossip at rendezvous was this year of an unusually exciting character. Of the brigades which left for different parts of the country the previous summer, the Monterey travelers were not the only ones who had met with adventures. Fitzpatrick, who had led a party into the Crow country that autumn, had met with a characteristic reception from that nation of cunning vagabonds.

Being with his party on Lougue River, in the early part of September, he discovered that he was being dogged by a considerable band of Crows, and endeavored to elude their spying; but all to no purpose. The Crow chief kept in his neighborhood, and finally expressed a desire to bring his camp alongside that of Fitzpatrick, pretending to the most friendly and honorable sentiments toward his white neighbors. But not feeling any confidence in Crow friendship, Fitzpatrick declined, and moved camp a few miles away. Not, however, wishing to offend the dignity of the apparently friendly chief, he took a small escort, and went to pay a visit to his Crow neighbors, that they might see that he was not afraid to trust them. Alas, vain subterfuge!

While he was exchanging civilities with the Crow chief, a party of the young braves stole out of camp, and taking advantage of the leader's absence, made an attack on his camp, so sudden and successful that not a horse, nor any thing else which they could make booty of was left. Even Captain Stuart, who was traveling with Fitzpatrick, and who was an active officer, was powerless to resist the attack, and had to consent to see the camp rifled of everything valuable.

In the meantime Fitzpatrick, after concluding his visit in the most amicable manner, was returning to camp, when he was met by the exultant braves, who added insult to injury by robbing him of his horse, gun, and nearly all his clothes, leaving him to return to his party in a deplorable condition, to the great amusement of the trappers, and his own chagrin.

However, the next day a talk was held with the head chief of the Crows, to whom Fitzpatrick represented the infamy of such treacherous conduct in a very strong light. In answer to this reproof, the chief disowned all knowledge of the affair; saying that he could not always control the conduct of the young men, who would be a little wild now and then, in spite of the best Crow precepts: but that he would do what he could to have the property restored. Accordingly, after more talk, and much eloquence on the part of Fitzpatrick, the chief part of the plunder was returned to him, including the horses and rifles of the men, together with a little ammunition, and a few beaver traps. Fitzpatrick understood the meaning of this apparent fairness, and hastened to get out of the Crow country before another raid by the mischievous young braves, at a time when their chief was not "honor bound," should deprive him of the recovered property. That his conjecture was well founded, was proven by the numerous petty thefts which were committed, and by the loss of several horses and mules, before he could remove them beyond the limits of the Crow territory.

While the trappers exchanged accounts of their individual experiences, the leaders had more

---

important matters to gossip over. The rivalry between the several fur companies was now at its climax. Through the energy and ability of Captain Sublette of the St. Louis Company, and the experience and industry of the Rocky Mountain Company, which Captain Sublette still continued to control in a measure, the power still remained with them. The American Company had never been able to cope with them in the Rocky Mountains; and the St. Louis Company were already invading their territory on the Missouri River, by carrying goods up that river in boats, to trade with the Indians under the very walls of the American Company's forts.

In August of the previous year, when Mr. Nathaniel Wyeth had started on his return to the states, he was accompanied as far as the mouth of the Yellowstone by Milton Sublette; and had engaged with that gentleman to furnish him with goods the following year, as he believed he could do, cheaper than the St. Louis Company, who purchased their goods in St. Louis at a great advance on Boston prices. But Milton Sublette fell in with his brother the Captain, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, with a keel-boat loaded with merchandise; and while Wyeth pursued his way eastward to purchase the Indian goods which were intended to supply the wants of the fur-traders in the Rocky Mountains, at a profit to him, and an advantage to them, the Captain was persuading his brother not to encourage any interlopers in the Indian trade; but to continue to buy goods from himself, as formerly. So potent were his arguments, that Milton yielded to them, in spite of his engagement with Wyeth. Thus during the autumn of 1833, while Bonneville was being wronged and robbed, as he afterwards became convinced, by his men under Walker, and anticipated in the hunting ground selected for himself, in the Crow country, by Fitzpatrick, as he had previously been in the Snake country by Milton Sublette, Wyeth was proceeding to Boston in good faith, to execute what proved to be a fool's errand. Bonneville also had gone on another, when after the trapping season was over he left his camp to winter on the Snake River, and started with a small escort to visit the Columbia, and select a spot for a trading-post on the lower portion of that river. On arriving at Wallah-Wallah, after a hard journey over the Blue Mountains in the winter, the agent at that post had refused to supply him with provisions to prosecute his journey, and given him to understand that the Hudson's Bay Company might be polite and hospitable to Captain Bonneville as the gentleman, but that it was against their regulations to encourage the advent of other traders who would interfere with their business, and unsettle the minds of the Indians in that region.

This reply so annoyed the Captain, that he refused the well meant advice of Mr. Pambrun that he should not undertake to recross the Blue Mountains in March snows, but travel under the escort of Mr. Payette, one of the Hudson's Bay Company's leaders, who was about starting for the Nez Perce country by a safer if more circuitous route. He therefore set out to return by the route he came, and only arrived at camp in May, 1831, after many dangers and difficulties. From the Portneuf River, he then proceeded with his camp to explore the Little Snake River, and Snake Lake; and it was while so doing that he fell in with his men just returned from Monterey.

Such was the relative position of the several fur companies in the Rocky Mountains in 1834; and it was of such matters that the leaders talked in the lodge of the Booshways, at rendezvous. In the meantime Wyeth arrived in the mountains with his goods, as he had contracted with Milton Sub-

lette in the previous year. But on his heels came Captain Sublette, also with goods, and the Rocky Mountain Company violated their contract with Wyeth, and purchased of their old leader.

Thus was Wyeth left, with his goods on his hands, in a country where it was impossible to sell them, and useless to undertake an opposition to the already established fur traders and trappers. His indignation was great, and certainly was just. In his interview with the Rocky Mountain Company, in reply to their excuses for, and vindication of their conduct, his answer was:

“Gentlemen, I will roll a stone into your garden that you will never be able to get out.”

And he kept his promise; for that same autumn he moved on to the Snake River, and built Fort Hall, storing his goods therein. The next year he sold out goods and fort to the Hudson’s Bay Company; and the stone was in the garden of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company that they were never able to dislodge. When Wyeth had built his fort and left it in charge of an agent, he dispatched a party of trappers to hunt in the Big Blackfoot country, under Joseph Gale, who had previously been in the service of the Rocky Mountain Company, and of whom we shall learn more hereafter, while he set out for the Columbia to meet his vessel, and establish a salmon fishery. The fate of that enterprise has already been recorded.

As for Bonneville, he made one more effort to reach the lower Columbia; failing, however, a second time, for the same reason as before--he could not subsist himself and company in a country where even every Indian refused to sell to him either furs or provisions. After being reduced to horse-flesh, and finding no encouragement that his condition would be improved farther down the river, he turned back once more from about Wallah-Wallah, and returned to the mountains, and from there to the east in the following year. A company of his trappers, however, continued to hunt for him east of the mountains for two or three years longer.

The rivalry between the Rocky Mountain and American Companies was this year diminished by their mutually agreeing to confine themselves to certain parts of the country, which treaty continued for two years, when they united in one company. They were then, with the exception of a few lone traders, the only competitors of the Hudson’s Bay Company, for the fur-trade of the West.

The River of the West

Chapter XI

1834. The Rocky Mountain Company now confined themselves to the country lying east of the mountains, and upon the head-waters and tributaries of the Missouri, a country very productive in furs, and furnishing abundance of game. But it was also the most dangerous of all the northern fur-hunting territory, as it was the home of those two nations of desperadoes, the Crows and Blackfeet. During the two years in which the company may have been said almost to reside there, desperate encounters and hair-breadth escapes were incidents of daily occurrence to some of the numerous trapping parties.

The camp had reached the Blackfoot country in the autumn of this year, and the trappers were out in all directions, hunting beaver in the numerous small streams that flow into the Missouri. On a small branch of the Gallatin Fork, some of the trappers fell in with a party of Wyeth's men, under Joseph Gale. When their neighborhood became known to the Rocky Mountain camp, Meek and a party of sixteen of his associates immediately resolved to pay them a visit, and inquire into their experience since leaving rendezvous. These visits between different camps are usually seasons of great interest and general rejoicing. But glad as Gale and his men were to meet with old friends, when the first burst of hearty greeting was over, they had but a sorry experience to relate. They had been out a long time. The Blackfeet had used them badly--several men had been killed.

Their guns were out of order, their ammunition all but exhausted; they were destitute, or nearly so, of traps, blankets, knives, everything. They were what the Indian and the mountain-man call "very poor."

Half the night was spent in recounting all that had passed in both companies since the fall hunt began. Little sympathy did Wyeth's men receive for their forlorn condition, for sympathy is repudiated by your true mountaineer for himself, nor will he furnish it to others. The absurd and humorous, or the daring and reckless, side of a story is the only one which is dwelt upon in narrating his adventures. The laugh which is raised at his expense when he has a tale of woes to communicate, is a better tonic to his dejected spirits than the gentlest pity would be. Thus lashed into courage again, he is ready to declare that all his troubles were only so much pastime.

It was this sort of cheer which the trapping party conveyed to Wyeth's men on this visit, and it was gratefully received, as being of the true kind.

In the morning the party set out to return to camp, Meek and Liggitt starting in advance of the others. They had not proceeded far when they were fired on by a large band of Blackfeet, who came upon them quite suddenly, and thinking these two trappers easy game, set up a yell and dashed at them. As Meek and Liggitt turned back and ran to Gale's camp, the Indians in full chase charged on them, and rushed pell-mell into the midst of camp, almost before they had time to discover that they had surprised so large a party of whites. So sudden was their advent, that they had almost taken the camp before the whites could recover from the confusion of the charge.

It was but a momentary shock, however. In another instant the roar of twenty guns reverberated from the mountains that rose high on either side of camp. The Blackfeet were taken in a snare; but they rallied and fell back beyond the grove in which the camp was situated, setting on fire the dry grass as they went. The fire quickly spread to the grove, and shot up the pine trees in splendid columns of flame, that seemed to lick the face of heaven. The Indians kept close behind the fire, shooting into camp whenever they could approach near enough, the trappers replying by frequent volleys. The yells of the savages, the noise of the flames roaring in the trees, the bellowing of the guns, whose echoes rolled among the hills, and the excitement of a battle for life, made the scene one long to be remembered with distinctness.

Both sides fought with desperation. The Blackfoot blood was up--the trapper blood no less. Gale's men, from having no ammunition, nor guns that were in order, could do little more than take charge of the horses, which they led out into the bottom land to escape the fire, fight the flames, and look after the camp goods. The few whose guns were available, showed the game spirit, and the fight became interesting as an exhibition of what mountain white men could do in a contest of one to ten, with the crack warriors of the red race. It was, at any time, a game party, consisting of Meek, Carson, Hawkins, Gale, Liggitt, Rider, Robinson, Anderson, Russel, Larison, Ward, Parmaley, Wade, Michael Head, and a few others whose names have been forgotten.

The trappers being driven out of the grove by the fire, were forced to take to the open ground. The Indians, following the fire, had the advantage of the shelter afforded by the trees, and their shots made havoc among the horses, most of which were killed because they could not be taken. As for the trappers, they used the horses for defence, making rifle-pits behind them, when no other covert could be found. In this manner the battle was sustained until three o'clock in the afternoon, without loss of life to the whites, though several men were wounded.

At three in the afternoon, the Blackfoot chief ordered a retreat, calling out to the trappers that they would fight no more. Though their loss had been heavy, they still greatly outnumbered the whites; nor would the condition of the arms and the small amount of ammunition left permit the trappers to pursue them. The Indians were severely beaten, and no longer in a condition to fight, all of which was highly satisfactory to the victors. The only regret was, that Bridger's camp, which had become aware during the day that a battle was going on in the neighborhood, did not arrive early enough to exterminate the whole band. As it was, the big camp only came up in time to assist in taking care of the wounded. The destruction of their horses put an end to the independent existence of Gale's brigade, which joined itself and its fortunes to Bridger's command for the remainder of the year. Had it not been for the fortunate visit of the trappers to Gale's camp, without doubt every man in it would have perished at the hands of the Blackfeet: a piece of bad fortune not unaccordant with that which seemed to pursue the enterprises set on foot by the active but unlucky New England trader.

Not long after this battle with the Blackfeet, Meek and a trapper named Crow, with two Shawnees, went over into the Crow Country to trap on Pryor's River, a branch of the Yellowstone. On coming to the pass in the mountains between the Gallatin Fork of the Missouri and the great bend in the Yellowstone, called Pryor's Gap, Meek rode forward, with the mad-cap spirit strong in him, to "have a little fun with the boys", and advancing a short distance into the pass, wheeled suddenly, and came racing back, whooping and yelling, to make his comrades think he had discovered Indians. And lo! as if his yells had invoked them from the rocks and trees, a war party suddenly emerged from the pass, on the heels of the jester, and what had been sport speedily became earnest, as the trappers turned their horses' heads and made off in the direction of camp. They had a fine race of it, and heard other yells and war-whoops besides their own; but they contrived to elude their pursuers, returning safe to camp.

The River of the West

---

This freak of Meek's was, after all, a fortunate inspiration, for had the four trappers entered the pass and come upon the war party of Crows, they would never have escaped alive.

A few days after, the same party set out again, and succeeded in reaching Pryor's River unmolested, and setting their traps. They remained some time in this neighborhood trapping, but the season had become pretty well advanced, and they were thinking of returning to camp for the winter. The Shawnees set out in one direction to take up their traps, Meek and Crow in another. The stream where their traps were set was bordered by thickets of willow, wild cherry, and plum trees, and the bank was about ten feet above the water at this season of the year.

Meek had his traps set in the stream about midway between two thickets. As he approached the river he observed with the quick eye of an experienced mountain-man, certain signs which gave him little satisfaction. The buffalo were moving off as if disturbed; a bear ran suddenly out of its covert among the willows.

"I told Crow," said Meek, "that I didn't like to go in there. He laughed at me, and called me a coward. 'All the same,' I said; I had no fancy for the place just then --I didn't like the indications. But he kept jeering me, and at last I got mad and started in. Just as I got to my traps, I discovered that two red devils war a watching me from the shelter of the thicket to my left, about two rods off. When they saw that they war discovered they raised their guns and fired. I turned my horse's head at the same instant, and one ball passed through his neck, under the neck bone, and the other through his withers, just forward of my saddle.

"Seeing that they had not hit me, one of them ran up with a spear to spear me. My horse war rearing and pitching from the pain of his wounds, so that I could with difficulty govern him; but I had my gun laid across my arm, and when I fired I killed the rascal with the spear. Up to that moment I had supposed that them two war all I had to deal with. But as I got my horse turned round, with my arm raised to fire at the other red devil, I encountered the main party, forty-nine of them, who war in the bed of the stream, and had been covered by the bank. They fired a volley at me. Eleven balls passed through my blanket, under my arm, which war raised. I thought it time to run, and run I did. Crow war about two hundred yards off. So quick had all this happened, that he had not stirred from the spot whar I left him. When I came up to him I called out that I must get on behind him, for my horse war sick and staggering.

"'Try him again,' said Crow, who war as anxious to be off as I war. I did try him agin, and sure enough, he got up a gallop, and away we went, the Blackfeet after us. But being mounted, we had the advantage, and soon distanced them. Before we had run a mile, I had to dismount and breathe my horse. We war in a narrow pass whar it war impossible to hide, so when the Indians came up with us, as they did, while I war dismounted we took sure aim and killed the two foremost ones. Before the others could get close enough to fire we war off agin. It didn't take much urging to make my horse go then, for the yells of them Blackfeet spurred him on.

"When we had run another mile I dismounted agin, for fear that my horse would give out, and

The River of the West

---

again we were overtaken. The Blackfeet are powerful runners--no better than us mountain-men, though. This time we served them just as we did before. We picked off two of the foremost, and then went on, the rest whooping after us. We were overtaken a third time in the same manner; and the third time two Blackfeet fell dead in advance. At this, they took the hint. Six warriors already gone for two white scalps and two horses; they didn't know how many more would go in the same way. And I reckon they had run about all they wanted to, anyway."

It is only necessary to add that Meek and Crow arrived safely at camp; and that the Shawnees came in after a day or two all right. Soon after the whole command under Bridger moved on to the Yellowstone, and went into winter camp in the great bend of that river, where buffalo were plenty, and cotton-wood was in abundance.

1835. Towards spring, however, the game had nearly all disappeared from the neighborhood of the camp; and the hunters were forced to follow the buffalo in their migration eastward. On one of these expeditions a party of six trappers, including Meek, and a man named Rose, made their camp on Clarke's fork of the Yellowstone. The first night in camp Rose had a dream with which he was very much impressed. He dreamed of shaking hands with a large white bear, which insisted on taking his right hand for that friendly ceremony. He had not given it very willingly, for he knew too much about bears in general to desire to be on very intimate terms with them.

Seeing that the dream troubled Rose, who was superstitiously inclined, Meek resorted to that "certain medicine for minds diseased" which was in use in the mountains, and added to the distress of Rose his interpretation, in the spirit of ridicule, telling him that he was an adept in the matter of dreams, and that unless he, Rose, was very mindful of himself that day, he would shake hands with Beelzebub before he slept again.

With this comforting assurance, Rose set out with the remainder of the party to hunt buffalo. They had proceeded about three miles from camp, Rose riding in advance, when they suddenly encountered a company of Blackfeet, nine in number, spies from a war party of one hundred and fifty, that was prowling and marauding through the country on the lookout for small parties from the camp of Bridger. The Blackfeet fired on the party as it came up, from their place of concealment, a ball striking Rose's right arm, and breaking it at the elbow. This caused his gun to fall, and an Indian sprang forward and raised it up quickly, aiming it at Meek. The ball passed through his cap without doing any other harm. By this time the trappers were made aware of an ambuscade; but how numerous the enemy was they could not determine. However, as the rest, who were well mounted, turned to fly, Meek, who was riding an old mule that had to be beaten over the head to make it go, seeing that he was going to be left behind, called out lustily, "hold on, boys! There's not many of them. Let's stop and fight 'em;" at the same time pounding the mule over the head, but without effect. The Indians saw the predicament, and ran up to seize the mule by the bridle, but the moment the mule got wind of the savages, away he went, racing like a thoroughbred, jumping impediments, and running right over a ravine, which was fortunately filled with snow. This movement brought Meek out ahead.

The River of the West

---

The other men then began to call out to Meek to stop and fight. "Run for your lives, boys," roared Meek back at them, "there's ten thousand of them; they'll kill every one of you!"

The mule had got his head, and there was no more stopping him than there had been starting him. On he went in the direction of the Yellowstone, while the others made for Clarke's Fork. On arriving at the former river, Meek found that some of the pack horses had followed him, and others the rest of the party. This had divided the Indians, three or four of whom were on his trail. Springing off his mule, he threw his blankets down on the ice, and by moving them alternately soon crossed the mule over to the opposite side, just in time to avoid a bullet that came whistling after him. As the Indians could not follow, he pursued his way to camp in safety, arriving late that evening. The main party were already in and expecting him. Soon after, the buffalo hunters returned to the big camp, minus some pack horses, but with a good story to tell, at the expense of Meek, and which he enjoys telling of himself to this day.

The River of the West

Chapter XII

1835. Owing to the high rate of pay which Meek was now able to command, he began to think of imitating the example of that distinguished order, the free trappers, to which he now belonged, and setting up a lodge to himself as a family man. The writer of this veracious history has never been able to obtain a full and particular account of our hero's earliest love adventures. This is a subject on which, in common with most mountain-men, he observes a becoming reticence. But of one thing we feel quite well assured: that from the time when the young Shoshonie beauty assisted in the rescue of himself and Sublette from the execution of the death sentence at the hands of her people, Meek had always cherished a rather more than friendly regard for the "Mountain Lamb."

But Sublette, with wealth and power, and the privileges of a Booshway, had hastened to secure her for himself; and Meek had to look and long from afar off, until, in the year of which we are writing, Milton Sublette was forced to leave the mountains and repair to an eastern city for surgical aid; having received a very troublesome wound in the leg, which was only cured at last by amputation.

Whether it was the act of a gay Lothario, or whether the law of divorce is even more easy in the mountains than in Indiana, we have always judiciously refrained from inquiring; but this we do know, upon the word of Meek himself, no sooner was Milton's back turned, than his friend so insinuated himself into the good graces of his Isabel, as Sublette was wont to name the lovely Umen-tucken, that she consented to join her fortunes to those of the handsome young trapper without even the ceremony of serving a notice on her former lord. As their season of bliss only extended over one brief year, this chapter shall be entirely devoted to recording such facts as have been imparted to us concerning this free trapper's wife.

The River of the West

---

“She was the most beautiful Indian woman I ever saw,” says Meek: “and when she was mounted on her dapple gray horse, which cost me three hundred dollars, she made a fine show. She wore a skirt of beautiful blue broadcloth, and a bodice and leggins of scarlet cloth, of the very finest make. Her hair was braided and fell over her shoulders, a scarlet silk handkerchief, tied on hood fashion, covered her head; and the finest embroidered moccasins her feet. She rode like all the Indian women, astride, and carried on one side of the saddle the tomahawk for war, and on the other the pipe of peace.

“The name of her horse was “ All Fours.” His accoutrements were as fine as his rider’s. The saddle, crupper, and bust girths cost one hundred and fifty dollars; the bridle fifty dollars; and the musk-a-moots fifty dollars more. All these articles were ornamented with fine cut glass beads, porcupine quills, and hawk’s bells, that tinkled at every step. Her blankets were of scarlet and blue, and of the finest quality. Such was the outfit of the trapper’s wife, Umentucken, Tukutey Udenwatsy, the Lamb of the Mountains.”

Although Umentucken was beautiful, and had a name signifying gentleness, she was not without a will and a spirit of her own, when the occasion demanded it. While the camp was on the Yellowstone River, in the summer of 1835, a party of women left it to go in search of berries, which were often dried and stored for winter use by the Indian women. Umentucken accompanied this party, which was attacked by a band of Blackfeet, some of the squaws being taken prisoners. But Umentucken saved herself by fight, and by swimming the Yellowstone while a hundred guns were leveled on her, the bullets whistling about her ears.

At another time she distinguished herself in camp by a quarrel with one of the trappers, in which she came off with flying colors. The trapper was a big, bullying Irish man named O’Fallen, who had purchased two prisoners from the Snake Indians, to be kept in a state of slavery, after the manner of the savages. The prisoners were Utes, or Utahs, who soon contrived to escape. O’Fallen, imagining that Umentucken had liberated them, threatened to whip her, and armed himself with a horsewhip for that purpose. On hearing of these threats Umentucken repaired to her lodge, and also armed herself, but with a pistol. When O’Fallen approached, the whole camp looking on to see the event, Umentucken slipped out at the back of the lodge and coming around confronted him before he could enter.

“Coward !” she cried. “ You would whip the wife of Meek. He is not here to defend me; not here to kill you. But I shall do that for myself;” and with that she presented the pistol to his head. O’Fallen taken by surprise, and having every reason to believe she would keep her word, and kill him on the spot, was obliged not only to apologize, but to beg to have his life spared. This Umentucken consented to do on condition of his sufficiently humbling himself, which he did in a very shamefaced manner; and a shout then went up from the whole camp--”hurrah for the Mountain Lamb !” for nothing more delights a mountaineer than a show of pluck, especially in an unlooked for quarter.

The Indian wives of the trappers were often in great peril, as well as their lords. Whenever it was convenient they followed them on their long marches through dangerous countries. But if the

---

trapper was only going out for a few days, or if the march before him was more than usually dangerous, the wife remained with the main camp.

During this year of which we are writing, a considerable party had been out on Powder River hunting buffalo, taking their wives along with them. When on the return, just before reaching camp, Umentucken was missed from the cavalcade. She had fallen behind, and been taken prisoner by a party of twelve Crow Indians. As soon as she was missed, a volunteer party mounted their buffalo horses in such haste that they waited not for saddle or bridle, but snatched only a halter, and started back in pursuit. They had not run a very long distance when they discovered poor Umentucken in the midst of her jubilant captors, who were delighting their eyes with gazing at her fine feathers, and promising themselves very soon to pluck the gay bird, and appropriate her trinkets to their own use.

Their delight was premature. Swift on their heels came an avenging, as well as a saving spirit. Meek, at the head of his six comrades, no sooner espied the drooping, form of the Lamb, than he urged his horse to the top of its speed. The horse was a spirited creature, that seeing something wrong in all these hasty maneuvers, took fright and adding terror to good will, ran with the speed of madness right in amongst the startled Crows, who doubtless regarded as a great "medicine" so fearless a warrior. It was now too late to be prudent, and Meek began the battle by yelling and firing, taking care to hit his Indian. The other trappers, emulating the bold example of their leader, dashed into the melee and a chance medley fight was carried on, in which Umentucken escaped, and another Crow bit the dust. Finding that they were getting the worst of the fight, the Indians at length took to flight, and the trappers returned to camp rejoicing, and complimenting Meek on his gallantry in attacking the Crows single-handed.

"I took their compliments quite naturally," says Meek, "nor did I think it war worth while to explain to them that I couldn't hold my horse."

The Indians are lordly and tyrannical in their treatment of women, thinking it no shame to beat them cruelly; even taking the liberty of striking other women than those belonging to their own families. While the camp was traveling through the Crow country in the spring of 1836, a party of that nation paid a visit to Bridger, bringing skins to trade for blankets and ammunition. The bargaining went on quite pleasantly for some time; but one of the braves who was promenading about camp inspecting whatever came in his way, chanced to strike Umentucken with a whip he carried in his hand, by way of displaying his superiority to squaws in general, and trappers' wives in particular. It was an unlucky blow for the brave, for in another instant he rolled on the ground, shot dead by a bullet from Meek's gun.

At this rash act the camp was in confusion. Yells from the Crows, who took the act as a signal for war; hasty questions, and cries of command; arming and shooting. It was some time before the case could be explained or understood. The Crows had two or three of their party shot; the whites also lost a man. After the unpremeditated fight was over, and the Crows departed not thoroughly satisfied with the explanation, Bridger went round to Meek's lodge.

“Well, you raised a hell of a row in camp; “ said the commander, rolling out his deep bass voice in the slow monotonous tones which mountain men very quickly acquire from the Indians.

“Very sorry, Bridger; but couldn’t help it. No devil of an Indian shall strike Meek’s wife.”

“But you got a man killed.”

“Sorry for the man; couldn’t help it, though, Bridger.”

And in truth it was too late to mend the matter. Fearing, however, that the Crows would attempt to avenge themselves for the losses they had sustained, Bridger hurried his camp forward, and got out of their neighborhood as quickly as possible.

So much for the female element in the camp of the Rocky Mountain trapper. Woman, it is said, has held the apple of discord, from mother Eve to Umentucken, and in consonance with this theory, Bridger, doubtless, considered the latter as the primal cause of the unfortunate “ row in camp,” rather than the brutality of the Crow, or the imprudence of Meek.

But Umentucken’s career was nearly run. In the following summer she met her death by a Ban-nack arrow; dying like a warrior, although living she was only a woman.

The River of the West

Chapter XIII

1835. The rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Company seldom took place without combining with its many wild elements, some other more civilized and refined. Artists, botanists, travelers, and hunters, from the busy world outside the wilderness, frequently claimed the companionship, if not the hospitality of the fur companies, in their wanderings over prairies and among mountains. Up to the year 1835, these visitors had been of the classes just named; men traveling either for the love of adventure, to prosecute discoveries in science, or to add to art the treasure of new scenes and subjects.

But in this year there appeared at rendezvous two gentlemen, who had accompanied the St. Louis Company in its outward trip to the mountains, whose object was not the procurement of pleasure, or the improvement of science. They had come to found missions among the Indians; the Rev. Samuel Parker and Rev. Dr. Marcus Whitman; the first a scholarly and fastidious man, and the other possessing all the boldness, energy, and contempt of fastidiousness, which would have made him as good a mountain leader, as he was an energetic servant of the American Board of Foreign Missions.

The cause which had brought these gentlemen to the wilderness was a little incident connected

with the fur trade. Four Flathead Indians, in the year 1832, having heard enough of the Christian religion, from the few devout men connected with the fur companies, to desire to know more, performed a winter journey to St. Louis, and there made inquiry about the white man's religion. This incident, which to any one acquainted with Indian character, would appear a very natural one, when it became known to Christian churches in the United States, excited a very lively interest, and seemed to call upon them like a voice out of heaven, to fly to the rescue of perishing heathen souls. The Methodist Church was the first to respond. When Wyeth returned to the mountains in 1834, four missionaries accompanied him, destined for the valley of the Willamette River in Oregon. In the following year, the Presbyterian Church sent out its agents, the two gentlemen above mentioned; one of whom, Dr. Whitman, subsequently located near Fort Walla-Walla.

The account given by Capt. Bonneville of the Flatheads and Nez Perces, as he found them in 1832, before missionary labor had been among them, throws some light on the incident of the journey to St. Louis, which so touched the Christian heart in the United States. After relating his surprise at finding that the Nez Perces observed certain sacred days, he continues: "A few days afterwards, four of them signified that they were about to hunt. 'What!' exclaimed the captain, 'without guns or arrows; and with only one old spear? What do you expect to kill?' They smiled among themselves, but made no answer. Preparatory to the chase, they performed some religious rights, and offered up to the Great Spirit a few short prayers for safety and success; then having received the blessing of their wives, they leaped upon their horses and departed, leaving the whole party of Christian spectators amazed and rebuked by this lesson of faith and dependence on a supreme and benevolent Being. Accustomed as I had heretofore been to find the wretched Indian reveling in blood, and stained by every vice which can degrade human nature, I could scarcely realize the scene which I had witnessed. Wonder at such unaffected tenderness and piety, where it was least to have been sought, contended in all our bosoms with shame and confusion, at receiving such pure and wholesome instructions from creatures so far below us in all the arts and comforts of life.

"Simply to call these people religious," continued Bonneville, "would convey but a faint idea of the deep hue of piety and devotion which pervades their whole conduct. Their honesty is immaculate, and their purity of purpose, and their observance of the rites of their religion, are most uniform and remarkable. They are certainly more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages."

This was a very enthusiastic view to take of the Nez Perce character, which appeared all the brighter to the Captain, by contrast with the savage life which he had witnessed in other places, and even by contrast with the conduct of the white trappers. But the Nez Perces and Flatheads were, intellectually and morally, an exception to all the Indian tribes west of the Missouri River. Lewis and Clarke found them different from any others; the fur traders and the missionaries found them different; and they remain at this day an honorable example, for probity and piety, to both savage and civilized peoples.

To account for this superiority is indeed difficult. The only clue to the cause is in the following statement of Bonneville's. "It would appear," he says, "that they had imbibed some notions of the

The River of the West

---

Christian faith from Catholic missionaries and traders who had been among them. They even had a rude calendar of the fasts and festivals of the Romish Church, and some traces of its ceremonies. These have become blended with their own wild rites, and present a strange medley, civilized and barbarous.”

Finding that these people among whom he was thrown exhibited such remarkable traits of character, Captain Bonneville exerted himself to make them acquainted with the history and spirit of Christianity. To these explanations they listened with great eagerness. “Many a time,” he says, “was my little lodge thronged, or rather piled with hearers, for they lay on the ground, one leaning over the other, until there was no further room, all listening with greedy ears to the wonders which the Great Spirit had revealed to the white man. No other subject gave them half the satisfaction, or commanded half the attention; and but few scenes of my life remain so freshly on my memory, or are so pleasurably recalled to my contemplation, as these hours of intercourse with a distant and benighted race in the midst of the desert.”

It was the interest awakened by these discourses of Captain Bonneville, and possibly by Smith, and other traders who happened to fall in with the Nez Perces and Flatheads, that stimulated those four Flatheads to undertake the journey to St. Louis in search of information; and this it was which resulted in the establishment of missions, both in western Oregon, and among the tribes inhabiting the country between the two great branches of the Columbia.

The trait of Indian character which Bonneville, in his pleased surprise at the apparent piety of the Nez Perces and Flatheads, failed to observe, and which the missionaries themselves for a long time remained oblivious to, was the material nature of their religious views. The Indian judges of all things by the material results. If he is possessed of a good natural intelligence and powers of observation, he soon discovers that the God of the Indian is but a feeble deity; for does he not permit the Indian to be defeated in war; to starve, and to freeze? Do not the Indian medicine men often fail to save life, to win battles, to curse their enemies? The Indian's God, he argues, must be a good deal of a humbug. He sees the white men faring much better. They have guns, ammunition, blankets, knives, everything in plenty; and they are successful in war; are skillful in a thousand things the Indian knows nothing of. To be so blest implies a very wise and powerful Deity. To gain all these things they are eager to learn about the white man's God; are willing to do whatever is necessary to please and propitiate Him. Hence the attentiveness to the white man's discourse about his religion. Naturally enough they were struck with wonder at the doctrine of peace and good will; a doctrine so different from the law of blood by which the Indian, in his natural state, lives. Yet if it is good for the white men, it must be good for him; at all events he is anxious to try it.

That is the course of reasoning by which an Indian is led to inquire into Christianity. It is a desire to better his physical, rather than his spiritual condition; for of the latter he has but a very faint conception. He was accustomed to desire a material Heaven, such a world beyond the grave, as he could only imagine from his earthly experience. Heaven was happiness, and happiness was plenty; therefore the most a good Indian could desire was to go where there should forevermore be plenty.

Such was the Indian's view of religion, and it could be no other. Until the wants of the body have been supplied by civilization, the wants of the soul do not develop themselves: and until then the savage is not prepared to understand Christianity. This is the law of Nature and of God. Primeval man was a savage; and it was little by little, through thousands of years, that Christ was revealed. Every child born, even now, is a savage, and has to be taught civilization year after year, until he arrives at the possibility of comprehending spiritual religion. So every full grown barbarian is a child in moral development; and to expect him to comprehend those mysteries over which the world has agonized for centuries, is to commit the gravest error. Into this error fell all the missionaries who came to the wilds that lay beyond the Rocky Mountains. They undertook to teach religion first, and more simple matters afterward--building their edifice like the Irishman's chimney, by holding up the top brick, and putting the others under it. Failure was the result of such a process, as the record of the Oregon Missions sufficiently proves.

The reader will pardon this digression--made necessary by the part which one of the gentlemen present at this year's rendezvous, was destined to take in the history which we are writing. Shortly after the arrival of Messrs Parker and Whitman, rendezvous broke up. A party, to which Meek was attached, moved in the direction of the Snake River head-waters, the missionaries accompanying them, and after making two camps, came on Saturday eve to Jackson's Little Hole, a small mountain valley near the larger one commonly known as Jackson's Hole.

On the following day religious services were held in the Rocky Mountain Camp. A scene more unusual could hardly have transpired than that of a company of trappers listening to the preaching of the Word of God. Very little pious reverence marked the countenances of that wild and motley congregation. Curiosity, incredulity, sarcasm, or a mocking levity, were more plainly perceptible in the expression of the men's faces, than either devotion or the longing expectancy of men habitually deprived of what they once highly valued. The Indians alone showed by their eager listening that they desired to become acquainted with the mystery of the "Unknown God."

The Rev. Samuel Parker preached, and the men were as politely attentive as it was in their reckless natures to be, until, in the midst of the discourse, a band of buffalo appeared in the valley, when the congregation incontinently broke up, without staying for a benediction, and every man made haste after his horse, gun, and rope, leaving Mr. Parker to discourse to vacant ground.

The run was both exciting and successful. About twenty fine buffaloes were killed, and the choice pieces brought to camp, cooked and eaten, amidst the merriment, mixed with something coarser, of the hunters. On this noisy rejoicing Mr. Parker looked with a sober aspect: and following the dictates of his religious feeling, he rebuked the sabbath-breakers quite severely. Better for his influence among the men, if he had not done so, or had not eaten so heartily of the tender-loin afterwards, a circumstance which his irreverent critics did not fail to remark, to his prejudice; and upon the principle that the "partaker is as bad as the thief;" they set down his lecture on sabbath-breaking as nothing better than pious humbug.

The River of the West

---

Dr. Marcus Whitman was another style of man. Whatever he thought of the wild ways of the mountain-men he discreetly kept to himself, preferring to teach by example rather than precept; and showing no fastidious contempt for any sort of rough duty he might be called upon to perform. So aptly indeed had he turned his hand to all manner of camp service on the journey to the mountains, that this abrogation of clerical dignity had become a source of solicitude, not to say disapproval and displeasure on the part of his colleague; and it was agreed between them that the Doctor should return to the states with the St. Louis Company, to procure recruits for the promising field of labor which they saw before them, while Mr. Parker continued his journey to the Columbia to decide upon the location of the missionary stations. The difference of character of the two men was clearly illustrated by the results of this understanding. Parker went to Vancouver, where he was hospitably entertained, and where he could inquire into the workings of the missionary system as pursued by the Methodist missionaries. His investigations not proving the labor to his taste, he sailed the following summer for the Sandwich Islands, and thence to New York; leaving only a brief note for Doctor Whitman, when he, with indefatigable exertions, arrived that season among the Nez Perces with a missionary company, eager for the work which they hoped to make as great as they believed it to be good.

The River of the West

Chapter XIV

From the mountains about the head-waters of the Snake River, Meek returned, with Bridger's brigade to the Yellowstone country, where he fell into the hands of the Crows. The story as he relates it, is as follows:

"I war trapping on the Rocky Fork of the Yellowstone. I had been out from camp five days; and war solitary and alone, when I war discovered by a war party of Crows. They had the prairie, and I war forced to run for the Creek bottom; but the beaver had thronged the water out and made dams, so that my mule mired down. While I war struggling in the marsh, the Indians came after me, with tremendous yells; firing a random shot now and then, as they closed in on me.

"When they war within about two rods of me, I brought old Sally, that is my gun, to my face, ready to fire, and then die; for I knew it war death this time, unless Providence interfered to save me: and I didn't think Providence would do it. But the head chief, when he saw the warlike looks of Sally, called out to me to put down my gun, and I should live.

"Well, I liked to live,--being then in the prime of life; and though it hurt me powerful, I resolved to part with Sally. I laid her down. As I did so, the chief picked her up, and one of the braves sprang at me with a spear, and would have run me through, but the chief knocked him down with the butt of my gun. Then they led me forth to the high plain on the south side of the stream. There they called a halt, and I was given in charge of three women, while the warriors formed a ring to smoke and consult. This gave me an opportunity to count them: they numbered one hundred and eighty-seven men, nine boys, and three women.

“After a smoke of three long hours, the chief, who war named ‘The Bold,’ called me in the ring, and said:

“ ‘I have known the whites for a long time, and I know them to be great liars, deserving death; but if you will tell the truth, you shall live.’

“Then I thought to myself, they will fetch the truth out of me, if thar is any in me. But his highness continued:

“ ‘Tell me whar are the whites you belong to; and what is your captain’s name.’

“I said ‘Bridger is my captain’s name; or, in the Crow tongue, Casapy,’ the ‘Blanket chief.’ At this answer the chief seemed lost in thought. At last he asked me--

“ ‘How many men has he ?’

“I thought about telling the truth and living; but I said ‘forty,’ which war a tremendous lie; for thar war two hundred and forty. At this answer The Bold laughed:

“‘We will make them poor,’ said he; ‘and you shall live, but they shall die.’

“I thought to myself, ‘hardly ;’ but I said nothing. He then asked me whar I war to meet the camp, and I told him:--and then how many days before the camp would be thar; which I answered truly, for I wanted them to find the camp.

“It war now late in the afternoon, and thar war a great bustle, getting ready for the march to meet Bridger. Two big Indians mounted my mule, but the women made me pack moccasins. The spies started first, and after awhile the main party. Seventy warriors traveled ahead of me: I war placed with the women and boys; and after us the balance of the braves. As we traveled along, the women would prod me with sticks, and laugh, and say ‘Masta Sheela,’ (which means white man,) ‘Masta sheela very poor now.’ The fair sex war very much amused.

“We traveled that way till midnight, the two big bucks riding my mule, and I packing moccasins. Then we camped; the Indians in a ring, with me in the centre, to keep me safe. I didn’t sleep very well that night. I’d a heap rather been in some other place.

“The next morning we started on in the same order as before: and the squaws making fun of me all day; but I kept mighty quiet. When we stopped to cook that evening, I war set to work, and war head cook, and head waiter too. The third and the fourth day it war the same. I felt pretty bad when we struck camp on the last day: for I knew we must be coming near to Bridger, and that if any thing should go wrong, my life would pay the forfeit.

“On the afternoon of the fourth day, the spies, who war in advance, looking out from a high hill,

---

The River of the West

---

made a sign to the main party. In a moment all sat down. Directly they got another sign, and then they got up and moved on. I war as well up in Indian signs as they war; and I knew they had discovered white men. What war worse, I knew they would soon discover that I had been lying to them. All I had to do then war to trust to luck. Soon we came to the top of the hill, which overlooked the Yellowstone, from which I could see the plains below extending as far as the eye could reach, and about three miles off, the camp of my friends. My heart beat double quick about that time; and I once in a while put my hand to my head, to feel if my scalp war thar.

“While I war watching our camp, I discovered that the horse guard had seen us, for I knew the sign he would make if he discovered Indians. I thought the camp a splendid sight that evening. It made a powerful show to me, who did not expect ever to see it after that day. And it war a fine sight any how, from the hill whar I stood. About two hundred and fifty men, and women and children in great numbers, and about a thousand horses and mules. Then the beautiful plain, and the sinking sun; and the herds of buffalo that could not be numbered; and the cedar hills, covered with elk,--I never saw so fine a sight as all that looked to me then!

“When I turned my eyes on that savage Crow band, and saw the chief standing with his hand on his mouth, lost in amazement; and beheld the warriors’ tomahawks and spears glittering in the sun, my heart war very little. Directly the chief turned to me with a horrible scowl. Said he:

“I promised that you should live if you told the truth; but you have told me a great lie.’

“Then the warriors gathered around, with their tomahawks in their hands; but I war showing off very brave, and kept my eyes fixed on the horse-guard who war approaching the hill to drive in the horses. This drew the attention of the chief, and the warriors too. Seeing that the guard war within about two hundred yards of us, the chief turned to me and ordered me to tell him to come up. I pretended to do what he said; but instead of that I howled out to him to stay off, or he would be killed; and to tell Bridger to try to treat with them, and get me away.

“As quick as he could he ran to camp, and in a few minutes Bridger appeared, on his large white horse. He came up to within three hundred yards of us, and called out to me, asking who the Indians war. I answered ‘Crows.’ He then told me to say to the chief he wished him to send one of his sub-chiefs to smoke with him.

“All this time my heart beat terribly hard. I don’t know now why they didn’t kill me at once; but the head chief seemed overcome with surprise. When I repeated to him what Bridger said, he reflected a moment, and then ordered the second chief, called Little-Gun, to go and smoke with Bridger. But they kept on preparing for war; getting on their paint and feathers, arranging their scalp locks, selecting their arrows, and getting their ammunition ready.

“While this war going on, Little-Gun had approached to within about a hundred yards of Bridger; when, according to the Crow laws of war, each war forced to strip himself, and proceed the remaining distance in a state of nudity, and kiss and embrace. While this interesting ceremony

The River of the West

---

war being performed, five of Bridger's men had followed him, keeping in a ravine until they got within shooting distance, when they showed themselves, and cut off the return of Little-Gun, thus making a prisoner of him.

"If you think my heart did not jump up when I saw that, you think wrong. I knew it war kill or cure, now. Every Indian snatched a weapon, and fierce threats war howled against me. But all at once about a hundred of our trappers appeared on the scene. At the same time Bridger called to me, to tell me to propose to the chief to exchange me for Little-Gun. I explained to The Bold what Bridger wanted to do, and he sullenly consented: for, he said, he could not afford to give a chief for one white dog's scalp. I war then allowed to go towards my camp, and Little-Gun towards his; and the rescue I hardly hoped for war accomplished.

"In the evening the chief, with forty of his braves, visited Bridger and made a treaty of three months. They said they war formerly at war with the whites; but that they desired to be friendly with them now, so that together they might fight the Blackfeet, who war everybody's enemies. As for me, they returned me my mule, gun, and beaver packs, and said my name should be Shiam Shaspusia, for I could out-lie the Crows."

In December, Bridger's command went into winter quarters in the bend of the Yellowstone. Buffalo, elk and bear were in great abundance, all that fall and winter. Before they went to camp, Meek, Kit Carson, Hawkins; and Doughty were trapping together on the Yellowstone, about sixty miles below. They had made their temporary camp in the ruins of an old fort, the walls of which were about six feet high. One evening, after coming in from setting their traps, they discovered three large grizzly bears in the river bottom, not more than half a mile off and Hawkins went out to shoot one. He was successful in killing one at the first shot, when the other two, taking fright, ran towards the fort. As they came near enough to show that they were likely to invade camp, Meek and Carson, not caring to have a bear fight, clambered up a cotton-wood tree close by, at the same time advising Doughty to do the same. But Doughty was tired, and lazy besides, and concluded to take his chances where he was; so he rolled himself in his blanket and laid quite still. The bears, on making the fort, reared up on their hind legs and looked in as if meditating taking it for a defence.

The sight of Doughty lying rolled in his blanket, and the monster grizzlies inspecting the fort, caused the two trappers who were safely perched in the cotton-wood to make merry at Doughty's expense; saying all the mirth provoking things they could, and then advising him not to laugh, for fear the bears should seize him. Poor Doughty, agonizing between suppressed laughter and growing fear, contrived to lie still however, while the bears gazed upward at the speakers in wonder, and alternately at the suspicious looking bundle inside the fort. Not being able to make out the meaning of either, they gave at last a grunt of dissatisfaction, and ran off into a thicket to consult over these strange appearances; leaving the trappers to enjoy the incident as a very good joke. For a long time after, Doughty was reminded how close to the ground he laid, when the grizzlies paid their compliments to him. Such were the every-day incidents which the mountain-men contrived to derive their rude jests, and laughter-provoking reminiscences.

The River of the West

---

A few days after this incident, while the same party were trapping a few miles farther down the river, on their way to camp, they fell in with some Delaware Indians, who said they had discovered signs of Blackfeet, and wanted to borrow some horses to decoy them. To this the trappers very willingly agreed, and they were furnished with two horses. The Delawares then went to the spot where signs had been discovered, and tying the horses, laid flat down on the ground near them, concealed by the grass or willows. They had not long to wait before a Blackfoot was seen stealthily advancing through the thicket, confident in the belief that he should gain a couple of horses while their supposed owners were busy with their traps.

But just as he laid his hand on the bridle of the first one, crack went the rifles of the Delawares, and there was one less Blackfoot thief on the scent after trappers. As soon as they could, after this, the party mounted and rode to camp, not stopping by the way, lest the main body of Blackfeet should discover the deed and seek for vengeance. Truly indeed, was the Blackfoot the Ishmael of the wilderness, whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him.

The Rocky Mountain Company passed the first part of the winter in peace and plenty in the Yellowstone camp, unannoyed either by enemies or rivals. Hunting buffalo, feeding their horses, playing games, and telling stories, occupied the entire leisure of these months of repose. Not only did the mountain-men recount their own adventures, but when these were exhausted, those whose memories served them rehearsed the tales they had read in their youth. Robinson Crusoe and the Arabian Nights Entertainment, were read over again by the light of memory; and even Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress was made to recite like a sensation novel, and was quite as well enjoyed.

1836. In January, however, this repose was broken in upon by a visit from the Blackfeet. As their visitations were never of a friendly character, so then they were not bent upon pacific rites and ceremonies, such as all the rest of the world find pleasure in, but came in full battle array to try their fortunes in war against the big camp of the whites. They had evidently made great preparation. Their warriors numbered eleven hundred, got up in the top of the Blackfoot fashions, and armed with all manner of savage and some civilized weapons. But Bridger was prepared for them, although their numbers were so overwhelming. He built a fort, had the animals corraled, and put himself on the defensive in a prompt and thorough manner. This made the Blackfeet cautious; they too built forts of cotton-wood in the shape of lodges, ten men to each fort, and carried on a skirmishing fight for two days, when finding there was nothing to be gained, they departed, neither side having sustained much loss; the whites losing only two men by this grand Blackfoot army.

Soon after this attack Bridger broke camp, and traveled up the Yellowstone, through the Crow country. It was while on this march that Umentucken was struck by a Crow, and Meek put the whole camp in peril, by shooting him. They passed on to the Big Horn and Little Horn rivers, down through the Wind River valley and through the South Pass to Green River.

While in that country, there occurred the fight with the Bannacks in which Umentucken was

---

killed. A small party of Nez Perces had lost their horses by the thieving of the Bannacks. They came into camp and complained to the whites, who promised them their protection, should they be able to recover their horses. Accordingly the Nez Perces started after the thieves, and by dogging their camp, succeeded in re-capturing their horses and getting back to Bridger's camp with them. In order to divert the vengeance of the Bannacks from themselves, they presented their horses to the whites, and a very fine one to Bridger.

All went well for a time. The Bannacks went on their way to hunt buffalo; but they treasured up their wrath against the supposed white thieves who had stolen the horses which they had come by so honestly. On their return from the hunt, having learned by spies that the horses were in the camp of the whites, they prepared for war. Early one morning they made their appearance mounted and armed, and making a dash at the camp, rode through it with the usual yells and frantic gestures. The attack was entirely unexpected. Bridger stood in front of his lodge, holding his horse by a lasso, and the head chief rode over it, jerking it out of his hand. At this unprecedented insult to his master, a negro named Jim, cook to the Booshways, seized a rifle and shot the chief dead. At the same time, an arrow shot at random struck Umentucken in the breast, and the joys and sorrows of the Mountain Lamb were over forevermore.

The killing of a head chief always throws an Indian war party into confusion, and negro Jim was greatly elated at this signal feat of his. The trappers, who were as much surprised at the suddenness of the assault as it is in the mountain-man's nature to be, quickly recovered themselves. In a few moments the men were mounted and in motion, and the disordered Bannacks were obliged to fly towards their village, Bridger's company pursuing them.

All the rest of that day the trappers fought the Bannacks, driving them out of their village and plundering it, and forcing them to take refuge on an island in the river. Even there they were not safe, the guns of the mountain-men picking them off, from their stations on the river banks. Umentucken was well avenged that day.

All night the Indians remained on the island, where sounds of wailing were heard continually; and when morning came one of their old women appeared bearing the pipe of peace. "You have killed all our warriors," she said; "do you now want to kill the women? If you wish to smoke with women, I have the pipe."

Not caring either to fight or to smoke with so feeble a representative of the Bannacks, the trappers withdrew. But it was the last war party that nation ever sent against the mountain-men; though in later times they have by their atrocities avenged the losses of that day.

While awaiting, in the Green River valley, the arrival of the St. Louis Company, the Rocky Mountain and North American companies united; after which Captain Sublette and his brother returned no more to the mountains. The new firm was known only as the American Fur Company, the other having dropped its title altogether. The object of their consolidation was by combining their capital and experience to strengthen their hands

against the Hudson's Bay Company, which now had an establishment at Fort Hall, on the Snake River. By this new arrangement, Bridger and Fontenelle commanded; and Dripps was to be the traveling partner who was to go to St. Louis for goods.

After the conclusion of this agreement, Dripps, with the restlessness of the true mountain-man, decided to set out, with a small party of equally restless trappers, always eager to volunteer for any undertaking promising either danger or diversion, to look for the St. Louis Company which was presumed to be somewhere between the Black Hills and Green River. According to this determination Dripps, Meek, Carson, Newell, a Flathead chief named Victor, and one or two others, set out on the search for the expected company.

It happened, however, that a war party of a hundred Crows were out on the trail before them, looking perhaps for the same party, and the trappers had not made more than one or two camps before they discovered signs which satisfied them of the neighborhood of an enemy. At their next camp on the Sandy, Meek and Carson, with the caution and vigilance peculiar to them, kept their saddles on their horses, and the horses tied to themselves by a long rope, so that on the least unusual motion of the animals they should be readily informed of the disturbance. Their precaution was not lost. Just after midnight had given place to the first faint kindling of dawn, their ears were stunned by the simultaneous discharge of a hundred guns, and the usual furious din of the war-whoop and yell. A stampede immediately took place of all the horses excepting those of Meek and Carson. "Every man for himself and God for us all," is the motto of the mountain-man in case of an Indian attack; nor did our trappers forget it on this occasion. Quickly mounting, they put their horses to their speed, which was not checked until they had left the Sandy far behind them. Continuing on in the direction of the proposed meeting with the St. Louis Company, they made their first camp on the Sweetwater, where they fell in with Victor, the Flathead chief, who had made his way on foot to this place. One or two others came into camp that night, and the following day this portion of the party traveled on in company until within about five miles of Independence Rock, when they were once more charged on by the Indians, who surrounded them in such a manner that they were obliged to turn back to escape.

Again Meek and Carson made off, leaving their dismounted comrades to their own best devices. Finding that with so many Indians on the trail, and only two horses, there was little hope of being able to accomplish their journey, these two lucky ones made all haste back to camp. On Horse Creek, a few hours travel from rendezvous, they came up with Newell, who after losing his horse had fled in the direction of the main camp, but becoming bewildered had been roaming about until he was quite tired out, and on the point of giving up. But as if the Creek where he was found meant to justify itself for having so inharmonious a name, one of their own horses, which had escaped from the Crows was found quietly grazing on its banks, and the worn out fugitive at once remounted. Strange as it may appear, not one of the party was killed, the others returning to camp two days later than Meek and Carson, the worse for their expedition only by the loss of their horses, and rather an unusually fatigued and forlorn aspect.

The River of the West

Chapter XV

---

1836. While the resident partners of the consolidated company waited at the rendezvous for the arrival of the supply trains from St. Louis, word came by a messenger sent forward, that the American Company under Fitzpatrick, had reached Independence Rock, and was pressing forward. The messenger also brought the intelligence that two other parties were traveling in company with the fur company; that of Captain Stuart, who had been to New Orleans to winter, and that of Doctor Whitman, one of the missionaries who had visited the mountains the year previous. In this latter party, it was asserted, there were two white ladies.

This exhilarating news immediately inspired some of the trappers, foremost among whom was Meek, with a desire to be the first to meet and greet the on-coming caravan; and especially to salute the two white women who were bold enough to invade a mountain camp. In a very short time Meek, with half-a-dozen comrades, and ten or a dozen Nez Perces, were mounted and away, on their self-imposed errand of welcome; the trappers because they were "spoiling" for a fresh excitement; and the Nez Perces because the missionaries were bringing them information concerning the powerful and beneficent Deity of the white men. These latter also were charged with a letter to Doctor Whitman from his former associate, Mr. Parker.

On the Sweetwater about two days' travel from camp the caravan of the advancing company was discovered, and the trappers prepared to give them a characteristic greeting. To prevent mistakes in recognizing them, a white flag was hoisted on one of their guns, and the word was given to start. Then over the brow of a hill they made their appearance, riding with that mad speed only an Indian or a trapper can ride, yelling, whooping, dashing forward with frantic and threatening gestures; their dress, noises, and motions, all so completely savage that the white men could not have been distinguished from the red.

The first effect of their onset was what they probably intended. The uninitiated travelers, including the missionaries, believing they were about to be attacked by Indians, prepared for defence, nor could be persuaded that the preparation was unnecessary until the guide pointed out to them the white flag in advance. At the assurance that the flag betokened friends, apprehension was changed to curiosity and intense interest. Every movement of the wild brigade became fascinating. On they came, riding faster and faster, yelling louder and louder, and gesticulating more and more madly, until, as they met and passed the caravan, they discharged their guns in one volley over the heads of the company, as a last finishing feu de joie; and suddenly wheeling rode back to the front as wildly as they had come. Nor could this first brief display content tile crazy cavalcade. After reaching the front, they rode back and forth, and around and around the caravan which had returned their salute, showing off their feats of horsemanship, and the knowing tricks of their horses together; hardly stopping to exchange questions and answers, but seeming really intoxicated with delight at the meeting. What strange emotions filled the breasts of the lady missionaries, when they beheld among whom their lot was cast, may now be faintly outlined by a vivid imagination, but have never been, perhaps never could be put into words.

The caravan on leaving the settlements had consisted of nineteen laden carts, each drawn by two mules driven tandem, and one light wagon, belonging to the American Company; two wagons with two mules to each, belonging to Capt. Stuart; and one light two-horse wagon, and one four horse freight wagon, belonging to the missionaries. However, all the wagons had been left behind at Fort Laramie, except those of the missionaries, and one of Capt. Stuart's; so that the three that remained in the train when it reached the Sweetwater were alone in the enjoyment of the Nez Perces' curiosity concerning them; a curiosity which they divided between them and the domesticated cows and calves belonging to the missionaries: another proof, as they considered it, of the superior power of the white man's God, who could give to the whites the ability to tame wild animals to their uses.

But it was towards the two missionary ladies, Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding, that the chief interest was directed; an interest that was founded in the Indian mind upon wonder, admiration, and awe; and in the minds of the trappers upon the powerful recollections awakened by seeing in their midst two refined Christian women, with the complexion and dress of their own mothers and sisters. United to this startling effect of memory, was respect for the religious devotion which had inspired them to undertake the long and dangerous journey to the Rocky Mountains, and also a sentiment of pity for what they knew only too well yet remained to be encountered by those delicate women in the prosecution of their duty.

Mrs. Whitman, who was in fine health, rode the greater part of the journey on horseback. She was a large, stately, fair-skinned woman, with blue eyes and light auburn, almost golden hair. Her manners were at once dignified and gracious. She was, both by nature and education a lady; and had a lady's appreciation of all that was courteous and refined; yet not without an element of romance and heroism in her disposition strong enough to have impelled her to undertake a missionary's life in the wilderness.

Mrs. Spalding was a different type of woman. Talented and refined in her nature, she was less pleasing in exterior, and less attached to that which was superficially pleasing in others. But an indifference to outside appearances was in her case only a sign of her absorption in the work she had taken in hand. She possessed the true missionary spirit, and the talent to make it useful in an eminent degree; never thinking of herself, or the impression she made upon others; yet withal very firm and capable of command. Her health, which was always rather delicate, had suffered much from the fatigue of the journey, and the constant diet of fresh meat, and meat only, so that she was compelled at last to abandon horseback exercise, and to keep almost entirely to the light wagon of the missionaries.

As might be expected, the trappers turned from the contemplation of the pale, dark-haired occupant of the wagon, with all her humility and gentleness, to observe and admire the more striking figure, and more affably attractive manners of Mrs. Whitman. Meek, who never lost an opportunity to see and be seen, was seen riding alongside Mrs. Whitman, answering her curious inquiries, and entertaining her with stories of Blackfeet battles, and encounters with grizzly bears.

The River of the West

---

Poor lady! could she have looked into the future about which she was then so curious, she would have turned back appalled, and have fled with frantic fear to the home of her grieving parents. How could she then behold in the gay and boastful mountaineer, whose peculiarities of dress and speech so much diverted her, the very messenger who was to bear to the home of her girlhood the sickening tale of her bloody sacrifice to savage superstition and revenge? Yet so had fate decreed it.

When the trappers and Nez Perces had slaked their thirst for excitement by a few hours' travel in company with the Fur Company's and Missionary's caravan, they gave at length a parting display of horsemanship, and dashed off on the return trail to carry to camp the earliest news. It was on their arrival in camp that the Nez Perce and Flathead village, which had its encampment at the rendezvous ground on Green River, began to make preparations for the reception of the missionaries. It was then that Indian finery was in requisition! Then the Indian women combed and braided their long black hair, tying the plaits with gay-colored ribbons, and the Indian braves tied anew their streaming scalp-locks, sticking them full of flaunting eagle's plumes, and not despising a bit of ribbon either. Paint was in demand both for the rider and his horse. Gay blankets, red and blue, buckskin fringed shirts, worked with beads and porcupine quills, and handsomely embroidered moccasins, were eagerly sought after. Guns were cleaned and burnished, and drums and fifes put in tune.

After a day of toilsome preparation all was ready for the grand reception in the camp of the Nez Perces. Word was at length given that the caravan was in sight. There was a rush for horses, and in a few moments the Indians were mounted and in line, ready to charge on the advancing caravan. When the command of the chiefs was given to start, a simultaneous chorus of yells and whoops burst forth, accompanied by the deafening din of the war-drum, the discharge of fire-arms, and the clatter of the whole cavalcade, which was at once in a mad gallop toward the on-coming train. Nor did the yelling, whooping, drumming, and firing cease until within a few yards of the train.

All this demoniac hub-bub was highly complimentary toward those for whom it was intended; but an unfortunate ignorance of Indian customs caused the missionaries to fail in appreciating the honor intended them. Instead of trying to reciprocate the noise by an attempt at imitating it, the missionary camp was alarmed at the first burst and at once began to drive in their cattle and prepare for an attack. As the missionary party was in the rear of the train they succeeded in getting together their loose stock before the Nez Perces had an opportunity of making themselves known, so that the leaders of the Fur Company, and Captain Stuart, had the pleasure of a hearty laugh at their expense, for the fright they had received.

A general shaking of hands followed the abatement of the first surprise, the Indian women saluting Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding with a kiss, and the missionaries were escorted to their camping ground near the Nez Perce encampment. Here the whole village again formed in line, and a more formal introduction of the missionaries took place, after which they were permitted to go into camp.

The River of the West

---

When the intention of the Indians became known, Dr. Whitman, who was the leader of the missionary party, was boyishly delighted with the reception which had been given him. His frank, hearty, hopeful nature augured much good from the enthusiasm of the Indians. If his estimation of the native virtues of the savages was much too high, he suffered with those whom he caused to suffer for his belief, in the years which followed. Peace to the ashes of a good man! And honor to his associates, whose hearts were in the cause they had undertaken of Christianizing the Indians. Two of them still live--one of whom, Mr. Spalding, has conscientiously labored and deeply suffered for the faith. Mr. Gray, who was an unmarried man, returned the following year to the States, for a wife, and settled for a time among the Indians, but finally abandoned the missionary service, and removed to the Wallamet valley. These five persons constituted the entire force of teachers who could be induced at that time to devote their lives to the instruction of the savages in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains.

The trappers, and gentlemen of the Fur Company and Captain Stuart, had been passive but interested spectators of the scene between the Indians and the missionaries. When the excitement had somewhat subsided, and the various camps had become settled in their places, the tents of the white ladies were besieged with visitors, both civilized and savage. These ladies, who were making an endeavor to acquire a knowledge of the Nez Perce tongue in order to commence their instructions in the language of the natives, could have made very little progress, had their purpose been less strong than it was. Mrs. Spalding perhaps succeeded better than Mrs. Whitman in the difficult study of the Indian dialect. She seemed to attract the natives about her by the ease and kindness of her manner, especially the native women, who, seeing she was an invalid, clung to her rather than to her more lofty and self-asserting associate.

On the contrary, the leaders of the American Fur Company, Captain Wyeth and Captain Stuart, paid Mrs. Whitman the most marked and courteous attentions. She shone the bright particular star of that Rocky Mountain encampment, softening the hearts and the manners of all who came within her womanly influence. Not a gentleman among them but felt her silent command upon him to be his better self while she remained in his vicinity; not a trapper or camp-keeper but respected the presence of womanhood and piety. But while the leaders paid court to her, the bashful trappers contented themselves with promenading before her tent. Should they succeed in catching her eye, they never failed to touch their beaver skin caps in their most studiously graceful manner, though that should prove so dubious as to bring a mischievous smile to the blue eyes of the observant lady.

But our friend Joe Meek did not belong by nature to the bashful brigade. He was not content with disporting himself in his best trapper's toggery in front of a lady's tent. He became a not infrequent visitor, and amused Mrs. Whitman with the best of his mountain adventures, related in his soft, slow, yet smooth and firm utterance, and with many a merry twinkle of his mirthful dark eyes. In more serious moments he spoke to her of the future, and of his determination, sometime, to "settle down." When she inquired if he had fixed upon any spot which in his imagination he could regard as "home" he replied that he could not content himself to return to civilized life, but thought that when he gave up "bar fighting and Injun fighting" he should go down to the Walla-

The River of the West

---

met valley and see what sort of life he could make of it there. How he lived up to this determination will be seen hereafter.

The missionaries remained at the rendezvous long enough to recruit their own strength and that of their stock, and to restore to something like health the invalid Mrs. Spalding, who, on changing her diet to dried meat, which the resident partners were able to supply her, commenced rapidly to improve. Letters were written and given to Capt. Wyeth to carry home to the States. The Captain had completed his sale of Fort Hall and the goods it contained to the Hudson's Bay Company only a short time previous, and was now about to abandon the effort to establish any enterprise either on the Columbia or in the Rocky Mountains. He had, however, executed his threat of the year previous, and punished the bad faith of the Rocky Mountain Company by placing them in direct competition with the Hudson's Bay Company.

The missionaries now prepared for their journey to the Columbia River. According to the advice of the mountain-men the heaviest wagon was left at the rendezvous, together with every heavy article that could be dispensed with. But Dr. Whitman refused to leave the light wagon, although assured he would never be able to get it to the Columbia, nor even to the Snake River. The good Doctor had an immense fund of determination when there was an object to be gained or a principle involved. The only persons who did not oppose wagon transportation were the Indians. They sympathised with his determination, and gave him their assistance. The evidences of a different and higher civilization than they had ever seen were held in great reverence by them. The wagons, the domestic cattle, especially the cows and calves, were always objects of great interest with them. Therefore they freely gave their assistance, and a sufficient number remained behind to help the Doctor, while the main party of both missionaries and Indians, having bidden the Fur Company and others farewell, proceeded to join the camp of two Hudson's Bay traders a few miles on their way.

The two traders, whose camp they now joined, were named McLeod and McKay. The latter, Thomas McKay, was the half-breed son of that unfortunate McKay in Mr. Astor's service, who perished on board the *Tonquin*, as related in Irving's *ASTORIA*. He was one of the bravest and most skillful partisans in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. McLeod had met the missionaries at the American rendezvous and invited them to travel in his company; an offer which they were glad to accept, as it secured them ample protection and other more trifling benefits, besides some society other than the Indians.

By dint of great perseverance, Doctor Whitman contrived to keep up with the camp day after day, though often coming in very late and very weary, until the party arrived at Fort Hall. At the fort the baggage was again reduced as much as possible; and Doctor Whitman was compelled by the desertion of his teamster to take off two wheels of his wagon and transform it into a cart which could be more easily propelled in difficult places. With this he proceeded as far as the Boise River where the Hudson's Bay Company had a small fort or trading-post; but here again he was so strongly urged to relinquish the idea of taking his wagon to the Columbia, that after much discussion he consented to leave it at Fort Boise until some future time when unencumbered by goods

or passengers he might return for it.

Arrived at the crossing of the Snake River, Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding were treated to a new mode of ferriage, which even in their varied experience they had never before met with. This new ferry was nothing more or less than a raft made of bulrushes woven together by grass ropes. Upon this frail flat-boat the passengers were obliged to stretch themselves at length while an Indian swam across and drew it after him by a rope. As the waters of the Snake River are rapid and often "dancing mad," it is easy to conjecture that the ladies were ill at ease on their bulrush ferry.

On went the party from the Snake River through the Grand Ronde to the Blue Mountains. The crossing here was somewhat difficult but accomplished in safety.

The descent from the Blue Mountains on the west side gave the missionaries their first view of the country they had come to possess, and to civilize and Christianize. That view was beautiful and grand--as goodly a prospect as longing eyes ever beheld this side of Canaan. Before them lay a country spread out like a map, with the windings of its rivers marked by fringes of trees, and its boundaries fixed by mountain ranges above which towered the snowy peaks of Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams, and Mt. Rainier. Far away could be traced the course of the Columbia; and over all the magnificent scene glowed the red rays of sunset, tinging the distant blue of the mountains until they seemed shrouded in a veil of violet mist. It were not strange that with the reception given them by the Indians, and with this bird's-eye view of their adopted country, the hearts of the missionaries beat high with hope.

The descent from the Blue Mountains brought the party out on the Umatilla River, where they camped, Mr. McLeod parting company with them at this place to hasten forward to Fort Walla-Walla, and prepare for their reception. After two more days of slow and toilsome travel with cattle whose feet were cut and sore from the sharp rocks of the mountains, the company arrived safely at Walla-Walla fort, on the third of September. Here they found Mr. McLeod, and Mr. Panbram who had charge of that post.

Mr. Panbram received the missionary party with every token of respect, and of pleasure at seeing ladies among them. The kindest attentions were lavished upon them from the first moment of their arrival, when the ladies were lifted from their horses, to the time of their departure; the apartments belonging to the fort being assigned to them, and all that the place afforded of comfortable living placed at their disposal. Here, for the first time in several months, they enjoyed the luxury of bread--a favor for which the suffering Mrs. Spalding was especially grateful.

At Walla-Walla the missionaries were informed that they were expected to visit Vancouver, the head-quarters of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Lower Columbia. After resting for two days, it was determined to make this visit before selecting places for mission work among the Indians. Accordingly the party embarked in the company's boats, for the voyage down the Columbia, which occupied six days, owing to strong head winds which were encountered at a point on the Lower Columbia, called Cape Horn. They arrived safely on the eleventh of September, at Van-

couver, where they were again received with the warmest hospitality by the Governor, Dr. John McLaughlin, and his associates. The change from the privations of wilderness life to the luxuries of Fort Vancouver was very great indeed, and two weeks passed rapidly away in the enjoyment of refined society, and all the other elegancies of the highest civilization.

At the end of two weeks, Dr. Whitman, Mr. Spalding, and Mr. Gray returned to the Upper Columbia, leaving the ladies at Fort Vancouver while they determined upon their several locations in the Indian country. After an absence of several weeks they returned, having made their selections, and on the third day of November the ladies once more embarked to ascend the Columbia, to take up their residence in Indian wigwams while their husbands prepared rude dwellings by the assistance of the natives. The spot fixed upon by Dr. Whitman for his mission was on the Walla-Walla River about thirty miles from the fort of that name. It was called Waiilatpu; and the tribe chosen for his pupils were the Cayuses, a hardy, active, intelligent race, rich in horses and pasture lands.

Mr. Spalding selected a home on the Clearwater River, among the Nez Perces, of whom we already know so much. His mission was called Lapwai. Mr. Gray went among the Flatheads, an equally friendly tribe; and here we shall leave the missionaries, to return to the Rocky Mountains and the life of the hunter and trapper. At a future date we shall fall in once more with these devoted people and learn what success attended their efforts to Christianize the Indians.

The River of the West

Chapter XVI

1836. The company of men who went north this year under Bridger and Fontenelle, numbered nearly three hundred. Rendezvous with all its varied excitements being over, this important brigade commenced its march. According to custom, the trappers commenced business on the head-waters of various rivers, following them down as the early frosts of the mountains forced them to do until finally they wintered in the plains, at the most favored spots they could find in which to subsist themselves and animals.

From Green River, Meek proceeded with Bridger's command to Lewis River, Salt River, and other tributaries of the Snake, and camped with them in Pierre's Hole, that favorite mountain valley which every year was visited by the different fur companies.

Pierre's Hole, notwithstanding its beauties, had some repulsive features, or rather perhaps one repulsive feature, which was, its great numbers of rattlesnakes. Meek relates that being once caught in a very violent thunder storm, he dismounted, and holding his horse, a fine one, by the bridle, himself took shelter under a narrow shelf of rock projecting from a precipitous bluff. Directly he observed an enormous rattlesnake hastening close by him to its den in the mountain. Congratulating himself on his snakeship's haste to get out of the storm and his vicinity, he had only time to have one rejoicing thought when two or three others followed the trail of the first one. They were

The River of the West

---

seeking the same rocky den, of whose proximity Meek now felt uncomfortably assured. Before these were out of sight, there came instead of twos and threes, tens and twenties, and then hundreds, and finally Meek believes thousands, the ground being literally alive with them. Not daring to stir after he discovered the nature of his situation, he was obliged to remain and endure the disgusting and frightful scene, while he exerted himself to keep his horse quiet, lest the reptiles should attack him. By and by, when there were no more to come, but all were safe in their holes in the rock, Meek hastily mounted and galloped in the face of the tempest in preference to remaining longer in so unpleasant a neighborhood.

There was an old Frenchman among the trappers who used to charm rattlesnakes, and handling them freely, place them in his bosom, or allow them to wind about his arms, several at a time, their flat heads extending in all directions, and their bodies waving in the air, in the most snaky and nerve-shaking manner, to the infinite disgust of all the camp, and of Hawkins and Meek in particular. Hawkins often became so nervous that he threatened to shoot the Frenchman on the instant, if he did not desist; and great was the dislike he entertained for what he termed the “d - - d infernal old wizard.”

It was often the case in the mountains and on the plains that the camp was troubled with rattlesnakes, so that each man on laying down to sleep found it necessary to encircle his bed with a hair rope, thus effectually fencing out the reptiles, which are too fastidious and sensitive of touch to crawl over a hair rope. But for this precaution, the trapper must often have shared his blanket couch with this foe to the “seed of the woman,” who being asleep would have neglected to “crush his head,” receiving instead the serpent’s fang in “his heel,” if not in some nobler portion of his body.

There is a common belief abroad that the prairie dog harbors the rattlesnake, and the owl also, in his subterranean house, in a more or less friendly manner. Meek, however, who has had many opportunities of observing the habits of these three ill-assorted denizens of a common abode, gives it as his opinion that the prairie dog consents to the invasion of his premises alone through his inability to prevent it. As these prairie dog villages are always found on the naked prairies, where there is neither rocky den for the rattlesnake, nor shade for the blinking eyes of the owl, these two idle and impudent foreigners, availing themselves of the labors of the industrious little animal which builds itself a cool shelter from the sun, and a safe one from the storm, whenever their own necessities drive them to seek refuge from either sun or storm, enter uninvited and take possession. It is probable also, that so far from being a welcome guest, the rattlesnake occasionally gorges himself with a young prairie-dog, when other game is not conveniently nigh, or that the owl lies in wait at the door of its borrowed-without-leave domicile, and succeeds in nabbing a careless field-mouse more easily than it could catch the same game by seeking it as an honest owl should do. The owl and the rattlesnake are like the Sioux: when they go on a visit to the Omahas--the visit being always timed so as to be identical in date with that of the Government Agents who are distributing food and clothing. They are very good friends for the nonce, the poor Omahas not daring to be otherwise for fear of the ready vengeance on the next summer’s buffalo hunt; therefore they conceal their grimaces and let the Sioux eat them up; and when summer comes get

massacred on their buffalo hunt, all the same.

But to return to our brigade. About the last of October Bridger's company moved down on to the Yellowstone by a circuitous route through the North Pass, now known as Hell Gate Pass, to Judith River, Mussel Shell River, Cross Creeks of the Yellowstone, Three Forks of Missouri, Missouri Lake, Beaver Head country, Big Horn River, and thence east again, and north again to the wintering ground in the great bend of the Yellowstone.

The company had not proceeded far in the Blackfeet country, between Hell Gate Pass and the Yellowstone, before they were attacked by the Blackfeet. On arriving at the Yellowstone they discovered a considerable encampment of the enemy on an island or bar in the river, and proceeded to open hostilities before the Indians should have discovered them. Making little forts of sticks or bushes, each man advanced cautiously to the bank overlooking the island, pushing his leafy fort before him as he crept silently nearer, until a position was reached whence firing could commence with effect. The first intimation the luckless savages had of the neighborhood of the whites was a volley of shots discharged into their camp, killing several of their number. But as this was their own mode of attack, no reflections were likely to be wasted upon the unfairness of the assault; quickly springing to their arms the firing was returned, and for several hours was kept up on both sides. At night the Indians stole off, having lost nearly thirty killed; nor did the trappers escape quite unhurt, three being killed and a few others wounded.

Since men were of such value to the fur companies, it would seem strange that they should deliberately enter upon an Indian fight before being attacked. But unfortunate as these encounters really were, they knew of no other policy to be pursued. They, (the American Companies,) were not resident, with a long acquaintance, and settled policy, such as rendered the Hudson's Bay Company so secure amongst the savages. They knew that among these unfriendly Indians, not to attack was to be attacked, and consequently little time was ever given for an Indian to discover his vicinity to a trapper. The trapper's shot informed him of that, and afterwards the race was to the swift, and the battle to the strong. Besides this acknowledged necessity for fighting whenever and wherever Indians were met with in the Blackfeet and Crow countries, almost every trapper had some private injury to avenge--some theft, or wound, or imprisonment, or at the very least, some terrible fright sustained at the hands of the universal foe. Therefore there was no reluctance to shoot into an Indian camp, provided the position of the man shooting was a safe one, or more defensible than that of the man shot at. Add to this that there was no law in the mountains, only license, it is easy to conjecture that might would have prevailed over right with far less incentive to the exercise of savage practices than actually did exist. Many a trapper undoubtedly shot his Indian "for the fun of it," feeling that it was much better to do so than run the risk of being shot at for no better reason. Of this class of reasoners, it must be admitted, Meek was one. Indian-fighting, like bear-fighting, had come to be a sort of pastime, in which he was proud to be known as highly accomplished. Having so many opportunities for the display of game qualities in encounters with these two by-no-means-to-be despised foes of the trapper, it was not often that they quarreled among themselves after the grand frolic of the rendezvous was over.

The River of the West

---

It happened, however, during this autumn, that while the main camp was in the valley of the Yellowstone, a party of eight trappers, including Meek and a comrade named Stanberry, were trapping together on the Mussel Shell, when the question as to which was the bravest man got started between them, and at length, in the heat of controversy, assumed such importance that it was agreed to settle the matter on the following day according to the Virginia code of honor, i. e., by fighting a duel, and shooting at each other with guns, which hitherto had only done execution on bears and Indians.

But some listening spirit of the woods determined to avert the danger from these two equally brave trappers, and save their ammunition for its legitimate use, by giving them occasion to prove their courage almost on the instant. While sitting around the camp-fire discussing the coming event of the duel at thirty paces, a huge bear, already wounded by a shot from the gun of their hunter who was out looking for game, came running furiously into camp, giving each man there a challenge to fight or fly.

“Now,” spoke up one of the men quickly, “let Meek and Stanberry prove which is bravest, by fighting the bear!” “Agreed,” cried the two as quickly, and both sprang with guns and wiping-sticks in hand, charging upon the infuriated beast as it reached the spot where they were awaiting it. Stanberry was a small man, and Meek a large one. Perhaps it was owing to this difference of stature that Meek was first to reach the bear as it advanced. Running up with reckless bravado Meek struck the creature two or three times over the head with his wiping-stick before aiming to fire, which however he did so quickly and so surely that the beast fell dead at his feet. This act settled the vexed question. Nobody was disposed to dispute the point of courage with a man who would stop to strike a grizzly before shooting him: therefore Meek was proclaimed by the common voice to be “cock of the walk “ in that camp. The pipe of peace was solemnly smoked by himself and Stanberry, and the tomahawk buried never more to be resurrected between them, while a fat supper of bear meat celebrated the compact of everlasting amity.

It was not an unfrequent occurrence for a grizzly bear to be run into camp by the hunters, in the Yellowstone country where this creature abounded. An amusing incident occurred not long after that just related, when the whole camp was at the Cross Creeks of the Yellowstone, on the south side of that river. The hunters were out, and had come upon two or three bears in a thicket. As these animals sometimes will do, they started off in a great fright, running toward camp, the hunters after them, yelling, frightening them still more. A runaway bear, like a runaway horse, appears not to see where it is going, but keeps right on its course no matter what dangers lie in advance. So one of these animals having got headed for the middle of the encampment, saw nothing of what lay in its way, but ran on and on, apparently taking note of nothing but the yells in pursuit. So sudden and unexpected was the charge which he made upon camp, that the Indian women, who were sitting on the ground engaged in some ornamental work, had no time to escape out of the way. One of them was thrown down and run over, and another was struck with such violence that she was thrown twenty feet from the spot where she was hastily attempting to rise. Other objects in camp were upset and thrown out of the way, but without causing so much merriment as the mishaps of the two women who were so rudely treated by the monster.

It was also while the camp was at the Cross Creeks of the Yellowstone that Meek had one of his best fought battles with a grizzly bear. He was out with two companions, one Gardiner, and Mark Head, a Shawnee Indian. Seeing a very large bear digging roots in the creek bottom, Meek proposed to attack it, if the others would hold his horse ready to mount if he failed to kill the creature. This being agreed to he advanced to within about forty paces of his game, when he raised his gun and attempted to fire, but the cap bursting he only roused the beast, which turned on him with a terrific noise between a snarl and a growl, showing some fearful looking teeth. Meek turned to run for his horse, at the same time trying to put a cap on his gun; but when he had almost reached his comrades, their horses and his own took fright at the bear now close on his heels, and ran, leaving him alone with the now fully infuriated beast. Just at the moment he succeeded in getting a cap on his gun, the teeth of the bear closed on his blanket capote which was belted around the waist, the suddenness and force of the seizure turning him around, as the skirt of his capote yielded to the strain and tore off at the belt. Being now nearly face to face with his foe, the intrepid trapper thrust his gun into the creature's mouth and attempted again to fire, but the gun being double triggered and not set, it failed to go off. Perceiving the difficulty he managed to set the triggers with the gun still in the bear's mouth, yet no sooner was this done than the bear succeeded in knocking it out, and firing as it slipped out, it hit her too low down to inflict a fatal wound and only served to irritate her still farther.

In this desperate situation when Meek's brain was rapidly working on the problem of live Meek or live bear, two fresh actors appeared on the scene in the persons of two cubs, who seeing their mother in difficulty seemed desirous of doing something to assist her. Their appearance seemed to excite the bear to new exertions, for she made one desperate blow at Meek's empty gun with which he was defending himself, and knocked it out of his hands, and far down the bank or sloping hillside where the struggle was now going on. Then being partially blinded by rage, she seized one of her cubs and began to box it about in a most unmotherly fashion. This diversion gave Meek a chance to draw his knife from the scabbard, with which he endeavored to stab the bear behind the ear: but she was too quick for him, and with a blow struck it out of his hand, as she had the gun, nearly severing his forefinger.

At this critical juncture the second cub interfered, and got a boxing from the old bear, as the first one had done. This too, gave Meek time to make a movement, and loosening his tomahawk from his belt, he made one tremendous effort, taking deadly aim, and struck her just behind the ear, the tomahawk sinking into the brain, and his powerful antagonist lay dead before him. When the blow was struck he stood with his back against a little bluff of rock, beyond which it was impossible to retreat. It was his last chance, and his usual good fortune stood by him. When the struggle was over the weary victor mounted the rock behind him and looked down upon his enemy slain; and "came to the conclusion that he was satisfied with bar-fighting."

But renown had sought him out even here, alone with his lifeless antagonist. Capt. Stuart with his artist, Mr. Miller, chanced upon this very spot, while yet the conqueror contemplated his slain enemy, and taking possession at once of the bear, whose skin was afterward preserved and stuffed,

The River of the West

---

made a portrait of the "satisfied" slayer. A picture was subsequently painted by Miller of this scene, and was copied in wax for a museum in St. Louis, where it probably remains to this day, a monument of Meek's best bear fight. As for Meek's runaway horse and runaway comrades, they returned to the scene of action too late to be of the least service, except to furnish our hero with transportation to camp, which, considering the weight of his newly gathered laurels, was no light service after all.

In November Bridger's camp arrived at the Bighorn River, expecting to winter; but finding the buffalo all gone, were obliged to cross the mountains lying between the Bighorn and Powder rivers to reach the buffalo country on the latter stream. The snow having already fallen quite deep on these mountains the crossing was attended with great difficulty; and many horses and mules were lost by sinking in the snow, or falling down precipices made slippery by the melting. and freezing of the snow on the narrow ridges and rocky benches along which they were forced to travel.

About Christmas all the company went into winter-quarters on Powder River, in the neighborhood of a company of Bonneville's men, left under the command of Antoine Montero, who had established a trading-post and fort at this place, hoping, no doubt, that here they should be comparatively safe from the injurious competition of the older companies. The appearance of three hundred men, who had the winter before them in which to do mischief, was therefore as unpleasant as it was unexpected; and the result proved that even Montero, who was Bonneville's experienced trader, could not hold his own against so numerous and expert a band of marauders as Bridger's men, assisted by the Crows, proved themselves to be; for by the return of spring Montero had very little remaining of the property belonging to the fort, nor anything to show for it. This mischievous war upon Bonneville was prompted partly by the usual desire to cripple a rival trader, which the leaders encouraged in their men; but in some individual instances far more by the desire for revenge upon Bonneville personally, on account of his censures passed upon the members of the Monterey expedition, and on the ways of mountain-men generally.

About the first of January, Fontenelle, with four men, and Captain Stuart's party, left camp to go to St. Louis for supplies. At Fort Laramie Fontenelle committed suicide, in a fit of mania a potu, and his men returned to camp with the news.

The River of the West

Chapter XVII

1837. The fate of Fontenelle should have served as a warning to his associates and fellows. 'Should have done,' however, are often idle words, and as sad as they are idle; they match the poets 'might have been,' in their regretful impotency. Perhaps there never was a winter camp in the mountains more thoroughly demoralized than that of Bridger during the months of January and February. Added to the whites, who were reckless enough, were a considerable party of Delaware and Shawnee Indians, excellent allies, and skillful hunters and trappers, but having the Indian's love of strong drink. "Times were pretty good in the mountains," according to the mountain-man's notion of good times; that is to say, beaver was plenty, camp large, and alcohol abundant, if dear.

The River of the West

---

Under these favorable circumstance much alcohol was consumed, and its influence was felt in the manners not only of the trappers, white and red, but also upon the neighboring Indians.

The Crows, who had for two years been on terms of a sort of semi-amity with the whites, found it to their interest to conciliate so powerful an enemy as the American Fur Company was now become, and made frequent visits to the camp, on which occasion they usually succeeded in obtaining a taste of the fire-water of which they were inordinately fond. Occasionally a trader was permitted to sell liquor to the whole village, when a scene took place whose peculiar horrors were wholly indescribable, from the inability of language to convey an adequate idea of its hellish degradation. When a trader sold alcohol to a village it was understood both by himself and the Indians what was to follow. And to secure the trader against injury a certain number of warriors were selected out of the village to act as a police force, and to guard the trader during the 'drunk' from the insane passions of his customers. To the police not a drop was to be given.

This being arranged, and the village disarmed, the carousal began. Every individual, man, woman, and child, was permitted to become intoxicated. Every form of drunkenness, from the simple stupid to the silly, the heroic, the insane, the beastly, the murderous, displayed itself. The scenes which were then enacted beggared description, as they shocked the senses of even the hard-drinking, license-loving trappers who witnessed them. That they did not "point a moral" for these men, is the strangest part of the whole transaction.

When everybody, police excepted, was drunk as drunk could be, the trader began to dilute his alcohol with water, until finally his keg contained water only, slightly flavored by the washings of the keg, and as they continued to drink of it without detecting its weak quality, they finally drank themselves sober, and were able at last to sum up the cost of their intoxication. This was generally nothing less than the whole property of the village, added to which were not a few personal injuries, and usually a few murders. The village now being poor, the Indians were correspondingly humble; and were forced to begin a system of reprisal by stealing and making war, a course for which the traders were prepared, and which they avoided by leaving that neighborhood. Such were some of the sins and sorrows for which the American fur companies were answerable, and which detracted seriously from the respect that the courage, and other good qualities of the mountain-men freely commanded.

By the first of March these scenes of wrong and riot were over, for that season at least, and camp commenced moving back toward the Blackfoot country. After re-crossing the mountains, passing the Bighorn, Clarke's, and Rosebud rivers, they came upon a Blackfoot village on the Yellowstone, which as usual they attacked, and a battle ensued, in which Manhead, captain of the Delawares was killed, another Delaware named Tom Hill succeeding him in command. The fight did not result in any great loss or gain to either party. The camp of Bridger fought its way past the village, which was what they must do, in order to proceed.

Meek, however, was not quite satisfied with the punishment the Blackfeet had received for the

killing of Manhead, who had been in the fight with him when the Camanches attacked them on the plains. Desirous of doing something on his own account, he induced a comrade named LeBlas, to accompany him to the village, after night had closed over the scene of the late contest. Stealing into the village with a noiselessness equal to that of one of Fennimore Cooper's Indian scouts, these two daring trappers crept so near that they could look into the lodges, and see the Indians at their favorite game of Hand. Inferring from this that the savages did not feel their losses very severely, they determined to leave some sign of their visit, and wound their enemy in his most sensitive part, the horse. Accordingly they cut the halters of a number of the animals, fastened in the customary manner to a stake, and succeeded in getting off with nine of them, which property they proceeded to appropriate to their own use.

As the spring and summer advanced, Bridger's brigade advanced into the mountains, passing the Cross Creek of the Yellowstone, Twenty-five-Yard River, Cherry River, and coming on to the head-waters of the Missouri spent the early part of the summer in that locality. Between Gallatin and Madison forks the camp struck the great trail of the Blackfeet. Meek and Mark Head had fallen four or five days behind camp, and being on this trail felt a good deal of uneasiness. This feeling was not lessened by seeing, on coming to Madison Fork, the skeletons of two men tied to or suspended from trees, the flesh eaten off their bones. Concluding discretion to be the safest part of valor in this country, they concealed themselves by day and traveled by night, until camp was finally reached near Henry's Lake. On this march they forded a flooded river, on the back of the same mule, their traps placed on the other, and escaped from pursuit of a dozen yelling savages, who gazed after them in astonishment; "taking their mule," said Mark Head, "to be a beaver, and themselves great medicine men. " That," said Meek, "is what I call 'cooning' a river."

From this point Meek set out with a party of thirty or forty trappers to travel up the river to head-waters, accompanied by the famous Indian painter Stanley, whose party was met with, this spring, traveling among the mountains. The party of trappers were a day or two ahead of the main camp when they found themselves following close after the big Blackfoot village which had recently passed over the trail, as could be seen by the usual signs; and also by the dead bodies strewn along the trail, victims of that horrible scourge, the small pox. The village was evidently fleeing to the mountains, hoping to rid itself of the plague in their colder and more salubrious air.

Not long after coming upon these evidences of proximity to an enemy, a party of a hundred and fifty of their warriors were discovered encamped in a defile or narrow bottom enclosed by high bluffs, through which the trappers would have to pass. Seeing that in order to pass this war party, and the village, which was about half a mile in advance, there would have to be some fighting done, the trappers resolved to begin the battle at once by attacking their enemy, who was as yet ignorant of their neighborhood. In pursuance of this determination, Meek, Newell, Mansfield, and Le Blas, commenced hostilities. Leaving their horses in camp, they crawled along on the edge of the overhanging bluff until opposite to the encampment of Blackfeet, firing on them from the shelter of some bushes which grew among the rocks. But the Blackfeet, though ignorant of the number of their enemy, were not to be dislodged so easily, and after an hour or two of random shooting, contrived to scale the bluff at a point higher up, and to get upon a ridge of ground still

higher than that occupied by the four trappers. This movement dislodged the latter, and they hastily retreated through the bushes and returned to camp.

The next day, the main camp having come up, the fight was renewed. While the greater body of the company, with the pack-horses, were passing along the high bluff overhanging them, the party of the day before, and forty or fifty others, undertook to drive the Indians out of the bottom, and by keeping them engaged allow the train to pass in safety. The trappers rode to the fight on this occasion, and charged the Blackfeet furiously, they having joined the village a little farther on. A general skirmish now took place. Meek, who was mounted on a fine horse, was in the thickest of the fight. He had at one time a side to side race with an Indian who strung his bow so hard that the arrow dropped, just as Meek, who had loaded his gun running, was ready to fire, and the Indian dropped after his arrow.

Newell too had a desperate conflict with a half-dead warrior, who having fallen from a wound, he thought dead and was trying to scalp. Springing from his horse he seized the Indian's long thick hair in one hand, and with his knife held in the other made a pass at the scalp, when the savage roused up knife in hand, and a struggle took place in which it was for a time doubtful which of the combatants would part with the coveted scalp-lock. Newell might have been glad to resign the trophy, and leave the fallen warrior his tuft of hair, but his fingers were in some way caught by some gun-screws with which the savage had ornamented his coiffure, and would not part company. In this dilemma there was no other alternative but fight. The miserable savage was dragged a rod or two in the struggle, and finally dispatched.

Mansfield also got into such close quarters, surrounded by the enemy, that he gave himself up for lost, and called out to his comrades: "Tell old Gabe, (Bridger,) that old Cotton (his own sobriquet) is gone." He lived, however to deliver his own farewell message, for at this critical juncture the trappers were re-inforced, and relieved. Still the fight went on, the trappers gradually working their way to the upper end of the enclosed part of the valley, past the point of danger.

Just before getting clear of this entanglement Meek became the subject of another picture, by Stanley, who was viewing the battle from the heights above the valley. The picture which is well known as "The Trapper's Last Shot," represents him as he turned upon his horse, a fine and spirited animal, to discharge his last shot at an Indian pursuing, while in the bottom, at a little distance away, other Indians are seen skulking in the tall reedy grass.

The last shot having been discharged with fatal effect, our trapper, so persistently lionized by painters, put his horse to his utmost speed and soon after overtook the camp, which had now passed the strait of danger. But the Blackfeet were still unsatisfied with the result of the contest. They followed after, reinforced from the village, and attacked the camp. In the fight which followed a Blackfoot woman's horse was shot down, and Meek tried to take her prisoner: but two or three of her people coming to the rescue, engaged his attention; and the woman was saved by seizing hold of the tail of her husband's horse, which setting off at a run, carried her out of danger.

The Blackfeet found the camp of Bridger too strong for them. They were severely beaten and compelled to retire to their village, leaving Bridger free to move on. The following day the camp reached the village of Little Robe, a chief of the Peagans, who held a talk with Bridger, complaining that his nation were all perishing from the small-pox which had been given to them by the whites. Bridger was able to explain to Little-Robe his error; inasmuch as although the disease might have originated among the whites, it was communicated to the Blackfeet by Jim Beckwith, a negro, and principal chief of their enemies the Crows. This unscrupulous wretch had caused two infected articles to be taken from a Mackinaw boat, up from St. Louis, and disposed of to the Blackfeet-- whence the horrible scourge under which they were suffering.

This matter being explained, Little-Robe consented to trade horses and skins; and the two camps parted amicably. The next day after this friendly talk, Bridger being encamped on the trail in advance of the Blackfeet, an Indian came riding into camp, with his wife and daughter, pack-horse and lodge-pole, and all his worldly goods, unaware until he got there of the snare into which he had fallen. The French trappers, generally, decreed to kill the man and take possession of the woman. But Meek, Kit Carson, and others of the American trappers of the better sort, interfered to prevent this truly savage act. Meek took the woman's horse by the head, Carson the man's, the daughter following, and led them out of camp. Few of the Frenchmen cared to interrupt either of these two men, and they were suffered to depart in peace. When at a safe distance, Meek stopped, and demanded as some return for having saved the man's life, a present of tobacco, a luxury which, from the Indian's pipe, he suspected him to possess. About enough for two chews was the result of this demand, complied with rather grudgingly, the Indian vieing with the trapper in his devotion to the weed. Just at this time, owing to the death of Fontenelle, and a consequent delay in receiving supplies, tobacco was scarce among the mountaineers.

Bridger's brigade of trappers met with no other serious interruptions on their summer's march. They proceeded to Henry's Lake, and crossing the Rocky Mountains, traveled through the Pine Woods, always a favorite region, to Lewis' Lake on Lewis' Fork of the Snake River; and finally up the Grovant Fork, re-crossing the mountains to Wind River, where the rendezvous for this year was appointed.

Here, once more, the camp was visited by a last years' acquaintance. This was none other than Mr. Gray, of the Flathead Mission, who was returning to the States on business connected with the missionary enterprise, and to provide himself with a helpmeet for life,--a co-laborer and sufferer in the contemplated toil of teaching savages the rudiments of a religion difficult even to the comprehension of an old civilization.

Mr. Gray was accompanied by two young men (whites) who wished to return to the States, and also by a son of one of the Flathead chiefs. Two other Flathead Indians, and one Iroquois and one Snake Indian, were induced to accompany Mr. Gray. The undertaking was not without danger, and so the leaders of the Fur Company assured him. But Mr. Gray was inclined to make light of the danger, having traveled with entire safety when under the protection of the Fur Companies

the year before. He proceeded without interruption until he reached Ash Hollow, in the neighborhood of Fort Laramie, when his party was attacked by a large band of Sioux, and compelled to accept battle. The five Indians, with the whites, fought bravely, killing fifteen of the Sioux, before a parley was obtained by the intervention of a French trader who chanced to be among the Sioux. When Mr. Gray was able to hold a 'talk' with the attacking party he was assured that his life and that of his two white associates would be spared, but that they wanted to kill the strange Indians and take their fine horses. It is not at all probable that Mr. Gray consented to this sacrifice; though he has been accused of doing so.

No doubt the Sioux took advantage of some hesitation on his part, and rushed upon his Indian allies in an unguarded moment. However that may be, his allies were killed and he was allowed to escape, after giving up the property belonging to them, and a portion of his own.

This affair was the occasion of much ill-feeling toward Mr. Gray, when, in the following year, he returned to the mountains with the tale of massacre of his friends and his own escape. The mountain-men, although they used their influence to restrain the vengeful feelings of the Flathead tribe, whispered amongst themselves that Gray had preferred his own life to that of his friends. The old Flathead chief too, who had lost a son by the massacre, was hardly able to check his impulsive desire for revenge; for he held Mr. Gray responsible for his son's life. Nothing more serious, however, grew out of this unhappy tragedy than a disaffection among the tribe toward Mr. Gray, which made his labors useless, and finally determined him to remove to the Wallamet Valley.

There were no outsiders besides Gray's party at the rendezvous of this year, except Captain Stuart, and he was almost as good a mountaineer as any. This doughty English traveler had the bad fortune together with that experienced leader Fitzpatrick, of being robbed by the Crows in the course of the fall hunt, in the Crow country. These expert horse thieves had succeeded in stealing nearly all the horses belonging to the joint camp, and had so disabled the company that it could not proceed. In this emergency, Newell, who had long been a sub-trader and was wise in Indian arts and wiles, was sent to hold a talk with the thieves. The talk was held, according to custom, in the Medicine lodge, and the usual amount of smoking, of long silences, and grave looks, had to be participated in, before the subject on hand could be considered. Then the chiefs complained as usual of wrongs at the hands of the white men; of their fear of small-pox, from which some of their tribe had suffered; of friends killed in battle with the whites, and all the list of ills that Crow flesh is heir to at the will of their white enemies. The women too had their complaints to proffer, and the number of widows and orphans in the tribe was pathetically set forth. The chiefs also made a strong point of this latter complaint; and on it the wily Newell hung his hopes of recovering the stolen property.

"It is true," said he to the chiefs, "that you have sustained heavy losses. But that is not the fault of the Blanket chief (Bridger.) If your young men have been killed, they were killed when attempting to rob or kill our Captain's men. If you have lost horses, your young men have stolen five to our one. If you are poor in skins and other property, it is because you sold it all for drink which did you no good. Neither is Bridger to blame that you have had the small-pox. Your own chief, in

trying to kill your enemies the Blackfeet, brought that disease into the country.

“But it is true that you have many widows and orphans to support, and that is bad. I pity the orphans, and will help you to support them, if you will restore to my captain the property stolen from his camp. Otherwise Bridger will bring more horses. and plenty of ammunition, and there will be more widows and orphans among the Crows than ever before.”

This was a kind of logic easy to understand and quick to convince among savages. The bribe, backed by a threat, settled the question of the restoration of the horses, which were returned without further delay, and a present of blankets and trinkets was given, ostensibly to the bereaved women, really to the covetous chiefs.

The River of the West

Chapter XVIII

1837. The decline of the business of hunting furs began to be quite obvious about this time. Besides the American and St. Louis Companies, and the Hudson's Bay Company, there were numerous lone traders with whom the ground was divided. The autumn of this year was spent by the American Company, as formerly, in trapping beaver on the streams issuing from the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains. When the cold weather finally drove the Fur Company to the plains, they went into winter quarters once more in the neighborhood of the Crows on Powder River. Here were re-enacted the wild scenes of the previous winter, both trappers and Indians being given up to excesses.

On the return of spring, Bridger again led his brigade all through the Yellowstone country, to the streams on the north side of the Missouri, to the head-waters of that river; and finally rendezvoused on the north fork of the Yellowstone, near Yellowstone Lake. Though the amount of furs taken on the spring hunt was considerable, it was by no means equal to former years. The fact was becoming apparent that the beaver was being rapidly exterminated.

However there was beaver enough in camp to furnish the means for the usual profligacy. Horse-racing, betting, gambling, drinking, were freely indulged in. In the midst of this “fun,” there appeared at the rendezvous Mr. Gray, now accompanied by Mrs. Gray and six other missionary ladies and gentlemen. Here also were two gentlemen from the Methodist mission on the Wallamet, who were returning to the States. Captain Stuart was still traveling with the Fur Company, and was also present with his party; besides which a Hudson's Bay trader named Ematinger was encamped near by. As if actuated to extraordinary displays by the unusual number of visitors, especially the four ladies, both trappers and Indians conducted themselves like the mad-caps they were. The Shawnees and Delawares danced their great war-dance before the tents of the missionaries; and Joe Meek, not to be outdone, arrayed himself in a suit of armor belonging to Captain Stuart and strutted about the encampment; then mounting his horse played the part of an ancient knight, with a good deal of eclat.

Meek had not abstained from the alcohol kettle, but had offered it and partaken of it rather more freely than usual; so that when rendezvous was broken up, the St. Louis Company gone to the Popo Agie, and the American Company going to Wind River, he found that his wife, a Nez Perce who had succeeded Umentucken in his affections, had taken offence, or a fit of homesickness, which was synonymous, and departed with the party of Ematinger and the missionaries, intending to visit her people at Walla-Walla. This desertion wounded Meek's feelings; for he prided himself on his courtesy to the sex, and did not like to think that he had not behaved handsomely. All the more was he vexed with himself because his spouse had carried with her a pretty and sprightly baby-daughter, of whom the father was fond and proud, and who had been christened Helen Mar, after one of the heroines of Miss Porter's *Scottish Chiefs* --a book much admired in the mountains, as it has been elsewhere.

Therefore at the first camp of the American Company, Meek resolved to turn his back on the company, and go after the mother and daughter. Obtaining a fresh kettle of alcohol, to keep up his spirits, he left camp, returning toward the scene of the late rendezvous. But in the effort to keep up his spirits he had drunk too much alcohol, and the result was that on the next morning he found himself alone on the Wind River Mountain, with his horses and pack mules, and very sick indeed. Taking a little more alcohol to brace up his nerves, he started on again, passing around the mountain on to the Sweetwater; thence to the Sandy, and thence across a country without water for seventy-five miles, to Green River, where the camp of Ematinger was overtaken.

The heat was excessive; and the absence of water made the journey across the arid plain between Sandy and Green Rivers one of great suffering to the traveler and his animals; and the more so as the frequent references to the alcohol kettle only increased the thirst-fever instead of allaying it. But Meek was not alone in suffering. About half way across the scorching plain he discovered a solitary woman's figure standing in the trail, and two riding horses near her, whose drooping heads expressed their dejection. On coming up with this strange group, Meek found the woman to be one of the missionary ladies, a Mrs. Smith, and that her husband was lying on the ground, dying, as the poor sufferer believed himself, for water.

Mrs. Smith made a weeping appeal to Meek for water for her dying husband; and truly the poor woman's situation was a pitiable one. Behind camp, with no protection from the perils of the desert and wilderness--only a terrible care instead--the necessity of trying to save her husband's life. As no water was to be had, alcohol was offered to the famishing man, who, however, could not be aroused from his stupor of wretchedness. Seeing that death really awaited the unlucky missionary unless something could be done to cause him to exert himself, Meek commenced at once, and with unction, to abuse the man for his unmanliness. His style, though not very refined, was certainly very vigorous.

"You're a d-d pretty fellow to be lying on the ground here, lolling your tongue out of your mouth, and trying to die. Die, if you want to, and to h--l with you; You'll never be missed. Here's your wife, who you are keeping standing here in the hot sun; why don't she die? She's got more pluck than a white-livered chap like you. But I'm not going to leave her waiting here for you to die.

The River of the West

---

There's a band of Indians behind on the trail, and I've been riding like hell to keep out of their way. If you want to stay here and be scalped, you can stay; Mrs. Smith is going with me. Come, madam," continued Meek, leading up her horse, "let me help you to mount, for we must get out of this cursed country as fast as possible."

Poor Mrs. Smith did not wish to leave her husband; nor did she relish the notion of staying to be scalped. Despair tugged at her heart-strings. She would have sunk to the ground in a passion of tears, but Meek was too much in earnest to permit precious time to be thus wasted. "Get on your horse," said he rather roughly. "You can't save your husband by staying here, crying. It is better that one should die than two; and he seems to be a worthless dog anyway. Let the Indians have him."

Almost lifting her upon the horse, Meek tore the distracted woman away from her husband, who had yet strength enough to gasp out an entreaty not to be left.

"You can follow us if you choose," said the apparently merciless trapper, "or you can stay where you are. Mrs. Smith can find plenty of better men than you. Come, madam!" and he gave the horse a stroke with his riding whip which started him into a rapid pace.

The unhappy wife, whose conscience reproached her for leaving her husband to die alone, looked back, and saw him raising his head to gaze after them. Her grief broke out afresh, and she would have gone back even then to remain with him: but Meek was firm, and again started up her horse. Before they were quite out of sight, Meek turned in his saddle, and beheld the dying man sitting up. "Hurrah," said he: "he's all right. He will overtake us in a little while: " and as he predicted, in little over an hour Smith came riding up, not more than half dead by this time. The party got into camp on Green River, about eleven o'clock that night, and Mrs. Smith having told the story of her adventures with the unknown trapper who had so nearly kidnaped her, the laugh and the cheer went round among the company. "That's Meek," said Ematinger, "you may rely on that. He's just the one to kidnap a woman in that way." When Mrs. Smith fully realized the service rendered, she was abundantly grateful, and profuse were the thanks which our trapper received, even from the much-abused husband, who was now thoroughly alive again. Meek failed to persuade his wife to return with him. She was homesick for her people, and would go to them. But instead of turning back, he kept on with Ematinger's camp as far as Fort Hall, which post was then in charge of Courtenay Walker.

While the camp was at Soda Springs, Meek observed the missionary ladies baking bread in a tin reflector before a fire. Bread was a luxury unknown to the mountainman,--and as a sudden recollection of his boyhood, and the days of bread-and-butter came over him, his mouth began to water. Almost against his will he continued to hang round the missionary camp, thinking about the bread. At length one of the Nez Perces, named James, whom the missionary had taught to sing, at their request struck up a hymn, which he sang in a very creditable manner. As a reward of his pious proficiency, one of the ladies gave James a biscuit. A bright thought struck our longing hero's brain. "Go back," said he to James, "and sing another hymn; and when the ladies give you another biscuit, bring it to me." And in this manner, he obtained a taste of the coveted luxury,

bread--of which, during nine years in the mountains he had not eaten.

At Fort Hall, Meek parted company with the missionaries, and with his wife and child. As the little black-eyed daughter took her departure in company with this new element in savage life--the missionary society--her father could have had no premonition of the fate to which the admixture of the savage and the religious elements was step by step consigning her.

After remaining a few days at the fort, Meek, who found some of his old comrades at this place, went trapping with them up the Portneuf, and soon made up a pack of one hundred and fifty beaver-skins. These, on returning to the fort, he delivered to Jo. Walker, one of the American Company's traders at that time, and took Walker's receipt for them. He then, with Mansfield and Wilkins, set out about the first of September for the Flathead country, where Wilkins had a wife. In their company was an old Flathead woman, who wished to return to her people, and took this opportunity.

The weather was still extremely warm. It had been a season of great drought, and the streams were nearly all entirely dried up. The first night out, the horses, eight in number, strayed off in search of water, and were lost. Now commenced a day of fearful sufferings. No water had been found since leaving the fort. The loss of the horses made it necessary for the company to separate to look for them; Mansfield and Wilkins going in one direction, Meek and the old Flathead woman in another. The little coolness and moisture which night had imparted to the atmosphere was quickly dissipated by the unchecked rays of the pitiless sun shining on a dry and barren plain, with not a vestige of verdure anywhere in sight. On and on went the old Flathead woman, keeping always in the advance, and on and on followed Meek, anxiously scanning the horizon for a chance sight of the horses. Higher and higher mounted the sun, the temperature increasing in intensity until the great plain palpitated with radiated heat, and the horizon flickered almost like a flame where the burning heavens met the burning earth. Meek had been drinking a good deal of rum at the fort, which circumstance did not lessen the terrible consuming thirst that was torturing him.

Noon came, and passed, arid still the heat and the suffering increased, the fever and craving of hunger being now added to that of thirst. On and on, through the whole of that long scorching afternoon, trotted the old Flathead woman in the peculiar traveling gait of the Indian and the mountaineer, Meek following at a little distance, and going mad, as he thought, for a little water. And mad he probably was, as famine sometimes makes its victims. When night at last closed in, he laid down to die, as the missionary Smith had done before. But he did not remember Smith: he only thought of water, and heard it running, and fancied the old woman was lapping it like a wolf. Then he rose to follow her and find it; it was always just ahead, and the woman was howling to him to show him the trail.

Thus the night passed, and in the cool of the early morning he experienced a little relief. He was really following his guide, who as on the day before was trotting on ahead. Then the thought possessed him to overtake and kill her, hoping from her shriveled body to obtain a morsel of food, and drop of moisture. But his strength was failing, and his guide so far ahead that he gave up the

thought as involving too great exertion, continuing to follow her in a helpless and hopeless kind of way.

At last! There was no mistake this time: he heard running water, and the old woman was lapping it like a wolf. With a shriek of joy he ran and fell on his face in the water, which was not more than one foot in depth, nor the stream more than fifteen feet wide. But it had a white pebbly bottom; and the water was clear, if not very cool. It was something to thank God for, which the none too religious trapper acknowledged by a fervent "Thank God!"

For a long time he lay in the water, swallowing it, and by thrusting his finger down his throat vomiting it up again, to prevent surfeit, his whole body taking in the welcome moisture at all its million pores. The fever abated, a feeling of health returned, and the late perishing man was restored to life and comparative happiness. The stream proved to be Godin's Fork, and here Meek and his faithful old guide rested until evening, in the shade of some willows, where their good fortune was completed by the appearance of Mansfield and Wilkins with the horses. The following morning the men found and killed a fat buffalo cow, whereby all their wants were supplied, and good feeling restored in the little camp.

From Godin's Fork they crossed over to Salmon River, and presently struck the Nez Perce trail which leads from that river over into the Beaver-head country, on the Beaver-head or Jefferson Fork of the Missouri, where there was a Flathead and Nez Perce village, on or about the present site of Virginia City, in Montana.

Not stopping long here, Meek and his companions went on to the Madison Fork with the Indian village, and to the shores of Missouri Lake, joining in the fall hunt for buffalo.

The River of the West

Chapter XIX

"Tell me all about a buffalo hunt," said the writer to Joe Meek, as we sat at a window overlooking the Columbia River, where it has a beautiful stretch of broad waters and curving wooded shores, and talking about mountain life, "tell me how you used to hunt buffalo."

"Waal, there is a good deal of sport in runnin' buffalo. When the camp discovered a band, then every man that wanted to run, made haste to catch his buffalo horse. We sometimes went out thirty or forty strong; sometimes two or three, and at other times a large party started on the hunt; the more the merrier. We always had great bantering about our horses, each man, according to his own account, having the best one.

"When we first start we ride slow, so as not to alarm the buffalo. The nearer we come to the band the greater our excitement. The horses seem to feel it too, and are worrying to be off. When we come so near that the band starts, then the word is given, our horses' mettle is up, and away we

go!

“Thar may be ten thousand in a band. Directly we crowd them so close that nothing can be seen but dust, nor anything heard but the roar of their trampling and bellowing. The hunter now keeps close on their heels to escape being blinded by the dust, which does not rise as high as a man on horseback, for thirty yards behind the animals. As soon as we are close enough the firing begins, and the band is on the run; and a herd of buffalo can run about as fast as a good race-horse. How they do thunder along! They give us a pretty sharp race. Take care! Down goes a rider, and away goes his horse with the band. Do you think we stopped to look after the fallen man? Not we. We rather thought that war fun, and if he got killed, why, ‘ he war unlucky, that war all. Plenty more men: couldn’t bother about him.’

“Thar’s a fat cow ahead. I force my way through the band to come up with her. The buffalo crowd around so that I have to put my foot on them, now on one side, now the other, to keep them off my horse. It is lively work, I can tell you. A man has to look sharp not to be run down by the band pressing him on; buffalo and horse at the top of their speed.

“Look out; thar’s a ravine ahead, as you can see by the plunge which the band makes. Hold up! or somebody goes to the d--l now. If the band is large it fills the ravine full to the brim, and the hind-most of the herd pass over on top of the foremost. It requires horsemanship not to be carried over without our own consent; but then we mountain-men are all good horsemen. Over the ravine we go; but we do it our own way.

“We keep up the chase for about four miles, selecting our game as we run, and killing a number of fat cows to each man; some more and some less. When our horses are tired we slacken up, and turn back. We meet the camp keepers with pack-horses. They soon butcher, pack up the meat, and we all return to camp, whar we laugh at each other’s mishaps, and eat fat meat: and this constitutes the glory of mountain life.”

“But you were going to tell me about the buffalo hunt at Missouri Lake?”

“Thar isn’t much to tell. It war pretty much like other buffalo hunts. Thar war a lot of us trappers happened to be at a Nez Perce and Flathead village in the fall of ‘38, when they war agoin’ to kill winter meat; and as their hunt lay in the direction we war going, we joined in. The old Nez Perce chief, Kow-e-so-te had command of the village, and we trappers had to obey him, too.

“We started off slow; nobody war allowed to go ahead of camp. In this manner we caused the buffalo to move on before us, but not to be alarmed. We war eight or ten days traveling from the Beaver-head to Missouri Lake, and by the time we got thar, the whole plain around the lake war crowded with buffalo, and it war a splendid sight!

“In the morning the old chief harangued the men of his village, and ordered us all to get ready for the surround. About nine o’clock every man war mounted, and we began to move.

The River of the West

---

“That war a sight to make a man’s blood warm! A thousand men, all trained hunters, on horse-back, carrying their guns, and with their horses painted in the height of Indians’ fashion. We advanced until within about half a mile of the herd; then the chief ordered us to deploy to the right and left, until the wings of the column extended a long way, and advance again.

“By this time the buffalo war all moving, and we had come to within a hundred yards of them. Kow-e-so-te then gave us the word, and away we went, pell-mell. Heavens, what a charge! What a rushing and roaring--men shooting, buffalo bellowing and trampling until the earth shook under them!

“It war the work of half an hour to slay two thousand or may be three thousand animals. When the work was over, we took a view of the field. Here and there and everywhere, laid the slain buffalo. Occasionally a horse with a broken leg war seen; or a man with a broken arm; or maybe he had fared worse, and had a broken head.

“Now came out the women of the village to help us butcher and pack up the meat. It war a big job; but we war not long about it. By night the camp war full of meat, and everybody merry. Bridger’s camp, which war passing that way, traded with the village for fifteen hundred buffalo tongues--the tongue being reckoned a choice part of the animal. And that’s the way we helped the Nez Perces hunt buffalo.”

“But when you were hunting for your own subsistence in camp, you sometimes went out in small parties?”

“Oh yes, it war the same thing on a smaller scale. One time Kit Carson and myself, and a little Frenchman, named Marteau, went to run buffalo on Powder River. When we came in sight of the band it war agreed that Kit and the Frenchman should do the running, and I should stay with the pack animals. The weather war very cold and I didn’t like my part of the duty much.

“The Frenchman’s horse couldn’t run; so I lent him mine. Kit rode his own; not a good buffalo horse either. In running, my horse fell with the Frenchman, and nearly killed him. Kit, who couldn’t make his horse catch, jumped off, and caught mine, and tried it again. This time he came up with the band, and killed four fat cows.

“When I came up with the pack-animals, I asked Kit how he came by my horse. He explained, and wanted to know if I had seen anything of Marteau: said my horse had fallen with him, and he thought killed him. ‘You go over the other side of yon hill, and see,’ said Kit.

“What’ll I do with him if he is dead?” said I.

“Can’t you pack him to camp?”

“Pack h--l” said I; “ I should rather pack a load of meat. “

“Waal,” said Kit, “ I’ll butcher, if you’ll go over and see, anyhow.”

“So I went over, and found the dead man leaning his head on his hand, and groaning; for he war pretty bad hurt. I got him on his horse, though, after a while, and took him back to whar Kit war at work. We soon finished the butchering job, and started back to camp with our wounded Frenchman, and three loads of fat meat.”

“You were not very compassionate toward each other, in the mountains?”

“That war not our business. We had no time for such things. Besides, live men war what we wanted; dead ones war of no account.”

The River of the West

Chapter XX

1838. From Missouri Lake, Meek started alone for the Gallatin Fork of the Missouri, trapping in a mountain basin called Gardiner’s Hole. Beaver were plenty here, but it was getting late in the season, and the weather was cold in the mountains. On his return, in another basin called the Burnt Hole, he found a buffalo skull; and knowing that Bridger’s camp would soon pass that way, wrote on it the number of beaver he had taken, and also his intention to go to Fort Hall to sell them.

In a few days the camp passing found the skull, which grinned its threat at the angry Booshways, as the chuckling trapper had calculated that it would. To prevent its execution runners were sent after him, who, however, failed to find him, and nothing was known of the supposed renegade for some time. But as Bridger passed through Pierre’s Hole, on his way to Green river to winter, he was surprised at Meek’s appearance in camp. He was soon invited to the lodge of the Booshways, and called to account for his supposed apostacy.

Meek, for a time, would neither deny nor confess, but put on his free trapper airs, and laughed in the face of the Booshways. Bridger, who half suspected some trick, took the matter lightly, but Dripps was very much annoyed, and made some threats, at which Meek only laughed the more. Finally the certificate from their own trader, Jo. Walker, was produced, the new pack of furs surrendered, and Dripps’ wrath turned into smiles of approval.

Here again Meek parted company with the main camp, and went on an expedition with seven other trappers, under John Larison, to the Salmon River: but found the cold very severe on this journey, and the grass scarce and poor, so that the company lost most of their horses.

On arriving at the Nez Perce village in the Forks of the Salmon, Meek found the old chief Kow-e-so-te full of the story of the missionaries and their religion, and anxious to hear preaching. Re-

ports were continually arriving by the Indians, of the wonderful things which were being taught by Mr. and Mrs. Spalding at Lapwai, on the Clearwater, and at Waiilatpu, on the Walla-Walla River. It was now nearly two years since these missions had been founded, and the number of converts among the Nez Perces and Flatheads was already considerable.

Here was an opening for a theological student, such as Joe Meek was! After some little assumption of modesty Meek intimated that he thought himself capable of giving instruction on religious subjects; and being pressed by the chief, finally consented to preach to Kow-e-so-te's people. Taking care first to hold a private council with his associates, and binding them not to betray him, Meek preached his first sermon that evening, going regularly through with the ordinary services of a "meeting."

These services were repeated whenever the Indians seemed to desire it, until Christmas. Then, the village being about to start upon a hunt, the preacher took occasion to intimate to the chief that a wife would be an agreeable present. To this, however, Kow-e-so-te demurred, saying that Spalding's religion did not permit men to have two wives: that the Nez Perces had many of them given up their wives on this account; and that therefore, since Meek already had one wife among the Nez Perces, he could not have another without being false to the religion he professed.

To this perfectly clear argument Meek replied, that among white men, if a man's wife left him without his consent, as his had done, he could procure a divorce, and take another wife. Besides, he could tell him how the Bible related many stories of its best men having several wives. But Kow-e-so-te was not easily convinced. He could not see how, if the Bible approved of polygamy, Spalding should insist on the Indians putting away all but one of their wives. "However," says Meek, "after about two weeks' explanation of the doings of Solomon and David, I succeeded in getting the chief to give me a young girl, whom I called Virginia;--my present wife, and the mother of seven children."

After accompanying the Indians on their hunt to the Beaver-head country, where they found plenty of buffalo, Meek remained with the Nez Perce village until about the first of March, when he again intimated to the chief that it was the custom of white men to pay their preachers. Accordingly the people were notified, and the winter's salary began to arrive. It amounted altogether to thirteen horses, and many packs of beaver, beside sheep-skins and buffalo-ropes; so that he "considered that with his young wife, he had made a pretty good winter's work of it."

In March he set out trapping again, in company with one of his comrades named Allen, a man to whom he was much attached. They traveled along up and down the Salmon, to Godin's River, Henry's Fork of the Snake, to Pierre's Fork, and Lewis' Fork, and the Muddy, and finally set their traps on a little stream that runs out of the pass which leads to Pierre's Hole.

Leaving their camp one morning to take up their traps they were discovered and attacked by a party of Blackfeet just as they came near the trapping ground. The only refuge at hand was a thicket of willows on the opposite side of the creek, and towards this the trappers directed their

flight. Meek, who was in advance, succeeded in gaining the thicket without being seen; but Allen stumbled and fell in crossing the stream, and wet his gun. He quickly recovered his footing and crossed over; but the Blackfeet had seen him enter the thicket, and came up to within a short distance, yet not approaching too near the place where they knew he was concealed. Unfortunately Allen, in his anxiety to be ready for defense, commenced snapping caps on his gun to dry it. The quick ears of the savages caught the sound, and understood the meaning of it. Knowing him to be defenceless, they plunged into the thicket after him, shooting him almost immediately and dragging him out still breathing to a small prairie about two rods away.

And now commenced a scene which Meek was compelled to witness, and which he declares nearly made him insane through sympathy, fear, horror, and suspense as to his own fate. Those devils incarnate deliberately cut up their still palpitating victim into a hundred pieces, each taking a piece; accompanying the horrible and inhuman butchery with every conceivable gesture of contempt for the victim, and of hellish delight in their own acts.

Meek, who was only concealed by the small patch of willows, and a pit in the sand hastily scooped out with his knife until it was deep enough to lie in, was in a state of the most fearful excitement. All day long he had to endure the horrors of his position. Every moment seemed an hour, every hour a day, until when night came, and the Indians left the place, he was in a high state of fever.

About nine o'clock that night he ventured to creep to the edge of the little prairie, where he lay and listened a long time, without hearing anything but the squirrels running over the dry leaves; but which he constantly feared was the stealthy approach of the enemy. At last, however, he summoned courage to crawl out on to the open ground, and gradually to work his way to a wooded bluff not far distant. The next day he found two of his horses, and with these set out alone for Green River, where the American Company was to rendezvous. After twenty-six days of solitary and cautious travel he reached the appointed place in safety, having suffered fearfully from the recollection of the tragic scene he had witnessed in the death of his friend, and also from solitude and want of food.

The rendezvous of this year was at Bonneville's old fort on Green River, and was the last one held in the mountains by the American Fur Company. Beaver was growing scarce, and competition was strong. On the disbanding of the company, some went to Santa Fe, some to California, others to the Lower Columbia, and a few remained in the mountains trapping, and selling their furs to the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Hall. As to the leaders, some of them continued for a few years longer to trade with the Indians, and others returned to the States, to lose their fortunes more easily far than they made them.

Of the men who remained in the mountains trapping, that year, Meek was one. Leaving his wife at Fort Hall, he set out in company with a Shawnee, named Big Jim, to take beaver on Salt River, a tributary of the Snake. The two trappers had each his riding and his pack horse, and at night generally picketed them all; but one night Big Jim allowed one of his to remain loose to graze. This horse, after eating for some hours, came back and laid down behind the other horses, and every

The River of the West

---

now and then raised up his head; which slight movement at length aroused Big Jim's attention, and his suspicions also.

"My friend," said he in a whisper to Meek, "Indian steal our horses."

"Jump up and shoot," was the brief answer.

Jim shot, and ran out to see the result. Directly he came back saying: "My friend, I shoot my horse; break him neck;" and Big Jim became disconsolate over what his white comrade considered a very good joke.

The hunt was short and not very remunerative in furs. Meek soon returned to Fort Hall; and when he did so, found his new wife had left that post in company with a party under Newell, to go to Fort Crockett, on Green River,--Newell's wife being a sister of Virginia's,--on learning which he started on again alone, to join that party. On Bear River, he fell in with a portion of that Quixotic band, under Farnham, which was looking for paradise and perfection, something on the Fourier plan, somewhere in this western wilderness. They had already made the discovery in crossing the continent, that perfect disinterestedness was lacking among themselves; and that the nearer they got to their western paradise the farther off it seemed in their own minds.

Continuing his journey alone, soon after parting from Farnham, he lost the hammer of his gun, which accident deprived him of the means of subsisting himself, and he had no dried meat, nor provisions of any kind. The weather, too, was very cold, increasing the necessity for food to support animal heat. However, the deprivation of food was one of the accidents to which mountain-men were constantly liable, and one from which he had often suffered severely; therefore he pushed on, without feeling any unusual alarm, and had arrived within fifteen miles of the fort before he yielded to the feeling of exhaustion, and laid down beside the trail to rest. Whether he would ever have finished the journey alone he could not tell; but fortunately for him, he was discovered by Jo. Walker, and Gordon, another acquaintance, who chanced to pass that way toward the fort.

Meek answered their hail, and inquired if they had anything to eat. Walker replied in the affirmative, and getting down from his horse, produced some dried buffalo meat which he gave to the famishing trapper. But seeing the ravenous manner in which he began to eat, Walker inquired how long it had been since he had eaten anything.

"Five days since I had a bite."

"Then, my man, you can't have any more just now," said Walker, seizing the meat in alarm lest Meek should kill himself.

"It was hard to see that meat packed away again," says Meek in relating his sufferings, "I told Walker that if my gun had a hammer I'd shoot and eat him. But he talked very kindly, and helped

me on my horse, and we all went on to the Fort.”

At Fort Crockett were Newell and his party, the remainder of Farnham's party, a trading party under St. Clair, who owned the fort, Kit Carson, and a number of Meek's former associates, including Craig and Wilkins. Most of these men, Othello-like, had lost their occupation since the disbanding of the American Fur Company, and were much at a loss concerning the future. It was agreed between Newell and Meek to take what beaver they had to Fort Hall, to trade for goods, and return to Fort Crockett, where they would commence business on their own account with the Indians.

Accordingly they set out, with one other man belonging to Farnham's former adherents. They traveled to Henry's Fork, to Black Fork, where Fort Bridger now is, to Bear River, to Soda Springs, and finally to Fort Hall, suffering much from cold, and finding very little to eat by the way. At Fort Hall, which was still in charge of Courtenay Walker, Meek and Newell remained a week, when, having purchased their goods and horses to pack them, they once more set out on the long, cold journey to Fort Crockett. They had fifteen horses to take care of and only one assistant, a Snake Indian called Al. The return proved an arduous and difficult undertaking. The cold was very severe; they had not been able to lay in a sufficient stock of provisions at Fort Hall, and game there was none, on the route. By the time they arrived at Ham's Fork the only atom of food they had left was a small piece of bacon which they had been carefully saving to eat with any poor meat they might chance to find.

The next morning after camping on Ham's Fork was stormy and cold, the snow filling the air; yet Snake Al, with a promptitude by no means characteristic of him, rose early and went out to look after the horses.

“By that same token,” said Meek to Newell, “Al has eaten the bacon.” And so it proved, on investigation. Al's uneasy conscience having acted as a goad to stir him up to begin his duties in season. On finding his conjecture confirmed, Meek declared his intention, should no game be found before next day night, of killing and eating Al, to get back the stolen bacon. But Providence interfered to save Al's bacon. On the following afternoon the little party fell in with another still smaller but better supplied party of travelers, comprising a Frenchman and his wife. These had plenty of fat antelope meat, which they freely parted with to the needy ones, whom also they accompanied to Fort Crockett.

It was now Christmas; and the festivities which took place at the Fort were attended with a good deal of rum drinking, in which Meek, according to his custom, joined, and as a considerable portion of their stock in trade consisted of this article, it may fairly be presumed that the home consumption of these two “lone traders” amounted to the larger half of what they had with so much trouble transported from Fort Hall. In fact, “times were bad enough” among the men so suddenly thrown upon their own resources among the mountains, at a time when that little creature, which had made mountain life tolerable, or possible, was fast being exterminated.

The River of the West

---

To make matters more serious, some of the worst of the now unemployed trappers had taken to a life of thieving and mischief which made enemies of the friendly Indians, and was likely to prevent the better disposed from enjoying security among any of the tribes. A party of these renegades, under a man named Thompson, went over to Snake River to steal horses from the Nez Percés. Not succeeding in this, they robbed the Snake Indians of about forty animals, and ran them off to the Uintee, the Indians following and complaining to the whites at Fort Crockett that their people had been robbed by white trappers, and demanding restitution.

According to Indian law, when one of a tribe offends, the whole tribe is responsible. Therefore if whites stole their horses they might take vengeance on any whites they met, unless the property was restored. In compliance with this well understood requisition of Indian law, a party was made up at Fort Crockett to go and retake the horses, and restore them to their rightful owners. This party consisted of Meek, Craig, Newell, Carson, and twenty-five others, under the command of Jo Walker.

The horses were found on an island in Green River, the robbers having domiciled themselves in an old fort at the mouth of the Uintee. In order to avoid having a fight with the renegades, whose white blood the trappers were not anxious to spill, Walker made an effort to get the horses off the island undiscovered. But while horses and men were crossing the river on the ice, the ice sinking with them until the water was knee-deep, the robbers discovered the escape of their booty, and charging on the trappers tried to recover the horses. In this effort they were not successful; while Walker made a masterly flank movement and getting in Thompson's rear, ran the horses into the fort, where he stationed his men, and succeeded in keeping the robbers on the outside. Thompson then commenced giving the horses away to a village of Utes in the neighborhood of the fort, on condition that they should assist in retaking them. On his side, Walker threatened the Utes with dire vengeance if they dared interfere. The Utes who had a wholesome fear not only of the trappers, but of their foes the Snakes, declined to enter into the quarrel. After a day of strategy, and of threats alternated with arguments, strengthened by a warlike display, the trappers marched out of the fort before the faces of the discomfitted thieves, taking their booty with them, which was duly restored to the Snakes on their return to Fort Crockett, and peace secured once more with that people.

Still times continued bad. The men not knowing what else to do, went out in small parties in all directions seeking adventures, which generally were not far to find. On one of these excursions Meek went with a party down the canyon of Green River, on the ice. For nearly a hundred miles they traveled down this awful canyon without finding but one place where they could have come out; and left it at last at the mouth of the Uintee.

This passed the time until March. Then the company of Newell and Meek was joined by Antoine Rubideau, who had brought goods from Sante Fe to trade with the Indians. Setting out in company, they traded along up Green River to the mouth of Ham's fork, and camped. The snow was still deep in the mountains, and the trappers found great sport in running antelope. On one occasion a large herd, numbering several hundreds, were run on to the ice, on Green River, where they were crowded into an air hole, and large numbers slaughtered only for the cruel sport which they

afforded.

But killing antelope needlessly was not by any means the worst of amusements practiced in Rubideau's camp. That foolish trader occupied himself so often and so long in playing Hand, (an Indian game,) that before he parted with his new associates he had gambled away his goods, his horses, and even his wife; so that he returned to Santa Fe much poorer than nothing--since he was in debt.

On the departure of Rubideau, Meek went to Fort Hall, and remained in that neighborhood, trapping and trading for the Hudson's Bay Company, until about the last of June, when he started for the old rendezvous places of the American Companies, hoping to find some divisions of them at least, on the familiar camping ground. But his journey was in vain. Neither on Green River or Wind River, where for ten years he had been accustomed to meet the leaders and their men, his old comrades in danger, did he find a wandering brigade even. The glory of the American companies was departed, and he found himself solitary among his long familiar haunts.

With many melancholy reflections, the man of twenty eight years of age recalled how, a mere boy, he had fallen half unawares into the kind of life he had ever since led amongst the mountains, with only other men equally the victims of circumstance, and the degraded savages, for his companions. The best that could be made of it, such life had been and must be constantly deteriorating to the minds and souls of himself and his associates. Away from all laws, and refined habits of living; away from the society of religious, modest, and accomplished women; always surrounded by savage scenes, and forced to cultivate a taste for barbarous things--what had this life made of him ? what was he to do with himself in the future ?

Sick of trapping and hunting, with brief intervals of carousing, he felt himself to be. And then, even if he were not, the trade was no longer profitable enough to support him. What could he do ? where could he go ? He remembered his talk with Mrs. Whitman, that fair, tall, courteous, and dignified lady who had stirred in him longings to return to the civilized life of his native state. But he felt unfit for the society of such as she. Would he ever, could he ever attain to it now ? He had promised her he might go over into Oregon and settle down. But could he settle down ? Should he not starve at trying to do what other men, mechanics and farmers, do? And as to learning, he had none of it; there was no hope then of "living by his wits," as some men did--missionaries and artists and school teachers, some of whom he had met at the rendezvous. Heigho! to be check-mated in life at twenty-eight, that would never do.

At Fort Hall, on his return, he met two more missionaries and their wives going to Oregon, but these four did not affect him pleasantly; he had no mind to go with them. Instead, he set out on what proved to be his last trapping expedition, with a Frenchman, named Mattileau.

They visited the old trapping grounds on Pierre's Fork, Lewis' Lake, Jackson's River, Jackson's Hole; Lewis River and Salt River: but beaver were scarce; and it was with a feeling of relief that, on returning by way of Bear River, Meek heard from a Frenchman whom he met there, that he was

wanted at Fort Hall, by his friend Newell, who had something to propose to him.

The River of the West

Chapter XXI

1840. When Meek arrived at Fort Hall, where Newell was awaiting him, he found that the latter had there the two wagons which Dr. Whitman had left at the points on the journey where further transportation by their means had been pronounced impossible. The Doctor's idea of finding a passable wagon-road over the lava plains and the heavily timbered mountains lying between Fort Hall and the Columbia River, seemed to Newell not so wild a one as it was generally pronounced to be in the mountains. At all events, he was prepared to undertake the Journey. The wagons were put in traveling order, and horses and mules purchased for the expedition.

"Come," said Newell to Meek, "we are done with this life in the mountains--done with wading in beaver-dams, and freezing or starving alternately--done with Indian trading and Indian fighting. The fur trade is dead in the Rocky Mountains, and it is no place for us now, if ever it was. We are young yet, and have life before us. We cannot waste it here; we cannot or will not return to the States. Let us go down to the Wallamet and take farms. There is already quite a settlement there made by the Methodist Mission and the Hudson's Bay Company's retired servants.

"I have had some talk with the Americans who have gone down there, and the talk is that the country is going to be settled up by our people, and that the Hudson's Bay Company are not going to rule this country much longer. What do you say, Meek? Shall we turn American settlers?"

"I'll go where you do, Newell. What suits you suits me."

"I thought you'd say so, and that's why I sent for you, Meek. In my way of thinking, a white man is a little better than a Canadian Frenchman. I'll be d - - d if I'll hang 'round a post of the Hudson's Bay Company. So you'll go?"

"I reckon I will! What have you got for me to do? I haven't got anything to begin with but a wife and baby!"

"Well, you can drive one of the wagons, and take your family and traps along. Nicholas will drive the other, and I'll play leader, and look after the train. Craig will go also, so we shall be quite a party, with what strays we shall be sure to pick up."

Thus it was settled. Thus Oregon began to receive her first real emigrants, who were neither fur-traders nor missionaries, but true frontiersmen--border-men. The training which the mountain-men had received in the service of the fur companies admirably fitted them to be, what afterwards they became, a valuable and indispensable element in the society of that country in whose peculiar history they played an important part. But we must not anticipate their acts before we have witnessed their gradual transformation from lawless rangers of the wilderness, to law-abiding and even law-making and law-executing citizens of an isolated territory.

Letters and Journal of Mrs. Narcissa Prentiss Whitman, 1836

Platte River just above the Forks June 3rd 1836

Dear Sister Harriet and Brother Edward.

Friday eve 6 o'clock. We have just encamped for the night near the bluffs over against the river the bottoms are a soft wet plain and we were obliged to leave the river yesterday morning for the bluffs. The face of the country yesterday afternoon and today has been rolling sand bluffs mostly barren quite unlike what our eyes have been satiated with for weeks past No timber nearer than the Platte, and the water tonight is very bad, got from a small ravine we have usually had good water previous to this. Our fuel for cooking since we left timber (no timber except on rivers) has been dried Buffalo dung. We now find plenty of it and it answers a very good purpose smaller to the kind of coal used in Pennsylvania (I suppose now Harriet will make up a face at this, but if she was here she would be glad to have her supper cooked at any rate, in this scarce timber country) The present time in our journey is a very important one the hunter brought us buffalo meat Yesterday for the first that has been seen today to have been taken. We have some for supper tonight. Husband is cooking it no one of our company professes the art but himself. I expect it will be very good. stop I have so much to say to you children, that I do not know in what part of my story to begin, (I have very little time to write) I will first tell you what our company consists off we are ten in number five missionaries, three Indian boys and two young men employed to assist in packing animals.

Sab 4 Good Morn H & E I wrote last night till supper, after that it was so dark I could not see. I told you how many bipeds there was in our company last night now for the quadrupeds - 14 horses and six mules and fifteen head of Cattle. we milk four cows we started with seventeen but we have killed one calf and the Fur Company being out of provision have taken one of our cows for beaf it is usually pinching times with the company before they reach the buffalo, we have had a plenty because we made ample provision -- at Liberty we purchased a barrell of flour and baked enough to last us with killing a calf or two untill we reach the buffalo. The fur Com is large this year, we are really a moving village, nearly four hundred animals with ours mostly mules, and seventy men the fur Com have seven wagons and one cart, drawn by six mules each, heavily loaded, the cart drawn by two mules carries a lame man one of the proprietors of the com. we have two waggons in our com. Mr & Mrs S and Husband and myself ride on one Mr Gray and the baggage in the other our Indian boys drive the cows and Dulin the horses. Young Miles leads our forward horses-four in each team. Now E if you wish to see the camp in motion look away ahead and see first the pilot and the Captain Fitzpatrick just before him - next the pack animals, all mules loaded with great packs soon after you will see the waggons and in the rear our company we all cover quite a space. The pack mules always string along one after the other just like Indians. There are several gentlemen in the Com who are going over the Mountains for pleasure, Capt Stewart - Mr Lee speaks of him in his journal he went over when he did and returned he is an Englishman - Mr. Celan. We had a few of them to tea with us last Monday eve, Capts Fitzpatrick Stewart Maj Harris and Celam. I wish I could discribe to you how we live so that you can realize it. Our manner of living is far prefferable to any in the States I never was so contented and happy before. Neither have I enjoyed such health for years. In the Morn as soon as the day breaks the first that we bear is the word --- arise, arise, then the mules set up such noise as you never heard which puts the whole camp in motion. We encamp in a large ring, baggage and men tents and waggons

---

on the outside and all the animals except the cows are fastened to pickets within the circle. This arrangement is to accommodate the guard who stand regularly every night and day also when we are not in motion, to protect our animals from the approach of Indians who would steal them. as I said the mules noise brings every man on his feet to loose them and turn them out to feed. Now H & E you must think it very hard to have to get up so early after sleeping on the soft ground, when you find it hard work to open your eyes at seven o'clock just think of me every morn at the word arise we all spring. While the horses are feeding we get our breakfast in a hurry and eat it by this time the word catch up--catch up rings throu' the camp for moveing we are ready to start usually at six travel till eleven encamp rest and feed start again about two travel untill six or before if we come to a good tavern, then encamp for the night.

Since we have been in the prairie we have done all our cooking when we left Liberty we expected to take bread to last us part: of the way but could not get enough to carry us any distance we found it awkward work to bake at first out of doors but we have become so accustomed to now we do it very easy. Tell Mother I am a very good housekeeper in the prairie I wish she could just take a peap at us while we are sitting at our meals, our table is the ground our table cloth is an India rubber cloth and when it rains as a cloak our dishes are made of tin, tin basen for tea cups, iron spoons and plates each of us and several pans for milk and to put our meat in when we wish to set it on the table --- each one carries his own knife in his scabbard and it is always ready for use when the table things spread after makeing our forks of sticks and helping our selves to Chairs we gather arround the table Husband always provides my seat and in a way that you, would laugh to see us it is the fashion of all this country to imitate the Turks Mr Dunbar and Allis have supped with us and they do the same. We take a blanket and lay down by the table and those whose joints will let them follow the fashion, others take out some of the baggage (I suppose you know that there is no [stone] in this country not 2 stone have I seen of any size on the prairie) for my part I fix myself as gracefully as I can some times on a blanket some times on a box just as it is convenient let me assure you of this we relish our food none the less for siting on the ground while eating. We have tea and a plenty of milk which is a luxury in this country our milk has assisted us very much in making our bread since we have been journeying while the fur company has felt the want of food our milk has been of great service to us, but was considerable work for us to supply ten persons with bread three times a day Now we done using it now what little flour we have left we shall reserve for thickening our broth which is excelent I never saw anything like buffalo meat to satisfy hunger we do not want anything else with it I have eat three meals of it and it realishes well Supper and breakfast we eat in our tent we do not pitch it at noon, have worship immediately after sup & breakfast

Noon. The face of the country today has been like that of yesterday. We are now about 30 miles above the forks and leaving the bluffs for the river. We have seen wonders this forenoon herds of buffalo have hove in sight one, a bull, crossed our trail and ran upon the bluffs near the rear of the camp We took the trouble to chase him so as to have a near view Sister Spaulding and myself got out of the waggon and ran up on the bluff to see him. Husband was quite willing to ratify our curiosity seeing it was the first. Several have been killed this forenoon. The company keep a man out all the time to hunt for the camps.

Edward if I write much more in this way I do not know as you can read it without great difficulty. I could tell you much more but we are all ready to move again so fare well for the present I wish

you were all here with us going to the dear Indians I have become very much attached to Richard Tak ah too ah tis, the one you saw at our weding he call me mother I love to teach him to take care of him and hear them talk. there is five Nez Perces in the company and when they are together they chatter freely. Samuel Temone the oldest one has just come in to the camp with the skin and a some of the meat of a buffalo which he has killed himself he started this forenoon of his own accord it is what they like dearly to hunt buffalo so long as we have him with us we shall be supplied with meat

I am now writing backwards. Monday Morn I begun to say something here that I could not finish Now the man from the mountains has come who will take this to the office. I have commenced one to Bro & Sister Hull which I should like to send this time if I could finish it We have just met him and we have stoped our waggons to write a little Give my love to all

I have not told you half I want to we are all in health this morn and makeing rappid progress in our journey by the fourth of July our Cap intends to be at the place where Mr Parker and husband parted last fall. We are a month earlier passing here than they were last spring husband has begun a letter to pa and ma and since he has cut his finger so that it troubles him to write to the rest this is done in a hurry I no not know as you can read it Tell mother if I had looked the world over I could not have found one more careful and better quallified to transport a female such a distance. farewell all

NARCISSA PRENTISS

Husband says stop.

---

Platte River, South Side, six days above the Fort Laramie Fork, near the foot of the Rocky Mountains, June 27, 1836.

Dear Brother and Sister Whitman: - We were in perplexity when we left Liberty, but it has been overruled for good. I wrote Mother Loomis from the Otoe Agency. We were in still greater perplexity there, while crossing our baggage. Husband became so completely exhausted with swimming the river on Thursday, May 9th, that it was with difficulty he made the shore the last time. Mr. Spaulding was sick, our two hired men were good for nothing; we could not obtain much assistance from the Otoes, for they were away from the village; we had but one canoe, made of skins, and that partly eaten by the dogs the night before. We got everything over by Friday night. We did not get ready to start until Saturday afternoon. By this time the company had four and a half days the advance of us. It seemed scarcely possible for us to overtake them, we having two more difficult streams to pass, before they would pass the Pawnee villages. Beyond there we dare not venture more than one day. We were at a stand; but with the advise of brethren Merrill and Dunbar after a concert of prayer on the subject, we decided to start and go as far as it would be prudent for us. Brother Dunbar kindly consented to become our pilot, until we could get another. He started with us and came as far as the Elkhorn river, then the man Major Dougherty sent for, for us, came Up, and Mr. Dunbar returned. We had passed the river on Monday morning and taken down the rope, when our pilot and his Indian came up. It was with difficulty we crossed him and returned Mr. Dunbar. While on the opposite shore, just ready to leave us, he called to us to receive his parting advice, with a word of caution which will never be forgotten. Our visit with him and Brother Merrill's family was indeed refreshing to our thirsty spirits - kindred spirits rejoicing in the self denials and labors of missionary life.

---

The next day, in the morning, we met a large party of Pawnees going to the fort to receive their annuities. They seemed to be very much surprised and pleased to see white females, many of them had never seen any before. They are a noble Indian-large, athletic forms, dignified countenances, bespeaking an immortal existence within. When we had said what we wished to them, we hurried on, and arrived at the Elkhorn in time to cross all our effects.

Here I must tell you how much good Richard, John and Samuel did us. They do the most of driving the cattle and loose horses. Occasionally husband and myself would ride with them as company and encouragement. They came up to the river before us, and seeing a skin canoe on the opposite side, they stripped themselves, wound their shirts around their heads, and swam over and back again with the canoe by the time we came up. We stretched a rope across the river and pulled the goods over in the canoe without much difficulty.

Monday and Tuesday we made hard drives - Tuesday especially. We attempted to reach the Loup Fork that night, and a part of us succeeded. Those in the wagons drove there by 11 o'clock, but it was too much for the cattle. There was no water or feed short of this. We rode with Richard and John until 9 o'clock, and were all very much fatigued. Richard proposed to us to go on and he and John would stay on the prairie with the cattle, and drive them in in the morning. We did not like to leave them, and so we concluded to stay. Husband had a cup tied to his saddle, in which he milked what we wanted to drink; this was our supper. Our saddle blankets, with our India rubber cloaks, were our beds. Having offered up our thanksgiving for the blessings of the day and seeking protection for the night, we committed ourselves to rest. We awoke in the morning much refreshed and rode into camp before breakfast-five miles. The Fur Company was on the opposite side of the river, which we forded, and, without unloading our wagon much, were ready to move again about noon. We wished to be with the company when they passed the Pawnee village. This obliged us to make a day's drive to the camp in half a day, which was too bad for our horses. We did not reach them until 1 o'clock at night.

The next day we passed all their villages. We, especially, were visited by them both at noon and at night; we ladies were such a curiosity to them. They would come and stand around our tent, peep in, and grin in their astonishment to see such looking objects.

Since we came up with the camp, I rode in the wagons most of the way to the Black Hills. It is astonishing how well we get along with our wagons where there are no roads. I think I may say it is easier traveling here than on any turnpike in the States.

On the way to the buffalo country we had to bake bread for ten persons. It was difficult at first, as we did not understand working out-doors; but we became accustomed to it, so that it became quite easy. June found us ready to receive our first taste of buffalo. Since that time I have had but little to do with cooking. Not one in our number relishes buffalo meat as well as my husband and I. He has a different way for cooking every piece of meat. I believe Mother Loomis would give up to him if she were here. We have had no bread since. We have meat and tea in the morn, and tea and meat at noon. All our variety consists of the different ways of cooking. I relish it well and it agrees with me. My health is excellent. So long as I have buffalo meat I do not wish anything else. Sister Spaulding is affected by it considerably - has been quite sick.

We feel that the Lord has blessed us beyond our most sanguine expectations. We wish our friends at borne to unite with us in thanksgiving and praise for His great mercies to us. We are a month earlier this year than husband was last, and the company wish to be at Rendezvous by the 4th of

July. We have just crossed the river and shall leave here to-morrow morning.

Now, Sister Julia, between you and me, I just want to tell you how much trouble I have had with Marcus, two or three weeks past. He was under the impression that we had too much baggage, and could not think of anything so easy to be dispensed with as his own wearing apparel - those shirts the ladies made him just before he left home, his black suit and overcoat - these were the condemned articles. Sell them he must, as soon as he gets to the fort. But first I would not believe him in earnest. All the reasons I could bring were of no avail - he still said he must get rid of them. I told him to sell all of mine, too; I could do without them better than he could. Indeed, I did not wish to dress unless he could. I finally said that I would write and get Sister Julia to plead for me, for I knew you would not like to have him sell them, better than I should. This was enough; he knew it would not do to act contrary to her wishes, and said no more about it.

July 15th When I wrote this letter I expected an opportunity to send it immediately but we did not meet the party we expected and have had no opportunity since. We are now West of the Rocky Mountains at the encampment Messrs. McLeod & McCay expecting to leave here on Monday for Walla Walla. It seems a special favour of Providence that that company has come to Rendezvous this season for we . . . to have gone with the Indians a difficult rou [te and] slow that we should have been late at Walla Walla and [not have had] the time we wanted for making preparations for winter. Hus [band has] written the particulars concerning our arrival, meeting the Indians, & c-to Brother Henry.

One particular I will mention which he did not. As soon as I alighted from my horse I was met by a company of matron women. One after another shaking hands and saluting me with a most hearty kiss. This was unexpected and affected me very much. They gave Sister Spaulding the same salutation. After we had been seated awhile in the midst of the gazing throng, one of the chiefs whom we had seen before came with his wife and very politely introduced her to us. They say they all like us very much and thank God that they have seen us, and that we have come to live with them.

It was truly pleasing to see the meeting of Richard and John with their friends. Richard was affected to tears, his father is not here but several of his . . . and Brothers. When they met each took off his hat and shook hands as respectful as in civilized life. Richard does not give up the idea of seeing again Rushville. I must close for want of room. Please give my love to Deborah and Harriet and all other friends. I hope you will all write us now as husband has given directions how to send. Remember me affectionately Sister Alice. Tell her to write us immediately. We want to hear from you all.

Your affectionate sister, NARCISSA WHITMAN.

---

Rendezvous Beyond the R. Mountains July 15th, 1836.

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

Last week I filled a letter for father and mother stating particulars up to that time. I said but little about the future. It was undetermined what we should do. We soon heard however that there was a Company from the Columbia river near at hand. Monday the 11th they came within ten miles of us & encamped. On Tuesday Mr. McLeod one of the principle traders in the N West Fur Co. came into our camp & gave us very satisfactory intelligence concerning Mr. Parker. Also a letter from him advising us to go to Walla Walla in company with them in preference to the Indians.

---

Mr. Parker went with them alone last year after he left here. They took a very difficult route on account of finding Buffalo & traveled very slow so that it made his arrival at Vancouver quite late. He came on his way to meet us at Rendezvous to Cooscoosky river little this side of Wallah Wallah with a party of Nez Perces early in May. When there they would not consent to come by Bear river but wished to make the same difficult route they did last fall for the same reason to make meat.

Mr. Parker thought that he would have to encounter considerable snow it was so early & having heard that our Company would be at Rendezvous by the first of July feared he should not arrive in season to go over with them accepted an offer of the H.B. Co. to take passage on board of one of their ships to England. He returned immediately to Wallah Wallah. But before he leaves intended to make another exploring tour up what is called Clarks river between 200 and 300 miles in company with some men of the H.B. Co. He will not leave for home until September quite probable we shall see him before he leaves For Mr. McLeod's Co. will have to make returns before the ship sails. Mr. Parker will have to visit England for the ship will not enter any of our eastern ports. We highly approve of this plan although we are very much disappointed in not seeing him here It will be much easier for him after having endured the fatigue of a tour over the country After considering the subject we concluded to follow the advice of Mr. Parker & put ourselves under the protection of N.W.Co. Mr. McLeod kindly invited us to return to his camp as soon as practicable Accordingly yesterday we took leave of the Eastern Company who had shown us every kindness possible and removed together with the Nez Perces and Flat Head to his camp On our arrival Mr McL came to meet us led us to his tent & gave us a supper which consisted of steak (Antelope) broiled ham biscuit & butter tea and loaf sugar brot from Wallah Wallah This we relished very much as we had not seen anything of the bread kind since the last of May Especially sister Spalding who has found it quite difficult to eat meat some time

We learn from Mr. McLeod much that is interesting about our future home

Mr. Parker has been very much pleased with his situation at Vancouver during the winter he has been as comfortably situated as if he had been at home.

He told us we should not want for supplies at Wallah Wallah. The Company have a very large [farm] at Vancouver which produced three thousands bushels of wheat last year and other crops in proportion.

They have apples pears peaches & grapes in abundance & every kind of vegetables necessary for comfort which we find in our own beloved land. When we arrive at Wallah Wallah we are assured of a treat of ripe watermelons & mushmelons. They have a farm at Caldwell [Colville] also which is on the north branch of the Columbia five days ride above Wallah Wallah where they raise an abundance grain and have a flouring mill. From this post Wallah Wallah is supplied with flour by water. Vancouver is 130 miles from the ocean & Walla Walla 250 above Vancouver.

We are recommended to a situation on the Coos Coosky river at it junction with the Lewis about three days ride from Walla Walla.

At Fort Hall about fifteen days ride from here they have green peas This establishment belongs to a man formally from Boston.

It will take us 35 days at least to go from here to Walla Walla if not longer

We have succeeded in bringing our waggon so far but with considerable difficulty for the last few days. Whether we shall succeed in getting it through is doubtful. We intend to try and go with it

as far as we can. We want to take it on for the benefit it will be to us when we get there While passing the Mountains we came over some verry frightful looking places & the Hill were so steep that it was difficult riding them. The steepest point of Mount pleasant in Prattsburgh would be verry easy decending compared with some of these rugged places. And in crossing rivers we find it not difficult to ford them The Green river is the deepest we have forded on horseback. Mr. McLeod say the Messrs Lees are doing verry well one of them has been verry much out of health & was advised to take a journey to Oahu He went there last October and is expected to return this fall

Vessels sail from Oahu to Vancouver frequently during the year & we shall have an opportunity of hearing from home through that channel. Letters sent to Mr. Green Boston post paid directed to Columbia river near Walla Walla by the way Oahu & Vancouver We should get them regularly & oftener than any other way, There will be no security in sending them over the Mountains by the fur Company possibly we might get them but not oftener than once a year. We have not known what directions to give about our letters Now our friends can write us when they please and send to Boston & in the mean time we shall get them as easy as the sandwich islande missionaries do theirs. For ships come from Oahu to Vancouver every two months during the year. My Dearest friends if you want to do us good write to us often You cannot know the comfort it will give us unless placed in like circumstances.

We have improved every opportunity of writing and sending notwithstanding the excessive fatigue of our journey.

July 17th Remember me affectionately to all the Brethren and Sisters in Christ with whom I have laboured in the Gospell long to hear of your faith & labours of love for His sake who has died for us - Is there no more in that church yea in my own dear family that can come & do these benighted souls good Oh that you were all here Father Mother & all.

This is a cause worth living for - Wherever we go we find oppertunities of doing good-If we had packed one or two animals with bibles & testaments we should have had abundant oppertunity of disposing of them to the traders & trappers of the mountain who would have received them greatfully Many have come to us for tracts & bibles which we could not supply. We have given away all we have to spare. When they return from hunting they have leisure for reflection and reading if they have the means, which might result in the salvation of their souls. A missionary might do good in this field one who would be willing to come & live as they do

Oh how many missionaries are wanted who wilt go into the highways & hedges & compel sinners to come in to the feast

Before this reaches you we shall probably be at Walls Walla. We shall write by Mr Parker but it will be some time before it reaches you. We expect to leave here tomorrow for Walla Walla Brother Judson Husband said when he received your letter that he should write you, but he has not found time yet His hands are full continually The responsibility of every movement rests upon him & besides he has many calls for medical attention He unites with me in sending love to yourself & wife Father Mother Brothers Sisters & friends trust you will not forget to pray for us for we feel that we need your prayers now as ever Sisters Jane Clarissa & Harriet want to know what you are doing How does the Moral Reform cause get along at home the Anti Slavery &c Keep the numbers of the Advocate & send to Boston as you do your letters . . .

Your sister NARCISSA

---

July 19th

Dear Mother. I have filled this sheet for sending once but since I closed I have heard so much about the West that I thought it best to write another and enclose [with] this. When we get to Walla Walla we shall feel as though we were in England. Most of men of the North West Company are from that country. They are expecting a Clergyman & his Lady from E. to settle at Vancouver. She refused to come by water around Cape Horn but chose to come to NY then to Montreal and join an expedition of the Company to cross the Mountains much to the north of this then down Clarks river to Walla Walla. There is one lady at Vancouver who came from E. in the last voyage of the Com ship.

Mother may rest easy about our wanting for the necessary of life. We have not suffered yet & judging from the hospitality of the Com. we are now with have no reason to think we shall. I am verry well and in great spirits. Pray for your absent daughter

NARCISSA.

Written upon the waggon.

Whether we ever see each others faces again in this world again is uncertain. I often think of my Dear Parents but do not regret coming.

As it will be a long time before you will hear from me again after we leave this place I bid you all My Beloved Parents, Brothers Sisters & Friends an affectionate farewell.

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D.

Originally published in German, in 1840

This edition based on the English translation published in 1912, by the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri

---

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY \*

CHAPTER TWO - THE DEPARTURE-THE CARAVAN \*

CHAPTER THREE - JOURNEY TO THE KANZAS RIVER - THE KANZAS INDIANS \*

CHAPTER FOUR - JOURNEY FROM THE KANZAS TO THE PLATTE - THE ELK - THE ANTELOPE \*

CHAPTER FIVE - JOURNEY ALONG THE PLATTE TO THE SOUTH FORK \*

CHAPTER SIX - THE BUFFALO \*

CHAPTER SEVEN - THE SIOUX - PASSAGE OF THE SOUTH FORK \*

CHAPTER EIGHT - JOURNEY UP THE NORTH FORK - THE PRAIRIE DOG - FORT LARAMIE \*

CHAPTER NINE - JOURNEY OVER THE BLACK HILLS - CROSSING THE NORTH FORK \*

CHAPTER TEN - JOURNEY ALONG THE SWEET WATERS - THE WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS \*

CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE YEARLY RENDEZVOUS \*

CHAPTER TWELVE - THE CROSSING OF THE MOUNTAINS -THE GRIZZLY BEAR \*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - THE BEER SPRING - JOURNEY TO FORT HALL \*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - THE COLUMBIA RIVER - THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY \*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN - BEGINNING THE RETURN JOURNEY - THE BEAVER \*

CHAPTER SIXTEEN - THE JOURNEY FROM BEER SPRING TO FORT CROCKET \*

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN - JOURNEY FROM FORT CROCKET TO THE SOUTH FORK \*

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN - RETURN TO THE BOUNDARY OF MISSOURI \*

CHAPTER NINETEEN - THE INDIANS \*

POSTSCRIPT. \*

---

CHAPTER ONE - A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY

THE whole territory of the United States of North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean is divisible into two great sections, the eastern and the western. The eastern, which we may also call the cultivated part of the United States, is bounded on the east by the Atlantic ocean, on the south by the Gulf of Mexico, on the north by the British Possessions in North America, and on the west by a line coinciding with civilization's ceaseless westward progress, stretching out from year to year, a line which I would call the boundary of civilization of the United States. This line now about corresponds with the western boundary of the territories, Wisconsin and Iowa, and of the states, Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana. The other, the western section of the United States,

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

extends from this boundary of civilization to the coasts of the Pacific. On the south, merely to give general indications, it is separated from Texas by the Sabine River, and from Mexico by a line running along the south bank of the Arkansas in its upper course to its source in latitude 42° , and with that parallel westward to the Pacific ocean. Toward the north this section bounds on the British Possessions. But the northern boundary has been fixed by the treaties of 1818 with England, only so far as concerns the part east of the Rocky Mountains, as running on the 49th parallel from the Lake of the Woods westwardly to the Rockies. Beyond these mountains to the Pacific Ocean the United States claim to the Russian Possessions in latitude 54° 10' north by reason of discoveries and ancient treaties. By provisional arrangement, England shares with us the possession of this region, leaving the dispute unsettled. The western portion of the United States, which alone concerns us here, is divided into territories: on this side of the Rockies we have the Northwest Territory, Missouri Territory, Arkansas Territory; while all beyond to the Pacific Ocean is covered by the general name of Oregon Territory. Only along the border of this western section, which in circumference and area is equal to the eastern section, if not greater than it, has civilization struck any roots. That is to say, along the boundary of civilization live various peaceful Indian tribes that have in part accommodated themselves to agriculture, and on the other side, on the Columbia River, near the Pacific Ocean, several, as yet quite unimportant settlements have been made by Americans and Englishmen. The area between these extremes as yet no plow has touched; no homely roof of the settler invites the traveler to rest. The roving Indian alone here puts up his portable tent, and moves daily on with his faithful companion, the buffalo, who, like himself, retreats before the "pale faces." The character of the country favors the hunter's life of these savage bands, and interposes great obstacles to the advance of the settler. For this enormous stretch of country is really only one huge prairie, rolling on in wave-like hills and broad plateaus, plentifully traversed, it is true, by brooks and rivers, but so scantily provided with wood, that even the mere traveler cannot always find the necessary firewood, but must take dried buffalo dung as an inadequate substitute. From north to south this prairie is crossed by the lofty mountain chain which traverses all western America in the direction just mentioned, bearing various names in the different countries it crosses, but known in North America under the general name of Rocky Mountains, and in South America as the Andes. Out of these mountains, whose peaks are covered with everlasting ice and snow, issue the streams which traverse this wilderness, and send their waters to either ocean, the Atlantic and the Pacific. So, in the northeast of this region arises the Missouri with its tributaries, the Yellowstone and the Platte; in the southeast the Green River (Colorado of the West), which empties into the Gulf of California. Toward the west the Columbia has its source, discharging itself into the Pacific Ocean, affording incalculable advantages for commerce. This short geographical survey makes evident the importance of the region in commercial aspects. If we further consider that the country abounds in beavers, and that trading with the Indians is a source of great profit, it need not surprise us that in spite of all obstacles which ignorance of the country, hostile Indians, difficulties of transportation, hunger and thirst oppose to a journey into this region, an enterprising people, such as are the Americans, have turned their attention from an early date in this direction, and have known how to conquer all difficulties with persevering courage.

The first trips of discovery to this Far West are so closely connected with the history of the North American fur trade, that it becomes necessary to refer to it briefly. Even in former centuries, when

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

the eastern coast of North America first began to be peopled, and when the country beyond the Alleghenies abounded in Indians and buffalo, fur trading and bartering with the Indians proved a veritable gold mine. The Canadians, at that time under French rule, especially distinguished themselves in this kind of commerce. The Canadian fur traders boldly pushed into and penetrated a wilderness into which no European had theretofore set foot. Their buoyant French temperament enabled them to make themselves popular even among wild Indian tribes; and so they became pioneers of civilization. Among the trading companies organized for this purpose two are especially prominent, their history running down to our day, namely: the Hudson's Bay Company, chartered by Charles II in 1670, whose headquarters were then in New York, and the North West Company, established at Montreal in 1783. These two rival companies carried on their trade chiefly on the Great Lakes, and later descended from there into the Mississippi Valley. The country further west was as yet unknown. The first fragmentary information about this country we find in the travels of Jonathan Carver of Connecticut, who, about the year 1763, was among the Indians on the Upper Mississippi. He mentions a River Oregon or the River of the West (Columbia). This information he probably received through Indians. The word "Oregon" seems to date from this, its first mention. The first traveler who reached the Pacific Coast by going westward was Sir Alexander Mackenzie, a former British officer. He crossed the Rocky Mountains for the first time in 1793, at 52° 20' 48" north latitude, and reached the Pacific Ocean in what is now Caledonia, between latitude 52° and 55° , and consequently north of the Columbia River. Soon thereafter the North West Company erected, on the Pacific Coast, in the region mentioned, two trading posts. In the year 1803 the Government of the United States, recognizing the importance of these western possessions, sent an expedition under Lewis and Clark across the Rocky Mountains to explore this country, and to take possession thereof in the name of the United States. Lewis and Clark ascended the Missouri to its sources; then, battling with many hardships, crossed the Rocky Mountains; reached on the other side the sources of the Columbia, and finally-following that river-the Pacific. With the change in political affairs in North America, the two chief trading companies, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, had passed into the hands of the English, and steadily maintained their preponderance. But formidable opposition against them arose in 1810 at New York in the Pacific Fur Company, whose financial and intellectual head was John Jacob Astor, a German by birth. A detailed account of this undertaking, so tremendous for a private citizen, is found in Washington Irving's classic, "Astoria." For present purposes it is enough to know that the undertaking consisted of two contemporaneous expeditions, one by sea and one by land. The latter was entrusted to Wilson P. Hunt of New Jersey (now postmaster at St. Louis) . Hunt ascended the Missouri to the village of the Arickaras, and thence continued overland in southwesterly direction. He reached the Rockies at the northwest corner of the Wind River Mountains, crossed the principal range, found on the further side the southern main source of the Columbia, the Snake River, and after incredible sufferings, to which several of the party succumbed, reached the Columbia and the Pacific Ocean. At the same time a ship had been sent around Cape Horn to the Columbia River. It had arrived there, and a trading fort (Astoria) had been built near the mouth of the Columbia River. So far, the undertaking was crowned with success. But several mishaps, especially the faithlessness of one agent, wrecked everything. In 1812 the fort was treacherously sold by the agent to the North West Company, and shortly after, the English, then at war with the United States, took military possession. In 1818 the fort was formally surrendered to

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

the United States, but the North West Company remained in the actual occupation of the country. Its only rival now was the Hudson's Bay Company. For a time these two companies maintained a bloody feud, till finally, in 1821, they amalgamated into one trading company under the valuable franchises of the Hudson's Bay Company. The new company has now drawn to itself all the trade on the Columbia and has actually expelled the United States from this part of its territory.

Such results were not encouraging for the people of the United States; but their spirit of enterprise soon showed itself afresh. In 1820 a new expedition, under Major Long, was sent by the Government of the United States up the Missouri River to explore the country. Private undertakings also were soon organized. So in 1822, General Ashley of Missouri and Mr. Henry established a trading post on the Yellowstone, and made trips through the country on this side of the Rocky Mountains to the Green River. Beaver trapping promised most profit. A peculiar class of men, the trappers, who traversed the country in all directions, were developed by this business. Out of this school arose leaders for subsequent enterprises, such as Smith, Fitzpatrick, Bridger, Robert Campbell, William Sublette, etc., names well known to every mountaineer.

In 1830 two companies organized in St. Louis became active: the American Fur Company, which had been organized as far back as 1809 but had become dormant, and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, founded by Sublette and Campbell. In 1832, two new rivals entered the field, viz.:

Captain Bonneville, on behalf of a company in New York, and Captain Wyeth, from Boston. These four parties crossed the country on either side of the Rocky Mountains in every direction, save that the all-powerful Hudson's Bay Company successfully excluded them from the Columbia River. Washington Irving has faithfully described in his "Rocky Mountains" the manner in which competition was carried on by these jealous rivals. Captains Wyeth and Bonneville disappeared from the scene after a few years, because their companies had sustained losses in the enterprise. The American and the Rocky Mountain Companies first came to a friendly agreement, whereunder each occupied a certain district for trading and trapping, and afterwards they amalgamated into a single company, which was carried on under the firm name of Chouteau, Pratte & Co. Several small companies were formed still later, which erected trading forts on the Missouri, on the North and South Platte, on the Arkansas and on the Green River; but none of them attained any marked preponderance.

While the knowledge of the country in general was much enlarged by the trading trips above described, much was also done in a scientific direction by men who had joined such expeditions on account of devotion to the natural sciences. So the well known naturalist, Nuttall, and the botanist, Bradbury, accompanied Hunt's Expedition to the point where it left the Missouri. In Long's Expedition there was Say, who has rendered such services to zoology. The Prince of Neuwied, too, so favorably known for his zeal for the natural sciences, undertook about this time a scientific trip up the Missouri. Finally, Captain Wyeth was accompanied by Nuttall and Townshend. Though these men accomplished much, often at great sacrifices, very much more remains to be done; for the country is rich in treasures for every branch of the natural sciences, and the difficulties and dangers of the journey alone have as yet prevented their exploitation.

---

CHAPTER TWO - THE DEPARTURE-THE CARAVAN

SOME human beings, like birds of passage, are ill at ease when kept for a considerable length of time under the same sky. They consider all Nature one great family; the whole world their home.

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

I will not decide whether or not I belong to this class; but I do know that from time to time an irresistible fever for wandering seizes me, and that I find no better remedy against the moods and crochets of hum-drum daily life than change of place and of air.

Chained for several years to an exacting medical practice, in which I had tasted to the full the sorrows and pleasures of the active physician, I felt the need of mental and physical recreation. An excursion to the cultivated part of the United States, through the greater part of which I had already traveled, suited neither my means nor my inclinations. The far West, with its wilderness and its aboriginals, was far more to my liking. Apart from the selfish purpose of personal enjoyment, I had another in view; perhaps I might contribute something, in proportion to my limited knowledge in natural sciences and my narrow means, toward a better understanding of this region, where as yet our information in many respects partakes of the fabulous.

About the middle of April, 1839, I left St. Louis with this purpose. I went up the Missouri on the steamboat St. Peters to Chouteau's Landing. Our trip lasted six days, because the water was at a very low stage; and offered nothing of special interest. The border village, West Port, is six miles distant from Chouteau's Landing. There I intended to await the departure of this year's annual caravan. The village has perhaps thirty or forty houses, and is only a mile from the western border of the State of Missouri. It is the usual rendezvous for travelers to the Rocky Mountains, as is Independence, twelve miles distant, for those journeying to Santa Fe. I bought a horse and a mule, the former to ride, the latter for my baggage; and made other preparations necessary for my journey. On May 4th the different parties who were to join the expedition met for their first night camp at Sapling Grove, about eight miles from West Port. The way thitherward goes through the land of the Shawnees, peaceable Indians who have settled here. Some of them own valuable farms. Their manner of life shows a close approach to that of the white man. Some of them speak English. My first day's journey began under evil auspices, for I had not yet learned to pack my mule. The usual way of doing it is this: The baggage is divided into two equal parts, each part firmly bound up, and hung by loops on either side of the yoke-shaped pack saddle. The whole is further fastened by the so-called "lash rope," of stout buffalo leather, which is first wound around the barrel of the animal, and then in diamond shaped turns as firmly as possible around the pack. My baggage weighed 150 to 200 pounds, a quite ordinary load for a mule; but I had not divided the burden properly, so that I had to repack repeatedly on the road. It was well toward evening when I reached the camp, where the others already had arrived. Our caravan was small. It consisted of only twenty-seven persons. Nine of them were in the service of the Fur Company of St. Louis (Chouteau, Pratte & Co.), and were to bring the merchandise to the yearly rendezvous on the Green River. Their leader was Mr. Harris, a mountaineer without special education, but with five sound senses, that he well knew how to use. All the rest joined the expedition as individuals. Among them were three missionaries, two of them accompanied by their wives, whom a Christian zeal for converting the heathen urged to the Columbia. Some others spoke of a permanent settlement on the Columbia; again, others intended to go to California, and so on. Almost all, however, were actuated by some commercial motive. The majority of the party were Americans; the rest consisted of French Canadians, a few Germans, and a Dane. The Fur Company transported its goods on two-wheeled carts, of which there were four, each drawn by two mules, and loaded with 800 to 900 pounds. The rest put their packs on mules or horses, of which there were fifty to sixty in the caravan. Our first camp, Sapling Grove, was in a little hickory wood, with fresh spring water. Our animals we

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

turned loose to graze in the vicinity. To prevent them from straying far, either the two fore feet, or the forefoot and hindfoot of one side are bound together with so-called "hobbles." In order that they may easily be caught, they drag a long rope of buffalo leather (trail-rope). At night stakes (pickets) are driven into the earth at some distance from each other, and the animals are fastened to them by ropes. After we had attended to our animals, and had eaten our supper, we sprawled around a fire, and whiled away the evening with chatting and smoking; then wrapped ourselves in our woolen blankets,-the only bed one takes with one-and slept for the first time under our little tents, of which we had seven. At dawn, the leader rouses the camp with an inharmonious: "Get up! Get up! Get up!" Every one rises. The first care is for the animals. They are loosed from their pickets and allowed an hour for grazing. Meanwhile we prepare our breakfast, strike our tents, and prepare for the start. The animals are driven in again, packed and saddled. We move off in corpore. We proceed at a moderate pace, in front the leader with his carts, behind him in line long drawn out the mingled riders and pack animals. In the early days of the journey we are apt to lead the pack animals by rope; later on, we leave them free, and drive them before us. At first packing causes novices much trouble on the way. Here the towering pack leans to one side; there it topples under the animal's belly. At one time the beast stands stock still with its swaying load; at another it rushes madly off, kicking out till it is free of its burden. But pauseless, like an army over its fallen, the train moves on. With bottled-up wrath the older men, with raging and swearing the younger ones, gather up their belongings, load the beasts afresh, and trot after the column. Toward noon a rest of an hour or two is made, if a suitable camp can be found, the chief requisites being fresh water, good grass, and sufficient wood. We unload the beasts to let them graze, and prepare a mid-day meal. Then we start off again, and march on till toward sunset. We set up the tents, prepare our meal, lie around the fire, and then, wrapped in our woolen blankets, commit ourselves to our fate till the next morning. In this way twenty to twenty-five miles are covered daily. The only food the animals get is grass. For ourselves, we take with us for the first week some provisions, such as ham, ship-biscuit, tea and coffee. Afterwards, we depend on hunting. Such are the daily doings of the caravan.

---

CHAPTER THREE - JOURNEY TO THE KANZAS RIVER - THE KANZAS INDIANS

IN the first days our journey was straight west. The first day we marched over the broad Santa Fe road, beaten out by the caravans. Then leaving it to our left we took a narrow wagon road, established by former journeys to the Rocky Mountains, but often so indistinctly traced, that our leader at times lost it, and simply followed the general direction. Our way led through prairie with many undulating hills of good soil. The region is watered with a few brooks and rivulets, along whose banks there is usually a narrow strip of deciduous timber. On the prairie itself there is no wood. Several times we had to content ourselves with muddy standing water; but usually we found pleasant, even romantic camping places on clear brooks. We saw no large game as yet. A few prairie chicken was all that we shot. However, a weather-worn buffalo skull and the antlers of an elk, which we found, reminded us of the time when these denizens of the wilderness had dwelt here.

On the fifth day after our start we reached the Kansas, or, as it is commonly called, Ka River, not deep, but rather broad and swift. Its course is from west to east, and it empties close by the border of the State of Missouri into the river of the same name. We were about a hundred miles above its

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

mouth. To cross us over a canoe had been sent up the river from its mouth, but it had not as yet arrived. So we camped in the meanwhile on an elevation near the river. Some miles from us, on the same side of the river, was a village of the Kas, or Kansas Indians; across the river, somewhat farther off, were two villages of the same tribe. Near the first village there is a trading house, a smithy, and a Methodist mission. The Kas formerly lived forty miles to the west; but in 1826, in pursuance of treaties, the United States Government assigned them the district which they now inhabit; and has set apart for them for twenty years the annual sum of \$3,500.00, which is given them principally in kind. The whole tribe is said to number at present 1,500 souls. The attempt to civilize the Kas and lead them to agriculture as yet has had little success. The Government has sent them some mechanics, has established a sort of model farm, and furnishes them yearly a number of cattle and swine. But they usually burn the fencing of the farm in winter and slaughter the animals. In other respects, they live, like the rest of the Indians, from hunting; and as their country, though containing some deer, and elk, has no buffalo, they go twice a year some hundreds of miles away on a buffalo hunt, and bring the dried meat back with them. A tendency toward civilization, on the other hand, is indicated by their permanent residence in villages. While all wild Indian tribes know no other shelter than their lodges, the Kas have already built villages of permanent houses, in which they spend a great part of the year. They thus form a transition from the agricultural Indians dwelling along the border of the United States and the untamed hunting hordes of the Far West.

We had scarcely arrived at the Ka River when the Indians came to our camp; but only a few, for most of them were off on a buffalo hunt. Their clothing was such as is customary with Indians. Some of them had only an apron around the loins; but most also wrapped themselves in a buffalo robe or woolen blanket. Some in addition wore leather leggings. Almost all wore moccasins. The chief garment of the women is a leather overshirt reaching from breast to knee, in addition to which they usually wear drawers and mocassins, with a woolen blanket, preferably of gaudy colors. Like all Indians, they are fond of painting themselves with vermilion. A red ring around the eyes is considered particularly becoming. To the dressing of the hair the men give more care than the women. While the latter simply part their raven black straight hair, push it back of the ears, and let it hang down behind, the men seek to train theirs in all possible ways. Sometimes they shave away all the hair save a long lock on top; again, they let it grow long, and plait it into a braid; sometimes they shave the hair on either side, and leave in the middle a helmet-shaped comb. The last named style seems especially in fashion with the Kas. Both sexes also adorn themselves with all possible ornaments of beads, coral, brassware, feathers, ribbons, gaudy rags, etc. When lacking ornaments, they often daub the head with clay. The Kas who came to our camp behaved very peaceably. They brought some hides, especially tanned deer hides, for sale, and bartered them for knives and other trifles. Some of them wanted money, and offered the hides for a dollar a piece. But they cared most for flour and bacon, for they were starved out. At night, we set guards for the first time, for although the Ka Indians have committed of late no hostilities against the whites, they do not scruple to steal horses from them when they can do it unpunished. The night was divided into three watches. Two or three men were always on watch together. As the canoe had not arrived the next morning, I made a side trip to the nearest village. The village is on the right of the river, on an elevation from which one can enjoy a pleasant and wide view. From a distance it is not unlike a mass of great mole hills. In the village itself no living being was to be found. The

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

greater part of the inhabitants were hunting buffalo. The rest had gone to our camp. As the houses have neither lock nor bar, I could survey them, inside and out, at leisure. The whole village consists of fifty to sixty huts, built, all in one style, in four somewhat irregular rows. The structure is very simple. On a round, arched frame of poles and bark, earth is placed with grass or reeds; at the top, in the middle, an opening is left for light and smoke; in front, at the ground, a similar opening as an entrance; and the shanty is finished. At the open door there is usually a reed-covered passage, extending a few steps into the street. There are about twelve cut braces inside the house; the fireplace is under the opening in the roof; at the side are some bunks of plaited strips of wood. The whole is rather spacious.

The canoe arrived the same day. The wind had been adverse. The next morning we crossed the river. All our baggage was brought over in the canoe; the carts were driven over empty; the animals were driven or ridden through. Everything went smoothly but for the breaking of an axle that had to be mended. The Indians visited us again, and received some presents, especially tobacco, for which they were very eager. Without further interruption we continued our journey.

---

CHAPTER FOUR - JOURNEY FROM THE KANZAS TO THE PLATTE - THE ELK - THE ANTELOPE

WE turned from the Ka River on our left, and took a more northwesterly direction. We passed two more villages of the Kas, built in the same way, and deserted, as were the others. The weather heretofore had been very favorable, but from now on we had frequent thunderstorms, alternating with a keen north wind. Our baggage was often so soaked that we had to sleep in wet blankets, and get up in the morning as from a cold bath. Nevertheless, we all continued in health. The country through which we go is still the same rolling, treeless prairie, wearying to the beholder's eye. Now that we are penetrating deeper into the country, we observe more caution than hitherto. At evening we form our camp in a square; at night we tie our animals in its midst; and regularly mount guard. On May 14th we came to the Rush River; on the 19th to the Blue River. Both are rapid streamlets, uniting somewhat farther down as the Big Blue River, which empties into the Kansas. Game becomes more plentiful. At times we saw deer, and also some wolves. At Rush River one of our hunters (we have two hunters in our company who daily go out hunting) shot an elk cow. As this noble animal, which was formerly at home in the greater part of the United States, is known to the younger generation only by description, it may not be amiss to devote some words to it.

The elk (*Cervus Canadensis*) bears resemblance to the European deer. It attains the size of a mule or small horse. The antlers, borne only by the male, grow to a height of four or five feet, and often have twenty to thirty tines. The antlers are shed from February to August. The hair is bluish gray in the fall, dark gray during the winter, and reddish brown in spring and summer. The elk is very skittish and has a keen sense of smell; but is also very curious. He must see the object of his fears, and often runs directly toward the hunter whom he has only scented. But as soon as he sees him, he stares at him a moment; then, with antlers thrown back and head held high, he rushes away like an arrow. In August and September, the pairing season, there are fierce encounters between the bucks. It is then most inadvisable to approach an elk that is merely wounded; for he will defend himself to the bitter end with antler and hoof, and even assume the offensive. In May and June the cow brings forth one or two young. The elks live on both sides of the Rocky Mountains,

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

usually in herds of twenty or thirty, but also of hundreds, and even thousands. Their meat has in taste most resemblance to beef; but is inferior to buffalo meat.

On our way to the Blue River we came across another not less interesting inhabitant of the wilderness, the fleet antelope (*Antelope Americana*, Ord - Prong-horned Antelope, Sab.-wild goat.) This beautiful swift animal is of the size of our German domestic goat, but of more slender and elegant build. Its heavy, thick, smooth hair is yellowish-brown on neck, back and feet. On the flanks it shades to whitish. The belly and breast are entirely white. The hair at the back of the head is somewhat longer and blackish. The tail is short and white on its underside, as is the deer's. The bucks have roundish horns, turning backward and inward, with only one short tine. These horns are often a foot long. The females have shorter horns, and instead of the tine, several knobs. The fleetness of the antelope excels the speed of a race horse. They have excellent vision and keen scent, and are very skittish. With such characteristics it would seem almost impossible to get at them; but they have another quality, which commonly seals their fate - boundless curiosity. It is hard to stalk them. At first sight they run away; but if the hunter lies quietly down, elevating a hat, a bright colored cloth, or even an arm or leg, curiosity will bring them back. They approach, run away again, and repeat the performance till they come within range. For this reason hunters for antelope prefer red shirts. Loud colors stimulate their curiosity. Antelopes are fond of elevations from which they have a wide view. On the plains the Indians hunt them at times in a sort of round-up; or else drive them into a fencing made of bushes, wide at first but gradually contracting, till it leads to a swamp or some sort of enclosure, where they can easily be killed. Under all circumstances hunting antelope requires more than ordinary skill and care. Antelopes usually live together in small herds of from ten to thirty. On this side of the Rocky Mountains they are much more common than beyond them. The meat is rather tender, but lean and dry.

We marched two days along the Blue River without following its windings. We now repeatedly crossed plateaus. They can be compared with nothing more fittingly than with the sea. Round about, to the horizon, one sees nothing but grass and sky; no bush, no creek relieves the eye from the wearying prospect. Only an antelope at times flits by. Any other moving body causes suspicion rather than pleasure. On May 21st, we saw in the distance such suspicious figures. Our spy-glasses were put in requisition; but the objects were too far off for us definitely to decide whether they were elk, horses or mounted men. Some hours later the point was settled. They were five Delawares returning from beaver trapping on the Missouri. The Delawares are a tribe friendly to the whites. They live on the western border of the State of Missouri, and in part practice agriculture, but often make excursions into the country of their red brethren, and are there feared for their fearlessness and their superior armament with guns. These Delawares had shot an elk, which they shared with us, receiving some flour in return.

The next day we crossed the so-called "Pawnee trails," a broad road made by the Pawnees, a quite hostile Indian tribe, in whose vicinity we now are. Indian roads are usually recognizable by the marks of their tent poles, fastened at one end on either side of their pack horses, and trailing on the ground with the other. On either side of the Pawnee trails there were vestiges of a great summer encampment. For in the summer the Indians find it often too cumbersome to carry their tents of skins with them, and so make at every place where they camp so-called summer tents. For this the squaws cut tree branches and wands, put them into the ground in semi-circle, and cover this little natural tent with a blanket or a hide. Several hundred such tents were here in the

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

vicinity. At evening we camped for the last time near the Blue River. We had had a north wind all day long, but at evening the wind changed to the west, and a terrible storm arose. The gale upset all our tents, and the rain poured down in torrents. All we could oppose to the elements was stoic equanimity. We wrapped ourselves in our blankets till the storm passed, and then stretched out around a fire. The next morning was pleasant. We were still twenty-five miles from the Platte. The road thither again went over a plateau on which no water could be found; but the rain, which had yesterday so incommoded us, had left some puddles behind, which today refreshed us and our animals. In the afternoon we reached a chain of small hills, from which we enjoyed a view of the Platte. At evening we camped on that stream.

---

CHAPTER FIVE - JOURNEY ALONG THE PLATTE TO THE SOUTH FORK

THE Platte has its sources on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, and has two main branches (North and South Fork), which, on their union, flow in an easterly direction toward the Missouri. A short distance below the meeting point the river divides afresh, and forms a great long island. At this island we reached the Platte. The river, of which we saw but a small part, is not broad at this point, with sparse borders of cottonwood (*Populus Canadensis*). The river valley is a mile or two broad on either side, and bounded by small hills (bluffs). The river is shallow, but carries so much sand that one may sink in the quicksands. The very valley is covered with pure river sand. Vegetation seemed here not to have advanced as far as in the prairie; but even at this point can be found the buffalo grass (*Sessleria Dactyloides*), a very short, delicate grass, growing in isolated bunches, preferred by the buffalo to every other kind, and also much appreciated by our animals. It grows only in sandy soil. We ascended the right bank of the river for six days. On the second day a lot of Indians encamped opposite us across the river. We thought them Pawnees, and expected a nocturnal visit from them, as they are notorious horse thieves, but were spared the infliction, probably because they thought the river too dangerous, or else because we were too watchful. The next morning they had disappeared. We now saw game daily, especially antelope, of which our hunters shot one. Many water birds were also about. The birds we had seen hitherto consisted chiefly of prairie chicken, lark, snipe, and a small kind of starling that was continuously swarming around us, and was so tame that it would at times sit on our pack animals while on the march. Here we got sight chiefly of water birds, such as ducks, geese, cranes, pelicans, gulls, and some very large kinds of snipe. We saw daily more marks of buffalo. Especially we saw many buffalo skulls, whose horns are always carefully turned by the Indians toward the west. The Indians believe that they thereby secure good luck on the buffalo hunt, and call it "Medicine," with which they designate everything great or wonderful to which they attribute secret influences. Dried buffalo dung, which we now find quite frequently, we now use occasionally for fuel, when absolutely no wood can be found. It burns tolerably well, but makes rather a glowing than flaming fire, adequate for cooking, but small comfort in severe cold - and the weather seems to be no more favorable than formerly. We have penetrating cold and thunderstorms in alternation. On the fifth day we came to a burial place where two Americans are interred - one, while drunk, shot the other and then himself. The incident happened several years ago; a simple stake marks the sad spot. On the seventh day we reached the junction of the north and south arms of the Platte. The bluffs, like the wings of a stage, on either side, had now become more interesting. I climbed one of the highest points to enjoy the view. The sandy hills are cut by many gulches, and so irregularly

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

thrown together that in comparison to the prairie they may be even deemed romantic. Arriving at the top I found considerable strong "medicine." Thirty buffalo skulls, adorned with all kinds of gewgaws, lay before me in a magic circle, as cunningly arranged as "Caspar" in the "Freischuetz" could have done it. I felt no kind of call to break the charm, but took out my spy-glass to enjoy the view. Before me lay a great part of the river valley we had come over. I traced out the island along which we had passed, and the shallow, but broad and rapid, stream, whose northern and southern branches here unite at an acute angle. Opposite me were other bluffs; behind me the boundless prairie.

After I had enjoyed the fine sight to the full, I hurried back to my party. We now ascended the right bank of the South Fork, over which we were soon to cross. On the same day-it was the twenty-sixth of our journey-we saw the first herd of buffalo. The rejoicing was general. The voyager at sea cannot long more for land than the traveler in that region for the buffalo; for only in the land of the buffalo is there comfort and superfluity. Anxiously the days are counted till one may expect the first buffalo. Every sign is investigated by which one may gauge their vicinity. Weight is attached even to dreams. Our first enthusiasm brought ruin to the careless herd; for twelve of them were immediately shot, and of most of them the tongue only was taken. The juicy, nourishing buffalo meat we all found more palatable than the lean flesh of the antelope. The next morning we went up river only ten miles, and camped there, preparatory to crossing the South Fork. As special boats, covered with buffalo hides, are constructed for that purpose, two parties were forthwith sent out to hunt, to procure the requisite buffalo hides. I joined one of these parties. But before we go on the hunt, let us consider more closely the noble game about to be hunted.

---

CHAPTER SIX - THE BUFFALO

THE buffalo (Buffaloe, Bison, *Bos Americanus*) is of the size of an ordinary ox, though his ungainly shape and long shaggy hair make him seem larger. The hair is yellowish brown; on the head and at the extremities, blackish. The fore part of the body to back of the shoulder blades is covered with thick long tufts. On the forehead the hair is curled, and so thick that a bullet glances off. Two short, thick, black horns project from the tangle; below, half hidden by the tufts of hair, roll two black gleaming eyes. The face is curved somewhat convexly. The upper lip is very broad below. From the underlip to the knees hangs down a long terrible beard. The head is very large and heavy; the neck thick and strong. On the back rises a considerable hump, formed of the prolonged spinal processes, and the muscles and ligaments thereto attached. The prolongation of the spinal processes increases from the rear to the front. The front ones are often twenty to twenty-four inches long. They are commonly called hump ribs. The rear part of the body is covered with shorter hair, which is like satin in summer. The tail is short and bare, with a bunch of hair at its lower end. Differences in hair are quite rare; but it is claimed that at times white buffalo, or buffaloes with white spots have been seen. The cow differs from the bull in being of smaller size and in having shorter hair and weaker horns. The whole appearance of the buffalo is ungainly, and at first sight terrifying. His step is heavy; nevertheless he trots, gallops and runs to match a horse. His sense of smell is very keen. He scents man at a mile. It seems, too, that the smell of the white man alarms him more than that of the Indian. The pairing season of the buffalo lasts from the end of July to the beginning of September. At this time the bulls and cows form one herd. Later on, they separate. The cows graze together in separate more compact herds, while the bulls

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

are more scattered. In April, the cows bring forth their calves, which usually run with them for a year. As to numbers, buffalo herds vary greatly. One finds herds of fifty to a hundred head, but also of a thousand, and of several thousands. Often many herds graze side by side and cover the country to such an extent that they are estimated not by the number of herds, but only by the miles they occupy. It is a grand sight when one of these bands suddenly gets the wind of some enemy, and, with an old bull in the lead, runs off at a lumbering gallop. The first band throws itself on the second, carrying it along with it; this again on a third, and so on, till the whole herd, which was quietly grazing only a few moments before, rushes off in wild flight, seeming one great black mass in whirling clouds of dust. A fleeing band is irresistible. It blindly follows its leader; with him it hurls itself over precipices; it swims rivers after him; and even charges through the travelers' caravans, so that they must be shot in self defense, to keep them from the train. After some miles, if they are not pursued, they usually halt, and begin again to graze. As I said before, they prefer the short tender buffalo grass. It grows on loamy sandy soil, usually saturated with salts. Where a buffalo herd has grazed for some time the ground is absolutely bare; for what they do not eat is trampled with their ungainly feet. Their bellowing can often be heard for miles. It is deeper and more muffled than that of our cattle, and at a distance not unlike the grunting of a great herd of swine. To their watering places they form narrow paths, over which they leisurely move on, one behind the other. A buffalo region is crossed by such paths in every direction. Formerly the buffalo roamed over the greater part of the United States. Civilization has gradually driven them back. Their real home now is the immense prairie between the boundary of the States and the Rocky Mountains. In the mountains themselves, and beyond them, they are much rarer. But here, in spite of the fact that many thousands are yearly killed by whites and Indians, their numbers are still incalculable. Should it, however, ever come to the extermination of these animals, then the whole of this country must necessarily assume some other shape; for to the inhabitant here the buffalo is more important than is his camel to the Arab. It supplies his prime necessities: food, dwelling and clothing.

The hunt for buffalo is one of the grandest and most interesting of which I know. The hunting is done either afoot by stalking, or on horseback by running. In both cases one must seek to be on the windward, to get as near as possible. For stalking, a hilly country is most favorable; but it is possible to get within shooting distance on the plain, if one does not find it too troublesome to creep on hands and knees, often for a mile. Even if the buffaloes see the hunter at this unusual locomotion, they often let him get near enough to shoot, provided his motion is quiet and regular. At the first shot they usually run away; but at times, when they do not see the hunter, they simply become restless, and permit him several shots. A wounded buffalo attacks the hunter only when he approaches too close; but then he uses his horns as a terrible weapon. The best place to give a buffalo a deadly wound is behind the shoulder blades, where the thick coat of hair stops. Shots back of that through the body trouble him little. A bullet on the head either glances off from the thick hair and firm skull, or at best does not penetrate far. Rarely does a buffalo collapse at the first shot. Usually they drag themselves along and remain standing on their feet to the last breath. In this respect the bulls show greater vitality than the cows. If the wound is near the backbone, they often fall down on the spot; but recover after a while and escape, often with the loss of the tongue or of some other piece of flesh that has been already cut out of them. Much more interesting than stalking is the hunt on horseback. This requires a skillful rider and a quick,

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

well-trained horse. A good buffalo hunter prefers to ride without a saddle. He sticks one pistol in his belt, holds the other in his right hand, and starts off at top speed. He rushes into the midst of the fleeing herd, and for some minutes buffaloes and rider disappear in a thick cloud of dust. But suddenly he reappears at one side close behind a buffalo which he has picked for his prey and separated from the herd. The hunted animal exerts all its strength to escape its pursuer; but the emulous horse races with him, following all his turnings, almost without guidance by the bridle. Now he has overtaken him; he is racing close to his left side; but the buffalo turns sharply and the horse shoots past him. The race begins afresh. Again, the horse overtakes the buffalo; again they are running parallel, and the rider discharges his pistol point-blank in the buffalo's flank. He now gallops slowly after the exhausted animal, and, if necessary, gives him a second shot. Often the wounded animal turns upon the rider, who must then rely on the swiftness of his horse for safety. The cows are more agile than the bulls; swifter horses are therefore required in hunting them. The Indians usually hunt the buffalo on horseback in the way just described, with the difference that instead of firearms they commonly use bow and arrow. In full career they discharge their arrows with such accuracy and force that occasionally the arrow pierces the animal and wounds another one. When the Indians hunt buffalo in mass, as they do in winter for the hide, they use devices such as I have mentioned before with reference to hunting the antelope. Among other things, they sometimes drive them over steep cliffs, whereby whole herds are killed.

Buffalo meat tastes much better than beef. The meat of the cows is usually tenderer and fatter than that of the bulls, and particularly deserves the preference in summer, when the bulls are lean and unpalatable. From the slain buffalo only the best pieces are taken, namely, the tongue, the ribs, the humpribs, the meat on either side of the backbone, and the marrow bones, with at times also the liver and kidney. Buffalo tongues are celebrated; in dried condition they are sent by thousands to the States; but the ribs, especially the hump ribs of a fat cow, are much finer. They are usually roasted on the spit, while other parts are better suited for boiling. The thigh-bones, or so-called marrow-bones, are thrown into the fire until they are roasted, and then cracked open, yielding the finest marrow that ever tickled a gourmand's palate. Considering the absence of bread, and the traveler's life in the open air and daily exercise, it is not remarkable that the appetite makes unusual demands, and that people, who formerly were accustomed to eat scarcely a pound of meat daily, can consume eight and ten times as much of fresh buffalo meat, without being gluttons on that account. With the abundance of buffalo such a healthy appetite can be satisfied without trouble. Only so much is shot daily as will last for a few days. But if the journey goes through a region where neither buffalo nor other game is to be found, the buffalo meat is dried as follows: The meat is cut in strips as thin as possible, and hung upon poles or scaffolds, and there allowed to dry in the sun. If time is limited, a little fire is at first maintained under it; but it tastes better without the fire. When it is dried, it is beaten with a stone or hammer to make it more tender. It is then eatable, either dry or cooked, and can be kept for years, if protected against moisture and insects. The so-called toro is still more suitable for preservation. For its preparation this dried meat is beaten with a stone into a coarse grained powder, and mixed with as much melted buffalo fat and tallow as it will hold. The paste thus formed is pressed as compactly as possible into a bag of buffalo skin, which is then firmly sewed up.

The whites use the buffalo chiefly for food. The green skins are too heavy, and their preparation too difficult to justify the trouble of carrying them off. The Indians, on the other hand, tan the

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

hides and use them partly for their own dwelling and clothing, partly in barter with the whites. Tanning is the business of the Indian women solely, and is carried on as follows: They first stretch the fresh hide with pegs on the ground, clean it with sharp stones of all flesh, fat and skinny parts, and finally rub in fresh buffalo brains. This latter gives the hides great pliancy, but is not a real tanning process. The hides thus prepared can therefore stand little moisture, and the hair falls out easily. The inner side of the hide thus prepared is usually adorned with all kinds of gaily-colored figures. Hides that are to be tanned on both sides are boiled in a solution of brain. When the hair is removed, brain is again rubbed in; and finally the hides are smoked, which makes them very suitable for tents and clothing. In addition to the hide, the Indians never forget to take the strong sinews from the neck and back of the buffalo. They dry them, and use them, torn into threads, with aid of an awl, for sewing.

With these manifold uses which the Indian makes of the buffalo, it will not seem strange to us, that this animal is the beginning and end of all their religious ceremonies; that great buffalo hunts can only be begun with mysterious rites; that the brave Indian dies in the belief that he is going to a land full of buffalo; and that one chief ground of the hatred of the Indians for the whites consists in their dread that the buffalo herds will be driven away and destroyed. The Indian and the buffalo are Siamese twins; both live and thrive only on one ground, that of the wilderness. Both will perish together.

---

CHAPTER SEVEN - THE SIOUX - PASSAGE OF THE SOUTH FORK

OUR hunting party consisted of only three men. We had ridden but a few miles, when we saw Indians in the distance, who had probably seen us long before. One of them galloped toward us. He had no clothing except an apron about the loins; and no arms except bow and arrows. We halted. The Indian gave us his hand in sign of friendship, and let us understand that a great Indian encampment was in the vicinity. Though the news was unwelcome, especially as we did not know to what tribe these Indians belonged, we continued our hunt. We soon saw buffalo, but they had been put into such turmoil by the Indians, who were hunting them, that it was a long time before we got a shot. From a hill I could survey the hunting of the Indians, and admire their skill as riders and as marksmen. Most of them were armed only with bow and arrow, though a few had guns. After we had ridden perhaps ten miles, we were lucky enough to kill three head. The last one was a cow. For a while she looked on as we flayed a bull, but forfeited her life by her curiosity. She had a calf with her that took to flight. The cow's udder was full of milk. We sucked out the milk, and found it refreshing and palatable. Laden with the hides, we returned at evening to the camp, where in our absence the Indians had also arrived. We now learned that there was on the other side of the river about five miles up stream a camp or village of several tribes of Sioux (Shiennes, Brules, Tetons, and Arapahoes) and of the Ogallallas. The Ogallallas and Sioux had formerly been at war; but had made peace shortly before this, and had united. The Indians who visited our camp had received small presents, especially tobacco; and, as the fur company still had some flour, had been regaled with sweetened mush, which was so much to their taste that, after satiating themselves to the full, they had taken the remainder with them. They also requested powder and whiskey, which was refused them on the pretext that we had no superfluity of the former, and nothing at all of the latter. Our leader, Harris, thoroughly realized that these unwelcome guests would further trouble us, and that just now was a most inadvisable time for crossing the river. So

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

at night, after all the Indians had left, he caused the few barrels of spirits which he had with him to be buried, and enjoined on all of us the greatest vigilance. The night passed quietly. The next morning about sixty Indians on horseback appeared on a little rise in the neighborhood of our camp. They rode in a line up to our camp, giving a salute in our honor out of as many guns as they could muster, and sat down with us in a semi-circle. All appeared in gala attire, decked as far as possible with ornaments and bright rags, and with their faces freshly painted. One of them wore a red English uniform, on which he prided himself not a little. They had three leaders with them. One of them delivered an address, which may have been very eloquent, but of which none of us understood a word. To judge by his gestures, however, he had taken the pale faces to his heart, and expected in return evidences of our appreciation thereof. The pipe of peace was of course not forgotten, but went around the circle several times. The Indians received tobacco, which was divided out among the warriors by these leaders, and were again regaled with sweetened mush. In the afternoon, a second party of Indians arrived afoot, with two divers colored flags, on one of which a star was embroidered, and on the other a cock. The Indian who bore the former was painted red in the face; he who bore the other, wholly black. Speeches and smoking, presents and feeding were repeated. Toward evening our guests left us, seemingly satisfied with their reception. While this was going on in our camp the rest of the Indians had broken up their own camp, and had established themselves across the river just opposite to us. The whole shore became alive. The tents were erected in several rows for about a mile along the river, and formed an interesting, though hardly agreeable, sight. The high, conical, leather tents with the projecting tent poles looked from a distance not unlike a sea-port. By our estimate there might be seven or eight hundred tents; later on, we heard that there were about a thousand. As each of them contained at least one family, we estimated the whole number at five to six thousand. Our situation was critical. Separated from such a crowd, eager for robbing and plundering, and so superior to us in numbers, merely by a river, whose passage offered no special difficulties, there remained for us, should it come to hostilities, nothing but quietly to allow ourselves to be robbed, perhaps even scalped, or else to defend ourselves to the utmost without any hope for success. True, the Indians who had visited our camp today had behaved pretty decently; but every Indian has sufficient self-control to conceal his real plans. Besides, the Sioux have repeatedly shown themselves treacherous. All we could do for the time was to shun all cause for hostilities, and quietly delay the crossing of the river until the Indians should leave us. For they had given out that they were going the next day from here to the North Fork.

Morning appeared, but the Indian camp had not budged. On the other hand, we received abundant visits in ours. The river was about a quarter of a mile broad; quite rapid to be sure, but generally not very deep, so that one could cross a-foot or on horseback without much swimming. Besides, the Indians had made a little canoe out of buffalo hides, on which they crossed. Many squaws paid us their respects today. As none of us understood the Indian language, we had to communicate by signs, wherein the Indians have great skill. We obtained by barter with them several articles, such as tanned skins, mocassins, buffalo hides and the like. For a piece of chewing tobacco as big as a hand one could get a fine buffalo hide. Some Indians would sell everything they had on. But all showed immense curiosity.

They were continuously about us in our tents; all objects that were new to them they stared at and handled, not failing to appropriate some when unobserved. The two wives of the Missionaries

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

were special objects of their curiosity. Among the guests who visited us today there was a leader of the Ogallallas, Bullbear by name. He is rather aged and of squat, thick figure. He had one of his seven wives with him. Our leader knew him from former days as a friend of the whites, and so invited him to stay with his wife over night. Bullbear gave us to understand that he could answer for his tribe, but not for the others; and readily accepted. The other Indians toward evening went back over the river.

Mrs. Bullbear is not ugly, and knows how to accept the presents made to her with much grace. Her leather shirt is richly adorned with beads and embroidery. All night through matters were lively in the Indian camp. Dreadfully piercing notes came to us over the water; and then a chorus of some thousand dogs howled such night music as I have never yet heard. The next morning we saw with pleasure how the Indians struck their tents, packed their horses and dogs, and gradually set themselves in motion toward the North Fork. We watched the march with our spy-glasses. The North Fork was only about three miles from us. The Indians crossed it, and set up their camp on the further shore. They also seemed to watch us, for they directed little mirrors toward us. Glad to be rid of our guests, we set in earnest about finishing the canoe at which we had hitherto worked but slowly. These canoes are made in the following manner: Small trunks of some wood that bends easily are split; out of these a boat-shaped frame-work is made with some cross-pieces inside; this is firmly bound with thongs of buffalo leather and willow bark, and all gaps are stopped with withes; and buffalo hides, sewed together, with the hair inside, are stretched as taut as can be over the whole. Then it is dried in the air, and the outside daubed over with a mixture of buffalo tallow and ashes. Our canoe was covered with three buffalo hides, and was about fifteen feet long by a width in the middle of five to six feet. It was finished toward evening, but we still spent the night here, to dig up the buried barrels of spirits. The next morning our canoe was put into the water. Though everything seemed quiet in the Indian camp, our leader preferred to cross the river somewhat further up. He detailed four men to draw up the canoe along the shore. The rest of us marched about ten miles and camped again on the river. The canoe arrived too late for crossing that same day; but on the next day we finally accomplished our passage. The river was rather broad and swift, but deep in only few places. As far as walking was possible, the four men pulled the boat through the water; then paddles and poles are used, during which time we were often carried far down stream. Each passage to and fro took over an hour. First, all the baggage and the empty carts were carried over in the canoe; then the passengers; finally the horses and mules were driven through the water. Apart from some few mishaps, arousing more laughter than sympathy, all went well. In addition, we made ten miles that same day, going up the stream, and camping on it.

---

CHAPTER EIGHT - JOURNEY UP THE NORTH FORK - THE PRAIRIE DOG - FORT LARAMIE

THE left bank of the southern Platte, which we are now ascending, is very sandy; the vegetation is scant. The bluffs close at hand are also of sandstone. A tower-like column of pure river sand rises in noticeable prominence. For some days we went up the river. We observed very many bitter herbs, especially wormwood; also Pomme Blanche (*Psoralea esculenta*), whose knobby root contains much starch, has a pleasant taste, and is gathered by the Indians. Long garlands of blooming wild roses frequently extended along the river. We saw no buffalo, but our hunters shot

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

on the bluffs several antelope, so that we suffered no want. On the third day (June 6th) we left the river, going across a plateau in a northwesterly direction toward the North Fork. On this plateau we saw for the first time wild horses. They were very skittish. Their sense of smell is said to be very keen. We also got sight of the European rabbit, which is not found in the eastern part of the United States. The day was very sultry. We covered eighteen miles before we found some water in a puddle. In the afternoon, while we were again on the march, we were overtaken by a terrible hailstorm. Some of the hailstones were as big as pigeon eggs. The horses on which we rode could hardly be held in check; but the pack animals ran away as if under the lash. The hailstorm lasted, with short interruptions, about half an hour. We then gathered up our pack animals, which had run miles in the meantime, and camped near Ash Creek, which empties into the North Fork. The next morning we reached the North Fork, but it was noon before we could find a passage for our carts. The North Fork with its surroundings is just like the South Fork-much sand, little wood, no buffalo. We are now to go up the right side of the river about one hundred and sixty miles to Fort Laramie. The next day we saw four Indians on the further bank. They swam over. They were Shiennes. They gave us to understand that their tribe had parted from the Sioux and would be here in a few days to go up the river with us. They urged us, therefore, to wait. Our leader acted as if he did not understand them, gave them some tobacco, and went on. The next day we received a second embassy, but with no better result. The bluffs of our side, on which I now saw for the first time some cedars, gradually diminished until they were lost in the prairie. But behind them reddish cliffs arose, steeper and more imposing than we had yet seen. The sand formation prevails in them also. Several such rows of cliffs are crowded together en echelon, with a grassy embankment in front of each, flattening down at the end of the chain. Each chain consists of more or less broken down (weather worn) rocks, often presenting the strangest of shapes. So the first cliff in the first chain, perhaps eight miles from the river, presented quite the appearance of an old castle or citadel. More remarkable still is the last cliff of the same chain. Its tower-like top is seen from a distance of thirty or forty miles, for which reason it has been called the chimney. It is only a mile from the river. The cone-shaped base constitutes about three-fourths of its height, the pyramidal top one-quarter of it. The foundation is limestone; above it is crumbling sandstone. The height of the whole is given as 525 feet; that of the top part as 125 feet.

Heavy down-pourings of rain often interrupted our journey. Almost daily we had thunderstorms, for which the Platte is notorious. One time we had to stay in camp almost all day on account of the rain; but by way of compensation we found a quantity of pine wood and cedar wood, washed down from the rocks on which it grows sparsely; and beside the blazing fire we laughed at the weather and forgot all discomfort. The next day the sky cleared. We traveled somewhat away from the river, toward the left, and enjoyed a picturesque landscape. All about were rocks piled up by Nature in merry mood, giving full scope to fancy in the variety of their shapes. Some were perfect cones; others flat round tops; others, owing to their crenulated projections, resembled fortress-es; others old castles, porticos, etc. Most of them were sparsely covered with pine and cedar. The scenery has obvious resemblance to several places in Saxon Switzerland.

At noon we halted in a little valley where rocks from either side confronted each other at a distance of half a mile. A fresh spring meanders through the valley. We encamped on the hill from which the spring flows. The place had something romantic about it. All around grew pine and cedars, wild roses, gooseberries and currants; from the top of the hill one enjoyed a wide prospect.

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

On the one side the Chimney and the whole chain of rocks we had passed showed themselves; on the other side, fresh hills. Before us lay the Platte. The magnificent surroundings, the clear sky and fresh antelope meat put us all in good humor. But increasing sultriness reminded us soon that we had not yet received our daily allowance of thunder showers. We traveled twelve miles in the rain that afternoon, and camped by the stream, at whose spring we had our noon rest. It was so swollen by the rains that we had to postpone crossing till the next day. The next morning we crossed it, as well as Horse Creek, only a few hundred steps further on, and then turned, over a long uninteresting hill, again toward the river. From the top of the hill we saw in the western distance the Black Hills, a chain of mountains we must cross later on.

Near the Platte I saw on this occasion for the first time a so-called prairie-dog village. Single dwellings of this strange animal we had already observed on the South Fork; but here we had a whole colony before us, and also got a look at some of the shy inhabitants. The prairie dog (prairie marmot, *Arctomys Ludovicianus*, Ord), resembles the hamster of Europe, and belongs to the same genus. He is sixteen inches long; the hair yellowish-brownish-reddish; the head broad; the ears short; the body stout, the hairy tail about two inches long. The five toes on each foot are of very unequal length. This animal digs itself holes underground. The earth thrown out forms toward the exterior a firm round wall. The funnel-shaped entrance is one or two hands broad. For a foot it runs perpendicularly down; then obliquely inward and downward. Such dwellings, at moderate space from each other, can be seen spread over an area of several acres, or even miles. That is called a village. Hundreds, even thousands of these animals live in this way neighborly together. In fair weather they come out of their holes to sun themselves; squat quaintly on their hind legs, and utter a sharp, twittering sound. At man's approach they raise a fiercer cry, wagging their short tails withal, as if prepared for serious combat. If one comes nearer, however, they withdraw into their holes, at most peeping out. Even if one shoots them, they fall back into their holes, and are not easily got out. In each hole several live together. Often six or eight can be seen retiring into one hole. The prairie dog lives on the seeds of several kinds of grass; but his dwelling is usually found in sandy regions, where grass grows scantily. He is found rather plentifully on either side of the Rocky Mountains. He sleeps through the winter, and so stuffs up the opening of his hole in the fall with grass. One often sees different animals creep into these holes, especially rattlesnakes, which are numberless in these regions, lizards, turtles, and a small kind of owl (*Stryx hypogaea*, Bonap). This quodlibet of animals cannot possibly constitute a friendly family; but Pike assures us that he has repeatedly seen a prairie dog, a horned frog and a turtle withdraw into the same hole. The owls and rattlesnakes seem to do most damage to the prairie dogs.

The North Platte, which we were now ascending, was here better supplied with wood than below, especially with cottonwood. We spent the night on its banks, in the neighborhood of an old winter camp. A number of cottonwood trees were lying about, which had been used partly for fencing, partly as fodder for the horses. (In winter the horses are fed with the bark of the tree.)

The next morning (June 14th), we left camp in good humor, for the crotchety master of human crotchets, I mean the weather, smiled on us; and the vicinity of Fort Laramie, but sixteen miles distant, promised us a speedy meeting with human beings. Before we reached the fort, we encountered the first "pale faces" we had seen since our departure from Missouri. They were French Canadians, clad half Indian fashion in leather, and scurrying along on their ponies, bedight with bells and gay ribbons, as if intent to storm some battery. Old acquaintances greeted each other,

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

question piled on question; and each briefly told, in Canadian patois, the adventures he had been through. Meanwhile we came in view of the fort.

At a distance it resembles a great blockhouse; and lies in a narrow valley, enclosed by grassy hills, near by the left bank of the Laramie, which empties into the North Platte about a mile below.

Toward the west a fine background is formed by the Black Hills, a dark chain of mountains covered with evergreen trees. We crossed the Laramie toward noon, and encamped outside the fort. The fort itself first attracted my attention. It lies on a slight elevation, and is built in a rectangle of about eighty by a hundred feet. The outside is made of cottonwood logs, about fifteen feet high, hewed off, and wedged closely together. On three sides there are little towers on the wall that seem designed for watch and defense. In the middle a strong gate, built of blocks, constitutes the entrance. Within, little buildings with flat roofs are plastered all around against the wall, like swallows' nests. One is the store house; another the smithy; the others are dwellings not unlike monks' off cells. A special portion of the court yard is occupied by the so-called horse-pen, in which the horses are confined at night. The middle space is free, with a tall tree in it, on which the flag is raised on occasions of state. The whole garrison of the fort consists of only five men; four Frenchmen and a German. Some of them were married to Indian women, whose cleanliness and neat attire formed an agreeable contrast to the daughters of the wilderness whom we had hitherto seen. In this connection, let me call attention to a mistaken idea often entertained as to these forts.

They are often thought of as military forts, occupied by regular troops, and under military rule, whereas they are mere trading forts, built by single trading companies, and occupied by a handful of hired men to have a safe point for storing their goods, from which barter may be carried on with the Indians. Such forts exist on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, established by American and English companies; but nowhere is there a military fort erected by the government of either country. The simple construction, as above described, protects them adequately against any attack on the part of the Indians. Out of abundant caution some of them have a little cannon on the wall. As far as I know, there is no fort on the North Platte save Fort Laramie; but several American trading companies have built forts along the South Platte, the Arkansas, the Green River, and the Missouri. Beyond the Rocky Mountains are only English forts.

Fort Laramie was built in 1835 by Robert Campbell, and was then called Fort William. Later, it passed into other control, and was rechristened Fort Laramie after one Laramie, who was killed here by the Indians. The custom of perpetuating the memory of departed friends by transferring their names to the place where they fell, is so habitual in the Rocky Mountains, and the occasions giving rise to it are unfortunately so frequent, that at least half the names owe their origin to such events. The fort is at present in possession of Piggit, Papin and Jaudron. In many respects it has a very favorable location. There is sufficient wood in the vicinity and good pasture. A few days' journey further there is abundance of buffalo and other game, and the Platte from this point is navigable for small boats; at least Campbell has already gone down from here to the Missouri in buffalo boats. Then, too, it is a very suitable center for trade with important Indian tribes, especially the Sioux and Crows. The last named Indians had recently levied a small contribution from the fort, in that they had driven off sixteen horses grazing in the vicinity in full daylight and in view of two guards. Luckily the fort had a superfluity of horses, so that the loss was not serious. In addition to horses, the fort owns property that is of very great value in this region; that is, several cows. No attention is paid to agriculture, although the ground seems suitable for it. Hunting is

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

the sole reliance for food. All we found in stock at that time was dried buffalo meat, of which we took a supply with us. As we stayed there the rest of the day, several races took place between our horses and those of the fort; and of course there was betting and swapping of horses. I swapped my horse, which was somewhat run down by the journey and thin, for a swift, well fed Indian horse trained to hunt buffalo. The Indian horses are said to have come originally from Mexico. They are of a small breed, and seldom can be called handsome; but they are very swift and hardy, and as they know no food save grass, are much more suitable for such a journey than American horses, which usually grow lean on mere grass. Still American horses, because they are larger and handsomer, are much sought after by whites and Indians, and, when once they are acclimated, are superior.

The distance from the boundary of Missouri to Fort Laramie, according to our daily reckoning, amounts to 755 miles, and was made by us in six weeks. All distances here can of course only be approximated. For this purpose we repeatedly counted the steps made in a given time, and found our average rate to be three miles an hour.

---

CHAPTER NINE - JOURNEY OVER THE BLACK HILLS - CROSSING THE NORTH FORK

THE next morning (June 15th), we left Fort Laramie to journey again in westerly direction through the wilderness. Our way led over the Black Hills above mentioned, leaving the Laramie River to our left, and ascending the North Fork at a moderate distance from it. The North Fork winds here through rocky walls so steep that the river is seldom in view, and there is no traveling on its banks. The hills consisted of sand and limestone, and show here and there a pine or cedar. To the left another high mountain chain is in view, the Platte Mountains, where, as we afterward learned, the North Platte has its source. On the top of the highest mountain of this chain snow was still lying. For four days we camped on little streams that flow into the North Fork, and found at times very pleasant camping grounds, for instance, at Horse Shoe Creek, where we rested on the second day. The water was cool and clear, the grass tall and luxuriant, and a thick fringe of cottonwood and sugar maples wound along the banks. Moreover, our hunters again brought fresh buffalo meat, no small spur in arousing lively appreciation of romantic surroundings. The road was growing daily more difficult. Steep ascents and deep clefts and ravines often made it necessary to lower the carts with ropes and pull them up again, or else make a wide circuit. We were visibly ascending. Had we not been already convinced by the violent current of the Platte of our rapid ascent, the thinner, purer air, the broad sweep of our view and the change in vegetation would have called it to our attention. In regard to the latter we noticed especially two companions of our journey that were no more to leave us, namely, cacti, in several species, and wild sage or wild wormwood (*Artemisia Columbiensis*). This *Artemisia* is found on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, in sandy soil, where the grass grows sparsely or not at all. It is of varying size. Sometimes it is stunted, and scarce a foot or two high; but at times it attains the height of a man, and then its stem is as thick as an arm. The wood consists, like that of the vine, of many twisted fibres, is of no use to the carpenter, but makes a good fire, and holds its glow very long. The foliage is characterized by its bitterness. If any of it gets into our food, it is scarce eatable. So, if fresh meat bound to the saddle has been brushed by it in passing, the best thing to do is to throw the meat away. A bird that feeds on this plant, the so-called sage cock or cock of the plains (*Tetrao Uripasianus*), has

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

precisely the same taste. The bird is somewhat larger than a prairie chicken, to which its resemblance is closest, and retains the repellent bitter taste of this plant in whatever way it be prepared for eating.

Our fourth night camp was our first on the North Platte since leaving Laramie. The river here was not very broad. Several of us bathed, but the water was so swift that, though we were all good swimmers, we could scarcely reach the opposite shore. The next day we traveled along the river over steep hills, with little grass or wood. Toward noon, just as we were about to set up our camp, I saw that terror of hunters, the grizzly bear. It was a splendid animal, but it ran away at full speed, and our horses were too tired to make chase. We camped that night again by the river on dirty loamy ground. The next morning we were not a little surprised to see opposite us, across the river, a dozen Indians, who had camped there all night. They swam across. They were Shiennes, who gave us to understand that they were on a horse-stealing foray against the Crows. They themselves were afoot, as is customary with Indians on such raids, and we had not the least reason to doubt their statements. Nevertheless we were keenly on guard to prevent any chance mistake of our horses for those of the Crows. For two more days we went along the river. Although we ourselves saw no buffalo herds, our hunters regularly brought fresh meat into camp. One evening an old bull strayed near our camp. A couple of novices started after him, but he fell only at the twentieth shot. The wolves followed promptly after the hunters, and howled for us all night long. Such nocturnal music is so common in this wilderness, especially in the buffalo country, that I finally regretted missing it, and found a sort of enjoyment in the long-drawn wails of these beasts, which run through all the minor chords. Say distinguishes four kinds of wolves in America, namely: 1. The common wolf (*Canis lupus*). 2. The barking wolf (*Canis latrans*). 3. The dark wolf (*Canis Nubilus*); and 4. the black wolf (*Canis Lycaon*). The last named I have not seen on this trip; the second is common. This wolf is smaller than the others, and is remarkable for his peculiar howl. He begins with two or three barks, about like a dachs, and follows it immediately with the howl. As he generally keeps near buffalo, and is therefore a good omen for hunting, he is also called the Medicine Wolf. Although wolves are seen daily, they are very wary. I never heard that they had attacked men; but at night they become impudent; they often sneak into the midst of the camp, and steal meat or leather goods. If one has shot buffalo or other game, they are sure to be lurking in the distance; they approach cautiously as soon as one goes away and reduce the animal to a skeleton with marvelous speed. They count so securely on this tribute, that they often follow the caravans for days.

Our road along the river now became somewhat smoother. The ground was sandy, and covered with many ant hills, composed of sand and pebbles. We saw some elk. I found, too, a nest of young magpies, which I had not hitherto seen in the United States. On the 21st Of June we halted at the river, in order to cross. The North Platte at this point is not as broad as the South Platte, but just as swift. A canoe of buffalo hides was soon constructed, and the very next day we crossed over without any special mishap.

---

CHAPTER TEN - JOURNEY ALONG THE SWEET WATERS - THE WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS

WE WENT further up the left bank of the North Platte, about fifteen miles. The road led over

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

sandy rolling country. From one hill we enjoyed a magnificent wide prospect. Southwestwardly, on our left, are stretched out the Platte Mountains, out of which the river here comes forth, and toward the northwest, at a distance of about one hundred miles, a foggy streak, in which our older traveling companions recognized the snow peaks of the Big Horn Mountains. In the vicinity live the Crows, a treacherous hostile Indian tribe, equally proficient in stealing and scalping. They often rove through the country along the Platte and the Sweet Waters, which are considered by the Indians as a common war ground. The ground over which we went this day was highly permeated with salts. We had seen this on several occasions before, near the Platte, and some days back had crossed a brook where water tasted quite like Epsom salts. But here it was very marked. We passed along several salt lakes in the prairie, all along whose shores there lay crystallized Epsom salt. At noon we camped on the river for the last time. A herd of buffalo were grazing comfortably on the opposite shore, and were not disturbed by our arrival, for the wind was favorable to us. The river twists here in a southwesterly direction toward the Platte Mountains, from which it issues. Where it issues from the mountains some reddish rocks arise, called the red buttes or hills. Here we left the river, to go more northwesterly toward the Sweet Waters. Moving over monotonous sand hills, we reached at evening a little brook, whose sandy bed had absorbed all the water; but by digging some feet we collected clear water in adequate quantity. During the day we had had thunder storms; at night there came a cold rain mingled with snow; the next morning it was unpleasantly cold. The country continued hilly, sandy, poor as to grass, but so much the richer in sage bush. Buffalo became more and more common. In the sandy soil of this region I found a new strange animal, the so-called horn-frog (*Phrynosoma cornuta*). It is a kind of lizard with thick head and body and short tail. It is of grayish color. Its whole length amounts to three or four inches. The whole back from head to tail is covered with horny spines. Down the middle of the back runs a horny white comb. On the back of the head are six great spines arranged in semi-circle. This thorny armor makes the little beast resemble an alligator in miniature. It runs very swiftly; is found only on sandy soil, and appears to live on insects. Another smaller kind of lizard, slenderer and exceedingly swift, erroneously called here chameleon, usually occurs in the neighborhood of the horned frog. Near the Sweet Waters the country again becomes more level. Some weatherworn bare rocks alone arise in the midst of the prairie. The ground is covered with decomposed salt tasting of alkali, and with some salt lakes. The buffalo seem specially fond of this region. We drove many herds before us. On the evening of June 25th, we reached the Sweet Waters, a little stream that forms the northern source of the North Platte, and which has probably received its name in contrast to the salty waters round about. We pitched our camp hard by an isolated rock, perhaps one thousand feet long, one hundred feet broad and fifty to sixty feet high, consisting of intermingled granite. It is known by the name of Rock Independence, and is said to have been so christened by a party of Americans who celebrated the Fourth of July here. It is regarded as a Rocky Mountain album, as it were. Many travelers write or cut their names upon it. All round about us, near and afar, rocks and mountains arise. The Platte Mountains are on our left. The Platte itself is said to be twelve miles off. The next morning we crossed the Sweet Waters. For six days we ascended the river in westerly direction, following it more or less closely and crossing it several times to cut off its meanders. Our road at first was level and passed through a valley, rather narrow at the entrance, but gradually widening, which was bounded on both sides by the Sweet Waters Mountains. The rocks of these mountains are partly bare, partly pine-clad.

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

On their summit it is said there live many mountain sheep (big horn, argali, *Ovis ammon* L), an animal resembling the deer in outward appearance, only somewhat larger, but provided instead of antlers with curved horns like a ram, of which one sometimes weighs about thirty pounds. The Indians make their best bows out of these horns. The mountain sheep climb with ease the steepest rock where they can be followed only with difficulty. To my vexation we did not get sight of a single one. We ran across several buffalo. I could not resist the temptation to try my newly acquired horse at buffalo hunting. I singled out an old bull. My horse soon caught up with him, and fearlessly galloped at his left side, permitting me to put the pistol almost on its breast. At the second shot the bull suddenly turned upon me; but my swift horse carried me promptly out of the vicinity; and, exhausted by loss of blood, the animal at the fourth shot fell to the ground. It was very lean, so I only took the tongue.

On the third day (June 28th), a white streak appeared in the west. As we rose higher, it assumed more definite shape. Some of its shining points changed gradually to higher and higher steep cliffs with heads of ice and robes of snow; in a word, snow peaks of the Rocky Mountains arose before us. It was the chain of the Wind River Mountains, one of the steepest in this mighty mountain system. These mountains extend in a northwesterly direction with a length of eighty miles by a breadth of twenty to thirty. It is said that one of these peaks was measured geometrically and barometrically on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, and that it is 25,000 feet high. As one approaches the mountains on a plateau, to which one gradually mounts through a journey of a thousand miles, and so is at a considerable elevation, it may well be that they do not seem to the eye as high as they actually are; yet such an assumption as to their height, which would put them in a class with the Himalayas, can scarcely be correct. Be that as it may, it is certainly a lofty and imposing chain of mountains, though I miss the romantic surroundings of the Swiss Alps, with their crystal lakes and blooming valleys which group themselves so picturesquely around the eternal glaciers. As we had to go around the southeastern point of the Wind River Mountains, we now took a more southwestern direction. The plain on which we had hitherto traveled changed gradually to a hilly country, covered with sandy soil and little grass, but the more sage brush, and quantities of buffalo. The geological character is very different, since we are on the Sweet Waters. Pure granite, basalt, quartz and feldspar are now matters of daily observation. Primitive mountains begin. We ascended continuously. The species of cactus become rarer, the mosses more frequent. Some plants occur here only in stunted form. On the sixth day (July 1st) we left the Sweet Waters to our right near their source on the eastern declivity of the Wind River Mountains. Those are the last waters we pass which flow into the Atlantic Ocean. That same day toward evening we reached a little fresh spring that flows toward the Pacific. The divide between these two water systems is formed by an undulating sandy prairie. The spring at which we pitched our night camp issues from under a rock formed of quartz and spar. In the vicinity grew willows, cedars and some birches (quickenasp). Where the water comes out from under the rock the thermometer placed in it sank to 43.5 degrees Fahrenheit, while it stood in the air at 48 degrees.

As supplement, I note the averages of the thermometrical record of our journey, so far of two months' duration, from the borders of Missouri to the divide between the eastern and western waters:

Thermometrical Average According to F.

At Sunrise.      Toward Noon. At Sunset.

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

In May.... 53 72 62.3

In June.... 49 72.5 56.8

During all this time we had only very few pleasant days, but rain and storm almost daily. The region of rain now is behind us; and-to use the words of our leader-the country where the wind reigns is before us.

---

CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE YEARLY RENDEZVOUS

OUR NEXT objective point was the upper Green River valley, which is thrust like a bay of prairie between the main chain of the Rockies and the projecting Wind River Mountains. Our direction was northeast. The road thither leads over sandy hills and plateaus. The Wind River Mountains lay to our right, permitting a closer view of the precipitous, weather-beaten granite formations cut by deep ravines. As intervening bulwark, there were foothills, dark with evergreens, but void of snow. To our left new snow peaks came into view, the Grand River Mountains. We crossed several streams, first the Little Sandy and the Big Sandy, then the New Fork; all having their sources in the Wind River Mountains and flowing into the Green River. The water is clear and cool, the river bed pebbly. The shores are usually fringed with willows. In these little rivers there are, furthermore, denizens characteristic of western waters. For, while the Platte has few fish, and little beside catfish are found in the other streams, many trout are found on this side. On the second day we found traces of whites and Indians, that had journeyed ahead of us through this region a short time before, probably to the rendezvous, which takes place yearly about this time in the neighborhood of the Green River. As our destination was the same, though our leader did not know precisely what place had been chosen for it this year, some of our men were sent out for information. They returned the next day while we were camping on the New Fork, with two agents of the fur company, Trips and Walker. These agents were accompanied by their Indian wives and a lot of dogs. The two squaws, quite passable as to their features, appeared in highest state. Their red blankets, with the silk kerchiefs on their heads, and their gaudy embroideries, gave them quite an Oriental appearance. Like themselves, their horses were bedight with embroideries, beads, corals, ribbons and little bells. The bells were hung about in such number that when riding in their neighborhood, one might think one's self in the midst of Turkish music. The squaws, however, behaved most properly. They took care of the horses, pitched a tent, and were alert for every word of their wedded lords. From the agents we learned that this year's meeting place had been fixed on the right bank of the Green River at the angle formed by its junction with Horse Creek. We were now about a day's journey from the place. Starting off in company in the afternoon, we covered, at a more rapid pace than usual, about twelve miles, and then camped on a branch of the New Fork, whose shores were framed with fine pines. It was the Fourth of July, the great holiday of the United States. Our camp, however, presented its humdrum daily appearance. We stretched out around the fires, smoked and, in expectation of what the morrow would bring, went quietly asleep. The next morning we started early, and reached toward noon the Green River, so long desired. The Green River (Colorado of the West) rises in the northwestern slope of the Wind River Mountains, flows in southwestern direction, and empties into the Gulf of California. Where we first saw it, it is a clear, rippling streamlet, abounding in trout; neither very broad, nor very deep; but later on it becomes a broad, rushing stream. Its navigation is said to present enormous difficulties. We

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

crossed the river, and were then in the acute angle formed by it and the Horse Creek (a brook coming from the northwest and emptying here into the Green River). The space between is level; the ground a loamy sand. The camping place was about two miles above the Horse Creek, along the right bank of the Green River. The plain between the two streams is here about three miles broad. The rendezvous has repeatedly been held here. According to observations formerly made, the place is in longitude 107 degrees 12 minutes west, and between 44 and 45 degrees north latitude. So we were about four degrees north of St. Louis. The journey which we had made from the border of Missouri, according to our rough calculation, was near 1,200 miles.

We reached the camping place. What first struck our eye was several long rows of Indian tents (lodges), extending along the Green River for at least a mile. Indians and whites were mingled here in varied groups. Of the Indians there had come chiefly Snakes, Flatheads and Nezperces, peaceful tribes, living beyond the Rocky Mountains. Of whites the agents of the different trading companies and a quantity of trappers had found their way here, visiting this fair of the wilderness to buy and to sell, to renew old contracts and to make new ones, to make arrangements for future meetings, to meet old friends, to tell of adventures they had been through, and to spend for once a jolly day. These trappers, the "Knights without fear and without reproach," are such a peculiar set of people that it is necessary to say a little about them. The name in itself indicates their occupation. They either receive their outfit, consisting of horses, beaver traps, a gun, powder and lead, from trading companies, and trap for small wages, or else they act on their own account, and are then called freemen. The latter is more often the case. In small parties they roam through all the mountain passes. No rock is too steep for them; no stream too swift. Withal, they are in constant danger from hostile Indians, whose delight it is to ambush such small parties, and plunder them, and scalp them. Such victims fall every year. One of our fellow travelers, who had gone to the mountains for the first time nine years ago with about one hundred men, estimated that by this time half the number had fallen victims to the tomahawks of the Indians. But this daily danger seems to exercise a magic attraction over most of them. Only with reluctance does a trapper abandon his dangerous craft; and a sort of serious home-sickness seizes him when he retires from his mountain life to civilization. In manners and customs, the trappers have borrowed much from the Indians. Many of them, too, have taken Indian women as wives. Their dress is generally of leather. The hair of the head is usually allowed to grow long. In place of money, they use beaver skins, for which they can satisfy all their needs at the forts by way of trade. A pound of beaver skins is usually paid for with four dollars worth of goods; but the goods themselves are sold at enormous prices, so-called mountain prices. A pint of meal, for instance, costs from half a dollar to a dollar; a pint of coffee-beans, cocoa beans or sugar, two dollars each; a pint of diluted alcohol (the only spiritous liquor to be had), four dollars; a piece of chewing tobacco of the commonest sort, which is usually smoked, Indian fashion, mixed with herbs, one to two dollars. Guns and ammunition, bear traps, blankets, kerchiefs, and gaudy finery for the squaws, are also sold at enormous profit. At the yearly rendezvous the trappers seek to indemnify themselves for the sufferings and privations of a year spent in the wilderness. With their hairy bank notes, the beaver skins, they can obtain all the luxuries of the mountains, and live for a few days like lords. Coffee and chocolate is cooked; the pipe is kept aglow day and night; the spirits circulate; and whatever is not spent in such ways the squaws coax out of them, or else it is squandered at cards. Formerly single trappers on such occasions have often wasted a thousand dollars. But the days of their glory seem to be

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

past, for constant hunting has very much reduced the number of beavers. This diminution in the beaver catch made itself noticeable at this year's rendezvous in the quieter behavior of the trappers. There was little drinking of spirits, and almost no gambling. Another decade perhaps and the original trapper will have disappeared from the mountains.

The Indians who had come to the meeting were no less interesting than the trappers. There must have been some thousands of them. Their tents are made of buffalo hides, tanned on both sides and sewed together, stretched in cone shape over a dozen poles, that are leaned against each other, their tops crossing. In front and on top this leather can be thrown back, to form door and chimney. The tents are about twelve feet high and twenty feet in circumference at the ground, and give sufficient protection in any kind of weather. I visited many tents, partly out of curiosity, partly to barter for trifles, and sought to make myself intelligible in the language of signs as far as possible. An army of Indian dogs very much resembling the wolf, usually beset the entrance. From some tents comes the sound of music. A virtuoso beats a sort of kettle drum with bells around with all his might, and the chorus accompanies him with strange monotone untrained sounds that showed strong tendency to the minor chords. A similar heart-rending song drew me to a troop of squaws that were engrossed in the game of "the hand", so popular with the Indians. Some small object, a bit of wood, for instance, is passed from hand to hand among the players seated in a circle; and it is some one's part to guess in whose hands the object is. During the game the chorus steadily sings some song as monotonous as those to which bears dance. But the real object is to gamble in this way for some designated prize. It is a game of hazard. In this case, for example, a pile of beads and corals, which lay in the midst of the circle, was the object in question. Men and women are so carried away by the game, that they often spend a whole day and night at it. Other groups of whites and Indians were engaged in barter. The Indians had for the trade chiefly tanned skins, moccasins, thongs of buffalo leather or braided buffalo hair, and fresh or dried buffalo meat. They have no beaver skins. The articles that attracted them most in exchange were powder and lead, knives, tobacco, cinnabar, gaily colored kerchiefs, pocket mirrors and all sorts of ornaments. Before the Indian begins to trade he demands sight of everything that may be offered by the other party to the trade. If there is something there that attracts him, he, too, will produce his wares, but discovers very quickly how much or how little they are coveted. If he himself is not willed to dispose of some particular thing, he obstinately adheres to his refusal, though ten times the value be offered him. The peltry bought from the Indians must be carefully beaten and aired, at peril of having objectionable troops billeted on you. The Indians, accustomed to every kind of uncleanness, seem to have a special predilection for a certain kind of domestic animal, and even to consider it a delicacy. So, for instance, I have repeatedly seen an old granddam summering before the tent with her gray-haired spouse, and busily picking the "heavy cavalry" from his head. But the fingers that deftly caught the prisoner with equal deftness carried him to the mouth, where the unhappy creature was buried alive. Cha- cun a son gout!

The rendezvous usually lasts a week. Then the different parties move off to their destinations and the plain that today resounded with barbarous music, that was thronged with people of both races, with horses and dogs, returns to its old quiet, interrupted only now and then by the muffled roar of the buffalo and the howl of the wolf. As yet I had had indefinite plans as to how far I should extend my trip. The fur company which we had joined intended resting in the vicinity for some weeks, and then returning with a cargo of furs to the borders of Missouri on the same road

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

by which we had come up here. The greater part of the rest of our company planned to go to the Columbia River; some, too, from there to California. The latter scheme attracted me particularly. I thought of getting to the Columbia in some months, going to California in the fall, spending the winter there, and returning in the spring by way of Santa Fe to the United States. I therefore joined that party. Of late the temperature had been pretty high at noon; the nights, on the other hand, cool. For the first time I felt somewhat unwell, but not enough so to prevent a further journey. The most difficult part of our trip, the crossing of the main chain of the mountains, still lay before us. Capt. Bonneville had already penetrated to the Green River valley with wagons; but, as far as I know, no attempt has as yet been made to go over the mountains themselves with them, but horses and mules alone are used for transportation of baggage.

---

CHAPTER TWELVE - THE CROSSING OF THE MOUNTAINS -THE GRIZZLY BEAR

ON JULY 10th we left the Green River and the rendezvous. Our party consisted of the former traveling companions, of Captain Armedinger, the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Hall on the Snake River, who had visited the rendezvous with about a dozen of his men, of some trappers going back again to their craft, and of several hundred Indians, chiefly Flatheads, on their return to their home across the mountains. The mixed procession presented indeed an original appearance. The inhabitants of a great city would give much to see such a caravan passing through their streets. In motley confusion whites and Indians, squaws and children, scurried past each other. The men let their eyes rove about in search of game, and as soon as a shy antelope came in view, a great bloodthirsting gang rushed after it, to return after some time generally without any success. The squaws, who must attend to the packing, rattled past us with their long tent poles. Anon they would stop to rearrange the pack, to gather herbs and roots, or to quiet the babies. The position of the latter can hardly be called very pleasant. The Indian women carry their nurslings in a case of buffalo hide consisting of a long leather piece with a projection below as foot rest. On this back piece the youngster is laid flat. In front is an arched piece of leather fastened to both sides of the back of the case, enclosing the whole body from the neck to the feet. Only the uncovered head is free, protruding from this little box. The sight inevitably calls to mind the figure of Egyptian mummies. In walking, this little papoose case with its contents is thrown over the back and held with a strap over the forehead or chest of the mother. But in riding it is bound to one side of the saddle, and the little head nods in time to the trot or gallop of the horse. As soon as the child can sit alone, it is freed from its prison house and is fastened to the horse, wrapped in buffalo hide. The first thing for which it learns to grasp is the bridle or the whip. So it is no wonder that the Indians are all born riders and that the squaws have usually a better seat a-horseback than white men. The direction we took to cross the mountains was at first southwest, and afterwards northwest. The chain in front of us, which we have to cross, is much lower than the Wind River Mountains. No more snow peaks tower out of it; only patches of snow can be seen here and there, which probably wholly melt away later in the summer. The naked, jagged forms of rock have also disappeared; and in their stead we have an even, continuous, thickly wooded mountain chain, with narrow valleys and ravines, from which cool mountain streams gush forth. This chain stretches in a rather straight line from north to south, and then, forming an acute angle at the southern end, extends northwestwardly between the Bear River and the Snake River. On

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

the eastern slope of these mountains several brooks arise which all pour into the Green River; from the northwestern slope come the waters which flow toward the Bear River. We descended about eighty miles in Southwestern course along the eastern slope, and crossed the acute angle above mentioned to reach the northwestern slope. On the first day we made only eight miles. We crossed Horse Creek and camped on Lead Creek. The road led over plateaus toward the mountains. The next morning we were still in similar country, but at noon we reached a little meadow, enclosed by steep heights, through which meanders a rippling brook with cool water. From now on we had to wind our way through wooded hills. We generally followed the course of brooks through narrow ravines, on whose steep sides the animals had to climb in single file in a long line. On both sides were acclivities, often very steep, overgrown with heavy pine and cottonwood. At times we had to clamber over the mountains themselves through thick pine timber to get from one ravine to another. The geological formation was primitive throughout. There was particularly much basalt. Here and there, too, one finds traces of that same lava which we later found spread over great areas. The vegetation was rather luxuriant. A quantity of wild flax particularly struck us. The scenery was generally wild and romantic, but I was unable to enjoy its beauties, for I had felt somewhat unwell even at the Green River. With the hope that traveling would soon restore me, I had forborne as yet to make use of the medicines I had with me. But the symptoms became worse. I feared that I was getting a severe bilious fever, and felt myself obliged to make up for my omission. On the fourth day I felt so weak that during the afternoon I could hardly keep my seat on the horse. So I let the whole train pass me, tied my horse and threw myself on the ground, indifferent as to what might become of me. Complete listlessness possessed me. The whole nation of Blackfeet might have swarmed around me; I would not have stirred from the spot. I soon fell into a feverish sleep. My faithful dog (I had a young German hunting dog with me), having missed me in the caravan, had in the meanwhile returned to me. When I woke the sun was setting. My mule had torn himself loose, and thrown off his pack, but was still close by. I felt a little stronger, packed up once more and followed the trail of the caravan. I had ridden some miles, when one of my traveling companions, who in the meanwhile had pitched their night camp and then missed me for the first time, came to meet me. The camp was about three miles away. We reached it that evening, having seen on the way a grizzly bear that ran away from us. The camp was on Smith's Fork, the first water on the northwestern slope, which direction we followed from now on. The character of the country remained substantially the same. We had constantly dense pine forests about us; but the cottonwoods had disappeared. On the fifth day we reached Thomas Fork, on whose banks great quantities of pure, good-tasting common salt were lying. Most of us took along a supply. Such deposits of salt are said to occur at several other places in the mountains; so this most precious of condiments is not very dear there. At noon next day we reached Tullick's Fork. On the road a grizzly bear was shot. As this dreaded animal will cut a figure several times in the adventures of our journey, I will here add some remarks about it.

The grizzly bear (*Ursus horribilis*, Ord.) is distinguished from other members of the bear family by the almost straight profile of his face and by his longer claws. The hair, short on the forehead and long and thick on the rest of the body, shows a peculiar mixture of white, brown and black, with many shadings. The ears are short and rounded; the forehead somewhat convex. The eyes are very small. The short tail is hidden in the shaggy hair. The curved claws are three to five inches long. The whole length of the full grown bear is about ten feet; his height, three to four feet; his

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

weight, seven hundred to eight hundred pounds. He cannot climb trees like the black bear, but has fearful strength and dexterity. He often drags a whole buffalo for some distance, and runs almost as fast as a horse. He lives partly on meat, partly on fruits and roots. He is found oftener on the eastern than on the western side of the Rocky Mountains. When he is hungry or has been irritated he attacks whatever comes in his way. One blow of his paw is enough to knock a man down. But under other circumstances he runs away from man, and defends himself only when pursued. With such qualities it is no wonder that he is the dread of hunters. A bullet through brain or heart will end him, but in all other parts of the body he survives numerous wounds. A good hunter therefore, does not shoot until he is within ten or twenty feet of him. When the females are with young they live very retired, so that I have never heard of a hunter that shot a pregnant grizzly she bear. The meat of the grizzly is very palatable. Along the back there is solid white fat, a hand thick. The grizzly we found on this occasion was still young. The dogs of the Indians discovered him in a thicket, but he wouldn't budge from it. The Indians surrounded him on horseback, and shot at him. Whenever he assumed a threatening attitude, they all ran away. The dogs, however, seemed to check his anger. He would not leave his hiding place. Finally one of our hunters approached within ten feet of him, and laid him low with a single bullet.

From Tullick's Fork we entered upon more open country. The western slope of the Rocky Mountains has no more deep valleys than the eastern, but passes imperceptibly into broad plateaus. In the afternoon we crossed over a treeless, rather level prairie to the Bear River, and encamped there. The Bear River rises in the Eastern Mountains, a chain toward the south, goes in a semi-circle first northward, then down northwestwardly and empties into the Great Salt Lake (also called Lake Bonneville). It is a clear stream, not very wide or deep. Mostly willows grow on its banks. My illness was by this time pretty well subdued, though I felt very weak for some weeks. Several of our company also were unwell, the cause for which could probably be found in the hot days and cool nights, the drinking of cold mountain water, and the eating of dried meat, which we had to eat for want of fresh. An emetic or purgative, promptly administered, usually brought speedy relief.

On the seventh day we went up the right shore of the Bear River by a fairly level and open road and encamped that evening on its banks. Our night camp was at too attractive a place to be merely mentioned; for we were at one of the most remarkable spots in the whole mountain country—at the Beer Spring, so well known to every mountain traveler.

---

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - THE BEER SPRING - JOURNEY TO FORT HALL

AS THERE are persons whose expression fascinates and wins us through something that we keenly feel but cannot clearly understand, so is it also true of some natural scenes. Such an impression took possession of me at first view of the so-called Beer Spring. I have looked on finer and more majestic scenes, but never found a more home-like place than this valley, produced out of the wrecks of prior geological revolutions, or one on which Nature had bestowed more of everlasting peace. Surrounded by banks of lava, numberless mineral springs bubble forth out of the calcined ground; a charming cedar grove invites the weary wanderer to its shades and the clear babbling Bear River rolls its ripples through the valley of peace.

We approached the valley from the east on the seventh day after leaving Green River (on July

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

16th). The way thither was sprinkled with scattered pieces of lava, and satisfied us that we were on the edge of the so-called great lava plain which is said to stretch in northwesterly direction about one hundred miles across the Snake River.

This lava consists of grayish black, porous, very heavy and hard pieces, varying much in size, sometimes covering the ground in flat layers, sometimes however in walls ten or fifteen feet high and several hundred feet in length, going down vertically on one side and running back to the level on the other in one connected mass. Nowhere in this region could I find anything like craters to whose extinct volcanic activity in prior ages these results could be ascribed. They seemed rather to have originated in so-called earth fires. The neighborhood of Beer Spring forms a center of this land of slags. At least I have not seen elsewhere these scoriae, lying flat as well as built in walls, more frequent or more characteristic of the country. About Beer Spring the lava bed is covered with a very white potter's clay. Out of a hill formed of this clay, the white clay hill, arises a clear fresh brook that flows into the Bear River. About half a mile off is the bottom of this valley abounding in springs. It lies in 44° north latitude and 109° west longitude, on the eastern bank of Bear River. It is shaped like an amphitheater. On the south it is bounded by the Bear River, running from east to west, and by hills beyond the river, covered with pine; on the three other sides it is enclosed by a chain of low sandy, cone-shaped hills, in part bare, in part crowned with pine and cedar. The valley thus enclosed is half a mile to a mile in diameter, and covered as to the greater part with a cedar grove. This evergreen cedar (*Juniperus Virginiana*) is the same which is also found in the eastern parts of the United States. It is only found in sandy soil on low mountains or the slopes of higher ones. It tends rather to thickness and breadth than to height, and is never crowded, though forming little woods. Unfortunately travelers have cut down and burned many trees of this grove. Its total destruction could rob the valley of one of its most precious ornaments. I fixed my camp under an old cedar, near one of the springs, that here bubble up from the ground. Exhausted by the burden and heat of the day, we all refreshed ourselves with this delicious draught. It was a cool, sparkling water, slightly chalybeate to the taste, with cheering and invigorating effect on the nervous system. So far as I could determine without chemical analysis, it is some acid of iron with abundant carbonic acid and slight admixture of salts. Addition of a little sugar and tartaric acid made it effervesce rapidly; in quiet condition, the carbonic acid escaped in little pearly bubbles. This pearling and effervescing has given the water the prosaic name of Beer Spring, since the term beer is in general use for all effervescing liquids. These springs appear either singly in perpendicularly walled openings out of the earth, about a foot in circumference and several feet deep; or else several of them form a common basin.

The water seems to be the same in all of them. On the margin of these springs there is usually a deposit of a red-brown oxide of iron, and various limestone formations with petrefactions are in the vicinity. The bottom of the spring is a soft mud. The water level seems to be the same in all of them. They have no outlet, although they are obviously in subterranean connection with each other, as well as with the Bear River, close by. For even in the river itself a number of such springs are seen to bubble up, and the stones on the shore, that are washed by these little fountains, are also coated with a red-brown crust. Several of these springs, shaded from the sun, which I tested with the thermometer, showed, all of them, a temperature of 54° F., while the air in the shade stood at 76° . A warm spring, some thousands of feet lower down the river, and close by it, deserves special mention. The spring issues from a block of lime, which it formed itself, in all prob-

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

ability, in the course of time. The stream, as thick as an arm, spouts out in abrupt pulsations, and runs into the river over the rock which is coated with oxide of iron and white crystals of salt. With the air at a temperature of 76° F., this water showed 84°. Its taste was like that of the cold springs, only weaker. About six feet off are two smaller openings, one of which is obstructed, while the other is still open. From the latter there issues with puffing noise, also in spurts, which are not timed, however, with those of the water, a gas mingled with vapor. This gas has a somewhat pungent and benumbing odor. Some of my companions thought it weak sulphurated hydrogen; to me it seemed merely carbonic acid gas. The puffing noise deceptively resembles the well-known sound of an engine, for which reason is also known by the name "Steamboat."

Gladly would I have spent some time in this most interesting valley, but my companions, less enthusiastic than I, insisted on pushing on; and so we left it the next morning. On our seven-day journey from the Green River to the Beer Spring we had covered almost two hundred miles. Many Indians, for whom we traveled too rapidly, had remained behind. Here our company divided again. The greater part of them went northwestwardly to Fort Hall on the Snake River, about fifty or sixty miles distant: while about a dozen others traveled northwardly to hunt, and then also go, with fresh provisions of meat, to Fort Hall. The latter party consisted of my old traveling companions that intended to go to the Columbia River. I joined them. In the mountains themselves we had seen no game save some grizzly bears; and so had lived on the dried meat which we had bought of the Indians at the rendezvous. The projected trip to the Columbia, however, on which we would have to cross a wide, barren, sandy plateau, made fresh meat supplies a necessity, which determined us to make this side trip. The neighborhood of the Beer Spring does not abound in game; further north, however, toward the Snake River, we hoped to find more of it. The leader of our little party was Mr. Richardson, an experienced mountaineer, who had been with us from the beginning of our Journey. On July 17th we left the Beer Spring. Between Snake River and Bear River there is an unimportant chain of mountains, a continuation of the one down whose northwestern slope we had traveled. Two little streams, Gray Creek and Blackfoot Creek, have their sources in these mountains, and flow into the Snake River in a northwesterly course. We crossed these mountains, and zigzagged northeastwardly and northwestwardly in the angle formed by the three streams last mentioned.

On the first day we only saw some shy antelope; on the second day we saw two buffalo, and killed one of them. The country was broken, the ground sandy, and game was scarce. For three days we remained on a little brook, while some of us were sent out to hunt. In all this time only three buffalo, a buffalo calf and a grizzly bear were shot. If ever a sojourn was tedious to me, it was this one. The surroundings were depressingly desolate. Only hungry ravens croaked around, as if in mockery of us; and as the Blackfeet frequently roam through the country, we had to keep as quiet as possible. No one was permitted to fire a gun or go hunting, save the hunters regularly chosen for the purpose. On the seventh day we finally started off again. I felt a load off my heart as I mounted once more, and turned my back on this uncanny country. On the same day we saw in the distance the so-called Three Buttes, three steep snow peaks, across the Snake River, visible from afar. The sandy valley of the Snake River was spread out before us. On the eighth day we crossed the Blackfoot Creek, followed its course for a time, and finally on the ninth day camped near the Snake River, about eight miles below Fort Hall. The next day, July 26th, I rode with some others to the fort.

---

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - THE COLUMBIA RIVER - THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

FORT HALL lies on the left bank of the Snake River, between the mouths of the Blackfoot and Portneuf Creeks. It was built by Capt. Wyeth, and sold by him some years later, when he left the mountains, to the Hudson's Bay Company, in whose possession it has remained up to the present. It is the most southern fort which this English company has pushed into the Oregon Territory of the United States. The fort lies hard by the river, and is built in a square of about eighty by eighty feet, suggestive of barracks. The style is essentially that of Fort Laramie, except that the outer walls, ten to twelve feet high, are constructed in this case out of partly baked brick instead of wood. A small cannon is in the courtyard. The fort owns many horses and six cows. The whole garrison consisted of six men; among them two Sandwich Islanders and a German. The clerks of the fort were Mr. Armedinger and Mr. Walker. We had learned to know the former as a jovial companion at the rendezvous. Both showed themselves very obliging to us, and furnished in this respect an agreeable contrast to the often brusque behavior of agents at American forts. The day of our arrival we were invited to a supper in the fort, which would be deemed quite frugal in civilized life, but which, in this wilderness, consisted of the most delicious dishes which we had tasted since we started, namely, bread, butter, milk, dried buffalo meat and tea with rum. No Paris meal composed with all a gourmand's art ever tasted better to me, than the luxuries (for that country) of this feast on the sand steppes of the Snake River. As we intended to stay here at least eight days to allow our animals to recuperate and to prepare ourselves for the trying journey to the Columbia, I employed the time in making inquiries about the Hudson's Bay Company and the country about the Columbia River, and here give the result:

The Snake River (Lewis River) has its source on the western slope of the main chain of the Rockies, and flows in northwesterly direction about eight hundred miles, when it unites with the Clarke River, coming from the northeast, to form the Columbia River, which, after a western course of only two hundred miles, empties into the Pacific Ocean. The Snake River flows through a sandy plateau, in which there can be found almost no game and very little food for the animals. About one hundred miles from the Columbia, the Snake River pierces a spur of the Rockies, the Blue Mountains. The river has a very rapid current, and is broken up by numerous falls, of which the first begin a little below Fort Hall, and has banks of basalt, so steep that one must often go along them for quite a while before finding a place to get water. Below the falls, near the Columbia River, it is full of salmon, which the Indians kill by thousands with the spear, dry and keep in store. Until one comes to that region one must be provided with an ample supply of dried meat, if one does not wish to risk encountering such hardships as Mr. Hunt experienced on his memorable journey thitherward. The broad Snake River valley is in the main sterile country. The climate there is moderately warm. The summers are remarkable for great dryness; for whole months there is neither dew nor rain. The winters are rather cold. Snow is often several feet deep. Westwardly from the Snake River there are several steep mountain chains with many glaciers, dividing this country from California and the Pacific Ocean. The direct road to California is very difficult on account of these mountains. Even unloaded mules can cross them only with great effort. For this reason it is thought preferable for those going to upper California to make a detour via the Columbia River. The distance from Fort Hall to the Columbia is estimated at about six hundred

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

miles. A second fort belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company lies at the junction of the Boisse with the Snake River. The first English fort on the Columbia is Walla Walla, about nine miles below the Snake River. But the main fort of the Hudson's Bay Company is Vancouver, on the right bank of the Columbia, about ninety miles from its mouth. Furthermore, there is a fort on the Clarke River, Fort Colleville, and several others of less importance on various small rivers that flow into the Columbia. These forts are built like the American ones, meant simply for defense against the Indians, and without military garrisons. Fort George, the Astoria of the past, consists simply of a blockhouse occupied by only three or four men, whose duty it is to note the arrival of vessels and pilot them. The Columbia River seems to have been known to Spanish seamen. The honor of its first authentic discovery belongs to Captain Robert Gray of Boston, who, sailing under the flag of the United States, discovered it in May, 1792, ascended it for fifteen miles, and gave it the name of his own vessel, Columbia. Two promontories form the entrance to the Columbia River: on the north, Cape Disappointment; on the south, Cape Adams. A sand bank running from north to south for two miles, with, at places, only four and a half fathoms, makes the entrance difficult; but there is on one side a channel of adequate depth, though narrow. For the first ten miles the Columbia is about four miles broad; higher up, to Vancouver, it has an average width of a mile. It is a deep river, carrying much water. Vessels with not more than fourteen feet draught can ascend it for about one hundred and twenty-five miles; but above that a succession of falls begin, impassable for vessels of every kind, forming obstacles whose removal would be disproportionately expensive.

The land along the Columbia has been described in most recent times as a western paradise. The truth of the matter is that the ground is indeed very fruitful, and well suited for the cultivation of wheat, barley, oats, rice, beans, potatoes, apples, tobacco and the like; but just as good tracts of land can be found in Illinois and Missouri. Besides, the Columbia River itself has only small valleys, which are subject to overflow; and so the valleys of the smaller streams that flow into the Columbia from the north and south are even better. One of the most fertile tracts is the land along the Wallamette, which flows from south to north into the Columbia. Immediately on the seacoast the land is the worst. The chief kinds of wood are white oak and long-leaf pine. Game is scarce, but there is superfluity of fish, especially salmon. The climate in summer is about the same as in the central part of the United States. The summer is distinguished by its dryness; for which reason maize succeeds indifferently. In winter, there is seldom frost or snow; but from October to April there is almost continuous rain, which refreshes the dried grass and makes it green. The fields are usually sown as early as January. These mild winters make this country one of the most suitable for cattle raising. No part of the United States is thought to excel it therein. Horses, cattle, and sheep - hogs in a less degree - thrive here exceptionally, and multiply with amazing rapidity. The country on the Wallamette is also distinguished in this particular. The settlement at Vancouver is up to now the largest on the Columbia River. The fort is a square building, two or three hundred feet long and broad. In its midst are the various workshops; but the workmen live chiefly outside of the fort in little block houses. The people in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, mostly Canadians, amount to about two hundred, and as for the greater part they have married Indian women, the whole number of inhabitants may be estimated at from seven to eight hundred. The fort has laid out a farm in its vicinity. In 1837, about three thousand acres were in cultivation. The produce was: 8,000 bushels of wheat, 5,500, bushels of barley, 6,000 bushels of oats, 9,000

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

bushels of peas, and 4,000 bushels of potatoes. Of animals they had in the same year about one thousand head of cattle, seven hundred hogs, two hundred sheep, five hundred horses and forty yoke of draught oxen. In addition they have a great threshing machine, a distillery, and a grist mill. A saw mill, cutting 3,000 feet a day, and served by twenty-eight men and ten yoke of oxen, lies six miles from Vancouver on a little river that flows into the Columbia. The surplus products, chiefly flour and boards, the Hudson's Bay Company exports to the Sandwich Islands and to California. For one thousand feet of boards they get in the Sandwich Islands \$60.00 to \$100.00. In California, they generally exchange for cattle at \$3.00 a head. The company conducts this trade with its own vessels. It owns at present one ship, one brig, one schooner, one sloop and one steamboat. The inner organization of the Hudson's Bay Company is based on strict subordination. The company consists of one hundred shareholders, who are such, however, only for life. Headquarters are in London. The general agents, who live in America (partners), receive one-eighth of the profit on one share, which amounts annually to \$4,000 to \$5,000; chief traders receive one-sixteenth; clerks receive yearly £100; and laborers £15 to £17 with fixed rations of potatoes, salmon, beans and salt in addition. The company engages its men for five years, and sends them back to their homes if they do not wish to serve longer. Old employees it permits to stay in the country on leave of absence, assigning them land to cultivate. During the time they receive no salary, but can be called into service at any moment. Promotions are made on a system based on rank and age. A yearly meeting of the partners and chief traders is held at York Factory on Hudson's Bay, which meeting has jurisdiction over all employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, and issues its orders from there. Constant communication is maintained between Vancouver and York Factory by land through express messengers. In addition a ship comes yearly from London to the Columbia River to bring fresh merchandise, and to carry back to England the furs which the company acquires from Indians and trappers in coast and inland trade. Beaver skins are the most profitable part of the cargo. Shipment of salmon has been abandoned. The company receives all its goods from England free of duty, and sells them much cheaper than the American companies. In this way the Hudson's Bay Company is in position to hold all competitors in check, and to maintain an undisputed overlordship over all the regions beyond the Rocky Mountains. The Indians on the Columbia River, already greatly diminished in numbers through disease and excesses, are committed to it so unconditionally that they scarce dare to trade with Americans. As yet, all attempts ventured by Americans against this company have gone to pieces. The Hudson's Bay Company has the advantages of connection by sea, internal union and the protection of the English government. The only settlement made by citizens of the United States is now on the Wallamette. This small stream, flowing from the south to the Columbia, is about one hundred and fifty miles long, and navigable for ships of twelve feet draught for about twenty miles. Some New York Methodist missionaries have recently settled here and gathered around them a little colony of Americans, Canadians and Indians. As they do not trade, but devote themselves only to, agriculture and cattle raising, the Hudson's Bay Company has put no obstacles in their way, but, on the contrary, encourages them and takes supplies from them at fixed prices. For a bushel of wheat, for instance, the company usually gives fifty cents in goods, while it receives on its part one dollar and a half in money from the Russians in California.

The Americans, whose claims to the territory of the Columbia River are much better founded than those of the English, are now merely tolerated by the Hudson's Bay Company. Had the Gov-

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

ernment of the United States given the slightest support to Astor's enterprise, the Americans in all probability would still be in possession of the country; but, as it is, the United States has done nothing to protect its claims through treaties. As far back as 1818 a treaty was made between the United States and England, whereunder both powers were allowed free access to the Columbia, without abandoning their respective claims. In 1826, the United States proposed to England to draw the line beyond the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean in prolongation of the boundary on this side of the mountains, that is to say, on the forty-ninth parallel, whereunder the Columbia River would have fallen wholly in the territory of the United States; but the proposal was rejected and the former treaty was renewed for an indefinite period determinable by one year's notice. This provisional arrangement, during which the English, by means of the Hudson's Bay Company, have acquired the actual control of the country, is still in force. The country is too valuable to ever be surrendered voluntarily by the English. While the Columbia is navigable for only a short distance, and its tributaries, on account of the numerous falls, are not suited for navigation, there is the better opportunity for mills and power plants; and better communications could easily be secured through the construction of canals. Moreover, the country is very suitable for agriculture and cattle raising. The interior trade and the coast trade with the Indians is very profitable. The intercourse with the Sandwich Islands, California, Russian America and Asia grows from year to year; and the trading vessels and whalers on the Pacific Ocean find here a safe base for action. In short, if any place on the western shore of North America seems designed by nature to be a western New York on the Pacific Ocean, it is this. The Straits of Juan de Fuca, somewhat further north, form a much better harbor. It is said that a whole fleet could anchor there in safety. These straits also lie south of the forty-ninth parallel. The Hudson's Bay Company seems to have secret assurances from the English government that at the worst the course of the Columbia River would be made the boundary, and its right bank retained; at least all the chief settlements of the company are made on that side, and buildings begun on the left shore have been abandoned. But the United States will not submit to such an infraction of its rights, and again the problem of the Gordian Knot will not be solved without the sword.

---

CHAPTER FIFTEEN - BEGINNING THE RETURN JOURNEY - THE BEAVER

I REMAINED eight days at Fort Hall. We camped outside of the fort. Various parties of Indians and trappers arrived during this time, and camped by us. The trappers were mostly French-Canadians, preparing for a fresh campaign against the beavers. The Indians, chiefly Flatheads, led a life that suited them perfectly. They gambled and sang all night long, and slept during the day. Near the fort were some graves. In one of them rested Antoine Godin, an adventurous mountaineer and a bitter foe of the Blackfeet. It was he who brought on in 1832 the bloody fight with the Blackfeet at Pierre's Hole, related in W. Irving's "Rocky Mountains," by treacherously grasping the hand of their leader, while another shot him. The Blackfeet after that harbored the bitterest enmity for him. Some years later a band of Blackfeet appeared near Fort Hall, on the right bank of the Snake River. Through signs they made it known that they were peaceably disposed and wished to trade with the fort. Some white men-among them Godin, who chanced to be there-crossed the river, and smoked the pipe of peace with them. While they were thus employed, a Blackfoot shot Godin from behind, and so avenged the death of their leader through similar treachery. Such occur-

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

es are here, unfortunately, not uncommon; and the first provocation is given ordinarily by the whites rather than by the Indians.

The days of rest which I spent at Fort Hall restored full vigor to my body, which had been debilitated by my previous illness and hardships; and the leisure I had to reflect on my program for further travel, determined me to change it; and, instead of going to the Columbia River to return to the United States. Several reasons brought me to this conclusion. In our party, composed of very heterogeneous elements, many dissensions had of late developed, so that a regular separation occurred, our party, small as it was, splitting into three or four smaller ones. Although I took no part in these petty quarrels, I was ill at ease the while, and missed a great comfort on such trips, that is, good company. Moreover, I would in all probability have had to spend the winter on the Columbia, for the journey from there to California by land is very fatiguing and dangerous. Caravans go there but seldom, and then my limited means would not permit me a prolonged stay on the Columbia and a scientific exploration of the country.

Under these circumstances I thought it most advisable to return in the fall to the United States by another road than that by which we had come up. Two of my former traveling companions came to the same resolution. But as we were all novices in mountain life, and wished to cross the country in various directions, we looked about for an experienced and reliable guide, and found him in Mr. Richardson, who had accompanied our journey up as hunter. So there were only four of us to begin the return trip. Our plan was to cross the Rocky Mountains in a more southern direction; to gradually draw toward the Mexican border and to reach the boundary of Missouri by the great Santa Fe road. Our undertaking was not without danger. Our little party, in case of an encounter with hostile Indians, had little chance of success. On the other hand, we had the advantage of attracting less notice and of being able to travel faster.

We left Fort Hall in high spirits on August 10th. We proceeded on a southeasterly course directly to the Beer Spring, sixty miles off. The road thither was hilly and even somewhat mountainous. Pine, cedar and cottonwood were the prevailing trees. At a little brook I had the pleasure of seeing for the first time an old beaver dam. Unfortunately I did not get sight of a single beaver on the whole journey; for they are very wary and from June to August, during which time I was in beaver regions, beaver trapping is usually suspended. So I can give the natural history of this remarkable animal only on the basis of reliable reports.

The beaver (*Castor Fiber*) is about two feet long, has a thick heavy body, compressed head with short elliptical ears, and somewhat oval, but rather broad tail, about ten inches long and covered with scales. The whole body is covered with a dense fur, consisting of longer reddish brown and shorter silvery hair. The skill of these animals in constructing their dwellings is well known. They prefer living on brooks and streamlets whose shores are overgrown with willows. In order to have deep water continually, they build a dam through the water, sometimes diagonally, sometimes in a convex bow. At this dam all the colony of beavers living together work jointly. Their only tools for this building are their teeth, their claws and their tail. In the water thus dammed up, each beaver family builds for itself out of the same material little square dwellings. In addition to these dwellings the beavers usually have side caverns in the bank of the stream (caches), where they retire when their dwellings are destroyed. When the state of the water makes it unnecessary, or when they are often disturbed, they build neither dam nor dwellings, but content themselves with these side caverns. Their dwellings, which they frequently repair, become in time so firm that they can

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

only be broken with tools. The greater part of these dwellings is under water; but there is under the roof a space without water, as the beavers cannot remain long under water without breathing. The conical roof is often four to six feet thick. The interior of their dwellings they keep very neat. Every dwelling has, deep down in the water, on the side furthest removed from the shore, an opening for the entrance and exit of its inmates. Beavers work only at night. By day they do not leave their dams, and swim, when going from one cone to another, so far under water that one cannot notice them.

The beaver feeds on the roots of various water plants; for instance, a nuphar luteum, but chiefly on the bark of various trees, especially willow, cottonwood and birch. Only in sore need does he gnaw the pines. With this object, beavers fell trees whose trunks are even six to eight inches in diameter, solely by gnawing them with their sharp teeth, leaving a conical stump. They like to cut the trees on the shore side and then float them down on the water to their dwellings. If the locality does not admit of floating the trees they drag them overland for long distances. They gather in summer provisions for the winter, which they keep in front of the entrances to their dwellings. The females bring forth yearly two to five young. The young beavers are very droll creatures. Their cry deceptively resembles that of little children. The beavers are usually caught in iron traps, whose two springs can be pressed apart. The bait which is put on it is a mixture of beaver secretions (castoreum) with various spices and some whiskey. A stick or twig is smeared with this, and set upon the trap. The bait must project over the water. The trap itself is in the water, and fastened to the shore by a chain. In summer, the beavers are lean, and their fur is poor, for which reason they are usually not caught at this time. But in winter they get fat and have thicker hair. Their meat is very palatable. The tails, which are fat all through, are especially regarded as delicacies. Besides the fur, the castoreum found in two pouches on the belly, is very valuable for its use in medicine. A persistent enemy of the beaver is the wolverine (*Gulo Luseus*), a sort of glutton who attacks not only the winter supplies of the beavers, but often the beavers themselves. Their most dangerous enemy, however, is the tireless trapper. The beaver formerly spread over the greater part of the United States. From the cultivated portions he has disappeared long ago; and in his present home, in the Rocky Mountains, he is beginning to become scarcer. Hundreds of thousands of them have been trapped there in the last decades, and a war of extermination has been waged against the race. The consequence is that they are now found only singly in regions that were formerly well known for their abundance of beavers. It is only in the lands of hostile Indians, the Blackfeet, for instance, that they still exist in greater numbers, because the Indians do not specially occupy themselves with beaver trapping. The furs of beavers caught in the spring are best. However, many trappers catch them in every season. The green skins are first cleaned, then stretched out, dried and folded. A dry beaver pelt weighs usually from one to two pounds; but there are some of three pounds weight. About sixty beaver skins are bound together in a pack. Two such packs make an ordinary load for a mule. The Hudson's Bay Company has established more system in beaver trapping within its territories. It allows trapping only at certain seasons, and when beavers get scarce in any neighborhood, trapping is strictly forbidden there for some years. In regions, however, on whose permanent possession the company does not count, it allows the trappers to do as they please. But if trapping is carried on in this ruthless fashion, in fifty years all the beavers there will have disappeared, as have those in the east, and the country will thereby lose a productive branch of commerce.

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

On the third day after leaving Fort Hall we came again to the Beer Spring. The day was hot; so much the more refreshing the water. In front of us several smoke wreaths arose. We had also discovered other signs of Indians that were ahead of us. Nevertheless, we slept without sense of danger. Our party was too small to permit of a night watch. Exertion by day and by night would have exhausted us too much. The only precaution we took was to tie our animals at night close by; for the rest we relied on good fortune. That we kept our guns in prime condition is a matter of course. On such journeys one gets habituated to his rifle as to a trusty traveling companion. During the march the gun lies across the saddle; when one rests it is always close at hand.

One never leaves camp without taking it as a cane; and at night it is wrapped in the blanket with the sleeper, to be ready for use at the first alarm. As disquieting as such conditions would be in civilized life, here one becomes so habituated to them that I do not remember to have ever slept more peacefully in my life. We no longer used tents, but slept quite unprotected in the open air. The weather, too, had of late become so genial as to leave nothing to be desired. During all the time that we were on the west side of the Rocky Mountains we had very steady weather. In the morning the thermometer was usually between 30° and 40° Fahrenheit; at noon about 80° ; at evening about 60° . With this the sky was clear and the west wind cool. When clouds occasionally gathered, the west wind, putting forth more force, scattered the approaching storm, sometimes with thunder and lightning, but generally without rain.

---

CHAPTER SIXTEEN - THE JOURNEY FROM BEER SPRING TO FORT CROCKET

WE left the Beer Spring on the morning of August 14th. I drank some cups of the sparkling water, and bade adieu to the place so endeared to me as to an old friend that one does not expect to see again for a long time. Our direction was southeastwardly. We ascended the right bank of the Bear River for four days, following almost the same road which we had taken through the Bear River Valley about a month before, after we had crossed the Rocky Mountains; but this time we generally kept closer to the river. On the first day we were crossing great stretches that had been burnt over, and round about us clouds of smoke were still ascending from the mountains, as to the meaning of which we could not entirely agree. The Indians usually light such fires as signals, when they wish to collect the scattered bands. So they are often regarded as indications that enemies are in the vicinity, or are making an excursion. The region through which we traveled belonged, it is true, to a friendly Indian tribe, the Snakes; but they are ravaged occasionally by these implacable foes of both white and red men, the Blackfeet. We were therefore on our guard so far as the small number of our party permitted.

The same day we came across a party of trappers, whom we had already met at Fort Hall. There were eight of them, chiefly Canadians, going after beaver. Some of them had their squaws with them. They were bound for Ham's Fork, a mountain stream emptying into the Green River, and, though our road was not the most direct for them, they chose, for company's sake, to travel some days with us. Most of them were old mountaineers of great experience, and they met us with the geniality characteristic of the Canadian. We extended reciprocal hospitalities. There was no fresh meat in camp, but sufficient of dried; also toro, coffee, cocoa and peppermint tea. One of the trappers was a Fleming. He had a squaw with him, of the tribe of the Eutaws, whom he had bought at one time for \$500.00, but was disposed to sell for half the purchase price. She was a little, unshap-

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

en bundle of fat; but otherwise seemed to have very good qualities, for he recommended her to us in the following terms, characteristic of the cardinal virtues of a squaw: "She is young, gentle, easy, and in first rate order." The trappers seem, unfortunately, to have adopted from the Indians the habit of looking on their Indian wives as chattels, not persons; and the squaws themselves seem to desire no other position. On the second day we started together, and crossed the Thulick Fork, a streamlet flowing into the Bear River from the north. Under way we met a band of Snake Indians. The first who saw us, took to flight before us, but when we had convinced them that we were friendly disposed, they came in crowds to our noonday camp. The Snakes are a peaceable tribe. Their country is not rich in game, so they gather in the fall divers roots and berries for the winter. They had lighted the fires which we had seen these last days, but only to call their people together for a great hunting party. The Snakes had five horses with them. A race of several miles for a wager was immediately arranged between one of their horses and an American horse. The latter won. In the afternoon, making a rather steep ascent, which afforded us a view of Little Snake Lake, lying to the south, we went along the Bear River on which we camped at night near the mouth of Thomas Fork. The third day we stopped at noon at Smith's Fork, emptying into the Bear River from the northeast. Near by, there was a rock from which the Blackfeet several years ago had shot into Bonneville's camp, killing, however, only a mule. Smith's Fork was the first stream coming from the western mountain slope which we had touched on our former passage through the mountains. From here on we took a direction differing from that of our former trip. Instead of returning northeastwardly over the mountains, we now turned southeastwardly, in order to reach the Green River some hundreds of miles further down. I have already mentioned, in speaking of our passage over the mountains, that the chain we then crossed runs out to a southern point. At this point, as it seems, the chain is pierced by the great eastern prairie for a distance of forty or fifty miles, not that it is an open plain, but it is certainly much more open, uniform and level than the mountains to the north and south, and does not offer such unsurmountable obstacles as they do to the passage of teams. This, as it were, pierced part of the mountains, is bounded on the south by the snow peaks of the Eutaw Mountains, on the west by the Bear River, and on the east by the Green River. The southeastern direction, which we took from Smith's Fork, carried us right through this region, which is perhaps the most convenient pass over the mountains. Going from there in northeasterly direction, one reaches again, by a rather open road, the Green River and the Sweet Waters; but we preferred to go southeastwardly, and to keep entirely off from our former route. The trappers left us at Smith's Fork. One of them, however, a native of French Switzerland, resolved to go with us. Swiss (so we usually called him) had roamed through the mountains for eleven full years, and suddenly took a notion to try civilization again, and to come with us to St. Louis. He was an experienced mountaineer and good hunter. On his accession, our party numbered five men. On August 9th, we left Smith's Fork and went still up the Bear River, though at some distance from it, over sandy, rather level ground, to the Muddy, which empties into the Bear River. Here we finally left the Bear River and went southeastwardly toward Black Fork, which has its source in the Eutaw Mountains and flows toward the Green River. The snow peaks of the Eutaw Mountains were on our right. They are not so imposing as those of the Wind River Mountains. The grass in this region as a rule was very poor, the game very scarce. We had not yet seen buffalo on our return trip, and the few antelopes we came across were usually wild. But our leader was fortunate enough to kill one of them on the way to the Black Fork. The nearer we got to Black

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

Fork the more uninteresting we found the country. The ground was a loamy sand. Only cedar groves throve here in which black-tailed deer occur singly. This species is as large as the European deer, with long ears and a black point at the tail. But we did not get a shot at any of them. The Black Fork itself is a clear rushing brook, overgrown with cottonwood, willows and wild currants. Our animals found also splendid grass. From here the country becomes more hilly. Many steep, conical, naked sand hills alternated now and then with little cedar groves. From there we reached Henry's Fork, a small stream flowing into the Green River south of the Black Fork. On the shores grew pine, cottonwood and willows. The grass was good. We followed the streamlet to its mouth. We had warm days, and suffered so much from mosquitoes at night, that we often could not get one hour's rest.

On August 15th, we crossed the Green River, which winds its way among precipitous mountains, and at this point can still be easily forded, going slantingly down stream for two more days. The road was generally steep, and led through forests of pine and cedar. The river valley at first was narrow, but widened further on. The geological formation was still the primitive. On August 17th we reached Fort Crocket. It is situated close by the Green River on its left bank. The river valley here is broad, and has good pasturage and sufficient wood. The fort itself is the worst thing of the kind that we have seen on our journey. It is a low one-story building, constructed of wood and clay, with three connecting wings, and no enclosure. Instead of cows the fort had only some goats. In short, the whole establishment appeared somewhat poverty-stricken, for which reason it is also known to the trappers by the name of Fort Misery (Fort de Misere). The fort belongs to three Americans: Thompson, Gray and Sinclair. The latter was at the fort, and received us very kindly but regretted his inability to offer us any supplies. For our store of meat was exhausted, and we had hoped to supply ourselves here with new provisions. But the people at the fort seemed to be worse off than we were. The day before they had bought a lean dog from the Indians for five dollars, and considered its meat a delicacy. I, too, tried some of it, and found its taste not so bad. In addition to some trappers and Indians, we found five Americans here, who had started in the spring with a larger party from Peoria, Illinois, to make a settlement on the Columbia River. They had arrived in Westport after our departure, and had journeyed first by the Santa Fe road, then up the Arkansas. But through several quarrels and mishaps, the company, consisting mainly of novices, was split up into several smaller groups. The party we here met had made most progress, and had not yet abandoned the plan of going to the Columbia. But the most difficult part of their journey lay before them. So two of them, Mr. Ogley and Mr. Wood, thought it best to avail themselves of the opportunity to return now offered them, and to join our party. Our party was thereby increased to seven. Among the people of the fort I had expected to meet an old friend of University days who had been roving through the mountains these six years, and who was supposed to be at this time at the fort. To note the metamorphosis from a jovial student at Jena into a trapper would be interesting enough in itself. The presence of S. would have afforded me a pleasure far beyond this, as we had not seen each other for ten years. Unfortunately, I learned that he had gone beaver-trapping and would not return before fall. So we left the fort the next day.

---

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN - JOURNEY FROM FORT CROCKET TO THE SOUTH FORK

ON August 18th we started from Fort Crocket. Our next objective point was the North Fork of

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

the Platte; so our direction was generally east. We went down the Green River for some miles more, and through a ravine six or eight miles long, Brown's Hole, where steep rocks of sandstone and porphyry rose abruptly on either side, at a distance of from one hundred to two hundred feet. At the end of this gorge we pitched our camp for the night. The next morning we scraped together the last morsels in our meat bags and ate them in hopes of soon getting fresh meat. But our way led over a desert sand plain with little grass and no game. In the morning we had crossed the Vermillion, a little brook with reddish water, which flows into the Green River, but at evening we did not even find water. We marched on till late at night, and finally laid ourselves down, hungry and thirsty, on the sandy soil. The next morning we reached the Snake River, and rested up a little. I still found in my food bag a little rice, whereof we cooked ourselves a thin soup. The other empty spaces in our stomachs we filled with wild currants and bullberries that grew along the shores. The latter, also called rabbit berries, are the fruit of the *Shephardia argentea*, a large bush, whose leaves are shiny white on the under side. The red berries in appearance and taste resemble currants, but were still quite unripe. Nevertheless they tasted famously. In the afternoon we got sight of some antelope, but they did not come within range. Our leader and Swiss usually rode on either side to hunt, while we marched slowly forward. As we reached towards evening a creek, where we intended to camp, we suddenly heard the growl of a grizzly bear quite close by. My companions had no ambition to meddle with it; but I could not resist the temptation, and made toward the place whence the sound came. All around was high grass and thick bush, so, that I could not see the bear. Of a sudden the beast started up only a few feet in front of me. I quickly raised my gun; the bear stopped short, and instantly disappeared in the tall grass. All this was the matter of a few seconds. I followed the track through the brush as far as my horse could press through, and tried to persuade my companions to beat the bush together on foot; but they showed no disposition that way. Meanwhile, the bear escaped across the river. When our leader rejoined us, we finally went into the thicket, but found only the tracks of a she-grizzly and two cubs without seeing the animals themselves. So, instead of roast bear we had to content ourselves this evening again with bullberries.

On the next day we did not find even berries. On the fifth day we started off with empty stomachs, but in good spirits. A thick mist covered the country, so that one could see only a few feet ahead. Our leader, who was riding ahead, suddenly sprang from his horse, and only then did we see a great black lump that was moving before us. It was three portly bears that saw us at the same moment, and ran away. We immediately chased after them in different directions, but the fog prevented us from following their tracks. The fog lifted soon after. Before us was a little stream with many cottonwood trees, called the big timber. There we hoped to find game. So Richardson and Swiss took the direct road toward it, while the rest of us went toward a point where we were to meet at noon. We came across some antelope, but they seemed to know of our ravenous hunger and to make sport of us. We kept pretty close to the river and had covered about ten miles, when suddenly one of us, who had lagged somewhat behind, galloped up in hot haste, and shouted to us to make for the timber as fast as we could. Although we ourselves could discover nothing, we could only take the call to mean that enemies were at hand. Without much questioning, we rushed for the timber, only a few hundred steps off, and looked for a position suitable for defense. Our informant assured us now that he had seen a whole band of mounted Indians, one or two miles off, coming toward us in full career. We surmised that they were Blackfeet and prepared for

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

a serious encounter. Our animals we tied to trees close by. For ourselves we looked to our weapons, firmly resolved that we would at least sell our scalps dearly. All this took but a few minutes. Then there was an expectant pause. Nothing stirred as yet. One of us crept the while to the edge of the timber to reconnoiter. "There they come," he suddenly cried, "Come here quick!" We hurried to him, and saw with astonishment a whole troop-not of Blackfeet, to be sure, but-of elk rushing toward us. They had not yet seen us, because we were hid behind bushes; but they scented us, and, with their customary curiosity, ran up to us. All at once our rifles cracked. Several tumbled, and one lay dead in its tracks. With exultation we fell upon the coveted victim. It was a fat elk cow. To live in plenty after several days of fasting, to be sure is pleasanter than being scalped by Blackfeet; still our informant had to bear many a joke on account of his defective vision. Such mistakes, however, are not uncommon in mountain life. At a distance an elk, especially if he throws back his head, looks very much like a horseman. Meanwhile our two hunters joined us, and helped us carve.

Quite systematically we now began to arrange our bill of fare. First soup appeared on the table, then cooked meat, then various roasts, and finally sausages stuffed with liver, and marrow bones. Pauses were made between the courses. Our appetite was all that could be desired. Whoever had seen us in civilized life give such substantial demonstrations of appetite as we did, would have set us down for a band of hungry wolves or gluttons. But here the whole thing seemed quite natural. After we had feasted and rested for about four hours, we moved on again, to promote digestion, and covered about eight miles, going along the river. "Indians!" suddenly exclaimed our leader. We listened, and heard to one side Indian speech. We approached carefully, and found a little party, consisting of Captain Walker, whom we had met at the rendezvous, and some trappers and Indians, who had come here some days ago to get dried meat. Captain Walker is an original among mountain loafers. He has roamed through the mountains, chiefly on his own hook, in all directions, and has made a side trip to California. He has taken such a fancy to this life that it is unlikely that he ever returns to civilization. We found him with pipe in mouth, and clad with nothing but a blanket, for which he excused himself to us, because his shirt was in the wash. He had sufficient fresh buffalo meat, and invited us to the rib of a fat cow. We heard, too, that great numbers of buffalo herds were before us, and that we would suffer no further want. The next morning we left the Captain's party and went over hilly prairie to Savory's Fork, a branch of the Little Snake River. On the way we saw many single buffalo, and small herds; and Swiss, who, is unrivaled in running down buffalo, killed a cow for us. The buffalo herds now became more and more frequent, and almost every day we shot a fat cow, of which we took only the best pieces. On the evening of August 25th we reached again the left shore of the North Fork of the Platte, at a point we had not touched on our journey up, and in bee line perhaps one hundred miles distant from Fort Laramie. The river here was broad, but shallow, and we crossed it with ease. But we left it immediately, to go in southeastern direction to the South Fork. We reached it in about eight days. On the first we crossed with moderate ascensions the mountains belonging to the North Platte; on the fifth day, a second chain, the watershed between the North Fork and South Fork, over which there is also a convenient pass. The geological formations were again sand and lime stone. Chiefly pine grew on the mountains. On the seventh day we reached Powder Cache Creek, a stream flowing into the South Fork; and on the ninth day the South Fork itself. The country between the North Fork and the South Fork is mainly a broad plateau with sandy soil, sparse

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

grass, and a few birch groves like oases in the midst of the prairie. Buffalo abounded, and we lived in plenty, for almost daily we shot a cow. We also encountered several bears. Once, when we had pitched our evening camp near a little grove, a great grizzly bear approached unobserved within twenty feet of our camp. At the first alarm, before we had a chance to shoot, he was back in the woods, and it was too dark to follow him there. Another time, just as we were cresting a hill, we saw three grizzlies - a she bear and her two cubs - cozily at play. Richardson and Swiss, who were ahead, immediately wounded two of them without killing them, and followed them on horseback. My horse had been so lame for some days past that I could take no part in the hunt. Our hunters raced after the bears, and were soon out of sight. The rest of us went slowly forward. After a time Richardson came, back with the skin of one of the bears, but Swiss stayed out all night. Only during the next morning did he rejoin us, and told us how first he had chased the bear, and then the bear him. His solitary pistol missed fire, and only by repeated snapping of the flint lock could he keep the enraged beast at bay, until he could get time to pour fresh powder on the pan and lay his pursuer low.

On September 3rd we came quite unexpectedly to the left bank of the South Fork and crossed the river. On the right bank there are here three forts, only some miles apart. Penn's [Bent's] and St. Vrain's fort, Vasquez and Sublett's and Lobdon's fort. The construction is the customary one; the outer walls are of half-baked brick. There is much rivalry and enmity between the three forts. In the first fort we found part of the scattered Columbia party from Peoria. In the second I met the well-known Fitzpatrick, who has passed through many an adventure during his life in the mountains. He has a spare, bony figure, a face full of expression, and white hair; his whole demeanor reveals strong passions. We remained in the neighborhood of the forts for about three days. In the meanwhile I had my horse shod. For want of shoes it had become quite lame. Among the news of the day which we heard in the forts we were most interested in the account of a recent battle between the Pawnees and the Sioux, wherein only one of the latter was killed, while about eighty Pawnees lost their scalps. The victorious Sioux were still roving about the South Fork, and were very much embittered against all whites, because the man they lost was thought to have been killed by a white man who was with the Pawnees. We were therefore advised to abandon our plan of further following the South Fork and to strike out for the Arkansas. The evening before our departure, several owners of the forts arrived, bringing a new cargo of goods from the United States. Goods are usually transported to this place in great ox teams, and the same road is taken which we are about to follow to the boundary of Missouri.

---

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN - RETURN TO THE BOUNDARY OF MISSOURI

ON September 7th we left the forts on the South Fork to go southeastwardly to the Arkansas. We went up the South Fork for only half a day. Southwestwardly, beyond the left bank of the Platte, a high mountain chain arose, whose more distant peaks were in part covered with snow, forming a beautiful background for the Platte with its fringe of cottonwood, and for the wide plain that stretched along its right bank. On the fourth day we crossed the divide between the waters of the South Fork and of the Arkansas. The ground was somewhat hilly, with scattered pine groves. In the wide prairie stretching from there toward the Arkansas we saw again our first herds of buffalo. We met here two lodges of Arapahoes, who had just shot a cow, and gave us a hospitable invita-

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

tion. The squaws were still cutting it up. We smoked the while, and, in the absence of wood, collected buffalo chips whereon to roast the ribs. After our meal we started off in company. The squaws packed their animals with admirable economy. One squaw not only loaded a horse with about three hundred pounds of baggage, but seated herself with some children on the same animal, maintaining the equilibrium with motions of her own body. A dog, too, had to carry about fifty pounds. At evening we camped together on a sandy creek. The Indians were also on their way to the Arkansas; but they traveled too slow for us, so we parted from them on the next morning, and reached in two days the left bank of the Arkansas. The Arkansas with its surroundings bears much resemblance to the Platte. It arises west of the same mountain chain as the Platte, and flows in eastwardly direction toward the Mississippi. Its shores at times are bare, at times have a growth of cotton trees. On either side stretches out a rolling prairie. The water is swift, but shallow, and is here navigable only for small boats. Many catfish are in it. We went down the left bank of the river about sixty miles to Penn's [Bent's] Fort. This country presents little variety. Along the shore we found at times wild grapes. They were larger than I had ever seen them in the United States, and tasted deliciously to us, though they were still quite sour. So also we found the red fruit of a species of cactus with a sweet mucous taste. The grass became constantly drier, only along the water did we find some fresh patches. Whenever set afire the tall parched grass burned like tinder. Through carelessness of one of the company the grass near our camp was once set afire and we could save our baggage only with difficulty. Buffalo became more and more scarce. On September 15th we reached Penn's Fort. It lies on the left bank of the Arkansas, close by the river, and is the finest and largest fort which we have seen on this journey. The outer wall is built of imperfectly burnt brick; on two sides arise two little towers with loop holes. In the ample courtyard were many barn-yard fowl. In addition, they have cattle, sheep and goats, and three buffalo calves that peacefully graze with the rest of the herd. At the time they had no superfluity of horses at the fort, because only a short time before a band of Indians with incredible audacity had driven away a hundred head of horses. The fort is about one hundred and fifty miles from Taos in Mexico, and about three hundred from Santa Fe. Little expeditions go frequently to the former city, to barter for flour, bread, beans, sugar, etc. Then, too, much merchandise is annually transported by ox-teams to this point from the boundary of Missouri, which is only six hundred miles distant. Four miles above, there is a second smaller fort, Peebles' Fort, occupied chiefly by French and Mexicans. We bought here some Spanish flour, which rather deserved to be called bran; but as our appetite was none too squeamish, we enjoyed it immensely. On the 17th we started off again. The many wagons which go each year from Missouri to the forts on the Arkansas have made a tolerably plain road, generally following the river, and uniting about one hundred and fifty miles below with the Santa Fe trail. This was the road we followed. The region was the same monotonous, hilly, treeless, sandy prairie as before. On the second day we reached the so-called big timber, a spot on the Arkansas, some miles in extent, plentifully covered with trees. So much the scantier is the wood lower down. The Comanches, who play in the south a part similar to that of the Blackfeet in the north, are said to rove freely in this vicinity; but we had the pleasure to be spared making their acquaintance. On the fifth day we again came across herds of buffalo. On the sixth we reached the Santa Fe road. This broad road, almost a highway, has been gradually made by the trading expeditions which annually leave Missouri's border with many ox-teams for the Mexican city. The distance from Independence to Santa Fe is estimated at nine hundred miles. The road

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

runs southwestwardly over the prairie. It crosses the Arkansas a little short of half way to Santa Fe. The river at that point is rather shallow, and the crossing is said to be not very difficult. At this ford we came upon the Santa Fe road, and followed it to the boundary of Missouri. The road from here on turned gradually from the river toward little streams that flow from the north into the Arkansas. The first days we went over a wide plateau, where we found countless buffalo, but little water. On September 26th we reached Pawnee Fork; the next day, Ash Creek, near which there is a solitary rock in the prairie, which is accounted as half way between the boundary of Missouri and Penn's Fort, and on which some travelers have marked their names. On the 28th we passed Walnut Creek. An unlucky accident separated me here from my companions. My horse had broken down a good deal of late, and so I had to walk more than was to my liking. As the party were late about starting the next morning, I took my horse by the bridle and started ahead, in the expectation that the mounted party would soon overtake me. Later on I tried to drive my animals before me, but they often ran to one side and probably in this way brought me on a wrong road, which became less marked after a few miles, and finally totally ran out. It was foggy, and I could discover nothing of my companions. So, in order not to lose time unnecessarily, I determined to push on in an eastern direction, hoping in this way to reach the road before long. After I had gone some miles further, I saw a great swamp lying before me. Toward north and south I could see no end to it, but it seemed to extend only a few miles toward the east. The water was not very deep and the ground pretty firm. So I resolved to try at every risk to get through in an eastern direction. I rode my horse forward at the slowest pace, but it often slid down on grass and reeds. My pack animal I led after me with a rope. All sorts of water birds swarmed around from all sides. Never have I seen together such quantities of swans, cranes, pelicans, geese and ducks, as were here. The swamp was fairly covered with them, and they seemed to feel themselves so safe that I could have killed hundreds of them with the shot barrel of my double-barreled weapon. Just at that time, however, I was less interested in hunting than in getting out of the confounded swamp, for my horse was visibly becoming exhausted, and I was making barely a mile an hour. With trouble and difficulty I finally reached what I had thought from a distance to be trees; but it turned out to be only tall reeds, and the second half of the swamp still lay before me. My horse now would not budge for either whip or spur; so I dismounted and dragged it after me by the bridle. The water sometimes reached to my chest. With slow and measured step I moved onward; my dog swam usually in the rear of our stately procession. The sun was sinking when I finally reached the other side of the swamp. Before me lay a little chain of hills and on my side of them was a little creek with some timber. To this I managed to drive my exhausted animals. The solitude in which I was so suddenly placed, would have much disquieted me at the beginning of the journey; but now it had a certain charm for me. I made a fire in a somewhat hidden place, and dried myself out. The next morning, just as I was eating breakfast, a herd of deer visited me. They came quite close to me and gazed at me for quite, a while; but I did not care to take a shot at them, partly because I still had dried meat on hand, and partly because the neighborhood is at times frequented by the Pawnees.

True to my resolution, I continued going on in an eastern direction. The grass in the prairie was often as tall as a man, and made walking very troublesome. Nowhere could a sign of a road be seen. It seemed as if no human being had ever set foot in this country. I passed several brooks, seemingly insignificant, but with such muddy bottoms that my animals sank into them, and I had

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

to unpack my mule on several occasions. In the afternoon I reached a larger creek with much timber, probably Cow Creek, and camped there. My animals were too much fatigued, so I spent also the following day there; dried my baggage; and made reflections upon solitude. The next morning I started early. On the road I saw the last buffaloes of the trip, got mired a few times in little creeks, and camped at night on the Little Arkansas, a creek with terribly steep banks. Only after long search did I find a place to water my animals. The next morning I couldn't find my animals in the high grass. Only on climbing a tree did I discover them at a mile's distance. With a load, it was impossible to get my mule over the creek; so I carried my baggage myself to the other shore, and then drove my animals over. After I had continued some hours steadily in an eastern direction through the prairie, I came suddenly and quite unexpectedly upon the Santa Fe road. My animals were no less pleased than was I. I found traces of my traveling companions. That same day I camped, for want of better water, at a puddle, inhabited by countless frogs. The next morning (it was the sixth since I had been separated from my party), I went twenty-five miles on a stretch to Cottonwood Creek, a wooded stream, that arches at this point into a pleasant semi-circle. I was looking about for a camping place, when I heard a shot in a hollow close by me. Cocking my rifle I rode closer, and found my traveling companions again, who told me that they had waited for me a day at the Little Arkansas, and had finally concluded that I had gone on ahead.

From here on, it was about two hundred miles to the border. United again, we started the next day (October 5) and covered thirty miles before reaching water. My horse was now so exhausted that I could hardly bring it into camp. On the second day we reached Council Grove. That is the name of a dense grove of deciduous trees, extending for some miles along a creek of the same name. The Santa Fe caravans usually stop here to elect their leaders and to organize: hence the name. It is about one hundred and fifty miles from the border. In these woods deer, turkeys and squirrels are found. It rained continuously; so we stayed there several days. We started again on October 9th. On the 11th we reached the Osage, a stream that was almost dried up, with wood in plenty. It was impossible to get my horse to stir from here. He grazed greedily, but from sheer fatigue would not move from the spot. "The horse has stopped," is the technical expression of the mountaineers for this condition. When left to itself the animal usually recovers after a while, but I could not wait for that. I had to abandon this worthy animal which had carried me some thousands of miles. Some weeks before we had abandoned two other horses in the same way. However, one of my companions lent me another horse. The country gradually became more familiar to us. On October 13th we rested at noon at the same place as after our departure from Sapling Grove. Toward night we camped in the vicinity of Sapling Grove. As yet we had seen neither farms nor human beings, but the cow-bells which we heard at evening near us, made sweetest music for us. The next morning we again passed the farms of the Shawnees to our starting point, Westport. Before entering the village we fired a salute from all our guns, which immediately brought out our old acquaintances. We had passed nearly six months in the wilderness. In that time we had covered under daily hardships about three thousand miles, had slept on the bare ground in all kinds of weather, and had lived almost exclusively on meat. Nevertheless, we all fairly overflowed with health, while the many sallow fever faces we here met sufficiently informed us that the summer had been very sickly. In Westport, we rested for a while. All, even the commonest, pleasures of civilized life had a double charm for us. After eight days I rode with three more of my traveling companions three hundred miles further, to St. Louis, where we made our return on the last day of October.

---

---

CHAPTER NINETEEN - THE INDIANS

WHEN a nation has perished, it arouses the interest of posterity, and historians and antiquarians exhaust themselves in researches as to the character of such a race. But the existence of a people that is merely near extinction, however characteristic its life may be, and however instructive its history as bearing on the study of the development of the human race, does not seem to call forth similar interest. This may be one of the reasons why we have not as yet, so far as I know, any adequate history of this race of man, once spread so far, which had the whole continent of America in its possession, until the advancing Caucasian race crowded them back. I do not deny the difficulties besetting such an undertaking, on account of our want of knowledge of many Indian languages, their own ignorance concerning their origin and history, the continuing hostility of many tribes toward all whites, and the hardships involved in traveling and living among them; but it is certainly true that on more thorough study of this people a more satisfactory history could be written now than in, say, a hundred years, when mere shadows of this perished race will be moving among us. The United States owe it to themselves and to this expelled race, to collect as soon as may be all that is worthy of preservation as to this people, and transmit it as a *momento mori* to posterity.

The Indians differ in so many bodily qualities from the rest of human kind, that they have been assigned a place among the five human races into which naturalists have divided the mammalian family, man. Here is not the place to consider whether these five races are aboriginal, or whether we are descended from a common stock, from which the five races were gradually developed.

As little can I decide whether, in the former case, the Indians are to be considered really aboriginal, or descendents of the Mongolian race, emigrating from Northern Asia to America. Passing this by, the characteristic differences, on account of which they are designated as a separate race, the American, are as follows: The skin of the Indian is brown-red, generally tan color, cinnamon brown, or dark copper red, but sometimes bronze colored. His hair black, straight and coarse.

The face is broad, but not flattened. The features are strongly marked. The eyes are deep-seated and rather horizontal. The forehead is not high, but compressed from the sides. The facial angle is about eighty degrees. The nose is rather broad and prominent, usually straight, but sometimes with the Roman bend. The cheek bones are very high and prominent, the chin almost square. The beard is thin, the chief reason for which may be their habit of plucking it out early.

There has been much fabulous talk about the Indian character. Some pose them as Roman heroes and unspoiled sons of Nature; others as cowards and the scum of humanity. The truth is between these extremes. First of all, we must differentiate between the Indians with some of the varnish of civilization and the cruder but freer tribes of the Far West. The former have no longer a marked character. The pursuit of agriculture, forced on them by necessity, has eradicated the virile traits of their old hunter's life, without inoculating them with the mild poison of civilization. To get a correct conception of the character of the freer North American Indian tribes, let us consider somewhat more closely the mode of life and customs common to them all.

The Indians inhabiting the western territories of the United States are split into numerous separate tribes, that consider themselves entirely independent of each other. They all live by hunting, especially buffalo hunting; and each tribe claims a wide territory with very vague boundaries as

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

its own. In addition they recognize certain districts, where buffalo usually abound, as common hunting and war ground, where various tribes roam at will, subjecting their conflicting rights to the test of strength. Between the tribes there is perpetual warfare. Each tribe must have an hereditary enemy, whose wrong must be avenged in blood. Their warfare is rarely carried on by open attack or battle; but they stalk each other till one party succeeds in surprising and massacring the other. When attacking, they raise a fearsome shrilling cry, the so-called war whoop. The slain are scalped, that is, the scalp is circularly incised in the hairy part of the head and torn from the skull. The scalp of an enemy is the highest triumph of the Indian. The more scalps an Indian can show, the higher does he stand in the esteem of his tribe. Sometimes, when the animosity is not very fierce, they simply make prisoners of their enemies, and treat them then as slaves. Such is usually the fate of women. The chief weapon of the Indian is the bow and arrow. Through trade with the whites many of them have now obtained firearms, the use of which they have well learned. However, all trading companies sell them only short, poorly-made carbines, and no rifles. Another weapon, peculiar to the Indian, is the tomahawk, a small hatchet which they use in close fight, and likewise purchase at the forts. In former times they made them themselves of pointed stones. Often the tomahawk is made so as to serve also as a pipe for smoking. But commonly they use for this purpose special long pipes, which they esteem as great articles of luxury, and from which the owners will part at no price. The bowl of such pipes is made of a red clay which is found on the Upper Missouri, and which forms an article of commerce between eastern and western tribes. Smoking is a conventional ceremonial of salutation. He who has been admitted to smoke the so-called pipe of peace is in no danger. Ordinarily the Indians smoke only chewing tobacco mixed with various herbs; but if no tobacco is to be had, they smoke sumach and other stupifying herbs. Every Indian tribe has a chief, which honor is hereditary in his family; but for a warlike expedition they often choose special leaders. In all important matters the chief must consult with the warriors of the tribe; but otherwise can act quite arbitrarily, especially if distinguished for bravery. The religious ceremonials are in every tribe under the guidance of a so-called medicine man, who knows how to impose on the people through all kinds of hocus-pocus. The religious ideas of the Indians are still quite crude. Like all people in an immature state, they believe in a good and bad principle, and continued existence after death, in which the brave have unalloyed enjoyment of all the good things of this life. Various wild dances and songs are an important element in their religious ceremonies.

Every Indian tribe has its own speech. All these languages seem derived from a common origin; but owing to the segregation of the tribes and the want of any writing, resemblances may often be well nigh obliterated. The Indian's style of speech is a mixture of laconic brevity and picturesque imagery. Their comparisons are taken from surrounding nature, and are generally very appropriate.

Concerning the daily life of the Indians we have often had occasion to make remarks in prior sketches. Most tribes live only in tents and lead a wandering hunter's existence. One family usually lives in every tent. Polygamy is sanctioned in all tribes, but only the wealthier can put it in practice. The squaws as a rule are anything but handsome, but their uncleanliness may serve to hide their charms. The squaws are treated not much better than slaves. There is no appeal from the will of the lord and master. War and the hunt are the only occupations for a man; everything else is for the squaws. The squaw must attend to the horses, set up the tent and take it down,

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

must care for the baggage, must cut up the game, attend to the kitchen, tan leather, make clothes and moccasins, etc. In spite of these multifarious demands on their activity, they are generally indefatigable and good-natured and bear the ill-temper of their masters, oft manifesting itself by blows, with Indian fortitude. Children are soon left to themselves. I have never seen that they were beaten. They usually learn riding before walking; but in the latter, too, they develop great speed and endurance. Although their muscles do not appear especially prominent, they seem to have a degree of toughness which qualifies them for extraordinary exertions. The women are no less hardened than the men, but with them the full development of the body is hampered by too early marriage, often at the age of ten and eleven. These hardy children of nature suffer little from sickness, though contagious diseases, like the small-pox, at times destroy great numbers of them. Their medicines consist simply in herbs. They also have great confidence in steam baths, which they take in so-called sweat lodges, in which water is poured on hot stones.

The wealth of an Indian consists chiefly in horses. Their horses come from Mexico, and are of as hardy stock as the Indians themselves. Whoever owns no horses tries to steal some. All stealing is permissible among the Indians, but horse-stealing is honorable. Such bands of horse thieves will often follow another tribe or a caravan of whites for weeks and months, till they find an opportunity to drive off the whole herd. In addition to horses every Indian usually owns a great number of dogs, useful partly to carry loads, partly, in absence of other meat, for food. In their form and character they are closely related to the wolf, from whom they are probably derived.

The clothing of the Indians usually consists of leathern leggings and a blanket or buffalo robe, to which is added in the case of the women, a garment, also of leather, reaching from the breast to the knee. Their light leather shoes, the so-called moccasins, the squaws make with great skill, using no other tool than the awl and the thread obtained from the sinews of the buffalo. Both sexes have the head uncovered. Vanity and love of finery is more deep-seated with these children of nature - if indeed such a thing is possible - than with the children of civilization. But one can note a vast range from the savage often wholly naked, to the complete Indian dandy, who, with his face painted with cinnabar, his hair decked with feathers, and his body adorned with beads and brass wire, will gaze for hours in a broken bit of mirror, admiring the masterpiece of all creation.

What, then, are the special characteristics of the Indians? Physically they consist, in addition to the racial marks above given, of admirable strength, skill and endurance, together with keenness of senses in highest development. An Indian sees his enemy before the white man discovers him with his spy-glass. His ear upon the ground, he interprets suspicious sounds at great distances. His keen sense of smell scents smoke and traces of the enemy, before the white man has any suspicion thereof. Among the characteristics of the man within this body, we are first struck by the pride with which he looks down upon his surroundings, especially upon the pale face. "The proudest thing in the world is an Indian," an old mountaineer once said to me; and whoever has seen a free Indian going through the streets of a populous city, which he is perhaps seeing for the first time, with firm, self-reliant step and military bearing, gazing straight ahead and seemingly indifferent to all around him, will admit that the opinion just quoted is not without foundation. This pride seems to me nothing more than a consciousness of his self-reliant independence. The Indian, born and nurtured in the broad prairie or in the mountains, familiar from childhood with the dangers of the wild life of the hunter and warrior, choosing his country wherever he can maintain himself by force of arms, and his shelter where the sky arches over him, must natural-

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

ly have a sense of self-reliance vastly differing from that of the effeminate civilized being, born, nurtured and buried amid a thousand conditions of dependence. The Indian feels himself free, his wants are few, his resources lie within himself. This consciousness fills him with such pride and with such contempt for all civilization. But his indifference is often seeming rather than real, and is based on a marked Indian characteristic, self-control. The passions of the Indian are as stormy, as eager to blaze out as they can be with any human being, but by extraordinary self-control he maintains all the outward appearance of calmness. An Indian will often endure, without the slightest manifestation of pain, the most torturing modes of death, simply to defy his enemy. The Indian who seeks to conceal his feelings or his plans will not let his left hand know what his right hand does; neither kindness nor threats can cause him to break silence. On the other hand, this self-control often serves as a cloak for guile and treachery. But it must be confessed that many acts of treachery toward Indians can be charged against the whites; so much so as to often seem to afford justification for the cruelties of the former. Acquaintance with the whites seems also to have diminished the high esteem in which hospitality was held among them. Still even now it is custom in most tribes that if even an hereditary enemy seeks refuge in the tent of the chief, not a hair of his head is hurt; though, to be sure, if he is found next day in the prairie or on the mountain his scalp is infallibly lost. The question has often been asked whether the Indian has real courage or, is cowardly by nature. Whoever knows the Indian's mode of life must concede if courage is by any means capable of development in a human being, such a life is calculated to inspire a man with fearlessness and contempt of death. That the Indians usually succumb to the weapons of civilization, and the fact that a few determined whites repel their attacks even in greatly superior numbers, is not proof against their courage, often verging on fool-hardiness. Their system of waging war, moreover, often causes us to regard that as cowardice which is really plan and calculation. They consider it, for instance, folly to advance toward the enemy in open battle array; and Black Hawk, the renowned chief of the Sacs and Foxes, when present at a great maneuver in New York, during which several batteries were stormed, could not wonder enough at the idiocy of sacrificing hundreds of warriors in this way, since the batteries might be taken at night by surprise without loss of a man.

The Indian tribes which now rove through the great Missouri territory are chiefly the Kansas, the Sioux, and the Pawnees. In and about the Rocky Mountains and beyond them, in Oregon, live the Crows, the Blackfeet, the Eutaws, the Snakes, the Nez Percés, the Flatheads, the Parmacks, etc. Of these tribes some are friendly to the whites; with others the friendship is dubious; while still others are at open enmity with them. The last is especially true of the Blackfeet, the terror of trappers and travelers. The Blackfeet rove about the headwaters of the Missouri on either side of the Rocky Mountains, and are the sworn foes not only of the whites, but also of all other Indians. They consider themselves the lords of creation, and wage war with all who will not submit to them. Their boldness and audacity causes them to be feared far and near. Most of the whites who perish in the Rocky Mountains are brained by their tomahawks. Small parties of trappers are pursued by them relentlessly; but they also often attack larger groups, and engage them in skirmishes. When on their expeditions they unexpectedly encounter a party they either attack or take to flight, for all whom they meet are sure to be enemies. Through this unrelenting hate toward all who are not of their tribe, which they put in practice to its utmost consequences, the Blackfeet have become a word of terror among the mountaineers; not unlike that which the grizzly bear in the animal

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

kingdom has won for himself. However, through ceaseless warfare, and still more through disease, especially small-pox, which ran its course among them some years ago, the tribe has been much reduced, and has become less formidable.

The ultimate destiny of these wild tribes, now hunting unrestrained through the Far West of the United States, can be foretold almost to a certainty, from the fate, already accomplished, of the eastern Indian tribes, where in the contact of races, true civilization collides with crude forces of nature, the latter must succumb. Civilization, steadily pressing forward toward the West, has driven the Indians step by step before it. Where war with the whites and with each other was not enough to reduce their numbers, the result was brought about by disease and ardent spirits. Whole tribes, that formerly dwelt in States where civilization is now permanently established, whose names perhaps were then as terrifying to the pioneers of the West as is now the word Blackfeet to the mountaineer, have entirely disappeared, leaving scarce a trace of their name behind. Some few have accommodated themselves to agriculture, and still live among us, the shadows of a vanished race. The western tribes still have, as yet, a bulwark against the advance of civilization in the boundless, generally sandy prairie, which extends for about a thousand miles from the boundary of the State of Missouri to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, in those mountains themselves, and in the broad sandy plains beyond them. But those obstacles are not insurmountable. At least half of the great prairie is capable of cultivation; and the want of wood, attributable less to the nature of the soil than to the frequent prairie fires and to the quantities of game, especially the herds of buffalo, will be less sensibly felt with the gradual progress of civilization. Illinois in former days had many treeless tracts that became wooded by natural means as the soil was cultivated. But the greatest danger threatens the Indians from the West; from the settlements on the Columbia. Along the Columbia River various Indian tribes have already perished; the rest live in entire dependence on the whites.

So the waves of civilization will draw nearer and nearer from the East and from the West, till they cover the sandy plains, and cast their spray on the feet of the Rockies. The few fierce tribes who may have maintained themselves until that time in the mountains, may offer some resistance to the progress of the waves, but the swelling flood will rise higher and higher, till at last they are buried beneath it. The buffalo and the antelope will be buried with them; and the bloody tomahawk will be buried too. But for all that there will be no smoking of the pipe of peace; for the new generation with the virtues of civilization will bring also its vices. It will ransack the bowels of the mountains to bring to light the most precious of all metals, which, when brought to the light, will arouse strife and envy and all ignoble passions, and the sons of civilization will be no happier than their red brethren who have perished.

---

POSTSCRIPT.

In the foregoing sketches I submit to the public some off-hand observations on a journey that was made off-hand. I make no claim to a scientific treatment of my subject. Neither my time, nor my means, nor my knowledge in the natural sciences, of which I never made a specific study, would permit of this. My purpose in writing these sketches was solely to give the reader an appreciable picture of the unknown west of the United States with the peculiarities of the country and the still greater peculiarities of its inhabitants, and to present in suitable groups, as it were through a pan-

---

A JOURNEY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1839

By F. A. Wislizenus, M.D

---

orama, those objects which passed one by one before my eyes, with often fatiguing slowness. With romantic trimmings the picture might perhaps have been made more attractive to some readers, but I have preferred to copy nature and life as faithfully as possible, and to give due heed to the shades as well as the lights. If I have accomplished this purpose, however imperfectly, I shall feel adequately compensated for the fatigues and dangers of such a trip.

As an aid for following the geography I have appended a little map of my journey, in which are indicated the trend of the Rocky Mountains and of the streams arising in them, filled in with more detail at the point where I crossed the Rockies. As there are no maps of these parts of the United States based on accurate measurements, I of course cannot vouch for the geographical correctness of my plat. Still it may serve the purpose of giving a better idea of the country. By the way, in all probability we shall have in a few years a geographically correct map of the, Missouri Territory and the Oregon Territory of the United States, since the Congress of the United States by a resolution only recently adopted has authorized the President to cause a scientific exploration of that region, and to take measures adequate for securing the country. It is reported that in consequence of this resolution three military forts are to be erected between Missouri and the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and that a scientific expedition, calculated for several years' stay, is to be sent out there. Such measures will soon afford travelers in these regions greater security, will increase our knowledge of the country, and will thus open a road for civilization.

A transformation of this remarkable country seems then at hand. It is perhaps only a few years until the plow upturns the virgin soil, which is now only touched by the lightfooted Indian or the hoof of wild animals. Every decade will change the character of the country materially, and in a hundred years perhaps the present narratives of mountain life

John Work's Journal

---

John Work's Journal

Oct 18 - Nov 17, 1824

Monday, [October] 18, [1824]. Arrived at the forks in the afternoon. It was foggy in the morning and we lost a good deal of time searching the horses which had strayed, three of which we could not find. Sent an Indian to seek them in the afternoon.

Tuesday, 19. The Indian arrived with the horses in the morning.

Wednesday, 20. Mr. Ogden arrived with the boats in the morning, 21 days from Fort George, which is reckoned an expeditious journey with loaded boats. The after part of the day was occupied with arranging the property for horseback.

Thursday, 21. The property and all the Spokane men but 2 were sent off to Spokane in charge of Mr. McDonald. Mr. Ogden remained with me and the remainder of the extra men to wait for the express.

Wednesday, 27. The express arrived in the afternoon, 2 boats with Governor Simpson, Dr. McLoughlin, Mr. McMillan and Mr. Dears and Mr. McKay.

Thursday, 28. The governor, Dr. McLoughlin, Messrs. McMillan, Ogden and McKay went off to Spokane. I was left with the men. The governor informed me that I am to go to the sea.

Saturday, 30. The gentlemen returned from Spoken. The boats are ordered to be gummed in the evening, so that everything may be ready to-morrow.

Sunday, 31. Embarked about 10 o'clock with the governor and Mr. McMillan in one boat, and Dr. McLaughlin and Mr. McKay in another, for Fort George. A third boat went ahead a few days ago to Okanagan. Mr. Ogden and the people for Spokane remain to proceed to their destination. In the evening we encamped below the San Poil River.

Monday, [November] 1, [1824]. Embarked at daylight, and arrived at Okanagan in time for breakfast. Here a halted was made, the remainder of the day preparing despatches for Mr. McLeod.

Tuesday, 2. Continued on our journey early, and encamped in the evening just above Stoney Island.

Wednesday, 3. Proceeded on our journey early in the morning and stopped in the evening some distance below the Priest's Rapid.

Thursday, 4. After supper last night we pursued our voyage and continued all night and arrived at Walla Walla a little after sunrising, where we remained for the day.

Friday, 5. We took our departure from Walla Walla after breakfast, and encamped in the evening a little below the Big Island. We were considerably retarded the greater part of the day by a strong head wind.

Saturday, 6. Embarked before daylight and came to near halfway between the Dalls and Cascades. Everything was carried at the Shoots, but we ran both the big and little Dalls. We saw a good many Indians yesterday, only about a hundred at the Shoots.

Sunday, 7. Embarked in the night, passed the portage at the Cascades and encamped in the evening opposite the upper branch of the Willamat. We had a sails wind part of the day below the Cascades.

Monday, 8. After supper last night continued our journey and arrived at Fort George in the evening. The wind was favorable and assisted us a good deal. The rainy season has not yet commenced.

Saturday, 13. Since Monday the weather has been dry and cold, with a thick frost in the morning.

Sunday, 14. Weighty rain in the night and all day. The rainy season may be considered as commenced.

Wednesday, 17. The weather has been showery since Sunday last. Preparations have been made for some days to send off an expedition to the northward, for the purpose of ascertaining the situation of the entrance of Frasers River and the possibility of navigating the coast in small boats. Frasers River and about its entrance are also to be examined, if it can be accomplished. It is understood from a report that these are the principal objects of the undertaking. The party are to consist of Mr. James McMillan, who commands the expedition, Mr. Thomas McKay, Mr. F. N. Annance and myself and 35 men. The journey is to be performed in small boats, 3 in number. Everything is now prepared to start tomorrow.

From Washington Historical Quarterly III (1912)

Journal of John Work, November and December, 1824.

Deputy Governor George Simpson (afterward knighted, and more generally designated Sir George Simpson), at the head of the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company in British North America for nearly 40 years, was a very forceful and thorough man. He had been chosen to the position at the time of the coalition with the Northwest Company in 1821, and the last District to be visited and reorganized by him was the Columbia District, for the management of which Dr. John McLoughlin had been selected as resident Chief Factor. This was the occasion for the presence of Gov. Simpson at Ft. George at the mouth of the Columbia river in November, 1824; along with Dr. McLoughlin and others he had just arrived from across the mountains.

The expedition covered by the Journal herewith (which is now published in full for the first

---

time) had been planned several months previous; this we know from correspondence with John McLeod at Thompson River (Kamloops), instructing him to detach Mr. Annamour, a clerk, to become one of the party. Mr. McLeod had been instructed to obtain all possible information as to an outlet to the Coast by way of Fraser river or any other stream of New Caledonia; and to explore personally in the interior. It was not until after 1828, when Gov. Simpson personally made the trip up Peace River and down the Fraser, that he gave up the immediate search for such an outlet; even later he was hoping to find one further north. So immediately after his arrival at Ft. George this expedition was outfitted and sent off. It is evident that the report from Mr. McMillan was desired before a permanent location should be selected further up the Columbia for the District Headquarters. Fort Vancouver then did not yet exist except by anticipation.

The personnel of the expedition is interesting. Mr. Jas. McMillan was a man of experience on the Columbia, the same who was associated on its upper waters with David Thompson fifteen years earlier; he afterward built Ft. Langley on the Fraser river and remained in charge until succeeded there by Mr. Archibald MacDonald in 1828. The ubiquitous and brave Thos. McKay, now a son-in-law of Dr. McLoughlin, but previously a member of the first Astoria party on the Tonquin, had returned to the Columbia with the present party; he of course wanted to be present when any chance for a scrap with the Indians might occur, for he had a family score to wipe out. He was in charge of the hunting and expected to keep the party supplied with fresh meat. Mr. Annamour was a clerk in rank who did not rise to special prominence in later years; Mr. Work, the writer of this Journal, was the other clerk. Mr. John Work was of Irish descent, his name is properly spelled Wark, but less often appears so written. He became a prominent man among the H. B. Co. officials of the District. His daughter, widow of the late Edward Huggins of Tacoma, has only recently died in that city; another daughter was the wife of the late Dr. Wm. Fraser Tolmie, whose last years were spent in Victoria, B. C., and whose children possess the original Journal from which this copy has been kindly allowed. This is the Journal from which Hubert Howe Bancroft personally drew his account of this same expedition as appears on pp. 464-8 of his History of the Northwest Coast, Vol. 2. It has not before been printed in full.

Briefly stated, the expedition portaged from the Columbia river at Ilwaco across to Shoalwater Bay and from that Bay portaged again along the beach to Grays Harbor; thence followed the meanderings of the Chehalis and Black river to a source in Black Lake, from which a portage was made to either Eld or Budd Inlet of Puget Sound; thence followed the Easterly channels and bays of the Sound to a stream beyond the 49th parallel that empties into Boundary Bay and up that stream to a portage across to another stream flowing into the Fraser river at the site chosen for Fort Langley a little more than a year later, and up the Fraser river for two days, a full month being consumed to the date of turning back. Returning they paddled and sailed out of the mouth of the Fraser, rounded Point Roberts and spent a night at Birch Bay and then followed practically the same route they had come as far back as Black River south of Olympia, Washington; there the party divided, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Work and a few others proceeding by the more traveled and direct route of the Cowlitz to the Columbia and Ft. George, and Mr. McKay, in charge of the remainder of the party, taking the boats back by the route first traveled. The return was made in twelve days by Mr. McMillan. To follow this course closely with the aid of charts published by the

John Work's Journal

---

U. S. and Dominion Governments and county maps showing careful details will be of much interest to residents of the counties bordering upon the Coast (who will appreciate what was meant by a "weighty rain") and Puget Sound and the Fraser. The journal is also of value as showing the carrying capacity of the light batteaus used by the fur traders, and the variety of food carried for their sustenance, and the manual labor and exposure common to their expeditions.

No opportunity has been available to compare with the original journal and check some uncertainties in copying.

T. C. ELLIOTT.

\*After Mr. Elliott had prepared this paper for the Washington Historical Quarterly it was learned that Mr. E. O. S. Scholefield of the Provincial Library of British Columbia had arranged to publish the Work Journal with other materials in a bulletin. Notwithstanding this fact, the Journal is here published for the benefit of readers who might not receive the proposed bulletin and also because of the fact that the record bears directly upon the field of this Quarterly.

-[Editor.]

Journal of John Work

Nov., 1824-Governor Simpson having determined to send an expedition to the Northward for the purpose of discovering the entrance of Fraser's River, and ascertaining the possibility of navigating that River with boats, and also of examining the coast between Fort George and Fraser's River as far as practicable. James McMillan, Esq., was appointed to command the expedition, which consisted of:

Thos. McKay, F. N. Annamour, John Work, clerks; Michael Laframbois, interpreter; 1, Pierre L'Etang; 2, Jas. Portneuf Abanaker; 3, Alexis Aubuchou; 4, Pierre Villandri; 5, J. B. Proveau; 6, Peter Wagner; 7, F. H. Condon; 8, Pierre Karogarajab, Ir.; 9, Louis Shatakorata Ir.; 10, Wm. Johnston, Englishman; 11, Segwin Le Deranti; 12, Cawano: Ir.; 13, Louis Anawano, Ir.; 14, Pierre Karaguana, Ir.; 15, Chas. Jaundeau; 16, Louis Diomilea; 17, Andre Lonctoin; 18, Chas. Rondeau; 19, Pierre Patvin; 20, Ettuni Oniager, Ir.; 21, Louis Hanatiohe, Ir.; 22, Louis Vivet; 23, Peo Beau, Islander; 24, Thos. Tojanel, Islander; 25, Thos. Zatwaiton, Islander; 26, Jos. Loui Abanaker; 27, Andre Le Chappel; 28, J. B. Dubian; 29, Joseph Delpard; 30, Leo Depuis; 31, Jacques Patvin; 32, Louis Shorakorta, Islander; 33, Joseph Grey, Islander; 34, Bazil Pioner; 35, Momonta, Islander; 36, Cannon, American.

Besides the above group, an Iroquoy Freehunter and his slave also accompanied the party on account of his being acquainted with the coast part of the way. The voyage to be performed in three boats, the only loading of which consists of . . . kegs pease, . . . kegs oatmeal, . . . bags flour, . . . kegs pork, . . . kegs grease, . . . kegs rum, . . . keg butter, . . . kegs, sugar, . . . bags biscuit, . . . bags pemmican. In all . . . days' provisions.

John Work's Journal

---

THURSDAY, 18 (NOVEMBER)

Everything being in readiness, the expedition left Fort George at a quarter past one o'clock and in 2 hours and 10 minutes reached the portage 1 in Bakers Bay, a distance of not less than 14 miles. This portage is about . . . miles to the Northward of Cape Disappointment. This portage is made to avoid doubling the Cape, which is not practicable with our boats. Though the wind did not blow very strong, there was a heavy swell in the middle of the River. Mr. Kennedy accompanied in a boat to Bakers Bay and stopped with us for the night. It was drizzling rain in the after part of the day, with some showers.

FRIDAY, 19 Nov., 1824

Weighty rain all day and blowing fresh in the afternoon from the Eastward.

Commenced carrying the boats and cargoes across the portage of 1060 yards, to a small lake 2 about half a mile long. The portage was wet and dirty, but in dry weather it would be a fine road. From this little lake part of the people carried part of the cargo, while the remainder of the people with the boats and the rest of the property proceeded down a small creek 3 that receives its waters from the lake. This creek is so narrow that the boats could scarcely be got dragged through it, and all the property had to be carried the greater part of the way. The road along this little creek, which runs through a little swampy plain, is very soft and wet. We have got only about 2-3 of the way across the portage. The distance we have made from the little lake is 4,200 paces in a direction nearly N. by E.

Mr. Kennedy, who came to see us across the river, took leave of us at the little lake.

Abundance of geese and ducks are along this little river and swamp. McKay killed three and Mr. Annamour 1 goose. Some parts of the road there were a good many cranberries.

SATURDAY, 20

Blew a storm in the night with weighty showers of rain. Fine weather in the morning, but very weighty rain afterwards, wind S. E. The people resumed transporting the property and boats to where the tide came up the little river, a distance of 1,218 yards, here all the property was embarked, and at 440 yards farther down the passengers also embarked. Here the creek began to widen and a strong flood tide made it sufficiently deep for the boats. About two miles farther we came to the entrance of Grey's Bay, 4 down which we proceeded about 9 miles and encamped about 2 o'clock P. M. at the entrance of a little river on the west side of the bay. 5 Our reasons for stopping so early was its being too late to cross the bay and there being no possibility of getting water farther on. The wind being favorable, the sails were hoisted about an hour. The little valley through which we passed yesterday and today is here and there clothed with willows, which some places nearly choke up the river, in some parts it is clear and clothed with verdure, in several places it is very swampy on account of the heavy rain and the tide flowing over its lower end. The part of the Bay which we have passed through seems to be from 4 to 6 or 7 miles wide. On the W. side the shores are flat and covered with woods, principally a kind of pine, to the water's edge, wood of

John Work's Journal

---

the same description also extends to the water's edge on the E. side, but the shores in some places appear steep and seem to be compounded of a reddish clay. Our general course all day was nearly due North.

Here there is a small village of Chenooks consisting of 5 inhabited and 1 uninhabited house.

SUNDAY, 21

Fair weather, a fine gentle breeze of wind from the S. E., some weighty rain in the night. As it would have been too long to wait for the tide rising sufficiently high, the boats and property were carried about 1/4 of a mile, and we were on the water at 8 o'clock. Our courses were as follows: N. E. 5 miles, which was across to the East side of the Bay, then along the East side of it; N. W. 6 miles; W. N. W. 4 miles; N. N. W. 5 miles; and W. N. W. 8 miles, which brought us to a point which forms the entrance of the bay on the East side at 1 o'clock. This is a low point about 2 miles across and has such a heavy surf breaking upon it, particularly that from the ocean on its north side, that it is impossible to take boats round with any degree of safety; the cargoes were therefore, carried nearly across the point, a distance of 3,300 yards. The labour of carrying will not end here, as the sea is breaking with such violence on the shore, that that business (will) likely have to be continued a good while. Notwithstanding this breach of the sea on the beach, the wind is off the land and not blowing strong. The road in this portage is very good, the ground is sound, dry, with some fir, pines and willows growing upon it. Grey's Bay widens greatly towards its entrance, it is in some parts not less than 15 miles. The E. shore appears still flat near the water, the bank on the W. side is a little higher and in some places would be difficult to land, as they are so steep. In crossing the entrance to two bays before we came to the portage, the tide ran very high, the waves were very high, but as they did not break we shipped no water

Monday, 22ND

Stormy with very weighty rain in the night and blowing fresh with some showers during the day. Wind southerly.

All hands were at work at an early hour, past carrying the property 3,870 yards N. N. W. farther on the portage, and part clearing a road along a little river, so that the boats might be got through that way in preference to attempting the sea shore. About all the people were sent for the boats, which they brought with great labour a distance of about 3 miles, the greater part of which they had to be dragged through places almost entirely dry or little better than swamps. Tomorrow it is intended to carry them to the sea shore and try to get them along as the Indians do their canoes, which is to conduct them along between the beach and the shore, while thus employed the waves often break over both them and their canoes. The road through which the goods were carried today is very good and lies along the edge of the woods which is about 1/4 to 1/2 miles from the shore. Geese are plentiful, 20 were killed, they are mostly the small grey geese and very lean, however, provided a kettle for the men. Vandit and little Louis are lame.

Tuesday, 23

---

John Work's Journal

---

Light clouds, fine fair weather, light wind from the S. E. At daylight all the people were employed carrying the boats from the woods where they were left yesterday to the sea shore, afterwards part of the men, 6 and boat, conducted them along shore in the inside of the breakers, where they had just water enough to float them to the other end of the portage. One of the boats was left some distance on this side of the others. In performing this business part of the men stopped in the boats with poles to keep her right and to watch the waves, while the rest dragged her along with a line; the swells were often nearly upsetting her. The surges often flowed in about the men at the line until they were up to the middle. The remainder of the people were employed carrying the property a distance of 4,620 yards N. N. W. The road still continues very good.

Mr. Annamour went to seek elk, but saw no appearance of any. He represents the country as bare and swampy and unfit for the residence of elk. 5 geese were killed, the same kind as yesterday and equally lean.

One of the men, Vanditt Potvin, who got lame yesterday, was so ill that he had to be carried today. Yesterday morning a small spot on the upper part of his foot became painful and suddenly swelled very large and is now so painful that he cannot put it to the ground. This (is) an unfortunate circumstance in our present situation.

Wednesday, 24

Overcast, fair weather except some showers in the afternoon, wind S. E.

As soon as it was daylight, all hands were at work and carried the property along shore 3,20 yards N. N. W.,<sup>9</sup> and then struck along the woods to a branch of the Chihalis Bay<sup>10</sup> a distance of 2,364 yards N. E., where the goods were all brought by 1 o'clock. The road along the sea shore was the same as yesterday, but that across the woods is very bad. It lies through thick woods and is almost one continuation of swamps where the men with their loads were often on their knees in water and mud. By taking this road a great deal of labour is saved, as it is 3 miles shorter than the road along the shore and across the other end of the point. As soon as the goods were got across the half of the people were sent to take round the boat which was left yesterday and to bring it and the other two up to this place; they have not yet arrived.

A goose and 2 ducks were killed, great numbers of ducks are in this small branch of the bay, but they are very shy and difficult to get at.

Vandit Patvin is getting worse, the swelling is extending up his leg and several black spots are appearing on his foot, he had to be carried all the way we came today.

The whole length of this portage which we have just got across is little more than 15 miles.

Thursday, 25

Overcast with drizzling rain and weighty showers. Wind S. E. blowing pretty fresh. Rained hard in the night.

---

At an early hour the men who remained at the camp were sent off to assist the others with the boats with which they arrived at noon, and at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 1 o'clock we embarked and proceeded up the Chihalis Bay. Our courses were N. 5 miles, N. N. E. 4 miles and N. E. 5 miles along the E. side of the Bay. On account of the haziness of the weather the form of the Bay or the appearance of the country about it could not be clearly discerned, but the Bay appears to be about 6 miles wide at its entrance immediately after which it widens to from 10 to 12 miles and then narrows gradually as we advance to from 3 to 4 miles. The shores are thickly clothed with wood, chiefly pine, to the water's edge, and near the water are rather flat. It is sometimes difficult to find a dry place to encamp on account of the rising tides, fresh water is also sometimes a scarce article, and that which we got being obtained from the swamps is of a bad quality and sometimes brackish.

The Iroquoy George<sup>11</sup> had been stationary near this bay sometime past hunting sea otter, he has now sent all his slaves to the Fort but one with whom he accompanies us.

A canoe with 10 Chihalis Indians passed us on their way to the Chenooks.

Friday, 26

Weighty rain in the night and with the exception of a few short intervals in the afternoon, pouring down rain all day. Blowing fresh from the E. forenoon. The men were completely drenched, and it was with difficulty a fire was got made when we put ashore for breakfast.

Embarked at daylight and proceeded to the bottom of the bay,<sup>12</sup> a distance of about 6 miles N. E. to S. E., the course in general may be considered E. The part of the bay through which we passed in the morning narrows from 2 miles to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in breadth, the shores of the North side are pretty high and those on the S. side are low and swampy near the water. The Bay from S. W. to N. E. may be about 23 or 24 miles in length. The Chihailis River is about 300 yards wide at its entrance and narrows as we advance till about 100 yds. where we are now encamped. The banks in some places are high and steep, but often low and flat and thickly wooded to the water's edge, principally pine on the high banks and oak and alder on the low points, and all along so thickly (covered) with underwood, bush and long grass, that it would be difficult to penetrate any distance into the woods; the shores are wet and muddy. The navigation for so far is very good, the river is deep and the current slack, the tide ascends this far. In the course of the day we passed several islands. Passed 4 villages of the Chihalis Nation, 2 houses in the first, 5 in the second, 2 in the third, and 3 in the fourth, opposite which we encamped. Though these people are well accustomed to the Whites and have been still on friendly terms with them, we were surprised to find them all under arms on our approach, and at some of the villages assuming threatening attitudes, shouting from behind the trees and presenting their arms, particularly their bows and arrows, as if in the act of discharging them. On inquiring into the cause of this unexpected conduct, we learned that Cumcumilus Son Cassica had sprad a report among these people that the Whites were coming to attack them and they were too credulous as to disbelieve it, but they were soon undeceived and a present of tobacco to some of the chief men dismissed all appearances of hostility.

Patvin, the lame man, is getting no better, the swelling is rather increasing than decreasing.

These peoples' houses and appearances, etc., are in every respect similar to the Chenooks, they have a good many fine arms among them.

We can only form a conjecture as to their number, from the first 3 houses we passed a canoe followed us with 14 men whom we supposed were all that belonged to those two houses, which was 7 house, supposing each house to contain 7 men fit to bear arms, as we passed 12 houses the number of men would be 84 which is probably correct, perhaps under the thing.

These peoples' houses are constructed of planks set on end and neatly fastened at the top, those in the ends lengthening towards the middle to form the proper pitch, the roofs are cased in with plank, the seams between which are filled with moss, a space is left open all the way along the ridge which answers the double purpose of letting out the smoke and admitting the light. About their habitations there is a complete bank of filth and nastiness. At this wet season it is a complete mess mixed with the offal of fish and dirt of every kind renders it surprising that human beings can reside among it.

Saturday, 27

Poured down rain all night, blowing fresh from the S. E. It rained incessantly with very little wind till 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when it ceased and a fair evening succeeded. Every person and every thing was completely drenched, our means of keeping them dry being ineffectual.

In order to save time and avoid the difficulty of getting a fire, we breakfasted before we left our encampment, and embarked at 8 o'clock and continued our course up the river to 4 o'clock in the afternoon where we encamped both wet and uncomfortable, but the evening being fine a good fire was soon made and all hands were soon employed warming themselves and drying their clothes. The distance made today we reckon from 20 to 24 miles through a very winding course, the river was so crooked that we were steering to every part at times, but our general course was East. The current was very strong and the people had often to use their poles. The general appearance of the river is much the same as yesterday except that the banks are high and not so soft and muddy as when the tide ebbs and flows. The breadth of the river this day might be from 60 to 80 yards. The continual rain is causing the river to rise very fast and, of course, increases the strength of the current. We passed 10 houses, first 1, next six and last 3 all of the Chihailis nation. The inhabitants did not appear in arms nor did they appear alarmed as those we passed yesterday. They were likely appeased by some of their friends who proceeded us, that they had no reason to be alarmed. At the large village I counted 47 men on the bank and saw some in the houses besides, the whole of which were upwards of 50, but some of those we saw yesterday were among them.

The filth about these houses exceeded that we saw yesterday. About and even in the houses were literally alive with maggots which had generated in the off all of fish and the stench was most offensive. Canoes of these people accompanied us from one village to another, many of them were

John Work's Journal

---

quite naked regardless of the rain. Several tracks of elk were seen today. But not a single appearance of beaver have we seen yet in the river.

Patvin is getting worse, his foot and leg has broke in different places.

Sunday, 28

Raining the most part of the night. Short intervals of fair weather in the morning and constant rain afterwards. Wind S. E.

Embarked a little after 8 o'clock and pursued our course up the river a distance of about 10 miles S. E. to where it receives a little river called the Black River from the Northward, up which we proceeded about 10 miles in about a N. E. direction. The part of the Chihailis River which we passed today is much the same in appearance as that described yesterday. The current continues very strong, the water had risen considerably in the night. The Black River<sup>13</sup> so named from the colour of its water, is from 20 to 30 yards wide, towards its lower end the navigation is very good, the water is deep and the current not strong, but about 5 or 6 miles up it the navigation gets troublesome as the current becomes strong and in many places so shallow that the boats could scarcely be dragged through it.

The river was also in two places blocked up with driftwood, at one of which a portage was made, a passage was cut through the other, a great deal of driftwood is piled on the shore at many places along the river. The banks of this river are in some places elevated and in some places low, the high banks are generally clothed with lofty pine and the low ones with poplar, ash, alder, etc., and the low points with thick willows. Where we are encamped is on the edge of a little plain. This river would not be passable for such craft as ours in the dry season. A great many dead salmon are in the river and many that are just alive and barely able to move through the water. Pased on Indian house belonging to the Holloweena nation, I counted 12 persons at it, probably some more were in the house.

MONDAY, 29

Wind S. E. Rain in the night and a continual succession of weighty showers all day.

Embarked at 1/2 past 8 o'clock and proceeded about 9 miles up the river in a N. E. course. In places the river was very shallow and our progress was sometimes obstructed by driftwood. In other parts the navigation was good as the water was deep and the current slack. The appearance of the country is changing considerably as we advance. The low points are covered with willows and small poplars, plane and some oak trees, while the higher banks have pine, and some distance appear hills thickly clothed with pine, between these hills and the river there are in some places fine plains. Saw several marks of beaver.-

Encamped at noon, the cause of stopping so soon was to wait for Mr. Annamour who had been sent to the principal Holloweena village a few miles off, for a trader Pierre Charles who has been with the Indians for some time. It is thought that he would be an acquisition to our party, but he could not be found.

Some of the people were sent off to hunt but returned unsuccessful though they saw both elk and deer. This is reckoned a good part of the country for those animals.

Passed two houses of the Halloweena Nation at which I counted 10 men and as many women besides children, probably some more were in the houses. Saw some more Indians some of whom had horses.

Tuesday, 30

Rain in the night and weighty rain the greater part of the day with strong gusts of wind from the S. E. We did not decamp today. Patvin's foot and leg has got so ill that there is no prospect of his recovery on the voyage, and this being the last place from which there is any chance of getting him sent back to the Fort, an agreement was made with an Indian, a principal man of the Chihailis Nation whom we met, to take him home to the Fort, for which he was to be paid handsomely on his arrival. Several of the men were, therefore sent off with the sick man to meet the Indian at the Halloweena Village where he was to proceed by the sea coast in a canoe. Eawania an Islander was sent with them to take care of him, but the men returned in the evening and reported that the Indian had made some difficulties and wanted payment before he went off. It not being considered prudent to send the sick man with the Indian, a bargain was made with another a Halloweena to take him by the Cowlitch, by which route he was expected to make the Fort sooner.

Pierre Charles, the man who was wanted yesterday, joined our party.

Several of the people went to hunt and Mr. Annamour and Little Pierre killed each a deer. Some of the others saw both elk and deer but killed none, the heavy rain was unfavourable for hunting.

Wednesday, 1st Dec

Showery weather, wind S. E. There has been more fair weather last night and today than for several days past.

In consequence of having to send the Interpreter Laframbois to finish the arrangements with the Indian and get him sent off with the sick man, we did not move camp today, until the Interpreter returned in the evening having effected his mission satisfactorily. The Indian who was engaged for the purpose had set out with the sick man by the Cowlitch. Part of the journey had to be performed on horse back. The poor man is furnished with a supply of provisions, medicines and the means of procuring provisions as the means possessed of would admit.

Several of the people were sent off to hunt, they are to proceed to a portage a short way ahead and there meet us.

Since we have been here several of the Halloweena Indians from the neighbouring village have visited us. Their mode of life, manners, language, etc., differ little from the Chihailis, indeed, they may be considered as a detached part of that tribe.

John Work's Journal

---

Thursday, 2nd

Mild fair weather, wind Easterly.

Embarked at half past 7 o'clock and proceeded about 5 miles up the river nearly N. Here the river becomes so narrow and nearly choked up with willows and trees that it was found necessary to make a portage and the goods were carried a distance of 2,980 yards. The boats were brought up by water which was such a tedious business, a road having to be cut for them in many places through the bushes, that it was night when they reached the upper end of the portage. The part of the river through which we passed today is pretty deep and the current not strong except at some points till we reach the portage. The shores are complete thickets of willows and different kinds of deciduous trees, mostly ash. The portage is a fine road through a handsome plain. Saw several marks of beaver by their cuttings they seem to be fonder of the ash than other trees.

Friday, 3rd

Wind Northerly, fair mild weather except a little drizzling rain in the morning.

Embarked at 1/4 past 7 o'clock and proceeded up the river and nearly to the head of a lake<sup>14</sup> where it has its source, a distance of about 8 miles N. to a Portage where boats and all have to be carried across land to Puget's Sound. On our arrival at the portage at 10 o'clock the business of carrying was immediately commenced and the boats and goods carried 3,140 yards N. W., the men had a hard day's work.

The river widened a little above the portage we left in the morning, but was in many places nearly choked up with willows, but on account of the recent rain there was plenty of water. Pine trees lined the shores which are low at some distance from the water, the intervening space is covered with thick willows and small trees of different kinds. The lake is about 3 to 4 miles long and from 1 to 1/2 miles wide, and appears on every side thickly wooded with, chiefly pine. In the part of the portage which we passed today the road is very good running through a small plain with ash trees scattered here and there through it and afterwards through thick woods of lofty trees of different kind, some of which are very large, and a good deal of underwood. The road is very good for carrying the pieces as it has been a good deal frequented by Indians, but it is too narrow to carry the boats through, and requires a good deal of labour to widen it, as some of the trees to be removed are pretty large, six men were employd clearing it all day.

The hunters who left us two days ago met us here. Mr. Annamour killed a deer which was the only success the party had.

Saturday, 4th Dec., 1824

Fair mild weather, wind Northerly.

At daylight the people resumed their labour on the portage, part to clear a road for the boats and

John Work's Journal

---

part to carry the baggage. The property was carried to the end of the portage, a distance of 4,950 yards N. W., by 11 o'clock after which all hands were employed carrying the boats a part of the way. This labour is attended with a great deal of difficulty, as we advance the road gets worse, it is in many places wet and miry, the trees are of a very large size many of them fallen, and the ground among them so thickly covered with underwood, particularly an evergreen shrub called by the Chenooks Lallall, that cutting a road through them for the boats is a tedious and laborious task. The track is also intersected by thin little rivers or creeks.

The portage is 8,090 yards long, and except a little plain at its commencement, thickly wooded with different kinds of trees, pine, maple, cedar, ash and wild cherry. Some of the pine trees are very large. I measured some of them, one of the largest was upwards of 5 fathoms in circumference, another 28 feet around, the soil seems to be very rich.

Pierre Charles was sent to hunt and returned in the evening having killed two elk.

Sunday, 5th

Overcast mild fair weather, wind North.

At an early hour part of the men was sent off for the meat that was killed yesterday, and the rest continued their labour at the boats which are yet a considerable distance from the end of the portage, though the people wrought at the road and carrying them all day. A good allowance of the fresh meat was served out to all hands which is a very acceptable change to them after the pease on which they have been living chiefly for some time.

Where we are now encamped is a small bay 15 of Puget's Sound. Notwithstanding that the tide rises about 6 feet yet the water is not very salt; it can only be called brackish. As the little river that falls into it here is inconsiderable, probably several little rivers discharge themselves into the bay at no great distance.

Two Indian houses of the Halloweena tribe are close by, their inhabitants are living on salmon which comes up this little bay.

Monday, 6th

Overcast, rain, cold weather, wind Northerly. Foggy in the morning.

At daylight the people went off to the boats which they brought to the end of the portage and at 9 o'clock we embarked and proceeded down the bay about 25 miles in the following courses: 4 miles N. N. W., 4 N. E., 3 N., 2 N. N. E., 2 N., 2 E. by S., 3 N E. by E., 3 E., and 2 N. N. E., mostly along the S. E. shore, through narrow channels formed by islands or points. Passed three deep bays or narrows formed by islands on the West side and on the S. E. side. In the evening passed the Nisqually River which falls in from the E. into a pretty large bay. The shores are steep and bold compounded of clay, a gravel and covered with wood, principally pine, to the water's edge. In several places the wood appears pretty clear and not much chocked with underwood. Put ashore a short time at noon to join the boats. Here we found plenty of musels, which were the only shellfish

---

John Work's Journal

---

we found although the shells of several other kinds such as oysters and different kinds of cockles were along the shores in plenty, another kind of fish in a curious shape was also in plenty, this is a shapeless animal with long toes joined together in the middle, it seems to be in a torpid state and scarcely to move, it is covered with a crust or hard skin of reddish colour.

Passed a house of the Halloweena tribe, also saw two Indians in a canoe.

Encamped in the evening near 4 o'clock on a sandy point; very little fresh water.

Tuesday, 7th

Wind Easterly. Overcast cold weather, foggy in the morning.

Embarked at 1/2 past 7 o'clock and proceeded 3 miles N. E., 6 E and 26 North, in all 35 miles. Encamped at 4 o'clock in the evening. Our course lay through narrow channels about 1/2 mile wide and some wide openings formed by traversing bays and channels formed by some islands and points. Passed a channel and two bays on the W. side and two bays and a channel on the E. side, the last of the bays receives the Qualax16 River. Stopped at another little river where there was a village17 of the Nisqually

Nation consisting of six houses, these are miserable habitations constructed of poles covered with mats, we were detained 1 1/2 hours at this village, getting two men and a woman, wife to one of them, to act as interpreters and guides for us. The men are both of the Sanahomis tribe18 and are not intelligible to any of our party, neither do they well understand us but they, at least one of them, understands the language of the Coweechins which is the name of the tribe at the entrance of what is supposed to be Fraser's River. The woman speaks and understands the Chenook language pretty well and is to interpret to the men. Two canoe with 8 Indians passed our encampment in the evening, and when it was dark the Indians visited our camp, these people are from the Interior and belong to the.....

The Nisqually Indians speak a language different from any we have seen yet.

Where we are encamped is an island,19 where we see the marks of some horses which the Indians have on it.

The appearance of the shores is much the same as yesterday, still bold and high, composed of clay and generally wooded to the water's edge. Where we encamped last night we found abundance of mussels at low water.

Wednesday, 8TH

Some rain in the afternoon, wind Easterly.

We were on the water at 7 o'clock and made according to estimation a distance of 36 miles, N. 5 miles, W. 3, N. E. 5 and N. 23. We were 7 3/4 hours on the water, 3 3/4 of which we both sailed

and paddled with mild breeze, we concluded that we made at least 5 miles per hour. We this day proceeded through a fine channel formed, as the others, by the main land and an island. Passed an opening on the E. side in the morning and on the same side a bay 20 into which the Linananimis River (flows). On the West side we came through the Soquamis Bay from which there is a small opening to the Westward. Where we are now encamped opposite to a wider channel or opening<sup>21</sup> which runs to the Westward (?) it is very deep with a number of islands in its north side and through its entrance. The channels through which we passed may be 3 or 4 miles wide, the shores appear the same as yesterday. We stopped at the Soquamis village situated in the bay 22 of the same name, it consists of 4 houses, we saw only 8 or ten men, but understand several of the inhabitants were off fishing. Our object in stopping here was to get the chief to accompany us as an interpreter, but he was not at home. The houses are build of boards covered with mats.

The country in general appearance the same as that through which we have already passed, the banks generally very high composed of clay or gravel and wooded generally to the water's edge, the timber seems not to be of a large growth. A ridge of high mountains covered with snow appeared some distance inland on the Eastern shore, two high mountains 23 were also seen covered with snow to the S. and S. E., another high one was also seen to the S. W.<sup>24</sup>

Thursday, 9TH

Foggy in the morning. Wind Northerly, rain, cold weather.

Resumed our voyage at 1/2 past 7 o'clock and proceeded about 28 miles through a fine channel from 3 to 5 miles wide, formed by an island on the W. side and the main land and islands on the E. side. Our courses were as follows: N. N. E. 15 miles, W. N. W. 10 and N. N. W. 3. Passed the Sinnahamis 25 Bay which receives a river of the same name on the E. side, and on the same side the entrance of a bay or channel, here was also a small island on the same side in the entrance of the Sannihamis Bay. On the W. side of the channel we passed the entrance of a bay or channel and a small island in the entrance of Sannihamis Bay. Where we are now encamped 26 is near a village of the Skaadchet 27 tribe, the smoke of two other villages of the same tribe appear at other situations around the Bay. During the forepart of the day the appearance of the country is much the same as yesterday, but towards evening it began to change considerably. The banks are still high but not so abrupt as before, the woods are getting in several places much thinner and sometimes plains were seen stretching down to the water's edge. A high ridge of snow topped mountains were still seen extending from nearly south to N. along the Eastern shore and some distant islands All the country hereabouts is represented by the Indians to abound with elk and deer.

In the afternoon passed a large house belonging to some of the Sannihamis tribe on the E. side of the channel, the inhabitants on our approach fled to the woods, but our interpreter called to some who were in a canoe and they brought back their friends. We went to this house and were treated by them with shell fish. All these tribes appear much alarmed on our approach and appear aimed to dispatch on landing, if they do not fly to the woods till they are informed of our friendly intentions. All strangers are considered by these as parties of neighboring tribes coming on war excursions. These people got some trifling presents.

---

One of our interpreters, being afraid to proceed any farther remained at this house where some of his friends resided. This man since he has been with us frequently boasted of his bravery and showed us how he would kill the Coweechins, the tribe who inhabit the entrance of the river of which we are in quest, and who are represented as a barbarous and wicked people. They are so wicked that the most of the Indians are unwilling to trust themselves among them even under our protection. However, the other interpreter and his wife are still bold enough to proceed.

A canoe with 10 men and a woman of the Scaadchet tribe met us in the evening and being assured of their safety by our guide, returned to where we encamped and are remaining with us all night.

Friday, 10TH

Foggy in the morning and foggy with rain all the after part of the day. Wind northerly.

Embarked at 1/4 past 7 o'clock and proceeded 3 miles N. N. W., 5 N. by W., 5 N. N. W., 2 N. W., 10 N. N. W., and 11 N. W., in all 36 miles. Our course lay first round a point to one of the Scaadchet villages,<sup>28</sup> then across a deep bay<sup>29</sup> and through a narrow winding channel<sup>30</sup> to another larger bay,<sup>31</sup> down which we proceeded to an island<sup>32</sup> at its entrance where we encamped at 1/2 past 4 o'clock. This was the only place within our reach where water could be found according to our guides. The appearance of the country is very much changed, the shores are much bolder and of rock, the islands are also rocky with apparently very little earth and clothed with trees of a stunted growth.

Last night a young man, son to the Scaadchet Chief, was engaged to accompany the party as a guide and interpreter, and principally for the purpose of introducing us to strangers whom we may pass. He accordingly embarked with us, and shortly after we were met by some people in canoes who informed him that a war party from a neighboring tribe had surprised one of the villages and slain one of his friends in the night. A kind of howling was set up and we proceeded to the village which was on our way where a short stay was made till our guide got some things for his wife, when we continued across the bay, in the meantime the Indians had collected from the different villages and followed us in five canoes to the number of 55 men armed with bows and arrows, spears, bludgeons and a few guns. Not knowing what their intentions might be our party placed their arms beside them in readiness, however, the Indians said they were going to get news of the murder which turned out to be a false report. A present of a knife and a looking glass was made to each of their principal chiefs with which they seemed well satisfied. Two of the chiefs, the father of the young man already mentioned, and another volunteered to accompany us and their offer was accepted and they embarked, all the others returned.

The Scaadchet are fine looking Indians. They are not so flat headed as the Chenooks. They go quite naked except a blanket about their shoulders, many use in lieu of blankets little cloaks made of feathers or hair. The bay in which they reside is a handsome place. Passed 12 houses belonging to these people on the E. side of our road, not far separated, and in the opposite side of the bay I

John Work's Journal

---

counted at least 12 houses in a village, besides which at a great distance, the smoke of two other villages appeared.

A ridge of mountains 33 covered with snow extended from S. E. to N. W. at some distance from the Eastern shore, the intervening space seemed to be a flat country well wooded. In the after part of the day approached considerably nearer the shore and the country became much more hilly, even every island of any size rose to a little hill in its centre. The Indians represent this country as abounding in elk, even the islands are said in to be well stocked with these animals. The main land appears well for beaver and the Indians say they are numerous.

Saturday, 11TH

Overcast showery weather, wind Easterly.

Proceeded on our voyage at 1/2 past 7 o'clock and continued to 1/2 past 12 where we encamped in consequence of having a very wide traverse to make which it was deemed unsafe to attempt as the weather appeared unsettled and the sea appeared to be running high in the middle of the traverse. The distance made was 15 miles N. W. by W. and 7 miles N. W. along the main shore. The wind being favorable we sailed most of the time with a fine breeze. Passed several islands 34 to the Westward but at a great distance, there was also what appeared to be a chain of hills to the Westward farther off than the islands but on account of the haziness of the weather we could not well distinguish whether they were hills or other islands. Saw two large channels, one 35 running to the S. W. and the other 36 to the West. On the East passed a small island in the morning, then two points 37 and a small bay close 38 to where we encamped which is in the entrance of another bay. The appearance of the country has again changed, the shore still continues high and steep but instead of rocks are composed of clay and wooded to the water's edge, and the woods seem not to be much chocked up with underwood.

Immediately when we put ashore Pierre Charles went to hunt and shortly returned having killed 3 elk and a deer.

Sunday, 12TH

Overcast stormy weather in the morning and moderate in the after part of the day, sleet and weighty rain in the night.

The weather being too rough to attempt the traverse this morning, and part of the people having to be sent for the meat which was killed yesterday, we did not decamp today.

The people who were sent for the meat arrived with it in the afternoon. The great number of tracks seen by the hunters indicated that elk are-very numerous about this place.

Monday, 13TH

Overcast, wind N. Easterly, a little wind in the forepart of the day but nearly calm afterward.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Embarked at half past 7 o'clock and set out with the intention of crossing the traverse, but had gone but a short way when it was thought too rough to proceed, though there was not much wind. The course was, therefore changed and the boats crossed the entrance of the little bay in which we had been encamped and continued along the main shore to another bay 39 down which they proceeded to the entrance of a small river 40 up which they continued about 7 or 8 miles, in a very winding course which was in general N. Easterly. Encamped at 1/2 past 3 o'clock.

The point above mentioned 41 to which it was intended to cross in the morning is represented by the Indians to form the entrance of Coweechan River (which is supposed to be the same with Fraser's), on the S. E. side it projects far out to sea and appears like an island but seems to be joined to the mainland which is very low by a sandy ridge which probably may be covered at high water, immense flocks of plover were observed flying about the sand. The distance to this point might be about 10 miles. Sand appears at a distance beyond the point.

The reason for proceeding up the little river was the Indians representing that by making a portage there was a road this way into the Coweechin River, but they said it was very bad and seemed most desirous to go by the point. The navigation of the little river is very bad, after getting a short distance up it was often barred up with driftwood which impeded our progress, the Indians had cut roads through it for their canoes yet they were too narrow for our boats. Farther up it is nearly closed up with willows so uncommonly thick that it was both laborious and tedious to get the boats dragged through them. It is yet some distance to the portage. The appearance of the country round the bay from which we started this morning round to the point, appears low and flat, the bay appears to be shallow. In the river nothing but thick willows are seen for some distance from the water, where the banks though low are well wooded with pine, cedar, alder and some other trees. There are the appearance of beaver being prtty numerous in this river. Where we are now encamped is a pretty little plain. Two Indian boys were found in a lodge a little above our encampment, they were treatedly kindly and allowed to depart. No information of any importance was got from them. Our Indian and they understand each other, but our interpreter so imperfectly understood the Indians who accompanied us that the information required on the most important points is very unsatisfactorily obtained.

TUESDAY, 14TH

Overcast, very weighty rain in the after part of the day.

It being found that the boats could proceed no farther up the river, carrying was commenced in the morning and the boats and baggage carried 3,970 yards which is a little more than half of the portage. This portage which is to another little river which falls into Coweechin River, lies through a plain 42 which with the weighty rain is become so soft and miry. that in several places it resembles a swamp. The road is very miry and every hollow is a pool of water. The soil here appears to be very rich, is a black mould, the remains of a luxurious crop of fern and grass lies on the ground. The country about here seems low, the trees are of different kinds, pine, birch, poplar, alder, etc., some of the pine of a very large size. Some of the men who were hunting visited the upper part of the little river and report that they saw the appearance of plenty of beaver. Elk have

John Work's Journal

---

been very numerous here some time ago but the hunters suppose that since this rainy season they have gone to the high ground.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH

Raining all day with the exception of some short intervals of fair weather.

The people resumed their labour at an early hour and by the evening had the boats and baggage at the end of the portage, a distance of 3,930 yards which makes the whole length of the portage 7,910 yards N. N. E. The appearance of the country the same as described yesterday.

In the evening as we got to the end of the portage a herd of elk was seen on the edge of the plain. Several of the people set after them but only one was killed which was by Mr. McKay. There were too many hunters and though the elk were not wild they were not approached with sufficient caution, they were followed into the woods by some of the people who have not yet returned.

These Indians came to us in the afternoon. They are of the Cahoutetts Nation. They differ little in appearance from the Indians who accompany us, their blankets are of their own manufacture and made of hair or coarse wool on which they wear a kind of short cloak made of the bark of the cedar tree, it has a hole in the middle through which the head passes, it extends to below the shoulders and breast and has an opening left on each side to leave the arms unconfined. The only arms observed with these were bows and arrows. Their language differs from that of our Indians but they understand each other. The only information obtained from them was that their tribe was in detached parties in their winter quarters in the little river, that the large river was not far off.

THURSDAY, 16TH

Rain in the night and except some short intervals, raining all day. Calm.

We were detained waiting for A. Aubutu, Thos. Taranton and Louis who went after the elk yesterday and did not return till late this morning, till 11 o'clock when we embarked and proceeded down the little river 43 from the portage through a very winding course, generally North, for a distance of about 8 miles to its discharge into the Coweechin 44 River, up which we proceeded about 2 miles E. and encamped at 2 o'clock.

The navigation of the little river is pretty good in some places it is rather shallow, the tide runs a little way up it. The country through which it runs is flat and clayey. In some parts near the portage the woods approach to the water's edge, but farther down the woods are at some distance and the river runs through a fine meadow which is covered with the withered remains of a fine crop of hay. The marks of a great many beaver and numerous tracks of elk some quite fresh are to be seen all the way along the river.

We entered the Coweechin River at 1 o'clock. At this place 45 it is a fine looking river at least as wide as the Columbia at Oak Point, 1,000 yards wide. Where we come into it is opposite to an island 46 we are uncertain which what distance it may be to its entrance. The banks of the N. shore

John Work's Journal

---

are low and those on the South shore are pretty high, both well wooded to the water's edge. The trees are pine, cedar, alder, birch and some others. Some high hills appear to the Eastward at no great distance, topped with snow.

From the size and appearance of the river there is no doubt in our minds that it is Fraser's.

The men who went after elk yesterday evening killed 2 but brought very little of the meat home and it was thought that too much time would be lost by sending for it.

FRIDAY, 17TH

Overcast, wind Northerly, sharp, cold weather.

Embarked at 8 o'clock and proceeded up the river 4 miles E. N. E. to an island 47, which divides it into two channels, then up the N. channel 1 mile E. N. E. and 1 mile E. to the head of the island, 4 miles E. S. E. here the river is again divided into 2 channels by an island 48 1 mile E. through a channel between two small islands 48 situated in the N. channel, 1 1/2 miles E. N. E. and 1 1/2 E. to the head of the island, then 3 miles N. N. E. and 1 mile E. to the entrance of a small river, 49 North where we encamped. The river still keeps its breadth, the shores in the forepart of the day had a moderate ascent and thickly wooded to the water's edge, farther on the banks were lower and wooded in some places principally with poplar, behind these the land rises in hills which appear to be chiefly clothed with pine and cedar. The banks were in many places composed with clay that has been deposited by the water. A high mountain 50 covered with snow appeared to the S. W. in the morning and shortly after a ridge also topped with snow was extending from N. W. to N. E. Two peaks 51 in this ridge are very high, as we are approaching these mountains the country is getting hilly, some of the hills are high and close to the shore.

In the forepart of the day we saw an Indian lodge in a little bay on the N. side of the river. Our Indians were sent ahead to apprise the inhabitants of our approach and good intentions which prevented them from being alarmed. This was a miserable habitation formed of plank, both sides and roof, the usual appendages of Indian houses filth and nastiness were here in abundance, and the smell of the remains of decayed salmon was very offensive. In number 22, 7 men, 7 women and 8 children. Nevertheless, the inhabitants appeared healthy and seemed to have plenty of dried salmon provided. Our Indians were understood by these people, yet we got very little information from them. We learned that they got some fine European articles in traffic from tribes above whom obtained them from White people. The Indians got a few presents when we left them at 2 and 2 of them accompanied us in a canoe.

A village is a short way up the river where we are encamped. An Indian went to it where (one) of them remained all night, the other returned when it was dark with 3 of the Indians who stayed a short time and went off with the Intention, as we understood, of paying a formal visit tomorrow.

At the house below there was an instrument resembling in shape a salmon spear, but what purpose it is used for, its size leaves me at a loss to determine, it was 2 poles about 5 inches in cir-

John Work's Journal

---

cumference fitted in such a manner that they were intended to be spliced together, one of the was 42 feet long and the other 29, in all about 71 feet, it was of cedar neatly dressed, a fork made of 2 pieces of wood different from the pole and not barked nor made very sharp was fixed to the end of the pole, no cordage any other tackling was about it.

SATURDAY, 18th

Rained without intermission all night and all day, very little wind from the N. E.

About 9 o'clock 47 men 3 women and 1 boy of the Cahantitt Indians (which is the name of the tribe that inhabit the village above where we were encamped) visited us in a friendly manner. Some presents were given them consisting of a fish hook to each of the common men and a looking glass and a little vermilion to each of 3 or 4 chiefs. A few beaver skins were also purchased from one of these chiefs for a couple of axes and a few beads. These Indians, though of the same tribe, are much more intelligent than those we saw yesterday.

A new blanket, two guns, a pair of trousers and a few other European articles, some of them very old and worn out, were in the possession of these people. These articles we understood were received in battle from tribes farther up the river and that they had passed from white people through several tribes before that. A good deal of information was received from these people respecting the river. A little boy presented to the chief to forward to Thompson's River, he mentioned not fewer than 15 tribes, 8 on the south and 7 on the North side of the river, through whose hands it must pass before it reached the Forks. He named the Suswhaps and some other tribes whose names we know.

The chief of this tribe is a fine tall good looking man, but his people are of low stature. The men have generally bierds, all their heads are a little flatted. Their clothes consisted of blankets of their own manufacture, some white and some grey or of black with variegated beads of different colours mostly red and white. They wore mats to keep off the rain and conical hats.

On account of our short stay we could observe nothing respecting their manners or mode of living of these people. They offered some roasted sturgeon for sale which shows that those fish were in the river, but of their mode of taking them we know nothing. Our Indian guide understood them and was understood also. The language they speak has some little resemblance to the Okanagan.

On the arrival of the Indians at our camp this morning we learned that the Scaadchet chief who went to visit them yesterday had deserted in the night.

Mr. McMillan having determined to retire deeming it unnecessary to proceed farther up the river, we embarked past noon and retired to the camp which we left yesterday.

SUNDAY, 19TH

Cloudy fair weather, wind S. E. blowing fresh in the evening. Poured

---

John Work's Journal

---

down rain all night. Embarked at 7 o'clock and proceeded town the river about 27 miles, viz., W. 4 miles down the N. channel formed by the island opposite where we entered the river on the 16th. Another small island is at the lower end of this one, then W. N. W. 2 miles, S. W. by W. 2 miles, W. by N. 2 miles, along the N. side of an island 52 4 miles W. by S. At the lower end of this course there is a bay with an island 53 its entrance. On the N. side of the river W. S. W. 3 miles, a small island is in the N. side of the river just below the bay. S. by W. 3 miles 54 about the middle of this course there is a bay and an island on the W. side of the river and immediately below the river is divided into two channels by an island 55 proceeded down the E. one. 1 mile S. W. by S. and 4 miles W. S. W. During the day the river maintained its wideness till towards evening when its breadth considerably increased. Some places the banks are elevated at the water's edge but in general they are low and the land rising into hills a short distance from the shore, towards evening the shores on both side of the river became low and swampy. The trees observed on the shores are pine, cedar, plane, alder and some others, the alder principally occupies the low ground. Where we are now encamped 56 is not far from the entrance of the river, the country is so very swampy and liable to be overflowed with the tide that we had to turn back some distance to our present situation which, though the site of an old village, is a quagmire.

Four canoes containing 17 Indians of the Cahotitt tribe met us, among them was the principal chief of the tribe and a second chief named . We put ashore and had some conversation with them by the help of our interpreters, they were informed of the motive of our visit and seemed highly pleased. A chief's clothing was presented to the old man and a corn. coat to the young one, besides a few other trifling articles. Some beaver skins were also traded from them. These people are of low stature their heads are a little flattened and the old men generally have beards. The old chief seems to be marked with the small pox, and is a smart looking little man though pretty old. The young one is much stouter and a good looking man. This village was at some distance up a river which falls into the bay.

We saw another canoe with three Indians in it but they would not approach us.

A pair of old blankets and an old knife were the only European articles observed among these people, they seemed to have no arms, their clothing was blankets of their own manufacture.

Though we saw but very few Indians yet they must be very numerous about this river at particular seasons of the year. We passed the site of several old villages, the one where we are now encamped extends at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile along the shore, while passing it I counted 54 houses but on coming near they are found to be so situated that not more than the  $\frac{1}{2}$  of them were counted.

MONDAY, 20TH

Overcast mild weather with fog and slight showers of rain forenoon, cleared up afterwards and became a fine sunshining day. Light wind from the E. and N. E.

Embarked at 1/4 before 7 o'clock and continued our course down the river S. by W. 6 miles and W. by S. 5 miles through one of the principal channels which is at least yards wide to

---

John Work's Journal

---

its discharge into the sea. There were two other channels on the south side and a large and one supposed to be on the N. side. The channel through which we came was sounded in several places towards its discharge and found to be from 7 to 3 ½ fathoms about high water. The land about the entrance of the river is very low and swampy with some few scattered pines of a small size and bushes. A ridge of pretty high land appears at some distance on the N. side of the river, that on the N. E. side is a low narrow strip which divides the river from the sea. The sea on each side of the entrance of this River appears to be shallow.

From the entrance of the river the boats proceeded along the outside of the low strip of land S. E. by S. 2 miles, S. E. by E. 5 miles to near a point of high land along which we continued 4 miles S. S. E., 1 S. S. E., 3 E. N. E. and 1 N. E. to its outward extremity, then across the open sea to the E. side of a bay on the northern shore E. by N. 6 miles, E. S. E. 4 and E. 4. The point above mentioned is Vancouver's Pt. Roberts, part of the shore along which we passed is low clothed with grass and bushes and has a pleasing appearance. Towards the outer end the shore is bold and composed of clay with some rocks along the water's edge, at the very lower end is a low point of considerably extent entirely covered with an old Indian village. Where we are now encamped is the Birch Bay of Vancouver.

Vancouver's Island and the islands in the E. channel between it and the main shore appeared quite plain and in many places rises into high hills. Also along the main shore to the Northward, the land could be seen distinctly a strip of low flat ground extends some distance from the shore and is surrounded by a ridge of high mountains covered with snow. extending as far as the eye can reach along the coast both to the S. E. and to the N. W. Some of the peaks are very high, some pretty high hills are also to be seen which are green and have no snow on them.

Saw a canoe with six Indians near the entrance of the river, on being called to by our Indian they approached to within a short distance of the boats but could not be prevailed upon to come nearer. On some further conversation with our Indian they pulled ashore to bring their chief who had landed, but the boats pushed on and did not wait for them. These people are of the Coweechin tribe and had just crossed from Vancouver's Island where they now live. They did not approach near enough for us to distinguish anything of their dress or appearance, they were armed with long spears.

On the low land at the entrance of the River geese particularly white ones, were very numerous and were by no means shy, they allowed themselves to be approached easily. Mr. McKay killed 3 of them.

TUESDAY, 21ST

Clear stormy weather in the night with a slight frost. Cloudy sunshining weather during the day. Light wind from the N. W.

Embarked at 6 o'clock and encamped at 2. Our course was back along the same track through which we passed on the 10th and 11th inst., viz. 12 miles S. E. by E., 5 miles S. E. by E., 9 miles S.

John Work's Journal

---

E. by S., 5 miles S. E., and 3 miles S. E. to the entrance<sup>57</sup> of the narrow channel. The wind was favourable and the sails were up part of the day, but it was so light that they were of little service.

WEDNESDAY, 22ND

Showery weather, wind S. Easterly.

Embarked at 4 o'clock and after getting out of the little channel which was S. E. 6 or 7 miles, proceeded E. S. E. across a bay about 10 miles to the entrance of a narrow shallow channel,<sup>58</sup> through which we proceeded 2 miles S. S. E. into a fine bay<sup>59</sup> up which we continued S. S. E. 12 miles to the head of an island on the right hand, it was down the E. side of this island<sup>60</sup> we passed on the 9th inst. From this island our course was S. by E. The entrance of bay to the Westward and the channel to Scaadchet Bay to the Westward, then S. by E. 10 miles to a point in the main shore<sup>61</sup> on Eastern side of channel opposite a wide channe<sup>162</sup> that falls in from the Westward. In the morning passed a lodge of Scaadchet Indians, here I counted about the house and in the door 17 persons. From these people we learned that the chiefs who deserted from us on the inst. have not yet arrived. Afterwards we passed a village of the Sannihamis tribe of 3 houses on island. A canoe with 4 men came off to us. They were presented with 3 brass rings each and a knife and pin of tobacco sent to one of their chief men.

The road we have pursued the after part of the day is through the same track we passed on the \_\_\_ inst.

Where we are now encamped is at a little brook and though it is scarcely large enough to get a kettle of water drawn from it, yet there are the marks of beaver in it, their cuttings are carried down by the current.

THURSDAY, 23RD

Stormy with weighty showers of rain in the night. Stormy with almost continual heavy rain all day. Wind S. E.

It being too stormy in the morning, we did not embark till 11 o'clock when it became a little moderate. Our course was along the Eastern shore S. by E. 12 to 15 miles to 2 o'clock when we put ashore <sup>63</sup> it being too rough to proceed.

Two canoes of the Soquamis tribe which were proceeding to the Northward along the opposite shore crossed over to us. One of them accompanied us a short way but the others could not get across in time. They soon both pursued their journey under sail. These crafts seem adapted to stand more sea than our boats.

FRIDAY, 24TH

Stormy and weighty rain in the night and cold cloudy fair weather afterpart of the day.

Embarked a little after 4 o'clock in the morning and encamped at 2 o'clock in the afternoon at

John Work's Journal

---

Sinoughtons, our guides' village which is called Chilacoom.<sup>64</sup> It was stormy in the morning but pretty moderate afterwards. Our course all day was about S. by E. 44 miles, we are now resting in the same track we pursued on our way going.

SATURDAY, 25TH

Showery in the night and weighty rain the greater part of the day. Wind S. E. Embarked at 4 o'clock and reached the portage at 10 where the people immediately commenced carrying and had the boats and baggage more than half across the portage at night. On account of the heavy rain the road is much more wet and miry than we passed last, yet we got on more expeditiously as the road is cleared.

One of our boats was left at Sinoughtons village baggage embarked in the other two.

Last night Sinoughton was paid for his services and seemed well satisfied.

SUNDAY, 26TH

Wind South Easterly. Very weighty rain in the night and raining the most of the day. At daylight the business of carrying was resumed and by 11 o'clock we were embarked on the Scaadchet Lake <sup>65</sup> and pursued back the same road which we went on the      to 4 o'clock where we encamped on a plain on the      side of the river opposite the Halloweena village.

Passed two Indian houses on the S. E. side of the Scaadchet Lake of the Halloweena Nation.

MONDAY, 27TH

Sharp frost in the night. Fair weather with fog. Wind Southerly.

Our party divided.<sup>66</sup> Mr. McMillan, I. Michel, the Interpreter and 6 men to proceed across land to the Cowlitch River and thence to the Fort by water. Messrs. McKay, Annamour and the rest of the people to go with the boats the same way we came. A man went ahead yesterday to procure horses from the Indians. It was noon today when he returned with the information that they were to be had. The boats then proceeded on their route down the River and we crossed a fine plain <sup>67</sup> about 6 miles to the Halloweena Village, but the Indians not being able to get the horses collected, we had to encamp close by for the night.

The plain on which this village is situated has a very pleasing appearance, it is of considerable extent bounded on every side by woods, principally pine, with here and there oak trees thinly scattered over the plain. The soil is composed of gravel mixed with a small quantity of rich black mould. The surface is covered with a scanty crop of short grass and fern.

TUESDAY, 28TH

Sharp frost in the night and foggy during the day.

Having procured the horses and got everything ready, started on our journey at 8 o'clock and

---

John Work's Journal

---

encamped at 4 in the evening. The people found such difficulty in dividing up the loaded horses that it was quite dark before some of them reached the camp, the men got so tired with one of the horses that they left him and carried his load themselves.

Our course was nearly S. E. about 25 miles. The road lay through plain and points of woods alternately. In the morning the road through the plains was very good but in the woods it was very bad and ran over two pretty high hills, it is very wet and miry and so slippery in places that the horses can scarcely keep their feet, and though it is a common Indian road they are so lazy that they will not remove the branches and fallen trees out of the way, which is often nearly obstructed by them, and the miserable horses with difficulty climb over the trees. The road was crossed by two pretty large rivers and several small streams some of which are now pretty much being swelled with the heavy rain, all these streams run to the S. W. As we advance the plains are of a small size, they are wetter than the large ones and the soil seems better having a greater proportion of black earth mixed with the gravel, the crop of grass and fern seems to have been more luxurious. In the woods the trees are pine of different kinds, some of a large size, cedar, plane, alder and some others, besides several bushes of willows and a kind of crab tree. The soil in the woods seems to be richer than that in the plains.

Passed an Indian house of the Halloweena Nation.

WEDNESDAY, 29TH

Frost in the night. Cloudy fair weather during the day.

Proceeded on our journey at 7 o'clock and by 11 arrived at the Cowlitch River, it was 12 before all the people arrived. The course was still about S. E. 10 or 12 miles and lay through alternate plains and woods the same as yesterday. 68 Some small streams crossed the road, the Nisqually and Cowlitch mountains appeared in the morning, the former to the N. E. and the latter to the E.

A canoe was hired from the Indians to carry us to the Fort, but when we had embarked it was found too small and another had to be hired and at 1/2 past 12 we pushed off and fell down the river and reached the Columbia near 7 o'clock. The Cowlitch is in general from 40 to 50 yds. wide, the current very strong above but slack as it discharges into the Columbia. The banks are in some places bold and high at other places not so elevated, the high bank is in general clothed with pine of different kinds and cedar, and the lower ones with alder, ash and other desiduous in this trees. The general course of the River, which is very winding, appears to be about S. W. A large branch falls in from the Southward, besides several small streams from both sides. The upper part of the river is very populous, I counted 30 houses to the Forks, all built of planks.

THURSDAY, 30TH

Frost in the night. Blowing fresh the forepart of the day with of the weighty rain in the afternoons.

Put ashore to sup at 8 o'clock last night and after supping embarked and continued under way

---

John Work's Journal

---

all night and arrived at the Fort at 10 o'clock in the morning. The wind being pretty fresh in the night caused a swell George that was just enough for our canoes to pass through with safety, the swell increasing about Teague Point we took in a good deal of water before we got ashore at the portage, but the wind being then off the land we got safely to the Fort. The little canoe had to put ashore in the night and did not arrive till the afternoon.

Notes

- 1 Present town of Ilwaco.
- 2 Whealdon's Pond, vulgarly called Black Lake.
- 3 Tarlett Slough and Cranberry Marshes.
- 4 Mouth of Slough at Shoalwater Bay.
- 5 Near present town of Oysterville.
- 6 Bay Center and Goose Point.
- 7 Toke Point
- 8 North Cove on Willapa Harbor.
- 9 Near to Westport.
- 10 Gray's Harbor.
- 11 The Freehunter already mentioned
- 12 Near Aberdeen.
- 13 This name still sticks; evidently there before 1824
- 14 Black Lake of today. See note on Dec. 26th ultra.
- 15 Eld Inlet. If Budd Inlet why no mention of the Chutes or Falls that have made Olympia famous?
- 16 Puyallup River.
- 17 Steilacoom; camped here again on return.
- 18 Snohomish.
- 19 Vashon island (?).
- 20 Probably Elliott Bay.
- 21 Admiralty Inlet.
- 22 Port Madison.
- 23 Rainier and St. Helens.
- 24 Evident error. Must refer to Mt. Baker.
- 25 Snohomish.
- 26 On Camano Island along Saratoga Passage.
- 27 Irish name for Skagit.
- 28 At Utsalady ?
- 29 Skagit Bay.
- 30 Slough between Fidalgo Island and La Conner Flats.
- 31 Padilla Bay.
- 32 Vendoli or Lummi Island.
- 33 Cascade Range.
- 34 Orcas, San Juan, etc., Islands.
- 35 Rosario Straits.

John Work's Journal

---

- 36 Channel de Haro.
- 37 Sandy and Whitehorn Points.
- 38 Samiamoo Bay.
- 39 Boundary, Bay.
- 40 Nikomeckl River.
- 41 Point Roberts
- 42 Langley Prairie
- 43 Salmon River.
- 44 Fraser River.
- 45 Future site of Fort Langley.
- 46 McMillan Island.
- 47 Creseent Island.
- 48 Matsqui Indian Reserve Islands.
- 49 Now Hatzic Slough, two miles above Mission Station.
- 50 Mt. Baker.
- 51 Cheam Peaks.
- 52 Barnston Island.
- 53 Mouth of Pitt River and Douglas Island.
- 54 Now passing in front of New Westminster.
- 55 Annacis Island.
- 56 Probably opposite Tilburv Island.
- 57 Swinomish Slough at La Conner.
- 58 Davis Slough at Stanwood.
- 59 Port Susan.
- 60 Whidby Island.
- 61 Meadow Point, north of Ft. Lawton.
- 62 Port Madison
- 63 Near Three Tree Point.
- 64 Steilacoom again and source for the name.
- 65 Impossible to reconcile this designation. It is Black Lake on present day maps
- 66 Near Gate station on Northern Pacific Railroad.
- 67 Probably Grand Mound Prairie.
- 68 The trail this and the preceding day follows closely the present line of Northern Pacific Railroad through Centralia, Chehalis and to point on Cowlitz River near Toledo, where later the Cowlitz Farm of H. B. Co. was located.

John Work's Journal, March 21 - May 14, 1825

March 1824, Monday 21. At noon left Fort Vancouver in the otter with four Owyhees for Fort George. The wind was favorable & we ran down the river under sail, till midnight when we brought up a little above the Cowlitz so that we might not pass the new Scow in the night. Showery weather.

John Work's Journal

---

Tuesday 22. Clear fine warm weather contd our course at daylight, and shortly after met the new scow opposite the Cowlitz, she was making very slow progress, & we could render her no assistance. Gave Casmus 8 books, 1 yd Tobacco, & 10 Ball & Powder to buy provisions. Passed the old scow below Oak Point village, manned by four Owyhees, three nights from the fort. The wind blew so strong ahead that we were stopped near four hours in the evening. during this time the men were employed mending the sail. Continued our course after sunset, when it became calm, and did not bring up till near 1 O'clock in the morning, when the tide was setting against us.

Weddy 23. At daylight contd our course under sail but the men mistook the channel and ran the boat aground at 7 O'clock and all efforts could not get her Off, & we had to wait till two o'clock for the tide, when we got afloat & reached the fort at 7 in the evening. It was fine weather. An Indian of the fort Tete Plume, was badly wounded by one Casserned Slaves, who is supported by his master, The poor man is in the fort and is not expected to live.

Thursday 24. Fine weather in the morning, but heavy rain in the afternoon. Busy all the forenoon loading the otter and sent her off in the evening, with an additional man B. Poirier who is in charge of her. I am to go up in 2 canoe with Indians, but have to remain till tomorrow morning, as the stores are to be examined and an estimate formed of the number of trips that will be yet required to take up the remainder of the property. Some writings are also to be finished. The wounded Indian died in the afternoon.

Friday 25. Heavy rain & blowing strong from the Eastward the greater part of the day. Embarked in a canoe manned by four of the freemen's Indian Slaves, the wind being ahead & such heavy rain we made but slow progress & only got to opposite McKenzies encampment. We were completely soaked with wet. Having only two mats to make a shelter for myself in the night, my lodging is not very comfortable. [Passed the otter at 2 o'clock. She was aground waiting for the tide a little below campment Verd.]

Satdy 26. Fine weather. embarked at daylight, and encamped near the lower end of deers Island in the evening. All the threatening and encouragement I can make use of I cannot get the slaves to go on as quick as I wish. Shot 4 bitterns.

Sunday 27. Fine pleasant weather - contd our journey at an early hour, and arrived at the new scow at the lower branch of the Wallamet and the old one a good piece farther up.

Monday 28. Showery weather - remained at the fort.

Tuesday 29. Do Do

Weddy 30. Heavy rain the forepart of the day.

Thursday 31. Rained hard all day very weighty in the afternoon. Late last night the Otter arrived & was unloaded this morning. At noon I embarked in her for fort George. The wind was favourable and we continued under sail till 11 O'clock when it became calm and the tide being against us

we brought up near the Cowlitz.

Apl. 1 Mild fair weather except some light Showers in the morning. Got under way at 2 O'clock in the morning and arrived at Fort George at 12 at night. It was calm and we made but little way when pulling against the flood tide. We were four hours getting from Tongue Point to the fort. Met the old Scow going off at the Tongue point, on her way up.

Satdy 2. Showery in the morning & very heavy rain afterwards. The men employed packing the furs, Some things in the other stores were also examined & prepared for packing. The freemen were off to the new fort at an early hour before I was aware, but wishing to inform Mr McLaughlin how affairs stood here, Mr McKenzie sent a canoe after them with letters, but it returned in the evening not being able to come up with them.

Sunday 3. Showery weather. This being Easter Sunday & it not being customary for the Canadians to work they were not employed. But Mr McKenzie & I were busy packing all day. A Boat with four men arrived from the new fort, another boat is behind.

Monday 4. Showery forenoon very heavy rain afterwards. All hands were busy packing &c. up all day. The other boat arrived this morning - with a letter from Mr McLaughlin requesting that 7 boats would be forewith be got ready besides the otter, four to be manned with two men each, white men and owyhees, and the other three with Indn Slaves, part of the men were employed preparing oars &c, but the day was so wet that nothing could be done at gumming the boats. Some of them are so old and crazy that it is feared they will not be got in order fit to go up with any cargo without damaging it, especially as they are to be so weakly manned.

Tuesday 5. Cloudy fair weather forepart of the day Showery afterwards, Wind Westerly, blew fresh in the night and part of the day. The most of the men busy employed gumming the boats, the rain in the afternoon interrupted them We were employed with the rest of the people packing up and preparing the cargoes.

Weddy 6. Some heavy showers of hail and rain. Wind S. W. blew strong in the night & morning. Busy employed loading the otter and sending her off in the evening under the charge of Mr Cartier & 4 men - And getting their cargoes for the other boats in readiness to load them and be off tomorrow.

Thursdy 7th. Heavy rain the greater part of the day. Squalls of wind from S. E. Busy all day loading 7 boats, with the intention of getting off with the afternoon tide,- When they were loaded one of them a very old one got a hole broke in her bow by touching against the wharf. On hauling her up to be repaired she was found so rotten that she was considered unfit for the voyage, some heavy casks were therefore taken out and the remainder of the cargo distributed among the other boats, this caused so much delay that we had to defer starting till the night tide everything is therefore in readiness for that purpose - A man sleeps in each boat to take care of her for the night. A ship was seen entering the river at 4 O'clock in the afternoon, the weather was thick and

John Work's Journal

---

hazy, so that it could not be distinguished exactly what kind of a vessel it was, perhaps it was a deception. On account of leaving the old boat, we were enabled by hiring some more slaves, to put three hands in each boat. Not knowing whether the ship may be a friend or enemy, we wish to get off with the furs as expeditiously as possible.

Friday 8. Stormy from the S. E. with constant heavy rain in the night & almost all day. In order to be ready to go off with the night tide I staid up all night, but it being stormy, such a pour of rain and very dark, I considered it unsafe to attempt doubling Tongue point & deferred starting till morning tide and went off at 9 O'clock. It was stormy doubling Tongue point. Just as we were getting round one of the slaves who was hired from George the freeman, dropped down dead in the boat. No cause could be assigned for his sudden death, he was not complaining of ill health before hand. Such sudden deaths are very common among the Indians. We encamped about 4 miles above Tongue point at 3 O'clock and buried him.

Saturday 9. Squalls of wind from the S. E. with almost constant rain sometimes very heavy. I Embarked at 2 O'clock in the morning with the flood tide and encamped late in the evening a little below Oak Point village, the unfavorable weather retarded us a good deal. Bought 8 small sturgeon for the people.

Sunday 10. Stormy from the S. E. with incessant heavy rain in the night & with some short intervals, heavy rain all day. In order to take care of the boats which are kept at anchor in the night, I sleep in one of them myself and make a man sleep in each of the others We were completely drenched in the night, the mats which cover the property in the boats are quite wet, and with them it is impossible to keep the property dry with them. Embarked at 4 O'clock with the flood tide and encamped late in the evening a little above the Cowlitch, we were detained more than two hours waiting for the boats with Owyhees which fell behind. Came up with Cartier & the Otter.

Monday 11. Stormy with excessive heavy rain in the night & morning. The weather was so rough that we were detained two hours in the morning. very heavy showers during the day. encamped in the evening a little below Caismoir - Indians passed us in the evening, with letters intimating the ship had arrived.

Tuesday 12. Stormy in the night & heavy rain, very weighty showers of rain & hail during the day. Embarked at daylight, and reached to a little below the fort in the evening. We would have got to the fort had we not been obliged to wait for the Owyhees.

Wedny 13. Rained very little in the night, but very heavy rain in the morning, & occasionally during the day. Came up to the fort early in the morning and had the boats immediately unloaded, Carting the property up to the fort occupied the most of the day. The whole of the things were found very wet, particularly the furs. They were opened & set about to be dried directly.

Thursday 14. Showery weather. The Otter arrived in the evening.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Friday 15. Fair fine mild weather, busy getting the furs &c dry. In the night men arrived from the fort George with letters relating to the arrival of the Ship, in consequence of which Mr McLaughlin found it necessary to go below in a boat manned principally by slaves. The Otter went off also. The Scow arrived in the evening.

Satdy 16. Clear fine weather. Busy drying the wet property. The Scow was unloaded and sent off in the afternoon.

Sunday 17. Cloudy mild weather. Showers.

May Wedy 11. Cloudy fair Weather Wind Westerly. Left Fort Vancouver with 5 boats 3 men each for Fort George at 10 Oclock. It blew fresh part of the day & the wind being ahead we made but little way, in the evening we put ashore to sup opposite the Cowlitch. bought 22 small salmon from the Indn Tetiltih . Met the Old Scow a little below the Fort. Mr Douglas & Dr Scouller accompanies me.

Thursdy 12. Fair pleasant weather Wind Westerly blowing fresh part of the day. Embarked after supper last night & drove down the river, passed Oak Pt village early in the morning, and arrived at Ft Geo in the evening. We were greatly kept back by a head wind.

Friday 13. Fair pleasant weather. Wind Westerly. Loaded the Otter (which has been here two days) & sent her off under the charge of J. Desland & 3 Iroquois. The men were employed part of the afternoon getting 2 spars for yards to the vessel. The boats were gummed & ready to be loaded tomorrow morning.

Satdy 14. Heavy rain the greater part of the day, Wind S. E. & S. Had the men at work at daylight loading the boats but it came on to rain so hard that we had to stop and defer going off till tomorrow. The powder would have been injured by taking it out in the rain. However it faired up a little in the evening when we got the boats all loaded except the pigs which will be embarked in the morning.

From Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 5 No. 2 (1914), pp. 83-115

Journal of John Work, June 21 - Sept. 6, 1825

Introduction and Annotations by T. C. Elliott.

Readers of the Washington Historical Quarterly have already become acquainted with Mr. John Work, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, through his previous journal-with introductory note- published in Volume III, pp. 198-228, recording the details of the journey of an expedition from Fort George on the Columbia river to the Fraser river and back in November-December, 1824, (in which he remarked among other things about the "weighty rain" common to the Coast and Puget Sound localities). Mr. Work's particular duties during January-May, 1825, we do not

John Work's Journal

---

know; this was the period during which Governor Simpson and Chief Factor John McLoughlin selected the site for Fort Vancouver and the headquarters were removed from Fort George (Astoria) to the new location, which was on the high ground east of the present city of Vancouver, Washington, where the buildings of the Washington (State) Asylum for the Blind and Deaf now stand. Governor Simpson returned up the Columbia river in March, 1825, with the Express bound for York Factory on Hudson's Bay, but events indicate that he already had learned to place much confidence in the young clerk John Work. In June, Mr. Work finds himself assigned to duty in the interior and accompanies the "brigade" of officers and voyagers under Mr. John McLeod returning up the river with goods for the trade at the various interior forts. Mr. McLeod was then stationed at Thompson River (Kamloops) but had been given leave to return across the mountains to Hudson's Bay the following spring. Readers of the "three synoptical writers of Astoria," as Dr. Elliott Coues designates Gabriel Franchere, Alexander Ross and Ross Cox, have had occasion perhaps to tire of the narratives of successive journeys up and down the Columbia river with the constant encounters with the Indians at the Cascades and Dalles portages. In this journal we have another account of the same journey and discover that with the education of the Indians of the Columbia to the fixed and just policy of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies in their trade relations, the hatred and distrust and armed resistance of these Indians has already ceased to a great extent and that only the natural disposition to pilfer has to be taken much into account.

Between June 21st and November 1st, 1825, the period covered by part of this journal, Mr. Work journeys many miles and introduces us to the regular lines of travel of the fur traders between their forts in Washington, Northern Idaho and Montana and to some of the routine life of the forts. He visits the Nez Perces at their trading ground where the city of Lewiston, Idaho, now stands, the Flatheads at the spot where the large power plant is now being erected below Thompson Falls, Montana, and the then active Fort Okanogan, Washington, at the mouth of that river where now there is only barren waste; but his headquarters were at Spokane House, then as now the trade center for all the "Inland Empire." He also tells of the very beginning of building and planting at Kettle Falls, where the most important of the interior trading posts, Fort Colville, was just being started. Only the first part of the entire journal is given in this issue and the remainder is to be presented in a later number of the Quarterly, and then to be followed by a second journal of the same writer. For brief mention of Mr. Work's career the reader is referred to the earlier number of this Quarterly-already cited, and page 464 of Volume II of H. H. Bancroft's History of the Northwest Coast. It is sufficient to say here that Mr. Work was of Irish descent, the name being properly spelled Wark, and that he remained in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company continuously up to the time of his death at Victoria, B. C. in 1861. This journal comes to us through his descendants and is now deposited as a part of the archives of British Columbia, and Mr. Scholefield, the Provincial Archivist, has kindly compared this copy for publication. The journal has never before been published and does not appear to have been examined or used by Hubert Howe Bancroft, who had access to others of the Work journals in the preparation of his series of histories.

The parenthetical marks are used to designate words that are doubtful by reason of the original manuscripts being blurred or faded.

---

T. C. ELLIOTT.

JOURNAL.

June 21, 1825.

Drizzling rain with some weighty showers. Very little wind. At 10 o'clock the Interior brigade, consisting of five boats carrying pieces and manned by 32 men, left Fort Vancouver under the charge of Mr. McLeod 1, A sixth boat and 12 men under the charge of Mr. McKay 2 accompanied the Brigade as a convoy to above the Chutes 3. The water is very high and the current strong. Encamped at 4 o'clock opposite Quick Sand River 4. We stopped at this early hour to get some of the boats which were badly gummed. Some of the pieces were put in Mr. McKay's boat to lighten the others. Being ordered to proceed to Spokane in charge of the outfit for that place, I accompany the brigade.

Wed. 22 Drizzling rain forenoon. Wind W. Embarked at 3 o'clock and reached the Cascades at 1, had to carry at the New Portage 5, everything was got half way across the Portage by 5 o'clock when the men were employed gumming the boats. There were a good many Indians, but they were very quiet, 60 to 70 salmon were purchased from them, principally for Tobacco, at an inch per salmon.

Thursday 23 Dry weather, blowing fresh from the N. W. Resumed carrying at 3 o'clock and by 6 everything was embarked at the upper end of the portage where we proceeded up the river under sail with a fine strong wind till 12 o'clock when we put ashore a little below Cape Horn 6. Mr. McLeod considering it too rough to proceed.

Friday 24 Dry weather a fine breeze from the N. W. Continued our journey at a little past 3 o'clock with a nice sail wind and reached the lower end of the Dalles about two and got boats & foods about half way across the portage. We were detained more than two hours at breakfast below the portage, as Mr. McKay left his boat with two men, and the pieces had to be put in the other boats. On approaching the Dalls the current was very strong and the boats being deep laden it was difficult getting them up. My boat was caught in a whirlpool and very near sunk, she was wheeled around three times before the men got her out. There are a good many Indians on the portage we reckon from 400 to 500, however they were very peaceable. Gave them a little Tobacco to smoke and bought as much salmon as we required at equally as low a price as at the Cascades

Sat. 25 Clear very warm weather a little wind up the river in the morning but calm afterwards. Recommenced carrying at « past 2 o'clock, had everything across the portage 7 & embarked at 6, and were across the Chutes by 11. The portage at the Chutes was short on account of the high water. Encamped at 6 in the evening a little below Day's River 8, to gum the boats. We lost nearly 2 hours at breakfast below the Chutes. We reckoned 150 to 200 Indians at the Chutes, they were very quiet. Gave them to smoke and also about an inch of Tobacco each when we were coming

John Work's Journal

---

off. Mr. McKay & Mr. Douglas 9 , with the convoy men left us at the upper end of the Chutes to return to Fort Vancouver.

Sunday 26 Clear weather little breeze of wind from the N. W. in the morning and evening, but calm and very warm in the middle of the day. Continued our journey a little past 3 o'clock and encamped at 7 in the evening. Were detained 2 hours gumming the boats- had the sails up while the wind lasted in the morning and evening. A good many Indians along the river.

Monday 27 Clear. a fine breeze up the River in the morning but calm and insufferably warm afterwards. Embarked a little before 3 o'clock, passed the lower end of the Big Island 10 at 1/2 past 4 and encamped at 6 to gum one of the boats, we were also detained 1 1/2 hours in the day gumming.

Tuesday 28 Clear very warm weather, a little breeze of wind down the river which prevented the heat from being so oppressive as yesterday. Continued our route before 3 o'clock and encamped late a little above the Grand Rapid 11 In ascending a piece of strong current doubling a point in the evening, two of the boats got aground and sustained some injury, one of them put ashore & gummed, the other went on to the encampment, & had not time to repair. Traded some beaver from the Indians along the river.

Wed. 29 Clear weather and not withstanding there was a nice breeze down the river the heat was oppressive.

We were detained gumming the boat till near 5 o'clock when we embarked and proceeded to Fort Nez Percés 12 where we remained at 12 o'clock and had boats immediately unloaded, and the cargoes examined. These were landed here from the five boats independent of the gentlemen and mens private baggage 262 pieces, viz. (Laments) boat Mr. McLeod passenger 47 pieces, -Ignace's boat J. Work passenger 52 pieces. -P. La (Course's ?) boat, Mr. Dease passenger 53 pieces. -Grosse (Chalon's ?) boat 55 pieces and Thomas Tagouche's boat 55 pieces.

Thursday 30th Not withstanding it blew strong from the N. W. the heat was oppressive, the sand, and wood about the fort were absolutely burning. In the evening there was a great deal of thunder and lightening with heavy squalls of wind and a few drops of rain, the wind sometimes quite hot. Mr. McLeod occupied the greater part of this day separating the pieces belonging to the different posts.

July 1825

Friday 1 Blowing strong from the N. W. A party having to make a trip up the South branch 13 to trade horses, (150 if possible,) the forenoon was occupied in making up an assortment of goods for that purpose and a 1/2 past 1 o'clock Mr. Dease accompanied by Mr. Dears 14 , myself and 28 men, embarked in two boats and proceeded to a little up the South branch where we encamped for the night. -Several Indians were about the entrance of the river, purchased a few salmon from

John Work's Journal

---

them, mostly small ones at about 2 inches of tobacco each. Our boats are very light laden, and the men well armed. Mr. McLeod & 10 men remain at the Fort.

Sat. 2 Clear, and notwithstanding a pleasant breeze from the N. W., very warm. Embarked at 3 o'clock and pursued our journey up the river till past 6 when we encamped for the night. Made a good days march, as the men worked constant and very hard.-The current was uniformly very strong. and the water high, though it has fallen at least 1 1/2 or 2 feet from its- greatest height this season.-The shores are generally high, some places steep rocks, at others undulating hills, the vegetation on which seems to be burnt up with the heat and has a barren appearance. Here and there along the river, bushes and grass appear green, having not been deprived of moisture. Passed several Indian lodges and traded 42 fresh and 9 dry salmon for 1 1/2 yards of Tobacco. The salmon are all of a small size.

Sun. 3 Clear excessive warm weather though there was a little breeze of wind from the N. W. the heat was oppressive. Continued our journey at 3 o'clock and encamped at the Flag River 15 at 2. There are a few lodges of Indians here who have some horses two of which were purchased from them at 15 skins each. these are the first horses we have seen in this river. The general appearance of the river the same as yesterday, the shores high and clearer. The general course of the river from its entrance to this place may be about N. E. a little above its entrance it takes a considerable turn to the Eastward and thus bends back to the Westward a little below the Flag River.-From this place to Spokane 16 is about 1 1/2 days march on horseback. Nez Perces is about the same distance

Mon. 4 Clear very warm weather, the heat was suffocating. Expecting that the Indians would bring some more horses to trade we delayed embarking till 8 o'clock when we proceeded up the river a short distance where we put ashore at an Indian lodge and bought a horse, which detained us a considerable time.-Two men rode the horses along shore-made but a short days march. The heat and plenty of musquitos which were very troublesome, allowed us to have but little sleep last night. Encamped past 6 o'clock. The current still very strong, the general course of the river from a little above Flag River a little more to the Eastward. Not many Indians on the river and but few horses to be seen.

Tues. 5 Clear a good breeze of wind up the river which made the heat more supportable than these days past. The current very strong, course of the river nearly E. the shores high with some times a low point, all parched up with the excessive heat, here there some bushes that are green are to be seen along the shores and in the little valleys or creeks. Embarked at 3 o'clock and encamped a little below the La Monte. Made a very short days march as we delayed a good deal along the river at Indian lodges, bought 3 young horses at 18 skins each.

The Indians inform us that a large party went off to Spokane yesterday, and that the Flat Heads and (Pendius ?) 17 have been with the Indians above and bought a number of horses from them.

Wed. 6 Stormy in the night and blowing fresh all day, Wind N. W. In order to get some salmon

John Work's Journal

---

from the Indians. delayed embarking till 8 o'clock when we proceeded up the river, to La Monte 18 where we encamped at 10- This is a place of rendezvous for the Indians but only one lodge is here at present, the others are all off in the plains digging camas. Some Indians were sent off with Tobacco for the Natives to smoke & to apprise them that we were here & would remain a few days to purchase horses from them, and that we would then proceed to the Forks 19 so that such of the Indians as are in that neighborhood may be there to meet us.

Thur. 7 Cloudy blowing fresh from the N. W.-pleasant cool weather. Several Indians of different tribes arrived at our camp from whom ten horses were traded, 15 to 18 skins each. The most of these horses are young not more than 3 years old and some of them very small. It would have been desirable to get ones of larger size, but the great number required renders it necessary to take such as can be got and not be too choise.

Fri. 8 Weather as yesterday. Trade going on very slowly. A few Indians visited the camp, but only 6 horses were traded one of which was a wild one and was immediately killed for the people. The Natives seem not eager to part with their horses. Generally young small ones are offered for sale, yet some of those purchased today are good stout horses. The articles generally paid for a horse are a blanket, 3 pt, 6 skins, 4 or 5 skins, 1 yd. each of green beads, a few skins of ammunition, a skin of Tobacco, a knife, and sometimes. Buttons and Rings a skin or two.

Sat. 9 Cloudy Warm weather, Wind variable, not blowing so much as these days past. A few more Indians visited us but only 4 horses were traded & two of these are young ones not broke in. We learn from the Indians that the natives above are collecting on the River to meet us. The Indians at our camp occupy the most of their time gambling. The River is falling very fast, the water is lowered four to 5 feet perpendicular since it has been at its height this season.

Sun. 10 Though a fresh breeze from the Eastward the weather was very warm and sultry. In expectation that the Indians would trade some more horses we delayed embarking till one o'clock when we proceeded up the River seeing that nothing further was to be done. Stopped at the Indian lodges as we passed and bought two unbroken in young horses one of which a beautiful animal, lept so when he was haltered & the man not managing him properly that he tumbled on his head & broke his neck. The current continues very strong the course of the river from E. to S. E. The appearance of the country continues much the same, the bank very high & mostly rocky, the smooth summits & sides of the hills clothed with dry grass, burnt up with the heat, here and there along the water edge and in some of the deep valleys or coves tufts of willow and poplars, and a few bushes of other kinds. Though the hills and valleys, except on the faces of the steep rocks are well clothed with vegetation nearly dried up, the country has altogether a barren appearance. The Indians live (in) sort of houses or lodges constructed of drift wood split & set on end, they are generally high and very large and inhabited by a great many Indians, I counted upwards of fifty at one house the dimensions of which were 40 yards long and 10 wide. These houses are generally high and flat roofed, the one side is occupied by the inhabitants who sit and sleep on the ground, and the other side is appropriated for drying fish which are hung up generally in two tiers the one above the other lower ones so near the ground that one has to stoop to get under them.-

John Work's Journal

---

The air has a free circulation through these habitations from the openness of their walls, which makes them cool & comfortable when there is the least air of wind, but in case of rain, from the openness of the roof, very little would be excluded. However, this is an article that seldom troubles them. The Natives along the River now are generally employed curing salmon and collecting camass.

Mon. 11 Cloudy but occasionally very warm Wind Easterly. Waiting till the Indians would bring us some horses to trade deterred us from embarking till 8 clock when seeing that only one horse could be traded, we proceeded up the river and as usual stopped to smoke at the most of the lodges which we passed which made our progress very slow, however only one horse was purchased till we encamped in the evening when four more were traded, making in all six today.

The appearance of the River and country much the same as yesterday. The course from E. to S. E. The hills along shore appear less elevated towards evening. The Indians near whom we are encamped offered a sturgeon for sale, which shows that these fish ascend this high.

Tues. 12 Cloudy blowing fresh from the Westward. The Indians traded two more Horses which detained us till after breakfast when we proceeded up the River till 11 oclock when we encamped a little below the Forks at the lodge of an Ind. 20 called Charly where a good many Indians are expected to assemble. About 70 men collected to smoke in the course of the afternoon. Two horses were traded from them. Which makes 4 today. Charly is considered to have a good deal of influence among the natives. A present was therefore made him and he afterward harangued the Indians from which good effects are expected tomorrow.

Wed. 13 Though cloudy part of the day, the weather was very warm and sultry. A brisk trade of horses commenced in the morning and 15 were purchased during the day, the greater part of which were bought before breakfast. They are much finer horses and the prices rather lower than those procured below. Horses are more numerous and much better here than in the lower part of the river. There were not so many Indians with us today as yesterday, but they had more horses. The Indians who visit us are of four different tribes, Chapoples 21 or Nezperces, Pelooshis 22, Carooris and Wallawallas. They are very peaceable but a good deal of Tobacco is required to keep them smoking They amuse themselves gambling in the evening they had a horse race. In the course of the day a message was received from some Indians further up the river, requesting us to go to their place, and more horses would be procured. It seems a kind of jealousy exists among the natives and the one party does not wish to sell their horses at the camp of the other, or that they wish to have the honour of being visited at their own camp.

Thur. 14 Very little Wind. excessively warm, where we are encamped on the stony sandy beach we are literally next to be roasted. The trade did not go on so briskly as yesterday, only 8 horses were bought, one of which was an unbroken in lame mare to kill, as she was fit for nothing else.

Fri. 15 Sometimes a little breeze of wind from the S. E. yet it was clear and so sultry that the heat was oppressive.

Embarked at half past 5 o'clock proceeded up the river and in 2 hours arrived at the Forks 23 and encamped on the E. side of the North branch where a few Indians are encamped shortly after we arrived about 40 of them with the old chief Cut Nose at their head visited us in form, smoked, and were presented with about 3 inches of tobacco each. A trade of horses was immediately commenced and 8 very good ones were soon bought from them, though these people have plenty of horses yet they say they have none, they mean probably that they can spare. This is not Cut Nose's camp, it is farther up this branch. In the afternoon a party of upwards of 100 men and a good many women on horseback with the son of broken or cut arm, as chief at their head, arrived down the S. branch. the Chief immediately on his arrival presented a horse to Mr. Dease, and received a gun, 6 yds. of Beads & Tobacco and ammunition 27 skins as a present in return. After smoking and getting about 3 inches of Tobacco for each of his people, a trade for horses was opened and 5 very good ones were soon bought which with the one presented and the eight bought in the forenoon make 14 that have been procured to day. These are the best horses we have got yet, they are 18 to 20 skins each. There is a little short of 200 Indians about our camp now, several of those from below accompany us as we advance up, and those encamped here with the band that arrived from the S. branch make about the above number. they are very quiet and peaceable for so far.

The country about the Forks is flatter and the hills not so abrupt as farther down. The South branch 24 falls in from the Southward, and the North one from the S. E. the waters of these latter are quite clear. while those of the other are white and muddy the North branch seems not so large as the other, nor does not discharge such a body of water. It may be about 250 to 300 yards wide. Charlie the chief who accompanied us from our last encampment crossed the river with a horse, and in swimming back either was seized or pretended to be seized with a cramp & called out for assistance. Some of the Indians brought him ashore, where he became very ill and got little better, though at his own request he got 2 or 3 drams, until evening when he thought he would be the better of an airing and got the men to paddle him in a boat up and down the river and sing at the same time, which must considerably contribute, no doubt, to the recovery of his health. This man may have some influence among the Indians at least to do injury, but he is undoubtedly an artful knave.

Sat. 16 Cloudy, a storm of thunder, with squalls of wind from the Westward and a little rain in the afternoon, last night there was a violent storm of thunder & a great deal of lightening, with squalls of wind and some rain. A brisk trade commenced in the morning and 19 horses were bought during the day, they are generally good ones and cost mostly 20 skins each. At noon (Tawerishea) arrived at the head of a troupe of 64 men and several women with plenty of horses from up the North branch. After smoking and each of his people being presented with a piece of Tobacco he presented a fine horse to Mr. Dease and received a present of different articles to the amount of 32 skins in return. -The other chief now here seems not to be fond of this man on account of his being a doctor or medicine chief. On account of our articles of trade falling short we will not be able to answer these people's expectations in the way of trade.

John Work's Journal

---

Sun. 17 Cloudy, gusts of wind from the Westward. A heavy thunder storm with strong wind and some rain in the afternoon. Commenced trading after breakfast & bought horses during the day, four horses were presented during the day by principal men of (Tawerishewa's) band, but they were dearer than if they had been traded on account of the quantity of articles that had to be presented in return. The most of the horses purchased today are very fine ones and cost mostly 20 skins each. Our articles of trade got short or we would have got more horses. Green Beads, Tobacco and blankets are entirely gone, several blankets were borrowed from the men. The last band of Indians that arrived were considerably disappointed by these articles being nearly gone when they came. There are about our camp near 250 or 300 Indians. they are very quiet and give us very little trouble, they occasionally get a little tobacco to smoke. They pass the greater part of their time gambling, horseracing & foot racing. We have traded 112 horses, 5 of which have been killed. A fine young white one was drowned crossing the river today.

Mon. 18 Cloudy pleasant weather not too warm. Wind Westerly. Our trade being finished and everything ready, we took leave of our friendly Indians and I and six men and an Indian Charlie as a guide, set out with 106 horses across land to Spokane at 1/2 past 8 o'clock. Two of the horses which were traded had got lame and were not able to start. We were detained two hours waiting for Charlie who delayed after us to make some arrangements with his family. On account of this delay and not being able to drive quick as one of the finest horses in the band (Mr. Dease's) being lame which I did not perceive till after we were off, we made but a short day's march. We passed through a fine country the course from N. to N. W. On leaving the river ranges of high hills had to be ascended 25 , the country then was not level but a continual succession of little rising hills or hummocks and valleys destitute of trees or bushes except along the margins of little brooks, but pretty well clothed with grass and other plants though rather dried and parched, in some of the valleys along little rivers there are a few trees and bushes besides different plants of an uncommonly luxuriant growth. A ridge 26 of high land runs along at a short distance to the Eastward, thinly wooded, close to a point of this wooded land is a beautiful situation at a Title spring of water. we encamped in the evening at about five o'clock having to wait for one of the men who remained behind with the lame horse.-Though the country was dry yet water as to be found at short intervals the most of the day. Five Indians with 8 horses also on the way to Spokane joined us in the day & kept company with us. In the evening we passed a party of women with a number of horses going off to the plains to collect horses. My object in accompanying the horses besides seeing them taken care of principally is to Visit Spokane, see how affairs stand there and consult with Mr. Birnie as to the practicability of getting all the property, etc., removed at once to the Kettle Falls so that the whole may be there by the time the boats arrive, by which means the trading parties to the Flat Heads and Kootenais could be sent off immediately and meet the Indians at a proper season or at least as early as possible, while the remainder of the people, when two establishments are not to be kept up, could be advantageously employed at the building of the new establishment. This is the only plan which will enable us to accomplish the objects of removing to the new Fort and attending their trading excursions at this advanced season without material injury to the trade. In order to enable us to put the above plan in execution I got Mr. Dease prevailed upon to supply Spokane with 11 pack horses which are certainly very few considering that there are only eight at Spokane, and there is little prospect of being able to hire any from the Indi-

John Work's Journal

---

ans as removing the Fort is likely to be disagreeable to them. I have also brought two men intended to be left at Spokane to assist. I also wished much that Mr. Dears should accompany me for the same purpose, so that he might proceed to the Kettle Falls & remain in charge of the property with one man while the transportation of the property was going on, but Mr. Dease would not consent to his coming lest Mr. McLeod would not be satisfied, as he would not have any one to assist him in taking up the boats from Walla Walla to Okanogan. He certainly needed no assistance to conduct these boats well manned, when little danger is to be apprehended from the Indians. I represented these things to Mr. Deise but it had no effect. I also pointed out the inadequacy of the number of horses, but as he had orders to procure a certain number for New Caledonia and Thompson's River, and no mention made of any to Spokane, 11 besides 2 saddle horses were all he could give, after completing the numbers for the other places, and depending on his own Fort for 60 for the Snake Country. In case the above plans are found to be practicable I intend to proceed on to Okanogan to receive the Spokane and Rocky Mountain, outfits and accompany the boats to the Kettle Falls. One or two more men were also requested but they could not be granted lest Mr. McLeod would have too few to take up three boats, though there are 23 for that purpose, of which number 2 certainly might have been spared.

Tues 19 Cloudy pleasant weather, Wind Westerly. Proceeded on our journey at an early hour but in consequence of having to delay & drive generally very slow waiting for the lame horse, we made but a short days march and encamped late in the evening at a small River or rather sort of swamp. In the morning we crossed the Flag River. -The lame horse gave up in the afternoon and with reluctance I was obliged to leave him at a spring in a little valley with plenty of grass about it. he seems to be otherwise diseased besides the lameness, his near foreleg is swelled, the outerfilm of the skin and hair is come off his breast in the shape of a horses foot, where probably he has received a blow before leaving him Charlie scarified his foot, he will be sent for if possible. The country through which we passed today has much the same appearance as that passed yesterday and the course nearly the same. Though the horses have not been driven hard yet some of them are getting fatigued. Many of them are getting very lean. Last night as the night before the horses were watched all night by 3 men at a time.

Wed. 20 Weather cloudy, but sultry and oppressively warm by turns. These two nights past were very cold which is a great change from the excessive heat experienced some time back. This is probably owing to our being in the vicinity of the high land. Set out on our journey early in the morning and got out of the plains into the woods about 1/2 past 7 o'clock. At 4 o'clock I left 4 of the men (C. Gregoire,) (A. Laparde,) (I. Levant) and (J. Maria) at the fork 27 of the road that branches off to Okanogan, and proceeded to Spokane with 2 men and 16 horses, 12 for this post and 4 with which I am to go to Okanogan. One of them knocked up by the way & had to be left to be sent for tomorrow. As the horses were fatigued I ordered the men to encamp and allow the horses the evening to rest and to march at a very slow rate for the future.

I left them with 89 horses but one of them was so much jaded that it could not be expected to be able to march. I therefore ordered it to be left and it would be sent for tomorrow. Arrived at Spokane 28 at 7 o'clock and found Mr. Birnie and his people all well. The country through which we

John Work's Journal

---

passed today as we advanced towards the woods and in the woods was in places very stony which was not often the case these past days. Water was also scarcer than hitherto.

Thurs. 21 Clear very warm weather. Employed this day examining the property to be transported to the Kettle Falls and find that the whole amounts to 254 pieces including trading goods, provisions, stores & sundries. Mr. Birnie has been actively & diligently employed during the summer, & has almost the whole tied up and ready to put on horseback.-Had Mr. Dears been permitted to accompany me I could have returned to Okanogan with an Indian, and the transportation of the property might have commenced immediately as Mr. Dears with one man could have remained in charge of the property at Kettle falls. But now as the horses which I brought with me must be returned to Okanogan and it being necessary that I should be at that place to receive the goods and to accompany the boats up, and no one being here to spare to take charge of the goods at the Kettle falls, and leave enough to remain here with Mr. Birnie and attend to the horses on the voyage, the conveying the property must be deferred until Mr. Dease and some men can be sent from Okanogan and the first trip will be at the Kettle Falls by the time the boats arrive. From the dislike the Indians have to the removal of the Fort, of which they have heard some vague reports, which they seem unwilling to believe, there is reason to apprehend that no assistance will be received from them In the horse way which will very much retard our business, as the number of horses which we have, about 34, will be a long time of conveying all these pieces. Mr. Birnie for so far has been pretty successful in the trade of provisions, appichimens & saddles, and about a dozen of horses the latter at a much cheaper rate than those purchased in the Nezperces River. But the returns in furs are far short of those of last year at this season the Indians from different places have done very little. The garden looks remarkably well, the potatoes are bigger than eggs. Six kegs which were sowed at the Kettle Falls also looked well the last time people were there they have been hoed twice. Paid the Indian Charlie who accompanied us with the horses 20 skins which he was promised more than he received at the Forks, and also made him a present of a Buffalo Robe, he has promised to bring the horse to the Fort. In case any other Indian trapper (should happen) to take him off he is the only one that would be likely to recover him. I intended to have sent a man & an Indian for this horse immediately but Mr. Birnie doubts that it would not be safe as a good many straggling Nezperces Indians are going & coming who might probably pillage them.

On my arrival last night Mr. Birnie handed me a note from Governor Simpson of which the following is a copy.

Columbia Lake 16th Apl. 1825.

Dear Sir

The Dr. will no doubt have informed you of the reasons that induced me to alter your destination for this season and I trust the change will be agreeable to you. I have lined out the site of a new establishments 29 at the Kettle Falls and wish you to commence building and transporting the property from Spokane as early as possible. Mr. Birnie has been directed to plant about 5 kegs of potatoes. You will be so good as (to) take great care of them the produce to be reserved for seed,

John Work's Journal

---

not eat, as next spring I expect that from 30 to 40 Bushels will be planted.-Pray let every possible exertion be used to buy up an abundant stock of Fish and other Provisions country Produce, as no imported provisions can in future be forwarded from the coast. If you can dispense with the service of Mr. Dears in the course of the summer I wish him to be sent with a couple of Indians to examine tire Flat Heads River 30 as far as the Ponderoy Camps at the Camass plain and if Navigable you will be so good as (to) forward the outfit of that Post by water instead of land carriage which will save a great expense in horse hire, etc.-The Cantany River 31 we know to be navigable; it is not, therefore, necessary to examine it, but you will likewise forward the outfit for the Post of that name by water. A few long Portages must not interfere with this plan as the benefits to be derived from the change will more than counterbalance the additional trouble and personal labour it may give our people. I have not the smallest doubt we shall be perfectly independent of the Indians in regard to horses, which will be a great saving of property, and thereby we shall also avoid the chance of quarrels with the natives in regard to horse thieving as we shall have few or none to tempt them. Mr. Dears appears to be a self-sufficient forward young man, he must not, however question or dispute your authority, if he does let me know it, in the meantime show him this paragraph if necessary.-With Mr. Birnie you will have no difficulty, he is unassuming active and interested.-Pray use every exertion to trade horses for Thompson's River and let them be sent in the fall so as to be forwarded from Okanogan to New Caledonia with all the pack saddles and appichimens that can be collected. The cedar canoes brought down this season from Spokane will be the proper craft for the Cootanies & Flat Head Rivers. The Spokans will not be pleased at the removal of the Fort but you must ( ? ) the chiefs with a few presents besides fair words.

Do me the favour to collect 32 all the seeds plants Birds and quadrupids & mice & rats you can and let them be forwarded by the ship of next season to N. (Gosny) Esqur. care of Wm. Smith Esqur. Secty. H. B. Cmy., London. Wishing a pleasant & prosperous season,

I remain

Dear Sir

Your most obd. servant,

(Signed) Geo. Simpson

Fri. 22nd Cloudy, but sultry warm weather. I deferred setting out for Okanogan, as I intended, in order to allow the horses which are fatigued another days' rest, and there still being plenty of time to reach that place before the boats from the Wallawalla something more could also be done here. In the course of the day the business of removing the Fort was broached to the Chiefs and notice given them that they would be requested to lend some assistance in horses. They gave no decisive answer on the subject but seemed to take it better than was expected. It was intimated that the Fort would be left in their charge and that probably instructions might be received in the fall for some people to reside at Spokane with them still. They seem to swallow this notwithstanding its improbability. Very few of them are now about the Fort the most of them being a short distance below it at a fishing barrier where they are taking 7 or 800 salmon per day.

Sat. 23 Cloudy blowing strong from the Westward. At 1/2 past 9 o'clock set out from Spokane for

John Work's Journal

---

Okanogan accompanied by a man and an Indian as a guide with seven horses, that is the 4 that belong to Okanogan, & 3 to return to Spokane with some people. At 12 o'clock we got clear of the woods & into the plains, except a short time that we stopped to allow the horses to feed. We drove on at a round pace all day and encamped at 1\2 past 7 o'clock at a little pool of bad water, some distance from the key encampment. The clouds of dust raised by the wind which was right ahead made riding very disagreeable as we were like to be choaked & blinded. Our guide did not keep the road but cut from place to place through the plains. Our course might be from N. W. to W. Ridges of mountains or highlands run along at no great distance to the Northward, thinly clothed with wood, the country through which we passed though not (even) could not be called hilly but swelling into little knolls, covered with a thin coat of dry vegetables and generally of a barren & scorched appearance, except some little valleys where some few bushes & green vegetables are produced in consequence of there being water in the place or some moisture in the ground.-The road was in some places good, but in others very stony. Nothing to be seen to the S.E. but extensive plains bounded by the horizon.

Sun. 24 Weather as yesterday. Continued our route at 4 o'clock and arrived 33 on the opposite side of the River at Okanogan at 1/2 past 7 after a smart days ride, and our horses much fatigued, some of them nearly knocked up, this was owing to their being allowed to drink too much water. if indulged in water while on the route they ought never to be allowed to take more than a mouthful or two. The appearance of the country course etc were much the same as yesterday except that we passed through a point of woods, in the morning we passed along the banks of the Columbia at the Lampolle 34 River, and before noon crossed the Grand Coolley, some of the mountains to the Northward were topped with snow. The men whom I left to proceed with the horses on the 20th arrived here about noon with the whole band but one which they lost a little more than a days march from this place.-It is a small horse 2 yrs. old, and does not seem well.

Mon. 25 Cloudy blowing fresh from the Northward. Went with the men for the purpose of bringing the horses across the River, but as it was blowing fresh and several of the horses very lean it was deemed advisable to let them remain until another occasion.

Tues. 26 Clear warm weather. Brought the horses 35 across from the other side of the River all safe. A little past noon an Indian arrived from Spokane with a note from Mr. Birnic and a packet which had recently reached that place from Mr. Ogden 36 dated East branch of the Missouri 10th July. In consequence of the former coming out at the Flat Heads, the Snake business would be so much involved with that of Spokane that I deemed it my duty to open the dispatch which I am sorry to find contains intelligence of a disagreeable nature. A series of misfortunes have attended the party from shortly after their departure on the 24th may they fell in with a party of Americans when 23 of the former deserted, two of this party were killed one by the Indians and one by accident and the remainder Of the party are now coming out by the Flat Heads.

This occurrence will entirely change all our plans at Spokane, respecting moving the Fort, as all our time will be occupied in transporting the Snake outfit from Fort Nezperces to Spokane if the Snake country business is carried on.-It is indispensably necessary that these despatches should

John Work's Journal

---

be sent to Fort Vancouver as soon as possible, they must be sent either direct to Fort Nezperces from this place or round by Spokane, by the former rout they will reach Nezperces in four days, by the latter they will require six.-I shall wait for Mr. McLeod's arrival when I expect he will furnish a man to accompany Mr. Dears whom I intend to send for the more safe conveyance of the packet, and who can return accompanied by an Indian direct from Walla Walla to Spokane, with all the despatches remaining at that place for Mr. Ogden, by this route he will reach Spokane as soon as I will with the boats and the papers can be forwarded by the Trading party to the Flat Heads & thence to Mr. Ogden by his men who are to come in with their furs. Mr. McLeods man LaPrade 37 who passed in the spring and who knows the road from this place to Nez perces can return accompanied by an Indian and be back at Okanogan in 8 days, or if deemed safe he could come round by Spokane which would occupy 2 or 3 days longer. If this plan meets Mr. McLeod's approbation it will be the most expeditious. The route by Spokane will answer equally well, but it will occupy at least 2 or three days longer to reach Nezperces.

Wed. 27 Warm sultry weather. Sent off two of the men E. Gregoire and J. Moreau to seek the horse which they lost by the way coming.-La Prade is retained at the Fort to accompany Mr. Dears to Nezperces, in case Mr. McLeod allows him to go.

Thurs. 28 Cloudy sultry weather. Mr McLeod arrived with the boats 3 in number at 9 oclock in 8 days or rather on the 8th day from Nezperces, the day was occupied separating the cargoes, when I made out an a/c of the pieces which are to be taken to Spokane Forks. 38 Some pieces belonging to Nezperces and the Snake expedition, it is thought advisable to take to Spokane, for the Nezperces pieces Mr. Dease is to take an equal number of the same description from the Snake outfit at his place. By taking these pieces to Spokane it will save the carriage across land from Nezperces.

Fri. 29 Sultry warm weather. This day was employed preparing despatches for the sea which are to accompany Mr. Ogdens letters which are to be sent off tomorrow; expected that Mr McLeod would have spared a man to accompany Mr Dears to Wallawalla, but he cannot. I therefore thought he would have had to go round by Spokane, but on consulting Robbie Doo 39 the Indian who came with me, he engages to take him from here to Wallawalla though he never was that road, this will save the horses, and two or three days time. Mr Dears is to return straight to Spokane where I expect he will arrive as soon as men with the boats, & have all Mr. Ogdens (documents) with him. Though we have not more than full cargoes for two boats and 18 men to work them to the Forks, wet as the road is very (bad) and Mr. McLeod's and Mr. Ross's 40 families to accompany us it is the guide's opinion that we will get on safer and more expeditiously by taking three boats, 6 men per boat. Three are therefore to be taken.

Sat.d.y. 30

Clear warm weather.

Left Okanogan with 3 boats at 8 oclock and encamped at 6 in the evening to gum one of the boats which was leaking though she had been gummed at the fort. The road was tolerable though the

John Work's Journal

---

current was very strong till afternoon, they got on without the poles but afterwards the boats had to be towed the greater part of the way with lines, sometimes the united strength of the two crews was required to take up one boat. The water is high though it has fallen greatly.

Mr. Dears & the Indian also set out in the morning for Wallawalla. The Indian who brought Mr. Ogdens letters from Spokane, also returned to that place, with a letter to Mr. Birnie requesting him to send horses to meet me at the Forks to take the property up to Spokane, as we know not whether the Fort can be removed this year untill answers are received from the sea 41 to our letters.

Sunday 31st.

Clear warm weather.

Embarked before 4 oclock this morning and reached the lower end of the dalls 42 at 9 oclock and got over there at 1, and encamped at half past 6 in the evening, having made a better days march than the common. In the evening we got on a little with the poles, but all the rest of the day the tow line had to be used, at the dalls it was very bad, the men had to pass the line over high projecting rocks where had they missed a foot they would have been killed. At the upper end of the dalls the boat had to be lightened and the one half of their cargoes carried a piece, as the boats could not b dragged up with the cargo all in.

August, 1825.

Monday. 1

Clear very warm.

Embarked at 3 oclock and put ashore at 5 to wait for Mr. McLeod who was to come across land with his family to embark for the mountains, and with some papers which he had not finished when he left the Fort, and were delayed till 3 oclock, when we proceeded on our journey and encamped at ½ past 6.

Tuesday 2nd.

Cloudy mild weather.

Continued our route at 3 oclock and put ashore near 7 having made a very good days work.-

Wed.y 3

Cloudy weather.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Embarked at 3 o'clock passed the (Lampoile) River at 9 where we breakfasted and traded a few pieces of dry salmon from the Indians, and encamped past 6 o'clock. A good days march. Tho' our boats are only a little more than 2/3 loaded yet they are a good deal embarrassed, as we have four women and ten children passengers.

Thursday 4

Cloudy and very warm afternoon, a great deal of thunder & lightening and some rain in the night.

Embarked past 3 o'clock and arrived at Spokane Forks at 8. The road this morning was very bad being continual rapids. These two days past, it was not so bad as the tow line had only to be used at some strong points. The boats were immediately discharged, at 10 o'clock 3 men arrived with the horses from Spokane with a letter from Mr. Birnie. It appears that they had some trouble at Spokane with the Indians. The scoundrel Charlie with some others was making a disturbance, about removing the Fort.

Busily employed the after part of the day, distributing the property among the men who are divided into two pairs and are to take a brigade of horses each two, and also laying out the goods for Rocky Mountain that are to go to Kettle falls, and some boxes of tools for the building at Kettle Falls.-The two boats that are to remain are also laid up and some guns, 26 pieces, which was sent from Spokane, buried in the sand, till it be sent below in the fall.-

Sent a little Tobacco to the old chief at the Sampoile bourne and a message that some salmon were wanted for the people, he brought twenty fresh ones in the afternoon, which was abundance for the people, Some dry ones were also traded.

Frid.y 5.

At an early hour, had the horses assembled and divided into brigades, loaded and set off by 8 o'clock and encamped at 1 at the bottom of the big hill which is a good days march. We have altogether 35 horses loaded, including baggage, etc. Left the guide P. L. Etang preparing to start with the boat and cargo destined for the R Mountains, to the Kettle Falls, where he is to remain until the 20th of next month, he has 7 men with him, who are to be employed preparing timber, and if they have time, building a store as a beginning to the new establishment, 43, tools are sent with him for the purpose.-Intend sending Mr. Dears who I expect is arrived nearly at Spokane by this time, to Superintend the people, and L. La Bentie who is a carpenter to assist & direct in the building. As there is a great demand for provisions, the salmon can be loaded at the same time, for which purpose and to feed the people, an assortment of goods is sent up.

Saturday 6

Cloudy, blowing fresh from the Westward.

John Work's Journal

---

Proceeded on our journey at 4 o'clock and halted to let the horses rest & feed at 10 and again resumed our journey at three and encamped for the night before 6 at camp at Cariboo (?) having made a long days march, the horses are tired.

The cords which fastened a load of traps gave way and the cases fell, the horse took fright and ran off with the load hanging to him, and so lamed one of his shoulders and leg that that he is disabled from carrying his load & scarcely fit to walk.-An Oil cloth which one of the men Gros Carlo had in charge was also lost through negligence. This is a serious loss as there is none to replace it and all we had were required. I sent notice among the Indians to seek it & if found to bring it to the Fort & they would be paid for their trouble.

Sunday 7

Mild warm weather.

Resumed our journey at a little past 4 o'clock and by 10 all the brigades had arrived at the Spokane Fort and delivered in the cargoes. The horses were immediately sent across the River to graze and a man to take care of them.-

Mr. Birnie was like to have some trouble with some of the Indians shortly after my departure to Okanagan. Charlie, according to intelligence received by Mr. B., with a few other Nezperces had laid a plan to cut off the fort, but as this is grounded on report and as the Inds are very prone to belie each other, there is no knowing what degree of reliance to place on it. Charlie is doubtly a notorious scoundrel, when he heard of the Fort going to be abandoned he was much displeased and declared among the Indians that had he known of it not a horse would have been got into the Nezperces River if in his power to prevent it.-The trade of furs has been a little better last month than the preceding ones, but the whole returns are far short of this time last year.-In provisions the trade is still increasing, there are now between 4 and 5000 pieces of salmon in the store, besides roots. Saving so much provisions is a fortunate circumstance as unfortunately almost the whole of the dry meat is found to be so completely spoiled and damaged that it is useless.-

Mr. Dears contrary to my expectations is not yet arrived, 9 days are now elapsed since he left Okanagan for Wallawalla, which is a day than I had calculated on his being able to reach this place. Probably something may have occurred to prevent him from arriving on the day expected.

Monday 8

Cloudy warm weather

Employed opening & examining the outfit-and making preparations by packing up the outfit for the Flatheads.

Mr. Dears and the Indians arrived at noon from Wallawalla with despatches from that place, they

---

John Work's Journal

---

were five days coming and had been four days going from Okanagan to Wallawalla. However he got through safe.-

Tuesday 9th

Cloudy warm weather.

At 10 oclock sent off 11 men with 10 horses loaded with an assortment of trading articles for the Flat Heads and a supply of some articles required by Mr. Ogden. I intend following them tomorrow accompanied by the Flat Head chief who has passed the summer here & is now going to his friends, and another Indian who is to bring back the horses. I was prevented from accompanying the people today by having some papers to arrange. After the people had been off some time one of them returned for another horse in stead of one that had thrown his load and ran off from them.

Wed.y. 10

Clear fine weather.

At 9 oclock I set out after the people accompanied by the old Flat Head chief and another Indian. Near 6 oclock we came up with the party encamped at the little Lake 44 in the woods.-Mr McDonald's 45 horse which the old chief rode had been unwell before he left the fort though we did not know it, and was so knocked up that we had to leave him at the little River at this end of the Coer de Alan plains where we arrived before 3 oclock which (is) a little more than 6 hours though we stopped to smoke by the way & seldom went past a trot.

Left Mr Dears preparing to go off to the Kettle Falls with L. La Bontie to to go on with the buildings at that place.

Thursday 11

Showery in the morning, fair afterwards with strong Westerly Wind.

Set out at 4 oclock and arrived at the Flat Head River 46 at noon & immediately commenced gumming the canoes which occupied the whole afternoon and is not yet entirely completed. One of the canoes was taken across the River by the Indians & we had to send across for it. The Indians had also taken nearly all the poles and paddles which will cause us a loss of time and labour to replace them with others. We are very scarce of gum.

An Indian handed the men who crossed for the canoe, a note from Mr Kittson 47, he has been at the Chutes 48 since the 31st of July, with the Indians waiting to trade

Friday 12

---

Cloudy pleasant weather.

Notwithstanding I had the men at work by daylight, they were so long getting paddles, poles & ready that it was 11 o'clock before we started & then lost nearly an hour crossing (a freeman, the Soteaux & his baggage.) So that it was noon when we got off. We got on pretty well and encamped past 6 o'clock in the Lake 49 below the traverse to the island. One of the canoes had only 2 men & as they found poles & paddles ready, they went off in the morning & are yet ahead. Two of the canoes are still very leaky notwithstanding the time that was taken to gum them.

Sent off the Indians in the morning to the Fort with the horses, and the appichimens, at the same time I wrote to Mr. Birnie & Mr Dears & desired the latter if he could to prevail on the Kettle falls Indians to get a quantity of cedar bark to cover the store. I doubt the season is too far advanced to raise the bark.

Saturday 13

Cold in the morning blowing fresh from the Southward. Lightening, & some thunder & rain in the night.

Had the men up at 3 o'clock but it was blowing too fresh to attempt crossing the Lak & nearly 2 hours were lost waiting, still it was rough making the haven, afterwards we got on very well and encamped near 7 o'clock below Isle de Pierre.<sup>50</sup> Came up with the two men in the canoe that was ahead of us, in the afternoon.

Passed a good many Indians at the upper end of the Lake, gave them a little tobacco to smok, bought a little cammass from them, & then proceeded.-

Sunday 14

Cold foggy weather in the morning but very warm afterwards.

Proceeded on our journey before 4 o'clock and encamped before 6 a good piece above the Barrier River.-We had to stop early to gum the canoes which were very leaky.

Passed a few Indians, two accompanied us all day in a canoe.

Monday 15.

Showry in the morning, fine afterwards.

Embarked at 4 o'clock and reached the Indian camp at the Chutes, 51 at 11 o'clock, where I found Mr. Kittson and two men from Mr Ogdens party with 38 packs & 6 (Parto .... ) braves. The Indian

John Work's Journal

---

chiefs (with) Snake furs soon visited us and on being asked whether they wished to trade immediately or wait till tomorrow they preferred the latter. Some tobacco was given them for all hands to smooke.- And in the afternoon Mr. Kittson and I visited their principle lodge where the whole of the Indians soon assembled, when we gave them all the news from the different quarters of the country when they were enjoying the pipe & gave us what news they had in return.-The chiefs sent us some provisions immediately on our arrival.

Tuesday 16

Cold in the morning, very warm afterwards.

At an early hour the Indians began to arrive & a brisk trade was immediately commenced and by noon nearly the whole trade was finished, some lodges & trifling things were brought for sale during the afternoon.-

In the afternoon the men were off in the woods collecting pitch for the canoes, we applied to the Indians but a sufficiency could not be obtained from them and the canoes much in want of it as they will be very deep laden.

Wed.y. 17

Cloudy mild weather.

The men were employed the whole day gumming the canoes & had not the Indians favored us with the lend of their kettles to boil pitch it would have taken another day to finish their business.

All the Indians, except one chief who remained with us, took a most friendly leave of us and departed during the day, there might be altogether about Indians of four different nations, Flat Heads. Kootanies, Ponderus and Piegans, of the latter there are but very few. A considerable number, 30 tents, were coming, but from some cause turned back. It was from the Flat Heads and Kootenais that the trade was principally obtained. these are remarkably fine Indians and easily dealt with. After the trade was over made each of the chiefs a trifling present of a little ammuni- tion & Tobacco, a looking glass & a little beads.-

Joachin Hubert accompanied the Indians with the horses that brought the Snake furs and a small supply of articles for Mr. Ogden to whom I wrote and forwarded a number of letters and des- patches addressed to him. The packet was put in charge of Grosplied one of the F. Head chiefs, as being more safe. It was not till I was perfectly satisfied by Mr Kittson that there was no danger of these documents falling into improper hands, that I would trust them. The chiefs are directed to give them to no one but Mr Ogden and in case of any accident having befallen him to bring them back. It was Mr. Ogden's directions to Mr Kittson that only one man should be sent back to him.

Our trade amounts to 374 large & 99 small beaver and 1 otter large, 76 bales meat, 44 Robes, 122

John Work's Journal

---

appechimans 16 dressed skins & 11 (chevereaux) and 5 lodges and 1 horse, 29 saddles and cords. etc. Beaver and dressed skins are far short of last year, the deficiency in beaver is owing to a great many of the Kootanies having gone off to their own lands before our arrival, the scarcity of leather may be attributed to the same cause and to their having been at the Buffalo this season. Every encouragement was given for leather, it being so much wanted, and very high prices offered and articles given which is not customary to give for it. A trip will yet have to be made to the Kootany country to endeavour to get some leather and what beaver they may have.

Thursday 18

Foggy in the morning, fine weather afterwards.

Having everything ready, commenced loading at daylight and fell down the river and encamped in the evening a little above the Heron rapid. The canoes are very full and deep laden, it was so much as we could do to get the whole into them, they are in fact heaped up in the middle. We came down the first rapid with half cargo, the other rapids were run with four men in each canoe, so that having to take only two canoes down at a time detained us. Two of the canoes were broke by striking on stones & some time was lost in repairing them, the cargoes fortunately sustained very little damage as they got ashore before they had time to be wet.

The old chief La Brash, who remained with us all night, took his leave and went off in the morning.

Friday 19

Cloudy fine weather.

Continued our rout at daylight, and encamped in the evening at the lower side of the wide traverse in the lake.<sup>52</sup> We were detained sometime repairing one of the canoes that was brok, also two hours at the Lake which was too rough to cross with our canoes so deep laden, tho there was no wind.-Some of the bales of meat were a little wet in the canoe that was broke.-

Satd.y. 20

Rain in the morning dry afterwards.

Continued our course at daylight and reached the Portage 53 at noon where three men were immediately sent off to the Fort 54 for horses. the men that remained employed drying the bales that were wet, and preparing places to lay up the canoes.

Sunday 21

Foggy in the morning, warm afterwards.

---

The men laid up the canoes & arranged part of the baggage to be in readiness when the horses arrive.

Monday 22.

Clear fine weather.

Had all the pieces tied and distributed among them who are divided into twos, saddles, appichimans & cords were also divided among the men.

Three Indians visited us In the evening from whom we got four ducks and a little bears meat.

Three bags of balls, & 9 half & 6 small axes which we had over & above our trade was hid in the woods in the horse pond in the night as it will save the carriage to the Fort and back in the Fall, and these are articles that will not injure by being burried under ground a short time.

Tuesday 23

Cloudy mild weather.

Before noon the men arrived from the Fort with all the Company's horses and what Mr Birnie could collect from the Indians which was still seven short of the number required. However an Indian arrived with these in the evening. The Indians at the Fort it seems are mostly off collecting roots which renders it difficult to procure horses.-As the horses require time to feed & as there would not have been time to get out to the plains where they can be kept without danger of losing them we deferred starting till this morning-

Wed.y- 24

Some rain in the night, and wet disagreeable weather morning.

The weather being unfavourable we were detained some time in the morning, but it clearing up afterwards, the horses were loaded and we set out & encamped in the evening at the little River at the edge of the woods. Some of the horses are very weak, and scarcely able to manage their loads.

Thursday 25

Showery in the night, but fair weather during the day, blowing fresh from the Westward.

Proceeded on our journey at 6 oclock and halted at Campment Bindash 55 at 11, where, as some of the horses are weak, I left the people, to go to the Fort tomorrow, & proceeded with Mr. Kittson to the house where we arrived at 4 oclock. I found two of Mr Dease's men who had arrive with

John Work's Journal

---

despatches from the sea a few hours before they also brought 26 horses for the use of the Snake country expedition.

By a letter of instructions to me I am directed to bring half or such part of the Snake outfit as Mr. Kittson may suppose sufficient, from Nezperces. Now as it is uncertain whether Mr. Ogden may equip his men at the Flat Heads or take them to Nezperces, I am at a loss how to act, if Mr. Ogden takes his peoples to Nezperces it would be lost labour to bring goods from Nezperces and just have to take them back again, it is therefore determined to defer sending for any part of the outfit till the beginning of October, by which time we will have heard from Mr. Ogden & perhaps from the sea and will be able to act according to the instructions received. -I am apprehensive we will not be able to remove to the Kettle Falls this fall as we are uncertain what assistance we may have to give the Snake people. by remaining the trade will be little affected, where as by removing we run a great risk of having the property, particularly the provisions injured as a store will not be ready to receive it, the horses would also be so completely knocked up transporting the property, that they would be of little service to Mr. Ogden in case he requires them, & probably not able to bring his outfit from Wallawalla.

F 'day 26th Augt. 1825.

Clear fine weather.

The men arrived with the horses before noon when the furs, provisions &c were all delivered in safe. -In the afternoon the Indians were settled with for their horses which we hired for the trip.

In the evening I was employed writing letters to Fort Vancouver.

Saturday 27

Clear fine weather.

Sent off Mr Dease's men with despatches to Nezperces to be for- forwarded to the sea.

A young Indian was engaged to carry the despatches to Mr Ogden in the Snake country he is to have a horse for his trip, and promises to make the most expeditious he can. Nothing material has occurred since

I have been absent. Trade in furs still slack but a little doing in provisions.

Sunday 28

Weather as yesterday.

Sent off the Indian with the express to Mr. Ogden he expects to reach him in about 8 to 10 days.

John Work's Journal

---

We are living now entirely on dry provisions as nothing fresh is to be got, not a salmon to be caught in the river.

Monday 29th

Clear fine pleasant weather.

Mr Kittson (&) two men with 6 horses set out for the Kootany country 56 with an assortment of Goods on a Trading excursion.

Sent off 9 men with some tools etc to the Kettle falls to assist with the buildings. I intend following them tomorrow or next day, to see how the business is going on. Getting the store completed is the first object.

Had the Flat head Furs opened and counted, they are in good order. the meat which was opened on Saturday is also in fine condition and weighs about 5500 lbs. The blacksmith Philip made 2 large axes, on Saturday he made 5 & did not begin early. we have now axes for all the people.-

A fire kindled about the Ind camp & spread about our garden & then burnt the greater part of the fence which was composed of thorn bushes.-

Tuesday 30

Fine pleasant weather.

Several Indians of the Pendant Oreill tribe arrived and traded, some beaver & roots & berries.

Seventy salmon were taken in our barrier which are the first that have been caught for some time The Indians took 100 in this.

Wed.y. 31

Pleasant weather.

Set out from Spokane accompanied by an Indian with 3 horses & some articles, required for building and trade, to the Kettle falls at 8 o'clock and encamped at an old burn on a little River in the evening at 5 o'clock. The road lies on the hills & through valleys. some plains thickly wooded & some places clear & here, & there a plain in the valleys.

Sept. Thursd'y. 1

Warm weather.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Resumed our journey at 4 o'clock and arrived at the New Establishment at noon.-The road was much the same today as yesterday, it lay a considerable distance through a plain along side of a little river 57, the plain is covered with very long grass and reeds in some places higher than the horse. The course from Spokane is nearly North, perhaps a little to the E of it.

The men who were sent off from Spokane on Monday arrived yesterday and are at work.

The men who were here before have made but very little progress in the work.-7 men of them have been employed since the 13th of Augt. and have only squared 4 logs 70 feet long, 4-25 feet long, 16-12 feet long & 13 joists 25 feet long. Mr Dears says he could not get them to go quicker, as some of them were almost always sick.-Two of them are at present ill with the venereal and fit to do very little, one of them does nothing. A pretty good stock of provisions is traded, dry fish & berries sufficient to serve all the people here now 18 days. Very few fresh fish are now to be got the water is fallen so much that the salmon do not leap into the baskets which the Indians set for them.

Friday 2nd

Very warm in the middle of the day.

The men were at work at an early hour and finished squaring the logs mentioned yesterday, the pitt saw was also put in order and a pit made to commence sawing tomorrow. A carriage with two wheels and horse harness were also furnished that carting the timber to the house may be begun tomorrow.-

The fort is to be situated in a little nick just above the falls on the South side of the River. This little nick or valley, is of a horse shoe form. about 2 miles along the River side and about 2 1/2 or 3 miles in depth surrounded by steep hills on both sides, a ridge of hills runs along the opposite side of the River. The Fort is to be situated on a sandy ridge about 600 yards from the river side. There is not a sufficiency of wood about it to build the store, that is now under way there the nearest wood is 1400 yards off on one side, 1500 or 1200 yards. on the other, where a little river is to be crossed.-

I took a ride along the river, through a point where there is some fine timber. The most expeditious mode of getting the dwelling house and other houses built will be to have the timber squared a few miles from the fort and rafted down the river. There seems to be some fine timber on the opposite shore about the same distance off.

The potatoes look well, but the moles are destroying some of them. the ground they occupy may be about 35 yards square.-

Saturday 3

---

Fine pleasant weather.

The men were differently employed, four preparing the frame for the store. some sawing, some squaring & one carting. there are now fifteen men fit for duty at work I expect as they are now properly set agoing they will get on well, and be able to have the store so far completed that the property can be deposited in it if we can effect a removal from Spokane this fall. This must in a great measure depend on what assistance we can give the Snake people.

Two Indians, the old chief's sons, were spoken to and having agreed to accompany a gentleman up the Pendent Oreille River in case he can be spared to go, to examine the lower part of it.

An Indian was also engaged to accompany me to Spokane & bring a supply of some articles of trade & toll that are wanted.

Sunday 4

Pleasant cool weather.

Set out from Kettle Falls at 1/4 past 6 oclock and arrived at Spokane at 7 in the evening, which was a hard days riding, I was accompanied by two Indians who were driving ten horses to the (Buffer de Chideu) where I left them in the evening as some of the horses were giving up. The Indians changed horses frequently, but I changed only once the one I rode in the afternoon came from where I left the men In 11/2 hours.

Monday 5

Clear fine warm weather.

Three of the freemen belonging to Mr Ogdens Party arrived here two days ago for supplies & say they were permitted to leave the party to proceed across the mountains to the S. side. But as they had no writings with them but notes specifying the state of their a/c which we did not consider sufficient authority to give them any advances and deeming it necessary to send them back to Mr Ogden, so that he might keep his party as strong as possible, they were refused any advances but a little ammuniton to take them back to where they would likely meet Mr. Ogden. These men are (A. Valle), A. (Curvais) and (Wetacass), they have brought some beaver, & have all money coming to them. Mr Ogden's notes are dated on the 15 Augt. when all the freemen but 6 had parted from him,58 his party then was only 15 strong, and he was going through a dangerous country, they had been successful in their hunting since Mr Kittson left them.-All the freemen but these three and another, turned back with the Flat Heads.-These men met the Indians who went off on Sunday week with the despatches to Mr Ogden, he was getting on well.-

The Indians whom I left Yesterday evening arrived with the horses, some of them are much fa-

tigued.

Nothing material has occurred here since I have been absent.

Tuesday 6

Fine weather.

Mr. Kittson arrived from the Kootenais and has made a pretty good trade, 99 beaver, 62 deer & 34 elk skins & 2 horses, he changed some of his horses which were jaded for others. The Kootanians desire a Post 59 to be in their country this season, though some of those we saw at the Flat Heads said it would not be necessary.

Notes

1 John McLeod, Senior, stationed at Thompson river or Kamloops. Consult "Peace River," by Archibald McDonald, for his career.

2 Probably Charles McKay, son of Alex McKay who was blown up with the Tonquin, and step-son of Dr. John McLoughlin.

3 Celilo, or the Falls of the Columbia, above The Dalles.

4 The Sandy River, Multnomah County, Oregon; camp being near Washougal on the opposite shore.

5 Portage around the Cascades on north bank, where railroad portage was built in later years.

6 The Upper Cape Horn, below Klickitat river; see Wilkes' map of Oregon.

7 This was the long portage of about 4 1/2 miles from Big Eddy to the upper end of Ten Mile Rapids. From here they used their boats to the Falls, or Chutes, where again carried boats and goods a short distance. Here was the "Wishram" village of Washington Irving. See "Astoria"

8 John Day River, Oregon side.

9 David Douglas, the English botanist, who was then on the Columbia. Consult Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol 5, pp. 218 and 245-6-7.

10 Now known as Blalock Island but more often referred to by the fur traders as the Long Island; opposite Cayote station of O. -W. R. & N. Ry.

11 The Umatilla rapids, above mouth of Umatilla River, Oregon side.

12 Also called Fort Walla Walla, built in July-Aug., 1818, by Donald McKenzie & Alex Ross ; consult "Fur Hunters of the Far West," chapters 6 & 7 and frontpiece for picture of the Fort. Location 1-1/2 miles west of Wallula, of present day.

13 South branch of the Columbia, that is the Snake River.

14 Mr. Thos. Dears, a clerk of the H.B. Co., but not attached to any special Post. Mr. J.W. Dease, a Chief Trader, was then in charge of Fort Nez Perces.

15 The Palouse river of today; the Drewyer's river of Lewis and Clark, and known to the fur traders also as Pavion and Pavilion river.

16 Spokane House, about 100 miles northward; see Ross Cox' "Adventures" etc for an account of this trail to the Spokane River.

17 Meaning the Pend d'Oreille Indians

18 Almota Whitman county, Wash., always a favorite Indian camping place, and meaning the hilly or mountainous stream or place. Lewis and Clark camped here Oct. 11th, 1805 and mention the Indian houses described by John Work a little further on in this text.

19 That is, the junction of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers.

20 Red Wolf crossing of the Snake River, at mouth of Alpowa creek Garfield county, Washington. Col. E. J. Stepto's expedition crossed here in the year 1858 on its disastrous expedition.

21 John Work's corruption of the Indian family name Shahaptin

22 The Palouse and the Cayuse tribes. Not unlike Lewis and Clark, Mr. Work was "something of a speller."

23 Where Lewiston, Idaho, now stands. See page 128 of Vol. 2 of "Trail of Lewis and Clark" (Wheeler) for photo and description of this site.

24 That is, the Snake Eiver proper but designated by Lewis and Clark as the Kimooenim while the Clearwater from the S.E. was the Kooskooske.

25 A very correct description of "Lewiston Hill" and of the famous Palouse country beyond. Travelers by stage over that road all remember it. Mr. Dease evidently returned direct to Fort Walla Walla by the river.

26 The regular Indian trail northward followed the line between Washington and Idaho, generally

speaking: consult Manring's "Conquest of Coeur D'Alene, Spokane & Palouse Indians" for this.

27 Probably near Phileo Lake between Spangle and Cheney, Spokane county, Washington

28 Spokane House, at junction of main with the Little Spokane River, nine miles N.W. of City of Spokane, first established by Finan McDonald in 1810: Mr James Birnie in charge. Mr. Birnie afterward settled at Astoria and Cathlamet near the mouth of the Columbia.

29 This is, and previous entries, give us the actual plans for removal of this trading post to Kettle Falls on the Columbia, as had evidently been agreed upon during the winter at Fort George. Consult "Fur Hunters of the Far West" (Ross) Vol. 2, p 162 as to this. Also Gov. Stevens large map in Vol. 12 of Pac. Ry. Reports.

30 The Pend d'Orielle river, from its mouth to the Calispel river and flats near Cusick, Washington.

31 The Kootenay River.

32 Evidently Gov. Simpson was not without some gift of humor; he was preparing Mr. Work for David Douglas' expected visit to the interior to collect botanical specimens.

33 After at least 150 miles across the best farming lands of Spokane, Lincoln and part of Douglas counties, Washington. Fort Okanogan was then on the Columbia river side of the plateau at mouth of Okanogan river.

34 The San Poil river, from the north.

35 These horses were for use in transporting goods to the Thompson river and New Caledonia Districts, which were now on to deliver furs and get goods at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia. Up to this time they had shipped everything to and from York Factory to Hudson Bay, using the Tete Jaune Pass across from the Rocky Mts.

36 Peter Skene Ogden, who was in charge of the Snake Country trappers that season. Consult Oregon Historical Quarterly Vol. 10 p.p. 229-278.

37 A half breed named LaPrate, who afterward was for many years resident at Fort Okanogan.

38 The mouth of the Spokane river.

39 This name should be Robideaux, another half breed.

40 Alexander Ross, who had proceeded to Red River with Gov. Simpson this same Spring and whose family now follows; and Mr. McLeod sends his family preparatory to himself leaving the Columbia river district the following spring.

41 Meaning Fort Vancouver.

42 That is Whirlpool Rapids at the foot of Nespalem Canyon. Consult Lieut. Thos. W. Symon's Report of Examination of Upper Columbia River for this journey from Okanogan to mouth of Spokane river.

43 The trading post to be known as Fort Colville just above Kettle Falls.

44 Probably Spirit Lake Northeast of Spokane, and the little river mentioned a little further on was probably Rathdrum creek.

45 Mr. Finan McDonald, who built Spokane House in 1810 and had but recently left there.

46 Pend D'Oreille river at Sinecateen crossing, the north end of David Thompson's "Skeetshoo Road": later known as Markham's Ferry, Kootenay County, Idaho.

47 William Kittson; see "Fur Hunters of Far West" Vol. 1, p. 207.

48 Thompson Falls, Montana.

49 Lake Pend d'Oreille.

50 Probably the Cabinet Rapids in Clark's Fork river. Barrier river next mentioned is probably Trout Creek of today and maps.

51 Thompson Falls, Montana, where the Indians would be gathered for the summer trade and to fish. Mr. Ogden's party was either on head waters of Jefferson's Fork of the Missouri in Montana, or on the Snake or Salmon rivers in Idaho.

52 This wide traverse or crossing of Lake Pend d'Oreille was from near Hope, Idaho westward across the Lake.

53 That is at Sinecateen again. During mining days this was the principal crossing of the Pend d'Oreille river and is well known to all early settlers of Idaho and Montana and the Kootenay country.

54 Spokane House.

55 Probably they had camped for the night at the Hoodoo lake and this Bindash Campment at Spirit Lake, but impossible to locate certainly.

56 Mr. Kittson goes as far as Bonners Ferry, Idaho, near which David Thompson's "Lake Indian

House" had been, for a summer trade with Kootenays there.

57 The Colville river and valley, and we now get a glimpse of the beginnings of actual settlement and trade in that valley. The "little nick" mentioned further on is Marcus Flat, just above Kettle Falls, where Fort Colvile (so named after one of the H. B. Co. officials) was maintained until about 1872.

58 This refers to the desertions of the H. B. Co. Free-hunters under inducement from the American traders, concerning which there has been some reflection cast upon Gen. W. H. Ashley, but without real evidence to support it.

59 Probably meaning the rebuilding of the Post or Fort near Bonners Ferry: a regular Post had been maintained further up the Kootenay river about opposite Jennings, Montana. See Ross Cox "Adventures," p. 233.

From Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 5 No. 4 (1914), pp. 258-287

Journal of John Work, Dec. 15th, 1825, to June 12th, 1826

Introduction and Annotations by T. C. Elliott.

The publication of this journal was begun in Vol. 5. No. 2 (April, 1914) of this Quarterly and has been completed in three parts instead of two as first intended; the introductory statements in the previous numbers will be of assistance to readers. For the sake of those who may not see the earlier numbers some of the annotations are repeated. The journal ends rather abruptly just before the arrival of Mr. Work at Fort Vancouver in June, 1826, almost an even year after it began with his departure from that same Fort.

This third part of the journal begins with Mr. Work in charge of the winter trade, 1825-6, at Flathead Fort or House located near the present Eddy Station of the Northern Pacific Railway in Sanders County, Montana. He remains there until February and returns to Spokane House and is on duty there with Mr. Dease, the chief trader, during the dismantling of that establishment in the spring of 1826. He then proceeded to Fort Okanogan for a short time and joins the annual "brigade" going down the Columbia river to Fort Vancouver, in June, 1826.

I have been asked to explain the meaning of the term "gummed," which is used quite often in these traders' journals. It means the smearing of the seams of the canoes or boats with pitch or gum gathered from the forest trees.

Reference has been made (note 2, p. 85) to C. McKay, as a son of Alex. McKay of the Astor party, but there appears to be doubt as to that relationship; quite likely C. McKay belonged to another family. There is also a question as to when the furs from the New Caledonia district began to come down over the Okanogan trail for shipment to Fort Vancouver; that trade route was probably opened earlier. The Thompson river (Kamloops) furs had come that way from the very begin-

ning, in 1812.

Research as to the identity of the actual builder of the trading post called Spokane House has progressed a little farther since the beginning of this publication; meaning the original Northwest Company post and not that of the Pacific Fur Company. There are reasons to believe that Mr. Jacques Finlay built it rather than Finan McDonald, as stated in notes No. 28 and 45.

This journal furnishes the source of our information for the beginning of occupation of the trading post on Marcus Flat. above Kettle Falls, and it is well to emphasize the correct spelling of the name of that post. namely Fort Colvile; not Colville as corrupted. It took the name from one of the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, Mr. E. Colvile.

December 1825. Thursday 15 Stormy with sharp frost in the night. Mild pleasant weather during the day. Had the men employed with Mr. Kittson opening and examining the Snake (112) furs, they are generally in good order but of a very inferior quality. they also do not answer the description given of them as many small beaver have been called large, the num's are as follows; 744 Large & 298 Small beaver and 15 otters.

Friday 16th Mild soft weather. The Kootenasy Chief paid us another visit and after trading a lodge and some Deer skins, got a small present and in the evening took his final departure for the winter. He is going with his people to hunt in their own lands not far from the fort (113) on their own river, where they intend to live on deer and endeavour to get a few beaver. On account of the snow they are apprehensive that they will not be able to go sufficiently far off to make a great hunt.-

In different conversations with the Kootanias since their arrival they express a particular wish to have a fort in their own country, and represent the communication by water much less difficult than the Indians whom Mr. Kittson saw stated it to be,(114) and say that the part which Mr. Kittson saw is the worst of it. They were told that they might depend on having an Establishment on their lands next season either by land or by water. Every means should be adopted to keep them on their own lands as they make much better hunt there than elsewhere. Their unprecedented trade this fall is to be mainly attributed to their hunting in the summer & fall on the upper waters of their own river and the Columbia.

It is out of our power to send people & supplies with them at present for want of horses, the six we have here, some of them from the Snake Country are so lean that they are totally unfit for the journey.-

Old LaBuche the F. Head chief paid us another visit.-

Saturday 17th Heavy rain in the night & the greater part of the day. The Flat Head Indians to the number of 60 to 70 arrived headed by three chiefs, they were all on horseback and came singing and firing guns with a flag flying. (115) We answered their fire with a volley of Muskets. The

John Work's Journal

---

Chiefs & some of the principle men smoked in the gentlemens' house, & all the others in the Indian House. The weather is so very bad that we cannot well put them out and they will have to sleep through the houses the best way they can. It is too late to trade today. After dark the men arrived from below bringing letters from Mr. Dease (116) dated on the 4th & 10th inst. and five guns & 4 doz. gun worms which we requested, but no Tobacco is sent which is unfortunate as it is an article which is in great demand and of which I am apprehensive we will be short. Mr. Dease informs us that we will require to be down in time to meet the Express at the Forks about the 5th of April. Without injuring the trade we cannot reach Spokane so early as our Indians will not have arrived with their spring hunts.

Sunday 18 Sharp frost in the morning. Commenced trading with the Flat Heads and by noon had traded all the articles they had for sale when a present of 20 Ball & Powder & 2 feet of Tobacco was made to each of the Chiefs and a remuneration made two of them at the request of Mr. Ogden, per note, for services rendered the Snake Expedition & assisting in bringing home the Snake furs.-Some others of the principal men got also a present of a few balls & Powder and in the afternoon they all went off apparently well pleased. On account of the bad road and weakness of the horses the greater part of the Flat Heads are not going to (hunt) the Buffalo this winter but are going to pass the winter hunting beaver. This will probably occasion a small quantity of Provisions being procured in spring than usual, but I expect it will be the means of an increase in the more valuable articles of furs.

I have not yet been able to ascertain the amount of the Trade.

Monday 19th Overcast mild weather. Had the men busily employed packing the Snake furs and also those traded here, in order to send off two canoes to the Coeur de Alan Portage (117) as soon as possible, so that the men may get the canoes back before the ice takes. Examined yesterdays trade and find it to amount to 222 Large and 107 small beaver. 1 Otter. 4 Robes, 72 Appichimons, 1 Elk Skin, 18 pack saddles. 113 fath. cords. 4 Hair Bridles, 52 Bales, 3122 lbs. dry meat, 119 fresh Tongues. 23 dry Tongues, 2 bosses & 10 « lb. castorum, which is much less than we expected. The greater part of the summer was occupied in pursuit of Buffaloes, which prevented them from hunting beaver, and as they are not going back to the Buffalo at present, they kept a considerable part of their meat to subsist on during the winter.

Some freemen paid us a visit, they were told to come tomorrow with the furs and get some supplies.-

Tuesday 20th Soft mild weather. The freemen A. Paget, C. (Loye), C. Gras Louis, J. Beauchamp & J. B. Gadwa delivered in their furs & received a little advance to enable them to pass the winter. These men would not accompany Mr. Ogden and were not to have received any supplies. but Mr. Dease directed them to get a little in case they delivered in the furs. Paget & Cadwa were unfortunate in losing a cache of 100 beaver which was stolen by the Indians. Cadwa was ordered to be sent to Spokane. He denies that his engagement was only to be free (118) as long as the Company thought proper and seemed unwilling to go, but on being told that he must comply he submitted,

John Work's Journal

---

but with reluctance. The Indians traded a few appichimans. The men employed finishing out the packs.

Wed. 21 Cloudy cold weather. The men employed gumming & repairing the canoes. We had no gum till the Indians were employed to gather it, or the canoes would have been repaired yesterday. The Kootany chief & 6 of his men visited us, and after smoking traded a horse & a few saddles and appichimans.

Thursday 22nd Some snow in the night, cloudy cold weather. Wind N. W.

Sent off 2 canoes 5 men each to the Schachoo (119) Portage laded with the following articles for Spokane viz 27 packages containing 762 Large and 376 Small beaver, 11 Martens, 10 Mink. 1385 Rats, 8 Elk Skins. 12 deer Skins, 70 Appichimans, 22 Saddles & 90 Salt tongues, of the F. Heads and Kootenay returns, and 21 Pieces containing 881 Large & 381 Small beaver, 16 Otters, 2 Rats & 7 1/2 lbs. Castrum, Snake Returns, besides 1 Bale private property, rivits and 5 bales meat 60 lbs. each for the peoples voyage down and back. The above part of the Snake returns is all that was brought here by C. McKay & delivered in by the Freeman.

I wrote to Mr. Dease informing him of the state of affairs of this place and requesting 1/2 Roll Tobacco and a few awls for the trade.-I wrote for the Tobacco the last time the Canoes went down but was refused it on the plea that it was more required below. I have now urged the necessity of its being sent here where it will be much required in the Spring.-The Men are directed to make all the expedition in their power so that they may get back before they are stopped by the ice, no danger is apprehended of ice stopping them before they reach the portage. Three Men Ignace. Martin & Gadwa are ordered to start for the Fort with the letters immediately on their arrival at the portage.

Friday 23rd Cloudy cold weather. The Indians are encamping about the Fort where there are now 21 Lodges. Some are going off to the Buffalo. The Pendent Orellies are blamed for stealing some of the Kootany horses. It is reported likewise that the Piegans have stolen 7 of the best horses from the Pendent Orellies that went first off to the Buffalo. Two Beaver Skins, the carcass of 2 deer & a few appichimans (120) were traded. One of the old Freeman, Paget, father-in-law to Cadwa, who was sent to Spokane, has come & encamped at the Fort he is an old man & having only Gadwa to depend on, he did not go off with the others. He is a very old servant and always bore a good character. After what little provisions he has will be done, he will probably become a burden on the Fort.-

Saturday 24 Cloudy cold weather. Wind N.W Some ice along the edge of the River. The Indians traded a few Appichimans and Saddles, to obtain a little ammuniton as some of them are going off.

Sunday 25th Cloudy. Raw cold weather. Masses of ice running pretty thick down the River.-

John Work's Journal

---

This being Christmas Day the two men here had a dram, and we served out extra each a ration of fresh meat, a tongue, & a quart of Flour. For the old freeman Bastang the same.

Five Kootany Indians of the Au platte tribe (121) arrived and traded 14 Large and 4 Small beaver, 1 Otter, 17 dressed Deer Skins and 3 (parrefliches), principally for ammunition & Knives & a little Tobacco. Two Pendent Oreilles traded the carcasses of 2 sheep. females, the one weighed 62 & the other 60 lbs.

Monday 26 Overcast mild weather. the river clear of ice, except some patches along its edge. The men employed cutting firewood.

Tuesday 27 th Overcast stormy weather. Wind Northerly- The men employed assorting and bailing up meat. The Indians are still trading a few appichimans, saddles, & few furs.-

Wed 28th Cloudy cold weather. Ice running pretty thick in the River. The Men finished assorting and baling up the meat. We have now in store 67 Bales. 84 lbs. net each, viz 36 of lean, 19 Back Fat & 12 Inside Fat, or 3024 lbs. Lean Meat 1596 lbs. Back fats & 1008 lbs. Inside fats, in all 5628 lbs. Some of the Indians moving a little further down the River. but as some others are coming up in their place the number of lodges still keeps about 20. Those Indians that remain here employ the most of their time gambling.

Thursday 29th Overcast, snowed thick the afterpart of the day. Ice running in the river.

The River below will probably freeze over with this weather and prevent the Canoes from getting up.

Friday 30th Overcast mild weather, some snow. Ice running in the river but not so much as yesterday. Nothing doing in the way of trade except a chance appichiman, (parrefliches) etc. The Indians occupy the greater part of their time gambling, even where it is snowing they are playing out of doors and a group sitting about the parties engaged watching the progress of the game.

Saturday 31st Snowed thick in the night and the forepart of the day. The snow lies nearly 6 inches thick on the ground. Very little ice running in the River. The men who were sent off to Spokane on the 22nd arrived in the evening with letters from Mr. Dease and 1/2 Roll of Tobacco & 1/2 gross of awls. The men had to leave the canoes yesterday below the Chutes as the Navigation was stopped by ice. They have made a very expeditious voyage.-

Mr. Dease in one of his letters expresses a wish that Mr. Kittson or I would pay him a visit.-Nothing material has occurred at Spokane since we heard from it last.

Jan. 1826. Sunday 1 - Stormy with heavy rain the greater part of the day, the snow has nearly all disappeared. This being the first day of the new year, according to custom, each of the men got an extra ration of 6 lb. fresh venison, 2 lbs. back fat. 1 Buffalo tongue, 1 pint of Flour and 1 pint of

John Work's Journal

---

Rum.-At daylight they ushered in the new year with a volley of musketry when they were treated with 4 glasses each of Rum cakes & a pipe of Tobacco. With this and the pint given to each of them, they soon contrived to get nearly all pretty drunk. They appeared to pass the day comfortably enjoying themselves.

An Indian brought us a female (Chiveaux), Round, Skin and all.

Monday 2nd Wind N.W. and stormy during the night and all day, but not cold, the snow has all disappeared except on the mountains. No ice driving in the River. The men doing little today. The Indians women were sent off to gather gum to repair one of the canoes to make another trip below if the weather continues favorable.-

Tuesday 3 rd Blew a perfect storm in the night, but calm overcast mild soft weather during the day.

Had part of the men repairing and gumming a canoe & making paddles, the others packing up Appechimons, dressed leather, Robes, Saddles & making in all 18 pieces or about 2/3 a canoe load, which is all in readiness to start tomorrow for the Coeur de Alene portage. I intend going myself, with 6 men, to proceed to Spokane. I expect we will reach the portage before the River freezes but we will probably have to walk back. I am induced to take this trip in consequence of Mr. Dease expressing a wish that either Mr. Kittson or I would visit him.-Mr. Kittson remains in charge of the place.-

Wed. 4 th Some frost in the night. Cloudy fine weather during the day. Left F. Head haven 20 Minutes before 8 oclock in a canoe with 8 Men, Iroquoys, reached the Chutes (122) 20 minutes past 10, Making the portage. which is 1380 yds. long, took more than 2 hours.-At 2 oclock we reached the canoes the men left a few days ago and encamped to change our canoe for a better one, the men were employed till it was dark gumming the canoes we are going to take. The canoe though not deep laden is a good deal lumbered. the saddles & appechimons take up a good deal of room. There is not much snow, a little ice along the edge of the River & on the banks. The ice that stopped the men going up is all gone.

Two parrefliches & a little meat which the men left in cache is stolen by the Indians.

Thursday 5 th Overcast soft weather. Proceeded on our journey at 1/2 past 6 oclock, reached Stony island portage at 10 & 1/2 past 10 got across it, the canoe taken down by water, by one oclock we reached the Heron Rapid, (123) the portage here also occupied half an hour, the canoe & part of the baggage got down by water. At 1/2 past 3 encamped near the Lake. A good days work. The snow is deep at the portage we passed, and also where we are encamped but it is soft and thawing.-It is difficult making the portage as the track is through rough stones & the hollows being filled up with the snow, the men with the loads tumble into the holes before they are aware.

Friday 6 th Stormy weather with heavy rain, rained hard in the night. Embarked at day light and

John Work's Journal

---

in an hour reached the Lake (124) where we encamped and had to remain all day it being it being too rough to attempt crossing it.

Saturday 7 Stormy with rain in the night. Moderate mild weather with some rain during the clay.

Embarked at 8 oclock and reached the portage (125) at 3 in the afternoon when the goods were laid up & covered, but it being too late deferred starting for the Fort till tomorrow. Killed a small deer crossing the River.

Sunday 8 Soft weather with disagreeable sleet & snow showers. Set out an hour before day light with 4 men to cross the portage on foot for the Fort and encamped at sun setting at the little River (126) at the edge of the plains after a hard days walking. Two of the mens feet got sore and I sent them back from Rat Lake. (127) Part of the road in the middle of the woods the snow is deep & ? with the thaw but not sufficiently hard to bear ones weight, and walking through it is very fatiguing on the other parts of the road there is little snow.-Met two Indians in the afternoon & got a horse from them but having no saddle & he being very poor it was a most fatiguing job to ride any distance. We rode turn about.

Monday 9 th Soft weather Snow showers. Resumed our journey before 3 oclock in the morning and reached Spokane (128) at 1 in the afternoon, and received a cordial reception from Mr. Dease who with his people were found well. There is little snow on the ground during this day's march.

Tuesday 10 th Snowed thick the forepart of the day but soft weather & rain in the evening so that the most of the snow had disappeared by night.-

Wed 11 Overcast mild weather some light snow.

Thursday 12 th Weather as yesterday. some light snow and rain showers.

Friday 13. Sharp frost in the night but cloudy mild weather during the day. Have made preparation to return to F. Heads tomorrow.-

Sat. 14 th Snowing and raining all day. Having every thing ready left Spokane at 10 oclock for the F. Heads accompanied by my own two men, & La Bonte & an Indian with 9 horses for the baggage that I left at the other end of the Portage. On account of the very bad weather and having to go round by the Chutes (129) where we were detained some time in the plains catching two of the Inds horses, we only reached the Fountain (130) in the plain where we encamped for the night. Every one of us completely drenched to the skin.-There is very little snow on the plains.

Sunday 15 th Overcast mild weather some light snow & rain showers. Some of the horses strayed off in the night, & it was 8 oclock before they were all collected, when we proceeded on our journey and only reached the W end of Rat Lake. The snow in the woods takes the horses up over their knees so that they were able to make very little way through it. Where we are encamped, the

---

poor horses can eat but very little. Saw the tracks of several deer and some martens.

Monday 16 th Overcast mild foggy weather. Three of the horses strayed off in the night owing to the Indian having neglected to hobble them. I sent a man & the Indian after them, while I with the other men & horses proceeded to the portage (131) where we arrived before noon, the man and Indian with the other horses did not arrive till sun setting. Had all the pieces arranged & ready to send off the horses in the morning & at the same time set out myself with the canoe. The snow is not so deep at this end of the portage as yesterday.

Tuesday 17 th Except a short Interval in the afternoon, rained without intermission all day and blowing fresh part of the day. Had the horses collected at day light and the man and Indian commenced loading them. At the same time I embarked & we proceeded up the River, and encamped a little above the lake, a good days march considering the very bad weather. Very little more wind would have prevented us from crossing the Lake. The snow has in several places disappeared but on the hills and along the shores it is still thick.

Wed. 18 th Overcast fair mild weather. Proceeded on our journey at daylight and encamped late above the Stony Island Portage. (132) The snow along the shore and particularly at the portages, was very deep.-

Thursday 19 th Weather as yesterday but colder. Continued our rout at an early hour, and encamped below the Chutes in the evening. About noon we passed the Crooked rapid after which there was very little snow to be seen. Found some Indians at the Barrier River (133) & traded some Venison from them which made us a good supper.

Friday 20 th Snowing and raining all day, very disagreeable weather. Embarked before sunrising and reached the F. Head House near dark. We were delayed some time at the Chutes gumming the canoes. Found Mr. Kittson and the people all well. Nothing material has occurred since I went off. Little done in the way of trade except of fresh provisions, some Inds. from above arrived with 14 deer which has served the people & saved dry provisions for some time back on account of the mild soft weather it is difficult to keep it from spoiling. The men have been employed getting wood for a canoe, milking troughs to (beat) meat & make pimmican, cutting cords & putting an upper flooring in the house, etc.-

Sat. 21 st Cloudy fine pleasant weather, thawing. An Indian brought the carcass of a deer.

Sunday 22 nd Mild pleasant weather.

Monday 23 rd Cloudy cold weather sharp frost in the night. Six men with some horses were sent off for canoe timber with which they returned in the evening. The road was very bad as they had to ascend the mountains.-It is difficult to procure wood for canoes here now.

Tuesday 24 th Overcast soft weather. C. McKay and six men were sent up the river in a canoe to

---

John Work's Journal

---

an Indian camp in expectation that they will be able to trade some fresh provisions. It is supposed they will be two days reaching the camp. (134) If we be able to procure some venison it will save the dry provisions.-

The Old freeman Paget and a man Pierre, were sent down to Thompson's Plain with the horses where the grass is better.

Wed. 25 th Overcast soft mild weather. Two men employed dressing canoe wood, the others cutting wood.

Thursday 26 th Weather as yesterday, some light snow. The men employed as yesterday. Two Kootany Indians arrived and traded Deer skins principally for ammunition.

Friday 27 th Disagreeable cold weather blowing fresh from the Northward. The men bent the timbers for the canoe.

Sat. 28 th Soft weather some snow. Had the provisions examined, a little of it was moldy, put 5 bales on the loft to dry to beat for pimican.

Sunday 29 th Raw cold overcast weather. C. McKay and the men who went off on Tuesday returned. The River is so shallow above that they could not get the canoe to the Indians camp but two men were sent. The Indians have had no provisions and the people were starving when they got a little. Only about two animals are brought home. They brought home the skin of a ram, horns and all, for stuffing.

Monday 30 th Snowed in the night and snowing thick the greater part of the day. Men differently employed.

Tuesday 31. Snowing part of the day. but soft weather & thawing. There is now nearly a foot deep of snow. The men employed cutting and melting down tallow.

Wed. 1 Feb. 1826 Overcast soft weather. Some sleet and rain showers. Part of the men employed cutting and melting Tallow, & part, pounding meat to make pimican.-

Thursday 2. Sharp frost in the night, and cloudy cold weather during the day. The men employed as yesterday.

Friday 3. Frost in the night. Overcast soft weather thawing during the day. Blowing strong in the evening. The men employed as yesterday except those that were pounding the meat, who are making a trough as the one already made is broken. Some Indians arrived from above & traded the carcasses of 2 deer & the skin of a (bison). The meat is a seasonable supply as our stock of fresh meat was nearly out.

Saturday 4. Some snow in the night but clear mild weather during the day.

Had the men employed melting down fat. Yesterday evening. I gave one of the men Togonche, a boxing for making too free with my wife (135) but being in a passion he got out of my hands before he got enough & to avoid getting another which I promised him he ran off to the woods.

Sunday 5. Clear mild weather.

Monday 6 th Snowed hard in the night and snowing part of the day. Part of the men employed pounding meat and part, dressing canoe timber.

Tuesday 7 th Stormy in the night with very heavy rain, rain & snow the greater part of the day. Part of the men employed melting fat the others at the canoe timber.

T. Toganche came to the fort in the night and took away his things, and the other provisions, the others deny that they knew of his going off or where he is gone too. I believe they are telling lies.

Wed. 8 th Rain in the night & rain & snow during the day. The men employed as yesterday. Nothing doing in the way of trade except a little gum.-

Thursday 9 th Rain & very stormy in the night, mild weather during the day.-The snow is disappearing very fast, there is no very little on the ground.

The men employed at the canoe, the wood is all dressed.

Monday 13 th Sharp frost in the night. Cloudy cold weather during the day. Four men employed at the canoe & two pounding meat. An Indian arrived from Spokane, with letters dated on the 3rd Inst. Mr. Dease sends me orders to proceed to Spokane to make out the a/c & leave Mr. Kittson in charge of this place. As I have a particular wish to see the years transactions of this Post finished so that I might be able to make some observations on it, that perhaps might have been useful, I certainly do not like the trip, and think Mr. Dease (136) might have made more Judicious arrangements, especially when It is only to make out the Accounts.

Tuesday 14 th Sharp frost in the night & very cold all day. The men employed as yesterday, finished pounding the meat and are now ready to make it into Pimican to take below to Spokane.

Wed. 15 th Keen frost in the night, and cold freezing weather all day. The river driving full of ice, which is an unusual thing at this season of the year. Two of the men employed repairing a canoe to below to the Le Portage if the River keeps open. Five more men making Pimmican. They made 14 bags 80 Is. each.

Five of the Au Platte Indians arrived late last night, & today traded 2 Otter, about 500 Rats, and some dressed leather and (Parrefliches). (137)

Thursday. 16 Cold frosty weather but milder than yesterday. A good deal of ice driving in the River.

Two men employed repairing a canoe to go below.-The others at the Pimican, Made 6 more bags & filled 2 bags of Tallow 90 lb. each.

A Flat Head Indian arrived for a little tobacco for his tribe who are now on their way coming in, but still far off. Several are daily arriving from different quarters principally from the Fd. H. Lake and encamping about the fort, they bring nothing except a little dry Venison.-

Friday 17 Overcast freezing weather. Some ice still driving in the River & ice fast along its edges. The water is rising considerably some days past.

Three men employed repairing the canoe.-The others tying up the Pimican & making packs of cords, to go below & doing other jobs about the fort.-

The Flat Head Indian that arrived yesterday went off. He got a little Tobacco for each of the principle men. He made us to understand that his tribe were still in pursuit of buffalo but would soon come off for the fort. They were likely to have a good deal of provisions but he could not say what success they had in the fur way. A band of 13 Kootanies principally Auplattes arrived in the evening with some furs.-It was too late to trade.

Saturday 18 Cloudy mild weather, frost in the night. Ice still driving in the River.

The Kootanies that arrived last night, traded 19 Beaver large & small, 1 Otter, 5 martens & 1 fish, 210 Rats, 4 Elk skins, 114 dressed & 5 parchment Deerskins and some (parrefliches), principally for ammunition.-

Part of the men employed at the new canoe, and three finishing repairing the one they were at these two days past. It is now ready and I intended to start tomorrow for Spokane with a load of provisions but the people arriving from the horse guard (138) informed me that part of the River there is frozen over and of course, impassable. A piece of the River above the fort has also been fast some days. In order to ascertain exactly the state of the River below so that we might be able to ascertain whether a passage is practicable or when it is likely to be so, C. McKay & Canotte, who is a good judge of the River, were dispatched to take a view of the water below at different places from which they will be able to judge of the state of the River farther down, they are to be back tomorrow, so that I must defer starting for another day. As Mr. Dease wants two men down also by taking a canoe & cargo down at present is the only means by which they can be spared.

The canoe is also the most expeditious mode of conveyance. We cannot attempt taking down the horses as Mr. Dease suggests, without running the risk of making a very tedious journey and perhaps losing some of the horses, on account of the great depth of the snow along parts of the

John Work's Journal

---

road.-The journey on foot must also be, tedious.-Performing the journey, in the canoe is decidedly preferable, as it can be done much quicker, & the cargo can be taken down at once & probably, not more than three canoes will require to be taken down in the Spring. So that the men wanted below can now be spared which they otherwise could not.

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Cloudy mild weather. Some ice still driving in the River. C. McKay & Conotte returned & reported that the River is frozen in 4 places where, Portages will have to be made, not very long ones, & that only one place farther down is likely to be frozen at the Cobias. I therefore have determined on starting tomorrow, it will require longer time but it is the only means we now have of performing the journey. From all that we can learn there is too much snow for the horses to be sent down with safety.

Monday 20 Left the Flat Heads early, in a canoe with 7 men & an Indian and 22 pieces Pimican & fat. 1 box candles & my baggage, besides provisions for the voyage, in all about 27 pieces. A little below the Fort we were stopped by ice & had to make a portage at least 3/4 of a mile, after which we proceeded to the Chutes, made the Portage & a little farther down the River was again frozen over & we had to make another portage about the same length as the last, but over a much worse road. The ice is too weak to carry upon it & it is difficult to get ashore and a bad road along shore. If we find obstructions of this kind tomorrow the canoe will probably have to be sent back & I will have to proceed on foot, as it would occupy a long time to carry over some of the portages below.-Very disagreeable weather. Snow & sleet heavy in the evening so that it wets everything.

Tuesday 21 Cloudy overcast weather. drizzling rain, sleet & snow the greater part of the day.

Proceeded down the river at an early hour & again soon found our road barred with ice in two places of considerable length, it was, however, so soft that we got our way broken through it with a great deal of labor & damage to our canoe. We crossed the Stony island portage & encamped below it at a late hour. In the forepart of the day there (was) little snow along the River but towards evening it was very deep. At our camp it is not less than three feet. In the morning when I was away with the foreman examining the ice one of the men (Bonufont) deserted and ran off with my old gun and Powder horn. The others said they thought I had sent him for them, This man is almost out of his senses about our peril at the F. Heads which is probably the cause of his running off-I had no idea that he ran off entirely or I certainly would have pursued him with the people & caught him although it would be difficult to find him as there is little snow in the woods and we had no time to spare.-He will probably go no farther that the fort where Mr. Kittson will stop him.

Wed. 22 Snow & rain the most of the day. We were detained some time in the morning gumming the canoe after which we continued our route & encamped in the evening near the lower end of Pendent Oreilles Lake. We just got across the lake in good time as it began to blow immediately afterwards. We met no more obstructions from the ice, but in several places it had very recently broke up.

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> Very disagreeable cold weather, thick snow & sleet all day. Embarked at an ear-

---

John Work's Journal

---

ly hour & reached the portage at noon, where we got the property all safely laid up & the canoe gummed for me to return with her tomorrow morning while I start with one man & an Indian to the fort & leave one man to take care of the property, till people & horses come for it. -I am afraid the horses will have a bad job of it as the snow here is very deep. The ice in different parts of the river has not been long broke up. Passed two Indian camps and lodges and loaded 3 pr. of small snow shoes from them. -The badness of the weather prevented me from setting out for the fort immediately.

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> Overcast, Cloudy weather, snow showers. At daylight set out for Spokane accompanied by an Iroquoy & an Indian, and encamped at 4 oclock in the afternoon between the big hill and the Lake. The snow on the portage is generally from 3 to 4 feet deep and very soft and on account of the smallness and badness of our snowshoes walking through it is very fatiguing, when we encamped we were very tired, & had no water, however, by melting snow on a piece of bark at the fire we soon obtained a sufficiency. -We stopped early having only a small axe to cut firewood.

I am afraid, there is so much snow, it will be a bad job getting the property across.

Saturday 25 Overcast, snow and sleet the greater part of the day. Proceeded on our route at daylight and reached the plain at 11 oclock and encamped at sunseting at Campment de Bindash, with J. Finlay's (139) sons who were hunting fortunately we fell in with them or we would have had little fire during the night.

The snow continued the same depth to near the edge of the woods where it was not so deep. There was not much snow on the plains and on the South end we walked without snowshoes. -

Sunday 26 Clear cold weather in the night and mild weather during the day.

Continued our journey at 3 oclock in the morning and arrived at Spokane at 11. Not much snow in the woods & it was so hard that we walked the most of the way without snowshoes. We were well tired. There were some horses on the opposite side of (Schuihoo) (140) plain but we thought it too far to go for them yesterday evening. Found Mr. Dease & his people all well.

Monday 27 Snowed in the night and the greater part of the day.

It being deemed impracticable to get the property across the portage at present on account of the depth of the snow, without, the risk of losing some of the horses, Mr. Dease had determined to let it remain some time till the snow thaws. -But a man (Chilifaux) was sent off to give the man who was left behind instructions & leave an Indian with him and at the same time to bring home some of my things, particularly the box containing the papers. -The Indians would not trust their horses to cross the portage. -

Tuesday 28 Cloudy mild weather, some snow. A good deal of the snow that fell yesterday thawed.

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

John Work's Journal

---

Wed. 1 Overcast mild weather. The snow thawing Mr. Birnie (141) I & the men busy packing beaver these two days.

Thursday 2 Overcast cold weather. The people still employed packing furs.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Overcast cold weather, the snow thawing a little about the Fort but diminishing very little in the woods.

Saturday 4 Weather as yesterday. Keen frost in the night.

Sunday 5 Cloudy mild weather in the middle of the day, but cold in the night morning & evening. Snow diminishing very slowly. The men finished packing the furs. I am employed arranging the accounts.

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> (Monday, Sunday & Tuesday here given in exact order of original M. S. )

Keen frost in the night. Cloudy cold weather during the day. The Chiefs we spoke to about horses to carry off part of the furs and property to the Forks, (142) they engaged to furnish 80 horses.

Sunday 7 Clear fine weather but cold & the snow wasting very little.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Cloudy cold weather keen frost in the night.

The men busy tying up the pieces & preparing to go off tomorrow. The Indians collecting the horses.-

Mr. Birnie with 3 men, 13 Indians and 80 loaded horses set out for the forks the first trip. Mr. B. is to remain in charge of the furs & property. Only 4 or 6 pieces of this is private property.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> In the evening Cholefaux arrived with my trunk & blankets about 100 lb.-The other things he left.-The snow on the Portage is now very deep, more so than when I passed it is now not less than 4 feet. There is no knowing when horses may be able to pass through it.

The night before Cholefaux arrived at the other end of the Portage some Inds slept there with the man who was left in charge of the goods, & stole a small bag 25 lb. fine pimican.-

Wed 8 Cloudy cold weather, sharp frost in the night. Chalifaux was sent off to the Forks to remain with Mr. Birnie.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Sharp frost in the night. Cold bleak weather during the day.-The snow wasting very little to be this season of the year.-

Friday 10 Keen frost in the night. Raw cold weather. Snow in the afterpart of the day.

---

The men, employed with two Indians pressing the fur packs, but had to give it up on account of the snow.

Saturday 11 th Froze keen in the night. Light clouds fine weather though cold during the day.

The People above mentioned employed Pressing the furs which was finished in the evening having done 36 packs in the day. In the evening an Indian with part of the horses that went off to the Forks on Tuesday, arrived. The whole reached their destination safe, & the property all in good order, having had dry weather.

Sunday 12 Frost in the night, cloudy cold weather during day. All the rest of the horses & Indians & men returned from the Forks.

Monday 13 Keen frost in the night. The men employed tying up and arranging the pieces for the next trip. Busy all day paying the Indians for their horses for their last trip.

Tuesday 14 Frost in the night, light. cloudy, cold weather during the day.

The snow is disappearing about the Fort, but going off very slowly.

Wed 15 Cloudy cold weather. The men employed cutting firewood.

Thursday 16 Heavy rain in the night some time In the morning, which has diminished the snow considerably, the valley round the fort is nearly all bare except patches here and there but in the woods and higher ground snow still lies pretty thick & is wasting very tardily. Mild, soft foggy weather, & the first spring like day we have had this season. The men employed cutting firewood in the forepart of the day, afterwards arranging and separating the furs & property to be sent off to the forks on Saturday, in all 60 loads. The Indians were engaged to furnish sixty horses on that day, for the trip.

Pere de Joile Fille was also engaged to cross the (Schuihoo) portage for the property that remains there, he is to go as soon as the road is passable through the snow, which he expects will be in two or three days.

Friday 17 Raw cold weather in the morning, mild afterwards. Had provisions &c., tied up for the party going off tomorrow. The Indians collecting their horses.-

Saturday 18 th Cloudy, snow & sleet the forepart of the day, snowed in the night. the snow in the morning was nearly 2 inches deep, but it had nearly all disappeared during the day, on the low ground, but on the high ground that faces the north, the snow still remains.

On account of the bad weather the departure of the horses with the property was deferred until

tomorrow.

The water in the river has risen considerably, these few days past.

Sunday 19 Frost in the night & fine weather in the forepart of the day but disagreeable weather with rain and sleet afterwards.

Three men and ten Indians, with the Interpreter Rivit, (143) were sent off to the Forks with 62 horses loaded with Furs, Provisions & Sundries. The after part of the day turned out very unfavorable which was not expected in the morning as the weather was fine. There is very little property of any kind now remaining. (144) -The women and children also went off today.-

Monday 20 Overcast fair weather in the morning some light showers during the day.

Tuesday 21 Rain and sleet in the night, but fair weather during the day. The River continues much the same, the water is rising very little.

The Blacksmith & cook, the only two men we have now here, employed collecting all the iron about the place, stripping hinges off doors (145) &c. The Indians much regret our going off.. and frequently complain that they will be pitiful when the whites leave them.

The Indians are getting a few trout and suckers in their barrier, a part of which they give us.

Wed. 22 Light showers. The men employed as yesterday.

Thursday 23. Sleet & rain showers, rained hard in the night. The greater part of the Men and Indians that went to the Forks on Sunday last, returned. Not withstanding the bad weather their property got down safe.

Friday 24 Showery weather and cold, notwithstanding the advanced season the snow still lies on the North side of the hills and banks. The rest of the people arrived from the Forks. Late last night two Indians arrived from Coeur de Alan Portage with letters from Mr. Kittson dated F. Head 9<sup>th</sup> Inst. The trade was then completed and preparations making to start. The provision trade has been excellent but the returns in furs less than was expected.-War has broken out between the F. Heads and (Piegans.)C McKay is at the other end of the Portage with the horses that were at the F. Heads, he had a bad journey down on account of the depth of the snow, the horses were five nights without eating. The snow on the portage is still near 3 feet deep.-Mr. Kittson was to have proceeded to the Pendent Oreilles Bay but as it is supposed from accounts that that portage is impassable with the depth of the snow, a man was sent off immediately with letters to Mr. Kittson to stop him at the Coeur de Alan portage.-

Some people were sent off to fetch home our horses from the Coeur de Alan plain to be ready to start for the F. Head property. Le Course caulking his boats.-Paid off part of the Indians for their

trip to the Forks.-

Saturday 25 Raining the greater part of the day. The horses were brought to (Birnie's) (146) plains. of the Indians for their horses.

Sunday 26 th Rain in the night and the most of the day. The water in the River rising considerably these few days.-Some snow still lies on the banks and hills that face the North.

Monday 27 Overcast weather. Martin arrived from Coeur 'de Alan Portage, in place of Charles who went off on the 23 rd who was so fatigued that he could not come back. Martin can also scarcely walk, though he came part of the way on horseback. Mr. Kittson had not arrived at the Portage 2 days ago. By Indian report he had started from the F. Heads but was detained at Thomp-sons plains, seeking after one of his men (Benifont) who had deserted. There is still a great deal of snow on the Portage. Some places it is said to be 3 feet deep. The horses were brought home. & the Indians engaged to furnish some more, to go off for the F. Head property tomorrow, as Mr. Kittson is expected to have arrived by the time they reach the Portage. Tuesday 28 Overcast mild weather. Rovit, 2 men & some Indians went off to meet Mr. Kittson with about 70 horses.

Wed. 29th. Fine weather, sharp frost in the night. Old Philip was sent off to the Forks to send home Chalifaux who is there.-

Thursday 30 th Fine weather, but keen frost in the night. La Course busily employed caulking and gumming the boats.

Friday 31 st Frost in the night, Overcast mild weather during the day. Not withstanding the weather is rather cold, Vegetation is making considerable progress. The ground about the fort is getting quite green, and the bushes are putting forth their leaves and some small plants flowering. The snow, nevertheless still keeps possession of the banks that Front the north.-The River has risen considerably for some days past. The Indians are hungry as they have little to depend upon but moss. They have for some time past got a good many trout from the Barrier but last night it was broken by the height of the water, & they will not be able to repair it.

April 1826

Sat. 1 Heavy rain the greater part of the day. The men employed gumming the boats.

Sunday 2 Overcast mild, soft weather. Mr. Kittson arrived from the F. Heads. he left his people yesterday. One of the men (Bonenfant) who deserted from me on the 21 st Feb but was afterwards secured, ran off a second time, when Mr. Kittson sent two men in pursuit of him. One of these Ignace (Astaryan), also stayed away & is supposed to have deserted also. Bonenfant made his escape from an Indian lodge before the men got up. Three of the canoes were broke, two of the them sunk, & though none of the property was lost a great deal of it was wet, & though pains were taken to dry it, it is feared from the witness of the weather that a deal of the meat will be much

damaged.-

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Overcast fair weather. C. McKay & Canotte arrived & left Rivit and the Men this morning. they are to stop the most of the day opening and airing the provisions.

Tuesday 4 Overcast, weather drizzling rain. The men employed tying up some things that were loose in the Store.

Wed. 5 Overcast fair weather. The people with horses loaded with Flat head returns arrived. The men immediately employed opening and examining the provisions. A good deal of it is wet & getting moldy. Some of the bales of leather were also wet, indeed scarcely anything in the canoes missed. Busy the after part of the day settling with the Indians for their horses.

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Fine weather. Busy settling with the Indians & paid them up for all their horse hire & services for so far. Mr. Kittson & the men drying and packing up the meat.

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> Fair weather. Had the Indians & Company's horses collected and the property taken to below the Forks, (147) in the boat. the river being too high to cross it on the horses. At past noon I set out with 59 loaded horses and encamped late at the Kettle encampment. (148) Our loads are principally provisions, a few packs of furs & leather. All Indians but one white man that are with the horses, they are very careful of the property.

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> Clear pleasant weather. It was some time in the morning before the horses were all collected after which they were all loaded and proceeded on the rout. Mr. Dease and Mr. Kittson shortly come up with us. I accompanied them & we proceeded on ahead and arrived at the Forks in the evening. We had some difficulty crossing a small river (149) that was swelled by the snow melting in the mountains, the current was very strong & the water deep. My horse was carried a considerable distance down the stream. I was completely wet up to the middle it was with difficulty I kept his back as he was different times nearly upsetting by getting on branches or trees.

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> Clear fine weather. The boats, three (150) in number, which left Spokane yesterday arrived at the Forks this evening, they loaded the cargoes above the little Dalles & the light boats were run down. La Courses boat struck a stone near the mouth of the Spokane river in a dangerous rapid and was broken. She was very nearly upset, had she done so everyone on board would have perished. Yesterday the boats fell in with the horses & transported all the property past the little river.

Monday 10 Cloudy weather, sun shining occasionally. The horses and property all arrived at the Forks safe in the morning where the loads were received. The Bales of meat were opened to be aired. several of them were a little wet.-Busily employed in the afterpart of the day paying off the Indians for the lend of their horses and their own labour coming to the Forks.-

Tuesday 11 Cloudy weather. The meat was again all opened & spread out to air. The Express

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

John Work's Journal

---

arrived in the evening, Messrs. McLeod (151) , Ermatinger & Douglas.-They brought 3 pigs & 3 young cows for Fort, Colvile. (152)

Wed. 12 Mr. A. McDonald (153) arrived from Okanagan by land.

Thurs. 13. Two boats sent off to Okanagan landed with furs.-And afterwards 20 of the Spokane horses for the same place to go on to Kamloops to meet the New Caledona people.-Rivit, Old Philip & old Paget & Pierre with a number of women and children & all the horses & the young cows, were sent off to Kettle falls. They have a quantity of seed potatoes with them & tools to commence farming immediately. (154)

Friday 14 th Nothing particular, all busy finishing the account.

Sunday 16. The Express for the Mountains. Mr. McLeod & Mr. Birnie, set off in the evening.-One boat 8 men.

Monday 17 A cargo was prepared for a boat to Okanagan.

Tuesday 18 A boat loaded with Packs of furs, appichimons, leather &c. Messrs. McDonald, Ermatinger & myself passengers, Set out in the morning for Okanagan.-

Wed. 19 th Arrived at Okanagan in the morning with all safe. Met the man that left the forks on the 12th returning yesterday morning. They would reach the forks in the course of the day.-

Thursday 20 Overcast mild weather. Messrs. A McDonald. E. Ermatinger and Annance, (155) 12 Men and 2 Indians took their departure for Nezperces & thence to Fort Vancouver in a boat, with 12 Packs furs, 15 bales salmon, 4 Bales Appichimons, 1 bale Saddles, 1 Bale leather, 1 Bale Cords & 3 (caffetes). They are to proceed from Walla Walla by land with horses.

I remain in charge of Okanagan till the Brigade goes down. Five men remain with me, two of whom are shortly to go off to Kamloops with horses to meet the N. Caledonia people, and two of them are invalids.-

(No journal kept from Apr. 21 to May 31 inclusive, unless in separate book.)

June 1826

Thur. 1 st Cloudy fair weather. The men employed gumming the boats.-Yesterday I gave up the charge of the store &c. to Mr. F. Ermatinger (156) who is to remain at this place during summer.-

Friday 2 nd Fair weather. Men employed as yesterday. Mr. Connolly (157) arrived about 5 o'clock in the evening. He left his people this morning, they are expected to arrive with the horses tomorrow.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Sat 3 Cloudy, Showery weather. Mr. Connolly's people under the charge of Messrs. Pambin (158) & Douglas (159) arrived late in the evening, 60 loaded horses 85 packs furs & 6 Kegs Castorum. They have been 25 days from Alexander 10 of which were from Kamloops to Okanagan.

Sunday 4 th Cloudy mild weather. An Indian traded a salmon.

Monday 5 th Cloudy, Showery weather.

Tuesday 6 th Sultry warm weather, some showers. Mr. Connolly being very anxious for the arrival of Mr. Dease's people, and apprehensive that letters which he sent some time ago had not reached their destination. An Indian and a man were dispatched with letters to Fort Colville. About 1 o'clock 2 boats & 11 men with Mr. Douglas (160) & Kittson arrived from Ft. Colville, with some appichimons, cords, provisions, &c.-The sending off in the morning is unnecessary. Everything made ready to start tomorrow.

Wed. 7 th Cloudy Sultry weather. Departed from Okanagan with 6 boats, men loaded with pack furs & other baggage. (161) All under the charge of Mr. Connolly, Messrs. J. Douglas, Pambin., Kittson, D. Douglas, & myself passengers. Started at 8 o'clock & encamped to gum the boats at 6 a little above Priests Rapid. Saw but few Indians on the River, traded some roasted salmon.-The current is very strong & the water high.

Thursday 8 th Cloudy, showery weather. Continued our journey at 3 o'clock and arrived at Nez Perces (162) at 7 in the afternoon. A few Indians along the river. Traded 6 fresh salmon.-

Friday 9 th Cloudy weather, excessively warm in the middle of the day. In consequence of the rain yesterday evening, the boat and additional cargoes to be taken from Nez Perces could not be arranged. Some time was, therefore, occupied doing that business this morning. Near noon the boats all started 8 in number with 45 packs furs in addition to those brought from Ok: and some other property. Messrs. D. Douglas & Kittson remained.-Our party now consists of 8 boats. 51 men, & 1. C. F. & 3 clerks.-We got on well during the day.-Shortly after leaving Nez Perces at Grand Rapid (163) we met an Indian with dispatches from Ft. Vancouver dated 3rd Inst., announcing the Arrival of the Ship. Encamped in the evening below J. Day's River. A good many Indians along the river. Mr. Black gave the people a horse to eat.

Sat. 10 Cloudy fine weather, very warm though there was a little breeze of wind. Proceeded on our journey at daylight. Passed the portage at the Chutes (164) and to near the lower end of the Dalles where we encamped to get the boats gummed.-The men had a hard days labor carrying across the two portages.-There were about 100 Indians at the Chutes, & from 200 to 300 at the Dalles. They are very peaceable. Traded salmon from them to serve the people 2 days.-

Sunday 11 Cloudy, Blowing fresh part of the day. All hands were in motion at daylight, and after proceeding down a small channel & making a portage at its lower end, (165) continued our rout,

but it blew so fresh that we had to put ashore before noon and could not proceed during the day. The Indians were very quiet during the night, but before they could be all sent off from the camp they made a hole in the sand under the edge of one of the boats & stole a capot from under one of the mens heads when he was sleeping. There was some trouble getting through the rapids and whirlpools below the Dalles. Traded some more salmon.-

Monday 12 Continued blowing fresh all night and all day. Storming in the afternoon. It being a little moderate we embarked at daylight, but had proceeded only a few hours when the wind reversed so that we had to put ashore & remain all day a little below Cape Heron. (166) Some Indians visited us from whom part of a sturgeon was purchased & some other little things. A canoe of Indians on their way from the fort below visited us. Two Indians who had solicited a passage from the Dalles to Fort Vancouver returned in the afternoon. One of them had the misfortune to lose his gun. It was lying in the oil cloth which being blown up by the wind tossed the gun overboard.

Notes

112. That is, the furs sent from the Snake river country where Peter Skene Ogden's party had been trapping during the winter and summer of 1825.

113. The trading post known as Fort Kootenay had been located nearly opposite the present town of Jennings, Montana, but was not being maintained this year.

114. This refers to attempt of Mr. Kittson to ascend the Kootenay river from the Columbia in a batteau , mentioned on pages 178-9 of this quarterly.

115. See note 108 on page 189.

116. Mr. John Warren Dease, Chief Trader, in charge at Spokane House during this winter.

117. The Portage mentioned in note 86, page 179 of this quarterly.

118. Free trappers nominally their horses, guns, traps , and lodges, but were usually in debt to the Company for everything and obliged to turn in their furs to pay the indebtedness. The regularly employed servants were called the engages.

119. The same as the Coeur d' Alene portage mentioned in note 117, this being Mr. Work's spelling of "Skeetshoo," the name given by David Thompson to the Coeur d' Alene lake and river Indians.

120. Saddle Blankets, made of skins.

121. The Indians residing along the lower Kootenay river; see note 104 on page 187.

122. Thompson Falls, Clark's Fork River, Montana.

123. The name still remains and is said to have its origin from numerous small fish resembling herring that were common there.

124. Pend d'Oreille lake

125. North end of Skeetshoo Road and in later years called Sineacateen Crossing.

126. Rathdrum creek, probably.

127. Hoodoo lake, Kootenay County, Idaho.

128. Spokane House at forks of Little Spokane and Spokane rivers.

129. Spokane Falls

130. Some large spring on Spokane prairie where Antoine Plante afterward lived.

131. Sinacateen again

132. Previously mentioned as Isle d'Pierre and impossible to locate with certainty; possibly Cabinet rapids, Clark Fork river.

133. Possibly the Trout creek, Montana; on main line of No. Pac. Ry.

134. The large camp of the Flatheads near the lake of that name.

135. Mrs. Work was of Spokane blood and a very intelligent woman.

136. Mr. Dease was suffering from some chronic disease from which he died a few years after at Fort Colville

137. Saddle Bags

138. Herders at Thompson's Prairie, where the horses were pastured.

139. Jacques Finlay, clerk of David Thompson, who was in charge of Spokane House in 1811, and after whom Jocko creek, Missoula County, Montana is named.

140. Another attempt to spell the word Skeetshoo.

141. See note 79, page 176. Mr. Birnie came to the Columbia in about 1820.

John Work's Journal

---

142. The mouth of the Spokane river where the boats were loaded to proceed either up or down the Columbia.

143. See note 68, page 167.

144. Mr. Work and Mr. Dease remain until the arrival of Mr. Kittson with the furs and provisions from the Flathead trading post.

145. This marks the end of Spokane House as a trading post. For glimpse of this place in July, 1826, consult David Douglas' account in Oregon Hist. Quarterly, Vol. 5

146. Evidently some prairie near the house, possibly the Five Mile Prairie of present day.

147. Meaning of the Forks of Spokane and Little Spokane rivers about three-fourths mile below the house, where the ford usually was. See map in Pacific Railway Reports, Volume 12.

148. Uncertain but probably where the main trail Walla Walla to Kettle Falls crosses the Spokane river.

149. One of several creeks entering Spokane river from the south. The road from Spokane House to the Forks evidently followed the south side of Spokane river very closely.

150. The boats had been built at Spokane House during the winter; the Little Dalles are the gorge at Miles, Lincoln County, Wash.

151. John McCleod, a chief trader, on his way to cross the Rocky Mts. Francis Ermatinger, a clerk, and Douglas, the botanist from England. For contemporaneous mention of this meeting, consult pp. 334-5 of Vol. 5 of Oregon Hist. Quarterly, being Journal of David Douglas.

152. This marks the beginning of the pork, beef, and dairy business in Steven's county, Washington, in particular, and all the Inland Empire in general.

153. Archibald McDonald, then a clerk; the father of Ranald McDonald.

154. These people are to become the first residents at Fort Colvile then being completed on Marcus Flat above Kettle Falls.

155. Mr. Annance, Chief Trader, had been in charge of Fort Okanogan that winter and Mr. Edward Ermatinger had probably been at Thompson river.

156. See note page 176

157. Chief Factor William Connolly from Fort St. James in New Caledonia en route for Ft Van-

couver to exchange his furs for trading goods.

158. Pierre Chrysologue Pambrun, a clerk under Mr. Connolly, afterward in charge of Fort Walla Walla consult Irving Capt. Bonneville.

159. James Douglas, clerk under Mr. Connolly, whose daughter he married, and afterward Sir James Douglas, Chief Factor and Governor of British Columbia.

160. David Douglas, the botanist, again.

161. Constituting what was known as a fur brigade.

162. Fort Nez Perce or Walla Walla; Mr. Samuel Black then in charge.

163. Umatilla rapids.

164. Celilio Falls and the Upper and Lower Dalles, now charted as Ten and Five Mile Rapids.

165. Three Mile Rapids.

166. Upper Cape Horn. See note 6.

[Return to list of Work Journals]

From Washington Historical Quarterly Vol. VI (1915), pp. 26-49

The Journal of John Work

July 5- September 15, 1826

(Introduction and annotations by T. C. Elliott.)

This is a chronological resumption of the journal published in the last number of this Quarterly and which stopped abruptly just before Mr. Work arrived at Fort Vancouver on the 12th of June, 1826. The "brigade" now returns up the Columbia and the initial entry in the journal tells us very clearly what the word "brigade" as used by the fur traders actually meant. The various chief factors, chief traders and clerks have spent a very enjoyable three weeks together at the original Fort Vancouver, situated on the higher land northeast of the later stockade and buildings which were known to the pioneers of Oregon. This second Fort was built in 1828.

It is rather an interesting company of which Mr. Work becomes the chronicler. William Connolly is bound for Fort St. James on Lake Stuart in the northern interior of what is now British Columbia, but was then called New Caledonia; he is already a chief factor and is in charge of that District. It was over the rich estate left by Mr. Connolly after his death that a certain famous contest took place in the courts of Montreal or Quebec which established finally the legal status of the common law marriage of the fur traders with native Indians when residing in the Indian Country. James Douglas, clerk, who married a daughter of William Connolly and afterward became a

John Work's Journal

---

chief factor at this same Fort Vancouver and still later the governor of Vancouver Island, was also en route for Fort St. James. Archibald MacDonald, clerk, had probably been upon a brief visit to his son Ronald, then a little more than two years of age and in the care of the grandfather, Chief Comcomly of the Chinook tribe residing opposite to Astoria or Fort George, and was returning to either Kamloops or Alexandria. Mr. F. Annance, another clerk, was also bound for one of the New Caledonia posts. Doctor McLoughlin and Thom. McKay were sending their children across the Rocky Mountains to be educated. Finan MacDonald's Kootenay or Spokane wife was starting to meet her husband further up the river and with him to cross the Rocky Mountains for permanent residence.

The route followed by Mr. Work takes him over practically the same line of travel he covered in the previous year and described by him in the journal published in Vol. V. of this Quarterly, except that his destination was the newly occupied trading post above Kettle Falls named Fort Colvile. The route includes The Dalles, Old Fort Walla Walla, the site of Lewiston in Idaho and of the present city of Spokane. At Celilo Falls the botanist, David Douglas, joins the party for the rest of the journey.

This journal furnishes the record of the first grain crops raised in what is now Stevens County, Washington, and of the first litter of pigs born there. No opportunity has been afforded to compare this text with the original journal, which is among the archives at Victoria, British Columbia.

T. C. ELLIOTT.

THE JOURNAL

July 1826

Tuesday, July 5th, 1826.(1) Overcast. showery weather. At about 1 o'clock the Brigade for the interior under the command of Mr. Connelly, consisting of 9 boats six men pr boat, left Fort Vancouver. Messrs A. McDonald, J. Douglas, F. Annance, J. Cortin and J. Work passengers, also their women, and 9 children, viz.- Dr. McLaughlin's family, Mr. F. McDonald's family, and 2 children of Mr. McKay. The cargoes consist of 72 pieces for Ft. Colville, 52 for Thompsons Riv, 60 for Nez Perce, 106 for N. Caledonia, and 1 for York Factory, including private orders. Besides 57 pieces of provisions, 36 of corn, 9 of pease. 9 Ind meal. 3 of grease, for the men, and 12 1/2 pieces for the gentlemen for the voyage. Besides the families' baggage and 4 cases muskets and a trading chest. In the evening encamped on an island,(2) a little below Sand River. The water is very high and the current very strong. Mr. McDonald's boat struck against the end of a tree which went through fortunately the injury was at low water.

Wednesday, 6th. Showery, raw cold weather. Resumed our journey at daylight, and encamped a little below the cascades. Lost a little time repairing the boat that was broken yesterday. Bought a

---

sufficiency of salmon in the evening to serve all (hands) for a day.

Thursday, 7th. Overcast weather some showers. The people were at work at an early hour and proceeded to New Portage(3) with half cargo and (sent) the canoe back for the remainder. The boats and cargoes were carried across the portage and the boats with half cargoes taken to the cascades where we encamped four of the gentlemen stoped with the remainder of the property at the portage. Notwithstanding the height of the water we got up better than we expected. Bought a sufficiency of fine salmon to serve the people two days and very cheap. The Indians are taking a great many salmon. A good many Indians are about the place, but they are very quiet. Kept watch.

Friday, 8 Showery in the morning. In the morning the boats were taken down to New Portage for the remainder of the cargoes and the boats and property afterwards carried across the cascades portage(4) which we left towards evening with a sail wind which continued till we encamped. Some time was occupied in the morning gumming the boats. The portage at the cascades was not so long as when the water was low. Traded enough of fine salmon to serve the people two days. We have enough now to last us till we reach the Dalles.

One of Mr. McDonald's men, J. Cortin, got his feet lamed by which he is hardly able to walk. An Indian slave was employed to go in the boat.

Saturday 9 Fair weather. Continued our journey at an early hour, and encamped a little below the Dalles(5) early in the evening. Had a fine sail wind all day, were detained some time repairing Mr. McDonald's boat which sustained damage by striking a stone. Some Indians visited our camp in the evening.

Sunday 10 Fair pleasant weather. Got underway before sunrise and soon reached the Dalles, and by carrying, lightening and dragging up the boats by the line, got about half way across,(6) where we encamped for the night. There are a great many Indians but a square is formed with the boats round the property. Traded a great many salmon in the evening very cheap.

In the evening Messrs. F. McDonald T. McKy, T. Dears arrived at the other end of the portage with two boats and 18 men and part of the Snake expedition furs from Wallawalla, on the way to Ft. Vancouver, Mr. Ogden(7) and part of the men are gone by the Willamut mountains with horses. The Snake returns will be but indifferent. Mr D. Douglas(8) also came with the party to meet us.

Monday. July 11 Pleasant weather. The boats and property were carried across the portage in the morning (when we) took breakfast - and the chutes(9) which we also crossed, having to make only a short portage on account of the high water and proceeded to the little river(10) above the chutes where we encamped for the night. The Snake party also proceeded on to Fort Vancouver. Messrs Douglas and F. McDonald return with us. J. Confin who got hurt at the cascades was sent back to the Fort. - Some time was taken repairing the boats in the evening. A dog, with a pistol and an axe and some other things were stole yesterday, the pistol and the axe were recovered. There are several Indians about the Dales and about the chutes. I wrote to Mr McLaughlin re-

John Work's Journal

---

questing that he would send one of the Snake men Michel Laporte, to Spokane to act as interpreter for the Kootanians.

Tuesday 12 Warm sultry weather. Continued our route before sunrise and encamped early in the evening about 15 miles above Day's River(11) to gum the boats The current is very strong and there being no wind we made but a short days march. There are a good many Indians along the river, but owing to the height of the water they are not getting any salmon. Bought about 20 at one camp.

The water has fallen about 4 feet since it was at its height. The water appears from drift trees on the shore, to have been much higher some years (ago) than they are.

Wed.y. 12th Fine weather, fresh breeze from the Westward. Embarked before sunrise and had a nice sail wind all day. Encamped in the evening a little below Big Island.(12) A good many Indians along the river, but not many salmon.

Thursday 13 Sultry warm weather. Continued our journey early and had a sail wind part of the day. Encamped in the evening a little above Grand Rapid.(13) Bought a few salmon, to serve the gentlemen. Few are to be got.

Friday 14 Embarked early and arrived at Ft. Nezperces,(14) about 1 o'clock. Sail wind part of the day. The weather very warm. The cargoes are separated, and that of Nezperces delivered.

Satd.y. 15 The weather very warm, though stormy. It was expected that a number of horses that are required could be procured from the Indians at Nezperces, but after different councils, and consultations and speeches on both sides it turned out that a promise had been made to the Nezperces Indians to go and trade on their lands which if not fulfilled would disoblige them and make them less inclined to trade.

Sunday 16th Stormy but warm weather. The forepart of the day occupied with more councils and making presents to the Indians as return for some horses which they had presented before. 7 or 8 horses were afterwards traded,- It appeared however that the number required could not be got in time, and the trading trip up Nezperces River was determined on.

(Learned) that the F. Head trade would not suffer but as little as possible by the late arrival of the boats at Colville, Mr. Kittson(15) with the Colville and Mountain boats is to proceed at once to Colville while I am to accompany the trading party and after completing the trade to accompany the party across land and proceed to Colville where I expect to arrive as soon as the boats. By this method no time will be lost whereas had all the Colville men gone to the horse trade the Flat Head summer trade would have been lost as it is it will be too late but it cannot be helped.

Monday 17 Stormy in the night and blowing fresh during the day but nevertheless warm. The outfit for the horse trade was packed up in the morning and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon the

John Work's Journal

---

party consisting of Mr A. McDonald, J. Douglas, F. Annance and myself, an interpreter and 28 men and the Indian chief Charlie embarked in two boats and proceeded till a short way up the Nezperces River(16) where we encamped for the night. Bought two or three pieces of salmon from the Indians.- I am directed if possible to purchase at least 60-70 horses, more if possible, 20 of them are for Ft. Colville, the others to go to Okanogan. Mr. D. Douglas(17) accompanies us to make collections of plants.

Tuesday 18 Weather warm but fine breezes. Continued our journey before sunrise, and had a good sail wind all day. Camped at night a considerable distance below Flag River.(18) The current very strong and the water high, though it has fallen about 8 feet since its greatest height this season. Several Indian lodges along the river brought a few pieces of fish and half dry salmon. Salmon are very dear here. The Indians have few to spare.

Wed 19th Very warm sultry weather no wind. Embarked early, passed the Flag River about 3 o'clock and encamped late in the evening a good way above it. - Got very few salmon though we saw a good many Indians. Salmon is very scarce, Traded a small sturgeon.-were detained some time by the Indians offering horses for sale but they would not accept the prices offered. A party of them accompany us on horse back along shore.

Thursday 20 Clear very warm weather very little wind. Proceeded on our journey early in the morning and encamped early in the evening at a camp of the Pelushes, Colatouche chief, in expectation of buying some horses, two were offered for sale, but the prices asked were far too high indeed the Indians appear not to be very fond of parting with them. - Salmon are also very (dear) we got a few pieces of dry and half dry. Since we left the Fort we have not got in one day a sufficiency for a day's rations for the people. however what little we do get still saves a little corn.

Friday 21. Very warm sultry weather. At noon the thermometer in the shade was 94 degrees, and 95 degrees shortly afterwards. We were detained waiting for the Indians who were seeking some horses to trade, but when they arrived with them, only one small paltry thing was offered and the price demanded could not be given, so after losing all our morning we continued our route not in the best humor. Passed several lodges and purchased a sufficiency of fresh salmon for nearly a days (living) for the people, besides some dry ones to serve the party going overland with the horses.- Encamped in the evening a little above Le Monte(19) (which we passed about 4 o'clock.) at an Indian camp where some horses (we) expected will be got, but we will probably be detained part of the day tomorrow. - Numbers of the Indians some of whom refused the prices offered them below are accompanying us along shore with their horses.

Satd.y. 22 Light clouds, very warm, though a little breeze of wind. Did not move camp today. They were off in the forepart of the day collecting their horses, but they would not trade till the afternoon, when 8 horses were purchased from them at from 14 to 19 skins each They were all young horses two of them just \* but not well broke in. They are to trade three more horses tomorrow morning. Traded 13 fresh salmon which made\* a days rations for the people. - The tardiness of the Indians trading their horses is really vexing, they are not keen about trading.

---

Sunday 23 Oppressively warm weather. Thermometer 100 degrees in the shade at noon. We were detained till near evening for the Indians who were off seeking their horses, when they returned they were traded, and we struck our tents and proceeded up the river, and stoped at another lodge for a considerable time and traded a good horse, another was offered but he was too small and we would not take him. We then continued up the river and encamped at another lodge where the Indians promise to sell us some horses tomorrow. - The Indians seem very indifferent about trading their horses, it is really provoking to be detained so long with them. - especially when so little time is to spare.- We have now 12 horses 8 yesterday and 4 today, 11 of which we traded from the Dartry band.

Monday 24 Sultry warm weather. Did not move untill afternoon as we waited till the Indians collected their horses when we bought four one of which a small unbroke-in one was killed. - In the evening proceeded up the river to another Indian camp and stopped for the night as some horses are expected in the morning.

Tuesday 25. A breeze of wind the weather cooler than these days past. Bought two horses from the Indians in the morning and started after breakfast and stopped at different lodges as we passed and bought four more horses, making 6 today, all pretty good at 18 to 19 skins each. The Indians have a good many horses but they are not eager to part with them. - Salmon very scarce, we hardly get what fresh ones serve the mess.

Wedy 26 Weather pleasant. Continued our rout after breakfast, and arrived at Charlie's lodge a little before the forks in the evening. Traded two horses during the day.-

Thursday 27 A little breeze of wind pleasant weather. Traded 8 horses at Charlie's lodge and in the evening came to the Forks(20)

where we found upwards of 200 Indians (men), and two principal chiefs Alunn and Towishpat. Gave the chiefs and some of the principal men a dram of mixed liquor and a smok in the hut the others got a smok and a little tobacco out of doors. Towishpal and another principal man cut noses both presented two horses immediately on our arrival. We are under the necessity of accepting their presents in order to please the chiefs though we have to give a present in return which makes the horses much dearer in general than were we to trade them. - The Indians have been assembled for some days and are now rather short of provisions.

Friday 28 Warm weather, a little wind afterward. No trade was made untill after breakfast, when the Indians began to come with horses and some chiefs presented more horses which were paid for at a dearer rate than usual in order to encourage the others, a brisk trade was commenced about 10 o'clock and continued untill 4 o'clock. 37 horses were traded one of which was killed. The price was generally 19 or 20 skins few exceeding 20. They were mostly fine horses. Our blankets and beads are getting short, which was the cause of the trade getting slack towards evening. Blue cloth does not take well with them.

Saturday 29 Pretty cool pleasant weather a shower in the night. Not having the proper articles blankets and beads in plenty the trade went on but slowly, only six horses were traded, the Indians are doubtless debarred from trading a little by a dance which is stirred up by a Schulas(21) chief who arrived yesterday with (?). However we are promised a few horses tomorrow, when we shall complete our trade and be ready to start the day following. -

Sunday 30 Warm weather rather sultry. Early this morning a quarrel took place between the Interpreter and the Indian chief Charlie. It appears that an Indian woman who passed for a medical character, had been looking at one of the mens hands which was sore and although she exercised none of her skill either in the application or otherwise yet she came to demand payment and applied to the Interpreter who refused her. Charlie interfered when some words took place and the Interpreter was called a dog, he applied the same epithet to Charlie who took up his gun and gave the other a blow, a scuffle ensued, and the noise was the first intelligence I had of the affray, when I ran out and found them wrestling in the other tent and the Indian getting the better, they were separated and the Indian again flew to his gun which was taken from him several Indians had collected by this time, Charlie was now asked was this conduct a return for all the kindness and attention that had been shown him, he replied that he had been called a dog, and that he could not bear the insult, he remained sulky and took up another gun which was also taken from him, an Indian then took him away, Shortly a message came for a yard of tobacco for the Indians to smok and that their hearts would be good. Shortly after another message came for 2 fathoms more and 20 balls and powder, this was refused and word sent to the chief that we wished to have an interview with them Toupe came, but Charlie came accompanied by the whole of the Indians several of them armed and took his station a short distance from the tent where they formed a circle round us. He was black with rage. We immediately went up to him and asked what he meant, and was he not ashamed to begin a quarrel in such a manner about an old woman. After some time sulky silence he replied that his heart was bad towards nobody but Toupie, and that he blamed him for not getting a better price for their horses, he was immediately informed that the accusation was false, that Toupe did nothing but what we desired him, they were also made to understand that, it was to trade horses and not to fight that we came there, but that if no better would do we would fight also and that as Toupe was under our protection and in fact one of ourselves any insult offered him would be offered to us and would be resented. - A demand was again made for the tobacco and that then all would be well and that the horse trade would immediately commence. As we were situated, with very little ammunition, ourselves on one side of the river and the horses with part of the men on the opposite side, two of the horses astray among those of the Indians, and two others already paid for not received, and also the great risk we ran of having the others stolen, it was considered advisable to comply with their request except the ammunition, rather than get into a quarrel as we had much to lose and little to gain, The tobacco was accordingly delivered the whole of the Indians smoked and then dispersed.- Charlie is certainly a notorious scoundrel and I consider the original of this quarrel as only a pretext. He sold a horse yesterday and was paid the price agreed upon, but he afterwards asked a blanket more which was refused, this I conceive was in a great measure the cause of the dispute, and the poor Interpreter was the only one he would venture to begin with, he has however been very useful to us since the

---

John Work's Journal

---

trade commenced harranguing the Indians to trade their horses, and ever since the dispute he has been again telling them to trade more.-The other chiefs and principal men except (Touispel) evidently wished to make the most of the affair and get as much as they could by it, Old Alumie and his men are particular. however they were disappointed as they got only 3 yds. tobacco and a few small pieces more besides the yard first sent them. and even this was given with reluctance, but we could not well do otherwise. Traded five more horses which finished our goods, found the two that were astray and received the two we had paid the Indians for and crossed the river to where the horses are in the afternoon - Our whole trade amounts to 79 horses, two of which have been killed.

The Indian chiefs crossed to pay us a visit in the evening, and smoked. They seem to regret what has taken place, Charlie himself is ashamed that he should have quarreled about such a trifle. During the dispute, the Indians were all threatening to take back the horses.

A few young men arrived in the evening from the buffalo, from them it was heard that the F Heads are now on their way to meet us to trade. Peace is again made between them and the Pee-gans.

Monday 31st. Pleasant cool weather. Having everything in readiness, the horses that are for the different places pointed out, after an early breakfast Messrs F McDonald. J. Douglas and myself accompanied by six men set out overland with the horses 79 in number including 2 bought a few days ago from W. Walla by Mr F. McDonald, we encamped in the evening a short distance 15 or 20 miles from flag(22) River. Mr. D. Douglas accompanied us on his botanical pursuits. - Mr A. McDonald took his departure for W. Walla with the two boats and the rest of the men at the same time we came of - The Indians and us were good friends when we parted.

Augt. 1826. Tuesday 1st. Cool pleasant weather. Some rain with thunder and lightening in the night. Kept a guard three men at a time on the horses all night. The horses took fright in the night and started but they were stopped and remained quiet till the morning, when after allowing them to feed a short time we proceeded on our journey, and stopped again a considerable time at noon to allow them to feed and rest, and encamped in the evening pretty late, near where we encamped last year.- The horses are generally driven slow.

Wid.y. 2nd. Weather pleasant but warmer than yesterday. Proceeded on our journey and ( ? ) the Spokane woods before breakfast, but missed our way crossing to the plain where we separated last year and fell on the Spokane River below the Chutes(23) later in the evening where we encamped for the night. The greater part of the day the road was stony and bad for the horses feet. On entering the woods we kept too far to the Eastward and missed the plain. The horses were allowed to feed and rest in the middle of the day.

Thursday 3rd Pleasant weather. Continued our route at an early hour and arrived, through a bad piece of road along the river, at the old Fort(24) at Spokane before breakfast time. We had separated the horses and took those for Fort Colville across the river and after breakfasting and trading

John Work's Journal

---

some salmon from old Finlay(25) Mr. Douglas proceeded on his journey to Okanagan with the 59 horses allotted for that place and N. Caledonia, and we pursued our route with 20 horses for Ft Colville, and encamped at a little river(26) in the woods late in the evening. Had we not missed the way Mr. Douglas would have parted with us yesterday, his coming to Spokane will cause the loss of about half a day however it is perhaps as well as the men know the road from Spokane and are not sure of it the other way. Mr. D. has four men with him.

Friday 4th Warm but pleasant weather, cold in the morning. Proceeded on our journey at an early hour and arrived at Ft Colville before sunset, part of the road was very bad. Mr Dease(27) was happy to see us, he and his people all well. One of the horses was jaded and a man was left with him to bring him home in the morning.

Saturday 5 Pleasant mild weather cool in the morning. Early in the morning the man who remained behind yesterday arrived with the two horses. The crops(28) at Fort Colville do not appear to realize the expectations that were entertained for them. The potatoes appear pretty well, barley midling, no wheat at all came up and only a few stocks of Indian corn green pease but indifferent. The kitchen garden stuffs turnips cabbages etc only so so. The soil appears to be too dry.- The moles are destroying the potatoes. The horses cattle and pigs very fat, but the grass is getting dry.

Sunday 6th Pleasant weather. Visited the falls(29) today, where the Indians are fishing. They are now taking about 1000 salmon daily. They have a kind of basket about 10 ft long 3 wide and 4 deep of a square form suspended at a cascade in the fall where the water rushes over a rock. the salmon in attempting to ascend the fall leap into the basket, they appear to leap 10 or 12 feet high. when the basket is full the fish are taken out. - A few are also taken with scoop net and speared.

Monday 7th Weather as yesterday Mr. Kittson arrived at the lower end of(30) the Portage with their (three) boats and the outfit for Colville and passengers and their baggage. He has been ten days from Walla Walla to Okanogan and ten from Okanogan to this place in all 20 days. Horses were sent off and part of the property brought to the fort.

Tuesday 8. Pleasant mild weather. The remainder of the boats cargoes brought to the Fort, the outfit examined and found all correct and in good order. No certain intelligence of the F. Heads as yet, we are now waiting for them, the sooner we hear of them now the better

Wedy 9th Heavy rain with thunder and lightning in the night and all day.-

Sunday 13. Three Pendant Oreille Indians arrived from Pendant Oreille River and report that a young man had arrived from the Plain(31) who says that a few of the F Heads have arrived at or near the Chutes, that the others are in the plains farther off accompanied by a party of Americans, that they are indifferent whether we go to trade with them or not, that they have very little to dispose of, having traded with the Americans. As this thing is second hand and the Indians do not agree among themselves little reliance can be placed upon it, particularly as a young man a F.

John Work's Journal

---

Head, who had left his tribe in the plains some time ago, was at the Fort two days since, and told us that his people were on the way to meet us but made no mention of having seen any Americans.

Monday 14th. Cloudy mild weather. Six men and a boy were sent off to make a road across the portage to the Pendant O'relle River(32), through which we had to pass on our way to the Flat Heads.

Made up an outfit for the F Heads and Kootany summer trade for the purpose of starting tomorrow though we are not certain whether the Indians are arrived, if they should not we will probably be short of provisions.

Tuesday 15th. Pleasant mild weather Supposing that the men did not have the road cut through the woods we deferred starting till tomorrow. Some Indians arrived and told us they had made but slow progress yesterday.

Wedy 16th. Warm sultry weather Set out accompanied by Mr. Kittson, and 7 men which with the 6 ahead making the road makes 13, to mak the summer trade at the F. Heads and Kootanies, We have 9 horses loaded with the articles of trade, provisions, gum etc - to repair the canoes.- Mr. Kittson and I with 12 men are to proceed to the F. Heads and make the trade there, and a man is to cross into the Kootenay country to tell them to come and meet us to trade at the Lake(33) on our return.

Did not make a long days march. encamped in the afternoon at a small river,(34) where there was a little place for the horses to feed. The distance made today was about 15 to 20 miles. The course from the fort till we struck off the Spokane road(35) nearly South 8 to ten miles. The remainder of the day it was about S. E. by E 10 to 12 miles. The road was in general good and lay through clear woods and small plains, except a piece near the fort called the Cedar, where the woods are very thicketty and the ground swampy and boggy and a deep gully of a river to cross. There is a small lake(36) close by our encampment.

Thursday 17th Warm weather. Proceeded on our journey before sunrise and not finding a place that we could stop, though it was hard on the horses, did not encamp till near sunset, when we stopped at a little river(37) on the edge of a large plain a short way from the Pendant Oreille River. The horses are much fatigued. The road for a short distance in the morning was pretty good, but afterwards it was very indifferent. The woods very thicketty, often fallen trees across the road, (though the men had removed a good many). The country very rugged a continual succession of hills some of them steep, and the road intersected by a number of small brooks and deep gullies some places the ground boggy, Though there is not much water in the little brooks at present yet from the height of the rubbish on the bushes along their banks they are totally impassable for horses during the high water not long since. It would be needless to attempt this portage in the spring when the snow is on the ground as it would be impracticable with horses. During this days march even at this season there is no place to encamp where more than a very few horses could

John Work's Journal

---

feed without the risk of their being lost in the woods. The distance made today I judge to be from 40 to 45 miles, in about a S. E. by E. course.

Friday 18 Cold with a thick fog in the morning, but clear pleasant weather afterwards. Had the horses loaded and started at sunrise, made the ascent of the plain, and arrived at the Pendant Orile camp(38) on the bank of the river near where the canoe sent down in the Spring was deposited. Here we found the men who had been making the road. The remainder of the day was occupied repairing the canoe, as the whole of the people are too much to embark in the canoes 5 men were sent on first to where the other canoes were deposited in the Ceur d Alen portage. Traded 32 beaver, 3 (appichimous) and some berries and roots from the Indians.

This plain is all inundated in the season of high water. where we slept last night the water had been more than 2 feet deep in the high part of the plain and from the bank of the little river at present the water has fallen at least 16 feet. This extensive plain is now clothed with a fine crop of grass.

The Indian who arrived some time ago from the Flat Heads, is now at Spokane. All we can hear from the others is that the old chief Le (Brute) and party of F Heads and Pendant Oreill are waiting us near the Chutes.-(39) that the rest of the tribes are in different parties farther off wintering their horses, that they had seen a party of Americans during the summer, said to be loaded with trading goods and that they were going to build in the fall on the upper waters of the Missouri at a place called the Grand (T-) No intelligence as to whether any of the ( ? ) or freeman were with them. It is said that the Indians have been unsuccessful and have few horses and little meat. A fine Sotiax who came from there is off a few days ago to the fort with his (hunt).

Satd.y. 19 Warm pleasant weather Embarked and proceeded up the River before sunrise and near dark arrived at the (Ceur de Alan) portage.(40) The men who started yesterday are at the portage before us. The current was very slack all day in the afternoon we passed a place called the island portage(41) where everything had to be carried over a small rock 15 or 20 yards. Two rocks divide the river here into 3 narrow channels down which the water rushes with great violence at low water the middle channel is dry.

The distance made today may be about 45 to 50 miles. For the first 25 miles or to near the Portage des Isle, the course South, afterwards it changed to the S. E.

The River is in general about 7 to 900 yds wide from the marks in the bank the water has fallen 10 to 12 feet. The country hilly, but many points of fine meadow ground along them.

Before we started in the morning sent off an Indian (Bascrorhy) who accompanied us for the purpose, and Ribets boy (Francis), to the Fort with the horses. Sent letters by them to the fort.- Left the saddles and (appichimans) in charge of the little chief till our return.

Sunday 20 Light clouds warm weather. By daylight the men were at work, brought out the canoes

John Work's Journal

---

and by 1 or 2 o'clock had given them a temporary repair when we embarked and encamped in the evening at the lower end(42) of the lake. The canoes had been very badly laid up in the Spring, one of them was entirely unserviceable and the other two much ( ? ) by the supports giving away. The paddles could not be found.

Monday 21 Weather as yesterday. Embarked at daylight and encamped in the evening below the Heron Rapid.(43) The canoes had to be gummed, some time was also lost in the day by having to stop to gum one of the canoes. Saw some Indians at the upper end of the lake, among whom were two Nezperces lately arrived from the F. Head camps from these we learned that the F Heads are all at the Horse plains and that a lodge of Americans are with them, that our ( ? ) ( ? ) are there also that the American is trading but that he has only tobacco. The Nezperces camp is a little farther off at the camass plains and that they have a few beaver, they report that the Indians have very little provisions.

In the morning sent Mortin Kanauswapu, the only man who knew the road across the Au-platte(44) portage with some tobacco to the Kootenay chiefs and to desire them to come and meet us at the lake six days hence to trade. In the event of Mortin's not finding the Indians he is directed to wait for us unless he gets short of provisions in which case he is to leave a mark indicating that the Indians could not be found and that he is gone to the fort. - He is supplied with a gun and ammunition and some little things to buy provisions.

Tuesday, 22 Cloudy but warm weather. Embarked at daylight, and encamped in the evening late above the cascades. We were delayed guming the canoes and taking up ball shot and some wire work that were hidden below Isle of Pine in the Spring, The water had been over the place, and one of the bags of ball was found scattered among the sand and gravel. The other bag which was entirely rotten and the box containing the (wire) ( ? ) ( ? ). Got the ball picked up as well as we could, and brought it with us, and hid the wire in another place.

Wedy 23rd Cloudy lowering weather, showery all day. Embarked early and arrived at the Chutes(45) near sunset, and had the baggage all arranged and the canoes taken up. - No Indians nor any appearance of any having been here this season.-

Thursday 24 Cold weather with fog in the morning showery afterwards. Set out in the morning accompanied by two men, Chalifoux and Dechamp to find the Indians and apprise them of our arrival, though we expected to find some encamped at Thompson's plains, we did not we any lodges till near the big rock(46) below the F. Head fort where we learned that the Indians were encamped at the Horse plains. here I sent back Dechamp and borrowed two horses for Chalifoux and myself and proceeded to the camp where we arrived in the afternoon and found about 50 lodges Heads and Pendant Oreille, and four chiefs. LeBrute, Gras Pied, Grand Visage and Bourge Pendant Oreille. I stopped at Le Brute's lodge, The old man was glad to see me and immediately gave me to eat. - The other chiefs and the principal Indians soon assembled and smoked, during which we were employed giving and receiving all the news on both sides. The old chief said he much regretted that this year his people had been unfortunate having been able to procure but a

John Work's Journal

---

small quantity of provisions and very few furs. That the cause of the scarcity of provisions was owing to the place being full of other Indians who disturb the buffalo. They have had no war except some horse stealing skirmishes in which they killed one Indian and lost one of their own men. - A party of the F. Heads had fallen in with some of the Snake deserters and some Americans, two of the deserters, J. Guy and Jacques accompanied them to some of the camps and Guy presented the two chiefs Gras Pied and Grand Visage with some tobacco and a little scarlet as from the chief of the American party Ashly,(47) whom they said wished to see the Indians, and that he was (then) off for a large quantity of supplies. - A few F Heads, Nezperces and 2 Snakes in all 22 have gone off to see them. - A considerable party of the natives under (Grune) and Red Feather(48) are at (Revine) de Mere, but the others say they have nothing to trade and that their horses are very lean, that prevented them from coming in.

A former deserter, Jacques, states that the Americans last Spring took out(49) 200 horse loads of beaver, that they are to return with 150 horse loads of goods and that another company is coming in with a quantity equally as large, and that they were told that 3 and afterwards 5 ships were to come to the Columbia or near the river. This report was also circulated among the Indians, but we undeceived them.-

Friday 25 Thick fog in the morning clear fine weather afterwards. The chiefs issued orders last night and again early this morning for all those that had anything to trade to be ready to start for our camp at an early hour, but though the horses were all assembled at the tents last night and a guard set upon them (as Blackfeet Indians are known to be in the neighborhood) yet they had strayed off through the plain, and on account of the fog could not be collected till about 9 o'clock when the whole was soon loaded and underway. One of the chiefs accompanied us ahead and we arrived at our camp(50) some time before the others, who reached it in the afternoon, and after smoking and some conversation, trade commenced and continued till it was getting dark. - The Indians from whom I borrowed the horses had fresh ones to change them with when I came back to the lodges. - The men have been busy employed at the canoes and have nearly completed repairing them

Satd.y. 26 Cold in the morning clear fine weather afterwards. Trade was resumed at an early hour and the whole finished by breakfast time, when the men were set to to tie up the things, and a little past noon we embarked and encamped in the evening a little above the Isle de Pine rapid.

Had a long conversation, with the principle Indians, and made arrangements about the time they would be coming to meet us in the fall which they said would be the usual time. Each of the chiefs got a present of 40 balls and powder and a little tobacco, a small present was also sent to the absent chiefs, and they were strongly recommended to exert themselves hunting beaver and also to bring in provisions. They are all well pleased.

A report has been spread among the Indians that this was the last time we are to trade with them. they say they were told by a young man from below who heard it from some white men. The Americans it was added were now to get the country. This they were told was false. We applied to

---

them to bring in our deserters who are with them.

The trade is inferior to that of last year in everything. There were only 221 beaver, 90 ( ? ) bales of meat, 66 appichimens, very little dressed leather, and some cords, and 5 lodges.

Sunday 27 Light clouds fine pleasant weather. Embarked before sunrise and reached the Kootenay portage(51) at the lower end of the Lake in the evening, where we found Morton and the Kootany chief with 12 or 13 of his people, the evening was employed smoking and giving and receiving the news. They are not satisfied because the whites did not go to their lands to trade as usual. They say messages were sent from the fort for them to go and trade there. - They had a good many beaver. They passed the summer in the upper waters of their own river.

Monday 28 Clear pleasant weather. Commenced trading before sunrise, and by breakfast time had purchased all the disposable articles. The trade is good, better by far than last year, and amounts to 382 beaver & 12 damaged do. 220 Rats, 20 dressed skins & 25 Deer skins besides some cords etc. They have a good many rats and dressed skins at their lodges which they say on account of the leanness of their horses they could not bring with them. It was there fore deemed advisable that Mr. Kittson should accompany them with a supply of trading articles and purchase the whole, they are to lend him horses to go & return three men accompany him & Pierre L. Etang & a man waits for him with a canoe till he returns, while I with the other two canoes full loaded proceed to the Pendant Oreille portage,(52) and send of for the horses, by this means the trade can be finished without loss of time as the remaining canoe will will be still at the portage by the time the horses arrive from the fort. - Mr. Kittson will probably proceed down the Kootenay to examine(53) it and send back the men to the canoe, perhaps one man an Indian will accompany him, he is to be guided by circumstances, he will still reach the fort before us. - Accordingly about 2 o'clock we both took our departure and encamped with the canoes a little below the Cour de Alan Portage.

Tuesday Clear fine weather. Embarked before daylight and arrived at the Portage a little past noon, and immediately sent off the men to the fort(54) for horses. The Indians visited us to smoke and get the news. Traded a few beaver skins. No news from the fort. Had the baggage all stored away and covered and the canoes put bye in the evening.

Cloudy cool weather. Had all the meat(55) opened out, and assorted and packed up in bales of 90 to 100 lb. each for the horses. The meat is in general in fine order, only a few pieces we found a little wet and damaged. Cords were also cut, and something done to arranging the saddles, etc., and putting them in order. Several of the Indians revisited us some of them got a little ammunition. The chiefs and a party are going off to the buffaloes. The Indians are wishing to trade camass, but having no bags to put it in and as we would have to hire horses to take it to the fort which would make it very dear I declined trading any. The Indians have horses themselves but are too lazy to go to the fort.

Thursday 31 Cloudy, fine weather. The men employed arranging the saddles &c., & preparing the pieces to be in readiness when the horses arrive. A few Indians visited us during the day, but had nothing to trade.

Sept. 1826 Friday 1 Thick fog in the morning, clear fine weather afterwards. The men employed us yesterday. Traded a few appichimens, some dressed skins and a robe from the Indians. The men arrived with the horses late in the evening. Little news from the fort.

Satdy. 2nd Thick fog in the morning, clear fine weather afterwards. After breakfast the canoe which was left at the Kootenay Portage arrived. Mr. Kittson made a pretty good trade in leather, & as was intended has gone down the Kootenay River to examine it. The men were immediately set to to arrange the pieces brought in the canoe, and application made to the Indians for the number of horses required in addition to those brought from the fort, but it was found that it would be too late before everything could be arranged and the Indian horses collected to start, therefore we deferred moving till tomorrow. The horses sent from the fort are short 2 of the number mentioned by Mr. (McDonald.)(56) The men say all they brought from the fort are here, as there is no list of the horses I can't tell the ones that are missing.

Sunday 3rd. Thick fog in the morning clear fine weather afterwards. On account of the thick fog the Indians were some time of collecting their horses and it was late before they arrived with them, it was 10 o'clock when we started and we encamped about 2 at the foot of a hill, good feeding in a fine meadow for the horses. We made but a short day's journey, but we had to put up or it would have been too much for the horses to cross the hill to another place to encamp. The road was pretty good mostly through plains but a piece of thick woods. Some places the road is boggy.

Monday 4 Cloudy and foggy in the morning clear afterwards. The people collected the horses at daylight, but before they were loaded it was about 7 o'clock, where we entered the woods and commenced ascending the hill, the top of which we did not reach till past noon, and it was near sunset when we encamped on the Kettle Fall little river.(57) In mounting the hill the woods are generally thick, the road pretty good but in many places very steep and very laborious for the horses to ascend, gullies in many places cross the road. In descending on the West side it is also pretty steep and the road in some places stony. At two or three places in crossing the hill a little off the road there is water and a little herbage for the horses, but it would be difficult to keep a (large band) for the night. The summer and fall is the only season that this road is practicable with horses. The horses are a good deal fatigued.

Tuesday 5 Foggy in the morning fine weather afterwards. Had the horses collected at an early hour and started a little past sunrise, and encamped a little past noon. It would have been too much for the horses to go to the fort after the hard day they had yesterday. Had two bales of leather that got wet by a horse falling in a swamp yesterday evening, opened and dried, and in the evening I left the men, and arrived at the fort after sunset, the men are to follow in the morning.

John Work's Journal

---

Wedy 6th. Clear fine weather. The people with the horses and property arrived in the forenoon, where the loads were received and all opened and examined and in good order. The trade stands as follows.

Flat Heads. Kootanians.

213 large beaver 297 Large Beaver

54 small "95 Small "

21 pap "6 Large Damaged Beaver

6 lb. (Coston)6 Small ""

71 Appichimans 4 lb. (Coston)

6 Pr. Buffalo Robes 7 Otters

6 Red Deer Skin dressed 505 Musquash

6 Buffalo ""2 Mortis

5 Lodges 3 Minks

4396 lb. Dry Meat 1 Fisher

119 lb. Cords 2 Appichimens

21 Pack Saddles 2 Com. Buff. Robes

(Pounfluhs), etc. 109 Red Deer Skins d'st

71 ( ? )

1 Lodge

22 Pow. flasks

7 Garnished shirts

3 Plain"

4 Pr. Leggins

2 (Gowns)

Cords, etc.

Thursday 7 Cloudy mild weather. The people employed at the building.(58) Settled with the Indians who lent us the horses at Pendant Oreille River, had 72 skins to pay, 17 horses and one Indian 4 skins each.

Satdy 9 These two days past Mr. Kittson and I busy taking the inventory. Preparations are making for the express boat to the mountains starting tomorrow. Mr. Dease means to accompany it with his family, and to send them across if he understands there is a likelihood of himself following them.

Sunday 10 Clear fine weather. The express boat(59) started in the evening deeply loaded with passengers, baggage and provisions. There are in all 20 passengers, and 23 pieces of provisions, corn, grease and dry meat. - Mr. McDonald(60) and family, Mr. Dease and family, Dr. McLaughlin's family, (J Cahn,) (F McKye) 2 boys & old (A Popt) passengers -

Monday 11 Clear fine weather, but cold in the night. The men employed at the building. I was arranging the papers.

Tuesday 12 Weather as yesterday. Employed as yesterday. Rivet went off to Pendant Oreille to hunt roots.

Weddy 13 Fine weather. The boat which started on Sunday returned with Mr. Dease and his family, he left by mistake a bundle of letters and papers of importance for which he had to return, and finding that the boat was too much submerged he brought back his family. He went off again immediately. Two pieces of provisions were brought back.

Thursday 14. Cloudy fair weather. Had two men employed repairing a canoe to go off to examine the Pendant Oreille River.

Friday 15th. The men employed as yesterday. two Indians with the two men are to accompany me, but one of them is off today and will not be back till tomorrow so that we will have to defer starting till the day following. It is reported among the Indians that a woman is killed at a small river on the opposite side of the Columbia, it seems she was gathering, nuts, and an Indian who was hunting took her for a bear crawling among the bushes, and shot her. One of the sows had five young pigs(61)

last night.

1. An evident error, as July 5 fell on Wednesday in 1826. This was overcome by Mr. Work later by

giving two days to July 12.- E. S. M.

2. Probably Lady's Island below Washougal; called Diamond Island by Lewis and Clark.
3. Probably means that at this high stage of the water they followed a channel behind Hamilton or Strawberry Island and carried goods and canoes across the Island to avoid the Garrison Rapids.
4. The regular portage beginning just below Sheridan's Point and ending at the cove or bend above the Cascades; practically where the railroad is built today.
5. Probably where the City of The Dalles now stands.
6. This portage was on the Oregon side from Big Eddy to the head of Ten Mile Rapids, nearly six miles. Here stood the village of Wishram of which Washington Irving wrote in his "Astoria."
7. Consult page 364 of Vol. 10 of the Oregon Historical Quarterly as to this. Peter Skene Ogden, with Finan McDonald Thos. McKay and Thos. Dears, had been trapping and trading in Southern Idaho.
8. David Douglas, the botanist. Consult his own account at page 356 of Vol. V of the Oregon Historical Quarterly.
9. Celilo Falls.
10. The Deschutes river.
11. John Day river in Oregon.
12. Blalock Island, also known as Long Island to the fur traders; this camp probably at "Canoe Encampment Rapids," so known to this day.
13. Umatilla Rapids.
14. Fort Walla Walla, at mouth of river of same name.
15. William Kittson, who came to the Columbia district in 1818 and died at Fort Vancouver during the early forties. His brother was Norman Kittson, the millionaire of St. Paul, Minn., and financial associate of J. J. Hill.
16. Snake river
17. For Mr. Douglas' own account of this journey consult pages 357-61 of Vol. 5 of the Oregon Historical Quarterly.

18. The Palouse River; known to the traders also as Pavion River.
19. Almota, Whitman County, Washington; an Indian crossing place; see note on page 89 of Vol. V. of this Quarterly.
20. Junction of Snake and Clearwater rivers; their camp probably on north side of Clearwater opposite present site of Lewiston, Idaho.
21. Cayuse?
22. Camp probably near Uniontown, Whitman County, Wash.
23. They reach the Spokane River at mouth of Latah Creek below the Falls.
24. They followed the south side of Spokane River until opposite the abandoned buildings of Spokane House. Consult note 145, page 279, of Vol. 5 of this Quarterly.
25. Jacques Raphael Finlay, who had built or helped to build this trading post in 1810.
26. Probably Chimakime Creek.
27. Mr. John Warren Dease, then in charge of Fort Colville.
28. A crop of potatoes had been raised here in 1825; this is the record of the first yield of grain on Marcus Flat in Stevens County, Wash.
29. Kettle Falls; the method of fishing here described was carried on within the memory of present residents of that locality, with marvelous success.
30. The trail used by the fur traders at this portage can still be seen; it is on the East bank.
31. Thompson's Prairie, Montana.
32. The trail or road for pack horses from Fort Colville across the Calispell Mountains to the Pend d'Oreille river at point near Cusick, Washington. Consult pages 147-8 of Vol. 1 of Simpson's Journey Around the World for a description of this trail. The fur traders had not used it before this time.
33. Pend d'Oreille Lake.
34. The Little Pend d'Oreille River.

35. The road leading to Spokane House, which crossed the Colville river just above Meyers Falls; this trail continued eastward through present site of city of Colville.
36. Probably a pond on section 3, township 34 north, range 40, E. W. M.
37. Probably a stream now mapped as Tacoma Creek, which empties into the Pend d'Oreille River.
38. Near the mouth of the Calispell river, where the Indians gathered to dig camas.
39. Thompson Falls, Montana.
40. The Sinecateen crossing of mining days, where the trail from Spokane to the Kootenay country and the Clarks Fork country crossed the river; nearly opposite Laclede station of the Great Northern Railroad of today.
41. Albeni Falls, just above Newport, Wash.
42. Sandpoint, Idaho.
43. Heron, Montana; see note 123, page 265, Vol. V., this Quarterly.
44. The portage from Pend d'Oreille Lake to the Kootenay river at Bonners Ferry.
45. Thompson Falls, Montana
46. Bad Rock, just below Eddy, Montana.
47. Gen. Wm. H. Ashley; see page 247 et seq. of Vol. 1. of History of the American Fur Trade by H. M. Chittenden for sketch of his career.
48. This chief was one of Peter Skene Ogden's heroes; see chapter 2 of the book, "Traits of American Indian Life and Character," by a Fur Trader.
49. That is, to St. Louis.
50. At Thompson Falls
51. Near Kootenay Landing, Pend d'Oreille Lake.
52. Mouth of Calispell River again, near Cusick, Wash.
53. For previous attempt to examine the Kootenay River consult this Quarterly, Vol V., p. 177-8.

54. Fort Colville.

55. Dried buffalo meat purchased from the Flatheads.

56. Finan McDonald, then at Fort Colvile.

57. The Colville River.

58. Fort Colvile was staked out by Governor Simpson in April, 1825, the timbers framed during the summer of 1825, and actually built in spring and summer of 1826

59. The express boat bound for Boat Encampment at Canoe River, there to meet the officer returning from the annual meeting of the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory or elsewhere, bringing the mail and orders for the Columbia District for the next year.

60. This is our last mention of Finan McDonald in the Columbia District; he is returning across the Rocky Mountains with his family. He came to the Columbia with David Thompson in 1807 and had been here continually since then.

61. This mother was brought from Fort Vancouver by canoe route in a crate in March and April of this year, 1826; in her company was a heifer. See page 284, Vol. V., of this Quarterly.

[Return to list of Work's journals]

From Washington Historical Quarterly, XI, 1920

#### JOURNAL OF A TRIP FROM FORT COLVILLE TO FORT VANCOUVER AND RETURN IN 1828

The following document by John Work is a reproduction of a copy (of the original) now on file at the Bancroft library, being pages 222 to 240 of Pacific Mss., C30, which the assistant librarian, Mr. Herbert Ingram Priestly, has kindly furnished.

The manuscript, as evidenced by the copy, appears to have suffered from the ravages of time, and several portions are either missing altogether or too illegible to be deciphered with certainty. In such cases the editors have supplied corrections or additions thereto which they have enclosed with brackets and placed in the body thereof.

Attention is also invited to the announcement that other portions of the Work journal will shortly appear: one covering a trip southward in 1834 in the Oregon Historical Society Quarterly; another describing a journey to the headwaters of the Missouri in 1831-32, by the department of history of the University of Montana.

William S. Lewis.

Jacob A. Meyers.

---

[May, 1828.]

[Page 222.]

Tuesday 20th. Between 3 or [and] 4 o'clock in the afternoon left Colville with six boats for Okanagan, and encamped in the evening one pipe [from] the grand rapid.(1) We were detained some time at the rapid, repairing two of the boats that were broken. The cargo got wet; all the other boats were lightened and half the cargo carried, and the boats ran down at two trips.

We have only twenty men for the six boats, four men each for two of the boats, and three each for the other four, which certainly weak crews for such a dangerous part of the river, but instead of paddles the people use oars by which they do more work with less labor. Our lading consists of 70 packs of furs, 2 kegs [castorium], 12 bales of leather, 8 bales of [barley meal from the crop of 1827] 2 do [corn meal] 10 do saddles, 1 cage 3 young pigs for N [new] Calidonia, 1 do cask [cage] for Nez Perces, 6 Indian lodges, provisions for the voyage, and which with the other baggage makes 24 pieces per boat, and myself and La Bontes(2) wife, & two children passengers. Everything was ready to start at an early hour, but Chatefau's(3) boat, which was not finished [page 223] gumming, till the afternoon. Cloudy mild weather.

May 21. Embarked at daylight this morning, and continued our route without any delay whatever, except a short [stop] for breakfast, till a little before sunset, when we encamped below the big [stone](4) a little above the little Dalls, [Makhim Rapids] which is a [good] days work for so few men. The current is very strong, and sent us along at a rapid rate, but the water is not so high as last year; it is now in a good state, and none of the rapids dangerous. Notwithstanding the (long) time that were [was] taken gumming the boats, some of them are leaky, and two of them had to be gummed. Yesterday evening some of the people were employ[ed at that.]

May 22nd. Cloudy cool weather in the morning, very warm afterwards. Resumed our route at daylight,(5) and arrived at Okanage [Ft. Okanogan] before breakfast, and found some of the people still not up. The Dalls were found good, and the boats shot down them without stopping. Received and examined the cargos, all in good order, and had them stand [stood] bye:-[Page 224.] and as the men had worked hard, gave them the remainder of the day, to rest, previous to commencing gumming the boats.

No news as yet of Mr. Conolly(6) and his people, and had appointed the 24th as the date on which he was to reach Okanage. We expected that being so weakly [manned] it would have taken us also to that date to reach this - where as, we were only a day & a half. We arrived early, and came to find the people from Colville [hungry.]

Finding some salmon in store, it was served out to the people, and the barley and corn used, till Mr. Conolly's people arrived.

May 23rd.- Very warm in the middle of the day, stormy in the afternoon. Had three of the men employed making oars; all the others gumming their boats. Soon the N[ew]. C[aledonia] people

John Work's Journal

---

arrived. One of the boats was in the water, and does not want much repairs, but the other two, being exposed to the sun, the gum was melted off them. The seams opened, so that it takes a considerable deal of labor, to put them in order. There are two other boats, which are so old and out of order, and so much decayed that [225] it is considered impossible to repair them so that they could be brought up the river again with any safety. Two of the men, Chatifaux & Pin,(7) are both bad with sore eyes.

May 24th. Stormy weather warm in the middle of the day. The men finished gumming the boats, and had them in the water before breakfast. About noon Mr. Ermatage [Ermatinger](8) and a man arrived from above. Mr. Connolly & party are expected in two days.

May 25th. A storm of wind with a great deal of dust.(9)

May 26th. Fine weather, some gusts of wind. Mr. Conolly arrived at noon, his people are close too.

May 27th. Fine warm weather. Mr. Conolly's men arrived with Mr. Dear's(10) in the forenoon, and the cargoes of the boats, 9 in number, made out, and everything arranged to start tomorrow. Two horses were killed, and given to the people with some barley for a treat.

May 28th. Fine weather, blowing fresh part of the day. Some time was spent in the morning gumming two boats that were a little leaky; that detained us till between 7 & 8 o'clock when the bag-gage [brigade] started. Nine boats, with Mr. Dear's [Page 226.] Mr. Ermat[inger] & myself, under the charge of Mr. Conolly. The cargoes amounted to 33 pgs per boat, via 228 [fur packs] (11) 7 bales of leather 6 do (castorium) 8 dit Saddles, 1 dit pamphlets, [book] 16 of gum, 6 lodges, with baggage. The men used oars in preference to paddles, and had as many as could work in each boat. The wind some time detained us, and the current was very strong. In the evening we encamped a little above the Rapids. The oars were far superior to paddles; the men do more work with greater ease.

May 29th. Overcast in the morning, and raining afterwards. Resumed our route at daylight, or a little before it, and put ashore near the lower end of the Rapids to wait for one of the boats, Leas Prim(12) who had followed behind; and in the meantime breakfasted. After which P. L. Etange(13) the guide, who was in Mr. Conolly's boat embarked with Prim, when all proceeded, and ran down the rest of the Rapid, and continued their course. But Prim's boat, which remained behind, as the place was not dangerous, and the guide ahead [copy missing], and the boats did not stop till they reached Nupims [Nez Perces] in the afternoon, when (the furs, goods and provisions) [Page 227.] received and distributed among the boats, and everything arranged to continue our journey tomorrow morning. Late in the evening L. Etange [Lelange] their guide, arrived with another man, in an Indian canoe, with this unexpected intelligence, that when coming down the lower part of the Prists Rapids in the morning just after the other boats, when they struck upon a stone, broke their boat, and three of the seven men that were in her, Prim [Primeau] J. F. Laurent the [Bouthe] foreman, [and] Plussy (Joseph Plouff) the Sacrant [Ducant] were drowned, and the others very narrowly escaped. Some of the Indians assisted the survivors in getting some of the

John Work's Journal

---

packs ashore, but how many would be saved, cannot yet be ascertained. Lacnant [Laurent](14) had been sick, and was very weak. The Guide [stated that] a gust of wind, and the people not pulling fast enough, is the cause of them not being able to clear the rock. Mr Cumatage and Mr Dear's were immediately sent off with two boats and 22 men to endeavor to move the bodies and to that may be saved from the water. I am to start early tomorrow morning on horse-back with two men, for the same purpose, by crossing to [Page 228.] the [north] side of the river, and straight across the plains. It is expected we will arrive before the boats, and prevent the Indians from carrying off any of the packs, if they be so inclined.

May 30th. Blowing a storm the fore part of the day. The weather was so stormy, and the river so rough, that it was impossible to cross the horses without drowning them, and I could not start as was intended, for the Prist's Rapids(15) where the accident happened. Yesterday we had the horses [ready to swim] across in the evening, I could not have got them before then; and to get them after, would be of no use. The [packs] were all carried from the water's side into the fort. An Indian arrived from Spoken (old Spokane House) with letters from Mr. Kettra [Kittson](16) of the 25th Inst, announcing the death of Jac Finlay(17) about 10 days ago. Nothing has happened at Coville lately, the crops are coming on well.

May 31st. Stormy in the morning, calm afterwards, a little rain in the evening. The furs all well covered with oil cloth.

June 1st. Dark cloudy weather. Mr Cumatinge & Dear arrived with the party at noon, they found all the furs, Oky [a keg] of customs, [castorium, parflsh] [Page 229.] a bale of leather, and 3 pins [skins] of gum. Nothing was seen of the bodies of the three unfortunate men that were drowned. The old prist(18) and his people behaved well. One of the old mans son came to the fort, and received in remuneration for his good conduct in the assistance given in saving the furs.

The after part of the day was employed drying the furs, repairing the boats, and getting everything ready to start early tomorrow morning. The brown [beaver] skins seem not to be much injured, but the small furs will be a good deal the worse of this wetting; fortunately there were not many.

Monday 2nd. Cloudy most of the day. Left Walla Walla at sunrise, this brigade consists of 9 boats, provisions and baggage. We were nearly three hours ashore drying the wet furs, that were not sufficiently dry yesterday. Some time was also lost going ashore to trade provisions. The wind also considerably retarded our progress; nevertheless, we encamped in the evening, a little above Day's River. A horse, some salmon and boats [roots] were traded from the Indians during the day. Mr. Black(19) is of such [Page 230.] a disposition that he would not give them a horse after a great deal of coaxing he offered them a colt but it was so small that it would not (suffice) for the people, and would not be accepted. However, he gave us, the bags of corn and a little [barley]

Tuesday 3rd. It was a little calm in the morning, and we embarked, but a little after sunrise, we had to put ashore at Day's River(20) with the wind, where we remained all day. A few Indians encamped here, from whom a few salmon were got, but nothing worth while, to give the people,

---

to [save] the provisions.

June 4th. Blowing a storm all day, so we could not stir.

June 5th. Blowing all night, but calm a little after sunrise- when we embarked, but were again stopped by the wind. We breakfasted; after a little while it became calm, and we proceeded and made the and afterward proceeded to the Dalls and made the portage to the rocks with boats. Here we encamped early, and there would not have been time to get to another convenient encampment. Traded enough salmon to serve the people for nearly two days. There are not many [Page 231.] Indians about the Dalls now; the most of them are out on the plains collecting roots.

June 6th. Embarked early this morning, made the lower Portage of the Dalls, had to put ashore to gum one of the boats, afterwards proceeded down the river. Reached the Cascades in the afternoon, made the portage with all the goods, and got the boats halfway across. Part way they were towed, and part carried. When the men left the boats they pulled up on the beach. We could get few salmon from the Indians, because the fort has entirely spoiled the trade, none can be got now at any kind of a reasonable price.

June 7th. Had the boats brought to the lower end of the portage, which detained the people a considerable part of the morning. In order to save time, we breakfasted before we started; we then proceeded, and reached Vancouver, where we arrived in the evening. It was however too late to get the packs carried up the Fort.

June 8th. Fair weather. All the packs carted up to the Fort, and the rest of the cargo remained.

June 9th. Cloudy in the morning, fair weather afterward. Employed a party to examine the furs; we were not able to finish the whole of them, as few of them were a little wet, but had sustained no damage.

June 10th. Busy at the furs, but we had to stop on account of the rain. Some of the New Caledonia ones are not yet opened.

June 11th. The weather prevented us from doing much to the furs today.

July 23rd. This morning the Ireland [Inland] brigade left Fort Vancouver, and encamped a little below the Cascades. We had a sail wind a while in the afternoon. The brigade consists of 9 boats 54 men including two Indians. These are passengers Mr. Conolly who commands the party, Messrs [Francis] Cumtage, [J. M.] Yale, [Thomas) Deace, and myself [John Work]. The boats are heavily laden, besides provisions. The cargoes were delivered and the boats loaded and moved up to the upper end of the place yesterday evening, when the men got their provisions for the voyage, which consists of corn,(21) fish, and grease.

July 24th. Cloudy weather, with fine breeze. Continued our route early in the morning, and were

---

John Work's Journal

---

employed the whole day, getting to [Page 233.] just a little above the Cascades. The water is very low, and it was very difficult dragging the boats. The line broke, and one of the rudders; so considerable time was lost fixing them. Part of the cargo had to be carried, both at the New Portage, and at another place below the Cascades. The Indians at the Cascades are taking plenty of salmon, but would give us none - a superstitious idea, that if our people, who had been at war, would eat of the salmon, they would catch no more. Had we been in want of provisions, we would have [kept] ourselves without caring; but that not being the case, we did not take any; though we told the Indians we would do so if we chose.

July 25th. Embarked at daylight, and had a fine sail wind all day, and early this evening reached the lower end of the Dalls, when we encamped, it being too late to reach the Portage. The Indians here are taking plenty of Salmon, and gave us a few for the people, making no objections about the men having been at war.

[July] 26th. The whole day was getting the goods across the portage, and the boats only part of the way. The weather part (Page 234.) of the day was very warm. In the morning we were met by Morgen [Ogden](22) who with his party is on his way to Fort Vancouver. The rest of his party are off with Mr. McKay for some furs that were hidden in the plains. Mr C[Ogden] remained with us all day, and stayed over night. Three of our men are sick, disabled, and unfit for duty. Got plenty of salmon in the evening for the people.

July 27th. It employed the men before breakfast carrying the boats across the portage; we got them loaded, and after breakfast took our leave of Mr. Ogden, and proceeded under sail to the Chutes, when boats and cargo had to be carried. We got to the upper end of the Portage late in the evening; loaded the boats, and encamped for the night. It was very warm during the day, though it blew a storm, and the people were nearly blinded with driving sand. The Indians here had a few fresh Salmon, but we got some dried ones from them. One Indian lodge took afire and was burnt; and though it was on an island, and apart from where we were working, they came and demanded payment for the property destroyed, and in case of [Page 235] refusal, they would take it by force. We threatened them with severe punishment for their conduct, when they became quiet. However, as a boat had to return from above, it was deemed advisable to give them a little tobacco.

[July] 28th. Clear warm weather. Embarked at daylight, and were employed all day with the poles. In the evening we encamped a little above Day's River. Two Indians, which were employed at the Dalls to work in place of the disabled men, left us this morning; they were not worth taking with us. Traded a few fish, and some dried Salmon, from some Indians, where we stopped for breakfast. An Indian was dispatched to Fort Nespus [Nez Perces or Walla Walla] with a letter.

(July) 29th. Continued our journey with the poles. Had a light wind, and got up the sail a short time in the evening; but the wind was too weak to be of much service. We encamped in the evening a good way below the Island. Passed some camps of Indians during the day they had very few fish, and report that Salmon are scarce above.

John Work's Journal

---

[July] 30th. Embarked at daylight. After breakfast a fine breeze sprung up, when the sails were hoisted, and we had a splendid run the remainder of the day. Encamped late [Page 236.] in the evening a good piece above Grand Rapid. One of the sick men is again better, and able to do his duty, but the other two are still unable to work. Some other of the men are bad with severe colds, while some of them have sore hands from poling.

July 31st. A fine wind again, we proceeded under sail, and arrived at Nespuses at 8 o'clock. The Nespuses outfit was delivered, and the remainder of the property distributed among 8 boats, as one is to be left. Mr McKay has arrived, he left his men yesterday. I found P[ambrum's] boys here, they are going off to Colville in two days; by them I wrote to Mr Kitter [Kittson] and sent six sickles so that he may be able to get on with the harvest. I also sent 22 [Ms. illegible.] as I understand he is short of that article. From his letter I understand that provisions are scarce - few salmon to be got, but the crops have a fine appearance. One of Mr Black's men, Dubans, [Dubois](23) was drowned a few days ago.

Aug. 1st. Left Nespurs at 7 o'clock, and encamped in the evening above the Yakaman River. The men worked with the poles all day, the weather very calm and warm. The river is unusually low for this season of the year. We have 8 boats, as deep laden, as when we left Vancouver, but as two more of the men are disabled, it will take 30(24) hours to Okanagan.

[Aug.] 2nd. The weather very warm and sultry. Proceeded on our journey, and encamped in the evening at the White banks. From an Indian's information, part of the bones of one of our unfortunate men that were drowned in the Spring was found. We had them collected and buried. Mr. Conolly read the funeral service. There are few Indians on the river, and these are starving; they are taking no salmon.

[Aug.] 3rd. Continued our journey at an early hour, and encamped in the evening at the lower end of the Prist's Rapid. The current during the day was strong. The water is very low. We found a lodge of Indians, from whom a few dried Salmon were obtained, they seem very scarce in the river.

[Aug.] 4th. Cool pleasant weather in the morning, but very warm afterwards. It took a considerable portion of the day to get up the Prist Rapid. Some time was spent gumming the boats, when we again proceeded, and encamped in the evening a little above the Rapid. Messrs Cumatage [Ermatinger] and Yale who were expected would be at [Page 238.] Okanagan, are nearly so with their horses by this time, and now encamped on the opposite side of the River.

Aug. 5th. Very warm weather, it is really hot passing over the burning sands. Lost some time this morning crossing the horses - in the evening encamped in the evening, a little below Roscal Rapid.(25)

Aug. 6th. Continued our journey, and encamped early, and got the boats just above Stony [Rock] Island, the boats are lighted, and the cargoes carried, to Rend Rapids.(26) The weather very warm,

---

John Work's Journal

---

though occasionally blowing a little. Very few Indians in the River, and Salmon very scarce. Another man left work with a sore hand.

Aug. 7th. Warm sultry weather. Passed Pirtanhouse(27) River in the afternoon. We were detained some time mending one of the boats that were broken; had sail wind a little in the evening. Traded some Salmon from the Indians.

Aug. 8th. Had a good breeze, and sailed most of the day. The wind though warm was a great relief from the scorching heat we experienced three days past. Encamped in the evening a little above Clear Water River.(28) A man from Okanagan met us in the evening, with two horses from there.

Aug. 9th. Cloudy, but very warm weather. In the morning, Mr. Conolly and I left the boats, and proceeded on horseback to Okanagan, where we arrived about nine o'clock in the morning. Four of the boats arrived late in the evening, the others are a little behind.

Aug. 10th. Arrived early in the morning, when the boats were unloaded, and the different outfits separated. When I distributed the Colville goods, amounting to 123 furs [bales] besides provisions and baggage. Besides the above cargo, we had a dozen or more passengers with their baggage. Six men per boat, some of them are from Okanagan. One of the men was sent to Colville, being unable to work, he sent another man in his place.

Aug. 11th. Went to boats(29) early this morning, but it was near 8 o'clock before they got through gumming, when we proceeded up the river, and encamped for the night a little above the Dalls. The current is very strong, nevertheless we got on well.

Aug. 12th. Continued our route, this morning passed the Dalls, and encamped in the evening a little below the Big Stone.(30) We lost some time gumming Charlie's boat [Page 240.] The boat had to be lighted at a place near the Dalls.

Aug. 13th. Continued our route early, and encamped a little above Spellium River.(31) Some more time was lost gumming. Met a family of Indians going down the river, but they had no Salmon worth mentioning.

Aug. 14th. Continued of journey early, and encamped a little below Semapoilish(32) River. One of the men not able to work with a sore hand. Chatfaux is also complaining of his hand, but does not give up working yet.

Aug. 15th. Embarked early, and went ashore a little above Stony Island(33) so to gum two boats. We had to carry part of the cargo to one of the portages below the Island. Chatfaux is from work with his hand, and walking along like a gentleman. Met Robinson(34) our housekeeper [horse-keeper](35) it is some time since he left the Columbia, and has little news.

1. Thompson's Rapids, now Rickey Rapids.

---

2. LaBonte was an Astorian. See Irving's Astoria, Chap. xxxvii. His name appears as numbers 989, 820 and 623, respectively, on the lists of employees of the Hudson's Bay Company in America for the years 1821-1823, inclusive.
3. Probably J. B. Chalifaux number 657 on the list for 1821; Andre Chalifaux appears as numbers 634, 505 and 407 for the years 1821-23.
4. Equilibrium Rock. See also the entry for August 12.
5. About 3:30 A. M. The distance to Okanogan is about thirty-three miles.
6. Chief Trader William Connolly stationed at Fort St. James in New Caledonia. His name appears as numbers 45, 7, 7, on the lists for the years 1821-23.
7. Joseph Pin, whose name appears as numbers 1138, 748 and 1029 on the lists for the years 1821-23
8. Frank Ermatinger, the well-known Colombian, often in the Spokane Country. He became chief trader in 1842.
9. See Ross Cox, vol. ii, p. 86.
10. Thomas Dears, a clerk, whose name appears as numbers 720, 582 and 82 on the lists for 1821-23. He was much about Spokane and Colville, having actual charge of the erection of the first buildings there 1825-26. He was placed in charge of Fort Connolly, New Caledonia, in 1831. Retiring, he settled at Ft. Thomas, Upper Canada.
11. These fur packs weighed 90 to 100 lbs each, say 1 1/2 tons. The crate of pigs, 2 kegs of grain or meal, 5 bales of leather, and 4 saddles have been left at Ft. Okanogan for the New Caledonia District, and 156 packs of far, with some additional provisions and baggage have been added; 8 days provisions for the 22 men as well as subsistence for the Colville men there, have been consumed by the time Mr. Work leaves Ft. Okanogan.
12. Lewis Primeau, whose name appears as numbers 1205 and 1000 on the lists for 1821 and 1822.
13. Pierre Letange, whose name appears as numbers 990 and 804 on the lists for 1821 and 1822.
14. The name J. F. Laurent appears as No. 1085 on the list for 1821.
15. 15 Priest's Rapids, so named by John Stuart of the Astor party and his party, who passed this point in 1811, from seeing an Indian priest performing some religious ceremony there. See

Franchere's Narrative, pp. 276-277.

16. William Kittson's name appears as numbers 933, 754 and 551 on the lists for 1821-23. He was an adopted son of George Kittson, and served with the Canadian chasseurs in the War of 1812-13. He entered the employ of the North-West Co. in 1819 as an apprentice clerk under Alex. Ross. See *Fur Hunters*, vol i. p. 207. He was assigned to the Flatheads in 1830, and died about 1843, probably at Victoria, B. C.

17. Jacques Raphael Finlay who established Spokane House, the first white settlement in the state of Washington, in 1810. See sketch of his life by Mr. Meyers, vol. x of this Quarterly, pp. 163-167, July, 1919.

18. Probably the identical old Indian priest mentioned in note 15, supra.

19. Samuel Black, an old North-West Co. clerk made chief trader under the Deed Poll of 1821; stationed at Spokane 1825; Nez Perce 1828-30; made a chief factor in 1838; and killed near Kamloops by Wanquille in 1841.

20. The John Day River of today.

21. Apparently flour from the Colville and Vancouver mills was not yet in use.

22. Peter Skene Ogden, the well-known Columbian, noted for his expeditions in Utah where Ogden City and Ogden River bear his name.

23. Andre Dubois appears as number 619 on the list of 1823-24; Francis Dubois appears as No. 569 for the same year.

24. It took nearer 100 hours, as the journal later shows.

25. Qualque Rapids.

26. Cabinet Rapids.

27. Piscouse of Wenatchee River.

28. Chelan River.

29. This was some distance from Fort Okanogan, see Ross Cox's N. W. Co. fort on the Okanogan River in 1816.

30. See the entry for May 21, 1828; see also Symond's Columbia River (1883). The stone is now known as Equilibrium Rock.

31. Nespelim River of today.

32. Sanpoil River.

33. Hell Gate.

34. Robidoux, numbered 1082 and 1084 on the lists of 1822-23.

35. Horsekeeper. The horsekeeper had probably had orders to come down to the mouth of the Spokane River, and there await Mr. Work's arrival. Work probably proceeded to Colvile on horseback and so finished this journal.

From Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, Volume X, Number 3, September 1909.

#### JOURNAL OF JOHN WORK

April 30th to May 31st, 1830.

Edited by T. C. Elliott.

#### Editor's Introduction

John Work, the writer of this journal, was one of the tireless and forceful "gentlemen" in the Hudson's Bay Company's employ west of the Rocky Mountains, and more particularly along the Columbia River and its tributaries, beginning with the year 1823.

In the course of serving his time as a clerk, he was sent from York Factory on Hudson's Bay in July, 1823, with the annual express, in charge of Peter Skene Ogden, to Fort George (Astoria). This was one year prior to the coming of Dr. John McLoughlin to assume charge of the business of the Company west of the mountains.

From 1823 to 1830, John Work's field of employment was principally at the Posts or Forts of the upper Columbia; Spokane House, Colvile, Flathead and Kootenai, and it was he who superintended the building of Fort Colvile, just above Chaudiere or Kettle, Falls (Ilth-Koy-Ape, according to David Thompson) in 1825-6, and the abandonment of Spokane House in 1826. In 1830, he was promoted to Chief Trader and appointed to succeed Mr. Ogden in charge of the Snake River Brigade, leaving in the fall of that year.

We very little appreciate or understand at the present day the constant and extensive demand for horses in the fur trade, primarily as beasts of burden, but very often as necessary articles of food; and the difficulty of obtaining them.

Among the descendants of John Work are his grand-children, comprising the family of the honored Dr. Wm. Fraser Tolmie, deceased, once a member of the legislature of the Provisional Government of Oregon and a scholar as well as a gentleman and man of affairs. The original journal is

John Work's Journal

---

in the possession of these grandchildren and through the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Gosnell, Archivist for the Province of British Columbia, has been copied for this, its first publication.

To definitely designate the route from day to day is not possible, but the more important stopping places will be readily recognized. The party followed from Fort Colville at Kettle Falls the more direct Indian trail up the valley of Colville (as now spelled), or Mill River to its source and then across the divide to the wide ridges along Tsimakane (or Chimakine) creek, flowing into the Spokane River, crossing that river considerably below the site of Spokane House, and thence south to the Snake River at the mouth of the Palouse. This afterward became the regular wagon road between Colville and Walla Walla, and is very clearly shown on the map published with John Mullan's Military Road Report. Governor Stevens followed this route very closely in the fall of 1853.

By the Hudson's Bay men, Snake River as far up as the Clearwater was often called the Nez Perces River, and Fort Walla Walla was commonly designated as Fort Nez Perces. It would appear from the journal that at that point the party crossed the Columbia to the west or north side, but at John Day River they are clearly on the south bank again and from there to The Dalles. The usual crossing place afterward was ten miles below at Lyle, the mouth of the Klickitat River, but they recrossed above The Dalles and from there to Vancouver kept to the higher trails along the ridges and prairies back from the Columbia through a very rugged country of course, as the time consumed plainly indicates.

Mountains Hood, St. Helens, Rainier and Baker are all familiar names to Mr. Work, indicating that a set of "Vancouver's Voyages" was then in the library at Fort Vancouver, and whether the first or second edition does not matter.

Friday, April 30th, 1830.

Left Colville near 6 o'clock in the evening, accompanied by five men - F. Payette, A. Baidijain, J. Pierre, Edward Besland, and C. Quesnelle, with 35 horses for Walla Walla, and then to Fort Vancouver. Encamped a few miles from the Fort. The whole day was occupied getting the horses collected and separated, which was the cause of our being so late in starting. I would have been off some days sooner, but a considerable number of the horses were lately traded, and being very lean, required some time to recruit before taking the journey; some of them will have enough to do to perform it yet.

Saturday, May 1st.

Heavy rain nearly all day. Started at an early hour, and encamped near sunset at the swampy plain. [Chewelah?] We stopped an hour and a half to breakfast. The small rivers are very deep, and the road in many places soft and miry. The horses had to swim across two of the rivers, and the luggage to be taken across a temporary bridge of trees thrown across them. All hands were soaked with wet, and both men and horses much fatigued in the evening.

Sunday, May 2d.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Heavy rain part of the day. Proceeded on our journey a little past sunrise, and reached Spokane River in the afternoon. It was near sunset by the time the horses and baggage were got across the river, though the Indians lent us a canoe to cross with. We put up here for the night. The road to-day was in several places deep and miry, but much better than yesterday, nevertheless, the horses were a good deal jaded. The Indians came and smoked with us in the evening. The people are always glad to see whites coming among them.

Monday, May 3rd.

Fair weather. The men were on the move by daylight collecting the horses. One of them were missing and, although all hands were employed seeking him till 11 o'clock, he could not be found, and was supposed to be gone off on the N. P. [Nez Perces] road, and so far off from the distance he was followed that it would have taken all day to come up with him, even were we sure he had gone that way, and as by waiting in the same encampment we were likely to lose more we moved on, and left word with the Spokane chief to seek the horse and bring him to Colville, which he promised to do. Camped in the evening at a place called the Fortress, on the edge of a plain. The road this day was pretty good.

Tuesday, May 4th.

Stormy during the day, heavy rain towards the evening. Four of the horses had strayed in the morning and, although all hands were in pursuit of them, they were not found till 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when it was considered too late to move, besides I wish to stop and send for the horse lost at Spokane, which, I hear from an Indian lad that was passing, is found by the Indians. We had no thought any of the horses would stray off so far.

Wednesday, May 5th.

Very heavy rain in the night, fair weather during the day. Sent two men back for the stray horse that remained at Spokane, which they found, and came up with us at noon. Landed to wait for the men who were late in starting, and again stopped a good while at breakfast. We encamped in the evening at 5 o'clock, having marched seven hours during the day, which, though little, is enough for some of the horses. Set a guard on the horses last night, which is intended to be continued during the journey to prevent the horses from straying or being stolen by the Indians.

Thursday, May 6th.

Showers of rain towards evening. Continued our route at an early hour, and fell upon the Nez Perces [Snake] River, near 6 o'clock in the evening, where we put up for the night. Allowed the horses 3 hours to feed and repose in the middle of the day, and marched altogether 8 hours. Part of the road was very stony and bad for the horses' feet.

John Work's Journal

---

Friday, May 7th.

Heavy rain in the night and the greater part of the day, particularly in the afternoon. Proceed on our journey, and after passing Grand Point [Fish-hook Bend] again fell upon the river opposite an Indian lodge, and crossed our baggage. The horses were allowed to rest before crossing there; from the bad weather they were so afraid of taking the water that all the men's efforts assisted by the Indians could not put more than 16 of them across, the others were obliged to be left on the opposite shore for the night. The men were completely drenched with wet and benumbed with cold in consequence of which, and the continued rain, keeping guard will be dispensed with tonight.

Saturday, May 8th.

Incessant rain all day. Another attempt, without success, was made to cross the remaining horses in the morning, but towards evening they were all got across but one, which ran off and could not be caught; the most of them had to be crossed by the cord. One was missing in the morning and cannot be found; we cannot tell whether he strayed or attempted to cross the river in the night, and was drowned; it is not likely that he was stolen. The men were again soaked with wet and cold. The poor Indian rendered us all the assistance in his power.

Sunday, May 9th.

Sent across the river for the horse that could not be found yesterday and to seek for the one that is missing; no marks of the latter could be found. We then loaded the horses, when two men were again sent off in quest of the stray horse, and the others moved on to Nez Perces, [Fort Walla Walla at mouth of Walla Walla River] where we arrived about 1 o'clock. The other two men arrived towards evening without seeing any trace of the horse.

Monday, May 10th.

Heavy rain in the night and forepart of the day, and stormy. We intended to have crossed the horses to the opposite side of the river this evening and have started tomorrow, but the wind raised such a swell in the river that swimming the horses across was impracticable without a great risk of drowning them.

Tuesday, May 11th.

Fair weather, but blowing strong all day. On account of the roughness of the weather and the swell in the river, crossing the horses could not be attempted, which has delayed us another day. This I regret as this cool weather is favorable for marching, and not so fatiguing for the horses as when the heat is great.

Wednesday, May 12th.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Stormy in the morning, but calm, fine weather afternoon. After the weather moderated, received 16 horses from Mr. Black, [Samuel Black, afterward murdered at Kamloops, but then at Fort Walla Walla] making our whole number 50, and got them across the river safe. It was late by the time the baggage and everything was across the river. [Probably the Walla Walla River, then in flood] I received another man, J. Baker, here and changed one of my men, Pierre, for J. Guy, to accompany us as guide. We also received 15 quarts of corn, 35 pieces of salmon and a little horse meat in addition to our provisions, also some ammunition and tobacco to procure an Indian guide below. Baker is a man from Vancouver, and has been waiting here for us since the express passed.

Tuesday, May 13th.

Some heavy showers during the day. The men were on the river by daylight collecting the horses, one of them was missing, and although all hands were seeking him in every direction till four o'clock, no marks of him could be discovered. We then gave up hopes of finding him, and started with the rest, but some time after, met an Indian who had also been seeking him. It was said that he had been got from an Indian below, and was going back to where his master usually resided. From the distance he went I suspect he was taken the lend of by some Indian who prefers riding to walking. On account of the delay, we made but a short day's journey, only across the point where the road falls on the river, and it was late when we reached the plain. But indifferent feeding for the horses.

Wednesday, May 14th.

Some heavy showers in the night and during the day. Kept guard over the horses during the night, and got under way by 6 o'clock. Came on at a brisk rate and encamped in the evening a good piece below Big Island, [Near Castle Rock] stopped in the middle of the day to feed and repose. The road was generally good. Passed some lodges of Indians from whom we received a little salmon. There are not many Indians on the river, and what little fish they get is barely sufficient for themselves. From their miserably lean appearance it may be supposed they have not known what a plentitude of food is for some time past.

Thursday, May 15th.

Heavy showers in the night, fair weather during the day. Continued our journey before 6 o'clock, and encamped before 5 in the evening at a little lake on the hill, a little above Day's River. We stopped thus early on account of it being a good feeding place for the horses; and that probably another such is not to be found before we would be obliged to camp where the road we mean to follow strikes into the country from the river. Some of the horses were also a good deal fatigued, and need a little repose. The road during this day's journey was frequently, but indifferent, being in many places stony and again sandy, which made the marching heavy and fatiguing for the horses.

John Work's Journal

---

Passed several lodges of Indians, from whom we obtained enough of salmon for breakfast. Stopped 3 1-2 hours in the middle of the day to rest and feed the horses.

Friday, May 16th.

Very warm, sultry weather. Resumed our journey past 5 o'clock. Left the river and struck into the country, and again fell on the Columbia at the little river, below the Dalles at 6 o'clock in the evening, where we encamped. The object of taking this route was to avoid the Dalles and chutes, where numbers of Indians are collected at this season, and likewise for a better road, as that along the river is very hilly and stony.[The immigrants did the same in later years] The road we took was very hilly and stony in places on leaving the river. Afterwards the road lay through a plain, and is good till nearly falling on the river, where it is for a considerable distance woody and some very steep hills. On account of the heat, the horses are a good deal jaded.

Saturday, May 17th.

Weather warm and sultry. The Columbia is so high it is impracticable to cross the horses at the entrance of the little river, the usual crossing place; we had, therefore, to seek another place which we found a few miles up the river, and, with a good deal of trouble got the horses across by 11 o'clock, when we moved on about 3 hours, when we encamped in consequence of engaging a guide to take us by another road, as that on the banks of the river, on account of the height of the water, is considered very difficult, if not impassable in places. The road we were to pursue by the interior is said not to occupy more than four days. This, however, I much doubt, if we get done in six days it will be very well. The road is said to be good enough except a mountain that is to cross and where there is likely to be some snow yet. Our interpreter, J. Guy, does not fully understand the Indians. I have heard it said that formerly some freemen came from Vancouver to opposite The Dalles on horse by this route in three days. This used to be a grand war road of the Kyauses and Nez Perces to go down to Kersinous village. We delayed the aft part of the day till our guide would get ready to accompany us, however.

Sunday, May 18th.

Clear, very warm weather. Our Indian guide was not ready to accompany us till 7 o'clock, when we proceeded on our journey, and encamped at past 6 o'clock in the evening at a place at the foot of Mt. St. Helens,[Mt. Adams] which is north of us, on the great Kyauses road which we are to pursue across the mountains. On leaving the river, we ascended hills of considerable height, and, but thinly wooded, but on reaching the summit we found the country thickly wooded, which mostly continued so to our encampment. The road lay over hills, some of them very steep, and steep valleys. We crossed some small rivers, but the water is not high, having recently fallen a great deal, which leads us to infer that there is but little snow on the mountains - a great deal of snow to obstruct our passage gave us some concern. Though we marched all day, except about 3 hours we stopped for the horses to feed; we have not made a long day's journey; owing to the hilliness of the roads, sometimes we had an Indian road, and sometimes we had none. We were in

John Work's Journal

---

expectation every hill we ascended of seeing the fine plain the Indians said the road lay through, but there was none till the one we are now at. Had we had a guide, we might have come in a much shorter time from Walla Walla to this place through the plains, or in fact from any part of the Columbia above the chutes. The road that way must be good, as it lies through the plains with little wood and few hills. Though we were told we would be only three nights of getting to the Fort, our guide now tells us that we will be 8 or 10, and represents the road as being difficult, independent of the snow. As we are now close to the mountain, which is the worst part of it, it is determined to try it, and should it be found impassable to turn back and gain the Columbia again. Our guide's brother also accompanied him in order to be with him coming back. Another lad also started to accompany us on foot, so that there are three of them with us. We did not expect to see an Indian here yet they made their appearance shortly after we encamped.

Monday, May 19th.

Fine, warm weather forepart of the day, but towards evening it became stormy with a great deal of thunder and very heavy rain. Continued our journey before 6 o'clock, and encamped at 4 o'clock at a little plain. We had gone a little farther into the woods to gain the foot of the mountains which we were to pass, but we intend to return to this place that the horses might have some feeding. The road today was good; it lies through rather clear woods not often thicketty and but few hills. In the morning we crossed the river [The White Salmon] that empties itself into the Columbia, between The Dalles and Cascades. It runs its waters to the northwest of Mt. St. Helen [Mt. Adams] where we forded, it is a considerable stream and the current very strong, but the waters appear to have fallen greatly lately. During the forepart of the day the ground among the trees was clothed with verdure and flowers, but afterwards several patches of snow was seen in the woods, and the rest of the ground seemed to be freed of it, not long since, and vegetation has yet made but small progress. From where we are encamped, there are two roads to cross the mountains; that to the right is represented to be the best road, but at the same time likely to have more snow in it than the other. Our guide has decided, therefore, to take the latter. Payette, accompanied by the Indian, went a good piece into the wood with the intention of proceeding to foot of the mountain to examine it, but the Indian got tired and returned. So far as they went, the road is not bad, and the snow, which is only in patches, not deep. The Indian says it is all the same way to the mountains, and that though the snow is deeper that in a day he expects he will get over the whole of it.

Tuesday, May 20th.

Stormy. Showers in the morning, and drizzling rain the most of the day. In order to allow the horses to feed and have their bellies full, lest we might be a night on the mountains without food, we did not move camp today; the grass is not good, but the horses got a little.

Wednesday, May 21st.

Fine, fair weather. At an early hour we were on the move and crossed the dreaded moun-

John Work's Journal

---

tains[Wind River Mts.] by midday, but one of the horses stepping off the road in a thicket of woods was left and had to be sent back for, which prevented us from proceeding in the afternoon. We are here on the side of a nearly bare hill, which yields tolerable good feeding for the horses. The road across the mountains is not bad nor is the mountain itself very high. In some spots the snow is pretty deep, but not as much so as to retard our progress. From the top of the hill where we are now encamped there is an extensive view and nothing to be seen but mountains and deep valleys as far as the eye can reach, Mt. St. Helen [Mt. Adams] is but a short distance to the north-east, and Mt. Rainier [St. Helens] bears north, at still a shorter distance. Mt. Baker, [Mt. Rainier] I suppose, is seen at a great distance between the two. We are still but a short way from the Columbia, immediately beyond it is seen Mt. Hood, and further off another high, snowy mountain, Mt. Jefferson. Several of the lower mountains are thickly covered with snow and many patches extending low in the valleys. None of these mountains seem to be continued ridges, but scattered about in every direction. The country through which we have to pass tomorrow has a bad appearance, all burnt woods.

Thursday, May 22nd.

Fine, warm weather. Recommenced our journey at past 5 o'clock, and by noon fell upon the road which we left on the other side of the mountain. The country we passed through this forenoon is dreadfully bad, a considerable portion of it burnt woods, immense trees fallen in every direction, and several deep ravines to cross, very steep for the horses to ascend and descend. Besides the woods are thickety, and large fallen trees are so numerous that we could scarcely get any way found through it. There is no way through this space. The road by which we crossed the mountain went in another direction and was lost. In the afternoon the road lay also through burnt woods, but being ..... was pretty good except frequently barred with large fallen trees. We encamped at 5 o'clock in a place where there is scarcely a mouthful of grass for the horses, and, what is worse, we will be two nights more without anything for them to eat. This was an exceedingly harassing day, both for men and horses; the latter on account of the heat of the day, and the difficulty of the road, particularly jumping over the large trees and ascending the steep hills, are completely jaded; one of them stopped on the road, but was got up to the camp in the evening. The ridge, our road lay in this afternoon, is divided from the foot of Mt. Rainier, [Mt. St. Helens] by a deep valley and river along which our road lay.

Friday, May 23rd.

Proceeded on our journey about 5 o'clock, and in less than 3 hours descended a steep hill and fell upon the river. During this distance, the road was the same, and through the same sort of country as yesterday. There is a pretty broad and very rapid river, its banks covered with thick woods, at this place burnt. Here a river falls in from the southward, which has now but little water. The main river seems to run towards the W. N. W. Our road here lies on the north shore of it. After some search, we found a fordable place, and with some trouble, got across a little past noon, and continued our journey. The woods were burnt and the road barred with immense large fallen trees through which we made our way with a great deal of difficulty, and much labor, both to men and

John Work's Journal

---

horses, particularly the latter; indeed, it is surprising they don't break their legs. We encamped at past 6 o'clock. No grass for the horses.

Saturday, May 24th.

Fine weather till towards evening, when there was some heavy rain. Continued our journey before 6 o'clock, and had proceeded but a short distance till we came to where the road used to pass along some beaches in the river, but the water is now so high that it is impassable; the luggage we had had to be carried along the side of a steep hill by the men, where they were in danger of tumbling into the river, and the horses taken up by the hill, a very steep and difficult road which fatigued them greatly; indeed, both men and horses were exhausted in the evening though the distance we made is not more than 5 or 6 miles. To avoid losing the horses we used to guard them in the night, but, as there is not grass and only leaves for them to eat, we let them loose tonight so that they may pick up what they can, as it is to be apprehended they will get so weak with hunger that they will not be able to march. Two Indians came to us in the evening, and have agreed to accompany us to the crossing place, and point out the best road to us as they are better acquainted with the country than our guide.

Sunday, May 25th.

Rained constantly almost all day. Started early, and with our new guide got on pretty well. The road through thick woods and over several steep hills; the road less difficult than these days past. One of our horses gave up, and we could not delay to let him rest; and as he would have been lost, he was killed and the meat, bad as it is, brought in to serve us till we got to the Fort. Our provisions are getting short. All hands were wet to the skin. The horses have very little grass among the bushes this evening.

Monday, May 26th.

Fair weather, but the bushes still hang with wet. Continued our journey early and arrived at a small plain not far from the crossing place at 5 o'clock, where we encamped. The road lay through thick woods and over some steep hills. Found a small plain at noon where we stopped to let the horses feed 3 hours. Where we are encamped is a good feeding place, and much need they have of it. One of the horses, so jaded that he stopped and could not be got on with the others. Sent a man and an Indian to bring him on after he rests a little. We mean to remain here tomorrow to allow the horses to repose and feed, of which they are in much need.

Thursday, May 27th.

Fine weather till towards evening, when it rained a little. Did not move camp today, but remained to allow the horses to feed and repose.

Friday, May 28th.

---

John Work's Journal

---

Fair weather in the morning, heavy rain towards evening. We moved camp at an early hour, reached the river [Washougal] at 10 o'clock and got across it with all the luggage, horses, etc., by noon, and by 5 in the evening encamped at a plain where there is good feeding for the horses for the night. Our road to the traverse was as difficult as usual, and after crossing the river, we had a very steep hill to mount, which took us nearly 3 hours to ascend, and was very fatiguing, both for horses and men, though the road is pretty good. The road afterward was better than usual. There are some Indians encamped not far from us, but they fled to the hills on our appearance, supposing we were enemies.

Saturday, May 29th.

Heavy rain all day. Proceeded on our journey at 6 o'clock, and encamped in a swamp at 5, which is the only place we saw to stop at during the day. Part of the road today was pretty good, being through clean pine woods, but a great deal of it was very difficult. Crossed a pretty broad river, which was a branch of the one we left yesterday, and on leaving it had a long hill to ascend with a bad road. Several more of our horses getting very weak, notwithstanding the slow rate at which we march. The Indians tell us that we will be only another night in getting to the Fort, and that the road is better. This we have been frequently told, and, found it not to be so.

Sunday, May 30th.

Rained part of the day, fair towards evening. Continued our journey at 6 o'clock, and encamped in another swamp, the only stopping place we saw during the day, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon on account of some of the weak horses not being able to come up. We had few hills today; the road was, nevertheless, full as difficult. As usual, a great deal of burnt fallen wood which was very ill to get through as it repeatedly barred up the road; there was also several boggy places which were very hard upon the weak horses. Our custom has been to keep the weak horses behind, so that they might have the advantage of a little road after the others all passing through the bad places of fallen woods, thickets, etc. Hamdijna was behind today with four, one of which, a very weak one, stuck in a bog and he was not able to get him out. He came up with us, and Payette and a man went back to aid him and get the horse out of the bog, but he was so weak that he could not rise, and it is expected he will be dead before morning. During that time another of the weak ones, a white mare, strayed and could not be found. The old man became confused in his difficulties and cannot tell exactly about where they lost him, but he is confident he had him at another bog, a little farther off where he had some difficulty getting another of the horses out. I marched ahead with the guide, myself and \* \* \* brings up the rear, but today he came on with one of the middle brigades or probably none of the horses would have been missing, as he is an excellent hand with the horses in the woods.

The men were completely drenched with rain all day yesterday and most of today, for though it did not rain today, the bushes are so charged with wet that a continual shower was falling as we passed through them. The road, exceedingly harassing all day, and men and horses much fatigued. It was past sunset when the men arrived, that were seeking the stray mare, and taking the

John Work's Journal

---

horses out of the bog. Had it not been for the delay caused by their misfortunes, we meant to have gone on a little further to a fine plain which our guides represent to be ahead a little way.

Monday, May 31st.

The horse which was dragged out of the bog yesterday evening was dead this morning. The other that was missing and another which had also strayed were not found till 11 o'clock, when we started, and arrived at Fort Vancouver at 7 o'clock in the evening with 48 of our 50 horses, several of them nearly worn out \* \* \* The road for some distance in the morning was as bad as usual until we got into a pretty boggy place which is so overflowed with water at this season that it may be called a swamp, where, though the road is soft, it is infinitely superior to the thickets we have been passing for some time back. After passing this plain we had another part of woods, through which the road is good, then a fine dry plain, and another part of woods where the road is good, when we fell upon the plain on which the Fort stands, all the low parts of which is now under water, the Columbia being unusually high at this season. We are glad our difficult and troublesome journey is finished.

From Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, Vol. XIII. (1912) pp. 363-371

Journal of John Work, Covering Snake Country Expedition of 1830-31  
(Printed from copy made by Miss Agnes C. Laut in 1905 from the original in the Hudson's Bay Company's House, London. England)

Editorial Notes by T. C. Elliott.

Introduction

Readers of the Quarterly will recall the publication of the journals of Peter Skene Ogden in Volumes 10 and 11, recording the explorations and fur trapping experiences of that energetic H. B. Co. fur trader in Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Nevada between the Cascade Mountains and the main range of the Rockies during the years 1825 to 1829 inclusive.

There is abundant indirect evidence that in the late summer of 1829, Mr. Ogden led his company of trappers to the southward from Fort Walla Walla, through Eastern Oregon and along the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Range and into Southern California, and that merely a detached party visited the Snake Country of Southern Idaho. But there is no record available and it is necessary to pass by the experiences of that year's journey with the hope that the original journal will be found at some future time. Upon the return of Mr. Ogden in the early summer of 1830 it was found that by orders from Gov. Simpson he had been transferred to the trade along the Coast in company with Mr. Finlayson, and the command of the Snake Country Brigade had been assigned to Mr. John Work, a very worthy successor. Mr. Work was of Irish descent and his name is properly spelled Wark. In this Quarterly (Vol. 10, page 296 et seq.), has already appeared an account of a journey made by him in the spring of 1830 from Fort Colville to Fort Vancouver and a brief mention of his career. Mr. Work's journals for at least two expeditions are available for use in this

John Work's Journal

---

Quarterly, and that for only the first part of the expedition of 1830-31 is now given. This is another of the transcripts made by Miss Agnes C. Laut from the original in the Hudson's Bay Company's House in London; it (the transcript) is now a part of the Ayers Collection in the Newberry Library of Chicago, and through the courtesy of that Library this copy has been obtained.

The track of Mr. Work's party in 1830 follows very closely that of Mr. Ogden in the Fall of 1827, for which compare with Vol. 11, page 355 et seq., of this Quarterly. From Fort Walla Walla, at the mouth of the Walla Walla River, across the Blue Mountain range and through the valleys of the Grand Ronde, Powder and Burnt Rivers to the Snake River at Huntington and on to the mouth of the Payette River it follows very nearly the scientifically recorded journey of John C. Fremont in 1843. Thence Mr. Work followed up the Payette River for two days, crossed over to the Boise River and from the sources of one of the forks of that river over to the Camas Plains and the waters of the Malade River in Southern Idaho. He then visited in turn the branches of that river and of the Lost River and proceeded across the lava bed plateau to the Blackfoot and the Portneuf Rivers. Evidently the intent was to trap pretty thoroughly the very sources of the various streams already named. It is of interest to recall that the year 1830 found in the camps of the American trappers in the Snake country some of the "mountain men" who afterward took an active part in the early government of Oregon, namely, Joseph L. Meek, Doc. Robt. Newell, Joseph Gale and others.

August 1830.

Sunday 22.- On the 15th the Snake Trappers whom I am appointed to take charge of reached Fort Nez Percés(1) from Fort Vancouver with their supplies. The following days were occupied arranging about horses. On the 20th they moved off from the fort. I remained two days to arrange papers and accounts to write letters and this morning followed and came up with camp near the foot of the Blue Mountains on a branch(2) of the Walla Walla. I reckon the distance 24 miles E. S. E. The party consists of 37 men, 4 hired servants, a slave,(3) 2 youths, in all 40 able to bear arms and armed, and 29 women and 45 children (22 boys, 23 girls), a total of 114 souls. These are provided with 21 lodges to shelter them, 272 horses and mules, 337 traps. The horses are pretty well loaded with provisions, as the journey lies through a country where animals are scarce. In the above party are 26 Canadians, 2 Americans, 6 half-breeds from east of the mountains, 2 Iroquois, 1 Nippesing.

Monday, 23 Aug. - Sultry weather. Moved 8 miles E. S. E. to the foot of the mountains, where we encamped(4) on a small branch of the Walla Walla. Our journey is to last a twelve-month, and we must take care of our horses at the beginning.

Tuesday, 24 Aug. - Early on the move and camped in 5 hours east of the summit of the mountains. Four Cayuse Indians going to the buffalo hunt joined us. They have no women, but one of them has a slave girl who followed him and was sent back twice; but today again came up. On her refusing to return, he shot her -, the ball wounding 3 places, but not mortally. This is the way of treating disobedience. I made him to understand that the whites did not suffer such occurrences among them.

---

Thursday 26th. Encamped at entrance(5) of Grand Ronde River. All hands employed getting lodge poles to pass the plains.

Monday 30th. Proceeded to Powder River through a fine valley.

Thursday, 2 Sept. Proceeded to Burnt River. Kanota killed 2 antelope. Dupard and Prichett took 5 beaver.

Sunday, 5 Sept. Proceeded to Snake River,(6) here about 200 yards wide.

Tuesday, 7 Sept. Alex Carson who is to take charge of 5 men, Depat, Cloustine, Sanders, Turner & Jean Ba'tiste, crossed the river northward to hunt the Wazer(7) and Payette's Rivers and cross the waters to some of the branches of Salmon River. A party was sent last year but too late to cross the waters they did not do well. These are to be at Nez Percés (Fort) the 10th of July (next). This reduces us 6 men, 4 women, 30 horses. We are still strong enough to oppose the Blackfeet.

Thursday 9th. Reached the discharge of Payette's River up which we proceeded. Payette found a horse here among the Snakes stolen 3 years ago. The Indian pleaded he had traded it, but got from Payette only a knife.

Saturday 11th. Marched S. E, from Payette's River to Reid's River(8) to the south flat, to the north mountains.

Monday, 13 Sept. Cut across to Sickly River:(9) here we encamped.

Thursday 16th. Pritchett's wife in labor we did not move camp. Kanota & Etang returned with 7 beaver. The woman delivered of a boy.

Sunday 19. Reached Little Camas Plain.(10)

Saturday, 25 Sept, Fine weather: encamped near the mountains. The people all out in different directions hunting. At 8 p.m., about an hour and a half after we encamped, one of the men, Thomas Taanateau, came running to the camp afoot almost out of his senses with fear and related that as he P. L, Etang, Baptiste Tyagnainto & L. Kanote's slave were going to their traps on the upper part of the stream in the mountain, they were set upon by a war party of Blackfeet and his three companions killed on the spot, that he barely escaped.

Five of my men were in camp. Some soon arrived & we put ourselves in a state of defence and made pens for our horses. The men scanned the hills in vain for the enemy. Three Cayuse Indians with us found poor L'Etang and the slave murdered, stripped and the latter scalped. Baptiste was still alive. They brought him to camp through the dark. He is wounded but not dangerously and gives the following account of the melancholy occurrence. The four were ascending a steep hill

afoot leading their horses and not paying attention to the sides of the road when Indians started up from the long grass and fired then rushed and seized him but not before he discharged his gun and killed one. He called on the slave to fire when the Indians rushed upon the latter and killed him. In the interim Baptiste ran to cover in a tuft of willows where he hid till the Cayuse found him, gun powder horn and shot pouch were torn from him. L'Etang made no defence. The slave killed one when he fired and it was his struggle enabled B to escape. Thomas was not wounded. His pursuers were near taking him but heard Kanota's rifle fired at a deer. The Indians made off without taking time to mangle the bodies as they are wont to do - scalping only the slave. The enemy consisted of 20 men - their motive to get horses and arms. Another man, F. Champaign had a narrow escape. They stole 3 of his traps. These men risked ( ? ) themselves but the Snakes being ahead, it was thought the Blackft would hang on the rear. Payette and 12 men interred our unfortunate companions. 4 men arrived from Reid's River with 27 beaver; 42 beaver this day from our own river. Sold L'Etang's property by auction .

Tuesday 28. Encamped on Sickly River where it received the Camas Plain River.(11) Country rugged and barren. Blackfeet tracks are observed prowling about camp.

Saturday, 2 Oct. Marched N by E to Muskeg Swamp where the N. fork of Sickly River has its source.(12) A party of Snakes 11 years ago took 300 beaver in 2 encampments here. Few beaver are here now driven by fire & destroyed by some sickness for there is no sign of recent hunting here. Little but reeds growing. The beaver feed on the roots. Whether this causes the sickening quality of the flesh or the roots, several of the people are sick from eating the beaver. Hemlock is also found the roots of which cause the flesh to be poisonous.(13)

Sunday, 10 Oct. One of the men who went up the river brought back news he had met a party of 20 American hunters just arrived from Snake River across the plains. They had been 2 days without water. One of them an Iroquois called Pierre,(14) who deserted from us came to our camp; but little news was obtained from him. Americans are encamped within a short distance of us.

Tuesday, 12 Oct. Left Sickly River and struck across the plain to a small rivulet that bears Bevens' name. Eastward lie the plains(15) towards Snake River. Our object is to search Salmon River. There are 2 roads of the same length - the north branch of Sickly River and the one we take by Goddin's River,(16) preferable because level and leading sooner to the buffalo for provisions, the people being out of food. Moreover the Americans may not follow us by this road not knowing our route. Their horses are (s)low but they have no families or lodges and little baggage to embarrass them wh. gives them an advantage over us. The Americans raised camp before us and proceeded up the river, but on seeing us strike across the plain they left the river and followed along the foot of the mountains and encamped behind where Payette and party were defeated by the Blackfeet 2 yrs. ago. I did not see a Mr. Rabides who is at the head of the party but it appears they are 200 men, 100 hunters. Crooks & Co. are the outfitters. A Mr. Fontenelle(17) who manages this business is now at Snake River with 50 men, They have great quantity of goods en cache. They have been hunting on the Upper Snake. They were set upon by the Blackfeet on Yellowstone River and 18 men killed. They had intended to go to the Flatheads this fall but were deterred by the

advanced season.

Thursday, 14 Oct. A. (?) Plante, M. Plante, P. Findlay, & Payette killed each a buffalo. Are now in a barren country covered with wormwood.

Wednsy. 20. Reach what is called the fountain & a swamp where Goddin's River has its source. A road here thro' the mountains to Days' Defile: A road also from the south. Buffalo are numerous but the Banock Snakes have driven off the elk.

Saturday 23rd. The women availed themselves of the hot springs to wash their clothes.

Tuesday, 2nd Nov. Camped near head of Day's River. Three years ago a party of freemen wintered here with Mr. McKay(18) we met 2 Flatheads. Their camp is 6 days' march off, very strong, Flat-heads, Pendant D'Oreilles and Spokanes with Nez Percés being together.

Saturday, 6 Nov. The two Flatheads left today. I wrote by them to Mr. C. F. McLoughlin apprising him of our route.

Tuesday, 23rd Nov. A party of Freemen under Mr. Ogden passed the winter here some years ago. There was neither ice nor snow in the valley then.

Sunday, 28 Nov. Stormy cold weather snow showers ( ?) and drifting. Crossed the height of land 12 miles S. E. The snow 2 ft. deep. The horses are jaded. People are fatigued. Large herds of buffalo are about.

Wednesday, Dec. 1. Proceeded to the entrance of Day's Defile.(19) Six of the men, August Finlay at the head of the party, O. Finlay, M. Finlay, A. Hoole ( ?). A. Plante and Bte Gardipie separated from camp and took the road round the end of the mountain. These men are all half Indians. The two roads meet at the end of a few day's march, the road thro the pass is hilly, and uneven (depth) of snow 2 ft. Horses gave out on the way. Excellent feeding at camp half way. Herds of buffalo observed in the valley.

Dec. 9, Thursday. Crossed plains to a dry branch of Goddin's River.

Friday 17th. Arrived(?) of Snake River lower end of Blackfoot Hill. Found good feeding for horses and a great many Snakes are encamped around. Loss of horses altogether crossing plains 26. Cold caused the loss. The Americans hunted this Quarter summer and fall. Lately a party of them crossed the mountains to White River to winter. We found poor L'Etang's rifle among the Snakes, picked up in bushes where Blackfeet had camped.

Tuesday, 21 Dec. Clear and cold. Large party of Snakes paid us a visit on horseback as a mark of friendship passed 3 times round our camp firing volleys. They were well armed and wore the scalps and mangled remains of the 2 Bckft whom they killed 2 days ago suspended from their

horses' bridles.

January, 1831. New Year's day. None of the people went hunting. They endeavored to regale themselves. Each man was treated with a dram of rum and some cakes.

2nd Sunday. Foggy late last night 16 Flatheads and Nez P came from the American camp(20) at White River on the E. side of the waters. They are afoot. Have been 10 days on the journey. They sold their horses to the Americans at high prices and now wear blankets of blue green and white besides having guns, rifles and beads. The Americans are to come this way in spring to form a post among the Flatheads. The Americans have 2 parties 6 chiefs and a great many men.

March, Thursday 17. Cloudy rain cold. The Snakes are moving off down the river. The chief of the Horn(21) and a few old men paid us a visit.

Friday 18. Moved camp across the plain to Portneuf (?) River.

1. Fort Nez Perce is the original Northwest Company's name for the trading post erected by them in the summer of 1818 and later known as Fort Walla Walla; for description of the building of the Fort, consult Alex. Ross's "Fur Hunters of the Far West."

2. This branch stream was probably Pine Creek, which empties into the Walla Walla River at the town of Touchet, sixteen miles east of Fort Walla Walla; the horses belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company were herded on what is still known as the Hudson's Bay ranch on this creek.

3. Not a "gentleman of color" from the South, but a captive from some other tribe and usually designated as such by leaving his hair cut short. This slave gave a good account of himself before his death soon after, as will be seen a little further on.

4. Probably near either Blue Mountain Station on Dry Creek or the town of Weston on Pine Creek, both in Umatilla County, Oregon; from this place they crossed the Blue Mountain divide the following day.

5. This was at Summerville, Union County, Oregon, formerly known as Indian Valley; after four days here, they passed through the Grande Ronde Valley and over the divide to Powder River.

6. Huntington, Oregon, having come by way of Powder River and Burnt River.

7. The Weiser River in Idaho; called the Wazer by Arrowsmith.

8. The Boise River, known as Reed's River after John Reed of the Astor party who started a trading post at its mouth.

9. The Malade, or Wood River of present maps; but the party can hardly have reached it yet.

10. Not far northeast but across the ridge from Mountain Home on the Oregon Short Line Ry.
11. At the host springs about eight miles west of Stanton in Blaine County, Idaho; present site of Magic Reservoir of U.S. Reclamation Service.
12. The North Fork of the Malade would be Little Wood River of today.
13. The Malade was so named by Donald Mackenzie because his men were made sick by eating beaver there; Alex. Ross reports a similar experience and now John Work adds his testimony and explanation.
14. Evidently the same Pierre who gave Alex. Ross so much trouble in 1825 in the Bitter Root Valley.
15. The dry lava bed plateau of central southern Idaho, beneath which the mountain streams flow to Snake River.
16. Arrowsmith shows this name of the Big Lost River and Day's River or Day's defile would be the Little Lost River of today.
17. Consult Chittendon's Hist. of Amer. Fur Trade. A trapper named Robidoux is mentioned; also Lucien Fontenelle. Both were with the American Fur Company of the Missouri River, with which Ramsay Crooks of Astor Company fame was connected.
18. Consult Mr. Ogden's journal for winter of 1828 when he was so anxious about this Thos. McKay party; the latter was son-in-law of Chief Factor John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver.
19. Where the river canyon opens upon the plain, which they crossed a few days later in about the line of branch line of Oregon Short Line of today to the Blackfoot Mountains east of the Snake River and City of Blackfoot.
20. Probably this refers to the vicinity of Ft. Bridger on a branch of Green River and to the trappers of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the partnership of Fitzpatrick, Jackson, and Sublette. This was the company with which Meek, Newell and Gale were associated. Arrowsmith shows a white Mud River, which would be our Bear River.
21. Probably the same chief named The Horse in Mr. Ogden's journal.

From Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, Vol. XIV. (1913) pp. 280- 314

JOURNAL OF JOHN WORK'S SNAKE COUNTRY

---

EXPEDITION OF 1830-31

SECOND HALF

Editorial Notes by T. C. Elliott

This Quarterly printed in Vol. XIII., No. 4 the first installment of the journal of John Work, a trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, covering his trapping expedition to the Snake Country in the year 1830-31, with an editor's introduction; the second and final installment is now presented. The original of the first part of this journal was found in London but curiously enough this latter half comes from quite another source, namely from the family papers of the late William Fraser Tolmie of Victoria, B. C.; Dr. Tolmie married one of the daughters of John Work. No opportunity has been afforded for the writer of these notes to compare his copy with the original but some few apparent errors, chiefly in proper names, cannot affect its general reliability.

We left Mr. Work with his large party of trappers and their families on the 18th of March, 1831, at the Portneuf river in Southern Idaho, probably not far east of the present city of Pocatello; we now resume our acquaintance with him April 21st, a month later, on the upper waters of the Bannock river, south of the Portneuf. After very successful trapping here he follows down Snake river past American Falls to Raft river (Mr. Work designates this stream both as Raft and as Roche-Rock river, but evidently it was the former), and ascending that river to one of its sources he crosses the divide to the plain at the north end of Great Salt Lake. He was then not far from Kelton, Utah, a place which held prominence for a time after the completion of the Central Pacific Railway as the eastern terminus of the stage lines from Walla Walla, which was one of the regular lines of travel for people going East from Oregon and Washington. This stage line crosses the Snake river below Salmon Falls.

Mr. Work then proceeds westward across the divide to the waters of the Humboldt river (called by him Ogden's river) and for more than a month is upon the waters of the Humboldt flowing west and south and of the Bruneau and Owyhee flowing north, in northern Nevada. Late in June he turns north across Eastern Oregon by way of Malheur lake, Silvies river and the John Day river to his starting point at Fort Nez Perce at the mouth of the Walla Walla river. But little attempt will be made at long range to trace the itinerary closely. On this his first expedition into this region Mr. Work followed closely the track of his worthy predecessor, Peter Skene Ogden, in 1828-29, whose journals published in volumes X and XI of this Quarterly are now the more intelligible.

Thursday, April 21st, 1831. Stormy, raw, cold weather. Moved camp, and marched 10 miles S. E. up the river. [Bannock River] The river here is a narrow deep stream with steep clayey banks which have some willows growing upon them, and appear well adapted for beaver, a good many marks of which are to be seen. This little stream is not known ever to have been hunted by whites. Just above our last encampment it spreads into a kind of swamp which was probably taken by the hunters to be its source. The valley through which the river runs here is pretty wide, and seems to have been but a very short time free of snow, the mountains on each side of it have still a considerable depth upon them, and banks of it remain in sundry places along the shores of the river. The valley seems to produce little else but wormwood. There is a little coarse, dry grass in some points along the river. Owing to the unusual lateness of the spring the young grass is barely beginning to shoot up so that our horses, lean as they are, can gather very little to eat, which is much against

---

them and also retards our progress as it is out of power to make such day's journeys as we would wish. Some of the people went in pursuit of buffalo but with little success. Nearly all the people set their traps, only two beaver were taken. Two of the men, A. Findlay and A. Hoole, who went after buffalo towards the mountains discovered a party of 14 Blackfoot with 8 or 10 horses. The Indians immediately fled, and the men foolishly pursued them some distance before they returned to the camp. On their arrival a party immediately went in pursuit of them but could not overtake them. They had got across the mountain notwithstanding the depth of the snow. F. Payette and 4 or 5 of the half breeds ascended the mountains after them but it was too late to continue the pursuit and they returned. A mare and colt which they left in their hurry was brought to the camp. There were the tracks of some women and children with the party. It is conjectured that the horses were stolen from the Snakes and that the women and children were also of that nation and made slaves of by the Blackfeet. They threw away several cords in their haste. A. Letender, who was up the river setting his traps, saw three Blackfeet with a horse, they immediately went off. P. Brinn and L. Kanottan saw and pursued another party of 5 men, two of them in their haste to escape them threw away their robes and cords. It is to be regretted that the two men who saw the party with the horses did not come to apprise us at the camp immediately and the whole party with their horses would probably have been taken.

Friday, April 22nd. Cloudy, cold weather, some heavy rain and sleet in the night and fore part of the day. Did not move camp. The people visited their traps and set some more. Twenty-five beaver and one otter were taken. There is the appearance of a good many beaver.

Saturday, April 23rd. Stormy, cold weather. Moved camp 5 miles farther up the river in order to find some feeding for the horses, and even here the grass is very indifferent and scarcely any of it. Though there are few buffalo to be seen now they have been very numerous here a short time ago and eat up the most of what little grass was. The men visited their traps and took 33 beaver. The river here divides into two forks and falls in from the other rivers and the Costen from the south. The former is that which the Indians represented to be richest in beaver. We are mortified to find that as far as the men proceeded up it it is choked up with snow except in small spots here and there, and the valleys through which it runs, though of considerable extent, still covered with snow to a considerable depth in places 3 to 4 feet deep and farther up probably much deeper. The men who went farther up the south branch 15 and 20 miles suppose they have reached its head, a kind of swamp; here though the valley is larger than in the other branch yet the snow lies equally deep, and farther on through a fine valley appears still deep. The wormwood is covered with the snow. In this state of the snow we can neither trap these little rivers in the mountains nor attempt to cross the mountains without the risk of losing some of our horses from the depth of snow and want of food. The only step we can take now is to abandon this road and seek another pass more practicable. It would take too much time to wait till the snow melts. Thus are the prospects of the little hunt which we expected to make of 600 or 700 beaver in this quarter blasted. The unprecedented lateness of the spring is greatly against our operations. The oldest hands even in the severest winters never witnessed the season so late. The men saw some buffalo on the verge of the snow, probably they had been driven there by the Blackfeet Indians whom we found here. The people killed some of the buffalo but they were so lean that they were scarcely eatable. Three of the men drew a herd of bulls into a bank of snow yesterday and killed 16 of them.

---

Sunday, April 24th. Frost in the morning, clear, cold weather for the season during the day. The men visited their traps, 14 beaver were taken. The water is rising, which is against the trappers. Two of the men saw 6 Blackfeet Indians high up the river yesterday, they made to the mountains. Some were prowling about our camp last night the tracks of two who passed close to in the night were observed this morning.

Monday, April 25th. Cloudy, cold weather. Returned down the river to near our encampment of the 20th. The people visited the traps but only one beaver was taken. The water in this little river rose several feet in the night. Though only a day's journey from our encampment of this morning there is a material difference in the appearance of the country. Vegetation has here made considerable progress, and we found pretty good feeding for our horses.

Tuesday, April 26th. Rained the greater part of the day, bright in the morning but heavy towards evening. Moved camp and marched 10 miles S. W. across a point to Snake river. Here we had the satisfaction to find excellent feeding for our horses. One beaver was taken in the morning. The men were out in different directions setting their traps. Some buffalo were seen and two or three of them were killed in the plains, they are still very lean. The hunters observed the fresh tracks of some parties of Blackfeet, and thought they saw one on horseback. One of the party had a few horses with them which they had probably stolen from the Snakes.

Wednesday, April 27th. Heavy rain in the night, and stormy with rain all day. The unfavorable weather deterred us from raising camp. The people revisited their traps, and set some more. Twenty beaver were taken, 16 of them in a small rivulet towards the foot of the mountains, which appear never to have been trapped nor even known notwithstanding parties of trappers having so frequently passed this road. C. Plant, M. Plant, Bt. Dubrille and J. Desland found it yesterday.

Thursday, April 28th. Cloudy, fair weather. Moved camp and proceeded 6 miles down Snake river to near the American falls, here we had good feeding for the horses. All hands out visiting and setting their traps. Twenty-two beaver and two otter were taken, 11 of the beaver from the little creek in the plains. Below the rapids there is some little appearance of beaver notwithstanding the Americans passed this way last fall. Some of our hunters had trapped big river down to near the falls early in the spring.

Friday, April 29th. Stormy weather, very heavy rain mixed with hail and sleet. The unfavorable weather deterred us from moving camp but it did not prevent the people from visiting their traps and setting several more. 19 beaver were taken.

Saturday, April 30th. Heavy overcast weather with some rain in the morning. Cloudy, fine weather afternoon. The unfavorable appearance of the weather in the morning prevented us from raising camp. The men visited their traps and took 50 beaver in a small creek called the big storm river. This little stream appears to have been hunted by the Americans last fall, yet there are marks of beaver being still pretty numerous. Several of the people's horses became jaded and gave up by the

John Work's Journal

---

way, some had to be left behind, and it was dark by the time others reached the encampment. The poor horses are still so lean and weak that they are unable to bear any kind of a hard day's work. They are in much want of a week's repose and good feeding, but the lateness of the season will not admit of our allowing them so much.

Sunday, May 1st, 1831. Heavy, cloudy weather, some showers in the afternoon. Moved camp and proceeded 12 miles S. by W. across a point to the little creek [Rock Creek] where the people have their traps set near the mountains, the road, though a little hilly, was good, considerable patches of snow occupying the north side of the little hills and the bottoms of the deep gullies. This little river is a narrow deep stream resembling the river Bannock, running between steep clayey banks. Where we are encamped is at the entrance of the mountains, the valley is not wide and no wood but some willows on the banks of the river. There is pretty good feeding here for the horses, but farther up the valley, where the snow has but lately disappeared, the men represent the grass as very indifferent, in many places scarcely any. All hands visited their traps, 65 beaver and 1 otter were brought to the camp, but the greater part of them were taken yesterday and left in cache. The traps this morning did not yield according to expectation.

Monday, May 2nd. Cloudy, fine weather, some showers in the afternoon. Did not move camp in order to allow the horses to feed, pretty good grass being at this place, and to allow the men time to take up their traps before we descend again to the Snake river. Some of the people have been up this river as far as there is any wood or beaver. 11 beaver were taken. Some of the men set their traps in the big river.

Tuesday, May 3rd. Cloudy, fine, warm weather forenoon; stormy with thunder and some rain towards evening. Moved camps, and proceeded 10 miles S. W. to the Snake river, where we encamped among hills on the small crawfish river. The road very hilly and fatiguing on the horses, many of whom were much fatigued on making the encampment. They were recompensed by excellent grazing. The men were on ahead setting their traps. 12 beaver and 1 otter were taken.

Wednesday, May 4th. Cloudy, stormy weather. Marched 10 miles W. S. W. to Raft river which we fell upon 10 or 15 miles from its junction with Snake river. The road good but very hilly the forepart of the journey. Raft river is now very high and muddy owing to the melting of the snow. There are some appearance of beaver in it though this part of it was hunted by the Americans last fall. The men visited and changed their traps. 11 beaver were taken. Some tracks of buffalo were seen on the opposite side of Snake river, and the tracks of some herds ascending the river. We have, if possible, to procure a stock of provisions as we have a long way to march through a country nearly destitute of animals of any kind, and this is the last place where we are likely to find any buffalo.

Thursday, May 5th. Cloudy, stormy weather, thunder and some very heavy rain towards morning. Marched 5 miles south up the river, when we encamped, and sent the most of the people after a large herd of buffalo which was discovered feeding in the mountain. Our horses have improved a little and are now able to catch them. The buffalo are beginning to get a little older, and though

scarcely the appearance of fat is to be found on the meat, is tolerably palatable. The people visited their traps in the morning, 14 beaver were taken. Gave orders for the people not to go ahead lest they would disturb the buffalo and drive them farther off.

Friday, May 6th. Cloudy, fine weather. Did not move camp in order to allow the people to dry the meat which was killed yesterday. The buffalo are so lean now that they scarcely yield as much dry meat, and of an inferior quality, as one would do in the fall or early part of the winter. 5 beaver were taken.

Saturday, May 7th. Cloudy, fine weather. Marched 12 miles south up the river. The road good, but very indifferent feeding for the horses. A number of the people went after a herd of buffalo which was grazing on the opposite side of the river, and killed several, the meat of which the women are now busy drying. It is fortunate we find buffalo here as it saves us the trouble of going a long day's march to the Eastward, to a place out into the plains called the Fountain where buffalo are always said to be found. It would lose at least three days going to this plain. I had some trouble in preventing some of the men from running ahead of the camp with their traps and raising the animals. Some of them want no provisions themselves and are indifferent whether others have it in their power to get any or not. By missing the opportunity of collecting a little provisions now the people would be obliged to eat several of their horses before reaching the Fort, [Fort Nez Perce] as animals of any kind are uncertain. (?) beaver were taken.

Sunday, May 8th. Cloudy, fine weather. Marched 12 miles south up the river. The road still good, but grass for the horses very indifferent. A number of the people went in pursuit of a large herd of buffalo which was feeding on the opposite shore of the river, and killed a number of them, the meat of which is now being dried. Blackfeet are still following our camp. Two of the young men, who went out into the plain yesterday to discover buffalo, saw them, but were not sure, on account of the haze, whether it was men or antelopes. Two of the men who went back this morning for some traps which they had (left) behind saw the Indians coming to our camp after all the people had left it some time. (?) beaver were taken.

Monday, May 9th. Fine weather. Did not move camp in order to give the people time to kill some more buffalo. Some large herds were found at the foot of the mountains on this side of the river, a number of whom were killed. The most of the people have now nearly enough provisions, what little a few of the people still want we expect to find as we advance up the river. Some marks of Blackfeet were seen near the camp this morning. In the morning the buffalo were observed flying from the mountains to the eastward, and it is conjectured they were disturbed by a band of those marauders.

Tuesday, May 10th. Unpleasant, stormy weather. Raised camp, and proceeded 10 miles south up the river, the Roche, [Must refer to branch of Raft, not Rock river] where it becomes confined in a narrow valley. Here we found good feeding for the horses. No buffalo to be seen today until towards evening when a small band were observed in the mountain. Some of the people went after them, but only one was killed. One of the men, M. Plante, who went after the buffaloes was

behind the others when returning and discovered a Blackfoot Indian on horseback and fired upon him but missed. The Indian made off towards the mountain, when five other Blackfeet were observed afoot. These scamps are still following us seeking an opportunity to steal.

Wednesday, May 11th. Cloudy, rather cold weather. Marched 10 miles S. S. W. up the river, the road good. We deviated a little from our straight road today in order to send off a party of our men to hunt in another direction tomorrow. The people visited some traps which were set yesterday and took 6 beaver. No buffalo nor the marks of any to be seen today.

Thursday, May 12th. Fine weather in the morning, but heavy rain and snow and very cold afterwards. Raised camp and marched 10 miles across the mountains, and encamped on a small rivulet of snow water. The head of Raft river appears in a deep valley to the west of us. The road on the mountains hilly and rugged and some places stony, and in places very boggy. The snow still lies in banks of considerable depth, and appears but very recently to have disappeared off most of the ground. The grass is barely beginning to spring up except on small spots exposed to the south, which has been some time clear of snow, where vegetation has made some progress. From the very ruggedness of the road and the badness of tile weather this was a harassing day both on horses and people. For want of water we could not encamp sooner. In order that we may make a better I separated a party this morning and sent 8 men, viz. C. Plante (who is in charge of the party), J. Deslard, F. Champagne, L. Rondeau, L. Quenstall, A. Dumarais, Bt. Dubrielle and A. Longtin to hunt to the Westward on the heads of small rivers which run into Snake river and on the Eastern fork of Sandwich Island River, [Owyhee river] while I with the remainder of the party proceed to the southward to Ogden's river, and then to the head of Sandwich Island river. Plante was directed to push on and make a good encampment today so that he might get out of the reach of the Blackfeet who are still following our track, but instead of doing so some of the people who went in pursuit of a horse that followed the party found the encampment only a few miles from our last night's station. If they push on they will in a short time be out of the reach of the Blackfeet.

Friday, May 13th. Raw, cold weather, froze keen in the night. Marched 15 miles S. E. to the entrance to the plain [Near to Kelton, Utah] of Great Salt Lake. The road very hilly and rugged, numerous gullies to pass, several of which are still full of snow, through which the horses sometimes with difficulty dragged themselves. Nearly all this day's journey through the mountains the snow has but recently disappeared even in patches, and the grass is still so imbedded with water that the horses nearly bog in it. Except a few spots here and there the grass is barely beginning to shoot up, and in many places vegetation is not yet commenced. Where we are encamped there is a little grass for the horses. This was a fatiguing day on both men and horses, many of the latter with difficulty reached the encampment.

Saturday, May 14th. Cloudy, cold weather. Marched 12 miles S. along the foot of the mountains, and encamped on a small river on Mr. Ogden's usual road to Odgen's river. The road today was good and pretty level though intersected by several gullies, some of which are still full of snow. The mountains to the West are still partially covered with snow, and appear very rugged. To the eastward lies the great plain thickly studded with clumps of hills. About this neighborhood we

expected to find some buffalo, and that such of the people as are short of provisions would furnish themselves with some more, but not the mark of a buffalo is to be seen. There are a good many antelopes in the plains and some black-tail chevereau.

Sunday, May 15th. Cloudy, fine weather. The air rather cool in the neighborhood of the snow-clad mountains. Proceeded on our journey 8 miles south, when we encamped on a small rivulet which barely yields sufficient water for the horses. No water being found near was the cause of our putting up so early at this place. The road lay along the foot of the mountains, and though hilly was good. It was intersected by several gullies, some of which are still full of snow. Large hills and points of mountains lay below us and the plains than yesterday. Found an old Snake Indian woman who said her people were encamped near some of the people: also found three men of the same nation with horses. These people seldom venture from the mountains, they are now employed collecting roots, none of them have yet ventured to our camp.

Monday, May 16th. Cloudy, cool weather in the morning, fine weather afterwards. Continued our route 13 miles south to what is called the Fountain, which is a small spring of indifferent brackish water in the plain where the soil is mixed with saline matter. Not only water is scarce here but there is very little grass for our horses. The road though hilly is pretty good, it lay down a deep gully and over several hills before we reached the plain. Ranges of mountains covered with snow ran to the westward, besides the plain is studded with detached hills, several of which are still covered with snow. On reaching the plain it appears to be eastward like an immense lake with black, rocky hills, here and there like islands large tracts of the plain appear perfectly white and destitute of any kind of vegetation it is said to be composed of white clay. A small lake appears in it at some distance. To the South E. is the Utah lake and river, to the southward the ( ? ) is said to be destitute of water for a long way, yet snow-capped mountains appear in that direction. We found a few Snake Indians encamped here, and a party of 20 men visited us from farther out in the plain. Some leather and other trifles were traded from them by the people.

Tuesday, May 17th. Fine weather. Continued our march 10 miles W. S. W. to small rivulet of indifferent brackish water which winds through a salt, marshy valley. There is pretty good feeding for the horses. The road pretty good and level though there are detached hills on each side of us. The rivulet is lost in the plain a little below our encampment.

Wednesday, May 18th. Fine, warm weather. Proceeded 7 miles W. S. W. up the little rivulet, which continues of the same appearance and about the same size. We encamped early on account of no water being to be found farther on. Tomorrow we have a very long encampment to make.

Thursday, May 19th. Cloudy, fine, warm weather. Continued our journey at an early hour and marched 25 miles S. S. W. to a range of mountains which we crossed, and then across a plain to a small rivulet which we found unexpectedly in the middle of it. The road good but hilly crossing the mountains. Not a drop of water to be had all the way. We found water near two hours march sooner than we expected, yet several of the horses were much jaded, some of them nearly giving up. That and the dirt were more oppressive upon them than the distance they came. The

John Work's Journal

---

mountains round this valley [Grouse Creek Valley] and plain are not very high, yet in places still covered with snow. The track of elk, black-tail deer are seen in the mountains but could not be approached. Cabins (?) are seen in the plains, but all very shy. The hunters saw some Indians; the naked wretches fled to the mountains. None of them visited our camp.

Friday, May 20th. Fine, warm weather. Continued our course 12 miles S. S. W. across the plain where we encamped on a small stream of brackish water which runs through salt marsh, and in a short distance is lost in the plain.

Saturday, May 21st. Fine weather, a thunder storm and a little rain. Proceeded on our journey 16 miles W. S. W. over a rough, stony though not high mountain, and then across a plain to a lake, where we had the satisfaction to find good water. The road over the mountains stony and rugged, but across the plain very good. A range of high mountains covered with snow appear ahead of us. Some antelopes are seen in the plains, but no appearance of any other animals.

Sunday, May 22nd. Sultry, warm weather. Marched 20 miles W. N. W. to the W. end of a steep snowy mountain, there we encamped in a small creek which rises from the mountain, the waters of which are lost in the plains below. This morning we left Mr. Ogden's track to Ogden's river in hopes to reach the river sooner and fall upon it a few day's march higher up than the usual route. Our road good, lay through an extensive plain. From the heat of the day and the distance marched the horses were much jaded and the people fatigued on nearing the encampment. However, we have good water and excellent feeding for the horses. Several naked starved looking Indians visited the camp. We have been seeing the tracks of these people every day, but seldom any of them venture to approach us.

Monday, May 23rd. Warm weather. Continued our journey at an early hour and marched 16 miles W. N. W. through a small defile across the end of the mountain and down a plain to the E. fork of Ogden's [Humboldt] river. This branch river runs through a low part of the plain which is now a swamp owing to the height of the water, the river having overflowed its banks. Several of the people were ahead both up and down the river with their traps. No vestiges of beaver are to be seen on the fork where we are encamped, though some of the people ascended it to near the mountains. In the middle or principal fork the water is so high that the river can only be approached in places the banks being overflowed and the low ground in its neighborhood inundated it is difficult to discern any marks of beaver, nevertheless, several traps were set at a venture.

Tuesday, May 24th. Warm, sultry weather. Marched 15 miles W. N. W. across the plain to the middle fork of the river. We had some difficulty crossing the E. fork, several of the horses bogged in its swampy banks. The road across the plain pretty good; the low ground through which the river runs is nearly all flooded. The river here has a good deal of willows on its banks. Only three beaver were taken. The people begin to apprehend there are but few beaver in the river, and from the height of the water these few cannot be taken. This part of the river was hunted two years ago by a party of hunters which Mr. Ogden sent this way, they found a good many beaver and supposed the river was not clean trapped.

Wednesday, May 25th. Overcast, thunder and heavy rain afternoon. Proceeded 10 miles up the river which here runs from N. to S., the road good, the banks of the river everywhere overflowed. Four beaver and 1 otter were taken. The part of the river we passed today is well-wooded with willows, and appears well-adapted for beaver, yet few appear to be in it. A party of Indians visited our camp this morning and exchanged two horses with the people. Some of the people were out hunting. F. Payette and L. Kanotti killed each an antelope. These are the only animals to be seen here, and they are so shy that it is difficult to kill any of them. Several of the people are getting short of provisions, and not finding beaver here as was expected is discouraging the people.

Thursday, May 26th. Overcast weather, blowing fresh. Did not raise camp in order to allow our horse to feed and repose a little, of which they are in much want, they having been nearly 16 days without one day's rest, they are all very lean and many of them much jaded. I was still expecting to find some beaver that we might allow the horses to recruit a little and hunt at the same time, and was induced to push on even to the injury to some of the horses. The people visited their traps but only four beaver were taken. Those who went farther up the river bring no better accounts of the appearance of beaver. The water is falling a little above. A party of Snake Indians visited us. They informed us that there are a few small streams in the mountains where there are a few beaver.

Friday, May 27th. Cloudy, fine weather. Continued our journey 12 miles up the river to a small branch which falls in from the north, the main stream running here from the west. The head of this small fork is close to the head of the Big Stone [probably Salmon river] river which falls into Snake river. The road pretty good till we reached the fork, where, on account of the water, it is a perfect bog and we had much difficulty in crossing it, several of the horses bogged and some of the things were wet. 4 beaver were taken. No better signs of beaver. Some of the people were hunting antelopes, which are the only animals to be seen here, but only one was killed.

Saturday, May 28th. Stormy, cold weather. Proceeded on our journey 16 miles up the river west to above where it is enclosed between steep, rocky hills. The road part of the way very hilly and rugged and so stony that the horses ran much risk of breaking their legs. Here we found a place where the river is fordable. The water has subsided a little within these few days. During this day's march the river is well wooded with poplar and willows, yet there is very little appearance of beaver, only three were taken today. Four of the young men who left the camp on the 25th arrived in the evening. They struck across the country to the W. fork of the river which they ascend to the mountains, and did not find a mark of a beaver to induce them to put a trap in the wet. That branch, like the one we are on, has overflowed its banks. The young men on the way here passed two small streams which run towards Snake river.

Sunday, May 20th. Stormy, raw, cold weather. Crossed the river in the morning and proceeded across the mountains 10 miles S. S. W. to a small stream which falls into Bruneau river. The road hilly and rugged and very swampy on the banks of the little river which we crossed. There is still a good deal of snow in large banks in the mountains, it appears not to have been long since it disappeared in the valleys as the grass is still very short and vegetation but little advanced. A few of the people who imagined the river was not fordable above remained at a narrow part in the rocks yes-

John Work's Journal

---

terday evening and made a bridge by felling trees so that they fell across the river over which they carried their baggage but in crossing their horses, one belonging to G. R. Rocque was drowned.

Monday, May 30th. Mild weather in the morning, which was succeeded by a violent thunder storm which continued a considerable time. Stormy, cold weather during the remainder of the day. The unfavorable weather deterred us from raising camp.

Thursday, May 31st. Stormy, cold weather, some showers in the morning, and a heavy snow storm in the evening, keen frost last night. Continued our journey 13 miles across the mountains to a small stream which we suppose falls into Sandwich Island river. The road very hilly and rugged, being over a number of deep gullies. There is also a good deal of snow on the mountains, some bars of which we had to cross. The country has a bare appearance. Not an animal except a chance antelope to be seen.

Friday, June 1st. Keen frost in the night, stormy, cold weather during the day. Continued our route 12 miles W. across the mountains and down into the valley where a number of small branches fell in from the mountains and formed the head of the E. fork of Sandwich Island river. This little valley is about 20 miles long and 15 wide. A small fork falls in from the S., 2 from the eastward, one from the W., all of which form one stream which runs to the N. W. through a narrow channel bordered by steep, impassable rocks. The different forks in the valley have some willows on the banks and seem well adapted for beaver, yet the men who have been out in every direction setting the traps complain that the marks of beaver are scarce. The water has been lately very high and all the plain overflowed, though this valley has not been known ever to have been hunted, but is now subsiding. To the southward there is a small height of land which separates the waters of this river from a fork of Ogden's river, to the westward there is a high rugged mountain covered with snow. Our road today was very rugged and hilly, and in many places boggy, the snow having but very recently gone off the ground, indeed, we passed over several banks of it.

Saturday, June 1st. Fine weather. We are like to be devoured by mosquitoes. Did not raise camp that we might see what beaver might be taken. The people visited and changed their traps. Only 12 beaver were taken, which is nothing for the number of traps, 150, which were in the water, and what is worse the men complain there is little signs of any more worth while being got. Several of the people were out hunting, but with little success, which I regret as provisions are getting pretty scarce in the camp. Not an animal to be seen but antelopes and but few of them, and even these are so shy that it is difficult to approach them. There are some cranes in the valley but almost as difficult to be got at as the antelopes. The hunters observe the tracks of some sheep in the mountains, but they appear to have been driven off by some straggling Indians whose tracks are seen. Altogether this is a very poor country. Owing to the lateness of the Spring the Indians who frequent these parts to collect roots have not yet assembled so that even a few roots, bad as they are, are not to be got to assist those who are scarce of food.

Sunday, June 3rd. Cloudy, fine weather. Continued our journey 12 miles S. S. W. to a branch of Ogden's river where it issues from a steep, snow covered mountain. This stream is well wood-

ed with poplar and willows, and appears well adapted for beaver, yet the people found only one solitary lodge in it and scarcely a mark of beaver either old or new, though they examined it for a considerable distance. One man set a few traps. Seven of the men: A. Findlay, P. Findlay, M. Findlay, M. Plante. A. Plante, Bt. Gardipie and Soteatix St. Germain, separated from the party this morning in order to proceed down the river, if practicable and thence by the usual road to the fort by Snake river, and endeavor to pick up a few beaver by the way, but principally to procure some animals to subsist on. These men are all half Indians, some of them with large families, and placing too much reliance on their capacity as hunters did not take so much precaution as the other men to provide a stock of food previous to leaving the buffalo, they are, therefore, now entirely out of provisions, and it is expected they will have a little chance of killing antelopes and cheveau when only a few than when the camp is all together. 7 beaver were taken this morning, making 19 in all in this valley where we expected to make a good hunt.

Monday, June 4th. Very stormy, cold weather. Crossed the mountains a distance of 18 miles S. S. W. to a small stream which falls into the W. branch of Sandwich Island river. The road very hilly and rugged and in places stony: we had several banks of snow to pass. The road was in places nearly barred with burnt fallen wood. The little fork, where we are encamped, is well wooded with poplar and willows, yet only in two places are the marks of beaver to be seen. Some of them men have proceeded on to the main branch and set 22 traps where they saw the appearance of some beaver.

Tuesday, June 5th. Stormy, cold weather. Continued our route 9 miles S. S. W. to the main branch of the river, road hilly and rugged. Crossed a small stream with a number of hot springs on its banks, some of them near a boiling temperature. The river here has been lately very high, and overflowed its banks, but the waters are subsiding, and river about 10 yards wide. Have fallen a good deal. The traps which were set yesterday produced only 6 beaver. This seems to be a miserably poor country, not even an antelope to be seen on the plains. The tracks of some sheep are to be seen on the mountains, but they are so shy there is no approaching them. Some Indians visited our camp this morning and traded a few roots, but the quantity was very small.

Wednesday, June 6th. Stormy, cold weather. Did not raise camp. The men went out in different directions with their traps. Those which were in the water yesterday, provided 14 beaver. The men begin to have a little more expectations. The Indians stole two traps in the night, one from Kanota and one from A. Hoole. There is no means of pursuing or finding out the thief as they ran to the mountains. There is no doubt they came to attempt stealing the horses, but not finding an opportunity they fell in with and carried off the traps.

Thursday, June 7th. Still raw, cold weather, blowing fresh. Some of the people went with the traps to some small streams which fell in from the eastward which was not hunted by Mr. Ogden's people when they hunted here two years ago. They saw the appearance of a few beaver.

Friday, June 8th. Weather mild these three days past. Moved a few miles down the river to a better situation for the horses and where we will be a little nearer the people with their traps. 17 beaver

---

John Work's Journal

---

were taken. Some of the people moved their traps a little farther down the river. The road is very hilly, rugged and stony. Some Indians visited our camp this morning with a few roots.

Saturday, June 9th. Did not raise camp. The people visited and changed their traps. 7 beaver were taken. Some of the men have not returned from the traps.

Sunday, June 10th. Cloudy, cold weather. Did not move camp. 18 beaver were taken. 2 traps stolen from Pichetto. The men who went farthest down the river returned and report that there are but small signs of beaver. Those from the forks to the eastward say there are a few there. Some Indians visited us with a few roots to trade. Miserably poor as these wretches are and the small quantity of roots they bring yet it provides several people with a meal occasionally which is very acceptable to them as provisions previous to the late supply of beaver was becoming very scarce among us.

Monday, June 11th. Warm, fine weather. Did not move camp. Several beaver were taken. There is still a chance beaver in the little forks to the eastward and down the river towards the rocks where the river bears so rapidly that no beaver are to be found, but not enough to employ all the people or worth while to delay for the season being so far advanced. We, therefore, intend to move up the river tomorrow and hunt the head of it.

Tuesday, June 12th. Cloudy, sultry weather in the morning, which was succeeded by thunder and heavy rain and hail, raw, cold weather afternoon. Raised camp and moved 7 miles up the river, where we had to encamp with the bad weather. 6 beaver were taken, two traps stolen from Pichette and 1 from Royer.

Wednesday, June 13th. Overcast, blowing fresh towards evening. Proceeded up the river [Head of Owyhee river] 11 miles S. S. W. to opposite a branch which falls in from the eastward. Here the trappers with Mr. Ogden crossed the mountains from Ogden's river to this plain two years ago. I meant to have taken the same road but have altered the plan by its being represented to me that several days will be saved and some bad stony road avoided by crossing the mountains farther to the southward, and falling upon Ogden river farther down. In this part of the river we will miss the few beaver to be expected. Some of the men visited the head of the river to the mountain, and two forks that fall in from the eastward to near the same, and though they are well-wooded and apparently well adapted for beaver, yet scarcely a mark of them is to be seen.

Thursday, June 14th. Fair weather. Continued our journey 18 miles across the mountains, viz.: S. W. 9 miles to the top of the mountains and S. 9 miles down the S. side of the mountains, the road hilly and uneven and in places stony. The mountains, though not high, have still patches of snow here and there upon them. Some of the people are out hunting but without success. A chance antelope is the only animal to be seen, and these are so shy that it is very difficult to approach them. The hunters saw three Indians, and the men who were on discovery yesterday saw some more, and their tracks are to be seen in every direction, yet none of them visit our camp.

Friday, June 15th. Fine, warm weather. Did not raise camp on account of one of the women being

---

brought to bed. Some of the people were out hunting but without success.

Saturday, June 16th. Fine weather. Continued our route 12 miles, S. over a number of hills and valleys to a small river where we encamped for the night. The road good, but here and there stony and generally gravelly and hard, which much wears down the horses' hoofs and renders their feet sore. These nights past we have had sharp frost, but here the weather is sultry, and we are annoyed with mosquitoes, which will neither give ourselves peace nor allow the poor horses to feed.

Sunday, June 17th. Fine, warm weather. Marched 21 miles S. S. W. along the side of an extensive plain to near Ogden's river. The plain here is partially overflowed and become a swamp, we can scarcely find a spot to encamp. Among the lodges the horses are nearly bogging, and to mend the matter we are like to be devoured by innumerable swarms of mosquitoes which do not allow us a moment's tranquillity, and so torment the horses that notwithstanding their long day's march they cannot feed. All hands are ahead of the camp with their traps, but found the river so high, having overflowed its banks, that they could not approach it except in chance places. Three of the men set 9 traps, which were all that could be put in the water. I much regret finding the river so high that it cannot be hunted as the people's last reliance was upon the few beaver which they expected to take in it in order to make up the hunt, but, more particularly, for food. The most of them are becoming very scarce of provisions, and they have now no other recourse but to kill horses. Some of the people nearly devoured their horses crossing the swamp on their way to the camp. They saw a small herd of antelopes in the plain, but they could not be approached. A few wild fowl were killed, of which there a good many in the swamp.

Monday, June 16th. Cloudy, warm, sultry weather. Pursued our journey 14 miles S. S. W. and 7 miles W. down the river. Marched longer today than intended not being able to find a place to encamp in consequence of the swamping of the banks of the river, which are almost everywhere overflowed. The men were sent along the river with their traps, but not one could be set. Only one beaver was taken in the 9 which were set yesterday. It is the opinion of the more experienced hunters that there are a few beaver still in this part of the river, but owing to the height of the water they cannot be taken. People passed twice this way about this season of the year before but never saw the water so high as at present. We expected to have found some Indians here and obtained some eatables from them, either roots or anything or another, but none are to be seen in consequence of the height of the water; they cannot remain on the river but are off to the mountains.

Tuesday, June 19th. Clear, very warm weather. Continued our journey 16 miles down the river which here runs to the N. W. The river is still full to the banks and all the low plains overflowed. The men again visited the river but could not put a trap in the water. Both people and horses are like to be devoured by innumerable swarms of mosquitoes and sand flies. The horses cannot feed they are so much annoyed by them, the banks of the river are so swampy that they bog when they approach to drink.

Wednesday, June 20. Overcast, thunder and very heavy rain afternoon. Continued our journey 19

John Work's Journal

---

miles to the N. W. along the river and then to the foot of the mountains, where we found a little water and some grass for the horses. These three days the river runs through an extensive plain, the mountains approach close to it. The farther we descend the river it becomes more difficult to approach on account of its banks being overflowed. Two of the men, J. Troupe and G. Rocque, killed a horse having nothing to eat, the provisions being all gone. On leaving the buffalo the people calculated on getting a few beaver and did not lay in such a stock of provisions as they otherwise would have done. This is really a miserable, poor country, not even an antelope to be seen.

Thursday, June 21. Cloudy, fine weather, blowing fresh in the morning. Proceeded across the mountain, and then across an extensive plain 20 miles W. to a small fork which falls into Ogden's river. By this route we saved two days' journey besides going round by the river. To our great disappointment and contrary to our expectations we found the little river had overflowed its banks and the plain in its neighborhood in a swamp so that we could not approach it; it is to be apprehended we will have much trouble crossing it. The different parties which formerly passed this way found this little creek with very little water in it. Several of the people were out hunting but did not see an animal. They expected to find some antelopes in the hills.

Friday, June 22nd. Warm, sultry weather. Proceeded up the river three miles N. N. W. and succeeded in crossing it by means of a bridge of willows. The river here is narrower but very deep with clayey banks so steep and soft that the horses could not get out of it were they thrown in to swim across. Too, near this plain its banks were so overflowed that it could not be approached. This was a hard day's work both on people and horses. The horses, as well as people, are like to be devoured by swarms of mosquitoes and gadflies. The river here is well flooded, and seems remarkably well adapted for beaver, yet there is not the least mark of any to be seen in it.

Saturday, June 23rd. Fine, warm weather. Continued our journey 15 miles W. N. W. across the plain to the foot of the mountains. We crossed two other forks of the same river we left in the morning, one of them much larger than it, but we found a good ford. Some Indians were seen along the mountains, but they fled on our approach.

Sunday, June 24th. Clear, fine weather. Crossed the mountain 19 miles W. N. W. Road very hilly and stony. From the steepness and highness of the mountain and the badness of the road this was a most harassing and fatiguing day on both men and horses. We find tracks of Indians but none of them approach us. The best hunters of the party were out in the mountains, which have still a good deal of snow on them, in in quest of sheep, but without success. They saw the tracks of some, but could not find them.

Monday, June 25th. Clear, warm weather. Marched seven miles N. N. E. along the foot of the mountain, and 15 miles across the plain to a little river which runs to the southward, and which we found impassable, its banks having been lately overflowed, and remain still like a quagmire. The best hunters are out, but as usual did not see a single animal of any sort. One of the men, P. O'Brien ( ? ), was under the necessity of killing one of his horses to eat. Thus are the people in this miserable country obliged to kill and feed upon these useful animals, the companions of their

John Work's Journal

---

labors. We passed a small Indian camp, but the poor, frightened wretches fled on our appearance and concealed themselves among the wormwood. Only two men who were on ahead saw any of them.

Tuesday, June 26th. Very warm, sultry weather. Marched five miles N. up the river to a place where we crossed one of its forks with little trouble, but the other which was close, too, was very difficult, the men had to wade across it with the baggage, its banks are like a morass, and several of the horses bogged so that they had to be dragged out. Crossed a plain five miles N. N. W. to another fork, which we crossed without further difficulty than bogging a few of the horses. This was a most harassing and fatiguing day both on men and horses.

Wednesday, June 27th. Blowing fresh, yet very warm weather. Continued our march 15 miles N. W. along the foot of the mountains to a small rivulet which falls into the river we passed yesterday. The road good but in places stony and embarrassed with wormwood. The hunters were out today but without success. Two antelopes were seen yesterday, which was a novelty.

Thursday, June 28th. Very warm weather, though blowing fresh the after part of the day. Proceeded on our journey 23 miles N. W. along the foot of the mountains, crossed the head of the river we left two days ago, and over the hill to a small rivulet, which is said to be a fork of the Owhyhee river. The road good, but in places stony. The hunters were out. F. Payette had the good fortune to kill a male antelope. One of the men saw four sheep on the plain, but did not kill any of them.

Friday, June 29th. Blowing fresh, which rendered the weather a little cool and pleasant. Marched 28 miles N. N. W. first across a plain and salt swamp and over a range of hills and across another valley, part of which has the appearance of the bed of a lake, but is quite dry and hard, and encamped near the foot of a mountain covered with snow. The road in some places stony, and from the length of the encampments very fatiguing both on horses and people, neither of which have a moment's quietness either to feed or repose, they are so annoyed with immense swarms of mosquitoes. The hunters were out, but without success. They saw the tracks of some antelopes and sheep. Some Indian tracks were seen, but none of them approach us, some of them had horses.

Saturday, June 30th. Warm and very sultry in the morning, a breeze of wind afterwards. Continued our journey along the foot of the mountains [Stein's Mountains] 18 miles N. by W., the road good. Passed two small lakes, in one of which the people found a good many eggs. S. Kanota killed an antelope, and F. Payette a young one. A. Letendre had to kill one of his horses to eat.

Sunday, July 1st. Fine weather. Our road lay along the foot of the mountains 12 miles N. W. Part of the road very hilly and very stony. The stony road and continual mounting wearing out the horses' hoofs and rendering them lame. Though the mountains in our neighborhood have still patches of snow on them, the little creek where we are encamped barely affords sufficient water for the horses to drink. The hunters killed nothing today. J. Despard killed one of his horses.

Monday, July 2nd. Fine weather. Continued our journey N. W. 19 miles to Sylvalle's Lake. [Mal-

John Work's Journal

---

heur Lake] The road part of the day stony. and the water brackish and so very bad that it is like a vomit to drink it. The hunters were out but without success. There are a number of wild fowl in the lake, but they are so shy that they cannot be approached.

Tuesday, July 3d. Warm, sultry weather, a thunder storm in the evening. Our road lay along the lake and across a point to Sylvalle's River [Silvies' River] in rather a circuitous road, nearly W. N. W. 20 miles. The road good. Some of the men set a few traps, they saw the appearance of a chance beaver.

Wednesday, July 4th. Very warm, but blowing fresh afternoon. Continued our journey up the river is miles N. N. W. to the first rocks. The horses like to be devoured by gadflies. F. Payette went to hunt yesterday and returned today with two antelopes. L. Kanota also killed two. The traps which were set yesterday produced four beaver.

Thursday, July 5th. Very warm weather. Did not raise camp in order to allow the horses to repose, of which they are in much need, they having marched 19 days successively without stopping a day to rest. They have been becoming lean for some time back and their hoofs are so much worn that some of them are becoming lame. The most of the people set their traps yesterday, 13 beaver were taken. The hunters were out. A. Houle killed a chevereau and the boy, Prevost, an antelope. Four Indians paid us a visit; they had nothing with them to trade; they received a few trifles, and promised to return with some roots to trade.

Friday, July 6th. Fine weather. Marched about 18 miles N. N. W. across a point, and fell again upon the river, by this road it is shorter than by following all the turns of the river. The people out with the traps, five beaver and one otter taken. In the morning one of the men arrived with a load of young herons, he found a place where they were very numerous. Some more of the people who are short of food immediately went to get a supply. These birds are very fat. Some of the people say they are very good, others say that they are scarcely eatable. Some of the people went off to hunt and have not yet returned. Fine weather.

Saturday, July 7th. Continued our journey 20 miles up the river N. N. W. Road stony, hilly and uneven. Five beaver were taken. The hunters arrived. A. Houle killed one elk and three black-tailed chevereau, and the boy, Prevost, one young elk. The men with the camp caught a wounded deer out of the river.

Sunday, July 8th. Fine weather. Proceeded up the river 15 miles N. N. W. to the head of the second valley. Three beaver were taken. Some antelopes seen crossing the valley, but none taken.

Monday, July 9th. Fine, warm weather, blowing fresh afternoon. Left the river which is enclosed by steep hills, and struck across the hills and fell upon the river at the head of the upper valley at the foot of the mountains, a distance of 13 miles N. W. The road good. The hills we passed in the morning well timbered with lofty pines, the valley is clear of wood except some willows along the different forks of the river. Two hunters were out. A. Hoole killed an antelope, and T. Senatoen a

chiveau.

Tuesday, July 10th. Very warm weather, still a breeze of wind in the afterpart of the day. Crossed the mountains to Day's River [John Day river] a distance of 22 miles N.W. The road very hilly and steep, particularly the N. side of the mountain. The mountain is thickly wooded with tall pine timber. Both people and horses much fatigued on nearing the camp, part of the road stony. Day's River is well wooded with poplar and willows. Two Indians visited our camp this morning and traded five beaver.

Wednesday, July 11th. Very warm sultry weather. Proceeded down the river 16 miles W. Parts of the road hilly and stony and very fatiguing on the horses, several of whom gave up on the way and with difficulty reached the camp. Some of the men set a few traps yesterday and took two beaver this morning.

Thursday, July 12th. Very warm weather. Continued our route down the river, which still runs to the westward 11 miles, when we stopped near a camp of Snake Indians who have the river barred across for the purpose of catching salmon. We, with difficulty, obtained a few salmon from them perhaps enough to give all hands a meal. They are taking very few salmon, and are complaining of being hungry themselves. No roots can be obtained from them, but some of the men traded two or three dogs, but even the few of these animals they have are very lean, a sure sign of a scarcity of food among Indians. We found two horses with these people who were stolen from the men which I left on Snake River in September last. They gave up the horses without hesitation, and said they had received them from another band that are in the mountains with some more horses which were stolen at the same time. It appears from the account that early in the spring some Snakes stole 13 horses from these men at the same time, and immediately made their way to this quarter with them. The uncertainty of finding the Indians with the rest of the horses in the mountains, the fatigued state of our horses, the advanced state of the Season, and above all the scarcity of food among the people deters me from sending some men in search of those horses. I have offered the Indians a reward if they will go and bring them. I also offered them a little remuneration for the two they had here. Part of the way today the road lay over rugged rocks on the banks of the river, and was very hard on the already wounded feet of the horses. Five beaver were taken in the morning.

Friday, July 13th. Fine weather. Did not raise camp in order to repose the horses for a little. Only three or four salmon could be obtained from the Indians. They complain of being starving themselves. One beaver was taken.

Saturday, July 14th. Cool, pleasant weather. Continued our journey down the river 25 miles W. The road very hilly and stony. The horses jaded and the people exhausted on reaching the encampment. Only three or four salmon could be obtained from the Indians in the morning before we started.

Sunday, July 15th. Fine, cool, pleasant weather. Continued our course W. eight miles down the

John Work's Journal

---

river to another fork [North fork of John Day river] equally as large, which falls in from the N., up which we proceeded seven miles. The road continued hilly and stony. These two days the people found great quantities of currants along the banks of the river.

Monday, July 16th. Fine weather. Proceeded eight miles N. E. up the river, then we took a northern direction for eleven miles across the mountains, which was here thickly wooded, the road in places very stony and very hilly and uneven, and very fatiguing both on men and horses. The hunters were out, but without success except one deer which F. Payette killed. Unfortunately we have but very indifferent feeding for the horses after the hard day's work.

Tuesday, July 17th. Fine weather. Continued our journey across the mountains 25 miles N. W. The country the same in appearance as yesterday until we got out of the woods in the after part of the day, when the road lay over a number of naked stony hills. [Southwest of Pendleton] The length of the day's journey and the badness of the road rendered this a harrassing day both on men and horses. Some fresh tracks of red deer were seen in the course of the day, but they could not be come up with.

Wednesday, July 18th. Cool in the morning but very sultry, warm weather afterwards. Proceeded ahead of the camp early in the morning accompanied by seven men and arrived at Fort Nezperces in the afternoon. Mainly through there being soft sand during the heat of the day was excessively oppressive on the horses as well as the riders.

Thursday, July 19th. Stormy but warm weather. The different parties who separated from the camp have arrived, Plante and party yesterday, the others some time ago. The party whom I left in September had the misfortune to lose the whole of the horses, nearly 30 in number, early in the spring. They imprudently allowed them to stray a short distance from the camp where there were a few Indians in the evening about sunset. The loss was the result of a great degree of negligence on the part of the men. They also put what few skins they had with, other articles in cache which the Indians found and carried off, from a pack to a pack and a half of the few beaver they had. The half breeds lost two of the horses by theft, and made but very few skins. Plant and party also found very few beaver, but they lost no horses.

Friday, July 20th. Fine weather. The people whom I left two days ago arrived safe. Since our spring journey commenced we have traveled upward of 1000 miles, and from the height of the water and scarcity of beaver we have very little for the labor and trouble which we experienced. Previous to taking up our winter quarters last fall we traveled upwards of 980 miles, which, with the different moves made during the winter makes better than 2000 miles traveled during our voyage.

Total loss of horses during the voyage, 82, viz.: Stolen by the Blackfeet when P. L. Clay was killed, 3; stolen by the Snake Indians from A. Case and party, 22; stolen by the Snake Indians from my party during winter, 3; stolen by the Snake Indians from the half-breeds in summer after leaving me, 2; died or gave up on the way previous to reaching the three hill plains in the fall, 1 by Toupin, 1 by Dumas, and 3 by the half breeds when they left the party on Salmon River, 5; died or

John Work's Journal

---

left crossing the plain in the fall, 26; died during the winter, 11; killed for food by A. Carson and party, 3; killed for food by my party during summer, 5; killed for food by C. Plante's party during summer, 1; drowned crossing a river by Royer, 1 ; total, 82.

From: Oregon Historical Quarterly XXIV (1923) pp. 238-268

[Note: this web page uses tables. If your browser isn't able to display tables, the editor's comments will appear after the corresponding journal entry, in italicized text.]

John Work's Journey from Fort Vancouver to Umpqua River, and Return, in 1834

Introduction and Comments by Leslie M. Scott

Introduction

John Work was an extensive traveler and trader and a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company. He came to the Pacific Coast from York factory, on Hudson's Bay, in 1823, with Peter Skene Ogden, who had charge of the annual express that year, and served in the fur-trading posts of the Upper Columbia River. He established a farm at Fort Colville in 1823, the first in the Old Oregon Country, and built Fort Colville in 1825-26. In 1830 he succeeded Peter Skene Ogden in charge of the Snake River brigade. Fort Simpson was in his charge in 1835-49, and in the latter year he was stationed at Victoria as a chief factor. For many years he was a member of the legislative council of Vancouver Island. He was born in 1791 and died December 22, 1861. For his biography, see Howay's and Scholefield's History of British Columbia, IV, 1178; Oregon Historical Society Quarterly, X, 296-7. For journals of his travels, see Washington Historical Quarterly, 111, 198-228 (1824) ; V, 83-115, 163-91, 258-87 (1825) ; VI, 26-49 (1826), all by T. C. Elliott; XI, 104-14 (1828), by William S. Lewis and Jacob A. Meyers; Oregon Historical Society Quarterly, X, 296-31:1 (1828) ; 331-65 (1825-26) ; XIII, 363-70; XIV, 280-31.1 (1830-31), all by T. C. Elliott. A narrative and journal of Work's Snake River expedition (1831-32), edited by William S. Lewis, of Spokane, and Professor Paul C. Phillips, of the University of Montana, is soon to be published by the Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, Ohio. The John Work journal of the expedition of 1834 from Fort Vancouver to Umpqua River, and return, is herewith presented as copied from the original, and has not been edited or otherwise altered. The bracketed numbers represent the pages of the H. H. Bancroft copy of the Journal. The writer of the subjoined comments is indebted to William S. Lewis, of Spokane, Washington; T. C. Elliott, of Walla Walla, Washington, and F. G. Young, of Eugene, Oregon, for many details of information.

This copy of the John Work journal of 1834 was made from the H. H. Bancroft copy of the original, under direction of Dr. Herbert I. Priestly, librarian of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California. The original journal is in the Provincial Library at Victoria, British Columbia.

Journal of a Trip to The Southward in 1834

Date	Work's Entry	Comments
------	--------------	----------

1834. May 22.	Very heavy rain the greater part of the day. Left Vancouver on a Trading & Trapping Trip to the Southward with 12 men. We embarked at 2 p.m. & reached the traverse	
---------------	---	--

---

in the little channel of the Willamet at just 6 oclock whence we are to proceed on horseback. It rained so hard that the people were completely soaked and the baggage also a good deal wet. And where we had to encamp is among wet grass which is very unpleasant, besides there plenty of mosquitoes & very little wood to make fire. The "traverse," where the boat route joined the mountain trail, was on Willamette Slough (Multnomah Channel), called by John Work "little channel," probably one or two miles northwest of the railroad station named Holbrook. This is some twelve miles from Fort Vancouver and five miles south of the present town Scappoose. At or near this "traverse," the Hudson's Bay Company had a dairy on Wapato (now Sauvie) Island. The mountain trail led across hills of between 1100 and 1200 feet elevation to McKay Creek, tributary of Tualatin River. John Work's bateaux probably crossed the upper end of Sauvie Island, which was then inundated by the spring freshet of Columbia River. See map of Charles Wilkes in "Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition", 1838-42. The distance across the mountains is estimated by John Work at ten miles, but the later winding road (1923) is about eight miles. It may be of interest to note that John Work gives the "i" instead of the "a" vowel in the first syllable of Willamette. This vowel difference has been the subject of controversy.

Saturday, May 23. Heavy rain. Sent part of the men across the mountain to Faladin Plain for the horses with which they arrived in the evening, all completely soaked with water. "Faladin" or Tualatin Plain was near North Plains, Washington County, Oregon, probably one mile or more northeast of that place. The Indian name "Titalatin" has had many variations. The meaning is unknown. The horses were probably those of Thomas McKay, who probably sent them there for grazing from his farm near Scappoose. This grazing ground is described by John Work in his entry of May 24 (see following). For John Work's description of McKay's place, see his entry under July 8, following. For details, see also Lee and Frost's "Ten Years In Oregon", XI, 124-26; also printed journal of Wyeth's second expedition (1835), p. 251, published by University of Oregon, 1899; diary of Jason Lee (1834), "Quarterly of Oregon Historical Society", XVII, 297, 399, 400, 401.

24. Showery. After getting everything ready raised camp & proceeded across the mountain to the beaver ground at Faladin Plain. In the afternoon gave out the people their horses & selected those to accompany the party, the remainder to be sent tomorrow to Mr. McKay's place. We were 3 ½ hours crossing the mountains which may be perhaps 10 miles across about S. West. [184] The road is in many places steep & rugged particularly on the N side of the hill. The unfavorable weather & being encumbered in places with fallen timber rendered it worse than it otherwise might be. The soil is composed of a thick strata of dark vegetable mould perhaps not over 6 or 8 inches deep, over a bed of reddish tile (?) No stone or gravel worth mentioning. It is not thickly wooded with timber but overgrown with underwood. The trees principally pine & cedar and of a pretty large size. On reaching the plains some oak of a middling size fringe the edges of the woods. There are also some ash & other trees. The country on getting out of the woods has a beautiful appearance. It is a continuation of plains which commence here and continue on to the Southward, separated by narrow strips of timber, bounded to the east by the strip of woodland which occupy the banks of the Willamet; and to the westward by the woods which occupy the base of the Killymaux Mountain.

The soil is a rich blackish mould covered (but not with a close [185] thick sward) with grass & other plants, among which are considerable quantities of strawberry plants, now well furnished

---

with fine fruit. Not a stone & scarcely a shrub to interrupt the progress of the plough which might be employed in many places with little more difficulty than in a stubble field.

The country here though termed Plain from being clear of wood, is not a dead flat but composed of portions of level land with gently rising grounds. Portions of the flat lands are springey. Here the soil inclines to be clayey. The vegetation is not rank, yet it yields a great deal of pasture. This first plain may be about three times the size of the clear ground about Fort Vancouver, and about 170 horses have been feeding upon it for the two last months, and there would still be grass enough for them for the rest of the summer. This Plain is never overflowed; the most Northern fork of the Faldin is a little distance further on to the Southward. It is not far but through a woody country, to the banks of the Columbia in a N. N. W. direction.

The open country here is of an irregular form, as points of woods [186] jut out into the plains from both sides. There can be no doubt but abundant crops of every kind of grain would amply reward the labor of the husbandman, besides its being so well adapted for pasture both of cattle & sheep. The open ground here may be about 3 or 4 miles wide from E. S. E. to W. N. W.

The horses to be sent to "Mr. McKay's place," apparently, were to return by the same mountain route to the "traverse" of May 22, and thence to go north to McKay's home near Scappoose. Thomas McKay was the son of Alexander McKay who was lost on the "Tonquin" in 1811. Wilkes' "Narrative", 1841, page 221, mentions McKay's gristmill near Champoeg and describes him as "St a man of middle age, tall, well-made and of muscular frame, with an expression of energy and daring, and a deep-set, piercing black eye, beneath a full projecting eye brow." The gristmill was built in 1836. "Killymaux" Mountain, to the west, is John Work's variation of "Tillamook", which has had many diverse forms and is supposed to have been originally the designation of an Indian tribe. The camping place was east of the present village North Plains, Washington County, probably four or five miles north and east of the site of Hillsboro. "The most northern fork of the Faladin" probably was Dairy Creek, some four miles southwest. The distance to the Columbia River, north, given by John Work as "not far," was thirty-five miles. In a northeasterly direction the distance to that river was less than fifteen miles.

May 25. Thick fog in the morning. Fair weather afterwards. Sent off six men and boys with 103 horses to Mr. McKay's Place. Owing to the fog it was late in the morning before the horses were all collected, and as it took some time to separate those which we are to take with us from the others, it was near noon before they started. They are directed to be here as early as they can tomorrow so that we may proceed on our journey. Kanata killed a deer. Kanata was listed among the employees of Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 as number 935. His name appears as Kanote, Kanota, Kanola, Kanotti and Kanato. He accompanied John Work in the Snake River country in 1831-32. This name and others are from the Hawaiian Islands, natives of which were brought here by the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, following their first introduction by the Astors and the "Tonquin" in 1811. The name Owyhee in Eastern Oregon, is a relic of these people. For the name Knola and Kanotti, see "Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society", XIV, 295, 309.

May 26. Fine weather. By the time the men who were sent with the horses yesterday, it was

near three o'clock and too late to raise camp. There was a good deal of trouble getting the horses down through the woods yesterday.

May 27. Overcast fine weather. Proceeded [187] on our journey at 8 o'clock & encamped near 2 at the 4th & last fork of the Faladin River near the mountains. We were delayed an hour & a half crossing the second fork where the horses had to be swam across, and the baggage carried across a bridge formed by a tree thrown across the river. The other forks were all fordable; the banks of all these forks are very steep & clayey. Our course today was S. S. W. about 18 miles. The soil has mostly the same appearance as where we left in the morning, but where we are encamped near the hills the soil is of a more reddish cast, and as not such a good appearance, and there are some gravel & stones in it.

To the Eastward of this there are some hills covered with wood. On the banks of the third fork there is some low, stony land, with longer grass & herbage than elsewhere. Some spots today are overgrown with fern, & the soil did not appear so good.

Camp, apparently, was between Dilley and Gaston, the "4th and last fork of the Faladin River" being either Scoggin Creek or South Fork of Tualatin River. The river crossings this day were probably of McKay Creek, Dairy Creek and Scoggin Creek. The difficult crossing probably was that of Dairy Creek. The "third fork" was probably Gale's Creek. The hills to the eastward of the camping place were Chehalem Mountains. The day's route passed the sites of Forest Grove and Dilley, in Washington County, Oregon.

May 28. Heavy rain in the night, and rain the most of the day. The unfavorable weather deterred us from raising camp, for the rain was not heavy during the day, yet the bushes were so loaded with water [188] that the baggage would have been wet. The hunters were out in the evening but without success. They saw some deer, but they were so shy that they could not be approached. There are a good many Indians about here, which causes the deer to be so wild. The Indians mentioned were probably either Yamhills or Tualatins, of the Kalapooian family.

May 29. Fair weather in the morning but continual heavy showers during the day afterwards. Raised camp & continued our route S. S. E. 4 miles [hours?] & about 15 miles. Encamped on a small creek at the head of an extensive plain. After leaving the river where we slept last night, the road lay through a point of woods, and two small plains of fine rich soil, but subject to be under water at times during the rainy season. Then over a few hills mostly covered with wood and bushes, and along an extensive plain of rich soil with a kind of swamp or lake running all along the West side of it. Parts of this plain are subject to be partially inundated. Before reaching the southern extremity we struck across to the Eastward over a portion of low hilly country covered with bushes and some trees, principally [189] oak to the head of the fine plain where we are encamped; which is some miles in length and breadth, composed of a rich soil covered with fine pasture; the lower part of it subject to be overflowed or rather covered with water in the rainy season. Passed some small rivulets during the day's march. After encamping I went to the Sand's encampment which is about 8 or 9 miles S. E., about half way through the plain we are encamped, and then through alternate small plains and points of woods to the Willamet.

My object in going here is to get some information from Depatty relative to the trade with the Umquah Indians, but though he had been there two years ago & as it was Gagnion who performed the trade, he could tell me very little about it. Kanota killed a deer & the men traded 3

from the Indians.

Camp was apparently on Chehalem Creek, west of the site of Newberg, and near the land of Ewing Young, who arrived there later in the same year (1834). The day's travel followed the east shore of Wapato Lake, whose overflow conditions John Work well describes. "Sand's Encampment" was Champoeg, otherwise known as "Campment du Sable, Camp au Sable" and "Sand Point". Depatty's house was near Champoeg and appears in the map of Nathaniel J. Wyeth (1832-33). See "Correspondence and Journals of Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-36", edited by F. G. Young, Eugene, Oregon, 1899, p. 178. See also p. 233, "Duportes House." Gagnion was apparently J.B. Gagnion, or Gagnier, number 821 on the list of employees of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, where the name is given J. B. Gagmon. This employee was assigned to Fort Umpqua as interpreter in 1840. Lucius Gagnion, said to have opposed the American party at Champoeg in 1843, may have been the same. In Gustavus Hines' "Oregon", VI, 99, Gagnion is referred to as follows: "We were kindly received at the fort (Umpqua) by an old Frenchman, having charge of it, by the name of Goniea. \* \* \* \* \* The Frenchman, it is said, belongs to a wealthy and honorable family in Montreal, and though frequent efforts have been made to reclaim him from his wanderings, yet all have been unavailing. He lives with an Indian woman whom he claims as his wife." The Umpqua Indians, whose habitat was the river of that name, are classed as belonging to the Athapascan family.

May 30. Fine. Continued our route near 7 hours S 10 miles to Yamhill river which we crossed, & then S. S. W.; 8 miles up the Southside of the river a little below the Faladin fork, and encamped on a small creek. The road till we [190] reached the river lay along a fine valley not very wide, surrounded with a number of rising hills thickly covered with oak. The soil all the way is very rich and the pasture though not rank more luxuriant than in the large level plains. On the summit of the hills the soil inclines in some places to a reddish tile. On the South side of the river the road lay through an extensive plain of fine Soil, and different from the country we passed through three days past by being a dead level. It appears a fine rich soil.

The plain continues on without interruption except a few trees along some small streams, on to the mountains to the Westward and is capable of yielding pasture for immense herds of cattle, for in places it is several miles wide. On the North side of the river the plains also continue on to the mountains, as well as along the Faladin fork. The banks of the river are clothed with a little timber, principally pine with a mixture of oak & some other trees. This wood here & there juts in points out to the [191] Plain, and there are patches of oak here & there. To the Southward of this plain on the S side of the river, a range of low green hills extend, with a few oak trees upon them, and would be a fine pasturage for sheep. The river has generally steep clayey banks, & is difficult to approach on account of the Underwood, and can only be crossed at some places wherever traversed. It runs over a bed of soft rotten sandstone, and many of the horses fell descending the lower part of the sloping bank which is also composed of these stones. This & the river which we crossed yesterday morning are the only places we have seen stones since we started. Where we crossed there is a rapid, but from the formation of the river it would be difficult to make it secure for millstream[?] The hunters were out. P. Lagere killed a deer.

The party crossed Yamhill River probably near Dayton. Faladin (Tualatin) Fork probably was the

---

John Work's Journal

---

north fork of Yamhill River, which rises from the northerly direction of Tualatin River. The "small creek" upon which camp was made probably was Salt Creek, near the later village Amity. P. Lagere may be Baptismo Deguear and J. B. DeGuerre, frequently mentioned in "Ewing Young and His Estate," "Oregon Historical Society Quarterly", XXI, 171-315.

Sunday May 31. Fine & warm, cool at night & heavy (Dew in the morning. Continued our route 6 3/4 hours) about 24 miles S & S. S. W and encamped at the second fork from the Yamhill. The road for the first 16 lay through a fine uninterrupted [192] plain of fine soil, with some swampy places, with better pasturage than we have hitherto met with. There is also a small lake. On each side of us there were ranges of moderately elevated hills, some of them with little wood, the others thinly covered with oak, and here & there a patch of pine. Beyond these hills to the Eastward there are said to be other ranges of Plain country. Here we closed up pretty nearly with the mountains to the Westward, and crossed a small river the first from the Yamhill, when the road lay about 3 miles along a ridge of hills pretty well timbered with oak, & then along a marshy valley about 5 miles to the fork where we are encamped.

The Plain which we left beyond the first fork continues along the range of hills which run along East of the road. The river where we are camped is 10 or 12 yds wide. A fringe of woods runs along its banks, behind which a narrow plain extends towards the mountain on both sides, and also downwards. This river runs over a bottom of a rocky & gravelly nature, of a slatey [193] texture, but has steep clayey banks. The plains in places appear subject to be inundated in the rainy season. The first river which is a branch of this one runs over a gravelly bottom & the soil on its banks is for a short distance gravelly, which is the only place we have seen gravel since we started.

Camp apparently was on Luckiamute River, which the diary calls "second fork from the Yamhill." The first "fork" was Rickreall River. The route passed the sites of later McCoy, Dallas and Monmouth. The "lake" is one mile south of Perrydale.

June 1. Fine. Continued our route 7 hours, 24 miles. The first half of the way S. E. & then S. W. to the river at Sauvie [Laurie] where we camped. The road for the first 14 miles lay through a plain country for about 7 miles across a point to another fork which falls into the river we left in the morning & thence over low hills & across along plain 7 miles further to another creek. All the way there is fine soil, and the low grounds about the creeks superior pasture land and very extensive to the E. Some woods along the banks of the rivers. And on the high ground oaks here and there. The road for the next 4 miles lay along the base of some hills thickly timbered with oak and composed of rich tile soil & pretty well covered with grass. Large tracts of open ground extend to the E. The road now lay along [194] an extensive plain, some parts of it swampy, to Laurie river where we are camped not far from its discharge into a Channel of the Willamet. Here is an extensive plain on both sides of the river, and the mountains to the W. are nearly without wood. Clover was observed today both on the high and on the low ground. The soil & herbage has the same appearance as usual. Where we are camped at the usual traverse of the river is too high to be forded, but we learn from the Indians it is fordable a little higher up.

We met a party of Indians today who informed us that all Michell's party but himself and one man were killed by the Indians; that this report was received from an Indian who was coming from the Umquah with the news, but turned back. Passed some Indian huts at the rivers we passed. A few natives visited us in the evening. The hunters were out in the evening, but without

success.

Laurie River was Mary's River. This river is "Riviere des Souris" (Mice River) in Duflot de Mofras' "Exploration", II, 210. Apparently John Work's "Laurie" is Duflot's Souris. The day's crossing was the South Fork of Luckiamute River, which John Work calls "another fork which falls into the river we left in the morning." The next creek mentioned is probably the later Soap Creek. Camp apparently was near the site of the later Corvallis. "Michell's party" evidently refers to the party of Michel Laframboise, see under June 2, following. Laframboise is frequently referred to as "Michell" in this diary.

June 2. Fine. Proceeded 18 miles S & camped at the traverse at Sam [195] Tomeleaf [?] river. We were delayed some time in the morning fording a traverse where we camped last night, after which the road lay through an extensive plain, very level except place[s] & averaging from 5 to 7 miles wide. On our left or E side at a short distance lay first the small channel of the Willamet, then a long narrow lake like a canal & then the river where we camped. And to the W extends the chain of mountains, the first range of rising hills with little wood on them. The soil here is of the same description as that passed three days past, but from being mostly a dead level, considerable portions of it appear to have been under water in the rainy season. And in places the grass seems to be less luxuriant than we have observed hitherto, probably owing to the drought having rendered the ground hard & cracked. Along the banks of the lake some places are swampy. The river here is close to the mountains and runs over a bed of rocks over which there are steep clayey banks. On the E side of the [1961] river there are extensive plains.

By what we can learn from T. Mouria[?] the Islander the Companion of poor Mourio who was drowned coming with letters from M. Laframboise some time ago, it appears that it was somewhere about here that they embarked in the canoe to descend the river, and 2 days after (but he cannot make us understand when [where?]) the canoe came in contact with a stick or fallen tree that was in the river, & upset when the poor man was drowned & the letters & everything they had was lost, and he Morina barely saved himself by his good swimming and found his way to the settlement 2 days after nearly starved with cold & hunger. From the little information he can give us & the length of time elapsed since the important occurrence any attempt to find out the place, or anything relative to the accident would be fruitless. The hunters killed 1 deer.

Sam Tomeleaf River was Long Tom River. Camp probably was near the site of Monroe. The day 4 journey, apparently, followed the route of the later Southern Pacific Railroad. Michel Laframboise was a French Canadian voyageur and interpreter who arrived in Oregon on the "Tonquin" and established himself in later years on a farm at French Prairie. See Ross, "Oregon Settlers", p. 257; Franchere's "Narrative", pp. 29-30. In 1833-38 he was attached to the Umpqua expeditions. In 1839 and 1841-43 he was listed on the Bonaventura expedition. He served as guide for the Wilkes party. He is listed as an opponent of the American party at Champoege in 1843.

June 3. Chilly & rain. Continued our route 18 miles S S E & S. Crossed the [197] river in the morning when we continued up the E side of it to the commencement of the mountains, where we are camped on the same river. The road lay through an extensive plain, the greater part of the way quite level, bounded to the E by the Willamet. Considerable portions of the plain are subject to inundation & parts of it are not so well clothed with grass as some of those we have already

passed. Some places of it are also swampy. And parts of it gravelly which is the first soil of the kind we have seen since we started. This plain is 4 to 6 miles wide. The river here runs over a muddy bottom with steep clayey banks so much so that it is difficult to water the horses. Where we left this morning would be an eligible situation for a settlement. On the E side of the river would serve for pasturage & the high ground on the W side for tillage & sheep walks; and the river could easily be made navigable. The hunters were out but without success, except P. Legare who killed 2 deer. There are some deer, but [198] they are very shy. Some Indians visited us in the evening. The river crossing was that of the Long Tom near Monroe. The mountains were those at the head of Willamette River, southwest of Eugene, called Calapooya Mountains. The day's course was up Coyote Creek of long Tom River. Camp apparently was ten miles west of the site of Eugene. The Indians were probably Calapooyas.

June 4. Cloudy. Proceeded 20 miles, first S. S. W. & then S. S. E. through a hilly country. First up a narrow valley along the river where we are camped, & then across a range of hills and along another narrow valley, where we crossed some more hills to another valley which brought us to the Yangawa river where we camped at the foot of Elk Mountain.

This river at the foot of the mountain falls into the sea. Some spots of rocks are to be seen on the brows of some of the hills we passed today. Some parts of the valley we passed today are subject to inundation. There are also a few places marshy but all the rest of the way the soil appears very rich & clothed with a more luxuriant crop of herbage than we have met with since leaving the fort. There is a considerable quantity of clover among the long grass, which in many places is sufficiently rank & thick to be cut for hay, & most excellent hay it would make. [199] The ground appears highly susceptible of cultivation & would be superior pasture land, the low ground for cattle, the bare or partially wooded hills for sheep. The plain on the end of which we are camped is of considerable extent & has a pretty large swamp in the middle of it. The second valley through which we passed is watered by a fork of the river which we left in the morning. Through all the hilly country through which we passed the land on the sides of the hills and in the intervening valleys appears to be of a superior quality, or at least the vegetation is more luxuriant than on the low flat plains even where they do not appear subject to inundation. There is also some timothy grass similar to what we have from England. The clover is of the white or red kind & grows most luxuriantly on the border of swamp or on the plains, where the ground is a little damp & springy. The timber today was mostly oak & a few other trees, & pine on the higher hills.

Yangama River was Siuslaw River. Elk Mountain marks the divide between Siuslaw and Umpqua rivers. Camp probably was ten miles west of the site of Cottage Grove.

June 5. Rain. The unfavorable weather deterred us raising camp, as passing [200] the mountains through the thick woods & bushes which are loaded with water would have wet & spoiled and baggage and horse agnts [?] An Indian, Catarah joined us here & state that M. Laframboise had gone along the seacoast & that reports had been received that the Indians attempted to pillage them of their property which caused a quarrel in which 16 of the natives were slain, & that subsequently the Indians had assembled in great force & cut off all, or the greater part of M. Laframboise's party. This part of the story I do not think probable. The hunters were out but without success. There are but few tracks of animals, besides the weather was unfavorable.

June 6. Heavy rain. Did not raise camp on account of the bad weather. The hunters were out but

---

without success.

June 7. Fine. Proceeded 4 ½ hours, 15 miles, first S 8 miles across the Elk mountain to Elk river, & then S W. 7 miles down the N side [201] of the river to the traverse where we camped. We were an hour ascending the mountain on the N side, & 1½ in descending. All the way through a woody country until we came within a short distance of the river when the road lay down a fine sloping hill & across a plain clear of woods & covered with fine verdure on a rich soil. The road then lay along the declivity of the hills which are mostly clear of woods. The soil in the mountains appears good. I observed timothy at different places along the road. No stones during the day's journey, but the river here runs over a bed of loose stones and rocks. The wood in the mountains is chiefly pine and along the river & on the hillsides a mixture of pine, oak & other trees. Elk River was the later Elk Creek. The "traverse" and the camp probably were near Drain.

June 8. Cloudy & light rain. Left camp in the morning & proceeded with 3 men and an Indian down to the Vernon[?] (for some furs which Michell had traded in the winter) where we arrived after 9 hours about 40 miles, first S W then W. The road [202] through a very hilly country, several of the hills steep; thickly wooded; parts clear of wood. The road crosses the Elk river between our camp & its discharge into the Umquah which is about half way to the Vervor. The road then lies along the N bank of the Umquah which may be about 80 yds wide. No stones worth mentioning all the way; the river runs on a bed of soft slatey rock. The soil rich and clothed with fine pasture. A narrow valley runs along the north side of the river. Here is a most luxuriant growth of fern mixed with grass, clover, vegetables & flowers. The plain which may be from ¼ to ½ mile wide is bounded to the N by a range of bare hills with trees along their tops, and several rivulets intersect it on their way to the river. Joe the master of the only house that is here has a small patch of potatoes which appear in a most healthy & thriving condition. Some of the pines in the woody part of the country are of very large size. [203] We had put up close by the House in the grass for the night and had supper, but as there was an appearance of heavy rain Joe invited us to take shelter under his roof which we reluctantly did as we dread being infested with fleas. In other respects except the excessive heat of the house our quarters are very comfortable but a scarcity of provisions prevails here at the present season.

This Joe is a noted character among the natives by whom he is much feared, as the life of a fellow creature is held in little estimation by him. He has seven wives now in the house with him which is said to be but half of the number he possesses. He appears attentive to us. There are five packs of beaver here which Michell left, besides 2 belonging to his men. Joe it appears has also about a pack to trade. Here I received a letter from Mr. Laframboise addressed to Mr. C. F. McLoughlin dated 17th of April last. He & his party were then all well shortly previous to that date he had had a battle with the Indians on the S side of the Umquah mountain in which 11 of the [204] savages were slain & several wounded. None of the whites had received any hurt. The cause of the quarrel is not mentioned. He desires Mr. McLoughlin not to be uneasy about his safety.

"The Vernon" or Vervor appears to have been near the site of Scottsburg, on tidewater, and twenty miles west of Elkton and the later Fort Umpqua. The later fort was near the site of the later Elkton, on the south side of Umpqua River. Elkton is on the north side. The letter to "C. F. McLoughlin" was to Chief Factor John McLoughlin at Vancouver. "Michell" refers to Michel Laframboise. Fort Umpqua near Elkton, apparently did not exist in 1834. John Work camped near

John Work's Journal

---

there on June 9 and passed there June 8 without mentioning the fort. But he mentions "Umpqua old fort," which appears to have been established in 1832 on or near Calapooya Creek. See entry of June 11, following. See also Himes and Lang's "History of the Willamette Valley", p. 201. The Umpqua country is described by Ross' "Oregon Settlers", p. 257, as the "finest hunting ground on the Willamette."

June 9. Light showers. Had the furs arranged, & returned on our way to the camp accompanied by Joe & 2 other Indians with some beaver to trade, at the end of 7 hours march put up for the night as our horses were fatigued. The road very hilly. This must be a very bad road to pass in the winter season on account of the number of times the river & other small creeks have to be crossed, the country being so hilly & in many places so thickly wooded. Even now our eyes are like to be torn out with the thicketty branches. The party returned some twenty miles or half way to the camp on Elk Creek. This half-way place apparently was near the later site of Fort Umpqua, on Umpqua River, opposite Elkton.

June 10. Light rain. Continued our route & reached the camp at the end of 5 hours march. Traded Joe's beaver in the evening. Some more Indians, Old Grey Heads sons, arrived with some beaver. I saw some Indians on the way going down 2 days ago [205] coming up the Umquah in canoes & sent word with them that we were here for the purpose of trade. Since I have been off 3 deer were killed. The party arrived at the camp on Elk Creek.

June 11. Heavy rain. Traded what beaver the Indians had which with those received from Joe make 72 beaver & 25 otters. I find some of the Indians difficult to deal with. I have not a proper assortment of goods. Heyquales[?] are much asked for, and I have none of small green beads which are much in demand. I had only 4 or 5 pounds & they are all done. The other sorts of beads are in little repute. Nor are the other goods except ammunition in much demand except at very low prices. The Indians also complain that the goods are charged higher than they have hitherto got them, which in some things perhaps may be the case. But be it so or not the Indians are always apt to say so when a stranger comes among them for the first time. The most of these furs appear to be procured from along the seacoast, & there seems to be an opposition among the Indians who go there to trade, which causes the [206] beaver first to cost higher than they otherwise would do, & to induce the Indians to ask a higher price from us, in order to have a little profit.

Joe returned home. I sent a letter with him for Michelle & also sent a bag of corn, 5 Gall rice, 5 Gall flour, 1 lb. tea & ½ loaf of sugar. Should Michell be sick as was my case last year, these things would be a great acquisition to him. After Joe went off I learn that he & some of the other Indians are not on the best of terms. He is said to have killed 4 Indians during the winter & is represented as a very bad character & a great hand for taking other people's wives. The men set some traps since I went off; only 1 beaver taken; 2 deer killed.

June 12. Fine. Had arranged to proceed to the Umquah old fort where I understood the natives have a few beaver, but was deterred on account of a child of Champaign's which has been sick some time, being so sick that it was not expected to live out the day. By some Indians that were here I sent word to those on [207] the Umquah to meet me with what few beaver they may have to trade. Hunters out but no success, except Kanota killed two deer. "The Umpqua old fort" indicates there were two Forts Umpqua. The later fort of that name was opposite Elkton

---

on Umpqua River. Either the old or the later fort, probably the former, was established by Chief Trader John McLeod and Michel Laframboise in 1832. The "old fort," apparently, was on Calapooya Creek west of the sites of later Oakland and Sutherlin, perhaps at the junction of Calapooya Creek and Umpqua River, which place was the southernmost objective of this journey.

June 13. Overcast & chilly. F. Champaign's child continued so ill that it was not expected to live out the day, in consequence of which we did not raise camp. Hunters out, 2 deer killed. We got enough to serve the people so that they require to touch but little of their voyage provisions. Francois Campogna was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company on the list of 1821-22 as number 638, and on the list of 1822-23 as number 509. See "Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society", XIII, 367; XIV, 290.

June 14. Cloudy & fine. Proceeded 20 miles S. E. & S. to the second fork of the Umquah through a hilly country with intervening valleys of rich soil richly clothed with verdure. Found some Indians where we encamped, and about 20 men visited us in the evening. Two of the men crossed the mountains to the E. accompanied by an Indian as a guide to set some traps. Hunters had no success. The route was southerly from the camp near the site of Drain to Calapooya Creek, probably near the site of the town Oakland. The second fork of the Umpqua was Calapooya Creek, the first fork being Elk Creek.

June 15. Fine. Did not raise camp. Champaign's daughter died about noon. The old chief Latana accompanied by 2 other Indians visited us. There are a few beaver among his people which I mean to go down [208] that way to trade. I received a note from Mr. Laframboise dated 8th April. It contains no news but what was contained in the one I received a few days ago addressed to Mr. McLoughlin. Men off yesterday returned. Hunters out; an elk & a deer killed.

June 16. Fine. Proceeded down river to below its discharge into the Umquah 9 miles. The river which the road runs along runs through a valley enclosed by hills. Soil fine & clothed with pasturage, grass & clover. The old chief Satarna (opposite to whose house we are encamped) with several of his people visited us in the evening. The hunters had no success. The day's journey ended below the junction of Umpqua River and Calapooya Creek, probably the site of "Umpqua old fort."

June 17. Fine. Employed most of the day trading with the Indians & traded only 21 large beaver, 2 small do & 5 otters, which I believe is all they have. They are troublesome to deal with. They suppose, or affect to suppose, that they are harder dealt with than usual. News arrived again that Michell & his party were all killed. The Indian who brought this news had heard it from another, who had received the information from [209] a third far off; and again it is stated that our people have killed 25 more of the Indians. Most probably the whole story is a falsehood. The Umquah here is about 150 yds wide & runs over a rocky bottom of soft slaty rock & is not very deep. A horse can ford it at present. A little below our station, the mountains which are steep & ragged strike close into the river. Where we are encamped there are a few plains on both sides of the river. The rock on the high ground is a sort of a freestone.

June 18. Fine. Returned to our station of the 17th [15th?]. There we met a party of Indians from the head of the Willamet, headed by a man named Charles who had been formerly a slave, but obtained his liberty & is now a chief. From this man we learned that the head of the Willamette is so difficult to ascend that it can only be hunted with canoes, & that for a length of time no one has been up it (indeed no white man has ever been all the way to the head of it) and that

there are some beaver in it. I have [210] determined to go there & try what can be done as there is nothing to be got elsewhere that we can venture to go to. Old Satana & some of his men followed us up in the evening. The hunters out, P Legare killed a deer. Beginning the return, the party journeyed up Calapooya Creek to the camping place of June 15. A person named Charles is mentioned in "Ewing Young and his Estate," "Oregon Historical Society Quarterly", XXI, 219, 267, 280.

June 19. Fine with squalls. Charles has some business to settle with the Indians which requires this day, and as he is to guide us to the head of the Willamet across the mountain we did not raise camp. There is some disturbance & rumors of war among the Indians here. It appears that an Indian was bitten by a rattlesnake some time ago & died. His friends accuse a tribe above of having effected his death by conjuring, & threaten to avenge it if property is not paid for the body, which will probably have to be complied with as the conjurers are the weaker party. One deer killed.

June 20. Fine. There was a total eclipse of the moon last night, which continued a considerable time. Raised camp & proceeded 20 miles N. E. & N. to a fork of Elk river through a hilly country partially wooded [211] some valleys of fine rich land covered with pasturage. A number of Indians encamped near our station. Three hunters out, each killed a deer. Camp was on Elk Creek above the site of Drain, perhaps five miles northeast, and also a few miles northeast of the camping place of June 7, 10-13.

June 21. Fine. Proceeded 6 hours N. across the Elk mountain to a fork of the Willamet. Road across the mountains rugged & lies through thick woods. But on both sides places clear & covered with verdure. The soil more gravelly than we have seen for some time. The route crossed the divide between Elk Creek of Umpqua River and Coast Fork of Willamette, to a camp south of the site of Cottage Grove. The party had crossed this same divide, more to the westward, on June 7.

June 22. Fine. Continued our route 10 miles N down the river where we camped in order to send the hunters in quest of deer. The hunters had no success. Camp was near the site of Saginaw.

June 23. Fine. One of the men who was out hunting lost his horse & it was late when he found him, so that we could not raise camp. One deer.

June 24. Fine. Continued our route 16 miles N to the main or middle fork of the Willamet at the commencement of the mountains, or end of the plains or clear ground where we camped. The river here is 80 to 100 yds wide. From Indian information the upper part of this fork has never been visited by whites and beaver [212] are said to be numerous within a few days march of this place beyond the first range of mountains, where there is a valley, but from the mountainous nature of the country, thickly wooded, little or no grass, it would be very difficult to get to with horses & though the navigation is difficult, it is said to be practicable to ascend the river in canoes. I have determined therefore to send the people to try what can be done that way. The men were off & selected cedar trees to make canoes for the purpose and were afterwards getting their tools in readiness to commence making canoes tomorrow. Camp was near the site of Springfield. John Work proceeded to build canoes so as to enable members of his party to ascend Middle Fork in quest of beaver.

June 25. Fine. The tree is very large & pretty difficult to work. Several Indians visited us &

---

John Work's Journal

---

corroborate what we have before heard respecting beaver being in the upper part of the river, & that the navigation is practicable, tho' difficult. Traded 2 beaver. One of the men taken ill with fever. The [213] hunters were out but without success.

One of the Willamet freemen, Louis, paid us a visit. He has killed 7 beaver within a few days between the settlement & this; and from his account upward of 80 beaver have been in the river from this downwards since the spring, the most of which must have come from above during the high water.

June 26. Fine. The people still busy with the canoes. Hunters killed nothing.

June 27. Lowering weather, thunder & light rain. The canoes were brought out of the woods to the water side, but they are not finished yet. 1 deer killed.

28. Heavy rain. People busy finishing their canoes. F. Champaign still continues very ill.

29. Foggy with rain, The canoes 3 in number being ready, I sent off 6 men accompanied by 3 Indians to ascend to the head of this fork to trap beaver. They are allowed 2 months to be back here if they find wherewith to employ themselves so long. They will have some difficulty in [214] getting up but from the accounts the Indians give of beaver being numerous it is expected that they will get a good many. An Indian who is acquainted with that place & speaks the language of the natives there, the Melilish is engaged to accompany the people. Two men remain with the families to hunt for them, & take care of the horses. These men are to have a share of the hunt the same as those who have gone off. Champaigne who is ill with the fever also remains but he is not concerned in the partnership. Gave Kanota a few articles to trade any beaver he may find and make trifling presents to the Indians.

Some Indians arrived in the afternoon from McKenzies fork & brought a few pieces of salmon. Traded 2 beaver.

McKenzie's Fork was the later McKenzie River, named for Donald McKenzie. This river enters the Willamette some ten miles below, but the distance to the river from camp was not more than four miles. Donald McKenzie was described by Ross in "Fur Hunters" II, pp. 264-65, as "Perpetual Motion McKenzie." He was a Northwester but came overland with the Hunt party and returned in the employ of the North West Company in 1816. He was a notable figure in the early Snake River fur trade expeditions. After coalition of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies in 1821, he became governor of the Red River colony. He accumulated property in the fur trade and died at Mayville, New York in 1840. He was a kinsman of Alexander Mackenzie. He was a remarkable rifle shot, skilled in woodcraft and Indian warfare and was an able Indian trader.

June 30. Fine. Proceeded 10 miles N. W. to Mr. McKay's old house where I left the three men & Champaign & the men's families that are gone up the river, as this is said to be a better place for deer than where the canoes were made. [215] I then continued down the river 12 miles W. to the plain accompanied by De Champ, an Owyhee & an Indian on the way to the fort with the furs. The road lay through a hilly country, woods & clear ground, & the rest thinly timbered. The banks of the river are thickly wooded. A good deal of the soil is gravelly and of a poor quality, yet a good deal of pasture on the S. side of the hills. The herbage is being already dried up. Some parts of the road stoney. "McKay's old house" probably was at or near the confluence of Willamette and McKenzie rivers, some six miles north of the site of Eugene. From this place

the canoes would ascend McKenzie River. John Work then continued the day's journey to a place apparently west of the site of Harrisburg. "McKay's old house" indicates that an earlier trading party under leadership of Thomas McKay had a temporary trading post there.

July 1 Fine. Continued our course 24 miles W. & W. N. W. down the river & then across a plain to the traverse at Lamitambuff[?] Met 2 Indians & traded the meat of a deer; three other Indians passed us but made a very short stay & appeared to be much afraid of something. Parts of plain gravelly & soil poor, herbage getting dry & the ground has an arid appearance; on the lower spots grass luxuriant. Lamitambuff probably was Sam Tomeleaf River of June 2 (Long Tom River). Camp apparently was several miles northeast of the site of Monroe. "Longtabuff River," tributary of the Willamette, is mentioned in David Douglas' journal, printed in London, 1914, page 236. This is probably a form of the modernized Long Tom. The name has had many variations. Wilkes gives "Lumtumbuff" (1841), in "Narrative", V, 222.

July 2. Fine. Continued our course 6 ½ hours across the plain to River Lauries river where we camped. [216] The Indians set fire to the dry grass on the neighboring hill, but none of them came near us. The plain is also on fire on the opposite side of the Willamet. River Lauries was Mary's River. See under June 1.

July 3 Fine. Sent in the morning to an Indian village below to see if they had any beaver. 10 of them visited the camp & traded their beaver. These Indians are much alarmed lest they be attacked by the Umquahs. It seems some of their tribe a little ahead pillaged an Umquah Indian some time ago of a rifle, & that nation have threatened to come to war upon them. They also inform us that 4 men of Lautaude Indians have been killed & 3 children taken slaves a short time since, as they suppose by a party of Faladin or Yamhill Indians. It was 11 o'clock when we had settled with these Indians after which we proceeded on our journey and camped at our station of 31st May.

As we were coming on we found a party of 32 men all armed & ready for war, supposing that a party [217] of the Umquahs were coming upon them. The smoke made near our camp was made to apprise them that strangers were coming. It was these people that had taken the rifle alluded to above. One Indian who is an Umquah who accompanied us & who was commissioned to get the rifle, demanded it from them, and after a great deal of talk they gave it to him. Where we are camped we found 8 or 10 Indians with the meat of 2 deer. They gave us a little. They are now busy dancing & singing & making -merry with the produce of their chase.

July 4 Showery. Continued & camped. An Indian came some distance to trade 6 or 8 beaver & otters that he had, but he demanded such an exorbitant price that I did not trade. They will no doubt find their way to the fort. After 9 ½ hours march we camped on a small fork near Yamhill river not far from our station of 30th May. Several Yamhill Indians passed us going to their village which [218] is close by, on their way from the Willamet falls loaded with salmon which are now of an indifferent quality, having been carried 2 days in the sun. These people have no beaver, nor do they know of any Indians about here who have any. Part of a deer was obtained from an Indian today. Camp was near Amity. Willamette Falls were less than forty miles distant.

July 5. Cloudy. Proceeded 6 hours & camped not far from an Indian village opposite the Campment de Sauble. Traded a beaver & 8 otters from the Indians here. These people are preparing to go to war in a band of the same tribe a short way to the N. who killed one of their men a short

John Work's Journal

---

time ago without any cause. Camp was on west side of Willamette River opposite Champoeg. John Work had been here on May 29.

July 6. Fine. Continued on 5 ½ hours & camped on the 3rd fork from the N. of Faladin river. There are a number of Indians here which I suspect to be the people that killed the Indian above alluded to, though they deny it, as they are all armed & prepared for an attack. They have no beaver. Camp apparently was near South Fork of Tualatin River and Gaston, where the party camped May 27. This was the "fourth and last fork" of May 27, and the "third fork from the north fork" (McKay Creek) of Tualatin River.

July 7. Fine. Proceeded 4 ½ hours to the [219] N. fork of the Faladin river. We were delayed 1 ½ hours carrying the baggage across the middle fork which is too deep to ford. Owing to the constant marching our horses are much jaded. Camp was on McKay Creek, this being the "north fork" of Tualatin River. The "middle fork," which made delay, apparently was Dairy Creek, where the party encountered similar delay on May 27.

July 8. Fair. Continued our march & in 3 ½ hours crossed the mountain to the little Channel of the Umquah [Willamette] when we continued down the river to Mr. McKay's place which we reached in 6 hours. The road lay sometimes along the plain & sometimes along to the height of the water. We had to pass through the woods where the road was very bad & difficult to pass owing to the thickets & fallen timber. We had also to unload & carry the baggage across a creek deep with steep clayey banks. The horses could not cross loaded. There are immense meadows all the way down along the river, & if the grass were not injured would yield an immense quantity of pasturage & hay. Where the water has recently dried off there is a thick crop of grass so tall that it reaches to the horses' [220] shoulders.

Mr. McKay's place is in a beautiful situation. There is a plain of considerable extent surrounded by woods clothed with fine pasturage in which there is a considerable quantity of clover. The soil however is gravelly & appears of an inferior quality to the Faladin country. There is a considerable quantity of ground enclosed & under crop. One field of potatoes, 5 acres, has a fine appearance, but the wheat, barley, peas & Indian corn don't promise so abundant a crop. The house is built on the bank of a lake which communicates by channels with the small channel of the Willamette. The cattle & horses are in fine order. What a pity the low ground is subject to be inundated, for otherwise it would yield most abundant crops of every kind of grain.

The route was that of the mountain trail of May 24, as far as Willamette Slough or Multnomah Channel, near the site of Holbrook. Thence the route was northward to Scappoose plains where Thomas McKay lived. Travel was slow owing to the bad trail and the fagged condition of the horses.

July 9. Fine. Obtained a canoe from La Bonte and a boy as a guide & embarked at [221] 10 o'clock & after winding through a number of small channels reached the small or western channel of the Willamette which we ascended a considerable distance & crossed a lake (which now occupies a considerable portion of Wapitoe Island) and made a portage of 190 yds into the main channel of the Columbia which we ascended to opposite the upper fork of the Willamette where we encamped at sunset, as it would have been late in the night before we could have reached the fort. A canoe with people from the "Llama" passed us in the evening on their way to the fort.

John Work's Journal

---

Louis La Bonte provided the canoe for the journey to Fort Vancouver. Camp was six miles west of and below Fort Vancouver, on the Washington side, opposite the mouth of Willamette River. The "lake" was probably Sturgeon Lake in Sauvie Island, that being the later name of Wapato Island. The "upper fork" of the Willamette was the present main channel of that stream. The vessel Llama was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, for whom it was operated by Captain William O'Neil for trading purposes. The vessel evidently was anchored down river, at Fort George (Astoria), and had sent a small boat to Fort Vancouver. Captain O'Neil sailed the vessel to Columbia River in 1832, and sold it to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1833. Louis La Bonte came to Oregon with the Hunt overland party in 1811-12. He was an employee of the company in 1821-23 as numbers 989 and 798.

July 10. Fine weather. Proceeded on our way by daylight as we were glad to get away from swarms of mosquitoes, and reached the fort for breakfast.

Afterwards had the furs all opened and examined & stood by.

The party arrived at Fort Vancouver.









Dear Brother,

You will think it is a long time before you hear from me but there has not been a company gone in expect one and at that time I was not able to move in bed I have had a severe spell of sickness worse than I ever had in my life and if it had not been for Mr Stanly I should have died for there was no Doctor here and not much medicine, and it is one of the meanest Countries to be sick in the world for there are no nourishments to be got, but I have got quite well again and enjoy good health which I hope you do the same and the Boys that is with you, David I have sent you in a draft of two hundred dollars by . . . Th. Bogs and I wish you to collect it as soon as possible for there is a great many drafts on the old man Pratt but I have no doubt but he will pay it at sight, you may think I ought to have sent in more money but it is out of my Power do it at Present it is not in the power of man to sell goods where there is no money I have bought up a large quantity of corn and wheat which I hope to sell it for cash in the spring or turn it into whiskey and that is cash or fur so you may expect one or the other in the spring. my chance was never more flattering than it is at present Chambers has been to St Louis and got the holy water put on his head and the Governor is a great friend of his he will assist us in any thing that we undertake so we have want you to get of Aberham Barns eighty gallon stills and some other articles which I will give you a list of, if you could do me the favour I shall be very glad for we are not on any uncertainty about it for we have got the stuff that will bring the money in the spring so that you and Mr Barns need not be the least afraid to get those articles but be shure never to name it to any person for they are contraband Articles, and I hope by this time that you have got that money from Johnson and Mc Keney if not make them pay if they have got it for they used me very bad Johnson is as mean a man as ever lived give me an exact account how you come on with them for I am afraid that you will have some trouble with them.

A list of the Articles

Two Eighty gallon stills, the caps to be of the goose neck kind

Six Brass cocks

Six falling axes

Two grubbing hoes

Irons for one tub mill

one inch and half Chisel

one inch ditto of the very strongest kind

Two Augers one inch and the other half inch

Two Mill picks, one stone hammer Iron

Twenty pounds of steels, One hundred lb of hoop

One Crane for Drawing water

twenty lb of Flouring nails.

One good strong Plantation Wagon

The things that I have named I want you and Aberham Barns to see to getting them if it is convenient, Mathew Kinkead and myself pays for half of them which I expect it will come to about eighty five dollars for each of us, Chambers pays for half and we the other half and perhaps you

W Workman Letter 1826

---

can get some of them with traid The goods that I named in my other letter I dont want you to send them but if any of the stores will credit me for five hundred yards of the Cheepest cind of Brown Domestic some narrow and some of the widest kind I will send them in the money this summer without fail and some tobacco if it can be got cheap, and one Blue settute coat made in the same fashion that my other on was but have it made a little larger so it will button easy on you and the ballance of my close I think I can make out except [shoes] and a hat you must send me two pair of shoes of . . . high quarter, and tell P. B. Ranys that he [must pick me] out a good hat, unfinished so that I can get it finished hear and I will send him the money or fur in the spring, there will be a very large company that will start from hear in march with about two thousand head of stock which they may calculate to loose half them I could have sent you in stock but it is so uncertain about them getting in for this reason I think that man in any Business that started with as little as I did ought to lie on a shoor futting, I have to furnish mule to Capt Brannin and you cant get one convenient I wish you to get one of M Kinkeads if they are not sould, I have sent you in twenty dollor by Thos Bogs to get us some Sugar and Coffee, and you must send me out colourd paper for lining Trunks and some saddlers tacks as as I did not bring any with me and some morocker Leather as mine was taken from me, I want you to send me out my tools such as eck planes and schels gouges holers and rounds and one male turning saw and my smool hammer so I reman, yours

W Workman

Mr Patton and myself tried our work in St ta Fee this winter and could sell nothing as for trunks I can Barter them of to a good advantage but their is very little money in Country and they thought that we would make them up and the would get them for nothing but be shoor to send me out that coulerd paper and nails and some locks of a better quality for their is half them that I brought is good for nothing and I want some good ones for some particular Persons in this country, Capt Brannin has to load his waggon with his goods and our Articles and if he cant fit it all of them Mr Thos Bogs has promised to bring them that we want, and if you can get some sassifress Bark . . . if you please, you will oblige yours

W Workman

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

OREGON;  
OR  
A SHORT HISTORY OF A LONG JOURNEY  
FROM THE  
ATLANTIC OCEAN TO THE REGION OF THE PACIFIC.  
BY LAND.  
DRAWN UP FROM THE NOTES AND ORAL INFORMATION  
OF  
JOHN B WYETH,  
ONE OF THE PARTY WHO LEFT MR NATHANIEL J WYETH,  
JULY 28TH, 1832, FOUR DAYS MARCH BEYOND THE RIDGE OF THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAINS,  
AND THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS RETURNED TO NEW ENGLAND  
CAMBRIDGE  
PRINTED FOR JOHN B. WYETH.  
1833.

A contented mind is a continual feast; but entire satisfaction has never been procured by wealth however enormous, or ambition however successful.

True happiness is to no place confin'd, But still is found in a contented mind.

OREGON EXPEDITION

In order to understand this Oregon Expedition, it is necessary to say, that thirty years ago (1803), PRESIDENT JEFFERSON recommended to Congress to authorize competent officers to explore the river Missouri from its mouth to its source, and by crossing the mountains to seek the best water communication thence to the Pacific Ocean. This arduous task was undertaken by Captain M. Lewis and Lieutenant W. Clarke of the first regiment of infantry. They were accompanied by a select party of soldiers, and arrived at the Missouri in May, 1804, and persisted in their novel and difficult task into the year 1806, and with such success as to draw from President Jefferson the following testimonial of their heroic services, viz. "The expedition of Messrs. LEWIS & CLARKE, for exploring the river Missouri, and the best communication from that to the Pacific Ocean, has had all the success which could be expected; and for which arduous service they deserve well of their country."

The object of this enterprise was to confer in a friendly manner with the Indian Nations throughout their whole journey, with a view to establish a friendly and equitable commerce with them, on principles emulating those that marked and dignified the settlement of Pennsylvania by William Penn. It was beyond doubt that the President and Congress sincerely desired to treat the Indians with kindness and justice, and to establish peace, order, and good neighbourhood with all the savage tribes with whom they came in contact, and not to carry war or violence among any of them who appeared peaceably disposed.

A few years before the period of which we have spoken, our government had acquired by purchase the vast and valuable Territory of Louisiana from the renowned NAPOLEON BONAPAR-

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

TE, at that time the Chief of the French Nation. Considering his previous intentions, and actual preparations under his famous General Bernadotte, nothing could be more fortunate for these United States than this purchase. Our possession of Louisiana was so grievous a sore to the very jealous Spaniards, that they have, till lately, done all in their power to debar and mislead us from pursuing discoveries in that quarter, or in the Arkansas, Missouri, or Oregon. Yet few or none of them probably believed that we should, during the present generation, or the next, attempt the exploration of the distant Oregon Territory, which extends from the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, or in other words, from the Missouri and Yellow Stone rivers to that of the river Columbia or Oregon which pours into the Ocean by a wide mouth at the immense distance from us of about four thousand miles; yet one and twenty men, chiefly farmers and a few mechanics, had the hardihood to undertake it, and that too with deliberation and sober calculation. But what will not a New-England man undertake when honor and interest are the objects before him? Have not the people of that sand-bank, Nantucket, redeemed it from the ocean, and sailed round Cape Horn in pursuit of whales for their oil, and seals for their skins? A score of our farmers seeing that Nantucket and New Bedford had acquired riches and independence by traversing the sea to the distant shores of the Pacific, determined to do something like it by land. Their ardor seemed to have hidden from their eyes the mighty difference between the facility of passing in a ship with the aid of sails, progressing day and night, by skilfully managing the winds and the helm, and that of a complicated wagon upon wheels, their journey to be over mountains and rivers, and through hostile tribes of savages who dreaded and hated the sight of a white man.

This novel expedition was not however the original or spontaneous notion of Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, nor was it entirely owing to the publications of Lewis & Clarke or Mackenzie. Nor was it entirely owing to the enterprise of Messrs. Barbell, Hatch, and Bulfinch, who fitted out two vessels that sailed from Boston in 1787, commanded by Captains Kendrick and Gray, which vessels arrived at Nootka in September, 1788. They were roused to it by the writings of Mr. Hall J. Kelly, who had read all the books he could get on the voyages and travels in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, until he had heated his mind to a degree little short of the valorous Knight of La Mancha, that is to say, he believed all he read, and was firm in the opinion that an Englishman and an American, or either, by himself, could endure and achieve any thing that any man could do with the same help, and farther, that a New-England man or "Yankee," could with less. That vast region, which stretches from between the east of the Mississippi, and south of the Lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie, and Ontario, was too narrow a space for the enterprise of men born and bred within a mile or two of the oldest University in the United States. Whatever be the true character of the natives of New England, one thing must be allowed them, that of great and expansive ideas,-- beyond, far beyond the generality of the inhabitants of the small Island of Britain. I say small, for if that Island should be placed in the midst of these United States, it would hardly form more than a single member of our extended republic. That vast rivers, enormous mountains, tremendous cataracts, with an extent corresponding to the hugeness of the features of America, naturally inspire men with boundless ideas, few will doubt. This adventurous disposition, at the same time, will as naturally banish from the mind what the newlight doctrine of Phrenology calls the disposition bump of Inhabitiveness, or an inclination to stay at home, and in its place give rise to a roaming, wandering inclination, which, some how or other, may so affect the organs of

---

vision, and of hearing, as to debar a person from perceiving what others may see, the innumerable difficulties in the way. Mr. Hall J. Kelly's writings operated like a match applied to the combustible matter accumulated in the mind of the energetic Nathaniel J. Wyeth, which reflected and multiplied the flattering glass held up to view by the ingenious and well disposed schoolmaster.

Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth had listened with peculiar delight to all the flattering accounts from the Western regions, and that at a time when he was surrounded with apparent advantages, and even enviable circumstances. He was born and bred near the borders of a beautiful small Lake, as it would be called in Great Britain; but what we in this country call a large Pond; because we generally give the name of Lakes only to our vast inland seas, some of which almost rival in size the Caspian and Euxine in the old world. It seems that he gave entire credit to the stories of the wonderful fertility of the soil on the borders of the Ohio, Missouri, the river Platte, and the Oregon, with the equally wonderful healthfulness of the climate. We need not wonder that a mind naturally ardent and enterprising should become too enthusiastic to pursue the laborious routine of breaking up and harrowing the hard and stubborn soil of Massachusetts within four miles of the sea, where the shores are bounded and fortified by stones and rocks, which extend inland, lying just below the surface of the ground, while the regions of the West were represented as standing in need of very little laborious culture, such was the native vigor of its black soil. The spot where our adventurer was born and grew up, had many peculiar and desirable advantages over most others in the county of Middlesex. Besides rich pasturage, numerous dairies, and profitable orchards, and other fruit trees, it possessed the luxuries of well cultivated gardens of all sorts of culinary vegetables, and all within three miles of the Boston Market House, and two miles of the largest live-cattle market in New England. All this, and more too, had not sufficient attractions to retain Mr. Wyeth in his native town and county.

Besides these blessings, I shall add another. The Lake I spoke of, commonly called Fresh Pond, is a body of delightful water, which seems to be the natural head or source of all the numerous underground rivers running between it and the National Navy Yard at Charlestown, which is so near to the city of Boston as to be connected to it by a bridge; for wherever you sink a well, between the body of water just mentioned, you strike a pelucid vein of it at from nineteen to twenty-two feet depth from the surface. With the aforesaid Lake or Pond is connected another not quite so large, but equally beautiful. Around these bodies of inosculating waters, are well cultivated farms and a number of gentlemen's country-seats, forming a picture of rural beauty and plenty not easily surpassed in Spring, Summer, and Autumn; and when winter has frozen the lakes and all the rivers, this spot has another and singular advantage; for our adventurer sold the water of this pond; which was sent to the West-Indian Islands, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and other places south of this; which is so much of a singularity as to require explanation.

In our very coldest weather, January and February, the body of water we spoke of is almost every year frozen to the thickness of from eighteen inches to two feet,- sometimes less, and very rarely more. It is then sawed into cubes of the size just mentioned, and deposited in large store-houses, and carted thence every month in the year, even through the dog-days, in heavy teams drawn by oxen and horses to the wharves in Boston, and put on board large and properly constructed

vessels, and carried into the hot climates already mentioned. The heavy teams five, or six, or more, close following each other, day and night, and even through the hottest months, would appear incredible to a stranger. Here was a traffic without any drawback, attended with no other charge than the labor of cutting and transporting the article; for the pond belonged to no man, any more than the air which hung above it. Both belonged to mankind. No one claimed any personal property in it, or control over it from border to border. A clearer profit can hardly be imagined. While the farmer was ploughing his ground, manuring and planting it, securing his well-tended crop by fencing, and yet after all his labor, the Hessian-fly, the canker or slug worm, or some other destructive insect, or some untimely frost, as was the case last winter, might lay waste all his pains and cut off all his expectations. The only risk to which the Ice-merchant was liable was a blessing to most of the community; I mean the mildness of a winter that should prevent his native lake from freezing a foot or two thick. Our fishermen have a great advantage over the farmer in being exempt from fencing, walling, manuring, taxation, and dry seasons; and only need the expence of a boat, line, and hook, and the risk of life and health; but from all these the Ice-man is in a manner entirely exempted; and yet the Captain of this Oregon Expedition seemed to say, All this availeth me nothing, so long as I read books in which I find, that by only going about four thousand miles, over land, from the shore of our Atlantic to the shore of the Pacific, after we have there entrapped and killed the beavers and otters, we shall be able, after building vessels for the purpose, to carry our most valuable peltry to China and Cochin China, our seal-skins to Japan, and our superfluous grain to various Asiatic ports, and lumber to the Spanish settlements on the Pacific; and to become rich by underworking and underselling the people of Hindostan; and, to crown all, to extend far and wide the traffic in oil by killing tame whales on the spot, instead of sailing round the stormy region of Cape Horn.

All these advantages and more too were suggested to divers discontented and impatient young men. Talk to them of the great labor, toil, and risk, and they would turn a deaf ear to you: argue with them, and you might as well reason with a snow-storm. Enterprising young men run away with the idea that the farther they go from home, the surer they will be of making a fortune. The original projector of this golden vision first talked himself into the visionary scheme, and then talked twenty others into the same notion. Some of their neighbours and well-wishers thought differently from them; and some of the oldest, and most thoughtful, and prudent endeavoured to dissuade them from so very arduous and hazardous an expedition. But young and single men are for tempting the untried scene; and when either sex has got a notion of that sort, the more you try to dissuade them, the more intent they are on their object. Nor is this bent of mind always to be censured, or wondered at. Were every man to be contented to remain in the town in which he was born, and to follow the trade of his father, there would be an end to improvement, and a serious impediment to spreading population. It is difficult to draw the exact line between contentment, and that inactivity which approaches laziness. The disposition either way seems stamped upon us by nature, and therefore innate. This is certainly the case with birds and beasts - the wild geese emigrate late in the Autumn to a southern climate, and return again in the Spring to a northern one, while the owl and several other birds remain all their lives near where they were hatched; whereas man is not so much confined by a natural bias to his native home. He can live in all climates from the equator to very near the dreary poles, which is not the case with other animals;

---

and it would seem that nature intended he should live anywhere; - for whereas other animals are restricted in their articles of food, some living wholly on flesh, and others wholly on vegetables, man is capable of feeding upon every thing that is eatable by any creature, and of mixing every article together, and varying them by his knowledge and art of cookery, - a knowledge and skill belonging to man alone. Hence it appears that Providence, who directs everything for the best, intended that man should wander over the globe, inhabit every region, and dwell wherever the sun could shine upon him, and where water could be obtained for his use.

So far from deriding the disposition to explore unknown regions, we should consider judicious travellers as so many benefactors of mankind. It is most commonly a propensity that marks a vigorous intellect, and a benevolent heart. The conduct of the Spaniards, when they conquered Mexico and Peru with the sole view of robbing them of their gold and silver, and of forcing them to abandon their native religion, has cast an odium on those first adventurers upon this continent and their first enterprises in India have stigmatized the Dutch and the English; nor were our own forefathers, who left England to enjoy religious freedom, entirely free from the stain of injustice and cruelty towards the native Indians.- Let us therefore in charity, nay, in justice, speak cautiously of what may seem to us censurable in the first explorers of uncivilized countries; and if we should err in judgment, let it be on the side of commendation.

Mr. Wyeth, or as we shall hereafter call him, Captain Wyeth, as being leader of the Band of the Oregon adventurers, after having inspired twenty-one persons with his own high hopes and expectations (among whom was his own brother, Dr. Jacob Wyeth, and a gun-smith, a black-smith, two carpenters, and two fishermen, the rest being farmers and laborers, brought up to no particular trade) was ready, with his companions, to start off to the Pacific Ocean, the first of March, 1832, to go from Boston to the mouth of Columbia river by land.

I was the youngest of the company, not having attained my twentieth year; but, in the plentitude of health and spirits, I hoped every thing, believed every thing my kinsman, the Captain, believed and said, and all doubts and fears were banished. The Captain used to convene us every Saturday night at his house for many months previous to our departure, to arrange and settle the plan of our future movements, and to make every needful preparation; and such were his thoughtfulness and vigilance, that it seemed to us nothing was forgotten and every thing necessary provided. Our three vehicles, or wagons, if we may call by that name a unique contrivance, half boat, and half carriage, may be mentioned as an instance of our Captain's talents for snug contrivance. It was a boat of about thirteen feet long, and four feet wide, of a shape partly of a canoe, and partly of a gondola. It was not calked with tarred oakum, and payed with pitch, lest the rays of the sun should injure it while upon wheels; but it was nicely jointed, and dovetailed. The boat part was firmly connected with the lower, or axletree, or wheel part; - the whole was so constructed that the four wheels of it were to be taken off when we came to a river, and placed in the wagon, while the tongue or shaft was to be towed across by a rope. Every thing was as light as could be consistent with safety. Some of the Cambridge wags said it was a boat begot upon a wagon,- a sort of mule, neither horse nor ass,- a mongrel, or as one of the collegians said it was a thing amphibious, anatomically constructed like some equivocal animals, allowing it to crawl upon the land, or to

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

swim on the water; and he therefore thought it ought to be denominated an amphibium. This would have gone off very well, and to the credit of the learned collegian, had not one of the gang, who could hardly write his own name, demurred at it; because he said that it reflected not back the honor due to the ingenious, contriver of the commodious and truly original vehicle; and for his part, he thought that if they meant to give it a particular name, that should redound to the glory of the inventor, it ought to be called a Nat-wye-thium; and this was instantaneously agreed to by acclamation! Be that as it may, the vehicle did not disgrace the inventive genius of New England. This good-humored raillery, shows the opinion of indifferent people, merely lookers-on. The fact was, the generality of the people in Cambridge considered it a hazardous enterprise, and considerably notional. About this time there appeared some well written essays in the Boston newspapers, to show the difficulty and impracticability of the scheme, purporting to doubt the assertions of Mr. Hall J. Kelly respecting the value and pleasantness of the Oregon territory. The three vehicles contained a gross of axes, a variety of articles, or "goods" so called, calculated for the Indian market, among which vermilion and other paints were not forgotten, glass beads, small looking-glasses, and a number of tawdry trinkets, cheap knives, buttons, nails, hammers, and a deal of those articles, on which young Indians of both sexes set a high value, and white men little or none. Such is the spirit of trade and traffic, from the London and Amsterdam merchant, down to an Indian trader and a yankee tin-ware man in his jingling go-cart; in which he travels through Virginia and the Carolinas to vend his wares, and cheat the Southerners, and bring home laughable anecdotes of their simplicity and ignorance, to the temporary disgrace of the common people of the Northern and Eastern part of the Union, where a travelling tin-man dare hardly show himself, - and yet is held up in the South as the real New-England character, and this by certain white people who know the use of letters!

The company were uniform in their dress. Each one wore a coarse woollen jacket and pantaloons, a striped cotton shirt, and cowhide boots: every man had a musket, most of them rifles, all of them bayonets in a broad belt, together with a large clasped knife for eating and common purposes. The Captain and one or two more added pistols; but every one had in his belt a small axe. This uniformity had a pleasing effect, which, together with their curious wagons, was noticed with commendation in the Baltimore newspapers, as a striking contrast with the family emigrants of husband, wife, and children, who have for thirty years and more passed on to the Ohio, Kentucky, and other territories. - The whole bore an aspect of energy, good contrivance, and competent means. I forgot to mention that we carried tents, camp-kettles, and the common utensils for cooking victuals, as our plan was to live like soldiers, and to avoid, as much as possible, inns and taverns. The real and avowed object of this hardy-looking enterprise was to go to the river Columbia, otherwise called the river Oregon, or river of the West, which empties by a very wide mouth into the Pacific Ocean, and there and thereabouts commence a fur trade by trafficking with the Indians, as well as beaver and other hunting by ourselves. We went upon shares, and each one paid down so much; and our association was to last during five years. Each man paid our Leader forty dollars. Captain Wyeth was our Treasurer, as well as Commander; and all the expenses of our travelling on wheels, and by water in steam-boats, were defrayed by our Leader, to whom we all promised fidelity and obedience. For twenty free-born New-England men, brought up in a sort of Indian freedom, to be bound together to obey a leader in all things reasonable, without some-

thing like articles of war, was, to say the least of it, a hazardous experiment. The Captain and crew of a Nantucket whaling ship came nearest to such an association; for in this case each man runs that great risk of his life, in voluntarily attacking and killing a whale, which could not be expected from men hired by the day, like soldiers; so much stronger does association for gain operate, than ordinary wages. As fighting Indians from behind trees and rocks is next, in point of courage, to attacking a whale, the monarch of the main, in his own element, a common partnership is the only scheme for achieving and securing such dangerous purposes.

We left the city of Boston, 1st of March, 1832, and encamped on one of the numerous islands in its picturesque harbour, where we remained ten days, by way of inuring ourselves to the tented field; and on the 11th of the same month we hoisted sail for Baltimore, where we arrived after a passage of fifteen days, not without experiencing a snow-storm, severe cold, and what the landsmen considered a hard gale, at which I, who had been one voyage to sea, did not wonder. It made every man on board look serious; and glad were we to be set on shore at the fair city of Baltimore, in which are to be found a great number of merchants, traders, and mechanics from different parts of New England, and where of course there are none, or very few, of those ridiculous prejudices against what they call Yankees, that are observable in Virginia and the Carolinas.

At Baltimore our amphibious carriages excited great attention, and I may add, our whole company was an object of no small curiosity and respect. This, said they, is "Yankee all over!" - bold enterprise, neatness, and good contrivance. As we carefully avoided the expense of inns and taverns, we marched two miles out of Baltimore, and there encamped during four days; and then we put our wagons into the cars on the rail-road; which extends from thence sixty miles, which brought us to the foot of the Alleghany mountains. Quitting the rail-road at the foot of the Alleghany, we encountered that mountain. Here we experienced a degree of inhospitality not met with among the savages. The Innkeepers, when they found that we came from New England, betrayed an unwillingness to accommodate Yankees, from a ridiculous idea, that the common people, so nicknamed, were too shrewd at a bargain and trading, for a slow and straight-forward Dutchman; for the inhabitants of this mountainous region, were generally sons and grandsons of the Dutch and German first settlers; and it cannot be denied and concealed, that the New England land-jobbers were in their bargains too hard for the torpid Dutchman, who, it is true, loved money as much as any people, yet when they, or their fathers had been the sufferers from a set of roving sharpers, it is no wonder that an hereditary prejudice should descend with exaggeration and aggravation from father to son, and that their resentment should visit their innocent sons to the third and fourth generation. No one pretends to mention any fact or deed, in which those Dutch foreigners were defrauded of their rights and dues; and all that can be, with truth, said, was, that the land-speculators from Connecticut and Massachusetts were to New-England what Yorkshire men are thought to be to the rest of the people of England, a race more sharp and quick-sighted than their neighbours, and with a sort of constitutional good humor, called fun, they could twist that uneducated progeny of a German stock around their fingers; - hence their reluctance to have any thing to do with men, whose grand-fathers were too knowing for them. You never hear the French or the English complaining of the over-shrewdness of the New England people. They accord very well together, and very frequently intermarry. No, it is the Dutch, and the descendants

of transported convicts, who sneer at those they call Yankees, whom their fathers feared, and of course hated.

At one public house on the mountains near which we halted, the master of it, learning that we came from Boston, refused us any refreshment and lodging. He locked up his bar-room, put the key in his pocket, went out, and came back with four or five of his neighbours, when the disagreement ran so high, that the tavern-keeper and the Yankee Captain each seized his rifle. The latter pointing to the other's sign before his door, demanded both lodging and refreshment, as the legal condition of his tavern-license; and the dispute ended in our Captain's sleeping in the house with three of his party, well armed, determined to defend their persons, and to insist on their rights as peaceable and unoffending travellers, while the rest of the company bivouacked near their wagons, and reposed themselves, like veteran soldiers, in their tents and wagons.

We gladly departed from the inhospitable Alleghany or Apalachian mountains, which extend from the river St. Lawrence to the confines of Georgia, and which run nearly parallel to the sea-shore from sixty to one hundred and thirty miles from it, and dividing the rivers, which flow into the Atlantic on the east, from those that run into the lakes and into the Mississippi on the west. The part we passed was in the state of Pennsylvania. Our next stretch was for the river Monongahela, where we took the steamboat for - Pittsburg. This town has grown in size and wealth, in a few years, surprisingly. It is two hundred and thirty miles from Baltimore; three hundred from Philadelphia. It is built on a point of land jutting out towards the river Ohio, and washed on each side by the Alleghany and Monongahela, which rivers uniting are lost in the noble Ohio. It was originally a fortress built by the French, called Fort du Quesne; being afterwards taken by the English in 1759, it was called fort Pitt, in honor of the famous William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, under whose administration it was taken from the French, together with all Canada. On this spot a city has been reared by the Americans, bearing the name of Pittsburg, which has thriven in a surprising manner by its numerous manufactories in glass, as well as in all the metals in common use. To call it the Birmingham of America is to underrate its various industry; and to call the English Birmingham Pittsburg, would be to confer upon that town additional honor; not but what the British Birmingham is by far the most pleasant place to live in. Pittsburg is the region of iron and fossil coal, of furnaces, glass-works, and a variety of such like manufactures. This town has somewhat the color of a coal-pit, or of a black-smith's shop. The wonder is, that any gentleman of property should ever think of building a costly dwelling-house, with corresponding furniture, in the coal region of the western world; but there is no disputing *de gustibus - Cacun a son gout*. The rivers and the surrounding country are delightful, and the more so from the contrast between them and that hornet's nest of bustle and dirt, the rich capital. Thousands of miserable culprits are doomed to delve in deep mines of silver, gold, and quicksilver among the Spaniards for their crimes; but here they are all freemen, who choose to breathe smoke, and swallow dirt, for the sake of clean dollars and shining eagles. Hence it is that the Pittsburgh workmen appear, when their faces are washed, with the ruddiness of high health, the plenitude of good spirits, and the confidence of freemen.

From the busy city of thriving Pittsburg our next important movement was down the Ohio. We

---

accordingly embarked in a very large steam-boat called The Freedom; and soon found ourselves, bag and baggage very much at our ease and satisfaction, on board a truly wonderful floating inn, hotel, or tavern, for such are our steam-boats. Nothing of the kind can surpass the beauty of this winding river, with its fine back-ground of hills of all shapes, and colors, according to the advancement of vegetation from the shrubs to the tallest trees. But the romantic scenery on both sides of the Ohio is so various and so captivating to a stranger, that it requires the talents of a painter to give even a faint idea of the picture; and the effect on my mind was, not to estimate them as I ought, but to feed my deluded imagination with the belief that we should find on the Missouri, and on the Rocky Mountains, and Columbia river, object as much finer than the Ohio afforded, as this matchless river exceeded our Merrimac or Kennebeck; and so it is with the youth of both sexes; not satisfied with the present gifts of nature, they pant after the untried scene, which imagination is continually bodying forth, and time as constantly dissipating.

The distance from Pittsburg to the Mississippi is about one thousand miles. Hutchins estimated it at one thousand one hundred and eighty-eight, - Dr. Drake at only nine hundred and forty-nine. Wheeling is a town of some importance. Here the great national road into the interior from the city of Washington, meets that of Zanesville, Chillicothe, Columbus, and Cincinnati. It is the best point to aim at in very low stages of the water, and from thence boats may go at all seasons of the year. We passed Marietta, distinguished for its remarkable remains of mounds, and works, resembling modern fortifications, but doubtless the labor of the ancient aboriginals, of whom there is now no existing account; but by these works, and articles found near them, they must have belonged to a race of men farther advanced in arts and civilization than the present Indian in that region, - a people who, we may well suppose, were the ancestors of the Mexicans. Yet we see at this time little more than log-houses belonging to miserable tenants of white people. All the sugar used by the people here is obtained from the maple tree. Fossil coal is found along the banks. There is a creek pouring forth Petroleum, about one hundred miles from Pittsburg on the Alleghany, called Oil Creek, which will blaze on the application of a match. This is not uncommon in countries abounding in bituminous coal. Nitre is found wherever there are suitable caves and caverns for its collection. The people here are rather boisterous in their manners, and intemperate in their habits, by what we saw and heard, more so than on the other side of the river where slavery is prohibited. Indeed slavery carries a black moral mark with it visible on those whose skins are naturally of a different color; and Mr. Jefferson's opinion of the influence of slavery on the whites, justifies our remark.

We stopped one day and night at the flourishing town of Cincinnati, the largest city in the Western country, although, laid out so recently as 1788. It is twenty miles above the mouth of the Great Miami, and four hundred and sixty five miles below Pittsburg. It appears to great advantage from the river, the ground inclining gradually to the water. Three of us had an evidence of that by a mischievous trick for which we deserved Punishment. We were staring about the fine city that has risen up with a sort of rapid, mushroom growth, surprising to every one who sees it, and who considers that it is not more than forty years old. In the evening we went into a public house, where we treated ourselves with that sort of refreshment which inspires fun, frolic, and mischief. We remained on shore till so late an hour that every body appeared to have gone to bed, when

---

we set out to return to our steam-boat. In our way to it we passed by a store, in the front of which stood three barrels of lamp-oil, at the head of a fine sloping street. The evil spirit of mischief put it into our heads to set them a rolling down the inclined plane to the river. No sooner hinted, than executed. We set all three a running, and we ran after them; and what may have been lucky for us, they were recovered next day whole. Had there been legal inquisition made for them, we had determined to plead character, that we were from Boston, the land of steady habits and good principles, and that it must have been some gentlemen Southerners, with whose characters for nightly frolics, we, who lived within sound of the bell of the University of Cambridge were well acquainted. The owners of the oil came down to the steam-boat, and carried back their property without making a rigid examination for the offenders -, without suspecting that prudent New-England young men would indulge in a wanton piece of fun, where so much was at stake. But John Bull and Jonathan are queer fellows.

From Cincinnati to St. Louis, we experienced some of those disagreeable occurrences, that usually happen to democratical adventurers. Our Captain, to lessen the expenses of the expedition, had bargained with the Captain of the steam-boat, that we of his band should assist in taking on board wood from the shore, to keep our boilers from cooling. Although every one saw the absolute necessity of the thing, for our common benefit and safety, yet some were for demurring at it, as not previously specified and agreed upon. Idleness engenders mutiny oftener than want. In scarcity and in danger men cling together like gregarious animals; but as soon as an enterprising gang can sit down, as in a steam-boat, with nothing to do but to find fault, they are sure to become discontented, and discontent indulged leads to mutiny. Whatever I thought then, I do not think now that Captain Wyeth was to blame for directing his followers to aid in wooding; nor should the men have grumbled at it. I now am of opinion that our aiding in wooding the steam-boat was right, reasonable, and proper. Every man of us, except the surgeon of the company, Dr. Jacob Wyeth, ought, on every principle of justice and generosity, to have given that assistance.

Our navigation from Cincinnati to St. Louis was attended with circumstances new, interesting, and very often alarming. Passing the rapids of the Ohio, or falls as they are called, between the Indiana territory and Kentucky, was sufficiently appalling to silence all grumbling. These falls, or rapids are in the vicinity of Louisville, Jeffersonville, Clarksville, and Shipping-port, and are really terrific to an inexperienced farmer or mechanic. Our Hellgate in Long-Island Sound is a common brook compared with them; and when we had passed through them into the Mississippi, the assemblage of trees in the river, constituting snags and sawyers, offered themselves as a species of risk and danger, which none of us had ever calculated on or dreamt of. We knew that there was danger in great storms, of huge trees blowing down on one's head; and that those who took shelter under them in a thunder-storm, risked their lives from lightning; but to meet destruction from trees in an immense river, seemed to us a danger of life, which we had not bargained for, and entirely out of our agreement and calculation. We had braced ourselves up only against the danger of hostile Indians, and enraged beasts, which we meant to war against. Beyond that, all was smooth water to us. The truth of the matter is, - the men whom Captain Wyeth had collected were not the sort of men for such an expedition. They were too much on an equality to be under strict orders like soldiers. Lewis & Clarke were very fortunate in the men they had under them.

---

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

Major Long's company was, in a great degree military, and yet three of his soldiers deserted him at one time, and a fourth soon after.

On the 18th of April, 1832, we arrived at St. Louis. As we had looked forward to this town, as a temporary resting place, we entered it in high spirits, and pleased ourselves with a notion that the rest of our way till we should come to the Rocky Mountains would be, if not down hill, at least on a level: but we counted without our host.

St. Louis was founded by a Frenchman named Peter la Clade in 1764, eighty-four years after the establishment of Fort Creve-coeur on the Illinois river; and inhabited entirely by Frenchmen and the descendants of Frenchmen, who had carried on for the most part a friendly and lucrative trade with the Indians. But since the vast Western country has been transferred to the United States, its population has been rapidly increased by numerous individuals and families from different parts of the Union; and its business extended by enterprising mechanics and merchants from the New-England States; and its wealth greatly augmented. The old part of St. Louis has a very different aspect from that of Cincinnati, where every thing appears neat, and new, and tasteful; as their public buildings, their theatre, and spacious hotels, not forgetting Madam Trollope's bazar, or, as it is commonly called, "Trollope's Folly," as well as its spacious streets, numerous coaches, and other marks of rapid wealth, and growing luxury. As St. Louis has advanced in wealth, magnitude, and importance, it has gradually changed the French language and manners, and assumed the American. It however contains, I am told, many of the old stock that are very respectable for their literary acquirements and polished manners.

We shall avoid, as we have avowed, any thing like censure of Captain Wyeth's scheme during his absence; but when we arrived at St. Louis, we could not but lament his want of information, respecting the best means of obtaining the great objects of our enterprise. Here we were constrained to sell our complicated wagons for less than half what they originally cost. We were convinced that they were not calculated for the rough roads, and rapid streams and eddies of some of the rivers we must necessarily pass. We here thought of the proverb, "that men never do a thing right the first time." Captain Wyeth might have learned at St. Louis, that there were two wealthy gentlemen who resided at or near that place, who had long since established a regular trade with the Indians, Mr. M-, and a young person, Mr. S-, and that a stranger could hardly compete with such established traders. The turbulent tribe, called the Black-foot tribe, had long been supplied with fire arms and ammunition, beads, vermilion and other paints, tobacco and scarlet cloth, from two or three capital traders at, or near, St. Louis, and every article most saleable with the Indians. Both parties knew each other, and had confidence in each other; and having this advantage over our band of adventurers, it does not appear that Mr. Mackenzie, and Mr. Sublet felt any apprehensions or jealousy of the new comers from Boston; but treated them with friendship, and the latter with confidence and cordiality; the former gentleman being, in a manner, retired from business, except through numerous agents. He owns a small steam-boat called the Yellow Stone, the name of one of the branches of the Missouri river. Through such means the Indians are supplied with all they want; and they appeared not to wish to have any thing to do with any one else, especially the adventurous Yankees. These old established traders enjoy a friendly influence, or prudent command,

---

over those savages, that seems to operate to the exclusion of every one else; and this appeared from the manner in which they treated us, which was void of every thing like jealousy, or fear of rivalry. Their policy was to incorporate us with their own troop.

We put our goods, and other baggage on board the steamboat Otter, and proceeded two hundred and sixty miles up the Missouri river, which is as far as the white people have any settlements. We were obliged to proceed very slowly and carefully on account of the numerous snags and sawyers with which this river abounds. They are trees that have been loosened, and washed away from the soft banks of the river. They are detained by sandbanks, or by other trees, that have floated down some time before. Those of them whose sharp branches point opposite the stream are the snags, against which boats are often impelled, as they are not visible above water, and many are sunk by the wounds these make in their bows. The sawyers are also held fast by their roots, while the body of the tree whips up and down, alternately visible and concealed beneath the surface. These are the chief terrors of the Missouri and the Mississippi rivers. As to crocodiles they are little regarded, being more afraid of man than he of them. On account of these snags and sawyers, boatmen avoid passing in the night, and are obliged to keep a sharp look out in the day-time. The sawyers when forced to the bottom or near it by a strong current, or by eddies, rise again with such force that few boats can withstand the shock. The course of the boat was so tediously slow, that many of us concluded to get out and walk on the banks of the river. This, while it gave us agreeable exercise, was of some service in lightening our boat, for with other passengers from St. Louis, we amounted to a considerable crew. The ground was level, and free from under-wood. We passed plenty of deer, wild turkeys, and some other wild fowl unknown to us, and expected to find it so all the way.

We arrived at a town or settlement called Independence. This is the last white settlement on our route to the Oregon, and this circumstance gave a different cast to our peregrination, and operated not a little on our hopes, and our fears, and our imaginations. Some of our company began to ask each other some serious questions; such as, Where are we going? and what are we going for? and sundry other questions, which would have been wiser had we asked them before we left Cambridge, and ruminated well on the answers. But Westward ho! was our watchword, and checked all doubts, and silenced all expressions of fear.

Just before we started from this place, a company of sixty-two in number arrived from St. Louis, under the command of William Sublet, Esq., an experienced Indian trader, bound, like ourselves, to the American Alps, the Rocky Mountains, and we joined company with him, and it was very lucky that we did. Our minds were not entirely easy. We were about to leave our peaceable country-men, from whom we had received many attentions and much kindness, to go into a dark region of savages, of whose customs, manners, and language, we were entirely ignorant, - to go we knew not whither, - to encounter we knew not what. We had already sacrificed our amphibious wagons, the result of so much pains and cost. Here two of our company left us, named Kilham and Weeks. Whether they had any real cause of dissatisfaction with our Captain, or whether they only made that an excuse to quit the expedition and return home early, it is not for me to say. I suspect the abandonment of our travelling vehicles cooled their courage. We rested at Independ-

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

dence ten days; and purchased, by Captain Sublet's advice, two yoke of oxen, and fifteen sheep, as we learnt that we ought not to rely entirely upon transient game from our fire-arms for sustenance, especially as we were now going among a savage people who would regard us with suspicion and dread, and treat us accordingly. From this place we travelled about twenty-five miles a day.

Nothing occurred worth recording, till we arrived at the first Indian settlement, which was about seventy miles from Independence. They appeared to us a harmless people, and not averse to our passing through their country. Their persons were rather under size, and their complexion dark. As they lived near the frontier of the whites, they were not unacquainted with their usages and customs. They have cultivated spots or little farms, on which they raise corn and pumpkins. They generally go out once a year to hunt, accompanied by their women; and on killing the Buffalo, or Bison, what they do not use on the spot, they dry to eat through the winter. To prevent a famine, however, it is their custom to keep a large number of dogs; and they eat them as we do mutton and lamb. This tribe have imitated the white people in having fixed and stationary houses. They stick poles in the ground in a circular form, and cover them with buffalo skins, and put earth over the whole, leaving at the top an aperture for the smoke, but small enough to be covered with a buffalo-skin in case of rain or snow.- We found here little game; but honey-bees in abundance.

We travelled on about a hundred miles farther, when we came to a large prairie, which name the French have given to extensive tracts of land, mostly level, destitute of trees, and covered with tall, coarse grass. They are generally dreary plains, void of water, and rendered more and by the Indian custom of setting fire to the high grass once or twice a year to start the game that has taken shelter there, which occasions a hard crust unfavorable to any vegetable more substantial than grass. At this unpromising spot, three more of our company took French leave of us, there being, it seems, dissatisfaction on both sides; for each complained of the other. The names of the seceders were Livermore, Bell, Griswell. In sixteen days more we reached the River La Platte, the water of which is foul and muddy. We were nine days passing this dreary prairie. We were seven and twenty days winding our way along the borders of the La Platte, which river we could not leave on account of the scarcity of water in the dry and comfortless plains. Here we slaughtered the last of our live stock, and at night we came to that region where buffaloes are often to be found; but we suffered some sharp gnawings of hunger before we obtained one, and experienced some foretaste of difficulties to come.

The Missouri Territory is a vast wilderness, consisting of immense plains, destitute of wood and of water, except on the edges of streams that are found near the turbid La Platte. This river owes its source to the Rocky mountains, and runs pretty much through the territory, without enlivening or fructifying this desert. Some opinion may be formed of it by saying that for the space of six hundred miles, we may be said to have been deprived of the benefits of two of the elements, fire and water. Here were, to be sure, buffaloes, but after we had killed them we had no wood or vegetables of any kind wherewith to kindle a fire for cooking. We were absolutely compelled to dry the dung of the buffalo as the best article we could procure for cooking our coarse beef. That grumbling, discontent, and dejection should spring up amongst us, was what no one can be

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

surprised at learning. We were at times very miserable, and our commander could be no less so; but we had put our hands to the plough, and most of us were too stuffy to flinch, and sneak off for home without reaching the Rocky Mountains; still hunger is hunger, and the young and the strong feel the greatest call for food. Every one who goes to sea may lay his account for coming to short allowance, from violent storms, head winds, damaged vessel, and the like; but for a band of New-England men to come to short allowance upon land, with guns, powder, and shot, was a new idea to our Oregon adventurers, who had not prepared for it in the article of hard bread, or flour, or potatoes, or that snug and wholesome article, salt fish, so plenty at Marblehead and Cape Ann, and so convenient to carry. When the second company shall march from the seat of science, Cambridge, we would advise them to pack up a few quintals of salt fish, and a few pounds of ground sago, and salep, as a teaspoonful of it mixed with boiling water will make three pints of good gruel, and also a competent supply of portable soup.

Buffaloes were plenty enough. We saw them in frightful droves, as far as the eye could reach, appearing at a distance as if the ground itself was moving like the sea. Such large armies of them have no fear of man. They will travel over him and make nothing of him. Our company after killing ten or twelve of them, never enjoyed the benefit of more than two of them, the rest being carried off by the wolves before morning. Beside the scarcity of meat, we suffered for want of good and wholesome water. The La Platte is warm and muddy; and the use of it occasioned a diarrhoea in several of our company. Dr. Jacob Wyeth, brother of the Captain, suffered not a little from this cause.- Should the reader wonder how we proceeded so rapidly on our way without stopping to inquire, he must bear in mind that we were still under the guidance of Captain Sublet, who knew every step of the way, and had actually resided four years in different green valleys that are here and there in the Rocky Mountains. To me it seems that we must have perished for want of sustenance in the deserts of Missouri, had we been by ourselves. It may have been good policy in Sublet, to attach us to him. He probably saw our rawness in an adventure so ill provided for as ours actually was. But for him we should hardly have provided ourselves with live stock; and but for him we should probably never have reached the American Alps. By this time every man began to think for himself.

We travelled six days on the south branch of the La Platte, and then crossed over to the north branch, and on this branch of it, we travelled eighteen days. But the first three days we could not find sufficient articles of food; and what added to our distress was the sickness of several of our company. We noticed many trails of the savages, but no Indians. The nearer we approached the range of the mountains the thicker were the trees. After travelling twelve days longer we came to the Black Hills. They are so called from their thick growth of cedar. Here is the region of rattle snakes, and the largest and fiercest bears, - a very formidable animal, which it is not prudent for a man to attack alone. I have known some of the best hunters of Sublet's company to fire five and six balls at one before he fell. We were four days in crossing these dismal looking hills. They would be called mountains, were they not in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains, whose peaks overtop every thing, and elevate themselves into the region of everlasting frost and snow. Our sick suffered extremely in ascending these hills, some of them slipped off the horses and mules they rode on, from sheer weakness, brought on by the bowel complaint already mentioned; among

these was Dr. Wyeth, our Captain's brother, who never had a constitution fit to encounter such an expedition. And yet we could not leave them under the care of a man, or two or three men, and pass on without them, to follow us, when they were able. It was to me particularly grievous to think that he, who was to take care of the health of the company, was the first who was disabled from helping himself or others, and this one a blood relation. It required a man of a firmer make than Dr. Jacob Wyeth to go through such a mountainous region as the one we were in: a man seldom does a thing right the first time.

From the north branch we crossed over to what was called Sweet-water Creek. This water being cool, clear, and pleasant, proved a good remedy for our sick, as their bowel complaints were brought on and aggravated by the warm, muddy waters of the Missouri territory we had passed through. We came to a huge rock in the shape of a bowl upside down. It bore the name of Independence, from, it is said, being the resting-place of Lewis and Clarke on the 4th of July; but according to the printed journal of those meritorious travellers, they had not reached, or entered, the American Alps on the day of that memorable epoch. Whether we are to consider the rock Independence as fairly in the Rocky Mountains, let others determine. We had now certainly begun our ascent to those lofty regions, previous to which we had to pass the chief branch of the river La Platte; but we had no boat whatever for the purpose; and had we not been in the company of Captain Sublet, it is hard to say what we should have done short of going a great way round. Here I, and others were entirely convinced that we were engaged in an expedition without being provided with the means to accomplish it. Our boats and wagons we had disposed of at St. Louis, and here we were on the banks of a river without even a canoe. Captain Clarke brought his canoes to the foot of the range of mountains and there left them. The reader will understand that not only the Missouri river, but the Yellowstone river, the La Platte, and many other smaller ones commence by small beginnings in the Black Hills, and in the Rocky Mountains, and increase in size and depth as they proceed down to join the Arkansa, or the Canadian river, and finally the Mississippi, and so run into the vast salt ocean. Whether it was Captain Sublet's own invention, or an invention of the Indians, we know not, but the contrivance we used is worth mentioning. They called it a Bull-boat. They first cut a number of willows (which grow every where near the banks of all the rivers we had travelled by from St. Louis), of about an inch and a half diameter at the butt end, and fixed them in the ground at proper distances from each other, and as they approached nearer one end they brought them nearer together, so as to form something like the bow. The ends of the whole were brought and bound firmly together, like the ribs of a great basket; and then they took other twigs of willow and wove them into those stuck in the ground so as to make a sort of firm, huge basket of twelve or fourteen feet long. After this was completed, they sewed together a number of buffalo-skins, and with them covered the whole; and after the different parts had been trimmed off smooth, a slow fire was made under the Bull-boat, taking care to dry the skins moderately; and as they gradually dried, and acquired a due degree of warmth, they rubbed buffalo tallow all over the outside of it, so as to allow it to enter into all the seams of the boat, now no longer a willowbasket. As the melted tallow ran down into every seam, hole, and crevice, it cooled into a firm body capable of resisting the water, and bearing a considerable blow without damaging it. Then the willow-ribbed, buffalo-skin, tallowed vehicle was carefully pulled up from the ground, and behold a boat capable of transporting man, horse, and goods over a

pretty strong current. At the sight of it, we Yankees all burst out into a loud laugh, whether from surprise, or pleasure, or both, I know not. It certainly was not from ridicule; for we all acknowledged the contrivance would have done credit to old New-England.

While Captain Sublet and his company were binding the gunwale of the boat with buffalo-sinews, to give it strength and due hardness, our Captain was by no means idle. He accordingly undertook to make a raft to transport our own goods across the river. Sublet expressed his opinion that it would not answer where the current was strong; but Captain Wyeth is a man not easily to be diverted from any of his notions, or liable to be influenced by the advice of others; so that while Sublet's men were employed on their Bull-boat, Wyeth and a chosen few were making a raft. When finished, we first placed our blacksmith's shop upon it, that is to say, our anvil, and large vice, and other valuable articles belonging to blacksmithery, bar-iron, and steel traps, and alas! a cask of powder, and a number of smaller, but valuable articles. We fixed a rope to our raft, and with some difficulty got the other end of it across the river to the opposite bank by a man swimming with a rope in his mouth, from some distance above the spot he aimed to reach. We took a turn of it round a tree. Captain Sublet gave it as his opinion that the line would not be sufficient to command the raft. But our Leader was confident that it would; but when they had pulled about half way over, the rope broke, and the raft caught under the limbs of a partly submerged tree, and tipped it on one side so that we lost our iron articles, and damaged our goods and a number of percussion caps. This was a very serious calamity and absolutely irreparable. Almost every disaster has some benefit growing out of it. It was even so here. Two thirds of our company were sick, and that without any particular disorder that we can name, but from fatigue, bad water, scanty food, and eating flesh half raw. Add to this, worry of mind, and serious apprehensions of our fate when the worthy Captain Sublet should leave us; for he was, under Providence, the instrument of our preservation. Our own individual sufferings were enough for us to bear; but Captain Wyeth had to bear the like, and more beside, as the responsibility lay heavy upon him. Most men would have sunk under it. At this point of our journey we were sadly tormented by musquitoes, that prevented our sleep after the fatigues of the day. This little contemptible insect, which they call here a gnat, disturbed us more than bears, or wolves, or snakes.

The next day after we started from this unlucky place, we descried a number of men on horseback, approaching us at full speed. Various were our conjectures. Captain Sublet had an apprehension that they might be hostile Indians who fight on horseback; he therefore ordered every man to make fast his horse as quick as possible, and prepare for battle on foot. But on their near approach, we found them a body of white men called trappers, whose occupation is to entrap the beaver and other animals that have valuable furs. Captain Sublet has, for several years, had about two hundred of these trappers in his pay, in and around the Rocky Mountains, and this troop was a party of them. His place of rendezvous for them is at Pierre's Hole, by which name they call one of those deep and verdant valleys which are to be found in the Rocky Mountains from the eastern boundary of them to their extreme edge in the west, where the Oregon or Columbia river commences under the name of Clark's river, some branches of which inosculate with the mighty Missouri on the east. It is to Pierre's valley or Hole, that his trappers resort to meet their employer every summer. It is here they bring their peltry and receive their pay; and this traffic

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

has been kept up between them a number of years with good faith on both sides, and to mutual satisfaction and encouragement. When Sublet leaves St. Louis, he brings up tobacco, coffee, rice, powder, shot, paint, beads, handkerchiefs and all those articles of finery that please both Indian women and men; and having established that sort of traffic with his friends, the Indians on and in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains, what chance was there that any small band from Boston, or even Cambridge, could supplant him in the friendship and confidence of his old acquaintance, the Shoshonees, the Black-feet, or any other tribe? He must have seen this at once, and been convinced that nothing like rivalry could rise up between him and the New-England adventurers. He therefore caressed them, and, in a manner, incorporated them with his troop. This gentleman was born in America of French parents, and partakes largely of those good-humored, polite, and accommodating manners which distinguish the nation he sprang from. The old French war, and wars on this continent since then, amply prove how much better Frenchmen conciliate the natives than the English. The English and the Americans, when they come in contact with the untutored savage, most commonly fight. But not so the French. They please and flatter the Indian, give him powder, and balls, and flints, and guns, and make a Catholic of him, and make out to live in friendship with the red man and woman of the wilderness. It is strange that such extremes of character should meet. Some have said that they are not so very far distant as others have imagined, - that the refined French people love war and the women paint their faces, grease their hair, and wear East India blankets, called shawls.- Captain Sublet possesses, doubtless, that conciliating disposition so characteristic of the French, and not so frequently found among the English or Americans; for the descendants of both nations bear strong marks of the stock they came from. The French have always had a stronger hold of the affections of the Indians than any other people.

The trappers kept company with us till we came to Pierre's Hole, or valley, which is twelve miles from the spot where we first met them. Three or four days after, we were fired on by the Indians about ten o'clock at night. They had assembled to about the number of three hundred. They stole five horses from us, and three from Sublet's company. About the first of July we crossed the highest part or ridge of the mountains. In addition to the mountain composed of earth, sand, and stone, including common rocks, there were certain peaks resembling a loaf of sugar, from a hundred to two hundred feet high; and some appeared much higher; I cannot guess their height. They were to us surprising. Their sides deviated but little from perpendicular. They looked at a distance like some light-houses of a conical form, or like our Cambridge glass manufactories; but how they acquired that form is wonderful. Subsiding waters may have left them so, after washing away sandy materials. But nature is altogether wonderful, in her large works as well as small. How little do we know of the first cause of any thing! We had to creep round the base of these steep edifices of nature. We now more clearly understand and relish the question of one of our Indians who was carried to England as a show, who, on being shown that elegant pile of stone, the cathedral of St. Paul, after viewing it in silent admiration, asked his interpreter whether it was by men's hands, or whether it grew there. We might ask the same question respecting these conical mountains. Had the scaffolding of St. Paul's remained, the surprise and wonder of the sensible savage had been less.

It was difficult to keep our feet on these highest parts of the mountains; some of the pack-horses

---

slipped and rolled over and over, and yet were taken up alive. Those that did not fall were sadly bruised and lamed in their feet and joints. Mules are best calculated, as we experienced, for such difficult travelling. They seem to think, and to judge of the path before them, and will sometimes put their fore feet together and slip down without stepping. They are as sagacious in crossing a river, where there is a current. They will not attempt to go straight over, but will breast the tide by passing obliquely upwards. One of our horses was killed by a fall down one of these precipices, and it was surprising that more of them did not share the like fate. Buffaloes were so scarce here, that we were obliged to feed on our dried meat, and this scarcity continued till after we had gained the head sources of the Columbia river. For the last five days we have had to travel on the Colorado of the West, which is a very long river, and empties into the gulph of California.

On the 4th of July, 1832, we arrived at Lewis's fork, one of the largest rivers in these rocky mountains. It took us all day to cross it. It is half a mile wide, deep, and rapid. The way we managed was this: one man unloaded his horse, and swam across with him, leading two loaded ones, and unloading the two, brought them back, for two more, and as Sublet's company and our own made over a hundred and fifty, we were all day in passing the river. In returning, my mule, by treading on a round stone, stumbled and threw me off, and the current was so strong, that a bush which I caught hold of only saved me from drowning. This being Independence-Day, we drank the health of our friends in Massachusetts, in good clear water, as that was the only liquor we had to drink in remembrance of our homes and dear connexions. If I may judge by my own feelings and by the looks of my companions, there was more of melancholy than joy amongst us. We were almost four thousand miles from Boston, and in saying Boston we mean at the same time our native spot Cambridge, as they are separated by a wooden bridge only. From the north fork of Lewis's river we passed on to an eminence called Teton mountain, where we spent the night. The next day was pleasant, and serene. Captain Sublet came in the evening to inquire how many of our company were sick, as they must ride, it being impossible for them to go on foot any farther. His kindness and attention I never can forget. Dr. Jacob Wyeth, the Captain's brother, George More, and Stephen Burdit, were too weak to walk. To accommodate them with horses, Captain Wyeth was obliged to dig a hole in the earth, and therein bury the goods which had been hitherto carried on horseback. In the language of the Trappers this hiding of goods was called *catcher* or hidden treasure, being the French term for 'to hide.' When they dig these hiding-holes they carefully carry the earth on a buffalo-skin to a distance, so as to leave no marks or traces of the ground being dug up or disturbed: and this was done to secure the cache from being stolen by the Indians or the white men. The goods so hidden are wrapt up in buffalo-skins to keep them dry, before the earth is put over them. Nor is this all; they make a fire over the spot, and all this to prevent the Indians from suspecting that treasure is cache, or hidden there, while the owner of it takes care to mark the bearing of the spot on some tree, or rock, or some other object that may lead him to recognise the place again. But I have my doubts whether they who hid the goods will ever return that way to dig up their hidden treasure. We did not meddle with it on our return with Captain Sublet.

On the 5th of July we started afresh rather low spirited. We looked with sadness on the way before us. The mountain was here pretty thickly timbered down its slopes, and wherever the ground is level. The pines and hemlock trees were generally about eighteen inches through. It had snowed,

and we were now at a height where the snow commonly lies all the year round. Which ever way we looked, the region presented a dreary aspect. No one could wonder that even some of us who were in health, were, at times, somewhat homesick. If this was the case with us, what must have been the feelings of our three sick fellow travellers. We passed through a snow bank three feet deep. We well ones passed on with Captain Sublet to the top of the mountain, and there waited until our sick men came up with us. George More fell from his horse through weakness. He might have maintained his seat on level ground, but ascending and descending required more exertion than he could call forth; and this was the case also with Dr. Wyeth. Burdit made out a little better. When we encamped at night, we endured a snow storm. Sublet's company encamped about two miles from us; for at best we could hardly keep up with his veteran company. They were old and experienced trappers, and we, compared with them, young and inexperienced soldiers, little imagining that we should ever have to encounter such hardships, in realizing our dreams of making a fortune. Ignorance of the future is not always to be considered among the calamities of man.

Captain Sublet's grand rendezvous, or Head Quarters, was about twelve miles from our encampment. He had there about two hundred trappers, or beaver-hunters; or more properly speaking, skimmers of entrapped animals; or peltry-hunters, for they chased but few of the captured beasts. To these were added about five hundred Indians, of the rank of warriors, all engaged in the same pursuit and traffic of the fur-trade. They were principally the Flat-heads, so called from their flattening the heads of their young children, by forcing them to wear a piece of wood, like a bit of board, so as to cause the skull to grow flat, which they consider a mark of beauty even among the females. They are otherwise dandies and belles in their dress and ornaments. This large body of horse made a fine appearance, especially their long hair; for, as there was a pleasant breeze of wind, their hair blew out straight all in one direction, which had the appearance of so many black streamers. When we met they halted and fired three rounds by way of salute, which we returned; and then followed such friendly greetings as were natural and proper between such high contracting powers and great and good allies. This parade was doubtless made by Sublet for the sake of effect. It was showing us, Yankee barbarians, their Elephants; - like General and Lord Howe's military display to our commissioners of Congress on Staten Island, when the British Brothers proposed that celebrated interview; and when Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams, and some others of the deputation, whose names I do not now recollect, assumed all that careless indifference, very common with the Indians on meeting a white embassy; for the express purpose of conveying an idea, that we, though the weakest in discipline and numbers, are not awe-struck by your fine dress, glittering arms, and fullfed persons.

It was now the 6th of July, 1832, being sixty-four days since we left the settlements of the white people. Captain Sublet encamped his forces; and then pointed out to Captain Wyeth the ground which he thought would be most proper for us; and altogether we looked like a little army. Not but what we felt small compared with our great and powerful allies.

We were overjoyed to think that we had got to a resting place, where we could repose our weary limbs, and recruit the lost strength of our sick. While Sublet was finishing his business with his Indian trappers, they delivering their peltry, and he remunerating them in his way with cloth,

powder, ball, beads, knives, handkerchiefs, and all that gawdy trumpery which Indians admire, together with coffee, rice, and corn, also leather, and other articles, - we, being idle, had time to think, to reflect, and to be uneasy. We had been dissatisfied for some time, but we had not leisure to communicate it and systematize our grievances. I, with others, had spoken with Captain Sublet, and him we found conversable and communicative. Myself and some others requested Captain Wyeth to call a meeting of his followers, to ask information, and to know what we were now to expect, seeing we had passed over as we supposed the greatest difficulties, and were now nearly four thousand miles from the Atlantic, and within four hundred miles of the Pacific Ocean, the end and aim of our laborious expedition, the field where we expected to reap our promised harvest. We wished to have what we had been used to at home,- a town meeting,- or a parish meeting, where every freeman has an equal right to speak his sentiments, and to vote thereon. But Captain Wyeth was by no means inclined to this democratical procedure. The most he seemed inclined to, was a caucus with a select few; of whom neither his own brother, though older than himself, nor myself, was to be of the number. After considerable altercation, he concluded to call a meeting of the whole, on business interesting and applicable to all. We accordingly met, Captain Wyeth in the chair, or on the stump, I forget which. Instead of every man speaking his own mind, or asking such questions as related to matters that lay heaviest on his mind, the Captain commenced the business by ordering the roll to be called; and as the names were called, the clerk asked the person if he would go on. The first name was Nathaniel J. Wyeth, whom we had dubbed Captain, who answered - "I shall go on." - The next was William Nud, who, before he answered, wished to know what the Captain's plan and intentions were, whether to try to commence a small colony, or to trap and trade for beaver? To which Captain Wyeth replied, that that was none of our business. Then Mr. Nud said, "I shall not go on;" and as the names of the rest were called, there appeared seven persons out of the twenty one, who were determined to return home. Of the number so determined was, besides myself, Dr. Jacob Wyeth, the Captain's brother, whose strength had never been equal to such a journey. His constitution forbade it. He was brought up at College. Here were discontents on both sides; criminations and recriminations. A commander of a band of associated adventurers has a very hard task. The commanded, whether in a school, or in a regiment, or company, naturally combine in feeling against their leader; and this is so natural that armies are obliged to make very strict rules, and to pursue rigid discipline. It is so also on ship-board. Our merchant ships cannot sail in safety without exacting prompt obedience; and disobedience in the common seamen is mutiny, and mutiny is a high crime, and approximates to piracy. It is pretty much so in these long and distant exploring expeditions. The Captain cannot always with safety satisfy all the questions put to him by those under his command; and it would lead to great inconvenience to entrust any, even a brother, with any information concealed from the rest. There must be secrecy, and there must be confidence. We had travelled through a dreary wilderness, an infinitely worse country than Palestine; yet Moses himself could not have kept together the Israelites without the aid of miracles; and the history we have given of our boat-like arks, and the wreck of our raft, and the loss of our heaviest articles may lead most readers to suspect that our Leader to his Land of Promise was not an inspired man. In saying this, we censure no one, we only lament our common frailty. Reflect a moment, considerate reader! on our humble means, for an expedition of FOUR THOUSAND miles, compared with the ample means, rich and complete out-fit, letters of credit, and every thing deemed needful, given to Captains Lewis and Clarke,

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

under the orders of the government of the United States; and yet they several times came very near starving for the want of food and of fuel, even in the Oregon territory! In all books of voyages and travels, who ever heard of the utmost distress for want of wood, leaves, roots, coal, or turf to cook with? Yet all through the dreary wilderness of Missouri, we were obliged to use the dung of buffaloes, or eat raw flesh. The reader will scarcely believe that this was the case even at mouth of the Oregon river. Clarke and Lewis had to buy wood of the Indians, who had hardly enough for themselves. To be deprived of solid food soon ends in death; but we were often deprived of the two elements out of four, fire and water, and when on the Rocky mountains, of a third, I mean earth; for everything beneath our feet and around us was stone. We had, be sure, air enough, and too much too, sometimes enough almost to blow our hair off.

But to return to our dismal list of grievances. Almost everyone of the company wished to go no farther; but they found themselves too feeble and exhausted to think of encountering the risk of a march on foot of three thousand five hundred miles through such a country as we came. We asked Captain Wyeth to let us have our muskets and a sufficiency of ammunition, which request he refused. Afterwards, he collected all the guns, and after selecting such as he and his companions preferred, he gave us the refuse; many of which were unfit for use. There were two tents belonging to the company, of which he gave us one; which we pitched about a quarter of a mile from his. George More expressed his determination of returning home, and asked for a horse, which after considerable difficulty he obtained. This was July 10th. The Captain likewise supplied his brother with a horse and a hundred dollars.

On the 12th of July, Captain Wyeth, after moving his tent half a mile farther from ours, put himself under the command of Mr. Milton Sublet, brother of Captain William Sublet so often mentioned. This Captain Milton Sublet had about twenty men under his command, all trappers; so that hereafter as far as I know, it was Wyeth, Sublet and Co.; so that the reader will understand, that Dr. Jacob Wyeth, Palmer, Law, Batch, and myself concluded to retrace our steps to St. Louis in company with Captain William Sublet, while Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth remained with Milton Sublet, and his twenty men. I have been unreasonably blamed for leaving my kinsman beyond the Rocky Mountains with only eleven of his company, and that too when we were within about four hundred miles of the mouth of the Columbia, alias Oregon river, where it pours into the boisterous Pacific Ocean, for such Lewis and Clarke found it to their cost.

The spot where we now were, is a valley, between two mountains, about ten miles wide, so lofty that their tops are covered with snow, while it was warm and pleasant where we pitched our tent. This agreeable valley is called by the trappers Pierre's-Hole, as if it were a dismal residence; and was the most western point that I visited, being about, we conjectured, four hundred miles short of the mouth of the Oregon river, whence the territory derives its name, which Mr. Hall J. Kelly has described as another paradise! O! the magic of sounds and inflated words! Whether Captain Wyeth's expedition was wise or imprudent we are not prepared to say; but under existing circumstances, half of his company having left him, and among them his own brother, the surgeon of the expedition, we cannot see what better he could have done than to ally himself to an experienced band of hunters, as a step necessary to his own preservation. He was three thousand and five

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

hundred miles from the Atlantic Ocean, with only eleven men, and half his goods lost or expended, and no resource of supply short of St. Louis, nineteen hundred miles from them. Had not the Sublets been with them from that place through the wilderness of Missouri and La Platte, it is hardly probable they would have ever reached the west side of the Rocky Mountains. In passing judgment on this strange expedition, we must take in, beside facts, probabilities and casualties.

On the 17th of July, Captain Wyeth and Captain Milton Sublet set out westward with their respective men to go to Salmon river to winter. The former had eleven beside himself: that river they computed at two hundred miles distance. Wyeth accordingly purchased twenty-five horses from the Indians, who had a great number, and those very fine, and high-spirited. Indeed the Western region seems the native and congenial country for horses. They were, however, delayed till the next day. But when they were about moving, they perceived a drove of something, whether buffaloes or men they could not determine with the naked eye; but when aided by the glass, they recognized them for a body of the Black-foot tribe of Indians, a powerful and warlike nation. As this movement was evidently hostile, Captain Milton Sublet dispatched two men to call on his brother, who was about eight miles off, for assistance; when Captain William Sublet ordered every man to get ready immediately. We had about five hundred friendly Indian warriors with us, who expressed their willingness to join in our defence.

As soon as we left Captain Wyeth we joined Captain Sublet, as he said that no white man should be there unless he was to be under his command; and his reason for it was that in case they had to fight the Indians, no one should flinch or sneak out of the battle. It seems that when the Black-foot Indians saw us moving in battle array, they appeared to hesitate; and at length they displayed a white flag as an ensign of peace; but Sublet knew their treacherous character. The chief of the friendly Flat-heads and Antoine rode together, and concerted this savage arrangement; to ride up and accost them in a friendly manner; and when the Black-foot chief should take hold of the Flat-head chief's hand in token of friendship, then the other was to shoot him, which was instantly done! and at that moment the Flat-head chief pulled off the Blackfoot's scarlet robe, and returned with the Captain to our party unhurt. As soon as the Black-foot Indians recovered from their surprise, they displayed a red flag, and the battle began. This was Joab with a vengeance,- Art thou in health, my brother?

The Black-foot chief was a man of consequence in his nation. He not only wore on this occasion a robe of scarlet cloth, probably obtained from a Christian source, but was decorated with beads valued there at sixty dollars. The battle commenced on the Prairie. As soon as the firing began on both sides, the squaws belonging to the Black-foot forces, retreated about fifty yards into a small thicket of wood, and there threw up a ridge of earth by way of entrenchment, having first piled up a number of logs cob-fashion, to which the men at length fell back, and from which they fired upon us, while some of their party with the women were occupied in deepening the trench. Shallow as it was, it afforded a considerable security to an Indian, who will often shoot a man from behind a tree near to its root, while the white man is looking to see his head pop out at man's height. This has taught the United States troops, to load their muskets while lying on their backs, and firing in an almost supine posture. When the Duke of Saxe-Weimer was in Cambridge, he noticed

---

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

this, to him, novel mode of firing, which he had never before seen, and this was in a volunteer company of militia.- I do not mean to say that the Indians fired only in a supine posture; when they had loaded they most commonly rose up and fired, and then down on the ground again to re-load. In this action with the formidable Black-foot tribe, Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's party had no concern. He himself was in it a very short time, but retired from the contest doubtless for good reasons. After contesting the matter with the warlike tribe for about six hours, Captain Sublet found it of little avail to fight them in this way. He therefore determined to charge them at once, which was accordingly done. He led, and ordered his men to follow him, and this proved effectual. Six beside himself first met the savages hand to hand; of these seven, four were wounded, and one killed. The Captain was wounded in his arm and shoulder blade. The Indians did not, however, retreat entirely, so that we kept up a random fire until dark; the ball and the arrows were striking the trees after we could see the effects of one and of the other. There was something terrific to our men in their arrows. The idea of a barbed arrow sticking in a man's body, as we had observed it in the deer and other animals, was appalling to us all, and it is no wonder that some of our men recoiled at it. They regarded a leaden bullet much less. We may judge from this the terror of the savages on being met the first time by fire arms,- a sort of thunder and lightning followed by death without seeing the fatal shot.

In this battle with the Indians, not one of those who had belonged to Captain Wyeth's company received any injury. There were, however, seven white men of Sublet's company killed, and thirteen wounded. Twenty-five of our Indians were killed and thirty-five wounded. The next morning a number of us went back to the Indian fort, so called, where we found one dead man and two women, and also twenty-five dead horses, a proof that the Black-foot were brave men. The number of them was uncertain. We calculated that they amounted to about three hundred. We guessed that the reason the three dead bodies were left at the entrenchment was, that they had not enough left to carry off their dead and wounded. This affair delayed Captain Wyeth three days, and Captain Sublet ten days. The names of those who left Captain Wyeth to return home, were Dr. Jacob Wyeth, John B. Wyeth, his cousin, William Nud, Theophilus Beach, R. L. Wakefield, Hamilton Law, George More, -Lane, and Walter Palmer. The names of those who remained attached to Captain Wyeth, and who went on with him to Salmon river, are J. Woodman, Smith, G. Argent, - Abbot, W. Breck, S. Burditt, - Ball, St. Clair, C. Tibbits, G. Trumbull, and - Whittier.

When they had gone three days journey from us, as they were riding securely in the middle of the afternoon, about thirty of the Black-foot Indians, who lay in ambush about twenty yards from them, suddenly sprang up and fired. The surprise occasioned the horses to wheel about, which threw off George More, and mortally wounded one of the men, Alfred K. Stevens. As the Indians knew that More could not get away from them, they passed him, and about twenty Indians were coming up the hill where they were. Eight or ten Indians followed up while only five trappers had gained the hill. They were considering how to save George More, when one of them shot him through the head, which was a better fate than if they had taken him alive, as they would have tortured him to death.

We have said that Captain Wyeth and the few who had concluded to go on with him, were ready

---

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

to begin their march for Salmon river. On this occasion Captain Milton Sublet escorted them about one hundred miles, so as to protect them from the enraged Black-feet, and then left them to take care of themselves for the winter; and this is the last tidings we have had of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, and his reduced band of adventurers. If we have been rightly informed, their chief hope was residing on a pleasant river where there was plenty of salmon, and probably elk and deer, and water-fowl; and we hope fuel, for to our surprise, we learnt that wood for firing was among their great wants. I have since been well-informed that in the valley of Oregon, so much extolled for its fertility and pleasantness, wood to cook with is one among their scarcest and very dear articles of necessity. From all accounts, except those given to the public by Mr. Kelly, there is not a district at the mouth of any large river more unproductive than that of the Columbia, and it seems that this is pretty much the case from the tide water of that river to where it empties into the ocean.

The Flat-head Indians are a brave and we had reason to believe a sincere people. We had many instances of their honesty and humanity. They do not lie, steal, nor rob any one, unless when driven too near to starvation; and then any man black, white, or red will seize any thing to save himself from an agonizing death. The Flat-heads were well dressed. They wore buck-skin frocks and pantaloons, and moccasins, with seldom any thing on their heads. They draw a piece of fresh buffalo hide on their feet, and at night sleep with their feet not far from the fire, and in the morning find their shoes sitting as snug to their feet as if they had been measured by the first shoe-maker in Boston. It is probable that no people have so little shoepinching as these savages. I never heard any one complain of corns, or kibed-heels, severe as the weather is in winter. The women wear moccasins also, but whether made in the same extempore method as those of the men, I know not. I suspect they must experience some shoepinching. They wear a petticoat, and a frock of some of leather, according to fancy, but all decent and comfortable. In rainy weather, or when very cold, they throw a buffalo-skin over their shoulders, with the fur inside. They have no stationary wigwams; but have a sort of tent, which they fix down or remove with facility. In Major Long's book may be seen an engraved representation of them. Their mode of cooking is by roasting and boiling. They will pick a goose, or a brant, and run a stick through its body and so roast it, without taking out its entrails. They are, according to our notions, very nasty cooks.

I know not what to say of their religion. I saw nothing like images, or any objects of worship whatever, and yet they appeared to keep a sabbath; for there is a day on which they do not hunt nor gamble, but sit moping all day and look like fools. There certainly appeared among them an honor, or conscience, and sense of justice. They would do what they promised, and return our strayed horses, and lost articles. Now and then, but rarely, we found a pilferer, but not oftener than among the frontier white people. The Indians of all tribes are disposed to give you something to eat. It is a fact that we never found an Indian of any tribe disposed to treat us with that degree of inhospitality that we experienced in crossing the Alleghany Mountains, in the State of Pennsylvania.

The Black-foot tribe are the tallest and stoutest men of any we have seen, nearly or quite six feet in stature, and of a lighter complexion than the rest.

---

The Indian warriors carry muskets, bows, and arrows, the last in a quiver. The bows are made of walnut, about three feet long, and the string of the sinews of the buffalo, all calculated for great elasticity, and will reach an object at a surprising distance. It was to us a much more terrific weapon of war than a musket. We had one man wounded in the thigh by an arrow; he was obliged to ford a river in his hasty retreat, and probably took a chill, which occasioned a mortification, of which he died. The arrows are headed with flint as sharp as broken glass; the other end of the arrow is furnished with an eagle's feather to steady its flight. Some of these aboriginals, as we learn from Lewis, Clarke, and Major Long, especially the last, have shields or targets; some so long as to reach from the head to the ankle. Now the question is how came our North American Indians with bows and arrows? It is not likely that they invented them, seeing they so exactly resemble the bows and arrows of the old world, the Greeks and Romans. They are the same weapon to a feather. This is a fresh proof that our savage tribes of this continent emigrated from the old one; and I have learned from friend to whom I am indebted for several ideas, which no one could suppose to have originated with myself, that the Indian's bow goes a great way to settle a disputed point respecting what part of the old world the ancestors of our Indians came from, - whether Asia or Europe. Now the Asiatic bow and our Indian bow are of a different form. The first has a straight piece in the middle, like the crossbow, being such an one as is commonly depicted in the hands of Cupid; whereas our Indian bow is a section of a circle, while the Persian or Asiatic bow has two wings extending from a straight piece in the middle. Hence we have reason to conclude that the first comers from the old world to the new, came not from those regions renowned for their cultivation of the arts and sciences. The idea that our North American Indians came over from Scythia, that is, the northern part, so called, of Europe and Asia, whether it is correct to call them Scythians, Tartars, or Russians, I leave others to determine. We have many evidences that our Northern Indians have a striking resemblance in countenance, color, and person to the most northern tribes of Tartars, who inhabit Siberia, or Asiatic Russia. The Black-foot Indians who inhabit small rivers that empty into the Missouri, resemble in mode of living, manners, and character, the Calmuc Tartars. Both fight on horseback, both are very brave, and both inured to what we should consider a very hard life as it regards food. Both avoid as much as they can stationary dwellings, and use tents made with skins.

On this subject we ought not to omit mentioning that the Indians on all sides of the Rocky mountains have several customs both among men and the women, which might lead some to conclude that our Northern and Western Indians descended from the Israelites; and this similarity is certainly very remarkable; yet there is one very strong fact against that hypothesis, namely, there is not the least trace amongst our Indians of the eight-day rite of the Jewish males, which sore, and, to us, strange ceremony would hardly have been forgotten, had it been practiced by our Indians. If our idea be well-founded on this subject, the custom could have originated only in warm and redundant climates, so that had Moses marched first from the shores of the Baltic, as did the Goths, instead of the shores of the Red sea, the Jews never would have been subjected to the operation of circumcision.

After all, it is very likely that the Persians came from a different stock from that which peopled

---

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

the Western and Northern parts of America,- I mean from the warmer regions of Asia. They seem possessed of more delicate marks of person, and of mind than the fighting savages of the North. There appears to be a strong line of separation between them, as far as our information goes.

To return to our own story. After the battle at Pierre's Valley, I had an opportunity of seeing a specimen of Indian surgery in treating a wound. An Indian squaw first sucked the wound perfectly dry, so that it appeared white as chalk; and then she bound it up with a piece of dry buck-skin as soft as woollen cloth, and by this treatment the wound began to heal, and soon closed up, and the part became sound again. The sucking of it so effectually may have been from an apprehension of a poisoned arrow. But who taught the savage Indian that a person may take poison into his mouth without any risk, as the poison of a rattlesnake without harm, provided there be no scratch or wound in the mouth, so as to admit it into the blood?

Three of the men that left Captain Wyeth when I did, enlisted with Captain Sublet to follow the trapping business for the period of one year, namely, Wakefield, Nud, and Lane, leaving Dr. Jacob Wyeth, H. Law, T. Beach, W. Palmer, and myself. We accordingly set out on the twenty-eighth day of July, 1832 with Captain William Sublet, for home; and thus ended all my fine prospects and flattering expectations of acquiring fortune, independence, and ease, and all my hopes that the time had now come in the order of Providence, when that uncultivated tract, denominated the Oregon Territory, was to be changed into a fruitful field, and the haunt of savages and wild beasts made the happy abode of refined and dignified man. Mr. Hall J. Kelly published about two years since a most inflated and extravagant account of that western tract which extends from the Rocky Mountains to the shore of the Pacific Ocean. He says of it that no portion of the globe presents a more fruitful soil, or a milder climate, or equal facilities for carrying into effect the great purpose of a free and enlightened nation; - that a country so full of those natural means which best contribute to the comfort and conveniences of life, is worthy the occupancy of a people disposed to support a free representative government, and to establish civil, scientific, and religious institutions, and all this and much more to the same effect after Lewis and Clarke's history of their expedition had been published, and very generally read; yet this extravagant and fallacious account of the Oregon was read and believed by some people not destitute of a general information of things, nor unused to reading; but there were circles of people, chiefly among young farmers and journeymen mechanics, who were so thoroughly imbued with these extravagant notions of making a fortune by only going over land to the other side of the globe, to the Pacific Ocean, that a person who expressed a doubt of it was in danger of being either affronted, or, at least, accused of being moved by envious feelings. After a score of people had been enlisted in this Oregon expedition, they met together to feed and to magnify each other's hopes and visionary notions, which were wrought up to a high degree of extravagance, so that it was hardly safe to advise or give an opinion adverse to the scheme. When young people are so affected, it is in vain to reason with them; and when such sanguine persons are determined to fight, or to marry, it is dangerous to attempt to part them; and when they have their own way and get their belly full of fight, and of matrimony, there comes a time of cool reflection. The first stage of our reflection began at St. Louis, when we parted with our amphibious wagons, in which we all more or less took a pride. Every one there praised the ingenuity of the contrivance and construction of them for roads and rivers

---

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

such as at Cambridge, and other places near to Boston; but we were assured at St. Louis, that they were by no means calculated for our far distant journey. We were reminded that Lewis and Clarke carried canoes almost to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, by the route of Missouri river, but were obliged to leave them there, and ascend mountains so very steep, that sometimes their loaded horses slipped and rolled over and over, down into lower ground sixty or seventy feet. This may serve to show, among other things, how ill-informed Captain Wyeth and his company were of the true condition of the country through which they had to pass. We expected to support ourselves with game by our firearms, and therefore powder and shot were the articles we took the most care to be provided with. Nor were we followers undeceived before we were informed at St. Louis, that it would be necessary to take oxen and sheep to be slaughtered on the route for our support. We also found it advisable to sell at that place the large number of axes, great and small, with which we had encumbered our wagons. All these occurrences, following close after one another, operated to damp our ardor; and it was this probably that operated so powerfully on W. Bell, Livermore, and Griswold, that they cut and ran away before we entered upon the difficulties and hardships of our expedition.

Nothing of importance occurred for the first ten days after we left Pierre's Valley. Our huntsmen were abroad in pursuit of buffaloes, when they were alarmed at the sight of a large body of the Black-foot tribe who had been watching our movements. Captain Sublet was not a little alarmed, for he had with him his whole stock of furs, very large in quantity and valuable in quality, which we were told would be worth eighty thousand dollars in St. Louis. But all the world exaggerates; nor even were we of the Oregon expedition entirely free of it, although not to be compared with Hall Jackson Kelly, who never stops short of superlatives, if we may judge by his publications. But he says, by way of apology, that it is needful that the friends of the contemplated Oregon colony should possess a little of the active and vital principle of enthusiasm, that shields against disappointments, and against the presumptions opinions and insults of others. Now the fact is, the sanguine and enthusiastic Mr. Kelly was never in that country, nor nearer to it than Boston; and his zeal in the colonization of that dreary territory led him to believe what he wished, and to disbelieve every thing adverse to his favorite enterprise. He had a right to enjoy his opinion; but when he took unwearied pains to make ignorant people believe as he did, he was the remote cause of much misery and lasting regret in more than half the adventurers from Cambridge. If the blind lead the blind, we know what will be the consequence. But our business is not to censure from a disposition to find fault, but to warn others from falling into the errors and difficulties which attended me and my companions, and chiefly through the misinformation of persons who never saw the country.

Each man, when he left St. Louis, was allowed to carry but ten pounds' weight of his own private baggage, and not every one to encumber his march with whatever he chose; and we adhered to that order on our return. We were ten days in passing over the Rocky Mountains in going, and nine in returning; and I repeat it as my fixed opinion, that we never should have reached the western foot of the mountains had we not been under the guard and guidance of Captain Sublet, and his experienced company. He was acquainted with the best way, and the best mode of travelling. He knew the Indian chiefs and they knew him, and each confided in the other. An anecdote

will illustrate this. There was a hunters' fort or temporary place of defence occupied by about a dozen white beaver-trappers from St. Louis, where were deposited furs, and goods belonging to the troop of trappers, and that to a considerable amount. One day this small garrison was alarmed at the sight of about six hundred warriors approaching on horseback. Upon this they barred their gate, and closed every door and window against the Indians, but with faint hopes of repelling such a powerful host of well-armed savages; for they had no other idea but that they had come for their destruction. But when the Indians saw them shutting themselves up, they displayed the white flag, and made signs to the white men to open their fort, for they came to trade and not to fight. And the little garrison thought it better to trust to Indian honor than risk savage slaughter or captivity; and accordingly they unbarred their doors and let the chiefs in with every expression of cordiality and confidence. After remaining nine days, they departed in peace. And what ought to be recorded to their honor, the white people did not miss a single article, although axes, and utensils, and many other things were lying about, desirable to Indians. The savages did not consider, as white men too often do, - that "might is right." When I expressed my surprise at it, one of the white trappers replied, "Why, the word of these trading Indians is as good as the Bible."

We were surprised to find the Indians in the vicinity of the mountains, and all round Pierre's Valley, and the Black-foot tribe, and the Shoshonees, or Snake-tribe, so well provided with muskets, powder and ball, woollen cloth, and many other articles, until we were informed that Mr. Mackenzie, an established and wealthy Indian trader, had long supplied them with every article they desired. Had the Captain of our band been acquainted with this fact, and also been informed of the trading connexion between the Indians and the two brothers, William and Milton Sublet, before he started from home, we should have avoided a great deal of trouble, and he escaped a great deal of expense, and for aught I know, suffering; for the last we heard of him, he was to pass the winter at the Salmon river.

From all I could learn, St. Louis was the depot, or headquarters of the commerce with the Indians. Mackenzie, I was informed has a steam-boat called the Yellow-stone, by which he keeps up a trade with the natives inhabiting the region watered by the river of that name. The Yellow-stone is a noble river, being eight hundred and thirty seven miles from the point where Captain Clarke reached it to the Missouri, and is so far navigable for batteaux; and eight hundred and fifty feet wide at its confluence with the river just named. By all accounts, the superiority of the Yellow-stone river over the Columbia, or Oregon, for a settlement of New-England adventurers in point of fertility, climate, and pleasantness, is such as to impress one with regret that ever we extended our views beyond it; for the lamentable fact is, that the trade with the Indians all round the Rocky Mountains, and beyond it to the Oregon territory and Columbia river, is actually forestalled, or pre-occupied by wealthy, established, and experienced traders residing at, or near St. Louis, while we are more than twelve hundred miles in their rear, and very far behind them in time. Besides all these considerations, we may add another of great importance; I mean the fact, that Mackenzie's and Sublet's white trappers, or hunters, are a sort of half Indians in their manners and habits, and could assimilate with them, while we are strangers to the savages, and they to us, with all the dislikes natural to both sides. Captain Sublet, who appears to be a worthy character, and of sound judgment, perceived this, and must have seen, at once, that he had nothing to fear

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

from us, and therefore he paid us great attention, conciliated and made use of us, and while he aided us, he benefited his own concern, and all without the least spice of jealousy, when knowing the impossibility, under existing circumstances, that we could supplant him in the affection of the red men of Missouri and Oregon.

The white traders, and the Indians have, if we may so term it, an annual Fair, that has been found by experience profitable to both sides. It is true the white trader barter a tawdry bauble of a few cents value, for a skin worth fifty of it. And so have we in our India shawls, and, a few years since, in Leghorn hats, in which we were taxed as high as the white merchant taxes the equally silly Indian. Coffee was sold at two dollars a pound, and so was tobacco. Indeed some of us gave that price to Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth for the latter article, a luxury more coveted by men in our situation, anxious and fatigued as we were, than whisky or brandy. This was the case under Lewis and Clarke. When deprived of tobacco, they cut up the old handles of tomahawks, which had been used as pipes, and chewed the wood for the sake of its smell and smack. It is not a singular case. It has been experienced among sailors at sea. They have pined more for the lulling effects of that nauseous weed than for ardent spirits; and it has been known that men will mutiny sooner when deprived of their tobacco, than when deprived of their usual food and rum. There was no small grumbling on being obliged to buy tobacco out of what we thought common stock, at the rate above mentioned, being, as we thought, all members of a commonwealth.

The following may serve to show the knowledge or instinct of horses.

When marching on our return home in the troop of Captain Sublet, not far from the eastern declivity of the Rocky Mountains, we were met by a large body of Indians on horseback. Sublet generally kept seven videts about two miles ahead of his main body. The horses of this advance guard suddenly refused to go on, and turned round, and appeared alarmed, but the riders knew not the cause of it. Captain Sublet rode up, and said, that he knew by the behaviour of the horses that there was an enemy ahead. He said there was a valley several miles off where he apprehended we might be attacked. He therefore ordered every man to examine his arms, and be ready for action. After riding a few miles we discovered a large moving body of a living something. Some of us thought it was a drove of buffaloes; but the Captain said no, because they were of different colors, whereas bisons, or buffaloes appear all of one color. After viewing them through his glass, he said they were a body of the Black-foot tribe, who had on their war dresses, with their faces painted, bare heads, and other signs of hostility.

Their appearance was very singular, and, to some of us, terrible. There was a pretty fresh breeze of wind, so as to blow the long manes and tails of their horses out straight. Nor was this all: the wind had the same effect on the long black hair of the warriors, which gave them not only a grotesque but a terrific appearance. Added to all this, they kept up a most horrid yell or war-hoop. They rode up and completely surrounded us; and then all was silent. Captain Sublet rode up to the chief, and expressed his hope that all was peace. The savage replied that there should be peace on their part, on condition that Sublet should give them twenty-five pounds of tobacco, which was soon complied with, when the Indian army remounted their horses, and rode off at full speed as

they came on: and we pushed off with like speed, lest they should repent their bargain and return upon us, to mend it.

Who will say that this gallant body of cavalry were not wiser than the common run of white soldiers, to make peace for a quid? and thereby save their horses and their own skins? Out of what book did this corps of savage dragoons learn that discretion was the better part of valor? We answer, From out of that book of Nature which taught the videts' horses that an enemy was in the wind. The horse is the dumbest of all beasts. He is silent under torture. He never groans but once, and that is his last. Did they roar like bulls, or squeal like hogs, they would be useless in an army. That noble animal suffers from man a shameful weight of cruel usage in town and country.

The wild horses are a great curiosity. They traverse the country, and stroll about in droves from a dozen to twenty or thirty; and always appear to have a leader, like a gander to a flock of geese. When our own horses were feeding fettered around our encampments, the wild horse would come down to them, and seem to examine them, as if counting them; and would sometimes come quite up to them if we kept out of sight; but when they discovered us they would one and all give a jump off and fly like the wind.

There is a method of catching a wild horse, that may appear to many "a traveller's story." It is called creasing a horse. The meaning of the term is unknown to me. It consists in shooting a horse in the neck with a single ball so as to graze his neck bone, and not to cut the pith of it. This stuns the horse and he falls to the ground, but he recovers again, and is as well as ever, all but a little soreness in the neck, which soon gets well. But in his short state of stupefaction, the hunter runs up, and twists a noose around the skin of his nose, and then secures him with thong of buffalo-hide. I do not give it merely as a story related; but I believe it, however improbable it may appear, because I saw it done. I saw an admirable marksman, young Andrew Sublet, fire at a fine horse, and after he fell, treat him in the way I have mentioned; and he brought the horse into camp, and it turned out to be a very fine one. The marvel of the story is, that the dextrous marksman shall shoot so precisely as only to graze the vital part; and yet those who know these matters better than I do, say, that they conceive it possible.

After we had made peace with the large body of the Blackfoot Indians, for, as we may say, a quid of tobacco, nothing occurred worth relating until we arrived at the town of Independence, being the first white settlement in our way homewards. I would, however, here remark, that the warlike body just mentioned, though of the fierce Blackfoot tribe, hunted and fought independently of that troop with which we had a battle in the Rocky Mountains; and were most probably ignorant of that affair, in which a chief was treacherously shot by one Antoine, who was half Indian and half French, when bearing a white flag, and with which nefarious deed I believe Captain Sublet had no concern. But of all this I cannot speak with certainty, as I myself was half a mile distant, when the Black-foot chief was shot, and his scarlet robe tom off of him by the mongrel Indian, as a trophy instead of his scalp; for the Indians returned their fire so promptly, and continued fighting so long, even after dark, that there was no time nor opportunity of his securing that evidence of his savage blood and mode of warfare.

---

When we arrived at the town of Independence, Dr. Jacob Wyeth, Palmer, Styles, and myself bought a canoe, being tired of travelling by land, and impatient to get on, and this was the last of my money except a single six-cent piece. A thick fog prevented our early departure, as it would be dangerous to proceed on account of the snags and sawyers in the river. To pass away the tedious time, I strolled out around the town, and lost my direct way back. At length the fog cleared off, and after my companions had waited for me an hour, they pushed off and left me behind! They, be sure, left word that they would wait for me at the next town, Boonsville, twenty miles' distance. I hurried, however, as fast I could five miles down the banks of the river; when, finding that I could not overtake them, and being fatigued by running, I gave over the chase in despair. I was sadly perplexed, and vexed, at what I conceived worse than savage usage. In this state of mind, I saw a small skiff, with a pair of oars, when an heroic idea came into my half-crazed brain, and feeling my absolute necessities, I acted like certain ancient and some modern heroes, and jumped into the boat, cast off her painter, and pulled away for dear life down the stream. The owner of the boat discovered me when not much more than a quarter of a mile on my way. He and another man got into a canoe and rowed after me, and gained upon me; on perceiving which, I laid out all my strength, and although two to one, I distanced them, and they soon saw they could not overtake me. When I started it was twelve o'clock, and I got to the next town, Boonsville, the sun half an hour high, - the distance about twenty miles. When my skiff struck the shore my pursuers were about twenty rods behind me. I ran into the first barn of a tavern I could reach. They soon raised the neighbors, and placed a watch around the barn, one side of which opened into a cornfield. In searching for me they more than once trod over me, but the thickness of the hay prevented them from feeling me. I knew the severe effects of their laws, by which those who were too poor to pay the fine were to atone for their poverty by stripes, which were reckoned to be worth a dollar a stripe in that cheap country; and hence I lay snug in the hay two nights and one day without any thing to eat. Hunger at length forced me from my hiding-place, when I went into the tavern, where I found Dr. Jacob Wyeth, Walter Palmer, and Styles. I told the landlord I was starving for want of food, and he gave me supper; and then I went back into the barn again, where I slept that night.

The next morning I went into the tavern again, and there I found my pursuers, and they found their prisoner, whom they soon put under the custody of two constables, who ordered me breakfast, which having eaten with a good relish, I watched my opportunity, while they were standing thick around the bar, and crept unobserved out of the back-door into the extensive cornfield, and thence into the barn window out of which they threw manure, and regained my snug hiding-hole, where I remained one day and one night more. I now and then could see the constables and their posse prowling about the barn, through a crevice in the boards. In the midst of my fears, I was amused with the solemn, and concerned phizes of the two constables, and one or two others. In the morning very early, I ventured out again, and ran down to the river; and there spying a boat, and feeling heroic, I jumped into her and pushed across the river, and landed on the opposite bank, so as to elude the pursuit of the authorities, who I knew would be after me on the right bank of the river, while I marched on the left. When I came to the ferry near St. Louis, I had only a six-cent piece, which the ferryman took for his full fare which was twelve cents, and so I got

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

safe to St. Louis, but with scarcely clothing enough for decency, not to mention comfort: and yet I kept up a good heart, and never once despaired. My companions arrived a day before me; they on Thursday, I on Friday, at four o'clock in the afternoon; they in the steam-boat, like gentlemen, while I, the youngest in the whole Oregon company, like a runaway. But I do not regret the difference, seeing I have a story worth telling, and worth hearing.

Where to get a lodging that night I did not know, nor where to obtain a morsel of bread. I went up to a large tavern, and asked permission of the keeper to lodge in his barn that night, but he sternly refused. I then went to the other tavern, and made the like request, when the landlord granted it, saying that he never refused a man sleeping in his barn who was too poor to pay for a lodging in his house. I wish I knew his name. I turned in and had a very good night's rest. Should any one enquire how I came to leave my old companions, and they me, I need only say that I had a very serious quarrel with one of them, even to blows; and with that one too who ought to have been the last to treat me with neglect; "and further the deponent saith not."

The next morning I went round in search of work, but no one seemed disposed to hire me; nor do I much Wonder at it; for in truth I was so ragged and dirty, that I had nothing to recommend me; and I suffered more depression of spirits during the following six days of my sojourn at St. Louis, than in any part of my route. The steam-boats refused me and Dr. Wyeth started off for New Orleans before I could see him. Palmer let himself by the month on board a steamboat running between St. Louis and Independence, while I was left alone at the former place six days without employ, victuals, or decent clothing. I could not bear to go to people's doors to beg; but I went on board steam-boats and begged for food. I was such a picture of wretchedness that I did not wonder they refused to hire me. My dress was buck-skin moccasins, and pantaloons; the remains of a shirt I put on in the Rocky Mountains, the remnants of a kersey waistcoat which I had worn ever since I left Cambridge, and a hat I had worn all the time from Boston, but without any coat whatever, or socks, or stockings; and to add to the wretchedness of my appearance, I was very dirty, and I could not help it. My looks drew the attention of a great many spectators. I thought very hard of it then, but I have since reflected, and must say that when people saw a strong young man of eighteen in high health, and yet so miserable in appearance, it was natural in them to conclude that he must be some criminal escaped from justice, or some vagabond suffering under the just effects of his own crimes.

At length, wearied out by my ill fortune, I plucked up courage, and went to the Constitution steam-boat, Captain Tufts, of Charlestown, near Boston, and told him my name and family; and detailed to him my sufferings, and said that he must give me a passage, and I would work for it. To my great joy he consented, and he gave me shirt, pantaloons, &c.; and I acted at a fireman, or one who feeds the fire with pine wood under the steam-boilers. I forbear narrating the particulars of my sufferings for want of food during the six days I tarried at St. Louis. Suffice it to say, that I was in a condition of starvation, and all owing to my wretched appearance. When I at times went on board the steam-boats, I was glad to scrape up any thing after the sailors and firemen had done eating. At length I obtained employ in the steam-boat Constitution, and a passage to New-Orleans, on the condition of acting as one of the firemen, there being twelve in all, with five men as

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

sailors, and two hundred and forty passengers, party emigrants, but chiefly men belonging to the settlements on the Mississippi, going down to Natchez, and to New-Orleans to work. We tarried one night at the Natchez; but soon after we left it the cholera broke out among the passengers, eighty of whom died before we reached New Orleans, and two of our own firemen. A most shocking scene followed.

I felt discouraged. My miseries seemed endless. After trying day after day in vain to get a passage in a steam-boat, I was made happy in procuring one, though I paid for it, by working as a fireman, the hardest and most disagreeable occupation on board; still I was contented, as I had victuals enough to eat; and yet, after all, I saw men perishing every minute about me, and thrown into the river like so many dead hogs. It is an unexaggerated fact that I witnessed more misery in the space of eight months than most old men experience in a long life.

On arriving at New-Orleans, Captain Tufts sent off every man of the passengers, leaving those only who belonged to the boat. He gave me shirts and other clothing, and offered me twenty dollars a month, if I would go back to St. Louis with him. I remained on board about a week; and so desirous was I to get home, that I preferred going ashore, although I knew that the yellow fever and black vomit, as well as cholera were committing great havoc in the city. The shops, stores, taverns, and even the gambling houses, were shut up, and people were dying in-doors, and out of doors, much faster than they could be buried. More white people were seized with it than black; but when the latter were attacked, more died than the former. The negroes sunk under the disorder at once. When a negro gets very sick, he loses all his spirits, and refuses all remedies. He wishes to die, and it is no wonder, ff he believes that he shall go into a pleasant country where there are no white men or women.

I soon got full employ as a grave-digger, at two dollars a day, and could have got twice that sum had I been informed of the true state of things. In the first three days we dug a separate grave for each person; but we soon found that we could not clear the hearses and carts. I counted eighty-seven dead bodies uninterred on the ground. Yet where I worked, was only one of the three grave-yards belonging to the city, and the other two were larger. We therefore began on a new plan. There were twenty-five of us grave-diggers. We dug a trench fifty-seven feet long, eight feet wide, and four feet deep, and laid them as compactly as we could, and filled up the vacant spaces with children. It was an awful piece of business. In this large trench we buried about, perhaps, three hundred; and this business we carried on about a month. During this time, you might traverse the streets of New-Orleans, without meeting a single person, except those belonging to the hearses, and carts, loaded with the dead. Men were picked up in the morning who died after dark before they could reach their own houses. If you ask me ff they died with yellow fever, or cholera, I must answer that I cannot tell. Some said the one, and some the other. Every thing was confusion. If a negro was sent by his master to a carpenter, for what they called a coffin, which was only a rough board box, he was commonly robbed of it before he got home. I myself saw an assault of this kind, when the poor black slave was knocked down and the rude coffin taken from him. New-Orleans is a dreadful place in the eyes of a New-England man. They keep Sunday as we in Boston keep the 4th of July, or any other day of merriment and frolic. It is also a training day

every other Sunday for their military companies.

I was in part witness to a shocking sight at the marine hospital, where had been many patients with the yellow fever. When the doctors, and those who had the care of that establishment had deserted the house, between twenty-five and thirty dead bodies were left in it; and these were so offensive from putrefaction, that when the city corporation heard of it, they ordered the house, together with the bodies to be burnt up; but this was not strictly complied with. A number of negro slaves were employed to remove the bodies, which being covered with wood and other combustibles, were all consumed together.

At length I was attacked myself with symptoms of the yellow fever,- violent pain in my head, back, and stomach. I lived at that time in the family of a Frenchman, who, among his various occupations, pretended to skill in physic. He fed me on castor oil. I took in one day four wine glasses of it, which required as much resolution as I was master of: but my doctor assured me that he had repeatedly scared away the yellow fever at the beginning of it, by large and often repeated doses of that medicine. Its operation was not one way, but every way. I thought I should have no insides left to go home with. Yet it is a fact, and I record it with pleasure, that it carried off all my dreadful symptoms, and in a very few days, I had nothing to complain of but weakness, which a good appetite soon cured. I therefore recommend a man in the first stage of yellow fever to take down a gill of castor oil, made as hot as he can swallow it; and repeat the dose in eight hours.

I remained nine weeks in New-Orleans, a city so unlike Boston, in point of neatness, order, and good government, that I do not wonder at its character for unhealthiness. Stagnant water remains in the streets as green as grass, with a steam rising out of it that may be smelt at the distance of half a mile. Besides this, their population is so mixed, that they appear running against each other in the streets, every one having a different object and a different complexion. In one thing they seem to be agreed, and to concur in the same object, namely, gaming. In that delirious pursuit, they all speak the same language, and appear to run down the same road to ruin.

I am glad that it is in my power to support what I have said respecting the Marine Hospital, by the following public testimony, published by authority, taken from one of their newspapers.

“ NEW-ORLEANS.- The following report from a committee appointed to examine one of the hospitals, will account, in some degree, for the unprecedented mortality which has afflicted New-Orleans. The report is addressed to the mayor.

“The undersigned, standing committee named by the city council during the prevalence of the epidemic now desolating the city, have the honor to report, that, in consequence of information given by sundry respectable persons, relative to the condition of the hospital kept by Dr. M’Farlane, they repaired to-day, at half-past one o’clock, to said hospital; that in all the apartments they found the most disgusting filth; that all the night vessels were full, and that the patients have all declared that for a long time they had received no kind of succour; that in many of the apartments of the building they found corpses, several of which had been a number of days in putrefaction;

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

that thence they repaired to a chamber adjoining the kitchen, where they found the body of a negro, which had been a long time dead, in a most offensive state. They finally went to another apartment opposite the kitchen, which was equally filthy with the other rooms, and that they there found many corpses of persons a long time dead; that in a bed, between others, they found a man dying, stretched upon the body of a man many days dead.

“Finally, they declare that it is impossible for one to form an idea of what they have witnessed, without he had himself seen it; that it is indispensably necessary for the patients to evacuate this hospital, and above all, to watch lest the corpses in a state of putrefaction occasion pestilence in that quarter, and perhaps in the whole city.

“November 7. The standing committee has the honor to present the following additional report.

“In one of the apartments where were many living and dead bodies, they found under a bed a dead body partly eaten, whose belly and entrails lay upon the floor. It exhaled a most pestiferous odor. In a little closet upon the gallery there were two dead bodies, one of which lay flat upon the floor, and the other had his feet upon the floor and his back upon the bed forming a curve; the belly prodigiously swelled and the thighs green. Under a shed in the yard was the dead body of a negro, off which a fowl was picking worms. The number of corpses amounted to twelve or fourteen.

Signed,

E. A. CANNON, Chairman.

FELIX LABATUT, Alderman, Second Ward.

CHARLES LEE, Alderman, First Ward.”

I took passage in the ship Henry Thomson, Captain Williams, and arrived in Boston, January 2d, 1833, after an absence of ten months, having experienced in that time a variety of hardships.

#### CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The lesson to be collected from this short-history is the great danger in making haste to be rich, instead of relying upon patient industry, which never fails to give a man his just deserts. Making haste to become rich is the most “fruitful source of the calamities of life; for here cunning, contrivance, and circumvention, take the place of diligence. After the schemer’s plans have all failed, there seems only one tempting means left to obtain riches in a hurry, and that is by gaming, the most prosperous invention ever devised by the arch enemy of mankind; and when that fails, the next downward step to destruction, excepting drunkenness, is robbery, many instances of which we find recorded in the annals of Newgate and the records of the Old Bailey in London. Such atrocities have never, or very rarely, occurred in our own country, and never will so long as we are wisely contented with the fruits of patient industry, and so long as we believe that the diligent hand maketh rich. These reflections refer to extreme cases, and are not applicable, or meant to be personally applicable, to the unfortunate expedition in which we have been concerned. It is not meant to reprehend those enormous vices and crimes which are known in the old countries, but

only to correct a spirit of discontent in men well situated and circumstanced. "If you stand well, stand still," says the Italian proverb.

Some may say this doctrine, if put in practice, would check all enterprise. Not entirely so, provided the means and the end were cautiously adjusted. Christopher Columbus ran a great risk; yet he knew, from the reasonings of his capacious mind, that there must be "another and a better world" than that he was born in; and under that strong and irresistible impression he tempted the trackless ocean and found it. But what shall we say of our Oregon adventurers, who set out to pass over the Rocky Mountains, and thence down the Columbia river to the Pacific ocean, in boats upon wheels? and that too with a heavy load of goods, and those chiefly of iron. What renders the project more surprising is, that they should take with them the most ponderous articles of a blacksmith's shop, - anvils, and a large vice. It is more than probable that the old and long established wholesale Indian traders at St. Louis laughed in their sleeves, when they saw such a cargo fresh from the city of "notions," paraded with all the characteristic confidence of the unwavering Yankee spirit. After assuring them that their ingenious and well-constructed amphibious vehicles would not answer for travelling in such a rough country as they must go through, they purchased all three of them, and advised our leader to buy sheep and oxen to live on between the white settlements and the country of the savages, and not to trust to their guns for food. This turned out very wholesome advice, as they must have starved without that provision.

The party under Captains Lewis and Clarke, sent out by the government of the United States, consisted of nine young men from Kentucky, fourteen soldiers of the United States army who volunteered their services, two French watermen, - an interpreter and hunter, - and a black servant belonging to Captain Clarke. All these, except the last, were enlisted to serve as privates during the expedition, and three sergeants were appointed from amongst them by the captains. In addition to these, were engaged a corporal and six soldiers, and nine watermen, to accompany the expedition as far as the Mandan nation, in order to assist in carrying the stores, or repelling an attack, which was most to be apprehended between Wood river and that tribe. This select party embarked on board three boats. One was a keel-boat fifty-five feet long, drawing three feet of water, with a large square sail, and twenty-two oars, with a fore-castle and cabin, while the middle was covered by lockers, which might be raised so as to form a breast-work. There were beside two periogues, or open boats of seven oars each. They had two horses, for any purpose, which they led along the banks; and fourteen bales of goods, with a variety of clothing, working utensils, locks, flints, ammunition, and richly-laced coats, and other gay dresses, and a variety of ornaments suited to the taste of the Indians, together with knives, flags, tomahawks, and medals. Yet all these articles were exhausted, without any accident or particular loss. The party was led by two experienced military officers, and the men were under military regulations; which was not the case with the Cambridge adventurers, who were upon shares, and all on a level.

We are unwilling that our readers should rely entirely on our opinion of the inadequacy of the outfits for such a formidable undertaking as that of going from the Atlantic shore of New-England to the shore of the Pacific by land. We shall therefore subjoin the opinion of a sensible gentleman, who had spent some time in the Missouri territory, and traversed its dreary prairies, where no

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

tree appears, and where there is, during the greater part of the year, no fuel for cooking, nor water fit to drink. He says: "Do the Oregon emigrants seek a fine country on the Oregon river? They will pass through lands [to get to it] of which they may buy two hundred acres for less than the farther expenses of their journey." He tells us that a gentleman (Mr. Kelly) has been employing his leisure in advising schemes to better the condition of his fellow countrymen, and has issued advertisements, inviting the good people of New-England to leave their homes, their connexions, and the comforts of civilized society, and follow him across the continent to the shores of the Pacific. He tells those who may reach St. Louis, that they will find there many who have been to Oregon, and found no temptation to remain there; - that they may possibly charter a steamboat from St. Louis to the mouth of the river Platte, but no farther, as that stream is not navigable for steamboats unless during freshets. And after they reach the mouth of the Platte, they will have a thousand miles to go before they reach the Rocky Mountains; and the country through which the adventurers must pass is a level plain, where the eye seeks in vain for a tree or a shrub, - that in some places they must travel days and nights without finding wood or water, for that the streams only are scantily fringed with wood. Our Cambridge emigrants actually found this to be the case, as they had no other fuel for cooking their live stock than buffalo-dung. The writer says, (and he had been there), that the ground is covered with herbage for a few weeks in the year only, and that this is owing to the Indians burning the Prairies regularly twice a year, which occasions them to be as bare of vegetation as the deserts of Arabia. The same experienced traveller assures them that they could not take provisions with them sufficient for their wants, and that a dependence on their guns for support was fallacious, and the same uncertainty as to the buffaloes; - that sometimes those animals were plenty enough, and sometimes more than enough, so as to be dangerous. When they trot smartly off, ten thousand and more in a drove, they are as irresistible as a mountain torrent, and would tread into nothing a larger body than the Cambridge fortune-hunters. Their flesh is coarse beef, and the grisly bear's, coarse pork; but this kind of bear, called the horrible from his strength and ferocity, is a most terrific beast, and more disposed and able to feed on the hunter than the huntsman upon him. We can assure the emigrants, says the writer already quoted, from our own experience, that not one horse in five can perform a journey of a thousand miles, without a constant supply of something better than prairie-grass.

The journal of Lewis and Clarke to the Pacific ocean, over the Rocky Mountains, was a popular book in the hands of every body; and the Expedition of Major Long and company was as much read; and both of these works detail events and facts enough, one would suppose, to deter men from such an arduous enterprise; not to mention the hostile tribes of Indians through which they must pass. It seems strange, but it is true, that a theoretical man need not despair of making the multitude believe any thing but truth. They believed the enthusiastic Mr. Hall J. Kelley, who had never been in the Oregon territory, or seen the Rocky Mountains, or a prairie-dog, or a drove of buffaloes, and who in fact knew nothing of the country beyond some guess-work maps; yet they would not read, consider, or trust to the faithful records of those officers who had been sent by the government to explore the country and make report of it.

There is a passage in the essay written by W. J. S. which we shall insert here on his authority, as it cannot be supposed that we, at this distance, should be so well acquainted with the affairs in

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

Missouri, as one who had resided on the spot. We assume not to keep pace with the professed eulogist of Oregon, of its river, and its territory, its mild climate, its exuberant soil, and its boisterous Pacific, so inviting to the distressed poor in the neighbourhood of Boston; who are exhorted by him to pluck up stakes and courage, and march over the Rocky Mountains to wealth, ease, and independence. The passage we allude to reads thus: - "About twelve years since, it was discovered by a public-spirited citizen of St. Louis, that the supply of furs was not equal to the demand. To remedy this evil, he raised a corps of sharp-shooters, equipped them with guns, ammunition, steel-traps, and horses, and sent them into the wilderness to teach the Indians that their right was only a right of occupancy. They did the savages irreparable injury. They frightened the buffaloes from their usual haunts, -destroyed the fur-clad animals, and did more mischief than we have room to relate." He adds, sarcastically, that "the Indians were wont to hunt in a slovenly manner, leaving a few animals yearly for breeding. But that the white hunters were more thorough-spirited, and made root-and-branch work of it. When they settled on a district, they destroyed the old and young alike; and when they left it, they left no living thing behind them. The first party proving successful, more were fitted out, and every successive year has seen several armed and mounted bands of hunters, from twenty to a hundred men and more in each, pouring into the Indian hunting grounds; and all this has been done in open and direct violation of a law of the United States, which expressly forbids trapping and hunting on Indian lands. The consequence has been that there are now few fur-clad animals this side the mountains."

Lewis and Clarke, and some other travellers, speak of friendly Indians,- of their kindness and hospitality, and expatiate on their amiable disposition, and relate instances of it. Yet after all, this Indian friendship is very like the affection of the negroes in the Southern States for their masters and mistresses, and for their children,- the offspring merely of fear. There can be no friendship where there is such a disparity of condition. As to their presents, an Indian gift is proverbial. They never give without expecting double in return.

What right have we to fit out armed expeditions, and enter the long occupied country of the natives, to destroy their game, not for subsistence, but for their skins? They are a contented people, and do not want our aid to make them happier. We prate of civilizing and Christianizing the savages. What have we done for their benefit? We have carried among them rum, powder and ball, smallpox, starvation, and misery. What is the reason that Congress, -the great council of the nation, - the collected wisdom of these United States, has turned a deaf ear to all applications for establishing a colony on the Oregon river? Some of the members of that honorable house of legislation know that the district in question is a boisterous and inclement region, with less to eat, less to warm the traveller, and to cook with, than at the mouth of any other known river in the United States. We deem the mouth of the river St. Lawrence as eligible a spot for a settlement of peltry merchants as the mouth of the Columbia. When Lewis and Clarke were on that river, they had not a single fair day in two months. They were drenched with rain day and night; and what added to their comfortless condition was the incessant high winds, which drove the waves furiously into the Columbia river with the tide; and on its ebb, raised such commotion, and such a chopping sea, that the travellers dared not venture upon it in their boats; yet the Indians did, and managed their canoes with a dexterity which the explorers greatly admired, but could not imitate. The bois-

JOHN B WYETH OREGON

---

terous Pacific was among the new discoveries of our American adventurers. Had their expedition been to the warm climate of Africa, or to South America, they would have been sure of plenty to eat; but in the western region, between the Rocky Mountains and the great river of the West, the case is far otherwise.

It is devoutly to be wished that truth may prevail respecting those distant regions. Indeed the sacred cause of humanity calls loudly on its votaries to disabuse the people dwelling on these Atlantic shores respecting the Oregon paradise, lest our farmers' sons and young mechanics should, in every sense of the phrase, stray from home, and go they know not whither, - to seek they know not what. Or must Truth wait on the Rocky Mountains until some Indian historian, - some future Clavigero shall publish his annals, and separate facts from fiction? We esteem the "History of the Expedition under the command of Captains Lewis and Clarke to the Sources of the Missouri, thence across The Rocky Mountains, and down to the Pacific Ocean," substantially correct. Their conduct towards the Indians was marked throughout with justice and humanity; and the journal of that expedition will be a lasting monument of their judicious perseverance, and of the wisdom of the government of the United States.

Reader! The book you have in your hands is not written for your amusement merely, or to fill up an idle hour, but for your instruction, - particularly to warn young farmers and mechanics not to leave a certainty for an uncertainty, and straggle away over a sixth part of the globe in search of what they leave behind them at home. It is hoped that it may correct that too common opinion that the farther you go from home the surer you are of making your fortune. Agriculture gives to the industrious farmer the riches which he can call his own; while the indefatigable mechanic is sure to acquire a sufficiency, provided he "build not his house too high."

Industry conducted by Prudence is a virtue of so diffusive a nature that it mixes with all our concerns. No business can be managed and accomplished without it. Whatever be a man's calling or way of life, he must, to be happy, be actuated by a spirit of industry, and that will keep him from want, from dishonesty, and from the vice of gambling and lottery-dealing, and its long train of miseries.

The first and most common deviation from sober industry is a desire to roam abroad, or in one word, a feeling of discontent, - a making haste to be rich, without the patient means of it. These are reflections general and not particular, as it regards all such high hopes and expectations, as lead to our Oregon expedition and to its disappointments. The most that we shall say of it is, - that it was an injudicious scheme arising from want of due information, and the whole conducted by means inadequate to the end in view.

Oh happy - if he knew his happy state,  
The man, who, free from turmoil and debate,  
Receives his wholesome food from Nature's hand,  
The just return of cultivated land.

THE END

Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country  
First Expedition - 1832

---

Journal of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country  
First Expedition - 1832

[The book containing the journal has been mutilated. There are traces of the removal of four pages describing the early stages of the expedition. In its place, statements from a letter which Wyeth addressed to J.G. Palfrey in December, 1847 have been added, describing this part of his travels.]  
On the 10th of March 1832 I left Boston in a vessel with 20 men for Baltimore where I was joined by four more, and on the 27th left to Rail Road for Fredrick Md from thence to Brownsville we marched on foot, and took passage from that place to Liberty Mo. on various steamboats, which place we left for the prairies on the 12th of May with 21 men, three having deserted, and on the 27th of May three more deserted.

[June 6th, 1832.] gray and my face like a plumb pudding the skin is entirely bare entirely bare [?] of skin is off one of my ears On the bluf[f]s the ghnats are equally troublesome but they do not annoy us much except in the day. Geese appear here mated and I have seen some broods of gooselings. Some rain last night. still barren and grass bad our horses about the same our men troubled with the relax toward night found buffaloe killed one which made a scanty meal for all hands for supper made 25 miles

7th Started out hunting killed two antelope about 10 saw a herd of Buffaloe crossing the River waited til they rose the Bank and commenced slaughter killed 3 and wounded many more these afforded a timely supply to the party and we ate hearty. Saw today the first appearance of muskrat since leav the settlements also Pelicans. Last night in cutting a tree for fuel caught two young grey Eagles one of which we ate and found it tender and good also a Badger saw some rattlesnakes and some other kinds not known to me the men [horses?] appear a little better the men [horses?] about the same Thr. 90 deg. wind S.E. my face so swelled from the mosquitoes and ghnats that I can scarce see out of my eyes and aches like the tooth ache

9th I date this the same on abc of a mistake of a day hertofore made 30 miles and yesterday 25 arrived at the Chimney or Elk Prick the Indian name this singular object looks like a monument about 200 feet high and is composed of layers of sand and lime stone in layers the sand blowing out lets the lime rock fall down and this action has in time reduced what was once a hill to a spire of nearly the same dimensions at top and bottom it looks like a work of art and the layers like the ranges of stone it is scituated about 3 miles from the river. Rain and thunder at night wind strong S. E. river as muddy as ever the bluf[f]s for the last 20 miles have occasionally a few stinted trees apparently Pitch pine and cedar the small streams that here empty into the Platte are frequently dry near the river during the day while above they are running free while at night there is running water entirely to the river Party in better order Horses about the same we now judge ourselves within 4 days march of the Black Hills

10th 28 miles, 2 Buffaloe

11th 30 miles, 6 Buffaloe

12th Nothing remarkable crossed Wild Horse Creek coming in from the S.

13th Came in sight of the Black hills and crossed Larrimee fork of the Platte in getting over one of my rafts broke the tow line the raft went down stream lodged on a snag and upset wetting most of the goods on it and loosing two Horse loads as it lodged in the middle of the river and the stream very rappid the goods were with difficulty passed ashore here an alarm was occasioned by the appearance of 4 men on the bluf[f]s behind us and an attack was expected every moment which would have been bad as our party was much scattered in crossing They However proved to be a part of a party of 19 men in the employ of Gant & Blackwell. They last winter lost all but 3 of their animals and in going to Santa Fee got enclosed by snow in the mountains and nearly starved to Death, and at first they were hard to tell from Indians or devils they are now in good health having felt well for some time all of them joined Mr. Fitzpatrick's party and proceeded on foot with us to the mountains. Killed an antelope

14th started late and left the river at which we had encamped and proceeded 16 miles killed one antelope and one elk

15th went out for game killed one antelope, 2 deer 2 Buffaloe made this day 20 miles and passed the first of the Black hills the country is now thinly wooded with Box Elder ash Pitch pine cedar and cotton wood and a variety of small shrubs among which are the cherry, currant and thorn wild sage here almost covers the country and is a plant of many years groth

arrived in camp found the company had killed plenty of Buffaloe and were encamped on a small stream coming in from the S. 20 miles.

16th Warm in mng. cold and rainy in the afternoon a little hard snow on the Peak of the Black hills a white Bear was seen this day Black ones for some days past. The lime rock still continues primitive peb[b]les in the streams and on the knols the hills pointed up very sharp from the same cause as the Chimney

the country appears desolate and dreary in the extreme no one can conceive of the utter desolation of this region nevertheless the earth is decorated with a variety of beautiful flowers and all unknown to me hard travelling disenables our botanist to examine them we have on the whole meat enough but the supply is too unsteady. There are here two kinds of Rabbits the largest weighing about 15 lbs ears 6 inches long plover and other marsh birds [re] common and some 2 or 3 kinds of Gulls. Struck the Platte river again here about 100 yds wide the water high and rapid we here find a small kind of Parsnip the blossom yellow root about 5 inches long 1/2 inch thick of more than one years groth the men appear better Horses about the same made this day 20 miles

17th Wind high N.W. Ther 40 a drear[y] and cheerless day made 25 miles killed 3 buffaloe 1 antelope 1 Deer crossed 2 small streams from the Black hills running into the Platte saw some rabbits & white bears Hops.

18 reached the place for fording the platte

19th Passed over my goods during a severe wind without accident

20th Mr. Subblettee (sic) passed over his goods and at night mooved on about 3 miles

21st Made a long march of 30 miles during which one of my Horses gave out killed this day 3 Buffaloe and fired at a white bear arrived at camp at 11 ock at night. I have ommitted one day on the other side of the Platte I date this right we arrived at Rock Independence at noon after a march of 15 miles

23 Yesterday we left the Platte and struck the Sweet water on which this rock stands it is scitu-ated in a gorge within 30 feet of the stream and is granite today is warm last night frost and the two last days cold and disagreeable from this time to 2nd July frost each night and snow once our course lay in various directions from S.W. to N.W. following the Sweet water and leaving the first snowy mountains on the right hand on the 29th we crossed on to the head waters of the Colorado during all this time we found abundance of Buffalo the travelling good but the grass poor the streams all fordable but rapid five streams have been crossed to this time and we are now encamped on the 6th all running into the Colorado trout are found here also some beaver Some of my men talk of turning back and I give them all free liberty many of my horses have given out and the rest are failing fast and unless we soon come to better grass they will all die and leave me on foot the waters running into Lewis river are not more than 8 miles distant, on the creek where we are there are pine trees in shape lik[e] a Balsam tree leaves like a pitch pine Bark rough yellowish and scaly The mountains in this region are not conspicuous are isolated and admitting free passage between them in any direction the creeks are sufficiently numerous for watering but feed is poor the 1st July we rested all the afternoon a respite quite acceptable to our weary legs Our average during these days about 20 miles but in some cases quite circuitous White bears are seen but none have been killed. Wolves and antelopes plenty, King fishers Our hunters have just brought part of 4 Buffaloe At night encamped on the same creek that we passed this mng. and soon after were visited by 6 men from Dripps & Fontenelles concern who with 13 others are encamped 5 miles from this place. This night at about 12 ock. we were attacked by Indians probably the Blackfoot. They approached within 50 yds. and fired about 40 shots into the camp and some arrows they wounded three animals got 5 from Mr. Subblette One from an Independent hunter and 4 which I left out of camp for better feed mine were all poor and sore backed and useless

3rd Decamped and in company with the men above mentioned proceeded to their camp and passed on to our route which lay W. This night encamped on the waters of the Colorado 25 miles

4th Decamped and at noon crossed the divide and drank to my friends with mingled feelings from the waters of the Columbia mixed with alcohol and eat of a Buffaloe cow made this day 30 miles and 25 yesterday The snow clad mountains now entirely surround us the streams this side increase rapidly. One bear seen this day the grass much better and some fertile land here the earth in some places was frozen snow yesterday and today Three of my men are sick and I have no spare

animals for them.

5th We passed along a wooded River and through a very difficult road by its side so steep that one of my Horses loosing his foothold in the path was rooled down about 100 feet into the river he was recovered but so much injured as we had to leave him shortly after. Made this day 20 miles

6th We marched early and at 2 ock stoped on Lewis river and within 20 miles of the Trois Tetons three very conspicuous snow covered mountains visible in all this region this river here runs nearly S. and is divided over a bottom about 2 miles and into 8 streams very rapid and difficult these we forded which consumed the time until night and encamped after making 18 miles on the W. bank with no grass. in the morning of the 7th we proceed up a small brook coming from a gap of the mountains due south of the Trois Tetons and passed the range of mountains of this range without much difficulty it is a good pass for such a range and fresh animals would have no difficulty in passing through it On the highest point we had snow accompanied with heavy thunder and being out of meat fed upon the inner bark of the Balsam trees a tree similar if not the same with the Eastern Balsam At Night we encamped at the foot of the pass on the western side and at the commencement of a large valley with several streams running through it into Lewis River surrounded with high and snow clad mountains The weather is here warm in the day time but frost every night the grass is good the land ordinary. On the 8th we proceed into the plain and after a march of 10 miles arrived at the rendezvous of the hunters of this region here we found about 120 Lodges of the Nez Perces and about 80 of the Flatheads a company of trappers of about 90 under Mr. Dripps of the firm of Dripps & Fontenelle connected with the American Fur Co. Many independent Hunters and about 100 men of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co under Mess Milton Sublette and Mr. Frapp [Fraeb]. I remained at this encampment until the 17th during which time all my men but 11 left me to these I have such articles as I could spare from the necessities of my own Party and let them go. While here I obtained 18 Horses in exchange for those which were worn out and for a few toys such as Beads Bells red and Blue cloth, Powder and Balls fish hooks vermilion old Blanketts We also supplied ourselves with Buffaloe robes we have now a good outfit and here we found plenty of meat which can be had of the Indians for a trifle On the 17th we put out and stered S.E. in direction to a pass through the same mountains by which we entered the valley these Mts. run E. & W. and the pass I refer to is the next E. of the one refered to and through it the waters of this valley reach Lewis [Snake] River which is on the S. side of this range at night we encamped within about 8 miles of the commencement of the pass On the 18th we did not leave camp when near starting we observed 2 partys of Indians coming out of the pass about 200 in number with but few horses after securing our camp our riders went out to meet them and soon found them to be Blackfeet a little skirmish ensued one of the Blackfeet was killed and his Blankett and robe brought into camp on this the Indians made for the timber the women and children were seen flying to the mountains at this time only 42 men being the party of Mess Milton Sublette & Frapp mine and a few Independent Hunters were in sight and the Indians were disposed to give us their usual treatment when they meet us in small bodies but while the Indians we[re] making their preparations we sent an express to camp which soon brought out a smart force of Nez Perces Flatheads and whites the Indians finding they were caught fortified themselves in a masterly manner in the wood. We attacked them and continued the attack all day there were

probably about 20 of them killed and 32 horses were found dead They decamped during the night leaving most of their utensils lodges &c and many of the dead we have lost 3 whites killed 8 badly wounded among which is Mr Wm. Sublette who was extremely active in the battle about 10 of the Indians were killed or mortally wounded of the Nez Perces and Flatheads in the morning we visited their deserted fort they had dug into the ground to reach water and to secure themselves from our shot It was a sickening scene of confusion and Blood[s]head one of our men who was killed inside their fort we found mutilated in a shocking manner on the 19th we removed back to our former ground to be near our whole force and to recruit the wounded and bury the dead. We think that 400 lodges or about 600 warriors of the Blackfeet are on the other side of the pass and if they come they must be met with our whole force in which case the contest will be a doubtful one. We have mad[e] Horse pens and secured our camp in as good a manner as we can and wait the result this affair will detain us some days. On 24th we again moved out of the valley in the same direction as at first viz about S.E. and encamped at night in the gorge of it during the march I visited the scene of our conflict for the first time since the battle the din of arms was now changed into the noise of the vulture and the howling of masterless dogs the stench was extreme most of the men in the fort must have perished I soon retired from this scene of disgusting butchery On the 25th we proceeded through the pass which is tolerably good and in a direction of about S.W. by S. and encamped 15 miles on Lewis River (here concentrated into one rapid stream) and about 30 miles S. of where we crossed it in going into the valley we are now employed in making bull boats in order to cross it One Buffaloe and some antelope killed today 26 crossed the river in a bull boat without accident in 4 hours and moved on in a westerly direction about 4 miles when we struck into a deep ravine with a little water in it this ravine is bordered by high presipices on each side and is small 3 miles up this we encamped for the night this stream is called Muddy as there is several of this name it is requisite to distinguish this by the cognomen of Muddy that falls into "Lewis"

26th we moved up the Muddy until we found the forks of it then followed the Right hand say 3 miles then took a south direction and struck another stream (small) and running in the opposite direction this we followed about 5 mil[e]s making 15 this day and encamped

27th We moved down the stream until its junction with another called Grays creek which we crossed and assended a high bluff and travelled an average course of S.W. and encamped on a small creek making 15 miles this day 2 days since I first this side the mountain met with the prickly pear and since leaving the valley of the Rendezvous the fruit that was green one day is ripe the next. The nights are still frosty but the days are very warm as in N.E. at this time fruits we have 3 kinds currants one of gooseberry all different from those of the U.S. and Service berrys all the first are sour the latter sweet the country through which we have travelled for these two days past has a strong volcanic appearance the streams occupy what appear to be but the cra[c]ks of an over heated surface the rocks are blown up in blubbers like a smiths cinders some rocks ten feet through are but a shell being hollow. A substance abounds like bottle glass of about the same weight not so transparent about as brittle the fracture is smooth and glossy with the exception of the cracks as above the country is tolerably level for a mountainous country but excessively dry. During our first days march from Lewis River beside the ravine above mentioned we passed three

craters of small volcanoes (as I suppose) and I am told there is a boiling spring near the same place We here find buffaloe plenty and fat and entirely different from those met with in the Spring on the Platte it is preferable to the best beef. Our party have taken lice from the Indians they are a great trouble as well as the Musquitoes these last trouble us in the day but the frost seals their wings at night when the first relieve them until morning.

On the 28[th] we moved in a direction about S.W. and during the march took the bearing of the Trois Tetons which was N.E. by E. and I think 75 miles we made 7 miles and encamped on a little stream meandering through a valley of about 100 acres of fine Black land with the grass as good as the buffaloe and the cold weather could admit of. Here we found plenty of cows and more Bulls 13 of the first were killed they were fat and we stopped to make meat these cows were killed by running them down which is a dangerous method expensive in horses and Requiring much skill in Riding We of course were obliged to employ help for none could be got by approaching while they were Running them

29th We remained all day making meat with a hot sun this morning sent 3 men down the creek fishing they caught 21 Salmon Trout and returned at 10 this afternoon it rained hard and during the storm the squaw of one of the party was delivered of a Boy in the bushes whither she had retired for the purpose it[s] head was thickly covered with Black hair it was as white as is usual with the whites in less than an hour afterwards the squaw made her appearance in camp as well and able for a days travel as usual it continued raining all night and until 8 of the 30 on which abc. our march was deferred for the day which was afterward fine and our meat dried well. 4 Beavers were caught from about 12 traps last night during this day one of the party saw an indian which must have been a Blackfoot as otherwise he would have come to camp yesterday and today we had Thunder & Hail as well as rain.

1st. Augt I date this the 1st on abc. of having missed a day in the time past. This day we made about 15 miles in a S.W. direction and most of the way in a deep valley and encamped on a small creek running into one called Blackfoot this latter is the second stream we have passed which empties into S. fork of Lewis River the first was called Grays River and is also small (this since crossing Lewis River) Here we stopped until the 4th to make meat of which I made enough to eat and no more while the other two parties who had go[o]d buffaloe Riders and Horses made considerable while her[e] we lost one Horse while attempting to Run Buffaloe by throwing his Rider and Running among the Buffaloe and going off with them I sent out a party to get fish of two men they Returned with about a peck of craw fish and a dozen of trout these average about 1 lb and are fine eating. We have here the Sandhill Cranes in plenty. On the 4th we moved due south and crossed Blackfoot and struck over to a stream emptying into the same as Blackfoot called Portneuf from a man killed near it 18 miles here we found Buffalo in the bottom and the Hunters are now out Running them. Here we remained this day and the 5th when the men I had sent out to hunt the horse returned as I had expected them on the 4th I was much alarmed for their safty being in a dangerous country while here we made 7 bales meat On the 5th. we mooved S. down the valley 3 miles and encamped on a creek running into the valley on the 7th we made 21 miles first down the N. side of the valley and taking the first creek running out of the valley then in a

S.W. direction and encamped on it from the valley above mentioned rises Bear River running into the Big Salt Lake distant about S.E. 50 miles Currants and service berrys are now ripe. I have been sick from indigestion for some days more so than I ever was before. We have here the Sandhill Crane Turtle dove Robbin Blackbirds (Crow & Cow) Kingfishers Black & Mallard Ducks, Ge[e]se. We find meat making a tedious business. On the 8th we moved S.W. 15 miles following the main Portneuf out of the valley for about 12 miles then took one of its tributaries for about 3 miles and encamped on the S.W. side of the valey in which this branch runs here we cached 6 Horse loads of goods and remained on the 9th & 10th & 11th moved on in a S.W. direction not following any stream but passing the ridge bordering the valley in a low place near where a small run puts into the valley from a very rugged pass. We made this day 15 miles and encamped on a small run going into Portneuf.

12th We made in a S.W. direction about 6 miles not following any stream but encamped on a very small run with poor grass.

13th We made 24 miles in a west and by N. direction and met no water for this distance and encamped on a very small run issuing from a spring a few miles from Lewis River we are here in sight of the River running through an extensive valley in a S.W. direction here are the American falls the place may be known by several high and detached hills arising from the plain the falls at one place 22 feet and the Rapids extend a considerable distance down the River We found here plenty of Buffaloe sign and the Pawnacks [Bannocks] come here to winter often on account of the Buffaloe we now find no buffaloe there are here abundance of Service berrys now ripe during a short walk from camp this mng. I saw a buff colored fox with a white tip on his tail. Wolves here serenade us every night making more noise than 50 village dogs and better music for they keep in chord and display more science yesterday we parted from 16 men bound out trapping. We are now in a country which affords no small game and a precarious chance for Buffaloe

14th We made 30 miles in a S.W. direction and encamped on a creek called Casu [Raft] River it joins the main River below the Am. falls. This days Ride was through an excessively barren country with no water between the two last camps on the N. side of the Lewis River and about 50 miles distant from it is a range of snowy mounts. also two or three points in the chain of this side with snow on them.

15th We made along the banks of the Ocassia about 25 miles and encamped on the west bank of it. The valley of the Ocassia is about 4 miles wide and of a rich soil but the excessive cold and drouth of this country prevents vegetation from assuming a fertile character. The air is so dry that percussion caps explode without striking and I am obliged to put the caps on and fire immediately except in the night when we consider it safe to keep the caps on the guns we have in this country a large kind of black crickett 2 inches long said to be used as food by the Indians they are in great numbers and roost on the sage at noonday there are also in the streams abundance of craw-fish we see antelope and old buffalo sign

16th We made 25 miles up the same side of the Ocassia then crossed it and followed S.W. 3 miles

and encamped on a small mountain run making in all 28 miles in a W. by S. direction yesterdays march was in a direction W. by S.

17th We moved in a W. by S. direction about 15 miles to a creek [Goose] putting into Lewis River on which we found no beaver of consequence having been trap[p]ed out by the H.B.Co. some years before.

18th We moved out up the creek about 8 miles and still found no beaver saw one Pidgeon Woodpecker this creek runs through what are called cut rocks otherwise volcanic in this region I found one mountain of Mica Slate enclosing garnetts. The Basaltic rock appears to be the same formerly and the remains of the Garnetts are in some cases to be seen. also I have found here granite in small blocks there is also much white sandstone compact the clefts on each side creek are high and perpendicular but the bottom affords good grass for this country. There is no timber except willow and alder in the bottom and cedar on the hills this days course about S. along the creek

19th We moved up the creek about 12 miles in a S.W. direction there was still little beaver this afternoon I took 2 men and proceeded from camp about 8 miles about W. following the creek and slept there at sunrise on the 20th we moved up about 12 miles in a W. direction and while I was engaged in the brook setting a trap we found three Indians following us the two men were on the bank and were seen but myself in the creek was unnoticed when they crossed to go to the men I presented my pistol to the first one who made a precipitate retreat back while I made mine to my gun having got which I beconed them to come to me which they did we then went to camp which we found had moved this day about 10 miles in same direction these Indians were Snakes the first we had seen during the march the party passed a hot spring the country still volcanic.

21st We followed the creek in a N.W. direction about 5 miles when we met a village of the Snakes of about 150 persons having about 75 Horses they were poorly off for food and clothing but perfectly friendly they are diminutive in person and lean. We encamped to trade with them but did nothing except getting a few skins for moccasins this morning caught my first Beaver a large one.

22nd We followed the same creek about 2 mils and then struck into a ravine in a west direction and in about 6 miles came to a warm spring near a cold one which formed a run which we followed in a west by S. direction this we followed about 2 miles and encamped making this day 18 miles

22nd We proceed in a S.W. direction and struck the same stream on another branch about 2 mils from the junction about 15 mils this day these two streams unite and run in a N. direction through impassable cut rocks this night caught 2 Beaver and slept out of camp.

24th Proceed up the creek in a S.W. by W. direction about 18 miles then in a W. by N. direction about 6 miles. The last half of this days travel was through clefts of Scienite rock pretty well broke to pieces by heat apparently we have here 2 kinds of Lizards the one like that of the United States as far as I could see the other shorter and more sluggish here we find the banks of the streams

lined with Diggers Camps and Trails but they are shy and can seldom be spoken and then there is no one who could understand them and they appear to know little about the signs which afford other Indians a mode of intelligence from this region specimens No. 1 are obtained.

25th We made in a W. direction along the same creek 20 miles.

26th In a W by N. direction about 20 miles

27th In a S W direction toward a snowy mountain and leaving the last creek 24 miles and struck one here running S.E. Country desolate in the extreme most of the creeks which have water in them on the mountains dry up in the plains of this region

28th did not move more than 2 miles up.

29th About 5 miles in a S.W. Direction to cross a range of high hills until we struck a creek running in a N.W. direction which we followed 12 miles and encamped where the creek goes into the cut rocks this day we parted from Mr. Sublett[e]'s party with feeling of regret for this party have treated us with great kindness which I shall long remember.

30th We followed the creek in a N.W. direction about 12 miles through tremendous cut rocks I went ahead to look the route I passed the smoking fires of Indians who had just left 4 of whom I saw running up the mountain endeavored by signs to induce them to come to me but could not Soon after I came to another camp I happened to find their plunder this induced them to come to me 3 men one boy 4 women from these Indians I procured fresh Salmon Spawn which was very encouraging as we are nearly out of provisions and the country would afford us a scanty subsistence I gave these Indians a few small presents to convince them of our friendly disposition. This day for the first time in this country saw raspberrys these Indians gave me a cake made of service berrys quite good they had about a Dozen of spotted fish of a kind I had never seen resembling a Tomcod. These Indians are small about 120 [lbs.] of a good countenance they are Snakes or Soss-honees.

30th [repeats date] We followed the same creek and made about 15 [miles] in a N.N.W. direction through a continued defile in many places admitting just room for the water through which in many places we were obliged to make our way The mountains on each side are about 1000 feet above the creek which has a rapid descent here are a small fish about 1/4 lb. similar to a trout but with large dark spots. We meet here plenty of cherrys currants and gooseberrys the latter sour. The last of yesterdays and the first of todays route lay through Porphritic Granite rocks in their natural state the latter part of to days was through a stratified blue sandstone untouched by fire for a short distance then assumed a volcanic appearance. This day we assended the highest mountain in sight and found the exhibit an indescribable chaos the tops of the hills exhibit the same strata as far as the eye can reach and appear to [have] once form[ed] the level of the country and the vally to be formed by the sinking of the earth rather than the rising of the hills through the deep cracks and chasms thus formed the rivers and creeks of this country creep which renders them of

the most difficult character to follow in the brooks we have fresh water clams on which we look with some feeling for the small quantity of Buffaloe meat now remaining admonishes us look for some other means of living gave there is little and being obliged to travel prevents our hunting much. from this place the specimen in Bag No. 1 of vitrified quartz was taken.

31st We followed the same creek about 4 miles in a N. direction then took a dry ravine 2 miles in a S.E. then in a N. direction and then followed down another dry ravine about 1 mile when the rocks on each side closed over the top and formed a natural Bridge elevated about 50 feet while the sides approached to within 20 feet of each other and the bottom descended perpendicularly about 60 feet we of course returned on our trail and then stered a N.E. direction about 4 miles and encamped on a little ravine in which there was only a little water standing in deep places and barely enough for us and our horses. The first half mile of our route lay through the bed of the creek and among rocks from 1 foot to 3 or 4 in diameter this was a very difficult task and several of our horses fell in the water this day we lost two horses which gave out the country still bears the same appearance as for several days past.

2nd [1st] We left our camp in the ravine ascended to the height of land which we found to be a high level plain over which we marched in a N.N.W. direction and found during a 10 hours march 2 springs which as the day was warm were acceptable at the end of 30 miles we reached the creek which we left on the 31st We found rabbits plenty on the plain our camp was made surrounded by high and perpendicular cliffs say 800 feet bearing every mark of fire here we found little grass for our horses.

3rd [2nd] We lay at the same camp and got fish from the brook enough for breakfast after which I took [a] horse and followed the creek down about 1 mile and found another larger joining it a little below which there is a warm spring issuing from the bank about 40 feet above the stream it gives out smoke when it meets the air and discharges a large quantity of water about 2 miles farther down I found a small party of Indians from whom I obtained 8 fish weight about 4 lbs. each and looking like a salmon for these I have 4 Hooks they were friendly they advise me to follow the right hand trail but I have determined to take the left and shall perhaps repent it. The left heads N.W. which I think [is] my direction I returned to camp and three of the Indians with me. One of these Indians had a bad wound on the side of his head and from his signs and appearance was made with a poisoned arrow.

3rd We moved camp in the proposed direction viz N.W. 16 miles During which distance we found stagnant water once and encamped near about 15 Indians diggers 3 of our men we left at the last camp to set the traps at some signs there seen. These Indians are very poor and timid when I approached them alone on a gallop they all began to run but by moderating my pace and making signs the[y] suffered me to come to them they gave me some sweet root to eat for which I gave them 3 Hooks they had a young yellow legged eagle with them and most of the diggers we have met had a small kind of Hawk at their camps these they feed and tame this party also had a young bird tame resembling a King Bird this days travel was on a high plain and good going on an old trail these Indians had with them staves for fish spears so we presume they are going to

the river for fish and so think ourselves on the right trail. For three nights passed there has been no frost a thing which has not before happened for three nights in all since leaving rock Independence. Snow spit we had the 28th Aug. Today a slight sprinkle of Rain being the 2nd time since leaving the Rendezvous.

4th We left the camp early and proceeded over a high and pretty level plain gradually descending to the N.W. in a N.N.W. direction and after 20 miles travel without water came to ravines running E. and dry having gravelly and sandstone untouched by fire bluffs and in 5 miles more came to the creek we had left on morning of the 3rd. [on] the banks of which we found every 20 steps or thereabouts warm or hot springs and the creek though large and discharging a great quantity [of] water too warm to be palatable Here we found an Indian and family of whom for 2 fish Hooks we bought 7 salmon of about 4 lbs. weight each when green. they were split and dried. The two men left behind not having yet come up we intend halting here for them. The creek is here lined with volcanic rock today [we] saw the first fish Hawk in this country.

4th Lay at camp and repacked our goods and held a smoke with some Indians one of whom we engaged as a guide down the river and to Beaver smoked too much and made myself sick

5th Moved on about 5 miles N.N.W. and again struck the creek and good grass found Beaver sign very plenty and for the first time set all our traps at good sign had a mess of fresh clams for dinner after which 2 Indians came to us with 4 salmon which we bought for 2 Hooks This day heard what we all took for a cannon at about 10 miles distance time will determine whether we were mistaken. In this creek there are a great number of snakes about 3 feet long with a large head and of a brownish grey color about the proportion of the striped snake of N.E. They inhabit the water and I saw one catch a small fish within two feet of me while bathing at a warm spring which put into the main stream The bathing at these warm springs is delicious there are hundreds of them and some large enough to dive in Some gush out of the rocks at an elevation of 40 feet above the stream and discharge enough water for a mill I can perceive no unusual taste in the water.

6th Remained at same camp and were visited at 10 o'clock in the morning by two Indians with whom we held a smoke we can learn nothing of any white post by these Indians caught 7 Beaver

7th Remained at same camp and exchanged two horses with some Pawnack Indians three of whom visited us also about 10 Sohonees with Salmon of which they have plenty here we caught a N. England Sucker also a fish a little resembling pike of about 3 lbs weight but without teeth. Caught 3 Beaver. Ravens are here very plenty and tame they light on the perpendicular sides of the creek waiting for fish on which they live. Geese and ducks are also plenty as well as grouse. Some of the Indians have guns but most of them go unarmed The creek here for about 10 miles runs W.N.W.

8th Moved camp down the creek about 12 miles and came to the village under the escort of about 20 Indians on Horseback one of whom by the direction of the chief showed us the place for our camp where grass and water could be had here the chief harangued his people telling them

not to come into our lines nor steal from the white people He sent his squaws with wood for us and also sent salmon for us to eat I gave him a present of tobacco awls Hooks Powder vermilion knives etc. Here I traded a Beaver skin robe for two knives and six skins with many muskrat which are plenty here I found these Indians great thieves in the small line knives etc. Missing mine I went to one of the Sub chiefs and told him of it he made enquiry and pointed out the thief who refusing to open his robe I gently did it for him but insted of finding the knife found a coat of one of the men which he held upon until I drew a pistol on which he gave it up and caught up what he supposed to [be] one of our guns but it happened to be my covered fishing rod he was then held by the other Indians and sent to the village and I saw him no more

9th In morning went to see the Indians catch Salmon which is done by entangling them in their passage up the creek among dams which they erect and spearing them they catch an immense quantity the operation commences in the morning at a signal given by their chief. This chief is a good sized man and very intelligent and the president would do well if he could preserve the respect of his subjects as well or maintain as much dignity

10 Mooved down the main river in a S.W. [N.W.] direction which here runs through moderate banks in a moderate current We are told that the next creek has beaver by the chief and that it is 4 days march The main river is here full of salmon which continually jump above the surface like sturgeon.

10th Mooved camp along the Bank of the river 3 miles there the river diverging to the Northward we left it and followed the main trail the river here goes through cut rocks about 30 miles We made this day 20 mils in all in a W.N.W. Direction and encamped in poor grass on a small creek 1 mile from the main river during the march we crossed a small creek up which about 2 mils is a fine camp.

11th Moved at 3 a.m. and followed the trail 24 mils in a W.N.W. Direction and encamped on the bank of the main river which is here a fine stream about a 1/3 mile or over. I swam across it and found it over my head all the way here we found Indians and bought Beaver 3 skins for 1 shoe knife and 4 charges powder & lead we also got salmon of them the Basalt here occurs resting on sand and gravel in some places the rock is not more than 4 feet thick and appears to have suffered from intense heat the country is barren in the extreme there is usually a difference of 40 deg. between the day & night the heat at noonday about 75 to 85 deg. The Indians here have large nets made in the European manner of the hemp of the country. The trail on the river so far is fine and much used.

12 Move camp 15 miles on the trail in a W.N.W. direction and following the bank of the river which is here a gentle stream of about 4 miles and 1/2 mile wide. Gnats here trouble us much and the days are extremely hot about 85 deg. and the nights warm enough for comfort The river is full of salmon and a plenty of them are to be had of the indians whom we meet every few mils fishing on the banks of the stream Some of the grass is here so salt that it can be washed in a pot of water and enough seasoning for boiling obtained grass is generally poor. The banks are here generally

sand Many kinds of water fowl frequent the river here today we bought a fish of the Indians dried excessively fat and when alive a large fish. sturgeon probably

13th moved camp along the bank of the river and following the trail 24 miles only deviating from the river about 3 miles the last of the travel. The first 6 miles the river is W. the next 3 N.W. then S.W. 3 then taking a circular sweep round to N. by E. which was 9 miles then left the river and in 3 miles struck a creek [Owyhee River] about as large as Charles River at Watertown, where we found grass, salmon and Indians and the first timber we have seen since leaving the Mts. in sight on what appears to be a river coming in from the N. side this I mean to ascertain tomorrow and the next day I shall start to explore the creek for Beaver. This forenoon and yesterday forenoon were cloudy and the first cloudy weather for 2 months except as mentioned before. Wether still as warm as 80 deg. in day time buy salmon for a hook apiece.

14th Mooved camp in a N.N.W. Direction 5 miles and encamped on the main river being out of provisions I sent a man on a mule to buy some salmon he went up the river about 3 miles and called to some Indians on one of the Islands to bring some these he bought afterward another Indian came over with some the man thinking he had got nearly enough offered him a less price this displeased the Indian who slapped him in the face and at the same time hit the mule a kick which set him out on the run and the Indian ran quick enough to avoid vengeance the man came to camp much displeased having had to walk most of the way and carry his fish this day also visited by Indians from below with salmon

15th Sent 3 men and 4 animals to examine the small river for beaver this day a N.W. wind much like the N.E of the Atlantic with some little rain (at the same camp) this day took a ride down the river to examine for a camp

16th N.W. wind still took a ride up the river to find a camp where timber, fit for a raft which we propose to build to carry some of the loose baggage and some men who are on foot can be found, found none saw some beaver sign in trading for some salmon an Indian attempted to sna[t]ch a paper of fish hook[s] from me but he did not make out returned to camp and sent two men to trap for the beaver they left their horses and went into the willows to look [for] the sign during which time the Indians none of whom were in sight stole a cloak from Mr. Ball. They found the beaver had lately been trapped out say within 3 weeks next morning they returned to camp

17th Mooved camp N. by W. 16 miles and encamped on a creek [Malheur River] about as large as the last near a few lodges of Indians the main river about two miles to N.E. This creek appears to run S.W. The Inds. say there is beaver on it the main river here makes a considerable detour to the N. Yesterday had hail and rain & snow and today the Mts. to the Northward are white with it.

18th with 2 men I went up the creek this I followed about 50 miles and found its general course about W. by N. the first 15 miles S.W. then W. 20 then N.N.W. 15 where the cut rocks begin This is a large stream when the waters are high in the spring but now is sluggish here we got a few beaver It had been trapped by the H.B. 2 years before we saw no Indians on it during the 9 days I was up.

On the 10th day [Sept. 28th] I returned to where I left the party and feeling in the mood of banter I told the Indians at the mouth of the creek (the party having left) that I had eaten nothing for two days this to see if they would give me anything for charity sake One of them went and looked at my saddle and pointed to me the fresh blood of a beaver I had that morning caught and left with the two men I then bought 2 salmon for one awl afterward I told him I had three children at home he brought forward three tawny brats and his squaw who was big I backed out of story telling with Indians. I then proceeded on until the moon went down when seeing a light I made for it after traveling 5 miles I found it to be an Indian camp on the other side of the river I then unsaddled my horse and slept until 4 ock when I mounted and at 9 ock found where my party had camped the same night and a notice in the trail of their motions at 11 ock I overtook them with my horse lame and jaded. I found an Indian with the party who seems to know the route to Wallah Wallah and he intends going with us During my absence the three men sent up the creek above the one I went up returned without accident, and during the same time Mr. Sublette with Mr. Frapp & party joined our camp and crossed by fording to the other side of the river intending to divide into 3 parties and trap up three streams coming in opposite the upper one of which we thought to be salmon river it proves to be called Big Woody [Boise] on account of the timber on it. They attempted to come down on the creek above the one I ascended but after toiling long and wearing down their horses in a cruel manner they crossed to the one that we descended and arrived at the Indian village the day after we left it he left before I returned I regretted much not seeing this party. from Information gained here we suppose that we shall meet no Indians between this and the fort have therefore provided as much salmon as we could get and put ourselves on allowance. Sublette who went to 2 creeks further than I did saw a large stream running S.W. this must either turn and be some large river coming into Lewis below here or be the head water of some river going to the Gulph of California. After joining camp we proceed on to a creek [Burnt River] coming from the N.W. which is our route the river here being impracticable and taking a great bend to the N. and shall wait here until the two men who went up with me come to camp The river from where I left camp runs about N. 20 miles then west 10 miles then N. again into cut rocks found the party all well and the horses much recruited

29th We lay at same camp.

30th Mooved about 5 miles the creek running about W.

1 Oct Mooved camp along same creek about 5 miles still W.

2nd At same camp at this place the bears dung was plenty but we saw but one.

3rd Moved camp about 15 miles creek still west and trail good.

4th With an Indian and 4 men I left camp in order to explore this creek the N.W. trail here leaving it after leaving camp I proceed over bad hills about 18 miles and encamped among cut rocks on the same creek it here being W. by S. during the march we observed a range of high snowy mountains to the N. of us but w[h]ether on our side of the river or not could not determine.

5th Made about 5 miles through intolerable cut rocks some beaver

6th At same camp.

7th 5 miles on same creek which bears W. by S here left it. having sent a messenger to camp with orders to proceed on the route to Wallah Wallah and steering north passed some snow clad mounts. which we walked up with bare feet and after 25 miles struck a small run going into the next creek during this day we passed through an immense forest of pine of different kinds and unknown to us altho very similar to some of ours on these mountains we found unripe service berrys, cherrys and thorn apple all of which are gone on the rivers it snowed and rained most of the day many of the pines were 4 feet through

8th Moved 4 miles to the main creek and laid down cold and hungry and supperless hoping that our traps would give us beaver in the morning

9th Got 7 beaver and went to eating like good fellows moved this day 6 miles down creek here running about N.

10th Moved N. and down creek about 15 miles and found the rest of the party who had come on the main trail in an average N.W. direction about 45 miles This day rain this creek from where we struck it to this place runs in an extensive plain of fertile soil equal to the best I ever saw of about 5 miles average width here we raised a great smoke and am told by our Indian that the Nez Perces will see it and come to smoke with us

11th To the S.W. of us is a range of snow clad Mts. the Indian says it is 7 days to Wallah Wallah. This creek runs about N.E. by E.

11th [repeats date] stretch at 8 o'clock and moved about N.N.W. 30 miles over high ground of good soil

12th Left the party after killing a horse of the poorest kind for food in order to go ahead to find indians or whites or food The party here remained one day in a valley of about 20 miles long and 15 wide of a very fertile soil in this valley saw extensive camps of Indians about one month old here they find salmon in a creek running through it and dig the Kamas root but not an Indian was here at this time we put out in a N.W. direction and ascended the hills which soon became wooded with good timber our course this day was about N.N.W. and 40 miles I had with me an Indian and three men and a little horse meat we camped this night in the woods without water.

13th Arose early and continued our route until 9 o'clock and stopped for breakfast of bad Horse meat on a creek of some size where we found the red thorn apple and a few cherries after 3 hours stop we moved across the creek which runs West and is called Ottillah [Umatilla] on ascending the opposite bluff we saw a smoke about 20 miles down on it to which we went and found some poor

horses in charge of a squaw and some children the men were all out hunting they had no food but rose berrys of which we made our supper they were much frightened at our approach there having been some Indians of this tribe viz Walla Walla killed by the snakes above, and this family was murdered the night after we left them

In the morning of the 14th we put out about N. and arrived at fort Walla Walla about 5 ock in the evening distance 30 miles near the fort the river Walla Walla was crossed which is about 75 feet wide and about 2 feet deep current moderate the size of the last creek passed I was received in the most hospitable and gentlemanly manner by Peanbron [Pambrun] the agent for this post the fort is of no strength merely sufficient to frighten Indians mounting 2 small cannon having two bastions at the opposite corners of a square enclosure there were 6 whites here. My party arrived on the 18th having fared for food they passed my trail and went N. of it and struck the main river [Snake] above the fort they brough[t] in all the horses At the post we saw a bull and cow & calf, hen & cock, punkins, potatoes, corn, all of which looked strange and unnatural and like a dream. They gave me a decent change of cloth[es] which was very acceptable I took a ride up the river 9 miles to the junction of Lewis River which comes in from the S.E. and soon takes a S. course the Columbia comes here from the N.W.

On the 19th I took leave of my hospitable entertainer in one of the Cos. barges with my party leaving my horses in his charge at the fort and proceeded down the river about 4 mils and s[t]opped to tighten our boat the river forms fine eddies to work up with and about 3 mile current down the 2nd run of fish failed this year in the river and the Indians are picking up the most nauseous dead fish for food the course of the river [is] about S.W.

20th Left the beach at sunrise the River still S.W. and kept on until about noon when a furious wind arose from the S.W. and stopped our further progress the sand flew so as to obscure the air Here we traded a few fish from the natives for Hooks awls powder &c made 10 miles during which we passed some rapids of a bad character at which in times of high water portage is necessary the ge[e]se are numerous seated on the banks of the river. River W. by S. a large snowy mountain S.W. by W. ahead which the river leaves to the left called by the French "Montagne de Neige" [Mt. Hood] made 10 miles

21st Wind same but more moderate Put down the river still W by S. passed a large Island at the lower end of which we stopped for the night. Ther. 22 deg. Made 16 miles during the day out boatman bought a colt which we found fine eating shagg and ge[e]se plenty

22nd Made 30 miles wind moderate and no rapids of much difficulty stopped at night at a village where was a chief sick to whom our conductor administered some medicine and bled him his eyes were exceeding yellow and his blood after standing a short time was covered with a scum of yellowish green he gave us a horse to eat of which he had 260 in fine order and of good breed we found the meat equal to any beaf and quite different from the poor and sick old ones we had eaten. They here sell Horses for 100 loads amunition 1 Blankett and 1/4 lb tobacco.

23rd The chief much better and we left him Yesterday our people in search of wood of which there is none but drift here found a pile which they brought to our fire but were soon told by the natives that they had robbed the dead we will avoid the like mistake in the future we made this day 28 miles during which distance we passed one bad rapid and the river John Day from a trader of that name. This river is large but obstructed by rapids and enters from the S. is 79 miles below Walla Walla no rain as yet but we are informed that the rain is now constant below the falls we see Indians every few miles who come off to trade what little articles they have sometimes with nothing to beg a chew of tobacco sometimes with a little wood for fuel sometimes with two 3, one or 1/2 a fish a few berrys our conductor appears to have a wife at each stopping place 4 already and how many more sable beauties god only knows these Indians are tolerably honest but will steal a little.

24th Started about 9 and after about [6 miles written here but crossed out] passed the grand falls [Celilo] of the Columbia just above which a small river puts into the Columbia about the size of the small rivers above the Wallah [Wallah] for instance these falls now the water is low are about 25 feet when the water is high these falls are covered the water not having a sufficient vent below the water here rises about 40 feet just before arriving at the falls are considerable rapids the falls are easily passed in boats at high water we hired the Indians about 50 for a quid of tobacco each to carry our boat about 1 mile round the falls the goods we carried ourselves shortly after passing the falls we passed what are called the dalles (small) or where the river is damed up between the banks steep and high of not more than 100 feet apart through which the whole waters of the mighty Columbia are forced with much noise and uproar I passed through with some Indians while my men went round they not being good boatmen enough to trust and frightened withall. We are now camped at the Great Dalles which are still narrower and more formidable than the small having stoped after making 20 miles the wind being high and unfavorable for passing at the gorge of this pass the water rises by the mark on the rock at least 50 feet forming a complete lock to the falls above the back water covering them entirely. The Indians are thieves but not dangerous before us and apparently in the river rises the most formidable mountain we have seen the country ahead is clothed with forest to the river side which has not been the case before and the western horizon is covered by a dense cloud denoting the region of constant rain during the winter.

25th Made this day 6 miles and passed the great dalles similar to the small ones which we passed yesterday but still narrower being 75 feet about in width through this pass we went with an unloaded boat at an immense speed the goods and Baggage were carried past on the backs of my men and some Indians hired for that purpose my men not being good boatmen and timorous I hired Indians to work ours through going with them myself to learn the way during part of this day we had a fair wind the river still W. by S. here we saw plenty of grey headed seals we bought some bear meat from the Indians which we found very fine. We encamped for the first time on the river among timber among which I saw a kind of oak and ash. Indians Plenty one chief at whose lodge we stopped a short time gave me some molasses obtained from [the] fort below to eat He had a large stock of dried fish for the winter 4 tons I should think roots &c he was dressed in the English stile Blue frock pants. & vest comported himself with much dignity enquired my name particularly and repeated it over many times to impress it on his memory his sister was the squaw of an American of the name of Bache who established a post on the river below the great

dalles three years ago last fall and who was drowned in them with 11 others the following spring the remains of the fort I saw as also the grave of the woman who died this fall and was buried in great state with sundry articles such as capeau vest pantaloons shirts &c. A pole with a knob at the top is erected over her remains at the foot of the Dalles is an island called the Isle of the Dead on which there are many sepulchers these Indians usually inter their dead on the Islands in the most romantic scituations where the souls of the dead can feast themselves with the roar of the mighty an eternal waters which in life time aforded them sustenance and will to all eternity to their posterity.

26 After 30 miles of beautiful navigation with little current and fair strong wind and no rapids we arrived at the Cascade or lower obstruction of the river here it is necessary to carry the boat and the Indians are all dead only two women are left a sad remnant of a large number their houses stripped to their frames are in view and their half buried dead this portage will be a hard job during this day I went ashore to a small lake near the river I killed at one discharge of my double barrelled gun 5 of them which gave 5 of us a hearty supper no rain as yet but constant appearance of it ahead at these rapids are a great many seal it is a mystery to me how they assend them. The direction of the river is here about W by S. and a little snow on some of the highest of the hills this day we passed the high mountain covered with snow hertofore mentioned it is on the left of the river and is a more stupendous pile than any of the Rocky Mts. Always covered with snow and is called the Snowy mountain.

27th in the morning commenced carrying the boat and goods which we finished at 1 ock. and making 9 miles in all stopped to repair the boat which was leaky from damage sustained in carrying rained all this day and saw but two Indians

28th With a fair wind and a little rain we decended the river at a great rate on the route we killed a goose which dropped in the water a white headed Eagle from a distance seeing this took occasion to come he seized it and lifted it into the air a few feet but our near approach frightened him away made this day 26 miles and stopped at a saw mill belonging to the H.B. Co. under charge of a Mr. Cawning a gentleman who came here 22 years since with a Mr Hunt he is in the service of the Co. We were treated by him with the greatest kindness he gave us mocasins and food in plenty.

29th Started at 10 ock and arrived at the fort of Vancouver at 12, 4 miles Here I was received with the utmost kindness and Hospitality by Doct. McLauchland [McLoughlin] the acting Gov. of the place Mr McDonald Mr Allen and McMckay gentleman resident here Our people were supplied with food and shelter from the rain which is constant they raise at this fort 6000 bush. of wheat 3 of Barley 1500 potatoes 3000 peas a large quantity of punkins they have coming on apple trees, peach Do. and grapes. Sheep, Hogs, Horses, Cows, 600 goats, grist 2, saw mill 2. 24 lb guns powder magazine of stone the fort is of wood and square they are building a Scho. of 70 tons there are about 8 settlers on the Multnomah they are the old engages of the Co. who have done trapping. I find Doct. McLauchland a fine old gentleman truly philanthropic in his Ideas he is doing much good by introducing fruits into this country which will much facilitate the progress of its settlement (Indian corn 300 bush) The gentlemen of this Co. do much credit to their country and

concern by their education department and talents. I find myself involved in much difficulty on abc. of my men some of whom wish to leave me and whom the Co. do not wish to engage no[r] to have them in the country without being attached to some Co. able to protect them alledging that if any of them are killed they will be obliged to aveng it at an expense of money and amicable relations with the Indians. And it is disagreeable for me to have men who wish to leave me. The Co. seem disposed to render me all the assistance they can they live well at these posts they have 200 acres of land under cultivation the land is of the finest quality.

30th to 5th. Nov remained at Vancouver and except the last day rain.

6th started down the river to look with a view to the Salmon business we decended the river at about 4 mils per hour and accomplished the journey in parts of 4 days the river is full of islands but they are all too low for cultivation being occasionally overflowed as also the praries (what few there are) on the main land with the exception of these small levells the country is so rough that a great part of the earth must be inhabited before this but the soil is good and the timber is heavy and thick and almost impenetrable from underbrush and fallen trees the description of Mess. Lewis & Clark and others is fully borne out as to size and more also the river is so well known at this part of it that I will not insert any observations of my own there are a great number of fowl on this river at this time and there will be more as they saw soon there are large swan white ge[e]se a goose with a motled breast and yellow bill a trifle smaller than the goose of N.E. A white goose almost exactly like the domestic goose of N.E. yellow feet and legs as also the former there is another goose like that of N.E. but I think smaller there is the tame duck of N.E. with 19 tail feathers and a fine duck to eat there is the grey duck of N.E. green winged teel Buffle heads Cape Races Dippers of the Sea loons seal deer I killed one swimming the river I saw no elk but only tracks fort George now occupied as a trading post by the H.B. Co. is well scituated on a sloping bank of the river about 2 miles outside of Tongue point and 6 miles inside of Clatsop point Chinook point is opposite the latter and inside Chinook is a river of small size is also inside Tongue point above Tongue point about 6 miles are the Cathlametts they are an archipelago of reedy Islands overflown at high water Here are ducks innumerable. the Indians in this part of the river are of late much reduced they appear good and hospitable as far as an Indian ever is that is they are willing to sell provisions for all they can get for them they appear to live well and I believe any one may with plenty of powder and lead on this river either as a purchase or to shoot there are no beaver here We arrived at the Fort of V. on the 15th Nov having had no rain during this time. I must here mention the very kind gentlemanly conduct of Mr. Jas. Bernie superintendent of Ft. G. who assisted me to a boat and pilot for the outer harbor and acted the part of host to perfection I had much pleasure with a little liquor and a pipe in his company he has seen much of this country and is of the old N.W. concern I derived much information from him on my return to the fort my men came forward and unanimously desired to be released from their engagement with a view of returning home as soon as possible and for that end to remain here and work for a maint[en]ance until an opportunity should occur. I could not refuse they had already suffered much and our number was so small that the prospect of remuneration to them was very small I have therefore now no men these last were Mr. Ball Woodman Sinclair, Breck, Abbot, Tibbits they were good men and persevered as long as perseverance would do good I am now afloat on the great sea of

life without stay or support but in good hands i.e. myself and providence and a few of the H.B. Co. who are perfect gentlemen During my absence Guy Trumbul died on the 7th of Nov. of the Cholic an attack of which he had on the Platte of which he nearly died in this case he was taken in the evening and died early in the mng. His funeral was attended by all the Gentlemen at the place and prayers were said accord[ing] to the form of the Church of England for this attention to my affairs in my absense was considerate to my feelings and I hope will be duly appreciated service is here performed on sunday and on the days prescribed by the church of Eng. our excursion down the river was performed in an Indian canoe which we hired for a 3 1/2 point Blankett We found it very kittish but withall a good craft for sailing and easy to paddle but the men were exceedingly awkward.

19th From this to the 29th I remained at Fort Vancouver eating and drinking the good things to be had there and enjoying much the gentlemanly society of the place.

On the 29th. with Abbot and Woodman in an Indian canoe I started for a journey up the Wallamet or Multonomah River this river which is highest in the winter was so at this time but is not rapid until near the falls the subjoined scetch will shew its course as I made it distance by the river by my estimate 27 1/2 miles to the falls which are perpendicular about 20 feet past these we carried our canoe about 1/4 mile and launched above the falls the water though generally more rapid above would admit of the running of a steam boat. In this river at this time there is more water than in the Missouri and not of a more difficult character to navigate the tide flows to within 8 miles of the falls below the fall the banks of the river are not suitable for cultivation being overflowed as far as the bottom extends which is not far and beyond these the country rises into rocky hills unfit for tillage but producing very large timber mostly if not all of the pines On the bottoms there is considrable oak of a kind not found in the States but of excellent quality for ship building and its the only kind of oak found in the country of the Columbia I noticed but two streams coming into the river below the falls the river to within 6 mils of its junction with the Columbia runs along the N.E. side of a range of hills or as they would be called in N.E. mountains at the falls it passes through this range this river has two mouths the East one is the one I assended the west one follows the range of hills above described to their falling on the Columbia about 3 miles below the eastern entrance the mouth of this river is in Latt 45 deg. 36 min. 51 sec. Long. 122 deg. 48 min. Above the falls for 22 mils by estimate the banks of the river are high enough to prevent flowing but timbered and not fertile and rough and the country apparently not valuable except for timber which is here mostly of the pines except a small quantity of cotton wood and alder the latter is here a tree of sometimes a foot and a half through at the falls the H.B. Co. are erecting a saw mill to which they contemplate adding a grist mill the scituation for mill priviledges is beyond any thing I have ever seen 22 mils from the falls are 3 or 4 Canadians settled as farmers they have now been there one year have Hogs, Horses, Cows, have built barns, Houses, and raised wheat, barely, potatoes, turnips, cabages, corn punkins, mellons The country here becomes open, but still wood enough and a much greater proportion of oak prairies of from 1 to 30 miles in extent bound by a skirting of timber this country seems a valley between the mountains to the East and West of about 50 miles wide including both sides of the river and is very level of nearly uniform soil extremely rich equal to the best of the Missouri lands. Accounts vary much as to its southerly

extent I have seen it at least 75 miles in southwardly direction and from all I can learn I think it extends with but little interruption as far south as the valley of the Buneventura which is also of the same description of the country. and I have never seen country of equal beauty except the Kansas country and I doubt not will one day sustain a large population 10 miles by land above the first settlement and 30 by the river is another by a MrJervie [Joseph Gervais] which was a very fine beginning of one years standing of the same character and product as the one below in all about 9 settlers are on this river if this country is ever colonised this is the point to commence the river is navigable for canoes to its very sources but as I understand very circuitous deer abounds in this district and wolves one of which a large devil I shot these settlers I found exceeding attentive to my comforts especially MrJervai at whose house I slept 2 nights I was absent from the fort this time 10 days.

To the 4th Jany. [1833] the weather was little better than a continual rain now however a hard rain often but a drizzling uncomfortable air during December there fell 9 1/2 inches rain by a pluviometer on the 4th the wind came strong to N.N.E. with fair and cool weather Ther. averaging about 19 Deg. this continued to the 8th when there is much floating ice in the river and those here think that with two days more of this weather the river will close. The readiness w[ith] which the river freezes must arise from the water getting intensely cold in the upper country. During this month Mr. McKay gave our room a treat of Buffaloe meat salted and smoked and this being the first opportunity of comparing good Buffalo meat with other good meat was highly acceptable. I think it equal to the best meat ever eaten. Up to the 4th there was no frost in the ground and ploughing is commonly done all the winter during the latter part of January the River rose about 4 feet which must have arisen from the rains as there could be no melting of snow on the Mountains at this season these rains must have I think extended farther back than is described to be their range viz the falls at which the timbered country terminates. Carrots are here finer and larger than I have ever before seen one I think was 3 inches through and of fine flavor. There appears much sickness among the people here especially among the common people which I think arises from low diet and moist weather for as far as I can observe the gentlemen who live well are not much subject to disorders. the main disorder is an intermittent fever which has carried off all or nearly all the Indians who live even worse than the engages. The Lima which sailed a month since had not to the 1st Jany. got out of the river. I have been informed by Mr Douglas and Mr. Finlesson that vessels have laid off the bar 7 weeks before they could enter.

11th Jany. The River closed with ice and I am detained here until it opens. Last winter the river remained frozen 5 weeks there is yet no snow. Today heard by Mr Hermatinger of the death of Mr Vande[r]burg killed by the Blackfeet up to this time the weather continued clear and cold for this country the Ther. varying from 12 deg. to 20 deg.

On the 18th at 2 o'clock it commenced hailing and at day light the hail was about 2 inches on the ground the River closed on the 10th and so remains at present on the 14th I walked across the Columbia and found the ice about 6 inches thick where it lay smooth but it was much tumbled up edge wise afternoon of the 18th commenced Raining and on the 19th rains still the hail was at one time from 1 1/2 to 2 inches deep on the 18th.

19th after raining hard all night there is no snow left it is warm and showery to day Ther. 54 deg.

20th Raining stil and Ther. 52 deg. River not yet cleared ice stationary.

21st 22nd warm and Rainy.

23rd The river Broke up still warm Ther. 51 deg. I am informed by Mr Dav. Douglas that a Mr Woodard whom he saw in Calafornia was intending to come to the Columbia for SaImon he is a Brother-in-law to Capt. Ebbets and is from New York Mr. Douglass saw him in Calafornia in July 1832. I am informed by Doct. J. McGlaucland that he has seen strawberrys ripe here in Dec. and blossom in Jany. the weather warm up to the 28th with occasional rains there is now little ice on the river on the banks the wreck and rubbish of the breaking up of the river. The H.B. Co. are now making a fort at Nass. to counteract the Am. vessells on the coast.

28th Warm still and fair the Co. are about sending a party under Mr. [Donald] Manson to make a fort at Milbank Sound.

30th Today a party sent to enquire after another reported to be cut off beyond the Umquoi or near the Clammat River under a man by the name of of Duportt [Jean Baptiste Desportes] I requested to accompany him but the Gov. would not consent alledging the[y] would conceive that I came to avenge the death of Mr. Smiths party who was cut off by the Umquoi Indians, all which I interpreted into a jealousy of my motives this party brought back 200 skins which they had traded they did not go beyond the Umquoi. they were gone 2 months lost no men and but 2 horses which Died of Fatigue.

31st to the 3rd. Feb. we had warm and wet weather on the 3rd at 10 ock. we started for Wallah Walla I had with me two men and am in company with Mr Emmatinger of the H.B. Co. who has in charge 3 boats with 120 pieces of goods and 21 men. I parted with feelings of sorrow from the gentlemen of Fort Vancouver their unremitted kindness to me while there much endeared them to me more so than it would seem possible during so short a time Doct McGlaucland the Gov. of the place is a man distinguished as much for his kindness and humanity as his good sense and information and to whom I am so much indebted as that he will never be forgotten by me this day we came to the Prarie Du Li[s] 15 miles raining most of the day.

4th Left the prairie Du Li on the lower end of it this prairie is about 3 miles long and through it the River Du Li a small creek enters the Columbia we made but 2 miles when one of our boats ran foul of a rock and was stove it landed its cargo without wetting much this accident detained us till 1/4 before 12 ock when we started and kept on till 2 ock and stopped 20 minutes to dine then kept on till 1/2 past 5 ock making 17 mils this day this River is at medium water the rivers banks high precipitous and rocky from the Lea prairie in one place the bank on the N. side rises to 200 feet perpendicular I saw a hawk light on a projecting crag about half way up which gave me a good idea of the height of the rock from this rock a small stream casts itself into the Com. w[h]ether a

permanent one or not cannot say but should think not there are here many white headed Eagles one skunk we saw today the timber appears much smaller than below no rain but cloudy this day wind west and Ther. about 40 deg. now at 8 ock at night the full moon is looking down calmly upon us aparently thinking that the cares of us humble individuals concern her little.

5th We left camp at 7 ock and made 4 miles to breakfast and in 7 mils more the foot of the Cascades our breakfast was made on a small island abreast of a rock rising perpendicular from the bed of the river as I should think 400 feet high Lewis & Clark call it I think 700 feet this rock is nearly surrounded by the waters of the river

The Cascades occasion a portage of 100 rods our goods were carried across this day the river is here compressed into a very small place and the bed is full of rocks I should think the fall to be about 8 feet in the space of the 60 rods There are here two fishing villages both now deserted as the people here say from the inmates being all dead of the fever but I suspect some are dead and the rest and much larger part frightened away we made the portage by the North side on which is one of the above villages it is near the river on a little clear spot with a little lake in the rear here the Inds were once hostile and great caution was once used in passing now but little is requisite it rained all the latter part of the day and night and morning of the 6th finished the portage but our boats were so bruised that the rest of the day was taken to gum them took a look about me the rest of the day found that the tripe de roche grew on the rocks here but small here there are many petrifications of wood in a bank of gravell some of which are perfectly petrified and will not burn in the fire but others appear only half so and burn and cut freely they are found bedded in stone composed of rubble of some former world the gravel is cemented together by finer gravell the whole being volcanic and water worn.

7th At 1 1/2 mile above the Cascade is a small river from the N. and 4 1/2 above this a creek from the N. rained all the 6th and rains a little today and came in all 27 miles passed many Indian habitations on the river and canoes 15 mils above the Cascades is a Torrent that precipitates itself into the river from about 60 feet 17 mils from same on same side viz south is a creek both small one between them on the N. side timber growing gradually thinner.

8th We found that a Capeau and 2 blanketts had been stolen by some Inds. from one of our men and went to the village just below our camp to recover them they acknowledged the theft but the thieves had run off we took two canoes to our camp and breakfasted immediately after breakfast the man who had lost the articles took an ax and broke the worst canoe for which he was reprimanded by Mr Ermatinger the other he left and a little after we left I saw the Ind. come and take it we made 29 mils to the Dalles which are one mile or thereabouts long and encamped having passed two of the boats the other owing to some mistake had she[e]red out and forced the line from those who were towing and forced one Indian into the stream and was drowned he was in a bank about 15 feet high he swam until he got into a whirl pool and went down. Just below the Dalles the timber ceases there are here many Indians Tilky & Casineau are here the chiefs and very clever ones all this day we saw Indians on the banks the water passes even now at a furious rate and at high water it is impassible and boats are carried as much as two mils and all the goods

for assisting through this place a little tobacco is given the Inds. we gave the usual quantity and saw a personal struggle for the division of it.

9th Left the Great Dalls and in three miles came to the little dalles which we passed by towing in which we were delayed by reason of having only two lines one having been lost at the time the Indian was drowned in three miles more I arrived at the Shutes or falls of the Columbia which are not in this stage of the water more than ten feet perpendicular but much more than that including the rapids above and below in the immediate vicinity these falls once during the times the whites have been here have been sailed up owing as I suppose to the Dalles at such times affording a slow outlet to the accumulated waters and their being raised by this circumstance to above the level of the falls this day got our baggage and goods over at the G. Dalles I traded one horse which I sent on by Abbot at the Shutes we found about 150 to 200 Indians who were very troublesome [having] to pay for very trifling services however they stole nothing.

10th Passed over and gummed the boats and at 1/2 past 12 started up the river having traded another horse and sent it on by Woodman one mile above the river Aux Rapide comes from the south the size of the stream I cannot tell as I only saw the mouth of it here on the N. side of the river Abbot came to me having lost the horse entrusted to him I took Mr. Woodmans and gave [it to] Abbot with orders to wait until 10 ock tomorrow and then to come on whether he got the horse or not we came today 9 miles and 6 yesterday here we have to give a piece of tobacco for every stick of wood we get last night was the first frost I have seen since the river broke the grass is somewhat green this part of the river affords trout in small quantity.

11th Started at an early hour and made the mouth of a considerable stream coming from the S. called John Days River from a hunter of that name formerly in this country distant from our 1st camp 7 1/2 miles we camped 22 1/2 miles from this on the North side of the river having had a strong and fair wind all day one thing I observed in this part of the River is that the savages are civil and as much as one in ten has lost an eye as I suppose from the effects of the fine sand of the river being blown about or the violent wind for which this part of the river is noted we found some few roots and little game with the natives the night was windy and uncomfortabl but no frost but a little rain

12th At 1/2 past 6 we started and made 2 miles to breakfast on the N. side fair wind and clear one boat stove and must stop to repair and gum found two small logs of drift wood at 10 ock. recommenced our journey with a fair light wind and made in all this day 17 miles during the day had the satisfaction of seeing Abbot come up but without finding the lost horse.

13th Calm in mng. but after breakfast had a fair and midling strong wind at 1 ock passed the upper end of Grand Island an Indian to day brought me a pouch and horn stolen from one of my men going down but the balls and powder used up which I redeemed for a little tobacco last night a frost not severe made this day 25 miles found wood enough for use on the banks but it is a custom of the Indians to run along the beach and take possession of the wood there may be and sell it [to] you for tobacco which appears to be their greatest luxury a quid is pay for almost anything.

14th We started at 6 ock and in one mile passed the River Ottillah one mile above which rapids commence the[se] we passed one mile long making 3 to Dreakfast and started at 1/2 past 10 with a fair and strong wind and reached Walla Walla at 5 p.m. just befor[e] reaching this place the cut rocks close into the river in such a manner that there appears but a small perpendicular sided gap to look through past these and at W.W. both bank[s] fall down to a nearly levell plain we were again hospitably received by Mr. P.C. Pambrun we remained at this post until the 19th of Feb. the weather mild and clear but high S.W. winds W.W. is a place noted for high winds a little frost during the nights only gras[s] just getting green My horses in tolerable good order and all found eat horse meat all the time at this post On Sunday took a ride up the river W.W. found its bottoms good but not extensive and no wood the corn for this post 150 bushells last year was raised at least 3 miles from the fort none was stolen by the Indians a good test of their honesty as they are all most always starving. This place is kept by about 5 men Inds. are freely admitted inside of it about 1200 skins traded here it is kept up mostly for trading horses and the safty of the communication the course of the Wallah [Wallah] river is E. by N. near the fort when I saw it.

19th Just as we were leaving the fort an Indian brought in the horse which Abbot lost at the Dalles and a short time after leaving the fort an Indian sent by Mr. P. brought one other which had strayed from Abbot at this place we made this day 7 miles to a branch of the Wallah [Wallah] river here coming from the N. the space nearly a plain and barren and sandy but good grass this branch appears to be about half the Wallah [Wallah] river encamped a little after sundown and for 12 yards blue clths. 1 Blkt. 2 1/2 pt 50 balls & powder 2 knives 1 lb. Tobacco bunch beads, 10 fish Hooks traded a good horse this appears a fair price here.

20th We made a late start and after travelling 9 hours without water arrived at the Snake river here running W. our course was this day N. by E. 22 1/2 miles over a country which would be considered light sandy land with little sage grass good and in tufts very level except some trifling roundly swelling hills these make one think of gently swelling breasts of the ladies. Day warm and clear We in the first of the day followed the branch of the W.W. mentioned yesterday say four miles on which I saw blackbirds which Mr. Pambrun says stay at W.W. all winter.

21st No frost in morning. Crossed the [Snake] river to the mouth of a creek coming into the river from the N. for 10 miles which was the length of our march this day this creek is through cut rocks of moderate height for this country. We followed the stream on the east bank. These banks were about 300 feet high to the levell of the plain if that can be called a plain where the hills rise to an almost equal height and the gullies are abrupt and narrow. The soil was what would be called in N.E. a poor sandy soil producing good grass but still no wood Traded two horses this day at the usual rates The people who are most used to this country are so little afraid of the indians that they either travel without guns or with them unloaded.

22nd A pretty hard frost in the morning followed the river one mile on the North side then crossed it and made North 3 miles and crossed a branch of it coming from the N.W. Our course this day N. by E. and encamped at a little run of water running S.E. This is inconsiderable Saw

about 20 antelope this day in one herd at our camp this nigh[t] observed about 2 inches of frost in the ground this days ride over very rocky country the valleys of which are very good but small otherwise more sandy than common grass good Made 22 1/2 miles

23rd N. 17 miles over a rough and Rocky country with a few small bottoms which are good land at 9 miles from last camp passed some of the best specimens of Basaltic colum[n]s which I have seen They were 5 sided and about 50 feet high some standing independent others tumbled down to the foot of the wall like demolished Towers This days march [passed] many small lakes whether formed by the snow or not I can not say but I think some of them are permanent none larger than a few acres Camped at a stream coming from the N. and were visited by three Indians who report the road to Colville impassable for snow a hard frost last night and frost in the ground beside the lakes mostly frozen over but not thick these made me think of the old business of my life.

24th 20 miles N. through timber in the first of which we encamped last night the stream which we camped on here forks no game except two small prairie hens passed many little lakes one of which is as large Fresh Pond and one nearly so the rest smaller Patches of snow and one third of the trees prostrated last year by southerly gale their trunks much obstructed the path before us on the right are snow covered and moderately high Mts. found good wood at our camp by the light of which I now write the scene reminds me of my Ice men at work by torch light not frost enough in the ground to prevent driving tent stakes the little [rain] and snow made streams [which] run Southerly

25th in a N. direction 15 miles to Spokane River a stream now about half as large as the Snake River it is now high from the melting of the snow its sources are not distant and in a range of Mts. in sight this Range runs about N.W. which is here the general course of the stream but how far I cannot say as it is visible but a short distance at this place are the remains of the old Spokane House one Bastion of which only is now standing which is left by the Indians from respect to the dead one clerk of the Co. being buried in it the banks of this river are here rocky and precipitous I observed among the rocks of its bed Granite Green Stone Quartz sandstone Lava or Basalt the country on approaching this river from the South resembles the pine plains of N. Hampshire near Concord we passed the divide between the waters of this and the last river about 5 miles from our last nights Camp striking then after passing the isolated wood in which we had camped and a large plain devoid of wood a deep valley running N. Crossed the most of our baggage today

26th Arrived [at Spokane House] After perusing the enclosed loose papers I proceed

27th March due N.E. by N 24 miles we made this day This line cuts the Spokane river This point we turned but I call the course direct for convenience this course is through a tolerable fertile prairie the grass good and flowers plenty on the W. side are low range of rocky hills which are granite and a better development of the broken rock named yesterday I find it to be volcanic by its being [a word omitted] blending with porous rock on our left and about half way of the days march passed a mile distant a little lake 1/2 mile across to the E. by N. Of this is a lake 3 miles across from which the Spokane flows neither of these I have seen but take this from hearsay ar-

rived at our camp and all well and in better order I have forgot to mention that the stream [Little Spokane River] that comes into the Spokane near the House beings down pebbles of volcanic rock also that the streams near our present camp come from the hills enter the prairie of the Spokane River and disappear in the ground.

28 Made 18 miles N. through a level and wooded country and camped with only snow water and poor grass the rocks seen to day are boulders of granite and observed that the compass in one place would not Traverse this happened while going to Colville from Spokane and coming from there back also observed Today and yesterday the effects of some former gale in prostrated trees direction here S.W.

29 horses missing in mng. and not found till noon went N. 9 miles and struck Flat Head Rivers compass again refused to traverse through deep snow today and yesterday and thick young trees and fallen timber observed here the white pine and Hemlock snow and rain all yesterday found our people at the river with the boats.

30th Remained at the same place crossed the river I here saw an Indian who was entirely blind he seemed to be taken good care of by his relatives made him a small present for which he thanked me parted company with Mr Ermatinger he to go on with the goods by water myself with horses by land last night the coldest for some time today warm and pleasant

31st Moved early N. 7 miles passing a point and to little streams Excessively bad going in crossing the point from snow and brush E. two miles along the river N.N.E. 5 miles to the Lake [Pend Oreille] then a line to our camp cutting the lake 5 miles more N.N.E. This lake is about three miles broad and indeed the river so far resembles a long lake little or no current and 3/4 miles wide plenty of partridges, geese, and Duck and some deer meat of the Indians all clay country mountainous one Horse gave out and left him a good lodge made of Branches of Pine had almost made me forget that it had snowed and rained all day ourselves and goods were wet through we had no human comfort except meat enough to eat and good.

1st April E. 2, N 3, E by S. 3, and found that from this spot the place where I entered on the lake bore S.W.N. by E. 2, E. by S. 5 N. 3 and made the traverse of a large peninsular at one mile E. by N. struck the head of a creek which after 3 miles more led us back to the Lake at the entrance into it of the River Tete Plate. [Clark Fork] This Lake is a large and fine sheet of water it appears of a good depth There looks as if a large river entered on the S. side at the east end it is widest and there are two Islands it is surrounded by lofty and now snowy Mts. but their summits are timbered yesterday saw nothing but Granite today saw Slate and Sandstone not the least volcanic appearance in this part of the Country.

2nd Made E.S.E. 6 miles through a difficult swamp over a hill and to the main river again during which time we passed two small streams this swamp had the largest cedars apparently the same as those of the N.E. that I have ever seen I measured one at my height from the ground of 31 feet circumference and I presume some were larger no rocks to day but sandstone and slate camped

on acc. of my horses having had no feed lately the slate is tortuitous and I think mica slate here my Indian brought me in some onions and two kinds of trout some of the trout I have bought of the Indians as large as 10 lbs. they are plenty and taken with the hook there are plenty of ducks and ge[e]se the Ducks are the [same] as the tame ducks of N.E.

3d 10 mils almost due E. cutting a mountain and through almost impenetrable wo[o]d and deep snow much trouble and delay to keep the trail from the mountain 4 mils from last nights camp saw our last camp on this Lake which bore W. by N. to night we camped without grass but could not go further some of the horses strayed in the trail behind

4th Started our Indian early to find the strayed horses and started camp ahead 9 mils E. following the river the whole way altho the trail cuts off the point and encamped where the trail again strikes the river at this place there is a considerable [Bull River] coming from the E. by N. into the river here for the first time since reaching Walla Walla I saw fresh Beaver sign the Indian has not yet come up with the horses and little feed for those we have with us to day saw a small sized Bear but he was off to soon for a shot

5th 12 mils E.S.E. through deep snow and thick wood most of the way sometimes miry sometimes slippery with ice and always obstructed by the great quantity of fallen wood Last night late the Indian brought up all the lost horses

6th 9 mils E.S.E. trail better slate rock only Camped on the river last night in the mountains. Yesterday two horses gave out left a man to keep them and bring them up if possible to day one gave out which I will leave at this camp for same man

7th Arrived at the Flathead post kept by Mr. Rivi [Louis Rivet?] and one man after a ride of 17 mils E.S.E. through thick wood not very good trail and a snow storm which loaded the pines in such a manner as to bend them down to the ground frequently loading me with the snow as passing I disturbed the branches trees loaded down in this way and frozen so as to be firm constitute much of the difficulty of the route from Flathead or Ponderay Lake to this place want of grass at this time of the year the residue with some mire rock mica slate this place is situated on a fine prairie 2 mils long 1 wide and seems pleasant after coming through thick woods and mountains counting my horses found 32 of 47 with which I started but think I shall recover all but one left on the Lake having sent men and Indians in search of them Mr. E. came in the boats in 5 days I have now news by four Indians who came in on the 6th on foot the Nez Perces have lost all but 4 horses of their band of about 500 stolen by the Blackfeet The Flatheads expected in about 15 days on the 11th started out to see if there were many beaver in the country with intention of staying 12 days but was recalled by the arrival of the buffaloe Indians found few beaver and the country can only be trapped on foot plenty of pa[r]tridges to be found in this country arrived again at the post on tho 17th of April my route was back on the Flathead River.

18th to 20th remained at the post having now found all my horses started camp 2 miles East up the river and to the upper end of the prairie on which the house is built at this place is a large

creek coming from the N. [Thompson River]

21th rained hard last night and from the 17th to this day have had one or more slight showers each day the plain is now good grass we are much annoyed by the dogs of the Indian village which are numerous they eat all our cords and fur flesh they can get at in the night this is always a great trouble while travelling with Indians until you get to Buffaloe where they find better food for three nights no frost This valley is the most romantic place imaginable a level plain of two miles long by 1 wide on the N a range of rocky and snow clad Mts. on the S. the Flathead river a rapid current and plenty of good fishing running at the immediate base of another lofty Snowy and Rocky range of Mts. Above and below the vally the mountains of each range close upon the river so as apparently to afford no outlet either way about 200 horses feeding on the green plain and perhaps 15 Indian Lodges and numerous barking dogs with now and then a half breed on horse-back galloping gracefully with plenty of gingling bells attached to all parts of himself and horse it is really a scene for a poet nought but man is wanting to complete it

22nd Moved 8 miles E.N.E. along the river at 6 miles passed a very bad rock called le Roche Mauvais the mountains as yet closely follow the river on both sides but seem declining in height as we stopped early we spent the rest of the day in preparing to prevent the Blackfoot from stealing our horses they have never but once passed the bad rock and then the Flatheads gave them such a beating as keeps [them] since in better order they infest much the country we are now about entering

23d Moved 8 miles E.N.E. to Horse plain thence N.E. 5 miles cutting a hill and leaving the River which we had heretofore followed descending the Mts E.N.E. 6 miles to a large open valley in the hills with little timber and much grass opposite to our Camp is a mountain where 200 Flatheads Conterays [Kootenais] Ponderays and other Inds. were killed by the Blackfoot Inds. During the first part of the last division of the days march passed a small lake with many waterfowl and one sand hill crane. We are now fairly in the dangerous Country through Horse plain and into the R Flathead is a small brook to day 2 Indians arrived from the main Flathead Camp at Porte D'enfer [Hell Gate] with news that the Blackfoot have made 2 hauls of horses from them the Flathead Camp consists of men of various tribes

24 moved E. by S. down the valley to Flathead river then 4 miles E. following the river then Forded it and made 3 miles E. by N. and encamped on it at a place where last year a man by the name of La Couse was [killed] by the Blackfoot Inds. the river is not now high when so it is not fordable and is here a good sized stream the salts here whiten in the ground and the animals are almost crazy after it which makes them bad to drive the morning was sultry and I travelled without my coat but in the afternoon we had a fine shower with some thunder of good quality the valley we left today abounds with the finest Kamas I have yet seen as provisions are scarce in camp the women dug much of it

25th Moved Camp up the main river 12 miles E 12 N. then up a large but fordable branch 3 miles E. by S. trail fine grass good weather beautiful no frost for three nights the Climate appears

much as at Baltimore at this season

26th made E. along the creek last named 5 miles then crossed and followed it 4 miles S.E. then recrossed it and followed it E.S.E. 3 miles crossing a small branch then 2 miles recrossing the main creek again then followed 1 mile E S.E. and recrossed it and followed a small branch of it S.E. 1 mile crossed the branch and followed it 2 miles S.E. to Camp clear except 1 shower but only comfortably warm Country hilly but open E. lay a heavy pile of snowy Mts. 5 miles distant apparently running N. & S. the rocks for a few days have been Sandstone mica slate this day saw a white bear which we surrounded to kill but he broke through and escaped earth in some places whitened with salt which makes the horses bad to drive horses getting fat grass good as also the bottom lands which are tolerably extensive

27th Remained at same camp snowed a little this day the Indians went hunting and got one Deer

28th Abbot brought in one Beaver started Camp 2 miles S.E. 2 S.S.E. 2 S. 4 S. by W. thus far through woods and a defile crossing the divide between the creek which we were on and another going to that branch of the Flathead river to [which] we came this day. then into open plains snowy mts on each side 3 miles S.S.E. then 5 miles S E by E crossing two slews of the Flathead river and Camped on a third and large one which we shall be obliged to raft over I judge it twice as large as the one we crossed some days since the river here runs S.W. a little snow today quarrelled and parted with my man Woodman he appeared to think that as I had but two he might take liberties under such circumstances I will never yield an inch I paid him half as I conceive he had gone half the route with me here we met some Indians from the great Camp which they say is a moderate Camp distant

29th Forgot to mention in proper place that I saw Plumb trees at the place we left W. branch of the Flathead river these are said to be good about [one] inch through ripe in Sept. and found nowhere else but at this place I tried hard to get some stones but could not Moved this day S.S.W. we crossed by fording contrary to expectation by loading high and taking high horses at 8 miles struck another branch of same river as large as those already passed at 4 miles further a creek from opposite side ford tolerably good at 20 miles came to main Camp of 110 Lodges Containing upward of 1000 souls with all of which I had to shake hands the Custom in meeting these Indians is for the Coming party to fire their arms then the other does the same then dismount and form single file both sides and passing each other shake hands with men women and children a tedious job buffaloes have come here and even further but they are killed at once and do not get wanted here the racine amani or Spetulum [bitterroot] is found this Camp is on the river good grass river direct S.S.W. six nights since the Blackfoot stole horses from this Camp here I found three Canadians one of whom was one who came to us the night before we were fired on on the heads of the Spanish River this days march between two parallel ranges of Mts now Snowy but I think not always so there is much kamas in this region we find little meat in the Indian Camp and are therefore much shorted for food

30th went out to collect some flowers for friend Nuttall afterwards to see the Camp fine 120

lodges of us today some having arrived they are collecting to go to the Buffaloe in force to meet the Blackfeet looked at their games one is played by two men at a time a level place is made on the ground about 15 feet long by 3 feet wide with a small log of wood at each end to stop a small iron ring with one of them rools from one end of the ally to the other both following it each having an arrow which they endeavor to throw after and under it so that when stopped it will rest on one of them the one on whose arrow it is wins at least this is all I understand of the game the game is kept by a third by means of placing sticks on one side or the other another feat much in practice from the smallest to the largest in Camp is two with some arrows throw them so as to go as near the first thrown as possible advancing continually untill all are expended then throwing them back again in same manner another game is two or more opposite the one side having some small article in their hand keep changing it from one hand to the other as swift as possible accompanied by a tune and motion of body and limbs except feet (for they sit all the time) the get is for the other party to designate the hand in which it rema[i]ns at the last this is the most practised game and requires much dexterity on both sides it is kept with sticks as the first every morning some important indian addresses either heaven or his countrymen or both I believe exhorting the one to good conduct to each other and to the strangers among them and the other to bestow its blessings he finishes with "I am done[" the whole set up an exclamation in concord during the whole time Sunday there is more parade of prayer as above nothing is done Sunday in the way of trade with these Indians nor in playing games and they seldom fish or kill game or raise camp while prayers are being said on week days everyone ceases whatever vocation he is about if on horseback he dismounts and holds his horse on the spot until all is done Theft is a thing almost unknown among them and is punished by flogging as I am told but have never known an instance of theft among them the least thing even to a bead or pin is brought you if found and things that we throw away this is sometimes troublesome I have never seen an Indian get in anger with each other or strangers. I think you would find among 20 whites as many scoundrels as among 1000 of these Indians they have a mild playful laughing disposition and their qualities are strongly portrayed in their countenances. They are polite and unobtrusive and however poor never beg except as pay for services and in this way they are moderate and faithful but not industrious. they are very brave and fight the blackfeet who continually steal their horses and kill their straglers with great success beating hollow equal numbers They wear as little clothing as the weather will permit sometimes nothing on except a little thing to cover the privates and sometimes but rare this is omitted at play but not when there are women and allways at a race the women are closely covered and chaste never cohabiting promiscuously with the men the pox is not much and perhaps never known among them it dies here of itself when brought from the coast where it is rife the young women are good looking and with dress and cleanliness would be lovely today about 100 of them with their root diggers in their hands in single file went out to get roots they staid about two hours and returned in the same order each time passing the chiefs lodge it was evidently a ceremony but the import I could not learn in a lodge or other place when one speaks the rest pay strict attention When he is done another assents by "yes" or dissents by "no" and then states his reasons which are heard as attentively it is a practice when a woman has her courses to make a little lodge outside her husbands lodge and there remain until they are finished. The more peaceable dispositions of the Indians than the whites is plainly seen in the children I have never heard an angry word among them nor any quarrelling altho there are here at least 500 of them together

and at play the whole time at foot ball bandy and the like sports which give occasion to so many quarrells among white children

May 1st. Same camp the day reminds me of home and its customs it is a fine and almost summer day altho the nights have been frosty of late but the days are warm This morning the squaws left camp with their root diggers singing in good accord the tunes of their country Yesterd[ay] Mr. Ermatinger traded 29 beavers I find an Indian Camp a place of much novelty the Indians appear to enjoy their amusements with more zest than the whites altho they are simple they are great gamblers in proportion to their means bolder than the whites

2nd Moved Camp 2 miles S.E. by E. 4 miles S by E. over a hilly but open country and diverging a little from the main river to the Eastward and Camped on a small river going to the same river the two parallel ranges of Mts still continue on either side of the river It rained a little of the last night and some this morning the day is cloudy and moderately warm The absence of quarrells in an Indian Camp more and more surprises me when I come and see the various occasions which would give rise to them among the whites the crowding together of from 12 to 1800 horses which have to be driven into Camp at night to stake in mng. to load the starting of horses and turning of loads the seizing of fuel when scarce, often the case, the play of men and Boys &c. At the Camp yesterday saw the bones of a buffalo bull not old being the first sign of buffaloe yet seen.

3d. Same Camp.

4th Same Camp To day heard a sound like a heavy piece of ordonance and I suppose arising from the fall of some mighty fragment of rock from the mountains The sound seemed to come from the N. I suppose the sound heard in the Snake country arose from the same cause altho then no heavy mountains were in sight but there were cut rocks enough weather somewhat smokey but warm and clear A party of hunters who proposed to out for beaver deferred the thing on acc. of the water being too high to set a trap. A Thunder storm in the afternoon with high wind from the S.W. and Rain.

5th. Sunday according to our reconing there is a new great man no[w] getting up in the Camp and like the rest of the wrld covers his designs under the great cloak religion his followers are now dancing to their own vocal music in the plain perhaps 1-5 of the Camp follow him when he gets enough followers he will branch off and be an independent chief he is getting up some new form of religion among the Indians more simple than himself like others of his class he works with the fools women and children first while he is doing this the men of sense thinking it too foolish to do harm stand by and laugh but they will soon find that women fools and children form so large a majority that with a bad grace they will have to yield. These things make me think of the new lights and revivals of New England rains a little today

6th. Bright and clear found all of my horses three of which had been missing Moved 4 mils S. and encamped on a creek of the main river about 1 1/2 mils from the latter

7th. Same Camp cloudy all night and today but warm

8th. Same Camp last night had a false alarm Some Inds. of the camp who were gambling for a gun discharged it before laying [it] on the stakes This though a common occurrence gave the horses a fright and one frightens another in those cases until all are alarmed the running of those that have got loose the snorting stamping and rearing of those who cannot when there are at least 1500 the Howling of dogs men running with guns the contrast of firelights with the darkness of the night make altogether a scene of confusion to be recollected This day hunters went out 2 only one returned sun two hours high with one antelope the other at night with 4 To day a small boy broke his arm but as I understood that the Indians reduce fractures well and as I am quite ignorant I did not meddle with it

9th. Moved S. by E 6 miles and camped on the main river on the march saw two blackfeet who ran with all the speed of their horses to the mountains a little rain but warm high wind and somewhat dusty The rain does not seem to lay the dust in the least The country covered for the first time with sage and so far the same kind of minerals as near the Ponderay Lake This afternoon came to us a Snake a Nez Perce and a Flat head on foot they came from Salmon River and bring no news except that the Nez Perce Camp is at Salmon river and that they are mostly without horses

10th Moved 7 miles E. by E. rained a little shower but clear in the afternoon. This morning Chief Guineo is saying the usual afternoon prayers I observe that he first makes a long one which is responded to by the usual note in accord then a short one followed by the same note on horse back the whole time walking about the Camp hat on in an audible voice and directed as though addressing the men below rather than "him" above To day 11 Flatheads started on foot to steal horses from the Blackfeet

11th Started out early hunting for the first time this trip We are now short of provisions. The Camp moved 10 miles S. by E. and camped on the river the wide bottom of which is done it is now jammed in between the hills during this distance passed two small creeks big enough for beaver only saw four antelope killed nothing saw two olive green snakes about 2 1/2 feet long blunt tail but slender afternoon clear and warm

12th Being Sunday remained at same Camp the hills here are of Granite with large bed of quartz. Mica slate is common Gneiss also in some places the same rock as at Kettle falls observed in one place a black mineral like that found at Franconia [in New Hampshire], covering iron ore it looks like horse hair in a mass combed straight the hills are now well covered with grass the river is now at its highest but is fordable this morning long prayers in form as usual at some lodges the Inds. are singing as an act of devotion

13th Went out hunting killed one N.E. partridge only saw 4 cubs 4 deer Camp moved 6 miles S.S.E. and camped on the W. side we approach the head of this river fast

14th. remained at same Camp snow and sleet all day An Indian died in camp to day but I do not

think the Camp was delayed on this account it was a bad day which I think the reason his friends now singing over him according to their custom

15th made 6 miles S.S.E. and crossed the river and camped on a little creek crossing wo on the W. side all too small at low water for beaver. snowed last night and until 8 this mng. altho as much as 4 inches of snow has fallen it is at 11 oclock all gone except the hills which are white grass good Granite country and fertile in the bottoms and on the hills and mountain sides

16th made 9 mils S.E. following a creek of the main river about 1/3 the size of the same this we crossed 6 times during the day this morning 4 inches snow which fell during the night but all gone at 9 ock fair at 4 in afternoon this day finishes all our provisions in above distance river crooked.

17th. 2 miles S.E. 3 E and cutting a high mountain 1 mile S by E. and struck the river again in a large and fertile plain here crossed the main branch of it and followed 2 miles a creek running S by E at the place where we left the river it receives a small creek from the S and where we struck it again another quite small from the N. The main branch appears to run about E. from the plain when arrived at Camp finding no meat I took my traps out to catch beaver when returning saw the squaw bringing in moss and roots when I came in found the hunters had come it with one bear one Elk and several deer and 5 beaver this makes a timely supply Indians are gone ahead to see the mountain is passable This mountain divides us from the heads of the Missouri.

18th 2 miles up the creek S. by E. then assending the mountain S.E. 2 more S by E down the mountain and struck a little thread of water which during 28 mils increased gradually to a little river and S.E. to another coming from the S. and both go off together N. this is one of the heads of the Missouri we crossed it and camped here we found both Bulls and cows which makes all merry this pass is good going when there is no snow now there was about one foot in places drifted more we took 8 hours to pass there is a visible change in the appearance vegetation is not so forward the trees appear stunted and small the land poorer and covered with Sedge the other side there is little on the W. side all is granite as soon as I passed the divide I saw Pudding Stone we had showers of snow and rain this day but this I believe is constant in this region at this time of the year the Mt. is much higher the W. than the E. side This I observed also at the Trois Tetons The grass is poor and has started but little the prairie in some places has snow The vally runs N. and S. and is bounded E. and W. by a range of Mts. this day my horse keeper left me taking an offence at some misinterpretation about a horse. The 16th Woodman came to camp from his hunt for a beaver tired and famished having eated nothing for three days

19th Same Camp snowed by fits most of the day being Sunday the medicine chief had devotional exercises with his followers he formed them into a ring men women and children and after an address they danced to a tune in dancing the[y] keep the feet in the same position the whole time merly jumping up to the tune keeping the hands in front of them at intervals he addressed them at night Blackfeet were seen prowling about the camp at least so the Indians say erected myself a lodge for the first time in the country and paid a treat of rum &c to the whites in Camp and some

of the principal Indians to wet the same as it is called.

20th. Snowing hard in the morning one horse so lame that if we move Camp to day he will remain for the Blackfoot or wolves. Much the same. Started at half past 12 found the horse could be drove a little got him along about four miles shall return for him to morrow this day 9 miles E.S.E. over a level plain of rich deep soil wet and miry in the extreme saw our Indians running buffaloe ahead At 5 mile crossed a little brook running N by E and camped on a considerable creek running N. by E. and all falling in to the same as the creek we left At about the junction it doubles round a point of mountains and apparently takes a northeastwardly course rain snow and sunshine as usual today. 4 hunters left us to day to hunt beaver in the Blackfoot country, Pellew, Charloi, Narbesse, [Louis] Rivey.

21st. Same Camp sent back and brought the lame horse into Camp Went out to the mountain to cut log poles found a Blackfoot lodge recently occupied snow as usual saw the Indians cooking a root resembling the yellow dock, but not so yellow tasted like parsnip raw, informed by them that it is bad before being cooked suppose it is more or less poisonous

22nd Same camp Blue Devils all Day Turned in

23rd 6 miles S.S.E. and up the valley 3 S E by S. 3 S.E. This valley is all good land about four miles wide and perhaps 50 long and how much further it goes N. I cannot say. Went out to hunt buffaloe killed one Elk out of a large band mountains with snow each side of valley snowed a little as usual

24th A double portion of the usual weather viz. rain Hail snow wind rain and Thunder into the bargain we are so near where they make weather that they send it as if cost nothing Course S.E. 6 miles up the creek then by N.E. 3 cutting a height of land but low and perfectly good going to the head of another river running SE. down this two miles and camped hunted today killed one cow saw some hundreds

25th Followed the creek 5 miles S.S.E. then it turned round a point more eastwardly We continued same course 4 mils and struck a creek going into the same about 2 mils below the point spoken of rain snow & Hail today with sunshine grass better to day had a long ride before sunrise after the lame horse which I brought to Camp.

26th Same Camp A blackfoot Trail discovered in our vicinity a numerous camp of them better weather than usual to day Sunday according to our reconing. At night one of two Indians who started on an express to the Nez Perces Camp returned with three blankets one white shirt and tobacco and powder which articles they found buried with a Blackfoot Indian who was unscalped two bullets through his head and one through his body We apprehend that there has been a battle between the Blackfoot Indians and perhaps the whites.

27th 17 mils S. crossing two small forks of the Missouri and camping on the third of small size

near Camp found a red blanket Hat and some small articles but no body. soon after Camp arrived one Indian with news and soon after 2 more and three squaws comprising the only survivor of the battle which happened thus 21 Nez Perces 18 Flathead and two Iroquois and 1 Ponderai started with intent to steal horses from the Blackfeet near the head of Salmon River they saw 4 and some horses these they attacked just at this moment a horse threw one of the Flatheads he seized on one of the horses of the Blackfeet and ran after him up a mountain he looked back and saw a large number of Blackfeet killing his companions not one survived but himself he made the best of his way to the Nez Perce camp to tell the sad tale to the wives and children of the dead

in this Camp [where] the relatives of the deceased Flathead are there is weeping and wailing. Fair all day and comfortably warm. there were 46 lodges of the Blackfoot do not know if women were with it or not if not it is a much larger Camp than ours, the blankets &c found are accounted for in the practice that the Blkft. have of cutting a piece of flesh from near the shoulder tying it to an article and throwing it away to propitiate the Deity the circumstances of the flesh being tied with them I did not at first know.

28th Moved S. 8 miles following the left branch of the creek which forks at our last nights camp then S.S.W. 4 miles and camped on the same creek a little rain just after we came to camp a band of Buffaloe passed the camp which gave a fine chance to the Indians to run them one of them they chased into camp and then killed her a fine cow.

29th Moved S. by E. 6 miles cutting the divide of waters and struck a small creek going into Salmon river then 7 miles S by E. following the creek through high hills of lime rock on which we found plenty of sheep some of which were killed then 3 miles S.W. and struck Salmon River here a small creek running through a fine open plain valley about 6 miles wide and extending each way as far as the eye could reach the river runs here about W. by N. On the S. side is a high range of snowy mountains perhaps not covered the whole year this range is parrallel with the river. the country I should call for two days back volcanic flints are found in abundance some of the stones have a white crust on the outside of them whether of lime or Epsom salts can not say both abound the lime rock is mostly slate blue but is found in layers of all shades from white to deep blue and very much contorted and forming frequent caves and holes. It is the intention of the chiefs to remain at this camp until the Nez Perces come to us and then to move together. This morning left my wounded horse.

30th. Same Camp rained all last night and all day Went up into the mountains to hunt sheep wounded one but a snow storm coming on his trail was covered and I lost him Saw plenty it is surprising to view the places where they go no one would imagine it possible for an animal to climb the rocks they do Got nothing and hearing a firing hasted to the top of a hill to see if the Camp was attacked but found that the Nez Perces had arrived with 9 whites a Mr. Hodgskins [Hodgkiss] at their head. This party is 16 lodges and only escaped the Blkft. by the latter falling in with 31 Indians 30 of whom they killed I t is supposed the 30 killed about 50 of the Blkft. They mustered about 700 all men and were sufficient to cut off all our Camps if they would trade man for man.

31st Got news that 20 lodges of Blkft. are now camped at our camp of 21st Inst. and I think likely that these are the same who killed the 30 Indians and as usual 10 times over rated. This day moved 7 miles S.E. up the river and following a small creek near our camp of last night a creek comes in from the S. one which we followed coming from N.W. this one fro[m] the S.S.E. the main river S.E went into the mts. saw antelope killed nothing in the mountains heavy thunder with snow and hail storm and high wind.

June 1st Same Camp some snow on Mts. got wet.

2nd 17 miles S . E. 1 E. by N . through an open plain nearly level finished the streams of Salmon river and struck one called little Goddin it terminates near the three butes in a little lake here goes S.E. through the valley the mts. appear terminating on both sides a fair day the S. range comprises much more of a stone which I will call quartz the same as is found at Kettle falls there is also lime stone Blue and without organic remains.

3d 15 miles S.E. through the same vally gradually decending the stream became a rapid and pretty large one as large as some that pass 300 miles We camped at a narrow pass formed of low hills here is between the hills a slough of clay saturated with Epsom salts the hills are of Basaltic rock in collumns the first I have seen in this region lime rock is found here in pudding rock Killed plenty of Buffaloe here

4th. Moved through the valley following the river called as I am informed little Goddin in a S.E. by E. 6 miles during which space I found the lower hills of Basalt the mts. are of lime rock the same as passed hertofo[r] Wind high N.W. which brings warm weather here and clear grass very bad.

5th. Clear warm day moved S.E. by E. 8 miles went in search of Buffaloe found none Saw an old Blkft. Camp of 65 fires half as large as our present camp Saw several whirlwinds which raised the dust at a distance and appears much like smoke. Saw the three Butes come in sight one by one and then the Trois Tetons The Butes S.E. by S. 20 mils distant about so far this river rapid and little brush and no beaver grass worse and worse.

6th. Same Camp last night arrived 3 Kootenays with 25 beaver who left us on Flathead river being on foot the whole time last night sent out Indians to see in what direction were the most Buffaloe one came back this mng. reports cows to the S.

7th Moved E.N.E. 15 miles and without water the whole route the Trois Tetons bearing E. perhaps 90 miles distant over a level and dry plain without grass or extremely little in the afternoon had a gale from the S.W. which blew down the lodges accompanied with a little rain and enough dust to suffocate one on our left there is a range of high hills from which come numerous streams but they sink in the plain and are warm and muddy went out this evening to bring in the meat of a cow killed in the forenoon and found a horse extremely fat it is surprising how fat a horse gets by

being left to himself no grooming that I have ever seen will make a horse appear as beautiful as to be left to his own resources the Butes bear due S.

8th 5 miles N. following the same creek up which grows larger as we ascend had a fine rain & Hail and Thunder today which is Sunday. Water very muddy grass little and but a little.

9th. 10 miles N. and following the creek has some tolerable wild cotton wood and willow on it wind N. clear and windy country same Three Nez Perces arrived at camp Bring news that Payette is with four Nez Perce Chiefs. Capt Serrey [Michel Cerre] with 7 is detained by snow that the Blackfeet village is camped at the spot where we met the Nez Perces. We find that Payette will meet us at the forks Capt Serrey has got 31 horses this day a bull was run into camp which I shot at my lodge door To day an Indian was running bulls he turned the horse stopped and threw him the bull gored him into his chest so that his breath was made through the appature by the help of the women he reached camp. When Mr. Ermatinger dressed his wound he very composedly made his will by word of mouth the Indians responding in concord at the end of each sentence. He appeared not in the least intimidated by the approach of death. I think the Indians die better than the whites perhaps they have less superstition in regard to the future and argue that as the deity makes them happy here he will also hereafter if there is existence for them.

10th. Same camp another Indian came to camp who had been looking out for the Blkft. He was ambuscaded by two of them and narrowly escaped by the goodness of his horse being wounded slightly in the nose.

11th Same camp fresh news of the Blkft. Made horse pen that my horses might be safe. I do not apprehend any serious attack but only that they will come suddenly with a great noise of voices and guns and fright the horses on such occasions horses become wild one frights another they run over the lodges this increases the confusion and the yelling firing and running & snorting of 1200 Indians and 1800 horses is frightfull indeed. Sometimes a camp with as many horses as the above loose every one it is commonly whole or none. Day warm, clear fresh wind W.

12th. Same camp warm day The Blackft camp about 15 mils from this they are very numerous.

13th. Same camp cloudy and cool with high wind from S. E. Blakft. still near but have attempted nothing yet. Child died in camp yesterday remains to bury today. Find I have missed one day in my journal which has been done while laying at some camp and accordingly date tomorrow the 15th.

15th Last night some Blackfoot fired into our camp a ball passed through a lodge some straggler disappointed of stealing horses I suppose. Moved N.N.E. 5 miles and camped on a creek now almost dry and soon will be wholly. There is little but cotton wood on this creek.

16th. 8 miles N.E. by N. to a small creek which about a mile below this joins another larger one. Country nearly level day windy S.W. wind cool and cloudy Trois Tetons bear E.S.E. Today saw the

Indians carrying the man who was wounded by a Buffaloe no one could receive more attention, one person to carry water he was on a good bed made on poles the front of which like shafts were carried by a horse led by his wife the hinder part by 6 men and women on their shoulders the camp moved slower than usual for him these things give a favorable impression of the Indians.

17th. Same camp rained very hard all last night and until noon of today an alarm of Blkft last night but I believe little of these things in so large a camp when it is known that there are Blkft. near a man straying out of camp is enough to give rise to a report and a report once raised it gathers like a snow ball.

18th. Same camp Severe hail & snow yesterday afternoon and rain most of last night and until noon today. Camp about out of provisions so we are in hopes of moving soon. Nothing but necessity and that immediate will induce an Indian to do the least thing, any excuse serves to stop business with them and a small party of whites who are not strong enough to move alone will find in traveling with them occasion for all the patience they may have.

19th. 1 1/2 miles to the main river here going S.W. this we found quite deep enough to ford for horses the mules I was obliged to unload and put the loads on the horses 3 miles more passed

three slews of our stream joining the last river mentioned. 3 miles more camped on another branch of it making 10 1/2 miles N.E. by E. day clear snow in patches in shaded places but the country green with herbage and mostly in blossom. All rocks for some days past volcanic. This stream loses itself in the plain.

20th. Moved 11 miles E. by N. and camped on Kamas River so called from the abundance of that root in some spots it is so abundant as to exclude other vegetation. This Prairie is very extensive perhaps 15 miles each way and is intersected by numerous little streams which form one going to the S. and ends in a small lake on the plain between this and Lewis river day clear & cool frost last night snow on all the high hills Trois Tetons bear E.S.E. I should think about 80 miles distant found Buffaloe here the first for 10 days when we found the last I think at least 100 were killed in one day 42 tongues were given to Mr. E. and myself.

21st. Late last night arrived 5 hunters Pillew, Nasben, and Churboye and two Indians who left us on the head of the Missouri having seen plenty of recent sign of the Blkfeet but happily saw none they killed 94 Beaver. Today went out to hunt killed one Bull. forenoon showers and lowery Kamas in bloom the Indians are taking large quantities of it this plain is extensive but about 7 miles across of it only is rich and that is as good as any land I ever saw the main plain is much of it bare rock the surface of which looks like a pan of milk when you push together the cream evidently it was once a fiery and fluid plain or lake of lava, probably the whole plain between these mountains and the Trois Tetons the rock is porous like honey comb the surface shows plainly the heads of Basaltic colums and in some places the colums stand not perpendicular but at an angle of 50 degrees about, same camp.

22nd. Same camp arrived this mng. an express from Bonneville this express came from the forks in three days they saw Blkft. by the way this afternoon Mr. Hodge [Hodgkiss] left to go to Bonneville day clear and warm Buffaloe were run into camp.

23rd. Sunday Indians singing and dancing as usual day warm and clear. These Inds. do nothing on Sunday.

24th. Moved across the plain 3 miles N.E. Day warm and clear.

25th Yesterday at night some Inds. came in from hunting Buffaloe reported that they saw two Blkft. and fired on them at night we saw their fire in the Mts. Same camp fine clear warm day employed in making a saddle.

26th. Same camp went out hunting saw a few Buffaloe but killed nothing but a grouse as I had some dispute with Mr. David Douglass about the grouse of this country I subjoin a discription; the bird had 10 pointed drab colored, mottled with white. tail feathers the outer edge of the feathers are only mottled until you approach their end when both sides are mottled under the tail are 10 or 12 dark brown feathers 2/3 as long as the tail feathers white at the termination. The tail feathers are about 8 inches long. The wing feathers are nearly white underneath and dark drab outside. From the head of the breast bone to the tail are many black feathers above the breast and nearly on the neck is a place devoid of feathers of a dirty olive color each side and a little below this is a tuft of short sharp pointed dirty white feathers they look as if they had been clipped with a shears. The tail feathers look as though they had been burnt off leaving the stalk of the quill projecting. The bill is short and curved downwards above the bare spot on the neck are short mottled feathers cream, white and black. It is feathered to the toes which are three and a small one behind. The hinder part of the leg is not feathered from the knee downwards Tow nails short and obscure. its back pretty uniformly mottled with deep brown dirty white approaching dirty yellow and dun colored weight 4 1/2 lbs. Length from point of tail feathers to tip of bill 25 inches from tips of wings 3 1/2 ft. We were regaled by thunder shower on our return to camp saw Blkft. trail and a cow recently killed by them.

27th. Same camp nothing remarkable.

28th. Same camp nothing but lice and dirt. Cool today.

29th. Same camp as yesterday went out to hunt killed one Buffaloe which fell into the river and had to butcher him up to my middle in cold water. Some hunters who went out today came in with the news that they had seen the Blkft. camp on Tobacco river one of the heads of the of the Missouri they say it is larger than ours.

30th Same camp Sunday Indians praying, dancing & singing.

1st July. Moved S. 12 miles S. and down the creek clear moderately warm day the first for three

days nights have been frosty ice made in our pots & pails. Men came from Bonneville in the evening.

2nd. Moved S. 12 miles and camped on same creek on the way observed some fine luxuriant clover grass good about 9 miles down the creek which rapidly increases in size from numerous springs which are of fine cold water we camped in a cluster of large cotton wood large for this place about 10 inches through.

3rd. Last night a Bear made his way into camp among the horses and gave a considerable alarm but was off before guns could be got out. Today moved 16 miles S.S.W. and camped on same creek with Mr. Bonneville with about 40 men bound for Green river. I have heretofore forgot to mention that at our camp of 1st July we left about 40 lodges of the Flatheads country this days route dry and barren day warm.

4th. Same camp at night saw a band of Blackfeet a little above camp clear warm day.

5th Same camp.

6th Same camp very warm weather.

7th. This morning our camp forked in three directions Mr. Hodgkin for a trapping excursion with the Nez Percés, Mr. Ermatinger with the Ponderays to go to Flathead river, ourselves East 18 miles to Henrys fork here wooded with narrow leafed cotton wood our route over a very dry plain passing at about half the distance some low hills of pure sand with not the least appearance of vegetation. The party is 26 all told.

8th. Followed up the river where we were much annoyed by mosquitos about 8 miles N.N.E. there forded it about belly deep going E. by S. 5 miles to a large river which must be Lewis fork here we found Buffalo these two rivers form a junction about 15 miles from this point as I believe near two butes but some say not until you get as low as Three Butes on this river are not many mosquitos.

9th Made this day 22 1/2 miles due East toward the Trois Tetons at 8 miles struck a small creek with cut rock banks running N.W. and to the river last crossed, which is not Lewis fork. At 20 miles cut a mountain which rises and is wooded to the S W. and diminishes to the plain to the N.E. We entered Pierre's Hole and camped on the N.W. side of it. Here we found Buffalo.

10th. Moved 12 miles S.E. crossing a difficult swamp and camped about 2 miles from the battle ground of last year with the Gros Ventres Day warm and a great quantity of grasshoppers for several days past so much so as to discolor the ground in many places.

11th. Started early and made 3 miles E.S.E. to the foot of the mountains then 8 miles E.S.E. to the summit then 6 miles E. to Lewis fork and 1 mile E. across it at the same place we crossed last

year found it very high for fording but succeeded at last. Wind strong N.W. clear and moderately warm. Horses troubled with horse flies on the mountains but not in this plain found buffalo in the bottom also mosquitoes The river is here much choked up with islands and heaps of drift wood and a great quantity of mud in coming over the mountains lost one mule and sent a man back for it he has not returned yet [at] sundown got a wet jacket in the river trying to find a ford. There is the trail of about 8 men who have passed through this defile before us as I think about 14 days they marked a name on the trees and we suppose that they are men of Dripps & Fontenelle. We as yet see no appearance of the Blkft. except very old forts and lodges. Lewis fork here runs S.E. about 9 miles then turns S.

12th. This morning my man came back having been out all night he found the mule at our last camp. Made this day 9 miles S.E. along the river then 3 miles E.S.E. to a small creek running into the river. At this place 9 men under Capt. Stevens were attacked by about 30 Blkft. a little later than this time last year and several of them killed. Mr. Bonneville informs me that when he passed last year in August their bones were laying about the valley. I am apprehensive that More, a sick man whom I left in charge of Stevens, must be one of them. 6 miles more over a hilly broken limestone country S.E. to a considerable fork of Lewis river this stream is strongly impregnated with sulphur. This camp is almost without grass. In the first place this morning we moved 3 miles and crossed a creek putting into the river. At our camp of to night there is a small branch joining the creek from the S.E.

13th. East 5 miles N.E. 1/2 mile through bad cut rocks on the N. side of the river there is also a trail on the S. side then 1/2 mile E. then 1/4 mile S.E. then following a left hand fork of the river a few rods N.E. crossed it and made E. 3 miles to the right hand fork again which we followed E. 2 miles then S.E. 4 miles to camp crossing it several times a good trail most of the way one horse of the Indians killed by falling from the cut rock trail down to the river in the first of the cut rocks there is a handsome cave rock lime & sand a few boulders of granite seen today as also on the E. side of the mountains of Pierres hole. The river which we followed this day is rapid and too deep below the branches to ford during the last of the route several small forks from each side.

14th. Made 9 miles S.E. to the height of land between this river and Green river then 5 miles S.S.E. to a creek running into Green river. there are good trails all the way and to the divide much timber The creek on which we camped last night just above the camp divided into three forks. We followed the most southwardly for awhile then mounted the hill on the left side of it. There has been for two days a high range of Mts. on our left about 10 miles distant apparently of sand stone and milestone these [trend] E.S.E. & N.N.W. and on the divide between this and Wind river also on our right there have been a range of Mts. of same composition about 15 miles distant. Both ranges have snow in patches Many alarms today but still no enemys killed plenty of Buffaloe.

15th. Made E.S.E. 12 miles to Green river and to Mr. Bonneville's fort day clear and fine. Found here collected Capt. Walker, Bonneville, Cerry, of one Co. Dripps & Fontenelle of the Am. Fur co. Mr. Campbell just from St. Louis, Mess. Fitzpatric, Gervais, Milton Sublette of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. and in all the Cos. about 300 whites and a small village of Snakes here I got letters

from home. During the last year among all the Cos there has been in all about 25 men killed two of my original party with them, viz Mr More & O'Neil.

16th. Same camp.

17th. Moved 10 miles down the river S.E. it is here a large and rapid stream and to be forded only in a few places. Here we were followed by the Snake village we encamped with the Rocky Mountain Fur Co.

18th to the 24 remained at the same camp during which time the weather was pleasant and warm for several nights we were annoyed by mad dogs or wolves which I cannot say but believe the latter as one was killed. I think one animal did the whole mischief as when men were bitten at one camp none were at the other about nine persons were bitten at Dripps & Fontenelles camp and three at ours. D. & Fs. camp is 4 miles above us on the same side of the river we hope he was not mad as no simtons have yet appeared.

24th. Moved E. 12 miles cutting a small divide came to a wide valley parallel with Wind river Mts. in which we crossed 3 large creeks and camped on the 4th. Which has much pine timber on it and is called Pine fork they all come into one quite soon by appearance and are not near as large as the main fork on which we first found the whites and which we have now crossed. In coming here it passed to our left that is up stream. Found plenty of Antelope and Bulls.

25th. Crossed the stream and moved E.S.E. 3 miles to a creek the same on which I made a cash last year and crossed at a good ford just below two stony hills then on 7 1/2 mile E.S.E. following a branch of the same creek and camped to noon. Buffaloe throwing the dust in the air in every direction and Antelope always in sight. This day a Mr. Worthington in running a bull fell from his horse, the Bull furious ran at the horse and passed him within 3 feet then turned again and passed him he having got up from the ground ran and escaped he killed the bull and found he had but one eye owing to which circumstance he escaped. Afternoon made S.E. 13 miles leaving the last creek of what is called New fork to which all the waters we have passed since leaving rendezvous belong the one we camped on last night heads in a lake about 1 1/2 miles over and not far from where we slept. We now struck the west fork of Sandy and camped at an old camp of last year at a place where Ball left his rifle Country covered with Buffaloe.

26th. Made S.E. 9 miles and camped on another fork of Sandy then S.E. by E. 15 miles to Sweet water all the country is granite from rendezvous so far Buffaloe quite plenty also Antelope Today shot a cow with a very young calf the calf ran after our mules for a long way until it found the difference.

27th. Made down the creek 1 1/2 miles E.S.E. then E. 8 miles to another branch of Sweet water then 6 miles E. by N. to another branch of same then down this branch S.E. 2 miles and camped. Saw one band of Elk and many Antelope plenty of Buffaloe.

28th. Made E. 2 miles to another Creek running S. by E. crossed made E. 6 miles E. by N. 4 miles at the creek a sort of slate prevailed but soon ran into a red sandstone passed at 11 miles a small pond to our right few Buffaloe today last night Capt. [William D.] Stewart had some sport with a bear near our camp in the willows which he wounded but did not kill He represented him as large as a mule. In the afternoon made E. by N. 6 miles to Sweet water river then N.E. 3 miles up it and camped. I came ahead and found a white bear in a thickett and after firing a pistol and throwing stones into it started him out he came as though he meant to fight us but I gave him the shot of my rifle through the body He then rushed on us and I ran as fast as I could Mr. Kamel [Campbell] snapped at him Mr Sublett ran also being on a mule the bear followed us no great distance and turned and ran up creek some horsemen followed and killed him after putting 4 more balls into him.

29th. Same camp, rained all day two men went out to hunt and at night one returned alone the other in the morning being still absent.

30th. Started out to hunt the man and in about 8 miles came to the place hunted the whole country and found nothing but a white bear the largest and the whitest I have yet seen run him about a mile and fired one shot but could not kill him. After a long ride returned to camp found the party had moved on followed them N.N.W. in 6 miles struck Popoise [Popo Agie] in a small rapid thread running through sandstone banks this we followed N. W. 3 miles then N. by E. 9 miles more thousands of Buffaloe in sight and the red bottom of the streams deep and muddy with recent rains and found camp a little after sundown. The afternoon of the 29th we found lime rock almost entirely today sand stone and a kind of glassy stone resembling Carnelian a course kind of which I think it is.

31st N.N.W. 8 miles through a muddy Bottom and little grass to some large willows found a party of 4 whites who have lost their horses and one of them wounded in the head with a Ball and in the body with an arrow very badly they suppose the Snakes did it but I think not. Little grass. In the afternoon moved N. 9 miles to the junction of Great Popoise river which comes from the S.W. then N. by E. 4 miles to the junction of Wind river which comes from the W. turning around as I suppose and running along Wind River Mountains which run N.W. Altogether they form a large and muddy river but fordable now which is after a heavy rain.

Aug. 1st. Same camp find Mr. Bonneville camped a few miles above us. On farther inquiry I changed my opinion expressed above in regard to the Indians who stole the horses I think they were 15 Snakes who left our camp at Green river a few days before we left that place. The case was this. Mr. Bridger sent 4 men to this river to look for us viz Mr. Smith, Thomson, [J.B.] Charboneau a half breed and Evans. Two days before it happened 15 Inds came to them and after smoking departed the second day after they were gone Thompson having been out hunting [tied] his horse to the others and thought he would sit down by them until it was time to water them and having been on guard much of the time previous fell asleep he was waked by a noise among the horses which he supposed to [be] his comrades come to water them raising his head and opening his eyes the first thing that presented itself to his sight was the muzzle of a gun in the

hands of an Indian it was immediately discharged and so near his head that the front piece of his cap alone saved his eyes from being put out by the powder the Ball entered the head outside of the eye and breaking the cheek bone passing downward and lodged behind the ear in the neck this stunned him and while insensible an arrow was shot into him on the top of the shoulder downward which entered about 6 inches, the Inds. got 7 horses all there were. Charboneau pursued them on foot but wet his gun in crossing a little stream and only snapped twice.

2nd. Found the river unfordable and ascended to west crossing Popoise & Wind river 5 miles up and made thence 20 miles N.E. by N. to a little creek going to Wind now on our right.

3rd. 11 miles N.N.E. to the summit of the mountains which are called little Wind River Mts. and run E. & W. then N. 5 miles to the river.

4th. 2 miles N. along the river to a clump of sweet cotton wood.

5th. 7 miles N. by W. to the River which between makes a considerable bend to the eastward camped in good grass and some large cotton wood trek this morning past beautiful camps afternoon N. by E. 12 miles 3 horses found this day and yesterday probably left by some party of Inds. who have passed this way saw the tracks of several more we think that when the Crows stole horses of the Snakes last winter they came this route and left their animals on account of giving out for want of food in the snow. Few Buffalo and those running indicates Indians near.

6th. N 10 miles to the River again to noon found little grass day cool afternoon 10 miles N.N.E. to the main river again. Since crossing the last Mts. we crossed a creek the second forenoon afternoon one yesterday 2 today 2 all small and I suppose sometimes dry

7th. 12 miles N.N.W and camped on Grey Bull River here I found a piece of about 5 lbs of Bituminous coal which burned freely It had in it some substance which I took to be Amber also an impression of wood It looked like and as good as Liverpool Coal. Its fracture was too perfect to have come far. 20 miles above and on the E. side comes in the River Travelled in afternoon 6 miles N.N.W. and again struck Wind river. Shell river comes in 3 miles below Grey Bull on the E. side and from the Mts. in the direction E. by N. Grey Bull is from the S.W. and much the largest stream on this side since Wind river. For three days have found no Buffalo and from the nature of the country think it is not often found in abundance along here except in the winter no antelope a few Elk and deer.

8th. W.N.W. 3 miles then 21 miles N.E. toward the right of two considerable Mts. where Wind river passes. We camped West of these hills on a river larger than Grey Bull called Stinking River coming from the S.W. This days travel was made between parrallel ridges of broken lime and sand rock some of it appeared cabined and much like fine caked salt. This day picked up some shell they are very numerous also found a round concretion which are found also on Cannon Ball River from which the name also a concretion of much the same substance but long pointed at one end with a core in the middle a hole at big end. During this space there was no water to our right

there is a range of Mts. running N.W. about 9 miles distant and the other side of Wind River.

9th. 10 miles N. striking a small stream of water This days travel and yesterday was over ground naked of vegetables in which the animals sank near six inches deep at every step perfectly dry and resembling, but of different color, lime in the operation of slacking full of holes down which the waters at the wet season sink the rock is sand and lime stone.

10th. N. 15 miles passing near but not exactly on the river and through rocky hills of no great height. The river here looks tranquil but flows between two perpendicular banks of stone of perhaps 5 to 800 feet high the chasm even at the top of no great width the rock of lime and sand this days march saw Plaster of Paris found for first time this year ripe Service berrys. Killed one mountain sheep which was all the meat killed this day for 48 men short commons. hard rains last night.

11 th. Went out hunting killed 2 Cows and 4 Bulls the camp made about a N. course at six miles crossed a small creek at 5 more another probably another branch of the same at 9 more a creek separate from the others but not large all these creeks have high perpendicular banks and are very bad to cross in the course of the day saw 4 Bears white. A fine grass country and a great many Buffaloe.

12th. 4 miles N.E. to Big Horn River this day went out to get Bull Hydres for boat got enough and employed the rest of the day in making a Boat this day followed down a little stream.

13th. Remained at same camp made a Bull Boat day fine.

14th. Same camp day fine.

15th. Made a start in our Bull Boat found it to answer the purpose well large enough runs well leaks a little made 3 miles N.E. stream rapid shoals at places 2 feet. Too much liquor to proceed therefore stopped.

16th. Made a start in our boat found travelling quite pleasant but requires much caution on account of some snags and bars. We frequently took one half of the river which dividing again gave too little water for our boat which draws 1 1/2 feet it is quite too much the [boat] ought to have been flatter We grounded about 6 times this forenoon it is surprising how hard a thump these bull Boats will stand ours is made of three skins is 18 feet long and about 5 1/2 wide sharp at both ends round bottom. Have seen on the banks of the river this forenoon 3 grisly bears and some Bulls in the river and on the banks they stare and wonder much the direction of this march was as near as I can judge N. by E. we went from 5 to 11 as I think about 6 miles per hour the indirection I suppose to be not more than 1/4. All feel badly today from a severe bout of drinking last night. Afternoon made 4 hours at a good 6 mile rate grounded three times saw a few elk and much Beaver sign all day there is here the best trapping that I have ever found on so large a river it is about 100 yards wide when all together but is much cut into slews which makes the navigation very dif-

ficult. The musquitoes have anoyed me much today they affect me almost as bad as a rattle snake this afternoons course about N.N.W. at 6 miles from our noon camp passed a place where we supposed the Little Horn River came in from the S.E. at least there is a considerable river at that place but it is difficult to tell a returning slew from a river this afternoon a severe thunderstorm which compelled us to put ashore until it was over

17th. This day the river made nearly a N. course and we made about 7 1/2 hours at the rate of about 6 miles the river winding about 1/4 of the distance we started at 5 ock. at about 9 ock. saw several persons ahead on the bank of the river which we at first supposed to be whites from the fort but soon found to be Crow Indians they informed us that the whole nation was behind we were anxious to avoid them but could not as the river afforded us no hiding place they showed us that they meant us to land very soon by stepping and swimming into the river seeing this we chose to land without further trouble in this way we were obliged to make the shore 6 times during the day we arrived at the Yellow Stone which was of clear water and did not mix with the waters of the Big Horn which was at this time dirty for some miles a bout 3 miles below the mouth of the Big Horn we found Fort Cass one of the Am. F. Co. at which post we traded about 10 packs of Beaver and 150 to 200 pack robes goods are brough[t] up in boats of about 15 tons burthen 2 of which are now laying here and one of them preparing to descend in two days we were treated with little or no ceremony by Mr. [Samuel] Tullock, who we found in charge which I attributed to sickness on his part well knowing that a sick man is never disposed to be over civil to others we therefore pushed on next morning. Just as we arrived we saw 31 Indians with two American flags come to the other side of the river they were Gros ventres du Baum the same we fought with last summer at the Trois Tetons they came to make peace with the Crows they were treated civily at the Fort and before night followed the river up to the Crow village where I expect their scalps will be taken for the Crows informed us that not long since a few Blkft. came and made peace with them shortly after three Crows went to the Blackfeet two of which they killed and they were determined to make no more peace with them.

18th. Started down the river made 3 hours with a hard wind about 4 miles an hour and put up to noon seeing some elk which we were in hopes to get to eat course about N. afternoon the river tended more Eastwardly and at last came to E.N.E. We made at the rate of 5 miles an hour for 3 1/2 hours and camped to fish and hunt having no meat on hand there is along this river pretty bottoms and great quantities of sweet cotton wood which would be fine for winter camps. We saw some large bands of elk but our hunters were more conceited than good which I have generally found to be the case with the hunters in this country they are not willing that a new hand should even try, and are far from good shots themselves and commonly have miserable flint guns which snap continually and afford an excuse for not killing. The river sometimes cuts blufs which are mostly of sand stone but the river brings down granite and porphry. Fort Cass is situated on the E. bank of the Yellow stone river is about 130 feet square made of sapling cotton wood pickets with two bastions at the extreme comers and was erected in the fall of 1832. The Yellow stone comes from the S.W. til it meets the Big Horn then the two go about N. until they bend to the eastward.

19th. Made 5 1/2 hours in a calm fine day I should think about 6 miles the hour the river going

E.N.E. stopped early to try a band of Buffaloe that we see on the left of us, at first we were careful to see if they were really Buffaloe for yesterday we were near approaching a band of Indians which I suppose were the residue of the Blackfeet which I saw at the fort as they appeared coming down from that way. Nooned in a fine cool place under the shade of a large Cotton wood in a large green bottom the musquitoes take much from the pleasure of the trip which is otherwise fine but I believe for a party like ours rather dangerous in afternoon 2 1/2 hours about 6 per H. River E. stopped on hearing the bellowing of Buffaloe on shore to get meat. Our hunters as usual having failed went myself and killed a cow got a good ducking from a shower and returned loaded with meat much fatigued. About 4 miles before we stopped we passed the mouth of Rose Bud a river coming from S.S.W.

20th. Started early and made this forenoon 6 hours at the rate of about 5 1/2 miles. River about E.N.E. last night a smart rain which wet our clothes much caught just at dusk last night plenty of Blue Catfish and a small one which resembles an Ale wife soon after started this morning found an immense herd of Buffaloe close to the river stopped and killed 2 fat cows and could have killed any number more but this was enough they keep up a continued grunting night and day now that we have fairly got into them in the afternoon made 5 1/2 hours current about 6 miles and E.N.E. at 5 hours found bad rapids but at this low stage of the water it is said to be better passing on account of the chanall being more visible we had a good joke on the old hands as they call them selves in distinction to those who have been a short time in the country two bald headed Eagles being perched on a tree on a point and ranged to the other side of the river our motion made them appear moving the old one cried out Les Sauvages others of them said on horseback with white scarfs I looked long but not supposing that they meant the eagles I said I saw nothing but the eagles they soon found out their mistake and we had a good laugh at them and a pleasant one as all the Indians we meet here we expect to fight. This day and yesterday whenever the river makes perpendicular banks we saw veins of poor bituminous coal in 5 to 7 veins horizontal from 3 ft. to 6 inches thick and 10 to 15 feet above each other rock sandstone.

21st. Made 5 hours river about E.N.E. passed the mouth of Powder River at 4 hours and half an hour below a bad and rocky rapid but without accident the coal still continues and thousands of Buffaloe day fine stopped to noon a little below the rapids in the afternoon made 5 hours current about 5 miles per hour in about E.N.E. direction no rapids of consequence the blufs have ceased these blufs are a part of the Black hills as I am informed the Black Hills I am also infomned make the Falls of Missouri at the Three Forks just on leaving the blufs the coal veins appeared thicker day fine. buffaloe plenty.

22nd. Made at 5 1/2 per hour 6 hours in forenoon using a sail which we found of little advantage and but a little course of the river N.N.E. and from the junction on the E. side of first Rose Bud then Tongue and then Powder River it is of about the color of the Missouri altho the Yellow stone above is of clear water quite so above the junction of the Big Horn. Our boat getting quite rotten in afternoon made 5 hours same course 5 miles per hour river better not so [many] bars and country not mountainous the coal appears to have given out.

23rd. Made in forenoon 4 hours at the [rate] of 5 [miles] per hour river about N.E. Day fine and hot plenty of Elks in herds afternoon made 4 hours N. then 2 1/2 hours E.N.E. current about 4 miles per hour saw but little game only 2 Elk river broad and shoal.

24th Made N.N.E. 2 hours with a heavy head wind about 4 miles per hour then the river turned Westwardly and when it enters the Missouri is running W. by S. this made one hour more when we found the Missouri which we ascended N.W. about 5 miles to Fort Union where we arrived about noon and were met with all possible hospitality and politeness by Mr. McKensie the Am. F. Co. agent in this country.

27th. This day at 1/2 past 10 oclock we took leave our hospitable entertainers and on the experience of a few days with prepossessions highly in their favor we found Mr. McKensie a most polite host I was particularly pleased with a Mr. J.A.] Hamilton and I am perhaps presumptuous in saying that I felt able to appreciate his refined politeness he is a man of superior education and an Englishman. I was here supplied with a peroque traded from the Blackfeet. A Mr. Patten shewed me a powder flask which he traded from the Blkft. I immediately knew it to be one of mine and on examination found No. 4 H.G.O.M. graven with a point on it. It was Mores flask who was kiDed in Little Jackson Hole last year on his return home after rendezvous. Fort Union is pleasantly scituated on the N. bank of the Missouri 6 miles above the junction of Yellow stone there is no timber on a high bank above the fort I am told that there is not enough moisture here to raise vegetables potatoes grass ect, Some corn is traded from the Inds. lower down the fort is of usual construction about 220 feet square and is better furnished inside than any British fort I have ever seen at Table we have flour Bread Bacon Cheese Butter they live well

I here saw a small sturgeon but they are very rare Cat fish are good and plenty they have cows and bulls milk etc. I saw lime burning also coal here they are beginning to distil spirits from corn traded from the Inds. below. This owing to some restrictions on the introduction of the article into the country. Above this we have met plumbs, grapes, cherrys, Currants, ash, elm. The river being already well laid down shall no longer give the course

we left the fort and went 2 hours and stopped for Mr. Sublette who remained behind to finish some business he came accompanied by the gentlemen of the fort

after leaving us we made 4 hours then supped and made one hour more and found Mr. Wm. L. Sublette at anchor with a large Bull boat this gentleman we had expected to have found on our arrival at the Missouri he is come to trade furs in opposition to the Am. F. Co. he treated us with much politeness his brother preferred to remain and come to the states with him we are therefore left without any one who has decended the Missouri but I can go down stream.

28th. Pulled one hour put by from wind and to regulate then pulled 6 hours and stopped to supper the banks continually falling in after supper we floated through the night 11 hours Calm

29 While breakfast was preparing went out to hunt killed one deer and found a severe time in the

thick swamp and mosquitoes pulled 8 1/2 hours and drifted 11 hours through the night which exposed me to much rain and wind from two thunder showers. I had much difficulty to keep the boat from bars and snaggs ran several times on to Bars all hands being asleep had to jump over board to get off In the night elk keep up a continual squeling it being now the commencement of the rutting season.

30th Day pulled 9 hours Saw three white Bears this day and some Elk and a herd of Buffaloe night floated 8 1/2 hours and were stopped by a gale from the S.E. not thinking it expedient to pull with a head wind and in the dark.

31st Blowing a gale. Made about 4 hours about the rate of 2 mils per hour and finding it too bad laid by at a considerable river coming from the S. entering by 2 mouths this I took to be the little Missouri as laid down in the maps. In this vicinity we find primitive pebles and bolders much petryfied wood other aluvial productions stopped all night on acc. of wind and rain which made our scituation uncomfortable in the extreme the weather had heretofore been very warm average as much as 90 deg this day cold like an Eastwardly storm.

[Sept] 1st. At seven the weather having abated a little made a start. At 3 o'clock found some of Sublettes men cutting timber for a fort and learned from them that the upper Mandan was 9 miles ahead we made it at 6 this day made only about 3 per hour this village was about 1 1/2 miles from the river taking my Indian and a man with me I went to it and was well received by Mr. Dorherty [John Dougherty], Mr. Subletes clerk and the Inds. Stopped about one hour with him and not seeing the fort and being afraid of passing it stopped for the night.

2nd. Pulled 1/2 hour arrived first on a high point at the village then immediately round the point found the fort and was well received by Mr. [James] Kipp. the Am. F. Co. agent for the Mandans Stopped 2 hours took breakfast the presented me some dry corn and some roasting ears. All these villages cultivate corn peas beans pumpkins ect. at 1/2 past 7 ock pulled a short distance when we had a good breeze and sailed until 5 ock then stopped to supper then floated from 6 until 12 ock then stopped owing to fog with head wind.

3rd. Floated 2 hours and stopped to Breakfast having found no game have lived much upon the stores we have taken from the forts above At the last place we were presented with some green corn which we are now roasting Makes us think of Old Lang Sine. We have had for four days rainy cloudy & foggy weather our bed clothes are wet and musty in consequence after Breakfast pulled 6 hours when I thought best to go on shore to cook I sent a man out to hunt in the meantime as soon as he assended the high bank he perceived horses on the other side we after counted 21 lodges and from the number of horses I have no doubt there might have been from 75 to 100. I immediately had the boat put into a little thicket and fortified as well as I could then went to fishing and spent the afternoon caught but two large catfish as soon as it was dark we proceeded forward with a high wind and a cloudy sky and no Moon all went well until we were just opposite the valley when we perceived lodges and fires on our side also On seeing this I ste[e]red the boat to the middle of the river but unluckly took ground on a sand bar here we worked for some time

to get off and had the Indians seen or heard us her[e] we were in distance for shot from both sides and could have made little resistance but they did not and after some time we got off and glad we were. We proceed in all 4 hours pulled, then stopped for the night these were probably the Ari-carey and would have scalped us. I feared much for my Nez Perce for we could not speak to any Indian on the river and all would without explanation have made some fuss and perhaps have killed him.

4th. With almost a gale of wind from the W. pulled 6 hours and then stopped to eat having twice nearly upset in carrying sail and wet all our things after drying and eating started on still blowing fresh and pulled 3 hours then floated through the night 11 hours It was a beautiful still night the stillness interrupted only by the neighing of the Elk the continual low of the Buffalo which we came to soon after starting the hooting of large owls and the screeching of small ones and occasionally the nearer noise of a beaver gnawing a tree or splashing into the water and even the gong like sound of the swan it was really poetical but sleep at last laid in his claim and I gave the helm to a man. Oak is now plenty in the Bottoms and for a few days past has been seen The upland along the river is here pretty good plumbs we occasionally see and have since we first took water on the Big Horn frequent squalls of rain yesterday.

5th. Pulled 7 hours stopped to eat pulled one more came to a deserted village on the S. bank fired two guns to see if there was any one in it but had no answer pulled one hour more then floated 7 hours more then pulled 3 to Breakfast saw in morning a bank of Elk playing like children in the water failed of killing any of them owing to the impatience of one of the men who fired too soon pulled through a dreadful rain 7 hours and camped wet and cold rained all night strong east wind.

6. In the morning made 8 hours pulling seeing an Elk on the sand Bar stopped and killed him very acceptable as we have had nothing to eat since yesterday noon and saved his horns for my best of friends Mr. F. Tudor of Boston pulled 2 hours more and the night being dark and appearance of a storm did not run.

7th. Last night about 11 ock was awakened by the water making a breach over the boat got her off the shore but was obliged to make the shore again on account of some of the men who were so frightened that if I had not they would have jumped overboard laid the rest of the night on a lee shore thundering in a loud strain and raining at no allowance spent a most uncomfortable night an rose in the morning benumbed with cold and all hands as dead as loggs started after eating at 8 ock and pulled until 2 ock when we had a fine breeze which gradually increased to a gale before which we scudded at a good rate almost despairing of seeing Fort Piere which we began to think we had passed at about sundown we saw people on the hills which we supposed to be Inds. therefore kept on they fired but we did not choose to hear about an hour after sundown we smelt the flavor of coal and landed and found people who had just burned a kiln who informed us that the fort was 3 mils ahead we though[t] to go to sleep at the fort but soon found that night and a gale of wind was a poor time for travelling and also that 3 miles was in fact 3 leagues after being near filled by the surf and running afoul of several sand bars and getting overboard to push off we

concluded to stop for the night which we did cold and tired and wet we spend the night as we best could one comfort plenty of elk meat stopped at 10 ock.

8. Made by sailing 3 miles and found Fort Piere pleasantly scituated on the right bank rather low but withal romantic were received with all hospitality imaginable by Mr. Laidlow [William Laidlaw] who is in charge of the Am. F. Co. post here. was much pleased by the order and regularity apparent about the place we stopped here for the day and visited Mr. and Mrs. Sublette who is scituated about one mile below we here saw melons of two kinds corn pork cows horses and stacks of hay.

9th. Remained at the fort until about 1 ock. when we made by pulling 2 hours an Island 9 miles below the fort on which the Co. have about 15 acres of ground under cultivation here I remained all this day eating and drinking of the good things afforded by the earth and the cellars of the Co. Found cucumbers water & musk mellons beets carrots potatoes onions corn and a good cabin and the Company of Mr. Laidlow and Doct.

10th. At 8 ock. began pulling the water has within two days risen about 2 feet in consequence of the rains which so anoyed me above and the surface of the water is covered with all manner of drift rubbish and the water as muddy as possible. Wind ahead all day but current much improved stopped at 6 ock. at the commencement of the great Bend and remained all night.

11th. Commenced pulling at 1/2 past 6 after having sent a hunter across the foot of the Bend and after 6 hours got past the Bend and found our hunters who had hid themselves in the brush being alarmed by seeing Inds. whom we also saw and gave some ammunion to took them in and in two hours more came to the agency for the Sioux & Poncas Mr. [Jonathan] Bean agent but not at the post we found it a miserable concern only three or four men but poorly fed and buildings out of order though new and shabbily built at best we were hospitably received by the young man in charge.

12. Pulled against a severe head wind 9 hours in hopes of finding White River but camped without seeing it got plenty of good plumbs which were an object to stop for as we are about out of food and the vicinity almost destitute of game.

13th Pulled against a severe head wind 3 1/2 hours finding we did not make much headway laid by for the day.

14th. Blowing still fresh ahead we started and made 15 hours night and day continuing until 12 ock at night it was dark and we were nearly upset by a snag but our fears of starvation impelled us to haste did not see an animal all day during the latter part of the night it rained in torrents and wet all our things and persons.

15th. Commenced pulling at 7 ock. Still blowing fresh ahead and raining a little about 3 ock cleared off and stopped to cook during meal time killed a fawn which was very good luck af-

ter supper pulled 5 hours more and found a keel boat of the Am. F. Co. alongside of which we stopped for the night in the morning of

16th. Put ahead with a fine wind not having been asked on board of her and immediately passed the Ponca village but I believe not in its usual place saw and delivered a message to Mr. Sublettes agt. here and gave the Chief some tobacco. Made with a wind which as usual soon died away and pulling 13 hours when we ran on a sand bar and was unable in the dark to extricate her and slept all night on it the musquitoes almost murder us rained most of the night.

17. Started at 5 ock. Pulled this day 10 hours rained some in the course of the day saw Powquet [Carolina parakeet] the first since leaving the states also mulberry trees Bass wood.

18th. Started early after a rainy night and pulled 10 hours saw wild Turkeys this evening but killed none nearly out of all kinds of provisions saw this day a herd of Elk tryed hard to get some but failed.

19th. Made with a strong and fine wind 12 hours and camped without meat supped on a little flour boiled in water Saw during the day 3 deer looked with folly at them and fired two shots and they ran off.

20th. Stopped until 1/2 past 6 to hunt caught one goose which we eat for breakfast afterward put ashore the hunters for game they were fortunate enough to kill a fat doe in which we feasted right merrily and having lost so much time we concluded to run until the moon went down altho we were before informed that it was not safe a few hours we got along well enough but at last went over a snag with limbs above which taking our mast and the boat swinging broadside she was taking in water at a jolly rate and in a little she would have gone with the suck under the rock I immediately had the mast cut away just in time to save her escaped from this I determined to try more we ran a little and were driven head foremost on a large tree lying across the river We stopped about midway and lay swinging like a pendulum with much danger and difficulty we extricated her not being yet discouraged we ran on but soon were driven into a large drift we narrowly escaped being carried under and half full of water and our oar broke we made the shore as soon as possible resolved to run no more nights, after making 10 1/2 hours.

21st. Made 9 hours with a head wind and camped at the old post of Council Bluffs it is now grown up with high weeds a memento of much money spent to little purpose it is a beautiful scituation the magazine and three or four chimneys only remain.

22nd. After 5 hours in a dead current we arrived at a trading post of the Am. F. Co. Mr. Josh Pilcher agent by whom we were entertained with the utmost hospitality I had met Mr. P. at St. Louis on my way out on this account I had much pleasure in stopping we found a good assortment of vegetables and a supply of such things as we wanted. dined with him and made three hours more and stopped to hunt Killed a fat deer and camped for the night.

23rd. Made 2 hours pulling and passed an agency 1/2 mile farther a trading post of Mrss. Dripps & Fontenelle. Made in all 13 hours and camped during the day killed one deer from the Boat from Council Bluffs to this have found the Hic[k]ory Shagbark Sicamore and Coffee Bean trees not seen above also Night Shade Brier Ducks Ge[e]se and Pelicans have been very numerous but shy for about 8 days stopped at the above trading post found only an old negro at home the rest out cutting wood.

24th. Made this day 10 1/2 hours Killed one goose saw plenty of deer

25th. Made 11 hours Killed one Turkey from the boat saw this day the first Pawpau fruit and trees wounded one deer from boat and stopped to search for him but without success

26th. Made 11 hours at 8 hours came to a trading house of the Am. F. Co. called Rubideau [Robidoux] Fort at the Black Snake hills and on the N. bank of the river on a little rise of ground in the rear of a beautiful bottom. Today saw the Black Locust for the first time the lands are here quite fine and the hills as far back as we can see clothed with timber and verdure of the most luxuriant appearance the country is one of the most pleasant I have ever seen

27th. After 7 hours pulling arrived at the Cantonment Leavenworth on the route we saw several Indian canoes with Squaws children ect. I had no letters of introduction at the fort and therefore could not expect any great extension of the laws of hospitality but was received with all the politeness that expected was offered all the stores which I might require by Leut. Richardson the officer of the day My boy Baptiste and the Indian wer[e] vacinated by Doct. Fellows. It was amusing to observe the actions of Baptiste [Payette] and the [Nez Perce] Indian when I went from the boat towards the Barracks the Boy followed me until I was hailed by the sentry at view of one so strangely attired and with a knife on the end of his gun he broke like a quarter Nag crying Pegoni [Blackfeet] and the Indian was only prevented from taking the run also by being assured that he would not be harmed. I took the two to Doct Fellows quarters to be vaccinated the Doct's wife and another lady happened to be present they were really beautiful women but the eyes of the two were riveted on the White Squaws Baptiste who speaks a little English told the other Boys when he returned to the boat that he had seen a white squaw white as snow and so pretty.

28th. Made about 45 miles to Liberty where I found Mr. E. M. Samuel an old acquaintance who received me with all hospitality supplied me w[ith] money and all that I wanted.

29th. Rained all day did not start

30. Went to the landing after breakfast a boat arrived going to the Garrison and joined her as I shall arrive at St Louis as soon by this means as any other and more comfortably

Shall close memorandum here with Boat I after returned to Leavenworth and was treated with great politeness by the officers of the garrison especially a Capt. Nichols who invited me to dinner.

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country  
First Expedition - 1832

---

Memo of distances on the Columbia according to the estimates of the English Traders.

From Boat encampment to Colville	309 miles
“ Colville to Oakenagen	150 “
“ Oakenagen to Walla Walla	207 “
“ Walla Walla to Vancouver	203 “
“ Vancouver to Cape Disappointment	80 “
-----	
	949

From Ermatinger.

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Journal of Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

On the 5th of May having crossed the Kansas at the agency without accident and in one Half of a day and traded as many cuds and apishemas [saddle blankets] as I wanted and some deer skins for which I paid Bacon. We started with 3 less men 4 having deserted and one new one engaged. Made this day along the Kansas about 16 miles on a small stream having crossed one called the Lautrelle

6th. Moved along the Kansas and made about 12 miles to noon and took an observation found the Latt to be 39 deg 38' made this day about 18 miles

7th Made about 15 miles and camped on Little Vermillion

8th. In the morning Mr. [Milton] Sublette finding that his leg would not bear travelling turned back made this d[a]y about 15 miles This day left Kansas River

9th. Made about 20 miles and camped on a small river this day our hunter killed our first deer

10th. Made 15 miles to Big Vermillion and then 5 miles more and camped in the prairie with but little wood and a little stagnant water

11. Made 9 miles to a small run then lost the trail and crossed a sluggish muddy stream running N and recrossed the same it rounding and heading North and camped at noon this day Latt. 40deg 18'. Sent a man to hunt the trail.

12th. Spent the morning mending hobbles and endeavored to get an observation for Long. but it was too cloudy in afternoon started and in about 8 miles found a camp of [William] Sublettes for nooning and marched until dark and camped the horses having had nothing to eat all day did not tie them up at 1. Ock at night was awakened by a furious running & snorting of the animals who all broke from their hobbles and left camp running in their course over any thing opposed to them spent the night in looking them up and found all but two about sun one hour high three Otoes came to us who I suppose occasioned the fright and got the two horses.

13. Started and travelled 7 hours and camped on a fork of the Blue and found the Long. to be 96deg 7'.

14th. Made W.S.W. 21 miles and struck the main Blue

15th. Made about W. 9 miles and found our Lat. to be 40deg 17' then made 12 miles W. by N. over a very level prairie and again struck the main Blue and camped

16th. Made 10 miles about W. by N. to Dinner Latt. 40deg 23' and 12 more to the Pawnee trail to the head of the Arkansas and found that a very large party had passed it about 10 days before and a smaller one this morning.

17th. Made 3 miles up the stream crossing a very small run course W. by N. then struck out N.W. 3 miles and crossed a little run the same as passed in the morning then same course 6 miles and took an observation for Latt and found it to be 40deg 22' then 5 miles more same course and got sight of the Platte then W.N.W. 5 miles to the river and camped

18th. Raining in morning caught some Cat fish found fresh track of Indians a small party Rained hard all day moved camp 15 miles to a small grove of timber on the main land found our horses very skittish during the night.

19th. In the morning had just raised camp when we discovered two Indians who were shy of coming to us but after a while suffered us to approach them they said they were Pawnees but as we did not know the Pawnees this might be so or not perhaps Ricarees afterward saw several more on the blufs who did not come to us at noon found our Lat. 43deg 1' after traveling 13 miles W.N. in the afternoon traveled 13 miles W. and found our Long. to be 98deg 30' this night doubled guard.

20th. Moved camp from the pickett and 12 miles W. to breakfast fine clear weather old Buffaloe sign and antelope after dinner started and soon saw a band of elk one loose horse took fright at them and ran back on our trail there being no person mounted on a swift horse in camp I followed myself after going to a little creek where we nooned they struck out S. 15 miles to the heads of some little streams with timber probably the Blue where I overtook three of them my horse having failed I lost 2 fine horses. After riding about 12 miles found the Platte at our nights camp and followed it to the camp making in all a ride of about 50 miles arrived about midnight camp moved on 11 miles.

21st. Moved about N. 10 miles Lat. 40deg 33' afternoon 10 miles W. and camped after a little 3 Pawnee Scouts came to us and slept with us in the morning 12 more came and wished to persuade me to go to their camp 1 1/2 days travel N. Over the river which they forded here they stole some small things from us

22nd. Moved from the pickett and 15 miles W. about to Latt. just before nooning passed a little creek then West 11 miles and camped.

23rd. 20 miles W. to the crossing of the South fork of the Platte about 8 miles above the forks found Latt. to be 40deg 41'

24th. Crossed without difficulty and made up the N. side of the South Fork about 4 miles W. then struck N.W. about 1 mile to the North fork which is here the largest then made about W. by N. about 15 miles and near to some cut blufs which come close to the river

25th. W. by N. 12 miles passing another place where the blufs cut the river and here found much cedar on them and camped on the river in a wide bottom found no Buffaloe today killed one antelope. Afternoon 10 miles W.N.W. at night found the variation of the compass 1deg 30' west at

midnight our horses took fright but being strongly picketed and hobbled but few got out of camp.

26th. I date this the 26th having over noted one day heretofore in afternoon 12 miles W.N.W. passing some steep cut blufs which cut the river afternoon made 12 mils and camped still no buffalo Latt. 40deg 22' at night.

27th. Made this day 20 mils during a severe gale from the N.N.W. the sand cut like a knife and it was altogether a most disagreeable day this day saw a little timber on some hills to the south of the river about 5 miles distant also 2 bands of wild horses killed one Bull so poor as to uneatable.

28th. Killed Buffalo plenty today Came in sight of the chimney about noon made 22 mils wind still high N.N.W. One of our outriders saw six Indians mounted today.

29th. No[o]ned at the Chimney Lat. 41deg 51' After travelling this forenoon 11 miles afternoon 10 mils

30th. Passed through between two high blufs through a pretty good pass and avoided going between one of them and the river where there are bad ravines. Made this day 22 miles to Horse creek.

31st. Made after crossing Horse creek at starting about 20 miles.

June 1st. Made 15 miles to Laramies fork just before coming to which we made a cut off of about 3 miles over and about 5 miles by the river forded this fork with ease and made 8 miles up the Platte in afternoon. At the crossing we found 13 of Sublettes men camped for the purpose of building a forte he having gone ahead with his best animals and the residue of his goods he left about 14 loads.

2nd. Made along the river 5 miles then struck out into the hills about W.N.W. and made 12 miles to a little creek in the afternoon made 13 miles to pretty large creek and camped for the night the whole course this day about W.N.W. Left at Noon camp a bull and cow whose feet had worn out.

3rd Made 15 miles and nooned on the river this course N.W. by N. and cut over the hills about 1/2 the way the river taking a bend quite to the N. and passing through bad rocks. Afternoon made 6 miles cutting two very bad blufs but still following the river and camped on it

4th. Forded the river and made W.N.W. 17 miles along the river and camped on it Sublette one day ahead.

5th. Made along the river 24 miles along the River

6th. Made along the river 24 miles W. by N.

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

7th. Made 12 miles along the river to the red Butes so called and is the place at which the river turns S.W. and we leave to strike for Sweet Water Sublette 2 days ahead weather chilly and windy. Poor grass for several days.

8th. This morning I had intended to have turned out the horses at 2 ock. and guarded them but during the night the horses appeared uneasy and appeared to think there were Indians about which induced me to keep them up until sunrise when we started W.S.W. from the Red Butes and made 18 miles to the high ridge of land and then one point more to the South and 12 miles more to a small creek with poor grass Several of the horses nearly done up for want of grass and from fatigue this day killed two grisly bears and many Buffaloe a little shower toward night

9th. Made S.W. 10 miles and made Rock Independence on which W.L. Sublette had noted that he had arrived on the 6th but I think he could not have done so before the 7th.<sup>39</sup> I noted my name then made S.W. along the creek 41,2 miles to a place where the creek puts through cut rocks each side perpendicular and about 60 feet high [Devils Gate] the trail goes through another place on a level and about 100 feet South of the river the rock intervening then made 6 miles W.S.W. between mountains but on a level and along the creek.

10th. General courses W.S.W. and along Sweet Water high granite hills on each side made 25 miles

11th. W. 10 mils then N.W. 9 mils to camp on Sweet Water

12th. S.W. forenoon a cut off of 10 miles to Sweet Water afternoon S.W. 9 miles along Sweet Water. Long. 110deg 30'

13th 3 miles along Sweetwater S.W. then took up a ravine to the W.N.W. about 1 mile then W. by S. 9 miles to a creek of Sweet Water runing into it about 8 miles off and S.E. then W. by S. 7 miles to another creek of Sweet Water running about S.E. and emtying into it at about 10 miles Sweet Water appears to run in cut rocks

15th. [14th.] Made due West 5 mils and crossed a small creek of Sweet Water which comes from a point of granite rocks about 2 miles from which we passed then W. 7 mils to a spring of good cold water and good grass. Wind river mountains now bear N.N.W. and a[re] covered with snow about 20 mils distant. Latt. 42deg 44 ' Afternoon made W. 6 miles to Sweet Water creek main body going about S.E. and coming out of cut rocks then W. by S. 16 miles over broken ground to one fork of Sandy running S. by E. here horses wer tired Buffaloe plenty.

15th. W.N.W. 9 miles to Big Sandy where we found Buffaloe plenty My hunters [Sansbury and Wilkins] not yet come in been out 4 days fearful they have been scalped.

16th. Made down the Sandy S.W. by W. 15 miles then 4 S.E. by E and camped on this stream so far the grass is miserable and the horses are starving and also at last nights camp they eat some-

thing that has made many of them sick. the same thing happened two year since on the next creek west.

17th. S.S.W. 10 miles down Sandy which makes here a bend to the right afternoon S. 9 miles passing at three miles the mouth of little Sandy and camped without any grass

18th. 12 miles in the forenoon S.S.W. making small cut off afternoon W.S.W. 7 miles camped in good grass.

19th. About S. by W. 8 miles and camped 1 mile above the mouth of Sandy on Green river or Seckkedee on the night of the 17th I left camp to hunt Fitzpatric and slept on the prairie in morning struck Green river and went down to the forks and finding nothing went up again and found rendezvous about 12 miles up and much to my astonishment the goods which I had contracted to bring up to the Rocky Mountain fur Co. were refused by those honorable gentlemen. Latt. 41deg 30'.

20th. Made W.S.W. 8 miles then S. by E. 15 miles to Hams Fork running here S.E. and a small stream.

21. Same camp.

22d. Same camp

27th. Moved up the river N.W.10 miles grass here pretty good but little timber and none but willows for the last 6 miles.

To 3rd. July. Same camp then up Hams fork 10 miles N.W. moved up the fork about W. by S. 12 miles to many Indians with us for comfort or safety they let their horses among ours so that it is impossible to guard any of them.

4th. Moved up the creek about 1 mile then leaving it made W. by N. over a divide and by a pass which occurs in the lowest part of a high range of hills 7 miles then W. 13 miles down a ravine which had a little water in it to its junction with another small run and the two are called Muddy here we celebrated the 4th I gave the men too much alcohol for peace took a pretty hearty spree myself. At the camp we found Mr. Cerry [Cerre] and Mr. Joseph R.] Walker who were returning to St. Louis with the furs collected by Mr. Bonneville's company about 10 pack and men going down to whom there is due \$10,000

5th. Made down Muddy 5 miles W. then N.W. cutting a divide into a small ravine which has a little water in it 8 miles then leaving the ravine cutting moderately high land to Bear river 4 miles. Then down Bear river N. by W. 4 miles to camp

6th. Made down the river N.N.W. 5 miles to Smiths Fork which is a short stream from the N.E. by

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

N. and nearly as large as Bear river then same course 3 miles more then N.W. 5 miles here comes in Kamas creek from the N. then W.N.W. 3 and crossed Bear river three more and recrossed then cut over some high hills same course 8 miles more and struck the river again then down the river same course 1 mile to camp nothing to eat due south of this camp about 5 miles is the little lake [Bear Lake] so called which is about 20 miles long.

7th. Made 3 miles N.N.W. and passed a little creek the same course 6 miles along the river, then 3 miles N.W. to camp all day fine grass. During this day a multitude of fine springs coming into the river. today killed one bull.

8th. made N.W. 10 miles then 10 miles W.N.W. to a place where there is soda spring or I may say 50 of them. These springs throw out lime which deposits and forms little hillocks of a yellowish colored stone there is also here a warm spring which throws water with a jet which is like Bilge water in taste there is also here peet beds which sometimes take fire and leave behind a deep light ashes in which animals mire Killed one Bull today but so poor as to be hardly eatable having in the course of the day lost a horse will remain here to hunt him up

9th Same camp assended a mountain and from it could see that Bear river took a short turn round sheep rock about 2 miles below the spouting steam and goes south as far as I could see there are in this place many hundreds of mounds of yellowish stone with a crater on top formed by the deposits of the impregnated waters of this place. Killed one Buffaloe.

10th. Moved N. by W 3 mils cutting a range of hills then N.N.W. 17 miles to Blackfoot on which I found Boneville again and plenty of Buffaloe and killed 3 Grisly Bears during the day passed many small funnel shaped holes in the lava having the appearance of small craters.

11th. Made W. 6 miles cutting a range of hills then following in a valley formed by these hills and another range Made W.N.W. 10 miles to a little brook running N. by W. to camp Buffaloe today saw one Blackfoot on foot in the hills who ran like a good fellow.

12th. Made W. 3 miles and came upon a small creek which was said to be Portneuf it may possibly be the same water as that we camped on last night but running S. by E crossed this and a high range of hills and struck a stream which is said to be Ross creek this runs about W. after 9 miles more camped saw but few Buffaloe today.

13th. No Buffaloe saw elk on Snake River which we struck after 6 miles W. by N. in some small slew saw a great quantity of fine trout about 2 lbs. weight

14th. Went down the river about 3 miles and found a location for a fort and succeeded and killed a Buffaloe near the spot

15. Commenced building the fort and sent out 12 men to hunt to be gone 12 days and continued at work on the fort a few days and fell short of provisions and was obliged to knock off in order

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

to obtain food sent out some men for Buffaloe they returned in two days with plenty. The 12 returned the 28th day at night. On the 26th a Frenchman named Kanseau was killed horse racing and the 27th was buried near the fort he belonged to Mr. McKays camp and his comrades erected a decent tomb for him service for him was performed by the Canadians in the Catholic form by Mr. Lee in the Protestant form and by the Indians in their form as he had Indian family. he at least was well buried.

30 Mr. McKay left us and Mr Jason] Lee and Capt. Stewart with him

6th. [Aug.] Having done as much as was requisite for safety to the Fort and drank a bale of liquor and named it Fort Hall in honor of the oldest partner of our concern we left it and with it Mr. Evans in charge of 11 men and 14 horses and mules and three cows we went down the river S.W. 4 miles and found a ford crossed and made N.W. 7 miles to the head of a spring and camped in all 29 strong. Fort Hall is in Latt. 43deg 14' Long. 113deg 35'

7th. Started at day light and traveled 10 hours as fast as possible N.W. by W. 30 miles to the Bute. being the most southwardly one and from it the other two Butes bear N.N.E. the farther about 20 miles off the other midway the Three Tetons about 100 miles off and bearing N.E. the day was hot and we suffered some for water and found but a small supply on the N. side of the Bute a miserable chance for our horses and not a good one for ourselves

8th. Started at sunrise and made N.W. 10 miles to Godins river then crossed it and made in the same direction 12 up the river and camped in fine grass where we struck the river there is no grass nor until we camped above I am told it is fine found no appearance of buffaloe

9th. Made due W. 16 miles striking for the N. side of it a pretty high hill and struck up the mountains close on the N. side of it then wound into the mountains in a S.W. course finding water at 5 miles this we followed 3 miles N.W. and struck a pretty large creek which we followed N.N.E. 1 mile and camped just at starting killed a Bull and separated from Abbot and a small party of trappers accompanied by Antoine Godin whom I sent out for Beaver.

10th. Made 7 miles down the creek N.N.E. to Godins river the same we left day before yesterday then N.W. 3 miles then West 14 miles today saw a large fire in the mountains on our left suppose them to be Diggers keeping for safety in the hills the Blackfeet trouble them even here saw one band of Buffaloe cows today killed one calf the party I parted from viz Antoine and Abbot are before us on this river.

11th. Made W. 9 miles then 18 SW the angle of the two courses occurs at what is called the Spring prairie which is about 10 miles over in the center of which there are three tolerable Butes these Butes when you approach from the East look like three but when from the West show as two this day killed an old Bull very strong

12th Moved 3 miles up the creek S.W. at which place the creek divides into about equal parts the

one going south I took by the advice of one [Thornburg] who said he had passed before followed this up one mile and a branch going E. 3 farther another E. 4 miles farther looked so bad camped took a horse to explore the route 1/2 mile above camp the stream branches the right at small distance heads in an amphitheater of inaccessible mountains followed the left 4 miles S. by E. and this also heads in an amphitheater. We drove 2 Bulls before us which we killed they being unable to pass. I climbed up the clefts an[d] in passing over the snow had liked to have been killed in the following manner passing over some snow and on which the water was running and being afraid of caving in I missed my foothold in a slippery place and went gradually sliding down to a precipice but succeeded at last in averting my progress to destruction by catching the only stone which projected above the icy snow I however reached the summit and looked into another defile running E. like the one I came up. Got to the bottom again and found one of our two mules gone and being in want of meat packed the other with part of one of the Bulls and walked barefoot to camp during the night through an infernal rough rocky prickly Bruisy swampy woody hole.

13th. Moved down creek back to the commencement of the South Fork then took the other about S.W. by W. at two miles up a creek from the N. forming about half of the stream then three miles farther where the rest divides into two parts very small passed the mountain in a south course between these last forks up a gentle fine trail and not more than 1 mile to the top then down by a very steep bad trail. South still along a branch of Malad 5 miles to tolerable grass and camped this last part of the route about the worst road that I ever passed.

14th. After shoeing some horses that were lamed yesterday started and made 9 miles S.S.W. at 2 of which got a small creek from the N.E. at the end of the 9 miles got a fork of about equal size to the one I came down from the S.W. then made S.E. by S. 10 miles and camped got a creek from the N.E. at 2 miles of it and at 7 one from the S.W. Saw no game today the dusky grouse plenty for three days past Horses much knocked up with sore feet.

15th. After crossing the stream passed up a ravine S.W. to its head then crossed some low grassy hills and at 12 miles crossed a small creek going S.E. this creek forks at this place then at two miles in all 14 miles S.W. crossed another which we followed two miles S.S.E. then left it on our left and cut a pretty high hill 4 miles S.S.W. and came down to the plain of Snake River then 3 miles W. to a creek with a fine bottom but no water except what remains in little pools, but excellent grass here found two lodges of Snake Indians.

16th. Made 28 miles W. following the main trail which is good perfectly level and distinct except in one place where it crosses several small branches which in the spring I presume are miry which occasions the traveller to go in no particular place during this days march I observed some low hills on the South side of us which gradually approach and at this camp are about 8 miles distant between us and them a little river appears to run to the W. which I am in hopes is Reeds other wise called Big Woody [Boise R.] Today the travelling was fine and many little streams of water cross the trail at this camp which is on a very small thread there commence small irregularities just enough to note the place.

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

17th. Made 20 miles due West over a country with easy Hills good and distinct trail and often water in very little streams. Country mostly burnt out by the Indians who have passed here lately going up to Buffaloe. Killed some dusky grouse and dug some kamas which assisted our living a little also found some choke cherries and saw one Indian at a distance on Horse back who fled.

18th. Made over a hilly country 12 miles W. until we passed a high stony hill then bending N.W. made 10 miles more over a stony Hilly but distinct trail with not much water saw a track of a Bull made this morning altho there is very little old signs in this section. Camped on a nearly dry creek running W. today lost 2 Horses.

19th. Left the little run on which we camped last night going here N.N.W. on our right and put out as near as I could judge W. 10 miles the first three over a divide of high steep hills then taking a little run followed it out of the worst hills along this run were many little Indian camps we then left it and went W.N.W. 15 miles and struck Woody River in cut rocks at about 7 miles of this last course struck the run on which we camped last night at Woody we saw plenty of Salmon but had no means of catching any of them this day found a colt in the Rush probably left by the Indians on which I mean to Breakfast tomorrow morning being short of provant.

20th. Followed the river down W. by N. 22 miles in the course of the day traded of some Inds. enough salmon for a Lunch and consumed the remaining provisions

21st. No Breakfast. Feel very much purified in the flesh. 12 miles down the creek W. at noon found Indians of whom we traded enough Salmon with a dead one we picked up in the brook and a few birds for a dinner afterwards traded 2 Bals Salmon of the Inds.

22nd. Made 5 miles W. then the trail cut a point of higher ground of about 2 miles and again struck the river and crossed it made on the other side 7 miles W. in all this day 15 miles W.

23rd. Made West 9 miles and found a small village of Snakes of whom we could only trade a very few salmon then 5 more in all 14 miles along the Big Wood R. and arrived at Snake River which we forded by wetting our packs a little here we found a few lodges of very impudent Pawnacks of whom we traded a half Bale of Salmon afterward 4 miles N. along the W. side of Snake River and camped near a few lodges of Inds.

24th. 6 miles N. then made a cut off N.N.W. 4 miles to R. Malheur where we found but three or four Indians and consequently got but little Salmon and consequently may starve a little between this and Walla Walla afternoon 7 miles N. passing not far from the River. I had forgot to note that on Big Wood River the Indians attempted to steal some of our horses but the horse guards discovered them and they failed. Scorpions are here quite common two nights since I was just about laying down when on my Blkt I saw something move I folded it in the Blkt. and on carrying it to the fire found it to be a very good sized scorpion. This day at noon parted from Richardson and 8 men to go up Malheur and other creeks to trap there is something melancholy in parting with men with whom one has travelled so far in this uncertain country. Our party is now 17 boys

Indians literati and all.

25th. This days march was in many different courses but I average them at 23 miles N.W. and camped just before where the trail finally leaves the Snake river and at the same camp where I overtook two years since my men who without orders were leaving the country while I was up Malhuer trapping. Traded this day about 70 salmon which makes a tolerable supply of provisions for the cut to Walla Walla.

26th. Made about 20 miles in about a N.W. direction up Brule [Burnt River] Last night lost two Horses which I think were stolen and today two more gave out. I now think of leaving two men behind to bring up some of the worst animals otherwise I fear I shall loose many of them.

27th. After leaving Sunsbury [Nicholas Sansbury] and [Calvin] Briggs to bring up the worn out horses I left and making a cut off to the right going up a ravine across another and down a third came again upon Brule, at the open Prairie and camped for noon at the upper end of it on a little run and cashed 24 bars lead and 18 Traps general course N.W. 14 miles afternoon 9 miles N.W.W. following the little creek up and camped on a little prairie near the head of it of about 20 acres here there is two trails one N.W. the other N. the N.W. one I shall try.

28th. Here taking the left hand trail we followed it 12 miles N.W. when it disappeared I then took a N. course and at 8 miles came on Powder river which we followed down about 5 miles and camped this afternoon I shall go out to see where the trail crosses the river. This day killed an antelope and a Fawn and saw fresh Elk Track.

29th. Turned up the creek again and after arriving at where we first struck the river made 6 miles W. by N. then into cut rocks then W.N.W. 4 miles more and Nooned on a little water in a ravine during the forenoon two men whom I had left behind with the poor animals brough[t] up all but two also during the forenoon two men got lost and our hunter [Hubbard] got lost yesterday all missing tonight. Afternoon made 8 miles N.W. and camped in cut rocks on the main river at a place apparently not frequented either by Indians or whites but there are Salmon here but we have no means of catching any without waiting too long. I think by the looks there are Beaver here but will ascertain in the morning in order that my trip here may not be entirely lost.

30th. Made 8 miles up the creek through Cut Rocks during which time killed one Salmon and Two Otter so much provisions and Nooned on the Walla Walla trail West Fork the East being the one I descended on my first Tour afternoon made N.N.W. on the Trail. Here plain and good 15 miles at 5 of which crossed another Fork of Powder River but dry at 5 more a little water and at camp a little and but a little country rolling and soil good. At our camp two lodges of Kiuses

31st. Made 15 miles N.N.W. good soil and not very hilly and nooned at the Grand Ronde where I found some Kiuse Indians, Capt Bonneville and two of Mckays men and learned that Capt. Stewart and Mr. Lee passed two days before. Afternoon took the Walla Walla Trail N.N.W. 12 miles and camped at a very small Prairie with a little stream going N.W. Killed 5 Hens today. On

allowance still.

1 Sept. After about 5 miles descended a very bad mountain and followed a dry creek then ascended another bad mountain and nooned with out water at 8 miles of very bad going afternoon making along a ridge of mountain 16 miles arrived at the Ottilla [Umatilla] the trail plain the ground stony about N.W. course but indirect so far from the Three Butes every day has been thick smoke like fog enveloping the whole country last night we camped at 10 ock having found no water and the whole country burnt as black as my Hat affording as poor a prospect for a poor sett of Horses as need be.

2nd Left camp behind and proceed across the Utalla River to the N. and up a mountain then took a slight ravine going N.W. and crossing several trails until the ravine leads to a dry willowed creek going N.E. with a little water in puddles then N.W. up a ravine to the height of land which is a gentle slope then leaving the trail and going a few Hundred yards to the left followed a Dry ravine to the Walla Walla River 22 miles in all N.W. then down the Walla Walla W. by N. 10 miles to Fort Walla Walla where I found Mr. Pambrum [Pambrun] who did the honors of the Fort in his usual handsome stile also found Capt. Stewart and Mess Lees who arrived two days since. Mr. Mckay for some reason remained in the mountains.

3rd. Remained at Walla Walla this day and made arrangements for going down at night Capt Thing and the residue of the party came up.

4th. In morning left Walla Walla in a boat hired by Capt. Stewart after proceeding 4 miles obliged to come to land to tighten the canoe.

5 - 6 - 7th Down the river and landed to Hire canoes at the Dalles for the party still behind.

8th. Waiting at the Dalles for party

9th. Waiting at same place party arrived at night with news that they drowned one Horse and the Jackass in crossing the River I valued him more than 10 horses as a breeder.

10th. At noon having with Difficulty hired three canoes started down the river with three Indians on board. Wind high and soon increased to a gale swamped one of the canoes which frightened the Indians back. Obligated to lay by with two of the canoes behind.

11th. Walked back and brot up the two canoes. Gale still furious and finding that my people were not good boatsmen enough to follow me left the two boats in charge of Capt. Thing and at noon put ahead made about 10 miles and swamped the canoe.

12th. Gale still violent and canoe so leaky as to require one man to Bail the whole time kept on until noon and camped until night when it calmed and we put ahead and made to the Cascades the roar of which warned me to camp. Here overtook Capt. Stewart.

13th. Made our boat a little tighter with some pitch obtained of Capt. Stewart and made the portage of the Cascade carrying our things about 1 mile and letting our boat down with ropes raining hard made til 9 ock. at night when it rained so hard that with the leakage we could keep the boat free of water no longer and put ashore.

14th. At 2 ock in morning cleared up a little and we put on but it kept drizzling at 9 ock. made the Saw mill above the Fort and got some breakfast not having eaten since noon the day before at 12 ock arrived at Fort Vancouver where I found Doct. McLaughlin in charge who received us in his usual manner he has here power and uses it as a man should to make those about him and those who come in contact with him comfortable and happy.

15th. Early in the morning having hired another canoe put ahead and in a rainy day at about 12 ock. met the Bg [Brig] May Dacre in full sail up the River boarded her and found all well she had put into Valparaiso having been struck by Lightning and much damaged. Capt Lambert was well and brot me 20 Sandwich Islanders and 2 Coopers 2 Smiths and a Clerk.

16th. Kept on up the river in order to make Fort Vancouver and pay my respects to Doct. McLaughlin but the wind failed and we could not.

17th. Took the gig and went up to Tea Prairie to see about a location but found none.

18th. Came on board and put down the river for Oak point where we mean to examine for a location.

19th. Came too at Cameans [Casineau's Village] house and concluded to remain at least for the winter.

20th. After setting the forges at work and commencing a coal kiln houses etc. started up the river Wallamut in a gig the gig followed the Wallamut 1 mile then took a creek to the right and after 5 miles came to the farm of Mr. Thomas Mckay. where I was treated with great kindness by [Louis] LaBonte his foreman and of him procured horses and proceded by land until near night over hilly wooded country near night came out into large plains of good lands surrounded with good timber some oak and overtook Mess. Lees who had started the day before me and camped with them they are in search of a location.

21st. Put out in the morning days travell through good lands rolling sufficient and assorted timber and water. At 3 ock. came to crossed the Wallamut at Duportes [J.B. Desportes] House and from him got fresh Horses and proceed up on the E. side of the river to [Joseph] Jervais 10 miles.

22nd. Not suiting myself as to a farm returned to Duportes and went to look at a prairie about 3 miles below his place and concluded to occupy it it is about 15 miles long 7 wide surrounded with fine timber and a good mill stream on it.

22d Laid out a farm afternoon took a canoe and descended as far as falls.

23rd. Made the portage of the falls and was taken violently sick of vomiting and purging probably caused by having eaten some Lamprey Eels recovered toward night and arrived at Fort Vancouver and finished an arrangement in regard to trade.

24th. Went down the river to the vessel.

25th. Making preparation for sending out parties

26th. Do. & sent off Sunbury to trade Horses at the Dalles. Sent Stout up the Wallamut with 2 men and implements to commence farm and started myself up to Vancouver on business.

28th. Up the Wallamut with Mr. Nuttall and Townsend and Mr. Stout.

29th. Going up to the falls and went a small distance up the Clackamas River to look at a spot there found it would not do. Saw there a chalk formation

30th. Returning down the rivers.

31st [Oct. 1st.] At night reached the vessell at Carneans from this time until the 13th Oct. making preparation for a campaign into the Snake country and arrived on the 13th at Vancouver and was received with great attention by all there

14th. Made up the river 12 miles

15th. Made up the River 11 miles

16th. Made up the River 13 miles to the Cascades.

17, 18, 19. Delayed by strong winds and making portage on the last day at night sent a division off under charge of Capt. Thing

20, 21, 22nd. Same camp with nothing to eat but what we catch out of the river with our lines not liking to broach our stores for the voyage

23rd. At sundown our boats arrived from above and I immediately started up the river we pulled all night except stopping to cook at midnight

24th. After taking breakfast and giving the Kanackas [Hawaiians] two hours sleep we put up the river with a head wind day raw and chill

25th. Arrived at noon at the Dalles and found all the people well and but one horse traded.

26th. Started Capt. Thing with 12 Kanackas and 6 whites and all the best Horses [to Fort Hall.]

27th. Remained at same camp and traded 5 Horses at about \$5.00 of goods each

28th. Started the boats back and Hubbard down by land with 13 horses for the farm

29th. & 30th. Same camp traded 4 Horses.

31st. Started up the river Kanackas on foot for want of Horses and goods on miserably poor animals To the 7th Nov. moving slowly up the river during which time and before traded 18 Horses and 600 lbs dried Salmon which I have reserved for provisions after we leave the river when I know we shall get none and having hired a canoe for Walla Walla dispatched her with this salmon on 2 loads of traps one woman one Indian and two whites she sank once but we recovered all and suffered one days delay only to dry the fish we have lived chiefly on trash and dogs fearing to commence our stock of provisions expecting to get little or nothing all winter and I do not mean to starve except when I cant help it.

8th Traded one Horse a few drops of rain today and for more than two thirds of the days since the 1st of the month. Kept along the river traded 8 dogs today being a 2 days rations.

9th. Moved along the River Traded 1 dog but no Horses

10th. Left camp and went into Walla Walla found Mr. Pambrum well and good natured, and got the news that Capt. Things 12 Kanacas had deserted him and that he had gone in search of them on their trail.

11th. Went to Capt. Things camp and learned from Mr. [Abel] Baker that the Kanackas had taken about 2 bales of goods and 12 horses Returned to Walla Walla on the way met the men who went with Capt. Thing they had not been successful dispatched an interpreter Mr. Richardson and two other men down the River in a canoe to head the fellows.

12th. Moved camp up the river a small piece for grass having crossed yesterday no success in trading horses today the Indians appear to think their fortunes are to be made by an opposition but they will find their mistake today got word that the Kanackas had not touched the Columbia nor passed the Utalla River and that Richardson had got a party of Indians to accompany him and horses and had taken up pursuit on land.

13th. Richardson stil out At night dispatched 4 men after two Kanackas that have been seen by the Indians about 15 miles below Walla Walla on the main river.

14th. Robinson and Richardsons party returned with no success Robinson had seen the track of

shod Horses within 5 miles of Walla Walla

15th. At 10 [o]ck this morning dispatched Richardson and Robinson with two men to trace out the track seen by Robinson.

16th. An Indian brot in one shod horse which had been taken by the Kanackas he found it at the Utalla River and brot word that there saw two of the scamps had bot a canoe and gone down leav- ing no horse except that which they took and one alive which he brot in.

17th. Robinson & Richardson Returned no news yet of the rest.

18th. Finding there is no immediate hope of getting the kanackas I today dispatched Capt. Thing to Fort Hall having 19 men viz 4 Kanackas 10 white men and himself a fur [free] man and three Nez Perces 19 in all. This is a picked up lot and I have great fears they will commit Robbery and desertion to a greater extent than the Kanackas have done but I was obliged to trust to the chance it is late and the Blue Mounts. are now covered white with snow altho the grass is green here with- in 30 miles of them.

19th. Went up the Walla Walla River about 7 mils and raised a deposit of goods which I had made in the ground there fearing that some of Capt. Things men who knew where it was might desert and raise it and attempt to go to the Spanish Country. I am now quite sick with a fever but must keep doing.

20th. Spent the day arranging packs for a move Weather clear and cold with much hoar frost and mist.

21st. Deposited the spare goods on hand at Walla Walla fort

22nd. Finished arranging for moving and given up all the Horses still missing viz. 2.

23rd. Moved down the Walla Walla River and camped on the Columbia about 6 miles below the Walla Walla taking leave on the way of Mr. Pambrun the gentleman in charge of the fort Still not well.

24. Moved about 15 miles down the Columbia and camped without wood night quite cold near some bad rapids just above the mouth of the Utalla where I have a cash of traps which I intend to raise.

25. Moved about 15 mils down the river and camped I had forgot to mention that on the 23rd in the morning when I was about loading the horses I found that Ira Long, a sick and as we have supposed crazy Kanacka, was missing I then thought that he woud go at once to Walla Walla but do not hear of him yet I am at a stand to make up my mind wether he went out of camp and died suddenly or drowned in the river or ran off what he should run off for no one can conceive as no

duty had been required of him and he had tea and other luxurys given him on acct. of sickness that no one else had it is a very strange affair to me. Today I hear that one of the two Kanackas who went down the river in a canoe as per former report has been killed for killing horses by the Indians other reports say a Kanacka has killed an Indian. I also hear that 6 of the runaways are on the heads of John Days River the whole of which storys I take to be lies invented to tell me in the hopes of a small present of tobacco. We live on dogs chiefly good luck traded 4 today.

26th. Made about 12 mils down the river and during the day traded a young fat dog.

27th. Moved about 14 mils down the river traded one poor little dog and 4 dried salmon. We hear such contardictory and impossible accounts from the Indians of the Kanackes that I do not know what to believe.

28th. Moved down the River 15 miles traded nothing all day providentially killed one goose which made supper and breakfast for 5 of us. Snowed a little this day and of course not much comfort for a little cold and wet spoils all the comfort of our camps.

29th. 16 mils down the river killed nothing traded 2 dogs and some little deer meat dried. Snowed all the first part of the day and uncomfortably cold rains tonight very uncomfortable some of us have no coats men grumble.

30th. The rain of last night changed to snow and this morning the Earth is white and the weather cold made 12 miles and crossed John Days River then 3 more along the main River and camped with nothing but grass to cook our supper.

31st. Made today 12 miles the last of yesterdays and some of today's march pretty bad traveling for the horses owing to cut rocks camped one mile up the river of falls called by the French "Reviu des Shutes". I do not know if from the numerous rapids of this river or its proximity to the great falls of the Columbia which are about 3 miles below its mouth. There is here a small villege of Inds. from whom I understand by signs that the two Kanackes who decended the river stole horses here or killed Horses and in some wrangle with the chief concerning it one of the Kanackas shot him. I shall be sorry if this is true as in such case I shall be obliged to make a signal example of him both in order to quiet the Indians and prevent their rising upon the whites and as a terror to the other Kanackas.

Dec. 1st. After trading 4 dogs and a few salmon and roots and ascertained that there was no ford above or near us and that the road lay on the river we moved camp down to the mouth and crossed at a rapid and tolerable deep ford then assended the hill by a ravine and descending again struck a good sized Beaver Creek at 6 miles due South while on the divide could see far ahead of a dreary snowy exposed country without a stick of timber to relieve the eye except far in the distance a black looking mass like a cloud of pine timber.

2nd. Moved camp early and left the creek on which we camped by a ravine to the right running

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

S.S.W. followed it to the height of land then down a ravine to the creek 3 miles S.S.W. then S.S.E. to the left of the creek by a ravine 5 more and camped We here find some little oak timber traded today about 30 lbs. dried deer meat.

3rd. Made 16 miles to the River des Shutes S.S.E. and camped near about 20 Lodges of Indians had to buy what little wood we used a thing I mortally detest last night about 12 sett in to snow before morning turned to rain which lasted all day the coldest I ever knew and blew a gale in our teeth this has been a miserable uncomfortable day the first part of it we ascended gradually until we reached a high ridge then descended suddenly to the river on the ridge considerable snow and the whole country covered with little round cones of earth denoting that the winds blow over this divide continually and strong. Grass is far as I could see pretty good.

4th. Moved camp S.S.W. 3 miles and camped on the fork of the River coming from timbered hills to the W.N.W. We hear that the two Kanackas have been followed by the Indians and killed in revenge for killing one of them and their Horses.

5th. Same camp trying to trade horses get none yet.

6th. Same camp

7th. Same camp

8th. Same camp

9th. Same camp During all this time traded but one Horse, but fared well enough for food as we obtained as many dogs as we could eat during the time Gully my Indian having lost his horse went out to hunt him and as I believe with a determination to quit me he found his horse and sent it to camp by an Indian with word to send his things with some trifling excuse but I kept the Horse and things the Indian whom he sent said he would go and take the Horse for which I gave him a flogging and he went off during this time we percussed 3 Rifles our powder being so badly damaged as to render flint locks useless. In this vicinity there are Elk and Deer as we trade their meat and skins of the Inds. in small quantities the grass here is good and here I cashed some goods our horses being to poor to carry them on.

10th. Moved but without our guide whom I had engaged who was among the missing when we started and I suppose engaged only to get something but without intending to start We took a S.S.W. course and crossed the fork on which we had camped for some days past and after mounting the small mountains which range along this fork found an extensive plain beyond which white and high rose a range of mountains disheartening to look at but ahead is the word and the spirit seems to raise with the occasion this range runs E. & W. made this day 11 miles to the foot of the range along which is a small stream here we cashed some provisions for our return route and some loads of dry goods which our horses are too weak to carry.

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

11th. S.S.W. and mounted the mountains which we found much less formidable than they appeared to be the earth and trees are covered with a heavy hoar frost which at a distance made them look as if covered deep with snow of which there was but little these mountains have scattering groups of pine timber and some oak and the little plains in them have brown cedars similar to those of N.E. but still of a different sort but yet the robins in considerable number feed on the berries which reminded me of old pleasures and home where I have often been out to shoot these birds from the laving. but these are too painful to be indulged and the present evil is enough without calling up old joys to enhance it made this day 15 miles and camped on snow water with good pine wood day cloudy wind N.E. and cold Saw the first elk and deer sign for some time they say we cannot cross the divide to Clamat but I will go as far as I can.

12th. Engaged an Indian Guide last night but he too it seems has backed out as I cannot find him this morning Made one mile down the ravine in which we camped and came to a small creek running about E. then ascended the hills and after 5 miles came to a larger creek then 3 miles more where the trail gave out then courses S.S.W. then struck S. by E. 3 miles and crossed a small creek this and the last running E then 3 miles more and camped on a dry ravine all these last courses S. by E. grass this far pretty good and country timbered and prettily level today with small prairies. Saw much Elk and Deer signs but killed none.

13th. Made 5 miles S. by E. over level timbered with small openings country and came to a creek with very bad cut rock banks at least 400 feet high we had much difficulty in getting our horses down to the water and up the opposite bank but succeeded after laming several of our horses this creek is rapid tolerably large and runs N.E. we then made 3 miles S. by E. and camped the snow here covers the ground and the horses have to dig for their food. Saw today 12 deer and a great quantity of Elk and Deer sign and one bear track after camping went out to hunt but could kill nothing today the first clear day for four days the fog lifted a little and enabled us to see a range of snowy mts on the west side of us and one very high bearing S. W. distant about 25 miles should we have any considerable fall of snow now we should loose all our horses they could not subsist with much more than there is now all the dog meat which we have brot with us from the last Inds. is done and we have now to look to our guns to supply us or eat our horses. We have about 4 bushells of rice and flour in camp for cases of extremity and a little dog grease. Small game there is none we have but 10 lbs of powder along and that damaged Go ahead very cold for the 4 last days.

14th. Made S.E. 4 miles to a very small creek running in an immense chasm into which we got and camped the grass being good and our horses having had nothing last night except what they dug up from beneath several inches of snow saw many deer today but killed none sent our hunters out after camping all but one returned empty and him I suppose has lost himself in the forests as I heard a gun late at night and returned several shots weather still quite foggy and very cold.

15th. S.E. by E. 4 miles and down the ravine the snow growing less and less visibly in this direction got out of the woods and saw the country bare of snow here found a lodge of Indians who have 32 Horses traded one of them and have the promise of trading two more in the morning the

man missing last nigh came thi[s] mng.

16th. Traded the two horses one of which cost 82 1/2 cents of beads first cost. Made E. down the ravine 2 mils then struck a good trail crossing the ravine and going off S.S.W. which I followed over rocky high land 8 mils and came to a very large creek I should think it must be at least one-half of the River Des Shutes at least running in an immense chasm into which we decended and camped in good grass and plenty of dry wood which makes us very comfortable for the night is very cold during the march over the high land saw a chain of mts on our left and the other side of the river white with snow and partly wooded.

17th. Went up the creek W.S.W. 2 miles when it turned south and we forded it at a deep ford horses suffered much from the coldness of the water then wound S.W. up the opposite bank of the river very high and precipitous 2 miles more here saw many deer killed none after attaining the heigh[t] made 8 miles S.S.W. through timber and snow then S.S.E. 4 miles also through timber saw several places where deer had been killed by the wolves which are here numerous and very large camped at a little grass the first seen today where the horses can dig up a little food. The country ahead appears more open we have now a little rice to eat and no meat begin to look at the horses still cold.

18th. Made S.S.E. 12 miles to a small creek during this days march a snowy range of high mts. in points lay along our right and front stretching so that our course today just doubles their eastwardly termination at a place where probably a fork of the river Des Shutes passes this range runs N.E. & S.W. still farther on our left and apparently on the other side of the same river there is another range running N. by S. today saw a very great amt. of sign and deer and have concluded to stop and hunt tomorrow and rest the horses tonight a little snow squall.

19th. Same camp Went out hunting killed 2 deer and several wolves this day came to us 5 Walla Walla Inds. who are out hunting they camp with us tonight they say that the game comes down from the mts. in the winter on account of the snows which is the occasion of its being so plenty at this time one man out of camp tonight probably lost shall wait tomorrow for him if he does not come in the meantime and take another hunt for meat which is now quite a luxury.

20th. Same camp killed one deer found the lost man

21st. Made S.S.E. 15 miles toward the eastwardly termination of the range of mts which has for some time been visible on our right at this point we can see no mts. but a little farther on the left they commence again apparently the same range which we have seen for some time ranging on the E. side of the river. Killed no game today but saw plenty.

22nd. S.E. by E. 10 miles and struck a small creek which though very rapid was so hard frozen over that we crossed it on the ice then N.E. 1 1/2 mils and came to a very large creek which I take to be the main river it is about as large as the other fork which we crossed on the 17th inst. country a little more broken deer plenty but killed none today a little warmer than usual.

23rd. Started up the river E.S.E. and gradually in 4 miles travel rounded to a S.S.W. course and made 12 more the last 6 of which the snow increased in such a manner that tonight we find no grass for our Horses and being afraid to advance with them another days march I have determined to send them back and with 3 men I propose to build canoes and ascend as far as I can and ascertain if it is possible to get the horses through and if so to send back for them and if not to ascertain if there is beaver and if so trap it if not further advance this quarter is useless. Tonight set in to snow hard but soon turned to rain.

24th. Snowed and rained all last [night] and still snowing with a gale of wind from S.S.W. nearly all the horses gone astray about 12 having found all but one killed a poor Horse for food and send the party all but three back to find grass for the horses cut down two large pines and commenced two canoes gale all day with occasional snow and rain.

25th. Same camp gale S.S.W. Snow and rain all day a miserable Christmas worked what little we could on the canoes.

26th Day fair and calm warm go ahead making canoes

27th. Day fair calm and warm still at the canoes

28th. day fair calm and warm still at the canoes and eating horse meat

29th Fair weather and mild.

30th Fair weather and mild. Sick with indigestion

31st. Fair weather and mild all so far South wind myself better and finished the canoes and horse meat at the same time viz; this evening at supper the men have called our two boats Black Snake & Triton.

1835 Jany 1st. Started in the morning in the canoes about 5 miles by the river about 2 1/2 miles due south and came to a rapid in attempting to ascend which got filled with water and afterward in towing with the line she broke loose and went down stream we recovered her after a long run and ascended again to the rapid and it being near night camped killed today one fine fat goose warm south wind rain snow deeper as we proceed and is now about 2 feet country rough and covered with pines set 4 traps for beaver today and am in hopes to have one for breakfast.

2nd. Went to my traps found nothing then made snow shoes and set out with one man to explore the river took a due south course and in 3 or 4 miles came unexpectedly to the river there running smooth. I was happy to see it as I was entirely tired of this mode of travelling my shoes were too small and I frequently sunk into the snow and bothered me much to get out again sometimes I would tread on my shoes and fall down and on the whole I though[t] I could get along better

without them returned to camp killed three ducks for four of us small allowance with our men took our boat up to the rapids and spent the residue of the day in getting our canoe past the rapid most of the time up to my middle in this cold water had to make a portage at last of about 1/4 of a mile the river here makes a detour to the E. and around S. to west to the place where we take our things across.

3rd. Raised our traps and found one beaver caught the largest I ever saw I think he weighed 65 lbs. and killed one duck a very seasonable supply of food the residue of the day finished making the portage and sett 8 traps the other Boat also got setting above Snow today and rained hard last night nearly all night. Wind Strong N.W. the first wind beside S. since 10 days.

4th. Found but one beaver in our traps took a jaunt up the river at about 6 miles straight line S. the river forks into two apparently equal streams followed the left one about 2 miles S. by E. and returned to camp tired enough having found only sign enough in this distance to set 3 traps the river winds so that we have to paddle twice the real distance rained and snowed some during the day. Saw for the first time on this route swans they appear plenty here country still timbered but much more level.

5th. Caught 3 Beaver rained and snowed hard all last night and part of today raised camp and camped about 2 miles below the forks mentioned yesterday one of the beaver caught today would weigh I should think 70 lbs. and our fires look finely with sundry roasting sticks around full of meat the beaver are fat and we live finely again. Wind strong and south.

6th Rained all the forenoon and hail and snow all the afternoon caught no beaver saw very little sign heard a rapid or fall ahead killed 2 swans so fat that we could not eat all the grease a rear thing in this country to be troubled with fat Seems good to live well after poor horse meat and short supply Shall lay down the course tomorrow when I get it more accurately today being too thick to see and the river more winding than ever timber less plenty and very small and but little of the large kind of pine country as far as we can see very level with here and there a round conical mountain.

7th Started up the river to sett traps found sign for but one and returned to camp at the same place as last night killed one swan which would weigh I should think 35 lbs. to fat to eat one we eat yesterday yielded nearly 2 qts. of oil more than we could eat with it. These birds are delicious it is strange that one only does two of us two meals that is to say a day. They dont eat so in the states day pretty cold wind S.W. strong little snow today and some sun out the bed of the river is a soft white stone or hard clay the same as found on the Clacamas I think it is of the chalk formation.

8th Remained all day at same camp on account of a severe snow storm it snowed all day and fell about one foot Blew strong from the South which is almost constant wind here.

9th went down the river and raised some traps we had set there and returned to same camp The river from the last place [to] where I brought it runs S.E. 1 mile at which point a fork coming

from the Eastward but it was frozen up so we could not ascend it then south 5 miles to this camp.

10th. Snowed and rained all last night hard and today so we are blessed with about 8 inches of slush makes every thing very uncomfortable did not move camp.

11th. Last night grew cold and set in for a hard snow storm with a gale of wind from the W.S.W. which continued without intermission until sunset today so we did not move camp the cracking of the falling trees and the howling of the blast was more grand than comfortable it makes two individuals feel their insignificance in the creation to be seated under a blanket with a fire in front and 3 1/2 feet of snow about them and more coming and no telling when it will stop. tonight tis calm and nearly full moon it seems to shine with as much indifference as the storms blow and wether for weal or woe, we two poor wretches seem to be little considered in the matter. The thoughts that have run through my brain while I have been lying here in the snow would fill a volume and of such matter as was never put into one, my infancy, my youth, and its friends and faults, my manhoods troubled stream, its vagaries, its aloes mixed with the gall of bitterness and its results viz under a blanket hundreds perhaps thousands of miles from a friend, the Blast howling about, and smothered in snow, poor, in debt, doing nothing to get out of it, despised for a visionary, nearly naked, but there is one good thing plenty to eat health and heart.

12th. Started up stream and made S. 6 miles at which point there is a considerable creek coming in from W.S.W. water as warm as the main river and not frozen up. Then 3 miles S.S.E. and camped. Saw but little beaver sign today river not very rapid but winding saw only two swans could not kill them caught one yearling beaver spit snow all day at night set in to snow hard moderately cold wind S. but moderate.

13th. 6 miles W. by N. creek very winding and more rapid than usual and camped just below a severe rapid fine sun in the forenoon but cloudy and snow spits in the afternoon and this evening.

14th. Snowed about 4 inches last night. Today pretty cold passed the rapid on the south side of the south channel there being a small island at this place just above the island there is a raft of drift timber which extends across the whole river this we made a portage of for about 6 rods at the rapid I hauled the canoe wading in the water about waist deep and remaining in it about 3 hours and got quite numb but at last got through with it we then ascended the river 3 miles more in good water but very winding S.W. to make which I think we paddled 8 miles to another rapid not severe finding that it would take some time and being obliged to return to camp soon concluded not to pass this rapid and returned to the first rapid and set 6 traps day windy from S.W. and some snow and sunshine.

15th. Last night excessively cold the cracking of the trees kept me awake part of the night and night before I was kept up most of the night by a fever arising from indigestion today cold calm and clear as the sun got high it was extremely pleasant and this is the only day I have seen that would pass for a pleasant one in a good climate this winter went to the traps found nothing descended the rapid after another cold job in the water and returned to our camp of the 13th inst on

the way down saw 5 swan the first since the 12th but killed nothing but 3 ducks We are getting short of provisions again at evening very cold again.

16th Started down the stream and made the portage of the falls about one hour after sunset last night the ther. must have been 10 below zero and the river scum over with drift ice which made us make haste for if we should get frozen up here it would be hard times for food the water fowl and beaver would be done and other game there is absolutely none and to travel would be almost impossible there is four feet of snow however we could try snow shoes Killed 4 ducks and one swan today the latter would weigh at least 45 lbs. a very seasonable supply as all our food gave out this morning. Day calm sunny not very cold tonight strong south wind and rain.

17th. Moved camp down stream about a mile and found our other boat with Mr. Richardson & Rob[in]son the latter during the severe cold had frozen his toes and fingers and the former was unwell with a numbness in his hips they reported to me that the beaver on this creek had made them sick probably this was what was the matter with me there is plenty of wild parsnip here they raised camp with us and we stopped the canoes where we built them and made a portage of 1/4 of a mile this severe work in deep snow we then decended about 3 miles and came to rapids part of which we let our boats over by the line in about 1/2 mile more came to worse rapids and made a portage of about 1/3 mile then immediately let the boats down further rapids about 100 rods to do which I had to remain in the water the whole time it was after dark when I got through the other boat got nearly through and gave it up and I suppose have camped without fire or food. The river falls at each of these carrying places at least 50 feet Rained most all day.

18th. Went up above the last rapid to see the other boat found them comfortably camped they made a portage of their things and I attempted to run their boat empty just as I took the Shute the bow struck a rock I did not see she swung round filled at once and commenced whirling over like a top I hung to her and passed without further damage than mashing both of my feet severely between the boat and a rock was in much pain all this day but not very lame we run by the river about two miles and passed some bad rapids then made a portage of about a 1/4 mile into a slew of the river which we followed about 1/4 mile further then were forced to make a bad portage up a steep bank of lava about 100 feet this portage about 1/4 mile we then ran about two miles further and camped snow here not so deep as above and apparently diminishing fast men much tired and discouraged and wish to abandon the canoes which I do not mean to do until I am obliged to cashed at the first portage today 22 traps good weather today.

19th. Started down stream and ran a continuous rapid for about 2 miles we let our boats down about 1/4 mile then crossed the river and let the boats down a few rods and finding the river was pretty much all rapids and falls concluded to abandon the boats cashed all but our blankets books amunition axe and kettles and took it on foot with about 60 lbs each on our backs and 1 foot of hard snow into which we sank sometimes and sometimes not it however diminished as we proceeded we made about 6 miles and saw plenty of deer and camped killed one which was just in time as a little piece of swan was all the meat left in camp. I am very tired hungry but the deer will cure all this there is little snow at this place our camp I think can not be far off on the other side of

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

the river I can see a grassy plain of about 30 miles long and about 5 wide bare of snow snowed a little this morning day fine tonight freezing a little.

20th. Started late sore footed but with a full belly and an addition of about 20 lbs of meat each we made about 6 miles and passed our camp of the 22nd and 23rd ult. about 1 mile further we crossed a small fork the one we before crossed on the ice then S. 2 miles and camped and tried hard for a deer but could not get one altho we saw a great many day fine this evening cool grass not much covered with snow see no sign of camp yet.

21st. Made 2 miles N. to the river and camped took a turn down the river about 5 miles to look for some sign of our camp found a little Indian sign of about the same age but nothing of our people. Afternoon went out to a high hill to the W. and made a large pile of brush and after dark set fire to it in order that if our people are near that they may see it and come to us sent a man over the river to look but he could not cross but he saw one of their camps shall go tomorrow and ascertain if it so killed nothing today so we shall have no breakfast in the morning day fine tolerable cool 1 inch of snow last night which went off today.

22nd Snowed part of last night and rained the residue and the forenoon of today snow the rest and part of the night in morning our hunter went out and wounded a deer which the wolves ran down but before he could find him they had eaten up all but enough for 2 meals this morning breakfasted on two beaver tails which I had laid by and forgotten so we have not yet on this trip lost a meal as yet myself in the morning made a raft and endeavored to cross the river but found I had selected a bad place and could not do it went above found a better place made another raft and succeeded found one of our camps so we now have some clew to camp and shall push for it after getting a small supply of meat beforehand wind strong southwardly camped this night in a cave of the rocks one mile W. of last nights camp.

23rd. Moved down to camp of 22nd inst and went out to hunt killed nothing myself but Mr Richardson killed a fawn so we have 2 meals ahead besides two nights supper Mr R. is sick of a bad cold in his chest and some biles on his neck and cannot carry his pack Rained steady all day.

24th. Made 12 miles N. by W. and using what looked like a fine ford I tried to wade the river but at first failed went a little lower and succeeded and got back safe but benumbed with cold and after warming myself at a fire which the rest had built took my things across and built a roaring fire to warm the others as they came over here found some beaver cuttings saw but little deer or sign today cold wind W. cloudy snow nearly gone.

25th. Made 10 miles N. and seeing a little deer sign stopped and our hunter went out during the march we heard a gun on the west side of the river we fired guns and were answered toward night a little Snake Indian came to us and induced us to go to their camp which was among the cedars about 5 miles N.E. we found them without meat but we bought of them a lean dog of which we made supper and enough left for breakfast so tis rub and go. there were three lodges they had no guns but had killed much deer as proved by the number of skins they had last night and this fore-

noon snowed about 5 inches today rained and melted most of it no water except snow and that dirty at this camp.

26th. Under the guidance of a Snake Indian we struck N.W. to the river 7 miles and forded it at a rapid and waist deep ford then W. by N. 4 miles and came to 8 lodges of Snakes here our guide I suppose heard that our camp had moved and backed out of his job by running away we then struck N.W. 8 miles and came to the small river on which we [camped] the 18th 19th and 20th ulto here we saw one Indian who ran from us who appeared to be a Snake. while we were debating which course to pursue we espied 4 Indians on the opposite side of the creek these we spoke and they Informed us where our camp was and one of them took my pack to it they had killed several deer but we thought to get to camp and did not take any we made from the creek N.N.W. up a very steep high hill 5 miles and coming very dark we camped for the first time this trip without supper and me without blanketts and tired enough.

27th. Got up and having no breakfast to cook or eat started the earlier and moved N.N.W. 2 miles and the rest refused to go further preferring to wait until some chance Indian should come along hunting to take them the right way to camp I having no pack started in quest of it and passing the N.N.W. course in 1 1/2 mile found it on a little thread of water running N. and deep snow during the time we had been gone they had Bled 20 deer and had not starved the Walla Walla Indians are here hunting. They go out on their horses and run them and as the deer get tired the Inds. get good shots at them but the number wounded is much greater than that killed on these the wolves feast at night and keep up a continual howl after these last comes the ravens for their share I found missing from yesterday 6 horses among which was my two fine riding horses and three others which have been stolen by the Snakes who are up to this kind of dealing today sent men to look for the 6 and they brot but one day fine for any country and warm tonight freezing cold.

28th. Sent out two men again for the 5 missing horses and after finding the residue which not until noon started N. by W. and after 12 miles struck the old trail on which I came up about 6 miles from our camp of 16 & 17 day very fine nothing to eat tonight but a little flour camped on a little stream made by the thawing of the snow.

29th Rose early and without any breakfast started down the valley on which we camped last night which joins a large fork of the Des Shutes in about 3 miles from this and leaving the old trail on which I came up to the left made N.N.E. 2 miles then leaving the valley to the left made 1 1/2 miles N.E. then going down a very steep and high cut rock bank E. 1 mile crossed the large fork of the Des Shutes about 2 miles below my camp of the 16th and 17th ulto. this ford is deeper and more rapid than the one I made before possibly the stream is higher on account of the thawing of the snow We are camped with about 12 lodges of Walla Wallas they have at this moment a good supply of meat deer which they are drying I presume they have not often so much on hand as they seem to value it highly on my arrival I made the chief a good present to induce him to influence his people to trade but as yet have traded of root and meat but about 3 days supply I intend waiting here three nights in order that they make another hunt and then perhaps I may get a sufficient supply to take me down. Tomorrow is Sunday and there will be neither trading nor hunting in

this camp this is my birthday but I have forgotten how old I am

30th This unless my reconing is wrong is Sunday at day dawn the chief called the Inds. to prayers which consist of a short recitation followed by a tune in which all join without words after which a note in accord to wind off this is repeated several times on Sunday and is a dayly practice at daylight to day the two men sent for the horses came in and brought 4 2 of which were my riding horses this day warm as June in N.E. and no snow in this valley.

31st The Inds. commence their meal with religious ceremonys and then come and beg a smoke the day is also closed with religious ceremonies traded about 2 days provisions of the Indians day fine as summer and the grass begins to start a little

Feb. 1st Started [from] camp early and made 8 miles N. by E. over a trail which we followed the latter part of the 16 ulto. I then laid the course S.S.W. to make our camp of the 16 & 17 which was about 1 mile above our last nights camp traded today about 2 days provisions looked at the rocks a little and as the country has been the same as far as I have been a description of the bluffs here will answer for the whole. There are some cut blufs of Basalt in its original position but they are chiefly a very coarse sand stone of an ash color in layers some of which are finer and some coarser it is soft and is composed of rubble stone of lava and primitive rocks it sometimes contains organic remains bones I have taken out of it in a fosil state a small piece of which I have preserved Today cloudy and on the high land over which we came today it was quite chilly but in the valley of the Small creek on which we are camped it is warm latter part of the day sunny.

2nd Moved camp N. by E. 8 miles over a plain and pretty good trail leaving entirely the route which I followed coming up the Indians killed some deer grass appears better day cloudy or foggy until about noon when the sun came out like April in N.E.

3rd This day the Indians concluded not to move camp I therefore requested the chief to call on his people to come and trade meat they traded about 6 days provisions and I left them following the trail N. by E. 8 miles to a creek which we crossed in our march of the 12th ulto. the Banks of this creek is of fine deep red clay and at this camp there is a hot spring too hot to bear the hand in long and smoking like a coal pit it tastes of sulphur and iron and deposits a whitish substance on the pebbles as it dries away we hear for the first time this season the croaking of the frogs trail good, grass good, day cloudy and chill. Ther in spring 191 deg.

4th. Early in mng. took my thermometer to ascertain the heat of the spring found it to be 134 deg and took a good bath by going a little distance down the stream to find a suitable temperature and this first time for a long while feel myself pretty clean. rose camp and crossed the little stream on which we camped and leaving the Indian trail struck N.N.E. and in 6 miles came to the main river Des Shutes along which we found a small trail we made 4 miles N. and camped during this distance the river could be run by a good boatman but it is almost a continued rapid the rocks of this march appear to be all shades between green and red similar to the earth it appears by being porous to be volcanic the first course of the march very miry the last firm and pretty good, grass

improving, day cloudy in morning sunny this afternoon. Saw much Big Horn and deer sign by the way.

5th. Made along the river 1 mile N. then west 2 miles up a mountain then N. 1 mile and down a ravine then E.N.E. 2 miles to the main river again and down a ravine then 7 miles N. by E. along the main river and camped trail plain all the way but very hilly and stony grass good, day at first cloudy and on the mountain much hoar frost in afternoon sunny the upper part of the mountain was of mica slate very much twisted this afternoon the rock was volcanic and in some places underlaid with green clay Saw today small bolders of a blackrock which from its fracture I took to be bituminous coal but its weight was about that of hornblende perhaps it might be Obsidian but I think was heavier than any I have ever seen river all this days march might be run if there is no bad place where I cut the mountain saw Big Horn trails but not the game.

6th Made along the river 4 miles N. by W. during which space saw nothing that might not be passed by a good boatman then mounted the W. bank of the river and came to a large cedar plain 3 miles N. by W. then N. by E. over the plain 6 miles more to tinkers camp in crossing at this camp wet my cases with all my papers by a horse falling in the river while fording day cloudy with a little snow found this branch some higher than when I passed up here we found and raised a small cash which I made on my way up and during the march sent two men to raise another which I made at the next camp above from these Indians I hear that [of] my runaway Kanackas 10 took the trail over the Blue one was drowned in crossing some ford one froze in the upper country that the residue rafted the Snake river one more died somehow about the falls that 7 are gone down to Vancouver tonight traded 8 dogs for their fat to kill the lice on my horses.

7th Early in the day the two men sent to raise the cash came in with its contents undamaged exchanged at this camp a poor little lame, mare for a tolerable horse in pretty good order traded for a knife each 6 dogs today used the grease of these dogs to kill the lice on my horses that are nearly covered with them day cloudy but not cold in the valley Mount Hood bears 1/2 point N. of N.W. sick myself of a bowell complaint cashed at this camp 1 1/3 bales corn and 7 setts shoes and nails.

8th N.N.W. 16 miles in the first place 2 miles to the top of an elevated range of woodless hills which skirt the west side of the creek on which we camped then down the slope of these hills 4 miles more during this space much snow then struck into a little creek which we followed 6 miles then the left bank of this creek to another and larger fork of the same 4 miles and camped in good grass This creek comes from the S.W. and is now as large as the small creek on which I camped the first night after leaving the mouth of the river Des Shutes on my way up there are several Indians with me who say that once there was much beaver on this creek but that the British Cos have trapped it out day cloudy a few drops of rain.

9th Moved camp early on a plain and good trail N.N.W. 10 miles to the Dalls after following on this trail 3 miles we came to a small creek coming from the W.S.W. and joining the one on which we camped last night and at 5 miles more another which either joins the same very near the Columbia or goes into the Columbia found Soaptilly [Tilki?] and a few more Chinooks at the river

Captain Nathniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

of whom I traded one horse and a canoe they report 7 Canackas gone down and that one was drowned at the falls and one froze in the mountains leaving one unaccounted for rained a little today.

10th Started early in a very leaky canoe which kept us bailing all the time and made 8 miles N.W. 5 W. and 3. S.W. 1 west and on account of high wind camped about noon a little rain as usual.

11th. At about sunsett last night the wind lulled a little and we made a start but the wind continued high and about 2 ock we arrived at the Cascades a little above which we camped this morning went to the Cascades and there found Mr Ermatinger with a brigade of 3 boats taking up the outfits for the upper forts also Capt. Stewart Mr Ray [William G. Rae] and one more gentleman made the portage and in 12 hours made the saw mill.

12th. In the morning made to Vancouver and found there a polite reception and to my great astonishment Mr Hall J. Kell[e]y he came in Co. with Mr [Ewing] Young from Monte El Rey [Monterey] and it is said stole between them a bunch of Horses Kelly is not received at the Fort on this account as a gentleman a house is given him and food sent him from the Gov. Table but he is not suffered to mess here I also found 7 of my runaway Kanackas they appear to be very sick of their job so I have concluded not to be severe with them I hear also that Fort Hall has traded 300 skins up to what time do not know or how true also that Tom Bule & Harry two more of the runaways are with some of McKays men on Snake River they will probably fall in at Fort Hall

13th Went down to the station at Carneaus and found all well and doing pretty well. This is Sunday and I have lost 3 days somewhere. During the residue of this month sent Mr. Richardson to the Dalles with supplies for the party which I left above trapping he had tempestuous weather and was gone 13 days myself took a trip up the Wallamut to look after the farm and my taylor who had deserted me during the winter after Richardson had gone I took a small canoe and proceeded up the Columbia and in my progress got filled with the violence of the wind and quantity of rain I arrived at Vancouver in the mornig 23rd Feb. and met a reception such as one loves to find in such a country as this

24th Started down the Columbia to the mouth of the Wallamut up which about 4 miles to the head of Wappatoo Islands here finding the canoe too deep to proceed against the rapid current of this river now very high we put down the west slew and crossed over the first bank of the river into the waters back and went to the Farm of Mr Thomas McKay and procured horses and went by land this took us all of the 25 & 26 both of which days it rained hard all the little streams made us swim our horses and some of the open prairies were swimming and much of them wading at night of the 26th arrived at Sandy camp just above which I had begun a farm.

27th Went to the farm and found the Taylor and Sloat [Stout?] the foreman gone down to see me they having heard of my return during the day went up to Mr Lees place in order to get Babtiste to school with him in which I succeeded

28th returned to Camp Sandy rain today

29th. [Mar 1] Started for McKay Farm during a hard rain and snow

30th. [Mar 2] Arrived at McKays farm

31st. [Mar 3] Back to station at Carneaus place and here found my runaway Taylor [Thornberg.]

Mar 1 [Mar 4] From this time until the 8th employed him in getting out coopers stuff and timber for a house boat which I intend to build.

Apl 13th Sunday I suppose employed in getting out stuff for the house boat in cutting 8000 hoop poles and in building a canoe 60 feet long wide and deep enough to chamber barrells of which she will take 25 she is clean of knotts shakes and almost of sap and 27 feet cut off the same tree of the same kind of stuff the whole tree was 242 feet long and this by no means the largest tree on Wappatoo Island this is of the Spruce kind today I am on my way down to Fort William where the Brig lay to regulate matters there I have just parted from Mr McLaughlin Esq. on his way to view the Fallatten [Tualatin] plains I suppose with some idea of making him a farm there some day I have now out of 21 people 7 sick and little work can be done after deducting from the remaining 14 a provision boat to trade food and enough to take care of the sick up to the first of this month it rained continually and about 1/4 of the time since I find the plows which I brought from the States of no use in the new lands here no news as yet from Bg. [Brig] or Capt Thing So far with much exertion we provided ourselves with food but the whites in this country are exhausted of all kinds.

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.

Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country.  
Second Expedition - 1834

---

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

- To George Simpson, York Factory, dated Fort Colville March 12th 1833  
To Captain Bonneville of Salmon River, dated June 22d 1833.  
To Mr. Thomas Nuttall (Cambridge), dated Heads of Lewis River July 4th 1833  
To Doct. McLaughland, Fort Vancouver, sent by Mr. Ermatinger, undated  
To Mr. F. Ermatinger, dated Green River July 18th 1833  
To Mr Henry Hall and Mess Tucker and Williams, dated Cambridge Nov. 8th 1833  
To Mess. J. Baker & Son, dated Nov 17th 1833  
To Geo. Simson Esq, dated Boston Nov 20th 1833  
To Mr. M.G. Sublette, dated [Cambridge Nov 19th 1833]  
To Leond Jarvis Esq (Ba[l]to.), dated Cambridge Nov 31st, 1833  
To Mr Jas Worthington (Flonsante Co Missouri), dated Cambridge Dec 9th 1833  
To Mr. M.G. Sublette, dated Cambridge Jany 2d 1833[4]  
To Mr M Sublette (N York), dated Boston Jany 4th 1834  
To wife, dated St. Louis March 31st 1834  
To Thos Fitzpatric or Co., in the Rocky Mountains, dated One day this side the Blue May 12th 1834  
To Mess Thomas Fitzpatric & Co., dated Sweet Water June 9th 1834  
To Mess Tucker & Williams, dated Hams Fork of the Colorado of the West July 1st 1834  
To Mr. [M.] G. Sublette, dated Hams Fork July 1st 1834  
To Friend Ermatinger, dated Bear River July 5th 1834  
To Mr Francis Payette, dated Bear River July 5th 1834  
To Capt. Bonneville, dated Sept. 1st 1834 (at Grand Ronde)  
To Capt Bonneville, dated [No address given.] Sept. 1st 1834  
To Friend Weld, dated Wappatoo Island Ap 3d 1835  
To John McLoughlin Esqr, dated Fort Vancouver 5th May 1836

1.

TO George Simpson  
York Factory  
Fort Colville March 12th 1833  
Sir

I am induced by gentlemen in this country to suppose that you would enter into some arrangement for a supply of goods and therefore send the enclosed proposal. I left the Boston in March last with 32 men with the intention of forming on the Columbia or south of it [a post] for collecting furs and salmon to be sent to the States by vessells ordered therefrom such vessells to bring out the goods required for the trade. My plan was based on the following grounds viz. that Salmon (worth in the States 16\$ per Bbl. of 30 gallons) would pay all the expenses that goods introduced by this route would be entitled to the drawback and this would be a consideration as they are nearly all foreign to the States and being coarse pay a heavy duty, that the saving made in the purchase of horses here instead of at St. Louis is at least 25\$ per head, that the danger of transporting this side of the mountains is infinitely less than on the other and the distance to the Fur country much less. In the first part of said undertaking I have completely failed. All my men have

---

left me and what goods and valuables I had with me have been expended or deposited where they will probably be lost to me. I am now on my return to the States for the purpose of forming new arrangements to carry my original plan into execution. In case I make no arrangement with the Co. I shall if I arrive in Boston by the 1st Nov. next come to the Columbia the following summer, if I arrive later I shall be delayed until the next.

It appears to me that as an American I possess some advantage that an Englishman would not inasmuch as I can visit parts of the country from which he is excluded and still not so remote in point of distance difficulty or expense as from St. Louis.

I have already lost largely from a capital at first small and am therefore desirous to proceed on a more secure plan even if it should offer less prospect of profit. I have to observe that in case of agreement being made I will give surety satisfactory to the Co. for fulfilling any part of the same or if required will deposit in their hands a sufficient sum for the same purpose. The only objection to the latter would be the difference in the rate of interest in the states and with you.

In case of an agreement for supply of goods the supply of men would still be a consideration. If men could come to this side of the Ry. Mts. as early as July a fall hunt might be made which is all that can be done from St. Louis. Canadians are to be had cheaper than Americans and are for some purposes better men. Their conveyance would not be so expensive as horses would be saved which cost 30\$ at St. Louis and the same set of animals are fit for a full hunt. I would not wish more than 15 Canadians. These might be procured by myself or agent or furnished me by the Co. as they might elect and the residue of the men required might be procured in the Mts. without the expense of bringing them into the country or learning them the ways of it. If no political difficulty exists there must be some advantage in using a few Canadians. Should you deem it for the interest of the Co. to close with me an agreement not essentially different from the enclosed proposal you would much oblige me by forwarding to my address care of Mess. Jarvis & Brown Merchants Baltimore Maryland a contract to the purpose which I will execute and immediately proceed to fulfill. I request this mode of procedure because I will have but one month after my arrival at Boston to prepare for a voyage to the Columbia, in case of failure of this negotiation with the Co.

Yrs &c N J W

Copy of the proposal enclosed in the two foregoing letters

[To Simpson and McLoughlin]

1st The Hon H.B.C. to furnish at their store at Vancouver to N.J.W. such goods as he may select at the same rate that the clerks of the said Co pay for the goods supplied them viz 50 pr ct on their original cost

2d The said Co to lay no obstruction in the way of the said Wyeths trading at any post or place for provisions or animals to be used in his business or to his trading furs anywhere south of the

Columbia and not within a 100 miles of their posts and generally in matters indifferent to their interest to forward his views and operations and to give him such information as may be in their power and not inconsistent with their immediate interest

3d The said Co to Cr the acc. of said Wyeth at the rate of \$5 for full Beavers and in proportion for kittens and yearlings and for all other furs and skins usually secured by the said Co. as merchandise at the same prop. to their market value in London or wherever that Co. dispose of their furs as 5\$ is to the market value of the Beaver skin.

4th The said Wyeth to deliver all Furs and skins of every description of which he may get possession to the Co.

5th Said Wyeth to continue the arrangement for five years and in case of his not doing so to be bound not to do a Fur business in any country to which the H.B. Co. have access.

6th In case said Wyeth faithfully performs this said agreement, then the H.B.Co. at the end of the time agreed on is to pay over to him any balance that may be due him in cash or goods as the said W. may elect and at all times he is entitled to claim from them in case any balance which may be due him over and above \$1000.

2.

To Captain Bonneville of Salmon River June 22d 1833.

Sir

I send you the following proposition for a mutual hunt in the country south of the Columbia river which I visited last autumn and winter. As to the prospect of Beaver there I will only say that I have no doubt of taking 300 skins fall and spring. As much sign as would give me this I have seen. I have little doubt much more might be found, but in that country a hunt cannot be made with horses alone, boats must be used. I have obtained some maps of the country beside my own observations in it, and I have little doubt but I can make my way through it without guides, who cannot be procured. As this country is distant an immediate answer is required. As it regards the mules Horses would do but are by no means so good for grass in some places is very bad. If the number required is a very great objection I would do but goods enough to buy 3 more must be given in their stead. The men that are wanted must be good, peaceable and industrious, but need not be trappers. I would prefer good men who have not been more than one year in the country. In case of agreement being made you are to engage to deliver what letters I wish to send home, a boy about 13 years old and about 25 lbs. sundrys. The expenses of the boy in the States my brother in N. York will pay to whom he is delivered. The boy will have a mule to carry him. With so many animals as I have and so few men I cannot come to the forks [Henry's Fork and Snake River] and I think these Indians will go no further than where in your route to Green River you strike the plain of the Three Buttes. There I hope to see you and in case you accede to the proposal, with all the things required in it, this hunt to be for one year to meet you at your rendezvous of next year

---

the furs to be equally divided between us and I to have the right to take mine at any time during the year yourself to have the right to send a man to see to your interests -

PROPOSITION.

TO BE FURNISHED BY MR. B.

9 men, armed, clothed for the year with saddles &c  
12 mules  
9 skins dressed for making boats  
40 good traps  
1 doz files  
4 doz knives  
20 lbs tobacco  
200 lbs grease, if possible  
3 bales Indian meat  
a few small tools  
3 axes  
12 pair Horse shoes (if you have them.)  
4 pack saddles and Harness.  
6 pair of lashes  
25\$ for cost of sundrys  
25 lbs. powder and lead with it.

TO BE FURNISHED BY MR. WYETH.

19 horses  
3 mules  
20 traps  
3 men with myself  
2 doz knives  
1 Lodge  
Cooking apparatus  
vermillion.  
fish Hooks a few sundrys.  
10 lbs powder and lead.  
14 pr. Horse shoes.  
4 pack saddles and Harness.

- said man to do duty the same as the other men and to have no other control than to secure your interest in the division of the skins. In case you are ready to make this arrangement you need make no doubt of my being ready to enter at once on it except that in the mean time I loose my animals.

You to have the liberty of sending a load of goods to pay off the men you furnish. All property at

---

the risk of its owner, neither to be responsible for the debts of the other.

Yrs &c.

[No signature.]

3.

Heads of Lewis River July 4th 1833

Mr. Thomas Nuttall (Cambridge)

Dear Sir

I have sent through my brother Leond of N. York a package of plants collected in the interior and on the western coast of America somewhere about Latt 46 deg. I am afraid they will be of little value to you. The rain has been so constant where I have been gathering them that they have lost their colors in some cases, and they will be liable to further accident on their route home.

I shall remain here one more year. You if in Camb. may expect to see me in about one year from the time you receive this. I shall then ask you if you will follow another expedition to this country in pursuit of your science. The cost would be less than living at home.

I have several times attempted to preserve birds to send you but have failed from the moisture and warmth. Excuse the shortness of this as I have many letters to write and little time to do it in.

Resply Yr. obt. servt. Nathl. J Wyeth

P. S. By the notes on the paper my journal will show the place from which the plant comes if kept in its proper sheet until I come home.

4.

["This letter sent by Mr. Ermatinger" written across the face.]

Dear Sir

Having arr[i]ved at the camp of Mr. Bonneville I take the liberty [of] writing you by this last opportunity to express how much I am under obligation to Mr. Ermatinger for the polite and agreeable manner in which he has dispensed your hospitality to me during the whole route.

I am here in a direct train for the States, and cannot without some extraordinary accident fail of reaching home in Oct. next. Should you visit the states I would feel myself highly honored by a visit or any intercourse which might be agreeable to you for which purpose I have enclosed my direction. Should any of your friends visit the States a letter would procure them any attention which may be in my power. It will be a pleasure to execute any business commands with which

you may entrust me. Models of Agricultural implements, seeds and other matters connected with your tastes or business.

Resply. yr. obt. Servt. Nathl. J. Wyeth

To Doct. McLaughland Fort Vancouver.

5.

Green River July 18th 1833

Mr. F. Ermatinger

Dear Sir

I arrived here on the 16th 9 days from your camp Saw no Indians but saw the bones of Mr More killed by the Blkfeet last year and buried them. He was one of my men who left me in Pier[r]es Hole last year. A Mr Nudd was also killed by them. All the rest arrived well in the States. I found here about 250 whites. A list of the Cos. and their Beaver which I have seen I subjoin. I should have been proud of my countrymen if you could have seen the American Fur Co. or the party of Mr. S. Campbell. For efficiency of goods, men, animals and arms, I do not believe the fur business has afforded a better example or discipline. I have sold my animals and shall make a boat and float down the Yellowstone and Missouri and see what the world is made of there. Mr. Wm Sublette and Mr Campbell have come up the Missouri and established a trading fort at each location of the posts of the Am. Fur Co. with a view to a strong opposition. Good luck to their quarrels. I have got letters from the States. The chief news are that the Cholera Morbus has swept through them killing 5000 people in N York and in proportion elsewhere. Genl. Jackson president an insurrection in the Southern States on acc. of the Tariff but quelled by Blocading their ports and the repeal of the most obnoxious parts of the same. About 25 Americans have been killed during the last year. A Snake village is here with us. I find Bonnevilles connections are responsible [A statement that he has a draft from B. for horses follows but is crossed out.] he being very short of them. He lost one entire party among the Crows that is the Horses and of course all the Beavers. A party under Bridger and Frapp also lost their horses by the Aricarees, also Harris party lost theirs by the same Inds. who have taken a permanent residence on the Platte and left the Missouri which is the reason I go by the last named river. Harris party did not interfere with any of my plans south of Snake River.

In my opinion you would have been Robbed of your goods and Beaver if you had come here altho it is the west side of the Mts. for Green River emtys into the head of the Gulph of California. I give you this as an honest opinion which you can communicate to the Co. There is here a great majority of Scoundrels. I should much doubt the personal safety of any one from your side of the house.

My Respects to Mr. Payette and believe me yr. sincere friend

Nathl J. Wyeth.

Drips and Fontenelle arrd July 8th 160 men a good supply of animals. Obtained 51 packs of 100 lbs ea. Beaver.

Rocky Mtn. Fur Co. 55 packs 55 men well supplied one party not in Beaver sent home by Mr. Campbell.

Mess. Bonneville & Co. 22 1/2 packs. Few goods few horses and poor Capt. Cerry goes home B. remains.

Harris party now in hand 7 packs Beaver and are on foot.

6.

Cambridge Nov. 8th 1833

Mr Henry Hall and Mess Tucker and Williams

Gent.

In order to understand the nature of that branch of the Fur trade in which I propose to operate I deem it requisite to enter into a short account of its size and progress. The statements which I shall make are such as I have heard and am confident are in the main true, but I do not pledge myself that every circumstance is so but only that I have heard them and believe them to be so and that the inferences are such as my best attention to the subject warrant.

About 12 years since Mr Wm H. Ashley engaged in the Indian trade essaying by various means to obtain furs. At the time he engaged in this undertaking he was bankrupt, but was a person of credit, which enabled him to get the requisite means. His first attempts were predicated upon the possibility of trading furs from the Indians in the interior for goods. In this he was not successful, and in the event became much reduced in means, and credit, but in the course of this business perceived that there was plenty of Beaver in the country to which he had resorted for trade, but great difficulty to induce the Indians to catch it. After many tryals of trading voyages he converted his trading parties into trapping parties. In the first establishment of this business he met with all the usual difficulties incident to new plans but still made something. About this time [1825] a Mr. Gardner one of his agents met a Mr. Ogden clerk of the H.B. Co. in the Snake Country at the head of a trapping party. Gardner induced the men of Ogdens party to desert by promises of supplyes and good prices for furs. The furs thus obtained amounted to about 130 packs or 13000 lbs. worth at that time about \$75000. The following year Ashley sold out to Smith Sublette & Jackson for about \$30000 and left the business, after paying up his old debts, worth about 50000\$. Smith Sublette & Jackson continued the business until 1829 and sold out to Milton Sublette Frapp Jervais Bridger and Thomas Fitzpatric, and in the stile of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. for 30000\$, dividing among them about 60000\$ for I think three years business. This last firm has continued the business since have paid the purchase money and have cleared their stock of goods and animals requisite for the business in the country but not being business men and unknown where the goods are to be bought have been dependent upon others for their suplies for which they have paid enormously to Mr. Wm. L. Sublette brother to a member of their firm. They have been

---

together three years and have made two returns amounting to 210 packs of furs, value nett about 80000\$ and received two outfits of goods, first cost about 6000\$ for which they have paid about 30000\$ and for returning their furs about 8000\$ leaving them after paying the first purchase about 12000\$ some of which must be due to men who have not received their pay in goods leaving them with little property except their Horses Mules and Traps and a few goods, and unavailable property.

Since the commencement of this species of business severall persons have attempted it, but all are now out of the way except Mess Dripps & Fontenelle fitted out by the Am. Fur Co. and Mess. Bonneville & Co. fitted out by men in New York. Neither of these last named Companies as far as I can ascertain have made money to any great extent, owing to enormous prices paid for the goods. The country to which these parties resort is extensive and there is plenty of room for them and many more, and if they made a little money, I do think if proper means are used that much could be made. After this short account of the present state of the business I proceed to sum up the expense of conducting it, as it is now done, in order to shew where a saving may be made. I shall omit saying any thing about duties on coarse woolens and other goods, used in this trade, which have to be paid when goods are sent by way of St. Louis and which may be saved when sent around the Horn.

The dry goods for an overland trip are best found in New York and the other articles in St. Louis. A small charge must be added for transport to St. Louis for those bought in N. York, say on 4000 lbs. including

Ins & Sundrys \$ 160.00

Baling of the above and Sundrys bought at St. Louis 100.00

50 pack saddles and 50 Riding Do 250.00

Hobbles and Halters for 100 animals 150.00

Shoeing for 100 animals 50.00

Corn and sundry for Horses 50.00

Saddle Blankets 100.00

50 men for 5 months at 15 per month 3750.00

Provisions to Buffaloe 100.00

Pack covers 50.00

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Am[m]unition 100.00

100 animals 3000.00

Guns 300.00

First cost of goods 3000.00

Six months interest on all charges except wages 222.00

-----

\$11382.00

being the Cost of transporting goods (including the first cost) of the value of \$3000 from St. Louis to the Trois Titons Long 110 deg. west Latt. about 43, Air line distance 900 miles.

In making an estimate of the cost of transporting the same amt. of goods from the head of navigation on the Columbia I shall make the difference in time and force required which from some knowledge I think just and also cost of Harness and Horses.

50 pack Saddles and 15 Saddles and 15 riding do to be bought of the Inds for about 25 cts. ea in goods 17.00

Halters and Hobbles for 65 animals 17.00

Buffaloes for blkts 30.00

15 men for 4 months at 15 per month 900.00

Provisions 100.00

Pack covers 50.00

Ammunition 25.00

Guns 90.00

65 animals at \$5 ea 325.00

First cost of goods 3000.00

-----

---

\$4554.00

Interest for 10 months on all charges except wages of men 182.00

-----

\$4736.00

being a difference of \$6646.00 in fav of transporting goods from the first rapids on the Columbia to the Trois Tetons Long 110 deg. west, Latt. 43 deg N. (and 400 miles air line) over and above St. Louis.

I have assumed a calculation of \$3000.00 because I have contracted to supply that amt. of goods as per the enclosed copy of contract and not because it is all that is required for the interior. The amt. now consumed in the section of country with which I am conversant is about 12000.00\$ first cost in N York. Whether in the end I could supply all goods wanted may be a question and of which you can judge as well as myself, but that men can be employed to trap beaver and paid as far as their wants require in goods the same as is now done I feel now the least doubt and to almost any extent, and that it can be done to a profit is proved by the fact that the business is one of great profit even as it is now conducted from St. Louis.

I shall now detail what I think may be done in order to get the goods wanted to the Columbia and the Furs home in such manner as that no part of the expense of the vessell may be charged to them. Salmon have been brought from the Columbia to Boston and I think sold for about \$16 per bbl. but I believe in not the best order which I suppose arose from their having been caught too long before they were salted. This I was told by persons who saw them put up. And if salmon are traded from the Indians there will always be some difficulty in this respect, but if salmon will bring \$12 per bbl. they will pay all the expenses of the vessell and leave a large allowance for the expenses of the post, at which they are caught. I make no doubt that enough could be taken when once the proper mode is adopted, but I have not been on the Columbia below the first rapids in the Salmon season, and should feel doubtfull as to the expediency of ordering out a vessell before I have made a thorough examination at the proper time of the year. While there last winter I sounded the bottom to ascertain depth on the fishing grounds and if the bottom was clear of snaggs and rocks and found it favorable. I have every confidence when the proper mode is known and adopted that this branch of the business will pay all the expenses of the vessell and leave the fur trade free from all charges in the shape of freight. The prominent advantages of supplying my own or the trapping parties of other concerns from the Pacific instead of St. Louis are safty of the country traversed, and consequent saving of men, shortness of distance, and low price and abundance of Horses on the Columbia. The latter circumstance alone would enable any company doing their business by that route to make a proffit equal to all expenses of transporting. The Horses in the mountains are brought from St. Louis chiefly, and cost about \$30, and when you consider that a trapping party uses 3 at least to a man this alone is a large and continual saving in

the business.

I will now proceed to state what I propose to do if I can find the means, and for the security of such persons as shall furnish me, I can give such names as I believe would be satisfactory. These names I will bring forward at the proper time. The enclosed contract was made with Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Sublette of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. when I was in doubt whether I would be able to perform it but knew I would be able to pay the default. The contract as you will perceive will amt. to little more than carrying me into the Indian country free of expense and procuring the business of a very efficient concern, in this light I hold it to be valuable.

I propose to fulfill this contract. This done if the Rocky Mountain Fur Co will sell me their remaining furs at such rate as I can make money or will pay me for transporting them to St. Louis I will fit out a party sufficient to send them down with all other furs then on hand. That they will do so I believe because if I supply them with goods no other party will be there to do it, and they will not have the means of doing it themselves in the country. If they should not do so, then I will proceed to a safe country on the Columbia River where some furs may be traded and there leave them with a few men leaving some men and a trusty person to keep them and trade as many more as he can. The residue of my party (their apparatus having been brought out at the same time with Sublettes goods) will be employed in the trapping business. During the last of the salmon season of 1834 I will be on the Columbia in order to see in what mode the Salmon may be taken in such quantity as will do for a vessell and also endeavor to make returns by some vessell that may happen to be there. If no such opportunity should occur then the furs must either remain in the country until a vessell can come out to receive them such vessell bringing apparatus salt bbls. &c for taking home a cargo of salmon and bringing also goods to supply the parties or when the first outfit is exhausted the whole return, and afterwards commence the undertaking by sea. In the mean time a proposal has been made to the H.B. Co to supply goods in the country and receive the furs as per the enclosed copy of proposition. Should I have no partners in this business I might in case of their acceding to it deem it for my interest to close with them, if I had partners I should probably not. Should you agree to give me the requisite supplies and I should afterwards close with them then you shall be entitled to your commissions the same as though the affairs passed through your hands. Should you join me as partners you will of course exercise your judgement in regard to it, but I have no expectations that the Co. will accede to it and made it with a view to get their ideas on the subject as much as with any expectation that they would close with me.

In case you agree to supply me for commissions and Interest the amt. wanted will not be far from 8 to 10,000\$ and wanted some by the first of January and from that to 1st March and in any case the cash would be required at the same period but the amt might be varied if you took partnership according to your views but I deem the smallest investment the best until more experience is obtained.

I will in conclusion observe that I consider all the coast and country North of the Columbia completely occupied by the English, and all east of the mountains by the Americans. From these

---

countries I expect nothing, but all that country lying south of the Lewis Fork of the Columbia and west of the mountains as far south as the settled parts of the Mexican territory is yet unexplored or nearly so. Into this section of country I have been, and have myself taken more than a pack of beaver in less than a month, and the furs of this region are excellent from their color, and goodness, and without doubt are reasonably abundant. One reason why this country has been so much neglected is that in it there are no Buffaloe, and hunters cannot live in the luxury that they like. Still with good economy of food enough may be found from the beaver, Elk, deer, and goat, of which there are some. Otter are plenty and good. Furs in this country would be good except about three months in the summer and by approaching the sea coast where the climate is warmer the hunt might continue all winter and thus add a great amt. to the years hunt without adding any thing to the expense.

&c &c N.J.W.

Enclosing copy of contract with Fitzpatric and Sublette and proposal to the Hon. H.B. Co.

7.

[No address.] Nov 17th 1833

Mess. J. Baker & Son

Gent

Below you have an estimate of the furs brot. in by the way of St. Louis for 1832 and 3. I have marked those which I have seen. The rest are from information which is as nearly correct as is requisite for your purpose. These furs are Beaver and otter, Land, about 1-20 of the latter.

I am Yr. obt. Servt. Nathl J Wyeth

90 packs from St. Fee

Seen- 30 Am. Fur Cos. party in the Mts. under Dripps and Fontenelle

Seen- 140 Rocky Mt. Fur Co. brot home by Wm. L. Sublette

120 Traded by the Am. Fur Co. at their posts on the Missouri (Astors Co.)

380 packs of 100 lbs. ea. 1832.

Seen- 62 Am. Fur Cos. party under Dripps and Fontenelle in Mts.

Seen- 61 Rocky Mtn. Fur Co brot home by Wm. L. Sublette

Seen- 30 Bonneville & Co brot home by Cerry to Alfred Seaton N. York.

90 Am. Fur Co Traded at their posts on the Missouri

60 probably from St. Fee returns not made when I left St. Louis.

---

303

The above are nearly all that came into the western States From the Arkansas and the Mississippi few Beaver are brot and whatever the quantity may be it must decrease yearly.

---

8.

Boston Nov 20th 1833

To Geo. Simson Esq

Sir

Since my last from Baltimore dated Oct. 26th 1833 I have ascertained that there was still time to forward a vessell to the Columbia to reach there by first of the salmon season and a vessell is now in a state of forwardness for this purpose, consequently all further negotiations for the present are at an end in regard to this subject. Had I been sure that you would have accepted I would have entered into no other arrangement but uncertain of this I could not let the opportunity pass. I regret that I have troubled you so much in this matter.

I am Yr. Obt. Servt. Nathl. J. Wyeth

9.

[Cambridge Nov 19th 1833]

Mr. M.G, Sublette

Sir

This is to inform you that I am now ready to fulfil the contract made with Mr. Fitzpatric and yourself on the 14th Augt 1833 at Big Horn River and to request that you will as soon as possible come to N. York where I will meet you. If by letter you inform me when you will be there please use this letter as an introduction to my Brother of the firm of Cripps and Wyeth Pearl St. N York importers of Lace goods, and leave with him directions where you may be found. I particularly wish to see you soon as I am about dispatching a vessell round Cape Horn to the mout[h] of the Columbia and would if possible wish to make contract to supply your Co. the following year.

I am &c. Nath. J. Wyeth

10.

Cambridge Nov 31st 1833

Leond Jarvis Esq (Ba[l]to.)

Dear Uncle

On my return from a journey eastward I found your very acceptable fav. of the 17th inst. In regard to the matter on which I asked advice I am happy to find that we agree. I did not ask your advice because I had any doubts as to the best course to pursue but because it was a matter in which the feelings of my friends were more concerned than my own. Had you advised different your advice would have been followed because I think one who has done so much for the respectability of his family has a right to be consulted in such matters. You say to all whose opinions you value on proper occasions vindicate your self. I value your good opinion much and will therefore explain a few circumstances of which Bells letters treat. John Wyeth tells many little lies but they

are of not much consequence. In Bells first letter to S.K. Livermore he says "One landing was at Point Comfort. Here our Captain was determined to make up lost time, and accordingly treated himself and some of the company very liberally to champagne and the usual effects of intemperate drinking succeeded." I deny none of these facts, but I deny the intended inference. Some of the men were worse of what they drank and Bell much more drunk than any other. If Bell had told that he threw a handkerchief full of eggs from the pier into the boat, or that I ste[e]red the boat to the vessell through a thick fogg about three miles with nothing to guide me but the stars he would have told the truth and the inference would have been somewhat plainer who "exhibited the effects of intemperate drinking." Beside this it is nonsense to suppose I had any lost time to make up. If I had had such a strong disposition to loose no time in drinking I might have carried a plenty of liquor with me. The fact that I carried some shews that there was no very strong desire for it. The facts out of which this very popular story was made are these. After a long and squally voyage during which most of the men had been sea sick and had lived very poor on salt beef and pork, we anchored off old Point Comfort and I went ashore with some five or six of the men to procure some oysters eggs &c. I ordered a supper for those with me and after supper I think two Bttles of Champagne and one of Made[i]ra were drank and I believe some ardent spirit. Afterward the landlord treated to some more I presume on acc. of the novelty of the Enterprise or some slight acquaintance with myself. Having got what stores I could for those on board and seeing that the frolic had gone far enough I returned on board with no more wine in my head than I have carried from your table. The answer to what Bell says of promises about purchase of Horses is all a lie. I never verbally or otherwise engaged to make other provision than what I might deem suitable and proper. All discession in this matter was reserved to myself by agreement, and the fact that they started is proof, that I did not. Can one man compel 24 men to go with him against their will, and would the men have started if I had broken my promises in the manner stated, or would they have gone at all if the equipment was evidently insufficient. The fact is that no other idea was ever held up to them except that of marching. If this was not the case why did they march across the Alegany. S.K. Livermore well knows this, for with him I corresponded on the subject of Thomas learning music for marching and in my letters to him dated Jany 23d & Feb 6th 1832 of which I have copy he will have the same expressed, the same in regard to hunting dresses &c. Tis all a lie that I made any promises on these subjects. The agreement states that the party shall be provided in the usual way and manner of trading parties, and this I can prove. Bell states that Weeks expressing a determination not to go I compelled him by put[t]ing him under arrest and afterward let him off on paying over to me all the money he had, and adds "leaving him almost destitute of means to accomplish his return" he might have said quite, if the first part of the statement was true.

The facts were these. The day before I left the last of the settlements I sent John Wyeth with a yoke of oxen and some sheep out to horse guard. He returned near night stating that the sheep strayed, and that he tied the oxen, and went after them, but when he returned they had broke loose and he could nowhere find them. I suspected all was not right, and sent a man to the place with John. This man returned and told me that John could shew no place where cattle had been tied, such place he would have known by the tracks (before morning they [were] found tied in a different direction). About this time Thomas Livermore told me that Johns gun was not in camp. I had the men called to arms. When it was discovered that Weeks and John Wyeth had no equipments

---

they we[re] called upon to produce them, and refused. I put them under guard, and a short time afterward Weeks offered to go and get them, and while out attempted to escape from the man sent with him, but finally produced the equipments. In the morning the Company was called together. I stated to them that I had no power to release any of the parties to our compact, that in regard to John he being a minor having been put under my charge by his father and having no means of satisfying the concern for the expenses incurred on his acc. I should carry him on, but this I would propose that Weeks should be released provided that he would indemnify for expenses incurred by the concern over and above what he had paid in. This passed by a vote according to form and by vote also it was provided that he might be released by paying \$40 and keep his cloths and equipments, which were Co. property This Weeks at first refused to do. I then told him that he should go if I tied him to the tail of a horse. Soon after he paid the \$40 and was released. The whole business was done by vote of the Co. and at the time recorded by the clerk of the same. Now if the Co. as Bell says had been deceived and abused could one man have exercised such control over them. The fact is that the Co. generally felt much insenced at this attemp[t] at desertion and seconded me fully and strongly in punishing it. The companion of Bells desertion, was the person who informed against those fellows viz. Livermore. In regard to the arbitrary conduct during the twelve days which Bell remained with me after this, I have only to say that I expected implicit obedience to my orders and was determined to enforce it at all hazards. Notice was given that those who lagged behind would be put on guard. They lagged to get rid of some work which is always to be done immediately on reaching camp, and those who avoided this labor I thought ought of right to make compensation by doing some other. Jacob was once put on guard for this offense. Livermore might have been but I do not recollect it. It was the business of any one sick or disabled to report himself to the Doct. and after examination he was entitled [to] and received any indulgence that the circumstances of the party would allow. Livermore complained of his feet once. I required to examine them, he refused and said his word was enough. I did not think so, and required him to do the same duty as the others. I had before experienced much impudence from Livermore. He at one time told me, I lied. I told him to prepare himself to return home from the next landing for that he should go no further with me. Before we got to the next landing he came and expressed a willingness to go before the whole Co. and make an apology. After this the matter was overlooked. His conduct was always bad. The night before we left Boston he and Bell were out all night and said they slept at a friends in Boston. When we arrived at Baltimore Bell had a clapp and this was the reason that he rode over the mountains at my expense. He takes care to tell none of these things and this was the tyranny to which he was subjected. Livermore spent on this trip beside the \$50 which his father gave him for his outfit near \$50 which he borrowed on various pretences of me, and something which you gave.

[“Insert here the Postscript” is written across the beginning of the following paragraph.]

The suggestions in your letter concerning family quarrels prevented me sending to Mr Livermore a letter which I had written not in anger but in a spirit of just rebuke for what I consider great meanness. I allude to his suffering a letter written to Bell to be published and Bells letters to be addressed to him. If these things were done without his consent he should have disclaim[ed] them, but he has aided in the dissemination of them and thereby made it a positive consent

---

instead of an implied one. I cannot overlook that as far as he is able he has assisted to get up an impression against me, when I had no chance to rebut it. If on the one hand I withhold an expression of my feelings for the course he has pursued on the other I shall withhold all explanations of things concerning which he might otherwise have enquired. I have enquired for Kendal at the Stables and Taverns, he appears not to be known at either place. My impression is favorable to him I hope he will turn out well, as much that you may get the suitable reward of your exertions for him as for his own good. In regard to my own plans I say that I would now entirely change my plan of life and as old as I am not deem success unattainable, could I once convince myself that my talents are as good as you seem to believe they are but in this matter every man must judge of himself and make up his own mind as to what he is most fitted for. I have never allowed myself to abandon any serious project that I had formed. Pursuant to this plan of life I have urged on from the beginning this western enterprise and I shall give it up only when I am convinced I am destitute [of] the means to pursue it. I have obtained the means of pursuing it and by relinquishing too much of the profit I have avoided responsibility beyond such extent as I am able to meet.

Please give my respects to my good aunt and accept for yourself the best wishes of - [Subscription written but crossed out.]

Postscript inserted in the body of the letter.

In regard to the fitness of the arrangements for the voyage There were purchased 34 animals. There were 19 loads of goods leaving 15 spare animals, beside two that were individual property and 24 persons started. I call all animals loaded with provisions spare ones because in less than 20 days they would all be released from their loads. If the men had took good care of the animals they could have rode half of the way but instead of this they lost or stole two horses before they left the settlements. Livermore stole three and I killed one more in trying to overtake him. Beside this some who were fearful to go on and disliked to back out endeavored to ruin the expedition by ruining the horses. Tin pots and picketts have been found under the pack saddles and the backs of many of the animals were soon ruined and in consequence we were all on foot except the sick or disabled or those who were hunting. It is not true that I rode the day before Livermore and others deserted. That day myself and Mr. Bache went out to hunt on foot. This fact I distinctly recollect from having found a horse that day. The day that they deserted I rode the newly found horse to hunt and being out of camp and able to go ahead of the party they were enabled to effect their intention, a thing they would not have dared attempt had I been in camp. The provisions carried with the party were one chest Tea pepper and salt, Corn meal 450 lbs. Bacon one yoke oxen sixteen sheep this to last until we should reach the Buffalo country which we did in 22 days.

N J W

11.

Cambridge Dec 9th 1833

Mr Jas Worthington (Flonsante Co Missouri)

Dear Sir

I shall be going to the Mts. as early next spring as the grass will permit and shall be glad of your company with as many persons as you may have with you and such goods as you may choose to carry. I shall have a vessell sail for the mouth of the Columbia in about ten days with goods and if you should follow the business of Beaver catching I do not doubt that I could hereafter supply you with goods in the Mts. much cheaper than you could pack them up yourself.

You will know my movements from Mr. E.M. Samuel of Liberty. In the mean time I remain

Yr. Obt. Servt. NJ. Wyeth

If you write direct to Cambridge Massachusetts.

12.

Cambridge Jany 2d 1833[4]

Mr. M.G. Sublette

Dear Sir

Yr. esteemed fav of the 26 ulto. is at hand. I am at this moment much engaged in fitting out a vessell for the mouth of the Columbia. I have written to my brother to urge you to come at once to Boston as the gentlemen who are concemed with me are desirous of seeing you, but if haste renders this out of the question, I will come to N. York as soon as I know that you are there, of which I have requested my brother to inform me immediately on your arrival. If you cannot come to Boston and are in much haste you can select the goods that you want when you please, and I have requested my brother to assist you in this matter, I would prefer however that you would not begin until I come but in this do as you please.

I am Yr. Obt. Servt. Nathl J Wyeth

13.

Boston Jany 4th 1834

Mr M Sublette (N York)

Dear Sir

I have received a note from my brother informing one of your having arrived in N. York. I should come immediately to see you were it not that I have already written to urge your coming here and am afraid of passing you on the road. When I have got your answer whether you will come here or not I shall move to see you. In the meantime permit me to suggest that there are great advantages to be derived from an interview between yourself and the gentlemen who are concerned with me in this undertaking, among the most important of which is the establishing in your mind of a perfect confidence that any contract that may be entered into with you or your partners will be fulfilled. When you have arrived here you will be able to satisfy yourself in this matter. Also it is important that you make some arrangement for sending home your furs over

and above those which you pay us for the goods which we are to deliver to you. If you should wish to avail yourself of the opportunity afforded by our vessell an agreement for the same can be made here and also for transporting them to the vessell. If it is possible to come to any agreement on these subjects an insurance might be effected to cover the risk of the sea on such amt. as might be shipped. Beside the above reasons, there are many goods which can be purchased as well and some better here than in N. York. The great difficulty which your concern has encountered and the enormous expence in getting your supplies has induced me to suppose that you would avail yourself of any opportunity which on reasonable terms would obviate all the difficulties and much of the expense. Such opportunity is now within your reach. By means of our vessells employed in the salmon trade we can take out goods and bring home furs to any extent to the Columbia. These goods we can purchase cheaper than goods can be purchased to send over the mountains because on some of them we get the drawback of the duties. The packing up from the Columbia is neither difficult nor expensive, horses there are comparatively cheap and in that country there is little danger consequently few men are required. These advantages we are willing to divide with you, in order that by getting your goods on reasonable terms you may be able to monopolise in a great measure the trade of the mountains, and thus, much enlarge the amt. of goods which you will take from us. One other convenience of this route is that all your men which are wanted for camp keepers could be had from the islands these men would be better than those you get from the States for such purposes and much cheaper. One other advantage to be derived from pursuing the business through this route is that if you succeed in breaking up the other companies as you certainly can do, when you get your goods so much cheaper you will prevent the influx to [oft] small traders and others who by their competition continually injure your business and spoil your men. Should the above considerations strike your mind as they do mine you will I have no doubt you will see of how much importance it is that parties who in the course of events may have such large engagements with each other should meet and establish a mutual confidence which will afterward facilitate all business and in such case I shall expect to see you in Boston in the course of the week. I was in hopes that you would be able to spend the winter with me and go to St. Louis together in the spring, but if your business prevents we will let you go after you have spent a week with us.

I am Yr &c NJ.W. To M. Sublette Esq.

14.

St. Louis March 31st 1834

Dear wife (Cambridge)

Your fav. of 13th came to hand this morning and was very acceptable. I am glad to find you will take some care of the trees. Perhaps they will not grow for our use but some one will get the benefit and it will be pleasant to leave even such a memorial of our having once existed. It is true that Mr. Fitzpatric was robbed by the Crow Indians but I was in hopes that you would not hear of it. I knew it before I left Cambridge but did not wish to alarm you. I do not think there is much danger with so large party as I shall have.

Mr. Nuttall and Mr. Townsend another naturalist passed through this place to the rendezvous last week and their goods went by the vessell so there is no doubt of his going. The Missionarys came here this morning. Mr. Abbot is at the rendezvous taking care of the horses. Batiste and the Indian I have also sent up to the rendezvous. Batiste continues a pretty good boy. I shall think of your request for seeds and pretty stones while I am on my way out, and certainly shall not forget my promise to send for you if there is any chance of doing so with propriety but you must not be too sanguine a thousand circumstances may prevent it altho I desire it much. I feel as much as you can do the lonesomeness of my way of life itself to me and if I do fail in it they shall never say that it was for want of perseverance. But this is my last attempt and if I am not successfull I must come home and endeavor the best way I can to get a living and to pay the debts which will then be heavy. Still I am yet sanguine that I shall succeed. I will take good care of myself and perhaps the life which began in turmoil may yet end in quiet and peace and our sun go down from a clear sky. I should be desolate indeed if I thought that the residue of life was to be as unsettled as the past, and I cannot but reproach myself that I have made you in some measure a widow while you ought to be enjoying yourself. I am afraid that you will brood over hopes that have been blasted by me who should have been with you to fulfil them and at hand in time of need to cherish and support. These things make me melancholy and I half believe I have got the Blues.

Jacob writes me that he is about getting married. The people from Galena all say that he is doing well. I hope so but cant. help doubting whether it is permanent.

Good bye My Dear wife and may God bless you.

NJ. Wyeth

15.

One day this side the Blue May 12th 1834

Dear Sir

Wm Sublette having passed me here, I am induced to write to you by this opportunity and hope you will get it. You may expect me by the 1st July at the rendesvous named in your letter to Milton which you sent by Dr. Harrison who opened it and I presume told Wm Sublette of the place. I am not heavily loaded and shall travell as fast as possible and have a sufficient equipment of goods for you according to contract. Cerre will be much later than me and also the Am. Fur Co. Milton left me a few days since on account of his leg which is very bad.

To Thos Fitzpatric or Co.

In the Rocky Mountains.

I am yr obt. Servt. N. J. W.

P.S. I have sent a vessell around the Horn with such goods as you want and would like to give you a supply for winter rendesvous or next year on such terms as I know would suit you.

16.

Sweet Water June 9th 1834  
Mess Thomas Fitzpatric & Co.

Gent.

I send this to inform you of my approach with your goods. I am now two days behind Wm Sublette, who I presume is with you by this. Milton informed me that you would rendezvous near the mouth of the Sandy. In case you do not I wish you would immediately inform me by express. I am now one days march above rock Independence and shall continue to come on at a good rate and for the present follow the same route which I came by two years since. I wish that you would defer making any contract for carrying home any surplus furs that you have or for a further supply of goods untill I come as I have sent a vessell to the mouth of the Columbia with such goods as you want and am ready to give you a supply for winter rendezvous if you wish, or for next year, and also to send home by her, at a low rate, such furs as you may have and can make you advances in St. Louis on them to pay men &c.

I am yr. obt. Servt. Nathl. J. Wyeth.

17.

Hams Fork of the Colorado of the West July 1st 1834 Latt. 41 deg. 45 min. Long, 112 deg. 34 min.  
Mess Tucker & Williams

Gent.

I arrived here on the 17th inst. and Wm Sublette arrived two days before me. This he was enabled to do by leaving one half of his goods and horses on the route, which of course I could not do. On arrival the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. refused to receive the goods alledging that they were unable to continue business longer, and that they had disolved, but offered to pay the advances made to M.G. Sublette and the Forfeit. These terms I have been obliged to accept altho they would not even pay the interest on cash advances for there is no Law here. I have also sold a few goods at low prices. The proceeds of the Forfeit &c and Sales after deducting a small amt. for payment of wages of men who have gone home, from this place, I have forwarded to Mess. Von Phull & McGill of Saint Louis subject to your order, in one draft Four months from date July 1st 1834 for \$864.12 1/2 and for \$1002.81 same date 12 months both by Fitzpatric Sublette & Bridger, accepted by Sublette & Campbell of St Louis.

In addition to not fulfilling their agreement with me every exertion is made to debauch my men in which they have had some success, but I have hired enough of theirs to make up, and do not fear falling short of troops. These circumstances induce me to quit their neighborhood as soon as possible.

I shall proceed about 150 miles west of this and establish a fort in order to make sale of the goods which remain on my hands. I have sent out messengers to the Pawnacks, Shoshonees, Snakes,

Nez Perces and Flatheads to make robes and come and trade them at this Post. I am under the impression that these Indians will make a good quantity of Robes whenever they find they can sell them and I believe the Transportation will not be too expensive for the value of the article beside which I have no doubt that tolerable good returns of Beaver may be made at this post. I propose to establish it on a river called Portneuf on Snake or Lewis River.

I feel much disappointed that the contract was not complied with. Had M.G. Sublette been able to come I think it would have been. I much fear that the gentlemen at home will get discouraged if no returns are made the first year. I shall do the best I can but cannot now promise anything immediate. If I find on arrival at the mouth of the River that [Capt.] Lambert has not done much I shall think myself justified in detaining him another year.

I have drawn no drafts from these mountains.

Bonneville & Co. I have not seen, but he is not far from me on my proposed route. I fear that he has done nothing of consequence. I shall endeavor to take home his Beaver what there is of it if I can get an adequate price. I think his concern is finished.

I should forward you an Invoice of goods on hand and a memorandum of transactions here but have not time without delaying my march. Capt. Thing altho a first rate man is even a worse scribe than myself and it is all we can do to make the proper charges and to look after our men and Horses and having to lose some time in making a fort, time is the more precious. I think that I will be with the vessell about the 10th Sept. next and after arranging at the Post on the Columbia shall try my fortune at a winter Hunt for Beaver.

I have now with me 126 horses and mules in good order and 41 persons all told that are in the employ, and can hire as many more as I want. The amount due for wages is trifling. Almost all the men take up as fast as they earn, and would faster if I would let them, in goods at about 500 per ct. on the original cost. Our expenses after this year will be very small, and I have strong hopes as ever of success notwithstanding appearances so far.

I am yrs Nath. J. Wyeth

18.

Hams Fork July 1st 1834

Mr. [M.] G. Sublette

Dear Sir

I arrived at Rendesvous at the mouth of Sandy on the 17th June. Fitzpatric refused to receive the goods. he paid however, the forfeit and the cash advance I made to you this however is no satisfaction to me. I do not accuse you or him of any intention of injuring me in this manner when you made the contract but I think he has been bribed to sacrifice my interests by better offers from your brother. Now Milton, business is closed between us, but you will find that you have

only bound yourself over to receive your supplies at such price as may be inflicted and that all that you will ever make in the country will go to pay for your goods, you will be kept as you have been a mere slave to catch Beaver for others.

I sincerely wish you well and believe had you been here these things would not have been done. I hope that your leg is better and that you will yet be able to go whole footed in all respects.

I am Yr Obt. Servt. NJ. Wyeth

19.

Bear River July 5th 1834

Friend Ermatinger

Your esteemed fav. of 12th ulto. reached me by the politeness of Mr. [Robert] Newell on Hams fork of Green River. Mr. N. also informed me of the particulars of the battle with the Blkfeet. It must have been a capital mixture of Wine and Gunpowder. I am happy to hear that you had some success last year but am afraid that you will do but little this season.

I am quite happy to hear that the Doctor remains at Vancouver. I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing him. I suppose that Mckay has "thought of it" by this time and perhaps felt of it too, and you too seem to have done more than thought of it.

The latter part of your letter I shall answer when I see yhou, which will be, I think in the course of the year.

I am now on my way to meet a vessell that I sent from Boston to the mouth of the Columbia and hope to be there by the 1st Sept.

You have also enclosed a letter for Mr. Payette whose son is now with me.

I came up with goods and about 50 men 130 horses. The goods I will have to leave for sale somewhere her[e] abouts with part of the men. I have got no Beaver and have sold but little and that for Drafts which I hope are good.

I have again to repeat to you the advice which I before gave you not to come with a small party to the Am. Rendesvous. There are here a great collection of Scoundrels.

I have a great desire to see you and repay you in part for all the kindness which I received from you last year. Please give my respects to Mr. Horon [Francis Heron] and all my acquaintances that you may happen to see and believe me

yr obt. Servt and Friend Nath. J. Wyeth

20.

Bear River July 5th 1834

Mr Francis Payette

Dear Sir

I received your esteemed fav. of 14th May from Fort Nez Perces.

Your son [Baptiste] is now with me and will go to the mouth of the Columbia to arrive there about the 1st Sept. He has learned to speak English to read write and cypher tolerably well. He learns fast considering how broken his time has been. We teach him a little on the route but cannot do as much as I could wish. He is an active lad and appears contented. I should be pleased to hear from you at all times and especially good news. Letters addressed to the care of the Doctor at Vancouver would reach me.

I am yr obt Servt. N J Wyeth

21.

Sept. 1st 1834 (at Grand Ronde)

Capt. Bonneville

Dear Sir

Yours of this morning I have, and in answer can only say that I shall send a clerk and an outfit of goods up to the fort as soon as I get down, and shall come myself with it as far as where you now are, and probably be there in about 7 weeks from this time. I will enlarge the outfit a little so as to meet this trade, and will trade with them personally at your present camp, if they will be there, or I will send a clerk to them at any place they shall designate, provided they do so before my passing the Grande Ronde. The time and place must be designated in time in order that I may give the proper directions to the clerk.

I shall bring up goods so that in case you should alter your mind as to purchasing you could still get a supply. But if I could see you personally at the Grande Ronde when I return it is likely that we might make a joint business of it.

It is very like that I may detain the Brig until next summer, in which case I would like to freight home your furs, which I will do at 37 1/2 per lb. Insurance included and receive them at the Grand Ronde.

[No signature.]

22.

[No address given.] Sept. 1st 1834

Capt Bonneville

---

Dear Sir

I got your note of to day late this evening, and am obliged to you for the trouble you have taken. I will meet the Nez Perces at the A-show-to River within 8 weeks. I Hope to meet you before this, and would be pleased to make a joint affair of it much better than to proceed alone.

Your Beaver traded from the Skiuses [Cayuses] is so much seized from the common enemy in trade, so far so good.

Respectfully yrs. Nathl J. Wyeth

23.

Wappatoo Island Ap 3d 1835

Friend Weld

I write, but do not know when I will have an opportunity to send. I am in the mood which you know is always enough for me. If I were at Cambridge the wine would suffer to night and you pretty well know who would be the company. I have had a severe winter of it. All my men have been sick except myself and one man and nothing but pure obstinacy has kept me from being hauled up. It may be interesting to you to know a little of what I am doing. In the first place I got here somehow not worth relating. When here found my Brig not arived but outside the bar. Went down the river and met her coming up. This was on the 11th Sept. and entirely after salmon time. Her late arrival was occasioned by having been struck with lightening and being in consequence obliged to put in to Valparaiso to repair. After shaking hands, set about arranging a party to send to a Fort which I have built among the Rocky Mts. This party consisted of Capt. Thing 13 Sandwich Islanders and 8 whites. They proceeded about 200 miles up the Columbia inland at the same time I took a party of 4 Sandwich Islanders and 16 whites and followed inland 150 and got news that Capt Things Islanders had all run away from him. This obliged me to spare all my Islanders, and all but 6 of my whites to enable Capt. Thing to proceed to Fort Hall. With the residue I proceeded to look up the deserters. I struck south thinking that they might have started for Califomia. This was the middle of Nov. During Dec. Jany. and Feb. I got no news from them. About the first of march I heard that some of them were near the Columbia. On this I changed my route and struck that river where I learned from the Inds. that 7 of them had passed down five days before. I followed and overtook them about 80 miles from the mouth of the river 7 in number and took them to Fort William our establishment on Wappatoo Island about 75 miles up the Columbia at the mouth of the Multnomah. Two were killed by the Indians one was drowned and one froze to death in the Mts. and two are still unaccounted for as yet. On arriving here I set about preparing for fishing. Have commenced a house Boat 70 feet long for a conveyance about to the different fisherys. Have finished a canoe 60 feet long 3 feet wide 2 feet deep of one tree which has not a shake or not in it, and this after cutting off thirty feet of clear stuff from the same tree, and still this is by no means a large tree here. I think I could find trees here free from shakes or nots that would square 4 feet one hundred feet long. It is quite a job to make one of these canoes. I have heard to day that our Brig has arrived at the mouth of the river from the Sandwich Islands whither she went last winter with a cargo of Lumber, and I expect more business more company

and more provisions soon the last not the least desirable of the three. This Wappatoo Island which I have selected for our establishment is about 15 miles long and about average of three wide. On one side runs the Columbia and on the other the Multnomah. It consists of woodlands and prairie and on it there is considerable deer and those who could spare time to hunt might live well but a mortality has carried off to a man its inhabitants and there is nothing to attest that they ever existed except their decaying houses, their graves and their unburied bones of which there are heaps. So you see as the righteous people of New England say providence has made room for me and without doing them more injury than I should if I had made room for myself viz Killing them off. I often think of the old knot of cronies about the town with whom I used to spend so much time especialy of an evening. When I sit down in my lodge on the ground and contrast the past with the present and wonder if the future will give as much difference and which way the difference will be for better or worse?

It has rained almost continually from last Oct. to this time but still there has been no cold weather except in the mountains at great elevations.

Now I do not wish this letter published I do hate every thing in print.

I am yr Friend and Servt. Nathl. J. Wyeth

24.

Fort Vancouver 5th May 1836  
From Nathaniel Wyeth to  
John McLoughlin Esqr.

Sir

The following proposal is made with a view of establishing a permanent fur business on the Upper Waters of Snake River and countries to the Eastward and Southward, not much, if any frequented by your parties, it is not made with a view of eventually limiting the Supplies to the amount named, but to increase the same to any extent that may be found profitable. I wish to obtain some assurance from the Honble. Company of Supplies, in order to be able on my return to Boston to make my present partners an offer for the property we have in this Country, if you approve of the plan, & could yourself furnish any positive assurance of the Supplies before I arrive in Boston, it would assist me in my transactions there, or if you would place the subject before the Honble. Company in England so that I could receive their answer during the coming winter, it would effect the object. The proposal which I wish to make is as follows.

1st The Honble. Company to furnish Supplies at 75 p. Cent advance on prime Cost and Charges to the Amount of L700 deliverable at Vancouver.

2d The Hble. Co. to furnish the produce & manufactures of the Country at the Tariff of the Country, Horses not over Seventy five the first year, & afterwards according to the exigency of the

busniess at their Cost at Walla Walla, and men not exceeding fifteen the first year, and thereafter according to the wants of the Trade, at the Cost of their wages commencing from the time said men shall leave the place where they are hired, the honble. Co. to send the said men home free of charge on the termination of their contracts with N. Wyeth.

3d The Honble Co. to furnish one or more clerks if required charging their Wages.

4th N. Wyeth to deliver over at Vancouver all the furs and peltries that he may obtain, amd receive therefore a credit of L1 p.l merchantable Beaver of 1 lb. Weight, and all smaller to be considered as half Beaver, and for all other furs and peltries usually receive by the Co. at prices to be hereafter determined.

5th N. Wyeth to agree to abandon Fort Hall if required and in no case to trade or barter with any Indians or freemen below the scite of said Fort on the waters of Snake River, and also agree to establish no posts on the Columbia or any of its waters without the consent of the Honble. Company, but to pursue his trade on the waters of the Salt Lake, the Colorado, del Norte, and the Rivers of the Atlantic.

I am respectfully  
Your obedt. Sert.

Nathl. Wyeth

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---

Text from Journals and Books of the Western Fur Trade

Selected Letters of Nathaniel J. Wyeth

---